C.O.P.S. Honors Heroes through Virtual Memory Board
Dear Survivors,

I would be remiss to ignore the topic that has been on all of our minds the past few months. COVID-19 put quite the damper on event plans for National Police Week and Hands-On Programs. More so, several survivors have been affected by current events and far too many officers have lost their lives. We are in unprecedented times, especially in the history of C.O.P.S.

As your National President, I was looking forward to meeting all of you in Washington, D.C. I had my speech ready for the Candlelight Vigil and I had been training to cross the finish line with my brothers and sisters of Law Enforcement United. Virtual events that were held were incredible, but nothing is better than supporting each other in person. Those times are coming soon! More information about what to expect at National Police Week 2021 will be announced in the next few months. Until then, please plan on attending your Hands-On Program or a special event such as COPS Walk in Harpers Ferry (WV) on October 9-11. Survivors and supporters come from all over to not only raise money for C.O.P.S. and honor their heroes, but to spend the weekend bonding with others who have been down a similar path.

This magazine is called HOPE because its purpose is to bring you hope. Inside this edition, there are articles that discuss how to adapt to different situations, survivors doing incredible things to help each other, and testimonies that show just how strong and resilient our blue family is.

When this magazine went to print, dates for several Hands-On Programs had been rescheduled and the remainder have stayed as scheduled. However, please continue to check the National C.O.P.S. website for any updates and changes that may have occurred in recent weeks.

The C.O.P.S. membership has now reached over 54,000 survivors across the nation. My family and I continue to pray for each and every one of you to find peace, healing, hope, and happiness while you work through your grief. Even in these uncertain and often lonely times, you are not alone. Thank you to all first responders, medical personnel, and everyone working tirelessly to keep us safe.

We will get through this together!

Emilio J. Miyares
C.O.P.S. National President
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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. 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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The C.O.P.S. National Board held their Winter meeting in Pensacola (FL) on January 18 and 19, 2020. You are encouraged to review the updated Standard Operating Procedures at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org to see the changes discussed.

If you have a topic of discussion to submit to the National Board for the meeting to be held on July 23, please email Missy Cottle at missy_cottle@nationalcops.org.
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:

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<tr>
<th>State/City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alabama C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Cindy Hatcher, President  <a href="mailto:alabamacops.cindy@gmail.com">alabamacops.cindy@gmail.com</a> (251) 604-0602 <a href="http://www.alabamacops.org">www.alabamacops.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alaska C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Laurie Huckleba, Vice President <a href="mailto:lauriehuckleba@gmail.com">lauriehuckleba@gmail.com</a> (907) 632-3795 <a href="http://www.alaskacops.org">www.alaskacops.org</a></td>
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<td>Arizona C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Marie Dryer-Kircher, President <a href="mailto:marie.dryer@copsarizona.org">marie.dryer@copsarizona.org</a> (602) 228-0643 <a href="http://www.copsarizona.org">www.copsarizona.org</a></td>
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<td>Arkansas C.O.P.S.</td>
<td>Linda Craig, President <a href="mailto:linda@arkcops.org">linda@arkcops.org</a> (501) 425-0645 <a href="http://www.arkansascops.org">www.arkansascops.org</a></td>
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Some of the most important 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 Laurie Putnam, Director of Chapter & Survivor Support, at (573) 346-4911.
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States without an active chapter:
Hawaii
North Dakota
South Dakota
West Virginia
Wyoming
Congratulations to Danielle and Bruce Woodall who were married on November 15, 2019, at The Treasury on the Plaza in St. Augustine, Florida with Wes Elingburg officiating.

The bride is the surviving daughter of Police Officer Daniel MacClary, EOW 9/27/2000 and Monique Griffin of Panama City Beach, Florida. The bride is a graduate of Florida State University.

The groom is the son of Jerry and Rose Woodall of Yanceyville, North Carolina. He is a graduate of the University of Virginia. After a honeymoon in Ireland, the couple now resides in Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida.

Big things are happening for Garrit Nijenhuis. In March, he won Pennsylvania’s State Wrestling Championship for the second time. His accomplishments include: Two-time WPIAL Champion, two-time PIAA Champion, 2019 Powerade Champion, and 2019 Super 32 Champion. He holds a career record of 181 wins and 16 losses, which makes him the record holder for all-time wins for WPIAL.

During his senior year as the Captain of the McMillan High School wrestling team, Garrit went undefeated with 47 wins. He has committed to Purdue University.

Garrit is the surviving nephew of East Washington (PA) Police Officer John D. Dryer, EOW 12/19/2011. He is pictured here with his grandmother, JoAnn Dryer, surviving mother of Officer Dryer.

C.O.P.S. welcomes Amelia Ann Biggs to the family. She was born February 24, 2020, and weighed 7 lbs. 10 oz. Congratulations to parents, Cody and Melissa Biggs.


Congratulations to a new member of the C.O.P.S. National Office! C.O.P.S. Development Director Lauren Crisman and her husband Stephen welcomed their baby boy, Barrett Nash Crisman, on May 27, 2020. He weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. and measured 20 inches long. The family of three are all doing well.
Richard Franklin Miller died unexpectedly Tuesday, May 26th. Richard is the surviving son of Rossford (OH) Patrolman Clifton Miller, EOW 5/14/1966. His sister is C.O.P.S. Past National President Brenda Donner.

Richard attended the Adult Children’s Retreat and brought a genuine and fun-loving spirit. His fellow Adult Children survivor friends will remember him for his annual karaoke rendition of “Sharp Dressed Man.” Our thoughts are with his family and friends.

In Memoriam

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The Dittamo family in the D.C. area used their talents to help protect law enforcement in their community when COVID-19 hit. Theresa Dittamo and her daughter Becky Mihalovich sewed and donated over 300 masks to officers! Theresa is the surviving mother and Becky is the surviving sister of Metropolitan (D.C.) Police Officer Paul Dittamo, EOW 10/30/2010.

Congratulations to Julian Jimenez, age 10, on being named Athlete of the Week for Lifetough Kids Boxing Beginners Class. His coaches said, “Julian is a strong, powerful young man. This kid has a ton of potential and has a lot of pop behind his punches. We are proud of Julian in how far he has come. We see him working to improve his calisthenics and his combos with every class. The coaches are so proud of you buddy!”

Julian participates in classes and scenarios where kids learn how to fight off attackers and practice safety around guns. Great work, Julian!

Julian is the surviving son of Chicago (IL) Police Officer Samuel Jimenez, EOW 11/19/2018.

The C.O.P.S. National Office is proud to announce Mike Lederle as the new Deputy Director. Mike has 27 years of service in the Missouri Army National Guard and 20 years of service in law enforcement with the Columbia (MO) Police Department before retiring. He is a surviving co-worker of Columbia Officer Molly Thomas-Bowden, EOW 2/10/2005.

Mike’s military service spans the first Gulf War up to the current conflict in Afghanistan. He achieved the rank of Brigade Command Sergeant Major (CSM) before retiring with 27 years of service. Most recently, Mike served as Executive Director of a nonprofit that trained service dogs for veterans and children with autism.
Congratulations are in order for C.O.P.S. Co-Founder and Executive Director Emeritus Suzie Sawyer and her husband Buzz as they celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on May 30, 2020.

Buzz and Suzie raised their three beautiful children Dawn, Jill, and Michael. Their grandchildren Alyssa, Lindsay, Dylan, Kimmie, Andrew, and Christopher are their pride and joy.

Between golfing and lake life, the couple enjoys every second they can with friends and family. You both are so loved. Happy Anniversary!

