



AAIM 2021

*Hope on the
Horizon*

**Virtual Benefit
Friday October 22, 2021**

aaim1.ejoinme.org/AAIM2021

Welcome to AAIM's
31st Annual Benefit

Cover Artwork Created by Heather Fischer



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AAIM 2021

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Administrative

Dear Friends,

Welcome to AAIM's annual benefit! We are excited that you're joining us in celebrating 31 years of support, advocacy, and community partnership.

AAIM was formed by a small but mighty group of individuals who tirelessly fought for victims to be heard in the wake of loss and injury due to impaired driving. In the years since, many like-minded and passionate individuals have lent their talent to our mission. Thank you to the countless collaborators who have helped bring hope to the communities we serve.



Jessica Zinck
Director of Victim Services

With the ongoing COVID pandemic, AAIM and our partner organizations, continue to work on creating a new normal. We are striving to support each other and uplift victims during unprecedented times. Together, we look forward to what's ahead, confident that there is Hope on the Horizon.

I am grateful to have seen first-hand how our team has worked so hard over the past year to continue providing excellent care to our victims. Because of the generosity of our donors, we have assisted families secure stable housing, purchase necessities, and pay their utilities. Those families have expressed heartfelt gratitude for AAIM's victim assistance fund. All of this 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.

We hope you enjoy our online format for the second year in a row! Please consider using your gifts to help us save lives by reducing the senseless tragedies that occur on our roads and waterways!

My heartfelt thanks,

Jessica Zinck
AAIM Director of Victim Services

A handwritten signature of Jessica Zinck in cursive script.



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.

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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 VERONICA MORALES



Veronica Morales is 44-years-old and has been married for 25 years. Veronica and her husband have two children, a son, and a daughter. Her husband works in the landscape industry, and Veronica worked in purchasing for many years. While raising their children, they worked hard to provide for their kids and foster a close-knit family. In 2017, their lives were forever changed when their daughter's life was taken because of a drunk driver. In an instant, their family was forever changed. Veronica and her family are eager to spread awareness by sharing their story so that other families don't go through the same pain they've been through.

AAIM BENEFIT COMMITTEE



*From left top row: Margaret Borgia, Carrie Kilpatrick, Samantha Gallagher, Kelly Krenzer, Charlie Wooley, and Rosemary Woods.
From left bottom row: Rita Kreslin, Max Cody, Cindy Huerta, Jesscia Zinck, Marlene Schwerzler, and Barb Cutro.*

Benefit Chairperson:

Samantha Gallagher

Silent Auction Chairpersons:

Meg Garcia, Carrie Kilpatrick and Marie DiMaria

Committee

Diane Blatter	Kelly Krenzer
Maxwell Cody	Rita Kreslin
Barb Cutro	Sarah Parsons
Marie Di Maria	Lisa Rogers
Meg Garcia	Rachael Stewart
Samantha Gallagher	Marlene Schwerzler
Cindy Huerta	Rosemary Woods
Carrie Kilpatrick	Charlie Wooley
Kristina Lawler	Jessica Zinck

SPONSORS

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

Sally Hoffman

Sponsoring: Tony Borcia

Top Notch

Plumbing, Heating and Electrical, Inc.

Sponsoring: Aric Wooley

IL State Representative Maurice West

Sponsoring: Willie White

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)

Gerry and Sandy Olmsted
The YnoT Project

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

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The John Kreslin Scholarship 5K Walk/Run
Naperville Masonic Temple Association
Vistex Foundation
Will County State's Attorney's Office

Gold (\$500 - \$999)

Marti and Tony Belluschi
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Max Cody and Anna Kaczor
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DONORS CONT.

Silver (\$100 - \$499)

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Austin Gannon	Top Notch Plumbing, Heating
Dan Groth	and Electrical
Zoe and Robert Guidolin	Gwendolyn Walker
Mary Ann and James Hynes	Nancy Wasily
Gene Kalin	Karen and Bob Westbrook
Glenn Kalin	Jacob Williams
Sue & Chuck Kaufman	Charlie and Jerry Wooley

DONORS CONT.

Bronze (UNDER \$100)

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Karen Coan	In Memory of Theresa "Peanut" Stanley
Cheryl Cullen	Dustin Rusakiewicz
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Mr. and Mrs. Mark LaCroix	
Mary and Bob Lange	

Our additional thanks to donations received after the printing deadline.

2021 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.

AAIM Victim Advocates	Kramer Photography
ABT - Anne Kennelly	Art and Kelly Krenzer
Arbonne	John and Rita Kreslin
Arthur Murray Dance	Lake Villa Restuarants & Banquet
Judith Birmingham	Lake Geneva Cruise Line/ Gage Marine Corp
Blaum Brothers Distillery	Lake Geneva Zipline & Adventures
Bottle & Bottega	Laugh Factory Chicago
Burr Ridge Hot Yoga	Lifeline Theatre
Carrie Kilpatrick	Little Red Ribbon Boutique
Chicago Bears	Main Event
Chicago Cubs	Maws & Paws Treats
Chicago White Sox	Metropolis Performing Arts Center
Chicago Wolves	Milwaukee County Zoo
DeSoto House	Naperville Hot Yoga
Destination Fitness	Pampered Chef - Amy Bourgeois
DuEvol - Jewelers	PRP Wine International
Egg Harbor Café	Robert Jeffery Salon Hair Studio
Ethereal Confections	Salvaged Roots
Family Gifts Company	Sanders Fine Portraits
Fogo De Chao	Schaumburg Boomers
Fried Green Tomatoes	Marlene Schwerzler
Fuji Film	Trisha Schlechauf
Samantha Gallagher	SonderClay
Meg Garcia	T.R.U. by Kelly
Gerri Gentile	The Cheese Cake Factory
Gobbie's	Tomori Salon & Spa
Goebbert's Winter Wonderland	Traverso's Italian Restaurant & Pizzeria
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Sally Hoffman	Village Links of Glen Ellyn
Home Depot	Wetoska Packaging Dist.
Ellen Johns	White Pines Golf Club
Jamie Lankford Art	Charlie Wooley
Kristina Lawler	Zanies Comedy Club
KMA Bartlett	

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

Special Thanks

- *Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White as AAIM guest speaker*
- *Illinois Attorney General Kwame Raoul as AAIM guest speaker*
- *Veronica Morales, a victim of a drunk driving crash for sharing her personal story in the face of tragedy by serving as guest speaker*
- *Reverend John Clemens for today's invocation*
- *Samantha Gallagher for donating her time and talent for serving as benefit chairperson*
- *Meg Garcia, Carrie Kilpatrick, and Marie DiMaria for serving as silent auction chairpersons*
- *To AAIM families for all the beautiful video tributes*
- *This year's book cover in memory of Chrystelle Janke Andrews*
- *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 \$817,912.00 has been donated to families who are in a financial crisis as a result of uninsured and underinsured impaired drivers. Below are some examples of families the AAIM's Victims Assistance Fund assisted financially in the 2021 fiscal year:

- **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 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.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

- **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 victim **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 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.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

- **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 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*

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

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

- **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 part- 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 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

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK (cont.)

emotional state. The father had to have a kidney transplant and was unable to work. Unfortunately, they both 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.



CONGRATULATIONS CHET STANLEY



Chet Stanley

On behalf of the AAIM Board of Directors and your colleagues, thank you for 21 years that help to build a strong foundation for the AAIM family; we will be forever grateful. Your efficiency and excellence marked the years you have served as AAIM's Treasurer and the Fiscal Officer. You have been an inspiration personally and professionally to everyone and every program at AAIM.

You have taken this organization and the board of directors to new heights with your organizational skills and efforts to save lives in the memory of your daughter, Theresa. You have been a mentor to all of us; even more important, though, are the friendships you have developed over that time. Thank you for being so kind and for all you have taught us. We send our very best wishes for a happy retirement; may it be filled with family fun!

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.

2021 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, and 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
Vice-President
Physician



Kathryn Fischer
Vice-President
Investment Banker



Rita Kreslin
Secretary
AAIM Executive Director



Shelly Anderson
Retired Insurance Executive



Ari Briskman
Law Enforcement Officer

2020 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
Lake County Investigator
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

Margaret Borcia

Kelly Krenzer

Cindy Huerta

Sarah Parsons

Carrie Kilpatrick

Rosemary Woods

Court Monitor Program

Lisa Rogers, *Director*

Court Monitors

Crystal Beltran

Kay Rivera

Barb Cutro

Carol Russell

Cathy Stanley

Joyce Synek

Prevention and Education Specialists

Samantha Gallagher

Rachael Stewart

Program Support Specialist

Kristina Lawlert

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 Krashesky2012
Cathy Stanley2018



*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)

Gary "bogie" Bogolin

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.



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

Gary is a founding member and Quarter master for the McHenry County Road Pirates motorcycle group. The Pirates may have a scary name, but they aren't what you might expect. McHenry County Road Pirates don't rob or pillage. In fact, they're remarkable volunteers for the community.

Formed in 2007, the McHenry County Road Pirates have assisted with every ride to benefit AAIM for eighteen years. They support AAIM because Matthew, the son of one of the group's members Randy Lounds, suffered extreme injuries when he and his friends were hit by a drunk driver. As a result, Matt lost the use of an arm and a leg. As a result of the Pirates' promotion to raffle a motorcycle, the group purchased electronic prosthetic sleeves for Matt, allowing him to regain nearly full use of his limbs. Since then, the Pirates have continued to support AAIM, most recently with a "Split the Pot" raffle that raised over \$5,000 for AAIM.

Gary spends countless hours coordinating the activities of the Pirates in support of their charities – including being the primary drive behind selling the raffle tickets.

Gary's continued support of victims and lifesaving efforts make him a worthy recipient of this award.

Congratulations!



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

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



Meg Garcia

Past Sheila Forsner Award Recipients

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

JESSICA GIL

RECIPIENT OF THE DIANE MAINS AWARD 2021

Jessica Gil
Victim Witness Specialist
Will County State's Attorney's Office

Jessica Gil has been serving the needs of crime victims at the Will County State's Attorney's Office since 2012. As a Victim Witness Advocate of Will County State's Attorney James Glasgow's Victim-Witness Services Division, Jessica provides services, information, and support to help crime victims navigate our complex criminal justice system, while they struggle through some of the most traumatic experiences in their lives.

Jessica is a dedicated, knowledgeable professional who brings kindness and compassion to her work on behalf of child and adult survivors of domestic and sexual violence, families of murder victims, victims of intoxicated and distracted drivers, and others who have suffered the effects of violent crime. In addition to advising victims of their rights under Illinois law, she guides them through court proceedings, coordinates support services, and directs them toward social services to help them heal.

Prior to accepting a position at the Will County State's Attorney's Office, Jessica served as an advocate who worked directly with victims of domestic violence and sexual assault at Guardian Angel Community Services in Joliet. She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Lewis University.



*We are proud to award Jessica with the Diane Mains Award.
Respectfully submitted by AAIM Victim Advocates*

LORI SMITH

RECIPIENT OF THE DIANE MAINS AWARD 2021

Lori Smith
Victim Witness Specialist Director
Cook County State's Attorney's Office
26th & California

Lori Smith, LCSW, directs the largest prosecutor-based victim services unit in the nation. Under Lori's direction, victim specialists work in nine courthouses across Cook County, providing an array of advocacy and mental health services to persons whose lives have been touched by violent crime, including reckless homicide.

Lori has a strong commitment to helping people that are going through very emotionally difficult times. The court system can be very intimidating to those that deal with it every day but far more intimidating to those who should never have to deal with the system but find themselves here throughout no fault of their own.

Lori knows that the criminal justice system can be a hard, unfriendly, and cold system to go through. With her experience in both misdemeanor and felony courtrooms and vast knowledge of the court system, she provides victims and witnesses with the understanding and compassion that they yearn.

A licensed clinical social worker, Lori received her Masters Degree from the University of Chicago. Lori's compassion and dedication doesn't end in the courthouse. She is a spouse, mother, and grandmother.



*We are proud to award Lori with the Diane Mains Award.
Respectfully submitted by AAIM Victim Advocates*

OUTSTANDING ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY



Christopher Menich

**Cook County Assistant State's Attorney 1st
Municipal District Richard J. Daley Center
Courthouse**

Christopher is an Assistant State's Attorney with the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. He graduated from the University of Missouri-Columbia in 2016, and while in college, he interned in the traffic division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office. This internship inspired him to go to law school with the goal of becoming an Assistant

State's Attorney. Christopher graduated from UIC Law School in 2020 and began working in the traffic division of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office as an Assistant State's Attorney. He views his job of prosecuting misdemeanor traffic offenses as a way for him to help keep others safe on the roadways, and is honored to work with victims, while helping to bring them justice.

Mr. Menich's confidence in the courtroom is a breath of fresh air during these challenging times where state's attorneys are overloaded with cases, overworked, and pressed on time. He is well informed and always prepared to fight for justice in any case that he is prosecuting. Not only does he treat every defendant respectfully, but he also offers some kind but stern words of advice, something other state's attorneys rarely take the time to do. As a result, all parties in the courtroom respect him. He reminds the system that he is still true to the role of "Legal Counsel." He takes this opportunity to make our community safer, upholds justice, and save lives.

OUTSTANDING ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY

Joy Eleanor Tolbert Nelson

**Cook County Assistant State's
Attorney 4TH Municipal District
Maywood Courthouse**

Joy Eleanor Tolbert Nelson was raised in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, by her single mother and maternal grandmother. For the past twenty years, Joy has chosen to live in Chicago. She is a wife and a mother of two children.



Joy learned about the criminal justice system from both sides. Joy's uncle was in and out of prison for most of her childhood and young adulthood. He died in prison while Joy was in law school. Joy worked her way up from a student member to a national staff member for the YMCA of the USA headquarters in Chicago, IL, and managed a \$1 million AmeriCorps grant which focused on Environmental projects in local YMCAs and across the country.

She graduated from Carlow College. Carlow was an all-women's catholic liberal arts college in her hometown of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Joy has a Bachelor of Science in Biology. Joy feels she owes a fellow high school student that took her under her wing and encouraged her to apply for college scholarships. She feels she would not have attended college without her help. This was after her high school guidance counselor told her she had no future.

