The Dragonfly Project®

Volume 42 — Fall 2026

MEET THE VOLUNTEER

Volunteer Spotlight: Sally Nelson



The Dragonfly Project is fortunate to have volunteers who are willing to step up wherever they are needed. Sally Nelson is a wonderful example of that spirit of service.

Sally originally volunteered with The Dragonfly Project through our Adopt-A-State program, helping identify grieving families who may benefit from receiving a message of hope. Sally's commitment to our mission continued to grow as she took on two additional roles as our Web Developer and Newsletter Project Manager, bringing her skills and creativity to multiple areas of the organization!

SAVE THE DATE JULY 31, 2027!

The Dragonfly Project's 25th Anniversary - see page 6





In Memoriam: Corinna Marry Lowe

FROM MICHELLE MARTENS

"We not only lost our daughter 4/1/26 but we lost our son 11/29/23. They were both age 38. My heart is very broken. However, my prayer is for God to use me to help others and bring them close to him so the pain they are enduring is doable because without him it is not possible. I am living proof. If I didn't have God in my life, I wouldn't be here as I have lost all of my children. I hurt and every day is painful, but I can put one foot in front of the other and look for the joy he gives us in each day. No matter what life throws at me, I am God's child and I am only here on borrowed time like all of us and a mission to complete. I know I will see my children again someday. Thank you for the Dragonfly, I never knew the meaning."

If you would like to share your dragonfly story with us, please fill out the form by clicking the link on this web page: dragonflyproject.org/share-your-story

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OUR PURPOSE

The Dragonfly Project brings a message of hope to those who are grieving by reminding people that they are not alone and that the connection to their loved ones is not over.

NOTES from the Executive Director

Happy Fall!

It has been a very busy and exciting year for The Dragonfly Project! In recent months, we've participated in several events to help spread awareness of our mission. You can read more about these events in this issue. For me, the most significant part of these experiences was meeting people who have received Dragonfly Project packets, and learning what those packets meant to them during such a difficult time. Hearing their stories is a powerful reminder of why we do what we do, and why it is so important to continue sharing our message of hope with even more grieving people. We also held several packet assembly events to sign cards for our Tragedy Outreach Response program.

You may have noticed that we have a new logo! We are so grateful to **Sara Weingartner** of Creative Soul Design for creating this logo design, as well as several of the cards you can purchase in our store. Thank you so much, Sara!

I am excited to announce that we are preparing to launch our brand-new website! By the time you're reading this, it will most likely be "live". You can visit us at the same address: **www.dragonflyproject.org.** We'd love to hear what you think! We are incredibly grateful to **Julie Bonde** for designing and maintaining our previous website for so many years. Our online store will continue to work just as it always has. You will also be able to order other merchandise with our logo and some of our card designs on our new Redbubble site at: https://www.redbubble.com/people/DflyProject/shop, launching soon!

You'll notice a fresh, updated look to this issue, and we hope you enjoy it as much as we do. A special thank-you goes to volunteer **Sally Nelson**, who designed our new website AND took on the role of Project Manager for this issue of the newsletter. We are also grateful to volunteer **Kelly Mundhenke,** who created the layout and did the graphic design for this issue. Sally and Kelly are also two of our wonderful "Adopt-A-State" volunteers. Thank you both so much! More special thanks is given to **Julie Bonde**, who started the newsletter in 2005 and did much of the work on it until this issue. Julie's contributions to The Dragonfly Project are numerous, and we are so grateful for all of them and for her continued involvement.

We are also thrilled to share that **2027 marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of The Dragonfly Project!** We've already started planning several events to honor this incredible milestone. The main event will be our 25th Anniversary Celebration, taking place on the afternoon of Saturday, July 31, 2027, in White Bear Lake, Minnesota. Save the date, and be sure to read the article in this issue for more details and watch our website, social media and e-newsletters for more information as it is available.

Finally, we are excited to announce that very soon we will have a NEW CARD design available, another design by Heidi Leppala. Also, in early January 2027, we will be launching our 25th Anniversary year with a CONTEST to design our first Pet Loss Card! Please watch our website for announcements and details.

Thank you so much to all of our supporters! Some of you have been with The Dragonfly Project for many years, while others have only recently discovered us. Wherever you are in your journey with us, please know how much we appreciate and value each and every one of you. Your generosity, through donations both large and small, makes it possible for us to continue our mission. As you consider your end-of-year giving, we hope you'll keep The Dragonfly Project in mind. We simply could not reach so many grieving people without your support. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!



