

# Healing Hearts



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## Building a Bereavement-Informed Community

In collaboration with six community partners, Bo's Place participated in the planning and execution of a two-day training entitled "Restorative Support for Families After Traumatic Death: Building a Bereavement-Informed Community." Participants from all



over the country came together on

September 21-22 at Texas Children's Hospital for this unique opportunity, which began with a live interview by Dr. Ted Rynearson and a woman who recently experienced the death of her husband by suicide. The interview set the tone for the training, which included presentations on spirituality, suicide death, the impact of traumatic death on children, and cultural competency, among other topics of interest.

With particular relevance to Bo's Place programming, we heard from Dr. Christopher Layne, who reminded us that grief is ultimately an adaptive process, that it is our job as helpers to cultivate adaptive behaviors and help to reduce more maladaptive grief reactions. In addition, we were cautioned to ask those who have experienced the death of a loved one by suicide what phrase they prefer to use when describing the cause of death and never to say "committed suicide," unless it is the preferred terminology of the person.

Overall, it was an impactful two days with many lessons learned, as well as an amazing opportunity to connect to others in the field. Bo's Place was proud to be a part of this event, resulting in a renewed commitment to helping Houston become a more bereavement-informed community.



## What we're wishing for...

Volunteer Leslie White describes going to camp with Bo's Place as "a beautiful reminder of the importance of finding joy in simple connection. Being able to

witness people find hope and healing in the course of a few short days is refreshing and nothing short of miraculous."

Help Bo's Place create a healing environment for campers (families) by donating supplies from the Camp Healing Hearts/Campamento Sanando Corazones Wish List. All supplies assist with themed activities, family memorialization activities, or ensuring that camp runs smooth and safe.

## VIEW CAMP WISH LIST



## Hearts of Hope Speaker Spotlight: Will Reeve

The annual Hearts of Hope luncheon brings together over 700 community supporters who spend their lunch hour learning more about Bo's Place and the importance of grief support for the bereaved in our community.

The 2019 luncheon will feature keynote speaker Will Reeve who is an important example of how we can honor the legacy of our loved ones. Son of well-known actor Christopher Reeve and his wife

Dana, Will was pointed toward advocacy after the death of his father in 2004 and his mother in 2006. The Reeve's set up the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation to harness support and mobilize community involvement around critical advances in the field of spinal cord research. Will serves on the Board of Directors for the foundation, for which he has the role of multigenerational

ambassador and community advocate.

Will has been a voice for those suffering from spinal cord injuries, but he is now sharing another part of his story, his grief journey. By age thirteen, Will had experienced childhood loss and grief with the passing of his parents, Christopher and Dana Reeve, and has used these experiences and the lessons and values he learned from his parents to forge ahead with resilience, courage and strength. At the luncheon, he will share candid insights on his experiences and how they have shaped him, and how grief has the power to unite and fortify us all.

We hope you will be a part of the Hearts of Hope Luncheon on Tuesday, February 12, 2019 at the Royal Sonesta, by purchasing a ticket or table. The funds raised at this annual event help Bo's Place provide grief support services at no cost to families in our community.

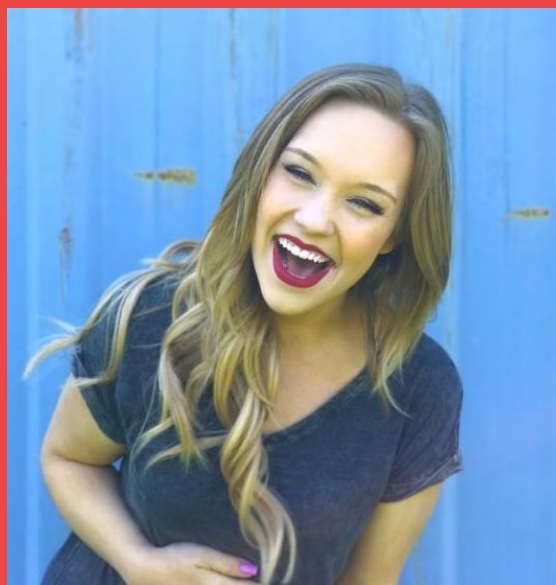
**PURCHASE TABLE OR TICKET**



## Volunteer Spotlight: Rylie Stevenson

Cabin Five, Look Alive!

