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E-Haven Email (from griefHaven)

Where Hope Resides

E-HAVEN EMAIL September 2006

The Power In Sharing

As the anniversary of 9/11 approaches, we are reminded of the compassion, strength, and hope demonstrated when complete strangers are thrown together by a life-altering tragedy. We see it every day through *griefHaven*, and we know how fortunate we are to have each other during our own life-altering tragedies over the deaths of our children. Many parents who are a part of our organization lost their children in those towers, and we send our heartfelt prayers to you as you approach yet another anniversary. Of course, all of the anniversary dates are difficult for all of us whose children have died.

We at *griefHaven* feel fortunate because you share the most intimate of all communications with us and with each other, for what could possibly be more personal or intimate than stories about your children, your losses, your struggles, and your willingness to connect with others with whom you have that one thing in common? That kind of sharing creates a bond amongst perfect strangers that is truly one of the most humbling experiences we have ever had. You tell us how the foundation has given you hope and strength, helped you understand what you are experiencing and that you are not going crazy, given you a place to go during those sleepless nights, extended a lifeline to hold onto, helped you and your partner with your different ways of grieving, provided a place to memorialize your beloved child for the world to see, introduced you to new friends who “get” your journey, shown you that you are not alone, and provided enough different support tools guaranteeing that there is something that will work for all of you.

“The love you take, is equal to the love you make.” John Lennon sang it so beautifully. It goes both ways, doesn’t it? We help hold someone up who doesn’t have the strength right then, and someone comes along and holds us when we fall. It’s the way things work. Simple and true. Well, except that we think it’s more like 100-fold, not “equal to.” We think what’s given out comes back in



Baby fawn lost its mother, and this loving female dog took her in and took care of her, comforting her, sleeping beside her, loving her, and protecting her.

greater proportion, but who’s counting? Your words of encouragement, strength, hope, love, tenderness, and commitment that you share with one another not only impact your lives and give you strength, but also untold numbers of others who read what you wrote. You not only give each other hope, but many others who visit the web site, until all of your days start becoming easier and easier. And we promise that they will. Hang onto that whenever you feel hopeless. Think these words, “I *will* be okay again.” And remember that what you are feeling right then is part of the process of getting to that point. It’s ironic, we know, that in order to get out of pain and grief you have to actually experience the depths of it. We have found that the greatest way “out” requires that you first actually go “in.”

All of us on the Board of Directors and Advisory Board have either lost a child or have been deeply impacted by the death of a child. We regularly read what you share with each other on the message board, see your loving and caring emails, and often

cry with you. None of us has any idea how many hundreds of thousands of people read and are touched in some way by what we have to say, how we grieve, and our stories of loss and rebuilding our lives. We do know that, in an eight-month period, over 100,000 people visited the web site, and that number continues to grow. So please keep the stream of compassion flowing knowing that others are held up by your words of honesty and encouragement.

We thank you, the mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, specialists, and all others. We honor your steadfastness, courage, strength, love, support, and all of the ways you touch others as you journey along in your lives. You amaze us, and we love and respect you deeply.

Thank you for holding each other up and showing the world what it means to do so. Isn't that what life is really about? Every day we have myriad chances to make a difference in someone else's life in the most simple of ways. Sometimes just a smile at a stranger can make all of the difference. One thing we all agree on is that it is now the simple things in life that matter to us.

To all of you, the amazing people we've had the privilege of getting to know, we care about you, bless you, send you our heartfelt thoughts, and walk alongside you every step of the way. Thank you for giving us the gift of being a part of your lives. After all, we are you.



Jennifer Woolf
Lulu Woolf

Anne Roberts

James Putney

Steve Ann Mill

Marc Klaas

Judith H

Wayne Kemmer

Wendell Whitmore

Jelly Goodman

URH Klaas

D. Roger Deffen

Paula

John

Jenny Fellows

Sandy Goodwin

Susan Whitmore

A Note From Gretchen's Mom



Dear Friends,

Each and every day, and sometimes twice or more, I go to *grievHaven.org*. My daughter's photos are there, and I try to keep in touch with everyone that posts on "Connect with others."

As I scroll down the page of photos of our children, I find myself so wanting to know them even more. In so many cases there is only that one photo and often no information about the person, other than their name and dates of life.

So I asked Susan if I could share my idea with you: When designing a new memory page, or if you already have one, what would be the possibility of each of us sending some additional information about our child so we can be even more closely connected? I find that knowing a bit about each of you and your child helps me through this very long, never-ending, abstract healing process. To see and connect with the photos, stories, and posts to the website is a gift. As Michael Karlin put it, "We are people who belong to the same club—the one none of us would ever want to join."

Perhaps there could be a time frame (one that never ends of course) that we could all post a biography of our beloved child or sibling, as well as more photos, if possible—a thought, a request, a need, something more that connects us all.

I appreciate your precious time to read and consider this request. Please write directly to me, if you like, at kimflynn7@msn.com.

Much love and compassion,
Gretchen Goodwin's mom
Kim Goodwin Flynn

Gretchen & Mike

