



Grief Support
for the Young in Oxfordshire

The first 10 years

2000-2010



Celebrating 10 years of supporting Oxfordshire's bereaved children and young people

Celebrating...all that's been achieved



Welcome to SeeSaw's Review. It's been interesting to reflect a little on the last nine years. I still remember the sense of anticipation and excitement at SeeSaw's very first information evening, which led to me becoming one of the first Volunteer Support Workers.

It's a sobering thought that without the time so generously given by Trustees, Volunteer Support Workers, Friends of SeeSaw and so many others – alongside gifts in kind and donated prizes – SeeSaw's costs would be at least doubled. Especially in these uncertain financial times, with talk of cuts in public services, SeeSaw's strength and confidence comes from this amazing "extra value".

Of course, this celebration of what's been achieved is tinged with the sadness of knowing that each and every one of the children supported has had to find a way of managing without someone they love. We feel very proud that we've been able to support them and that Oxfordshire's people have become so committed to this work. We really hope that our overall aim of making Oxfordshire a place where every bereaved child's needs are understood and met has been achieved – not just for now, but for the next ten years and beyond. Thank you to absolutely everyone who's made this possible.

Rosie Nicol-Harper
Director



"Our name reflects the ups and downs of grief."

SEESAW: THE FACTS

Supports children aged up to 18 who have a parent or a sibling who is dying or has died.

Responds swiftly to requests for help, usually within 24 hours.

Provides tailored, one-to-one support, when required – usually in the home.

Gives support, advice, resources and reassurance to parents and carers.

Provides advice, resources and training to professionals who deal with bereaved children – including nurses, teachers and GPs.

Through support groups and family days gives children and their families the opportunity to meet others who are going through similar experiences.

Covers the county of Oxfordshire, but can provide information about other services in the UK where necessary.



Registered Charity Number
1076321

SeeSaw is a company limited by
guarantee registered in
England and Wales N°3790965

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www.seesaw.org.uk

Celebrating...ten wonderful years

2000

First Director, Christine Pentland, is appointed

After two years of hard work, SeeSaw is launched as Oxfordshire's dedicated grief support service for children and young people.



2001

SeeSaw's support service to schools is launched

First fully trained volunteers start to work with children



2002

Macmillan pre-bereavement service is launched

2003

3rd birthday party – attended by children supported by SeeSaw

2004

Difficult financial year. Mobilised superb support from county

2005

SeeSaw winner of national Guardian Charity of the Year Award

Remembering event at Kingston Bagpuize house



2006

Increased demand leads to the appointment of a fourth member to the clinical team

1,000th child helped by SeeSaw



2007

Virginia Grant and Raymond Blanc join founder Patron Sylvia McLintock as Patrons of SeeSaw

First family activity day is held at Cothill School



2008

'Side by Side' project established. First two-day support group held

2009

SeeSaw finalist in the Oxfordshire Business of the Year Awards



2010

Time to celebrate! SeeSaw is now the established and valued service in Oxfordshire our founder Trustees dreamed it would become

Anticipated that more than 2,000 children supported by year end

"My heart was so touched by the work SeeSaw does."

Celebrating... a dream realised



2010 marks ten years of SeeSaw providing help and support for bereaved children in Oxfordshire and their families. In this anniversary year we will reach the milestone of having given dedicated support to 2,000 children.

Thanks to the excellent reputation built up through the expertise of the staff and volunteer support workers, and the positive feedback from children and families, teachers and other professionals, SeeSaw is now recognised as providing a key part of children's services in Oxfordshire.

I would like to congratulate all the staff and volunteers who have made all this possible, and send my special thanks to those who have committed their time, talents and resources to supporting SeeSaw.

Gillian Forrest
Chair of Trustees



Fourteen years ago SeeSaw was a dream. A dream shared by a group of people who worked with children. All knew that the support available to children in Oxfordshire whose parent or sibling had died was patchy at best... and often non-existent.

It took four years of thinking and planning just to get started. However, because of the determination of that group – reinforced by the team of skilled business people who joined us – the dream has been realised.

