



Haven Herald

“A true friend can hear the song in your heart and sing it back to you when memory fails”

-Anonymous



HOW TO HELP A GRIEVING FRIEND

by Ron McNally

Friends often wonder what they can do to help a friend who is grieving. They don't know what to say, they wonder how they can help, they are afraid they will make things worse, they are afraid that they will make them cry. Sometimes, because of these things, they do and say nothing.

If you are a friend, it is important that you acknowledge the death. It is important that you express your sympathy. You don't need to be profound. Simply say, in your own words, that you are sorry.

Often when you express sympathy a bereaved person will cry. Understand that you did not make them cry. When grieving, tears are always just under the surface. They cry because they are grieving, because they need to cry.

People sometimes say to a bereaved person, “Call me if you need help.” This is a nice thing to say, but it is very unlikely that they will call you. They don't know the kinds of (Continued on Page 2)

Letter from the Executive Director

We are definitely ready to welcome spring this year! As we dig out of the snow and leave winter behind, we are looking forward to a busy spring season. Haven support groups and workshops are starting and we are here to help our clients.

Since April is National Volunteer Month we would like to thank our volunteers and friends at Haven. It is through the hard work, time, and dedication donated by our volunteers that Haven services are made possible. Thank you all for making a difference.

The theme of our spring newsletter is friendship. The burdens of grief and loss can be made easier by the help, strength, and love of good friends. It is in friendship that we are able to walk through a difficult today to get to a better tomorrow.

Sadly, Haven lost a dear friend and volunteer in Evelyn McIntyre, who died this past December. Evelyn came to Haven in the Fall of 2008. She brought terrific energy and a wonderful laugh to everything she did and we miss her.

-Frankie Smith



HOW TO HELP A GRIEVING FRIEND (Continued from page 1)

things you are able to do. If they do call, be prepared to go way out of your way to help. If they do call, they are desperate.

It is much better to offer specific things you know you can do. If you do offer, be prepared to follow through. As a friend, if you think about it you will likely know of

specific things that you can do to help. The following are just a few of many possibilities, some of which were done for my parents when one of my brothers was killed in a car accident, and some of which were done for me when my wife died.

- Offer to houseclean, shop, cook, take care of the kids, pick up dry cleaning, pick up groceries, and so on.
- Offer to baby sit the children on a specific day or on days that you know would be helpful.
- Offer to mow the lawn or just do it (that was done both for my parents and for me).



- After snowstorms, shovel the driveway and sidewalks for them, just do it (this was also done for me).
- Offer to do the holiday shopping for the young children of a bereaved parent.

And finally, we can all offer and be available to talk, but really to listen. Bereaved people need to talk about their loss, their feelings, the details of the death, and later on they will need to reminisce about the life of their loved one. For this they will need noncritical, supportive people who can refrain from giving advice. These needs go on much longer than most people realize, unless they too have suffered the death of someone very near and dear to them.

To quote Dr. Alan D. Wolfelt, “By ‘walking with’ your friend in grief, you are giving one of life’s most precious gifts -- yourself.”

For a comprehensive look at this subject see Dr. Wolfelt’s paper “Helping a Friend in Grief” at: <http://www.centerforloss.com/articles>

WHAT WORKED FOR ME
Helping a Grieving Friend
by Joni Greene

When I was 20 years old, the parents of my friend Jeanne died. They owned a restaurant/bar about 20 miles from their home and usually did not get home until 3 or 4 o’clock in the morning. Once or twice I stayed with her overnight. One day her parents were killed on the way to the restaurant. Going over a bump, the steering wheel locked and they crossed the median strip and ran headon into an oncoming car with one passenger. All three died. Like me, Jeanne was an only child.

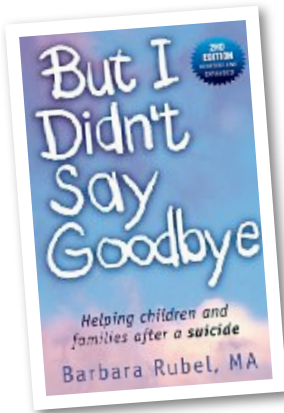
Some time after the funeral, a friend called one night to say that

while he was talking with Jeanne, he heard the phone drop. I immediately drove over to her house to see what had happened. On the way over I was stopped for speeding. I explained to the officer that I was driving to my friend’s house because she had passed out. With a police escort, we drove to her house, broke in and found her lying on the floor. I learned that she had not eaten in several days and was weak. I stayed with her not only that night but, over the objections of my parents, for the next six months.

