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**HOPEline** is a **monthly newsletter** of **HOPE FOR BEREAVED**, a nonprofit community organization providing support for the bereaved. The **purpose** of **HOPEline** is to help those who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each month, **we share information and ideas** from bereaved people and professionals to help you through your grief journey. Please know you are not alone. **HOPE is here to help you.** To talk with a compassionate, caring member of our peer support team, **please call us at 315-475-9675.**

## Exciting Changes Coming to the HOPEline Newsletter in July

To better utilize our resources and serve our community, we're making some important updates to the **HOPEline** newsletter. We will transition from a monthly to a bi-monthly release and move to a digital format instead of mailing printed copies.

If you currently receive the newsletter by mail and would like to continue receiving it, please reach out to us at **315-475-9675** or **mail@hopeforbereaved.com** to provide your email address. If you don't have email, we encourage you to call us to discuss your options—we want to make sure you stay connected.

With this shift to digital, we're also refreshing the newsletter layout. You'll still find the heartfelt grief stories and the Executive Director's letter, but we're adding new features like volunteer and staff spotlights, updates on what's happening at HOPE, and more ways to stay engaged with our community.

We're excited about these changes and look forward to continuing to bring you meaningful content in a way that's more accessible and sustainable.

Thank you for being part of our family.  
*The Team at HOPE for Bereaved*



## Spring is Upon Us!

Which means the *Butterfly Garden of HOPE* is gearing up for another beautiful season! Thank you to our 2025 sponsor, **Excellus BCBS**, for their financial support of the garden! We'd also like to thank Jim and Megan Sollecito, of **Sollecito Landscaping**, for their ongoing work to help keep the garden beautiful!

We are currently accepting reservations for events, memorials, and celebrations of life. From the months of May to September, there will be a porta potty available for all rentals. Consider purchasing a memorial brick today! We still have space for 8x8 photo bricks.

To make a reservation or purchase a brick, contact Kim Bermel at 315-475-4673 or [kbermel@hopeforbereaved.com](mailto:kbermel@hopeforbereaved.com)

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Dear Friends of HOPE,

Once again, our community is reeling from tragedy.

It can feel like there's no good left in the world. The weight of grief and despair is heavy—something you can feel in everyday conversations with friends, family, and neighbors. There's a quiet exhaustion in the air, a shared sadness that seems too big to carry.

But this is not where the story ends.

I've been reading *Hope for Cynics* by Jamil Zaki, a book that challenges the idea that hope is passive or naïve. Zaki writes about "active hope"—the kind that is built, reinforced, and shared, even in the face of heartbreak. He argues that cynicism is easy, but choosing to see and create goodness in the world takes effort. And in times like these, that effort is exactly what our community needs.

Grief can make the world feel small, but hope can break down the walls that loss builds around us. Hope is the neighbor who shows up with a meal, the friend who listens without judgment, the volunteer who gives their time when it would be easier to turn away. It's the work we do here at HOPE for Bereaved—holding space for pain while also helping people rebuild.

There is still so much good out there, but we have to look for it, choose it, and create it together. Since April is **Volunteer Appreciation Month**, I can't think of a better time to recognize the incredible people who give their time, energy, and hearts to HOPE. To our volunteers—you are the backbone of this organization. Your generosity is what keeps HOPE alive.

If you are struggling, please know you are not alone. HOPE is here. And if you have the strength to extend a hand to someone else, now is the time. If you've ever thought about giving back, we would love to welcome you into our community of kindness. Every act of service makes a difference. Rebecca Solnit said, "*Hope is not a lottery ticket you can sit on the sofa and clutch, feeling lucky. It is an axe you break down doors with in an emergency.*"



**From Executive Director**  
**Kelly Ocampo**

With Hope and Love,

*Kelly*

## In Search of Joy: Finding Your Way Through Darkness

By: Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS

Do you know how long it took me to allow laughter and joy to return to my life? Do you know how far it is from this side of the page to your side? Do you know how difficult it is to write about death? It was a long journey. It took me thirty years to get from your side of this page to mine...a long time...actually a whole lifetime!

