



WinterSpring

Issue 30

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www.WinterSpring.org

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This newsletter is dedicated to the memory of Stephen C. Bates
September 29, 1906 – November 14, 2003



The Calls Come...

...A widower is grieving the death of his wife. "Where do I go now? We were together for almost forty years. I don't want to be here without her."

...A mother calls after her son died by suicide. The feelings of helplessness and hopelessness are overwhelming her and causing serious problems in her marriage.

...A teacher calls, worried about her student. "Since his dad died, he's been missing school a lot, and he seems so angry. I don't know how to help him."

...A young father whose wife died of cancer, needs help for himself and his little girl.

WinterSpring's Fifteenth Anniversary

The calls continue to come as WinterSpring celebrates 15 years of service to the community. In 1989 a small group of community members began to plan an organization to offer education, support, and resources to grieving people. They recognized that a mobile society, grief related family crisis and lack of role modeling, experience, and information create a need for grief support services. Children may be overlooked during a loss, and the lack of opportunity to express their feelings may lead to difficulties later in their lives such as depression, substance abuse, school drop-out, early pregnancy and suicide.

The calls began the day the phones were installed and have not stopped. The first Board of Directors included Al Densmore, Ronnie Budge, Dee Marlow, Janet Schaefer, Sue Babcock, Barbara Lee, Michael O'Brian and Annette Batzer. The first volunteer staff members were Sandy Huston, Karen Nollenberger, RN, MSN, Pat Case, RN, Dee Marlow, and Ramona Kearns, RN, BSN. In addition, many community members comprised an advisory board. Graduates of the first volunteer training were Debi Boen, Nancy Bailey, Linda Studer, Jan Murphy, Sandy Baleria, Gwen Morris, Jean Ives, Marge Luce, Cathy Lougheed, Heather Aarestad, Marianna VanDijk, Kerstin Cuffs, Bette Wilga, Sheldene Wilcox, Mary Krystine, Karoly Hatt, Cindi Van Sickle, Thersa Shostrom, David Keene, Kim Fischer, Candace Steele, Lucille Kelley, Carolyn Barrett, Pat Case, and Chuck Case. Volunteer Ramona Kearns served as director until late 1998, when Donna Taylor was hired with the help of a one-year grant from the Carpenter Foundation.

Throughout our history, we've been blessed with donated space. Kathy Ingram Ph.D. and other professionals shared office space with us until 1991, when Gregg Adams donated the use of a house on Jackson Street in memory of his son Brandon. Since 1998, Perl Funeral Services (now Leavitt Inc.) has generously donated the use of space in two locations. We'll be moving again soon, while we continue to work toward our dream of a permanent facility that will always be a safe space where children, teens and adults can meet for support and understanding.

In fifteen years over 12,000 calls have been received. Over 600 clients received direct support from volunteers, and at least 1427 clients attended support groups. Approximately 2989 people have received helpful Bereavement Information Packets. Innumerable others have been helped or enabled to help others through our extensive community education presentations, Rogue Valley Community Television programming, the Website, the WinterSpring Theater and the WinterSpring Memorial Grove. In 2004, 120 volunteers continue this extraordinary work, depending on three employees for training, supervision, facilities and administration. As the telephone rings, and grieving people ask for help, WinterSpring's tradition of caring continues.



Director's Corner, from Donna Taylor

Photo courtesy of Linda Bowman



The Re-Awakening and Hopefulness of Spring

Over five years since I began my work with WinterSpring, I'm asked: "Why are you so passionate about your work?"

Some days, I feel more tired than passionate. I love the message that WinterSpring carries into our world, but being a messenger is also hard work. It means doing the math, measuring statistics, struggling with budgets. It includes long hours and many days at the computer, writing grant proposals, preparing reports. And my work can't be accomplished without discussions with many people at many meetings. There are days when the work feels far removed from the inspiration that led me to this field of service.

