



Dear .

Brandon Heelan was eight years old when his father fell ill and had to be hospitalized. He was diagnosed with sepsis, a fast-moving infection in which the body attacks its own tissues and organs. Within one week of checking into the hospital, the most important person in Brandon's life was gone forever.

"My dad was my everything: my baseball coach; my role model; and my hero," Brandon says. "He meant the world to my family and finding a new normal was extremely difficult."

Brandon will always be grateful for the sincere outpouring of love he received from his relatives, teachers and classmates; however, he knows from painful personal experience that kind words alone can't heal a small heart so completely broken.

"I felt supported, but I didn't feel like anyone understood," he explains. "I was confused, wondering why this happened to me. After my dad died I stopped playing baseball, stopped doing anything. It was just too hard."

Brandon's mom quickly realized that Brandon and his two older brothers needed more help than she could give them, and she began taking them to weekly family bereavement counseling sessions. The counselor recommended Camp Comfort.

"I didn't feel so alone," Brandon says. "Looking back at my 8-year-old self, I went from bottling everything up to learning to talk about my loss. I learned to live for my Dad and do things that would make him proud."

By the time his powerful Camp Comfort weekend drew to a close, Brandon was set on the path to emotional healing. The pain was still there, of course, but, for the first time in a long time, so was the active, optimistic boy he'd been. Last summer, Brandon and his mom returned to Camp Comfort, this time as buddies.

"It's full circle," he smiles. "I know firsthand how much Camp Comfort can help a grieving child. It means the world to me that I can be there for them."

And now you can be there for Camp Comfort. Even though it costs \$800 to host one child for one life-changing weekend, we only ask families to pay \$175 per camper. This can help alleviate the often stressful financial challenges they face after the death of a loved one. Because even \$175 is beyond the means of many Colorado families, Camp Comfort scholarships ensure that no child struggling with the death of a parent or sibling is ever turned away for want of means.

Please help us bring hope for healing to children again this summer. Use the enclosed envelope and give today. Your generous contribution will mean the world to a small heart in pain.

Sincerely,

Sallie Wandling

Sallie Wandling, LSW
Camp Comfort Founder

**Your gift
has power.**

*Bring support,
fun and healing to
a Colorado child
grieving the death
of a loved one today.*



Brandon, along with his mother, returned to Camp Comfort as volunteer "buddies" because of his impactful experience as a camper after the loss of his father.



About Camp Comfort

Founded in 1995, Mount Evans Home Health Care & Hospice's groundbreaking bereavement camp has helped more than 1,500 Colorado children find a path through their grief.

For two weekends each summer, highly trained Mount Evans counselors engage grieving campers in a carefully curated program of powerful emotional discovery and heart-healing outdoor recreation. Volunteer "buddies" extend each child a friendly hand, a shoulder to cry on, a warm smile of encouragement and an attentive ear. Perhaps most importantly, the children are surrounded by the reassuring faces of other kids recovering from psychological trauma.



Children experience grief differently than adults

Here in Colorado, 1 in 17 children will experience the death of parent or sibling before age 18. These children are often the forgotten victims of loss. When adults overlook the grief of their children, it is rarely on purpose. Some children may outwardly appear completely unaffected by the loss, and are overlooked accidentally as the adults process their own grief while carrying out the daily demands of adult life.