



Tunnel to Towers Foundation
T2T.ORG

ABOUT TIME

SUMMER 2022

Nancy Gass (*Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient*)



It is no accident that the Tunnel to Towers Foundation's events involve fitness. Whether it is our *NYC Run and Walk* or a locally organized *Run, Walk, or Climb* almost all of our gatherings include fitness or movement. It really never is about winning or losing, or running as fast as you can. It is about moving forward together as a community with those we love and care for and helping each other cross the finish line.

Nancy Gass
Surviving Spouse of US Army SSG Jerry Gass
Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient



Nancy Gass (Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient)



"There is NEVER enough time." Ugh, I hate that saying. Yet, I find myself saying it all the time. It's dangerous. Words are powerful – words become truth. What if instead of saying that very overused phrase, I instead say, "There is all the time in the world"? Someone very wise suggested this to me and it has been running on a loop in my brain ever since. It is true. When I say "I am so busy and there is never enough time", that is EXACTLY how I feel.

In reality though, we live in a world with more tools and technology that create an efficiency like never before. We have the same 24 hours in a day that we ALWAYS have every single day. No matter who you are in this world, from the President of our country to the everyday workers who actually make the country run, whether you have ten kids or none – we all have the same amount of time every day.

This summer as my kids are getting older I want time to slow down. I want life to slow down, and I want us to stop and sip the lemonade. I want to soak up watching them swim in my friend's pool. I want to take them to the movies. I want to sleep in and stay up late counting the stars. I want to feel it all.

Here is what I do NOT want: I do NOT want another summer to go by where I avoid being emotionally present because I miss my husband so badly and it is not the same without him. I do not want to stay glued to my to-do list or my phone and overwork because it is easier to stay busy than to feel his absence in my presence. I want to stop and smell the roses. I want to feel alive again.

Some of you are MUCH better at doing this than I am. I admire you. I think about you every day and how beautiful you are with your kids, how beautiful it is that they have you, and the ways that you spend your days. If this is you, then *thank God* for you. If you struggle like me then I pray we all can take a step back from whatever obligations are in front of us and just be; whether it is sitting on the porch swing, clocking out of work on time, cooking dinner together as a family, or sitting on the grass soaking up the sun.

Our CEO Frank Siller once said to me, "Nancy, we gave you a mortgage-free home because we want you to have TIME with your children." If there is one thing Tunnel to Towers wishes for all of us, it is family time. Quality time. Summer time.

I wish each of you the BEST summer ever!

Nancy Gass
Surviving Spouse of US Army SSG Jerry Gass
Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient



Mecca Nelson (Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient)

What do you think about when I say “About Time?” Let that simmer on your mind for a minute – haha! Well it’s *about time* you take the time to add some fun into your life. Yeah yeah, I know it’s easier said than done. Just because life is not the way you planned it to be does not mean you can’t enjoy it to the fullest. Here we go again with that word COMPASSION. Give yourself compassion and let it move you to be active. Like the famous song from Disney’s Madagascar says “I like to move it, move it!”

It’s about time to incorporate movement in your life. It will allow you to achieve your heart’s desires, connect with the self, connect with your children, family and friends. This will allow you to connect to every aspect of your life as you maneuver and explore what life has to offer. This happens when you incorporate movement— movement comes into play in many aspects of life. For example it can be taking a fitness class, a yoga class, running around a park with your children, riding bikes, and playing handball with friends or family (just to name a few.) I bet that sounds so amazing and fun, right? I dare you to try it—oh yeah!

Movement does not need to be intense and it can be slow paced or seated. This includes movement like coloring, drawing, painting, working out while sitting in a chair and yoga. Believe it or not, everything that you do can be done while you are seated. You have to be the one to make the best of it.

Recite this Prayer Mantra while you are in movement:

I give myself compassion to add movement into my life. I am working with integrity because I am amazing.

Words to remember while you are in movement:

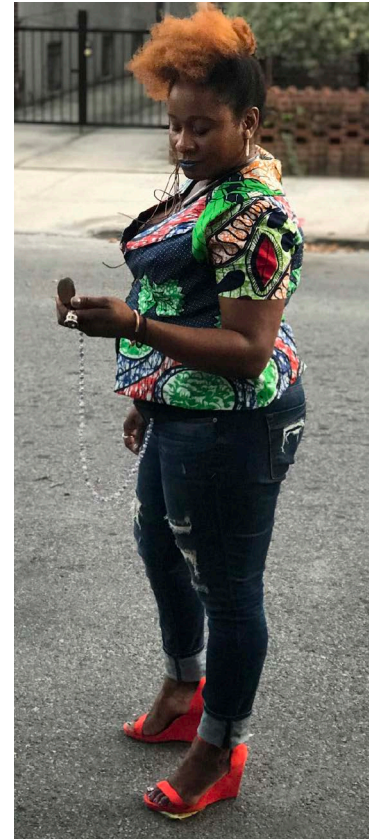
Self-love, Self-care, Fulfillment, Happiness, Modification, Connection

Don’t worry – modifications are good and you are still incorporating movement with integrity. I dare you to try it – oh yeah!

