



# GRIEF DOESN'T WAIT....

"Camp in a Backpack"

Banner Hospice Virtual Children's  
Bereavement Camp

September 2020



With funding through the Dottie Kissinger Children's Bereavement Camp fund, the Banner Foundation, and Banner employee "Better Together" contributions, Banner Hospice has offered in person bereavement camps at no cost to grieving children and their families for over 20 years.

Each child/teen would select a backpack the first evening and fill it with gifts and treasures throughout the rest of camp....







A backpack for each child and a re-useable shopping bag for each adult was packed full of supplies for the virtual camp!



To ensure proper safety precautions:

- Items were packed one week in advance by staff & volunteers wearing masks
- Backpacks and parent bags were sealed, and no items touched once packed

Our goal to adapt therapeutic activities done at camp to an online format in the Teams application produced a full schedule!

Friday September 25

6:30 – 8:00 PM          Opening Circle  
S'mores & sharing on your own!

Saturday September 26

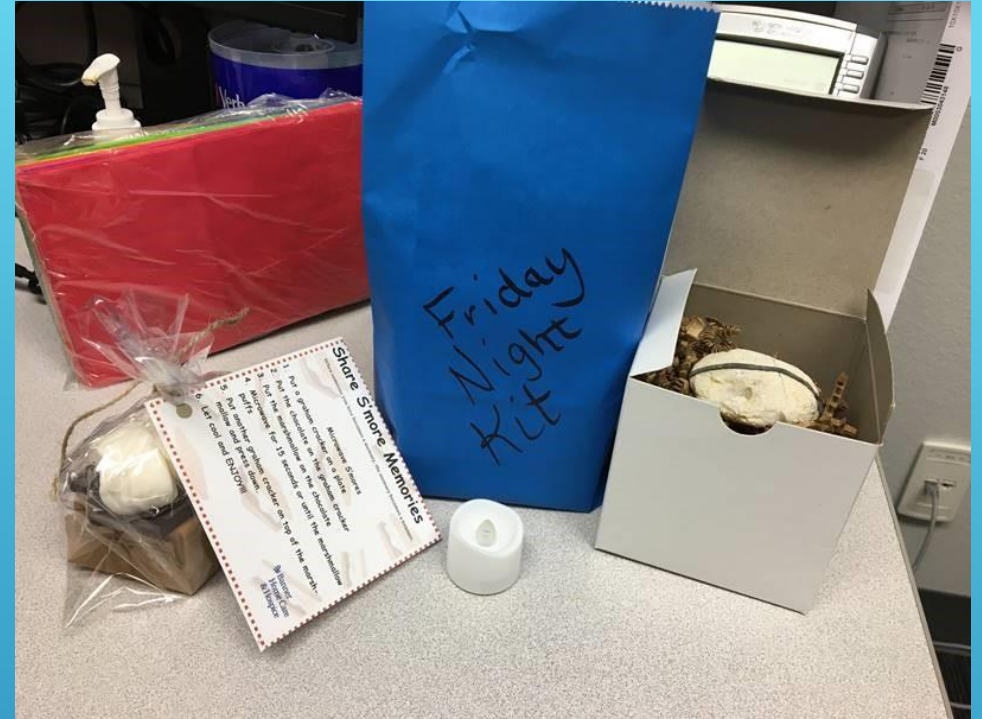
9:00 -10:00 AM	Create and share Memory Boxes
10:00 – 10:15 AM	BREAK
10:15 – 11:15 AM	Journaling and Grief Plan
11:15 – 12:30 PM	LUNCH – at home
12:30 – 1:30 PM	Songwriting and Music
1:30 – 1:45 PM	BREAK
1:45 – 2:30 PM	Breakthrough Activities ( mummy wrap & finish line
2:30 – 2:45 PM	BREAK
2:45 – 3:30 PM	Closing Circle





## Friday night program:

- Greeting
- Opening song
- Sharing circle
- Candle lighting
- Geodes – finding beauty in hard ugly places
- The Invisible String – book reading
- Closing song & candles





# Friday night powerful moment



Honoring loved ones with candles...



