

theVisitor

Fall 2021



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Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month in the United States, and at Edmarc, this month holds a somber and revered place in our hearts. The awareness spread by remembering these sweet babies and their families is vital in validating and supporting those who endure this very specific heartbreak. At Edmarc, we have the privilege to care for babies and children facing life-threatening illness at any stage in their development, even during pregnancy.

For families who have discovered their baby may be born with a life-threatening or life-limiting condition, coping with this news can be overwhelming. Our Bridges of Hope Perinatal

a note from **EDMARC**



As the leaves begin to turn and one season gives way to the next, Edmarc looks to the future with expectancy and optimism. I hope you enjoy reading our feature story about the rebranding of our perinatal program. We've been providing this valuable service to families for over 20 years, and yet people

continue to be surprised that we walk alongside families during this journey. Please help us spread the word to those who may need to know we offer this support.

We celebrated summer with the return of a little normalcy. We excitedly held our annual summer picnic, welcoming families in person on the grounds of the Taylor Bend YMCA. A few weeks later, we pulled off our biggest fundraising event to date with our 25th Annual Charity Golf Classic. After more than a year of isolation and intense anxiety while navigating COVID-19 and all of its challenges, it felt really good to see smiling faces in person. Yes, we are still very careful and following all of the protocols, but we are also able to do more things safely than we could this time last year.

Another exciting chapter on the horizon for Edmarc is the expansion of our services into Williamsburg, Gloucester, Matthews, and surrounding counties. We had to place our \$2 million campaign on hold during the pandemic, but this June we picked up the pace once again. Stay tuned in 2022 for an exciting update on our vision for the future.

We look toward the coming holiday season with renewed hope. Things may still look a little different than they have in the past, but we will gather on the grounds of Edmarc for Fall Fest; volunteers will organize and deliver meals in November and December for families; and Santa will show up to spread his holiday cheer. Thank you for your steadfast support of Edmarc and the families we serve. Most of all, thank you for providing hope for the journey to those who need it most.

Well wishes for the coming season,

Debbie Stitzer-BrameExecutive Director, Edmarc

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Support Program can help. Families do not have to face this experience alone. Edmarc's perinatal program has been providing services at no cost to families for over 20 years and strives to help a family journey through pregnancy, birth, and potential death, while honoring both baby and family. Our social workers provide birth plan assistance, memory making opportunities, supportive counseling, and assistance with funeral planning if needed. In addition to the social workers, Edmarc's nurses can help to answer medical questions about the baby, attend hospital care conferences, and facilitate admission to Edmarc's home health or hospice program if the baby is stable enough to come home from the hospital after birth. Volunteers can help with family needs, and bereavement can support the family in the event of a bittersweet goodbye.

For the past several months, Edmarc's social workers have been in the process of rebranding this program and changing the official name from Perinatal Hospice Program to Bridges of Hope Perinatal Support Program to honor the many paths our families may take on their pregnancy and birth journey. The Bernadine Franciscan Sisters Foundation provided Edmarc and its other partner agencies with Catchafire, a valuable resource matching skills-based volunteers passionate about helping nonprofits. Edmarc worked with a graphic designer who created the new brand logo and designed a brochure at no charge. We are hopeful this change better describes the program and resonates with families wherever they are along their journey.

In supporting these families, we have learned that it is impossible to definitively say what path these babies may take, and we strive to provide support and prepare the family for many possibilities. We felt that the word Hospice narrowed our program's vision and may have even limited families' willingness to participate in the program and receive helpful support, as families may not believe that Hospice reflects their wishes for their baby. We are hopeful that these changes may allow us the opportunity and privilege to meet more families where they are and embrace them into our program.

The best way to illustrate the impact this program has on expectant families is to share their stories and images of their precious babies. These families' experiences and their words are what matter most to us, and it is an honor to have been able to care for each of them.



