



MISS Foundation

A COMMUNITY OF COMPASSION AND HOPE FOR GRIEVING FAMILIES

No Relief



By Terri Demontrond

Recently I had dinner with two girlfriends - our annual birthday get together. Another friend of mine stopped by our table to say hello on his way out. He shared with me that a woman I'd met with a couple of months ago (he'd introduced us because she wants to become a Life Coach) had lost her son and he was leaving to attend a benefit in her son's memory. I asked him to send her my condolences and he said, "Oh I will, but believe me it's a relief for her." The look on my face must have been clear because he then began to say things like...he had a drug problem, wrote hot checks, physically assaulted her, and had ultimately lost his life because of his love for the drug lifestyle.

I was almost speechless - almost. I turned to him and I said..."NO...NO...NO, it was not a relief that her child died. I understand how you might think that - and PLEASE, don't say anything like that to her!!! She wanted the miracle she'd

Missing them ...

No Relief

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submission guidelines

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surely prayed for to occur - NOT his death. She wanted him to find a way after all the heartache and suffering, to find a way to get through it to the other side! Even in the darkest moments, she wanted her little boy, her child, to be whole again...and to live life happily ever after!

AND...yes, in another of the darkest of moments she might have even had a fleeting thought of "God, can't this be over!"...and now her own thoughts are haunting her because somehow she wonders if maybe, just maybe, that's the prayer God answered. The guilt over not doing enough, doing too much - and every single decision she ever made for him churns through her thoughts night and day. There will be no peace - no RELIEF - there is no possible way to unwind and resolve all those millions of moments that as his mother, if she'd only, that he might be alive and well today."

I know this because that very thing was said to me by a good friend of many years when my daughter died of an intentional overdose. Yes, my 'good friend' had sat with me hundreds of times when I was sick with worry and seen me abused and burned out...but to have "relief"... NO. NO. NO. There is no relief in having the miracle never happen when we lose our child. No. We forever, even under the worst of circumstances are the keeper of the light of HOPE for our children. That's what mothers do.

** Also, may I tell you readers - my friend, the man who made the mistake of making that now surely regretful statement...he has served 30 years as the Executive Director of one of the largest Emergency Medical Services outfits in the country. How is it possible that he could hold such a position facing front line trauma and death every single day, and not have the slightest clue about this? Well, he does now. He received a thorough mini-education on a bereaved momma bear. We are good friends. Don't know how I missed this about him. He has never had children of his own and I know that is a factor. I think I may ask if I can come and talk with the hundreds of employees about traumatic loss of a child. I have a feeling they need the insights.**

Grief, Holidays, and Connection

From the blog of Dr. Joanne Cacciatore

Grief does not discriminate, and loss will, eventually, affect us all. And for many who have already suffered loss, the holidays mark a significant and painful reminder of that person's absence during, what is culturally recognized as, a time of celebration. Often, those mourning the death of a loved one suffer in silence during the holiday, trying very hard to put on their "game face".

Yet, for some mourners, this forced inauthenticity may exacerbate their already fragile emotional state, making them feel disconnected from family, friends and other loved ones during the holidays.

So what do we do as mourners when others, all around us, are celebrating? In my nearly two decades of working with and researching the traumatically bereaved I found some things which may help connect us deeply with self, other, and the natural world during what can be a very overwhelming time of year:

1. Sharing your feelings openly and honestly with others directly may help them to understand. Sometimes, the process of discussing the loved one who died before the gathering begins can relieve the tension others may feel wondering, "Should I talk about this or not?"
2. Rituals are often very helpful, especially new ones. A few ideas, for example, include lighting a candle and having a moment of silence at the beginning of the holiday meal, asking family members to make a donation to a specific charity in his/her name, setting an empty place at the table for him/her and asking each person to tell their favorite memory, volunteering as a family in his/her memory, buying a gift for a child the same age and donating it, and a craft-making project where family and friends make an ornament in his/her memory. This not only gives others permission to share their feelings but also brings people together by enacting grief.
3. Connection with a support group in your area can be very helpful. Empirical research suggests that social support is one of the most important variables in helping grievers cope. There are many grief groups that meet in person and online. Even social media can be used to help connect grievers to one another.

4. Get out into nature if weather permits. Take a walk, hike, or just sit outside. If that's not possible, then bring nature inside. Create an indoor window garden or a Zen sand garden. When possible, expose yourself to natural sunlight at least a few minutes each day.

