

# Celebrating Life

As part of remembering your deceased loved one, you'll want to celebrate his or her life—as well as the lives of those still living. Life is a precious gift, and going through this difficult time of first caring for and then losing a loved one can make life seem all the more precious and worthwhile. The grieving process is truly complete when you can move beyond the despair of death and see death as a natural part of life. Celebrating life can be joyous and healing.

There are many ways to celebrate and remember the life of your loved one as well as the lives of those still alive.



*Celebrate a deceased loved one's life by creating a special memory album that includes photos, mementoes, newspaper clippings and awards.*

## **Keep Memories Alive**

Celebrating your elder's life can mean keeping the memories of that life alive—through photos, writing and even telling stories. These can be particularly valuable for children who may be too young to remember much about their elderly relative. You might want to work on a special memory album of your deceased relative, including photos, mementoes, newspaper clippings and awards. This album will be valuable for generations to come. There are mini-courses or computer programs that can help you do this.

## **Donations, Scholarships and other Honors**

Another way of honoring and celebrating the life of your deceased elder is through donating a portion of his or her estate to a charity, a bench at their favorite park, establishing a scholarship fund or endowed chair at their alma mater, or otherwise contributing to causes that he or she supported in life. Such donations may be designated in the person's will, but if not, the family can make them on the deceased's behalf. When deciding on which cause to support, consider the groups or institutions that meant the most to your elder during life and which can most use the help.

## **Activities and Community Participation**

Perhaps your deceased relative was active at one time in the local 4-H. Or perhaps the hospice caregivers at the end of your relative's life helped your relative and you immensely, touching your life forever. You might decide after your elder's death to commit your time to one of these organizations in his or her honor. This kind of involvement can be a way of honoring and celebrating the life of your elder by giving of your own time and effort after their death. Involving your children or spouse can also be a way of connecting them with the process of healing and celebration—bringing your immediate family together in a commitment to community service.