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Upcoming Events

Tuesday, July 23rd
Comfort Coffee
9-10 a.m.
Courtyard by Marriott, Mankato

Save the Date

Sunday, September 29th
Children's Memorial Service
1-3 p.m.
OBS Children's Memorial Site at
Erlandson Park, Mankato
(Hilltop United Methodist Church if
inclement weather)

REMINDER

Annual installation of new memorial plaques and pavers are due to One Bright Star by July 31. Click this link to order: www.onebrightstar.org.

Contact Erica at director@onebrightstar.org or (507) 345-1920 for additional questions.

Contact Us:

Phone: (507) 345-1920
P.O. Box 1084
Mankato, MN 56002
onebrightstar.org



Have You Tried Comfort Coffee?

How Comfort Coffee Started - by Deb Drummer (OBS Board Member)

When my good friend Danielle Duffy lost her father, she struggled with grief, but when she lost her beautiful angel Blake, grief took on a whole new meaning. She inquired about a support group for parents and during a board meeting while discussing the concept of hosting coffee, Linda Janavaras commented, "come for coffee" but my mind heard "Comfort Coffee" and just like that, it came together! What a fantastic outlet it has been. I attend as often as I can and come away each time with another little bit of peace. This group of parents has helped my healing process immensely and I sincerely hope they feel the same. It is a group no-one wants to be a part of but sharing our experiences and



different ideas of dealing with our loss, recognizing and talking about our children and being there for each other is amazing medicine. The group is very informal. There is no agenda. You don't have to say a word if you choose not to and you are not required to attend. These parents are now my friends and some stay in touch outside the group. To assist more parents and realizing the Tuesday morning session is not convenient for many people, the board is looking for an alternative session and we'd appreciate your feedback as to a time/day that may work better. We hope to offer another gathering (or 2) in the near future so you can all experience the comfort of others in your shoes.

Words from Comfort Coffee attendee Marcia Wahoske

I am one of the faithful that goes to Tuesday morning Comfort Coffees. My favorite times are when someone new comes. If that person isn't ready to share the story that is uniquely theirs, I know that the rest of us will open up with our own. I am blessed by the stories, blessed to be with others who have known what I have known and live with, blessed to be moving forward in the company of those who show me the way. I have walked into our time together thinking I have nothing to say. I know that would be okay, but it rarely happens. Those are the days my tears will open the door to my heart, and the words follow. What I hear, what I feel from these strangers, now

friends, gives me the strength to go back into the world that doesn't know my journey and cannot feel my pain. My daughter died 2 1/2 years ago. Comfort coffee brought a very special woman and me together 18 months ago and her friendship has made an immeasurable difference in my life as I have had to regroup with my new reality. How would I have found her without the existence of this simple gathering? I don't know how best to get the word out, but having this moment let me encourage anyone who is hurting from their loss of a child to come and share, come and take comfort in not feeling alone, come and let the tears fall. We have an infinitely safe place for your tears.

In honor of Bereaved Parents Awareness Month, I wanted to share the blog post I wrote last year after attending my first National Bereaved Parents Conference. It was a life changing event for me in that I felt I truly found what would keep me going and how would approach my new life, even with those who may never understand. I would be inspired by others like me. I would find those, bereaved or not, that hold compassion in their hearts, and I would continue to share my story. Losing my son is not something I will get past, it will be a lifelong journey of overcoming obstacles and heartache and finding those who will truly help me through. If you have never attended a National Conference, I highly recommend BPUSA (Bereaved Parents of the USA). And as this year's Conference approaches in August, I cannot wait to see my friends, make new ones, and take away more inspiration on how to survive, find joy and help others. Love -Tracy

Still Living by Tracy McCabe, original blog post and additinal poem at www.hopeandhealinggrief.com

