

# Healing Hearts



Bo's Place

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## Family Fun Day / Fiesta en Bo's Place!

Family Fun Night/Fiesta en Bo's Place has become an August tradition at Bo's Place. What began as a night to share stories about loved ones through scrapbooking has evolved for some families into a much anticipated annual family event. One family who has been working on their scrapbook for four years stated: "We love scrapbooking because it allows us to work together as a family, preserving memories of our loved one." A family new to Bo's Place shared: "The best part (of Family Fun Night) was the scrapbooking! We are looking at expanding our (family scrapbook) further. It's beautiful." In addition to scrapbooking, participants enjoyed face painting, arts & crafts, board games, yard games, snow cones, and fajitas!



This event would not be possible without the help of many supporters. Big thanks to these friends of Bo's Place:

- The Bonnie and David Weekley Fund for their ongoing support of all our summer programs
- The wonderful Bo's Place volunteers for their time; they are the heart of

## Bo's Place

- Fajita Pete's for generously donating a wonderful fajita buffet
- Maria and Humberto Guebara for braving the heat to provide delicious and refreshing snow cones and popsicles
- National Charity League - Heart of Texas and Memorial chapters - for setting up and staffing the event
- April Shaver for taking beautiful and memorable photos

Telling family "love stories" through scrapbooking helps heal hearts! We can't wait until next year to share this special tradition with more Bo's Place families.



## Women's Retreat / Retiro de Mujeres

In August, Bo's Place hosted our first bilingual day retreat for women enrolled in our grief support groups. Participants came to Bo's Place with the intention of learning how to identify and vocalize their emotional needs and personal strengths, and to give themselves permission to take time for themselves and reach out to others for support. Activities included journaling to practice self-processing for those times in life when others are not available, small group discussions and expressive arts to explore personal strengths and resiliency, and to memorialize their loved ones. The retreat closed with a candle lighting ceremony and moment of silence in memory of those loved ones who had died.



We are grateful to the Bonnie and David Weekley Fund for their support of this summer's Women's Retreat, to Phoenicia Specialty Foods for the Good Neighbor discount on the delicious box lunches and to the volunteers who facilitated the retreat with our staff members.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Ana Oyarvide

A Champion for Bo's Place



When Ana Oyarvide was a young girl, she wanted to be a teacher, just like her mother. By the time she made it to college she had decided against teaching, but she knew that she wanted to work with kids. She also knew that her bilingual skills would be invaluable in offering services to Spanish-speaking families in the community. Ana moved from Mexico when she was two years old and uses her understanding of the cultural impact of accessing help and the barriers to seeking mental health services in her work. (By profession, she is trained as a Licensed Professional Counselor, including registered play therapy.) During graduate school, an advisor connected her to Bo's Place and she began volunteering with the Saturday Spanish group as a facilitator. But Ana didn't stop there, she slowly found additional volunteer opportunities including being a camp counselor, helping administer assessments, and facilitating activities during summer programming.

As a support group facilitator, Ana would have pictured herself focused on the kids groups based on her professional experience, but found she loves the adult groups just as much. The first men's group was an eye-opener for her, as she witnessed the group connecting and opening up during their time together. Ana explained, "I could see the power of how supporting each other within the group setting helped them heal themselves." Over the years as a facilitator she has learned many lessons, but one she hopes to share with new facilitators is this: "The healing is not what we say, or what we do, it is our presence." She encourages all volunteers to remember that the primary gift they offer to families is creating an environment for them to feel safe, and not judged.

When asked about one of the most memorable experiences at Bo's Place, Ana replied without hesitation: "Camp!" She described the emotion as she drove away from Camp for All on Sunday afternoon as "this overwhelming feeling that your heart is just so full." Because of bilingual volunteers like Ana, Bo's Place offers Campamento Sanando Corazones for our Spanish-speaking families. Her greatest joy is watching how emotionally open the participants become, and how they let the volunteers into their lives over the course of a weekend. Ana still has a note on her refrigerator from one of the little campers whom she helped support at camp.

As an incredible advocate for Bo's Place, Ana often refers families to our programs and describes the services we offer to people she meets in the community. To her, one of the most appealing aspects of Bo's Place is that services are free of charge to participants and Bo's Place does not consider ethnicity, language, or documentation status a barrier to service. One of the

most appealing aspects of being a volunteer at Bo's Place is that she can be herself when she walks through the doors at Bo's Place. The camaraderie she enjoys with fellow volunteers and staff members, and particularly the humor used to balance such heavy issues each group, are key to the fulfillment she experiences as a volunteer.

Oh, and Ana is not only a champion for Bo's Place, she is also a two-time Fantasy Football champion! Please wish her congratulations on her big win, but also on her upcoming marriage to fiancé Brent, pictured above. (Beloved cat Cheeto not pictured here).



## SpawGlass delivers hope and healing

Bo's Place was once again on site to help with the 6th Annual CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament hosted by the Houston office of SpawGlass, a Texas-based construction company. This was the fourth year that the event benefitted Bo's Place. This year, the event also allowed for a scholarship contribution and a donation to Coastal Bend Bays and Estuary.

