

heart strings

Fall 2016

A Newsletter to the Community from
The Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas

Bringing Hope and Healing to the Rio Grande Valley

For two years, the leadership team of the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas (the Center) met with a group of concerned professionals in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas (RGV/the Valley), in an effort to establish services for families of grieving children in that region.

A unique region of Texas, the Rio Grande Valley is located on the extreme southern tip of the state. According to United States Census data, there are 400,000 children in this region, 46 percent of which live in poverty.

Funding to make this dream a reality came recently from Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation and Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas, Inc.. By September 2016, a regional director, program assistant, and counselor were employed, and offices established in Harlingen. The goal is to begin providing services in January

"When you are starting a new venture like this, having the right people is key to its success. I think we have the perfect team in place," said Executive Director Marian Sokol. "All three staff members were born and raised in the Valley, they all know the special needs and the challenges they face, and all

are passionate about finding ways to make life better for the residents of this region."

Regional Director Corie Olivarez began her career as a counselor for abused and neglected children. She has served on the board of directors for the Moody Clinic and the Children's Museum of Brownsville. She was Director of Marketing and Development for the Brownsville Museum of Fine Art.

Corie is enthusiastic about the progress they have made to date, "Educators, administrators, school board members and city officials from across the Valley have welcomed CBC-RGV with open arms. We have already formed a partnership with McAllen ISD. "

In addition to her work at the new Center in the Valley, Rubi Salinas, is pursuing a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at the University of Texas-Rio Grande Valley. Rubi's non-profit experience includes the Brownsville Museum of Fine Arts, and United Way of Southern Cameron County.

Counselor Cindy Perez Waddle will provide the grief support services everyone is working so hard to establish. Cindy comes to us from Southwest Key Programs where she provided counseling services to children, adolescents,

and their families. Cindy will also help train, educate, and equip other Valley counselors with knowledge to provide grief counseling in their community.

With this remarkable team, every grieving child and young adult in the Rio Grande Valley will soon have access to competent, compassionate, care when facing the death of a loved one.



RGV Staff from Left to Right:
Cindy Waddle, Counselor; Corie Olivares, Regional
Director; Rubi Salinas, Program Assistant



Going Green

Help us reduce printing, postage and other mailing costs by receiving paperless updates! Stay up to date on exciting news and events at the Center, as well as trainings and other opportunities available. Text CBCST to 22828 or visit our website at www.cbcst.org and click on the "Get Updates" icon at the top of the page.

Shop for a Cause

Holidays are right around the corner and online deals are on the horizon. As you start to mark people off your holiday gift list, shop Amazon Smile to make your gift go further. Designate the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas when you shop and a portion of your purchase will come back to the Center to heal grieving hearts.



Visit www.Smile.Amazon.com for more information and search for the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas to designate us as your charity of choice.

Happy Shopping!!

Heart Strings is the community newsletter for the friends and families of



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www.cbcst.org

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Rio Grande Valley Staff

- Corie Olivares, Regional Director of the Rio Grande Valley
- Rubi Salinas, Program Assistant
- Cindy Perez Waddle, Counselor

Center Kicks Off 20th Anniversary Year

The Center began its 20th Anniversary year with a luncheon honoring 20 of its most steadfast supporters on October 13. Over 600 “close friends” gathered in the Mays Family Center at the Witte Museum to recognize and thank the individuals and organizations that have continued to support the Center’s mission throughout the past two decades.

“We couldn’t have done it without you!” said Executive Director Marian Sokol during her remarks, adding, “We are so grateful to you, and for having this opportunity to publicly thank you.”

Chairs for the event were: Janie Worth, Linda Fugit, Sallie Chasnoff and Mallory Ahl. Tom and Pat Frost served as honorary chairs and Zak Williams, son of the late Robin Williams, shared the story of his own grief experience with attendees. The 20th Anniversary Committee worked on the event for 18 months and the 20 honorees will soon be recognized by a permanent art installation at the Center.



Happy 20th! Zak Williams (center), son of the late Robin Williams, was welcomed by 20th Anniversary chairmen (l-r) Sallie Chasnoff, Janie Worth, Mallory Ahl, and Linda Fugit prior to the luncheon.



Kim Ternan, Jack and their grandmother

Targeting the Needs of Teens

Nobody likes to think about death – our own or that of someone we love. Yet death inevitably touches everyone – it is part of life. Helping children recover from loss is the purpose of the Children’s Bereavement Center, and the demand for the Center’s services has grown rapidly over the last three years. Yet one group has historically remained hard to reach – the teen population.

Thanks to Kimberly Ternan, who dedicated her Girl Scout Gold Award to addressing the issue of Teen Grief, teens and their families gathered in the Spring

to kick off the new Teens Only Group at the Center.

