

Center Highlights

From the Executive Director -



Grief... a word, an experience, a journey. We at the Center for Loss and Bereavement know all too well that the path of grief starts with an end, a change – a loss of something or someone cherished. Through the 18 years of service that the Center has opened its doors and arms to the grieving community, our staff have had the fortitude and guidance to do this very sensitive work under the leadership of its founders, Christine Smith and Shirley Elrod.

Chris and Shirley knew early on that the mission of the Center fulfilled a long-term need for those affected by shattering loss. They have fostered hope and growth in each person its mission touches, especially for the staff members, who transform their vision into action as the working hands of the Center. Each individual who has joined the Center since its inception has had the passion to serve others kindled and nurtured by these two caring, courageous and inspiring women. Though we know they will both continue to support the Center from an advisory role moving into the future, saying ‘goodbye’ to their active presence has been a journey in transitional grief for us all.

Growth... In facilitating resilience, continued bonds and meaning making in the face of loss, the Center’s staff have shared the mixed feelings of bittersweet excitement, sadness and hopeful wishes with Shirley and Chris as we approached this milestone of change together. We have shared memories, laughter and even tears. We find ourselves honoring what must be let go, while dedicating ourselves to hold on to providing the same quality care, professionalism and compassion that have always been at the core of our mission.

Gratitude... I am honored to be a part of the new leadership team of this important organization. As I begin my role as the current Executive Director, I am overcome with a new sense of appreciation of all that it takes to sustain the impact of our work. Words cannot convey the profound gratitude we have for Chris and Shirley’s devotion to making the Center a pillar of our community’s strength. We are equally thankful for the many levels of support that each of you have provided to help the Center reach so many people.

As we uphold our quality, responsive care to those in the darkest hours of their lives, we hope you will remain a part of our extended network of light and communal strength, at any level you are able. When called upon, we will continue to extend hope from our offices in Skippack outward into the neighborhoods, schools, businesses, faith-based centers and homes of those in need. Our doors remain open, our shoulders remain strong and our services remain in need of your continued support. I welcome you to reach out to me anytime for guidance in our services or if you wish to discuss ways of supporting our mission.

Emily



Our Combined Board
(Alumni, Advisory and Current)



Commissioned Art
dedicated to our
Founders



Plaque Presentation



Our Staff



Thank you to the one hundred+Women who Care!

This group of women get together once a quarter to listen to various organizations' missions and vote on a worthy cause to donate funds. Recently, the Center was the recipient of their generosity which will support programs of our Center, most specifically, Camp Millie. We are so grateful!

ADULT SUPPORT GROUP PROGRAM

Sometimes people need a hand to hold, an ear to listen and a heart to understand them

Six Week Support Groups

Loss of Spouse or Partner, Support for Loss due to Addictions, Support for Loss due to Suicide, Adult Loss of Parent

Ongoing Support Groups

Monthly Loss of Child- *For parents who have experienced the death of a child as a teen or adult. 2nd Monday or 4th Thursday of the month*

Twice-A-Month Young Adult Grief Support (YAGS)- *For ages 19-29 Every other Wednesday 7:00-8:15 pm. Ongoing Registration/No Fee.*

**For dates, times and cost contact
Lois at 610-222-4110, ext. 118**

PROFESSIONAL ROUNDTABLE TRAININGS

March 15, 2018 9:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Understanding Children's Grief

We will focus on the unique characteristics and needs of the school-aged grieving child. 3 CEUs

April 26, 2018 9:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Case Studies in Grief

This training will illustrate complicated grief through case study presentations of important aspects of grief. We will connect these case studies with theory and practice and discuss possible interventions. 3 CEUs

Trainings are \$70 for one training and \$130 if you register for both. For additional information and registration forms visit our website www.bereavementcenter.org or contact Claire at 610-222-4110, ext. 104



Grief Notes

Our last Grief Notes column focused on the current societal epidemic of opiate abuse and overdose and the unique difficulties faced by mourners from such deaths. The Center has been inundated in recent years with bereaved loved ones seeking grief therapy and group support for these losses.

The grief experienced after such deaths is prone to becoming disenfranchised. This concept was coined by Kenneth Doka, PhD, in 1987. Disenfranchised grief refers to grief that is unacknowledged, avoided, minimized or otherwise not legitimized by society and/or the mourner's social support system. One of the most important "ingredients" to facilitate a healthy and uncomplicated grief process is the availability and quality of social support. Disenfranchisement may result when the social support is either unavailable or breaks down, resulting in "empathic failure". Disenfranchisement may occur for different reasons.

