

Healing Hearts



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A Note from Jennifer...

Finish Strong. Then Help Others.

I'm one of those least likely people to run a marathon. When I was a tennis player in high school, I would cheat when we had to run.

Then one day as a working mom of four, with tennis in my rear-view mirror, I was convinced by some colleagues to run a marathon. "*It will be fun,*" they said. "*It's at Disney World.*" I put on my tennis shoes. And I got on the treadmill at my health club. It took me weeks to get to the point where I could run one mile without walking. Next thing you know, I was doing my last long runs. 18 miles on the treadmill. I was ready?

No Pain. No Gain.

We were near the end of the race. About two miles left. On the Disney route, that means you have two overpasses to get through. Just overpasses. If you hadn't just run 20+ miles, this would be no big deal. But at that moment, they feel like Mount Everest. We are making our way up the overpass when this woman, who is obviously a seasoned marathoner, comes alongside us.

What is she doing back here with those of us who clearly aren't concerned with our time? After all, we have stopped to snap photos with Mickey and many other characters along the path. She runs alongside us, encouraging us all the way to the top of the overpass. And when we make it to the mountain top - I mean overpass - she says, "*Way to go, I'm going to go back down and help others finish strong.*"

She was a stranger. She gained nothing from us finishing. But she loves the community of runners. She finished the race hours earlier. But she goes back to this spot because she knows that's where people quit. She wants others to feel the joy of completing what they started.

I'll never forget her. I'll never forget finishing a marathon.

At Bo's Place, we often talk about the helpers. The helpers are the lifeline to us reaching those in need. Many of you reading this are helpers and we are forever grateful for you and your impact.

As you probably know, for years, Bo's Place has been a Run for a Reason charity with the Houston Marathon. If you are considering participating in the marathon, half marathon, or 5K, we would love to have you run with Bo's Place and we will do our best to help you finish strong.

Time to hop back on the treadmill...



Jennifer Boubel
Executive Director



Father's Day & Grief

As the summer heats up in June, attention turns to another Father's Day, and what that day means can be very different for each person. We may wish it was a picture-perfect and joyful day to celebrate dads in our life, but it isn't that way for everyone. Father's Day may be hard to face if your father died and you are grieving his death, or if your father is alive and you have a difficult relationship. It may seem that everyone else is celebrating with family barbecues, joyful family get-togethers and making memories while you are not.

At Bo's Place, we know that it can be hard to celebrate when you are grieving. If you are grieving this Father's Day, know that you are not alone and give yourself permission to spend the day any way that you choose that allows you to take care of yourself. You don't have to fit into someone else's version, and you can do what feels right to you as a way to spend the day. Acknowledge that you may be struggling and give yourself permission to feel the range of emotions Father's Day evokes for you. Consider creating a plan for the day. You may want to talk with family or friends who support you or do activities that are restorative for you. Having a plan for the day can make it more manageable.



Some ideas for approaching Father's Day and other holidays can be found in these resources:

How to Help Grieving Families
through the Holidays (English)

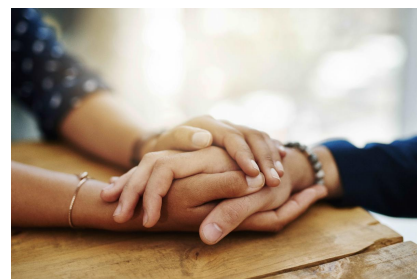
How to Help Grieving Families
through the Holidays
(Spanish)



Monthly Support Group for Adults

Our Online Monthly Adult Group provides an option for participants to continue receiving support from Bo's Place as long as they feel the need for it. Some participants stay in the group for a few months, and some stay longer. We have seen friendships develop in the group, with some members choosing to meet outside group to support each other during the holidays or even becoming travel buddies.

Thanks to the addition of new volunteer facilitators, we have expanded our capacity to accommodate more group members. We are also pleased to share that attendance rates have increased with group members sharing feedback such as, "I am immensely grateful for the support and countless meetings I've attended through this platform. I consider you all my saving grace as much as my grief family."



Bo's Place is honored to help heal hearts of all ages in the Houston community. If you or someone you know is interested in our Adult support groups, please visit our [website](https://www.bosplace.org), email info@bosplace.org, or call 713-942-8339.



Volunteer Spotlight: Riley Hammond

Riley Hammond is a Certified Child Life Specialist, who is currently the Child Life Manager of Special Programs at CHRISTUS Children's in San Antonio. She oversees many of the hospital's fun programs, such as the facility dogs,

music therapy, Child Life Zone, hospital school and Gaming & Technology Specialist. She loves "to garden, craft, cook, tackle a new DIY project, travel and develop a love for the city I live in."



Riley started as a volunteer in 2017 after attending a community education presentation. She first volunteered with our Katy support group programs, then began volunteering twice a year at our Camp Healing Hearts family camp. In 2019, Riley moved out of town, but when she moved back to Texas in early 2022, she jumped right back into volunteering – this time with our online support groups. One memory she shared from this group: "At the closing, a school age child shared how they knew they weren't alone. It was in the moment that I realized 8 weeks over a screen can make a positive difference for children grieving. Online groups continue to give an accessible option for some families who can't make it to the downtown Bo's Place location and give volunteers who are not in the city a way to volunteer."

