

HOLIDAY 2025

HOPEline

a bi-monthly newsletter from HOPE for Bereaved



NEW LEADERSHIP AT HOPE: WELCOME KELLY ROSSI!

We're thrilled to announce Kelly Rossi as HOPE's new Board President as of November 2025. Kelly joined the board in April, but she's no stranger to HOPE, having served as Development Director over 15 years ago. With a B.S. in Communications from SUNY Brockport and 30 years of experience in development, public relations, and marketing, Kelly brings a deep understanding of HOPE's mission, history, and future. Kelly currently serves as Foundation Director for McHarrie Life Foundation.

In her free time, she loves spending time with family and friends hiking the Adirondacks, cross-country skiing, camping at Southwick Beach, and biking New York trails.

Kelly's expertise and passion for helping grieving people will guide HOPE forward into a hopeful new chapter.

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Kelly Ocampo



Dear Friends of HOPE:

We are in full holiday swing at HOPE – so much so that this newsletter is arriving a bit later than planned. In the spirit of what we remind our clients each day, we're giving ourselves grace. It has been a season full of change, and our work reflects that.

In October, we celebrated 47 years of HOPE, and it was an evening filled with courage, healing, and a few well-earned tears. Just weeks earlier, we hosted our first *Wine & Cheese Open House* where we welcomed friends and supporters into our space to unveil the building renovations we've worked so hard to complete.

Coping with the Holidays was re-formatted as a traditional support group where we offered a space to be surrounded by others who understand the added grief of the season. We also hosted *A Conversation About Grief*, a professional grief panel featuring five local leaders.

We're re-launching two support groups – Senior Widows/Widowers and Bereaved Parents – as closed 8-week groups beginning in January. Please reach out if you're interested in joining. As HOPE moves into the future, we remain committed to strengthening how we serve our community.

And, of course, we are amid our Holiday Appeal. If you're able to give, please consider *Giving the Gift of HOPE*. Because our services remain free of charge, we rely deeply on the generosity of people like you who believe in compassionate care for grieving hearts.

Thank you for walking alongside us this season. May you find moments of peace, gentleness, and light.

With Warmth & Gratitude,

Kelly Ocampo

Grief and the Holidays



The holiday season can be a tender time for many of us. Even in the best of circumstances—when our basic needs are met and life feels relatively steady—the extra weight of the holidays can create strain. The gatherings, meals, shopping, expectations, and constant activity often leave people feeling stretched thin. Much of this pressure comes not from the season itself, but from the obligations we place on ourselves or feel from others.

Now imagine moving through all of this while grieving.

Grief changes us—physically, mentally, emotionally. The energy that once went toward cooking, decorating, or showing up at holiday events is now being used simply to get through the day. And yet, the world continues to expect you to participate as if nothing has changed. You may not feel up to hosting, or putting up a tree, or attending a single party. And often, layered on top of the grief is guilt—guilt for saying no, for disappointing others, or for not being able to meet expectations you once easily fulfilled.

If you are a friend or family member of someone who is grieving, this is where your compassion can make all the difference. Offer something concrete and meaningful: drop off groceries, help wrap gifts, pick up a few things they've been putting off. Tell them sincerely that it is perfectly okay if they skip the gathering this year. Give them permission to honor what they need.

And if you are the one grieving, please hear this: you are allowed to protect your energy. You do not owe the world cheerful participation. This holiday season, I want you to choose what supports your healing, your peace, and your well-being.

Do what is best for you.

STORY OF HOPE

“
YOU DON'T
HAVE TO
GRIEVE
ALONE.”

On July 8, 2023, Sade Sullivan's world changed forever when her husband, Daquan R. Sullivan, was killed by gun violence. In the midst of shock and heartbreak, and the overwhelming weight of raising four children through tragedy, Sade walked through the doors of HOPE for Bereaved seeking one thing: a place where she and her family could begin to breathe again.

“When I walked into HOPE, I was heartbroken, lost, confused, and looking for hope,” Sade shares. She began meeting one-on-one with a peer counselor, bringing her children as well so they could receive support together as a family.

