

Healing Hearts



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Mothers Are On Our Minds

"A mother is not defined by the number of children you can see, but by the love she holds in her heart."
-Franchesca Cox

Sunday, May 7th is International Bereaved Mother's Day and Sunday May 14th is Mother's Day so mothers have been on our minds.

International Bereaved Mother's Day always falls on the first Sunday of May and is a time to offer support and comfort to grieving moms. If you know a grieving mother here are some suggestions for support:

- Give her a call, send a note, and/or make plans to be with her to offer your support.
- Share any special memories you may have of the child. Let her know that her child is remembered and give her a chance to talk about her child and speak his or her name.

Mother's Day itself can be a difficult loss reminder. In addition to mothers whose children have died, here are others who are bereaved and might struggle with how to approach Mother's Day:

- Children whose mother has died
- Women who experienced a pregnancy loss
- Mothers raising their children alone after the death of their parenting partner
- Parents raising children and missing their own mother or grandmother
- Parents or guardians raising a child whose mother died

If you know someone grieving in one of these ways it is a good time to reach out and let them know you are thinking of them and offer support. Some ideas for approaching Mother's Day and other holidays and can be found in these resources:

Helping Grieving Families Through the Holidays (English)

Helping Grieving Families Through the Holidays (Spanish)

How To Spend Mother's Day On Your Own Terms

17 Posts To Help You Cope With Mother's Day Grief





Little Friends Explore Matthew's Garden

Little Friends group is back in person at Bo's Place. Little Friends is for families with preschool aged children who have experienced the death of a parent/guardian or sibling. The group recently enjoyed time outside for a scavenger hunt. Magnifying glasses in hand, children searched the garden for signs of life and death in nature. Plants, colorful flowers, caterpillars, and other crawling insects were found; living things that move or grow and need food and water. A bright green lizard was spotted on a rocking chair, his lounging interrupted by curious children. Group members also looked for items that were not alive, such as fallen leaves, twigs, dead plants, and insects no longer moving or growing. This outdoor scavenger hunt is a way to help young children talk about and explore what "alive" and "dead" mean. Using concrete language, and sharing information in small bits at a time, are helpful when talking to young children about death. Families were provided a copy of the book *Lifetimes: The Beautiful Way to Explain Death to Children* by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. This book gently talks about the beginnings, endings, and lifetimes of plants, animals, and people.



Volunteer Spotlight: Evette Ned

On April 13, 2015, my life changed with the death of my husband. I had never imagined life without him or raising our children alone. At the time of his death, my son was eight and my daughter was one. Though I knew that he would never return in an earthly state, my heart yearned and ached for his physical presence. Family members and friends provided words of what they thought were encouragement, such as, "you are strong and you will get through this". However, the most encouraging words came from the secretary of the school that my son attended, who encouraged me to call Bo's Place. Bo's Place became our house of refuge. It was the place where I felt safe to express the pain and heartache that I was feeling. It provided a safety net for my son to be around other children who were grieving the loss of a parent and/or loved one.



The magic of Bo's Place occurred somewhere between my tears during group sessions, watching my son rock climb at Camp for All, and doing yoga at the Women's Retreat. Or maybe the magic happened while creating a scrapbook for the first time or singing Lean on Me at the closing of group. It could have occurred while creating a square for the quilt, you see that's just it; of the three years that my son and I spent at Bo's Place, we can't identify the single moment that our hearts were healed. That's the magic of Bo's Place!

As a current facilitator, I have the opportunity to watch the magic of Bo's Place unfold right before my eyes. Knowing that there is another side of a families' grief journey and treading the waters with them, is a privilege. In the words of Bill Withers, "Sometime in our lives, we all have pain, we all have sorrow, but if we are wise, we know that there's always tomorrow ... we all need somebody to lean on." It's an honor to give back to the organization that walked alongside my son and me during our grief journey. Bo's Place truly does heal broken hearts.



