Fernside Celebrates Twenty Years

This year Fernside reaches a remarkable milestone in its development. In a very special place that acknowledges the timeless nature of grief, we pay special attention to time by marking our twenty years of service to the Greater Cincinnati Area. In this article, we revisit a few of the highlights from our past as well as celebrate where we are now.

Beverly Chappell is founder and former director of The Dougy Center in Portland, Oregon, the first organization to serve grieving children in this country. Beverly has fond memories of Rachel Burrell, Fernside’s founder. “It was during a miserably hot few days in August, 1985, and The Dougy Center was holding its first ever National Training. If I remember correctly, there were only 5 or 6 attendees. One of them was Rachel. I knew for certain that she had been bitten by the urge to go back home and start a program.” The rest is history. Rachel did create a program, naming it Fernside: A Center for Grieving Children. Her vision and leadership along with the vital support from key community partners enabled Fernside to open its doors in December 1986. The Junior League of Cincinnati provided financial and volunteer support in the beginning. Other individuals were instrumental as well, especially Barb Coe, Steve Sunderland, and Ginger Hamm. Knox Presbyterian Church in Hyde Park and the United Church of Christ in Norwood provided a home for our program for which we were very grateful.

In January of 2001 we became an affiliate of Hospice of Cincinnati. This association has advanced the overall growth of our programming. Comparing the years 2001 and 2005, we have seen a 39% increase in the number of adults served and a 68% increase in the number of children served. During this 4-year period we have formed 3 satellite locations in addition to the groups offered at our primary site in Blue Ash and provided in-school support groups to grieving students. This tremendous growth could not have been possible without the support of our dedicated volunteers.

Fernside has also maintained an active role on the national level with representation on the Advisory Council of the National Alliance for Grieving Children. Program staff members have offered numerous workshops to colleagues around the country at the annual conference of the National Symposium for Grieving Children.

We will continue to serve the needs of grieving children and their families in the tri-state area; providing support, advocacy, resources, and education. Thank you to all the families, individuals, organizations, and foundations who have supported us thus far. We invite you to share the next twenty years and beyond with us.
Support Groups Available

Blue Ash:
2nd and 4th Monday Parent Loss
2nd and 4th Tuesday Parent Loss
1st and 3rd Tuesday Sibling Loss
1st and 3rd Thursday Extended Family Member and Friend Loss
1st and 3rd Thursday Young Adult Support Group

Hamilton Area:
1st and 3rd Tuesday Parent Loss

Bridgetown
2nd and 4th Wednesday Parent Loss

Anderson Township
2nd and 4th Thursday Parent Loss
The next round of facilitator training classes begins in February 2006. Dates for the classes are February 11th, 15th, 18th, 22nd, 25th, and March 1st. Contact Mary if you are interested in working directly with the children and adults in our support groups.

The Hospice Summertime Classic is scheduled for June 4th and 5th at the Hyde Park Golf and Country Club. This annual event supports programming at Fernside. Volunteers are needed for both days. Please contact Erin Walker at the Bethesda Foundation if you would like to help. She can be reached at 513-745-1613 or at Erin_Walker@trihealth.com.

Fernside’s summer camp program, Camp WeBelong takes place this August. Planning for the camp is underway now. Facilitators should contact Mary if they are interested in volunteering as camp counselors.

This space is devoted to the writings, drawings and quotes of Fernside children and adults who are grieving the death of someone close.

Blank

I went to the ____.  
I saw ____ and  
I ate ____. It was  
All very _____, but it  
Could’ve been more _____.

Just a few words on a page  
That’s what it seems.  
Doesn’t make any sense  
You don’t know what it means.

He was the spunk,  
The attitude,  
The flavor.  
He was the extra-extra  
In my life.  
Without him it’s  
The same old question:  
Why? Why? Why?

While he was here  
He would always find a way  
To fill the air with cheer.  
Drumming on the counter,  
Screaming lyrics throughout the house,  
You’d be around him for two minutes,  
No matter how you felt before,  
Your face would be filled with a smile.

Now I spend two seconds  
Thinking about him,  
And the way things used to be.  
Tears spill down my face.  
I know he’s up there,  
Looking down on me,  
Shaking his head  
Wanting me to stop what I’m thinking.

Now life just doesn’t make any sense.  
All the things that I thought mattered,  
Just don’t anymore.  
All the things that I thought didn’t matter,  
Mean the world to me now.  
Like an old vase I was  
Cracked and shattered and,  
He was the glue.  
Always holding things together.  
Without him in my life  
I just don’t know what to do.

Kayla at the WeBelong Retreat, November 2005.

Kayla has discovered a love for poetry since the death of her brother Craig. She has shared some of her poems with other teens in her Sibling Loss group.

Call with any questions or to arrange a pick-up time: (513) 745-0111. Ask for Christi! Thanks!

wish list

• Crayola Model Magic
• Foam shapes and letters
• Gift cards to Hobby Lobby, Michaels’ and Ritz
• Gift certificates to Oriental Trading Company, Inc.
• Memory boxes (small/medium, paper mache)
• Polaroid 600 film
Jeff and Kristin Braun lost their 4-year old daughter Noelle Elizabeth who died suddenly November 29th, 2004. Shortly after her death, they began attending Fernside's sibling loss groups with their son, Alec. Her premature death has taught them some important lessons. According to the Brauns, "Noelle brought so much love into our lives and she continues to shine through us everyday. By her death she has taught us the preciousness of life. Live your best life everyday and take nothing for granted."

With this in mind, Jeff and Kristin created the noelle elizabeth braun MEMORIAL FOUNDATION. The foundation's mission is to provide financial assistance to enhance educational opportunities, provide grief support and enable joyful experiences for local area children. They hosted their first annual memorial gala and golf tournament at the Kenwood Country Club on October 23rd and 24th. Fernside received a portion of the proceeds from this event and was presented with a check in the amount of $5,000.