

# Sharing the Journey

*"Working Together is the Answer...Compassion Consciousness is the Goal."*



VOLUME 21 ISSUE 2

The Official Newsletter of the Family Assistance Foundation

Fall 2021

## Survivor Mindy Mayer Hosts Fundraising Event Kerry Hill Winery - September 30, 2021



Join us for the fundraising kickoff for the FAERF Institute which will take place on the afternoon of September 30, at Kerry Hill Winery, owned by survivor Mindy Mayer. Funds raised at the event will go toward funding graduate students who will study topics pertaining to the effectiveness of Care and Special Assistance Teams and other research related to the field of response to traumatic loss in the workplace.

The event will include a demonstration of shepherding with renowned dog trainer and judge for sheep dogs/trials, Patrick Shannahan and a falconry exhibition by Megan Messinger. Participants will be able to tour the winery with Mindy, and take part in games and activities throughout the afternoon, culminating with a wine tasting of Kerry Hill wines. For more

information about the event, [click here](#).

The program for the event is shown on page 3-5, and you can register for the meeting [here](#). For those who cannot attend in person, live streaming will be made available and corporate tickets for a later viewing of the entire program can be arranged for the member-organizations' convenience.



## The Foundation Elects New Board Members On August 1, 2021

New Board Members were elected in August as the Foundation expands its mission and goals to include the new FAERF Institute. Plans are currently underway to offer a certificate in Humanitarian Assistance Response over distance learning for a global audience. Rich Anderson and Scott Maurer will transition to our Emeritus board. The new board members also serve on the [advisory board for the Institute](#) along with other survivors and business and industry leaders. **(Continued on next page)**



**Jeff Arnold**  
Survivor, American Airlines 1420



**Susan Ryan-Bisig**  
UPS A300 Captain, Retired



**Tracy Wholean**  
Survivor, Cruise Line Excursion  
Accident

**New Board Members Elected, Continued from Page 1**

**Jeff Arnold**, then an (Army National Guard) lieutenant colonel, survived the crash of American Airlines Flight 1420, where 11 died and 134 survived. Jeff saw first-hand the critical role that well-trained company employees can play in assisting survivors and families. Since that time, Jeff has joined the Family Assistance Foundation's Care Team and worked alongside company employees and other responders in offering compassionate care to those who may otherwise be left helpless in the aftermath of trauma in the workplace. Jeff plays a major role in volunteerism in Alaska and upon retirement was honored in the press release that is attached ([click here](#)).

**Susan Ryan-Bisig**, retired as UPS Captain after 27 years with the company. Susan also served in the United States Air Force. Susan was part of the Independent Pilots Association's Critical Incident Response Program which assisted crew members who were involved in incidents in the air or on the ground. During that time she served as a Care Team member to the family of the co-pilot who died in Flight 1354 on August 13, 2013. In addition to volunteering with the Foundation, Susan volunteers with [littleway.org](http://littleway.org) a pregnancy resource center, as an educator where women receive free and confidential services. She also donates time to a non-profit Senior Care Experts, a free meal delivery service for seniors who do not qualify for government sponsored meals.

**Tracy Wholean** and her husband Mike survived an excursion accident while on a cruise with Royal Caribbean Cruise Line. Tracy's best friend Mary died in the accident. Tracy has been an executive in the payment processing industry since 1994. During that time she has held many positions including serving as a Relationship Manager and Senior Vice President of Customer Service and Relationship Management. Tracy sought training in Massage Therapy as a way to learn more about the human body and help others on a physical as well as emotional level--this is where she met Mary, her best friend who died in the excursion accident. While still full-time employed, Tracy volunteers as a member of the Foundation Care Team.



The Foundation Board, leadership team and our internal team members are holding in our hearts those who died on September 11, 2001 and their family and friends with loving condolences and deep respect. The black ribbon across the Foundation's logo pin is our way of letting the world know we are keeping our promise, "We will never forget." The logo pin is named after flight attendant, Sara Low. Sara was a new flight attendant with American Airlines and to us a hero along with Betty Ong and all of the American Airlines, United Airlines' flight attendants and pilots who died that day. We also honor the memory of the heroes in emergency services who died on September 11, 2001 as well as their families. Our hearts go out to all who lost loved ones in the tragedy, and we are grateful for all the lessons about emotional and psychological survival we have learned from them. We pray for "peace that passeth all understanding" for all this day and every day in the future.



