

A close-up photograph of a person's face, smiling broadly, wearing a red shirt. They are holding a magnifying glass over the word "VOLUNTEER" which is printed on a light blue circular object. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white.

Volunteer Onboarding



tidesprogram.org

info@tidesprogram.org

814-692-2233

WELCOME MESSAGE



We're thrilled to have you join our volunteer team at Tides!

Your dedication and compassion for those experiencing grief will make a significant difference toward fulfilling the Tides vision and mission.

What you will find inside this onboarding guide:

- Discover Tides' mission to provide a healthy and compassionate grief systems for individuals of all ages so no one has to grieve alone.
- Learn about the specific tasks and expectations associated with your volunteer role, whether it's facilitating support groups, assisting with events, or providing administrative support.
- Access necessary training materials and resources to equip you with the knowledge and skills needed to effectively support individuals in grief. Learn how to effectively communicate with staff, volunteers and program participants.

Please take a moment to review this onboarding guide and complete the necessary steps. You may refer to our volunteer handbook for detailed information on policies, procedures and expectations.

Keep our contact information handy for any questions or concerns.

We're excited to work with you and make a positive impact together!

The Tides Team



IMPORTANT CONTACTS



HOLLY OXENDALE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
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ANGIE KEMPF

SCHOOL PROGRAMMING MANAGER
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ORGANIZATION HISTORY



In December 2002, Leslie Finton recognized a significant gap in her community: no resources specifically designed for school-aged children experiencing grief. Driven by this realization, she initiated a collaborative effort involving the Cancer Program at Mount Nittany Medical Center, the State College Area School District, Brookline Home Care and Hospice and The House of Care.

Together, these organizations worked to create, implement and establish a grief support group named Tides. The name "Tides" was chosen to reflect the ebb and flow of the grief journey, comparing it to the tumultuous nature of the ocean.

Over the years, Tides has grown and evolved to provide essential support services to the Centre region. Tides offers a variety of programs and initiatives designed to help children, teens and adults navigate grief.

Through its dedicated efforts, Tides has become a valuable resource for the community, offering comfort, understanding and a safe space for those who are grieving. In recognition of Tides' significant impact on the community, Centre County declared September 19th "Tides Day" in 2024.

2002 — 2024



...ll, you get tackled out of ...where • Tides lets me grieve with folks who need to explanation. That is huge v
 They listen • Grief is like a graph - it has lots of ups and downs • I love Tides • I love Tides because I can
 ompa ... it's not the only kid who had a Mom die • Grief is not wanting to let go • G
 ster ... because they understand what I am going through • I feel
 es ha ... y losses taught me how to forgive. My losses taught me
 s ab ... tlet for ... my dad. Not a ton of people m
 ugh ... I'm very grateful
 blac ... nds at ...
 re l ... norm
 o sh ... des
 u ... wit
 ter ... ns
 ke ... e

ABIGAIL, JOANNE, ANNE, BOITZ
 Tides is...
 AT TIDES is
 great because I can
 EXPRESS my emotions
 AND tell EVERYTHING

Tides is...
 the HOPE for me to
 Keeping living when in
 TIDAL WAVE / REPTIPE of
 grief... not feeling
 alone in my sadness.

the story begins

2002

In 2002, it became evident to Tides Founder, Leslie Finton, that the Centre County region had no grief support for children who had lost a loved one. Leslie had previously helped with a program similar to Tides Nights through her work in Columbus, Ohio. She met with school counselors and other professionals such as, Aileen Galley and Evelyn Wald, in the area and shared

her vision for starting a grief support organization for children in Centre County to be based on the Evergreen community support group she worked with in Columbus. From there, a collaborative relationship formed between the Cancer Program at Mount Nittany Health, State College Area School District (SCASD), Brookline Home Care and Hospice and the House of Care to create, implement and found a group, which became Tides.





2003

Molly Snavelly was one of the counselors that met with Leslie. She was the school counselor at Mount Nittany Middle School (MNMS) and helped arrange for a meeting space for Tides. Leslie's idea sparked Molly's interest because, as a new counselor, she was working with several families who had experienced the loss of a loved one and saw the impact that loss had on their lives. She saw first-hand the desperate need in the local community for

a safe environment to share personal grief. It was important for these individuals and families to understand that they were not alone in their grief journey and an organization like Tides could meet that need. In March 2003, Tides held its first meeting with seven families in attendance at MNMS.

Founder, Leslie Finton and longtime supporter, Molly Snavelly

glosses taught me how to
 des acts as an outlet for me
 nitude. So being around those
 fe place to be able to share your
 house • Tides is a place where I can be
 only place I can talk about my Mom
 es because they understand
 kled out of nowhere
 explanation.

