



I AM THE ASSIGNMENT PEACE BY PIECE

IN LIFE, CHILDREN FACE THE SAME KIND OF PAIN ADULTS DO, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY LOSE SOMEONE THEY LOVE.

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a note from EDMARC



I hope this message finds you all in good health and high spirits. As we approach the fall months and the busy holiday season, I wanted to take a moment to reflect on the incredible journey we've been on together and share our vision for the future.

Over the past months, we have accomplished much for which we should all be proud. I continue to be inspired by the dedication and passion of the Edmarc staff, volunteers and supporters, because we would not be able to do what we do without you. Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones, from establishing our new office in Williamsburg to continuing to celebrate wonderful family events like the Spring Fling, summer picnics, food deliveries to families, Easter baskets, and providing school supplies. These events and activities give our families a chance to enjoy time together, while experiencing some sense of normalcy.

Looking ahead, our path remains guided by the same principles that have brought us this far. We will continue to provide families with the highest quality of care possible, striving to make an even greater impact in the lives of those we serve.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to every volunteer, donor, staff member, and partner for your many contributions. Your generosity, whether in time, resources, or expertise, is what propels us forward. Edmarc's impact is not measured in numbers, but in the positive change we bring to individuals' lives. With your help, we continue to be the beacon of hope and support that our families rely on.

If you ever have ideas, suggestions, or concerns, please know that my door is always open. Your input is essential as we shape the future of Edmarc.

Thank you for being a part of our journey, as we look ahead to achieving even greater heights together.

Warm regards,

Debbie Stitzer-Brame

Executive Director, Edmarc

I Am the Assignment – Peace by Piece

By **Bryante Nicole Brooks**

In life, children face the same kind of pain adults do, especially when they lose someone they love. For a child, this kind of trauma turns their safe, dependable world upside down. Peace by Piece is an interfaith program for grieving children and teens in partnership with Jewish Family Service of Tidewater. Participants are assigned to age-appropriate groups led by trained volunteer facilitators. The program allows them the opportunity to process their experiences regarding loss and provide support for one another through therapeutic activities, games, and crafts.

Ten years ago, Bryante Brooks' father passed away and with the love and support of her grandmother, Regina Moody, and Peace By Piece she has grown into a resilient, strong, smart, and kind young lady. Bryant put into writing what the Peace by Piece program has meant to her over the years.

I am that little hand that grabbed my grandmother's when my father's hand lost its grip on life. Thankfully, she reached out and took me as her second assignment. She understood the assignment and gladly accepted.

I have learned that it's okay to be sad right now, to be overwhelmed with uncertainty, and stress, to be filled with anxiety, and to be unmotivated. When I feel that way, I let myself feel it, and remember that it will pass, and things will get better.

When I feel like my world is falling apart my go-to sources are God first, then my grandmother, my family, and Edmarc. I always say talk with people who help you see the world differently.

Here's my advice, hug everyone you love a lot tighter, never leave someone in an argument, be present, and say I love you way too much. Always remember the sloppy kisses. Take a lot of pictures of the ones you love, because you never know when the last time you see them will be. Please don't take one second for granted.

Edmarc has taught me to let the world know this: You can sound confident and have anxiety. You can look healthy but feel ill. You can look happy and be miserable inside. You can be good-looking and feel ugly. So be kind because every person is fighting a battle you know nothing about.

Over the past 10 years, Edmarc has said things to me like:

- We understand what you are going through, and it sounds hard.
- What do you need right now?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- You matter, your feelings make sense.
- I care about you. Your words are safe with us.
- It's OK to not feel OK right now.
- You're not alone in this, we are here.

The hardest truth that I have learned about losing a parent is that it is acceptable to show emotions and talk about the person who died. Normalizing the grieving process is important. It allows kids to reduce anxieties about the future. Edmarc has helped me reduce my exposure to negative life events. And children don't have to forget about their parents who died. It is so important for bereaved children to be in constant contact with others that are experiencing the same helplessness. It gives them a sense of more control over events happening to them than their non-bereaved friends.

In keeping with the friendships and memories that I have developed over the years, I hope to become a counselor with Edmarc one day and to be able to give back to the wonderful people that have so graciously given me so much love.



