



Donor Family Services Spring 2025 Newsletter

Dear Donor Families,

Healing after loss is a deeply personal journey, and at LifeNet Health, we are committed to walking alongside you every step of the way. This newsletter reflects that commitment—offering resources, support, and opportunities to connect with others who share similar experiences.

In this edition, we highlight the refreshed Healing the Spirit website, where you can find bereavement resources, upcoming events, and ways to honor your loved ones. We also share information about the LifeNet Health Foundation, which funds meaningful programs such as the Donor Family Baseball Games and the Tree of Remembrance ceremonies.

Additionally, we feature a heartfelt article on finding support after loss, written by one of our Donor Family Advocates, as well as guidance on knowing when you're ready to share your story or volunteer. We hope these insights provide comfort and encouragement as you navigate your personal journey.

We invite you to explore the upcoming events and consider joining us for a moment of remembrance, reflection, and community. If you ever need support, please know that we are here for you.

Please share your thoughts about events and workshops at DFS@lifenethealth.org. Your feedback helps us plan better support experiences for you!

If you would like more information about any of our programs, contact us at 800-847-8731 or DFS@lifenethealth.org

To register, scan QR code or visit:

[https://www.lifenethealth.org/
healingthespirit/events](https://www.lifenethealth.org/healingthespirit/events)



Upcoming Events

IC&R Ceremonies

April 6 – Richmond, VA
April 27 – Virginia Beach, VA
May 4 -Edmonds, WA
June 1 – Spokane, WA
September 7 – Jacksonville, FL
September 28 – Pensacola, FL

Donor Family Baseball Games

May 2 – Salem Red Sox, Salem, VA
May 14 – Flying Squirrels, Richmond, VA
June 21 – Blue Wahoos, Pensacola FL
June 28 –Jumbo Shrimp, Jacksonville, FL
July 20 – Norfolk Tides, Norfolk, VA
August 25 – Seattle Mariners, Seattle, WA

September 27 - NW
Donor Family Hike
(Location TBA)





Dear Dr. Leary: How Do I Know When I'm Ready to Volunteer?

Dear Dr. Leary:

I know that LifeNet Health has opportunities to get involved such as speaking to groups or volunteering at events, which interests me, but I am not sure I am ready to do something like that. How do I know when I am ready?

-Hesitant to get out there

Dear Hesitant,

You sound willing but not sure if you are ready. Ask yourself “ready for what?” Are you ready to share your perspective so that you might help another person not feel alone? Are you ready to share your compassion and empathy with those who might be in pain? Are you ready to turn your pain into a sense of purpose or a calling?

To put yourself “out there” offers support for others in need and supports your common experience of learning to live with loss. While helping others, volunteering can mean that you put your grief into action and find purpose in your loss. Volunteering, even in short-term or small amounts of time, can benefit others and yourself by connecting you to others; developing new skills and competencies; widening your circle of influence; lifting depression and isolation; reducing anxiety; and making meaning out of challenges. Volunteers find a sense of meaning and appreciation, both given and received, which can have long-term effects on mental and physical well-being, relationships within and outside of family, and an increased sense of life satisfaction.

Here are some suggestions to overcome your resistance and lean into a volunteering opportunity:

- Ask yourself “what do I enjoy doing?”; “what are some skills that come easily to me?”; “how have I shared myself in the past?”. Build on what you know and who you are.
- Focus on your role as a fellow traveler rather than an expert. When you change your focus from “how am I doing/looking/being successful?” to “what is the other person’s experience/challenge/need?” then you take the pressure off yourself and any potential anxiety about your performance.
- Focus on the process and your intention. I often remind myself that my intention is honorable and meant to be of service, and how others interpret my intention is none of my business. In other words, I focus on what I can control and let go of what I cannot.

continued on page 3



Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in work with chronically ill, dying and bereaved clients. Dr. Leary has worked for the past 35 years as a psychotherapist in private practice and in eight hospices across the country. Have a question for Dr. Leary? Contact us at DFS@lifenethealth.org.



HEALING THE SPIRIT



Dear Dr. Leary (cont.)

- Don't compare yourself to others. How we think about ourselves is often our most challenging obstacle, and we can never accurately compare ourselves to others.
- Connect with an audience member before beginning. All you need is one smiling face in an audience to give you the confidence to carry on, so personally connect with one person before you begin speaking to a group.
- Start small. Identify where you can make a difference one-on-one. How can you begin to contribute to an organization behind-the-scenes.

Remind yourself that there is no “perfect” volunteer or presentation. Allow yourself to be a beginner. Be yourself and bring your unique experience to the opportunity. Remember the purpose of volunteering; no matter how small, your service matters.

