



The Mourning Star Center OF THE VNAIC



2006-2007 Program Year - Ready to Roll

We're ready for a new season with more children being served than ever before. All of our children and teen grief support groups are set to resume in late September and early October, beginning with our New Family Orientation Night on September 19th from 6-7p.m.

New adult bereavement groups being offered by the VNAIC include a Young Adult Grief Support Group (ages 19-30's) and a Latino Grief Support Group. Please call (760) 836-0360 for meeting dates and times of groups.

The Mourning Star Center's programs are provided as a community service. There is never a charge to the children or families. Your donations ensure our ability to offer these programs.



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MSC Staff and Volunteer Facilitators

Anne Marie Clark
Director

Staff Facilitators

Kim DuBeau
Pamela Gabbay
John Forand
Joy Soice
Deana Blissmer
Kathleen Dale

Volunteer Facilitators

Diane Kimmey
Angela Acosta
Camie Reyes
Pat Woodard
Iris Bessmer



~ Director's Corner ~

Looking forward to the upcoming Mourning Star Center year, I can't help but look back to where we were at this time last year. We knew we had a big job to do and I'm happy to say the first part of the mission has been accomplished.

Because of the passion of the people involved and the commitment of the VNAIC, the MSC is stronger than ever. We have gone from providing one group for children ages 6-12 to providing a total of six groups. We are now serving pre-schoolers, elementary age, and teens. This year we are excited to be offering a young adult group, as well as a bilingual group, all at no cost to the participants!

Even though the groups have the summer off, the kids and the program coordinators, as well as several members of our community, were busy with The Summer Art Institute. You will see some of their creations at our Heart of Fashion luncheon next February.

All that we are able to offer these kids and their families is in large part thanks to the financial support of our local community. If you are reading this, you have no doubt supported us in some way, either by introducing us to a new friend, volunteering your valuable time, or making a financial commitment. On behalf of The Mourning Star Center families and staff, I would like to thank you for your continued support.

I look forward to giving you more good news in our next publication. Until next time,

Anne Marie Clark,
Director, Palm Desert Hospice



Camp Erin News

Camp Erin is coming! Camp Erin, our week-end bereavement camp for children and teens ages 6-17, is currently recruiting volunteers. The camp, scheduled for July 27-29, 2007, in Big Bear, CA, is the first camp of its kind, serving grieving children in the Coachella Valley. If you are someone with a passion for children, who loves to have fun, and is mature and responsible, we want you.

Volunteers Needed

Camp Erin will need volunteers in many capacities.

- Counselors
- Photographers
- Supplies Needed
- 50 stuffed Teddy Bears "Erin Bears"
- Arts and crafts, luminaria supplies and balloons
- Camp snacks

For more information about volunteering, or how you can help support Camp Erin, please contact Pamela Gabbay, Camp Coordinator, at (760) 836-0360.



Renowned Artist Edward Lupper Donates Art to MSC Children

Edward Lupper, a local artist among "Who's Who in American Art", donated original lithograph creations to the children and teens of the MSC. His whimsical animal paintings include cats, pandas, and mice. Each child was given a framed, hand-signed lithograph on the last night of the group before breaking for the summer. That evening, the children left the Center with huge smiles on their faces and a picture that they'll cherish. Thank you, Mr. Lupper!

For more information on Edward Lupper, please go to www.lupperart.com.



The Painless Art of Giving

Charitable contributions can become as routine as going to the grocery store. If you become a member of The Community Partners Program, by registering your name with Albertson's, Food For Less, or Ralph's, the VNAIC will become the beneficiary of a donation, each time you shop. By naming the VNAIC as the charity of your choice, each of the three grocery chains will automatically make a contribution in your name to support our pediatric care fund. We hope you will take advantage of this consistent, easy way to give. For more information on how you can sign up for The Community Partners Program, please call Brianne Lawson at (760) 773-6263.