**Sara Low**  
**American Airlines Flight 11**  
September 11, 2001

# Member-Partner Meeting Agenda

## Survivor Speakers

### Flight #3407

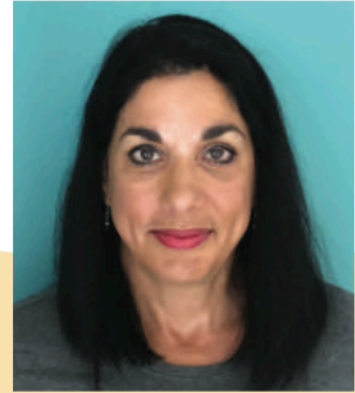
### Families Achieve Final Milestone as Pilot Record Database is Finalized



Terry & Scott Maurer  
Survivors  
Parents of Lorin Maurer



Kathy Johnston  
Survivor  
Wife of Kevin Johnston



Tina Siniscalco  
Survivor  
Sister of Mary Abraham

### Crew Survivor Trapped at Sea During Pandemic



Ivan Godoy, Second Purser Crew  
International Cruise Line



Enzo & Angeles Amerigo Vignoli



Ivan & Juan Pablo





Missy Jones  
Survivor  
Mother of Gordon Jones  
Deep Water Horizon



Mindy Mayer  
Survivor  
Lost 5 Family Members  
Cruise Line Excursion

## Industry Speakers



### The Role of Unmanned Aircraft Systems in Crisis Response

Grant Guillot  
Partner and Unmanned Aircraft Systems Team Leader  
Adams & Reese, LLP

### Connecting with the Customer Through the Worst of Times



Captain Bob Waltz  
Vice President of Flight Operations  
Southwest Airlines



Martin Vigil

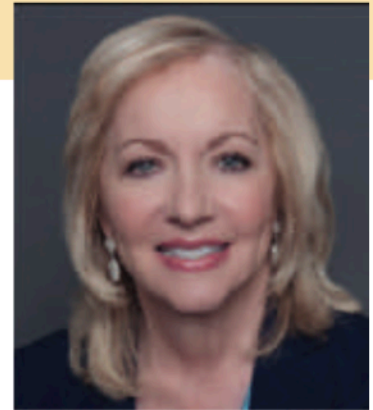


Jeff Morgan

## Business & Industry Response Following a Hostile Environment

## How to Become Certified as a Mental Health First Aider

Carolyn V. Coarsey, PhD



## Registration Includes Virtual Tickets This Year... Please Join Us!



Kelly McKelvey  
Finance Manager

Technology never ceases to amaze me! The way we can connect with others remotely is truly life and business changing. Not only can we work remotely, but we can also provide training classes to so many more people who otherwise would be restricted by the inability to travel due to time or finances.

We are so excited for our Member-Partner meeting in Idaho this month. If you and your colleagues are not able to join us in person, we are offering a Corporate Virtual attendance package that allows you to stream the event live or play the recording later, up to five days after the event to fit your schedule. We also have an option for individuals to participate remotely.

The training will be great and the fundraiser event at the beautiful Kerry Hill Winery will be even better! We would be thrilled to see you in person, but keep in mind that there is an alternative if that works best for you and your company.

# Two Weeks to Flatten the Curve... or Not

## Short-Term Measures Become Long-Term Strategies

by Jeff Morgan



**Jeff Morgan**  
President/CEO

The year 2020 started off as most years have in the past, but by the end of January we all began hearing of this potentially dangerous coronavirus we soon learned was called COVID-19. By the middle of March, we learned of several new measures that governments around the world were implementing to combat this global threat and to "flatten the curve." We have all learned so much more in the nearly 18 months since the first pandemic measures were implemented, and our purpose here is not to judge the actions taken, the circumstances or the various thoughts and opinions that have arisen over the last year. But, it is prudent to consider how you might modify your processes and procedures for the foreseeable future.

### Virtual Meetings are Here to Stay

Though we all used apps such as Zoom, Teams, GoToMeeting, WebEx and other apps before the pandemic, virtual meetings became our primary means of communication rather than the alternative in the past year. Consider integrating the use of these tools in your emergency procedures and family assistance programs. These may be simply video meetings between care teams and families, or for larger virtual family briefings.

