

SUMMER 2025

# HOPEline

a bi-monthly newsletter from HOPE for Bereaved



## TOURNAMENT OF HOPE RAISES \$35,000 FOR THE BEREAVED!

The 33rd Annual Tournament of HOPE, presented by *Molly Elliott*, was a huge success—despite the record-breaking heat! Golfers, sponsors, volunteers, and community partners came together and helped raise nearly \$35,000 to support grief services for youth, adults, families, and organizations across Central New York.

Remarkably, in just two years, the amount raised at this event has tripled—proving that with strong community support, HOPE flourishes. These critical funds ensure that more individuals can access support groups, counseling, and grief resources without financial barriers.

This year's event featured new additions, including a whiskey tasting, putting contest, and premium raffles.

Included in  
this issue:

Grief Articles

A Letter from the  
Executive Director

Events that  
Support HOPE

Programs &  
Partnerships

Stories of HOPE:  
Corinne Bardrof

Volunteer  
Spotlight: Kathy  
Kowalczyk

**HOPE**  
for bereaved  
*A journey from grief to HOPE*

## A Message from the Executive Director

*Kelly Ocampo*

Dear Friends of HOPE:

Change is hard. After a death, “new” doesn’t feel better—it often feels wrong, unfamiliar, and unwanted.

Grief brings change we never asked for, and sometimes it happens for no good reason at all. But grief also demands something of us: that we learn to live in a world that’s been altered and slowly find our way forward.

Here at HOPE, we’re in a season of change, too. Some of it you’ll notice right away—like this newsletter. The layout, format, and timing are all different. We’ve moved to a bi-monthly schedule and made space for new content: volunteer spotlights, client stories, more articles on grief, and breaking news to keep you updated on what’s happening in our community.

Other changes may be more gradual. New ideas. New ways of doing the work. But let me be clear—our mission to help those grieving will never change. That’s our constant. How we carry out that mission, though, must evolve. If we want to continue meeting people where they are, we have to grow with the world around us.

HOPE is a living, evolving place, and we want you to be part of it. We’re walking through change, just like you. And we’re walking through it together. Thank you for trusting HOPE in your grief.

With Warmth & Gratitude,

*Kelly Ocampo*



SUMMER 2025

## STORY OF HOPE

“  
GRIEF IS NOT  
A RACE WITH  
A FINISH LINE  
YOU  
EVENTUALLY  
GET TO  
CROSS.”



After losing her sister Megan to an accidental fentanyl overdose in 2020, Corinne was overwhelmed by grief and isolation. Searching for support, she found HOPE for Bereaved. “I was nervous walking in, but it was one of the best things I’ve ever done,” she says.

Through HOPE’s overdose loss support group, Corinne found understanding, connection, and a way forward. “Grief doesn’t end, but with people who understand, you get through the hard times.” Hearing from others further along in their journey helped her feel less alone and more hopeful.

Today, Corinne is a co-facilitator of the group that helped her heal. “I feel more secure now, knowing I’m not alone. And I hope I’m making my sister proud.” Her message to others grieving: “Just reach out. You won’t regret it. With HOPE, you gain a family that walks with you.”

Corinne is a tattoo artist and co-owns Gemini Tattoo Studio in Syracuse.

## Days of Reflection

July 3 - National  
Bereaved Parents  
Day

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August 22 -  
Rainbow Baby  
Day

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August 25 -  
Bereaved  
Father’s Day

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August 30 -  
National Grief  
Awareness Day

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August 31 -  
National  
Overdose  
Awareness Day

**HOPE**   
**for bereaved**  
*A journey from grief to HOPE*



Contact HOPE  
if you need to  
talk to  
someone  
about your  
grief

**315.475.9675**

## GRIEF RECOVERY AFTER A SUBSTANCE PASSING

While most major causes of preventable death are declining, drugs are an exception. The death toll has doubled in the last decade, now claiming a life every 14 minutes. Among the most commonly abused are OxyContin, Vicodin, Xanax and Soma now causing more deaths than heroin and cocaine combined. In some ways, prescription drugs are more dangerous than illicit ones because users don't have their guard up, "people feel they are safer with prescription drugs because you get them from a pharmacy and they are prescribed by a doctor." "Younger people believe they are safer because they see their parents taking them. It doesn't have the same stigma as taking street drugs".

Anyone who has lost a loved one through addiction knows that society treats that death in a much different manner than a death from any other cause and it creates unique bereavement needs. Many drug-overdose death bereaved parents routinely misrepresent the cause of a family member's death fearing that the person's reputation will be greatly diminished or feel ashamed for the true cause of the death.

In a recent study conducted by Dr. William Feigelman, Phd, Dr. John Jordan, Phd and



Bernard Gorman, Phd on Parental Grief after a Childs Drug Death found some interesting conclusions:

- Higher problems were reported for a drug and suicide bereaved death in comparison to an accidental or natural death.
- Drug death bereaved heard more child and parent blaming comments.
- Evidence suggests that parents who lose a child to a drug-related or overdose death encountered much the same stigmatization and exclusionary treatment that suicide survivors confront.
- Greater grief and mental health difficulties comparatively to accidental and natural cause deaths.
- Close to half of the drug and suicide bereaved parents encountered blaming responses from their significant other.

