



# PATHWAYS TO HEALING

Sept./Oct. 2017

*A newsletter to aid in bereavement*

Created by: Hospice of Central New York & Hospice of the Finger Lakes

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## I'll See You in My Dreams

by Michelle Gladu, LMSW, Bereavement Counselor

Dreams have long been a source of fascination for people. Dreams can be sad, scary, funny or just confusing, but usually follow what is happening in our lives in one form or another. Sleeping and dreaming allow our minds to process our day-to-day experiences, so it's not surprising that an experience as significant as the death of a loved one would be reflected in our dreams.



In their book *Grief Dreams: How They Help Heal Us After the Death of a Loved One*, T.J. Wray and Ann Back Price discuss how dreams that occur after a loss can both mirror our thoughts and feelings about the loss and help us cope with grief. Wray and Price state that grief dreams allow us to absorb our shock over the death, sort out

emotions about the loss, maintain our inner relationship with our loved one and create a bridge to the future. They acknowledge that while psychologists and others have developed helpful methods of interpreting dreams, ultimately a dream's meaning and significance can only be known to the dreamer.

Wray and Price suggest that the content of dreams after a loss usually changes over time. Soon after the death of a loved one dreams can be especially vivid and upsetting, often in the form of nightmares, and we may wake up crying or frightened. In time, dreams may exhibit more of the memories we shared with our loved ones and aid us in finding meaning in their lives. Some may come to welcome and look forward to these "visitations" from loved ones.

I often meet people who are troubled when they don't experience dreams about their loved one who died. It's important to note that we likely don't remember many of our dreams, or may recall just bits and pieces that fade from memory once we are awake. Our loved ones may not always be portrayed in a recognizable, straightforward way in our dreams either. Keeping a journal or note pad at your bedside to jot down thoughts or feelings when you wake up may help. A lack of sleep or disrupted sleep, which can both be common when grieving for a variety of reasons, will also interfere with our ability to dream.

Those who do recall their dreams as they grieve often note images that demonstrate the passage of time and a growing sense of peace. A loved one who was ill or injured before he or she died may appear in dreams as healthy again. We might experience fewer dreams of the loved one over time as we come to terms with our loss and reinvest in life. Wray and Price state that "the gradual return of hope does not signal an end to mourning – for grief is the work of a lifetime – but our dreams can help us recognize that we are moving forward and that we are indeed beginning to heal."

# \*\*\*\*\*SAVE THE DATE\*\*\*\*\*

## A Service of Remembrance

*"Remembering those who died and healing for those who grieve"*

DATE: Sunday, October 29th, 2017

TIME: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

PLACE: All Saints Church  
1340 Lancaster Ave.  
Syracuse, NY 13210

Twice a year the Hospice Bereavement team offers to the community a Service of Remembrance to remember the life of those who have died. This ceremony allows family and friends to come together to celebrate the lives of those that were loved. As you move forward on the healing path of grief, may you have strength to make peace with your grief and face the days ahead. We hope you will join us and feel some solace in reflecting on the light your loved ones brought to your lives.

*"Joy and grief walk together hand in hand, each celebrating the beauty, and the necessity of the other."*

Angus McDonald

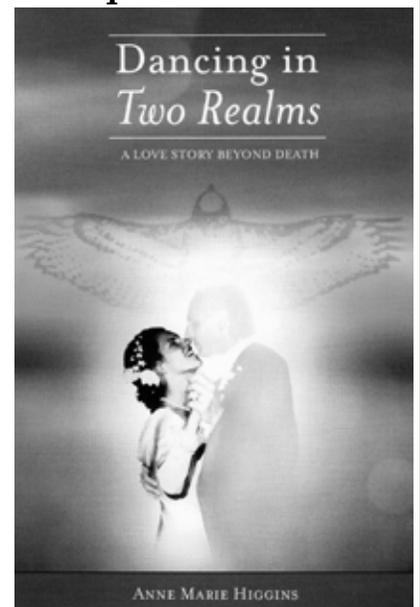
## Dancing in Two Realms: A Love Story Beyond Death

Wednesday, September 20, 2017, 5:30 to 7:00 P.M.

Hospice of CNY, Panasci Entrance, No registration required

At the September 2017 Spousal /Significant Other Loss Drop-In Group, we will have a guest speaker. Anne Marie Higgins will present a book she has written about her personal experience of hope and undying love beyond death. Anne Marie and Tim Higgins were looking forward to celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary when Tim was diagnosed with leukemia. He died 18 days later. Blindsided by the devastating events, nothing could have prepared Anne Marie for what was to come next. Follow Anne Marie as her journey of unrelenting grief was soothed by communication from Tim in many ways and many forms. See Anne Marie's photographs of phenomena and events beyond earthly description.

Do you believe your departed loved one has sent you a message? Join us as we explore this topic.



# FALL 2017 UPCOMING EVENTS

Attending a support group with others who have experienced a similar loss and are having similar reactions may be helpful. Hospice of CNY support groups are facilitated by professional staff who can assist in processing the challenges we face while grieving.

## **SPOUSAL LOSS GROUP** (six Monday sessions)

**Date:** October 2nd – November 6th  
**Time:** 1:00 – 2:15 p.m. (day session)

**Facilitator:** Susan Bachorik, M.S.  
Bereavement Counselor

Call (315) 634-2208 by Sept. 26th to register

## **ADULT GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP** (six Thursday evenings)

**Date:** September 14th – October 19th  
**Time:** 6:00 – 7:15 p.m.

**Facilitator:** Joyce Nevola, LMSW  
Bereavement Counselor

Call (315) 634-2208 by Sept. 8th to register

## **HELPING HANDS/HEALING HEARTS GROUP**

(six Tuesday evenings)

**Date:** September 19th – October 24th  
**Time:** 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

**\*\* For children ages 6-11 years old\*\***

Call (315) 634-2208 by  
September 13th to register

## **SPOUSAL/SIGNIFICANT OTHER LOSS DROP-IN GROUP** **Wednesdays: 5:30-6:30 p.m.**

**Invited Speaker September 20th (see pg. 2)**

**October 18th**

**November 15th**

**December 13th**

All events are held at Hospice of CNY, 990 Seventh North St., Liverpool, NY. Please use the Panasci entrance at the back of the building, which is fully accessible. Doors open 15 minutes before events. To check cancellations due to weather or emergency, call (315)-634-1113 x307 two hours prior to the event.

