

Healing Hearts



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Día de los Muertos

Día de los Muertos (or Day of the Dead) is a traditional Latin American custom that honors our loved ones who have died. It is a cherished, complex holiday celebration where we celebrate, honor, and remember the lives of those who are no longer here with us. The common principle for this holiday is "whatever pleased our loved ones in life, they are to have again."

This month, there are many events throughout the city of Houston where you could learn more about this holiday.

October 26: Día de los Muertos Procession and Celebration

Casa Ramirez FOLKART Gallery will host an event in celebration of ancestors and loved ones; there will be a personal altar display, community altar for all who wish to participate, performances and a procession.

November 1: Bo's Place Ofrenda: Día de los Muertos festival

Join us from 6-8 pm at Bo's Place as we host a festival to celebrate Día de los Muertos. The evening will include memorialization activities and light snacks. Registration is required and will open in mid-October. For more information, contact ofrenda@bosplace.org.

November 2: Día de los Muertos in the Heights

Day of the Dead of the Heights will host a day filled with music, dance, art, food, and vendors celebrating Día de los Muertos at Montie Beach Park.

November 2: Magnolia Park Día de los Muertos

In its 6th year, the Magnolia Park Día de los Muertos event returns with family-friendly fun celebrating at the historic Hidalgo Park in Houston's East End neighborhood of Magnolia Park and honoring the Día de los Muertos feast day.

November 2-3: 2019 MECA Día de los Muertos Festival

MECA (Multi-Cultural Education and Counseling through the Arts) will host its 19th annual Día de Los Muertos Festival. The festival will feature a variety of traditional foods from the Americas, authentic Latin American arts and crafts, and three performance stages.



The Smilin' Rylen Foundation's Big Heart for Bo's Place

Bo's Place would like to give a big Thank You to the Smilin' Rylen Foundation for sponsoring a delicious barbeque meal for our Katy families on Tuesday, September 24. At the event, Rylen's parents shared, "We're super excited to be a part of this for Bo's Place. It's nice to actually see our gift and how it affects the families that come! What a treat!"

The Smilin' Rylen Foundation was established in August 2017 after the Cowan family lost their 13 month old son, Rylen, on June 5, 2017, after a short battle with bacterial meningitis. After Rylen was able to donate his organs to save five lives, the family vowed to make sure that, through the foundation, they would help raise awareness about organ donation and help families in crisis.

Since the establishment of the foundation, they have had two successful annual runs in Katy, along with many fundraising events. The Smilin' Rylen Foundation has raised over \$74,000, which it has donated to organizations including LifeGift, Ronald McDonald House-Houston, Emma's Hugs, Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep, and Bo's Place!



The gift of giving has helped the Cowan family heal in unimaginable ways. They are looking forward to traveling to Pasadena, California this December, as they have been invited by LifeGift to have Rylen be a part of the Donate Life Rose Bowl Parade float. Rylen will have a florigraph made of his face placed on the float with 44 other donors. "We can't wait to be a part of this once in a lifetime opportunity and feel honored and privileged. We feel blessed to be Rylen's parents and part of Rylen's legacy. We think about Rylen every day and miss him terribly, but feel blessed as his story is still unfolding and impacting so many lives!"



Volunteer Spotlight: Sara Beth and Scott Good

Sitting down to lunch with Sara Beth and Scott Good is like getting together with old friends. The ease with which they draw you into conversation, adding a sprinkle of humor, is like pulling on a warm sweater when the weather gets chilly. From across the restaurant you wouldn't know that the two are highly decorated volunteer facilitators, with 15 heart shaped pins adorning their name badges to signify the number of years they have collectively served at Bo's Place. And you certainly wouldn't guess by their easy smiles and spontaneous laughter that their connection to Bo's Place was born out of significant pain, following the death of their mother/wife.



Sara Beth shared that at 16 years old, Bo's Place was the only thing that got her through her high school years. She explained that her group members were "the only people on the planet who understood me." And her father Scott would probably agree with that statement. Left to raise two daughters on his own, Scott admits that he didn't know the first thing about raising girls. But through his own experience in a support group at Bo's Place, he slowly figured it out. Sara Beth went on to finish college and recalls that a week after graduation she called Bo's Place, ready to give back to the place that had meant so much to her. Soon after, she began volunteering and completed her facilitator training class.

Scott's transition to the role of volunteer wasn't quite as rapid. With a wide grin Scott recalls Sara Beth's insistence after her first volunteer experience that he too go through facilitator training. "And three years later she was still harassing me," which finally prompted him to return to Bo's Place in a very different role. For Scott, it is the loyalty to his group members that keeps him coming back year after year. "I've been where they are, " and he has witnessed the magic of Bo's Place over the years as a facilitator for adults navigating the pain of grief. Scott is very clear right from the start of each group that "this is your group, not mine," believing that his role is to be the potted plant in the room while allowing the group members to support each other.

Not only has Sara Beth been a support group facilitator, but she's also been a camp counselor for a group of middle and high school girls. Sara Beth laughs as she recalls her last-minute recruitment along with a fellow facilitator to come to camp. On the first night, once lights were out and they thought the girls were asleep, Sara Beth and her co-counselor headed to the health clinic to take a quick shower. When they returned, the girls had pushed all of the beds in the cabin together and were having a slumber party. The bonding she witnessed over those three days reinforced her belief in the power of what she experienced at Bo's Place. Sara Beth also acknowledges that volunteering offers an ongoing reminder of her own resilience, that she has

overcome great obstacles to become the strong woman she is today.

