

**For Immediate Release**

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## **Camp Courage Helped Kids Cope with Grief**

**HOWELL, Mich.** – In early August, a group of local youth came together to begin a unique two-day camp experience. Each child, aged 6-17, had experienced a loss in their life and signed up to attend ***Ted and Jane's Camp Courage*** to help cope with their grief.

Ted and Jane's Camp Courage was a collaborative effort of the Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation and St. Joseph Mercy Livingston Hospice. It was a free program for children in the community.

The 23 participants were watched over by 38 volunteers throughout the weekend. They participated in activities including an 'ask the doctor' session, drumming, visiting animals, hiking and riding ziplines. They also participated in a moving candlelight boat launch, dedicated to their loved one.

"The candlelight boat launch was so very special," explains Kate Ritter, St. Joseph Mercy Hospice bereavement coordinator and camp leader. "The boats drifted away on the quiet water with their candles gently flickering. When the candles went out, the clouds opened up and the stars could be seen briefly. On a rainy, cloudy weekend, that moment was incredibly special."



*(from left to right) Claire Corrin and Gabe Gatesman release a candlelight boat into the water in honor of their loved ones.*

The combination of outdoor activities, arts and music provided a variety of opportunities for the youth to share their grief. Ritter explains, “Sharing our grief is not only about talking, it’s about drumming and howling and swimming and ziplining and mud puddles!”



*(from left to right) Krissy Lovely, Claire Corrin and Emily Nowicki share a light and freeing moment as they jump into the lake together.*

According to Gwen Haggerty, president of the Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation, “Camp Courage was a huge success. We were able to walk with these children down a very special path of grief and healing. Each and every participant brought his or her own unique perspective to the camp. As someone who has lost her parents, it was a healing process for me as well.”

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#### **About The Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation**

The Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation is a private family foundation created in 2006 by Jane Von Voigtlander (1944–2007), wife of Ted Von Voigtlander (1936–1999) who was the co-founder of the Discount Tire Company. The Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation has set out to fund a spectrum of philanthropic pursuits, focusing its giving on Children, Health, Medical Research, Environment, Animal Advocacy and the Arts.

For more information on The Ted and Jane Von Voigtlander Foundation, please visit [www.tjvv.org](http://www.tjvv.org)

### **About Saint Joseph Mercy Health System**

Saint Joseph Mercy Health System (SJMHS) is a newly expanded health care organization serving southeast Michigan. Health coverage spans six counties, including Livingston, Macomb, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw and Wayne. It includes 537-bed St. Joseph Mercy in Ann Arbor, 443-bed St. Joseph Mercy Oakland in Pontiac, 304-bed St. Mary Mercy in Livonia, 136-bed St. Joseph Mercy Livingston in Howell, 119-bed St. Joseph Mercy Port Huron and 74-bed St. Joseph Mercy Saline. Combined, the six hospitals are licensed for 1,613 beds, have five outpatient health centers, five urgent care facilities, more than 25 specialty centers; employ more than 13,000 individuals and have a medical staff of nearly 2,400 physicians.

A member of Trinity Health, the nation's fourth largest Catholic health care organization, SJMHS is committed to providing a remarkable patient experience by using leading edge technology in a comforting and healing environment. As a mission based organization, Saint Joseph Mercy Health System hospitals provides approximately \$100 million in community benefit to the communities it serves each year.

For more information on health services offered at Saint Joseph Mercy Health System, please visit [www.sjmercyhealth.org](http://www.sjmercyhealth.org).