Dear Survivors,

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your new C.O.P.S. National President. My name is Connie Moyer and I am the surviving spouse of Lancaster (OH) Police Officer M. Scott Moyer, EOW 5/26/2017.

Our story is a bit different than most, although I’ve learned there are many survivors with similar situations. In 1999, Scott responded to an officer down call where he contracted the blood borne pathogen disease, Hepatitis C. Little was known about the disease at that time, but it quickly started showing its effects on Scott and eventually led to forced disability and the end of his career in law enforcement. May 26, 2017, on our eldest daughter’s birthday, my soulmate of 40 years left my side.

Early on, my struggles were applying for benefits: both disability after Scott was injured and death benefits after he died. These experiences turned into a passion of helping survivors with this process. Please know that I am here to help you with ANYTHING you need help with. The C.O.P.S. National Office also has dedicated staff members who are incredible resources for any questions your family or department may have.

You will hear more of my story throughout the year as I look forward to meeting you and sharing OUR stories together whether at the upcoming Surviving to Thriving Conference, National Police Week, or one of the many other events held throughout my term. Our struggles are different, yet as survivors, our grief is the same!

As we enter the holiday season I realize that this is such a difficult time on survivors. Please know you are in my thoughts and prayers as we go through this season together! Faith, Family, and Friends are how we endure the hardships in life. Grab hold of each other as we travel on our grief journeys together.

Not only were Scott and I together for 40 years but 2024 marks the 40th Anniversary of C.O.P.S. which makes this term extra special to me. We will be celebrating the entire year acknowledging the many accomplishments this organization has achieved.

A brand new event happening in January is the Surviving to Thriving Conference. This conference is for all survivors to come together and share fun activities, network, engage with mental health professionals, and experience the peer support of other survivors which is the heart of the C.O.P.S. organization. Turn to page 13 for details!

Thank you for this opportunity to serve you. I look forward to leading us through this historical year and ensuring the C.O.P.S. mission is strong for another 40 great years!

Most Sincerely,

Connie S. Moyer
C.O.P.S. National President
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### Mission Statement

**Rebuilding shattered lives of survivors and co-workers affected by line-of-duty deaths.**

Survivors can seek comfort from C.O.P.S. while awaiting a decision from the following determining agencies: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Public Safety Officers’ Benefits (PSOB) Program, National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund (NLEOMF), or Fraternal Order of Police (FOP).

### Submission Information

Concerns of Police Survivors welcomes the submission of articles, trial updates, survivor news, and memorials. Please know that all submissions will be considered, but may not be published. The inclusion of news articles or court documents makes the process much easier for C.O.P.S. When sending photos, please make sure they are high resolution (600KB or higher) or the original files. All submissions can be e-mailed to sara_slone@nationalcops.org with the subject line “Newsletter Submission.”

### Information for Our Readers

Throughout C.O.P.S. publications, you will find codes that tell how a person is related to an officer who has died in the line of duty. Here is a key for you:

- W=Spouse; AC=Adult Child; C=Child; S=Sibling; M=Mother; F=Father; CW=Co-Worker; SM=Step-Mother; SF=Step-Father; SC=Step-Child; GM=Grandmother; GF=Grandfather; GC=Grandchild; FS=Former Spouse; FN=Fiancé; SO=Significant Other; F-IL=Father In-Law; M-IL=Mother In-Law; D-IL=Daughter In-Law; SN-IL=Son In-Law; SS-IL=Sister In-Law; B-IL=Brother In-Law; U=Uncle; A=Aunt; NC=Niece; NP=Nephew; CS=Cousin; FR=Friend

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Concerns of Police Survivors National Board Members

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Non-Voting Board Member
Dianne Bernhard CW/05
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Executive Director Emeritus
Non-Voting Board Member
Suzie Sawyer

The upcoming National Board Meeting will be held on January 17-18, 2024, at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Center in Grapevine (TX), starting at 1:00 p.m. If you have a topic of discussion to submit for the meeting, please email Barbie Squires at barbie_squires@nationalcops.org.

The C.O.P.S. National Board gathered in Gatlinburg, Tennessee, for their annual Team Building event on August 25-28, 2023. The new National President, Connie Moyer, and the Regional Trustees were elected and announced during Board & Chapter Training in St. Louis in July.

Returning to their board positions include:
Patricia Carruth (M/03) - Immediate Past President
Lynne Parry (W/02) - Atlantic Region Trustee
Debbie Jacobs (AC/83) - Northwest Region Trustee
Kyle McCallister (GC/72) - Northeast Region Trustee
Dave Wallace (S/16) - South Central Region Trustee
Virginia Coates Ricks (W/10) - Southeast Region Trustee
Max Morgan (CW/14) - Southwest Region Trustee

Newly elected board positions include:
Connie Moyer (W/17) - National President
Staci Brakhage (S/11) - Central Plains Region Trustee
Dani Stori-Stinson (W/10) - Western Region Trustee
Andrea Arrington (S/02) - Midwest Region Trustee

Thank you Emilio Miyares (AC/86), Dana Evans (AC/86), and Cheryl Railsback (M/09) for your dedicated service to the C.O.P.S. membership while serving on the board.
To enable the C.O.P.S. organization to provide peer support close to home, below are 55 C.O.P.S. Chapters that are here to help you through the difficult times. These are the Chapter Representatives as of September 1, 2023:

Alabama C.O.P.S.
Cindy Hatcher, Treasurer
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Northern CAL C.O.P.S.
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Connecticut - See New England C.O.P.S.

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New England C.O.P.S.
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New Hampshire - See New England C.O.P.S.

New Jersey

Garden State C.O.P.S.
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NJSP Survivors of the Triangle C.O.P.S.
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New York

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Wisconsin C.O.P.S.
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www.wicops.org

States without an active chapter:

Hawaii

North Dakota

South Dakota

West Virginia

Wyoming
**Marriages/Engagements**

*Nathan Stuckey* was joined in marriage to his bride, Samantha, on October 22, 2022. There were a lot of special guests present at the wedding including law enforcement officers from Louisiana, Texas, Indiana, and Wisconsin, all of whom Nathan met through his C.O.P.S. journey. Nathan’s mom, Kim, said, “These men and women have never wavered in their support and love for us, especially this boy.”

Also present from the C.O.P.S. family was Cody Beal (pictured in the center), whom Nathan met and befriended during his first year at Kids Camp in 2012. The collage photo is Nathan and Andy Mecklenburg, who met at camp when Nathan was 13 and Andy was just 6. Andy and his family drove in from Florida. Their friendship is a true testament to what C.O.P.S. can offer.

Nathan is the surviving son of Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sergeant Paul B. Stuckey, EOW 9/30/2011.

*Kelley Garbo* was united in marriage to *Spencer Thomas* on August 12, 2023, in Nazareth (PA). The newlyweds now reside in Dallas (TX).


*Mariah Provins* will marry the love of her life, *Sean Cooper*, on October 14, 2023, in Latrobe (PA). She is pictured here with her grandmother, Geri.

Mariah is the surviving daughter of Jefferson Hill Borough Police Officer Dale T. Provins Jr., EOW 6/13/2020.

*Nathan graduated the 48th C.A.R.T.A Law Enforcement Academy on May 9, 2023.*


**Births**

**Todd and Rhea (Elliott) Johnson** are proud to announce the birth of their daughter **Elliott Wren Johnson** on May 8, 2023, in Columbus (OH). She weighed 7lbs, 6oz. Ellie’s maternal grandfather was Miami County (OH) Sergeant Robert Elliott, EOW 2/25/1987.

