



pathfinders

you never have to walk alone

FROM GRIEF TO GIVING

THE CARSON CLETTENBERG ANGEL FUND

On August 18, 2022, Carson Clettenberg was hanging out in a hammock with a friend, enjoying the day, when a rotting tree gave way, killing him instantly. He was just 17.

I met Steve and Christy Clettenberg a few days after Carson's death, when I visited their home to talk about their unimaginable grief. The moment I walked in, Carson's presence was everywhere—photos, sports equipment, even an article of his clothing draped over a chair. I could still smell him when we sat in his bedroom to talk. It was a deeply personal space that told the story of who he was: a passionate athlete, a loyal friend, and a young man full of life. I saw the smile he so freely gave in the photos around the room, and being in that space as Steve and Christy shared their heartbreak allowed me to understand Carson through their words and the lasting imprint he left on the world around him.



The loss of a child defies the natural order. It is a sorrow that parents carry for the rest of their lives. Although the weight may shift with time, his absence and all the milestones they will miss will remain. The Clettenbergs were not only grieving as a family but were also holding the sorrow of Carson's friends, teammates, coaches, and a community that deeply felt this loss. To endure this pain during what would have been Carson's senior year made the grief even more profound, as his peers continued through rites of passage he would never experience.

Grief is never clean or linear. What moved me most about Christy, Steve, and Carson's sisters, Katy and Coco, was their authenticity in grief. Each experienced the loss of Carson in their own raw and complicated way, cycling through anger, confusion, resignation, blame, and more. They didn't hide from the pain, and they allowed me to sit with them in it. Their vulnerability and honesty were powerful.

Each family member found their way forward. Christy retreated into the quiet of their home, grappling with the ache of a world that seemed to move on without Carson. Sitting with her as she gave voice to her sorrow and rage was both heartbreaking and profoundly inspiring. Steve leaned on his faith and sought connection, especially with Carson's friends. Katy and Coco drew strength from their friends and Carson's, finding moments of comfort in shared memories and presence.

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters of Pathfinders,

It felt like a tug-of-war between sunshine and snow, warmth and cold throughout the spring. Every year, I'm surprised by the back and forth. And every year, I forget that this is simply how spring unfolds—unpredictable, shifting, and full of contrast. My moods tend to follow suit.

In many ways, grief mirrors this season. It doesn't follow a straight path. It's messy, filled with highs and lows, and arrives in waves that can take us by surprise. In my grief journey, I've learned to permit myself to feel it fully—for as long as needed—and to welcome the unexpected tears when they come. Grief has become a powerful teacher, expanding my capacity for compassion and opening space for growth. This may not be everyone's path, but it has been mine.

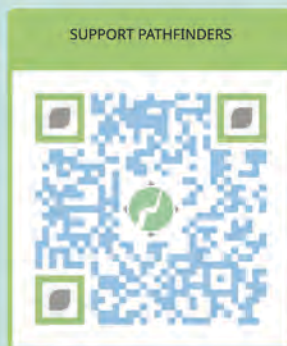
Pathfinders has been my anchor and my calling. After the losses of my husband, father, and mother, this organization gave me purpose and healing. Supporting others through grief and serious illness is not just our mission—it's deeply personal.

Over the past few months, we've been fortunate to bring on Allison Alexander as a consultant to help us strengthen our foundation. With her guidance, we have been working to refine our mission, clarify our messaging, and ensure we're building a sustainable future for Pathfinders. Allison has helped me reflect on my role, our organization's structure, and how we can better support our incredible team of counselors who serve communities from Aspen to Parachute.

We are excited about the path ahead and deeply grateful for your support. Thank you for believing in our mission, for taking the time to read this letter, and, most importantly, for giving. Your donations enable us to continue supporting those experiencing profound grief, loss, and illness throughout the valley.

