

Heart & Hand

Quarterly Newsletter of the **Spiritual Care Support Ministriessm**

Reaching for a hand, and touching a heart

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Issuing four times yearly - March, June, September and December

Greetings from Chaplain Liz

Greetings from the Spiritual Care Support Ministry Center where we continue to walk with God on a daily basis, trusting Him to guide us with all our decisions. We are trusting God for wisdom and discernment that we need as we support those who are ill, grieving, experience personal loss and those who journey with them. We believe that God is everywhere. He is there in all the directions we take no matter which way we choose to go. God is with us in all the conditions of life, whatever their nature and intensity. We believe that God is at our side day to day and step by step. So often we don't think God is around because we don't feel His presence, but there is nowhere that we can go that God is not. "I look behind me and you're there, and then up ahead and you're there, too - your reassuring presence coming and going" (Psalm 139:5, The Message). God's presence and majesty crowns the earth. It is reflected in the splendor of spring with the beautiful flowers and trees bursting forth with their beauty. It is also evident in ev-

ery loving act of support we give to others. In your darkest hours of grief and personal loss, you may not feel God's presence, but no matter how you feel, God promises that nothing can separate you from Him and His great love for you.

Training others to be effective in helping people is such a privilege for us at SCSM as we know that those who are brokenhearted do not need to be wounded more. As we equip others with knowledge and understanding of what they are going through, then we can pray that they will intentionally make changes with the help of God to find healing. The process is never easy but we believe it is possible. We have proof of changed lives as demonstrated in our book, "Journey from Heartache to Hope," that has just been published. If you



would like to purchase a copy, please contact the SCSM office. They are available for \$12.00 (\$10.00 each for 30 copies or more).

Our one desire at Spiritual Care Support Ministries is to fulfill the vision that God has given us, and without the help of people just like you, we would not be able to do what we are doing. Perhaps you are a professional counselor and would like to give some volunteer time to help at

our Center. Are you retired and need purpose again? Are you finding you have some free time on your hands and are trying to decide who to volunteer for? Do you have gifts and talents that have never been used before, and you know that they could be used at SCSM? Would you consider volunteering for us? Are you part of a men's or ladies group or youth group that need a project to work on? SCSM has lots of projects as our new Center is going to be built soon. Perhaps you would give an "office shower" for SCSM at your home, workplace or faith community to help us with our need for office supplies. We have a list that we can send you telling you what we need. Are you a prayer intercessor and can give 30 minutes a week to join us to pray for the needs that come to the Center? God has a place for you. The most important thing to remember is you don't want to volunteer at the SCSM Center just to fill up your schedule. You want to come and get involved because God has brought you to us. Is He tugging at your heart? Is your heart being drawn to the needs of those who desperately need hope? Do you want to reach for someone's hand so that their heart will be touched? If so, please email me at ChaplainLiz@scsm.tv or call me at 540-349-5814, and I will send you a volunteer application.

Chat with the Chaplain

Planting Seeds of Healing Through Support

So often I am asked the question, "What kind of support do you actually give at Spiritual Care Support Ministries to help with healing?" It is a great question especially when you are trying to find help when you have lost your way emotionally, physically and spiritually.

I believe that this acrostic will be of help to you when you are considering coming to SCSM for support. The following acrostic will give you components of support that we believe are important to the process of healing. If you are a child, a teen or an adult, genuine support is available to you. Our support services are free, although donations are appreciated.

If you have questions or want to schedule an appointment because you need support, please do not hesitate to call Danette or Kaye at 540-349-5814.

S – Standard of Care

U – Understanding

P – Perspective

P – Prayer

O – Opportunity to Heal

R – Respect

T – Truth and Trust

Tips for Widows by Liz Shaw

When I lost my husband, Dennis, to a sudden heart attack eight years ago, I felt all alone and that I was the only one in the world that it happened to. Before leaving the emergency room the day he died, I told the nurse that Dennis was an organ donor, "So please use whatever you can." A very short time later, maybe less than



Liz Shaw

a month, I received a letter from the Washington Regional Transplant Center stating that two people had received his eyes. Then, not too long after that, I learned that someone had received bone tissue from Dennis. I was invited to attend a support group by the transplant center in Annandale. That's at least an hour's drive from Warrenton, and I really didn't want to travel that far one way.

After my husband died, my oldest daughter, Susan, and her husband and two children came to live with me. Susan got a job at the Fauquier Bank. Her co-workers spoke very highly of Liz Danielsen and her ministry helping people who had suffered losses.

Susan knew I was looking for a support group closer to home, so she suggested that I call Liz Danielsen to learn more. Well, I can tell you that was the VERY best thing that anyone had ever told me. I called SCSM and spoke with Liz several times. I also began to receive emails from SCSM.

One night I decided to attend something called "Tear Soup." I was very moved by that, and I was very impressed and wanted to learn more.

