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Children's Mini Camp

### Upcoming Events

#### Saturday, June 9th

Comfort Coffee  
9-10 a.m.  
Cambria inside the Rivers Hills Mall

#### Sunday, June 10th

Children's Mini Camp  
4:30-7:30 p.m.  
Children's Museum of Southern MN

#### Tuesday, June 26th

Comfort Coffee  
9-10 a.m.  
Courtyard by Marriott, Mankato

### Save the Date

#### Saturday, July 14th

Comfort Coffee  
9-10 a.m.  
Cambria inside the Rivers Hills Mall

#### Tuesday, July 24th

Comfort Coffee  
9-10 a.m.  
Courtyard by Marriott, Mankato

#### Sunday, September 30th

Children's Memorial Service  
1-3 p.m.  
OBS Children's Memorial Site at Erlandson Park, Mankato  
(Christ the King Church if inclement weather)

### Contact Us:

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## Connecting Mothers Through Creativity



Participants pose for a group photo after their butterfly themed paintings are complete.

One Bright Star hosted its annual Mother's of Angels Painting Event on Saturday, May 5th at the Lake Crystal Area Recreation Center. Carolina Koopmans, with Unwine Creations, led the group painting. This event brought artists of all levels together to share their creativity and connect mothers that have lost a child. Participants enjoyed food and refreshments and most importantly, honored their special angel through a painting. The theme this year was butterflies. Spanish tradition says that when you see a butterfly, it is a sign from a loved one. It's so powerful to see how unique and colorful each painting turned out and it speaks to how unique and special our angels are to each of us! This annual event is free to mothers of angels and is just one of the many events One Bright Star hosts to help families understand that they are not alone in their journey through grief.



Carolina Koopmans leads participants step-by-step through their painting.



The Best  
thing to  
Hold Onto  
in life is  
Each Other  
Audrey Hepburn

All your life,  
everything that  
ever happened  
made you into  
the incredible  
person you are.  
- even the  
hard stuff.  
♡

*This May 28th, was 16 months since my son passed away. Most of the early months after his passing were a fog. As the months went by, I found myself wondering how I was to survive and adapt back into this world. I also, sometimes desperately, was trying figuring out this new relationship with my son in Heaven. Along my journey I have met some amazing people. These people we often refer to as our Tribe. The people who's aching and healing hearts, meld with our own. They give us inspiration, hope and strength we never knew we had. This Father's Day, I wanted to recognize one such man. Below is something Bobby wrote to share his experience through hope and healing. Thank you Bobby, you continue to inspire me every day. - Tracy*

## **Bobby's Story - A Father's Journey of Hope and Healing**

I was the luckiest man on the planet, and had turned 60 just nine days earlier. I had experienced it all in my life; I was "Living the Dream." On October 27, 2014, that all changed, my son, Jared, died that day. I will never know the time, the exact reason, or the circumstance. I only knew that I would not, could not survive the trauma of his death. Somehow, three and a half years later, I can say I have.

My beautiful loving boy Jared had passed from his earthly physical presence to Spirit, he had crossed the Veil. My world, as I had known it, came to a crashing end that fateful day. How could this have possibly happened? In that moment, the blink of an eye, my entire Self shattered, through the core and right down to my foundation... I was a completely broken man. I have since learned that my human body had gone into fight or flight mode that day, the human basic instinct of survival. I was in shock; a total fog had set in, I was lost in the abyss!

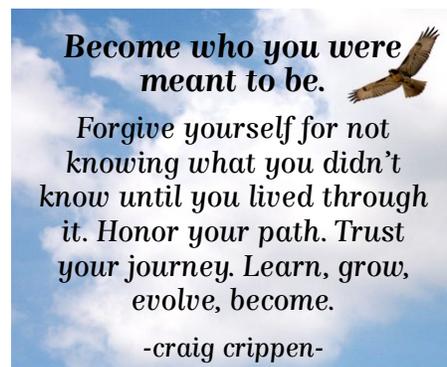
I was journeying into the labyrinth, not knowing where it was leading me, "slip sliding away" so to speak. My world was in total darkness. Thoughts were full of anger and rage, guilt and blame, my serenity had turned to anxiety and doubt; in an instant I had deteriorated into absolute and total despair. I don't remember how long it took me to slide down that slippery slope; it was a mass confusion of tangled emotions. At the bottom I spun and wrapped myself into a cocoon, my new safe place, a place to hide from the world outside. Others call it the rabbit hole, the name doesn't matter, if you have been there or are there now, you know exactly what I'm talking about. Existence, survival, self protection!

