



## THE FRIENDS OF AINE CENTER for Grieving Children and Families

Dear friends,

March 10, 2021

My name is Matt Ryzewski, proud friend and neighbor of Christine and David Phillips, co-founders of Friends of Aine. On April 17, 2021, for my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday year, I have decided to run a distance of 40k in the hope of raising \$40,000 for this wonderful mission. The run will be held on the Millennium Running Anytime 5k course in Bedford, NH.

On August 10, 2010, Christine and David's daughter Aine died tragically and suddenly from a misdiagnosed condition called Pulmonary Veno-Occlusive Disease. She was 8 years old. Her surviving sister Bella was 5.

Christine and David discovered that while there were programs and support groups available to grieving parents, there was not enough support available to the traumatized children like Bella. Children and teens who have experienced a significant death are in real need of support and care from trained professionals who understand the trauma they are going through. Programs such as these are few and far between and consequently are difficult to find.

They established Friends of Aine as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with a mission to run free of charge peer-to-peer support bereavement programs for children in a safe and warm environment, be an advocate for child bereavement, and act as a grief resource center to other community organizations and families to ensure children, teens, and families are receiving the care and support they need.

Children are our most precious resource yet they are the forgotten mourners. One of the greatest crises a child can experience is the death of someone close to them. When a parent/guardian or sibling dies never again will the world be a secure place as before for a child. The surviving children witness others anguish and inconsolable pain while they themselves are going through the most difficult, bewildering, and painful period of their lives as they are confronted with the fragility of life.

Support for bereaved children is often minimal because family and friends are focused on the parents and in any case have difficulty dealing with children's sadness, which adds to the sense of isolation and abandonment. And there is no government or insurance funding. As a result of the lack of funding, these programs are only possible because of the generosity of donors and volunteers.

Christine and David endeavor to have a Friends of Aine Center to support grieving children, teens, and families throughout the region. They have always envisioned that the space would be a safe, warm, and comforting home, large enough for our organization to expand, and full of hope for the future of our organization and the children, teens, and families we humbly serve.

To donate for the 40/40/40 run, please visit the following page:

[www.friendsofaine.com](http://www.friendsofaine.com)

Please donate generously! I would also love to see some of you down at course on race day and if anyone wants to jump in a join me for a few miles, that would be appreciated! Millennium Running (138 Bedford Center Rd) parking lot will be our base camp and gathering spot. There will be post-race food!

In these tumultuous times, let us come together and rally for this great cause. Together in strength and solidarity we can aid grieving children and help to restore hope and healing within our community.

Sincerely,

Matt Ryzewski  
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Bedford, NH 03110

