



# heart to heart newsletter

A PERIODICAL PUBLICATION OF ELE'S PLACE

March 2012

## "It's Not Fair!"

Our daughter Ashley had extra special relationships with both of her grandmas. We spent a lot of time at Grandma Pat's house on Friday nights, Sundays after church and holidays. She had many grandchildren, but made each of them feel like the most special gifts on earth. Then in April of 2010, Grandma Pat died. She had been sick for some time and we all knew that she would be going to Heaven. Still, when she died, it was very hard on Ashley to understand why Grandma had to leave us. The first Friday after Grandma Pat died, Ashley cried, "We are supposed to be going to Grandma's for dinner!"

We had heard wonderful things about Ele's Place and knew it would be a great place for our family to go to help with our grief and sadness. We were especially worried about Ashley. She was only 8, and had become very emotional, with good reason. She was restless and had a lot of difficulties sleeping. We frequently had to sleep with her, because she feared that something else bad was going to happen. As her parents, we wanted to make sure that we did everything we could do to help her through this, so that she would not suffer later in life with unresolved feelings and unanswered questions. When we called Ele's Place, we felt like the clinical staff really cared, that our family mattered, and that this was not just a

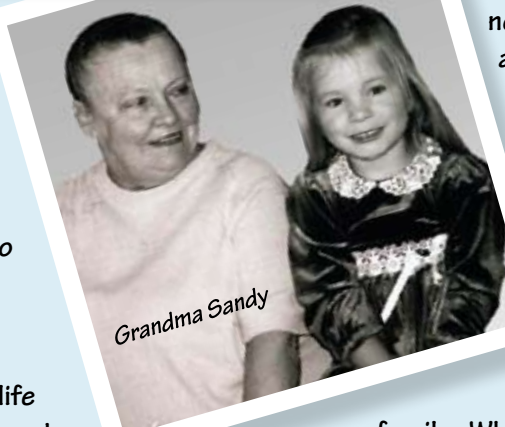


Grandma Pat

job to them. So, we started attending weekly group sessions. Ashley was very nervous at first, but was made to feel welcome and important from the moment we walked through the door.

Suddenly, two months later, Ashley's other Grandma Sandy died. We did not know how we could tell our little girl who was still coping with the death of her Grandma Pat, that now her Grandma Sandy had died without saying good-bye. Ashley's first words to us were "Now I have no Grandmas left to love me, and it's not fair!" This broke our hearts, but we knew that Ele's Place was helping Ashley at an incredibly difficult time.

As if losing two important people in Ashley's life wasn't hard enough, soon after, our family dog died from bone cancer. Yes, she was an animal, but she was part of our family. It was one more death for us to grieve and one more time Ashley asked, "Why did she have to die?"



Grandma Sandy

It's difficult to cope with death as an adult, let alone as a child. Ele's Place helped Ashley to know that she was not alone, and provided answers to a lot of her questions about death. She felt very safe and secure with her caring group facilitators after getting to know them. They got her to open up and share her feelings. We can't say enough good things about Ele's Place and would highly recommend it to anyone who has experienced a death in their family. When we think about how many lives Ele's Place has touched and helped, it makes us smile. Keep doing what you're doing, Ele's Place!

-Kelsie & John Troub



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**Betsy Stover**  
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Ele's Place

**John Truscott**  
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Please visit our website for more  
information [www.elesplace.org](http://www.elesplace.org)

Lansing (517) 482-1315  
Ann Arbor (734) 929-6640

## Our Mission

Ele's Place is a nonprofit, community based organization dedicated to creating awareness of and support for grieving children and their families.

Through peer support groups, Ele's Place helps children learn how to cope with the death or life-threatening illness of a parent, sibling or other loved one. Ele's Place is named in honor of Ele Stover, who died in 1989 at the age of 11 months. She is survived by four siblings. ELE also represents the organization's philosophy of Embracing Loss Effectively.