2007

In 2007, Tides celebrated five years of serving the Centre County community reaching 58 children and 38 adults. The tremendous growth from its inception in 2002

encouraged

Tides staff and volunteers that Tides was meeting a significant need in the Centre County area.



Leslie Finton and Evelyn Wald support children at a Tides Night.

2009

In 2009, Tides received over \$200,000 in a three-year grant from the Highmark-Healthy High Five initiative. The purpose of the grant was to expand peer support services to grieving children, adolescents and the people who love them, as well as to raise awareness in our surrounding communities of the needs of grieving children and adolescents. Since the current grant was awarded in 2009, 404% more grieving children/adolescents have been served. They now know that grief is normal and they do not have to grieve alone.



Evelyn Wald leads group activity at Tides.



2011

On April 2, 2011, Tides hosted its first annual Happy Valley's Got Talent event at the State Theatre to a sold-out crowd of 571 people. It received tremendous local support from 40 businesses across the area and premiered top talent with over 65 auditions. Happy Valley's Got Talent has become a cornerstone event for Tides and the event continues today featuring live performances of singing, dancing, instrumentals, and stand-up comedy.



Happy Valley's Got Talent

2012

In 2012, Tides became a Centre County United Way (CCUW) partner agency. Since then, United Way has donated nearly \$185,000 to Tides through grants and the partner agency funds distribution process. We strive to support CCUW's efforts to mobilize resources for the physical and emotional health of the community through our Tides Nights, school programming and crisis support. Our focus on bettering our local community through needed resources is what makes CCUW an irreplaceable partner of our organization.

**Centre County
United Way**

**United
Way**



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 Snavely

Joseph & Rebecca Zavacky

and



KOCH FUNERAL HOME

FAMILY OWNED
CREMATORY ON PREMISES

2015

Glenn Fleming at Koch Funeral Home offered a \$50,000 matching gift in memory of his wife, Marge Fleming, who had passed away. Tides was challenged to raise a similar amount in a five year period through gifts to the Centre Foundation. If successful, Tides would have a \$100,000 endowment fund to provide ongoing financial support to the organization.

The idea of Tides Angels came together over dinner with three couples, including Larry and Molly Snavely, who each pledged \$1,000 a year for five years. Molly Snavely was instrumental in Tides Angels and found seven additional people who joined the group and pledged a similar amount to complete the Tides Angels challenge. Tides Angels, as a group, continue to be committed to the long-term viability of the organization.

2018

Since 2009, Tides has received over \$150,000 from the Shaner Golf Tournament, including \$50,000 in 2018. The JB Griffin Memorial Foundation was formed in memory of and to honor the life of JB Griffin, Chief Financial Officer of Shaner Corp. JB was a loving husband and father of five children who lost his battle with cancer in August 2011. The JB Griffin

Memorial Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization formed to provide financial support to charitable organizations that assist people in need in the communities in which Shaner does business, including the State College area. Tides has been a grateful recipient of proceeds from this event.



Mary Pat Griffin and Mandy Hartley at the Shaner Golf Tournament.

Tides participant experiencing the benefits of horse therapy at Rising Hope Therapeutic Riding Center.



Throughout the years, Tides has had various therapy dogs who have lovingly supported children, teens, and adults. We have witnessed first-hand the healing and soothing effect of pet therapy, specifically from dogs, such as Moose (pictured right). In addition, Tides has had the opportunity to partner with Rising Hope Therapeutic Riding Center to learn about the benefits of equine therapy.



Moose, a beloved therapy dog, providing support to Tides participants and volunteers.



2020

Like so many other organizations, Tides programming was forced to adapt to the global pandemic in 2020. We gave up gathering in person and instead became all-too-familiar with Zoom and faces on screens. While we missed our in-person gatherings, we are grateful for the technology that allowed us to continue meeting virtually until it was safe to meet in person once again. We are thrilled to be back to regular face-to-face meetings with our Tides families every other Thursday night!



Tides participant joins support group virtually during COVID.



Students at Osceola Mills Elementary read The Goodbye Book and had an activity during their school-based grief and loss group.

2022

In 2022, Tides launched school-based programming to reach more children in need of grief support. This programming is meeting an incredible need for children to experience peer grief support, guided by our program and Outreach Manager Angie Kempf and Program Director Evelyn Wald. Children meet during the school day to learn healthy coping strategies, how to share their grief, and most importantly, that they do not need to grieve alone. School programming is taking place in 12 schools across Centre County and supported 130 students in 2022.



