



HEALING THE SPIRIT

Spring 2023

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Dear Donor Families,

One of the more challenging parts of navigating the grief journey is letting yourself smile. Or have fun. Or do ANYTHING without your loved one with you. This brings up hard questions – am I forgetting them if I do this activity? Am I being disloyal somehow? Am I forgetting them if I do something and don't think about them while I enjoy something? Very tough questions, indeed.

You will notice that this edition is full of information about activities – activities that might be emotional or that might be a break from the heaviness of grief. Allowing yourself the space to breathe can feel scary because it can bring up those questions that are hard. We encourage you to consider one (or more!) of the activities in your area. All our events are open not just to the donor family – but to your extended family and friends. Each of you is grieving and each of you might need permission to take a moment to breathe. It's ok – if you feel ready – to go to a baseball game or a remembrance ceremony and to spend a bit of time with other families. You might find a new friend who reminds you that you are not alone on your grief journey. And to answer those tough questions – no, you are not forgetting them or being somehow disloyal.

We hope to see you at one of the upcoming events – connecting with you and hearing your stories is a wonderful way to spend an afternoon!

All the Best,

Debbie Hutt, NDFS Director

LifeNet Health offers opportunities for donor families to come together to remember their loved ones and find support amongst others. You are welcome to attend all events no matter where you are along your grief journey.

Donor Family Baseball Games

Norfolk Tides – July 16, 2023

Everett Aquasox – Sept. 10, 2023

Tacoma Rainiers – Sept. 24, 2023

In Celebration & Remembrance

Jacksonville, FL – September 24, 2023

Pensacola, FL – October 8, 2023

Billings, MT – October 15, 2023

Seattle, WA – November 4, 2023

Workshops

Roanoke, VA - Preparing for the Holidays
(Date/time to be announced)

To RSVP or get more event information, please go to our website healingthespirit.org



Healing Tears

Dear Lani,

I feel like grief has devoured my life. How can I calm this ripple effect throughout every part of my life?

Signed, Exhausted Widow

Dear Exhausted Widow:

I hear you. Grief seeps into every part of our life. Grief touches us physically, emotionally, cognitively, spiritually, and in our relationships. Besides the death of a person and the loss of their physical presence in your life, we need to understand the full pervasive consequences of loss, called secondary losses. Examples of secondary losses include loss of confidence, loss of a role and identity, loss of safety in relationships, and loss of worldview. Working through our grief asks that we attend to each facet that this loss touches, giving attention and care to all that arises. But how do we fully “attend” to the loss, and the ripple effects?

Admit and accept what is painful. Give words to your grief. What is mentionable is manageable. Often, just the act of bringing our grief out into the light and giving it words invites more support and quiets an inner voice that might suggest we are wrong or crazy. Look at all facets that are affected. Let’s begin with the physical needs. You are exhausted. You are probably not sleeping well and feel agitated when you are awake. Your body needs quieting and soothing. What has worked for you in the past when your body was feeling stress or pain? Use those strategies now if they are successful. There are several ways to regulate and harmonize the body using self-soothing exercises, gentle touch, classical music, or physical exercise.

Emotional soothing can come from feeling heard and validated when you ask a trusted friend or professional to listen to your feelings. Just feeling heard is a powerful antidote to feeling “eaten up by grief”. A compassionate listener can validate and mirror your experiences, help calm the mind and help you investigate the stories that you tell yourself. It is especially important to ask ourselves questions when we are feeling guilty or regretful about our relationship, to get us back to “right thinking”.

You might also need to give yourself permission for relief from relationships that are not serving you in your grief. There may be some people in your life who mean well but do not know how to truly support you as you need right now. Give yourself permission to take space from them; not have to respond; and focus on yourself and your needs.

Grief touches all aspects of your life, and the secondary losses that often accompany it may be inevitable. But through your grief work and the support of others, you may find that there are secondary

gains as well. These gains are known as post-traumatic growth, and can bring us into new connections, deeper confidence, and a rich understanding of purpose and meaning. We are working towards coping, rather than healing. Grief will never go away, but it can soften and be folded into our life in a way that is productive and bearable.

Blessings, Lani

Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in working with chronically ill, dying, and bereaved clients. Dr. Leary has worked for the past 25 years as a psychotherapist in private practice and in six hospices across the country.
 Have a question for Dr. Leary? Contact Debbie Hutt at debbie_hutt@lifenethealth.org.

FAQs from Donor Families

- **What is an In Celebration & Remembrance event?**
 - These events bring families together to remember and honor their loved ones. We invite you to bring pictures and smaller mementos that can be displayed on a tribute table as this invites others to learn about your loved one.
- **Are events going to be very emotional?**
 - Maybe. Tears and smiles are often both present at an In Celebration & Remembrance or Tree of Remembrance event. It is not “another funeral” but a time to say your loved one’s name proudly. Families find strength in being with other donor families.
- **When should I attend a LifeNet Health Donor Family event?**
 - As soon as you can! Again and again, families share that the events are more personally and emotionally rewarding than they expected.
- **How do I know when events are being held? Won’t I always get an invitation?**
 - Families will get invitations in the mail for 4 years following the death of their loved one. Information on all events will be on the Healing the Spirit website, the Donor Family Facebook page, and in the quarterly Donor Family Newsletter. You are always welcome and always invited!

For More information or if you have any questions about events, please visit our website healingthespirit.org or email DFS@lifenethealth.org.

The Journey



Can we honor your loved one on the 2024 Donate Life Rose Parade Float?

Thanks to support from the LifeNet Health Foundation, we can sponsor one florograph honoring an organ, eye, tissue, or research donor on the annual Donate Life float in the Rose Parade in Pasadena, CA. Two family members and a LifeNet Health staff member will travel to Pasadena 12/29/23-1/2/24 to be part of the

decorating, ceremonies, and the New Year's Day parade. (Most travel expenses for the family are covered by the Foundation grant.)

We are looking for a family who can enthusiastically support the various activities that lead up to the parade that will be seen by millions around the world! See information below for more information.

Requirements

Floragraph honoree

- Families applying for the floragraph opportunity must have been approached for, and authorized donation on behalf of their loved ones or supported their loved one's donor designation, at least one year prior to the application being completed. This allows the family to be better equipped to handle media opportunities and the multiple commitments that go along with the Floragraph sponsorship.
- Families applying for the floragraph opportunity must have the *Consent for Use of Name and Likeness* form signed by any and all next of kin who authorized donation so that the next of kin of the same legal standing are aware of the donor being honored on the Donate Life float.
- There will be only one floragraph produced per honoree and it is the sponsor's responsibility to relay this information to all legal next of kin. Sponsors and the family must decide how to distribute/issue the finished floragraph post parade.
- Floragraph family members should be comfortable speaking to the media and must report to media opportunities on a timely basis.
- The family must provide a high-quality headshot photograph of the Honoree to serve as original artwork for the floragraph (min. size 4" x 6" at 300dpi). The image will be enlarged to fill the floragraph canvas, so the highest quality original image is necessary for best results.
- Families are required to stay in the official Donate Life Rose Parade® hotel during designated dates as well as attend all floragraph related events.

To have your loved one considered, please submit a high-resolution picture of your loved one and a tribute of no more than 250 words sharing their story. Submissions are needed by July 21st so that one donor can be chosen to be honored on the 2024 float. For more information, please email DFS@lifenethealth.org.

Would you like to get involved in promoting donation in your community? Often donor families are needed to help with education in hospitals and at community events. Scan this QR code to find out more.

