



# HEALING THE SPIRIT

Summer 2022

1-800-847-7831 | [healingthespirit.org](http://healingthespirit.org)



## Dear Donor Families,

With summer comes warm weather and opportunities to make new memories. Whether you are enjoying a staycation or taking a trip looking for adventure, life may be presenting you with moments that spark new experiences while reminding you of past journeys.

It may feel difficult to move forward without your loved one at your side. A change of environment can be healing. Breathe in that summer breeze and let it put your heart at ease. Be open to whatever happens!

All the Best,

Debbie Hutt, DFS Director

If you would like more information on any Donor Family Service Programs, please contact us.

800.847.8731 | [DFS@lifenethealth.org](mailto:DFS@lifenethealth.org)

Summer 2022  
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Healing the Spirit

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### In Celebration & Remembrance Events

**September 17, 2022: Jacksonville, FL**  
Club Continental

**September 25, 2022: Seattle, WA**  
Museum of Flight

**October 16, 2022: Pensacola, FL**  
Pensacola Yacht Club

**November 13, 2022: Billings, MT**  
Northern Hotel

### Donor Appreciation Baseball Games

**Jacksonville, FL**  
August 7, 2022

**Pensacola, FL**  
August 13, 2022

**Salem, VA**  
August 21, 2022

**Seattle, WA**  
October 2, 2022

### Tree of Remembrance

**Roanoke, VA**

December 11, 2022

*Additional dates/locations to be announced.  
Please visit our website for more information. A complete listing will be in the next issue.*

### “Honoring Donor Families”

**Motorcycle Ride & Celebration**

August 13, 2022

Destination Church  
Hopewell, VA 23860

*For information about attending, please contact  
John Reid at 804-704-4329*

## Florograph Honoree for the 2023 Rose Parade



Would you like your loved one to be honored on the 2023 Donate Life Float in the New Year's Day Rose Parade?

Email [DFS@lifenethealth.org](mailto:DFS@lifenethealth.org) for more information!  
Submissions are due to DFS by **August 15**.

## Healing Tears



*Dear Lani,*

*Since my sister died, I have not had a traveling partner. I have not been able to go anywhere during the pandemic and now that the world is opening, I am sad to not have someone to take a trip with. It will also be hard for me to miss her and not share new experiences with her by my side. How can I get myself to go?*

*Sincerely, A Sad Sister*

Dear Sad Sister,

Yes, so much has changed in your world. You have lost your sister and traveling companion. You have lost several years of travel and adventure. And you are grieving your sister and the anticipated future experiences with her. While you cannot share future trips with your dear sister, you do know yourself and what you want. It sounds like you want to get out and explore the world and have adventures. It sounds like your challenge is to reframe your thinking from “I don’t have someone to take a trip with” to “I don’t yet know who I will take a trip with”. Use that insight to create new “habits” to get out there and experience what you desire.

You want to get out of the pandemic isolation. You have the motivation i.e., you want to take a trip. Now make sure you have the ability i.e., the physical ability, resources, and time to travel. Next, make sure you have some realistic prompts to help you follow through into this new territory i.e., have travel magazines around you, call a travel agent, or join a travel group like Rhodes Scholars. Remember that you are forming a new way of living in the world without your sister; learning to live in a new world without your loved one is one of the major tasks of griefwork. There will be normal errors, setbacks, and grief surges that delay what you envision. I encourage you to have compassion for yourself during those grief surges or self-doubt and find a support system that will validate your wishes and help you toward your goals. It may take several attempts to clarify, envision the specifics, and find the options that match your true desire. But every misstep is an opportunity to shed light on the core of your values and wishes.

A helpful resource to support your new life can be found in BJ Fogg's New York Times best-seller, *Tiny Habits* (First Mariner Books, 2020). His 20+ years of research at the Stanford Behavior Design Lab can help you to make the move forward. It may help you envision, stop judging yourself, and break down your desire into smaller, practical steps. You can start small and check out his website [tinyhabits.com](http://tinyhabits.com) or watch one of his YouTube videos to get started.

Another option for clarity can be your journal. What is your heart telling you? What patterns of resistance can you identify? What gets in the way of you having what you want? Are your beliefs just assumptions or reality? What support do you already have at your fingertips, and who do you have within your inner circle that can help you? Perhaps you have a single friend that is also wanting to travel but you didn't think of her before because you were committed to your sister. Or perhaps there is an adventure waiting for you just by connecting to a new group of unknown travelers. The unknown can be scary, but also full of unexpected gifts.

