

Celebration of Hannah's Life  
Saturday April 7, 2012 ~ 6:00 PM  
Burke Museum ~ University of Washington Campus  
Notes from Planning Meeting ~ Allyson & Greg McNutt

Order of Service

**Music – CD (Compiled by Allyson) played on Burke Museum sound system**

**Johnny Bregar – Fields of Gold**

**Char - Welcome & Introduction**

Thank you Johnny. Welcome and thank you for being here on this sun filled day to celebrate the life of Hannah Vail McNutt, daughter of Allyson Brown & Greg McNutt, little sister to Wesley McNutt, granddaughter to Anne & Greg Brown and Marilyn McNutt, niece and cousin to many aunts, uncles and cousins. I'm Char Barrett, Celebrant for our gathering and Celebration of Hannah's Life. Allyson and Greg have asked me to help tell Hannah's story, through the many voices you will hear today. It is my sincere honor to do so.

We are here to celebrate Hannah's life – her short sixteen months has had an impact that will last a lifetime for all gathered here today. Hannah touched lives without words. Her ripple was more like a wave. This is a gathering for Hannah's family, for the many families that have supported the McNutt family and this celebration is for the providers who gave their skill, knowledge, compassion and love for this little baby girl and her family.

You may be wondering... why here – at the Burke Museum – as the place to celebrate Hannah's life? Well, its one of Wes' favorite places and he knows it would have been one of Hannah's favorites too. This is a kid's place, to explore, to learn and create fun family memories together. It a place you hear the sounds of children's laughter. It's also a place to remind parents of what it's like to be child again, looking with child like wonder at all this wonderful museum has to explore. And, it's a place for parents to hold their children close and reconnect to what is important in life. So hold your children close, celebrate being parents, grandparents, or being someone special in a child's life and most of all - let's celebrate Hannah's life!

A quick note as we begin our celebration, parents with little ones, if you need to get up during our gathering time, feel free to do so, as there are many areas to take a break, if needed. Our program will be on speakers throughout the museum, so you won't miss what is being said if you need to slip away. Family restrooms are available on this level through this archway and additional restrooms are available down the stairs to my right. If you need wheelchair or stroller access to the downstairs restrooms, please find a museum staff member.

At this time I would like to introduce Janet Smith, loving and affectionately known as Auntie Gigi by the children, who will be representing Allyson, Greg and Wes McNutt and Hannah's entire family. Auntie Gigi will share with us about Hannah's entry into the world.

As Janet comes forward, I'd like to briefly mention about whom you will not hear from today – Hannah's ever loving and attentive parents Allyson and Greg. Many of you have experienced Allyson's voice of strength so beautifully spoken in her blog, [Riding the Wave](#), and know of her ability to speak eloquently and honestly of she, Greg and Wes' journey. However, today is a day for all of them to receive. These loving parents, who have given so much of themselves to their baby girl Hannah and beautiful son Wes, need to feel our support throughout our celebration. They are choosing to receive today, riding the wave, being present to "what is" as they live the lessons Hannah has taught them. Janet...

### **Auntie Gigi (Janet Smith) – Hannah's birth and entry into the world**

#### **Char - Introduction of Johnny Bregar**

Thank you Janet. Next I'd like to invite forward gifted children's musician and friend of the McNutt family, Johnny Bregar from Bainbridge Island who will be sharing with us an Irish lullaby.

#### **Johnny Bregar – Tura Lura**

#### **Char – Introduction of Drs. Clark, Lo and McDaniel and Lyn Kratz, reflecting on Hannah's life**

Thank you Johnny.

Before I introduce our next speakers I'd like to briefly share a few thoughts expressed both by Allyson and Greg, as well as excerpts from Hannah's CaringBridge site about the life of Hannah McNutt.

PAUSE

Hannah's life - her role / her mission / her lasting legacy we may never fully understand. But one thing is for sure; this very special child was loved and cared for by a very unique family. A family that came together vs. coming apart after countless trips to Children's Hospital (including four by airlift), relocating their home from Bainbridge Island to Seattle to be closer to Children's, creating a virtual ICU in their home to care for Hannah's endless seizures "or spells" as Allyson and Greg began to refer to them. This child could not have been in more capable and loving parents hands and hearts.

And while Allyson and Greg needed to focus so much of their time, attention and love toward Hannah, they also needed to give that same time, attention and love to their son Wes. There is no question it would have not been possible without the constant care and support from Allyson & Greg's families and especially Grandma Marilyn's support of Wes. As Allyson and Greg have shared, "Grandma Marilyn kept us on track and kept Wes whole". What an incredible testament to a grandparent, to contribute in such a selfless way to the wholeness of her grandson. Through Grandma Marilyn's love and encouragement, Wes evolved as an artist to express himself as he journeyed through life with his mother, father and little baby sister Hannah.

And Hannah's gift to her parents, brother and all who have known her, was bringing something to their lives they never would have thought they needed or wanted. As Allyson has written previously of Hannah, "She has the wonderful ability to keep us focused on right now – today – this moment. It benefits not only our relationship with her, but also our interactions with the world. We listen differently, watch more intently, focus on small things, let ourselves change course. Each day, we have to let go (some days just a little, other days a whole lot) and be present for where life takes us."

Allyson continues, "We have been humbled by the lessons Hannah has taught us. She is a fighter, she is silly, and she is stronger than any child we have ever known. But most of all, she is a teacher. Her capacity to teach those core, underlying things of what it means to be human, will last forever.

They never asked for miracles for Hannah. Hannah had a plan, and orchestrated their lives from the beginning. They simply followed her lead.

