

Walk of Hope Order of Events 17th October 2021

Welcome everybody to our 11th Annual Walk of Hope.

Before we begin I would like to read out an acknowledgement of country that has been prepared by students at Anglesea primary school.

We are honoured to live in Wadawurrung Country and would like to pay our respects to the people who have nurtured the land on which we live today for tens of thousands of years. Thank you for protecting this land and caring for the native animals that crawl, slither, and fly along the Nangun Wruk (earth) and Waari (water) .

We are grateful for the way you have treated this land. We thank you for sharing your culture and Dreamtime stories that will shape the minds for generations.

We would like to pay our respects to the elders and families both past, present and emerging of the Torres Strait Islander people. We will continue to live on this land together and care for her the way you have taught us.

October, as many of you are already aware, is International Pregnancy, Infant and Child Loss Awareness month, with October 15 being the actual day of remembrance. On this day, bereaved parents across Australia and around the globe honour their children who have died through pregnancy loss, stillbirth, or post-natal causes.

Hope Bereavement Care in its various forms has been here in Geelong for the past 36 years and we believe very strongly that no-one should be alone with their grief. Hope also works closely with The Compassionate Friends here in Geelong and so there will also be parents and families walking today in remembrance of their adult children.

Many bereaved parents find that they are able to honour their babies and their children at events such as this. And the walk helps them on their journey to adjust to life after the huge impact of losing a baby or a child. In particular, the walk can help with that grief of a future that can no longer be. When a baby or child dies the hopes, dreams and expectations of a life lived with that baby or child are completely shattered. Many bereaved parents feel they have lost a part of themselves. As they grieve, they must come to a point of acceptance, to learn to live with their loss and that sense of shifting identity. These changes are not often welcome, and all the bereaved person wants to do is to return to who they were before their loss, before their lives changed irrevocably. At some point there is the realisation that life will always be different, and you will never quite be the same person again.

Each year, a central theme is chosen to give siblings and parents the sense of an event, something around which they can bring together their experiences, their feelings and emotions, and their memories. This year, in 2021, the theme is Hearts and Hands.

This was chosen as it is with our hearts and hands that we embrace our children, physically, emotionally and in our dreams. We hold our babies and children within our hearts and our memories and when we can no longer hold and protect them in this life, we go on to protect their memory. And it is with our hearts and our hands that we do so. This might be through maintaining a special space in the household with objects of remembrance, by creating scrapbooks and albums, art works, journals and poetry. It may be through making a birthday cake, planning a special day for anniversaries, attending remembrance services and walks or raising awareness. Whatever you do, it is your heartfelt love that carries you and holds you.

It is also with our hearts and hands that we give and receive support in those darkest moments of grief. Family and friends offer emotional and practical support; a shoulder to cry on, an ear to listen, a meal when everyday practicalities seem impossible.

And it is with our hearts and hands that we at Hope Bereavement Care hold space for those who seek our support and all who have lost a baby or child for whatever reason at any stage or at any age. In Particular, today, as we journey together on this Virtual Walk of Hope, we are your supportive hand to hold. As you walk to honour your babies and children, wherever you may be, Hope walks with you. Help others to feel connected by adding a name to the memorial board, share a photo of yourself walking or post the “ I am walking” social media tile.

Sometimes I catch a glimpse,
In softened waves of blue,
My child, my heart ...when I see a smile,
I can't help but think of you.

Sometimes these waves fill oceans.
And feelings string on every shore,
A collections of each memory
And every way I wish for more.

Sometimes I watch for answers
Because each day I call to you.
I ask for faith and courage
And strength...to help me through.

Sometimes I ask for bravery
Like dolphins in the deep,
Because time moves oh so slowly,
And sometimes the road is steep.

Sometimes I hear your laughter
And remember you at play,
But My Child I always miss you. Not sometimes, but every day.

We have our beautiful doves from Endless Dove to release before we embark on our Walk of Hope Today. As the doves find their way home, it is our hope from all of us at Hope Bereavement Care that bereaved families are also able to continue a little in your journey as you spend time reflecting where ever you are walking today.