EVA'S STORY

When we first got the news during my pregnancy that no parent wants to hear--a life-limiting diagnosis for our 17-week-old baby girl--I was alone. As my heart dropped and tears built, still in shock, I was whisked from the ultrasound room to meet with the genetic counselor. My mind was in a whirl as I heard her discuss further testing, likely outcomes, options for the pregnancy, and all decisions I'd have to make quickly. I felt like I didn't know where to start or how to make the best choices for our baby's life. But then the geneticist mentioned she would refer me to Edmarc, and the name seemed like a beacon of hope. Edmarc would be able to help.

We met our social worker, Brittney Twisdale, soon afterward, and she gently and compassionately guided me through the details of how Edmarc could support me and our entire family during the pregnancy and birth. There is no one-size-fits-all approach; Edmarc's staff learns about each family's unique situation and needs and then builds their support around those needs. Thanks to Brittney's guidance, we were able to make the decisions we needed to make about our baby's delivery and the interventions we wanted to plan for her. Brittney helped us navigate the logistics and was in close contact with us as we met with the hospital team, and Edmarc's nurses on staff were able to help answer questions about our daughter's condition as well. It was much less scary in those early days as we came to terms with our baby's diagnosis because we had Edmarc at our side.

We named our little girl Eva Shalom, meaning "life of flourishing," and decided to carry to term. And thanks to the care we received from Edmarc, my pregnancy with Eva was indeed a time of peace and flourishing, as Edmarc helped us celebrate her life and enjoy the time we spent with her. We were able to focus on loving Eva in the moment instead of worrying about the future. The Edmarc team blessed us with a Thanksgiving food basket, Christmas gifts and a visit from Santa, and an Easter basket. Brittney also lined up maternity photos for us so that we have pictures of my pregnancy to treasure forever.

When Eva was stillborn on her due date, Brittney remained a solid support. She made sure my husband and I had the care we needed to survive those bittersweet early days. Although we expected to lose Eva at or soon after birth, I had not been able to bring myself to contact a funeral home. Brittney made those arrangements on our behalf so that we could focus on simply being with Eva, loving her, and grieving her.



And now in the months after we said goodbye to our precious daughter, Edmarc is still there for us through the bereaved parents support program. We placed a memorial plaque in Edmarc's garden as a permanent way to honor our daughter, and we attend monthly support meetings as we process through life after loss. Eva gave us so many gifts in her short time with us--gifts of gratitude, patience, and faith. And Edmarc's support helped us fully embrace Eva's life and legacy. We are forever grateful to their team!

~ Eva's Mom, Stephanie

ISAAC'S STORY

We met Edmarc when I was six months pregnant with our first child. Just a few weeks earlier we had been given a likely fatal diagnosis for our baby boy. My husband was enlisted in the Navy on a four-year sea-duty rotation based in Virginia. The rest of our family was in California. Edmarc staff became



so much more than our hospice support system over the next few years, they became friends and family to us. In the last few months of my pregnancy, they offered grief support and local resources to help us plan to memorialize the expected loss of our baby. Notably a free maternity session with renowned local photographer, Bob Harper. We had a dream photo shoot on the beach at sunset and a follow up in his studio. Their team of volunteers took care of practical help for us; like mowing our yard, stocking our freezer, and helping us with a cross town move. When our son Isaac was born and had a subsequent 19 day stay in the NICU, the Edmarc nurses offered invaluable expertise to help us navigate his diagnosis and the many specialty doctors we'd go on to see. When our Navy medical



coverage couldn't get what we needed after an emergency hospitalization,
Edmarc had in-home medical equipment at our house within 24 hours of discharge. But more than all this was the constant knowledge that someone from the team would be at the house each week checking in on me

and my medically fragile baby. I wasn't supposed to take Isaac out for the first six months and the isolation could have been very overwhelming. Instead, I developed the sweetest relationships with our social worker, the rotation of nurses that all fought over who got to visit us each week, and the extended staff and volunteers that would come on special occasions. They were literally my lifeline in the worst of times. Eight years later, with Isaac, a healthy, thriving third grader in California, the Edmarc staff still holds incredible space in our story and in our hearts.