In 2000, Joy graduated from John Marshall Law school. She went to night school. She worked and paid for her education. Joy has been a Cook County Assistant State's attorney since graduating.

Joy is deeply honored and humbled to receive this award from AAIM.

OUTSTANDING ASSISTANT STATE'S ATTORNEY

Alice O'Connell

**Cook County Assistant State's
Attorney
1st Municipal District Richard J.
Daley Center Courthouse**

Although Alice came into this position in a trying and ever-evolving time, she focuses on justice with a positive attitude and professional demeanor. Undoubtedly, she takes pride in upholding the law and keeping our community safe. She is a reasonable prosecutor that holds the defendants accountable but quickly reminds us that she's human when she offers them kind words of wisdom. Alice is truly an asset, and our roads are safer because of her dedication.

-Court Monitor Kay Rivera



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

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

AAIM 2021

*Hope on the
Horizon*

Virtual Benefit
Friday October 22, 2021

aaim1.ejoinme.org/AAIM2021

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

AAIM 2021

Hope on the Horizon

Virtual Benefit
Friday October 22, 2021

aaim1.ejoinme.org/AAIM2021

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 140,093 victims. Last year, we served 2319 victims, and we project we will serve 1900 or more in 2021.

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 30th 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, individuals with cognitive or physical disabilities. Working to change a victims' environment will shape their healing and provide them 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 2019, AAIM gave \$23,900 in rewards. We have awarded \$729,000 has been paid to 8071 tipsters. 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.

School Presentations – 3D Program: Dangerous Driving Decisions

AAIM understands the changing world in which we live, where impaired driving is becoming far too normalized. Whether it be alcohol, drug, or technology impairment, we want to encourage drivers to be safe on the road and believe change begins with our youth. Our 3D Program, Dangerous Driving Decisions, focuses on choices and making the right choice when we get behind the wheel.

AAIM PROGRAMS

There are many choices that we have to make every day that can either benefit or harm us. When driving on the road, the choices we make are on a life or death basis. We at AAIM are continually working to promote the choices that keep drivers alive and safe. **AAIM TO SAVE LIVES** by choosing never to make dangerous driving decisions. Teachers and administrators influence the lives of their students, as well. Make it a positive influence by inviting AAIM to speak at your school.

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. Help 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

AAIM PROGRAMS

- 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 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 25 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.aim1.org.

Prevention and Education Specialist

The Prevention and Education Specialist educates the public about the devastation caused by underage drinking, drug misuse, impaired and distracted driving. AAIM Personnel are passionate and have a strong desire to work with youth, the community and positively impact others' lives.

AAIM Prevention and Education Programs work to reduce substance misuse, underage drinking, impaired and distracted driving crashes.



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)



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



Cindy Huerta
Victim Advocate



Carrie Kilpatrick
Victim Advocate



Sarah Parsons
Victim Advocate



Rosemary Woods
Victim Advocate



Margaret Borcia
Victim Advocate

TENTH ANNUAL AAIM PICNIC

On July 11th, AAIM Victim Advocates held their tenth annual picnic at Cermak Grove in Lyons, Illinois.

We wanted sunshine, and it rained. AAIM hosted our annual picnic in honor of the families we serve. We made the best of this soggy day, and fun was had by all! Thanks to all who came out and the AAIM staff for all your hard work and making this a memorable day! A special thanks to Chief Nord and his crew from the Lyons Fire Department. Congratulations on celebrating 25 great years of serving the community!



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:



Crystal Beltran



Barb Cutro



Cathy Stanley



Kay Rivera



Carol Russell



Joyce Synek

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

AAIM Prevention and Education Specialists service the Chicagoland Communities. They increase public awareness and knowledge about alcohol, drug misuse, impaired and distracted driving in the community.

They promote alcohol and drug-free events throughout the year, particularly in high schools, with appropriate emphasis on high-risk events, such as homecoming, spring break, prom, and graduation.

Our staff present alcohol and drug prevention and education programs, encouraging healthy behaviors in children, their families, and other adults.

Dedicated Staff:



Samantha Gallagher



Rachael Stewart

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

AAIM'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH PROGRAM

AAIM's Community Outreach Program was developed to help parents navigate through the teen years and to 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. 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. Dr. Charles Nozicka, AAIM Board Member and Pediatric Emergency Medicine Physician, Commander Brian Cooper, Carol Stream Police, and Deputy Chief Joseph Moran, Oak Park Police, all provide expert advice to parents to help ensure teenagers have a healthy lifestyle and a positive future.



Rachael Stewart, AAIM Prevention Specialist, Dr. Nozicka, and Rita Kreslin



Commander Cooper



Dr. Charles Nozicka



Deputy Chief Moran



Commander Cooper, Rita Kreslin, and Deputy Chief Moran

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.

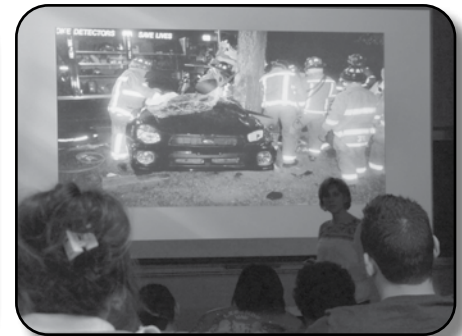
AAIM'S YOUTH VICTIM IMPACT PANEL



Rita Kreslin



Doug Petit



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.



TEAM AAIM



Marlene Schwerzler and Rachael Stewart



Samantha Gallagher and Jessica Zinck



Rita Kreslin, Kelly Krenzer, and Carrie Kilpatrick



Rosemary Woods, Lisa Rogers, and Barb Cutro

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 2020 are:

Decatur Police Department for making the most DUI arrests in Illinois (344)

Carol Stream Police Department for making the most arrests per officer in Illinois (3.80).

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



Decatur PD



Carol Stream PD

2021 TOP COPS

The following officers are recognized at AAİM's 2021 Benefit for making 100 or more DUI arrests in 2020:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>Arrests</u>
Trooper Eric David	ISP District Chicago	259
Trooper Lucas Sniady	ISP District Chicago	187
Officer Alberto Zayas	Chicago PD District 10	115
Trooper James Knaperek	ISP District Chicago	102
Officer Jeffrey Kriv	Chicago PD District 12	101

PEER TO PEER ONLINE FUNDRAISER FOR AAİM

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

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

AAİM 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 AAİM.



www.classy.org/campaign/aaim-to-make-a-difference/c147934
Peer to Peer Fundraising



AAIM 2021

*Hope on the
Horizon*

Virtual Benefit
Friday October 22, 2021

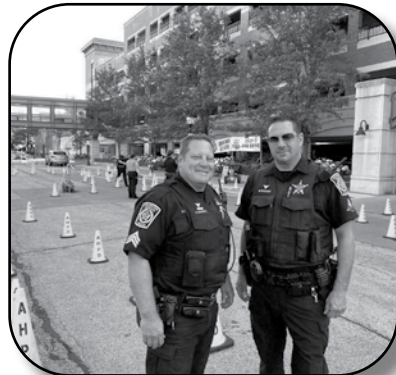
aaim1.ejoinme.org/AAIM2021

AAIM's Partnerships

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS POLICE DEPARTMENT P.E.D.A.L. EVENT

Summer 2021, AAIM Prevention and Education team partnered with the Arlington Heights Police Department to help educate the community about the danger of impaired and distracted driving. This was a fun interactive obstacle course.

Thank you, Arlington Heights PD!



WILL COUNTY OUTSTANDING STATE'S ATTORNEY *James W. Glasgow*



Crystal Beltran, Court Monitor, Cindy Huerta, Victim Advocate, State's Attorney Glasgow, Rita Kreslin, AAIM Executive Director and Jessica Zinck, Director of Victim Services

Will County State's Attorney James W. Glasgow has a long and distinguished career during which he has implemented groundbreaking initiatives to investigate, prosecute and prevent crime. As a prosecutor and third-generation Will County resident, State's Attorney Glasgow has committed to making Will County the safest place to live, work and raise families. He is serving an unprecedented seventh term as Will County's elected state's attorney.

Under his direction, the Will County State's Attorney's Office has led the way in creating crime prevention programs while maintaining a felony conviction rate 15 points higher than the state average.

AAIM truly depends upon the services offered through the Will County State's Attorney's office and its staff. Their professional, engaging, compassionate victim advocates and assistance state's attorneys help gain information about new cases involving reckless homicide as well as assistance with contacting victims' families.

AAIM believes that victims are much better served with the coordination of both this department. The staff provides a mentoring role to otherwise guideless victims in an overwhelming system. We appreciate the efforts made by State's Attorney Glasgow and the victim advocacy and court monitoring programs.

State's Attorney Glasgow is deeply honored and humbled to receive this award from AAIM and wishes to share the recognition with his entire team.

JESSE WHITE CANDLELIGHT CEREMONY

For the Victims of Impaired and Distracted Driving Crashes

AAIM took part in a virtual Candlelight Ceremony for crash victims, sponsored by Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White, co-hosted by AAIM.

This compassionate event took place online December 14, 2020: <https://www.facebook.com/AAIMtosavelives>

Remarks were given by Secretary White, Reverend John Clemens, AAIM 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



COMMENDABLE AWARDS FOR DUI EFFORTS

BELVIDERE

AAIM Victim Advocate Kelly Krenzer presented certificates of appreciation for DUI enforcement efforts to Belvidere Police officers.

Officer Christopher Garcia, Kelly Krenzer, and Officer Matthew Korn



CAROL STREAM



Also recognized are several Carol Stream Officers for their life-saving efforts in DUI enforcement during 2020.



Commander Cluevers' Family

In October, AAIM recognized Commander Brian Cluever from the Carol Stream Police Department for his career accomplishments. Brian is dedicated to DUI enforcement, education and building strong relationships in the community. Brian has made over 200 DUI arrests in his career. Congratulations!

GURNEE POLICE DEPARTMENT



AAIM Director of Court Monitoring Lisa Rogers and Prevention and Education Specialist Rachael Stewart presented milestone awards to Gurnee Police Officers for their life-saving efforts in DUI enforcement.

Officer Thomas Branick 10th DUI Pin

Officer Austin Demski 10th DUI Pin

Officer Daniel Moorehouse 10th DUI Pin

Officer Tim Hamann 50th DUI Pin

ORLAND PARK



AAIM Board Member Tami O'Brien recognized Orland Park officers for their efforts in DUI enforcement.

Not all officers are pictured.

Officers: Nickolas Eyer, Dennis Leuver, Tyler Lorek, Timothy O'Connell, Nathan O'Connor and Chris Prat.

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



September 22, 2021, AAIM hosted CommUNITY Matters Event at the Richard J. Daley Center in Chicago. Outreach is critical in serving people who are members of disadvantaged and under-privileged populations. Accessing services can be complicated by geographic isolation, language barriers, cultural intolerance, disability, and/or lack of social support. The AAIM For CommUNITY event addressed these issues and gave crime victims hope that there is help available and people do care.

Serving diverse populations could include meeting specific needs for low-income families, people of color, individuals living in rural areas, immigrants, 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.

Attendees received free raffle tickets and giveaways!



CommUNITY Matters Group



Jesse White



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



AAIM Victim Advocates, Rosemary Woods, Kelly Krenzer, Cindy Huerta, Carrie Kilpatrick, and Sarah Parsons



Sarah's Inn



Lee Roupas, Liquor Control Commission

AAIM FOR COMMUNITY

Sponsored by AAA The Auto Club Group



*AAIM Prevention and Education Specialists
Samantha Gallagher and Rachael Stewart*



Community-Based Solutions



*AAIM Court Monitors, Barb Cutro, Director
Lisa Rogers and Kay Rivera*



Illinois Attorney General



Link Together



Polish American Association

THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Illinois State Fair

AAIM collaborated with the Illinois Department of Transportation at this year's State Fair. AAIM staff provided information about our programs funded through IDOT.



*Samantha Gallagher, Prevention and
Education, Lisa Rogers, Court Monitor Director
and Rita Kreslin, Executive Director*



*Samantha Gallagher, Lisa Rogers, Julie Coplea,
IDOT Safety Grant Manager, and Rita Kreslin*



*Samantha Gallagher, Prevention and
Education, Lisa Rogers, Court Monitor
Director and Rita Kreslin, Executive Director*

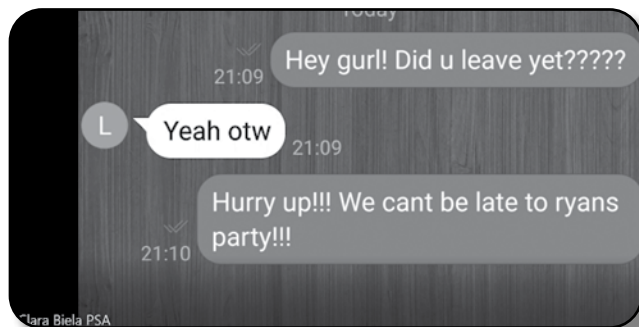


ARE YOU INTEXTICATED?

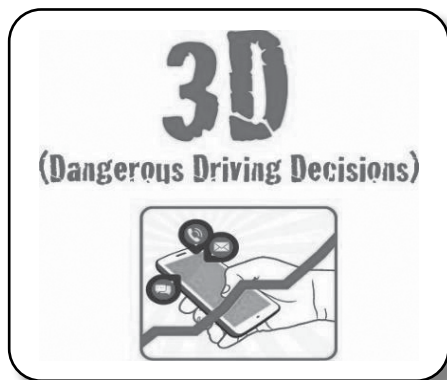
Congratulations to our 2021 “Are you InTEXTicated?” PSA Contest Winners! AAIM challenged Illinois high school students to put together PSA videos highlighting the importance of staying focused on the road and to put down the phone. This challenge was created to get the conversation going with young people and their parents about driving distractions; particularly the use of cellphones, 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.

2021 “Are You InTEXTicated?” Winners:



1st Place: Clara Biela
– 9th Grade Rickover
Naval Academy



ARE YOU INTEXTICATED?