## The Fear we need to Embrace.

We may fear working through the grief and loss we experience after the death of a loved one. Often, we believe that the grief will be too much to bear. Some people think if they allow themselves to start crying, they may never be able to stop. And so, out of self-preservation, they may refuse themselves the opportunity to grieve appropriately.



They lock up all those feelings and emotions and avoid conversations pertaining to the death of their loved one. Although they may feel they are protecting themselves, they can actually be only injuring themselves further. When we do not grieve, the feelings do not simply go away. Instead, they simmer and boil beneath the surface until they can no longer be contained. When we avoid the grief in our life, it is like an untreated wound. Eventually, an unexpected infection or virus can take hold and cause a larger infection, leading to more complications that affect the entire body.

The repercussions of grief-avoidance are limitless. Not only can it impact our life, it can also impact family and friends. Substance abuse, broken relationships, isolation and suicide are just a few of the common consequences of unresolved grief.

The reality of working through grief: It is painful and exhausting. It is called “grief work” because it is just that: work. So why do it? We must work through the grief because when we do, we can find healing. When we allow ourselves the opportunity to fully feel the pain, trauma, sadness, anger, betrayal and abandonment without self-imposed barriers, we can then also fully experience healing. Healing brings peace, comfort, joy, and the ability to continue living a meaningful life. Grief work is painful, but it is also temporary. When we are courageous enough to do grief work, I believe we fully acknowledge our own worth and the value of our loved one. With this work, we keep the memory of our departed loved ones.

Matthew P. Binkewicz, MA, FT

### **UPCOMING EVENTS AT HOSPICE OF THE FINGER LAKES**

#### Hospice Support Group

Hospice of the Finger Lakes is sponsoring a four session Bereavement Support Group beginning on Wednesday, September 6, 2017. Sessions will continue on each Wednesday in September (13, 20, and 27). All sessions meet from 3:00-4:30 pm at the Hospice Office located at 1130 Corporate Drive, Auburn, NY 13021

#### 6th Annual Bluefield Classic – Whiffle Ball Tournament

September 2, 2017 – 12:00pm

Tournament is held at 5731 Bluefield Road, Auburn

#### 6th Annual Soup Bone Gold Tournament in memory of Jim & Flo Peters

September 24, 2017

Millstone Golf Course, Elbridge. Visit [www.soup-bone.org](http://www.soup-bone.org) for more information

#### Annual Service of Remembrance

October 22, 2017 – 2pm

Westminster Presbyterian Church

# ♥Healing Hearts Kids and Teens Corner♥

By Susan Bachorik, M.S. Bereavement Counselor

**Defining Death for Children.....**Children are seeking to understand what caused the death and why it happened. **The best and most basic way to explain death is to simply say,** “The body stopped working.” This definition fits what children observe when they see a dead animal. The bird can no longer fly or sing. Avoid using the words “lost”, “expired”, “passed away”, “sleeping”, etc. Children have a literal, concrete style of thinking, so avoid comparing death with sleeping, expiring, kicking the bucket, pushing up the daisies, or other euphemisms that will confuse them. Children believe they have the power to make things happen in the world. They often believe death is the result of something they did or didn’t do, think or say. For example, if they say, “drop dead” to a person who later dies, they are sure they caused the death.

When someone very important in our life dies, several changes take place that affect memory, concentration and learning. Grief and trauma can impact learning for children. After the death of a loved one, the area of the brain which processes information can be overloaded with thoughts of the deceased and how to manage intense emotions. Little room is left for concentrating on academics, so school can become overwhelming to a child. On the other hand, some children continue to perform well in school following the death of a significant loved one. These children often go unnoticed. They may use schoolwork or sports to maintain steadiness when dealing with painful feelings and thoughts. Or maybe they find that “doing their job” helps restore their sense of balance, just like adults who find the distraction of work to be healing and helpful. There is no one size fits all.

## **How does one help a child balance grief and academics?**

Children are just returning to school. Here are some things to do to support your child:

- Maintain routines
- Talk to the school counselor for support in the school
- Be patient and realistic, some children have difficulty focusing after a death
- Avoid telling the child to “move on” or “get over it”
- Validate and affirm feelings daily
- Allow make-up opportunities
- Remember children can have difficulties off and on for an extended period of time
- Some children struggling academically can benefit from extra-curricular activities as an outlet for their emotions, such as participation in sports, music or drama



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## Fall 2017 Events

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**Helping Hands Healing Hearts**  
Sept. 19th - Oct. 24th

**Spousal/Significant Other Loss  
Drop in Group**  
Sept. 20th  
October 18th

**Spousal Loss Group**  
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**Articles Inside**  
*I'll See You in My Dreams*  
*Defining Death for Children*  
*The Fear We Need to Embrace*

## The Hospice Grief Center

Hospice of Central New York provides support for Hospice families for 13 months following the death of their loved one. There is no charge for our services.

Community members are welcome to attend workshops and drop-in groups at no charge.

Donations are appreciated for community members requesting individual counseling.

***\*If you do not want to receive the  
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315-634-2208\****

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