Then in December, 2007, I received an email that said, "If you have lost a loved one and are in need of support, please come to dinner at Ruby Tuesdays." I didn't know anyone there. I sat between Virginia Wright and Walter Wigglesworth. They both said the same thing to me. "You need to do this." I attended GriefShare starting in January 2008, followed by Spouse Loss ten weeks later.

I began to read a lot of books and articles about losing a loved one.

The one sentence I read that made sense to me was, "The best way to help yourself is to try to help someone else." That was the turning point when I decided to try to help others through the same hurt I had been through. I called Liz several times asking if there was anything I could do to help. Liz asked me to call someone and tell that person who I was and that I had suffered a similar loss and had a similar hurt.

Four years after Dennis died, I was asked to be a co-facilitator for the Spouse Loss Group. I met Vickie Richey who had also lost her husband. We became close friends and "sisters" in a very short time.

I have co-facilitated Spouse Loss with Vickie Richey for the past 5 years. Last spring, Vickie and I decided that we wanted to share some tips for widows, other ladies who have also lost their husbands and are having a hard time trying to decide what they should do in various situations. So, one night when no one came to our Spouse Loss class, this is what we decided we wanted to share with others. (If there are any widowers who would like to share, please let either me or Liz Danielsen know. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ, and this is what I believe He wants us to do.)

Immediately after the death:

- Call the funeral home you have selected.
- If your spouse was a veteran, you may be able to get assistance with the funeral, burial plot, or other benefits. Call the Veterans Administration at 1-800/827-1000. You will need a copy of your loved one's discharge papers.
- Obtain 10-15 copies of the Death Certificate from your funeral director.
- If your loved one was receiving Social Security benefits, notify your local Social Security Office of the death to stop benefits. Overpayments will result in difficulties. Also, ask about your eligibility for increased benefits if you are a surviving spouse.
- Contact the health insurance company or employer regarding terminating coverage for the deceased while continuing coverage for others covered through the policy.
- Contact the insurance company for all life insurance policies. You will need to provide the policy number and a certified copy of the death certificate and fill out a claim form. If the deceased is listed as the beneficiary on any other policy, arrange to have the name removed.
- If the deceased was working, contact the employer for information on pension plans, credit unions, and union death benefits. You will need a certified copy of the death certificate for each claim.
- Return credit cards of the deceased with a certified copy of the death certificate, or notify the credit card company if you, as the survivor, want to retain use of the card.
- Seek the advice of an accountant or tax advisor about filing the deceased's tax return for the year of the death. Keep monthly bank statements on all individual and joint accounts that show the account balance on the day of death, since you will need this information for the estate tax return.

information for the estate tax return.

- Arrange to change any joint bank accounts into your name. If the deceased's estate is in trust, check with the Trust Department or Customer Service at the bank.
- Arrange to change stocks and bonds into your name. Your bank or stockbroker will have the forms.
- Make sure that important bills, such as mortgage payments, continue to be paid.
- Gather the following documents: death certificates (10-15 certified copies), Social Security card, marriage certificate, birth certificates (whole family, if applicable), insurance policies, deed and titles to property, stock certificates, bank books, honorable discharge papers for a veteran and/or V.A. claim number, recent income tax forms and W-2 forms, automobile title and registration papers, and loan and installment payment books and/or contracts.

Other suggestions learned from experience:

- Find a support group.
- Talk about your loss.
- Get someone trustworthy to help with your finances if you need to. Protect your numbers: your bank account numbers, credit cards, and ATM cards. Don't sign the back of your credit cards. Instead write "Ask for photo ID".
- Take care of yourself. Eat well and get enough rest. If you aren't sleeping well, see your doctor so he or she can help.
- Take one day at a time.
- Don't advertise that you are alone. Have your answering machine say "we".
- Don't feel obligated to donate money to everyone who calls. Get caller ID. Only answer the phone if you recognize the caller ID or the voice if someone leaves a message.
- Stay in your church. Continue with your church activities.
- Don't make any big decisions the first year.
- Keep cheap kitty litter in your car during the winter months just in case you get stuck on the ice. Sprinkle some kitty litter around your tires if you get stuck on the ice. The kitty litter will help you regain traction.
- If someone's husband was a member of the Knights of Columbus, it's ok to contact them for help in getting things done around the house such as repairs, cutting the grass, or changing a light bulb if you can't reach it. The Knights of Columbus was started in the late 1800's by a priest who realized that widows need help in these sorts of situations.

I hope these will help someone who is on the same grief journey I have been on and continue to travel.

