



Cornerstone
of Hope

HOPE'S MESSENGER

FALL 2023 | CLEVELAND EDITION

BRIGID'S STORY OF HOPE

BRIGID GODIC | FORMER CORNERSTONE OF HOPE CLIENT

When we found out we were pregnant with identical twin boys, we were beyond surprised, we were borderline shocked! Rory and Casey were born at 28 weeks, 12 weeks early, and were immediately taken for medical care in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Rory, the smaller baby of the twins, survived for four days before passing away due to complications from prematurity. While we only got to spend a short time with him, we knew him in our hopes and dreams during our pregnancy and in planning for

adding the twin boys to our family. Following the loss of our son Rory, we felt like we didn't know how to function as a family, as parents to our toddler daughter, or as a married couple with the grief we were experiencing. We were yearning to share our unique experience, to receive support and guidance, and to hopefully connect with others in a similar situation.

**Continue reading Brigid's
Story of Hope inside...**

WHAT'S INSIDE

NEW PARTNERSHIP
With MetroHealth

GRIEF & ART THERAPY
Memory Box Workshop

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM
Traumatic Loss & Grief Support

A LETTER FROM OUR FOUNDER



Hello Cornerstone of Hope Family,

When we founded Cornerstone of Hope twenty years ago, summer used to be our "slow" season. We often used these months to strategically plan the next 16 months of programs and events. This "slow" season started to fade when we moved into our permanent home in 2008 and has completely vanished as we celebrate 20 years of serving grieving individuals and families. It is a difficult but evident fact that grief never takes a break.

As a ministry we experience this truth every day, with every phone call received and every person who enters our front doors seeking support in their darkest season. During our recent Grieve with Hope Retreat, our keynote speaker, Linda Isaiah relayed a powerful challenge to our participants: "Grief can consume you. It can take over your entire life. The goal is to sit with your grief, not to live in your grief!"

I must be honest; this challenge is easier said than done! I know my wife Christi and I probably lived in our grief for several months, even years; however, that challenge was one of the reasons Cornerstone of Hope was needed in our community. God's call was to create a safe, sacred place where all who are grieving can gather with others on a similar journey to seek support. We have attempted to do just that with a variety of programs for all ages since our inception.

We just completed our camp season with over 200 youth participating in our three **summer camps**. Our annual **Memorial Butterfly Release** provided our 500 attendees an opportunity to sit in their grief while experiencing peaceful

and healing moments in both our Northeast and Central Ohio locations. In addition to these seasonal programs, we continue to serve families through professionally led support groups, grief counseling, and spiritual direction.

These programs are made possible by our generous community partners who go above and beyond to raise awareness and the necessary dollars to provide these critical services. We would like to thank **DiGeronimo Companies** and **Electronic Merchant Systems** for hosting our two summer golf outings. Together these summer events raised over \$220,000.

As we look forward to the coming months, we have an exciting line-up of events and educational opportunities for you. We invite you to join us at **Taste of Hope** on Thursday, September 7. Over 45 local restaurants and caterers will be sharing signature food and drink samplings as well as entertainment and raffles. Tickets can be purchased online.

On September 6-8, we will host the **2023 National Symposium on Traumatic Loss and Grief Support**. A full description of this unique conference is included on page 5. Don't miss out on this opportunity, nine CEU's will be provided for professionals.

To say, "thank you!" does not seem adequate for those who trust Cornerstone of Hope to accompany them in their grief journey and to those who generously gift their time and resources to this mission ... but it is absolutely necessary! Thank you to all who make up the Cornerstone of Hope family!

With hope,

| Mark Tripodi

Pregnancy & Infant Loss Awareness Day

WAVE OF LIGHT CEREMONY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2023 | 6:30 P.M.

CORNERSTONE OF HOPE

5905 Brecksville Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

A LIGHT SEEN AROUND THE WORLD

On October 15th in honor of Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day, bereaved parents around the world light a candle to create a wave of light to illuminate the night in remembrance of their children lost too soon. We invite all who have experienced a pregnancy loss or infant loss (child under age 2) to come together and be surrounded by love and support as you honor the baby in your heart during this remembrance service filled with music, readings and candle lighting.



TO REGISTER

This event is available at no cost to families, but registration is required. Register by October 6, 2023 by scanning the code or visiting cornerstoneofhope.org.



BRIGID'S STORY OF HOPE, CONTINUED

Cornerstone of Hope's information was provided to us through the hospital, and we had friends that had utilized its services and were strong supporters of the organization. We began to participate in the Infant Loss Support Group. At the time, we felt like attending the group was a life-ring thrown to us as we were swimming through our lives, but barely keeping our head above the water. The weekly sessions were often very difficult and emotionally draining, but, upon completion, we felt we had made progress in our journey. It felt like we could finally catch a breath from the grief that had been drowning us. Following the group support, we also participated in a private counseling session. Additionally, we have continued to attend events like the Annual Butterfly Release and Christmas Candle Lighting ceremonies at Cornerstone of Hope, and feel that each time we are there, we are honoring the memory of our son Rory.

