

# Healing Hearts



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## A Note from Jennifer...

Over the almost 35 years that Bo's Place has been serving our community, countless people have shown up to walk alongside the bereaved. They selflessly give of themselves in order to help others experience hope and healing.

I suspect, most of the time, they are thoughtfully leaning in with their whole heart and not thinking about themselves, only thinking of others. For those of you reading this who have been a part of Bo's Place in any way, I hope you know how much your presence has made a difference. In the words of Dr. Seuss, "To the world you may be one person, but to one person you may be the world."

To everyone who loves Bo's Place, supports Bo's Place, and serves at Bo's Place, thank you for the difference you make in the lives of others. You are what makes the magic of Bo's Place real.

With Bright Hope for Tomorrow,

Jennifer Boubel  
Executive Director



## Grief Support for Families

As the school year begins, Bo's Place often gets an influx of calls from grieving families as teachers and counselors hear the stories of grieving students on their campuses and refer them to us. If you know a grieving family, please share with them about Bo's Place as they navigate their grief journey.

Bo's Place family groups are one way we serve the bereaved. There are free grief support groups in English and Spanish for families with children ages 3 -18 who have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, or person significant to their family.

The first step to joining a Family Group is for the parent/guardian to call Bo's Place and speak with one of our clinicians to determine what services would be the best match for the family.

For links to information on our other groups (Adult Group, Young Adult Group (ages 18 to 30), Pregnancy Loss Group, School-Based Groups, Groups in Spanish) please visit the Support Groups page on our website.



## Support Groups



## School-Based Grief Support Group: Grief Balloon

Our School-Based Program offers grief support groups for students in grades K-12 in the Houston area through our partnerships with Communities in Schools (CIS), KIPP Public Schools, and Yes Prep Schools.

In the school groups, we begin by asking the question, *What is grief?* We explain to students that grief is the combination of how people feel, think, and react after someone dies. With our elementary students we use the activity, Grief Balloon to show that grief can feel like a balloon, full of air, and that it can help them to share about their thoughts, feelings, changes, and memories to let some of the air out of their grief balloon. We invite them to draw a big balloon on a piece of construction paper, making sure it fills up the page. Inside the balloon, we encourage them to draw or write about what their grief is like, using prompts such as:

- Draw or write about the feelings you had after your person(s) died
- Draw or write about worries you have
- What is different for you at home now? At school?
- What helps you remember your person(s)?
- Who can you talk to about the person(s) that died?
- What can you do when you are having big feelings?



Students are invited to share their grief balloons with their group members. This helps them to see how each person's grief is unique while also recognizing similarities within the group.

If you work in a school setting and would like to learn more about children's grief, including how to support bereaved students, we invite you to join our upcoming online training, *Good Grief for School Professionals*, on Friday Sept 13 from 9am-12pm. Information and registration can be found below.

## Good Grief for School Professionals



## Volunteer Spotlight: Julianne Sellers

Julianne Sellers is a 20-year-old Houston native in her junior year pursuing a double major in psychology and educational policy at Rhodes College in Memphis Tennessee. She shared "My Bo's Place journey started in 2009, when I joined the Bo's Place family groups after the loss of my mother. I still have my Bo's Place puppy, Raisin, from when I was 6 and my most vivid memory is after group, standing in a circle with all of the participants, singing Bill Withers' 'Lean on Me.' I participated in the grief support services for

around 3 years. I have many positive memories about the group, the people I've met, and how I came to understand grief. Since then, I've always known I wanted to give back to a place that means so much to me."

This summer, Julianne was a special projects volunteer helping to prepare for Volunteer Facilitator Training. In her short time working with our team, she made a stellar impression and a lasting impact. When describing her experience, she shared "working behind the scenes gave me a deeper understanding of the work it takes to make sure facilitators are equipped with the necessary supplies and information to ensure training went smoothly. Volunteering at Bo's Place is so much more than making people feel better. It is finding a community of compassionate individuals who take the time to truly listen, support, and share in the journey of grief together. Every person plays a unique and important role in assisting the grief journey, creating the Bo's Place magic."



Julianne plans to become a mental health professional specializing in children and grief. She shares that "not only was my return to Bo's Place very full circle for me, but it also prepared me for my future career endeavors. Because of the impact of Bo's Place on my childhood, I have always wanted to help people the way I was helped. Now, I am on my way to pursue a career in grief counseling. I am so grateful for Bo's Place for uncovering my passion and helping me develop the skills needed to make a meaningful difference in the world."

