

# Healing Hearts



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## In This Issue

- Goodbye and Hello: Farewell to Mary Beth Staine and Welcome to Jennifer Boubel
- What Do You Want to Carry into the New Year?
- "Good Grief for School Professionals" IN PERSON
- Last Call: Hearts of Hope Luncheon Tickets
- Experience the Magic of Bo's Place Volunteering
- Thank You to our December Holiday Meal Sponsors
- Volunteer Spotlight: Lindsay Derman
- Cheer on Team Bo's Place



## Goodbye and Hello

### From the desk of Mary Beth Staine, retiring Executive Director:

As 2023 has come to a close, so has my time as Executive Director of Bo's Place. I am so grateful that I had the opportunity for thirteen years to work for an organization that I love doing work that is so critically important for the long term health and well-being of bereaved children and families. What a joy and privilege it has been to be a part of this special nonprofit that provides an environment where children and families can grieve together, learn about healthy and adaptive grieving, and start to heal.

I will always cherish the friendships and connection developed over the years with an entire community of individuals committed to ensuring these children and families receive the support they need when they need it most. I'm proud of the work we've done in the last 10+ years and thank each and every one of you for the role you have played in helping heal fragile hearts of the bereaved.

We've worked hard, improved and expanded programs and access, but the work is not done until we ensure that every child and family has access to trauma informed grief support and resources. Bo's Place is fortunate that Jennifer Boubel will lead Bo's Place into the future serving as our new Executive Director.

With gratitude, appreciation and anticipation for what the future will bring!

Mary Beth (affectionately known by grandchildren as Marmie)  
#helphealhearts  
#noonegrievesalone  
#bosplace



### From the desk of Jennifer Boubel, new Executive Director:

It's a new year and this year in particular feels like a brand new start in many ways. As I begin this journey, as the new Executive Director at Bo's Place, I am honored. Truly honored to join such a noble organization with a strong history in our community. The people, the mission, the healing. I am grateful for every person who has been a part of this community and their part of making Bo's Place what it is today.

As I reflect on Bo's Place story, and think about the days, months and year ahead, I am reminded of a saying that has always resonated with me, "What if one day, becomes day one?"

That's not just a New Year's thought. Or a once a year thought. What if we lived every day like day one of something? Day one of a big idea. Day one of a re-energized mindset. Day one of realizing people before tasks. Day one of knowing you have a community of people in your corner.

My hope is that 2024 becomes a year filled with **DAY ONES** for our work at Bo's Place. Day Ones of exploring and celebrating the meaningful work that happens routinely in this community and Day Ones of new ideas and ways to reach those who are grieving.

There's something really special here at Bo's Place and I am grateful to have the opportunity to lead the efforts in this new season. Looking back at Bo's Place rich history and hearing about the dreams to grow, expand and serve more in our city, I'm excited and encouraged.

Grief is something that we all will experience at some point in our lifetime. The community that is formed at Bo's Place brings people together in ways that often seem impossible. We need each other, in grief and beyond. Each one of us has a voice. And each of our voices can make an enormous difference in one person's life and our community.

With Gratitude and Bright Hope For Tomorrow,  
Jennifer



## What Do You Want to Carry into the New Year?

At the start of a new year, people often make goals or resolutions about what they want to change. Sadly, you can't make a resolution that will make your grief go away, but you can focus your intentions on releasing difficult parts of your grief, and holding tight to those things that are helping you.

At Bo's Place, we have an activity that guides participants through thinking about something that they want to let go of related to their grief journey – maybe it's a feeling of worry, sadness, regret, anger, confusion, or guilt. Perhaps they want to let go of hurt feelings or unanswered questions. We ask them to think of what weighs on their heart and identify one thing within their control that they can "release" or "let go". They may not be able to change all of their stressors, but there is probably at least one that they can pick, and actively decide "I am letting go of this." At Bo's Place Camp Healing Hearts, we did the activity around a campfire and the campers would say aloud what they wanted to let go of and then break a stick symbolizing that thing and throw the stick into the fire.



