



One Family, Two Tragedies

by Ann Bromstedt

My name is Ann Bromstedt, and our family story is one that I have been asked to share with The Dragonfly Project. We grew up in Marshalltown, Iowa, a town of about 30,000 at that time. Life was good and simple. We built snow forts, went sledding, we played kick the can at night and whiffle ball. My brother, Pat, always let me tag along with him and his buddies. I was a tomboy.

I was the youngest in a family of six with three brothers as siblings. Mike was the oldest, Dave was middle, and Pat was two years older than I. My father was the fire chief and I was always in awe of his work. I was intrigued by his wisdom and how he juggled his professional life with raising four kids with my mother. My mother was a librarian at the high school. We all grew up, and became college students and working professionals. I remember sitting and having a conversation with one of my friends at college one evening. I told my friend... "I don't know what I would do without any one of my brothers."



Pat

Exactly 29 years ago, October 3rd, 1991, our world stopped. I was in my last year of pharmacy school at Iowa. I didn't have class that morning until 10:30, which was a rarity. I was usually up and out by 7:00 am, if not earlier. However, that morning, I jumped out of bed around 7:30 thinking I was late for class. It happened to be the same time, that my brother, Pat, was killed in a truck accident. Little did I know what had happened, so I went back to sleep.

One Family, Two Tragedies CONTINUES ON PAGE 5

Dad's Transformation

By Marcie O'Dwyer



William "Bill" & Linda Heine
(Dad & Mom)

As far back as February my Dad was complaining of ear and jaw pain and headaches. He was seen by physicians three times for a "sinus infection" until finally being diagnosed with Covid -19 on March 23rd, 2020. After struggling for weeks, my Dad left this world on April 1st, 2020. His loss was unexpected and tragic. This loss was exacerbated when my sisters were also diagnosed with Covid-19 forcing my three siblings and me into a 14-day quarantine. My Mother was left alone with her grief for those agonizing 14 days. Those days following my father's death were the longest, loneliest and darkest days of my life.

I had experienced the loss of family and friends. But the pain of previous losses was eased by the physical presence of my family, friends, and my community. I did suffer through grief in isolation fearing I too would get Covid while trying to process the loss of my dear Dad.

Prayers, texts, and cards provided light and forged a sense of connection with my community. One of the cards I received was from my friend and Dragonfly Board Member, Janell Stanton Soderberg. I was curious about the dragonfly keychain enclosed in the card. Reading the story of the dragonfly's transformation, I was encouraged to reevaluate my

Dad's Transformation CONTINUES ON PAGE 5

Executive Director's Corner: *A New Journey Begins*

By Pete Bonde

As I sit down to write this on September 28, 2020, I remember twenty years ago this night. Julie and I were both out of our house. Julie was at church playing recorder with the Global Folk group. I was at soccer practice with our sons Karl and Luke. Our oldest boy Jacob was at a high school football game. My sisters were at our home with our son Hans, who was on hospice.

Julie suddenly felt a wave of sadness and a heavy heart overcome her. I received a phone call, gathered my two boys, and headed home, a somber three-block walk. As I approached our front door, a person was there delivering some medical equipment. I told him it was not needed anymore. I called our church and our pastor answered. He went to the sanctuary where Julie was playing. When she saw him, she knew what had happened. Our son Hans had died.

The next days were a blur. How do you arrange life after the death of a son or daughter? With the help of family, friends, and our church, we had a wonderful celebration of Hans' life. After the service, we gathered with family and friends. We received a lot of support. We got home and some family members joined us. Then it was time for them to leave. The next few days were awful. I then went back to work and the kids were back at school. Julie was home alone. Julie had cared for Hans, but now he was gone. What was she to do? How could she survive? How could we survive?

Weeks turned into months. Fewer people were saying Hans' name. It was nearly six months, and Hans' birthday was approaching. However, we could no longer celebrate it

with Hans. On his birthday, after Julie had delivered Jacob to baseball practice, her grief dam broke. She sat in the car outside our house in tears, pleading with God for a sign from Hans. Anything. Just a crumb would suffice.

Then the mail came. Among the junk mail was a card from Valerie



Marquardt, a person we hardly knew. "Thinking of all of you and Hans on his birthday," it said. Along with the card was the Dragonfly Story. "The fact that we cannot see our friends or communicate with them after the transformation, which we call death, is no proof that they cease to exist." There it was. A sign from Hans. This totally changed Julie's grief journey.

Julie wrote about her experience in our Christmas letter, which Valerie received and shared with her daughter, Anne Booker. Anne said, "We should do this for other people." And so they did and The Dragonfly Project was born. A new journey began. We are so grateful to Valerie and Anne for the gift they gave and now has been received by more than 125,000 households.

