



## Coming around full circle

by Patti Anewalt

“We had an appointment with hospice the day my husband died.” Lin’s husband was only 62 when he died, and his disease progressed too quickly for him to receive hospice care. She was left not knowing what to do, so she turned to the internet. “I searched online and found the hospice’s bereavement center. I called them and spoke to a grief counselor. She listened to my story and helped me realize that what I was feeling was common so soon after losing my husband.” Lin signed up for their four-week support group for people like herself who were newly bereaved. “I saw the same people week after week. We were all in the same boat,” says Lin.

After completing that series, she began attending the support group they offered for the loss of a spouse where she met new people each session. “The beauty of the group is that you can be as involved as you want to be and take away what you need to at that time,” Lin explains. “I began to realize grief is a process. I’ve been taking advantage of every opportunity they offer because I’m learning a lot about myself on this journey.”

In addition to attending the support groups and commemorative events the hospice has offered, she has borrowed several books from their lending library. “I’m a huge proponent of the library. We were introduced to it on the first night in the Newly Bereaved series and I’ve been utilizing it ever since. It’s free and I’m always returning one book and taking out another.”

After a 40-year marriage, Lin had much to adjust to and she found comfort in the groups, not just from fellow participants but the leaders and volunteers as well. “Everyone was great. The volunteers have all been through a loss too, and their insight is invaluable. We share our experiences, grieve, and grow together.” She also notes how

no one spoke of grief and loss as she was growing up but held it in. “I’ve learned a lot during my life, but not how to deal with death. The hospice grief program taught me how to cope and move through my loss.” In time, being so appreciative of all she had gained over the months she availed herself of the grief support services, Lin decided she was ready to give back. She signed up to take the hospice volunteer training and now enjoys helping in the same support groups she once attended, this time providing rather than receiving the grief support.

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