Then I encounter a moment in time with a grieving person, and the dream ignites once more. This week, I took a quick break between meetings with realtors at a local ice cream shop. I was tired, and not looking for company, but the friendly owners asked about the WinterSpring pin on my lapel. Of course, I told them enthusiastically about the work we do, helping grieving adults and children. Somehow, no matter how tired I am, my enthusiasm never wanes when I talk about this wonderful organization.

I'd barely noticed the woman and child sitting quietly at the table next to mine, until she turned, tears brimming behind her dark glasses. "Excuse me," she said. "I couldn't help but hear, and I just know this is where we were both meant to be. I think I need your help" She went on to explain that her son had died. She introduced me to his son, her grandson, a lively young man about the age of my own grandson. She asked for my card, and we talked a while longer.

I felt grateful again, as I do so often, that WinterSpring is here to help, and that we had the opportunity to connect in this most human and genuine need, the need for understanding and support when a heart is battered with grief. Each time I encounter the human faces of WinterSpring, the people who form the heart of this organization even in their sadness, the work seems less daunting. Even the statistics sparkle, with fresh tears and renewed hope.

And I'm reminded, as the earth warms to a new season, that WinterSpring, Center for Living with Loss and Grief, helps ease the transition from the darkest winter to the re-awakening and hopefulness of spring.

Stephen Bates' Legacy

Stephen Bates could not have known how many people he helped during his lifetime, which spanned nearly a century. When he was born in 1906, the telephone was a rare convenience, so his career with the telephone company certainly improved communication for untold numbers of people. He was especially interested in conservation and environmental concerns, so he could not have measured the outcomes of his volunteerism and generosity by the individuals he knew personally. Instead, he simply contributed to the well being of the world around him. He could not have known, years ago, who was to benefit by his legacy when he planned his bequest to WinterSpring. We will always be grateful for his \$50,000 gift.

It is in the future that we will meet the people helped by his legacy of love. Because of his careful planning, WinterSpring can invest carefully in the long term financial stability necessary to thrive, and to be available each time a grieving child or adult needs support during grief. He will be remembered for his generosity, and his kindness will be revealed in the faces of the future.



Leadership Matters

Knowledge in the field of nonprofit management continues to evolve, bringing new opportunities to operate caring organizations more efficiently. For WinterSpring's Executive Director and the Board of Directors, opportunities to explore new techniques and brush up on the education about nonprofits that originally directed us to this work are invaluable. This is especially true for training that is made available locally, saving the expense of a trip to Portland or beyond. The Board is enthusiastically learning more about Board Development and Fundraising with the help of consultant Roi Crouch. A series of meetings, coaching and workshops were made possible with a technical assistance grant from Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation. In addition, Executive Director Donna Taylor attended a four month "Building Strategic Leadership" class sponsored by Pacific NonProfit Network, Southern Oregon University, Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation and The Ford Family Foundation. The entire Board met for a full day, Strategic Planning Workshop, in March. The workshop was held at beautiful Suncrest Day Retreat in Talent. It is a beautiful setting that makes hard work more enjoyable. Several Board members who've served with more than one nonprofit commented that this was the most productive planning workshop they've attended.

You also have the opportunity to spend time at the Suncrest Retreat Center at no charge. It is open every Tuesday from 8:00 AM to 8:00 PM for anyone seeking a silent time for prayer, journaling or reading. Donations are gratefully accepted. For information, call Shirley Woodring at 535-8542 or S. Mary Pat Naumes at 535-6981.



Seasons of the Heart Slated for Memorial Weekend

A dedication of names will be part of the memorial event planned for Sunday, May 30th at 2:00 PM. "Season's of the Heart," is an afternoon of music and remembrance. This year, in recognition of WinterSpring's fifteenth anniversary, guest soloist Sheri Parker will perform. Everyone is welcome, and guests are encouraged to bring photos or symbols of remembrance for the memorial display table. Refreshments will be served. The drawing to select the winner of the "Mended Hearts II" quilt will be held at the event, but the winner does not need to be present to win. Tickets for the raffle are \$5.00, or six tickets for \$25.00. The event will be at the WinterSpring Memorial Grove within Medford's Donahue-Frohnmayr Park on the corner of Spring Street and Springbrook Road.

