

GRIEF MATTERS

The mission of Annie's Hope is to provide comprehensive support services for children, teens, and their families who are grieving the death of someone significant.

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Volume 6

Fall 2008

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

Happy Fall to all! We have major news at Annie's Hope! Not only are we gratefully celebrating **10** years of service to grieving kids and families, but we have kicked off a **major drive to serve even more children!**

We know that there are almost **4000** newly bereaved kids every year in greater St. Louis – and that number only includes children and teens who are grieving the death of an immediate family member. Annie's Hope began in 1998 and served almost 20 kids. **In 2007 Annie's Hope served 1000 kids!**

We have grown tremendously but have so much more to do to reach the other 3000 each year who are not being helped.

Let me explain how you can make that happen. We have just started our first **Major Gifts Campaign.** Our goal is to raise **\$200,000** in three months. We have three focus areas where the greatest need has been identified.

Expand **family support groups** to offer another group that meets every two weeks for families who cannot commit to eight straight weeks in our current sessions or have completed the eight-week groups but desire to continue grief work with Annie's Hope.

Add a second week to **Camp Courage** – currently a weeklong, overnight camp experience. Camp Courage is our single most effective program to attract kids and connect them to each other in a supportive and fun environment.

Expand our **Horizons** program for children, teens, and their families who are anticipating a death in their household. This is a niche program that is not offered by any other organization in the St. Louis region. Even with limited community awareness, the demand is more than we can serve at this time. Past experience has proven that when the Horizons program is marketed, our requests for visits skyrocket.

The kids you will help heal include:

✿ three beautiful daughters whose dad died of cancer when they were very young. Their mother has requested an ongoing group for the family for over two years.

✿ a brother and sister who have literally begged for another week at Camp Courage so they can see their friends again. "Nobody understands me like they do."

✿ a twelve-year-old boy who admittedly says he does not know how to talk to his dying mother and therefore avoids her.

We all know children and teens who are struggling to live without someone they love. If you would like to help wounded kids regain their self-esteem, discover their strengths, and find hope in their future, please consider joining Annie's Hope in our Major Gifts Campaign. Together we can make a lasting difference in the lives of hurting kids all over St. Louis.

Peace, Becky Byrne, ED

EAT, DRINK, AND BE MERRY FOR THE KIDS!!!



"Kids Helping Kids." These children raised \$140 by asking lemonade and pretzel customers to donate to Annie's Hope. The asking is easy when it is for children devastated by tragedy.

Giving back to the world comes in many forms ... **Grace Episcopal Church** hosted the **"Lobsters on the Loose"** fundraiser. **Hallmark Stone's Granite Sale** again had hundreds of happy customers. **Parkway Northeast Middle School** collected money through its **"Battle of the Bands"** and **"Hats on Day for Annie's Hope."**

Everybody can raise money to help grieving children!!



The 2nd Annual **"More Cowbell"** fundraiser drew another sold-out crowd. **Webster Groves' Embroider the Occasion** and **Lindwedel Jewelers** donated the silk-screened t-shirts.

CAMP COURAGE HITS HOLLYWOOD!!!



This was the first year for the labyrinth, a meditative walking path that leads campers to the center. They are able to reflect and focus on their thoughts, while their slow, deliberate steps act as a destressor.

This year the campers of Camp Courage were in the spotlight with the theme of "Hollywood!" It was a memorable week for everyone. On the evening they arrived, each camper had the opportunity to light a candle for their loved one who died, share a memory or story, and then float their candle in the pool.

During the ceremony a six-year-old girl told her cabin counselor she was happy the ceremony was held outside. When the counselor asked why, the girl replied, "Because you know how your loved one turns into a star when they die? Well,

all the stars are looking down on us and they are hearing all these wonderful things we are saying about them."

Among the 112 campers, many sentiments like these were shared. One boy commented that when he was inside the center of the labyrinth, "I felt my dad was there with me."

