



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Hospice of Santa Barbara Helps Young People Cope With Loss; Youth Bereavement Program at All Local High Schools**

**May 24, 2011, Santa Barbara, CA---** Coping with the loss of a loved one or friend can be a difficult experience for a young person. Hospice of Santa Barbara is helping youth in the community who are dealing with grief and sorrow through its Youth Bereavement Services.

Hospice of Santa Barbara is currently offering weekly bereavement groups at all the local high schools (Santa Barbara, San Marcos, Dos Pueblos and El Puente). This year Hospice of Santa Barbara has helped more than 100 young people who have lost a parent, family member or friend through illness, accidents or suicide.

Young people express grief in a variety of ways: sadness, emotional confusion, social withdrawal and isolation, fear and anxiety, anger and aggression, and self medicating with drugs and alcohol.

“Our work in the schools helps to normalize feelings for these kids who are grieving; to let them know that they aren’t alone and, in fact, there are many other kids experiencing the same kinds of emotions—emotions and feelings that are natural and part of the grieving process,” said Steve Jacobsen, Executive Director of Hospice of Santa Barbara.

Hospice of Santa Barbara helps these young people work through their pain in ways that lead to emotional healing and maturity. The professional staff at Hospice of Santa Barbara helps children and teens cope with their immediate loss, but it also teaches them skills to cope with loss throughout their life.

In a recent evaluation, more than 86% of youth who received services through Hospice of Santa Barbara reported that it provided them with significant help in coping with their grief and sorrow.

“It (the program) really helped me get back to life,” said a child who is coping with the loss of a parent.

In addition to the work Hospice of Santa Barbara does in the schools, it offers professional counseling for all ages, including youth, at its offices. Hospice of Santa Barbara serves more than 360 people every month, ages 4 – 103, through a wide variety of programs with a paid staff of 35 and more than 100 volunteers. Recently, local teens put on a songwriter’s showcase at SOhO Restaurant & Music Club raising \$1,000 for the HSB Youth Bereavement Program.

All services at Hospice of Santa Barbara are free of charge. The organization receives no government or insurance reimbursements. For 37 years Hospice of Santa Barbara has been committed to providing care that is not limited by anyone’s age or ability to pay. It is able to do this because people in the community support Hospice of Santa Barbara with donations, grants and bequests.

If you or anyone you know is facing a life-threatening illness or grieving the loss of a loved one, or if you would like to know more about how to support the work at Hospice of Santa Barbara, call 563-8820 or visit [www.hospiceofsb.org](http://www.hospiceofsb.org).

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