### 2020-2021 C.O.P.S. National Board Applicants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Surviving Family</th>
<th>EOW Date</th>
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| **National**       | **President**  
*Emilio Miyares*  
| **Northeast**      | **Leslyn Stewart**  
| **Southeast**      | **Holly Reed**  
Surviving spouse of Dixie County (FL) Sheriff's Captain Chad Reed Sr., EOW 1/14/2010. |                               |                                          |                 |
| **Atlantic**       | **No Applicant** -  
The National President will appoint.                                      |                               |                                          |                 |
| **Central Plains** | **Dana Evans**  
| **Northwest**      | **Joyce Kramer**  
| **South Central**  | **Mary Carmikle**  
Surviving spouse of Arkansas Game and Fish Sergeant Monty Carmikle, EOW 11/16/2008. |                               |                                          |                 |
| **Southwest**      | **Max Morgan**  
Surviving co-worker of Utah County (UT) Sheriff's Sergeant Cory Wride, EOW 1/30/2014. |                               |                                          |                 |
| **Western**        | **Cheryl Railsback**  
Surviving mother of Chambers County (TX) Sheriff’s Deputy Shane Detwiler, EOW 7/13/2009. |                               |                                          |                 |

C.O.P.S. wishes to thank outgoing trustees Nancee Hetrick, Hector Dit-tamo, Pilar Orellana, and Ashlee Hardy-Byers for their hard work and dedication to serving on the National Board. You truly make a difference to survivors across the nation.
Congratulations Class of 2020!

Haven Gammill, class of 2020, Cairo High School in Cairo, Georgia. She will attend ABAC in the fall to complete her Health Science Degree then attend the Armstrong Campus of Georgia Southern in Savannah (GA), to obtain her Bachelors of Science in Radiology studies with emphasis on perinatal health.

Haven is the daughter of Douglas County (GA) Sheriff’s Deputy Haven Blake Gammill, EOW 2/24/2005.


His proud parents are Jessica Miyares-Cardoso and Javier Cordoso. His uncle is C.O.P.S. National President, Emilio J. Miyares.

Hannah DeLaittre graduated and is looking forward to pursuing a career in dental hygiene. She will begin her studies at Sheridan College this fall.


Congratulations to this set of cousins who have been inseparable since being born 13 days apart!

Jacob Barnes graduated from Sunlake High School in Land O Lakes, FL, and will be attending Saint Leo University where he will be running on their Cross Country and Track team, and majoring in Biology-Biomedical & Health Sciences.

Haylie Yaslowitz graduated from Walter L. Sickles High School, in Tampa, FL, and will be attending the University of Tampa, and majoring in Forensic Science.

Haylie is the surviving daughter of St. Petersburg (FL) Police K-9 Officer Jeff Yaslowitz, EOW 1/24/2011. Jacob is his surviving nephew.
Jillian Eve Laub graduated from North Stafford High School in Stafford (VA). She is committed to Mary Washington University where she will study Psychology and Neuroscience.

Jillian is the oldest surviving grandchild of Escambia County Correctional Officer Joe Heddy, Jr., EOW 6/17/2017.

Jolie Wass graduated from Faith Academy in Bellville (TX).

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

Kayla Rose Hallenbeck graduated from Bayonne High School in New Jersey. She plans to attend college and study to be an interpreter and American Sign Language Teacher.

Kayla is the surviving niece of Jersey City (NJ) Police Detective Joseph Seals, EOW 12/10/19.

Patience Tinsley is a graduate of St. Charles High School in Waldorf (MD).

Patience is the surviving sister of Charles County (MD) Colonel Jamel Clagett, EOW 12/21/2014.

Tyler Jansen is a graduate of Liberty High School in Wentzville (MO). He has been accepted into the University of Missouri St. Louis Succeed Program.

Tyler is the surviving son of St. Charles (MO) Police Officer Grant Jansen, EOW 9/10/2008.

Jordin Freeto graduated from Texas A&M with her degree in Physical Therapy. She plans to work part-time as a therapy technician until she starts Graduate School.

Jordin is the surviving daughter of Fort Worth (TX) Police Officer Dwayne Freeto, EOW 12/17/2006.
**Austin Gryder**, surviving son of Houston Police Officer Gary Gryder, EOW 6/29/08, graduated the Houston Police Academy on December 05, 2019. Austin’s grandfather & mother are retired Houston Officers.

Austin is pictured holding a shadow box with badges of his grandfather and parents, as well as a replica of his own badge. Also pictured is Tyler Martin, surviving son of Houston Police Officer Richard Martin, EOW 5/18/2015.

**Kristen Elaine Skavdahl** (Kramer) graduated from the University of New England with a Master of Social Work degree. She is the surviving sister of West Yellowstone (MT) Police Officer, Patrick Kramer, EOW 10/22/2006.

Kristen has opened her own private mental health therapy practice in Scottsbluff, Nebraska called “Sisu Counseling”.

**Tess Evans** graduated from the Ohio State University & Fisher School of Business with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, with an emphasis on Marketing. Her dream profession is to work with collegiate (Ohio State preferred) or professional sports.


The Town of Mountainair (NM) saw tragedy when their police station was destroyed by a fire. The station has now been rebuilt and a special dedication was made in honor of **Officer Stephen Sandlin** who was shot and killed at the station on May 7, 1988. A ceremony was held to officially rename the building the “Stephen A. Sandlin Memorial Police Station”.

Officer Sandlin was just 21 years old at the time of his murder and had only been an officer for two months. It is believed he was killed as retaliation for a large narcotics arrest he had made two days prior.

Officer Sandlin’s surviving parents were present at the dedication, with his father, Thomas, speaking about his son.
The Sherrard Family’s Fight for Justice

This story is from the perspective of the Sherrard family. Richardson (TX) Police Officer David Sherrard was shot and killed on February 7, 2018. He left behind his wife Nicole and their two young daughters, Emily (16) and Grace (14).

Throughout the legal proceedings of David’s killer, all three Sherrard ladies kept one thing in mind. A saying their husband and father tried to instill in them; they are Sherrards, a name that means “crazy strength.”

Before the trial, Nicole used that crazy strength to prepare herself to be even more emotionally and mentally strong. Nicole and David were high school sweethearts and truly best friends. They did everything together. Now she had to face the person who took that away from them.

She didn’t want to lose her composure at any time. “Knowledge is power,” she said. She watched every second of the body cam footage and attended any legal proceedings of the trial possible. She took a journal with her to write thoughts and messages to others without actually speaking out loud. Having the facts and all the information was one way of handling her grief.

Nicole had already seen the suspect during pre-trials and highly encourages others to do so. She couldn’t imagine having not seen him before the trial with all of the other emotions running through her.

Throughout all of this, Nicole was balancing being a single mother to her daughters, while also preparing them for the legal proceedings. Emily had been given the option to testify and eventually made the decision to speak for her father.

Nicole says there was little she could tell her daughter to prepare her emotionally for standing up there. She told Emily, “you can look anywhere you want to. You can look at your father’s killer; you can look at the prosecutor, but please don’t look at me because I will probably be crying.”

During her testimony, Emily looked straight at the suspect. She later said it helped her to see his face. She said in her victim impact statement, “You took a piece of my family, but we’re Sherrards, and my dad proved that name means crazy strength.”

That Sherrard “crazy strength” was evident in all three women on February 28, 2020. They read their statements and reminded every single person in that courtroom about the amazing man their father and husband was.

