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December 2011, Issue 26



Seasons™ Loss and Grief Program

Hello Everyone,

Our final newsletter for this year highlights the amazing impact of Seasons at Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre (PRNC) in Queensland, whilst our mid-year newsletter focussed on the excellent work of our long standing Seasons New Zealand partners, Waiapu Anglican Social Services.

Both these entities have embraced the Seasons philosophy and as a consequence have provided support each year to 100's of young people and their families experiencing loss and grief, they act with their focus on the young person.

'The young person, with their individual needs, is at the centre of the Seasons™'.

Seasons A Program for Grief & Loss Mp.2

It is humbling to reflect on the work of the Seasons Program as it deals daily with grief and loss issues that have the capacity to cripple the lives of children. It is also always important to return your gaze to the reason that Seasons was written – the support of children, young people and their families. Examples of the benefits of Seasons can be seen when you read the reflections of children reproduced in this newsletter when they express their reactions and feelings in written form.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Christmas and holiday season and I invite you to move forward with us into 2012.

Liz Payne
Pastoral Services Manager
CatholicCare
Formerly Centacare Catholic Family Service, Melbourne



Seasons™ PRNC LAWNTON QLD

By Paula sharp

It is inspiring to see and hear about some of the wonderful work our Seasons™ Companions are doing supporting those young people and people grieving the death of a loved one or the breakdown of their family unit. Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre in Lawnton QLD is one organisation that has worked tirelessly to establish not only Seasons

Support Groups for both young people and adults but also a trained volunteer base of Seasons Companions, school and community Networks for referrals and more recently new partnerships and offices within a school setting! Sonja Flett, as the Community Learning Manager, has been at the forefront of the drive to create this new model of delivery. Sonja has been a trained Companion for 8 years and a Trainer of both the 5yr- 18yr and Adults Program the last two years. Sonja is an inspiration to us all! Please find below the story of the PRNC Seasons™ journey from Sonja! Thankyou Sonja!

Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre

By Sonja Flett Community Learning Manager

“The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre (PRNC) in Lawton, Queensland, has facilitated the Families in Transition incorporating the Seasons™ program for many years within the Community Learning focus area. The program is pivotal in supporting local community members who have experienced significant family change and are experiencing grief and loss because of those changes.

PRNC facilitates four groups every term, with each course spanning eight weeks. Two of the groups are for children aged 7-9 yrs and 10-12 yrs; one group is for parents and the fourth group is for child minding. This ensures whole of family participation and support. Our primary focus is to assist children to cope with the death of a loved one, family separation or divorce. We have a team of highly skilled and trained volunteer companions that facilitate the children’s groups. The volunteer Companions have diverse backgrounds, including retired teachers, social workers, provisional psychologists, community artists, master’s students and family support workers. The parent group is facilitated by the Community Learning Manager and Support Worker

Each group has two active and enthusiastic volunteers which guarantee the program is full of wonderful moments. Each volunteer brings their strengths and this adds flavour to each program. For example, one of our volunteers has a gift in silk artistry. This volunteer makes bright silk scarfs with the children in week 7 before the group finishes and uses the opportunity to talk about thinking positively and being hopeful about the future. The volunteer also discusses how wearing a bright scarf can remind us to be bright in our attitude also. Another companion is skilled in origami and can make beautiful paper cranes, so in week 6 when the topic is memories the companion discusses the story of Sadako and her thousand paper cranes while making beautiful cranes with the children. Encouraging Companions to use their strengths to connect with lessons has been a key in making groups successful.



The parent group explores ways to support their children more effectively through the change or loss they are experiencing. The parent group is facilitated simultaneously for simplicity, but also for the children to be able to see everyone has a responsibility to grow and support each other through the significant changes they are experiencing. Some of the topics we cover in the parenting program are: understanding children’s reactions to grief and loss events; positive communication with children; building self-esteem in children; and positive discipline. When parents attend and share their stories and experiences with each other, the normalization of their experience occurs and they begin to understand that they are not alone in their journey. Parents often make friends and stay connected after the group has finished.

The Pine Rivers Neighbourhood Centre also offers Counselling, Family Therapy, Support to maintain tenancy, Legal Advice, Family Support, Kids Friends Mentoring, Volunteer management and development, Multicultural groups and many other services. This diversity of services within our organisation allows a very responsive easily-accessible service to be offered to families attending the program. Integration within PRNC is beneficial to clients as referrals are easily made across programs.

The Community Learning focus area moved to Undurba State School’s brand new community hall in early 2010. This was enabled through a partnership agreement with Undurba State School and Living Faith Primary. This partnership has created access to great conference room spaces for all the groups facilitated by Community Learning. Being integrated in two large school communities allows for good community communication and involvement. The school communities have embraced Seasons™ being on the school grounds and student support staff often refer students who identify as going through significant life change. Families can then be easily contacted and enrolled in the program.

