

Healing Hearts



e-Newsletter // March // 03.01.17



"The process is pretty straightforward," Christine Hempel explains when I ask about the process of making a quilt for Bo's Place. "Cutting, pressing, starching, pinning and sewing." This doesn't even begin to describe what *really* happens when one of our volunteer quilters accepts responsibility for a stack of quilt squares. After our families pour their hearts onto a 7x7 inch square of fabric, the squares are lovingly collected by quilters all over the Houston Metropolitan area to craft into works of art. Many have stories like Christine's; memories from childhood of great-aunts and grandmothers,

gathered around the quilting frame, chatting and drinking coffee. The quilts are intricate creations born of meager materials; heirlooms passed down through generations, traveling across the country to grace bedrooms and walls. Christine shares that "those quilts exemplify our family roots, a reminder of a simpler time, and the important bonds of family and community. While some of these quilted mosaics are threadbare and worn today, the memory of the handiwork, dedication and collaborative spirit that created those masterpieces is as vibrant today as it was then."

Christine began as a kitchen volunteer for the Bo's Place satellite program in Katy and remembers the first time a group in Katy completed their quilt squares. "My hand shot right up! I couldn't wait to get started." Admiring the quilts Christine has created, I compliment her handiwork. Modestly, she remarks, "I'll be the first one to admit that I'm not the best seamstress in the world. I make mistakes and maybe the quilt isn't perfect. But the families really don't care if the stitch is off, or a square is a little off-kilter." And she is absolutely right. These quilts are made by hand, they reflect the families whose hands drew intricate pictures of their loved one, whose grief is unique to each individual. "I treat each of the quilt squares like it's made of glass. I am so careful with each one, because I know that each square is a valuable memory and tribute to their loved one. They cannot be reproduced. I am always enthralled to see the amount of time, effort and thought involved in creating a memory."

From her stories, I can imagine Christine as a young girl, crawling around under a giant quilt frame where her great-grandmother, great-aunt and their neighbors would gather, learning this treasured art form. Could they have imagined the number of people that would be impacted by their love of quilting? Or the gratitude the families express to Christine when finally, they can see their memorials enclosed in fabric, hung high on the wall? Christine knows the power of her quilts and sees it in the faces of the children when the final piece is complete. "The quilt represents the truly important things in life: community, family and love."

Please consider sharing this story with the quilters in your life. We are currently seeking volunteer quilters to assist with the mounting stack of quilt squares awaiting a place on the wall. For more details, please contact Carla Bagalay at 713-942-8339 or carla@bosplace.org.



Volunteer Spotlight

Leah Adams - finding her true calling



Leah Adams started volunteering at Bo's Place in the kitchen, so she could see what all the talk was about. But it didn't take her long to graduate to facilitator and then to facilitator extraordinaire!

Leah started facilitating two groups, a Wednesday ongoing group and the Thursday LIGHT group. Since that early start, she has also volunteered for special events like the Hearts of Hope luncheon, Parent's Night Out, and various summer programs. Last year she volunteered at the inaugural Mom's Retreat and she is slated to do so again this year. Currently, Leah facilitates for the Thursday LIGHT group and is a member of the Outreach Committee, helping to share the magic of Bo's Place.

Leah couldn't remember exactly how she heard about Bo's Place, but she did recall the time when she decided to live a life of service. In 2007, after some stressful life changes, she took a sabbatical in Hawaii for three months where she reflected on life, loss and hope. "During that time, I really thought about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life and I decided that serving others was the most meaningful thing I could do with the wisdom of grief in my heart."

While loving the many facets of the volunteer opportunities at Bo's Place, Leah says the Thursday LIGHT group is where she found her true calling because she too was a suffering family member. When she was younger, her teenage brother died when he was hit by a truck while riding his bike. "Things just fell apart after that," said Leah. Her parents got divorced and she went into a "grief cloud." "Had we known about Bo's Place after my brother died, I think our hearts would have healed a decade sooner."

While families in need are her primary motivator, Leah couldn't say enough about her colleagues at Bo's Place. "The leadership, staff and co-facilitators at Bo's Place are truly and authentically some of the most beautiful souls I've come across. I hold on tight to these connections and am grateful each and every day for them." Trauma Program Manager Russ Robinett felt the same way about Leah. "She is a dedicated volunteer who regularly demonstrates her genuine care and heart-felt compassion for her group members. Leah is a wonderful and valuable part of our Thursday LIGHT Team."