2nd Place: Meredith
Schleeauf – 9th Grade
Schaumburg High School

3rd Place: Cristy Alvarez
– Peace and Education
High School



#AreYouInTEXTicated #AAIMPSAContest #AAIMtoSaveLives
#EndDistractedDriving

Thank you to our generous sponsors!



florinroebig.com/car-accidents/florida/tampal/



www.glenbardgps.org/

THE JOHN KRESLIN SCHOLARSHIP – 2021



Congratulations to Nicole Aigner, from Fremd High School. Nicole is the recipient of the 2021 John Kreslin Scholarship Award (\$1,000).

We are wishing Nicole all the best at the University of Wisconsin!



Nicole Aigner



THE JOHN KRESLIN SCHOLARSHIP – 2021 5K FAMILY FUN/RUN WALK

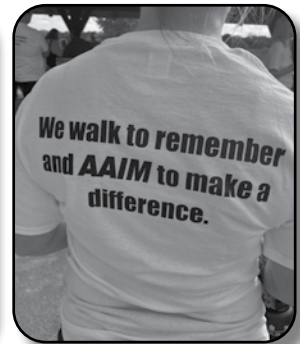


*John Kreslin, August 26,
1983 – August 30, 2002*

On August 22, 2021, the Kreslin family held their eighth 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 \$12,500 to graduating high school seniors.

WE WALK TO REMEMBER AND
AAIM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE
www.johnkreslin.com



LOMBARD POLICE DEPARTMENT



The Lombard Citizen Police Academy has proven to be a very popular program within Lombard Community Policing efforts. Residents and members of businesses are given the opportunity to meet and interact on a personal level with many members of the Lombard Police Department.

Citizens are exposed to many facets of law enforcement with class topics that are both interesting and informative. The experience is not limited to classroom lectures alone. Attendees are given the opportunity to participate in a patrol ride-along, participate in firearms training, practice mock traffic stops, and conduct room searches.

On November 16, AAIM celebrated with the Lombard Police Department Citizen Police Academy graduates. Law Enforcement officials make a consistent effort to find creative ways to initiate community outreach. The Lombard Citizen Police Academy has done just that!



Carrie and Rita

LOMBARD POLICE DEPARTMENT



Chief Roy Newton



Carrie Kilpatrick, AAIM Advocate



Graduates



Rita Kreslin, AAIM Executive Director

AAIM PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2021 AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

What is National Night Out?

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

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

Algonquin Night Out



AAIM PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2021 AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Cary Night Out



Rachael Stewart, Prevention and Education



AAIM PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2021 AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Machesney Night Out



*Kelly Krenzer, AAIM Advocate and
Heather Lopez, AAIM*



AAIM PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL NIGHT OUT 2021 AMERICA'S NIGHT OUT AGAINST CRIME

Wood Dale Night Out



*Anita Huvaere, AAIM, and
Charlie Wooley, AAIM*



*Aidan Fischer, AAIM Volunteer
and Rita Kreslin,
AAIM Executive Director*

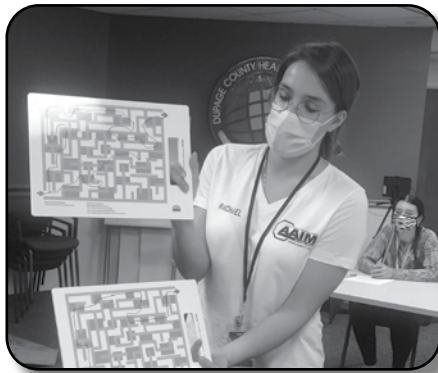


PREVENTION AND EDUCATION REALITY ILLINOIS – TEEN ADVISORY PANEL

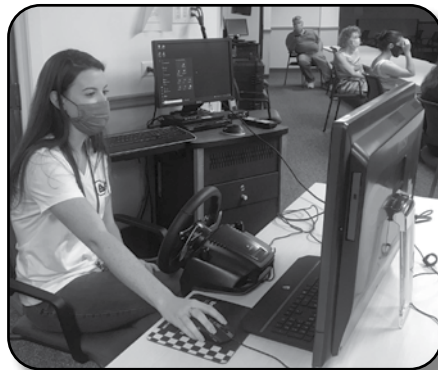
August 2021, AAIM Prevention and Education Specialist's Samantha Gallagher and Rachael Stewart collaborated with the DuPage County Prevention Leadership Team, Gilda Ross, Student and Community Projects Coordinator and Jordan Esser, Community Initiatives Coordinator, to provide students from Glenbard High School important information about the dangers of distracted, impaired, and drowsy driving.

Thank you to the DuPage County Health Department for providing us with a safe environment to hold this event!

A special thank you to AAA Auto Club Group, Charlene Sligting-Yorke, Traffic Safety Program Manager. AAIM was awarded a grant from AAA, which allowed us to purchase the impaired driving goggles.



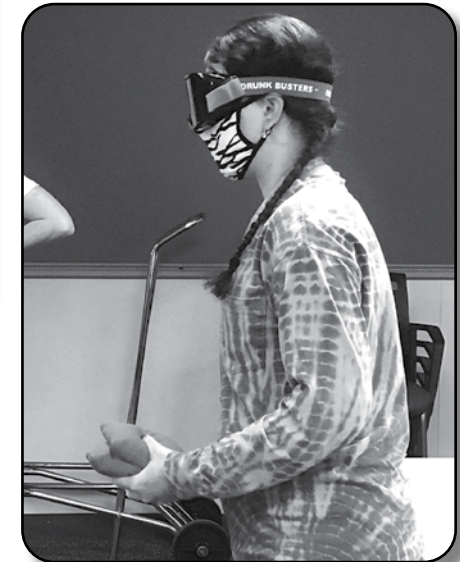
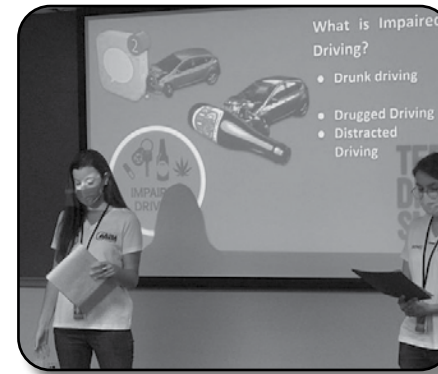
*Rachael Stewart Prevention
Education Specialist*



*Samantha Gallagher Prevention
Education Specialist*

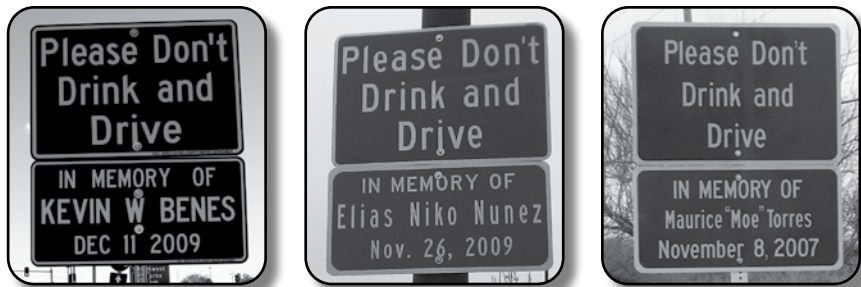


PREVENTION AND EDUCATION REALITY ILLINOIS – TEEN ADVISORY PANEL



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.



STAFF TRAINING

AAIM would like to express our deepest appreciation to Officer Dan Stafiej, the Carol Stream Police Department, Officer Ari Briskman, Lake County Sheriff's Department, Jennifer Cifaldi, Illinois Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor, and Jennifer Bash, Analytical Forensic Toxicology Specialist. We are deeply indebted to you all for your continued support of AAIM and providing us with valuable education and information to prevent impaired driving crashes and save lives in Illinois.



STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

November 4, 2021, AAIM hosted an education focused event to create a greater understanding and knowledge to better serve our clients and to expand prevention and education for underage drinking, drug misuse, impaired and reckless driving.

Many thanks to our presenters!



*Donald J. Morrison, Attorney
Kelleher and Holland, LLC*



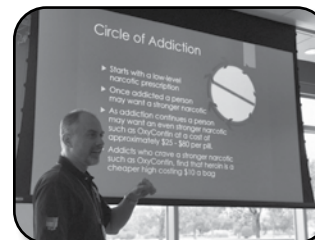
*Sergeant Sean Carroll, Chicago
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*Paul Niezabitowski, Traffic
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*Valerie Whittle, Business
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Illinois*



*Special Agent Greg Czaczkowski,
DEA Chicago*





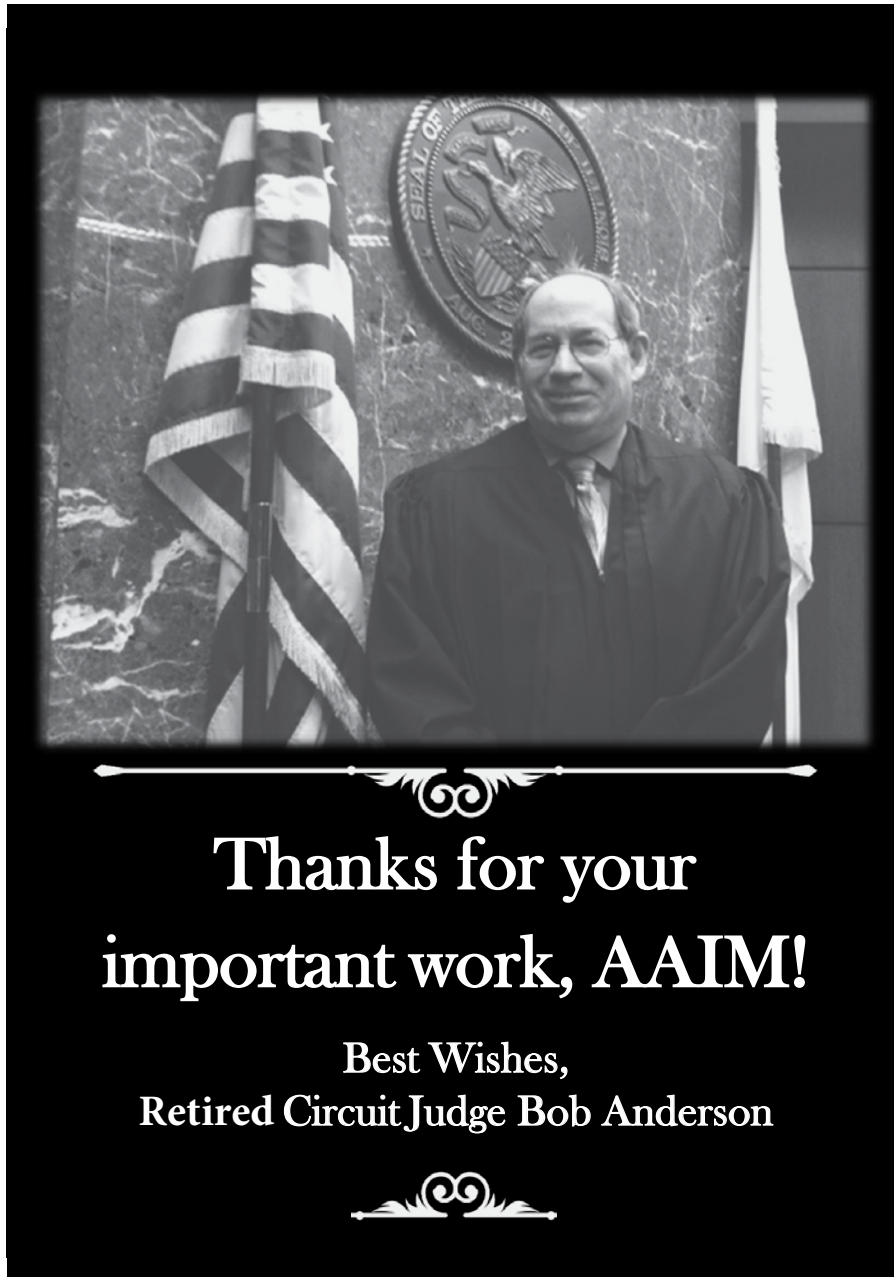
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*The City of Belvidere and the Belvidere Police Department
would like to thank AAIM for all their hard work and
support over the years.*

Keep fighting the good fight!



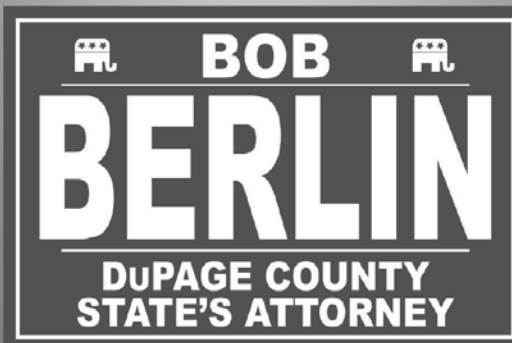
*Our hearts and prayers go out to all those who have lost loved
ones or suffer injuries caused by intoxicated motorists.*

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

Mayor – Clinton Morris

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**Best wishes to the Alliance
Against Intoxicated Motorists.
Thank you for all that you do!**



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Best wishes on AAIM's efforts to help DUI Victims

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Jesse White Illinois Secretary of State

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



Together we are making a difference.



**Boone County State's
Attorney Tricia Smith**



**Salutes AAIM for their
efforts to end impaired
and distracted
driving crashes.**

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*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*



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Illinois roadways safer for all of us!*

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Thank you AAIM for all the
Love, Hope and Strength
you give to those affected
by impaired and distracted
driving crashes.

May God continue to bless you all!

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you more than ever"*
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Tyler and Avery



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Reginald "Jalen" Johnson
1997-2016

Memories are a gift to treasure;
ours of you will last forever!



THANK YOU AAIM
for your ongoing
commitment and dedication.
McHenry County State's Attorney
Patrick Kenneally

Piotrowski & Associates, Ltd.

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JOE SOSNOWSKI
State Representative

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STATE SENATOR
Steve Stadelman



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



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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



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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 15 and Emma 11. 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 was dedicated to her children. Her standing rule was "I just want my kids to be happy!"

