

# Sharing the Journey

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



VOLUME 21 ISSUE 3

The Official Newsletter of the Family Assistance Foundation

Winter 2021

## Celebrating a Successful Kickoff to the FAERF Institute



The Foundation kicked off the FAERF Institute at the successful 2021 Member-Partner Meeting at Survivor, Mindy Mayer's Kerry Hill Winery outside Boise Idaho. The fundraiser followed the Member-Partner program held at the Courtyard by Marriott in Boise, Idaho. We continue to hear from members who attended in person as well as those who participated by streaming the program as to the success of the event. Survivors and members from around the world called in to say "hi" and offer their support for the Foundation's new Institute scheduled to begin offering courses for certification in 2022. See page 2 for highlights about the speaker's presentations.

## Become a Mental Health First Aider through the Foundation



The National Council for Mental Wellbeing sponsors the Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) program and has trained more than 2.5 million people in the U.S. to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges (see end of article re: training for other countries). As nationally certified trainers, the Foundation now offers classes to all our members. We have already trained our own Foundation Care Team members. MHFA teaches you to understand, identify and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges with compassion and facts. Like Human Services Response™ Training, it helps you use your natural helping skills to assist others,

Continued on Page 8

# Highlights from the Member-Partner Meeting - September 29-30, 2021



Jeff Morgan opens the meeting and welcomes participants.



Carolyn Coarsey introduces Mindy Mayer. Mindy expresses gratitude to Care Teams for what they do for survivors like her and welcomes attendees.



Scott Maurer shares stories about his daughter, Lorin and describes the accomplishments of the Colgan/Continental 3407 families.



Capt. Bob Waltz shares recommendations about "Connecting with Customers through the Worst of Times".



Rosangela Maxwell, General Manager, Client Services - The Americas, presented videotaped interviews with guests trapped at sea when the pandemic first began. Celebrity guests include Angeles & Enzo Americo Vignoli. Crew member Ivan Godoy spoke about challenges faced by employees on ships and praised his own company for how they responded to guests and crew.

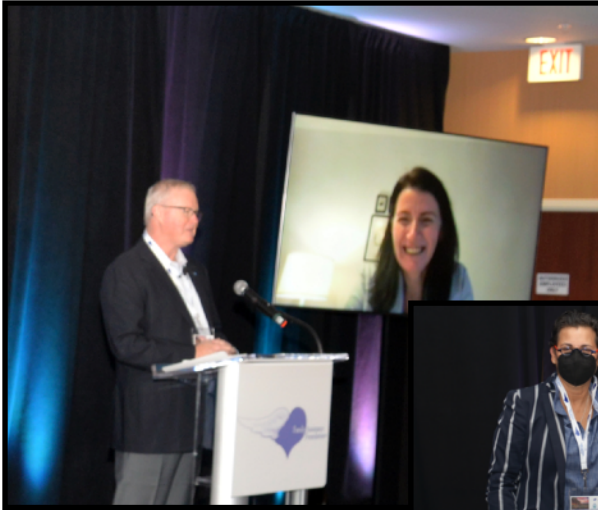


Ray Gonzalez, Manager, Care Team for Royal Caribbean Group shared how they are currently assisting guests on ships in the current pandemic environment.





# Highlights from the Member-Partner Meeting - September 29-30, 2021



Jeff Morgan & Ana Maria Dumitru



Aviem Team: Jeff Morgan, Ana Maria Dumitru, Rosangela Maxwell, Sally Fleming, Adriana Hurtado, Kelly McKelvey and Cheri Johnson



Jeff and team presented about the Aviem/Foundation Care Team response which is now in its second year of activation for two corporate members in the Northeastern US.



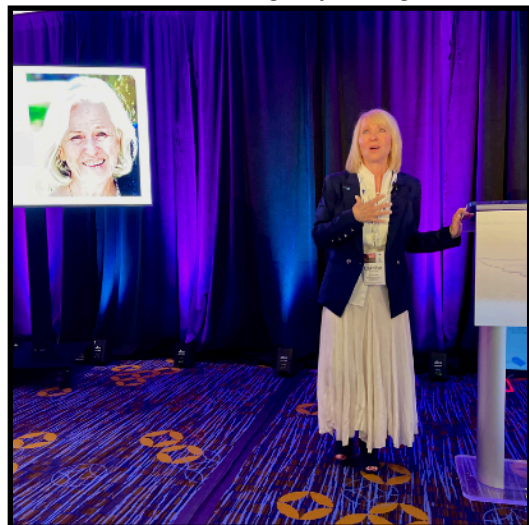
Chief Martin Vigil from Northern New Mexico Emergency Management updates the audience on new practices for post-shooting responses.



