



Motherless Daughters
of Orange County

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A Publication of Motherless Daughters of Orange County,
Inc.

Spring, 2009

Volume 6, Issue 1



*Once upon a memory
Someone wiped away a tear
Held me close and loved me
Thank you, Mother dear.*

Motherless Daughters of Orange County, Inc.
Mission Statement

Motherless Daughters of Orange County was formed to provide support, community and resources to women and girls who have experienced early mother loss (birth to 21 years of age). We are committed to bringing together motherless daughters, otherwise isolated, to encourage healing among them and to promote awareness about the long-lasting effects of such a loss.

*Please join the women of
Motherless Daughters of Orange County
for our Thirteenth Annual
Motherless Daughters Day Luncheon*

*Saturday, May 9, 2009
11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Alta Vista Country Club
777 Alta Vista Street
Placentia, California*

*R.S.V.P. by April 24th--\$30
After April 24th--\$35*

Reservation deadline April 27th

*More information
Juanita Driskell
714.772.9002*

** Teens, be our guest.
Reduced rate for college students*

Message From Our President ~ Juanita Driskell

Hello Sisters at Heart,



It has been a long time since I wrote one of these letters. So, welcome back. If you are reading this, you are reading our new newsletter. We've decided to join the modern age and put the newsletter up on our website where you'll be able to find it periodically from now on. By doing it this way, we hope to save costs plus make it more convenient. If you still like the feel of a newsletter in your hands, you can, of course, download it and print it out. And we will be printing some issues for our friends who don't have a computer and for the people on our courtesy list. Our courtesy list consists of professional therapists. When we send them a courtesy copy, they can place it in their waiting rooms so we can reach more potential members for MDOC. It's part of our outreach to the community.

This brings up the idea of membership fees. In the past, membership in MDOC costs \$25 and was based on the fact that you received the newsletter. By putting the newsletter up on the internet for anyone to read, obviously we can't justify a membership fee for that reason anymore. The board of directors did decide to keep a membership fee but reduce it to \$20 and base it on the other reasons that existed before. The two main reasons for keeping your membership are that your information remains in our database so you will be sure to receive information about upcoming events as well as invitations to them. And, as a member, you will receive a discount on the price you pay for the events for which we charge a fee. We also are able to send out cards on your birthday, which was special for your mom; and on the anniversary of her death, which no one else does. You can have the satisfaction, too, of knowing that you have supported an organization that honors the needs of sister motherless daughters.

Most of the money that we get for memberships will go to administrative costs that will enable us to put on functions such as our annual Mother's Day luncheon. It keeps us from having to ask for donations from sponsors or from having to spend money from our own pockets to put on events. Plus, it will enable us to donate money, as we did this year, to worthy places such as Gary's Place for Kids. Gary's Place helps young, newly bereaved motherless daughters (and sons) process the loss that they have just experienced. We are always trying to reach out and make ourselves available as a resource for other motherless daughters in our community, and your membership money will help us do that.

The new fee will be payable starting in May, and you may pay at the luncheon. We will have our treasurer there to take your checks.

The other important thing to talk about with you is the Mother's Day luncheon. It will be held this year at the Alta Vista Country Club in Placentia from 11:30 till 2:30. If you are on our membership list already (from previous years), you have already received your invitation, and we hope that you are coming to the luncheon. This year, we won't be having a guest speaker. We will instead be speaking ourselves and telling our stories about our mother loss and how we dealt (or didn't deal) with it. We hope to have you add your story to the women who will be sharing.

We sincerely hope that this new format of the newsletter will be successful and will meet the needs of our members and of other women out there who are motherless daughters but haven't joined us yet.

As always, you can reach me at juanita@finewoodnthings.com if you have any questions.

Juanita Driskell

MDOC President

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Sisters at Heart Newsletter

Linda Mantarakis, Editor
mdocnews@yahoo.com

*This newsletter can also be viewed on our website:
motherlessdaughtersoforangecounty.org*

CLINICAL CORNER

By Patricia Zielinski

How to Deal with Mother's Day

Every year on Mother's Day, motherless daughters everywhere mourn the loss of their beloved mothers. When we see mothers and daughters young and old, having brunch, window shopping and holding hands, a familiar feeling of pain and longing

re-emerges. The following suggestions are offered not only to help you to get through Mother's Day, but to honor your mother in a way that is meaningful to you.

