

Milestones

a publication of CarePartners Foundation

Summer 2012

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Connecting With Grieving Children

Blair Fielding has been the Children's Grief Counselor with Kids Path® at CarePartners since its inception in 2005. Her office, with its bright pastel mural, toys and tools to promote expression, is designed for children. "Somehow, I connect well with kids," she says. "I just love every child I work with."

Kids Path® was founded by Hospice and Palliative Care of Greensboro to serve children with serious, progressive medical conditions and to support those grieving the illness or death of loved ones. The CarePartners program focuses on grieving children.

Blair works with kids from 5 years old through high school, usually meeting with them at school. Children are referred by schools when a loved one dies. Some have difficult home lives that are compounded by loss and grief. Kids come from a variety of backgrounds and are served free of charge. Most families with whom she works could not afford to pay for counseling.



Children enjoy using the sand tray to tell stories that reflect their feelings.

"Children's grief looks different," Blair explains. "Even through middle school, kids don't tend to express grief verbally." This is one of the reasons she often refers to them as "the forgotten grievers." Sometimes adults are so consumed by their own grief that they can't recognize it in their children. Sometimes the desire to protect children or the belief that they are too young to grieve leads adults to avoid addressing it.

This is where Blair comes in. She offers supportive counseling that embraces the way children communicate. She answers many questions but never asks questions, instead making empathetic statements with which children can agree or disagree. She also doesn't use euphemisms for death that can confuse children, and she always validates what they are feeling. As one child said, "All feelings are okay."

Blair works with the children through expressive arts like making journals and memory boxes, drawing pictures, making puppets or votive candle holders and working with clay. Two activities Blair says kids love are making gnomes and using the sand tray. Completing a gnome improves self esteem and leaves children with something meaningful and comforting that fits in a pocket or under a pillow. The sand tray allows kids to create worlds and use characters to tell stories that help Blair see what they think and feel.

"Typically we will meet 6 to 8 times and I let the child know they can fire me at any time." In one case



Blair Fielding, Children's Grief Counselor, points out the tears on one of the characters in the mural in her office. The artist, Dana Irwin, added them after a 9 year old girl mentioned that none of the male characters looked sad.

Blair started working with a family when the father was admitted to Hospice Home Care. They came to counseling together at first. When the father died, it was particularly helpful for the children to work with Blair while their mother was dealing with her own grief and the financial challenges facing the family. Blair provided continuity for the children through their father's illness and death. She notes that "commonly, kids who have lost a parent are worried about the surviving parent or guardian." Blair works with them to help share this concern and deal with their emotions while remembering those they've lost.

To support the CarePartners Kids Path® Program, you may make a secure donation at carepartnersfoundation.org or participate in the Golf Tournament on August 23, featured on page 2.

To learn more about Kids Path®, visit carepartners.org or call 828-251-0126.





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Calling All Golfers! Tee Off for Kids Path®



*The CarePartners Golf Tournament Committee.
Back row: Blaine Killian, George Suggs, George Stone
Front row: Karen Killian, Ernestine Stone*

Get those golf clubs shined up and ready for the second annual CarePartners Golf Tournament on August 23. The tournament will benefit the Kids Path® children's grief program, and is organized by our dedicated troupe of volunteers, George Suggs, George and Ernestine Stone and Blaine and Karen Killian. These five enthusiastic individuals have collectively volunteered for CarePartners Foundation for over 83 years. They have helped with almost all special events benefiting Hospice, including the Super Flea rummage

sale, Chunns Cove Horse Show, Festival of Trees and the new Holidays for Hospice. When asked why they volunteer to help CarePartners Hospice, George Suggs says, "It was unanimous. Giving back to the community and being able to help others is a rewarding part of our lives. By volunteering we have met many people and made lifelong friends."

Second Annual CarePartners Golf Tournament August 23, 2012

High Vista Country Club, Mills River

To benefit

Kids Path

the CarePartners Hospice Children's Grief Program

\$100 per golfer

Sponsorships available for \$100-\$1000

Registration Deadline: August 10, 2012

Find tournament details at
carepartnersfoundation.org

To participate or sponsor, contact:

George Suggs at 828-712-9049 or
gesuggs@aol.com

or call CarePartners Foundation at
828-277-4815

Tournament Sponsor



Visit our website for additional sponsors.



This Year's Memorial Ornament is a "Basket Case"

This year's Memorial Ornament celebrates local custom crafting. The ornament design is based on a quilt by Asheville quilter Janice Maddox, and is made in Brevard, North Carolina by The Charleston Mint, a family-owned company that started in 1974.

The limited edition brass ornament captures all the intricacies of the quilt's design. The quilt, called "Basket Case," was made in 1992 and is based on a quilt made by the great aunts of a friend of Janice's back in the 1930's. "Basket Case" is one of over 30 quilts that were donated to CarePartners Hospice last year by the Asheville Quilt Guild.

Quilts have been a part of Janice's life since she was a child. She grew up sleeping under quilts made by her grandmother out of cotton grown by her grandfather and milled at the local cotton gin. Janice learned to sew from her mother, who as a child remembered collecting walnuts to dye fabrics to get that "certain brown that went with anything."

Janice started quilting in 1985, and joined the Asheville Quilt Guild in 1989, a year after it was founded. She started teaching quilting in 1991, and taught quilting for over 15 years. While she no longer teaches, she continues to quilt and to be involved in the quilting community.

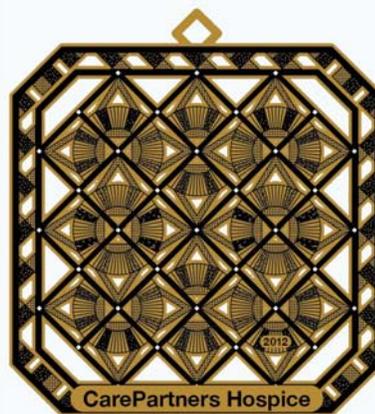
Janice says, "I enjoy all processes of making a quilt: handling and cutting the fabric, sewing the pieces together, quilting it. But probably my favorite aspect is the designing, seeing the potential with a certain color or shape, or changing my mind about a pattern or idea to create something even more exciting."

We are excited to have Janice's quilt be the inspiration for this year's Memorial Ornament.

Limited edition ornaments will be available starting in September. Look for an order form in your mailbox or on our website then. Can't wait? Contact us to pre-order by calling 828-277-4815 or emailing Stephanie at sjones-byrne@carepartners.org.



Quilter Janice Maddox with the quilt "Basket Case," which inspired this year's Memorial Ornament.



The 2012 Memorial Ornament, created by The Charleston Mint.

Milestones is a publication of CarePartners Foundation

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Golfing for
Kids Path

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To speak with someone about CarePartners Health Services, including Hospice, Palliative Care, Inpatient and Outpatient Rehabilitation, Home Health, Private Duty, and Adult Day Services, please call 828-277-4800.



6th Annual Mustangs for Hospice
Pony Run and All Ford Car Show
September 15 & 16, 2012
Biltmore Square Mall, Asheville



In its first five years, the Mustangs for Hospice Pony Run has raised over \$120,000 for CarePartners Hospice. Organized by the Blue Ridge Mustang Club of Asheville and sponsored by Ken Wilson Ford, this year's Mustangs for Hospice is a two-day event featuring a car show on Saturday, September 15 and a 52-mile "Pony Run" drive on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Tickets are \$25 for the car show and Pony Run, or \$20 for the Pony Run only. More information is available from the Blue Ridge Mustang Club at brmcoa.org or by calling 828-407-3976.