Tides Night

The foundational program of our organization is Tides Night. Through Tides Night, we help individuals of all ages journey through individualized healing with peer-facilitated support groups experiencing diverse types of loss. We place special emphasis on the environment where participants are met by a welcoming, safe and judgement-free atmosphere with consistent and committed volunteers. Attendees are supportive of one another and often form lasting relationships outside the Tides Night programming.

School Programming

Tides is supporting students throughout Centre County by facilitating school-based grief peer support groups, offering grief-specific guidance to counselors, providing grief toolboxes for counselors and distributing age appropriate and loss specific Bags of Hope to students who have recently experienced a death. The program is designed for kindergarteners through 12th graders, serving ages 5-18. Not only does the program benefit the students involved, but it also helps their families and the loved ones who support them.

Community Crisis Support

Tides is one of the few organizations in Centre County specifically designed for community crisis support in response to death. When a group of individuals experiences a shared loss, Tides staff can work with the group to aid in addressing and working through the trauma of the death. Trained staff with over 30 years of experience have been able to serve community groups and help children, teens and adults through their immediate response to grief.

Bridges

Bridges is a compassionate program designed to support families facing the profound challenges of a loved one's terminal illness. We understand the emotional turmoil and logistical hurdles that arise during this challenging time. Our mission is to empower families with the resources and connections they need to navigate this journey.

Grief Education and Training

Grief education is an important part of the resources provided through Tides. We offer an annual event, Grief Matters, which is a one-day seminar designed to educate school counselors, psychologists, direct care professionals and other interested attendees on how to effectively support grieving individuals. In addition, we offer individual grief training sessions by request.



Workshops/Resources

Tides offers a variety of workshops and resources designed to support individuals and families through their grief journey. These workshops cover a wide range of topics, including finances, parenting and more. They provide a safe and understanding space for families to connect with others who have experienced loss, learn coping strategies and find healing together.

Children and Teen Day Camps

Tides partners with Rising Hope Therapeutic Riding Center to offer a unique and therapeutic equine day camp. This camp provides a special opportunity for children and teens to connect with horses, engage in equine-assisted activities and find comfort and healing in nature. Through these experiences, young grievers are able to develop important life skills, build self-confidence and foster a sense of hope and resilience.

Tides plans to offer more camps in the future, partnering with various organizations to provide diverse and enriching experiences for grieving children and teens. These camps will focus on activities that promote healing, growth and connection, such as art therapy, music therapy, outdoor adventures and more. By offering a variety of camp experiences, Tides aims to meet the unique needs and interests of each young person and create a supportive community where they can thrive.

Tides Lending Library

Tides offers a lending library filled with books, videos and other resources to support individuals and families on their grief journey. These materials can help you understand the grieving process, find coping strategies and connect with others who have experienced loss. The library is a valuable resource for anyone seeking comfort and support during difficult times.

Tides Grief Cart

The grief cart is a mobile resource for Tides families. It is available during Tides Night at Mount Nittany Middle School. It offers comfort items like blankets and teddy bears, as well as informational materials on grief. It's designed to provide support and a sense of peace during difficult times.



Tides Bags of Hope Outreach

Spreading Comfort and Support

Tides Bags of Hope is a compassionate outreach program focused on assembling and distributing care packages filled with comforting items, such as books, journals, community resources and inspirational messages.

These care packages are designed to provide solace and support to those who are grieving. They offer a tangible symbol of care and understanding, letting recipients know that they are not alone in their journey. The items included in the bags are carefully chosen to provide comfort, coping items, relaxation and inspiration.

Tides Bags of Hope outreach efforts are carried out in various ways, including:

- Distributing bags to hospitals, hospices and funeral homes. This ensures that those who are facing loss have access to these comforting care packages.
- Partnering with local schools and community organizations. Tides often collaborates with schools and community groups to distribute bags to children and families who have experienced a loss.
- Organizing community events and fundraisers. Tides may host events or fundraisers to raise awareness about the program and collect donations to support its efforts.
- And More!

By providing Bags of Hope, Tides can reach out to individuals and families in need, offering them a small token of comfort and support during their time of grief.



VISION

Our vision is to form a community of individuals who have a healthy grief support system for every wave of grief.

MISSION

Our mission is to serve grieving individuals of all ages by providing a healthy and compassionate support system so no one has to grieve alone.



COMMITMENT

Tides connects individuals by providing grief support to individuals of all ages through peer support groups, in-school grief support, educational and guidance sessions, community crisis support, grief support for individuals with a terminal illness and their families, and additional resources to provide hope and encouragement to families.