Although many parents struggle with the challenges of losing a child to a drug overdose, it is surprising and troubling that so little research has been devoted to identifying the unique bereavement needs of this large under-served population. In this same research study, they suggested clinicians need to pay particular attention to the social condemnation overdose drug death survivor parents confront. Advising some to avoid “toxic” relatives and/or encouraging others to openly challenge unhelpful but well-intentioned efforts among associates may help these parents to establish more supportive environments for their healing.

Within the last couple years, deaths of Heath Ledger, Anna Nicole Smith, and Michael Jackson, an outpouring of media attention has appeared, attesting to widespread societal interest, if not fascination, with this topic. Yet, it is a remarkable disconnect that so many give such great thought and discussion to the subject of overdose death generally, with little more than a perfunctory glance at the impact these deaths have on surviving family members.

**IF YOU ARE GRIEVING A DEATH BY DRUG OR ALCOHOL USE, CONSIDER JOINING OUR SUPPORT GROUP ON JULY 15<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30PM - 4500 ONONDAGA BLVD.**



## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Kathy Kowalczyk

Kathy's journey with HOPE began over 21 years ago. Encouraged by her sister Pat, HOPE's longtime office manager, Kathy started by stuffing envelopes, helping with newsletters, and eventually found her home supporting the Celebration of HOPE each Fall. When Kathy met founder Therese Schoeneck, she immediately felt a sense of belonging. **"Therese made you feel needed and special,"** Kathy recalls.

In 2021, HOPE took on a deeper meaning when Kathy lost both her husband, John, and her sister Beth just three days apart. Through her grief, she experienced the same compassion she had helped extend to others. "The volunteers and counselors at HOPE reached out and were always willing to listen," she says. **"Grief is an individual journey, but HOPE reminds us we don't have to walk it alone."**



## Wish List

Keurig coffee pods

Tissues

Lavendar essential oil

Travel coffee cups

Live house plants

Postage Stamps

Gift Cards

Individually wrapped snacks

Bottled Water & seltzer

Lysol Spray

## Events That Support HOPE



### REMEMBRANCE RUN/WALK AUGUST 2ND

Join us for HOPE's 15<sup>th</sup> annual Remembrance Run/Walk on **Saturday, August 2nd** at Long Branch Park in Liverpool. This event features a timed 5K race for runners, a memorial walk for families and individuals, and plenty of activities for kids. The expo area opens at 8AM, with the race and walk starting at 9 AM.

Looking for a special way to honor your loved one? For a \$100 donation, their name can be printed on the back of this year's event t-shirt—a lasting tribute seen by all who attend.

Register today at [hopeforbereaved.com](http://hopeforbereaved.com) or call our office at 315-475-9675.

### JOIN US THIS SUMMER!

- July 23: HOPE at the Syracuse Mets at 6:30PM
- August 15: Yard Sale at HOPE
- August 16: Tattoo Flash Fundraiser with Gemini Tattoo Studio

**For more information, call HOPE at 315.475.9675 or visit our website - [hopeforbereaved.com](http://hopeforbereaved.com)**



SAVE  
THE  
DATE

10.24.25

*Celebration of Hope*



For more grief articles,  
visit our website:  
[hopeforbereaved.com](http://hopeforbereaved.com)



## WHY VACATIONS CAN HELP WITH GRIEF

“We travel, initially to lose ourselves; and we travel, next to find ourselves.” – Pico Iyer

Traveling can provide an insightful perspective into your life, but when you're grieving, that perspective often widens into something much more.

Grief can be isolating and lonely. Traveling can serve as a reminder to yourself that there is a whole world out there outside of the walls of your home and familiar places that may remind you of your loss.

A vacation may be the last thing on your mind. However, it can aid in your grieving journey by not forgetting that you are grieving but making it easier to remember good times with your loved one. We've come up with four ideal vacations to consider to enrich your heart and soul, melt away stress and have a deeply rejuvenating and meaningful adventure.

### **The Cruise Vacation**

Being away at sea can be healing for grieving on both an emotional and health level. Nothing says adventure like booking a voyage and being whisked away on a ship to forget about real life for a week or so. On a cruise, you'll be waited on hand and foot and have access to food around the clock, on board entertainment and an environment of elegance and fun. Plenty of sunshine gives your body a Vitamin D dose, which boosts the immune system and offers natural antidepressants from positive endorphins. Fresh ocean water also produces positive mental function and respiratory health. As a big plus, there are cruise packages for every budget. You can book anything from a quick 3-day cruise to Mexico or the Caribbean, to a 14-day Alaskan or Mediterranean voyage.



### **The Therapeutic Vacation**

While there is a time for adventure, for some the grieving journey calls for complete relaxation. In this case, an all-inclusive resort package in a tropical location may work wonders. Perhaps a more budget-friendly option is a getaway to a cabin or bed and breakfast? Many people choose to book stays specializing in therapeutic relaxation and spa treatments. All of these are awesome options if you want to lower the cortisol levels in your body and enjoy the soothing relaxation of treating yourself.

