

Healing Hearts



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Making a Plan for Holiday Grief



Most of us envision the holidays as a happy and thankful time of year to be enjoyed with close family and friends. But for those who are grieving, the holidays may only serve to magnify our loss, as memories of good times and togetherness remind us how much our lives have changed.

While this special time of year may be harder to navigate when you are grieving, it is possible. Sometimes just the anticipation of the holidays is worse than the actual day, and that's why most experts agree that having a plan is important. Remember, there is no right or wrong when it comes to grief and there are many options to finding the holiday plan that is right for you.

Try something new. Losing a loved one can give us a new perspective on what's really important in life, and the same may be true for the holidays. Now is the time to reflect on what parts of the holidays you enjoy and what parts you don't. While sticking to some old family traditions may help to give the holidays structure, it may also be therapeutic to develop some new traditions. Do whatever feels safe and comfortable this year, and reevaluate your plan next year.

Surround yourself with people who love you. Share any new plans for the holidays with family and friends. They may not know how to help you through the holidays and will need input from you, if possible. Most of us find memories comforting, so perhaps you can ask your family and friends to reminisce on past holidays with your loved one.

Allow yourself to feel. Realize that the holidays will likely be a mix of sadness, anger, love and laughter. Try to accept the emotional ups and downs and remember that each family member may grieve in different ways, especially during the holidays. Keep the lines of communication open as much as possible.

Scale back or take a year off. When you are grieving you are in a vulnerable state, so it's more important than ever to do what's right for you. For some that may mean scaling back the decorations or forgoing the holiday card. And for others it may mean "canceling" the holidays all together. While time alone to reflect and grieve will be important during the holidays, try not to isolate yourself and have at least a few activities planned with family and friends.

Do something for someone else. Make a donation or send a gift in memory of your loved one. Perhaps you could invite someone who is alone for the holidays, or adopt a family in need. Being able to access the giving spirit of the season can be an important symbol of life continuing.

Take care of yourself. Avoid overindulging in food and alcohol and try to get plenty of rest and some physical exercise. Allowing yourself to do only what you feel you can handle this holiday season is one of the best gifts you can give yourself and your family.

Take care of the kids. The holidays have a special meaning for children and thus your choices will likely affect the children in your family. If you withdraw completely, they may not understand. If you're finding it difficult to participate this year, perhaps you can engage in the family traditions that are most important to the kids and bow out of the rest.

Honor your loved one. Participate in a holiday ritual in your loved one's memory. This could include lighting a candle for them, dedicating a service to them, displaying their picture among the holiday decorations, or visiting the cemetery to decorate their grave. Perhaps a moment of silence during the holiday toast would be appropriate or you could set some time aside for family and friends to share their own special memories. Whatever you choose, honoring your loved one as part of your holiday traditions can help to bring meaning to the season.

Having a plan for the holidays can relieve anxiety and help people adjust expectations. Our holiday handout is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Please feel free to share these resources with others who are grieving this holiday season.



A Night to Remember

Bo's Place was the beneficiary of Festari for Men's annual "Una Notte in Italia," which took place on Friday, November 4 at the Royal Sonesta. A bevy of Bo's Place board members walked the stage in this fun men's fashion show. Thank you to David Shine, Travis Torrence, Frank Verducci and Paul Vincent for representing Bo's Place on stage!

The all-star lineup also included Astro's 3rd Baseman Alex Bregman, Dynamo player David Horst, Houston Texans Safety Andre Hal, Defensive End Christian

Covington and Outside Linebacker Whitney Mercilus. The "Original" Houston Texan, Chester Pitts, also made an appearance on the runway.

Guests enjoyed fine Italian food, fashion and wine while cheering on the male "models".

Board president Travis Torrence presented Debbie and Rudy Festari with a City Proclamation for their dedication to raising funds for deserving charities through this annual event. In addition, they also received a special recognition in appreciation from Bo's Place.

Following the show, guests danced the night away in the lounge to sounds from DJ Senega. Thank you to everyone who made this event a success and raised over \$340,000 for Bo's Place!



WANTED: Volunteer Facilitators



Compassionate, dedicated and empathetic men and women for our January 2017 Volunteer Facilitator training.