5. Move your body. Exercise, even just walking, can help increase positive emotional states.

6. Practice intentional solitude using contemplative prayer, silent time, or meditation. Take a few minutes every morning and evening to breathe slowly and deeply, eyes lightly closed. Focus on the stillness if you can. Keep this practice going.

7. Change your routine. From the small things like changing the music you play when putting up the tree or the meal you eat to leaving town for a planned holiday vacation, novelty can help us cope at difficult times.

8. If you are spending time with others during the holidays, tell them in advance of your fragility. Let them know that you may leave early (it's nothing personal toward them), ask them if there is a quiet spot in the house where you can go to be alone if you need it, and tell them the ways in which you'd like them to discuss- or not to discuss- your feelings openly with others.

9. Give others permission to talk about your precious loved one who died. Tell them what you need. Sometimes, fear gets in the way of others approaching the bereaved. You can write a letter delineating what you would like. For example, "Dear friends, At this time of year, we are struggling without our daughter, Jane, in our home. We know it is frightening but we'd like to ask you to talk about her with us and to ask how we are really doing. We'd like you to remember her in your prayers, and then tell us when you do. We'd like you to consider a donation to X charity in her name. Please send us emails rather than calling us. We find phone calls to be overwhelming right now. We'd appreciate help with meals during the week of Christmas. If you are able to leave a meal at the door, we'd appreciate it. Our friend, Mary, will be coordinating that for us. Please contact her at XXX-XXXX. Finally, we love to receive cards so please keep them coming. We love hearing your favorite memories of Jane. Thank you. We are grateful for your support, and will need it for many years to come."

10. Finally, give yourself permission to take care of you and your family first. It is okay to turn down invitations to events, to cut back on holiday celebrations and décor, and to ask

for help with child family members who may also be grieving. Eat well, get enough rest when you can, and watch alcohol/drug consumption. Stress, naturally, distracts us from self-care, so you'll need to be more vigilant during this time of year.

There is no question that, for many, grief and the sense of isolation and loneliness amplifies during holidays. These 10 simple strategies may help us remain more self-aware, self-compassionate, and feeling more connected to those around us who love us, to our precious one who died, and to a deeper and wounded part of our self. Together, connected, we can get through these dark days.

Please Help MISS During Your Holiday Purchases

Each purchase you make through Amazon.com's charitable giving program (smile.amazon.com) helps the MISS Foundation. All you have to do is select us as your charity of choice!

If you haven't signed up yet but would like to, here's how:

- 1) Visit smile.amazon.com
- 2) Go to 'Your Account' and select "Change Your Charity" under the drop down menu.
- 3) Type "MISS Foundation" into the search field to find us.
- 4) Click "Select"
- 5) Instead of visiting amazon.com for future shopping, visit smile.amazon.com, and your purchases will automatically support MISS!

Thank you so much for supporting the MISS Foundation this holiday season.



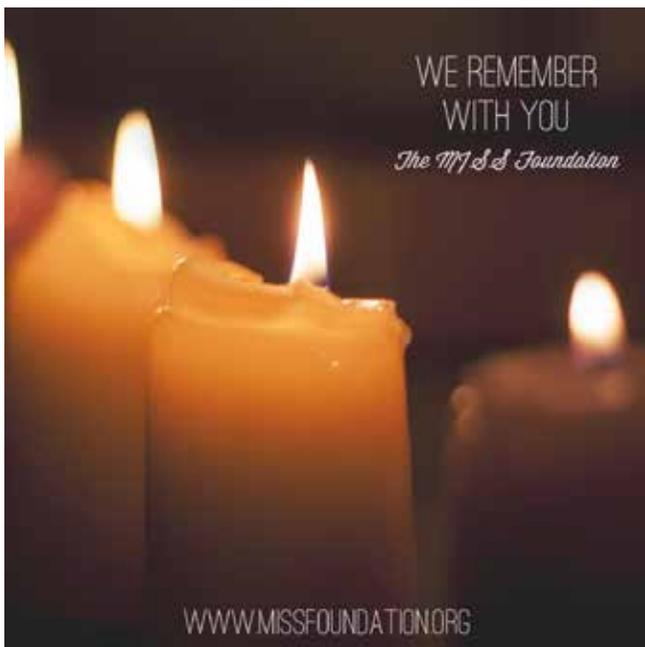
UPCOMING EVENTS

National Children's Memorial Candle-Lighting Ceremony

The MISS Foundation supports families after the death of a child at any age from any cause. The MISS Foundation will be participating in the Worldwide Candle Lighting that unites family and friends around the globe in lighting candles for one hour to honor the memories of the sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, and grandchildren who left too soon. As candles are lit at 7:00 p.m. it will create a virtual 24-hour wave of light as it moves from time zone to time zone. This national event occurs the second Sunday of December and for 19 years has brought comfort to the bereaved community.

