

## Family Services Staff

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## Mission Statement

To provide quality end-of-life care at no expense to the patient, while supporting their family and others in the community who are experiencing grief.

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[www.hospiceofnorthcentraloklahoma.com](http://www.hospiceofnorthcentraloklahoma.com)

Dear Friends,

Hello! My name is Tanja Walker, and I am excited to be the new bereavement coordinator (and sometimes chaplain) at Hospice of North Central Oklahoma. It is my hope to get to know each of you as you walk through your grief journey, and be a supportive, listening ear as you do the painful, but necessary work of processing your losses and integrating them into your new life without your loved one.

I have a varied educational background, having earned a master of human relations from the University of Oklahoma and a master of divinity from Phillips Theological Seminary. I have worked in hospices in Oklahoma City and in Tulsa as a bereavement coordinator and chaplain, and have also worked as a chaplain in various hospitals in Norman and in Oklahoma City.

Besides professional experience, I bring the personal experience of having gone through several losses in my life. What I have learned is that helping others deal with their grief not only helps them, but helps the one offering help. No one gets through life without losses of some kind, and when we support each other, we can grow through these losses, become more caring, understanding, people, and embrace the life we have been given on this earth to live.

I would be happy to meet with you, either on the phone or in person, to talk about your loss, give you an opportunity to share memories, or work through difficult feelings. Please call me at (580) 762-9102, and we will set up a time to talk. I look forward to hearing from you and hearing your stories.

# Special Camp for Kids Coming August 24

The death of someone we love can be difficult for adults. It is also difficult for children who have not developed the life skills and experience to deal with loss and grief. A little guidance can go a long way toward a healthy reconciliation with the loss. This is why Hospice of North Central Oklahoma is offering our one day Camp Monarch, Children's Healing From Loss Camp, coming in August!

If you have or know of a child, or a family with children, who have been through a significant loss within the last year or so, our family services staff would like to invite them to join us for CAMP MONARCH—to be held 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Saturday, August 24, 2019 here at the Hospice of North Central Oklahoma office, 445 Fairview Ave., Ponca City.

At Camp Monarch we blend fun, grief education, and coping skills development into an exciting, day long children's healing activity. The goal of Camp Monarch is to provide a time for children age 6-13 to learn ways of dealing with their grief after the loss of a loved one. We will explore some of the common emotions associated with grief, including confusion, sadness and anger.

In keeping with the idea of grief as a journey, the activities are centered around the theme of camping and

hiking, and will include time for crafts, story telling and interaction with other children. Lunch and snacks will be provided for the children.

Parents and guardians will need to register their children that morning from 8:45-9:00 a.m. We will begin wrapping things up at 2:00 p.m., so please be prepared to pick up your children at that time.

If you think your or a loved one's children would benefit from a day of exploring their feelings and learning effective coping methods, then this event is for them. There is no cost to participate in this event.

We, the staff of the family services department of Hospice of North Central Oklahoma look forward to being present with your children for this support activity. It is important to know how many are planning to join us, as space is limited. Please call ahead to reserve your place at Camp Monarch by calling or stopping by our office at 445 Fairview Ave, Ponca City. Questions? Call the office and ask for Tanja Walker or Cathy Denning at 580-762-9102.

Including our children in the grief process, both before and after the death, is good for their emotional health as well as your own.

Cathy Denning, BSW

## Grief: The Early Phase of Shock and Denial

The journey through grief is an individual journey; no two people grieve in exactly the same way, and the timing of grief is different for each person. No one can predict with exactness the progress of your grief, however, there are elements of the grief process which are common to us all and can be gathered into loose categories. Early grief literature used the word stages to define parts of the process. This was unfortunate in that many took this to believe that the journey through their grief would be clearly defined and progress in clear-cut steps. The truth is, grief is messy, and defies organization. What we can do is define some commonalities of grief, and put a rough time frame to expectations.

The first “phase” to address is the initial shock, numbness and denial. Many people report a sense of disbelief after first learning of the death. In a word, shock.

People often continue to act quite normally during the first few hours or days. The reality of the loss does not truly hit home until later. In this early time frame, people seem to be coping well and it is often remarked how strong the immediate family member seems to be in the face of the loss. We get through the funeral planning with a sense of grace, greet those who attend meals and Rosary services, and

generally manage to keep our composure intact reasonably well.

Shock is a protective measure; it slows down the psychological impact of the loss, allowing us to absorb the impact of the death in a manageable way. Think of the airbags in a car. In a severe automobile accident, the human body is subjected to tremendous force when it decelerates from 60 mph to 0 mph almost instantly. That kind of force breaks bones and damages tissue. When the airbag opens up, it cushions the impact by releasing its compressed nitrogen relatively slowly, through tiny holes in the back side of the bag. This effectively adds precious seconds to the deceleration process, spreading the impact out over time, and over a larger area of the body. We are still hurt, but hopefully in a less traumatic and more manageable way.

Psychologically, shock accomplishes the same thing. It slows down the enormous mental, emotional, and spiritual impact of the death, allowing it to be comprehended over a longer period of time. This allows the person to process the change slowly and more healthily.

Numbness often accompanies shock, allowing the emotional pain to be dealt with over the coming weeks and months (and years) rather than all at

once. Numbness will often come and go over time, allowing us to face that pain in manageable doses.

Denial serves a similar purpose. At times one's mind simply shuts out the reality of the death. We talk, act, even plan, as if the death never happened. We say things like, "he will be home any day now," or "this is just a bad dream and I'll wake up soon." Denial can be intermittent. The mind goes back and forth from the painful reality to the comforting, dreamlike expectation of life as it was. To use the car analogy again, it is like tapping, rather than slamming on the brakes; it helps us maintain a better grip on life while processing the loss.