~ Isaac's Mom, Laura

GABRIEL'S STORY



Without Edmarc I'm not sure where our family would be. They were there from the time we found out our devastating news about our son to even today when we get a card in the mail or a quick phone call or email just to make sure we are ok. There is always someone to talk to or cry with, enjoy our happier moments and make sure we find all the resources we need in our darkest hours, even when we moved away. They ensured that not only myself and my husband, but also my kids had the help they needed. The staff is truly amazing, and the help and resources are more than we even knew we needed.

~ Gabriel's Mom, Cassandra





BENJI'S STORY

In 2016, upon our discharge from the NICU, we became an Edmarc family. My daughter, Lorelei, was born with a rare form of Mitochondrial Disease. Two years later I was pregnant with our son, Benjamin. Because of Lorelei, we were able to do extra testing to find out if Benji also had Mito

When we received news that he too had this lifethreatening disease, Edmarc was there for us. As Benji's mom, I was enrolled as a perinatal patient, and our social worker, Abbey, was with me as we navigated this rare disease prior to his birth. She attended appointments with me, assisted us with our unique birth planning needs and processing the unknown. Edmarc connected us with the hospital I would be delivering at, as well as with key players at the CHKD NICU where Benji would be taken immediately after birth. Unaware of how Mitochondrial Disease would present itself with Benji, we planned for the worst-case scenario and prayed for the best. It was a blessing to have the support of Edmarc prior to Benji's birth. It was comforting to know that I had a team to support us prior, no matter what happened.

Benji is now a medically complex two-year-old who is a grouchy, silly bear most days. He loves his mama and his blankie, and he is thankful for his Edmarc family who has been with him from the beginning!

~ Benji & Lorelei's Mom, Susan

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LIAM V. (6/17/15-9/26/20)

Malachi B. (9/17/19-5/10/21)

Malachi was a silly, friendly, and loving little boy who was loved by everyone who met him. He especially loved music, Mickey Mouse, spending time with his siblings, parents, and family, and making everyone laugh. He was so deeply loved by his mom, Alexis; his dad, Ja'Var; his big sister Makayla, as well as a host of dear family and friends

KARLI H. (7/27/06-5/20/21)

Karli had an infectious smile that would light up the room. She was often quiet and listened as others talked around her. She was always dressed like a diva and with her fingernails painted too. Her earthly body limited her but she was as sweet and kind as they come. Left to cherish her memory are her parents Scott and Missy (Michelle); her younger brother Kasey, and numerous family and friends.

DALTON F. (2/19/09 -5/25/21)

Dalton was an inspiration to all who had the pleasure to know him. A very strong, determined young man who never complained about anything. Dalton captured those around him with a bright smile and loving heart. This young man displayed courage and wisdom far beyond his years. Dalton will be lovingly remembered by his parents, Will & Jennifer, big sister, Rachel, and numerous other family and friends.

JA'VAR B. (1/31/17-7/2/21)

Ja'Var was a sweet little boy with a HUGE heart. He traveled a challenging road during his life, and through everything, never lost his tenderness and joy. He impressed everyone with his courage and toughness, and continually beat the odds. He had a special connection with Spiderman, though everyone could agree that Ja'Var was the true hero. He was so deeply loved by his mom, Alexis; his dad, Ja'Var; his big sister Makayla, as well as many close family and friends.

LORELEI G. (2/16/16-7/7/21)

Our sweet Doodle. Little Lorelei was born an absolute fighter, who never lost the sass and strength that made her so delightful and lovable throughout her life. She truly LOVED life and showed it each day, even when her days were hard. She adored water, the outdoors, camping with her family, her puppy friends, and her soulmate of a baby brother, Benji. She had a special affinity for surprising her medical friends, and always did things her own way. Her wild hair, sweet smile, and loving heart really did make the world a better place. She will be forever remembered and missed by everyone who knew her, but especially her mom, Susan; her dad, Michael; her baby brother, Benji; as well as a community of friends and family who continue to hold her in their hearts.

