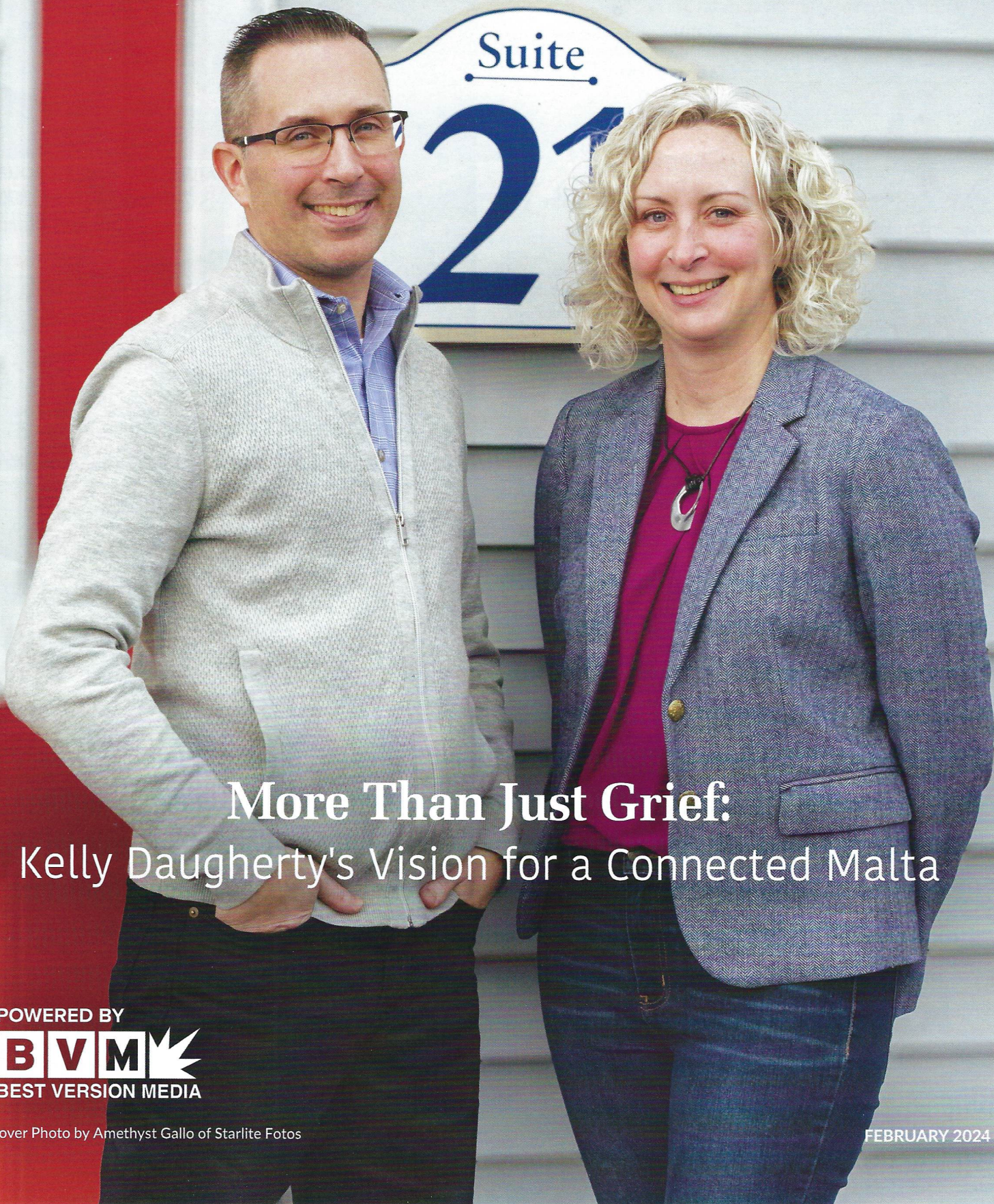


MALTA

NEIGHBORS



More Than Just Grief:

Kelly Daugherty's Vision for a Connected Malta

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WELCOME



Dear Readers,

Forget the groundhog – Cupid's the one calling the shots this month! Whether February brings winter's final bite or spring's first flirtation, we've got a love-themed issue packed with sweet stories and surprises.

On our cover, we spotlight a power couple radiating compassion: Kelly Daugherty, grief counselor extraordinaire, and Kevin Daugherty, the mastermind behind Greater Life Health. They'll share their recipe for a thriving community amidst life's ups and downs.