I'm delighted that SeeSaw is now such an established and highly valued service, helping bereaved children face the future with hope. We couldn't have wished for more.

Ann Couldrick
Founder Trustee



When I was invited to become a Trustee, I was happy to accept as I already knew about SeeSaw's important work and, moreover, knew families who had been helped and supported by the charity.

"We would never have survived as a family without SeeSaw", a work colleague with two young children had said to me a year before, following the death of his wife.

Since becoming a Trustee I have been impressed by the charity's clear focus, the dedication of those who work for it, both salaried staff and trained volunteers, and the scrupulous way its resources are deployed.

My hope for the future is for SeeSaw to continue to evolve, while retaining the firm anchor of its core values.

Jacqueline Worswick
Trustee



SeeSaw Trustees, including Terence Cross, front

SeeSaw owes a great deal to its Trustees. Each year they donate as a group about 1,500 hours of skilled time, and the current group have between them 77 years of experience as Trustees! Over the past 10 years we've also benefited from the skills, time and expertise of Mike Williams, Alison Jestico, Arthur Thompson, Joanna MacIntyre, Dreena Barnard-Higton and Terence Cross.

Sadly, one of our earliest Trustees, Terence Cross, died in May 2009. His financial and business acumen, as well as his warmth, humour and generosity have been hugely influential and will be missed.

"SeeSaw was a tower of strength for my children and for me at a very difficult time in our lives."

Celebrating...excellence



People often ask what exactly we do to support young people and their families following a death. There's no simple answer as grief affects everyone differently – even within the same family. But this is what families tell us they really appreciate:

- *Being able to pick up the phone to speak to someone straight away who can offer a bit of guidance. Often, reassurance is what's needed.*
- *The offer of a home visit – sometimes on the same day – at a time when they couldn't even think about having to make their own way to an office. As Oxfordshire is such a large, mainly rural, county home visiting means everyone can access the help we provide.*
- *Visits to children when needed. Using practical activities based around remembering, children can be helped in their grief.*
- *Complete flexibility about the number and timing of visits. Some young people may have two or three series of visits – at different stages of their lives – so the service adapts to suit their new needs.*
- *The option to meet with other families who've been through similar circumstances.*

By listening to feedback and hearing what really helps families, SeeSaw strives to improve, whilst keeping the core work solid and reliable.

We're proud of the reputation we've built up in Oxfordshire, not just with families but with the county's professionals who both recommend us and use us for their own advice and consultation. Having a small but strong and stable team of staff has been key to this reputation for excellence.



Between them, the staff team have spent over 40 years working with bereaved children and their families.



"It is very comforting to know that such fantastic support and resources are available at the end of the phone."

Celebrating... our volunteers



Each time I meet a Seesaw child or young person for the first time there's a questioning, interested, yet slightly daunted feeling: Will we get on? Can I make any difference? Those questions are always there. But I have learnt that I am only a stepping stone, staying beside each child until his family regains enough confidence to support each other again. The aim is to be dispensable. For a few weeks or months one has the privilege of gaining a child's trust and learning through them about the parent or sibling he or she is grieving for. Together we discover what that person meant to them and how they can treasure their memories, hopefully enabling them to share their feelings with the rest of the family. From that first visit when a child may have felt utterly bereft, to a point where anniversaries may be marked with a visit to somewhere they used to go together, or laughter breaks out about funny habits they remember, can be an amazing journey.

Eve
Volunteer Support Worker



I retired from teaching and wanted to find interesting voluntary work with children, which would both stretch and reward me. The training – excellent preparation – difficult in places, but giving me the tools to do the work. I also joined a band of "like thinking" people who have since become my friends. Sense of humour essential!

What makes our visits valuable to children and their families is that we give our time – time for that one child; time to fill memory boxes and salt jars for the good memories and to help manage difficult feelings; time for fun and walks and time to listen to questions too difficult to ask close family. Most of all, as much time as is it takes before we are no longer needed.

My role is to encourage hope for the future and to capture joyful moments from the past.

I feel very privileged to be invited into the homes of the families and grateful that we can make a difference.

