

Memories

A Tribute to Gina

Saffron

*To an angel
Whom I pray everyday
is watching over us.*

*That I often wonder if she sees me
my heart is broken.*

*Georgina Marie Manuel
is her name.
We call her Gina.*

She was my baby sister.

*Her charisma and spontaneity
would sometimes be perfect timing.*

*Her gifts of loyalty,
loving, caring and forgiveness
was what made her
that much more special.*

*Her beauty
didn't just come from within,
it was both inside and out.*

*Her inner strength for forgiveness
was something to be envied.*



Gina and her boy

*Her love and appreciation for life,
made it so,
that by her visiting,
would just pick you up.*

Her smile was like a light.

*My sister had heart
and her journey in life wasn't
always easy,*

*she had battled through life.
She had triumphed
and rose above those battles.*

*There was just one battle
she just could not win.*

*Sadly on the 21st August 2013
her life was stolen.*

With that part of me was stolen.

*I can only hope that the gates to
heaven were open
waiting for her to enter them.*

*I miss you Gina.
You are forever in my heart.*



When you stand and share your story in an empowering way, your story will heal you and your story will heal somebody else.

— Ayana Vanzant —

AZ QUOTES

If you would like to write a few lines of words or poem to remember and honour your loved one in our newsletter, please send it with a picture to homnews@victimsupport.org.nz.

We would appreciate your feedback regarding our newsletter. Feedback can be sent to homnews@victimsupport.org.nz

Taken Website Launches

www.taken.life

Alan & Wendy

The Taken website was launched in October after 15 months of planning. It's been a new experience for all those involved, a little bit of making-it-up-as-we-go, but with the help of some talented people it is now up and running. It is a great achievement but in many ways it is just the start.

Our goals remain focused on providing a safe environment for families to place timeless tributes to loved ones taken through violence and homicide.

The tributes are free of charge and we have kept the process of placing a tribute as simple as possible. It doesn't matter where a loved one was killed or what their nationality, or if their death is recent or historic.

Tributes placed on the Taken website are not only a way to express respect and honour for loved ones, but we hope will also become a source of strength to other families facing similar tragedies.

It is a way we can say to others you are not alone on this journey.

The tributes also form a powerful and moving reminder to all New Zealanders of the far reaching impact and ripple effect of senseless violence and homicide in our country. **Greater awareness leads to greater opportunity for change.**

As survivors of homicide we know that it is a lonely and painful journey and acknowledge that it is not easy to speak out or place a tribute like this. **As we find the courage to share our story it will make a difference to someone else, and it will become part of our own healing as well.**

To place a tribute for a loved one, please visit www.taken.life and click 'Place a tribute'

If you have any questions please feel free to ask; email team@taken.life

Coping with grief and loss at Christmas

Resource from Skylight

Christmas is a time when there can be reminders of how things have changed and of the people, places or events that are missed. For supporting those who are going through change, grief, loss and trauma, we have put together some tips to help you going through difficult times over Christmas.

Here is some of our key advice:

Keep in touch with family and friends: Contact others when you need company, distraction or support. Often those who care about you are grateful to help.

Make time to do things you enjoy: Before the holidays plan and make time to do some things that you really enjoy, or that relax you. It needn't be anything costly or complex. Scale back on stressful activities.

Mark your change for loss: This positive action may help because it acknowledges how things are for you. You could light a candle, visit a special place, plant a tree, have a small ceremony or prayer, play special music, or make a holiday toast.

It's OK to enjoy yourself: Some people worry that enjoying the holidays is disrespectful, or makes them look like they've stopped caring about what's happened. In fact, pushing all joy from your life isn't a positive step. Celebrate life as that's what people who care about you would want you to do.

It's OK to say 'No': You don't need to do things that might make you uncomfortable just because you think they are expected of you. Give yourself permission to say "No".

Those we love
don't go away,
they walk beside us
every day...
unseen, unheard,
but always near,
still loved,
still missed
and very dear.

Turn your face to the sun and let
the shadows fall behind you.
Hurihia to aroaro ki te ratukuna to
atarangi kia taka ki muri i a koe

Māori proverb

Need Counselling?

