

# Healing Hearts



e-Newsletter | November | 11.01.2023

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## November is Children's Grief Awareness Month: Let's FLIP THE SCRIPT

Children's Grief Awareness Month serves as a poignant reminder of the importance of acknowledging and supporting grieving children and their families. According to the JAG Institute's 2023 [Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model](#) Report, an alarming statistic underscores the urgency of this effort: 1 in 12 children, or approximately 6 million children, in the United States will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18. The profound impact of this loss cannot be understated.

In recognition of Children's Grief Awareness Month this November, the National Alliance for Children's Grief (NACG) is coming together with its dedicated members to "flip the script" on grief. **What is Flip the Script?** Flipping the Script references a shift in perspective or a change in the way a situation is typically handled. When someone "flips the script," they are taking a different approach, and this November, we will work together to flip common grief scripts. We know that many of the traditional expressions of sympathy can be unhelpful or even hurtful to grievers.

Join us this November as we flip the script -- informing, encouraging, and supporting individuals in this journey. Follow Bo's Place on social media for daily posts. Learn more about the campaign by visiting the NACG website. Your support will #helphealhearts

FLIP  
THE  
SCRIPT

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Exploring Feelings with Young Children

Have you ever had trouble naming how you feel? Or feel two things at once, like being happy and sad about something at the same time? Maybe you've had a big feeling or reaction and didn't understand why. There are times when feelings can get complicated, especially for those who are grieving a loss.

Small children can have big feelings as well. Children tend to grieve in waves; grief feelings may come and go throughout daily routines, times of rest, or times of play. It is important to let children know that it is okay to have different feelings and offer engaging ways to explore those feelings and practice healthy outlets. Here are some ideas:



#### Feelings Games and Activities

- Playdoh Feelings- Use playdoh to create faces that look express different feelings (i.e., happy, sad, mad, or scared faces).
- Feelings Charades- Take turns acting out feelings (i.e., excited, tired, silly, hurt, surprised) without talking or using words and see if the other person can guess the feeling.
- Musical Feelings- Use instruments or household items to make music that sounds like different feelings (i.e., cheerful, angry, scary, calm sounds).

#### Coping Skills: Ways to Help Children Calm Their Mind and Body

- Five Finger Breathing: Hold your hand up in front of you. Using your other hand, slowly trace up and down each finger. Breathe in as you trace up and breathe out as you trace down.
- Freeze and Melt: Keep your body still and freeze up like an ice cube by squeezing tight from your head to your toes. Then slowly relax and let yourself melt. Repeat 2-3 times.
- Three Colors- Choose 3 favorite colors to draw with. On blank paper, use the first color to draw a shape or design all over the page (i.e., circles, lines, hearts, balloons, triangles). Choose a new shape or design to draw with the second color, and another design for the third color.

#### Book Recommendations

- *The Way I Feel* by Janan Cain
- *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld
- *Something Very Sad Happened: A Toddler's Guide to Understanding Death* by Bonnie Zucker



## Reflections on Ofrenda: a Día de los Muertos Event



On Friday, October 27, group participants were invited to attend our annual *Ofrenda: a Día de los*

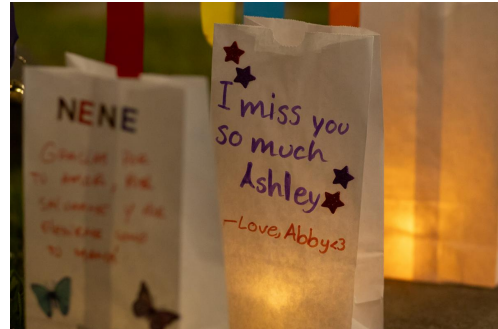


*Muertos Event.* The focus of this special evening is to celebrate life while commemorating the lives of those who died.

With the help of our staff and volunteers, Bo's Place was adorned with paper marigolds, papel picado (paper flags), and Catrinas (skeletons). Our living room served as a space for reflection and connection with their loved ones. The ofrenda (altar) displayed more than 90 photos of our group participants' loved ones. Throughout the building attendees had an opportunity to engage in memorialization activities which included scrapbooking, memory bracelets, luminarias, and decorating picture frames to display on their altar at home.

Bo's Place served aguas frescas (fruit water) and light dinner, which included tacos, empanadas and pan dulce. Guests in attendance enjoyed a special performance by Mariachi Calmecac and Mixteco Ballet Folklorico.

Special thanks to our amazing team of staff and volunteers who welcomed our families with a friendly face. This wonderful event was underwritten by The Junior League of Houston, Inc., Lopez Negrete Communications, Inc., and Dr. Roberta Leal. Bo's Place is grateful for their generous support.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Kristin Tropa

When Kristin Tropa was exploring the Child Life field in 2016, she met with a Child Life Specialist at Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital who suggested she gain experience with grief and bereavement. She suggested Bo's Place and Kristin's journey as a Bo's Place volunteer began.

Kristin shared that from the moment she walked through the

door and met with the Volunteer Coordinator, she knew this place was special. Her volunteer work began as a support group facilitator on Saturdays in the Spanish family group, and then branched into Camp Healing Hearts for several years.

One of Kristin's most memorable experiences with Bo's Place occurred at camp. A woman in her group was terrified as she climbed the rock wall. But the rest of the cabin began singing "Lean On Me" to encourage her, and she found the strength to complete her climb. Kristin recalled thinking that the connection the group had made and the unconditional support they provided was incredible.

After that, Kristin assisted with Volunteer Facilitator Trainings, training and mentoring our newest volunteers. Then she took her passion to the next level by going to graduate school for her master's degree to become a Licensed Master of Social Work (LMSW), something she says Bo's Place inspired her to do. Kristin completed her first graduate school internship at Bo's Place while she was in school.