Women's Retreat Highlights

Saturday, April 29, Bo's Place hosted our Women's Retreat/Retiro de Mujeres. The retreat is an annual bilingual experience focused on self-care, support, and memorialization. Participants started the morning with team building and reviewing their grief journey. Large group sessions focused on self-care such as: journaling, deep breathing exercises, yoga, gratitude, and mindful movement. The retreat culminated with memorialization opportunities and a moving candle ceremony. This weekend would also not be possible without the generosity of Pamela Urcid for providing bilingual yoga instruction, as well as The Junior League of Houston Sustainers and Yael Iffergan for their meal sponsorship. Thank you to the volunteers, interns, and staff who played a role in preparing and facilitating this special day at Bo's Place.



Celebrating Our Friends and Supporters

Bo's Place staff had the pleasure of welcoming our wonderful volunteers and supporters to our annual Appreciation event on Saturday April 15. The incredible Over the Hill Gang donated a delicious barbecue feast that more than 100 people enjoyed. It was a beautiful evening where attendees enjoyed good music, photo ops, frozen margaritas, and some fantastic door prizes. Best of all, staff had an opportunity to show our gratitude for the dedication and hard work of our volunteers and supporters who enable Bo's Place to heal hearts in our community. We would not exist without the commitment of these amazing individuals who have our heartfelt thanks for all they do for Bo's Place and the bereaved families we serve.



Good Grief for Helping Professionals: June 9, 2023

Save the date for our upcoming *Good Grief for Helping Professionals* which will be held on Friday, June 9, 2023, from 9 am – 12 pm.

This in-person training is designed for professionals wanting to build their skills to more effectively support the bereaved. The session provides an overview of current grief theory, various indicators of grief, and how to support grieving individuals across the lifespan. Led by Bo's Place mental health professionals, this 3-hour training will focus on supporting the bereaved client using grief-specific therapeutic elements through a variety of interventions. Participants will gain tools and resources to support their work with the bereaved, and interventions ready for implementation in a variety of settings. Opportunity for 3 continuing education credits will be available.



Good Grief for Helping Professionals is co-presented by Bo's Place mental health professionals, Alison Smith, LCSW and Courtney Reynolds, LCSW.

Light breakfast provided.

***Due to limited space, this training is limited to 45 participants. Register today!**

[Register Now](#)



Happenings

On April 14, School Program Managers Arlette Rodriguez, LMSW and Lori Bokone, M.Ed., LPC presented **Good Grief for School Professionals**. The full day training included school counselors and teachers discussing grief at different developmental stages,

identifying the indicators of grief, and how to develop support plans for students experiencing grief. Participants also learned how to run their own grief support groups, engaging in different activities they can do with their students to explore their experiences with grief.



On April 20, Mary Beth Staine, Bo's Place Executive Director, along with Laura Laux and Carol Lee Lyons, both Bo's Place board members, participated in a TV interview with the program **Texas & Me**. Talking about all things Bo's Place, we cannot wait for this episode to air on May 14. You can watch *Texas & Me* on Sunday mornings at 7am on KYAZ.



Sable McElveen, LCSW, Bo's Place Community-Based Programs Director, participated on a panel of mental health experts and advocates at the **Ashley Jadine Foundation Lecture Series** held on April 22. The theme of the panel and lecture series was *"It Takes a Village: Parents, Educators, Clergy, and Mental Health Professionals Working Together to Prevent Suicide."* Sable and other panelists discussed their personal experiences with suicide, warning signs for suicidal ideation, and steps community members and loved ones can take to support someone who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide.



Saturday, April 29 was the 6th annual Smilin' Rylen Run, honoring the life of Rylen Cowan and the lives he saved through organ donation. Representatives from Bo's Place participated in the run/walk and shared information about our grief support services. Thank you to the Smilin' Rylen Foundation for choosing Bo's Place as a recipient of the online raffle for this event!



Bo's Place Grief Support Services

At Bo's Place, we believe that grieving families heal when they share their experiences with each other. We offer free Grief Support Groups in English and Spanish to families and individuals.

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



