



*Circle of Life
Community Hospice*

NEWSLETTER
2023

APRIL
MAY
JUNE



SOCK HOP



*Circle of Life
Community Hospice*

Circle of Life Hospice would like to invite you to the

Senior Sock Hop Dance

Saturday, May 6th 2023

3-6pm

Reno Senior Center 1155 E 9th St Reno, NV 89512

Please RSVP by email to rsup@colhospice.com



For free clothing please visit Good Shepherd's Clothes Closet

540 Greenbrae Dr. Sparks, NV 89431

Brought to you by Circle of Life Hospice and Senior Coalition



Circle of Life Community Hospice

Reno

Support Groups are open to the community free of charge.

Groups are held the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of every month

from 3:30 - 4:30 pm

1575 Delucchi Ln Ste 214 Reno, NV 89502

P: 775-827-2298

April 4th

April 18th

May 2nd

May 16th

June 6th

June 20th

Fallon

Support groups are held the 4th Wednesday of every month

Holy Trinity Episcopal Church

507 Churchill St Fallon, NV 89406

5:30 pm

April 26th

May 24th

June 28th




MY LESSONS IN GRIEF

By Johnny Sutter

21 years ago I was a newlywed and at 29 years old we had the world by the tail and our careers were soaring. We had a blended family of five kids, my two sons and her daughter and two sons. But there was a sadness that had always been there, it was unspoken and she preferred to sweep it under the rug.

My wife was in a nasty custody battle for all three kids, I knew it ate at her and in some ways she felt like less of a woman. She would cry herself to sleep sometimes and as a husband there are certain things you can't make better, no matter how hard you try.

About four months after we got married we were hit with yet another motion from her ex wanting full custody and no judge in their right mind would grant it but we still had to answer the motion. She had been in this battle long before I was ever in the picture and I think for some reason after we got married she thought it would end. But instead, it just got worse and she fell into an even deeper depression.



I can still remember it like it was yesterday. It was a Monday morning in late September; she said she wasn't going to work that day because she didn't feel well. So I headed off to work like it was just another Monday, but I was wrong. She was hurting so bad that she wanted the pain to stop any way that she could. So, she did the unthinkable. She took a whole bottle of pills. She called my office after she did that and in a slurred voice begged for my help. I called 911 and rushed home to find her lying on the floor having a seizure of some kind. She was rushed to the hospital and had her stomach pumped. In a perfect world that would be it, she would recover and get help for her depression and the battles with her ex would mellow out and we would live happily ever after.

But that's not what happened. Her liver went into complete failure and 5 days after she took those pills she died in ICU, and my life changed forever.

Death can change you on so many levels. I lost weight ...and friends. I moved twice to get a fresh start and eventually crawled into a whiskey bottle and didn't come out for 17 years. I blamed myself for her death and everyday that I was here and she wasn't I needed to punish myself for her passing. You see, little did I know back then that depression is an illness and if left untreated it can be fatal. I thought there was something I could have said or done to make a difference, but in actuality there wasn't. The average person is not trained to deal with people dealing with depression; they need to seek professional help.

Fast forward 21 years and there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think of that pretty lady. I can remember on her good days that amazing smile and how it would light up a room. My grief has changed over the years, I have gained understanding and purpose in my life and have been sober for 4 years now. Rather than being angry at her passing, I am grateful for the time I did have with her. Those memories will never fade away. She is still a part of my life and always will be. Only now her death doesn't consume me.

I guess that is why I'm writing this; to let other people know that it is ok to grieve, hurt and even be pissed as hell. After all, that person mattered and how lucky for them that you would love them so much to hurt this bad because of their passing. If your grief is new and your loved one just passed, there will come a day when you will smile again and mean it. I promise.

In a way it is the start of a new chapter in a book that you're still writing and how it ends is up to you. So turn your grief into something positive, whatever that means for you and know that your loved one is cheering you on every step of the way.

I know Teri (that's her name by the way) is still my biggest fan.

Ten Minutes

I'm sitting here next to a creek near Frenchman's Lake... wondering if I could only have one wish, what would I wish for? And my wish might surprise you because I wouldn't ask to have you back with me in life... that's because I know that you have all the answers to all the questions that all of us are still wondering about and because you are probably happier now than you ever were in life. And I know in my heart that your work on earth is done, but what I would wish for is ten minutes with you in a dream where I can hold your hand and smell your hair and tell you now I understand. I understand the pain you went through in life. I understand what you meant when you said you were so tired, and I just want it to be quiet because now I feel your pain. I'm so tired and I just want it to be quiet. Then I would tell you I am so so sorry, not because I feel I caused your pain, but because I couldn't understand it and I couldn't do anything to relieve it. And I would tell you that for me you were a gift, a gift from God and I knew someday I'd have to give you back.