The memorial grove provides a living memorial – a place to reflect on loss, to celebrate life, and to find hope for healing. It allows people wishing to place a memorial, to do so as part of a planned enhancement to the Medford parks system. The name of the person in whose memory a stone is to be dedicated will be inscribed in the Wall of Remembrance. Dedicated stones are available with a donation to WinterSpring of \$150 or more. It is a gift to the entire community that also helps other bereaved children and adults.

On many Saturday mornings, the WinterSpring Memorial Grove is bustling with volunteers who share the task of weeding and picking up litter. You are welcome to help out. To reserve a stone, volunteer or request more information, please contact WinterSpring Center for Living with Loss and Grief at 772-2527.



Giving to WinterSpring

This is an age of under funded programs on every level, and intense competition for every available dollar. How does one decide where to give their money, and know that it is being put to the best possible use? WinterSpring is an organization that is very conscious of the value of each dollar and appreciative of every contribution received, no matter how small. Despite the contribution of many hours from volunteers the necessity of paying three part time staff members to ensure the survival of the organization exists.

One of our most generous donors told me recently she and her husband cannot believe how much service we provide with so little money. This is why I feel confident and proud to donate money to this wonderful organization. It really does make a difference in people's lives. I also maintain a life insurance policy with WinterSpring as the beneficiary. My payment is tax deductible so this is a win-win situation.

Ramona Kearns



Heroes for Kids

Jerry and Donnis Lausmann, with KOGAP Industries, Inc. received the Board of Director's "Heroes for Kids" award from WinterSpring Center for Living with Loss and Grief on Monday, December 15th. Their \$3000 donation to the Children's Program at WinterSpring is a wonderful gift for children. Gene Hart and Donna Taylor presented the award, saying, "The Lausmann's have helped WinterSpring as long as I can remember, so they really deserve this award. This gift is especially timely, because we'd been struggling to keep these services going. With gifts like this from our community, we're sure WinterSpring is here to stay".

Jerry was Medford's mayor for six terms. He is President of KOGAP Industries, and his wife, Donnis, is Chair of the Board and Vice President. While Mayor, he organized the Medford Youth Advisory Council, and he is a former Chamber of Commerce Citizen of the Year. In addition to their productive business careers and community leadership, the Lausmann's have generously supported many programs for children with volunteer time and financial gifts.



CORPORATE DONATIONS & FOUNDATION GRANTS

- The Carpenter Foundation
- Cow Creek Umpqua Indian Foundation
- INTRANSIT
- Jerry & Donnis Lausmann of KOGAP Enterprises, Inc
- Mental Health Resource & Education Network
- S.I.S. Corporation
- The Joe & Frances Naumes Family Foundation
- Southern Oregon Humane Society
- Temple Emek Shalom
- United Way

**Volunteer Ventures with Christine Hunter,
Program Coordinator**

Grief and Loss Education Series Spring training – a delightful group of people dedicated to personal growth amazed us at the most recent volunteer training. Congratulations, you made it: Ruth Klause, Walter Diaz, Donna Hunt, Olivia Padilla Levin, Jon Gove, Sue Marion, Janet Taylor, Diane Ware, Kent Hayward and Tonya Shankle. Those completing in October 2003 were Amara Thelan, Onnolee Stevens, Rebecca Davenport, Goldye Wolf, Sandra Adams, Cynthia Becker-White, Brenda Rosch, Geoff Hanzlik and Me. Brenda (Rosche) is a valuable help with administrative support. Geoff and Rebecca have been wonderful additions to our volunteer helpers with the children's program. Onnolee is assisting in the office with volunteer Deborah Thornally, taking intake calls and helping with phone line support. This has been a great project that we hope to expand.

"Thank you, thank you, thank you!! Wow, what an experience--very healing. All of the presenters have been outstanding," commented one participant after the training. Others added, "This information is so terrific... so good to be here," ; "a great resource for the community." Since WinterSpring's first class, 372 volunteers have completed this extensive training.

