

Paradisus Playa Del Carmen La Esmeralda

from \$437

See lowest prices from 200+ sites
Go to TripAdvisor

Whistler Blackcomb® Deals -
Book Now & Save Up To 35%
Off

Stay Longer, Save More. The Best Deals on
Lift and Lodging Packages. Go to
whistlerblackcomb.com/Winter-Deals

Top 3 Lithium Stocks

Now is the time to invest in the
Metal of the Future. Don't miss out.
Go to
energyandresourcesdigest.com

6 Stocks to Hold Forever

Looking to retire? These 6 stocks will
generate regular income. Go to
wealthyretirement.com/PreferredStocks

NEWS

Death, grief and the salad of love

By Cheryl Clock, The Standard

Wednesday, November 9, 2016 3:44:24 EST PM



Image: 1 of



Chloe LeBlanc, 16, was nine-years-old when her mother died. She holds a photograph of herself with her mom, Trisha Potvin, taken when she was about five years old. ♦It makes me feel happy because she's smiling so big,♦ says Chloe. on Wednesday November 2, 2016 in St. Catharines, Ont. Cheryl Clock/St. Catharines Standard/Postmedia Network

Together, they would make Raspberry Love Salad.

That was their name for it. The raspberries looked like tiny hearts to the young sisters who weren't yet tall enough to reach the kitchen counter. Their mom set them on stools and together they added ingredients to their salad of love.

The salad became their special recipe.

A memory of love.

For a long time after their mom Trisha Potvin died of breast cancer at 31, no one made the salad.

Until one day, when one of the sisters, Chloe LeBlanc, thought to try it again. She is tall enough to reach the counter, now a 16-year-old student at Laura Secord Secondary School in St. Catharines.

This summer, she finished grief therapy at Pathstone Mental Health.

It was a journey that led her to understand her anger and sadness, she says. She was nine years old, in Grade 4, when her mom died. She now feels comfortable sharing stories about her mom, and the experience of having a parent die. She has joined clubs and activities at school. And she's made many friends.

At her last therapy session, she gave her therapist a painting. The canvas was filled with bright, happy colours, in contrast to the pencil sketch of her mother she drew when she started counselling at 14. Flowers dance around the border. And at the bottom, is one word: Thrive.

Child and family therapist Angel Graham says there's an important difference between surviving and thriving. "Surviving is just going on with your day."

Thriving is living, experiencing joy again in life.

This Saturday, she will be speaking at the Children's Grief Awareness Event, an all-day session organized by Grief Network Niagara, a group of professionals and volunteers who provide bereavement support throughout the community. The event being held at Brock University begins in the morning with the movie *Inside Out* for children and families. In the afternoon, adults can attend a series of workshops on topics that include children's grief, sleep, nightmares, grief dreams, child-pet bonds and bullying after loss.

Children are often the forgotten mourners when it comes to death, says Graham.

They grieve differently than adults.

Children might not understand the finality of death until about age 10. She recalls one little boy who believed that he could visit heaven to see his grandma then return the next day.

Questions children want answered can include: Did I cause it? Can I catch it? Can I cure it? And who is going to care for me? she says.

Children are good at holding in emotion, so they don't upset the surviving parent.

Grief is easy to detect in children who act out with behaviours. However, there are children and teens who get missed.

"They throw themselves into their studies because it's something they can control," says Graham. "And they go under the radar."

Chloe was recommended for therapy because she seemed too quiet. And even Chloe didn't realize that it was grief she was experiencing.

"I didn't notice I was grieving until someone asked me to talk about it," she says. "I was angry, but I didn't realize it. I was sad but I didn't want to accept it."

A source of her anger was guilt. She would help her mom by cooking, and keeping her bedroom clean. But she wanted to do more. "I couldn't do anything to help with her cancer," says Chloe.

And she made herself appear happy, thinking that would help make other family members happy.

Meanwhile, she stopped hanging out in groups and became more introverted. She felt uncomfortable talking about her mom. "I felt like if I talk about it, I would scare them off," she says.

