



# GriefHaven

*where hope resides*

## E-Haven™ Newsletter Special Holiday Edition 2010

a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation

[Www.griefHaven.org](http://www.griefHaven.org)

**(310) 459-1789**

Dear Friends,

Here come the holidays. For all of us, the holidays forever changed when our child died. For those who are very new traveling this journey, the holidays can be an especially difficult time filled with trepidation, uncertainty, and something you feel you are now simply enduring. For those who have been on this journey for many years, you might find that you have found a way now to make the holidays more manageable and perhaps found what does and doesn't work for you. The holidays remain a challenging time for most of us.

Every year we send a special holiday newsletter and share with you gifts we feel will be meaningful, as well as suggestions to help you through this time. For lots of detailed suggestions, please visit our December 2009 newsletter on our website.

What can you give a bereaved mother, father, sibling, relative or friend that means something to them? This year we found these beautiful portraits, described in detail below, as well as the special memory candles that we at griefHaven use as gifts for bereaved parents and during support group meetings.

Please pass this newsletter forward to anyone and everyone you want to know about these lovely gifts filled with meaning—a way to honor those you love. We at griefHaven are sending all of you our heartfelt and sincere love and hope that this holiday season will bring you at least some Peace of Heart.

*Be Remembered*



Original Photo



Portrait

Be Remembered portraits is a Southern California company that empathizes with the difficult grieving process occurring after the loss of a loved one.

After attending the funeral of a family member, we left feeling sad that the last image we had of that person was a distorted and grainy enlargement made from a photo-

**Affordable For Everyone!  
Looks Exactly Like An Expensive Portrait.  
Makes the Most Memorable Gift Ever.**



Original Photo



graph. That is when we decided to do something about that, and Be Remembered was born. Our motivation was one of love, compassion, and an honoring of the deceased person's life, while not only providing something memorable for the families, but something also very affordable for everyone.

At Be Remembered, our artists will turn any photograph into an original work of art. Our portraits keep the memories of our loved ones alive. As professional artists, we lovingly and painstakingly create portraits that are compassionate, endearing, completely accurate, and timeless. Photographs record moments; a portrait reflects a lifetime.

A client testimonial;

"Thank you so very much for the beautiful artwork you created using my mother's photograph. We immediately placed it on an easel near the altar in the church for the memorial service, and now it is lovingly in our home on the wall where we are reminded of our wonderful mother. Thank you for sharing your talent in this beautiful way."

- Beautiful gift for anyone who has lost a loved one
- All portraits arrive professionally framed and ready for display
- Affordable and convenient
- 20% of all profits donated to griefHaven
- Includes a CD with your photo
- We offer a money-back guarantee



A traditional painting can take weeks to complete and cost thousands of dollars. However, our cost is only a fraction of that. How?

We have developed a technique using special photo editing software and state-of-the-art technology that allows us to paint directly into the computer. Using this process, we can create a Digital Painting in a fraction of the time it would take using traditional mediums.



All portraits are hand stretched Canvas Giclee Prints, UV coated, and texturized, offering long lasting color and vibrant color that will last for generations to come.

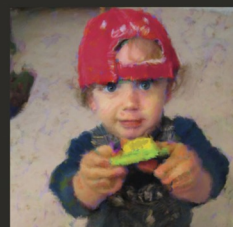
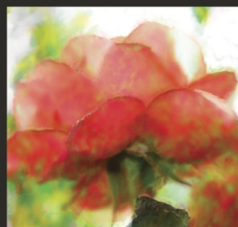
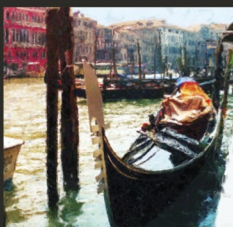
These portraits come fully framed and ready to hang on the wall. People usually tell us the portraits we do look better than the original photos. Anything in the photo can be changed or adjusted. You don't need to worry about the background, size of the original, or anything else in the photo, which means you can have your favorite photo made into a beautiful and timeless piece of art. Our artists work closely with families to ensure each portrait is a personal reflection of their loved one. Our staff is available to help you through this process.