HOPE became a turning point in their grief journey. “HOPE helped by giving me a sense of meaning and understanding of what grief really is,” she says. One person made an impact above all others.



Days of Reflection

November -
Children's Grief
Awareness Month

November 11 -
Veteran's Day

November 20 -
Transgender Day
of Remembrance

November 20 -
December 20 -
Homicide
Awareness Month

December 1 -
World AIDS Day

December 7 -
National Pearl
Harbor
Remembrance Day



Contact HOPE
if you need to
talk to
someone
about your
grief

315.475.9675

“There were days I couldn’t get out of bed,” Sade recalls. “Walt would call with encouraging words. He understood what I needed most.” Those simple moments, filled with compassion, became anchors during the hardest days.

Since coming to HOPE, Sade’s daughter was inspired to start a support group for grieving girls, and Sade is working alongside her. “We are turning our grief into something positive,” she says.

When asked what she would tell someone who is grieving and unsure whether to reach out, Sade’s message is clear: “Reach out. HOPE will change your mindset and your life.” Today, hope looks different for Sade. She is living each day for her husband and giving back to her community.

“You don’t have to grieve alone,” she says. “So don’t.”



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Alex Butterfield

For Alex Butterfield, grief has shaped much of her life: losing both parents, her best friend, two pregnancies, and others close to her. She knew of HOPE through clients she had referred, and after becoming a mother, she felt a pull to build a healthier mindset. She submitted a volunteer form “to dip a toe in,” but after the orientation, she felt inspired and fully committed.

In her year and a half with HOPE, Alex has facilitated the Parents Without Parents group, supported Celebration of HOPE for two years, assisted with data and social media, spoken at Coping with the Holidays, and joined the CEU committee to develop grief trainings.

“I guess I just can’t get enough of HOPE,” she says.

One standout memory was this year’s Celebration of HOPE. “There were challenges, but the team united. Seeing it all come together is something that stays with you.” Volunteering has strengthened her belief that grief is a public health emergency. “Grief isn’t just missing someone - it can be anger, shame, even relief. People want to talk, and they deserve support.”

Her message to future volunteers: “Do it. It’s not gloomy - it’s full of love, light, and people learning to live with loss.”



