

heart strings

FALL ISSUE • 2024

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A journey through grief and perseverance

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Save THE Date

► Tour of the Heart

First Friday of every month

Register at:

give.cbcbst.org/touroftheheart

► Bingo At The Center

October 23

give.cbcbst.org/bingo

► Teddy Bear Brunch

November 3 | 10am-2pm

Signature Restaurant at La Cantera

Make your reservation today by
calling Signature at (210) 247-0176

► Children's Grief Awareness Day

November 21

Wear blue to help raise awareness
for children's grief

A Family's Journey Toward Hope

Following the death of a beloved family friend, the Serrato Family found themselves in the turbulent waters of grief. Zach and Cheryl, and their teenage children Minerva and Manuel, experienced an unanticipated tragedy. During the difficult period following this untimely loss, they discovered our Center through a hospital chaplain.

The Serrato Family was soon welcomed with open arms by our compassionate and empathetic staff. Through the Center, the Serratos gained an extended family of peers navigating the same difficult journey of grief they found themselves on. Our various programs – including peer support groups and individual counseling – provided much-needed space for understanding and reflection.

Our clinicians will tell you that coping skills are essential in navigating the grief process. The Serrato Family acquired these coping skills to practice through the Center's services when their emotions are activated. Minerva found solace in the "five senses" approach, stating, "That's what I do if I'm having like, a panic attack or just to settle myself." Manuel acknowledges that the skills he has acquired will prove to be helpful throughout his life, "...some things will stick with you, and you'll remember them, you'll keep them and use them later". The Serratos' story illuminates the invaluable work undertaken by our team at the Center, which is made possible through the generosity of our community.

What started as a haven to unload the emotional weight they carried quickly evolved into a vibrant community for the entire family. This support enabled them to navigate their grief, turning their loss into shared resilience.

As the Serrato Family navigated their grief journey with grace and perseverance, they continue to serve as a testament to the power of community support and the transformative nature of shared healing. Your contributions to the Children's Bereavement Center can ensure that families are provided with the support they desperately need during their most challenging times.



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2024

Fall

A Message From Our Board Chair

Dear Friends,

Venturing into the fall season brings lots of change, and I am excited to share some of these changes with you! On the heels of our recent Board retreat, we feel more energized than ever for the coming months. There is a lot of excitement for the new strategies being implemented to ensure the consistent growth of the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas across the community. We continue to focus on our financial stewardship of all our resources and improving our services and programs.

The Center's progress is lifted and fully supported by the staff at CBCST! The Board is confident in the staff, both new to the Center and tenured, to continue the healing offered to families. Seeing the changes in the Center has been amazing, and we are ecstatic about the newest additions. Our brand-new playground (ribbon cutting coming soon!) is open for use, thanks to the incredible generosity of our community partners.

With the Center's continued progress, we need your support. Through the gift of your time and financial contributions, we can continue to serve the families needing our services. As the Center navigates the season ahead, we welcome the prospect of new opportunities. We plan to face these changes with hope and grace to align with our unwavering commitment to serving families walking their grief journeys. Looking ahead, we are strategizing plans with our new leadership to enhance the therapeutic environment we welcome families into.

Thank you for your commitment to our mission of fostering healing for children, their families, and the community!

With gratitude,

Frances Gonzalez

Frances Gonzalez



COUNSELOR'S CORNER: A Summer Filled With Hope And Healing

Summer always marks the busiest season for our camp team, and this year was no exception! Our Center hosted two camps, nearly back-to-back, in July and August.

The first camp to kick us off during summer was Summer Camp Heroes. We ventured out to Morgan's Camp for a week, bringing 48 of our most excited campers, ages 8-17. Campers enjoyed time floating in the lazy river, horseback riding along the trails, and navigating the challenge course. Campers could connect with peers in their Healing Circle groups between all the fun camp activities. These Healing Circles were campers' opportunities to share about their people who died, express their grief emotions, and harness their personal coping skills. For many, this was their first time away from home. Witnessing their resilience (and seeing the huge smiles on their faces) was truly heart-warming!

Before we were even unpacked from Summer Camp Heroes, our team was already hitting the road for Camp Cardinal. 2024 marked our fourth year at Camp Mystic Cypress Lake for our beloved family camp. We hosted 14 amazing families, and it was a beautiful weekend spent hiking through the Hill Country, catching critters in the creek, and cooling off in the lake. Families played hard but also worked incredibly

hard at their grief; processing the changes that accompany the loss, facing the reality of the difficult emotions they often feel, and working to support each other through the messy moments. Seeing the immense grief and great joy experienced in these three days by all - families and volunteers - is an experience none of us will soon forget.

We remain so grateful for all those who make this work possible! From the community partners who fund our programs to the volunteers who pour their hearts into guiding families through their grief. With summer behind us, there is still so much work to do but our team is ready to continue bringing comfort and support to every family that walks through our doors.

Emily Price, LPC, CCST



NEW LEADERS PAVING THE WAY!

As we have transitioned through the seasons, we are excited and hopeful for the new and exciting changes the Center is currently experiencing. Many of you may know that we welcomed our new Chief Executive Officer, Kristina Hernandez in July and shortly after, our new Chief Development Officer, Catie White, and Chief Program Officer, Adriana McKinnon joined the team!



With these changes come new and exciting perspectives and possibilities. We are grateful for the new growth that lies ahead of us! Kristina, our former Chief Development Officer, has hit the ground running with her new role. The Center is lucky to have Kristina as our leader to guide our staff through the coming years. Alongside Kristina, we have gained two amazing talents in Catie and Adriana. These incredible women serving in leadership roles bring a wealth of skills, perspectives, and career achievements. We are so appreciative of their vision and dedication to our mission.

As we move through the season, the Center is looking forward to the guidance our amazing leadership will bring!

Children's Grief Awareness / NOVEMBER 21ST

CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS MONTH 2024



CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT CENTER OF SOUTH TEXAS

Don't forget - November is Children's Grief Awareness Month, and we're all about spreading love and support to families who need it most!

At the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas, we're here to help grieving children find hope and healing. **Want to get involved?** It's easy! You can volunteer, donate, or simply spread the word. And don't forget to wear **Blue** on November 21st to show your support — it's a fun and meaningful way to stand with the kids and families we serve. Let's come together to make a difference and show that no child has to grieve alone!



We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Valero for their generous donation of school supply kits as part of their United Way campaign. Support like this means so much to the children and families we serve at the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas. These kits not only provide essential tools for learning but also bring joy and comfort to the children in our care, reminding them that they are supported by a compassionate community. Your kindness helps brighten their days and ensures they have what they need to succeed.

Thank you, Valero, for making a difference!

LEAVE A
Lasting Legacy

AND SUPPORT A
GRIEVING CHILD TODAY!

cbcstlegacy.org

**MONARCH
SOCIETY**

A LEGACY CIRCLE OF THE CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT CENTER