Proud grandma is past National Board Member, Tammie Elliott-Gehle.

The Ferguson family welcomed a new baby girl! **Oakleigh Michelle Ferguson** was born on February 3rd, 2023, at 11:16 a.m. She is pictured with her sisters Paisleigh and Blakeleigh.

All the girls are the surviving granddaughters of Thomaston (GA) Police Officer Michael Todd Thomas, EOW 9/28/21.

A BIG congratulations to the Geary-Silva family as they welcomed THREE new members to their family this summer!

**Wesley Geary-Silva** was born on April 3, 2023, weighing 8lbs, 10oz. He was soon joined by his twin sisters on July 1st, **Camille and Collins**. Camille weighed 5lbs, 3oz, with Collins following at 4lbs, 9oz.

Proud dads are **Peter Geary and Wemerson Silva**, who both support C.O.P.S. by riding with Law Enforcement United. Peter is also a mentor at C.O.P.S. Kids Camp. Proud grandparents are former National Board Members, Pete and Debbie Geary. Debbie served as National President from 1998-2000.

Joyce Thomas celebrated her marriage to **Graham Thomas Hutcheson** on July 20, 2023. The happy couple hosted a patriotic wedding at Bent Creek Farms in Belton (SC).

Taking part in the festivities were Joyce’s children, Alissa and Maximus.

Joyce is the surviving spouse of Valencia County (NM) Deputy Sheriff Ryan S. Thomas, EOW 12/6/2016.
Graduations

**Kiana Favela** graduated Magna Cum Laude from Chapman University with a double major in Broadcast Journalism and Political Science. Kiana is the surviving daughter of Honolulu City-County (HI) Police Officer Steve Favela, EOW 11/26/2006.

“I want to thank C.O.P.S. for the invaluable support you provided me throughout my four years of college. Thanks to your scholarship, I was able to pursue my academic goals with focus and determination. Beyond the financial assistance, knowing that I had your support pushed me to work even harder. I hope to one day make a meaningful impact, just as you have done for me, and other children like me.”

**Samantha Stewart** graduated from Elmont Memorial High School. She graduated as Senior Class President and was awarded “Senior of the Year” by her classmates.


Pictured is NYPD Inspector Barry Gelbman on Rusti, Leslyn (mom), Samantha, Alexis (sister), and NYPD Detective Pamela Bond on Torch.

**Jenna Marie Vassallo** graduated from Fort Zumwalt South High School in Missouri. She plans to pursue a degree in Criminal Justice in the fall.

Jenna is the surviving granddaughter of Bellefontaine (MO) Neighbors Police Sergeant Peggy Kaelin Vassallo, EOW 8/24/2015. She is pictured with her father, James.

**Bryce Lynn Mazurkiewicz** graduated with her Bachelor of Science in Nursing on May 13, 2023. She has accepted a position with Strong Memorial Hospital in Rochester (NY).

Bryce wore a graduation cap customized with her late father’s badge number.

Bryce is the surviving daughter of Rochester (NY) Police Officer Anthony “Tony” Mazurkiewicz, EOW 7/21/2022.
Congratulations to **Olin Shinholser** who was presented with the Distinguished Service Award honoring his 35 years of service as a judge.

The award was presented by Highlands County (FL) Sheriff Paul Blackman on behalf of the Florida Sheriff’s Association.

Olin is the surviving brother of Jacksonville (FL) Sheriff’s Officer Charles “Ray” Shinholser Jr., EOW 12/14/1988.

---

**Justin Wallace Hoxter** has served as an EMT with the Dorchester County (MD) EMS for several years. In January of this year, he achieved his Paramedic License with the state of Maryland.

“To say my family and I are proud of Justin’s accomplishments is an understatement. My father would also be so very proud of his grandson. We certainly wish Justin a safe and very well deserved career,” said Justin’s mother, Robin Mowbray.

Justin is the surviving grandson of Maryland State Police Sergeant Wallace J. Mowbray, EOW 8/10/75.

---

**Gwendolyn DiNardo** graduated with honors from Jefferson Township (NJ) High School on June 23, 2023. Members of her dad’s unit attended her graduation ceremony. She will be attending Seton Hall University in the fall, majoring in Pre-Law and English.

Gwendolyn is the surviving daughter of Jersey City (NJ) Police Officer Marc Anthony DiNardo, EOW 7/21/2009.

---

Congratulations to **Catherine Gwosdz** who graduated from the University of Houston Basic Peace Officer Academy at the Criminal Justice Training Center on September 12, 2023.

Catherine is the surviving sister of Harris County (TX) Deputy Sheriff Alexander David Gwosdz, EOW 4/22/2021.
C.O.P.S. Sends Condolences to the Families of:

**Maryellen Barry, 60,** died unexpectedly on July 31, 2023. Maryellen was an active member of the New England C.O.P.S. Chapter, where she served as the Past President. She leaves behind several friends and family members, including her seven children.

Maryellen is the surviving spouse of Massachusetts State Police Trooper Paul F. Barry, EOW 6/15/2006.

**Steven G. Taylor, 67,** died June 17, 2023. Steve proudly served as a paramedic, firefighter, EMT, and a Fire Safety Inspector for the state of Missouri until retiring.

Steve is the surviving father of Riverside (MO) Police Officer Jefferson “Jeff” Taylor, EOW 6/3/2011. Steve’s daughter, Staci Brakhage, also serves as the Central Plains Region Trustee on the C.O.P.S. National Board.

**Jeffrey Lee Brown, 62,** died July 19, 2023, after a long battle with cancer.

Jeffrey is the surviving son of Cochise County (AZ) Deputy Sheriff Leroy D. Brown, EOW 12/6/1969. Jeffrey’s brother T.C. and sister-in-law JoEllen have attended several Adult Children Retreats and COPS Walk events.

**Kevin Stauffer, Sr., 73,** affectionately known as “Pop Pop”, was surrounded by family when he died September 5, 2023.

Kevin is the surviving father of Tupelo (MS) Police Corporal Kevin Gale Stauffer, EOW 12/23/2013. Kevin, his wife Kay, their daughter, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren were welcoming faces each year at their respective retreats.


Janet is the surviving mother-in-law of Harper County (OK) Deputy Sheriff William C. Coen, EOW 6/10/2012.

**Ralph Coen, 90,** died May 27, 2023.

Ralph is the surviving father of Harper County (OK) Deputy Sheriff William C. Coen, EOW 6/10/2012.
**Derrelynn Perryman, 59,** died unexpectedly on September 12, 2023. Derrelynn has always had a passion for law enforcement, as she worked in victim services for her entire career with the Arlington (TX) Police Department, Tarrant County (TX) District Attorney’s Office, and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Derrelynn has been a beloved mental health counselor at C.O.P.S. adult retreats and Kids Camp for many years. Her calming spirit and wise words will be missed by all who knew her.

---

**Scott “Mase” Morgan, 60,** died unexpectedly on September 9, 2023. He was a devoted father, grandfather, brother, son, uncle, counselor, friend, and to many a coach, who touched lives with his unwavering kindness.

Scott is the brother of C.O.P.S. Western Region Trustee, Max Morgan.

---

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”
-Mahatma Gandhi

---

**Interested in running for a position on the C.O.P.S. National Board?**

All persons seeking to serve on the C.O.P.S. National Board should submit a completed application for nomination to the Chair of the National Elections Committee (Patricia Carruth, patricia_carruth@nationalcops.org) no later than February 20, 2024. This includes both sitting board members and new applicants. Letters of reference and confidentiality statements shall be dated no earlier than 60 days prior to the application cutoff date.