For more information, and to order your portrait as that special holiday gift or any time, please visit our website at [www.bere remembered.me](http://www.bere remembered.me) or call (805) 469-0168 to get started.



Creating a portrait of a child gone too soon is a touching experience for all of our artists. We hope you will give us that opportunity."

## TURNING PHOTOS INTO PAINTINGS



*Be  
Remembered*

[www.BeRemembered.me](http://www.BeRemembered.me)  
[Portraits@BeRemembered.me](mailto:Portraits@BeRemembered.me)  
P.O. Box 3313  
Camarillo, CA 93011  
805.469.0168

Memories of You  
Candles  
By Susan Whitmore  
(A portion of every purchase  
will be donated to griefHaven)

A while back, we told you about these beautiful memory candles that Kim Griffin started creating after the death of her son, Ryan. To date, griefHaven has purchased many of these candles for gifts and provides one for each parent who participates in our support group meetings. At each meeting, the candles are placed on the mantle where the children's faces light up the room throughout the night.

I personally ordered my own candles of Erika, and you can see the photo below of Wendell and me holding Erika's candle at my birthday party last October, where this candle glowed throughout the entire night, showing Erika's sweet smile and face. It was my way of including her in that special event, and it reminded others that she is an integral part of our lives now and forever.

There are endless uses for these amazing candles.  
These candles are great gifts for:

A bereaved parent  
Christmas  
Hanuka  
Wedding  
Birthday  
Baby shower  
Funeral or memorial service  
Mother's Day  
Father's Day  
Valentine's Day  
The anniversary of someone's death  
Memorializing a special event  
The person who has everything

kimbergiffin173@yahoo.com  
c/o Memories Of You Candles  
173 Black Rock Lane  
St. Charles, MO



Erika's candle sat on the restaurant table and burned throughout the entire night at Susan's birthday party

For just a few dollars,  
you can give this beautiful gift  
to show someone how much you care.

A treasured gift  
for so many  
occasions.

Choose the back-  
ground that represents  
something your child  
loved.



Memory candles of each child burn on the mantle during griefHaven support group meetings.

Beloved children honored on the mantle are: Kyle Keiji Pog-gensee; Lucas Oakland Binford; Jackson Thomas Senator; Erik Daniels Hanifan; Travis Lucas deZarn



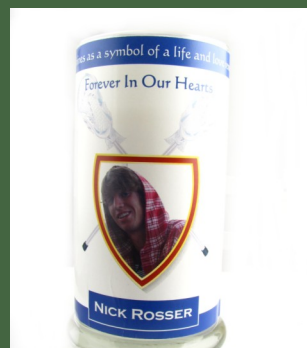
Austin Plummer  
(Radio DJ)



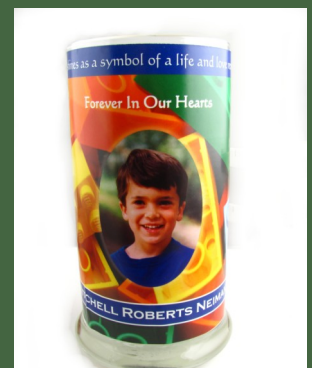
David Brian Abrams  
(Horses & Riding)



Nick Piacentini  
(The Beach)



Nick Rosser  
(LaCrosse)



Mitchell Roberts Neiman  
(Legos)



## SIBLING NEWSLETTER

Exciting griefHaven News!  
Our First Sibling Newsletter  
Will Arrive In  
January 2011

### To Our Siblings Of Any Age:

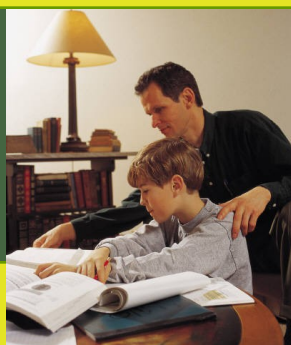
We need your  
Articles or stories  
Drawings  
Photos  
Poetry  
Tributes  
Memories  
Ideas & suggestions



### Parents:

#### We Need Your Help and Encouragement

We need your help with anything you feel  
will lend itself to this beautiful sibling newsletter  
that will be of great love, hope, and support  
to all siblings everywhere!