Once upon a time I went to a workshop
At first it was scary as hell.
At times I thought my heart would stop,
But instead it removed a veil.

I found a me I never knew,
Like an infant bird that learned to sing.
With a heart that's free I say "Thank you
And blessings to all at WinterSpring."

*Donna Hunt
Participant, Grief and Loss Education Series*

Bereavement support groups have been facilitated by Karen Nollenberger and myself with co-facilitators Carolyn Verner and Kathy Wallis. Michael and Melanie Rhoades continue to support people grieving a death by suicide in the butterfly group. Members of each group shared their feelings and thoughts about the support they received. Here are a few of them: "If you don't get a chance to share your story and feelings, you'll wither inside." "At the beginning I could not even talk – you were all really helpful." "A place to go where people understand your feelings – the ability to talk, cry, whatever you needed to do - the compassion from all..." "...I felt safe, ... not alone."

A new venture, "Giving Sorrow Words" with Debra (D.J.) Thornley, is a journal and poetry series for coping with loss, grief and transition. Participants shared their stories through poetry and creative techniques. This enabled them to express themselves and find their voice.

We would like to share our heartfelt gratitude to two teen troopers! They are facilitators Valerie Neck and Carolyn Verner for our teen groups. Each brings a unique vibrancy and light to the group that assists teens to feel empowered and understood. Some of the teens shared that the group was helpful because they learned that it is OK to cry, it helped to sit and talk, and to feel loved and not judged. They also added that at first it was difficult for them to share and talk about their feelings, but they learned that someone was there to help them. Thank you, Valerie and Carolyn.

Our volunteers for children's program continue to amaze us with their passion and motivation. Angel, who simply is "Children's Program," brushes herself down after a long day in the office and engages passionately with the children. Geoff Hanzlik always running in after a grueling day is a real blessing to group. Our constant and relentless devotees, Liz Axness and Tracy Lamblin, bring a nurturing and warmth which is a delight. Rebecca Davenport, Stephanie Hamilton and I are relatively new to the group but feel as if we've always been here. Thanks goes to Michael Datz, who despite many personal changes (congratulations on baby Joshua Philip) continues to support the children. Thank you everyone, from all the children, past and present, and those yet to come.



HELP WANTED
Volunteer positions available for people without WinterSpring training requirements include: clerical, telephone, computer entry, park maintenance, litter pickup, crafting, reporting and photographing. We will also need some help with moving in June.

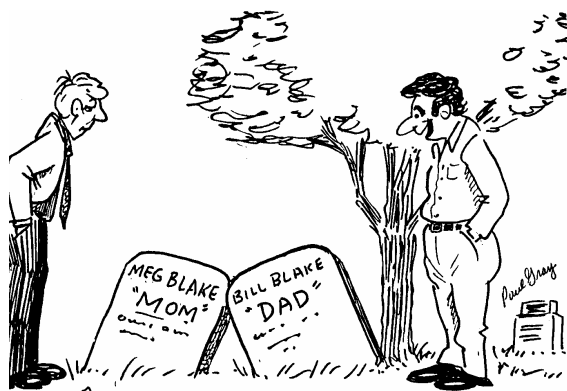
"Grief Work"
By Christine Hunter

I would like to share a story with you. Not grand or dramatic, it is a simple story of a lady whose husband died, a lady who has shown great courage on her journey and a willingness to do the work we know as "grief work".

I first met Shirley, a retired teacher, at our holiday group of 2003. Shirley has a warmth about her that generates to everyone in the room. Like anyone recently widowed, she was having a very hard time dealing with the everyday challenges of being without the person she loved. She'd been married to Al for thirty-nine years when he died.