The pride radiates from Scott as he talks about his daughter's accomplishments, once she leaves the restaurant to take a conference call for work. I feel honored to have a tiny glimpse of the long journey that led to this place of healing and growth for the Goods. And we are incredibly grateful for their ongoing commitment to creating a safe space for families to walk through their grief, just as they have learned to do so for themselves.

Jodie Gonzalez, LCSW, Director of Volunteer Services & Community Education/Outreach



Upcoming Workshops for Professionals

No matter how hard we try, we know that not every bereaved family in the greater Houston area who could benefit from attending our grief support groups will be able to come to Bo's Place. It is for this reason that an important part of our services focuses on offering education and training to professionals and community members supporting the bereaved. In an effort to break down the taboo of discussing death which is so prevalent in our culture, Bo's Place is committed to providing unique learning opportunities on topics related to grief/bereavement.



We recently tailored our signature Good Grief workshop for two specific audiences and offered one to helping professionals (medical, private practice, etc.) last spring. On October 11, we will hold our first [Good Grief for School Professionals](#) workshop, with updated content and a variety of activities perfect for implementation in a school setting. This interactive workshop offers 6.0 CEUs for social workers, licensed professional counselors and marriage and family therapists.

In our support groups we utilize specific activities to help families prepare for the inevitable challenges of the holidays and special events throughout the year. Knowing that this can be especially difficult for the bereaved, Bo's Place has created a two-hour Lunch & Learn entitled [Helping the Bereaved through the Holidays](#). This workshop is intended for helping professionals looking to gain insight into the grief process and help the bereaved navigate special events with intention. The workshop will be held on October 25 and also includes the opportunity for continuing education.

As a member of the National Alliance for Grieving Children (NAGC), Bo's Place will be streaming live the 2019 Fall Conference and Webcast entitled [Ethical Considerations for Grief Support after a Traumatic Death](#). Three thought-leaders from the across the country will speak on topics such as the impact of a suicide death on the grief process, the particular needs of survivors of homicide, and the impact of traumatic loss on the family system. In addition to the webcast speakers, mental health professionals from Bo's Place will lead an interactive discussion following the broadcast on November 8.

We hope you will consider joining us for our workshops this fall as we continue our mission to help heal hearts. For more information or to register, please view the link below.

[VIEW WORKSHOPS](#)



Houston Auto Show Charity Preview Gala to Benefit Bo's Place

Bo's Place is thrilled to be one of four charities selected by The Houston Auto Show as a beneficiary of its annual Charity Preview Gala, a Roaring Twenties themed gala on January 21, 2020 at NRG Center.

Just last year the Auto Show opened its exclusive Preview Gala to the public and successfully raised \$100,000 for charity. Previously reserved for industry professionals and VIPs, the charity gala is the kick-off event to the Houston Auto Show that gives guests a chance to preview the latest in automotive innovation before the general public.

"We're honored to have such wonderful local charities as beneficiaries for the 2020 Preview Gala," said Wyatt Wainwright, President of the Houston Automobile Dealers Association. "These organizations assist our community in a wide variety of causes that fulfill needs across greater Houston and it's a privilege to work with them to achieve their missions through funds raised at the gala."

This no auction, limited seating, adult only fundraising event, is one of a kind. Guests will enjoy a roaring twenties theme with entertainment to match from Julie Johnson and the Fifth Avenue Band.

Concluding Preview Night, the Houston Auto Show will open to the general public on Wednesday, January 22, 2020 for five days. The Show expects to include at least 700 new and classic vehicles with the opportunity to test drive nearly 80 different models.

Gala tickets are \$250 a person, of which \$100 of the ticket is tax deductible. Sponsorship opportunities are still available. This event is already supported by American Financial Automotive Services and the Houston Chronicle. Visit the link below for more information.



MORE INFORMATION



Shoe Box Drive

As we gear up to celebrate Día de los Muertos at Bo's Place, we need your help collecting standard-size shoe boxes. We will use these shoe boxes for an upcoming activity, in which families will create their own personal family altars. The altars are a way to honor their loved ones who have died.

Shoe boxes can be dropped off at Bo's Place during normal business hours. For questions, contact Jessica Gonzalez at jessica@bosplace.org or 713-942-8339.



Happenings



On September 5, **Modern Luxury Houston** hosted "Fresh Faces of Fashion" at **Tootsie's** to benefit Bo's Place! We appreciate all of the attendees whose ticket purchases contributed to a generous donation from the event!

Nineteen volunteers from the **Baylor College of Medicine** participated in the annual **Matthew Carter Day of Service** on September 7. These students worked diligently to get all group rooms ready for the new year, and made over 230 paper marigold flowers for our Día de los Muertos altars.



On September 12, **Hopdoddy in Rice Village** hosted a "Neighborly Love" day, in which proceeds from sales benefitted Bo's Place. Thanks to all of our friends who ate burgers to a cause that day... including our staff!



Congratulations to this awesome new group of heart healers! This **Volunteer Facilitator Training** class on September 14-15 was our biggest group yet, and we can't wait to see all the ways they will #helphealhearts.



Our friends from **Aetna** provided a delicious dinner for our families on September 17, complete with beautiful flowers and kid-friendly tabletop decorations. #weheartourvolunteers!



Bo's Place was honored to be invited to the **Houston Symphony Community Partnerships Breakfast** on September 24. It was a wonderful morning of networking, music, and conversation!



On September 24, our Board of Directors kicked off the new term with a fantastic **Board Retreat** where everyone became better acquainted, experienced a deep dive into Bo's Place programming aspects, and acquired renewed energy for a great term ahead. Thanks to Board President, David Shine, for leading such a successful event.



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.



Your Guide To Intelligent Giving