Spotlight on

Volunteer Facilitator Pat Woodard

The thought of Pat Woodard brings to mind one word- Giving. Pat is one of the most generous people, sharing her time, her friendship, and her laughter to all of the MSC children that she comes in contact with. Whether it is listening intently to a 12 year old tell his story or playing tea with a 4 year old in the preschool group during free time, Pat is always available and present.

MSC children know that she is someone they can trust, so Pat is an invaluable part of our MSC team. She also volunteers with our Hospice program, as well as the Trauma Intervention Program (TIP) and is the mother of 7 sons. Thank you, Pat, from all of us at the Mourning Star Center!

Special Thanks to the Following Foundations for their Support of MSC over the past year.

- The Auen Foundation
- The Bob Hope Chrysler Classic
- The Donald and Coeta Barker Foundation
- The Moyer Foundation
- The Regional Access Project Foundation(RAP)



Pat Woodard, Volunteer Extraordinaire

First Summer Art Institute at MSC

In response to our children's desire to stay in touch during the summer months, the Center hosted special art workshops for the Mourning Star kids and teens. Professional art instructors volunteered their time and conducted a total of nine sessions of art instruction, teaching the kids how to work with various media. The kids had a great time, learned some new skills and took home their own fabulous works of art, such as button memory frames, clay pinch pots, and plaster masks. They also worked together and created several group projects to benefit the Center. Look for these special pieces, including plaster masks, button photo frames, and a clay tile collage at our Heart of Fashion auction in February. A special thanks to volunteer art instructors Susie Klein, Betsy White, and Gina Bikales, who donated their time and shared their expertise during these workshops. The workshops were free of charge and available to all of our kids over the age of 5.



THE NIGHTINGALE SOCIETY SUPPORTS MOURNING STAR

The Nightingale Society, VNAIC's volunteer women's auxiliary dedicated to fulfilling the non-clinical needs of our patients, has been busy granting the wishes of MSC. Under the leadership of Nightingale Society Chair, Linda Curea, the women have donated many items to The Center and the families it serves. They do this not by opening their check books, but by networking in the community. In recent months the ladies have donated dress-up clothes, toys, an armoire, fans, a swamp cooler, books, and art supplies. The Nightingales are always interested in adding new members, so if you would like information on how you can become a valued member of this group, please call Gina Bikales, Fund Development Manager at 760-773-6262.

★ *Dancing the Night Away*

Dancing With Our Stars is a unique fundraiser to be held on October 28th at the Hyatt Grand Champions in Indian Wells. The event will benefit 12 Coachella Valley charities, among them the Mourning Star Center!



Dr. Audrey Depelteau, D.C., our "Star," has graciously volunteered her time and dancing talent for the Center to perform with her professional partner, Luis Garcia, in the 2nd charity ballroom dance competition. Dr. Depelteau has a successful chiropractic practice in Cathedral City and spends her free time giving back to the community.



The charity event, a production of A Charity Affair, allows you to vote for Dr. Depelteau by "purchasing" Proxy Votes for \$10 each – as many as you like! 100% of all monies received benefit the Center and are tax deductible. Everyone's a Winner!

You can help our Star win!



- Use the envelope included here and simply write "Dancing With Our Stars" somewhere on the envelope. Provide your credit card information or include your check, payable to the Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC, stamp the envelope and drop it in the mail, or,
- Call our Fund Development office at (760) 773-6260 and purchase your vote over the phone, or,
- Drop by the VNAIC office on Cook Street in Palm Desert and purchase your vote in person. (To insure staff availability to assist you quickly, please call (760) 773-6260. Our office hours are generally 8 am to 5 pm, Monday – Friday.)