The MISS Foundation invites you to participate from the privacy and comfort of your home, in your community or at our local event in Phoenix AZ on December 13, 2015 honoring all those children gone too soon who continue to matter and continue to be loved and missed.

The local Phoenix event will be held at Northern Hills Community Church located at 2740 E Union Hills Dr Phoenix Arizona 85050. The service will begin at 6:30pm. The MISS Memorial Wall will be displayed, there will be speakers and music. Every person will be able to light a candle and speak their child's name. There will be a dessert buffet following the service. Please contact Michele Newton 623-329-2970 or michele.newton@missfoundation.org with any questions.



Compassionate Bereavement Care Program

With so few providers who understand the depth and breadth of the death of a child, the MISS Foundation & Center for Loss & Trauma have partnered to present one of the most significant, timely, intensive training programs in traumatic grief to providers around the world.

This training is for therapists, counselors, first responders, clergy, medical staff, hospice workers and bereavement specialists looking to specialize in a mindfulness-based, non-medicalized, green approach (Cacciatore, 2010) to working with families suffering a traumatic loss such as the death of a child, including but not limited to perinatal death, suicide, homicide, terminal illness.

The MISS Foundation's purpose in offering this one-of-a-kind, specialized program to providers worldwide is to significantly change the way our bereaved families are treated after a child's death.

Through this approach, traumatic grief counseling is considered a sacred art backed by evidence-based practice in which the provider is "fully present" with the bereaved. Please share this opportunity with others in your community who may benefit. The 30-hour continuing education program has been approved to provide CEU's through Alliant International University (AIU).

Our next training Compassionate Bereavement Care® Provider Certification program is March 31st- April 3rd 2016. Applications are still being accepted. Read more about the CBC program and apply online here:

<http://certification.missfoundation.org>



MISS Foundation's Selah Retreat

The next MISS Foundation Selah Retreat for bereaved parents will be held at the Sedona Mago Retreat Center in beautiful Sedona Arizona, April 28th-May 1st, 2016. We hope you will join us.

"...life changing, breath taking, heart wrenching, courageous, compassionate, connective, compelling...a path forward from deepest sorrow."

Registration has not yet opened but we will post an announcement as soon as everything is set.



Thanks for Supporting MISS Foundation in the 2015 Kindness 5K and Walks!

The MISS Foundation's Kindness Walk: Remembering Those We Love is an international memorial walk to remember all of the beloved children who are gone too soon, and to honor all of the mothers, fathers, families and communities by participating in Kindness Projects as a way to continue their child's legacy.

Huge thanks to our Phoenix Chapter, our volunteers, our families and sponsors who participated in the MISS Foundation's 5th Annual Kindness 5K and Memorial Walk on October 3rd at Midwestern University in Glendale AZ. Hundreds attended the event at Midwestern University which raised \$19,471 this year! Thank you to everyone who participated for supporting our programs! The third section of the MISS Memorial Wall was unveiled, with the names and pictures of 172 children, along with 172 Kindness Cards distributed in each child's honor. Special thanks to our donor partners Midwestern University, PSA, GPS Insight, Rubios, Gentle Dental, Cold Stone-Arrowhead, Arizona Bag & Shade. We also had many donors contribute to the raffle and participant bags -- thanks to, among others, Yoga Pura, Carla Roel de Hoffman, Abacus Inn, The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, Rita's Frozen Custard, Road ID, Emergen C and Sakana Sushi. Special thanks to the anonymous donor who donated a laptop, along with the Friewald Family for donating an I-pad mini as well as a beautiful necklace in memory of Braden. Thanks to all of our teams and supporters who raised money and awareness for MISS -- and huge thanks to our organizers Michele Newton, Melissa Flint, Elizabeth Armijo, and Midwestern University!



The 3rd Annual MISS Foundation Tucson Chapter Kindness Walk beautifully honored their beloved children and their families on October 17, 2015. On the way to the park to set up, thunderstorms poured down, but miraculously cleared up upon arrival! The Tucson crew set up in clear skies, in time for the event to begin. The inclement weather held off for most of the event, and only about ten minutes of sprinkling occurred. Unfortunately the wind and rain made it impossible to display the three paneled Memorial Wall. Amplified A Capella blessed the participants with their lovely vocal talents, Dr. Melissa Flint shared words of wisdom and encouragement, and the families experienced an outpouring of love and compassion from the Tucson community.