The Loss of Peace by Susan Amato

It seems that all we hear about and see in the news these days is so negative. There is so much violence taking place, not just in our country, but all over the world. To compound all this negativity, TV shows and movies have become more focused on violent acts than ever before. With all the computer graphics available today, the violence seems so very realistic that I wonder if all children can actually distinguish between real and fiction. It is interesting that when my sons were children there were TV shows that were canceled because they were deemed too violent. Likewise, movie ratings were put into place so parents could determine which movies were appropriate for the children, and that was followed by TV ratings which were to be guidelines for parents as to the kind of language used, the sexual content, and violence of the nightly TV line-up. My husband and I were pleased when those tools were put into place. While we didn't allow our sons to watch hour after hour of TV, it was good to have a better idea about the programming each evening.



This has become a much greater problem in the 21st century. There are hundreds of networks, many of which have violent and/or sexual content. Have you noticed a change in the disclaimers that pop up before each show? I was very surprised as I watched the other night and saw this one, "Content may not be suitable for all ages." Exactly what does that tell a parent? I jokingly told my husband that I supposed parents would need to watch the show when it first aired to determine if it would be appropriate for the children, who could then watch it as a re-run. What started as a good idea and a real help to protect our children has been watered down to, well, nothing.

Along with all the regular programming are the 24-7 news networks which air vicious acts of war, along with massive destruction of holy landmarks and buildings, and the execution of prisoners. Since these are news networks, they are not responsible for any kind of disclaimer before they are aired. In addition to TV and movies, there also are many violent games available on computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices.

How did all this happen? Have we as a nation

become numb to all that is going on around us? Have we given up? Have we adopted the attitude that we can't do anything about it? That's the way it seems. However, I think that, while certainly a percentage of people feel that way, most of us would like to see some kind of control over what is aired on all the networks. I think it must make our Lord sad to see what has happened and continues to happen with the media on all levels and in all areas. He has gifted many people to use complicated math, science, and engineering so that televisions, movies, computers, cellphones, iPads, etc., could be created and used for our enjoyment and education.

While I have no answers for this dilemma, I do know that the Lord makes it clear in His word that we are to be aware that our adversary, Satan, is always seeking to destroy all things that are good and that we as believers must resist him. Since this is a spiritual battle, the only tool we can actively use is prayer. It is also the best tool to use. To that end, I pray the "Warrior's Prayer" every morning to ready myself for any flaming arrows the enemy may aim my way. We are fighting a spiritual battle every day, and by using the armor of God we can stand firmly on His word and resist all the forces of wickedness. It will not be a quick and easy battle, but I know that everything is possible with God.

Introducing Kaye Kready

Following the Lord's Leading

I can vividly remember the day the decision was made. We were all together in the master bedroom, which wasn't very masterly; it was only a 12x12 room. It was decorated with hunter green printed draperies with matching bedspread and peach carpeting. We had a job opportunity in Virginia. It was unanimous. Even our two children who were teenagers at the time said, "Let's do this!" The Lord had placed the desire to leave Pennsylvania on all of our hearts. It had taken us months to pick our last car and in only a few minutes we decided to move to another state.



Let me take you back a little before this decision. We were looking to buy a new home. I felt like the Lord had a specific place that He wanted us to be, so I visited all of the new housing developments but none of them seemed right. As it turned out, I was looking in the wrong state. My husband, our two children, and I were all raised in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. We never fathomed that we would ever leave, but the Lord had other plans. The adventure moving to Virginia began! We were following the leading of the Holy Spirit. We did not know anything about the area, did not know anyone, and did not have a church or a home. All we knew was that God

wanted us to move, and He had something important for us to do.

The Holy Spirit leads us to a community and a home.

It meant selling our home in Pennsylvania and finding one in Virginia. We looked all around the Manassas area, but it did not feel right. Then we found Fauquier County and Bealeton. The Lord

went before us and the Holy Spirit lead us to the lot where we were to build our home. The lot had been tied up in a dispute with the electric company for two years and became available the very day that we looked at it. God had been orchestrating our move for two years.

The Holy Spirit leads us to a church family and ministry.

We moved to Virginia in May 2005. God directed us to Liberty Community Church in Bealeton where we began to serve immediately. There I was encourage to pursue minister credentialing and became an ordained minister. I served on staff as an associate pastor for almost seven years.

The Holy Spirit leads me to SCSM.

The Lord began to draw my interest to chaplaincy. I shared this with two other credentialed ministers, Liz Danielsen and Jane Fitzgerald, that I met with monthly, and we prayed for God's direction. I began to feel a draw to be a part of SCSM in a greater way. I was doing a small amount of



Fauquier Ministerial Luncheon

All clergy and ministry leaders are invited to the SCSM Center

1st Tuesdays, Noon

volunteer counseling when needed. My husband even randomly said one day, "It is too bad that you can't work with Liz at SCSM." Two months later, the three of us were meeting and we were praying for each other's needs. As I prayed for God to direct Liz to the right person for the receptionist position at SCSM that just had become open, God clearly spoke to my heart that I was that person. I decided that I would not say anything. The Holy Spirit also spoke to Liz. I sent in my resume, was interviewed, and then hired. I began in November 2014 and love every minute of it! Proverbs 3:5-6 says, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths." We can acknowledge Him in our day, in our decisions, our conversations, in our relationships, in all our ways, and He will guide us. I encourage you to trust Him today and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. He will take you on an amazing adventure!

