



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.

December 2004/January 2005

Volume 8 Issue 6

Why are the holidays so Difficult?



No matter what your culture, no matter what your faith, no matter what your traditions, the holidays are an extremely difficult time of year for those who are bereaved. Why is this?

Possibly more than at any other time of year the holidays are family times. When your own family is not intact it can be terribly difficult to be with other families, even those you love, who are whole. Often, you can virtually feel the physical absence of your loved one. The stores are full of shoppers, holiday music is playing everywhere and the world seems to be slightly more crazed than usual. Everyone seems to be in a good mood, anticipating a joyous season, while the bereaved just wish that it would somehow all go away. The holiday season can cause a resurgence of the feelings of intense grief and it is important to understand that these feelings are normal and the sense of purposeless, isolation and alienation from the rest of the world is most often temporary.

Many bereaved people find themselves paralyzed by the fear of preparing for the holidays and feel great pressure to "carry on as usual". There is often an anxiety over doing what you feel is the "right" thing and doing what you feel you "must" do to satisfy the expectations of family and friends. Acknowledging that the holidays will always be different and difficult due to your loss is very helpful. Try to anticipate even the smallest part of your traditions that might cause pain and then decide what can or cannot be faced. Decide not only what you **can** do but also what you **want** to do. In doing this, remember to leave the words "ought" and "should" out of your vocabulary. Breaking large tasks into smaller parts may help them seem less impossible. Consider changing, altering or eliminating some of your holiday traditions. Keep those that will bring you comfort, and eliminate or change those that are too painful to bear. Your own needs are important, so let your inner feelings serve as a guide to help you with the decision making process. Do remember that any changes you make do not have to be permanent. You can always return to the "old ways" another year.

Keep in mind that grief depletes energy, so don't set your expectations of yourself too high. It may take a surprising amount of energy to get through the season and you should try to get plenty of rest. Making time for yourself will help you with the emotional and physical drain on your energy levels.

Most of all, remember to allow yourself time to grieve over the holidays. Many of the sights, places, aromas and sounds of the holiday season are instant grief triggers. Give yourself permission to cry when these triggers hit. It is never a good idea to suppress emotions and reaching out for support during this time is very appropriate. Find ways to memorialize your loved one(s) that are important and meaningful to you.

For most grieving people the anticipation of the holidays is often worse than the actual event. Taking the day one minute or one hour at a time will get you through the difficult times. Live with the hope that one day you will again find joy in the season, albeit a joy always touched by sadness.



Wishing you all peace and comfort over the holiday season.

Jill Hill, Program Coordinator

2002 CHAMPIONS OF HEALING

In Kind Canada

2002 PARTNERS IN HEALING

*CIBC Charitable Foundation * Mother's Day Fund * Municipality of Halton Chairman's Charity Golf Classic *
Pratt & Whitney Canada * RBC Financial Group Corporation * Turner & Porter Funeral Directors Ltd. *
Simon & Wendy Dean*

We reserve the right to edit submissions as needed. Submissions for Feb/Mar 2005 Newsletter must be received no later than January 15, 2005.

Bereaved Families of Ontario Halton/Peel

6700 Century Ave., Suite 204

Mississauga, Ontario L5N 2V8

Telephone: (905) 813-4337 Fax: (905) 813-4339

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

Volunteer Corner...

Larry Lloyd continues to do amazing volunteer work for BFO-Halton/Peel helping us with our database, network and web site. Thank you Larry, so much for your unending dedication. We couldn't do it without you. Recent Bingo volunteers have been Pheobe Ahlstedt, Eleanor Fleeton, Elizabeth & Peter Cochrane, Wanda Hayward, Vanida Hannan, Shivana Ramsingh & Donna O'Leary Thank you all for assisting with this important fundraiser.

Wilma van den Hurk, Melanie Freund, Linda Belford, Samantha Frank, Roy Drepaul and Helena Stahls are all facilitating groups that will be ending shortly. We thank you so much for your commitment to our programs and our families. Thank you also to Cristina Fernandes and Sharon Lowe for your gentle, skilled supervision of these groups. A special thank you to Carol Martin and Jane Carkner for their continual facilitation of our monthly Loving Choice group. Your support of this program is invaluable to both the group members and to us,

Our appreciation is sent to Ann Bodner, Carolyn Bell, Dolores Campos, Iris Walsh, Luba Pulver, Melanie Freund, Monica Buechler and Paulette Cooling for their tender and compassionate care during recent 1:1 initial meetings.



Would you be interested in volunteering in the office on a regular basis? Full day and half day time slots are available and we need office volunteers to fill them. Duties would include answering phones, data entry, filing and generally helping to keep the office running smoothly. Please call us if you have a free morning or afternoon on a weekly basis.