I liked my other life. In fact, I loved it! I hadn't intended to be here, in your life. But then, just as it happened in your life, a single moment changed everything, and here I am ... with you now and forever. Thirty years ago, our son slipped away from his mom and dad and big sister. At peace after a lifelong battle with a malignant brain tumor, he took with him all our hopes and dreams of being an average American family.

We had two children so that no one would have to share the window or ride on the hump in the middle of the backseat. We had two children because I had hundreds of recipes that served four. We had two children because we couldn't figure out how to have the 1.6 children which is the national average. But something happened along the way to that dream, and in a moment our dreams were lost. The sounds of joy and laughter left our lives, perhaps as they seem to have left yours.

All of us know the quietness that comes when we realize we are the only source of sound in our house now. We all know that loss, that emptiness that brings us here to these pages in search of something to ease the pain; in search of something to stop the tears; in search of something to dream about again.

I can't think of anything else I'd rather be doing right now than living. But that wasn't always true, especially after our child's death when there were days when all I could do was think about dying, to join him and to relieve my pain. But I lived through that, just as you are right now, by grasping every day and claiming it as my own. Each of us will, one day, rediscover whatever we cherish about life. Each of us will find the laughter that echoed throughout our life with our loved one...if we will look for it.

I'm here on this side of the page, not to tell you how to be happy, but to tell you that you deserve to be happy again. It's a different kind of happy, however. It's a happiness robbed of innocence, born out of fire, forged by a flame that has the power to destroy everything in its path – but only if *we let it!*

How did I do it? How did I get to now? I got to where I am today because of healing, with time and a commitment to re-discovering the joy in living. Must we dwell in the darkness forever? Can we begin to understand that our loved one's death was but a moment, a split second of horror? And can we remember, instead, our loved one's life? Is it possible that one day we will begin to understand that joy can return?

We cannot find words to soothe the hurt...there aren't any! We cannot shield ourselves from the twists and turns of living. We cannot protect ourselves from experiencing life. We can, however, build supports and safety nets. We can create cushions and pockets of comfort: places where we can rest, momentarily, gathering strength to re-enter the crashing tides. We can learn to smile again, maybe even giggle, and return laughter to our lives.

Cry all you want, but remember to laugh when you can. Your life with your loved one was filled with moments of laughter! Remember them, enjoy them again and again. Between the tears, allow the joy to return. What I bring you in this article is a message with hope, a gift of remembrance, a love letter of laughter. Read this article as if we were sitting together, across the kitchen table, trying to help each other through the valley. Whether you are a bereaved parent, a widow or widower, a sibling, an adult bereaved child, a grandparent, friend, or simply someone who wants to know how to help, I hope you will find information, education, and support in these words. They are written from my heart to yours, each word carved out of experience as well as professional education.



I am a psychotherapist and a grief management specialist by trade, a mother by choice, and a grieving person by chance. Our hearts speak the same language, the language of grief. We hold the same fear of never getting over this and forever having to live with the terrible pain of having someone we love dearly die. Come with me, across the stepping-stones of grief, finding your way through the darkness, reaching for each touchstone as you can.

*Continued on next page*

There are no timetables for grief and no one right way to grieve. There are as many ways to grieve as there are people grieving. Know your pain is real and that you have the right to hurt and to ache and to continue loving your loved one. No one can tell you how to grieve or when to heal. I just want to let you know you can find hope and healing and you can find joy once again. Our loved ones lived and we loved them. We still do. But sometimes we cannot wait for fun and joy to be presented to us. We must make it happen! Insist on joyfulness and silliness being a part of each day. What the world needs now is a paper airplane that carries our message of love and hope and laughter to friends, family, and everyone!

Become an aviator right now and run your own flying circus. Make your own "Happy Planes" to send everywhere: to your mother who is trying to understand (or just "trying"), to your best friend who hasn't spoken to you since the funeral, to the neighbor who didn't bring a tuna casserole (bless her), to a child who needs some fun, and to yourself— just BE-CAUSE! Sail these messages through the air mentally, verbally, and physically. Fold the paper airplane right now and let the joy of your loved one's life begin to take the place of the hurt and anger of his death.