Craving something delectable? Don't miss Barb Schrader's Very Berry Martini, guaranteed to put a blush on your cheeks, or Meg Wert's Creamy Cheesecake, a slice of pure bliss. And, speaking of cultural feasts, explore our tasty spread of local museums – perfect for cozy dates or family outings.

February's also about spreading love beyond our own circles. Transforming lives, one child at a time, take a look at the range of comprehensive services St. Catherine's Center for Children provides adults, children, and families throughout the capital region and beyond. Learn how they transform lives and discover heartwarming ways you can join their mission in this month's not-for-profit spotlight.

This February, embrace the warmth, whether it's from the sun, a loved one's touch, or the simple joy of reading a good story. Dive into this issue – we've got something for every heart's desire!

Happy Valentine's Day! XOXO

Franchesca Caputo





More Than Just Grief:

Kelly Daugherty's Vision for a Connected Malta

By Francesca Caputo | Photos by Amethyst Gallo and the Daugherty family

“What is grief, if not love preserving?” Kelly Daugherty of Greater Life Grief Counseling, LCSW, has made a career out of examining such a question, helping others cope with the loss of a loved one for the past 22 years.

At just 14 years old, Kelly’s Mom died from breast cancer. She remembers her father persuading her to attend a grief support group. At the time she attended an all-girls Catholic High School on Long Island. Taking advantage of this, her father told her boys would be there, so she reluctantly went.

“So that’s what got me to go,” Kelly said laughing, “but of course there were no boys in that group!” While there were no boys in attendance, that group changed her life forever.

“I walked into that room and for the first time I didn’t feel alone in my grief, and I realized I wasn’t the only one who had a parent die,” she said.

After attending additional groups on top of family counseling

with her dad, Kelly’s social worker suggested she volunteer with the children’s program. “That’s when I knew this is what I wanted to do with my life,” Kelly said.

Her father moved to Florida when he retired, and naturally Kelly attended and graduated from Florida State with her masters in 2002. Soon after Kelly found work in the Carolina’s. She worked at a couple of hospices, a prevention agency for children, and the Department of Mental Health in South Carolina. In 2008 she moved to upstate New York to be closer to her sister, and her nieces and nephew. She worked at Glens Falls Hospital, then became the clinical director at Saratoga Center of the Family. In 2017 she made the switch to private practice, and opened Greater Life Grief Counseling, LCSW specializing in working with individuals with grief and loss.

“I made a couple shifts in my career, as a social worker does, but inevitably I’ve come back to grief and loss, because that

really is where my passion is," Kelly said, explaining that's why she became a social worker. "I find meaning in my grief every day by being able to help people on their grief journey."

While attending a women's empowerment course in Saratoga, Kelly met Kevin, a wellness coach and hypnotist, who was a panelist for one of the seminars. "They brought men in, and you could ask men any questions you wanted to," she said.

After meeting in February, they went on their first date in March, and in October the two got married.

"We had a very quick, whirlwind relationship," Kelly said. "I guess when you're a little older, you just know." March marks the ten-year anniversary of their first date.

In 2021 Kelly and her husband moved their business from Round Lake to Malta Commons, craving more community. Their new space is warm and welcoming and allows for group sessions. Located in Suite 21, alongside Greater Life Grief Counseling is Kevin's private practice, Greater Life Health, Birch Hill Counseling, RJR Infinity Counseling, Bullock Mental Health Counseling, PLLC, Healing Presence Counseling, LCSW and Deb DeCelle-Intuitive Medium.



Kelly offers individual counseling for children and adults and a variety of grief groups throughout the year. Once a month she facilitates a free pet loss group. She also has done a group for coping with the holidays, and a parent loss grief group for those who have lost a loved one from substance use.

She believes niching down the groups helps others feel more understood.

"When you have a bereaved mothers bereavement group, they all can get it, they all can really relate. To be able to have that connection like I did when I was a teenager, walking into that room and knowing I wasn't alone, made a huge difference," Kelly said. "You don't have to try to explain what you're going through, because they get it."

Healing Strides, another of Kelly's grief groups, combines the power of emotional processing with physical activity. Offered twice a year (once in fall and spring), this unique 7-week program blends one hour of traditional grief group with another hour dedicated to training for a 5K race. By the program's finale, the participants conquer the challenge together, crossing the finish line of, most recently, the Malta Trail Race as a united team.

