



BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO

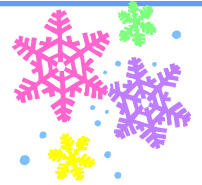
Halton/Peel Chapter

An association of families who have lost children, siblings or parents through death.
The Bereaved Helping The Bereaved. We Can Help The Healing Begin

February/March 2004

Volume 8 Issue 1

Share and Support Night Wednesday, March 3, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.



A Special Night For Grandparents

Grandparents face many challenges on their grief journey. When your own child has died, your relationship with their children, your grandchildren, is often changed as the family struggles to cope with their grief and unfamiliar dynamics. Sometimes grandparents are expected to step into a more active care-giving role despite their own grief. At other times, changes in the family may leave them feeling left out or isolated from their grandchildren's lives.

If it is your grandchild who has died, you are often faced not only with your own grief, but the pain of watching your child mourn the loss of their son or daughter. In trying to support your child, are you able to receive the support you also need?

It is unique challenges such as these that we will be discussing at our March Share and Support Night. The evening will be facilitated by our volunteer Helena Stahls, who is a bereaved mother and grandmother. If you know of any grandparents in the community who might benefit from participating in this interactive evening, we would appreciate you passing this information on to them.

Please remember that Share and Support Nights now require your RSVP. If you plan to attend on March 3rd, please phone in your RSVP to (905) 813-4337 or email to: jill.hill@bereavedfamilies.ca

Announcement—Our new Executive Director

We are very pleased to announce the appointment of Charles MacLean as the new Executive Director of Bereaved Families of Ontario-Halton/Peel. Chuck received his Masters Degree in Social Work from Wilfred Laurier University and has been involved with a variety of Community Mental Health organizations, providing services to youth, adolescents and families. Chuck brings a wealth of experience to this position including managerial, fund raising and program development. His background in working with school boards and non-profit, grassroot organizations makes him well suited to B.F.O. Halton/Peel. We look forward to welcoming Chuck on March 1, 2004. While we shall all feel the loss of Wendy Dean, we do believe that Chuck will endear himself to our staff and volunteers and we look forward to his leadership.

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*CIBC Charitable Foundation * Mother's Day Fund * Municipality of Halton Chairman's Charity Golf Classic *
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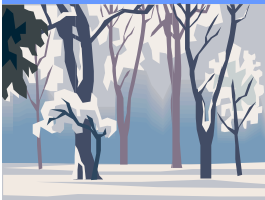
We reserve the right to edit submissions as needed. Submissions for April/May 2004 Newsletter must be received no later than March 15, 2004.

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Email: bfo.haltonpeel@bereavedfamilies.ca web site: www.bereavedfamilies.ca

Volunteer Corner

A very special word of gratitude to those who have endured these record cold temperatures to volunteer their time with B.F.O. Halton/Peel.

1:1 Initial meetings are such an important part of our program. Our thanks is extended to: **Laura Taylor, Monica Buechler** and **Theresa Greer** for their help. Some groups are continuing after the holidays and others are just beginning. This would not be possible with out the supervision and facilitation skills of: **Jamie Sutherland, Heather Appleby, Carol Martin, Susan Rose, Neil Carlin, Joanne McCarthy, Carol Ann Schneider, Jody Bourke and Donna Kaufman**. A special word of thanks to each of you. **Cathy Pike** and **Larry Lloyd** have been in the office helping out with their unending enthusiasm and energy. Our faithful bingo volunteers, who are so important to our funding, are **Pheobe Ahlstedt, Elizabeth & Peter Cochrane, Anne & Paul Ferreira, Eleanor Fleeton, Melanie Freund and Debbie Blagojevic**. Thank you everyone.



An Information Night ...

For those interested in learning more about Facilitator Training

March 10, 2004 at 7:30 p.m.

Do you remember when you first attended group and felt enormous respect for the courage and wisdom your facilitators demonstrated so clearly? Perhaps, for the first time, you felt hope that, like them, you might actually be able to survive this unimaginable pain and go on to live with some meaning again?

