Kids Camp Mentor Visits Surviving Kids Across the Nation

Page 12
Dear Survivors,

As 2020 comes to an end, I want to remind you all that I have been grateful to be a part of this organization during one of the most difficult years to date. Knowing I have my C.O.P.S. family just a phone call, e-mail, or social media connection away has helped my family and me to get through times of quarantine and the cancellation of so many events and trips we were looking forward to. I hope you all felt the same support, as C.O.P.S. has been steadfast in adjusting to the virtual capabilities of keeping us all connected with mental health professionals, honoring our officers, and making peer-support of survivors to survivors a priority.

As we have learned from the past few months, plans can change from one day to another without warning. We are planning events as normal for 2021. This includes the Hands-On Programs, which begin as early as March and run through October. All dates and locations are listed on page 22 of this publication. Please save the date, and we will be sure to let you know when online registration is open.

We are also moving forward with plans for National Police Week, with a few changes and additions to accommodate higher attendance expectations. The C.O.P.S. National Board and Staff are taking every precaution and possible scenario into consideration. Our ultimate goal is to offer the best experience for all survivors traveling to Washington, D.C., to honor your officer at the Peace Officers’ Memorial Service and Candlelight Vigil, and where you will find healing sessions and peer support at the National Police Survivors’ Conference. Registration is open at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/aboutnpw.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don’t hesitate to call the National Office at (573) 346-4911. We understand you will have questions about events and any changes that may be in the works. We also know that the continued impact of COVID-19, mixed with the approaching holidays, can bring unexpected emotions. C.O.P.S. is here to listen and connect you with a counselor if needed. Always remember, you are not alone, and we will continue to get through this, TOGETHER.

From my family to yours, I wish you joy and happiness this holiday season. I look forward to what 2021 will bring!

Emilio J. Miyares
C.O.P.S. National President
In This Issue

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>President’s Message</td>
<td>22-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Board Member Contacts</td>
<td>24-26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Chapter Contacts</td>
<td>27-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-9</td>
<td>News of Note</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-11</td>
<td>Law Enforcement Appreciation Day 2021</td>
<td>32-33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>We Rise By Lifting Others</td>
<td>34-36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>Survivor Spotlight</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-16</td>
<td>Handling the Holidays</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17-21</td>
<td>LE Gift Ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mission Statement

Rebuilding shattered lives of survivors and co-workers affected by line-of-duty death.

Survivors can seek comfort from C.O.P.S. while awaiting a decision from the following determining agencies: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Program, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), or Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

Submission Information

Concerns of Police Survivors welcomes the submission of articles, trial updates, survivor news, and memorials. Please know that all submissions will be considered, but may not be published. The inclusion of news articles or court documents makes the process much easier for C.O.P.S. When sending photos, please make sure they are high resolution (600KB or higher) or the original files. All submissions can be e-mailed to sara_slone@nationalcops.org with the subject line “Newsletter Submission.”

Information for Our Readers

Throughout C.O.P.S. publications, you will find codes that tell how a person is related to an officer who has died in the line of duty. Here is a key for you:

- W=Spouse; AC=Adult Child; C= Child; S=Sibling; M=Mother; F=Father; CW= Co-Worker; SM= Step-Mother; SF= Step-Father; SC=Step-Child; GM=Grandmother; GF=Grandfather; GC=Grandchild; FS=Former Spouse; FN=Fiancé; SO=Significant Other; F-IL=Father In-Law; M-IL=Mother In-Law; D-IL=Daughter In-Law; SN-IL=Son In-Law; SS-IL=Sister In-Law; B-IL=Brother In-Law; U=Uncle; A=Aunt; NC=Niece; NP=Nephew; CS=Cousin; FR=Friend

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If you have a topic of discussion to submit to the National Board for the meeting to be held in January 2021, please email Missy Cottle at missy_cottle@nationalcops.org.

Would you like to serve on the C.O.P.S. National Board?

One of the most cherished and vital ways to serve other survivors is by running for a Regional Trustee position on the C.O.P.S. National Board. Each trustee serves a one-year term, for a maximum of four years. The National President serves a one-year term, for a maximum of two years. To find out more information, our National bylaws can be downloaded from www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/bylaws.

Any survivor seeking to serve on the National Board shall submit a completed application for nomination to the Chair of the Nominations/Election Committee, Cheryl Schultz (cheryl_schultz@nationalcops.org), no later than February 20, 2021.

The application and criteria can be found on our website under the ‘Contact - National Board’ tab.
To enable the C.O.P.S. organization to provide peer support close to home, 55 C.O.P.S. Chapters are functioning, and others are in the process of organizing. Below are state or regional chapters that are here to help you through the difficult times:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>President/Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Cindy Hatcher, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:alabamacops.cindy@gmail.com">alabamacops.cindy@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(251) 604-0602&lt;br&gt;www.alabamacops.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Laurie Huckeba, Vice President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:lauriehuckeba@gmail.com">lauriehuckeba@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(907) 632-3795&lt;br&gt;www.alaskacops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arizona C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>James Warriner, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:james.warriner@copsarizona.org">james.warriner@copsarizona.org</a>&lt;br&gt;(602) 448-7600&lt;br&gt;www.copsarizona.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Linda Craig, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:lindasuecraig@gmail.com">lindasuecraig@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(501) 425-0645&lt;br&gt;www.arkansascops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>California</td>
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<td>Central CAL C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Rich Perez, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:rich.cencalcops@gmail.com">rich.cencalcops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(559) 696-1522&lt;br&gt;www.cencalcops.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern CAL C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Michael Stolzman, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:michael.stolzman@norcalcops.org">michael.stolzman@norcalcops.org</a>&lt;br&gt;(707) 689-3830&lt;br&gt;www.norcalcops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern CAL C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Liz White-Dibb, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:lwhitedibb.socalcops@gmail.com">lwhitedibb.socalcops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(619) 843-8500&lt;br&gt;www.socalcops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colorado C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Robert Cook, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:robert.cook@coloradocops.org">robert.cook@coloradocops.org</a>&lt;br&gt;(970) 567-4885&lt;br&gt;www.coloradocops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connecticut - See New England C.O.P.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Brett Parson, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:brett.parson@gmail.com">brett.parson@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(202) 246-3138&lt;br&gt;www.dc-cops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delaware C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Eleanor Allione, Vice President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:troopersmom4cops@yahoo.com">troopersmom4cops@yahoo.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(302) 388-2657&lt;br&gt;www.delawarecops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Iowa C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Yanira Scarlett, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:yanira@iowacops.org">yanira@iowacops.org</a>&lt;br&gt;(515) 360-4187&lt;br&gt;www.iowacops.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kansas C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Dustin Dierenfeldt, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:ddierenfeldt@kckpd.org">ddierenfeldt@kckpd.org</a>&lt;br&gt;(816) 518-3041&lt;br&gt;www.kscops.org</td>
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<td>Kentucky C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Brandy Durman, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:kentuckycops@gmail.com">kentuckycops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(859) 230-0986&lt;br&gt;www.copskentucky.org</td>
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<tr>
<td>Louisiana C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Kim Stuckey, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:kstuckeylacops@gmail.com">kstuckeylacops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(225) 933-5191&lt;br&gt;www.la-cops.org</td>
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<td>Maine - See New England C.O.P.S.</td>
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<td>Maryland C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Sue Nickerson, Director&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:mikie@atlanticbb.net">mikie@atlanticbb.net</a>&lt;br&gt;(410) 708-1334&lt;br&gt;www.mdcops.org</td>
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<td>Massachusetts - See New England C.O.P.S.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Andrea Arrington, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:andrearaarrington@att.net">andrearaarrington@att.net</a>&lt;br&gt;(586) 945-0882&lt;br&gt;www.micops.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Jackie Bergeron, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:minnesotacops@gmail.com">minnesotacops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(651) 295-2314&lt;br&gt;www.mncops.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Caroline Turney, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:carolinemscops@gmail.com">carolinemscops@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(662) 678-3192&lt;br&gt;www.mncops.org</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missouri C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Annette Jansen, President&lt;br&gt;<a href="mailto:ajansen202@gmail.com">ajansen202@gmail.com</a>&lt;br&gt;(636) 299-3772&lt;br&gt;www.mo-cops.org</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some of the most crucial work C.O.P.S. does is to help survivors apply for or check on the status of their benefits through the Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Program, as well as other available benefits. If you need assistance with your benefits, please contact Barbie Squires, National Chapter Liaison at (573) 346-4911.
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www.washingtonstatecops.org