Chrystelle's last three years were a roller coaster ride. She was diagnosed with depression, PTSD and dealt with many people telling her she wasn't worth much as a human being. Then COVID hit, and emotions escalated. In some eyes, emergency department nurses were heroes. In some eyes, they were snubbed, attacked and put down.

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 was unmatched.

Our HOPE for the past was that her children knew how much she loved them; and her family and friends knew how much they mattered.

Our HOPE for the past was that she knew how much she was loved. That somehow, she saw, heard, and felt all the love at the time of her passing. Over 500 people attended her visitation; the funeral home smelled like a floral shop. Thousands of dollars were donated for her children after her death. Co-workers praised her compassion and nursing skills. Teachers, school staff, coaches, and babysitters, all confirmed she was a great mom.

Our HOPE for the future is that we are brave enough to ask for help when needed and brave enough to give it when asked.

Our HOPE for the future is that her children learned from her to understand what kindness, unconditional love and support can do for one another.

Our HOPE for the future is that we can move past anger and grief to 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 must believe.... HOPE IS ON THE HORIZON.

The Andrews, Janke, Talley and Olson Families



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

It has been nearly six 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. To those who did not know him, he would appear shy, introverted even. He was quite the opposite actually. 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 together at online videos that showed 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 little by little, day by day with your loss. 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



It takes away faces ...

As a miracle recovery crash victim, I have had the enormous privilege and the heavy responsibility to be a spokesperson for other crash victims, particularly teens, who have not survived or who have incapacitating injuries. In my impaired driving prevention presentations, I always tell that "this is not my face" because of damage done by a drunk driver. And, I ask listeners to always remember what impaired driving does ... *"it takes away faces and it takes away lives!"*

Although the crash was years ago, my story is still too familiar today.

When I was fifteen years old, my father and I were hit head-on by a drunk driver, who was going 90 miles per hour. I was in the passenger seat, not wearing a safety belt - this was before safety belt laws. I was gravely injured. My face went through the windshield and I whiplashed back. The glass slit my throat from ear to ear and severely lacerated my face - this was before windshield safety glass. 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.

In the ambulance, I was bleeding so badly that the paramedics did not have enough clamps to stop the blood loss. They had to also use the bobby pins that were holding a ribbon in my hair to clamp some of the blood vessels.

THE MARTI MULL BELLUSCHI STORY

At the hospital, the doctors performed a tracheotomy, so I could breathe, and spent six hours trying to stop the bleeding and put my body back together. I was wheeled out of the emergency room with even my face covered by a sheet. The nurses told my mother that if she wanted to know I was still alive she could touch my hand, but they did not want her to see what I looked like. I was in a coma for five days and immobilized in traction in a hospital bed for 2 1/2 months.

My father suffered serious physical injuries, a shattered kneecap, broken hand, broken arm and facial lacerations. But sadly, his most significant and most painful injury was that what happened to me broke his heart.

I have never seen Arthur, the drunk driver, who was also seriously injured. He was 21 years old. He was uninsured and unemployed. He never spoke to my family. He never said he was sorry. The only consequence of his unconscionable actions was losing his driver's license for 90 days.

Although some injuries and difficulties continue all these years later, many blessings have also come to me. One very important positive result of being a crash survivor is my involvement with AAIM as a volunteer, spokesperson, Board member and friend. Today, of course, the sanctions for the impaired driver would be much more severe - due in part to the dedication and efforts of AAIM. Today, of course, many teens do not have a story like mine to tell - due in part to the dedication and efforts of AAIM.

Thank you AAIM for all of your good works.

Together we are saving faces and saving lives!

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 nineteen years, six months, and three days we had the chance to watch him grow into a loving, kind, and responsible son, brother, and man. Kevin was a big brother to Matthew, Amy, and Jillian. Everyday our family had together, I witnessed the love and laughter they shared. He was an encouraging and supportive big brother, who loved to play practical jokes and make everyone laugh. He was a family man and generously shared his love with his family and those close to him. Kevin was not only a caring man, but a responsible and determined man. He graduated from Lockport High School in the top ten 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 went on to become a third-generation electrician in our family. We were so proud of Kevin. He was on his way to achieving and living his dream.



Since December 11, 2009, sadness and grief now fill my heart. Kevin was on his way home from work when he was tragically killed. Kevin wasn't taken by sickness, or an act of nature or 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 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 forever! We're serving a life sentence without Kevin. It'll be twelve years since that tragic day he was taken from us, and each day is a challenge. Although time has gone by, the pain is still intense. We must tend to the pain, and our broken hearts. The loss of Kevin will always be there for his family and friends. We're still trying to learn "how" to live without Kevin.

THE KEVIN WILLIAM BENES TRIBUTE

Kevin lived a life of love and honor. What can we do to honor Kevin? We must learn from Kevin and live like he did. We need to 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 one another each day. He gave us faith and faith gives you hope. Hope gives you strength and 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'll be so missed at your little sister Amy's wedding. I know you'll be close in our hearts, and you will send us a sign. 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 2:30am on February 3rd, 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, but to get to the hospital, and to 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 he had little brain activity, and his prognosis was not good. There lying in

this bed was our son, 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. He had simultaneous surgeries, a splenectomy, and a craniotomy, due to the impact of the crash. 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 to him, that he is strong, that we love him, and that the waiting room was full of people praying for his recovery.

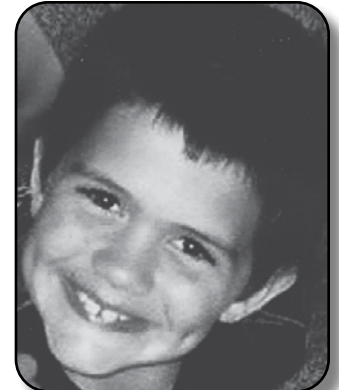
Jason started responding to short verbal commands. This road would be a long one, but he was with us, and we would do whatever needed to support him. Two weeks after the crash he was transferred to Shirley Ryan Ability Lab. During his almost four-week stay. He attended physical, occupational, and speech therapy daily. Once he was released, he participated in outpatient therapy 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 is currently finishing physical therapy. 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 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 everyday to deal with this loss.

There is not enough time or words to describe Tony. He was an 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 piggy back 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 backwards) as a tribute to him. The Y-noT Project is dedicated to stopping intoxicated boating. Driving a boat is one of 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 type of 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

On August 21, 1999, at approximately 11:02pm, 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. 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.



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

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 of 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 was 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 breath.

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 would have checked to make sure Dallis, Tiffany and Daniel were wearing their seatbelts, then Dallis would have survived. 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 me and my new wife 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 my mom dying on the second anniversary of the crash.

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 21st. 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 that wants to know my family; that enjoys hearing my stories. 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 a.m. for me to celebrate. I called in to work telling my manager; "Mollie is pregnant. I am drinking champagne and I am not coming into 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 grief is

THE THOMAS BURLESON STORY

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.

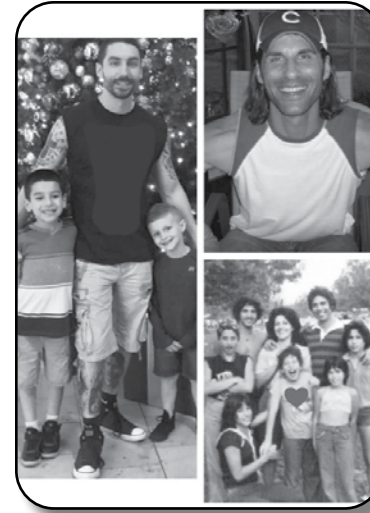
The beautiful part of grief is watching Gideon demand to sit in a big boy chair, to use a fork and go upstairs by himself, because his brother can do it. The beautiful part of grief is when Elijah, my son, was six months old and very fussy. First a friend held Elijah, but he wouldn't calm down. Then, 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, that 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 everyday 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



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. Something inside me died the day my son was killed. I'll never have another opportunity see his beautiful smile, hug him, or tell him I love.

Frankie, (my son Frank, Jr 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.

We're grateful for the good times that we shared and the fun stories that were 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



This year, 2021, marks the seventeenth-year anniversary of losing our daughter at the hands of a drunk driver. Yes, seventeen years. Is that a long time ago? Yes and no. In the daily routines of life, yes, seventeen years is a long time. However, losing a child, even though it happened seventeen years ago, seems like yesterday. There is an expression “absence makes the heart grow fonder.” This cannot be truer when one loses a child. We still recall in our minds that tragic weekend of events when Cindy was killed. There has not been a day in the last seventeen years that we don’t think about the crash and its horrible consequences. Our lives were

shattered and will never ever be completely put back together.

In 2004, the year of the crash, Cindy was enrolled at Benedictine University in the pre-med program studying to be either a pharmacist or a surgical nurse. Helping people is what Cindy was all about. Matter of fact, a few weeks before the crash, she volunteered with the Knights of Columbus to help with their annual Tootsie Roll Drive. We have a picture of her collecting donations on the corner by Benedictine. Everything was looking up until that tragic, tragic night in November of 2004.

Since that time, we have been blessed with two beautiful grandchildren, Tyler now 12 and Avery 8. As you can see, they were not here to meet Aunt Cindy. All they have are the recollections we share with them in trying to explain who Cindy was and how much she meant to everyone. We can see it in their eyes how sad they are that they will never meet their dad’s sister. All they know is that Aunt Cindy is looking down on them from heaven.

This memory page is actually being written on October 18th. Those of you who knew Cindy will remember that today is her 38th birthday. How will we celebrate it? By visiting her at Resurrection cemetery. Yes, it’s sad but that is how we have celebrated her birthday these past many years.

Cindy, we your family and friends, continue to love you and miss you ever more deeply every year. We ask our family and friends to pray for us to give us strength to continue somehow deal with this terrible tragedy that has permanently changed our lives.

**Mom and Dad
Pam and Bob Cebzynski**

THE NADIA CHOWDHURY TRIBUTE

May 14, 1983 – February 21, 2004



It has been more than seventeen years since our beloved daughter, Nadia, was snatched away by drunk and reckless drivers at the UIUC (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign) campus.

Nadia started her higher education at UIUC after graduating from Naperville Central High School in 2002. Her academic advisors at UIUC remember her as a great student, focused on the business core curriculum and excited at the prospect of being an honors student. Her goal was to obtain the CPA examination from one of the best schools (UIUC) in the country. Her desire and ours as well is going to remain a dream.

We want to keep Nadia’s memory and dream alive. We participated in the Run to Remember up Pikes Peak in Colorado Springs, Colorado the weekend of August 18-20, 2017 to create awareness of the devastating effect of drunk and reckless driving. This was the 10th annual Live Forward and Run to Remember event honoring loved ones who have died due to traffic incidents. This yearly event was organized by KKAD25 (Keep Kids Alive Drive 25), www.KKAD25.org. Their Live Forward!® team ran in honor of over 100 loved ones who’s families have connected with the KKAD25’s mission due to a traffic-related deaths. The running team carried the names of those killed on the back of their shirts. Family members of loved ones who were killed, joined the team for the weekend on Pikes Peak, and in the Colorado Springs area. Here they celebrated the life and endless love they shared and continue to share with all touched by the gift of their lives. Please view the video “The Mission and The Mountain” on KKAD25’s website which shares a few stories from families who have participated in the past.

It was an inspirational weekend of sharing stories and making memories. Anyone interested in joining the team, may send a note to kkad25@kkad25.org

*With gratitude,
Nasrin and Shamsul Chowdhury*

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 had 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. 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 talk 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's lives, were flipped upside down that night. I have thought about that day every single 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 in 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 even given a chance to try to avoid him or at trying to live. They both 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 three 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 amount of years in prison" for his actions.

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"*

Unknown

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

Nancy GeRue
Daughter of Paul Conrad
Stepdaughter of Sheryl Andreassen

THE ALEXIS SYMONE DANLEY TRIBUTE

June 26, 1990 - June 30, 2017



Alexis was a bibliophile, a bookworm. She loved to read as a child, especially Harry Potter. Alexis owned every Harry Potter book. Alexis was a social butterfly with a strong, big personality, but with a gentle caring soul, heart, voice, beautifully infectious smile and laugh. Alexis was a loyal, dedicated friend, with strong family values, whose love for family should never be underestimated.

Alexis enjoyed family gatherings, hanging out with her friends, TV date nights, going out to eat, shopping and going to the movies. Alexis took on motherhood valiantly. She loved and adored her little “Nugget”, her daughter Alyanna. Alexis was always trying to help, feed, and lift someone up. She never looked down on anyone. Alexis would give everything she had away and everything I had away also. That included her time.

Alexis’ daughter Alyanna, our granddaughter, 10 months old, was also in the car on the fatal night of June 30, 2017. Alyanna survived the automobile crash without an injury or scratch (THANK GOD FOR CAR SEATS!) even though Alyanna lost her mother Alexis and baby sister A’maia. Alexis was six months pregnant at the time of the crash. In the blink of an eye and five minutes away from home, Alyanna became a motherless child and we lost our beloved daughter Alexis and her unborn child/granddaughter A’maia. That night, Alexis went to the movie theater and never made it home.

Our life is forever changed. My emotions go full circle from shock to anger because Alexis did not have a chance to survive and she does not get a second chance at life. Alexis died at the age of 27 with so much love to give and so much more life in her. Words cannot express how much we love and miss our daughter Alexis. There isn’t a day that goes by that I, as Alexis’s mother don’t think about Alexis, or cry.

In Loving Memory of
Alexis Symone Danley and baby A’maia

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 KALEY DAVIS AND HANNAH VASSMER STORY



The drunk driver had many choices that night, sadly she chose to give us none. NEVER get into a vehicle when impaired, buy alcohol or drugs, and NEVER try to pass someone ON A CURVE WITH DOUBLE YELLOW LINES. The combinaton is deadly.

When the crash happened, Ebony, the drunk driver, walked up to our car asked if we were okay. We were both badly insured. She then proceeded to lie to police and her rental car company. She told them we ran a stop sign and HIT HER! Ebony has caused many changes in our lives for the worse and now we are going to explain them.

