

Friends of griefHaven

J U L Y - S E P T E M B E R 2 0 1 3

in the works

BY MELANIE SPEISER AND WENDY BROUDY

Friends of griefHaven is busy planning:

FRIENDS: YOU ARE INVITED...

We are holding an "open meeting" on August 27 at noon in Pacific Palisades. We hope you will attend. This meeting is open to all Friends of griefHaven members and any potential "new" members you would like to include.

Please RSVP to Pam Solomon at pbsolomon@gmail.com if you are able to attend. We will discuss the latest griefHaven developments, our upcoming October fundraising luncheon, and much more. We would love your input and ideas. Hope to see you there!



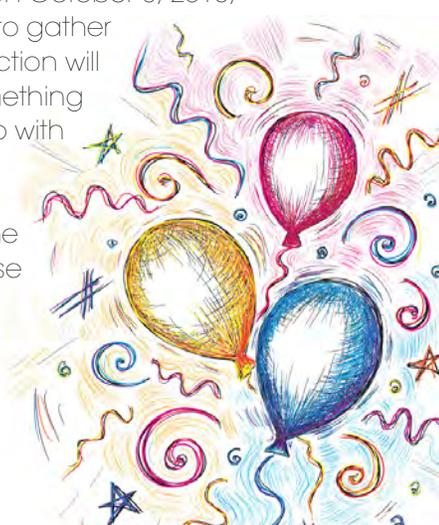
YOGURT SHOPPE FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR GRIEFHAVEN AUGUST 18 - AUGUST 31 BETWEEN DAILY HOURS 5 TO 7 PM

When you buy yogurt at the Yogurt Shop between August 18 and 31st, and between the hours of 5 to 7 PM, you help raise money for griefHaven. The owners of the Yogurt Shoppe have graciously agreed to donate a portion of all yogurt sold during that time to griefHaven. Please mark your calendars and watch for our e-mail blast with further details.

ANNUAL GRIEFHAVEN FUNDRAISING LUNCHEON, OCTOBER 8, 2013

Our annual griefHaven luncheon will be held again this year at the Luxe Hotel in West Los Angeles on October 8, 2013, and we can't wait! We are starting to gather auction items now so this year's auction will include many amazing items—something for everyone. We do need your help with auction items, so please read the detailed article on the next page. Also, if you would like to help with the organization of auction items, please contact Wendy Broudy or Melanie Speiser at wendy@ebroudy.com or melanie@manicgroup.com.

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a message from Beth

In our last Friends of griefHaven newsletter I wrote about how, with griefHaven's help, our family began to live again after losing our beloved son and brother Jackson in the summer of 2008. Jackson was diagnosed with pediatric brain cancer in May and passed away in July during chemotherapy treatment. It has been almost five years, and he is still such a strong presence in our home and our daily lives.

Susan taught us all that one way to help our grief was to reach out to others—she did this herself by founding griefHaven, its website, and by producing the *Portraits of Hope* documentary film, all dedicated to providing hope, support, and education for grieving parents and siblings.

Following Susan's example, for the past three years our family has been actively involved with the Pediatric Cancer Research Foundation, a remarkable organization that raises money to support innovative research programs searching to find better treatment options for pediatric cancer. My son Zachary first

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where hope resides

AUCTION ITEMS NEEDED



We need your help in gathering great auction items for the October 8 event. Here are just a few we came up with. We are sure you have your own, unique ideas. Please help us gather plenty of wonderful items to make this year's event even more fun, interesting, and successful than the last. Contact Wendy Broudy or Melanie Speiser at wendy@ebroudy.com or melanie@manicgroup.com.

Ideas: Vacation homes, sporting events, fabulous hotels, accessories, clothing, gift certificates, jewelry, restaurant certificates, artwork, plane tickets, unique items, home decorating, spa treatments, personal treatment certificates, gift baskets, television show tickets, or any theater tickets.

RADIO SHOW

Susan Whitmore, Founder and President of griefHaven, is being interviewed on live online radio August 6, 2013 at 11 AM PST at www.W4WN.com. Anyone may tune in to hear the show. The show will also be available to hear on the griefHaven website once the show is complete.