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www.wicops.org

States without an active chapter:
Hawaii
North Dakota
South Dakota
West Virginia
Wyoming
Congratulations to **Caleb Carmikle** and his new bride, **Madison**. They were joined in marriage on June 27, 2020. Caleb is the surviving son of Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Sergeant Monty Carmikle, EOW 11/16/2008.

Pictured with the happy couple is Caleb’s mother, Mary. Mary currently serves on the C.O.P.S. National Board as the South Central Region Trustee.

**Trey Hontz**, youngest son of Scottsdale P.D. SWAT Sergeant Thomas Hontz, EOW 2/20/02, graduated the Mesa (AZ) Police Academy on September 4, 2020.

In working for the Scottsdale Police Department, he will follow in the footsteps of his father and older brother, Christopher. Congratulations to him from all of his family and friends.

Congratulations to **Madeline (Madie) Clark** on her graduation from Wester Schroeder High School on July 26. She is attending Niagara University where she is studying to be a Teacher.

Madie is the surviving daughter of Rochester (NY) Police Officer Tom Clark, EOW 1/17/06.

Congratulations to **Tera Denial** on her retirement from the United States Marine Corps after 20 years of service. Pictured at left is Tera, and her husband, Lieutenant Colonel David Denial. Out of the same family, Major Denial’s niece, **Jacqueline Whitaker**, has now entered the Marine Corps alongside her husband. Pictured at right with Jacqueline are her brothers, Bryan and Kevin.

Tera is the surviving sister of Nicholasville (KY) Police Officer Burke J. Rhoads, EOW 3/11/2015. Jacqueline, Bryan and Kevin are Officer Rhoads’ surviving children.

Join the family of Officer Rhoads on Sunday, March 14, 2021, for The Burke Memorial 5.74 run/walk. Event will be held in person and virtually. Race starts at 2:00 p.m. in Nicholasville (KY).
Congratulations to Meghan and Adam Abbate who welcomed twins Stella and Maeve on June 15, 2020. These sweet babies are the surviving granddaughters of United States Marshal Kenneth J. Doyle, EOW 7/26/2017.

Congratulations to Erin and Lucas Bolton, on the birth of their daughter, Madeline Claire. Madeline joins proud big brother Taylor.

Erin is the surviving spouse of Mobile (AL) Police Officer Justin T. Billa, EOW 2/20/2018.

Jolie Wass has begun her freshman year at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX.

Jolie is the surviving daughter of Washington County (TX) Sheriff’s Deputy Donald Wass, EOW 4/23/2006.

Alyssa Bennett began her sophomore year at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX.

Alyssa is the surviving daughter of Harris County (TX) Sheriff’s Deputy Shane Bennett, EOW 6/12/2002.

Christopher Robateau Jr. graduated from Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. He will attend Rutgers University in the Fall.

Christopher is the surviving son of Jersey City Police (NJ) Lieutenant Christopher Robateau, EOW 1/5/2018.

Jolie Wass has begun her freshman year at Sam Houston State University in Huntsville, TX.

Jolie is the surviving daughter of Washington County (TX) Sheriff’s Deputy Donald Wass, EOW 4/23/2006.

Alyssa Bennett began her sophomore year at Texas State University in San Marcos, TX.

Alyssa is the surviving daughter of Harris County (TX) Sheriff’s Deputy Shane Bennett, EOW 6/12/2002.

Christopher Robateau Jr. graduated from Union Catholic High School in Scotch Plains, New Jersey. He will attend Rutgers University in the Fall.

Christopher is the surviving son of Jersey City Police (NJ) Lieutenant Christopher Robateau, EOW 1/5/2018.

To submit your news of note, please email Katrina Old, Public Relations Manager, at katrina_old@nationalcops.org.
Bob Hatch, 45, died September 24, 2020. Bob was a longtime volunteer at National Police Week. His dedication, passion and friendship will be missed by many.

As an officer with Indianapolis (IN) Metro Police, Bob worked in various capacities including Fleet Supervisor, Primary Instructor, Field Training Officer, Logistics Support Unit Specialist, Incident Command Vehicle Operator, Chief’s Honor Guard, and in 2017 Bob rose to the rank of Sergeant. Our condolences are sent to his family.

Cora Hardy took home Grand Champion Chianina Heifer at the Heart O‘Texas show in Waco, TX, in October. Cora’s heifer competed against heifers from all across the state of Texas on structure, maternal appeal and overall appearance. Congratulations Cora!

Cora is pictured with her twin sister, Caitlyn, her mother Ashlee and her stepfather, Jim. Cora is the surviving daughter of Plano (TX) Police Officer D. Weston Hardy, EOW 7/7/2007.

In Memoriam

**Jeffrey Bennett, 61**, died August 21, 2020. Jeff and his wife Judy have been familiar faces at the COPS Walk Harpers Ferry event each year, where they named their team “Monkey and B.” They have raised thousands of dollars for C.O.P.S. and often went back to National Police Week to meet new survivors. Many C.O.P.S. members will miss him.

Jeff is the surviving brother-in-law of New York State Police Trooper Andrew J. Sperr, EOW 3/1/2006.

**Daniel J. Marquez, 92**, died July 9, 2020. With a long list of accomplishments throughout his life, the Marquez family says Daniel will be remembered most for his generosity, compassion, passion for boxing, devotion to family and an unwavering faith in God.

Daniel is the surviving father of Chicago (IL) Police Officer Donald J. Marquez, EOW 3/19/2002.


Allen is the surviving father of Harris County (TX) Deputy Sheriff Darren H. Goforth, EOW 8/28/2015. Our condolences are sent to his family.

**Bob Hatch, 45**, died September 24, 2020. Bob was a longtime volunteer at National Police Week. His dedication, passion and friendship will be missed by many.

As an officer with Indianapolis (IN) Metro Police, Bob worked in various capacities including Fleet Supervisor, Primary Instructor, Field Training Officer, Logistics Support Unit Specialist, Incident Command Vehicle Operator, Chief’s Honor Guard, and in 2017 Bob rose to the rank of Sergeant. Our condolences are sent to his family.
It’s almost that time again for C.O.P.S. to go above and beyond for our men and women in BLUE! What are you planning for Law Enforcement Appreciation Day on January 9, 2021? We know doing it in a safe and social distanced way is of utmost importance so be sure to share your creative ways by tagging @nationalcops on social media and using the hashtag: #LEAD2021

Here are a few ideas to show your support:

• Wear BLUE all day
• Shine blue lights from your home or office
• Make cards for your local police department
• Give blood at your area Blue Blood Drive, or at your closest collection agency (see next page)
• Take individually packaged treats to your local department

Most importantly, if you see a Police Officer, THANK a Police Officer!
Concerned about Covid’s impact on your drive?

