



## In a Moment, a Family is Forever Changed

The phone call startled Theresa awake ... and thrust her family into a nightmare. There had been an accident, and her husband, Mark, was at Harborview Medical Center. The family rushed to his bedside, but Mark never regained consciousness. Theresa and their four children

suddenly found their world torn apart.

Mark was not in the audience for Matt's first high school play or Michelle's graduation. He never will share another outdoor adventure with Sarah, or finish building that model with Jordan. And Theresa has lost not only her life companion, but her partner in parenting and decision-making.

No one can change the reality of Mark's death, but at **GriefWorks** we've offered this bereaved family companionship for the journey. Our staff visited their home for a Family Huddle, which included the opportunity to share treasured memories of Mark. Shortly after, they attended the Holiday Public Forum, gaining tools for their first Christmas without Dad and lighting candles in his memory. At the Family Night Series, they learned more about the craziness of normal grief. They also found a safe place to share the pain, as well as the memories.

Together, with the help of our generous supporters, **GriefWorks** is striving to help grieving families and individuals mend their broken hearts and re-landscape their lives. Thank you for partnering with us in this work.

## Mark Your Calendars

### Holiday Public Forums ...

December 6<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30 p.m. and December 10<sup>th</sup> from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the **GriefWorks** office. (No cost.)



### A Night to Remember ...

December 7 from 7-8:30 p.m. at the Junior Achievement Building, 610 Perimeter Rd., Auburn, WA. This community holiday service of remembrance is **GriefWorks'** gift to you.



## Snowflakes of Remembrance

Shimmering snowflake ornaments, personalized with your loved one's name, can be ordered *now* for a \$20 donation to **GriefWorks**.

These 6.5" decorations can adorn your home year after year as a special remembrance. *Snowflakes of Remembrance* also make a comforting gift for grieving friends, and we will gladly mail them with a gift card enclosure.

For more information or to order, please call:  
**GriefWorks** at (253) 333-9420 or (800) 850-9420  
or e-mail [debbie@griefworks.org](mailto:debbie@griefworks.org)



## You're Invited!

Come learn how you can join us in mending hearts and re-landscaping lives through

### Compassion Partners

- Partners with the Brokenhearted
- Partners with Families
- Partners with Students

at

**GriefWorks' 4<sup>th</sup> Annual  
Benefit Breakfast  
Thursday, December 13th  
7:00 - 8:30 a.m.**

### Emerald Downs, Auburn

For reservations for this complimentary breakfast or to learn about being a Table Captain or Corporate Sponsor, please call or e-mail:

[debbie@griefworks.org](mailto:debbie@griefworks.org).

We also welcome your help in preparing for this important event.

To volunteer, please e-mail Debbie or call (253) 333-9420 or (800) 850-9420. Thank you for partnering with us in supporting the bereaved.

### Family Night Series

To make your grief as a family more manageable, **GriefWorks** is pleased to offer a 6-week Family Night Series featuring education and support for adults ... college students ... teens ... and children.

**When** Thursdays, Nov 1 thru Dec 13  
No meeting Nov 22,  
Thanksgiving  
6:15 pm – 8:15 pm

**Where** **GriefWorks** Office  
(Skills, Inc)  
715 - 30<sup>th</sup> St NE  
Auburn, WA

**Cost** \$90 per family helps cover a portion of the cost of this 6-week series. Some scholarships are available. A light supper and all craft materials will be provided.

To register or for more information, please call (800) 850-9420 or e-mail [mel@griefworks.org](mailto:mel@griefworks.org).



## Ask Dr. Bob

*Everything you wanted to know about loss but were afraid to ask*

Dear Dr. Bob,

My husband died eight months ago of leukemia, and I feel like I'm going crazy. We were only married for 2 ½ years, and we have no children. I tried going to a widows' group, but I was one of the youngest there, and I never went back.

At times I truly feel like I'm going out of my mind. I'm going through a bunch of ups and downs, sometimes crying out of the blue (like right now as I'm typing this) and other times laughing. In addition to all the grief stuff, I've actually had two situations where I thought I saw him. Once was during the day in our hallway by our bedroom and another time at the foot of our bed—he was just standing there. What do you think? ~ *Melinda*

Dear Melinda,

Because you've never gone through all this before, it is natural to feel like you are going crazy. Grief has its own craziness built into it. Many folks report that being bereaved feels a little like being strapped in a roller coaster and sent on a wild ride, over which you have no control. Like you said, you're up, you're down, and you are taken places you've never been before.

