

T★A★P★S®

Comfort and Support Since 1994

MAGAZINE

FOR THE LOVED ONES OF THOSE WHO SERVED & DIED



TAPS Magazine is dedicated to the brave men and women who died while serving in the Armed Forces, and to their survivors. The magazine is written by surviving family members, friends, and care-giving professionals. We hope you will find comfort, support, information, inspiration, and a sense of connection within its pages.

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★ **About TAPS Magazine** ★

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) is a national nonprofit 501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization which publishes TAPS Magazine in furtherance of its mission to provide support services to the survivors of servicemembers who have died while serving.

TAPS Magazine is published quarterly and sent free of charge to survivors, their friends and family, servicemembers, and professionals who work with U.S. military survivors.



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Comfort and Support Since 1994

TAPS offers immediate and long-term emotional help, hope, and healing to anyone grieving the death of a loved one in military service to America, regardless of their relationship to the deceased or the circumstances of the death.

**TAPS is here for you
24 hours a day
7 days a week**

**Call us at 800-959-TAPS
Or visit us at www.taps.org**



SUPPORTS the bereaved survivor through a network of Peer Mentors. Mentors are trained volunteers who have also lost a loved one in the Armed Forces and are now standing ready to reach out and support others.

PROVIDES a national toll-free help and information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week at 800-959-TAPS (8277). Support is available from leading experts in the field of grief and trauma.

HOSTS the TAPS Online Community of survivors, providing secure chat rooms, message boards, peer group discussion sites, and an extensive website at www.taps.org.

SPONSORS Military Survivor Seminars for adults and Good Grief Camps for young survivors in locations across America, giving survivors the opportunity to share, grow, and help each other heal.

CONNECTS families to resources in their local communities and provides grief and trauma resources and information.



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Allison Black,
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Let Us Hear From You



We want to know your thoughts, perspectives, and opinions on TAPS programs and publications. Tell us what you think, send ideas for future topics, or submit an article. Submission Guidelines can be found online at www.taps.org. Your TAPS family is waiting to hear from you. ✧

National Good Grief Camp

This was my first year being a mentor with TAPS. My mentee took a piece of my heart home with her! It was a blessing to watch this shy little girl slowly open up to talking to me, to playing a game with me, to finding a friend, to asking if she could join a group of kids playing! I can't wait to see her again! God bless all these little heroes and their families!

Cynthia Carr, Maryland
Good Grief Camp Mentor

Adult Survivor Outreach

TAPS is a wonderful program I am so proud to have in my life. In my darkest time you called and listened to me. The love and kindness you give with understanding does so much to help calm the pain. God has blessed each one of you with kind hearts that help daily. Thank you all for being so strong when I needed you.

Andrea Campbell, Texas
Surviving aunt/adopted mom of
SGT Billy Bridgewater

TAPS Magazine

I had a super tough day yesterday; I had decided it was time to start packing some of Andrew's stuff and I'm sure I don't need to tell you what the rest of the day was like. In the middle of this mess was the mail with the newest *TAPS Magazine*.

I started reading the article, "A Father's Grief" by Lee Vincent and there was a sentence in it that got me through that day. "We must never let our sorrow over what they could have been take away any of the glory of what they already were." This is my new focus.

Diana Cross, North Carolina
Surviving mom of
SGT Andrew Cross

TAPS Resource Kit

Thank you! I got your box filled with love and items to help... I cried so hard! We lost our love, a father, son, and brother, in April of this year. Still in denial, but I want you to know you are helping me. I appreciate and need you. Thank you!

Dorothy Justice, Florida
Surviving fiancée of
SPC Andrew Lara

Fort Hood Survivor Seminar

Another great TAPS weekend. Every time, I leave thinking this was the best one yet. But this one was particularly hard with the loss of some dear friends. And yet, as a family, we shared more after this than ever in our grief journey. That alone makes it amazing. Thank you TAPS, mentors, friends old and new, and The Great Place for letting us in with open arms. We love you!

Judi Swenson, Texas
Surviving mom of
SPC David Swenson, Jr.

Overnight camp

Thank you Camp Erin/TAPS Grief Camp at Fort Lewis! We just came home from camp and I have two exhausted and completely, blissfully happy girls with me. They had a wonderful time, and I am so grateful to each and every volunteer involved during these days. You have all created some beautiful memories for my girls and I thank you all so very much!

Sara Clark, Washington
Surviving spouse of
GYSGT Michael Clark

Inclusion for all

TAPS, you have done so much for me and my family but I especially want to thank you from me. After everyone kept telling me, "He's just your cousin; he isn't family," you came along and allowed me to be the family I know I am. I don't come from a family with a lot of cousins, so when one of us is gone forever we know it and feel it every day.

Maya Starbuck, Washington
Surviving cousin of
PFC Keith Moore



editor@taps.org





From the Youth Program Director

Dear TAPS Family, *

TAPS Youth Programs had a wonderful summer this year! We had our largest ever National Good Grief Camp, several Regional Good Grief Camps including our two day event at Fort Hood, and four overnight Camp Erin/TAPS Grief Camps. For those who have brought your child to a Good Grief Camp in the past, thank you for sharing your child with us!

Good Grief Camp is an amazing place where a child or teen knows immediately that he is safe. There is no judgment, just understanding. The children learn coping skills, build support systems, and normalize their feelings; but most of all they learn that they are not alone. The support the children provide to each other—having a chance to tell their stories and listen and empathize with another's hurt—forges a bond that cannot be easily broken. This support is strengthened by trained military mentors who stand beside them along the way and remind them that they will always be a part of this incredible military family.

Now that summer has ended and our children have returned to school, we wanted to provide you with a few tips on what may help your child be more successful at school. We realize that some schools are very supportive and others, unfortunately, are not. Often they do not understand that there is no time limit on grief; a child never

actually “gets over it.” It is important to communicate with your child’s school, so let us know if there is a way we can help facilitate this communication.

♦ **Talk to your child’s teacher(s):** There are so many situations that arise at school that could be avoided with just knowledge of the death and where your child is with their grief.

♦ **Create a safe place to go:** If it gets overwhelming and they need some time away from the watchful eyes of their peers, find a place for them to go. This could be the office of a guidance counselor or favorite teacher, an empty classroom, or a library, but it needs to be identified in advance so no one has to search for your child.

♦ **Identify someone to talk to:** It is important for a child to identify someone to talk to at school—someone they can trust and have access to during the school day.

♦ **Talk to the guidance counselor and administrator:** Make them aware and together come up with a plan of how to best support your child through their grief.

♦ **Be consistent:** Talk about expectations, responsibilities, and consequences.

♦ **Set boundaries:** Teens would say they disagree, but children and teens are looking to find what is acceptable and what is not.



They often push the boundaries until they know where they are. Be aware of this when you set those boundaries and stick to them, with an understanding that you can be flexible too.

♦ **Understand that grades may drop:** A common reaction to grief is that concentration and memory are affected. It is important for everyone to understand that this is normal, and then work to pull up those grades.

♦ **Encourage your child to find an outlet for their grief:** Some like to draw, sing, journal, or exercise. Whatever it is, help them identify it and use it!

We hope this helps you prepare your child or teen for school this year. For additional support, see Linda Goldman’s article, “Responding to Teen Grief,” on page 20 of this issue. If there is anything we can do to help you or your child, please don’t hesitate to let us know. We truly are here for you and your family.

Thank you again for sharing your kiddos with us! We look forward to our next time together!

Warmly,

Heather Campagna

* Youth Program Director *





Stuff

You can't carry it all with you

By Darcie D. Sims, PhD, CHT, CT, GMS

I travel a lot and spend a great deal of time in airports. I spend so much time in airports that I no longer want to collect frequent-flyer miles, but rather the hours I've spent waiting for airplanes that are late, lost, or nonexistent. I am always prepared to spend those hours constructively, and I travel with my laptop computer, a small carry-on that can support my needs for several days if necessary, and a good book. I am a fairly compact traveler. After having spent so many years on the road, I have mastered the art of packing light and have learned to keep my needs to a minimum.

I spend most of my airport time working or reading, but sometimes it is fun to watch the never-ending stream of humanity making its way down the walkways, heading blindly toward someplace. I also love to watch that endless human tide board aircraft, carrying all manner of stuff that they then try to place in the overhead compartments, despite the repeated pleas of flight personnel to "utilize the space beneath the seat in front of you."

I have learned a lot from these observations. Traveling is a lot like life. We are headed somewhere with high hopes, little preparation, and too much baggage for any single human to carry. Along the way we sometimes need to stop and sort through the "stuff" in our luggage.

Of course we each have a personal list of things that are so necessary that we could not possibly live without them for even a single day.



This group of items represents us, or at least the version of us we wish others to recognize. This compilation of items defines us, sustains us, and comforts us. It may include a toothbrush, styling gel, makeup, aftershave, special socks, a favorite picture, a pillow, a rock, a souvenir matchbook cover, and an odd assortment of other items, each too personal to mention, but beloved by the owner and considered to be essential for life as we know it. We simply must have this stuff with us at all times in order to function.

We have become a society that defines itself by its stuff. We measure our stuff. We sort it, count it, store it, move it, treasure it, and discard it only to retrieve it again. Our "stuff" is simply who we are, and without it we risk becoming disoriented, lost, and disconnected. This stuff simply has to come with us at all times!

Grief is part of our "stuff," too. Our experiences get boiled down to a few essential memories, phrases, and images that seem to become necessary to hold on to.

It would be easier if we would pick and choose which memories to keep and which to toss. We could, perhaps, get away with a smaller version of who we are, if we only knew we did not have to fear forgetting anything that has happened to us and felt more comfortable carrying fewer reminders of the hurt and more

symbols of the joys.

Trying to pack for a trip means assembling the vast amount of necessary stuff and deciding what can be taken and what can't. We have all seen people who obviously cannot live without everything they own crammed into one carry-on, while others figure a small reminder or two will be enough.

Grievors are like that, too. Some seem to be able to release much of the pain and horror far sooner than others while some stash it away, buried deep within themselves, only to have it emerge at the least convenient moment. Some try to cram a steamer trunk into the overhead compartment without regard for the needs of others. Some try to compartmentalize their hurts with the idea that hurt and grief can be dealt with in an orderly and logical fashion.

But you can't pack away grief in the same way you can toss stuff into a suitcase and then stash it on a shelf

Traveling is a lot like life. We are headed somewhere with high hopes, little preparation, and too much baggage for any single human to carry.

*So lighten up. Carry less, live more, and love a lot.
Love is a good thing to carry
and really the only essential thing we need!*



until you are ready to deal with it. Grief simply is a part of our fabric, woven into each fiber of our being, always with us, but not always recognized or even acknowledged. It nudges us, calls us, teases us, hurts us at the least touch. Grief demands to be heard, and when we turn a deaf ear, it grows louder and more insistent until we grow weary trying to ignore it.

We can sort it out, roll it up tightly, pack it carefully, lock it away, or even carry it around with us, but we cannot ignore it forever. It returns again and again until we learn to embrace it, wrestle with it, and adapt to its flow. If we are lucky, we learn to carry the load we have without too much guilt or anger and have found ways to release the emotions that accompany our grief.

Like our "stuff," grief defines a part of who we are, but not all of who we are. The trick is to figure out which parts are grief-borne and which parts are joy-based. At some point you may discover that it is all the same and that grief truly is the price we pay for loving someone.

*Maybe we are really afraid of losing it all,
not just the bad parts, but the
good times as well.*

*Do we save too much,
pack too much,
carry too much,
because we are afraid?*



I am glad I bought the ticket, paid the price, shared the journey, and have a memento or two from the trip. It is often lonely, sometimes hard, but never boring. Trying to carry it all with you isn't possible, but neither is ignoring it all and hoping it will go away.