Shock, numbness and denial eventually dissipate, making room for the process of coming to full realization of the loss. However, little vestiges of each remain, helping to make the transition more manageable. Months and even years afterward, the heart holds on to that expectation that they are still alive, if only for brief moments. The telephone will ring, and we immediately think "that must be (deceased) calling." Your daughter becomes engaged, and your first thought is "I've got to tell....," even though you have been grieving the death for months now. It's a normal and healthy part of grief.

## Noon Support Group starting in October

Hospice of North Central Oklahoma will be hosting a six-week Healing After Loss Support Group, from 12:00 p.m. to 1:00 p.m. beginning in October. Sessions will be held on October 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 29th, and November 6th in the Hospice of North Central Oklahoma office building, 445 Fairview Ave. Ponca City.

A bereavement support group is a great way to work through all the experiences and emotions after the loss of a loved one, and to learn new skills to help you cope and heal after the death of a significant person. This support group will help you understand and be prepared for the challenges of life after the death of a loved one. It will also allow you to share your story, and to meet other people who can relate to

your struggles. You will likely make new, supportive friends along the way, friends who can provide encouragement during your journey through grief. This particular group is a general loss support group, which would be appropriate for grief from the death of a parent, sibling, spouse or other loved one.

If you have suffered a significant loss in the last few months, or years, this opportunity may be for you. Please give us a call at (580) 762-9102 if you would like more information. Please call and let us know if you plan to attend. We will have a light lunch ready for you to enjoy when you get here. There is no cost for participating in this healing group, and I hope you will find it well worth your time.

## Bereavement tip

Talk regularly with a good friend. Talking over your feelings, experiences, anxieties and fears with someone you trust and who will listen without judging, is one of the best ways of helping yourself through grief. It will help you release some of the pressure, help you gain a fresh perspective, and provide balance to the often single minded focus one has during bereavement. Look for a person who is a good listener; one who will listen attentively to what you need to say without judgmental comments, and who gives advice only when you ask. Possibly the best listeners are those who have been through significant grief themselves, and have moved forward enough to be able to give you their attention. If you make good use of a listening friend, then chances are the skill will rub off, and someday you will be able to turn around and be a good listener for someone who is grieving. And, isn't that what friends are for?

New Location to Whet Your Appetite!

## LUNCH BUNCH

Lunch bunch is a casual, group of bereaved people who meet twice a month to enjoy a meal together and catch up on one-another's lives. On Tuesday, August 20 we will try out a new location; Lakeside Grill, 1201 L.A. Cann Dr. in Ponca City, just south of Lake Ponca Park (the old Pauline's Steak House.) See the calendar on page 6 for other dates and locations. Come join us for companionship and encouragement.



## Annual Cherokee Strip Cook-off

**Saturday, September 21st, 2019**  
**Lake Ponca Park**  
**Contestants will begin serving at noon.**

Tasting kits are available from a Professionals Today member, the Chamber of Commerce and local banks. in advance for \$5.00, or at the gate for \$7.00 and include ballots to vote for your favorite chili and BBQ!

**All Proceeds go to support Hospice of North Central Oklahoma!**



Proceeds  
benefit



More information available at  
[www.facebook.com/cherokeestripcookoff](http://www.facebook.com/cherokeestripcookoff)

Hosted by the  
women of



Hospice of North Central Oklahoma  
445 Fairview Ave.  
Ponca City, OK 74601

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

## August

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, August 6,  
11:30 a.m., Pizza Inn, 2224 N.  
14th, Ponca City

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, August 20,  
11:30 a.m. Lakeside Grill, 1201  
L.A. Cann Dr., Ponca City.

Camp Monarch, children's Healing  
Camp, 9:00 a.m to 2:00 p.m. Satur-  
day, August 24, Hospice of NCO  
offices, 445 Fairview Ave.  
Contact (580) 762-9102 for de-  
tails and to sign up.

## September

Labor Day! Monday, September 2,  
Hospice Office Closed.

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, September  
3, 11:30 a.m. Pizza Inn, 2224 N.  
14th Ponca City

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, September  
17, 11:30 a.m. Lakeside Grill,  
1201 L.A. Cann Dr., Ponca City.

33rd Annual Cherokee Strip  
Cook-Off, Saturday, September,  
21, Lake Ponca Park  
Come join us.

## October

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, October 1.  
11:30 a.m. Pizza Inn, 2224 N.  
14th Ponca City

Healing After Loss Support Group,  
Wednesday, October 2, noon to  
1:00 p.m., hospice office, 445  
Fairview Ave. Ponca City. (a light  
lunch will be provided.)

Lunch Bunch, Tuesday, October  
15, 11:30 a.m., Hunan's Chinese  
Restaurant, 2800 N. 5th, Ponca  
City.

Healing After Loss Support Group,  
Wednesday, October 9, noon to  
1:00 p.m., hospice office, 445  
Fairview Ave. Ponca City (a light  
lunch will be provided.)

Healing After Loss Support  
Group, Wednesday, October 16,  
noon to 1:00 p.m., hospice office,  
445 Fairview Ave. Ponca City. (a  
light lunch will be provided.)

Healing After Loss Support Group,  
Wednesday, October 23, noon to  
1:00 p.m., hospice office, 445  
Fairview Ave. Ponca City (a light  
lunch will be provided.)

Healing After Loss Support Group,  
Wednesday, October 30, noon to  
1:00 p.m., hospice office, 445  
Fairview Ave. Ponca City (a light  
lunch will be provided.)