I knew that I couldn't stay there forever, in fact I had no desire to, and I wanted a way out. I did not have the tools or the knowhow for this major task, for what seemed the first time in my life. At some point there was a glimpse of light. It was coming from somewhere, I wanted, needed to find more; I could finally see it and I longed for it with all my heart. I was being pulled, nudged, and drawn



to attend the Compassionate Friends Conference in Arizona early in 2016. I knew I needed to go and that Jared was the one nudging me. That is where I believe my Grief Journey turned into a Healing Journey. There I found Hope, I found my Tribe! I met so many people there; however a few would change my life forever. They became my teachers, my mentors that showed me a light and a path out of the darkness; I held on for dear life. Sara, who taught me to Trust the Journey. Paula, who relit the spark to my Inner Wisdom and showed me that joy and grief co-exist in the human spirit. Mitch, who taught me to truly believe in all the signs I was receiving from Jared. Alan, who taught me to forgive myself for the guilt and blame I held onto, just to mention a few!

Soon after that magical trip, I knew I had found a way out of the darkness. I broke through the barriers of my cocoon, the safe place that I had built to survive. I began to see the choices laid out in front of me one by one. Small steps at first, there was so much work to be done. Each choice came with a lesson. Some lessons came easy, but most required of me a



lot of work, work on myself mostly. The "before me" was not used to this, I had always made snap judgments, it was my job, I had always trusted my "gut" instinct. However, this time I needed to dig deeper and learn it all over again, find the trust in it. I was becoming the "new me", a different version of myself, a mixture of the old and the new. I knew that Spirit was guiding me; Spirit was leading me out of the darkness and back into the light.

At times I have felt fully back in the light. I feel grounded again, and in balance. At times I have been allowed to Soar, to look down from a higher vantage point to see where I have been and where I am now. The darkness still exists for me; at times I need to go back there, to that safe place where I need to learn yet another lesson or to heal from another wound. I know now that is not my forever place, just a place that needs to be visited from time to time. In other words, I don't believe I will fully heal. I believe that I will always miss Jared's big beautiful physical presence... I don't ever want that to go away. I can say that I truly enjoy life, probably more than I ever had. I appreciate everything and take nothing for granted! I no longer let little things irritate me, I am much more forgiving, I have become empathetic to others suffering, I am a much better person than I ever was. I have all of this to thank Jared for. Had he not lived and died, had he not been my son, had I not walked through the fire and come out the other side, I would not be who I am today. I can truly say I like this person, this new version of me.

Please allow yourself the time to do the work of grieving, let out every emotion that comes to you, yell or scream whenever you need to; there is no avoiding any of it. Allow others to hold space for you when you cannot do it for yourself. Find a like loss community, that is your tribe. When and if you can, help others, it will help you far more. **Remember, Love never dies! Our Loved ones are with us always, the relationship and Love is still there, just in a different way!**



REGISTER  
ONLINE BY  
JUNE 3RD.

The One Bright Star Mini-Camp is an activity-based celebration and support program. It will assist young people in dealing with grief, enjoying an afternoon of remembrance, and entering a supportive network of friends and others who have lost a close loved one.

# CHILDREN'S MINI-CAMP

SUNDAY, JUNE 10TH, 2018 · 4:30-7:30PM  
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF SOUTHERN MINNESOTA (224 LAMM ST., MANKATO)

## FREE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS AGES 4-17

PAINTING WITH UNWINE CREATIONS  
YOGA (BRING A YOGA MAT OR BEACH TOWEL IF YOU HAVE ONE)  
STUFF A TEDDY BEAR KEEPSAKE (WRITE A MESSAGE TO YOUR LOVED ONE TO BE PLACED INSIDE)

MEET NEW FRIENDS  
REFLECT AND SHARE ABOUT YOUR LOVED ONE (SIBLING, PARENT, COUSIN, FRIEND, ETC.)  
WRITING WORKSHOP (AGES 10-17)  
DINNER IS PROVIDED

For over 20 years, One Bright Star has served as a resource to families who have lost a child. One Bright Star offers several events throughout the year, including a: Mothers of Angels painting event, Memorial Service, Celebration of Life Gala, Couples Trivia Night and Children's Mini-Camp. For more information please visit [www.OneBrightStar.org](http://www.OneBrightStar.org). You can also like and follow us on Facebook.