

Healing Hearts



Bo's Place

E-Newsletter // June // 06.02.16



Dad: A son's first hero, a daughter's first love

Losing your father at any age can be a life-changing event, the impact of which will ebb and flow with time and age. For children, the loss of a father can bring up feelings of sorrow and uncertainty: adult emotions that are often hard

to understand. It can also make them feel very alone and different from their peers.

If your family has experienced the recent death of Dad:

- **Expect a focus on the traumatic.** Death is traumatic, even if it was expected, and thus children will naturally focus on and ask many questions about the event itself. If the death was unexpected and sudden, the child may fear that someone else they love may die suddenly.
- **Expect dramatic play and reenactment.** Young children understand their world through play and this includes both positive and negative events. Thus, grieving children will often act out scenarios of death and loss through imaginary play.
- **Express your own sadness.** As the surviving parent or guardian, you may feel it necessary to remain strong for the kids, but this may not be the best model. By letting them know that you are sad and hurting, too, children will know it is okay to express their feelings and show emotions. More importantly, it will show them that they are not alone.
- **Listen.** After the initial sadness has worn off, many teenagers find

themselves experiencing anger. Maybe they are mad at the world and find it unfair, or maybe they are mad at themselves because they think they could have tried to prevent the death in the first place. Let them know that these feelings are normal and don't judge them. After listening, ask how you can help.

How to prepare for Father's Day:

- **Encourage your child to talk about Dad.** One-on-one or as a family, encourage your child to remember the good things about Dad. Look at photos, write down memories and perhaps put together a memory album or make a collage that will help celebrate Dad today and in the future.
- **Let your child know that they will always be their father's child.** Even though their father is not physically present anymore, encourage your child to continue the relationship with their father by sharing their thoughts, feelings and life experiences with Dad either verbally or in writing.
- **Let your child know that their Dad would be proud of them.** Children will wish their father was there to see them grow up and achieve goals and reach milestones. They may miss being able to ask his thoughts about their lives and choices. Praising children about the things their father would be proud of and giving them feedback on what kind of person their father hoped they would become can help them feel a continued connection and instill feelings of closeness and comfort.
- **Decide how to celebrate the day as a family.** Ads on television and the radio will not escape notice from even the youngest child, and of course, most will discuss the holiday in school. While there is a big push to celebrate Dad this June 19, decide as a family how you want that celebration to look and feel for your family. Perhaps you want to do something that you used to do with Dad or perhaps you want to do something new. Also, be prepared if your kids don't want to do anything at all or just want time for themselves.

As Father's Day approaches, remember that grieving is not a single event, but a process. Remain patient with yourself and your kids, and allow everyone to cope at their own pace in their own way. The best thing you can do for your child is to be present, extending your hand and your heart, and show them that it's okay to be sad but it's also okay to go on with life. Dad will always be cherished in your hearts.



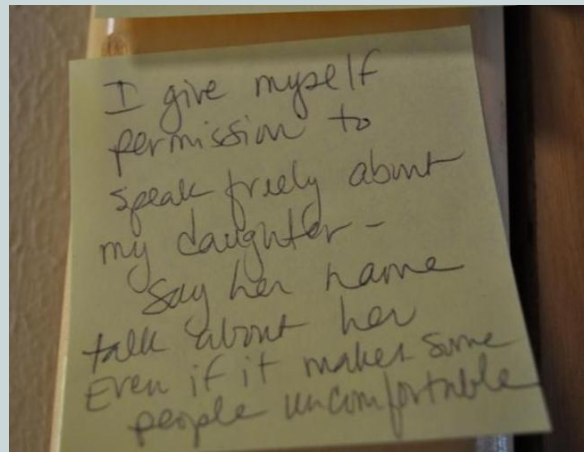
Moms Retreat

Research shows that children who are grieving a death are supported when parents and caregivers provide attentiveness, warmth, and connection, and when adults model healthy coping. At Bo's Place, we know that if moms don't have a safe place to work through their own grief, they will not be accessible to their bereaved children in the way that their children need support.