Shirley reached out to ask for help from WinterSpring. She attended groups and conferences, as well as reading a great deal to support her process. I have seen Shirley through her gray days and shared the joy of the small but significant moments such as the first visit to the cemetery without crying, and the letting go of things that represent their life together. Shirley shared how she put a collection of treasured keepsakes into an attractive box, gathering them together to store the memories in one special place. As Shirley spoke of this, I saw the fragmented pieces of her grief coming together. Once shattered, she was now slowly and purposefully drawn to the whole once more. Life can't be the same, it will always be changed. The healing continues as part of the journey of living. As each day comes there continue to be moments of sadness and tears, of memories held dear. One of the many things Shirley has shared, is that the struggle and fear of doing something, like clearing away Al's clothes, is greater than simply doing it. "The anticipation is worse and when I get through it, it's not so bad".

What I admire about Shirley, and so many of those that come through our doors, is the way they march forward, relentless in their commitment to their own healing. Shirley demonstrated this commitment the day she stopped to ask for a hug, then said, "I just needed a WinterSpring fix!" As we connect with each other through simply being in the world, we share our vulnerability. We find beauty in the warmth of those who understand our situation, and sometimes no words are necessary, just a simple reminder to "Breathe, just breathe."



"Some think the earth collapsed a little, but they didn't know Mom and Dad."

Looking Up
By Kay Daphne Redcoff

I looked up from my sorrow,
wiped the tears aside and found
the day was new, the sun shone on
the world would still go 'round.

"How can this be?" I screamed and cried,
"I'm sure to fly apart!"
The center of my world is gone,
a stove goes through my heart!

I've got to learn survival,"
I reasoned through the pain.
"My loved ones need me to go on
to share their lives again.

To laugh once more and plan ahead
for living, future times."
I had to think of some way I
could WANT to start to climb.

And, too, among the things HE loved
in me, lest I forget,
My humor, spark, my drive and strength
when troubling times beset.

I looked up 'cross that table there
and into eyes that cried,
So pained (like mine), so deep in grief--
Your loved ones too, had died.

And in the midst of so much hurt,
my heart felt such concern
For each and every heartache there,
we've all so much to learn.

And as I listened, shared and wept
together with you all,
a tiny light was lighted and
some weight began to fall.

None of us is healed or whole,
we've not emerged brand new.
But we're surely somewhat stronger now
in what we seek to do.

My friends, I've gathered from
tears I saw there in your eyes.
In quiet ways we've learned to help
each other realize.

That looking up through veils of tears
we still can vaguely see
And help some other friend "look up."
THANK YOU for helping me.

Bereavement Magazine June 1992

Children's Program

"Mended Hearts II," a Quilt for a Cause



"Our lives are like quilts - bits and pieces, joy and sorrow, stitched with love." So an unknown quilt maker described one reason we respond so emotionally to the beauty of a quilt.

WinterSpring's "Mended Hearts II" quilt is the second in a continuing series of mended hearts themed quilts lovingly stitched by WinterSpring volunteers. It is being raffled as a fundraiser for WinterSpring grief support projects. Carol Clum, a former WinterSpring participant and adult volunteer hand quilted this fifty-inch square heirloom quality quilt. It is comprised of 892 squares, individually hand cut to complete the pieced quilt top, with a Prairie Points edging.



Kids from WinterSpring's Children's Program placed mementos in memory of the person whose death they are grieving on the back of the quilt. Many little loving hands sewed charms carefully picked out to represent memories of their loved



one: "Nanna loved gardening so I've chosen a watering can." "Daddy loved music, that's why I picked it." "Grandpa had a big heart." "I picked the lighthouse for my Dad; he liked the ocean and the boats."

The drawing to select the winner of the quilt will be held at "Season's of the Heart" (see page 3) on May 30th, but your presence is not required to win. Tickets for the raffle are \$5.00, or six tickets for \$25.00. To purchase tickets, call 772-2527.



Quilter's Poem

Love is a quilt - a quilt is love . . .
Both love and a quilt should be:
Soft enough to comfort you,
Bright enough to cheer you,
Generous enough to enfold you,
Light enough to let you move freely,
Strong enough to withstand adversity,
Durable enough to last a lifetime,
And given gladly, from the heart.