The application form can be found on the National C.O.P.S. website or requested from Patricia Carruth. Survivors must meet the following eligibility requirements for nomination:

Applicants must:

- Be a member as defined in National Bylaws, Article III Membership.
- Have observed the first anniversary of their officer’s death and attended NPW.
- Have served on a chapter board within the last five (5) years, or have been a past National Board member. Requirement for applicants to have served on a chapter board within the last five (5) years shall be waived if that applicant has no chapter in their specific area.
- If elected, applicants for Region Trustee must reside in their respective region for the entirety of their term.
- Must sign a C.O.P.S. Confidentiality & Nominee Pledge Information Policy form agreeing that they will be an advocate for and supporter of the Concerns of Police Survivors organization and dedicated to work in the best interest of the C.O.P.S. organization.
- All applicants for office must meet all eligibility requirements and must register and participate in the mandatory events specified in SOP 6.3.

Please refer to the SOP 6.0 for further details of the nomination and election process for the C.O.P.S. National Board.
C.O.P.S. Surviving to Thriving Conference
January 18-21, 2024
Grapevine, Texas

C.O.P.S. is excited to offer a new, fun, and uplifting conference-style event to ALL SURVIVORS! For the first time ever, the “Surviving to Thriving” Conference invites survivors to come together, regardless of survivorship, to participate in informational life sessions, interactive experiences, and activities that bring challenge and laughter! Most importantly, the bonds of peer support will be evident!

This conference does not replace the FREE Hands-On Programs available to survivors. This is an additional opportunity for survivors to connect with their family, blood AND blue!

Who’s invited? YOU! This conference is for all surviving family members, co-workers, and supporters of C.O.P.S. Please note there is no Daycare or Kids Program for children under the age of 15. (Children aged 15-17 must be accompanied by an adult.) A special Leadership Program is available for attendees aged 15-20, empowering them to get involved with C.O.P.S. for years to come.

Where are we going?
Grapevine (TX) is just outside of Dallas/Fort Worth. Events will take place at the Hilton DFW Lakes Executive Conference Center.

If you are in need of a hotel room, a rate of $159/night has been secured. A link to reserve a room is available on the online registration form.

How much is it to attend?
$250 for adults; $150 for survivors ages 15-20. This fee includes: Conference sessions, 2 lunches, 1 dinner, networking opportunities, and fun activities!

Scan Me

Schedule of Events:

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<tr>
<th>Thursday, January 18</th>
<th>Friday, January 19</th>
<th>Saturday, January 20</th>
<th>Sunday, January 21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arrival/Check-in*</td>
<td>8:30 am</td>
<td>9:00 am Inspirational Speaker</td>
<td>7:30 am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking Opportunities</td>
<td>Opening Session Inspirational Speaker</td>
<td>10:30 am Informational Session or Interactive Activities</td>
<td>Faith Based Session (Optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Attendees should fly in to DFW International Airport on Thursday, January 18 and depart after 12:00 pm on Sunday, January 21.</td>
<td>Lunch and Exhibitors</td>
<td>12:00 pm Lunch and Exhibitors</td>
<td>8:30 am Informational Session or Interactive Activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1:00 pm Informational Session or Interactive Activities</td>
<td>1:00 pm Informational Session or Interactive Activities</td>
<td>10:00 am Closing Session Inspirational Speaker</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6:00 pm Blue Family Gathering (Dinner)</td>
<td>12:00 pm Conference Ends</td>
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CONCERNSOFPOLICESURVIVORS.ORG
The end-of-the-year holidays, such as Thanksgiving, Christmas, Chanukah, and New Years, can be complicated to face when you are grieving. It is very normal to experience an increase in your grief during this time as we reflect back on memories, traditions, and connections while your loved one was alive. You may be even more aware of the absence of the person you lost while also trying to navigate through this very difficult time in our world...COVID, racial inequality, and political upheaval have added insult to injury, so to speak. At times, I wonder, have you felt like you are almost back to square one? Well, if you are struggling with more intense grief, please know that it surely is painful, maybe bittersweet, but it makes sense.

My brother, Damien, died on Christmas Day. Three weeks later my grandfather died. Two weeks after that, my sister adopted out my newborn nephew. A month later, my parents moved from where I lived to the Midwest. It was an impossible time for me. Christmas was changed for ever. And has stayed changed. Traditions, rituals, and even relationships have morphed into something new. But it took time to adjust to that. Sometimes the holidays seem so overwhelming, but other years it is more manageable. But my awareness of the increase of my grief is clear. It doesn’t always help when we watch movies, are invited to gatherings, or preparing our homes that we have these messages of how the holidays “should” be. How often do we see a commercial of families gathering around the dinner table laughing and sharing? Now how often do those commercials reflect the pain of a person who may be missing from that table? It can make us feel like we are doing something wrong or even making others feel bad by sharing our grief. I’ve heard some people say, “I don’t want everyone else around me feel bad or ruin their holidays. So I don’t say anything and I just kind of push it away as best I can.” It’s complicated...and often results in many conflicting emotions that can feel overpowering.

Well, we have to get through this, right? How? What are some ways to cope with your grief as the holidays approach?

**Give yourself permission to feel your feelings without judgment**

The experiences and expectations around these holidays can really trigger some intense emotions and painful memories, which may or may not be shared by others who also are grieving. That’s OK. We all grieve in our unique ways. Some of us are more likely to talk with a person who can hear our pain without trying to “fix it,” while others need time alone to process quietly. Sometimes we even need a combination of both. Follow your instincts and allow your feelings to be as they are. Pushing them down only makes them more intense...kind of like the pressure of a volcano when it cannot let out any of its built up pressure. An explosion, or implosion in this case, can result.

**Take time for yourself and maintain a routine**

Finding ways to have boundaries around self-care can make overwhelming thoughts and feelings feel more manageable. If you are taking care of your mind, body, and spirit, in whichever way is comfortable for you, you will have more bandwidth to
navigate your grief in healthier ways. Questions to ask yourself are: How much time do you want to spend with people? How much social media should you look at? What kind of activities feel too much to handle? And if you change your mind at the last minute, how will you communicate that clearly?

Also, maintaining a routine provides some structure. When you have structure, there can be a sense of feeling grounded. So in a way, that feeling of having an anchor in your daily life with consistent sleep, healthy food, exercise, spending time with your hobbies, meditating, etc., creates a “container.” You find ways to feel like you have space for your grief while also still feeling like you are keeping your life on a healthy track.

**Be patient with yourself and with your process**

In a previous blog, I talked about how grief is not a linear process. We do not go from one stage or another (such as denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance). Grief is messy. There are way more emotions than just this simple prescription we are told to believe. Grief circles around and takes turns that are unexpected. It surges and dips down...but all the while we are striving to accept the reality of our loss, find ways to adjust our life to accommodate for all the changes, and remain connected to our lost loved one while also giving ourselves permission to move forward.

This takes time. You cannot force it to go any faster just like you cannot force a flower to bloom before its time. Allowing your grieving process to unfold naturally is the way through. It is going to hurt, and we naturally want to shy away from pain. But grief is the price we pay for love, and I do not think you’d give up all the love you shared just to avoid the grief you have now. Maybe at times it feels that way, and that’s OK as well. But in the end, when your grief is not as intense, you may feel differently about that.

One way of managing these difficult times is to put together a ritual. It doesn’t need to be elaborate...or it can be. Whatever you’d like. Include others if you can. If you can do so earlier in the day, it helps to know you have allowed yourself to feel and share your thoughts and emotions and helps the rest of the day be manageable.

