

Healing Hearts



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National Alliance for Grieving Children Symposium

Bo's Place was well represented at the National Alliance for Grieving Children's (NAGC) 21st annual Symposium in Richmond, Virginia. Eight staff members attended to learn the latest trends, theories and practices related to children's grief. Bo's Place staff members were also popular speakers, with Flor Guebara and Cristina Flores presenting a workshop titled "Somos NAGC: Offering Culturally Appropriate Grief Support to the Latino Community," Marian Mankin co-leading the Program Director's Forum and Courtney Reynolds presenting a workshop titled "Lean On Me: Building a Supportive Environment through Team Building." Bo's Place Executive Director, Mary Beth Staine, is president of the NAGC board of directors, and she presented speakers and updated the NAGC membership on current developments within the organization, and offered all in attendance a warm welcome. Over 450 attendees from across the country learned new ideas and shared successes.



We look forward to seeing our colleagues from across the country gather again next year for the NAGC's 22nd annual Symposium in San Antonio.



Volunteer Spotlight: Tracey Blumrosen

Thinking back to her facilitator training three years ago, Tracey Blumrosen recalled her observation that people volunteer at Bo's Place for a reason. It was obvious to her that often life experiences (and grief journeys) led many to sign up for the training, and offered the strength to fill this unique role. Bo's Place became part of Tracey's life story following the death of her sister, who had a 10-year-old daughter. After numerous recommendations that she go to Bo's Place, her niece began attending group with her father. One evening, when he was out of town, Tracey brought her niece to group and describes the warmth in the dining room that evening as "overpowering."



With a 17-year-old daughter of her own, Tracey feels most at home with the teen group. She has facilitated several rounds of the LIGHT program (for sudden or traumatic loss) with teenagers and people in the community often say to her "I can't believe you can do that." Tracey admits that before her sister's death, she

couldn't have either. She has been challenged to facilitate adult groups and notes how rewarding it is to watch the participants transform from the first night to the closing ceremony. Now she is considering a return to graduate school in social work as a result of these experiences.

When asked about herself, Tracey keeps her answers to a minimum, and explains that she is much more interested in listening to the stories of others than telling her own. During our conversation, I did learn that she moved to Houston from South Africa when she was thirteen, and that she spends her days balancing her volunteer work with teens/adults with her job at a preschool. Not only does she volunteer at Bo's Place, but Tracey also delivers meals through Aishel House, which supports visiting patients receiving care in Houston. For all that she gives to the community, Tracey acknowledges what she receives: a true appreciation for life. "I wake up every morning grateful for what I have."

And we are grateful for you, Tracey.



A Reel Great Time

This marked the third year that Bo's Place was designated as one of the beneficiary organizations of the CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament hosted by SpawGlass. CJ loved hunting and fishing, so this annual event helps keep his spirit alive and brings together friends, family and colleagues for fun, fishing and laughs. Moving to a new location in Rockport, TX this year allowed the tournament to add ten additional teams to the field for a total of 60 boats making it the largest event in the 5-year history of the event. Bo's Place was on hand to help set up for the Captain's Dinner on Friday Night, where the silent and live auctions raised more than \$23,000!

Everyone was up early on Saturday to head out to the bay for some wonderful fishing and fellowship. Teams started appearing with their daily catch by midday, with the last team coming in just before a storm rolled in. Taking top honors were 1st Place Overall: Big City Access, 2nd Place Overall: SpawGlass/Correct Electric and 3rd Place Overall: AC Tech. The largest redfish was hauled in by Team Marek at 8.56 pounds and 27.4 inches.



Bo's Place received a generous \$25,000 contribution from the tournament proceeds last year. Funds raised from last year's tournament also helped build a construction exhibit at the Children's Discovery Museum, funded students at St. Joseph's High School and provided a scholarship to a Construction Science Major at Texas A&M.

Our deepest gratitude to Aaron Bradford, Layton Muehr, Brandon Meyers, Julie Soltis, Heather McDonough, Matt Elliott and the SpawGlass Houston office, as well as Carolyn and CJ Strnadel III and family for their tireless efforts to hold such a wonderful event in CJ's memory. SpawGlass will hold the tournament again next June in Rockport, Texas. Contact andrea@bosplace.org if you are interested in participating in 2018!



"Dear Dougy" Podcast

Flor Guebara, LCSW and Cristina Flores, LCSW, two of our clinicians who run oversee Bo's Place Spanish/Latino outreach and Spanish-language services, were invited to be guests on The Dougy Center's podcast, Dear Dougy. Both Cristina and Flor were interviewed about the work that Bo's Place has been doing with the Latino community. They spoke about grief in the Latino community, what Bo's Place has done, and how this work has changed them. We are proud of the important work that these two clinicians are doing in our local community and in communities across the country.



The episode can be found where you listen to your podcast or online.



"Oh So Fresh" Lemonade

Bo's Place was excited to host the Howard Family and Cadence Bank for an award ceremony on June 2. The Howard Family generously donated the proceeds from their Lemonade Day stand to Bo's Place in May, and they were also chosen by Cadence Bank for their catchy lemonade stand slogan "We Squeeze to Please!"



The Howard Family shared their strategy for the lemonade stand, as well as their favorite things about Lemonade Day. Representatives from Cadence Bank presented each of the children with backpacks filled with goodies including water bottles, headphones, fidget spinners, gift cards and more! In return, the Howards

brought their famous lemonade for everyone to sample!



Happenings



"Kid's Night Out," sponsored by the Baylor Pediatric Student Association on June 2, was filled with fun, laughter, games, friendship bracelets and *The Lion King*. Children from our Bo's Place support groups attended while the adults got a night to relax and recharge!

On June 6, Rina Ocampo, Development and Special Events Coordinator, and Isaiah Johnson, Communications and Community Outreach Intern, attended the **Valero Wellness Fair** to share information about Bo's Place with Valero employees.



On June 7, Bo's Place children and volunteers enjoyed the call of the jungle and grief themes provided by Disney's **Tarzan**. A special thank you to the National Charity League for creating our jungle decorations. Everyone in attendance felt like they were in the middle of a safari!



Bo's Place received a \$10,000 grant from **Touchdown Houston**, a charitable giving program created by the Houston Super Bowl Committee in partnership with the NFL Foundation. A kick off was held on June 15th at NRG stadium. Bo's Place board member and president-elect Debbie Gregg attended the #GreaterThanTheGame special event with Bo's Place staffers Atashi Johnson and Andrea Sivells.



Young professionals gathered at The Houston Club for **Bo's Buddies summer happy hour** on June 27. Guests mixed and mingled while enjoying drinks, appetizers and stunning views of Houston. The Houston Club donated a portion of the proceeds to Bo's Place, and one lucky attendee went home with a door prize of wine and gift cards!

Our staff gathered at Buca di Beppo on June 28 for our **"Year End Celebration Lunch!"** We reflected on the accomplishments of our past fiscal year and shared things for which we were grateful. Grazie mille to all of you who helped make our 2016-2017 year a success!



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

