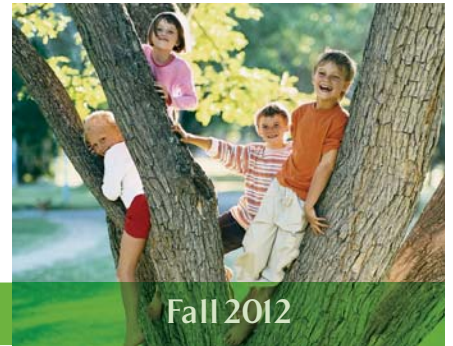




Peter's Place

A Center for Grieving Children and Families

Comfort. Hope. Healing.



Fall 2012

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Fertile Ground

Letter from the Director

*Carrie Miluski, MS, CT
Executive Director*

Dear friends,

The work of Peter's Place is about hope and healing, and as you will read in these pages, it is also about growth. It might not make sense intuitively to think of "growing through grief" but in fact, it happens. Children and adults learn through tragic experiences to live in new ways and to adapt to their new realities. We hope and believe that families find the loving community at Peter's Place to be fertile ground for this kind of work.

Likewise, Peter's Place as an organization is preparing to grow. We recognize our responsibility to grow carefully, always attentive to protecting the heart and soul of our community—always faithful to our mission and purpose.

Our strategic planning process in 2011 reaffirmed the inestimable value of Peter's Place to families in the broad geography surrounding our Radnor facility and to the schools touched by our outreach program.

Two key realities also came to light:

1. Our region needs more from Peter's Place.
2. We must gather the resources to meet that need.

The unmet need is great—countless children in our region need the support Peter's Place provides. Six percent of children will experience the death of a parent before age 18. Many others will lose a sibling or another caregiver. Peter's Place is here for these children, their caregivers, and support professionals.

Childhood bereavement, if left unaddressed, carries increased risk of emotional, behavioral, and academic problems. Kids who participate in peer groups at Peter's Place or through our in-school programs exhibit many positive outcomes. These include willingness to share their grief, improved school performance, increased communication with family, and decreased sense of isolation.

Expanding our reach to help more children and families, without compromising the unique quality of our services, requires careful planning and hard work to increase our resources.

Peter's Place is preparing to grow through three significant initiatives made possible by generous grants and gifts:

1. A 3-year partnership with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) focusing on the needs of bereaved siblings, made possible through a generous grant by The Stone Family Foundation.
2. A generous grant from "A Little Hope" will help us establish a presence in Chester County.
3. A gift from Leigh and John Middleton will enable the launch of "Ryan's Hope at Peter's Place," offering peer support to parents grieving the death of a child to addiction.

Your support of our fundraising efforts nurtures the healthy roots which sustain Peter's Place, and these new endeavors. Your dedication to our mission and belief in our work is the "fertile ground" which enables our continued growth so that we can extend the promise of "growth through grief" to even more children and adults.

Thank you for being a friend to Peter's Place.



“Your support... nurtures the healthy roots which sustain Peter's Place.”

OUR MISSION

Peter's Place provides safe and supportive environments for grieving children and families and acts as a community resource to foster understanding of the effects of death and grief.



Growing the On-Site Program

Kimberly Nelson, LCSW
Director of On-Site Programs

Our on-site support groups typically include activities which encourage introspection and sharing of thoughts and experiences. Within our safe and supportive environment, these activities provide comfort, promote healing, and offer the promise of hope for the children and families we serve.

One highly effective activity asks group members to create three columns: "The Way It Was," "The Way It Is Now," and "The Way I Want It to Be." Choosing a topic such as "feelings" or "family," participants explore their grief journey by writing down their thoughts, or drawing pictures beneath each heading.

This simple exercise helps group members process change and transition after the death of a loved one. It also serves as a great way for us to prepare for the growth of our on-site programs.

The Way It Was

Last year, through a redesign of our program schedule, we were able to conduct multiple age-related groups simultaneously. This allowed families with siblings in different age groups to attend sessions on the same night. In addition, this change allowed optimal use of our facilities, including the newly designed "Teen Room." More group sessions were also added to the schedule, eliminating the need for a waiting list, and allowing support to be more readily available to families in need. Our volunteers were provided with additional self-care and support. These steps helped to enhance and strengthen the program offerings available today.

