



**BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO**

July/August 2005  
Volume 9 Issue 3

**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*

**Welcome to our shorter, more casual summer edition of the newsletter. This edition is being sent to you by hard mail as we are also enclosing other material which we encourage you to read and reflect upon. Our regular newsletter format will return with the September/October edition.**

*Our Annual General Meeting and Volunteer Recognition Evening was held on June 23. It was a wonderful evening full of energy, dedication, passion and hope. The following presentation by Linda Ger Walters, Executive Director set the tone not only for the evening but for how BFO plans to move through this challenging year.*

This AGM marks our 18<sup>th</sup> year in operation. As most of you know, I joined BFO Halton/Peel just 3 months ago and cannot speak directly to our 2004 fiscal year. I can however, highlight that 2004 was a year of challenge, celebration, and continued accomplishment. As a result of some of the challenges - much value has been gained. Organizations such as Bereaved Families, have choices to make when faced with challenges. They can "give up" and say - "we tried and nothing seems to work" or they can rise and empower themselves - as this organization has.

Through the unrivalled tenacity of our Board of Directors, our Professional Advisory Committee and committed staff and volunteers, we have now moved into 2005 with determination, strength and direction. This is becoming a pivotal year for new visions, new energy and unquestionably - the assurance in upholding and honouring our mission and mandate in supporting *the bereaved to learn to live with grief.*

There is one individual who must be acknowledged for her insight, love, and compassion for BFO. Wendy Dean, your

former Executive Director - exemplifies courage and belief. She stepped back into the E.D. position, **as a volunteer**, on an interim basis until the position was filled. Wendy - is a treasure and a blessing. On behalf of everyone associated with our organization - we thank her.

There is a guiding principle in Hebrew called TIKUN OLAM. The translation means:

*TO REPAIR THE WORLD. TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE. TO GIVE BACK.*

Bereaved Families is an organization about character - and yes, about choice. For within the context of deep pain, choices are made to seek comfort with others and continue the cycle in giving back to others. This is character building. This is TIKUN OLAM.

What an honour and legacy we offer to our loved ones by giving back and making a difference. It is through the profound loss experience that we have gone through that allows us to transform this loss into **HOPE, POSSIBILITY, and COMPASSION** - especially under adversity. For who better can understand loss at this level than those who have experienced it? Transforming Loss into Meaning takes courage and belief—and, as an essential service in offering grief support to the community when the unfortunate occasion will arise, is a gift to the healing process and nurturance to our community. We have the capacity for resilience - always holding on to our core values of respect, non-judgement, mutual support and understanding.

In Ashley Davis Prend's Book entitled TRANSCENDING LOSS, she states: *"Because of your loved one's death, you are in a unique position to reach out and make a difference in this world. This is what gives meaning to death. This is what gives meaning to life."* And in the words of Loretta Girzaris, an American writer and educator, *"If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, extraordinary things begin to happen"*.

I believe that BFO is an extraordinary organization and this year is dedicated to moving forward in an extraordinary way. This year is committed to ensuring that everyone can see where their fit is in contributing to our growth and capacity. ***There is a place for everyone.***

This year is your opportunity to continue to make a difference through your financial support, and, perhaps by participating on a sub-committee such as fundraising, grief in the workplace, Board of Directors, community outreach or through individual or group support. And this year is bringing continued TIKUN OLAM.

*There are those whose lives affect all others around them. Quietly touching one heart, who in turn, touches another. Reaching out to ends further than they would ever know.*

William Bradfield

**2004 CHAMPIONS OF HEALING**

*United Way of Peel Region*

**2004 PARTNERS IN HEALING**

*CIBC Group of Companies \* Hoffmann-La Roche Canada \* Narvali Digital Photography \* RBC Financial Group Foundation \* The Simple Alternative \* Tire World Inc. \* Turner & Porter Funeral Directors Ltd. \* Ward Funeral Home \* Simon & Wendy Dean*

**We reserve the right to edit submissions as needed. Submissions for September/October Newsletter must be received no later than**

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**Highlights From The Office**

Recent months have been full of change and challenges. As most of you know, Linda Ger Walters has joined our staff as Executive Director. Linda's determination and dedication to BFO-H/P has given a renewed energy to the office and we move forward with new programming and funding opportunities.

Catherine DaCosta has resigned as Development Officer but we are delighted to have Luiz Godinho join our staff through an HRDC grant. Luiz will be coordinating our Business Campaign and showing off his wizardry in graphic design as he develops new marketing tools for Halton/Peel.

Natasha Thompson has joined our staff for the summer, again through HRDC, and is working on several projects for us during her tenure here.

After breaking for the summer, support groups will start again in the early fall. If you are currently waiting for a group you can expect a call towards the end of August.



This photo illustrates to wonderful connections made by children ages 9-12 in a recent group facilitated by Anna Anderson, Grace Dhanjal and Mikaila Green.

We are very excited to announce that we are in the planning stages of offering several new groups which will hopefully include:

- a spousal loss group for younger widow and widowers
- a program for grandparents
- a crisis response team
- a follow-up group for those who have completed their regular support group and wish to reconnect.
- additionally, we plan to resume our bi-monthly Share & Support nights

Another important note is the BFO Halton/Peel will no longer be charging an Administrative Fee for groups. Rather we will be asking for a voluntary charitable donation to offset some of the expenses incurred in offering groups. Tax receipts will be issued for these donations. The Walk to Remember and our Annual Golf Tournament were both excellent opportunities for our families to come together and connect. Our sincere appreciation is extended to all those who participated. The Annual General Meeting and Volunteer Recognition Evening was a wonderful night and we will give you a full report when we return to our usual newsletter format in September

**Donna Parco**

It is with great sadness that we announce the death on July 6, 2005 of our amazing volunteer and dear friend, Donna Parco. Donna, a professional volunteer, was dedicated to the adolescents who sought help from BFO-H/P both at the office and in the school system. Despite her fragile health Donna shared her incredible gifts of love, compassion and caring and she will be greatly missed by all whose lives she touched. Donna was honoured by BFO in May, 2004 when she was chosen as our Volunteer of the Year.

*Loved Ones Remembered*

**Marek Ustohal**

*May 4, 1962—August 25, 1988*

**Michelle Sylvestre-Williams**

*August 24, 1977-February 9, 1997*

*Happy Birthday, Love Mom, Dad, Renee & Nicholas*

**An Opportunity to Support B.F.O. Halton/Peel**

B.F.O. Halton/Peel is thrilled to have been chosen as the charity to receive proceeds from the Garden Brothers Circus which will be appearing in Brampton on **Sat., Aug. 6th** at 11 am, 3:30 pm and 7:30 pm and on **Sun. Aug. 7th** at 1:00 pm and 4:30 pm. The Garden Brothers Circus is sponsored by the Police Retirees of Ontario Incorporated, ( P.R.O. Inc.) and a portion of the **advance ticket sales** for this event will be donated to BFO. For ticket information please call: 1-800-296-7166 or 1-800-580-5456. We urge you to make every effort to support this event with your attendance or by sponsoring a child, senior or a person with a disability to attend.



**WANTED: LIBRARY BOOKS**

Our Library is very much in need of some new books. Do you perhaps have some books that were helpful to you when your loved one died, that you would be willing to part with? Please call us at 905-813-4337 if you can donate any books.

