



## OUR HISTORY

The Children's Grieving Center began in 1996 as a pilot project of the Junior League of Orange County. It was a collaborative effort to create a safe, neutral and private environment for grieving children and their families.

Participation in the Children's Grieving Center does not require prior participation with the Hospice program; many of the children are grieving the sudden unexpected death of a family member.

## WHO WE ARE

The Children's Grieving Center provides families in Orange & Sullivan County, New York with loving support in a safe place where children, teens and their families grieving a death can share their experience as they move through the healing process.

Healing is enhanced when children/teens grieve with others their own age. They gain strength and understanding from one another.

Twice monthly the Children's Grieving Center provides grief support to those who have experienced the death of a family member or friend from an accident, illness or traumatic death. Trained professionals and volunteers lead activities designed to help the grieving process of children ages 6–16 yrs.

## HOW CHILDREN GRIEVE

The grieving process with children is complex, and is affected at each child's stage of development. Strong feelings such as denial, anger and sadness are often expressed through children's play and physical activity.

Most children between the ages of 2 and 4 see death as reversible, temporary and impersonal.

Between the ages of 5 and 9, most children begin to realize that death is final and that all living things die. They tend not see death as personal, and hold the notion that they can escape death through their own ingenuity and efforts.

From age 9 or 10 through adolescence, children begin to comprehend fully that death is irreversible, that all living things die, and that they too will die some day. Many teenagers become intrigued with seeking the meaning of life and developing philosophical views of life and death.

## COMFORTING YOUR GRIEVING CHILD

The following is a brief list of suggestions for helping a child through the grieving process.

- As soon as possible after the death, talk with your child. Use the deceased person's name when gently explaining what is happening.
- Avoid phrases such as "sleeping", "went on vacation" or "God took them". It will confuse and scare a child.
- Let your child ask questions, but be sensitive to the age and level of understanding of your child.
- Let your child participate in the wake, funeral, cemetery, etc., if he/she wants to. Never pressure your child to go.
- Play with your child in ways that allow him/her to express feelings (make believe, drawing, etc.).
- Plan something special for your child to look forward to; a vacation or outing. It is ok to feel happy again after someone has died.

**Grieving Center professionals can answer your questions about children's grief.**

**HOSPICE of Orange & Sullivan Counties, Inc. 845-561-6111**



## CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Here are a few books that may help you and your child through the grieving process. You may also check with your local school or public librarian for resources.

### **Ages 3 to 5**

#### Where's Jess

By Joy and Mary Johnson

#### Sad Isn't Bad

By M. Mundy

### **Ages 6 to 9**

#### The Tenth Good Thing About Barney

By Judith Viorst

#### The Invisible String

By P. Karst

#### Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs

By Tomie de Paolo

### **Ages 10 and Up**

#### I Will Remember You

By L. Dower

### **All Ages**

#### The Fall of Freddie the Leaf

By Leo Buscaglia