VICTIM SUPPORT

Can assist with funding
for counselling
for victims of homicide

Please call 0800 VICTIM
Or contact your local
Victim Support office

Seek professional help if you need to: If you feel overwhelmed by your emotions, or if you're having extreme reactions that are frightening you, contact your GP or practice nurse, a counsellor, your local mental health team, a local family support agency or a telephone help line, such as Lifeline, Samaritans or Youthline. Skylight can also offer person-centered grief counselling for people of all ages.

You can also call Victim Support to assist in organizing a counsellor for you if you haven't done so.

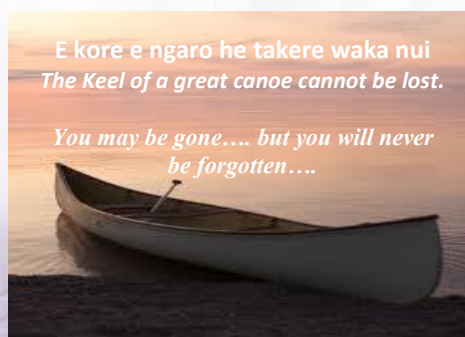
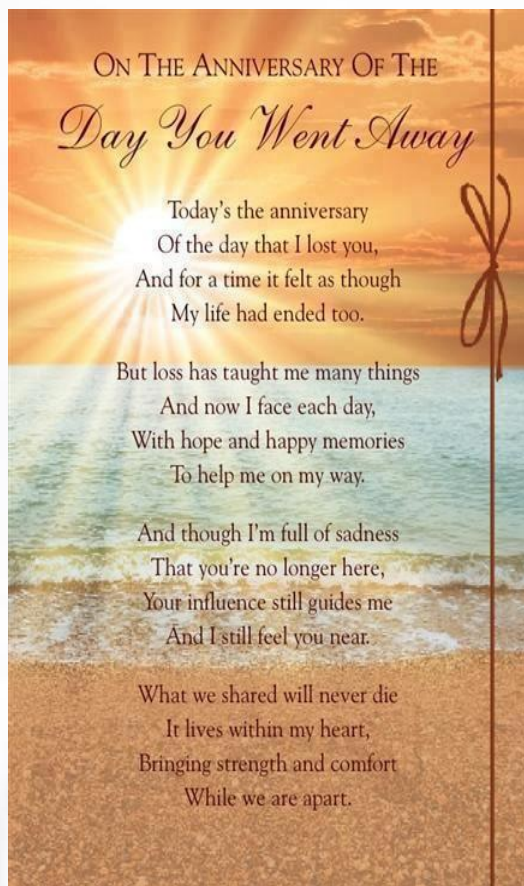
It's normal to have many mixed emotions during the holidays, particularly when going through grief, stress or change. This is a time to make sure you care for yourself – eat well, drink water, get some exercise, get enough sleep and rest. Holidays and special times do present unique challenges for those experiencing tough times, and allow yourself to get help is important. Remember: *grief happens and support matters.*

Memories Matter

Resource from Skylight for young people

When someone has left, moved a long way away or died, it can feel like they've been ripped away from you. It's important to know that you can continue having a special link and bond with that person, especially if they have been really close to you. They are part of your life – part of who you are.

Remembering and finding ways to stay connected with someone means you can keep your link with them.



Here are some ideas some young people suggest:

- if it's possible, keep in touch with them by phone, visits, letters, texting or email
- if it's not possible, write a letter to the person, saying how you're feeling and just keep it, leave it somewhere special or throw it away - whatever suits
- visit somewhere you've both been together - or do something you did together
- make a photo board or scrapbook to help you remember good times
- talk aloud to the person - in your room, to their photo, or at a special place. Say how you really feel - whatever that is

- write them a song, poem or story dedicate something you make or create to them
- plant a tree or flowers visit a special place wear their clothes - like an old T-shirt or hat
- spend anniversary days and special holidays - like Christmas - with others who miss them too. Talk about the person with others. Swap memories.
- Make a special Christmas tree decoration with the person's name on light a candle to remember them.

Like the Kea and the Kiwi

Elena Poletti

**Lord, at times you raise us
high above the hills,
like the kea,
wings flashing in the sun.
At times you remind us
that we are of the earth,
like the kiwi,
searching in the dark.
Help us always to know
the joy and comfort of your love,
to work for change where we can,
and to remain faithful and hopeful in prayer.**