

Survivor Outreach Services

Wisconsin

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CAMP SERENITY



We hope you have marked your calendars for September 23rd-25th for the first camp event being hosted by SOS in partnership with Camp American Legion. There will be camp fires, hiking, yoga, arts, workshops, fishing and more! The fun is for the entire family!! We want to promote a healthy and caring environment for all. The beauty and serene outdoors provides something for everyone. You will stay in cabins, or the main building, so for those of you uncertain of the outdoors this should provide you reassurance. This event is free to you, and meals will be provided. Please look for a flyer in the mail about the Camp, or check out our website for information updates. We will post how to register for this event as it will be first come first serve. If you should have any questions, please contact the Survivor Outreach Service Coordinators, Kori Williams or Tara Zarm at their contact information listed below. We look forward to seeing you at Camp Serenity!!!



SOS is committed to assisting all Families of the Fallen regardless of military branch or status.

Websites:

- www.TAPS.org
- www.webhealing.com/articles/xmas.html
- www.gotyourbacknetwork.org/index.html
- www.goldstarwives.org/index.htm
- www.actsofkindness.org/
- www.snowballexpress.org

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For loved ones, a lingering grief

Fallen troops' families endure their own sacrifices.

By Carolyn Davis

INQUIRER STAFF WRITER

Frankie Pryor, all of 11, somberly describes "my moments" - those times when the death of his father in Iraq slam him the hardest.

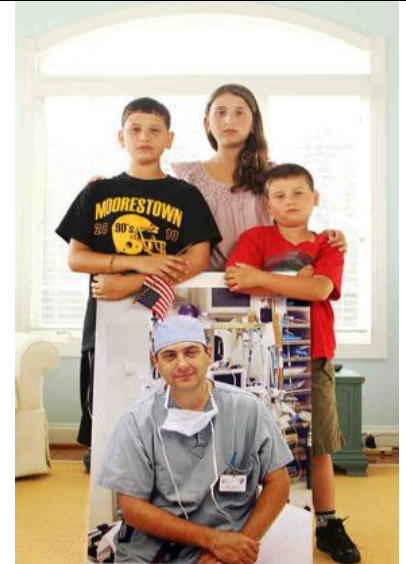
"Now that I'm in fifth grade, it really hit me," says Frankie, whose dad, John Pryor, died 2 1/2 years ago, killed by shrapnel from a mortar round.

"He's really not coming back. He's dead."

His older sister, Danielle, 13, is much more stoic - too stoic, says their mother, Carmela Calvo, a pediatric emergency-room physician with St. Christopher's Hospital for Children.

John led the University of Pennsylvania's trauma team before he returned to Iraq for a second stint with the Army Reserve, this time as a major and combat surgeon posted to a frontline unit in Mosul. The 42-year-old was near his living quarters when the shell exploded. He was the lone fatality.

It was Christmas Day 2008.



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SNOWBALL EXPRESS

We are pleased to officially announce the dates for Snowball Express VI.

To be held in Dallas Texas:

December 9, through December 13, 2011



This year the arrival day will be on Friday and departure the following Tuesday.

Please check the snowball express web site often for updates and additional details.

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR SNOWBALL VI

Pull down the "families" tab above and click on family registration. If you have previously registered with Snowball Express, enter your e-mail address and password, click on the small arrow. When your data appears, click on your id # and then on edit. In the "plan to attend box" click on Snowball VI and save. Please repeat the process for each of your children.

If you are registering as a new family, instead of clicking on the arrow, click on register a fallen hero and follow the forms.

We can't wait to see you in December.



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"She never brings up his name. She never cries," Carmela says of her daughter.

"It's fine. It's fine," says Danielle; she's managing just fine. She's just not interested in the "corny" grief books and coping exercises her mom uses with her brothers.

Seven-year-old John, whom Carmela alternately calls John John and "my baby," yearns to understand what he is forced to accept.

Before going to Iraq, his dad told John John that he, Frankie, and Danielle were precious and that he wanted to help moms and dads injured on the battlefield return home to their own children. John John wonders, "If Daddy didn't have children, would he still go to war?"

Carmela gently answers, yes, he wanted to serve his country and help people.

"This living nightmare is worse than you could ever imagine it," says Carmela, 43.

Still, she has learned it is possible to move ahead with life while slogging through a death.

"People don't want to hear you're still in pain and struggling - and dealing with it," says Carmela. The family is aching, yet "highly functioning."

If not the enemy, grief is a ceaseless companion for the families of about 6,000 U.S. service members killed in the Iraq and Afghanistan military operations in the last decade.

Of the two million service members deployed to those missions, the great majority have been men, mostly active-duty Army, followed by Marines, Navy, and Air Force. The deaths have come on the battlefield and off, some from fighting, some from accidents, others from suicides and illness.

It takes an average of five to seven years "to reach a 'new normal' following the traumatic death of a loved one," says Ami Neiberger-Miller with the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, a nonprofit group in Washington that helps those who have lost service members.

"A death in the military is unlike any other death in society," says TAPS founder Bonnie Carroll.

"One of the tough things is, when the death occurs in the middle of an extended deployment, it's very difficult to even acknowledge this has occurred," Carroll says. "For many of our families, it doesn't become real until the rest of the unit comes home or after the deployment would have ended.

"It isn't for months that you even feel a normal grief, you feel the full impact of the loss." By then, given military life, it's likely that many friends have moved.

Or if the service member was in the Reserve or National Guard, as is often the case in Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the family may be in a community where there are no specialized support services and few other military families to understand what you're going through.

Over Memorial Day weekend, 1,300 survivors - including 476 children, 235 widows, 260 parents, and 109 adult siblings - were in Arlington, Va., for a TAPS seminar and children's Good Grief Camp.

Please visit the following website to view more stories and support:
www.philly.com/philly/news/special_packages/123995079.html

Dependent Education Assistance Program (DEA)

Chapter 35 of Title 38 U.S. Code Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance Program says, you may be eligible for education benefits as a dependent or survivor if you meet the following criteria: You must be the son, daughter, or spouse of a veteran or service member who:

- ▮ Died or is permanently and totally disabled as the result of a service-connected disability. The disability must arise out of active service in the Armed Forces, *OR*,
- ▮ Died from any cause while such service-connected disability was in existence, *OR*,
- ▮ Is missing in action or captured in the line of duty by a hostile force, *OR*,
- ▮ Is forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power.

If you are a son or daughter and wish to receive benefits for attending school or job training, you must be between the ages of 18 and 26. In certain instances, it is possible to begin before age 18 and to continue after age 26. Marriage is not a bar to this benefit.

For additional information visit: www.military.com/education/content/money-for-school/dependents-educational-assistance-dea.html