The Way It Is Now

Based on our strong foundation, we seek continuous improvement in the breadth, depth, and quality of our on-site programs. Always mindful of our mission, we are committed to maintaining a unique, supportive environment for grieving children and families. This requires the careful attention of our staff and volunteers, remaining present with group participants, walking with them on their journey, and providing them time and space to honor the past, and move toward the future.



Grief Candyland

Tracy Clark Photo

The Way We Want It to Be

We have many exciting growth opportunities underway for the coming program year. These include the launch of a partnership with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP), and a new program "Ryan's Hope at Peter's Place," which will begin offering support to parents who have lost a child to addiction. Our on-site program depends on the services of 36 faithful volunteers who give their time and talent each week to help us facilitate groups. Recognizing their vital role, we seek to provide even greater ongoing support to them by fostering community and advancing their individual growth as group facilitators and leaders. By working through the logistics of implementing these growth initiatives, we are striving to move ahead to "the way we want it to be."

We look forward to continuous enhancement and expansion of our services, while maintaining the strength of our core program. We can ready ourselves to grow effectively and responsibly by honoring the past (the way it was), being in the present with group participants (the way it is now), and looking to the future (the way we want it to be).



Hello & Goodbye

We are pleased to welcome "Jamie" H. Bromley and Jane McNeil to our Board of Directors. James joined the Board after completing his function as a consultant, guiding us through our strategic planning process. He is now serving as Treasurer. Jane has been a wonderful friend of Peter's Place and most recently co-chaired our 10th anniversary celebration with great enthusiasm for the mission of the organization. We are honored they have chosen to serve and look forward to sharing this work with both of them.

Sadly, we have said goodbye to Nancy Dever, who served as our Development Coordinator for 3 years. Nancy brought many gifts to Peter's Place and was a treasured member of our team. She continues as a volunteer facilitator. Replacing Nancy is Amy Holzapfel, JD, Office and Event Coordinator. Inspired by our mission, Amy joined our staff in January after first volunteering for the Moonlight & Magnolias event committee. Amy is an attorney with vast experience fundraising for local non-profits. Welcome Amy!

Last fall, we were pleased to add Kimberly Nelson, LCSW, to our staff as the Director of On-Site Programs. Kim joined Peter's Place after working 10 years in child welfare helping families deal with the loss and transition associated with the foster care system and adoption. Kim is now the caretaker of our on-site peer support groups and works with the wonderful volunteers who staff these groups. We also regretfully said goodbye to Cara Magrogan Sacks, who served as the Director of Off-Site Programs.

And finally, welcome back Darcy Krause, LSW, JD. Darcy completed her graduate internship at Peter's Place while a student at the University of Pennsylvania, and she joins us again as the coordinator of our new sibling bereavement project with CHOP.



Growth through Grief

Denise Paul, MA, CT
Group Specialist

Grief is a complex mixture of human emotions that is both natural and necessary following the death of someone special. Mourning brings about growth, and growth occurs when the bereaved person processes the loss and feels the pain of the person's absence, while integrating the loss into their lives in a meaningful way. Peter's Place offers children and adults a safe place in which to talk about their precious memories and heartfelt feelings.

Grief affects us in many ways—physically, socially, spiritually, cognitively, and emotionally. Our *physical* well-being may be challenged in the following ways: diminished appetite, inability to sleep, decreased energy level, headaches, body aches, and anxiety. We eventually grow physically by overcoming the physical limitations that set us back. As we grow in grief, our bodies increase in stamina to persevere through the *physical* challenges of grieving.

We may be forced to grow *socially* as our old set of friends may not fit comfortably with our new circumstances. New roles in the family may force us to grow in ways that may be challenging. Growth will occur as we re-evaluate our daily activities and learn to live without that person. Developing a new way of being with other people is an important part of healing and an opportunity for *social* growth.

