

It Begins with a Child; How Wildflower Creates a Circle of Support for Grieving Children

By Laura Krotky

Life changed for the entire Parks family in an instant in 2011 when dad was killed in an accident. At the time, Lucas was 7-years old and Kaleb just 11 months. In the blink of an eye, their mom Tiffanie became the sole provider for her 2 young boys. Thankfully, Tiffanie was able to rely on her parents in the immediate aftermath of the accident and soon began to search for additional help for her young children. She found Jeff's Place, a bereavement center in Framingham that is committed to helping families feel less alone in their grief.

Jeff's Place has been a long-time collaborator with Wildflower, often sharing ideas about how best to help the bereaved families we serve. In October, 2014, Wildflower called Melissa Kennedy Panto, their program director, to ask for her input. Wildflower had submitted a grant to the Youth in Philanthropy program at the Foundation for MetroWest. In the grant, we asked for support to expand our program to more families living specifically in the Metro West area. Upon hearing our request, Melissa knew she could help. She knew of 3 families who were part of the Jeff's Place community who would greatly benefit from Wildflower's unique support. The Parks family was one of those families.

Several months after Wildflower submitted our grant application to the Foundation for MetroWest, we received a phone call with great news. We were selected to receive the Youth in Philanthropy grant!

In the end, we were able to welcome 3 new families from Metro West into Wildflower's circle of support. We were able to do so by collaborating with our wonderful partners—accomplishing so much more as a team than we would have been able to accomplish alone. And the result was well worth the effort. Lucas and 2 other young



campers enjoyed a sun-speckled, fun-filled summer at camp last year. Wildflower is committed to repeating the adventure every summer for many years to come. We know that attending camp can help to soften the grief of losing a parent and increase the resilience that comes with the strong bonds, fun and learning that occurs at camp. In a recent conversation with Tiffanie, we learned that Lucas had an absolutely wonderful summer at Pompositticut Farm Camp, a new camp that Wildflower helped her find. She said "It was a perfect fit for Lucas. He loved every minute of camp and was a much happier child by the end of the summer thanks to Wildflower."

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our collaborating partners Jeff's Place and the Foundation for MetroWest and we look forward to many more rewarding collaborations in the future.

Running in the Rain at the Boston Marathon

Congratulations **Brett Wilzbach, Kurt Minihane** and **Seth Roman** for running 26.2 miles through the rain-soaked city streets at the Boston Marathon. Together our runners raised more than \$18,000 for Wildflower's campers and families. We cheered for them on Marathon Day at **Sherri Goldberg's** Commonwealth Avenue home and we continue to extend our thanks for their commitment to our mission. Special thanks to **Buffalo Wild Wings** for supporting Wildflower through Kirk's run.



Rodman Riders Pedal for At-Risk Kids

Wildflower celebrated Rodman's 25th anniversary by riding in the Rodman Ride for Kids on a bright and beautiful September morning. Our team joined 1,500 other riders, all committed to the same goal of helping at-risk kids throughout Massachusetts. This year's Ride is expected to raise \$12 million for kids! Thank you Team Wildflower, volunteers, corporate sponsors and individual donors.

Spotlight: New Grants for Wildflower

Wildflower has received several significant grants this year. We would like to thank those who have exhibited confidence in our mission by choosing Wildflower to receive your support.

The **New York Life Foundation** awarded a \$10,000 "Grief Reach" capacity building grant to support the implementation of Wildflower's strategic plan.

The **Risa S. Rosengard Foundation** awarded a grant that will fund our families who have experienced loss due to cancer.

The **MetroWest Foundation's Youth in Philanthropy Grant** enabled Wildflower to extend our support to three new families living in the Metro West region.

A grant from long-time supporter **Ann Melanson** and **The Bailey Family Foundation** will support Wildflower's children attending camp this summer.



The Risa S. Rosengard Foundation awarded Debbie Whitehill and Audrey Loria with the first prestigious Dr. Gail Singer Harrison Award.

The Wildflower Gala: A Night of Magic on the Boston Waterfront



More than 200 Wildflower supporters enjoyed a special night of celebration at The Wildflower Gala on September 9th at the beautiful Seaport Hotel. The magic of Wildflower was everywhere: in the sweet voices of the **Aloha Camp Chorus**, in the story of resilience and courage told by a Wildflower mom and again in the comments made by our honorees **Paul Burton** and **Bob Strauss**. It was both a beautiful reminder of the importance of our mission and a significant fundraising vehicle. Thanks to the generosity of our corporate and individual donors, we raised over \$150,000 for our campers and their families.

Our great success at the Gala enables Wildflower to begin work on our new goal: to expand and broaden our mission to help more families who so greatly need our assistance. Thank you to our new corporate sponsors, especially lead sponsor **Commonwealth Financial Group**, our dedicated and growing collection of individual donors and our loyal volunteers for helping us reach this new plateau. Our last speaker for the night, 12-year old Simon, a Wildflower camper for three years, summed up the night best when he said, “The reason I love camp, is for the people you meet, the friends you’ve made, and I hope for me, the ones you know forever. I thank everybody for coming and for supporting Wildflower. Thank you!”

Thanks to all of our corporate sponsors for their generous support

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Our new and active Friends Network donors support Wildflower at the highest level. Thank you to each of you for making a significant contribution in support of Wildflower’s mission this year.

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- Wildflower is fueled by a growing assembly of donors. We so greatly appreciate every donation we receive, regardless of the amount. Thank you for your support and your confidence in our mission.

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With Your Help, Our Mission Grows

Wildflower relies on the generosity of our donors. Please consider making a donation to help us send our 2016 kids to camp this summer and thank you for your support. Online: www.wildflowercampfoundation.org

MISSION

Wildflower helps children who have lost a parent with the gift of camp, enrichment opportunities and ongoing support. We provide summer-camp placement and funding, along with long-term support, to both the camper and their family while they recover from their loss. We are committed to making a real and lasting impact on the lives of the families we serve.

To learn more visit:
www.wildflowercampfoundation.org