



## Helping grieving children through the holidays

Adults play an important role in helping children grieve, especially over the holidays when new emotions and memories can hit with full force. Children often have trouble expressing their emotions, and when they see their loved one hurting, they naturally want to protect them, so the children may not be open about their own grief. Close family friends and even other relatives can step in and assist in helping the children grieve. The following are tips that a parent or other loved one can use to help grieving children through the holidays.

**Conversations and connections ...** Talk with them about their loved one. Be specific with good memories. Let children share their feelings and stories. Keep the communication lines

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## Managing emotions through the holidays

*F*all ushers in the beginning of the holiday season. It is a time when friends and family gather to celebrate and it is often filled with traditions. Holiday activities, traditional or not, may be difficult for the bereaved.

Events and happenings around the holidays play on all of our senses. Your departed loved one may have had a big part in putting up the holiday lights or maybe he/she was the one who prepared the holiday meal. What you see, hear and taste bring to mind experiences, evoke emotions and may intensify grieving.

"Emotions can take us by surprise," said Optimal Hospice Bereavement Counselor David Berg. "Be aware that raw emotions are possible, especially if the loss is recent. Having a dress rehearsal for an upcoming event may prepare you to manage those emotions."

Anticipate how you might feel in holiday situations and have a plan to help you navigate those emotions. Identify that *this* may happen, so I will be prepared to do *that*: have water to drink, have a note pad to write on, leave the room, etc. Let others know how they can help you. For instance, have a safe word with a partner that lets him/her know to sit near you, change the conversation or just be there to listen.

With the loss of a loved one, some traditions are no longer possible in the way we have known them. It is OK not to do everything. Don't be afraid to express your feelings or to ask if another family member wants to do that activity that your loved one did.

Keep in mind that anticipation is often worse than the actual event. Having a plan may put you at ease and help you through the season.



# Helping grieving children,

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open by spending one-on-one time with a child who is grieving. This is especially important as you and the child remember your loved one's favorite holiday activities.

**Clown around ...** Children need to take breaks in their grieving. In other words they will not grieve continuously, every day, all day long. Let them laugh and kid around. It's okay to laugh. Laughter releases good endorphins in the brain.

**Create ...** Let them draw, color, paint or construct their world through blocks and other manipulative items. Make an ornament or a collage. What does my life look like? Who is in it? Who is not?

**Carry ...** Let them have a photo or small memento to carry with them. It helps them feel close. During the holidays, allow the children to keep pictures of their loved one from past holidays. Visit about how the holidays will be different but also how some traditions will be the same.

**Cope ...** Let them journal. It could be in the form of a letter, a daily meditation with God or in a book form. (It's like

peeling an onion and getting to the core, their heart.)

**Center ...**

Remember the family is the center of your children's world. They need stability. You are it. However, if this is too much for you, then allow other adults to minister to your child. Always be close by so your children do not feel abandoned.

**Composure ...** Don't feel like you always have to be composed. It is okay for the children to see your tears and to feel your pain. Ask your children for a hug on your down days.

**Cook ...** Let them bake a special holiday meal or dessert in memory of their loved one. Invite family and friends to join in. If their loved one had a favorite Christmas candy or a favorite Thanksgiving dessert, encourage the child to make those items and talk



about how much the loved one enjoyed these favorite items.

**Celebrate ...** Let them go to holiday parties and family get-togethers. Make new memories and new traditions.

**Candlelight memorial service ...** Let them honor the memory of their loved one.

*In part from "Helping grieving children through the holidays" by Jodi Rule-Rouse and Linda Ranson Jacobs.*

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## Save the date for our Community Celebrations

Each year Optimal Hospice Foundation holds uplifting Light Up A Life events to remember our loved ones and help to keep their memories alive as we enter into the holidays.