So, pack what you truly need, give the rest away, and get going on your travels. Each breath takes you closer to your destination, even if you don't know where that is. Learn to let some things go so you can pack lighter next time. Try letting go of some of the guilt or fear or anger or hurt. How about weeding through the awful parts so you can get to the loving parts? Don't discard them without embracing them first, but once you have examined the whole picture, let go of the "stuff" you no longer need to carry in order to define yourself. Let go of the labels and the worries.

Will it happen again? It could. Will I be able to handle it better next time? Maybe. Will I ever find love like that again? Not unless I look for it. Will I forget? Not likely.

Maybe that is why we believe we need so much stuff around us all the time. Maybe we are really afraid of losing it all, not just the bad parts, but the good times as well. Do we save too much, pack too much, carry too much, because we are afraid?

We will not forget our loved ones. If we let go of that fear, we all can travel a bit lighter. Fear is a heavy burden to carry. You cannot forget love that has been given and received. You cannot forget the exchange of heart and soul. You don't need the bad stuff in order to remember the love.

Love is the size of a sigh, as light as a kiss, as gentle as a whisper, and as small as a moment in time. It comes in all sizes and shapes and cannot be saved until later. Love simply is, and you have been loved. So lighten up. Carry less, live more, and love a lot. Love is a good thing to carry and really the only essential thing we need! *

About the Author



Darcie Sims is a bereaved parent and child, long time friend and keynote speaker for TAPS, author, thanatologist, pastoral bereavement specialist, licensed psychotherapist, and president and co-founder of GRIEF, Inc. For more information visit: www.griefinc.com



How Do We Go On Without Him?

By Cindy Surprenant ★ Surviving mom of Specialist Douglas Desjardins

It was a cold, dreary, wet November morning in Oregon. I'd just grabbed a pair of wool socks to ward off the cold when I heard the doorbell ring. I felt a sense of panic. Anyone in our small town who knew us, knew that we were usually in church Sunday morning. As I made my way down the hallway, the cold penetrated my soles and a chill coursed through me. An unfamiliar voice asked if I was home. Oddly, my husband, who had answered the door, did not respond. The hallway enveloped me like a tunnel; my pulse pounded. As I turned the corner into our front room, my heart shattered. Two army officers stood in the open doorway.

Photo courtesy of Cindy Surprenant



In shock I tried to convince myself that our son was just hurt, but as I later reported to a local newscaster, "You know, he's not coming home." And I wondered *how do we go on without him?*

I don't recall much of the first six months after we lost Doug except for that recurring thought, *how are we supposed to live without him?* How could I, could we, live without him? What purpose could life have without him? Doug was the catalyst in our family. We melded when he was with us. He brought sunshine and happiness, love and laughter, peace and contentment. A natural joker, he kept the mood light. He completed us.

As is common in the loss of a soldier, Doug's death was unexpected, untimely, and tragic. While the grieving process is intensely personal and private, a military loss, especially in the early days, can be a public affair. There may be honor paid to your loved one by the military, veteran's organizations, and community. That very honor can complicate your grieving. It takes courage to mourn publicly in the presence of military officials, the media, family, friends, and the curious. But it is essential that we mourn.

My expressions of grief have been many and varied, and the coping mechanisms that have emerged are myriad. After five years I can see how various facets of the

THERE HAS NEVER
BEEN, NOR WILL THERE
EVER BE, ANOTHER
LIKE HIM. REMEMBER
AND CHERISH HIM.

mourning process brought comfort and peace. Though the following suggestions are not exclusive, they are the ones I found most helpful.

Remember the Person

The loved one you've lost was a unique individual. There has never been, nor will there ever be, another like him. Remember and cherish him.

I realized that going on without Doug meant no longer seeing his "look." It is one of contentment, lips slightly parted, blue eyes pools of peace and calm, his expression contemplative. This image of him is captured in my favorite picture sent home from the war. Though his eyelashes were caked with sand and sweat; his ears sunburned, peeling, and raw; his lips dry, cracked, and bleeding he had his look of perfect contentment. I am so grateful for that perfect portrayal of him, a reminder of his character. I have numerous copies of that picture displayed in my home. I study it often, and it always brings a sense of peace and relief.

Remember the Relationship

The relationship we each have with our loved one is unique. Dr. Alan Wolfelt writes in his book *Understanding Your Grief*, "Embracing the uniqueness of your grief may ultimately give you a profound sense of peace."

One of the aspects of losing Doug that I grieved the most was the loss of our mother-son talks. I had talked to Doug from birth and had vowed he would laugh every day. We had a close relationship intensified by surviving tough times when

he was a toddler and I a single mom. We communicated on a deep level, often without words. A look, a shrug, a sound would convey what words could not. I knew his thoughts; he knew mine. And we had supported one another faithfully throughout the years. I will always cherish our relationship and remember its defining moments.

Remember Conversations

I have found it comforting to remember not only the content of our conversations, but the context, the deeper meaning. I hold dear the times we shared and words that were spoken.

During Doug's last leave I spoke with boldness, "You've grown up to be a good man and I am so very proud of you." I needed for him to know that I recognized his maturity, his sense of responsibility; and that I accepted his mission.

While I wished he was not in harm's way, I respected his desire to fulfill his duty with integrity and passion. I sensed in that moment a spirit of relief within him, as if hearing those words were liberating. It was one of those moments that drew us closer.

Now I draw on the closeness of our relationship and somehow I know what he would say in a given situation, what he would do. I feel as though being sensitive to his spirit refines me in ways that bring honor to him. I am inspired to be more like him—more accepting of others, more loving.

Remember their Character

Remember your loved one's character. Its central aspects can become the anchors you hold onto.

From the beginning I have found that remembering Doug's sense of humor was comforting—a relief, a release. One of my



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army

recently found and most priceless treasures is a videotape of Doug's last Christmas home. I remember the conversations, but had not remembered Doug's childhood antics replayed for our benefit. He sat at the dining room table holding his fork to his head and wagging it up and down just as he had done as a child. We all laughed then and now.

Doug was known for his commitment, making sure the tanks were ready for action. My husband Jim had consistently reminded our kids, "Always check your work twice." And though Jim was tough on him, Doug credited Jim with inspiring him to be strong and responsible, helping him to become a man. Doug would certify his tank and then check all the others. His gunner said, "Your tank ain't right if it's not DJ certified." It somehow lessens our sorrow to know that his service was exemplary and we contributed.

Honor their Mission

Despite my objections Doug volunteered to drive in a ground assault convoy. We'd had the conversation. He expressed his interest; I had adamantly objected. My desperate need was to shelter him, save him for myself. But he chose a higher calling. He felt compelled to provide protection for the convoy.

Just as I was protective of Doug, he protected others—his fellow soldiers, friends, and family at home. I've had to accept that he was a grown man who made his own decisions. He was, after all, following his nature. He'd always watched over me. Why would he not continue in that venue and watch over others? Being protective was one element of his mission. I will always honor and respect that.

Honor their Wishes

In the words of Doug's sergeant, "He would want us to continue on, to look out for each other. He would want us to come together, despite any differences we have between us. He would say that all we have is each other."

Doug became a man of purpose, mission, and unity, a protector and lover of his fellow man, an encourager. His memory remains alive within each of us. We speak of him often with laughter and tears. We love him now more than ever. We will never be the same without him.

How Do We Go On Without Him?

Ultimately, we find comfort in knowing Doug fulfilled his life's purpose by serving God and country, defending and ensuring safety for his loved ones at home. And I have peace, knowing he willingly gave his life for us, for his country. Doug will forever be my hero—an angel whom God commands—as we go on without him. *

Dispelling the Misconceptions About Suicide and Grief and Mourning

By Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD

A misconception is a mistaken notion you might have about something—in other words, something you believe to be true but that is not true. Misconceptions about grief are common in our society because we tend not to openly mourn or talk about grief and mourning. You can see how we'd have misconceptions about something as “in the closet” as suicide grief.

As you journey through the wilderness of your suicide grief, if you mourn openly and authentically, you will come to find a path that feels right for you. But beware—others may try to pull you off this path. They may try to make you believe that the path you have chosen is wrong—even crazy—and that their way is better.

They have internalized some common misconceptions about suicide grief and mourning. And the misconceptions, in essence, deny you your right to hurt and authentically express your grief.

As you read, you may discover that you or people around you have believed in some of the misconceptions. Don't condemn yourself or others. Simply make use of any new insights to help you open your heart to your work of mourning in ways that restore your soul.

MISCONCEPTION: Grief and mourning are the same thing. Perhaps you have noticed that people tend to use the words *grieving* and *mourning* interchangeably. There is an important distinction, however. *Grief* is the constellation of internal thoughts and feelings we have when someone we love dies. *Mourning* is taking the grief you have on the inside and expressing it outside of yourself. Over time and with the support of others, to mourn is to heal.

WARNING: After someone you love has completed suicide, your friends may encourage you to keep your grief to yourself.

A catalyst for healing, however, can only be created when you develop the courage to mourn publicly, in the presence of understanding, compassionate people who will not judge you.

MISCONCEPTION: Grief following a suicide death always results in “complicated” or “pathological” mourning.

Research indicates that survivors of suicide integrate grief at about the same pace as those who experience any kind of unanticipated death. Obviously, there can be some natural challenges, such as the combination of sudden shock, the natural question of “why?”, the trauma of witnessing or discovering the suicide, the lack of support from family and friends, and the potential of secondary victimization that results from cruel, judgmental, or insensitive comments, but do not let this misconception become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Do your work of mourning, and you will come out of the dark and into the light.

MISCONCEPTION: Grief and mourning progress in predictable, orderly stages.

The concept of stages was popularized in 1969 with the publication of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross's landmark text, *On Death and Dying*. However, Dr. Kübler-Ross never intended for her stages to be interpreted as a rigid, linear sequence to be followed by all mourners.

As a grieving person, you will probably encounter others who have adopted a rigid system of beliefs about what you should experience in your grief journey. And if you have internalized this misconception, you may also find yourself trying to prescribe your grief experience as well.

Everyone mourns in different ways. Personal experience is your best teacher about where you are in your grief journey. Don't think your goal is to move through prescribed stages of grief.



MISCONCEPTION: We can always determine the “why” of a suicide death. Why the person took his or her own life can be a painful yet natural question to explore, yet it’s a question for which there is often no clear, satisfactory answer. My experience with many survivors suggests that you may very slowly, with no rewards for speed, discover that is possible to live with the uncertainty of never fully knowing the answer.

MISCONCEPTION: All suicide survivors feel guilty. The sad reality is that some people will actually say directly to you, “I bet you feel guilty,” or pose the question, “Do you feel guilty?” This is one of the most prescribed responses for survivors of suicide. In reality, as a survivor you may or may not feel guilty. Besides, assuming you feel guilt is the opposite of my belief that you are the expert of your own experience and therefore you must teach me what you feel; I must not prescribe what you should feel.

MISCONCEPTION: Only certain kinds of people complete suicide. This is a simple misconception to dispel. The reality is that suicide is a stranger to no race, creed, religion, age group, or socioeconomic level. All kinds of people have completed suicide since the beginning of recorded history.

MISCONCEPTION: Only a crazy person completes suicide. While the person you loved who completed suicide may have been depressed, anxious, or hopeless, to be sure, most of us survivors don’t find comfort when people try to tell us the person was crazy. Not all people who complete suicide meet some formal criteria for mental illness, and even when they do, we don’t need to hear that they were crazy.

