

FR*ENDS* INDEED

Newsletter of the National Centre for Childhood Grief



National Centre
For Childhood Grief

Providing support to newly
bereaved children and families
childhoodgrief.org.au



Changing seasons

By Mal and Dianne McKissock – Clinical Directors

Today is a beautiful winter day – sunny, but with that special crispness in the air that tells us the season has really changed. Some of us may love winter – its paler colours and different smells, the promise of snuggly nights with more restful sleep, curling up around the fire or enjoying the warmth of air conditioning, warm drinks, hot meals, shorter days – family times. Others may tend to hibernate, wishing the season away, longing for the return of summer.

Whatever our favourite season, the same words that have the power to bring wonderful memories back into the foreground to be re-lived and savoured, also have the power to hurt. For bereaved families, each change of season may be experienced with sadness, poignant memories may come rushing back, reminding each grieving person of what used to be and what will never be experienced in the same way again.

The challenge for all of us at these times is to find a new way of managing each change that reminds us that the external world keeps turning in fairly predictable ways, despite the often unpredictable nature of our internal world. We may wonder how life can go on as if nothing has changed, when everything in our world has changed. How can we go on? How do we learn to live with painful reminders of what has been lost? How do we help the grieving children in our care?

Each of us, no matter how young or how old, has to find our own way, but there are some things that can help most of us, despite our different personalities and coping styles. First, we need to

let whatever is, just be –
thoughts, feelings,

*"We
have the
power – in the long
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responses."*



Mal and Dianne McKissock – Clinical Directors at "A Friend's Place"



> physical responses. It is important not to panic, not to fight surges of feeling. Once the intensity of our thoughts and feelings diminishes just a little, we can distract ourselves with some activity that uses adrenalin, an activity that is different to the sort of thing we might have done at this season with the person we love who has died. We have the power – in the long term – to change the pattern of our thoughts, and the way we use our emotional responses. We don't have to remain stuck, or be permanently overwhelmed.

We can share our thoughts and feelings with the children in our care, and invite them to do the same. We can reassure them as we reassure ourselves.

*"Spring, summer, autumn, winter
– the ever changing cycles of nature
predictable and reassuring.
Nothing stands still – not even the seasons
of the heart."*

Rachael McLennan Biography

Board Member



Rachael is CEO of Australian Philanthropic Services, a not-for-profit organisation that inspires and supports philanthropy, and provides education for individuals and advisers.

Rachael began her working life in the corporate sector in business development, marketing & communications, rising through the ranks in organisations such as Stamford Hotels & Resorts, Prudential and PKF. She spent 8 years in London working for Clariden Private Bank and Chelsea Village (home of Chelsea Football Club), gaining an enormous amount of experience - and a very interesting network.

Inspired by her mother who was raised by the Salvation Army, Rachael made a conscious move into the not-for-profit sector in 2004. Initially working at the coalface of a small but national UK charity, the Rainbow Trust Children's Charity, she raised \$1m in 3 short years.

Rachael returned to Australia in 2007, and after having 2 children, began working with Social Ventures Australia in a marketing role. In 2009, she helped to develop a business plan that would engage wealthy Australians in structured philanthropy. Less than a year later, Social Ventures Australia's Private Ancillary Fund Service was established. When this evolved to become Australian Philanthropic Services in April 2012, she was appointed Chief Executive Officer.

STAFF BIOGRAPHIES

Nina Olle Biography

Board Member



Nina comes to the NCCG board with extensive media and communications experience developed across the not for profit, government and corporate sectors.

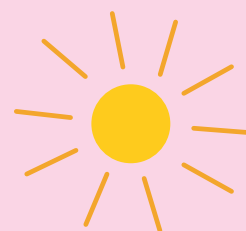
After completing

an Arts Degree at the University of Sydney (majoring in Media and Communications and Government and International Relations), Nina worked as a journalist in Canberra, writing and editing the weekly City News magazine and producing for ABC radio.

Nina then decided to see what 'the other side' was like and joined Carers NSW (the peak organisation for family carers in NSW) as their Media and Communications Manager. Nina oversaw a rise in membership and helped raise the profile of carers and carer issues through the media, events, marketing and other communications initiatives. She also developed a sound knowledge of the not for profit sector and grew partnerships with government, service providers and corporate supporters.

In recent years, Nina has harnessed her unique mix of experience in her work as a consultant to a range of organisations across the health, arts, youth and environmental sectors. This work has involved mentoring and training staff in media engagement, developing targeted communications strategies and assisting with issues management and brand positioning.

