

CBTS NEWSLETTER

December 2007

GRIEF AND LOSS AND HOLIDAYS

"The holiday season has begun and this can be a particularly difficult time for youth in proctor care. Whether it is their first or sixth season away from their birth family, the holidays often invoke a sense of loss and grief. Think about your first holiday away from your family. Even though it is likely that it was your choice, it is hard to be away from family and the comforting and familiar rituals that define holidays.

Here are some things parents can do to help their proctor children with grief and loss issues around the holidays:

- ◆ *Involve the youth in physical activities so that they may have an outlet for their stress.*
- ◆ *Help them work on scrap books in order to record special holiday memories and traditions.*
- ◆ *Be especially mindful of your youth's family visits. Start a tradition for after visits, like going for ice cream, taking a walk or ride in the car so that they can talk about the visit and relax.*
- ◆ *When you listen to a youth talk about his or her birth family, help them assign names to the feelings they are experiencing: 'you must really miss your family.' 'you sound really sad and disappointed you cannot be home on Christmas.'*
- ◆ *Never compare losses. All loss is experienced at 100%. There is no such thing as half grief, especially for youth.*
- ◆ *Time doesn't heal, actions do. Recovery from loss or grief happens through a series of small action choices by the griever. Help the youth take these small steps.*
- ◆ *Grief is normal and natural. It is the reaction to loss. In and of itself, it is not a psychological condition.*
- ◆ *Youth and adults show grief in different ways. Be mindful of the particular ways your proctor youth grieves.*

The holidays are also a challenging time for your youth's birth family, not only the parents, but siblings, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. Holidays can be a great time to make connections with your proctor youth's birth family. Have your proctor youth's picture taken and provide a copy to them. Have the youth send a holiday card to their family. Making connections with your youth's birth family may help the youth build a strong identity and contribute to building his or her self-esteem."

CBTS

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Weekend death

Family had no idea where youth was

16-year-old, found dead in a stairwell, had been drinking with friends

By Jason Bergreen
The Salt Lake Tribune

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The whereabouts of 16-year-old Dillon James Whitney over the weekend were apparently unknown to his proctor family and the state until Sunday after he died.

Don Maldonado, the director of the Utah Division of Juvenile Justice, said he didn't know Whitney was missing until early Sunday evening, after the boy was found critically injured in a Salt Lake City apartment complex stairwell. Whitney later died from a head wound he received during a fall. Witnesses told police Whitney was drunk on vodka and fell down 1 1/2 flights of stairs at an apartment complex near 1050 South and 250 East.

Now, juvenile services investigators are trying to find out how and why the teenager died.

Maldonado said Whitney had been placed in the proctor care of a local husband and wife in August after a juvenile court removed him from his home because of "delinquent acts." He declined to elaborate on any specific crime.

Proctor care families are registered with the state to provide a "normal" family environment for juveniles with criminal histories.

Utah State Court documents show that Whitney has been convicted of felony burglary and misdemeanor graffiti and shoplifting, starting in the summer of 2006.

The proctor couple had provided care to other juveniles in the past without a problem, Maldonado said.

Whitney went missing after the state granted him permission to visit his father for Thanksgiving. It was his first visit home since being placed in a proctor home, Maldonado said.

Whitney was supposed to return to his proctor family on the evening of Nov. 23, but he never showed up. "Their statement is the kid did not return," Maldonado said.

Maldonado said the proctor family began making calls to the boy's father and others to try to locate him.

It wasn't until Sunday, when police responded to a "man down" call at the apartment complex stairwell, that he was discovered. Whitney later died at a hospital.

Whitney allegedly had been drinking with at least two teenage friends and 47-year-old Victor Hernandez on Saturday night. After his fall, the boys and Hernandez moved Whitney into Hernandez's apartment and put him on a couch. The juveniles then left.

Hernandez called police Sunday morning and said there was a person lying in the stairwell near his apartment. He was later arrested on suspicion of endangerment of a child, a first-degree felony, and misdemeanor charges of tampering with evidence and possessing drug paraphernalia.

