

# 2018-2019 ANNUAL FUND CAMPAIGN THE ZELLNER FAMILY'S STORY

Larnie Jr., Sandra, Angela, Sherri, Diane, & Camden

## Angela Zellner's Story

When we lost my sister, Camie, I was not ready. Before she died, I planned how I would react if anyone close to me died. My plan was to be STRONG. All of this was "supposed" to happen when I was older, not when I was in my 20s, and NOT to my sister who should have had years left with us! Camie was gone on February 26, 2016, and we had no warning, no time to say goodbye or "I love you."

We went through the motions of cleaning out her space and getting things in order before her burial. I went back to work but did not feel like I was actually there. I tried to stick to my plan and be strong. As the weeks passed, I was isolating myself and falling apart. I would cry, be angry, and hate that Camie was gone. **Everything changed when she died.**

For over a year, I sank into darkness. I was a stranger in my own body. I found a Cornerstone of Hope brochure on our table, and my sister told me about their services. As I visited their website, I cried while reading the Tripodi's story. **This was an answered prayer.** I was seeking a way to heal and if counseling was the answer, I would try it.

I sat in the parking lot before my first appointment, sobbing and wondering if I was making the right choice. I got out of my car, walked back numerous times, and finally made it inside. The journey was nothing like I had imagined. The next months were a blessing filled with tears, hurt, anger, guilt, shame, forgiveness, and love! Love because I could freely talk in my sessions and be transparent with no judgment. **I had begun my healing process.**

I knew that I wanted to give back to the place that gave me hope, just like Camie, with her kind heart, would have done. Moving through the grief, getting support, and being able start sharing my story with others ignited the healing. My journey of hope, love and support have sprung me from the darkness. **I thank Cornerstone of Hope, who God knew would be there to support us during such a difficult time.**

## Sandra Zellner's Story

I am proud to be number five of six siblings, and that number was very much part of who I was. So when I received a call that my sister passed, my world caved in. Camden Elizabeth was 35, extremely intelligent, shy, and compassionate. Camie was gone abruptly, and for my close-knit family, it was traumatic. We found there were blood clots in her lungs suffocating her.



Sandra, Camden & Angela

**After the funeral, life was not going to wait for me to get myself together.** With five days bereavement leave from work, I was expected to step back into my life and function, but I was not ready. I would cry until 4:00am and get up three hours later for work. By 2017, I barely made it through the year and I didn't recognize myself.

