

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT NELSON'S JOURNEY

INNOVATIVE GIFT LAUNCHED TO SUPPORT
BEREAVED CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Norfolk-based child bereavement charity, Nelson's Journey, has recently launched the Smiles & Tears Gift Box, an idea developed and created by its award-winning young volunteers.

Nelson's Journey was established in 1997 and provides therapeutic support to children and young people, living in Norfolk, who have experienced the death of a significant person in their life, eg family member friend, teacher, etc. If the child is struggling to cope following their bereavement the charity can offer a range of therapeutic services to meet their needs.

Many of the charity's young volunteers say that around the time their special person died, people around them didn't know what to do or say to provide support.

A member of the young volunteers said: "People don't always know what to say when someone has died, so we have designed this box of goodies for

children and young people to use when they feel they need them. By receiving this gift, they will know that someone cares about them and it might help them feel less lonely."

Kiera-Lea is a young volunteer and was six years old when her dad chose to end his own life. About the box, Kiera-Lea said: "The gift box would have helped me by giving me ways to communicate with my family. It would have provided me with toys and other things that would have been of comfort. It also includes ways to remember your special person in a good way and informs me that everything I am feeling is normal and ok."

Items contained in the box include:-

- happy jar and notes – a special place to write down and store your happy and positive thoughts;
- mindfulness colouring postcards – created especially for Nelson's Journey which feature the range of emotions and feelings commonly experienced in grief, eg anger, sadness, guilt and loneliness;
- tissues – featuring the message "It's ok to cry";
- soft toy – for those times when you need a hug;
- chocolate bar – because everyone deserves a treat.

Businesses and civil celebrants within the funeral profession are promoting the Smiles & Tears Gift Box by providing literature to appropriate families affected by a recent bereavement.

Anne Beckett-Allen, Director at Norfolk and Suffolk based business Rosedale Funeral Homes, said: "Through our work as funeral directors we are often asked about the best way to support

a bereaved child and, up until now, we have felt that resources have been quite limited, so we really welcome the release of the bereavement gift box and have already ordered a small stock to have available in our funeral homes.

"It is traditional to send flowers to adults at a time of bereavement, but children are often 'forgotten mourners.' It's evident that each item within the box has been thoughtfully selected and that the benefits to a bereaved child would be immense, making an impact that would last far longer than flowers. These boxes will make a real difference in the weeks and months after the funeral, as well as on special days such as anniversaries and birthdays for many years. It is my firm belief that all good funeral directors should be making families aware of the benefits of this wonderful resource."

The Smiles & Tears Gift Box can be purchased for £28.00 (+ £4.99 P&P) from the Nelson's Journey website by visiting www.nelsonsjourney.org.uk/shop. As a project being led by the young volunteers, any profits received from the sale of gift boxes will be reinvested into the project enabling the young people to purchase further stock, helping to ensure the product benefits as many young people as possible.

For more information please contact Sophie Berry at Nelson's Journey on **01603 431788** or by email to sophie@nelsonsjourney.org.uk