Like many of our volunteers, Rylie Stevenson first walked through the doors of Bo's Place as a person grieving the death of someone close to her. When she was sixteen years old, Rylie's daddy died unexpectedly, leaving her family devastated. Rylie spoke of the experience as each family member moving in separate directions in their grief, her brother grieving completely differently from their mother, which was far from Rylie's style of coping. She became the hostess, baking cookies the day after the death and offering snacks to everyone who came to pay their respects or sit with the family. It wasn't until they joined the 9-week family group (formerly LIGHT) that they began to reconnect with conversations on the drive home, which she described as magic. "I believe wholeheartedly that Bo's Place changed our family."



As a result of her experience as a teenager, Rylie knew she wanted to continue her journey as a volunteer. She speaks lovingly of the community she found all those years ago, and the one that continues to nourish her today. She is a facilitator for the Thursday 9-week family program and calls her group of fellow volunteers truly a family. To Rylie, the warmth she experienced as a group participant is still present every Thursday when she walks through those doors. "It's why our families fall in love with Bo's Place, it's safe, it's home. And at the end of the day, it's the place you walk into and breathe a sigh of relief."

Rylie has experienced many magical moments over the years, but one shines

exceptionally bright. As she was facilitating a group of teens to create their quilt squares, she shared with them the importance of the activity as a way to honor their loved ones who died, to leave a lasting reminder. She said to the group "I get to walk these hallways and I know that every single square on the quilts represents someone who meant as much as my daddy meant to me." And as she looked up, she saw her own quilt square, which until that time the staff had been unable to locate for her. In retelling the story, she admits that she still gets the chills and a little weepy when she thinks about that incredible moment.

Although she loves volunteering with the teens in a support group setting, the one thing she looks forward to all year is CAMP. Rylie is currently our #1 camp volunteer when it comes to number of camps attended, previously serving at seven camps and anxiously awaiting number eight. During our conversation, her voice lowers to a whisper as she confesses "I really go to camp for me. I leave just as fulfilled as the families do." For Rylie, it's the amazing growth that takes place in such a relatively short amount of time. Cabin Five has become her home away from home and she recounts stories of the joy her young campers experience amidst the sadness of their grief journeys. "Camp is amazing" she says glowing, but if you're planning to volunteer for the first time she also warns "be prepared not to sleep."

We are so grateful to Rylie for all the ways she volunteers her time in support of the mission of Bo's Place. Soon she will add a new volunteer role: that of "Bo's Place Ambassador," to help spread the word about Bo's Place and continue to break the taboo of discussing death. She knows that she was put on this earth to inspire others, and we couldn't agree more. Rylie recently heard this quote which completely resonated with her own grief experience: "You have to keep living until you feel alive again." She knows that this is exactly what Bo's Place allows our families to do, to take the first wobbly steps forward toward healing.

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Editor's Notes: If you would like to join Rylie and help heal hearts at camp the weekend of November 16-18, please contact Rina Ocampo at [volunteer@bosplace.org](mailto:volunteer@bosplace.org) or complete your application [here](#).



And, if you like cookies, you'll be happy to know that Rylie hasn't stopped baking since that day after her daddy died. She just launched her own bakery, [Sweets by Rylie!](#)





## Open House & Open Hearts

Bo's Place is inviting community members who are interested in learning about how each of us can support grieving families to stop by Bo's Place during four upcoming Open House and tour dates. Already know and love Bo's Place? This is the perfect opportunity to bring a friend you think would enjoy learning more about us!

These open houses will feature a tour for guests who are new to Bo's Place, and an opportunity to visit with staff and ask questions about how each of us can develop skills to support grieving children and families in our community, and raise awareness about Bo's Place within your network.

Please join us and bring a friend, because together we can all take part in healing hearts!

**Friday, October 26, 2018**

7:30-9:00 am ([RSVP](#))

9:00-10:30 am ([RSVP](#))

**Wednesday, January 30, 2019**

4:30-6:00 pm

**Thursday, February 28, 2019**

4:30-6:00 pm

If you or someone you know wants to learn more about Bo's Place because you would be interested in receiving grief support services, reach out to our clinical staff at [info@bosplace.org](mailto:info@bosplace.org).