## Lansing Community Board

as of March 1, 2012

**Chair: Denise Maybank, PhD**  
Interim VP for Student Affairs  
Michigan State University

**Vice-Chair: Honorable Laura Baird**  
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Community Volunteer

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Biggby Coffee

**Kevin Shaw**  
Vice President – Marketing  
The Wieland-Davco Corporation

**John Truscott**  
President and Principal  
Truscott & Rossman

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## Ann Arbor Community Board

as of March 1, 2011

**Chair: Sean A. Duval**  
CEO  
Golden Limousine International, Inc.

**Vice-Chair: Diane Kieliszewski**  
Financial Advisor  
Edward Jones

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President & CEO  
Ele's Place

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Organizational Development Consultant  
University of Michigan,  
Division of Student Affairs

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Managing Director  
Ele's Place Ann Arbor

**Megan Crosbie**  
Marketing Coordinator  
Charles Reinhart Company

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Assistant Professor of Anesthesiology  
University of Michigan

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Vice President of Regional Operations  
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School Administrator  
Washtenaw Intermediate School District

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EMC Corporation

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Community Leader

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Community Volunteer

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Vice President, Administration and Real Estate  
Compuware Corporation

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President  
Sandler Training

**Susan Torrible Spoor, M.D.**  
Geriatrician

**Betsy Stover**  
Founder  
Ele's Place

**Debra Urquhart, MA LLP**  
Learning Disability Specialist  
Washtenaw Community College

# message

from the President & CEO

**In December 2011, Ele's Place completed a three-year strategic plan that accomplished amazing goals, allowing us to serve more grieving children, more effectively.**

Over the last three years, Ele's Place...

- Supported 989 individuals in 2011 through our three core programs in Lansing, compared to 890 in 2008
- Added a second night of programming in Ann Arbor, allowing us to support 396 individuals in 2011, compared to 130 in 2008
- Created partnerships with five additional schools and organizations to offer **"Ele's Group"** for a total of 11 locations by the end of 2011
- Supported 216 children whose families are coping with a life threatening illness, through our **TLC (Together Learning to Cope) Program** in Lansing
- Both locations grew our **"Healing Hearts Society"** of donors who make a five-year pledge of at least \$1000 annually, from 172 members in 2008 to 338 in 2011
- Increased the number of donors who remember Ele's Place in their will or estate plan from six to 24, and created **"Ele's Legacy Society"** to recognize them
- Created the **Michigan Network for Grieving Children** with First Lady Sue Snyder, to educate people that grieving children need support and to provide resources and a

directory of programs throughout the state on our new website, [www.KidsGrief.org](http://www.KidsGrief.org)

And to think these are just the highlights! Together, our volunteers, donors, Board members and staff continue to impact the lives of thousands of grieving children!

Recently, our Community Boards in Lansing and Ann Arbor participated in retreats to create a new three-year strategic plan for each Ele's Place location. Goals have been established in the areas of programming, fund development, facilities, public awareness, board development, volunteer development and administration. In addition, our Governing Board goals include assisting the Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo communities in supporting grieving children, and growing the Michigan Network for Grieving Children.



The economy has been challenging for all nonprofits, but Ele's Place has not had to cut any services or turn away any families. This is only because you - our donors, volunteers and staff - are personally committed to supporting grieving children.

Thank you for believing that they deserve a chance to heal and find hope!

Laurie Strauss Baumer  
President & CEO  
Ele's Place  
Lansing – Ann Arbor

## Get Connected to Ele's Place



Like us - [www.facebook.com/ElesPlace](http://www.facebook.com/ElesPlace)



Follow Us on Twitter - @elesplace

- Get current news and information
- Find out if Ele's Place programs are closed due to bad weather
- Learn about upcoming events
- Add comments and interact with others who like Ele's Place

# activities

## Ele's Place Expands School Partnerships

**E**le's Place has recently partnered with several new schools to provide the "Ele's Group" program. In Lansing, three schools were added last fall, thanks to annual funding from Comerica Bank and a grant from A Little Hope Foundation. Ann Arbor launched its very first school partnerships with three middle schools (listed on page 5) in early 2012, generously funded by the New York Life Foundation and the James A. and Faith Knight Foundation.

"Ele's Group" is an eight-week support group held in the schools (or other community organizations) multiple times throughout the year for students who are grieving the death of a family member or close friend. Most importantly, they have the opportunity to connect with other students from their school who are grieving, and share their sadness, anger, fear and other feelings in an understanding, confidential environment. Feeling less isolated helps them to cope and begin to heal. This program is designed to improve the students' ability to learn about common feelings of grief, identify and express feelings, share their stories, learn coping skills and reduce feelings of isolation.

One activity that the students truly enjoy is the "Inside vs. Outside" mask art project. It helps the students become self-aware about their own coping style and helps them identify their feelings. The group starts with a discussion about how they might act differently on the outside than how they feel on the inside. Next, each student receives a mask and decorates the outside to reflect the feelings they let other people see about the death and in general.