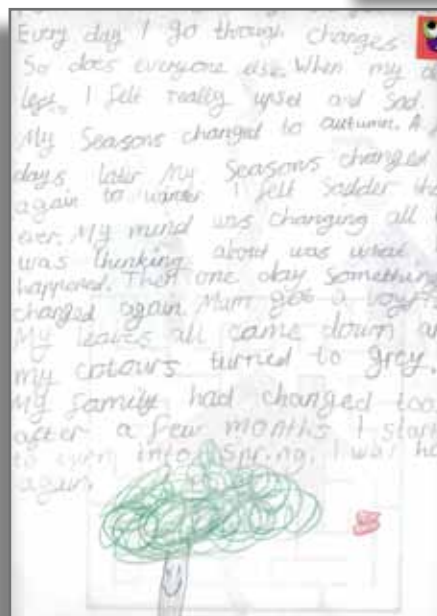


PRNC has been funded by FaHCSIA to continue facilitating Families In Transition incorporating the Seasons™ program for the next three years. This continuation of funding has been very warmly received by the Community Learning team because it means we can continue to consistently support local families who are experiencing grief and loss due to significant change in their lives.”

Seasons™ peer support groups

By Paula sharp

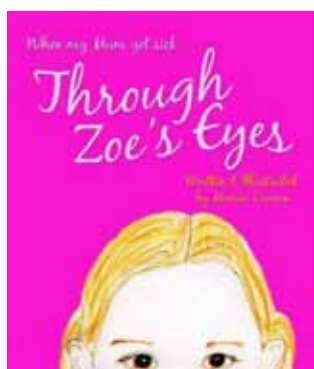
Here are some reminders of why we do what we do in the Seasons™ Program! These insights by the young people in a Seasons™ group illustrate what a powerful image the 'Seasons and a Tree' creates. One of our wonderful Companions shared some of her groups work (with their permission). The copies are a little cut off but I think you will get the idea and hopefully be affirmed in your work with young people living with family separation or the death of a parent.



Resources

We are often asked for suggested resources for young people who are experiencing a Life Threatening Illness in their family and one of our more recent finds is this lovely picture book written by a mother and daughter.

Through Zoe's eyes



'When Monica was first diagnosed with cancer in January 2006, she searched for a picture book to help her daughter Zoe deal with the changes that had occurred in her life. After finding that most books were about specific illness or had very sombre undertones, Zoe and Monica set about writing and illustrating their own story.' Ages 5+.

The suicide of a parent is a traumatic and extremely difficult time for children and those people who care for them. Below are some suggested resources to help support the young people and the carers after complicated losses.

DIANA C. SANDS, PHD

Red Chocolate Elephants

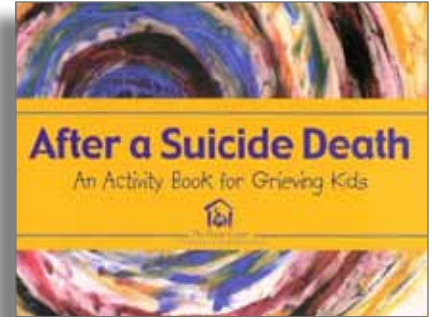
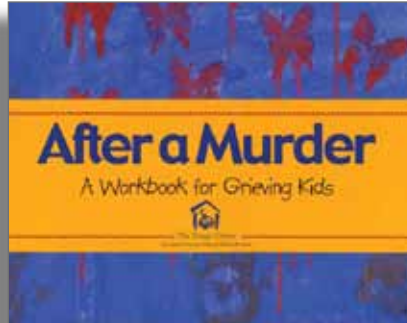
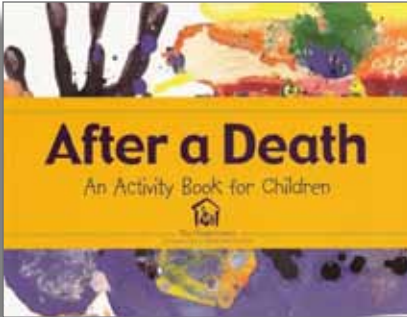
Red Chocolate Elephants is an educational DVD and book resource for children and families bereaved by suicide. In this moving and beautiful book and DVD, children write and draw about their experience of losing a parent to suicide.



Continued on next page...

After A Death Series (*After A Death, After A Murder, After A Suicide Death*)

The Dougy Center, USA (The National Centre for Grieving Children and Families). Activity and Workbooks for Grieving Children.



BOOK YOUR PLACE NOW IN ONE SEASONS™ TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR 2012

Seasons™ Program	Program Number	Location	Program Dates	
			Day One	Day Two
5-18yrs Seasons™ (Core Program)	1	East Melbourne	20 March	27 March
5-18yrs Seasons™ (Core Program)	2	East Melbourne	22 May	29 May
5-18yrs Seasons™ (Core Program)	3	East Melbourne	21 August	28 August
5-18yrs Seasons™ (Core Program)	Regional 1	Geelong	TBC Sept (Wed)	TBC Sept (Wed)
5-18yrs Seasons™ (Core Program)	4	East Melbourne	16 October	23 October

ABN 42 795 179 778

Places will be allocated in order of receipt of bookings.

Please do not send payment until invoiced & ring if confirmation is not received within a fortnight.



Name of Organisation (Auspice) :.....

Name of Principal/Agency Director:.....

Auspice Address:.....

Postcode:..... Phone:..... Email: **(required for confirmation)**.....

Signature Principal/Manager:.....

The following people wish to attend the Seasons™ training program:

Name	Program Number	Program Date
eg. Mary Peters	2	22nd April/6th May
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