Grief - Whatever Works For You

BY LERRYN PITCHER

“All sorrows can be borne if you put them in a story or tell a story about them.” Isak Dinesen

Bereavement clients at Evergreen often ask the same question, “Am I normal?” The answer is almost always, “Yes!” There is no right way to grieve. I recently read a book making the news called, “Getting Grief Right: Finding Your Story of Love in the Sorrow of Loss,” by Dr. Patrick O’Malley and Tim Madigan. This book reinforces what we convey to our clients - that every grief journey is different, as every person and every relationship is different. This journey does not conform to a specific period of time or a specific path.

Dr. O’Malley, a psychotherapist, did not really understand grief until he experienced it himself. Until the death of his son, he would treat people going through grief as he would treat depression. If a client came to him because they were “stuck” in grief and “depressed” and unable to move on, he would analyze the client’s history and symptoms to figure out why they were stuck. Now, after his own loss, the first thing he wants from his clients is to hear the story of the loss and the relationship. Having the opportunity to tell their story, from beginning to end, is often a catalyst for releasing emotions that have been stifled or avoided.

Many bereaved have not had the chance to tell the whole story to anyone. Many bury their feelings as they try to conform to what society expects of them; or they bury their feelings because they are too intense and painful to face. There is often subtle pressure from society that a person can only grieve for a limited time period and limited intensity.

They feel “crazy” when grieving goes on longer than society expects. Often, profound sadness is confused with depression. Grief is not a mental illness to be cured, but part of the enduring connection with the one we’ve lost.

There are three aspects of loss that need to be talked through:

1. The relationship - understanding and talking about your relationship with your loved one.
2. The death - understanding the death and all that happened surrounding it.
3. After the funeral - understanding that the outside world has moved on and discovering what you need at this time.
As Dr. O’Malley states, “When loss is a story, there is no right or wrong way to grieve. There is no pressure to move on. There is no shame in intensity or duration. Sadness, regret, confusion, yearning and all the experiences of grief become part of the narrative of love for the one who died. Through their stories, my clients were being liberated from external rules or expectations and thus could grieve in a more natural way.”

Dr. O’Malley also shared some tips for dealing with your grief:

1. Listen to your feelings - Be careful not to be self-critical about what you feel.

2. Be gentle on yourself - Your grief journey is your story of love. It is okay to be sad.

3. Write - Reflect on and write about the emotions of your loss. Use this as a way to remember your loved one.

And tips for helping the grieving:

1. Acknowledge the death - We often avoid talking about the death or the deceased because we “don’t want to make them feel worse.” However, most people “just want to hear their loved one’s name” and appreciate that they are not forgotten.

2. Keep calling - so they know that the world has not forgotten them. Their days and nights are long and painful. Keep in touch.

3. Encourage them to talk, if they want - Ask about the person they lost.


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A Support Group for Women experiencing Cancer

Evergreen launched its first Support Group for Women experiencing Cancer this spring at our main office in Markham. This free series of seven sessions is available for any woman with a cancer diagnosis. The group offers sensitive, emotional and practical support as well as coping strategies to deal, heal and emerge empowered and connected to other women with similar challenges and victories. Trained facilitators and a cancer survivor support the group.

We are excited to announce that this popular group will be offered again starting Tuesday, October 10, from 10:00 am to noon every week for seven weeks. We invite referrals from health professionals and directly from women who have been diagnosed with cancer. Please call for more information and to register prior to the group start. A short assessment will also be done before attending the group. Help us to ensure that no one faces cancer alone.

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C-CARE SUPPORT GROUP

FREE 7-WEEK SUPPORT GROUP
Provides women experiencing cancer with useful skills and information.

Learn strategies to help with:
• The emotional impact of having cancer
• The physical impact of the disease and treatments
• Coping with expectations
• Intimacy and relationships
• Reinforcing your inner strength
• Finances and other practical concerns

Offered locally in Markham!

*Registration Required For more information on C-Care Support Group or any other Evergreen Program, or to register for an upcoming group: Call - 416-499-2185 Email - info@evgcares.org

Healthy Living Now

Overcome some of the emotional and physical distress caused by your chronic condition. Learn to Live a Healthy Life with a Chronic or Life-Threatening Illness (such as cancer, heart, neurological, kidney and more!)

FREE 6 WEEK WORKSHOP
Offered by: Evergreen

Learn strategies to help you reduce the distress of:
• Pain and other symptoms
• Difficult emotions like anxiety and depression
• Poor quality sleep
• Juggling nutrition and exercise
• Dealing with your healthcare team

CAREGIVERS:
Healthy living can be compromised by caregiver responsibilities. This program is for you, too!