God Uses All Things for Good by Dave Joswick

My story begins in 1986, the year my 16 year old son, John, died of Leukemia. I never got mad or angry but was very sad and wanted to find some good in John's death. For the next fourteen years I prayed to find that good in his death.

During this time, I started a software company that focused on automating the criminal justice system. The company's focus was mainly on automating state prisons and county jails. Over the next 14 years I was in and out of prisons/jails all over the country. What I discovered during that time was many of the inmates got on the wrong track after a parents death. Had they received proper grief support, they probably would not have ended up there.

In 1996 I was one of the founding board members of a children's grief center that opened in Maitland, Florida. I was trained to become a grief facilitator and in February, 1997, I began volunteering in the children's grief support program, and I continued to do so until 1999. During this time, I continued as a board member for the organization.

In late 1999, the Executive Director retired and a replacement was hired. Almost immediately, the organization began to implode so that by the summer of 2000 there was Board concern that the organization might have to shut down. The Board met in a special meeting in July, 2000, and it was decided that the current Executive Director was to resign or be terminated. The Executive Director left that day.

The Board convened the following week wondering what to do. During that meeting I volunteered to be an interim Executive Director until a replacement could be hired. My reasoning was I started my own company so I knew how to run a business. I had been a grief facilitator for nearly two years, so I understood the grief program's operation. This organization also has a children's wish program component. Since classmates of my son had submitted a wish request, I had some familiarity with a wish program.

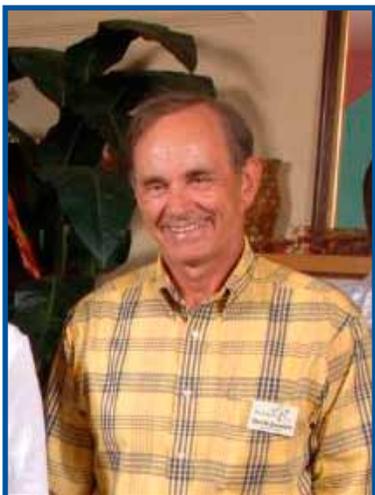
In September, 2000, as Interim Executive Director, I began rebuilding the organization. I had to recruit three professionals for positions that had been recently vacated including the Grief Program Director. Once I filled those positions, I began the search for the Executive Director. I narrowed the applicants down to about five as I recall and submitted them to the search committee. About a week or so later the committee

chair contacted me to tell me the committee was pleased with the candidates I had selected. There was one glowing problem. The salary requirements of the applicants were higher than the committee was willing to approve. I was asked if there was any way I would take the position. I told the board chair that I would have to think about this.

After thinking and praying about the position, I came to the belief that this was the good in my son's death I had been seeking, plus, I might be able to keep young people from getting in trouble with the law. So, I accepted the position and fifteen years later the organization is serving 400 children, 300 adults, and 250 families

annually.

I believe today that I was being prepared and guided for this position based on the experiences I underwent over a fourteen year period. I don't think it was merely a coincidence. I'm sharing my story with you because I believe to some extent God has guided me over the past 29 years.



Would you like to receive information about our events but don't have email? Let us know and we'll add you to our "upcoming events" mailing list!

SCSM Honorariums and Memorials

In Memory of: Rob Christiansen, given by Ann Marie and John McCarty, Catlett, VA; Scott Neth, given by Jack and Joyce Neth, Flower Mound, TX; Vera Best, given by Liz and Arvid Danielsen, Warrenton, VA; Sgt. Jason A. Shaffer and Jennifer Nichole Shaffer, given by Roger and Gwen Shaffer, Huntly, VA; John Wood Payne, Jr., given by Ailene Duval, Richmond, VA; Patrick Ryan Gay, given by Pam and Tom Gay, Warrenton, VA; Charles Leggett, given by Sylvia Leggett, Manassas, VA; Peter Grossarth, given by Hillie Grossarth, Staten Island, NY; Danny Cottrel and Veola Sivils, given by Kenneth and Betty Lambert, Harrogate, TN; John Schetting and Susan Gray, give by Marlina Schetting, Blairstown, NJ; Nicholas Daymude, given by John and Debbie Daymude, Copper Hill, VA; John W. Payne, Jr., given by Pamela and Michael Sargent Rhoadesville, VA.

In Honor of: Liz and Arvid Danielsen, given by Helen Danielsen, Roseland, NJ.