MISCONCEPTION: It is a sin to complete suicide, and the person who does goes directly to hell. As one Catholic priest observed about suicide, “When its victims wake on the other side, they are met by a gentle Christ who stands right inside of their huddled fear and says, ‘Peace be with you!’ As we see in the gospels, God can go through locked doors, breathe out peace in places where we cannot get

in, and write straight with even the most crooked of lines.” Personally, I believe there are no limits to God’s compassion. God mourns with us. If God’s nature is one of steadfast mercy and love, then this is a misconception we need to keep educating the world about.

MISCONCEPTION: Suicide is inherited and runs in the family. Be alert for uninformed people who may project to you that because someone in your family completed suicide, you may have the same fate. This projection is not supported by the facts. Scientific research has not at this time confirmed a genetic basis for suicide risk.

MISCONCEPTION: Tears of grief are only a sign of weakness. Tears of grief are often associated with personal inadequacy and weakness. The worst thing you can do, however, is to allow this judgment to prevent you from crying. Sometimes, the people who care about you may, directly or indirectly, try to prevent your tears out of a desire to protect you (and them) from pain. You may hear comments like, “Tears won’t bring him back,” or “He wouldn’t want you to cry.” Yet crying is nature’s way of releasing internal tension in your body, and it allows you to communicate a need to be comforted.

MISCONCEPTION: Being upset and openly mourning means you are being weak in your faith. Watch out for those who think that having faith and openly mourning are mutually exclusive. If you are mad at God, be mad at God. Similarly, if you need a time-out from regular worship, don’t shame yourself. When and if you are ready, attending a church, synagogue, or other place of worship, reading scripture, and praying are only a few ways you might want to express your faith. Or, you may be open to less conventional ways, such as meditating or spending time alone in nature.

Now that we’ve reviewed the common misconceptions of grief, let’s wrap up this article by listing some of the “conceptions.” These are some realities you can hold onto as you journey toward healing.

REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS FOR GRIEF AND MOURNING

- ◆ You will naturally grieve, but you will probably have to make a conscious effort to mourn.
- ◆ Your grief and mourning will involve a wide variety of different thoughts and feelings.
- ◆ Your grief and mourning will impact you in all five realms of experience: physical, emotional, cognitive, social, and spiritual.
- ◆ You need to feel it to heal it.
- ◆ Your grief will probably hurt more before it hurts less.
- ◆ Your grief will be unpredictable and will not likely progress in an orderly fashion.
- ◆ You don’t “get over” grief; you learn to live with it.
- ◆ You need other people to help you through your grief.
- ◆ You will not always feel this bad. *

About the Author



Alan D. Wolfelt, PhD, is a noted author, educator, and grief counselor. He serves as Director of the Center for Loss and Life Transition in Fort Collins, Colorado and is on the faculty at the University of Colorado Medical School, Department of Family Medicine. Dr. Wolfelt is known for his compassionate philosophy of “companioning” versus “treating” mourners. This article is excerpted from his book, *The Wilderness of Suicide Grief: Finding Your Way*, available at bookstores and www.centerforloss.com.

Selecting a Grief Counselor

Part 2 ☆ By Stephanie Frogge, MTS

In Part 1, published in the Summer 2011 issue of *TAPS Magazine*, we cataloged the various types of mental health professionals so that you could better understand the different providers and narrow the scope of your search.

Your work, however, isn't finished once you've scheduled an appointment. As a consumer, it's your job to monitor both the service provider and the services you are receiving. In the face of advanced degrees and impressive-sounding titles, it's human nature to believe that you are receiving competent care. You may believe that it is somehow not your place to question the services you are receiving. To the contrary, you have every right and obligation to make sure that you are getting the support you need.

❖ TRAINING & PHILOSOPHY

As you are calling around, feel free to ask about the counselor's education and training.



What licenses does he hold? What degrees has she earned? Part 1 of this article gave you a little bit more information about what those titles and licenses represent. In this article we give you some tools so that you can make sure that the chosen counselor is a good fit for you. Reputable counselors will feel comfortable answering questions about their qualifications. Ask about their therapeutic philosophies. What kinds of techniques do they like to use? How do they typically proceed with clients whose issues are similar to yours?

❖ EXPERIENCE

Even a highly qualified mental health professional may simply not have worked with very many people who have experienced the sudden, traumatic death of a loved one.

You have every right and obligation to make sure that you are getting the support you need.

That does not make them less competent; it may simply mean that they are not right for your needs. It's appropriate to ask a therapist about his or her experience with trauma. How many similar clients has she seen? Does he belong to any trauma or bereavement-specific professional organizations or done any continuing education in this area?

❖ RELATIONSHIP

This is a highly subjective category but the bottom line is: does this person seem like someone you will be able to work with effectively? Does his or her demeanor, answers to your questions, and office environment make you feel safe and respected? If it does not feel right, then it probably is not right for you. Research has demonstrated that a good therapeutic relationship, more than any other factor, predicts counseling effectiveness.

❖ COMPETENCE

Although the vast majority of mental health professionals are both well trained and emotionally stable themselves, for your own emotional well-being certain boundaries

must be maintained. If your counselor becomes distraught when you tell your story, if your relationship crosses over the line from professional to personal, if your counselor is sharing what feels like too much of his or her own personal information, if you feel like you have given it a fair shot but you don't seem to be feeling better, then it's time to look for someone else. Just as you would not continue to take your car to a mechanic who cannot fix the problem or shop at a store with disinterested, rude salespeople selling products you do not like, you are not under any obligation to continue counseling. Take your business elsewhere.

❖ AFFIRMATION OF GROWTH

Most people who seek mental health services to help them with a specific issue,

*For many survivors,
good counseling has been
their soul's bridge back
from despair to life.*



such as a significant change or loss as opposed to a chronic mental health condition, will not need to be in counseling forever. Part of the therapeutic experience is moving toward the time when counseling is no longer necessary. At appropriate times, your counselor should explore that with you and affirm the strides that you are making. If your counselor is making it sound as though you will be in therapy for months on end, or is resistant to reducing the number of times you meet, and you feel as though maintaining the same schedule is no longer in your best interest, then at least get a second opinion.

As a licensed professional, your counselor has to maintain the standards set by his or her licensing entity, adhere to a code of ethics, and abide by a conflict resolution process when there has been a complaint. With most licenses, you can find out if someone really does hold that license or has had any complaints filed against them. You can also find out the procedure for filing your own complaint if a serious problem arises. Much of the information can be easily found on the internet and can further assist you as you explore your counseling options.

Catherine Doherty, a 20th century social rights activist, is credited for having said, "Someone has said that it is possible to 'listen' a person's soul into existence." For many survivors, good counseling has been their soul's bridge back from despair to life. With a little bit of information and the will to be a good consumer, you can find a counselor who can be an important part of your healing journey. *

For help connecting with a grief counselor in your local area, call TAPS at 800-959-TAPS(8277) or email info@taps.org. TAPS connects you with individual counseling through programs that offer free, unlimited counseling such as the VA's Vet Centers and Give an Hour.

About the Author



Stephanie holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Texas Christian University and a master's in Theological Studies from Brite Divinity School. She is the assistant director of the Institute for Restorative Justice & Restorative Dialogue at the University of Texas at Austin. Stephanie has more than thirty years of experience in the area of trauma response. She is the former National Director of Victim Services at Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) and served two years as the Director of Peer Support Services for TAPS.



Living the Legacy



It has recently occurred to me that we - all of us American citizens - are the legacy of our American soldiers. We owe them our lives - lives that must be lived to their fullest potential. And this is the greatest tribute we could possibly give. ~ ANNETTE BRIDGES, FREELANCE WRITER FROM TEXAS.

At some point in our grief journey many of us conclude that we will go on living - not merely existing or even just surviving, but truly living - for those who died. After all, we are the legacy that our loved ones left behind.

~ BETSY BEARD, EDITOR TAPS MAGAZINE



Small Steps in Speech

By Amanda Charney MA, CCC-SLP ☆ Surviving fiancée of Staff Sergeant Marc Small

It all started years back at a Philadelphia Eagles game. My brother-in-law invited me down to tailgate on New Year's Eve. He had been trying to fix me up with his best friend Marc Small, and this was part of his plan to get us together. That New Year's Eve, I knew Marc would be the one for me.

I am a school-based speech language pathologist in Collingswood, New Jersey, and Marc was a supporter of my profession. He loved to hear about my day with the kids that I work with. We would talk about our future together, our plans to travel, the names of our children, and what our wedding would be like. Marc used to tell me that once we married and started a family, I should open my own private speech practice so that I could work from home and have a flexible schedule. I asked Marc, "What would the name of the practice be?" Quickly, Marc replied, "Small Steps in Speech," Small representing my last name

after our intended wedding along with the steps it takes a child with a disability to build with their communication.

We wanted to start our lives together but decided to wait until Marc completed his five-year term with the Army. He deployed in January of 2009 for his first tour to Afghanistan and was killed on February 12, 2009 while conducting combat operations. When the tragic news of Marc's passing came, starting Small Steps in Speech as a non-profit seemed like a great way to keep Marc's memory alive.

Small Steps in Speech assists children with speech and language disorders by funding supplemental therapies and treatments for individuals as well as grants to charitable organizations that serve children with communicative disorders. Our goal is to give children the chance to better express themselves in the world in which we live. We have provided up to a year of private speech and language therapy to children,

sent children and their parents to workshops to improve their communication, along with providing a variety of other grants for children who have neurological disabilities impacting their comprehension and expression of speech.

If you know of anyone who may benefit from a grant, we encourage you to apply. You can change the life of not only a child but also their family with the gift of improved communication. For more information visit www.smallstepsinspeech.org.

I can't help but think of how the days, weeks, months, and now years just keep on moving. It doesn't seem real. I never thought that this is what my life would be like, and I wonder if I will ever not think, "What if..." Step by step, I am helping children and their families as well as continuing the legacy of my true love, Staff Sergeant Marc J. Small. *



Photos courtesy of Amanda Charney

Let the Good Days Come

By Gordon Bolar ☆ Surviving father of Corporal Matthew Bolar

One of the things that someone said to me shortly after Matthew died in 2007 was this: "There will be some good days and there will be some bad days. Let the good days come and enjoy them." I didn't believe it at the time but it turned out to be true.

When I first heard these words in the wake of losing my son, I wasn't the most optimistic person on the planet. But lately there have been some changes. To tell you why and how, I need to go back a few years.

When Matthew was eight years old, he tied balloons on his arms to jump off the monkey bars thinking he could fly. I suspected then that my son was an optimist.

When he turned 12 and announced he was a New Orleans Saints fan - back in the nineties when they had never been to the playoffs or had a winning record - I strongly suspected that he was an optimist. And when Matt told me in 2005 he was going to Fort Benning to learn how to jump out of airplanes - with no balloons tied to his arms this time - all of my earlier suspicions of his optimism were confirmed!

My favorite picture of Matthew was taken at the NFC championship game in 2007. Matt had just returned from his first tour in Iraq and I got tickets to the game at Soldier Field. That snowy Sunday the Chicago Bears were easily victorious over his

New Orleans Saints. The Bears went on to play in the Super Bowl, but on the way to the airport Matt said, "Dad, the Bears were the better team today, but I know someday the Saints will win the Super Bowl."

Some time later I put him on a plane at Midway Airport. That was the last time I ever saw him alive. He had volunteered to go back to Iraq for a second tour. When he got there he volunteered to drive down a road that few others wanted to drive. He was an optimist all the way, like so many of our soldiers. I guess he had to be, to drive down that road and do what he did. He was killed on May 3, 2007, but the story doesn't end with Matthew's death on that road south of Baghdad.

Although I had poked fun at his allegiance to the New Orleans team, I became a die-hard New Orleans Saints fan in the season of 2009-10. Maybe I jumped on the bandwagon late, along with a lot of other people, but for me it wasn't really the Saints that I was rooting for.