With a vision to provide a special weekend retreat for bereaved moms to address their own needs, Bo's Place sought an underwriter for its first Moms Retreat. Thanks to the generosity of **Geo. H. Lewis & Sons**, who underwrote the retreat, twenty moms attended our inaugural Moms Retreat at Camp Allen the last weekend in April. Despite the threat of torrential rain and predictions of floods, the weekend was warm and sunny, providing the perfect backdrop for a weekend of activities for self-care and renewal. But the proof of the success of the weekend is always in the feedback we receive from our participants. During the closing ritual at the end of the retreat, moms shared about the things they would give themselves permission to do:

- Do something for themselves
- Live more in the moment
- Give themselves time—realizing they don't have to feel OK immediately
- Experience a glimmer of hope and, in that hope, gain a sense of confidence that their family will be all right
- Feel a sense of gratitude — that there are others out there who understand and will be there to listen and to support them



Moms Retreat was a powerful weekend made possible due to the inspiration and hard work of our Special Programs Manager, Courtney Reynolds, LMSW and her team of volunteers. Bo's Place is committed to making this an annual offering for our moms and we have already booked space at Camp Allen next spring.



Donor Spotlight: New York Life Foundation

The New York Life Foundation was founded in 1979 and has provided nearly \$220 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. In 2008, they narrowed their focus to help grieving children because 1 in 20 will experience the death of a loved one by the time they are 16. Since then, the New York Life Foundation has committed over \$25 million to support grieving children.

Bo's Place is grateful for the support of the New York Life Foundation, which has been instrumental in the success of our Hispanic Outreach Initiative. They have committed to giving Bo's Place \$300,000 since our first grant in 2011.

Beyond the Foundation, the local New York Life office and its staff have been steadfast in their support of Bo's Place, committing volunteer hours, providing holiday meals, participating in training/education opportunities and giving through a matching campaign.

Thank you to New York Life for all that you do to help grieving families in Houston, and in the United States. Together we are able to provide better support for the bereaved.



Volunteer Spotlight: Marie Hejtmancik de Valenzuela

*we *heart* our volunteers!*

Marie Hejtmancik De Valenzuela is a dynamo - when she's "in," she's "all in." She and her husband, Kelly, first found out about Bo's Place from the New



York Life Foundation, which has supported Bo's Place Hispanic Outreach program for six years. Once Marie was aware of New York Life Foundation's support of Bo's Place, she began thinking of ways to further engage the Houston Office. First, she connected Bo's Place with Lighthouse Charity Group, who joined forces with the New York Life Houston Office to provide a delicious holiday meal straight from their cook truck last December for one of our support groups.

Marie was eager to learn more about how she could support Bo's Place, so she and Kelly joined our Outreach Committee, where Marie then volunteered to single-handedly solicit door prizes for our Volunteer Appreciation event, which is a highlight for all our volunteers!

She and Kelly immediately saw how helpful it would be for the life insurance agents at New York Life to learn more about how to support grieving children and families, so they arranged for Program Director, Marian Mankin, to give a presentation for 50+ agents. Feedback from the workshop was so positive that we have plans to make this an annual offering. Having completed Volunteer Facilitator Training in February, Marie is now a volunteer facilitator, and she attended our Spring Camp Healing Hearts as a cabin counselor.

Born and raised in a small town in Germany, Marie grew up on a dairy farm. She received a scholarship because of her singing abilities to Notre Dame. She's happily married to Kelly Hejtmancik, a Partner with New York Life. Kelly and Marie have two children Nate and Libby, both juniors at Friendswood High School. Marie is an animal lover especially when it comes to her three rescue potbelly pigs. Marie and her family reside on 6 acres in Friendswood enjoying a menagerie of animals. Besides volunteering for Bo's Place, she also volunteers at the Lighthouse Charity.

Marie's motto has always been "smile on to the world and watch the world smile back at you."

Thank you, Marie, for generously sharing your time, energy and smile with Bo's Place!





Ready. Set. Bo.

In 2017, Team Bo's Place members will participate in our 12th year as a part of the Chevron Houston Marathon/Aramco Half Marathon's "Run for a Reason" charity program. Our goal is to raise \$75,000 through TEAM BO'S PLACE this

year and we can't do it without you!

