Because No Child Should Grieve Alone

November 20, 2026

Dear Friends,

In August 2016, I met the love of my life, Carlos, when two police officers responded to an incident near my home. One of those officers was Carlos Gonzalez Jr., who would become my husband and the father of our beautiful daughter, Olivia. Carlos loved telling people that he arrived just in time to catch a machete mid-air with his bare hands and rescue me. He never changed a detail of that story.

He became my safe place, my greatest love, and the person with whom I built a life filled with adventure, laughter, and dreams for the future.

Then, on March 24, 2023, everything changed. Carlos was diagnosed with lymphoma. For the next two years, we fought alongside one another, holding onto hope and continuing to make plans for the future. Eventually, the cancer became too aggressive to treat. In his final weeks, Carlos worried less about himself and was most concerned with one thing - who would take care of his girls?

Carlos died leaving me to navigate a world without him, without my husband and partner, and Olivia to grow up without her Papi who she absolutely adored.



Olivia was just three years old. She was young, but she noticed everything. She noticed his hair loss, his exhaustion, and the changes in our lives. After he died, she kept asking when Papi was coming home. I desperately wanted to find the right words to explain something I could barely understand myself.

That's when I contacted Imagine.

Just two days after Carlos's funeral, I attended Imagine's webinar, *How to Talk to Kids About Death and Dying*. It gave me the words to begin explaining death to my daughter during the most unimaginable time in our lives. A month later, Olivia and I attended our first Night of Support.

At school, Olivia had begun to realize that her family now looks different. She saw all the mommies and daddies at school events and wondered why her Papi wasn't there. But at Imagine, something changed. She discovered a place where everyone had lost someone. She wasn't different. She belonged. Today, Olivia talks openly about her Papi. She even invited her classmates to come to Imagine with her.

Recently, I've had the opportunity to experience the impact of Imagine's work from a different lens, one focused on training and education. When Olivia started kindergarten at a new school in September, I was grateful and relieved to learn that the staff were trained by Imagine, educated on how children process grief, and prepared to support her not just academically, but from a socioemotional perspective as well.

While I originally came to Imagine because I wanted to make sure my daughter was okay, I found something I didn't know I needed: a community that understood my grief, too.

Imagine has given us so much more than a place to talk about loss. It has given us friendship, connection, education, and the reassurance that we don't have to navigate life after loss alone. From Nights of Support to family events, workshops, and the incredible people who make this community possible, Imagine has helped us find our way forward.

I often think about a quote shared at Greta's Run: *"They say you die twice. Once when you stop breathing, and a second time when somebody says your name on Earth for the last time."*

I want Carlos's name to be spoken. I want Olivia to grow up knowing her Papi, his love, and the incredible person he was. At Imagine, we are surrounded by people who understand that remembering someone we love is part of learning to live without them.

When you support Imagine, you are doing something extraordinary. You are making sure a young child who has lost a parent or a parent who has lost a child has a place where they don't feel alone. You are giving a grieving mother the tools to help her surviving children. You are reminding families that there is life, connection, and even joy after loss. And that grief and joy can coexist in the same moment.

Imagine is 100% free to every family it serves. That means its ability to be there for families like mine depends on the generosity of people like you.

I know firsthand what it means to walk through Imagine's doors when your world has fallen apart. I also know what it means to find a community that helps you put the pieces back together.

As you consider your year-end giving, I ask you to please make a meaningful financial contribution to Imagine. Your generosity will ensure that another child, another parent, another family facing the unimaginable will have the support they need.



You may never meet that family. You may never know their names. But they will know they are not alone.

Carlos will always be Olivia's Papi. He will always be the love of my life. And because of Imagine, we have a community that will help us carry his memory forward.

Thank you for making that possible.

Jessica Martin Gonzalez

P.S. Imagine's support groups are offered 100% free to families as long as they need us. Your generosity makes that possible. ***Give today to provide life-changing peer support to families suffering devastating loss.***



Sponsor an entire year of grief support for one child



Sponsor training for volunteers who will facilitate grief groups for children at our centers



Provide games and art supplies for children in our grief groups



Provide dinner for up to 60 children and adults on a night of support at our center

Note: These are examples of how we invest your unrestricted donations.