REIGN MARIE R. (4/25/21-7/13/21)

Sweet Reign Marie was an adorable, strong, determined, and joyful little girl. It seemed that she loved to prove her medical providers wrong, and made a point to show her strength at each turn. As much as her mom, dad, and siblings loved her, it was obvious she loved them back just as much. Her beautiful eyes and shiny curls made her irresistible, and she soaked up all of the love and attention she got. She will be forever remembered and loved by her parents, Raymond & Renisha; her brothers, Raymon, Kaiden, Karter, and Kuentin; her big sister, Kamiryn; and countless friends and family.

CLAYTON M. (7/16/20-7/17/21)

Clayton was a very special baby boy who brightened and touched the lives of his family and all those around him. Though his time here was far too short, he was loved immensely by his family. Left to cherish his sweet memory are his parents, Nathan & Kathryn, big brother, Logan, as well as numerous other family and friends.

SAVANNAH D. (2/22/07-7/23/21)

Savannah was a very special young lady who touched the hearts of all who were privileged to know her. Despite her challenges, she always communicated love and warmth to everyone she met and touched the lives of so many. Savannah loved the beach and spending time with her family. She is deeply missed and lovingly remembered by her superhero grandparents, Dale & Renae, her parents, Kari, Phillip, & Danielle, siblings, Austin, Charlie, & Kennedy, and numerous other family and friends.

AZAD H. (7/20/21-7/22/21)

Azad was a very sweet little baby boy who brightened the lives of his family and all who had the pleasure to meet him. Though his time here was very short, he was truly a blessing. Azad is lovingly remembered by his parents, Ayesha & Marcus, his sister, Kaylen, his brothers, Marcus, Jr. & Karter, and numerous other family members and friends.

EVERLY W. (8/1/21-8/1/21)

Everly, a precious little baby, was deeply loved and tenderly cared for even before she was born. Even though she was with her family far too briefly, she managed to make the world a more loving and beautiful place in her time here. She will remain in the hearts of her mommy and daddy; Karlee and Tyler; her big brother, Phoenix; and many other special loved ones.

KAIDEN D. (7/21/17-8/31/21)

Kaiden was a wonderful little man that always graced others with a huge grin on his face. He fought a long and difficult battle with cancer, yet he never complained and always found time to laugh and enjoy every moment. Kaiden will be greatly missed by all those who had the privilege to know him. He is lovingly remembered by his parents, Kierra & Jeremy, his sister, Aniya, and numerous other family and friends.

AMYA P. (9/1/07-9/7/21)

Amya was a young woman with a big personality. Her fiery spirit was absolutely endearing, and throughout the challenges she faced, she never lost her spark. She had a special love for the Weather Channel and soon became everyone's personal weather girl. She also loved animals and Jojo Siwa. She was such a special young lady, and she will be deeply missed. Her parents, Carla and John; brothers, Ayden and Levi; and many other family and friends will remember her warmly and miss her immensely.

MADELINE B. (9/21/21-9/21/21)

Madeline was a precious little baby whose parents, siblings, and family loved her and cherished her even before her birth. She was comforted in her mothers arms, and was loved by everyone who had the pleasure of meeting her. She was strong and sweet, and will be deeply missed by her parents, Sara & Ed; her siblings, Emma and Cooper, as well as numerous aunts, uncles, and grandparents who will remember her always.