Sign up for OPEN REGISTRATION NOW by clicking [here](#) and don't forget to indicate you want to be a part of Team Bo's Place. To receive HERO benefits, which include a custom black bib, tech cap, pass for pre-race private indoor restrooms and more, set up a fundraising page and raise \$350! Or you can choose to purchase a HERO spot [here](#) (only 5 remaining). To purchase a hero spot, you will pay your marathon registration fee and make the donation of \$350 right now.

If 3.1 miles sounds more your pace, you can also sign up for the 5K! As a Team Bo's Place 5K runner, you can also set up a fundraising page to help us reach our goal. Sign up for the 5K [here](#)!

One additional way to support Team Bo's Place in reaching their goal is to make a donation to the cause! You can support an individual runner or the team by making a tax-deductible contribution [here](#)!



Think We're Great?

We hope you do! You can support Bo's Place by helping us reach "Top-Rated" status on Great Nonprofits. They are asking we meet the challenge of 10 new ratings before October 31st! So please take a moment to share your personal story. What brought you to Bo's Place and made you passionate about the work that



we do? Bo's Place families, volunteers, supporters and community partners are all welcome to participate.

Great Nonprofits is a research tool where individuals can find out more about Bo's Place and how we support families in Houston who have experienced the

death of a loved one. Help us spread the word by sharing your Bo's Place experience [here!](#)



Happenings



On May 13, we hosted some of the students who participated in our school-based support groups, allowing them to experience the "magic" of Bo's Place for themselves. It was a very successful and helpful "**End of School Year Event**" for them!

On May 17, Tracy Dieterich, Houston Symphony Board of Trustees member and Social Service Partnerships Chair, hosted a breakfast reception and symphony rehearsal preview at Jones Hall to officially launch the **Houston Symphony's Social Service Partnerships initiative**. Bo's Place is honored to be one of the lucky key partners in this initiative.



On May 18, Bo's Place Executive Director, Mary Beth Staine, attended a luncheon honoring the Fellows of the Foundation and 2015-2016 Grant Recipients of the **Houston Young Lawyers Foundation** held at Brennan's of Houston. Thanks to the HYLFF, we will distribute 1000 packets to Houston area schools and businesses in November during Children's Grief Awareness month.

On May 19, we presented Paul Vincent with **Superior Energy** a gift of recognition for their generous support as a Sidewalk Squad Sponsor for the 2016 Houston Marathon.



On May 20, Bo's Place clinician, Russ Robinett, LPC, LCDC, presented a workshop entitled "Understanding Grief and Supporting the Bereaved" training for staff members at the **Montrose Center**.

On May 20, the Vitas Community Connection of **Vitas Healthcare** came to Bo's Place to present us with a check. We are thrilled to grow this partnership in the years to come.





On May 20, Spanish Outreach Manager, Flor Guebara, LMSW, attended the **Communities In Schools Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon**, where Bo's Place was acknowledged for the several in-school support groups conducted in eight schools this year. (pictured here with Kimberly Satterwhite, MA, CIS Project Manager, Elsie High School)

Parent's Night Out is a twice a year tradition for Bo's Place children and teens, and is hosted by **Baylor College of Medicine** in the spring time. This May 27, children and teens enjoyed music, chalk, movies, art, face painting, pizza, a basketball tournament, and getting to pie volunteers in the face.



Bo's Place Grief Support Services

At Bo's Place, we believe that enabling grieving families to share their experiences with each other helps these families navigate the grief journey and move towards hope and healing. We offer free Grief Support Groups in English and Spanish to families and individuals.

If you or someone you know would like information about Bo's Place Grief Support Groups for children, families, and adults, [click here](#) or call 713.942.8339.

Bo's Place exists to enhance the lives of those who have experienced the death of a loved one.

10050 Buffalo Speedway // Houston, TX 77054 // 713.942.8339

info@bosplace.org; www.bosplace.org; [facebook.com/bosplace](https://www.facebook.com/bosplace)