After two years of waiting, the family breathed a sigh of relief as the judge announced the suspect was sentenced to death. Nicole said she couldn’t hold back her emotions and the tears came uncontrollably. Justice for the man she loved had been served.
It has now been almost four months since the trial ended and after two years of feeling stuck in her emotions, Nicole says she is starting to feel a sense of closure and peace. She knows David is at peace. The prosecutor said not to expect feelings of peace immediately after the trial, but Nicole is grateful for the moments of peace she does feel.

Perhaps, it isn’t just peace Nicole is feeling. As a survivor, no situation is the same. Legal proceedings can be extremely difficult for survivors. Both the family and co-workers. The most common thing that happens in these cases is survivors come out with resiliency and the power to take a first step towards healing.

C.O.P.S. is honored to walk alongside the Sherrard family and share the story of what they went through during the trial. Nicole attends the C.O.P.S. Spouses Retreat with excitement and a smile on her face, where she meets new friends and heals a little more each year. She has also attended Kids Camp with both girls, where Emily and Grace have also made friends and learned how to address their grief.

At C.O.P.S. Hands-On Programs, the counselors have all worked in the law enforcement community and are able to provide tools specific for families going through legal proceedings following the death of their loved one.

To other survivors going through the trial process, Nicole says, “You are going to get through it. It may not be pretty, but you will.”

Talking with other surviving spouses, hearing their stories and their advice continues to help Nicole. She has since supported another spouse during her trial as well.

“Knowledge is power,” says Nicole. Knowledge paired with hope and a piece of crazy strength.
C.O.P.S. was deeply saddened that we could not all be together in Washington, D.C., for the events of National Police Week this year. However, several virtual events were shown via social media to make sure each officer was honored and their families recognized. As plans unfold for events scheduled for 2021, we will continue to keep you updated.

The following virtual memorials are still available for viewing:

The virtual Candlelight Vigil from the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund was a beautiful tribute with messages from Tom Selleck, U.S. Attorney General William Barr, and survivors from across the nation. Names of current year and historical officers were read, each state’s bell was sounded, and bagpipes closed the memorial.

You can view the vigil by going to @nleomf on Facebook.

The C.O.P.S. Virtual Memory Board was a compilation of messages from the survivors of the officers honored in 2020. From surviving children to loving spouses and proud parents, this video is a keepsake for all. Supportive messages to the families can be found in the comments. You are encouraged to continue leaving your comments as this remains available for viewing.

You can view the Virtual Memory Board by going to @nationalcops on Facebook.

The virtual National Peace Officers Memorial Service gave messages of support from President Donald Trump, Fraternal Order of Police National President Pat Yoes, Music Producer Tommy Mattola, and a musical performance from Country Music Artist, Lee Brice. Officers who were honored will also be honored at next year’s events so families will be able to place their flower in the wreath.

You can view the vigil by going to @glfop on Facebook.
C.O.P.S. requested permission to reprint this article as the content provided gives survivors positive advice and tips for these times of change throughout the nation. For those who have experienced crisis and continue to find ways to heal, social distancing is not always ideal and can lead to even more stress and anxiety. It is our hope this article will help you look into the importance of adapting to change and how you can adjust yourself to an ever-changing life.

The one constant thing in our lives is change. Change, as John F. Kennedy once quoted, is a law of life. We are surrounded by change and it is the one thing that has the most dramatic impact on our lives. There is no avoiding change as it will find you, challenge you and force you to reconsider how to live your life.

Change can come into our lives as a result of a crisis, as a result of choice or just by chance. No matter the situation, we are all faced with having to make a choice – do we make the change or not?

I believe that it is better to be prepared for change because we have more control over how we react to the change.

When you are unprepared and resistant to change, then you have no control or choice as to how you want to live your life. You live your life as a reactionary rather than an activator of change.

We cannot avoid the unexpected events (crisis) in our lives, as it is these events that challenge us and force us to step out of our comfort zone. If we ignore or hide away from the challenge of change, we deny ourselves the opportunity to learn and grow.

Our resilience in life can only grow stronger when we embrace change and manage these challenges in a positive way, rather than hide away and ignore the opportunities that change can bring to our lives.

There is no escaping the impact that change can bring into your life. Managing change is key to living a life where you are not only surviving but thriving as well.

5 Strategies for Adapting to Change:

These five strategies below are the key steps that will enable you to adapt and successfully manage change in your life.


We like to live our lives in our comfort zone. Our subconscious likes this because it is the “known.” Embracing change is stepping into the unknown and our subconscious does not like the “unknown.” So it will resist.

Our fear and self-limiting beliefs will kick into action when we are faced with the disruptive consequences of change. There is no escaping the fact that change is a disruptor and it feels uncomfortable and scary. However, it is our power of choice that enables us to activate positive change in our lives.

The more you use your power of choice and the more you focus your mindset on positively adapting to change, the more resilient you will be to dealing with the impact that change will bring to your life.

2. Find Meaning In Life

Knowing what is important in your life gives you purpose and sets the direction of how you want to live your life. With a sense of purpose and meaning in life, you have clarity and focus and both these elements...
are essential to you being able to successfully adapt and manage the impact of change in your life.

Having no purpose or meaning means that you tend to drift in life within the confines of your comfort zone. Purpose and meaning in life gives you the courage to step out of your comfort zone – which is where you will find change and the opportunities it can offer to you.

3. Let Go of Your Regrets

Regrets have a huge impact on how you respond to change and they hold you back in life. Letting go of your regrets is key to you being able to move forward in life.

It is the events of change that present opportunities in life, so if you are looking back at your past, you may miss the opportunities of the present and the future.

You cannot change what you did or did not do in the past, so let it go. The only control you have now is to choose to live in your present and future life.

A great exercise to deal with regrets in life is to blow up a heap of balloons and on each balloon write a regret. Then, let the balloon go. As the balloon drifts off, say out loud “goodbye” to that regret.

Very simple, but an effective way of dealing with the pile of regrets that you may have collected in your life.

4. Write a List of Scary Things to Do – Then Go Do Them!

Change is scary and it is all about stepping out of your comfort zone and into the unknown. Our subconscious needs to get familiar with us stepping out of a comfort zone and doing scary things. In fact, we want to train our subconscious into believing that stepping out of our comfort zone is a normal thing for us to do.

Make a list of scary things that you would like to do but have been too afraid to. Put a plan in place and then go do them. Go have fun, challenge yourself and get yourself use to the feeling of being scared and stepping into the unknown.

Public speaking is one of the most frightening things for me and for many other people to do. To overcome my fear of public speaking, I joined Toast Masters. My first speech I gave was a nightmare. My knees were knocking (didn’t know that was possible – but it is!) and I broke out in a sweat and my voice was a whisper when I started my speech.

I got through it and, though it wasn’t the greatest speech, the exhilaration of actually overcoming my fear was amazing. I kept going and now enjoy public speaking so much that I jump at any opportunity to speak.

5. Focus on Living a Balanced and Healthy Life

Living a balanced and healthy active life builds our resilience and the ability to successfully manage the disruption that change can have on our lives.

Stress is a normal response to dealing with changes and challenges in daily life. In the short term, stress can help you perform better under pressure, but constant stress can pose problems for your health.

Finding positive ways to deal with the stress and pressure that we face daily is key to our survival on both a physical and emotional level.

Some healthy lifestyle actions you can use to successfully manage change and disruption in your life are:

- Eat a healthy diet
- Exercise regularly
- Reduce caffeine and sugar
- Avoid cigarettes, alcohol and other drugs
- Get enough sleep
- Practice meditation regularly
- Take time out and disconnect from technology
- Learn how to relax and have fun
- Connect with others. Spend time with people who have a positive impact on your life.