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Praise and Prayer

Praises to the Lord

- For our book, “Journey from Heartache to Hope,” being published.
- For the opportunity to be His hands and feet extended to help others.
- For His faithfulness to us.
- For our new SCSM Center that is in the process of being built to give us more room.
- For our new volunteers.
- For His wisdom given to us as He directs our steps each day as we support people who are brokenhearted.
- For all who are called to pray, give financially, and help with Spiritual Care Support Ministries.

Prayer Needs

- For continued focus as the ministry is growing and we are reaching more people throughout Virginia, the US, and the world.
- For our yard sale and good weather on Saturday, September 12, so that we can raise funds for SCSM.
- For our Family Grief Camp on October 3 when children (age 6 to 17) and their parents or guardian come together for a day to find healing.
- For more volunteers that can help us.
- For our financial needs. The first quarter giving report to our ministry was very low. We are \$9,000 in the red.
- For someone who can give us creative fundraising ideas and be able to help us with implementing them.
- For those who are chronically ill, grieving, and experiencing personal losses. We have many who come because of the loss to divorce which is affecting their children.
- That God would give us a team of people who would want to support children of divorce.
- For our country and those who are fighting for freedom, and for the needs of their families that are left behind.

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Sick and No Doctor's Appointment - Just Drop In by Dr. Karl Benzio

Transformational Thought

Although I still have the privilege of treating patients 1-2 days per week in my psychiatric practice, my main job is directing Lighthouse Network. When Lighthouse Network was just getting rolling 10 years ago, I was still practicing 4 days per week. Due to God's blessing and my specialty, my appointment schedule was packed full and there was an 8 to 10 week wait for an evaluation. Periodically, someone would wander into the office and want a “drop-in” appointment. Unfortunately, there was no time in the schedule for a 90-minute drop in evaluation. People usually understood, but some were amazed and said, “If I went to my family doc, he would see me today!” You would have thought I committed some federal offense. Unfortunately, for my sanity, no appointment ... no meeting.

Here's some Good News: amazingly, you can “drop in” on Someone far more important and much busier than a psychiatrist during the high-stress holiday season. And you can be 100% confident that He will focus completely on you. His undivided attention, love, and power will be yours. Just imagine the Creator of heaven and earth yearning to have a personal appointment and relationship with you. He has been expectantly and excitedly awaiting your drop-in arrival.

You see, when I was a kid, I believed God loved me. But by the time I had experienced more of the world, I believed God was very busy with the Middle East, extreme diseases like cancer and HIV, and devastating abuses around the globe. I still knew He loved me, but somewhere deep inside, I thought my life was too trivial or not extreme enough for Him to allow me to drop into His office whenever I needed to. Learning I had 24/7 access was incredibly empowering, affirming, and freeing for me. To know that God actually set aside time and awaited my drop-in visit floored me.

Not only are you able to “drop in,” He is actually knocking on the door of your heart all the time. His Holy Spirit is talking to you in your spirit. To catch your attention and direct your steps back to Him even more, God the Father is talking to you as He orchestrates and works on you through your daily circumstances. Because of His love for you, He wants to guide and protect you from life's garbage and heartache. Unfortunately, we often don't listen to the doctor's orders. Then we wonder why the disease we have still impacts and hurts us.

Today, drop in to visit the Ultimate Healer. Pray 3 extra times today. Start a conversation, not just the standard prayer you say out of habit. Ac-



tually talk to Him. Then really listen. It takes practice, so give it some time. He rejoices every time you “drop in” for a visit. As you drop in regularly, you will begin to hear Him knock on the door of your heart. But it's up to you. If you don't listen to the Great Doctor's treatment plan, the disease will destroy you. Remember, no matter what, THE DOCTOR always has a special appointment time ready for you. Whether you drop in on God and take that appointment, or you never contact Him assuming He's busy or not interested is your decision, so choose well.

Prayer

Dear Father God, I thank You that I can talk with You. I thank You for listening to my words, thoughts, and fears. I thank You, Father, for receiving even the longings of my heart, even though I cannot always put them into words. Help me to develop ears that hear and eyes that see the treatment plan You have prescribed for me. Give me the courage to follow Your treatment plan, which brings peace and fulfillment, and to turn away from my treatment plan, which leads to destruction. I pray in the name of the One who will always see me without an appointment, Jesus Christ; and all God's children say – AMEN!