Most people will continue to turn to their religious or *spiritual* beliefs and practices for solace, comfort and understanding in the midst of their sorrow. However, it is not uncommon for grievers to doubt their faith and question God's responsibility for the loss. As we search for answers and find meaning in the death, we may find that our spirituality changes and may even be enhanced by the support of our faith community. *Spiritual* growth can occur even in the midst of religious uncertainty.

Grieving people experience *cognitive* limitations as they often report feeling like they are "going crazy" in the weeks and months following the death. They are unable to think clearly, concentrate, and process information properly. Grieving takes a tremendous amount of mental energy because of the many thoughts and emotions to reconcile following a death. In time, *cognitive* abilities will resume as the bereaved person processes the loss.

The grief journey can be a painful one, as a flood of *emotions* is often experienced. Commonly reported feelings include: shock, denial, anger, despair, sadness, failure, hopelessness, loneliness, and confusion. Growth can occur if one takes the time to process these feelings with trusted family, friends, therapists, or support groups. It may sound counterintuitive to actually encourage people to explore the many painful feelings of grief, but if done in the midst of supportive people, growth will come through *emotional* expression.

As we reconstruct a world of meaning that has been challenged by the loss of a loved one, we are sure to grow physically, socially, spiritually, cognitively, and emotionally.



Putting Together Shattered Pieces



Tracy Clark Photo

In Their Own Words

Q: What is the best thing about Peter's Place?

"In my group I found it very easy to talk about things that I would otherwise keep inside." *Caregiver*

"I know that I am not alone on this ride." *Caregiver*

"My children and I all gain extra strength from our groups." *Caregiver*

"On a scale of 1-5 I give groups a 5, the facilitators a 10 and Peter's Place overall a 100." *Peter's Place teen*

"I love it a lot and I don't want to leave." *Peter's Place child*

"I like being with other people who understand your grief and the feelings you have felt." *Peter's Place child*

With Gratitude

Peter's Place is an organization with a small staff but a huge impact. Our broad reach is made possible by the incredible outpouring of support we receive from the community. Here are some of the special people and groups who've helped Peter's Place this past year:

- In February, **Strath Haven Middle School** hosted their annual Student-Faculty Basketball Game with proceeds benefitting Peter's Place. The school raised over \$2,100 to help support our programs, and the students earned their first victory in 20 years! A win-win! (see photo)



- In May, **Dia Dolce Cupcake Truck**, winner of the *Mainline Times'* "Best Cupcake Award," held a cupcake sale to raise money for Peter's Place. The cupcakes sold out in less than one hour!
- A special thank you to **Michael Brock**, who generously donated his inspiring photography and talent at several of our events, including the Peter's Place Bowl-A-Thon and Moonlight & Magnolias.



- **Nudy's Café** donated a portion of all proceeds for the month of June, totaling over \$1,700, to Peter's Place.

- A heartfelt thank you to **Beth Fogarty**, a Moonlight & Magnolias committee member, who generously donated a portion of her Stella and Dot jewelry sales during the month of April.
- Thank you to **Thomas J. Paul, Inc.** for their generous work on this newsletter and Moonlight & Magnolias.
- Thank you to our **volunteer facilitators**. Peter's Place on-site peer support groups could not exist without the commitment of over 36 trained volunteer facilitators. Each year, these amazing people give over 2,500 hours.
- Thank you to our **Moonlight & Magnolias Event Chairs and Committee Members** for their tireless hours of beautiful work. Special thanks to Sheila Norton and Mary Katherine Schenkel, Chrissy Madden, Jen McGowan and Kelly Perillo.
- Thank you to the **Women's Dining Circle of Overbrook Presbyterian Church** for hosting a dinner in honor of Peter's Place to raise over \$1,700!

For more information on how you can host your own event to support Peter's Place, please contact **Amy Holzapfel** at 610-687-5150 or amy@petersplaceonline.org.