The many benefits of movements include the release of *feel good* neurotransmitters like norepinephrine, dopamine, serotonin and acetylcholine into the brain which decreases feelings of anxiety and depression. Movement helps maintain and improve the mind, body, spirit and health. It helps to rebuild your brain’s structure.

Catch this – experiencing trauma is no joke! Understanding how movement can help release and decrease what needs to be expelled to build a better brain structure. This is especially important after experiencing a trauma. I say go for it! It never hurts to make an attempt at bettering yourself. This all comes back to self-care and self-love – so go show yourself some love!

Mecca Nelson
Surviving Spouse of US Army SGT Mario Nelson
Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient



FITNESS
ISN'T ABOUT THE
PUSHUPS,
SIT-UPS,
AND MILES RUN.
IT'S ABOUT TAKING YOUR
POWER
BACK.

Rick Yarosh *(Smart Home Program Recipient)*

Summer – my favorite season! There isn't much that I don't love about summer. People might think I would have issues with the heat because of my burns, which I do, but even if I struggle to do something I love having the opportunity to be able to watch my family do those same things!

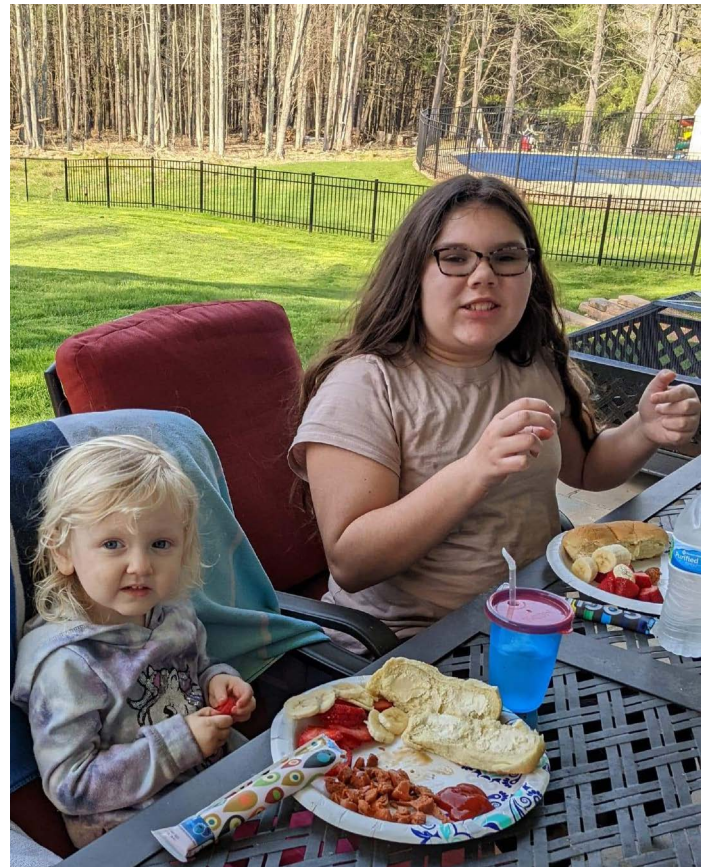
Summer breathes freedom. My wife, Amy, and I love watching our 2 girls play in the sun. Our 2-year-old daughter, Grace, loves running through the amazingly green grass in our yard. Our 10-year-old, Tenley, loves to swim and this summer we will be fortunate enough to add a pool to our yard. We are blessed all year long, but summer just feels like the time when we get the most blessings.

This summer I am looking forward to hiking different parts of New York State. I struggle with fitness, but with the amazing summer weather in NY combined with my love of nature, hiking will be a perfect way to build my health. Getting as many hikes in as I can this summer will help me to reach my goal for next summer – hiking the 94 miles of The Appalachian Trail in NY.

My 2nd favorite holiday (behind Thanksgiving) is Independence Day, which is a big reason why we can take those summer breaths of freedom. Celebrating on the 4th of July with my family makes me think a little deeper into how lucky I truly am to be a citizen and contributor in our country the United States of America.

This summer I will continue to be grateful for so many things, including you all.

