

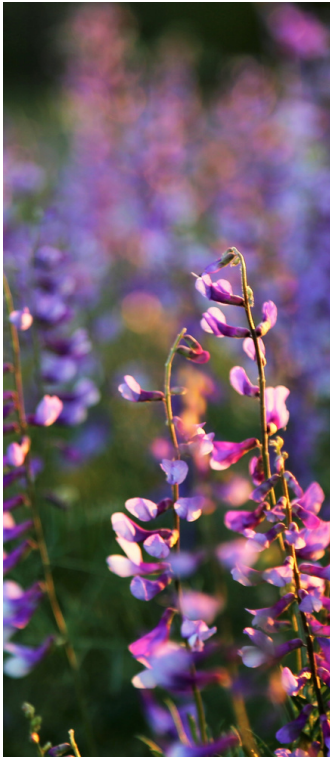
A P R I L - J U N E 2 0 2 3

# CALVARY IN TOUCH



**FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:**

Jackeline Abbondandolo, Intake Coordinator  
347-949-1266 | [jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org)



## GREETINGS

One of the tasks of mourning, according to grief theorist William Worden (2018), is to process the pain of grief. This is a very difficult task, as the pain of grief is the most challenging when you are recently bereaved, because the emotions can feel so erratic and out of control. You feel as though you are on a roller coaster ride. One moment you feel up and in the next moment you feel down. Even after the acute grief reactions subside, you can be triggered emotionally by something that you see, hear, smell, taste or touch that reminds you of your deceased family member or friend. This is all part of grief. Do not be alarmed.

**CALVARY  
HOSPITAL**

*Where Life Continues*

Continued on page 3

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Greetings, continued</i> by Edgardo Lugo.....	3
<i>When Is Lunch Just a Lunch?</i> by R. Abby Spilka.....	4
<i>I Write in His Name</i> by Lindsay Fairclough LaCruise AKA Pam.....	5
Bronx Groups + Counselor Contact Information .....	6
Brooklyn Groups + Counselor Contact Information .....	7
Manhattan Groups + Counselor Contact Information .....	8
Individual Counseling / Tree of Life .....	9



# GREETINGS, CONTINUED

As we journey through this season of spring and take time to notice the leaves and flowers unfold and bloom, consider that growing through the pain of grief is slow, like the slow and imperceptible unfolding of those tree leaves and flower petals. There is one interesting flower in the plant world that can be a paradoxical symbol of growth through the dark pain of grief. The plant is called the Princess of the Night (selenicereus grandifloras). The mind-boggling thing about this cactus plant is that it blooms a beautiful, radiant white, fragrant flower once a year and only at night. Sometimes growth and healing happen when we least expect it.



Image by Robert John Thornton (1768-1837)

WRITTEN BY  
Edgardo Lugo, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP  
Director of Bereavement Services



# WHEN IS LUNCH JUST A LUNCH?

In my work with grieving clients, I am often asked about signs – those incidents or moments indicating the presence of someone who has died. I have noticed that even the most cynical of individuals will tell me they saw a cardinal appear at the exact hour and minute that their person died and wonder if it means something. My response is quite simple. Throughout our lives, when incidents occur, our interpretations of them are informed by previous experiences, our current circumstances, and our particular mindset. I observe that if the event they describe brings them comfort, it does not matter if it means something. In that moment it is meaningful to you. And as a griever, take the comfort where you can.

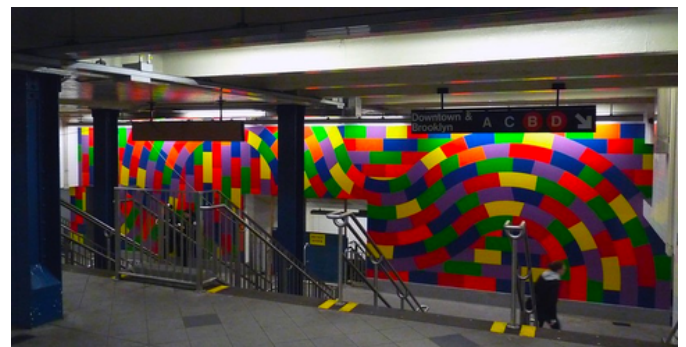
In 1995, authors Judy Guggenheim and Bill Guggenheim published their book *Hello from Heaven* (Bantam, 1997) after interviewing more than 2,000 people about their experiences with after-death communications (ADCs). They define an after-death communication (ADC) as “a spiritual experience, which occurs when you are contacted directly and spontaneously by a deceased family member or friend, without the use of psychics, mediums, rituals, or devices of any kind.” The Guggenheims estimate that between 20 to 40 percent of Americans have had some kind of ADC. This area of research is quite limited, but the authors suggest that possessing an awareness of ADCs can be beneficial.