A combination of the one-on-one therapy and sharing her feelings in a bereavement group for teenagers at Hospice Niagara guided her towards an ability to once again thrive.

"It's quite healing to tell your story," says Graham.

While loved ones adapt to the physical person no longer being with them, that person is still a part of their life narrative. The memories, and the stories, are what keep the person alive, in the sense of not being forgotten. Their importance becomes recognized.

"Trisha is still here through the memories of her children," says Graham. And then to Chloe directly: "You're mom helped to shape the person you are," she says.

Chloe smiles. Nods.

She says she's learned to turn memories into good feelings.

"I don't want to look back on memories as sad things that won't happen again," she says.

"Now I find happiness remembering what happened when she was alive."

She remembers being in Grade 1, and her mom asking, "If you could go anywhere, where would you want to go?"

"And we said, Disney," says Chloe.

A month later, the whole family — mom, dad and the three kids — travelled there.

Her mother gave her a journal before they boarded the plane. Chloe liked reading and telling stories and she wrote about the parks and rides.

Years later, after her mother had died, Chloe found that journal and showed it to her dad. He then showed her all of her mother's journals, including one she'd written for her children.

On the first page, Trisha began with some instructions: When I pass away, make a copy for each one of you, so you don't fight over it ...

They each have a copy. Chloe has read it several times.

Her mom began by telling the stories of their births. And she wrote about fun memories. The bumpy road at African Lion Safari. Chloe crying the first time she rode a horse. Her mother taped tickets into the journal from the time they visited the Toronto Zoo.

Chloe remembers lying in bed, talking across the hall with her brother, in his bedroom. After her mom died, she remembers her dad coming into their bedroom if one of them was crying. They would gather on one of their beds, or separately, and talk until they fell to sleep.

"Eventually, we stopped crying at night," she says.

Even that, is a good memory.

In her desk drawer, she keeps a photo taken with her mom when she was about five years old. Chloe is dressed in a pink knit sweater with fringe around the sleeves. Her arms are wrapped around her mother's neck and their cheeks are pressed firmly together.

"It makes me feel happy because she's smiling so big," says Chloe.

She thinks of her mother as she watches the Food Network, especially when it's one of celebrity cook Rachael Ray's shows, or when she hears the Maroon 5 song *She Will Be Loved*.

"It's a part of me," says Chloe, "but I'm not letting it take over everything I do in my life."

And she makes the Raspberry Love Salad. Often.

The first few times without her mom were difficult. Now, she imagines her mom beside her.

"I may not be able to make it with her," she says, "but I can make it in memory of her."

Cclock@postmedia.com

Children's Grief Awareness Event

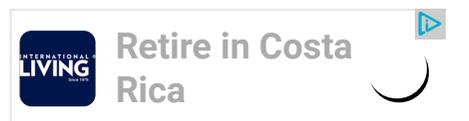
What: The Children's Grief Awareness Event is designed to raise awareness of the needs of grieving children and the benefits they can obtain through the support of others.

When: Saturday

Where: Brock University, David S. Howes Theatre.

Details: In the morning, 9:30 a.m. to noon, children can watch the movie *Inside Out*. In the afternoon, adults can attend workshops from 1 to 3:30. Topics to be discussed include: Children's grief; bullying after loss; children's sleep; working with nightmares; grief dreams; child-pet bond and pet loss.

Register: For more information visit www.childrengriefawarenessevent.com



This Week's Flyers

walmart.ca

All items available online NOW

SENIORS' DAY!

ProForm Performance 600i

HOVER FOR FLYER

Walmart

Rexall Pharmacy Plus

SENIORS' DAY!

Collect More. Save More.

SENIORS' DAY! SAVE 20%

30

25

10

18.99

HOVER FOR FLYER

Rexall

RONA

THIS WEEKEND WE FINISH THE BASEMENT!

SAVE \$129

\$100

25%

HOVER FOR FLYER

RONA