



**As someone who has lost a loved one, I know how devastating grief can be.**

**Christmas is an especially hard time of year, but there is a way you can help bereaved families this Christmas.**

Imagine going into a dark room, crawling under a blanket, and feeling awfully, terribly and totally alone. That was what grief felt like for me. I thought I could cope – I've experienced death before. But the grief when my son died knocked me sideways.

My lifeline came in the form of Prospect Hospice's bereavement team. So this Christmas, I want to ask, **could you fund vital bereavement services, and help more people going through their darkest days?**

Adam died on 1 November last year. He was 49, my lovely boy. He'd been diagnosed with lung cancer just three months previously, but went downhill so quickly it was shocking. We'd moved Adam into Prospect Hospice. During one evening he said, "Mum, I think this is it." He knew he was near the end. I popped back home to get some bits so I could stay over, but Adam sent me a text saying he was fine and I should sleep in my own bed. That was just before midnight. He died at 1.32am.

I've dealt with grief before, including both parents and my sister. But this was different. This was my child, my baby, the one I'm supposed to defend and protect – and I couldn't do a thing. **Adam's death left me in pieces.**

I became trembly and shaky. I wouldn't drive. I'd cry at the drop of a hat. I couldn't register anyone else's sorrow. I stopped doing things around the house, like cleaning or cooking. I just couldn't be bothered.

**It was like a wave had crashed over me, and I was lost underwater.** I couldn't swim or breathe or find my way out. It was awful. I felt I would never come up for air again. But then Louise, from the bereavement services team at Prospect Hospice, called to see if I'd like to talk to anyone. **She became my lifesaver.**

I started going weekly, and Louise and I sat and chatted. She understood the awfulness of grief. She asked gentle questions, listened and led me through it all. Can you imagine the relief of having somewhere to go, to cry, to discharge the feelings that overwhelm you? **It strengthened me tremendously.**

Now, I have good and bad days. I've taken up the guitar. I see Louise every two weeks, and she's arranged for me to meet other bereaved mums. **I feel like I'm becoming a normal person again.**

I've made jokes with Louise about 'taking the stabilisers off' – I can't attend her sessions forever, but for now I can keep going. She never mentions the cost.

I know it's down to the kindness of people like you that this amazing service is available to me. I'm deeply grateful. But there are so many of us – grieving mums, dads, wives, children, husbands...

**Please, will you help provide bereavement support to people facing their darkest days?**

**£25 will provide an hour of vital one-to-one bereavement services to a grieving relative**

**£86 will ensure someone can come to our carers' café for around six months**

**£196 will ensure two people can benefit from a course of bereavement group sessions**

Thank you so much, and I hope you have a happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

With kind regards,

Sally

**PS. Bereavement care might not be the first thing you think of at Prospect Hospice. But, for me, it's been a lifesaver. Please, will you help more grieving families through their darkest times, by supporting this vital service?**