## **How to Deal with the Exhaustion of Grief**

By: Gary Roe; Source: [www.thegrieftoolbox.com](http://www.thegrieftoolbox.com)

I'm tired all the time. I can barely put one foot in front of the other. Bruce is the same way. Exhaustion has become a way of life," Carla said.

Carla and Bruce's sons Blake and Barrett were practically inseparable. Two years apart, they grew up as boys will - competing, fighting, cooperating, and having great adventures together. The family lived on a large piece of land out in the country, giving the boys lots of room to roam and explore. They loved their mini-kingdom.

One Saturday, the boys were out riding their ATVs. Inattention led to a loss of control and they collided. Barrett was killed instantly. Blake died a day later in the hospital. They were 13 and 15. "Life is heavy now. Last night at dinner, I was so exhausted that I could barely chew. Fatigue has taken over our lives," Carla shared.

### **Grief takes incredible energy**

Losing a loved one is like being hit by a bus. It immobilizes us. The shock waves are immense, and roll over us again and again, relentless and debilitating. Some days, we can barely lift our heads. Chronic fatigue, even exhaustion, is a common and natural experience for those in heavy grief.

We wake in the morning and it smacks us again. They're gone. The shock stuns us. We close our eyes and sigh. We rise and attempt to do life. We drag from room to room, place to place, task to task. There is little to no heart in what we do. How could there be? Our heart is shattered and in a million pieces.

We put on a mask and fake it through the day. Others are aware of our pain, but don't know what to do with it. Relationships become awkward, tentative, and different. At work, we go through the motions. Our performance isn't what it was. We're more irritable and erratic. We wonder what others are thinking.

Perhaps we have children. They might be grieving, too. We can't handle ourselves right now, so how in the world do we love them through this? Our backs are broken. The thought of shouldering any more weight - even an ounce more - is terrifying.

Numb. Dazed. Fatigued. Exhausted. Our bodies are feeling it. Grief is terribly draining.

**"Missing you is exhausting. I'll be patient and take my time."**

**Some suggestions:** Grief is incredibly demanding. Fatigue is the natural result. Here are some possible action steps to help manage this:

**Make taking care of yourself a high priority.** Focus on nutrition, rest, and exercise. Let these things rise to the top of your list.

**Downgrade your expectations of yourself.** If you're a list person, limit each day to three things, and tackle them in the order of importance, not urgency. Most of us in grief have to "do less." Pace yourself.

**Be patient with yourself.** This isn't a common cold that will resolve itself in a few days. Recovery often feels slow. Time doesn't heal all wounds, but healing does take time - lots of it.

You may always grieve on some level, but the grief will change. Handle today, this hour, this moment. One moment, one baby step at a time.









Hope  
For  
Youth



4/2025

Dear Friends,

How do we know we are progressing along our grief journey?  
~~?~~ — ? There are many different theories ~~?~~ and ideas  
about stages, or steps, ~~?~~ of grief. These explanations  
can be useful to help us understand what we are going  
through. However, we should only use these as guidelines,  
because there is no one way  to grieve. Every journey  
through grief is going to be a little different, because  
each of us is a special and unique individual.   
It might be helpful to see our ~~?~~ grief journey not ~~?~~ as  
steps, but as PHASES of grief. A phase through a  
topic is more gradual.  This means that our  
feelings can come and go, and some periods will have  
ups  $\uparrow$  and downs  $\downarrow$ . So if we are having a bad  $\downarrow$  day,  
it is part of our healing process, and we still make progress!