Grief is an emotion like no other. Happiness and anger are concrete emotions that even small children know how to describe. The triggers for these emotions are typically evident, and they are even assigned a color, further supporting their simplistic nature. Grief, however, is ever changing in its impact, its presence, and its color on your life. Days when we expected grief, prepared for its occurrence, and anticipated the emotion, it wouldn't come. To date, there are moments in our day-to-day lives where grief shows up, unexpected and often uninvited, and we are always surprised at the random life moments that cause us to feel that sadness.

Thanks to Cornerstone of Hope, we now embrace those moments, knowing it is right and okay to fully feel the myriad emotions that may accompany them as we forever continue the grief journey. We have truly valued Cornerstone of Hope and its presence in our journey through loss. We are so appreciative to have this wonderful resource close to home!

GRIEF & ART THERAPY MEMORY BOX WORKSHOP

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2023

8:00 A.M. - 10:00 A.M. or 11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

CORNERSTONE OF HOPE

5905 Brecksville Road, Independence, Ohio 44131

COST: \$20 (includes a light brunch and all supplies)

We invite you to join us for a hope-filled morning of creative nourishment. In this workshop, attendees will learn about the power of art therapy and its benefits in processing grief with Kaylen Jones, Cornerstone of Hope's licensed art therapist and clinician. Each attendee will have the opportunity to create a memory box in honor of a loved one.



REGISTER TO ATTEND

Two sessions will be offered, with a limit of 25 adults per session. No artistic skills are required. Please visit cornerstoneofhope.org or scan the code to register by October 27, 2023.



GRIEF EXPRESSED

BOOK REVIEW BY JOSEPH ALTO,
CORNERSTONE OF HOPE CLEVELAND INTERN

This piece of historical fiction loosely describes the origins of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The novel shares a fictional account of the death of Shakespeare's and Anne Hathaway's son, Hamnet. The death of Hamnet—which was caused by the plague—catapults Shakespeare and Hathaway into deep grief. O'Farrell dedicates much of her novel to detailing how the two famous literary figures explore their emotions, and their marriage after the loss of their only son. Shakespeare, wanting to immortalize Hamnet, crafts a play (Hamlet) which ultimately tells the tale of a son avenging the death of a father.

The novel reflects the reality many parents feel after the loss of a child. While discussing the personal turmoil a parent feels, the author also touches upon how grief can be even more complicated when a parent also has a spouse and other children to look after.

Learn more about Maggie O'Farrell and Hamnet at maggieofarrell.com.



GRIEVING THE LOSS OF YOUR BABY

A perinatal loss or death of an infant can be shocking and many emotions you have may be overwhelming. This loss is normal to grieve, not only the baby, but also the hopes and expectations you may have held for their life. Grief reactions can look different for each person, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. It is important to remind yourself that grief is not linear, and there is no manual to grief. Each day will be challenging, and milestones can bring up increased emotion. These milestones can include holidays, death anniversaries, birthdays, etc. When a milestone is approaching, some griever find it beneficial to plan a ritual. A few examples of these rituals may include taking time off of work, releasing balloons, planting a tree, creating a rock garden, writing letters, or making a donation in honor of your child. Even when a milestone is not approaching, emotions can still be challenging to cope with. It can also be difficult to navigate other individual's pregnancies/children. In those moments, take inventory of your healthy coping skills. Once you have them written down, ask yourself, "Am I using my coping skills? Could I add some new coping skills?" A few examples of coping skills include taking a walk, talking to others, listening to music, creating art, attending a support group, attending individual counseling, watching your favorite show, getting enough sleep, planning an enjoyable activity, reading, volunteering, writing a letter, cooking or baking, attending a sporting event, accepting an invitation or meditating. Remember, there is not one way to grieve, and sometimes it takes time to find coping skills and rituals that work best for you.



EARLY PREGNANCY LOSS SUPPORT GROUP

In Partnership with MetroHealth

Cornerstone of Hope recently partnered with Cleveland MetroHealth to facilitate a support group for women and couples who have experienced an early pregnancy loss.

MetroHealth approached Cornerstone of Hope after their Media Relations Specialist, Dorsena Koonce, personally experienced a miscarriage and was surprised at the lack of resources provided to her as both a MetroHealth employee and patient.

After trying to conceive for over a year and a half, just days after Valentine's Day, Dorsena and her husband finally got the news that they were expecting a child. Elation and relief soon turned to sadness and disbelief when they were told at the first ultrasound appointment that the pregnancy was not viable.

