

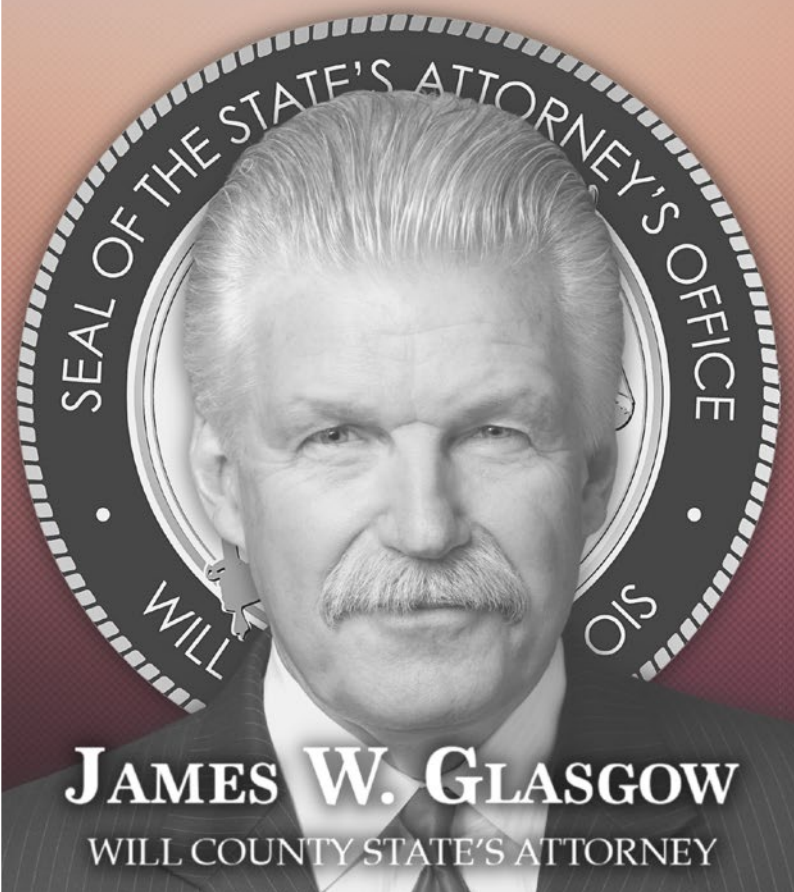
AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

*Thanks*



FOR ALL YOU DO ON BEHALF OF DRIVING  
CRASH VICTIMS & THEIR FAMILIES



**JAMES W. GLASGOW**

WILL COUNTY STATE'S ATTORNEY



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm golden glow over the scene. Sunbeams radiate from behind the clouds, creating a magical atmosphere. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, with bright yellow petals and dark brown centers. The leaves are a deep green, providing a rich contrast to the yellow of the flowers.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Welcome to AAIM's  
32nd Annual Benefit

*Cover Artwork Created by Heather Fischer*





A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground shows large green leaves and bright yellow petals of several sunflowers in sharp focus.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Table of Contents



# Table of Contents

Contents	Page
----------	------

## ADMINISTRATIVE

Welcome Letter – Jessica Zinck .....	1
Mission Statement.....	2
AAIM Philosophy .....	3
Guest Speaker – Jesse White, Illinois Secretary of State.....	4
Guest Speaker – Amy Brierly.....	6
Guest Speaker – Glenn Kalin .....	7
Guest Speaker – Anna Rauner.....	8
Guest Speaker – Lee Rauner.....	9
Benefit Committee.....	10
Victim Story Sponsors.....	11
Benefit Donors.....	12
Silent Auction Sponsors.....	15
Special Thanks .....	16
Your Donations at Work .....	17
Help AAIM Fund Raise .....	22
AAIM Board of Directors.....	23
AAIM Staff.....	25
Angel of AAIM Award.....	26
Sheila Forsner Award.....	27
Sheila Forsner Award Recipient – Dr. Charles Nozicka.....	29
Sheila Forsner Award Past Recipients.....	30
The Diane Mains Award .....	31
Recipient of the Diane Mains Award – Annie Purtell .....	32
Recipient of the Diane Mains Award – Natalee Schroeder.....	33
Outstanding Assistant State’s Attorney – Conor Woods.....	34
Outstanding Assistant State’s Attorney Past Award Recipients .....	35

## AAIM’S STORY

Ann Brierly .....	38
Robert Kalin .....	40



## PROGRAMS

AAIM Programs .....	42
AAIM DUI Pin Award Program .....	45
Victims' Bill of Rights .....	46
AAIM Victim Advocates .....	47
AAIM Picnic .....	48
AAIM Grief Support Group .....	50
Court Monitoring Program .....	52
AAIM Prevention and Education Program .....	54
AAIM's Community Outreach Program .....	56
AAIM's Youth Victim Impact Panel .....	58
Top Cops Honored .....	60
AAIM Team Building .....	62
Peer to Peer – Online Fundraiser for AAIM .....	63

## PARTNERSHIPS

Jesse White Candlelight Vigil .....	66
Crime Victim's Rights .....	68
IHSCDEA .....	69
Commendable Awards for DUI Efforts .....	70
AAIM for CommUNITY .....	73
Are you InTEXTicated? .....	76
Impaired Driving Prevention Campaign .....	78
The John Kreslin Scholarship .....	80
The John Kreslin Scholarship - 5K Family Run/Walk .....	81
Safe Driving is a Vibe .....	82
Lifesavers Conference 2022 .....	84
Lisle Police Department .....	85
Erin Olmsted Gymnastics Invitational .....	86
National Night Out 2022 .....	88
AAIM Life Time Achievement Award .....	92
Wiffleball Tournament .....	94
Roadside Memorial Markers .....	96
NASID .....	98

## ADVERTISING

James W. Glasgow - Will County State's Attorney .....	Inside Front Cover
Triple A .....	Back Cover
Palatine Ridge Counseling - Nicole Miller.....	Inside Back Cover
Retired Circuit Court Judge Bob Anderson.....	100
Belvidere Police Department .....	101
Bob Berlin - DuPage County State's Attorney.....	102
Elmhurst Police Benevolent Athletic Association .....	103
Kramer Photography .....	104
Our Lady of Hope Church.....	105
Rosemont Exposition Services .....	106
Law Offices of Couri & Couri - Philip Couri.....	107
Jesse White, IL Secretary of State.....	108
David Finkelstein, Allstate Insurance.....	109
Buffalo Grove Police Department.....	109
Cindy Cebrzynski Tribute .....	110
Childress Automotive.....	110
Kildeer Police Department .....	110
Vanguard Security Co.....	110
Patrick Kenneally - McHenry County State's Attorney .....	111
Piotrowski & Associates .....	111
IL Representative Joe Sosnowski.....	111
IL State Senator Steve Stadelman.....	111
Winnebago County Sheriff .....	112
Wizard's Storage .....	112
Temperly Excavating Inc. ....	112

## VICTIM STORIES

Jenni Anderson Tribute .....	114
Chrystelle Lee Janke Andrews Tribute .....	115
Alex Banks Tribute .....	116
Michael Bell Tribute.....	117

Marti Belluschi Story.....	118
Kevin William Benes Tribute.....	120
Jason Blatter Story.....	122
Tony Borcia Tribute.....	123
Patricia Breyn Story.....	124
Thomas Burleson Story .....	126
Frank S. Caruso Jr. Tribute.....	129
Cindy Cebrzynski Tribute .....	130
Nadia Chowdhury Tribute .....	132
Paul Conrad and Sheryl Andreasen Tribute .....	134
Troy Evers Tribute .....	137
Brandon Ferreira Tribute .....	138
Gary Fink Tribute.....	140
Tanessha Gates Story.....	141
Brant Alexander Griebal Tribute.....	142
Jameel Ali Harris Tribute.....	144
John Hauptman Tribute.....	146
Leeslyee Huerta Story.....	148
Raymond N. Daniel Jackson Tribute.....	150
Beata Janulek Story .....	151
Reginald "Jalen" Johnson Tribute .....	152
Andrew Keating Tribute .....	154
Karolina Kedziora Story .....	155
Nicholas Kilpatrick Tribute .....	156
Amanda Kordich Tribute.....	158
Christopher Krenzer Tribute.....	160
John J. Kreslin, Jr. Tribute .....	162
Karla Y. Leanos Tribute .....	164
Andrew "Drew" Lewis Tribute.....	165
David Logterman Tribute.....	166
Ashley Marie Lopez Tribute.....	168
Izaiah Lopez Tribute.....	170
Manuel Lopez Story .....	172
Juan Lozano, Jr. Tribute.....	174
Christopher "Chris" L. Lukes Tribute.....	176
Sheila Lupton Story & Kathleen Bowes Tribute.....	178
Tanya McDonough Tribute .....	180



Jocelynn Morales Tribute.....	182
Idanis Navas Story.....	184
Adelaida Otero Tribute.....	185
Erin Elizabeth Olmsted Tribute.....	186
Michelle Denise Parker Tribute .....	188
Jonathan Petit Tribute .....	190
Daniel "Danny" Rauner Tribute.....	192
Payton Richmond Story .....	194
Veronica Rojas Tribute.....	196
Heidi Roseen Tribute.....	197
Carlos Serratos Story .....	198
Richard "Dick" Seyller Tribute .....	199
Pierre L. Shelton Tribute .....	200
Shavon Smith Tribute.....	202
Theresa Stanley Tribute .....	204
Mikey Steines Tribute.....	205
Jesse C. Walker III Tribute.....	206
Jorlyce "Joy" Wange Tribute .....	207
Steven R. Wasily Tribute.....	208
Dimon Williams Tribute .....	209
Caitlin Elizabeth Weese Tribute.....	210
Willie James White Tribute .....	212
Aric Wooley Tribute .....	214

## OFFENDER STORIES

Andy's Story.....	218
Rafael Sandoval Story.....	219
Maria's Story.....	222
Nick C. Story.....	227
That Could Never Happen to Me .....	229
An Offender's Story .....	232

## OTHER STORIES

Tami O. – An Offender’s Mother’s Story .....	236
The Antonio Sanchez Story .....	238

## LETTERS OF GRATITUDE

Cali Ann Merlino .....	240
Kristin Hartman .....	240
Shane Woody .....	241
Pam Walzynski .....	241
Lee Rauner .....	242
Brett GeRue .....	243

A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground shows large green leaves and bright yellow petals of several sunflowers in sharp focus.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Administrative





## *A New Tomorrow*

Dear Friends,

Welcome to AAIM's annual benefit! We are excited that you're joining us for our first in-person fundraiser in two years.

It's a very special year for us as we reflect on celebrating 40 years of providing victim advocacy and various programs to bring awareness to the dangers of impaired driving, underage drinking, reckless driving, and other risky driving behaviors.

Since that first meeting 40 years ago, our AAIM family has worked tirelessly to create an environment of hope and change for those devastated by impaired or reckless driving. Both staff and volunteers alike have been motivated by the goal of completely reducing these senseless tragedies from occurring. There have been many important milestones along the way, but we still have work to do!



*Jessica Zinck*  
*Director of Victim Services*

This year, our victim advocacy team has increased our efforts to ensure victims' rights are upheld in court. We have increased our communications with court staff, judges, Marcy's Law for Illinois, the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and the National Crime Victim Law Institute. All of us have partnered together to strengthen the culture in our judicial system to ensure that victims are supported in a more trauma-informed manner.

We'll continue doing so with our eyes set on *A New Tomorrow*.

Because of your generosity today, we can continue providing excellent care and financial assistance to our victims tomorrow. As a result, we'll be able to provide for our families in their very darkest times, offering them a sense of stability. Keeping families in their homes and able to purchase their daily necessities would not be possible without you!

Thank you to our advocates, board members, committee members, donors, sponsors, volunteers, and guests for your time and support. You have been instrumental in continuing the good work of AAIM.

My heartfelt thanks,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jessica Zinck".

Jessica Zinck  
AAIM Director of Victim Services



## MISSION STATEMENT

### ALLIANCE AGAINST INTOXICATED MOTORISTS

The Mission of the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM) is to prevent deaths and injuries caused by chemically impaired or distracted operators of any motor vehicle or watercraft and to assist victims of these crashes in Illinois.

### TO ACHIEVE OUR PURPOSE

**AAIM** heightens awareness and educates the public about the devastation caused by the impaired or distracted operation of any vehicle. This includes underage drinking, the improper use of intoxicating substances before driving and distracted driving, particularly the use of handheld electronic devices while operating a vehicle, and other dangerous behaviors that impair the ability to operate a vehicle safely on both roadways and waterways.

**AAIM** supports impaired and distracted driving crash victims and their families emotionally, legally and financially.

**AAIM** encourages community involvement in its programs to make Illinois roadways and waterways safer.

**AAIM** supports strict enforcement of impaired operation laws and the development and enactment of appropriate legislation to ensure safe, sober and responsible driving on Illinois roadways and waterways.





## AAIM PHILOSOPHY

**We** believe that deaths and injuries caused by impaired and distracted driving are not accidents. They are tragic results of willful conduct. The label of “accident” obscures the causative factors of alcohol/substance use/abuse, distraction and other dangerous behaviors resulting in the failure to recognize these actions as intentional and criminal.

**We** believe that being under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or being distracted, does not absolve one of accountability for one's actions. Rather, the lack of accountability develops a climate of irresponsibility, leading to an increase in tragic outcomes.

**We** believe that driving is not a right, but a privilege granted by society to those members who comply with rules established for the good of all; that any benefits an individual derives from driving are secondary to the safety of others; and that the economic impact associated with the loss of driving privileges is the concern only of the individual driver, and should not outweigh the safety of others. Life, not livelihood, is the issue and should be the foremost consideration when sentencing persons guilty of impaired or distracted operation.

**We** believe that law enforcement agencies and the judicial system must continue to be sensitive to the trauma of the victims of impaired or distracted driving to avoid causing further emotional injury and to guard against inequity in the disposition of these prosecutions.

**We** know that impaired or distracted driving is a complex social problem and no simple solution exists. Rather, a multifaceted approach must include elements of education to heighten public awareness, formal education in primary and secondary schools, deterrence through law enforcement, and rehabilitation. Such an approach will require the coordination of public agencies and private organization.

AAIM  
870 E. Higgins Rd. Suite 131  
Schaumburg, IL 60173  
[www.aaim1.org](http://www.aaim1.org)

## THE HONORABLE JESSE WHITE

*Illinois Secretary of State*



Jesse White is Illinois' 37th Secretary of State. White was first elected to the office in 1998 and won landslide victories in 2002, in which he won all 102 counties, and again in 2006 and 2010. On November 4, 2014, White was re-elected for a record-breaking fifth term, winning another landslide victory by a 2-to-1 margin in which he earned over 2.3 million votes statewide – more than 230,000 votes than any other statewide constitutional candidate. White became Illinois' longest serving Secretary of State on May 30, 2014.

The Illinois Secretary of State's office is the largest and most diverse office of its kind in the nation, providing more direct services to the people of Illinois than any other public agency. White's office issues state ID cards, vehicle license plates and titles, registers corporations, enforces the Illinois Securities Act, administers the Organ/Tissue Donor Program, licenses drivers and maintains driver records. As State Librarian, Secretary White oversees the State Library and literacy programs, and as State Archivist, he maintains records of legal or historic value.

Under White's leadership, customer service has been improved through the use of technology as well as modernizing and streamlining operations. Wait times in facilities are shorter than ever before. Illinois has become a national leader in road safety as White strengthened DUI laws, reformed the CDL program and overhauled teen driving guidelines. As a result, traffic fatalities have decreased, with drunk driving deaths down nearly 50 percent and teen driving deaths reduced by 51 percent. In 2014, White was inducted into the Illinois High School & College Driver Education Association Hall of Fame.

## THE HONORABLE JESSE WHITE

Prior to his election as Secretary of State, White served as Cook County Recorder of Deeds – a job to which he was first elected in 1992 and re-elected in 1996. Before that, he served 16 years in the Illinois General Assembly, representing the most culturally, economically and racially diverse district in Illinois.

In 1959, White founded the internationally known Jesse White Tumbling Team to serve as a positive alternative for children residing in and around the Chicago area. Since its inception, more than 17,500 young men and women have performed with the team. White has spent 58 years working as a volunteer with the team to help kids stay away from gangs, drugs, alcohol and smoking, and to help set at-risk youth on the path to success. The program has received international praise. This year the team will have more than 1,500 performances using seven units, consisting of 225 young men and women. Currently, there are 51 members enrolled in college. In 2014, the Chicago Park District opened the Jesse White Community Center and Field House in honor of White's lifelong contributions to the community. In addition, a school in Hazel Crest, Illinois, was recently renamed the Jesse C. White Learning Academy, and a Chicago street was designated Jesse White Way in honor of White.

White served our country as a paratrooper in the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division and as a member of the Illinois National Guard and Reserve. He played professional baseball with the Chicago Cubs organization, which was followed by a 33-year career with the Chicago Public Schools as a teacher and administrator.

Jesse White earned his Bachelor of Science from Alabama State College (now Alabama State University) in 1957, where he was a two-sport athlete earning all-conference honors in baseball and basketball. In May 1995, White was inducted into the Southwestern Athletic Conference Hall of Fame. He was an all-city baseball and basketball player at Chicago's Waller High School (now Lincoln Park High School) and was inducted into the Chicago Public League Basketball Coaches Association Hall of Fame in June 1995. In 1999, he was inducted into the Alabama State University Sports Hall of Fame. Born in Alton, Illinois, he now lives on Chicago's Near North Side. White has two daughters, Glenna and Lorraine, and two grandchildren, Jesse and Susan.

## GUEST SPEAKER AMY BRIERLY



Telling the story of who I am at an event like this is not possible without some context. I am here because of a terrible thing that happened. And because of my mother – who made sure that we didn’t just grieve that terrible thing – but that we did something about it.

My mother Carol Brierly cofounded the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists after my sister Ann was killed by a drunk driver in June 1981.

Ann was the oldest of three children born to Carol and Jack Brierly over four years in the mid-1960s. Ann was the big sister. I was the middle child. My little brother John was the baby.

In the weeks before Ann’s death, she had turned 18 and graduated from New Trier West High School. She won an art scholarship and was excited about starting college at University of Wisconsin to study art therapy. Ann was a force of nature. She was kind, creative, passionate, and full of life.

Although she has been gone for more than 40 years, Ann left an indelible mark on the lives of her family and friends. She is still loved and celebrated. And because people like my mother and Glenn Kalin and others who say “What can I do to help?,” my sister’s spirit lives on and we continue to make this world a better and safer place.

We lost my mom in 2008, but her spirit lives on as well. I followed in her footsteps and work as a public relations consultant and writer. I founded Extra Mile Public Relations in 2007. Extra Mile helps nonprofits and companies tell their stories and increase their visibility.

I have also been involved with several area non-profits as a volunteer. I’ve served as a board director for Vital Bridges and for Heartland Health Outreach, part of Heartland Alliance. For the past four years, I’ve been a volunteer coach for One Million Degrees, an organization that helps community college scholars succeed in school, in work, and in life.

Much to my mother’s delight, I married my longtime partner Greg Gressle in 2006. Greg and I live in Chicago’s Edgewater neighborhood with our dog Simba and three cats.



## GUEST SPEAKER GLENN KALIN



Glenn was born in 1949 in Brooklyn, New York, the oldest of four. In 1953, the family moved to Charlotte, North Carolina, where he finished elementary school. He graduated from Maine East High School after his family moved to the Chicago area in 1962. Glenn earned his Bachelor's degree in English at Notre Dame University in 1971. While at Notre Dame, Glenn was an All-Midwest fencer. While earning his Master's at Northeastern Illinois University, he also taught in the Chicago Public Schools from 1973 to 1980 and then at Lake Forest Country Day School until 2011. In addition, Glenn coached girls' and boys' 7th and 8th-grade volleyball for 30 years. He still plays volleyball every Sunday during the summer.

Glenn became involved with the issue of drunk driving in 1982 after his brother Robert was killed by a drunk driver. Robert was a sophomore at Arizona State University at the time. Forty years ago, people who were injured and killed in impaired crashes were thought of as *being in the wrong place at the wrong time*. Glenn met Carol Golin that same year following the loss of her 18-year-old daughter in a drunk driving crash. Together, they created the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists.

Glenn currently lives in Bettendorf, Iowa, and he has three children: Robert, Michael, and Elise.

## GUEST SPEAKER ANNA RAUNER



Anna Rauner was born and raised in Little Chicago, and she is one of six children, three sisters and two brothers. She has many fond memories of growing up in a large family. Her parents liked to travel with them all in tow. Family breakfast was an event, and Fridays were family night movies and homemade pizza.

Anna met her soulmate, Danny, at the age of 16, they had been dating for only two months, and one night they were sitting outside of his parent's house when he looked at her and said, "you know, one day, I'm going to marry you!"

After nearly twenty years of marriage and a beautiful life, Danny was killed by a drunk driver. It's been four years, and the grief continues to make it difficult to move forward. Anna's favorite pastime is working in her garden and sharing all she knows about the horticultural world.

Anna believes that her faith in God will guide her and give her the strength to find joy again. She is committed to sharing her husband's story and working to prevent any family from going through a tragedy that is so preventable.

## GUEST SPEAKER LEE RAUNER



Lee was born the middle child in Etobicoke, Canada, and has two brothers. She met her husband, Michael, at the age of 15. Michael told her on their second date that he was going to marry her. Lee and Michael married on December 31, 1977, and moved to the United States six months later. They were blessed with two boys, Daniel and Jeremiah. Lee was a stay-at-home mom until her boys were a little older, then worked as a kindergarten teacher's assistant for eight years in a private school. Lee believes that the love and understanding she and her husband had for each other carried them through many wonderful years and life's most difficult times. The most difficult and unbearable was the tragic loss of their youngest son Daniel who a drunk driver killed at the age of 38 on January 19, 2019.

After 45 years of marriage, Lee's husband, Michael, died on December 12, 2020, from COVID complications. Lee recently changed her 27-year career in retail management to work for a local family-owned auto glass business in Rockford. Lee continues to find strength through God, her family, and friends as she travels through her new journey in life and builds *Hope for a New Tomorrow*.

## AAIM BENEFIT COMMITTEE



*Caption: Rita Kreslin, Lauren Armour, Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, Carrie Kilpatrick, Kelly Krenzer, Kathleen Fletcher, Charlie Wooley, and Meg Garcia*

### **Silent Auction Chairpersons:**

*Meg Garcia, Carrie Kilpatrick and Marie DiMaria*

### **Committee**

---

Lauren Armour	Kelly Krenzer
Margaret Borgia	Carrie Kilpatrick
Maxwell Cody	Rita Kreslin
Barb Cutro	Kristina Lawler
Marie Di Maria	Lisa Rogers
Kathleen Fletcher	Bianka Salinas
Samantha Gallagher-Gannon	Marlene Schwerzler
Meg Garcia	Charlie Wooley
Cindy Huerta	Jessica Zinck

## SPONSORS

We would like to thank the following people for their generosity in sponsoring a victim's story in this book:

**Boone Co. State's Attorney - Tricia Smith**

*Sponsoring: Shavon Smith*

**Patti Gustafson**

*Sponsoring: Ketzaly Huerta*

**Sally Hoffman**

*Sponsoring: Theresa Peanut Stanley*

**Carmel and Alan Cottrell**

*Sponsoring: Aric Wooley*

**IL State Representative Maurice West**

*Sponsoring: Mikey Steines*

**Wetoska Packaging Distributors**

*Sponsoring: John Kreslin, Jr.*



## DONORS

**Our gratitude and appreciation to the following  
whose generosity has made this benefit possible.**

### **Platinum (\$5,000 - Up)**

Erin's AAIM for Change -The Olmsted Family  
The YnoT Project – The Borcia Family

### **Diamond (\$1,000 - 4,999)**

Ari and Stephani Briskman

### **Gold (\$500 - \$999)**

Art and Kelly Krenzer

The Nozicka Family  
In Memory of Nancy Nozicka

Dave and Mary Houston

## DONORS CONT.

### Silver (\$100 - \$499)

Jacquelyn and Thomas Anderson

Pam Benitez

In Memory of John Kreslin

Dominic Blasco

Team Braille Incorporated

Celtic Kitchen

Carmela Christensen

Alan and Carmel Cottrell

Barb Cutro

Sharon and Mark Dewart

David and Mary Druker

Sue and John Early

In memory of John Kreslin

Rita and Kenneth Feltz

Cindy and Patrick Finlon

Steve and Heather Fischer

Kathleen Fischer

Michael Fischer

Marci and Steve Friedman

Austin and Samantha Gannon

Jim and Geri Gentile

G.L. Beaumont Lumber

Dan Groth

Zoe and Robert Guidolin

Heartland Bank

Mary Ann and James Hynes

Gene Kalin

Glenn Kalin

Sue & Chuck Kaufman

Kristina Lawler

John Lillig

Jennifer Parrott

McHenry County Road Pirates

McCarrel Photography

Three Plastics

Beatrice Muchman

Jennifer Parrott

Roger Primeau

In Memory of Troy Evers

Lee Rauner

In Memory of Daniel Rauner

Law Offices of Robert Ritacca

Carol Russell

Cathy and Chet Stanley

IL State Representative

Brad Stephens

Joyce Synek

Luke Temperley

Three R Plastics, Inc.

Terri and Steve Titus

Gwendolyn Walker

Nancy Wasily

Karen and Bob Westbrook

Steve Wetoska

In Memory of John Kreslin

Jacob Williams

Charlie and Jerry Wooley

In Memory of Aric Wooley

## DONORS CONT.

### Bronze (UNDER \$100)

Annette and Larry Becker	Mary and Bob Lange
The Blanchard Family	Christopher Markos
Martha Braunstein	In Memory of Tony Borcia
John Caldarella	Francine Modelski
Nasrin and Shamsul Chowdhury	Lynn Nicoara
Jennifer Cifaldi	Shilpa Patel
Karen Coan	Susan and John Psenicka
Cheryl Cullen	Bill and Kathy Riordan
Nicholas Dearing	In Memory of
Susan Ditore	Theresa “Peanut” Stanley
Jeannette and William Eakins	Alfred and Brabara Savino
Jim Esworthy	Ted Salecki
Rosemary and Robert Farrington	Jan and Margaret Schultz
Philip Freeman	Debbie Seyller
Kristin Hartman	Mary Ellen Smith
Heartland Bank	Elizabeth Stalzer
Jennifer and Mark Houtsma	Edward and Patricia Sutarik
Paulette and Anthony Hydzik	Phyllis Swartz
Betsy Johnson	Mary Jane Terpinas
Shelley Kalin	Sue Velichkoff
Kathleen Kinahan	In Memory of Dave Long
Jeanette Kludac	Leonard Wlodarski
Joanne and Albert Krueger	
Mr. and Mrs. Mark LaCroix	

*Our additional thanks to donations received after the printing deadline.*

## 2022 SILENT AUCTION SPONSORS

*We would like to thank the following companies and individuals who supported this event with there generous donation of goods and services.*

ABT – Anne Kennelly	Lettuce Entertain You LLC
ACL Golf Course	Lolo's Bowls
Allstate Arena	Ma & Paw's Pet Treats
Apple Canyon Lake Golf Course	Main Event
Applebee's Grill & Bar - Belvidere	Marengo Animal Hospital
Arbonne	Marlene Schwerzler
Art and Kelly Krenzer	Meg Garcia
Arthur Murray Dance	Milwaukee County Zoo
Barb Cutro	Nancy Easum
Blaum Brothers Distillery	Naperville Hot Yoga
Bone Fish Grill - Schaumburg	Old Chicago Restaurant - Rockford
Carrie Kilpatrick	Ollie Gray Design
Chicago Bears - Kevin McCaskey	Pampered Chef - Amy Bourgeois
Chicago Wolves	Pet Smart
Desoto House	Portillo's
DuEvol Boutique	PRP Wine International
Egg Harbor Café	Ramanda Inn
Elizabeth Earleywine	Rita Kreslin
Fried Green Tomatoes	Sally Hoffman
Gobbies	Samantha & Austin Gannon
Dave & Meg Garcia	Schaumburg Boomers
Goebbert's Winter Wonderland	Marlene Schwerzler
Heavenly Horses	Soaks N' Scrubs
Home Depot	South Paw Pet Grooming, Schaumburg
Honey Jam Café	The Great Frame Up
Jamie Lankford Art	The Schleeauf Family
Jeanine Griffin	Tomori Salon & Spa
Jerry & Charlie Wooley	Traverso's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria
Jim and Geri Gentile	Village Links of Glen Ellyn
JJ & Freddie's	Village of Schaumburg
Kevin Bell	Wetoska Packaging Distribution
Kramer Photography	Wholesome Petz Marengo Pet Supplies
Kristina Lawler	Wines for Humanity
Lake Geneva Cruise Line/ Gage Marine Corp	Woodman's Market
	Zanies Comedy Club

*Our thanks to those contributors whose donations were received after the printing deadline*

## **Special Thanks**

- *Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White as Honorary AAIM guest speaker.*
- *Monsignor Kenneth Velo, for today's invocation.*
- *AAIM co-Founder Glenn Kalin by serving as a guest speaker.*
- *AAIM co-Founder the late Carol Brierly Golin, represented by Carol's daughter Amy Brierly, serving as a guest speaker.*
- *Lee and Anna Rauner, victims of a drunk driving crash, shared their personal stories in the face of tragedy by serving as guest speakers.*
- *Charlie Wooley and Maxwell Cody for donating their time and talent to serve as benefit Master of Ceremonies.*
- *Andrew Bobb Siedelmann, Kramer Photographers.*
- *Meg Garcia, Carrie Kilpatrick, and Marie DiMaria for serving as silent auction chairpersons.*
- *Charlie Wooley for today's centerpieces.*
- *To the benefit committee and all the volunteers for making our virtual event a success— we could never have done it without you.*



## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

*Since 1991, through the generosity of our donors, over \$838,307.00 has been donated to families in a financial crisis due to uninsured and underinsured impaired drivers. Below are some examples of families the AAIM's Victims Assistance Fund assisted financially in the 2022 fiscal year:*

- **In October 2021**, a mother was traveling with two of her three children when a three-time drunk driver struck them in an intersection at a high rate of speed. The mother died at the scene, and her 15-year-old daughter died a few days later. Her five-year-old son was in critical condition but has since recovered from his physical injuries.

The mother's cousin is now the legal guardian of her now six-year-old son. A surviving sibling, who is 21 years old, spends time with his brother every weekend.

Before the crash, the cousin's adult children were supporting her. The extra expenses she gained since the crash has strained her financially. Her rent is subsidized through the "Scattered Base Program." Thankfully, she was not in jeopardy of losing her home.

The AAIM advocate learned the child needed a bed, a dresser, and clothes. Her adult children helped with her financial responsibilities while waiting for disability for her physical and medical issues. AAIM provided funds to purchase a new bed and dresser for her cousin's son and a Walmart gift card for groceries and school clothes.

- **January 2019**, an impaired driver traveling over 100 mph rear-ended a 38-year-old man who was stopped at a red light, killing the man instantly. The victim was the sole source of income for their household, as his wife hadn't worked in more than eight years. She was unable to afford funeral expenses, as they had no savings. A Go Fund Me account was set up to pay funeral expenses. She took a job part-time after her husband was killed until she would be able to work full time. She is overwhelmed with grief and has started attending the grief group with her mother-in-law. Her in-laws have been trying to assist her with daily living expenses the best they can. She has been having trouble paying her utilities, as well as having money for daily expenses such as food and toiletries. This has added a heavy burden on her, at a most difficult time. ***The AAIM Fund*** paid for utilities for three months and provided a gift card for food and necessities.
- **February 2018**, a 23-year-old woman and her boyfriend were struck by an impaired driver. The victim suffered a crushed pelvis, lacerated liver, and a collapsed lung from the impact of the crash. She was in a wheelchair for months, then used a walker and now walks with a severe limp. She has been told she will always have pain and not regain her ability to walk normally. She recently was told that she suffered neurological issues from the crash, causing her to have

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

tremors in her limbs. She was also told that she suffered from an undiagnosed brain injury incurred from the crash, which causes her to not comprehend even simple instructions. Her boyfriend suffered bumps and bruises from the crash and took care of her after the crash. They are currently renting a house together. She opened a cleaning business with her sister, but the physical toll left her in constant pain, and she had a falling out with her sister. She has had a string of jobs and was feeling positive about moving forward prior to COVID-19. Since the pandemic, she has lost her daycare and waitressing jobs. She has a dream to get her GED, which would help her get a decent job. She suffers from depression since the crash and needs counseling. She's struggling to pay rent, buy groceries, toiletries, simple necessities, winter clothes, is behind on utility bills and other expenses. *The AAIM Fund* paid past due utility bills, car insurance, GED test fees, counseling sessions and provided gift cards for gas, groceries, toiletries and necessities.

- **February 2019**, a 33-year-old was on his way home when his car was struck by a vehicle that ran a red light. The victim was injured badly with broken ribs, knee damage, loss of smell and taste and he lost sight in his left eye. Due to his injuries from the crash, he's had to take extended time off from work to get to her many doctor appointments. Since the beginning of this summer, *The AAIM Fund* paid for physical therapy and gift cards for Uber for transportation.
- **February 2017**, an impaired driver ran a red traffic signal and struck two vehicles. The 20-year-old victim was in the second vehicle. Both the victim and offender had to be extricated from their vehicles. The victim was taken to the hospital, where she later died from her injuries. The victim left behind a two-year-old daughter; whose father didn't want custody of her. The victim's mother and brother were living with the victim who was helping to pay rent, utilities and daily living expenses at the time of the crash. The victim's mother had just gotten married and was getting ready to live with her new husband and son, but the crash changed everything. She is now single and has full custody of her granddaughter. She applied for social security and food stamps for her granddaughter but was denied. Her granddaughter's father was paying for daycare but decided he doesn't want to pay any longer. She is working full time to support her family and trying to do the best she can. Her granddaughter can't start kindergarten this year, due to her birthday being in October. The government pays a portion of the daycare, but there still is a portion left unpaid. *The AAIM Fund* has paid for the portion of the daycare costs for 12 months that the government doesn't cover.
- **September 2019**, a 17-year-old young man who had autism, was walking home and while crossing the street was struck by a vehicle that didn't stop. Witnesses saw the vehicle hit the young man and called 911. Meanwhile, a second vehicle struck the young man causing him to die at the scene. The young man lived with his grandmother, who was his legal guardian and caretaker. She had adopted him

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

and received money for his care from the State. His grandmother is disabled and unable to work. She has lost half of her income since her grandson's death and was unable to pay her monthly rent in its entirety, get housing assistance or get her car repaired. Due to this, she has decided to move out of her apartment and move in with her mother to help ease her financial burdens. She fractured her leg and was unable to continue packing and moving boxes. *The AAIM Fund* paid to have her car repaired, new tires, gift cards for necessities and packing and moving expenses.

- **March 2019**, a 32-year-old woman was a passenger in a vehicle driven by an intoxicated driver. The driver was driving at a high rate of speed when he lost control of the vehicle. The 32-year-old-woman died at the scene and another passenger in the backseat was badly injured and had to have her leg amputated. The 32-year-old's mother was extremely depressed after losing her daughter. She was unable to work for four months and at the time of the crash her husband was on leave from work due to a broken leg. She had no money coming in and his salary was reduced to 50%, causing them to fall behind on bills. They also had to pay her daughter's funeral expenses out of pocket. *The AAIM Fund* paid for past due utility charges.
- **March 2018**, a 36-year-old woman was walking across the street in a crosswalk, when the offender ran a red light, striking a car that had the right-of-way, then striking her and lastly a traffic signal pole. The victim suffered head, neck and leg injuries and was taken to the hospital. The victim has been in physical therapy, but her injuries to her leg and knee weren't getting any better. She got a second opinion and it was found that she had additional injuries to her leg that had not been seen previously. She had surgery on her knee and leg, but unfortunately, she couldn't pursue her dream. Prior to the crash she had finished nursing school and moved back to Illinois to pursue her dream of nursing. She lost her nursing job shortly after her surgery, as she couldn't be on her feet for long periods of time. She got a part-time job to try to get caught up on her bills, but her doctor limits her to how many consecutive hours she can work. Her job hasn't been accommodating to her constraints and so they let her go. She moved in with her mother, but that isn't working out and she's trying to find someplace else to stay. She is behind on her phone bill and is fearful of it being shut off, as it is her lifeline for trying to find a place to live and a job. The crash has taken a toll on her mentally as well. She is currently seeing a counselor for anxiety and depression as a result of the crash. *The AAIM Fund* paid the past due phone bill and provided a gas card.
- **February 2007**, an 18-year-old woman was asleep in the backseat of her aunt's van when they were abruptly struck head-on by a wrong way impaired driver. She survived the crash but continues to battle many health problems. She is paralyzed from the waist down as a result of the crash. She lives in her home with her daughter. Due to the crash, she has lost the ability to work. The minimal

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

settlement that she received is in trust for her long-term medical care. She is driving a van with 100,000+ miles, and it recently needs extensive repair work. Due to the cost of the repair, she was faced with the possibility of losing her independence of being able to drive, take herself to doctor appointments or even drive her daughter to school and events. **The AAIM Fund** assisted The Y-noT Project who donated a large amount of funding to purchase a new used handicap van for this young woman. The Y-noT Project is a non-profit organization honoring Tony Borcia who was killed by an impaired boater; the group is dedicated to stopping intoxicated boaters. [www.ynotproject.com](http://www.ynotproject.com)

- **August 2019**, a 40-year-old woman was driving her cousin's vehicle and had four passengers in the vehicle; two of the passengers were children under the age of seven. A vehicle driven by an impaired driver travelling at a high rate of speed crossed the solid yellow line and struck the 40-year-old woman's vehicle head-on. One of the passengers died, the owner of the vehicle was taken into surgery, the children were taken to a trauma center, as well as the woman driver. The woman driver missed work due to the crash and lost her job. She has no health insurance and is behind on paying her tuition. She wants to attend counseling, but her situation is making it difficult. She is currently working part-time. **The AAIM Fund** has paid for counseling sessions.
- **August 2019**, a 37-year-old woman was a passenger in her vehicle that her cousin was driving and had 3 other passengers as well in the vehicle; two of the passengers were children under the age of seven. A vehicle driven by an impaired driver traveling at a high rate of speed crossed the solid yellow line and struck the vehicle head-on. One of the passengers died, the driver of the vehicle was taken to the trauma center, as well as the children. The 37-year-old woman was taken into surgery suffering from broken bones, fractures, dislocated hand/wrist and had an operation on her abdomen. She was attending school on a visa specifically for working towards her master's degree. She was able to work according to the limitations of her visa prior to the crash. Since the crash, she has lost her job and is unable to find one to satisfy the work limitations of the visa. She is without a vehicle, unable to finish her current course for school and still owes her school fees for the semester. She is currently renting a room, but is unable to afford groceries, cell phone bill and the rent. She wants to attend counseling, but her situation makes it difficult. **The AAIM FUND** has paid for rent, cell phone bill and counseling.
- **January 2019**, a 38 -year-old man was sitting at a stoplight when he was rear-ended at 100mph by a drunk driver, killing him instantly. His parents assisted his grieving wife by using their savings to help with household and auto repairs while she was looking for a job. They also paid for their son's funeral expenses. They were dealing with crippling grief in addition to the financial strain. The victim's mother was unable to work due to her emotional state. The father had to have a kidney transplant and was unable to work. Unfortunately, they both

## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

contracted COVID. The father lost his job and benefits; the mother wanted to be near her husband when he was in hospital, so working was sporadic. The mother recovered, but the father was in the hospital on a ventilator. Sadly, he passed away. She is needing help with her mortgage and utility bills. *The AAIM Fund* was able to pay her mortgage for three months and her utility bills.