Grant Guillot, a Baton Rouge attorney who specializes in assisting companies who own un-manned aircraft, (drones) presented an update on their use in Emergency Management.



Carolyn Coarsey introduced Sandra Novak who presented crucial information about what is being learned about prevention of shootings and violence in the workplace.



Carolyn Coarsey presented Mrs. Missy Jones's story of how she was overlooked when her son went missing in the Deepwater Horizon tragedy in 2010.

## **Highlights from the Member-Partner Meeting - September 29-30, 2021**



Matt Mullenix, Mission Media



**FAERF INSTITUTE**  
Family Assistance Education and  
Research Foundation

**"When I first met Carolyn and Jeff, I was struck by the passion they have for their mission, even if the details of the work were a little hard to piece together over drinks and hors d'oeuvres. But after meeting the "FAERF family" and hearing directly from survivors and care-givers, I now better understand both the mission and why it inspires such devotion.**

**"It's an honor to be in a position to help further FAERF's good work, grow its family of passionate supporters and set a firm foundation for its legacy. Thank you all for your welcome hospitality and trust."**

The Foundation contracted with Matt Mullenix as a strategist to assist the leadership and board with the growth and expansion of the organization with special attention on the FAERF Institute in early 2022.

Matt is an experienced communications and association professional with a passion for leading nonprofit, governmental, education and corporate partners toward mutual benefit through Mission Media, LLC, a communications consultancy based in Baton Rouge, Louisiana (established: 2013). Current and recent clientele include statewide nonprofits, local municipalities and small businesses across several industries.

Prior to private consulting, Mullenix directed the Louisiana Job Connection, a statewide, online employer/employee matching system created by Louisiana Economic Development. As Vice President of Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations, he managed communications and public relations, and led the organization's shift in business and membership models that greatly expanded its participant network and financial position. At Louisiana State University, Mullenix managed public and press relations for the Office of Research and Economic Development, and served as Managing Editor of LSU Research Magazine.

Mullenix currently volunteers on several nonprofit boards dedicated to civil rights and civic leadership. He is a licensed Master falconer and author of three popular books on the subject. He and spouse Shelly Mullenix have twin girls who now attend Louisiana State University.

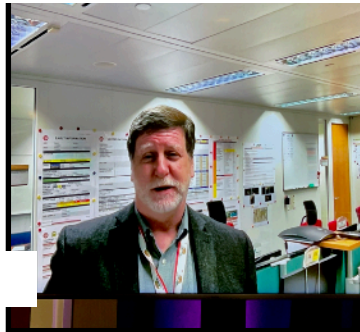


# Member-Partner Meeting, Boise, Idaho - September 29-30, 2021



Sharyn Cannon, Connecticut

Gus Whitcomb, Hong Kong



Glenn & Carole Johnson, Pennsylvania



Kathy Johnston,  
New York



Elizabeth Turner, United Kingdom



**From Phoenix to New York, the UK to Hong Kong, from Australia to Singapore! Some of our valued team members were able to join us via live or recorded video! Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to send us a personalized message. It was fun to have you as a part of our meeting. It was almost as good as having you in person - but not quite!**