Rick Yarosh
US Army SGT
Smart Home Program Recipient

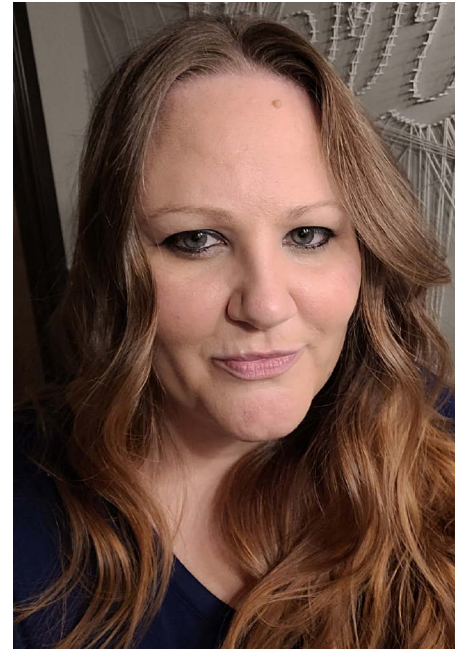


Tiffany Burgess (Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient)

"About Time", those two words with the right punctuation can have vastly different meanings and emotions attached to them, especially when talking about grief and loss.

"About time?" can have confusion, anger and hurt attached to it when someone says it to you. Like you are finally arriving at a level of "OK" that makes them feel more comfortable. Confusion can be attached when you aren't certain why someone else feels like you have to do things in their time and not your own.

"About time..." can have hope or incomprehension attached to the phrase. Feeling lost in your journey is not uncommon or unexpected. About time for what? What now? "About time!" could have a multitude of emotions attached. Spoken to you and from you it holds a lot of passion behind the statement. How these words are said matter, and we should own the words that we speak. Know that they hold power and emotions at any given time. It's about time we own our words.



Tiffany Burgess
Surviving Spouse of US Army SSG Bryan Allen Burgess
Gold Star Family Home Program Recipient



Alisa-Ann Whiteman *(Fallen First Responder Home Program Recipient)*

Deputy Whiteman Inclusive Academy's mission is to provide cognitive learning strategies with specially designed instruction according to our successor's individual education plan. Successors will flourish in an inspirational therapeutic environment with positive affirmations and growth mindset where they can discover their full potential for successful outcomes.



Vision

Deputy Sheldon G. Whiteman Inclusive Academy was inspired by my husband, Sheldon Whiteman who went to Glory in the line of duty, on January 23, 2020. Deputy Whiteman's passion was serving people and the community. His vision allows his legacy to live on by serving and providing peace, love, and inspiration in the community. My husband and I are blessed with 3 boys. Our eldest is our beloved with special needs whom we learned to love, be patient with, and support. Together, we built a strong tower for him and our other two boys. As a teacher in the special education classroom, my husband supported my ministry, and his vision was for us to share our knowledge, experience, and love to others in the community. Our academy is in honor of his strength, trust, and love for God and people and fulfilling the vision for our family and the community. As a parent with a child with special needs, his vision was to impact children's lives by providing healing through education. He believed that all things are possible through Christ and that all children can learn with the belief and faith of Christ ambassadors serving them. He served the community with the love of the Lord. DWIA is a continuation of his passion and ministry in serving God and the community.



Led by God

My name is Alisa-Ann Whiteman, I am the widow of Deputy Sheldon Whiteman. I am the owner and founder of Deputy Sheldon G. Whiteman Inclusive Academy. I am thankful to God for blessing me in the ministry of teaching children with individual needs. I served in the United States Army for 8 years in the office of Human Resources. On my retirement from the Army in 2013, I graduated with a dual master's degree in Human Resources Management and Management and Leadership. Then, the Lord ordered my steps to obtain a Master's in Special Education and I graduated in the year 2015. I began my ministry as a co-teacher in the general education classroom with resource support. Then, my God ordered my steps to serve in the self-contained special education classroom to provide specially designed instruction aligned with their individual educational plan. I was presented with the Teacher of the Year Award for McClelland Elementary School and presented with the Teacher of the Year for the District of Long County Schools. I am currently enrolling to start my PHD in Developmental Psychology.

Alisa-Ann Whiteman *(Fallen First Responder Home Program Recipient)*

Our Core Values

I believe in the power of prayer and allowing God to lead my path. I've also studied the brain and the growth mindset versus fixed mindset. When children are taught to embrace the power of yet and embrace their individual ability, they walk in the spirit of excellence and flourish. I believe and value that all children can learn with specially designed instruction consisting of appropriate goals and objectives, accommodations, and modification with the support of parents and teachers.

Alisa-Ann Whiteman
Surviving Spouse of Deputy Sheldon G. Whiteman
Fallen First Responder Home Program Recipient



Positive Affirmations

I am enough

I am loved

I am kind

I am strong

I can persevere

I can be a friend

I can do hard things

I can give my best

I am a conqueror

I am a child of God

I am brave

I can do all things

I will never give up

I can show what I know

I can correct my mistakes

I can share my victories

I can embrace the power of yet