Light Up A Life information will be mailed the first week of November and also can be found on our website: [OptimalHospiceFoundation.com](http://OptimalHospiceFoundation.com)

### BAKERSFIELD

Wednesday, December 5, 6:30 p.m.  
Bakersfield RV Resort,\*  
5025 Wible Road

### FRESNO/CLOVIS

Thursday, December 6, 6:00 p.m.  
Sierra Vista Mall Common Area,\*  
1050 Shaw Avenue, Clovis

### KERN RIVER VALLEY

Sunday, December 9, 5:00 p.m.  
Kernville Circle Park,\* Kernville

### LONG BEACH

Thursday, December 13, 7:00 p.m.  
Huntington Terrace  
18800 Florida Street, Huntington Beach

### MODESTO

Tuesday, December 11, 6:00 p.m.  
Bethel Assisted Living, 2345 Scenic Drive

### PORTERVILLE

Wednesday, December 5, 6:00 p.m.  
Roger S. Good Cancer Center,\*  
456 West Putnam Avenue

### STOCKTON

Wednesday, December 12, 6:00 p.m.  
Oakmont Of Stockton, 3318 Brookside Road

### TAFT

Thursday, December 13, 6:00 p.m.  
The Historic Fort, 915 North 10th Street

### TEHACHAPI

Saturday, December 8, 3:00 p.m.  
Tehachapi Senior Center, 500 East F Street

### VISALIA AND TULARE

Tuesday, December 4, 6:00 p.m.  
Café 210, 210 Center Avenue, Visalia

\* Outdoor/partially outdoor event



# Optimal Cares Halloween Car Show



Presented by



**Saturday, Oct. 27**  
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



at the Bakersfield RV Resort  
5025 Wible Road, Bakersfield, CA 93313

**Open to ALL Vehicles  
Including Motorcycles**

For event sponsorship, entry and vendor  
information, call the Foundation office at  
(661) 716-8000,  
email [cshoemake@optimalcares.com](mailto:cshoemake@optimalcares.com)  
or visit  
[www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com](http://www.OptimalHospiceFoundation.com).

*100% of net proceeds benefit Optimal Hospice Foundation*

## Thank you Garden Wine Tasting Sponsors and Patrons

The 3rd Annual Optimal Cares Wine Tasting event,  
held Saturday, June 16 at the home of Tim and Millie Byers,  
raised over \$10,000 to support the Foundation's mission.

Thank you to all of the sponsors, donors, attendees,  
vendors and volunteers that made this event a huge success.

For information regarding our 2019 event please  
contact Cherie Shoemake at 559-320-8000 or  
[cshoemake@optimalcares.com](mailto:cshoemake@optimalcares.com). We are currently looking  
for new committee members.

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Cedarbrook Memory Care  
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### Spirit Sponsor

Yost & Webb Funeral Home

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Cedar Creek Senior Living • Evergreen Residential Care

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• Michelangelo's Pizzeria • Mickey's Yogurt • Phoenician Garden Mediterranean  
Bar and Grill • Popolo's Pizza • Press Box Sports Grill • Somerford Place Fresno  
• Taco Plus Co. Latin Grill • Tamari Robotayaki & Whisky Bar • The Market

### Wine Vendors

Allegro Wine of California • Pear Valley Vineyards • Prosperi Farms  
• Quady Winery • San Joaquin Wine Company • The Wine Group  
• Tobin James Cellars • Turner Wine Alliance

# Golf in the Sun & Under the Stars

The 27th Annual Golf In the Sun & Under the Stars Tournament presented by Horizon Oxygen & Medical Equipment, Inc. was held on Friday, September 14, 2018, at Stockdale Country Club. **THANK YOU** to all of our sponsors, donors, players and volunteers who helped us raise over \$25,000 to further our Mission.



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## Thank you Kids Camp sponsors and donors

The 2018 Kids Camps, for children ages 8 to 16 who have lost a loved one in the recent past, were held in July and August at Gergen Ski Ranch, Camp Oakhurst and the Taylor Family Foundation at Camp Arroyo.

At camp, kids have the opportunity to find healing and peace through games, activities and meeting others who are "just like them." Thank you sponsors, donors and volunteers for helping to provide this opportunity for our campers!

