



# WinterSpring

Issue 29

P.O. Box 8169 • Medford, OR 97501 • (541) 772-2527

Fall/Winter 2003

www.WinterSpring.org

## WinterSpring Catches A Star

**Elizabeth Bryant** was selected as one of the Stars of the Baudville, Inc., "Catch a Star" program! She was nominated for rewarding the WinterSpring team in innovative



ways we all appreciate — especially her smile. Her photo and story appear in Baudville's current catalog. Valerie Neck artfully combined our praises in the story submission: "Elizabeth is more than a star, she's a bright constellation! She deeply respects the sacred, challenging work of bereavement support. Elizabeth secretly submitted our Office

Manager for an award, organizes volunteer parties, makes gift baskets and always smiles in a way that says, "You are so valuable. Thank you." In recognition of her effectiveness in helping to build a positive and empowered team of volunteers, Baudville, a maker of recognition specialties, also donated \$100.00 in merchandise of her choice. She received a striking trophy commemorating her Star performance.

Elizabeth is now WinterSpring's Lead Educator, facilitating WinterSpring's Grief and Loss Education series for volunteers and community members, and works full-time at Soundpeace in Ashland. Until recently, she was our Program Coordinator, and over the past decade has served variously as a volunteer, trainer and Volunteer Coordinator. The June, 2003 Volunteer Recognition Barbecue was held in her honor. Congratulations, Elizabeth, you've won the hearts of us all!



## WinterSpring Theater

"Good Grief!", a production of the WinterSpring Theater, drew an enthusiastic audience for an appearance at the Schoolhouse Retreat Center on October 2nd. "Good

Grief" is a lively and insightful show, featuring wisdom and humor gleaned from the personal grief journeys of children, teens and adults who've participated in our support groups. The performance highlights members' personal experiences and appropriate tools for grieving, while including audience participation.

Guided by Sheri Harding, drama therapist and WinterSpring Volunteer, the theater troupe creates educational theater pieces that examine various issues of loss and grief and performs to audiences of all ages. With an inter-generational perspective, it is a creative way to explore how friends and family can support one another during many kinds of loss and grief. Participants create scenarios in addition to performing, and find continued healing in that process. The troupe camaraderie is apparent. During rehearsals, a boy said, "Here, I feel accepted, and not judged — that's a lot different than how it is at school." Others joined in, nodding and sharing experiences. A girl added, "Nobody here tells me I have to just get over it!"

Soloist Beth Baker entertained at a reception for the troupe following the event. With songs from her CD, "I've Got to Sing my Song." Beth generously donates 15 percent of the proceeds from her CD when purchased through the WinterSpring office.

The theater was launched with a grant for a portion of the first year from the Patricia D. and William B. Smullin Foundation. We anticipate that, with community donations, it will become a permanent part of WinterSpring programs. Please call Christine at

772-2527 if you'd like to get involved, or if your church, club or social service organization will host a performance.



## Milestones

We notice first times—the first time we see the ocean, the first time we share a romantic kiss, the first time we fall in love. We make a mental note and store the memory.

I'm grateful that we aren't so aware of last times. They slip away before we realize that something significant has come to an end. It would be hard to bear the knowledge that this kiss would be the last or that we would never see the ocean again. Blissful ignorance keeps us sane.

Living through grief puts a different spin on this gentle natural order. The moment of loss begins an avalanche of dreadful firsts — the first breath without the one we love, the first dinner with an empty chair, the first shopping list

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*...the essence of grief doesn't get better.  
It stays. What does happen is that the  
painful sting of "firsts" becomes less  
frequent...*

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without Raisin Bran. We are painfully aware of these firsts.

Still, there is healing in these "firsts." They are milestones that show our progress across the landscape of grief. Gradually, they are diluted by time. We move from everyday occasions to events more weighted by emotion: anniversaries, birthdays, holidays — even mundane moments, like the first income tax filing. Each gives us an opportunity for reflection — and tears.

When my husband died, friends who had also experienced loss told me, "It gets better." I moved through the anguish grasping that idea as my emotional carrot. But the essence of grief doesn't get better. It stays. What does happen is that the painful sting of "firsts" becomes less frequent. Ordinary days start to build a new pattern. Even if we don't want it to happen, we find ourselves living in that pattern.