As her group, each carrying a testament of love on their backs – signs reading "with every step we take, we walk in memory of..." with their loved one's name etched, crosses the finish line, Kelly can't help but be moved. Witnessing their strength and the stories they carry, she almost always succumbs to emotion.

"Every time I do a goal race I cry on my way home, because you

watch these women who are dealing with so much grief and loss, and then to see them cross that finish line, I can't even put words to it - it's amazing," Kelly said. "I think it's those kinds of things that really keep you going and why it doesn't always feel so bad."

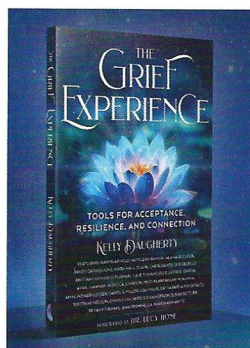
Grief isn't the easiest line of work. Kelly says having a community is one of the most important things she does when it comes to self-care.

"I wanted to be around other professionals because private practice can be kind of lonely," Kelly said, "It's just nice to be able to go out to lunch together and have someone to bounce things off of between sessions."

Aside from building a solid community, Malta Commons also was the perfect location for both Kevin and Kelly's businesses.

"We're able to serve people from Saratoga or Clifton Park," Kelly said, "We really wanted to be in Malta so that's why we decided to be in Malta Commons."

Last year, Kelly was invited to write a chapter in a collaborative book, *Holistic Mental Health*. She says it was a great way to ease into her longtime goal of becoming a published author. Later on, she met with the publisher to discuss her idea to write another collaborative book, this time about grief. After months of stalling, Kelly finally took the plunge and agreed to be the lead author. This meant she would be tasked with finding 24 additional experts in the field.



The book, "The Grief Experience: Tools for Acceptance, Resilience and Connection" available to purchase on Amazon February 6, 2024, is a collaboration of 25 authors sharing their personal experiences with grief and loss with a tool to help readers on their own personal grief journey.

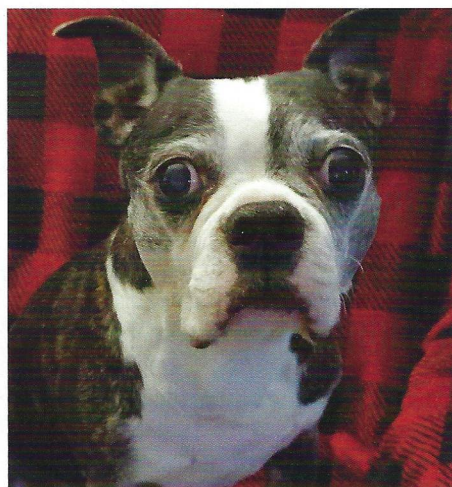
Out of the 25 authors, 11 of them hail from the Saratoga region, seven of which come from Malta Commons. Each chapter portrays a wide range of losses. Kelly wanted readers to find connection in this book, whether they faced infertility, disenfranchised grief, or the anxiety of waiting for an uncertain future. The book covers a wide range of losses, including some that are deeply traumatic.

While in the introduction, Kelly dedicated the book to her mother, ultimately in her chapter she decided to write about pet loss.

"It's a very disenfranchised grief, which means it's not always readily accepted by society," Kelly explained. "People tend to minimize it and think oh it's just a dog. Well, when you don't have children, your dogs are your babies."

So, Kelly wrote about the death of PJ, who passed away about a year ago. A cairn terrier, he would have turned 16 years old this year. Like Toto from the *Wizard of Oz*, but blonder, she describes PJ as a great pup that loved her and Kevin very much but had a

continued on next page



bit of an attitude when it came to pretty much everyone else. They believe he suffered from a stroke.

In November, Kelly and Kevin made the heart-wrenching decision to have Boomer, the couple's Boston Terrier of 16 years, transition peacefully at home after his quality of life began to decline.

"Thankfully Boomer went very peacefully and beautifully," Kelly said. "The vet was fabulous and gave him some sleep medicine, and he was snoring away, so in my opinion he passed away in his sleep."

Like countless others, Kelly and Kevin didn't just lose their pets, they lost their family members. "I mean if you'd walk into our house, you'd see we have these huge pictures of them on our walls. It's a transition, you know, the house feels very lonely," Kelly said.