- **June 2010**, an 18-year-old woman went out with friends to celebrate her 18th birthday. She and her three friends went to see a movie. The driver of the vehicle stopped to buy a bottle of vodka after seeing the movie and headed to the beach. On the way home he crashed into a tree killing two passengers. The mother has had a struggle ever since her death, living on limited income and supporting two other daughters. Her oldest daughter lost her job due to COVID and isn't able to contribute to household expenses or rent. They are currently living in a hotel, which another family member is paying for weekly, since they got evicted from their last apartment. She has found an apartment where the landlord is willing to work with her on the rent, let her move in early at no extra cost and even provide her with furniture. They need help with rent and purchasing two new beds. *The AAIM Fund* was able to pay two months rent and purchase two queen size beds.
- **In August 2006**, at 4:45 AM a young father who delivered newspapers was headed to work. He was in front of his apartment when his car stalled. He went back inside to get his dad so he could jump-start his vehicle. When a drunk driver came around the corner, he and his father were working on the car. The young father pushed his dad out of the way but he was unable to avoid being hit. Since the crash his wife has been the sole provider for her family because his leg was crushed. He had diabetes and never completely recovered from his leg injury. His kidneys were damaged in the crash, which also caused complications in healing. Eventually, he was put on dialysis. In addition, he suffered infections in his foot that never completely healed. In 2012, they amputated part of his foot. On **May 30, 2022**, he was hospitalized and put on a ventilator; his organs failed. After a long 16-year journey of treatment, setbacks, and healing, he passed away on June 22, 2022, at 49 years old. They had two children, their daughter, now an adult, and their son who just turned 17 years old. The grandmother, who lived with them and helped pay rent, passed away three months earlier. The ripple effect continues to plague this family.

*The AAIM Fund* assisted with the memorial service, paying one month rent, utilities, auto loan, insurance, and groceries.



## WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP AAIM HELP THE VICTIMS OF DUI CRASHES?

- Ask your employer if they are willing to match funds to our organization for contributions of another sponsor or donor at an AAIM event
- Volunteer your garage for an AAIM garage sale
- Host a donated jewelry sale
- Ask your favorite merchant (spa, salon, grocery store, etc.) to sponsor a coupon day where 10% of each coupon holder's purchase goes to AAIM
- Ask a friend or colleague interested in fundraising or with public relations experience to consider joining AAIM's board or benefit committee
- Shop Amazon Smile and designate AAIM as your charity
- Organize a team to participate in a Run/Walk and designate AAIM as your charity
- Ask a teenager if they would like to earn their service hours by volunteering to help with an AAIM event

**AAIM Board Members are ready to help you organize, staff, and promote these events! If you're considering helping out or have other ideas, please contact the AAIM office: 847-240-0027.**

## 2022 AAIM BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### MEET THE BOARD

AAIM board members held prestigious positions on many civic and governmental boards including the Illinois Drug Education Alliance, The Regional Prevention Group, the Coalition for Reform of DUI Laws, the National Safety Council, the Illinois Traffic Safety Leaders, and the IDOT DUI Advisory Council. Furthermore, board members are often called upon to speak at local, state and national conferences.

AAIM Board members have been written about in People Magazine, Reader's Digest, many newspapers, and have appeared on 20/20, Oprah, and various television talk shows and news reports.



**Charles Nozicka**  
**President**  
Physician



**Kathryn Fischer**  
**Vice-President**  
Investment Banker



**Rita Kreslin**  
**Secretary**  
AAIM Executive Director



**Shelly Anderson**  
Retired Insurance Executive



**Ari Briskman**  
Law Enforcement Officer

## 2022 AAIM BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEET THE BOARD



**Bob Cebrynski**  
Retired IRS Agent



**Maxwell Cody**  
Sales



**Elizabeth Earleywine**  
Attorney  
AAIM Governmental  
Affairs Committee



**Patrick Finlon**  
Law Enforcement  
Officer



**Dan Groth**  
Attorney



**Ron Harper**  
Retired Law  
Enforcement Officer



**Glenn Kalin**  
Retired Teacher  
AAIM Co-founder



**Tami O'Brien**  
Business Office



**Terry Vandergrift**  
Retired Law Enforcement  
AAIM Governmental Affairs  
Committee

## AAIM STAFF



***Executive Director***

Rita Kreslin



***Director of Victim Services***

Jessica Zinck

***Executive Assistant***

Anita Huvaere

***Administrative Assistant***

Marlene Schwerzler

***Victim Service Advocates***

Lauren Armour  
Margaret Borcia  
Kathleen Fletcher

Cindy Huerta  
Carrie Kilpatrick  
Kelly Krenzer

***Court Monitor Program***

Lisa Rogers, *Director*

***Court Monitors***

Barb Cutro  
Tracy Lorence  
Bonnie Marshall  
Carol Russell  
Kay Rivera

Bianka Salinas  
Ivan Salina  
Cathy Stanley  
Joyce Synek

***Prevention and Education***

Samantha Gallagher-Gannon

***Program Support Specialist***

Kristina Lawler

**ANGEL OF AAIM AWARD**

The Angel of AAIM Award is given to someone who has made exceptional contributions to the work of AAIM.

In all areas of business and organizations, there are always some people who do much of the work without getting much of the credit. We all know who they are – they are the glue that holds us together, the organizer that helps us get where we want to go, the historian who reminds us of the battles fought in previous years and even many years ago, they provide the memory that reminds us of the issues not yet resolved, they are the ones who continue the fight despite many, many setbacks.

They are also the ones who most often stay in the background, they are the ones who oversee all the papers and reports and staff required for our success, the ones who nominate others for awards, the ones who choose others as spokespersons.

They are the ones without whom “we” other traffic safety enthusiasts and leaders would surely struggle even more. They are the ones who are most essential to our work.

**Past Angel of AAIM Award Recipients**

Charlene Chapman.....	2009
Pat Larson.....	2010
Alan Krashesky .....	2012
Cathy Stanley .....	2018



*From left Charlene Chapman, Alan Krashesky  
and Pat Larson*



*Cathy Stanley*



**SHEILA FORSNER AWARD  
FOR OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEER SERVICE**



Sheila Forsner

**“No one is useless  
in this world who  
lightens the  
burden of it for  
anyone else.”**

— Charles Dickens



Alex Forsner

Sheila, her husband, stepson and baby were traveling to our mom's house when they were hit by a drunk driver. Three and half month old Alex, although strapped into his car seat, was killed instantly by the impact. Sheila's stepson remained in a coma for several days and recovered physically over the following several months. Sheila's husband remained conscious throughout, witnessing the unimaginable destruction of his family caused by one man's choice to drive while intoxicated and impaired by alcohol and drugs.

Sheila remained in a coma for several months and, over the next five years, faced not only the intense grief of losing her son, her independence and the life she had with her family, she also faced the myriad of challenges caused by the traumatic brain injury (TBI) she sustained in the crash. She endured countless hours of physical, occupational and speech therapies. She had to re-learn many of the things we take for granted: how to literally breathe again after being taken off of a ventilator, how to eat, how to talk and find the most effective way to be understood as a result of her speech impairment, how to use the very limited movement she fought to regain in order to be as independent as possible. This consisted mainly of using her right arm as the TBI affected all of her motor skills and left her virtually a quadriplegic. She faced so many trips to the hospital as a result of complications due to her injuries, went into kidney failure and had to go on dialysis. Sheila died before she could receive the kidney transplant that had been scheduled.

A drunk and drug impaired driver killed Alex, Sheila's first child, our parent's first grandchild and our first nephew (in a family of six girls!). Alex

## **SHEILA FORSNER AWARD**

was with us for what seems like the blink of any eye but his smile and ability to make others smile and feel such overwhelming love spans the years since the crash and defies the passage of time. One man's choice decimated so many lives but ultimately did not take away Sheila's independent character, strength, humor and compassion. These are the memories we keep of Sheila and Alex. There have been many additions to our family, nieces and nephews Sheila never met and who never had the chance to know Sheila. Alex will never know his older brothers and his cousins; his cousins will never know him. We talk about Sheila and Alex so the children in our family who never met them will know their names, hear about their lives so they can have the opportunity to have a sense of who they were and to know they are an integral part of the tapestry of our family. Sheila's work with AAIM and her work with Pat Larson, which was so important to and valued by Sheila, resonate to this day and her family is so honored every year with the presentation of the Sheila Forsner Award. Sheila often told me that if, through her work with AAIM, she could prevent just one person from going through what she and her family experienced, then she would feel she had contributed something very worthwhile.

**I believe she succeeded in her mission.**

**Patrice Heelan (Sheila's sister)**

## **Dr. Charles Nozicka**

### **Recipient of the Sheila Forsner Award**

*This award is given in memory of Sheila Forsner who rose above her own tragedy and triumphed in educating and inspiring others.*



In 2014, Chuck contacted AAIM with an interest in traffic safety, risky adolescent behavior, and a passion to advocate for responsible driving. Being a pediatric emergency room physician, he had taken care of too many victims of intoxicated motorists. So, Chuck became an AAIM Board member. Without hesitation, he jumped into public speaking and assisting with the AAIM grief support group. Representing AAIM, he's presented to hundreds of parents and students about the dangers of underage drinking, substance misuse, the parental influence on the use of alcohol, and provided expert brain research on the effects of alcohol on the developing teenage brain. In addition, he gives open discussions on proven skills to prevent the tragedies of impaired driving and underage drinking.

Chuck spends countless hours volunteering his time, working community events that bring awareness to victims' rights, and assists in raising funds for needy crash victims suffering financial hardship.

Chuck's work and life-saving efforts pave the way for safer roads in Illinois and will definitely contribute to future safe travels for his four young grandchildren.

Congratulations, Chuck!



*Meg Garcia*



*Gary "Bogie" Bogolin*

*From left: Shelly Anderson, Bob Cebzynski, Chet Stanley, Gerry Olmsted, Rita Kreslin, and Charlie Wooley.*

*Cindy Huerta, Claudia Corrigan, Sandy Olmsted, and Heather Lopez.*

## Past Sheila Forsner Award Recipients

<i>Cathy Armstrong</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>Joel Mains</i>	<i>2010</i>
<i>Nancy Foy</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>Bob Cebzynski</i>	<i>2011</i>
<i>Twyla Blakely</i>	<i>1999</i>	<i>Claudia Corrigan</i>	<i>2012</i>
<i>Sally Hoffman</i>	<i>2000</i>	<i>Randy Lounds</i>	<i>2013</i>
<i>Linda Irwin</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>Lisa Lilly</i>	<i>2014</i>
<i>Bill Crowley</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>The Olmsted Family</i>	<i>2015</i>
<i>Dave Perozzi</i>	<i>2003</i>	<i>Margaret Borcia</i>	<i>2016</i>
<i>Pam Kelleher</i>	<i>2004</i>	<i>Heather Lopez</i>	<i>2017</i>
<i>Shelly Anderson</i>	<i>2005</i>	<i>Leeslyee Huerta</i>	<i>2018</i>
<i>Charlie Wooley</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>Doug Petit</i>	<i>2019</i>
<i>Rita Kreslin</i>	<i>2007</i>	<i>Meg Garcia</i>	<i>2020</i>
<i>Chet Stanley</i>	<i>2008</i>	<i>Gary "Bogie" Bogolin</i>	<i>2021</i>
<i>Lucy Romero</i>	<i>2009</i>		

## THE DIANE MAINS AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING VICTIM WITNESS ASSISTANCE



*Diane Mains and her daughter Caitlin Weese*

AAIM developed an award in memory of Diane Mains to be presented to a State's Attorney's Victim Witness Assistance Representative for outstanding dedication to the needs of impaired driving crash victims and their families. Diane Mains, an AAIM victim advocate, died unexpectedly after heart surgery in August 2006. The recipient of this award will be determined each year by AAIM victim advocates.

Diane's seventeen-year-old daughter, Caitlin, was killed by a drunk driver a week before her high school graduation in 2003. Diane turned her horrific sorrow into action by volunteering for AAIM and speaking at Victim Impact Panels to court DUI offenders. These panels are one way that crash victims and their families work to educate arrested drunk drivers about the impact of drinking and driving tragedies. Diane also spoke to high school students throughout the area as part of AAIM's pre-prom prevention programs. Ultimately, Diane became a part-time victim advocate for AAIM in 2005 and was instrumental in developing a working relationship with the McHenry and Lake County State's Attorneys.

In all of her efforts, Diane championed the cause of justice for the victims of impaired driving crashes. In honor and memory of Diane, AAIM is pleased to present the Diane Mains Award to acknowledge outstanding courtroom work assisting the victims of these crimes.

## ANNIE PURTELL

### RECIPIENT OF THE DIANE MAINS AWARD 2022

**Annie Purtell**

**Victim Witness Specialist**

**Cook County State's Attorney's Office**

**26th & California**



While in college, I knew that working in the criminal justice system was something I wanted to pursue. I was just not sure in what aspect. When I was hired for my first job, it was working in a Juvenile Detention Facility in Lake County, Illinois. I worked there for three years and gained knowledge and valuable experience to help me see where my next career move would take me. I left the facility to pursue a master's degree in social work from Aurora University. During my master's program, I interned with a school and a residential treatment program. Then, my decision to pursue a job in the criminal justice system took flight. After completing my master's, I was hired to work for the Cook County State's Attorney's Office at 26th and California. This office has employed me for 15 years, which has led to a plethora of experience. I began my career with the office working in the Complex Homicide and Gang Unit. I was the specialist who worked with surviving family members of gang homicides and media-related cases. I was in that unit for 11 years. I was then rotated into a position of a specialist in the Homicide and Sexual Assault Unit. I was there for 2 years advocating for families and victims. I have been in my current position for 2 years, working in 4 courtrooms within the Felony Trial Division. My current position has led me to work with a large spectrum of cases, many being victims of alcohol-related crashes. I was thrilled when I encountered amazing AAIM advocates who helped me with added support that my families needed and helped me become a better advocate.

I still believe that advocacy was something that I would find fulfilling and necessary within the climate of the times. I feel blessed and fortunate to work with amazing victims and their families on this difficult journey and to help navigate them through the criminal justice system.

*We are proud to award Annie with the Diane Mains Award.*

*Respectfully submitted by AAIM Victim Advocates*



## NATALEE SCHROEDER

### RECIPIENT OF THE DIANE MAINS AWARD 2022

**Natalee Schroeder**  
**Victim Witness Service Provider**  
**Winnebago County State's Attorney's**  
**Office**

Natalee Schroeder has been working with crime victims at the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office since October 2016. She currently holds the position of victim service provider and team lead. She provides services to victims and witnesses in our community, as well as supervising the victim service provider unit. A victim service provider/witness coordinator provides advocacy, resources, information, and support to victims of crime and witnesses.



Natalee offers knowledge and compassion to victims in our community each and every day and is very dedicated to her work. She works with many survivors of domestic violence, gun violence, sexual violence, families of murdered victims, and victims of intoxicated and distracted drivers. She advises victims and families of their rights under the Crime Victims' Rights Act, helps navigate them through the criminal justice process, attends court proceedings, coordinates support, and makes referrals to services to help with the healing process.

Prior to accepting her position in the Winnebago County State's Attorney's Office, Natalee provided direct services as a residential coordinator and legal advocate at Rockford's local domestic violence organization, Remedies Renewing Lives. She has been providing advocacy to survivors in our community for the last 9 years. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Criminal Justice from Rasmussen College in 2015.

*We are proud to award Natalee with the Diane Mains Award.*

*Respectfully submitted by AAIM Victim Advocates*

## OUTSTANDING ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY



**Conor Woods**

**Cook County Assistant State's Attorney  
2nd Municipal District Skokie Courthouse**

Conor Woods began working as a prosecutor at the Skokie Courthouse in November 2020. Prior to becoming an Assistant State's Attorney, he graduated Magna Cum Laude from Notre Dame Law School in 2020. During law school, Conor won academic awards for Legal Writing, Legal Research, Federal Criminal Practice, and Trial Advocacy. He was also awarded the A. Harold Weber Moot Court Competition Award.

During law school, Conor was a judicial intern for Judge Matthew Kennelly of the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. Two semesters as a law clerk in the Domestic Violence Division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office.

As an Assistant State's Attorney, Conor prosecutes a wide range of misdemeanor offenses, including DUIs. During his tenure, he has successfully prosecuted trials for both drug and alcohol related DUI offenses. With every case, Conor's primary concern is to make our community safer. Often this comes in the form of making sure that the defendant gets the help they need so that they never find themselves in the criminal justice system again. ASA Woods feels honored and humbled to represent the people of Illinois everyday in his crusade to keep their communities safer and save lives.

*ASA Woods' diligence and dedication is shown in the courtroom. The impact of the effort put into each, and every case can be heard in his meticulously constructed statements when presenting his cases in the courtroom. Mr. Woods studies each of his prosecution cases thoroughly and utilizes this knowledge to achieve empathy from the Judge and/or Jury which often results in a guilty verdict and stringent sentencing. In return there is reduced recidivism, lives saved, and our streets are safer.*

## PAST AWARD RECIPIENTS

### VICTIM WITNESS AND ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEYS

#### **Diane Mains Award for Outstanding Victim Witness**

2007 - Joan Dolan – Maywood Courthouse  
2008 - Pamela Walker – 26th & California Courthouse  
2009 - Isabel Martinez – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2010 - Iliana McKittrick – Skokie Courthouse  
2011 - Patty Gonzalez – 26th & California Courthouse  
2012 - Roberta Lewis – Markham Courthouse  
2013 - Debbie Vanderwall – Lake County Courthouse  
2014 - Barb Stone – Winnebago Courthouse  
2014 - DuPage County Victim Witness Unit  
2015 - Nichole Pasteris – Will County Courthouse  
2015 - Linda Roman – Markham Courthouse  
2016 - Evelyn Velez – 26th & California Courthouse  
2016 - Jody Miller – Winnebago Courthouse  
2017 - Edith Hernandez – Maywood Courthouse  
2017 - Michelle Bradford-White – Markham Courthouse  
2018 - Silvia Cruz – Kendall County Courthouse  
2018 - Vicki Surman – Grundy County Courthouse  
2019 - Maria Collazo – Maywood Courthouse  
2020 - Patricia Burns – Markham Courthouse  
2021 - Jessica Gil – Will County Courthouse  
2021 - Lori Smith – 26th & California Courthouse  
2022 - Annie Purtell – 26th & California Courthouse  
2022 - Natalee Schroeder – Winnebago Courthouse

#### **Outstanding State's Attorneys**

2007 - Paul Chevlin – 26th & California Courthouse  
2007 - Mike Deno – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2007 - Mike Fitzgerald – Will County Courthouse  
2007 - Helen Kapas – DuPage County Courthouse  
2007 - Donna Kelly – McHenry County Courthouse  
  
2008 - Nancy Galassini – 26th & California Courthouse  
2008 - Deborah Lang Lawler – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2008 - Mark Shlifka – 26th & California Courthouse  
2008 - Steve Sims – Kane County Courthouse  
  
2009 - David Bayer – DuPage County Courthouse  
2009 - Kathy Lanahan – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2009 - Jim Newman – Lake County Courthouse  
  
2010 - Michael Baker – Daley Center Courthouse  
2010 - Scott Clark – 26th & California Courthouse  
2010 - Michael Clarke – Rolling Meadows Courthouse  
2010 - Peter Troy – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2011 - Mohammad Almad – Rolling Meadows Courthouse

**Outstanding State's Attorneys continued**

- 2011 - James P. Byrne Jr. – 26th & California Courthouse  
2011 - Catherine Crowley – Skokie Courthouse  
2011 - Mary Ann Jennings – Bridgeview Courthouse  
2012 - Brittney Rae Burns – Maywood Courthouse  
2012 - Mary Cronin – DuPage County Courthouse  
2012 - Ari Fisz – Lake County Courthouse  
2012 - Maureen O'Brien – Maywood Courthouse  
2012 - Robert Zalud – McHenry County Courthouse  
2013 - Frank Byers – Will County Courthouse  
2013 - Nick D 'Angelo – Markham Courthouse  
2013 - Renee Dehn – Miller – Winnebago County Courthouse  
2013 - Nancy Galassini – 26th & California Courthouse  
2013 - Christina Kye – Skokie Courthouse  
2013 - Laura Leahy – Daley Center Courthouse  
2014 - Adam W. Delderfield – Maywood Courthouse  
2014 - Dan Groth – Maywood Courthouse  
2014 - Kyle Klukas – Grundy County Courthouse  
2014 - Michael J. Ori – Lake County Courthouse  
2014 - David Shin – Rolling Meadows Courthouse  
2015 - Torrie Corbin – Markham Courthouse  
2015 - Michael Gerber – Rolling Meadows Courthouse  
2015 - Jason Grindel – Lake County Courthouse  
2015 - Renee Thibault – Daley Center Courthouse  
2015 - Demetri Tsilimigras – McHenry County Courthouse  
2016 - John T. Gibbons – McHenry County Courthouse  
2016 - Dominique R. Marshall – Maywood Courthouse  
2016 - Debbie Mills – Will County Courthouse  
2016 - Martin Moore – 26th & California Courthouse  
2016 - Michael N. Pattarozzi – 26th & California Courthouse  
2017 - Caitlin Casey – Maywood Courthouse  
2017 - Michael Falagario – Skokie Courthouse  
2017 - Regina Mescall – Markham Courthouse  
2017 - Kathleen Rowe – DuPage County Courthouse  
2018 - Susan Caraher – Markham Courthouse  
2018 - Jennifer Gadow – Winnebago County Courthouse  
2018 - Shilpa Patel – Rolling Meadows Courthouse  
2018 - Kim Przekota – Skokie Courthouse  
2020 - Mary Cole – Lake County Courthouse  
2020 - Desiree Sierens - Boone County Courthouse  
2021 - Christopher Menich – Daley Center Courthouse  
2021 - Alice O'Connell – Daley Center Courthouse  
2021 - Joy Eleanor Tolbert Nelson – Maywood Courthouse  
2022 - Conor Woods – Skokie Courthouse



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground shows large green leaves and bright yellow petals of several sunflowers in sharp focus.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

AAIM's Story

**ANN BRIERLY STORY**  
**1963 - 1981**

**Out of Tragedy Can Come Positive Action**  
**How AAIM Came to be...**



The imagined sounds continually rise to the surface of my consciousness - tires squealing on the pavement, the reverberating clash of metal on metal, the screams, then silence. From a window, someone has heard and called for help. Sirens pierce the nights, headlights fall upon the bodies of three crumpled teenagers tossed helter-skelter across the intersection. One girl is dead; another is dying. The boy can't move; he has a broken neck. From a second car, another nineteen-year-old boy emerges, holding his broken arm. He has run a red

light at a high speed, broadsiding a Toyota, sending its occupants flying from their vehicle. Now he is swearing, incoherent and terribly, terribly drunk.

The dead girl is my daughter, Amy Brierly, three weeks past her eighteenth birthday, one week past her high school graduation. My oldest child – bright, funny, a talented artist and musician – enrolled at the University of Wisconsin on an art scholarship just two days before the crash.

In June 1981, Ann and her friend Lilich Shazar, a foreign student, and only child, died in Antioch, Illinois. The typical reaction during the 1980's was, "Oh, how awful, but those things happen." Such things were happening in Illinois all right, with astounding frequency. In "Blood Border", straddling the Illinois and Wisconsin state lines, there were over 65 drunk driving deaths that occurred in less than three years, death usually resulting because Wisconsin's legal drinking age was 18, 21 in Illinois. Under-age drinkers flocked to Wisconsin bars then tried to drive home, sometimes with devastating consequences.

It wasn't just in "Blood Border" that drunk drivers were killing and maiming hundreds of people every year. Half the driving deaths in Illinois were alcohol-related and the state's record on dealing with drunk drivers was one of the worst in the nation. The wide media attention given by this case brought a phone call from Lake Forest school teacher Glenn Kalin, grieving over the death of his brother Rob who was killed by a drunk driver. "Let's do something about this," Glenn said, and so we did.



## ANN BRIERLY STORY

### **Out of Tragedy Can Come Positive Action How AAIM Came to be...**

In April 1982, we called a meeting at Glenn's school and invited people that were concerned about the drunk driving problem. People that lost loved ones, paramedics, police officers and coroners that were tired of picking up the dead and injured off the highways, then watching drunk drivers walk away in court with little to no repercussions. These were the people that built AAIM.

We shared a painful bond as drunk driving victims and we also shared something else, a determination to stop the killing. During the first few meetings, our mission, philosophy and priorities became clear. We needed to create greater awareness among Illinoisans that drunk driving is a crime and that there are no drunk driving "accidents". More importantly, we needed to tighten the laws, build in stiffer penalties and assure that courts would prosecute those penalties and they would be imposed upon conviction. We needed to work with Wisconsin to achieve a legal drinking age of 21 in that state. And, we needed to provide emotional, legal and sometimes financial support to victims.

There were no other drunk driving organizations in Illinois in 1982. AAIM was the first citizen's group to take on the drunk driving issue and found a strong legislative champion in Governor Jim Edgar and Secretary of State George Ryan. Governor Edgar created a citizens task force to develop and integrate an approach to the problem

Now, 39 years later, AAIM continues to work to keep impaired drivers off the roads and bring awareness to the dangers of underage drinking. AAIM has led the way and set the standard for citizen action and organizational leadership in Illinois. Those standards are difficult for a volunteer organization to maintain, but maintain them we will – with your help. The tragic toll of intoxicated and irresponsible driving is still much too high; for this is a job that isn't, and may never, be finished. We do it gladly in remembrance of those we lost, and in the fervent hope that neither you nor anyone you will love will ever be a victim of an impaired driving crash.

Carol Brierly Golin  
AAIM

## THE ROBERT KALIN STORY



My nineteen year old brother, Robert, was a sophomore at Arizona State University. He loved racquetball, skiing and campus life. He was instrumental in forming an organization that provided nighttime escorts to coeds between classes, after a friend was assaulted on campus. Robert attended ASU because our sister, Shelley moved out to live in the Phoenix area. Robert wanted to be near Shelley. Robert and Shelley spent much time together, since he worked at her Cutlery World store.

On January 13, 1982, I received a middle of the night phone call telling me that Robert had been killed in a car crash. Shelley's everyday life was completely shattered. Following the funeral, I took Shelley to visit the Arizona State Capitol. As I'd had previous political experience, I immediately felt the need to take action against drunk drivers. I took Shelley along to show her how citizens can take a direct approach to issues. We visited every key member of the Arizona House and Senate. Shelley took this experience and formed the first chapter of MADD in the state of Arizona. I returned to Illinois where, thanks to a letter to the editor of a local paper, I was introduced to Carol Golin. Carol had been researching drunk driving issues since her daughter, Ann, had been killed the previous June. Carol and I decided that it was time for action in Illinois.

As we did research, we found that there wasn't a MADD chapter in Illinois. We considered joining MADD and called a meeting of interested citizens in May 1982. After several meetings, we concluded that forming a chapter of MADD would restrict our opportunities to have the most impact. We wouldn't control our monies and would be subject to rules that were adopted in California.

The name AAIM, the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists, was adopted. Early members such as Dave Osborn, Louie Greenwald and Jeff Lyons helped guide AAIM's beginnings. Other people were instrumental in our goal to rid Illinois highways of drunk drivers....Secretary of State Jim Edgar, Lake County State's Attorney Fred Foreman (now a Lake County judge) and Deputy Secretary of State Wayne Anderson (now a federal judge). It was through the efforts of these and many other supporters that AAIM has continued to save lives.

Glenn Kalin  
AAIM Co-founder

A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground shows large green leaves and bright yellow petals of several sunflowers in sharp focus.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

AAIM's Programs

## **AAIM PROGRAMS**

### **Victim Services**

AAIM victim service advocates are available to victims working to meet the needs of survival. Our history is working with crash victims and their families, those who have been directly affected by impaired and reckless drivers; this includes those causing a crash while using an electronic device.

Advocates provide support to all ages, gender, colors, disabilities, language barriers, and undocumented immigration status. Since 2007, AAIM has provided victim advocacy to 142,357 victims. Last year, we served 2357 victims, and we project we will serve 1900 or more in 2023.

Victims receive emotional support, informal legal guidance, information regarding counseling, aid in identifying community resources, and financial assistance. Advocates regularly accompany victims to court, track case dispositions, and help ensure that justice is being done. They act on behalf of the victims to ensure that victims' rights are being respected and acknowledged throughout the court process. Assistance is given in preparing their victim impact statement for final court disposition. Victim services are offered free of charge.

Financial help to victims comes by way of AAIM's Victim Assistance Fund, established in 1991, to aid those families that face financial devastation due to death or serious injury caused by an intoxicated driver. Today's benefit, which is now in its 32nd year, raises money for the Victim Assistance Fund. Since 1991, through our donors' generosity, over \$817,912.00 has been donated to families who are in a financial crisis as a result of uninsured and underinsured impaired drivers. AAIM is the only organization in the state of Illinois and possibly the nation to give direct financial assistance to victims of impaired driving crashes.

### **Program Support Specialist**

AAIM's programs and activities are available to any population. Events focus on victims that might not have access to services or would not have known about our services and resources without outreach. Advertising community outreach includes social media, the press, brochures, booklets, newsletters, advertising stalls and displays, and dedicated events. AAIM's victim service information is provided in English and Spanish.

Victims accessing services can be complicated by geographic isolation, language barriers, cultural intolerance, disability, and/or lack of social support. AAIM heightens awareness of the issue and gives victims hope that there is help available and people do care. Serving diverse populations could include meeting specific



## **AAIM PROGRAMS**

needs for low-income families, people of color, individuals living in rural areas, immigrants, and individuals with cognitive or physical disabilities. Working to change a victim's environment will shape their healing and provide them with the tools needed to help heal and build trust.

Including these individuals and groups in our programs and activities help to eliminate stereotypes and build personal authenticity.

### **Drunkbusters**

To encourage drivers with cellular phones to report erratic driving to police, AAIM initiated the "Drunkbusters" program in 1990. AAIM gives \$100 to tipsters whose call led to a DUI arrest. In 2021, AAIM gave \$18,700.00 in rewards. Since the program's inception, we have awarded \$770,300.00 and removed 8472 impaired drivers from Illinois roads. This life-saving program has been recognized with first-place awards from the National Safety Council, Ameritech, and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce. The drunkbuster program is going strong in Boone, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties.

### **Speaker's Bureau**

AAIM speakers are well received at high schools, colleges, middle schools, before civic groups, law enforcement agencies, and victim impact panels to encourage prevention, create awareness and illustrate the consequences of underage drinking, impaired, reckless, and distracted driving.

### **Victim Impact Panels**

AAIM conducts live Victim Impact Panels for the courts, with victims and defendants telling their stories to DUI offenders who have been ordered to attend as part of their sentence to prevent recidivism. Currently, AAIM presents panels in Cook, Dekalb, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will, Ogle, Jo Daviess, and Winnebago Counties every month. Panels are also presented in Spanish in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, Will, and Winnebago Counties.

### **Prevention and Education**

AAIM Prevention and Education Specialists service the Chicagoland Communities, increasing public awareness, and knowledge about the dangers of impaired driving, underage drinking, alcohol and drug misuse, distracted driving, speeding, and other risky driving behaviors.

## **AAIM PROGRAMS**

### **Community Outreach Program**

AAIM's Community Outreach Program was developed to help parents to navigate through the teen years and educate the community about the dangers of underage drinking. Parents have more power over the choices their children make than they may realize. Kids that learn from their parents about the dangers of underage drinking, illicit drugs, dangerous driving decisions, and other risky behaviors are less likely to make poor choices. While many teens are making positive choices, many parents can't help but continually worry about the challenges and potential risks that teens face in their lives. Teachers and administrators have an important influence on the lives of their students. You can prevent underage drinking and work to change the environment that encourages risky alcohol and drug use in your community. AAIM's Community Outreach Program will provide you with expert advice designed to help middle and high school students. Your participation will help to ensure your teen has a healthy lifestyle and a positive future.

### **Court Monitoring**

Court Monitors are staff who are physically present in the courtroom regularly. They receive training to observe and document what happens during impaired and reckless driving proceedings. Court monitors track results and identify inconsistencies from courthouse to courthouse. The regular presence of monitors reminds all justice system personnel, including judges, attorneys, clerks, and administrative personnel, that they are accountable to the public and that the public is interested in what happens in DUI and reckless driving courtroom cases.

#### **The goals of court monitoring are:**

- To hold the justice system accountable for its actions by maintaining a public presence in the courts
- To identify problematic patterns and concerns with the court system as well as to propose practical solutions
- To improve the administration of justice
- To increase public awareness of and public trust in the justice system

Studies have shown that when court monitors are present, there is a different demeanor in the courtroom, which can positively affect sentencing.



## AAIM PROGRAMS

### **AAIM DUI PIN Award Program**

The enforcement of DUI laws is a thankless, time-consuming, and unpleasant arrest situation. However, it is one of the most important arrests that you can make on a regular basis. Officers who work hard every day in this area are not always recognized for their efforts as they should be.

With this in mind, AAIM, in conjunction with IDOT, who instituted the awards program, will carry on this ambitious project. The awards program provides a continuing recognition system for those officers that excel in arresting impaired drivers. The program began in 2001, and any officer who has made 10 or more DUI arrests since January 1, 2001, is eligible to receive the award.

The award package consists of a lapel pin; a letter of appreciation, and a achievement certificate.

Awards are given upon the eligible officer's supervisor's request in the following denominations: 10, 25, 50, 75, 100, 200, 300 etc. To request the DUI Pin Award, visit: [www.aaim1.org](http://www.aaim1.org)

### **Beyond Driver Education Presentation**

This program targets high school students preparing to drive or have recently received their driver's license. Teens learn about the dangers of impaired, reckless, and distracted driving, the impact underage drinking and drug use can have on their developing brain and body, the effects of substance misuse, the importance of good decision making, and important traffic safety laws and regulations.



## Illinois Crime Victims' *Bill of Rights*

The Illinois Constitution and Illinois statutes provide that victims of violent crime have the following rights:

- The right to be treated with fairness and respect for their dignity and privacy and to be free from harassment, intimidation and abuse throughout the criminal justice process.
- The right to notice of and to a hearing before a court ruling on a request for access to any of the victim's records, information or communications which are privileged or confidential by law.
- The right to timely notification of all court proceedings.
- The right to communicate with the prosecution.
- The right to be heard at any post-arraignment court proceeding in which a right of the victim is at issue and any court proceeding involving a post-arraignment release decision, plea or sentencing.
- The right to be notified of the conviction, sentence, imprisonment and release of the accused.
- The right to timely disposition of the case following the arrest of the accused.
- The right to be reasonably protected from the accused throughout the criminal justice process.
- The right to have the safety of the victim and the victim's family considered in denying or fixing the amount of bail, determining whether to release the defendant and setting conditions of release after arrest and conviction.
- The right to be present at the trial and all other court proceedings on the same basis as the accused, unless the victim is to testify and the court determines that the victim's testimony would be materially affected if the victim hears other testimony at the trial.
- The right to have present at all court proceedings, subject to the rules of evidence, an advocate and other support person of the victim's choice.
- The right to restitution.

*These rights apply in adult criminal proceedings and juvenile delinquency proceedings.*

*Violent crimes include homicide, felony assaults and batteries, kidnapping, sexual assault and abuse, arson, domestic battery, misdemeanors that result in death or great bodily harm, stalking, driving under the influence and violations of domestic violence orders of protection, civil no contact orders and stalking no contact orders.*

*The law requires that these rights must be requested in writing when charges have been filed against an offender. Contact the state's attorney's office prosecuting the case and complete a written "Notice of Victim's Assertion of Rights."*

*For more information, please contact your local state's attorney's office or the Attorney General's toll free Crime Victims Assistance Line for more information.*

**Crime Victims Assistance Line**  
1-800-228-3368  
1-877-398-1130 (TTY)



**LISA MADIGAN**  
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY GENERAL

Printed by authority of the State of Illinois. 03/17 7500 C17-547  
This material is available in alternate format upon request.

This project was supported by Grant #2015-VF-QX-0062, awarded by the Office for Victims of Crime, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority. Points of view or opinions contained within this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice, or the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

## AAIM VICTIM ADVOCATES

Victim Advocate personnel are available to victims and families who have been directly affected by intoxicated, reckless, and distracted driving crashes. Victims can receive emotional support, a guide to legal terms and court process, information regarding counseling, and financial help. AAIM coordinators regularly accompany victims to court, track case dispositions, and help ensure that justice is done. They act on behalf of the victims to ensure that victims' rights are respected and acknowledged throughout the criminal process. Assistance is also given to victims in preparing their Victim Impact Statements for final court disposition.

- ❖ *They talk to victims anytime, any day, 365 days a year...*
- ❖ *They get involved with lawyers, judges, state's attorneys, police and doctors on behalf of victims...*
- ❖ *They go to schools, to court, to the hospital and sometimes even to funeral homes...*
- ❖ *They provide a safe place for grieving families in support groups...*
- ❖ *They secure financial assistance to those who are in economic crisis because of an uninsured drunk driver.*

**Below is our dedicated staff servicing crash victims:**



*Jessica Zinck*  
*Director of Victim Services*



*Kelly Krenzer*  
*Victim Advocate*



*Lauren Armour*  
*Victim Advocate*



*Margaret Borgia*  
*Victim Advocate*



*Kathleen Fletcher*  
*Victim Advocate*



*Cindy Huerta*  
*Victim Advocate*



*Carrie Kilpatrick*  
*Victim Advocate*

## ELEVENTH ANNUAL AAIM PICNIC

*On July 17th, AAIM Victim Advocates held the eleventh annual picnic at Twin Lakes in Palatine, IL*

AAIM hosted our annual picnic in honor of the families we serve. Everyone had great fun on the paddleboats, sack races, bingo, pinata, and good food! Thanks to all who came out and the AAIM staff for all your hard work and for making this a memorable day!







## AAIM GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP PIZZA PARTY

March 2022, AAIM has a recipe for fun, and once a year, our grief support group hosts a pizza party. This is a wonderful chance for our families to relax with others, share stories and enjoy a Lou Malnatis pizza.

*This year's pizza party was held at the Schaumburg Park District*



*From the left back row: Carrie Kilpatrick Advocate, Cindy Huerta Advocate, Margaret Borgia Advocate, Jessica Zinck Victim Services Director, Rita Kreslin Executive Director, and Sarah Parsons Advocate.*

*Seated: Maxwell Cody Board Member, Kelly Krenzer Advocate, and Patrick Finlon Board Member.*





*A New Tomorrow*



## COURT MONITORING PROGRAM

*This program is funded through a grant from  
Illinois Department of Transportation*



***Court Monitor Program  
Lisa Rogers, Director***

Court Monitors are staff who are physically present in the courtroom on a regular basis. They receive training to observe and document what happens during impaired and reckless driving proceedings. Court monitors track results and identify inconsistencies from courthouse to courthouse. The regular presence of monitors reminds all justice system personnel, including judges, attorneys, clerks and administrative personnel, that they are accountable to the public and that the public is interested in what happens in DUI and reckless driving courtroom cases.