Then the students draw and write things inside the mask that represent how they really feel on the inside and what they hide from other people. After the students complete their masks, they have an opportunity to share what they've put inside and why it isn't safe for them to let those

feelings show. The group wraps up by identifying individuals in their lives with whom they might be able to share the inside of their masks and trust with their inside feelings.

Below are some comments from a few Ann Arbor area middle school participants, when asked at the end of their first one hour Ele's Group session, "how do you feel right now?"

*"In Ele's Group, I can talk about my mom dying and know that no one will make fun of me."*

*"I feel happy right now because I realize that other people at school have experienced the same thing as me."*

*"I feel happy because I would never talk to a couple of people outside of this group, and it's nice to know they had someone close to them die too."*



Photos of Ele's Group at Waverly Middle School

## Ele's Group Locations

### Lansing Area Schools & Organizations:

Gardner Middle School  
Otto Middle School  
Pattengill Middle School  
Pleasant View Magnet School  
Lansing S.T.E.M. Academy  
Waverly East Intermediate School NEW  
Waverly Middle School  
Grand Ledge - Hayes Middle School NEW

Holt - Hope Middle School NEW  
Highfields  
Refugee Development Center

### Ann Arbor Area Schools:

Milan Middle School  
Willow Run Middle School  
Ypsilanti Middle School

## Our Legacy for Ele's Place

“Over 20 years ago, before there was an Ele's Place, I was at home nesting with my newborn Morgan and enjoying every minute of bonding with her during the Christmas holiday.

On the news there was a story about Betsy Stover and her 11-month-old daughter, Ele, at Sparrow Hospital.

Betsy was clinging to the hope that somehow they could find a cure for Ele's inability to thrive and develop. As a new mother myself, I had an immediate and profound connection with this emotional situation. I couldn't imagine how this mother and Ele's siblings could get through this difficult time and I said a prayer.

A couple years later I heard about Ele's Place being started and it felt natural to become part of this mission. After my retirement from Jacobson's stores, I volunteered on a special fundraising committee for Ele's Place and served on the Board of Directors. From then on, supporting Ele's Place has truly been a passion for our entire family. Our daughters have volunteered at the Fall Reception, Ele's Race and in the office, and my husband, Steve, helped plan a special fundraising event.

As founding members of the Healing Hearts Society, we knew it was the perfect progression for us to become members of the new Ele's Legacy Society which will ensure that our annual gift will continue beyond our lifetime. It was simple and we encourage others to consider



this type of gift – it costs nothing now, and will make a huge difference for future generations of grieving children.”

-Mary Jo Scofes

There are many types of planned gifts our supporters make through their wills and estate plans. Mary Jo and Steve decided that a gift of retirement assets, which would have been taxable income if left to their daughters, was better left to Ele's Place. The Scofes' named Ele's Place as a percentage beneficiary of a 401(k), establishing a legacy that will benefit countless children in their community in the future.

For information about planned gifts, contact Sue Woodard, a planned giving specialist for Ele's Place or email [swoodard@elesplace.org](mailto:swoodard@elesplace.org).

If you have already made a planned gift to Ele's Place, please let us know. We would like to recognize you as an Ele's Legacy Society member, or if you prefer we can keep your gift anonymous.

# healing hearts society & ele club

Make a big difference in the lives of grieving children through our giving program. Ele Club members who give \$1000 or more over 12 months are listed in our newsletter. Healing Hearts Society members make a monetary pledge of \$1,000 or more annually for five years, allowing us to better plan our resources and help us serve even more children each year through new and expanded programming. These donors receive all of the benefits of Ele Club members, plus complimentary reservations to special events. For more information on giving options, please check the box on the enclosed reply envelope, or call (517) 482-1315 in Lansing or (734) 929-6640 in Ann Arbor.

## Lansing Location Healing Hearts Society Members

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Auto-Owners Insurance  
Company  
Jackson National Life Insurance  
Clark and Kathleen Manning  
Christina Pasant  
Steve and Melinda Roznowski  
Foundation  
Lyle L. Stephens

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Mary Papageorgiou McGrath and  
Ron McGrath  
Michigan Millers Mutual  
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John Truscott

### The Gift of Compassion

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The Carthage Trust  
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Tony Dowling  
Lisa C. Drake  
John and Marilyn Gorgenson  
Elizabeth and Rob Haar  
Julie and Scott Hughes  
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Rebecca and Chad Myers  
Russ and Eilene Peck  
Craig and Lori Rasche  
Paul Rathbun  
Ken and Lori Stewart  
Diana Tarpoff and Emily Polo  
Tate on behalf of the R.E.  
Olds Foundation