An Update From the Chair of the Board...



As you are all aware, over the past several months, there have been many significant changes at Bereaved Families of Ontario-Halton/Peel. Many of you may now be wondering why the voice of the former Executive Director, Wendy Dean, is back on the answering machine. For those of you who were not able to attend the general meeting held on the evening of Tuesday, November 9th at Westminster United Church, I want to inform you that Executive Director, Chuck MacLean, resigned at the end of October. During this time of transition, Wendy has agreed to return in a volunteer capacity until a permanent replacement is hired. The Board is currently reviewing applications and plans to begin interviews in early January, 2005 with the goal of hiring a suitable candidate as soon as possible.

As stated in the October/November newsletter under "Catherine's Update", as part of a temporary restructuring measure, staff hours were reduced in the summer and other new initiatives are being introduced. Again, we wish to thank all those who responded so generously to the appeal for emergency funding last summer. As well, we are very happy to announce that **United Way of Peel Region has approved \$20,000 in Community Contingency Funding to our agency.** Receipt of this funding was largely based on our Fundraising Strategy for 2005. This includes a Small Business Educational Campaign which BFO-HP hopes will generate substantial revenues, thus hopefully realizing the dream of a stable and secure financial future.

It is through the ongoing dedication and support of our volunteers including the Board of Directors and the Professional Advisory Committee as well as the BFO-HP staff that this amazing organization continues to evolve and grow in response to challenges. We are so very pleased that due to the efforts of so many, BFO-HP can continue to offer its programs, resources and services to our community.

I wish you all a peaceful holiday season..

Neil McDonough, Chair of the Board

I Will Light Candles This Christmas



I will light candles this Christmas; Candles of joy despite all sadness,
Candles of hope where despair keeps watch, Candles of courage for fears ever present,

Candles of peace for tempest-tossed days, Candles of grace to ease heavy burdens,
Candles of love to inspire all my living. Candles that will burn all the year long.



By Howard Thurian



Loved Ones Remembered



Millicent Beduh
Oct. 30, 1974—Jan. 29, 2003



Lauryn Alexandria Rose Bratz
March 30, 1998—November 28, 1998

Lovingly remembered and missed by
Mommy and Daddy!!



Hugs and kisses from twin sister
Taryn Victoria Rose and younger
brother Dwyer Laurence!!
XOXO

Megan Jane Hill
December 16, 1986—February 23, 1988

She has taken her bright candle
And has gone into a room we
cannot yet find.
But anyone can tell where she has been,
By all the little lights she left behind.



Lovingly remembered and missed
always,
All of our love, Mom, Dad and David


Mark Andrew Young
July 20, 1971—December 13, 1994




Mark, you are in our hearts
always.

Love Mom & Dad

Karin Morton
July 22, 1977—December 23, 1989

You will always be remembered. 
Love Mom, Dad, Kim, Kevin & Laura

Kale Michael Zietsoff
February 20, 1970—Dec. 13, 1990

Time, has a way of slipping away my
Dear Son, but time, can never erase the
love in our hearts for you. Not a day
 goes by that you are not in our
hearts and minds and soul. You
are my Angel and I know that
you will always be with us. Time, can-
not ever take that away.

Forever Love,
Mom, Dad & Kevin

Donna Zampieron (Stahls)
Dec. 26, 1964—Dec. 15, 1999

No matter how hard we try
No matter how many years go
by
No matter how many tears we
cry
We still can't say good-bye




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




Don (Donny) George
April 10, 1965—January 2, 2000

Don

My sweet young man, there isn't a
day goes by that I don't miss
 your smiling face and your
fun loving ways. I hold you
so close in my heart. Always
missed, always loved, always re-
membered.

Love, Mom

Jennifer Jacqueline Carter
Feb. 6, 1984—Nov. 23, 2002

In loving memory of our daughter
A special smile, a special face.
And in our hearts a special place.
No words we speak can ever say
How much we miss you everyday.
To hear your voice and see you
smile. To sit and talk to you awhile.
To be together in the same old way.
Would be our dearest wish today.
Put your arms around her, Lord. Treat
her with special care. Where
shall we see a better daughter
or kinder sister, or truer friend. 
Separation from you over this time has
been very painful.
We love you and miss you.

Mom, Dad, Matthew
and all your family & friends

New Year

The New Year comes
When all the world is ready for changes,
Resolutions...great beginnings.
For us, to whom that stroke of midnight
means
A missing child is remembered,
For us the new year comes more like

another darkness.
But let us not forget that this may be the
year
When love and hope and courage
Find each other somewhere in the darkness
To lift their voice and speak...
Let there be light. Sascha Wagner

Catherines Fund Raising Update...