Tara Morrison, *Executive Director*
TaraM@dragonflyproject.org

▶ MEET THE VOLUNTEER

Volunteer Spotlight: Ann Danko



For nearly a decade, Ann Danko has been a dedicated volunteer with The Dragonfly Project, faithfully making sure that cards, CDs, and books find their way to people who are grieving the loss of a loved one. Week after week, she shows up with the same care, dependability, and compassion that have made her such an important part of the The Dragonfly Project family.

Ann began volunteering with The Dragonfly Project around 2018. Ann was a recipient of a dragonfly packet after losing a loved one. She experienced firsthand how meaningful it can be to receive a thoughtful message during a difficult time. She knew then that she wanted to help bring the same support to others.

Today, Ann checks The Dragonfly Project's online system every day for new orders, carefully prepares the requested cards, CDs, and books, and makes the trip to the post office twice a week. After mailing the packages, she updates the system so each order is marked as shipped. She has held this same volunteer role since she began with The Dragonfly Project, bringing reliability and care to a job that happens quietly behind the scenes.

When asked why The Dragonfly Project's mission is important to her, Ann reflected on the way grief can continue long after the initial days and weeks of loss. Friends and family often reach out right away, but that support can fade with time. The Dragonfly Project's cards remind grieving people that they are still remembered and cared about, even months after their loved one has passed.

Ann is retired and fills her time with an impressive variety of volunteer work and hobbies. She also volunteers with the Prayer Shawl gathering, where she has made baby blankets, shawls, and lap blankets. ***Continued on page 6***

GIVE TO THE MAX DAY

Starting November 1st, please help us continue our mission of *bringing a message of hope to those who are grieving* by donating during this wonderful online event!

gtmd
november 19, 2026

Founded in 2009, GiveMN provides nonprofits and schools with critically needed fundraising technology, tools, and education that build stronger, more equitable communities. Organizations need more than giving days to meet their missions, that's why GiveMN.org is active year-round, empowering nonprofits and donors to make connections 365 days a year.

GiveMN connects donors with organizations through an online giving platform, GiveMN.org, which enables charitable giving any time and any place, allowing people to donate with ease and enthusiasm.

Give to the Max Day is Thursday, November 19th, but donations are accepted until the end of the year. The Dragonfly Project has participated in this event for many years and appreciates the generosity of the many donors who give through the platform. Please visit our cause at GiveMN.org and feel free to donate as you are able to The Dragonfly Project. Our goal this year is to raise at least $3,500. Thank you in advance for your generosity and support! Thank you in advance for your generosity and support!

WWW.GIVEMN.ORG/ORGANIZATION/THE-DRAGONFLY-PROJECT

BOARD MEMBER *Introduction*

JORGEN LERVICK ~ *Chair*

Jorgen Lervick is a corporate attorney at Circana, where she focuses on business transactions, governance, and compliance. She brings legal expertise, business insight, and a strong commitment to community service through her pro bono work and nonprofit involvement. As a board member, she is honored to support The Dragonfly Project's mission of offering comfort and hope to those who are grieving. Jorgen has served on the board of directors since May, 2025.



SALES TAX UPDATE

We recently learned that we need to charge sales tax on orders shipped to Minnesota addresses or are purchased at in-person events in Minnesota. As a result, some of you will notice this charge on your invoices going forward. If you order by mail with a written order and pay with a check, please take into account that there will be state, **and** sometimes city and county tax added to your total. Thank you for your understanding.

Summer EVENTS by Pam Olson

The Dragonfly Project participated in several events this summer where we could raise awareness about our organization. Our Executive Director, Tara Morrison and board of directors members Pam Olson and Jorgen Lervick participated in the Canvas Health "Stomp Out Suicide" event that took place on August 8 in Wyoming, MN. This event is a family-friendly 5K run/walk and designed to help people remember their loved ones, feel hopeful, connect with others, and provide helpful resources.





Tara, Pam and board of directors member Joy Akurienne also had a booth at the "Pink and Teal Classic" event held in Oakdale on July 18, which raised money for the fight against ovarian cancer and breast cancer. Our booth fee was graciously sponsored by donor Ann Flis - thank you, Ann!



At both events, The Dragonfly Project booth was a place where those affected by the loss of a loved one could stop by and share a story and learn more about The Dragonfly Project. Participants were given Dragonfly keychains and materials that explained our mission and how to get involved. Some visitors had been recipients of packets (card and keychain) when they lost their loved one, and it was wonderful to hear in person how much it meant to them.

CALLING ALL AMATEUR ARTISTS!

To kick off our 25th Anniversary year, we will be holding a design contest for a Pet Loss Card to add to our other designs. If you would like something to be published that you can add to your portfolio, this is a great opportunity! Watch our website and social media for contest details!