The show was started by Joni Aldrich who lost her husband to cancer. Joni has published six books, and her shows include: Cancer S.O.S., Caregiving S.O.S., Ladies Who Inspired, Diagnosis S.O.S. and Treatment S.O.S. **Mark your calendars!**

GRIEFHAVEN AND THE MILITARY

For years griefHaven has attempted to provide its resources to military families. We have had limited success so far. Recently, through Didi Reuben, we found a potential lead to get our foot in the door. As our first project, we have designed a military grief pin. As you can see from the drawing to the right and alongside our original grief pin currently given to people around the world, it is similar in symbolism and beauty, yet it has its own identity. We can't wait to start sending these to military families everywhere. If you know anyone you would like to send either of our grief pins to, just let Susan know at swhitmore@griefHaven.org.



DID YOU KNOW...?

That anyone may make a donation to griefHaven throughout the year for any event, celebration, or just because and griefHaven will put up a beautiful memory tile in honor or memory of that person, as well as send a personalized card to the person of your choosing with the wording exactly as you write it. For instance, people send donations in honor of a friend's anniversary who lost their child several years ago or in memory of someone's child or a person's birthday or as a graduation tribute or... You get the idea. The list goes on and on. It makes a wonderful gift and is a way to let people know you remember or are commemorating them or someone they love.

POSSIBLE NEW PARTNERSHIP



griefHaven was recently contacted by the Southern California Foster Family and Adoption Agency (www.scffaa.org) who were looking for a grief program for those in the foster system needing grief support. griefHaven is excited about this potential and is meeting this month with executives to see how the two organizations might work together. This is a very disenfranchised group of grievers and we passionately believe they need our support. We will keep you posted.

learned of the PCRF from Jackson's doctors at UCLA Mattel Children's Hospital. Each Fall, the PCRF partners with UCLA to raise money for researchers through an event called Dribble for the Cure.



Zachary has participated in this event for the past three years, and through our generous community, family, and friends, has raised more than \$60,000 for the PCRF! We were recently invited to UCLA to hear these researchers discuss their work in finding more successful and less invasive treatments for pediatric cancer. We left feeling so proud and hopeful about our contribution to this effort.

Although our family will never "get over" losing Jackson, trying to help other children suffering from pediatric cancer and their families has helped us heal. We are extremely grateful to Susan and griefHaven for showing us the way. We look forward to helping Susan and griefHaven with all its future endeavors.

Warmly,
Beth Abrams

volunteerwish list

BY BETH ABRAMS

I am honored to serve as the Friends of griefHaven Volunteer Coordinator. Each quarter, I will help Susan get the support she needs to keep griefHaven up and running by publishing a list of the tasks with which she needs assistance. In-between newsletters, if help is needed, I will email those who checked the "able to volunteer" box when signing up to be a member of Friends of griefHaven.

If you are interested in helping with the current needs below, please email me directly at beth-stu@verizon.net.

TO DO

Stuffing Packets

(a great project to do with your kids)

WHERE

In your home
or Susan's

ESTIMATED TIME

Up to you

SKILL NEEDED

None

Packing grief pins into new boxes

(a great project to do while watching TV)

