

Friends of griefHaven

A P R I L 2 0 1 3 - J U N E 2 0 1 3

in the works

BY MELANIE SPEISER AND WENDY BROUDY

Yes, Friends of griefHaven is planning, and we look forward to sharing these events with all of you, your families, and your friends.

Friends of griefHaven has three very special events that we can't wait to tell you about!



2013 PACIFIC PALISADES YOGURT SHOPPE FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR GRIEFHAVEN – AUGUST 18-31, 2013 5:00 TO 7:00 P.M. DAILY

Our second annual fundraising event for griefHaven at the scrumptious Yogurt Shoppe on Swarthmore will be August 18–31 from 5 to 7 p.m. every day. Please tell everyone everywhere and put it on your calendar!

Last year griefHaven received over \$800 in funds—the highest amount the Yogurt Shoppe had ever seen. That is a LOT of yogurt! In fact, the Pali High swim team regularly visited as a group and bought yogurt. Let's surpass that this year.

Oh, and don't worry that this notice seems far into the future. We will remind you again as the dates draw nearer.

2013 GRIEFHAVEN LUNCHEON – OCTOBER 8, 2013

Our Second Annual griefHaven Luncheon will be on October 8, 2013, at the Luxe Hotel in Los Angeles. Last year's "Live Your Best Life" luncheon with speaker Roko Belic was a huge success, and we can't wait for you to join us once again. Please mark your calendars. More updates coming soon!

SPECIAL GALA EVENING – MAY 2014

Another exciting celebration will be our evening event Gala, coming in May 2014, where we will have some very special, unique entertainment (remember our last gala where Davis Gaines, Broadway's Phantom of the Opera, performed?) and present our Peace of Heart award to special and deserving people. It will be an evening to remember, with dinner and a spectacular, lively auction that will help griefHaven continue its important work.

FAMILY EVENT

We haven't yet scheduled the date, but we are working on a family griefHaven event with fun for all ages. We'll keep you posted on this as well.



a message from Beth

Welcome to our first ever Friends of griefHaven newsletter. I am honored to be part of the Friends of griefHaven council, a group of women committed to assisting griefHaven founder and president, Susan Whitmore. We will be publishing this newsletter quarterly, and will use it to keep all our "friends" updated about upcoming events, the important work in which griefHaven is involved, and how you can volunteer to help.

I met Susan Whitmore almost five years ago under the worst of circumstances, after we lost our beloved son Jackson to pediatric brain cancer. After meeting Susan, and then through griefHaven counseling, our family began to hope that we would eventually get back to lives filled with happiness and joy. Because of Susan, and all the support and inspiration she provided, I am now able to reach out to parents and siblings going through the most trying time in their lives. My family and I are so very grateful for her and griefHaven.

I hope you enjoy our first newsletter.

Warmly,
Beth Abrams



GriefHaven
where hope resides

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

Typing of Teen "What Is Grief?"

