

Camp Widow Gears Up for Year Number Six

Written by Australian Business



Camp Widow 2013 - Group Shot

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10, 2014 - For the last five years Laura Altobelli-Anderson has been going to camp, and this year will be no exception. On the morning of July 11 she will once again get in her car and make the three hour drive from Moorpark, California to San Diego for what will be her sixth Camp Widow®. She fondly remembers her first camp; signing up online, arriving and feeling scared to death, but yet excited and thinking is this for real?

Camp Widow® is for real ... and this unique weekend long conference has impacted thousands of widowed people like Laura from across the country and the world; providing them with a place to gather, to hope, to be uplifted, and most importantly an atmosphere where laughter and fun is not only okay, but encouraged. Hosted by the non-profit organization Soaring Spirits International, a resource for the widowed community; this year's Camp Widow® is scheduled for July 11 – 13 at the San Diego Marriot Hotel and Marina. "I can't believe we're celebrating six years. I am so grateful that this program continues to address the on-going needs of the widowed community. This year we have widowed people coming from as far as Australia to attend," said Michele Neff Hernandez, creator of Camp Widow®.

Camp Widow® is the only such program of its kind in the country and it is unique in that it is all inclusive and covers every aspect of widowhood, from the newly widowed and the widowed not legally married, to LGBT widowed to the parents of widowed children and more. Campers walk away from this two-day workshop with practical tools, valuable resources, and peer-based encouragement to help them rebuild their lives following the death of their spouse or life partner. "Camp Widow® provides resources for the entire arc of the widowed experience in a positive, forward thinking atmosphere. We pack a lot of information, camaraderie, and hope into three short days." said Ms. Neff Hernandez.

Two very special round table discussions are planned for this year's event – 1) My Child Never Met Their Mom or Dad and 2) Parents of Children Who are Widowed. The lineup of speakers continue to get better and better every year, and two highly notable authors on tap to speak are Christina Rassmussen, author of Second Firsts and founder of the organization Life Starters, which helps people create a path back to life after loss; and Anders Nilsen, winner of the 2012 Lynd Ward Graphic Novel prize, and author of Don't Go Where I Can't Follow. Mr. Nilen's graphic art has been shown Internationally.

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Some other highlights - back by popular demand is the Widow Flash Mob and the Widow Dash 5K; and new this year is the Balloon Release Ceremony; attendees can write messages to their loved one on a balloon (no strings and no plastic) and release into the atmosphere; this will take place on the Harbor across from the hotel.

Registration for Camp Widow® is available online at www.campwidow.org , click on the registration tab. The cost for the event is \$375, which covers workshops, the Welcome Reception, access to the event bookstore, one ticket for the Soaring Spirits International Formal Awards Banquet, one ticket to the Farewell Breakfast and entry into the Widow Dash 5K Run.

Laura became a widow in her 30s and she says Camp Widow® saved her life. And, even though she is remarried she keeps coming back to Camp every year because it's a community full of support and hope. She's not alone – there's Matt from Los Angeles and Sandi from Anaheim – who like Laura come back every year. For more information about Camp Widow® visit the website at www.campwidow.org .

About Soaring Spirits International: Soaring Spirits International (SSI) - formerly known as Soaring Spirits Loss Foundation; was established in May of 2008 to provide a unique peer-based support community for widowed people around the world. Up to now, this segment of the bereaved community has been underserved and often overlooked. SSI aims to change that by leveraging a social-media-based infrastructure with key programs designed to inspire, inform, comfort, and provide practical help for the bereaved. For more information about SSI visit the website at www.sslf.org .