Send Information To:  
[hope@griefHaven.org](mailto:hope@griefHaven.org)

Or Call: (310) 459-1789 with any questions

## Newsletter Dedicated to Sibling Loss

### "Siblings"



We are excited about our first sibling newsletter coming out in January 2011 and dedicated solely to our beloved siblings and their journeys after the death of a brother or sister.

We often refer to siblings who have lost a brother or sister as *the forgotten ones*, as people often do not realize that siblings suffer a depth of grief that is difficult and affects them deeply. It is often hard for siblings to understand the feelings they are experiencing and for society in general to understand that they, too, are grieving.

So we are not forgetting about siblings by putting together a sibling newsletter. It will continue as long as we have articles and items to make up a quarterly sibling newsletter.

All ages are welcome and encouraged to participate!

**For older siblings:** Please write anything you want about your journey. Some ideas are: what it has been like for you since your sibling died, what you suggest other siblings do to help themselves, how your friends have or have not been supportive, what it was like going back to school, how it has been with other family members, how society has handled the fact that you lost a sibling, suggestions you have for society regarding a sibling loss, what you have learned about life since your sibling's death, and what you have done that has or has not helped you on your journey so far. Write a tribute to your sibling, a poem, a thought, a saying, etc. We encourage you to write or share whatever you want. Your words will be seen by thousands and thousands and will help so many.

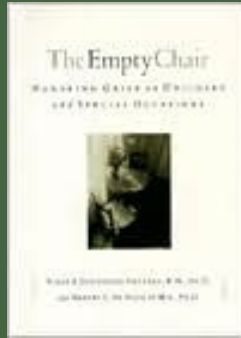
**For younger siblings:** If your child is very young, you can coach them to write whatever they would like to share, send a picture they have drawn, write down something for them as they dictate it to you, ask them questions and send in the question/answer dialogue, or any other ideas you have.

Just be creative and remember that we want to help educate others about the loss of a sibling, no matter the age.

Send your writings or ideas to:

[swhitmore@griefHaven.org](mailto:swhitmore@griefHaven.org)

## Excerpts From:



### ***The Empty Chair,***

—Susan J. Zonnebelt-Smeenge, RN, Ed.D.  
And Robert C. DeVries, D.Min., Ph.D.

**F**or many people, grief at the holidays is an oxymoron. Holidays are supposed to be happy, fun, joyful, overflowing with bonds of love. Grief casts a painful, somber, dark shadow over the holidays, shrouding the happy memories of past celebrations.

We grieve because we loved. We formed an intense attachment to another person. We became vulnerable, letting the other person deep into our life in intimate ways. Attachments and connections, once the glue that held our life together, have now been broken by death. We yearn to have our loved one close to us again.

We grieve not only for the person who died but for the life we lived with that person. We grieve over the loss of someone who functioned in important ways in our life, who was a companion, who shared the same living space. We remember hugging each other, taking walks or eating meals together, and sharing rich holiday traditions.

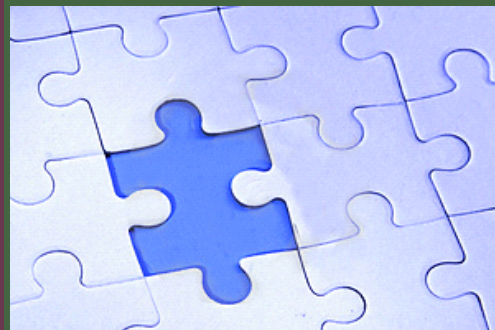
**N**ow, that part of who you were together is gone. Your own identity is changing. Holidays are special times of the year when we are drawn to remember those significant people who have died, even if the death occurred many years ago and the memories are pleasant and no longer filled with pain.

