

## A Note from the Foundation

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the Akula Foundation in 2015. On behalf of Dr. Shiva Akula, we would like to thank everyone, especially our sponsors for their material and financial support, as well as, those of you who have shown support through your volunteerism and by your generous donations. The Foundation has seen many changes this year, Paul Mathes, who started with the Foundation as our Director of Grants and later became the Akula Foundation Manager, and for several years was the public face of the Foundation, has left his Foundation family to provide personal health care to his own family. His guidance and input are missed. In his place, the Management Team, composed of Christopher, Lee and Laura are currently handling day-to-day operations.

The Akula Foundation's programs continue to grow because of each of you. We have made a positive difference in people's lives throughout the greater New Orleans area, the Northshore, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Baton Rouge, Lafayette and North Carolina. We have expanded programs and added some new ones. As we embark into 2016 we hope the Akula Foundation will have even a bigger impact on our communities. For more information on the Akula Foundation's programs, to volunteer, or to make a monetary donation, please call our new phone number at (504) 247-7818 or visit our website at [www.akulafoundation.com](http://www.akulafoundation.com). Again, thank you for your continued support, it truly is appreciated.

### Grief Support Groups

Lisa Suarez, M.Ed, LMFT  
Grief Support Group Facilitator

In my 10th year with Canon Hospice and the Akula Foundation, I feel continuously privileged for the opportunity to establish ongoing relationships with bereaved family members. These past years the Foundation has expanded services with additional Grief Support Groups. There are now 14 sessions per month in six locations, with groups that start as early as 11 a.m. to as late as 7:15 p.m., providing comfort for any adult going through grief and loss.

The establishment of so many groups made it necessary to expand our professional capacity as well, and I'd like to introduce our newest Facilitator, Daina Marshall, L.P.C., a Licensed Professional Counselor, who now leads several of the Groups.

Daina obtained a Masters of Arts in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at Xavier University after earning her Bachelor of

Arts and Science in Psychology, and a minor in Sociology, at Louisiana State University. She has a specialized certification in Multisystemic Therapy (MST). She also has training in Suicide Prevention, and Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

While working towards her Master's degree, Daina completed her internship at Canon Hospice, under my supervision. She was also a facilitator at Akula Foundation's weekend camp for bereaved children and adolescents, Camp Swan, teaching children how to utilize play and art as an alternate form of expression.

Grief in the group setting is a passion of Daina's and she stayed on with us as a substitute facilitator, until recently becoming a part of the Akula team! She is incredibly excited to be part of this team and continue on her journey working with the bereaved.

For times and locations of each of our support groups, please call (504) 818-2723.

## Fundraising

Christopher Guthrie,  
Fundraising Chair

In 2015, the Akula Foundation raised over \$28,000 through its two major fundraisers. In 2016 we hope to raise even more money for the foundation! Our 8<sup>th</sup> annual New Orleans fundraiser, A Night Out with the Akula Foundation, was our most successful fundraiser to date ever! We had over 150 attendees, and the event profited over \$24,000. The exciting evening consisted of music by New Orleans' band "NO IDEA," delicious food and libations. Guests also browsed a huge silent auction, with over 50 different auction packages to bid on. The silent auction consisted of donated items from the community, such as art, sports and theatre tickets,

hotel stays, restaurant gift certificates, etc. The event would not have been possible without the support of our great sponsors, silent auction donors, Mrs. Kitty Perre, Southport Hall, Nothing Bundt Cakes, foundation volunteers, Canon Hospice and all of our event attendees! We are currently in the process of planning our 9<sup>th</sup> annual New Orleans fundraiser. The event will be at Southport Hall on Friday, July 15, 2016. Guests will enjoy an evening of live music by Utria, libations, delicious food and a silent auction. Make plans to attend! Baton Rouge's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Akula Foundation Fundraiser held on August 21, 2015 at Mount Hope Plantation. This year's event was Baton Rouge's most successful, with over 50 guests and profiting almost \$4,000. Guests enjoyed the ambience of the plantation as they sipped wine,