PHILOSOPHY

We believe that each individual processes grief in their own unique way. By following the philosophy of Dr. Alan Wolfelt at the Center for Loss and Transitions, the staff and volunteers at Tides provide a safe space for companionship during their mourning and grief. By taking the "companionship" approach, we seek to learn from individuals how they are feeling and their perspective on their grief. We listen to their stories. We provide an environment where participants feel comfortable sharing and connecting with others.

VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST



As a new volunteer, it is important to have a clear understanding of our organization's mission, values and expectations.

This onboarding checklist will guide you through the essential steps.

- Please complete the following tasks: All documents are included in this onboarding guide
- Items 1-7 must be completed before your first Tides Night Observation
- Please submit all completed documents to Ashley Lopes, Tides Program Manager: ashley.lopes@tidesprogram.org

1. Complete/Submit a Volunteer Application and a color photo
2. Complete/Submit Mandatory Clearances
3. Sign/Submit Confidentiality Statement
4. Sign/Submit Media Release
5. Sign/Submit Mandated Reporter Attestation
6. Review Tides Volunteer Manual
7. Sign/Submit Manual Receipt and Agreement
8. Attend a Tides Night for Observation (Tides Nights occur on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month during the school year. Once a month during the summer months)
9. Complete In-Person training (offered in March and August)



APPLICATION



To apply, please complete all questions.

Today's Date

Date of Birth

Full Name

Program Interest

Tides Night

School Groups

Unsure

Special Events

Happy Valley's Got Talent

A Night at the Barn

Community Outreach

Phone

E-Mail

Address

Student? Please provide details

Employed? Please provide details

Referred By

Emergency Contact :

First Name

Last Name

Relationship

Phone Number

Questions :

- Are you able to commit to 1-2 evenings per month, specifically for our Tides Night Program? Yes No
- Are you eligible to obtain the necessary state and/or federal clearances necessary to volunteer with our organization? Yes No
- Are you comfortable with the topic of death and willing to enhance your knowledge of how to support grieving individual? Yes No

■ TIDES VOLUNTEER

APPLICATION



Continued

What personal experience do you have with grief and loss?

What skills or qualities do you believe would make you a good volunteer for our organization?

What do you hope to achieve by volunteering with Tides?

VOLUNTEER CLEARANCES



To ensure safety and security, we require all new volunteers to complete the following clearance process:

Any adult or minor age 14 or older applying for or holding an unpaid or paid position with a childcare service, school, program, activity, or service responsible for a child's welfare OR having direct volunteer contact with children will need the clearances listed below.

The Volunteer or Employee is responsible for paying the cost of the required clearances when applicable.

Renewal for all clearances is every 5 years unless otherwise requested.

Tides can request updated clearances at any time.

Please provide copies of your clearances to the Tides Program Manager upon receipt.

You will have almost immediate access to releases upon submitting them via the appropriate websites.

For more information on what guides our organizational policies and procedures, please visit: Keep Kids Safe

-
Required Clearances:

PA Child Abuse History Clearance (CY113):

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis/public/home>

Cost: Volunteer: FREE, Employee: \$13

Pa State Police Criminal History Clearance:

<https://epatch.pa.gov/home>

Cost: Volunteer: FREE, Employee: \$22

FBI Criminal History Clearance:

<https://uenroll.identogo.com/>

Only required if the volunteer has lived outside the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in the last 10 years

Cost: Volunteer: \$23.25 (Service Code: 1KG6ZJ)

GRIEF & LOSS RESOURCES



- "[GRIEF TALKS](#)" is a series of educational webinars hosted by Caring Place staff members — experts with many years of experience working with grieving children and families. These seminars focus on a wide range of topics around grief and support.
- [Speaking Grief](#) explores the transformative experience of losing a family member in a death- and grief-avoidant society. This national public media initiative includes a one-hour television documentary, media-rich website, social media campaign, and numerous community engagement events, all aimed at starting a national conversation about grief.
- [Bo's Place](#): Connects families, educators and professionals with resources for people who have lost a loved one.
- [Coalition to Support Grieving Students](#): Provides grief-support modules and videos for school professionals.
- [National Alliance for Grieving Children](#): A network of professionals and volunteers who share resources and information to support grieving children and families.
- [The Dougy Center](#): Offers resources for people of all ages, including kids, adults and caregivers.
- [Dr. Joann Cacciatore](#): Offers support packets and resources for parents, grandparents and siblings who are struggling with traumatic grief.
- [Open to Hope](#): Offers articles, podcasts and books to help with recovery after a loss.
- [The Center for Prolonged Grief](#): Provides resources to help people understand and cope with prolonged grief.
- [Compassionate Friends](#): A peer support group for parents who have lost a child.
- [Alan Wolfelt- Center for Loss](#): The creator of the model of "companioning" versus "treating" people in grief, Dr. Wolfelt presents numerous workshops and provides grief education to community members, area professionals and staff members.