Another powerful activity was the creation of colorful paper "footprints" to depict each child's unique grief journey, either with words or pictures. The kids wrote down their story, emotions, and how they are coping with their new life with-

out their loved one. "My life was turned upside down," and "My mom taught me how to love," were just a couple of the statements made on the footprints, in addition to drawings of tears and breaking hearts.

Camp would not happen without the generosity of many individuals, companies, and organizations. Major sponsors included **Ameren, Anheuser Busch Cos., Build-A Bear Foundation, Cardinals Care, and the Employees Community Fund of Boeing.** All the staff, campers, and "stars looking down" would like to say **thank you** to all of you!

GRIEF WORKSHOP FOR SCHOOLS & ADVOCATES

"It is important for adults to recognize how painful, personal experiences can impede the progress of children."

An elementary school counselor at the February workshop.

On Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2008 Linda Grana, School Support & Education Coordinator and Pam Weiss, Horizon's Coordinator, will offer the **3rd Annual Grief Workshop** for school personnel and community advocates for grieving kids.

The attendance jumped from 21 in 2006 to 75 in 2007. "To meet the demand, we decided to offer two additional workshops this year," said Linda. "We greatly appreciate all of those who 'spread the word' about the workshop so the circle of support for grieving

children can continue to grow."

The workshop will run from 8:30 to noon and discussions will include information about Annie's Hope, details about the School Support & Education and Horizons programs, suggestions on supporting grieving children at each developmental stage, plus ideas for supporting students as they reenter school after a death has occurred. Artwork made by children describing and exploring their grief journey is displayed for participants.

"Talking about dying, death and grief with others can be very difficult for many. It is very promising that more and more people are interested in learning about Annie's Hope and finding ways to support the families, children and teens they work with and/or live near," commented Pam.

Past workshop attendees reflected that the dimensions of grief, particularly at various developmental stages, was new and valuable information that they could share with co-workers and the community.

HORIZONS STORIES DEMONSTRATE VITAL NEED



"The meetings we had with the Horizons volunteers were very helpful. My sons felt very comfortable talking with them and the guidance they gave me was invaluable." Jack Pollihan

Horizons, our child-centered anticipatory grief support program for families, is the only one of its kind in the St. Louis area. Our unique program has offered numerous families understanding, support and care as they begin their grief journey while they await the impending death of someone in their family. We offer a safe place for kids to talk about death, name it, and understand it.

Bill Streck and his three children, Hannah, Will and Ian were served by the Hori-

zons program during the five months before Sue Streck, wife and mother, died. "It helped them through the initial trauma," Streck said. "It improves your comfort and understanding."

The **Pollihan family** has three boys Michael, Justin and Andy. Their dad, Jack, said, "When faced with the impending death of my wife, Cindy, we weren't sure how our three sons would cope. I had heard many wonderful things about the Annie's Hope bereavement program, so when I

learned they had an anticipatory grief program, I called right away."

VOLUNTEERS NEED TO:

- ◆ Be comfortable interacting with children, adults, and the person who is dying
- ◆ Be flexible and adaptive to changing situations and environments
- ◆ Have knowledge about anticipatory grief and how children grieve
- ◆ Be able to set boundaries

RETREATS HELP GRIEVING TEENS DISCOVER WAYS OF COPING

In August nine teens attended the second Teen Retreat of 2008. The theme “**Connections**” gave each teenager the opportunity to express through discussions, writing, clay work, and drumming how their grief “connects” them to who they are today. They were able to explore their questions, struggles, hopes, fears, worries, and dreams for the future. It was a weekend where friendships were made and rekindled. Following is a poem that one of the teens shared as she journeys through her grief ... her words and spirit say the rest.

I wrote this poem in the winter of 2007. It is an adaptation of Walt Whitman's famous “There Was A Child Went Forth.” I kept the first stanza and the last line from his poem, but edited everything in between and made it about me and my life. The version printed here is shorter than I had originally written, due to the limited space available. I hope that you enjoy it..