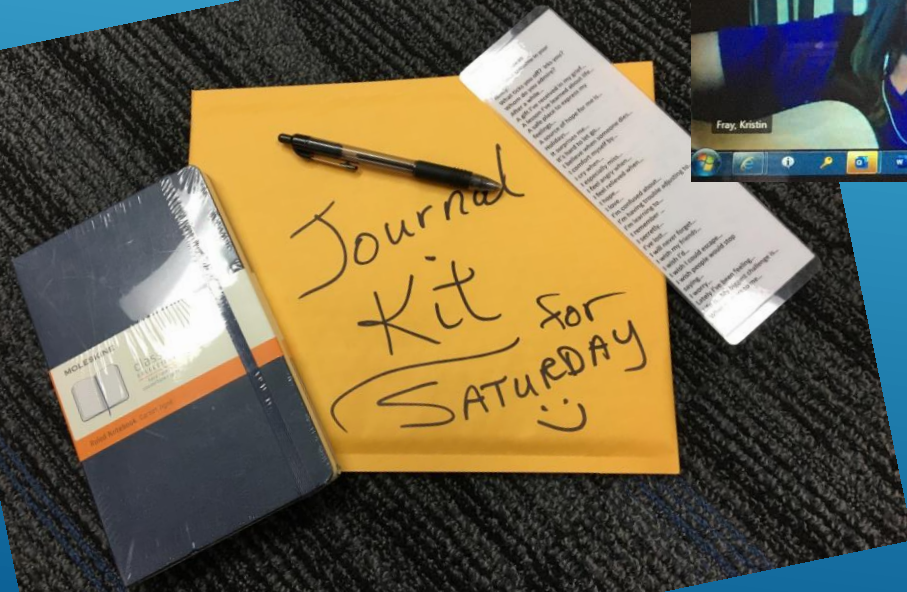
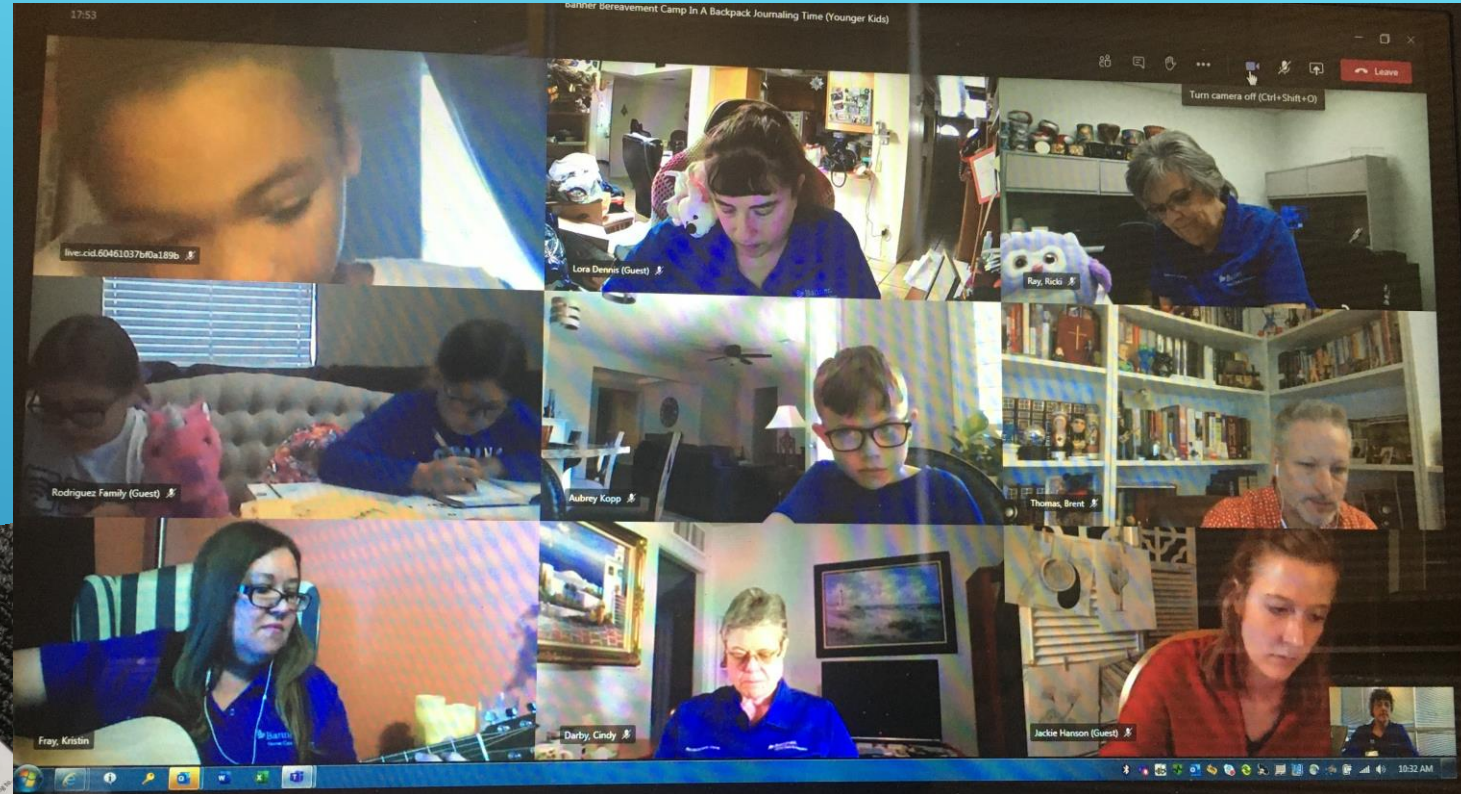
*“When you put it  
on a box, it  
becomes a happy  
memory.”* adult camper