5TH ANNUAL

heart *of fashion*

*Honorary Chair Jackie Lee Houston
Event Chair Barbara Geitzen*

February 8, 2007
Rancho Las Palmas Resort in Rancho Mirage

*To benefit The Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC
A place of hope and healing for grieving children*

For an invitation call (760) 773-6260

The Best Wheel Deal in Town

It's time for a new car...but what are you going to do with the old one? Trade-ins just aren't worth the time, or the hassle involved. Besides, you are never offered what you think is a fair trade. Selling a car yourself can take way too much time away from the golf course, the tennis courts, or the swimming pool. Do you really want to put your phone number out there for just anyone to call? VNAIC has a better idea. By donating your vehicle, boat or RV to us, you can be assured that the fair market value will be tax deductible, the vehicle will be taken away in a timely manner, and the proceeds from your donation will help provide the best in home health and hospice care to those in need. To find out more about the best wheel deal in town, please call (760) 773-6260.



WAYS YOU CAN HELP

The Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC

You can help support our mission in a variety of ways:

Make a donation

Volunteer your time

Support our fundraising efforts

Spread the word

The Mourning Star Center is supported solely through private support from individuals, foundations and companies, and receives no state or federal funding.

The Mourning Star Center does not charge a fee for its services.



The Visiting Nurse Association of the Inland Counties (VNAIC)

offers adult grief support groups in English and Spanish.

VNAIC also offers a **Young Adult Grief Support Group for Ages 19-30's**

Please call (760) 836-0360 for dates and times groups meet.



MSC Grief Support Groups

Little's: Ages 3-5

School Age: Ages 6-12

Teens: Ages 13-18

Please call (760) 836-0360 for dates and times groups meet.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT OUR VOLUNTEERS

MSC would not be capable of serving 50 children and teens per month, were it not for our wonderful volunteer facilitators! Our facilitators not only complete several days of extensive training prior to working with our children, but they also make a 10-month commitment to remain involved with their group at the Center. We have outstanding volunteers and, as a token of our appreciation, MSC hosted a dinner at the Marriott Shadow Ridge Resort. It was a great time of comradery and team building. We also were able to debrief from the year's experiences, review our mission and goals for serving the community, and most importantly, recognize the unique contribution that each and every facilitator made to our program. Staff presented Certificates of Appreciation to each facilitator during the dinner. Thank you to the Marriott Shadow Ridge Resort for donating Marriott Dollars toward the cost of the dinner.



MSC Staff and Volunteer Facilitators (front row) John Fajardo, Krystine Johnson, Pat Woodard, Deana Blissmer, John Forand (back row) Pamela Gabbay, Joy Soice, Kim DuBeau, Kathleen Dale

Mourning Star Center Staff attends The Dougy Center Summer Institute

Mourning Star Center Staff Anne Marie Clark, Kim DuBeau, Pamela Gabbay, and Sheryl Sullivan (from our Victorville office), attended the Dougy Center's International Summer Institute training for a week in July. The Summer Institute provided program and skill development as well as opportunities to observe Dougy Center peer to peer grief support groups. The Dougy Center is the National Center for Grieving Children and Families and the model upon which The Mourning Star Center is based. Not only was the work that of the Center validated, but we left the Dougy Center with wonderful ideas for program expansion and development. It was an inspiring week for all who attended from the VNAIC! A large portion of the cost for attending the Summer Institute was made possible by the Bob Hope Chrysler Classic Foundation and the Regional Access Project Foundation (RAP). A special thank you to both of these organizations for making this trip possible!

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Director Palm Desert HospiceKim DuBeau
Center CoordinatorPamela Gabbay
Camp Erin Coordinator**OUR GOAL**

The Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC provides loving support in a safe place where grieving children can share their experience as they move through their healing process. The Center extends supportive services to the family, caregivers, schools, and the community.

OUR PRINCIPLES

The Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC believes that every child deserves the opportunity to grieve in a supportive and understanding environment. However, our society often fails to understand or support the needs of a child and family in grief. Based on these beliefs, the principles of The Mourning Star Center of the VNAIC are:

- ★ Grief is a natural reaction to the loss of a loved one for children as well as adults.
- ★ With the help of the community, each individual has the natural capacity to heal.
- ★ The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual.
- ★ Caring and acceptance assist in the healing process.