Moments after the Saints won over the Colts in the Super Bowl, I watched as quarterback Drew Brees held his infant son aloft in victory. Balloons were released behind him. I felt Matthew's spirit of optimism at that moment in a way that I never thought possible. I am grateful that Matthew's life and his optimistic spirit touched my life and continues to touch it even today. I am grateful that I know what a good day is now. Sometimes there really are good days. We have to acknowledge them when they do come around, and hope they will come again.

I continue to think about what Matthew would have wanted for us. His legacy was that he embraced all of life, both in solemn duty and unrestrained joy. Given the example he set during his life, he would expect me and those he loved to do the same. ☆

"There will be some good days and there will be some bad days. Let the good days come and enjoy them." I didn't believe it at the time but it turned out to be true.



Picture the Fallen

By Jessica Dumont-Oatman ★ Surviving sister of Sergeant Paul Dumont, Jr.

A picture is worth a thousand words. That's all I need to say when someone views the photo of my brother's headstone that hangs in my house. One look at the print, and the words just start coming out: hero, American, death, Arlington, sad, amazing, and the list just goes on. It's a constant reminder of what I and my parents, siblings, his wife, and my own children are missing. It's a future that will never be and memories that will never happen with one of the most amazing people you could have ever met.

We were informed that my brother Paul was killed in a noncombat related incident on August 19, 2009 while serving in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He was the fourth child of seven of us. He was the first boy, the comedian, the life of the party, and he was truly just "livin' the dream." Nothing will replace him. He died at the young age of 23. It doesn't matter to me how he was killed. The fact is that he is gone.

Like some, I enjoy going to Arlington National Cemetery. It helps me to feel closer to Paul. People tell me that it's just his body and that he's in a much better place, which I know. But on this earth, that is the closest I can come to being near my brother.



Last year during one of our numerous trips to Arlington, we realized there were many families who couldn't pay a regular visit. Standing next to Paul's marker we noticed families taking photos of their loved one's headstones. As a professional photographer, I thought, "What better way to honor their sacrifice than to start a non-profit organization that provides prints for families of their fallen hero's headstone." It was then that Picture the Fallen was created. It's a way for me to honor Paul as well as the other thousands of men and women who have given their lives for our country.

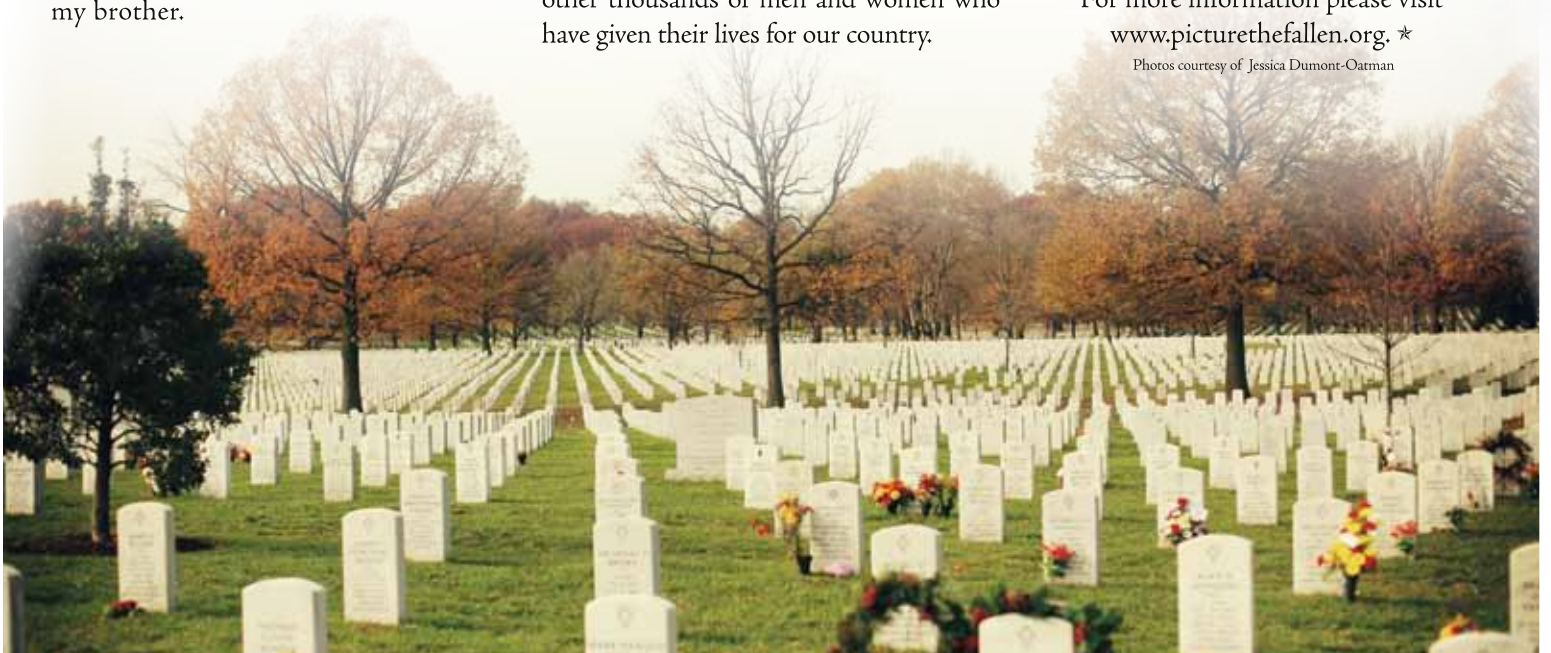
If you are interested in receiving an 11" X 14" print, visit our website and email us your contact information; the information about your hero; and whatever verse, saying, or quote you would like on the print. From there, we will travel to Arlington National Cemetery to locate your hero, take a photo, and provide a finished print. If your loved one is not buried in Arlington, you can choose a generic photo of Arlington National Cemetery and personalize it.

Although this may not be for everyone, we have heard from many that in some small way it brings them peace. One family told us their print hangs in the front entry so that it's a constant reminder to all who enter that some truly give all. Others like it hanging in the bedroom, a more private reminder of what they have lost. Whether the reason is to show others what their hero gave or to have them feel close when they are so far away, it doesn't matter. As long as we can help other families, we will continue to travel to Arlington to take photos and create prints.

Nothing I do can take the pain the away, but I can honor these American heroes, promise that I will never forget, and create a picture that is worth a thousand words.

For more information please visit
www.picturethefallen.org. ★

Photos courtesy of Jessica Dumont-Oatman





The Gift of Someone Who Listens

By Nancy Myerholtz

*Those of us who have traveled a while
Along this path called grief
Need to stop and remember that mile,
That first mile of no relief.*

*It wasn't the person with answers
Who told us of ways to deal.
It wasn't the one who talked and talked
That helped us start to heal.*

*Think of the friends who quietly sat
And held our hands in theirs.
The ones who let us talk and talk
And hugged away our tears.*

*We need to always remember
That more than the words we speak,
It's the gift of someone who listens
That most of us desperately seek.**



About the Author

Nancy is the surviving mom of Alan Myerholtz who was 20 when he died following heart surgery in 1985. She was a school counselor, teacher, and librarian at the time of his death and subsequently served as a chapter leader for The Compassionate Friends. Since retiring, Nancy has volunteered in many capacities including tutoring and mentoring young people from Tajikistan and Afghanistan.



Camp Erin/TAPS Grief Camp Healing Through Mentoring

By Heather Clark ☆ reprinted with permission from *The Fort Campbell Courier*



Seven-year-old Hannah Carbaugh sits in the dining hall of Fort Campbell's Camp Hinsch, playing board games with friends. Her hair is still wet from the colossal water balloon battle and obstacle course that took place only minutes before. She looks every bit like a girl enjoying her very first overnight camping experience.

"Last night, we made s'mores, and it was my very first time having them," said Carbaugh.

Like other traditional overnight camps, Carbaugh got the opportunity to sit around a campfire, play team-building games and have some summertime fun. Some of the activities in which she participated, however, would probably be unfamiliar to most kids.

While in a communal circle, she shared memories of her stepfather, a Soldier who died during deployment. Her story, though unique, rang with similarity to the stories of the other camp participants, each of whom is coping with the loss of a parent or sibling who served in the military.

The bond shared by these special children was explored during a three-day outdoor

camp, made possible through the USO and a new partnership between the TAPS and the Moyer Foundation.

This year marks the first that TAPS and the Moyer Foundation have paired up to bring TAPS/Camp Erin grief camps to military installations across the country.

"It's a great combination," said Brad Gallup, teen group facilitator for TAPS. "Their focus is outdoor camps. Our pairing with them lets us utilize their resources and expertise. And through us, they've learned a little more about working with military families. We make a great team."

The camp began June 16. When the children, ages 6-16, arrived at Camp Hinsch, the first order of business was to partner each of them with special mentors: active duty Soldiers who volunteered to participate in the grief camp.

Prior to the arrival of the children, the Soldiers were put through three hours of training in order to prepare them for the weekend ahead.



"We talk with them about grief and their own losses," explained Gallup, a Gulf War veteran who knows firsthand about the loss of friends in battle. "A lot of mentors are dealing with things like losing battle buddies overseas. So here's an opportunity for them to step in and support these kids, which allows them to heal themselves."

In order to promote healing, the Camp Erin/TAPS grief camp allots time for special events such as candlelight remembrance ceremonies, picture sharing, and special talk sessions known as circle time.

"At circle time, the kids can talk about anything and everything," said Tina Saari, regional director for TAPS. "It's their chance to get together with the other kids and realize that they are not the only ones grieving the loss of a parent or sibling."

It is this solidarity that allows the children to open up and share their personal stories of grief.

Saari recalls a conversation overheard at a previous camp, where a group of girls expressed to one another that they simply told peers at school that their fathers were still away on deployment.

"None of them had ever admitted that their parent had actually died," said Saari. "A lot of times, the kids come to these camps and it's the first time they've expressed that they've actually lost somebody. This is their opportunity to come together in a safe environment and feel that it's okay to share that loss."

"I love that we get to connect with other people that can share the same stories," said 11-year-old Bayleigh Dostie. "We can all share memories about loved ones. It feels good to know that there are other kids out there like me."

Dostie has had some experience with the grief camp environment, along with her 14-year-old brother, Cameron. She has found the TAPS experience to be one of her favorites.

"It's such a wonderful camp. We get to stay in cabins, we get our own mentors. Best of all, we get to hang out together as one big

group," said Dostie. "It's just sad that it only lasts for three days."

While each of the children learn from and bond with their mentors, the mentors often leave the Camp Erin/TAPS grief camp environment enlightened as well.

Specialist Barry Powell of the 501st Area Support Medical Company, was quick to respond to the call for volunteers for this project. He was paired with a 9-year-old boy who, like Powell, had lost a brother in Afghanistan last September.

"I may not understand exactly how he might be feeling," said Powell, "but I can say that I've been through what he's been through. I'm just trying to be a positive influence for him."

As he worked to get his grief camp buddy out of his shell, Powell realized that he was being pushed to face the loss of his brother, something he says he had not yet had the chance to do.

"It's brought up some repressed memories that I had tried to keep at bay," said Powell. "It hasn't been long since I lost my brother, and I never really had a chance to grieve. The coping skills they teach the kids here may end up helping me."

As the children and mentors bond through shared loss and newly forged friendships, there often grows the desire to become part of a program which works to heal those who have lost a loved one in service.

"I've had kids who have gone through the program, and now they're 18 or 19 and have become mentors who come back to work with the younger kids," said Gallup. "And they're the best mentors ever because they're so familiar with the program and have experienced losses themselves."

It is a trend that Dostie hopes to continue.