For more information or to register for an upcoming group: Call - 416-499-2185 Email - info@evgcares.org

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On Thursday, March 30th, Australia came to Markham. “A Night Down Under” featured a taste of foods, wines and culture of the land of Australia. Angus Glen Golf Club was transformed into a cultural fair for regions of the land: Victoria, New South Wales, Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland and South Australia.

Guests were greeted at the door with a cup of gaming chips and a special “Australian Passport” filled with fun tasks and a trivia quiz. Then, they were offered tastings of some of Australia’s fine wines. A didgeridoo, an instrument of the indigenous people of the continent, made wonderful music that drifted through the hall, courtesy of the talented Alex Petrogiani. A Mini Countryman was on display, giving attendees a chance to imagine themselves hitting Australia’s open road. The silent auction tables were filled with all kinds of merchandise.

A small gaming area, with blackjack and poker tables, horse racing and a Crown and Anchor wheel, was bustling with people having fun. Winners exchanged their chips for raffle tickets. People were delighted to win the raffle prizes: packages with wine, books and movies from down under. Our DJ, Rob Vessmann, aka Bear, tempted people onto the dance floor with many of Australia’s great bands, from INXS to the Bee Gees to AC/DC.

After the initial cocktail hour, where guests were served a variety of authentic foods, guests were treated to a fashion show of “race day” clothing and fun hats. Following this, they were invited to participate in the Melbourne Cup Crazy Hat Contest.

Everyone really appreciated the delicious chocolates, courtesy of Aunt Sarah’s Chocolates. The fabulous floral centrepieces were provided by Tim Clark’s Flowers. At the end of the night, a warm and cozy volunteer-driven BMW shuttled guests back to their cars in the parking lot, courtesy of Town+Country BMW.
Evergreen could not manage without the volunteer committee who worked so hard from start to finish: Kimberly Clark, Diane Constanzo, Lynn Dawson Parker, Deborah Jestin, Cindy Knowles, Joan Rossi, Heather Sally and Mari Stoneman. Our special advisory committee consisted of Wayne Emmerson (Honorary Chair) and Nirmala Armstrong, Regional Councillor. The Evergreen event volunteers, many of whom were students, made sure everyone attending was well looked after. We must not neglect to thank the Angus Glen staff who always perform beyond expectations with outstanding support and service.

A special thanks also goes out to Peppertree Klassics and Karen Piper for their super fun fashion show, Joseph Wong for creating the Evergreen video, Piranha Laser for the wooden sponsor centerpieces, Robert Vessman of Bearmoon Productions for going beyond with additional support and ideas, and Town+Country BMW for the loan of the shuttles and the Mini Countryman on display. We would also like to thank Peter Brazier of Aunt Sarah’s Chocolates, John Narvali of Narvali Digital Photography, Alex Petrogiani who played the didgeridoo, KymPyke, aka Crocodile Dundee, Brightworks Charging for their cell phone charging station, and, of course, our wonderful volunteers for their assistance in presenting this event.

Proceeds from “A Night Down Under” came to $111,000, which will go toward compassionate palliative care and bereavement support for children, teens and adults living in Thornhill, Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

Presenting Sponsor  
Upper Unionville Inc.

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Stouffville Sun-Tribune  
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Markham Review

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Flowers Courtesy of Tim Clark’s Flowers  
Chocolates courtesy of Aunt Sarah’s Chocolates  
Design Courtesy of Len Art Design & Illustration

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www.evgcares.org
Hike for Hospice: A Walk to Remember

It was a sunny and beautiful day on May 28th when participants of A Walk to Remember took to the trails around Thornhill in support of Evergreen Hospice. Clients, staff and volunteers alike walked a four kilometer route around Pomona Mills Park. Jan Pearce, Evergreen’s Executive Director, kicked-off the walk by giving a thoughtful speech where she honoured Don Cousins, a long-time Evergreen supporter and former gala chair, Don Ferguson, a former board chair and gala chair, and Brian Foley, who was our current board chair.

At the conclusion of the speech, everyone walked down to Pamona Mills Park where we released a basket of doves into the wild and attendees took the time to reflect on their own loved ones. The rest of the trek commenced after the dove-release ceremony, where those continuing on the trail strolled through the lush forests of the area, overlooking ravines and small trickling streams feeding into the Rouge River system.

We would like to thank our Presenting Sponsor, Beachwood Cemeteries, our Comfort Sponsor, Clintar Landscaping and our Care Sponsor, Dixon Garland who provided us with funding to help the event run smoothly. As well, we want to thank Home Care Assistance for providing food for us before and after the walk. At the end of the day, we raised almost $15,000, thanks to our generous donors, wonderful sponsors, and especially to those who walked and fundraised for us!

A Walk to Remember 2018 is already in the works, so we hope to see an even greater turnout next year!

