

Healing Hearts



e-Newsletter | July | 07.01.19

In This Issue

- StoryCorps animation featuring Bo's Place family
- National Alliance for Grieving Children Annual Symposium Recap
- Volunteer Spotlight: Over the Hill Gang
- Bo's Grows: We are hiring!



StoryCorps animation features former Bo's Place participants

The "Road to Resilience" partnership with StoryCorps and the New York Life Foundation has been a journey of hope and healing for the many Bo's Place families who participated. As the six month project draws to a close, we are honored to share this three minute animation featuring Asia and Carmichael Khan, who participated in Bo's Place grief support groups. In reflecting upon the StoryCorps experience, Carmichael shared:

"On behalf of Asia and myself, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you and the StoryCorps staff for inviting us to return to Bo's Place and share our ongoing grief story. It was a bittersweet homecoming of sorts that unearthed special memories of Rose. Though it has been a while, her loss has transfigured us deeply. Asia and I continue to hold an especial place in our hearts for Bo's Place. We will continue to hold Story Corps style mini conversations with Rose's relatives and friends, if only to flesh out the larger narrative of her life, parts of which Asia can only now appreciate. We have an instinctual fear of forgetting, so will re-commit ourselves to documenting the journey of our lives with and without Rose's physical presence. We remain willing to give back to Bo's Place, so when opportunities arise, please keep us in the loop. Again, thanks for asking us to participate in a worthy initiative."

Asia and Carmichael, thank you for sharing these memories of Rose through authentic storytelling and for demonstrating the importance of sharing one's grief story.



Volunteer Spotlight: Over the Hill Gang

If you've attended our annual Volunteer Appreciation Fiesta in April, you are likely familiar with the delicious fajitas and sides served at the event, courtesy of the Over the Hill Gang. Recently, we chatted with the Gang's leader Mike O'Kelley, about the group's connection to Bo's Place throughout the years. The Over the Hill Gang was formed in 1979 and Mike became involved shortly thereafter. The mission of the Over the Hill Gang is focused on supporting children and they got their start by cooking meals at Boys & Girls Country, and later the Boys & Girls Country Spring Festival. The Over the Hill Gang participates in the annual Bar-B-Que contest with the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo in addition to supporting other fundraisers throughout the year. The cooking team consists of 1st and 2nd generation members and many of their events include fundraisers for their children's and grandchildren's baseball teams, basketball teams, drill teams and more.



The Over the Hill Gang started their partnership with Bo's Place 12 years ago when the food vendor for the Bo's Place Boot Scootin' BBQ event fell through at the last minute. A Bo's Place employee had a connection to the Over the Hill Gang and reached out to ask for their help with the meal. They gladly filled in and provided the barbeque for the event. Mike remembers being overwhelmed with the gratitude shown to the Over the Hill Gang during their first year at Bo's Place. Each member of the cooking team received a special gift from Bo's Place as a thank you for their hard work and this really stood out in Mike's memory. The Over the Hill Gang has continued to support Bo's Place through the gift of home cooking and enjoys mixing and mingling with the rest of the Bo's Place volunteers at the annual Volunteer Appreciation Fiesta.

The mission of Bo's Place is a natural fit with the Over the Hill Gang's mission to support children through fundraising, special events and scholarships with the Houston Rodeo. Many members of the team were not familiar with Bo's Place prior to the partnership, but can now recommend Bo's Place to those who may be in need of grief support services. When asked about why people should volunteer at Bo's Place, Mike remarked that the volunteers and staff are a "group of very positive people doing things for kids in need."

We are so grateful for this longtime partnership with the Over the Hill Gang and look forward to working with them each year at the fiesta. Thank you for keeping us well-fed and happy!



National Alliance for Grieving Children's 23rd Annual Symposium on Children's Grief

Six staff members proudly represented Bo's Place at the National Alliance for Grieving Children (NAGC) 23rd Annual Symposium on Children's Grief in Salt Lake City, June 20-22. The mountaintop scenery made a beautiful setting for sharing ideas and best practices for supporting grieving children.



Many were inspired by Lori Bokone's workshop entitled *Pave the Way for Behavioral Change*. With a background in behavior management, this is the second year that Lori has presented a workshop to provide strategies to work with bereaved children when they are having difficulty managing their emotions. Shared Lori, "It felt really good that a few people recognized me from last year's presentation and said they teach the SMILE strategies to their volunteers. I think because they are simple concepts, people are confident they can implement them themselves and easily teach them to volunteers. I feel like we can expand this even further to keep supporting volunteers across the country!" One participant in Lori's workshop responded, "We cannot stop talking about your presentation. It was amazing. Thank you for doing a wonderful job and helping others improve."