Partying with Peter's Place

November 2, 2011 Guests and friends of Peter's Place gathered for **Eat. Laugh. Love.** to celebrate a decade of comfort, hope and healing at The Viking Culinary Center in Bryn Mawr. Guests enjoyed cocktails, delicious comfort food and cooking demonstrations. We are grateful to Allison Hayden for capturing the evening in photos. A special thank you to **The Viking Culinary Center** for putting on another fabulous event.

February 4, 2012 The Playdrome at Devon was buzzing with excitement as 126 bowlers, from 23 teams, enjoyed an afternoon of pins, pretzels and pizza—at the 2nd annual **Peter's Place Bowl-A-Thon**. Teams were made up of Peter's Place children, families and friends. Together, the participants generated over \$14,500 in donations! The money raised provides a support group to 12 families for a program year at our Radnor facility. Special thanks to Michael Brock for his inspiring photography and video of the event, Bravissimo Pizza and Philly Pretzel factory (food sponsors), Thomas J. Paul, Inc. (grand prize sponsor), John Kelly for his awesome DJ services—and finally, Devon Playdrome for their wonderful facility and help the day of the event.

May 12, 2012 Peter's Place celebrated a night of elegant southern hospitality at the Baldwin School. Led by co-chairs Mary Katherine Schenkel and Sheila Norton, guests were invited to step into a night of "**Moonlight & Magnolias**" and swing to the sounds of Zydeco-A-Go-Go, an authentic jazz and zydeco band. Guests enjoyed traditional southern cuisine and spirits—all prepared by the culinary experts of Jeffery A. Miller Catering. This fundraising event and silent auction helped to increase awareness of Peter's Place and raised over \$90,000 in critical funds needed to continue grief support services to children and families.



Michael Brock Photo



Michael Brock Photo

2011-2012 DONATIONS

contributions received since 2011 newsletter

Peter's Place is ever grateful to all of our contributors who make our programs possible.



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Readying to Grow

Tony Morelli Jr., LSW
Director of Off-Site Programs

The metamorphosis of caterpillar into butterfly is an archetypal symbol for the processes of growth and transformation in the natural world. The formation of the chrysalis—in which these mystical processes happen—however, is somewhat illusory. Although it **appears** that the caterpillar actively forms this protective coating, in reality it actually **sheds its outer layers, thus accessing the chrysalis already existing within**. Once this organically formed “container” emerges, the evolution from caterpillar to butterfly is underway! Ultimately, the caterpillar does virtually nothing to facilitate this process; **it merely has to be and to allow nature to take its course**.

The Outreach Program of Peter’s Place engages in processes similar to that of the caterpillar/butterfly, and it is unique in its mission to carry the spirit and work of Peter’s Place outside of the walls of our Center and into schools and community settings. Each Outreach effort literally requires the relinquishing of the various “accouterments” found in our Center—from the colorful pillows, games, toys and costumes to the ever-coveted Foolsball machine! The Outreach Program, however, consistently carries with it a power directly derived from the theoretical and practical foundations that make the grief support services of our on-site program unparalleled—namely, our “peer support” and “companionship” models.

Employing these above-mentioned models, the Outreach Program actually creates a “series of chrysalises” wherever it goes, fostering support, understanding, and compassion among and for grieving children and families in the wider community. For those bereaved young people who, for various reasons, are unable to come directly to Peter’s Place, the Outreach Program offers support within a common and familiar social setting—their school. Much like the caterpillar releases that which is unhelpful to its growth, the Outreach Program allows grieving students to unburden themselves of the culturally constructed inhibitions that often stymie the expression of their grief—and that are, generally, unnatural to children to begin with. Ironically, in this particular process of letting go, grieving students actually create a “chrysalis of protection” via the support of their peers in the group. Much like the caterpillar accesses the chrysalis inherent within it, so too, do these young people access their own inherent capacity for empathy. Consequently, they are able to grow and develop as effective and capable individuals, both in and out of the classroom.