When I met you, you changed my life and gave it meaning and a definite road to travel and in death you changed my life and gave it meaning, but the road is still unclear. And then I would tell you that your father and I would make sure that your children would know how much you loved them in life and that you would always be with them in death. Your children were the light of your life, and they live on but the sparkle in their eyes is you... and then I would tell you that the last eight hours of your life was a miracle. Baby, if what you went through in that time span is dying, then I can assure everyone that dying is nothing to fear. I know you were with someone. Someone you loved and trusted, and that someone loved you equally as much... and my only hope is when it's my time to go you are on the other side with all the answers to all the questions...

... And then I would thank you for keeping your promise not to break my heart, the only problem is you took it with you... And then I would kiss you and tell you I love you and that I'm so much better off having known you. And if I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing. And then I would let you start the work you were sent up there to do and then in your journey if you need any help with that work all you have to do is visit me in a dream. I always knew you were an angel, I just couldn't see your wings... thanks for ten minutes.

Love Now and Forever,

Johnny Sutter



American Foundation
for Suicide Prevention

Out of the Darkness

Community Walk



*Circle of Life
Community Hospice*

SUICIDE PREVENTION WALK

May 20th 2023

Registration: 8:00 am

Walk Start Time: 10:00 am

Sparks Marina Park

Join us for the suicide prevention walk, all funds raised support the suicide prevention resources as well as the families who have lost a loved one to suicide. Circle of Life Hospice is partnering with Great Basin Chaplain Corps for this event. Both organizations will be walking with our families of honor. If you would like to donate please call us at 775-827-2298



A Letter from the Founder

I am excited and humbled to enter the 20th year of providing grief support services in Reno, Nevada, surrounding counties, and Northern California. It has been an honor and privilege to work alongside an amazing team of volunteers who are caring individuals who have committed their time and money to provide comprehensive grief support in our community.

I have been able to provide professional development at the University of Nevada, Reno, the University of Nevada School of Medicine, TMCC, hospitals, and hospices in our community, as well as serve as a keynote and guest speaker at dozens of conferences locally and nationally over the years. In collaboration with school counselors, we have been able to work with schools, students, staff, and families. Every single person we have come in contact with has helped us to fulfill our mission and vision that No Child, Teen, or Adult shall Ever Grieve Alone.

In Nevada 1 out of 14 children will have a parent die before they turn 18 years old. As of 2022, there are 2.2 million children nationally under the age of 18 who have had a parent die. Compared to nonbereaved children, bereaved children are at a higher risk of academic failure, depression, alcohol and substance misuse, violent crime, suicide attempts, suicide, and premature death from any cause.

We will continue to be committed to the mission to build the necessary support systems for grieving children and families in their time of loss and trauma in the Reno-Sparks area, Northern Nevada, and Northern California. I knew two decades ago that something needed to be done to support grieving families, and I am grateful for your support and partnership and invite you to continue the journey with us as The Solace Tree begins our next chapter.



SUPPORTING GRIEVING CHILDREN, TEENS, AND ADULTS

Onward with Love and Support,
Emilio Parga
Founder, The Solace Tree





CAMP HOPE 2023

FREE
Grief Camp
KIDS & TEENS
AGES 7-17

THE ACTIVITIES

- GRIEF ACTIVITIES
- TEAM BUILDING
- COPING SKILLS
- BEACH FUN
- LUNCH & SNACKS



Wednesday, July 12, 2023
9:00am – 3:00pm



Round Hill Pines Beach Resort
300 US Hwy 50
Zephyr Cove, NV

TO REGISTER...
775.450.0329
DOUGLASCENTERFORHOPEANDHEALING.ORG

LEARNING TO GRIEVE TOGETHER

5 Candles

By Michelle Cagle

We light these five candles in honor of our loved ones:

One for our grief, one for our courage, one for our memories, one for our love, and one for our hope.



The first candle represents our grief. The pain of losing you is as intense and deep as our love for you. It's no wonder the deep sorrow. Where there is great love there is deep grief. What is grief, if not love persevering?

