

## Monthly Support Groups

**2nd Tuesday** of the month from 4:00 pm. to 5:00 p.m. @ Alpert Jewish Community Center in Long Beach.  
This group offers a safe and supportive environment for participants to share their experiences and feelings related to loss.  
**Pre-registration is required.** Please contact Donna Baranyay at 562-426-7500 ext 206 for more information.

## Individual Support

The Bereavement Department of Haven Hospice offers individual support. For more information or to make an appointment for an individual meeting please contact our Bereavement Coordinator, Donna Baranyay at (562) 426-7500 ext 206

## Volunteering With Haven

Are you ready to become a Haven Hospice Volunteer? If you are interested in this rewarding opportunity, or you know anyone who is looking to volunteer his or her time, please contact Erin McCuan, Director of Volunteer Services (562) 426-7500 ext 409.

## Help us keep our mailing list current!

If you no longer wish to receive our monthly newsletter or if the address that appears is not current, please email Jennifer Orellana at [Jennifer.Orellana@havenhealth.org](mailto:Jennifer.Orellana@havenhealth.org) or call the office at (562) 426-7500 ext 300.  
Thank you for your assistance.



Haven Health™

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# Healing with Haven

May & June 2014

## Honoring Our Veterans

By Susana Anaya-Baca, MSW

As Memorial Day approaches, I wanted to share some ways that we can honor our living and deceased veterans. As a family member of a naval officer, a former intern at the Veterans Administration and currently, through my work with veterans and their families in hospice care, I have come to deeply understand the sacrifices, struggles and challenges faced by our heroes during and after their service. My family has also shared in many sacrifices, experienced grief, worry and loss during our loved ones deployment. The following are suggestions which differ in involvement level but are meaningful demonstrations of caring and remembrance.

### Memorials

#### **Public Memorials**

During this time of the year local governments and veteran associations hold public memorials, which offer various opportunities for veterans and families to participate. Also many places of worship hold prayer services in honor of veterans. Contact your local government and place of worship to see how you can participate in their planned events.

#### **Private Memorials**

At the end of October and beginning of November segments of the Mexican community celebrate the day of the dead as a way to honor their ancestors that have died. Common customs include placing a picture of the deceased in a place of honor in the home and decorating its surroundings with flowers, their favorite dishes, lighting candles and prayer. Some families choose to do this memorial at the gravesite. But why wait until then? Designate a place in your home to honor your veteran by placing pictures of their service time and related mementos. Other cultures have special ways of honoring their deceased as well. Think about your heritage and integrate your cultural and spiritual beliefs and create a special remembrance. Another wonderful way to honor a loved one is by establishing a memorial fund, a scholarship, planting a tree or installing a memorial bench at a favorite park.



### Donations

#### **Homeless Veterans** - [www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp](http://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp)

There are several veteran oriented organizations that you might want to consider donating to in honor of your veteran. The Veterans Administration holds routine “stand downs”. The concept of a stand down originated in Vietnam with the goal of providing war weary soldiers respite, shelter, medical care and nutrition. Today’s stand downs are multiple day events designed to provide homeless veterans clean clothes, shelter, food, medical and mental health services. The following link provides information on upcoming stand down events around the country and the contact person associated with each scheduled event.

# *Honoring Our Veterans cont...*

## **The National Coalition for Homeless Veterans** - [www.nchv.org](http://www.nchv.org) / 1-800- VET- HELP

This organization helps to provide leadership in the stand down movement as a means of conducting outreach to our homeless heroes.

## **Volunteers of America Los Angeles Veteran Services Program**- [www.voala.org](http://www.voala.org) / 213-385-7599.

For over a hundred years this organization has provided the needy with assistance. They provide homeless heroes with a wide range of services ranging from housing to benefit assistance

## **Deployed Veterans**

### **Operation Write Home** - [www.operationwritehome.org](http://www.operationwritehome.org)

Are you Crafty? Operation Write Home is an organization that collects handmade blank cards and mails them to deployed veterans so they can write home to their loved ones. You can make cards as an individual or consider hosting a card making event in your home, community center or place of worship.

### **United Service Organizations** - USO - [www.uso.org/1-800-876-7469](http://www.uso.org/1-800-876-7469)

The goal of the USO is to lift the spirits of troops and their families during deployment.