Saturday morning – kids decorated a memory box and shared about their special person and some of the precious things they want to keep in the box....



# Journaling, myths, and creating a grief plan....

*"I love my fancy notebook!!!!" child camper*



## My Grief Plan

- When I feel sad, I can do these things to cope....
- I can talk to these people to help me feel better....
- I can think these thoughts.....
- Some ways I can take care of myself.....

## True or False?

- It is best to grieve alone.
- I need to be strong for others.
- I can replace the loss with someone or something else.



Every child received a musical instrument in their backpack to play and keep.



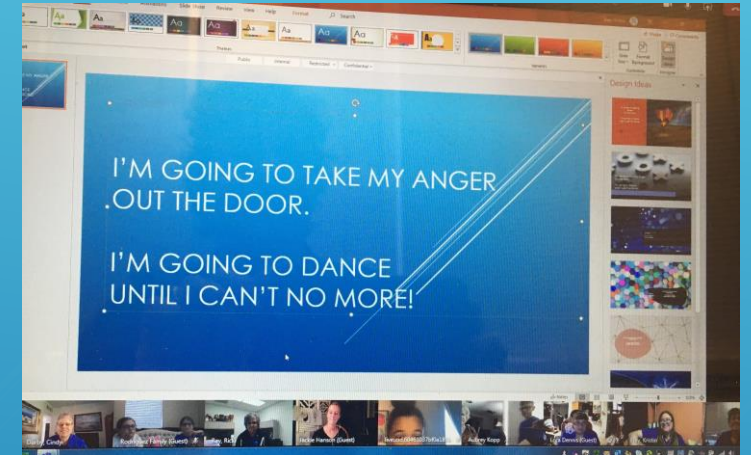
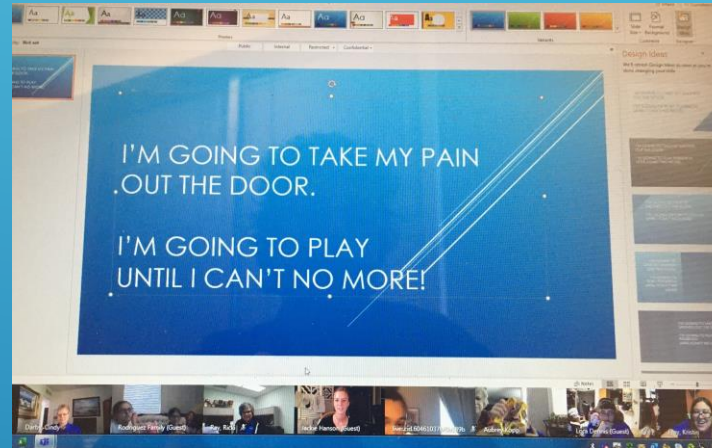
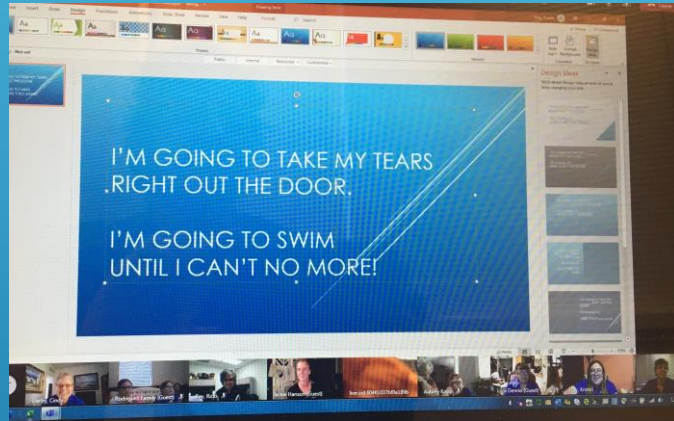
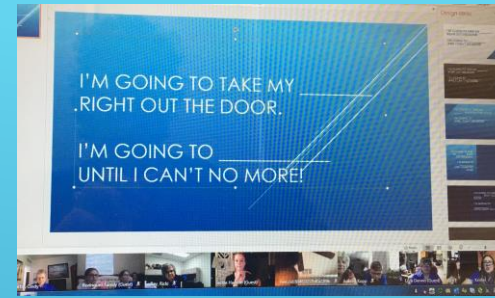
Fun music, dancing animals, LOTS of laughter!



# Music Therapy FUN!!!



Songwriting to the tune of “Old Town Road” with blanks filled in by campers....



