

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

- Dec. 7 Remembrance Service and Celebration of Life Tree Lighting, 7 p.m., First United Methodist Church, 210 Soule, Dodge City
- Dec. 8-31 Celebration of Life Campaign. Christmas tree will be located in the Village Square Mall
- Dec. 9 Thursday Night Grief Support Group, 6:30 p.m., Hospice of the Prairie Meeting Room; Jerry Hodges, facilitator
- Dec. 12 Compassionate Friends Candle lighting Ceremony, 7 p.m., Hospice of the Prairie
- Dec. 13 No Compassionate Friends Support Group
- Dec. 15 Bereavement Luncheon, 12 noon, Inn Pancake House, 1610 W. Wyatt Earp, Dodge City; Dick Robbins, host
- Dec. 23 No Thursday Night Grief Support Group
- Dec. 25 We wish you a Christmas filled with hope and warm memories!

## Christmas Memories

When snowflakes dance on winter winds  
And colored 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 spaces within my heart,  
At this season, seems to grow  
'Till oftentimes it fills the days  
And many nighttimes 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 so 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.

written by **Sandy Siewers**

BEREAVEMENT NEWSLETTER is a publication of Hospice of the Prairie, Inc., 200 Fourth Circle., Dodge City, KS 67801, (620) 227-7209, www.hospiceoftheprairie.com. Please help us keep our printing and mailing costs down by notifying us if your address has changed or you no longer wish to be on our newsletter list.



# Bereavement Newsletter

December 2010

200 Fourth Circle • Dodge City, KS

Tel: (620) 227-7209 • Fax: (620) 227-7429

## Coping With Grief During The Holidays

By **Don Harold Lawrence**

One of the most difficult times for bereaved persons is that period between Thanksgiving Day and the second day of January. Many bereaved individuals have found the following suggestions to be practical and effective in helping them cope with grief and manage holiday depression.

### 1. Be Yourself

Tell yourself, "It's okay to be me this Christmas!" Do what you need to do in order to manage your grief during the holidays. It's okay if you do not mail Christmas cards, give gifts, or decorate this year. You may feel a need to take a trip, change some of the family traditions, or simply to cry at times. Nowhere is it "cut in stone" that the family must meet at your home for Christmas dinner, even though they have always done so. In years past you were not experiencing grief, but this year you may feel that entertaining the family is more than you can handle.

Because you know your feelings better than anyone else, you know your physical, emotional, and mental capacities and limitations. Out of love for yourself, and by exercising common sense, decide what you are able to do and not able to do. Do not feel that you have to make explanations or offer apologies. Once you have made your decision, stick with your decision. Do not choose to feel guilty or permit others to make you feel guilty.

### 2. Take Care of Yourself

The old myth is that bereaved people need to "hold up" and "be strong"

for other members of the family. It is important that a person who has suffered a traumatic loss be able to grieve. This is necessary if the healing process is to have a chance to work.

Face your feelings; express your grief; and come to terms with how you honestly feel. Assure yourself that you will not always experience this much pain. You are moving through grief toward a new life.

Pay close attention to your health. Get proper diet and exercise. Your doctor can provide a list of foods and nutrition that you need. Exercise helps to relieve the stress that is present in grief. Drink water. Get adequate rest. Stress makes it difficult for one to rest and sleep. Set aside specific blocks of

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**THE COMPASSIONATE FRIENDS**  
Supporting Family After a Child Dies

Light a candle for all  
children who have died

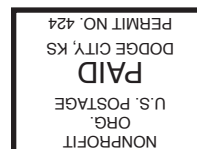
**Worldwide  
Candle  
Lighting®**

... that their light  
may always shine.

**Sunday, December 12, 2010  
7 PM Around the Globe**



*Compassionate Friends & Hospice of the Prairie  
Invite you to a local candlelighting  
Hospice of the Prairie Meeting Room  
200 Fourth Circle, Dodge City*

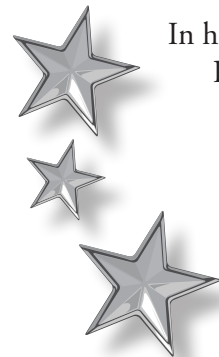


Hospice of the Prairie, Inc.  
200 Fourth Circle  
P.O. Box 1298  
Dodge City, KS 67801



**Hospice of the Prairie**  
invites you and your family to a  
**Remembrance Service & Celebration of Life**  
**Tree Lighting Ceremony**

In honor of your loved one and others who have passed away  
Please join us Tuesday, December 7, 2010 at 7:00 pm



First United Methodist Church  
210 Soule, Dodge City  
In the Parlor Room  
(use the east entrance of the building)  
Reception will follow the ceremony  
Please RSVP by December 3  
227-7209 or 1-800-466-7209



*Celebrate*



*Life!*

The "Celebration of Life Tree" your tax-deductible contribution to Hospice of the Prairie, Inc. will illuminate a symbolic light on a beautiful holiday tree. You may dedicate your light in honor of someone you admire or in memory of someone you miss - names will be on display with the tree. Brighten the holiday season by helping us Celebrate Life!

