

Families of Highway Fatalities



"Have a heart for highway safety"

FHF

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Hope & Healing Seminar: "Arts as Medicine"

Using Expressive Arts As Avenue Toward Healing

FHF will hold the first of four 2009 Hope and Healing Seminars at the end of this month on March 27-28.

Dr. Dee Gulledge, an FHF member, has conducted prior trainings for FHF. She is an expert in thanatology, the study of death and dying. But she also understands on a personal level what it is like to live with the death of a family member.

In 1990, her 17 year old daughter, Melanie, died after cancer. Since then, Dr. Gulledge has devoted her life's work to learning all she can about how to help others experiencing the loss of a loved one.

She works with the Richland County Coroner-Medical Examiner Office where she manages the C.A.R.E. Team, an all-volunteer team that helps families respond to the trauma of a death in the family. She is also a certified crisis response trainer.

During this seminar, members will use the Expressive Arts to facilitate heart healing and forward motion in the grief process.

Using the Arts, members will demonstrate techniques to:

- Calm their emotions;
- Focus their mind;
- Settle their spirit;
- Strengthen their community.

Registration is limited to 25 people and will be on a first come, first-served basis. There is no cost for the seminar and lunch as well as snacks will be provided. Information has been sent to FHF members. For more information, please contact Faith at 803-896-8171.



Dr. Dee Gulledge,
Thanatologist

Greenville Memorial Hospital Trauma Unit Recognizes FHF

FHF had a unique opportunity recently to present our program to the 2008 Southeastern Trauma Symposium. This group was made up of medical doctors and trauma nurses from around the state.

These individuals work with motor vehicle collision victims every day. They understand well the trauma of families losing someone to a motor vehicle collision as well as the long-term consequences of someone being severely injured.

The Trauma participants were pleased to learn that there was a group such as FHF, which could help families once the hospital's role was complete.



FHF members presented both sides of the story — from someone whose family member had died and someone whose family member suffered long-term injury.

Doctors and nurses received feedback from FHF members about what families need from the hospitals during times of crisis.

Valerie Johnson, a Neuro/ICU Trauma Nurse, at Greenville Memorial Hospital, was inspired by FHF and its families. She created a display board in the hospital in hopes of reaching out to other families.

Upcoming Events:

- ⇒ March 27-28: FHF Hope and Healing Seminar with Dr. Dee Gulledge. Seating limited!
- ⇒ April 18: FHF Peer Support Event: Swan Lake/Iris Garden Picnic, Sumter
- ⇒ April 25: Fatality Memorial Service for families who lost someone on the roadways in 2008, hosted by the SCDPS Office of Highway Safety.
- ⇒ March-May: Prom presentations with SCHP CROs.



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Support...Fellowship...Safety Education

"Please don't become a statistic like my son" by Lisa Radvansky



Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from an opinion/editorial piece submitted to *The State* newspaper by FHF

member, Lisa Radvansky about her son, Chad (left). The newspaper ran this piece on its web site. We encourage FHF members to consider writing safety perspective pieces for your local newspaper. If your association with FHF is mentioned, we would like to preview it before publication.

I've wondered recently if there is a magical number that determines how many young people have to die in car wrecks before their friends will change their behaviors behind the wheel.

When my son became another highway fatality statistic, I had hoped

that his death would not be in vain. I had hoped that some would learn from his mistakes and prevent other families from suffering the same, unimaginable pain we experienced.

I began to spend my time, my money and my gas traveling all over this state in an effort to educate teens and young adults about the importance of safe driving practices. Yet I continue to attend funerals.

We lose approximately 42,000 people each year on our nation's roads and highways, with almost 1,000 of them in South Carolina alone. Enough, already!

I refuse to call them "accidents," because so many of them are preventable. In fact, more than half of these deaths could have been prevented by the simple choice to wear a seat belt.

Each time I hear of another senseless death on the highway, I sit and wonder who is to blame.

The simple, hard fact is that the drivers, themselves, are to blame.

No one forces them to speed or talk and text on cell phones. No one forces alcohol down their throats and puts them behind the wheel to drive. No one forces them to race with other drivers.

With all the information made available to them, they still drive unbuckled. Why? Because they never think anything will ever happen to them. Today is not their day to die.

They cry at funerals and carry the coffins of their family and friends, yet they continue to behave in the same manner that took the life of someone they claim to love.