browsed the fabulous silent auction and enjoyed music by local band, Utria. Celebrity guest, Danny Glover, also made an appearance at the event and mingled with guests and signed autographs. Special thanks to all of our event sponsors, silent auction donors, foundation volunteers, Utria and Dr. Rani Whitfield, Nothing Bundt Cakes, Celebrity Guest Danny Glover, Canon Hospice and all of our attendees! We look forward to the next fundraiser in Baton Rouge in 2016! We hope to see you there!

For information on our fundraisers, or if you would like to make a donation, please call Christopher Guthrie at (504) 881-0452 or (504) 818-2723. You may also visit our website at [www.akulafoundation.com](http://www.akulafoundation.com).



Dr. Akula and Team with Actor, Danny Glover at Baton Rouge's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Akula Foundation Fundraiser

## Reminiscence Therapy Outreach

Nationally known journalist, author, and workshop facilitator Robin A. Edgar offers reminiscence workshops for eldercare facilities and organizations such as Hospice and the Akula Foundation. Based on the sense memory techniques in her book, *In My Mother's Kitchen: An Introduction to the Healing Power of Reminiscence*, she demonstrates how to use reminiscence as an effective tool for long term care planning as well as to cope with loss or change due to illness such as Alzheimer's or the death of a loved one.

In addition to her workshops for professional, volunteer, and family caregivers, she facilitates love and forgiveness sessions based on her work with the Fetzner Institute's four-year Love & Forgiveness Campaign. That and her passion to help others tell their own stories led her to develop her TEDx Tryon talk, "Reminiscence: A Healing Pathway to Forgiveness" which encourages reflection on significant memories to help let go of old grudges and pain.

"The greatest challenge was to synthesize what I have learned from fifteen plus years of teaching reminiscence and

forgiveness into a 10-minute talk. I ultimately decided to focus on how reminiscence can be the pathway to forgiveness."

To view her TEDx talk, go to <https://goo.gl/Oxy3Tu>.

Edgar's other books include: *Personal Legacies: Surviving the Great Depression* and *Fantastic Recycled Plastic*. To learn more about Robin Edgar and her work, go to [www.robinedgar.com](http://www.robinedgar.com).



## The Canon Hospice Health Hour

Sue May, CHPLN, CHA, Radio Show Coordinator

The Canon Hospice Health Hour will be celebrating 10 years of radio programs in March 2016. The First Canon Hospice Health hour aired on March 11, 2006. We are very proud to be able to present this informative radio program, each week on WGSO 990 am from Noon-1 pm. To listen to the show just tune in live on Saturday or go to our Website <http://www.canonhospice.com/> for all of the archived shows.

## Grief Resource Center

Lee H. Matthews, PhD, Grief Resource Center Director

The Grief Resource Center (GRC) has had major expansions in our programs in 2015. Several of these will be covered in more detail in other parts of this newsletter, such as the Continuing Education program report. Our **Grief Support Groups**, which are free to the public, continue to be offered once or twice monthly at several different locations. In addition to Lisa Suarez, LMFT who has been involved for many years with the groups, we were joined this year by Daina Marshall, LPC, who also is providing groups. If you are interested in further information or are interested in attending one of these groups, please go to the Akula Foundation website at [www.akulafoundation.com](http://www.akulafoundation.com) where a complete listing of group dates and times may be found; or call the Akula Foundation Management Team at 504-247-7818. Our professional, caring staff is dedicated to providing comprehensive bereavement to all who participate.

