

CORA MARIE O'LEARY—PAWTUCKET, RHODE ISLAND

Cora Marie O'Leary was born on October 5, 1994. She was her parents second child and first daughter. Growing up, Cora was so fun. She was spunky and never wanted to be like the "in" crowd; she danced to her own beat. We knew early on she would be special. Cora learned the love of reading, along with her brother, as I read to them every night before bed. Her love of reading became something very special between her and I. One of my favorite memories is when we went to one of Jodi Picoult's readings, met her, and got her autograph. Cora would barely study or do homework, yet still aced tests and classes.

Cora was 16 the first time she tried heroin. Cora started to seclude herself from everyone and everything, well before she even dropped out of school. She then attempted suicide in her high school's gym locker room with her best friend. From that point on, the bullying started. People made fun of her for trying to take her life and as a result she started to self harm, and cut herself. This led to more bullying. When she was younger, Cora was a cheerleader and a dancer. Cora quit dance when she was young because she wanted to spend more time with friends. Cora eventually went to an all star gym for maybe a week, only to quit when she felt secluded because she "wore too much eyeliner" and was "too goth".

Cora left Rhode Island to enter a treatment center in Florida and moving in with her grandparents afterward. Cora later moved back to Rhode Island and moved in with a new boyfriend; one who tried everything he could to help keep her sober and off of heroin.

Cora found a way out to get the drugs while her boyfriend was at work, causing fights with her boyfriend, who was trying to help her. Cora then moved in with her aunt and got a job—only to use when she got her first paycheck. She had been back Rhode Island for only 52 days. On the night of Friday, August 5, 2016, Cora was to go out with her friend. As the friend sat in the driveway waiting for Cora, she called me in a panic because Cora wouldn't answer the door or her phone and everything was locked to the house. Everyone was afraid to call 911, because if Cora wasn't using again she would be mad that we didn't trust her.

Cora was found by her cousin in the upstairs bathroom of her aunt's house. The safest place she could possibly be. He called 911. Even Narcan didn't work this time as it had eight times before. She became one of the 129 on August 5, 2016. Our lives are forever changed.

KENT EDWARDS—PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Kent Edwards, 18 years old, died of an accidental prescription drug overdose in 2003. One night during his sophomore year of high school, Kent called his mother to say that he was out with some friends and wasn't coming home that night. He was calling because he didn't want to worry his mother, but when they hung up she knew something was wrong. Kent's mother waited for him when he came home at 6:00 a.m.

Life changed for the Kent's family that morning. Kent went to the doctor and tested positive for substances. His family restricted and monitored Kent's activities. They made a lot of changes that next year and Kent adjusted fairly well. He transferred schools and graduated with ease. Kent got a job he loved and spent time with his friends and family. His family thought they had dodged the bullet—Kent didn't want to be addicted to drugs so they mistakenly thought they were in the clear. It seemed that all was well, but Kent's family didn't know any better.

Before Kent turned 18, he was scheduled to have his wisdom teeth removed. His mother

filled the prescription before his surgery. As she was looking at the bottles, she noticed that one of them had fewer pills in it than the other. When she confronted Kent about it he admitted to having taken some.

She asked Kent why and his answer was chilling. He asked his mother to think about a time in her life when she had felt "Great"—"The Best." When she nodded Kent said, "The first time you get high, it's better than that. It feels so good that you want to feel that way again—only it's physically, chemically impossible." He explained how the drugs alter your brain chemistry and why people take more and increase their frequency of use in an attempt to get back to the feeling of that first high.

On a Monday in September, 2003, there was a knock on the Kent's family's door and soon they heard the words: "Your son has died."

Kent and two other kids crushed some Oxycontin and washed them down with beer. Kent got sleepy and the other two left. As Kent slept, the drug slowed his respiratory system down until it stopped completely. His roommate found him the next day—already gone.

DYLAN BRADLEY PEARSON—SAINT FRANCIS, MINNESOTA

On March 11, 2013, Dylan's mother found out that her only child was using heroin at the age of 18. By the time she found out, heroin had already gotten ahold of him. Over the next year, Dylan was charged with two felonies related to his addiction. He was admitted to three different treatment centers. In May of 2014, while Dylan was staying in a treatment center that he had been furloughed to, Dylan's mother received a phone call from one of his friends saying that Dylan had overdosed and was in the ER. Not knowing whether Dylan was alive or dead made the drive to the ER one of the worst drives in her life. Luckily Dylan survived, but 36 hours after being admitted to the hospital, he was sent to jail for 30 days.

When Dylan was released from jail, he began the same routine of using. Dylan's family tried to help him and keep him at home but there was nothing they could do. They were so desperate that at one point they took turns sitting in front of his room, but when his mother got up for a second, Dylan sprinted out the back door. They were helpless. His parents never gave Dylan money but they let him live at home. Dylan's mother talked to him every single day about his addiction and told him much she loved him. Dylan didn't want to live the life he was leading but he didn't know how to stop.