I don't disagree.

In mid-March I went to lunch with my sister-in-law. We visited a small town in Connecticut unfamiliar to either of us. As we wound our way through quaint shops, we asked every shopkeeper where we should have lunch. Everyone said, “Oh, the River Tavern.” We weren't really in the mood for tavern or pub fare, but we agreed to check it out. We walked through the door and were greeted with large windows, natural light, and a very un-tavern-like atmosphere. My sister-in-law first noticed a painting by Sol LeWitt on one wall. We were seated and I noticed a small photocopied image of another of his paintings on the bottom of the menu. We asked our server what the restaurant's connection was with Sol LeWitt and learned that his wife, Carol, was the restaurant's landlord; she had filled the space with her husband's art. The server left to place our order. My sister-in-law and I were quiet for a moment before we both acknowledged how much Adam (her husband and my brother) loved Sol LeWitt's work. Adam died suddenly in January and this was the first restaurant meal my sister-in-law and I were sharing.

We reasoned it was purely coincidence that we ended up surrounded by paintings by one of Adam's favorite artists in a restaurant we had not heard of... in a town we did not know. And yet, it felt like we were meant to be there. Sign? Maybe. Coincidence? Probably. Meaningful? Absolutely.

*"Sign? Maybe.  
Coincidence?  
Probably.  
Meaningful?  
Absolutely."*



Sol LeWitt, *MTA Whirls and twirls*, created 2004 and installed 2009. Have you seen this work at the 59th Street Subway Station in Manhattan? "Sol LeWitt" by karlnorling is licensed under <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/?ref=openverse>

WRITTEN BY  
R. Abby Spilka, MA, LMHC, FT  
Bereavement Counselor



# I WRITE IN HIS NAME

I intellectually understand and believe that we are all here in this earthly space for a limited time, but emotionally it seems impossible to accept when I lose my loved ones. One of the most difficult losses I have experienced is the loss of my beloved husband. One definition for the word loss is “the state of feeling grief when deprived of someone of value.” I surely value my husband.

On February 22, 2021, my husband unwillingly stepped away from his earthly life. He was taken; he suffered a massive brain trauma. Yes, I was instantly deprived of him, that is what death does. I was left feeling totally without a sense of who I am. Immediately, I lost my sense of self, purpose, identity, hopes, and future.

I was abandoned even though it was not intentional. He was killed, it wasn't his choice. Nevertheless, that did not change my feeling of abandonment. I carry the same feeling for more than forty years when my father stepped away due to cancer. I felt abandoned then and I feel abandoned now.

The grief is intense and it takes over my entire being. My mind constantly wonders about everything. The why of his death...the who that caused his death. Simple decisions are now complicated. Every step I take is now delayed because I no longer trust myself, anything, or anyone. People, places...nothing is the same.

I often question my mental health because the loss of my husband consumes me daily and for many hours in each day. And, in the beginning, which was over one year ago, all day long I was thinking about what happened to my husband. The questions of death just repeat in a cycle. The beginning being two years ago or a moment ago. The loss of my beloved husband makes me question everything I had ever known. I repeatedly questioned my God: why? My world is very different. This world is very different. Death and loss left me without a foundation. I am like a house when its foundation is damaged due to an earthquake. His death was one of my shattering earthquakes.

Daily, I now work on my foundation in order to find myself again. There are moments that the loss of my husband consumes me and I wonder if I will ever be whole again. His death shattered my mind, body, and soul. I aged instantly when I was told by medical personnel that they will not do anything for my beloved husband because “he had no prognosis.” Yes, my foundation was shaken and it almost crumbled.

Nevertheless, I am standing two years and a little more in from that day. I am working moment by moment on the foundation of my house, this mind, this body, and this soul. Day to day, moment by moment, I am putting the shattered and scattered pieces of my life together again; even though I know the pieces of my life will never fit together as they did prior to the loss of my beloved husband.

Yes, LOSS consumes, LOSS confuses, LOSS hurts, and LOSS leaves me adrift at times; but the memory of my husband's love encourages me to continue as he would have wanted me to do. Yes, LOVE heals, LOVE hurts, LOVE encourages, and LOVE is never lost even when our loved one steps away or is taken away from this physical life. Love remains and holds you even when the physical person is no longer here to hold you.  
***“In His Name, Ronald George LaCruise.”***



SFC Ronald George LaCruise

WRITTEN BY  
Lindsay Fairclough LaCruise AKA Pam  
Individual Bereavement Counseling Client

