



# Children's Grief Center of New Mexico

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Dear Friends and Family,

Each year when spring approaches, I recall planting flowers for Mother's Day. My mother and I picked purples and yellows and reds at the nursery and rushed home to plant new life with my Grandma Betsy. Three generations of women – two mothers and two daughters -- smelling of soil, mouths open, laughing.

Unfortunately, we stopped this tradition, as we stopped so much else when my mom was diagnosed with stage IV colon cancer in 2006. I was 12-years-old. I remember that spring in colors of whites and greys: the sterility of clinical settings; hospitals, chemo centers, and doctors' offices. Instead of planting new life, my grandmother and I were sowing the seeds of loss.

No brief letter could sum up the gloriousness of my mom's brief life. But I will say this: she was my first true love. When she died mere months after her diagnosis, my world upended. Moreover, three months after my mother died, and three days before my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday, my beloved grandmother died, too. Three generations of mothers and daughters became one.

Yet, their legacy lives on through my strength, which I first learned to nurture at a grief center in Denver. My age-specific group offered understanding. Each week this incredible message resounded: *you are not alone*. I spent years working through my grief with my new friends, licensed counselors, and amazing volunteers. I was permitted to feel everything: anger at the unfairness of loss, sorrow at their absence, and finally, invited to be carefree again – to resume my childhood without guilt. I was given a chance to heal.

Recently I joined the Board of Directors for the Children's Grief Center to honor my mom, Patricia Alley, and my grandmother, Elizabeth Lau. I joined for that 12-year-old girl who lost them. I joined because, like me, there are children who need a grief center.

This spring I invite you to plant flowers of hope and healing. **You can make a direct and powerful impact-by contributing to support the grieving children and adults who walk through our doors every day – many of whom have lost a parent or primary caregiver.**

We know there are many organizations in our community that deserve your support. Thank you for considering the Children's Grief Center. Join me in making a gift this Mother's Day and upcoming Father's day in Memory or in Honor of the parents who shaped us.

Thank you!

*Brita Alley*

*Celebrate the Children's Grief Center's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary by honoring your loved one with a monthly on-going gift of \$20.*

*Just check the **Circle of Hope Monthly Giving Club** box on the enclosed envelope or go to [www.childrensgrief.org/donate](http://www.childrensgrief.org/donate)*

*Offering hope and healing to grieving families*