Typing of Teen "What Is Grief?" For Parents

Make Jewelry

Stuffing Packets of Hope

WHERE

In your home

In your home

In your home
or Susan's

In your home

ESTIMATED TIME

2 hours

2 hours

Whatever

Up to you

SKILL NEEDED

Medium to high - MS Word

Medium to high - MS Word

Zero to high

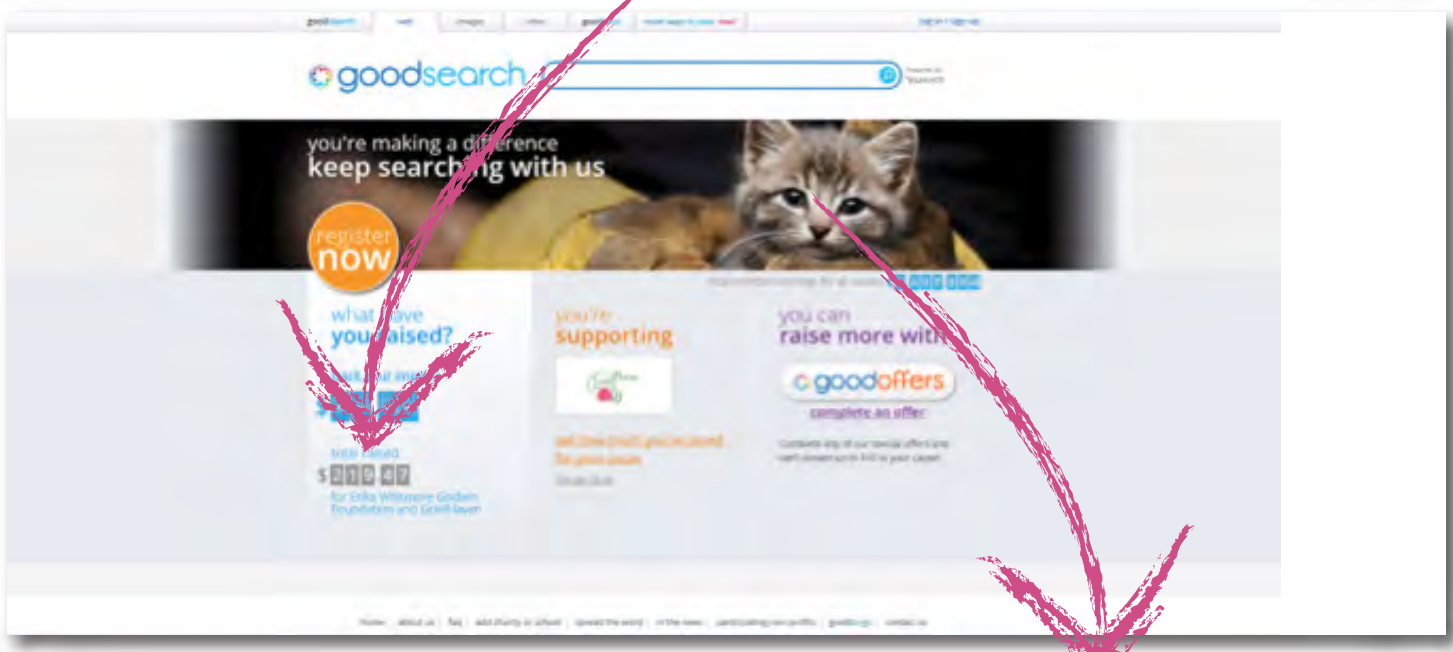
None



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

Georgia, USA

"First, I want to thank you for such a wonderful place you have given us parents to be able to speak with others dealing with the same situations. I did a posting yesterday and have already had a reply. It makes me feel a part of this 'special group,' and I really needed this."

(Rwanda)

"I am so glad to have found you and to count you as a new friend who can understand what we have been through. We do not have any structure as yours in our country. I know already other mothers who've been in the same situation after me. Thanks again for your time and for the documents. God Bless you."

(Canada)

"Thanks for everything you and your Board do. Whenever I have the opportunity, I tell people about the griefHaven website, as it was and is so beneficial to me."

(Colorado, USA)

"I received your packet of hope, and I devoured every word. I couldn't read it fast enough. Do you have any idea how much help this has given me, we, us? Where I live there isn't anything, not even a support group. I thought I would go mad. When I can't sleep in the middle of the night, I go to the web site and I read everything, sometimes twice. When I first get up each morning, I go to see who else has shared. I've posted two messages and received lots of responses. I have something to look forward to."

(Florida, USA)

"I am so glad to have found your website to share my wonderful son with the world. I got my grief packet this weekend and want to thank you for such a beautiful grief pin. I look forward to going to your website daily. It has helped me with my grief process."

reading between the leaves

BY SUSAN WHITMORE

We have a hummingbird nest in the Ficus tree next to our front door. It has been amazing, week after week, watching the mother bird make the nest. Each day I have carefully approached the tree and gently peeked around the leaves, watching the mother bird nesting in her trance state. And then...this one day arrived when I peeked around the leaves, and there they were: two little beaks bobbing up and down from inside the nest (I took that photo and this is exactly what I saw.) As I moved in just a teensy bit closer to ensure that my eyes were seeing correctly, the mother bird suddenly came screeching around the corner, her teeny little body hovering in the air, her wings fluttering so madly they sounded like giant fans moving at high speed. She began chirping and shrieking at me! "Oh my God, little mother bird," I said, "I know just how you feel." I apologized and moved away.

