

Personal Story

Tess, grandmother of Rebecca



BUILDING A JUST SOCIETY

about grief

Our 18 year old granddaughter, Rebecca, died 2 years ago. She was the first grandchild so she had a special place. She was a beautiful girl growing up, so bright and intelligent and happy. She'd come to us on the farm in the school holidays, she loved it. I think she liked it more than the other grandchildren. They'd sometimes get bored, but she wanted to help out. She did as best she could, milking the cows and eventually she was good at it. We could rely on her. She loved to be around the animals, she'd name them and talk to them, and watch them grow from calves over the years she was here.

She had her own boots and work clothes and would get up early in the morning to round up the cows. I guess we noticed that she was a sensitive child. Things seemed to hurt her more than they would most people. She didn't seem to bounce back from the bumps of life as most of us do. She'd be very sad when one of the herd died. We'd try and explain things to her but sometimes she was upset all day.

From around the age of 15 she was going off the rails, we heard from our daughter, Sarah. She was using drugs and going out at night with an older group of friends. There were fights at home and she was not going to school. She'd still come to us and she seemed to still enjoy it, though she started not to look so happy. She would send text messages to her friends at all hours but we know this is normal now so we tried not to mind.

When Sarah phoned and told us Reb was dead it was the worst moment of my life. We've had some difficult times in our lives, most people have, like when my parents died and an uncle I was close to. But nothing prepared me for this. I was so devastated and shocked.

I still worry sometimes about Sarah, her husband Paul and our other grandchildren. It hurts so much to lose her, but it also hurts to see them suffer so much as well. It seems like a double dose when our granddaughter died. We grieve ourselves and we grieve for our daughter as well. You don't expect to outlive your children, let alone your grandchildren. The world felt the wrong way up for ages.

We try and help out in any way we can. They're all doing better now, but sometimes we'd take the kids for a weekend or a week to give Sarah and Paul some time to themselves. They weren't able sometimes to take care of the kids they were so torn up by the grief.

We have felt helpless and sad. We've tried to help and sometimes this has worked and sometimes we have just felt we were in the way. We've pulled through but sometimes I still have trouble believing our dear Reb did this. We needed to change how we did Christmas. It was too much to do the usual thing. We've needed to change a lot of things. We'll always be sad about her not being here, but we learning how to put things back together.

Counselling and Support Services

Support After Suicide (03) 9427 9899 Richmond, Lalor, Ferntree Gully, Dandenong and Lt Collins St, City

Bereavement Counselling and Support Service (03) 9265 2111

The Compassionate Friends (03) 9888 4944

Mercy Western Grief Services (03) 9364 9838

Telephone counselling

Suicide Helpline 24 hours 1300 651 251

Griefline—12pm-3am—9596 7799

Lifeline—24 hours—13 11 14

Parent Help Line 1300 30 1300

Kids Helpline—1800 55 1800

Support After Suicide

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