



Dear Forget-Me-Not Center Friends:

It is my pleasure to take a new leadership role at the **Forget-Me-Not Center** as the new Director of Bereavement. I am thrilled at this opportunity to help the bereavement center continue to grow and to touch lives of our clients that are missing someone near and dear to them.

The **Forget-Me-Not Center** now currently sees grieving children (ages 3-17) of our own Hospice patients as well as children in the community that have suffered a loss (human and/or pet). Children are seen in individual sessions, with their siblings, and with surviving family members to offer them much needed support in this difficult time of need.

We also offer sessions to grieving adults of our Hospice patients, as well as adults in the community that have suffered a loss (human and/or pet). Adults can be seen in individual sessions or family sessions, as well as in a group setting on Wednesday evenings.

The **Forget-Me-Not Center** has been blessed this year with being able to help many Hospice families and community families during their difficult journey of grief and loss. We understand that it is difficult to open up and share personal feelings when we grieve; that is why we are here so you can have a safe place and an open ear to share and heal.

We look forward to opening our doors, our ears, and our hearts to you in this New Year.

Yours truly,

Sonia A.M Thomas, MS, ATR-BC
 Director of Bereavement



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Welcome to our second edition of our **Shared Memories** newsletter! We are pleased to have this newsletter to reach out to one another and to share our stories about the loved ones that have touched our lives in so many different ways.

If you would like to add your story, thoughts, poems, or what-not to future Shared Memories Newsletters, please feel free to bring them by the **Forget-Me-Not Center** office or drop them off in the mail at:

1721 SE 4th Ave, Ft Lauderdale, FL 33316 or fax us at 954-763-3365 or email us at stomas@hospicecareflorida.org



Thanks for the Memories Event – November 18, 2007

Our “Thanks for the Memories” Event this past November was a great success! Thanks to all of our

Forget-Me-Not Center Friends and clients, Hospice volunteers, HospiceCare of Southeast Florida staff, Dr. Alan Reitman- music therapist, and the Barbara Falowski Funeral Home for making this event at HIT! We had a wonderful turn out on a beautiful autumn day where everyone was able to share memories, grieve peacefully and celebrate those that we missed at the beginning of the 2007 holiday season. We thank all of those that attended and made this day extra special to our Forget-Me-Not Center friends. We are looking forward to making the “Thanks for the Memories” Event an annual Forget-Me-Not Center event.



PLANTING MEMORIES MURAL

Our “Planting Memories Mural” designed by, Sonia Thomas, was dedicated this past fall as part of the “Thanks for the Memories Event.” It is designed to honor our loved ones by planting their picture and their memory in our memory garden for one year. If you are interested in having a photo of your loved one added to the mural for a donation, please contact Sonia at 954-467-7423 ext. 1502.





SIGNS THAT YOUR CHILD MAY BE GRIEVING:

There is a myth out there that children do not grieve when they are young. How do they know what is going on when they are so young themselves? Some people feel that if a child does not say anything, then nothing is wrong. On the contrary, children do grieve, even as young as infant years. It is important to keep your eyes and ears open to some early warning signs of a grieving child:

- 1. My child is very quiet:** A typically social and outgoing child may start to be very quiet, isolative, and even appear to have less energy than before. Children have a difficult time knowing what to say or what to ask, out of lack of life experience, and therefore will isolate or withdraw.
- 2. My child is angry:** Many children will start to act out at school or at home because they are not sure of their own feelings or actions during the time of grief. Sometimes it is easier for them to express themselves in negative ways. This is an early warning sign that needs immediate attention.
- 3. My child's grades are dropping:** Many children have a difficult time paying attention in school because their mind is drifting to painful memories and thoughts. These children have a difficult time following along with what the teacher is saying and misses lessons learned as well as refuses to do homework or class work. This is also an early warning sign that requires immediate attention.
- 4. My child is clinging onto me and doesn't want to be without me:** Children have a difficult time figuring out why someone was alive one day and gone the next. They may start to hug, kiss, snuggle, or cling onto you more than ever because they are worried about losing you, too. Children also react negatively to being separated from you (work, errands, etc.) because they are afraid that you will leave them, too. They also may have difficulty sleeping alone.

What to do when you notice one or more of these signs? It is very important to talk to your child, reassure them that they are loved by you and by the person that died. Reassure your child that they did not do anything wrong that caused their loved one to die. Many children have magical thinking and feel guilty and will punish themselves. Offer your child an opportunity to express themselves (talk, cry, be mad, to write, to draw), and to reminisce through stories and photographs.

Please know that you are not alone and what your child is experiencing is normal.

If you need assistance with your child during this time, please call us to ask questions and/or to make an appointment. Please call Sonia Thomas at 954-467-7423 ext. 1502.



Thanks to Our Sponsors!

Thank you so much to our **Forget-Me-Not Center** Supporters! We want to give a special thanks to:

-Botanical Garden Level-

The Barbara Falowski Funeral & Cremation Services for sponsoring our "Thanks for the Memories Event"

The Grimmé Family for their kind donation and dedication of the Children's Art Therapy room in loving memory of their son, Michael J. Grimmé II.

-Bunch of Flowers Level-

To *the Jump Family* for their kind donation.

If you are interested in supporting the Forget-Me-Not Center and are interested in our donation and sponsorship levels, please contact Sonia at 954-467-7423 ext 1502.

Weekly Grief Support Group

Wednesday Evenings
6:30- 7:45 pm

At the Forget-Me-Not
Center

Please RSVP in advance

Open to the community.

Group offered on a
donation basis.

*The Forget-Me-Not Center is a
division of:*



HOSPICECARE of
SOUTHEAST FLORIDA, INC.

Providing Hospice & Palliative Care to Broward, Miami-Dade & Monroe Counties