As a bereaved child herself, Nina identifies strongly with the NCCG and the work it does in supporting children experiencing grief after the death of a family member. She is committed to ensuring NCCG remains "A Friend's Place" long into the future.



CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

By Rick Taylor



Hi everyone and welcome to the fourth edition of Friends Indeed, the newsletter for National Centre for Childhood Grief, aka "A Friend's Place".

The reason we call it "A Friend's Place" is because when the chips are down, you need to have friends to rely on. And for a bereaved child who has had someone close to them die, typically a parent, both parents or a sibling; it's comforting for the kids and their caregivers to know that at "A Friend's Place", you not only get loving support, but also clinical assistance from our professional team of psychologists, social workers,

nurses and a GP.

As we are a not-for-profit charity, we rely on the donation of time, funds and resources to provide group and individual counselling services to bereaved kids. It's a highly specialised and time/personnel intensive service that is unique and very necessary in our society where **9% of children lose one or both parents before they turn 18 years of age**. Grief in general is little understood and childhood grief in particular is often misunderstood.

On the macro level, it's comforting for the bereaved kids and their families to know that the wider community care about them through the continued support, we receive from generous donors.

I would like to thank **Macquarie Group Foundation, The Caledonia Foundation, State Street, Bain & Company and Archer Capital** for their continued support plus all the individual donors who support our work.

In addition I am delighted to announce and welcome **Third Link** on board as a supporter of "A Friend's Place".

We have put some processes in place to make it easier for those of you who wish to support our work:

1. We now offer a **monthly debit system** (just like the BIG charities). You decide the amount you wish to pledge and you can join or cancel at any time.
2. The National Centre for Childhood Grief is now registered on **www.everydayhero.com.au**, so you can nominate us as your charity to fundraise e.g. City to Surf, the Sydney Half Marathon or any number of activities nationally. (All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible).

This year, we welcome a new Board member **Rachael McLennan** (see her bio in this newsletter) who brings a wealth of knowledge from the not-for-profit sector and a great deal of enthusiasm. Rachael complements our other Board members of Mal McKissock, Nina Olle and myself. A HUGE thank you to Alison Turner as an outgoing Board member for her time and efforts.

I am continually humbled by the heartfelt support and appreciation we get from the community for the work, we do for bereaved kids. None of this would be possible without the efforts of our fantastic counsellors and support workers. On behalf of the bereaved kids and families, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Lastly, but not least, a BIG thank you to Anna Lane, our graphic designer extraordinaire, who has again donated her time and expertise in putting this newsletter together for you.

Richard M. Taylor



Kids' group session



Sharing precious memories



Together we can go forward





National Centre For Childhood Grief

WHAT DO WE DO?

The NCCG ("A Friend's Place") provides free individual and group counselling for bereaved children and young people (up to the age of 18 years) and their families.



The philosophy of the NCCG is based on the following 4 principles:

- 1 Grief is a natural response to loss
- 2 Children, like adults, grieve when someone close to them dies and they need opportunities to express this grief in an understanding and supportive environment
- 3 The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each child
- 4 With support, children have the capacity to integrate grief into their lives if the environment provides acceptance, compassion and safety

Parents' support groups are run simultaneously with the children's groups. We also act as advocates for individuals and families to assist them in overcoming specific challenges. Additionally, we provide community education seminars and workshops.

Counselling services are provided for children and families in specific situations. This helps to identify and assess the most appropriate and effective response to those who have experienced traumatic deaths including suicide, homicide or terrorism.

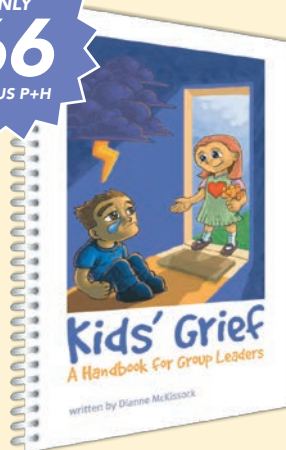
For more information about the NCCG, or if you would like to put a friend in contact with us, please visit www.childhoodgrief.org.au or phone us on 1300 654 556 or email afriendsplace@me.com

childhoodgrief.org.au

HELPING YOU HELP THEM

THREE USEFUL RESOURCES FROM THE NCCG

ONLY
\$66
PLUS P+H



KIDS' GRIEF

A Handbook for Group Leaders

By Dianne McKissock OAM

The essential resource for all those involved in the care of dying and bereaved children and their families.