A mother hummingbird. A mother bear. A mother seal. A mother dog. A mother anything! Get close to its offspring, and it will fiercely protect, even if it means its own death. Don't we all understand THAT mission?

Yesterday morning I peeked around the corner, and guess what? The nest was empty. All three birds had flown... just like that...somewhere...to begin their new lives. But while here, they gave me tremendous joy every time I saw them. And once again I was reminded that there are moments of true joy after our child dies. Many of them. Sometimes we have to look for them. Sometimes we have to recall what they were. Perhaps all we have to do is simply peek into the places where they might be—hidden, just waiting for someone to enjoy their wonder.



Mommy hummingbird and babies outside the Whitmore's door

"But while here, they gave me tremendous joy every time I saw them. And once again I was reminded that there are moments of true joy after our child dies. Many of them."

what have we been up to?

Newtown

Since the Newtown tragedies last December, griefHaven has been working closely with Rabbi Shaul Praver on a comprehensive program for the grieving Newtown community. I, along with therapists Dr. Roger Daffer and Dr. Denise Mandel-Becker, plan to travel to Newtown whenever they are prepared for our program and arrival. To simply “show up” and try to do something would not be prudent on our part. The program includes working with Newtown’s professionals, the community in general, and the grieving families.

We are still working out the details for our visit. We have no doubt that we will get to Newtown at some point, whether in the near future or even further down the road. If you or anyone you know has connections in Newtown or knows a grieving family, please let Susan Whitmore know (swhitmore@griefHaven.org).



griefHaven Receives Grant from the Pacific Palisades Woman’s Club

BY PAM SOLOMON

On March 5, 2013, griefHaven received a grant from the Pacific Palisades Woman’s Club. The grant was in support of griefHaven’s excellent grief support and in providing grief group counseling to parents and siblings.

Throughout the year, the Pacific Palisades Woman’s Club raises money through its “Home Holiday Tour and Boutique” and distributes the funds to organizations the membership feels has made a significant impact in the community. This year the Club awarded grants totaling \$63,000 to 39 organizations.

The grant award evening was casual, warm, and often emotional as the various grant recipients talked about their nonprofit work and expressed gratitude to the Woman’s Club for their financial support. Susan Whitmore accepted the grant award on behalf of griefHaven and shared with the group how important the grief groups continue to be in helping parents and siblings on their grief journeys.

This was the second year in a row that griefHaven has received a Woman’s Club grant.



Wendell and Susan Whitmore,
Grant Award Evening

FOGH Council Meeting Monthly

The Friends of griefHaven Council meets monthly to discuss, plan, and strategize. We plan to invite you to join us for one of our meetings to hear about our plans and to share your ideas. Please keep your eyes open for that date.

We Get Phone Calls—Daily

A MESSAGE FROM SUSAN WHITMORE

Throughout most days in my small griefHaven office, the phone rings. It is usually someone who has either lost a child and needs support, or someone who knows someone who lost a child and wants to know how to help them. Just this month I answered calls from all across the United States and also Canada, the Netherlands, and England. Last week, an 84-year-old mother called. She had just lost her 53-year-old daughter to cancer and was in desperate need to talk to someone. We spoke for about thirty minutes, and, at the end of the conversation, she was laughing. She told me she felt so much better just talking to someone who understood. This is one of the things I get to do on a regular basis. Just by connecting with people on the phone, I help them realize they are not alone, that their feelings are normal and that they won’t always feel the pain they feel now. I help them find the courage to go on yet another day without their child. What a great honor it is to give others greater peace of heart.



New “Private” Grief Group

We just started a new “private” grief group that meets twice a month at Kehillat Israel from 7 to 9 p.m. We have room in that group for anyone who has lost an adult child in the past year. Private groups are closed groups where parents start and finish the group together over a period of years.

“Open” groups are available to any grieving parent and meet the second Wednesday of every month from 7 to 9 p.m. at Kehillat Israel.

FOGH Members Refer People

Many of you have referred people to griefHaven, and we have taken great care of their broken hearts. Thanks for sending them our way.