

# GRIEF MATTERS

Volume 8

Spring 2009

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## CHILDREN ARE OUR HOPE FOR THE FUTURE, BUT WE ARE THE HOPE FOR THEIRS. Anonymous

Burr! It may be cold outside but it's always warm at Annie's Hope. In fact, Annie's Hope was founded on the values of warmth, welcome, compassion, kindness, and acceptance. As you may suspect, we would not be able to offer free support to grieving kids and their families if others did not share the same values with us.

For example, for the last two years, **John L. Ziegenhein & Sons Funeral Homes** has shown the kids of Annie's Hope incredible kindness, compassion, and generosity while acknowledging the importance of memorializing someone who has died. This is how they do it. On a monthly basis, for every family served at their funeral homes, they make a donation to Annie's Hope in memory of the deceased individual. Annie's Hope then sends an acknowl-

edgement note to the family of the deceased while the funds donated help to heal the bereaved kids all over St. Louis. For another example, **Hallmark Stone** of Fenton has held a remnant granite sale for the past five years to raise funds for the kids of Annie's Hope so they can attend Camp Courage. They plan to do so again this coming April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. This is how they do it. Their entire staff volunteers time to collect, classify, price, and display granite remnants of all sizes, shapes, colors and price points for the weeks before the sale. All staff again volunteer their time on the weekend to work the granite sale at their store so the public at large can have the opportunity to purchase beautiful, perfect granite pieces at a considerable savings. With tears flowing down her cheeks, one buyer said, "I never thought I would be able to have granite

in my house. It is a dream come true". This is a win-win-win situation. Hallmark Stone gets to do wonderful, generous things for the kids of Annie's Hope, the buyer gets to have stunning granite at a price he can afford, and kids who have had their hearts broken from a death can go to Camp Courage and meet others who understand them.

The beauty of these two examples is the creativity shown, the acknowledgement that grieving kids matter, and the commitment to step up and help the kids of Annie's Hope find healing. Any person, any company, any organization and any foundation can do the same. If you would like to brainstorm on how **YOU** can make a difference for grieving kids, just contact us.

Peace,  
Becky Byrne  
Executive Director

## TRIVIA IS NOT SO TRIVIAL FOR THE KIDS OF ANNIE'S HOPE



Trivia Night attendees were awarded prizes for their "tacky tourist" costumes.

On Saturday, March 7, Annie's Hope hosted its 11th annual Trivia Night and Silent Auction. The event was coordinated by the Junior Board (or "J Board" as they are often called) and was held at Bishop Dubourg High School. Over 350 people attended the event themed "Around the World". The theme was chosen to mirror this year's theme of

Camp Courage. Tacky Tourist costumes were hard to miss, and an award was given out at the end of the night for the best costume.

Approximately \$15,000 was raised at the Trivia Night and Silent Auction to help the kids of Annie's Hope. We hope to see everyone again next year!

## INTRODUCING CAMP ERIN!



**A group of campers having fun at Camp Courage 2008.**

### **Annie's Hope is thrilled to introduce our newest program, Camp Erin - St. Louis!**

We have been chosen to collaborate with The Moyer Foundation and the St. Louis Cardinals to start this new camp for grieving children in St. Louis. The Moyer Foundation was started by Jamie Moyer, the 2009 World Series Champion pitcher of the Phillies, and his wife Karen ([www.moyerfoundation.org](http://www.moyerfoundation.org)).

Don't worry, we will still have Camp Courage too! We feel very fortunate to be able to

have two camps and the chance for more children to attend. The themes for both Camp Courage and Camp Erin will be *Around The World!* Here are some of the details for the new organization of camp:

**Camp Erin - St. Louis will serve teens between the ages of 13 and 18. The dates have been set for June 13-16 and will be held at Sunnyhill Adventures.**

**Camp Courage will now serve children between the**

**ages of 6 and 12. The dates have been set for June 7-11 and will also be at Sunnyhill Adventures.**

We are looking for campers and volunteers for both of our camps. If you know of a child or teen who would like to attend either camp, please let us know. Also, there are multiple ways to volunteer. We need cabin counselors, nurses, arts & crafts coordinators, helping hands, and help with the preparations before camp begins. Call or email us for more information!