There are many more things you can do to live a healthy balanced life. The key is that you commit to activities that enable you to be resilient, optimistic, physically and mentally fit to successfully work through the impact that change can bring to your life.

Final Thoughts

We all desire to live successful, happy and long lives. To achieve what we all desire, we need to be proactive about how we manage the changes we face in our lives. This is why it is so important to learn how to be adaptable, resilient and bold in life because these three things are key to successfully adapting to the constant impact that change will have on your life.

Kathryn Sandford is a Career Resilience Coach with the passion to support others to grow and thrive in a complex world. Through her coaching, writing and speaking, she helps people to rediscover their “true value and potential” so they can live flourishing fulfilled lives within a world of constant change and disruption.
Since 2015, there has been an increase in attendance at National Police Week events. On average, 140-160 officers die in the line of duty each year, but that average does not include the multiple deaths of law enforcement heroes who responded to the terrorist attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001, and developed an illness related to the recovery site. Since 2017, 269 officers who have died from 9/11 related cancer and have been honored during National Police Week.

These heroes rushed to help when terrorists attacked our nation. They didn’t hesitate to run into the chaos as so many were trying to get out. They left their families for weeks at a time to search through piles of destruction full of cancer-causing materials at any time of the day. They helped distraught family members as they searched for their loved ones. And they lost co-workers, friends and family that day.

To comprehend the thought of so many officers now suffering from cancer and losing their lives due to their heroism is unnerving. But if there is one thing they all have in common, as well as their survivors, is they are strong, resilient and they have zero regrets.

That holds true for the surviving family of Officer Audrey P. Capra of the New York Police Department (NYPD). Audrey’s husband of 33 years, Rory, was also a Sergeant with the NYPD. They met outside the city and ironically ended up in the same academy class. Both responded to Ground Zero for rescue and recovery; however, Audrey was stationed in the area more often and at the early critical times.

All across America, families came together after the tragic attacks. If you are old enough to remember the days following, patriotism was at an all-time high and American flags were selling out in every store. For the Capra family, when they were able to be together during shifts, their focus was on their two daughters, Victoria and Christine.

“My mom was very proud of what she did as a police officer. She was proud of being a hero to others,” said Victoria, now age 21. Victoria says while her

“They died doing something they loved to do and they didn’t have regrets. You love them. You support them. Trust, believe, and somehow you will be made stronger.”

-Rory Capra
Surviving Spouse of NYPD Officer Audrey Capra, EOW 12/24/2018

“Trust, believe, and somehow you will be made stronger.”

-Rory Capra
Surviving Spouse of NYPD Officer Audrey Capra, EOW 12/24/2018
parents worked odd hours due to the profession, she remembers her mother for her amazing cooking, attending their ice skating competitions, and having fun with arts and crafts, including making the girl’s competition costumes.

“Audrey was always ready for a call, but she was a wife and mother first. The kids were a huge part of her life,” said Rory.

Audrey was best known in the profession for specializing in firearms and tactics. “She was responsible for teaching cops how to save lives,” said Rory. He explained that it was a dream for them to be cops and said, “if you’re going to do police work, the dream is to do it at the NYPD.”

Neither Rory or Audrey had any regrets about their career choice, or rather, passion. Even when 9/11 happened, they both didn’t hesitate to jump in to help their city. “I remember calling the teachers at the girl’s schools and telling them someone had to get the girls if they didn’t make it back,” said Rory about the times he joined his wife at Ground Zero.

Audrey decided to retire from law enforcement after 20 years, as she wanted to spend more time with her family. The family is grateful for those years because in 2016, Audrey was diagnosed with breast cancer, which had been a common diagnosis with other officers experiencing illness from their rescue efforts. Cancer quickly spread but the family stayed hopeful. Christmas Eve of 2018 would be Audrey’s end of watch.

The Capra family has always been close-knit and remains so to this day. The family has their own memorial to Audrey in their home, Victoria still gives flowers and cards to her mom on holidays, and she has also taken over the family tradition of hosting Sunday dinners complete with a place setting for their hero. Both girls are in school and Victoria says her plan B is to take the NYPD test, a proud yet nerve-wracking thought for her father.

Rory says he misses his best friend and lifelong partner every day, but believes his wife, as well as every fallen officer, would want their families to live life to the fullest and be thankful for the time you had and have.

To other surviving families, especially to their NYPD family, Rory has lasting words of advice: “Grief impacts everyone differently. When any tragedy happens, you have to have an element of faith that all things work for a higher power. They died doing something they loved to do and they didn’t have regrets. You love them. You support them. Trust, believe, and somehow you will be made stronger.”

“Please remember and take comfort that here at the NYPD Family Assistance Section, we will be thinking of you and your family during these difficult times.”

-NYPD Commanding Officer Thomas Burns addressing the families of fallen NYPD officers during the 2020 Virtual Memory Board event.
C.O.P.S. understands the disappointment many have felt in having to cancel some events and hands-on programs. We know things look a bit different lately, but we are so happy to see survivors connecting with other survivors via Zoom calls and other virtual ways of support and connection.

Below is a list providing updated information for the programs that are being rescheduled later this year. The Programs department at the C.O.P.S. National Office has been in touch with all participants who are currently registered, but if you have not, please pay close attention to the registration deadline as we will not accept submissions after that date. Please remember: it is better to register and have to cancel then to miss the registration deadline and not have the opportunity to go at all.

If you are at home and are having a tough time with the stressors that accompany isolation, C.O.P.S. mental health professionals have made themselves available to connect with you virtually. If you would like to do so, please contact the C.O.P.S. National Office at 573-346-4911.

Updates for 2020 Hands-On Programs

Co-Workers for Couples Retreat

*Rescheduled for August 29 - September 1, 2020*
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: July 29, 2020

Spouses for Couples Retreat

*Coming again in 2021!*

Adult Children’s Retreat

*Rescheduled for November 13-16, 2020*
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: October 13, 2020

Kids Camp June 20-26

*Virtual plans underway for 2020. Can’t wait to see you in 2021!*
Outward Bound

2021 dates will be announced soon. Be sure to register for Young Adults Camp for 2020!

Young Adults Camp

Rescheduled for November 13-16
Moving to YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO for 2020
Registration Deadline: October 13, 2020

As of the date this magazine went to print, the following Hands-On Programs are scheduled as originally planned:

Fiancés & Significant Others Retreat
August 14-17
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: July 14, 2020

siblings Retreat September 11-14
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: August 11, 2020

Spouses Retreat September 25-28
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: August 25, 2020

Co-Workers Retreat October 2-5
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: September 2, 2020

Extended Family Retreat October 16-19
YMCA Trout Lodge - Potosi, MO
Registration Deadline: September 16, 2020

Parents Retreat October 23-26
C.A. Vines Arkansas 4-H Center - Little Rock, AR
Registration Deadline: September 23, 2020
Several benefactors help C.O.P.S. provide these scholarships. This year’s funding came from **ICMA-RA and the Missouri Attorney General’s Office**. The scholarship fund has provided over $1.6 million in scholarships to survivors since 1993.

Recipients of the 2020 C.O.P.S. Summer scholarship are:

**Renise Bayne** is a student at Wayland Baptist University, completing her degree in Human Services. Renise is the spouse of Officer Bryant Bayne, EOW 7/22/1995.

**Erin Billa-Bolton** is a student at University of South Alabama, completing her degree in General Business. Erin is the spouse of Police Officer Justin Billa, EOW 2/20/2018.