Save the Dates

- **AUGUST 26, 2017**
  Taste of Stouffville

- **SEPTEMBER 20, 2017**
  Circle of Hope

- **SEPTEMBER 25, 2017**
  Evergreen Hospice AGM & Volunteer Recognition

- **SEPTEMBER 28, 2017**
  Healthy Living Now - (Mosaic)

- **OCTOBER 10, 2017**
  C-Care Support Group for Women Experiencing Cancer

- **NOVEMBER 7, 2017**
  Healthy Living Now - (Markham)

- **MARCH 22, 2018**
  Annual Evergreen Gala

Expansion of the Evergreen - Mosaic Home Care Services Partnership

In May, Evergreen began providing Thornhill clients direct service at Mosaic Home Care Services Office in the Shops on Steeles and 404 Mall at 2900 Steeles Avenue East. In addition to hosting Evergreen’s Healthy Living Now sessions, Mosaic now provides a counseling room for Evergreen’s Lerryn Pitcher to counsel Thornhill clients, space for the joint Evergreen/CHATS Caregiver Groups and hosts the Thornhill Hospice Palliative Care Professional Team Meeting monthly. Thank you to Jane, Nathalie and Kevin for making our transition so easy!

We are currently looking for a place to host the Thornhill complementary therapy sessions. Anyone with a small private space in their office or clinic in Thornhill that could be used for a few hours, once a week for client therapy by a volunteer therapist, please Call Jan Pearce at 416 499-2185 x 100

Markham/Unionville Ministerial Meeting

Board member Dr. Jim Clubine, Minister of Worship and Pastoral Care at Central United Church will be hosting the Markham/Unionville Ministerial at Evergreen on Wednesday September 13. This group of clergy, from the churches of Markham and Unionville, meet on a regular basis, but this will be their first visit to Evergreen. Welcome!
Helping Evergreen by holding a “Third Party Event”

Every year, Evergreen Community Supporters step up to put forward Evergreen’s name as a recipient for their group’s fundraising efforts. Evergreen will provide information about Evergreen’s programs and activities to circulate and a speaker for the event if desired. Call us for information if you would like to hold an event for Evergreen. Here are the most recent results from our very important Community Supporters.

ONE HUNDRED WOMEN WHO CARE - MARKHAM
Thank you to this amazing group of women in Markham who chose to support Evergreen at their last meeting. Bonnie Cochrane, a long time volunteer and Evergreen supporter, presented Evergreen’s C-Care, a support group for women experiencing cancer, as one of the three charity programs up for consideration in May. Evergreen received over $10,000 from over 100 women who each wrote a cheque that night to Evergreen. Thank you also to the group’s Executive who work so hard to get the money collected, sorted and delivered to Evergreen in record time!

GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS EVENT
Community Supporters, Kevin Ker (Epic Music Group), George Bigelow (The Earl of Whitchurch) and Dave Mills (Stouffville.com) managed a Guinness World Record Challenge of the “longest concert by multiple artists” at the Earl of Whichurch pub in Stouffville, keeping live music running 24/7 for 18 days. Evergreen received all the admission money for March 21st, as well as any donations and a portion of the sales of event merchandise that day. We also received half of the 50-50 draw money from the generous winner of that portion of the event. A huge thank you goes out to the incredible team that managed the fabulous event and chose Evergreen as one of their charities to receive over $5800.

LILAC TENNIS EVENT IN SUPPORT OF EVERGREEN HOSPICE
Community Supporter, Janet Murphy arranged for Evergreen to again receive the proceeds of this year’s Lilac Tennis Event at the Bayview Golf and Country Club in Thornhill on June 19th. The women had a fabulous day and were able to raise over $3000 for Evergreen’s client programs. We are grateful for the club’s continued support through this memorial event.

THORNHILL PRESBYTERIAN LENT SERVICES
For many years, a group of Thornhill churches has raised money for Evergreen as part of their Lent activities. This year, the group raised over $2100. Thank you so much Reverend Robert Metcalf for organizing the group and for keeping Evergreen’s work in the forefront with your parishioners.

HARRY JAMES GROUP INC.
Registration fees for Harry James Group Inc. “Engage Thursdays” Sessions for business professionals raised $1785 over the past year which was donated to Evergreen. Thank you!

UNIONVILLE CURLING CLUB GOLF TOURNAMENT
Community Supporter, Andrea Meredith, engaged the Unionville Curling Club to once again support Evergreen from the proceeds of their Annual Golf Tournament. Although the weather was horrendous and no one got to golf, the group managed to raise $1200 for Evergreen. Thank you so much ladies!

PEPPERTREE KLASICS SALE EVENT
Again this spring, Community Supporter, Karen Piper held another special event with a donation going to Evergreen for every sale, raising over $500. We are lucky to have the help of such a great business in Markham. Many thanks, Karen!