The proctor family did not know how Whitney knew Hernandez or why the boy had been at the apartment, which is not near the proctor family's home, Maldonado said.

Children have died in the past while in the custody of juvenile services, but it is rare, Maldonado said.

If the proctor family is found negligent in any way, sanctions could be leveled against them or Quest Youth Services, the company that placed Whitney in their care, Maldonado said. Criminal charges, if applicable, would have to be filed by the police.

*****This is a terrible tragedy. Please review this with your proctor youth. We as an agency and you as proctor parents have been entrusted with the care of these youth. This is one of the main reasons why we stress accountability and safety. It is essential to know where a youth is going, when they are expected to return, who they will be with, etc. It is also essential to report to your Specialist if the youth has not returned when expected.***

TIPS FOR COPING WITH HOLIDAY STRESS

by Mark Sichel, L.C.S.W.

"We all look forward to the holidays and hope that they will be a time of happiness, fellowship and harmony. Yet often our anticipation and excitement turns into feelings of depression and/or family disharmony. Part of what happens in the holiday season, in terms of mood changes and anxiety, may occur because of the stressfulness of holiday events. It may also be caused by overdrinking, overeating, and fatigue. The demands of the season are many: shopping, cooking, house guests, parties and extra financial burden.

Sometimes people who are not generally depressed actually struggle with holiday depression. Symptoms can include headaches, insomnia, uneasiness, anxiety, sadness and unnecessary conflict with family and friends. Here are some tools to get through the holiday season happily...as well as ways to prevent problems and misery for yourself and your loved ones:

1. Have an attitude of gratitude. Misery and gratitude cannot occupy the same space in our psychological house and we have the power to choose between these emotional states.

2. One golden rule to getting along with family...be responsible for how you behave. You certainly have no control over how your relatives behave. The most important part of avoiding holiday stress with our families is for each of us to feel mastery over, and satisfaction with, our own behaviors, attitudes and feelings. If you know in your head and your heart that you've acted like the best parent, child, brother, sister, friend that you know how to be, you can walk away from any difficulty feeling good about yourself.

3. If you're feeling depressed and lonely, volunteer. Any number of groups help underprivileged children, the homeless, or the aged and disabled at the holidays. There are many opportunities for doing community service. No one can be depressed when they are doing community service.

4. Decide upon your priorities and stick to them. Organize your time. Be reasonable with your schedule. Do not overbook yourself into a state of exhaustion.

5. Be careful about resentments related to holidays past. Declare an amnesty with whichever family member or friend you are feeling past resentments. Do not feel it is helpful or intimate to tell your relative every resentment on your laundry list of grievances.

6. Don't expect the holidays to be just as they were when you were a child. They NEVER are. YOU are not the same as when you were a child, and no one else in the family is either. On the other hand, if your memories of childhood holidays are awful, be grateful that you now have the capacity and skills to make them wonderful for yourself and those you love.

7. Plan unstructured, low-cost fun holiday activities: window-shop and look at holiday decorations. Look at people's Christmas lighting on their homes. Take advantage of free community holiday events.

8. Do not let the holidays become a reason for over-indulging in food and drink and create unnecessary weight gain and hangovers for yourself. This will exacerbate your depression and anxiety.

9. Remember, no matter what your plans, the holidays do not automatically take away feelings of aloneness, sadness, frustration, anger and fear.

10. Give yourself a break; create time for yourself to do things YOU love to do.

For many of us, holiday depression can be a choice we, in effect, choose to make. If we choose not to make this choice, we can choose instead to focus on our courage to face each day with hope and determination."



JOYOUS SEASON PAYMENTS

The Division of Child and Family Services and the Division of Juvenile Justice Services will once again be providing a joyous season payment for youth this year. These payments are for Christmas gifts to be given to and by the youth. The amount you will be receiving is \$58.00/youth. This check will be included on the December 10th payday.



