

*Tides*TM



A Support Program for
Grieving Children, Teens, and
The People Who Love Them.

Community Newsletter

for friends and supporters of Tides

Spring 2020



A message to our friends

Dear Friends,

As I reflect back on my first full year at Tides, I have been incredibly humbled and blown away by the strength and courage shown by the kids and families we serve. We know that life isn't always fair. Families who attend Tides are here because of personal and tragic loss of someone they hold dear. They find themselves grieving a loss while learning how to live again with an immeasurable absence in their lives.

To see the hurt and sadness that our families are going through is heartbreaking. I am humbled that so many of you are inspired to be involved and support the children and family members served at Tides. The consistent and heartfelt generosity of the community and individuals like you continues to touch and amaze me.

Not only do we do our best to support the families we currently serve, but we also strive to bring awareness to the surrounding community of the impact a death has on children and adults, the positive influence peer support has on individuals, and how we, as family and friends, can best support those who need it. Together, we can help be there for grieving families in the Centre Region.

With Much Appreciation,



Holly Oxendale
Executive Director
Tides, Inc.



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Your Support Helps Tides...

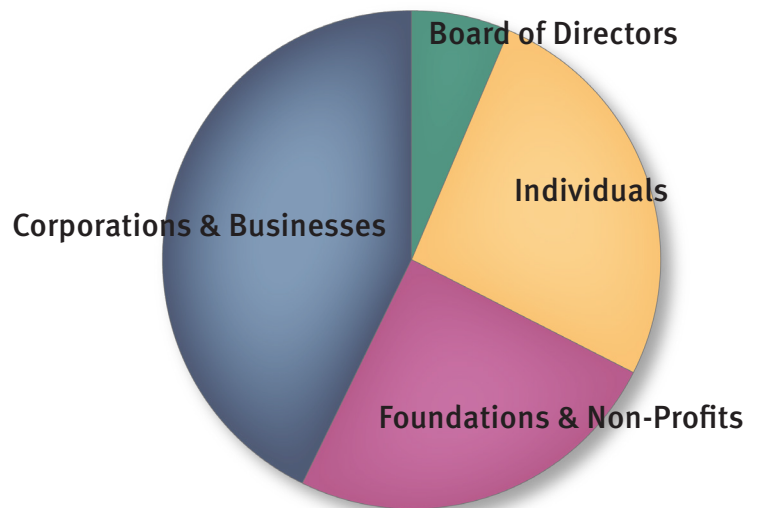


Support from donors helps Tides continue to...

- Offer a no-cost support program for families coping with the death of someone special to them.
- Provide a safe, comfortable, and nurturing environment for all individuals who are grieving.
- Ensure that all individuals and families know they do not need to grieve alone.
- Be on location for grief support after the death of an individual that immediately impacts a group of children or adults
- Spread awareness and education of the positive impact grief support has to schools, youth groups, clubs, and organizations
- Provide referrals to other supportive organizations and resources to inform and support



Who Donates



Thank you to our Corporate supporters

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Twisted Whisk Catering
University Baptist & Brethren Church
Valley Girl Sweets
The Village at Penn State
Village Eatinghouse
Wegmans
Woodring's Floral Gardens
WTAJ-10

A Support System



On Christmas Eve 2015 Dan Aten was diagnosed with cancer. The news came just seven months after he and his wife, Emily, welcomed their little boy, Tyler, into the world. Initial treatments led them to believe they were in the clear, but in fall 2016, it came back aggressively. At that point, the

“It’s an open environment where you talk and you share your story and everybody nods their head along, because everybody gets it...”

Aten family had to move to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for treatment of his relapsed lymphoma. All of the radiation, chemotherapy, and immunotherapy led them one step forward only to take two steps back. They returned to their home in State College after a year in Philadelphia, committing to the commute so they could be in their home. Less than three years after Dan’s initial diagnosis, on August 14, 2018, he passed away.

Emily, then a 34-year-old widow with a three-year-old son, needed help. Because of her career in the State College Area School District (SCASD), she had heard of the Tides organization when a student’s father passed away and the teachers came together to formulate a plan of support. That experience gave her a general knowledge about the organization. Later, while receiving therapy to help her work through her own grief, her therapist recommended Tides to her.

“Tyler was only three, but I needed to go to have community for myself,” Emily says. “I needed to be in a room where people understood without me having to say anything.”

Emily was grateful for the way Tides so openly welcomed Tyler. Knowing that a three-year-old can challenge logistics, Program Director Evelyn Wald encouraged Emily they would do whatever it took to make sure they could both attend – and they did. Tyler was safe, happy and entertained so that Emily could get the help she needed. And now that Tyler is older, he participates more in the elementary-aged group.