For Leah, the magic of Bo's Place is "trusting the process." She said her Thursday LIGHT Mom's group started with 14 members, and while she was nervous about having that many voices to be heard, Russ told her to trust the process. "Grief is messy and it has to get messy before it gets better. I see it over and over with our families. Even in that mess they are in communion with each other. The sharing of that energy seems to be the true healing magic."

Thanks, Leah, for sharing your magic with Bo's Place!



Getting Ready to get Decked Out

We officially kicked off our **Hats, Hearts and Horseshoes** with a party at **IW Marks** on February 8. Event Chairs, **Megan Hotze** and **Hannah McNair** greeted party-goers while Executive Director Mary Beth Staine shared everyone's excitement for this fun event to be held on **May 6** at the home of Paige and Tilman Fertitta.



Mint juleps will be flowing and guests will get to participate in plenty of fun games. To keep you entertained before we watch the big race, there will be a "giving tree", racing wall, heads or tails and a Big Board! Instant wine cellar, Rockets tickets, spa parties, custom boots, Texans package are just some of the fabulous items in store. We'd love to see you decked out in your Derby finest, as there will also be contests for best-dressed and best hat!

Purchase your tickets or tables [here](#) and don't miss out on the action!



BO'S BUDDIES Crawfish Boil



Mark your calendars for the Bo's Buddies Crawfish Boil on **Saturday, March 11**. The event will be held at **McIntyre's in the Heights** from **12 to 3 p.m.** Purchase of a \$25 wristband gets you crawfish and sides, plus an entry to win a door prize gift basket filled with your favorite goodies valued at over \$250! We'll also have drink specials and a silent auction.

Let's raise money for Bo's Place! Bring your friends, have fun and discover ways to get involved with Bo's Buddies!

Click [here](#) to RSVP for the event.



Team Bo's Place Rallied!

Thank you to our wonderful Team Bo's Place runners, cheerleaders, donors and supporters. With your help, we crushed our goal of \$75,000! We're still tallying the final total, but it looks like it will be almost \$80,000.

We couldn't do this without all of you as a part of the team, but our runners truly are the heart of the program. One of our fundraisers this year was **Mary Murray** and she shared her reason for running:

"Why do I run for Bo's Place? That is a good question. I don't consider myself a runner, I don't really train and I'm still waiting for endorphins to kick in. However, I have managed to run 1 full marathon and 7 half marathons at the Chevron Houston Marathon benefiting Bo's Place. I truly 'Run for a Reason'.

When I was 7 years old, my mom died of breast cancer and I always promised myself I would help other children that also experienced the death of parent. I began volunteering in 2006 as a group facilitator and I am honored to still be a part of such wonderful organization. Watching the families create bonds and friendships within their groups is an amazing and heartwarming experience.

So why do I run? I run in honor of all the children and parents that come to Bo's Place for support and in memory of my mom. I was unable to help her when she was sick, but by running for Bo's Place and in my own small way, I can help heal broken hearts.

As long as I am able, I will continue to Run for a Reason for Bo's Place. Looking forward to next year!"

Thank you to Mary and all of our runners who hit the pavement for Bo's Place. We're so proud of you and look forward to cheering you on next year!



SUMMER INTERN!

Do you know an outstanding college student who enjoys working with children and teens and is interested in learning more about the nonprofit world? Bo's Place is accepting applications for two paid internships, which will be wonderful 2017 summer workplace opportunities.

The **Special Programs Intern** funded by ExxonMobil will work with program staff and volunteers as they assist in our Summer Grief Support Programs for children, teens and families. The intern will also assist in the development of arts and activity programming for our upcoming camps and retreats. There are many more facets of this job, which you can learn more about in the Special Programs Internship [job description](#).

The **Communications and Community Outreach Intern** funded by Shell will complete projects to gain knowledge and experience in public relations, communication, marketing, and community engagement. The intern will develop communications tools

and create materials to promote events and volunteer recruitment/appreciation activities for the organization. Learn more about the Communications and Community Outreach Internship in the [job description](#).

Bo's Place is proud to be a part of the **2017 ExxonMobil Community Summer Jobs Program** and the **2017 Shell Nonprofit Internship Program**, which have made these internships possible.

For more information about the internships, please visit our [website](#).



