

## THE SADIE ROSE FOUNDATION

# THE HOLIDAYS ARE OVER, NOW WHAT? Overcoming the January blues that might follow...

*By Regina Cyzick Harlow*

For many bereaved parents, the anticipation and dread leading up to the holidays can be worse than the actual days themselves. In the whirlwind of gatherings and dinners, we get to the other side and realize that somehow we made it through.

Then January shows itself. That dreaded month where nothing happens. Everyone is coming down off the holiday highs and settling back into the humdrum of ordinary life. That's when the weight of our pain can crush our spirits and bring our lowest emotional lows even lower.

The silence is deafening, the quietness unbearable. We are left alone with the memories of our children. Our grief, our pain can become the thing that defines us.

That's where The Sadie Rose Foundation comes in.

We hope to be one of many elements of support in the lives of those who are grieving the loss of their child/children. We do that through weekly online support chats, monthly support meetings,

individual office appointments, special remembrance ceremonies and other events. Whether bereaved families only take part in remembrance ceremonies to honor the memory of their children or become fully engaged in all aspects of our support, we welcome you with open arms.

Together we cry, we laugh, and we become family. We come from all walks of life. Our stories of loss are all unique and yet it is the very tie that binds us. We find comfort in the company of strangers, because those strangers understand. Together we bear each other's burdens and united we lift each other up. Those blues become manageable, that pain, bearable, those memories, cherished with you by others that understand. And in reaching out to other bereaved families, we somehow find ourselves to be the ones comforted.

We are here for you, remembering with you, as we face a new year without our children. We cordially invite you

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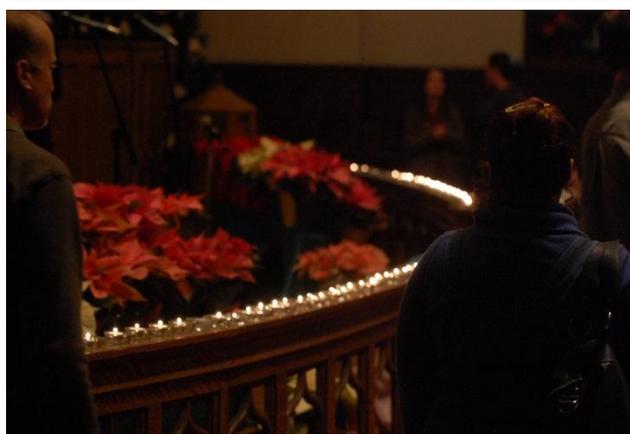
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to participate in any/all elements of the support we offer.

Regardless of how long ago or recent your loss, we welcome you as strangers no longer, but fellow bereaved families coping shoulder-to-shoulder in a life we never imagined for ourselves.

Wishing you a gentle and peaceful 2012.

## Fourth Annual Candlelight Ceremony at Otterbein United Methodist Church



The first Christmas after Sadie died, we were invited to a candlelight ceremony hosted by a chapter of The Compassionate Friends. I wasn't brave enough to attend, so Lee and I lit a candle at home at 7 p.m. the night of the ceremony. Since that chapter disbanded, The Sadie Rose Foundation has been providing a candlelight service in conjunction with TCF worldwide candlelight ceremony. That has become one of the most meaningful ways that I honor and remember my child, as well as so many others that I know of, gone too soon. Across the globe, at 7 p.m. in our respective time zones, we create a continuous wave of light for 24 hours. We hope you will join us at the ceremony or in your homes in 2012.

## Grief : One on One

By Nancy Shomo

Grief can be a frightening journey when traveled alone. So often, we feel isolated and unable to put words to the depth of pain we feel. One minute, life is good, then suddenly a huge wall is dropped in front of us blocking our way. We are shocked by the suddenness of it all. We lose direction and a sense of self.

At some point in our lives, each of us faces the loss of someone or something dear to us. The grief that follows may seem unbearable, but it is a necessary part of healing. Many times individuals begin to feel disenfranchised due to the lack of support or validation.

Grief is the NORMAL internal reaction to loss. Mourning is the external reaction--basically grief gone public.

You may be familiar with the five stages of mourning by Dr. Elisabeth Kubler-Ross:

**Denial-** This is "emotional anesthesia" and occurs when the information we've received is so painful that we "put up a wall" to protect ourselves while other defense mechanisms are being developed.

**Anger -** Once denial can no longer support us, we often move into anger. The anger may be directed towards the MD, ourselves, God or even the deceased. It doesn't have to make sense, but we must take ownership. We may not want or be proud of our emotions, but they are what they are. Trying to suppress our emotions will only work against us. This anger doesn't make us bad, simply human.

**Bargaining -** Dr Kubler-Ross calls this a "period of temporary truce." It stems from our feelings of vulnerability and lack of or need to regain control. We try to make a deal with God, challenge the medical team or basically anyone we feel could change the situation we are facing.

**Depression-** This is the realization of the inevitable. We can no longer deny the situation. We must face the truth, which opens the door to intense sadness. It will lessen as our grief lessens. We slowly start to find ourselves again.

**Acceptance** is the final stage of mourning. We've been in an intense battle, fought hard, but now realize that we must come to terms with the loss. We begin to look forward.

The stages are not sequential. You might bounce around among the stages,

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Jan. 27: Monthly Support Meeting,** Dayton Church of the Brethren, 7 p.m. Our support meetings are low-key and casual. Families are welcome. Childcare provided. Bring a light refreshment if you wish. (Park in the back and enter the double glass doors. Meeting room is first door on the left.)

**Weekly Online Support Chat,** Sundays, 9 – 11 p.m. To participate, visit our website and scroll to the bottom of the page. Click on the weekly support chat button to sign in. This is a great way to fill in the gaps between our monthly meetings or a great way to "meet" people from our group before attending a monthly support meeting.

