



# for Every Season

## A Season of Change

By Lindsay Chance, LMSW

### Grief is about change.

How does one experience this change in a healthy way even though it can feel so painful? One way is to embrace another kind of change – spring, a time of awakening, renewal and observing the cycles of life. Often, people experiencing grief will plant flowers or trees. It's a way to bring life back to their world. Planting trees or flowers (especially perennials) to honor a loved one can be an active, positive reminder for years to come. Several holidays during the spring season come to mind: Arbor Day, Earth Day, May Day, and Memorial Day. Why not consider making your garden into a memorial garden this year?

Usually, the time after losing a loved one is busy: legal matters need addressing, family and friends are in town, or everyone is calling and writing. This can distract you from your grief process. Then, around the second or third month, the grief hits hard. This is normal. In fact, challenges faced throughout the entire first year are normal. Each new date brings some associated memory. Grief can surface and overwhelm in this sudden idle time. Fill that time constructively with something that relates to what you were doing before.

Many who are grieving were the loved one's primary caregiver. Your caregiver role may have defined your life. Now what? It may involve figuring out a new plan for your future or perhaps resurrecting an old dream that was placed on hold. Obviously, change will be inevitable. However, it can happen gradually.

It's important to recognize your loss. Try not to rush into anything. Your priorities, activities, and habits will change. Your life goals and plans may shift. Don't press big decisions, such as moving or entering into a new romantic relationship.

Surround yourself with your support group. Allow time to mull over important decisions, construct new routines, and re-establish old ones. Many spring and summer holidays have strong ties to family (e.g., Easter, Passover, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day). Plan ahead for those special days, as well as birthdays or anniversaries, which may be triggers. Make them positive milestones to mark your loved one in meaningful ways. Mother's Day and Father's Day can be especially affecting if your loved one was either your parent or child.

Finally, there is a very mundane annual activity that many people do at this time of year that can turn into a powerful time – spring cleaning. This year, it can be an opportunity to sort through memories and gently arrange or rearrange your life.

*small things  
that matter most*

# Bereavement Camps Heal Grieving Hearts

By Luisa Kcomt, LMSW

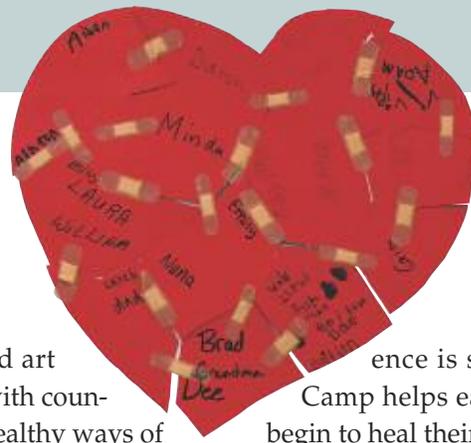
When families suffer a loss through death, everyone is affected. Children may struggle to understand their grief reactions and to find the words to express their feelings. The grief may affect their performance in school or lead to social and behavioral problems. Adults may struggle to process their own grief while also worrying about how the children in their lives are coping. Moving forward through grief can be a challenging, lonely, and confusing journey at times.

Recognizing this need to help kids who have experienced loss, Seasons Hospice Foundation offers bereavement camps to support children and teens through their grief process. As they share their stories, the campers learn that they are not alone in their grief.

Through music and art therapy and time with counselors, they learn healthy ways of coping with their feelings and have fun in the process too! Many camps include an Adult Support Group for parents and guardians, allowing them a space to share their feelings and to learn how to support their children at home.

The camps are led by dedicated professionals and trained volunteers from Seasons Hospice & Palliative Care and are offered free of charge to anyone in the community. In fact, over 70% of kids that attend camp did not have a relative in hospice – often, the loss they experi-

ence is sudden and tragic. Camp helps each child cope and begin to heal their grieving hearts. “It inspires us to see how these campers blossom through the camp experience,” says Courtney Farmer, the Camp Director in Michigan. “Knowing that we make a difference for these bereaved families means so much.”



## How to Help:

If you would like to help us expand our camp programs, please call us at 847-692-1000 or visit our website at [SeasonsFoundation.org](http://SeasonsFoundation.org).

Together, all of our gifts can make a difference.

**Bereavement Camps Scheduled for 2018**

Camp Name	Dates	Location
Camp Kangaroo	April 27-29	Southern California
Camp Erin	August 17-19	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Camp Kangaroo	July 14-15	Massachusetts
Camp Kangaroo	June 22-24	Connecticut
Camp Kangaroo	TBD	Chicago, Illinois
Camp Kangaroo	September 22-23	Tampa/Pinellas, Florida
Camp Kangaroo	November 10-11	Broward County, Florida

*“It inspires us to see how these campers blossom through the camp experience.”*

– Courtney Farmer  
Director, Camp Kangaroo Michigan

After their grandchildren attended the camp in Michigan, Larry and Jan sent the following message:

*A thank you goes out to you and your team from Ella, Joey, and Brittyn. They all really benefited from the experience – especially Ella. She was so talkative and said, “I will definitely, definitely, definitely go back.” I think her feelings opened up for the first time in the six months since her mother passed away in July. My heart breaks for my grandchildren losing their Mommy so young. Their Mom was only 41, and was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer and passed 18 months later. The children experienced cancer and how it affects the family. Sadly, they will remember Mom so sick and in Hospice.*

*We had a “show and tell” when they came home. Each child explained their feelings expressed in the art projects. We are so happy Seasons continues to remember and work with children who have lost their loved ones. Expressing their feelings with care and hope are so important. We continue to keep their Mom’s memory alive in talking about her and displaying art and memories, but events at the camp give us the extra support.*

*Our deepest thanks for this beneficial camp for children,*

*Larry and Jan (Papa and Nana)*



For more information about our bereavement camp programs or to sponsor a camper, please visit [www.SeasonsFoundation.org](http://www.SeasonsFoundation.org)

# The Mourner's Bill of Rights

By Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., C.T.

Though you should reach out to others as you do the work of mourning, you should not feel obligated to accept the unhelpful responses you may receive from some people. You are the one who is grieving, and as such, you have certain “rights” no one should try to take away from you.

The following list is intended both to empower you to heal and to decide how others can and cannot help. This is not to discourage you from reaching out to others for help, but rather to assist you in distinguishing useful responses from hurtful ones.

- 1. You have the right** to experience your own unique grief. No one else will grieve in the exact same way you do. So, when you turn to others for help, don't allow them to tell you what you should or should not be feeling.
- 2. You have the right** to talk about your grief. Talking about your grief will help you heal. Seek out others who will allow you to talk as much as you want about your grief. If at times you do not feel like talking, you also have the right to be silent.
- 3. You have the right** to feel a multitude of emotions. Confusion, disorientation, fear, guilt, and relief are just a few of the emotions you might feel as part of your grief journey. Others may try to tell you that feeling angry, for example, is wrong. Don't take these judgmental responses to heart. Instead, find listeners who will accept your feelings without conditions.
- 4. You have the right** to be tolerant of your physical and emotional limits. Your feelings of loss and sadness will probably leave you feeling fatigued. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Get daily rest. Eat balanced meals. And don't allow others to push you into doing things you don't feel ready to do.
- 5. You have the right** to experience “griefbursts.” Sometimes, out of nowhere, a powerful surge of grief may overcome you. This can be frightening, but it is normal and natural. Find someone who understands and will let you talk it out.
- 6. You have the right** to make use of ritual. The funeral ritual does more than acknowledge the death of someone loved. It helps provide you with the support of caring people. More importantly, the funeral is a way for you to mourn. If others tell you the funeral or other healing rituals such as these are silly or unnecessary, don't listen.
- 7. You have the right** to embrace your spirituality. If faith is a part of your life, express it in ways that seem appropriate to you. Allow yourself to be around people who understand and support your religious beliefs. If you feel angry at God, find someone to talk with who won't be critical of your feelings of hurt and abandonment.
- 8. You have the right** to search for meaning. You may find yourself asking, “Why did he or she die? Why this way? Why now?” Some of your questions may have answers, but some may not. And watch out for the clichéd responses some people may give you. Comments like, “It was God's will” or “Think of what you have to be thankful for” are not helpful and you do not have to accept them.
- 9. You have the right** to treasure your memories. Memories are one of the best legacies that exist after the death of someone loved. You will always remember. Instead of ignoring your memories, find others with whom you can share them.
- 10. You have the right** to move toward your grief and heal. Reconciling your grief will not happen quickly. Remember, grief is a process, not an event. Be patient and tolerant with yourself and avoid people who are impatient and intolerant with you. Neither you nor those around you must forget that the death of someone loved changes your life forever.

## Making A Difference

Seasons Hospice Foundation is committed to making a positive impact in the communities that we serve. Through the generosity of our donors and our fundraising efforts, we received over \$1 million in contributions during 2017. This enables us to sustain and grow our special programs, and to achieve the following outcomes during 2017:

- Fulfilled 396 final patient wishes, at an average of 33 wishes per month
- Healed the hearts of 296 children and teens through our bereavement camps in eight locations around the country. In 2018, we will be piloting camps at two new locations: Connecticut and Tampa, Florida.
- Provided internship experiences for 104 students throughout our clinical sites
- Grew our Leaving a Legacy Program by 500%, helping patients and families to achieve peaceful life closure



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If our mailing records need to be updated, or if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Seasons Hospice Foundation at 847-692-1000, ext. 4.

## Helping Others Through SEASONS HOSPICE FOUNDATION



### SEASONS HOSPICE BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT

Bereavement support for loved ones is an essential component of Seasons' mission. Thus far in 2017, we have provided outreach and grief support services to more than 20,000 family members. Seasons offers several opportunities for families to find support. Trained counselors provide:

- Support groups
- Individual counseling
- Check-in phone calls
- Supportive mailings
- Services of remembrance
- Educational workshops
- Online resources

These services are offered free of charge for families, friends and caregivers of Seasons Hospice patients. To learn more about support groups

available in your area, please visit <https://www.seasons.org/our-services/beravement-support/>. If you are in need of support, please reach out to your local hospice care team.



*"Do small things with great love."*

Mother Teresa