Sometimes, the relationship itself between the mourner and deceased is not recognized or seen as legitimate. Examples of this are the death of an ex-spouse, an extramarital affair, a homosexual relationship, a cherished pet, stepparents/children, foster parents/children or a previous abuser or dysfunctional relationship. Similarly, disenfranchisement may also result when the loss is not acknowledged, such as abortion, infertility, or perinatal death. Perhaps the most potent contributor to disenfranchisement is the cause/circumstances of the death itself. Deaths due to addiction and suicide are prime examples. Surviving mourners are often plagued with associated stigma, guilt, regrets and shame regarding the relationship and/or specific circumstances of the death. This internalized, often private struggle can last months or years as the griever works toward a sense of peace. Social support is imperative during this time and frequently grievers yearn for it.

However, disenfranchised grievers often perceive that their supporters not only don't/can't understand the true nature of addiction or mental illness, but they don't make a sincere attempt to do so. The bereaved often report well-intentioned loved ones or acquaintances who attempt to offer solace by using insensitive or unhelpful platitudes. For example, "He's in a better place" or "At least he's not suffering anymore". Frequently, mourners also sense avoidance of conversation about the deceased or their grief in general. These perceptions of judgment and avoidance, real or imagined, exacerbate alienation. This can result in defensive withdrawal, i.e. hesitation to risk seeking support.

The clinicians at our Center encourage our clients to be assertive grievers. This means sometimes it is necessary to respectfully teach your supporters about your individual grief experience and especially what you need or don't need from them. A crucial aspect of this is often expressing your need to talk about the deceased despite the fact that it may evoke painful emotions for both parties. We encourage supporters of disenfranchised grievers to simply maintain a curious, open-heart and respectfully ask how you can help. Finding just the right words is often impossible and sometimes just providing a kind and loving safe space can be very healing.



THE CENTER FOR LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT

Children's Summer Camp - **Camp Millie**

Camp Millie 2017

Central Community Center
Lansdale, PA



Riding the Waves

June 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th
9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Supporting our youth as they discover how to gain balance and insight with their grief is what the Center's Camp Millie summer program is all about. Surf's Up during this year's four-day adventure, *Riding the Waves*. Campers will discover what strengths they have to maneuver the often challenging "waters" of a loss and learn skills to ride a wave to their future. Beach-themed crafts, games and activities create a fun-filled, unforgettable summer camp experience.

Camp Millie is for children ages 6 to young teens who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling or other close family member. Families provide their own transportation and bag lunches. The fee per camper is \$100 with discounts for siblings. It includes all activities, a t-shirt, snacks and lunch on the last day.

Registration priority is given to new campers.

Registration forms available at www.bereavementcenter.org/camp-millie or call 610-222-4115.



Make A Splash with Us

Volunteer! It takes many hands to support our campers during the week of Camp. Please consider participating in our Volunteer Training (other side of insert) so you can be a Buddy to some of our campers. We also need part time help with some of our activities! In addition, an energetic undergraduate or graduate student with an interest in gaining valuable hands-on experience with a bereavement program is sought to be our Camp Millie Intern.

**Contact Christina to learn more
610-222-4115**

Donate! Help us to defray the cost of offering a camp by making a **monetary donation** to the Center. Many supplies can be purchased with **gift cards**, especially to stores such as AC Moore, Walmart, Michaels or Costco! There are several collectible items needed this year including: cd disks, shells, colored sand, cardboard egg cartons, small decorative stones and empty Figi and Gatoraid plastic bottles.

THANK YOU!!!

Some Advantages of a Four-Day Camp

- Themes and discussions have time to build as the week progresses.
- For children new to a grief support program or those who are reluctant or slower to engage, the model allows time for safety, trust and connection to be established, often leading to deeper conversations.
- Children have time away from camp to process on their own or simply take a break, sometimes leading to new thoughts, discoveries or insights they come back to share the next day.
- Daily conversations can be had at home, bringing the whole family into the child's experience.
- Provides parents and guardians the opportunity to gain insight into how their child is responding to his/her grief. It also allows for the child's caregivers to be a main source of comfort or information, if needed.
- An ever changing, wide variety of activities, coping strategies and discussions are offered so a camper can explore what is most supportive and helpful to him/her individually.

And unique to Camp Millie:

- The Center's staff, specially trained in bereavement and who work with children regularly, plan and facilitate all aspects of Camp Millie, providing a safety-net of expertise, experience and insight and interact daily with parents and guardians.
- Those who participate in Camp can easily be connected to other services of our Center including counseling and our school-year peer support program, Nello's Corner.