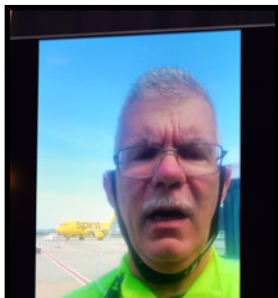
Cyrano Latiff, Singapore



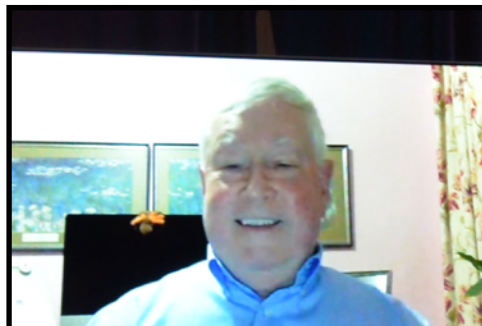
Lisa Swartzwelder,  
Ohio



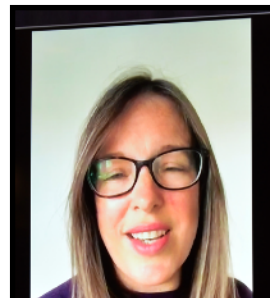
Chris Rausch,  
Arizona



Joe Wagner,  
Pennsylvania



Mike Kavanagh, Australia



Katrina Raynsford,  
UK



Merrilee Morris, Georgia

# #Virtual is From Now On

by Jeff Morgan



**Jeff Morgan**  
President/CEO

The year 2020 ushered in a near cataclysmic shift in how the world responds to a pandemic-- and also, how we do our work. Lockdowns shifted work habits of just about anyone who could work from home. We've all learned to communicate with others via Zoom, Teams, WebEx, and many other video platforms. Social media has continued to expand, and we've learned that things we thought must be done in person can actually be done fairly well in a virtual way.

Even though there is much discussion and controversy over whether we are still in a pandemic or some sort of post-pandemic environment, the fact is that the many ways we've worked and interacted before will never be the same. In a recent survey, the National Association for Business Economics found that just 11% of the respondents expected all of their employees to return to an office. We continue to see stories on the advancements in AI and robotics, and the size of many company workforces may never reach their pre-pandemic levels. I was in a Walmart recently where there was only one traditional "assisted" checkout line and all others were self-checkout lanes. Amazon recently announced they are opening a Whole Foods Market that will have no cashiers. While these changes were coming anyway eventually, the pandemic accelerated our transition to interaction with machines and fewer humans to interact within many aspects of our life, except through virtual connections.

Perhaps the greater changes that affect our work in humanitarian assistance are the multitude of restrictions and requirements associated with the movement of people locally, across state lines and internationally. While there have been travel restrictions of various types because of the pandemic, there are many who believe that certain restrictions and requirements may remain after the pandemic is officially declared over. These might include blocking travel into certain states or countries, quarantines of various lengths, vaccine requirements, and/or vaccine/health passports.

We at the Foundation hope the pandemic ends soon, and we hope all restrictions on travel and other requirements are lifted. But, we accept the fact that even with restrictions lifted, some people may be hesitant to travel and congregate with larger groups of people, especially others they do not know. Where family assistance centers may be established, family members may still prefer to stay home and be supported virtually. So, going forward, we will operate always having virtual options available. This would include:

- Virtual Care Team support;
- Expanded use of the Aviem Family Support Center (FSC) as a virtual Family Assistance Center as needed;
- Expanded use of the latest virtual tools such as Zoom, SMS communications, email, and other tools to communicate with and support families.

For our Foundation corporate members and team members, we will continue as appropriate to provide:

- Virtual training, as well as in-person training, and a combination, to accommodate those who cannot travel to the in-person class;
- Webinars;
- Member-Partner meetings with potential live-stream options for virtual participation.

We may have been forced (or dragged kicking and screaming) into this new reality but all we can do is make the best of it and stay on our mission of improving compassion consciousness and supporting business and industry in responding to traumatic events, no matter what the circumstances.



**FAERF INSTITUTE**  
Family Assistance Education and  
Research Foundation

## Become a Friend of the Foundation™

Help the Foundation raise funding to support scientific studies of why it makes good business sense for a company to provide a compassionate response to employees, customers, and families confronted with grief and traumatic loss. Go to [our website](#) and donate. For any amount, you can be listed as a Friend of the Foundation™ and original founder of the FAERF Institute.





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

## Book Recommendation: The Gratitude Project

**Author: Jeremy Adam Smith, Editors: Kira M. Newman, Jason Marsh, and Dacher Keltner**

**Reviewed by Carolyn V. Coarsey**

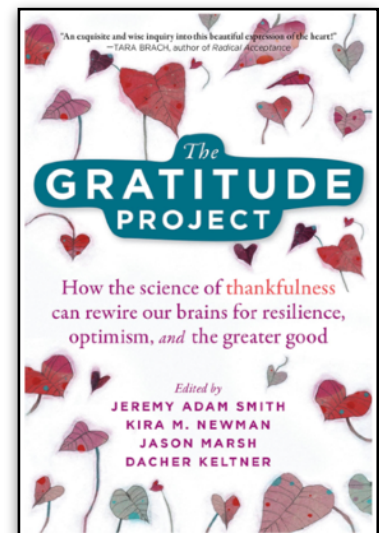
The University of California-Berkeley did a 3-year research project costing over \$5 ½ million dollars on the topic of gratitude. Their findings showed being grateful and keeping a journal of gratitude, instead of complaining, resulted in better sleep, fewer symptoms of illness, more happiness, less anxiety and depression, increased self-esteem, less stress and reduced negativity. Now the book is available for others to benefit from learning about the power of gratitude.