### **The goals of court monitoring are:**

- ❖ *To hold the justice system accountable for its actions by maintaining a public presence in the courts*
- ❖ *To identify problematic patterns and concerns with the court system as well as to propose practical solutions*
- ❖ *To improve the administration of justice*
- ❖ *To increase public awareness of and public trust in the justice system*

## COURT MONITORING PROGRAM

### Dedicated Court Monitors:



**Barb Cutro**



**Tracy Lorence**



**Bonnie Marshall**



**Kay Rivera**



**Bianka Salinas**



**Ivan Salinas**



**Carol Russell**



**Cathy Stanley**



**Joyce Synek**

## PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM



*Samantha Gallagher-Gannon*  
*Prevention and Education*

AAIM's Prevention and Education program provides programs to reduce excessive alcohol/drug misuse and work to prevent impaired driving and impaired driving crashes for all ages. We promote alcohol and drug-free events throughout the year, particularly in high schools and local community events, with appropriate emphasis on high-risk events, such as homecoming, spring break, prom, graduation, and various community festivals. In addition, AAIM provides public awareness events and activities to promote our services that are essential to reaching people in the community, including under-served groups.

Finally, AAIM community engagement events help promote positive change in neighborhoods throughout the Chicago Metropolitan Area. These include various interactive, safe driving events with law enforcement, traffic safety enthusiasts, and like-minded organizations for the public of all ages.

### **Beyond Driver Education Presentation**

AAIM collaborates with the Illinois Secretary of State Driver Education Programs. We take students beyond the basics of driver education and give a deeper understanding of the impact of making good choices, the lifelong consequences of poor decision-making, and how to become the best driver possible.

### **Program Support Specialist**

Victims accessing services can be complicated by geographic isolation, language barriers, cultural intolerance, disability, and/or lack of social support. The Program Support Specialist heightens awareness of the issue and gives victims hope that help is available and people do care. Serving diverse populations and providing programs and activities are important to all populations.



*Kristina Lawler*  
*Program Support Specialist*

## POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

*We drank for happiness and became unhappy.*

*We drank for joy and became miserable.*

*We drank for sociability and  
became argumentative.*

*We drank for sophistication and  
became obnoxious.*

*We drank for friendship and made enemies.*

*We drank for sleep and awoken without rest.*

*We drank for strength and felt weak.*

*We drank “medicinally” and acquired  
health problems.*

*We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.*

*We drank for bravery and became afraid.*

*We drank for confidence and  
became doubtful.*

*We drank to make conversation easier and  
slurred our speech.*

*We drank to feel heavenly and ended up  
feeling like hell.*

*We drank to forget and were forever haunted.*

*We drank to erase problems and  
saw them multiply.*

*We drank to cope with life and invited death.*

Author unknown



## AAIM'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

AAIM's Community Outreach Program was developed to help parents navigate the teen years and educate the community about the dangers of underage drinking. Parents have more power over their children's choices than they may realize. Kids that learn from their parents about the dangers of underage drinking, illicit drugs, dangerous driving decisions, and other risky behaviors are less likely to make poor choices. Unfortunately, while many teens are making positive choices, parents cannot help but continually worry about the challenges and potential risks that teens face in their lives.

The program helps prevent underage drinking and works to change the community's environment that encourages risky alcohol and drug misuse. Speakers provide expert advice to parents to help ensure teenagers have a healthy lifestyle and a positive future.



*Sergeant Ari Briskman*



*Commander Brian Cluever*



*Commander Brian Cooper*



*Dr. Charles Nozicka*



*Terry Vandergrift -  
Retired Law Enforcement*



*Dr. William Watson*

## AAIM's COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM



### FENWICK HIGH SCHOOL 2022 – AAIM COMMUNITY OUT REACH PROGRAM

*"I attended the sophomore night program with my son Jaxon and thought it was excellent. Rita Kreslin's story is devastating. It is amazing how she has turned her worst nightmare into a teaching lesson for others to understand the dangers of underage drinking or drugs and driving. It was very powerful how Dr. Watson and Sergeant Briskman tied all the life-changing various impacts and consequences. I spoke with my daughter Amber, a senior graduating this year, and she didn't experience this program due to Covid. I truly believe this message was so strong that I believe there should be something similar for the graduating seniors who are about to go off to college and experience the temptations of drugs and alcohol firsthand. How they can remove themselves from those situations? How to deal with stress so that you are not resorting to drugs and alcohol, etc."*

Jason Cloud, Parent



## AAIM'S YOUTH VICTIM IMPACT PANEL

### A Word About Youth

If you are a parent of a teenager or someone who works with teenagers, you have done your share of worrying about the potential risks in their lives. Underage drinking, illicit drug use, dangerous driving, and other risky behaviors are just a few of the challenges facing our youth.

Many adolescents are making positive choices and thriving in their community. They are more involved in school, volunteering and even exploring their spirituality. In years past, society looked at underage drinking as a rite of passage. Today we know better, we understand the long-term health risks and the devastation one wrong decision can make in someone's life.

In cooperation with the Department of Probation and Court Services of the 18th Judicial Circuit Court of DuPage County, AAIM began its first YVIP in 2014. The program targets individuals twenty-four years old and younger. This age group will attend a YVIP in place of the court-ordered adult Victim Impact Panel.

This program is an important tool in the prevention of recidivism. It's needed for individuals who are facing penalties for DUI, underage drinking, and related offenses. Our goal is to empower young adults and teenagers to make good choices and decisions in their lives. To better communicate with their parents to help ensure a positive future. We encourage judges, state's attorneys, and local prosecutors to consider having this age group attend the YVIP.

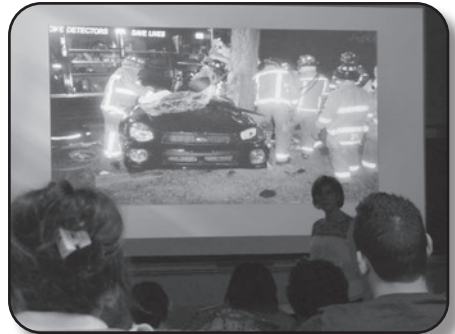
## AAIM'S YOUTH VICTIM IMPACT PANEL



*Rita Kreslin*



*Doug Petit*



## TOP COPS HONORED BY AAIM

AAIM recognizes Illinois “Top Cops” at our annual Benefit. These police officers have demonstrated a proven commitment to traffic safety in the fight against impaired driving.

AAIM has been conducting a DUI survey from municipal and county police departments across the state since 1990. By publicly recognizing the achievement of the top departments and individual officers, we reward those currently doing a good job and inspire others to increase their efforts as well.

The survey provides a valuable service by encouraging citizens to compare the DUI enforcement record of their local police department with that of other communities. As a result, public pressure can be applied, where needed, to make DUI enforcement a priority.

Top departments receiving awards for 2021 are:

**Decatur Police Department** for making the most DUI arrests in Illinois (353)

**Franklin Park Police Department** for making the most arrests per officer in Illinois (5.54).

AAIM received the National Commission Against Drunk Driving (NCADD) Citizen Activist award for our survey and recognition of outstanding departments and officers.



*Top Cops honored all year. They include municipalities, sheriff deputies, and state troopers.*

## 2021 TOP COPS

The following officers are recognized at AAIM's 2022 Benefit for making 100 or more DUI arrests in 2021:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Department</u></b>	<b><u>Arrests</u></b>
Trooper Eric David	ISP District Chicago	298
Trooper Lucas Sniady	ISP District Chicago	217
Trooper Christopher Wittemann	ISP District 10	164
Trooper Cory Fox	ISP District 14	134
Officer Jeffrey Kriv	Chicago PD District 12	114
Trooper James Knaperek	ISP District Chicago	105
Trooper Daniel Pedreyra	ISP District 2	105
Patrolman Manuel Quinones	Franklin Park	101



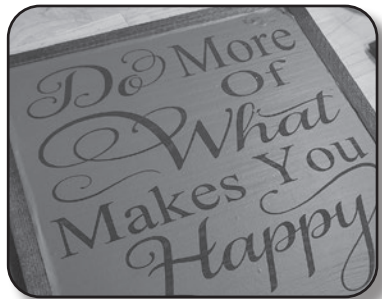
## AAIM TEAM BUILDING

Team building activities bring people together and allow them to connect in a different setting and see each other in a different light.

This event created a fun-filled day for all of the AAIM staff. The benefits of team building increase communication, planning skills, employee motivation, and employee collaboration.



*#1 TEAM AAIM*





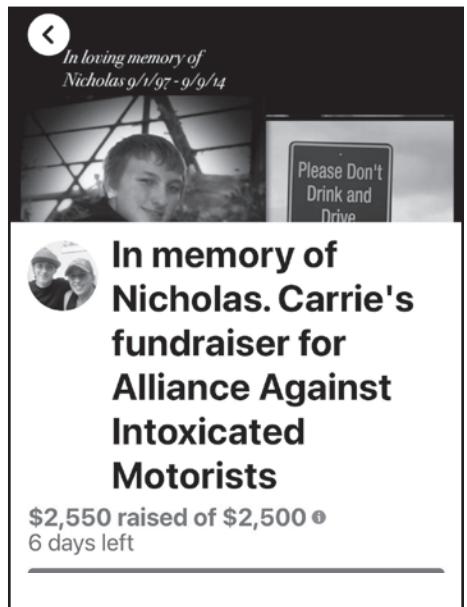
## PEER TO PEER ONLINE FUNDRAISER FOR AAIM

Raising funds for AAIM doesn't cost you a thing. AAIM's Peer to Peer fundraising site will give you the tools to get started to support AAIM and honor your loved one. You can create, share and collect support for your online fundraiser in just a few clicks.

AAIM to make a difference is contagious and often inspires others to be generous.

AAIM will make it easy for you to get your fundraiser off the ground, and you can rest assured knowing that all of the funds donated will go directly to AAIM.

*Thank you to all the  
Peer to Peer campaigns  
held in 2022!*



[www.classy.org/campaign/aaim-to-make-a-difference/c147934](http://www.classy.org/campaign/aaim-to-make-a-difference/c147934)  
Peer to Peer Fundraising



———— *A New Tomorrow* ————



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground features large, detailed sunflowers with bright yellow petals and dark brown centers, surrounded by lush green leaves.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

AAIM's Partnerships

## JESSE WHITE CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY

*For the Victims of Impaired and Distracted Driving Crashes*

AAIM took part in the 2nd annual virtual Candlelight Ceremony for crash victims, sponsored by Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, and co-hosted by AAIM.

Due to the pandemic, this compassionate event took place online on December 13, 2021: <https://www.facebook.com/AAIMtosavelives>

Remarks were given by Secretary White, Reverend John Clemens, AAIM former Board President Terry Vandergrift, and Director of Victim Services Jessica Zinck.

A personal story was shared by Jason Blatter, whose life was forever altered by an impaired driver on February 2, 2019. Jason recounted the horrific crash and the daily reminder that left him severely injured and blind in one eye.



*Secretary of  
State Jesse White*



*Jason Blatter*

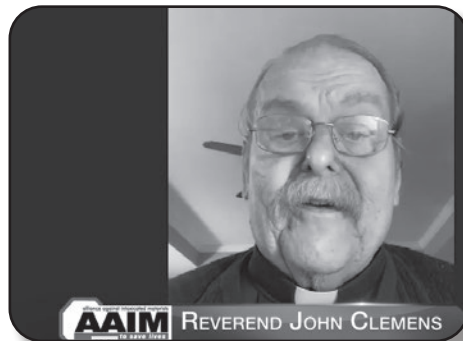
## JESSE WHITE CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY



*Former Board President Terry Vandergrift*



*Director of Victim Services Jessica Zinck*



*Reverend John Clemens*



## CRIME VICTIMS' RIGHTS

AAIM Advocates shared their experiences and best practices with local Assistant State's Attorneys in AAIM's new Educational Session: "Victims' Perspective: Case Study on a Victim's Rights Violation and Common Occurrences in the Judicial System." During this session, AAIM Staff reviewed a recent criminal case that involved a Victims' Rights Violation and the progression of the case as AAIM advocated for the Victim's interest. The session then explored some of AAIM's best practices in trauma-informed care, and AAIM Advocates shared common situations and concerns previously voiced by Impaired Driving Crash Victims, to help court personnel understand the victim's perspective. AAIM Advocates plan to bring this educational session to multiple State's Attorney's Offices across northern Illinois, in the hopes of continuing to advance victim services across the state.

### Common Occurrences in the Judicial System: Victims' Perspective

#### Reminders:

- We understand every county handles cases and court proceedings differently (Our advocates are assigned by courthouse)
- Language of the laws: "Crash" vs "Accident" in DUI/Death cases
- What we're discussing together today are rhythms and patterns observed by victims across the state of Illinois
- We do our best to help victims manage their expectations, and to work within the system to support them

#### AAIM Educational Session:

### Victims' Perspective: Case Study on a Victim's Rights Violation and Common Occurrences in the Judicial System



### Case Timeline



### Case Timeline



## THE ILLINOIS HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE DRIVER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION IHSCDEA

With the support of the Illinois Secretary of State's Office, AAIM collaborates with the IHSCDEA on teen road safety initiatives. IHSCDEA is a professional teaching organization that was established in 1952. They are composed primarily of high school and college driver education instructors, supervisors, coordinators and safety enthusiasts throughout Illinois. They have over 700 members and represent over 600 public high schools in Illinois.

Samantha Gallagher-Gannon provided Beyond Driver Education materials to address the issues that go beyond Illinois Rules of the Road.



*Samantha Gallagher-Gannon,  
Prevention and Education  
Specialist.*

*This program and topics can be modified to fit each school's class schedule.*

- Driver inexperience
- Driving with Teen passengers
- Nighttime driving
- Seat belt safety
- Distracted driving Drowsy driving
- Reckless driving/Speeding
- Alcohol-impaired driving
- Drugged Driving
- Underage Alcohol and Marijuana misuse
- Scott's Law (Move Over Law)
- Fraudulent ID's
- Impact of marijuana on the developing teenage brain
- Interactive activities that demonstrate cognitive impairment
- Evidence based information on the preconceived ideas about marijuana use
- The physical and cognitive process that are affected by marijuana use



## COMMENDABLE AWARDS FOR DUI EFFORTS

### BANNOCKBURN

AAIM Victim Advocate Margaret Borcia presented certificates of appreciation for DUI enforcement efforts to Bannockburn Police Sergeant Dennis Sears.



*Sergeant Dennis Sears and  
Chief Walter Trillhaase*



*Margaret Borcia*

### BELVIDERE

AAIM Victim Advocate Margaret Borcia presented a certificate of appreciation for DUI enforcement efforts to Belvidere Police Officer David Dammon. Congratulations on your retirement!

*Officer David Dammon and  
Margaret Borcia*



### HOFFMAN ESTATES

AAIM Board Members Officer Ron Harper (retired) and Cary Police Chief Patrick Finlon recognized Officer Peter Edgar for 25 years of service and dedication to DUI enforcement and for achieving 200 DUI career arrests. Enjoy your retirement!

*From Left – Ron Harper, Officer Edgar, and  
Cary Police Chief Patrick Finlon*



## COMMENDABLE AWARDS FOR DUI EFFORTS

### GURNEE POLICE DEPARTMENT



In coordination with the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists (AAIM), awards were presented to officers for their career DUI enforcement efforts. These awards are presented when officers reach a designated cumulative total of DUI arrests. Each officer received a commemorative pin and certificate for their achievement. The following officers were recognized:

*AAIM Top Cops*

*50th DUI Arrest: Michael Lambert*

*25th DUI Arrest: Tyler Schutt*

*10th DUI Arrest: Phillip Lewy*

*10th DUI Arrest: Joshua Silvernail*

*10th DUI Arrest: Antoine Smith*

*Officer JR Nauseda -  
400 DUI Carrer Arrests*



Officer Antoine Smith was also recognized for receiving the Gurnee Police Department Traffic Enforcement Award. This award is presented to officers who demonstrate dedication to traffic safety by leading the department in both speed enforcement and seat belt enforcement.

*Officer Antoine Smith*

## COMMENDABLE AWARDS FOR DUI EFFORTS

### MORRIS

Jessica Zinck, AAIM Director of Victim Services, recognized Officers Ryan Ties, Sarah Markusic, and Nick Pampinella for their efforts in DUI enforcement.



*Offcier Ties, Offcier Markusic,  
Offcier Pampinella*



*Officer Sarah Markusic and Jessica Zinck*

### WOOD DALE POLICE DEPARTMENT

AAIM recognized Wood Dale Police Officers with certificates of appreciation for their life-saving efforts in DUI Enforcement. Presenting on behalf of AAIM in memory of Aric Wooley, is Charlie Wooley, Aric's stepmother. Aric was killed in a drunk driving crash at the age of eighteen on June 16, 2000.



*Charlie Wooley, Officer Kevin Perez, Officer Dan Drost, Officer Robyn Lyons,  
Officer Genna Gruendeman, and Chief Greg Vesta.*

## **AAIM FOR COMMUNITY**

*Sponsored by AAA The Auto Club Group*



June 21, 2022, AAIM hosted our 2nd annual CommUNITY Matters Event at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago. Outreach is critical in serving people who are members of disadvantaged and underprivileged populations. Accessing services can be complicated by geographic isolation, language barriers, cultural intolerance, disability, and the lack of social support. The AAIM For CommUNITY event addressed these issues and gave crime victims hope that there is help available and that people do care.

Serving diverse populations could include meeting specific needs for low-income families, people of color, individuals living in rural areas, immigrants, and individuals with cognitive or physical disabilities. Working to change a person's environment will shape their healing and provide them the tools needed to help heal and build trust.

The event brought community coalitions and like-minded agencies from the Chicago Metropolitan Area to provide information on social services available to the public. The goal of this event was to reach out to individuals and families in need of community support. This event was open to the public and free of charge.

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White spoke to the crowd reminding them about the dangers of impaired and distracted driving. And the devastating effect this crime has on crash victims.

Representing the Illinois Attorney General's Office, Leslie Ramos, Statewide Victim Witness Coordinator, addressed the needs of crime victims and the importance of victim advocacy.

Attendees received free raffle tickets and giveaways!



— *A New Tomorrow* —

# AAIM FOR COMMUNITY

*Sponsored by AAA The Auto Club Group*



*From Left: – Hanna Caselton-Wierzbna and Kris Zerfass, Link Together Coalition, Lee Roupas, Illinois Liquor Control Commission, Rita Kreslin, AAIM Executive Director, Jesse White Secretary of State, Samantha Gallagher, AAIM Prevention and Education, Aidan Fischer, AAIM, Dr. Charles Nozicka, AAIM President, Sarah Parsons, AAIM Advocate, Tanya Fisher and Lakedra Vaughn, Lutheran Social Services of Illinois*

*Picture Right – Jesse White, IL. Secretary of State*



*Kristina Lawler, AAIM Program Support Specialists, Dr. Chuck Nozicka, AAIM President, Charlene Sligting-Yorke, AAA and Rita Kreslin, AAIM Executive DirectorPresident, Charlene Sligting-Yorke, AAA and Rita Kreslin, AAIM Executive Director*



*Jessica Zinck, Director of Victim Services, Kathleen Fletcher, Victim Advocate, Carrie Kilpatrick, Victim Advocate, and Cindy Huerta, Victim Advocate*



*Tumblers and Dr. Charles Nozicka, AAIM President*



*Tumblers*

## AAIM FOR COMMUNITY

*Sponsored by AAA The Auto Club Group*



*Future Ties*



*Kristina Lawler, Program Support Specialist,  
Aidan Fischer, AAIM, Rita Kreslin, AAIM  
Executive Director, Cindy Huerta, Victim  
Advocate, and Dr. Charles Nozicka,  
AAIM President*



*Illinois Attorney General, Leslie Ramos,  
Statewide Victim/Witness Coordinator*



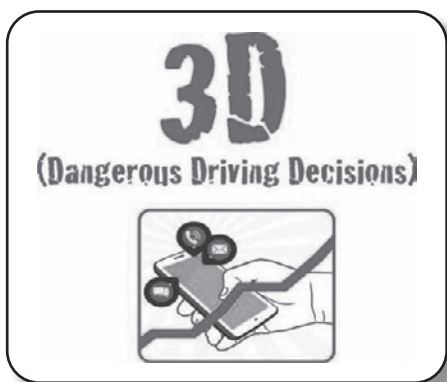
*Stand Strong*





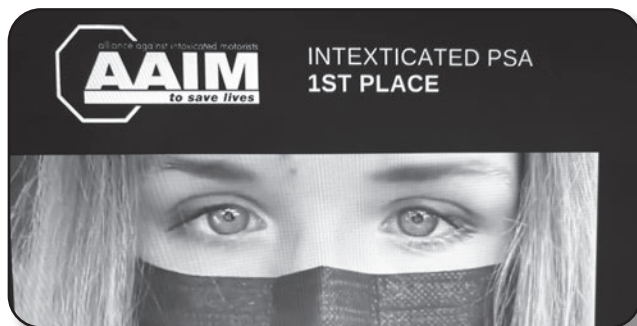
## ARE YOU INTEXTICATED?

Congratulations to our 2022 “Are you InTEXTicated?” PSA Contest Winners! AAIM challenged Illinois high school students to put together PSA videos highlighting the importance of focusing on the road and putting down the phone. This challenge was created to get the conversation going with young people and their parents about driving distractions, mainly using cell phones, other people in the vehicle, putting makeup on, eating, and various other dangerous driving decisions that can result in tragedy. These students had guidelines and rules set forth by AAIM to maintain the safety of all participants. The videos send a strong public safety message to the community to focus on the road while driving for driver safety and that of their passengers.



We thank everyone who voted and shared the creative and impactful videos these teens created. We are grateful that these videos brought awareness to the dangers of distracted driving and helped others to think twice before driving InTEXTicated.

### 2022 “Are You InTEXTicated?” Winners:



*1st Place: Stevenson  
High School Students  
Alina Qian and Lada  
Volkov*

## ARE YOU INTEXTICATED?



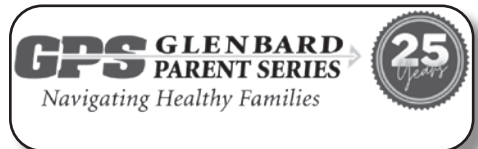
*2nd Place: Grays Lake High  
School Students  
Karina Beltran,  
Madison Hoffman,  
Karla Munoz,  
Twisha Patel and  
Rose Garay Rodriguez*

*3rd Place: Stevenson High  
School Students  
Edwin Flores,  
Miguel Flores and  
Edwin Sandoval*



**#AreYouInTEXTicated #AAIMPSAContest #AAIMtoSaveLives  
#EndDistractedDriving**

**Thank you to our generous sponsors!**



*[www.glenbardgps.org/](http://www.glenbardgps.org/)*

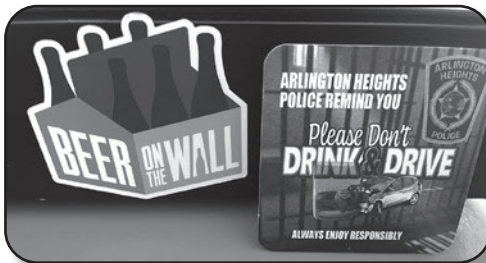
*[florinroebig.com/car-accidents/florida/tampa/](http://florinroebig.com/car-accidents/florida/tampa/)*

## IMPAIRED DRIVING PREVENTION CAMPAIGN JULY 4TH HOLIDAY

On June 28, 2022, AAIM supported local bars and restaurants in downtown Arlington Heights and encouraged patrons to safely celebrate the July 4th holiday. AAIM partnered with the Arlington Heights Police Department to help educate the community about the dangers of impaired driving.

Thank you, Sergeant Russell Mandell and the Arlington Height Police Department, for working on this project with AAIM.

Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, AAIM Prevention and Education, Lisa Rogers, AAIM Court Monitor Director, and Barb Cutro, AAIM Court Monitor, Thank you, for all your hard work!







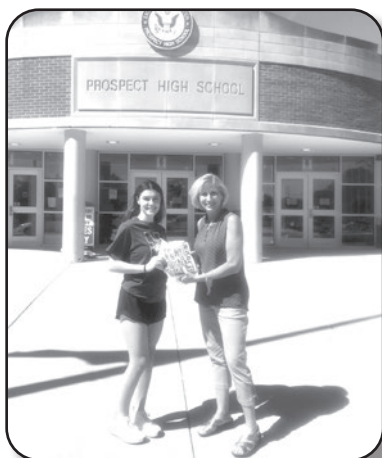
## THE JOHN KRESLIN SCHOLARSHIP – 2022



Congratulations to Madilyn McCarthy from Mount Prospect High School and Quentin Whoehler from Elk Grove Village High School

Madilyn and Quentin are both recipients of the 2022 John Kreslin Scholarship Award - (\$1,000.00 each).

*We wish both all the best!*



*Madilyn McCarthy*



*Quentin Whoehler*



## THE JOHN KRESLIN SCHOLARSHIP – 2022

### 5K FAMILY FUN/RUN WALK



*John Kreslin, August 26,  
1983 – August 30, 2002*

On August 22, 2022, the Kreslin family held their 9th annual fundraiser in memory of John J. Kreslin, Jr., at Mallard Lake – Hanover Park. John was 19 years old and a pre-pharmacy student at Butler University in Indianapolis. On August 30, 2002, just four days after his birthday and two days after starting his sophomore year of college, he was killed in a impaired driving crash.

Proceeds benefit the John Kreslin Scholarship Fund and AAIM's Victim's Fund. Since 2010, the John Kreslin Scholarship Fund has given \$14,500 to graduating high school seniors.

WE WALK TO REMEMBER AND  
AAIM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
[www.johnkreslin.com](http://www.johnkreslin.com)





## SAFE DRIVING IS A VIBE



Prevention and education begin with our youth by increasing public awareness and knowledge about the dangers of impaired driving, underage drinking, alcohol and drug misuse, distracted driving, speeding, and other risky behaviors.



*School of Rock*

Arlington Heights Ale House and School of Rock partnered with AAIM to provide a safe, alcohol-free, chaperoned environment where kids can hang out and learn that fun does not need to include drugs or alcohol. In addition, the Ale House provided pizza, soda and helped AAIM with games and prizes for a spin-the-wheel trivia game. Trivia questions included rules of the road and traffic safety.

*Fun was had by all!*

— *A New Tomorrow* —

## SAFE DRIVING IS A VIBE



*Cathy Stanley and Kathleen Fletcher*



*Marlene Schwerzler*



*Jim Gignac and Rita Kreslin*



*Samantha Gallagher-Gannon and Teens*



*Samantha Gallagher-Gannon,  
Kevin McCasky and Rita Kreslin*

## LIFESAVERS CONFERENCE 2022

### NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HIGHWAY SAFETY PRIORITIES

AAIM participated in Lifesavers National Highway Conference, which was held in Chicago this year. The conference is dedicated to reducing the tragic toll of deaths and injuries on our nation's roadways. Each year, Lifesavers Conference provides a forum that delivers relevant and timely common-sense solutions to today's critical highway safety problems. The conference addresses a wide range of safety topics, from child passenger safety and occupant protection to roadway and vehicle safety and technology. It offers the latest information on advances in highway safety, highlights successful programs, and draws attention to emerging safety issues. Various panels included awareness to the dangers of distracted driving, underage drinking, drunk driving, crash victim support during court proceedings, tough legislative initiatives, and encouraging law enforcement.



*Lisa Rogers, Court Monitor Director, Sarah Parsons, Advocate, Rachael Stewart, Prevention and Education, Jessica Zinck, Director of Victim Services, Carrie Kilpatrick, Advocate, Cindy Huerta, Advocate, Kay Riviera, Court Monitor, Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, Prevention and Education, Anita Huvaere, AAIM Executive Assistant, Cathy Stanley, Court Monitor, Kristina Lawler, Program Support Specialist, and Rita Kreslin, Executive Director.*



## LISLE POLICE DEPARTMENT OPEN HOUSE

May 18, 2022, the Lisle Police Department hosted a community event and provided information of a variety of programs aimed at protecting and informing citizens and business owners throughout lisle. In addition, AAIM staff distributed our information regarding traffic safety, victims services, and educational programs.



*Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, Prevention and Education,  
Bianka Salinas Court Monitor,  
and Cindy Huerta Victim Advocate.*



## THE ERIN OLMSTED *AAIM* FOR CHANGE MEMORIAL GYMNASTICS INVITATIONAL



**Erin Olmsted**  
**August 6, 1979 – March 2, 1997**

On January 8, 2022, Erin Olmsted's 8th annual *AAIM* for Change Memorial Gymnastics Invitational was held at Victor J. Andrews High School in Tinley Park, IL. Along with fellowship, music, and social awareness, money was raised for the Erin E. Olmsted Memorial Scholarship and the Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists. For more information, please visit [www.erinsaaimforchange.org](http://www.erinsaaimforchange.org)

*(See Erin's Story)*



*Gerry and Sandy Olmsted*



## THE ERIN OLMSTED *AAIM* FOR CHANGE MEMORIAL GYMNASTICS INVITATIONAL





## **AAIM PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME IN SEVERAL COMMUNITIES**

ALGONQUIN, CARY, WOOD DALE, ORLAND PARK,  
WEST CHICAGO, ARLINGTON HEIGHTS, MACHESNEY PARK

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make our neighborhoods safer, more caring place to live.

National Night Out enhances the relationship between neighbors, law enforcement, and first responders while bringing back a sense of community. Furthermore, it provides an excellent opportunity to get police and neighbors together under favorable circumstances.



*West Chicago*



*Arlington Heights*



*Algonquin*



*Algonquin*

## AAIM PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME



*Wood Dale*



*Wood Dale*



*Orland Park*



*Cary*



*Machesney Park*



*Machesney Park*

## AAIM PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME





## AAIM PARTICIPATED IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME



**THE HONORABLE JESSE WHITE**  
*ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE*  
**AAIM LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**



*From left-AAIM Executive Director Rita Kreslin, AAIM Victim Advocate Kelly Krenzer, Illinois Secretary White Jesse White, AAIM Prevention and Education Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, Former Mayor of Chicago, Rahm Emanuel*

On September 14, 2021, Secretary White was recognized with AAIM's Life Time Achievement Award. This is AAIM's first Lifetime Achievement Award. This special merit was created by vote of the AAIM Board of Directors and AAIM Staff. It was decided to be given to someone who, during their lifetime, have made contributions of outstanding work in Traffic Safety, and DUI Prevention, and Victim Advocacy.

AAIM celebrates White for his integrity, cracking down on DUI, and supporting key legislation for traffic safety issues, including stiffer penalties for DUI offenders. In addition, we celebrate the success and Implementation of the Teen Driver Safety and the Graduated Driver's License Program – AND new rules and regulations of the CDL licensing process.

AAIM has been honored to work with Secretary White's administration since he took office in 1999.



## THE HONORABLE JESSE WHITE

*ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE*

### AAIM LIFE TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Mister White has served as AAIM's Honorary Chairperson at our annual fundraiser, supporting financial assistance for crash victims. He hosts AAIM's annual Candlelight Ceremony to honor crash victims and their families. He continues to encourage AAIM's testimony during Secretary's Advisory Council Hearings.

We all know that every tight ship has a strong captain, and the secretary's staff reflects good leadership. His dedication to the office and the people of Illinois and all his excellent work makes him worthy of AAIM's Lifetime Achievement award!

Thank you for your kindness and friendship, congratulations!



*SOS Advisory Council*



*Springfield*

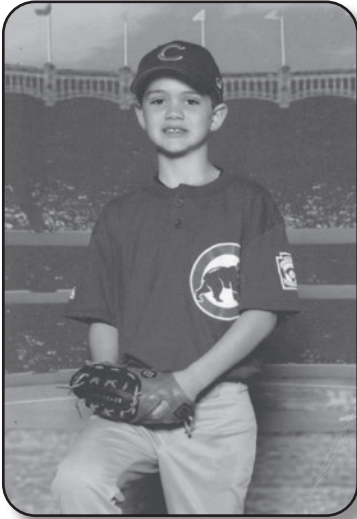


*Jesse White*



*Candlelight*

## EIGHTH ANNUAL WIFFLEBALL TOURNAMENT



On August 7, 2022, the Borgia family and friends held the eighth Wiffleball Tournament fundraiser in memory of their son, Tony Borgia. Tony was killed at the age of ten on July 28, 2012, by an impaired boater. (see Borgia tribute). Proceeds from the tournament have been generously donated to AAIM's Victim's Assistance Fund and The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

Despite a 2-hour rain delay, spirits were not dampened and we played all games. The raffle and silent auction also went on as planned, and we all had a great day. ***And we raised almost \$60,000!***



THE  
Y-NOT  
PROJECT

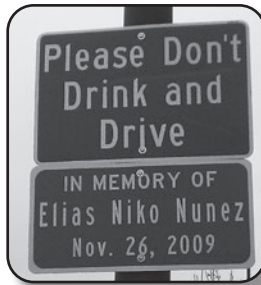


## EIGHTH ANNUAL WIFFLEBALL TOURNAMENT



## ROADSIDE MEMORIAL MARKERS

In August 2007, the Governor signed HB 1900 (Mendoza, Dillard) into law, creating the Roadside Memorial (Tina's Law). This legislation was a result of the efforts championed by the Tina Ball Memorial DUI Task Force, along with the Legislation Committee of AAIM. Tina's Law allows the families of individuals killed by impaired or reckless drivers to apply to Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) for the installation of a memorial marker sign to be placed at the location of the crash. These markers serve as a remembrance of a loved one whose life was taken as a result of a senseless act committed by an individual while driving impaired or reckless. The markers are blue road signs saying, "Please Don't Drink and Drive" and "Reckless Driving Costs Lives." Family members may also request a special marker indicating the name of the victim and the date of the crash.



One of the provisions of the Memorial Program called for a fee to be paid by the family wishing to have the marker installed, to cover the cost of the manufacturing and installation of the sign. But major questions were raised by legislators during the hearing process "Why are the families who suffered such a tragic loss being required to pay? Why are the offenders not the ones being forced to pay for the act they committed?"



AAIM is proud to say as a result of the continuing efforts of the AAIM Legislative Committee and all those who support efforts to eliminate DUI offenders from the roadways in Illinois, HB 881

(P.A. 96-0667) was signed into law on August 25, 2009. This law shifts the financial burden of the Memorial Sign Program from the families who have suffered such a tremendous loss, to the offenders, whose actions have led to the senseless loss of life and to all of those who get behind the wheel while under the influence. The law calls for an additional fee of \$50 to be paid by all drivers who are found guilty or are granted supervision as a result of driving under the influence. The monies collected will be used to pay for memorial markers and to fund DUI prevention programs.



## ROADSIDE MEMORIAL MARKERS VILLAGE OF HAMPSHIRE

September 19, 2018, a roadside marker bearing the name Nicholas Kilpatrick was unveiled and serves to remind people of the tragedies caused by impaired drivers. Nicholas was 17 years old and riding a skateboard when he was struck and killed by a drunk driver on September 9, 2014.

Carrie Kilpatrick, Nicholas' mother, has waited a long time for this memorial marker. "The pain and grief of losing a child will never go away; this marker gives some comfort knowing that Nicholas' memory will live on and bring awareness to the pain that comes from this senseless crime."

Roadside DUI Memorial Markers have appeared on state highways since August 2007, when HB 1900 was signed into law, creating the roadside memorial.

For many years, AAIM has been working with local agencies to install signs where a fatality occurred as the result of an impaired driver. Family and friends of crash victims often erect temporary makeshift memorials which are often removed because they can become a distraction to other drivers.

Thanks to the Village of Hampshire this sign was erected and will be maintained by the village. AAIM is pleased that the village supported this program and worked hard to make it come to fruition.

This program acknowledges the victims in a dignified manner. The uniform, easily-recognized signs also create awareness of the dangers of alcohol and drug-impaired driving and will help prevent these tragedies.





## NATIONAL ALLIANCE TO STOP IMPAIRED DRIVING (NASID)

July 2022, AAIM staff attended The NASID conference in Washington, DC. Traffic safety experts examined the challenges and complexities of multiple substance-impaired driving. Participants engaged in discussions about topics such as the National Road Safety Strategy safe systems approach, advanced technology to prevent impaired driving, public awareness campaigns, standardization of chemical testing protocols, and more.



*Lisa Rogers, Court Monitor Director, and Samantha Gallagher-Gannon, Prevention and Education Specialist.*



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground is filled with large, detailed sunflowers and their green leaves.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

AAIM's  
Event Sponsors



Thanks for your  
important work, AAIM!

Best Wishes,  
Retired Circuit Judge Bob Anderson





*The City of Belvidere and the Belvidere Police Department  
would like to thank AAIM for all their hard work and  
support over the years.*

***Keep fighting the good fight!***



*Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who have lost loved  
ones or suffer injuries caused by intoxicated motorists.*

*We **AAIM** to prevent anyone else from suffering these  
kinds of losses.*

**Mayor – Clinton Morris**

**Police Chief – Shane Woody**

*Best wishes to AAIM.  
Thank you for all you do!*



**[www.bobberlin.com](http://www.bobberlin.com) • (630) 484-4BOB**

Paid for by Citizens for Bob Berlin. A copy of our report filed with the State Board of Elections is (or will be) available on the Board's official website [www.elections.il.gov](http://www.elections.il.gov) or for purchase from the State Board of Elections, Springfield, Illinois





*Proudly Serving DuPage County Since 1974*

**President**

Tim Jorgensen

**Treasurer**

Dorian Jarrette

**Secretary**

Brandt Cappitelli

*Best wishes on AAIM's efforts to help DUI Victims*

# Kramer

## PHOTOGRAPHERS

Weddings • Fine Portraits • Commercial

*The Professional  
Choice since 1971*



921 NORTH WASHINGTON ST.  
NAPERVILLE, IL 60563

630-355-3546

KRAMERPHOTOGRAPHERS.COM

## **OUR LADY OF HOPE Catholic Mission**

Rev. Derek Ho, Pastor  
9711 W. Devon Ave.  
Rosemont, IL 60018  
847-825-HOPE (4673)



**Closest to O'Hare**

### **Mass Schedule**

Sunday 8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.