We did whatever she wanted to do. We painted a room at 6:00 a.m., talked until the wee hours of the morning, and visited her relatives in Ohio. We ate together,

went to church together and many times went out with dates together. We laughed, talked and cried about her parents. However, although I spent those six months with her, I never really knew how she felt until a few years later when my mother died.

It’s been more than 40 years since her parents’ accident. We are still in touch and she still talks about the things we did during those six months. A few years ago I got an e-mail from her telling me that her uncle had died. His daughter asked how she got through the death of her parents. She said, “I had a very good friend who was there for me.”



'But I Didn't Say Goodbye'

By Barbara Rubel, M.A.

This book offers the recollections of Alex, a sophomore whose father completed suicide when Alex was in the fifth grade. In each chapter, Alex reveals the confusion, anger, guilt, and hurt that he felt when his father died and the ways that he was able to cope with his grief. The book is intended to help adolescents who are experiencing grief and to let them know that they are not alone in the feelings they are having. At the end of each chapter are questions for children about what

they feel about the content in the chapter. The book can be read alone or in a group

In the beginning of the book, Alex is picked up from school by his uncle, who in deep pain finally blurts out to Alex the awful truth-- that his father has shot and killed himself at home. In tears, Alex is in shock and following that, feeling guilty, wondering if he had done something to make his father shoot himself. Though his uncle and his mother try to reassure him and explain that his father killed himself because he was ill with depression, Alex doesn't believe them. He expresses anger at his father and mother -- why couldn't his mother save his father? What could he have done? Did he do something bad that made his father kill himself?

The book covers Alex's experience of the funeral and his first discussion with a friend about how his father died. After the funeral, Alex experiences several emotions -- guilt, anger, and pain.

He feels relief at his friend's house where he doesn't have to hear discussions about the funeral. But he does want to know whether his father is in heaven and can see and hear him. To make Alex feel close to his father, his mother suggests that he start a scrapbook and place mementos of his father in it. And Alex's grandmother gives him his father's baseball cap to wear.

Other chapters discuss how Alex copes with grief with the help of his mother and relatives, a professional counselor, his coach, and school friends. At the end of the book, five years after his father's death, 15-year-old Alex is coping - sometimes having great days and sometimes having terrible days.

This book may help children relate to their feelings of grief -- alone and in a group -- and enable them to talk about what they are feeling.

At the end of the book is a 62-page list of resources for children, parents and professionals.

Reviewed by Nancy Ragsdale

"HOW TO HELP A GRIEVING CHILD" WORKSHOP

by Steve Springer

In November parents met with Haven volunteers to discuss concerns about their children's grief, while the children worked with volunteers in a play setting. Some children were excited to talk about their loss as though it were a new adventure in their young lives. They energized the class. Others were not so eager to speak - better to



let the sadness pass. For 90 minutes the group read stories about loss, shared ideas about feelings, worked on People Who Care for Me lists, talked about how to be angry without getting into trouble, learned the meaning of words surrounding funerals, and chose a favorite rock as a reminder of the loved one who died. The workshop provided support to families struggling with grief. Through a time of sharing we hope that we opened avenues for discussion and healing for both the parents and the children.

HOW HAVEN IS FUNDED



Haven is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It is funded mainly by donations from individuals in the community who wish to support our work and by those who donate in memory of a loved one. Donations are tax deductible. If you are interested in making a donation, please contact Haven at (703)941-7000 or at havenofnova@verizon.net



Spring Schedule

General Bereavement Support Group

Beginning in late spring or early summer.

Suicide Survivors Support Group

Beginning in late spring or early summer

Teen Support Group

Beginning in late April

Widow/ Widower Support Group

Beginning in late April

Space is limited, and reservations are required to attend all workshops and groups. Please contact Haven for more information.

Haven also offers support on a one-to-one basis; please call to schedule an appointment. Support is also available on a walk-in basis between 10:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Contact Information

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Hours of Operation

Monday through Friday

9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

www.havenofnova.org

Messages may be left on our voicemail after hours

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