**In our fractured, “me-first” world, the science and practice of thankfulness could be just the antidote we need.**

Gratitude is powerful: not only does it feel good, it’s also been proven to increase our well-being in myriad ways. The result of a multiyear collaboration between the Greater Good Science Center and Robert Emmons of the University of California, Davis, *The Gratitude Project* explores gratitude’s deep roots in human psychology—how it evolved and how it affects our brain—as well as the transformative impact it has on creating a meaningful life and a better world.

With essays based on new findings from this original research and written by renowned positive psychologists and public figures, this important book delves deeply into the neuroscience and psychology of gratitude, and explores how thankfulness can be developed and applied, both personally and in communities large and small, for the benefit of all.

With contributions from luminaries such as Sonja Lyubomirsky, W. Kamau Bell, Arianna Huffington, and many more, this edited volume offers more than just platitudes—it offers a blueprint for a new and better world.



## Gratitude Drives a Sense of Purpose and Desire to Do More

People who keep a gratitude journal consistently report feeling more energetic, alive, awake, and alert. They also make 20% more progress toward their goals than others in one study. Yet, they don't report feeling more satisfied with their progress toward their goals than others. They don't become complacent or satisfied to the point that they stop making an effort. This relates to other research showing that gratitude inspires prosocial behavior such as generosity, compassion, and charitable giving. (Excerpted from *The Gratitude Project*)

# Tips for Taking Care of Your Mental Health

## *From the National Council of Mental Wellbeing*

It's the holiday season again. While this time of year can elicit excitement and joy, it can also feel stressful and challenging – especially as we all continue to cope with the impact of COVID-19. In fact, an [American Psychological Association poll](#) found that 45% of Americans would prefer to skip the holidays entirely to avoid the associated stress. If this is how you're feeling, you're not alone.

Whether you are excited or are experiencing feelings of apprehension and uncertainty, keeping your mental wellbeing a priority is crucial. Simple self-care strategies and advance preparation can help you cope with the "new normal" and make the most of this time of year. We're here to help with information and tips from Mental Health First Aid (MHFA).

This month, we shared tips from the MHFA curriculum to help you support young people and military members and veterans around you during and after COVID-19. We also shared information to help you plan ahead for the holiday season while keeping your mental health top of mind. Taking time now to protect your mental health can help you #BeTheDifference for yourself and others in the coming weeks.

We're continuing to share daily information and tips on our [blog](#) and social media channels – follow the National Council of Mental Wellbeing on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)!

### **Take Care of Your Mental Health this Holiday Season**

1. Focus on what you can control. To take care of your physical and mental wellbeing.
2. Keep healthy habits in place.
3. Make time for yourself.
4. Create new traditions that prioritize your mental wellbeing.
5. Ask for help if you need it.

**Continued from Page 1**

while coordinating with community helpers who have clinical and other skill sets. It consists of two-hours of pre-work and six hours of training over Zoom.

As a First Aider, you can be the first line of support for someone experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. You can be the difference by helping that person get information and support they need. Research has shown that talking about our challenges can encourage others to do the same. Having these difficult conversations helps reduce mental health stigma so more people reach out for the support they need.

