



July 26, 2013

Elliott Cherry
P.O. Box 6602
Portland ME 04103

Elliott Cherry invited the Cancer Care Center to co-sponsor a performance of 'A Finished Heart' during the summer of 2013. As the Executive Director of a Cancer Care Center, I was interested in developing supportive programs that would allow individuals to talk about the many emotions of grieving. I was particularly interested in the post-performance discussion and the immediate reactions that were being expressed by the audience.

The level of raw emotion shows Elliott's ability to connect with any audience. He shares his experience so completely and without reservation. I felt the audience connect with his honesty and open expression of fear, anger, guilt, frustration and sadness.

Expressing feelings in a safe place is part of the healing process after a death and very few individuals have a supportive environment where they can be with others who have suffered similar losses.

A 'Finished Heart' is dramatic story with poetry accompanied by music. The piece expresses an experience of losing someone you love and the complexity of end-of-life experience. During the discussion session after the Ocean Park performance, it was apparent how much each member of the audience was impacted. The questions were insightful and very personal. Members of the audience shared their appreciation and demonstrated the level of emotions- the audience is clearly moved by the performance. Many revealed that there were few situations and opportunities to express their emotions after the loss of a loved one.

On a personal note, viewing this performance while losing a loved one, gave me tremendous insight to the array of emotions that others were experiencing during the grieving process. This performance and the discussion validated the many thoughts and range of emotions I have been feeling. This gave me a better understanding of the stages of grieving and hopefully someday acceptance.

Elliott is passionate about bringing this experience into the community and sharing this gift of validation and connection.

Karen Pierce-Stewart, Executive Director
Cancer Care Center of York County

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Pierce-Stewart" with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

27 Industrial Avenue, Sanford, Maine 04073
Contact: Karen Pierce-Stewart, Executive Director
(207) 459-1606 pierck2@cccycme.org
www.cancercaresyorkcounty.org