### Virtual Family Assistance Centers

Last year the U.S. NTSB announced that in the midst of the pandemic they would be calling for the establishment of a virtual family assistance center for any legislated accidents they would oversee, and the American Red Cross established a virtual family assistance center website. We have

operated our secondary call center (Family Support Center) for many years and can set this up as a virtual family assistance center very easily and we would recommend that you integrate the process of setting up virtual family assistance centers into your plans and consider that some situations will call for the combination of both a virtual and physical family assistance center.

### Respond Globally, Deploy Locally

We can expect to see travel restrictions in place for the foreseeable future. We know these restrictions can range from total bans on travel from one country to the next and we see restrictions on travel even from state to state or from one region to another. In other cases, even where travel is permitted there are issues with quarantines, health passports, and other requirements that may be with us for a while. So, a key success factor in being able to meet family needs is to identify resources in your geographical areas of operation that could be deployed locally and therefore not limited by cross border or cross jurisdictional restrictions. The Family Assistance Foundation is continuing efforts to do this by identifying, training, and tracking additional teams and by working through regional coordinating groups. More recently these groups have come together in Scandinavia, Alaska and Brazil and we expect to create more of these groups going forward.

Through the focus in these areas, we can continue to offer families all choices when possible, to still travel to sites where their loved ones have been impacted, or choose to get information and support virtually and in a form most helpful to them from video meetings, texts and traditional phone calls. Please let us know if you have any questions or would like to know more about our regional efforts.



**Ana-Maria Dumitru**

General Manager,  
Client Services -  
Europe, Middle East  
& Africa

## SERTS 2.0

While technology started playing an even more important role during the pandemic and so many processes had to move and adapt to the online environment, we often talked about how virtual has always been an important part of our operation, before the start of the pandemic, and it

continues to be one of our priorities. And also, how the systems of operation have always been a great focus for us.

Data comes in so many different formats and via many avenues, at a very fast pace, especially in a crisis. And data is so important, but for it to serve its purpose of providing a good overview and also detailed information for crisis management, it has to be stored in a secure system, it should be available and easily accessible to those that rely on information in order to be able to provide support to someone affected by a crisis.

In the last article we talked about how we worked on a new system of communication for our Family Support Center. And mentioned SERTS (our Strategic Emergency Response Tracking System) - and how SERTS is the keeper of all the information related to a crisis, those affected by it and the support team providing assistance.

SERTS 2.0 has been our focus for the last year. We invested resources and time to revamp SERTS, and our goal was to make it more accessible, user friendly and adaptable. It is a continuous focus for us, and having the ability to work on a secure platform that provides flexibility, is key.

We have very much enjoyed bringing SERTS 2.0 to life.

SERTS brings all the data related to a crisis together. An extensive relational database that helps connect the dots and keep track of information, as well as a tool to help set tasks and next steps in helping those affected.

A special note to our Clients: As we continue to fine tune the system and it's user roles and profiles, we are here to help you get started with the new SERTS, and to walk you through the system and its features. The first video tutorial is also available and we'd love to share it with you. Please send me a quick email at [anamaria.dumitru@aviem.com](mailto:anamaria.dumitru@aviem.com) and I will gladly share the link so you can view it. The system is operational and we are so excited to share as much information as possible with you!



**Rosangela Maxwell**

General Manager,  
Client Services - The  
Americas

## July Agent of the Month

In my last article we announced the implementation of the 'Agent of the month' award, within our call center agents. As you might remember, we conduct Internal Drills monthly, to give an opportunity to our agents to practice what they learn in our 1-hour long Call Center Training. With the training and the monthly practice, we are confident that our agents have the best tools to be able to handle calls with compassion and care and following our very specific protocol if we need to activate them to support one of our clients who might experience an emergency.