"Every year, I tell myself that I am going to grow up and become a TAPS mentor," said Dostie. "It would mean more to me than anything. You can connect to these kids, and them to you. Soon one connection leads to another, and then everybody can connect as a big group."



"I'd definitely like to do this again," said Powell. "If I get the chance, I'd go to any TAPS event that I could."

Because the TAPS/Moyer Foundation partnership has been such a success, the surviving children of the Fort Campbell area can expect these camps for the next four to five years.

"This has been a great camp, and Fort Campbell has been a great support for us here," said Gallup. ★

This year camps were held near Fort Bragg, Fort Campbell, Fort Hood, and Joint Base Lewis McChord. To learn more, visit www.taps.org or www.moyerfoundation.org.



Responding to Teen Grief

By Linda Goldman, FT, LCPC, NBCC

Teen years can be turbulent ones under the best of circumstances, and the addition of the death of a parent, friend, sibling, or peer can be unsettling even for the most well-adjusted adolescent. Common grief symptoms, such as intense mood swings, can become very frightening and unpredictable. Kevin was enraged when he heard the doctor say calmly that his friend Tony was dead. "Why couldn't you save him?" he screamed, as he pounded his fist against the wall.

Many teens feel isolated in their grief at the very time in their lives when they want to fit into a group and not feel different.

His intense anger and rage at the medical profession for not being able to keep his friend Tony alive was only equal to the tears he continually shed over the loss.

Guilt weighs heavily on many young people; either wishing their friend who is suffering with cancer would experience a quick death, or feeling devastated for having those feelings. Survivor guilt is

often experienced when one person may live through an accident, and another may not. Amy was driving a car with her best friend Mary when

a drunken driver lost control. He smashed head first into their car killing Mary instantly and leaving Amy with several broken ribs. Amy ran into the street shouting, "She's dead! She's dead! Why her? Why wasn't it me?"

Many teens feel isolated in their grief at the very time in their lives when they want to fit into a group and not feel different.

Jon didn't want to talk to friends about his girlfriend's death. "My friends will just think I'm weird. They won't understand," he said. "Anyway, everyone tells me I need to be strong. Guys don't cry. Move on. It's driving me crazy." These feelings of isolation and inability to communicate and express feelings are key issues when addressing teen grief.

Ross Gray's study of bereaved teens reports in *The School Counselor* that: "Forty percent of the teens questioned

report that the most helpful person in dealing with their loss was a peer. This was true for teenagers who were involved in support groups and for those who were not. Support group participants in this study were much more likely to report that they felt peers understood them after their loss than did other bereaved teenagers (76% versus 8%)."

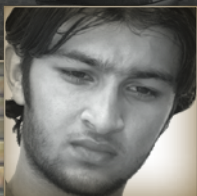
Most teens have a need to tell and retell their story. They need a safe, non-judgmental environment to express themselves. They also may choose their own way to express grief, as they are often not willing or able to express feelings to family members and may choose peers instead.

One grandmother was concerned about her fifteen-year-old grandson Tommy whose mom suddenly died in a car crash. "I don't see him grieve," she explained. Soon after, she told me that he takes a nap on his mother's bed every day. This is a common sign of grief, wanting to connect at a specific place with the person who died. I reassured the grandmother that it was typical for a teen not to verbalize grief to family and that Tommy was creating his own way to be with his mother.

SUPPORTING THE GRIEVING TEEN AT SCHOOL

Often adults say nothing to grieving teens, fearing they will say the wrong thing and cause the student to become more upset, or assuming they will "get over" their grief and "move on." These clichés show a lack of education and understanding of the grief process.

Grief is ongoing and unpredictable. Each grieving student will maintain an ever-present, evolving, internal relationship with the loved one who has died. Teachers need to provide a safe space for the grieving child to express his or her feelings when they are ready, perhaps through writing, poetry, individual conversations, or music.



The school system can begin to respond to a student's grief by implementing some practical steps to facilitate the grief process for the student. Trainings for educators, students, and parents can lay the important foundation of knowing the common signs of grief. This knowledge creates an understanding of developmental, age appropriate signals and helps to reduce anxiety by normalizing grief symptoms.

1 Be aware of common signs of teen grief:

- ◆ Isolation
- ◆ Inability to concentrate
- ◆ Bullying or becoming the class clown
- ◆ Poor grades
- ◆ Stopping social life and activities
- ◆ Acting out behaviors/drugs, alcohol, permissiveness
- ◆ Change in eating or sleeping patterns
- ◆ Expressing feelings of guilt and over-responsibility
- ◆ Worrying excessively about health issues or death of themselves and their family
- ◆ Idealizing person who died
- ◆ Needing to tell and retell their story over and over again
- ◆ Talking about funeral and giving possessions away

2 Provide educational interventions for the grieving teen:

- ◆ Allow student to leave the room without needing to ask permission.
- ◆ Allow student to choose a safe person to go to if they become overwhelmed with grief feelings.
- ◆ Provide a classmate who will serve as a buddy to help grieving students with homework.
- ◆ Allow grieving student to call home if they feel the need during the class day.
- ◆ Provide academic progress reports at more frequent intervals.

- ◆ Create thorough lines of communication so that the entire faculty knows that this is a grieving student.
- ◆ Allow visits to nurse as a reality check if student is overly concerned about their own health.
- ◆ Modify assignments with an awareness of the difficulty that most grieving students have in concentrating for some time.
- ◆ Create ways the grieving student can actively commemorate the death of a friend or peer.
- ◆ Provide resources and support groups for the grieving student within the school.

3 Create support groups within the school for the grieving teen:

Teen support groups are key tools in working with grieving adolescents. So often, teens are unwilling or uncomfortable going to a therapist or a community-based support group. Providing a grief support group within the school day is a great service. These groups allow young people to be validated by peers, become recognized as identified mourners, and given permission to work through their grieving process in a safe and healing environment.

4 Provide resources for teens and professionals:

See our Book Shelf Department on page 22 of this issue for a list of resources compiled by Linda Goldman.

CONCLUSION

An underlying framework of all grief work is remembering that every person is unique and so is their grief. This is especially true of teenagers. So often caring adults may attempt to prescribe to adolescents how they should think and feel, instead of allowing them to share with peers, parents, teachers, and counselors where they are in their grief process. The essence of working with young people is to create a protected environment where grief can be expressed without judgment. This "safe haven for grief work" is the thread that binds all of the resources, supports, and interventions used by parents, educators, and other caring professionals to assist the grieving teen. *

About the Author



Linda Goldman is a Fellow in Thanatology: Death, Dying, and Bereavement (FT) with an MS degree in counseling and Master's Equivalency in early childhood education. She is a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor (LCPC) and a National Certified Counselor (NBCC). She currently has a private grief therapy practice in Maryland where she works with children, teenagers, families with prenatal loss, and grieving adults. Linda is the author of *Life and Loss: A Guide to Help Grieving Children; Children Also Grieve*; and *Great Answers to Difficult Questions About Death*. Visit her website at www.childrensgrief.net



Grief Resources for Teens & Those Who Work With Them

The following book list was compiled by Linda Goldman whose article, "Responding to Teen Grief," appears on page 20 of this issue. Linda has worked with TAPS for a decade writing articles, giving workshops, and serving on the advisory board as Children's Bereavement Advisor.



GRIEF RESOURCES FOR TEENS

Death is Hard to Live With by Janet Bode (1993). Teenagers openly express how they have coped with the loss of someone they have loved.

Facing Change by Donna O'Toole (1995). The author provides an abundance of information and coping choices to assist the grief process for teens. Practical ways to help normalize grief are included.

Fire in My Heart, Ice in My Veins by Enid Traisman (1992). This is a practical workbook for teenagers to explore thoughts and feelings and record grief memories.

The C-Word by Elena Dorfman (1994). A book for teenagers and their families coping with the disease of cancer and the deaths it may cause.

When A Friend Dies by Marilyn Gootman (1994). This is an excellent resource for teens about grieving and healing. The

author uses the words of many teens, affirms their feelings, and presents positive ways of coping with these feelings.

GRIEF RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS WORKING WITH TEENS

Breaking The Silence: A Guide to Help Children With Complicated Grief by Linda Goldman (2001) 2nd ed. This book is a comprehensive work for professionals working with children traumatized by complicated grief issues such as sudden death, suicide, homicide, AIDS, violence, and community trauma.

Life and Loss: A Guide to Help Grieving Children by Linda Goldman (2000). This is a user-friendly resource guide that provides practical insights, ideas, and understanding to work with grieving young people.

Helping Teens Work through Grief by Mary Perschy (1997). This book is a great support for anyone wanting to provide group activities for teens who are dealing with grief. It includes ways to work through grief using clay, painting, movement, writing, and music through group and paired activities.

Raising Our Children to Be Resilient: A Guide to Helping Children Cope with Trauma in Today's World by Linda Goldman (2005). This practical resource is for parents, educators, and mental health professionals working with teens and the many aspects involved with traumatic grief.

Teen Age Grief (TAG) Program by Linda Cunningham (1990). The teenage grief program described in this book is a grief support structure established for school systems. Its basic six-week structure is formatted in detail, with specific and valuable techniques to use with teens in a group setting. *



TAPS VOLUNTEER

★ Glenn Ricks ★

Volunteers are a very important part of the TAPS family. We are grateful for the countless hours our volunteers donate and the part they play in supporting the TAPS mission. Volunteers, we salute you!

Like many buildings in our nation's capital, the building that houses TAPS' headquarters is relatively secure. The front desk must be notified of visitors in advance. You can understand then, why Natalie Milani, Director of Volunteers, was surprised to receive a call from the front desk one morning announcing unexpected guests. The receptionist told her, "There are two people here who want to speak with you."

As fate would have it, this surprise visit turned out to be a real blessing for TAPS. One of the visitors was Glenn Ricks, a manager at Deloitte Consulting. He had stopped by with a colleague to offer to help TAPS in any way they could. He had heard about TAPS from a co-worker who ran a marathon with our Run and Remember Team.

Over the next few months, Natalie learned a lot about Mr. Ricks. She learned that he's a funny, good-natured guy always willing to help, no matter what the task. Back when TAPS was in the midst of the TAPS Chopper Sweepstakes, Glenn would round up a few colleagues to come into the office after hours. They would work late into the night inputting the entries. It was tedious work, but Glenn and his crew did it with a smile.

Glenn is an Army veteran who served in the 10th Mountain Division. Asked if his service had anything to do with his eagerness to support our mission, he said, "The mission really resonated with me. I lost several friends while deployed in Iraq; I just wish I had known about TAPS back then." Wistfully, Glenn recounted how hard it had been on the families of his battle buddies. He witnessed the devastation and



Thank You Glenn!

said, "I know TAPS would have made such a difference."

Over time, Glenn became a regular at TAPS and met with Natalie to talk about more ways he could help. When discussions turned to the national seminar, they realized that with his vast experience in logistics, Glenn could be a valuable ally in coordinating the movements of the buses that transport TAPS families to various activities during the Memorial Day weekend. Together with Steve Willis, a friend and colleague from Deloitte, Glenn played a

huge role in organizing the bus schedules, mapping routes, and working closely with the bus company and drivers to ensure that transportation ran smoothly. Thanks to their efforts, it did.

At TAPS it is important that our volunteers feel that the time spent with us is rewarding. Glenn Ricks gave the biggest possible compliment when he said, "Natalie, thank you for letting me be involved with the national seminar." He was touched by all the kind smiles and thanks he received from the families, but he said his biggest reward was just being witness to the kinship among all the attendees. "I was honored to be there," he confided.

