

October 7, 2024

To Whom It May Concern regarding the Elmer G Biddick Charitable Foundation,

Thank you for reviewing this letter. We are submitting a request on behalf of our ministry, BENS Hope.

After losing our 27 year old son Benjamin to suicide 11.11.14, Got put it on our hearts to help others. We have been doing just that these past almost ten years through our ministry. Never before did we know of those that are struggling, but have since learned, there are many. We are humbled to serve in this capacity helping others.

If you aren't familiar with our ministry, services include but are not limited to:

Helping Hands Giveaway

The first event I'll share is one that God put on my husband Terry's heart. It's hosting an annual BENS Hope Helping Hands Giveaway. Each year we take nominations during the month of February. Nominees include people down on their luck, doing good things in their community or others who are furthering their education in mental health. From these nominations, three are selected and each blessed with a monetary donation. Their names are announced on March 5, which also happens to be Ben's birthday. God has the best ideas! This event is a wonderful way to give back! Those recipients are truly grateful.

Monthly Support Group Meetings

We also host monthly Survivors of Suicide meetings the 2nd Tuesday of each month. These are peer facilitated by Terry and me. All are welcome. People attending include survivors of suicide, people struggling or dealing with suicidal ideation or parents who join us and bring their child who is currently dealing with suicidal thoughts. It's incredible to witness the impact as people get clarity on what it looks like to be a survivor, left behind and figure out how to move forward in life, without our loved ones here. For survivors, it's a community where they are welcomed and offered love, compassion, support and hope. We do not charge for people to attend these monthly support meetings.

Retreats

Another idea from God is hosting BENS Hope Grief and Healing Hearts Retreats. Mom's who've lost a child, by suicide or otherwise are invited to attend these retreats that I facilitate. They receive a private room, bath and all meals and materials are provided. The event runs Friday evening through Sunday midday, with an opening ceremony at the start and closing ceremony as we wrap up and all sorts of incredible activities in-between. This retreat is offered to mom's at no cost, covered by donations made to our BENS Hope ministry. I am humbled and honored to walk with these moms on their grief and healing journey. I don't have it all figured out and I'm walking this journey also, but what I do have, is a heart that cares and wishes to

support these beautiful moms who are left broken behind words. It's an incredible experience to be part of.

Annual 5K/2M Event

We recently hosted our 10h annual BENS Hope 5K/2M Suicide Awareness/Prevention event, September 21, 2024. We contemplated this being our final year to host this event, but based on the number of attendees, and specifically first time attendees, Pastor Mark Deiter, who was our MC, shared with us that our efforts are needed to support those in and around our community. We can't help but question, who will serve these families, if we don't?

School Presentations

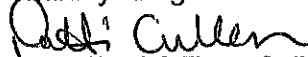
In addition to these events, we've made countless school presentations at junior high, high school and college levels. Our target audience is 8th grade students. During these classroom presentations, we share our story of losing Ben, offer resources and prepare a Safety & Crisis Plan, so that these students are equipped for challenges they will encounter ahead of them. These classroom presentations are incredibly powerful! It's hard to explain to others what it feels like when a student comes up to us afterwards and thanks us for coming to their class, offering them HOPE! Kids are struggling, people are struggling. Suicide is not a topic most are comfortable talking about. We are, which is why we do these presentations. We know these are not our kids, and all the talking in the world won't bring Ben back. But we know that these students are someone's loved one, which is why we invest in these presentations. We pray our efforts spare their families from ever knowing the pain we live with and the strength and courage it takes to continue on once a loved one makes the lone decision to their life by suicide.

God also put it on my heart, four weeks following Ben's suicide, to start journaling. I declined, but He was persistent until I became obedient. He told me these journal entries would become a book and that this book would be called Tears of Love. He said it would help save lives. How does one argue with that?! I left my career of 43 years at the end of 2022, to work on this book with an editor and publisher. Tears of Love came to fruition and was published and released in November 2023. I've been reassured, this book is helping others, just as God promised.

I hope this letter conveys the desire we have to find goodness in our tragedy by reaching out to others offering our love, support, compassion, tools, resources and hope in a world that is desperately seeking it.

We appreciate your consideration of donating monies towards our BENS Hope ministry efforts. We aren't making a specific dollar amount request, because we appreciate all donations. We trust God will provide and know that our services to this ministry will continue as long as we're financially able to. Your blessing allows us to continue to bless others.

Thank you again.



Love, Patti & Terry Cullen of BENS Hope
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