The Truth

Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. Psalm 55:17

A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.” Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.” John 4:7-15

(From Dr. Karl Benzio, *Lighthouse Network's Stepping Stones Daily Devotional*, February 17, 2015. www.lighthouse-network.org, used with permission)

In an Instant - Grief Changes Lives

by Nan Zastrow

Spring forced its way into Wisconsin in an unusual way in April, 1993. It strangely marked the day with headline news. "Blizzard!" It was Easter-time, a time when the sun typically began warming the earth and tulips emerged. Outside my window a cherry tree with long, thin branches swayed in the wind. The branches loaded with spring buds supported dozens of plastic Easter eggs in bright colors suspended from ribbons. The sudden freezing rain and blizzard coated the branches heavily with ice causing them to strain and bend unbearably against the frozen weight. This bizarre scene mocked the event that had just unfolded - the death of our 21 year-old son, Chad, as the result of suicide. We tried to shake the icy chill that numbed our minds and bodies. How could this be happening to us? Ten weeks later, Chad's fiancé took her life too.

In an instance, our lives change forever. Sometimes who we were meant to be is changed by a memory from our darkest moment. Memories triggered by traumatic events change the way we

think, act, and respond to future events. They can create either negative or positive reactions going forward. It's a choice. What we become tomorrow is molded by how we process the event when the numbness subsides. Our son's death, our darkest moment, became a turning point that changed who we were and created a life much different than we ever imagined.

Challenges

My husband, Gary, my daughter, and I were left to survive an unimaginable absence in our lives. When life seemed almost perfect, suddenly we were challenged beyond the limits of our human understanding which included some of these.

- Faith - Our faith wavered with unanswered questions and triggered a new search for meaning.
- Stigma-related deaths in a time when death by suicide was silent.
- Challenge the statistics - So many people told us the statistics about divorce among parents who lost a child. We wanted to show by example that the death of a child can also forge an unbreakable bond of communication, love, and marital commitment.
- Lack of knowledge about grief and unavailable resources (the Internet was just born). Community resources were few.
- Helping our special needs daughter (Jalane has Down's Syndrome) to understand this loss and protect her from social scrutiny.

- Dealing with grief in a workplace - Three days off was the standard for close family death. An employee was expected to return to productivity.
- Inability to accept that this death was something we could not control. We struggled with shudda, wudda, cudda feelings of guilt until we realized that some things in life are not to be understood, but rather accepted.
- Loss of dreams - For me, this was a major concern. I dreamed of being a grandmother one day and seeing our son grow and mature in an adult world. What would life be like going forward?

How We Healed Our Pain

Here are my short answers to the items above that



Gary and Nan Zastrow

paved our path to healing. First, we let God in. After a brief period of anger and frustration with a loving God, we realized there is nothing stronger than faith to get you through. Stopping the silence about suicide remains a passion with Gary and me. So often suicide is misunderstood and

over-judged. We speak publicly about this and other related taboo deaths. Remembering who our son was, not how he died, is our focus. Guilt implies "intent". We adopted a "no fault" judgment in regards to Chad's death. We instinctively knew, without a doubt, that Chad did not intend to hurt us. Putting guilt aside was a simple choice. We built new dreams, dreams of a future where we could be instrumental in helping others through loss and grief. Since 1997, our Wings-a Grief Education Ministry has served countless families to survive (live beyond) their loss.

Our way to defeat the pain was to never forget.

We'll never forget our darkest moment, but there are lessons to be learned from all of life's experiences. We still selfishly surrender to moments of sadness and tears. It is our legacy. However, choosing to be better rather than bitter was the right choice. The memory of our grief lives as our daily companion, but it is the healing that reigns. The dark moments become grayer, and the sun shines brighter fading the pain of loss so we can live with the present moment.

We will forever be amazed at the surprises that unfold because we are exactly where we are meant to be. God directs our paths. Our pursuit for meaning provided us with the purpose. Choosing to heal grief can challenge your life temporarily, but it will likely change your life forever. One nanosecond in time changed our lives forever.

For more details and articles about our journey through grief, visit our website www.wingsgrief.org and/or subscribe to our FREE E-Letter at wings1@charter.net.

Thanking Our

Volunteers

by Virginia Wright on behalf of the
SCSM Board of Directors

Without the many volunteers that have felt the passion and seen the vision of Spiritual Care Support Ministries, we would not have been open for 10 years, celebrated the success of those wonderful 10 years and lives touched and changed, or be planning a move into a new and special building.

As the Board of Directors met in February, we are reminded that every mile each volunteer drives and every minute or hour of the volunteer's time is so special to the ministry but also in the hearts of the individual and to those ministered to. Each was willing to give of self to be able to meet someone, feel their hurt, and offer hope to that person who maybe was feeling down that day or about life's situation.

Each volunteer is special in their own unique way. We were not made by God to be alike, except to have His love for His people. Some are good with talking and working with people, some have limited time with other life issues and can only donate money, others working with paper and computers, and others have a gift of cleaning or creating a welcoming presence on the lawn. Many hours and lots of work went into the preparation for our board meeting. God gave each one that special gift to share in the ministry of Spiritual Care Support Ministry and the Board of Directors appreciates your investment and commitment to see the ministry grow and touch many more lives.

