

## Meet Author JoAnn Tuzeo-Jarolmen

**Learn more about the inspiration behind her book, *When a Family Pet Dies*.**

*By Stacy N. Hackett*

Why did you write the book?

After years of counseling people who felt isolated and abandoned in their grief after losing a companion animal, I decided it was an important issue that needed attention. The public needed to know about the problems involved in pet loss for children and their parents. Many parents had come to me totally bewildered by the process and asked how to help their children.

What was one of the most compelling anecdotes you heard while writing the book?

One story that sticks out in particular is of a family that had lost its pet when she was hit by a car. The children had witnessed the event and were angry, guilt-ridden and traumatized. One of the children refused to get close to any other animal and promised to never have a pet when he grew up. He was the one who felt most guilty, having opened the door when the pet ran out into the street. This type of trauma can lead to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder if not dealt with appropriately.

What is your writing process?

Because this book was based on my doctoral dissertation, it was about making it interesting and readable to the general public. I usually write in the morning since that is when I have the most energy.

What has the feedback been on the book so far?

Thus far the feedback on the book has been positive. Many comment that it is a needed tool to help parents deal with their children going through the grief process.

Do you own a cat (or cats)? Tell us about them.

Yes, I have many cats. I rescued all of them. The rescue venues included Ramapo College of New Jersey when I worked there. Many of my cats came as kittens who were somewhat feral and others as adults who were significantly feral. I have spent time working with these companion animals. I also have received a great deal of gratification from their socialization and subsequently from their unconditional love and affection.

Do your pets influence your writing?

Absolutely. I have a therapy dog that is always by my side. I have a wonderful cat named Vito that sits on the chair behind me when I write. Their presence contributes to my confidence and sense of purpose in my resolve to continue in this field.

Were certain parts of the book more difficult to write than others? Which ones?

The vignettes were very difficult to write. As I put them down on paper, I relived the pain and grief that my counselees had experienced. The "Reflections for Parents" were exceptionally difficult as some of them dealt with my personal losses.

Stacy N. Hackett is a contributing web editor for CatChannel.com and the former editor of Pet Product News magazine. She lives in Southern California with her husband, James, children, Kayla and Parker, and two adorable Cornish Rex cats, Evita and Carson.

In July's CAT FANCY:  
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