Your experience of seeing your husband is, believe it or not, relatively common. According to research, approximately half of all widowed people report having at least one form of contact (visual, auditory, touch, and/or smell) during the first year after the death.

There are several ways for you to understand your grief and to realize that you are not going crazy. Here are a few:

- read a book on grief reactions—seek one that is short and to the point
- find articles on grief
- subscribe to a widowed group newsletter
- try a different grief support group
- find an online chat room for widowed people
- don't accept advice from people who tell you to get over it and move on
- remind yourself that you are in new life territory—widowhood is a whole new life
- remember to be good to yourself

Regards, *Dr. Bob*

*Bob Baugher, Ph.D., has taught for over 25 years and currently is a psychology professor at Highline Community College, where his classes include "Death and Life." He has led numerous community and national bereavement workshops as well as written or co-authored several books, including A Guide for the Bereaved Survivor and the newly released The Crying Handbook. For more information or to order Dr. Bob's resources, visit <http://www.griefworks.org/>.*

### About GriefWorks

The mission of **GriefWorks** is to serve as a bereavement resource providing education and support for people grieving a death or seeking to understand the grief process. Since 1998, we have provided healing and hope to more than 9,000 children, teens and adults who experienced a devastating loss. **How is GriefWorks Supported?**

**GriefWorks** relies on generous donations of individuals and organizations. **GriefWorks** is a nonprofit organization, and contributions to **GriefWorks** are tax-deductible. **GriefWorks** also depends on volunteer involvement. To learn more about volunteering your time, please e-mail [debbie@griefworks.org](mailto:debbie@griefworks.org).

We appreciate supporting our work through your time and donations. We also want to express our gratitude to The Lamb Foundation, The York Foundation, The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, The City of Auburn, and Auburn Valley Kiwanis for their support of **Kid Talk** and **Teen Talk** programs in area schools. Your generosity is making a difference in lives of kids and teens!

Would you like to help? Please send your tax-deductible donation to **GriefWorks**, P.O. Box 912, Auburn, WA 98071-0912. *Thank you!*

## Founder's Corner



One of my favorite programs offered by **GriefWorks** is the 6-week Family Night Series, which is scheduled to start November 1<sup>st</sup>. Some of my most indelible and smiley memories are from moments in a Family Night Series "Kid Talk," "Teen Talk," or "Parent Talk" group.

When families arrive the first night, the air is charged with uncertainty, reluctance, and emotional pain. Somehow a transformation takes place. As early as the second week, children are asking, "When do we go back for Kid Talk?" Young people come through the door looking for their new friends and hoping to eat together. There is a sense of relief that, "We're not having to figure this out alone." Participants find comfort in being with others who are on a similar journey.

Some families have reported that the conversations in the car on the way home are as healing as the meetings. They compare notes using their new "language of grief" and code phrases like, "feeling just ducky." (This translates as looking composed and unruffled on the outside, but paddling like crazy underneath – just like a duck in a pond.)

Adults learn that, at home, children naturally are hesitant to add to their parent's grief by expressing their own. Adults also learn that children will heal in direct proportion to how their caregivers are healing, and that the best thing parents can do for their children is to work through their own grief.

Mr. Rogers said, "Making difficult matters mentionable is the best way to make them manageable." This is exactly what happens at the Family Night Series. If you know a broken-hearted family, please, tell them about the Family Night Series!

*Mel Erickson, along with Nanette Flynn, founded **GriefWorks** in 1998 as a bereavement resource providing education and support for people grieving a death or seeking to understand the grief process.*

## Getting the Word Out

In the beautiful, wooded campus of Green River Community College, **GriefWorks** recently joined career representatives and local service organizations at *The Next Step* resource fair. In addition to talking with people about our services, staff member Debbie also shared volunteer opportunities with students.

**GriefWorks** is responding to interest in a college-age support group. If you or someone you know would be interested, contact [gwen@griefworks.org](mailto:gwen@griefworks.org), or call our office.

### GriefWorks

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For more information or to unsubscribe from this newsletter, e-mail: [debbie@griefworks.org](mailto:debbie@griefworks.org)