

Healing Hearts



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Bo's Place Ofrenda: Día de los Muertos Festival

Walking into Bo's Place on November 1 was like being transported into a scene from the movie *Coco*. With paper marigolds lining the walkway, guests were welcomed to the first *Bo's Place Ofrenda: Día de los Muertos Festival*. Our incredible volunteers and community partners spent countless hours making paper flowers and decorating the building to transform Bo's Place into a land of marigolds, the flowers symbolizing the fragility of life.

This unique event was held to celebrate the beautiful holiday that brings forth the ability to remember our ancestors who have died, while also honoring their lives. An *ofrenda* is an altar, not meant for worshipping, but rather designed as a way to show love for the deceased by leaving objects beloved by the person. The *ofrenda* was a focal point of the evening, allowing guests to add photos and items to the altar. Guests were also invited to write messages to their loved ones on a memorial wall.

Friends of Bo's Place in attendance had the opportunity to decorate *calavera* (sugar skull) cookies, create their own *calavera* mask to take home, have their face painted, and design a *luminaria* (paper lantern) in remembrance of the person who died. The evening concluded with a special performance, as Mariachi Luna Llena filled the air with music and Mixteco Ballet Folklorico spun around the basketball-court-turned-dance-floor.

We are so grateful for our amazing team of staff and volunteers who dedicated their time to help create an unforgettable event.





Reflections from first time "camp counselors": a weekend of healing at Bo's Place family camps

There are many traditions at Bo's Place around the Thanksgiving holidays and some of our favorite and most impactful are our weekend family camps. Over 100 participants in our family grief support groups returned last week from a weekend at Camp for All filled with traditional camp fun, including horseback riding, the "Big Swing", archery, and the crowd favorite, s'mores around the campfire, and also grief-related activities. Throughout the weekend, the theme of "Superheroes" reminded campers that, despite a tremendous loss, it is still possible to find hope and experience joy.

Our hearts are full of gratitude for the volunteers and staff members who made this year's camps a healing part of the grief journey for all of our campers. Below are reflections from some of our first time "camp counselors":



"Bravery comes in many forms. The amount of bravery I witnessed first-hand this weekend did not fall short. Trying new things can be a frightening experience for anyone. I was blown away by the enormous amounts of bravery one of our littlest friends displayed during horseback riding. Once his turn finally arrived, I saw his joy overcome with fear and he backed out. I heard him whimper to the barn staff that he was scared and that he didn't want to ride the horse anymore. I saw one of the horse handlers comfort and listen to his worries. She told him that if he decided to get on the horse, she would personally walk alongside him as he rode the horse. I could see the struggle on his face that evolved into determination as he swung his little leg over that horse. He completed the course with the horse handler by his side with the biggest and brightest smile on his face. When he dismounted the horse, he ran to tell me that he was able to ride the horse because he remembered how brave he could be. It was a great reminder that even in our scariest moments we all have the capacity to channel our inner bravery."



- Jessica Gonzalez, LMFT, Bo's Place Bilingual Ongoing Family Groups Manager

"When I first met the women in my cabin, many did not know one another, they were nervous about being there, and they were unsure of what to expect from the experience. But within just a few minutes, they had bonded to a point where anyone looking in would have thought they had been friends for years. Within an hour they were dancing, smiling, and just having fun, which was a beautiful transformation to see. Many times at camp, I was honored to see many moments of support and encouragement from our families. My favorite memory from camp was at the dance when I looked out and saw all the families together: smiling, dancing, and having fun. In that moment, it was amazing to get to see not only their strength and hope, but the love they have for another. I started to think about how some moments in life seem small or insignificant, but in reality these moments have the power to personify hope, joy, and love. I feel humbled and so grateful to have been able to be a part of such a life changing experience."



"During the Heart of Hope activity at Campamento Sanando Corazones, families had the opportunity to reflect on their day and share a message of hope with their fellow participants. A family shared that this weekend had been filled with smiles, laughter and fun; something they had not experienced since the death of their loved one. As a family, they realized that even with a broken heart they were able to experience these emotions. My favorite memory of camp was seeing how the adults encouraged each other to get out of their comfort zone and conquer their fears during the "Giant Swing" activity. Adults enjoyed swinging back and forth after having hesitation in participating at first. As a clinician at Bo's Place, camp was another reminder of why I love the work I do. A death of a loved one is one of the most difficult journeys an individual endures yet our Bo's Place families are filled with resiliency and hope. As this year comes to an end and we enter the holiday season, this weekend also served as a time to reflect and show gratitude for my own personal blessings."



- Arlette Rangel Rodriguez, LMSW, Bo's Place Bilingual Group Coordinator



Now - more than ever - we need your help!