Glenn continues to be a champion of our mission. When Deloitte began planning their June 10th Impact Day (a global initiative to give back to their communities by allowing their employees to volunteer), Glenn was quick to nominate TAPS as one of the beneficiaries of the program. Thanks to his efforts, TAPS received the help of nearly 20 Deloitte employees who prepared more than 500 resource kits for newly bereaved families.

We are so grateful that Glenn dropped in that day last September. Like so many of our wonderful volunteers, he has made a real difference. We hope he will continue to drop in as the years go by. Announced or otherwise. ★

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TAPS welcomes new volunteers. Email us at volunteer@taps.org or visit us at www.taps.org. Click on Volunteer Central to explore volunteer jobs, sign up, and take our online training course.



Am I Going Crazy?

By Russell Friedman and John W. James

"Since my mother's death, I've had the experience of being in one room, deciding to go to another room to do something, and when I get there, I don't have a clue what I'm there for. Am I going crazy?"

No, you're not crazy. For most people, the immediate response to the awareness of the death of someone important to them is a sense of numbness. After that initial numbness wears off, the most common physiological reaction is a reduced ability to concentrate. The rest of the world goes out of focus. Nothing else is important. It is normal and natural that your entire being is centered on what happened and your relationship with the person who died.

The length of time that the reduced ability to concentrate lasts is individual and can vary from a few days to several months, and even longer. It is not a sign that there's something wrong with you. Realistically, the fact that the emotional impact of the death of that person has altered your day-to-day routines indicates something very healthy. It would make no sense for you not to be affected by the death.

It is normal to drift out of focus in response to conscious or unconscious memories of the person who died. Please be gentle with yourself in allowing that your focus is not on the actions of life, but on your reactions to a death. If you're at work, you can take little grief breaks as needed. It's a good idea to establish a safe person at work whom you can talk to when and if you get overwhelmed. It's also smart to have a phone pal you can call when the emotions keep you from concentrating. The breaks and chats will make you able to do the work you need to do.

Please keep in mind that it's important to focus while driving a car. It's not safe to drive with tears in your eyes. If need be, pull over. Allow yourself to have whatever

emotions come up and maybe call someone and talk for a while before you get back on the road.

WHEN YOUR HEART IS BROKEN, YOUR HEAD DOESN'T WORK RIGHT

Along with not being able to concentrate, your thinking ability and judgment may be limited. That's why grieving people are advised to be careful about making major life decisions in the aftermath of the death of someone important to them. To put it in simple terms, when your heart is broken, your head doesn't work right. You must take care either not to make big decisions until you

The rest of the world goes out of focus. Nothing else is important. It is normal and natural that your entire being is centered on what happened and your relationship with the person who died.



regain your ability to focus or make sure you have people you trust to help you understand your choices and the consequences of what you decide.

There are other common physiological reactions to grief. Sleeping habits are often disrupted for an extended period of time. You may find yourself unable to sleep, or you may not be able to get out of bed. You can even go back and forth between those extremes. Eating patterns are also subject to confusion. You may not be able to eat at all, or you may not be able to stop. You can also ping-pong between those extremes. Sleeping and eating disruptions aren't as common as the reduced ability to concentrate, but they can be really uncomfortable. If they happen, it doesn't mean you're going crazy. It just means that your routines and habits are out of sync.

Another common grief reaction is best described as a roller coaster of emotions. It can be a wild ride with tremendous emotional shifts. But, like concentration and the eating and sleeping issues, that roller coaster is one of the typical responses to the death of someone important to you. Don't fight it, just go along for the ride, no matter how bumpy it might be. When it happens, it's a good idea to call a friend and talk about what you're feeling. Talking about what you're experiencing helps make sure you don't trap your feelings inside.

NORMAL AND NATURAL - NOT CRAZY

One of the most important things we can tell you is that the reduced ability to concentrate, the disruption of sleeping and eating patterns, and the roller coaster of emotions are all normal and natural reactions to death. There is nothing crazy about them or you.

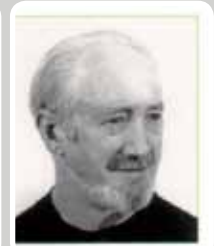
It will also help you remember your person the way you knew them in life. And it will help you continue a life of meaning and value, even though it is altered by the absence of the person who died.

Those reactions usually diminish within time as you adapt to life without the person who died. But time doesn't heal emotional wounds, nor does it complete anything that may have been left emotionally unfinished when the person died. Sometimes it's just the feeling of wanting to have said one more "I love you and goodbye." Sometimes it is a more complex set of communications that would include apologies, forgiveness, and significant emotional statements.

It is always helpful to take action to help you discover and complete anything that was left unfinished. Doing so will allow you to have fond memories not turn painful. It will also help you remember your person the way you knew them in life. And it will help you continue a life of meaning and value, even though it is altered by the absence of the person who died.

Above all, allow yourself to be out of rhythm. As we said, be careful when you're driving and be cautious when making major decisions. Be gentle with yourself as you make your re-entry back into the flow of your life. But don't judge yourself harshly because you are having any or all of the reactions we mentioned. *

About the Authors



Russell Friedman and John W. James are co-founders of the Grief Recovery Institute; creators of The Grief Recovery Method™; and co-authors of *The Grief Recovery Handbook*, *When Children Grieve*, and *Moving On*. They deliver Grief Recovery Certification Training programs which are open to anyone who has a genuine desire to help grieving people. For more information visit www.grief.net. The Grief Recovery Certification Training is approved for veterans education benefits: www.gibill.va.gov.



T★A★P★S Run & Remember

Team Long Gray Line

“Running for TAPS was a tremendously rewarding experience for me. The chance to honor Captain Doug DiCenzo and his surviving family was an incredible privilege and responsibility. I was so inspired by what I experienced being a part of TAPS that I knew after I crossed the finish line I would have to do everything I could to expand Team Long Gray Line for 2011.” ~Taylor Mosera, West Point cadet and Team Long Gray Line 2010 coordinator.

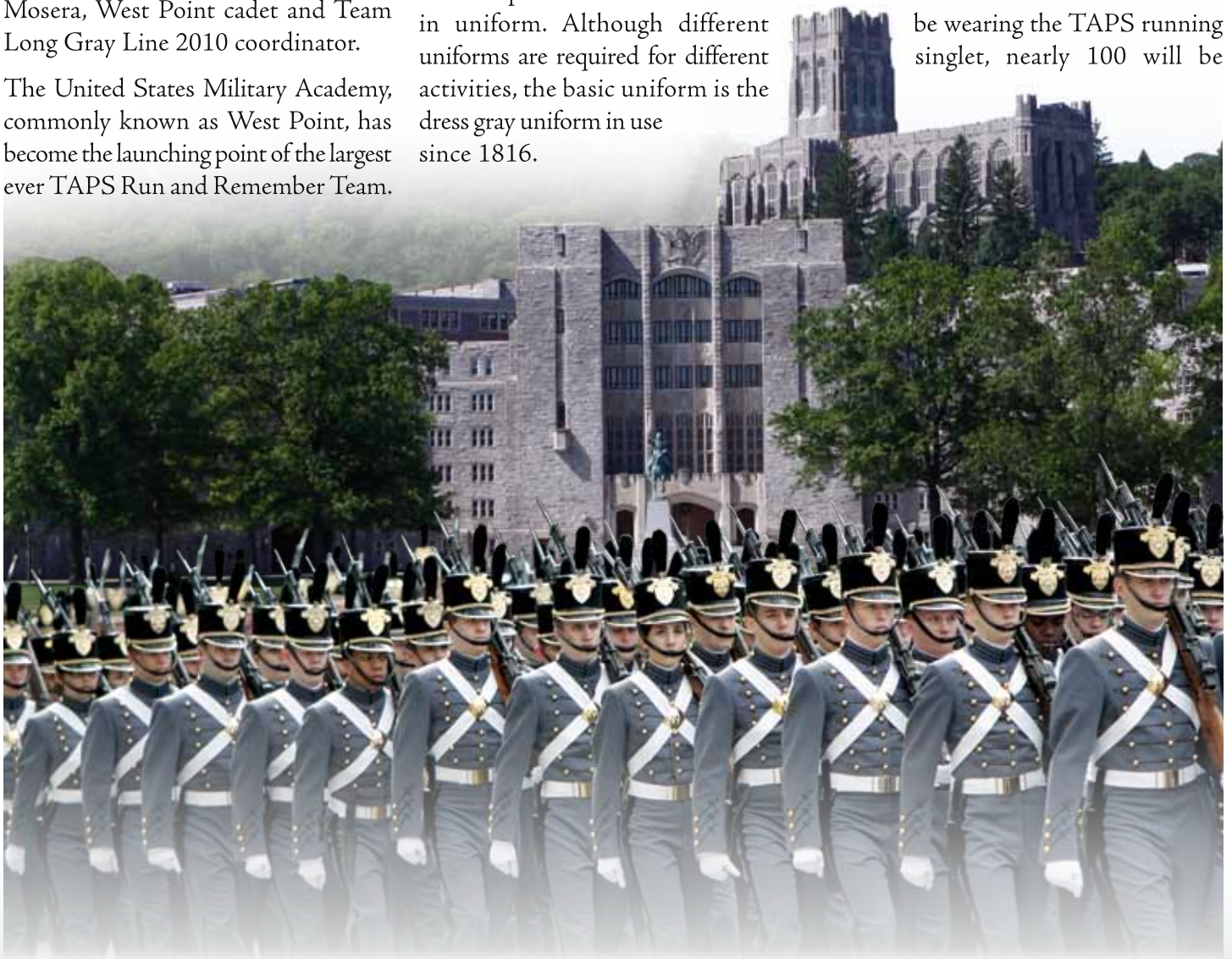
The United States Military Academy, commonly known as West Point, has become the launching point of the largest ever TAPS Run and Remember Team.

Located 50 miles north of New York City, the four-year academy boasts a 4,400 member student body, with representation from every state in the US. Upon graduation each member of the Corps of Cadets, as the student body is called, is commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Army.

During their four years at West Point, cadets spend much of their time in uniform. Although different uniforms are required for different activities, the basic uniform is the dress gray uniform in use since 1816.

Because of their distinctive “cadet gray” uniform, West Point’s alumni and students are often referred to collectively as “The Long Gray Line.”

Last year, cadets at the academy formed Team Long Gray Line to run for TAPS in the 2010 Marine Corps Marathon (MCM). The team fielded 15 members and raised \$15,000. This year, among the 260 marathon runners who will be wearing the TAPS running singlet, nearly 100 will be



I WAS SO INSPIRED BY WHAT I EXPERIENCED BEING A PART OF TAPS THAT I KNEW AFTER I CROSSED THE FINISH LINE I WOULD HAVE TO DO EVERYTHING I COULD TO EXPAND TEAM LONG GRAY LINE FOR 2011

members of Team Long Gray Line. Under the coordinating efforts of Taylor Mosera and Brance Waggoman, the team has grown to 93 members with a \$100,000 fundraising goal, exceeding their initial 2011 goal of 50 runners and \$50,000.

Before last year, Taylor had never run a marathon in his life. His best friend Brance convinced him that he had to try at least one, if for no other reason than to be able to say that he could overcome the inherent obstacles presented by an endurance race of 26.2 miles.

“He hounded me for weeks as I tried to decide what to do,” said Taylor, who finally concluded that if he was going to struggle through what he considered a near impossibility, he was going to do it for something other than just to say he did it. “I would need an extra push to make it to the finish line,” Taylor said.

Taylor had learned about TAPS from his sponsoring officer at West Point, Major William Wright, who had run previously for TAPS. Wright shared that the experience of running in memory of a fallen hero was far more meaningful than simply running a race. Taylor’s decision to run a marathon now had a focal point for that extra push he needed. His purpose quickly changed from simply surmounting a physical challenge to something much more: supporting TAPS and raising awareness among cadets, as well as bringing comfort to surviving families.