**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.

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

**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.

**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.

**Cassidy Holcomb** is a student at Jacksonville State University, completing her degree in Forensic Investigation/Biology. Cassidy is the daughter of Lieutenant Dexter Holcomb, EOW 2/16/2007.

**Kaila Holloway** is a student at LSU Health Sciences Center New Orleans, completing her MD/MPH degree. Kaila is the daughter of Officer Daryle Holloway, EOW 6/20/2015.

**Cydni Holloway** is a student at Emory University, completing her degree in Business Administration. Cydni is the daughter of Officer Daryle Holloway, EOW 6/20/2015.

**Rebekah Jones-Broadbent** is a student at St. Leo University, completing her degree in Human Services. Rebekah is the spouse of Officer Brian Jones, EOW 5/30/2014.

**Jacob Martinez** is a student at Sam Houston State University, completing his degree in Criminal Justice. Jacob is the son of Sergeant Alejandro Martinez, EOW 11/21/2014.

**Trina Scott** is a student at Health Coach Institute, completing her life coaching certificate. Trina is the spouse of Patrolman David Scott, EOW 6/7/2002.

**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.

**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.

**Stephanie Vidal-Echevarria** is a student at University of Turabo, completing her degree in Psychology. Stephanie is the daughter of Police Sergeant Nikolai Vidal-Perez, EOW 10/16/2004.

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**Deadline Dates for Scholarship Applications are as follows:**

**Winter/Spring Semesters - October 1 // Summer Semester - April 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. Recipients are determined by an independent scholarship committee. Scholarships are not awarded to survivors who are entitled to a tuition-free education as a state death benefit.
The spring of 2020 has brought many challenges and much uncertainty due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I cannot help but note the similarities to the lives of law enforcement and their families. Every day, officers and their families face uncertainty about what dangers they will encounter and whether they will return home safely. And in the tragic event of a line-of-duty death, the challenges facing surviving family members and co-workers can seem insurmountable.

What follows is the story told by one of our brave survivors as she shares her experiences of a life-altering tragedy and the challenges of finding a new normal. Here is Brittany’s story:

On December 10, 2019, my family and I attended my oldest daughter’s Christmas play and had a great time. We returned home and got ready for bed, just like any other night. But I distinctly remember around 8:00 p.m., I had a weird feeling that something bad was going to happen.

A few hours after falling asleep, I was awakened by my phone vibrating. I saw a text from my mom that said, “Call asap, it’s an emergency.” I called my mom expecting to hear that one of my grandparents had passed, but instead, she said, “Kaila was in an accident...she didn’t make it.” I thought I must have misunderstood her and asked, “What?” She had to repeat herself twice before the words sank in. I just kept saying, “No, no, no!” over and over again. I felt like my heart was being ripped out of my chest and I had never felt so empty.

The next day, the kids and I met my mom in Texas to go to my sister’s house. I was a complete zombie and had no idea how to show any emotion. The next two weeks were a painful struggle. There were funeral arrangements and other details, as well as dealing with the news coverage and publicity, all while barely existing in a thick fog of grief.

When we returned home, it was difficult to have Christmas, but I put on a happy face for my children. A few weeks after the New Year, I found that I was incredibly depressed and found myself hiding in the bathroom, crying uncontrollably, thinking, “How can I ever move on from this?”

The month after the funeral was so difficult. Pain turned into anxiety, which turned into anger and numbness. Some people from C.O.P.S. called to check on me. They reached out to talk if I needed someone, but at that point, I was not in any mood to talk to anyone.

Two months later, a Zoom online meeting was set up through C.O.P.S. for all the sibling survivors to connect and talk, since National Police Week had been cancelled due to the COVID-19 outbreak. I forced myself to be there, because I knew I needed to talk to someone. It was so refreshing to hear that others had felt the way I had, and even though we were not the spouse, child, or parent of our officer, our feelings were just as important and justified.

I met so many people who have been able to find a way to heal. They were there for me and I felt loved and supported. I am thankful for all that C.O.P.S has done for my family and all other families that go through these tragedies.

Brittany Sullivan Porter
Nassau Bay (TX) Police Sergeant
Kaila M. Sullivan, EOW 12/10/2019
Kim Ellis has always had a way of making people laugh and smile. At the C.O.P.S. Adult Children’s Retreat, Kim and her husband Mitchell are often the first to welcome new survivors and set the precedent for a fun and healing weekend for all.

Kim and Mitchell remain positive and happy despite several life turns. At four years old, Kim lost her father, Dallas (TX) Police Officer Sunny Lov, in the line of duty on November 4, 1990. Mitchell, who is an officer with the Fort Worth (TX) Police Department, lost his good friend and co-worker, Corporal Garrett Hull, on September 14, 2018.

Kim said, “Cards are a great way to make people’s day! It says that you care because you took the time to find the perfect card and then write in it. It is also a treasured item.” Each card has a font that has special meaning; it was created based off of Kim’s father’s handwriting. “Having a tangible piece of paper with my Dad’s handwriting means so much to me and it is something I will always cherish,” Kim said.

Get your custom cards at: https://www.etsy.com/shop/cowtowncardco

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Christmas Ornament Design Contest

It’s that time of year again to submit a design for the 2020 C.O.P.S. Holiday Ornament!

Design Rules:
1) Must be designed by a law enforcement survivor (no age limit)
2) Design must include “C.O.P.S.” somewhere on it

Submit a hand-drawn sketch or an image from a computer design program that YOU created. The design will be changed into an “official ornament design” as space allows.

Email your submissions to Sara Slone at sara_slone@nationalcops.org no later than August 1, 2020! Winning design will be voted on by the C.O.P.S. National Staff. Winner will receive a gift certificate to the COPS SHOP!
You may remember the contest in which people voted for an off-road vehicle “fixed up” honoring our nation’s military, police, and fire departments. After donating the $10,000 prize to C.O.P.S., Polaris Off-Road and the Diesel Brothers (hit show on the Discovery Channel) have also donated the actual Polaris, which has an estimated worth of $28,000 to C.O.P.S.

C.O.P.S. has decided to offer you all the opportunity to own this incredible custom vehicle. A virtual silent auction will be held this summer and bids can be placed via concernsofpolicesurvivors.org. We will continue to update you via social media accounts as well. If you have questions, please contact Chris Kahmke at chris_kahmke@nationalcops.org.

The family of Sharon Story wishes to send their heartfelt gratitude and immense appreciation for the support they have been given since Sharon’s death in November 2019.

Elaine Felton is the surviving mother of Sussex County (VA) Sheriff’s Deputy Thomas Felton, EOW 4/29/1989. She, along with Sharon’s husband Wayne and daughter Jessie, called C.O.P.S. for help in sharing the family’s message of thanks with as many people as possible, explaining she was a “second mother” to Sharon and she knows how many people loved her daughter-in-law and her family. Elaine said, “The outpouring of love, messages, visitors, and continued support has been amazing and we could never explain how much you have helped Sharon’s entire family heal. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for loving us, and of course our beautiful Sharon.”
Join C.O.P.S. for the 6th annual National Conference on Law Enforcement Wellness and Trauma. This year, we are moving the conference to the resilient city of Oklahoma City (OK).

Oklahoma City experienced the deadliest incident of domestic terrorism in our country’s history in 1995. Many attendees and course instructors who will be present at the conference were a part of the tragic events that day and will help us honor all lives lost 25 years ago.