# Music Therapy at it's best!

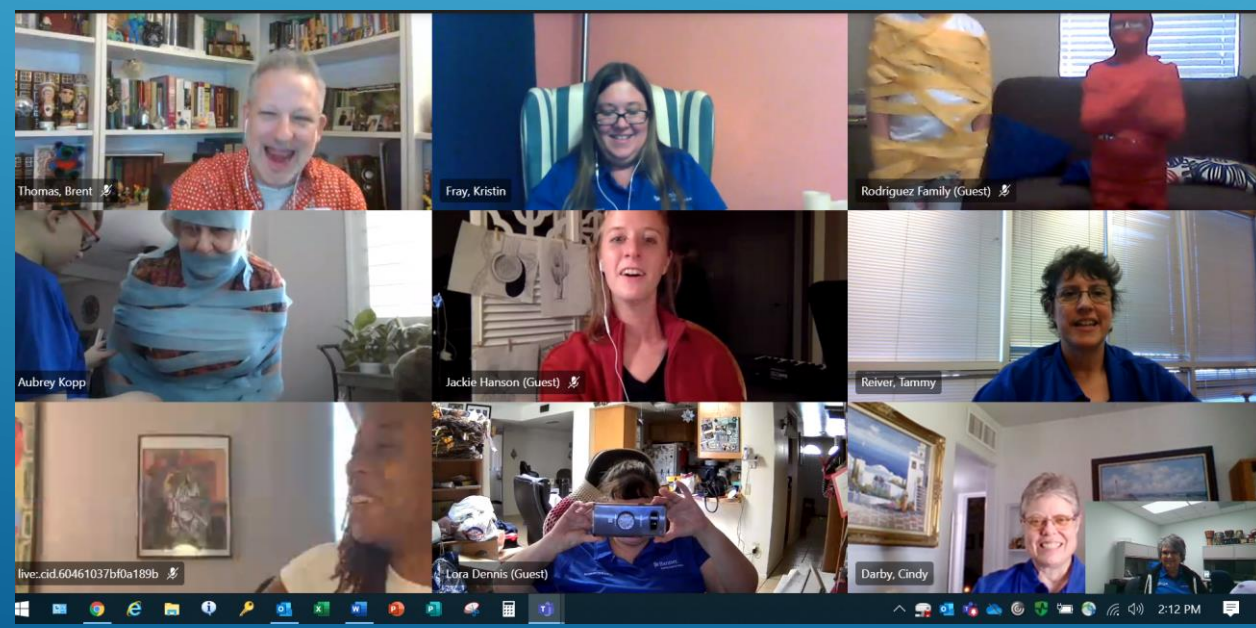
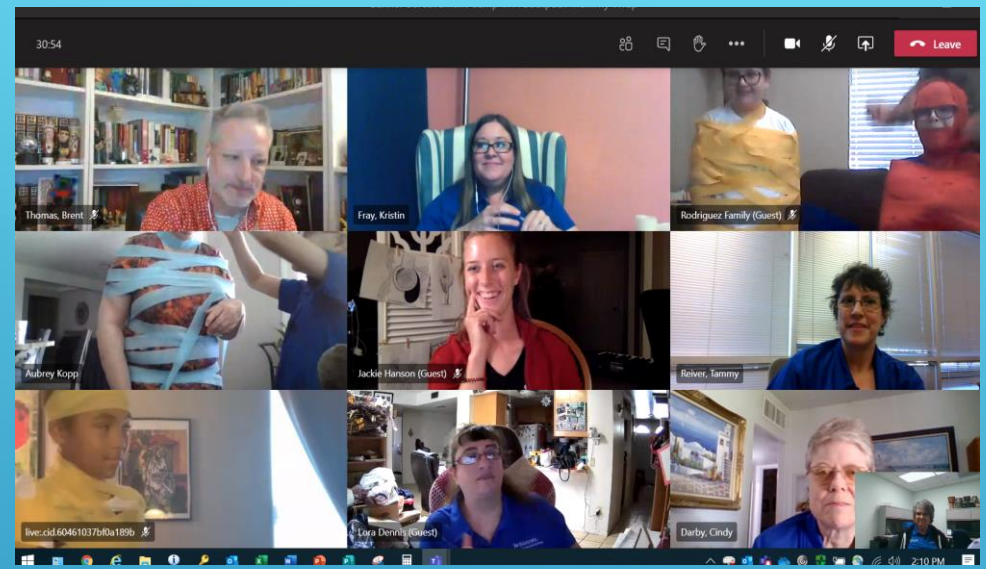
# BREAKING THROUGH GRIEF!!

Mummy Wrap – families wrap someone in streamers like a mummy and then that person “breaks out” of the confinement and tells what it feels like to get free!

The Finish Line – each child uses a 6-foot length of streamer and draws pictures or writes words, thoughts, things, they want to break through and leave behind at the end of camp. Adults hold the streamer, and the child runs through it to the finish line of the grief work done at camp!









