



WELCOME TO THE

Newsletter

I'm so glad you're here!

Is Gratitude teachable?

I believe one authentically demonstrates gratitude with your heart, without effort and then perhaps, in succession, one "mirrors" gratitude towards others. It can be a beautiful "domino effect."

I believe it is communication you model and perfect in the best way you know how. Gratitude is an attractive effort and when showcased can bring people together instead of dividing us all apart. Gratitude is a feeling that is good for the soul. Not a "campy" word.

Gratitude isn't pretending everything is fine. It's choosing to notice what still exists when life doesn't go as planned. It can take root even in our trials, when we trust that God is still at work, strengthening us and teaching us along the way.

I've watched grieving children find gratitude not because they were taught to, but because someone sat beside them with patience, safety, and compassion. With love and encouragement, they were seen. That's what we do at The Mark Wandall Foundation. Our scholarship program exists because generous donors believe young people who are experiencing profound grief still deserve opportunity. Gratitude grows when someone says, "Your future still matters. I see you. You are not alone. You matter."

I am also deeply grateful for the opportunity to use my lived experience and voice to advocate for traffic safety, helping turn lessons that came at a cost into policies and conversations that save lives. I do not take that responsibility lightly, and I see it as a calling to use what I've learned for the good of others. Gratitude is having compassion for others misunderstanding and with empathy for their criticism, educating them with real-life critical knowledge and an understanding heart.

As we approach April's Giving Challenge, I am reminded that gratitude is also action. It's donors and community partners turning empathy into impact. We'll be sharing more soon about how you can support The Mark Wandall Foundation through the April Giving Challenge.

Let's all work to remind one another that gratitude is not passive! It can be life-saving and powerful!

Melissa Wandall

What's Supporting Me This Month

HAND CREME

Whether I'm in sunny Florida or traveling north to speak, Swedish Dream Sea Salt Hand Crème keeps my hands soft and smooth. It comes in a set of two—perfect to keep one and gift one. A small comfort that goes wherever I do.



New on the Blog: Raising Resilience, A Mother's Sacred Promise

In this deeply personal reflection, I share the experiences that shaped my resilience, my advocacy, and my life's work supporting grieving children and building safer communities. From childhood loss to the promises that carried me through tragedy, this story reflects how faith, connection, and purpose continue to guide me each day.

At its heart is a reminder I hold close; healing is not something we finish. It is something we lean into, one step at a time.

[Read the Full Blog →](#)



Save the Date: April Giving Challenge

April 15-16, 2026

The Mark Wandall Foundation is proud to participate in the upcoming [April Giving Challenge](#), presented by the Community Foundation of Sarasota County. This special community-wide event is an opportunity to come together and support the programs that help children and families navigate grief with connection, care, and hope.

Mark your calendars and join us in making a meaningful impact this April.

[Visit our Giving Challenge page →](#)



Partnership Spotlight: Uber In-Kind Grant

The Mark Wandall Foundation was recently honored to receive a generous in-kind grant from Uber, made possible through the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA). This partnership reflects a shared understanding that safe communities require attention to both physical safety on our roadways and the mental and emotional well-being of individuals and families.

By helping remove transportation barriers, this support allows The Mark Wandall Foundation to reach more families, increase participation in programs, and strengthen the logistics that make events possible.

“We are incredibly grateful to Uber for this generous in-kind support. By helping remove transportation barriers, this partnership allows us to reach more families, increase participation in our programs, and better support the logistics that make our events possible. It's a powerful example of what can happen when community partners come together with a shared commitment to showing up for children and families when they need it most.”

— Melissa Wandall, Founder



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



The
MARK WANDALL
FOUNDATION®

Spots Still Open for Camp

Registration is 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](#)



SPECIAL OFFERING

LAUNCH A SAFETY CAMPAIGN IN YOUR COMMUNITY

Want to do more than just talk about traffic safety? Let's make it happen—together. My Traffic Safety Campaign Package is designed to help communities like yours turn awareness into action.

Here's what's included:

- A communication plan crafted specifically for your community
- In-person support—whether it's a press conference, media engagement, or a campaign kickoff, I'll be right there with you
- Ongoing guidance to keep the momentum strong and build lasting partnerships with leaders, law enforcement, and the public

Ready to take the next step? Let's start shaping change.

I want in!

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