

“...If children mourn well,
they will live well...”

It was supposed to be a happy family vacation at Lake Chelan. Then, the unthinkable happened. A motorcycle accident left 36-year-old Scott Hanan dead, his wife, Kate Fallon, and their two children devastated. But with support from Evergreen’s Grief and Bereavement program, they are putting their lives back together.



The family enrolled in Evergreen’s “Supporting Our Children As We Grow Through Grief” program, which helps children address their grief while also helping the surviving parent or guardian understand how best to assist them through the grieving process.

“Grief is such a difficult thing to talk about,” explains Evergreen bereavement specialist Mary Hejnal. “With young families, we want to help them normalize grief without minimizing the experience.”

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH LOSS

Since children mainly grieve through their behavior, the Supporting Our Children program provides opportunities through games, art, storytelling and movement for the children to get in touch with their feelings. “Our goal is to provide a supportive environment

where the children can talk about what the death means to them,” Hejnal says. Parents meet separately from the children during the six-week program, focusing on their own healing and how they can best help their children grieve.

“I believe that if children mourn well, they will live well, and they will love well,” Hejnal says. “It’s an ongoing process, but every child has the innate ability to heal. Our group is a very good beginning for most families.”



Mary Hejnal

Evergreen is the only organization on the Eastside to offer these groups for children, and has been doing so for 10 years – thanks

to support from the King County Public Hospital District No. 2 levy.

“IT WAS DEFINITELY A GREAT PROGRAM”

The Supporting Our Children program was just what Kate Fallon’s family needed. “It was good for Meg (age 9) and Cole (age 7) to find out that they weren’t the only ones who had lost a parent,” she shares. “It helped them feel less isolated and alone. It was definitely a great program.”

The healing and bonding continue even after the program ends. Both Meg and Cole left with the phone numbers and e-mail addresses of their new friends so they could have play dates or call them if they just want to talk.

It’s now been a year since Scott Hanan’s death, and his children remember the daddy who took them fishing and cheered at their soccer games. “We’re doing much better than we were doing 9 or 10 months ago,” Fallon states. “We still have days where we feel kind of sideswiped. But we’re all adjusting and creating a new normal. I think fundamentally both Meg and Cole are going to be okay. It’s a different journey than their friends will have, but it’s their path.”

Evergreen’s Grief and Bereavement programs are available to anyone who has experienced a loss through death. For more information, call 425.899.1077 or visit our Web site at www.evergreenhealthcare.org.

Soccer is a favorite activity for Kate Fallon and her children, Meg and Cole Hanan.