Interested facilitators should attend a Volunteer Information Session and two days of training on January 28 and 29 from 9:00 am - 4:00 pm. Volunteer facilitators must be at least 22 years old and make a one year commitment. Both English speaking and bilingual (English/Spanish) facilitators are needed.

Please contact Carla Bagalay, Volunteer Coordinator, at carla@bosplace.org to learn more about this heartwarming volunteer opportunity.

"The families are dealing with the worst thing that could happen to them and I feel honored to be a support for them. I like that they allow me into their



Workshop: The Neurobiology of Grief and Loss

In our next workshop for mental health professionals, guest speaker Matthew S. Stanford, Ph.D., from the Hope and Healing Center & Institute, presents "The Neurobiology of Grief and Loss". Join us as Dr. Stanford discusses how grief and loss affect our brain.



Date: Friday, December 9

Time: 9:00 am - Noon

Cost: \$45 with 3 CEUs; \$30 without CEUs

Location: Bo's Place



For questions, contact Valencia at valencia@bosplace.org or 713-942-8339.



BO'S PLACE
HEARTS
— of —
HOPE
LUNCHEON 2017

New York Times Best-Seller at Hearts of Hope

It's not too late to make your reservation for this year's Hearts of Hope Luncheon on Thursday, January 26, 2017 at the Hilton Americas.

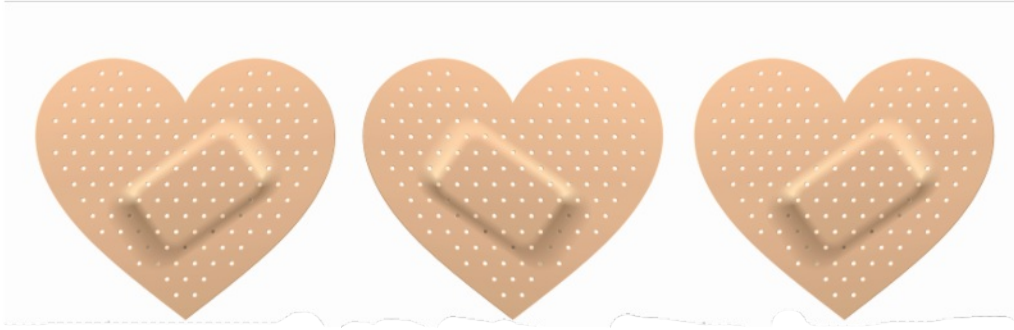
Tickets and tables are still available and we hope you will join us in support of this year's Robin Bush Award Honoree, Susan Harvin Lawhon and our Event Chairs, Susan and David Light and Leslie and Randy Newcomer.

You also won't want to miss out on hearing this year's speaker, Dr. Lucy Kalanithi, widow of Dr. Paul Kalanithi, author of *When Breath Becomes Air*. This New York Times Best-Selling book is an intimate look at living life fully in the face of death.

Tickets and tables are available online [here](#), or call Andrea Sivells, Development Director at 713-942-8339. We hope to see you there!



where **hearts** are healed



As we reflect on what a wonderful year 2016 has been, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide free-of-charge grief support and education to children, families and individuals in need. In our 2015-2016 fiscal year, we provided these services to over 5,000 individuals.

In order to continue to meet our mission, we need your financial support. And now is the perfect time to make a tax-deductible donation. Your gift to Bo's Place can be given in honor of, or in memory of a loved one. With your support we can continue to help heal hearts. To make a donation, click [here](#).



Happenings

On November 7, **St. Martin's Episcopal Church** delivered Thanksgiving decorations to set the holiday mood in the dining room for the month.





The **Theta Charity Antiques Show** Preview Night on November 10 was a great start to an event that benefitted local charities, including Bo's Place!

Thanks to the generosity of an Advisory Board member, we were able to provide smoked turkey breasts to almost 100 Bo's Place families. Additional thanks to a board member, National Charity League, St. Martin's Episcopal Church and the Junior League of Houston who provided a full complement of **Thanksgiving** goodies for families.



On November 27, little elves from **National Charity League** brought the holiday spirit to Bo's Place by decorating the inside of the building!



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.
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