Upcoming Workshops

The Colors of Mourning: A Panel Discussion Death Rites and Rituals across Spiritual Traditions

Presented by Bo's Place and the Institute for Spirituality and Health
Thursday, March 30 from 9 a.m. to noon

Through discussion from several cultural perspectives, attendees will develop knowledge of various mourning rituals and their meaning for specific cultural communities, as well as increased competence in working with diverse populations of bereaved individuals.

Los Basicos del Duelo

Presentado por Flor Guebara, LCSW y Cristina Flores, LCSW
Viernes, 7 de abril 2017, de 9:00 am a 12:00 pm

Este taller ofrecerá una visión general del trayecto del duelo, comprensión de los niños de la muerte de acuerdo a las etapas de desarrollo, el duelo en la familia y en la cultura Latina, como apoyar a la comunidad, y actividades. Se hará énfasis en el vocabulario que se usa cuando se habla del duelo en español.

Lean on Me: Building a Supportive Environment through Team Building

Presented by: Courtney Reynolds, LCSW
Friday, May 12, from Noon to 1:30 p.m.

Team Building allows a group to form bonds which can result in a higher level of understanding, trust and healing. Through experiential activities, participants will learn exercises that can be translated into your staff environment, volunteer culture, support or therapy groups, camp cabins and other supportive programming.

Offering Culturally Appropriate Grief Support to the Latino Community

Presented by: Cristina M Flores, LCSW and Flor Guebara, LCSW
Friday, May 19, from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

This presentation will provide detailed information on grief in the Latino culture, including a discussion on the cultural considerations to take into account when working with the Latino bereaved community.

Good Grief: Understanding and Supporting the Bereaved

Presented by Cristina Flores, LCSW, Flor Guebara, LCSW, Marian Mankin, LCSW
Friday, June 16, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Led by Bo's Place mental health professionals, this workshop will provide an overview of current grief theory, children's understanding of death according to developmental stages, grief in the family and in the community, and experiential activities.

Please visit our [events page](#) for more information and to register for workshops.



Happenings

On February 1, in conjunction with the Houston Super Bowl festivities, singer and actress **Jordin Sparks** and her Houston Texans friend, **Christian Covington**, visited Bo's Place for the evening. They hung out with the children, made Valentines, and distributed teddy bears. It was a very special night!



Lady Gaga's **Born This Way Foundation** partnered with three local charities and hosted a fundraising booth at the NFL Experience as they did their Kick Off For Kindness project. Bo's Place was honored to be selected and received toy donations from their partnership with the Mattel Foundation.





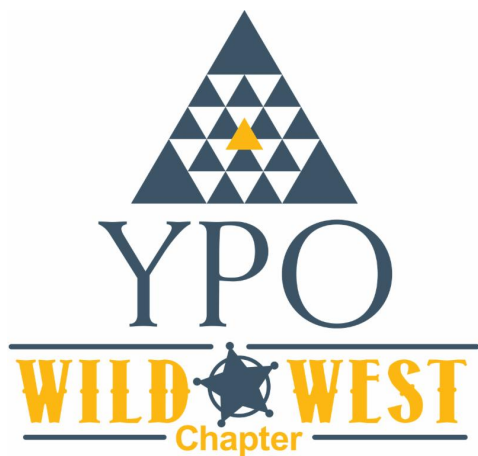
Local mission partners were invited to have a display with brochures, pamphlets and volunteer information for the parishioners of **St. John the Divine** on February 5.

February 8 was a grand evening at **IW Marks** on February 8 as **Hats, Hearts and Horseshoes** Co-Chairs Megan Hotze and Hannah McNair welcomed guests to the official kick-off party. Derby designs were on display from Tootsies and guests enjoyed light bites and cocktails!



High School students from **Emery/Weiner School** spent a Day of Service at Bo's Place on February 10.

A group of over 160 **Houston Ultimate** players gathered for the annual **Hucking for Laura** tournament on February 11 at George Bush Park. This co-ed tournament is held in memory of a beloved friend to the Ultimate Community, Laura Powell Higgins. Thanks to all who came out to support this fun day in the sun!



Bo's Place would like to thank the **Young President's Organization Wild West Chapter** for their generous donation! On February 16, Lori Bokone, Katy Program Manager, spoke to members of this organization about the services Bo's Place provides, and she shared tips on talking to children before and after a death occurs.



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.