In October of 2014, Dylan agreed to go to a treatment center. The moment he arrived, Dylan didn't want to be there anymore. When he walked out of the center, Dylan's mother refused to bring him home. So Dylan partied for a few days in a hotel with some other kids that had been kicked out of the treatment center for using. Dylan then went to a halfway house and waited there while he tried to get into another treatment facility. Dylan received his completion certificate from this treatment center on January 17, 2015, and was 90 days clean.

Dylan tried so hard to stay clean but within a week of being home, he stumbled again. Dylan went to court and was going to be put on probation. Things seemed like they were going to be okay. On the afternoon of January 30th, Dylan's friend called because he needed to get rid of the rest of his dope before he went into treatment. Dylan's mother could tell Dylan was high when she got home from work, but he hung out with her all night and they had fun. Dylan seemed fine when she told him she loved him and went to bed after midnight.

Dylan went to bed and never woke up. He died on January 31st, 2015. In his bed. In his parent's house. His parent's worst nightmare came true—their only child was dead.

Dylan's mother doesn't remember much about that day, but she does know that her life will never be the same. Every day when she walks into her house, she sees Dylan's shoes sitting on the floor where he kicked them off and his jacket draped across the banister where he left it. They will never have another one of our midnight snacks. Dylan will never have the chance to get married, have kids, travel, and do all of the things that a 19 year old should be experiencing.

Dylan was quiet, but when he did talk, he was funny. He was a good athlete, loyal, handsome and genuine. Dylan and his mother always knew what the other was thinking and we talked—good talks—all the time. Near the end of his life, his mother sent him what seemed like thousands of texts just making sure that he was ok.

Dylan's mother keeps thinking that she will wake up and all of this will have been a dream. She cannot put into words the pain that this loss has caused her family. Today, her mission is to help change the system that we currently have. This epidemic has killed too many young men and women. Let's do all we can to help people with substance use disorder access the treatment they need, break the stigma surrounding addiction, and make some real change.

HONORING BATTALION CHIEF
MICHAEL WINK

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor CalFire Battalion Chief Michael Wink, whom I have named a 2016 Public Safety Hero of the Year for Lake County in California's 5th Congressional District. This award is given to exceptional members of our community who perform beyond their duty as a public servant.

A native of our Napa Valley, Battalion Chief Wink attended the Santa Rosa Junior College Firefighter Academy and served as Academy Class Leader. He then attended the CalFire Academy and began working on assignments across the state. In addition, Battalion Chief Wink is a certified Emergency Medical Technician and has earned numerous technological and incident management certifications. Battalion Chief Wink currently serves as a CalFire Battalion Chief for Lake County.

Our community knows firsthand the value of Battalion Chief Wink's leadership. During the Clayton and Valley Fires, Battalion Chief Wink led a large team and acted quickly to help protect our community. His leadership undoubtedly limited the damage sustained by our Lake County community during those devastating fires.

Mr. Speaker, I thank Battalion Chief Wink for his dedication to our community's safety. For this reason, it is fitting and proper that I honor him here today.

HONORING THE 5TH ANNIVERSARY
OF THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE
FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF HAI-
TIAN PROFESSIONALS

HON. FREDERICA S. WILSON

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. WILSON of Florida. Mr. Speaker, from the 24th District of the great state of Florida, I rise to mark the fifth anniversary of the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals (NAAHP) and to honor its years of service to the Haitian-American community and our nation.

NAAHP was founded in 2008 as the National Association of Haitian Professionals (NAHP) by a group of ambitious college students to connect Haitian professionals and build ladders of opportunity for the Haitian diaspora domestically and abroad. In 2015, NAHP officially became the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals to reflect the organization's growth and pursuit of new initiatives since its launch in 2011.

In the past five years, NAAHP has become one of the leading associations for Haitian professionals and also an advocate on issues affecting the global Haitian community.

NAAHP has hosted many conferences around the world to engage the Haitian diaspora, recognized influential Haitian leaders, awarded scholarships to students of Haitian descent, launched the Network After Work Social Hour Series, and offered year-round college readiness programs through its College Readiness Access & Retention Institute.

NAAHP has led the Haitian diaspora in confronting a number of issues affecting Haitians abroad. Since 2015, it has been one of the foremost advocates fighting the denaturalization of Dominicans of Haitian descent. In response to Haiti's derailed 2015 presidential elections, NAAHP proposed several solutions which were adopted and helped to mitigate the political crisis.

Every year, the NAAHP conference gathers Haitians from around the world to highlight the Haitian diaspora's success, network, and share solutions to address Haiti's challenges. I am so pleased that the NAAHP decided to convene in Washington, D.C., for its fifth annual conference. As the Member of Congress representing the Congressional District with the largest population of Haitians, it gives me great pleasure to welcome NAAHP and the diaspora to Washington.

This year's honorees include Congresswoman MIA LOVE (UT-4), Washington D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine, National Urban League president Marc Morial, entrepreneur Leanna Archer, and renowned architect Rodney Leon.

I personally thank Robert Raben, Cleve Mesidor, and Donald Gatlin from the Raben Group, Suze Francois, Albert DeCady, Ambassador Paul Altidor, Naomie Pierre-Louis, Ariel Dominique, and everyone at the Embassy of the Republic of Haiti, 1 Click, Off the Ground Solutions, Haiti Renewal Alliance, and Azure College for their unwavering support of NAAHP.