### **Weekdays**

12:10 p.m. on Tuesday & Friday



[www.ourladyofhopechurch.org](http://www.ourladyofhopechurch.org)



Rosemont Exposition Services

*Supports the efforts of*



*and is proud  
to contribute to the*

**Victims Assistance  
Fund**

**Law Offices**  
**Couri & Couri**



**Proudly supports the good  
work of AAIM!**

Phillip E. Couri

\*

Phillip A. Couri

Attorneys at Law

Corporate Law

Business Transactions

Real Estate

Commercial Litigation

Family Law

Personal Injury

Estate Planning

847- 446-7372

847-501-4858

552 Lincoln Avenue, Winnetka, IL 60093

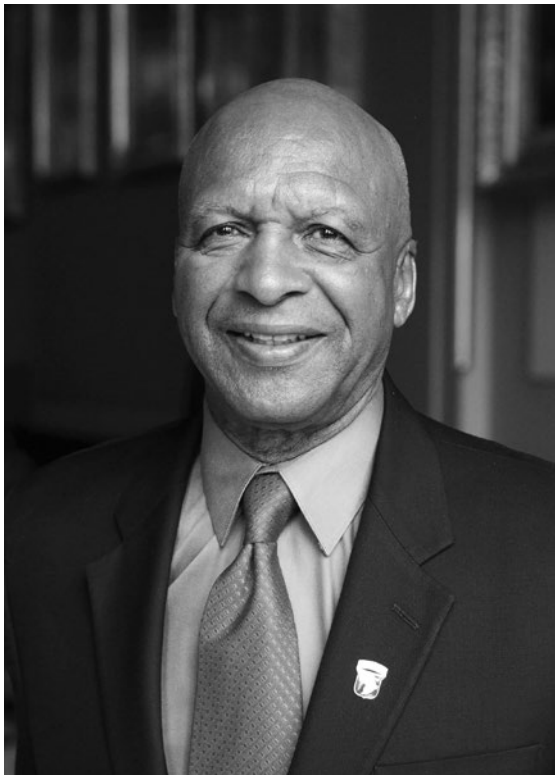
[pac@courilaw.com](mailto:pac@courilaw.com)

[www.courilaw.com](http://www.courilaw.com)



**Jesse White**  
**Illinois Secretary of State**

Salutes AAIM for your work  
in the fight against  
intoxicated motorists.



Together we are making a difference.

*Thank you, AAIM for making  
Illinois roadways safer for all of us!*

9548 Southwest Highway • Oak Lawn, IL 60453 • (708) 425-4200 • [fink@allstate.com](mailto:fink@allstate.com)



**Allstate**  
You're in good hands.

**David Finkelstein, MBA, CIC**  
Agency Owner

Monday - Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday

9:00 AM - 6:00 PM  
9:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
APPOINTMENT ONLY

HOME • AUTO • BOAT • MOTORCYCLE • LIFE • RETIREMENT

SERVING THE CHICAGOLAND AREA SINCE 2007



*A Partnership Dedicated to the Education and Enforcement of  
Intoxicated Motorists*



The men and women of the Buffalo Grove  
Police Department commend AAIM for  
their efforts against drunk and impaired  
driving, and wish them continued success  
in their efforts to assist DUI victims.



*Steven R. Casstevens*  
*Chief of Police*





In Loving Memory of  
Cindy Cebrzynski  
*"Eighteen plus years and we miss  
you more than ever"*  
Mom, Dad, Chris, Kate,  
Tyler and Avery



**Greg Childress Automotive**

41w875 Rt. 20  
Hampshire, IL 60140  
**847-464-5835**

Brakes  
Suspension

Oil Change  
Other Automotive Services

**Kildeer Police Department  
Kildeer, Illinois 60047**

Chief Village Officer: Michael Talbett  
Police Chief: Steve Balinski  
Finance Director: Annette Zborowski  
Police Records Clerk: Tammy Dreyer  
Administrative Assistant: Mary Derda



The Kildeer Police Department is committed to removing impaired drivers from the roadway.

**Our partnership with AAIM save lives!**



**PETE CALLACHER**  
Cell 630-327-7032

**VANGUARD SECURITY CO.**

Fire Alarm Systems / Security Systems  
Video Surveillance Systems

Licensed & Insured Electrical Contractor  
Commercial Residential

Tel. (630) 595-5351  
Fax (630) 539-4505  
Email: [vanguard60106@aol.com](mailto:vanguard60106@aol.com)

P.O. Box 46  
Bensenville, IL 60106



**THANK YOU AAIM**  
**for your ongoing**  
**commitment and dedication.**

McHenry County State's Attorney  
Patrick Kenneally

**Piotrowski & Associates, Ltd.**

CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

3315 Algonquin Road, Suite 420B  
Rolling Meadows, IL 60008  
Phone: (847) 259-1900  
Fax: (847) 259-2016

William G. Piotrowski, CPA  
E-mail: [wpiotrowski@piotax.com](mailto:wpiotrowski@piotax.com)



**JOE SOSNOWSKI**  
*State Representative*

*Proudly supports AAIM and their efforts to assist victims*

815-547-3436 • 305 AMPHITHEATER DR., ROCKFORD, IL 61107  
[SOSNOWSKI@ILHOUSEGOP.ORG](mailto:SOSNOWSKI@ILHOUSEGOP.ORG) • [WWW.JOESOSNOWSKI.ORG](http://WWW.JOESOSNOWSKI.ORG)



**STATE SENATOR**  
**Steve Stadelman**



**34th District**

**Much thanks to AAIM for its vigilance in preventing death and serious injury caused by chemically impaired or distracted drivers.**



The Winnebago County Sheriff's Office proudly supports AAIM's efforts that help us encourage safe, sober and responsible driving on our roads and highways. We look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership with AAIM and removing hundreds of dangerous drivers from our roadways



CONTRACTORS WELCOME

**Wizard**  
**STORAGE**

CARS / BOATS / RV'S / ETC.


INSIDE OR OUTSIDE

MONTHLY OR SEASONAL

CALL NOW **815-492-2691**

**TEMPERLEY EXCAVATING**

**Luke J. Temperley**  
*Excavating & Grading Contractor*



672 Montgomery Ave.  
East Dubuque, IL 61025  
Phone: (563) 543-6114  
ltemperley@hotmail.com



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, with bright yellow petals and dark brown centers. The leaves are a deep green.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Victim Stories

**THE JENNI ANDERSON TRIBUTE**  
**March 30, 1981 – October 17, 1997**



On October 17, 1997, Jenni and her best friends, Ali Matzdorf and Jennifer Roberts were killed in a horrible crash. Our lives have been altered and forever changed. The memories of our Jenni will be in our hearts and minds forever. It is not natural to bury your child. With Jenni's death, we were given a life sentence to live without her.

We feel Jenni's presence often, especially when we see a butterfly or hear a song that was special to her. This year marks twenty-three years since Jenni passed, but still it seems like yesterday that she was here with us. I can still hear her laughing voice and see her smiling eyes. She will always be with us, even through our tears.

The vision of her pretty face that passing time cannot erase; what we wouldn't give if, one more time, we could hear, "Hi Mom, Hi Dad." Any sign to know that she is okay and close at hand, just happy and living in another land.

We now have two beautiful grandchildren, Austin 16 and Emma 12. We often wonder if Jenni were still here how many more grandchildren we would have. We will never know, because of the selfish choice of a drunk driver.

Your loving Mom, Dad and Sister

## THE CHRYSTELLE LEE JANKE ANDREWS TRIBUTE

June 1, 1982 - March 10, 2021

Chrystelle was an imperfect-perfect Mom, daughter, sister, and friend. She was kind, loving, caring, smart, loved nursing, and dedicated to her children. Her standing rule was “I just want my kids to be happy!”

Chrystelle’s last 3 years were a roller coaster. She was diagnosed with depression, and PTSD and with many telling her she wasn’t worth much as a human being. Then COVID hit, and for many Emergency Department Nurses, they were heroes but at the same time shunned. She fought the fight and lost, but for those of us who truly loved her, we are better for having her in our life. Her heart was huge, and her advocacy and love for her kids were unmatched.



### ***Our Hope for the Past***

That her children knew how much she loved them.

That her family and friends knew how much they mattered.

That she knew how much she was loved. That somehow, she saw, heard, or felt all the love given at the time of her passing. Over 500 people attended the visitation. The funeral home smelled like a floral shop. The \$1,000’s of dollars donated as a memorial for her kids. The co-workers praising her compassion and nursing skills. The teachers, school staff, coaches, and babysitters all who confirmed she was a Great Mom.

### ***Our Hope for the Future***

That we are all brave enough to ask for help when needed and that we are all brave enough to give it when asked. That her kids had her long enough to understand what kindness, unconditional love and support can do for one another. That we can move past anger and grief and celebrate life with compassion. Chrystelle has visited us often, as you can see by the picture on the cover of the AAIM book and we Have to Believe.... ***Hope IS in the Horizon.***

*Written by the Andrews’, Janke’s, Talley’s, and Olson’s family.*

**THE ALEX BANKS TRIBUTE**  
**July 20, 1990 – December 4, 2015**



It has been nearly seven years since my son Alex was taken from me and those that love him.

People were always drawn to Alex, even at a young age. The house was always filled with friends and family laughing at his jokes and stories. He would appear shy, and introverted even to those who did not know him. But, he was quite the opposite. While he had a sense of humor like no other, he had a compassionate side that only a few saw. It wasn't uncommon for him to ask for a whole new wardrobe because he had given his to a homeless person or someone who needed

them more than he did. As frustrating as that was, it also made me proud to be his mom.

We shared the same sense of humor and would laugh hysterically at online videos showing people falling. It is during these times when everything feels so surreal. I still pick up my phone to call him... and when the realization hits that he's gone, it hits hard! The mental pain of knowing my child is gone forever is unreal. No parent should ever have to bury a child.

To this day I still anticipate receiving phone calls on Fridays, during special occasions and holidays. The mental and at times, physical pains are there just as if the crash occurred yesterday. I know there will be no more phone calls to wish me a happy birthday. No more calls to ask how to cook something. No more phone calls to share a joke. No more phone calls to ask for money. Although there will never be any more phone calls, I have memories and thousands upon thousands of pictures to look at and his two adorable children. His life ended on December 4, 2015, but his legacy will live on in his children.

There are those who say, "Time heals all wounds." And while they mean well, I know that definitely does not heal all wounds. As a parent who has lost a child due to someone else's actions, you learn to cope with your loss little by little, day by day. No one ever truly heals from losing a child, no matter how old that child is. This is by far the most difficult thing to go through as a parent... it is a pain no mother or parent should ever have to go through.

The love between mother and child is the strongest love there is... my son may be gone, but he is definitely not forgotten...

Missing you- Mom



**MICHAEL BELL TRIBUTE**  
**November 27, 1981 – January 28, 2008**



**His Journey's Just Begun**

~ by Ellen Brenneman

*Don't think of him as gone away  
his journey's just begun,  
life holds so many facets  
this earth is only one.*

*Just think of him as resting  
from the sorrows and the tears  
in a place of warmth and comfort  
where there are no days and years.*

*Think how he must be wishing  
that we could know today  
how nothing but our sadness  
can really pass away.*

*And think of him as living  
in the hearts of those he touched...  
for nothing loved is ever lost  
and he was loved so much.*

*Michael, we love you.  
Grandmother Bell, Mother, Aunts, and Jermerial and Karer*



## THE MARTI MULL BELLUSCHI STORY



Although it was years ago, my story is similar to too many others that still happen almost every day and every hour since ...

When I was fifteen, my father and I were hit head-on by a drunk driver going 90 miles per hour. I was gravely injured. I was in the passenger seat, not wearing a safety belt. My face went through the windshield, and I whiplashed back into the car. The glass slit my throat from ear to ear and severely lacerated my face. The force of the crash shattered part of my skull, knocked out my front teeth and broke my femur. I was thrown under the dashboard and trapped in the car. I was given a tracheotomy so that I would not drown in my own blood. Then, I was in a coma for five days and in the hospital in traction for two and one-half months.

My father was seriously injured. He had a shattered kneecap, broken hand, arm, and facial lacerations. He was in the hospital for three weeks. Sadly, his most significant and long-lasting injury was that what happened to me broke his heart.

The drunk driver was also seriously injured. He was twenty-one years old, uninsured, and unemployed.

As many AAIM supporters know, my father and I were very fortunate to have survived. And, I have had the honor and responsibility for many years to speak out on behalf of other crash victims, particularly teens,

## THE MARTI MULL BELLUSCHI STORY

who have not survived or who have even more serious and permanent injuries. I have also had amazing opportunities to work for years in various capacities to make Illinois roadways safer.

One particularly bright light in my life has been my years of coordinating work with AAIM to end impaired driving. Thinking of my relationships and friendships with AAIM supporters and so many other traffic safety advocates in Illinois, I am reminded of this meaningful quote from Elizabeth Kubler-Ross:

*“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness, and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.”*

It is too often sad but I am very proud to be part of your Unexpected Journey dear AAIM friends. Together we are saving lives and making the world better.

*YOU and AAIM are beautiful! Thank you, all ways, and always!*

*Marti Mull Belluschi*

## THE KEVIN WILLIAM BENES TRIBUTE

June 8, 1990 – December 11, 2009



On June 8, 1990, excitement and joy filled my heart after giving birth to my first child Kevin William. During the next 19 years, 6 months, and 3 days I, along with everyone who knew Kevin, had the chance to watch him grow. He grew into a loving, kind, and responsible man, brother, and son. He was a big brother to Matthew, Amy, and Jillian. Every day our family had together, I witnessed the love and laughter they shared. Kevin was an encouraging and supportive big brother who loved to play practical jokes and make everyone laugh. He was a family man who generously shared his love with his family and those close to him. He wasn't only a caring man but a responsible and determined man. He graduated from Lockport High School in the top 10 percent of his class. As an Illinois state scholar and two-sport athlete; Kevin had already shown us how hard-working and responsible he was. He then went on to become the third-generation electrician in his family. We were so proud of Kevin. He was well on his way to grasping and living his dreams.

Since December 11, 2009, sadness and grief have filled my heart. Kevin was on his way home from work when he was tragically killed. He was not taken by sickness or an act of nature.

Kevin's life wasn't taken because of his own dangerous behavior or reckless disregard for others. He was killed because a repeat DUI offender CHOSE ONCE AGAIN to get behind the wheel of his truck while intoxicated. He violently crashed into Kevin's car at a high rate of speed, killing Kevin instantly. The DUI offender made a plea deal in April 2011 and was sentenced to six years in prison. On April 13, 2016, the offender was released from prison, and able to go home to his family. Kevin wasn't given that chance; he was taken from his family. We're serving a life sentence without Kevin. It'll be 13 years since that tragic day Kevin was taken from us, and each day is still a challenge. Although time has gone by, the pain is still intensely the same. We have to tend to the pain, and our broken hearts. The loss of Kevin will always be there for our family and friends.

## THE KEVIN WILLIAM BENES TRIBUTE

We're still trying to learn "how" to live without Kevin.

Kevin lived a life of love and honor. What can we do to honor Kevin? We need to learn from Kevin and live like he did. We must live each day to the fullest, with responsibility and care. We must come together and help each other. In Kevin's honor, we have the faith to continue our lives in love and help each other each day. Kevin gave us faith. Faith gives you hope, and hope gives you strength. Strength gives you courage to go on each day. When you're praying for an answer to things you can't change, and when it's out of your hands, just hold onto faith.

Kevin, you were missed at your little sister Amy's wedding, but you were close in our hearts. Miss you, my boy!

**Kevin, we love you, you are in our hearts forever!**

**Marilyn Benes - Mother**

## THE JASON BLATTER STORY

November 18, 1986



On the night of February 2, 2019, our lives forever changed when our son, Jason, was struck by a drunk driver. Around 2:30 am on February 3, we received the phone call all parents dread. The voice on the other end asked if I knew Jason Blatter, and I stated, “Yes, I am his mom.” She asked me to remain calm, get to the hospital, and call family. We were in shock and scared. All I could do was ask, “God, please let us keep our son. He has so much left to do.”

I don’t remember a lot of what was being said. I heard he was alive but had little brain activity, and his prognosis was not good. Our son was lying in this bed, draped with tubes and hooked up to so many machines. His head was bandaged and had staples in it. His left eye was bruised and swollen shut. He had an incision all the way up his abdomen. He was on a ventilator and sedated. Due to the crash’s impact, he had simultaneous surgeries, a splenectomy, and a craniotomy. He suffered a Traumatic Brain Injury, and his left bone flap had been removed due to brain swelling. He also suffered three rib fractures, a severe knee injury, an orbital fracture, and sinus injuries.

We were living hour to hour. As time passed, we sat bedside hoping for any sign that Jason was still with us. We were told not to have any expectations, but every movement or sound gave us hope. I would hold his hand and whisper that he is strong, that we love him, and that the waiting room was full of people praying for his recovery.

Jason started responding to short verbal commands. This road would be long, but he was with us, and we would do whatever needed to support him. Two weeks after the crash he was transferred to Shirley Ryan Ability Lab. During his almost four-week stay, he attended physical, occupational, and speech therapy daily. Once he was released, he participated in outpatient treatment until his graduation on July 3, 2019. The bone in his skull was replaced on May 17, 2019, using 50 screws and plates. He endured a seven-hour knee surgery in December of 2019 and physical therapy. As a result, Jason has lost vision in his left eye and partial vision in his right eye.

As his mom, every day, I wish there were something I could do to take away all the pain he has endured. The most important thing is that Jason is here with us today! We are so grateful to our family and friends that have walked this journey with us. A special thank you to AAIM for their support.

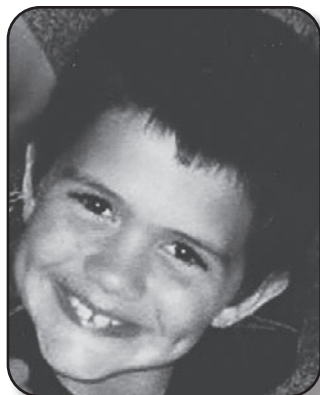
**J.J. and Diane Blatter, Tony Blatter, Meg Chrisman, and Kathleen Sulikowski**  
**#blatterstrong**



## THE TONY BORCIA TRIBUTE

June 3, 2002 – July 28, 2012

My son, Tony Borgia, was ten years old when he went tubing with his father, Jim, and siblings, Kaeleigh, Joe, and Erin, on the Chain-o-Lakes on July 28, 2012. Tony was having the time of his life until he fell off the tube. Before his father could pick him up, he was hit by a large boat despite wearing a bright red lifejacket and waving his arms. The man who hit Tony pled guilty to causing the incident and operating his boat under the influence of cocaine and alcohol. He was sentenced to ten years in prison.



Prior to July 28, 2012, I had everything I ever wanted. I had a wonderful husband and four beautiful, healthy children. Tony was the youngest and completed our family. His smile, with the big gaps between his teeth and his sweet dimples, lit up the room.

My world was shattered by one phone call from my husband. As the night wore on, I slowly got more details about what had happened. I was eventually told that Tony's body had been dismembered. It was only then that I truly realized the horror that my husband and children had witnessed.

The days, weeks and months after Tony's death seemed to blend into one another. It has been nine years since Tony died, and my family is still struggling every day to deal with this loss.

There is not enough time or words to describe Tony. He was incredible joy in our lives. He was always happy and made you happy just being around him.

I miss the little things about him the most. The feel of his hand in mine, the smell of his head after he took a bath, cuddling with him in my bed every night before bedtime, trying to steal a kiss from him at the bus stop because he thought he was too big to kiss his Mom in public, the way his eyes lit up when he saw me after work, and giving him a piggyback ride to bed every night singing our bedtime song "Tony Mine," kissing him good night, telling him "I love you" and hearing him say "I love you too Mommy."

Our family and friends have formed The Y-noT Project (Tony's name spelled backward) as a tribute to him. The Y-noT Project is dedicated to stopping intoxicated boating. Unfortunately, driving a boat is one of the last places where it is still socially acceptable to drink and drive, and The Y-noT Project, with help from AAIM seeks to change this culture and make our lakes and rivers safe again.

**Margaret Borgia**

*This tribute is sponsored by Sally Hoffman*

## THE PATRICIA BREYN STORY

In my life, I have twice been a victim of a drunk driver. The first time, I was 10 years old. I was not hit by this driver, truthfully, he did me no physical harm. Instead, the drunk driver hit my 7-year-old brother as he rode his bike to school. I was only steps behind him, and I saw his broken body lying in the road. It was me that had to tell my mother her son had been hit by a car. It was me that had to grow up without a brother, who had years of nightmares, and can still see him lying there every time I close my eyes. I remember going to a lawyer's office with my parents. We were told the driver would not be charged with anything and that my parents would receive some money. Even I was aware that what they were offered would not cover the bills from the funeral. This was in 1976. If there was any help out there for families in our position, we were not aware of it. My parents never recovered from my brother's death. My mother withdrew from life, and had to be hospitalized for depression more than once. I have had my own emotional issues, and I believe it changed the way I brought up my own children.

In January of 2018, I was the victim a second drunk driver. I was leaving work, and it was shortly after midnight. I was enjoying the clear night and the peace and quiet in the car, I felt good. I turned onto the main road home. There was only one other car on the road. I was in the left lane, and the car was slightly ahead of me in the right lane, then suddenly, it was across both lanes. No signal, nothing. I remember trying to get out of the way, but I didn't make it. She crashed into me. My airbag went off, and there was suddenly blood everywhere. Cars came from the other direction and several stopped. A taxi driver tried to stop the blood that was coming from my face, and I heard one man say he thought I should have died. I went to two different hospitals that night. At the second, a priest met my husband, and for a few terrifying moments he thought I was dead. In the end, I had a broken nose, some small fractures, a gash on my face, which has left a permanent scar, and some other minor injuries. The aftermath of this crash has been different than what my parents experienced.

## THE PATRICIA BREYN STORY

I knew of AAIM from Randy Lounds and AAIM's annual BIKERS TAKE AAIM AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING event. One of the first calls I made after leaving the hospital was to Rita Kreslin, AAIM's Executive Director. She told me about my wonderful advocate, Carrie Kilpatrick. Carrie was with me every step of the way. Explaining the court procedures, being there when I was with the State's Attorney, taking late night tearful calls, offering advice, and talking through varied and sundry emotions I seemed to be flying through. Her help and kindness was invaluable. Having been through both experiences, I can tell you that though the court system itself is better than it was in 1976, and drunk driving is taken more seriously in 2021. AAIM and the work it does is very necessary. It is something that we need to support so that no family is left to fend for themselves as my parents were.



## THE THOMAS BURLESON STORY



*The Burleson family at  
Great America just hours  
before the crash.*

On August 21, 1999, at approximately 11:02 pm, a drunk driver on the wrong side of the road hit my VW microbus head-on, killing my wife Eva, 34 our three children, Daniel 13, Tiffany 11 and Dallis 7, and our dog Emmitt. In addition, I suffered a broken neck in four places, a broken nose, a broken left clavicle and numerous cuts and bruises. I was in a Halo brace for over three months.

In the months after the crash, I wrote a suicide note and was sharpening the knife when a friend intervened. I can tell you I didn't want to die. I was tired of being alone

and feeling emotional pain I can't describe; it must be experienced to be understood. I was tired of sleeping alone, waking up alone, and living in an empty house. I was tired of the first thing I felt each moment was emptiness and pain. I was tired that each breath took all my energy. I was tired of the last thing I felt each night before falling asleep: pain. I was tired of having the same nightmares over and over again each night. If breathing was not automatic, I would have forgotten to breathe.

Grief is ugly, yet beautiful. The ugly part is the photo of my son at the crash scene lying in a puddle of his own blood, with a hole in his skull large enough to accommodate a human fist; bones jutting through his flesh. The ugly part is Tiffany's hair being red in the crash scene photo; she was a blonde. The ugly part is knowing Dallis did not suffer life-threatening injuries. If I had checked to make sure Dallis, Tiffany, and Daniel were wearing their seatbelts, then Dallis would have survived. Instead, all I did that night was tell the kids to put on their seatbelts. The ugly part is the fact the drunk driver has never accepted responsibility for the crash and blames me. The ugly part is this man has threatened my new wife and me in court during a hearing that took place just a few years ago. The ugly part is the fact that during a search of his cell, they found our home address and telephone number. The ugly part is that my mom died on the crash's second anniversary.

## THE THOMAS BURLESON STORY

Finally, the ugliest part is when my wife, Mollie and I found out she was pregnant and the due date for our baby was August 21, 2005. YES!!! Something to celebrate on August 21. A few weeks later, we find out we are having a little girl. Then a few weeks after that we find out our little girl is Trisomy 18 and will die either in utero or very soon after her birth. The doctor told us, "Trisomy 18 is not conducive for life." How do I, as a husband to Mollie and a father to Elijah, our oldest child, support, protect and help carry their burden, when I barely have the strength to breathe and to live? Abigaele Eden Burleson lived 38 hours and 24 minutes; she died in my arms. I have never seen a human being fight so hard to live, to draw each breath. I told Abbey over and over again, "Please Abbey, its ok. You can go home to Jesus." Mentally, I was screaming at God, "You will heal my daughter **NOW!!!**" God listened but didn't give me the answer I desperately wanted.

The beautiful part of grief is the memories I did not know I had of my wife and our three children. I am not talking about the memories of Christmas, birthdays and anniversaries. I am referring to the seemingly innocuous memories that only I have. Memories so precious, that it took the depths of grief to reveal them to my heart.

The beautiful part of grief is falling in love with a beautiful, strong woman who enjoys hearing my stories and wants to know my family. The beautiful part of grief is seeing Mollie for the first time, standing at the back of the church in her wedding dress and telling the best man that she is a gift from God.

The beautiful part of grief is when Mollie told me we were pregnant with our first child. I opened a bottle of champagne at 5:30 am for me to celebrate. I called in to work telling my manager; "Mollie is pregnant. I am drinking champagne, and I am not coming to work. If she calls, I will not answer the phone."

The beautiful part of grief is telling Mollie each night, "Good night, sweet dreams, love you." The beautiful part of grief is in the middle of the night having Mollie to cuddle and to touch, because she is there and it comforts me; and to play footsie while we sleep. The beautiful part of



## THE THOMAS BURLESON STORY

grief is smelling her perfume on her pillowcase when I wake up; having her hair in my face. The beautiful part of grief is praying with my wife each morning.

The beautiful part of grief is being a daddy to Elijah Thomas, Abigaele Eden and Gideon Luke. The beautiful part of grief is celebrating the differences between my sons. Elijah, looks more like me, but has more of Mollie's personality; Gideon, looks like his mommy, but has my personality.

The beautiful part of grief is watching Gideon demand to sit in a big boy chair, to use a fork and go upstairs by himself, because his brother can do it. The beautiful part of grief was when my son Elijah was six months old and very fussy. First a friend held Elijah, but he wouldn't calm down. Then, his nana held him, and he wouldn't settle down. I took Elijah, and he immediately cuddled into my shoulder, stopped crying and relaxed. Elijah didn't need our friend, his godmother, he didn't need his nana. He needed me, his daddy.

Grief is ugly and beautiful just like life. My life does have some ugly parts but most of it is beautiful. August 21, 1999 was an absolutely perfect day until the crash. I cherish my memories of Daniel teasing me, of Tiffany's soft giggle when I kissed her nose and sitting next to Dallis during her first roller coaster ride. Standing next to my bride as we recite our wedding vows, making a lifetime covenant between each other and God is beautiful. Holding my children for the first time just moments after they were born is beautiful. Hearing the word Dada for the first time, that is beautiful. I am a husband and a father, that is beautiful. Yes, I grieve every day and will until I die. Then there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain. Then life will be....perfect.

Tom Burleson

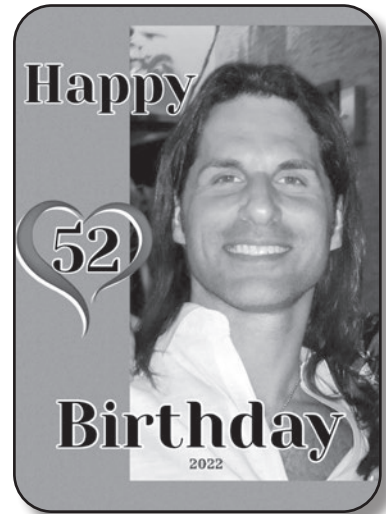
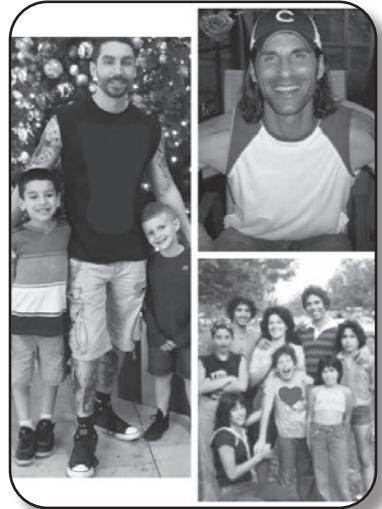
**THE FRANK S. CARUSO, JR. TRIBUTE**  
**January 5, 1970 - February 11, 2012**

**FRANKIE FOREVER!**

My son, Frank, was killed by a drunk driver while he was sitting in a state trooper's car after surviving a previous crash caused by an intoxicated driver. The years have passed, and I've forgiven the offender, but I still ask the question... Why? A mother should never lose a child. I'll never have another opportunity to see his beautiful smile, hug him, or tell him I love him.

Frankie, my son who was killed has a son, Frank and two beautiful grandchildren, Matteo and Frankie who have been deprived of their grandfather's hugs and kisses since he was killed. Their grandfather has been deprived of watching his grandchildren grow.

His brother, Sam and sisters Anna, Cathy, Rosie and Gina and their families still miss him on holidays, birthdays and at family get-togethers. It's been 10 years and we still celebrate his birthday together. We're grateful for the good times that we shared and fun stories that are told. Family photos and funny stories fill our hearts with thankfulness to God that we have those memories to keep him alive forever.



*Always grateful for the compassion and support from the AAIM advocates.*

*When I miss you, I do not have to go far...*

*I just look inside of my heart, and that's where I'll find you.*

Mom



## THE CINDY CEBRZYNSKI TRIBUTE

October 18, 1983 – November 7, 2004



Some of you will be reading this tribute for the very first time. Others who have been associated with AAIM and received a book like the one you are holding may remember how tragically Cindy's life was cut short.

Our daughter, Cindy, had her life taken away from her on the morning of Sunday, November 7, 2004, at the hands of a drunk driver. It seems like yesterday, but this November it will be eighteen years.

Cindy had gone out with friends to celebrate her 21st birthday, October 18, 2004. Kissing her goodbye that night, we wished her a good time, and she assured us that she would be safe. The next time we knew of her whereabouts or what happened to her was from three Illinois State police at 5:20 AM on the morning of November 7, 2004. We were informed that Cindy was killed in a rollover crash as she was ejected from the car she was traveling in. By the time the paramedics arrived on the scene, Cindy was already dead. On this earth for too short of time, 21 years and 20 days.

Losing a child is the worst possible thing that can happen to parents. There is nothing so sad as seeing one's child laid out in a coffin ready for burial. Nothing!!

At the time of the crash there were five people in our immediate family. Having lost one of the five is mathematically 20% but in our hearts, it feels like 99% of our family is gone, having lost a member in such a tragic fashion and at such a very young age.

Cindy was enrolled at Benedictine University in the pre-med program at the time of the crash. Her desire was to be either a pharmacist or a surgical nurse. Extending a hand and helping people was her calling. We have established a scholarship at Benedictine University in Cindy's name.

**THE CINDY CEBRZYNSKI TRIBUTE**

**October 18, 1983 – November 7, 2004**

This scholarship affords the recipients the opportunity to further their education in the science field.

Cindy's death could have and should have been prevented. Our lives will never be the same. Resurrection cemetery in Justice, Illinois is now Cindy's home. The closest we can be to her is visiting the cemetery, standing next to the mausoleum wall where she is entombed and seeing her name and picture on the wall.

This past year our grandchildren Tyler and Avery turned 13 and 9 respectively. Often, they ask about their Aunt Cindy whom they never got to meet. You can see the sorrow in their faces as they try to comprehend what happened to their aunt.

Our faith in God remains strong as does our belief that someday we'll be reunited with Cindy. We ask our family and friends to pray for us to give us strength to continue to somehow deal with the terrible tragedy that has occurred.

Cindy, your family and friends continue to love you and miss you even more deeply every year.

**Mom and Dad  
Pam and Bob Cebzynski**

**THE NADIA CHOWDHURY TRIBUTE**  
**May 14, 1983 – February 21, 2004**



It's been more than 18 years since our beloved daughter, Nadia, was snatched away by drunk and reckless drivers at the UIUC (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) campus in 2004. Nadia went to UIUC for higher studies after graduating from Naperville Central High School in 2002.

Nadia's life was as brief as a rainbow in her family's and many friends' lives. We want to keep the memory of Nadia and

her dream alive. We want to promote education and use of computers among the very underprivileged youths, in Bangladesh and in particular girls. This motivated family and friends to establish a Computer Literacy Center (CLC) in collaboration with Volunteers Association for Bangladesh (VAB) and their Computer Literacy Program (CLP). <http://clpweb.org/>

The rationale behind the CLP was to bridge the 'digital gap' between underprivileged students in rural Bangladesh and their counterparts from developed nations as well as well-to-do families in Bangladesh.

The CLC is a humble endeavor, by Nadia's family and friends. It provides for enlightenment of human spirit by providing opportunities to students to realize Nadia's goal and make a difference in their lives, as well as in multicultural global societies. The CLC was established at Talgachia Deshanterkati High School in Borguna, Bangladesh in June of 2011 and was sponsored by the Chicago Suburban Bangladesh Islamic Group (CSBIG) USA. One of the main purposes of the centers is to educate the underprivileged youth in Bangladesh in the use of computers, information, and communication technology. We believe that given adequate training and providing the tools and technology to underprivileged youth it's likely to create a more balanced socio-economic structure, a just society in Bangladesh and elsewhere. Since inception of the center, more than 75 students are being trained each year.

*With gratitude,*  
*Nasrin and Shamsul Chowdhury*



## ONE SPLIT SECOND

One split second is all it takes  
For death and destruction to be left in your wake.

Before operating any vehicle of any kind.  
Stop, focus and clear your mind.

For the life you save that day  
Maybe your own in a huge way.

The goal is to arrive intact.  
Distracted and impaired driving may have a deadly impact.

40 years to bring our mission home  
For each victim to know they are not alone.

We will forever continue to fight  
Until every motorist sees the light.

With every story and tear that we share  
Awareness and expression of our care

We are the voices for those who can no longer speak  
Awareness and justice is what we seek

*By Marianne Aspan*

## THE PAUL CONRAD AND SHERYL ANDREASEN TRIBUTE

Paul – May 23, 1952 – June 29, 2018

Sheryl – July 11, 1955 – June 29, 2018



On Friday, June 28, 2018 at approximately 5:10 pm, my husband called me on his way home from work to let me know there was a car crash on Old River Road and that he was rerouted and going to be a couple of minutes late. I sent my dad a text stating that I heard there was a crash outside of his neighborhood and wanted to make sure he was okay. I didn't receive a text back from him, so I called him repeatedly. I sent a text to my stepmom, and I didn't receive a text from her either. A local news station was "live" at the scene of a crash and showed the back end of a silver car from far away. I tried to call them again. My gut couldn't let it go, so I called the local hospital near their house and asked if they were there, but

neither had been admitted. I still couldn't let it go, so I decided to call the coroner's office. Through my tears I explained there had been a crash near my dad's house and I was unable reach him. They asked me for his name and told me they didn't have anyone there by that name. I felt a little better, but for some reason I still couldn't shake my gut feeling. I contacted my stepmom's sisters and my brother to see if anyone had heard from them. I tried one last time at 10:40 p.m. to reach them at home.

At approximately 11:20 pm, as I laid in bed awake, my phone rang. I looked at my phone and it was a local number that I didn't recognize. I instantly knew something was wrong. The local chaplain asked if I was the daughter of Paul Conrad, and I answered yes. He wanted to know if he could come to my house to speak with me. I remember every painful minute waiting for him to arrive at our house and every second of that conversation. With my husband and mom by my side, he delivered the worst news of my life. My dad and stepmom were in a car crash and didn't survive. My life and so many other lives, were flipped upside down that night. I have thought about that day every day since.

To lose a parent in a blink of an eye is beyond painful, but to lose two parents is unimaginable. My dad was filled with corny jokes and a smile that could light up a room. He loved spending time with his children and grandchildren. He loved helping friends and family with projects. He had a passion for gardening and the movie "The Wizard of Oz." Sheryl was an amazing stepmom and had a heart that could fill a room. She was a friend to everyone and volunteered for multiple organizations. She was a deaconess at her church and a strong and faithful Christian. They left behind three children, nine grandchildren and one great-grandchild. They missed meeting their newest grandchild and great-grandchild. They both had so much more life to live and love to give.

## THE PAUL CONRAD AND SHERYL ANDREASEN TRIBUTE

Instead, our lives were immediately filled with meetings with the funeral director, attorneys, banks, and tax professionals. They had an entire home filled with their possessions that needed to be sorted. Life as we knew it stopped, while we finished everything in their lives that they had started and left behind.

The impaired driver who killed them was driving at a high rate of speed during the middle of the day and abruptly swerved his car directly in front of them hitting them head-on and killing them instantly. They weren't given a chance to try to avoid him or save their lives. They had multiple "instant killer" injuries that are unthinkable. We were advised to wait to see them until they were ready for their double funeral. Two caskets, floral arrangements, and headstones to pick out; two lives that were taken.

It's been four years and the case abruptly ended with no real closure for our family. The impaired driver that killed them was in jail for almost a year and a half. Multiple changes of attorneys and public defenders among other things, kept delaying any real progress with the case. He received help from a local organization and bonded out of jail a week before the second anniversary of the crash. A week after bonding out, he overdosed on drugs and died. This part of our journey of grieving may not have finished the way we thought it would, but the criminal justice part is over. After everything we have gone through as a family, we never got to hear the words "guilty" and a sentence of "X number of years in prison" for his actions.

Life completely changed after that day for those who knew and loved them. Four years later and there are so many moments in our lives that they've missed. More grandchildren and great grandchildren were born and will never know them. Engagements and weddings that they couldn't attend. These are moments that they should be here for, and it hurts that they aren't. We will continue to remember and celebrate the amazing people they were. Husband, dad, wife, stepmom, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, grandparents, and great-grandparents.

*A million times we have needed you,  
A million times we have cried,  
If love alone could have saved you,  
You never would have died.  
In life, we loved you dearly,  
In death, we love you still.  
In our hearts, you hold a memory,  
No one can ever fill.  
It broke our hearts to lose you,  
But you did not go alone,  
For part of us went with you  
The day God called you home"*

Call your parents often and tell them you love them...  
you'll never regret it.

*Nancy GeRue,  
Daughter of Paul Conrad  
Stepdaughter of Sheryl Andreasen*

## PLEASE...

*Please, don't ask me if I'm over it yet.*

*I'll never be over it.*

*Please, don't tell me he's in a better place.*

*He isn't here with me.*

*Please, don't say at least he isn't suffering.*

*I haven't come to terms with why he had  
to suffer at all.*

*Please, don't tell me you know how I feel.*

*Unless you have lost a child.*

*Please, don't ask me if I feel better.*

*Bereavement isn't a condition that clears up.*

*Please, don't tell me at least you had him  
for so many years.*

*What year would you choose for your child to die?*

*Please, don't tell me God never gives us  
more than we can bear.*

*Please, just say you are sorry.*

*Please, just say you remember my child, if you do.*

*Please, just let me talk about my child.*

*Please, mention my child's name.*

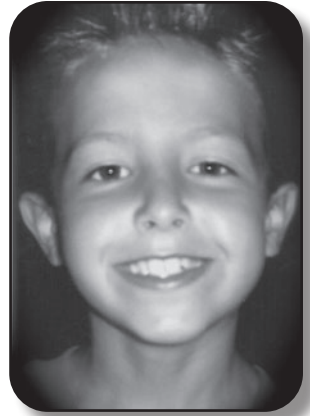
*Please, just let me cry.*

**Rita Moran**

**THE TROY EVERS TRIBUTE**  
**August 28, 2000 - November 8, 2008**

It will be 14 years since a drunk driver killed our son Troy. Troy was only eight years old. Yet, not a minute goes by that we don't think of him.