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THE LANGUAGE GROUP (TLG)



Edmarc recently partnered with The Language Group (TLG), an award-winning language solutions company headquartered in Virginia Beach, to assist us in helping our families whose first language is not English. TLG believes in leveraging its services such as virtual, in-person, and over-the-phone interpretation, to positively impact society. Through this new relationship, TLG aims to increase awareness of the importance of hospice care at any age and encourage discussions on how advancements in language services can complement the existing services provided by these centers.

This relationship started because Edmarc recently admitted a family we and we don't have access to interpretation services that included the family's native language. In a moment of desperation, so we could avoid a father having to interpret heartbreaking news about his son to his wife, we put a call out to our network of volunteers to see if anyone knew someone who spoke the language and could interpret for the admission visit. No one was available. However, one of our volunteers works for TLG and immediately connected us with their owner, who ironically, was raised two blocks from our building in Portsmouth and was a student at the now-closed Portsmouth Catholic High School across the street from Edmarc. Within two months, TLG had Edmarc set up to access over 200 languages through their phone interpreting, onsite interpreting, video remote interpreting, and even document translation. Edmarc can ensure that all families, regardless of their native language, have equitable access to our services and support, thanks to this new partnership with The Language Group. "We are honored to have had the opportunity to visit Edmarc and witness the remarkable work being done here," said Madison Handley, a representative from TLG. "The dedication and compassion demonstrated by the staff are truly inspiring. TLG remains committed to exploring ways our services can contribute to improving end-of-life care and support for patients and their loved ones."



KIWANIS CLUB OF NORFOLK; FRIEND OF EDMARC FOR OVER 25 YEARS!

In their latest show of support, the Kiwanis Club of Norfolk has become the official sponsor of The Visitor newsletter. Over the past 25-plus years, their generous support has helped us ensure that comprehensive, family centered, home-based care is provided to the children of Hampton Roads living with life-threatening illness.

Kiwanis International was founded in 1915 in Detroit, Michigan, U.S., by a group of businessmen who called the organization the Supreme Lodge Benevolent Order of Brothers. The name changed to Kiwanis in 1916, after a Native American expression: "Nunc Kee-wanis." ("We trade.") That same year, Kiwanis became an international organization with the founding of the Kiwanis Club of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada.

Initially focused on business networking, the organization changed its focus to service in 1919 – specifically service to children. Over the years, more clubs were created in the U.S. and Canada, and worldwide expansion was ultimately approved in the 1960s. Today, there are Kiwanis clubs in nearly 80 nations and geographic locations.

Kiwanis' mission is "serving the children of the world" and their commitment to the kids and families of Edmarc has spanned over 25 years.

Some ways Kiwanis Club of Norfolk has helped Edmarc over the years:

Summer Picnic

- Initially, Kiwanis Club of Norfolk sponsored our Summer Picnic every other year, but in 2020 they moved to annually and now they host our Summer Pool Party on the Southside of Hampton Roads.



Grant funding

- For programs including nursing, support, perinatal, bereavement.
- They have funded 3 vehicles making it possible to visit our families.

Capital improvements to the Edmarc facility

- Replaced windows and sliding glass doors

Done in a Day

- Lawn maintenance and pond cleaning

The Visitor

- First official sponsor of the Edmarc newsletter



with love,
we remember



MARGARET H. (8/9/04-1/9/23)

Miss Maggie Mae was a sweet young lady whose mischievous smile could make anyone grin from ear to ear. She was very expressive and had ways of telling people EXACTLY what she wanted (or didn't want!). She had the biggest heart and was so deeply loved by everyone around her. She will be missed by her parents, Kevin and Holly, as well as countless friends and family.

AUDREY C. (11/11/22-1/15/23)

Audrey was a precious baby girl who loved to be held and wrapped in snuggly blankets. Though she was tiny, she had a feisty personality. She will be forever loved and remembered by her mother, Ireland, and numerous family members.

OMAR H. (9/19/12-1/23/23)

Omar was an amazing young man who brought a smile to everyone he met. He loved Mickey Mouse, Thomas the Train, Barney, his twin sister Ameera, cheese quesadillas from Taco Bell, and the color yellow. Omar battled cancer for several years but did not let that dampen his spirit. He was determined to walk again and go to school. Omar loved to play jokes on the nurses and doctors who cared for him. His spirit and zest for life will be missed by all who knew him; especially his parents, Omar and Bonita; his sisters Sara (Sissy), and Ameera; and numerous friends and family members.

SOPHIE C. (4/18/23-4/18/23)

Precious little Sophie was deeply loved even before she was born. The time she spent with her family was far too brief, but her legacy will last forever. She will be remembered in the hearts of her parents, Angie and Troy, as well as her big brother, Luke.