Find a unique way to keep you mother's memory alive: Plant a rose bush or flowering shrub in your garden. Each time it re-blooms you will remember the special beauty that she brings to your life. Watch her favorite movie, eat her favorite food or do something she would enjoy. Look at photos and share with others the special times you shared with her. Share some of her motherly wisdom with your children or a special child in your life.

Remember self-care: Plan ahead and find ways to nurture yourself. Treat yourself to a manicure or pedicure, take a walk and pick flowers, or light a fragrant candle to remember her presence in your heart. You can choose how to spend the day.

Feel your feelings: If you feel like crying...cry. Whatever you are feeling it is important to honor it. You may want to write your mother a letter on your favorite stationery telling her what is in your heart. Avoiding your feelings by repressing them or numbing them out doesn't solve the problem. Sooner or later they will need to emerge. Remember that uncomfortable feelings too shall pass.

Remember some motherly advice...

Always change your underwear; you never know when you'll have an accident.

Don't make that face or it will freeze in that position.

Pick up your room! You weren't born in a barn! If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all.

What if everyone jumped off a cliff? Would you do it too?

Don't put that in your mouth; you don't know where it has been.

Written by Patricia Zielinski, Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
www.patriciazielinski.com (949) 433-8949

Prince William Marks His New Role as Patron of Britain's Child Bereavement Charity.

Prince William has spoken in depth publicly for the first time about death of his mother, Diana, Princess of Wales, 12 years ago. "What my mother recognized then -- and what I understand now -- is that losing a close family member is one of the hardest experiences that anyone can ever endure.

"Never being able to say the word 'Mummy' again in your life sounds like a small thing. "However, for many, including me, it's now really just a word -- hollow and evoking only memories." Writing in Britain's Daily Mail newspaper about his new role, the Prince said the reality of losing a child or parent was "awful."

"Initially, there is a sense of profound shock and disbelief that this could ever happen to you. Real grief often does not hit home until much later. For many it is a grief never entirely lost. Life is altered as you know it, and not a day goes past without you thinking about the one you have lost."

**"Losing your Mother so young,
makes you feel sort of invisible."**

~
Dylan McDermott, Actor



Channeling The Grief Process Into a Magnificent Creative Adventure

By Adele Canzano, Grief Program Developer and Program Manager Gary's Place For Kids

Gary's Place For Kids provides ongoing grief support for children, teens and their families in a safe and nurturing environment. We meet the first and third Monday of the month from 6-7p.m. at the Mission Conference Center in Mission Viejo, September thru June. Our groups are divided into Littles 5-8, Middles 9-12 and Teens 13-18. Our adult group meets at the same time.

Our staff is trained in the principals of The Center of Attitudinal Healing and The Dougy Center. Both Centers roots are based on the teachings of Elizabeth Kubler Ross.

I am often asked how Gary's Place For Kids got started.

Seven years ago, after the loss of my mother, Julie, I was attending a weekly ongoing adult grief group. I had been attending almost a year when one evening a young widow, Madeline, sat down next to me. We became friends.

When Madeline had been attending group for about six months her daughter Sondra, then eleven, said to her, "Mom why can't I have a group to go to like you and Adele have so that I can share my feelings about Daddy?"

The search for a children's grief group began. At quite a distance from home, we found a six-week grief group for Sondra. When the six-weeks were over we were told that the group would not have another session due to lack of funding. For Sondra, who was just beginning to find comfort in the group, this was another loss.

When we related this to our group, our Facilitators, Kathleen Braun and Jeanette O'Connor, looked us right in the eyes and said, "I think it's time for the two of you to get out there and start a children's group."

It took every ounce of resolve we had. Just when we felt we would have to abandon our dream the universe would open a door that allowed us to go forward. It was during this time that I came to realize that the grieving process could be channeled into a magnificent creative adventure. My background is in art and finance and Madeline's background is in the legal profession. As it was Sondra's desire to have a place to share her feelings about her father, Gary, which was at the heart of it, we named it Gary's Place For Kids. With the help of our two angels, Gary and my mother, Julie, we opened our doors six years ago.