It was watching her younger brother struggle with grief after the death of his best friend that made Kim aware of the problems that can be caused by unresolved grief. This experience inspired her to help other teens in similar situations. From there Kim decided to devote her Gold Award project to educating grieving teens about the importance of asking for help.

Kim developed the idea of a video, Teens Take On Grief, that would show teens – from

a teen’s perspective – “that you shouldn’t be embarrassed to need help, and that it’s important to ask for help.” She met with the staff to learn about the Center, plan, and get help with her project. She was impressed by the services provided; the different ways the staff meets the needs of bereaved children, and the effectiveness of the program.

According to Tami Logsdon, the Center’s Program Director, “The problem we struggle with all the time is the lack of awareness of our program. We feel that we are everywhere, all the time, telling people about our services, but in reality there is a much greater need, especially among teens.”

“There is no doubt that Kim’s film will be a great tool for us to use in getting the word out to the San Antonio and South Texas communities about our programs,” said Logsdon, adding, “It will help us realize our organization’s vision that “every grieving child and young adult in San Antonio and South Texas will have access to competent, compassionate care when facing the death of a loved one.”

For Kim, the most important message conveyed by Teens Take On Grief, is that “It’s not weak or uncool to grieve or to ask for help. It’s more important to do what you need to, in order to get better. It’s about YOU and about YOUR feelings.”

Beginning in April, the Center set aside one night each month exclusively for this age group. For more information about the Teens Only Group, check out our Teens Page or contact Tami Logsdon at (210) 736-4847, ext. 221.

Camp Heroes Brings Miles of Smiles

The staff at the Children's Bereavement Center is constantly asking two questions: "How can we improve our services?" and "How can we reach more families in need?"

Through the years, studies have shown that peer support is the most effective method to help children heal after the death of a loved one. Interacting with others who have experienced a similar loss helps children feel less alone and to understand that their feelings are normal. It also helps parents and children to keep their lines of communication open, so they can talk openly about their grief.

Peer support groups are the cornerstone of the Center's program. But what happens if a family is unable to attend the twice-monthly peer group gatherings due to a lack of transportation – or because the child's parent/caregiver works in the evenings?

Two years ago the Center's staff addressed this issue and the result was Camp Heroes – a two-day, sleepover camp held at the Center and designed to meet the needs of children who cannot attend regularly-scheduled support group meetings.

Camp Heroes has been well-accepted by children and parents alike and extremely successful. In March, 21 children ages 7 to 12 attended the fourth Camp Heroes session. In addition, Camp Heroes: Beyond the Walls was added in June to give additional support to teens who participate in offsite groups hosted at local high schools.

For more information on Grief Camp Services, please contact the Program Department at (210) 736-4847 or visit us online at www.cbcbst.org.

"EVER SINCE SHE CAME BACK FROM THE CAMP, SHE'S BEEN MORE OPEN TO SHARING ABOUT HER LOSS AND THE PAIN SHE FEELS."



Camp Heroes Group Shot at The Doseum

"BOTH OF OUR CHILDREN ATTENDED AND BOTH WERE SURPRISED THAT THEY'RE NOT THE ONLY KIDS GOING THROUGH GRIEF. IT WAS A LIFE CHANGING EXPERIENCE. I KNOW IT IS A WORK IN PROGRESS BUT THIS A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION."



Camp Heroes Girls In The Chairs



Camp Heroes Posters



Camp Heroes Kids Lined Up On Playscape

"ALL STAFF WERE SO KIND AND UNDERSTANDING, WHICH IS SOMETHING WE ARE NOT ABLE TO GET FROM OTHER FRIENDS/FAMILY AND PROFESSIONALS. THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR TIME AND EFFORTS IN HELPING MY FAMILY GET THROUGH THIS DIFFICULT TIME."

Mark Your Calendar!!

NARRATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE ARTS FOLLOWING SUICIDE/ HOMICIDE

Friday, November 11, 2016, 3-5pm
205 W. Olmos Drive
San Antonio, TX 78212

FEE: \$35 PER PERSON

CEUs are available.

This presentation will provide foundational grief theory and discussion of narrative and expressive arts interventions applicable for use with children, teens, and adults grieving a death by suicide or homicide in an individual counseling setting. The training will help participants with the following: 1) Participants will receive foundational grief theory based on William Worden's Task Model 2) Participants will be able to identify common reactions and concerns of survivors following the homicide/suicide death of a family member and validate the appropriateness of narrative and expressive arts techniques for these clients. 3) Participants will review examples of narrative and expressive arts techniques useful for children and teens following a death by suicide and homicide.

For a complete list of trainings offered through the Grief Education Institute or to RSVP for these events, please visit our website at www.cbcst.org.

Grief Education Institute

An Initiative of the
Children's Bereavement Center
of South Texas

Holiday Greeting Cards

You may think it's too early to start thinking about the holiday season – but the Children's Bereavement Center has a suggestion that just might make your holidays easier and less stressful.