There Was A Child Went Forth by Cierra Lowe

There was a child that went forth every day;
And the first object she looked upon, that object she became;
And that object became part of her for that day,
Or a certain part of the day, or for many years, or for stretching cycles of years.
The rolling blanket of snow that shielded the world beneath from view became a part of this child, and autumn's fallen leaves packed wet against the curb,
And the beads of rain that danced on the windshield, and the stuttering cars that carried their anxious people to and fro,
And the blinding light of every morning that flooded her room at the dawn of every day, and the song of cicadas on humid summer nights,
And the lamppost outside her window whose light leaked through the plastic blinds and striped the walls, keeping her awake at night—all became a part of her.

The flickering streetlights that shepherded every city block became a part of her;
And the highways and interstates that would one day take her some place warmer,
And the rubber-worn paint of the asphalt stage that held the never-ending play of blinding headlights and receding taillights,
And the blare of horns and the screeching of tires and the angry words exchanged through passenger-side windows,
And the background music of her city, everywhere she went.

Her own parents,
She that had given birth to her and he that had adored her with the final 15 years of his life,
And he who tried his best to fill in as the father that her own could never be,
They watched this child as she grew—and they became a part of her.

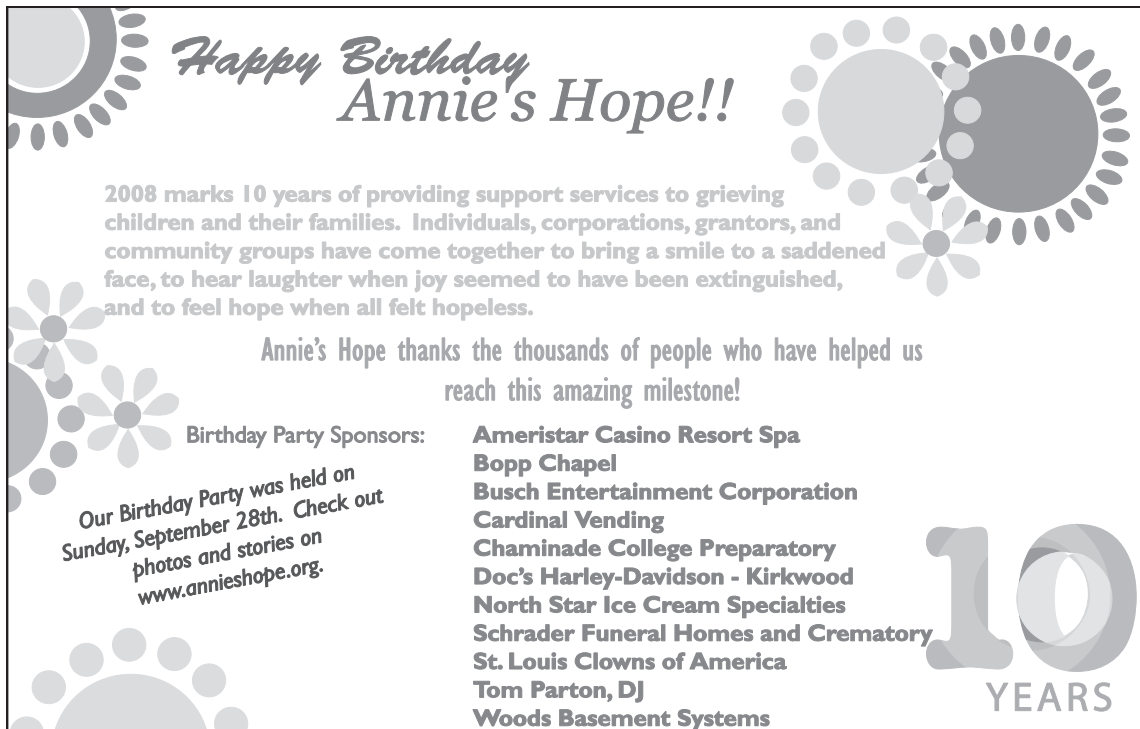
The mother who tried so hard to protect her from the harshness of the world;
And her father who, on one Tuesday morning in August, left it all behind;
And the sister that grew up; and Angie became a part of her;
And the feeling of blood rushing through her veins like a swift-moving current,
And the dried paint on her hands from two nights ago, and the smell of turpentine,
And all the things that she never knew she wanted, and the things that she chased,
And the hands of the clock as they relentlessly turned, and growing up,
And her father—the smell of Old Spice and sawdust and sweat and incense and tobacco,
And the hiss of something that was missing that drowned out the warnings of those who still worried about her,
And all that she destroyed, and all that she created; and every promise, and every lie;
And those who changed her, and the spinning room of the warped reality that she cherished so dearly,
And all the places she would never see, and all the places she would never leave, and all the spaces she would never fill,
And the rickety bridges that spanned the torrents below, and the loving arms that broke her fall,
And the beauty that she discovered in unconventional places, and her relentless chase of what it was to be truly alive;
These things became a part of that child who went forth every day, and who now goes, and will always go forth every day.



The teenager on the left is describing the struggles she is experiencing in her grief journey, and the steps she will need to take to get to a different and happier place in her life.

The teens on the right are discussing their feelings of grief, as well as creating artwork that describes their pain.






Happy Birthday Annie's Hope!!

2008 marks 10 years of providing support services to grieving children and their families. Individuals, corporations, grantors, and community groups have come together to bring a smile to a saddened face, to hear laughter when joy seemed to have been extinguished, and to feel hope when all felt hopeless.

Annie's Hope thanks the thousands of people who have helped us reach this amazing milestone!

Birthday Party Sponsors:

- Ameristar Casino Resort Spa**
- Bopp Chapel**
- Busch Entertainment Corporation**
- Cardinal Vending**
- Chaminade College Preparatory**
- Doc's Harley-Davidson - Kirkwood**
- North Star Ice Cream Specialties**
- Schrader Funeral Homes and Crematory**
- St. Louis Clowns of America**
- Tom Parton, DJ**
- Woods Basement Systems**



Our Birthday Party was held on Sunday, September 28th. Check out photos and stories on www.annieshope.org.




GINGER BAY'S 7TH ANNUAL SPATACULAR

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11 5pm – 9pm





Ginger Bay will host its 7th Annual SpaTacular Event to benefit Annie's Hope. Planned festivities for guests include a welcoming gift bag upon arrival, mini spa treatments from the Ginger Bay team, an exciting silent auction, salon tours, giveaways, hors d'oeuvres and refreshments – all in our relaxing spa sanctuary.

Annie's Hope – the Bereavement Center for Kids is a community based nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide comprehensive support services for children, teens, and their families who are grieving the death of someone significant. Annie's Hope is a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization. It is their goal to establish and maintain the first comprehensive bereavement center focused solely on the needs of grieving children, adolescents and their families in St. Louis and the surrounding communities.

SPATACULAR PACKAGES - \$100 each

Art, Science, Nature and Relaxation packages include:

- Aveda gift bag with a full-size product
- Commemorative SpaTacular gift from Ginger Bay
- Cocktails and BORBA skin balancing water provided by Anheuser-Busch
- Hor d'oeuvres compliments of Café Provençal
- Coffee bar by Kaldi's Coffee
- Mini Spa Treatments
- Silent Auction (5:30pm – 8:15pm)

- ART** – Haircut or Special Style
- SCIENCE** – Pure Focus Facial
- NATURE** – Pure Focus Manicure and Pedicure
- RELAXATION** – 30 min. Elemental Nature Massage
- *ANNIE'S* PACKAGE – \$50**

Can't attend the entire evening? Purchase "Annie's" Package to participate in all of the evening's festivities (excluding full spa treatments)! Limited availability! Call 314.966.0655 for reservations.

Space to Spare???