► In Memoriam: Daniel Hicks

FROM LADONNA HEMBREE

"I lost my 15 year old daughter in 2004 in a car accident. I lost my 22 year old son in 2007 to a motorcycle accident. This past November (2025), I lost my last living child at age 35 to a motorcycle accident. I have never heard of this organization and received a card and dragonfly key ring. I am so thankful and honored to have received it. God bless your mission forward."



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We have continued to reach grieving people with a message of hope through continued efforts of our wonderful Adopt-A-State (AAS) volunteers and others.

We always need more help with the AAS program – if you have even a few hours per month to help, we'd love to tell you more! Our other volunteer needs are also growing, and we'd love your help in any of the listed areas.

Do you have other ideas of how we can spread the word about The Dragonfly Project? We'd love to hear them!

Email us at:
TaraM@dragonflyproject.org

Social Media Coordinator: Our wonderful former volunteer, Carle, is going to school and working, so this position is open. Do you love social media? Can you help us with graphics and posting on our various accounts and help us get started on Tik Tok? Apply today!

Graphic Design: We urgently need someone with Adobe Illustrator access to help us with occasional small projects and edits to existing graphics. Approx. 1-3 hours a month.

Event Coordinator: Do you have ideas for fundraisers, or are you willing to take ideas from the BOD and others and help make them happen? We'd love an Events Coordinator! This person will also play a key role in our 25th Anniversary events, so we need someone local in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

Outreach Coordinator: This role will involve researching/reaching out to groups such as scout groups, national honor society groups, senior centers, church-based groups, etc. to provide information on The Dragonfly Project and schedule packet-assembly events. This position can be done fully remotely. We anticipate a need of approximately 3-4 hours per month.

Packet Assembly Event Hosts: We need packet assembly hosts in the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area. This involves assembling the cards and keychain packets that our Adopt-A-State volunteers have worked on, as well as the card packets that will be offered on our online store and at events. A NEW option is to host a Tragedy Outreach packet event. This is a great activity for families, scout groups, etc. and could be hosted just about anywhere! For more information, go to: https://shorturl.at/6qGfu

To apply, complete our application at Dragonflyproject.org/get-involved

The Dragonfly Project's 25th Anniversary - 2027!



In 2027, we will be commemorating the 25th anniversary of the founding of The Dragonfly Project! We are making plans for several different events and will be sharing more about these as we know more.

Our main event will be The Dragonfly Project's 25th Anniversary Festival Celebration event, which will be held on the afternoon of Saturday, July 31st 2027 at Lakewood Hills Park in White Bear Lake, MN. We will have a covered pavilion and there is ample parking, a playground, and more! Some of the ideas we are considering for this event include inviting attendees to bring "memory boards" honoring their loved ones they have lost and an "open mic" time to tell us about your loved one, followed by a candle lighting ceremony, a walk to a pond to observe dragonflies and talk about these incredible insects, a silent auction (please start thinking about ways you could contribute to the auction!), craft activities including making a dragonfly out of sticks, leaves etc. and painting dragonflies on flat rocks, keychain toss using dragonfly project keychains, a cultural talk about the significance of dragonflies to various cultures around the world, a glitter tattoo artist, and a time to recognize volunteers - past and present! Do you have other ideas? Please share them, and/or sign up to help!

For updates on this event and others that we will be hosting as part of the anniversary year, please check our website, our social media links (Facebook, Instagram, X) and we will also be sending out a few "mini-newsletters" by email only - so if we do not have your email address, please share it with us so we can send them to you! Email to sign up to help or share your ideas, to share your email address for updates, and to offer to help: Anniversary@dragonflyproject.org

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Ann Danko, continued from page 3 -

She also volunteers with the Prayer Shawl gathering, where she has made baby blankets, shawls, and lap blankets. Through Community Emergency Services, she helps pack and sort pet food for the Ani-meals program and has assisted with special food distributions. She has also supported Clare House, participated in Alzheimer's fundraising and walks, and finds time to make her own greeting cards, read, garden, walk, and enjoy plays, shows, and local history with friends.

Ann's dedication is a wonderful example of how meaningful impact often comes from simple acts of service. We are so grateful for the time, care, and compassion Ann brings to The Dragonfly Project!

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!