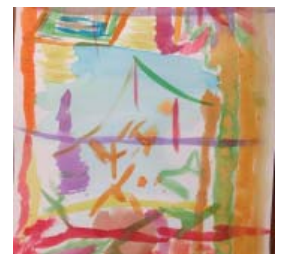
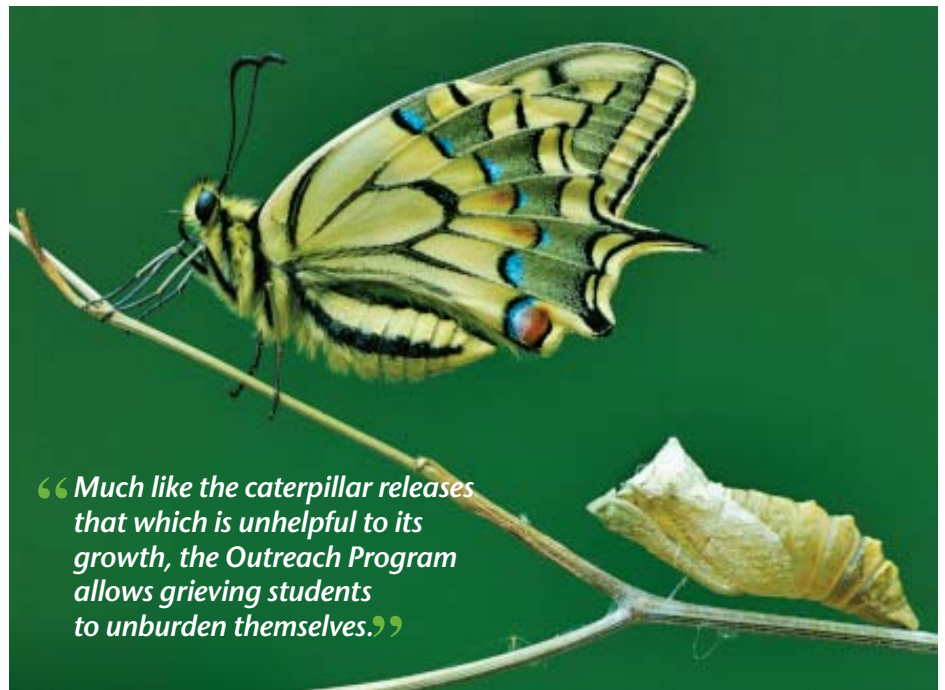
The Outreach Program is also seeking to expand its efforts to educate more adults who are caring for bereaved children in economically underserved areas by working with school-based parent-teacher organizations as well as local community groups in the city of Chester and in other areas of southern/southeastern Delaware County. More information will be forthcoming as these fledgling efforts develop within their own “chrysalises!”

Simply by being present to bereaved children and families, and by offering our exceptional service to the community, the Outreach Program allows Peter’s Place to naturally expand as a distinguished, respected, and evolving presence within the communities that exist beyond the “chrysalis” of our own walls here in Radnor.

Thank you for supporting our growth and transformation!



Balloon Release



Grief Watercolor



Teen Group

Peter's Place by the Numbers

*On-Site Peer Support Groups, 2011–2012
Program Year*

13 peer support groups for children and teens

13 peer support groups for adult caregivers

1 peer support group for young adults

297 total served in 2011-2012 program year

Outreach Program Highlights 2011–2012

21 eight-week grief support groups in area schools

6 new schools were added this year!

172 Outreach Programs in local schools and agencies

646 individuals served and over 16,000 children indirectly served

Participating schools and organizations in the Outreach Program

Academy Park High School
 Agnes Irwin Upper School
 Catapult Learning, Inc.
 Chestnut Hill Graduate School of Counseling
 Chester Community Charter School
 Colonial School District
 Darby Township Elementary School
 Delaware Co. Juvenile Detention Center
 Eddystone Elementary School
 Harris Elementary School
 Interboro School District
 Mommy's Light Lives On Fund
 Neighborhood Hospice of West Chester
 Northley Middle School
 Olney Charter High School
 Park Lane Elementary School
 Radnor High School
 Ridley High School
 Senkow Elementary School
 Sharon Hill Elementary
 Southeast Delco School District
 Strath Haven Middle School
 University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of Social Policy and Practice
 Villanova Graduate School of Counseling
 Widener University Graduate School of Social Work
 Widener Partnership Charter School