Focus on reconnection with your loved one, and make sure that when you are done with your ritual, you give yourself a few moments to reset and then transition into the rest of the day. It’s important that the ritual

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**Plan for the holidays**

Your holidays may need to look different now. Life the way you knew it is no longer, and as a result, figuring out how to adjust to those changes will be part of getting through them. What changes will you need to make? How can you honor your relationship and loved one’s memory while still engaging with the days ahead?

Christmas was HARD after Damien died. Really hard! My grief surges when I approach Christmas...it sometimes even takes me over. I realized there was no way I could work for a few days before Christmas. As a grief specialist, my ability to be there for my clients as they moved through the holidays was reduced. I had to learn to take care of myself and put a boundary around that time even though in my heart I wanted to be there for them, too. But that’s just a fact for me now. I’ve learned to be OK with that because I cannot very well encourage others to have boundaries if I cannot put them in place for myself.
be meaningful by including objects or memories. For example, in my ritual for my brother, I always include brownies. Brownies were a favorite of ours in the family, and I have a lot of special memories around making them with my brother. So now I make them every single year. I share them with my loved ones, light a candle next to his picture, and tell stories about memories I have of him.

**Don't do it alone**

Now, I know I said that sometimes being alone is important. But the research shows that even if you have just one person you can share your feelings with, your grief will likely be easier to manage. There is a saying I love: Joy shared is joy doubled, grief shared is grief halved. That speaks volumes. Reach out to others as you need them so you know you are not alone in your pain. Identify those trusted people you can lean on and let yourself do so. Ask people for what you need.

I wish you the best as you are trying to learn how to do this “new normal.” And remember, if it is feeling like it’s too hard to manage, reach out to a grief specialist who can help you through.

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**Dr. Christina Zampitella, FT,** is a licensed clinical psychologist and founder of the Center for Grief and Trauma Therapy. She is a thanatologist, which is a psychologist that specializes in trauma, death, loss, and grief. Dr. Zampitella has worked in mental health for almost 30 years in a variety of settings, working with bereaved individuals as well as people who are processing things like depression, anxiety, relationship issues, and more.

Visit [www.centerforgrieftherapy.com](http://www.centerforgrieftherapy.com) for more information.

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**YOU ARE INVITED TO THE EVENTS OF National Police Week**

**MAY 11-17, 2024 ★ WASHINGTON, D.C.**

See the next page for a brief schedule of events.
**Saturday, May 11**
Early Arrival day at Reagan National Airport (DCA)
C.O.P.S. provides escorted transportation between 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. to C.O.P.S. hotels. Must be pre-registered through C.O.P.S.

**Sunday, May 12**
Official Arrival day at Reagan National Airport (DCA)
C.O.P.S. provides escorted transportation between 9:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. to C.O.P.S. hotels. Must be pre-registered through C.O.P.S.

Law Enforcement United (LEU) Arrival Ceremony
The Road to Hope bicycle ride concludes after over 250 miles. Funds raised benefit C.O.P.S.

The Police Unity Tour bicycle ride will also be arriving this day. Funds raised benefit the National Law Enforcement Officers’ Memorial Fund.

**Monday, May 13**
Candlelight Vigil hosted by the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund

**Tuesday, May 14**
C.O.P.S. hosts day one of the National Police Survivors’ Conference
Surviving family member sessions and surviving co-worker sessions will be held at the Washington Hilton. Meals included at the conference are a light-fare breakfast and a buffet lunch.

C.O.P.S. hosts day one of the Kids/Teens Program
Surviving children, step-children, and siblings of the fallen officer, grades K-12, can attend while their parent/guardian attends the conference. Pre-registration is required.

C.O.P.S. hosts day one of the Daycare Program
Surviving children, step-children, and siblings of the fallen officer, ages infant to six, can attend while their parent/guardian attends the conference. Pre-registration is required.

C.O.P.S. hosts the 40th Anniversary Gala
Tickets must be purchased in advance. See next page.

**Wednesday, May 15**
National Peace Officers’ Memorial Service hosted by the Fraternal Order of Police and its Auxiliary (FOP)

**Thursday, May 16**
C.O.P.S. hosts day two of the National Police Survivors’ Conference

C.O.P.S. hosts day two of the Kids/Teens Program and Daycare Program

C.O.P.S. hosts the Blue Family BBQ
Join us at the Washington Hilton for a fun evening to relax and enjoy activities and dinner with other survivors!

**Friday, May 17**
Official Departure Day

Registration will open soon!
You are invited to a formal celebration of the 40th Anniversary of Concerns of Police Survivors

Tuesday, May 14th
Washington Hilton
1919 Connecticut Ave, Washington D.C.

$135/Ticket // $1,350/Table of 10

Black/Blue tie attire is expected. Uniforms are acceptable.

Gala doors open at 6:00 pm.
Dinner at 7:00 pm with special program to follow.

Purchase tickets by emailing cops_development@nationalcops.org by May 1, 2024.
I had the opportunity to attend the Fiancés and Significant Others Retreat in August. This is one of the smaller C.O.P.S. retreats in terms of attendance, but as a staff member, it’s a good opportunity to be able to participate in the activities and sessions with the group. I sat in the room and listened to 11 women and 1 man tell their stories of losing their officers, how life has been since that day, and how the dreams and future plans they had with their partner were torn away in an instant.

Each retreat has the “seasoned” survivors who come back year after year, as well as the new survivors attending for the first time. As with all retreats, it’s a beautiful blend of understanding and acceptance based on unfortunate circumstances. One of those survivors attending this retreat for the first time was Camryn Gosdeck. A 22-year-old, recently graduated college student, who had lost the love of her life just 6 months prior.

Her story is heartbreaking, but she offered a perspective that stopped me in my tracks when I heard her speak. The seasoned survivors quickly had her in their arms. So young, so early on her grief path, and so glad she had come.

Camryn met the love of her life, Hunter Scheel, while attending the University of Wisconsin – Stout in Menomonie (WI). While Hunter was persistent in his attempts to date Camryn, she was more hesitant. Eventually giving in, her life changed forever when she realized how much she wanted to spend her future with him.

“Hunter had so many amazing qualities about him. He was caring, selfless, funny, and hardworking,” said Camryn. “There wasn’t one thing I didn’t love about him; he just filled my heart with a kind of love I never knew existed.”

Camryn said if Hunter was passionate about something, he put everything he had into it. Whether it was hunting, being an avid hockey fan, or making homemade syrup with his grandfather, his passionate spirit made Camryn fall in love with him even deeper.

For his entire life, Hunter always had the dream to become a cop. His friends and family couldn’t picture him doing anything else. While earning his degree, he went on numerous ride-alongs with the Cameron (WI) Police Department, where he would soon become a sworn officer.

While Camryn continued her studies and prepared for graduation, Hunter was starting his law enforcement career. Their future plans were underway and their whole lives were in front of them. Knowing she was about to graduate in May 2023, Camryn started applying for jobs and the couple started the process for loan approval to purchase a home. Unknown to her at the time, Hunter had met with Camryn’s parents to ask them for their blessing to propose to her.

The proposal didn’t come.

On April 8, 2023, Cameron (WI) Police Officer Hunter T. Scheel stopped to assist Chetek (WI) Police Officer Emily Breidenbach (of a neighboring agency) with a traffic stop for a warrant and welfare check on the driver. The subject exited his vehicle, began shooting at the officers, and gunfire was exchanged. Both officers succumbed to their injuries on the scene.

