



BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO OTTAWA REGION

The Bereaved Helping the Bereaved Learn to Live with Grief

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

MAY 2007

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BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO - OTTAWA REGION RESOURCES

- Monthly Support
and Share Nights
- One-on-one
support
- Closed Groups
- Handouts,
Lending Library
- Quarterly
Newsletter
- Facilitator
- Training
Educational
Speakers

Communicating

An e-newsletter offers an effective way for BFO-OR to stay in touch with our clients and our volunteers. After a few false starts, we're ready to try again. We want this newsletter to be of value to you. We want it to contain information of value to both our clients and our volunteers. The information contained here should, we think encourage, offer hope and solace, provoke thought, satisfy, and elicit a positive response.

We want your input; so, contact us with your ideas on information you would like to see included at: office@bfo-ottawa.org

The Volunteer Crisis

Bereaved Families of Ontario—Ottawa Region reached a critical point in its History last winter. On December 19 and January 16, the Board of Directors held meetings for all volunteers, past and present, active and inactive, to address the very future of this organization.

People showed up at those All-Volunteer Meetings with questions and suggestions, ready to help in whatever way they could.

Perhaps you weren't able to be at one of these meetings. That's understandable, but we would still like your help. Will you stand up and be counted? Are you among those who will help BFO continue providing its priceless service to those struggling through the ordeal of a loved one's death?

While funding remains a challenge, the primary issue today is people. More people are currently needed to:

- To manage or help manage the office
- To answer phones
- To maintain databases in our computer
- To do filing and make copies for Support and Share Nights
- To answer queries for the public
- To help prepare grant proposals,
- To keep track of basic information, such as who has volunteered for what activity and when.

Wanted:

- Volunteer Bookkeeper— Must be fluent in English and able to present a financial report to Board meetings on the third Tuesday of every month.
- Volunteers to answer the phone for four hours at a time.

We need you now as never before! If you have a few hours a month to spare, and are willing to offer them to a good cause, please contact BFO-OR at: office@bfo-ottawa.org

Spring Ain't Sprung This Year by Bob Christy

“Just go wit the flow. If you are down this spring because of your grief, accept it. And if it bothers the kids and the other relatives, though. It’s your grief and you have a right to deal with it in your own way and in your time—nobody else’s.”

I just got off the phone talking with my golf buddy, Jim.

“Heh, Lady, the golf course opened today,” he said in his over exuberant way. “Want to go out after work tomorrow. You’re free aren’t you?”

Sure I’m free. No one home but me and the car. It’s been that way since last fall when Carol died.

Normally I would have had the gold cleats on even before I hung up the phone. But somehow, the old excitement of spring just isn’t there this year. I lied and said that I had something on.

Last week I went out into the backyard. It was awful. As I walked around, I could see Carol everywhere.

She had redesigned the perennial bed, which I dug for her. I looked at the new peony she had bought. It was seven inches tall. What should have brought a smile brought tears instead. Thanks God the kids are away at school. But what am I going to do when they get home next week?

I went to Support and Share night at BFO last night. I shared some of these issues with other men and women who had lost their partners.

One woman said, “Just go wit the flow. If you are down this spring because of your grief, accept it. And if it bothers the kids and the other relatives, though. It’s your grief and you have a right to deal with it in your own way and in your time—nobody else’s.”

Her comments were so freeing. I don’t feel ashamed to cry when I see things that remind me about Carol. Maybe that just shows how much I loved her and how important she was in my life.

Next time I go to the Support and Share, I’ll tell people that.

And I’ll tell the kids too. They need to know that they have to grieve and not feel ashamed for doing so.

(Christy is a free-lance writer in Ottawa and the spouse of Gail Christy, one of BFO’s Professional Advisors.)

Things to Tell People Who Are Not Grieving

Dear (friend, parent, brother, sister, minister, employer ...)

I have had a devastating loss. It will take me time, perhaps years, to heal the grief that has afflicted me. For some time, it is quite possible that I will cry much more than usual. My tears do not signify my weakness, a lack of hope or faith. They represent the depth of my loss and signify my convalescence.

Perhaps at times I will seem angrier than is apparently reasonable. The stress of grief tests the intensity of my emotions. Pardon me please if I seem irrational.

I need your understanding and your presence more than anything else. If you don’t know what to say, touch me, kiss me, but please let me know that you care about me. Please, don’t wait until I call you. I am often far too tired to even think of using the telephone to reach out for the help that I need.

Don't let me become a stranger to you. Over the next year I will need your presence more than ever.

