



Heart Strings

SPRING ISSUE • 2025

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Save THE Date

▶ **TOUR OF THE HEART**
Join our staff for a tour of the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas on the first Friday of every month. Email us at: development@cbcst.org to schedule your tour.

▶ **APRIL 3, 2025**
 **FRIENDS MEMBERSHIP BRUNCH**
RSVP for this event at: give.cbcst.org/beafriend

▶ **FIESTA: APRIL 24 - MAY 4**
Be sure to get a 2025 CBCST Fiesta Medal!

▶ **NOVEMBER CHILDREN'S GRIEF AWARENESS MONTH**
Wear blue on November 20th to show your support!

Alina's Story

(Little) HEARTS IN HARMONY

After losing her dad in 2021 due to COVID, Alina began struggling with the complicated feelings of grief. Her mother, Anna, came to the Children's Bereavement Center to find support for her daughter. Alina joined Little Hearts, the Center's play therapy group that supports children ages 3-5 and their caregivers. Last year, she was one of 71 hearts healed through this program.

Children can't always verbalize their emotions, so the Children's Bereavement Center utilizes play therapy to help our Little Hearts process and express the heavy feelings that come after the death of a loved one. Through play therapy, Alina was able to express and work through the emotions that were causing outbursts. According to her mother, the changes she saw in Alina were astounding.

"Alina is definitely happier. She has learned how to manage her emotions... She's able to speak freely about her father. She's able to comfort not only me but her sister."

Through the holistic approach the Center takes, Anna was able to find hope and healing as she supported her daughter through grief, as well. The support groups and resources offered by the Children's Bereavement Center helped her to get through some of the most difficult times following the death of a loved one.

Alina and her family are just one example of the stories we hear every day, and we're humbled by how much trust they put into our staff at the Center. We had the privilege to share Alina's moving story at our 24th Annual Hearts in Harmony Gala. Her story touched our audience, and we thank our community for the outpouring of support shown for Little Hearts just like hers.



CONTINUE FOR MORE ... *Hearts In Harmony* ▶▶▶

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▶▶▶ MORE Hearts In Harmony

Our gala is such a special night where the community we have built can come together and show our support of the Center's mission - so that no child has to walk the painful journey of grief alone.

Everyone coming together for our mission showed us truly how strong the power of community is. Thank you again from the bottom of our hearts for being part of our clients' stories. Your support truly means the world and makes a lifetime of a difference.



Counselor's Corner

A NEW CHAPTER IN SUPPORTING OUR STUDENTS



As we welcome the new year, I'm excited to share some fantastic updates about our school-based program, which continues to grow and extend its reach to more students who need support. For those who may not be familiar, our school-based program offers crucial mental health support directly within the school environment. It's been a year full of progress, and we're eager to highlight these milestones with you!

Starting March 1st, we're expanding our school-based program into the North East Independent School District (NEISD), marking a significant step forward in our mission. We could not be more thrilled about the opportunity to bring our services to more students and families. While the Children's Bereavement Center's physical location is an invaluable resource, we know that for many families, coming to the Center can be an obstacle. By bringing our therapists directly to schools, we're able to eliminate that hurdle, allowing us to support children who are navigating grief in real time. It's a model that meets kids where they are, helping them cope with the challenges they face in the most familiar and comfortable setting possible.

Although school campuses can sometimes present creative challenges for session locations (schools are busy places!), our team remains committed to delivering high-quality grief therapy to each child. In the first semester of the 2024-2025 school year, our seven school-based therapists worked with 84 children through individual and group sessions.

We are incredibly grateful to all the individuals and organizations who make this work possible—especially the school district staff who go above and beyond to provide experiences possible for the children we serve. As we move into the second half of the school year, we remain committed to the Children's Bereavement Center's mission of fostering healing for children, families, and the community. We can't wait to see what this next chapter brings!

Warmly,
 Devan Aguilar-Mock, LPC

A Message From Our Board Chair

Dear Friends,



As I reflect on my time as Board Chair, I cannot help but be profoundly grateful for what we have done together as a team and community. The Center has successfully grown through pivotal leadership changes and continues to navigate an ever-changing external environment. I am proud to say that, even with these changes, CBCST has emerged stronger and more vibrant than ever before.

I celebrate my board colleagues (among the most hardworking in San Antonio) and, most importantly, the CBCST staff, who have embraced these changes with undeterred professionalism and seek continually to embody hope and healing for every child, youth, and family who enters our doors. If the future belongs to those who believe in it, then I am confident our future will be nothing short of magnificent. The team continues to expand our impact, as well as our opportunities for strategic funding partners and community relationships. Our unmitigated growth ensures that, both now and in the future, no child will have to walk the painful journey of grief alone.

I believe in this team, and I am excited for what happens next-- I encourage you to come by and see and hear about it for yourself. I know you will be grateful and in awe of the work of our tireless staff, all of whom are dedicated to helping children and families in the hardest moments of their lives. So stop by and bring a friend or two, and please, I urge you to get involved. Our mission is dependent on your generous support, as it is only with you that we can foster healing and help children and families find hope again.

With sincere gratitude,

Frances Gonzalez

Frances Gonzalez

Volunteers: OPEN HOUSE

Our volunteers make so much possible at the Center, and 2024 was an incredible year for our program. Whether it's taking an hour out of your week to serve dinner as a Potluck Partner, hosting a drive for much-needed program supplies, greeting our families when they need the most support, or anything in between - the time our volunteers have dedicated to our mission is invaluable.



To say thank you for all the incredible and selfless work our volunteers do, we held an open house to highlight our appreciation. In 2024, our volunteers provided 426 hours of service to our support groups alone, 118 clients across our grief camps, and provided 106 meals to the dozens of families that come to us for services.

▶▶▶ Spanish SUPPORT GROUP

We have an unwavering goal to provide grief services to as many people in our community as possible, and to advance this mission, we're proud to be able to host a Spanish-speaking support group thanks to our incredible team of bilingual counselors.

GET YOUR Fiesta Medal!

Don't forget to snag a 2025 CBCST Fiesta Medal!

Show your festive spirit and your support for the Children's Bereavement Center of South Texas with your very own Fiesta Medal. For a \$10 donation, you can party with a purpose by helping fund our grief support programs.

Come visit the center to get yours now!



Your Gift Matters

Make a Big Impact With a Future Gift!

Learn more about estate plan donations:
plannedgiving.cbcst.org