

Healing Hearts



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Father's Day tips for those in grief



It is important to remember that when someone we love dies, although they are no longer physically present, our relationship with the person does not end. After the death of a father, the legacy of his presence in your life and how this affected your personal identity and beliefs continues. The people we love are a part of who we are. Storytelling is a key part of remembering someone who has died and finding ways to weave the story of their life and death into the story of your own life as it is now. Telling your story is an important part of being able to make meaning of your grief journey. Here are some ideas for celebrating the legacy of your father and

sharing his story this Father's Day:

- Create a memory box or scrapbook and fill it with mementos from both before and after the death. The items can be tokens of a time spent together (such as ticket stubs, shells from a day at the beach, photos) or things that remind you of your father (such as something green because that was his favorite color, a picture of his favorite actor from a magazine). Write letters, poems, songs, or stories, or draw a picture for your father to add to the other mementos.
- Gather with family and friends who knew your father and pull out old photos or home movies and encourage each person to share a story about your father at that age or about what was going on in the image or video clip.
- Revisit one of your father's favorite places, such as a restaurant or park, or room in his home, somewhere where you have strong memories of your father. Bring a journal and write down the memories being in that place evokes. Imagine being in that place again with your father. If he was there with you, what questions would you ask him? Write out an imagined conversation in your journal, outlining what you would say and how you think he would respond.
- Memories are often connected with our senses. Engage your sense of sound by creating a playlist to honor different memories with your father. On Father's Day, share your playlist with family and friends and describe the meaning behind each song. Engage your sense of taste by recreating a memorable meal you had with your father. If your father liked to cook, you could try making one of his recipes or you could go to one of his favorite restaurants for Father's Day.
- If it is your child's father who died, you may wish to reach out to family members and friends and ask them to write down memories and stories that you can share with your child. Sharing memories with the bereaved is a true gift, it shows that others love and remember the person who died and also adds new memories for them to hold on to. Children who were very young when their father died will want to know "What was my

dad like?" Stories that describe the kind of things their father did and the way he was, from the silly to serious, help build a sense of who their father was, how they are alike, and how they are different.



Bo's Place needs your vote to win \$100,000 from Reliant!



Bo's Place is one of three Houston-area finalist organizations in the running for a \$100,000 donation from "Reliant Gives Vote," a charitable-giving program from Reliant. Kicking off on June 10, and running through June 16, the public can cast their vote by visiting Reliant.com/vote. **The nonprofit with the most votes receives \$100,000!** The other two nonprofits receive \$20,000 and \$10,000, respectively, based on the number of votes received.

Reliant employees nominated a wide selection of nonprofits, which are narrowed to three finalists for each round. Reliant Gives will celebrate continued community support when the winners are announced on Tuesday, June 18.

WHERE: Visit Reliant.com/vote to vote once per day, per mobile phone number. (Friends, Please note: submitting your mobile phone number is required only to receive and enter a verification code, ensuring just one vote per day. Your phone number will NOT be used for marketing purposes!)

WHEN: Voting begins June 10 at noon and ends June 16 at 11:59 p.m. (all times Central). Follow us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/bosplace) and [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/bosplace) for voting reminders during the contest.

QUESTIONS: Contact Andrea Sivells at andrea@bosplace.org or 713-942-8339.



Volunteer Spotlight: Debbie Ebner



Sitting down with Debbie, who is a retired clinical psychologist, it was surprising to hear that she was nervous when she first began volunteering as a support group facilitator. But Debbie quickly added that she was nervous she would act too much like a therapist! From the very beginning, Debbie was clear on her role in the group room: "to be like a potted plant most of the time." She acknowledged that the silence can sometimes become very uncomfortable, but she knows that silence can also be very powerful. Debbie spoke about the importance of allowing the group members to direct the conversation, rather than filling the silence with questions that may not be what the group needs most. One of the most rewarding parts of the group for her is when they step in to help each other out.

Working for many years in Adolescent Medicine at Baylor, one would think Debbie would be teaching us a few things about working with kids, but she admits that she is continually learning each time she volunteers with a group. And that is pretty often since Debbie is currently facilitating three different groups at Bo's Place! But the biggest difference between her volunteer work and the years spent as a psychologist is that she can truly see the impact of her time at Bo's Place. Debbie acknowledged that there were many times over the years working with teens that she was "in the dark," not always feeling she was making a difference, particularly when her clients were resistant to help. At Bo's Place, Debbie can regularly witness the healing that her group members experience, sometimes in as little as a 9-week session of the Adult Group, but more clearly with the families she has supported over the last two years in the ongoing group on Sunday.

Although her clinical background is impressive, Debbie also has an artistic side. She shared that she lives in a 3-story loft and will sometimes paint on the big white walls of her home, making life-size canvases of the blank walls, just for the experience of it. Then she goes back and covers it up with white paint (but often takes a picture so she'll have a record of it). Debbie has also been training to hike the Camino de Santiago in Spain, although the trip is currently on hold since she recently adopted a German Shepard puppy. All of these experiences allow her the opportunity to stay truly present in her life, one of the significant lessons she has learned through volunteering at Bo's Place.