TITUS W. (9/5/2016-10/1/2021)

Titus was an amazing little boy, wise beyond his years, courageous and brave, with a great sense of humor and a smile that stole hearts. Titus loved dinosaurs, Lego Batman, books, and had quite an eclectic taste in music from Queen to Sade's Smooth Operator. Titus loved spending time with his family, especially his little brother and trips to the beach. Left to cherish his sweet memory are his father and stepmother, Paul & Adriel, mother and stepfather, Victoria & Sean, little brother, Seamus, and numerous other family and friends.



GOLF BY DAY, HULA BY NIGHT

August 12th brought about a scorcher of a day, but it also brought about Edmarc's 25th Annual Charity Golf Classic. And this one was a hole-in-one for sure.

Cedar Point Country Club hosted a full course of players who turned up to raise funds in support Edmarc kids and families. Big Ugly Brewing came out once again to offer players cool refreshments while Paradise Ocean Catering fueled them up as they played 18 hot and humid holes. Between the birdies and the bunkers, golfers played great games and then joined together afterwards for a festive luau at the club's aquatics center. 7th Street Band supplied the dance music while attendees took advantage of the pool and a superb Hawaiian feast including tuna poke, steak kabob, and of course, a roasted pig.

Not only was the whole day a blast, but this silver anniversary tournament turned out to be Edmarc's most successful fundraiser ever. Thanks to our top-notch sponsors, including Presenting Sponsors One Hour Cares and Steve and Dorne Eastwood, our fantastic volunteers, and all of our golf players competing in rounds of golf and silent auction bidding, Edmarc raised over \$75,000! Thank you to all those that made this year incredible beyond belief!

















Our annual Camp M.A.G.I.C. (My Active Grieving Instills Courage) looked a bit different this year due to COVID 19, but thanks to our great friends at Chalice Christian Church we were able to provide our families with a safe space for therapeutic activities, fun, and an opportunity to honor and remember those they love. Camp M.A.G.I.C. is typically a weekend retreat offered to grieving families to share their experiences, strengthen coping skills, and create new memories together. This year was instead a day camp where families tie-dyed t-shirts, played field games, crafted memory hearts, and participated in break-out group. Tears and laughter were shared. It may have been short, but it was surely sweet and meaningful.















SOLID START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR

We had another successful Back-to-School drive this year, providing stuffed backpacks to over 80 kids! Each year, we strive to take the stress and pressure off of our families in whatever way we can. Providing school supplies for our families and their children is one way we can lighten their load! When we have donors step up and provide school supplies for our families, it means that caregivers don't have to navigate school supply shopping with a sick child, especially during COVID. A big thank you to all those who donated school supplies, including Vitesco Technologies who provided 50 backpacks with school supplies! We couldn't have made the Back-to-School drive possible this year without our wonderful volunteers who sorted and organized the donations, those who stuffed the backpacks, and those who delivered them to the families. We hope everyone has a successful school year!



BACK IN THE SADDLE

- EDMARC'S SUMMER PICNIC

After a full year of modified events, masked smiles, elbow bumps and air hugs, on July 18th Edmarc held its annual picnic at the Taylor Bend YMCA. Families, volunteers, staff, and Edmarc supporters alike came together for the first fully in-person activity in over a year and to say it was magical is an understatement.

Thanks to the Kiwanis Club of Norfolk, we had a DJ spinning some hot tunes; a face painter transforming kids into circus

animals and Disney princesses; a petting zoo with pony rides; and a delicious meal of pulled BBQ with all of the fixings. We even had a surprise visit from some superheroes courtesy of the East Coast Alliance of Cosplayers! None of this would have been possible without the generosity of our community



partners, including The Taylor Bend YMCA who donated their pool and accessible splash pad so that all of our families, no matter their limitations, could enjoy time in the water.

It was an afternoon of much needed connection, where families could feel "normal" again, amongst familiar faces who understand what it is like to parent a child with



complex medical needs.
One mom told us that attending an Edmarc event is the only time she feels comfortable because we provide an inclusive and welcoming

space for all of our families and their needs.

Until next year, we carry the memories of this year's picnic close to our hearts, and we cherish the time we were able to spend together.