They celebrate those who have died by getting drunk in their honor. Where is the honor in that?

Please realize that your actions do not only affect you. Suffering ends for the person who dies, but begins for those who are left behind. For once, think of someone other than yourself before you get behind the wheel of a car, and try to behave responsibly. From *The State*.

FHF says thank you



FHF members, Donald and Julie Hudson, and FHF coordinator, Faith Turner, recently presented a certificate of appreciation to an "angel" at Palmetto Health Richland. Ms. Ceasar Hubbard, who has been employed at the hospital for over 14 years, has the tough job of keeping families calm and updated while their loved one is in surgery. She went above and beyond the call of duty to help the Hudsons after their son received life-threatening injuries in a motor vehicle collision last year.

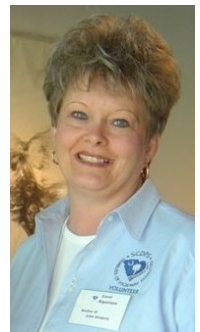
Speakers' Bureau Members: Don't forget your FHF shirts

If you are a part of our speakers' bureau or representing FHF at a safety event, please remember to wear your FHF-issued shirt.

You should have received either a long-sleeved or short-sleeved FHF oxford shirt with our logo. We have FHF lapel buttons available as well.

We ask that you wear these — especially when giving safety presentations with our Community Relations' Officers. This brings consistency and professionalism to our organization. It also makes it easier for potential members to recognize a friendly face.

If you have any questions or need a shirt, please contact Faith.



Member Carol Kiparisus wearing a FHF shirt.



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Photo Gallery—Peer Support Events



Members work on "Grief Awareness" bracelets with beads donated by [Debbie Harding](#) in memory of her son, [Michael](#).



The FHF Chili and Crafts event held at North Trenholm Baptist Church in Columbia had over 39 participants.



[Francis Radvansky](#) displays her "Comfort Quilt" made in memory of her grandson, [Chad](#).



[Cassandra Washington](#) and her family at their first FHF event.



[Carol Kiparisus](#) and [Joy Batchelor](#) at the Jan. event.



[Latasha Bosier](#) and her children [Makaylah](#) and [Marcy Jr.](#)



Sisters [Janette](#) and [Jean](#) cheered from the sidelines at the Bowling Event on Feb. 21.



[Terri Wise](#), FHF Inc. President, and member, [Treaasa Crosland](#) with her grandsons, [Tristan](#) and [Payton](#).



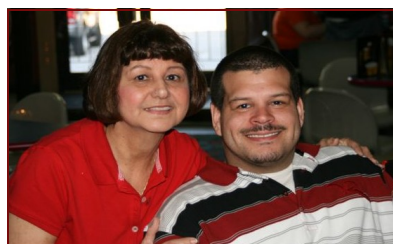
The FHF Bowling Event held at AMF Lanes in Columbia brought out 30 members including new faces.



[Keli Crosland](#) and friend [Jerry Levenia](#) at bowling night.



The [Crosland Family](#) share a table with [Carol Kiparisus](#), [Joy Batchelor](#), and Joy's mother, [Karen Hughes](#), during dinner at Cracker Barrel.



[Myrna Shelley](#) and her son, [Kevin](#), at the Bowling Event. This was Kevin's first time participating in an FHF event.



[Margaret](#) and [Ned Blackmon](#) from Lancaster, SC, talked with [Kelsey Turner](#).



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FAMILIES OF HIGHWAY FATALITIES

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Our Mission:

Our goal is to provide Peer Support for grieving families; facilitate forums and opportunities for grieving families to meet; prevent further highway fatalities through public education and information; and to diligently work alongside law enforcement, first responders, and other government officials as advocates for highway safety.

Join Us: FHF includes families who have lost loved ones on the highways, motor vehicle collision survivors, safety professionals, counselors, and clergy.

E-mail: FamiliesofHwyFatalities@scdps.net



Have you posted a memorial to your loved one on our web site yet? If not, please log on to www.schp.org/inmemoryof to share with others about the very special family member you lost on South Carolina highways.

For inquiries regarding the non-profit, FHF Assistance Program Inc., please contact Ms. Terri Wise at Post Office Box 916, Blythewood, SC, 29016, or FHFINCI100@yahoo.com