I'm Hannah, and I had two compression fractures in my lower back, one fracture in my chest bone (sternum), nerve damage in my leg, and two fractured teeth. I was in the hospital for almost a week. I showered, ate, and slept on my back brace for three months. I was two classes away from graduating with my Associate's Degree, but because of a drunk driver, I had to withdraw. Even after seven months, I still can't feel parts of my leg, and I need to constantly check my teeth in the case they might die off due to the fractures. What she did to me is permanent, and I'll be dealing with back pain until the day I die. The drunk driver saw the blood rushing down my face. I know she heard the agony in our voices as we pleaded with her to get help. She had an infinite amount of choices that night and she chose all the wrong ones.

THE KALEY DAVIS AND HANNAH VASSMER STORY

I'm Kaley, and this is what you left me with: two fractures in my leg, a broken foot, the considerable pain of surgery (which has left me with a four-inch scar), huge financial debt, and a totaled car. I will have arthritis in my knee for the rest of my life. I have to feel pain in my leg every day. I can't do certain activities the same anymore. I haven't been able to walk the same, which has now caused my hip and back to be in tremendous pain as well. I am still going to physical therapy, six months after this has happened.

Together, we believe people should get help for their drinking issues and learn the consequences of getting behind the wheel while intoxicated. We beg our defendant and the public to never to this again. No one deserves the pain and suffering and the financial toll that she caused us. Next time anything like this happens someone might not be so lucky.

Written by Kaley and Hannah

THE JAMES DAY TRIBUTE
February 19, 1964- September 19, 2017

No quantity of words or quality of writing would be sufficient to describe our husband and father, James E. Day, or the depth of our indescribable sorrow over losing him. He was truly an extraordinary man, a wonderful husband, an incredible father, a devoted son, a loving brother, a supportive uncle, and a loyal friend. With a zeal all his own, he loved others unconditionally and his joy was contagious. He had a larger-than-life personality and a unique sense of humor that endeared him to hundreds of people from all walks of life. His wit and fun-loving spirit were magnetic, effortlessly drawing others to him. Most memorable of all, he shared his great gift of laughter with everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.



Jim exemplified what it means to be a Christian and a family man. A recurring theme in the flood of cards and messages that we received after his death was that he left such a positive impact on people's lives. So many recalled that he'd always have a smile on his face and a kind word to offer. His love for his family and friends was evident in everything he did, and his giving spirit spilled over into all his relationships, including coworkers, acquaintances, and even strangers. One of the comments from a former coworker was, "The world lost a great man in Jim. He was my boss for seven years, and because of his leadership, I am a better person today." Jim's was a shining example of a life filled with love, joy, and faith in God.

In spring 2017, Jim made a job change and started a new position at Woodward. He was so pleased to be working for the large, international manufacturer and he expected to spend the rest of his career with the company. Around the same time, he began a rigorous discipline of exercising twice a day and watching his diet closely. By Sept. 1st he had lost 80 pounds and was excited to begin training for RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa) in summer 2018.

THE JAMES DAY TRIBUTE

Jim was proud of his recent accomplishments and seemed to have found a new lease on life. By his own accord, he was as happy as he had been in a long time.

Jim's life was cut tragically short on September 19, 2017, when he was hit and killed by a van while riding his bicycle on Squaw Prairie Road. He will never get the chance to walk his daughters down the aisle or get to meet his future grandchildren. He won't have the satisfaction of watching his children flourish in their chosen careers, after years of cheering them on and giving them his undying support as they pursued their dreams. He didn't deserve to die at age 53 and miss out on this next chapter in his life. And we didn't deserve the heartbreak of losing him. His absence has left a permanent hole in our lives and in our hearts.

There is nothing to be done, no words to be said, no price to be paid, and no sentence to be served that could reconcile the wrong done to our family. However, we do want the driver to know that her actions and negligence have not only taken Jim's life, but have forever robbed us of Jim's love and laughter.

Negligent driving, distracted driving, reckless driving, impaired driving has affected our family in ways that this driver may never comprehend, but our hope is that by sharing his memory and tragic death and the tremendous loss our family has suffered that the public will make better choice when operating a vehicle.

Thank you,

Cindy Day, Hannah Day, Michael Day, Katie Day, John Day

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

It will be 13 years since a drunk driver killed our son Troy. Troy was only eight years old. There is not a minute that goes by that we don't think of him.

As his mother, I know he is in Heaven looking down on us and his brother Chad. There are days, even now, that 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.
Last year I suffered a stroke 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 GARY FINK TRIBUTE
October 19, 1960 – January 22, 2017

I never thought there would be a day where I would need to put on paper how a driver's willful negligence would cause my father's death. I can't describe how when I wake up the first thing that runs across my mind, is how my dad is no longer here with me. My dad won't be able to walk me down the aisle to give me away. He won't be there to watch me at equestrian competitions. I won't be able to watch my dad grown old and reach 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 the lives of 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 go back and see if my father needed help when he felt the crash? Why did he falsify his log book about where he was at the time the crash?

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

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

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

There will never be closure for me or my family. While the driver goes on living his life, my family suffers. Because of this crash, I no longer celebrate my birthday on January 19th and my family dreads important dates like my father's birthday, his wedding anniversary and holidays. I hope the defendant never forgets my father's name.

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 to 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: the jocks, the stoners, the nerds, the 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 out celebrating a friend's birthday party 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 they were a designated driver that night. Although he thought he could trust them to get him home safe, they were not as trustworthy as he had believed. Then they were hit by a driver under the influence of both alcohol and drugs. They were t-boned, and Brandon had been trapped in the car. The crash left him quadriplegic, and 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 life as “normal” 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 most positive outlook on everything. He would never succumb to being hateful towards the drunk driver because he believed it would impede his recovery. Both that belief and his strength carried me and our family through this tragedy. He wanted to

THE BRANDON FERREIRA TRIBUTE

get his degree in business and accounting. I had never seen him so confident and passionate about his future. Despite his disabilities, he overlooked and tried his best to overcome them all. He fought against all immobility's and wanted to give back to make sure that everyone in his position was provided necessary things at ease. 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 TANESSHA GATES STORY

December 4, 2015

A 23-year-old girl's life has been changed forever. A girl who had dream's and was the provider for her children. What I mean to say is, she'll never be the same due to 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 life. 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 each day and trying to reach the goals she set for herself. She has four beautiful children who look up to her, but now they'll 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 were 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, who was her friend was with her that night and will never see his children and family 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. Due to the crash she had to relearn everything.

She is alive but will never to be the same. Every day is hard for her as she struggles with her brain injury each day. The defendant received 10 years for killing Alex and 5 years for injuring Tanessha which are being served concurrently; hardly enough in our eye's.

It took me 5 years to get back to my goals and complete school, but I did it. I never gave up! I am now a nurse.

My family suffered another tragic loss last year when our baby sister Chiquita, died in a car crash. I've had my second child who has brought my family back together for something good. I've named my daughter 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.

Blessed by God, Brant lived seventeen years. He saw 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 walked to Walmart and the gas station. On his return home he was hit on the road right outside our apartment. A witness saw the first driver hit Brant and left him on the road; never stopping, never even considering helping him. The first driver has not been caught for this crime. A second, third, fourth and fifth vehicle 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 is now in the criminal court system for hitting Brant.

The pain of losing Brant is indescribable. My whole life has changed. I've moved because it was so painful to literally look at the spot, 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

Brant gained his wings and now moves on to heaven to celebrate his after 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.



To say the least, April 22nd 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.”

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.”

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

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 testimonies 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 over the course of 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 for us all. 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

THE JOHN HAUPTMAN TRIBUTE

had 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 wrote letters to the judge that would break your heart. How that 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's been fourteen years since my life changed forever. When I was 18 years old, I was involved in a car crash caused by a drunk driver. That night my aunt, uncle and I went to a concert to celebrate my aunt's birthday. We left that night happy and never thought that from that night on our lives would never be the same again. I remember hearing my aunt crying and trying to help my uncle because he was bleeding from his mouth. I was in the middle of the van and my entire body was hurting. It was a pain that I can't explain. I knew I was about to die. I was in intensive care for weeks and then transferred to rehabilitation. I was told I would never walk again and I would always have to take care of my health and skin. I would need to stay strong because life would be very difficult. In that moment, my goals, dreams and future vanished

completely. I remember feeling like there was no life for me any longer. I was depressed for over three years.

Three years after the car crash, I was able to get pregnant. I was very surprised because doctors had told me that I wouldn't be able to have children. I can honestly say my baby is a miracle! My pregnancy went beautifully. I had no pain whatsoever and I was able to give birth to her without a c-section! My daughter is now 11 years old and OH MY! She's the sweetest little girl. She helps me so much, not just emotionally but she also helps me with everything I physically need.

Life hasn't been easy. I'm always dealing with something. Some people believe that if you're in a wheelchair, you're just sitting all day. Little do they know what really happens. I never sleep well, due to the trauma, stress, pain and fear. I also must wake up every two hours to move from side to side so I can avoid skin problems. I must use a catheter every four hours. If I go out, I can't neglect taking care of my medical needs, no matter what. Do I ever enjoy myself when I go out? I try my best to enjoy myself, but sometimes it's difficult.

I thank God for bringing AAIM into my life!! They've been a HUGE, HUGE support!!! I don't have enough words to say how grateful I am for everything they've done for me and my family. Thanks to them I've had the courage to move on. They always check on me to make sure I'm doing well. Thank you AAIM for the gift cards, support, love, and for your beautiful heart!!

I love you AAIM FAMILY!!

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 (23), Rachel (20), Rayne (18), Johnathan (12), Raylynn (2), and was excited to meet his unborn daughter Araya (now 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, 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, and sometimes we can sense when a close one is in danger. There is a feeling that 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 streams of tears flowing down my cheeks I laid myself down 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 a countless number of 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 2021, the light of justice hasn't shined down on us. The man who caused the crash, who eventually admitted to be guilty of his actions after multiple attempts of trying to deny his fault in court, walks free. By now most of the physical damage has gone away, but the emotional toll is relived every now and then. The friendship between my mom and her friend slowly has 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 very difficult road to be traveled. Although in the back of my head, I always keep in mind 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



People often say “time flies” which is how I feel some days, yet I feel like I’m standing still. Although I can still remember the exact day, the exact moment and the exact emotion of when Jalen died, I can't believe that it has been five years already, almost six. It truly feels like yesterday. We've moved on with our lives, but not really. The life was snuffed out of an intelligent, loving, athletic and wise young man. I liken it to when the final

piece of the puzzle is missing; that puzzle will never be complete.

Just like the past five years, I still find myself waiting for him to call or send one of his silly texts. Now our family conversations center around how old he would have been and speculating on what he would be doing in life. My parents had the last family portrait enlarged and mounted on their wall in remembrance. Our comfort is the legacy that he left behind and how he touched many people's lives. We continue to get calls, visits, social media posts, flowers left at the grave, and so many well wishes. He was an angel on earth, my angel.

It continues to be hard not getting closure with his offender yet to be convicted but that fight will continue until justice is served. In the meantime, we are surviving but missing our loved one, missing his smile, his touch, his laugh, and his sense of humor.

We loved him then, we love him now, he remains forever in our hearts.

In Loving Memory, Kendall & Jennifer Parrott

THE ANDREW KEATING TRIBUTE

October 26, 1989 – July 2, 2005



Andrew I can't believe it's been 16 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. My heart still hurts.

Andrew, your niece Lily is 9 years old and starting fourth grade. I can't believe our baby Lily is 9!

Ali, your younger sister graduated Suma Cum Laude this year from Southern Illinois University. I'm so very proud of her, as you would be.

Your sister Amanda is still working as a Dental Assistant and doing very well.

As for me, I just retired July 31, 2020 after working so many years. I so wish you were here so I could have spent more time with you.

Andrew, all your family and friends miss you so much. I can only imagine the young man you would be at 31 years old.

Andrew, not a day goes by that you're not in my thoughts and heart.

I'll love you forever and ever, 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 was waiting for the crosswalk light to change so I could cross the street. I remember twirling a bag on 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?" One of the paramedics told me, I was involved in an auto crash. It took a moment for me to grasp what happened. My family meet 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. When the doctors told me how severely injured my left knee was, I cried inside. How was I supposed to walk again or do the things I loved? I fell into a deep depression, not knowing how I was going to 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 how to walk, since limping is all I know. 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 seven-year anniversary of Nick's death. Nick would've been 24 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

THE NICHOLAS KILPATRICK TRIBUTE

September 1, 1997 – September 9, 2014

of us. I finally decided to have a burning ceremony and "send" it up this year. It was excruciating to see everything and 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,

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 thirteen 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 would have 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 hasn't been able to work since Amanda died; he just sits at home.

THE AMANDA KORDICH TRIBUTE

I need to be the bread winner 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
“National Dog Day”



On August 26th, each year, millions celebrate “National Dog Day”. It’s an important day. Pictured above is “Dee Oh Gee.” He’s missing his owner and so are we. Dee Oh Gee’s owner, Christopher, was killed by a drunk driver 11 years ago on National Dog Day. We’re now the guardians of our son’s beloved dog. Over the years Dee has spent a lot of time outside, watching every car that passes, wondering if Chris will return home. He tolerates us but

would rather be out riding in the car, fishing, or visiting people with Chris. Dee will never know what happened to Chris or know that he really isn’t coming home. He’ll never know if Chris saw the car heading towards him between 93 and 104 mph or the violence of the impact. It’s probably just as well. Dee can remain hopeful that Chris will one day pull in the driveway. The rest of us aren’t that lucky; we know he isn’t coming home.