Nothing will make you feel as ready or as confident as just taking action. Remember how it felt when someone reached out to you and the impact they had on your journey? You can be that person for someone else. You can make a difference.

- Lani

LifeNet Health Foundation: Supporting Donor Families

Did you know that the LifeNet Health Foundation supports you, our Donor Families? Through fundraising efforts, the Foundation helps fund impactful programs such as the Donor Family Baseball games, In Celebration & Remembrance events, the annual Rose Parade florograph and Tree of Remembrance ceremonies.

The Foundation hosts several fundraising events throughout the year, such as the LNH Foundation Golf Classic, The Race for Hope 5K and the biennial Celebration of Life Gala. There are multiple ways to support and participate in these events, including financial contributions, event sponsorships, and volunteering. Every dollar raised directly supports four key areas:

- Providing comprehensive services for our donor families
- Promoting high-quality educational programs for the public and healthcare professionals
- Advancing medical innovation
- Fostering enduring community connections

For more about the Golf Classic, please visit: <https://www.lifenethealth.org/golf-classic-supports-lifenet-healths-extraordinary-mission>. For questions about supporting or participating in these events, please contact Will Driscoll, Director of Foundation & Community Outreach at william_driscoll@lifenethealth.org.

Through the Foundation's work, we honor LifeNet Health's mission of Saving Lives, Restoring Health, and Giving Hope.



LifeNet Health
Foundation Golf Classic
May 12, 2025
VB National Golf Club



Finding Your Support System

By Michael V. Jones, Donor Family Advocate

Having a strong support system is essential for navigating grief.

How many people have good support? According to a Meta-Gallup global study conducted in 2022, it found that more than seven in 10 people in 142 countries (3.2 billion people worldwide) said they felt either very (35%) or fairly (36%) supported. While this is encouraging to see that most people feel supported there is still a lot of ground to make up with the three out of 10 that only feel a little supported (19%) or not at all supported (9%). That is 400 million people who feel they do not have sufficient or any support.(1) And what about those 36% that only feel fairly supported? Is that going to be enough when a tragedy occurs?

A strong support system is crucial for coping with grief, yet many lack it.

Losing a loved one is difficult enough, but it can be even more challenging if they were a key source of support in your life. Merriam-Webster defines a support system as a network of people who provide an individual with practical or emotional support. I have spoken with many donor family members who expected their once supportive family and friends would be there for them in their time of grief, only to be left dumbfounded by the lack of care and compassion from those closest to them.

Unfortunately, this happens more often than people realize. For many, the subject of death is taboo and makes them feel uncomfortable. The sad reality is that the person experiencing the greatest loss, the one struggling the most, is being neglected.

After experiencing loss, having supportive people around you is essential, especially on days when grief bursts, powerful surges of sorrow, overcome you (2). Different people offer different types of support, so it is helpful to embrace the idea of having a small village walk alongside you on your grief journey. In my experiences, I have found this to be more than true. I may have one person I confide in emotionally, but that person is different from the one that I turn to when I need a distraction or a shared activity, whether for mourning purposes or simply to take a break.

Sometimes, support comes from unexpected places. I discovered this while working with children. Their youthful energy and dependance on me really helped me through some of my most painful moments.

continued on page 5



HEALING THE SPIRIT

Finding Your Support System (cont.)

Ideas for finding support:

1. Join a grief group. Whether through a local place of worship, a community center or online forum, connecting with people who are experiencing similar losses can remind you that you are not alone.
2. Engage in activities that involve others. Join an arts and craft class, a kickball team or a culinary course. These activities provide an opportunity to meet others that share your interests, and the activities themselves can be very therapeutic.
3. Get involved and volunteer. Coach youth sports, participate in a charitable bake sale or help at a local food bank. Giving back allows you to cultivate the compassion that may feel missing in your own life.

Finally, it is important to be supported in the way that best meets your needs. A true supporter understands that support is different from comfort. They should be consistent, avoid making the situation about themselves and never judge your grief.(3)

The road ahead is uncertain, but no one should have to walk it alone.

1. <https://news.gallup.com/opinion/gallup/545024/support-systems-may-help-world-cope-meta-gallup-study.aspx>
2. <https://mygriefandloss.org/mourners-bill-of-rights>
3. <https://wellbeing.jhu.edu/blog/2024/05/03/its-ok-not-to-be-ok-advice-on-how-to-navigate-your-own-grief-and-how-to-support-others/>

Finding support through groups, activities, or volunteering can ease the burden of grief.

Healingthespirit.org : Donor Family Support Website

The Healing the Spirit website has been updated to provide donor families with helpful resources, including bereavement support programs, upcoming events, grief resources, and more. We encourage you to visit HealingTheSpirit.org to explore these valuable offerings.



HEALING THE SPIRIT