

# Calvary in Touch

CALVARY  
HOSPITAL

Where Life Continues

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*“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or touched, but are felt in the heart.”*

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## *Greetings*

Shouldn't sunny summer days lift our spirits and make us feel better? Unfortunately that is not always the case. Ironically we may feel worse as the summer months surround us with warmth and sunshine. In fact, most people say that their grief is harder to handle when the weather is nice. When the weather is dreary, cold or rainy, it almost mirrors the way that we feel inside-dreary and cold.

The change of season and nice weather can also be a painful reminder of what we no longer have. We remember vacations spent

with our loved ones, being with friends and extended family, working in the garden together, planting flowers, picnics at Orchard Beach, or going to Coney Island.

Our memories become bittersweet as we look back and recall happier times of past years.

Taking the time to recognize your feelings, no matter what they are, is part of the grieving process. Nurture yourself and give yourself permission to just “be.” Contact our office for additional support and allow us to help you in your grief.

This issue of *Calvary In Touch* focuses on our Young Spouse Bereavement Groups and the unique challenges young spouses and their children face.

All Calvary support groups are free and open to the community.

*Dr. Sherry R. Schachter*  
*Director of Bereavement Services*

## *Young Spouse/Partner Bereavement Group*

Five years ago, Calvary's Bereavement Services team recognized the need for a Young Spouse/Partner Bereavement Group. It focuses on the special issues young bereaved spouses or partners deal with including raising young children or teens, returning to work, and entering into new relationships. Women and men in the group offer one another shared situations, understanding and non-judgmental acceptance.

Young men and women that have lost a partner are now

faced with the various tasks involved in grieving. These tasks may include accepting the reality of the loss, working through the pain of grief, adjusting to an environment where your partner is missing, creating new connections, and re-investing life in positive directions (Worden, 2002).

Members of the group are able to express their feelings and thoughts openly and helpful readings are always distributed. Different grieving styles are recognized and accepted.

For example, some may cry while others may be angry. The Young Spouse Group is a safe place for people to explore their grief and talk about their issues. It offers participants the opportunity to admit their loved ones' flaws and yet honor their memories.

Meetings take place on Thursday nights at 7:00pm-8:30pm. If you are interested in finding out more about a group, please call Kristen Finneran at (718) 518-2270.

## Helping Children Grieve

Children often have a lot of difficulty expressing their grief to family members. They may feel they will hurt their parents or siblings by bringing up the person who died. Parents or guardians say children do not want to talk about the death and don't respond to their efforts to talk about their feelings.

Children are very aware of the grief of their family members and understand that they are in pain. Children may silently feel that there is no room for their pain and that sharing it with others would be a burden for those they love. Family members can help children by talking about their own pain and reassuring children that even though they are in pain,

they will all be able to survive this pain. Children feel comforted by that reassurance and may be more likely to open



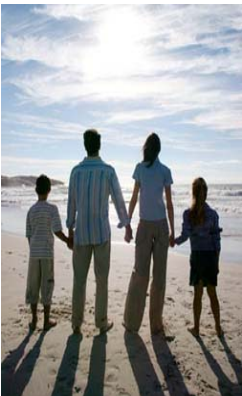
up if they see others discussing their feelings and still being able to live their lives.

Teaching the language of grief to children means showing them that we can create room

for our sorrows and that emotional pain can be dealt with. Even in families that are expressive, children may still choose to share their grief with friends or other trusted people in their lives, and that is okay. It does not mean they love their families any less; death is just a difficult topic for all us. The important thing is to provide safe places for children to express themselves, whether within or outside of the family.

When children begin to feel comfortable with expressing themselves, they may open up to talking about their feelings with their families.

## Brooklyn Bereavement Support Groups



Effective immediately, Calvary Hospital's two weekly bereavement support groups for adults in Brooklyn, will meet at new donated space located at:

**St. Francis College**  
**180 Remsen Street**  
 (between Court and Clinton Streets)

- The group for those who have lost a spouse or partner meets Mondays 5:30 to 7:00 PM.
- The group for those who have lost a parent meets Mondays 7:15 to 8:45 PM.

People interested in being part

of either adult group must first speak with Robert Ludwig, M.Ed., M.A., Group Facilitator, *before* they attend their first meeting. To reach him, email him in care of Sherry Schachter at: [sschachter@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:sschachter@calvaryhospital.org)

Individual counseling is available on a limited basis.

Later this year, Calvary will also start offering bereavement support groups in Brooklyn for children ages 6 through 17. Details to be determined.

Calvary's year-round bereavement programs for school-age children, "Precious Moments," and groups for

teens, have helped hundreds of children to date. Camp Courageous, Calvary's innovative summer camp for children ages 6 through 17, will host its 13<sup>th</sup> annual session this year.

The Hospital's bereavement support groups are available to anyone who has lost a loved one, whether that person was a patient at Calvary, or someone from the larger community whose death is attributable to illness, accident, or other causes.

## Spotlight: Nervana Repetti

My name is Nervana Repetti and I am 53 years old. I attend the Young Spouse Bereavement Group. This is my second bereavement group at Calvary.