In Memory of Greg Belstler
Given by Bill & Cherri Althoff
Given by Kathy & Steve Anderson
Given by William Becken
Given by Dorothy Belstler
Given by Zinaida Gutmanis
Given by Lyle & Elena Johnson
Given by Jan & John Keprios
Given by Virginia Leutgeb
Given by Denny & Sherry Luettinger
Given by Denise Marecki
Given by Stanley and Barbara Miller
Given by Colleen Nora
Given by Patty and Bruce Patterson
Given by Eileen Ronning & Brian Austin Henry
Given by Frances Sarnacki
Given by Mark & Liz Schramm
Given by Barry & Janet Sullivan

In Memory of Joe Belstler
Given by Elizabeth Schramm

In Memory of my twin sister Gwen
Given by Gail Boline

In Memory of Hans Bonde
Given by Julie & Pete Bonde
Given by Thrivent Foundation

In Memory of Tess Brueni
Given by Dave & Cindy Brueni

In Memory of Larry Bunte
Given by Katie Jenkins

In Memory of Tara Christenson
Given by Diane Christenson

In Memory of Nathan Crowe
Given by Lisa Hanneman

In Memory of Chase Draper
Given by Tracey Draper

In Memory of Hank Ferstl
Given by Bob Weiss

In Memory of Elfriede Gentilini
Given by Craig and Donna Kiefat & Jerry

In Memory of John Geres
Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of Sara K Gross
Given by Tim Gross

In Memory of Jimmy Hackbush
Given by Maureen Van Roden

In Memory of David Kajer
Given by Valerie Marquardt

In Memory of Kim Kiefat
Given by Craig & Donna Kiefat

In Memory of Gloria Kumferman
Given by Valerie Marquardt & Greg Brooker

In Memory of Susan Rambaugh Larson
Given by Bev & Don Enger

In Memory of Ursula Leyoub
Given by Lesley Leger

In Memory of Zachary Scott Matschiner
Given by mom Kathy

In Memory of George C. Maurer
Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of Jude Sandberg
Given by Gloria Sandberg

In Memory of Sara Schewe
Given by Ruth Schewe

In Memory of Gage William Smith
Given by Azhar Kothawala

In Memory of Sandy Smith
Given by Gary & Theresa Alderman

In Memory of Miles M. Sudbeck
Given by Nancey Sudbeck

In Memory of Geoff Swanson
Given by Bebbie & Howard Swanson

In Memory of Peggy Swanson
Given by Karen Reynolds

In Memory of Gail Tepp
Given by Janet Otten

In Memory of Billy Voce
Given by Ladonna Kiefat

In Memory of Cheryl Wagner
Given by Heather Henry

In Memory of Alberta Whitaker
Given by Norman Whitaker

In Memory of Tedi Jo Williams
Given by Gary & Theresa Alderman

In Honor of Pete and Julie Bonde's wedding anniversary
Given by Karen Weiberg

MAILING PREFERENCE

If you are receiving a PRINTED COPY of this newsletter and are willing to switch to an EMAIL COPY ONLY, please let us know at: newsletter@dragonflyproject.org. We are striving to reduce printing and mailing costs whenever possible. Also, we will be sending some mini-newsletters to those we have email addresses for but won't be mailing printed copies of those. If you still prefer to receive a printed copy, please update your mailing address if you move or are away for part of the year. This helps us avoid issues with forwarding and related costs.

News From The Dragonfly Project is the official newsletter of The Dragonfly Project and is published twice per year. The next issue will be published in Spring 2027. Additional mini-newsletters will be sent by email only.

Newsletter Team:

Sally Nelson, *Project Manager*
Kelly Mundhenke, *Layout & Design*
Joy Akurienne, Julie Bonde, Karen Bonde, Pete Bonde, Sharon Foss, Jorgen Lervick, Tara Morrison

THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jorgen Lervick - *Chair*
Karen Bonde - *Vice Chair*
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***Founder* - Anne Marquardt Brooker**

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The Dragonfly Project®

Volume 42 — Fall 2026

WHAT IS THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT?

The Dragonfly Project is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that sends condolence cards and messages of hope to grieving individuals. Run by volunteers and a board of directors, the group checks obituaries and mails support packets—typically three to six months after a loss. Each packet includes a condolence card, the dragonfly story printed inside, and a dragonfly keychain. Thousands of packets are sent annually across the United States and internationally. Each packet costs $4.50 to produce, and tax-deductible donations are always welcome.

Our Beginnings - In 2000, after 11-year-old Hans Bonde died from a brain tumor, Anne Marquardt Brooker and her mother sent his family a story by Walter Dudley Cavert about dragonflies and the cycle of life and death. Deeply moved by the gesture, the family found a renewed sense of hope. Inspired by their reaction, Anne founded The Dragonfly Project in 2002 at the age of 11 to share that same comfort with others.

HOW CAN I GET A PACKET TO SEND TO SOMEONE? To send a packet to a loved one, please visit our online store at dragonflyproject.org/online-store. Have the order shipped directly to you so you can sign the dragonfly card, insert your own personal message and hand-deliver or mail it. Please allow 1 to 2 weeks for delivery. Grief is a long journey, and it is never too late to share your sympathy.