

# Partner Profiles



Lisa Park Laflin, Executive Director

*Editor's Note: This article is part of an ongoing series that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA) and its funded Partners. To learn more about how you can give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, or to view the article archive, visit [www.uwtva.org](http://www.uwtva.org). To contact staff, call (207) 778-5048 or e-mail [info@uwtva.org](mailto:info@uwtva.org).*

## **There when you need them: American Red Cross provides disaster services, and hope**

### *Historic Partner*

*A Program for Grieving Children & Teens* will hold a ten-week session in Farmington beginning in early April. The program provides support for children and teenagers, ages 3 to 18 years, who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, relative, or friend.

Founded in 1998, *A Program for Grieving Children & Teens* is sponsored by **Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice** and serves families from Androscoggin, Franklin, Oxford and northern Cumberland counties at no charge.

The upcoming weekly sessions for Farmington families will be held in the early evenings at the Franklin Memorial Hospital in Farmington.

Children meet weekly in groups for age appropriate activities, games, art and other forms of self-expression. Adults meet at the same time to support one another and discuss ways to best meet their families' needs. Groups are led by volunteers who have completed a 27-hour training.

Program participants have found both comfort and strength in the program. In the words of one parent, "It is wonderful that this program exists. So many people have no one to turn to in grieving. Children especially need the support. It was a relief to my son to be able to come. It has helped his frame of mind and given him coping tools."

To enroll in the program, a parent or adult support person should accompany a child or teen. Grandparents are also encouraged to participate. Pre-registration is required so families can meet with program volunteers before the session begins.

**For more information about the program or to pre-register, contact Joan Spitzform, Bereavement Assistant, at Androscoggin Home Care & Hospice at 777-7740 or 1-800-482-7412 ext. 1460.**

. One adult (mother) and three children, one 11 year old girl (daughter), one 8 year old boy (son) and one 4 year old girl (daughter) – They lost their Husband / Father.

Here are a few comments from the children's evaluations:

4 year old - Daughter:

I got to express my feelings and I would like to do it again.

11 year old – Daughter:

I found the program helpful in my grieving process. I was able to let out my feelings and I think participating in another program would be even more helpful.

8 year old - Son:

I thought the program was awesome. I got to meet new people and I would definitely come back to another session. This place is the best!

Mother:

The program was absolutely helpful to me and my children. It was great to be in a safe place with people who can empathize, sympathize and talk about things that we wouldn't have been able to talk about even with some of our closest supporters.

**A Jay Family –**

One adult (father) and two children, one 10 year old boy (son) and one 8 year old girl (daughter) – They lost their Wife / Mother.

Here are a few comments from the children's evaluations:

8 year old - Daughter:

This program was helpful because talking gets all the feelings out. It made it easier to talk about my mom and my feelings.

10 year old - Son:

I found it helpful because we bond and talk with other kids and see what they think. I would like to do it again to keep the bond with the other kids.

Father:

My kids loved coming to the meetings and they really talk more about what happened to their mom, and helped them realized that they weren't the only kids who have lost someone they love.

It helped me also. I tended to hold everything in before I came here and now I can talk more freely about how I'm feeling.

*The United Way of the Tri-Valley Area's (UWTVA) mission is to improve people's lives by focusing the caring capacity of our communities. One of 10 United Ways in Maine, UWTVA conducts an Annual Fundraising Campaign, contributions to which are reinvested in Greater Franklin County, by supporting programs run by area 501 (c)3 health and human service organizations. UWTVA also coordinates the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and collaborates with area volunteers and organizations to conduct initiatives that support the community, including food drives and homeless prevention activities.*