As his mother, I know he is looking down on us and his brother Chad in Heaven. Some days, even now, take our breath away because missing him is so painful. Yet, our faith keeps us strong.



*“As I sit in Heaven and watch you every day.  
I try to let you know with signs I never went away.  
I hear you when you're laughing and watch you when you sleep,  
I even place my arms around you when you weep.*

*I see you wish the days away begging to have me home,  
So I try to send you signs, so you know you're not alone.  
Please don't feel guilty that you have life that was denied to me.  
For Heaven is truly a beautiful place- just you wait and see.*

*So live your life, enjoy yourself and be free-  
Then I know with every breath you take; you'll be taking one for me.”*

Troy, we miss you, and love you very much.  
Grandpa planted a lollypop tree in his back yard in memory of you.  
Auntie Linda does a hero walk against drunk driving in New Jersey.  
Your brother Chad has now finished college.  
I suffered a stroke two years ago and have been fighting an uphill battle ever since.  
The Ripple Effect of losing you has taken a toll on all of us.

**We will love you always and forever,  
Dad, Mom, and Chad**



## THE BRANDON FERREIRA TRIBUTE

June 4, 1992 – December 30, 2017



Brandon Ferreira was an enthusiastic 22-year-old who had the world at his feet, and he was “living the dream.” He was working two part-time jobs and trying to figure out how to go to college without becoming part of the rat wheel and owing more than he would ever be able to pay off. He dived into poetry and writing music. He even helped create a club in high school to influence other students to express themselves in such a way that had no gateway at that time. It was called the

Music Industry Club. He helped form this club, which has now taken off and inspired many students. Brandon was the kid that had friends across every barrier: jocks, stoners, nerds, and high achievers. Everyone knew and loved him. He had the best sense of humor and could make anyone laugh. He had no boundaries and got along with everyone.

In February 2015, Brandon was celebrating a friend’s birthday and realized he had too much to drink, so he made the decision to leave his car at the bar. One of his friends had offered to drive him home since he was the designated driver that night. Although Brandon thought he could trust his friend to get him home safely, he wasn’t as trustworthy as Brandon believed. Their vehicle was hit by a driver under the influence of both alcohol and drugs. Their vehicle was T-boned, and Brandon was trapped in the car. The crash left him a quadriplegic. He had to re-learn how to breathe, eat, and function. Brandon spent four months in inpatient rehabilitation centers and that was just the beginning. Both my husband and I had to quit our jobs and be at the hospital, learning how to take care of our son. Brandon recovered beyond expectations and once he was released, we tried our best to get back to as “normal” a life as possible.

We remodeled our home and did our best to accommodate him and his needs. Brandon recovered as best as he could with a positive outlook on everything. He would never give in to hate towards the drunk driver because he believed it would impede his recovery. That belief and his strength carried our family and me through this tragedy. He wanted to get his degree in business and accounting. I’d never seen him so confident and passionate about his future. Despite his disabilities, he overlooked and tried his best to overcome them. He

## THE BRANDON FERREIRA TRIBUTE

fought against being immobile and wanted to give back to those in the same situation and to provide necessities easily to them. Brandon had dreams to open a foundation that could help people who have mobility issues.

Although Brandon's body fought as long as it could, we lost him on December 30, 2017 due to the perils of being a quadriplegic. His legacy will live on as he made the decision to donate his organs, which have helped over 30 people to live.

We were so fortunate to meet the advocates from AAIM who helped us immensely through this tragic time in our lives. We have made lifelong friends and will always continue to inform and educate the public about the dangers of driving under the influence.

Brandon created beautiful art and poetry, and I share this piece of him with you this year:

### *Drifting*

*By Brandon Ferreira*

*"We had spoken outside the gates.  
We were to meet again,  
Somewhere on our journey,  
I lost you..."*

*Were you held back or did you slither away?  
Is it heavy on the other side? Like they say  
Or are you just drifting somewhere?  
Drifting away..."*

*Don't go running from the light and leave your pretty world behind  
I bet you never thought it could be like this.  
I stood there on a full moon autumn night,  
A gust of wind ran away with my soul.*

## THE GARY FINK TRIBUTE

October 19, 1960 – January 22, 2017



I never thought there would be a day where I'd need to put on paper how someone's willful negligence would cause my father's death. I can't describe to you when I wake up in the morning, the first thing that runs across my mind, is my dad is no longer here with me. My dad won't be able to walk me down the aisle to give me away or be there to watch me at equestrian competitions. I won't be able to watch my dad grown old in his golden years because of a person's selfish actions.

I don't have much to say to the defendant, other than "why?" Why did he knowing that he had engine troubles, get back on to the highway, not only clearly endangering my father's life but others around him too? Why didn't he put on his caution lights when he was stopped in the lane of traffic on I 90? Why didn't he not go back and see if my father needed help when he felt the crash? Why did he lie in his logbooks about where he was at the time the crash?

The defendant has taken so much away for me, my mom, our family, and our mental health. One thing he didn't take from me is my strength to live for my father and keep his memory alive.

I won't sugar coat anything, I am angry! I'm angry the driver got back on the road that day. I'm angry he took away the one man in my whole life who was my constant. He took away my peace and my mental health, as I've had to go on medication to cope with depression and anxiety since that day.

Sure, crashes happen, but this was completely avoidable. If the driver had made a better decision, my father would still be alive. I wouldn't have to write this tribute and the driver wouldn't have felony charges

There is no closure. There will never be closure. While the driver goes on living his life, my family suffers. My family dreads important dates like my father's birthday, wedding anniversary and holidays. My birthday is January 19th and the defendant killed him on January 22nd... I no longer celebrate my birthday. I hope the defendants never forgets my father's name.

## THE TANESSHA GATES STORY

December 4, 2015

A 23-year-old girl's life has been changed forever. A girl who had dreams and children to provide for. What I mean is...she will never be the same because of the crash. I'm her sister and I've been her caregiver since the crash. I've seen her struggle with everything in life, even the simple things.

The brain injury she sustained, due to a drunk driver traveling the wrong way on a bridge, has changed her. Tanesha is now 30 years old. She's mad and has anger issues due to the brain injury; she's always on the run, lost and very confused.



Tanessha was very independent and focused before the crash; she was attending college. She was a single parent working hard every day and trying to reach the goals she set for herself. She has four beautiful children who looked up to her, but now they will never know her the way she was before the crash. This crash didn't just change her life, but it changed her entire family's lives as well.

As her caregiver I gave up my life and goals because family is important. We're taught if your family needs you, you help them. She's my baby sister who I love very much, and I wanted to make sure she got the best care she could after her injury.

Innocent people's lives were taken that day. Alex Banks, her friend who was with her that night will never see his family and children again, as he died due to the crash.

Tanessha was hanging on for dear life and the doctors didn't think she would pull through. She spent about two weeks in a coma with a severe brain bleed. She had a traumatic brain injury, two broken legs and feet. After about two weeks in a coma, she woke up, but didn't recognize anyone. She had to relearn everything after the crash.

She is alive but will never be the same person she was before the crash. Every day is hard for her, as she struggles with her brain injury each day. The defendant received concurrent sentences; 10 years for killing Alex and 5 years for injuring Tanessha, which is hardly enough in our eye's.

It took me five years to get back to my goals and complete school, but I did it. I never gave up! I'm a nurse now.

My family suffered another tragic loss when our baby sister Chiquita, died in a car crash two years ago. I've had my second child, who has brought my family back to together for something good. I've named her Chiquita after my beloved baby sister.

Please don't drink and drive.

*Written by her loving sister,  
Latricia Gates*

**THE BRANT ALEXANDER GRIEBEL TRIBUTE**  
**October 22, 2001 – September 15, 2019**



I want to share my beautiful boy Brant with you. I adopted Brant who was my grandchild when he was two-years-old. He was so special. At a young age we discovered he had autism, which only meant he was even more special. He was a funny and happy child. He was the delight of my life.

The remainder of his autistic beautiful life was spent by bringing joy and happiness to the hearts of many. He danced to his favorite music, played with all his favorite toys, and took care of his

pet's Angel and Karma. He was innocent and loved playing with kids, riding tricycles or scooters and doing anything kids liked to do! He loved cartoons; Sponge Bob Square Pants was his favorite. He loved music and stories. He was kind, loving and gentle. He even planted a flower bed at his school. Sadly, I never got to see how it turned out, as he was killed shortly after.

By the age of 17 he was blessed by God to live and see life through the eyes and heart of a four-year-old. On the night Brant was killed, he snuck out of our house in his pajama bottoms and went to Walmart and the gas station. On his return home he was hit on the road right outside our apartment complex. A witness saw the first driver hit Brant and left Brant on the road; never even considering stopping to help him. The first driver who hit Brant has never been found. A second, third, fourth and fifth vehicles also drove past Brant in the road; never stopping. Brant was still alive according to the witness when those vehicles passed. A second vehicle hit Brant and failed to stop. That driver was caught and is now in the criminal court system for hitting Brant.



## THE BRANT ALEXANDER GRIEBEL TRIBUTE

The pain of losing Brant is indescribable. My whole life has changed. I've moved because it was too painful to look at the spot where he was killed day after day, week after week, month after month. It's been speculated the reason the first driver didn't stop is because he or she was drunk or high. Please be aware that whatever your actions are in life that they have consequences.

It's terrible that several people hit Brant and didn't have the decency to stop and try to help him. I have a feeling it's because they were probably drunk or high. I don't know what is wrong with the world. My innocent boy is dead, and our lives will never be the same.

Brant gained his wings and has now moved on to heaven to celebrate his life with all our loved ones who have passed.

**Love, Mom**

## THE JAMEEL ALI HARRIS TRIBUTE

July 17, 1976 – April 22, 2012



As the new day's sun was rising on April 22, 2012, Jameel Ali Harris (35 years old) had just picked up his mother's car. He was excited about going to buy a birthday cupcake for his son, Timothy, who turned two years old at sunrise. His plan was to wake Timothy up and sing Happy Birthday, but instead, a drunk driver crashed into the back of the Chevy Tracker

at a horrendous speed, making contact on the left side near the gas tank. He pinned my son to the steering wheel. The drunk driver somehow managed to turn his own steering wheel away from the crash just before the burst of flames began to engulf the Tracker with my son in it. The drunk driver was oblivious to what happened and hours later asked to be taken to the hospital because someone had hit his car.

Jameel left behind a wife and three boys, who are now 10, 12, and 14 years old.

To say the least, April 22 is a bittersweet day for the Harris family, friends, colleagues, and the many lives that Jameel Ali Harris touched, even at his young age. Jameel was my son, a husband and father, an anointed ordained evangelist, corporate executive, mentor, music producer and an angel to all whom he met. The following are special memories of him from some of the people he impacted and ministered to, which speaks on the person that Jameel really was. And after the testimonies, this story ends with the MIRACLE OF JAMEEL'S DEATH – for from death comes life!

A client – “I am blessed to have worked with you. Thank you for believing in me!”

A friend and colleague – “You taught me forthrightness, perseverance, to trust in the good intentions of others, and what it was to be a friend to someone. Most importantly, you taught me about forgiveness.”

**THE JAMEEL ALI HARRIS TRIBUTE**  
**July 17, 1976 – April 22, 2012**

An employee – “Thank you for teaching me about life, showing me that LIFE is all about what you can give and do for others. You were a great teacher, amazing FRIEND AND BOSS.”

A mentor – “You were the one who took a chance on me. Where I am today would not have been possible without you. You told me to chase my dreams, there will always be risks, but taking a chance was better than a life of “what ifs.”

A fellow minister – “You may or may not have known his name, but you knew the spirit of this man: creative, dependable, selfless, hard-working, disciple of God, reliable co-worker, responsible and never complaining.”

These testaments and more honored God. JAMEEL’S IN HEAVEN, THE ANGELS CAME TO GET HIS SOUL BEFORE THE FIRE. THE AUTOPSY PROVED THAT THERE WAS NO SMOKE IN HIS LUNGS. GOD IS FAITHFUL, EVEN UNTO DEATH.

*This is the miracle of Jameel Ali Harris’ death.*

## THE JOHN HAUPTMAN TRIBUTE

May 26, 1971 – June 20, 2018



John was many things to many people, a brother, a father, a friend. He had a close relationship with his sisters, and John's oldest sister, Gail was like a mother to John. Even though John's other sister Lisa was older than him in years, she always said "he's my big younger brother." They shared both laughter and tears with John throughout his life. Once when he was three years old, he was going upstairs, eating a plain cheeseburger

(he loved plain cheeseburgers), and coming back down the stairs, he fell. Everyone was scared to death; they feared the worst! He got up from the landing and hollered, "my cheeseburger!" He was fine. We all laughed so hard. His only worry was that cheeseburger!

John was an exceptional guitar player. He saved his money when he was a teen, went to a pawn shop and bought a bass guitar. Our family was skeptical he'd learn to play that thing! He went home that summer and played until his fingers bled. As an adult he would gather with friends and family and play his acoustic guitar. We all reminisce, and his music takes us to a special place, but that place also is filled with sadness and pain. We will never again receive that gift of listening to him play his guitar ever again.

John had three children, his son Johnnie, Kole, and Nyla. Although divorced from his wife, they remained friends. They talked often and would get together to have outings with the kids, like going for ice cream or a play day at the park. Kole and Nyla thought their dad hung the moon!

On Father's Day 2018 at 8:30 am the phone rang, on the other end of the phone was someone screaming and crying. It was John's girlfriend's daughter. She said John had been hit and was on life support. John had

## THE JOHN HAUPTMAN TRIBUTE

a traumatic brain injury. The neurosurgeon said he had no chance. His brain stem was severed. We traveled from Iowa and Alabama. John's ex-wife was at the hospital, she was also a nurse, and prepared us for how bad it was. Papers had to be signed to take John off life support. There were ten people in his room. They were all praying for John. They all knew if there was any chance of John waking up, it would be when Gail got there. There was lots of begging John to wake up and come back to us, the tears were uncontrollable, he never moved or even knew we were there. It was the hardest thing we ever had to do.

Court is still in process for us, but John's six-year-old and ten-year-old children wrote letters to the judge that would break your heart. How they are "so sad they don't get to see their daddy anymore;" how they miss their talks, playtime, and the cookies he had at his house for them, and his hugs. John's ten-year-old son wrote to the judge that his dad "won't get to watch him grow up and he missed the fun he had with his dad."

John lost his life because of a driver TEXTING... Because of this one second in time he will never be able to see his children grow up. The sad part about all this is he hated people that use their phones while driving. It made him very angry to see people in today's society looking into their phones instead of socializing face to face. The fact that he died at the hands of a young man that had to respond to a text message is just unbelievable. Had he not been distracted; things might have turned out differently.

**Written by John Hauptman's family**



## THE LEESLYEE HUERTA STORY



*Leeslyee Huerta*

It has been 15 years since my crash, it's hard to believe it's been that long. I don't know where to begin or explain how that makes me feel. But I have learned that life can change in a second and that I must move on, no matter what.

When I was 18 years old, I went to a concert with my aunt and uncle; we celebrated my aunt's birthday and went to see my favorite band. We left the concert and stopped at a nearby restaurant for a bite. While driving home from the restaurant, I remember feeling very tired, so I strapped myself in the van and fell asleep in the backseat. We entered I-55 going to the south suburbs, and a HUGE impact woke me up; I thought I was having a nightmare, but little did I know it was my reality. I started feeling so much pain that I could not even explain with words. I do not know

what was hurting more: my spine, stomach, head, or entire body. I was rushed to the hospital and stayed in ICU for a very long time. I couldn't tell what was real and what was not. I was fighting for my life, and I remember waking up and my parents, my boyfriend, and siblings holding my hand and praying for me. I would ask myself, "why is everyone saying that everything will be ok, that I will walk again, I'm confused".

After a couple of weeks, doctors had me sit in a regular chair to get my circulation flowing. While I was in the chair, I realized two nurses were holding my shoulders, I looked at my mom and she was crying, her beautiful eyes looked so sad. My reaction was to stand and go hug her but... that's when I realized my legs weren't responding. I tried kicking and moving my toes, and my legs were just not getting the signal. I started crying and had a panic attack. Doctors entered the room and explained that I would never walk again and that there would be more surgeries for my spine and my stomach. My intestines were so severely damaged that they would have a colostomy bag. Steel rods were placed in my spine because I had a Spinal Cord Injury. Rehabilitation was a long journey. I had to learn how to do everything for myself in a new way. I thought that after years my life would get easier, but I was wrong, I still struggle with complications every single day.

I will always be grateful to my AAIM family for all they have done for me and my loved ones. THANK YOU AAIM FOR LETTING ME SPEAK AGAINST DRUNK DRIVING AND SENDING A MESSAGE TO SAVE LIVES!

## THE LEESLYEE HUERTA STORY

A poem to my mom – “I AM”

### I Am

*I am kind and caring*

I wonder why people drink and drive while knowing they can hurt someone. I hear ambulances, police sirens, and families crying from a devastating car crash. I see doctors, hospital machines, and cars destroyed by drunk drivers. I want people to stop drinking and driving.

*I am kind and caring.*

I pretend my mom didn't have to struggle with her disabilities, all caused by a drunk driver.

I feel mad when people drink and drive while knowing it's wrong.

I worry about the people that may be killed by these "crashes."

I cry seeing my mom struggle with her disability caused by a drunk driver.

*I am kind and caring.*

I understand that not everyone can take a stand, but at least, they can try to spread awareness.

I say that no one should drink and drive.

I dream that there is a world without drunk drivers

I help take care of my mom as best I can.

I hope drunk drivers stop their actions, become more thoughtful, and stop causing sadness.

*I am kind and caring.*

**Ketzaly Huerta  
I love you mom!**



*This story is sponsored by Patti Gustafson*

## THE RAYMOND N. DANIEL JACKSON TRIBUTE

June 16, 1977 – April 25, 2021



Raymond was a hardworking father and husband with strong family values, who did everything with courage and determination. He was a friend, protector, advisor, and inspiration in all he did. Ray was a very devoted and respected man, trustworthy and dependable in every type of relationship.

Ray loved fishing, riding motorcycles and ATVs, playing Xbox, cooking, and most of all spending time with his family. He loved and adored his children. Megan (24), Rachel (21), Rayne (19), Johnathan (13), Raylynn (3), and was excited to meet his unborn daughter Araya (now 1 year and 3 months old). Ray liked to take his wife and children on adventures, whether it was going fishing at his favorite spots, off-roading, jumping on the motorcycle, taking an unplanned trip in the car, or building an igloo in the front yard. He was the happiest when he was with family and friends.

Ray was confident and stern. Often people were intimidated by him until they got to know him, and then they found he was very loyal and selfless. He always put everyone before himself and would go the extra mile for those he loved.

In the blink of an eye, Raymond lost his life. He left behind a pregnant wife and five children. Johnathan and Raylynn were in the vehicle at the time of the fatal crash on April 25, 2021. Raylynn was left fighting for her life; Johnathan was left with minor physical injuries and devastating grief.

It took a split second the lives of so many to be changed forever. The loss of Ray left a wife without her life partner, six children fatherless, a mother grieving the loss of her son, and many friends and family members in shock and disbelief. Ray was killed at the age of 43 with so much life still ahead of him. There isn't a day that goes by that family and friends don't think about Ray. Thankful for the memories, missing him every day.

*In loving memory of*

*Raymond N. Daniel Jackson*

## THE BEATA JANULEK STORY

Where I come from, we stress the importance of family. The bonds we form are inseparable; sometimes, we can sense when a close one is in danger. Yet, a feeling still haunts me every now and then. It is the feeling of emptiness, breathlessness, and despair. It jolted me awake early morning on March 8, 2009. I didn't understand the feeling, but with tears flowing down my cheeks, I laid myself back to sleep. Later that same morning, I woke up to a phone call from my stepdad, Libor. He told me that he, my mom, and her friend were involved in a crash caused by a drunk driver.



The collision left my mom with broken ribs, teeth, and nose; a punctured lung, and countless stitches. She remained in the ICU for four days, and in the hospital for ten days. My mom's friend, Libuska Kramser, suffered broken ribs, a collapsed lung and mild bleeding in the brain. She also stayed in the hospital for the same amount of time as my mother. My stepfather, Libor, was lucky to only be left with a few scratches from the glass. At the scene of the crash Libor was asked by an officer to take a BAC test for which he blew a .00. The driver of the other vehicle involved, who was visually identified as intoxicated by the responding police officer, refused to take the test.

Even now, in 2022, the light of justice hasn't shined down on us. The man who caused the crash, who eventually admitted to being guilty of his actions after multiple attempts to deny his fault in court, walks free. By now, most of the physical damage has gone away, but the emotional toll is relieved now and then. The friendship between my mom and her friend has slowly been rekindled. Yet, my mom still struggles with being a passenger in a vehicle. Whenever the driver of a car she is in gets too close to another car or has to use excessive braking to stop faster than intended, she panics, sometimes bursting into tears.

It's still a challenging road to travel. Although in the back of my head, I always remember that it could have been a lot worse.

**Michal Junik, son of Beata and Libor Janulek**

## THE REGINALD “JALEN” JOHNSON TRIBUTE

January 8, 1997 – February 1, 2016



As I went to bed on January 31, I thought about the phone call I would make to wish my oldest brother a happy birthday. He was turning 50 and it would be his first day back at work in six months since his hip replacement. As I dreamt the night away, in the wee hours of the morning on February 1, my daughter shook me to wake me up to deliver the TKO news that my nephew, Jalen was involved in a car crash. The words are stored in

my memory forever, “Jalen was in a car crash, and they don’t think he’s going to make it.” My first thought was “Oh my God, am I dreaming?” but my first words were, “Where is he?”

The drive to Good Samaritan Hospital seemed to take forever, and with each passing moment a prayer that Jalen would live until we got to the hospital. As we stood in the hallway, shaking with fear and sadness, we waited for any word from the doctor. It was then that we were guided to the critical care area and saw Jalen covered up to his neck with a beige blanket. He was unrecognizable, but I knew it was my nephew. When the doctors finally came to tell us about the extent of his injuries the list was so long that I was unable to comprehend it and I only wanted to know if he would live. The tubes, bandages and machinery hooked to him were daunting. The person in the bed didn’t look like the young man that was home for Christmas break just over a month ago. They had his head wrapped in bandages due to the missing part of his skull and an eye patch over one of his eyes that had been punctured. Blood was oozing through both bandages. The nurse told us the bones below his eye had been crushed; his jaw had been wired shut. He had a breathing tube due to the fractured ribs and a punctured lung. This required another tube in his chest to keep it inflated and drain the fluid. Jalen’s hip had been dislocated. The parts of his body we couldn’t see but had sustained injuries were the internal organs. I remember feeling both terrified and overwhelmed by his injuries, wondering if Jalen could



**THE REGINALD “JALEN” JOHNSON TRIBUTE**  
**January 8, 1997 – February 1, 2016**

live through the sheer amount of injuries to his body. The answer would be no. We made the gut-wrenching decision to discontinue life support at 7:06 a.m.

As the years have passed, the pain has lessened, the memories remain and yet anger grows. While we are still waiting for the legal process to unfold, I'm taking more time off work to attend court. Preparing to go to trial, the roller coaster of emotions continues to be never ending. Each time the case gets continued, I feel frustration that the man who did this to Jalen continues to escape the legal ramifications I hope would befall him. Continually going to court is a constant reminder that the killer is alive and well, while we are without Jalen. I hold the anger for a man who was, at times, freely walking the streets. A man who I believe, has no conscience for taking my nephew's life when he chose to run from the police. He showed no remorse with Facebook comments such as, "I talked to Reggie and we're good." Jalen was denied the opportunity to continue with his college education and to live what should have been the best years of his life.

Jalen was a loving, kind, gentle young man who went out of his way to help everyone. We'll never know the full potential of a young man that meant so much to so many. Our comfort is the legacy that he left behind and how he touched many people's lives. Even though, six years have passed, we're still contacted by people who knew Jalen with words of comfort and how his passing has affected them. There're been countless social media posts and flowers left at his grave over the years. Some of his friends and college peers have named their sons after him. There're been songs and poems written about him as tributes, and so many other remembrances. These remembrances are a true testament to the goodness of a person, especially someone so young. He was an angel on earth, my angel. Heaven welcomed him back on February 1, 2016.

**In Loving Memory,**  
**Kendall, Jennifer, Tavia and Kristopher Parrott**

## THE ANDREW KEATING TRIBUTE

October 26, 1989 – July 2, 2005



Andrew, I can't believe it's been 17 years since you were taken from us. It feels like a blink of an eye. I still see your face as you walked out the door and said you would be home in half an hour, but you didn't. My heart still hurts.

Your niece Lily turned 10 years old on July 3 and is starting 5th grade. We talk to her about you all the time, and she comes with us to visit you at the cemetery.

Ali, your younger sister graduated Suma Cum Laude from Southern Illinois University

two years ago, and she is now working at a pediatric dental office.

Your sister Amanda is still working as a dental assistant. She's met someone and will probably be getting married soon. She and Lily will be moving to Kankakee.

As for me, I'm still retired and spending time in New Mexico in the home that Tom and I bought. We also spend time in Hometown so we can spend time with the girls.

Your Dad and Bill are doing fine.

Andrew, your family and friends, miss you so much. I can only imagine the young man you would have become. You would have been 33 years old this year but will be forever 15.

Life is not the same without you, Andrew. I miss you every second of every day...

Until we see each other again, I love you forever and ever, Andrew...  
Love, Mom

*We miss and love you so much,*

*Dad, Mom, Mandy, Ali and Lily*

## THE KAROLINA KEDZIORA STORY

The night of March 4, 2018, changed my life forever. I was on my way home and stopped at Starbucks to get tea and catch up with a friend. I left and waited for the crosswalk light to change so that I could cross the street. I remember twirling a bag in my hand, waiting for the light to change. The next thing I knew, I woke up in an ambulance. I felt so cold despite the fact I was wearing a winter jacket. I looked down at my feet and saw I was missing a shoe. I kept thinking, “What happened to me? Why am I here?” Finally, one of the paramedics told me I was involved in an auto crash. It took a moment for me to grasp what had happened. My family met me at the hospital. My mom and brother were both in shock.



I spent the next two weeks in the hospital dealing with my injuries. I cried inside when the doctors told me how severely injured my left knee was. How was I supposed to walk again or do the things I loved? I fell into a deep depression, not knowing how I would make it. Eventually, I had two knee surgeries followed by physical therapy. I'm now relearning how to walk for the fourth time. It's hard to retrain my brain on how to walk since limping is all I could do. I often look at others and see how they do the things I once did, running, walking, and playing with friends and family.

Before the crash, I was working at a hospital as a phlebotomist. I have seen so many crashes over the years; so many families lives torn apart. I finally saw the person who caused the crash in court. I wanted to hurt him. I was so angry because of the damage that was done to me, and the other three people involved. I've gone on with my life. I started working as a nurse, which was my dream. I still struggle with walking and running. Since it takes me longer to walk, I'm not as quick to respond to my patients, which makes us both frustrated. Some days the pain is overwhelming and is a daily reminder of the ordeal I went through. My family became distant, and I had to deal with everything on my own. I don't think they understand the severity of what happened to me. People ask me how I survived, and I don't have an answer for them. I wasn't very religious before the crash, but I think that somehow God saved me that night. I'm still here and I have a lot of life to live.

## THE NICHOLAS KILPATRICK TRIBUTE

September 1, 1997 – September 9, 2014



This year marks the eight-year anniversary of Nick's death. Nick would've been 25 years old this year. I find myself wondering more than ever who he'd be today? What career would he have chosen? Would he be married? A father? I'll never know.

The night of September 9, 2014, I received the phone call that would change my life forever. My son was hit by a drunk driver while riding his skateboard. I immediately woke my other two children

and rushed to the hospital. On the way to the hospital, I received a call that Nick didn't make it. I insisted on going to the coroner's office to see for myself that it was my child. It was then and there that I saw my baby lying on the gurney, lifeless. I felt for his heartbeat and listened to his chest for breathing, there was nothing. I begged and pleaded for him to wake up. I held him and didn't want to let go. The coroner explained that Nick had died upon impact. His neck and spine were broken, skull fractured and a multitude of other internal injuries. My heart shattered repeatedly. Nicholas had just turned 17 years old, eight days prior to being killed. He had his whole life ahead of him. Now instead of celebrating, I was planning his memorial service. I kept thinking to myself, this isn't how it's supposed be. We don't bury our children, they bury us.

My ex-husband wanted Nick's clothing from the crash, and I wanted Nick's other belongings. Sadly, Nick's dad died 3 weeks before we received Nick's belongings from the crash, and I was left with all of it. It's been under my bed untouched for the last five years. The box felt like a weight, looming over me. My fear was if something were to happen to me, my children would have to see his clothing. I couldn't just throw out his things because that felt wrong, yet now I don't want the torn and stained clothing either. Just in case...it's how I live my life now...just in case. I know that tomorrow isn't promised to any of us. I finally decided to have a burning ceremony and "send" it up this

**THE NICHOLAS KILPATRICK TRIBUTE**

**September 1, 1997 – September 9, 2014**

year. It was excruciating to see everything and to hold it in my hands. A part of me didn't want to let it burn, but I knew it was better than having my children find it one day. The hardest part was when I came across his shoes. Nick always wrote on his shoes. It used to drive me mad that he wrote on brand new shoes. I'd forgotten he would do that, until I pulled his shoes out of the evidence bag. The air was sucked out of me. A gut punch, when I saw what he had written for the first time, seven years after his death.... "Smile NOW, die later". It broke me up all over again, but it was so like my son. He may have only had seventeen years on this earth, but he lived, truly lived, each one of them to the fullest.

Nick, you live on through your brother and sister. I see you in them every day. I see the signs you give me. The number 44 is all around me and I know it's you. I smile because I know it's you saying, "Hey Ma" and I always say "Hi Nickaby" back. You're always on my mind and forever in my heart.

We love you always and forever,

**We love you always and forever,  
Mom, Keira and Christian**



## THE AMANDA KORDICH TRIBUTE

March 3, 1991 – July 28, 2008



Just writing the title to this tribute is so difficult. Memories come flooding back to the day Amanda was born and the day that she died. I wish I could say that life is back to normal. Life will never get back to normal. In fact, life still hasn't gotten any better. Just when I think I'm doing better, something punches me in the gut to remind me that I'm a broken person and not whole.

It's been fourteen years since I have laughed, hugged, shared a story or future plans with my daughter. Just saying the words "my daughter" makes me want to cry. When I'm on Facebook and someone posts about their daughter, I always make an upbeat comment, but in private, I cry.

This week another parent reached out to me regarding her 16-year-old son, that was killed in a car crash. She had so many questions about why him? What if she didn't let him go out that day? What if she would have bought him a bigger car or truck like he wanted? What if his brother had been in the car with him as planned? I tried to help her and walk her through her grief, telling her it would get better. God has a plan, and our children are bringing others to Christ. But at the same time, I'm dying inside. I wanted to say there are days when I still can't catch my breath.

I'm a teacher at the high school my children attended. Every other Wednesday, we have a staff meeting in the auditorium. Every time I walk in there, I have shortness of breath and can't sit anywhere close to the front. I go through a mini-PTSD episode. No one understands that we had my baby girl's funeral in the auditorium. It's where I sat and looked at her lying in her casket. It's the last place I hugged my baby girl and said my final goodbye. I can't escape this room as our meetings take place in it. My husband

## THE AMANDA KORDICH TRIBUTE

hasn't been able to work since Amanda died; he just sits at home. I need to be the breadwinner now as I must take care of everyone. I want to quit my job, but I already have 15 years of service at the school.

On one Friday, when I was teaching, a student that I helped had on the same perfume Amanda wore. At first, I smiled as it brought back memories, but then I wanted to run away. The hundreds of students that I see each day look, dress, and laugh like Amanda did. I'm glad I can help these children. I can relate to them in a way that other people can't, but inside I just want to die!

My brain doesn't shut down with the memories from the night she was killed. Yesterday was a bad day; I don't know why. it just was. I tried reading, devotions, crafts, crossword puzzles, grading papers, and nothing could clear my mind.

So, when people ask if it gets any better or tell me to just get over it... this is why I can't.

Maybe tomorrow will be a better day.....

**Written by Diane Kordich**

**Amanda's Mother**

## THE CHRISTOPHER KRENZER TRIBUTE

January 20, 1990 - August 26, 2010



I never thought I'd survive the first year Chris was killed, let alone the 12 years since then. In the beginning, it was nothing but crying, throwing up, and sleepless nights for months on end. I was getting up in the middle of the night, staring out the window at the driveway to see if his car was home and then the realization and pain that he was never coming home again. The senselessness still strikes me, and it angers me. There are no words to explain what grief and anger feel like.

On August 26, 2010, at 12:04 a.m., our lives were changed forever. A 20-year-old repeat DUI offender that was drunk and had THC in his system left a party to drive home. He ran a red light at an intersection

in Rockford, speeding between 93-104 mph. He struck the driver's side of our 20-year-old son's Honda Civic. Chris was trapped in the back seat, as there was no longer a front seat. An off-duty nurse, Kelly witnessed the crash and was the first one to Chris's car. She did all that she could for Chris who was in the twisted wreckage of his car. She had no gloves, equipment, or lights. The impaired driver who hit Chris's car was trying to leave the scene. Luckily, as Kelly worked on Chris, witnesses restrained the impaired driver. Kelly couldn't tell how old Chris was, because it was dark, and his injuries were so extensive. There was blood everywhere, but she knew he was young. His college textbooks were thrown about the car and scene. When they got Chris on a gurney, the EMT's allowed Kelly to make the call... do they transport him to the hospital? Or do they call it at the scene? Absolutely transport, as he was a young person and might still have a chance.

At the hospital, they tried to intubate him, but his lungs were too bruised, and his injuries were too numerous. He had massive head trauma that he couldn't have survived. We know Chris had a pulse when the nurse got to him, that he had gasps of breath, and that the gasps stopped at the scene. We know everyone did everything in their power to revive our son. We are eternally grateful to Kelly, and the people who stopped to help. He wasn't alone; he was prayed over in the last moments of his life.

My husband, our oldest son and I didn't know there had been a crash involving Chris, as we were in bed asleep. We were notified by phone that Chris had been in a bad crash, and we needed to come to the hospital immediately. We had no idea Chris was dead; the thought never crossed our minds. You don't go there.

## THE CHRISTOPHER KRENZER TRIBUTE

We thought about ICU, surgery, and rehab. We sat in a room off to the side in the Emergency Room of St. Anthony Medical Center. A doctor and nurse came in and said, "We're sorry, but there was nothing we could do. His injuries were too severe." Just like that. No appeals and no second chances. It was final and devastating news. Our youngest, kind, funny, handsome, 20-year-old son, Christopher was dead. All due to a stranger's selfish, reckless decision to drive impaired.

Only one person could have changed the outcome of that evening. If only the driver of the car wouldn't have put the keys in the ignition that night. If he'd called an Uber or a friend.... this tribute wouldn't have been written. We would have gone on with our lives the way it was supposed to be...celebrating his marriage, grandkids, and happy family times.

The years after Chris's death have been spent in great pain; I guess that pain will always be there. The years after Chris's death are a blur. We are shadows of the people we once were. Losing Chris knocked us to our knees. It changed our every breath, thoughts, and our very souls. We may look the same on the outside, but we are broken people inside.

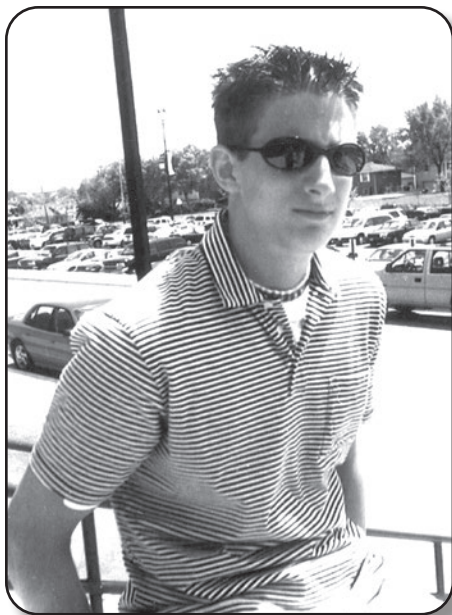
The shock has worn off, but the emptiness inside is still there. The ache and loneliness have not gone away. Learning to cope without our son has been the hardest thing we've ever done.

I became a Victim Advocate in Rockford, Boone, and McHenry Counties after Chris's death. It's emotional and mentally hard work helping families through their grief, but it's rewarding and fulfilling. The recovery is fragile for victims after losing a loved one. Grief is a slippery slope, very long, painful, and lonely. So many people ask me why would I do this job? Why, put myself back in the courtroom, living other people's crash details along with my son's? There is a very simple answer. If someone hadn't been in court with us to support our family, inform us of what was going on, and hold our hand, we would have been lost. The compassion, support, and guidance we've experienced has given us the foundation to be able to support other victims and their families in the most devastating time of their lives. We miss our son every second of every day. We work to educate, change, and support Chris's memory.

*AAIM Advocate Kelly Krenzer*

## THE JOHN KRESLIN JR. TRIBUTE

August 26, 1983 – August 30, 2002



*I will be with you always.*

MATTHEW 28:20

The "Broken heart" cliché has never meant anything more to me than what you would hear in a love song. Since the death of my son John, a broken heart has taken on a whole new meaning for me. Words and clichés do not begin to describe how devastating

it is for a parent to lose a child. I wake up in disbelief that my life has taken this turn every morning.

The images from the night of August 30, 2002, and the days that followed, remain very vivid in my memory. We woke to the dog barking just before midnight. When I opened the door, my husband and I knew something horrible had happened. I will never forget our son Kevin (15 years old at the time), sitting at the top of the stairs listening to a police officer and a chaplain tell my husband and me that our son John had died in a car crash just before 10:00 PM that evening.

School had just started for John. We dropped him off only two days before (on August 26, John's 19th birthday) for the beginning of his sophomore year at Butler University in Indianapolis, where he was studying to become a pharmacist. Classes had begun a few days later, with the crash happening on Friday night of that first week, the start of the Labor Day weekend.