Hunter was 23 years old. He left behind his mother, stepfather,
father, three sisters, and the love of his life.

“Hunter was a selfless person and wanted to protect his people, whether it was family, friends, or a civilian, he would do what was necessary to ensure safety,” said Camryn. “Hunter did what he needed to do to not only defend himself, but also his friend. I know in my heart that if Hunter was presented with this scenario a second or third time, he would make the ultimate sacrifice again and again in a heartbeat; it’s just who he was.”

In the days, weeks, and months that have followed, Camryn says she has struggled with all the “firsts” that survivors experience in the first year after their officer’s death. She graduated college and landed one of the jobs she had been interviewing for, but the person she was supposed to celebrate with was gone. Hunter had planned to propose on her graduation day, instead Camryn fought hard through her grief to finish her final month of studies. Instead of buying their first home, Camryn’s sister moved in with her to help her get through each day, sometimes forcing her to get out of bed, study, and finish strong.

“There hasn’t been a single day where I don’t think of him. I can find something in any situation that makes me think of him; a song, smell, joke, article of clothing, the list goes on,” said Camryn. “The whiplash of emotions has been challenging to deal with, but thankfully I have an amazing support system to help guide me and pick me up when I get knocked down through the obstacles I face.”

Part of that support system are those 10 other women and 1 man she met at the Fiancé and Significant Others Retreat. Camryn admits she only got nervous when her plane landed in St. Louis. Thoughts started running through her head of being alone in a different state and traveling to stay in a place with total strangers. That all dissipated when those open arms embraced her at the airport.

Throughout the weekend, Camryn and her fellow “FNSOs” as they refer to themselves heard each other’s stories, shared in outdoor activities, sang karaoke, cried, laughed, got angry, hugged, and supported each other.

“My favorite part of the retreat was hearing other people’s stories and seeing that they have all survived this. It truly gave me hope that I, too, can survive this,” said Camryn. “I have been in many dark places since Hunter’s death and knowing that I can talk to others who are and have been in the same exact boat is very healing and assures me that I am not alone.”

Camryn admits there are days where she still can’t get out of bed. The pain is too unbearable, both mentally and physically. Dark thoughts have run through her head, but she quickly shuts those down.

“That is the exact opposite of what Hunter would want. He would want me, his family, and friends to continue on. To live out the dreams that he was never able to fulfill,” said Camryn. “I made a promise to myself to live for him, although it is tough now, I try to accomplish something every day and one day I will be able to live out our dream.”

Camryn is thriving in her new role and taking each day in stride. She keeps the memories she made with Hunter close to her heart and she knows she will see him again one day. “Reminiscing on those memories may make us sad now, but we will laugh and smile about them one day,” said Camryn. “Because we will remember how lucky we were to have such an amazing person in our lives.”

Survivor stories are important to share to add a new perspective, hopeful tips, and encouraging words. If you would like to share your story, please email Blake Haynes at blake_haynes@nationalcops.org. Stories may be used in the HOPE magazine, social media sites, or the blog on the national website. All views/opinions stated in survivor stories are that of the survivor and do not reflect the views/opinions of the C.O.P.S. National Office.
It’s been a busy spring and summer for Hands-On Programs! We hope you enjoy the photos from each retreat. The smiles say it all! Magic happens and life-long memories are made. If you were unable to attend your retreat this year, 2024 is not far away! We hope you join us next year! In the meantime, consider registering for the new Surviving to Thriving Conference in January where ALL survivorships will be coming together! Details are on page 13!

**Kids Camp**
Young Adults Camp

Fiancés & Significant Others Retreat
The Pit Barrel Cooker Co.® has supported the mission of C.O.P.S. for many years. They are avid supporters of military and first responders, so much they are running an incredible deal just in time for the holidays! Use code USAPBX at checkout to save 50% on the PBX. (A savings of $300!)

This offer is good for active duty, retired law enforcement, and their families who equally make sacrifices for our country and communities every day.

Did you know? The Pit Barrel® is famous for its ability to get consistently delicious results, and it's not by accident. Hanging the meat in the center of the heat allows for even cooking and penetration of a “smoke fog” created by juices dripping directly on the coals. Experts, judges, and food lovers of all ages agree – the Pit Barrel® simply cooks some of the best food you’ve ever tasted. And the best part? No hassle! It’s as easy as 1-2-3 and guaranteed to impress friends and family. Check out the holiday turkey recipe below!

### INGREDIENTS
- Two 10-15lb Turkeys OR One 16-30lb Turkey, fully thawed.
- Olive Oil
- All-Purpose Pit Rub
- Turkey Hanger(s) sold separately
- Pit Grips recommended for use with Turkey Hangers

### DIRECTIONS
Light your Pit Barrel® according to the instructions. Remove the turkey from the package, remove the neck and giblet bag from inside the turkey, and remove any plastic or wire ties holding the legs in place.

Coat all sides of the turkey with a light coating of olive oil, followed by a liberal dusting of the All-Purpose Pit Rub. Tip: Make sure that you season the areas under the wings, and inside the cavity.

Slide the turkey hanger rod through the cavity from the neck end. Turn the bird upright so that the breast end is sitting on the double-hook portion of the hanger, and insert the T-bar through the eye on the end of the hanger rod. Stuffing Tip: If stuffing your bird, cut a slit in the flap of skin over the neck, insert the hanger rod through the slit, and fold it over to seal the opening on the underside of the bird.

Hang the turkey(s) in the center of the Pit Barrel® so that the T-bar straddles the center of the rods, and secure the lid. Note: depending on the size of the turkey, you may have to lower the turkey(s) into the cooker before inserting the second rod.

Cook approximately 3.5-7 hours, depending on size of the bird.

Tip: Look in on the turkey every couple hours to monitor the progress and take the temperature. Also, to get an extra crisp on the skin, crack the lid 1/4° for the last 30 mins of the cook.

Remove the smoked turkey from the Pit Barrel® to a large platter or sheet pan. Remove the hanger and let rest 15-20 minutes, bringing the final temperature to 165° (shown using the ThermoWorks Thermapen®).

Carve and Serve.
Affordable, mission driven, exciting and entertaining. These were the goals behind creating the automotive scavenger hunt that is known as Rally North America. Charitable events such as Rally North America don’t blossom overnight, but when a group of like-minded individuals get together, good things can happen and it is never by accident.

“Scott and myself wanted to put something together that was affordable and tie in things to actually benefit a charity, all while making that charity connection visible to all,” said Tony Intrieri, Rally North America’s Operations Manager/Route Planner.

On July 10, 2009, a small, but motivated, group decided to participate in an organized drive from New York City to Ocean City (MD). Needless to say, a “good time was had by all” and discussions began about doing this again on a much larger scale. The thought process was to gear it towards having a “driver’s road” all while benefiting a charity. The very next morning the group went their separate ways with the goal in mind of creating what is now known as Rally North America.

In 2018, Rally North America selected C.O.P.S. as the year’s benefitting non-profit organization. This selection process changes every year and is currently rotating between four separate organizations.

“Our organization was overjoyed after we were notified that C.O.P.S. had been selected as a benefactor of Rally North America in 2018,” C.O.P.S. Development Team Member, Lauren Crisman, said. “Opportunities to partner with such an amazing event and individuals, to support the C.O.P.S. mission, is simply amazing.”

That first event held by Rally North America in 2018 saw the monetary support to a tune of $217,333 that would be donated to C.O.P.S.

“We work so closely with so many individuals within the law enforcement community that we wanted to make sure we were giving back,” Tony said. “We just wanted to have a positive spin for those folks in this community.”