THE CENTER FOR LOSS AND BEREAVEMENT

Children's Bereavement Program - Nello's Corner



Nello's Corner 2017-2018 has been going full speed. We have been working diligently in our peer groups, striving to support children and teens who have experienced the death of a close family member. They make connections with one another in a safe, comfortable place where they can share feelings and stories. Nello's Corner encourages all children to be themselves and explore their individual grief journeys. Support groups for ages 4-19 and the adults who care for them are held on Tuesdays or Wednesdays afterschool or in the evening. All who might benefit are invited to give us a call.



Contact Lois 610-222-4115 or lh@bereavementcenter.org

BEYOND THE WALLS

Did you know that in addition to counseling, trainings and group programs, our professional staff provides **off-site services** for children, teens, families and the communities that serve them? While we are not an emergency response crisis center, we are continually involved with providing short and long-term support to those in need **upon request**. The following are some examples of how our reach extends beyond our walls:

- A four day summer bereavement camp in June
- Grief support groups offered in schools, as well as in business or faith-based settings
- Workshops for developing organizational response to a death or tragedy
- Processing support for teachers, parents, teams, coaches, etc. prior to or after a loss
- Trainings on various bereavement-related topics
- Participation in career days, conferences, panels, in-services, committee meetings
- Timely response by a professional staff member to all phone and email inquiries for support and/or resources

Please reach out! 610-222-4110

CALLING ALL POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS!

Has your heart been drawn to volunteer with our children's programs? Do you enjoy working with children? Do you have empathy and compassion for others?

Search no further!

We hope you will consider our annual **Volunteer Group Facilitator Training Course** this spring:

Thursday, March 29th 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 5th 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Thursday, April 19th 6:00-9:00 p.m.

Observe a group on your choice of April 10th, 11th, 17th or 18th

You must complete ALL 4 parts of the training and provide clearances in order to volunteer.

Once completed, you may volunteer in one or both of our children's programs. Nello's Corner is an every other week commitment from September through May for 2.25 hours on a Tuesday or Wednesday. Camp Millie is held Monday, June 25th through Thursday June 28th, 8:30 a.m. - 2:15 p.m.

If interested please contact Christina 610-222-4115

CONTINUING ON



Every once in a while, our staff is fortunate to have a reconnection with someone who has participated in our Nello's Corner program. It may be a chance encounter in the community, a donation which arrives in the mail, a phone call that begins, "You probably don't remember me..." or a surprise visit to our Center. Some of us have been at the Center long enough to have first-hand memories of the time these individuals spent with us. We point to a memory quilt square on our wall, find a star which hangs from our ceiling in memory of their presence years ago or tell a story. We eagerly hear updates about school, graduations, parents remarrying, loves, college, life, new jobs and the struggles and turns along the way. It is nice to know that our program is a part of their journey in who they are today and that time at the Center is remembered. We are continually grateful for the lessons taught to us about death, loss, grief, life and hope by the wonderful participants of Nello's Corner, past and present. You will always be part of our circle here at Nello's Corner as the journey continues for us all.

Thank You For Your Support

"I am only one; but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; I will not refuse to do the something I can do." ~ Helen Keller

Individual Donations:

* signifies two or more donations during 2017

Bernadette R. Abate
John Alchin and Hal Marryatt
Jim Alexander
• *In memory of Brian Alexander*
Amy and Matthew Anderson
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
Anonymous
Anonymous
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
Rose Hartle Barnhart
Frank and Mira Batson*
Kim Beam*
Maura and Mike Bear
• *In honor of Peter DePaul*
Cate Becker
Carol and Bob Berardelli
• *In memory of Larry Smith and The Cresta Family (Angelo, Lee and Alan)*
Dr. and Mrs. Mark Bidwell
Theresa Lynne Borghi
Stacy M. Borans
Joan and John Bown
Dolores and Ron Boyle
• *In honor of Mr. Peter DePaul*
Stephanie Cehelsky
Eugene and Dianne Cestrone
James Clayton
• *In honor of Robb Muse*
Emily K. Clemens
Kenneth W. and Frances G. Clemens*
Mark and Iris Coblitz
David and Rhonda Cohen
Morgan Cooper
David and Barbara Cornish
• *In honor of Chris Smith's 70th Birthday*
Diane Croce
Joseph and Denise Daniele
Carl and Laurie Daddona
• *In memory of Sally Breen*
Carol and Joe Davis
• *In honor of Shirley Elrod*
Jane, Michael and Maria DeIRaso Clark
• *In memory of Thomas DeIRaso*
Sherry DeMito*
Greg and Cathie Dickey
Bill and Nancy Dingman*
Shannon and Dan Dingman
• *In honor of Shirley Elrod*
April Donahue
Dorney and Beth Douglass
• *In honor of Steven Douglass – 2017 Penn State Grad!*
William and Deborah Egan
Tom and Erica Elrod*
Pam Euteneuer*
Nancy and Roy Fairman
Cathy Farrell
John and Colleen Feras
Krissy, Tyler, Amanda, and Frank P. Focht
• *In honor of Uncle Judd DePaul's 90th Birthday*
Catharine and Keith Fretz
• *In memory of E. Richard Fretz and Christopher B. Fretz*