The death of a child makes holidays difficult. Society judges such a death as the most unanticipated—the most out of order. In our culture, children often occupy a prominent place in the family. They are our link to the future, for they will carry in their hands and hearts the generational torch after we die. This child was to be a significant part of your future, and with his or her death, part of your future died. [Regardless of how your child died and

at what age], your hopes and dreams for what might have been with this child are gone. So now, on this holiday, you are called to name the pain, to celebrate the memory, and to search the landscape for signs of a new life without your child.

For siblings, a sister or brother may have died—a comrade in blood. This was the one you teased and with whom you fought, yet you were also bonded with a strong sense of family loyalty. Siblings understand the nature of their shared environment, growing up together. But now the birth order may have changed—you have become the oldest, or maybe the only. Family reunions will forever be different. Family structures will change. Your family is now smaller—one less place setting for the holiday dinner; one less chair at the table. This important person is no longer there. Often siblings grow to also be close friends, so a sibling's death is also the lost of your friend. There is now one less person to help with family decisions or plans, one less person to help care for an aging parent, and one less person to share milestones as you go through life.

Holidays seem to intensify the pain and add another layer to one's grief. The holidays typically



fall short of what they are imagined to be. Death has removed a significant person from your life. A meaningful relationship has vanished like the morning

mist. In the middle of your celebration, you are reminded how closely attached you were to your deceased loved one. Memories of other important people who have preceded you in death may also flood over you.

A holiday celebration makes you face the reality of death all the more directly. It may be difficult to say the words dead or died. They refuse to be shaped by your tongue. Yet in the middle of the traditions of food, family, and friends—and all the activities associated with holidays and other special days—you have an empty chair, a place once filled by that special person, and a reminder of the loss.

Here are some things you can do  
(suggestions from *The Empty Chair*  
and griefHaven):

- Take care of yourself physically. Holidays can be physically draining, especially if this is your first or second experience with a holiday since the death of your loved one. Respect your mind and your body. Failing to take care of yourself physically will only add to your fatigue and frustration.
- If you have to shop, and it seems a daunting task, do so online instead of going into the stores. You



may also ship items to a loved one if you are not spending the holidays together. If you simply cannot shop, let others know that you will not be exchanging gifts this year.

- Think back to how you celebrated the holidays.

What was your role in the celebration? How might that be different now that your loved one has died? Begin to consider how you might want to handle your traditional ways of celebrating this day following his or her death.

- Siblings are grieving too, and the holidays are also difficult for them. Listen to what is important to them, and then see if you can incorporate their hopes or wishes into the holidays without completely giving up what you need. You can also break the day up into smaller segments of various types of events, such as opening presents at home as a family, breakfast with friends, a visit to the cemetery as a family, dinner with relatives, and then home early where you share memories of your child.
- Death puts things into perspective. Since the death of your child, many of the routine things that you used to care about may now mean almost nothing at all. Some of the festivities and all of the hubbub might seem utterly ridiculous. Reassure yourself that eventually you can come to a new and deeper understanding of each special day and how you will handle it.
- Talk with others about the reality that your loved one has died and that therefore your life (and your celebrations) will feel and be different.
- If you accept a holiday invitation to someone's home, give yourself some leeway. Be up front with them when you accept the invitation, letting them know that you will try to participate, but that you may well excuse yourself at some point. We suggest that you not host an event during the first year after a death. As a guest, you can leave when you want to or even cancel at the last minute. As a backup plan, you might also wish to consider mak-

ing alternative plans that may feel more comfortable.