CONFIDENTIALITY STATEMENT



Tides touches human life intimately in many ways.

As a volunteer, you will frequently be the observer and recipient of confidential information concerning the participant and their family. It may be a fact, a series of facts, or a situation in the participants' life that is shared or observed, with the implicit understanding that this information be preserved as a sacred trust.

Confidentiality is the preservation of information about the participants disclosed to the facilitator, co-facilitator, or employee. It is based on the participants' basic privacy rights; it is the ethical obligation of the Tides representative and necessary to create effective trust.

When the participants come to Tides for help, they will realize, in some way, the necessity of revealing pertinent facts about themselves and their situation. This may include innermost feelings, which they want no one outside the group to know. It may include facts about upsetting things in the home that they are not ready to share with other household members. This is to be preserved in confidentiality, however, there are exceptions to this rule for the safety and well-being of our participants.

I understand that any information concerning the identities and information shared by people participating in Tides is to be kept confidential. The only exceptions to the above confidentiality policy are as follows:

1. When Tides is bound by the law to report suspected child abuse, elder abuse, and/or the abuse of a person with a disability and/or homicide or homicidal or suicidal threats.
2. Compliance with court orders and properly issued subpoenas.

Thank you for your commitment to upholding our participants' trust and companionship in their grief journey.

Name of volunteer (PLEASE PRINT)

Date

Signature of Volunteer

MEDIA RELEASE



Tides is to serve grieving individuals of all ages by providing a healthy and compassionate grief support system so no one has to grieve alone. As part of this mission, Tides offers support programs, consultation, training, education and resource materials to families, volunteers and professionals who work with children, families and other community partners.

Tides uses quotations, stories and artwork of Tides participants and volunteers to facilitate its efforts. Photographs and videography of children, adults and volunteers engaged in support group work are also used; at times, mock group sessions are videotaped to illustrate grief-related issues. This material is used for educational, commercial or advertising purposes, such as the development of display boards, brochures, promotional videos, newsletters, newspaper articles, television advertising, social media and other various places on the internet; and to illustrate points when providing lectures, training or presentations. Tides may, but is not obligated to, include my name.

I understand that I may revoke my permission at any time by submitting my request in writing to a Tides staff member. Revocation does not affect materials already in production materials or their use or distribution.

I understand that my refusal to give permission will not affect my ability to volunteer with Tides.

I release Tides and its affiliates from any claims that may arise in connection with the above, including any claims related to copyrights, defamation, invasion of privacy, or infringement of other personal rights.

-----I waive the right to inspect or approve the uses described above.

-----I grant permission for Tides to use my and/or my child's photo/video/audio in Tides publications and on their website.

-----I grant permission for Tides to use my and/or my child's photo/video/audio in Tides-approved media.

-----I do NOT permit the uses described above.

Name of Volunteer/Employee (PLEASE PRINT)

Date

Signature of Volunteer/Employee

MANDATED REPORTING



MAKING A REPORT:

As a volunteer in Tides Programming, you are a Mandated Reporter.

You are required to report when you have a suspicion of abuse or neglect. If you have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is a victim of child abuse, you only need minimal facts to make a report.

Make an electronic report to ChildLine at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis (This is the preferred way to make a report as a Mandated Reporter).

If you are unable to make an electronic report, please make an oral report to ChildLine at 1-800-932-0313. If an oral report to ChildLine is made, you must complete a written CY-47 form and send it to the local Child Protective Services agency within 48 hours.

Immediately after making the report, notify the Executive Director or Program Manager.

As a Volunteer of TIDES, I hereby attest that I: _____

1. Understand my rights and responsibilities as a Mandated Reporter in the state of Pennsylvania.
2. Swear and affirm I am not disqualified from service based upon a conviction of an offense under §6344 of the Child Protective Services Law.
3. Understand that if arrested or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying my participation in the TIDES program if I am named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, I must provide TIDES Program with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that I have been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database. I understand if I willfully fail to disclose information as required above, I am committing a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of a volunteer position.
4. Understand that I am required to complete and submit clearances to TIDES:

I can also visit the following resources for more information:

- Child Welfare Information Gateway: www.childwelfare.gov
- Keep Kids Safe PA: www.keepkidssafe.pa.gov
- Child Welfare Resource Center: <https://www.reportabusepa.pitt.edu/>, this is a FREE 3-hour course on Mandated Reporting rules and regulations.

Volunteer Signature: _____ Date: _____



Thank You

Tides
PROGRAMS