Three cheers for Debbie! We are so grateful for her dedication to our mission.



A Strong Finish: Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes



Sold out for a third year in a row, Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes is, without question, the best spot to watch the "run for the roses" if you can't be at Churchill Downs. Chair Hallie Vanderhider and Honorary Chairs Megan and Luke Hotze and Hannah and Cal McNair gathered with over 400 guests on May 4th for a sunny afternoon in the lush backyard of a private River Oaks estate. The threat of rain disappeared and guests decked out in their Derby finest mingled throughout the shady lawn, sipping on mint juleps, and devouring a lavish smorgasbord of the finest bites that Landry's had to offer. The Racing Wall allowed guests to be part of the action as they placed their guess on the winning horse, and Country House took honors as guests were met with the thrill of a contested win! Two guests walked away with a \$2,500 prize from IW Marks and another with a \$1,000 gift card to M Penner. A divine silent auction and other activities helped push the event over \$350,000 in total raised for Bo's Place.

We hope you will plan to join us for Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes on May 2, 2020! Send an email to derby@bosplace.org to be placed on the mailing list when tables become available!



Advanced Facilitator Training learnings

As an ongoing commitment to our volunteer facilitators, Bo's Place hosts two annual Advanced Facilitator Training sessions to build upon skills learned during volunteer training. On April 29, the workshop entitled "The Stories We Hear: Understanding the impact of trauma on our families and ourselves" incorporated tools for both group members and volunteers to help manage intense emotions. Russ Robinett, LPC and Jodie Gonzalez, LCSW teamed up to provide an engaging two hours of information and activities, intended to increase self-awareness and practice a few techniques to help while listening to painful stories in the group room. The mood was lightened with door prizes focused on self-care, including an aromatherapy diffuser and gift certificate for a reflexology session. Laughter erupted periodically with reference to the biofeedback dots each volunteer was encouraged to wear throughout the workshop, similar to a mood ring, the dot changes color related to the person's stress level.



Overall, the big takeaway for the night was the understanding that any type of death can be experienced as traumatic and that listening to the retelling of these traumatic stories can impact

the listener in significant ways. Through a video from the Trauma Stewardship Institute, volunteers witnessed several professionals share the dangers of secondary traumatic stress and the need for organizations to maintain an environment of wellness to reduce suffering for the helpers. This is a core tenant in providing trauma-informed care and integral to the Bo's Place model of providing grief support. We can't wait for the next training in August when Executive Director Mary Beth Staine will share our 3-year strategic vision with the volunteer facilitators.



Happenings



New York Life volunteers visited Bo's Place on May 1 to help prepare for Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes. Volunteers prepared signs for tables, tied bows on puppies, and gathered supplies. We are so grateful for their help for this event!

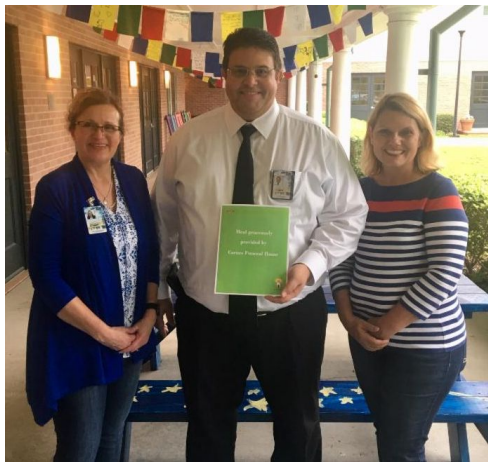


On May 3, participants from the **school-based groups** enjoyed a field trip to Bo's Place for their **End of Year Event**, filled with delicious food and exciting activities in the Chill and Team Rooms. This event provides our students with the opportunity to see Bo's Place in person and to meet participants from other schools. A special thank you to our event volunteers, including Houston Texan Greg Mancz, for participating and assisting with the event!



Our Katy Program Manager, Lori Bokone, and Development Assistant, Hannah Thibodeaux, attended **Spindletop's 54th Annual Golf Tournament** on May 4 as a part of the "Charities on the Green" activity. Golfers were able to learn more about the mission of Bo's Place and hit the perfect shot on the green to earn additional funds for Bo's Place, resulting in a gift of \$5,000!

On May 6, family participants enjoyed a very sweet treat from **Dessert Gallery Bakery & Cafe!** Children (including those young at heart) got to decorate their own cookies alongside the owner of the bakery and everyone had a blast!



Employees from **Carnes Funeral Home** visited Bo's Place on May 8 to sponsor a delicious meal for our families. Families enjoyed pizza, salad and cookies while volunteers from Carnes Funeral Home served them. We are so glad they love to #helphealhearts!



Bo's Buddies attendees cycled for a cause at **RIDE with Buddy** on May 18. Attendees got a heart pumping work out followed by mimosas, snacks and their very own Buddy, Chip or Raisin plush puppy to take home. We appreciate those who could join us for this fun weekend kick-starter!



We hosted a **Bo's Place baby shower** on May 22! We loved showering our mommies-to-be and their newest additions to our Bo's Place family! We can't wait to meet both babies in August!



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.