*Author: unknown
(Quoted in Quilter's Newsletter Magazine)*

Including Children in the Funeral

*Excerpt, used with permission by Dr. Alan Wolfelt
From "Creating Meaningful Funeral Ceremonies"*

Most of the rituals in our society focus on children. What would birthdays or Christmas be without kids? Unfortunately, the funeral ritual, whose purpose is to help bereaved people begin to heal, is for many adults not seen as a ritual for kids. Too often, children are not included in the funeral because adults want to protect them. The funeral is painful, they reason, so I will shelter the children from this pain. Yes, funerals can be very painful, but children have the same right and privilege to participate in them as adults do.

You can help appropriately include children by:

* **Explaining what will happen ahead of time**

Unless they have attended one before, children don't know what to expect from a funeral. You can help by explaining what will happen before, during and after the ceremony. Give as many specifics as the child seems interested in hearing. If the body will be viewed either at a visitation or at the funeral itself, let the child know this in advance. Explain what the casket and the body will look like. If the body is to be cremated, explain what cremation means and what will happen to the ashes. You can also help children understand why we have funerals. Children need to know that the funeral is a time of sadness because someone has died, a time to honor the person who died, a time to help comfort and support each other and a time to affirm that life goes on.

* **Finding age-appropriate ways for children to take part in the funeral**

When appropriate, you might invite children to actually take part in the funeral. Bereaved children feel included when they can share a favorite memory or read a special poem as part of the funeral. More shy children can participate by lighting a candle or placing something special (a memento, a drawing, a letter or photo, for example) in the casket. And many children feel more included when they are invited simply to help plan the funeral service.

* **Understanding and accepting the child's way of mourning**

Understand that children often need to accept their grief in doses, and that outward signs of grief may come and go. It is not unusual, for example, for children to want to roughhouse with their cousins during the visitation or play video games right after the funeral. Respect the child's need to be a child during this extraordinarily difficult time.



Teen Grief

As if it were not enough to be concerned with changing bodies, pimples and hair growth, the tidal wave of bereavement can sideswipe an adolescent. Young people are already feeling as if the world is clueless about their experience, and grief adds its own awful impact. Yet teens are just as much in need of finding outlets to express grief as adults – if not more so! As life changes and transitions occur, the loss of a loved one is re-visited with each passing year. WinterSpring continues to support youth through this process; in our support groups, both in-house and in schools; through education and the element of theatre. Our very own 'Good Grief' presentations really bring a message that is clear with vibrancy and fun. It is also an avenue for teens to express themselves in a fun and supportive manner. This troupe includes people of all ages. It gives all of us a chance to better understand how grief affects children, youth and adults. Perhaps most importantly, we see the interaction of family and community members, and how we help, or hinder, the grief process. If you've not yet had the pleasure of attending an event with the WinterSpring Theatre, make sure you sign up for the next show. Please encourage your service club, church or employee group to book a performance, at no charge. Better yet, join in!



Sharing Experiences

Heather was 15 when her sister died by suicide. "That was pretty hard on me so my parents decided to send me to WinterSpring. Now I'm an avid volunteer with them.... I think it's really important for me to help other people, especially teenagers, through grief, by sharing my experiences."

Heather participated in a support group, helped plant flowers in the Memorial Grove and then joined the Teen Panel and appeared on the "Grief and Teens" show on RVTV. When asked what she might say to a grieving youth, Heather reflected on her experience at WinterSpring. "Going to a support group, I think that's really the best help you can get. Because there's people there for you who aren't going to worry about it when you cry, who're going to understand when you're ready to talk and who're going to be there to listen. I think that probably it helped me better than anything I could have done. It's very important for a grieving teenager to have somewhere to go, where they can talk and get feelings off their chest that they might not be able to discuss with people like their parents."

Don't be afraid to get help and don't be afraid to talk with someone about it."