The second candle represents our courage. It takes a lot of courage to live life as a griever. To face some days with a smile when you're actually crying inside. It takes a lot of courage to reach deep down within yourself and tell yourself that you'll survive. Grief is not a weakness. It takes courage to lean into pain. The only cure for grief is to grieve.

The third candle we light in your memory: The memory of your laugh, your hug, the color of your eyes and the scent of your presence. The times we laughed, the times we cried, and all the silly things we did. The memories are treasures that can never be taken from us.

The fourth candle we light for our love. We light this candle that your light may always shine as bright and as big as the love we have for you, and for the love and joy you gave to us. Love never ends.

The fifth candle we light for hope: hope that you will live on through us, never be erased from our memory, that your life still has meaning and continues to make a difference in this world. Hope... that we continue to heal with grace and kindness towards our-selves and others. Hope that we'll be together again.

May there be comfort and healing in knowing that someone so incredibly special will never be forgotten.



*Circle of Life
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Death Café



PLEASE JOIN US FOR TEA, COOKIES, LIGHT LUNCH, AND INTERESTING, CONFIDENTIAL DISCUSSIONS ON DEATH, DYING AND LIVING.

THIS IS A FREE EVENT.
LEARN MORE AT DEATHCAFE.COM.

GOALS OF AN END OF LIFE DISCUSSION:
TO HELP PEOPLE BE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE MANY FACETS OF DEATH AND DYING, OVERCOME THEIR FEARS ABOUT DYING, UNDERSTAND THAT ONLY BY EMBRACING DEATH CAN ONE FULLY LIVE.

June
24TH

11:00 - 1:00 PM

**RENO
SENIOR CENTER**

1155 E 9TH ST

RENO, NV 89512

RSVP TODAY

- SEATS ARE LIMITED -

RSVP@COLHOSPICE.COM

CAN THERE BE SUCH A THING AS A GOOD DEATH?

Written By: Jason Rose, CD-SV, RIT, RUPES USA

On behalf of the IDA Health and Wellness Taskforce, this article about grieving, death, and dying is relevant and timely as our membership has experienced the loss of several industry leaders recently. Many of us were shocked to hear of the passing of Denis Healy and then gut-punched with the passing of Rick Goldstein in November 2021. More recently, Chris Evans and Daryl Lyons, CD-SV. In addition to our thoughts and prayers for their families, we have our own reactions and emotions. Many of us are deeply sad and grieving in our own way.

What follows is an abridged interview with a “death and dying” expert, of sorts. Our hope is this discussion will raise awareness of death being an important part of living, and something for which we can be prepared.

Michelle Cagle, CEO of Circle of Life Community Hospice and Jason Rose, CD-SV, RIT of RUPES USA

Jason: Michelle, tell us about your company and what you do.

Michelle: I am the CEO of an agency called Circle Of Life Community Hospice based in Reno, Nevada. Founded in 1999, I became a majority shareholder in 2021. Circle of Life serves individuals and their families during the advanced and final stages of a terminal illness.

Jason: Your website states on the landing page, “Hospice is many things, but first of all, it is a philosophy. We believe that dying is not a defeat but rather a natural part of human life. Death happens to all of us and hospice allows it to happen with maximum respect for each person’s inherent worth and reverence for the process. Hospice care is for people in the advanced stages of a chronic or terminal illness who have made the decision to discontinue curative treatments, emphasize physical comfort and live their remaining days with dignity, surrounded by our team of compassionate caregivers.” Wow. So you and your team are there when people are dying? That is fascinating to me. How do you do it?

Michelle: We have a team of doctors, nurses, chaplains, and caregivers. The main emphasis of our team is to never put profit over care. To do this, we have to have a team that genuinely cares, first. So, we are available 24/7 to provide customized care. There is no one way to leave this world; your way will be special for you. Our team will be there for the individual and their family. Contrary to what many think, hospice is not about death. It’s about the living.

Jason: Why do you choose this kind of work? Most of us shy away from talking about death, even thinking about it. Why would you lean so deeply into hospice work?