# BRONX GROUPS

## **Precious Moments (6-9 year-olds)**

Monday: Jacqueline 4:00PM - 5:00PM

## **Tweens (10-12 year-olds)**

Tuesday: Jacqueline 5:00PM - 6:30PM

Thursday: Jacqueline 5:30PM - 7:00PM

## **Teens (13-17 year-olds)**

Thursday: Jacqueline 4:00PM - 5:00PM

## **Death of a Child Bereavement Support: 2 Years and Beyond**

2nd & 4th Thursday

Joanne 12:30PM - 2:00PM

## **Death of a Child**

Monday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

## **Adult Death of a Parent**

Thursday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

## **Death of a Sibling**

Tuesday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

## **Death of a Spouse/Partner**

Tuesday: Joanne 1:00PM - 2:30PM

## **Death of a Spouse/Partner**

Wednesday: Joanne 5:30PM - 7:00PM

## **Spanish Speaking Group**

Wednesday: Yvette 1:00PM - 2:30PM

## **Men's Discussion Group**

1st Thursday: Jackeline 12:30PM - 2:00PM

## **Supportive Connections:**

### **Parents/Guardians of Bereaved Children**

3rd Monday: Jacqueline 6:00PM - 7:30PM



# CONTACT US

## **JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC**

347-949-1266

[jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org)

## **JOANNE CASTELLANOS, MA, LMHC, FT**

917-574-4941

[jcastellanos@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jcastellanos@calvaryhospital.org)

## **EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

347-963-7001

[elugo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:elugo@calvaryhospital.org)

## **JACQUELINE MARLOW, ATR-P**

917-708-0133

[jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org)

## **YVETTE RAMIREZ, CHAPLAIN**

347-880-6446

[yramirez@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:yramirez@calvaryhospital.org)

# BROOKLYN GROUPS

## **Teens (13-17 year-olds)**

Wednesday: Jackeline 4:00PM - 5:00PM

## **Young Adult Group**

Wednesday: Abby 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Death of a Spouse/Partner**

Thursday: Abby 4:00PM - 5:30PM

## **Death of a Young Spouse/Partner**

Thursday: Abby 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Adult Death of a Parent**

Tuesday: Jackeline 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Death of a Child**

Tuesday: Abby 6:45PM - 8:15PM

## **Mindfulness & Movement for Grief**

Wednesday: Jacqueline 6:00PM - 7:30PM



## CONTACT US

### **JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC**

347-949-1266

[jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org)

### **JACQUELINE MARLOW, ATR-P**

917-708-0133

[jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jmarlow@calvaryhospital.org)

### **EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

347-963-7001

[elugo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:elugo@calvaryhospital.org)

### **R. ABBY SPILKA, MA, LMHC, FT**

917-574-6879

[aspilka@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:aspilka@calvaryhospital.org)





## **Precious Moments (6-9 year-olds)**

TBD

## **Teens (13-17 year-olds)**

TBD

## **Adult Death of a Parent**

Wednesday: Jackeline 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Death of a Young Spouse/Partner**

TBD

## **Death of a Spouse/Partner**

Monday: Edgardo 11:00AM - 12:30PM

Thursday: Jackeline 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Death of a Spouse/Partner to COVID19**

Wednesday: Edgardo 6:00PM - 7:30PM

## **Death of a Parent to COVID19**

Tuesday: Abby 5:00PM - 6:30PM



## CONTACT US

### **JACKELINE ABBONDANDOLO, LMHC**

347-949-1266

[jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org)

### **STEPHANIE INSALACO, MA, LMHC**

646-771-6604

[sinsalaco@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:sinsalaco@calvaryhospital.org)

### **EDGARDO LUGO, MS, LCSW-R, RPT-S, CGP**

#### **DIRECTOR OF BEREAVEMENT SERVICES**

347-963-7001

[elugo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:elugo@calvaryhospital.org)

### **R. ABBY SPILKA, MA, FT, LMHC**

917-574-6879

[aspilka@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:aspilka@calvaryhospital.org)



# INDIVIDUAL COUNSELING

Calvary Hospital's Bereavement Department would like to acknowledge how challenging the past few years have been, especially when grieving. As a way to extend our support, we are now offering individual bereavement counseling for a nominal fee. If you would like more information, please contact Jackie.

## FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Jackeline Abbondandolo

INTAKE COORDINATOR

347-949-1266

[jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org](mailto:jabbondandolo@calvaryhospital.org)

## TREE OF LIFE



Calvary Hospital complies with applicable Federal civil rights laws and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, or sex.

Through the Tree of Life, we can recognize your significant naming gift in a permanent and meaningful manner. Your significant person's name will exist in perpetuity with the lifetime of the Hospital. This is a loving way of memorializing someone special to you or saying thank you, because your gift of love helps patients and families today and for many years to come.

For more information, please call 718-518-2689.

## THANK YOU FOR READING!

Calvary In Touch has been made possible by a generous bequest from Michael Camara.