Here’s how you can help:

• Schedule appointments for all your donors to help manage donor flow and allow for social distancing.

• Inform your donors that guests will not be able to attend drive (e.g. kids or teens, unless teen is donating blood).

• Communicate to your donors that they will be asked to wear face masks or coverings at your upcoming blood drive according to CDC guidelines. We encourage donors to bring their own mask or covering that covers both their nose and mouth. If a donor does not have a mask, the Red Cross will provide one. **If a donor does not want to wear a mask, we ask they postpone their donation for a later date.**

• Provide the Volunteer Document to your volunteers, before your blood drive, so they know what to expect. Volunteers may be asked on-site to assist with some of the new safety tasks, training on-site will be provided. If your volunteers are not comfortable completing any tasks, have them inform the charge person at the drive.

• For areas that may still be in restricted travel guidance, please access and print the Essential Service Letter for you and your volunteer’s day of drive travel.

• Refreshment Items at Blood Drives: All food and drinks at blood drives must be single service, individually wrapped packages.

• For additional information, go to redcrossblood.org to learn more about coronavirus and blood donation.

The Red Cross is currently testing all blood donations for COVID-19 antibodies. The test may indicate if the donor’s immune system has produced antibodies to this coronavirus, regardless of whether they developed symptoms. Visit RedCrossBlood.org/antibodytesting for more information.
C.O.P.S. Kids Camp Mentor Travels the Country for C.O.P.S. Kids

We Rise By Lifting Others  By Katrina Old

2020 may have kept C.O.P.S. from hosting many in-person events, but it hasn’t affected the peer support that is the heart of the organization. We have enjoyed seeing the creative ways of staying in touch with each other as we all navigate this year.

Michael Stolzman, President of the Northern California C.O.P.S. Chapter and surviving co-worker of Oakland (CA) Police Officer John Hege, EOW 3/21/2009, has always been a world traveler. With COVID-19 hindering his plans, he set out to keep his promise to several of C.O.P.S. younger members; the surviving children he has mentored at C.O.P.S. Kids Camp and Young Adults Camp for several years.

When we announced that this Summer’s Kids’ Camp was canceled, Stolzman connected with several kids who were having a tough time and missing camp for the first time. On a whim, he got in his truck and set out on a cross-country road trip to see the kids, stopping and surprising a few others as he went.

“Outreach and peer support are ALWAYS important, but this year it’s even more important. We CAN and SHOULD be doing more for the survivors in our areas,” said Michael. “We have to remember that we DO need each other. This year has completely reiterated how important C.O.P.S. events are to survivors.”

Stolzman showing up on their doorstep was a surprise, but making sure he brought along his fellow mentors and counselors through virtual connections was the icing on the cake. Kids got to see the familiar faces of counselors Angie McCown, Kathy Thomas, Stephanie “Super Steph” Williams, as well as mentors Pilar Orellana, Joe Hamer, and his sidekick K-9 Sheriff Bruno. Although the virtual connection was missing the hugs, handshakes, and fun in the sun, connecting with people from camp brought a sense of hope and healing that so many kids and parents look forward to each year at camp.

Stolzman said, “Just look at the smiles in these pictures and the happiness that it brought them, but it brought me double the happiness to see them.”

As we come to the end of 2020, C.O.P.S. looks back on this year’s Hands-On Programs, which of course, was shifted to a virtual world. “We rise by lifting others” is not just a phrase - it’s a definition. It’s the definition of the peer support that happens between survivors. We thank Michael Stolzman and the countless others who have dedicated their time to connect with fellow survivors, making sure we all get through these unprecedented times together.
Survivors are often thrown into a world of unknowns after their officer dies in the line of duty. Difficult and strange times, much like the entire year of 2020, can be even more challenging for those who are grieving. The following story is about surviving spouse, Linda Craig, who currently serves as the President of the Arkansas C.O.P.S. Chapter. Her experience of overcoming grief, generating positivity to help others, and how she welcomes the unknowns with her ongoing mission to honor is inspiring.

Her mission? Ensuring every survivor that crossed her path was sure to have the peer support they needed for their future and that their officer was continually honored.

Linda’s mission began as a first-year survivor at National Police Week (NPW) in May of 2001. Her husband, Arkansas State Police Captain Thomas Craig, was struck by a vehicle during an ice storm while responding to an accident on December 14, 2000. At that time, there was no C.O.P.S. Chapter in Arkansas. She and her two children, ages 12 and 14, stepped onto a plane, not knowing what to expect when they landed in D.C. They struggled with the unknowns of transportation, events, and the common fear of not knowing anyone. That all changed when they landed.

Linda said, “I got so much from the sessions at NPW and felt so normal. I realized I was not the only person going through this and even met others that had gone through the same thing. I came back from NPW with the mission to start a chapter in Arkansas.” With the help of five other families and with Mary Flo Klein as the first Arkansas C.O.P.S. Chapter President, they did just that.

The Arkansas Chapter was officially chartered in 2002, a rare accomplishment for a survivor in the first few years of grief. By overcoming her fear of the unknown, Linda used her new friends and connections she met at NPW to keep her focused on her mission.

It has now been almost 20 years since her husband’s end of watch. Linda says, “the grief is still there, but I came out stronger and wiser. Whatever I face later, I know I can handle it. I will survive it.” Linda says she often has to remind herself to give herself grace when she has a “weak” moment, even after so many years. She said, “Sometimes I am not strong and that’s okay. I want others to be inspired and see me as strong. I have Mary (Carmikle) that I go to when I’m struggling but, I limit it. I am allowed to grieve, but I also know that I am strong, and I can get through even the hardest things now.”

By not only ensuring peer support for all Arkansas survivors, Linda’s end goal always reverts back to honor. Her husband and so many other officers in her area, paid the ultimate sacrifice while serving others. Creating traditions was important to Linda, and they continue to spread across the entire state.

Each year, Linda hosts a breakfast for the Arkansas State Police. Her advice, which can sometimes be difficult to hear, is, “If you want a relationship with your department, you need to be sure you are eventually the one that reaches out to them. Do something for them. Don’t expect them to always do for you.”

As some survivors know, some agencies can find it difficult to stay in contact with surviving families. This can be due to time constraints, misinformation, or many of times because they are grieving themselves. For Linda, she says, “If you want that relationship and want to keep his name alive, then make it your mission to know the officers that come into the agency after him. They will know who he is.”

Another tradition Linda shares in her area was created years ago when she attended C.O.P.S. Kids Camp with her children. They had made a Christmas ornament with a picture of their dad in it. As that ornament hung on her tree, an idea was born, and Linda set out on yet another mission. Linda said, “I started setting up a blue Christmas tree for the State Police. I included pictures of each officer and their EOW. It’s a great way for the public to realize the sacrifice these officers have made.”
To help honor and cherish your officer and their memory, we present this year’s holiday ornament. It is based on a design submitted by Amber Beck, surviving sister-in-law of Officer Alyn R. Beck of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, EOW 6/8/2014.

Amber shared: “I love Christmas, and I honor and respect our police officers; those currently serving and those who have fallen in the line of duty. This ornament is a tribute to the many roles, requirements, tools, and responsibilities it takes to be a good police officer.”

We hope this limited-edition keepsake ornament will bring some sparkle to your 2020 holiday season and many more to come. This annual holiday ornament is the only financial solicitation that National C.O.P.S. makes of its membership, so we hope you will consider donating $100 to receive this unique, personalized pewter treasure. Your officer’s name and EOW will be engraved on the ornament.