Love, Mark 



Dear Friends,

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*How did your loved one die? The answer is important, since it may affect the way we grieve and experience our feelings. Some deaths are very sudden, while other deaths can be a more prolonged process. Sudden deaths include accidents, medical events (e.g. a heart attack), or tragedies such as murder, suicide, or drug overdose, to name a few examples. These types of deaths are devastating for many reasons. A complicating factor in sudden deaths is the lack of preparation for the survivors. If your loved one died suddenly, it is common to experience shock, and have many regrets. There is a lot of "unfinished business" having to do with things we wish we could have done or said to our loved one before they died.*

*A more prolonged dying process can include a long-term illness (e.g. cancer), physiological diseases (e.g. Multiple Sclerosis or Muscular Dystrophy) or diseases associated with aging, such as Alzheimer's or dementia. If your loved one died in a more gradual manner, you may have still experienced a sense of shock at the point of death. While it may have been in some ways less sudden, there is a part of all of us who can't (or won't) accept the finality of death until it actually occurs. Many still have regrets of things not expressed or done with our loved one. The kind of death may often differ; however we all share common feelings and features as we embark upon our journey through grief.*

*One of the most important lessons we can learn on our grief journey is the value of our loved ones who are still with us. We must nurture and cultivate these relationships. And, as best we can, we need to appreciate those people that will be with us as we navigate through life. By doing this, we honor our deceased loved ones, and keep their spirit alive!*

Take Care -Mark

*Please forward your questions, comments, and ideas to [mail@hopeforbereaved.com](mailto:mail@hopeforbereaved.com)*

**SAVE THE DATES** for our 2025 Events

- ♥ **JUST ANNOUNCED!** Delmonico's Anniversary Party  
- Tuesday, May 6th
- ♥ Tournament of HOPE Golf Tournament - Monday,  
June 23rd
- ♥ Remembrance Run/Walk for HOPE - Saturday,  
August 2nd
- ♥ Celebration of HOPE - Friday, October 24th

Memorial and sponsorship opportunities are available.  
Contact us to learn more! **P: 315-475-9675**

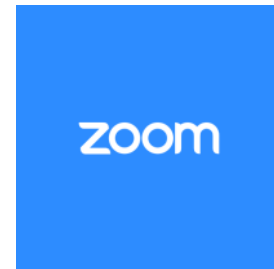
# happening at HOPE



## APRIL Support Groups

Friends & Family - ZOOM only 6:30 - 8:30 PM Tues. Apr. 1st	
Young Widow/Widower/S.O. 6:30 - 8:30 PM Wed. Apr. 2nd	Family and Friends 11:30 AM - 1:30 PM Clay Senior Center - 4948 State Route 31 Fri. Apr. 11th
Left Behind by Suicide 6:30 - 8:30 PM Wed. Apr. 9th	Family and Friends 6:30 - 8:30 PM Tues. Apr. 8th
Senior Widow/Widower/S.O. 10 AM - 12 PM Wed. Apr. 16th	Left Behind by Drug Overdose 6:30 - 8:30 PM Tues. Apr. 15th
Parents without Parents 6:30 - 8:30 PM Thur. Apr. 17th	Bereaved Parents & Grandparents 6:30 - 8:30 PM Wed. Apr. 16th

### IMPORTANT NOTICE



### Re: Virtual Support Groups

HOPE is no longer offering a Zoom option for each of our separate support groups.

Starting in April, on the 1st Tuesday of the month, we will offer a Zoom-only grief support group for all grievers. The Zoom link can be found on our website.



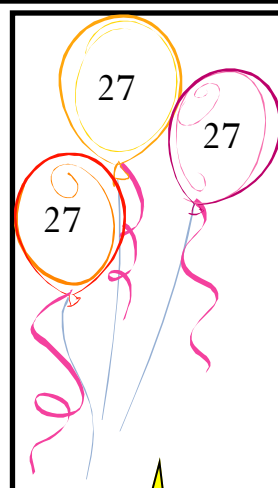
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APRIL 2025



You're invited to join us for  
**Delmonico's  
Italian Steakhouse**  
**27th Anniversary Celebration**



Tuesday, May 6th, 2025  
4:30-close

2950 Erie Blvd. E, Syracuse

**Delmonico's will donate 50%  
of the evenings tab - including takeout and bar -  
to HOPE FOR BEREAVED, Inc.**