Today, Kristin is a Primary Therapist at The Eating Recovery Center, working with both adolescents and adults. Between work, reading as many books as she can, spending with her friends and family, traveling, and searching for the best Tex-Mex, Kristin still makes time to volunteer at Bo's Place. She also encourages others interested in volunteering by sharing how rewarding her volunteer experience is. Seeing the resilience and strength of families who come to Bo's Place is very inspiring to Kristin. For Kristin, coming to Bo's Place to volunteer feels like coming home. Thank you, Kristin, for all you do to help heal hearts.



## Kick Off Running Season with Team Bo's Place

Add a little fun to your Saturday morning run by joining Bo's Place at the Chevron Houston Marathon Kickoff Series Finale on November 4 at Memorial Park. Stop by our table to learn more about Team Bo's Place and the Run for a Reason program. Other event activities include a recovery yoga session and food and beverage from Chevron Houston Marathon partners.

The event is from 7:30-9:30 am and takes place at the Memorial Park Picnic Loop just south of Memorial Drive.

For more information about running with Team Bo's Place, please email [marathon@bosplace.org](mailto:marathon@bosplace.org).



Event Details



## Save the Date: Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday is coming up on November 28. This year, Bo's Place will compete in the Chevron Charity Challenge for a chance to win \$25,000 on Giving Tuesday. Mark your calendars and follow Bo's Place on social media to make sure you donate on this global day of giving. With your support, we can win the \$25,000 Challenge and ensure no one has to grieve alone.

**GIVING  
TUESDAY**





# Grant Spotlight: Junior League of Houston, Inc.

Bo's Place is so grateful to The Junior League of Houston, Inc. for their long support of Bo's Place including our *Ofrenda: a Día de los Muertos Event!* In addition to active and sustaining members making marigolds for our décor and volunteering to staff last weekend's Ofrenda, the League provided a very generous grant to help underwrite the event. Since 2021, the League has helped make the magic of Bo's Place shine during our annual Ofrenda. Thank you to the Junior League of Houston as they work to improve communities through the effective action and leadership of trained volunteers.



## Happenings

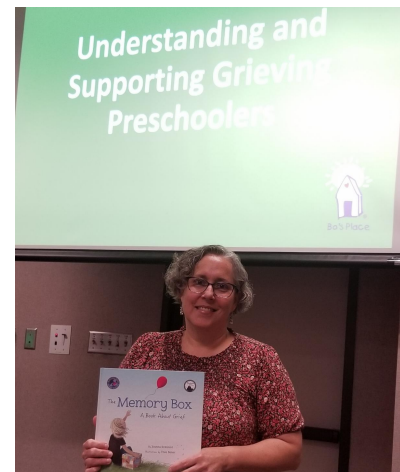
On October 12, Mary Beth Staine, Bo's Place Executive Director and former board member for the National Alliance for Children's Grief, along with fellow Junior League members Julie Comiskey, former board member for Ronald McDonald House Houston; Katie Grahmann, board member for the Houston Botanic Garden; and Lee Pierce, board member for Met Dance, served as panelists for the **Junior League of Houston's Nonprofit Board Service 101 Panel Discussion**. Moderated by Junior League member Megan Ryan, the objective of the panel discussion was for attendees to learn about board service from other League members who work in the nonprofit sector and have served on nonprofit boards.



Wade McGee selected Bo's Place as the recipient of his **Eagle Scout project**. His project included painting eight rocking chairs, scanning and organizing Bo's Place archives, and creating a poster about the tradition of the rocking chairs at Bo's Place. He delivered the chairs to Bo's Place on October 13. Be sure to read the poster on display in the dining room and enjoy a few moments in the new rocking chairs next time you visit Bo's Place. Thank you for your generous donation, Wade!



On October 20, Marian Mankin, Bo's Place Program Director, presented "Understanding and Supporting Grieving Preschoolers" at the **Harris County Department of Education Head Start "Healthy Minds, Healthy Families Conference."**



Bo's Place hosted a virtual training entitled **"Rooted in Hope: Grief after Suicide and Traumatic Loss"** on October 20. Presenter Tina Barrett, EdD, LCPC shared with participants different grief styles, grief myths, and identified helpful

caregiver responses and interventions for the unique considerations of grief following a death by suicide or traumatic loss. Thank you to Dr. Barrett and our 126 participants for attending!



Members of the **Junior League of Houston Sustaining Club** gathered on October 23 for fellowship and service. They assembled over 50 marigolds for our upcoming Día de los Muertos event. Thanks to their hard work, our building will be filled with color as we honor the lives of loved ones who have died.



Twenty volunteers from the **Microsoft Cloud Operations and Innovation** team gathered at Bo's Place on October 24 for a morning of service. After touring Bo's Place, they worked on two projects to prepare for our Día de los Muertos event. One group made beautiful marigolds for the altar where loved ones will be honored. The other group pulled weeds and planted fresh flowers in Matthew's Garden for our participants to enjoy.



To show appreciation for our volunteers, Bo's Place hosted a **"Volunteer Queso Hour"** on October 25 at Bayou Heights Bier Garten! Thanks to those who attended – we had so much fun together! We are deeply grateful for all you do to #helphealhearts



Volunteers from **National Charity League Heart of Texas Chapter** helped transform Bo's Place into a beautiful space for our Día de los Muertos event on October 27. They decorated spaces throughout the building with festive flowers and set up activity spaces in each room. We are grateful to these moms and daughters for all they do to help heal hearts!



## 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.*



**CHARITY NAVIGATOR**  
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