



THE  
Michael H. Flanagan  
FOUNDATION

## The Michael H. Flanagan Foundation Newsletter Fall 2017 | Volume 15

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### Dear Friends,

As we look back on 2016 and 2017, we thank you for all you have done to help the MHFF fulfill our mission.

Through your support, we are able to touch families experiencing challenges that are overwhelming and stressful as they encounter the physical, emotional and financial struggles that come with a diagnosis of leukemia and bone marrow transplants.

On behalf of the MHFF and those we help, thank you for your continued generosity. We could not do it without you. Our 2016 Benefit raised funds exceeding \$38,000. This year is our non-event year which we replace with an armchair campaign. The details are in this newsletter. Thank you in advance for any generosity you may offer as it is that which allows us to continue our work. We will look forward to seeing you at our 2018 Benefit ...stay tuned for information!

In this particular newsletter I am proud to share two beautiful notes from patients. I also wanted to share part of my remarks from 2016 Benefit as they still stick with me today. Sadly, so many situations in our world are in need of extra hands and any support you are able to share will do some good, somewhere.

In closing, I always feel it is appropriate to share a thought or a lyric to a song as a way to give props to

## OUR MISSION

The Michael H. Flanagan Foundation was established by the Flanagan family in 2002 in memory of this young man, who at the age of 19 was diagnosed with leukemia. Michael strived to live his life with courage, integrity and faith during his three and a half year struggle with leukemia which included two bone marrow transplants. He received the very best in medical and nursing care at both The Miriam Hospital in Rhode Island and the Tufts Medical Center in Boston.

Bone Marrow transplant patients spend weeks and sometimes months in isolation while they struggle with complications and wait for their new immune system to develop. After witnessing Michael's time in the hospital, his family decided to establish this foundation as a way to keep his memory alive and to support other patients facing the same difficult journey. It is the mission of the Foundation to provide comfort to these patients and their families during this very challenging time.

The Michael H. Flanagan Foundation is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization. Find out more at [mikes-foundation.com](http://mikes-foundation.com).

my brother. It all goes back to him. Something always comes to me too...which of course is a sign.

I was reminded recently while driving to Boston, of the rides my sister and I would take to visit Mike in Boston 16 years ago on November days and the songs that would become our soundtrack to life at the moment. We would rush to get there and never want to leave, for obvious reasons. And good old John Cougar Mellancamp strumming away would remind us that my brother was never alone and we do not want others to feel alone.

*Everyone just needs a  
hand to hold onto.*

Sometimes all you need to know and believe is that someone else cares. Everyone needs a hand to hold on to- literally and figuratively- and it is up to us to be those hands when people are fighting and have no one else to turn to for help.

Patients and families count on us because we are able to count on you!

With much appreciation,

*Christine*  
Christine E. Griffin

## FROM THE DIRECTOR

# WHAT HAVE WE BEEN UP TO?

It has been a busy 18 months and the MHFF has much to share! Staying ever true to our mission of providing comfort to leukemia and bone marrow transplant patients and their families in the New England and beyond, here is what we are proud to share with you, our supporters.

## Feet for Defeat raises over \$5300

Grace Adamson, Barrington High School class of 2016, created a fundraising platform in which the MHFF was the beneficiary and partner. Grace had been affected by leukemia as her mom, Susan, was diagnosed when Grace was a junior in high school. Through Susan's time at Rhode Island Hospital, their family learned about our foundation upon receipt of a Comfort Bag and by spending time in the family room on 8B, a renovation we are proud of. They spent many hours in



Grace Adamson and her Mother

there as well including Thanksgiving Day. Grace created a Walk Event that took place on the beautiful starry evening of December 3, 2015. She had sponsors from the community, balloons, t-shirts for participants, hot chocolate, cookies, a raffle and a speaking program where facts about leukemia were broadcast while people walked laps with great spirit. We were proud to partner with Grace and MHFF Director, Christine Griffin, enjoyed the mentor experience as it not only allowed her to work with Grace but also spread the word about how the foundation is such a valuable resource. Our goal is to provide comfort, in the many forms it can be. Grace is a sophomore at Simmons College pursuing Nursing and we wish her the best of luck!