You can pray for me, but only if you don't do it through obligation. My faith should not be preventing me from grieving.

If, perhaps, you have ever experienced a grief similar to mine, share it with me. You will not hurt my feelings.

This loss is the worst thing that has ever happened to me. But I will survive and I will heal. I will not always feel the way I am feeling at this moment. I will smile again.

Thank you for thinking of me. Your consideration is a gift that I will appreciate forever.

BFO’s resources material

**Charitable Donation
Number:
85343 2730 RR001**

**Support and Share
Night**

Held on the first
Tuesday of each month

- **June 5, 2007**
- **July 3, 2007**

Program Coordinator's Report for May 2007

Currently we have the following support groups in progress:

- Loss of Spouse
- Loss of Child
- Parent and child group for ages 7 to 12

BFO would like to thank McEvoy Shields Funeral Home at 1411 Hunt Club Road for their free use of space and coffee and tea for our closed groups.

BFO would also like to thank the Ottawa Mennonite Church the space used for the parent child groups. We thank them for the many times they make sure all our needs are met.

Facilitator Training for Volunteers and Professionals, and ASIST Training, was held on April 5, 6, 12 and May 4, 5, 2007. Eight people completed the training and are now completing 6 hours of practicum at our Support and Share Night. Trainers were Martha Attridge Bufton, Joan Auden and Gail Christy.

Bereaved Families of Ottawa thanks Xiaohua Ni for her volunteer hours as bookkeeper over the past year and a half. With a new full time job, as well as her continued studies, Xiaohua finds her schedule too busy to continue on as our volunteer bookkeeper. We wish her well in her studies and new job.

Annual Meeting

BFO-OR will hold its Annual Meeting on Tuesday, June 19, 2007 at 6:30 pm in room 306 of the Bronson Centre. Everyone is invited.

Please call the office at (613) 567-4278 or e-mail at office@bfo-ottawa.org for more information.

BFO-OR can help!

We provide a place for you to discuss your experiences and learn about grief with others who have been there. We give you a chance to talk, in a confidential setting, about how your loss affects your life. By sharing with others who have been there, you may learn how to cope by gaining insight into your own thoughts and feelings.

Who we serve

Currently we offer mutual support groups that are co-facilitated by trained volunteers and supported by professional advisors, for:

- Infant Loss: Parents of an infant child (including miscarriages, babies that are born still and newborn/infant deaths)
- Child Loss: Parents of a young child or adult child Children ages 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12 who have experienced the death of a parent/caregiver or sibling.
- Parent/Caregiver/ Sibling/ Friend Loss: Adolescents and adults who have experienced the death of a parent/caregiver, sibling or close friend.
- Spouse or Partner Loss: Adults who have experienced the death of a spouse or partner.

Our members have experienced deaths in their families due to prolonged or short-term illnesses as well as sudden or traumatic deaths.

Contact Us

Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region (BFO–OR)

Contact Us

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Suite 308
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<http://www.bfo-ottawa.org/>

The bereaved helping the bereaved learn to live with grief.

Board of Directors:

- Bob Hughes
- Mary Thomson
- Jim Elliott
- Maria Boodhoo
- Hilda Sabadash
- Deborah Krogan
- Joyce Jensen
- Antonella DeBenedictis
- Mary Hearn Hendela

Office Renewal

Debbie Krogan and Hilda Sabadash have been volunteering long hours on Saturdays to complete the office renovations and alterations. They hope to have it complete by the annual meeting on June 19, 2007.

Thanks to student volunteers Stephanie Phan, Nick and Alex Frechette, and William Stoop. Nick and William chose Bereaved Families in which to complete their 40 hours of volunteering in the community. These boys have completed their 40 hours before they finished their grade 9 in 2007. Alex completed his required 10 hours for grade eight and has continued to volunteer with Bereaved Families. We want to thank these students for the hard work on Saturdays, PD days and after school. They pulled up the carpets, moved heavy filing cabinets and desks, and completed the messy and dusty work of shredding papers.

Debbie Krogan, a new Board member, is an office designer by trade and her ideas and design are making the office a much nicer place to work. Thank you Debbie for all your hard work and laughter at pushing me to throw out what was outdated. Her automatic response to throw out paper that was too faded to read caused so much laughter when I seriously questioned what pile to place this one sheet of very old paper in!

New technical equipment will mean our office is more efficient and presentations will be more professional. We plan to have most of our literature on line and easily accessible. Pamphlets will be emailed to professionals so there will be less storage space required.

Trained volunteers are encouraged to become comfortable with the office and offer time to respond to callers needing support.