## REMEMBER, REFLECT & RECHARGE

As the holidays neared, Annie's Hope hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Hope and Healing Gathering. **This was an opportunity for families to take a moment to remember and honor their loved one who died.** We recognize the holidays can be a very difficult time for grieving families, so we wanted to provide a comfortable, supportive environment to gather with other grieving families. This year we had 51 adults and children par-

ticipate in the event. Some of the activities included the candle-lighting ceremony, a chance to pay tribute to loved ones, listening to soothing and thoughtful music and working on a family activity.

The families each made a Magic Message Bottle to take home. These bottles were beautifully and creatively decorated with tissue paper, stickers, flowers and more. The Magic Message

Bottles can be used by the families to place messages inside. The messages can be a note to the deceased loved one, a question for a family member, a memory of the loved one, or anything else they'd want to put inside!

We thank all the families who attended the Hope and Healing Gathering. We hope your 2009 will bring you and your family peace, and renewal.



**Attendees participating in a family activity at the 2008 Hope & Healing Gathering.**

## COME ONE, COME ALL! VOLUNTEERS PLEASE CALL!



**Volunteers at the first 2009 mailing party!**

### **Annie's Hope is in need of a few good men & women!**

We have a steady, fun group of volunteers who come and help with our organization's mailings. When we're all together we call it a party! Our mailing parties are held every few months, so if you'd like to join us, please give us a call. Donating **any** of your spare time would be greatly appreciated!

One special volunteer we would like to call attention to is new to Annie's Hope.

Andrea Bruell came to us because her husband fixes our copy machine. Andrea is really a Jill of all trades. We haven't found anything she can't do. Some of the tasks she has mastered include: organizing our Community Resource Library, collating the Annie's Hope informational packets and preparing the Grief Workshop training manuals. Thank you, Andrea, for all your help!

**Looking for friends... Annie's Hope is starting a "Friends" group.** We realize that we are still relatively unknown around St. Louis, so we need a group of dedicated individuals to help increase the awareness of Annie's Hope and our mission. Our "Friends" will also help raise funds to make our programs possible. If you are interested in becoming a charter member of this group, we'd love to hear from you.

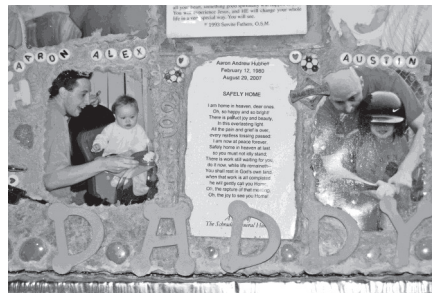
## TOOLS OF THE TRADE



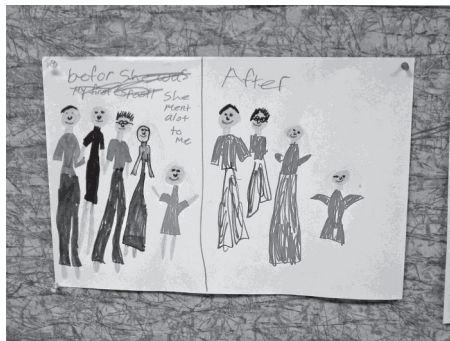
An excerpt from a collage that was done during an Annie's Hope support group.



A grief tapestry shown by a child who is very proud of his work.



A memorial stone made by a family in our eight week support groups.



A "before & after" picture created by a child comparing his sense of family before & after the death.



A teenager plays "emotional jenga", prompting her to think and talk about things she may have otherwise kept to herself.

## FROM THE HEART



The above is a picture of the card made by a student in one of our School Support and Education support groups.

The Annie's Hope School Support & Education Program reaches out to grieving kids in the school setting, so that they are able to get the support they need that they otherwise would not receive.