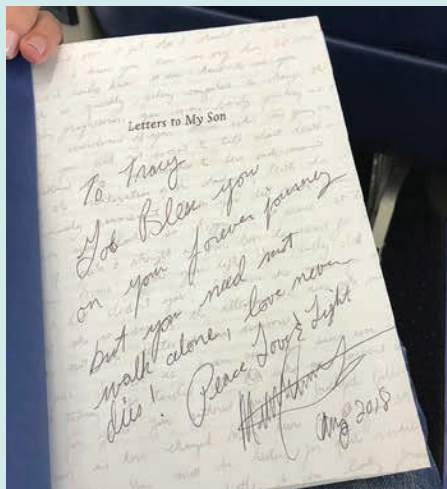
This past weekend, I attended my first National Conference for Bereaved Parents. This past weekend, my life was again forever changed. Never, ever, in one place have I felt so at ease being around so many people. I did not have to pretend I was ok when I wasn't. I was never "offended" by anything that anyone said. In fact, I heard such little things that I never would have thought would have such a profound impact on my heart and my way of thinking and the knowing that I am not alone. Compassion is truly what keeps us living.

One of my favorite moments that weekend was during a presentation with all the attendees. Someone sneezed. I have never heard an entire room of so many people say "Bless You" all at once, and truly, truly mean it. I was strangely comforted when I would hear someone say, "Don't forget your purse." Or ask "have you seen my water?" or "where am I going again?" or even "does anyone remember what I was going to say?" Grief brain is real and I'm going to be ok.

There was a moment at dinner when I asked if anyone needed anything as I got up to get more water. "A hug," a woman said. Yes, we need hugs, the real ones. Because of another beautiful woman who shared a story, I am no longer sad when I see a dead butterfly or dragonfly. I watched a dear friend, one that's been so strong and an inspiration to me, just break down and sob, and she was loved



Mitch Carmody and Kelly Holst at Memphis airport. Their sons are Kelly and Waylyn



A personal message of encouragement from Mitch, written in his book, *Letters to My Son: A Journey Through Grief*

and admired with even greater love and strength than before. There were secrets with no judgment. There was pain with no dismissal. And there was hope to come from all our despair.

I have to admit I was scared to leave. Of course I couldn't wait to see my family, but I was scared. Scared to feel so alone inside again, like no one really understands. Well, we can't make others understand unless we keep talking and keep sharing. We know that true understanding only comes with others who have lost a child, but if we keep sharing, maybe people will be less afraid to talk about it with us. We aren't just a few here and there... we are EVERYWHERE. We just don't always know who may be sitting next to us. Which brings me to the end of this story.

How delighted I was to see that a few of my bereaved friends were also waiting for flights together at the airport. We shared more stories, more hugs, more tears and more encouragement. Three of us then ended up at the same gate and the same flight back to Minneapolis. Little did we know, the man across from us was also a bereaved father. He so lovingly joined in our conversation and again another bond was formed.

During that last little while, was when I was overwhelmingly inspired. A renowned author, bereaved father and talented artist was sharing his wisdom with me. I had attended his workshop, had a copy of his book (now autographed of course) and envied that he was still so creative. I want that back so bad. I heard so many times at the conference, "write, write, write" and so here I am.

Bereaved Parents of the USA NATIONAL CONFERENCE

<https://www.facebook.com/BPUSA-2019-Gathering-Conference-1933921923313278/>
<https://www.bereavedparentsusa.org/>

Our annual gatherings provide an opportunity to hear some of the best speakers in the nation who are experts on many topics related to grief. They will inspire you with their messages of HOPE. They will offer you the tools you need to

continue to HEAL as you transition from mourning to living again after the loss of your child.

You will also get to know many parents and siblings from different parts of the United States who have experienced losses such as

yours. You will come to understand that you are not alone on this journey.

Please join us for 3 days of remembering, honoring and celebrating our children, brothers and sisters. Let this be the year that Hope & Healing will fill your heart...





invites you to our

CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL SERVICE



When: September 29th, 2019 at 1-3pm

Where: One Bright Star Children's Memorial Site
Erlandson Park,
corner of East Main Street and Victory Drive, Mankato

Back-up location in case of inclement weather:
Hilltop United Methodist Church,
108 S Manitou Drive, Mankato

Updates can be found on our Facebook page.

