Dear friends,

We are experiencing signs of spring, which gives us hope that our long winter is coming to an end. At Hospice, the butterfly is a symbol of hope. We all need hope. You can survive much if you have even a flicker or small flame of hope. Hope can keep us going through our greatest trials. One gal told me that the letters – H.O.P.E. meant for her "hold on, pain ends." Where do we find our hope? We often find it through signs in nature and through others – friends and family. There are signs of comfort and hope, if we are open to receive it.

Time and again at our grief support groups I hear the intense pain, the depths of despair but also the stories. Those unexpected moments they felt God reaching out to them with comfort and hope. I have experienced it in my own life as well.

A bereaved shared the story of an eagle following the funeral van from the church to the cemetery. She felt it was a sign from God reaching out to them in comfort. And then several months later when another family member died, she remembered seeing an eagle flying overhead, a sign of hope.

Another example would be the gal who told me she was desperately missing her husband and feeling very alone. She got in her car and when she turned it on, the radio was playing "their song". She said she realized, I'm not alone, God does care and this is a sign of hope.

A former volunteer, told me her husband loved to pick up pennies. He seemed to see them everywhere when somehow she could look at the same place and have missed them. After he died she realized that when she was feeling sad she would see some pennies. It would make her smile and she took that as a sign of encouragement and hope.

When my mom died, we divided up her plants. My sister took the Christmas cactus despite it not having bloomed for probably 10 years. She took it home, put it on a shelf and forgot it until Christmas when it was covered in beautiful flowers. Now someone might say that she took better care of it than mom, but I don't think so or that is was simply a coincidence, but to do so would mean we miss the message, we miss the miracle.

A daughter told me that when she left our inpatient unit she was extremely sad because she felt like her mom would die before morning. As she was driving she saw a rainbow as a sign of comfort and hope.

So many stories I could share but one funny one that sticks in my mind was told to me by a daughter of a patient. Her father had a dislike for doors being left ajar and would often, to make a point, slam the door so others would know that another door hadn't closed properly. He was very close to his grandson, more like a father/son relationship, so when the grandson was getting married, he was really missing his grandpa. As the minister pronounced them husband and wife, somewhere in the church a door slammed loudly. It startled some, but those who knew grandpa's dislike for doors ajar got a chuckle out of it. And the grandson said he found it comforting.

You all know when you have received a phone call or card just when you needed it, a hug or an unexpected kindness. A grandson told his grandma when he hugged her that she needed to cry so the sad could come out. I love that. And if we take it one step further, you let the sad out so that joy can take its place. This past week, there have been several stories shared with me about people hearing or seeing a cardinal when they needed a sign of hope.

Look all around you. Soak up the love of family and friends. Your grief will transform. The smiles, laughter, and the joy will return. Then see where your path leads you to provide comfort and hope to others.

We invite you to join us Saturday, June 15th for our Wings of Hope butterfly release to remember all the special people in our lives who are gone, but never forgotten. It is a meaningful opportunity to gather with others and find more hope and encouragement for the months ahead.

Thinking of you,

Autumn & Joyce - Bereavement Coordinators
Wings of HOspicE Memorial & Butterfly Release

MercyOne North Iowa Hospice invites you to remember your loved one(s) or honor those living at our Wings of HOspicE Memorial & Butterfly Release

Saturday, June 15, 2019
1:00 p.m.
First United Methodist Church
119 South Georgia Avenue
Mason City, Iowa
located directly across the street from our MercyOne North Iowa Hospice Serenity Garden

Please join us for a memorial service, butterfly release, refreshments, music and fellowship with other families, staff and volunteers. Names of those you wish to remember and honor will be read at this event and listed in the program.

(Please note, publication of your loved one’s name in the program is not automatic and must be requested. Additionally, names are not continued from year to year and must be requested annually.)

Your donation* to the Wings of HOspicE Memorial & Butterfly Release will help extend hospice care to others so they can live the last months of their lives with dignity and hope.

*A donation is not required to participate in this service.

A Symbol of Hope

A butterfly lights beside us like a sunbeam.

And for a brief moment it’s glory and beauty belong to our world.

But then it flies again
And though we wish it could have stayed,
We feel blessed to have seen it.

Please visit us at the MercyOne North Iowa Hospice booth at the Franklin County Fair in Hampton, IA July 17th - July 21, 2019.