As we leave 2023, think of one thing that you can "let go of" that is no longer serving you or that is weighing you down. Write it down on a piece of paper, then say out loud "I am releasing you," and then tear it into small pieces and throw that stressor away.

For the second part of this activity, participants identify something that gives them strength for their grief journey that they want to hold on to. Sometimes this is a person, a place, an activity, or belief that is helpful to them. Sometimes they mention love, memories, or wanting to honor the legacy of the person who died. We provide them with an object (such as a rock or crystal heart) that they can use to symbolize that source of strength. We ask that they keep that object somewhere where they can see it frequently to remind them of that strength.

As we start this new year, take a moment to think about what lifts you in times of grief and struggle. Find an object that can symbolize your source of strength and put it where you see it frequently (such as on your key chain, a note on the bathroom mirror, a keepsake on your dresser) so you can carry it into 2024.



"Good Grief for School Professionals" IN PERSON

Join us for *Good Grief for School Professionals* on **Friday, February 9, 2024**, from **9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.** in person at Bo's Place.

This full-day, in-person workshop is designed for school professionals wanting to build their skills to effectively support bereaved students. Through this training, school professionals will gain an understanding of children's grief at different developmental stages, identify indicators of grief, and learn about current grief theory. Attendees will be provided with tips for talking to students about grief and death and guidance on forming and facilitating a grief support group. Content is intended for those who are trained and experienced in providing social/emotional support to students. This workshop will include interactive exercises and attendees will be provided with educational handouts, samples of grief-based activities, and student support plans.



This in-person training opportunity is being co-presented by Bo's Place school groups managers, Arlette Rodriguez, LCSW and Lori Bokone, M.Ed., LPC.

Light breakfast and lunch will be provided.

What past attendees have said:

- *"I learned that grief is not linear and we need to allow our students the space and time to grieve while allowing them to know that we are there to support them."*
- *"This session affirmed my belief that children are not immune to the effects of grief and loss, and that it never completely heals, but just transforms over time."*
- *"I actually learned a lot. I learned how students at various stages of development deal with or process grief. I also learned how to best support them."*

Registration is limited, so we encourage you to register now. For questions, please email [alison@bosplace.org](mailto:alison@bosplace.org).

Register Now



## Last Call: Hearts of Hope Luncheon Tickets

Join Co-Chairs **Emily and Chad Covey**, **Laura and Mark Dalton**, and **Amy and David Mitchell** at the Annual Hearts of Hope Luncheon benefiting Bo's Place. The luncheon will take place on **Wednesday, February 7, 2024** at the **Hilton Houston Post Oak**. We will honor **Lauren and Rob Gray** with the Robin Bush Award and hear from Special Guest Speaker, **Kreis Beall**.

We are grateful to the many friends of Bo's Place that have made this event a true success as we join together to help hearts heal in February!

Tickets and tables are limited, so secure your table now!



HEARTS OF HOPE  
2024 LUNCHEON  
BO'S PLACE

Purchase Tables & Tickets

For more information, please contact Rachel Daniels at [heartsofhope@bosplace.org](mailto:heartsofhope@bosplace.org).



## Experience the Magic of Bo's Place Volunteering

Bo's Place provides free grief support groups to families and adults, in-person and virtual, daytime and evening, and in English and Spanish.



This is only possible because of the time and dedication of our amazing volunteers.

**Why should you volunteer?** You will have the opportunity to hold space for participants at a time in their lives when they feel most alone. Allowing them to see "I'm not alone" or "I'm not the only one feeling this way" is such a healing experience.

**How much time will it take?** Some groups meet for several weeks in a row at a time, and others meet twice a month all year. You can tell us what your availability is, and we can work together to find the volunteer role that is the best match for you.

**How will I know what to do?** We provide a weekend-long training with grief theory, and the basics of being a group facilitator. However, each time you facilitate your Group Coordinator provides you with a write up on the activity or theme. We have a time called pre-group where additional guidance is given, and any questions can be answered before each group's time.

**What if the stories are too hard to hear?** We will talk about self-care in the training, as well as provide a time for you to talk with former families and current volunteers. All volunteers go through four group observations so that you can experience the group magic, before being the one in charge of holding the group space.