So many times adults, who have lost a parent during childhood, say to me...if only a place like this had been around

Courage is not freedom from fear, but being afraid and going on. — J.C. Shapley

Profiles in Courage ~

by Linda Mantarakis

I was 20 when my mother actually died, but that is only the end of the story. She died for me right after I was born.

During her pregnancy, she started falling; they thought she might have a brain tumor. They operated on her when she was four months pregnant, but found nothing. They later determined she had MS.

I have a few recollections of her being at home from when I was very young, lying in her hospital bed in the room she shared with my father. He had asked my grandmother to come live with us to take care of her and me. Nana was very strict and controlling and it was not a very loving household. She always told my father what a bad girl I had been as soon as he came home from work.

My mother was shuttled in and out of hospitals throughout my childhood, and when I was 11, she was finally sent away to a long care facility about an hour from our house. My father and I would go there once a week for the next nine years. She was in a huge ward that smelled bad and she cried all the time. I finally stopped going the last year or so of her life because I hated being dragged to see someone I really didn't know. I couldn't relate to her at all as being my mother—just some emaciated stranger in a bed.

It was on one of these trips to see her that my Dad and I were talking and he told me that she hadn't really wanted to have children at all and that he threatened to divorce her if she didn't! I didn't realize at the time what a huge impact that piece of information would have on my life.

When she finally passed away, I went to the funeral and felt nothing. After all, I didn't know this person who had died; she was just someone I visited in the hospital. It wasn't until 15 years later that I discovered all the repressed grief and loss I felt.

I had recently gotten married and all was well, except for a nagging problem in the back of my mind that I couldn't put my finger on. I found a therapist and we talked for a while. She then gave me a pencil and paper and instructed me to write a letter to my mother telling her how angry I was that she had left me, and to use my left hand. She said that by using my left hand, I would write in a slower, more child-like way. Well, I started in on my assignment and immediately started to sob. I had never known in all those years how deeply I had felt her loss. The fact that I had never had a mother to be there for me and the fact that she hadn't wanted me anyway!

I have seen several counselors over the years but have yet to come to a full resolution of the loss. I did, however, come to terms with the fact that she probably did love me and was just afraid to have a child. As it turns out, she was also a motherless daughter. Her mother died when she was 9 years old.

Note from the editor: I have volunteered to publish this newsletter because I feel very strongly that it is a tremendous resource for Motherless Daughters, as is MDOC. Please bear with me in the issues to come as I try to put it together in a cohesive format.

VOLUME 6, ISSUE 1

Motherless Daughters of Orange County Membership Form

Please print and complete all items

Today's Date: _____

- \$20.00 Annual Membership (See member benefits below)
- \$15.00 Student Rate: Eighteen (18) years of age and younger
- Other: \$ _____ MDOC appreciates any other tax-deductible donation you care to make and will provide you with a letter for tax purposes.

- I have enclosed my company's matching gift form. Please contact me regarding volunteer opportunities.

Membership donations pay for the printing of *Sisters at Heart* Newsletter for those professional therapists on our courtesy lists, mailings, local organizer support, and administrative costs. This information is strictly for the purpose of maintaining our database. Motherless Daughters of Orange County does not sell or exchange its member information with any person or organization.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ E-Mail: _____

Occupation: _____ Your Date of Birth: _____ / _____ / _____

Mother's Name: _____ Mother's age at time of loss: _____

Do you have children? Yes No Month/Day you lost your mom: _____

If so, how many? Boys: _____ Girls: _____ Your age at time of loss: _____

How did you hear about Motherless Daughters of Orange County (MDOC)? _____

Please make your check or money order payable to: Motherless Daughters of Orange County or MDOC

Mail to: Juanita Driskell, 1302 W. Colonial Avenue, Anaheim, CA 92802

MEMBER BENEFITS

Your annual membership to Motherless Daughters of Orange County will provide you with the following benefits for one year:

- Invitations to special events and social events for motherless women.
- Notices about local workshops and seminars that relate to early mother loss and/or grieving.
- Remembrances on your birthday and the anniversary of your mother's death
- Discounts to members for all MDOC-sponsored events that include the public.