If we receive your order by December 4th, 2020, the ornament can be mailed to you before Christmas. Or you can choose to have your ornament displayed on the Christmas tree at the National Office and then shipped to you after the holidays. Please indicate which option you prefer and carefully print your officer’s name and EOW for the engraving when ordering.
Holidays are often difficult for people who have experienced the death of a loved one. The sounds, sights, and smells of the holiday season may trigger feelings of sadness, loss, emptiness, and anxiety. Traditionally being a time of family togetherness, sharing and thanksgiving, this season may bring feelings of loss different from what you experience in your daily routine. This is a common part of grieving during the holidays. We hope this blog post provides guidance and support so you can find peace throughout the holiday season.

**Plan Ahead**

The season is often filled with traditions and gatherings of friends and family. Take the time to consider what may be expected of you, both socially and emotionally. What are your hopes for this season? Reflect by yourself and with your loved ones about which traditions you wish to continue and those you may want to change. Remember, what you do this year may differ from what you decide to do in the future.

**Inform Others Of Your Needs**

As you grieve during the holidays, well-meaning friends and family may try to tell you what they feel is in your best interest. It is important to focus on what is best for you. As you become aware of your needs, share them with friends and family. Be specific with them about your preferences and desires, and let them know if those needs change.

**Be Aware Of Limitations**

Grief can consume most of your available physical and emotional energy, no matter what the season. The holidays place additional demands on your time and emotions. Respect what your body and mind are telling you. Be realistic in the expectations you hold for yourself.

**Reduce Unnecessary Stress**

The holiday season can bring additional stress. It is important to be aware of your limitations, so you don’t overextend yourself. Consider changing your surroundings, rituals or traditions to reduce stress. Limit social and family commitments to suit your available energy. Re-evaluate priorities and forego unnecessary activities and obligations. Keeping busy may temporarily distract you from your grief but may increase your stress in the long run.

**Talk About Your Grief**

It is essential to identify friends and family who encourage you to be yourself and accept your feelings, both happy and sad, without judgment. Be open to expressing your feelings of grief as sharing your feelings may help lessen the pain.

**Ask For And Accept Help**

Frequently, loved ones are looking for ways to provide their support. Allowing those who care about you to assist with holiday shopping, decorating, cleaning, cooking, etc. may lessen your feelings of loneliness and may even be enjoyable.
**BE GENTLE WITH YOURSELF**

The combination of a holiday and a loss naturally results in looking inward and thinking about where you have been and where you are. Be gentle with yourself as you think about the true meaning of the holidays. Find things around you that you are thankful for, even if they are small things. Accept the ups and downs you may experience. If you feel sadness, feel sadness; If you feel joy, feel joy; Keep taking deep breaths and take each moment as it comes.

**HEALING RITUALS**

Memories were made in love, and memories are what keep you connected to your loved one during the holiday season. As you share memories, keep in mind that memories can bring feelings of both happiness and sadness. Allow yourself to feel your feelings. The following are ideas that may bring you comfort as you remember your loved one:

- **Decorate the tree with family or friends.**
- **Place a wreath at your loved one’s gravesite.**
- **Choose a candle or flower to be placed at the table as a remembrance.**
- **Make a loved one’s favorite meal.**
- **Place written memories in a box to be shared when family is together.**

**Surviving Spouse Turns Story Into Memoir**

“The marriage of man and woman provides purpose and hope for the years ahead. But what happens when the partner you love and depend on is murdered and dies much sooner than you ever imagined, leaving you alone with two children? It happened to me. The unimaginable. And I suffered an enormous blow.”

Linda Cavazos’s personal memoir reveals the inside story of the highly publicized case of her husband’s tragic death. It is a love story of a mixed marriage, Virginia’s first Mexican-American state trooper, and his death in an emotionally shattering case that went all the way to the Supreme Court. There is no escaping the darkness of capture and the execution of her husband’s killer, and there is no easy path forward with her own life. But ultimately, readers will be inspired by “One Dark Morning,” a story of grit, recovery, growth, and renewal.

One reader said, “An emotional, relatable, well-told memoir where the author lets us experience the difficulties, but also the triumphs, of her life after the loss of the love of her life, a Trooper for the State of Virginia. She shows us how her strength helped her overcome prejudice, inequality, sadness, loneliness, and helped her find joy again.”

Both a paperback and Kindle edition are available at Amazon.com.

*Linda is the surviving spouse of Virginia State Police Trooper Jose Cavazos, EOW 2/24/1993.*
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Back by popular demand is our list of items to consider during your holiday shopping. Each item is brought to you by a company who gives back to C.O.P.S. and BACKS THE BLUE throughout the season of red and green! Check these items off your list!
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From the C.O.P.S. Siblings Retreat: Andrea Arrington, Tami McMillan, and Katie MacDonald

Andrea, Tami and Katie are surviving siblings who met at the C.O.P.S. Siblings Retreat over 12 years ago. Since then, they have been inseparable at every event, which includes Siblings Retreat, National Police Week, National Conference on Law Enforcement Wellness and Trauma, and many others.

When asked how being friends has benefitted them, Katie said, “Well, this one gives me goosebumps. I truly don’t know where I’d be without them. They’ve been who I can turn to when I need to talk about my brother or truly anything in my life! They have helped me to live my life in a way that honors Owen. My life is so much bigger, brighter, and better because of them.”

The bond these ladies share is stronger than they could ever have imagined after losing such a big part of their lives. Their support for each other gets them through the good and bad days and anything that comes their way.

Throughout 2020, they have had challenges that have not allowed them to meet up with each other as often as years past. They make up for it through a constant text message thread, Facetime, and Zoom to stay connected.

To all those who have not attended a Hands-On Program, Katie says, “You need people who have gone through this. An officer’s death happens so quickly and unexpectedly that you’re not sure where to go next or where to release the emotions. Our sibling support group are the people I turn to when I need to talk about Owen - when I’m missing him after all these years. JUST. GO. TO. THE. RETREAT. Seriously, just take the first, super scary step. I went a month and a half after Owen died, and my take away was that I met an awesome group of people that have become like a family. We will get you. No matter how your story goes, we will listen and get you.”

From C.O.P.S. Kids Camp: Alana Nauden and Sadie Santucci

Alana and Sadie, surviving children, met at National Police Week in 2015 during the C.O.P.S. Kids/Teens Program. They are proof that peer support has no age restrictions.

Alana says, “I am happy to have Sadie as a friend because she understands what I am going through when I am sad. She has made it a little easier to deal with losing my dad.” Sadie feels the same way and says, “Alana understands what it’s like to grow up without a dad and it’s easy to talk to her because she understands me.”

As with many surviving children, Alana and Sadie live far apart and mainly see each other at C.O.P.S. events throughout the year. They have adapted to 2020 by connecting on social media, playing...
games together and chatting on FaceTime. Alana says, “it’s sad not being able to see each other in person this year, but we are still close, and when we do get to see each other, it will be like we never parted.” Alana and Sadie continually support each other and are a pillar of strength even at such a young age.

Alana’s advice to other surviving children is, “Don’t be afraid and shy to talk to people at C.O.P.S. events because they understand what you are going through.” Sadie agrees, adding, “go to Kids Camp and try to introduce yourself to different people to make connections and find your tribe.”

**From C.O.P.S. Spouses Retreat: Tonja Garafola and Trenisha Jackson**

Tonja and Trenisha lost their husbands on the same day, from the same department, and from the same incident. The tragedy of the ambush attack in Baton Rouge, (LA) on July 17th, 2016, brought these two friends together and has kept them connected for over four years now.