The loss is just as great today as it was 11 years ago that night the phone rang. The call was from the emergency room at the hospital advising we needed to come there right away. We knew it was bad but were hopeful as we drove to the hospital that he’d eventually be ok. Knowing that it was bad, but hopeful as we drove that he’s eventually going to be OK. We’re now aware that they don’t tell you your loved one has died via a phone call. He was already dead when we got the call, we just didn’t know it. Dee Oh Gee didn’t hear the words “Mr. and Mrs. Krenzer we’re sorry, but there was nothing we could do.” Dee Oh Gee didn’t hear our screams and wails. He didn’t know when we went to the hospital room that there were towels wrapped around Chris’ head to soak up the blood coming out his ears and head. Dee didn’t know Chris a fractured skull, broken pelvis, ruptured spleen, bruised lungs, so bad that he couldn’t be intubated, and a list of injuries that when on and on. It’s devastating to see your child’s dead broken body. There are no words that can describe it. The pain and

THE CHRISTOPHER KRENZER TRIBUTE

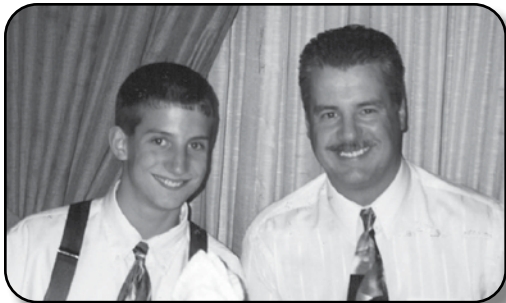
trauma for those left behind is the byproduct of someone else’s decision to drive drunk. It lasts a lifetime.

Dee went through his own level of grief. He could feel something was gravely wrong in the house after Chris was killed. The grief filled journey can be awful; the dark places it takes you. We’ll never be the same. There are no words to make it better, just a big empty hole. We occasionally bring Dee to Chris’ grave. We just sit there; the dog doesn’t understand why we’re there. We don’t understand “why us, why our child?” Dee Oh Gee is getting old, and we know eventually we won’t have Chris’s pride and joy by our side. To this day if Dee sees someone that may resemble Chris’ stature, he’ll stare at him in hopes it is Chris coming home.

**Written by “Dee Oh Gee’s” owners,
Chris’s parents, who miss him dearly**

THE JOHN KRESLIN JR. TRIBUTE

August 26, 1983 – August 30, 2002



Nineteen years ago, I lost my son, John, in an impaired driving crash. He had just started his sophomore year of college at Butler University, Indianapolis, IN., he was a pre-pharmacy student. Not a day goes by that I don't miss him, and It will be like that for the rest of my life. Sometimes,

it's hard to remember his voice. I miss his smile, his joking around, and his serious side. He had a kind heart which shined through at a very young age; he was always willing to be a friend. Unfortunately, his hopes and dreams were taken from him and our family because someone chose to drive impaired and recklessly.

Throughout the years, I have met many people who have lost a loved one in a crash. We are part of a group that no one chooses. We share stories and tears together and work to prevent impaired driving so that no one has to bury a loved one because of something so preventable.

We all have a responsibility for setting good examples, not just for our youth but for each other. No one ever picks up their keys and heads out the door thinking they may never come home or that they or someone else would be injured in a crash. All too often, crash victims are left to pick up the pieces, financially and emotionally - sentenced to a life of injuries and struggles at no fault of their own.

AAIM has stood by and supported my family for nineteen years. We are blessed that John's mother was introduced to AAIM after losing our son. AAIM became the advocate we never had in the court system in Indianapolis. She took a horrific loss and turned it into helping other crash victims, sharing what happen to our son to high school and college students in hope of making a difference in their lives, while reminding them of the importance of making good choices.

The AAIM family, the victim advocates, and court monitors are truly special people of strength, courage and compassion. We are all in a better place because they care. Thank you!

See - *The John Kreslin Scholarship - 5K Family Fun Run/Walk* on page 73.

This tribute is sponsored by Wetoska Packaging Distributors

THE KARLA LEAÑOS TRIBUTE

June 26, 1989- December 24, 2015



Hello, my name is Irma and I want to share with you our family's tragic story about my little sister Karla. She was the baby of our family; a mother of four beautiful children. We were so blessed, lucky and thankful to God that we had those years together. My little sister was killed by a drunk driver as she was getting ready to cross the street after getting off the bus. She didn't have a chance to get back up unto the curb because the drunk driver was speeding.

At the time Karla (Babe) was pregnant with her fourth child. 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. Due to the driver deciding to drink and get behind the wheel, my sister was tragically killed and that is not an accident! Our brother was also tragically killed by a drunk driver six months earlier. Sadly, our father passed away after the one-year anniversary of my sister's death. He just couldn't take the unexpected and tragic deaths of his two children.

My entire family has been impacted by this 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 just have to continue to live life and appreciate everyday with our loved ones. Thank you for taking the time to read a little bit of my family's difficult time during that year. Thank you, Cindy, 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 AUSTIN LOCKWOOD TRIBUTE
May 26, 1995 – June 10, 2018



My son, Austin was killed by a drunk driver on June 10, 2018. I had the privilege and honor of being Austin's mother for a very short 23 years before he was senselessly and cruelly taken from me. I have been a single mom for more than 21 of those years. I worked very hard as the sole supporter for my kids. The most important thing in the world to me was to be a good mom.

Austin and I always have had a special bond. Not only did he look and act like

me in many ways, he looked just like his older sister, Taylor who I lost to SIDS when she was 4 months old. I could look at Austin and know that this is how his older sister would probably look. He has big beautiful brown eyes and a warm smile that lit up a room. Austin was loved by all. He would lend a hand to everyone he knew without ever expecting anything in return. I have heard countless stories on how he helped people and refused to take anything in return. He helped everyone including family, friends and even our elderly neighbors. Selfless only begins to describe my son. Ultimately that selfless behavior is what took him with the defendant that weekend. The defendant had a cabin that flooded and no one else had time to help clean it, no one but my Austin. His kindness was paid back by taking his life. Austin was the passenger in the vehicle. The driver had a BAC of 0.117 (3 hours after the crash), he was going 70 mph in a 40-mph zone. My son was taken from me upon impact, he was gone when the police arrived. I watched the entire dash video from the police. It was horrific for me to hear and watch. I found out about the crash at approximately 5:00am on June 10th, two very nice police officers had to come to my home and deliver the horrible news.

Losing Austin has been a blow that affected me physically, mentally and emotionally. I have been going to therapy weekly since the tragedy, I have seen both a counselor and psychiatrist. I have had 4 ulcers in my eyes from crying. I was hospitalized on Mother's Day in 2019. My days were

THE AUSTIN LOCKWOOD TRIBUTE

filled with trying to establish some sort of routine, but there is nothing routine about my son not ever coming home. I have a hard time focusing and completing simple tasks. Nothing will ever look or feel the same. A dark cloud will always be over me and all of those who love Austin so much. As a mother you are supposed to help your children through difficult times. But this is something that is unfixable. My pride for having such wonderful kids has turned into a feeling of failure because I cannot help them, I am not able to make their lives happy and whole again. My life has been ruined while the killer will only be in prison for 3 years and then out to live his life and carry on.

Since the crash, I have realized how completely inadequate our laws are and how completely unjust the system is to victims. The criminal has more rights and less consequences than the victims. It has become my mission to change this I have met with various Wisconsin and Illinois elected officials to create new legislation requiring a central database across all states. It is still a work in progress.

Since the crash, I have tried so hard to make a change. As much as I wished I had been the one taken on June 10, 2018, I wasn't. I do not EVER want another family to experience this loss. The problem with all the penalties we put into place trying to make laws stricter, is that it is AFTER the fact; after another senseless death.

I love you, Austin

Mom (Sheila Lockwood)



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. While we waited at the intersection to turn left, a distracted driver chose to grab his phone and rear ended our car. Not only was he distracted by using his phone, but he was speeding, too. The impact of the crash caused it to go into the other lane, where another car hit us. My car was pushed into the ditch, smashing the car's rear end. While I don't remember anything from the impact, my daughter Angela does. She remembers hearing me wheezing because I couldn't breathe, and 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 and had died.

While I was fighting for my life, I had no idea that Ashley had passed away. 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. They had to make the decision of how to lay to rest their sister, Ashley. 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 grieve with my family—because I was fighting for my life.

THE ASHLEY MARIE LOPEZ TRIBUTE

Since Ashley's passing, each day has been a challenge. As I recovered from my injuries, I found myself crying constantly as I remembered she was no longer with us. I never got to hold or see my daughter one last time and this has been one of the most difficult issues I've had to face.

Ashley was someone's daughter, sister, and aunt. If Ashley was still with us, she would be spending all her time with family. We as a family are trying to live the life Ashley would want us to have lived, but it's hard to celebrate every moment without her. It's almost five years since we lost Ashley and living life without her is the hardest thing to do.

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 IZAAH 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 liked 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



Fifteen 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 Sheriff were also there, as well as several 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) 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.

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, ex-wife

THE JUAN LOZANO TRIBUTE
October 12, 1993 – February 3, 2016



I'm Juan's mom and I would like to share with you a short story about my son and what his purpose was in life. 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 where he wouldn't do everything in his power to see his loved ones happy.

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.

All Juan's dreams were taken away from him the day he lost his life in that terrible crash. My life has completely changed; nothing is the same without him. My son is missed by his entire family but most of all by me. He has left an empty feeling in my heart. I'm not sure when or how I'll be able to move on from this tragedy. Juan has left so many beautiful memories and although they're painful to think of, I will cherish them forever.

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 am aware that it's his time to rest with God.

Over four years have passed and during this time the defendant bonded out of jail and was on the run. We spent months worrying that he

THE JUAN LOZANO TRIBUTE

wouldn't be found. Luckily, on June 24, 2019, my victim's advocate informed me that the defendant was found in North Carolina. He was being extradited to Rockford, Illinois, where he would be held until trial. We still haven't had justice, but we know it will happen eventually. We as a family finally have that sigh of relief that our case will continue and hopefully get justice for Juan soon.

Juan's little brother has really struggled with the loss of his big brother. The tears and anger are so hard for him. He looked up to his big brother and he is angry someone has taken him away. We all miss Juan. He was a son, brother, uncle and friend.

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 all were in shock, we couldn't believe they would do this to us, I was angry, I cried for months. My AAIM advocate cried along with us and felt responsible. The AGG DUI Death Charge was dropped, and the defendant plead to Reckless Homicide, this is a lesser charge and less prison time than the AGG DUI Death charge. The defendant received 10 years at 50% for killing my son, he will only serve 5 actual years. I have a lawyer fighting for my rights as a victim and AAIM standing by my side to try and get justice for Juan. It may not change anything for me, but hopefully it changes something for someone else and this never happens again. I appreciate your taking the time to read my son's painful story.

Written by his mother who misses him dearly,

Elizabeth Alvarado

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 6-year-old child. This choice has left a little girl without a mommy. No mommy to tuck her in at night, no kisses, hugs, or teach 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 five years since my niece was ripped away from this world. Five long, heartbreaking and horribly sad years. Every month there has been a court date; each month I face the person who caused this tragedy. This person hurt my family and took away a mother, daughter, niece, sister, and best friend. Five years of watching a precious child grow up without her mommy. Five years of seeing Tanya in her daughter's eyes.

I honestly hoped that the hard part would be over; but the trial will be starting soon. With the trial approaching my family and I get to relive that day over again. The day someone made a choice that took Tanya's life. Now it will be our turn to get justice for Tanya and her daughter.

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 in sixth grade, she was chosen to be part of a program with twenty-two students. 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 14th, I got up for work, and it 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 14th. 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 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 and 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 twenty-four years since I've felt Erin's arms around me for a hug, seen those big eyes or bright smile. Twenty-four 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.

THE ERIN ELIZABETH OLMSTED TRIBUTE

She's 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 and 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, and now married. 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.....

Written by Sandy, Erin's loving Mom

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 14th, 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.

For me, 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 DANIEL “DANNY” RAUNER TRIBUTE

October 6, 1980 - January 21, 2019

Today as I sit and write the memories, I have of our son Daniel “Danny” John Rauner, I find the memories of him are clear. However, they do come to my mind with unbearable trauma knowing he was taken from us.

I’d like to take this time to say thank you to AAIM for all they did for our family. Thank you, Kelly Krenzer, for your support, love, strength and courage for our family.



Daniel was born October 6, 1980. He was born with the gift of love and his purpose in life 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 loved his wife Anna, Dad, Mom and his brother Jeremiah and family. Daniel, like many young men, was not a perfect person. He made mistakes, but for the most part he had a huge heart and would do anything for anyone. I painfully miss Daniel’s funniest little laugh and his grin. He’ll never call me on the phone or come to our home and say, “Hey Momma” again.

January 21, 2019, was a day that changed our lives forever because a driver was SELFISH and made the wrong choice TO NOT be a responsible driver. We received the 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 bad trick. To see your child’s lifeless body with blood all over him and his head bundled up in towels is something a parent should never have to witness. Danny suffered a broken leg, arm, pelvis, broken ribs and other injuries due to the crash. How do you move forward with a heart that has been annihilated? This grief is anxious and loses control in the blink of an eye. It’s an explosion in your head and runs flooding into 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...

We hope that when people read our story, Danny’s memory will remain alive and that the awareness of not drinking and driving will become a reality.

Love you Doolittle,
Love, Mom and Beloved Dad

THE MICHELLE DENISE PARKER TRIBUTE
January 6, 1959 – August 22, 2013



CLOSER TO GOD

Over the past eight years, August is a month that I have come to dread. Each year, August 22nd 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 when I think of how I will get through this month. At earlier years of my life, August had always been one of my favorite months because it represented a few more summer days and nights, returning to school to be with friends, traveling the highways to college so that I could meet my new roommates, several family birthdays, her only son Marko's birthday. It was a time of celebration, a time in my sister's life that allowed her one final birthday celebration with her then 17-year-old son. When I think of his birthday, as he will turn 25 in a few days, my heart aches that he is unable to celebrate this milestone of life with his mother.

As I reflect on this family tragedy of my beloved sister's death, I am reminded of how this incident traumatized me and our entire family. I have often wondered who was traumatized the most: me, my mother, my other siblings, her closest and best friends? This question will always remain unsolved for me because deep down inside, I really don't know how to measure the loss of someone so dear and special to our family.

I believe strongly in therapy and know we have all had to encounter some form of therapy to assist us in pushing through these painful days of sorrow. In some recent family discussions, I learned that after our loss, many of us were unable to get out of bed and just pulled warmer covers over our faces,

THE MICHELLE PARKER TRIBUTE

or we sat in church on Sundays, just staring at the pictures of JESUS on the wall, wondering how to feel, what to feel, as the sermon came to a close and we continued to walk in such deep and dark pain.