While your travel adventures will be different than the joy you experienced with your sister, you can have the trips you want if you allow yourself new ways of having them. Acknowledge your grief while using the energy of past shared adventures to propel you forward toward new ones.

Bon Voyage and Best Wishes,

Lani

*Lani Leary, Ph.D., specializes in working with chronically ill, dying, and bereaved clients. Dr. Leary has worked for the past 25 years as a psychotherapist in private practice and in six hospices across the country.*

[Have a question for Dr. Leary? Contact Aimee Evans at \[aimee\\\_evans@lifenethealth.org\]\(mailto:aimee\_evans@lifenethealth.org\).](mailto:aimee_evans@lifenethealth.org)



## The Journey

### Grief Companions: Compassionate Connections

(Featured left: Liz with husband Randy; Jo with husband Bob)

LifeNet Health's Grief Companion® Program pairs donor families who are seeking emotional support and encouragement through their grief journey with other donor families who have walked their own journey. They understand the experience of grief and support others as they mourn. Our program is designed to provide a safe environment for grieving, free of judgment, with an understanding companion they can trust.

It is important to be able to express our grief, to talk with someone who understands. However, often those closest to us and our loved ones are also grieving and reluctant to share their grief in an effort to protect us. That mutual grief becomes a barrier, leaving us to walk our journey alone and bewildered. A Grief Companion is an empathetic listener who allows a donor family member the opportunity to share stories, cry and discuss coping skills. Some companions interact frequently by phone, email, or Facebook. Some

communicate only occasionally or on an as-needed basis. Each grief journey is unique, and the purpose of this program is to support donor families how and when they need it most.

Grief will feel different each day as you carry that weight with you throughout your life. No matter what a person is feeling as they grieve it is all part of carrying the loss and the love with you. Jo Schumacher lost her husband, Bob, over eight years ago. She trained to become a Grief Companion to help others who are grieving know it is okay not to be okay. Jo shared, “Grieving makes you feel vulnerable and takes away your confidence, especially in the beginning. I try to empower those who I support to be their own advocate.” Losing your loved one is not just an emotional stressor; it can be a financial and social stressor as well. Oftentimes, you have to adjust your lifestyle and routines. Jo explained, “It is important to have someone there to support you and allow you to let it out, floating the energy lets your pain be heard and gives others the opportunity to help. It is not easy to ask for help, most of us try to avoid it but the irony is, most of us want to help others.”

In Jo’s experience, it is all about letting the person tell their story and for the Grief Companion to feel out what would support them with their unique situation. Whether it is talking it out, recommending specific resources, or coaching them through the logistics like having to report the death to everyone and changing names on accounts. It comes down to simply being there when they need to be heard, walking alongside, and validating them.

One of the donor families Jo pairs with is Liz Rowland. For over a year now, she has been in close contact with Liz. In reflecting on her interactions with Jo, Liz feels, “Jo is a Godsend and I cannot imagine my life without her. She boosts me up and when I felt like I was stuck in my grief journey she gave me hope that there will be better tomorrows.” She also shared, “I am so glad this program exists and Jo has taught me how important self-care is.” Jo puts her heart into Grief Companionship and makes extra efforts to console and provide support to the individuals she is paired with. For example, on special occasions, she has been known to send care packages. Liz was very touched that Jo had sent her individually wrap little gifts of significance to cheer her up as Liz mourned her wedding anniversary to her late husband, Randy. After grieving her husband, Jo finds helping others through their grief process allows her to continue to have movement in her own process of bereavement. Jo explained, “Being a Grief Companion has helped me too because I can reflect on my own journey and see how far I have come.”

**If you are interested in having a Grief Companion or becoming one, please Paulette Cordes at [paulette\\_cordes@lifenethealth.org](mailto:paulette_cordes@lifenethealth.org)**

IMPORTANT NOTE: A Grief Companion is not a professional counselor, and the Grief Companion Program is not a substitute for professional counseling. If you find yourself not able to function in your life as you would wish to please contact a professional counselor or talk with your doctor or a healthcare professional who can refer you to a licensed grief counselor.