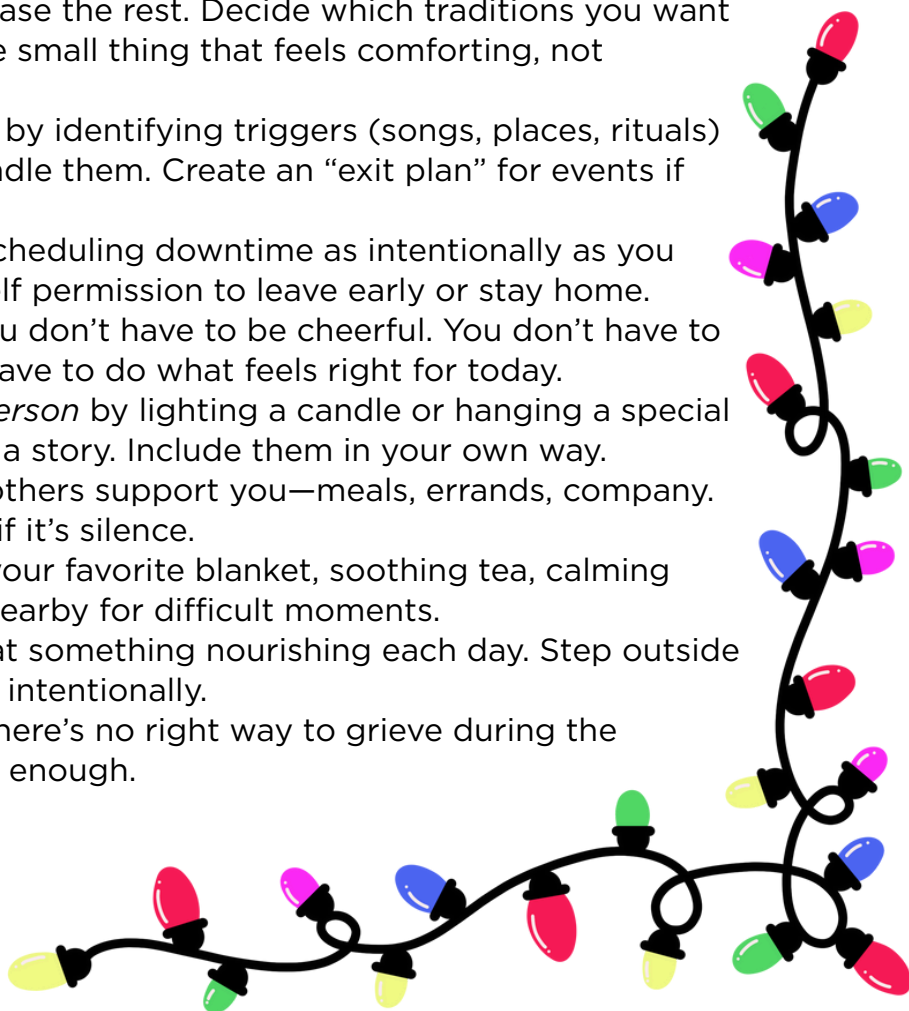
Wish List

Keurig coffee pods
Tissues
Lavendar essential oil
Travel coffee cups
Live house plants

Postage Stamps
Gift Cards
Individually wrapped snacks
Bottled Water & seltzer
Lysol Spray

Holiday Checklist for a Griever

- ✓ *Give Yourself Permission* to feel whatever comes—joy, sadness, numbness, or all of it. Say “no” to plans that feel too heavy.
- ✓ *Choose What Matters* and release the rest. Decide which traditions you want to keep, change, or skip. Pick one small thing that feels comforting, not obligatory.
- ✓ *Plan Ahead for Hard Moments* by identifying triggers (songs, places, rituals) and choose how you want to handle them. Create an “exit plan” for events if you need a break.
- ✓ *Build in Moments of Rest* by scheduling downtime as intentionally as you schedule gatherings. Give yourself permission to leave early or stay home.
- ✓ *Set Realistic Expectations* - you don’t have to be cheerful. You don’t have to “make the most of it.” You only have to do what feels right for today.
- ✓ *Create Space to Honor Your Person* by lighting a candle or hanging a special ornament. Say their name. Share a story. Include them in your own way.
- ✓ *Accept Help* or ask for it. Let others support you—meals, errands, company. Tell people what you need, even if it’s silence.
- ✓ *Prepare a “Comfort Kit”* with your favorite blanket, soothing tea, calming playlist, tissues, journal. Keep it nearby for difficult moments.
- ✓ *Practice Small Acts of Care*. Eat something nourishing each day. Step outside for fresh air. Drink water. Breathe intentionally.
- ✓ *Give Yourself Grace* because there’s no right way to grieve during the holidays. Whatever you can do is enough.



MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUPS

Please call HOPE for more information: 315-475-9675

Family & Friends | Young Widow/Widower/Significant Other | Left Behind by Suicide
Bereaved Parents & Grandparents (Infant/Newborn, Miscarriage or Stillbirth)

CLOSED SUPPORT GROUPS

Please call HOPE to register: 315-475-9675

Beyond the Quiet House: for senior widows, widowers, & significant others
A Life Remembered: for parents grieving children 1 year or older



PAT SPENT HER LIFE

Caring for Others

HER FINAL GIFT IS HELPING
HOPE DO THE SAME

Pat Kriesel spent 30 years of her life tirelessly helping grieving children and adults at HOPE for Bereaved. In celebration of her life, her family designated gifts to HOPE in her memory.

Memorial gifts to HOPE for Bereaved help grieving families in our community by supporting one-to-one counseling, support groups, and educational opportunities free-of-charge.

