

Bequest Thousands of *The Dragonfly Door* Books by Valerie Marquardt



Valerie and a lot of books to share!

A Surprise at the Door:

On August 18, 2016, there was a knock on my door. There stood John Adams, author of *The Dragonfly Door*, and 4,000 copies of his book. He wanted to donate them all to The Dragonfly Project. John and my husband, Greg Brooker, provided the sweat equity to get the 2,000 pounds of books into our basement on a hot, summer night.

I asked John two questions about why he donated 4,000 books:

Why did you write the book?

"My early involvement with The Dragonfly Project was a reminder that children might benefit from stories showing some of the possible emotions a child experiences following the death of a loved one. I had experienced the death of a close family member in my youth and had few resources, then, to draw from. So, I purposefully "normalized" these

and other possible feelings in *The Dragonfly Door* to let children know that what they were experiencing was okay. The book also gives parents and adults a tool to talk about death from their perspective. I believe at the time I also wanted to memorialize an important crossroad: when the death of Hans Bonde intersected with the formative path of Anne Brooker, leading to a universally powerful message of hope that continues to spread among countless numbers of people."

STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 3

Wings of Hope by Alyssa Misemer

On September 14, 2015 I got the most devastating news that I never saw coming. Earlier that Monday my best friend Ashley was hit on the road we always took home: a simple two lane back road. The impact of the accident spun her car around and took her life. Being only 18 years old, Ash was the first person I have ever lost. I took her death extremely hard and did not confide in anyone about my pain. I found myself constantly crying to the point I could not see straight, and screaming at the top of my lungs to the point I would nearly pass out. I was so afraid heaven did not exist and that my best friend was truly just GONE into some darkness. I came across the book *Chicken Soup for the Grieving Soul* and immediately I found myself pages deep



reading about others' journey of grief. It was not until I came across the dragonfly story that I ever felt comfort. When I read the dragonfly story, it was then that I realized my Ash IS safe. Her beautiful earthly body may no longer be here, but she has grown herself new wings and transformed into a glorious heavenly body that is simply too wonderful for the human eye to see. Although I cannot see her for now, she is with me, and one day I will take on the same transformation. One day again I will hold her hand forever. The dragonfly story has been something I have shared with many people, and I always look back to it when I find myself crying. I now have many things with dragonflies on them, because when I see a dragonfly I cannot help but smile as it reminds me I have a glorious angel for a best friend :)



Veterans Create New Images for the Dragonfly Project *by Annie Young*



Permission to Soar

flag and dragonflies.

I solicited the help of a fellow veteran, photographer and graphic designer, Bill Mitchell. We both served as active duty airmen in the United States Air Force, and a number of years with the Minnesota Air National Guard. Together we were able to create images that could offer a closer connection between the loss of the service member and the healing message of the dragonfly story.

Permission to Soar

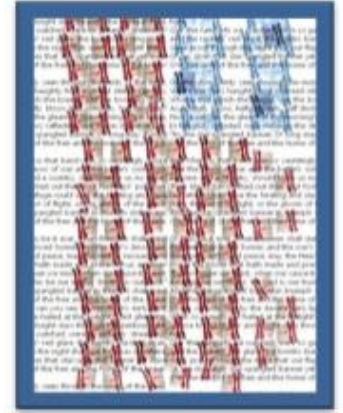
The card titled, *Permission to Soar*, was created using a very tactile dragonfly image I painted. The adaptation of the

Over the years, I have been connected to the Dragonfly Project organization as an artist, a Board Member at Large, and a Volunteer. All of which are positions that I am humbled to serve in. I meet a great deal of people while working as an artist and community volunteer. Many of the folks I've met are serving, or have served, our country and communities. I just felt this need and opportunity to create a special card that included images of the American

American flag within the boundaries of the wings was accomplished by Bill. He spent many hours trying to get the image 'just right'!

...Of the Brave

I paired a composite of dragonfly watercolor images that I painted with the lyrics of our country's national anthem, *The Star-Spangled Banner*. This resulted in the card titled *...Of the Brave*.



...Of the Brave

It is my hope that the creation and offering of these two 'Americana' dragonfly images, along with the story of the dragonfly, will comfort loved ones of those who have served our country and communities in a very special way.