In your home

Up to you

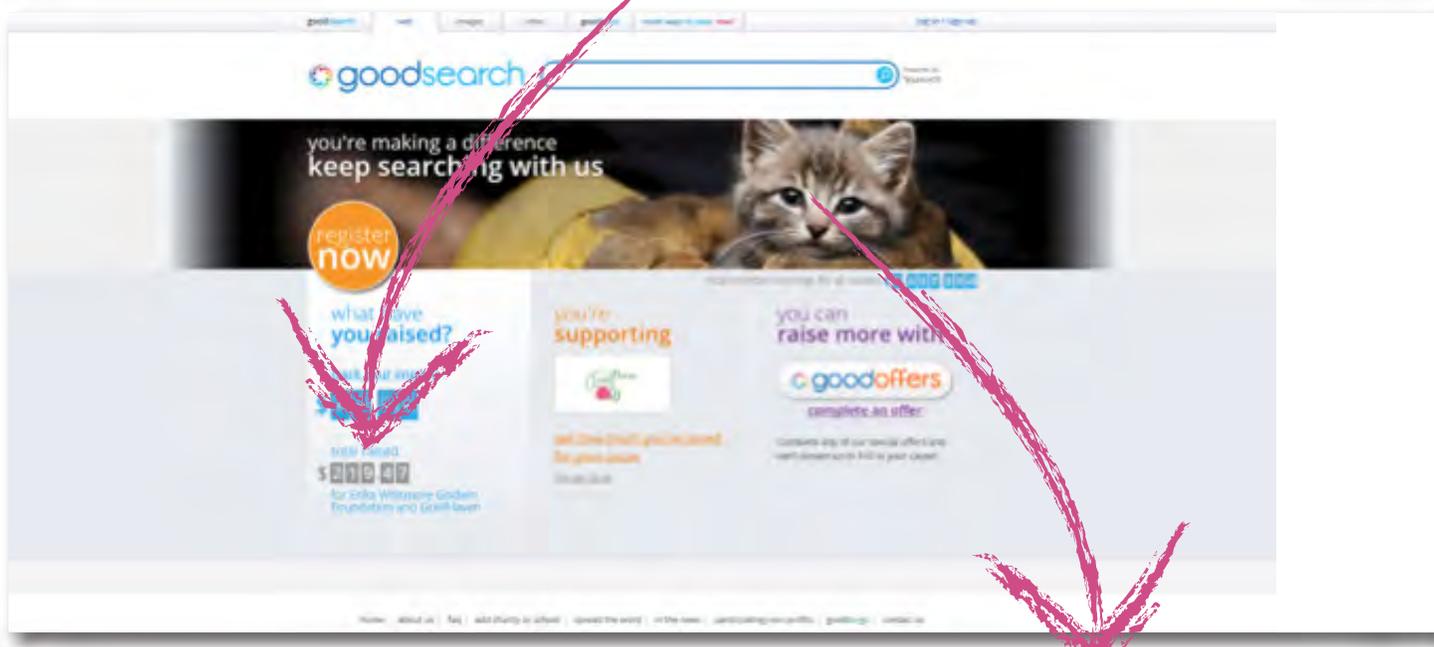
None



search the web and make \$ for griefHaven
just make **goodsearch** your search engine and
name griefHaven as your foundation of choice!

We make money just by your searching!
Look below and see how much we have made since January!

\$219.47



It's SO easy. All you need to do is go to www.goodsearch.com.
The website will walk you through the rest!

griefHaven makes a difference...

thanks to YOU for
helping us help others

Michigan

I think of you and our talk often. It is one of those discussions that really "stuck" with me. I have gained back feelings of enjoyment again. Whenever I visit your website, I can't help but feel the abundance of love that is put into all of it.

Oregon

Having you and griefHaven as our "anchor" gave us a stability that we needed. You are doing simply awesome work, and I hope you have the strength to carry on with it for many, many years to come. I'm lucky to have the chance to be of great support to someone else now and to help to make her life better.

Calabasas

Not only was your response quick, but you are filled with enthusiasm and contagious joy—such a wonderful mentor for we moms who have experienced unfathomable loss to have as a role model, showing us that grief is as natural as joy and that each—grief and joy—need the other.

Massachusetts

Thank you so much for starting griefHaven. Your website is a life-saver! I lost my daughter, who is my very best friend. It has been a nightmare. I appreciate everything available on your website very much! My ex-husband and I have only had each other. Both of our spouses are so unsure of how to help. I'm a little afraid this may tear our whole family apart, but your Packet of Hope, personal letter, and other website information has given us all hope and guidance. Whatever help I can get, I'm going to take it. Thank you so much!

Florida

I received your package yesterday. Thank you so much for sending me all this beautiful material. I am truly moved by the thought that goes into your Packet of Hope. I will be encouraging my clients' parents to reach out to you. Your brochure will be going out in one of my mailings to each family who has lost a child to cancer.

what have we been up to?

