

Grief Notes

July 2025

Telling their story by George McLaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator

“It’s not their death that defines a person; it’s their life.”

Next Thanksgiving will mark twenty-five years. Twenty-five years since I experienced one of the most significant losses in my life, the death of my dad. It was not unexpected as he had courageously battled cancer far beyond what the medical professionals had anticipated, so we felt blessed yet still struggled with the loss. I worked through my grief by focusing as much as I could on supporting my mom through this difficult process. The days, weeks and months that followed were a roller-coaster ride of emotions for all of us.

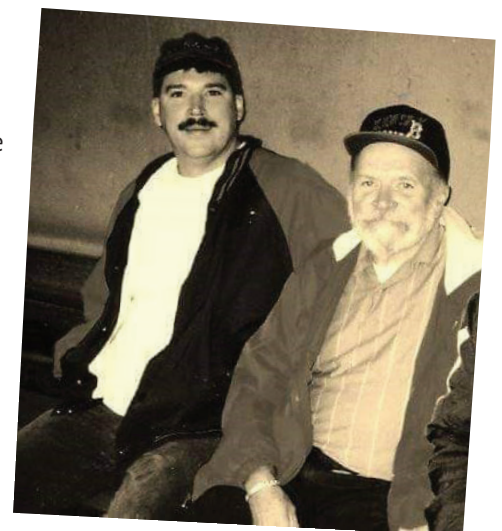
I was blessed to live only a mile up the road from my parents, so I spent as much time as I could with my dad during his last year and a half. It was a time to sit and just listen as he shared whatever came to mind. At times he would repeat stories that he had already shared with me, but I quietly listened again, remembering clearly an incident from years ago that has deeply impacted my life to this day. As a young boy I once complained to my dad that my grandfather, his father, often repeated the same stories. Dad responded to me saying “Perhaps your grandfather wants you to remember those stories. Those stories tell his story.”

As my father and I spent time together, I listened, and I learned. I was constantly reminded of his love for my mother and his concern for her after he was gone. I learned again and again what made him such a great man, a wonderful father and a very caring husband. He shared with me the strength his faith brought him. I heard about his struggles and even some of his failures. He told me stories of his time serving his country in the Army during the Korean War. He has left me many incredible memories from his life growing up in Boston, as well as those memories from our shared experiences and

adventures. But what I learned most is something I have shared with people many times over the years, that “it’s not their death that defines a person; it’s their life.”

As I write these words and reflect on my dad, I still grieve his death and even now, 25 years later, it brings tears to my eyes. But through my grief experience I have learned about the incredible power of “telling the story.” I honor my father every time I tell part of his story, whether it be to my children, my grandchildren, a friend or a stranger. I’m thankful that I took the time to listen and at times wish I had listened more as there are still pieces of his life that I am missing.

There is power and comfort in the story of one we have lost. Don’t lose sight of the value of storytelling. While grieving, we can bring healing to ourselves and to others by telling their story. Remember, “it’s their life that defines them, not their death”. So, as you consider ways to honor and remember loved ones who have died, telling their story may be a great way to start! Ask me about my dad...I’d love to tell you more!





Calendar

Bangor Area Grief Support

Grief can feel isolating and lonely, and griever are sometimes surprised by the intensity and duration of their grief. Here at Northern Light, we believe that no one should grieve alone. Our bereavement coordinators are available for questions and grief support. Please feel welcome to contact your bereavement coordinator, Jane Cornman, to learn more about how we can help, or to sign up for a support group: 207-944-5534 / jcornman@northernlight.org.

Monthly Drop-in Grief Support Group (in person)

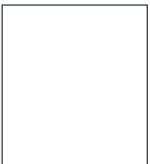
Tuesday drop-in grief support groups continue on the fourth Tuesday of the month, 2-3:30, at a local church in Bangor. The next two meetings will be on July 22 and August 26.

Wednesday Evening Fall Grief Support Group - Starts September 17 on Zoom:

We will be offering an 8-week online grief support group on Wednesday evenings, September 17 to November 5, 6-7:30 pm. Attending all eight meetings is recommended, and because we meet online, participants can participate even while traveling. To join or find out more information, please contact one of our facilitators: Jane Cornman (207-944-5534 / jcornman@northernlight.org) or Linda Hopkins (207-400-8714 / hopkinsl@northernlight.org).

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- Mark Twain
poem on his
daughter's headstone



Jane Cornman, Bereavement Coordinator
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Calendar

South Portland Grief Support

Wednesday Evening Fall Grief Support Group:

Starts September 17 on Zoom: We will be offering an 8-week online grief support group on Wednesday evenings, September 17 to November 5, 6-7:30 pm. Attending all eight meetings is recommended, and because we meet online, participants can participate even while traveling. To join or find out more information, please contact one of our facilitators: Jane Cornman (207-944-5534 / jcornman@northernlight.org) or Linda Hopkins (207-400-8714 / hopkinsl@northernlight.org).

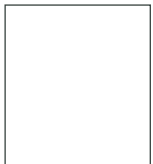
Monthly Zoom Grief Support Meetings:

Next meetings are on July 1 and August 5 from 1 to 2 pm. If you are interested in attending, contact Bereavement Coordinator Linda Hopkins (207-400-8714 or e-mail hopkinsl@northernlight.org.) Meetings will be held on the first Tuesday of each month.

Support groups are only one of the supports we offer. For more information about grief support, please contact Linda Hopkins, 207-400-8714 or hopkinsl@northernlight.org.

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Linda Hopkins, Bereavement Coordinator
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South Portland, ME 04106
Phone: (207) 400-8714 1-800-757-3326
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Waterville Grief Support

Grief can feel isolating and lonely, and griever are sometimes surprised by the intensity and duration of their grief. Here at Northern Light, we believe that no one should grieve alone. Our bereavement coordinators are available for questions and grief support. Please feel welcome to contact your bereavement coordinator, Jane Cornman, to learn more about how we can help, or to sign up for a support group: 207-944-5534 / jcornman@northernlight.org.

Waterville Area Grief Support Groups

In-Person Grief Support Groups

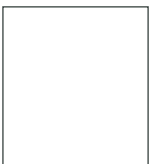
We are not currently offering in-person meetings in Waterville. If you would prefer an in-person experience, please contact Jane Cornman for assistance with finding a local grief support group.

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Ellsworth Area Grief Support

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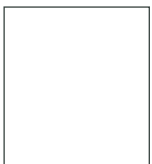
Grief and grieving is different for each of us. If you are struggling with grief, have questions, concerns, or if you would like information about bereavement support groups, please contact Tim Soucy, Bereavement Services Coordinator, at 207-356-1497 or tesoucy@northernlight.org or our tollfree number at 1-800-757-3326.

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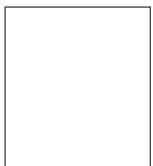
Presque Isle Area Grief Support

No Grief Support Groups will be held during the summer months. Six week Grief Support Groups will once again be offered in all areas of The County based on interest, this Fall. We require a minimum of five participants in an area to hold a Grief Support Group and each group is limited to twelve participants.

Please contact George McLaughlin, Bereavement Coordinator for Northern Light Home Care and Hospice at 498-9039 or by email at gmclaughlin@northernlight.org if you are interested or desire more information about these groups or if you desire additional support.

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