Maxine
Volunteer Support Worker



SeeSaw has trained 45 Volunteer Support Workers in total – eleven currently give their time and care to support young people. Between them they have over 50 years of experience and they donate over 2,400 hours of time each and every year.

"She is easy to talk to and very nice. We can talk to her about anything. She doesn't make you talk about things you don't want to talk about which is good."

Celebrating...making a difference



Demand for SeeSaw's service has increased steadily as its reputation has grown. By June 2010 SeeSaw expects to have given dedicated, tailored support to 2,000 children in over 1,200 families and provided advice, support and training to 3,000 professionals.



The number of children, families and professionals supported each year by Seesaw has more than doubled since 2001

In 2001

Helped 93 children

Helped 53 families

Visited 33 schools

Supported 140 professionals

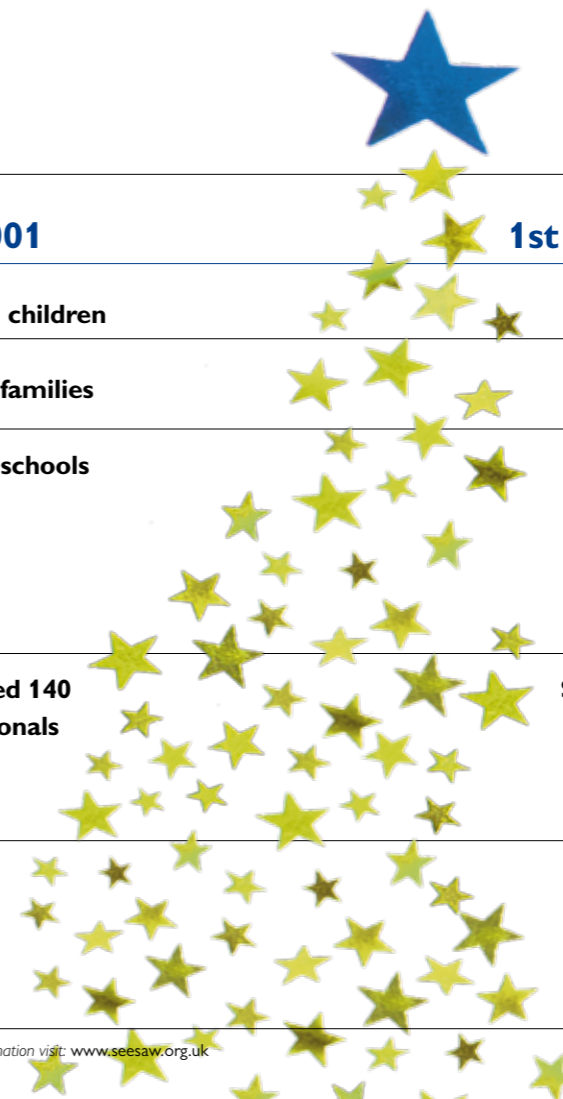
1st July 2008 to 30th June 2009

Helped 441 children

Helped 227 families

Visited 46 schools, contact with 108 in total. Additional 170 teachers reached through conference training sessions.

Supported over 300 professionals. Telephone guidance, advice and consultation for 108. Training sessions for 227.



"Statistics sound dry and boring, but behind every number is the personal story of a child."

Christine Pentland, SeeSaw's first Director

Celebrating... community spirit



Jane Elliott
Fundraising Co-ordinator

For me, the most rewarding part of my role as Fundraising Co-ordinator for SeeSaw is the fabulous commitment and support we receive from the community.

So many support SeeSaw in different ways – regular donors help us to plan for the future with some certainty; fundraising volunteers are ready and willing to run stalls, sell raffle tickets, or help with stewarding or refreshments at our bigger events; community group friends raise large sums of money each year for SeeSaw; and businesses large and small support us through donations, employee fundraising and providing services.

As a small local charity we are so grateful to everyone for their invaluable loyalty and support. We couldn't do it without you all, and I know that I speak on behalf of everyone at SeeSaw when I say how truly grateful we are.



Sadly, we simply don't have space here in this review to say thank you to each and every person, group and company, much as we'd like to.

