

# Healing Hearts



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## "Meaning Making" for the Bereaved

When someone dies, those close to them may struggle with finding a way make sense of the death. Sometimes a death impacts an individual's core beliefs and assumptions about who they are in the absence of their loved one. They may wonder what their life will be without the person who died. Meaning making is an important concept in grief literature that involves the bereaved finding ways to incorporate the story of the death into the story of their life in a way that makes sense to them and to identify personal growth they have experienced since the death. This is both coming to an understanding about the death and being able tell your own story with the death as a part (but not all) of who you are and being able to see personal growth and strengths developed on the grief journey.



Being able to identify personal growth helps provide meaning to the suffering of grief. This understanding can move someone from seeing themselves as being unable to cope, to seeing the ways they are coping, and then seeing themselves as resilient, able to adapt to challenging life experiences. This growth does not take away the pain of grief, but it does increase the understanding of how to cope with the pain. For example, someone might say "I wouldn't wish this on my worst enemy, but I'm stronger than I thought." For some suggestions that may help you and your family members make meaning of a death please see our Meaning Making handouts in English and Spanish.

Meaning Making Flyer

Creando Sentido de la Muerte



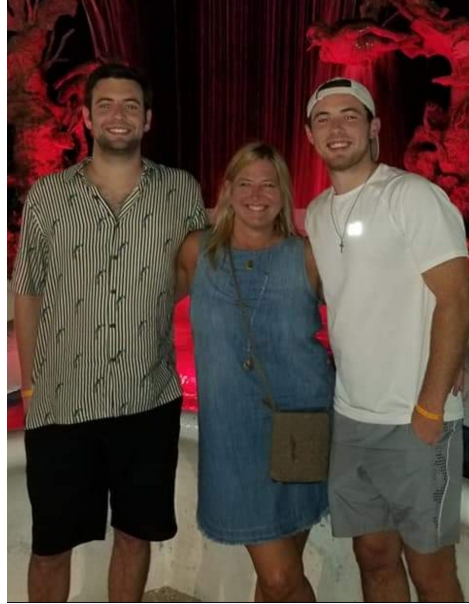
## Volunteer Spotlight: Julie Hogg

We had the privilege of speaking with Julie Hogg who has

recently transitioned from volunteer to part-time staff member! Below is our "interview" with Julie as she shares her special Bo's Place story.

*Julie, tell me about yourself!*

My name is Julie Hogg and I currently live in Spring, Texas. I have two sons who are 26 and 24. My older son lives in Austin and my younger son lives in Ft. Worth. My younger son got married this summer to his college sweetheart and we are all very excited! I completed my undergraduate degree at Texas A&M University and recently completed my master's degree in social work at the University of Houston. I enjoy spending time with my family and friends and, of course, volunteering at Bo's Place. I have an RV and when possible, I enjoy camping near the beach or in the woods. I love to read and enjoy a variety of genres.



*How did you first get involved with Bo's Place?*

In 2000 at the age of 34, my husband was killed by a drunk driver, leaving me a widow with a 4-year-old and a 20-month-old. I quickly realized that I was not going to be able to navigate my own grief and help my sweet sons. One weekend while I was in Arlington visiting my in-laws, I learned about The Warm Place. I called them and they referred me to Bo's Place. At that time, Bo's Place offered groups for children beginning at age 5, but my son was 4. The Director of Bo's Place agreed to try and start a 4-year-old program and within a few weeks, I got the call that we could begin coming to Bo's Place. We were the first 4-year-old group to attend Bo's Place. We attended the ongoing group every other Monday for 3 years and we drove an hour and half to get there.

*What was your volunteer experience like with Bo's Place?*

In 2017, my sons had both left home for college and I finally felt like I had the time to begin volunteering at Bo's Place. I began facilitating with the family groups on Tuesday evenings and have remained with that group for 6 years. During the pandemic, I became an online facilitator and have been amazed at how well it works. I have also been a substitute with the teen group and adult groups, as needed. In 2018, at the age of 50, I made the decision to go back and get my master's in social work in hopes of someday working with bereaved families. While working on my masters, I completed my internship at Bo's Place and experienced even more in-depth the "magic of Bo's Place." I have continued to facilitate the Tuesday night group and look forward to it each week.

*What was one of your most memorable experiences at Bo's Place?*

My most memorable experience at Bo's Place was when a little boy brought his little pet mouse with him to group (in a cage of course). He said the mouse made him feel safe and less sad. It was so cute, and the other children loved seeing the mouse. I had seen support dogs, but never a support mouse!