With gratitude,

Allison Daily



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT: FROM GRIEF TO GIVING

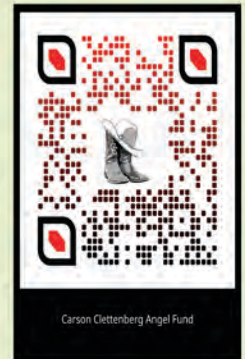
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Carson's friends gathered at the Clettenbergs' home throughout their senior year. Each visit and remembrance helped the family survive that first painful year. They found strength in a community that didn't pretend everything was fine but showed up with open hearts. Christy and Steve especially appreciated the weekly grief group that Melissa Seigle and I led at Aspen High School, where Carson's friends could process their loss together. Steve joined the group one week to connect with the kids and support their healing. The community became the Clettenbergs' lifeline.

Wanting to give back, Steve approached us with the idea of creating the Carson Clettenberg Angel Fund, dedicated to supporting Pathfinders' School-Based Counseling Program from Aspen to Parachute. This fund honors Carson's life and ensures that other students and families navigating grief can access the same compassionate support that meant so much to them.

We are deeply honored to be part of this tribute to Carson, a young man whose spirit continues to inspire love, connection, and healing.

—Allison Daily, Executive Director and Grief Counselor



INHALE, EXHALE: THE POWER OF BREATH IN GRIEF AND HEALING



All humans experience loss, and all living humans must breathe. From my perspective, this is not a coincidence. Our breath is ever-present, waiting to support us when we connect to it and work alongside it to move us through moments of challenge and heartbreak. We enter the world on an inhale and leave on an exhale. Many, many things occur in the space between, most of which we have no control over. Some inhales are more challenging to let go of than others, as we hold our breath, hoping to will an outcome by clinging to the breath. In contrast, there are exhales that usher in freedom as we let them go after moving through difficult moments. As we move about the world, we cannot control the external, which sometimes leads to chaos, disconnection, and dysregulation inside, but connecting to our breath can help to shift those experiences.

Daily, we take somewhere between 17,000 and 25,000 breaths. Research suggests that bringing our attention and awareness to even 5-7 of those in any given moment can reduce anxiety, overwhelm, and disconnection. When someone takes the time to connect with their breath during challenging times or moments of stress, they create an opportunity to move through the moment instead of being swept away by it.

When we experience a loss or a traumatic event, often we don't have the words to express what we are feeling, and in other instances, we don't feel as though we can express the emotions within us. In these times, a longer practice of connecting with our breath can be supportive in a breathwork session. Through connecting with the breath, we can reduce some of the intensity that can arise from these events without needing to use words necessarily. The breath becomes our ally in healing when we take time to connect with it.

For three years, I have had the privilege of collaborating with Pathfinders to offer community Breathwork for Healing sessions. In those sessions, participants are invited to connect with their breath for a little over an hour in a community setting. These offerings are particularly potent because they honor our innate human need to connect and belong by coming together as a group, utilizing our universal tool of breath to move through the shared experiences of loss and grieving. I have seen incredible shifts after sessions; all that is needed is a willingness to connect with the breath, even if only for a moment.

—Allison Alexander, Breathwork Facilitator

SACRED TUESDAYS: A YEAR OF GRIEF, GROWTH, AND CONNECTION

On Tuesday mornings, our group packed into the only room at the high school big enough to hold us all. Nineteen of Carson's friends—arguably too big for a processing group—but each held a piece of his story and carried their own grief. They needed to be together. Our initial meetings were awkward and somber. We learned that no one talked about their grief outside of the group. They didn't know how, they told us. They worried that talking about it would make another person sad, or they simply didn't have the words to describe their feelings.

Our Tuesday mornings together became sacred: a space to honor and celebrate their dear friend, to crack open the heavy hearts each was carrying, and to begin to hold each other in their grief and pain. Slowly, through the cracks, something beautiful and powerful emerged. With each passing week, we trusted each other more, laughed a bit more freely, and went deeper.

Carson was the thread that tied this group together, spanning Freshman to Seniors, jocks and art kids, some best friends and some unfamiliar to each other when we first met. Carson was the ultimate connector of people: gregarious, lighthearted, and deeply loyal. As group leaders, Allison and I came to know him through stories, videos, and memories. Though we had never met him in life, each week revealed more to us of who he was—a bright, positive presence whose optimism was infectious. We saw how much his friends had leaned on him, admired him, and how profoundly his absence had shaken their worlds.