I commend the NAAHP leadership team for their commitment, dedication, and excellence.

The executive management team includes Serge Renaud (president), Marie Myka Texas,

Samuel Charles, Vladimir "Vlad" Gilbert, Regine Albin, Ketsia Saint-Armand, Victoria Winslow, Kathy W. Elisca Clermont, Widline Luctama, Tracy Vertus, Kristia M. Beaubrun, Claslyne Doris Jean Pierre, Verlene Julceus, and Malika Raquel Bernard.

The Board of Directors consists of Dr. Wilkerson Compere (chairman), Samuel Charles, Mackendy Elmera, Serge Renaud, Dr. Cledicianne Dorvil, and Anide Jean.

The Advisory Board is co-chaired by Dr. Marjorie Pierre Brennan and Miche Jean, and includes Nathalie Liautaud, Bruno Surpris, Dr. C. Reynold Verret, Dr. Paul A. Belony, Ambassador Danielle Saint-Lot, Jaques M. Jean, Brigitte Rousseau, Adler C. Eliacin, and Harold Charles.

The Scholarship Committee is led by co-chairs Dr. Marjorie P. Brennan and Jacques Medina Jean, and includes Widline Luctama, Regine Albin, Bruno Surpris, and Miche Jean.

The Advocacy Committee is under the leadership of the Honorable Judge Lionel Jean-Baptiste, Joanne Antoine, and Cassandre Theano.

Mr. Speaker, I urge you, my colleagues in Congress, and all Americans to please join me in honoring the National Alliance for the Advancement of Haitian Professionals on their fifth anniversary and for hosting this year's conference in our nation's capital.

RECOGNIZING THE WORK OF MR.
BUTCH RAMIREZ

HON. HENRY CUELLAR

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mr. CUELLAR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mr. Butch Ramirez, a professional photographer whose work has been chosen to be displayed as part of the newly commissioned nuclear submarine, the USS *Illinois* (SSN-786).

Growing up in Webb County, Texas, hunting and fishing were regular parts of Mr. Ramirez's life. Mr. Ramirez decided to expand his passion for hunting and fishing by pursuing an interest in photography. He quickly developed a talent and enthusiasm for capturing some of nature's most beautiful and rare wildlife in the South Texas area. Over the course of his career capturing photos of wildlife, Mr. Ramirez's photographs have been selected for the cover of magazines on 25 separate occasions. One of Mr. Ramirez's most notable pieces of photography is his photo of the White-tailed deer that has been chosen to represent the crest of this newest Virginia class submarine through an extensive selecting process.

Mr. Ramirez has also led exclusive photo workshops for people from all over the world at his ranch in Laredo, TX. In addition, his ranch, Rocking R6, is an official stop for the Laredo Birding Festival. Those interested in the history and photography of animals come to his ranch specifically because of the rare species of birds that can be found there including, the Crested Caracara, Green Jay, and the Red-billed Pigeon.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to recognize the work of Mr. Butch Ramirez.

IN HONOR OF 100TH ANNIVERSARY
OF ST. ILLUMINATOR ARMENIAN
APOSTOLIC CATHEDRAL

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the 100th anniversary of St. Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Cathedral located in the district I represent in Manhattan, New York. It was the first Armenian church established in New York City.

After fleeing to the United States in the late 19th and early 20th century following the Hamidian Massacres and Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, the Armenians of New York City did not have their own church to worship in together. They held religious services in various churches, most of which were located in the neighborhood of the current cathedral. Purchasing a church was initially proposed in 1913. A successful fundraising effort allowed construction to begin for what was then known as the central cathedral of the Armenian Apostolic Church in 1915. The Cathedral officially opened its doors in 1916, but parishioners celebrated the Cathedral's centennial throughout 2015 at the same time as the centennial of the Armenian Genocide in Ottoman Turkey in 1915.

For over a century, St. Illuminator's Cathedral has played a significant role in advocating for Armenians in the U.S. and around the world. Many Genocide survivors found their refuge in the United States, entering the country through Ellis Island. St. Illuminator came to serve as shelter to many of them once they arrived. Today, there remains a vibrant congregation, inspiring their community through faith and service.

I extend my congratulations to the pastor, Rev. Fr. Mesrob Lakissian who has led the church for 10 years, the Board of Trustees, and all members and friends of St. Illuminator, and wish them many more years of success and service to the Armenian American community.

I ask my colleagues to join me in celebrating the anniversary of St. Illuminator's Cathedral and its contributions to the Armenian American residents of Manhattan, Queens and Brooklyn as well as the larger Armenian American community in the United States.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2016

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, If I were present, I would have voted YES on roll call number 601 to H.R. 5015.

If I were present, I would have voted YES on roll call number 602 to H.R. 6427.

If I were present, I would have voted YES on roll call number 603 to House Amendment to S. 1635.

If I were present, I would have voted YES on roll call number 604 to H.R. 6394.

If I were present, I would have voted YES on roll call number 605 to H. Res. 939.