



Bronnie Taylor

Minister for Mental Health, Regional Youth and Women

MEDIA RELEASE

Monday, 21 December 2020

***** *Interview with Daniel and Leila Abdallah and Vision for TV and Radio available here* : <https://vimeo.com/492341712/4c7ee1f2a1> *****

‘I 4GIVE DAY’ LAUNCHED BY FAMILIES OF CRASH VICTIMS

The families of four children who were tragically killed by a drunk and drugged driver are launching an annual forgiveness day with the support of the NSW Government.

Siblings Antony, Angelina and Sienna Abdallah and their cousin Veronique Sakr were killed in February this year when an out-of-control ute mounted the footpath.

The two families have taken the extraordinary step of forgiving the man behind the wheel as an important step in their grieving process.

The families want *i4give* Day to be held every year on the anniversary of the deaths in memory of the children.

In launching this day, a memorial service will be held on the eve of the anniversary, Sunday, 31 January 2021, which will be live streamed to the public.

Daniel Abdallah said he wants *i4give* Day to become one when people can remember the four children but it may also help others who have suffered.

“We still feel pain and sorrow everyday, but forgiveness has helped to get rid of the anger and bitterness. It’s helped us get through each day and make sure we are there for our other children,” said Mr Abdallah.

Both families say this is about honouring their four little saints in heaven.

“Our four children are now our four saints and this day is for them. Forgiveness is the greatest gift you can give yourself and others. The more you practise the better you become at it and it allows you live peacefully and to heal.” Leila Abdallah said.

“Christmas Eve is a very hard time for us as it is also Angelina’s birthday. Even though it is tough, we’ll be celebrating Christmas for the rest of our kids.”

Veronique’s mother Bridget Sakr, said “Christmas can be a difficult time for many families. I hope people can reflect on what so tragically happened to our beautiful

children to mend bridges with estranged family members and move forward, to love each other in peace and harmony. Life is too precious.”

People across the state will be encouraged to reflect on events and relationships in their own lives and look to the example set by the Abdallah and Sakr families.

Minister for Mental Health Bronnie Taylor said that while grieving is a normal part of life, when a tragedy such as this occurs the impact on the family is profound.

“The grief experienced can take many forms and there is no set timeline. For some people a psychologist or grief and trauma therapist may be of assistance and the need for this may occur months or years after the event,” Mrs Taylor said.

“For some people where the loss has occurred through trauma, forgiveness may play a healing role as part of the grieving process.

“This day is about honouring Antony, Angelina, Sienna and Veronique; their families have shown amazing strength through such a terrible tragedy.”

A website *i4give.com* will also be launched where people will be directed to links dealing with grief and trauma counselling.

The family have asked for privacy at this difficult time, please direct any media inquiries to the media contacts listed below. Interview and vision for radio and TV have been made available.

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