The Grief Resource Center has also added a new program this year called **Legacy Moments**. This program was based on two experiences. The first was individuals attending the Reminiscence Groups talking about and bringing in personal keepsakes to show to the other group members. The second part was adopting the format from one of our Foundation's sponsors, Canon Hospice, which provides DVD and memorial books to all Canon patients and their families. We are currently embarking on developing a group of volunteers to help gather information so we can provide these services for a donation. This program will be available to individuals we serve in all of the Foundation programs. Materials to be included in such videos and printed materials may be pictures from the person's past, keepsakes of today or items such as awards or medals; or perhaps a collection of family recipes. We are hopeful that such a program can be fully in place early in 2015. Look for further developments to be added to the Akula Foundation website at [www.akulafoundation.com](http://www.akulafoundation.com).

### Grief Support Groups - New Orleans

The Villas at Woldenberg Dining Room	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month	3:00-4:00pm	Adult Support Group
Canon Hospice Family Room	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month	4:30-5:30 pm	Adult Support Group
Canon Hospice Family Room	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of the month	6:15-7:15 pm	Adult Support Group
West Jefferson Hospital Gretna Room	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month	5:30-6:30 pm	Adult Support Group
Touro Infirmary 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor Classroom	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month	7:15-8:15 pm	Adult Support Group
Ochsner-Baptist Uptown Krewe Room	1 <sup>st</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month	5:30-6:30 pm	Adult Support Group
Canon Hospice Family Room	1 <sup>st</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month	11:00- noon	Adult Support Group

## Camp Swan

Sue May, CHPLN, CHA, Camp Director

Camp Swan New Orleans took place on November 20, 21 and 22, 2015. Thirty one kids and a multitude of dedicated volunteers spent the weekend at Camp Living Waters in Loranger, LA. Camp Swan is a bereavement camp for children, ages 7-12 years old who have experienced the loss of someone significant in their lives. The children spent a weekend of healing with us and it is certain that they went home with their hearts a little lighter. The Akula Foundation would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all of the community volunteers who made this weekend possible. We look forward to camp in 2016!

Camp Swan on the Mississippi Gulf Coast will be held this Spring and Camp Swan in the Baton Rouge area will be held this Summer. For specific dates and additional information please call 504-818-2723 and ask for Sue May.



Camp Swan - Baton Rouge



Camp Swan - New Orleans



Camp Swan – Mississippi Gulf Coast

## Continuing Education

John Calderara, RN, CEU Director

Continuing Education- CEU Credit Workshops for Health Care Workforce: The workshops offered cover: Grief and Recovery; Anxiety Disorders, Diagnosis and Clinical Intervention; Palliative Care and Hospice; Ethical Issues; Depressive Disorders, Diagnosis and Clinical Intervention; Elder Abuse Issues; and Advanced Illness Management. A total of 28 CEU workshops were offered with over 1400 healthcare professionals attending the sessions.

## AIM Program

John Calderara, RN, AIM Director

Advanced Illness Management Program: The AIM program is an assistance outreach to family and patients which focuses on the health care management of chronic and complex illness. The program has cared for over 180 patients and is currently caring for 30 patients.

## The Akula Foundation 2015 Annual Report

The Akula Foundation had another successful year of growth in providing community programs to area communities at no cost. The Akula Foundation has continued to offer programs free to the community to address the problems of the lack of access and services in health and wellness. The Akula Foundation expanded its outreach and facilitated hundreds of volunteer hours in health outreach projects this year.

The foundation has the following programs:

**Hospice Care to Indigent Patients through Canon Hospice:** Over 30 patients received hospice care that did not have health care insurance benefits in our community representing over 1000 days of care and a monetary value of over \$120,000.

**Nursing Home Reminiscence Programs:** Reminiscence Therapy (RT) group sessions to improve social interaction are currently being offered in over 105 nursing homes and assisted living centers throughout the New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Lafayette, the Northshore, the Mississippi Gulf Coast, and North Carolina. On average, 1,300 nursing home residents participate in reminiscence groups per month for a total of 15,600 yearly. The Akula Foundation has continued to partner with the University of Louisiana Psychology Department in Lafayette in research projects on the efficacy of reminiscence outreach groups.