Cristina Flores co-facilitated a forum on *Engaging Diverse Communities* and shared, "Several Executive Directors and Program Directors from across the country approached me to tell me that because of our work and presentations at the NAGC Symposium throughout the years, they have established their own Spanish-language programs. It was wonderful to see how the work that we have done at Bo's Place has provided other agencies with the information and will to

establish their own Spanish-language program.”

Marian Mankin and Mary Beth Staine provided a workshop entitled *Matthew’s Garden: Creating a Memorial Garden to Enhance Grief Support Programming*. “Having the opportunity to get our colleagues across the country excited about creating a memorial garden was very meaningful to me,” said Mary Beth. “Creating Matthew’s Garden and developing activities that allow our families to use this special place was and continues to be a part of the grief journey of our entire Bo’s Place community. It is our gift to other bereavement centers to share with them the step by step process for planning and building a garden, as well as the tools to make a case to funders of the significant impact a memorial garden can have.”

Mary Beth also co-presented with colleagues from Judi’s House/JAG Institute in Denver, Colorado, Micki Burns, Ph.D. and Laura Landry, Ph.D. a workshop entitled *Using the Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model (CBEM) to strengthen bereavement services in community*. Bo’s Place newest clinician, Arlette Rangel, attended the session and remarked, “The power of data! The CBEM presentation with Judi’s House and Bo’s Place was my introduction to the Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model... To be able to look closely at data about different counties in the Houston area to adapt our services to the communities’ needs is amazing!”

In addition to the many workshops offered at the Symposium, there were opportunities to network and connect with others in the field of childhood bereavement. Highlights of the conference included the New York Life Welcome Reception at a location 11,000 feet up with spectacular views, a dinner sponsored by the Trauma and Grief (TAG) Center at Texas Children’s Hospital bringing together research collaborators in the GIFT Network from across the country, and a dinner hosted by StoryCorps for participants in the *Road to Resilience* program. During the NAGC Founders’ Luncheon, Mary Beth Staine was thanked for her hard work and dedication during her 6 ½ years of service on the NAGC Board of Directors and various board committees.

It was wonderful to share stories and resources, and to make connections with others in the field. Many thanks to the NAGC and all the sponsors for another wonderful Symposium!



Bo’s Grows: We are hiring!

Our team is growing! We are currently accepting resumes for the positions below. Bo’s Place is a fantastic place to work! One employee recently shared “As emotionally challenging as the work is, the efforts to prioritize our staff’s wellness and happiness are felt by each individual, regardless of their role within the organization. I know that all of my fellow colleagues would agree that Bo’s Place is the best place to work in Houston!”



Please share these opportunities with anyone who may be interested to #helphealhearts.

ADULT GROUPS MANAGER

BILINGUAL ONGOING FAMILY GROUPS MANAGER



Happenings

On June 7, children enrolled in Bo’s Place groups enjoyed a **Kid’s Night Out** full of fun, food, and games! Event sponsors and volunteers from the **Baylor Pediatric Student Association** played large group games, basketball, decorated flower pots and watched a movie with the children and teens. Thanks to this organization for their big hearts and ongoing dedication!



Mary Beth Staine, Executive Director, and NRG Employee Natalie Bober attended the **Reliant Gives Kick Off** on June 10 at A 2nd Cup. This event was the kick start to a week-long social media voting campaign for Bo's Place!



On June 10, some of our staff enjoyed a workout at **The Studio FORM**, who included Bo's Place as one of their 5 charity recipients for this quarter's profits. We had a great time working out for a great cause!



Mary Beth Staine, Executive Director, attended a filming on June 11 with **Houston Life** about how a gift from Reliant Gives would support the families at Bo's Place.



On June 11, volunteers from **Living Stones Church Life Group** served a delicious meal for our Katy Family Group tonight. Thank you for helping us heal hearts!



On June 12, **Betsy's at Evelyn's Park** hosted "Betsy's Benefit Bingo, benefiting Bo's Place!" Kids and adults enjoyed a beautiful evening of bingo and snacks, and all proceeds from bingo card sales went to Bo's Place.



St. Martin's Episcopal Church visited Bo's Place on June 17 and transformed the dining room with patriotic decorations. Volunteers served chicken, pasta, salad and dessert to the families that were attending group. We are thankful for the continued support and festive centerpieces that will decorate our dining room for the summer months!



Andrea Sivells, Development Director, attended the **Fort Bend CARES** grant reception on June 18. Fort Bend CARES raises money to support the needs of their community. Through their efforts, Bo's Place received a \$5,000 award to support families from Fort Bend County.

On June 26, our staff enjoyed an **End-of-Fiscal-Year Celebratory Luncheon** at Tiny's No. 5! We had a great time reflecting on this year's accomplishments and having fun together out of the office!



The **7th Annual CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament** took place in San Leon, Texas over the weekend of June 28-29. This annual fundraiser has raised over \$120,000 for Bo's Place support programs. Thank you to all the sponsors that make this event so much fun each year!



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.