In the United States, locations like Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Asheville, North Carolina can offer plenty of rest and relaxation. If you're thinking of adding stamps to your passport, the Icelandic or Irish countryside can rejuvenate you.

### **The Physical Activity Vacation**

Many people choose to grieve by engulfing themselves into rigorous physical activity. This is a great way to de-stress while improving your health and adding years to your life. Some people might choose vacations with world-class fitness centers or challenges, while others prefer to embark on natural physical challenges including climbs, hikes, and trails. Climbing Japan's Mt. Fuji not only to physically exert yourself but also to boost your emotional health through confronting and conquering a challenge. You'll have stories for Life when you decide to explore natural rainforests or go kayaking through British Columbia or New Zealand.

### **The Sight-Seeing Vacation**

Taking in breathtaking monuments, structures or natural wonders do a lot to expand your horizons and touch your emotions. These vacations work to put life and the world into perspective, which is essential in any grief journey. There are countless sights and landmarks to see. A trip to check out the Grand Canyon, Eiffel Tower, New York skyscrapers, Swiss Alps, Great Wall of China, Pyramids of Africa and the list goes on. You'll have great photo ops or just add to your life's memory bank.

You can't go wrong with any of these vacations. Comb through them to see which touch your heart and fill needs that will help your mental, physical and spiritual health.

SUMMER 2025

# HOPE in Action

Programs & Partnerships That Make a Difference



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS MAKE IT HAPPEN!

HOPE is deeply grateful for the support shown by our community partners. Thanks to their collective generosity, over \$14,000 was raised in just 2 months to support HOPE's free grief services.

The Delmonico's Anniversary Party raised more than \$8,000—special thanks to **John Wade** for hosting yet another unforgettable evening. The first annual HOPE Fest brought in nearly \$2,000, thanks to the amazing **Maria DeSantis** and the DeSantis Orchestra. And Derby for the Heart more than doubled its goal, raising over \$4,000—huge thanks to **Julie Corn** and her family.

Together, this community continues to turn compassion into action.

## Upcoming Programs

*Singing through Grief with Singing Soulutions*  
8/28, 9/4, 9/11, 9/25,  
10/2, 10/9 at HOPE

Grief Yoga with  
Kelsey Sawyer of  
Riverbend Grief  
Sunday, August 10th  
Butterfly Garden in  
Liverpool

HOPE Picnic - yard  
sale, games, BBQ, &  
tattoo fundraiser  
August 15-16 at  
HOPE

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## What is a Rainbow Baby?

A "rainbow baby" is a term used to describe a healthy baby born or adopted after a miscarriage, stillbirth, or other infant loss. It symbolizes hope and healing after a period of grief and loss, representing a "rainbow" appearing after a storm. The term acknowledges the joy and new life that a baby brings after experiencing the



pain of pregnancy or infant loss. Remember: **your journey is yours.**

A rainbow baby can bring joy to a family that has been affected by a deep, painful loss. And it's OK — and healthy — to grieve that loss long after your rainbow baby arrives. After all, having another child will never replace the child you lost. But they may just make your world a little brighter and more beautiful.

**IF YOU ARE GRIEVING AN INFANT/NEWBORN, MISCARRIAGE OR STILLBIRTH, CONSIDER JOINING OUR SUPPORT GROUP ON JULY 16<sup>TH</sup> AT 6:30PM - 4500 ONONDAGA BLVD.**

### MONTHLY SUPPORT GROUPS

- Friends & Family (ZOOM only) | 1st Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Family & Friends – Clay Senior Center | 2nd Friday | 11:30AM – 1:30PM
- Family & Friends | 2nd Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Young Widow/Widower/Significant Other | 1st Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Left Behind by Suicide | 2nd Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Left Behind by Drug Overdose | 3rd Tuesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Parents without Parents | 3rd Thursday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Senior Widow/Widower/Significant Other | 3rd Wednesday | 10:00AM – 12:00PM
- Bereaved Parents & Grandparents (Infant/Newborn, Miscarriage or Stillbirth) | 3rd Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM
- Bereaved Parents & Grandparents (Child of Any Age) | 4th Wednesday | 6:30 – 8:30PM **\*\*Note:** *This group is cancelled in both July and August.*





4500 Onondaga Blvd.  
Syracuse, NY 13219

### Electronic Service Requested

#### Board of Directors

Kristin Moses, President  
Marwa Dehaibe, Treasurer  
Dan Cummings, Secretary  
Rodger Loomis  
Nicole Macris  
Joshua Edinger  
Kelly Rossi  
Colby Cyrus

#### MISSION STATEMENT

HOPE for Bereaved, Inc. provides support groups, peer counseling, and resources at no charge to grieving Central New York youth, adults, families, and organizations.

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Syracuse, NY  
Permit NO. 713

Summer 2025

**REMEMBRANCE  
RUN/WALK FOR  
HOPE**  
HOPE for bereaved, inc.

**LONG BRANCH PARK  
LIVERPOOL, NY**

**AUGUST 2**

Register online  
**[www.hopeforbereaved.com](http://www.hopeforbereaved.com)**  
or  
by calling  
**315-475-9675**