**Grief Support Groups for Adults:** the grief support groups offered in the greater New Orleans, Baton Rouge, Northshore, and Gulfport area are open to any family member, medical staff, or family caregiver that has experienced the death of a loved one or other significant loss. Over 22 groups were offered each month on a regular basis in hospitals and other public access locations.

**Continuing Education- CEU Credit Workshops for Health Care Workforce:** The workshops offered cover: Grief and Recovery; Anxiety Disorders, Diagnosis and Clinical Intervention; Palliative Care and Hospice; Ethical Issues; Depressive Disorders, Diagnosis and Clinical Intervention; Elder Abuse Issues; and Advanced Illness Management. A total of 28 CEU workshops were offered with over 1400 healthcare professionals attending the sessions.

**Advanced Illness Management Program:** The AIM program is an assistance outreach to family and patients which focuses on the health care management of chronic and complex illness. The program has cared for over 180 patients and is currently caring for 30 patients.

**Children's Bereavement Camps:** Camps are offered three times a year in New Orleans, Baton Rouge, and Gulfport. This year over 80 children, recovering from loss, attended Camp Swan.

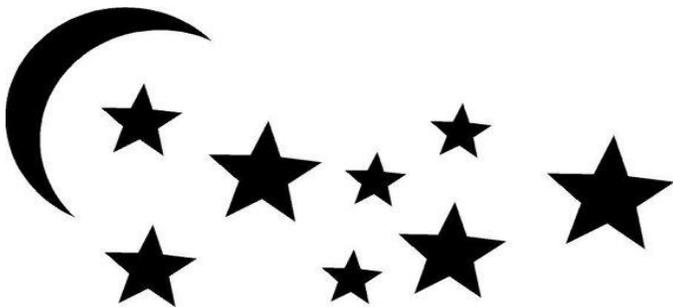
**Weekly Radio Broadcast of Health Care Issues Program:** The Canon Hospice Health Hour is broadcast every Saturday at 12:00 PM on WGSO 990 AM in New Orleans and A Healthy Conversation airs on the Mississippi Gulf Coast every Sunday morning at 7am on News Talk 104.9 FM. A total of 104 shows were broadcast for the year providing information on community health issues to serve the public.

**Legacy Moments:** The Legacy Moments Program was created in 2015. The program provides DVDs and memorial books to all Canon Hospice patients and their families. The patient's family and friends are encouraged to bring in photographs and stories about the patient that are then compiled into a commemorative DVD and book.

Our 501-C-3 non-profit organization relies on donations from the community and we ask that you consider us in your next tax deductible donations. For more information on the Akula Foundation, please call (504) 818-2723 or visit our website at [www.akulafoundation.com](http://www.akulafoundation.com).

## Save the Date!

### Akula Foundation 2016 Summer Fundraiser



Friday, July 15, 2016  
Southport Music Hall  
New Orleans, Louisiana

Visit

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

or call (504) 818-2723 for  
more information.

### Legacy Moments

Sheila Marriott

The Legacy Moments Program was created in 2015 with an idea from Dr. Akula and Sue May. The program provides free DVDs and memorial books to all Canon Hospice patients and their families. The patient's family and friends are encouraged to bring in photographs and stories about the patient that are then compiled into a commemorative DVD and book. The DVDs and books are available at all four of our Canon Hospice locations for our patients. We have had wonderful feedback from the families. Many have said that viewing the DVDs and looking through the book helps them with healing from the loss of their loved one.

Please contact Sheila Marriott at [paletmusique@yahoo.com](mailto:paletmusique@yahoo.com) for Canon Hospice New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Mississippi and Jerry Pesses at [jerryesses@yahoo.com](mailto:jerryesses@yahoo.com) for Canon Hospice Northshore.

CANON  
HOSPICE  
*Making Every Moment Meaningful* 

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Winter/Spring 2016