"What I wanted was the hospital that diagnosed me also to give me a resource, and I didn't get that. I love MetroHealth, but I felt like we were lacking in that instance," Koontz shared in a May 24 interview with News 5 Cleveland.*

Koonce asked internally about forming the group to help others like herself, and then coordinated with Cornerstone of Hope. Hannah Donofrio, support group facilitator of the group, shared the importance of the program.

"Parents often feel dismissed and alone over a pregnancy loss when it is not recognized as a 'big enough' loss at times. The group allows each member to be heard, validated, and supported around their individual experiences and feelings. Mothers are able to talk about the day to day challenges and thoughts and process their journeys, learning from one another along the way," Hannah explains.

The free support group began on June 7, 2023 and meets on a monthly basis every Wednesday at 6 p.m. in MetroHealth's Rammelkamp building. The group is open to both MetroHealth clients and non-clients. Those interested in attending can register online at metrohealth.org.

*From "New programs hopes to help families coping with the emotional toll of early pregnancy loss" (news5cleveland.com)



CORNERSTONE OF HOPE PRESENTS

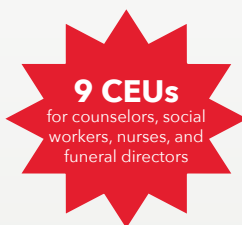
2023 National Symposium Traumatic Loss & Grief Support

SEPTEMBER 6-8, 2023

Embassy Suites Hotel Rockside

5800 Rockside Woods Blvd N.

Cleveland, OH 44131



9 CEUs

for counselors, social
workers, nurses, and
funeral directors

REGISTRATION

This symposium is a great opportunity for practitioners, researchers, educators, clinicians, and students to learn about the latest research and innovative approaches on traumatic loss and grief support.



SPEAKERS

Linda Anderson Gaines, LPCC-S
Benjamin E. "Ben" Baran, Ph.D.
Kailey Bradley, LPCC-S

Nancy Carst, MSW
Sarah Hendrickson, M.Ed.
Julie Olds, CT

Emily Ribnik, LPCC-S
Wendy Ricks Hoff, BA

Neesha Roberts, MA
Leila Salisbury, MA

FEATURED KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Alan Wolfelt

Director

Center for Loss & Life Transition



Dr. Alan Wolfelt has been recognized as one of North America's leading death educators and grief counselors. His books have sold more than a million copies worldwide and have been translated into many languages. He founded the Center for Loss in 1984 to offer education and support both to griever and bereavement caregivers. Well respected for his inspiring teaching ability, Dr. Wolfelt is a past recipient of the Association for Death Education Death Educator Award. He is known around the world for his compassionate messages of hope and healing as well as his companioning philosophy of grief care.

Dr. Wolfelt speaks on grief-related topics, offers trainings for caregivers, and has written many bestselling books and other resources on grief for both caregivers and grieving people.

Understanding Your Grief: Touchstones for Hope & Healing

PRESENTED BY DR. ALAN WOLFELT

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2023 | 6:30 P.M.

Embassy Suites Hotel Rockside

5800 Rockside Woods Blvd N, Cleveland, OH 44131

This program will help all of us understand how loss influences our lives. Participants will embrace the uniqueness of their grief, quietly reflect on their feelings of loss, learn about the six essential needs when someone dies, and come to understand the difference between "reconciling" grief and "resolving" grief.



Reception with light refreshments will be available. This event is free to attend, but registration is required. Scan the code or call Cornerstone of Hope at 216-524-4673 to register by August 30th.



GOD'S TRANSFORMATIVE LOVE

ANNIE DALBY | CORNERSTONE OF HOPE COLUMBUS CLINICIAN

Autumn is upon us and as with millions of other people, I look forward to its awesome beauty. Cooler temperatures, drier air, abundant sunshine, and the spectacle of leaves changing color fill me with anticipation and deep gratitude. As a child, I ran with excitement around my neighborhood picking up leaves from various trees so my mom could dutifully press them between sheets of wax paper for my school projects. In high school and college, I learned about the science of changing leaf colors, about diminishing sunlight and cooler temperatures and decreased chlorophyll production and turning, falling leaves.

Somewhere along the way on my spiritual journey, I absorbed and understood the beauty of autumn's pageantry on a completely different level. These leaves that practically shout to the heavens in their shades of greens and golds and reds and crimsons—these leaves are dying. Dying. The leaves are in a dying process, offering the world their loveliness as they go. God our Creator put this in motion, this transformative process whereby beauty happens amid change and loss and death.

