

WINTER NEWSLETTER

BOSTON CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL BEREAVEMENT PROGRAM

November 2023



Dear BCH Families,

We are excited to announce the inaugural installment of the Boston Children's Hospital Bereavement Program's seasonal newsletter! We hope this newsletter will provide a space to help connect you with grief resources and programs, and to support shared experiences and connections between BCH families who have experienced child loss.

If you would like to contribute to our newsletter by sharing a recommendation for a book, podcast, article, or resource that you believe will be helpful to other families, please click [this link](#) to let us know about it, and we will try to include it in an upcoming edition. For our Spring newsletter, we are especially interested in feedback on any summer camps or programs your family has attended. We also hope to release a special edition newsletter for Valentine's Day (please read ahead for more details!).

In the words of BCH bereaved parent and New York Times writer, Sarah Wildman, *"Living in loss is heavy; it is made all the more so by a world overflowing with grief, and parental pain. I see myself in all these newly minted members of my terrible club...[Grief support] experiences aren't in search of solace or solution, but of place. **It is powerful to be around people who recognize the insistency of loss, its daily presence, the continued impact of which so easily slips past others, unseen, as everyone else returns to the business of living.** It has made me recognize how many people walk around concealing pain."* To read Sarah's full essay, please see the Family Spotlight section.

As the days grow shorter and colder, and as the holidays approach, please know that we see you, your grief, and your love, and that we are here.

We wish you gentle holidays,
SoYun Kwan
BCH Bereavement Program Social Worker

Grief around the Holidays

[Getting Through the Holidays](#) this article from The Dougy Center features tips and a [Holiday Plan Worksheet](#)

[Coping with Grief During the Holidays](#) this webinar from What's Your Grief shares tips and ideas for coping with holiday grief, and covers topics from "setting boundaries over the holidays to thinking about holiday tradition, roles and responsibilities, and ideas for remembrance."

[A New Years Resolution for Grievers](#) is a piece about carrying on the everyday reminders of loved ones.





Love Letter Writing Prompt & Call for Submissions

“Even though Valentine's Day is usually marketed as only about romantic love, this episode focuses on the love that exists in any connection.” [This podcast](#) from the Dougy Center features a compilation of love stories from listeners, and we invite you to join in the conversation by answering the questions: *How did your person love you? How did you love your person?* We also welcome siblings to answer these questions through drawings or other creative expressions.

If you are interested in sharing an excerpt of your love letter or any artwork to be published in our special edition newsletter around Valentine's Day, please send it to: bereavement.program@childrens.harvard.edu. If you wish to remain anonymous, please let us know, or remove your names in advance. Thank you!

Virtual Support Groups and Workshops

Care Dimensions' Coping with the Holidays workshop

Monday, December 11, 3-5 pm

Discuss helpful ways to navigate the holiday season while you are grieving.

Participants will have time to ask questions and find mutual support. RSVP

Required to Grief@CareDimensions.org by Friday, December 5. Find more

information at: www.caredimensions.org/grief-support/index

Care Dimensions' Helping Your Children Cope With the Holidays workshop

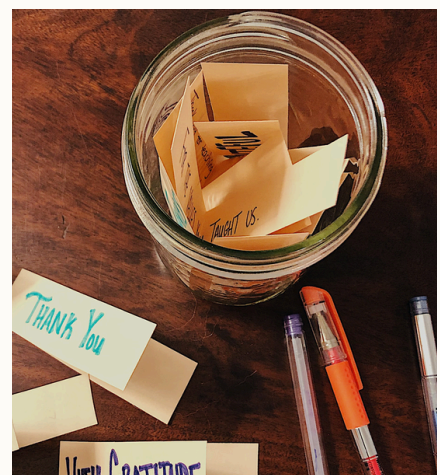
Wednesday, December 13, 7:30-9 pm

A free virtual workshop series for parents/caregiver focused on supporting grieving children/teens. Contact ChildLife@CareDimensions.org to register

Family Activities

[Grateful Remembrance Jar](#)

“This activity is about expressing gratitude for the past you shared with your loved one. By sharing these gratitudes, family and friends have an opportunity to connect, share, honor, and remember in a way that is a little bit happy and a little bit sad (there's space for all emotion at the Thanksgiving table).”