KAYLEIGH J. (10/28/15-1/19/23)

Sweet Kayleigh had quite the habit of beating the odds at every turn! She was born with a formidable fighting spirit in a tiny (1lb 4 oz) little body; and lived 7 years full of love. She was a little diva through and through and loved music and her family. Her memory will be forever cherished by everyone who met her, but especially her parents, Valerie and Corey; brothers, Corey Jr. and Kameren; and baby sister, Kylie.

ELIJAH H. (3/10/23-3/10/23)

Elijah was a special baby boy who touched so many hearts. Although baby Elijah's time here was far too short, he was deeply loved by his family. Left to cherish his sweet memory are his parents, Tracy & Ben, his big brother, Ben Jr., and numerous other family members and friends.

KA'MONI R. (3/6/23-3/6/23)

Ka'Moni was a very sweet baby girl who brightened the lives of her family. Though her time here was very short, she was truly a blessing. Ka'Moni will be lovingly remembered by her mother, Kierra, her big brother, Mika, and numerous family and friends.

ANJE W. (4/9/20-3/11/23)

Anje Nicole was a beautiful, funny girl who lit up the room with her smiles. She loved watching Gracie's Corner videos and had her own little dance. She also enjoyed playing with her sisters and being held by those she loved. Anje had a very special bond with her mom, who took excellent care of her. She is lovingly missed and remembered by her mother Marqueta, father Andre, and stepfather Kelvin; sisters Mariah, Jordan, and Andriana and countless family members and friends.

JAYDEN J. (8/2/22-3/23/23)

Jayden, or "Little Jayden" as he was called, was such a happy little boy. He came into this world with an unknown prognosis and brought joy to his mom and dad for seven and a half months. Little Jayden had big bright eyes and an adorable smile. Mom provided excellent care for him while Dad was out at sea. He was loved by so many. Little Jayden's memory will be cherished by his parents, Maria and Jayden, and countless friends and family members.

KINSLEY D. (3/10/20-3/22/23)

Kinsley was a beautiful little girl who brought light and laughter to anyone she met. She loved singing, clapping, and extremely loud noises. She and her Mama shared a bond like no other...they even had matching outfits for every day of the week. Kinsley had such a strong spirit and bravely faced so many health challenges during her brief time on earth. She is deeply missed by her Mama, Lisa; her brothers Zaccharia and Jarrell; and so many friends and family members.

CHLOE K. (4/18/08-3/30/23)

Chloe was an amazing young woman who inspired so many along her journey. She was courageous, tough, wise beyond her years, and had a smile that could light up any room. Chloe was also sassy with a great sense of humor. She loved a good joke and frequently enjoyed playing pranks on her medical team. She was a fierce lover of her family, friends, and animals, especially her two dogs, Finn and Wilson, and her bearded dragon, Peanut. Chloe is lovingly remembered by her parents, Jeff and Crissy, her little brother, Brycen, and numerous other family and friends.

LINDSAY R. (1/29/07-6/30/23)

Lindsay was a very special young lady who touched the hearts of all who were privileged to meet her. She loved to spend time with her family, attending school, and going on vacations. Lindsay was sassy from her stylish outfits to her polished nails and toes. But most all of she was strong, brave, and courageous in her fight and taught all those around her so much without saying a word. Lindsay will be deeply missed and lovingly remembered by her devoted parents, Joyce & Acton, numerous extended family members, and friends.

CAMERON B. (3/5/15-4/22/23)

Cameron was nothing if not an absolute delight. He was always happy and smiley, and had quite an affinity for straws, Lady Gaga, Baby Shark, and dancing! He utterly adored his big brother and big sister, and the feeling was easily mutual. Cameron will be forever loved by his parents, Lauren & Kris; big brother, Carson; big sister, Brady; as well as countless family and friends.

MUHAMMAD S. (12/4/22-6/1/23)

Muhammad was a sweet baby boy with beautiful brown eyes and a calm, gentle spirit. He was most content in the arms of his family or laying on his tummy. Muhammad leaves a legacy of love with his parents Selly and Alpha, as well as siblings Fatimata, Aliou, Mariam, and Yaseen, and extended family.