“It’s an open environment where you talk and you share your story and everybody nods their head along, because everybody gets it,” Emily says. “And just realizing you’re not alone is... absolutely unbelievable to have a community like that.”

Emily compares Tides to any other group of people with common ground. When you’re a runner, there are groups for runners. When you’re a swimmer, there are groups for swimmers. Emily contends that grief should be no different.

“Grief should be no different than other groups. It’s going to be a part of everybody’s life one way or another,” Emily says. “Tides lets you have a community where you see the people, you hear their tone of voice... you are them. You are the people in your group, and they are you. Just having people surrounding you that have been through what you’ve been through, it’s one of the most supportive environments that can exist.”

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Emily has made a number of friends who have children the same age as Tyler. They rely on each other for support and often message each other with different situations they’re in, last minute babysitting needs, or when they’re just having a hard time being the only parent. They go out, get coffee together and bounce ideas off of each other because there’s a mutual need for all of that.

“It’s a tribe that you never in your life wanted to be in, but are so thankful that you are a part of because you wouldn’t get through it without them,” Emily says.

While Tides is unique because of its primary focus to support children, it is a group that is open to all individuals dealing with grief. Whether you lost a child, parent, grandparent or friend, and whether it was last week, last month, last year, or longer. Emily encourages anyone dealing with grief to attend.

“Come to Tides,” she says. “You always leave Tides feeling better than when you got there.”

Tides Angels

It all started among friends at a dinner table. Bob Flayhart and Lynn Litow Flayhart, John and Carol Kelly, and Larry and Molly Snavelly had a common desire to support kids and families who were grieving the loss of someone dear to them. In an effort to realize that support, they bore the idea that became Tides Angels. The topic of conversation that evening was the Koch Funeral Home \$50,000 matching gift challenge. In celebration of their 100th anniversary, the Koch Funeral Home owners, Glenn Fleming and Tom Brown, chose Tides as the recipient of the match. Raising \$50,000 would launch the Endowment Fund to \$100,000 with the match and provide on-going financial support to the organization.

Once the challenge was accepted, each couple around the table made their commitment.

“We each pledged \$1,000 per year for five years,” Larry explains. Molly then set out to find seven additional couples to pledge the same in order to meet the \$50,000 goal. It didn’t take long to find other individuals who wanted to commit to such an impactful mission. Each of the Tides Angels believe in the importance of Tides

to the Centre Region community and recognize its unique role.

“I see how important it is. It’s a very, very behind the scenes, under-served need,” John says.

“Tides evenings and activities provide a nurturing, safe and supportive environment for children and their loved ones to process their feelings with others who are experiencing similar loss. By providing an opportunity to share their emotions, memories and thoughts with others, Tides provides a catalyst for the healing process,” Larry says.

The generosity of Koch Funeral Home and Tides Angels will continue to support Tides for years to come. The Koch Funeral Home Endowment, managed by the Centre Foundation, will provide programmatic financial support in perpetuity to Tides.

“Tides Angels are grateful that Glenn Fleming offered the matching gift challenge,” Larry says. “And as a group, are committed to the long-term viability of the organization.”

A Special Thank You to Our Tides Angels

Henry & Jacqui Chiarkas,
Home Edge Realty

Bob Flayhart &
Lynn Litow Flayhart

James & Doreen Glenning

John & Carol Graham

Steve & Cathy Hurvitz

John & Carol Kelly

John & Michelle Mason

J. Larry & Molly Snavelly

Joseph & Rebecca Zavacky

SAVE THE DATE

APRIL 25 | 7:00 PM ★ THE STATE THEATRE

10TH ANNIVERSARY



HAPPY VALLEY'S GOT TALENT

opening with Pure Cane Sugar, featuring Eric Ian Farmer,
and top acts from the past 10 years!

presented by

M&T Bank



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Tides 
A SUPPORT PROGRAM FOR
GRIEVING CHILDREN, TEENS, AND
THE PEOPLE WHO LOVE THEM.

Volunteer Spotlight



Eric Hurvitz, State College local and REALTOR® at RE/MAX Centre Realty, made the transition from Tides event sponsor to Tides volunteer in just six months. Thanks to an engaging Happy Valley's Got Talent event in 2019, his kids promptly asked him, "Dad, can we do that again next year?" And since then Hurvitz has gotten progressively more connected and involved at Tides.

Eric is a caring, easy-to-talk-to people person, which makes him a great fit at Tides. Eric attends Tides nights where he helps set up and clear dinner and facilitate conversation in small groups.

"I was looking for a way to give a little bit more of myself," Eric says. "What I didn't expect was that volunteering ended up being really beneficial to me personally. One of my best friends died a few years ago and my time with Tides has

really helped me heal while helping others do the same."

Eric values the Tides organization and what they do because he recognizes the importance of dealing with grief in a healthy way. For such an important subject, there is little in the way of similar resources.

"There is really very little else that deals with this subject. And the general public has a hard time talking about it. It's a touchy subject," Eric says. "They feel safe and loved here."

Volunteering has brought him fresh perspective as well. At the end of Tides night, when everyone holds hands in a circle to talk about what they're grateful for, Eric is reminded that not every story is a happy one, but we are grateful to have each other.

Save the date

Oct. 5 | Toftrees Golf Resort



Host and presenting sponsor
STATE COLLEGE
MAGAZINE

Oct. 5, 2020
Toftrees Golf Resort



**Support a great cause
and enjoy a fabulous meal
from the area's finest chefs!**

For more information, visit tidesprogram.org/chefsonstage



2019 Snapshot

1,200

hours of grief support given to children and adults

Over **180** individuals educated on grief support



0

number children and adults who need to grieve alone

Over **660** volunteer hours



Special events raising funds for Tides



\$151,113.98 raised to support grieving families from **285** donors

18 Tides Nights

3 special summer events for families



Ways to support Tides

Tides is 100% privately funded by individuals and businesses. We are only able to continue to provide grief support to those who need it because of the generosity of our community.



Volunteer | Volunteering allows you to have a direct impact on kids, teens, and their adult family members. Tides has volunteer opportunities for those who would like to facilitate group sessions, help serve pizza dinners, or participate in community events outside of program nights. If you are interested in supporting Tides by volunteering, please contact us at (814) 692-2233 for more information.



Give | Due to the generosity of individuals in the community, we are able to provide support to children and their family members who are in need of companionship during their grieving process.

Whether you choose to donate to Tides on a monthly basis or with a one-time gift in honor of a loved-one, your contribution means so much! You can learn more about the different ways to donate online at tidesprogram.org or make a donation by phone at (814) 682-3199.



Partner in Hope | Businesses have the opportunity to support Tides by establishing an individualized partnership that is beneficial to both Tides and the supporting business.

By forming a relationship with businesses in the area, Tides is able to get to know the needs of organizations, as well as individuals, in our growing community.

A few words from our families

"Tides acts as an outlet for me to talk about my dad. Not a ton of people my age have gone through a loss of this magnitude. So being around those who listen and understand is something I'm very grateful for."

"Tides is a place where I can be myself, share my grief, and feel totally normal doing it."

"I love Tides because they understand what I am going through."

"My losses have taught me what is most important in life. My losses taught me how to forgive. My losses taught me how to love"

"Grief is like an empty space in my house"

...Now the laundry

In the summer of 1999, I was sitting on our back deck feeling terribly depressed, grieving the loss of my sister who had killed herself that spring. I felt hopeless and bereft. Out of the blue I heard – with my ears – her voice. "Jannie, Jannie, I'm OK, tell Tommy, tell Tommy, I'm OK!"

Astonished, I leaped up and called my brother-in-law, Tom, and told him what I'd just heard. He listened and then yelled "I know she's OK but I'm not! I'm not OK!" I was confounded by this because for me, it was confirmation that she was still alive somewhere and apparently doing just fine. Why did it soothe me and anger him? Well, I soon found out.

The very next day I woke up and felt her absence so profoundly, as I knew my brother-in-law did too. Even though we may know that our loved one exists somewhere, we still have to face our lives day to day without them here. We have to get up, make breakfast, take the kids to school, go to work, make dinner, and go to bed. Without them.

In Jack Kornfield's book *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*, he writes about returning to our mundane lives after we have experienced a moment of enlightenment. Similarly, after we

have been giving a sign or experienced a spirit presence, we may know our daughter, son, husband, wife or parent lives on, but we still feel lonely without their physical being near us. Having a spiritual experience of our loved one is truly a gift, but it feels like it is never enough. The solace it brings is fleeting – now the "laundry" must be done.

That's why I volunteer at Tides. Tides offers a safe environment for people to express their feelings in the company of others who have lost loved ones too. I show up on Thursday evenings

hoping to help by bearing witness to a mother's grief. Not trying to fix it or make it better, but by simply listening to and acknowledging a spouse's pain. Or honoring the difficult road a son or daughter has ahead of them without their dearly loved parent or grandparent as a guide.

The comfort of sharing and being with others who experienced something similar has been the real healing for me. I have lost my sister. I know that she's OK somewhere, but my day to day life without her here is made bearable by the community I have found at Tides.

- Jan Filiaggi, Tides Volunteer

Tides™



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Grieving Children, Teens, and
The People Who Love Them.

P.O. Box 1251 • State College, PA 16804

Community Newsletter

for friends and supporters of Tides

Thank you for your support



tidesprogram.org/give

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