We are always thrilled to share real-life examples of how our hard work makes a difference in the life of a child. One recent example... an eighth grade student at Bayless Junior High made a beautiful card for our School Support and Education

Coordinator as a thank you. In the card she stated "I was shy at first but now I realize that there is a group of student I know who is grieving too. Also, I know that they're feeling the same pain I am which I always thought nobody did." "I see that crying is also a good way to grieve because I seem to hold a lot of things in & sooner or later the things build up and I POP!" She included a poem in her card saying "This is a poem that I feel fits the way I'm feeling all the time."

**"FEELINGS OF ME"**  
*No one knows how it feels to be me.  
 Like a river, my tears flow fast and free.  
 When people walk by me I wonder what they see  
 Certainly not a person who's happy or carefree.  
 At night I close my eyes  
 And to God I make a plea.  
 Please give me the strength to let the anger go away in every degree.  
 So that I don't have to live the rest of my life in a fantasy,  
 Where I dream that I live everyday in perfect harmony.*

## ONE VERY SPECIAL VOLUNTEER



**Students Ronna worked with at Holman Middle School were grateful for the time they got to spend in groups.**



Volunteers are vital to the success of Annie's Hope. There is no doubt, we could not support grieving children and families in our community without the time, dedication, and passion of all of our volunteers. As our programs continue to grow, School Support & Education is no exception. It has been a challenge to meet the requests for support groups in schools that we receive.

**This past year, we have been blessed to have a volunteer, Ronna McDaniel, who has enabled Annie's Hope to say yes to the schools more often.**

She shares her time and talents with grieving kids by leading support groups in schools that we could not reach before.

This being said, we would like to recognize Ronna McDaniel for all her work in

facilitating school groups these past 12 months. Ronna came to Annie's Hope as a retired elementary school teacher after thirty years in education. She continues to be an advocate for children, yet impacts their lives in a different way.

As a child, Ronna experienced her own loss and understands the confusion and loneliness that is often felt. She began co-facilitating groups with Linda Grana, School Support & Education Coordinator, in January 2008 and by May 2008 was ready to take off on her own.

"It's been so fulfilling working with these children," said Ronna. **"Children have a hard time finding an outlet for their questions about death, particularly since they don't want to upset**

**their grieving families. Often they feel so alone and different. Without the School Support Program these children would not have the opportunity to be involved with a bereavement group.** It's been a wonderful experience for me. I get to work with children in a meaningful way. I also get to work with a staff that fully supports my needs and recognizes my efforts."

The Annie's Hope School Support and Education Program hosts support groups in schools throughout St. Louis during the school day. The groups typically last for an hour and run for six to eight weeks.

Thank you so much, Ronna, for all you do!!!!

## J BOARD PUTS THE "FUN" IN FUNDRAISING

### Junior Board Members

**Dan Bredenkoetter  
Shawn Crecelius  
Krissey Durant  
George P. George III  
Shayla Graves  
Colin Hobart  
Paul Koeningsdorf  
Chloe McClanahan  
Monique Roberts  
Sarah Scaglione  
Anne Simon  
Jamie Skyles  
Allison Steinman  
Annie Weshtoff**

In 2007, the Annie's Hope Junior Board was created. **This group, better known as the "J Board", is an energetic group of 18-35 year olds who are interested in supporting Annie's Hope through advocacy, fundraising, and volunteering.** The J Board meets at least once a month, members must commit at least one year of service, and be willing to take an active role in planning and implementing events.

Shawn Crecelius was elected president for 2008 and is currently the co-chair for Trivia Night as well. With

Shawn and the other dedicated members, the J Board has been responsible for three different fundraising events including Trivia Night 2008, a Benefit Concert, and an event at Jive and Wail in Maplewood. So far this year, the J Board has been hard at work with the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Trivia Night at Bishop DuBourg High School. With this group of devoted and reliable individuals, we're sure the J Board will make 2009 another successful year!

Many members of the J Board volunteer in other respects for Annie's Hope as

well. They are Camp Courage cabin counselors, support group facilitators, and they're always around to lend a helping hand. Annie's Hope staff is very appreciative of all the energy and hard work done by the J Board! Keep up the great work!