In 2023, C.O.P.S. reunited with the automotive scavenger hunt to once again be the benefitting non-profit organization of the event. Tony, Scott, the drivers, and everyone else involved with organizing this amazing event made it a special one alongside being able to provide C.O.P.S. with a donation of $225,400.

Moving forward, Tony says they are looking to simply maintain the level of support they are able to provide organizations through the event. Their crew is blown away by the growth the event has seen and are elated to be able to assist the chosen charities monetarily. Much like their staff, C.O.P.S. is excited to see this event return to our mission in 2027.

To find out more about Rally North America, visit rallynorthamerica.com.
Chapter Chatter:

Like many Chapters, board members and survivors are spread all over the state. Attending an event may take hours of driving. Most Wisconsin events are held in the south central or southeast areas of the state. Something was needed in the northwest.

That’s when Wisconsin board member Gay Anne Birkholz reached out to long time friend Jackie Bergeron, Treasurer of Minnesota C.O.P.S. Jackie’s Chapter does a private luncheon cruise on the bordering St. Croix River, where the note was made that there are survivors in both Minnesota and Wisconsin who worked or lived on opposite sides.

Gay asked Jackie if their Chapter would consider doing a joint event. Jackie went back to her board with the idea and it was approved to invite Wisconsin survivors to the next cruise if Wisconsin would cover the cost of their own

Wisconsin survivors. Gay approached her chapter with the great news and the Wisconsin chapter voted to approve covering the cost.

In 2022, the first joint chapter river cruise event happened. On August 12th, 2023, the second joint border river cruise brought out 96 participants. Gay said, “It was heartwarming to watch the new connections and reconnections made.”

Pictured top left are some of the sibling survivors who attended from Wisconsin and Minnesota. Stories were shared of how they’ve stayed connected via Facebook, but have not seen each other in person in years since their last retreat or National Police Week. Some met for the first time on this cruise!

Pictured bottom left are Jackie Bergeron and Gay Birkholz.

In July, surviving family members and local community leaders unveiled the Officer Wayne Leon Memorial Highway along a stretch of Lorain Avenue in Cleveland (OH). The sign hangs in front of St. Ignatius High School, Officer Leon’s alma mater.

A special effort was made by a few members of the high school football team who wore Officer Leon’s badge number and football jersey number.

Cleveland Police Officer Wayne A. Leon was killed June 25, 2000.
Kai Allmendinger started his first day of kindergarten August 30, 2023. His dad’s department, Gallatin County (MT) Sheriff’s Office, organized a special first-day-of-school escort. Officers from the Montana Highway Patrol and Belgrade Police Department also assisted.

Kai’s uncle and his dad’s best friend, Captain Brian Taylor, escorted him to school in his patrol car and had officers there to support Kai on his big day.

Kai is the surviving son of Gallatin County Deputy Sheriff Jacob Allmendinger, EOW 10/19/2019.

Pennsylvania C.O.P.S. is mourning the loss of their friend, K9 Archie, who died July 18, 2023, at the age of 3. His partner, Lieutenant Jim Finnigan, was out of town when K9 Archie suffered a medical emergency at the veterinarian’s office.

Lt. Finnigan and K9 Archie participated in National Police Week with C.O.P.S. for the past two years with the Kids/Teens Program and at the host hotel. K9 Archie served alongside his partner with the CSX Railroad Police Department.

Flor Almendarez, surviving spouse of Harris County (TX) Deputy Darren Almendarez, EOW 3/31/2022, attended the dedication ceremony of the newly named Deputy Darren Almendarez Community Center on August 19, 2023. Family, friends, and agency personnel were there to support her.

Flor Almendarez is pictured with Commissioner Adrian Garcia (3rd from left), Harris County TX Sheriff Ed Gonzalez (4th from left), and Texas House Representative Armando Walle (2nd from right).
New Mexico C.O.P.S. shared the unveiling of the Sergeant Robert W. Baron Memorial Corridor on September 13, 2023. The corridor is from mile marker 254 to 255 on I-25. This dedication is in honor of Sandoval County (NM) Sheriff’s Sergeant Robert W. Baron, EOW 12/6/2013.

Robert’s surviving wife, Krysia, unveiled the sign alongside Rio Rancho (NM) Police Chaplain Gregg Hartz.

Kansas C.O.P.S. had a busy May and June! The chapter sent four surviving families from Kansas, two families from South Dakota, and six family liaisons to National Police Week (NPW). Former Central Plains Region Trustee, Dana Evans, said, “With each survivor we supported, we, too, felt that circle of love and understanding come right back to us, completing the awesome mission of C.O.P.S.!”

The annual Kansas C.O.P.S. Golf Tournament was held on June 30th. The chapter thanks organizers Heath Samuels, Tammy Samuels, and Marilyn Goodheart, along with several Kansas survivors who came out to help run the tournament, raffles and games, including the kids that helped with signs and were errand runners. Not to mention the amazing bbq cooked by Josh Brooks! Over $20,000 was raised!

On September 16th, Kansas Bikers Backing Our Blue rode in honor of our fallen officers, raise funds for scholarships, and to send Kansas survivors to NPW and Hands-On Programs. In 2022, they presented KS C.O.P.S. with $16,000!

West Tennessee C.O.P.S. shared the news that a portion of a highway in Savannah (TN) has been named in honor of Hardin County (TN) Sheriff’s Deputy Matthew Locke, EOW 9/25/2021.

The DC C.O.P.S. Chapter is proud to announce their Immediate Past President, Cindy Carter, was presented with the Humanitarian Award from the FBI. This award includes a $5,000 donation to a charity of the recipient’s choice, which Cindy chose as DC C.O.P.S.!

Cindy has been volunteering at National Police Week for over 35 years and has been actively involved with the DC chapter since its inception.
The Arizona Chapter will be having their annual Holiday Party on Saturday, December 2, 2023. Chapter members should watch their email for a save-the-date notification, and specific information will follow once all the details are finalized.

The Arizona Chapter will also be celebrating their 20th Annual Arizona Fallen Officer Memorial 5K, at Wesley Bolin Plaza, near the state Fallen Officer Memorial. It will be held on Sunday, March 3, 2024.

Registration opens soon! So please watch your emails and other social media for additional details and when registration opens.

Top legal and true crime network, Law&Crime, and Ev&Em Vineyards launched its new limited edition wine collection honoring police officers killed in the line of duty on August 26, 2023. Abrams himself was present alongside several survivors who traveled to be there.

The collection features 30 unique bottles of a vintage Bordeaux-style blend from Ev&Em Vineyards, each labeled with the names and photo of an officer who has fallen in the line of duty, as well as a written tribute commemorating their service. 20% of all proceeds goes to C.O.P.S.

“Both Law&Crime and Ev&Em Vineyards are honored to be able to bring awareness and remembrance to those who served to protect and lost their lives doing so,” said Dan Abrams, founder of both Ev&Em and Law&Crime, “and I think we have created a terrific red wine that serves as an important tribute.”

These 30 limited edition bottles were the first trial run for the winery. If they decide to produce more and offer customization, we will announce it via email and our social media accounts. To purchase a current bottle, visit evandemvineyards.com.
In December 2014, Concerns of Police Survivors (C.O.P.S.) invited partnering organizations to promote a day of appreciation for law enforcement all across the nation. Civil unrest was rampant after events unfolded in Ferguson (MO) and the silent majority of Americans were looking for a way to show support for peacekeepers who were under attack.