I want to thank the Dragonfly Project for supporting this project. It was an honor also for me to work with fellow veteran, Bill Mitchell.

To learn more about the artists visit:

www.annieyoungarts.com and www.billmitchellimagery.com

Executive Director's Corner : *Influencing Someone's Journey*

By Pete Bonde

It doesn't take long to make a positive difference in someone's grief journey. Here's how to do it:

1. Go onto our website (www.dragonflyproject.org) and order a card.
2. Write a simple note in the card such as "Sorry to hear about your loss. I'm sure that [give the full name of the deceased] was a special person. Take care of yourself and honor your grief."
3. Put a regular postage stamp on it. Better yet, add an additional 21 cents and mark on the front of the envelope 'nonmachinable'. This helps to protect the key chain. This is how we send our bulk mail cards and key chains (which we call packets).
4. Wait 3-6 months before sending the packet. You may receive a response from the recipient. It may take years,

depending on the person's grief journey. But regardless, you most likely will give a heartfelt moment to the grieving person's for remembering their loss of a loved one.



I hope you enjoy our newsletter this fall. The recipient response articles are always touching to read and often bring tears to my eyes. There is an article about a generous donation of *The Dragonfly Door* books from John Adams. And then there is a list of memorial donations and other support.

Lastly, I want to thank all of you for your donations and support. Thanks to our many volunteers who help to keep our mission alive. The Dragonfly Project is looking to another good year of donations and reaching out to those who are grieving. Please contact me at execdirector@dragonflyproject.org if you have any questions or comments about The Dragonfly Project. ~ Pete



Dragonfly Books.....CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Why are you making this large donation?

"I have always believed in The Dragonfly Project's outreach to those grieving the loss of a friend or a loved one. Walter D. Cavert's hopeful and purposeful message inserted into so many unassuming cards that have been mailed around the world says so clearly to others, 'Although we may not know you, we truly care about you, your loss, and your struggle for answers.' I believe the elegance of Cavert's message and the simplicity of its delivery is an inspiration, and an example of raw and generous goodness. Something the world could use more of. It is my hope that these donated books bring more funding to The Dragonfly Project's outreach and expands its resources for parents and adults who are faced with a difficult discussion about death with young children. "

Our Current Outreach with *The Dragonfly Door* books:

The board of directors realized that John's generous gift could help the mission of The Dragonfly Project in so many ways. We began to determine how these books could be distributed to grieving persons in a meaningful manner. We recognized that this book could be given to children and to adults alike because of its beautiful message.

In mid October, nearly 20 volunteers (ages 10-70) gathered together to write personal messages and sign their names in 214 books which will be sent to four schools who experienced the loss of a student or staff member. The schools are located in St. Paul MN, Chatfield MN, St. Joseph MN and Park City Utah. In addition, the Wetterling family in St. Joseph MN, who lost their 11-year-old son, Jacob, will also be sent numerous books to share with their friends and family.

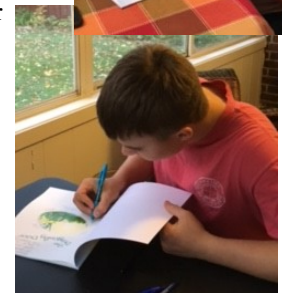
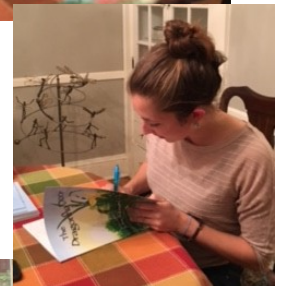
Dina Blumenfield received the book *The Dragonfly Door* from a friend in the fall of 2012 after the death of her father. Her father was shot and killed at the age of 61 at his business by a disgruntled employee, who also killed several others that day. Her son was 3 1/2 and her daughter was just over a year old when they first read *The Dragonfly Door* book. "It gets picked out by them for us to read intermittently throughout the year even now 4 years later. They ask many questions about the characters and why they react in certain ways. You can really sense them thinking about the themes in the book as they hear it each time."

Dina described why she and her children like the book and how it has been helpful to them in their grieving process: "The book has a gentle but realistic approach to death and weaves in the continued connection we have with loved ones we have lost. It has allowed me to cry about my loss within the context of the story, while at the same time giving my children a background story to help them understand my feelings and their feelings of loss. It has a beautiful message and really helps me explore challenging topics with them in a straightforward and relatable way."

