

GOING THE DISTANCE TO HELP CHILDREN WHO ARE GRIEVING

“If you can’t fly then run, if you can’t run then walk, if you can’t walk then crawl, but whatever you do you have to keep moving forward.” — Martin Luther King, Jr.

For the past 12 years, teams of marathon runners have come together to give back to The Children’s Room (TCR), an organization that has helped them and their families find paths forward with hope, resilience and new senses of community. A grantee of The Parmenter Foundation, TCR is an Arlington-based nonprofit that offers free-of-charge, direct grief support services for families with children who have experienced the death of a parent or sibling.

One such marathon runner is John Shea, a math teacher at Needham High School whose wife Diane died in 2013 after a long illness. After Diane’s death, John connected with the peer support program at TCR to help himself and his two young daughters navigate and cope with their grief. John was so grateful for the wonderful community he found that he wanted to give back by running the Boston Marathon as part of its “Miles & Memories” team. He has now run the Marathon five times in honor of his wife and in support of TCR, including the virtual marathon in 2020. Each year, his daughters were there cheering him on and hosting water stations. John says, “The first year I ran, I thought it would be a ‘one and done’ thing, but I kept wanting to do more to support this inspiring organization. Our experience at The Children’s Room continues to have a lasting impact on our lives as a family and I am so grateful for that.”

Further pumping up TCR’s teams of marathon runners are volunteer coaches Crissy Straub and Malinda Dublin, co-founders of MC Coaching. Crissy and Malinda have trained marathoners, such as John Shea, for years on an entirely volunteer basis. Their support has made it possible for runners to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars for TCR. In honor of their selfless dedication to preparing dozens of runners, The Parmenter Foundation proudly awarded its 17th annual Grace Johnson Volunteer Appreciation Award this year to Crissy and Malinda.

Since January 2021, The Parmenter Foundation has provided more than \$275,000 in children’s bereavement grants, including a grant to The Children’s Room to provide free grief support services to families in MetroWest who have suffered a loss.



John Shea runs the Boston Marathon in support of The Children’s Room.



Parmenter Executive Director, Angela Crocker, presents award to Crissy Straub and Malinda Dublin.

EXPANDING ARRAY OF RESOURCES TO PROVIDE HOPE AND HEALING IN METROWEST

The Parmenter Foundation has been working diligently to build out our online library of educational and inspirational resources. We are proud to announce our continually growing library including videos, guides, book recommendations, etc. in the areas of:

**Children’s Bereavement ♦ Teen Bereavement ♦ Adult Bereavement ♦
Life & Estate Planning ♦ Hospice & Palliative Care ♦ Pet Loss**

Specifically, you will find such materials as a guide to executing a will and its related documents, videos regarding the unique challenges of teen grief, and a newly launched area for those who are preparing for or grappling with the loss of a pet, including informative expert-driven content unique to Parmenter. Please let us know if you have suggestions for additional resources that would be valuable to you. We will continually work to develop new and updated offerings to inspire hope and healing in our community.

These resources are available at: <https://parmenterfoundation.org/resources>



Parmenter guides and videos help those who are navigating the often-underappreciated challenges of pet loss grief.

HELPING TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR HEARING IMPAIRED HOSPICE PATIENTS



A Care Dimensions volunteer uses a Pocket Talker to engage with a patient who had become isolated and was in decline due to his hearing loss.

Among the more than \$385,000 in grants Parmenter awarded so far in 2021 is funding to Care Dimensions for 23 Pocket Talker hearing amplification devices to support 70+ MetroWest, hearing impaired hospice patients each year. A nonprofit, community-based leader in advanced illness care, Care Dimensions provides comprehensive hospice, palliative care and grief support to patients wherever they live, including at its Hospice House in Lincoln, MA.

Hearing loss is common among the elderly and often leads unnecessarily to isolation, depression and lack of active participation in one's care plan. Communication and support of patient wishes are at the heart of the hospice philosophy. Being able to actively engage in clinical or care plan discussions and life resolution matters is critical to a positive end-of-life experience for both patients and their loved ones. The employment of Pocket Talker hearing amplification devices in a hospice setting can help ensure peace and resolution for patients during their end-of-life journeys. Pocket Talkers can even be used along with hearing aids to further improve hearing and communication.

Hospice and palliative care physician, James Peterson, MD, HMDC, is the Pocket Talker “champion” at Care Dimensions MetroWest. Dr. Peterson has extensive experience in end-of-life care and has used Pocket Talkers for years to aid in the treatment of his elderly patients. The devices help his patients to re-engage in their medical care plans and reduce the isolation and depression that often accompany hearing loss.

“For some patients, hearing loss can limit or prevent the important conversations approaching end-of-life, impacting their quality of life. These patients will benefit – sometimes dramatically – from this simple intervention,” says Dr. Peterson.

Pocket Talkers not only allow hospice patients to be more involved in their care but also enable them to be more present in conversations and make new memories with loved ones; joyous experiences during a time of such difficulty. The immense, meaningful impact of something as “small” as a hearing device is immeasurable to those enmeshed in the challenges of hospice and palliative care.

INSPIRING LIVE WEBINARS: ESTEEMED EXPERTS SHARED WISDOM ON HOPE AND RESILIENCE

In 2021, The Parmenter Foundation hosted two web events, bringing together hundreds of attendees to hear about unique, informative topics.

In May, our first event, “Capturing the Stories of Our Elders – From Hollywood to Our Own Families” featured Tiffany Woolf, seasoned filmmaker, and Noam Dromi, Emmy Award winning writer and producer. Tiffany and Noam are also co-founders of Silver Screen Studios, created to celebrate the stories of elders through film. They shared anecdotes and clips of their projects with such Hollywood icons as Carl Reiner, Larry King, and Marion Ross, and they expounded upon why capturing our senior family members’ stories of hope and resilience can enrich the lives of future generations and help ease our grief when these relatives are no longer with us. Tiffany and Noam also provided unique advice regarding how to gather and develop elder stories, whether you’re on a shoestring budget or interested in a professionally produced film. A replay of this event and related materials are available at:

<https://parmenterfoundation.org/silverscreen>.

During our second live webinar in June, Hope Edelman, bestselling author of *Motherless Daughters* and *The AfterGrief*, explained how grief evolves and reemerges over time and through life transitions, shaping our thoughts and behaviors, as well as our identities and personal growth. The webinar was co-hosted with Parmenter by grief expert Jennifer Wiles, Director of renowned MetroWest children’s grief support programs: HEARTplaySM and Camp Erin[®] Boston, both Parmenter grantees. Jennifer moderated a panel discussion with Hope and young adults from her HEARTplay family who have experienced significant losses. They told their emotional stories and engaged in moving discussions regarding how their grief has impacted their lives over time. A replay of this event is available at: <https://parmenterfoundation.org/hopedelman>



Clockwise from top left: Webinar host, Parmenter’s Dave Kartunen; filmmakers, Tiffany Woolf and Noam Dromi.



New York Times best-selling author, Hope Edelman.

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