For a list of everyone who has helped over the past year, please take a look at our new

THANK YOU page on our website.

www.seesaw.org.uk

It is impossible to count the number of hours and gifts in kind so generously given by Oxfordshire people to raise funds needed to keep SeeSaw running.



"Hard working and committed staff, seeing children helped to see the positives this is why SeeSaw can recruit and retain so many supporters."

Celebrating... confidence for the future



From July 2008 to June 2009, SeeSaw's service cost £269,212. Thanks largely to increased community fundraising activity, another very successful dinner and auction, continued support from a variety of charitable trusts, and some local grants (from Oxfordshire PCT, Sobell House Hospice Charity and Vale of White Horse District Council), we have exceeded our budgeted income for our financial year ended 30 June 2009, raising a total of £338,032.

This brings our reserves to £313,865 which represents just over a year's operation costs, to ensure the continuity of the service.

This is a significant improvement from just 18 months ago and puts us in a healthy position even in these times of uncertainty about the fundraising climate. We will continue to fundraise actively from a wide variety of sources, maintaining our current resources (one full-time equivalent fundraiser). As 2010 will be our 10th anniversary year, we feel reasonably confident that our income targets for 2009-2010 are realistic and achievable.

For SeeSaw's full accounts for 1st July 2008-30th June 2009 please see our accounts page on the Charity Commission website – simply look up SeeSaw (Registered Charity 1076321) on www.charity-commission.gov.uk

Alun Evans
Treasurer



2010 is a year to celebrate SeeSaw's achievements culminating in a wonderful 10th Birthday Party for all of the children and families that we have supported. It takes place on Sunday 18th July at the beautiful Kingston Bagpuize House. To have a celebration on this scale, we will need the help and support of many Oxfordshire companies and community organisations. To find out how you can be part of this, please contact:
Jane Elliott on **01865 744768** or fundraiser@seesaw.org.uk

"SeeSaw's future depends on continuing donations, grants and local fundraising"

Celebrating... SeeSaw



"This is important work, often overlooked in the adult preoccupations which surround a death. SeeSaw does it with sensitivity and effectiveness, helping both the children themselves and those who care for them when – as one put it – the wheels come off your life."

"I'm happy and proud, as patron of SeeSaw, to celebrate ten years of this very worthwhile charity. It is a joy to think of the difference SeeSaw has been able to make in the lives of bereaved children."

Raymond Blanc, O.B.E.
Patron of SeeSaw

Libby Purves

Writer and Radio 4 Presenter



"This is very important work. Thank you to all the team, especially the volunteer support workers, and best of luck for the next ten years."

Tim Stevenson, O.B.E.
Lord Lieutenant of Oxfordshire

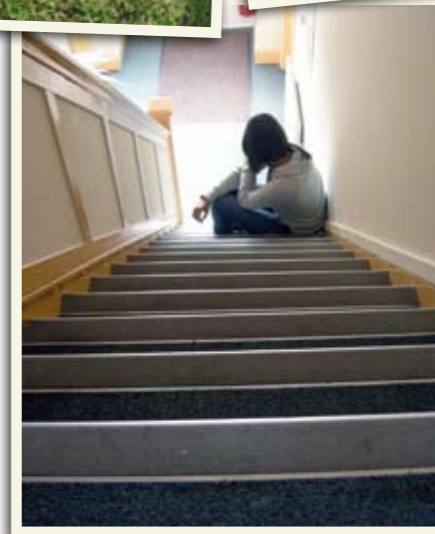
"Oxfordshire is truly fortunate to have this young and inspiring charity working to help bereaved children. When we most needed it SeeSaw gave Elizabeth, Alex and me understanding, friendship and help to look forward. I am delighted to support and continue to be humbled by the commitment of all the staff at SeeSaw in their work with bereaved children and their families."

Virginia Grant
Patron of SeeSaw



"I am delighted and proud to have been associated with SeeSaw over these important years. May it continue to flourish."

Sylvia McLintock
Founder Patron



As part of our Side by Side initiative to bring young people together, we ran a photography project in Autumn 2009. These are just a few of the images the young people produced to express some of the difficult feelings connected with grief.

Thank you



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www.seesaw.org.uk