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# Thank You for Your Support

The following individuals and organizations generously contributed to Optimal Hospice Foundation from January through June 2018. On behalf of the patients and families we serve, thank you for your support.

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*Thank you to our generous Employee Giving Campaign donors who are listed annually in the Spring Newsletter.*

## FOUNDATION LOCATIONS

### FOUNDATION OFFICE

1315 Boughton Drive  
Bakersfield, CA 93308  
(661) 716-8000

### COMMUNITY OFFICES

#### Bakersfield

1675 Chester Avenue, #401  
Bakersfield, CA 93301  
661.716.4000

#### Kern River Valley

6504 Lake Isabella Blvd, #E  
Lake Isabella, CA 93240  
760.379.5038

#### Fresno

6780 North West Avenue, #101  
Fresno, CA 93711  
559.320.8000

#### Lancaster

44151 15th Street West, #201  
Lancaster, CA 93534  
661.674.3301

#### Long Beach

5000 East Spring Street #525  
Long Beach, CA 90815  
562.735.8687

#### Modesto

1101 Sylvan Avenue, # B-10  
Modesto, CA 95350  
209.338.9000

#### Stockton

3461 Brookside Road #A-2  
Stockton, CA 95219  
209.670.8040

#### Visalia

2439 West Whitendale Ave., #B  
Visalia, CA 93277  
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## Support groups available through Optimal Hospice Care

These groups are open to the public and offered free of charge.

### BAKERSFIELD

**Tuesdays 10–11:30 a.m.**

**Thursdays 6–7:30 p.m.**

First United Methodist Church  
4600 Stockdale Hwy., Room 4  
(661) 716-4000

*Counseling available en Español*

### FRESNO

**Mondays 3–4:30 p.m.**

Fairwinds – Woodward Park  
9525 Ft. Washington Rd.  
(559) 320-4000

*Counseling available en Español*

### HUNTINGTON BEACH

**Group Sessions Offered**

Call for information

Huntington Terrace Assisted Living  
18800 Florida St.  
(562) 494-7687

### LAKE ISABELLA

**Thursdays 1–2:30 p.m.**

Optimal Hospice Care Office  
6504 Lake Isabella Blvd., Ste. E  
(760) 379-5038

### LANCASTER

**Counseling available**

Call for information

Optimal Hospice Care  
44151 15th Street, Space 201  
(661) 674-3300

### MADERA

**1st & 3rd Wednesdays 2–3:30 p.m.**

Cedar Creek Senior Living Center  
500 N. Westbury Blvd.  
(559) 320-4000

**2nd & 4th Wednesdays 3–4:30 p.m.**

*Counseling en Español*  
Madera Rehabilitation & Nursing  
517 South A St.  
(559) 320-4000

### MODESTO

**Group Sessions Offered**

Call for information  
Optimal Hospice Care  
1101 Sylvan Ave., Ste. B-10  
(209) 338-3000

### PORTERVILLE

**2nd & 4th Thursdays 2–3:30 p.m.**

Sierra Hills Retirement Center  
2500 West Henderson Ave.  
(559) 741-7220

*Counseling available en Español*

### SEAL BEACH

**Group Sessions Offered**

Call for information  
Redeemer Lutheran Church  
of Leisure World  
13560 Saint Andrews Dr.  
(562) 494-7687

### STOCKTON

**Group Sessions Offered**

Call for information

Optimal Hospice Care  
3461 Brookside Road, Ste. A2  
(209) 670-8000

### TAFT

**1st & 3rd Wednesdays 1–2:30 p.m.**

First Baptist Church  
220 North St.  
Boardroom  
(661) 716-4000

### TEHACHAPI

**Tuesdays 1:30–3 p.m.**

Tehachapi Senior Citizens Center  
500 East F St.  
(888) 597-6115

### VISALIA

**2nd & 4th Tuesdays 3–4:30 p.m.**

Prestige Assisted Living at Visalia  
3120 W. Caldwell Ave.  
(559) 741-7220

*Counseling available en Español*

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for details.



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