I know that God has promised to never leave us, nor forsake us and I believe he has been with me and family members every step of our daily journeys, but there are some days that all I knew how to do was draw upon God's strength. I've learned to know that God wants to do more than give us strength- He wants to be our strength, and it is those scriptures about strength that have given me and my family members the strength to "keep life moving."

I've learned to begin each day by reading several books by Joyce Meyers, believing in the Word of God daily and saying, "Lord, I need to depend on you once again today. It is not about what I can do with my strength; but it is about what you call me to do in your strength."

And so, in closing, I remember my sister Michelle's beautiful smile, I think of her laughter, I think of the songs she hummed to make us all laugh, but most of all I recall her relationship with God and how on many days before her death, she spoke of getting closer to God and what new meaning her relationship with God meant to her. I carry her son in my heart every day, asking God to watch over him and grant him great purpose in life. I pray for his traveling safety daily, I pray for peace, I pray for kindness, I pray for goodness, I pray for faithfulness, I pray for gentleness, and self-control in his young life; but most of all I pray that God will protect him from all the impaired drivers who continue to drive through our city streets and highways, destroying lives and families who will experience similar pain and heartache that on many days, we sometimes could not find the words to describe this emotional roller-coaster that was brought into our lives so suddenly.

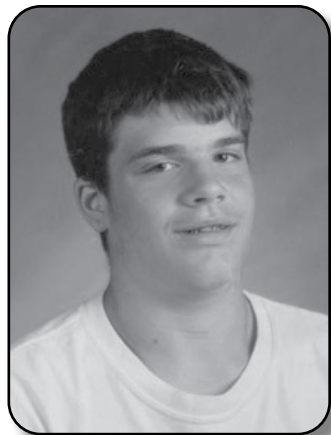
To God be the Glory for moving us all closer to his strength and to each day that we have been blessed to learn that He is always by our side. RIP Michelle, we love you.

Authored by April L. Holland & Family

Sadly, as Michelle's tribute was submitted for the 2021 AAIM Hope on the Horizon book, her family has suffered another devastating tragedy because of a drunk driver. Michelle's niece and great niece were killed, and 5-year-old great nephew was critically injured in a crash. The same AAIM advocate will be going to court with this family again.

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 would 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 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, family, 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 have 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 when she gets out of prison. 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.

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

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

Written By: Payton Richmond

THE PAYTON RICHMOND STORY

Injured January 12, 2018



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



When I tell you that my heart still hurts, you don't know what to say.

When I tell you that my eyes still cry, you look the other way.

How could you know the pain I have, and the sorrow that I feel?

For you haven't lost a precious child, so for you, this isn't real.

I can't really say that I blame you, for I was once like you.

I would turn my head and walk away, not knowing what to do.

But now I know, OH, how I know what another mother feels!

For only when you have lost your child, do you know this pain so real.

This painful loss that bereaved moms share brings us closer in our hearts.

Now when we meet and share our child, we are friends

right from the start.

(Author Joy Curnutt)

This poem resonates with the pain I feel after losing Veronica. She was 18 years old and left behind her beautiful baby boy, Manny. Manny is now 13 years old. Everything is still the same as the pain in my heart and mind will never go away. My daughter isn't here, and I miss her every day. As our lives go on, we can only hold onto our memories of Veronica. Time doesn't heal all wounds.

Love, Mom

THE BRIAN SCHMIDT TRIBUTE

May 30, 1990 – June 24, 2018



The call I received in the early hours of Sunday, June 24, 2018 from my middle son, Shawn, telling me Brian was no longer with us, that he was gone, changed our lives forever.

Brian is my oldest son, followed by Shawn and my daughter Kailtyn. Brian has a son, Julian Jordan, "JJ", who, at the time of Brian's death was only 9 years old. All my children lived with me, including Julian, who was with us most of the week.

Shawn made plans to go to a party with a friend that afternoon. Brian was invited but was hesitant in going. I talked Brian into going and having fun as he had been down lately and not been going out. It was unlike him to be home every weekend and I knew he'd have fun. As both my boys walked out of the house, they told me they would be home early. They both had plans the next day and Brian knew Julian was with me that night. They both ran out the door calling "shot gun" (who'd be sitting in the front seat); neither one was the driver. Brian "won" front seat for the ride into the city.

This was a pool party with dancing and drinking. They stayed much later than they wanted. Shawn had front seat privileges on the way home, as it was only fair. Brian sat behind the driver. Both fell asleep on the way home, which was a good 45 minutes. The driver missed 4 exits on the expressway before deciding to stop in the second lane of a five-lane highway. He put the car in park and passed out right there, in the middle of the highway. Another car, driving at highway speed, tried to avoid the parked car but rear-ended it, slamming it into the concrete barrier. This resulted in the car facing the opposite direction of traffic. Shawn remembers hearing the paramedics speaking to him, seeing his brother on top of him, and then waking up in the hospital. Brian was thrown from the back seat into the front passenger seat. Brian didn't survive due to traumatic injuries. If it wasn't Brian, I lost that night, it would have been Shawn. The driver, their friend, had twice the legal limit of alcohol in him. This was his third offense, one for DWI and now two for DUI.

Our lives are forever changed. I lost a piece of my soul that night. Brian was loved by so many. He always had a positive attitude, a smile on his face and laughter in his voice. He touched so many lives. Knowing his son is growing up without his father is heartbreaking. The questions, the why's and the what ifs, will be something that haunts us for the rest of our lives.

Brian – forever 28, forever missed, forever loved.

We love you to the moon and back, again and again
Mom, Shawn, Kaitlyn, Julian

THE CARLOS SERRATOS STORY



Stacie and Carlos Serratos



Carlos Serratos

Fifteen 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. To this day he suffers from depression. Who wouldn't? He feels he isn't a good husband, father, or even a man because he can't work. Definitely not true! I won't let him think that way!

AAIM has been our rock. We would have been lost if it wasn't AAIM. We've met so many wonderful people under such tragic circumstances. Thank you AAIM for all you do for victims and their families. I always say you are our angels in disguise. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

The Serratos Family

THE RICHARD SEYLLER TRIBUTE

March 1, 1945 – October 25, 2005



October 25, 2005 was a beautiful fall day, sunny and warm. I was at work and my husband, Richard "Dick" Seyller who was a realtor was planning out his day. At 11:12 a.m. our lives were torn apart and will never, ever be the same. Dick was on Route 20 in McHenry County on his way to Marengo for an Open House and was hit head-on by a drunk driver. Dick was killed instantly, and his passenger was injured, but survived. 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 fourteen years, and had gotten it back in 1999. Her blood alcohol level, two hours after the crash, 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-law's, Lauren, and Casey. Our family was the most important thing in Dick's life. Our family has been devastated by this crash. The drunk driver ripped Dick from our lives. Our "new and normal" life is still a struggle. Dick has missed many important milestones in our children's lives. Andy, Lauren, Laura, and David have 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 I now have five grandchildren. It hurt so much to know that my grandchildren will never know their grandpa except through stories and pictures. Two of them are now old enough to start questioning where Grandpa Seyller is. Dick would be so proud of his children and grandchildren.

Any joyous occasions are tempered with sadness because Dick isn't here to celebrate with us. There is also anger toward the drunk driver because her actions that day killed Dick and has caused so much pain to our family. The emotional and mental toll that the crash, and Dick's death have caused our family is indescribable. Our hope is that the woman that killed Dick wakes up each day and thinks of him and the pain and suffering she has caused.

I speak at AAIM's Victim Impact Panels, as I feel I need to speak for Dick and tell our family's story. My hope is that at least one person will listen and learn from our story and not drink and drive.

We would like to thank AAIM for their continuing care and support through many difficult times.

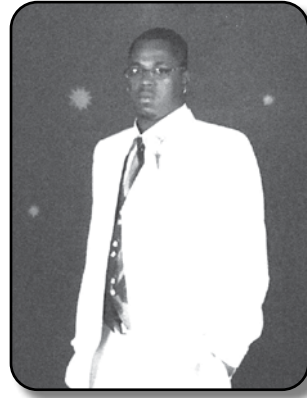
We know we must keep moving forward but it's still hard almost 16 years later. We miss you, Dick, every day.

Debbie, Andrew, Lauren, Laura, David, and Casey – 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 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 17th. 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. Pierre leaves behind many unbreakable bonds and an honorable legacy.

Loving Mother,

Deborah

THE SHAVON SMITH TRIBUTE

September 14, 1985 – April 17, 2016

As a family we would like you to know about the beautiful soul Joseph Gerardi took from us and the life of a grieving family. Shavon was the oldest of five children, and although the smallest, she had the biggest, bravest heart and a smile which always made her standout. 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 it's sad those special days were taken away all too soon from us. We now must live with ourselves not knowing what happened to our loved one. There are so many unanswered questions that our family will never have answers to. How did this crash really happen? What was everyone doing at the time she was taken from us? Did she really suffer? What was going through her head when this was happening?



From a mom's prospective, I would like the people to know how it feels to be woken up by two police officers at 6:30 in the morning, being told your daughter was in a crash and that she did not make it. Going to the coroner's office witnessing my other children asking if they could see their sisters' finger or toe to have some sort of closure. Having to go to the 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 going to her house and cleaning it out. This man took my daughter's life away by being distracted on his phone while being behind the wheel of a semi truck. I had to bury her not knowing if it's really her in the casket. Life will always go on no matter what happens but there's something called the life I live, which involves me crying in my car. My daughter was supposed to bury me not the other way around.

Shavon's daughter, Shavonna, must now live without seeing her mother every day. She will never take her to parent teacher conferences, dances, her favorite restaurants, or simple things like making frequent trips to the mall, which they did often. We sadly must hide our grief from Shavonna, to cry and hide our emotions most of the time.

It's so saddening to know we can never fulfill the emptiness of Shavonna's heart, that was taken away when her mother was killed and taken away from us. All of our hearts ache because of what a distracted driver caused. He never expressed remorse; this makes us very angry. We will always remember Shavon as our "SMILELY" daughter, mother, sister, and friend. This is one thing she always did, no matter what, even if she had a face full of tears!

Love, Sharon Smith (mom), Shavonna Smith (daughter), Shaneil Starks, Kenneth Geiger, China Shaffer and Katrina Smith (sisters and brothers)

THE THERESA "PEANUT" STANLEY TRIBUTE

July 7, 1978 – March 3, 2001



It has been 21 years since the loss of our youngest daughter, Theresa, at the hands of a drunk driver. Some days it feels like yesterday and other days it seems so long ago.

How does a family recover from such a terrible tragedy? How does a mom go on when one of her flesh and blood has been ripped from her without even a goodbye? I can only speak for myself since that is what I know best. I can honestly say I'm not sure how or if anyone ever gets over such a devastating loss.

In looking back, I now see that I was in denial. I had been initially blessed with being in shock, I was functioning well but I wasn't feeling anything. It was as if that part of my being was separated from me. I remember pinching myself and thinking it doesn't even hurt. But slowly everything began coming back - the pain, the sorrow, the depression. I feel so blessed to have brought her into this world, nursed her, tickled her, loved her, played with her, taught her and watched her grow into a beautiful, kind, loving and wise young woman. I would not change that for the world. For as long as I can remember we said "I love you" and that is the glue that holds my life together today.

Today I rejoice with my memories. Today I feel her spirit. She is with me every day. I just can't see or touch her, but in my head, I hear her voice. I've been blessed with her energy. I am not the same person. I am a better human being. She taught me a valuable lesson about life. Through her death she has given me a deeper insight into my purpose here on earth.

It has taken me 21 years to get to this point in my recovery. It has been an interesting journey and I have met many loving, caring and wonderful people along this path. Each has given me something to rebuild my life on - a word, a hug, a smile, a pat on the back, something that helped me heal. Often, I didn't realize it, but now in retrospect I see it so much clearer.

My hope is to continue my journey here on earth and to try to make a difference. I have my daughter's energy and spirit, and together we will make this world safer for my children and grandchildren. This is my path; this is my purpose. And when this journey is completed, I know I will be joyfully reunited with my beautiful daughter.

Cathy Stanley

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.

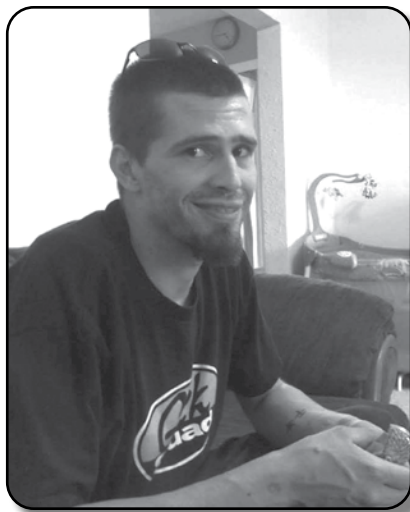
Someone should have taught him,
that its wrong to drink and drive.
Maybe if his parents had,
I'd still be alive.

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 MIKEY STEINES TRIBUTE

June 12, 1978 – August 29, 2012



Michael James Steines aka Mikey Santa. He was a brother, father, uncle, son, and friend. He was certainly a card! How can you describe someone like Mike? You can't. You had to meet him to understand. He was one of a kind.

Mikey and I had different mothers. His mother died when he was ten. In a way, I became his surrogate mom. Being the older sister, Mike and our baby brother lived with me for a time. Eventually, they went to live with our dad. Mike always looked up to me; he always came to me for advice.

He was my oldest daughter's favorite uncle, and they were very close. Mike moved to Alabama and she was heartbroken that he couldn't attend her high school graduation. Little did she know, we were bringing him home as a surprise for her graduation. We planned to have her party at our house. Mike called when he was around the corner from the house to let me know he had arrived. I needed to get her inside the house so she wouldn't see him. I sent her inside to grab some food to bring out to the deck. When she came out and saw him, she nearly dropped all the food she was carrying. She ran to him crying and nearly knocked him over! Our hearts were overjoyed; I don't think anyone was happier than my daughter. She was crying tears of happiness for nearly 30 minutes. She couldn't stop hugging or hitting him for lying to her and making her cry. He smiled and asked her, "Did you REALLY think I'd miss this? Wild horses couldn't keep me away." She said there was no gift that could compare to having him there. When an impaired driver took Mikey from us, he gave all of us a life sentence.