John worked hard all summer with his uncle's moving company. He attended summer school with the determination to conquer calculus. John was so excited about going back to school. He had such confidence and shared his



## THE JOHN KRESLIN JR. TRIBUTE

August 26, 1983 – August 30, 2002

feelings of a great year with me. After singing "Happy Birthday" in his dorm room, we said our goodbyes in the parking lot. Through a few tears was a kiss on my cheek and a promise to call in a couple of days. He shook his brother's hand, the same for his dad, and a hug, "love you." No one ever thinks that when they say goodbye to someone that it could be the last time they ever see them

John, his girlfriend, two other girls, and the driver of the car (20 years old) went out for a ride to see an apartment some friends had moved into off-campus. The driver took a shortcut through a heavily wooded residential area on a poorly lit street with a speed limit of 25 mph. The driver sped through the area, losing control of the car, and crashed into a tree. My son died instantly. Two of the girls and the driver were all seriously injured. Estimates from the police report indicate that the car traveled at 65-75 mph, with skid marks measuring 185 feet long. The driver had a BAC of .13.

I could write pages about what this loss has done to my life and my family. I have searched my heart and soul to make sense of this horrible tragedy, and of course, there is no sense.

I grieve every day, not just for my son, but for all the families that have lost someone they love senselessly.

A mother's heart is always with her children.

*Visit [www.johnkreslin.com](http://www.johnkreslin.com)*

This story is sponsored by Wetoska Packaging, Elk Grove Village

## THE KARLA LEAÑOS TRIBUTE

June 26, 1989- December 24, 2015



It's nearly seven years since we lost my youngest sister, Karla; she was killed by a drunk driver on Christmas Eve. She was the baby of our family, and I remember her always giggling and happy. Karla was pregnant with her fourth child and preparing to spend Christmas with her children. She was crossing the street after getting off the bus when a speeding drunk driver hit her. She didn't survive the impact, but thanks to God, her baby survived. I hope no one ever forgets who Karla was and will forever keep her cheery smile in their hearts.

Our brother was also tragically killed by a drunk driver six months earlier. So due to drivers deciding to drink and get behind the wheel, my siblings were tragically killed; that was not an accident!

Sadly, our father passed away after the first anniversary of my sister's death. He couldn't take grief of the unexpected tragic deaths of his two children. Although my mother has been strong, she is brokenhearted; she has found strength in her faith and her grandchildren.

This has impacted my entire family, and our lives are so different now. But we know that God is always here to listen and protect us. And He always wants the best for us, so we have to continue to live life and appreciate every day with our loved ones.

Thank you for taking the time to read about my family's tragic loss; we will never be the same because someone selfishly chose to drink and drive. Thank you, Cindy, our AAIM advocate, for keeping in touch and checking in on how we are doing. Thank you, AAIM, for allowing us to keep their memories alive. *God Bless you all.*



## THE ANDREW “DREW” LEWIS TRIBUTE

April 28, 1988 – August 21, 2021

I'm writing this tribute to my oldest son, Drew on September 11, 2022. It's a day that marks tragedy for our nation and for thousands of mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, children, grandparents, and friends that have lost loved ones to senseless acts. I also lost my Drew to a senseless act. He was the passenger in a vehicle of someone driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs; someone that supposedly cared about him. Instead of making this about that person, I'd rather share the things about Drew that still make me smile and the beautiful memories he left me.



Drew spent the early years of his life in Arkansas and North Carolina. He spent the last four years of his life living in Illinois where we were fortunate to have him working in our family business. Anyone fortunate enough to know Drew loved him for his quick wit, sense of humor, subtle nature, and adventurous spirit.

Throughout Drew's life, he was gifted in working with his hands as evidenced by his talents in drawing, welding, and the culinary arts. These talents surfaced early when in 4th grade - he won the elementary school art contest. In high school he was so proud of his senior project, which was welding together an entire truck bed. As a young adult he started working in hospitality and worked his way from prep to sous chef and then to chef. Cooking Thanksgiving dinner with him, or really any meal, was always something we loved to do together.

Alongside these talents, a few of Drew's favorite things included the Green Bay Packers, Superman, collecting medieval swords and knives and riding the one-wheel on the beach. However, his greatest passion and joy in his life was his son, Connor Andrew Lewis. Connor was 6 years old when his daddy was taken from him. I can't tell you how incredibly grateful and blessed I feel to have a physical part of Drew still here on earth. My lifelong pledge is to make sure Connor remembers his daddy and knows how much he loved him and was proud of him. As Connor grows, I see glimpses of Drew in his humor, expressions, laughter and looks. Thank you, God, for this gift!

We'll forever miss Drew's kitchen dancing, card playing, belly laugh and radiant smile while we're here on earth. I see and feel his spirit all around in the birds, wind, rainbows and enjoy meeting him in his memorial garden on our hill. It's been 13 months since you were taken from us Drew and not a day goes by that you're not thought about, talked about, and remembered. Until we meet again in our heavenly home my dear son, I love you Drew #forever33.

*Your Mom and Biggest Fan*

## THE DAVID LOGTERMAN TRIBUTE

September 21, 1956 – May 20, 2014



Dave Logterman was a husband, father, son, brother, uncle, friend, MRI technician, swim coach, golfer, and so much more. A year after his death he would have added grandfather to this list, a role he couldn't wait to play.

He never got that chance. On May 20, 2014, a driver under the influence of alcohol and drugs, driving at a high rate of speed from the opposite direction, took Dave's life instantly. Here one minute, on his way to work, and gone the next, forever.

When I left for work that morning, I heard of a crash that was causing major backups, so I took a different route to my workplace. Dave had left two and a half hours before, so it didn't cross my mind that it was him

involved in the crash. Not until I got to work, and the secretary asked me to call the police; and then seeing the coroner walking up the sidewalk did the reality set in.

It happens every day to people everywhere but having to notify my family and friends that Dave was killed in a DUI crash was unimaginable. It was truly the hardest thing I have ever had to do.

Our son Jeremy's wedding was less than three weeks away...we had to fight hard to make it their special day. Dave would have wanted it that way. Stephanie our daughter was married last April. Jeremy walked her down the aisle, and at the reception, he danced with her to the song "Over the Rainbow". There wasn't a dry eye in the house watching Stephanie dance with her brother to represent her beloved father. Kellie our youngest is engaged and will be married next March at one of Dave's favorite places in Mexico. It will be another special day, but it will be a hard day without him. We've all learned to live life without Dave. Some days are harder than others, but his spirit and memories live on forever.

I've now retired and have four beautiful grandchildren. One of our grandchildren wishes he could have played golf with his grandfather; he is

## THE DAVID LOGTERMAN TRIBUTE

only seven years old. Our four-year grandchild is now playing T ball, and Dave would have loved to be able to do these things with his grandchildren. Dave was the swim coach at Harlem High School in Machesney Park for many years. We raised money in Dave's honor and used it for new bleachers in the pool area at Machesney Park High School, as they needed to be replaced. We also give student scholarships, in Dave's memory, to members on the swim team. Harlem High School dedicates the first Invitational Swim Meet every year in Dave's honor. Our youngest daughter followed in her father's steps and is a head swim coach in the suburbs; she has 60 students that she coaches. Dave would be so proud of his children.

There is a beautiful plaque hanging in the MRI Department of Swedish American Hospital and two bricks in the healing garden of the hospital where he worked for 25 years.

After two years in the court system and having the first trial declared a hung jury, there was a second trial. The defendant was found guilty and received a sentence of 42 years in prison. Even though he still denies doing wrong, he'll never drive again!

In August of 2022, our AAIM advocate happened to see the defendant's name on the docket. We attended court and found out that it was the second time the defendant had submitted motions to the court. The assistant state's attorney said the defendant submitted pages and pages of nonsense. Nonsense or not, we'll be at court to represent Dave.

We continue to thank Jen Gadow, our attorney, our advocates through the States Attorney, and Kelly Krenzer, our Victim Advocate from AAIM. We'll forever be grateful for their dedication to their jobs and prosecuting DUI offenders

Thank you to our AAIM advocate, Kelly, who was with us every step of the way. We appreciate your guidance and time as you lead us through this process. It's because you went through this yourself that you knew how to guide us – thank you.

**In loving memory,  
The Logterman Family**



## THE ASHLEY MARIE LOPEZ TRIBUTE

January 23, 1993 – October 11, 2016



On October 11, 2016, what started out as a beautiful day ended as my worst nightmare. Ashley and I had spent the day together. She had just returned home from the University of Nebraska where she was attending school. Ashley's plan was to finish her last year at Columbia College and move with her sister Angela to Chicago. She was happy and excited to finish school and explore what the world had to offer. What I didn't know was that would be the last conversation I would have with my daughter.

As we were driving home, we picked up my daughter Angela from work. We were waiting at the intersection to turn left. A distracted driver chose to grab his phone to use it and rear ended the car my daughters and I were in. Not only was he distracted by using his phone, but he was speeding too. When he hit my car, he caused it to go into the other lane, where another car hit us. My car was pushed into the ditch and the rear end of my car was smashed. While I don't remember anything from the impact my daughter Angela does. She remembers hearing me wheezing because I couldn't breathe, and she was looking for Ashley. The police told me that they didn't know Ashley was in the car because the car was badly damaged. They saw Ashley's hair and began immediate extraction. Ashley was airlifted to a trauma one center due to her injuries, but she didn't make it.

While I was fighting for my life, I had no idea that my daughter was no longer with us. I was unaware of where I was and what had happened. I lay unconscious, unable to breathe, talk or walk. The moment I was finally able to speak the first thing I asked was, "where are the girls?" My children didn't know how to respond to my question. That day, my family surrounded me and told me we were in a crash. Angela was okay, but Ashley didn't survive. I felt numb and couldn't stop crying. No mother should bare the loss of a child.

My children had to make the most difficult decisions without me after Ashley passed away. They had to make the decision of how to lay to rest

## THE ASHLEY MARIE LOPEZ TRIBUTE

my daughter and their sister. They had to make those decisions without their mother. I couldn't say goodbye to my daughter, and I struggle with that daily. The young man who caused the crash took away my ability to walk, talk, breathe, and to say goodbye to my daughter and to grieve with my family—because I was fighting for my life.

Since her passing each day has been a challenge. As I tried to recover from my injuries, I found myself crying constantly, remembering my daughter was no longer with us. I never got to hold or see my daughter one last time. I didn't get to say goodbye to her. Not saying goodbye to Ashley has been one of the most difficult issues I've had to face. It's hard to live life without Ashley and have to celebrate every moment in life without her. If Ashley was still with us, she would be spending all her time with family. Ashley was someone's daughter, sister, and aunt. It's almost six years since we lost Ashley and living life without her is the hardest thing to do. We as a family are trying to live the life Ashley would want us to have.

Our family is very thankful for AAIM especially our advocate Carrie. I don't know where we would be without her support and the other families we have met. It's great to have a support system and know that we are not alone in this journey.

**To my daughter Ashley, we love you and we all miss you very much.**

## THE IZAIAH LOPEZ TRIBUTE

February 1, 2011 – March 25, 2019



I remember the day my son Izaiah Nathaniel Ornelas Lopez was born and the day he was taken from us as if it was yesterday. He was born at Copley Hospital the day of the big blizzard. I knew he would bring storms, but never did I think the storm was going to stay over me. Izaiah like to play ABC mouse on his computer and did online learning. He would practice reading or writing before playing his PlayStation or Xbox. He loved his video games.

The day that changed my life forever was March 25, 2019. I got a call from my son's grandmother at 7:45 p.m. with the terrible news my son was hit by a car. She didn't have any other details. Once I heard what happened, I told Karina, Zaya's stepmom and we left to go to the hospital. Karina dropped me off at the front door and she went to park the car. I ran through the doors into the emergency room and saw my son getting CPR. They were pushing on his chest, and it hurt me to see them do that to him. I knew my son was not alive. They stopped doing CPR and came to tell me there was nothing more they could do for my son. I felt so alone knowing that my first born, who I thought would grow old with me was no longer alive.

He always said he wanted to work with me. I would think about the day he would be old enough to come to my job and see what I did. The "take your child to work day" was always my dream to do with my son, as I had always wanted to go to my dad's job instead of school. Whenever I looked at my son, I saw myself. I just wanted a better life for him, and it hurts to know he's gone. Izaiah was the best son a father could have.

I want to thank AAIM for the help they've given me during this difficult time. AAIM has showed me that I'm not the only one who lost a loved one. It's hard to live without my son and even though it hurts I know AAIM is always there.

**Written by Angelo Lopez**

**Izaiah's Father**

## POSITIVELY NEGATIVE

*We drank for happiness and became unhappy.*

*We drank for joy and became miserable.*

*We drank for sociability and  
became argumentative.*

*We drank for sophistication and  
became obnoxious.*

*We drank for friendship and made enemies.*

*We drank for sleep and awaken without rest.*

*We drank for strength and felt weak.*

*We drank “medicinally” and acquired  
health problems.*

*We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.*

*We drank for bravery and became afraid.*

*We drank for confidence and  
became doubtful.*

*We drank to make conversation easier and  
slurred our speech.*

*We drank to feel heavenly and ended up  
feeling like hell.*

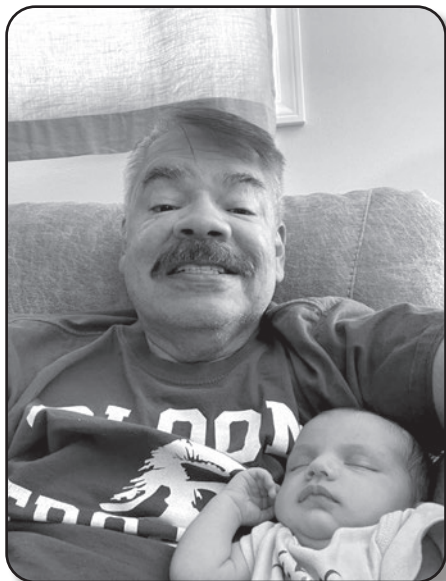
*We drank to forget and were forever haunted.*

*We drank to erase problems and  
saw them multiply.*

*We drank to cope with life and invited death.*

## THE MANNY LOPEZ STORY

September 26, 2006



Sixteen years ago, on September 26, 2006, my daughter and I were on our way home from a volleyball tournament when I got a call from a Belvidere police officer. He told me my then husband had been injured in a crash. That was all he could say and that he was being taken to St. Anthony Trauma Center in Rockford. My heart sunk and there was a pain in my gut, wondering how badly he was injured. I later learned he'd been hit by a drunk driver while he was walking and had been airlifted to the hospital.

When I arrived at the hospital, my pastor and a friend were waiting for

me outside the emergency room doors. I knew then it couldn't be good. I was quickly ushered down a long hallway to the family room, where many friends and police officers (all who knew my husband quite well) were waiting. The Belvidere Chief of Police and the Boone County Sherriff were also there, as well as several high-ranking officers from the Illinois State Police, my husband's employer. Strangely, the first thing I asked was, "was the guy drunk?" I still don't know why I would ask that at 7:30 p.m. Sadly, the answer was a resounding "yes." Rather ironic since Manny had been working with the Breath Alcohol Section for several years.

When the doctor came to talk to me, he gave me the long list of injuries my husband had suffered. . . a broken neck, fractured ribs, five fractured vertebrae, fractured and separated pelvis, scrapes on his hands, big gash on the back of his head, broken front tooth, concussion and worst of all, a traumatic brain injury. That's what frightened me most. There was silence in the room, as we all took in the gravity of the situation. Even though the room was full of friends and coworkers, I never felt so alone. I knew he would recover from the broken bones and scrapes, but I've seen what a brain injury does to a person and it's devastating. That's what scared me. Manny was in a medically induced coma for two of the three weeks he was in ICU. He spent six weeks in a rehab facility where he had to completely relearn

## THE MANNY LOPEZ STORY

how to care for himself, from walking, to bathing, dressing, eating and how to do life again. The “doing life” was most difficult and many things would never be the same.

Calling family and friends was very difficult! It was almost 11:30 p.m. before I was able to start making these calls. The State Police brought his mom and sister to Rockford from their home in the south suburbs. Telling our children (our son 7 and daughter 12 at the time) that their father had almost died was the most difficult thing I’ve ever had to do. Thankfully, we had plenty of support from family, friends, church, his coworkers and AAIM.

It’s been very difficult to watch my strong husband struggle as he learned once again how to care for himself. We’re very grateful that his life was spared. Our life, family and marriage were forever changed and damaged because of this crash. He was off work for over a year, which placed a great financial burden on us. After a year off, he was able to go back to work, albeit in a much-reduced capacity. He was no longer able to carry a weapon, wear his uniform or even drive his State issued vehicle. Thankfully, he was able to work a few more years until retirement, but it was extremely hard to go through. He’ll always have physical limitations and he struggles with short-term memory loss (which has progressively gotten worse over time).

Manny was an avid runner, which came to a halt because of his injuries. Several years ago, he was able to complete a five-mile Tough Mudder Competition! He had a great time even though he had to pass on two events. He struggles daily with chronic pain, physical limitations, memory trouble and keeping up with yard and housework.

Manny is so grateful to be alive, he recently became a grandpa for the first time and she is amazing!

We are thankful for AAIM and the love and support they continue to give us. I’m now a victim speaker at Victim Impact Panels with Kelly and Art Krenzer, where we each share how a drunk driver adversely affected our lives. I’ve also spoken to high school students to get them to see the terrible effects drinking and driving has on people. Please share our stories and stop impaired drivers from getting behind the wheel of a vehicle.

*Heather Lopez Lopez*  
*Manny's ex-wife*



## THE JUAN LOZANO TRIBUTE

October 12, 1993 – February 3, 2016



I'm Juan's mom, and I would like to share a short story about my son and what his purpose was in life. I'd also like to share what happened to us in the criminal justice system.

My son was a good, kindhearted, and wise person. Juan was a young man full of life who had big dreams. One of his biggest dreams was to become an architect; he would always say he wanted to build me the home of my dreams.

Juan was a humble and noble person. I was always his priority, and everyone knew that about him. His entire family loved him deeply. He was a great big brother to his siblings and an awesome uncle to his nieces and nephews. There was never a time when he wouldn't do everything in his power to see his loved ones happy.

Juan's little brother has struggled with the loss of his big brother. The tears and anger are so hard for him to deal with each day. He looked up to his big brother and he was angry someone has taken him away. We all miss Juan. There are times when I feel that I'll never be able to live a happy life, but I try my hardest for my four children and my grandchildren that need me; they're my only motivation for moving forward. However, I still feel lifeless without Juan. A part of me is gone forever, but a part of him will live forever inside of me. How I wish this was a nightmare I would wake up from. My life has completely changed, and nothing is the same without him. He has left an empty feeling in my heart. Juan left so many beautiful memories with me that although they are painful to think of, I will forever cherish them.

My son never got a chance to meet his biological father. He searched everywhere for him and yet he was nowhere to be found. Sadly, Juan's father contacted me three months after Juan's death.

I ask God for the strength to carry on every day knowing I can no longer kiss, hug, or hold my son again. At 22 years old, my son lost his life and dreams in the blink of an eye. I would give anything to bring my son back, but I'm aware that it's his time to rest with God.

The drunk driver who was Juan's friend took Juan's dreams away from him that night. I've been told by another passenger in the vehicle that Juan begged the driver to stop the car when the driver fled from the police.

## THE JUAN LOZANO TRIBUTE

The defendant had his girlfriend put up a \$50,000 cash bond and then he ran away. We spent months worrying that he wouldn't be found. Luckily, on June 24, 2019, my victim's advocate called me with the good news that the defendant had been found in North Carolina. That was a day of relief that he had been caught. The defendant was extradited to Rockford where he would be held until trial.

In November of 2020, my son's case was closed without my family being contacted by the State's Attorney's Office. My AAIM advocate was never informed that our case was closed either. We were in shock. We couldn't believe they would do this to us. I was angry, and I cried for months. My AAIM advocate cried along with us and felt responsible. The AGG DUI Causing Death charge was dropped, and the defendant plead to Reckless Homicide. This is a lesser charge with less prison time. The defendant received 10 years for killing my son; and according to Illinois law he is only required to serve 50% of the time.

I didn't know the court proceeding was also going to be a heart-sickening slap in the face to me and my family plus add to my unbearable pain. I've thought long and hard about what I'd say to the court, state, and defendant since I wasn't informed of what was going to happen with the case. I was never allowed to give an impact statement.

I relied on the criminal justice system to do right by me, and my family; they failed. The assistant state's attorney knew I was there and involved in the case. They had meetings with me over the years to talk about the case, and my advocate told them I wanted to be there when the time came for a trial or plea and sentencing.

I had a lawyer fighting for my rights as a victim, after they closed the case. My AAIM advocate stood by my side to try and get justice for Juan. It didn't change anything for me, but hopefully it changes something for someone else and this NEVER happens again.

The State's Attorney in Illinois and their staff must do better. The court and judges must do better; for victims and their families.

My SON Juan, the deceased victim, DESERVED BETTER.

I appreciate your taking the time to read my son's painful story.

**Written by his mother who misses him dearly,**

**Elizabeth Alvarado**

## THE CHRISTOPHER “CHRIS” L. LUKES TRIBUTE

July 13, 1990 - August 6, 2021



On July 18, 2021, my life changed forever, the night of the crash that took my son's life, Chris decided to take his brother, Bryan, out for his birthday. He told Bryan that he loved him and that this was going to be his best birthday. Chris' girlfriend, Shaleika, his brother's girlfriend, Valeria, and a friend, Kimani went out and enjoyed themselves. Afterwards, they decided to go downtown and get

something to eat. They were in three different cars when one rear-ended the other. They all stopped on the expressway to check for damages. That is when a car came along at a high rate of speed and crashed into Chris and two friends. Chris' friends were injured but ultimately recovered. Chris sustained a severe head injury. Due to the impact, his spine shifted to the point that his brain stem disconnected from it, and he sustained great liver damage. Chris went into cardiac arrest while in surgery, but they were able to stabilize him. For the next two weeks, I was told that he would never recover and that I had to make the decision to let my son go.

After three weeks, we decided to let him go. I talked to Chris and asked that he let us know because I didn't want to let him go. Chris miraculously awakened the next morning, but my heart knew that it wouldn't be for long. I feel he came back to make sure that Bryan, Shaleika, Valeria and Kimani were okay and to say good-bye. On August 5th, he closed his eyes one last time and on August 6th it was determined that he had passed away overnight. The young man that took my son's life left the scene of the crash. A witness followed him until he got all the information on the car and the driver was picked up a few hours later. He had driven home and gone to sleep.

Police determined that he was highly intoxicated at the time of the crash. He is now facing 14 years in prison. 14 years for injuring two people and taking the life of my vivacious, charismatic, and loving son. My son was a father to two beautiful girls, Amya, and Jazara. Chris also leaves behind four brothers, Dontae, Bryan, Terrell, and Antione.

I always called Chris the pied piper of fun. Everyone he met adored him. He was always there to lend a helping hand to friends, family, and strangers. He was a beautiful person. My days are long and lonely but as much as I love Chris, God loves him best.

*Chris my love, we will meet again.  
Love, Mom*

## **The Great Remover**

Alcohol is a product of amazing versatility.  
It will remove the stains from designer clothes,  
it will also remove the clothes off your back.  
If by chance it is used in sufficient quantity  
alcohol will remove furniture from the home,  
rugs from the floor, food from the table,  
lining from the stomach, vision from the eyes  
and judgment from the mind.

Alcohol will also remove good reputations,  
good jobs, good friends, happiness from children's hearts,  
sanity, freedom, spouses, relationships,  
and man's ability to adjust and live with his fellow man  
and even life itself.

As a remover, alcohol has no equal.

Author – Unknown

## THE SHEILA LUPTON STORY AND KATHLEEN BOWES TRIBUTE

**Sheila- Injured August 31, 2020**  
**Kathleen – June 15, 1947-August 31, 2020**



*From Left: Sheila –Kathleen*

On August 31, 2020, my world shattered and was changed forever. At the intersection of East State and Second Street, my vehicle was struck by a reckless, speeding driver driving on South Street. The police report said the car smelled like Marijuana when they arrived. But no charges were ever added for that. My friend Kathy was in the passenger seat, I was taking her to a doctor's appointment, she was a good woman, and a great friend. She died because of the injuries she received in the crash. I carry survivor's guilt, because she died and I survived.

I now have anxiety when approaching a lighted intersection. I wait in dread for a vehicle to run the red light, twice I have seen this happen. It has left me crying, shaking, and gasping for air. I have had to call family members to calm me down. Another time I had to change my plans, instead of going out to eat, I returned home, where I felt safe.

I spent 8 days in the hospital and three weeks in a rehabilitation center, my injuries were so server. I suffered a brain bleed from the crash, fractured ribs on my right side, and breathing was an agony. I had vertigo so bad, that I would almost pass out when being moved. I had injuries to my thumb and wrist that had to be surgically repaired and fused. I now carry three scars on my left wrist and thumb. I also carry a permanent scar on my stomach from the seat belt. I suffered daily migraines for months. I suffered a Deep Vein Thrombosis in my left calf in rehab. I had to have blood thinner shots in my stomach twice a day and then remained on blood thinner medication for months. I still have vertigo issues and take medication for it twice a day. I still have migraines and now wear tinted glasses to help with them.

**THE SHEILA LUPTON STORY  
AND KATHLEEN BOWES TRIBUTE**

I spent a month not being able to see my family. I have three grandchildren that I saw almost daily, my granddaughter gets very upset if she thinks I'm leaving without giving her a hug and kiss goodbye. She worries I may not come back.

My fiancé worries about me constantly. He needs to know where I am and that I am safe.

When I was finally able to return home, I had to use a walker to get around. I had at-home physical therapy for a month. I worked to regain my strength, so I could graduate with a cane. And finally, to be able to walk without one. It took 14 months for me to be strong enough to return to work. I no longer feel safe in a car, I choose to drive an SUV now because it's bigger.

The day this "incident" happened, it changed so many lives. Kathy's family lost their sister and friend. I and many of our other friends lost Kathy as well. We will miss her kindness, and her love for pets, friends, and family. We will miss her loving and generous spirit. We all feel her loss daily.

I have spoken to my family clergy many times privately, to help me deal with my feelings of guilt, anger, and depression. This is what recklessness does to people's lives.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story and for listening to what I had to say.

*Sincerely Sheila Lupton*



## THE TANYA McDONOUGH TRIBUTE

June 26, 1983 – June 26, 2016



June 26, 1983 was an amazing day in my life. My sister gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. I was only seven years old at the time. This precious child was named Tanya. We would grow up together, talk about boys, do each other's hair and makeup, share clothes, and eventually babysit each other's children. Tanya became my best friend. The one I could tell anything and everything to. She wasn't only my niece, she was like a sister, like my own child and half of my heart and soul. Life was amazing because she was in it.

June 26, 2016, will always be one of the worst days of my life. On this day I learned someone's selfish choice to drink, and drive stole Tanya's life. Tanya had been home celebrating her birthday with friends and family and decided to go for a walk.

Tanya never drove, as it scared her beyond words. She would have never willingly gotten into a vehicle with an intoxicated driver. A very intoxicated person that she knew went to look for her and put her in their vehicle. The driver proceeded to drive at a high rate of speed and flew up an embankment into a tree, causing Tanya to be ejected from the vehicle. The driver on the other hand wasn't ejected from the vehicle and lived. His selfish choice caused Tanya to lose her life; it wasn't his to take. His choice has left me in a million pieces, which can never be put back together.

His choice took a mother away from her then 6-year-old child. This choice had left a little girl without a mommy. No mommy to tuck her in at night, no kisses, hugs, or teaching her how to bake. No mommy to take her shopping for her first dance, graduations, first boyfriend, or for her wedding day.

## THE TANYA McDONOUGH TRIBUTE

Every morning I look into Ila's eyes and I see Tanya in them. I hear Tanya in her daughter's voice and see her in everything she does. Tanya was proudest of being a mother and she was an amazing one. She loved Ila so much. Her daughter is so strong it amazes me. She has decided that we should celebrate her mommy's birthday and not mourn the loss of her because that's how her mommy would want it. Now every day I feel my heart break because she's no longer here to fulfill her dreams of watching her daughter grow.

It's been six years since my niece was ripped away from this world. Six very long, heartbreaking, and sad years. Every month there was a court date; every month I faced the person who caused this tragedy. This person hurt my family and took away a mother, daughter, niece, sister, and best friend. Six years of watching a precious child grow up without her mommy. Six years of seeing Tanya in her daughter's eyes.

I honestly hoped that after the trial we could get peace. The defendant received six years. We relive Tanya's death over and over again; the day he made a choice that took Tanya's life. This case is back in court, apparently due to the trial court judge violating the defendant's rights. The judge didn't allow him to change his lawyer of four years to a different lawyer for sentencing. Due to this violation of his rights, we have to go through the sentencing process again.

There hasn't been a day that goes by that my heart hasn't hurt. I still fall apart completely all the time; I still pick up my phone to call her. I'll never be complete without her. I'll never heal or have a day that I don't love and miss Tanya.

I'll forever be grateful for AAIM and Kelly because God knows what I would've done without her.

**Written by her loving aunt  
Kristi Kunish**

**THE JOCELYNN MORALES TRIBUTE**  
**October 14, 1996 – December 15, 2017**



My daughter Jocelynn was the most beautiful girl, and not just because she was my daughter. She had the most amazing smile and beautiful dimples that everyone just loved and would always compliment her on. She was such a smart young lady. Since she was a little girl, she never asked for help with homework or projects. She was so smart that she was chosen to be part of a program with twenty-two students in sixth grade. It was called Tomorrow's Promise Vision 2020. Students needed to maintain A's and B's throughout grade school and high school to get a full-ride scholarship at Concordia University. Jocelynn maintained her grades, and in

2015 she moved into her dorm at Concordia University. Of course, school would sometimes stress her out, but she always maintained good grades. I missed her so much while she was in college. I loved summer and Christmas break, because that meant she was coming home. It also meant I would have my baby girl with me for a few weeks. We loved going shopping at Target and Kohl's. Jocelynn had a lot of friends, and everyone loved her. She would always try to help anyone that needed advice as her major in college was psychology.

In December 2017, she came home for Christmas break. I remember so clearly how she brought home some clothes in her laundry hamper. I was so happy to have her home. I wanted to cook her favorite foods. On Thursday, December 14, I got up for work, which seemed like a normal day. Little did I know my life was about to be shattered later that night. Jocelynn spent the entire day with her dad putting up the Christmas tree. When they were done, they started watching the movie "COCO" My husband said she cried during this movie. I got home from work and started dinner. Around 9 pm, she said her friend Ivan was picking her up, and they were going out for a bit. My husband told her not to go out since it was only Thursday and she had to work the next day. She knew that and said they weren't going out for long. She was excited

## THE JOCELYNN MORALES TRIBUTE

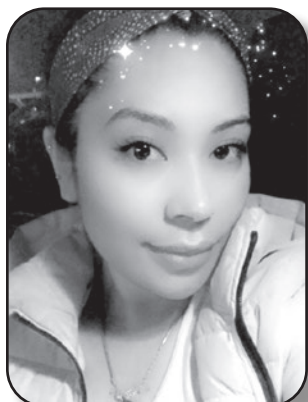
about finally being twenty-one. She had turned twenty-one on October 14. She was picked up by Ivan and I told him to take care of my baby. I would always tell him to take care of her. My husband, son, and I went to bed around 10 pm. I woke up around 2 am and texted her; I didn't get a response. I started to worry because she always replied to my texts. I called her and got no answer. At 4 am, there was the most horrible knock on the door. A knock that I will never forget. It was a police officer. I will never forget the blank look on his face. He asked if I was Veronica, and I said yes. He asked if my husband was home, and I said yes. I ran upstairs to wake up my husband. I told him the police were downstairs and that something had happened to Jocelynn. I could not believe what was happening. It was so unreal. She and her best friend were out drinking, and he decided to get behind the wheel to drive. I always told her I would pick her up wherever she was if he couldn't drive. I don't know how he thought he could beat the train. There was no rush to get home. His bad judgment cost my beautiful daughter her life. She had such a bright future. She wanted to help people in any way she could. Seeing my daughter's lifeless body at the hospital is an image that I will never forget. "How can this be happening?", I kept yelling. I kept asking her to wake up to go home, but she couldn't hear me. Friends and family filled the emergency room; they wanted to see her one last time. Then the time came for us to say goodbye, because they were taking her to the medical examiners.

I miss my daughter Jocelynn so much!!! She had so many plans and projects to fulfill, and she is gone forever because of one bad decision to drink and drive. I will never get the joy of seeing her get married and having children. He made one bad decision that changed our lives forever. I don't hate him because I know how much she loved him. However, it doesn't change the fact that his irresponsible actions took my baby's life. Please don't drink and drive.

*Jocelynn Forever 21*

*Mami, Papi and Lil Luis miss you!*

## THE IDANIS NAVAS STORY



April 6, 2022, my life completely changed. I'm a survivor of a rollover vehicle crash. The last thing I remember is my car swerving off the expressway; everything goes black after that. Later that day, I miraculously awoke, in the ER with a neck brace on; I could barely talk or move. At the hospital I was told some details of the crash and how the EMT's weren't anticipating anyone in the vehicle to be alive due the severity of the crash. This was scary to hear since I didn't know what happened, or if the driver of the vehicle I was a passenger in was alive or not.

I was in ICU because I sustained many life-threatening injuries. I suffered a neck fracture, two lumbar spine fractures, shattered right arm, broken left collar bone,

broken ribs, heart and lung contusions, and lacerations to five of my organs. Due to complications from my injuries, I developed a blood clot which traveled to my lung. Due to the blood clot, I now take blood thinners daily. I had to have surgery on my right arm the following day and unfortunately, I still have issues with my arm. I don't have the strength or endurance in my arm that I once had. To this day I'm still going to physical therapy. I now have multiple permanent scars. I was left unable to work, and drive for months; I lost my independence for what felt like forever.

The aftermath of what transpired the night of the crash has been the hardest chapter of my life so far, and I'm only 27 years old. The emotional aspect of it, is still a work in progress. Some days I feel like I can keep pushing forward, and other days I feel like I want to give up. Watching everyone around me move on with their lives, while I was stuck at home by myself because I physically couldn't do anything, was devastating to me. In the blink of an eye, everything was taken away from me. At the same time, I realize how blessed I am to have a second chance at life. I realize how blessed I am to be able to walk and move around. It really is a miracle. God has been good.

I couldn't have asked for a better support system then my family, friends, doctors, physical therapist Caroline, and the wonderful staff at Lutheran General Hospital. None of this would be possible without each one of them, and I will forever be grateful. I also want to thank AAIM, and my wonderful Victim Advocate, Kathleen. I connected with her instantly, and she regularly checks on me.

***What AAIM does for people is really such a blessing.***

***I fully support AAIM and what they stand for***

**Idanis Navas**

**THE ADELAIDA OTERO TRIBUTE**  
**March 19, 1938 – July 14, 2009**

On July 12, 2009, we were awakened to a call that you were in a crash, hit by an “intoxicated motorist.” You were taken to the hospital and were conscious, but nobody knew that you were bleeding internally. You were rushed to surgery and the doctor said, “If she’s a fighter, she will survive.” You fought until your heart couldn’t fight anymore, and on the early morning of July 14, our Lord called you home. It was one of the worst days of my life.



I recently lost my 37-year-old son, Eric, to a massive heart attack and this is one death that I don’t know if I will survive. My son was the second-born grandson to my Mami. After raising seven daughters, you can imagine how much she spoiled her grandsons. The myths about grandparents are so true! Grandparents treat their grandchildren differently than they do their children. My Mami was old school and had no problem swatting us on the butt to reprimand us, but God forbid we reprimanded our children in front of her! At the time of her passing, she had 10 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Today, she has 16 great-grandchildren. She has missed the births of 13 of her great-grandchildren, but I’d like to think that she’s sitting up there sending us these great blessings.

The only thing that brings me some comfort is picturing my Mami in heaven now taking care of my son (like she always did), along with my Papi and my sister. They sit in heaven with the Lord, showering us with blessings.

I love you, Mami, please take care of my Nene.

*Your Loving Daughter,  
Irma Otero Velazquez*



## THE ERIN ELIZABETH OLMSTED TRIBUTE

August 6, 1979 – March 2, 1997



I remember the evening Erin was born. I didn't know you could love another human being that much. She changed our lives in so many ways I can't even list them. She paved the way for a sister and brother, and upon their births, assumed the role of "little mommy". She helped me and watched over them both. She supported them in all their achievements, sitting in the stands alongside us cheering them on to victory. I remember Erin's first smile, her first steps, her first cold/

fever, her cuddles, the mess she made as she learned to use a spoon, navigating the stairs as a toddler, sitting outside on the swing for hours, how easily she picked up the ability to roller-skate, ride a bike, bowl, golf and was even able to ride a unicycle! Her passion, though, was gymnastics. I remember how hard she worked to learn each skill and wouldn't give up till it was accomplished. She was stubborn, sensitive, trustworthy, sweet and dependable. She was impatient. She loved with her whole heart. She was a good daughter & sister. She was a good friend. I hope her friends knew how much she loved them. Erin loved life.....she took it on full-speed ahead and looked forward to everything life had to offer. Erin had goals. She wanted to go to college and become a Speech Pathologist. Her reason? Later, she could adjust her hours to concentrate on her REAL goal in life... to be a wife and mom. She loved kids and wanted to be a mom. Erin taught young girls gymnastics and to this day I still hear from some of their moms. I know Erin would have been a GREAT mom.

It's been over 25 years since I've felt Erin's arms around me for a hug, seen those big eyes or bright smile. Twenty-five years since our last mom-daughter chat. There are so many 'what if's', 'if only's' and 'should be's'. I can't help but reflect on all Erin's missed. She's

## THE ERIN ELIZABETH OLMSTED TRIBUTE

missed everything leading up to her sister becoming a High School English Lit Teacher - moving on to Humanities Division Chair - and now Associate Principal - a wife and mom of three boys. She's missed being a Sister-in-Law & Auntie Erin. She's missed all that has gone into her brother graduating from Medical School and living his dream of becoming an Emergency Room Doctor, starting his new chapter, in another part of the country. Erin should have been part of all their accomplishments. She should have been beside her sister when she got married and as her children were baptized. She should have been able to celebrate her brother at his graduations and shared the joy when he became engaged, married and NOW a dad! Every family milestone is bittersweet, with its tiny bit of sadness. We all think of Erin and what 'should have been'. We all think of the 'what ifs' and 'if onlys' and 'should be's'. We all had our dreams. We all try to make Erin proud. I'm sure Erin and her sister used to lie in bed at night and 'talk' about what life would be like when they grew up. If only someone else had made a better choice. If only someone else hadn't chosen to drive drunk. If only.....

## THE MICHELLE DENISE PARKER TRIBUTE

January 6, 1959 – August 22, 2013



### ***“We All Just Want to Be Loved”***

Over the last 9 years, August is a month that I have come to dread. Each year, August 22 signifies the tragic and untimely death of my younger sister Michelle D. Parker. She was killed in a tragic auto crash by an intoxicated driver who ran a red light, crashed into her car, and killed her. She had just celebrated her only son's 17th birthday two days before the terrible crash, and it still burdens my heart as I think of how to get us all through this month. In the earlier years of my life, August had always been one of my favorite months because it represented a few more calm summer days and nights, returning to high school to be with favorite friends, traveling those crowded highways to return to college so that I could meet my new roommates, a celebration of several family member's August birthdays, and Michelle's only child, Marko's birthday. It was a time of celebration, a time of great joy and laughter in my sister's life, and we are grateful she had one more final birthday celebration with her then 17-year-old son. When I think of his birthday, as he now turns 26 years old, my heart aches that he cannot celebrate this milestone with his mother.