LEGEND G. (5/31/23-7/15/23)

Legend was an amazing baby boy who has a special place in the hearts of many. Though his time here was far too short, he touched the lives of so many. Legend was a little fighter and was adored by all who had the privilege to meet him. Legend will be greatly missed and lovingly remembered by his mother, Danyale, big brother, Deontae, and numerous other family and friends.

JOY J. (5/12/12-7/26/23)

You never met a little girl whose name was more appropriate for her. Joy was just that: the embodiment of JOY. Her smile was contagious, and she had a sass about her that was absolutely endearing. She was always full of surprises, and seemed to love to make her family and caregivers shake their heads and just say, "Oh, Joy!" She loved spending time with her family and a herd of support dogs and was admired and loved by everyone around her. She will be tenderly remembered by her parents, JJ and Brad, siblings, extended family, and many others.

TYRAH P. (7/28/23-7/28/23)

Tyrah was a very sweet baby who brightened and touched the lives of all those around her. Though little Tyrah's time here was far too short, she was loved immensely by her family. Left to cherish her sweet memory are her parents, Takeyah & Mark, Jr., big brother, Mark, III, as well as numerous other family and friends.

SUMMER TIME FUN

The Mariners' Museum graciously partnered with the Rotary Club of Oyster Point to host the Peninsula Summer Picnic by providing both the space and programming for this fun summer event. Edmarc and The Mariners' Museum staff worked together to bring some wonderful programming for families that included a museum scavenger hunt and viewing the narwhal tusk from the collection. Families enjoyed activities in the courtyard and welcomed the chance to be inside the museum as well. There was even a special visit from the superhero, Dr. Strange!

The Rotary Club of Oyster Point has been supporting Edmarc for 20 years, and this year's summer picnic was just another example of how their members go above and beyond to provide great experiences for our families. From the delicious spread of food to the entertainment provided by Wanda with Family and Fun Entertainment, families had a great time.

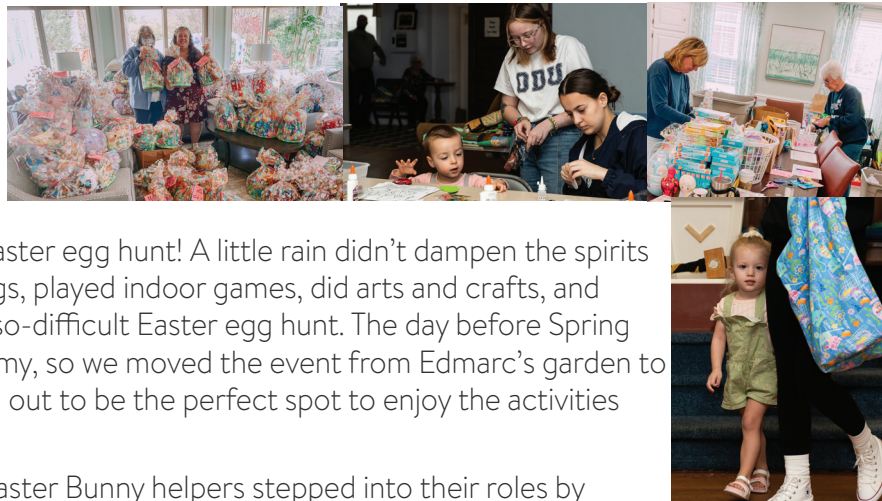


SPRING SHOWERS

The Easter Bunny was busy this year as we welcomed spring with a fun-filled day of crafts, activities, prizes, pictures with the Easter Bunny, a special appearance from Wags, and of course, the famous Edmarc Easter egg hunt! A little rain didn't dampen the spirits of our families as they decorated Easter eggs, played indoor games, did arts and crafts, and indulged in candy-filled eggs from the not-so-difficult Easter egg hunt. The day before Spring Fling the weather forecast was looking stormy, so we moved the event from Edmarc's garden to the South Norfolk Masonic Lodge. It turned out to be the perfect spot to enjoy the activities and stay as dry as possible.

On the heels of a successful Spring Fling, Easter Bunny helpers stepped into their roles by putting lots of love and attention into Easter baskets for each child involved with Edmarc—not just the Edmarc patient, but their siblings as well. Volunteers paid special attention to the specific needs of each child, taking exceptional care not to include candy in baskets for kids who cannot eat candy, and adding special touches like including their favorite stuffed animal from their favorite tv shows.

Special thanks to Mako Medical for providing generous financial support and to the ladies who provided Fairy Hair at Spring Fling, and to Elf Patrol and all the Easter basket donors for your generous donations.