FOGH COUNCIL OPEN MEETING



The Friends of griefHaven Council meets monthly to discuss, plan, and strategize. We are thrilled to invite all of our "friends" to the August meeting so we can hear from you! The meeting will be on August 27th. Please look for the Evite soon and mark your calendars right away.

SIBLING LOSS DOCUMENTARY FILM

The documentary film, *Portraits of Hope: The Parent's Journey*, is one of the most important tools griefHaven offers to grieving parents. It features interviews with parents in different stages of the grieving process, demonstrating first hand that it is possible for parents who have lost children to experience happiness and joy in the years to come.



Because grieving siblings also need this same support, griefHaven's next major project will be the production of a sibling video. Its title will be *Portraits of Hope: The Sibling's Journey*. The Friends of griefHaven Council has decided to use a portion of the proceeds from its October 8 luncheon to fund the film. However, additional funds will be needed. If you or anyone you know would like to contribute to this very-much-needed project, please contact Susan Whitmore at swhitmore@griefHaven.org. We are all very excited about this new project and look forward to updating its progress in our next newsletter.

BOOK RECOMMENDATION LIST



A much needed educational and support tool for people grieving the loss of anyone they love is a list of recommended books. griefHaven has been working for several months to accumulate a list from a large variety of resources. That list is almost ready. Be watching for it in an upcoming newsletter.

GRIEF GROUP

griefHaven continues to have open grief support meetings the second Wednesday of every month at Kehillat and has added a new private support group to the many it already provides. We are in the process of training a new grief facilitator and hope to have many more in the future so we are able to provide many more grief groups.

PACKETS OF HOPE

Since the last newsletter, griefHaven has sent out close to 300 additional packets to families all over the world. Each packet runs griefHaven several dollars to print and mail, and you can see from the comments we receive how much a packet helps those in need. And each packet also includes a free grief pin, along with the beautiful, full color grief pin card explanation. This is one major way griefHaven's support reaches into the lives of families everywhere without us having to be there physically to make a big difference.

PORTRAITS OF HOPE FOR SIBLINGS

Melanie Speiser and Susan Whitmore met with Scotty Bergstein about the filming and editing of the new documentary film for siblings we told you about earlier in the newsletter. As you might recall, Scotty is the one who created the beautiful and poignant short video using Kehillat children who wanted to make a statement right after the shootings in Newtown. Scotty has agreed to spearhead the sibling project. We are so grateful to him for this. Thank you, Scotty!

SPRING 2014 EVENT

The Friends of griefHaven are looking at having a family event in the Spring of 2014. We'll keep you posted.

WEEKEND WORKSHOP FOR PARENTS

For several years, Susan has been working on what will eventually become a weekend workshop for grieving parents. She hopes to offer this amazing workshop by the Summer of 2014.

AND MUCH MORE...

please...

author unknown, rewritten by susan whitmore

Please don't ask me if I'm "over" it yet.
You get "over" a cold, not the death of a child.

Please don't tell me she's in a better place.
She's not here with me, and that's what hurts so much.

Please don't say, at least she's no longer suffering.
I haven't yet come to terms with why she had to suffer at all.

Please don't tell me you know how I feel.
Unless you have lost a child, you can't know.

Please don't tell me that I had her for so many years.
What year would you choose for your child to die?

Please don't tell me God never gives us more than we can bear.
That does not alleviate any of my pain now.

Please just let me cry without trying to fix me.
I am not broken, not needing to be fixed—just grieving.

Please just say you are sorry.
Those are special, powerful words.

Please, if you have one, just share a story of my child.
It reminds me of the special times we shared.

Please just let me talk about my child.
I need to make her part of my new life without her physical presence.

Please freely mention my child's name in conversation.
That shows me that she is not being forgotten.

Please remember that death only ends a life.
It does not ever end a loving relationship.

Please remember that my child will always be my child.
That her body is no longer here does not change that fact.

Please make my child a part of your life, too.
I will be eternally grateful.