Allyson and Greg have truly lived these words, "We must be willing to let go of the life we have planned, so as to have the life that is waiting for us."

PAUSE

It is now my honor to introduce Dr. Jonna Clark, Hannah's– Intensive Care Unit doctor, Dr. Mark Lo, Hannah's – Emergency Room doctor and Dr. Sharon McDaniel, Hannah's neurologist – these doctors witnessed Hannah's short 16 months of life and in doing so have discovered a new way to view and practice medicine. They will be joined by Lyn Kratz, a social worker at Children's family resource center who will be reading a statement by Dr. Alexa Craig who was part of Hannah's neurology care team. Hannah continues to have an impact – a ripple effect or some may call it a wave - on all of these medical providers.

**Drs. Clark, Lo, McDaniel and Lyn Kratz – Hannah's life and legacy**

**Char - Acknowledge support of caring community –stand to be recognized**

Thank you Drs. Clark, Lo, McDaniel and Craig and along with Lyn Kratz. We wish there was enough time to hear from all the providers and caregivers who have supported Hannah during her lifetime. We would, however, like to acknowledge all of those providers who are with us today that cared for Hannah over the course of her life. Would all of you who have been providers and care givers for Hannah, please stand? We would like to give you a round of applause to acknowledge your collective effort, care and compassion for this amazing child and her family.

### **All providers and caregivers stand to be recognized**

#### **Char - Introduction of Heather from Stepping Stones of Hannah's passing**

Thank you Johnny. We will now hear reflections of Hannah's passing from Heather Sessions, social worker with Providence Hospice Pediatric Stepping Stones program, who journeyed with the McNutt family through Hannah's passing.

#### **Char – Introduction of Johnny Bregar to sing Annie's Song**

Thank you Heather. As we begin to conclude our gathering Johnny will once again share his musical gifts with Annie's Song. "Annie's Song" by John Denver was always special to Allyson and Hannah. Allyson began singing it to Hannah hours after her birth, and ever since, it has been Hannah's (also fondly called Hannie) song. We'll have Johnny sing through the entire song one time, then we'd like to invite everyone to sing along with Johnny one more time from start to finish (the words are printed on the back of your program).

#### **Johnny Bregar – Annie's Song – (Guests to sing along during second time through)**

#### **Char - Closing words**

Thank you once again Johnny as you remind us, through the words of Annie's Song, to celebrate all the places in nature we will look to find Hannah. Thank you.

PAUSE

As we conclude our celebration, I would like to ask for your consideration of these thoughts in the days ahead.

Lending support at this time of great grief seems to come naturally from those who care so deeply for this family, however, please remember that grief comes in seasons. So remember Allyson, Greg and Wes in the days and months ahead.

Especially in this first year following Hannah's passing around the holidays and on those very significant days, like next month on May 13<sup>th</sup>, Mother's Day, the following month, June 17<sup>th</sup>, Father's Day, and again on November 4<sup>th</sup>, Hannah's birthday, throughout the holidays and again next March 21<sup>st</sup>, the anniversary of Hannah's passing. It's on those days that the McNutt family will need and appreciate your support the most. Thank you for your consideration.

**Now is the time to enjoy each other, the children and the Burke Museum** – We have access to the entire museum for the next hour. The family will be here until 8:00 PM, so please take that time to visit, sharing your love and support for them.

**Memorial Benches** –

I would also like to mention a word or two about Hannah's Memorial Benches. Discovery Park in Seattle and Rockaway Beach Park on Bainbridge Island overlooking the waters of Puget Sound, in both directions, will be the site of two memorial benches honoring Hannah's life. It is here, bridging where Hannah lived her life between Bainbridge Island and Seattle, where people will be able to sit and reflect, to be present, accepting what is, and to be grateful. Contributions are being accepted toward the donation of these benches in both parks at the donation box on the Gift Shop counter directly behind you here in the Lobby.

**Hannah's Memory Book** –

Also, I would invite everyone, adults and children to participate in creating Hannah's Memory Book. You will find memory book supplies in the Burke Room to my right, as well as at stations throughout the museum. Please take a moment to recall a memory, write a note to the family, draw a picture or simply write your name on slips of paper to be included in Hannah's Memory Book. This will mean so much to the family to remember you were here to honor Hannah's life and legacy.

**Sharing your Memories** –

Additionally, another way to give to Hannah's family tonight, is to share a story, memory or thought on video. Jim our videographer will be with us for the next hour capturing our celebration, for Hannah's family to remember and reflect on in the future, so feel free to reach out to Jim and share your memories.

**Cupcake Royale** –

Also, please feel free to enjoy Cupcake Royale's Baby Cakes, juice for the children and coffee and tea for the adults available in the Burke Room to my right. Allyson and Greg want to express a special thank you to Jodi Hall, owner of Cupcake Royale and friend of the family, for providing the Baby Cakes we will all be enjoying. While you are in the Burke Room please be sure to enjoy a slide show of Hannah's life and the special artwork created for Hannah by her big brother Wes and his classmates. We ask that you please keep food and drink only in the Burke Room and Lobby Areas of the Museum.

**Basket of Bubbles** –

Finally, upon departing, please take a bottle of bubbles with you outside to blow bubbles to Hannah as you make-a-wish and remember her.

The family is so grateful to find Hannah in nature, a sunset, a rain cloud, or the ripple of water, or wave, on the Sound – they will see her everywhere they look.

Thank you for being here, this concludes our service. After a final song by Johnny, please enjoy the time to visit. Here Comes the Sun!

**Johnny Bregar – Here Comes the Sun**