If you would like to give a donation to The Dragonfly Project in memory of Hans or in honor of Anne Brooker, you can use the included envelope (if you received the hardcopy of this newsletter), or use this link <https://www.dragonflyproject.org/make-a-donation> to make an online donation from our website.

Please contact me at execdirector@dragonflyproject.org if you have any questions or comments about The Dragonfly Project.

~Pete





The Dragonfly Project Adds Outreach to Camp Penuel

By Lois Finney

The vision of Camp Penuel is to love others with God's love. The main purpose is bringing children and youth from impoverished areas of Costa Rica to a camp-like setting, allowing them to just be kids, while learning about the love of Jesus. The Camp lasts for 3 days and is free for children ages 7-11. Camp Penuel provides time for fun, crafts and games, swimming, enjoying wonderful home-cooked meals, seeing exciting Biblical dramas, and worshipping. The Camp also reaches out into the community by teaching English in local schools, making ukuleles in juvenile detention centers, doing work projects in at-risk areas, and training young adults to be Christian leaders. We welcome individuals, families, and teams to participate in our vision by praying for the Camp and/or coming to the Camp to get to know the people of Costa Rica. For more information, please visit our website, <https://www.cp-cr.org/> or our Facebook page, Camp Penuel Costa Rica.



Camp Penuel is proud to partner with The Dragonfly Project in bringing comfort to those in Hispanic areas who have recently lost a loved one. When it is safe to have children at Camp, our campers will color a Spanish version of the dragonfly card and attach a dragonfly keychain to take home and share with family or friends. In the meantime, we will be sharing a Spanish PDF version of the dragonfly story with people via email. We will also work with Pastors from Costa Rica and other Latin American countries, so that they, too, have this resource available to them. We see great potential for the Dragonfly Project as a powerful tool for bringing a message of hope to those who are grieving in the Spanish speaking world.



Dios te Bendiga (God Bless)

The Dragonfly Buzzette is the official newsletter of The Dragonfly Project and is published twice a year. It is available either in print or via email. You can also find it on our website. The next issue comes out in Spring 2021. The Dragonfly Buzzette team consists of Julie Bonde, Karen Bonde, Peter Bonde, Valerie Marquardt, Patsy Kahmann, P.J. Tombarge.

If you would like to share your dragonfly story with us, please fill out the form online at this page: dragonflyproject.org/share-your-story

Introducing Jennifer DeBruin

by Jennifer DeBruin, New Board Member

My name is Jennifer DeBruin and I'm excited to join The Dragonfly Project board! I've been working with the organization for over five years as a card packet leader and Adopt-A-State volunteer.

I first learned about The Dragonfly Project about eight years ago when I was working at Thrivent and came across a volunteering event in the lobby where volunteers assembled keychains. I was immediately drawn to the organization, so I reached out to Pete to see how I could get involved. I started leading my own card packet events with Thrivent employees and soon after became an Adopt-A-State volunteer. I've also personally sent many Dragonfly Project cards to grieving family and friends, and love the positive impact it has on others.



Emma, John, Jennifer, Cole

My family lives in Neenah, WI and includes my husband, two high school children named Emma and Cole, and my work companion, Bella, our lovely lab mix. We enjoy biking, taking walks, playing yard/board games and making fires together. We also love traveling, adventure and being outdoors.

Recipient Responses from Facebook Posts

We received ours over seven years ago after the loss of our son. Still have my keychain & cherish it. I have shared the Dragonfly story with many. I shared it with my sister after the loss of her husband, also helped her through a difficult time, little did I know I would be sharing with all nine months later in her eulogy. Thank you all for what you do .

~Judy

We received a Dragonfly card about 5 mos after our son died. It was wonderful, beautiful and so strengthening. Thank you to whomever sent it and to this project. The mystery is like life and the end of life. Full of mystery, love and gratitude. Thank you!

~Terri

Hi my name is Dominique Johnston my son Damon passed away on July 17th, 2017 from a rare brain tumor/cancer after fighting for almost two years and today when I opened my mail after missing him so much more then before these last few days and saw your card and the keychain it felt nice knowing that even if it's just a small act of kindness that someone who never met me nor my son cares enough to send something so sweet that I can hold dear to my heart. My dragonfly will go everywhere with me right next to his ashes in a locket. You really did make my whole week alot better thank you so much you never really understand the small things till that's all you have left I hope you keep doing this amazing work and keep being the amazing person/people that you are you are truly amazing Thank you so much from me and my Damon.

~ Dominique

We received our card from your organization in 2013 after our son lost his battle with depression at age 18. I had never heard of The Dragonfly Project before. The story within the card made me cry and gave me a sense of comfort. Then we received another card from a former coworker of mine! Now I make sure to always have these cards readily on hand and they are the sympathy card I send out. I have had many people thank me and ask me about them. It always makes me happy when I get to retell my story of when I received mine and direct them to your website. Seven years later, I still cannot thank you enough. Much love to all of your volunteers and your organization!