Last summer I went on a trip with a friend. She offered to make reservations at a motel and, without realizing it, chose the same place my husband and I had stayed just months before his death. I felt a shock of grief, realizing that this was another "first" for me — the first time I had stayed there without him. Then I tucked the little pain away.

Another milestone.

*Sharon Heisel, WinterSpring Board President*

## WILL WINTERSPRING SERVICES CONTINUE?

"Time is running out! After 14 years of dedicated service for bereaved people, WinterSpring may soon close".

Many people have asked about this urgent appeal that was sent to donors recently. "Is it true? Can't it be run by volunteers, without money or staff? Might WinterSpring really close?" they ask.

Yes, it is true. We're open today only because we've used money that we'd painstakingly saved toward a permanent home for WinterSpring. We discontinued the AmeriCorps program, eliminated contract services, froze wages and cut other costs to the bone, yet a deficit of nearly \$20,000.00 to date will soon use up our savings. We must raise \$40,000.00 from individual donors in our community to meet our projected annual service costs of \$94,000.00.

WinterSpring is not the tiny organization it was 10 years ago. Then, it survived in large part because Ramona Kearns donated at least \$25,000.00 in salary each year. She and a small circle of friends and volunteers also supported WinterSpring financially. She asked the Board to hire a paid director in 1998 because she could not continue and the organization would otherwise close.

Today, we serve more people with more services, with special outreach to at-risk children and teens and low-income families. We've formed critical partnerships with many area service agencies. About 120 volunteers depend on three part-time staff (2.0 full time equivalents) for basic and specialized training; supervision and recognition, fundraising and facilities management; clerical and administrative services; client needs assessment and program management.

WinterSpring urgently needs your help now to continue services for grieving children and adults. WinterSpring successfully teaches that alcohol, drugs, violence or suicide are not answers to the agony of grief. Help heal broken hearts — give generously today!

*A heartfelt thank you goes to each person who has responded to our plea with a donation. As of September 20th, we've received \$3,600.00.*

## Autumn Memorial and Planting

People gathered to remember loved ones at the second annual Autumn Memorial and Planting at the WinterSpring Memorial Grove on Saturday morning, September 20th, in Medford's Donahue-Frohnmayr Park. Beth Baker touched our hearts with her unforgettable songs, and the fall series of memorial stones in the Wall of Remembrance was dedicated. Afterward, many of us stayed to plant Iris and Narcissus, visit with friends and enjoy refreshments. Everyone received a wicker Memory Basket with bulbs or rhizomes to plant at home.

Volunteers have been tending the flowerbeds and monitoring the Memorial Grove to pick up litter and discourage vandalism. Sally Densmore is a former WinterSpring Board President, and she's now Chairperson of our Memorial Grove Task Force, but you'll usually find her on Saturday mornings, pulling weeds at the Grove. Recent contributors to the Grove include John L. Scott Real Estate, LTM Inc., Crater Sand and Gravel, JB Instant Lawn, Siskiyou Rare Plant Nursery, Swimming Pools by Fields Construction, Galbraith and Associates and members of the Oregon Landscape Contractors Association. The Grove is being developed in partnership with the City of Medford Parks and Recreation Department

Memorial stones are available on request with a donation of \$150.00 or more to WinterSpring, and tree donations are \$300.00. They will be dedicated at the sixth annual "Season's of the Heart," an afternoon of music and remembrance planned for Memorial Sunday, May 30th, at 2:00 PM in the Grove. Dedications of major features may be arranged with donations ranging from \$3,000.00 to \$25,000.00. For more information, please call WinterSpring at 772-2527.

From a letter:

My husband is buried in California, and I would like to have a place in the Rogue Valley to go and remember him...I do have one question — related to the other guarantee in life: taxes! Is any of the \$150.00 donation considered tax deductible? Your help, and your service to the community, is greatly appreciated!

*Evelyn Fellows*

Our answer: Yes, the entire gift is eligible for a tax deduction, since the stone will become part of a community park, rather than your personal possession. We hope you'll join us for "Season's of the Heart" this spring to celebrate the your husband's life.

**Christine Hunter is WinterSpring's Program Coordinator. She brings nursing, teaching, counseling, and hospice experience to her work, as well as a compassionate and enthusiastic attitude. Christine came from England to the United States four years ago, originally working as a registered nurse in Phoenix, Arizona.**

As an Englishwoman, I am drawn to the green and the water. I moved to this area because of its natural beauty and the seasonal climate. At home, I enjoy painting, writing, and taking our dogs for a walk.