"Lots of teens have problems actually helping their friends through grief because it's a hard thing for teens around teens to deal with. A lot of the clichés really turn out to be a lot more unhelpful than you want them to. Like one that really got to me was, 'it was God's will'." She suggested "Grieve like in small doses sometimes, you know just try and go through your day, go through your regular grieving, go to school, go to classes and then find time, you know, every few hours take a few minutes, or twenty. No matter how long it takes you, just let yourself cry, and let go of some of those emotions that you've built up over the last few hours, and just let yourself grieve for a little while, and then try and take a deep breath and move back into your life a little bit. When you are really deep and heavy in grief, sometimes the only things you can focus on are eating, sleeping, exercising, just trying to do your daily routine."

"Grief is something that really helps teach you how to deal with yourself and deal with your feelings. And so it really kind of challenges you to dig deeper into yourself and decide for yourself how you are going to grieve. And don't let anyone else tell you, "we're just here to give you suggestions." Grief is a really really really long process, but it does get better and you get better. You can look back on memories after a while and not be sad about them--feel happy. There's healing in grief. Grief isn't going to always be this cloud over your head. It's going to get better, and I feel like it's still sad, it's still sorrow, but it gets better. I've learned that I'm a lot stronger and I've learned that I'm better at dealing with things like this than I thought I would be."

Today, Heather is enjoying her Junior year in High School, and is excited about her new after school job as a cashier at Target. Her story is a vivid example of the transition of a grieving youth through WinterSpring support and on to the sense of purpose inherent in helping other grieving youth. She explains, "I learned how to help myself through helping other people."

In response to Senator Gordon Smith's public discussion of suicide and the death by suicide of his own son, a Mail Tribune editorial noted that, "Not until people are willing to speak openly -- and publicly -- will the problem of suicide among young people be diminished." WinterSpring is expanding services for people who are grieving the death of a loved one by suicide with the help of a \$10000 grant from the Carpenter Foundation. In the last five years, nearly 200 people are recorded as dying by suicide in Jackson County. An unknown number of "masked" suicides are recorded as accidents, drug overdoses and other causes. With the grant, we are able to partner with other organizations in a National Suicide Survivors' Day observance; offer more community education about bereavement after suicide through the WinterSpring Theater, television and community forums; and offer individual and group support to survivors. Since the risk of suicide increases with a bereavement after suicide, this is a program of prevention as well as immediate support. With support, bereaved people can move from the agony of grief to a renewed sense of purpose, finding meaning in life once again.

All Things Hooah and more Hooah

"Decide Now.

Is Your Life Going to be
Poetry or Prose?"

Nothing against prose, mind you, but I'm a poet and poets adore living poetically. This year of National Service with WinterSpring has added multiple stanzas to the greatest poem of all, life.

It all begins with Emerson's, "Death puts life into perspective." Three-hundred and sixty-nine days ago my dad died. My sweet old Dad. You may remember from my introductory article, he was a great man. 100% Hooah, and the best damn jitterbugger this side of the Atlantic. I landed at WinterSpring three months after this milestone, unsteadily steady and surrounded by generous, kind-hearted people—Elizabeth Bryant, Angel DeShane, Ramona Kearns and Donna Taylor, to name but a few. They fed me ice cream and sent me to work. I've been eating ice cream ever since.

Some things I've learned: grieving and being of service exercise big and small muscles and burn calories; special people are drawn to this sacred challenging work; everyone has something to teach about his/her grief process; much healing can occur with a magazine, glue stick and piece of construction paper; people are so amazing; yep, Angel is really an Angel; there is always more to learn; life is precious and short.

Being an AmeriCorps member: AmeriCorps is a year of national service, the American version of the Peace Corps. Indeed, it is the act of volunteering one's time, energy and abilities for the larger benefit of one's community and nation, that provides the greatest compensation. There are many additional rewards--a \$4725 education benefit at the end of the year, health insurance, the opportunity to meet incredible people throughout Oregon, who are also inspired to do service, stimulating training sessions and the chance to work at an organization like WinterSpring. The downside? A monthly stipend that averages to \$4.74 an hour.