DCFS CHRISTMAS STORE

Each year DCFS sponsors a Christmas store where youth in custody can go to 'shop' for gifts for themselves and others. They are given points to spend toward gifts. The Christmas Store will be open December 14 & 15 from 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. At this time the location is still to be determined. We will send out a letter with the address as soon as we are notified of the location.



F.Y.I.

We would like to welcome our new Proctor Specialist Liz Mavor to CBTS. Liz has previously worked with RISE and Copper Hills Youth Center. She will be a great addition to CBTS.

Unfortunately we were unable to obtain a location for our Christmas party. The talent show will now be held during our summer barbeque. This gives you plenty of time to practice!



"To discourage anybody from shaking the gifts one of those boxes has been filled with hornets. Yep, I hate to think what those hornets might do if anybody shook their box."



EVENTS TO RING IN THE HOLIDAYS

December 1 - 2 Holiday Open House & Art Fair Free
Red Butte Garden (300 Wakara Way) 10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Utah artists and craftsmen will present art for sale

December 1 - January 3 Trees of Diversity 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Free
Utah Cultural Celebration Center (1355 West 3100 South) Exhibit of trees decorated in styles representing cultures from around the world (for more information call 965-5100)

December 5 - 7 from 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.; December 8 from 1:00 - 7:00 p.m. Free
Christmas Around the World Festival Riverton Civic Center (12830 S. Redwood Road) A chance to glimpse various world cultures with a wide range of performers (for more information call 232-9702)

December 1 - 31; Sundays through Thursdays, 4:30 - 8:00 p.m.; Fridays and Saturdays, 4:30 - 9:00 p.m. Zoo Lights Hogle Zoo (2600 East Sunnyside Avenue)
\$6.00 adults/\$4.00 children More than 1 million lights and 150 lighted animated sculptures (for more information call 584-1729)

Friday, December 14 Joys of Christmas 11:00 a.m. or 1:30 p.m. Free
Pioneer Memorial Museum (300 North Main) Musical trios, stories, bell choir and refreshments (for more information call 532-6479)

December 1 - 22 (closed Sundays) Holidays at Wheeler Farm (6351 South 900 East)
Cost \$3.00 Santa, hayrides, lights and more (for more information call 264-2441)





SANTA STATS.....

There are currently 78 people named S. Claus living in the United States and one Kriss Kringle.

Weight of Santa's sleigh loaded with one Beanie Baby for every kid on earth: 333,333 tons.

Number of reindeer required to pull a 333,333 ton sleigh: 214,206 plus Rudolph.

Average wage of a mall Santa: \$11.00 an hour. With real beard: \$20

To deliver his gifts on one night, Santa would have to make 822.6 visits per second, sleighing at 3,000 times the speed of sound.

At that speed, Santa and his reindeer would burst into flames instantaneously.



HOLIDAY DIET

- Breakfast:** 1/2 grapefruit
1 slice whole wheat toast
8 oz. skim milk
- Lunch:** 4 oz. lean broiled chicken breast
1 cup steamed spinach
1 cup herb tea
1 Oreo cookie
- Mid-Afternoon:** The rest of the Oreos in the package
2 pints of Rocky Road ice cream
- Dinner:** 1 large sausage and cheese pizza
2 loaves garlic bread
4 cans Coke
3 Snickers bars

Late Snack: Entire frozen cheesecake

*Little known fact - anything consumed while standing has no calories. This is due to gravity and the density of the caloric mass.



A Dog's Christmas Promises

Christmas is for humans and I will not ruin the surprises by opening all of their presents.

Christmas light bulbs, Christmas ornaments, Christmas stockings and tinsel from the Christmas tree are not food.

I will not even THINK about going underneath the Christmas tree and piddling on the dining room rug.

I will not steal the neighbor's Christmas light bulbs.

The bowl underneath the Christmas tree is not a dog dish. I will not drink from it.

I will not dive into the Christmas tree to get the candy canes (which I will eat - paper and all).

I will not eat my Christmas doggie treats until after they are out of the stocking.