## 2016 & 2017 MHFF Education Advancement Fund & Recipients

In 2016, we were proud to honor our First Education Advancement Fund Recipients. The Flanagan family was so pleased by the care Michael received from the nurses at The Miriam Hospital and Tufts Medical Center that they decided to establish a fund in Mi-

chael's name. Nurses are the backbone of our health-care system and furthering education is essential and often very expensive. We are proud to establish The MHFF Educational Advancement Fund. This fund will be awarded to an RN/BSN who has gone above and beyond when providing patient care in the area of Oncology. The recipient, who must have also shown excellence in patient safety and clinical skills, will receive \$500 to use toward furthering their education in the field of Oncology.



The 2016 Miriam Hospital award winners: Michelle Moreau and Jessica Corrente (5th and 6th from left)

Tufts Medical Center winner: Keisha Mungal (in blue)



The 2017 Miriam Hospital award winners: Caroline Kinney, Bethany Cunningham, Ashley Chartier and Dustin Wilcox

Tufts Medical Center award winners: Kathleen Coughlin, Emily Riley and Lindsay Holland



2016-2017 HAPPENINGS



## Flatbread Company Benefit Nights in Providence, RI



We are thrilled to share that we had our 3rd and 4th Pizza-Filled Fun-Tastic nights at Flatbread Pizza in Providence RI. On November 24, 2015 and January 24, 2017 we were able to raise our goal of funding several grants by receiving a portion of the proceeds from all pizzas sold that evening and also raffle tickets for packages filled with books, wine, Flatbread gift cards and more! Thank you to those who dined in or carried out for joining our efforts!

## An Evening of Thanks & Giving 2016 raises over \$38,000!

In addition to the many patients and families we assisted with Comfort Bags and grants, we were busy planning our Evening of Thanks & Giving to raise funds to continue our efforts. The event took place on November 18th at Rhode Island Country Club.

### Top Ten facts about 2016 Fall Benefit:

1. One great event on Friday, November 18th at RI Country Club, enjoying festive food stations and music by Fat Free Bob.
2. 220 family and friends come together for a special cause to create an evening of wonderful energy.
3. 3 rooms of incredible decorations created by Crafters of Barrington to illuminate the night and carry the theme of Thanks & Giving throughout the space.
4. Multiple cases of wine generously donated by Mark Gasbarro of Gasbarro Wines of Providence. Thank you!
5. Japanese lanterns were lit by candles and set off into the night sky in honor or in memory of many guests.
6. Thoughtful remarks of thanks by first EAF award recipient.
7. Most exciting Silent Auction yet due to amazing donors!
8. \$8400 raised through Silent Auction and Raffle
9. \$12,000 donated by generous sponsors
10. \$38,000+ raised to further our mission and help patients and families. Thank you!!



2016-2017 HAPPENINGS

## Love Your Melon... we sure do!

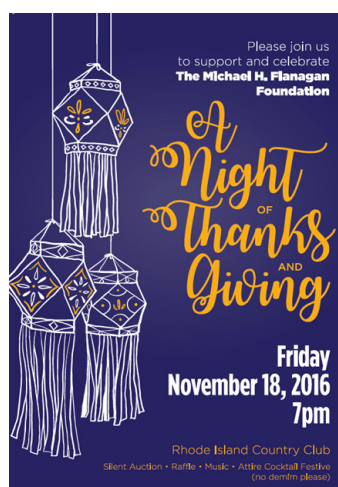


Love Your Melon is an apparel brand dedicated to giving a hat to every child battling cancer in America as well as supporting nonprofit organizations who lead the fight against pediatric cancer. We are proud to be one of their partner organizations and put one of their hats in every Comfort Bag we make.

Check out [www.loveyourmelon.org](http://www.loveyourmelon.org) for more information.

## Comfort Bags upon admission

Each time a newly diagnosed leukemia patient is admitted to begin their treatment they receive a MHFF Comfort Bag. Our population that we serve is 18 + however we customize for pediatrics whenever we are asked. We reached our 15 year mark this May! We are proud to report that over 1300 Bags have been opened and those lives made a little more comfortable while undergoing treatment. We have added adult coloring books, colored pencils and Queasy pop lollipops and are always researching new ideas, products and potential donations. Let us know if you come across a possibility!