If you are outside the United States, we will help to find the resource for MHFA Training in your own country as it is offered throughout the world. To learn more about becoming a Mental Health First Aider, please email Cheri Johnson at [cheri.johnson@fafonline.org](mailto:cheri.johnson@fafonline.org)

The MHFA training in addition to the FAERF "Depression Awareness and Suicide Prevention Training" has been an exceptional and eye opening experience in building on our continued education. Recognizing, supporting and knowing "what to do" for ourselves and others is key. Education unlike "a" training session is not time limited. Education is never ending with the right partners and resources who continue to guide, empower and expand our capabilities with their research and support. **-Ray Gonzalez, Royal Caribbean Group**



# From Cheri: Team Work is What Makes Events Like These Successful

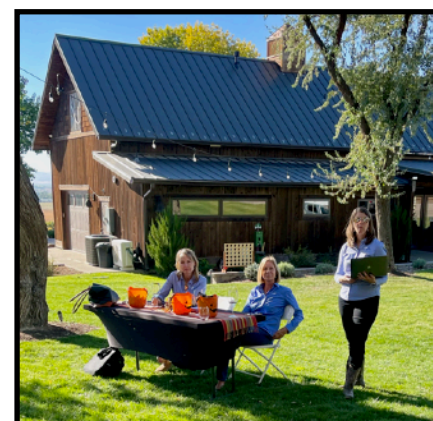


**Cheri Johnson**  
Manager, Internal  
Operations

This year’s Member-Partner meeting in Boise, Idaho was the second one I’ve had the pleasure of attending and the first one I’ve helped Carolyn plan. I was very nervous about the event because I have not had the experience of planning and organizing an event of this magnitude before. Carolyn held my hand the whole way through and helped make sure that every detail had been well thought out.

We also had an amazing team of people helping us on the other end of things from the hotel management to Mindy Mayer and Shawna Taylor at the winery who helped us make decisions and provide amazing options for food and entertainment. Then there were the rest of our amazing staff and many team members who stepped up big time to help in any way we needed them to. From Jeff Arnold being the chauffeur extraordinaire and helping with temperature control in the meeting room, to Sally for her sweet support and can do attitude, willing to accept any task we handed her, to Tracy who purchased fun supplies and treats for the two day event and planned games for the winery festivities, to the whole team who helped us move tables and chairs from one room to another when we realized it would serve our group better, to the team who helped put together our challenging display sign and Adriana who was our amazing photographer to document the entirety of our event. Many hard working, selfless people were the backbone of this event.

Leading up to the meeting I was very excited to see everyone again, but worried I was going to overlook an important detail and I expected to be stressed and frazzled. However, I had a wonderful time and things went very smoothly and I believe it is truly because of all of you that this event was a success. This is such an amazing group to be a part of and I am sincerely grateful for the opportunity I had to experience the event with all of you! Looking forward to the next one!





**Ana-Maria Dumitru**  
General Manager,  
Client Services -  
Europe, Middle East  
& Africa

## Ana Summarizes Attendees' Feedback on Meeting

This year's Member-Partner Meeting has been so special in many ways. We were able to get together in person for the first time since the start of the pandemic, which is something we all so much looked forward to during these unprecedented times! And for the first time, streaming was an option, a great way to bring so many of us together, near or far.

We thank all our attendees for helping us make the 2021 Member-Partner Meeting a success. As with all our meetings, trainings and events, getting our attendees' feedback is so important and helps us plan and make our future events even more successful.

We had some great feedback to the Survey we sent after the meeting. The Survey had 4 questions, and it took only a few short minutes to complete. Nearly 50% of our attendees filled in the Survey and we so appreciate everyone's time and energy in sending us this very valuable feedback!

Here are the questions and an outline of the answers received:

1. Which of the sessions did you find most useful or helpful?

(You may choose more than one answer)

Our attendees were able to select one or all of the sessions presented at the Meeting. The different presentations had a great score and they all came really close together in our attendees' preferences, which was great to see.

2. What would you like to see more of, at future events?

(You may choose more than one answer)

The answer choices provided were:

A.Survivors' Presentations & Discussions

B.Presentation by Responders or other Government Officials

C.Break Outs on processes and procedures

All options were selected by different attendees, and option B was the leader of this category, followed very closely by options A and C.

3. Our goal is to hold events that are well worth our attendees' valuable time and provide useful information and takeaways that are applicable to your organization. Did we meet this goal for you?

We were very humbled and grateful to learn that we achieved our goal with all but one attendee. One person wrote that there needed to be more interaction and breakout opportunities. We want the person who provided this feedback to know that we take their comments seriously and look forward to future meetings where there will be time for more of a workshop format. We value everyone's contribution and feedback and look forward to more interaction with all who attended and learning more of what members want from future meetings.

4. Do you have any additional recommendations for future presentations or feedback you wish to share about how we can improve future events?