Please remember to save your A&P, Dominion and Miracle Mart tapes. When you send them in to BFO we receive a financial donation based on a percentage of your purchases at these stores. If you have time, please calculate the total value of all your cash register tapes before submitting them.

Many, many thank you's to those who have responded already to the Individual campaign. Our goal for 2004 is \$15,000 and \$10,600 has been raised to date. If you have not yet sent in your donation please consider doing so. Reaching our goal will help us to meet our program needs for the year end.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank our donors of \$100 and more for their support.

April Arias
 Marie Bajc
 Mr. & Mrs. Louis B. Barbisan
 Leona Buttigieg
 Dolores & John Campos
 Elizabeth & Peter Cochrane
 Paulette & Scott Cooling
 Paulette Cormier
 Alice & Craig Costerus
 Paul Cristante
 Simon & Wendy Dean
 Robert and Mae Dunwoody
 Joan & Brian East
 Eleanor Fleeton
 Paul Fletcher
 Keith & Barbara Gibson
 Stephen & Cathy Griggs
 Laura Hampson
 Jane Hedden
 Krystyna & Simon Hubbard
 Dave & Lis Karpinski

Bill & Betty Longlade
 Marcelo & Teresa MacKinlay
 Bridget McGlynn
 Joyce & John Messenger
 Joe & Pat Milando
 Angela & Janes Moylett
 Gail O'Brien
 Dyanne Oleszkowicz
 Francesca Perozzo
 Kathy Pike
 Sabrina Ramdeholl
 Carol-Anne Schneider
 Glen Smith
 Rob Smrekar
 Fred & Helena Stahls
 Neil & Robyn Sullivan
 Jeff Sumilas
 Gayle & Wayne Sylvestre-Williams
 Greg & Zoë Zsak
 Melissa Vanberkum



Gifts, Garlands, and Grief

by Sandy Goodman

I remember our first Christmas after. It began the first week of November in 1996, three short months into our worst nightmare, but a lifetime into missing our child of eighteen years. He had died suddenly, one of those "in the wrong place at the wrong time" things, and he took our hearts with him when he left. Summer screeched to a halt and autumn came and went without our participation.

Still standing in confusion at the threshold of grief, we were stunned when the stores replaced the gloomy ghosts and goblins with sparkling ornaments and cheerful decorations. Neighbors strung lights on their houses, friends sent cards wishing us joy filled holidays, and not one person mentioned Jason's name. Closing our drapes, we huddled in our cocoon, waiting for his return.

Thanksgiving passed. I recall the empty chair, the unbroken wishbone, and more turkey than three of us could eat. There was an unwatched football game and a failed attempt at gratitude. That was our day, and it was good enough. It was inconceivable that we would ever enjoy another holiday, much less be thankful for it.

Snow fell. Carols rang out, lights twinkled, church bells pealed. Our thoughts were of Jason, fixed more acutely on his departure than on his arrival eighteen years before. Memories of prior Decembers pervaded our present. Jason ice fishing. Jason sledding. Jason's birthday. Jason opening gifts. Jason throwing tinsel on the tree, on his brothers, and on the dog. Every memory brought tears but every tear brought Jason closer to us. We found him in the pain, the only place we knew how to get to. I believe that first Christmas had to be that way. Showing up was the best we could do.

But now it is six trees, six silent nights, and six collectable ornaments later. I've learned a few things about this path I'm on and found a few crutches for when the road gets too rough. Holidays can be disabling for those who grieve. I'd like to share some things that might help:

- o Believe that your loved one is with you. Include them in your celebrations and in your sadness. Include them when you talk with others about old times and holidays past. If you don't mention them, no one else will.
- o Light candles. For six years now I have lit a special candle for my son. This year I will light five, one for each of us, living or not. Why perpetuate the myth of separation? Jason is still a part of this family.
- o Do good things in celebration of your loved one's life. Random acts of kindness bring smiles to everyone involved. Buy anonymous gifts, scoop snow from a stranger's sidewalk, or light candles at unmarked graves.
- o Connect with your loved one who has died—take a meditation class, create a special place to go to where you can feel their presence.

(Continued on Page 5)

The Loving Memory Tree 2004....

Our Loving Memory Tree ceremony took place at the Mississauga Civic Centre on December 6th. Predictably, once again the weather was not ideal but despite the conditions, approximately 350 guests were present for this special evening of remembrance. Our tree stood magnificent with its white bows and lights, a silent testimony to loss and grief at this difficult time of the year.

