A NEW YEAR, A NEW START

A new year is a new beginning. It is a time when many people make plans and formulate resolutions designed to improve their lives.

But when we are grieving, our tendency is to stand at the threshold of a new year looking back rather than forward. Our loss defines our life and obscures thoughts of the future. We fear that walking through the door into a new year means leaving our loved one behind. Moving forward may seem to be an act of betrayal or abandonment. We may fear forgetting or letting go. And yet, we stand on the precipice of 2017 and our life moves on.

Though we might not be ready to embrace it, one undeniable offering of a new year is hope. One writer said, “Hope is hearing the music of the future. Faith is having the courage to dance to it.” Each breath is an acknowledgement that the last chapter in our life story has yet to be written.

Each day is another opportunity to grow and move toward healing. Each new moment is pregnant with hope. The decisions we make in those moments shape us and our future. Ironically, the things that most often fill our resolutions are the very things that help us most in our grief: getting plenty of rest, eating healthy, exercising regularly and connecting more closely with others.

Yet, change is not easy, especially change weighed down by our grief. How do we move forward? One word: Courage.

Webster defines courage as “the mental or moral strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear or difficulty.”

The journey of grief is difficult beyond measure. We hope that as you venture into 2017 you find the courage to embrace the new opportunities that are before you, persevere in spite of the challenges you face, and seek help from fellow travelers when you need it.

As the new year approaches, we look forward to offering activities and events that will aid your grief journey. As always, those activities are listed on the back page of this newsletter. We hope one resolution will be to take advantage of these offerings.

For many of us, the last thing we feel now is courageous. Yet, as Mary Ann Radmacher writes:

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying, ‘I will try again tomorrow’.”
**Twelve Things To Remember**

When You Have Suffered A Loss

From *What Will Help Me?* By James E. Miller

1. The best way to handle your feelings is not to “handle” them but to feel them.

2. Only by giving your losses expression will you begin to heal.

3. Seldom is this loss only “this loss” for you.

4. There is one person who can take care of you better than anyone, and that’s you.

5. In allowing others to help you, you help everyone: them and you.

6. God may not be finished yet with those who try to give you care, so show grace.

7. Sometimes it makes perfect sense to act a little crazy.

8. Your grieving, your timing and your progress in healing are all uniquely yours, and that’s as it should be.

9. You have a choice in how you respond to your loss.

10. Your time of loss can be a time of soul-making unlike any other.

11. Not all your questions will have answers, but they’re worth asking anyway.

12. Your time of loss can become a time of discovery.
There are Many Ways to Channel Your Grief to Honor Your Loved One

A bereaved family took their mother’s wish to help others and made it their mission to help feed the hungry. The family — who prefers to remain anonymous since that is what their mother wanted — purchased $100 worth of groceries for one hungry family each month. Their mother was one of 14 children, so she knew firsthand what it was like to miss a meal.

“Feeding a hungry family was her idea. She wanted that in lieu of flowers, and we decided to do it for as long as we could,” her son says.

Area churches help to find those in need. The family buys the food, then brings it to a church representative who then delivers the groceries. Enclosed with the groceries is a note explaining that the family is honoring their mother’s memory.

In order to continue for as long as possible, the family does receive some help. Children at a local daycare center collect canned goods and raise money for the groceries by holding bake sales.

The family has fed hungry families from Pocomoke City to Salisbury to Selbyville, and as far away as Baltimore County. Her son says helping feed the hungry helps his family with their own grief. And the returns are priceless, he adds.

“We heard that the families were actually in tears,” he says. “Everybody has responded so gratefully. Today people are so grateful for food that we take for granted.”

His mother has passed, but her son says her legacy of giving lives. “She was a giving person all her life and she always worried about other people. We will continue to give in my mom’s memory as long as we can.”

RECOMMENDED READING

How to Go On Living When Someone You Love Dies
By Therese A. Rando, Ph.D.
January 1991, Random House Publishing Group

When a loved one dies, many of us are unprepared and ill-equipped to navigate the seas of grief and despair. In this beautifully written, compassionate guide, author Therese A. Rando, Ph.D. sends a message that there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and offers meaningful, actionable advice on how each of us can deal and heal with loss in both the short and long term. This is a book you’ll want to keep by your bedside and share with others experiencing loss in their own way.

Dreaming Beyond Death: A Guide to Pre-Death Dreams and Visions
By Kelly Bulkeley and the Reverend Patricia Bulkley

A practical approach from an expert caregiver and a respected religious scholar

In Dreaming Beyond Death, Kelly Bulkeley and Patricia Bulkley bring together their diverse areas of expertise to create a guide to pre-death dreams that offers practical advice and provides a broader understanding of this phenomenon. Drawing from a rich understanding of dreaming in culture, history, psychology, and through modern dream study, this book explicitly addresses three common aspects of pre-death dreams and offers interpretations that will aid both the dying person and the caregiver.

Rev. Patricia Bulkley’s experience with the transformative possibilities of pre-death dreams as a hospice spiritual counselor lends this book a deeply personal and human touch, while Kelly Bulkeley’s insightful analysis and intellectual framework make it easy to understand the deeper meanings behind this type of dreaming. A final chapter provides resources and concrete methods for a caregiver to respectfully guide a dying person through the dreaming process and, ultimately, to a sense of peace.
Reach Coastal Hospice at 410-742-8732
or www.coastalhospice.org

January / February 2017
Bereavement Activities

**Dorchester County**

**Dinner Social Group** – Kay’s at the Airport, Cambridge
January 2 and February 6 at 5 p.m.
RSVP ~ Elmer Davis 410-726-2583

**Support Group** – Dorchester County Library,
303 Gay St., Cambridge
January 10 & 24, February 7 & 28 at 6 p.m.
Information ~ Elmer Davis 410-726-2583

**Worcester County**

**Lunch Social Group** – all at 1 p.m.
January 19 - Fager’s Island, Ocean City
February 16 - Victorian Room in The Dune, Ocean City
RSVP ~ Diana Pikulsky 410-641-6566

**Support Group** – Ocean Pines Library,
11107 Cathell Rd, Ocean Pines
Every Thursday at 11 am.
Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

Please note: Socials are “Dutch treat”

**Somerset County**

**Support Group** – Somerset County Library,
100 Collins Street, Crisfield
First and third Tuesdays at 11 a.m.
Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

**Wicomico County**

**Lunch Social Group** – all at 1 p.m.
January 11 - Adam’s Ribs, Fruitland
January 25 - Denny’s, Fruitland
February 8 - Red Lobster, Salisbury
February 22 - Outback Steakhouse, Salisbury
RSVP ~ Lynette Chase 410-901-2292

**Support Group** – The MAC Center,
909 Progress Circle, Salisbury
Second and fourth Fridays at 1 p.m.
Information ~ Bob Miller 410-251-8163

**Support Group** – The MAC Center,
909 Progress Circle, Salisbury
Second and fourth Mondays at 6 p.m.

These groups provide a time of respite and a safe place to express feelings in the grieving process. We offer these activities at no cost to any adult who has experienced the death of a loved one, even if they were not a patient of Coastal Hospice. For information, call 410-742-8732.