Would I do it again? Yes-way, Doris Day! Why pinch and scrimp and learn to live even more simply, and count one's pennies and gas mileage, and be resourceful with tuna in more ways than one can imagine? Why do it? Because it is the essence of life--giving, receiving, learning, loving, and being of service. What more matters? I've had the honor of sharing the space with children, teens and adults through a most difficult time; *they* taught me the meaning of authenticity. I've gotten to face daily the preciousness of this life by being constantly reminded that it can be taken away in an instant. I've gotten to know amazingly gifted, loving people. I've gotten to experience my own grief--and bring it to work even--to an environment that cares, understands and supports the process. The list goes on.

Poets *do* love their drama, passion and the ups-and-downs of life. Nothing like grief coupled with a year of National Service to create a bit of these! Here's to an incredible year with you here at WinterSpring. "Hooah!" as my dad would vigorously whoop, "Hooah!" Thank you. I look forward to continuing to be of service to WinterSpring as a volunteer.

By Valerie Neck, written July 2003. Valerie continues to volunteer with television production projects and the teen program.



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, 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.



DEATH IS

Death is full of uncertainty.

It is hard to accept and deal with and even lonely.

Death is scary.

It is sad.

It surrounds us every minute, every hour of every day.

Death is hard and hard to deal with.

*Created by Hollyann, Emily, Katie
and Elizabeth April 2003 Teen Group*

More Special Events

Poppy Beveridge and The Schoolhouse Retreat Center hosted "Good Grief," a production of the WinterSpring Theater. This production, based on the troupe members' experiences of grief, draws naturally on tragedy and comedy for the essentials of drama. Beth Baker wrapped up a remarkable evening for us with her outstanding vocal talent. Jennifer Schloming, a favorite among musicians and audiences alike, accompanied her. It is rare to see such a mixture of tears and smiles in an audience, and the historic schoolhouse was a perfect setting for WinterSpring supporters to enjoy the performances.



"My Mother died when I was sixteen. If I'd had something like this to help me then, my life would have been different."
Lois Adams, a volunteer actor in the WinterSpring Theatre

Casey Mitchell's charming home, in Ashland's historical district, was clearly designed for warmhearted social occasions. It was the setting for WinterSpring's 2004 "Pennies from Heaven" fundraiser.



The evening was another opportunity to experience the intergenerational drama of the WinterSpring Theater. Jennifer Schloming again performed at this event, accompanying popular soloist Kurt Bernhardt.

Board member Sarah Sanders donated an unusual raffle item for the party: a ride in Ashland's Fourth of July Parade in her 1953 English Mayflower Triumph. This remarkable automobile looks like a miniature Rolls Royce and is one of only 500 imported to the United States. Dee and Robert Marlow were the lucky winners of the raffle, and we're all looking forward to watching them roll regally through Ashland on the Fourth.

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

To the Future: A Move and More

WinterSpring staff and volunteers will be especially busy this summer, moving into rented offices, and preparing for support groups in locations throughout the valley. As Board President Sharon Heisel commented, "In a sense, this means WinterSpring is growing up, because we're moving out on our own for the first time." Indeed, this will be the first time WinterSpring will be housed in paid space. The use of storage space would be a helpful gift, and donations to our rent fund will be gratefully accepted.

After we're settled, we plan to celebrate our fifteenth anniversary with a WinterSpring Reunion for anyone who has participated, volunteered, or been employed, at WinterSpring. This great party will include our semiannual volunteer recognition event that is ordinarily scheduled in late spring. We'll be releasing press announcements in August, so be sure to watch for notices about the date, time and location.

Employment Opportunity

WinterSpring will be hiring a part-time Program Coordinator this summer. The position will be available after Christine changes her role at WinterSpring in early July. The job description is not yet available, but you may ask to be included in the announcement list in order to receive the recruitment materials when they are released.

Wish List

A new home
 Help moving
 Storage space



Glue sticks
 Small scissors
 Craft paints

2 Soccer balls
 Balloons



Toilet tissue
 Kleenex

Paper towels
 Small plates



Napkins
 Garbage bags
 Flavored tea

Hot and cold cups

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

This is a list of donors who contributed to WinterSpring's Family Tree 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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WinterSpring's Fifteenth Anniversary Edition

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.

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