The trust we built together created a container to expose raw emotions, painful breakdowns, riptides of anger at the injustice, and sometimes even dark humor to lighten the weight. Some group members expressed that Tuesday was their week's hardest day, yet they kept coming. From September to May, they showed up for each other, to carry something unfixable but could not be borne alone. I was consistently surprised at the openness of teenagers to many forms of healing. Together, we tried breathwork, art therapy, and subconscious parts work. We relived time with Carson through videos, memories, and dreams. Sometimes we couldn't tell whether someone was laughing or crying. We shared regrets, deep pain, belly-aching laughter, and many snacks.

Time and time again in this work as a grief counselor, there is the small voice in the back of my head that wants to fix the pain, to offer brilliant healing strategies, to make sense of the senseless. It can be hard to trust that creating a safe container is enough, and that if we hold it well, what needs to emerge will be: beauty, sorrow, connection, and love. Allison and I were the group leaders, but truly, the students taught us. We had the privilege of witnessing the evolution of their grief and their enduring love for their friend. Carson continued to teach us all too, from the other side. I remain in awe of teenagers' inherent depth and wisdom, the resilience of the human spirit, and the power of connection in love and loss.

Healing isn't about fixing. It's about showing up together and trusting the process.

—*Melissa Seigle, Pathfinders Grief Counselor*

MEALS MADE WITH LOVE: HOW ONE VOLUNTEER BUILDS COMMUNITY THROUGH FOOD



Amy Verschleiser is a cherished Pathfinders volunteer who makes and delivers meals to clients needing extra support during challenging times. Her heartfelt meals offer more than just nourishment—they provide comfort, connection, and care. Amy and her family have spent time in the Roaring Fork Valley since the early 2000s. Amy, her husband, and their four children moved from New York to Aspen during the pandemic just before the youngest daughter was about to start high school. Today, all four of her children are in their twenties, and her family has fully embraced life in the valley.

Supporting food needs has long been Amy's passion and a meaningful way to give back. In New York City, she volunteered through food pantries and other hunger-relief efforts. While those experiences were impactful, she often felt a sense of anonymity. Since relocating to the Roaring Fork Valley, she has appreciated the closer, more personal connection she has with the individuals and families she helps. "I love the feeling of real community and feel so lucky to be able to give back in this way," she says.

Amy first heard about Pathfinders while volunteering with Lift-Up during the pandemic, participating in masked and outdoor food drive-throughs. She was immediately drawn to Pathfinders' mission and the opportunity to support people through food, which felt deeply personal and tangible. She began cooking and delivering meals for Pathfinders clients in 2022. "This way of giving back nourishes the soul," Amy shares. "It feels good because I know people are getting healthy, clean food to nourish themselves during difficult times. The food is always made and delivered with love."

"Amy is truly something else," says Pathfinders Angels Volunteer Coordinator, Debbie Kreutzer. "She helps every week, and if any meals are left uncovered, she jumps in immediately—she doesn't want anyone to miss a meal. Her passion for helping others shines through in every dish she makes, and our clients are always thrilled with her food. This week, she picked up and delivered four meals—such a generous, caring act. One of our cancer patients even called me to say how much she loved her meal. Amy is truly an angel."

Living in Aspen has allowed Amy to slow down after years of a fast-paced lifestyle in New York and truly connect with her community. She draws inspiration from the Jewish value of *Tikkun Olam*, a Hebrew phrase meaning "repairing the world"—a guiding principle that shines through in her compassionate service. We are deeply grateful for Amy's kindness, dedication, and the heartfelt meals she shares with our beloved Pathfinders clients.

—**Robyn Hubbard, Pathfinders Grief Counselor**

SCHOOL-BASED PROGRAM WRAPS UP A REMARKABLE YEAR

As the school year ends, our school-based program is celebrating another impactful and meaningful year. Our dedicated clinicians supported nearly 200 students across 25 schools, from Parachute to Aspen. Throughout the year, our therapists walked alongside students facing significant life challenges—including the death of a loved one, parental separation or divorce, and the emotional toll of leaving family and friends behind during immigration.