As I reflect on this family tragedy of my beloved sister's death, I am reminded of how we experienced another tragic drunk driving crash in October of 2021, killing my 39-year-old niece and her 15-year-old daughter. Anger, shock, and disbelief are all emotions we experienced once again due to someone driving drunk. Ten months later, another horrific tragedy. My brother's daughter and granddaughter were both killed by a drunk driver. His 6-year-old grandson was injured, and to God be the Glory for saving his life. We are still mourning these horrible family tragedies that once again traumatized our entire family.

## THE MICHELLE PARKER TRIBUTE

I don't know how to measure the loss of family members who are loved so much. All we can do is pray and ask God for guidance and understanding.

I believe strongly in therapy and know we have all had to encounter some form of treatment to assist us in pushing through these painful days of sorrow. In recent family discussions, I learned more about pain and the impact of pain as I have attempted to listen to my family members' struggles and how we move through the process of accepting the loss of those we so deeply loved. We all want to be loved and are so blessed that Jerrisha and her family were so deeply loved. We thank God each day that her youngest son is still alive, and we will continue to pour deep love into his young life while always remembering his mother and older sister, Allione.

We've learned greater love through all these traumatic experiences, but most of all, we've learned that God wants to do more than give us strength- He wants to be our strength.

As I work towards bringing this tribute to a close, I remember my sister Michelle's beautiful smile and how I still pick up the phone to call her. I think of her laughter and the songs she hummed to make us all laugh, but most of all I recall her love for God. I carry her son in my heart every day, asking God to watch over him and grant him a great purpose in life. I remember my niece Jerrisha's voice as she told me how excited she was to make me a pan of her delicious mac & cheese for our next Thanksgiving holiday. Finally, I recall Allione's joy in attending high school for the first year and how she delighted herself in working hard and getting good grades.

I pray daily for all members of my beloved family; and their traveling safety grace. I pray that people will think cautiously before they get behind the wheel and seriously contemplate all the lives impaired driving has impacted. To think of the many lives they might save when they call a taxi, an Uber car ride, a friend, a neighbor, call SOMEONE sober.

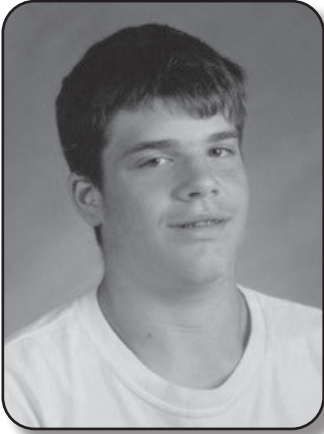
We have lost so many lives during the COVID Pandemic, and I know we will continue to lose loved ones through many of life's struggles. So let's look at LOVE through a new lens and focus on loving ourselves, our family members, and our neighbors and taking better care of one another.

To God be the Glory. Rest In Peace, Michelle, Jerrisha, and Allione. We love you all DEARLY!

**Authored by April L. Holland & Family E**

## THE JONATHAN PETIT TRIBUTE

September 2, 1998 – June 17, 2005



My son, Jonathan, was blessed with a wonderful sense of humor. He loved to make people laugh and smile. Jonathan enjoyed playing Texas Hold 'Em with all of his buddies. It wasn't uncommon for a dozen or so of his friends to get together for a few hands. The card games were perfect settings for Jonathan to give and take with his friends and crack jokes.

On a hot summer night, in June, my beautiful son left our house with his friends with the understanding that he was to return

home by 11:00 pm. Jonathan's mom, Yvonne, called him at 11:15 pm because he was late for his curfew. He was a teenager pushing the envelope of parental authority. He told Yvonne he was coming straight home. She made a second call about 30 minutes later. The phone rang once and was shut off. Jonathan never made it home.

The Carol Stream Police Department called to ask me if I was prepared for some tough news. He told me Jonathan had been seen at a party extremely intoxicated. He'd been abused by some of the people at the party and then tossed out of the party because he was trying to wrestle and was knocking things around. At this moment I got scared. I knew Jonathan wouldn't put up with hazing of any sort unless he had no control of the situation. The madness was now front and center and I could do nothing to stop it. My son was out there somewhere and I was helpless to do anything about it.

The decision by a parent to provide alcohol to a minor is a terrible and illegal decision. This parent chose to cover up her duplicity by tossing my son out of her house and next to a large body of water. She washed her hands of the problem once he was ejected from the party she held in her home. The police had been called to the home that night because of a noise complaint. She denied them access. She tried to cover her tracks.

## THE JONATHAN PETIT TRIBUTE

My son died alone; most likely confused, disoriented, nauseous, and afraid. His final moments were not pleasant. Jonathan was our first born child. He was 16 years old.

### **Doug Petit**

I could not complete my comments without mentioning Jonathan's Garden. It started out as my dedication to our son. One day sitting next to the garden it came to me there are so many of us who have lost a child. I began growing the garden. I began adding perennials into the garden to honor young folks I likely never met. I have met parents through AAIM, through podcast interviews, and through my life who have suffered this horrible loss. I thought the rebirth of the perennials each year would be a fitting reminder that they are never really gone; and certainly not forgotten. It just seemed like the right thing for this dad to do.



## THE DANIEL “DANNY” RAUNER TRIBUTE

October 6, 1980 - January 21, 2019



Today as I sit and write the memories I have of our beloved son, Daniel “Danny” John Rauner, I see them so clearly. However, they do come to my mind with unbearable sadness knowing the way his life was taken from us.

I'd like to take a moment to say thank you to AAAIM. This organization was founded in 1979 and is made up of many people – Board of Directors, Executive Director, Court Monitors, Victim Advocates, office staff and volunteers, that have brought hope on the horizon to many people like our family. The hope of

love, justice, support, strength, courage, and survival while walking through a very lengthy process in court. Walking with us through an emotional journey that just seems to engulf you. You think that maybe this time it's coming to an end, only to find out it isn't.

A year after our son was tragically taken by one man's selfish choice, my husband, my beloved soulmate of 45 years, died tragically from COVID. All the numbness of the tragic death of Daniel came raging back. Not finished battling in courts with Danny's horrific death, I found my life spinning out of control. Talk about not being able to function once again... I couldn't work and AAIM stepped in and helped me financially so that I was able to try and find some solid ground. Thank you AAIM for everything!! Thank you, Kelly Krenzer, my victim advocate for always being there and walking alongside us.

Daniel was born on October 6, 1980. He was born with the gift of love and his purpose in life was to spread that love to bring people in any circumstances a feeling of self-worth. He was a very caring young man who loved life and people. He had a charismatic charm about him, he could sell an ice cube to an Eskimo! He adored and loved his wife Anna, Dad, Mom, and his brother Jeremiah and family. Daniel, like many young men, wasn't perfect. He made mistakes, but for the most part, he had a huge heart and would do anything for anyone, from a king on his throne to a bum on the street. I painfully miss Daniel's funniest little laugh and grin. He'll never call me on the phone or come to our home and say, “Hey Momma”. Daniel loved life, no matter what was thrown his way. He was always able to withstand the test of time, no matter what the obstacles in life

## THE DANIEL “DANNY” RAUNER TRIBUTE

were. He'd always rise to the occasion and make it work. If it was a bridge, he'd cross it, he'd always find a way to get to the other side. If it was a mountaintop, he'd somehow find a way to the top of the mountain.

January 21, 2019, changed our lives forever because the drunk driver was selfish and made a horrific choice to drink and drive. We received a phone call from Anna, Danny's wife, that Danny had been killed in a car crash due to a drunk driver. That was the beginning of a series of events that play over and over in my head. Until the day we went to the coroner's office I kept telling myself that someone was just playing a horrible trick. There are no words that describe the emotions of seeing your child's lifeless bloody body his head wrapped in towels. It's something a parent should never have to witness. Danny suffered a broken leg, arm, pelvis, ribs, blunt force trauma to the head, and other injuries due to the crash. How do you move forward with a heart that has just been annihilated? Grief is an explosion in your head and floods your heart and soul. It's the horrific disturbing mess your life becomes after losing a child, that was taken from you due to a selfish and irresponsible choice. The loss of your child doesn't just change who you are, it demolishes you! How do you go through life because your life now is lived on another level. No matter how hard you try the pain from this tragic loss floods over you again and again. There's a heavy numb feeling in your chest when you feel no desire to speak or even move. All you want to do is close your eyes and go to sleep. The process of being so broken is excruciatingly exhausting. The horror of our son's death and the fact that the defendant was so selfish in his choice, really is too much for one person to bear.

Please share with people that lives are precious, and we all have a choice to save lives! Our lives are changed forever, and we'll forever grieve and miss him. We hope that when people read our story, Danny's memory will live on in them, as it does in us, until the day we meet him again. As we ask the Lord to continue helping us to continue our lives on earth, we hope and pray that you will remember that there is “hope on the horizon” “hope for a new tomorrow” and that the awareness of NOT drinking and driving or driving impaired, will become a reality.

Love you, Doolittle,  
Love, Mom, and Beloved Dad

## THE PAYTON RICHMOND STORY

**Injured January 12, 2018**



On January 12, 2018, I was involved in a serious crash that left my world torn apart. My family's lives were changed and turned upside down that night by a very selfish impaired driver.

The memories of that night still haunt me. At the crash scene I remember very vividly, the impaired driver hovering over my face yelling. She claimed she wasn't under the influence. I remember being placed on the cold gravel road, waiting for a paramedic to find out where my pain was coming from. I was trying to catch my breath to tell someone I could not feel my legs but couldn't breathe. I was rushed to Mercy Hospital where the

doctors in the trauma center said I was pale and cold to the touch.

I had a breathing tube and catheter inserted. My older sister was the first person at the hospital. I remember her wiping blood off my face; it was very scary. The doctors told me I had an injured kidney and spleen, shattered pelvis and collapsed lungs. That night my family didn't know if I would ever be able to walk again or even worse if I would die.

I remember asking my family "what happened". I was told a drunk driver was driving on the wrong side of the road and crashed into the driver's door. I thought "not me". How? I've never even broken a bone before.

During the two weeks I spent in the hospital I had surgery, countless drugs pumped into my system, shots in my stomach and physical therapy to regain my strength. I have scars all over my body from my injuries from the crash.

I missed my little sister, my family, my puppy, and my life. I finally made it home where my mom and family took care of me 24/7. It's been a long, painful road to get to where I am now. I graduated from a wheelchair, to walker, and then cane. I still have ongoing medical issues.

My advocate Kelly Krenzer has helped my family and me through this trauma. I'm grateful for AAIM and my family who've been by my side through this tough time. I want to tell people that getting behind the wheel impaired by alcohol and/or drugs that it has dire consequences that reach far beyond themselves; it affects many, many other people.

The woman who hit me got two years in prison and one-year supervision. Her family tried to bully me in the court room, as if the crash was my fault. I'm the victim here. I'll most likely be in pain and have a slight limp for the rest of my life due to the crash.

## THE PAYTON RICHMOND STORY

### Injured January 12, 2018

I'm no longer able to do the work I love. I don't want to think about the crash every day, but I am because of the physical pain I am in.

Sadly, I have been hit again by a careless driver distracted driver who ran a red light, all she got was a ticket. She told police she was distracted. I am so traumatized, I was injured again with a sprained ankle, had to go to Physical Therapy again, could not work for a while, again. Out a car, again. My body hurts so bad from the first crash and now from another.

I am lucky to be alive. Life should never be taken for granted. I thank God every day that I got a second chance at life.

*Written By: Payton Richmond*

### Hope on the Horizon

#### A Grandparent's Perspective

On January 12, 2018, our precious granddaughter's life was almost taken from us by a senseless act of selfishness by an intoxicated motorist.

Days and months have passed, and Payton's recovery process has been a long one.

We prayed, cried, and asked God to help her walk again as Payton was confined to a wheelchair.

After months of therapy, Payton is no longer confined to a wheelchair.

Determination, love, support, and prayers from family, friends, and her loving AAIM advocate, Kelly Krenzer, is proof miracles happen. Payton is a miracle.



*Hope on the Horizon* to support victims who have taken this unexpected journey.

Our appreciation goes out to the Police Departments for all the efforts to enforce DUI and impaired driving laws.

Thank you  
Love,

*Grandma Paula Stima and Grandpa Joe Stima*

**THE VERONICA ROJAS TRIBUTE**  
**June 27, 1992 – June 28, 2010**



On June 27, 2010, my beautiful daughter Veronica went out for her 18th birthday with her best friend Natalie, and they were both killed by a drunk driver.

It's been 12 years, and the pain is still here.

Veronica's son Emmanuel is now 14 years old and a freshman in high school. Emmanuel states, "Veronica was my mother, but I don't remember her, because I was only two years old when she was killed."

Veronica's sisters are without her, and she is missed, every day.

Not a day goes by without us thinking about her.

The holidays are no longer the same since Veronica was killed.

I still can't believe it's real. I feel like I'm in a dream; and I dream of losing her over and over, again.

Love Mom, Emmanuel, Jennifer, Marisol, Alicia, and Jasmine

**Love, Mom**

## THE HEIDI ROSEEN TRIBUTE

September 16, 1960 – July 8, 2012

This story has two parts – life with Heidi and life without her.

This year should have been our 39th wedding anniversary. My wife Heidi was a registered nurse at Christ Hospital in Oak Lawn. She was the mother of our three children. She was a faithful member of the Ashburn Baptist Church and loved helping with the Awanas Club at church. Heidi loved boating and most of all water skiing. She always wanted to participate in the Tommy Bartlett Water Ski Show in Wisconsin; she was an excellent skier.



It's been 10 years since Heidi's life was taken from us. Not a day goes by that we don't think of her.

On July 8, 2012 while on her way to work at 6:30 am she was killed by a driver who was drunk and high on drugs. As she entered the intersection at LaGrange Road and 95th Street she was struck by an impaired driver at a high rate of speed. This selfish and spoiled young man had a history of trouble with the law. The parents of this senseless person spoiled him his entire life by bailing him out each time he was in trouble. It's no surprise that they hired two lawyers to defend his careless acts once again, when they should have let him pay for his own foolish choices. I assume after his release that he went back to his childish and foolish ways.

She was taken without warning and that's no way to say goodbye. The family and I are doing our best to patch our broken dreams.

Rest In Peace Heidi,

Written By Your Loving Husband.



## THE CARLOS SERRATOS STORY

April 8, 1973 – June 22, 2022



Sixteen years ago, a 20-year-old drunk driver changed our lives forever. Carlos and I had a newspaper route and on weekends when I worked my regular job, he worked the route with his dad or my brother. The morning of the crash, our car stalled about a block from our apartment. Carlos went to get our van and tried to jump-start the car. Suddenly, he heard squealing tires and saw a car coming around the corner at him. Carlos pushed his dad out of the way of the car and Carlos tried jumping out

the way. It was too late. The driver pinned his leg between the bumpers of both cars.

The year following the crash, Carlos was in and out of the hospital five times. Since the crash, he hasn't been able to work. Our daughter was nine-years-old and our son was two-years-old at the time of the crash. Our daughter never got to attend daddy-daughter dances. Our son only knows his dad going in and coming out of the hospital. Carlos was never able to teach our son how to ride a bike or how to play soccer. They were robbed of doing all the things a dad can do with his children.

Since the crash, Carlos has had many medical issues arise stemming from depression that causes a lack of interest in daily living. It's as if his will to live was taken from him after the crash. He always suffered from depression. Who wouldn't? He felt he wasn't a good husband, father, or even a man because he couldn't work. Definitely not true!

Carlos passed away on June 22, 2022 after many years of suffering.

Always, your wife Stacie.

————— *A New Tomorrow* —————

## THE RICHARD SEYLLER TRIBUTE

**March 1, 1945 – October 25, 2005**

October 25, 2022, will be 17 years since Dick Seyller, husband, and father, was killed by a drunk driver. He has missed so many family holidays, birthdays, graduations, weddings, grandchildren's births, and just everyday life. We miss him dearly and tears still come when we talk about Dick and the wonderful memories, we have of him. Below is our story...



October 25, 2005 was a beautiful fall day, sunny and warm. I was at work and my husband, Richard "Dick" Seyller was planning his day. He was a realtor with Coldwell Banker-Primus in Elgin. At 11:12 a.m. our lives were torn apart and will never, be the same. Dick was on his way to Marengo at the time and was hit head-on by a drunk driver. The crash occurred on Route 20 in McHenry County. Dick was killed instantly. There is a blue Illinois Roadside Memorial Marker at the crash site in memory of him.

The woman that hit Dick was 49 years old, had three prior DUI convictions, had lost her license for almost 14 years, and had gotten it back in 1999. Two hours after the crash, her Blood Alcohol Level (BAC) was more than three times the legal limit.

Dick and I had been married for 31 years. We have three children, Andrew, Laura, and David and two daughter-in-laws, Lauren, and Casey. Our family was the most important thing in Dick's life.

Our family has been devastated by the crash. The drunk driver ripped Dick from our lives and we continue to struggle to find a "new normal". Dick has missed many important milestones in our children's lives. Andy, Lauren, Laura, and David all graduated from Western Illinois University and have jobs in their chosen professions. Their Dad is never far from their thoughts each day. Our sons have married and there are five grandchildren, with another one on the way. It hurts so much to know that these grandchildren won't know their grandpa. Two of them are old enough to start questioning where Grandpa Seyller is. Dick would be so proud of his children and grandchildren.

The emotional and mental toll the crash and Dick's death have caused our family is indescribable. We hope the woman that killed Dick wakes up each day and thinks of him and the pain and suffering she has caused our family.

I speak at AAIM's Victim Impact Panel that are held in Lisle, as I feel the need to speak for Dick and tell our family's story. My hope is that at least one person will listen and not drink and drive.

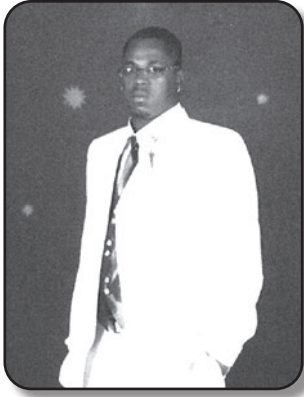
We would like to thank AAIM for all their continuing care and support.

We know we have to keep moving forward but, it's still difficult almost 17 years later. We miss you, Dick, each day.

*Debbie, Andrew, Lauren, Laura, David, Casey, Ryan, Finnley, Poppy, and Charlotte*  
*The Seyller Family*

## THE PIERRE L. SHELTON TRIBUTE

December 31, 1988 – March 17, 2019



Pierre was a tough little boy as he was growing up. When he was eight years old, he would continuously get in trouble at school and, as a punishment, he would have to go to church with his older cousin every Sunday. The first couple of months were rough, but because of who Pierre was, he eventually started participating in the programs and services. Pierre joined the Metropolitan Drill Team, where he had to stay out of trouble and keep his grades up. Joining the drill team helped guide Pierre to be not just a better person, but a better leader.

After graduating from grammar school, Pierre went on to high school and still participated in church and as a leader on the drill team. He joined Metropolitan's Young People Auxiliary and started traveling more, performing with the drill team, and doing various activities with the YPA. After graduating from high school, he worked many jobs in order to get by and help take care of his family. In 2011, Pierre had his first-born child, LaKenya, and in 2014, he had his little boy, LaMarion. He loved his children very much. He enjoyed watching them grow and being a part of their lives. He was so happy when his daughter joined the same church that he did as a kid. Pierre had a suitable job and a very special friend, who he adored so much. Life started out rough for Pierre, but he overcame whatever he could and became better. A better father, son, brother, uncle, friend, and leader.

On Saturday, March 9, 2019, Pierre and his girlfriend, Joy, were involved in a fatal car crash. This crash left both families devastated. Pierre was placed in the ICU until Sunday, March 17. On this day, Pierre departed this life due to intensive injuries from the crash. This careless act claimed Pierre's life at the early age of 30.

*Loving Mother,*

*Deborah*

## ***I Went to a Party Mom***

I went to a party,  
and remembered what you said.  
You told me not to drink, Mom  
so I had a sprite instead.

I felt proud of myself,  
the way you said I would,  
that I didn't drink and drive,  
though some friends said I should.

I made a healthy choice,  
and your advice to me was right  
as the party finally ended,  
and the kids drove out of sight.

I got into my car,  
sure to get home in one piece,  
I never knew what was coming, Mom  
something I expected least.

Now I'm lying on the pavement,  
And I hear the policeman say,  
"The kid that caused this wreck was  
drunk,"  
Mom, His voice seems far away.

My own blood's all around me,  
as I try hard not to cry.  
I can hear the paramedic say,  
"This girl is going to die."

I'm sure the guy had no idea,  
while he was flying high,  
because he chose to drink and drive,  
now I would have to die.

So why do people do it, Mom  
Knowing that it ruins lives?  
And now the pain is cutting me,  
like a hundred stabbing knives.

Tell sister not to be afraid, Mom  
tell daddy to be brave,  
and when I go to heaven,  
put "Daddy's Girl" on my grave.

Someone should have taught him,  
that its wrong to drink and drive.  
Maybe if his parents had,  
I'd still be alive.

My breath is getting shorter, Mom  
I'm getting really scared.  
These are my final moments,  
and I'm so unprepared.

I wish that you could hold me Mom,  
as I lie here and die.  
I wish that I could say I love you,  
Mom  
So I love you and good-bye.

Author Unknown

## THE SHAVON SMITH TRIBUTE

September 14, 1985 – April 17, 2016



This time of year is very hard for me; it's Shavon's birthday in two days. We would like you to know about the beautiful soul that was taken from us and about the life of a grieving family. Shavon was the oldest of five children, and although the smallest, she had the biggest, bravest heart. Her smile always made her stand out. She was always the life of the party and a hard-working lady. Shavon always made sure family was her priority. We spent every single holiday, weekend, and birthday together, and, sadly, those special days were taken away all too soon from us. Now we live with the uncertainty of not knowing what happened to our loved one. So many unanswered questions about that day that our family will never have answers to. How did the crash happen? What were we doing at the time she was taken from us? Did she suffer? What was going through her head when this was happening?

From a mom's perspective, I would like people to know how it feels to be woken up by two police officers at 6:30 in the morning and being told your daughter was in a crash and that she didn't make it. Then going to the coroner's office and my other children asking if they could see their sisters' finger or toe to have some sort of closure. Having to go to the crash site where my child suffered after being struck and then being burned and partially cremated in the vehicle is something that is excruciatingly painful- it's indescribable. My heart ached to go to her house and clean it out after her death. The offender took my daughter's life away as he was distracted by his phone while behind the wheel of a semi-truck. I had to bury her not knowing if it was her in the casket. Life will always go on no matter what happens but the life I live, involves me crying in my car. My daughter was supposed to bury me not the other way around.

Shavon's daughter doesn't have her mom anymore to go to parent-teacher conferences, take her to her favorite restaurants or do simple things like making frequent trips to the mall with her. She will never see her go to dances at school. We sadly hid our grief from Shavonna when she was a child as much as we could.

## THE SHAVON SMITH TRIBUTE

It's so hard to know we will never fill the emptiness of Shavonna's heart. The emptiness caused when her mother was killed and taken away from her. Our hearts ache because of a selfish distracted driver. He never expressed remorse; this makes us very angry. We will always remember Shavon as our "SMILEY" daughter, mother, sister, and friend. This is one thing she always did, no matter what, even if she had a face full of tears!

Shavonna is grown up now, working, and going to school to become a nail technician. She has her own place. It's very hard when you lose a child, life will never be the same for me, her mother.

Love,

**Sharon Smith – Mom Shavonna Smith - Daughter, Shaneil Starks,  
Kenneth Geiger, China Shaffer and Katrina Smith –  
Sister and Brothers.**

**This story is sponsored by Boone County State's Attorney  
Tricia Smith**



## THE THERESA "PEANUT" STANLEY TRIBUTE

July 7, 1978 – March 3, 2001



It has been more than 20 years since our beloved daughter Theresa was killed by a drunk driver on March 3 of 2001—the worst day of my life. Theresa was a beautiful young woman. At 22 years-old she was just entering adulthood with her entire life before her. Theresa was the youngest of our seven children. She had many close friends and she was adored by her nieces and nephews. She was very athletic and played three sports in high school. Because she was always the shortest person on the team, she

acquired the nickname “Peanut”. Theresa really enjoyed high school and participated in many other activities besides sports. Her varied interests carried over into college and she had difficulty deciding on a major. She changed majors several times and as a result was still in school when she was killed.

My wife Cathy and I were devastated by Theresa’s death. For several months we had trouble functioning. Within a year we both quit our jobs. I retired and Cathy began working with special needs children as a teaching assistant. We both began volunteering with AAIM in the hope that we could prevent other parents from experiencing the pain we had gone through.

Today I can’t honestly say that I think about Theresa every day, but most days something will trigger a memory of her and I continue to use some variation of her name, nickname or birthday in my rapidly multiplying computer passwords. For me, this is one way of keeping her memory alive. Our first great-granddaughter was born last January and our grandson and his wife gave her the name of Gloria Theresa. I can imagine Theresa beaming with pride.

We love and miss you,

Dad

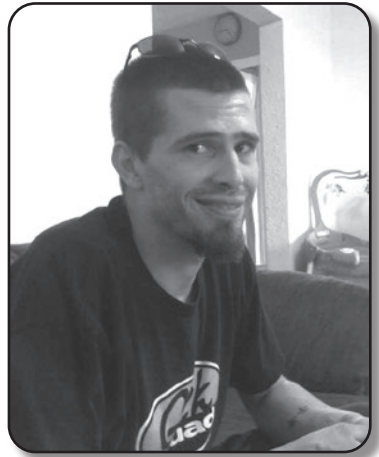
*This story is sponsored by Sally Hoffman*

## THE MIKEY STEINES TRIBUTE

June 12, 1978 – August 29, 2012

It's been ten very long and painful years since Mike was taken from us. They say time heals all wounds, but that isn't true; the wounds never heal.

On August 29, 2012, a death sentence was issued to my brother, because one person decided to get behind the wheel of a vehicle and drive impaired. The crash took a father from his three children, the youngest child being four years old. No child should have to lose a parent, especially at such a tender young age.



There are many memories of Mike, and we should have many, many more. I think about all the laughter we shared and my heart hurts...yet I smile. As I sit typing this and recall the last time, we were together, I think about the abundant amount of laughter we shared that evening. He was a comedian. He was always the life of the party and caused laughter so intense that your ribs would hurt, and tears would flow from your eyes. He had a way about him that lifted your spirits and put smiles on the faces of anyone he met.

It's hard to summarize the life of someone that you loved once they're gone. It's difficult to imagine them being gone. You'll never hear their laugh, voice, or see them smile again. You'll never have holidays or birthdays together. You'll never exchange secrets or knowledge. There will be no laughter, pranks, hugs, or deep, meaningful conversations.

Death is permanent. It damages, and scars so many lives. Think about that for a minute. How many lives have you impacted? How many lives would be destroyed, damaged, or affected by your loss? We have one life to live. Once it's gone, it is gone, and all that's left is pain, and memories.

How could I possibly summarize Mikey's life? Well, it was too short! Mikey will forever be remembered as a kind, and gentle soul. He had a huge heart, and he was loved by everyone. He was a favorite uncle to his nieces and nephews. He was a great brother and friend, and most importantly, he was a dad. His presence is and will always be greatly missed.

*Forever leaving footprints in our hearts*

*With love your sister, Tressie*



*This story is sponsored by Maurice West – Illinois State Representative*

## THE JESSE C. WALKER III TRIBUTE

December 20, 1961 - October 13, 2019



On September 3, 2010, we met and fell in love. On September 3, 2011 we married and shared a magical life together. On October 13, 2019, my heart was shattered into a million pieces when I answered the door to four state troopers. I knew you were gone... taken from me by a drunk driver... how irresponsible to drive while

drunk and of course, she walked away without a scratch. If GOD granted me one wish, it would be for a stairwell that reaches up to Heaven so that I could bring you HOME!

Remembrance of our last anniversary on September 3, 2019:

### *For My Wife, My One and Only Love*

“I love my wife and I know that she loves me. We’re best of friends. We’re just lucky to have found each other. It takes a lot of work but I just feel very blessed that I FINALLY found the right person. It’s a very fortunate situation and not everyone has it. Being married to you has been the finest thing that’s ever happened to me. You have been my partner, my lover, and my very best friend. Knowing I have your love lets me face life’s challenges, secure in the knowledge that there is a special person who thinks about me, supports me, and cares for me more deeply than anyone else. I’m thankful to be able to share my life with you.”

### *My Husband, My Everything*

“I’ve always believed in love. I just felt that somehow, somewhere, I would find my soulmate. And when I did, it would be amazing and you know what I discovered? Amazing doesn’t even begin to describe what being in love with you is like. And it certainly doesn’t come close to describing you as a man, a father, or a husband how incredible you are, how generous and caring, how strong and loving. Everything in life means more to me because of you.”

**I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER TO NEVER FORGET YOU!**

**Your loving wife... Gwen**

**THE JORLYCE "JOY" WANGE TRIBUTE**  
**February 10, 1948 – December 30, 2002**



It's been twenty years since the death of my beautiful wife, Joy. The best person in my life was taken from her family by a selfish high school senior who chose to drive impaired after a night of partying with his friends. Yet, not a day goes by that I don't miss her kind heart.

My oldest daughter, Dawn, a nurse's aide, helps to care for many COVID patients. She has been by the side of many dying patients whose families could not be there, comforting them and reassuring them that they are not alone.

Our youngest daughter, Kara, who continues to grow into a beautiful woman, works as a teacher aide with autistic children. In addition, she loves animals and earns extra money by working as a dog sitter.

Joy would be so proud, as am I, of our daughters. I now live each day to the fullest in memory of Joy.

Until we meet again.

***Love, Clayton***

## THE STEVEN R. WASILY TRIBUTE

October 9, 1983 – July 18, 2008



It's been 14 years since Steven was tragically taken from us at the hands of his "friend" Mike, who was three times the legal limit. It seems like yesterday when the detectives were at our door to tell us there had been a crash involving our son.

Steven had come home from work and had Chinese food with his brother Wayne. He said he would be gone for a couple hours, as he knew they had plans the next day. He was going to go to Mike's house after dinner. Steven would never come home again. As his mom, I ask myself why Steven would have gotten in the car with Mike. Didn't he know Mike was drunk? Maybe he didn't; we'll never know.

Steven got in the passenger seat and put his seat belt on, and Mike got behind the wheel of the car. He drove at a high rate of speed and before they got to the end of the subdivision, Mike lost control of the car. It rolled over, sliding across the intersection, and ending up in the parking lot of the condominium complex. Steven died instantly from craniocervical injuries.

Mike was prosecuted and went to prison. He was released from prison in November of 2016. We recently heard that he's engaged to be married for the second time. Steven will never get married.

We see Steven's other friends getting married, having children and wonder what Steven's life would have been like. Would he be married with children? Would they have his blue eyes and sense of humor? We'll never know.

With each passing year, it doesn't get any easier. A part of us died with Steven that day. Our lives have never been the same. Not a day goes by that he's not in our thoughts.

Steven, we live our daily lives, but not without knowing at the end of the day our family will not be together. Steven won't be coming home or ever having dinner with us again. We'll never hear from him how his day went. We'll go to bed and wake up to another day without him.

Praying that one day we'll be united with you for all eternity.

*We love and miss you, Steven!*

*Mom and your brother, Wayne*

**THE DIMON WILLIAMS TRIBUTE**  
**January 16, 2002 – August 26, 2020**

My name is Arlecia Threbits and I'm the mother of Dimon Williams. August 26, 2022 will mark two years that I've been forced to live without my baby, my sunshine.

Dimon was a beautiful, intelligent, hardworking, and respectful young lady. Unfortunately, she was killed on her way home from work by a drunk driver.



The offender has the nerve to want to go to trial instead of taking the plea offer by the State. This tells me that he has no remorse for what he's done.

Not only did he kill my daughter, but the court has allowed him to take me through a long, devastating, exhausting, horrible two years of going to court with no progress.

My first year of going through this process, I had overwhelming anxiety, and literally would get sick.

The second year of going through this process, I'm angry! I want him, and his family to feel what I'm going through. If I have one wish, it would be that he never gets out of prison; so he could serve a life sentence like he gave me.

Just having to write this is overwhelming and devastating. My prayers are that we finally go to trial, so we can get justice for my baby girl, Dimon A. Williams.

*Written by her loving Mother.*



## THE CAITLIN ELIZABETH WEESE TRIBUTE

June 15, 1985 – May 24, 2003



“I hope it’s a girl”, I said as my small hand pressed up against my mom’s big pregnant belly. “I want a sister”. I felt the baby wiggle around beneath her white maternity shirt that was covered in tiny blue flowers. I was hardly three years old and unaware of the amazing bond, a dearest friend and most precious gift of a sister I would be privileged to love and to share for the following seventeen years of my life.

Caitlin lit up every room she entered. She was like our mom in that way. Her smile was warm and genuine, and she had the prettiest blue eyes I’d ever seen. After having a bad day, she’s the friend that would have you laughing so hard your stomach hurt. She’s the sister that cleaned your room and did your chores, so you wouldn’t get in trouble. Together, we endured our parents’ divorce, going back and forth from mom’s house to dad’s house. We witnessed our single, yet phenomenal, mom work so hard to support and raise us on her own. My mom referred to us as the three musketeers. We did everything together and kept a really special bond. Caitlin and I joked that we were meant to be twins. Our connection was like nothing I’ve ever felt before.

The six a.m. flight to Chicago was the longest hour of my life. I hadn’t slept, my body was shaking, I was scared, fighting back the tears and wondering when I was going to wake up from this awful dream. I was supposed to drive up the following weekend for Caitlin’s high school graduation and party. Those plans changed when Caitlin’s car was struck in a head on collision while on her way home from the mall. Caitlin was air lifted by helicopter to a trauma center. The man in the vehicle that hit her was drunk. He had a blood alcohol level of .163, marijuana in his system, driving on a suspended license and was also

## THE CAITLIN ELIZABETH WEESE TRIBUTE

a repeat DUI offender. His careless choice sent Caitlin to the surgical ICU bruised and unconscious, with broken arms and legs, a ruptured spleen, a fractured pelvis, a lacerated liver, and her brain too swollen to keep her alive. Instead of attending my sister's graduation party the following weekend, I was inside a funeral home kneeling before her casket, saying goodbye to her forever.

My mom described her loss as a "Caitlin sized hole" in her heart. How does a mother function with her child no longer on this Earth? It's not natural. Your children should never leave before you do. The stress and the pain of losing her baby physically affected her own heart. My mom died of a massive heart attack in August of 2006. Let me rephrase that, my mom died of a broken heart in August of 2006.

*This selfish, irresponsible and destructive decision stole the future of a bright and beautiful young woman. It left my poor mother with more heartache than she could bear, left my children with an aunt they will never know and took away an amazing friend to so many people. The impact of her death caused a trickle-down effect. The decision that killed Caitlin consequently, put a lot of holes in a lot of hearts.*

Love doesn't die. The love I have for my sister, the pain and sadness of her loss is something I continue to carry with me each and every day.

*Cassi*

*(Caitlin's sister)*

## THE WILLIE JAMES WHITE TRIBUTE

October 28, 1978 - March 26, 2016



On October 28, 1978, I gave birth to a baby boy. A healthy seven-pound, seven ounce, and nineteen-inch-long bundle of joy. The minute they gave him to me, he opened those beautiful brown eyes and flashed that heartwarming little smile. It was love at first sight. The doctors and nurses said it was just gas, but I knew it was a bond that would last a lifetime. We named him Willie James White. He was a heartbreaker from the start. Those bright shining eyes, like two stars in the sky; a smile that would light up the room. You couldn't help but love him; he was a sweet and gentle soul.

Willie was also a prankster. I remember when he was cleaning his room, I heard the vacuum running for a long time. I opened the door and there he was, sitting on the edge of his bed playing with his toys. The vacuum was just on and running. I said, "Willie, what are you doing?" He just looked at me and smiled. That smile, those eyes, how could I be angry? I just smiled too! He was a brother to four sisters; a role he loved. Willie told his sisters that they were talented and beautiful. He told them that they would have to learn to protect themselves. That they should never start a fight but be able to defend themselves. So, he taught them how to box.

Karen, Willie's sister was so happy to have her first-born son's birthday on Willie's birthday. Now it's such a bittersweet day.

Willie had a paper route when he was younger. He would rise early to roll newspapers and place them into plastic bags. Some mornings it was a family affair, and we would help him. Despite the cold, ice, and snow, Willie would always place the paper by the front door. His customers would thank him for being so kind. Willie would try to help everyone he could. He was a natural-born athlete, and he excelled in sports. He was captain and quarterback of the football team. He placed third in wrestling and played basketball.

———— *A New Tomorrow* ————

## THE WILLIE JAMES WHITE TRIBUTE

Willie's younger sister is disabled. We always have birthday parties for her and one year, Willie's friends came to the party. His sister was so excited and happy. They ate pizza, gave her presents, and even flirted with her! By far this was her best party ever! I personally thanked each one of them for making her party so special. All of them said "Anything for Willie!". Our son was surrounded with light and energy. Like all of us, he wasn't perfect. But, Willie was an amazing person, loved and cherished by his family and friends.

On March 26, 2016, my only son was found in the street, face down. The person who hit him left the scene but eventually came back. He admitted to drinking and driving and hitting Willie. Willie's injuries were fatal. At his funeral, one of his friends stood and shared a memory with us. Many years had passed since he last saw Willie. He stated how happy they were to see each other. He asked Willie how he had been, and if he needed anything. Willie said, "As long as I have my mom, I'm good". To this day, each time I think of this, tears fill my eyes. My heart skips a beat to think my son loved me that much. What more could a mother hope for?

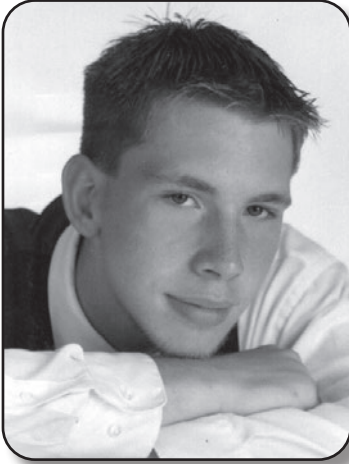
This year will be six years that we've been waiting for justice for Willie. Each day that passes without answer's feels like the first day we lost him. It's sad because before Willie was killed, we were living life, loving life, never wondering what life would be like without each other. Fast forward six years since Willie was last with us. Now, we're NOT living life. Now we're existing and learning daily how to navigate without Willie in our lives. Everyone misses Willie so much and there's still no justice. We are finally going to trial this November. After all the defense delay's, changes in attorneys, and judges, we are patiently waiting for justice for our son; so that Willie can finally Rest In Peace.

We saw the best in you, Willie. We'll continue to fight for you, until justice is served. We'll always love you, Willie. To say you are missed is an understatement! You'll never be forgotten. You live on in the hearts of your family and friends that love you.