~ Lynn

I'm the Mother of Brad Preston. I got my card and the dragonfly key chain, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for you thinking of my family and the loss of our Son! Much love from the Murray family.

~ Phyllis

One Family, Two Tragedies continued

I proceeded through my morning routine, and went to class. During class, the Dean of the Pharmacy school walked to the front of the lecture hall, and he asked if I was in attendance. I popped up and walked with him out of the lecture hall into the lobby where the priest from the Newman Center was standing. He greeted me, grabbed my hand, and told me that we had had a death in the family. One of my brothers had been killed in an accident. "Which brother?" Security took me to my apartment, where I ran up the steps to call any of my brothers. I started with Dave, and there was my answer. He told me it was Pat. Pat was 25 at the time, and was a route driver for Pepsi. He was married with an 18-month-old daughter. He had started his route that morning and another semi driver fell asleep at the wheel, and hit him head on. He was killed instantly. My mother passed away due to health reasons, 7 years later. I struggled to understand why things happened the way they did for us. We then lost our father to esophageal cancer in 2015.

Then the unthinkable happened. Exactly two years ago this October 28th, my brother and sister-in-law went through the same pain that my parents did. Their son, Keenan Patrick Hilsabeck, was killed in a senseless car accident in Fort Worth, Texas. Keenan and his friend were pulling into an intersection which unbeknownst to them, two other cars were drag racing and hit them broadside. My nephew was killed in the accident. He died at the hospital. The trial is pending.

A few months went by after the painstaking death, and The Dragonfly Project reached out to my sister (in-law), Lana, to send condolences and give her a purpose. I will always be grateful for the comfort she and my brother have found in this with the keychain dragonflies and the postcards. Because, we all need something to believe in as far as mortality goes, especially when so many young people die so unreasonably and unfairly.

This is our family story. It hurts, but when I see the dragonflies cruising around in the air, I feel better. Thank you for this opportunity to share our story.



Keenan

Dad's Transformation continued

Father's death. Specifically, the loss of his physical presence, the sound of his voice and the twinkle in his blue eyes.

I prayed for strength to accept this loss and found my grief evolving into gratitude. Gratitude for the gift of my Dad. A Dad who was kind, generous and loving. A dad who enjoyed the simple pleasures in life. Nothing brought him more joy than simply spending time with his family. A dad who exemplified unconditional love.

Dad's actions after my Mom's stroke provided a living example of this love. After over 55 years of my Mom taking care of my Dad and all of us, Dad became her caretaker. Dad's sole focus was Mom. Instead of being angry and bitter he remained devoted to Linda's happiness and well-being. I can speak for my family when I say we were blessed and

privileged to witness his lasting example of unconditional love. So, while I still miss our morning coffee talks, our road trips and our current events discussions, I know my Dad has been transformed and is among us, always. I am so very grateful to the Dragonfly Project and my friend Janell for inspiring me to see my Dad's death as a transformation and not a loss.

I want to leave you with this quote from Buddha *"In the end these things matter most- How well did you love? How fully did you live? How deeply did you let go?"* It reminds me of my Dad as well as of the message of the Dragonfly Project, *"The fact that we cannot see our friends or communicate with them after the transformation, which we call death, is no proof that they cease to exist."*

God Bless and be well!



Front Left to Right: Marcie, Bill, Linda, Susan, Cindy
Back with hat: AJ



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 its message of hope only because of your generosity! Memorials and honorariums are listed below and on the next page.

Memorials—March through August 2020

In Memory of Maynard Anderson
Given by Cheryl Biegler

In Memory of Dar & VerNel Anderson
Given by Ladonna Kiefat

In Memory of Roger, Benjamin,
& Jacob Baalson
Given by Kay Baalson

In Memory of Earl & Hans Bonde
Given by Charlotte Bonde

In Memory of Hans Bonde
Given by Julie and Pete Bonde

In Memory of Hazel Braaten
Given by Kristine Braaten-Lee

In Memory of Myles Aaron Brawner
Given by Karen Hillerman

In Memory of Sister Ruth Ann Brooker
Given by Ruby Benson

In Memory of Tessa Brueni,
Our Daughter
Given by Cindy Brueni

In Memory of John Cain
Given by Donny Stanton

In Memory of Louis R. Calicchio
Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of James S Carpenter VI
Given by Nancy Carpenter