We've received overwhelmingly positive feedback from school counselors and administrators. One Garfield Re-2 School District team member shared, "Thank you, thank you that this program exists and works to walk alongside students when experiencing grief/loss. The lessons they learn are invaluable and will be useful for the rest of their lives." A counselor at Coal Ridge High added, "This year has been excellent! The counselors have done a great job as school-based providers and navigating the considerations of that relationship." Counselors throughout the Roaring Fork Valley have consistently called the program "invaluable."

Overall, it's been a truly successful school year—and we're deeply proud of the difference we've made in the lives of so many students.

—**Amelia Dotzenrod, Pathfinders Counselor and School-Based Program Coordinator**

UPCOMING EVENTS



WELCOME WELLNESS 2025

breathwork

Go within and work on all the levels of your being.

WHEN: 6:00-7:30pm
July 13 • August 24

WHERE: TRUE NATURE HEALING ARTS CENTER

INFO: Allison Alexander
hi@theallisonalexander.com

 **TRUE NATURE**
HEALING ARTS FOUNDATION
truenaturehealingarts.com

 **pathfinders**
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pathfindersforyou.org

FLOAT FROM NEWCASTLE TO SILT!

TEEN GRIEF & HONOR RIVER TRIP

AUGUST 9TH | 10AM-3PM

FOR ALL RISING 9TH-12TH GRADERS
LUNCH PROVIDED | GRIEF SUPPORT & COMPANIONSHIP

Trip sponsored by Pathfinders. Fee is sliding-scale. Trained raft guides and counselors will be present.

Registration Contact: Amelia Dotzenrod
970-614-8285 | sunbeamcounseling@gmail.com
River-related information: Lisa Moretti 970.456.2769

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PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH OTHERS

FEEL THE EASE & FLOW ON THE COLORADO

SUMMER RAFT RETREATS

JOIN US FOR ONE OF OUR 3-DAY GRIEF & HONOR GENTLE RIVER RETREATS

JULY 11-13 • AUG 15-17 • SEPT 5-7

Experience the healing of our amazing Colorado River as you float along and release the pain and stress of loss while honoring your life and that of your loved ones.

WILDERNESS HEALING | NOURISHING FOOD
GRIEF COUNSELORS & GUIDES
SUPPORT & COMPANIONSHIP

Trained, professional raft guides and counselors will be present the entire time. Trip fee is on a sliding scale and sponsored by Pathfinders — a local non-profit. Register early as these trips fill quickly.

For information please contact:
Allison Daily 970.379.5276
or Robyn Hubbard 970.319.6854

 **pathfinders**
www.pathfindersforyou.org

PLEASE SHARE THIS WITH OTHERS!

PLEASE SHARE WITH OTHERS

grief group

Mountain Lily Counseling and Pathfinders invite you to join us in Carbondale for group support and healing.

TUESDAY | 6-7:30PM JULY 15 • 22 • 29 | AUG 5 • 12

LOCATION: 1101 Village Rd (conference room)
INFO + SIGNUP: Amanda Peterson 970.279.1867
amanda@mountainlilycounseling@gmail.com

 **pathfinders**
www.pathfindersforyou.org

 **MOUNTAIN LILY**
COUNSELING
mountainlilycounseling@gmail.com

events

make a plan to join us

pathfindersforyou.org/news-events
for updates and details.



PATHFINDERS SUMMER EVENTS CALENDAR

june

ONGOING

**courage +
compassion**
9:00am: 3rd Sunday
Glenwood Springs

july

breathwork

6:00-7:30pm
July 13: Carbondale

river retreat

July 11-13
Colorado River

happy place

July 18: 8:00 @ TACAW
One-man show

ONGOING

courage + compassion

9:00am: 3rd Sunday
Glenwood Springs

grief group

6-7:30pm Tuesdays
July 15, 22, 29
Carbondale

august

breathwork

6:00-7:30pm
August 24: Carbondale

river retreat

August 15-17:
Colorado River

teen river trip

August 9:
Colorado River

ONGOING

courage + compassion

9:00am: 3rd Sunday
Glenwood Springs

grief group

6-7:30pm Tuesdays
August 5, 12
Carbondale

sept

river retreat

September 5-7:
Colorado River

community day of grief

September 21

ONGOING

courage + compassion

9:00am: 3rd Sunday
Glenwood Springs

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