



BEFRIENDER
MINISTRY

A Listening Presence

Foundation Principles

- God is present
- Caring not curing
- Nonjudgmental presence
- Active listening

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How Does BeFriender Ministry Make a Difference?

Here's one Story from a BeFriender: My Journey to BeFriender Ministry

By Theresa Melles

In January of 1992 my mother, Patricia, died unexpectedly. She had been at Mayo Clinic from December 13th until January 2nd, 1992. It was a blessing that someone from our family was always at her side during her final days. Whether it was praying, reading, or just holding mom's hand, we were able to support her and each other.

Shortly after mom's funeral, I attended mass at my parish church, St. Joseph's in Hopkins, MN. Barb Schwery, the parish Pastoral Minister at that time, spoke to the congregation about the new BeFriender Ministry at St. Joseph's. She explained the mission and described the importance of a caring and listening presence.

After listening to her speak, I thought BeFrienders would be the perfect group to receive memorial gifts from my mother's funeral. I later met with Barb, and we had a great conversation about the goals and mission of BeFriender Ministry.

Soon after, my husband and I were blessed with our first child. We named her Patricia after my mom. She was such a blessing and brought joy and hope to our family after our time of loss. In less than a year, our hearts were broken when Patricia died from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Shortly after Patricia's death I received a call from a BeFriender from St. Joseph's. She let me know that she was there for me when I felt ready to meet. I met with my BeFriender for several months. She was a source of understanding, comfort, and compassion. Along with my faith and family, the BeFriender helped me as I went through the difficult journey of losing a child.

In the last few years, I was approached several times about joining BeFriender Ministry. I was not yet ready to take on that commitment. In 2023 I was asked again and decided that I was ready to become part of the ministry that had given me such comfort in a time of sadness and grief. I completed my training and was commissioned in Fall 2023.

I am hoping my life experiences, including being in a BeFriender relationship, will help me as I continue my learning and growth in this ministry.

Theresa Melles
BeFriender
St. Gabriel the Archangel Catholic Church

Reflection shared with permission.