I write this on behalf of the Board of Directors, and we are aware of the many hours given. We thank you, pray for you, and invite you to continue to participate with us in the wonderful things our Almighty God has in store for His people.

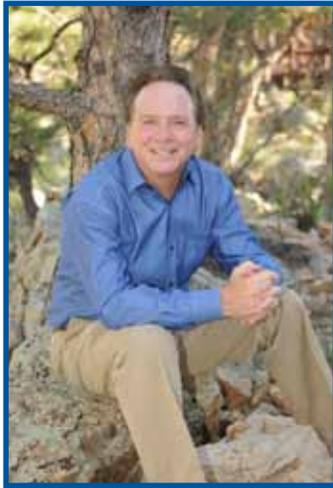
Thank You!

Bobby Delach and Theresa Wharton for cleaning the Center; The Orthopedic Office and Kitchen & Baths for use of their parking lots; Diane and Jim Fritz for donating coffee; Warrenton Bible Church for funding for our Clergy and Ministry Leaders luncheon each month; Sharon Giambanco and Vinnie's Pizza for donating lunch for the SCSM Board Meeting in honor of Sharon's good friend and mentor, Catherine Jeanne Blackwell; Lucille Semeraro for office supplies; Betty Reedy for a Panera gift card for the Care Café; Sue Griffith for storage bags; Sonja Johnston for rose bushes for the new building; Rose Hernandez for fundraiser wreaths.

Editor - Dorothy Slaga
Associate Editor - Rev. Cheryl Reynolds

Helping a Grandparent Who Is Grieving by Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

“When a grandchild dies, grandparents grieve twice. They mourn the loss of the child and they feel the pain of their own child’s suffering. Sometimes we forget about the grandparents when a child dies. You can help by not forgetting, by offering the grandparents your love, support and presence in the weeks and months to come” ~ From *Healing a Grandparent’s Grieving Heart* by Alan Wolfelt.



A child or young adult has died. Everyone who loved the child is now faced with mourning this tragic, untimely death. The child’s parents are heartbroken. But what about the grandparents? How might they be feeling? How can you help them with their unique grief?

This article will guide you in ways to turn your concern for the grandparents into positive action.

Realize That a Grandparent’s Grief is Unique

When a grandchild dies, the grandparent often mourns the death on many levels. The grandparent probably loved the child dearly and may have been very close to him or her. The death has created a hole in the grandparent’s life that cannot be filled by anyone else. Grandparents who were not close to the child who died, perhaps because they lived far away, may instead mourn the loss of a relationship they never had.

Grieving grandparents are also faced with witnessing their child—the parent of the child who died—mourn the death. A parent’s love for a child is perhaps the strongest of all human bonds. For the parents of the child who died, the pain of grief may seem intolerable. For the grandparents, watching their own child suffer so and feeling powerless to take away the hurt can feel almost as intolerable.

Acknowledge the Grandparent’s Search for Meaning

When someone loved dies, we all ponder the meaning of life and death. When a child or young adult dies, this search for meaning can be especially painful. Young people aren’t supposed to die. The death violates the natural order of life and seems terribly unfair.

For grandparents, who may have lived long, rich lives already, the struggle to understand the death may bring about feelings of guilt. “Why didn’t God take me, instead?” the grandparent may ask himself. “Why couldn’t it have been me?”

Such feelings are both normal and necessary. You can help by encouraging the grandparent to talk about them.

Respect Faith and Spirituality

Many people develop strong commitments

to faith and spirituality as they get older. If you allow them, grieving grandparents will “teach you” about the role of faith and spirituality in their lives. Encourage them to express their faith if doing so helps them heal in grief.

Sometimes, however, faith can naturally complicate healing. The grandparent may feel angry at God for “taking” the grandchild. He then may feel guilty about his anger, because, he may reason, God is not to be questioned. Or the grandparent may struggle with feelings of doubt about God’s plan or the afterlife.

Talking with a pastor may help the grandparent, as long as the pastor allows the grandparent to honestly express her feelings of anger, guilt, and sadness. No one should tell a grandparent that she shouldn’t grieve because the child has gone to heaven; mourning and having faith are not mutually exclusive.

Listen with Your Heart
You can begin to help by simply listening. Your physical presence and desire to listen without judging are critical helping tools. Don’t worry so much about what you will say. Just concentrate on the words that are being shared with you.

The grieving grandparent may want to share the same story about the death over and over again. It’s as if talking about the death makes it a little more bearable each time. Listen attentively. Realize that this repetition is part of the grandparent’s healing process. Simply listen and try to understand.

Sometimes grandparents, especially grandfathers, don’t want to talk about the death. They may have been raised to believe that talking about feelings is frivolous or selfish or unmanly. It’s okay; they don’t have to talk. Simply spending time with them demonstrates your love and concern.