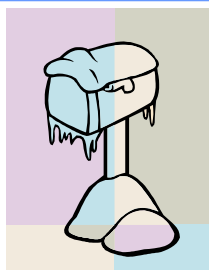
Did you ever think that maybe one day, you would like to give back to others what they gave you? This information night will give you a chance to ask questions of seasoned facilitators and find out what it takes to become a group facilitator.

We invite everyone who is interested in learning more about facilitation of 1:1 initial meetings and support groups to attend. Please RSVP if you plan to attend (905)813-4337 or jill.hill@bereavedfamilies.ca

Attention: All Group Facilitators

Please mark April 14th of your calendars. We will be having an evening of continuing education for your role as a facilitator.

More information about this event will be given in the next newsletter.



Book Review

Ghost Rider by Neil Pert

Neil Pert is probably best known as the drummer for the band Rush. The music stopped for Neil, however on August 10, 1997 when his beloved 19 year old daughter was tragically killed in a car accident. His wife Jackie died from cancer ten months later. Of this second tragedy, Neil said "the doctors called it cancer, but of course it was a broken heart". Unable to bear being in his own skin he took off on an epic 14 month, 55,000 mile motorcycle journey across North America. It was during his travels that he wrote Ghost Rider, a powerful story that weaves his tale of grief and his healing journey.

The book is a combination of an interesting travelogue and a journal of despair. Although his writing style is not eloquent, his anguish is crystal clear. He writes openly and candidly of how therapeutic the long days of riding are as he asks the familiar questions "Who am I?" "Where am I going?" "When will it be over?" Not surprisingly, he does not ever find a definitive answer, but he does discover a sense of renewed passion.

I would highly recommend the book, written from a masculine point of view, but the reader must have patience for plowing through the travelogue and uncovering the gems of spiritual healing.

Pert, Neil. (2002) Ghost Rider. Toronto: Stewart House. ISBN#:1-55022-548-0

**Reviewed by Sharon Lowe,
Professional Consultant**

In the depth of winter I finally learned there was in me an invincible summer.

Albert Camus



Loved Ones Remembered



Jennifer Milando
January 8, 1966—October 11, 1991



Lorna Gaye Orsler Shelly
August 10, 1942—Sept. 26, 1978

My mother died when I was just 11.
My youngest brother, who was 5 at
the time doesn't remember her at all. I
miss her so much every day, although
I know she still looks out for me.

Joanne Shelley

Brittany Angela Fong
July 6, 1990—March 23, 1991



Steven Michael Faulknor
March 29, 1961—October 9, 1988

We miss you, Steven, as much today
as in the hour you passed away. In
God's care you rest above, in our
hearts you rest with love.

Until we are all together again.

Love always

Mom, Dad, Laurie, Julie & Chris

Anthony Stephen Morhan
February 1, 1964—November 8, 1981

Your presence we miss,
Your memory we treasure,
Loving you always,
Forgetting you never.
Love forever, Mom, Ray & Rob

*Go ahead and mention
my child,
The one that died,
you know.
Don't worry about
hurting me further.
The depth of my pain
doesn't show.
Don't worry about
making me cry.
I'm already crying
inside.
Help me to heal by
releasing
The tears that I try to
hide.
I'm hurt when you just
keep silent.
Pretending he doesn't
exist.
I'd rather you mention
my child,
Knowing that he has
been missed.
You asked me how I was
doing.
I say "pretty good",
or "fine".
But healing is
something ongoing.
I feel it will take
a lifetime*

Megan Jane Hill
December 16, 1986-Feb. 23, 1988

You lived....
and brought unto this
earth a bit of beauty,
love and faith.
And now your life
will ever be reflected
in our hearts.