Winter Light- Making Memory Luminaries

"For thousands of years, people have held festivals of light. Some of these festivals help brighten winter. Others welcome spring. Lights are kindled to honor the dead and to celebrate birth. Throughout the year, lights shine on special days." — Nancy Luenn, Celebrations of Light

In-Person Workshops & Remembrance Events

Care Dimensions' Family Holiday Event

Sunday, December 10, 1-2:30pm

Bertolon Center for Grief and Healing, 78 Liberty Street, Danvers, MA

A free workshop for children/teens and their families. RSVP by Tuesday, December 5 by contacting SMccarthy@CareDimensions.org or (781)373-6570

Care Dimensions Service of Remembrance and Tree of Lights hosts four lighting ceremonies this December, offering the community the opportunity to remember and honor loved ones.

Danvers Ceremony
Tuesday, December 5 - 5PM
M&T Bank, 1 Conant Street,
Danvers

Swampscott Ceremony: Thursday,
December 7 - 5PM
Town Hall & The First Church,
22 Monument Avenue, Swampscott

Lincoln Ceremony
Includes Service of Remembrance
Wednesday, December 13 - 6PM
Bemis Hall
15 Bedford Road, Lincoln

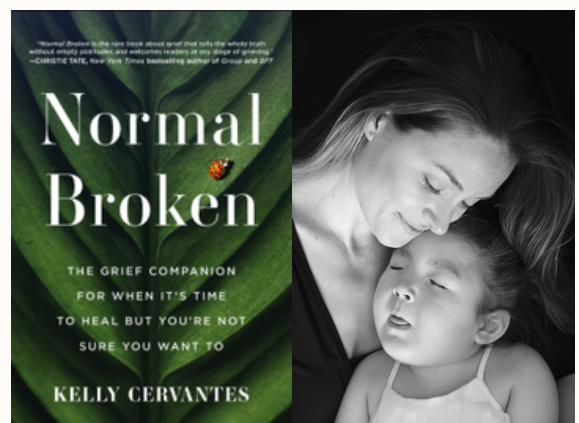
Cape Ann Ceremony: Monday,
December 11 - 5PM
Bank Gloucester
160 Main Street, Gloucester

Angel of Hope Candlelight Vigil is held annually on December 6th at 7 pm at the St. Anne and St. Patrick Shrine, 16 Church Street Sturbridge, MA

Book Corner

Normal Broken, by Kelly Cervantes

This memoir and "grief companion" was recommended by a BCH parent, and featured on the Courageous Parents Network. [Watch an archived interview](#) with the author from CPN, or [register for an upcoming webinar](#) featuring the author, November 28 at 8 pm.



Family Spotlight

The Empty Seat at Our Thanksgiving Table This inspirational New York Times essay written by BCH parent, Sarah Wildman, describes her experience of grief facing the holiday season, and every day, after the loss this year of her 14 year old daughter, Orli, who was diagnosed with hepatoblastoma at age 10. Orli received a liver transplant at BCH in March 2020.

Sarah and her family recently attended Keeping Connections, a grief conference held by Boston Children's Hospital's Bereavement Program, which is hallmarked by a bereaved parent panel, small group discussions for bereaved families, and sibling activities.

Below are photos of Sarah, her husband Ian, and their daughters, Hana (age 10) and Orli.



SoYun Kwan has been a clinical social worker at Boston Children's Hospital since 2005. She has worked in the Medical/Surgical Intensive Care Unit, and in the Liver, Intestine, and Multivisceral Transplant Program, supporting families facing serious illness. She currently runs the BCH Bereavement Program, where she is passionate about offering bereavement support and programming to BCH families.

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Ellie Frechette is one of the clinical social workers on the Pediatric Advanced Care Team (PACT), who specializes in supporting bereaved parents/caregivers and siblings. Ellie currently runs many of the programs offered through the bereavement program, including support groups, educational sessions, and expressive arts workshops.

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Please reach out for further resources or recommendations