This was an open-ended question, and we were glad to hear from our virtual attendees who commented on how the virtual actually worked, and is something that we should continue offering for our future meetings. Some of our in person attendees mentioned that it was great to be able to have some fun after the working meetings.

**Continued on page 11**



## Kelly's Observations...



**Kelly McKelvey**  
Finance Manager

My first trip to Idaho did not disappoint! We had such a great member partner meeting. Jeff, Carolyn, and all of the speakers did such a wonderful job of keeping the meeting engaging, relevant, and on track. It was really nice to meet several people in person that I have only known via email and to see some folks again that I have not seen in a long time. We were also very thankful to be able to provide the meeting virtually to those who were unable to travel at this time.

Our afternoon and evening at Kerry Hill Winery were spectacular. From falconry and sheep herding to live music and wine tasting, there was something for everyone. It was a truly relaxing, enjoyable event. I love my job and working virtually really is a gift, but nothing beats being together in person. I am so glad we were able to do this event and we truly appreciate everyone's support. We look forward to many more!

**Continued from page 10**

Some of the additional thoughts shared by our attendees:

- ◇Always learning and takeaways that are applicable. Over the years the most valuable lessons and learning has come from these interactions with family members or responders sharing their true-life experiences with us.
- ◇Thank you for making the content/attendance available virtually, for those of us unable to travel. Although in person attendance is always preferable, it all worked great. Much appreciated.
- ◇I think it's good to receive an overall picture of the events and how different areas managed their part.
- ◇Learning from survivors and those on scene offering help has the most impact for those who have never dealt with these types of situations.
- ◇Very informative and enjoyable speakers. Even learned about sheep herding and a falconer which I never was aware of.
- ◇The conference was amazing and very informative, emotional and educational. Thank you.

We are so grateful for the feedback received and we value each answer. We appreciate every comment submitted by our attendees via surveys and we want our attendees to know we take all of them seriously in an effort to learn and plan our future meetings and events.

Thank you so much for joining us and we look forward to our next one!



**Rosangela Maxwell**

General Manager,  
Client Services - The  
Americas

## Rosangela Writes: Bringing Back Memories

For the 2021 Member-Partner Meeting I had the pleasure to work on interviews with the survivors from South America who were onboard a cruise ship when the pandemic started in March 2020. We interviewed two couples who were on Celebrity Cruise Lines and one crew member who was working on a sister ship.

Both couples had planned their cruises to celebrate birthdays and intended to stay away from their homes for two weeks. They had no idea they would be away for more than two months. When they were told they could not return home on their original return date, they became anxious as they were uncertain of what would happen to them. They quickly realized that the cruise line was communicating with local government and embassies, to help them return home--the future started looking bright again.

Their stories confirmed that treating people in crisis with sincere care and compassion makes an enormous difference in their lives. With my previous experience of working on cruise ships where I was often assigned to help families in crisis, I felt pride over how this cruise line 'got it right' for these guests.

When the guests shared examples of how the cruise line went above and beyond, to make their stay more comfortable, it brought back memories of the many times we had to make extra efforts to assist guests experiencing difficult times while onboard with us. It made me smile to hear how the crew onboard were 'holding their hands' and how 'they started becoming family'. As a former crew member, while I was accustomed to spending long-periods of time on board—I felt compassion for these guests whose plans did not include such a long-term stay on a cruise ship.

The part of the guests' experience that impressed me the most and made me emotional pertained to their feelings of sadness over saying goodbye to the ship's captain. I felt sad and cried when they described their difficulty in saying goodbye to the man who had taken such good care of them for 60 days. While they had longed to get home for nearly two months, the thought of now being on their own was frightening. They left the ship with feelings of gratitude mixed with anxiety.

Now, after almost two years, we know they are planning to take another cruise in 2022. It is amazing to me that they plan to take the same cruise line, as they feel that a special bond was created between them and Celebrity Cruise Lines.

We were honored that these survivors shared their stories with us and feel privileged to show their story to the leadership team of the cruise line. We will also use their videos for trainings programs as we know their stories can help others learn to 'do it right'.

At the Foundation, we have much to learn and much to share. Every story is precious, and we are forever grateful that these amazing guests decided to share their adventures with us. It is our promise to pass these stories along to many other people who can benefit from them.



















