

IN MEMORIUM

Timothy Douglas “Tim” Heller, Beth Heller, Mara Heller, Derek Heller and Kara Heller

Departed this life Nov. 20, 2023

When a rare but devastating landslide in Wrangell destroyed the family home

Celebration of Life for the Heller Family

11 a.m. to 4 p.m., Saturday Jan. 13, 2024 at the Nolan Center

11 a.m. Celebration Memorial Service at Noon, Meal provided

1:30 p.m. Celebration Slideshow and Stories

Community welcome to attend a portion or all



The Heller family Photos courtesy Havalah Praise Photography



Timothy Douglas "Tim" Heller, 44, was born in Lacy, Washington, and departed this life on Nov. 20, 2023. His home for the majority of his life was Wrangell. While Tim developed a strong reputation for expertise in marine construction, he also worked hard to balance his work with his dedication to his family.

Tim graduated from Wrangell High School before attending United Technology Institute at Phoenix, obtaining a degree in diesel technology and heavy equipment repair. His exceptional skills as a mechanic and a welder served him and his family well as he learned marine construction, spending around 20 years in his trade union and working on docks throughout Alaska, largely for the company Western Marine. He was sought after for both his unique skills and his reputation as a hard worker.

His desire to have more time with his family led to Tim working with his wife Beth to start their own successful business in marine construction.

Tim's crowning achievement and source of all his joy, however, was family. Tim considered his wife, Beth, his soulmate. He was blessed with two children from each of his two marriages, and completed his circle of love with the adoption of his soulmate's daughter.

Although many would think of Tim as a quiet man, he was both committed to his family and loved to have fun with family and friends. Whenever he was in town, he was fully involved in his children's activities, attending athletic events, cooking steaks or making the fire for s'mores or teaching them new skills.

At home, Tim rarely sat down — he always had a project going to improve the house, build something, or fix something — and he could fix just about anything!

Tim loved to travel with his family, exploring new places. He also loved the menagerie of pets in the Heller household. He created a solid foundation for his family, helping them grow and learn.

Beth Jean Heller (Stephan), 36, was born in Wrangell and lost her life on Nov. 20, 2023. Her loving generosity and vibrant spirit will be missed by all who knew her.

Beth was born and grew up mostly in Wrangell and graduated from Wrangell High School in 2005. As an adult, Beth lived briefly in various communities, but Wrangell was always her home. She was a lifelong learner, achieving her licensure as a certified nursing assistant and an EMT, and taking a variety of college classes in child development and

business finance. She worked in education and health care, but her greatest love was her family.

Beth and her husband Tim shared a loving and joyful relationship. Together, they worked hard to build a successful marine construction business. Family was at the core of Beth's existence. She was an excellent mother to her three children, providing them with so many opportunities to make wonderful lasting memories. Her radiant smile and infectious laughter created a home filled with joy and comfort.

Beth was an amazing baker, loved to travel, and was a talented gardener. She enjoyed curling up with a mug of coffee, a good book, and her beloved dogs. Beth's kindness and compassion toward every living creature was admirable.

Beth was an amazing friend to so many people throughout her life. She gave excellent advice, and people often turned to her for her wisdom, humor and logic. She leaves behind a legacy of love, warmth and kindness. She will be missed every day.

Mara Jeannette Heller, 16, was born in Juneau and lost her life on Nov. 20, 2023.

When Mara entered a room, you couldn't help but smile. Her bubbly personality and endless energy were infectious. Mara lived most of her life in Wrangell.

Mara was wise beyond her years. She had a strong sense of self and prioritized what was truly important in life. She had an undeniable love for her family and friends. Mara had a huge heart, always willing to help and care for others. She was a light in our lives. Kind and compassionate, she shared that light with us every day.

It was clear that Mara wanted to leave this world a better place than she found it, and while her time here was too short, her impact was deep. Mara was brave. While she was sometimes hesitant to face new challenges, she was quick to celebrate her successes and triumphs and was always cheering others on.