Some topics that will be discussed will be:
- Peer Support Teams
- Yoga/Meditation
- Mental Health
- Combating PTSD
- Fitness/Nutrition
- Finding Purpose in your Pain
- Chaplains
- Law Enforcement Suicide

(Official courses will be announced at a later date.)

Don’t Miss the Pre-Conference Event, Thursday, November 5th!

Arrive Thursday, November 5th, to tour the Oklahoma City National Memorial Museum. This private pre-conference networking event is included with registration to the first 175 people who choose the pre-event option.

The Memorial Museum is an interactive learning experience. It takes visitors on self-guided tours through the story of those who were killed by the Oklahoma City bombing, those who survived and those who had their lives changed forever. Light hors d’oeuvres and drinks will be provided.
The **Missouri C.O.P.S. Chapter** held elections on March 7th. They are excited to welcome Jim and Alyce Bava, and Kim Roberts as the newest Trustees. Brandi Hamilton is the new Chapter Secretary. Chapter President Annette Jansen said “We are excited to have new people join with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.”

The chapter’s largest fundraising event, Molly’s Miles, was changed to a virtual run this year due to COVID-19 restrictions. The chapter is grateful to Buddy and Christie Anliker and the Molly’s Miles board members for always supporting the chapter. Over $30,000 was raised for Missouri survivors.

Coming up on **October 17th**, a morning board meeting will be held at Bev and Dave Thomas’s house in Columbia (MO), followed by a fall festival where members will enjoy a potluck, bonfire, hayride and great company.

The chapter’s winter party date has not been set yet, but members will receive information on that fun-filled expense-paid overnight stay in Kansas City when it gets closer.

The **Alabama C.O.P.S. Chapter** had to cancel their Candlelight Vigils and June Family Picnic, but have adjusted to the following schedule:

- **July 11, 2020** (11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.) A Zoom Chapter Meeting is scheduled for all Alabama families that have lost an officer, no matter the state the officer worked. Details will be on Alabama C.O.P.S.’ Facebook page or may be obtained by contacting any of the Board Members directly.

- **August 8, 2020** (3:00 - 4:00 p.m.) A second Zoom Chapter Meeting. Again, information is available on Facebook or directly from a Board Member.

- **September 12, 2020** (11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.) The chapter’s Annual Picnic will be held on the Colley Farm in Eclectic (AL). All officers will be honored on this date. The Picnic will be dedicated to Officer David Colley, EOW 4/04/2015.

The chapter is looking for a family in Alabama to host their chapter Christmas Party on **December 5, 2020**. The celebration will be dedicated to your officer if you volunteer to host.

Members of Georgia C.O.P.S. were proud to attend the 45th Ron Parker Memorial Service in January.

Ron’s surviving spouse, Chapter Treasurer Brenda Parker said, “I am always so humbled for the support the family and I have received from everyone.”

**Gennesee Valley C.O.P.S.**

**Chapter Events:**

- **June 25th at 9:00 a.m.**
  - Annual Golf Tournament
  - Victor Hills Golf Club

- **December 1, 2020**
  - Annual Candlelight Memories Vigil
  - Christ Episcopal Church

*Continued on next page.*
The Arizona C.O.P.S. Chapter donated hand sanitizer to the Arizona State Troopers Association where much needed supplies were then shared with Troopers in various locations across the state. The chapter had purchased the small hand sanitizers prior to the pandemic to use as giveaways at events.

Since social distancing is not possible for law enforcement, the chapter knew where these were needed most! Awesome job, Arizona C.O.P.S.

West Central Florida C.O.P.S. held their chapter board member elections in March. Changes include:

- Leaving the board is Treasurer of the last two years, Debbie Logsdon, surviving mother of Hartford County (MD) Sheriff’s Deputy First Class Mark Logsdon, EOW 02/10/2016. Taking the Treasurer position is Marcy Berlin Hampton, surviving adult child of Tampa (FL) Police Detective Kenneth Berlin, EOW 9/27/1975.

- The position of Vice President was accepted by Autumn Curtis Stradley, surviving twin sister of Tampa (FL) Police Officer David Curtis, EOW 6/29/2010.

- The position of Secretary was accepted by Ramona Jenkins, surviving mother of University of Central Florida Police Corporal Mario Roberto Jenkins, EOW 9/24/2005.

- Stephanie Yaslowitz Barnes will continue as Chapter President for two more years.

- Franc Jenkins, surviving father of Corporal Mario Jenkins, continues as Director.

- Cindy Roberts, surviving spouse of Tampa (FL) Police Corporal Mike Roberts, 8/19/2009, continues as Immediate Past President.

- St. Petersburg (FL) Police Lieutenant Gary Dukeman continues as the chapter’s Police Liaison

- Brandon Barnes continues as Chaplain.

The chapter is looking to add more trustees, as well as someone to assist with social media. If you are interested, please email Stephanie Yaslowitz Barnes at sabarnes_01@verizon.net.

Continued on next page.
Pennsylvania C.O.P.S. has had to reschedule events due to COVID-19. Those include:

- Golf Tournament originally scheduled for April 17th is rescheduled for September 18th at Pheasant Ridge Golf Club in Gibsonia (PA).

- Golf Tournament originally scheduled for May 22nd is rescheduled for September 25th at The Bridges Golf Club in Abbottstown (PA).

- New to the schedule is a PA C.O.P.S. Family Weekend Retreat for October 16th - 18th at Seven Springs Mountain Resort.

- PA C.O.P.S. Family Picnic that was scheduled for June 13th at DelGrosso’s Park is now cancelled.

How COVID-19 Has Impacted Chapter Connections:

“While everyone has been disappointed about the cancellation of National Police Week, they understand why the decisions were made. Many have also offered their support to each other, especially the new survivors. Many have said they plan on attending NPW next year to give support to the survivors who would have been attending this year as well as the new ones from this year. They know that having it at least doubled means the new survivors will need as much support as possible and that it could be overwhelming to the ones who usually do the support so they want to be there.”

-Ellen Guerdat  
Genesee Valley (NY)  
C.O.P.S. Chapter Vice President

“I think for me, one of the hardest issues is not being able to personally meet the families that have lost officers to the COVID-19 and other circumstances, which we have five officer deaths since our meeting in March. I’m used to going to them and meeting them and the department, going to the viewings and funerals to give support and I can’t do that right now. I have been talking to them over the phone, but that’s not the same as being with them when they really need us with a shoulder to lean on or a hug.”

-Kim Weigand  
Pennsylvania C.O.P.S. Chapter Director

“I feel it adds another level of loneliness but adds a strength you pull from what you know your loved one would have done during this time. I realize that everyone is different, but I have thoroughly enjoyed slowing down, taking time to focus more on my family and loved ones. I have reached out to family and neighbors that have been shut in, helping them when possible. I can’t help but think that my brother would be out working in the midst of this pandemic, helping others. It’s one way that I keep his memory alive.”

-Caroline Turney  
Mississippi C.O.P.S. Chapter President
As the C.O.P.S. membership continues to grow, we continue to see the incredible strength and resiliency that is born from the blue family. The blue family is vast and people take care of each other.

Throughout C.O.P.S.’ travels at events and conferences hosted by other police organizations, a topic that is extremely difficult to address has been at the forefront of conversations; Police suicide. The leadership of C.O.P.S. has also discussed this topic, specifically their survivors, for many years. There has been a desire to help, but C.O.P.S. was already growing at a record pace and timing was not ideal.

C.O.P.S. started when 10 surviving spouses realized they simply needed each other and a place to be together to talk and grieve with others who “get it”. They needed a network of peer support all across the nation.