We are proud to announce that the 'July Agent of the month' was awarded to agent Victoria Harris from our site located in Hays, KS. Victoria has only participated in two Internal Drills, but got the highest score in a team of ten agents on the July drill. She handled 7 incoming calls from our Role Players and got an average score of 4.8 for all calls. The calls handled presented four different types of scenarios and Victoria was able to navigate through our system of operation easily and logged the calls correctly. Victoria handled each call showing compassion and care and was able to make the callers at ease and keep a calm tone of voice that is ideal when talking to family members who call as they are looking for their loved ones who might have been involved in a tragic accident. Victoria was very efficient when taking down the callers' information. We want to make sure that we take down all the basic information of the callers (full name / city calling from / good contact number), so she made sure to spell the names and repeat the phone numbers, so that the Family Support Representatives who are assigned to call back the same families will be able to contact the family members and provide further assistance. When a caller asked additional questions that Victoria did not have an answer for, she politely explained that the information at the time of the call was very limited, but she was able to reassure the caller that once more information about their loved ones was known, the Family Support Center would get back to the family immediately.

We provide very detailed feedback to our agents after we analyze the surveys submitted by our Role Players, and we listen to some recordings, but at the same time, our Role Players are experienced and so we try to coach our agents on the spot, at the end of the role-played call. One of our Role Players noticed that Victoria had made a small mistake while navigating through the system of operation that displays the script to the agent, so the Role-player provided some feedback and guidance to Victoria at the end of the call. Victoria took the feedback with great humility, positive attitude and showed sincere appreciation for the feedback. We are confident that she will be a great agent if we have to activate her for any of our clients, as we know she will be using respect and compassion when talking to family members, while following the correct protocol with efficiency and professionalism.



# The Foundation Now Provides Mental Health First Aid Certification in Conjunction with the National Council for Mental Wellbeing



**Cheri Johnson**  
Executive Assistant

Our world is changing rapidly and with many struggling from fear, loss and isolation that may have already been present or was brought on by the pandemic or events over the last year and a half, suicide awareness is more important than ever. How can we help those who are struggling? How can we know what to say to someone when we suspect they might be having a difficult time? What role can we play to come alongside someone who is hurting? Maybe you are like me and have asked yourself these same questions. Many who have undergone their own struggles and losses can empathize and so many of you are already caring, empathetic individuals with a heart for the hurting.

It is because of the compassionate people we know that you are, that the Family Assistance Foundation is launching a new training program called Mental Health First Aid. Carolyn has spent countless hours training and preparing to become a certified national trainer for the National Council for Mental Wellbeing. With this certification, she is able to train others on Mental Health First Aid.

The first online training took place in August and I was privileged to take part in it. I learned SO much invaluable and interesting information. This is the type of training, much like HSR™ that can be utilized in all areas of your life. The goal of the Foundation is to have every one of our team members certified with this important and beneficial training. The training will help you identify the needs of others who are dealing with difficult circumstances and prepare you to know what to do and what to say in order to help them. The next training will be held virtually on October 29th, 2021. In addition to training our team members, we will also be opening up training for our corporate members' teams as well. For more information, please email Cheri Johnson at [cheri.johnson@aviem.com](mailto:cheri.johnson@aviem.com).



**Carolyn V. Coarsey, Ph.D.**  
President & Co-Founder  
Family Assistance  
Foundation

## Book Recommendation:

### **Affectionate Communication in Close Relationships**

**Author: Kory Floyd**

**Reviewed by Carolyn V. Coarsey**

Before the Coronavirus, few of us had ever heard of social distancing, and now it is part of everyone's life. Within cultural and religious restrictions, most people took for granted handshakes, hugs and affectionate touching as part of daily interactions—and now we are starting to wonder about the toll social distancing may be taking on relationships.

In ***Affectionate Communication in Close Relationships***, Kory Floyd, Ph.D. examines the scientific research on the affection exchange that has emerged from the disciplines of communication, social and clinical psychology, family studies, sociology, nursing, and behavioral health. Few communication behaviors are more consequential to the development and maintenance of close relationships than the expression of affection. In contrast, the absence of affection in established relationships frequently coincides with relational deterioration.

In the book, specific points include the individual and relational benefits, including health benefits of affectionate behavior, the significant detriments associated with lacking sufficient affection, and the risks of expressing affection. It also discusses the primary social and cultural influences on affection exchange.

Dr. Floyd's extensive work in the areas of emotion, family, and affection has resulted in 15 books and over 100 articles. While written in a scholarly format, the examples provided make ***Affectionate Communication in Close Relationships*** a great addition to libraries of Care and Special Assistance team members and leaders.