Thank you to the **Kriesel family** for supporting HOPE's mission in memory of Pat.

To learn more about designating gifts to HOPE in honor/memory of your loved one, give us a call today at 315-475-9675.



PAT'S FAMILY GATHERS AT HER
MEMORIAL DEDICATION AT HOPE

SECONDARY LOSSES & THE HOLIDAYS

The holiday season can cause secondary losses to come into sharper focus for grievers.

What is a secondary loss? Secondary losses are usually non-death losses, like those related to financial stability, sense of self, sense of purpose, support systems, or most notably during the holidays - traditions. While the primary loss is the death of your loved one, secondary losses are the quieter ripples that follow. A person who once hosted every celebration may now feel the weight of an empty chair and an unfamiliar silence. Someone who relied on a partner for emotional or practical support may find the simplest holiday tasks unexpectedly overwhelming. These layered losses can make the season feel disjointed, lonely, or strangely altered.

For many, holidays also highlight the social shifts that accompany grief. Invitations may change, relationships can strain or strengthen, and the familiar rhythm of gathering may feel foreign. What once felt joyful can become complicated. You may notice the loss of companionship, the loss of having someone to shop or cook with, or the loss of the person who always brought a special tradition to the celebration. These changes can deepen the emotional impact of the season, leaving you feeling unanchored or unsure of how to participate in festivities you once loved.

Recognizing secondary losses is an important step in navigating this time with self-compassion. Understanding that these feelings are normal can help you give yourself permission to make new choices. This might look like simplifying the holiday, creating a new ritual, asking for help, or giving yourself space to step back when needed. By acknowledging the many layers of loss that arise during the holidays, you can approach the season with both honesty and gentleness, honoring what has changed while giving yourself room to move through it at your own pace.



HOLIDAY 2025

HOPE in Action

Programs & Partnerships That Make a Difference



Staff & volunteers enjoying the patio at our Wine & Cheese Open House

A NEW SPACE FOR HOPE

Some gifts arrive exactly when you need them. Ours came last year on Christmas. That day, HOPE learned that **Landscapes East** had selected us as their charity recipient of a \$10,000 outdoor project. What began as a holiday surprise soon became one of the most meaningful additions to our space.

In late January, HOPE's Executive Director, Kelly Ocampo, met with James, owner of Landscapes East to imagine what this gift could become. Thanks to years of generosity from Sollecito Landscaping, our grounds were already well cared for. So instead of more plantings, we dreamed bigger: an outdoor hardscaped patio, a place that could serve as HOPE's sixth counseling space and a sanctuary for staff and volunteers.



By the end of August, that vision was real—a beautiful 12x12 patio, complete with a ramp featuring a hand-carved butterfly inlay for accessibility and newly planted trees that provide privacy for the space.

Within days, Kelly found a barely used patio set at a great price, and immediately the space came alive. When she pulled into the parking lot, and saw a peer

counselor and client already using the patio for their session, it was the very moment she had hoped for.



Of course, with all outdoor spaces in CNY, our patio is now under snow. But when that snow thaws, it will once again be a place to breathe, to talk, to rest, and to heal. We're deeply grateful to Landscapes East for transforming generosity into something lasting and restorative for everyone who visits HOPE.



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MISSION STATEMENT

HOPE for Bereaved, Inc. provides support groups, peer counseling, and resources at no charge to grieving Central New York youth, adults, families, and organizations.

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Syracuse, NY
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Holiday 2025

This newsletter was
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Charles W. Rock
Jan. 16, 1942 – Oct. 12, 2019

Your hands were strong yet gentle as you held us in your care. You taught us by example every day. No matter what we needed, you were always there. We meant the world to you and you to us which is the reason it was so difficult to say goodbye. You left an emptiness inside our hearts. It seemed somehow you would always be with us; we never learned to let you go.

*Your loving family,
Diane, Chip, Kathy, Austin,
Ashley, Katie, Chris, Carrie,
Cecelia, Carleigh, Patrick,
Meaghan, Maeve and Charlie.*