All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.

THE MAGIC OF MEMORIES CD

By Dianne McKissock OAM
Narrated by Henri Szepe OAM

These 5 real life stories, narrated by Henri Szepe, are designed to help adults understand and facilitate children's grief.

All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.



ONLY
\$55.50
PLUS P+H

ONLY
\$38.50
PLUS P+H



THE GRIEF OF OUR CHILDREN

By Dianne McKissock OAM

Ideal for newly bereaved families.

All proceeds of sales support the ongoing work of the NCCG.

ORDER NOW

www.childhoodgrief.org.au

Ph: 1300 654 556

Email: afriendsplace@me.com



ADVENTURE WEEKEND

A SUCCESSFUL COMBINATION OF FUN AND TEAM WORK

By Kerri Hamer – spoilt support worker

Girls companionship and resilience enhancement (C.A.R.E) weekend

26-28 August, 2011

A very excited group of 19 girls (aged 8 -16 years) and 7 support workers (Ella, Mary, Ada, Helen, Carolyn, Caroline and Kerri) accompanied Mal McKissock to the "Girls C.A.R.E Weekend" in August 2011.

Far from roughing it, as some of us expected, we were treated to fabulous accommodation at Bundanoon, in the Southern Highlands of NSW.

We set off from the centre at 2pm on Friday and had a mid journey stop over at a highway picnic area. We arrived at Bundanoon at 5pm and were allocated our cabins. They each consisted of 4 bedrooms with ensuites and an adjoining large common room with mini kitchen and lounge area (a fun place for late night chats). As I said we were roughing it! We all excitedly unpacked and explored the immediate area which consisted of several acres of beautiful gardens and large highland trees.



*I loved the weekend away.
I got to talk about my dad who died and I had fun at the same time.*



Our next treat was a gourmet dinner. Every meal over the weekend was wholesome, tasty and nutritious, and something both the girls and support workers looked forward to. Meal time was a buzz of conversation as many of the girls were either catching up on old friendships or busy making new ones. The girls came from three different counselling groups and some had only come to the Centre for individual counselling sessions, so many had never met prior to this weekend. We also had a few graduates (girls who had left group counselling) return which was an extra joy. The opportunity for the girls to meet, share and feel normal was one of the many benefits of the weekend.

Our first evening activity helped set the scene for the weekend. It was a getting-to-know-you session by introducing ourselves and the parent who had died. Over the next two days we had a combination of fun and serious activities – early morning walks, yoga, skin care and grooming, Saturday night karaoke, cupcake decorating and eating.

We spent Saturday morning together, working on two tribute sculptural totems – one for the mothers who had died and one for the fathers. These are still on display at "A Friend's Place" and provide a tangible reminder of that special weekend together.

Sunday morning was a quiet time of reflection, while we viewed photographic images the girls had gathered over the weekend that reminded them of their grief. These images were strikingly poignant and personal and something we could all identify with. We were all very moved by the universality and individuality of these images. The whole weekend was a very special time together, an opportunity to share experiences and build memories.

Thanks to Mal our "organiser extraordinaire" and the many sponsors who provided this wonderful experience for all of us.

4 WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The NCCG is a registered charity and provides free of charge services to bereaved families. We are fully dependent on donations from the community to sustain our organisation.

THERE ARE SO MANY WAYS YOU CAN HELP:

- 1** Volunteer your **TIME** OR **EXPERTISE**
- 2** Offer the NCCG access to any **RESOURCES** you may have
- 3** **DONATIONS** (even the smallest amount can make a difference)
- 4** **SPONSORSHIP** of a special project or a core service.



CORE SERVICES



Our core counselling program requires approx. \$1,250 per year to support a grieving child.

You can contribute in the following ways:

\$50	= Support a child for one group session
\$100	= Support a child for one month
\$300	= Support a child for three months
\$625	= Support a child for six months
\$1,250	= Support a child for one year
\$2,500	= Support 2 children for one year
\$5,000	= Support 4 children for one year
\$18,000	= Support a group for one year

NB: All children's details are kept private

PLEASE DONATE TODAY TO CHANGE A CHILD'S LIFE!

To join our monthly regular-giving program via direct debit:

Contact "A Friend's Place" on 1300 654 556 OR

email: afriendsplace@me.com

To make a one-off donation:

visit www.childhoodgrief.org.au and click on the "donate" button.

OR

email: afriendsplace@me.com

All donations over \$2.00 are tax deductible and will be issued a tax receipt at the end of the financial year for regular givers.



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