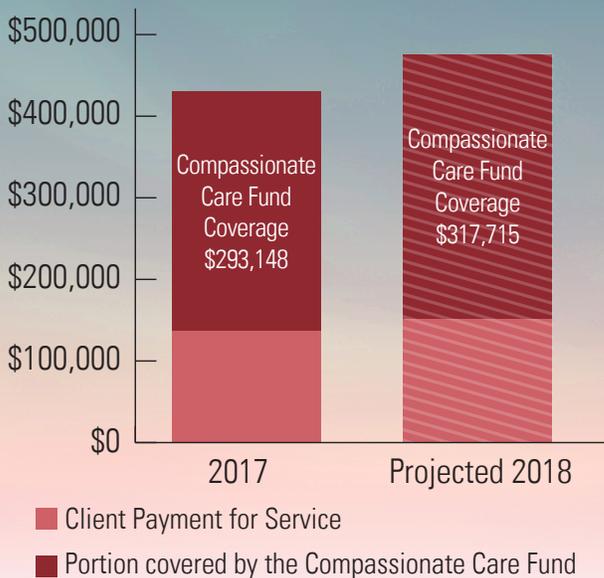
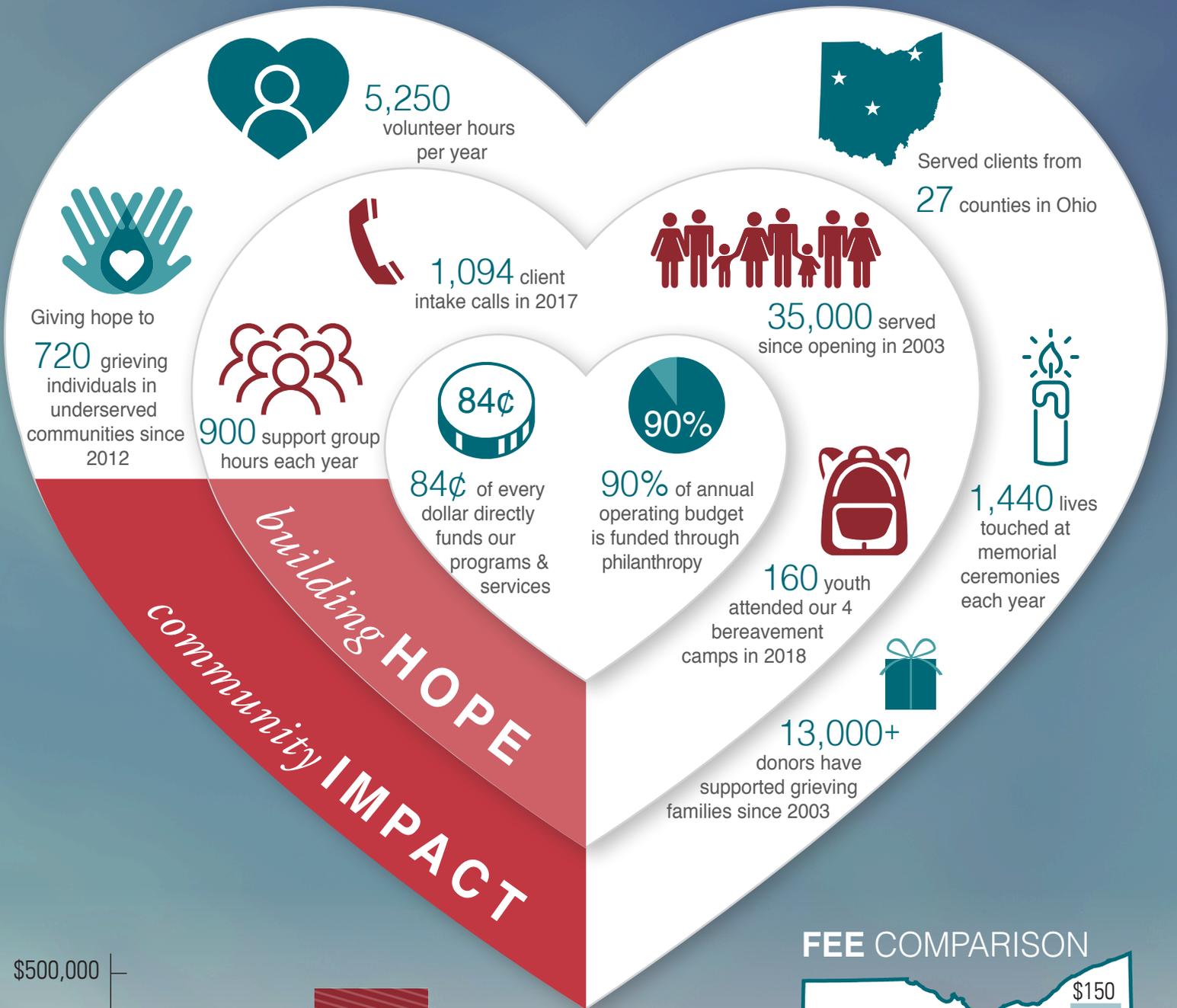
**I searched for counseling options and heard Cornerstone come up more than once.**

Scrolling through the site, I was captivated by the Tripodi's story. My life had been at a standstill since we buried Camie, and I desperately wanted someone to reassure me it

was okay to keep living.

**I found that Cornerstone was a space where I could safely fall apart and be put back together.** The staff was kind, gentle and understanding. They let me grieve, provided tools, and encouraged me to receive love and move forward. **I could not believe a place like this actually existed.** I was comforted seeing people from so many backgrounds in the same place, receiving help and hope.

**Cornerstone was the biggest step I took,** and I have a greater understanding of what a place like Cornerstone means to others. **Supporting Cornerstone means you are giving tangible hope to those who do not have the resources to make it on their own.** To this day, I champion the organization because I do not want another person to go through grief without a place like this. Cornerstone helps lives start again and my sister and I are proof of that.



## FEE COMPARISON