Julianne, we can't wait to see the difference you make and we can't thank you enough for helping us heal hearts this summer.



## Upcoming Training: *"Four Faith Perspectives in Bereavement: Understanding and Supporting the Bereaved and Yourself"*

This opportunity for cultural competency CE's is presented by Bo's Place in collaboration with The Institute for Spirituality and Health. Faith is often an important part of a person's grief journey and Houston is one of the most diverse cities in the nation. This in-person, three-hour training will feature a speaker panel representing the faith traditions of Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Attendees will be provided with an overview of each faith tradition's beliefs regarding death and dying, tips on offering culturally appropriate support for bereaved members of these faith traditions, and self-care tools for those supporting the bereaved.



### **Four Faith Perspectives in Bereavement: Understanding and Supporting the Bereaved and Yourself**

**Friday, October 18, 2024  
9:00am-12:00pm**

For more information and to register, please visit the link below or email [alison@bosplace.org](mailto:alison@bosplace.org).

Four Faith Perspectives on Bereavement



## SpawGlass CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament

Bo's Place was again honored to be a part of the annual CJ Strnadel IV Memorial Fishing Tournament, hosted by SpawGlass each summer, this year in Rockport on August 3-4. Bo's Place has been a designated charity of this event since 2015, and in that time has received more than \$250,000 to sustain our grief support programs. Jennifer Boubel, Executive Director, attended the Friday night Captain's Dinner and reports that the fishin' weather was perfect on Saturday, with 300 participants in 58 boats vying for the coveted



Champion Trophy. We are grateful for this very special partnership!



## Team Bo's Place Marathon Training Kickoff Event

Did you know that 1 in 13 children in Texas will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18?

As a Team Bo's Place runner (or walker!), your participation provides bereaved children and their families with the support they need when they need it most. Each mile that you run ensures no one has to grieve alone.

Learn more about Team Bo's Place at our booth at the Marathon Kickoff Event! There will be food and music, so come join the fun!

**Tuesday, September 24, 2024**  
**6-8PM**  
**Cullen Track @ Memorial Park**

For questions, please email [marathon@bosplace.org](mailto:marathon@bosplace.org).



## Happenings

On August 3, Julie Hogg, Bo's Place Clinician, and Mikole Montgomery, Bo's Place volunteer, staffed a table at the **Southwest Public Schools Back To School Bash**. There were over 300 families who attended the event gathering resources and information in both English and Spanish on our support groups and the services we offer.



On August 8, Jennifer Boubel, Executive Director, and Courtney Varner, Communications Director, had a site visit at **Camp For All** with Allen McBride, Camp Director. We enjoyed seeing the updates and improvements that have been made at the beautiful facility and we look forward to partnering together again in the future!



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On August 14, 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.



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On August 19, Bo's Place welcomed Tyler Lemmons to the Bo's Place family, a new **University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work** intern.



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**Chicken N Pickle** in Webster hosted a "Give Back Night" benefitting Bo's Place on August 21. Courtney Varner, Communications Director, and Vivi Varner, volunteer, informed dinner guests about Bo's Place services while a percentage of the night's proceeds were donated to Bo's Place.



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The **New York Life Houston General Office** volunteered at Bo's Place on August 22 completing packets for our virtual family and adult groups, created marigold for our Día de los Muertos event, sanitized and restocked all group rooms, and signed all of the NYL donated Kai's Journey books.





Bo's Place attended the **National Latino Behavior Health Association (NLBHA) Conference** in San Antonio, Texas on August 23-24. We joined with hundreds of professionals from all over the U.S. and Puerto Rico to attend sessions on various mental health topics from the Latino perspective. Our own Dianne Baek and Donna Olson-Salas presented a session on "Understanding and Supporting the Hispanic/Latino(a) Bereaved Community" and to share with our session attendees about the wonderful work we do at Bo's Place.



**The Junior League of Houston, Inc.** hosted their first session of the **2024-2025 Leadership Institute Training** at Bo's Place on August 24. Courtney Reynolds, Bo's Place Volunteer Manager, spoke about Bo's Place programming and the Bo's Place League placement that is offered to League members.



**Great Day Houston** filmed a segment on September 29 about National Grief Awareness Day, which was August 30. Bo's Place staff members Marian Mankin, Program Director, and Courtney Varner, Communications Director, attended as participants and audience members in this special program.



## 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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