December 7th Dedication & Remembrance Ceremony, First United Methodist Church, 7:00 p.m.  
(Please RSVP to 227-7209 if you wish to attend)

December 8th-31st On display at Village Square Mall

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

In honor of \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of \_\_\_\_\_

(Please attach additional names on a separate sheet of paper)

I would like to notify someone of my gift:

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ gift notification cards.

Please mail \$20 for each light requested to  
Hospice of the Prairie, Inc., P.O. Box 1298  
Dodge City, KS 67801

*Coping With Grief During The Holidays*

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time in which you rest, even if you do not sleep. Learn to relax. Your doctor, the local mental health office, and the local library can provide you with helpful materials on how to relax.

**3. Get Organized**

Designing your own plan—which is based on your own particular situation—will help you get organized and bring some structure and definition to your life which has been disorganized and chaotic due to the loss of your loved one.

Planning and preparing will also reduce some of the stress that is present during the holidays. Getting organized, designing a schedule, and sticking to your plan will greatly reduce your stress and anxiety, and will enable you to function and regain control of your life.

**4. Make Necessary Choices**

You may feel that Christmas shopping is more than you can handle this year. And, if you do not feel like shopping this year, you might consider giving money as gifts, doing catalog shopping by telephone, or ordering gifts from one of the home-shopping channels on television or the Internet.

If you do decide to go shopping, do only as much as you feel you are able to do at any one given time. Do not force yourself to do what you are not able to do.

An alternative to the traditional family Christmas meal that has always been at your home would be to take your relatives and loved ones to a restaurant.

**5. Let Loved Ones Help**

Those who love you will be glad to help with shopping, cleaning, decorating, cooking, and other responsibilities. Loved ones will appreciate your mentioning specific ways they

can help. We are wise to ask for and receive help because we are not Superman or Superwoman!

**6. Keep Life Simple**

This is good advice for everyday living, but it is especially applicable for those who are facing the holidays following the loss of a loved one. Eliminate unnecessary responsibilities and activities. Follow the sage old advice: Simplify! Simplify! Simplify!

When we are experiencing grief it is difficult for us to take care of even the most basic chores and responsibilities. Our energy is depleted due to the added stress.

Recall how difficult it was for you to function during the days following surgery or how painful it was to move about after you had badly sprained your ankle. The same rule applies to the time following the loss of a loved one. When we are injured it is difficult to do what we could normally do.

Thus, the holidays are a time to keep things simple.

**7. Write a Letter to Your Deceased Loved One**

Many have discovered the positive and therapeutic value of writing a personal letter to a deceased loved one. Writing such a letter provides you with the opportunity to express all of your memories and feelings (negative and positive). It is a means of expressing all those unsaid things you wish you had said. Letter-writing can result in a healing experience, and it can also play a vital role in acceptance and recovery.

**8. Share Your Feelings**

Experience and wisdom teach us the importance of talking out our grief with someone who will listen. This may be a trusted friend, clergy person, or counselor.

As you verbalize and ventilate those deep feelings and memories, you express and release that which is causing you to be anxious and depressed. Talking out your feelings provides you with an opportunity to explore your feelings and thoughts, and to come to terms with how you really feel. Such ventilation and expression play an important role in re-stabilizing your life and re-establishing tranquility, harmony, and balance.

**9. Attend a Grief Support Group**

In this setting you will find yourself surrounded by an atmosphere of acceptance, understanding, support, and nurture. You will be with persons who are able to reach out to you because they, too, have experienced the pain of loss. Here you will find the kind of acceptance that gives you permission to be yourself and express exactly how you feel without apology. Grief support groups have played a critical role in the recovery of many bereaved persons.

**10. Learn about Grief**

Educate yourself. Read materials written by professionals who specialize in this field. Listen to audio tapes and compact disks which have been prepared specifically to provide assistance to bereaved persons. Contact your local funeral home and ask for educational materials regarding grief. Discuss the matter with those who have suffered a loss and who know what grief is.

**11. Draw upon your spirituality**

Many bereaved individuals have shared how, in leaning on God during their deepest sorrow, they have experienced His love, support, and security. God is greater than any problem we have, and this means that God is greater than grief!