In HONOR of Edmarc gratefully acknowledges the outpouring of LEE AND LAINE HOBBS Lori Strickland support in honor of family members and friends. **COLBIE HOFFHEIMER** Joan and Allen Hogge March 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021 **JOANNA &** IN HONOR OF FROM LARRY HOFFHEIMER Joan and Allen Hogge **SAM HOFFHEIMER** Joan and Allen Hogge SHERYL AND **ALLEN HOGGE** Helen Kemp **CHRISTINA ALAN** Marilyn Smith Mrs. Joan Hogge **MALLORY AND** DR. & MRS. ALLEN & **JACKSON ANDREWS** Lori Strickland JOAN HOGGE Mr. Ken Crumbly JENNIFER AND JOAN HOGGE Dr. and Mrs. Stuart Bray **ANTHONY ANGELONE** Lori Strickland Mrs. Joanna Hoffheimer LATORIA CHANTAE ARNOLD Mr. & Mrs. Arnold Mr. Michael Shelton **GEORGE AND SALLY BAISLEY** Marilyn Smith Joan and Allen Hogge **KELLY HOGGE** FLOYD EVAN BAKER JR Lori Baker MS. BERNADETTE HOGGE Joan and Allen Hogge LAURIE BARBARO Barb and Mike Hethcoat Ms. Sara Burton **QUAYE HUDSON CHRISTOPHER BARTLETT** Jeanne Bartlett Sharon Sutton SUSAN HUFTON **RACHEL L. BIGGS** Laura Biggs **ELIJAH JOHNSON** Mr. and Mrs. Harold Frantz Marie Biggs Lori Strickland **KRISTEN JONES NINA BIVENS** Pamela Martin SARAH AND MS. JOAN BLANCHARD Irene Esteves RYAN KATUZIENSKI Lori Strickland DR. STUART BRAY Joan and Allen Hogge Ms. Sara Burton MARSHA KELL SHIRLEY BRAY Joan and Allen Hogge **EVAN AND CARLY KIDD** Lori Strickland MARY BRILEY Helen Clay-Spotser **SONYA LANGLEY** Ms. Sara Burton **NATALIE BRYAN** Lori Strickland IAN WILSON LARMORE Bob and Nancy Larmore MS. SARA S BURTON Mr. and Mrs. Richard T. Devero DAVID AND **CINDY AND STEVEN BYRD** Lori Strickland **BRYCE LAUGHLIN** Patricia Laughlin **DORIS CANNON** Mrs. Cheryl Hummer **AMY LUGAND** Robin Malcolm **EDWARD CANNON** Mrs. Cheryl Hummer **CHIPPY MARTIN** Pamela Martin JOE AND PHYLLIS CANUPP Lori Strickland **AMBER MOONEY** Sharon Sutton MICHAEL AND **CASEY NEWMAN** Sharon Sutton **LORRAINE CARTER** Lori Strickland JON AND LEAH NISBET Lori Strickland **TERRY AND JIM CHERRY** Lori Strickland BROOKE AND DAVID OWEN Lori Strickland DARRELL LYDELL CLARK Mr. Darrell Clark **DEBORA PENN** Ms. Sara Burton MR. DARRELL COLEY Ms. Sara Burton MABEL RENCH Donna Gaines Lori Strickland ADDI AND KEVIN COOKE **DANIELLE REUBEL** Mr. Joe Reubel **DUSTIN CORNELIUS** Ms. Sara Burton THEODORE RICE Ms. Marcella Rice MR. AND MRS. **PAT ROBERTS** Ms. Sara Burton **CHRIS CRAIGHEAD** Ms. Sara Burton BRETT AND NANCY RUSSEL Lori Strickland MARGIE CROSBY Joan and Allen Hogge Ms. Sara Burton **ERIKA SMITH** JEROLENE CRUSENBERRY Mrs. Nancy King **DESTINY CULLUM** Mr. Micheal Shaw DR. ROBERT HALL SQUIRE Ms. Sara Burton **MRS. TEDDY DEVERO** Ms. Sara Burton Ms. Sara Burton **MOLLY SQUIRE NELL AND MIKE DOWELL** Lori Strickland **SCOTT AND** ANDY AND AJ FITZGERALD Sharon Sutton KATHY STRICKLAND Lori Strickland **BRUCE R. FRIEDEN** Mr. and Mrs. John Rector SHARON C. SUTTON Ms. Linda Arrington **ABBY FURCO** Jeff & Kay Phelan Mrs. Fran Taylor **DERRICK HALL** Joan and Allen Hogge **HOWARD TABOR** Bobbie Tabor JAYDEN HALL Joan and Allen Hogge **EDWARD AND JOSIAH HALL** Joan and Allen Hogge **LILLIAN TRAHEY** Mrs. Donna Duffy **KIANA HALL** Joan and Allen Hogge **ERIN TURNER** Ms. Sara Burton SHAWNA LOMONACO MRS. MARGARET TURNER Dr. Allen Hogge AND GREG HASSELL Lori Strickland **CHARITY VOLMAN CATHY HEISE** Ms. Sara Burton AND BARCLAY WINN Sarah Golden ISAAC HERSHBERGER Mr. Paul Dilgard