When reflecting on the impact that Bo's Place has made on her life, Riley shared "Volunteering has strengthened my belief that children need the opportunity to learn about feelings, ways to express grief and cope with it, and how to memorialize their person. I first experienced grief in my early childhood. While I had supportive family members, grief wasn't talked about. Even when I was in college, a grandparent's death wasn't shared with me because they didn't know how to deliver the news. I'm so grateful to be a small part in creating a safe place for kids to be able to talk about the death of their person. In recent years, after experiencing the sudden death of my dad, I was able to share my personal experience with family members of how seeking support via groups or counseling can help heal hearts."

Riley is a treasured volunteer, and we look forward to many more years of healing hearts together. She has continued to be a volunteer because "I believe that it's in giving that we receive, and I am able to fill my cup by giving some of my time to Bo's Place. I am always so appreciative of the little and big things Bo's does to thank their volunteers. It's unlike any other organization I've volunteered with."



A Photo Finish at Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes

For the first time, Hats, Hearts & Horseshoes moved indoors... to The Post Oak Hotel, where on Saturday, May 4th, nearly 400 guests dressed in their finest Derby attire gathered to watch the "Run for the Roses." Chairs of this successful event were Fady Armanious and Bill Baldwin, Amanda and Terry Boffone, and Jayne and Garrett Johnston, who were thrilled that this year's event raised \$360,000. Kathy O'Neil, Bo's Place Advisory Board member and Past Board President, presented the Champion of Hope award to sisters Meredith Chastang and Liz Anders, who are longtime supporters of Bo's Place and the need to have a place of support for coping with family grief, having lost their mother many years ago.



The afternoon was led by emcees Chita Craft and Stephen Lewis, who kept the attention of the lively crowd. The photo finish wasn't the only excitement of the day. Guests socialized, sipping traditional mint juleps and champagne from the Madame Zero Champagne cart, and sampling the variety of delectable bites. Silent and live auction bidding, a racing wall raffle, heads or tails game, and a bourbon pull entertained the guests during the event. Bill Baldwin shared his personal story of when his mother died when he was 14 years old. He explained that he believes it is so important to support Bo's Place in order to give families an outlet to share and talk about their grief that did not exist many years ago. The need is greater than ever today.

Thank you to all who attended or supported this event!



Celebrate Global Running Day with Team Bo's Place

Global Running Day is coming up on Wednesday, June 5. What better way to celebrate Global Running Day than to sign up for a race? Commemorate this running holiday by committing to Team Bo's Place for the Chevron Houston Marathon, Aramco Houston Half Marathon, or We are Houston 5K, each event taking place in January

2024. As a special bonus, anyone registered for Team Bo's Place by June 6 will receive a Bo's Place tumbler.

Running for a reason is a special way to honor or memorialize a loved one, and we would love to have you on our team. Contact marathon@bosplace.org with any questions.



REGISTER TODAY



Give. Hope. Heal.



Robins are associated with the arrival of spring, a reminder that the dark of winter is ending and the time of renewal and growth is beginning.

When one is grieving, it can be hard to see the promise of springtime, so part of what we do at Bo's Place is to hold hope for those who cannot yet hold it for themselves.

Help us finish our fiscal year strong and donate today. Your gift will bring hope and healing.

Spring Annual Appeal - Donate Now



Happenings

On May 1, Bo's Place participated in the **Houston Food Bank** "ConnectED Network for Knowledge" event. Twenty organizations from around the Houston area were in attendance. The event helps to connect students and families with vital resources in the community. Julie Hogg, Bo's Place Clinician, and Sylvia Walters, Bo's Place volunteer, shared information about Bo's Place and the services we offer.



On May 1, Dianne Baek, Bilingual Family Groups Manager, and Courtney Varner, Communications Director, represented Bo's Place at **The University of Houston Mental Health and Wellness Fair**. We enjoyed meeting staff and students and sharing Bo's Place services with the attendees.



On May 3, Jenifer Boubel, Bo's Place Executive Director, attended **River Oaks Baptist School's annual Bo Neuhaus Field Day**. This tradition pays homage to the namesake of Bo's Place, celebrating his joy for life and the positivity he brought to the school and his classmates when he was a student there.



On May 9, Julie Hogg, Bo's Place Clinician, and volunteers Eva Allison and Nicole Koulov staffed a table at the 1st annual **MD Anderson Mental Health Fair**. There were over 40 organizations who attended the event providing resources to over 1,000 MD Anderson employees, trainees, and retirees.



On May 9, Bo's Place welcomed a group of Family Development Workers from **BakerRipley** for a tour and training focused on grief in young children. Lori Bokone, School Program Manager, presented "Understanding and Supporting Grieving Preschoolers," covering common grief reactions and sharing books, videos, and activities to aid providers in supporting the bereaved.



Donna Olson-Salas and Julie Hogg, Bo's Place Clinicians, along with volunteer Deb Biner, attended the **HISD Counseling Department Monthly Meeting** on May 15. Counselors and HISD staff had the opportunity to learn about Bo's Place and the services we provide.



On May 21, eight **Junior League of Houston** volunteers attended their Bo's Place Placement training. These members, along with Jazmin Jarrell, their Chair person, will be volunteering with Bo's Place as hospitality and special projects volunteers from June 2024 through May 2025.



On May 22, our staff gathered at a beach house on the Galveston Bay for a **Staff Development Day**. We enjoyed fellowship and food, and we learned a lot about our personal values and goals for the future. It was a very special day for the team!



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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