C.O.P.S. chose Friday, January 9th, 2015, as the first National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day (L.E.A.D.). The public was encouraged to show support on social media, wear blue clothing, send treats and cards of support to local agencies, shine blue lights from homes and businesses, and encourage local and state government officials to officially declare January 9th as Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. In more recent years, C.O.P.S. has developed the Blue Blood Drive, in which blood collection agencies partner with C.O.P.S. chapters to collect blood in honor of law enforcement of the past, present, and future.

January 9, 2024, marks the 9th anniversary of Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. In those nine years, January 9th has been adopted by social media and holiday observance websites, declared official by numerous cities and states, and acknowledged by the President of the United States.

Law enforcement officers play such an integral part in our society. Without law enforcement officers, chaos would reign. No matter how many challenges they face, they continue to do their job, and do it well. They are the guardians of our way of life and they deserve our support.

In 2024, we once again call our nation’s citizens to action in support of law enforcement. Those citizens who appreciate law enforcement are encouraged to take time on January 9, to show their support. If posting on social media, show your support by using #lawenforcementappreciationday and/or #COPSThanksCops.

For more ways to show your support or find a blood drive in your area, please visit concernsofpolicesurvivors.org.
Once again in 2024, C.O.P.S. will be partnering with the American Red Cross and other community blood collection agencies for “Blue Blood Drives” where people are encouraged to donate blood in honor of law enforcement. A location map will be available in December under the Special Events tab at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org.

If you are an agency and would like to host, please visit our website to connect with a C.O.P.S. chapter in your area. If you are a chapter or individual wanting to get the process started to host your own blood drive, contact Stephani Anderson, C.O.P.S. National Chapter Liaison, to get connected with a collection agency in your area. Stephani’s email is stephani_anderson@nationalcops.org.
Amara Baez is a student at Cairn University, completing her degree in Elementary Education. Amara is the daughter of Alex Baez, EOW 11/22/2008.

Colter Baron is a student at Grand Canyon University, completing his degree in Justice Studies. Colter is the son of Robert Baron, EOW 12/6/2013.

Aaron Blount is a student at Howard University, completing his degree in Media/Journalism. Aaron is the son of Aaron Blount, EOW 4/22/2003.

Taylor Born is a student at Bluffton University, completing her degree in Sociology. Taylor is the step-daughter of Dominic Francis, EOW 3/31/2022.

Karley Burbridge is a student at Creighton School of Law, completing her Juris Doctorate. Karley is the daughter of Mark Burbridge, EOW 5/1/2017.

Jack Cicora is a student at Michigan State University, completing his bachelor’s degree. Jack is the son of Jeffrey Cicora, EOW 8/10/2019.

Emma Clardy is a student at Ana Maria College, completing her degree in Nursing. Emma is the daughter of Thomas Clardy, EOW 3/16/2016.

Eva Clardy is a student at Assumption University, completing her degree in Criminology. Eva is the daughter of Thomas Clardy, EOW 3/16/2016.

Lily Clardy is a student at Assumption University, completing her degree in Biology. Lily is the daughter of Thomas Clardy, EOW 3/16/2016.

Connor Coleman is a student at Benedictine University, completing his degree in Engineering. Connor is the son of William Coleman, EOW 1/8/2012.

Amber Covington is a student at St. John’s University, completing her degree in Childhood Education. Amber is the daughter of Rodrick Covington, EOW 3/31/2022.

Ashley Covington is a student at St. John’s University, completing her degree in Communications and Sociology. Ashley is the daughter of Rodrick Covington, EOW 3/31/2022.

Ashley DeLorenzo is a student at Mid Michigan College, completing her Nursing degree. Ashley is the daughter of Jeremy Wilkins, EOW 12/17/2021.

Kadin Denner is a student at University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, completing his degree in Electrical Engineering. Kadin is the son of Kevin Denner, EOW 5/6/2013.

Kaitlin Denner is a student at University of Northern Colorado, completing her bachelor’s degree. Kaitlin is the daughter of Kevin Denner, EOW 5/6/2013.

Elizabeth Diebel is a student at Florida Atlantic University, completing her degree in Health Sciences. Elizabeth is the daughter of Robert Edwards, EOW 1/21/1984.

Brody Erfe is a student at Boston University School of Medicine, completing his degree as a Doctor of Medicine. Brody is the son of Nicki Erfe, EOW 9/18/2007.

Matthew Favela is a student at Chapman University, completing his degree in Data/Computer Science. Matthew is the son of Steve Favela, EOW 11/26/2006.

Emilee Fleschner is a student at University of Central Florida, completing her degree in Psychology. Emilee is the daughter of Adam Fleschner, EOW 1/13/2003.

Jocelyn Fontanez-Rivera is a student at UPR Recinto de Cayey, completing her bachelor’s degree in Psychology. Jocelyn is the daughter of Jose Fontanez-Correa, EOW 5/23/2007.

Tiakahlyn Furr is a student at Duke University, completing her associate’s degree. Tiakahlyn is the daughter of Tolbert Furr, EOW 4/3/2020.

Ashley Garner is a student at Walla Walla University, completing her degree in Psychology. Ashley is the daughter of Jason Garner, EOW 5/13/2017.

Avery Gaunt is a student at Montana State University, completing her degree in Sociology. Avery is the daughter of Brian Gaunt, EOW 10/24/2021.

Jake Gaunt is a student at Mesa Community College, completing his associate’s degree. Jake is the son of Brian Gaunt, EOW 10/24/2021.

Amelia Helmke is a student at University of Connecticut, completing her degree in Liberal Arts & Sciences. Amelia is the daughter of Robert Helmke, EOW 7/28/2007.

Isabella Huffstetler is a student at Grand Canyon University, completing her degree in Engineering. Isabella is the daughter of Kirk Huffstetler, EOW 5/26/2002.

Brandi Koprowski is a student at Campbell University Law School, completing her Juris Doctorate. Brandi is the spouse of Keith Bellar, EOW 6/7/2011.

Ethan Lee is a student at University of Alabama, completing his degree in Mathematics. Ethan is the stepson of Scott Lunger, EOW 7/22/2015.

Trevor Lee is a student at Chico State, completing his bachelor’s degree. Trevor is the stepson of Scott Lunger, EOW 7/22/2015.

Robin Lee is a student at North Central College, completing her degree in Graphic Design. Robin is the daughter of Gene Lee, EOW 10/30/2019.

Hayden Micun is a student at Drexel University, completing his degree in Communications. Hayden is the son of Joshua Micun, EOW 10/3/2021.

Chandler Miller is a student at Park University, Gilbert, completing his degree in Business Administration. Chandler is the son of John Miller, EOW 11/16/2007.
Alexa Molloy is a student at Hofstra University, completing her Juris Doctorate. Alexa is the daughter of James Molloy, EOW 1/30/2017.

Christina Molloy is a student at Fairfield University, completing her Master of Arts in Special Ed. Christina is the daughter of James Molloy, EOW 1/30/2017.

Trentten Orth is a student at Arizona State University, completing his degree in Mechanical Engineering. Trentten is the son of Joseph Sanders, EOW 12/15/2008.

Ilia Ortiz-Colon is a student at Wake Forest School of Medicine, completing her degree in Nursing. Ilia is the daughter of Norberto Ortiz Ocasio, EOW 8/11/1993.

Sole Pabon-Velez is a student at University of Puerto Rico in Humacao, completing his degree in Puerto Rican and Caribbean studies. Sole is the son of Edwin Pabon-Robles, EOW 9/23/2016.

Julia Preslar is a student at Fairleigh Dickinson University, completing her degree in Radiography. Julia is the daughter of William Preslar, EOW 5/14/2007.