In 2019, over 150 officers died in the line of duty. Over 220 officers died by suicide. That’s almost 400 officers taken from us in one year.

It’s no surprise to anybody that suicide seems to be a taboo topic. The survivors left behind feel isolated and are hesitant to talk about how their loved one died. They are pummeled with questions like, “Were there signs?” “How could they ever do this to themselves?”, “How could they do this to their families?”, or even the all too common and unapologetic comment of, “Suicide is selfish.”

Additionally, the co-workers of officers who die by suicide rarely have a support system either. Police leaders often do not know how to react to a suicide within their own agencies, or how to support the families.

Survivors of suicide are faced with questions of, “Was it something I did?” They suffer with endless ideas of how they could’ve helped their loved one and prevented them from taking their own life.

How could they not have known their loved one was on the brink of suicide? The answer in most cases is, they simply didn’t know. Their loved one didn’t talk about it. Work was work. Home was home. Or they did know and reached out for help and there was no help.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other mental health issues are plaguing departments all across the nation. Police officers see things we are never meant to see. From domestic violence, child abuse, and murders, to having to fire their weapons to protect themselves or others. They deal with fear of backlash if they shoot during a “kill or be killed” critical incident. They stand poised and emotionless as they salute the family of a fallen comrade, deliver the folded flag, and go right back to their job because it is their duty to protect. Emotions and feelings that should be expressed are hidden away.

Cheryl Schultz is the Immediate Past President of C.O.P.S. and the surviving spouse of Pojoaque (NM) Tribal Police Officer Kevin Schultz, EOW 8/17/2002. As part of the C.O.P.S. National Board, Cheryl has been a proponent of forming a separate organization to support survivors of police suicide.

She knows all too well the struggles officers experience when they go through a critical incident. One of Kevin’s co-workers struggled with depression and attempted suicide several times while another died by suicide. “Kevin’s friends had demons they did not
know how to deal with,” Cheryl said. “If we make it okay to talk about trauma, instead of officers feeling alone, we can start preventing police suicide and spare families from losing their officer.” Cheryl added, “Compassion is a state of constant giving of one’s self for others,” and, “that is what the C.O.P.S. family is all about.”

Over the past couple of years, C.O.P.S. has been approached by law enforcement organizations and departments about supporting families of officers who die by suicide. Also, many line-of-duty death (LODD) survivors have voiced their concerns that there are no services available to survivors of suicide and have expressed their desire for C.O.P.S. to help.

C.O.P.S. is the perfect organization to support and act as a mentor to this separate endeavor as our survivors have the biggest hearts and love of the blue family. They understand the need for grief and peer support from those who ‘get it’.

C.O.P.S. Presidents dating back to Madeline Neumann, Brenda Donner and Cheryl Schultz have echoed Emilio Miyares, C.O.P.S. National President, and Dianne Bernhard, Executive Director, when they said, “If we are going to do it, we need to do it right.” They have always known it was the right thing to do, but it was important to find the right time. Shelley Jones, C.O.P.S. Director of Operations, spoke out and made it clear that now is the right time and she wanted to be a part of making it happen.

Shelley has been with C.O.P.S. since June 2014. She retired as an Assistant Chief from the Columbia (MO) Police Department. She is a surviving co-worker, survived being shot in the line of duty in 1996, and has lost a co-worker to suicide. Her passion and commitment to survivors is unavering, as well as her dedication to the law enforcement profession she has spent her whole life serving. Because of this, the National Board has approved Shelley to move forward in forming a separate non-profit organization that would offer survivors of police suicide the same grief and peer support C.O.P.S. gives to LODD survivors.

The C.O.P.S National Staff has doubled in the past five years to meet the needs of LODD survivors. The National Board recognizes that C.O.P.S.’ metaphorical hands are full and does not have the capacity to address the needs of suicide survivors but they want to help. In January of this year, the C.O.P.S. National Board voted to “pay it forward” by providing a loan to create a separate non-profit organization modeled after C.O.P.S. to help suicide survivors.

We know you will have questions, starting with what will this entail and how will this affect the current status of the C.O.P.S. organization?

First and foremost, this will be a separate organization. The organization name is “Survivors of Blue Suicide Foundation”. It will have its own 501(c)(3), but will be housed out of the C.O.P.S. National Office for the first two years. They will be in charge of their own fundraising, although monetary support will be loaned for start-up expenses.

Outreach to departments is in the early stages and plans for survivor retreats and/or an introductory conference separate from National Police Week are underway. A committee has been formed that represents the different survivorships and gives input on the immediate needs to be addressed.

Chapters and LODD survivors will not have to be involved. All we ask is if they hear of an officer who dies by suicide, they notify the National Office and provide whatever information they have. The new organization will take it from there. We already discuss police suicide in the Traumas of Law Enforcement trainings, but the plan would now include survivors of suicide to speak at that portion of the training.
Joining Shelley will be Laurie Putnam, who is currently the Director of Chapter and Survivor Support. Dianne Bernhard, C.O.P.S. Executive Director, said, “There is nobody better at organizing and maintaining a database than Laurie. But beyond that, Laurie has an amazing heart and as the first point of contact for survivors for 10 years, she knows how to talk to people when they call needing support. That’s vital as this organization gets up and running and they start to connect with survivors of suicide.”

Shelley said, “Laurie’s commitment to C.O.P.S. is amazing but her commitment to all survivors is limitless. She brings with her the compassion and insight needed to start the outreach and support of suicide survivors.”

To all of you in the C.O.P.S. membership, it is our hope in moving forward with your support. Together, we can not only support these families, we can start to make a difference in silencing the stigma that surrounds suicide.

Laurie Putnam said it best when she explained, “The blue family is the blue family. For the LODD survivors to support the suicide survivors, it’s still all the blue family. When I’m asked in 20 years how this organization got its start, I’m going to say, ‘it started with C.O.P.S. and survivors being there for other survivors.’”

It has been said by other law enforcement organizations that there is no better grief organization than C.O.P.S. that knows how to connect with the law enforcement community, their survivors and the officers who need help. We believe that as well and ask you to join us in congratulating Shelley and Laurie as they move forward with the full support of the National Board and Staff in this new organization.

Shelley added, “I am so proud and appreciative of C.O.P.S. survivors and leadership for their courage and their selflessness in helping start Survivors of Blue Suicide. As James Keller said, ‘A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle.’”

Through speaking with survivors of suicide over the past few months, Shelley and Laurie say they have learned a lot, but most importantly is the survivors of officer suicide want to connect with other survivors who understand what they are going through, just as the survivors of LODD. The circumstances surrounding their officer’s death are different, but the grief is not. Survivors of Blue Suicide Foundation is in the beginning stages but the impact it is going to have on the many lives of survivors of officer suicide and law enforcement agencies is evident.

“Shelley Jones Laurie Putnam
Shelley Jones Laurie Putnam

Survivors of Blue Suicide (SBS) mission is:
Fostering hope by uniting survivors of law enforcement suicide to support one another and honor our fallen heroes.

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Fostering hope by uniting survivors of law enforcement suicide to support one another and honor our fallen heroes.
Over the next year, C.O.P.S. and C.O.P.S. chapters are going to face extreme challenges assisting the combination of the survivors of the 2019 fallen officers as well as the 2020 fallen officers, especially with the sharp increase in deaths in 2020 due to COVID-19. In regards to events for National Police Week 2021, plans are underway to accommodate the enormous increase in attendance expected. We will communicate those plans as they are finalized.