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the J Board, please contact the office.

# H U G E

## GRANITE REMNANT SALE!!!

**Saturday, April 18 - 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**  
**Sunday, April 19 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

**HUNDREDS** of beautiful remnants in a variety of colors...  
 Bring your drawings with exact measurements for vanity tops, desktops, tabletops, etc. to:

## HALLMARK STONE

Bringing nature's beauty into your life.

Hallmark Stone will help you:

- find a piece of stone that meets your needs,
- fabricate it to your measurements
- and flat polish the edges at an incredible savings!



## Prices up to 50% off retail !!!!!

Each remnant is unique in size and color and is best suited to making individual tops. We cannot match colors of multiple slabs to create a complete kitchen with these remnants. This is **your** chance to save **hundreds of dollar\$\$\$** on **custom** granite tops!!!

Proceeds from this sale will go to **Camp Courage** and other programs of Annie's Hope.

## FRIENDS FIND EXCITING WAYS TO HELP



The women of Ginger Bay Salon and Spa Group present Becky Byrne with a donation check for their annual SpaTACULAR event.

Friends of Annie's Hope have hosted some great events over the last few months, benefitting grieving kids and having fun at the same time! We are so thankful for their clever thinking and kind generosity.

**Hannah Streck and Ann Marie Brown** of Webster Groves hosted a Christmas brunch benefitting Annie's Hope.

The "J Board" hosted an evening of music and fun with John Hardy and the Public at Beffa's as a benefit for the

kids of Annie's Hope.

**Ginger Bay Salon & Spa** hosted their 7th annual SpaTACULAR benefitting Annie's Hope.

**The Financial Executives Networking Group (FENG)** hosted a 2008 Golf Networking Event to benefit Annie's Hope.

**Ameren UE - Meramec Plant Christmas Club** raised funds and donated Michaels gift cards.

**Mark and Amy Hessler** spearheaded The Dan

Fleming Memorial Golf Tournament held in June, 2008, benefitting Annie's Hope.

**Washington University School of Medicine Student Support Services** made a monetary donation as well as donating wish list supplies.

**Allison Brennan c/o Maggie Brennan's 10th Birthday** donated supplies to be used for support groups.

**Baisch & Skinner** donated art supplies and a check for the kids of Annie's Hope.

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Support Services  
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**(September 1, 2008 – January 31, 2009)**

We also thank the many people who have supported our fundraisers. If we have somehow missed your name, **please** let us know.



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## Calendar of Events

April 3-5	Sat/Sun	Teen Retreat
April 4	Saturday	"Angels on Ice" at Hardees Iceplex Benefitting Annie's Hope
April 18-19	Sat/Sun	Hallmark Stone Remnant Sale
April 19	Sunday	Annie's Hope Night at the Magic House
May 13	Wednesday	St. Louis Rotary Club #11 Downtown Golf Tournament benefitting Annie's Hope
May 18	Monday	Italian Open Golf Tournament Benefits Annie's Hope & other charities
June 7-11	Sun-Thurs	Camp Courage (for ages 6-12)
June 13-16	Sat-Tues	Camp Erin - St. Louis (for ages 13-18)

See [www.annieshope.org](http://www.annieshope.org) for more details.

## PROGRAMS

Family Support Groups  
 School Support & Education  
 Horizons - Anticipatory Grief  
 Camp Courage & Camp Erin - St. Louis  
 Hope & Healing Gathering  
 Retreats (teens, moms and dads)  
 Social Events  
 Community Resource Library  
 Grief Community Referrals  
 Speakers Institute

## STAFF

Rebecca Sloan Byrne  
 Executive Director  
 Kay Walsh  
 Operations Manager  
 Ali Johnson  
 Program Director  
 Beth Boeding  
 Office Manager  
 Linda Grana  
 School Support & Education Coor.  
 Pam Weiss  
 Horizons Coordinator  
 Ellen Hugge  
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