John has made it possible, through his book, for parents to discuss the grieving process with their children in terms that they can understand. The Dragonfly Project's founder, Anne Brooker, summed it up by saying, "Death is bewildering to all of us, but children especially may struggle to understand what has happened to their loved one. *The Dragonfly Door* gives children (and their parents) some tools to start navigating a confusing and difficult time. I was so touched by the donation, as I know it will help so many." The Dragonfly Project is grateful to John for writing the book in the first place and for making this kind donation so that we can bring a message of hope not only through the dragonfly story, but through *The Dragonfly Door* as well.

Future Outreach

For any questions, thoughts or comments about the distribution of *The Dragonfly Door* books, please contact Valerie Marquardt at valeriem@dragonflyproject.org. If you are interested in obtaining a book for yourself or for a loved one, please refer to our website (www.dragonflyproject.org) for how to make a purchase.



Recipient Letters



Remembering Joshua

We would like to thank you for the beautiful card and key chain. We lost our son, Joshua, in an automobile accident the night before his 35th Birthday. That was one of the worst things we ever experienced. It felt like a part of my heart was just ripped right out. That pain is still there. I don't think it will ever go away. When we received your card in the mail it was just a joy to know that there are people out there who know what we are going through. We are just ever so grateful you thought of us. We put the card by his picture on the shelf where we can share it with our family and friends. Thank you again for sending such a wonderful gift. May God be with you all. Hope our donation will help your group.

~ Jackie Stubr

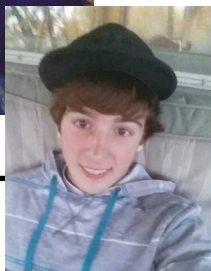


Remembering Ethan

I want to say thank you for the card I received from your organization, and especially Jeanne Bartlett. We lost our son in September of 2015 to suicide. His birthday was June 5th and we received this card on June 9th. It was magical. Just when you feel like the wind is once again knocked out of you by Mother's Day, and then his birthday, this magical card appears and says, "we are sorry" and "someone cares."

I LOVE the story inside, how appropriate. Please know that today of all days, you have restored my faith in the goodness of the world just by sending this little card. Thank you.

~ Deb Lynn



Remembering Ryan

I want to say thank you for the card I received from you. Your card and Dragonfly arrived on the 5 month anniversary of Ryan's passing. The poem, card, and dragonfly have blessed us beyond belief. Thank you for your kindness and amazing story. Ryan was 5. I am sure he is dancing in heaven!

~ Anita Casteel



Donna Brandell, Board Member

By Stefanie VanWyck

Donna Brandell has been a Board Member for one year, and has been with the Dragonfly Project for five. She and former Board Member, Denise Jubert, have recently become the Volunteer Coordinators for the Dragonfly Project, so we thought it was time to get to know her better.

What brought you to the Dragonfly Project?

Several years ago, I was diagnosed with a brain tumor. As a result, I was not able to return to work as a 6th grade school teacher. I was greatly disappointed about this as I loved teaching. I wanted to do something meaningful with my life, so I started to volunteer at Courage Kenny Rehab Institute at Mercy Hospital in Coon Rapids, MN. Valerie Marquardt, who works at Courage Kenny and who also volunteers for The Dragonfly Project (tdp), offered me an opportunity to make decorations for the annual Dragonfly Project Celebration and Remembrance event. I was happy to have the opportunity to pay it forward, and I have been volunteering for The Dragonfly Project ever since!

Why did you become a board member?

I wanted to get more involved with The Dragonfly Project and offer ideas and input as to how we could expand our mission of bringing a message of hope to others. One of the ideas that I had was to send schools that had tragically

lost a student more than one copy of *The Dragonfly Door* book. As a former teacher, I realized that this helpful and lovely book would be very important to have in every classroom, instead of only sending one copy for them to place in their library.

In addition, I was able to see the comfort that THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT was able to bring to grieving families by sending them the dragonfly story and *The Dragonfly Door* book. I wanted to be a part of making that happen. I thought it was a wonderful opportunity to pay it forward. After all, people were there for me after I was diagnosed with the brain tumor, therefore, I was inspired to help others in a time of need.