The question is being asked whether officer deaths from COVID-19 will be considered in the line of duty for the purpose of line-of-duty death benefits. The Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) Public Safety Officers’ Benefit (PSOB) program put out the following release in April:

“To establish eligibility for benefits under the PSOB Act in connection with a public safety officer’s death or disability due to COVID-19, the PSOB Act and regulations require that the evidence show that it is more likely than not that the disease resulted from the public safety officer’s exposure to the disease or the virus that causes the disease, SARS-CoV-2, while performing a line of duty activity or action. In general, BJA will find that the evidence shows a public safety officer with COVID-19 contracted it in the line of duty, when (1) the officer had engaged in line of duty activity or action under circumstances that indicate that it was medically possible that the officer was exposed to the virus, SARS-CoV-2, while so engaged; and (2) the officer did contract the disease, COVID-19, within a time-frame where it was medically possible to contract the disease from that exposure. In addition, in the absence of evidence showing a different cause of death, BJA generally will find that the evidence shows a public safety officer who died while suffering from COVID-19 died as the direct and proximate result of COVID-19.”

Basically what this statement does is relax the burden of proof from an officer having to know exactly where they contracted the virus to a presumption if they had been working in a law enforcement capacity during the pandemic.

So how should a chapter respond to the death of an officer from COVID-19?

First, notify National C.O.P.S. We are working with Officer Down Memorial Page (ODMP) to keep a spreadsheet of all officers who have died from COVID-19. This will allow us to follow up to determine if they were considered a line-of-duty death (LODD).

Second, follow the lead of the law enforcement agency. If they are declaring the death a LODD, we will offer services unless we learn differently. You can outreach normally as you would for a LODD, except now limited by social distancing yourself, of course. Because of social distancing C.O.P.S.’ response will likely be delayed—unless it can be accomplished virtually. Many funerals are being delayed until after the virus or are being held privately with public events planned later.

Third, pay attention to ODMP. The administrators of the page are researching each officer’s death on our spreadsheet and are looking at the circumstances of each death and the agency’s response to the death. Please note if an officer who you have known to have died is not currently on the ODMP does not mean it will not ultimately be considered a line-of-duty death.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the C.O.P.S. National Office for assistance.

Impact of COVID-19 on Officers
National Police Week 2020 items are available! The original Roll Call t-shirt was updated to the design to the left due to events being cancelled. That design will be reserved for shirts during NPW 2021.
STREAMLIGHT VIRTUAL 5K FOR CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS

VIRTUAL RACE DATES: AUGUST 15–29, 2020

Please join us for Streamlight’s Sixth Annual Virtual 5K / 1 Mile Fun Walk benefiting the Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) Organization. Complete your run or walk anytime between August 15–29, 2020. Location, course and time is up to you!

Register at runtheday.com - Keyword: Streamlight

GWG Offers Special Promotion to C.O.P.S. Membership

C.O.P.S. is excited to have a new supporter on board. Girls with Guns (GWG) has reached out to us to share a special promotion with our membership, especially the ladies!

From outerwear designed to survive any element, range wear that is comfortable both on and off the range, and logo apparel for all occasions, the GWG collections are designed by women for women and created for any adventure that comes your way.

Did we mention they are strong supporters of law enforcement and their families? Be sure to check out their “Back the Blue” collection available on their website, gwgclothing.com.

Past Year ROLL CALL Shirts!

If your officer was honored at National Police Week from 1999-2013, roll call shirts are still available! Please note there are limited sizes and stock available.

Visit www.policeweekstore.com/roll-call/

Roll call shirts after 2013 are available in limited quantities. If you wish to purchase, please call the C.O.P.S. National office at (573) 346-4911.
COPS Walk Harpers Ferry is the original event that started it all! If you prefer a special event on the East Coast, this walk is for you!

The largest of the three walks takes participants along the beautiful C&O Canal, which offers stunning views as the season welcomes fall to the area.

Come out and meet survivors who have been doing this walk for the past 15 years! Men, women, and children of all ages are welcome! Just like the other COPS Walk events, there are different fundraising packages available to help you meet your goal.

Want to walk in honor of your hero? Come to Harpers Ferry!

October 9-11, 2020
in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia at the Embassy Suites Dulles North.

COPS Walk Southwest was held on February 21-23 in Buckeye (AZ)! The net amount raised was an incredible $86,374!

Participants were faced with an unusually rainy walk, but they powered through together and honored their heroes as planned! Walking 25 miles over two days is quite the accomplishment! Congratulations walkers!
The Lucky Ladder Drop is back! Five hundred numbered balls will be dropped from the top of a fire truck ladder. Closest ball to the target takes home the grand prize.

Take your shot for $10 each, 5 balls for $45, or 10 for $80 before luck runs out. Half of the proceeds go to prizes and the rest goes to help C.O.P.S. continue its mission!

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC - NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN

Get yours at bit.ly/luckyladder2020

2020 theme is Suzie as Prom Queen!

Will you be crowned victorious this year?

C.O.P.S. 14th Annual National Golf Tournament
August 2nd, 2020 // Lake Ozark, Missouri

9:00 AM Shotgun Start at Osage National Golf Resort

Entry Fee:
$100 per Osage National member
$125 per non-member
(4 person scramble)

Breakfast and a light lunch will be provided. Check out incredible items at the Silent Auction!

Register online at concernsofpolicestressors.org

Registration Deadline: July 22, 2020
The men and women of Law Enforcement United (LEU) were unable to kick off their 11th annual Road to Hope bicycle ride into Washington, D.C., this year due to COVID-19. However, in a virtual check presentation to the organizations they support, LEU board members honored their commitment by donating $380,000 to C.O.P.S.!

Thank you to every member of LEU who lives each day by your mission of “honoring the fallen and remembering the families.” We look forward to following your ride in 2021.

2020 would have been the first official ride for Landon Winfield, surviving son of Marion County (OH) Deputy Sheriff Brandy Winfield, EOW 10/14/2004. Although canceled, LEU uniforms were sent out to members and Landon couldn’t contain his excitement when his arrived.

For many survivors, riding with LEU is so much more than fulfilling a passion of riding a road bike. It’s the comradery and being surrounded by officers who know their story and know why they are there. “I think it helps me heal. These officers know what happened to my dad. I know they are going to do everything in their power to help me get to the finish line in D.C.!” Landon said.

Landon, who has hopes of becoming a law enforcement officer himself, says he remembers waiting for the LEU riders to come in each year and understanding the honor they give to fallen officers and their families. “When survivors see LEU riders arriving into D.C., some of them are emotional because they know why we ride,” Landon said. “When I get to that finish line, I don’t care if they are a stranger, I’m going to walk up to them in my LEU uniform and tell them ‘You’re not alone and we are all here for you.’”

C.O.P.S. EARNED COVETED 4-STAR RATING FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR

C.O.P.S.’ strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned it a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator (CN), America’s largest independent charity evaluator. This is the 8th consecutive time that C.O.P.S. has earned this top distinction. Only 5% of charities that CN evaluates have received at least eight consecutive 4-star evaluations.

Since 2002, using objective analysis, CN has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations a 4-star rating.

“C.O.P.S.’ exceptional 4-star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public,” according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. “Only a quarter of charities rated by Charity Navigator receive the distinction of our 4-star rating. This adds C.O.P.S. to a preeminent group of charities working to overcome our world’s most pressing challenges. Based on its 4-star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support C.O.P.S.”

C.O.P.S.’ rating and other information about charitable giving is available free of charge on www.charitynavigator.org.
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