

WELCOME TO THE



Newsletter

I'm so glad you're here!



The holidays carry a certain sparkle, but for many, this season can feel complicated. The lights shine brighter, the music plays louder, and the pace quickens, yet for those navigating grief, the contrast can feel heavy. If your heart feels out of step with the world around you right now, please know that you are seen.

This time of year, so many quietly wish for just one more meaningful moment with someone they deeply miss. These longings are not signs of weakness. They are reflections of love, and they deserve space to exist with honesty and care.

If you are carrying an empty seat at the table, your grief is not an interruption to the season. It is part of your story, and it matters. And even in the midst of that ache, there is still room for hope to be born again in us.

Not the kind that pressures us to feel cheerful, but the gentle kind that arrives softly, in steady and meaningful ways. And if faith is part of your journey, this season can remind us that light has always found its way through even the darkest nights.

Hope born again in us doesn't erase what we have lost. It simply means there is space for both truth and tenderness, for sorrow that honors deep love, and for small moments of comfort that show up along the way. There is no right timeline, no expected way to carry this season. Only your way.

As you move through the days ahead, I hope you feel met with compassion and not expectations. I hope you encounter gentleness where you least expect it. And if you notice even the smallest stirring of steadiness or strength within you, may you trust it. You don't have to walk this season perfectly, only honestly.

And you never have to walk it alone.

Melissa Wандall



Give Comfort. Give Joy. Give Hope.

This holiday season, hundreds of children in your community are navigating grief no child should ever have to carry.

And they shouldn't face it alone.

At [The Mark Wandall Foundation](#), we help grieving youth find connection, confidence, and moments of joy again through camps, equine sessions, reconnect events, and scholarships that remind them their future is still wide with possibility.

But these programs are only possible because of people like you. As we close 2025, we are asking one more time for your help.

A gift today goes directly toward creating safe spaces where grieving children can heal, laugh, grow, and rediscover their strength.

Your generosity makes their tomorrow lighter. *Your gift reminds them they are not alone.*

Will you give today and help us lift a grieving child into a brighter new year?

[GIVE](#)

PRODUCT RECOMMENDATION

INSPIRATIONAL GLASS TUMBLER

Need a team gift idea? This sleek glass tumbler set is a simple, meaningful way to thank your team with something they will truly use. And it arrives before Christmas!



Thank you

GIVING
TUESDAY

The **MARK WANDALL**
FOUNDATION

We are humbled and deeply grateful to share that **\$20,500** was raised to support the young people we serve.

To our supporters, board members, and friends, thank you! Your generosity allows us to walk alongside youth who are grieving the death of a parent, guardian, or sibling, helping them find connection, confidence, and hope for the future.

Your gifts make real healing possible. Because of you, we can continue to provide meaningful programs that remind children they are not alone, including:

- [**Youth Bereavement Camp**](#)
- [**Equine-Assisted Learning Programs**](#)
- [**Scholarship Opportunities**](#)
- Reconnect Events for Youth and Families

From our hearts to yours, thank you for believing in this work and in the resilience of the young people we serve.



Upcoming Speaking Engagement

I am honored to serve as a Keynote and Professional Development speaker for the Wisconsin County Highway Association on Tuesday, January 13.

My keynote, [**Driven by Purpose: The Power of Why in Connection, Collaboration, and Safety**](#), will connect the daily work of county highway professionals to its direct, life-saving impact across Wisconsin's communities.

Drawing from my personal story and national advocacy work, I will share how purpose, persistence, and collaboration can be transformed into prevention, resilience, and lasting safety progress.

The session reinforces how decisions made in planning rooms, on back roads, and at job sites directly protect workers, strengthen infrastructure, and save lives across all 72 counties.

Speaking Schedule | Tuesday, January 13

Keynote Presentation | Driven By Purpose
1:15–2:15 PM

Professional Development | Grassroots Advocacy in Action
3:30–4:30 PM

[View the Agenda](#)



THE MARK WANDALL FOUNDATION

CAMP REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Together, moving through grief, for a happy, healthy, optimistic future.

April 24-26, 2026

Warren Willis Camp
Fruitland Park, FL



Camp Registration Is Now Open

Registration is now open for our [**2026 Youth Bereavement Camp**](#), offered in partnership with Comfort Zone Camp. This donor-funded 3-day camp supports youth navigating grief through connection, trust-building activities, and age-appropriate support.

The camp serves youth ages 7–17 (18 if still in high school) who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, or guardian.

Each camper is paired one-on-one with a Big Buddy mentor and leaves with coping tools, meaningful connections, and the reassurance that they are not alone.

April 24–26, 2026
Warren Willis Camp | Fruitland Park, FL

Spots fill quickly and a waitlist is likely.

[Register for Camp](#)

FREE RESOURCE

Journaling Pages for Healing & Reflection

Journaling is a powerful tool for processing emotions and finding clarity.

DOWNLOAD HERE

Journal Therapy



These free journaling pages are taken from [**Marked Through Hearts and Heart Journal**](#), written by Melissa and her daughter, Madisyn. Created as a gentle companion for reflection and healing, the journal offers space to process emotions, honor memories, and move forward with intention, one page at a time.

If you would like to own a full copy or gift it to someone as they step into the new year, you can find [**Marked Through Hearts and Heart Journal on Amazon**](#).

[View the Journal on Amazon](#)

[Download Free Journaling Pages](#)



Looking Ahead to 2026

As agencies, organizations, and universities begin planning their 2026 budgets and programming, I would be honored to be considered for speaking engagements and presentations that inspire action and spark meaningful dialogue.

I speak to a range of audiences from policy and legislative leaders to students and advocacy-focused programs, and on topics including traffic safety policy, legislative reform, community advocacy, and the human impact behind data and enforcement.

If your organization, university, or program is seeking a mission-centered, solutions-oriented perspective, I would welcome the opportunity to connect.

[View Speaking Topics](#)

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