Michelle: I didn’t choose this work. It chose me. All my life, I have been intimately involved with death and dying in my family. At age 10, my grandpa died of cancer. When I was age 14, my cousin died of cancer. At age 15, my mom cared for her best friend dying of colon cancer. I was with her daily during those last few days. When I was 18 years old, my grandma died suddenly of a heart attack. That same year, my dad had a massive stroke. I moved back home to help care for him. He died in 1997. In 2005, my mom moved in with me while she was dying of colon cancer. I held her hand and cared for her in her final days, just as she showed me how to do with her best friend years earlier. My stepfather died a few years later. My 16-year-old son died suddenly in a tragic automobile accident in 2017. That year, I realized that my life experiences, passion, and abilities are ideally suited for hospice service. I became the Operations Manager of Circle of Life Hospice, which led me on this path to becoming majority shareholder and CEO.

Jason: Yikes. Wow. Your life experiences and your “life’s work” are certainly aligned. This brings me to the main purpose of this interview. Our IDA membership has experienced the loss of several leaders in our industry. As we each grieve and process in our own ways, I feel it is important to take a loss and own it. Allow it to be personal. Ask questions. Learn from it. Feel it. Let that person’s life contribute to us as we hurt and as we go forward. Make an intentional effort to assign meaning. Otherwise, it can seem like a bundle of random emotions without purpose. So, my first question to you, isn’t it a very different experience to have someone in our lives suddenly die versus a hospice-like scenario where family and friends are aware that end of life is eminent for a loved one?

Michelle: There are differences yes, and many similarities. Both involve loss, grieving, and the process of accepting the changes brought upon us with someone’s end of life. A sudden death adds the element of surprise and shock. The advanced notice of a terminal illness adds the element of time and an opportunity to share the end of life experience with a loved one. It provides a chance to prepare for the passing, for all involved. Both scenarios offer a profound occasion to internalize the meaning of someone’s life to you, and to celebrate a life.

Jason: You used the word “prepare”. For our IDA membership, the passing of Rick, Denis, Chris, and Daryl was each a sudden announcement that we were not prepared for. Perhaps their immediate families might have had more advanced notice, but for most of us, it was a shock. Personally, I lost my youngest brother in a motorcycle accident. It was years ago, but I remember it very well. I had an overwhelming feeling of shock, a jolt to the core. Disbelief! How could this be?!? He was so young. I kept going over it in my mind, “this is not supposed to happen!” I’m sure you, Michelle, had similar experience with your son’s accident. So being prepared in a situation with advanced notice makes sense to me. But how can we prepare for a sudden, unexpected event?

Michelle: Unexpected? In this life, we are given our first breath and our last. Everything in between is uncertain. But those two events are certain. Many people prepare for various parts of life, early education, college maybe, jobs, and housing. We prepare for marriage, family. We plan vacations. Many prepare finances for different stages of life, building assets and retirement. But end of life? Our own or others around us? It’s rarely even talked about. I can assure you that most people do not discuss, plan, or prepare for end of life with the same vigor, assertiveness, or thoroughness that they do while buying a house or having a baby. When buying a house or having a baby is loaded with many uncertainties, end of life is 100% certain. It is gonna happen. Prepared or not.

Jason: Why is that? Many of us, myself included, respond to a sudden death as a completely unexpected thing. It’s a side impact. Why?

Michelle: In American culture especially, it is taboo. It is considered the norm in our society to refrain from discussing death and dying. Somehow, we think if we don’t talk about it that it won’t happen. In other cultures, it is often more acceptable to discuss, prepare, and even celebrate end of life. And for many, the strong emotions can make it difficult to share. For some of us, our own feelings are so uncomfortable and painful that it makes others around us uncomfortable. And somehow that is viewed as unacceptable. When it really is a natural part of the process.

Jason: So, what does that look like? To be prepared for end of life, our own or someone else’s?

Michelle: One powerful way to be prepared is to say it. Talk. Say what needs to be said to your loved ones, friends, family, co-workers. Don’t leave anything important unsaid. Be mindful of your last words to people, because the reality is they could in fact be your last words to a person. Be attentive of energy in a relationship. Would you regret it if that energy is suddenly frozen in time forever?

Jason: Ok, that seems like very wise advice, directed towards emotional preparedness. Since end of life seems to bring out many strong emotions, what other suggestions do you have?

Michelle: Feel it. Feel whatever it is. Cry if and when you feel like crying. Laugh. Somehow it is viewed inappropriate to laugh or feel joy at end of life, your own or someone else’s. There is no right or wrong way. It’s a very individual thing. Respect your way and the way of others. To intentionally lean into the feelings of end of life is a good way to prepare. For yourself, and to help those around you be prepared. Here are some suggestions:

- Have a “safe share place”. This could be a support group, a friend, family, a meaningful physical location, or a meditation spot by yourself. It should be a place where you feel safe and comfortable sharing your feelings.