In response to many requests, this year we are offering holiday honorarium cards featuring the artwork of a child who has received services at the Center. We hope to make this busy time of year easier for you by printing your message, preparing them for mailing, and dropping them at the post office for you.

Not only is this a great way to lighten your load during the holiday season, but it solves the age-old problem of what gift to get for those people on your list who "already have everything." We guarantee this is a gift that will warm their heart.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Benavides at 210-736-4847, ext. 249 or sbenavides@cbcst.org. Here's to happier holidays!



Call For Friends

Looking for a way to volunteer with the Children's Bereavement Center, but have not yet found your place?

Join the Friends of the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas!! This membership-based alliance of caring individuals is committed to raising awareness about the Center and organizing fun activities throughout the year for our children, teens and families. Activities include museum days, zoo trips, picnic parties, the annual Hearts in Harmony Gala and so much more! This is a lively, fun-loving group with a big heart and a mission to serve.

The Center is truly a volunteer-driven organization. Wherever your time and talents may be, there is a match for you bring renewed joy to our families during this difficult time. We invite you to make a difference in any of the following ways:

- Become a Potluck Partner!! Sponsor and serve dinner to a support group
- Become a trained support group facilitator
- Serve on an Events' Committee (Hearts in Harmony Gala, Sisterhood Soiree, etc.)
- Contribute items from our Wish List (Located at www.cbcbst.org)

JOIN NOW and add your name to the growing list of Friends at www.cbcbst.org. For more information, please contact Julia Anderson at janderson@cbcbst.org.



2017 GALA Committee

Though not scheduled until February 23rd, the 2017 Hearts In Harmony Gala committee is already hard at work preparing for the annual event. Committee members held a planning meeting at the Center recently, attended by: (seated L-R): Sara Holliday, Nicole Johnson, Elizabeth Marceau, Shannon Kingman, Mary Barker, and (standing L-R): Elizabeth Stephens, Scotty Macdaniel, Brooke Leddy, Faith Stouffer, Katie Rogers.

Thanks to All Who Support the Center!!!

Special Thanks to Our Potluck Partners!!

Abiding Presence Lutheran Church
Allison Aderholt & Friends
Alison Barrow
Sarah & Chris Hodge
Jill Jaeckle
Junior League San Antonio
Virginia Koehl
Brookes Lasswell
Laura Lindner & Family
Aimee Locke & Family
Patricia Maguire
Marian McGrath and Catering by Rosemary
Mal Moorman & Smart Barre
National Charity League Alamo Chapter
National Charity League Rose Chapter
Nix Realty Company
Roseheart Ladies Who Care
Elizabeth Stephens & Family
Izzy Sterling & Rackspace
Teens Give Back
The Ursone & Lawton Families

Lisa Westmoreland
Elaine Whittingstall & Family
Julie Wolle & Family

THANK YOU TO Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Deerfield Ward for donating art supplies for support groups.

THANK YOU TO Garrett Echte for donating Teddy Bears and collecting other items for the Center.

THANK YOU TO Methodist Hospital – Pastoral Care Department for donating supplies.

THANK YOU TO Nicole Anderson and Family for donating costumes for our Drama Room.

THANK YOU TO Jacobs Family for donating board games for our teen room.

THANK YOU TO the Women of Mission Union at First Baptist Church of San Antonio for collecting stuffed animals for grieving children.

THANK YOU TO National Charity League for helping to freshen things up before groups started this fall.



National Charity League

Thanks Cont....

THANK YOU TO Sarah and Chris Hodge for the extra special cookies for our groups.



THANK YOU TO the Primrose School at Cibolo Canyon for their generous monetary donation.



THANK YOU TO Carolyn Crutsinger and Xan Gahan, with granddaughters Kate and Cayleigh, deliver beautiful pillowcases for our Center's "Campers".



SAVE THE DATE

16th Annual Hearts in Harmony Gala
February 23, 2017 6:00pm at San Antonio Country Club,
Chaired by Brooke Leddy | To purchase tickets and tables, contact
Julia Anderson janderson@cbcst.org

CONGRATULATIONS!

We would like to congratulate our wonderful CBCST students on their respective graduations! Each of these students completed their internship with the Center this past year. Their commitment to our mission is reflected in their dedicated work. Thank you and we wish you the best in all that you do!

Amberkay Crotts	Angela Gouger	Jen Menzel
Amanda Dow	Lindsay Lange	Rachel Weber
Amy Gilbertson		



*Have you ever
wished you could
leave a legacy?*

You can.

Please consider a 20th Anniversary Legacy Gift.

By including the Children's Bereavement Center in your estate plans, you will be part of the driving force in assuring that thousands of children... perhaps even your grandchildren... will never have to walk the painful journey of grief alone.

For additional information,
please contact Dr. Marian Sokol,
Executive Director at (210) 736-4847.





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OF SOUTH TEXAS

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