Written by Willie's Family

## THE ARIC WOOLEY TRIBUTE

August 25, 1982 – June 16, 2000



Trying to write my tribute for Aric hasn't gotten any easier in the past twenty-two years. It's all so fresh in my memory the day this young man was taken from us. Writing this tribute and talking about him is still extremely painful. The tears flow and memories come flooding into my head that bring joy and then heartache. My husband can't have any photos of Aric on display in our home, as it's just too painful for him. My office in our loft has photos on display on my desk as well as on the ledge behind my desk. These photos are from when Aric was a young child, until the last photos taken of him at his high school graduation.

They bring me comfort and remind me that someday we'll all be together again...there will be **A NEW TOMMORROW**.

Our lives changed forever 22 years ago due to the senseless act of carelessness by an impaired driver. **Driving impaired is against the law!!** Remember, **driving is a privilege, not a right...so make the choice not to drink and drive.** Making the wrong decision to drive impaired can ruin your life and the lives of many, taking all on a heartbreaking journey.

Our family keeps Aric's memory alive by honoring him in our own special ways. Nick, Aric's younger brother paid tribute to him by naming his first-born child Aric. Aric's Dad has a tattoo on his right hand of a cross with Aric's initials across it and Aric's birth date and date of death above the cross...his dad's right-hand man forever! As for myself, I pay tribute and honor Aric's memory by volunteering to speak for AAIM and work on the benefit committee to raise money and silent auction items for the annual AAIM benefit. All of Aric's friends and family have suffered pain and loss, but I know there is **A NEW TOMMORROW** for each of us.

My goal is to tell Aric's life story, our story on the sudden tragic loss of Aric and how it has changed our lives forever. I've found strength and courage sharing Aric's story whenever possible. If I can reach one person and save them from making a deadly and foolish decision of driving impaired, there will be **A NEW TOMMORROW** for those I've reached. I'll have honored Aric's memory and given our family hope for **A NEW TOMMORROW**.

Time doesn't stand still...life goes on...all we have left of Aric are photos and fond memories. There will always be a hole in our hearts and tears in our

## THE ARIC WOOLEY TRIBUTE

eyes when we recall that fateful tragic day. Our lives will never return to “normal”, but we find hope in **A NEW TOMMORROW** in our children and grandchildren.

My husband will have the memory of that horrifying day etched in his mind forever, as he was at the intersection at the time of Aric’s crash. He saw Aric’s Camaro approaching the intersection and was going to honk his horn as they passed each other...he never got the chance. He looked away for a split second and then heard crashing metal! When he looked, he saw Aric’s mangled car on the parkway after being hit by a semi. He made his way to Aric’s car and was with Aric during his final moments on earth. I’m positive Aric knew his dad was with him and felt comfort in hearing his dad’s voice and feeling his dad’s love surround him. Thank you for giving our family the love, support, and strength to face each new day...for giving us hope for **A NEW TOMMORROW**.

We haven’t taken this long and difficult journey alone over the years since Aric’s death. For my dear friend Rita Kreslin, a special **THANK YOU** for her love, support, and friendship. We share a “special bond” as our lives were changed forever due to a senseless decision to drive impaired. **THANK YOU** is such a small phrase for the strength, love, hope and support we’ve received from our AAIM family each step of the way. We’ve made friendships that will last a lifetime with others who understand our pain and the road we’re travelling on in life. It’s a common bond we wish we didn’t share in life but are blessed to have each other to lean on **THANK YOU** for giving us the hope for **A NEW TOMMORROW**.

*We little knew that morning, God was going to call your name.*

*In life we loved you dearly, in death we do the same.*

*It broke our hearts to lose you, you did not go alone.*

*For part of us went with you, the day God called you home.*

*You left us beautiful memories; your love is still our guide.*

*And though we cannot see you, you are always by our side.*

*Our family chain is broken and nothing seems the same.*

*But as God calls us one by one, the chain will link again.*

**We love you Aric,**

**The Wooley Family**

*This Story is sponsored by Carmel and Alan Cottrell*



——— *A New Tomorrow* ———



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The sunflowers have bright yellow petals and dark brown centers. The leaves are large and green.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Offender Stories

## ANDY'S STORY

I've always been considered the "good guy" and was well liked by all. I've never been in a fight in my life and I abhor the thought of violent actions. I tried to live a good and decent live. Yet with these positives in my twenty-six years I never realized that I had a problem. I don't drink anymore. But when I did, I'd go out on the weekends with friends and go to the bars, and occasionally during the week I knew that drinking and driving was wrong, yet many times I would do nothing about it. I would still get behind the wheel or get into a vehicle with someone who had been drinking. This was my drinking problem. Many of us have this. We drink and then get into a vehicle without ever realizing that this might be a serious problem, that we might endanger others with our actions. I always thought that people who were termed 'drunk drivers' were full-blown alcoholics with a complete disregard for human life - a group of people that I would never fit in with. I was a social drinker; I didn't have problems like those regular alcoholics did. I was a social drinker until the night I got in my Jeep and killed my friend's twenty-year-old sister. This is how bad my drinking problem had gotten. I killed my friend's only sister. I ended the life of an innocent and ruined the lives of so many other people. All this could have been avoided. But I was stupid and didn't think. Now I have to live with what I did. PLEASE THINK BEFORE YOU ACT.

(Andy S.)

## RAFAEL SANDOVAL STORY

Growing up in Chicago I was able to experience the good and the bad of life in the city. I was born to Mexican immigrants that arrived in the United States with a dream of a better life. Both my parents worked hard all through their lives, including their childhood. They had very humble beginnings in the countryside of Mexico. I thank God that they gave my siblings and me the chance to live an easier life, full of opportunities. Throughout my childhood, my father worked many hours but he always made time for us. Whether it was for sports or school events, he was always there. My mother was the backbone of the family. She was the family chauffeur, but she loved it. She wasn't employed throughout my childhood. She was always there for me growing up and still is to this day. Whether it was for a laugh or a shoulder to cry on, she was always there.

I grew up on the southwest side of Chicago. I've had many friends throughout my adolescence. I saw take the wrong path in life and the good path. The gang life was an outlet for many of my peers. I looked straight ahead to think about the future and never chose that path. I also avoided associating myself with gangs. I stayed involved with school clubs and sports. This was also the same throughout high school. In high school, I was involved in about six or seven clubs and also played baseball. One of my fondest memories was being named the captain of the baseball team in my senior year. We weren't the best, but we gave it our all. I felt proud that many of the younger guys looked up to me as a role model. I did well in class also. I graduated with a 3.3 GPA on a 4.0 scale.

My bad habits began during my junior year of high school. This was the year that I started dabbling with alcohol. At first, it was only a few drinks here and there. Then it became a weekly routine. Every weekend we would figure out whose parents would be out of town, so we could find a place to party. Buying the liquor was never a problem. We would wait in front of the store and get someone to buy the alcohol for us. After a while, it became a must to drink every weekend. We did not know how to do it in moderation. I have to, regretfully say, it was in excess. We were young kids that thought this was the "cool" thing to do. I look back and know that we just wasted time, money and moments of clarity. This continued all through college without slowing down.

I began working at the age of 16 and have been working ever since. I worked and went to school for seven of the last nine years. In some way, alcohol was my way of getting out of hectic reality I lived in. This kept going until my 24th birthday.

## RAFAEL SANDOVAL STORY

I am currently employed at a hotel, I worked all types of hours, being that the hotels never close. It is typical to go out to drink on the weekdays in the hospitality industry. My birthday fell on a weekday that year. I was celebrating my birthday with coworkers and ended up having approximately eight beers, maybe more. I didn't keep count because a lot of people brought me drinks because it was my birthday. I had developed such a high tolerance of alcohol that I would act and seem more sober than I really was. I didn't show the usual signs of being drunk. But in fact, I was a person that was not able to function 100%. It never crossed my mind that I would cause harm to anyone or myself. I had made it a habit to drink and drive. I regret that night over and over again. Every morning and every night I have to think of what I did.

I was going home late that evening. I remember leaving the bar then driving away. I next thing I remember was waking up at impact. I was mortified after I crashed. I panicked and drove away. I made it a few blocks and pulled to the side of the road. My truck was pretty much totaled. It was too late to change any of my choices and I just waited for the police. When they arrived I got out of my truck and surrendered peacefully. Under the influence of alcohol, I was the most selfish person in the world. I drove away from a person that needed help. I caused her great bodily harm when I crashed into her car. I can say that if I was stone cold sober I would never in a million years have driven away. When a person is sober they always make better choices.

She was a young grandmother that takes care of her grandchildren. I felt so shameful and empty inside that night. My selfish acts changed the course of this person's life and her family's life. When I was at the police station, they informed me the extent of the harm I caused. At that point, my heart dropped. Never would I wish harm on anyone and to be the cause of it just killed me inside. I was in lock up for a while and could not stop thinking of what had just occurred. Did I just kill someone? All the articles you read in the newspapers, all the news clips you see on television, all the new laws being passed for drinking and driving, has a reason. It shows it is a chronic problem that needs to be addressed. I became a statistic. Every day I wish that it was me that was in Northwestern Hospital and not Cynthia. It should have been me in the emergency room...not her. I deserved what she got.

Will she be able to care for her grandchildren the same way she did before the crash? Will she be able to attend games? Is she always going to need assistance to do the simple tasks in life that we take for granted? Not being able to move as a person once did can be a terrible thing to go through and live with.



## RAFAEL SANDOVAL STORY

People know not to drink and drive but we do it anyway. Why is it? Do we think, “Oh that’s not going to happen to me.” Well, that is what I said while sitting in the back of a squad car. Good things happen to good people just as often as bad things happen to good people. But when a good person is drunk, is that person still good? The answer is yes. The decisions that made while intoxicated are what is not good.

I sit here with good health, but mentally hurt at what I have done. The first thing I did when I was released from the police station was to look at the infractions that I received from the police officers and I saw that the victim was taken to Northwestern Hospital. I called the hospital to check her status for the next few days. I wanted to know how she was doing. I have tried to be a good person my whole life.

My parents instilled that in me. A person can do good deeds their entire life, but drinking and driving can change all the good they have done with one mistake. That day has been repeated in my mind over and over. I have not, and will not forget the harm that I have caused. I cannot touch alcohol without that day repeating itself. I currently abstain from alcohol and try to advocate the harm drinking and driving causes my friends and family. Even though it isn’t many people that I tell but it’s one more person that didn’t have someone telling them the harm that driving under the influence can cause. I made a grave error and have caused harm to another human being. I will attempt to be a person that prevents the horrors of what drinking and driving can do.

My father hardly drinks and my mother has never touched alcohol. Alcohol abuse was a choice I made and a choice everyone makes when they pick up that drink. This abuse has an effect on your family and friends, as well as your body. The abuse of alcohol has so many harmful effects on your body you don’t even realize it is slowly weakening. But all of those adverse effects are by choice. Another choice that everyone has is getting behind the wheel while intoxicated and putting everyone at risk. Is it worth it? I can tell you .... No! I have been there and I saw the damage I have done.

I wish that I would never have caused harm to another human being, but what I did and what I went through made me a better person. Hopefully, I can influence those around me to make better choices when it comes to getting behind the wheel after drinking alcohol.

Rafael Sandoval



## MARIA'S STORY

Hello, my name is Maria, and I would like to share my story of how one horribly bad decision can forever change lives. I have forever affected my family and friends lives and changed the lives of one very innocent family. I killed a young lady named Nicole Murawski on September 15, 2000. Nicole was a vibrant, beautiful young lady who had hopes of becoming a pharmacist someday. I took all of Nicole's hopes, dreams and future away from her. I killed Nicole because I was a selfish, irresponsible, immature young adult, and I made a choice to get behind the wheel of my car after drinking.

I grew up in the suburbs of Chicago. My brother and I, who are sixteen months apart, had a normal upbringing. I had two very loving parents who were married for almost 27 years. My brother and I had lots of friends and did the regular things kids do. I was a Brownie and later a Girl Scout. I attended regular Sunday school classes until I was finished with high school, danced in a dance group, was the secretary for my student council in high school and played four years of soccer through high school. Through high school I also found time to volunteer at a local hospital once a week. I was a happy and loved child.

I started drinking with my peers toward the end of high school. I don't remember my first experience being drunk, but I do know that I was drunk plenty of times. I really could never handle much alcohol. Usually 4-5 drinks and I was drunk. I couldn't handle much more. I always went out drinking when Friday or Saturday came around. It was fun and cool. That was what all of my friends were doing, and that was what I wanted to do.

At the age of 21 drinking was not a big deal; it was a pattern I had developed. I was socially drinking with my peers, because I wanted to be accepted. There were many times I didn't want to go out or didn't really feel like drinking, but I did it anyway, because my friend(s) didn't want to go out alone or didn't want to drink alone. I had been drunk several times. I had also driven while under the influence of alcohol and had also ridden in the car with a drunk driver many times. Nothing ever happened. We thought we were careful. We had convinced ourselves that we were okay to drive after having a few drinks. We thought we were really cool. Really, every time I choose to drive or ride in the car with a person under the influence of alcohol, we were driving on a thin line and risking many innocent lives, including our own. We were selfish and we were stupid.

Drinking was like a favorite hobby in college. Everywhere you went on a weekend whether a house party or bar, drinking was on the menu. Drinking was what college kids began talking about on Wednesday night.

## MARIA'S STORY

September 15, 2000, I made a decision to drink and drive that changed the fate of my life and forever affected, devastated and pained many.

It was Thursday and I didn't have class, but worked from about 10 am to 2 pm. I went directly home and worked until about 9pm, finishing a group accounting project. Around 9:30, I drove to one of my fellow student's home, where our group had decided to meet to review our project. I left around 10pm. I was exhausted. When I arrived back at my apartment, my roommate was in the shower and had left a note for me that we were going out, and that I should get ready. When she got out of the shower I explained to her how I'd had a long day and was exhausted and didn't want to go out. She continued to ask that I join her, until I gave in. Now I must tell you, that I remember having this very intense feeling inside of me telling me not to go out. I can't explain it to you in words, but I very distinctly remember this little voice inside of my head telling me not to go out that night. I wish I had listened to that voice.

Around 10:30 pm my roommate and I proceeded to the bar. I had decided to drive. Once we arrived at the local college bar, I had one drink with my roommate and then she saw some friends of hers and decided to mingle with them. I knew a group of students out that night and mingled on my own as well. At 1am when the bar closed, my roommate wasn't in sight. I waited for her by the front entrance until the bar was nearly empty and then figured that she must of left with some friends.

I drank approximately 4-5 beers, maybe a mixed drink or a shot and decided I was fine to drive home. Actually, I didn't think twice about it. I got behind the wheel and proceeded the short three miles home. Not even one mile into my drive, a young woman stepped off the curb in front of my vehicle. It was not at a crossing. It was in the middle of a dark road. I screamed "Oh my God! What are you doing!" I screamed, tried to brake and swerve, but it had already happened in the blink of an eye. Her body flew onto the hood of my car; her face smashed in front of mine on the windshield and her body flew in the air. It was like a dream, it was so unreal. There was a police car stopped a few yards ahead of where I had struck Nicole, and I immediately pulled over in front of his car. That is all I really rationally remember. I was in shock. I remember seeing all these bright lights flashing around me, and I wasn't quite sure where they were coming from. There was a lot of traffic at this time, because this was the main campus road and all of the bars had just let out. I remember my head spinning in a really fast circle, having hundreds of thoughts going in my head and I couldn't grab on to one of them. I was thinking things like, "Did that just

## MARIA'S STORY

happen? What just happened? Oh my God!” I felt numb. After waiting in my car, I never once thought about getting out to see what happened or if the person I hit was ok. The police officer didn’t come to my vehicle, and no other cars stopped. I didn’t have a cell phone. I drove off, but I can’t tell you why I did this, because I don’t know. I drove to a friend’s home nearby that had been at the bar. A friend called the police.

When Nicole was pronounced dead sometime around 2 or 3 am, I was formally arrested and charged with “Failure to Report an Accident”. I went to the county jail where my bail was set at \$100,000. My parents had to post \$10,000 for my bail.

The first few weeks after September 15, 2000 were the worst. I was in shock, weak and depressed. Nightmares began right away. I would fall asleep only to be awakened by my own voice screaming in the night. I soon began fighting sleep. I was terrified of the night, terrified of the dark and knew that I would just awaken from nightmares.

I received a letter from NIU saying they were expelling me. In January of 2001 I transferred to ISU.

After enduring a long year and a half court battle, I was sentenced to three years in the Department of Corrections. In December of 2001, the judge told me that even though he didn’t believe I needed rehabilitation, “someone had to set the example for college students that drinking and driving is not acceptable, and I was going to be the example. I served nine months and was released early for good behavior.

Prison was rough, tough, lonely, depressing and disgusting. My first few weeks during the intake process, I was locked in a cell by myself. For these two weeks I was on 24-hour lockdown. I didn’t shower and sometimes I didn’t get fed.

I was later transferred to a minimum-security prison, where I finished my sentence. I lived in a housing unit made up of 100 women, 5 rooms and 20 women to a room with one guard. There was no privacy. Some of my cellmates were murderers who were finishing their last 20 years, child molesters and lots of prostitutes and drug addicts. I would say that out of the 20 women in my room, approximately 7-8 were in for murder. One thing I can say about the women I met in prison is that most of them were either high on drugs or alcohol when they committed their crime.

I was released from prison on October 2, 2001 and went back to college in January of 2003. Two weeks after my first semester started, my father died after

## MARIA'S STORY

battling a long illness. I took one week off of school and then continued straight through until I graduated in 2003 with my Bachelor's Degree.

My Bachelor's Degree was a huge accomplishment, but really didn't mean much. Even though I was strong enough to endure all that I had and finished school. I was very tired, depressed, not socializing much and still traumatized. Now that my prison sentence was complete, I would somehow have to find a way to deal with the fact that I had killed someone. This is something no person should ever have to experience. The pain inside of me is so deep and so real. It is a pain that does lessen, and never goes away. I will never be the same person and can never look at life the same. I have hurt so many people, including myself.

Upon the conditions of early release from prison, I was on parole for two years, had to check in with my parole officer twice a month, and could not leave the state of Illinois for two years. I had lost my driving privileges and been convicted of a felony. Not a prime candidate for a new graduate position in the world.

This long road of mine and the killing of Nicole has been hard, painful, embarrassing and heartbreaking, to say the LEAST. I can never ask Nicole's parents for enough forgiveness and not a million apologies will ever take their pain away. I took their only daughter. I took all of Nicole's hopes, dreams and future away from her, her parents and family. I am so very sorry for that, but sorry IS NOT enough when you have killed someone.

I hurt my parents and put our family through an emotional and financial turmoil. My parents worked very hard all of their lives and then had to spend over \$60,000 helping me pay for attorney fee's, counseling and other things. I embarrassed my brother, who was a police officer, and I caused unneeded stress to my father, who was battling his own illness.

I have cried endless rivers of guilt, pain and sorrow. I can honestly tell you that almost seven years later, there hasn't been a single day that I haven't thought of Nicole or prayed for her family. Yes, there are some days when I am so consumed with my life and things are really busy, but as soon as my head hits the pillow I always think of her. That is when I think of Nicole. That is how I have gone to sleep every night since her awful death. I have to live with the fact that I killed someone for the rest of my life.

I was a very reckless, immature, irresponsible and selfish person each time I got into a car and drove home after drinking. In addition to the night I killed Nicole not only was I all of those things but I was also irresponsible in my actions after my vehicle struck Nicole.

## MARIA'S STORY

The truth is that I thought I was so mature. I thought I could handle drinking. I thought I could be responsible after having a few drinks and getting behind the wheel. I thought I was in control. I thought I was different. The truth is, I was wrong.

The truth is that when I hit Nicole with my car, I couldn't think rationally or logically, because I was under the influence of alcohol. I couldn't act responsibly, because I was blurred by the intoxication of alcohol.

I will forever be sorry. I have to live with the emotional pain and guilt of devastating an innocent family and taking the life of another very innocent human being.

## THE NICK C. STORY

### The Day that Changed My Life

February 11, 2007 is a day that changed my life. Before that I was a big partier. Typically what some 21 year olds do. I would go out, drink all night and still drive home. There were quite a few times that I don't even remember driving home. I had no intentions of ever stopping. I always thought that I was invincible and nothing bad was ever going to happen to me. If I kept on drinking the way I was there was a very good chance that I would be dead before I hit the age of 60. I was going to school and working full time.

One night all of my hopes and dreams came to end. It was February 11, 2007 and I would do something that I will always regret. I went out partying all night and still drove but I never made it home. I went head on with another car on Interstate 55. I didn't remember what I did that night or even the week before it. I continuously had dreams about everything. Once the dreams stopped I woke up in the hospital learning I was in a bad car crash. I was told by a nurse that I had a broken collar-bone, broke a tiny bone in my neck, three ribs, my elbow, my femur, shattered my knee-cap and had a traumatic brain injury. What that brain injury means is that my cognitive, memory and motor skills are all gone. I needed one month of in-patient therapy and three months of out-patient. I was 100% within five months. A lot of people said that I was very lucky and fortunate to be where I was because when someone goes through that kind of injury they are never the same again. So I thought I was lucky but still didn't know what happened and how I got there.

I got picked up at the end of April by mom and asked "What happened?" She didn't say anything at first. So I asked again, "What happened?" She told me that I hit a car head on - on the expressway. She then told me that no one died. I said "Good." She then said "Nick, you paralyzed someone from the waist down!" "No! I didn't - it wasn't my fault!", I said. So I believed what I said. I went to court for the first time and understood what was going on. I had seven indictments (all felonies six for aggravated DUI with great bodily harm and one for reckless driving. All carried a prison sentence of three to seven years, serving 85% of the time. In March, I pled guilty to aggravated DUI. The sentencing date was set for June 11, 2010. My victim and her entire family said how hard her life is now thanks to me. They also said "He should go to jail for breaking the law and ruining a life." I agreed with everything they said. I got up and looked at my victim and said "I'm truly sorry for what I did. I don't expect you to forgive me because I don't deserve it." The judge gave me four years of probation and four hundred-eighty hours of community service. For



**THE NICK C. STORY**  
**The Day that Changed My Life**

the next two years I worked to pay all my bills off and made sure I spread the message about drinking and driving.

I got word that my victim wanted to meet me face to face. I didn't know what to expect but when she told me "Nick I forgive you." That was the most unbelievable feeling ever. We talked for three hours straight about anything and everything. I told her that there isn't a day that goes by that I don't think about her and pray that she can walk again. We exchanged phone numbers and are friends to this day. I never thought that I would ever talk to her. When we did it felt absolutely amazing. She gave me something that I never expected from her. I still can't believe that she forgave me and better yet that we are actually friends now. I want her to know that she is always on my mind and I pray for her every day. I'm extremely lucky going through what I did and having my victim actually forgive me. I hope and pray we can keep our friendship going. She is the nicest, sweetest person. I'm really grateful that she wants to be my friend. Most importantly that she knows I'm not a bad person, I just made a really bad choice.

## THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME

“That could never happen to me.” I remember so clearly sitting in a business law class during my sophomore year of college as we were talking about a person who drives a car after drinking and causes a crash. A few years later, 8 members of the cross-country team from the local university were killed in a head-on collision with a drunk driver. Again, I thought, “That could never happen to me.” I wasn’t the kind of person who would get behind the wheel after having too much to drink and I certainly wouldn’t do something stupid enough to risk the lives of others. What I didn’t realize then, is that every time a person gets behind the wheel of after drinking, that person is putting the lives of others in grave danger. Tragically, on the evening of September 15, 2005, the decision I made to drive a car after drinking resulted in the deaths of two of my very good friends.

Trying to put into words the emotions involved with this crash and the events that have followed is one of the most difficult things I have had to do. There is simply no adequate way to describe the sorrow and regret that I feel for the thousands of people who have been hurt by the selfish decision I made. There is also no way to express the gratitude that I feel to the families of Jared Cheek and Matthew Molnar.

Before telling some of the events of the evening of the crash, I need to share something of the lives of the two men that were killed. Jared, Matty and I were all students at Mundelein Seminary discerning the possibility of becoming ordained priests in the Catholic Church. Both Matty and Jared were from the Archdiocese of Kansas. Matty was 28 and Jared was 23. Matty was an excellent musician who used music to share his experience of God with so many. Jared was an athlete and a key player on the Seminary basketball team. They both had an incredible ability to connect with young people helping them to see God at work in their lives. It is not an exaggeration to say that Matty and Jared have touched the lives of thousands of people in a very profound way. In many ways, their goodness has made dealing with their deaths all the more painful. “I know that for the rest of my life, I will meet people who have been deeply touched by their lives and tragically wounded by their deaths.

The night of the crash was a Wednesday evening of the second week of September. We had all just returned from summer and did not have classes the following day. At 8:30 that evening, I accepted an invitation to go with a friend to a nearby bar and grill for a beer and some time to catch up from the summer. We took his car to a place on the corner of Hwy 45 and Hwy 176 called Emil’s. While we were at Emil’s a group of four other students, including

## THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME

Matty and Jared arrived. After about two hours, two from the second group decided to return to campus, leaving, Matty, Jared, my friend who had driven and me. While we were at Emil's, we had all been drinking and during the time I was there I had two Long Island Iced Teas. As we got up to leave, my friend who had driven looked at me, handed me the keys to the car and said, "Rob, you're going to have to drive." There were so many things I could have and should have done that night. I could have called any one of the 200 men back on campus, I could have called for a cab, it was a beautiful September evening, and we could have walked back to campus. Unfortunately, I didn't choose any of those options. I had been drinking and I was drunk. Not only were my reflexes impaired that night, but my thinking was clouded as well. A truth that I have learned is that when you start drinking, you stop thinking. When I decided to drive the car that night, I did not have the courage to do what I knew was right and with the alcohol in my system, I didn't have the sense to realize the danger of what I was doing.

As we left Emil's, we drove headed back to campus and were parked in the lot, ready to go inside when the suggestion was made to go for one last drive around the lake. We were four guys out having fun, not wanting the night to end and by that point I had convinced myself that I was just fine to drive. As we headed around the lake my friend started yelling to go faster and stupidly, I did. The last thing I remember is going too fast around a right-hand corner as the front left tire slipped off the asphalt into the grass. I felt so helpless as we were heading for a row of trees and it was too late for me to do anything. The next memory I have is standing outside of the car talking to the 911 operator trying to explain why we needed an ambulance. In the crash, Matty had been thrown from the car and was killed instantly, Jared had hit his head on something inside of the car which injured his brain so badly that he would never recover and two days later his parents would have to make the decision to end life support and to gift someone with his organs.

As a result of what happened that evening, I was charged with 10 felonies and faced a possibility of 28 years in prison. During the next months, I had a lot of time to think of what I had done that evening and each day the realization of how many people were hurting became more and more intense. After investigating the crash, in February of 2006, the prosecution amended the charges to two felony counts of reckless homicide and one count of aggravated DUI. In fact, this is what I had done and two days later I pled guilty to these charges knowing that I still faced a possibility of 14 years in prison.

## THAT COULD NEVER HAPPEN TO ME

On May 2, 2006, I was in the court room in Waukegan for sentencing. On that day, a truly remarkable thing happened. The families of both Matty and Jared were present at the hearing and after telling the court some of the pain that they had experienced because of the deaths of their sons, they asked the judge not to impose a prison sentence. Thankfully, the judge honored their request and instead sentenced me to 18 months of house arrest, 30 months of intensive probation, 250 hours of community service, and to make a \$5000 contribution to AAIM.

The gift given to me by the families of Matty and Jared is more precious than anything I can imagine. They have given me not only the chance to move forward with my life, but much more importantly the opportunity to share this story with others to try to prevent drinking and driving. They have shown me how reconciliation and forgiveness can happen. Their example is now a standard by which I must live my life.

Working with AAIM has given me the chance to speak to thousands of young people and adults. I believe that every speaking engagement is a chance to share the message not only about drinking and driving but about two wonderful young men; Jared Cheek and Matty Molnar. Knowing what I do now and having experienced the pain and suffering that my decisions have caused, I cannot imagine how I ever could have been foolish enough to make the statement that, “this could never happen to me.”

Rob

## AN OFFENDER'S STORY

I am 29 years old and I have three more DUIs than I ever thought I would. I remember visiting my mother in rehab in third grade. They always had free fruit roll-ups and I thought that was awesome. I would go into my mom's work and help open the store because she woke up late from drinking the night before. I sat at a bar waiting for my mom, who was passed out in the bathroom.

I started drinking in tenth grade. I was the new guy in high school, and I wanted to fit in. This spiraled into three minors, three violations of drinking on campus, two tickets for driving with a suspended license, and four weekends in jail. I spent thousands of dollars on fines. I justified my actions by telling myself that drinking is what my youth was for.

I got my first DUI in the fall of 2012. My colleagues were grabbing drinks, but I had to stay late to finish a project. When I got to the bar, I took two shots and slammed a gin and tonic. I then drank a double IPA. As we left, I offered to drive two friends' home. I crashed into a parked Range Rover. Luckily, they walked away with only bruises. I spent a weekend in jail. My grandma had to cash in her quarter collections to pay for my bond. I paid a small fine, completed community service, and attended a victim impact panel.

In December of 2015, I was heading home after a night of drinking on my birthday. My cousin and I grabbed several beers before my first tattoo. I crashed my car into a car, which then hit another car. There was a female in each car, and one was pregnant. Luckily, no one was hurt.

On January 12, 2018, I knew the moment I crashed that this DUI was different. On that day, I left a funeral and drove back to Chicago. I had a beer with lunch. When I got home, I had a beer in the shower, and another beer before attending a dinner party. I remember feeling nervous and slamming my gin and tonic. I quickly consumed three more drinks.

I told my girlfriend that I was fine to drive. Fifteen minutes later I was turning left and crashed into an oncoming car. I failed the sobriety test, blew a .13, and spent the weekend in jail. Luckily, my girlfriend wasn't injured. Since then, I've spent thirty days in treatment, and seventy-five hours in the classroom. Dealing with a curfew and weekly meetings with probation has been difficult. Wearing an ankle monitor is a daily reminder of the mistake I made.

## AN OFFENDER'S STORY

My DUIs have cost over \$20,000. I wasted time preparing for court, being in jail, missing events due to my curfew, sitting in classes about alcohol, and completing community service hours. I've watched my grandmother, brother, and girlfriend cry.

I don't have a story of killing another human being, but I could have killed my girlfriend, a pregnant mother, a close friend, a mom, and a wife. These are just the times I got caught. I wasted a majority of my youth hurting others. I'm grateful for that last DUI because it helped me realize that every bad moment in my life started with one drink.

I shared my childhood with you in the beginning to show that I believed I would never drink and drive. It happens in the blink of an eye. Don't start the process.



——— *A New Tomorrow* ———



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The foreground is filled with large, dark green leaves and bright yellow flower heads.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Other Stories

## AN OFFENDER'S MOTHER'S STORY

My story is from a different side. I'm an offender's mother. February 12, 2005 would change our lives forever!!! My husband and I went to dinner with our friends for Valentine's Day. We arrived home about 1:00 am. A few hours later the phone rang, it was my son Jason's friend calling. He stated they were at the hospital and there's been an accident. We headed to the hospital and on the way I called Jason's father to meet us there. When we arrived, my son's friends were gathered outside the ER crying. They stated there were fatalities. We rushed into the ER fearing the worst. Nothing could prepare me for what the next twenty-four hours would entail. I saw my son in an exam room crying with two police officers by his side. I felt the life sucked right out of me. He sustained a fractured ankle and was lying there crying and saying I'm sorry I did something stupid!

You see my son who was twenty-four years old at the time was at his girlfriend's house for dinner and was then going to meet his friends. She said be careful and "I Love You". Apparently my son went to three different bars that night and after the last bar made the poorest choice to get behind the wheel and drive! It would change his life and ours **forever!** He was driving back to his girlfriend's house and went through a busy intersection and killed two teenage boys, Ahmad and Mohammed both seventeen and in high school. They were in another car going through the intersection. The next eleven months were harrowing and very emotional. There were monthly court dates that were draining both emotionally and physically. This was a high profile case, so the news media attended each court date. It was very emotional for our family as well as the victim's family. Each time my son would say "Mom I did something wrong and I have to pay, I'll be OK". When my son was sentenced to twelve years in prison it broke my heart as it would break any mother's heart, but from the beginning my son took responsibility for his actions. His sentence was reduced to ten years. My son was never a partier. He was a good kid who made a horrible mistake and it will affect his life forever! There is not one day that goes by that my son doesn't think about what has happened and neither do I. Dave Perozzi approached me from AAIM after the sentencing and he asked if I would

## AN OFFENDER'S MOTHER'S STORY

like to speak for AAIM, I stated, “When do I start”. I have been speaking since February, 2006, trying to reinforce that drinking and driving don’t mix! I know we can never bring those boys back, but we can get the word out so hopefully other families don’t have to endure what we have had to endure.

Jason served his ten years in prison and was released in July 2014. I know he will **never** forget the pain & grief he has caused. Jason is trying to turn his life around & has attended & helped with the “Lockport Road to Reality” & speaking for AAIM. He has also been involved with an organization I’m also involved in “In the Blink of an Eye” and speaks to get the word out about drinking & driving.

So I beg anyone reading this  
“DON’T DRINK AND DRIVE, WE’LL ALL LOSE!!”

Tami

## THE ANTONIO SANCHEZ STORY

At age seventeen, I started making bad decisions regarding beer, drugs and associating with the wrong people. I started working at age twenty, as a spray painter at a car plant in Mexico. For fourteen years, I worked twelve hour shifts. Smoking, drinking and using drugs was an accepted part of the day. At some point the want of alcohol and drugs became a need. The drug use increased in frequency and I needed to smoke marijuana every two hours during my shift.

After moving to the United States, I continued using drugs and alcohol, trying to escape from what I created. My life revolved around using and acquiring the drugs and alcohol. I blamed everyone and everything as I made excuses on why I couldn't stop using. This cycle of use, blame, excuse, despair was repeated by me for many years until December 31, 2008.

On that fateful night, my life changed forever. My wife left me, taking our children and I realized the high price I had paid for my drug and alcohol abuse. I saw the reality of my choices; I woke up and made the decision to make a change.

In my house, alone, depressed and feeling no hope for the future, I attempted suicide. In the hospital, I realized that I had been running from responsibility and blaming others for my failures. I realized that if I wanted to be a meaningful part of my children's and hopefully my grandchildren's life, I needed to step up and be a man.

During treatment, I started to attend Alcohol Anonymous meetings. I realized that stopping the use of drugs and alcohol was an end to the only life I knew. Now I needed to make a life that was drug and alcohol free. As I started to make better decisions, I want to help others make better decisions. I started to tell my story at an outpatient treatment center, at AA Meetings and for AAIM. I appreciated that as I helped others I was the one that was helped the most.

I reflect often on where I am, where I have been and where I am going. As I look back at my years of using, I see an empty bag of drugs, an empty bottle of alcohol and an empty me. I see what I lost because of my addiction; being a loving husband, an involved father, a supportive son, and I lost my dreams and hopes.

Today I focus on the positive changes I have embraced. I am proud to say that every day I am sober, I become a more loving husband, a more involved father, a more supportive son and I am ready and willing to help others make better decisions.

With the support of my wife, family, friends, the fellowship of Alcohol Anonymous and through the grace of God, I am honored to speak for AAIM. I am hopeful that others will make better decisions after hearing my story.



A vibrant field of sunflowers under a dramatic sunset sky. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a golden glow over the clouds and the tops of the sunflowers. The sunflowers have bright yellow petals and dark brown centers. The leaves are a deep green. The overall mood is warm and hopeful.

AAIM 2022

*A New  
Tomorrow*

Sunday, October 23, 2022

Letters of Gratitude



I wanted to thank you for all you guys do.

When I completed the Victim Impact Panel (VIP) it had a very, very deep impact on me. It was raw, heavy, and deep and didn't sugar coat a thing. Which is why it made, such a positive impact on me and changed my mindset so much. I always thought, "Oh I have had only one drink, I am fine to drive," but after doing this it changed my mindset completely. It taught me not only how selfish I was by drinking and driving. I was willingly putting other lives in danger, innocent people with families and children. I now understand because of you that getting behind the wheel under the influence is a matter of life and death. I am one of the lucky ones who didn't hurt anyone else's life.

So, thank you for this program and thank you for teaching me just how real this is, and how selfish I was. I needed this program, and it changed me a lot.

Thank you again.

Cali Ann Merlino

————

Please accept this as my annual donation for AAIM. I'm always amazed at the number of people you touch through this Organization.

Sincerely,

Kristin Hartman

Kelly,

I just read your letter to the City Council. Let me personally tell you how much I appreciate you sharing your story. I understand that by sharing your story it divides the pain but nothing about that story is easy to tell. I can't thank you enough for your support and courage. If there is anything that the Belvidere Police Department can do for you or your family let me know. God bless you.

Respectfully,

Shane Woody  
Chief of Police  
Belvidere Police Department

---

Dear Carrie,

I want to thank you for helping me better understand the judicial system and for giving me Court 101 lessons along the way!

Boy, there was a lot I did not know about – I was like June Cleaver before (ha-ha!).

You were so comforting knowing that I could reach out to you at any time, for any reason.

You are the best Carrie! =)

I will continue to see you on the monthly zoom meetings with AAIM. Until then – enjoy the beautiful weather and have lunch on me one day. =)

All the best,

Pam Walzynski

To Whom It May Concern:

I am so sorry that I did not get this note back to you sooner. First of all, what would we have done without AAIM for the consistent encouragement, love and understanding that we our family has received from AAIM.

Our advocate Kelly Krenzer has been wonderful and amazing. The loss of our son Daniel has been devastating, horrendous, traumatic, and unspeakable which you know the list can go on and on. Having the support of an organization such as AAIM has been great.

Also, by not getting a note to you sooner, due to the fact the illness of my husband after a kidney transplant and then losing him (he was my soulmate) to Coronavirus has been devastating. In addition, having to deal with the court system, and bills have been just overwhelming to me. Without having the support of my beloved husband Michael as we finish this process is unbearable.

Yet, another blessing came from AAIM to help me with my mortgage. I cry as I write this letter, all I can say is Thank You from the bottom of my heart which has been warmed by the generosity of AAIM. I am so grateful!

So sorry for this messy handwriting, the medications I am on leave my shaky sometimes.

*Thank you, AAIM!*

*Thank you, Kelly!*

Love,

Lee Rauner

I don't typically get any feedback from clients now that they watch the panel online. So I wanted to share with you a recent email I got from a client who watched the VIP video. His email was short and to the point but validates that it is still a very impactful tool:

"I'm sure you deal with these instances a lot but I have not. That was the most horrific video, respectfully speaking, I've ever watched. As a father, I am ashamed. I wish I didn't have to watch that, but I'm glad I did."

Thanks,

Brett GeRue

Winnebago County Adult Probation

— *A New Tomorrow* —





# **Solution-focused Therapy for Individuals, Couples and Families**

**Collaborative – Compassionate - Responsive**

Countryside Office Plaza  
1278 W Northwest Highway  
Suite 1278  
Palatine, IL 60067  
847-496-5529

**Proud supporter of Alliance Against Intoxicated Motorists**





AAA Chicago  
proudly supports AAIM  
and their efforts to  
eliminate impaired and  
distracted drivers from  
Illinois roadways.

[www.aaa.com](http://www.aaa.com)