Thanks to you and our **COMMUNITY** of support, Bo's Place provides a safe place for bereaved families to:

Share experiences with others in grief, regaining a sense of **HOPE** and possibility for the future,

Develop new, healthy coping skills to be more resilient in the face of future challenges on the path toward **HEALING**,

Build a strengthened **SUPPORT** system, to not feel so isolated or alone in their grief,

Find the **COURAGE** to use their own personal strengths to overcome adversities resulting from the death,

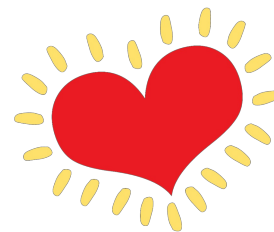
Learn to communicate openly about their thoughts and feelings in a circle of trust and **FRIENDSHIP**,

Offer the gift of **LOVE** to their family members and other families by being present for and accepting of each other's unique grief experience.



It is estimated that 1 in 15 children in Houston will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18, and that number more than doubles by the age of 25.* Childhood bereavement is a prevalent and critical public health issue that can have a profound impact on future well-being if appropriate grief support is not available when these children are most vulnerable.

Your investment in Bo's Place today is an investment in the future success of the bereaved children and families in our community. A gift of any size will help us in our goal to ensure that no one, especially no child, ever has to grieve alone.



MAKE A YEAR END GIFT

*Judi's House. (2019). Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model: Understanding Childhood Grief in the U.S. Retrieved from www.judishouse.org/CBEM.



Walk or run the 5K with Team Bo's Place

Join Team Bo's Place for the We Are Houston 5K on January 18, 2020. The 5K is a great way to get involved as a family or with a group of friends while supporting Bo's Place. Many of the runners on our team choose to run In Memory Of or In Honor Of a loved one as a way to honor their connection to that person. Runners who join our team will receive a tech t-shirt to wear on race day and an invitation to the Pancake Breakfast celebration following the 5K.

If you prefer to cheer instead of run, we invite you to join our HOOPLA station on January 19, 2020 as we cheer on the half marathon and marathon runners as they race past. Catch up with Bo's Place staff and volunteers as you encourage Team Bo's Place runners. And enjoy coffee and donuts while you cheer them on!



Start off the year on the right foot and join Team Bo's Place for a fun weekend! You can register for the 5K or create a fundraising page below if you are already signed up.

Please email marathon@bosplace.org with any questions.

REGISTER FOR 5K

CREATE FUNDRAISING PAGE



Be a part of history: Hearts of Hope Luncheon celebrating 30 years of healing hearts

It's not too late to participate as an underwriter for the annual Hearts of Hope Luncheon on **Thursday, February 13, 2020**. The event will be chaired by **Susan and Charlie Neuhaus** and **Kate and Logan Walters** as we honor **The Upton Family** with the Robin Bush Award.



Guest speaker **Bode Miller**, a US Olympian and World Cup Champion Skier, will share his message of hope and healing after experiencing a great loss as we celebrate 30 years of healing hearts at Bo's Place. We hope you will help us commemorate this special Bo's Place anniversary by purchasing a table. The deadline to be included on the invitation is December 6. You will not want to miss this heartwarming event!

For more information contact HeartsOfHope@bosplace.org.

PURCHASE A TABLE



Happenings

On November 8, our Bilingual Ongoing Family Group Manager, Jessica Gonzalez, LMFT, attended the **LifeGift Donor Medal Ceremony**, which is held every year as a way to honor the families for selflessly giving to others in their time of grief through organ donation. Bo's Place was there to meet with families and share how we help heal hearts



One of our volunteer facilitators, Susan Coates, attended the **Veteran's Day Celebration at Monty Ballard YMCA at Cinco Ranch** on November 9. Thanks to Susan for representing Bo's Place and sharing our services with veterans like the one pictured here! #weheartourvolunteers



We had a great group of friends show up for **Bo's Buddies Happy Hour** at Under the Volcano on November 13! Hats off to this group of volunteers and supporters who are passionate about the mission of Bo's Place!



Spindletop Charities brought a wonderful group of volunteers from the energy sector for a day of service at Bo's Place, and then surprised us with a \$15,000 gift! We could not be more grateful to this group for their ongoing support through gifts of time and treasure.

One of our favorite traditions each year is delivering **Thanksgiving meals** to Bo's Place families. Through the support of generous donors, families receive a smoked turkey dinner with all of the sides, and pie to top it off! On November 27, we loved sharing this gift with our families. #weheartourvolunteers



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.



CHARITY NAVIGATOR
Your Guide To Intelligent Giving