## **Wounded Veterans**

### **Wounded Warrior Project** - [www.woundedwarriorproject.org](http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org).

wounded warrior project mission is to help empower veterans throughout a variety of services and support.

### Paralyzed Veterans of America- [www.pva.org](http://www.pva.org)

The Paralyzed Veterans of America helps our wounded heroes by advocating for benefits, health care and a better quality of life.

### **Give an Hour** - [www.giveanhour.org](http://www.giveanhour.org)

Help provide mental health care for our heroes and their families by either donating your time, if you are a mental health professional or simply support the organization financially to continue with its mission.

## **Life Histories**

### **Public Sharing**

Life review, reminiscence, autobiographical and narrative therapy are terms used to describe the act of engaging an individual for the purpose of therapeutically examining their life. There are several benefits to engaging in this process with a veteran. Reminiscence can elicit unique narratives which can be archived to be included in the library of congress as part of Veterans History Project. To learn more about this important contribution to our nations history and how you can start please go to [www.loc.gov/vets/questions.html](http://www.loc.gov/vets/questions.html).

### **Private Record Keeping**

Some individuals choose to record, video tape or write their life history for future generations as part of family histories. There are several resources available to help you document oral histories that follow structured themes to help elicit information in an organized manner. The following tools are available to help guide you in documenting your loved ones story.

[www.storykeeper.org](http://www.storykeeper.org)

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com)

[www.rootsweb.com](http://www.rootsweb.com)

Grieving can be a life long process. If you or a loved one need additional support please contact our bereavement department at 562-426-7500 and ask for Donna Baranyay for referrals and resources. You can also find local support groups via [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org). My hope is that you will find these ideas helpful and consider implementing one to honor your loved one this Memorial Day. My deepest gratitude for your heroes service and your families sacrifices as well as my thoughts are with you in this time of remembrance.

Ms. Anaya-Baca is a social worker at Haven Health and Bella Vida Hospice.

# Community Voices

We invite you to share your experiences with others. Please Email your submission to: [donna.baranyay@havenhealth.org](mailto:donna.baranyay@havenhealth.org)

Or mail them to: Haven Hospice Bereavement Department, 2895 Temple Ave, Signal Hill, CA 90755

## Mindfulness Along the Grief Journey

by Donna Baranyay, CT

During the month of May we honor our veterans on Memorial Day. Memorial Day may also bring up feelings of our losses, the deaths of our loved ones - who may or may not be veterans. When we take the time to practice a ritual or one of the suggestions in Susana's article we may feel close to our loved one, even memorializing them in some way. One of the ways we can practice self care is through the art of mindfulness.



Mindfulness defined is paying attention to the present moment. When we pay attention to this moment we have the opportunity to feel the emotions that often surface. Taking the time to feel the emotions, to allow them to flow to the surface gives them an opportunity to be released. While grief is a time of transition, of learning to let go of our loved one in physical form and integrating them into our lives in a different manner, it is not a place that was meant to be the stopping point. During this transition we have the opportunity to feel the love that will never die, feel the connection with our loved one that can never be diminished, feel the love that resides within us. Being mindful to this present moment allows healing to surface, to flow through

our hearts and lives. We learn how to move through our pain, to remember sweet memories, and possibly carry on a dream or purpose that our loved one had while they were alive.

There are many ways in which we practice mindfulness every day. We see the beauty in a flower, in the smile or laugh of a young child, are reminded of our loved one through a picture,

memory, song, or some other avenue and it brings us to the present moment. It reminds us that we are still alive. That there is still life in us. We may feel lonely for our loved one, feel like there is a void

within us, or a missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle that is our heart. But we remember. We remember the love we shared, the joys and challenges that we experienced with our loved one while they were with us. We celebrate and honor these memories. In fact, we cherish them. I also believe that we heal, that we embrace and embody the love that we shared. I imagine as if we wrap this love around our heart as we keep moving, keep living, keep loving, keep healing. We are transformed by the power of our love for our loved one and what better way to honor their memory than to heal and discover within ourselves a way to integrate their memory and what they taught us. I wish you healing and a gentle peace that passes all understanding as you continue your journey.