

On February 8, 2010 the grief support program we have monthly took a bit new direction for this month. Since February is the month of Valentine's Day, we held a Valentine's Day party for the group. Normally the group would recognize the holiday during the program, but this year we decided to theme this particular support program. Valentine's Day can be a hard day for persons who lose their loved ones. Mary Jane Ward, the group facilitator, decided to make this one a special group. First of all, most of the part-time staff attended, as well as, the funeral directors and owners who were also present. We decorated the room we use for the program with balloons and pink, red and white streamers. The owners went to the local bakery and bought some Valentine's themed cupcakes. Ice cream was also present. As the attendee's arrived, the staff greeted them and had them take a seat in the room. Usually the room is arranged with the chairs in a half circle, but this meeting had the chairs in small groups. We arranged it this way in order to have an informal feeling to this meeting. Mary Jane had some love poems she recited and a small sermon on grieving and the loss during Valentine's Day.

After the small group session was completed, cupcakes and ice cream were brought into the room. This grief service ended up being more of a meet and greet among the people who attended. We have a lot of the same individuals who come to every meeting, sometimes it seems it's the same group month after month, but this one was attended by more new people. A lot of them brought their friends and even some brought their children or grandchildren. The meeting usually ends around 8:00 PM, but some of the people were here for longer. We are not sure if it was the staff that made people hang out longer or the feeling of comfort that the room emulated, but the group seemed comfortable and most everyone participated in conversation. Next year we are already talking about getting more people together for this. We don't want to make it as big as the Candlelight Service, but maybe half the size.