Mara embraced the softer things in life. She enjoyed literature, deep ideas and the intangible aspects of being human. Her relationships with others were genuine and she remained true to herself. She learned to accept that unkindness happens sometimes, yet she continued beyond trials without becoming bitter.

Mara once wrote about her future goals which included going to college, being intelligent, hardworking and successful — but she said the biggest thing she wanted to be was kind.

Mara loved listening to music, especially Taylor Swift. She would often talk about her favorite songs and quotes. In listening to the artist's music, Mara found a soundtrack to her world. The words were more than lyrics, they served as inspiration to be both kind and strong and embrace the waves that come over us in life.



Derek David Heller, 12, was born in Juneau and lost his life on Nov. 20, 2023. He lived most of his life in Wrangell.

Derek lit up any room he walked into; always smiling, cheerful, extremely talkative, and full of endless energy. One might even say he was often the "loudest" in the room.

He loved to make people laugh and would frequently engage in silly banter with his friends and teachers. His kind and caring heart and likable personality meant that he had several good friends.

He was always willing to assist his peers, even if it meant he got some "heat" for talking. It didn't matter who he sat beside in class, he would quickly find some common ground and become fast friends with his neighbors. He made his peers feel important and valued.

Derek was curious and wanted to learn more, often asking inquisitive questions.

He was a trumpet player who not only played his trumpet with all his heart, but also often asked his teacher "why" so that he could gain a better understanding of how the trumpet worked.

He often talked about his family with pride and shared hilarious family stories.

Derek joined the middle school running club this fall and became a strong competitor. He also played on the middle school basketball team.

He participated in wrestling for many years and had started working out with Jack Carney's weightlifting group in the mornings this fall. He had a great time participating in the swim meet earlier in November.

Derek was often seen laughing and being goofy with his friends. Although we have lost the future of that boundless energy, goofiness, laughter and big, big heart, our memories of Derek's approach to life give inspiration for living life fully each day.



Kara Joy Heller, 11, was born in Juneau and lost her life on Nov. 20, 2023. Kara's middle name says it all — she brought joy and happiness to anyone she met. Her wide smile and sparkling eyes were more than contagious.

Kara lived most of her life in Wrangell. At school, she was a bright and successful student who excelled in all academic areas — and finished her work ahead of time! She had a uniquely positive attitude, and she never seemed to say a negative thing about anybody. She was very approachable and well-liked by her classmates.

Kara was outgoing and involved in a lot of extracurricular activities. Although she was just beginning to learn sports, her coaches were impressed with her determination and attitude. She was an amazing swimmer. While on the swim team, she was a tough competitor with brilliant instincts who never took the easy way out. Joining the middle school running club this fall, she was determined to increase her speed, and never complained.

Kara attended ballet, where her coach remembered her big smile — she just beamed whenever it was time to perform. She worked hard on perfecting her dance moves.

Kara was in Girl Scouts and sold many cookies, no doubt because no one could resist that smiling face!

Kara loved anything Taylor Swift sang or did. One of her favorite experiences was attending the Taylor Swift film that showed in Wrangell. She sang and danced through the whole movie.

Whether at home or at school, Kara loved gardening — working with dirt and plants. While working at the elementary school garden, she had a big smile on her face whether she was digging up potatoes or sifting through soil looking for rocks and other unwanted things.

How do you describe Kara Joy Heller? Happy, kind, patient, neat, determined, thoughtful, smart, polite, motivated, creative, and so much more.



The Heller family is survived by Tim's father Myron "Mike" Heller and mother Yvonne Heller; Tim's adult children Timothy Orion "Orion" Heller and Alisa (Raife) Bowman; Tim's two grandchildren; and by Beth's father Dave Stephan, mother Laureen Curtner, brother Jeremy (Brandy Jenkins) Grina, nephew Jacob Grina, and many extended relatives.

In lieu of flowers, donations are being accepted at First Bank.