Mikey was funny, laid back, and easy to be around. He always wanted to make people laugh. We miss Mikey terribly, but were fortunate to spend time with him. Unfortunately, his children didn't get to spend much time with him. Nya has four children, having just recently giving birth to twins. His grandchildren will never have the opportunity to know their grandfather. Susan, the middle

THE MIKEY STEINES TRIBUTE

child just graduated from high school. She's working and living on her own. Joshua is the baby of the family and is in elementary school and doing well. Three children and four grandchildren... lives that Mikey should be a part of... lives changed forever.

It is hard to sum up someone that you loved once they are gone. It's difficult to imagine you'll never hear their laugh or see their smile again. You'll never have holidays, or birthdays together, or exchange secrets or knowledge. No more pranks, 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 the loss? We have one life to live. Once it's gone, it's gone. All that's left is pain and memories.

On August 29, 2012, a death sentence was issued to my brother, because one person decided to get behind the wheel of a vehicle impaired. This crash took a father from his three children with the youngest child being only four years old at the time of the crash. No child should have to lose a parent this way.

Life is short. To have someone steal it from your loved one is incomprehensible. The loss of Mike's life could have been prevented if the driver were responsible and chose not to drink and drive. As Mike's sister, I truly try not to have hatred in my heart toward this cold-hearted man. It took nearly two years before this man was charged for killing Mike. He dismembered Mike on impact and didn't think twice about him. He didn't stop. He didn't try to help. He didn't call for help; he just kept going. I'm angry that he is walking free and can play with his children. He can watch them grow up, attend special events, and watch them graduate from school; Mike can't do the same with his children or grandchildren.

Life is short. Don't take one second of life or the people you love for granted. We're all living on borrowed time. Tomorrow isn't promised to any of us.

*Written in his memory by his sister,
Tressie Neiseimer*

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 nineteen 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 made the choice to drive impaired after a night of partying with his friends. Not a day goes by that I don't miss her kind heart.

I never thought I would meet someone as kind as Joy. Four years ago, I met a woman from my church. Friends tell me, "Joy would be pleased that you have found someone to open your heart." Before the pandemic, we would spend time at sporting events, concerts, and enjoy an occasional quiet dinner. Since the shutdown, we are learning new ways to enjoy the simple things in life.

My oldest daughter, Dawn, who is a nurse's aide, helps to take care of 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. She loves animals and earns extra money by working as a dog sitter. Last year, Kara met a young man named Jordan and fell in love. I am overjoyed to hear them talk about their life together and what the future holds.

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 DIMON WILLIAMS TRIBUTE

January 16, 2002 - August 26, 2020



Hi, my name is Janice Mathis, I'm the proud grandmother of Dimon Armani Williams. Dimon was 18 years old when her life was taken from her by a drunk driver.

I'll never forget the last time I saw my sweetie. She came to the house with her mother. She had the

morning off from her job, so she and her mother decided to spend some time together. As the day was winding down, they decided to stop by my house to visit. Dimon was such a sweet girl. I remember I was sitting there trying to do something with my phone, and I didn't know how. She said, "Granny, I know how to do it." She took my phone and fixed the problem. While we were sitting there, someone said "Hey let's Face Time so they can see you since you're not at work."

Unbeknownst to us, Dimon was saying her last goodbyes to the family. My mom and dad - Dimon's great grandparents, and my sister, got to see her on FaceTime. We all said our "Hi's" and our "Bye's." Shortly after that Dimon, her mother and my other daughter left. As they walked off my porch, I said, "Hey, look at my girls!" They all turned back and waved. They got in their car and left. I had no idea that would be the last time I saw my granddaughter alive.

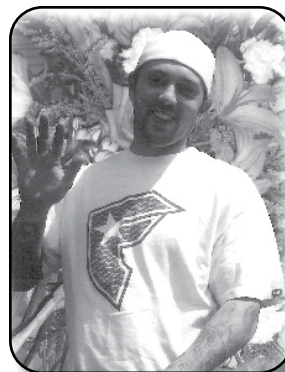
I thank God for the 18 years that we had with her. I just pray that those who may read this, remember to put their keys down when they pick that bottle up. Thank you.

Janice Mathis

Dimon's Grandmother

THE STEVEN R. WASILY TRIBUTE

October 9, 1983 – July 18, 2008



It has been thirteen years since Steven's life was tragically taken at the hands of his "friend" Mike, who was three times over the legal limit. It seems like yesterday when the detectives were at our door to tell us there had been a crash involving Steven.

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. Steven would never come back home again. As his mom I ask myself why Steven would have gotten in the car with Mike. Didn't he know how drunk Mike was? Maybe he didn't, we'll never know. So, 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 cranio-cervical injuries.

Mike was released from jail November, 2016. We recently heard he is engaged to be married for the second time. Steven will never get married.

We see Steven's friends married, some with children and wonder what Steven's life would be 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 does not get easier. A part of us died with Steven that day. Our lives have never been the same. Not a day goes by that you're not in our thoughts. We know you're looking down from heaven watching over us.

We love and miss you, Steven!

Mom and your brother, Wayne

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)

— Hope on the Horizon —
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 that 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 heart breaker 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 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. 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.

— Hope on the Horizon —
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 they 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. 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?

Next 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 five 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 saw the best in you, Willie. We'll continue to fight for you. Until justice is served. We will always love you, Willie. To say you are missed is indescribable. You'll never be forgotten. You live on in the hearts of your family and friends that loved you.

Written by Willie's Family

This tribute is sponsored by IL State Representative Maurice West

THE ARIC WOOLEY TRIBUTE

August 25, 1982 – June 16, 2000

Sitting here trying to write my tribute for Aric hasn't gotten any easier in the past twenty 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 is **HOPE ON THE HORIZON**.



Our lives changed forever 21 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 **HOPE ON THE HORIZON** 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, I'll have honored Aric's memory and given us **HOPE ON THE HORIZON**.

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 ON THE HORIZON** 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 ON THE HORIZON**.

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 **HOPE ON THE HORIZON**.

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 tribute is sponsored by Top Notch Plumbing, Heating & Electrical



AAIM 2021

Hope on the Horizon

Virtual Benefit
Friday October 22, 2021

aaim1.ejoinme.org/AAIM2021

Offender Stories

AN OFFENDER'S STORY

I am 31 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

AN OFFENDER'S STORY

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.

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.

ERIC'S STORY

I'm Eric and I'm writing to tell you how a drunk driver changed my life forever. That drunk driver is me.

On February 20, 1993, I got behind the wheel of a car drunk. I killed Mr. Charles Hayes in a car crash. I took this man away from his children, grandchildren, friends and so many other people he was in contact with. The destruction to his family goes on and on. More than I can even tell you.

I would like to tell you the effects it has had on my family. My mom developed cancer and passed away because of the grief I put her through while drinking and going to prison. My youngest daughter developed cancer. Both my children had a hard time in school when I was in prison. I could just imagine the hurt I cause them and the embarrassment my wife went through. She always told me this would happen. I should have listened.

For me, I will have to live with killing Mr. Charles Hayes for the rest of my life. Yeah, suicide looks like a good option at times. I wake up every morning and have to look myself in the mirror, which is awful hard at times.

Yes, on January 21, 1994, I was sentenced to three years in prison, I should have gotten fourteen years which is the maximum sentence for reckless homicide. Prison is a living hell. Rapes, murder, fights, and riots at any time could happen. The Devil's playground, they call it. I deserved to be there.

I got into recovery from active alcoholism and drug addiction a month after the crash happened, after trying to get sober on my own. Today, I am only alive by the grace of God and a twelve-step fellowship group.

The message I would like to get across is that you don't want to have to tell a family you are sorry for killing their loved one – if you don't want to go to prison – if you don't want to be suicidal – if you don't want to live with destroying a family. This is something I said would never happen to me. I drive better intoxicated. Lies I told myself to continue to drink and drive. Don't lie to yourself – this will and can happen to you if you continue to drink and drive. I am living proof of that.

Please think before you drink. Call a cab, designate a driver, I wish I would have. I want to thank AAIM for allowing me to share my story and speak at Victim Impact Panels.

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.

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

THE NICK C. STORY

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 next two years I worked to pay all my bills off and make 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 forgave 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.

STEVEN'S STORY

I started drinking socially during my last year of high school. There were times when I overdid it and was even stopped by the police a few times but back in the 70's the cops would just take your beer or pot and tell you to go home. DUI's were rarely handed out---at least through my experience. But the fact of the matter is that I was already drinking and driving at 18. Laws started to toughen in the 80's when anti-drunk driving groups started putting pressure on the judicial system, but I still drank and drove -- more frequently now as I was in my 20's and was very into the bar scene as my entertainment. I was just "careful" I would convince myself but in reality I was just lucky when I drove intoxicated.

I drove with little regard for the consequences I might face for over 28 years. Typical thinking and self centered behavior of an alcoholic.

My 3 DUI's came in quick succession in 2001/2002. All occurred within a six to eight week period! My trouble with the state was just beginning. I am not even going to go into too much depth about failed marriage, loss of house, cars and jobs.

I was out of money by my third DUI (I had already paid my lawyer a grand total of \$8,000 for the first two and he wanted an additional \$8,000 for the third). I had to borrow that money and he received it with no guarantee of keeping me out of prison. In fact, he told me that I would have to serve some time. The question was whether it was going to be one year or three to seven years. I did not have any funds left to bail myself out of Cook County jail after his retainer, so I stayed incarcerated there for 3 months awaiting trial. That was no picnic. People were stabbed and beaten on the deck I was on and I had to watch my back nearly every day. I was elated to be sentenced to only one year --after Cook County, I would have been okay with the three years just to get out of there. It was filthy. I had to sleep on a mat on the floor for most of my stay. Roaches would crawl over me at night occasionally. The food was horrible and they did not feed you much. One person was shanked (stabbed) over a baloney sandwich he would not give up. It was horror.

STEVEN'S STORY

I was transferred to Statesville maximum security for two weeks after my sentence of one year for processing. I was locked in a cell for 13 days with a person who had murdered a person with a gun and then hacked him a few times with an axe. He had received 25 years. He was 19 years old and told me was drunk when he did it. I had one shower and a ten-minute phone call my whole time I was in Statesville. They would throw our food through the opening in the cell door. It was a little better than Cook County food so getting thrown onto the floor sometimes before you ate it was tolerable, if you can imagine that.

I was finally sent to my destination -- Danville Illinois Medium/Max Penitentiary -- quite a step up from my previous two places of residence. The first sign I saw when entering was "SIT DOWN WHEN SHOTS ARE FIRED" and the second sign was "ANY INMATE APPROACHING INCOMING AIRCRAFT WILL BE SHOT". Lovely.

My cellmate at Danville was a three time convicted sexual predator. He raped little girls. They caught him before he could kill them. He was 65. He had seven years left on a 30-year sentence. Most of his days were spent watching the Disney channel and figuring out what state he could go to that had the least amount of reporting and registration requirements for sexual predators. Most of his nights were spent masturbating to a magazine called "Barley Eighteen". Again, lovely.

The rest of my new associates were a mix of rapists, wife beaters, murderers, hold up men and gangbangers.

I consider myself a very intelligent and observant person and it dawned on me that I had not met one person other than my cellmate, the molester, that was not in prison for either a drug or alcohol related crime. Not one. They were either on drugs or selling them, robbing to support a habit; killing or assaulting because they were under the influence of something.

These were my new associates. This is what it had come to. Upon my release, I checked into a treatment facility to address my alcoholism. I am now a member of AA and my life has turned around 180 degrees.

I cannot even begin to express how I feel about myself and my new life. That is why I want to share this with you.

By the way, all of you are very lucky. I did not kill or maim you or any of your loved ones while I was drinking and driving. I could have easily been the one to destroy your life.

And now the cost:

Legal fees	\$16,000	(3 DUI)
Lost Wages	\$40,000	(six months incarceration)
Homes	\$45,000	(profit I would have made by not selling under duress)
Divorce	\$20,000	
Autos	\$10,000	(1) 1974 Z-28
	\$15,000	(1) 1984 Porsche 944 Turbo
	\$12,000	(1) 1987 IROC Z
	\$12,000	(1) Honda Accord
	\$ 8,000	(1) Jeep Cherokee
	\$15,000	(1) Chevy Blazer

A rough total of \$193,000

I have not added in other lost wages over the years, or money that I had to borrow from family.

AAIM 2021

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Friday October 22, 2021

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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.



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Letters of
Gratitude

Rita, Shannon and Board Members-

I wanted you to know it's been my honor and privilege to serve as a Board member of the IIDTF. Being co-chair of IIDTF is one of the highlights of my career.

I can tell you this is an exceptionally well-run organization that benefits all member agencies that belong to it. There's a well-placed structure already developed and I wholeheartedly believe IIDTF will continue to thrive in the years to come.

I want to thank Rita and the Board members for their support over the years. I also want to make special mention of Shannon, who is an outstanding individual and has always treated me with kindness, professionalism and compassion. People such as Rita and Shannon make your life a pleasure.

Again, thank you to the Board, and I want you to know that I am always available. I just wanted to make sure to thank you and let you know exactly how important each of you are, and that you were important also to the development of my personal goals in life, and when it came to the police profession.

I retire from Riverside on Thursday, May 20th-

Respectfully,

Thomas Weitzel

Chief of Police

<https://www.rblandmark.com/2021/02/15/riverside-police-chief-to-retire-in-may/>

July 28, 2021

Thank you for this excellent program. I went through the online-Victim Impact Panel on March 14, 2021 and received my certificate. It has been 525 days since my accident, and I have not had a drop of alcohol and have NO desire for it.

Thank you for your website and your help to me!!! May God Bless All of You and Everyone around you in Jesus' name. Amen

I am going through the process to have my license reinstated and praying that it will happen.

Thank you!!
John P. Wagner