In Their Own Words

About our Outreach Program

"Grief group allows the students the format to express themselves as well as get the support of others in the group. By the end of the group sessions the majority of the students have progressed in all realms possible, i.e. behaviorally, emotionally, and academically." *A School Counselor*

"My students loved group and looked forward to it each week. Many times they reminded me that we had group that day :)" *A School Counselor*

"It helped me to tell my siblings how I feel and know that it's alright to show your feelings." *Student*

"Everyone had someone that died and I didn't feel like I was the only one that had someone that died." *Student*



Memory Box

“My favorite thing about the group was the Memory Box because I could put things that remind me of my mom in it.” *Student*

DONATE: Comfort. Hope. Healing.

With only a small paid staff working and over 36 volunteer grief facilitators, Peter's Place serves hundreds of children and families every year. We also provide support to thousands of kids and staff in area schools.

Peter's Place does not charge a fee for our support group services. This helps to ensure that no child is turned away for financial reasons.

Your donation to Peter's Place enables us to provide these essential services and also helps us grow responsibly and sustainably.

How You Can Help

- \$4,000 helps keep Peter's Place in a low income school for a whole school year.
- \$1,098 allows one family to attend Peter's Place for a program year.*
- \$800 allows up to 10 grieving students to attend an 8-week support group in their own school.
- \$350 purchases a year's supply of children's story books about grief for our lending library.
- \$122 provides a month of services for a grieving family at Peter's Place.

*Program year is 9 months

How to Donate

- Donate today using the attached donation envelope.
- Visit our website www.petersplaceonline.org, and click on "Donate."
- Designate Peter's Place for your **United Way** contribution; our donor number is **14576** for United Way of Southeastern PA. For other United Way agencies, write in "Peter's Place, 150 N. Radnor-Chester Road, Suite F130, Radnor, PA 19087."
- **Donate in Memory of Someone:** You might find special meaning in making a memorial contribution to Peter's Place. Your gift will help others in grief.
- **Donating in Honor of Someone:** Pay tribute to someone by making a donation to Peter's Place in their honor.

We have a Wish List on Amazon.com!

Our wish list was just updated and we need many new books for our library. To locate our Wish List, go to Amazon.com and click on *Gifts and Wish Lists*. Under *Wish Lists and Registries* type in Peter's Place.



Visit www.petersplaceonline.org for a link to our Facebook page.



We have a Wish List on Amazon.com!

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Many thanks to the Davenport Family Foundation for generously funding the printing of our publications.

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Peter's Place

150 N. Radnor-Chester Road
Suite F130
Radnor, PA 19087
Ph: 610-687-5150 Fax: 610-687-5120
www.petersplaceonline.org

Staff

Carrie Miluski, MS, CT, Executive Director
carrie@petersplaceonline.org

Tony Morelli Jr., LSW, Director of Off-Site Programs
tmorelli@petersplaceonline.org

Kimberly Nelson, LCSW, Director of On-Site Programs
knelson@petersplaceonline.org

Amy Holzapfel, JD, Event Coordinator/Office Manager
amy@petersplaceonline.org

Denise Paul, MA, CT, Group Specialist
denise@petersplaceonline.org

Darcy Krause, JD, LSW, CHOP Sibling Project Coordinator
dkrause@petersplaceonline.org

Leila Gordon, MBA, Gordon Business Solutions, Finance Manager
leila@petersplaceonline.org



Tracy Clark Photo

Upcoming Events

November 9-11, 2012

Art Sale to Benefit Peter's Place
The Women of the Palette Artists' Group will hold their 14th annual art exhibit and sale at The Eagle Village Community Hall in Strafford. This year a percentage of the price of each painting sold will be donated to Peter's Place.

November 9, 2012

Peter's Place Professional Development Series

We welcome Jeffrey Kauffman, LCSW, to speak on *Shame: The Hidden Emotion in Grief and Trauma*. This is a continuing education program for mental health professionals.

February 2, 2013

Annual Peter's Place Bowl-A-Thon

April 27, 2013

Spring Gala



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