**February 24, 2016**

Please excuse me for not getting back to you faster. Guess they cause the condition "Chemo Brain"; I have been very slow at responding to anything. February 9th was my transplant day. Things went well, no matter I wanted to let them go well. So I put my care and will into Gods hands. That seems to work better letting him drive while I sit in the rear seat. When I received your package and check it made me cry. I wasn't expecting that from anyone. You have no idea what that check means to me paying my monthly insurance payment. (Thank you-so very much!)The gift package was great. My family and I went through it 2-3 times. The gifts were purpose for the person (me). Spent a lot of time doing the coloring book, will send you a few pictures. Want to send you the very best ones.

Like your model Courage, (Strength- I added this one) Integrity and Faith. You have enhanced this patients goal and enhanced my quality of life. Your foundation is both awesome and incredible.

Thank you again from the bottom of my heart. Your gift will help me in this difficult time.

Sincerely,  
James J. Soukup

*Sadly James lost his battle and we were so sorry to hear that after we received this beautiful letter of thanks and appreciation. I thought it was important to share this letter with all of you as that is truly who the letter is meant for.*

**April 19, 2017**

I just wanted to say thank you. When I was 20, I was diagnosed with leukemia. Stuck in a hospital room for forty days, it was lonely and trying and painful. The treatments that followed my release were just as exhaustive.

While I was inpatient, I received a care package from the Michael H. Flanagan Foundation. It was an important gesture that I can't express the value of. Essential creature comforts that meant so much to me. When I was in an environment that was so sterile and lacking privacy to the point of becoming alienated from my own experiences. These comforts grounded me. I remember them well. I still use the hat I received. I filled up the notebook I was given. There was a turtle filled with sand, a little toy that even at 20 years old was a grounding anchor to what I was going through. I still have it. It still means the world to me.

Thank you for giving me physical comfort when I was at my most uncomfortable. Thank you for the foothold to emotional recovery. Thank you for everything you do. I'm now 22 and cancer free. But this Foundation holds a special place in my heart, and always will.

Thank you,  
S. Marshall

## **A kind thank you to all of our loving and generous supporters!**

Our work at the Michael H. Flanagan foundation can only thrive with the help and support of our friends, family, and generous supporters. Without your determination to pass along support, our work would not be possible!

Thank you for your generous support. We raised over \$38,000 from our Fall Benefit and various donations throughout the year. This list includes gifts received and processed between January 2016 and press time. Gifts received after will be included in next year's listing. Great care has been taken to ensure accuracy of all names. If an error has been made, please let us know by calling 401-369-1740 or email christinegriffin@cox.net and accept our sincere apologies.

- Thank you to Barrington High School senior, **Aly Vetromile**, for her many hours of volunteer work with data entry, correspondence, creativity and organization assistance. We wish her luck on her adventures in college!
- Thank you to **Jennifer Grady** of RI BloodCenter for frequently updating our DVD collections for our patients by collecting from her co-workers.
- Thank you to **Alex Giannakos** who is our website and all-things-technological expert and does all of this from Iceland where he is working as a graphic designer and northern lights guide.
- Thank you to **Bob Tomassone**, aka Fat Free Bob, for providing complimentary and awesome music at our benefits every year!
- Thank you to **Karin Medeiros** who recently stepped down from our Board of Directors. Karin has moved to North Carolina and will be greatly missed as she was a leukemia survivor who provided a valuable perspective as she knew the process our patients are experiencing first hand. She is a warm, enthusiastic, thoughtful and reliable individual and we will miss her!!
- Thank you to **Mark Gasbarro** of Gasbarro Wine's of Providence for his donation of wine for our benefit. His generosity and amazing selections are truly appreciated.

## **Thank you to the following individuals for their thoughtful donations In Memory of loved ones.**

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**PATIENT LETTERS & THANK YOU'S**



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this evening possible!**

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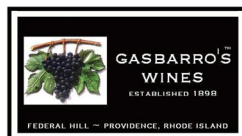
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