

Green Glen Hospice
621 Harlem Avenue, Suite 2
Forest Park, Illinois 60130

A Pathway to Hope

A BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER from GREEN GLEN HOSPICE

Issue #5 — Fall/Holiday



GREEN GLEN HOSPICE is a special healthcare option for patients and families facing a terminal illness. A multidisciplinary team of physicians, nurses, hospice aides, social workers, bereavement counselors and volunteers work together to address the physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs of each patient and family.

Hospice is about living, not about dying.

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A Message About How You Can Help

FOR AT LEAST THE PAST YEAR, you have been immersed in an often intense, difficult process. We hope it has been an experience with more than just pain — one where you have learned a lot.

Yes, the year of formal bereavement services Green Glen Hospice offers is now concluding. But our staff of skilled professionals

— counselors, chaplains, social workers, nurses, physicians, and therapists of several kinds — remain available as a resource.

Let us mention another crucial part of the Green Glen Hospice team who are here to help you ... or for you to join — our volunteers. These giving people come from many places. They come from among community members who've gone through bereavement and have a desire to give back. They are interns and



externs from area colleges. But especially valued are people like you, people who have gone through caring for a dying loved one and through bereavement recently, and done so with Green Glen Hospice.

Often, it's easier for a patient or family member to relate to you as a volunteer. You can be a non-clinical sounding board who can easily empathize with them. You possess insight, knowledge and compassion you can share with others.

Won't you consider volunteering with Green Glen Hospice? Please contact us for information on getting started.

Do you feel you aren't ready for such a commitment, or that volunteering doesn't fit you? Then we hope you'll consider this rewarding role in the future.

May Grunwald

Founder & CEO

Giving the Gift

Green Glen Hospice relies on donations from our community and volunteerism for our continued success. How can *you* help our hospice? Please consider . . .

- ❖ Making a donation to help us purchase the extra comforts needed by hospice patients
- ❖ Honoring a loved one with a memorial donation
- ❖ Providing for future hospice services by making a charitable donation in your will or trust
- ❖ Supporting hospice fundraisers
- ❖ Giving the gift of time as a hospice volunteer.

To make a donation, go to www.greenglenhpc.com/donate.

Green Glen Hospice does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability in its health programs and activities.

Si usted habla español, servicios de asistencia lingüística, de forma gratuita, están a su disposición.
Jeżeli mówisz po polsku, możesz skorzystać z bezpłatnej pomocy językowej.

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Bereavement Support Services

Green Glen Hospice services are provided to the loved ones of our patients for 13 months after the patient's passing. We have bereavement counselors to aid you as well as a library of brochures and other materials. Green Glen also has a regular calendar of workshops, seminars, support groups and other events year-round.

Call the Green Glen Hospice office at any time at 708.366.5294 to get more information. Plus, we can put you in touch with a bereavement counselor or provide other referrals.

You do not need to grieve alone.

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Contact Green Glen Hospice

621 Harlem Avenue, Suite 2
Forest Park, Illinois 60130
708.366.5294; 800.765.4321

www.greenglenhpc.com



Taking Your Journey Past the 1st Year

BACK IN OUR WINTER ISSUE, we discussed "anniversary reactions." You've experienced many anniversaries in the year since your loved one's death. But one can loom especially large: the anniversary itself of your loved one's passing.

Many people get to where you are — about a year after your loved one's passing — and think, "I should be over this." Life these days moves so fast that we think grief should, too. Moreover, in our self-help, there's-a-quick-program-for-everything world, you might be thinking, "I really should be over this!" The answer on both counts: "There are no *shoulds*. There are no set programs or prescriptions. There is no set length of time for bereavement that everyone follows. Nor is there a set, defined path. Only what is right for you."

For some people, the second year can be harder than the first year. If not as great, the challenges can be new and unexpected. A new sort of awareness can set in when the calendar comes full circle. You face a *second* Valentine's Day, a *second* Mother's Day or Father's Day, a *second* set of birthdays and anniversaries, a *second* holiday season. These milestones repeating can give you a sense that your loved one's passing is indeed permanent. Be ready for this possibility.

We hope that, if you haven't already, you will soon reach that fifth Stage

of Grief that Elisabeth Kübler-Ross describes: Acceptance. As she writes:

"Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being 'all right' or 'OK' with what has happened. This is not the case. . . . We will never like this reality or make it OK, but eventually we accept it. We learn to live with it. . . . Instead of denying our feelings, we listen to our needs;



we move, we change, we grow, we evolve. We may start to reach out to others and become involved in their lives."