“I ran for the chance to meet the families of those who had gone before me,” said Taylor, “in hopes of showing them some level of appreciation

so they knew that their sacrifices were remembered.”

This year, Team Long Gray Line’s roster consists of West Point cadets, staff, graduates, and family members. Their mission is to unite, train, and inspire the Corps of Cadets and the surrounding community under the banner of the TAPS organization. In the process of fulfilling their mission, the runners hope to develop new relationships with families of the fallen. “Last year’s team became very close with their host families,” said Taylor, “and some continue to keep in touch nearly a year later.”

The final comment that Taylor wanted to add was a thank you to Run and Remember Team Director Marie Campbell and the TAPS organization for all they have done to make Team Long Gray Line possible. “Without Marie’s support and guidance,” said Taylor, “we would not have been able to expand the team this year and provide cadets with the valuable experience of serving.”



According to Marie Campbell, all the TAPS slots for the Marine Corps Marathon and the 10K have been filled, but you can still support TAPS if you have already entered the MCM on your own. To raise funds for TAPS, email Marie Campbell for more information at run@taps.org or call 800-959-TAPS (8277).

The TAPS Run & Remember Team operates year round across the country. You can enter any of our featured events listed on the website or enroll in a local event of your choosing.

“Our team includes people who walk a 5K, seasoned runners who are accomplished marathoners, people who have never run before but want to try, and people who are running to remember someone they knew personally,” said Marie.

Additional support for TAPS Run and Remember team members includes: periodic training articles with tips and advice from our TAPS coach, monthly on-line chat sessions with Run and Remember Team staff, online “Ask the Coach” forum, and fundraising tips and incentives.

“People who join our team come from all walks of life,” Marie continued, “and are united around a common purpose—to honor our fallen service members, assure that their sacrifices are remembered, and raise support that helps the families they leave behind.” *



Photos courtesy of Taylor Mosera



6th Annual TAPS Celebrity Classic Donates \$500,000 to TAPS

By Christine Burtt

The 6th Annual TAPS Celebrity Classic, hosted by Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers, exceeded expectations both in terms of the fun factor and by the \$500,000 raised for the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. In its six years, the event has raised more than \$1.8 million for TAPS.

The sold-out event, held June 24 and 25, included a Friday night kick-off dinner with the Songwriter's & New Artists Show and a tournament at The Golf Club at Bear Dance on Saturday followed by a dinner and concert. The Gatlin Brothers—Larry, Steve, and Rudy—headlined the celebrity-studded activities.

Michael Martin Murphey, award winning country western singer and songwriter, was a surprise guest at the Friday night show held at the Red Lion Hotel Southeast for 350 guests. With two standing ovations, the audience greatly enjoyed his unannounced performance. Additionally, Nashville's hottest songwriter, Brett Jones, treated the audience to many of his chart-topping tunes and was joined by local beer magnate Pete Coors playing the spoons. Grammy-nominated songwriter Leslie Satcher, recording artist Jeff Dayton and newcomer Charla Corn also performed.

Eddie Ainsworth, executive director of the Colorado PGA, ran the Five Player Shamble (four players and a celebrity). Of the 24 teams, the First Flight winners were the Tri-West sponsored team of Steve Alcock, Greg Dillon, Scott Celley, Bob Feehs and Joe Pansini. Pansini is a TAPS survivor whose son, a U.S. Marine, died in 2010. Second Flight winners were the team sponsored by American Furniture Warehouse, and Third Flight winners were the team sponsored by Greiner Electric.

A separate military competition pitted teams from Air Force, Army, Marine, and Navy. First Place winners were the Air Force team, sponsored by Pete and Marilyn Coors. Team members included Colonel Chance Saltzman, Lieutenant Colonel Kelly Cannapaux, Major Mike Shirley, and Chief Master Sergeant Leon Palmer.

Steve Groves again gifted the use of his spectacular Ranch at Cherry Creek for the Saturday night concert. It was hosted by the Gatlin Brothers, with special appearances by local musical legends Bo Cottrell, Eddie Johnson, and Steve Phelps known collectively as The Lawmen. Funnyman Gary Mule Deer kept the audience laughing and wanting more.

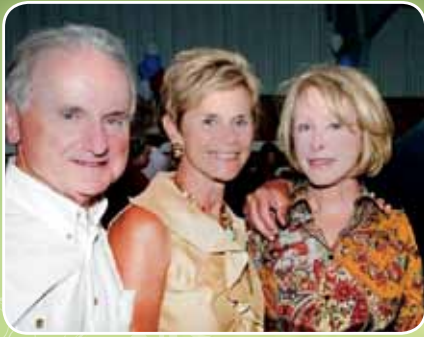
Once again, the Coors Cowboy Club Chuckwagon Crew drove from Amarillo, Texas, donating their time and a delicious pit-roasted prime rib dinner for over 600 guests, with Pete Coors helping to serve the meal. For some, the Cowboys' reliably delicious dinner is as much a draw as the entertainment.

The Cottrells attribute the high net contribution to many generous donors such as AIMCO; Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP; Tri-West HealthCare Alliance; American Furniture Warehouse; Gordon and Kaja Burr; Pete and Marilyn Coors; Randall Taylor and Taylor Oil Properties; Terry Ganey and Prolific Petroleum, LLC; John and Randee Conley; Bud and Kaye Isaacs; Bill and Rita Bass Coors; Lanny Martin and other friends of TAPS.

More than 60 local volunteers staff the events to keep the two-day



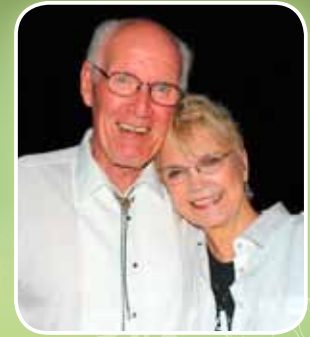
PRESENTATION OF \$500,000 CHECK TO TAPS



THREE OF THE TITLE SPONSORS:
MILES & JAN CORTEZ WITH JANA BARTLIT



COORS COWBOY CLUB CHUCKWAGON CREW



EVENT DIRECTORS
BO AND LYNNE COTTRELL



STEVE GATLIN, TITLE SPONSOR FRED
BARTLIT, LARRY GATLIN & RUDY GATLIN



NATHAN LEININGER AND
CELEBRITY TONY DAVID



FRIDAY SONGWRITERS
& NEW ARTISTS SHOW

program running like a well-oiled machine. Andrea Castro, Amanda Mountjoy, Jewel Hargrave, Joan Beninati, Jennifer Lee, Al Duran, Micah Marmaro and Rob O'Regan served as committee chairs in charge of merchandise sales, celebrity gift bags, logistics, registration, print collateral, hospitality, transportation, decorations and website marketing. Christine Burt serves as media director for the TAPS Celebrity Classic. Dave Gill gifted professional photography for the several events.

Tom Tarver helped recruit celebrities, golfers, and sponsors. Marty Soudani and WizBang! Solutions gifted production and printing of the event programs. The Red Lion Hotel Southeast donated celebrity suites plus additional amenities. Colorado Party Rentals donated all the Saturday night tables, chairs and linens.

Pat and John Frank directed all aspects of the silent auction, and Michelle Yi organized the live auction. Jake Jabs called the live auction, which asked donors to sponsor specific items for TAPS such as backpacks and other Good Grief Camp supplies or funding for families to attend the National TAPS Suicide Survivor Retreat to be held at Fort Carson this October.

Tom and Mary Dyk won the bid to sponsor the Greiner Electric Barbeque with Tony David and Pam Hughes Entertainment for the Fort Carson Good Grief Camp to be held next spring.

Don Scott of Bartlit Beck Herman Palenchar & Scott LLP won the bid to sponsor four wounded warriors to attend a Denver Broncos game with 50-yard line seats, field passes, and parking passes.

Other performers and local notables who donated their time and talent to the TAPS Celebrity Classic included comedian Ralph Achilles; former NFL running back Donny Anderson; actor John Ashton; radio host Peter Boyles, actor Tom Bower; radio host Michael Brown; Congressman Mike Coffman; entertainers Tony David and Pam Hughes; US Air Force Academy Superintendent Lieutenant General Michael Gould; quarterback Brian Griese; basketball star and coach Bill Hanzlik; author and physician Colonel Dave Hnida, MD; sportscaster Cory Lopez; ace fighter pilot Brigadier General Steve Ritchie, Retired; radio talk host Mike Rosen; NFL pro Mark Schlereth; radio host Craig Silverman; actor Bill Smitrovich; Colorado State Treasurer Walker Stapleton; former Bronco Jerry Sturm; State Representative

Nancy Todd; radio news anchor Steffan Tubbs; sports anchor Natalie Vickers; film producer Michael Watkins; and NBA coach Brian Winters.

The TAPS Celebrity Classic continued to bring in donations after the event. Radio host Mike Rosen read *Klinger, A Story of Honor and Hope*, written by TAPS survivor Betsy Beard, during his KOA Radio Show. The children's story is about a young horse that wanted to be a race horse but learned the honor of becoming one of the caisson horses performing military honors for fallen heroes buried in Arlington National Cemetery. The broadcast inspired more than 125 listeners to make a contribution to TAPS and receive a gift of the book. ★

Photos courtesy of Gill Photography and Christine Burt

TAPS is grateful for the time and energy that the Cottrells and their team of volunteers put forth each year for the annual TAPS Celebrity Classic. We are humbled by their dedication and thankful for their support.





Friends of T★A★P★S

Our mission of caring for families of the fallen could not be accomplished without the support of those who give of their time, their resources, and their hearts. Friends of TAPS assist us financially or donate their time and talent, allowing TAPS to continue its mission of providing national and regional programs, online connections, grief resources, the quarterly TAPS Magazine, the peer support network, and 24 hour assistance for all who are grieving the death of a loved one in the Armed Forces.

As a nonprofit, TAPS receives no government funding, and our continued existence depends on donations and volunteers from the private sector. We are so thankful for each and every dollar contributed, each hour volunteered. As you contemplate your charitable contributions for this year, consider becoming a Friend of TAPS.

If your workplace participates in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) or United Way, you can designate your giving to support Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors. You can also



create your own fundraiser, volunteer at TAPS events, join the Run and Remember Team, or buy products from the TAPS Online Store. No gift of money or time is too small. A single annual magazine subscription for a grieving survivor can be funded with a \$10 gift.

We are grateful to all our Friends of TAPS!

Some of our Friends of TAPS help in a big way, providing grants for specific programs or donations for general purposes. Our sponsor page inside the back cover lists many of them. The following foundations have supplied grants to TAPS in this past year. Although they are not listed below, the USO and The Moyer Foundation have been featured in the Spring 2011 issue and on page 18 of this issue. For a complete listing of donors and grants, visit the Friends of TAPS website at www.taps.org/friends.



THE FISHER HOUSE FOUNDATION is best known for the network of comfort homes built on the grounds of major military and VA Medical Centers where families can stay while a service member or veteran is receiving treatment. Additionally, the foundation recently built a Fisher House at Dover Air Force Base for

the families of the fallen who wish to be present when their deceased loved one is returned to American soil from overseas.

Fisher House Foundation also administers the Hero Miles program. The program is comprised of individual airlines whose passengers donate their frequent flyer miles to assist service members and their families. This year Fisher House Hero Miles donated 25 million miles valued at \$902,000 for 650 attendees of the TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar. Without this gift, many survivors would not have been able to attend.



FOLDS of HONOR FOUNDATION

FOLDS OF HONOR FOUNDATION is a national nonprofit that salutes the sacrifice of fallen and disabled service members by ensuring their families are not left behind. Through scholarships and other assistance, they provide healing and hope to these families.