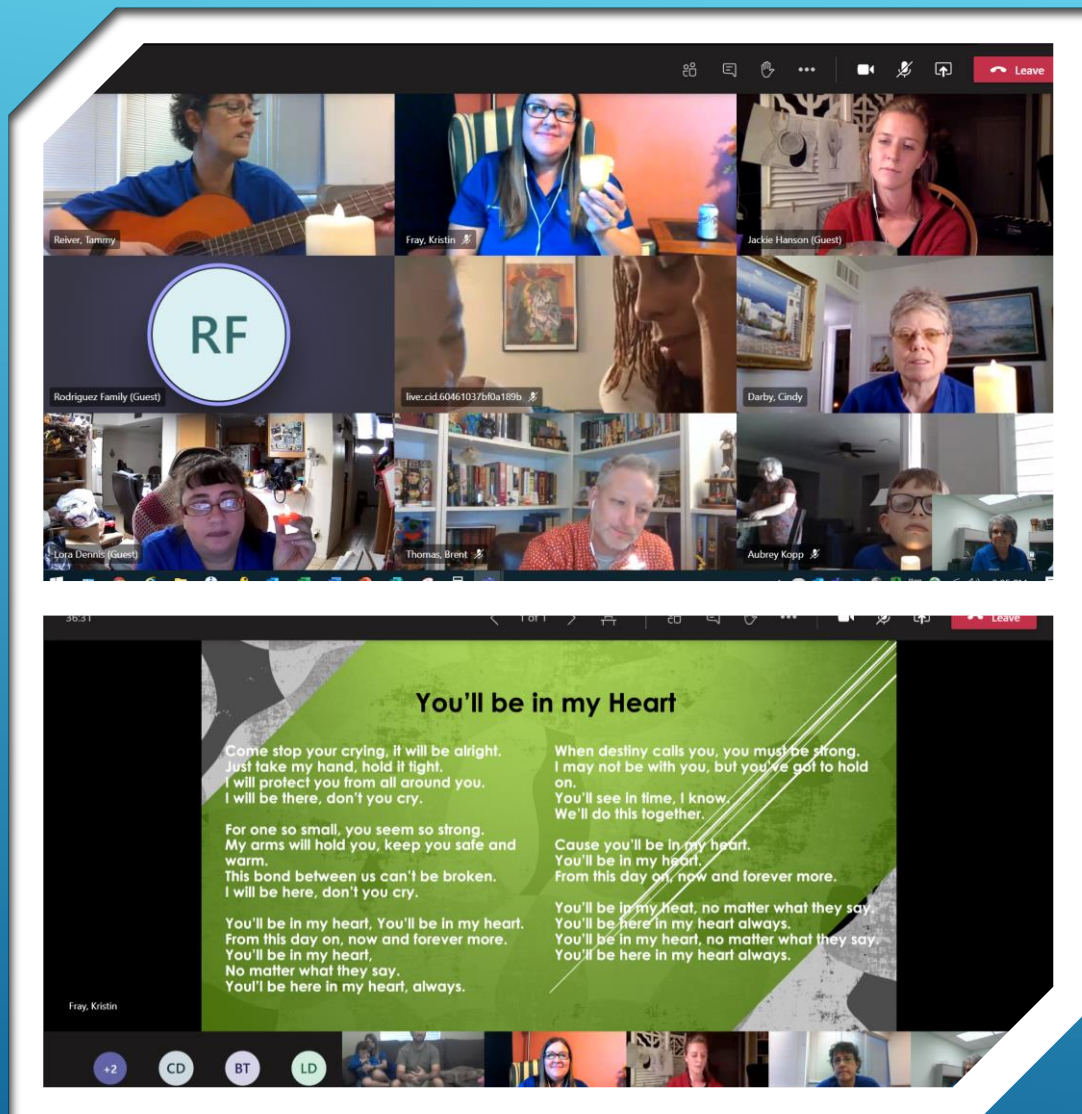


Banner Hospice Volunteers  
sewed masks and matching  
pillow slips for each child and  
helped staff prepare and  
pack the backpacks!

**OUR VOLUNTEERS  
ROCK!**



# CLOSING CIRCLE THE BEGINNING OF NEW FRIENDSHIPS



# GRIEF DOESN'T WAIT – SO WE DID SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

## What virtual Camp in a Backpack has meant in their words:

“This is very therapeutic.”- adult camper

“This is fun!” – child camper

“This makes me so happy.” – adult camper

“Thank you, I love it!” . . . (and). . . “Thank you guys!” . . . in reference to the volunteers who made pillowcases and masks for the campers. – child camper

“Thank you for letting me share my thoughts and feelings.” – child camper

“I am stronger; you taught me how to handle emotions.” – child camper

“I feel empowered to help (the children) work through their own emotions.” – adult camper

“ . . . knowing how to express emotions without getting frustrated.” – adult camper