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IN MEMORY OF

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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, special items that were hard to find during the pandemic such as paper products and cleaning supplies, items from our Amazon wish list, professional services and more! March 1, 2021 - September 30, 2021

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Welcome Valeta Donnell



Kelly Collins

Joining the Edmarc team is our new Bereavement Program Director Valeta Donnell. Valeta is a native of the Hampton roads area where she has spent the past 15 years working with youth and their families. Valeta received her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Christopher Newport University in Early Childhood Psychology and a minor in Religious Studies

and Philosophy. Since then, Valeta has gone on to pursue two additional Master of Science Degrees from the University of Phoenix in General Psychology and Clinical Mental Health Counseling. Valeta has great hopes of becoming a Resident Therapist in the spring of 2022 upon completion of her current academic program.

Serving youth and families has been a passion for Valeta for many years. She credits her parents and family for instilling values of kindness, compassion, and service. "Growing up my siblings and I were always taught to help others, its just the right things to do and you never know when you will need help from someone, so you always pay it forward no matter what". "Life is tough but when you have people around that care it makes it a little bit easier. In discussing her draw to Edmarc, Valeta stated "it's an awesome cause and a much-needed service for families. "There is no greater honor than to be a part of someone's journey and help to bring a sense of comfort". When Valeta isn't counseling she enjoys time with family, friends. "Everything about self-care that I tell my clients I work very hard to implement in my own life daily.

VROOM! BEEP! BEEP! SPLASH!

Thinking of selling your old car, truck, boat or RV? Why not donate it to Edmarc? We have a Car Donation Program available. Your donation is tax deductible and free towing is available. For more information, please call Edmarc at 967-9251. Why not choose this easy way to help yourself dispose of a vehicle you no longer need, and help our children and families in the process?

Thanks for thinking of us!

CONGRATULATIONS TO...



Brittney Twisdale has been serving Edmarc for 15 years as a Coordinator of Family Support Services. We are so grateful for her continued service and for the difference she's made in the lives of so many families and children. Congratulations Brittney!

Extending heartfelt congratulations to Sara Zandford, Edmarc's former Bereavement Program Director, and her husband, Alex, on the birth of their baby boy, Cyrus James Zandford, on April 29th!