Ariana Salim-Johnson is a student at UCF College of Medicine, completing her medical degree. Ariana is the daughter of Joseph Johnson, EOW 5/30/2019.

Jack Santoro is a student at Stevens Institute of Technology, completing his degree in Mechanical Engineering. Jack is the son of Thomas Santoro, EOW 7/21/2019.

Michael Santoro is a student at St. Johns University, completing his degree in Advertising Communications. Michael is the son of Thomas Santoro, EOW 7/21/2019.

Adrian Seals is a student at Northeastern University, completing his degree in Psychology & Criminal Justice. Adrian is the son of Joseph Seals, EOW 12/10/2019.

Sydney Taylor is a student at Purdue University, completing her degree in Veterinary Medicine. Sydney is the daughter of David Hewitt, EOW 2/13/2019.

John VanDenberg is a student at Stark State College, completing his degree in English. John is the son of Sean VanDenberg, EOW 12/25/2021.

Isabel Vera is a student at Pennsylvania State University, completing her bachelor's degree. Isabel is the daughter of Nemesio Vera, EOW 12/3/2020.

Margaret Vera is a student at Pennsylvania State University, completing her master's degree in forensic sciences. Margaret is the daughter of Nemesio Vera, EOW 12/3/2020.

Brigitte Wendel is a student at OK State University, completing her master's degree in forensic sciences. Brigitte is the daughter of Douglas Wendel, EOW 7/30/2003.

Vicky Yan is a student at Harvard University, completing her bachelor's degree. Vicky is the daughter of Ching Yan, EOW 5/16/2020.

Robert Zane is a student at Sacred Heart University, completing his bachelor's degree in criminal justice. Robert is the son of Robert Zane, EOW 5/12/2009.

Deadline Dates for Scholarship Applications are as follows:
Summer Semester - April 1
Fall Semester - June 1
Winter/Spring Semesters - October 1
APPLY ONLINE at concernsofpolicesurvivors.org

C.O.P.S. scholarships are awarded to surviving children and spouses of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty, who are enrolled in under-graduate and post-graduate studies at an accredited college or university, or an accredited trade/vocational school. An independent scholarship committee determines recipients.

Scholarships are not awarded to survivors who are entitled to a tuition-free education as a state death benefit.
New items!

Great deals!

Surprise gift with $50 purchase!

SHOP COPS SHOP

HOLIDAY SALE

November 24 - December 8

COPSSHOP.ORG
**Contact Information Needed**

In an attempt to make sure C.O.P.S. has the most updated and correct information for all survivors, you may have received an email from the Chapter & Survivor Support department. As you may know, we work hand in hand with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, specifically the office of the **Public Safety Officers’ Benefits Program (PSOB)**. If C.O.P.S. is struggling to reach an agency and/or surviving family, the PSOB office might be having issues as well.

There is a three-year deadline from the date of an officer's end of watch (EOW) for an agency or surviving family to submit a federal benefit line-of-duty death claim. If you are unsure if an application has been submitted, please call us at 573-346-4911. If you have submitted a claim and the status is still pending, we also encourage you to call us as your information may be one that needs to be updated.

Please remember that C.O.P.S. is always available to assist you with the benefit process and any questions you may have. You can reach Alyssa Starnes, C.O.P.S. Benefits Coordinator, by emailing alyssa_starnes@nationalcops.org.

**2023-2024 Traumas of Law Enforcement Training Dates and Locations**

Alexandria, VA - December 4th - 6th, 2023  
Jacksonville, FL - January 29th - 31st, 2024  
Las Vegas, NV - February 5th - 7th, 2024  
Oklahoma City, OK - February 26th - 28th, 2024  
Pittsburgh, PA - March 25th - 27th, 2024  
TBD:  
Indianapolis, IN    Boise, ID  
Des Moines, IA    San Antonio, TX

“Thank you to the National Board for entrusting us to host the Traumas of Law Enforcement training June 12-14th in Wichita. Over 160 officers attended this critically acclaimed training! A big thank you to our KS C.O.P.S. board, and several Kansas survivors for helping us make this TLE a grand success!” -Dana Evans, Kansas C.O.P.S.

**Have you been wanting to take part in the Law Enforcement United (LEU) bicycle memorial ride? This could be your year!**

LEU is accepting new members until the December 1, 2023, deadline. Ride along active and retired law enforcement officers, as well as your fellow survivors, to honor all fallen heroes and support survivors.

Did you know LEU is the benefactor supporter of both C.O.P.S. Kids Camp and Young Adults Camp? Not only do these men and women ride to honor your heroes, they also attend various events during National Police Week, serve as mentors and volunteers at these camps, and raise additional funds for other adult programs and trainings.

Sign up and choose your ride by visiting [leunited.org](http://leunited.org) today!
CONCERNS OF POLICE SURVIVORS PRESENTS

COPS WALK SOUTHWEST
BUCKEYE, AZ

SAVE THE DATES

FEBRUARY 9-11

2-DAY 25-MILE JOURNEY HONORING THE FALLEN

2024

COPS WALK SOUTHWEST BRINGS TOGETHER SURVIVORS, FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITY TO WALK 25-MILES IN 2-DAYS IN HONOR OF THEIR FALLEN OFFICER. PROCEEDS FROM THIS EVENT HELP FUND C.O.P.S. PROGRAMS AND SERVICES.

ALL DONATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED BY JANUARY 11TH FOR AWARDS.
HOTELS: HILTON GOODYEAR PHOENIX WEST AND SPRINGHILL SUITES PHOENIX GOODYEAR

#COPSWALKSW

REGISTRATION LINK COMING SOON - BE SURE TO FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA
Get Your C.O.P.S. 2023 Holiday Ornament!

Don’t forget to place your order for the 2023 C.O.P.S. holiday ornament. This year’s design was inspired by Staci Brakhage, surviving sister of Riverside (MO) Police Master Patrolman Jefferson “Jeff” Taylor, EOW 6/3/2011.

“The holidays have always been magical in our family. Every year, we gather a new ornament for Jeff to place on our tree. Seeing the new special ornament brings back so many memories to talk about and cherish,” said Staci.

If we receive your order by December 1, 2023, the ornament can be mailed to you before Christmas. Or you can choose to have your ornament displayed on the Christmas tree at the National Office and mailed to you after the holidays.

To order, visit concernsofpolicesurvivors.org or scan the QR code. If you have questions or need assistance, please call the C.O.P.S. Development team at 573.346.4911.

$10,945 raised from the Suzie Sawyer Golf Classic!

The Suzie Sawyer Golf Classic was held once again on June 12, 2023, at Lake Valley Golf Course in Camdenton (MO). The sold out tournament brought out members of local law enforcement, avid C.O.P.S. supporters, and area business associates. In true Suzie fashion, the day was full of twists, turns, fun, and fellowship. Not to mention the day raised almost $11,000 for C.O.P.S.

Thank you to all players, volunteers, and sponsors for making this tournament possible!
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
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<td>FBI NAA Wisconsin Chapter</td>
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Stay Connected Via the C.O.P.S. App!

The C.O.P.S. general smartphone app has recently been updated. If you currently have the app, please go to your app store and select the “Update” option. If you do not have the app yet, you can easily download this free resource by searching “Concerns of Police Survivors” in your app store.

This app is an easy way to have all of the vital information C.O.P.S. has to offer at your fingertips. Allowing push notifications is recommended so you receive updated information throughout the year.
Concerns of Police Survivors
P.O. Box 3199 846 Old South Highway 5
Camdenton, MO 65020

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED