



NEWSLETTER ♦ 81st Edition ♦ May 2020 ♦ Happy Mother's Day

**Our Mission** - To reach out and empower people affected by limb loss to achieve their full potential through education, support, and advocacy, and to raise awareness of limb loss by becoming actively involved in our community.



## EDITOR'S NOTE

– by Elaine Skaggs

How our world has changed in the last month! If you are like me, you probably never thought you would see anything like this in your lifetime, and in our country. For most of us, COVID-19 has completely altered our lives. From the hand washing, to wearing a mask, to social distancing, all to protect us from spreading a virus. We've been bombarded with information, and I can't tell you anything you haven't already heard a dozen times. Just like the word 'unprecedented'. Have you noticed that's the word everyone is using to describe what's going on around us? Since everyone is using it so frequently and just to be sure I knew what it meant, here is the definition of that word.

Unprecedented (adjective) = without previous instance; never before known or experienced; unexampled or unparalleled: an unprecedented event.

I'm sure each of us has experienced many unprecedented events in our lives on a more personal level, both positive and negative. And I believe that no matter whether it's something personal, national, or global, positive things can result from mayhem; it's a matter of how we perceive it, and how we react to it. It's hard to remain positive and not worry if you're constantly watching the news, so I have stopped paying so

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## 4 Reasons Why Hugs Are Good for You

The world would be so much better if we could just hug everything out. Make your world better with the all-powerful hug.

There's a pretty good chance some of your best memories feature a good old-fashioned hug. In fact, the humble but powerful hug was one of the first things welcoming you to the planet just after you were born. You've been hugged by parents, friends, coworkers, kids, and perhaps even complete strangers you preferred not to be hugged by.

The hug is celebratory, reassuring, comforting, and calming. Believe it or not, there have been many legitimate studies conducted about the hug's incredible powers:

### 1. Hugs ward off illness

In 2015, a study conducted by Sheldon Cohen, a Professor of Psychology in Carnegie Mellon Universities' Dietrich College of Humanities and Social Sciences, found that frequent hugs actually protected people from increased susceptibility to the kind of stress that leads to infection. And participants who were sick exhibited fewer symptoms when they were hugged more often.

### 2. Hugs release oxytocin

Oxytocin is often called the "love hormone," and it's released when we cuddle or bond. It's the reason why being hugged feels so good. So when you're feeling down, give someone a squeeze and feel your mood lift.

### 3. Hugs make you feel like everything will be ok

We instinctively hug those who are struggling. When you receive a hug from someone you care about or who makes you happy, it can generally leave you feeling safe, and excited for the future.

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## EDITOR'S NOTE (cont'd)

much attention to all the additional news conferences, and only watch the regular local news. I've also tried to focus on the positive things that are happening. Once again families are sitting down to dinner together, like we did when I was growing up. Parents are taking the lead and becoming directly involved in their children's education. People are going the extra mile to help each other, like my neighbor who dropped off an Easter feast for us. And thank goodness for technology, the number one way we can all keep in contact with each other and show our care and concern. My own personal view is that I'm very fortunate, to live in this country, to have family and friends who love and care for me, and though I may not have all I want, I have everything I need. But I think the thing I've missed the most is hugging my granddaughters, so I hope they are prepared for a long, tight squeeze from Grandma once the danger has passed!! The article about hugs in this issue explains why I've missed that so much.

Needless to say, there's not much from April to recap; all of our meetings and events were cancelled due to the Coronavirus. We did hold a virtual meeting in March on Facebook Live with success. Hopefully we will be holding a virtual meeting on April 25, 2020, using the Zoom application and I will report on that event in the June newsletter. By then some of the restrictions that have been placed on us should be lifted, and we can return to our in-person meetings. Until then, our only Upcoming Events will be a virtual meeting on May 23, unless restrictions are lifted. We will notify everyone with any changes. Stay in, stay safe, see you soon!

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## QUOTE OF THE MONTH



## 4 Reasons Why Hugs Are Good for You (cont'd)

### 4. Hugs cut down on stress

You probably know that cortisol is a stress hormone, but did you know that hugs can actually combat cortisol? The science of this is pretty involved, but essentially a hug can lower cortisol levels and counteract the physiological consequences around being stressed.

We may hesitate to touch each other for fear of overstepping personal boundaries or making someone feel uncomfortable, but sometimes it's worth the risk to hug it out. If you're unsure of whether a hug is welcome, just ask. You don't have to make it weird — a simple, "Can I give you a hug?" will do.

Sometimes a hug can change someone's day, and it only takes seconds. Hug your loved ones and friends more. Show them you care, and you'll also reap the benefits.

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### What is the Amputee Coalition

It is the leading national non-profit organization that empowers individuals with limb loss through education, support, and advocacy. The Amputee Coalition is the nation's leading organization on limb loss, dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for amputees and their families, improving patient care, and preventing limb loss. They help amputees live well with limb loss, raise awareness about limb loss prevention, and ensure amputees have a voice in matters affecting their ability to live full, thriving lives.

### Limb Loss Education & Outreach

The National Limb Loss Resource Center, located on the Amputee Coalition's website provides comprehensive information and resources free of charge. All of the information provided is reviewed by the Coalition's medical/scientific advisory committee of experts in the field of limb loss so you can count on the accuracy of the information. There are articles on many different issues, from learning how and getting involved in advocacy, how to manage daily living, to dealing with different health

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# The Joys of Raising an Amputee

– by Julie Randolph

My son Philip is quite a remarkable young man. After contracting meningitis at the age of 5 weeks and having his right hand, left fingers, and both feet amputated at 10 weeks, Philip has had no recollection of a “normal” life. The Dr. also told us that the meningitis would affect his frontal lobes, which would be his reasoning & creativity. I am very grateful that Philip has grown up being positive, upbeat, fun-loving, and sociable. He has excellent coordination & balance, which has been such a tremendous asset for a prosthetic wearer. He has roller skated & even ice skated on several occasions & done quite well.



It was evident in Philip’s early years that he was bestowed with a gift of music. At an early age before he could even formulate the words, Philip was found quite often humming the songs & hymns he learned at church. He also started drumming the beat with pencils or anything else he could get his hands on. I believe he was made with music built in.

It goes without saying that Philip has had many, many obstacles to overcome and has had to learn how to do seemingly simple tasks in his own way. He has used ingenuity and resourcefulness his entire life. At the early age of 2 and 3, I would watch Philip stack blocks meticulously, making sure each corner was lined up perfectly.

One thing that I love about Philip is his indomitable spirit. It has been a treasure to watch him grow up & learn how to cope with life. I decided right from the start that I was going to make the best of this unfortunate situation, and encourage him as much as possible along the way. We have spent many hours talking & reasoning things out. This is the way of it when you are raising & training a child but Philip has needed an extra portion because of his long-term and short-term memory loss.

One of the most memorable experiences I’ve had while Philip was growing up was when he was around 15 months & I wanted to take him to a children’s shoe store & get him a pair of high top walking shoes. I thought they would help stabilize him as he was learning to walk. I decided it would be easier to just take his prosthetic legs with me to get fitted & not take the boy. When I walked into the shoe store, the owner came over to help me. When I told him what I wanted, he replied in the most serious, matter-of-fact manner:

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concerns like diabetes. In addition to all the educational information on a wide variety of subjects that is featured on the website, the Amputee Coalition holds a national conference every year in a different location in the United States. As the nation’s premier educational event for the limb loss community, the conference brings together hundreds of persons with limb loss/difference, family members, & healthcare professionals for learning, interaction, & networking. No other educational event in the United States addresses issues important to amputees & their families. In 2012 a new educational program series called Limb Loss Education Days was launched which brings high-quality educational programming to the local level and serves amputees in their own communities.

## Advocacy and the Amputee Coalition

The Amputee Coalition helps bring together and amplify the voice of people affected by limb loss and limb difference. Making sure legislators and insurance policymakers are educated about the needs of the community is an important part of the mission. Through partnerships with other organizations they provide the tools needed to understand and address a broad range of issues. Those partnerships include the Administration for Community Living (ACL), the Veterans Administration (VA), the Department of Defense (DOD), and other federal agencies, as well as with other disability groups and organizations that serve as allies. These partnerships are often broader, delving into needs around the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Medicare and Medicaid, funding for programs and research, and access to care. The Amputee Coalition works with partners to ensure the limb loss community, the disabled community, and the professionals that support these communities are well-represented.

## Support Group Network

Amputee support groups provide a safe and supportive environment for individuals living with limb loss or limb difference as well as their family members. They are an invaluable place to connect with others who have overcome similar challenges and setbacks. With over 400 support groups registered with the Amputee Coalition, individuals

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## The Joys of Raising an Amputee (cont'd)

"This is the first time I ever fitted a child for shoes without the child!"

Another time when Philip was around 3, his prosthetic legs were suspended only by neoprene sleeves that came up around his thighs. We were shopping and Philip was sitting in a grocery cart.

He was wearing his legs as usual, when all of a sudden I heard this "thunk!" – one of his legs had hit the floor. I looked around frantically to see if anyone had noticed and then I hurriedly picked up his leg, checked out, and got out of the store as quickly as possible. The fun things we go through as mothers of amputees!!

All in all, the most endearing experience I can remember was when Philip's preschool class was performing in a little program at the end of the school year. The class was up front singing a little song with actions. Philip was singing with all his heart and doing the actions without missing a beat. He was singing the words "I love you!" and he was pointing out toward me with his little hand and looking right at me while he sang. It was one of those special moments when you could tangibly *feel* the love! And this is why I do what I do as a mother and as a caregiver!



*NOTE: To read "Philip's Story" in full, go to the Sep. & Oct. 2013 issues of the newsletter available on our website: [ampmovingforward.com](http://ampmovingforward.com).*



## CONTACT INFO

**MOVING FORWARD Limb Loss Support Group**

Email: [moving4wdamputeegroup@gmail.com](mailto:moving4wdamputeegroup@gmail.com)

Website: [ampmovingforward.com](http://ampmovingforward.com)  
502-509-6780

Facebook: Moving Forward Limb Loss Support  
and Moving Forward Limb Loss Support Group  
for Young Adults Ages 18-38

Kelly Grey, President / Facebook Editor /  
Newsletter Staff

[kjgrey79@gmail.com](mailto:kjgrey79@gmail.com) • 502-235-3146

Elaine Skaggs, Vice-President / Newsletter Staff

[elaineskaggs@ymail.com](mailto:elaineskaggs@ymail.com) • 502-548-6419

Julie Randolph, Secretary / Newsletter Editor

[jbrsweepea@yahoo.com](mailto:jbrsweepea@yahoo.com) • 812-557-3970

Mary Jo Kolb, Treasurer

[mjk2you@gmail.com](mailto:mjk2you@gmail.com) • 502-727-9566

Mike Portman, Board-Member-at-Large

[mdportman712@gmail.com](mailto:mdportman712@gmail.com) • 502-262-8344

Katie Flanigan, Writer / Young Adult Facebook  
Editor • [katiemovingforward@gmail.com](mailto:katiemovingforward@gmail.com)

812-987-5329



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with limb loss or limb difference and their families across the country are receiving the vital support to help them along their journey. Participation in support groups provides members the opportunity to express their feelings, learn helpful information, improve social skills and realize they are not alone. At the heart of the Amputee Coalition's mission are the peer support programs with the goal of making sure that no one goes through this journey alone. Support comes in many forms and can make an incredible difference in recovery and rehabilitation. In addition to support groups, the Coalition offers peer support in the form of hospital partnership programs, youth camp, and our Certified Peer Visitor program. No one is potentially in a better position to understand about living life with an amputation or supporting a person with limb loss/difference than someone who has been there. An experienced, well-trained peer can offer encouragement and information from a place, and at a pace that an individual in this circumstance can better absorb.



## Ways to Donate to *Moving Forward* Limb Loss Support

### AmazonSmile

Go to "[Smile.Amazon.com](http://Smile.Amazon.com)"

Sign in or Create your account

Hover over "Accounts and Lists"

Under the "Your Account" items,

Click on "Your AmazonSmile"

AmazonSmile is a website operated by Amazon with the same products, prices and shopping features as Amazon. The difference is that when you shop [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to the charitable organization of your choice!

Once you have registered, you can check back to see how much your orders have contributed to ***Moving Forward***.

You will know you are contributing to the group because under the search bar it will say "Supporting ***Moving Forward*** Limb Loss Support Group, Inc."

### ***Kroger Community Rewards Program***

Go to:

"<https://www.kroger.com/account/enrollCommunityRewardsNow/>"

Sign in or Create your account under box "I'm a Customer"

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## PREVIOUS NEWSLETTER ISSUES

For your convenience, all previous issues of our newsletter are available on our website at: [ampmovingforward.com](http://ampmovingforward.com)



MOVING FORWARD Limb Loss Support Group  
Newsletter CORPORATE SPONSORS:



**BRYAN SWINT, CPO/L**  
ORTHOTIST/PROSTHETIST  
BSWINT@KENNEYORTHOPEDECS.COM

**KENNEY**  
**ORTHOPEDECS**  
PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

2809 N. HURSTBOURNE PARKWAY • SUITE 111 • LOUISVILLE, KY 40223  
PHONE 502-882-9300 • FAX 502-882-8375

WWW.KENNEYORTHOPEDECS.COM



**DONNA HINNANT CP, LPO**  
DHINNANT@KENNEYORTHOPEDECS.COM

**KENNEY**  
**ORTHOPEDECS**  
PROSTHETICS & ORTHOTICS

2809 N. HURSTBOURNE PARKWAY • SUITE 111 • LOUISVILLE, KY 40223  
PHONE 502-882-9300 • FAX 502-882-8375

WWW.KENNEYORTHOPEDECS.COM

**Kentucky Prosthetics & Orthotics**  
1169 Eastern Parkway Ste. 4423  
Louisville KY 40217

502-585-4228

Lending A Hand LLC  
Keeping Limbs And Lives Safe In The Workplace  
Billy Parker  
Owner/Keynote Speaker

PO Box 91721  
Louisville, KY 40291  
502-415-2504

lendingahand@gmail.com  
Facebook & YouTube: BillyPAmputtee



## Ways to Donate to *Moving Forward* Limb Loss Support (cont'd)

Click on "View Details" (this will take you to a new screen to select our group)

Enter our organization number: DC476 or, Search for "Moving Fwd Limb Loss Support"

If you do not have internet access:

Register at the Service Desk of your local Kroger.

Once you have registered, the bottom of your receipt will say that your "Community" rewards are going to **Moving Forward** Limb Loss Support Group. You can check the amount of your community rewards on their website for each quarter.

### Employer Deductions

Many employers offer employees the opportunity to have automatic payroll deductions which are donated to a charity of their choice. Some companies will **MATCH** your donation. If your employer uses Frontstream, Truist, or Network for Good to manage their deductions, **Moving Forward** is listed.



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Newsletter CORPORATE SPONSORS:



**Chris Luckett, C.P.**

1404 Browns Lane, Suite C Louisville, KY 40207 Phone: 502.895.8050 Fax: 502.895.8056 Web: <a href="http://www.louisvilleprosthetics.com">www.louisvilleprosthetics.com</a>	742 East Broadway Louisville, KY 40202 Phone: 502.584.2959 Fax: 502.582.3605
--	---



**Bruce Luckett, L.P.**

1404 Browns Lane, Suite C Louisville, KY 40207 Phone: 502.895.8050 Fax: 502.895.8056 Web: <a href="http://www.louisvilleprosthetics.com">www.louisvilleprosthetics.com</a>	742 East Broadway Louisville, KY 40202 Phone: 502.584.2959 Fax: 502.582.3605
--	---



**R. Wayne Luckett, L.P., L.Ped.**

1404 Browns Lane, Suite C Louisville, KY 40207 Phone: 502.895.8050 Fax: 502.895.8056 Web: <a href="http://www.louisvilleprosthetics.com">www.louisvilleprosthetics.com</a>	742 East Broadway Louisville, KY 40202 Phone: 502.584.2959 Fax: 502.582.3605
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