## Upcoming Workshops at Bo's Place

Any holiday can trigger a loss reaction, not only those occurring between Thanksgiving and New Year's. One woman shared that Veteran's Day proved to be the most distressing holiday for her following the death of her father. After serving in the military for much of her childhood, she observed her father as a proud Army veteran. What this daughter didn't expect was the wave of emotion that overtook her on the first November 11 after her father died. We hear similar reactions from the family members in our groups; how a certain food or decoration can prove to be a very painful loss reminder. In our upcoming workshop "**Helping the Bereaved through the Holidays**," Bo's

Place clinicians will discuss the common reactions that can surface around the holidays and other special occasions, including the anniversary of the death. Designed for helping professionals and volunteers, this two-hour workshop will offer tips and activities to better support bereaved individuals as they encounter significant days throughout the year. By incorporating holidays such as Día de los Muertos, participants will learn new avenues for fostering a lasting connection with the deceased and the importance of legacy in the path toward healing.

### **Helping the Bereaved through the Holidays**

Friday, October 26, 2018

11:30 am - 1:30 pm

Registration and information **HERE**

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On November 8, Bo's Place will be broadcasting "**Ethically Supporting Youth and Schools After a Community Tragedy**" live from Princeton, NJ. Presented by National Alliance for Grieving Children and New York Life Foundation, this webcast will include distinguished speakers in the field of childhood bereavement, such as: Donna L. Schuurman, Sr. Director of Advocacy & Training at The Dougy Center and Dr. David J Schonfeld, Director of the National Center for School Crisis and Bereavement. Particularly for the Houston community, these topics prove timely in the aftermath of events including Hurricane Harvey and the Santa Fe school shooting. We are proud of the work our friends at the Trauma and Grief Center at Texas Children's Hospital are doing in these areas ([Harvey Resiliency and Recovery Program](#) & [Santa Fe Strong Resiliency Center](#)), and know there is more to learn. Topics of the webcast include how to talk to children about tragedy, how to engage the community, and ways to offer support throughout the grieving process. This unique educational opportunity offers continuing education for mental health professionals.

### **Ethically Supporting Youth and Schools After a Community Tragedy**

Thursday, November 8, 2018

10:30 am - 2:30 pm

Registration and information **HERE**

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**VIEW OUR FULL  
TRAINING SCHEDULE**



## **Sponsor a meal & celebrate the holidays at Bo's Place**

The holidays can be especially painful for those who have experienced the death of a loved one. To further support families during this difficult time, Bo's Place wants to ensure that all of our group participants enjoy a holiday meal in November and December. We are seeking companies, organizations or groups to provide a meal for one of our support groups, including the chance to participate in the volunteer experience and serve the meal to our families.



Please consider this unique opportunity to spread holiday cheer to the families of Bo's Place. For additional details, please click below.

**TELL ME MORE!**



## Happenings

On September 5, Flor Guebara, Bo's Place Spanish Outreach Manager, was interviewed by Elideth Escobar of Spanish radio **MEGA 101FM**. The interview was aired Sunday September 23rd on their segment *Mi Comunidad*, which highlights social services in the Houston area that offer services for Spanish speaking families.



Each year, students from **Baylor College of Medicine** volunteer at Bo's Place in honor of Matthew Carter, a first year medical student who died in 2000. On September 8, students helped with a special event mailing and created beautiful magnets that were distributed to volunteers throughout the month.

Forty people attended **Volunteer Facilitator Training** on September 8-9. Our sincere gratitude to these individuals for volunteering their time and energy to

#helphealhearts at  
Bo's Place!



On September 13, Bo's Place Director of Volunteer Services and Community Outreach and Education, Jodie Gonzalez, and Spanish Outreach Manager, Flor Guebara, attended **Hispanic IMPACT Summit** hosted by the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce!

Andrea Sivells, Bo's Place Development Director, and Hannah Thibodeaux, Bo's Place Development Assistant, were on site at **Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church** on September 16 for **Outreach Sunday**. Non-profits who received a grant from MDPC gathered to network and thank Church staff and congregation members for their support.





Employees from **PBK Architects** sponsored and served a meal to our families and volunteers on September 19. We are so appreciative to have their ongoing support!!



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