Helen Fretz*
• *In memory of Elmer Richard Fretz*
Jillian Gallagher
Robert and Louise Gilchrist
• *In memory of Gordon F. Linder*
Judy Giuliano*
• *In memory of Scott McKeeman*
• *In memory of Mary Baker*
• *In memory of Lee Schmalbach*
Brian Good
Leslie and Charles Gonce
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
James and Sara Gowing*
Mary Louise Graham
Martha E. Green
Marc Gresko
Helen M. Gruver
Kate Harper
Herb and MM Harris
Melanie and John Harris
Gordon Hart
Betty Helpa
Anna Hillman
Kevin and Kelly Hooper
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
Jane Barr Horstman
Pam and Mara Howard
• *In memory of Dan Howard*
Randy and Linda James
Girvin and Monica Janicki
Edith W. Jenkins*
• *In memory of Frank and Caroline Jenkins*
Andrea Kalaczniak
Andrea and Warren Kantor*
• *In memory of Andrew Cavitolto*
Scott and Selaine Keaton
Kenton Keiser
• *In memory of Jeanne Keiser*
Winnie Keller
Diana K. Kelly
• *In memory of Allen R. King (beloved brother), Lehman Kapp (Methacton), Kenneth Lawrence, and Dr. Frank Husted*
Jack and Carolyn Kelly
Allison Kerlin*
• *In memory of my grandparents and Uncle Rick Kerlin*
Jack and Arlene Kilcoyne
• *In memory of Larry Parker*
Christian Kilyk
• *In memory of Pamela Kilyk*
Gloria Kimmel
• *In memory of Thomas Kimmel*
Chase and Linda Kneeland*
• *In memory of Malcolm L. Kneeland*
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Sister Marjorie Lawless, SSI
• *In memory of Matthew Madden*
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• *In honor of Carrie Ferraro*
Theresa and Kenneth Lepitre
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Georgia Lovelady*
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David R. Lowthert*
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Sam Magliente D.C.
• *In memory of Joe Magliente*
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• *In memory of Robert J. Porter, Jr.*
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Lauren and Joe Rieger
• *In memory of Lawrence Smith*
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Brian and Aileen Roberts
Catherine and James Roberts
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Sheri L. Strouse
Michael, Kelli, Kaitlin and Emily Suzuki*
• *In memory of Eric Y. Suzuki on the sixth anniversary of his death*
• *In memory of Eric Y. Suzuki on his 24th birthday*
Kyle Tevlin
Art and Ginny Tinner

Kathy Thomas*
Jane Thomson
• *In memory of Jack Thomson*
Emily and Steve Vincent
• *In memory of Walter and Earl*
Joseph Ward and Rita Porreca*
Ellen Watson
Dorothy K. Weik
Dale A. Westwood
Kelly Wichner
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
Regina Wieder
Drake and Sandy Williams
• *In memory of Larry Smith*
Marybeth Williamson
• *In honor of Elizabeth Kane's 10th Birthday*
Thelma and Jon Wood
• *In memory of loved ones*
Kim Woodring*
• *In memory of A.C. Woodring and Joe and Jo Pacholski*
Dawn Zapotok
• *In memory of Matt's father, Michael Holleman*
Lauren Zelnick

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The Women's Christian Fellowship of Central Schwenkfelder Church
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FOUNDATIONS:

AseraCare Hospice Foundation
Julian A. and Lois G. Brodsky Foundation
Gifts of Joy Foundation
The Mennonite Foundation
Nello Memorial Fund
The Stratton Foundation
Wynn Family Foundation
• *In memory of Jim Wynn*

Shirley and Brad Elrod
• *In honor of my precious family and the wonderful team of people that have supported me all these years with my work at the Center.*

Lawrence and Christine Smith Charitable Trust
• *In memory of my beloved husband, Larry Smith and in honor of my children, Christopher, Lauren and Andrew for their unyielding love and support.*



The Center for Loss and Bereavement

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Board of Directors:

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