*If someone doesn't know about Bo's Place, how do you explain it?*

I am always honored to have the opportunity to tell others about Bo's Place. My own personal experience and the support that it provided to me and my sons during that sad time was immeasurable. It is a safe place where you can talk about your feelings, and you can be with others who are also experiencing the same thoughts and feelings. The grief journey is a lonely one and can be very isolating. Bo's Place offers a place where children and adults do not have to be afraid to share their feelings because everyone there is experiencing the same thing.

*Why should someone consider volunteering or learning more about Bo's Place?*

I think the idea of volunteering at Bo's Place can be scary to people because they do not feel qualified to hold the space for children who are grieving, or they are afraid to hear sad stories. However, Bo's Place makes it easy to give the children support by offering activities that are well suited for them and that allow them to express themselves in creative ways. As a volunteer, you are a "plant in the room," letting the group offer support to each other. You do not need to be a qualified counselor to facilitate a group, you just need a caring heart and ears to listen.

*How has your volunteer experience impacted you personally, or in your personal life?*

Volunteering at Bo's Place has been the most rewarding thing I have ever done. It is an honor to hold the space for the children to be able to share their thoughts and feelings and to know that they are not alone. I look forward to the group time each week and seeing how much progress they make as they move through the weeks. It is heartwarming to hear how the children love Bo's Place and never want the round to end. I wish I had never had to attend Bo's Place, but I am thankful for all it has done for my family, and I am thankful to be able to offer support to others.

*Thank you, Julie, for sharing your journey with us. Bo's Place is grateful to you.*

Editor's Note: We are thrilled Julie is now on staff at Bo's Place as a clinician! Our team of heart healers is so lucky to have her!



# Reel-y Good Time at the CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament

Bo's Place was honored to be a part of the CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament, hosted by SpawGlass, in Fulton on August 4-5. Since 2015, Bo's Place been one of the beneficiaries of this event, receiving over \$250,000 to sustain our grief support programs. Several staff members from Bo's Place helped staff the Captain's Dinner. Kirsten Herrscher, Bo's Place Board President, participated in the tournament, finishing 6th! Children from our family groups helped to create a beautiful heart tray that was a big hit in the live auction. We are grateful for this very special partnership!



## Training Opportunity: "Rooted in Hope: Grief after Suicide and Traumatic Loss"

General discomfort addressing and supporting death, grief, and trauma coupled with societal pressures to "get over" or fix an inalterable situation, can often leave grieving individuals feeling isolated and mired in their grief. Children face additional challenges integrating losses into their lives related to developmental influences and a limited repertoire of coping tools often coupled with social stigmas.



We will illuminate common (sometimes challenging) responses to loss and grief myths, identify unique considerations following suicide and traumatic loss, and outline helpful caregiver responses and interventions when supporting an individual after a loss by suicide or traumatic loss.

Presented by Tina Barratt, EdD, LCPC  
Friday, October 20  
11 a.m. – 2 p.m.  
Live Interactive Webinar

[Register Now](#)



## Partner with Team Bo's Place

Is your company looking for wellness activities while showcasing its charitable initiatives? The Run for a Reason Corporate Partnership Program, part of the Chevron Houston Marathon, is the perfect way to bolster your social and wellness programs and support Bo's Place at the same time. Corporate Partners receive race entries and opportunities to showcase their brand in front of thousands of active Houstonians and participants from across the globe. Team Bo's Place corporate partners also receive tech t-shirts, signage in front of Bo's Place leading up to race weekend and on-course signage at our HOOPLA station, and an invitation to our Pancake Breakfast.

If you are interested in more information about the Corporate Partner Program or would like to run with Team Bo's Place, please contact [marathon@bosplace.org](mailto:marathon@bosplace.org).





## Happenings

On the last weekend in July, 27 amazing heart healers completed our two-day **Volunteer Facilitator Training!** We are grateful to these generous individuals for the time they gave to become the best volunteers for our support group participants. We cannot wait for them to get started!



On August 8, Dr Michelle Barratt from **UTHealth Houston McGovern Medical School** brought medical students in their pediatric residency to Bo's Place for a tour and meeting. We are always glad to see Dr Barratt and her students every year.



Provisional members from The Junior League of Houston, Inc. attended an agency visit at Bo's Place on August 24 to learn more about our services and the Bo's Place placement within the Junior League.



## 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.*



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