**Will I make a difference?** Absolutely. One volunteer said they find value in "being a small yet impactful part of the group members' healing journey." You help group members find community, feel hope, and understand that they are not alone.

**Interested?** We have a Volunteer Facilitator Training occurring on Saturday February 3rd and Sunday February 4th from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM both days. If you are interested in applying to be a Volunteer Facilitator, please email [volunteer@bosplace.org](mailto:volunteer@bosplace.org).



## Thank You to Our December Holiday Meal Sponsors

The tradition of holiday meals continued in the month of December, thanks to the support of several groups and individuals. These meals are a welcomed treat for families in our grief support groups during the exceptionally difficult holiday season. We are grateful for:

- Cynthia Lam
- The Junior League of Houston, Inc.
- Bo's Place Board of Directors
- Professional Pool Supply

Thank you for your generous support and delightful meals during the month of December.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Lindsay Derman

Lindsay Derman began volunteering at Bo's Place after she graduated from Duke University with a psychology major. Her career path took her a different route, as her first job was working for the Houston Rockets. Looking for something that would "force" her to leave work after very long days, she discovered Bo's Place and felt a connection to the families and staff. Volunteering for Bo's Place allowed her to continue working in the mental health realm that she had enjoyed in school. Initially working with children age 5-7, Lindsay moved through all age groups up through the teens. She was always afraid of working with adults, but when her schedule forced her into a change,

she challenged herself to overcome her fear. Now – two decades later and married with two children – Lindsay is a steadfast and reliable adult group facilitator for Bo's Place. In fact, she shared "I'm so thankful I feel comfortable facilitating adult groups, as I don't think I could go back to the high-spirited kids!"

Throughout her decades of service to Bo's Place, Lindsay's most memorable experience was volunteering at Camp Healing Hearts. In talking about the experience, Lindsay reflected "It is such an incredible opportunity to see families outside the Bo's Place environment, soaking in new adventures in the beautiful outdoors, testing themselves on the ropes course, or finding peace while walking the labyrinth." Another fun memory from Camp Healing Hearts is that she had just started dating her boyfriend (now husband), and Bo's Place needed more male counselors, so she invited him to join as a volunteer counselor. "Watching him interact with the families so seamlessly (when he had never been a Bo's Place volunteer) is one of the many reasons I knew he was my perfect match," Lindsay shared.



During her time as a Bo's Place volunteer, Lindsay has overcome some of her own personal challenges. While she was once uncomfortable talking about death, she now knows to make an effort to be present for a friend or colleague, and to proactively ask questions about the person who died. And while she hates silences or pauses in conversations, she has learned to "embrace the silence" during support groups as an opportunity for reflections. Lindsay has even taken some of what she's learned in the support groups to use for her own self-care. She shared "I find myself doing some of the meditation exercises whenever I feel overwhelmed or stressed!"

Bo's Place is grateful to Lindsay for her ongoing dedication to Bo's Place, and to her beautiful family for supporting her voluntarism. We know there is a mutual appreciation from Lindsay, as well. When she got married, in lieu of gifts for her shower hostesses, she made a donation to Bo's Place in honor of each hostess and gifted each of them a plush stuffed Raisin puppy. This makes our hearts so happy. Thank you, Lindsay, for all you do to help heal hearts.



## Cheer On Team Bo's Place

We need your help to cheer on Team Bo's Place during the **Chevron Houston Marathon** and **Aramco Houston Half Marathon**!

We invite you to join us on **Sunday, January 14, 2024** to cheer on the half marathon and marathon runners at the Bo's Place HOOPLA station. It's located at approximately mile 5.5 on the course and it's a great point in the race see your friend or family member as they run by. We will be handing out snacks to runners and offering encouragement with signs and noisemakers.

If you are interested in joining the Bo's Place HOOPLA station, email [marathon@bosplace.org](mailto:marathon@bosplace.org) for more information.



## 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.

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*Bo's Place exists to enhance the lives of those who have experienced the death of a loved one.*

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