

Emma Soorikian

Emma Soorikian, a most beautiful light, has left the material world, and joined with the universe. Her light will continue to shine. She left us on August 17, 2022, after a long and very courageous struggle with a neurological illness that was relentless in its pursuit, and unaided by a broken system of mental health care. She was a brave and kind warrior who wanted to lift up those in need, even when she was battling such difficult obstacles herself.

Emma grew up in Decatur, Georgia. Many of her friendships extend way back to her early days at school in Decatur. Emma spent summers and holidays with family in Alabama, New Jersey, and her beloved Block Island, Rhode Island. She grew up with a tremendous love of her family, her friends, nature and all creatures of the animal world.

Emma graduated from Decatur High School in 2019, where she earned a Career IB degree in early childhood education and spent much time in the Fraser Center with infants to 4 year olds, and at her beloved Camp Scene after school with 5 to 11 year olds. She adored working with children.

After graduating high school, Emma started art school in New York City at the Fashion Institute of Technology. It was a dream come true for her. She worked so hard and showed incredible promise in her art abilities there, and she was very proud of making the Dean List in her freshman year. Her art is amazing.

Unfortunately, the pandemic cut Emma's big foray into the wider world short, and her serious struggles began. For the past 18 months, Emma worked so hard to recover, and to use the talents she possessed to try to make a difference in the world. She had an uncommon strength and was determined that her purpose in life was now to help others. Emma longed for a world where we all realize that we are connected by a universal thread and that we need to love one another accordingly.

She went back to work with Camp Scene and it was a true beacon in her life. She loved her co-workers, her boss, all the children, and the mission they were on to bring awareness to the beauty and diversity of the natural world. The children were a constant source of joy in her world. She cared deeply for them and wanted to help them when she saw them face their own struggles. She had a particular fondness for those kids who misbehaved. She believed them to be often misunderstood and acknowledged that they must have struggles in their own lives, and that they needed patience and understanding, not punishment. That is what she tried to provide.

Emma wanted to help plan an amazing and memorable family trip following her big brother's recent graduation from college. She planned the road trip itinerary from the desert at Death Valley National Park, through Sequoia National Park to see the giant trees, up to San Francisco. It was an adventure that we would never have dreamed up ourselves. She loved the desert so much and we love that she was able to experience it. We could never have imagined that it would be our last vacation with her.

Emma is survived by her parents, Karen and Matt Soorikian of Decatur, GA, her brother Lee Soorikian of Seattle, WA, her grandparents, Louis and Georgia Buettner of Tuscaloosa, AL and Diana Soorikian of Leonia, NJ, her Uncle Chris Buettner and Aunt Ellen of Decatur, GA, her Uncle Craig Buettner and Aunt Amy of Tuscaloosa, AL, her Aunt Anne Bonadies and Uncle Mike of Leonia, NJ, and her Aunt Andrea Soorikian of Santa Fe, NM. She is also survived by her older cousins, Nick Bonadies of New Orleans, LA, Joe Bonadies of Greenwich, CT, his wife, Emily and their children, Henry and Nora, Tony Bonadies of Pine Plains, NY, Willie Jane Dent of Glendale, CA, Jacob Buettner of Burbank, CA, his wife, Tessa, and their son Sage, Hayden Buettner, Kennedy Buettner, Isabelle Buettner, Markie Buettner all who reside in Birmingham, AL, and her two younger cousins Sophia and Dahlia Buettner of Decatur, GA. Emma is also predeceased by her beloved grandfather, Levon Soorikian.

Her last few months were a tremendous struggle for her, and in the end her pain and suffering became too much for her to bear. We hope that she has finally found the peace that she so desperately sought. It is now our goal to nurture her life purpose of helping others in need. Emma always had a deep and abiding conviction that all kids, no matter their family's means, should have access to great after school and day camp programs like Camp Scene. She wanted kids to be cared for with kindness and to learn important things about the world around them in fun, unexpected and imaginative ways. Emma's wish will be granted with "Emma's Equity Fund," which will provide scholarships to after school and day camps for underserved kids that need help to access such programs. In lieu of flowers, please consider giving to this fund, so that we can continue Emma's mission.

(link to fund)

A memorial service will be held on September 9, 2022 at 6:00 pm in the Woodlands Garden in Decatur, Georgia (932 Scott Blvd, Decatur, GA 30030). Everyone is invited to celebrate the passing and release of Emma's beautiful light into the universe. May she continue to shine in us all.

Directions to Woodlands can be found [here](#). Parking at Woodlands is limited. Off-site parking options are available at Westchester Elementary (758 Scott Blvd), BB&T Bank (1221 Clairmont Road) and on Maediris Dr. across from the Decatur YMCA. Please consider walking or carpooling if you live close to the garden.