My husband Chris died at Calvary on November 3rd, 2009. He was diagnosed three and a half years earlier with Stage IV colon cancer and was not expected to live as long as he did. He was receiving chemotherapy for three years continuously, and was very sick and weak from it. He also had a congenital heart defect and had open heart surgery at 30. How could this happen? It doesn't seem right to me, but I know now it happens to other people as well.

I found out about Calvary's services while my husband Chris was a patient there.

I wasn't ready right away. I waited a few months and said to myself, either go now or it will never happen. I was worried about coming into the hospital for the first time after Chris's death, but it was okay.

At first the group was very emotional and I had a hard time saying Chris's name. People who had been in the group one or two cycles were so giving. Now I look back and can see my progression from those first days. Just hearing others say how they are feeling...you feel comfortable sharing your

feelings. It is a place where sharing is accepted and expected. It is not a hardship on the other group members like it is on some family members and friends. It is a safe place to say



what you feel. You realize it is all part of the process.

I thought that it would be difficult being in a group with members that are further along in the grief process. However after the first session, I saw that as the group's biggest asset.

I am not sure that I will ever feel true happiness again, and I think I still have a lot of processing to do. There is still some anger, some questions that don't have answers. I am not done yet.

Chris and I waited to have children. Jonathan was born 18 years after we were married. He was 10 when his father was diagnosed with cancer.

Jonathan is such a huge part of

my life. I can't do anything without thinking about him. I am glad there are a couple of others in the group with children. They act as role models for me. If they can make it, so can I.

Jonathan looks like his father. He has his wacky sense of humor and it is wonderful! I am so glad I have him. I want to model for Jonathon that life goes on. Sometimes by talking about Chris we get emotional, but it is a good emotional. Instead of having that lump in your throat, you release it and you are able to keep going. Jonathan and his dad were very close and did lots of great things together.

I miss the little things like hugs, and having his touch...that is a big loss.

I wouldn't have been able to come this far without the group. I learned that I don't like being by myself and I miss Chris tremendously.

It is hard to adjust to life without him, we were married 31 years. I don't want to wallow so I keep busy and allow myself time to grieve. I'm happy to say I don't cry every night anymore, and the group has helped me get to this point.

*Monthly Calendar (All groups are free and open to the community, must call prior to starting a group )*

- **Bronx Day Group for Parents Whose Adult Child Has Died (Sherry Schachter)**  
Every Monday from 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
- **Brooklyn Spouse Group (Robert Ludwig)**  
Every Monday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Bronx Precious Moments Group (Maria Georgopoulos)**  
Group for children, ages 6-11 years, Monday afternoons 4:15 PM - 5:30 PM or 5:45 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Brooklyn Evening Group for Adults Whose Parents Have Died (Robert Ludwig)**  
Every Monday from 7:15 PM - 8:45 PM
- **Bronx Spanish Speaking General Bereavement Group (Yovani Santiago)**  
Every other Monday; Please contact Yovani at 718-518-2569
- **Bronx Day Spouse Group (Kristen Finneran)**  
Tuesdays from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM
- **Bronx Evening Spouse Group (Andrew Ostergren)**  
Every Tuesday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Men’s Group (Bronx) (Sherry Schachter)**  
Every other Tuesday from 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM.  
  
This group is for men who have lost their spouse, partner, parent, sibling, or child or are dealing with their own health issues.  
  
The purpose of the group will be to discuss handling stress and sadness, managing loneliness, rebuilding self-esteem and dealing with relationships.  
The group will meet on the following Tuesdays:  
--July 6th,  
--July 20th,  
--August 3rd,  
--August 10th
- **Bronx “Young” Spouse Group (Kristen Finneran)**  
Every Thursday from 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM
- **Bronx Evening Group for Adults Whose Parents Have Died (Kristen Finneran)**  
Every Thursday from 5:30 PM - 7:00 PM
- **Teen Bereavement (Bronx) (Maria Georgopoulos)**  
Group for teens ages 12-18 years, meets Wednesday afternoons 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM
- **Monthly Christian Memorial Service**  
Bronx-Saturday, July 10 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
Saturday, August 14 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM  
Brooklyn-Sunday, April 25 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM
- **Jewish Memorial Services**  
Bronx-Sunday, August 8 9:30 AM - 11:00 AM  
Brooklyn-Sunday, August 29 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM
- **Friday Matinee (Bronx)**  
Friday, July 9 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
  
“The Accidental Tourist”  
This is a tender, romantic, and heartwarming film starring William Hurt, who plays a depressed travel writer struggling to come to terms with his son’s death. He buys a dog for companionship, then hires an eccentric dog trainer (Geena Davis) to teach it to behave. But as he is beginning to admit his feelings for her to himself, he is blindsided by the return of his estranged wife (Kathleen Turner), who attempts to rekindle their marriage.
- **Friday Matinee (Bronx)**  
Friday, August 13 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM  
  
“On Golden Pond”  
Henry Fonda, in his last role, plays an 80-year-old irritable English professor. Visiting his summer house by a Maine lake with his wife (Katharine Hepburn), the old man forges an unlikely bond with a lonely boy, comes to terms with his daughter (Jane Fonda), and suffers disorienting effects of mild dementia.

*Key Contacts in Calvary’s Bereavement Department*

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