I have pondered this in terms of my own spiritual growth and certainly as I journey with people as a spiritual director and clinician. There have been many messes in my life. I am no stranger to grief, loss, pain, and death. And unlike the leaves, I don't typically shine in a blaze of brilliant color at these times. Most of the time, I go kicking and screaming.

Until the Holy Spirit wakes me up, and I invite God in, and I turn my messes over to him. That is when the things that

are dying in me begin to change into something more like a leaf in the autumn. How God brings about this transformation is wrapped in mystery; but that he will bring about transformation I know for certain.

When I sit with my clients I offer my presence, my insight, my knowledge and skills, my care, my love, and my prayers. I know there is much value in my knowledge, training, and experience. Many people have told me they have benefited from a technique I've taught them or an insight I've offered. Many have experienced healing. And yet God has humbled me enough to know it is truly God's power at work that brings about change and binds wounds. It is God's love and mercy and compassion that work through all of us to heal our broken world and make something beautiful out of the messiness in our lives.

I attended the funeral service for the father of a dear friend of mine recently. This man had planned his own funeral service and so much of it moved me deeply. My attention was most captured by two parts that seem to apply perfectly to this reflection. One of the scriptures was from Ephesians 3:20: "All glory to God, who through the power at work within us can do immeasurably more than we could ask or imagine." YES! And the beautiful recessional hymn, whose title certainly describes the leaves of autumn in full blaze and the power of God's transformative love: "How Great Thou Art." Amen!

WELCOME TO OUR TEAM

LIZ LYNCH, CLINICAL RECEPTIONIST

Liz joined the Cornerstone of Hope team as the Clinical Receptionist in April 2023. She developed a compassion for helping the bereaved after experiencing multiple losses in her own life. Liz says that she is "excited about the opportunity to aid in Cornerstone of Hope's mission to support clients as they navigate their grief."

We are blessed to have Liz's warm, welcoming personality to greet all who walk through our doors.



GRANT AWARDS

We would like to thank our grant sponsors:



Medina County
Community Fund

An Akron Community Foundation Fund



The Higley Family



Cornerstone
of Hope

Taste of Hope

Presented By Enerco Group, Inc. | Cynthia & Allen Haire

**An evening of spectacular samplings of food and drinks
from local restaurants, entertainment and raffles.**

Thursday, September 7, 2023 | 6:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

Hosted Outdoors at Cornerstone of Hope

5905 Brecksville Road, Independence, OH 44131



Individual Tickets | \$100

Includes valet parking, restaurant samplings, entertainment & raffles.
To purchase tickets, scan the code or visit cornerstoneofhope.org.

**For sponsorship opportunities,
please scan the code or visit
cornerstoneofhope.org.**



Cornerstone of Hope
Cleveland

5905 Brecksville Road
Independence, Ohio 44131

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cleveland, Ohio
Permit #1106

SAVE THE DATE

To learn more or to register, please contact our office at 216-524-4673 or visit cornerstoneofhope.org.

EVENTS FOR GRIEVERS

- **Mom's Club** - 8/19, 9/16, 10/21, 11/18
- **Understanding Your Grief: Touchstones for Hope & Healing** - 9/6
- **Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Day Wave of Light Ceremony** - 10/15
- **Grief & Art Therapy: Memory Box Workshop** - 11/4
- **Holiday Grief** - 11/10

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- **Taste of Hope** - 9/7
- **Dine For Hope at Corleone's Ristorante & Bar** - 11/12
- **Shop for Hope Holiday Market** - 11/28

GRIEF EDUCATION

- **Survivors of Suicide Loss** - 8/21, 9/11, 10/9, 11/13

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

- **2023 National Symposium on Traumatic Loss & Grief Support** - 9/6-9/8
- **Children's Grief Awareness Day** - 11/16

CLEVELAND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tom Futey
Chairperson

Jamie Vilcheck
Vice Chairperson

Maria Dean
Treasurer

Kent Manson
Secretary

Christi Tripodi
Founder, Ex Officio
Board Member

Mark Tripodi
Founder/CEO, Ex Officio
Board Member

Kumar Arora

Michelle Burdette

Sheryl Caine

Tony Esposito

Barbara Fohl

Kathy Futey

Cynthia Haire

Dan Hartnett

Kyle Kiffer

Emilie Kurtz

Laura Manuel

Wayne Ostrosky

Jason Palus

Kodi Pride

Loree Vick

Dave Wheeler

Nathan Zegura

EMERITUS DIRECTORS

Jay DeFinis

Judith Matsko

Casey Rasata

FOUNDING BOARD

Ed Butler

Denise Dufala

Patrick Rollins

Bobby DiGeronimo

Dino Lucarelli

Jeff Spetrino

Donnie DiGeronimo

Frank Rini

Lisa Kurtz Luciano*

**Until we meet again*