Tonja and Trenisha have shown up for each other time and time again. Even through the bad days and tears, they helped each other find happiness and continue to honor their husbands because “we have learned that life is short, so we cherish every moment.”

“There is nothing like having someone that can relate to what you’re going through, and know exactly how you feel,” says Tonja. The ladies attend C.O.P.S. Spouses Retreat together every year. Tonja says that without Trenisha pushing her to go to the retreat, she never would have. “We have learned strength, courage, understanding, and wisdom that we will carry forever, along with unconditional love,” says Tonja. “Don’t be afraid to take that step in reaching out! It is extremely important to be able to depend on, relate to, and lean on anyone dealing with similar grief.”

Survivors who attend Hands-On Programs can agree that peer support is vital. While no two journeys are the same, reaching out to another survivor provides you the necessary support needed to continue through life.

Annette says, “Peer support will remind you there is life after loss, no matter how much you think no one understands. We know that grief has no timetable. We are both many years out from our loss but we do have ‘triggers.’ We know when to push each other and when to leave it alone. The beauty of a longtime friendship is knowing what the other needs, sometimes before we know ourselves. We are there for each other, but more importantly, we are there for those friends we haven’t yet met.”

Lacey says, “I know she will always be there for me, as I will for her. We laugh together, cry together, and honor our fallen together. Knowing there is always someone there that ‘gets me’ gives me happiness and peace.”

The dates for the 2021 Hands-On Programs are listed on the next page. Online registration will open at concernofpolicesurvivors.org in December 2020.
Spouses for Couples Retreat  
March 12-15, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Co-Workers for Couples Retreat  
April 16-19, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Adult Children’s Retreat  
June 11-14, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Kids Camp  
July 10-16, 2021 // Salvation Army Wonderland Camp - Salem, WI

Outward Bound Adventure  
Location and date is TBD due to COVID-19 restrictions. Please check the C.O.P.S. National website for updates.

Young Adults Camp  
July 26-30, 2021 // Epworth By The Sea - St. Simons Island, GA

Fiances & Significant Others Retreat  
August 13-16, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Siblings Retreat  
September 10-13, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Spouses Retreat  
September 24-27, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Co-Workers Retreat  
October 1-4, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Extended Family Retreat  
October 15-18, 2021 // YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO

Parents Retreat  
October 22-25, 2021 // C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center - Little Rock, AR

Chapter Chatter:  
North Carolina C.O.P.S. accepted a donation from the Back the Blue Rally Caldwell. The chapter and Caldwell County DARE Program were the recipients of the proceeds and each organization received $12,306.

Event organizers, Jeremy and Kim Pitts, will be hosting a second rally next year and North Carolina C.O.P.S. will again be the recipient of half of the proceeds. Chapter President Kim Murray said “We are so very thankful to this awesome couple who just wanted to let law enforcement know they are appreciated and to help out two deserving organizations at the same time.”

Chapter members gathered on September 12 to fill 38 baskets of goodies and 38 care packages for area department’s officers. Each package contained a mask, antibacterial wipes and hand sanitizer in recognition of “Thank a Police Officer Day.” The chapter also took lunch to an additional six departments and one detention center to celebrate the day.
Continued on next page.

When Wisconsin C.O.P.S. found out Kids Camp was canceled, “we knew we needed to act and do something for our eight children in Wisconsin who had attended camp in the past or would have been able to this year,” said Chapter President Jo Ann Mignon.

“Wisconsin C.O.P.S. Kids Camp In 2020” sprang to life. The goal was to allow survivors to feel like they were getting a taste of camp while never leaving their home by delivering a box of camp items to each household for them to share as a family.

Each box had a theme: Arrival Day, Campfire Day, Counseling and Comfort Dog Day, Law Enforcement Day and Ice Cream Social Day, Movie Night, Graduation Day, and Departure Day. Some items included were pillowcases from the Renegade Pigs, grief and counseling books, a camp t-shirt, arts and craft projects, microwave popcorn and a movie rental gift card, caps for our graduates, a photo frame to place a “camp” photo in and of course, ice cream toppings and a certificate for an ice cream shop near them. Each family also received a candle created by Crafty America that could be lit so each family could “hope together” with us and know we were together in spirit as everyone is “AT HOME BUT NEVER ALONE.”

Members from the Wisconsin C.O.P.S. Board and area law enforcement made a personal delivery to each child. It may not have been the normal escort they would have gotten at camp but each child knew their law enforcement and C.O.P.S. family will always be here to love and support them. We are so very blessed by all those who supported our efforts and are thankful we could bring a little HOPE during these difficult times.

Alabama C.O.P.S. Introduces Social Media Trustee

Caroline Bennett Has A Message to C.O.P.S. Young Adults:

I had always hesitated about getting involved in my local chapter. Mainly because I wasn’t sure what to expect, and I felt like I was too young. So, I never got involved until my late teens.

My mom and I had come to events over the years, but we never jumped fully into becoming active members. I can honestly say getting involved has been one of the best things ever to happen. I have met so many individuals of all ages who understand the feelings and things that I went through.

I had never met someone who had lost their parent and was in the same age range as me before getting involved with my chapter. It was a comforting feeling to build relationships with people who fully understand what you have gone through. It had been an aspect of life that I had been missing for so long. Since then, I have encouraged anyone who has not yet delved deeper into their connections with C.O.P.S to do so, especially the young adults! Sometimes there is the stigma that it is all for the grownups and others who have been involved for a long time, but I can say that there is a place for you within your chapter no matter your age.

Our chapter is currently trying to get outreach to our younger crowds, like myself, to begin building up the Chapter’s young adult side. If there is one thing I want to push out, it’s that no matter your age, there is a spot waiting for you within C.O.P.S to begin growing bonds with others who have walked in your shoes!
Illinois C.O.P.S. continued with their annual Cycle Across Illinois, only in smaller groups due to COVID-19.

While covering 375 miles in four days, one group was greeted by the Elgin (IL) Police Department who presented a check to the chapter for over $900!

The Greater Houston C.O.P.S. Chapter stayed connected with survivors in their area through virtual calls. They also sent backpacks of goodies to surviving children who were missing Kids Camp and blue candles to new surviving families.

The Chapter has planned their annual Christmas party on Saturday, December 5, from 2:00-5:00 p.m. at the HPOU Building in Houston (TX). Survivors are encouraged to come and see old friends and make new ones.

The Missouri C.O.P.S. Chapter will be hosting its annual Winter Party on January 23-24, 2021, at Old Kinderhook Country Club in Camdenton, MO. The party and dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m.

Join us for a winter weekend retreat! This is a great weekend for Missouri survivors to just relax, enjoy the beautiful winter views that the area has to offer, and connect with other survivors. Bring your party attire!

Pictured at right is last year’s Fiesta themed party.

The Oregon C.O.P.S. Chapter went out of their way for chapter member, Rick Puente, surviving co-worker of Woodburn (OR) Police Captain Thomas Tennant, EOW 12/12/2008. Rick is now Chief of Public Safety for a school district in the Portland area. When protests hit Portland, he was advised to take down his thin blue line flag in his office, which honored his fallen friend.

That’s when Chapter President, Alan Painter, stepped in. Through law enforcement connections, Rick was surprised on July 31 with a ceremonial flag that flew over the Oregon Law Enforcement Memorial in honor of Captain Tennant. An even bigger surprise was the attendance of Captain Tennant’s surviving son, Scott.