In Memory of Tara Christensen
Given by Diane Christensen

In Memory of Edna Coates
Given by Margaret Conti

In Memory of John Connolly
Given by Marie Hasty

In Memory of COVID 19 Victims
Given by Kay and Bud Bjorke

In Memory of Nathan Crowe
Given by Lisa Hanneman

In Memory of Ann Czech
Given by Mitch Czech

In Memory of Keith Duff
Given by Ladonna Kiefat

In Memory of Elaine Dugan
Given by Edward Mattei

In Memory of Dorothy Eggiman
Given by Phyllis Miller

In Memory of Andy Englund
Given by Wendy Englund

In Memory of Edward Fitzsimons
Given by Raymond Fitzsimons

In Memory of Cole Hammond, Our Son
Given by Gayle Hammond

In Memory of Charlotte Hanna, Mother
Given by Kathleen Hanna

In Memory of Lloyd Hildebrand, Brother
Given by Joann Johnson

In Memory of Mabel Hughes
Given by Marie Hasty

In Memory of Lance T. Johnson
Given by Yvonne Johnson

In Memory of Florence & Stan Kabat
Given by Mary Geurts

In Memory of Paul Kittleson
Given by Marie Hasty

In Memory of My Mr. Man, Bob Kurtz
Given by Marcia Kurtz

In Memory of Dick & Brian Lardonnois
Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of Amanda Marek
Given by Charlotte Brooker
& Gene Mammenga

In Memory of Zachery Scott Matschiner
Given by Kathy Matschiner

In Memory of Mike
Given by Judy Kornder

In Memory of Jacob, Son
Given by Steve and Mary K Moe

In Memory of Troy Perron
Given by Virginia Johnson

In Memory of Joseph "Joey" Plant
Given by Vicki Plant

In Memory of James Poole
Given by Diane Netzloff

In Memory of Jon Radle
Given by Diane Radle

In Memory of Jan Rickertsen
Given by Joyce Margritz

In Memory of John M. Roll
Given by Leona Roll

In Memory of Julie Scheer
Given by Cheryl Biegler

In Memory of Sara Schewe
Given by Ruth Schewe

In Memory of Miles M. Sudbeck
Given by Nancee Sudbeck

In Memory of Ellen Voce
Given by Ladonna Kiefat

In Memory of Jeffrey Wagenlander
Given by Margaret Wagenlander

In Memory of Alberta Whitaker
Given by Amy Hennen

In Memory of Avery and Krista
Given by Kathy White

In Memory of Micah Wood
Given by Liv Norderhaug

In Memory of Justin Zirbes, Son
Given by Carol Zirbes

Honorariums—March through August 2020

In Honor of Anniversary in August
Given by Kristine Braaten-Lee

In Honor of Nancy Barbo
Given by Richard Love

In Honor of Hazel & Arndt Braaten
wedding anniversary
Given by Kristine Braaten-Lee

In Honor of Margarette Brooker
Given by Sharon & Brad
Schmidtbauer
Given by Valerie Marquardt & Greg
Brooker

In Honor of Cora Martinez
Given by Trudy Simonson

In Celebration of my Daughters
Given by Patti White

In Celebration of my Daughters
& their Families
Given by Patti White

The Dragonfly Project
Board of Directors

Karen Bonde
Chair

Janell Stanton Soderberg
Vice Chair

Brianna Walvoort
Secretary

Jennifer DeBruin
Member at Large

Winda Roets
Member at Large

P.J. Tombarge
Member at Large

Executive Director
Pete Bonde

Founder
Anne Marquardt Brooker



Help bring hope to those who are grieving. Give to the Max Day 2020 is scheduled for Thursday, November 19! Each gift you give makes The Dragonfly Project eligible to additional Prize Grants of \$500, \$1000 or \$10,000.

Click on this link to Give to the Max: <https://www.givemn.org/organization/The-Dragonfly-Project>

Save the Date! ~ You Are Invited!



1:00 P.M.
SATURDAY
MARCH 13, 2021

19th ANNUAL
DRAGONFLY PROJECT
CELEBRATION & REMEMBRANCE
EVENT

Pending COVID-19 restrictions:
Join us in honoring loved ones
and celebrating The Dragonfly Project at:

NATIVITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
3312 SILVER LAKE ROAD
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55418
Or watch us online via our website

To let us know if you are coming,
please see our website:

<https://www.dragonflyproject.org/annualcelebrationinvite>

If you have a photo of a loved one that you would like included in our celebration 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)—due by February 20, 2021.



P.O. Box 19264
Minneapolis, MN 55419
dragonflyproject.org

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Twin Cities, MN
Permit# 31777

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 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 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 (dragonflyproject.org/online-store) and order a card to be shipped to you. Then you can sign and send the card to whomever you wish. The cards in our store have room for you to insert your own message. Please allow 2 to 3 weeks to receive your order. It is never too late to tell someone you care about their loss.