Congratulations to
William Tyree-Hermann
on earning his Eagle
Scout Award! Will, an
Edmarc sibling, wished
to give back to an
organization that had
been such a huge part of
his life when his younger
brother, Jack, was under
our care. For his project,



Will chose to revitalize Edmarc's Infinity Garden that is dedicated to all of the children still fighting their brave battles. Will and his volunteers added beautiful butterfly plants, bird baths, a bench, and a brick walkway so those in wheelchairs can now navigate around the entire building. It was only fitting that he held his Eagle Scout ceremony in the garden. With one of his sisters presiding as the Master of Ceremonies and the rest of his family by his side, Will was honored for his hard and selfless work throughout his years in the Boy Scouts. We are so proud of you, Will, and so thankful for your entire family!

Welcome Laura



I am from Pennsylvania and have been a registered nurse for 27 years. My nursing background is primarily Pediatric ICU and Neonatal ICU. I actually worked for Edmarc back in 1996 prn and have been trying to get back ever since! I have one daughter, Madison, who is 23 years old and in nursing school. I have a few fur babies as well...Piper is a

6-year-old Soft-coated Wheaton Terrier, Ivy is a 6-month-old Shetland Sheepdog, and Oliver is a 3-year-old Maincoone cat. I am newly married to my husband Russ; we had a small COVID beach wedding May 30, 2020. I love the beach, yoga, reading, the Steelers, DUKE basketball, and going to see live music. I am so excited to be a Patient Care Coordinator with Edmarc and look forward to finishing out my nursing career here.

Welcome Megan Gillispie



Hello! My name is Megan Gillispie, and I could not be more honored to be a new member of the team here at Edmarc! I was born and raised in Norfolk until 2012 when I moved to Richmond for graduate school. I obtained a Master's degree in Social Work with a concentration in Social Work Administration, Policy, and Program Planning from

Virginia Commonwealth University. I have spent the majority of my career working in child welfare, children's mental health and volunteer management. In February of 2021, my son, Theodore, was stillborn at 41 weeks. My friend Mallary worked for Edmarc at the time and although I did not become an Edmarc patient, Mallary provided me with a beautiful memorial keepsake and other resources from Edmarc. A few months later, the Community Resource Coordinator position was posted with Edmarc, and I knew I had to apply for it. Edmarc touched my life in such a small, but significant way, and I knew wanted to be a part of Edmarc's legacy of supporting children and their families. It has been an honor to be able to work with our incredible volunteers (who really are top notch!) to walk alongside our families while they go through such difficult experiences and times.

When I'm not at work, I'm spending time with my husband, our 3 dogs, my family and friends, and thinking up new ways to honor the memory of my son. We enjoy boating and being on the water during the Summer and exploring new trails in the Fall and Spring.







S'MORE VOLUNTEERING, **PLEASE**

Oh, how we missed these amazing people. While volunteers carried Edmarc through last year, most had to support us from afar. We still were not at a point where full fledge volunteering could make its comeback, but on April 17th, we wanted to at least bring our volunteer force together to celebrate the wonderful people they are and the good they do. Edmarc celebrated in the Butterfly Tribute Garden with an afternoon social. Volunteers and staff gathered around fire pits to roast marshmallows and make s'mores, listened to some mellow tunes, and simply enjoyed each other's company. And unlike most years, an awards ceremony was not part of the afternoon. Edmarc felt the void when volunteer services had to be placed on hiatus, and after a heavy and uncertain year, there was nothing better

to do than recognize ALL of Edmarc's. They are why Edmarc continues to thrive. They are why our families continue to receive holistic care. And as Edmarc experienced last year, an absence of volunteers is greatly felt.

We did, however, have to recognize one special individual who led Edmarc through untreaded waters. Dr. Linda Pegram, Edmarc's volunteer medical director, guided us, leaning on her medical expertise to ensure Edmarc could still provide the best care for kids and families, allowing them to stay in the home which had become more important than ever. Because of her, we were not only able to continue providing service but were able to do even more to ensure our families were as safe and as healthy as possible. Thank you, Dr. Pegram, Edmarc's 2020 Volunteer of the Year!

And thank you to every Edmarc volunteer! You are invaluable and immensely treasured.











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