Rick has had an honorable career, even serving as president of the Oregon Peace Officers Association. He and his family have attended numerous Oregon C.O.P.S. functions. The Oregon C.O.P.S. Board is proud to know him.

To submit your Chapter updates, please email Sara Slone at sara_slone@nationalcops.org.

Please contact individual chapters for more information or to get involved. Chapter contact information is listed on pages 6-7 of this magazine.
River Bickham is a student at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi, completing her degree in Environmental Science. River is the daughter of Deputy Jeffery Bickham, EOW 9/20/2005.

Bryce Bordonaro is a student at Mercyhurst University, completing his degree in Intelligence Studies and Spanish. Bryce is the son of Deputy Sheriff Frank Bordonaro, EOW 7/8/2014.

Erika Brentar is a student at DePaul University, completing her degree in Human-Computer Interaction. Erika is the daughter of Officer George Brentar, EOW 10/10/2007.

Karley Burbridge is a student at Iowa Lakes Community College, completing her degree in Arts & Criminal Justice. Karley is the daughter of Deputy Sheriff Mark Burbridge, EOW 5/1/2017.

Christian Burgert is a student at Mansfield University, completing his Nursing degree. Christian is the son of Deputy Sheriff Christopher Burgert, EOW 3/31/2004.

John Butler is a student at Florida State College-Jacksonville, completing his degree in Emergency Medical Technician. John is the son of Officer John Butler, EOW 3/10/1997.

Nicholas Chapin is a student at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, completing his degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology. Nicholas is the son of Sergeant James Chapin, EOW 4/2/2011.

Gabryella Clardy is a student at Framingham State University Student Accounts, completing her degree in Early Childhood Studies. Gabryella is the daughter of Trooper Thomas Clardy, EOW 3/16/2016.

Tyler Clardy is a student at University of Massachusetts - Amherst, completing his degree in English and Education. Tyler is the son of Trooper Thomas Clardy, EOW 3/16/2016.

Alycia Cottrell is a student at Wright State University, completing her degree in Psychology. Alycia is the daughter of Patrol Officer Thomas Cottrell, EOW 1/17/2016.

Mariah Darden is a student at Virginia State University, completing her degree in Hospitality/Human Ecology. Mariah is the daughter of Police Officer Seneca Darden, EOW 5/21/2006.

Kiana Favela is a student at Chapman University, completing her degree in Broadcast Journalism. Kiana is the daughter of Police Officer Steve Favela, EOW 11/26/2006.

Keahi Favela is a student at Chapman University, completing his degree in Health Science. Keahi is the son of Police Officer Steve Favela, EOW 11/26/2006.

Emilee Fleshner is a student at Valencia College, completing her degree in Psychology. Emilee is the daughter of Deputy Adam Fleshner, EOW 1/13/2003.

Jocelyn Fontanez-Rivera is a student at UPR Recito Universitario de Moyaguez, completing her Bachelor degree. Jocelyn is the daughter of Agent Jose Fontanez-Correa, EOW 5/23/2007.

Caitlin Forgione is a student at University of Kansas, completing her degree in Theatre. Caitlin is the daughter of Deputy Anthony Forgione, EOW 7/22/2008.

Ashley Garner is a student at Pacific Union College, completing her degree in Psychology. Ashley is the daughter of Deputy Sheriff Jason Garner, EOW 5/13/2017.

Lauren Haist is a student at University of North Georgia, completing her degree in Graphic Design. Lauren is the daughter of Patrol Officer Charles Haist, EOW 2/16/2005.

Chelsi Hamilton is a student at University of the Cumberlands, completing her degree in Teaching. Chelsi is the spouse of Police Officer Scotty Hamilton, EOW 3/13/2018.

Haley Hester is a student at UNC - Wilmington, completing her degree in Biology. Haley is the daughter of Deputy Dewayne Hester, EOW 6/8/2012.

Marissa Hofester is a student at Midwestern University, completing her four-year degree in Veterinary Medicine. Marissa is the daughter of Detective William Hofester, EOW 1/22/2008.

John Huffman is a student at Truecoders, completing his degree in software development. John is the son of Officer John Huffman, EOW 5/21/1992.

Marissa Licon is a student at California Baptist University, completing her degree in Forensic Chemistry. Marissa is the daughter of Sergeant Steven Licon, EOW 4/6/2019.
Jacob Martinez is a student at Sam Houston State University, completing his Criminal Justice/Criminology degree. Jacob is the son of Sergeant Alejandro Martinez, EOW 11/21/2014.

Nicholas Massey is a student at University of Colorado - Boulder, completing his degree in Film. Nicholas is the son of Lieutenant Curtis Massey, EOW 1/28/2009.

Emily McCutcheon is a student at Truman State University, completing her degree in Psychology Child Studies. Emily is the daughter of Deputy Don McCutcheon, EOW 2/8/2010.

Trentten Orth is a student at Arizona State University, completing his degree in Mechanical Engineering. Trentten is the son of Officer Joseph Sanders, EOW 12/15/2008.

Chandler Owens is a student at Morehouse College, completing his degree in Business Administration. Chandler is the son of Officer Derek Owens, EOW 3/1/2008.

Sydni Owens is a student at Clark Atlanta University, completing her degree in Media Arts and Journalism. Sydni is the daughter of Officer Derek Owens, EOW 3/1/2008.

Katherine Pearson is a student at Western Carolina University, completing her degree in Innovation & Entrepreneurship. Katherine is the spouse of Detective Rickie Pearson, EOW 4/8/2009.

Brianna Powell is a student at West Coast University, completing her RN degree. Brianna is the daughter of Deputy Sheriff David Powell, EOW 11/30/2002.

Erin Robinson is a student at University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, completing her degree in BioChemistry. Erin is the daughter of Patrolman John Robinson, EOW 12/1/1999.

Jorge Sanchez Hernandez is a student at Universidad Interamericana De Puerto Rico, completing his degree in Biomedical Sciences. Jorge is the son of Agent Jorge Sanchez-Santiago, EOW 8/15/2009.

Payton Selby is a student at Mississippi State University, completing her degree in Public Relations and Marketing. Payton is the daughter of Deputy George Selby, EOW 12/4/2002.

Gabrielle Sherwood is a student at Western Michigan University, completing her degree in Early Child Education. Gabrielle is the daughter of Deputy Sheriff Kevin Sherwood, EOW 10/9/2003.

Gwendolyn Sherwood is a student at Alderson Broaddus University, completing her degree in Criminal Justice. Gwendolyn is the daughter of Deputy Sheriff Kevin Sherwood, EOW 10/9/2003.

Emma Stockham is a student at Pennsylvania State University, completing her degree in Molecular Biology & Biochemistry. Emma is the daughter of Special Agent Rex Stockham, EOW 10/8/2016.

Amanda Stuart is a student at Stony Brook University, completing her degree in Women’s Studies and Sociology. Amanda is the daughter of Officer Walwyn Stuart, EOW 9/11/2001.

Christian Stuewer is a student at Boston College, completing his Finance/Business degree. Christian is the son of Investigator Paul Stuewer, EOW 10/5/2016.

Mary Thompson is a student at Unitech Training Academy, completing her degree in Phlebotomy/EKG. Mary is the daughter of Sergeant Frederick Riggenbach, EOW 1/26/2013.

Savannah Uhl is a student at University of Arizona, completing her degree in Nursing. Savannah is the daughter of Rotary Wing Pilot Matthew Uhl, EOW 9/20/2011.

Anthony Walker is a student at Haverford College, completing his degree in Engineering. Anthony is the son of Sergeant Anthony Walker, EOW 11/15/2003.