- Lower your expectations and the pressures you put on yourself. You do not have to celebrate the holidays in exactly the same way you did before. Plan your day, keeping it simple. Allow yourself time to face the hard reality of your loved one's death (in a manageable dose) if you think you can do so this year. For some of you, celebrating the holiday according to family tradition may be a comforting coping strategy. If it is not, take a break this year.
- Talk about your deceased loved one. Tell a favorite story, give a toast, write a poem, play his or her favorite song, or make a favorite food. Such an act will help you express the importance of the deceased, and then perhaps you and other family members will be able to appreciate the holidays with an even deeper and more meaningful significance.
- Write a letter to your loved one, recalling several memories you have of the holidays in which this

person played an important part. In that letter, write about such things as:

*When I think of this holiday without you, I feel ...*

*The thing I miss most on this special day without you is*

...



- Using photos, make a picture book of holidays past and sit together as a family remembering and sharing.

- Go through cards, letters, pictures, and other personal memorabilia associated with your relationship with your loved one. Re-live the occasions as you review the mementos.
- Ask your friends and family to write down their memories of your loved one and collect them in a keepsake book or have each person read one.
- Remember the reasons that you enjoyed the holidays in the past, other than the fact that your deceased loved one was there, and see if any of those help give you a renewed view of the day, even if for just a few moments.
- Make a plan regarding how you will get through the day and with whom you will spend it. Try to spend time with other "like" hearts and people who are compassionate and understanding of your needs. There is a decided advantage in





thinking ahead about what you want the day to include and with whom you want to spend it.

- Bring some type of memento with you wherever you go, whether it is a photo of your child, a candle with his picture, or something that reminds you of him or her. Let others know ahead of time that you will be bringing something. This will help you honor your child throughout the day and incorporate his or her presence in the family events.
- If you are visiting someone else's home, ask that person to display a photo or some other memorabilia of your child so he or she is included in the holiday. If you aren't comfortable doing that, bring your own, as stated above.
- If you are in a grief group, discuss your concerns and possibilities in group. Don't hesitate to meet with a grief professional to assist you in deciding what to do. Trained grief professionals can help you articulate your feelings, fears, hopes, losses, and concerns. When those are expressed, you will be better able to figure out what you can and can't handle.
- If you find yourself dreading spending time with people who won't talk about your child, who carry on as if everything is the same, who ignore your requests for simple things, such as to say his name, and who seem to avoid and ignore the fact that this day is one that is difficult and requires some greater sensitivity and understanding, then you might need to re-think how you will spend this holiday season. Maybe it's time to take a break and do something different. If you haven't told others what you would like for the holidays, then do. No one is a mind reader, and what is comforting to you might not occur to someone else.
- Your holidays were once wrapped in love and family closeness as you celebrated together. With the death of your child, others may try to "cling" to old family traditions, even though this may cause you much pain. Everyone needs to try and accept that nothing will ever be the old "normal," whatever that may have been for you. If everyone can join together, then you can create new family traditions without leaving anyone out.
- Show your family and friends this newsletter so they, too, will have a greater understanding of how and the holidays can be made easier for everyone.
- Remind yourself throughout the last two months of each year that there are no "have tos." Your heart



has been broken, your life has forever been changed, and you are simply attempting to find what will and what won't work for you as you rebuild your life without your child. Everyone grieves differently and so needs different types of support. Be gentle and tender with yourself. Seek out the softest place to land so that you are in a position to honor your loved one while also creating new traditions. Hopefully, one day, instead of dreading the holidays, you will actually look forward to spending them exactly as you have planned, for they will be holidays filled with the true meaning of the holiday spirit.

## *Parents' Holiday Bill of Rights*



**YOU** have the right  
this holiday season to

- say, "time out!" whenever you need; ;
- talk about him or her during conversations;
- tell the truth when people ask, "How are you?" ;
- have some "bah, humbug" days;
- do things differently;
- change your mind;
- be where you want and need to be;
- arrive late / leave early;
- allow yourself to have some fun;
- change directions in mid-stream;
- cry;
- laugh;
- cry and laugh at the same time;
- tell others what you need;
- remove yourself from whatever you are doing if it gets too difficult;
- do something for someone else (reaching out to others can be comforting);
- have rest, peace, and solitude;
- do it all differently again next year.