*For more information about any of our events, please email or call us.*

perhaps multiple times, until finally completing the process. There is no right or wrong way to grieve. Everyone grieves in their own way and own time. Some may have the need to talk while others don't. Men and women may grieve

differently as well. Men may tend to be more “task oriented,” having the need to clean the yard, chop wood or immerse themselves into their job. Women, on the other hand, often have the need to process verbally. They may find themselves sharing their story multiple times.

We can experience grief on a global level as well as personally. Do you recall your initial response on 9/11? How about when Princess Diana died or the Virginia Tech Shooting? Many of us did not have a personal connection to these events; however, we grieved...deeply.

I often speak of the “emotional trash can” we have inside of us and how, if left unchecked, these emotions can become toxic. The grief can manifest physically. One begins to literally “feel” the pain. We try to find substitutes to help manage the pain like drugs, alcohol, shopping or even food. We will do anything to avoid facing grief head on, but ultimately that is exactly what we must do in order to successfully complete the process. As difficult as it is to face the pain, it’s far more devastating long term to ignore it.

It’s important that we take good care of ourselves during this time. Grief is a process not

an event. Think of it as a marathon and know you must pace yourself accordingly. Talk or write (journal) get the story out, attend a support group, educate yourself on grief, eat healthy, exercise regularly, follow up with your primary care physician if you are having difficulties with sleep or eating regularly.

Let others know what you can and cannot do. Well-meaning family and friends want to help and often just want you to be happy again. They don’t understand and may say things that will anger you; however, it’s up to you to take responsibility for your own healing. Communicate your needs and set healthy boundaries. You are developing a NEW normal which takes time and patience.

Grief is like a golden thread being slowly woven into our hearts. The needle, grief, is painful as it weaves the memories and very essence of our loved one into our being. In time, we are left with the golden thread which becomes part of us....never forgetting and always keeping them close.

It’s always nice to have a companion on a journey.

*RMH Grief and Loss Service, located at 644 University Ave. in Harrisonburg specializes in helping individuals and families*

## LANTERNS OF HOPE

Are you enduring a loved one’s suicide? Do you feel alone, confused, guilty or angry? Do you wonder how to cope with such tragedy?

You are welcome to a casual and friendly group to talk about the agony of suicide loss with other survivors.

Lanterns of Hope is a suicide loss support group. Come share your story. You are not alone.

This group meets the first Monday of each month, 7-9 p.m. at Grace Mennonite Fellowship 209 Lacey Spring Road Harrisonburg, VA 22802.

For more information, contact Suzy LaBonte at (540)833-4185 or at [HopeForLife@juno.com](mailto:HopeForLife@juno.com).

*cope with the difficulties and pain associated with loss and grieving. Among the services offered are individual and family consultations, educational workshops and bereavement training.*

Office hours are Monday  
through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to  
4:30 p.m. by appointment.

For more information,  
contact Nancy J. Shomo, BSW,  
GC-C, Program Coordinator at  
540-433-4427.

## Don't Hide My Daughter

Don't hide my daughter  
Behind that wall of silence  
The comfortable one that  
Makes you forget she ever was  
For I will always hold her memory  
In the sun and the stars, and my very breath  
Just because she was only here a moment  
Don't try to pretend that she never was

I don't...and I never will

A Mother's love resounds beyond the Earth  
To the Heaven above as she pictures her tender child  
In the arms of those who have gone before her  
and will cradle my child in a loving embrace  
and tell her all about a loving family on Earth  
Who wishes she could be with them so much  
and tries desperately to understand why she isn't

Don't hide my daughter's name behind your silence  
Though you may never speak her name  
It resonates through my very soul  
Lighting the candle in my heart  
That will forever burn in honor of my littlest Angel.

Copyright 2003, Sara Morgan ~ Angel's Mommy

## QUOTE CORNER

"Like a butterfly, you entered our world, silently, lingering only long enough for us to glimpse your beauty and sense the presence of God. Then just as silently you fluttered away, but in that brief moment you changed our lives forever." ~ Regina

"In the space of one breathe our world changed forever" ~ Anita

## SUBMISSIONS

We welcome your submissions of articles, poems, quotes and events that pertain to grief and child-loss support. We will publish as space allows.

Please ensure that we have permission to publish your submissions. We reserve the right to edit all content for clarity and space purposes.

*Email all submissions to Regina@SadieRoseFoundation.org or mail to The Sadie Rose Foundation P.O. Box 382 Dayton, VA 22821.*

## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Want to help? There are many ways to volunteer with The Sadie Rose Foundation. You or a group you are involved with (Sunday school class, social club, family, youth group, service organization) can make and/or donate items for bereavement packages. (Contact us for a list of appropriate items. Any handmade items such as knitted/crocheted prayer cloths, stuffed animals, small stained-glass pieces, etc. are usually fine.) Other opportunities include organizing and/or helping with fundraising events and office duties, including preparing newsletters. To learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities, please email [info-assistance@sadierosefoundation.org](mailto:info-assistance@sadierosefoundation.org) and type "volunteer" in the subject line and include your preferred means of contact in the message or call our office at 540-810-0307 to be added to the volunteer contact list. We are funded solely by the generosity of those that believe in the support we offer. All donations, monetary/volunteering, are greatly appreciated and help shine a light of hope into someone's darkest night. Thank you for your continued support.

Because the path of grief after losing a child should never be walked alone

For more information, "like" us on Facebook and visit our website at

[www.sadierosefoundation.org](http://www.sadierosefoundation.org).

Office ~ P.O. Box 382 Dayton, VA 22821 ~ 540-810-0307

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