GRATITUDE FOR THE WESTERN BRANCH LIONS CLUB

When the Western Branch Lions Club recently decided to combine with the Churchland Lions Club, they wanted to make one final impact on the community before the merger. Phyllis Bricker, a former nurse with a heart for children, paid Edmarc a visit on the club's behalf, accompanied by a \$10,000 donation! This generous contribution will support Edmarc's Foundation, helping to secure our future.



The ladies of the Chesapeake-Western Branch Lions Club originally formed as a Lioness Club in 1992. That first year they received the Governor's Award for their outstanding service to the community. Over the years, they continued their drive to serve, supporting numerous non-profits, including Edmarc. They understand the importance of caring for the sick child as well as the entire family. Their generosity will help Edmarc nurses and social workers through the Edmarc Foundation for years to come.



YORKTOWN ROTARY WEEKEND

Every year the Yorktown Rotary Club hosts and sponsors an incredible event for Edmarc families called the Yorktown Rotary weekend. This event allows families a chance to attend a mini vacation in the Yorktown area with some very exciting and fun-filled activities planned over the course of the weekend! This year was no exception! Once again on Father's Day Weekend, June 16-18, two Edmarc families set off to enjoy a special weekend away. It started with a meet and greet picnic on Friday evening. The families spent the weekend at a beautiful home near the river. Saturday's activities included a family fishing trip and an evening designed to give kids some time to enjoy Play-A-Round Family Fun Center, while their parents enjoyed dinner out at a restaurant. Sunday included a delicious breakfast to enjoy before families headed home. The entire cost of the weekend is covered by the Rotary and is a blast for everyone who attends! A huge thank you to the Yorktown Rotary, for once again providing a very memorable weekend for our Edmarc families!



In HONOR of Edmarc gratefully acknowledges the outpouring of support in honor of family members and friends.
October 31, 2022 – June 30, 2023

IN HONOR OF
LATORIA CHANTAE ARNOLD
ART BY RHONDA
BOB ASTON
KAY BARNE
CHRIS BARTLETT
DREW AND KERRY BOLLING
BROOKE BOLTON
STEVE BOWYER
BRITTANY BOYLAN
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DR. STUART BRAY
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JENNY AND DENNIS BRIDGER
BRUCE AND MARYSUE BRIGHT
MICHAEL BRIGHT
SARAH & MILTON BROWN
DENISE BURTON
MRS. DENISE BURTON AND FAMILY
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MS. SARA S. BURTON

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Torres Walker
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CHELSEA GOLDSTEIN
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Denisa Lyketsos
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Joan and Allen Hogge
Joan and Allen Hogge
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John and Emma House
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LARRY HOFFHEIMER
ALLEN HOGGE
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Lorrie Van Akkeren
Sara S. Burton
Billy Chorey

Sara S. Burton
Melinda South
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Charles Beitz Jr.
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Sara S. Burton
Joan and Allen Hogge
Richard Spano

Sara S. Burton
Sara S. Burton
Sara S. Burton

Sara S. Burton
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October 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR OUTSTANDING SERVICE

We thank the following three outstanding volunteers who recently completed their terms for their service to our Board of Directors. They have all played instrumental roles in guiding our mission with their insights and unique expertise. What all three of them have in common is their love for our families. We are grateful for their big hearts and the combined thousands of hours they gave to Edmarc. A very special thank you to Susan Blake, Vice President of Human Resources, Dominion Enterprises; Morton “Nemo” Larmore Partner, KPMG; and Mary Morgan Attorney, Golightly, Mulligan & Morgan, LLC.

We value each of them and benefited greatly from their expertise, leadership, compassion, and generosity. We thank them for making the lives of the people we serve matter. For their ability to see a better world. For being all that they are and doing all that they do.

THANK YOU!

NEW STAFF

Joining the Edmarc team as a nurse for the Williamsburg office is **Wendy Anthony**. Wendy graduated from Riverside School of Professional Nursing. She began her career in Acute Care Pediatrics at VCU Health Systems. After taking time off to stay home with her children, she returned to nursing as an adult hospice nurse.

“The moment I met the staff and heard the history and mission of Edmarc, I realized all roads had led me to this point. I am honored to be a part of the team and am looking forward to advancing Edmarc’s mission; bringing hope and comfort to the community of Williamsburg and beyond that travel this journey of childhood illness.”