Kaitlyn Weatherford is a student at Arkansas State University Newport, completing her degree in Criminal Justice and Psychology. Kaitlyn is the daughter of Lieutenant Patrick Weatherford, EOW 6/12/2017.

Tysaac Webb is a student at AMDA College for the Performing Arts, completing his degree in acting. Tysaac is the son of Senior Patrol Agent David Webb, EOW 11/3/2006.

Deadline Dates for Scholarship Applications are as follows:

Summer Semester - April 1 // Winter/Spring Semesters - October 1 // Fall Semester - June 1

APPLY ONLINE at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org!

C.O.P.S. scholarships are awarded to surviving children and spouses of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty, who wish to pursue a course of study beyond high school. An independent scholarship committee determines recipients. Scholarships are not awarded to survivors who are entitled to a tuition-free education as a state death benefit.
The Alcatraz East Crime Museum has decided to showcase the work of the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) for the next year. The exhibit will honor Special Agent De’Greaun Frazier, who was killed in the line of duty on August 9th, 2016. Agent Frazier is the only Tennessee Bureau of Investigations Agent to be killed in the line of duty.

Frazier’s surviving spouse Shannon said, “The exhibit is an awesome way to honor and remember the ultimate sacrifice my husband made while working for the TBI and the great state of Tennessee. It will also help bring attention to my husband’s brave story along with revealing some of the TBI’s most known cases, solved and unsolved.”

Frazier’s surviving children, Kamaryn and Kendrix, said, “I am honestly grateful they have created such an exhibit. Dad’s legacy won’t be forgotten. This is a nice way to show how much of a great officer, husband, and father he was. He will forever be in our hearts.”

Virginia Mondie, surviving mother of Agent Frazier, added a special message to law enforcement across the nation saying, “Families like ours stand behind you and support you wholeheartedly.”
C.O.P.S. invites all active and retired law enforcement officers, peer support, counselors, police, chaplains, spouses/significant others, to attend this education, healing and virtual training event.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND:

C.O.P.S. is creating a dynamic virtual conference experience for Law Enforcement and Survivors. As an attendee, you can expect the same great content that we were set to deliver in Oklahoma City. This free 2-day event will focus on Wellness & Trauma. The virtual experience is structured for live viewing, with breaks. You can decide which classes best fit your schedule and meets your professional and personal needs.

FEES:

FREE!

Registration is required at: concernsofpolicesurvivors.org
Most people are not prepared to experience grief and the intense feelings associated with loss. The loss of a loved one or co-worker in the line of duty, whether the cause is accidental or felonious, is almost always unexpected and sudden. This type of loss is often complicated by a multitude of factors to include media coverage, investigations, departmental response, formal line of duty death funeral, memorials, geographic location of family members, family relationships, and more. However, this year, with the pandemic’s impact, isolation has become one of the complications in grieving a loss. We are living in a world challenged by fear, anxiety, and this pandemic, while not being able to gather in person to support one another.

Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) has always been a “survivor-driven and hands-on” support organization. C.O.P.S. board and chapter members attempt to reach out to family and department survivors immediately following a line-of-duty death, often providing support at the hospital, memorial service, and as needed in the weeks, months, and years to come. Those survivor relationships have a chance to grow at chapter meetings, National Police Week events, and at C.O.P.S. retreats. It is often those in-person connections of speaking directly to another parent, sibling, spouse, child, adult child, extended family member or co-worker survivor that sends a message to survivors that they are not alone.

Grief may be intensified during this pandemic due to increased isolation, heightened anxiety, and a resulting heightened sense of loss. Processing grief and receiving comfort from others is often non-verbal support through physical interaction – simply sitting with someone, offering a hug, or a nod can help survivors feel that they are not alone. Without the ability to be together in person, C.O.P.S. has worked hard to come up with creative ways to connect survivors, such as virtual retreats and connecting new survivors with seasoned survivors, staff, and counselors through phone calls, facetime and Zoom.

Grief is messy, there is no right or wrong way to grieve, and there are no simple steps to go through to get to the other side. The first year following a loss can be a blur. It can feel unreal and unbelievable, and you may just be trying to get through one minute to the next. It may seem like you are in a bad dream or nightmare. When that first-year anniversary of the death arrives, it can be as if the fog lifts, the numbness begins to wear off, and the loss is more real, and as a result, sometimes the second year can be more difficult. The hope is somewhere in that second-year healing gains some momentum.

Connecting with other survivors through C.O.P.S. offers hope; hope that although your life may never be the same, and you will never stop longing for your loved one, you may have days in the future that don’t bring you to your knees, days where heartwarming memories of your loved one bring a smile to your face. C.O.P.S. provides the opportunity to be exactly where you need to be in your grief process – no judgments – holding space for you wherever you are, while also giving you a glimpse of hope. Working through grief may be the most difficult thing you will ever do, but it is an essential path towards healing. Remember that you do not have to do this on your own. C.O.P.S. is here for you.
Tuesday, June 14, 2016, began as a typical summer day. My two sons were out of school for summer and just finished 4th and 2nd grades. I was teaching elementary school at the time and was off for the summer with them. I had finished my master’s degree program the day before, so it was an exciting day and I felt like summer had truly begun. Mike was working a late-day shift and did not have to leave the house until about nine that morning. We were in the middle of remodeling the hall bathroom. The tile guy was there with his crew, working away.

As he left the house, Mike went into the bathroom and made sure the tile guys were set for the day, and I specifically remember one of them asking what color grout he wanted. He told them, “Whatever my wife wants!” Mike thanked the guys for their hard work, hugged the boys, and as he always did, he told them, “Be good to your mom.” He then kissed me goodbye, so handsome in his police uniform, got on his police motorcycle, and drove away.

The roar of the engine, which always comforted me when I would hear it pull into our garage at the end of a shift, could be heard for a while as he rode down our country road. Little did I know, it would be the last time I would hear his motorcycle engine roar in our garage or down our street. The last time our boys would get a hug from their dad. The last time I would get a kiss from my husband.

Hours later, I received the call, then the knock on the door - the one every police spouse fears. The call and the knock which changed our lives forever. The hours, days, weeks, months, and even years to follow are all too familiar to any law enforcement surviving spouse. It is hell on earth. The endless responsibilities, obligations, events, memorials, media, and worry were overwhelming. If you have children, all your focus and energy go into making sure they are okay. So often, we forget about ourselves and our own healing. I know I did.

I was thrown into this new role of being the widow of Officer Katherman, which took up all my time. My new role of being a single mom to two broken-hearted little boys took up all my energy. There was nothing left to give for myself. I was depressed, unhealthy, exhausted, broken-hearted, and not willing to admit any of it. On the outside, I looked like the poised, strong widow, and mom, yet on the inside I wanted to die - literally wanted to die.

Then, as if life were not already a living hell, the winter storms of 2017 flooded our home. Our perfect little farmhouse in the country, which was in the finishing stages of being remodeled, was destroyed. The boys and I were rescued by firemen who carried us on their backs through the water rising in our home. We climbed through a bedroom window into a boat that took us through the lake which was once our country road to safety. Our belongings were ruined, our home was deemed uninhabitable by the county, and we could never live in it again.

Within the first year of losing my husband, I had been through hell and high water, literally. It did not take long before the people closest in my life, my family, and my best friends realized what a good actress I was, trying to portray to everyone I was okay. Their support allowed me to finally admit I was the complete opposite. I was an absolute
mess and I needed help. I needed therapy, I needed help with my children, I needed help dealing with all the horrific details of the natural disaster which took our family’s home, I needed to cut back on my obligations and I needed to begin focusing on myself and my own healing.