I am passionate about being amongst people who are like-minded souls, willing to share their experiences and love with others. This is an understatement at WinterSpring. From my first visit, I felt as if WinterSpring had hugged me in its welcoming embrace. Each person I have met is a beaming light of love. I have never felt so wrapped in warmth and caring at work as I have amongst these beautiful souls. And yes, I am sure you know this to be true in your experience. I am truly blessed and find each day joyful. I am excited about the new friends I have found and the growth that occurs when we have such beautiful mirrors to aid us. Truly each of us arrives at a place that is right just for us, for our life experiences. So here am I in mine. What do I bring with me? What can I share with others? I have been a nurse, a teacher, a counselor, and a hypnotherapist, to name but a few experiences that have enriched my life. I am always amazed at how we seem to collect our skills, like flowers we have picked along the road of life. I have my basket of flowers, a bouquet of skills that will be enriched from my time here at WinterSpring.



Like many of you, I have encountered the highs and lows of life, which have enabled me to tap into the depths of my soul, adding to my basket. As I sit here writing to you, with my cup of tea in hand, I realize how unique this experience is. That is what being present, in the now moment, is all about. This is my philosophy: to be present, where all the love, joy, and peace resides. Children naturally stay present, in the moment. If they fall and cry, it's forgotten with the next hug they receive or the next butterfly they chase. I am choosing to be childlike again, to play and have fun in this new experience. And if you fall, I will offer to help you up, so we can both chase butterflies again!

## After Suicide: A Child Grieves

A child has as great an emotional need after suicide as an adult, yet in the shock and pain of grief, adults may overlook a child's need for support.

Honesty is the best policy. Share clear, correct facts about the death in a simple and loving manner. Complex or lengthy explanations are not helpful. Listen well to a child's questions, and answer with honest, consistent information. Even a very young child will sense evasions, and will feel more secure when told the truth.

Talk freely about the person who died. Encourage a child to share feelings of grief with you, and other trusted friends. It's okay for a child to witness your tears. It models that crying is a healthy and acceptable way to express emotion.

Be aware of possible guilt feelings. Give reassurance that the suicide was not the child's fault, and that nothing he did, or didn't do, caused the death.

Remember that childhood grief is often expressed by play. Play is a child's most natural means of expression. It is typical for a child to "play act" the death itself. This may be extremely difficult for you to witness, and seem uncaring. Yet for a child, it is may be the most effective way to come to terms with an extraordinarily confusing and painful experience.

Talk about helpful ways to deal with problems. Explain that even if a family member died by suicide, the child will always have other choices, including the choice to live a happy, healthy, well-adjusted life. Make a point of getting the help you need during a difficult time, so you can be a model of positive choices.

"Children of suicides have a higher than average rate of suicide, not because the tendency toward suicide is biologically inherited, but because they grow up with a heritage of guilt, anger and a sense of worthlessness," reports D. Klagsburn, in the book, **Too Young to Die**.

Children may feel alone and different than other kids after the death of someone significant in their lives. At WinterSpring, friends understand and have experienced similar losses. Peer grief support groups are gently facilitated by trained and caring adults. Compassionate support helps prevent or overcome the guilt, anger, and feelings of hopelessness that too often become the heritage of suicide.

*Thirty-five children have applied to the Fall 2003 Children's Program. At least seven are grieving the death of a family member by suicide. Youth groups are also available at WinterSpring and many area middle and high schools.*

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## WinterSpring Wins CAT Award

WinterSpring was awarded Rogue Valley Television's (RVTV) Third Annual CAT Award for being the favorite educational show of 2003 for the Community Access TV channel.

The show topic was Loss, Grief and Teens. It first aired for an hour the evening of May 23rd, 2003 on Public Access Channels 9 and 31. It has since aired on a number of occasions through the summer. Participants included a Volunteer Teen Panel of Heather Peterson, Katie Heieck, Jessica Hartman and Sierra Stone. Elizabeth Bryant was host and facilitator, adding her usual warmth and personal touch. WinterSpring AmeriCorps Member, Valerie Neck, produced the program, after a 10-week TV producer's workshop to qualify! Two friends of WinterSpring, Tom Magnussen and Michael Rhoades, volunteered as Director and Graphics Coordinator.