Maybe you feel you've found acceptance and adjustment, even months ago. Or you feel you still have a way to go. Remember, the advice you've received to date doesn't expire. When you need perspective, look again at the issues of this newsletter and other materials you've received.

Moreover, in the past 40 years, bereavement has become a much more well-understood process. There are many resources — websites, articles, books, videos — that we've told you about over the past year, and many more we can lead you to.

Yes, the formal one-year bereavement program is concluding. But most important, the networks of help and information that you have developed with Green Glen over the past year, plus the period of your loved one's care, are *not* disappearing.

Green Glen Hospice is still here to help you. ■

Consider the Candle Ceremony

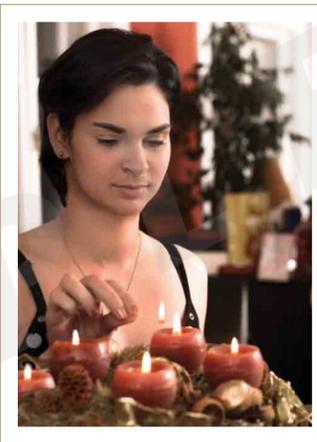
FIVE CANDLES form the heart of the holiday ceremony Sherry L. Williams created in 1985. Each candle recalls and honors your loved one, symbolizing . . .

- ❖ grief,
- ❖ courage,
- ❖ love,
- ❖ hope, and
- ❖ memories.

Include the kids. — The candle ceremony works very well with children because it's simple, it's clear, and it's powerful. Even kids who are too young to light candles themselves can take an active role.

Adapting the ceremony. — Williams created the ceremony as a one-day, annual holiday observance. You might adapt it. Each day (choosing whenever you wish to start), light a single candle, carrying you beyond the holidays. Each candle stands for one symbol. As you get beyond five candles,

choose new symbols or meanings. After Christmas or New Year's, move to a candle each week. With Spring, perhaps shift to monthly.



Over the year, there are many anniversaries — first birthdays without your loved one, first wedding anniversary, first anniversaries of less formal events. The candle ceremony can help you through the

whole next calendar year. On those days, burn a special candle.

After the year, or two, you can do it annually or on a few most significant dates on the calendar.

Exploring the meanings. — Every candle will be unique. The brightness of the flame will vary. The scent you choose may differ. Each day, you

may focus more on one symbol, one aspect, one recollection. However, the candle's light will always stand for your loved one's memory.

Exploring your emotions. — As you watch the flame, find joy. Don't dwell on sadness. Recall the laughter, the happiness. It's common when grieving to feel guilt if you find something funny or begin to laugh. Allow yourself to balance your grief with joy. The life you shared with your loved one included many happy times.

Permit yourself to express a range of emotions. In the flame, recall times when you laughed, times when you cried, times of anger, times of silliness.

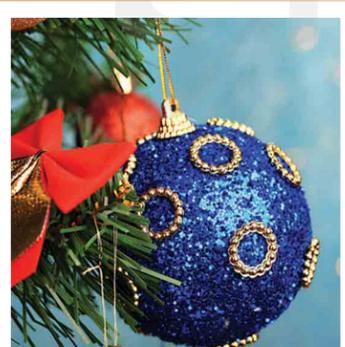
In your grief, the candle can cast a light on all the memories, helping you to recognize that every moment of your loved one's life, every moment of your life, is precious. Let the candles each serve to build a lasting memorial in your thoughts. ■

Greetings of the Season

ALL THOSE HOLIDAY GREETINGS. They're so much a part of the season that, usually, you don't even think about them. This time around is different. This year, how do you respond to "Merry Christmas," "Happy Holidays," and "Happy New Year" when you're anything but merry or happy?

Remember these lines aren't meant to prompt deep dialogue. They're stock phrases. So take a bit of time beforehand to consider how you will reply to these cheerful greetings. You don't need to fake it, but find appropriate replies you're comfortable with.

If a stranger or casual acquaintance greets you, just say, "Thanks, happy holidays to you." To those you know well who know you're grieving, you can say, "I'm trying." It's an opening for a quick exchange or for them to reply with condolences or sympathy. ■



Prayer for the New Year

May God make your year a happy one!
 Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain,
 But by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes;
 Not by making your path easy,
 But by making you sturdy to travel any path;
 Not by taking hardships from you,
 But by taking fear from your heart;
 Not by granting you unbroken sunshine,
 But by keeping your face bright,
 even in the shadows;
 Not by making your life always pleasant,
 But by showing you when people and their
 causes need you most,
 and by helping you become available to help.
 God's love, peace, hope and joy to you
 for the year ahead.