Thank you to all the families who participated, our invaluable volunteers and all the generous sponsors that helped to make the event a great success!

Thanks to Audra White for organizing this year's event and for all of the volunteers and families who participated in making it special.

Thanks also to our wonderful MISS families and volunteers in Richmond VA, NW Illinois, and our Iowa chapters for organizing amazing Kindness Walks this spring and summer.

We look forward to more events being planned for this Fall for MISS Foundation families in Arizona, and in LA in May 2016.

We appreciate all of our amazing MISS volunteers in our communities for organizing these meaningful events.

MISS Foundation Children's Memorial Service & Surviving the Holi-Daze Workshop – December 19th

The Tucson Chapter of MISS would like to invite you to its annual "Surviving the Holi-Daze" event and its Christmas Children's Memorial Service both on the same day in Saguarita, AZ. The MISS Foundation Memorial Wall will be presented at the Memorial Service. The Christmas Children's Memorial Service will begin at 9 am on December 19th at Santa Cruz Valley United Methodist Church for the wall reveal and Memorial Service, and then we will proceed to Jenne Breslin's home for the Surviving the Holi-Daze Workshop and lunch.

The Children's Memorial Service:

Honoring the children gone too soon and their bereaved families, the MISS Foundation will be hosting a Christmas Children's Memorial Service on December 19th beginning promptly at 9am. Pastor Angie McCarty has generously offered Santa Cruz Valley United Methodist Church to host the memorial service. It is located at 71 E. Sahuarita Rd., Sahuarita, AZ 85629 (520) 282-4085. Your GPS may not find Santa Cruz Valley UMC when using that address. It is located about 1 mile east of the intersection of I-19 and Sahuarita Rd. on the northwest corner of Sahuarita & La Villita Rd.

The MISS Foundation Memorial Wall will be displayed, there will be speakers and music as we take time to honor the children missing from our holiday season. Following the service you will be able to enjoy breakfast pastries while getting hugs and support from family, friends and the community. Please contact Michele Newton 623-329-2970 with any questions.



The Surviving the Holi-Daze Workshop:

Immediately following the Memorial Service, we will travel to the nearby home of Jenne Breslin for our Annual "Surviving the Holi-Daze Workshop."

For more information and to RSVP by December 11th, please contact:

Audra White - 520-404-1004

Audra.White@missfoundation.org

Carrie Westover

Carrie.Westover@missfoundation.org

Thank You

We would like to thank all of our donors for continuing to support the important work of the MISS Foundation in caring for families suffering the most unthinkable tragedy — the death of their child. Since 1996, the MISS Foundation has tirelessly helped families facing infant and child death through counseling, advocacy, research, education, and support. No one else does what we do.

Over the past year many changes have taken place, and, sadly, too much growth in our membership. In 2015, more than 604 newly bereaved parents have registered for help. In addition to serving the new families just finding out about the MISS Foundation, we help thousands more each year through our support groups, mentor network, counseling and online forums. We have an amazing volunteer network of bereaved parents who spend countless hours every day helping

other bereaved parents nationwide. Our 30-50 support groups each month nationwide, provide a place of comfort and healing for grieving families. We provide affordable counseling to those in need. We recognize the birthdays and the death days of thousands of MISS Foundation children each year. We remember our children at MISS Foundation events like International Kindness Project Day and our Kindness Walks held in cities around the nation.

As we continue to grow at an alarming rate, the MISS Foundation has been inundated with requests to provide specialized training to professionals in the field who deal with child death on a day-to-day basis. In 2015, we held three Compassionate Bereavement Care trainings for professionals to provide appropriate support and care to families who have a child who is dying or who has died.

The MISS Foundation is able to care for grieving families because of individual and corporate donations. Many of our contributions come directly from the families we serve who want to give back to the MISS Foundation as a way to help others going through this tragedy, as well as to honor their child who has died. This year, KONG came through again as our main corporate sponsor. The Parker Ortman Memorial Fund benefited the MISS Foundation with a golf tournament for the 6th year in a row.



However, not unlike other nonprofits in this declining economy, donations have not kept pace with the growing need for our services. Granting authorities and many corporations think child death is just too sad to associate themselves with so they do not contribute. As such, we need your help to continue and expand our programs and resources to help families after the death of their child.

