

Healing Hearts



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In This Issue

- Gratitude for Hearts of Hope Luncheon
- "Hats Off to Houston" Contest
- Volunteer Spotlight: Ruth Cummings
- Hopdoddy Burgers for a Cause



Hearts Full of Gratitude

The annual **Hearts of Hope Luncheon** took place on February 12, 2019 with **Courtney & Jeremy Brynes** and **Claudine & David Hartland** serving as Co-Chairmen. Over 750 guests intently listened as **Kathy O'Neil**, the 2019 Robin Bush Award Honoree, accepted the award with poignant remarks about her own grief journey.

Closing out the event, **Will Reeve** shared with the audience how lessons he learned from his father, Christopher Reeve, gave him strength to move forward when he lost both of his parents by the age of thirteen.

The luncheon raised over \$395,000 for Bo's Place, which will go toward providing grief support services, the Information & Referral Line, and training and education for our community. Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success!



See our Co-Chairmen Courtney & Jeremy Brynes and Claudine & David Hartland share their grief stories in this year's [video](#).

Read the full press release [here](#).



Round Up Some Votes for Bo's Place!

Bo's Place needs your vote to win the Reliant "Hats Off to Houston" contest. Bo's Place is one of 10 local charities selected to participate by decorating a hat that is on display at the Houston Rodeo. **The charity whose hat receives the most votes will win \$10,000!**

Our design incorporates heart shapes decorated with words of gratitude to the people and activities that have been helpful in their grief journey, and hand shapes displaying tips for the community on how to support grieving children.

There are **two ways to vote**, so please do both:

1. **Like** the photo of our hat on Reliant Energy's Facebook page
2. **Email** your vote (must include your full name, mailing address (including zip code), daytime phone number (including area code), and e-mail address)



LIKE HAT ON FACEBOOK

EMAIL YOUR VOTE

Thanks, y'all!



Volunteer Spotlight: Ruth Cummings

Ruth Cummings has been a volunteer at Bo's Place for 21 years. She recalls fondly the groundbreaking ceremony for the current building on Buffalo Speedway, where she shook hands with Barbara Bush. Ruth told herself "it's now or never" and marched right up to Mrs. Bush to introduce herself. Ruth shared that the experience taught her that famous people are still real people, as Mrs. Bush chatted about the dog at her feet and thanked Ruth for her service to Bo's Place. She expressed great pride that the Bushes were such heartfelt supporters of the Bo's Place mission.



Since the summer day in 1998 when Ruth decided to stop in and see the place she'd referred students as an elementary school counselor, she's been a dedicated facilitator: leading grief support groups for adults, many of whom have experienced the death of a spouse. She acknowledges that this type of volunteer work isn't for everyone, that it takes someone who doesn't feel the need to solve the world's problems. Ruth knows that the key to her role as a group facilitator is listening with an open heart and open mind, and recognizing that she doesn't have all the answers. She loves volunteering on Monday evenings with her group coordinator Marian Mankin, whom she's been with for many years. "Marian is amazing, she really takes care of her volunteers." And Marian feels the same way, sharing "It has been such a pleasure having Ruth volunteer on Mondays all these years, I so appreciate her warm, thoughtful presence."

In the years she's worked with bereaved spouses, Ruth has witnessed incredible courage in her group members. To become single parents overnight and begin to navigate the maze of parenthood in the midst of grief takes not only courage, but the support of a community. On the first night, Ruth always approaches new group members in the dining room with this simple statement: "Welcome, I'm glad you're here, but I'm sorry you needed to come." Ruth shared with me that although she has not experienced a death like those in her groups and can't identify with their situation, she can listen to their stories. With the gift of her time and compassionate ear, she offers grieving parents the safe space to begin the long journey toward healing. It takes a very special person to be able to sit with others in their pain, but Ruth says that her commitment to volunteerism is also rooted in her belief of the rule to those whom much is given, much will be required.

Ruth has been blessed with a wonderful marriage to her husband Jimmy for 51 years, and has watched her children grow to adulthood. During those years she has also seen the impact that the death of a parent can have on a child throughout their lifetime. Jimmy's mother died when he was only four years old and Ruth has witnessed the impact his mother's death has had on her husband, who didn't have a place like Bo's Place to talk about his loss. Along with their annual trip to her gravesite, Ruth and Jimmy have traveled to a new destination each year since they retired on the same day. Retirement has also become a time for Ruth to increase the ways in which she gives back to the Houston community. The native Houstonian, who lives on the same street on which she grew up (but a different house!), also volunteers her time at Texas Children's Hospital, Juvenile Justice Center, A.D. Players at the George Theater, Joni & Friends summer camp, as well as at her church.

Ruth, it is such an honor to have you as a part of the Bo's Place family, we are so glad you stopped in to see us on that summer day in 1998.



Enjoy Burgers for a Great Cause this Thursday!

Bo's Place is excited to team up with Hopdoddy Burger Bar in Rice Village this Thursday, March 7. Please stop by Hopdoddy to dine in and **mention Bo's Place at the register to donate 20% of your check to us!**

Dine anytime during their business hours from 11:00 am until midnight and benefit Bo's Place while enjoying a burger and fries. Bring your friends and family to join in on the fun!



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Happenings



St. Martin's Episcopal Church visited Bo's Place on February 4 and transformed the dining room with their festive Valentine's Day décor! Families dined on a tasty meal provided by St. Martin's while enjoying the fun decorations. We *heart* our volunteers!



Volunteers from **Symphony Talent** visited Bo's Place on February 6 to lend a hand with the stuffed puppies for the Hearts of Hope luncheon. Volunteers toured Bo's Place, learned more about the services offered, then tied pink bows on Buddy, Chip and Raisin.

Members from **Congregation Emanu El** volunteered in the kitchen on February 21 and served a delicious catered meal of burgers, fries, salad and dessert! Both the families and volunteers enjoyed the special meal. We are grateful for these volunteers!



Students from The **Emery/Weiner School** volunteered on February 22 and helped with various projects throughout the day. The students prepped activities for our support groups, tidied up activity rooms, and restocked art supplies to help our activities run smoothly and efficiently. We appreciate their hard work!



On February 22, one of our clinical interns, Morgan, attended the **University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work Field Marketplace**. Morgan educated fellow social work students on internships at Bo's Place, and we could not be more grateful for her help! We couldn't #helphealhearts without our amazing interns!



Like many, we celebrated **GO TEXAN DAY** on February 22. Check out our staff song and dance - yee haw!



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 in Houston and West Houston/Katy.

If you or someone you know would like information about Bo's Place Grief Support Groups for children, families, and adults, visit our website [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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