WinterSpring received a grant from the Oregon Community Foundation to reach out to Rogue Valley teenagers (ages 12-18). Teens with experience in grief-support training were recruited and trained to lead interactive peer education presentations about teen grief for students in local schools. The teen educators meet with students in health class settings or with groups of grieving students pulled together by school counselors. Due to budget and schedule cuts, schools had less time available in their schedules for grief intervention. WinterSpring's response was to pursue the live call-in TV show as an option to address the needs of youth.

The TV presentation was similar to the format the teen educators follow when they work with a peer group. In those groups, panel members each talk briefly about his or her own story. They share how they felt at the time of the loss, and since. They review some things that helped them cope, and things that didn't help. They discuss ways to help oneself through the grief process, and how to be with and help others who are grieving. They talk of the different types of losses, and how prior losses and new losses feed into each other and stimulate powerful feelings of pain and abandonment. The second half of the show was a live call-in question and answer session.

The support of RVTV and the RVTV Program Coordinator, Cynthia Salbato, was invaluable. The program will soon be edited down to a 30-minute video for distribution to schools and community groups thanks to Michael Rhoades' seemingly tireless efforts. Bless you Michael! An original copy of the program is available in the WinterSpring library. Congratulations and heartfelt thanks to all those involved with this innovative project!!



## Volunteer Support and Recognition

If you've completed WinterSpring's "Beyond Condolence, the Grief and Loss Education Series," that is required training for bereavement volunteers, please come to our lunchtime volunteer support and training classes. On Wednesday, October 1st, we'll talk about "endings" and how to bring graceful closure to support service with clients. On Wednesday, October 22nd, certified writing instructor Debra Thornley will discuss "Poetry and journal writing to transform grief through creative expression." On Wednesday, November 19th, Guest Speaker Irene Kai will talk about her new book **Golden Mountain**. The book describes an American/Asian cultural perspective on transitions and loss. Each meeting is from noon to 1:00 PM.

We're looking forward to another fabulous holiday party for volunteers in December (date and time to be announced.) Please come celebrate with us!

## A Place Called Diary

You won't find it on the map, but a diary is a place, all the same, a place that allows us to dump, rail, cry, confess, pray, meditate, and explore. A diary is a place to grow, to try out different ideas, to dream. We can take risks in a diary, take chances.

We can scream or cry in a diary, even laugh — freeing our souls, cleansing our hearts — and the pages will absorb our words without criticism or censor, without flinching. A diary is a place that is shock-proof. It is a place without boundaries, a place without fences. It is as deep as our pain, as broad as our courage, as wide as our imagination.

What would happen if every schoolchild was given 15 minutes each morning to write in a diary? If every child had a place — a diary — in which to dump family problems, fears, anger, and bad dreams, would there be fewer discipline problems? Less violence? More openness to learning?

Those of us in grief need a dumping place. When our world has been turned upside down, we need to unload the guilt and anger, free ourselves from despair and confusion.

A diary is always open, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When the world is asleep, we can go to this place, write in this place, cry in this place.

We must write deeply, dredging the bottom of our heart, the furthest reaches of our soul. In **The New Diary**, Tristine Rainer likens diary writing to deep-sea fishing and advises us to cast our lines as far and as deep as we

can... "Don't stay close to the shore where the water is muddy. Cast for your deepest thought or emotion."

Write fast from the soul; write slow from the heart. Look for repetitive words or themes, for these often lead to the source of a problem. One friend sat down to write about her mother's death and instead found herself writing about the father who had deserted the family when she was nine. "My diary made me realize that I had never dealt with the anger toward him, and my mother's death triggered unresolved feelings of loss and abandonment."

Write long; write short. Write fast; write slow. Don't be afraid of deep water. The fishing is great!

by Margaret Brownley, *Bereavement Magazine*

My journal catches  
the shattered bits of my life  
neatly on straight lines.  
*Haiku by Diantha Ain*

## Wish List: Volunteers and Other Treasures

Fundraising assistants  
Strong people to plant trees  
Litter collectors for the Memorial Grove  
Artisans: stained glass, greeting cards, etc  
Volunteers to take meeting notes  
Sculpey clay and fabric paints  
Dress up clothes and military uniforms  
Paper towels, Kleenex and bathroom tissue  
Office snacks  
Beanbag chairs  
A house for WinterSpring by 2004