In the spirit of holiday giving, gratitude, and loving all of the precious children gone too soon, please help support MISS Foundation programs and consider a donation of any size.

Every single dollar helps the MISS Foundation save families struggling in their darkest hours. Remember, not all families get to spend their holidays with their children. Please make your tax-deductible donation today at <http://www.missfoundation.org>.

Volunteer Spotlight - Sari Edber

Volunteer feature this week is our Los Angeles @MISS Foundation Chapter Leader, Sari Edber:



Sari Edber is the proud and loving mother of three children. Her first son, Jacob, was stillborn full term on July 20, 2006 after a perfectly blissful, innocent, and healthy pregnancy. While Sari and her husband, Daniel, were learning to navigate the horrific path of being bereaved parents, MISS Foundation immediately became a lifeline for them through their online resources, monthly support groups, and the lifelong friendships that they made. They found comfort, healing, validation, guidance, and mentors, who would walk this journey alongside them.

Sari continued her involvement with the MISS Foundation when she was one of three grieving mothers who sponsored and helped to pass the California MISSing Angel's Bill. After almost a year of lobbying for this bill that allows parents to request a government issued Certificate of Still Birth, it was signed into law in October, 2007.

Sari has been the facilitator and lead coordinator for the Los Angeles chapter of MISS Foundation for the past 6 1/2 years. Her volunteer work includes monthly support group meetings, 3 annual remembrance events, and a biannual Kindness Walk. She also serves as the co-chair of the MISS Foundation Parental Advisory Board and took part in the January 2015 cohort of the Compassionate Bereavement Care Certification Program

Birthdays & Death Days

Birthdays and Death Days are now online on the MISS website.

See the Birth Days

<http://www.missfoundation.org/newsevents/birthdaysthis-month>

See the Death Days

<http://www.missfoundation.org/newsevents/deathdaysthis-month>

Our Donors & Sponsors

We'd like to thank all of you who give so much to support the MISS Foundation

See our sponsors

<http://www.missfoundation.org/about/sponsors>

See our donors

<http://www.missfoundation.org/about/donors>



Sari's advocacy work extends into the greater Los Angeles community, as well, by working closely with other grief organizations, leading training sessions with hospitals, and providing bereavement care workshops for health/emotional care professionals with the goals of: sharing her experience, being a peer resource for other bereaved parents, and increasing public awareness, education, and research about child death.

Sari and Daniel's healing revolves around finding ways to keep Jacob's memory alive and their comfort comes from knowing that Jacob is forever a part of their family. They have been blessed with two subsequent healthy children – a daughter, Talia Jaclyn, born on November 4, 2007 and their second son, Elan Jared, born on Sept. 21, 2010. They are true blessings and will grow up knowing about, remembering, and honoring their big brother, Jacob.

Jacob gave Sari the most wonderful gift imaginable by making her a mother. He taught her about gratitude, appreciation, values, priorities, love, compassion, relationships, and healing. Most of all, he helped Sari become an even better mother, wife, daughter, sister, and friend. She will never look at the world in the same way, and somehow, through all of her grief, she has learned to be thankful for this new set of eyes.

The 6th Annual Parker Ortman Memorial Golf Tournament Raised \$8,000 for MISS

The MISS Foundation would like to thank Jeff, Kristina, and McKenzie Ortman for supporting our work, in memory of their son Parker. This year the Parker Ortman Memorial Fund raised \$8,000 with a golf tournament and fundraising event on October 15th. The Ortman's contributions have totaled \$59,000 over the past 6 years. Their support is so important to us as we continue to offer outreach to as many bereaved families as possible. Without donors like the Ortman's, we could not do the work we do. On behalf of the MISS Foundation, thank you!



**PARKER A. ORTMAN
MEMORIAL FUND**

Reminder – Please Note Our New Mailing Address

The MISS Foundation Phoenix Office relocated services this Fall. The MISS Foundation no longer has an office in Phoenix. Most of our support groups in Phoenix have been moved to the beautiful Franciscan Renewal Center. Our business and administrative services are handled in Austin TX and Northern AZ. Our mailing address is:

MISS Foundation
P.O. Box 9195
Austin TX 78766

Support Groups– Please email us your information

We are updating our website information and need all current information on support groups.

ALL active MISS Foundation Support Groups, please send us:

Each Facilitators' (publishable) contact information for our website listing, along with the meeting time/day/place and address. Please email Ashley.Santi@missfoundation.org with your current information. Thank you!



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