- When feelings are intense, seek professional counseling or hypnotic therapy. When feelings are intense, it is a call to action. If those feelings involve a family member or significant other, it could be much better to intentionally address those proactively, rather than at end of life. This is the essence of being prepared.
- Start a Eulogy Club. This is a developing idea where you gather friends, family, and loved ones to express eulogies to each other as if they were dead. This can be a very cathartic and empowering way to prepare. It can have the added benefit of strengthening relationships, which is also another way for mutual end-of-life preparedness.
- Participate in a Death Café. It is an open forum where people who are interested in the many topics associated with death and dying can come together to discuss subjects of their choice, fears around dying, and stories they may want to share with others. It is an event — usually, two hours in duration — that is inclusive of all religions, philosophies, and choices of hospice care — should that be a topic of discussion. There is no intention of leading participants to any particular conclusion, product, or course of action. The events are held in an open, respectful, and confidential space. All views are welcome and honored. Death cafés are facilitated by one or more facilitators and topics of discussion are determined by participants. They are always free.
- Pray. For spiritual care, pray with your spiritual/religious leader or group. Or pray alone. But have intentional and focused prayers about end-of-life. Connect with the finality and the eternity. The blessings.
- Journal. If it is one of your better ways to express yourself, write about end-of-life. Write about what it means to you, how you hope it happens, how you hope it doesn't happen. Writing can help you prepare.
- And again, say it. Feel it. Talk about end-of-life. Sharing it now will make it easier on you and your survivors.

Jason: Those are amazing suggestions. I have one more I can add.

- Clean up your mess. Having cleaned up multiple houses and storage units after my mom and dad passed away, I know very well the physical mess that can be left behind after a family member passes away. So I think of things like this when leaving my house in the morning. I ask myself, "Am I ok with my survivors cleaning up my mess? What will my survivors find?" Cleaning up messes you don't want left behind you is one way to be prepared. One day it will be the case that you will leave the house one last time.

Michelle: Yes, I agree. That is a good suggestion to be prepared.

Jason: There are other practical things to be prepared. What are some of those?

Michelle: There are documents called Living Wills, Instruction Directive, Health Care Proxies, Power of Attorney, and other Advanced Directives that can be completed to prepare for end-of-life from a legal and medical perspective. These documents clarify your desires and intentions to medical professionals and family. Individuals that die suddenly without any of these documents prepared can leave behind a sometimes frustrating situation for a family to figure out what can legally be done, and what might have been accurate desires or intentions of the deceased.

Jason: And of course, there is a Last Will and Testament document. This is a legal document that designates beneficiaries who will receive real estate and personal property after death. Having first-hand experience with this in my family, I can assure you it is significantly more loving, considerate, and respectful for your family to have these documents prepared before end-of-life, compared to leaving it up to your family to sort out what legally can be done about what they may be guessing is your wants/needs/preferences.

Michelle: Yes, it is easier for survivors if you prepare emotionally, medically, legally, and financially, but it can also be self-serving and gratifying to know that you are preparing yourself, as you prepare your loved ones for your end of life.

Please know that your IDA Members are in my thoughts and prayers. On behalf of Circle of Life, I would like to offer your IDA membership a monthly zoom call conducted by our grief counselors. And any of your members can reach out to us anytime.

Jason: Thank you. With that, we will summarize and conclude our interview. Sincerely, thank you Michelle for taking the time in your busy schedule to contribute to our IDA members in this way. For our readers, I want to suggest and refer to Michelle's article called, "A good death, did I hear you right?". This article and other resources are listed below and can also be found in the IDA Health & Wellness Taskforce resource library.

A "good death" seems hardly ok to say. I'm certain death will seldom feel good, especially for family and friends. But it can be "gooder", better, if we prepare for what will be a certainty for each of us.

I would like to be a "safe share place" for you. If you reach out to me, I will listen and be there for you.

Let's face it. Expect the unexpected. It's time to accept and take action. It could be one of the most loving things you do for family, friends, and yourself.





1575 Delucchi Ln Ste 214
Reno, NV 89502

If you notice an error in your name or address or if someone else in your family would like to receive our mailings, please contact Circle of Life Community Hospice at 775-827-2298.



In Loving Memory of:

Clay Dalton Cagle
08/14/2000 - 06/21/2017