Be Compassionate
Give the grandparent permission to express her feelings without fear of criticism. Learn from the grandparent; don’t instruct or set expectations about how she should respond. Never say, “I know just how you feel.” You don’t. Think about your helper role as someone who “walks with” not “behind” or “in front of” the grieving grandparent.

Allow the grandparent to experience all the hurt, sorrow and pain that he is feeling at the time. Enter into his feelings, but never try to take them away. And recognize that tears are a natural and appropriate expression of the pain associated with the death.

Avoid Cliches

Words, particular clichés, can be extremely painful for a grieving grandparent. Cliches are trite comments often intended to provide simple solutions to difficult realities. Grandparents are often told, “God needed another angel in heaven” or “Don’t worry, John and Susie can have another child” or “You have to be strong for your child.” Comments like these are not constructive. Instead they hurt because they diminish the very real and very painful loss of a unique child.

Offer Practical Help

Preparing food, washing clothes, and cleaning the house are just a few of the practical ways of showing you care. And, just as with your presence, this support is needed at the time of the death as well as in the weeks and months ahead.

Write a Personal Note

Sympathy cards express your concern, but there is no substitute for your personal written words. What do you say? Share a favorite memory of the child who died. Relate the special qualities that you valued in him or her. These words will be a loving gift to the grandparent, words that will be reread and remembered always.

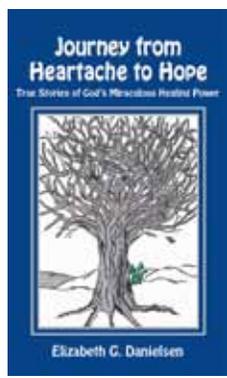
Use the name of the child who died in your personal note and in talking to the grandparent. Hearing that name can be comforting, and it confirms that you have not forgotten this important child whom the grandparent loved and misses so much.

Be Aware of Holidays and Other Significant Days

The grandparent may have a difficult time during special occasions like holidays and other significant days, such as the child’s birthday and the anniversary of the death. These events emphasize the child’s absence. Respect this pain as a natural extension of the grief process.

These are appropriate times to visit the grandparents or write a note or simply give them a quick phone call. Your ongoing support will be appreciated and healing.

(Used with permission. From Dr. Alan Wolfelt, Center for Loss and Life Transition, www.centerforloss.com, printed in T.A.P.S. Magazine, Spring 2015)



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Spiritual Care Support Ministries, Inc.

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Dear Chaplain Liz

How can I provide opportunities for my children to heal after the death of their father? Provide an open, honest atmosphere in which it is easy for your children to ask questions and express their thoughts and feelings. You have to understand how your children are interpreting their experience with your husband's death. Asking them specific questions enables them to tell you what they are thinking and feeling. The questions need to be age appropriate. One question could be: What would you like to know? Sitting on the floor and having eye contact is very important. Using appropriate coloring books to describe what has happened is very helpful for young children. Children have imaginations. Be truthful but do that as simply as you can. Don't say that your husband is sleeping or that he has gone away. Often children will think that their parent will wake up, and since they have gone away, they will return. If your children will be attending the viewing, memorial, or funeral service, describe to them what they will be seeing. Pictures are a great help. If they desire to do something, drawing a picture (keeping

a copy for themselves) is a wonderful way of saying goodbye. They can write notes or put a special object (toy) in the casket that will go with their dad.

How can I, as an adult, take care of myself after loss? I have facilitated many support groups over the years of my chaplaincy ministry, and I find support groups to be very helpful. To have a group of people to talk to about what you are experiencing in your life on a weekly basis promotes healing. Find people you can trust. Drink water. Eat nutritiously. Get adequate exercise and sufficient rest. Spend time with God in prayer. Read scripture and inspirational books that give you hope and remind you that you are precious and that you can have a purpose even though you have had a loss. Be patient with yourself. Say "no" to those things that you know you are not emotionally, physically, and spiritually up to doing right now. It is alright to take some time off for you to heal. Remind yourself everyday that you will make it and that God is working behind the scenes.

Do you have a question for Chaplain Liz? Send your question to "Dear Chaplain Liz", SCSM, 76 W. Shirley Ave, Warrenton, VA 20186. All correspondence needs to include your name, address and telephone number to be considered. All correspondence becomes the property of SCSM and receipt of the same constitutes writer's permission to publish any portion of the material in the H&H Newsletter or any other media, at the sole discretion of SCSM. Only first names (or an alias if you so indicate) will be included in the use of the material.

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SCSM Mission Statement

Providing support, education and a Biblical perspective to those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.

SCSM Values: God's Word, Prayer, Value every human life, Integrity, Confidentiality, Excellence in everything we do.

SCSM Vision

To establish a local, national and international resource center to provide ministry, training and a retreat for those who are ill, dying, grieving and experiencing personal loss, and to those who journey with them.