As far as what Kelly wishes other people knew about grief, it comes down to one thing: the five stages aren't accurate. "Grief is a very individualized process, and it's okay to feel whatever you feel," Kelly said, "And it's also okay to seek out support when you need to. But my biggest thing is that there are no stages!"



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Back Row: Kirby Kay Clark, Lisa Millis, Amy Lindner-Lesser, Rebecca Rainstrom, April Hannah, Brittany DeMarco-Furman, Deb DeCelle
Front Row- Alaina Bullock, Kelly Daugherty, Cheri Davies

The Grief Experience

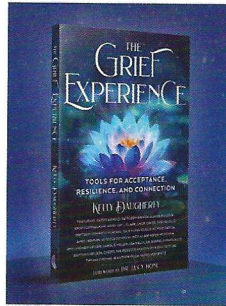
By Laura Di Franco of Brave Healer Productions

A collaboration among 25 local authors, offers ways to build resilience in the face of life's inevitable losses.

"The Grief Experience: Tools for Acceptance, Resilience & Connection" brings together 25 local authors who have navigated various types of losses, ranging from the death of loved ones to the end of relationships, struggles with infertility, disenfranchised grief, anticipatory grief, delayed grief, and more. Each chapter delves into a specific type of loss, written by an author who intimately understands that form of grief.

The Grief Experience: Tools for Acceptance, Resilience, and Connection, set to be released on February 6th, is helmed by Kelly Daugherty, a social worker and fellow in Thanatology with more than 20 years of clinical experience in grief support and bereavement. The book features a foreword by Dr. Lucy Home, author of Resilient Grieving, and tips and personal experiences from 24 additional authors. Daugherty, who was 14 when her mother died from breast cancer, says her co-authors have endured a variety of losses, everything from the death of loved ones to the end of marriages and other significant relationships and the emotional trauma of infertility. She writes, "These authors, representing a wide spectrum of beliefs, faiths, cultures, and backgrounds, acknowledge that grief is deeply personal and unique, lacking a definitive right or wrong way to navigate it. As you read their stories, you'll likely find comfort in connecting with at least one of them, knowing that you're not alone in your journey through grief."

There are chapters on developing continuing bonds after a death, using nature to cope with death, and transferring the pain of loss into art, for example. Contributing to the book were Karyn Arnold, Kathleen Banicki, Alaina Bullock, Kristi Caprigione, Kirby Kay L. Clark, Cheri Davies, Deb Decelle, Brittany DeMarco-Furman, Julie Funkhouser, George Garcia, April Hannah, Rebecca Johnson, Misti Klarenbeek-McKenna, Amy Lindner-Lesser, Carol S. Miller, Lisa Millis, Dr. Gabriela Miniscalco, Brittany Nelson, Cheryl Nix, Rebecca Rainstrom, Susan Settler, Tiffany Thomas, Jean Trehwella, and Karen Ann White. 11 out of the 25 authors reside in the Saratoga region.



Praise for The Grief Experience

"In a world where anybody can publish a book and self-identify as a grief expert, this one is a breath of fresh air and a critically important resource because it's based on viable first-hand experiences by credentialed coaches and mental health professionals. Of all the grief books on the market today, this is one of the few I would recommend to my students and clients." — **Rev. Dr. Terri Daniel, end-of-life advisor, interfaith chaplain, certified clinical trauma professional**

"The Grief Experience beautifully interweaves its contributors' stories of personal loss with their professional wisdom for coping, allowing a glimpse into the vast range of grief experiences while building a practical toolkit of supportive resources. Its messages of validation and hope will undoubtedly bring comfort to countless grievers." — Litsa Williams, co-founder of What's Your Grief, co-author of What's Your Grief

"This compassionate resource explores a variety of life losses and provides practical tools to support people experiencing grief. If you are experiencing grief these personal narratives will provide you with the understanding, solace, and gentle guidance that you need and deserve. If you are a caregiver this guide will enhance your grief-informed body of knowledge and invite you to care, not cure." — **Alan D. Wolfelt, Ph.D., author of Companioning the Bereaved: A Soulful Guide for Caregivers, director of Center for Loss & Life Transition**

About Brave Healer Productions

Brave Healer Productions specializes in book publishing and business strategy for healers. It has published 59 Amazon best-selling books, among them the series The Ultimate Guide to Self-Healing, The Wellness Universe Guide to Complete Self-Care, and The Ancestors Within.

A full list of services offered by Brave Healing Productions can be found here.

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