Is there any project you're specifically involved in within the Dragonfly Project itself?



Volunteer Coordinators

Denise Jubert (left)
& Donna Brandell (right)

As of Fall 2016, Denise Jubert and Donna Brandell will be taking on the task of being our volunteer coordinators. Both Denise and Donna have served The Dragonfly Project in several different capacities. If you are interested in volunteering or have questions for them, please contact them at volunteer@dragonflyproject.org

I recently paired up with Denise Jubert to be one of the volunteer coordinators for The Dragonfly Project. I am looking forward to working in this new capacity. I also help with the School Out Reach Program (sending condolence cards to school staff when a student at their school died).

Is there anything about yourself that you'd be willing to share?

I recently moved from Anoka to Andover, MN. My husband, Kim, and I have two adult children, Aly and Mitchel, and one dog, Noka. I recently trained Noka to be a therapy dog for others. I take Noka into area schools and to the Stroke Support Group and Brain Injury Support Groups that are held at Courage Kenny Rehab at Mercy Hospital. In my spare time, I love to make greeting cards and scrapbooks.

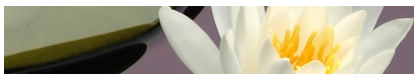


Coming Soon!

Our new Zach Lasley card!

With artwork by Zach Lasley in full color.

To order, check out the "Order Cards" page on our website at www.dragonflyproject.org



DONATIONS

A huge **THANK YOU** to all our faithful supporters. We are so grateful for your generosity with both financial and volunteer support. The Dragonfly Project is able to continue bringing our message of hope only because of your generosity! Memorials and honorariums are listed below and on the next page.

Memorials—March through August 2016

In Memory of Benjamin & Jacob Baalson

Given by Kay Baalson

In Memory of Mark Bjerkebek, Our Son

Given by Beverly Bjerkebek

In Memory of Earl Bonde

Given by Thrivent Financial Foundation

In Memory of Hans Bonde

Given by Charlotte Bonde, Karen Bonde,

Thrivent Financial Foundation

In Memory of Kevin Zack Broadbent

Given by J Broadbent

In Memory of Don Brooker

Given by Valerie Marquardt & Greg Brooker

In Memory of Bryanna & Garrett

Given by Holly Goodenough

In Memory of Meredith Church

Given by Joyce Oatley

In Memory of Maggie Crane

Given by Teresa Berger

In Memory of Darlene, My Mom

Given by Suzanne Perry

In Memory of Bonnie Drexler

Given by Diane Christensen

In Memory of Edna

Given by Diane Christensen

In Memory of Phyllis Englert

Given by Ruth Wittkop

In Memory of Connie Gould

Given by Charlotte Brooker

In Memory of Ali Gratz

Given by Terri Gratz

In Memory of Earl Joseph "Joe" Hall

Given by Bonita Vogel

In Memory of Joe Hall

Given by Mary Hembree

In Memory of Andrew Holter

Given by Elizabeth Holter

In Memory of Paul Christian Keller

Given by PCK Foundation

In Memory of Laura Knutson

Given by Georgia Savat

In Memory of Carolyn Kolquit

Given by Teresa Berger

In Memory of

Lisa Langeslay-Glenn's Mom

Given by Mary Babcock

Given by Kay Kruse

In Memory of Jay Lechler

Given by Jack & Jermaine Lechler

In Memory of Jonathan Masin

Given by Eleanor Masin

In Memory of Zachery Scott Matschiner

Given by Kathy Matschiner

In Memory of Sean McQuillen

Given by Joyce Oatley

In Memory of Bob Metzger

Given by Tim Metzger

In Memory of Miles, our son

Given by Nancee Sudbeck

In Memory of Charles Miller, Jr "Charlie"

Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of Philip Miller

Given by Marlene Miller

In Memory of Moe Family

Given by Tammy Kuglin

In Memory of Ray Nagell

Given by Helen Nagell

In Memory of Jake Nelson

Given by Kay Cafferty

In Memory of Matthew O'Malley

Given by Donna O'malley

In Memory of Diane Olsen

Given by Charlotte Brooker

In Memory of Kathy Hals Peterson

Given by Charlotte Brooker

In Memory of Phil

Given by Thrivent Financial Foundation

In Memory of Jim Poole

Given by Valerie Marquardt & Greg Brooker

In Memory of Austin Rhodes

Given by Patricia Rhodes

In Memory of Severin Savat

Given by Georgia Savat

In Memory of Jason Schaeper

Given by Terri Schaeper

In Memory of Sara Schewe

Given by Ruth Schewe

In Memory of Son & Husband

Given by Mary Weber

In Memory of Justin Spieker

Given by Kathy Spieker

In Memory of Ken Stritesky

Given by Carolyn Stritesky

In Memory of Marlys Thorson

Given by Roxanne Orth

In Memory of Sarah Tilman

Given by Catherine Tilman

In Memory of Mike Wakefield

Given by Wallace Wakefield

In Memory of Frank Weber

Given by Mary Weber

In Memory of Alberta Whitaker

Given by Norman Whitaker

In Memory of Chris Wille

Given by Alan Steckman

In Memory of Julie Woltzen

Given by Joyce Woltzen

In Memory of Ray Young, Jr

Given by Ellyn Erickson

In Memory of Hans Zimmermann

Given by Sue Zimmermann Living Trust

DONATIONS CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

DONATIONS

continued

Honorariums

In Honor of Donna Brandell
Given by Valerie Hanson

In Honor of Kenny Pahler
Given by Donna O'malley

Group/Business Support

All Saints Catholic Church
Amazon Smile Foundation
Grace Lutheran Church
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Sue Zimmermann Living Trust

The Dragonfly Project Board of Directors

Katie Schmalz
Chair, Secretary
James Smith
Treasurer
Donna Brandell
Member at Large

Executive Director
Pete Bonde

Founder
Anne Marquardt Brooker

SAVE THE DATE—You are Invited!

15th Annual Dragonfly Project Celebration & Remembrance Event

**1:00 p.m., Saturday
March 25, 2017**

**At Nativity Lutheran Church
3312 Silver Lake Road
Minneapolis, MN 55418**

All are welcome! We'd like to know if you are coming.
We could also use some help with the event.
Contact celebration@dragonflyproject.org
to let us know you are coming or to find out how to help.

If you have a photo of a loved one that you would like included in our photo montage, send a digital copy to julieb@dragonflyproject.org with "photo montage" in the subject line. Please include the name and date. You may also include a comment or some words to honor them (up to 10 words).

Photos are due by February 14, 2017

The Dragonfly Buzzette is the official newsletter of The Dragonfly Project and is published twice a year. The next issue comes out in Spring 2017. The Dragonfly Buzzette team consists of Julie Bonde, Peter Bonde, Patsy Kahmann, Valerie Marquardt, Jan Stanton, Stefanie VanWyck and Sara Weingartner.

If you would like to share your dragonfly story with us, please email us mystory@dragonflyproject.org. We'd love to hear how The Dragonfly Project has touched your life.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

A message
of hope
to those who
are grieving.



What is The Dragonfly Project?

The Dragonfly Project is a registered 501 (c) (3) non-profit that sends condolence cards carrying a message of hope to people who are grieving. Our organization consists of volunteers who look up names in obituaries and help put together and mail packets out to people who are grieving; usually 3 to 6 months after the death has occurred. Each packet contains a condolence card, a copy of the dragonfly story printed on the inside cover and a dragonfly keychain.

Each year, thousands of dragonfly packets are sent throughout the United States and other countries to individuals who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Each dragonfly packet costs \$4.00 to make. The Dragonfly Project is operated by volunteers and a board of directors. Donations are welcome. Your donations are tax deductible.

OUR BEGINNINGS

In 2000, when an 11-year old, Hans Bonde, died from a brain tumor, Anne Marquardt Brooker and her mother sent his family a story about dragonflies and their significance in the cycle of life and death (written by Walter Dudley Cavert). The small gesture so moved the grieving family with its "message of hope" that it inspired Anne to create a nonprofit corporation that would reach out to others who were grieving the loss of a family member or friend. In 2002, when Anne was 11, she founded The Dragonfly Project to share this message of hope with others.

HOW CAN I GET A PACKET TO SEND TO SOMEONE?

To get a packet sent to you, please go to our website store and order a card to be shipped to you. Then you can sign and send the card on to whomever you wish. The cards in our store have room for you to insert your own message. Please allow 3 to 6 weeks to receive your order.