What Wendy loves most about life is spending time with family and friends. You can find her at the beach or in a rocker on her front porch with husband Russ, daughter KellyGrace (recent high school grad), son Coen (rising high school junior), and their 3 dogs and 4 cats.



Darby Whitley Domer is originally from Georgia but has lived in Virginia for the past 15 years. Darby holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting and a bachelor’s degree in human services, with a concentration in Child and Family Services. Working at Edmarc as the Director of Finance and Administration enables her to use her unique set of skills to support both the business and family side of human services and healthcare. Darby’s son was her inspiration for coming to Edmarc, as her son was an Edmarc patient before gaining his wings in September 2022.

Darby considers herself a numbers geek and thrives on analyzing, budgeting, and working with formulas. Darby enjoys running and is currently training for her first full marathon in honor of her son. On the weekends, Darby loves trying new restaurants and coffee shops and spending time with friends and family.



We are thrilled to announce that **Latisha ‘Tish’ Newman** has joined Edmarc as the Telehealth Project Manager. Tish brings a wealth of experience and skills to her new role, with a background as an Air Force Veteran specializing in both physical and cybersecurity. Having earned a bachelor’s in healthcare administration and computer science with a focus on network security, Tish possesses a unique and valuable skill set that will undoubtedly benefit the team and organization. Tish’s roots are in Newport News, Virginia, where her family, who has a proud military history, settled. Professionally, Tish’s expertise lies in pediatric home health and hospital staffing. Her passion for making a positive impact on the lives of children and their families shines through in her work, making her an invaluable addition to the team. Beyond her professional accomplishments, Tish treasures her family life. She is happily married and is a proud parent to three wonderful children. In addition to her family, Tish shares her home with a beloved cat (Sadie), adding joy to her daily life. In her spare time, Tish is a fitness enthusiast, prioritizing a healthy lifestyle and engaging in regular workouts. She also loves to travel, explore new places, and embrace diverse cultures. Trying out new restaurants and indulging in various cuisines is a delightful hobby that Tish thoroughly enjoys.



Brittany Boylan joined the Edmarc team in April as the Community Resource Coordinator. Brittany is a Florida native with a heart for nonprofits. Her husband’s active-duty career has taken them all over the country, and she has loved working for different nonprofits along the way. Brittany’s experience has been in nonprofit fundraising and she’s eager to pivot into a more volunteer-oriented role. She moved back to Hampton Roads in January, and she is excited to be here again!

Brittany is an avid lover of all things wild, wonderful, and old, and enjoys backpacking, antiquing, skiing, and – most especially – riding horses. She has a lovely Coonhound named Rosie, and two kitties, Jack and Remi.



Thank you ...

Thank you to the many, many individuals, businesses and organizations who make the work Edmarc does possible and bring joy to our families across Hampton Roads by donating food baskets and gifts for the holidays, items from our Amazon wish list, professional services, and more!

October 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

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THE HOPE SOCIETY

Edmarc recognizes and honors donors who have included Edmarc in their estate plans. We have a group of people who have formed the Hope Society because they look forward to giving back and creating a legacy for generations to come.

Many people are surprised to learn how easy it is to make a planned gift that will support their favorite causes. For example, it is just as simple as adding Edmarc to your will or as a beneficiary in your

retirement plan. Your financial advisor, accountant, or attorney can help you with the process.

Your Hope Society membership can remain anonymous, or you can be recognized and serve as an inspiration to encourage others to consider a planned gift to benefit the incredible mission of Edmarc. For information on the Hope Society or if you would like to include Edmarc in your estate plans, please give us a call at 757-967-9251.

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Megan Gillispie has been with Edmarc for a little over 2 years and in April transitioned into the Bereavement Program Director role. She was born and raised in Norfolk until 2012 when she moved to Richmond for graduate school. She earned a master's degree in social work with a concentration in Social Work Administration, Policy, and Program Planning from Virginia Commonwealth University. She has spent much of her career working in child welfare, children's mental health, quality assurance and improvement, and volunteer management. After her first son, Theo, was stillborn in early 2021, Edmarc touched her life in such a small, but significant way, that she knew she wanted to be a part of Edmarc's legacy of supporting children and their families. This new role allows her to "witness first-hand the undaunted, courageous love our families have for their children." When Megan is not at work, she's wrangling her 9-month-old son, Anderson, spending time with her husband, Dan, their 2 dogs, family, and friends. She enjoys boating during the summer and exploring new trails in the fall and spring.





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