Loving & Missing you always,
Mommy, Daddy & David

John Michael deNeef
Feb. 8, 1983—March 29, 2002

Kerri Lynn Hearn
February 14, 1992

Our precious valentine
Forever in our hearts

Hugs & Kisses
Grandma & Grandpa Dunwoody
& Auntie Lori

Linda Mae Hearn (Dunwoody)
Sept. 8, 1959—February 4, 2000

They say that time heals
everything
But we know that isn't so
Because it hurts as much today
As it did four years ago.

Forever loved, forever missed,
forever remembered.
Mum, Dad & Lori

Baby Carlton Wiggins Jr.
Dec. 9, 2001—Dec. 28, 2001

Thanking Our Donors...It is through your generosity that we are able to continue to offer support to our community. Every dollar helps and is so very much appreciated. This is a complete list of all donors for the year 2003 who have contributed \$25 or more...

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Veronica Neil	G. & W. Sylvestre-Williams	Daree Import & Sales Limited	Oakville Mayfair Apartments	<i>Leave yourself open to comfort and caring.</i>
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*Now that your life knows every darkness and sorrow,
Now that your time trembles with mourning and pain,
Now that your eyes see only empty horizons;
Now that your hand touches the centre of grief:
Leave yourself open to comfort and caring.
Leave yourself open to softness and friendship,
Leave yourself open to kindness and blessing,
And try to listen for the still music of hope.*

Fund Raising Report

Thanks to all of our faithful and generous corporate, foundation, and individual donors and members, Bereaved Families of Ontario-Halton/Peel's books were out of the red at the close of 2003!

New for 2004: We have decided to change the Individual Member Campaign in the new year; instead of writing to our members in the Spring and the Fall of each year, we will be making our appeal for support on an annual basis in March of each year. Look out for our appeal letter at the beginning of the month.

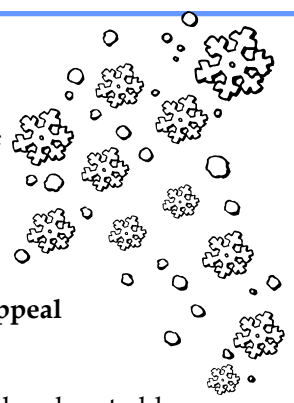
Also new for 2004 is our Healing Hope Campaign: We have large quantities of gel pens, toothbrushes, teddy bears, and children's books available for fundraising in your local schools, churches, and other associations. Call me if you would like to get involved at (905) 813-0363.

Brochures for our Walk to Remember scheduled for Sunday June 6th 2004, should arrive in your mail boxes in early April. Featuring:.....Great Prizes! Clown tricks! Face Painting! And back again this year, a Hot Air Balloon tethered ride for the enjoyment of all our participants at the day's event (weather conditions permitting). This year's minimum pledge collection amount in order to qualify for the prize in each age category will again be \$500.00.

We will be hosting our Annual Golf Tournament and Auction in the early summer at Hunter's Glen Golf and Country Club, and our 2nd Annual Fashion Gala in the Fall of this year. Details to follow.

Please accept my sincere wishes for a new year that brings healing hope and peace to each of our families, friends, and generous donors.

*With appreciation,
Catherine Da Costa, Development Officer*



Our Privacy Policy

Bereaved Families of Ontario-Halton/Peel respects your privacy. We protect your personal information and adhere to all legal requirements with respect to protection of your privacy. We do not rent, sell or trade our mailing lists or other personal information. We use your personal information to assist us in providing you with appropriate services, and to keep you up-to-date on the activities of Bereaved Families-Halton/Peel, including programs, services, special events, funding needs, opportunities to volunteer or to give and more through periodic contacts.

If at any time you wish to be removed from any of these contacts, please advise us by telephone at 905-813-4337 or via e-mail at bfo.haltonpeel@bereavedfamilies.ca and we will gladly accommodate your request.

"Grief is the hardest work I have ever done and I realize now that it is a journey that must be undertaken, it will not go away. You must participate. You can choose to do so now or later, but you must participate if you are ever to find peace and joy again in life"



Snowflakes

by: Darcie D. Sims, Ph.D.

Have you ever stood outside, with your head tilted back and your mouth open wide, trying to catch a snowflake? Snowflakes fall everywhere, on your hair, your chin, your eyelashes, even your nose, and some even manage to land on the very tip of your tongue, only to vanish before you can really get a taste.

Each snowflake is a completely different design and pattern. No two are ever created exactly the same. It is a mystery that continues to delight "snow catchers" everywhere. There are very few things that can be so lovely, so delicate, so perfect, so different and disappear so quickly, never to be reproduced in exactly the same pattern again.

Sometimes it seems as though people are like that, too. Those we love are so lovely, so delicate, so perfect, so different-and they disappeared too quickly, too.

Each of us is as unique as those childhood snowflakes. We each have a unique look, sound, smell, touch. We are cut from unique patterns, assembled in an endless variety of shapes, styles, combinations. We look, sound, talk, think and act differently than anyone else. There are no identical matches just as there are no perfectly identical snowflakes.

We know this, but when it comes to grieving, we demand that everyone grieve the same way. Some of us will talk our way through the iciness of our grief while others prefer more solitude. Some want to read everything they can about grief while others wish to submerge themselves in work. Some cry endlessly while others never shed tears. We are as unique as snowflakes drifting from the sky.

There is no right or wrong way to grieve, although there are some ways that are a bit less

dramatic. Just as the snowflakes find their way to their destination, so too, will each of us find our own way through grief. Frozen hearts and numb minds do, eventually, thaw. Icy memories that chill to the bone can grow warmer as we begin to move through our grief.

Whatever hurt we are carrying begins to weave itself into our very being, and eventually it becomes a part of our history. We become the sum total of all of our experiences. Our unique patterns begin to reflect our unique journeys.

We carry souvenirs of our hurts, each stored away until it is time to add them to the next hurt, thus piling up one hurt after another, all to be carried forever in our being. These hurts leave scars, some big, some small, but all significant in their pain. Each scar must have a place in our being. We become a carefully organized mass of layers, as delicate and intricate and individual as a snowflake.

Sometimes, especially in the early months and even years of grief, all we can remember is the pain and horribleness of our loved one's death. Pain seems to overshadow everything. These shadows seem to make every day harder and in winter, the shadows seem longer, deeper, darker. The snowflakes seem small, less beautiful. The magic of winter's decorations only leaves us cold and barren. If we begin as frozen beings, the journey through grief becomes a process of thawing. And each of us will defrost in a pattern as unique and individual as the snowflakes that drift across the windowpane, leaving little icy streaks of memory on the heart.

So, be patient with yourself this winter season. Recognize your own unique emotions and hurts and learn to identify the tracings of your own snowflakes of grief. You will survive these winter days and this winter season. You will begin to defrost eventually, and it will be far

less painful if you will begin to cherish your differences rather than use them as weapons and yardsticks of judgement.



