

## KIDS' FACTS

### HELPING CHILDREN WITH THEIR GRIEF

Whether or not your child will be attending a support group with BFO, now or at some future point in time, there are some helpful things parents can consider.

**Keep Channels of Communication Open** - Children of all ages respond to loss differently than adults. Some will be openly upset and distraught, while others will be seemingly indifferent and may carry on as if nothing has happened. It is important not to push children to talk and share their feelings—but it is equally important to talk openly about the deceased, and let children know that it is okay to talk, if they want to. Sometimes children are afraid of upsetting a parent by talking about the death. Letting them know that it is right to talk about them and it is alright to be upset, can free them up to do so—when they feel ready.

**Be Clear and Honest** - Children often interpret things in a very literal fashion. If you say someone has gone to sleep—they picture that person simply sleeping and may be afraid for themselves or others to go to sleep. Don't be afraid to ask them what they heard, to clarify their understanding. Children often ask many direct and pointed questions about the death (for example, "Did it hurt?"; "Where are they now?"; "How will they eat?" etc.) It is always best to be honest, even though there may be some details you do not wish to share with younger children. Because our bodies quickly go into shock, it is an honest response to say they were not in pain.

It is important to let children know what you believe about issues that come up. You may respond to questions about the dead requiring food by saying that the spirit or soul does not need food like we do—or something to that effect. When children ask questions it is often out of a desire to talk, as opposed to looking for the right answers. This is a very important point, because the answers depend upon your own belief system. Once again, it is often very helpful to ask the child what they think or believe—you may be very surprised.

**Young Children Grieve Through Their Behaviour** - Children sometimes appear to be indifferent and to carry on normal, everyday routines—and may get upset about changes in those routines. This is normal, as it is important to children that their world is predictable—it makes them feel safe. They may react to changes with challenging and disruptive behaviour. It is important to be understanding by taking the opportunity to talk about how hard it is for everyone, but it is also important to maintain limits and controls. Children need to know that certain behaviour is unacceptable to you. After you have disciplined a child for inappropriate behaviour, you might take that opportunity to talk with the child about how hard it is for everyone, but certain behaviour is just not okay. You can help them come up with other ways of expressing their anger or frustration.

Fall also is a time many children and parents are separated for a time—returning to school. This can be a difficult time for a child who is grieving. Parents of children going to school are well advised to let the teacher and principal know about any losses a child has experienced during the past year. Counsellors who are made aware of such an event will be particularly sensitive to your child and can provide some extra emotional support.

Take it slow, day by day and watch for opportunities to talk with your child about the loss.

## REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES



**Leo Labelle** – January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
*We Remember*

**Audrey Morrow** – November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Doreen Lalonde** – November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Gary Snyder** – November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Rodney MacLaren** – November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Donald Walter** – November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Cyril Merkley** – December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Marcel Lepage** – December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Eunice Prevost** – December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Cyril Merkley** – December 25<sup>th</sup>, 2007

**Sheldon Tryon** – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

**Richard Young** – December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2007

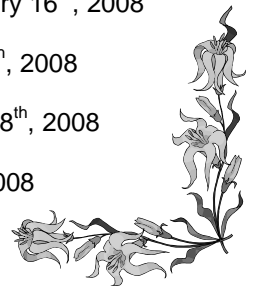
**Harry Willems** – January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Carole Lavell-Wylie** – January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Louis Banville** – January 17<sup>h</sup>, 2008

**Frederick Black** – January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2008

**Mike Ryan** – January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2008



If you would like your loved one remembered in this section of the newsletter, please fill out this form or call us at 936-1455

Name of loved one \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Death \_\_\_\_\_  
Optional Verse \_\_\_\_\_  
Remembered by \_\_\_\_\_

*The Joy that surrounds the holidays may be difficult to face, but with courage and warm recollections you will endure. Remember that your precious memories are like pebbles along the pathway of hope. Embrace them, they will show you the way.*