Annie's Hope is in need of more space so that programs can be expanded. We are in search of 10,000 square feet of commercially zoned, handicap-accessible property located in a safe, accessible area that can hold our support groups, Community Resource Library, social events, training space, Camp Courage supplies, and our offices. Currently, we utilize three separate sites.

If you know an "angel," an individual or a business who may be willing to help the kids of Annie's Hope in this way, please contact the Annie's Hope office.



COMMUNITY ACTION HELPS HEAL HEARTS WITH FUNDRAISERS

If you ask a child to name his or her greatest fear, the number one answer would be, **"If someone in my family would die."**

The St. Louis community continues to help heal grieving hearts by finding **creative and innovative ways** to raise money for Annie's Hope's 10 programs and services.

Fundraisers also bring awareness about children's grief.

A huge note of appreciation goes out to the following organizations and people who continue to bring hope to families learning to cope in positive ways:

Thank you to:

Dan Fleming Memorial Golf Tournament
Embroider the Occasion
Grace Episcopal Church
Hallmark Stone
Lindwedel Jewelers
More Cowbell

Kids Helping Kids:

Day Camp Collections
Maggie Brennan
Molly Brennan

Lemonade Stand:
Anna Lindwedel
Sam Lindwedel
Tony Lindwedel
Casey Richards

Parkway Northeast Middle School
"Battle of the Bands"
and "Hats on Day"



"Lobsters anyone???" For the past two years Grace Episcopal Church in Kirkwood has donated the proceeds from its **"Lobsters on the Loose"** fundraiser to Annie's Hope. The event takes place just before Father's Day.

THANK YOU GRACE EPISCOPAL!!

HOW CAN I HELP ANNIE'S HOPE? *Can You Juggle Fire???*

Falon Jones called Annie's Hope one afternoon in May and explained that she and some friends at SIUE had a few hours to give as part of their community service initiative. Would we have something they could do? As it turned out, they were able to load four buses with campers and their luggage and then ride along with the kids to Camp Courage.

While dealing with the death of her husband, Jan Sorth was referred to us by a

friend. Jan has done everything from putting labels on mailers to inputting data on new books for our Community Resource Library.

Following are various ways for volunteers to help at Annie's Hope; however, we are always open to creative ideas:



- Facilitating at Family or School Support Groups
- Office Support, Computer Support, Mailings
- Marketing, Public Relations, Graphic Design
- Grant writing
- Fundraising
- Board Development
- Other ...

(It's amazing how often we have used this category!)

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM CORPORATIONS, FOUNDATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

A Little Hope
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Anheuser Busch Cos.
Cedar Hill Garage
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Anita Donohue & Kids

Charlie & Ann Gitto

Justin Horneker

George & Mary Horneker

Roger Richie's 60th Birthday

Charles & Beverly Letchworth

Shirlee Green Preschool

Sharon Jick

(April 1, 2008 – August 31, 2008)

We also thank the many people who have supported our fundraisers and those who have given us in-kind donations. If we have somehow missed your name, please let us know.



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much earlier!!!**

Calendar of Events

Sept. 16 - Nov. 4	Tuesdays	Family Support Groups (8-Week Session) Webster Hills United Methodist Church
Oct. 11	Saturday	7th Annual "SPA-tacular" from 5 - 9 p.m. Ginger Bay Salon & Spa - Kirkwood
Oct. 20	Monday	FENG Golf Networking Event Persimmon Woods Country Club
Oct. 28	Tuesday	School Support Grief Wkshop, 8:30-noon Webster Hills Christian Life Center
Nov. 14 - 16	Fri. - Sun.	Teen Retreat
Dec. 12	Friday	Hope and Healing Gathering, 7 p.m. Webster Hills Christian Life Center
Spring 2009		First Dads' Retreat!

PROGRAMS

Family Support Groups
School Support & Education
Horizons - Anticipatory Grief
Camp Courage
Hope & Healing Gathering
Teen Retreats
Social Events
Community Resource Library
Grief Community Referrals
Speakers Institute

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