So many of us survivors try to be strong for everyone else, and we too quickly forget about ourselves. It’s almost like we need permission for it to be okay not to be okay. Let me tell you, it was not until I gave myself permission when I started my healing process. When I finally began caring for myself, my physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being is when my smile started to return. I was more patient and understanding with my children. I opened up more in therapy. I was able to talk about Mike with a smile and laughter instead of sadness and tears. I had the strength to make our new house a home and I even began to open myself up to the idea of dating again.

Eventually, I started becoming myself again, but not the same woman I was prior to losing my husband. I was a better version of myself. More passionate about living the life I had been blessed with to the fullest all while honoring God and my husband in Heaven, Mike. Once I began to heal, my sons began to heal as well. As parents, we lead by example. It was if my newfound happiness permitted them to be happy again as well.

We are now over four years past Mike’s End of Watch. I have found love again and married David, my husband on earth. We have built a life together with my thriving boys, his two children, and our miracle little girl who completed our family this past December. Do I still struggle with my grief? Do I still miss Mike? Do my boys still display anger and sadness? Absolutely! We rely on our faith in Christ, our memories of Mike, and our consistent efforts to work through our grief together so we may continue to find the joy and happiness in our lives.

Working through grief and heartache after a loss will look different for everyone. It may take therapy, EMDR, C.O.P.S. retreats, faith, support from family and friends, exercise, hobbies, traveling, work, writing, reading, whatever gives you help to make your way up each new step of the ladder of grief. The first step starts with giving yourself permission to recognize it is okay to need, ask, want, and receive help every step of the way. Each step you work through will bring you closer and closer to getting the lost smile back, the joy sparking, and the happiness in your life to return.

It is not going to be easy. I often slip and fall off the ladder and down a couple of steps. It is inevitable. Loss is hard. The grief road is long, unending. Keep reaching up for whatever it is giving you the strength to continue the climb. Do it for your children. Do it to honor the loved one you lost. Most importantly, do it for yourself. Because once you heal your own heart, your happiness will radiate to those around you.

April hopes to bring inspiration and encouragement to others by sharing her story of loss and love through her writings on her blog and through her upcoming book launch set for the beginning of 2021.

Visit her website and subscribe to her Beauty for Our Ashes blog: www.beautyforourashes.com

April and David on their wedding day with their children. Pictured upper left is the couple’s daughter, Savannah, who was born in December 2019.
YOU ARE INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE EVENTS OF

NATIONAL POLICE WEEK 2021

WASHINGTON, D.C.
MAY 11-17, 2021

Registration must be completed at:
www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/npwregistration

If you have difficulty with the online registration, please contact the C.O.P.S. National Office at (573) 346-4911. We would be happy to assist you.

Deadline to register is March 26, 2021.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Tuesday, May 11
Early arrival day at Reagan National Airport (DCA)
C.O.P.S. provides escorted transportation between 9am-6pm to your C.O.P.S.’ hotel. Transportation is provided to those who have both preregistered with C.O.P.S. and will be staying at a C.O.P.S. hotel.

Wednesday, May 12
Official Arrival day at Reagan National Airport (DCA)
C.O.P.S. provides escorted transportation between 9am-6pm to your C.O.P.S.’ hotel. Transportation is provided to those who have both preregistered with C.O.P.S. and will be staying at a C.O.P.S. hotel.

Law Enforcement United (LEU) Arrival Ceremony
LEU raises awareness of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. The Road to Hope bicycle ride concludes after over 250 miles are ridden in honor of officers who will be recognized during the May 15 Memorial Service hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police & Auxiliary. Transportation will be provided.

The Police Unity Tour bicycle ride will also be arriving this day; however, no transportation will be provided to this event.
**Thursday, May 13**

**Candlelight Vigil hosted by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund**

The NLEOMF will host the Annual Candlelight Vigil on the National Mall at 8:00 p.m. to honor the law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty. Transportation will be provided.

**Friday, May 14**

**C.O.P.S. hosts day one of the National Police Survivors’ Conference**

Surviving family member sessions will be held at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center (host hotel). The surviving co-workers’ sessions will be held at the Doubletree Crystal City.

**C.O.P.S. hosts the Kids/Teens Program** for surviving children and siblings of the fallen officer.

**C.O.P.S. hosts the Daycare Program** for surviving children and siblings of the fallen officer.

**C.O.P.S. hosts the Annual Blue Honor Gala** formal event in the evening. Tickets must be purchased in advance at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org.

**Saturday, May 15**

**National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service (NPOMS) hosted by the Grand Lodge Fraternal Order of Police & Auxiliary (FOP)**

The FOP will host the Annual National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service at 11:00 a.m. on the West Front Lawn of the U.S. Capitol to honor officers who have died in the line of duty.

**Sunday, May 16**

**C.O.P.S. hosts day two of the National Police Survivors’ Conference**

Surviving family member sessions will be held at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center (host hotel). The surviving co-workers’ sessions will be held at the Doubletree Crystal City.

**C.O.P.S. hosts the Kids/Teens Program** for surviving children and siblings of the fallen officer.

**C.O.P.S. hosts the Daycare Program** for surviving children and siblings of the fallen officer.

**Picnic on the Patio** hosted by C.O.P.S. at the Hilton Alexandria Mark Center. Join us for a fun evening to relax and enjoy activities and dinner with other survivors!

**Monday, May 17**

**Official Departure Day**

No organized transportation to area airports. Contact your hotel front desk for shuttle information.
The 6th Annual Krawl’n for the Fallen, is an off-road event for all off-road enthusiasts to raise awareness, show support and to honor, remember, and pay our respect to fallen heroes.

Come out to enjoy a weekend of fellowship, food, vendors, trail riding, camping, entertainment, kid’s zone, demonstrations, raffles, prizes, as well as some specialty classes.

November 14-15, 2020
At The FIRM
(Florida International Rally Motorsports)

You could win this JEEP!
(Remodel not yet revealed.)
Get your raffle tickets at: facebook.com/krawlnforthefallen

Visit themcdavidgroupcharities.com for more information!
The 14th Annual C.O.P.S. National Golf Tournament was held on August 2, 2020, in Lake Ozark (MO). Each year, this sold-out tournament brings out long-time supporters from all across the nation. With a beautiful course, high-end silent auction items, and new friends supporting the same cause, this tournament was once again a huge success!

Total raised was over $20,000 after costs!

C.O.P.S. once again hosted the Twisted Golf Classic on September 23, 2020, in Camdenton (MO).

Much like the amazing host, C.O.P.S. Co-Founder Suzie Sawyer, this tournament is FUN! Twists and games were waiting at almost every hole, including driving off a red Solo cup, chipping a marshmallow, and teeing off from a child’s seat, just like Suzie’s husband, Buzz, is doing in the lower-left photo.

Total raised was over $16,000 after costs!

The Lucky Ladder Drop raised an additional $2,790! Thank you to everyone who purchased a ball!
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Giving Tuesday is the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, which will be December 1, 2020. This movement was created as an international day of charitable giving as the Christmas season approaches.

Please help us spread the word to your friends, family, co-workers, and social media connections! By making C.O.P.S. their charity of choice, they will be helping law enforcement survivors all across the nation find the healing and hope they need now more than ever.

For a number of ways to give, visit www.concernsofpolicesurvivors.org/donatepage.
This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement No. 2016-PS-DX-K002 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice’s Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office. Points of view or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.