### The Gift of Hope

Anonymous  
John and Alicia Armstrong  
Randy and Peg Asmus  
Keith and Jennifer Azar  
Laura Baird and George Zulakis  
Jane Baker  
Jill K. Baker  
Ben Baldus  
Mark and Martha Bashore  
Laurie and John Baumer  
Stuart and Judy Birn  
Dennis and Donna Blue  
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Jeff and Barbara Borton  
Brehm Family-Holiday Inn  
Express and Comfort Inn of  
Okemos  
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Daniel Brouse  
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Penny Papantonopoulos  
Wendell and Barbara Parsons  
Mrs. William and Linda Peterson  
Gabriella, Anastasia, Parker and  
Thomas Petroff  
John and Mary Beth Pirich  
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Gary Rakan and Suzy Merchant  
Dana S. Rapier  
Sheila and Gery Rehmann  
Don and Paula Reichle  
Frank and Pattie Reynolds  
Lisa and Chet Riddle  
Jon and Amy Riekse  
Rochelle and Brian Rizzi on behalf  
of Rizzi Designs, LLC  
Jim and Suzanne Robinson  
Dan and Jody Rooney  
Brad and Meg Ropp  
Mary Roszel  
Fran Russell  
Cathie and Ron Sandin  
Mr. Chris Savona and Dr. Patricia  
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Lingenfelter Foundation  
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Employees  
Michigan Health and Hospital  
Association  
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Mid-Michigan Mechanical  
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The Frederick S. Upton  
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The Walmart Foundation  
WILX TV-10  
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as of February 24, 2012

## Ann Arbor Location Healing Hearts Society Members

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Auto-Owners Insurance  
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John, Jack and Calvin Floyd  
Jeff Hall and Chad Losey

### The Gift Of Friendship

The Dettler Family Foundation  
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Tom and Marion Kies  
Jason & Amy Lindauer  
Dr. Martin and Sheila Patrias  
Rick and Sue Snyder  
Susan Terrible Spoor

### The Gift Of Compassion

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NAIFA - Washtenaw (National  
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Financial Advisors)  
Toyota Motor Engineering and  
Manufacturing, N.A.

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Laurie and John Baumer  
Jim and Marlene Beck  
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Marisa Chrissos  
Dick Lundy  
David and Diane Lusk  
Bob and Jan Lyons Family  
Foundation  
Rob and Allyson Lyons and Family  
Rose Manitz  
John and Anne Mann  
Geraldine and Sheldon Markel  
Steve and Susan Marquardt  
Joe Marr - Sandler Training  
Jeff and Molly Mason  
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Dennis and Yvonne McComb  
Carolyn and Brad McFarlane  
Tom and Debby McMullen  
Dennis Michalak and Nancy  
Shipway  
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The Millican Family - Mary, Bryan,  
Devyn, Kelli, Taylor and Brock  
Mark and Mary Muetting  
Janet Nacu and Katherine Ford  
Mark Ouimet and Donna Hrozencik  
Donna Palmer  
The Timothy and Sheila Patton  
Family  
Robin and Stuart Phillips  
Anne Sanderson and Stephen  
Purcell  
Tom, Shirley and Ian Randall  
Jacob Sapp  
John and Mary Lou Severin  
Alfred and Mary Alice Shrosbree  
Jane Shrosbree  
Nancy and Brooks Sitterley  
Staffan Mitchell Funeral Home, Inc.  
Denise Starr  
Jerry, Ami, Justice, and Skylar Staton  
Peter Staton  
Doug, Julie, Jackie, Lauren,  
and Nathan Stotlar  
Peggy Sullivan  
Tamara Sutton  
The Tom Ufer Family  
James and Heather Voight  
Elly Wagner  
John and Jill Wagner  
Robin, Graham and Mason Wagner  
The Roy and Carol Weber Family  
Fund at the Ann Arbor Area  
Community Foundation  
Kathy and Tom Weber

Susan West  
Wilkinson Foundation  
Anne Williams  
Jeff and Dawn Williams  
Diane and Wendell Winner  
Dr. Brian and Amy Woodruff  
Kathy Young  
Karla Zarley and Keith Kastella  
Allison and Mark Zeglis  
Carole and Gary Zenz