John Green (Member-Board of Directors) was this year's Master of Ceremonies. Her Worship, **Mayor Hazel McCallion** honoured us with her presence and a short address followed by **Ned Levitt** (a bereaved father) who, as our guest speaker, gave a thoughtful reflection of his loss experience. The candle lighting poem was read by **Brittany Bajc**. The evening's musical program is ever expanding and this year we are very grateful to **Liz Fielding** (pianist), **Nana Jokura** (soloist), **Kevin Laliberte** (guitar) and **Heather Appleby** (Soloist/Piano) for sharing their gifts of music and talent with us.

Again this year, we had the "Presentation of the Names" followed by a moment of silence and reflection which was broken by the mournful sound of a lone piper (**George Duncan**). The evening concluded with a time for fellowship.

We would like to extend our appreciation to our donors and supports of this event:

The City of Mississauga	for the use of the facility & their cooperation & assistance with the evening
Turner and Porter, Funeral Directors	for storing our special tree & for assisting with its erection & removal
Tim Hortons	for the timbits
Parmalat	for the milk and juice
Fred and Helena Stahls	for the donation of the candles



Most of all, we thank the members of the Loving Memory Tree committee. Small in number but big in energy and commitment, this team of volunteers works extremely hard over a three month period to ensure that this special evening is meaningful for all in attendance. Committee Chair, **Elizabeth Cochrane** does a magnificent job of keeping everyone on track and her detail oriented agendas make sure that nothing is overlooked. This year the committee members were: **Peter Cochrane, Agnese Monteleone, Laura Hampson, Nancy Griffin, Paul and Vanida Hannan and Yvonne Hawke**. Thank you everyone for a such a moving experience.

The Loving Memory Tree and the plaque will remain at the Mississauga Civic Centre throughout the holiday season. You may visit the tree at any time the Civic Centre is open.

Christmas Memories

When snowflakes dance on winter winds,
And coloured lights shine Christmas cheer,
When children's laughter fills the air,
And family gathers from far and near,
I try to celebrate with them
And not let my hurting show.
But, the empty space within my heart,
At this season, seems to grow.
'Till oftentimes it fills the days,
and many night times too,
with aching thoughts and memories
of Christmases I spent with you.
Yes, memories do hurt, it's true.
But I have this feeling too.
I'm glad I hold these memories,
For with them, I hold part of you.
So for now, I'll wipe away the tears,
And join with loved ones dear
To celebrate this Christmas time,
For I know that in my heart, you're here.
Arden Lansing

Call a newly bereaved friend or neighbor and invite them to reminisce with you. Cry with them, listen to them, share your journey.

- o Give to an organization that your loved one supported.
- o Make a memory tree. Buy a small tree and decorate it with tokens of their life.
- Don't worry about what others will think. You are solely in charge of this journey. It's all yours.

Love someone who is grieving? Lost as far as how to help them through this upcoming season? Any of the above suggestions can be adapted (i.e. give money in celebration of their loved one's life and tell them about it, make them a memory tree) to fit your needs. However, there are two gifts that you can give to a person deep in the pit of grief that will mean more than anything else:

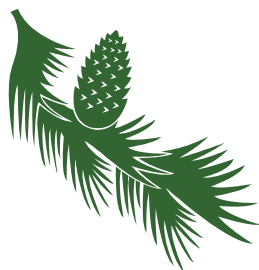
1. Undivided attention
2. Unconditional acceptance of their journey, wherever it leads them

I won't end this article with a wish that you have your merriest Christmas ever. I know that for some of you that is not possible or even desirable. Instead, my wish for you is this: That you find a quiet moment during the sometimes magical but often horrendous season upon us and relax. That you take a few deep breaths, close your eyes, and envision your friend, child, parent, sibling, spouse, grandparent, or partner. That you accept that dead doesn't mean GONE. That you send out a "Merry Christmas" and "I love you" and then BELIEVE when you hear his or her whispered reply of "I love you, too. Merry Christmas."

Sandy Goodman is the author of Love Never Dies: A Mother's Journey from Loss to Love (Jodere Group, 2002), and the founder and chapter leader of the Wind River Chapter of The Compassionate Friends.

Calendar of Events

Date & Time	Event/Meeting	Location	Messages
December 14, 2004 9:00 am—10:30 am	Professional Advisory Committee Meeting	B.F.O. Office	
December 14, 2004 6:30 pm	Board of Directors Meeting	At a local restaurant to be announced.	
January 11, 2005 9:00 am—10:30 am	Professional Advisory Committee Meeting	B.F.O. Office	
January 18, 2005 6:30 pm	Board of Directors Meeting	B.F.O. Office	



I know this will be a hard season for me.

I will face it one day at a time.

I will acknowledge when grief hovers close.

I will try to be open to times when joy may surprise me, too.

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.