YORK UNIVERSITY HOSPICE HELPERS
Every year, a group of York University students holds bake sales for their classmates and raises money for Evergreen. Calling themselves the “Hospice Helpers,” these students raised over $350 for Evergreen programs.
In Home
Our volunteers can offer help with practical needs - whether it is reading aloud, respite for the caregiver, a compassionate listening ear or legacy work. Social and emotional support to clients of all ages is provided.

Family Caregiver Support
Friends and family receive help and guidance in caring for their loved ones and themselves. Caregiver focused support groups and calls can make the difference in managing the very special work of the family caregiver.

For Seniors
We understand the concerns of seniors who are living with a life-threatening illness. Residents of nursing homes or seniors residences and their families can also receive social and emotional care on an individualized basis.

Living Room Program
Provides life-affirming activities for adult clients of all ages and respite for caregivers every week. Activities include yoga, exercise, art, legacy work, massage, and complementary therapies. Guest speakers and information sharing sessions help those individuals and their family members wanting to “take charge” of their own care. Participants share a delicious meal and conversation with staff, volunteers and others who are living with the impact of life threatening illness.

Bereavement Correspondence Support
This educational bereavement program is distributed by mail for one year to all interested hospice families.

Circle of Hope
An 8-week bereavement support group for adults who have lost a loved one. It is not a therapy group, but is based on the belief that sharing common experiences and concerns can aid in the healing process of the bereavement experience. Offered as required.

C-Care, A Support Group for Women Experiencing Cancer
A 7-week closed support group facilitated by professionals and survivors to provide women experiencing cancer with useful skills and helpful information.

Healthy Living Now
This evidence-based self-management education series developed by Stanford University empowers adults of all ages to live well while dealing with conditions such as cancer after chemotherapy and radiation and any other chronic condition. The 6-session program helps participants take control of the things they can, in order to live better. Anxiety, depression, sleep problems, exercise, diet and communication are all covered in the interactive program.

The Evergreen Team and Extensions

Executive Director:
Jan Pearce x100

Supportive Care Coordinators:
Michelle Juer x102
Patti Enright x103

Counsellors for Care and Bereavement
Bonnie Strand x106
Lerryn Pitcher x101

Living Room Coordinator:
Hedi Spiar x108

Coordinator of Volunteers
Virginia Bidwell x107

Fund Development Coordinator:
Rebecca Simkin x109

Administrative Assistant:
Hannah Mak x101

Thornhill Outreach:
Melanie Gross x112
SUMMER STUDENTS

This summer, we had a fantastic group of summer students, supported by a grant from the Canada Summer Jobs program. Sara Pickard, Joelle Lee, and Myuran Ganesan joined us this summer, providing support to the bereavement program, the Living Room, volunteer management and fundraising. Having three young enthusiastic people amongst us was such a wonderful addition to the office environment! You were all a tremendous help to the Evergreen Team in many different ways. Thank you so much for your help! You are an inspiration.

Volunteers Desperately Needed

Have you ever thought about helping your neighbours? Do you like talking to people and have some time available each week to share with someone who really needs you? Would you like to learn new skills?

Evergreen has individuals with life threatening illness who are waiting for support because we do not have enough trained volunteers to help.

Evergreen also needs people with group facilitation experience to assist with support groups and volunteers interested in event planning and fundraising committee work.

Call Virginia Bidwell at 416-499-2185 for more information about opportunities and training dates.

Help support others just like Nadia & become a Monthly Donor today!

Diagnosed at a time when her husband was working outside the province, Nadia found that she needed extra support to help her through her difficult treatments.

After her doctor referred her to Evergreen’s Living Room Program, she found all the support she needed each week from the caring volunteers and staff.

“I felt a sense of community and met a lot of people. There is medication and doctors but there is also keeping your spirits up and finding out what else is happening in life. Evergreen makes the whole process easier”

Your commitment to a monthly donation will help us ensure that programs such as the Living Room are available in the future for people like Nadia.

Evergreen provides community based supportive services to individuals and their families in Markham, Stouffville, and Thornhill, who are living with life-threatening illness or coping with the death of a loved one.

Become a Monthly Donor Today!

YES! I would like to become a Monthly Donor and support programs such as the Living Room at Evergreen.

Select your monthly donation level:

$10  $25  $50

Other $ __________________________ (minimum $10)

OR Please accept my one time donation: $ __________________________

Our monthly donors provide us with sustainable funding and give us the ability to plan more effectively for our client programs.

PLEASE PRINT

Name: __________________________
Address: __________________________
Telephone: __________________________
E-Mail: __________________________
Credit Card Number: ________________ Expiry: ________________

I agree to allow Evergreen to withdraw from my Visa/MasterCard/AMEX on the 1st of each month. I understand that I may cancel at anytime by calling Evergreen. I will receive a single donation receipt after the end of each year.

Signature: __________________________