Folds of Honor has teamed up with the Hartwell Foundation to establish the Hartwell Fallen Soldiers Children's Fund. This fund helps broaden the mentorship of children who have lost a parent in Iraq or Afghanistan, providing valuable and much needed assistance to children up to 16 years of age. This year TAPS was the recipient of \$145,600 to help with expenses of the 2011 National Good Grief Camp.



THE HASBRO CHILDREN'S FUND is the philanthropic grantmaking arm of Hasbro, Inc. and was established to help children in need triumph over critical life obstacles. TAPS received a \$125,000 grant to help cover expenses for our record-breaking number of children at this year's 17th Annual National Good Grief Camp. The Good Grief Camp Saturday evening festivities were given a Hasbro makeover including interactive NERF football in addition to many other activities allowing the children to spend play time with their Good Grief Camp mentors.

Photos, TAPS Archives



In addition, Hasbro provided TAPS with more than 1,000 toys and games, including hundreds of cans of Play-Doh which are used for therapeutic purposes. Younger children can smash feelings of sadness, anger, or guilt using Play-Doh compound. Older teens write down negative thoughts or ideas and then press Play-Doh into them, pounding it on the paper to cover the words.

THE LOST HEROES ART QUILT

AMERICAN LOST HEROES ART FOUNDATION came into being to honor the memory of the extraordinary young men and women who fought and died for our nation. In 2009, artist Julie Feingold created The Lost Heroes Art Quilt. The quilt consists of 50 squares, one for each state. Each square tells the story of an individual service member from that state who died in Iraq or Afghanistan.

Since completion the quilt has toured across the country and was exhibited at this year's National Military Survivor Seminar. American Lost Heroes Art Foundation announced on May 7, 2011, that BAE Systems purchased the quilt for \$100,000, to be split between two charities: TAPS and CAUSE. After the quilt has completed its tour, it will be donated by BAE Systems to a national museum for display.



LAND OF THE FREE FOUNDATION was started to recognize the men and women of our Armed Services and their families who work and sacrifice every day to ensure that we will always live in the land of the free. Their Veterans Day Golf Classic is the main fundraising event each year for the Land of the Free Foundation. All proceeds from the event go towards supporting charities that support America's military and their families. TAPS received \$100,000 this past year for general program expenses.

NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION

NEWMAN'S OWN FOUNDATION was created to put into action the philanthropic philosophy of actor Paul Newman, who was committed to helping make the world a better place. He worked to raise the level of corporate giving, leading the way by donating the profits from the business he created to market his now famous salad dressings. From the very beginning, every penny Paul earned from the sale of Newman's Own products was donated to thousands of charities around the world.

To carry on his philanthropic legacy, Newman's Own Foundation donates all net royalties and profits after taxes to charities and causes that span the globe and spectrum of human need. This year the foundation provided TAPS with \$75,000 for the funding of three regional seminars across the country. *



Financial Counseling

Your Best Decision in a Difficult Time

By Fran Hackett, Vice President of Administration and OSGLI, Prudential's Group Insurance

Making important financial decisions can be difficult for anyone, even under the best of circumstances. But making them after you've experienced the death of a loved one can seem like an impossible task and is often far from being a priority. Finances are most likely the furthest thing from your mind when you are grieving.

In addition, your already strong emotions may be compounded by receiving a payment from your loved one's life insurance. On the one hand, you may feel relieved to have funds to pay for immediate expenses that may arise. On the other hand, you might feel overwhelmed and confused about what to do with the money. The life insurance payment does not replace your loved one and you may even wish you did not have the money at all. These feelings are shared by many survivors and are a normal reaction.

It may take several months or even longer after the death of your loved one before you can begin thinking about your current and future financial picture. Once you are ready to start thinking about your finances, then you may wonder what you should do next and who to turn to for advice.

One of the things you should know if you received benefits through Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI), or Family SGLI (FSGLI) is that the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has made free financial counseling available to you for an unlimited period of time.



The financial service afforded to beneficiaries by the VA is provided by an independent company whose team of financial professionals includes many veterans who understand military and veteran benefits. They are not affiliated with any investment firm or bank, do not receive commissions, and will not try to sell you any products or services. You can be assured that you will receive objective guidance in a pressure-free atmosphere from individuals who have your best interests at heart.

You can contact this service for answers to any of your simple financial questions, or you may request a detailed financial plan customized to your needs, based on additional information you provide. This financial plan can help you:

- ★ Make informed spending choices
- ★ Determine which debts to pay off first
- ★ Protect your credit
- ★ Create an "emergency fund"
- ★ Plan for your child's education
- ★ Plan for retirement
- ★ Develop investment strategies

Most importantly, you may find that this service can help you make sense of the more immediate financial decisions that you may face, and at the same time provide you with the guidance you need to gain a sense of security about your financial future.

The loss you suffered is a significant life event. There are many emotions you may need to process before you even begin to think about making financial decisions. Above all else, it is important that you take the time to cope with your loss in a way that's right for you. Then, when you are ready, you can decide what is best for your unique circumstances.

If you received a life insurance payment from SGLI, VGLI, or FSGLI, then you are eligible for free financial counseling as often as you feel is necessary. The counselors are available to meet with you as soon as you feel the time is right. There is no rush because your access to this service will never expire. ★

To learn more about the financial counseling services available to SGLI, VGLI, or FSGLI beneficiaries, please call Financial Point at 888-243-7351 or send an email to fcs@financialpoint.com.

LifeEnsured's NetClose

Bringing Closure to Your Loved One's Online Life

"Thank you so much for all of your help in dealing with my son's accounts. You were able to accomplish in a minimum amount of time what I struggled with for a couple of years." ~ Carol Brown, surviving mom of First Lieutenant Thomas Brown.

At the 2011 TAPS National Military Survivor Seminar, Carol Brown visited the LifeEnsured display and met founder, Mike Aiello. She quickly learned that LifeEnsured's NetClose service could put an end to her two-year struggle to gain access and bring closure to the Facebook account of her son who had been killed in Iraq. Carol completed an information sheet, and over the following weeks LifeEnsured was able to uncover and resolve Thomas's account.

In addition, LifeEnsured found and recovered several more online memberships including some that Carol had completely forgotten about. Under Carol's direction, LifeEnsured resolved Thomas's accounts according to her wishes. As soon as Carol learned that she could memorialize Thomas's Facebook she "...knew that was exactly what needed to be done". Today Thomas's profile is open to his confirmed friends who are able to post tributes in remembrance of his life. For Carol, the NetClose service was invaluable. "I would definitely recommend LifeEnsured to anyone who has lost a family member," said Carol.

Since the seminar, LifeEnsured has helped nine TAPS families to unravel their loved one's accounts, saving them countless hours of confusion and stress. A total of 765 account searches have been conducted, which led to the discovery of 17 online accounts. The searches have uncovered important digital property including photographs, cash balances, and domain names. "The NetClose service takes the

burden off families by helping them to effortlessly bring closure to their loved one's online lives," said Mike.

With a desire to continue helping survivors, LifeEnsured has partnered with TAPS to offer their NetClose search-and-report service for up to 20 TAPS families per month until March 31, 2012. Valued at \$495, this service will be provided completely free of charge to the first 20 families to enquire each month during this period.

ABOUT THE NETCLOSE SERVICE

NetClose conducts deep web searches that sort through 85 of the most popular websites. They also make the phone calls that are vital to discovering online accounts.

NETCLOSE TAKES CARE OF YOUR BURDEN

Resolving online accounts is time consuming and administratively burdensome. By assigning a dedicated associate to take care of the entire process, NetClose makes it easy and saves you hours of work. They'll take care of the forms, make phone calls on your behalf, compile all information in one place, and settle the accounts at your discretion.

NETCLOSE HELPS AVOID IDENTITY THEFT

To help prevent identity theft, NetClose notifies all three major credit agencies of your loved one's passing. Sadly, identity thieves prey on deceased individuals and use their information to apply for credit cards and loans—causing a great deal of stress for the



Photo courtesy of LifeEnsured

family. Notifying the agencies makes things much more difficult for thieves.

HOW NETCLOSE WORKS

LifeEnsured will assign a dedicated associate to take care of the entire process. Your associate will immediately notify the credit agencies of the passing before commencing a deep internet search and placing calls to uncover as many online accounts as possible. Your associate will let you know what they've found and you'll discuss how to handle the discovered accounts. After LifeEnsured has carried out your wishes, they will provide a comprehensive search report outlining all accounts discovered, any passwords recovered, confirmation of credit agency notification, and an outline of the actions taken for each account. *

To sign up to have NetClose help your family, please visit www.netclosehq.com/taps or contact them at 347-227-0198.



Tips for Self-Care

Excerpted from *You Don't Have to Suffer* ☆ By Judy Tatelbaum, LCSW

In the early months of grieving, it is easy to lose sight of the importance of taking care of yourself physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and socially. Here are some easy ways to incorporate self-care into these difficult days.

diet: A healthy, well-balanced diet of proteins, vegetables, fruit, grains, and a minimum of fats and sugars is important. We can educate ourselves on what comprises a healthy diet, information that is available from our physician, the American Heart Association, or other health groups. It is useful to know that too much sugar depletes us and to discover which foods energize us.

exercise: Regular exercise like walking, running, swimming, bicycling, tennis, racquetball, and so on is recommended at least three times a week. If you are under stress, daily exercise anywhere from twenty minutes to two hours can increase energy and a sense of well-being. This can make a particular difference after a loss, trauma, or stress.

rest: In contrast to activity, we may also need rest. Those of us who tend to drive ourselves particularly hard may recover best with rest periods, lying down and taking it easy sometime during the day. Catnaps, reading breaks, or closing our eyes for fifteen minutes can be rejuvenating. Both rest and sleep can regenerate us.

meditation: This is another form of rest or rejuvenation. Taking twenty minutes to go inward one to three times a day can be very healing. There are many techniques and books on meditation. One simple form of meditating is to sit with eyes closed, listening to classical music.



people support: The support of a friend, colleague, therapist, counselor, teacher, minister, or rabbi can be valuable nourishment. We benefit when we can talk intimately, clear up feelings and reactions, be understood or have a witness to our experience, and be encouraged to move forward. Family may worry too much, get involved in our problems, or be unavailable, so someone outside our regular life can be very supportive in regaining balance.

nourishment: Activities that nurture our bodies, like massages, hot baths, sun baths, or whatever personally appeals to us, are particularly supportive. This kind of nourishment is not related to eating and food. Many of us habitually deny our needs, so we may have to dig deeply to discover what would nourish us.

time alone: At times it may be beneficial to take time to be alone to do nothing, look at the scenery, read, daydream, watch television, and rest. How much time alone each of us needs may vary. Taking time for oneself can be a way for spirituality and creativity to emerge during or after the time spent alone.

time off: This means time away from the usual routine, like vacations or days away from home. If vacations are not feasible, consider a drive or walk in the country or any environment that is different from your usual one.

play: Playing one hour a day can be regenerating. Many of us have lost the idea of play while growing into adulthood. We may need to look again at what play would involve for us now. Games, sports, shopping, or crossword puzzles are a few examples of what we might enjoy.

exercise responsibility for your well-being:

After reading the above steps regarding self-care, make a list of specific steps that would be beneficial for you. What relaxes you? What delights you? What engages you? What is fun for you? Write all these answers down for further use and carry them in your daily calendar or post them on your mirror or refrigerator. *

About the Author



Judy Tatelbaum, LCSW, is a psychotherapist who specializes in grief and author of the books, *The Courage to Grieve* and *You Don't Have to Suffer*. Other grief related articles are on her website: www.judytatelbaum.com. She can be reached by email at: jtmiracle@comcast.net



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