## Ele Club Members

Airea, Inc.  
Anonymous  
Courtney Atsalakis  
Barbara and Daniel Balbach  
Bank of Ann Arbor  
Chelsea State Bank  
Chicks 4 Charities  
Comerica Foundation  
Charlie and Janet Crone  
Donovan and Smith Marketing  
and Media  
Bill and Julie Dunifon  
Dykema  
Fifth Third Bank  
William Clay, Jr. and Lisa Ford  
Mr. and Mrs. William B. Holmes  
Phil Jenkins  
Korybalski Family Charitable Fund  
The Lindauer Group at Merrill  
Lynch  
Ken & Kristen Lingenfelter  
Stacey, Mike, Megan and Madison  
Marsh  
Andrew Mizzi  
New York Life Foundation  
Chad and Rachelle Nyitray  
Dean and Cindy Rottermond  
Frederick and Diane Schmid  
Simmons Foundation  
Sons of Sunshine Fund  
Stockbridge Lions Club  
United Bank and Trust  
University of Michigan Greek  
Week Inc.  
The Frederick S. Upton Foundation  
Timothy Wadhams  
John and Tammy Williams

as of February 24, 2012

## LANSING WISH LIST

Copier Paper  
(White, 8 ½ x 11)  
DVD Player  
6MP Digital Camera  
iPod Players  
Large Paper Cutter  
Photoshop Computer  
Program  
Power Strips & Power  
Cords  
9" Paper Plates  
and Napkins  
9 oz. Plastic Cold Cups  
Blank Journals  
Dry Erase Markers  
Frequent Flyer Miles  
to Attend Workshops  
Laminating Machine  
Manilla 1/3 Cut Tab  
File Folders  
Pens  
Permanent Markers  
Post It Notes

## ele's legacy society

*Recognizing and thanking  
those who have thoughtfully  
remembered Ele's Place in  
their will or estate plan.*

Anonymous  
Laurie Strauss Baumer  
John and Jewel Bos  
Lori Bosch  
Nan Elizabeth Casey and Jim Dunn  
and the boys  
Karen A. Cox  
Nancy Finegood  
Deborah J. Garland  
Ken Hamstra  
Veronica E. Jackson  
Patrice A. Klein  
Charles and Christine McDonald  
Carrie Rathbun Hawks and  
Clint Hawks  
Steve, Mary Jo, Morgan and  
McKenzie Scofes  
Denise Shaheen  
Stan Soffin  
Lyle L. Stephens  
Betsy and Woody Stover  
Diana Tarpoff and Emily Polo Tate  
Susan West  
Chris and Amy Wilson  
Kathryn Wirth  
Sue and Ray Woodard

## Their Legacy lives on...

*The following donors planned  
a gift during their lifetime. Their  
legacy continues to support  
children today:*

Autumn D. Herrmann  
Maggie Miller  
Ruth E. Minor  
Harold A. Smith

Sculpey Clay  
Toilet Tissue  
Oust Air Freshner  
Hand sanitizer  
Easel pads  
Correction tape/white out  
AA, AAA, C and D  
Batteries  
Tri-fold Poster Boards  
Gift Cards from: Meijer,  
Walmart, Sam's Club,  
Gordon Food Services,  
Michaels, JoAnn's

## ANN ARBOR WISH LIST

iPod Players  
Copier Paper  
(White, 8 ½ x 11)  
Craft Supplies (markers,  
crayons, stickers,  
glitter glue, etc)  
Gift Cards from: Michaels,  
JoAnn's, Costco,  
Walmart, Sam's Club,  
Meijer, Gordon Food  
Services



Lansing & Ann Arbor  
Administrative Office:  
1145 W. Oakland Avenue  
Lansing, Michigan 48915



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## SAVE THESE DATES

### 5TH ANNUAL ELE'S PLACE SPRING RECEPTION

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2012  
TRAVIS POINTE COUNTRY CLUB  
ANN ARBOR

•  
HONORED GUEST  
FIRST LADY OF MICHIGAN,  
SUE SNYDER

•  
KEYNOTE SPEAKER  
LLOYD CARR  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
FOOTBALL COACH, *RETIRED*

•  
CHAIRPERSONS  
KEN AND KRISTEN LINGENFELTER



Ele's Race is  
Sunday,  
July 22, 2012

Jackson National Life Insurance Company®  
Headquarters

**NEW THIS YEAR!**  
Join us for a Team KICKOFF PARTY  
on Saturday, May 12th  
10:00-11:00 a.m.