*Do you have a special talent? Let us know!*

## Awkward Silence

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <i>I wish that someone<br/>would say his name.</i>              | <i>That no one will<br/>even his presence miss,</i>            |
| <i>I know my feelings<br/>they're trying to spare,</i>          | <i>As if there were no trace<br/>that he was here</i>          |
| <i>And so we go through<br/>the charade, the game,</i>          | <i>By referring to him, my purpose<br/>is not to stir pity</i> |
| <i>Of dancing around<br/>the ghost that is there.</i>           | <i>or keep things the same.<br/>But my heart will simply</i>   |
| <i>Trying to avoid evoking a tear,<br/>Or stirring emotions</i> | <i>break if his<br/>Memory will die</i>                        |
| <i>too painful to bear.</i>                                     | <i>like a flickering flame.</i>                                |
| <i>That he be forgotten is<br/>what I fear.</i>                 | <i>I just wish someone<br/>would say his name.</i>             |

by Richard Dew, M.D.  
TCE, Knoxville, TN

**THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR WONDERFUL  
CONTRIBUTORS FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT**

This is a list of donors who contributed to WinterSpring since our last newsletter. We try hard to keep accurate records.

If you see any errors or omissions, please let us know so we can provide proper thanks and recognition.

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A United Way Agency

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We are deeply grateful  
to group participants  
who continually support  
WinterSpring with  
donations.

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LTM, Incorporated  
Cow Creek Seven Feathers  
Foundation  
Gordon Elwood Foundation  
The Oregon Community  
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Patricia D. and William B.  
Smullin Foundation  
United Way

## Personal Memorials

Now you can have a personal memorial stone engraved for your home or yard. A stone will be personally inscribed with your choice of words, names and artwork. You may choose to match the stone you've placed in the Wall of Remembrance at the WinterSpring Memorial Grove. A carved stone is also a perfect pet memorial, or a lasting remembrance in your personal memorial garden. Memorial stones are now being sold at WinterSpring. They are available in several styles and sizes, and prices begin at \$39.00. Call 772-2527 for information about our selection. Proceeds are used to support WinterSpring programs.

The National Survivors of Suicide Day Teleconference and Panel hosted by Living Works, ASIST, WinterSpring and others is Tuesday, **November 18th.**

The Rogue Valley observance of National Children's Memorial Day is Sunday, **December 14th.** It closes with the 6th Annual Worldwide Candle Lighting at 7:00 PM. The Compassionate Friends, WinterSpring, Hospice of Providence, and Asante Hospice host this community event.

Perl at Siskiyou invites WinterSpring friends, participants, and volunteers to celebrate the Light of Life with the lighting of luminaries on Tuesday, **December 23rd,** at Siskiyou Memorial Park on the corner of Highland and Siskiyou in Medford.

## WinterSpring Staff

*Donna Taylor, Executive Director*

*Christine Hunter, Program Coordinator*

*Angel DeShane, Office Manger*

## WinterSpring Board of Directors

*President Sharon Heisel, Vice President Gene Hart,*

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*Bill Glaser, Jon Jalali*

Thank you to  
Perl Funeral Home  
and  
Siskiyou Memorial Park,  
a major  
sponsor of WinterSpring  
since 1997.

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The name WinterSpring symbolizes the seasons of life and death, particularly the transition from the darkness of winter, to the reawakening, lightness and hopefulness of spring.

### ***WinterSpring Services Include***

- ✦ General bereavement support groups for those whose loved one died by accident or from illness.
- ✦ Workshops, speakers and interactive presentations available to community groups.
- ✦ Butterfly Group, an on-going group for those whose loved one died by suicide.
- ✦ On-going Children's Support Group for children under twelve.
- ✦ Bereaved Parents Support Group.
- ✦ Teen Grief Support Groups onsite and in school or community settings.
- ✦ Individual support for people grieving or facing life threatening illness.
- ✦ Grief and Loss Education Series for volunteers and community members.
- ✦ Legacy of Love, memorial gatherings and support for people grieving the death of a pet.
- ✦ Coping with the Holidays, a series for anyone who has experienced significant loss or change.
- ✦ Library resource materials for clients, reading room available for community.
- ✦ The WinterSpring Memorial Grove, a place for community remembrance.
- ✦ WinterSpring Theatre

*Website <http://www.WinterSpring.org>*

We do not provide therapy, crisis intervention, drop-in or hotline phone support.

**This newsletter  
is dedicated to:**

*Elizabeth  
Bryant*

(See Story on  
Page 1)