Over 60 boats participated in this annual event, which was held at Doc's Seafood and Steaks in Corpus Christi. The new venue allowed for growth, but also provided a fun atmosphere for families to gather during the Captain's Dinner on Friday, June 22. The boats were off early Saturday morning for all to enjoy area bay fishing.

The event, which is held each year in memory of CJ, brings together those who knew him well and honors who he was as an individual, as he was an avid hunter and fisherman. A special toast is made each year, led by some of CJ's closest friends, Layton Muehr and Aaron Bradford, but it's a full team effort. CJ's parents, Carolyn and CJ III, were also on hand, helping secure a variety of silent and live auction items for the crowd to enjoy. It is a heart-touching evening, being amongst family and friends who come together to laugh, reminisce and celebrate CJ's life.

Bo's Place is grateful to CJ's family - Layton, Aaron, Matt Elliott, Brandon Meyers, David Ajlani, Julie Soltis, Heather McDonough - and the rest of the SpawGlass team who work tirelessly to make this event one that CJ would be proud of.



SpawGlass presented Bo's Place with a \$50,000 check on August 17. Since their first gift, they have donated more than \$120,000 to ensure that the families at Bo's Place receive the grief support they need, at no cost. We are grateful to this special community partner who has a heart for the Bo's Place mission, and is raising money for important causes as a way to honor someone they dearly loved.

If you would like to be a part of this fun weekend away and have a boat in the tournament in 2019, contact Andrea Sivells, [andrea@bosplace.org](mailto:andrea@bosplace.org).



## Bo's Place offers grief support programming in Spanish

When one talks about the death of a loved one and the distress and emotions surrounding that experience, it is important to be able to have those conversations in what we call one's "love language", the language in which one is most comfortable talking about matters closest to the heart. For those whose "love language" is Spanish,

Bo's Place now offers a variety of grief support programs in Spanish:

- Family Grief Support Groups that meet for nine consecutive weeks for

- Family Grief Support Groups that meet for nine consecutive weeks for families who have experienced a sudden, unexpected death of a parent or guardian or the death of a child.
- Family Grief Support Groups that meet twice a month on an ongoing basis for families who have completed the nine-week Family Group or who have experienced an expected death of a parent/guardian.
- Pregnancy Loss group for women who have experienced the death of an infant, a miscarriage or a stillbirth.

Additionally, Spanish speaking families enrolled in our family groups can attend our weekend bereavement camp, Campamento Sanando Corazones, and bilingual summer programs. Spanish speaking women enrolled in our family groups or pregnancy loss group can attend our bilingual Women's Retreat/Retiro de Mujeres.

Bo's Place is thankful for the growing number of bilingual volunteers who make it possible to provide these programs in Spanish. We are always looking for additional bilingual volunteers who are ready to listen and help create a safe place for children, teens, and adults to share their stories, feelings and concerns. If you or someone you know would be interested in learning more about our bilingual volunteer opportunities, please contact [rina@bosplace.org](mailto:rina@bosplace.org).



## Conquer a 5k for Bo's Place!

This year, our goal is to have the largest number of Team Bo's Place participants in our 14 year history as a Run For a Reason Charity and we want YOU to be a part of this milestone!

Join the team for the We Are Houston 5K and set up a fundraising page with a goal of \$200. Following the 5K, we'll hold a pancake breakfast for the team at Bo's Place and you will not want to miss out on the fun.



Interested in tackling more mileage?

The half marathon is sold out but you can still sign up with Bo's Place [here!](#) Entries are available for the Chevron Houston Marathon and Aramco Houston Half Marathon.

Not a runner? Create a fundraising page [here](#) and cheer from the sidelines at our Hoopla Station.

Join the team today, set your goal for a PR and make this a record breaking year for Bo's Place!

Questions? Contact [marathon@bosplace.org](mailto:marathon@bosplace.org).



## Happenings

Bo's Place was the beneficiary of **Houston Magazine's To Live and Dine** event on August 2 at LIFE HTX. This fun event featured local restaurants competing for bragging rights for best dish; guests enjoyed small bites from over 10 vendors, cocktails and a photo booth.



On August 9, Rina Ocampo and Hannah Thibodeaux attended a wellness fair at **Gulf Coast Community Services Association** to share about the services that's Bo's Place provides to the community!

On August 17, Flor Guebara staffed a table at the **Back-to-School Extravaganza**, hosted by HISD's Homeless Education Office.





Bo's Place was proud to support the staff of Santa Fe ISD at the **Santa Fe Teacher Resource Fair** on August 17 as their staff gears up for the new school year. Thank you to Jodie Gonzalez and Lori Bokone for representing Bo's Place!

On August 18, Flor Guebara attended the annual **Emancipation Community Center Back-to-School Bash**, hosted by the Houston Parks and Recreation Department.



Over 50 Bo's Place volunteers and clinicians attended an **Advanced Facilitator Training** by Lori Bokone on August 23. The training outlined behavior techniques to use in group, introduced our new Bo's Place CARES guidelines, and included a reveal of our newly remodeled activity rooms- the Chill Room and the Team Room!





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.*

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