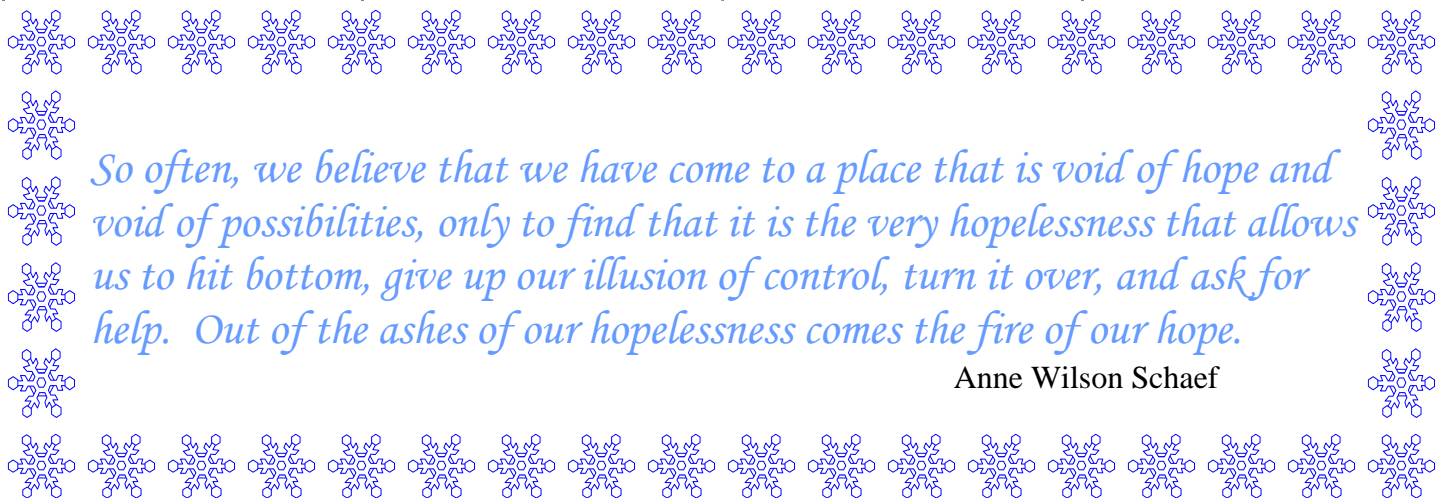
Ways to Thaw, Survive and Find Hope

- * Brush your teeth every morning. No matter what else happens, do that and you are on your way. Just keeping a routine is a way to counteract the craziness. It is a "responsible, adult" thing to do and is a start. Just do it. Your dentist and everyone else you encounter will be glad you did.
- * Take out the trash. Just get it out of the house. Someday you can try getting it out on the right day.
- * Be realistic. It will hurt, but don't try to block bad moments. Be ready for them. Let those hurting moments come, deal with them and let them go.
- * Take care of yourself physically. Eat right. Exercise (or at least watch someone else). If nothing else, jog your memory.
- * Leave the word "ought" out of this winter season.
- * Breathe in and out, in and out. It's that simple and that hard. Some days just breathing is all you can do. Some days it's a bit easier than others.
- * Enjoy those moments and remember your loved one's life instead of focusing only on the death.
- * Make a snow angel. Get outside. Catch snowflakes. Build a sand castle. Take a memory walk.
- * Put something that reminds you of your loved one in your pocket and every time you need a hug, just pat you pocket and recall the loving connection between you.

Our arms may be empty, but the heart is full. And every time you see a snowflake or just imagine one, remember to cherish its unique design and pattern...and to cherish your unique footprint through grief.

Calendar of Events

Date & Time	Event/Meeting	Location	Messages
Feb. 10 & Mar. 9, 2004 9 a.m.	Professional Advisory Committee Meeting	B.F.O. Office	
Feb. 17 & Mar. 16, 2004 6:30 p.m.	Board of Directors Meeting	B.F.O. Office	
March 3, 2004 7:30 p.m.	Share & Support Night (Please RSVP)	B.F.O. Office	A Special Night for Grandparents.
March 10, 2004 7:30 p.m.	Facilitator Training Information Night	B.F.O. Office	Everyone Welcome to Attend
April 14, 2004	Continuing Education Night for Facilitators	B.F.O. Office	Further details in next newsletter
June 6, 2004	Walk to Remember		Further details in next newsletter



So often, we believe that we have come to a place that is void of hope and void of possibilities, only to find that it is the very hopelessness that allows us to hit bottom, give up our illusion of control, turn it over, and ask for help. Out of the ashes of our hopelessness comes the fire of our hope.

Anne Wilson Schaefer

Memorial Opportunity

- Yes, I would like to make a memorial donation in honour of my loved one.
- Yes, I would like to have my loved one included on the "Loved Ones Remembered" page.
- No, I would prefer to make a donation only.

If you choose to have your loved one remembered in the newsletter please complete the following.
If you wish to include a personal message or verse, please use a separate piece of paper.

Name of Loved One: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Date of Death: _____

Month in which you would like to have this published in the newsletter: _____

Bereaved Families reserves the right to edit all submissions due to content and/or space limitations.