— Anonymous

Helping Children Through a Challenging Time of the Year

CHILDREN VIEW THE HOLIDAYS differently from adults. A grieving adult might react by cutting back on holiday celebrations. Grieving kids, however, are apt to focus on the joy and hope linked to the family's holiday traditions. Many kids still want the things they are used to at the holidays. They still look forward to the decorations, the parties, and the gifts.

Of course, children still grieve. But they may express grief differently depending on their age. A teen may sulk or withdraw, while a young child may act out.

With the loss of a family member, some holiday traditions that a child knows have to change or end. Perhaps Thanksgiving dinner was always at Grandpa's. Or Abuelita and the kids made tamales together. Or Mom's special pecan pie was the Christmas Eve treat everyone waited for. Therefore, grieving families must create new traditions. This is a vital life lesson — for children old and young as well as adults: Loss means change, not just emptiness.

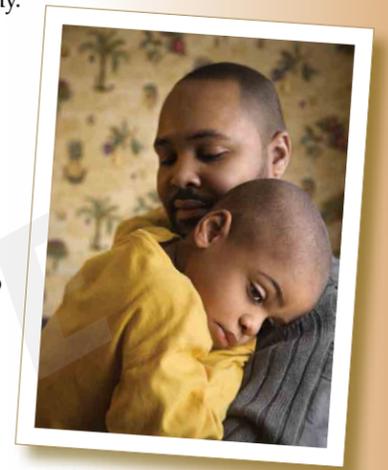
Honor your loved one. — Before each holiday arrives, the family, kids included, however young, should get together. Decide how your loved one will be remembered. There are many ways. Each person, even the youngest,

might recall cherished memories. The family might donate to a cause that meant a lot to your loved one. Everyone may gather for a candle ceremony.

Open communication. — No matter what the age of your child or children, maintain the lines of communication. Remember to make it age-appropriate. Your teen likely understands more than you think; your young child may not be able to absorb as much as you think.

Many kids from age 7 or 8 up find help from a bereavement group designed for their age. They're with others at their developmental level going through similar feelings and thoughts. This can be especially useful because the rest of their peers will be focused on fun and joy. A support group provides them with a place beyond the family where they can be heard and listen to others.

The holiday season is usually a challenging time for families that are grieving. It's also a time that can be a meaningful and creative part of the process, providing opportunities to honor the memory of your loved one. ■



11 Things You Can Do to Handle the Holiday Stress

THE END-OF-YEAR holidays can be stressful even in the happiest times. Family events, out-of-town visitors, office parties, church functions, vacations. End-of-year deadlines at work. And of course there's shopping.

Now add the stress of losing a loved one. You're wishing it was 2017 and could all be over.

First, realize this feeling is normal — not great, but normal. Here are 11 steps to help get you through the holidays. Indeed, they're good for any holiday season, but they are all the more important when grieving.

1. **Be realistic.** — Don't try for perfect. Accept that this year can't be perfect.
2. **Think simple.** — Avoid committing to too much, which, this year, means not much.
3. **Exercise.** — Stick by set routines.
4. **Eat and drink right.** — Don't pile on the sugar, fat, alcohol and caffeine. Any or all of them are easy to overdo during the holiday season, and will increase stress.
5. **Say "Yes."** — If friends offer to help, accept. Let yourself ask for help.
6. **Say "No."** — Be polite and show your appreciation. Let's repeat: Avoid committing to too much, which, this year, means not much.



7. **Start new holiday traditions.** — Young kids are frequently good at coming up with ideas.
8. **Give.** — Volunteer. Donate to charity. Help those in need.
9. **Delve into the spiritual side of the holidays.** — Popular culture tends to focus on the commercial and superficial. But these are observances with deep, serious meanings and origins. Explore that. How do they touch you, your family, all of us?
10. **Rest.** — Get enough sleep. Give yourself short, frequent breaks to relax. Meditate. Allow yourself solitary, quiet times.
11. **Treat yourself well.** — See a movie. Get a massage. Visit someplace special. Dine with friends and talk about old times. Enjoy your loved one's memory. You will always have that. ■

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