

The Pony Princess

IN MEMORY OF GRACE EKIS



Grace Elizabeth Ekis was born on April 20, 2002, joining brothers Colin and Garret. The Ekis family made their first trip to the Outer Banks that summer and fell in love with the Corolla beaches. As Grace grew, so did her love of horses. She was never far from her stuffed horse, Alex, that she bought while on vacation. When she visited the Wild Horse Museum, she learned about the wild horses living here and hoped to see them one day.

On January 4, 2007, Grace's parents were devastated to learn that their little daughter had an extremely rare malignant brain tumor. Grace completed radiation therapy and was put on experimental chemotherapy drugs. Grace's parents were told that she had 8 to 12 months to live but fervently hoped for a miracle. They returned to the Outer Banks for their annual vacation in July. Grace enjoyed climbing the lighthouse and, according to her mom, Tamara, was thrilled to paint a horse at the Wild Horse Museum. She used every bit of pink paint available and finished off her horse with purple hooves, an eye and a big smile.

Later that fall, Grace's tumor worsened and her parents' hearts broke as they watched her lose movement and control of her right side. She remained upbeat however, and continued to do the things she loved – kindergarten, dancing, and coloring horses.

On Valentine's Day, February 14, 2008, Grace lost her brave battle and passed away. In the words of her mother, "*We miss her desperately.*"

Her family decided to make the trip to Corolla this summer in her memory. Grace's parents once again visited the Wild Horse Museum – this time to make a donation in her memory. In a letter dated July 31, Grace's mother wrote, "*Unfortunately, Grace never got to see her Outer Banks horses running free and wild on the beach. We can imagine, however, that she is running with them now, as a beautiful angel.*"

Brian and Tamara Ekis, North Huntingdon, PA

Grace's website is www.carepages.com. The Care page name is: *ThePonyPrincess*

