



Peter's Place

A Center for Grieving Children and Families



Comfort. Hope. Healing. Fall 2014

150 N. Radnor-Chester Road, Suite F 130 • Radnor, PA 19087 • Phone: 610-687-5150 • Fax: 610-687-5120 • Web address: www.PetersPlaceOnline.org

Peter's Place Teens Share Their Experiences



Victoria, 17 years old

The first time I came to Peter's Place, I was nervous. I wasn't sure how I felt about my grief.

After coming to Group I felt more comfortable talking about things that once upset me.

I was surprised how quickly I was able to talk about my own experiences to other kids.

I felt connected to these kids from the start. I knew they were going through something very similar, and knowing that they understood my feelings was very comforting.

If I could tell other grieving kids one thing, I'd say it really does get better. When my mom died, I thought I would never be happy again. I'll never really accept my mother's death, but I have developed my own ways of living with grief.

Grief is unpredictable, and feelings will appear when least expected. Everyone goes through and copes with grief in different ways.

I would definitely recommend Peter's Place. It gave me a chance to figure out my feelings about losing my mom, and it helped me develop ways to express those feelings. Now, it's much easier to talk to others about my mom, and about grief.

Julia, 17 years old

I started coming to Peter's Place because, like most people that have lost somebody close to them, I felt I had no way to express my feelings.

Each time I left Group, I felt that all the things I was worried about weren't as bad as before. What I was dealing with was natural for a person my age, especially for someone who has lost loved ones. My favorite thing was to simply connect with the other kids.

As I went through my Group experience, I became less shy, and can now talk about my feelings and my experience easier than before. Even talking about things that weren't related to grief made my life a lot better.



The most important thing for grieving people is to have somebody to talk to.

Peter's Place provides an easy way to get good people to talk to, whether it's to the children, adults, or Group leaders.

I learned that I shouldn't dwell on the past, which doesn't mean I forget about the people who have died, but to be able to move forward and still remember and celebrate the lives of my mother and grandparents.



Our
Mission in
Action



Sarah, 18 years old

I first came to Peter's Place when I was 12 years old. My dad had passed away a few months earlier and my grandparents suggested Peter's Place for my sister and me.

I had never met anyone else who had experienced a death so close, so coming to Group was a whole new world. I was pretty nervous and wasn't really sure what to expect.

I shared my story for the first time and opened up to people I barely knew.

It meant a lot to meet people like me. I wasn't alone. Whether we were talking about grief or what we watched on TV the night before, there's a special connection between us. My favorite thing in Group was to go around and update each other. No matter what had happened during the week, we were all there for each other.

Grief makes you feel sad, alone, angry one minute, and then proud, happy, and excited the next minute. Things get easier as time passes, but you will always have that day, week, or month where grief swallows you up again.

Peter's Place is unique. When you walk out the door, you feel a weight lifted from your shoulders. You learn skills that help you with your grief every day.



Our Vision In Action

Carrie Miluski, MS, CT
Executive Director

Dear Friends,

The vision of Peter's Place is to create a world where comfort, healing, and the promise of hope are readily accessible to all grieving children, families, and communities.

We know that we can't stop grief from touching young lives. Death, and therefore grief, are inevitable parts of the human experience. And none of us are immune. What we can do is work to ensure that when a family is impacted by loss, help is available.

Since 2001, Peter's Place has offered support services to grieving families and education about grief to the broader community. Year after year, we learn about the profound and sometimes unexpected impact of this work, such as reduced loneliness, improved performance in school, improved communication within families, better self-esteem, and, for adults, the ability to return to work and relationships.

This past Program Year, over 889 children and adults participated in our grief support programs free of charge—a 10% increase over the previous year. We know that over 50,000 children in our 5-county area will experience the death of at least one parent before turning 18, and countless others will lose a sibling or other close family member. This means that while our programs have grown consistently for the past 4 program years, we still have further to go. There are thousands of children in our own backyard that still need the compassionate support available at Peter's Place.

What can we do? In the coming months, we will be sharing our long-term plans to extend the reach of Peter's Place. We have added staff to our school-based program so that we can provide our service to more schools and communities. Through our partnership with The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, we are developing a pilot program to serve the specific needs of children who have experienced the death of a sibling. And we are planning to add more services on-site so that more families can access the sanctuary that is Peter's Place. We can't do this without you. We need the support of every person who believes in the work of Peter's Place to help spread the word.

Together, we can serve more of the children and families who are seeking the hope and healing that Peter's Place brings.

Within these pages, you will read about our mission in action. You will hear from participants in our teen Groups about how peer support can help them transform their grief, and from a new volunteer about the lessons she learned from children here. Most of all, you will see the breadth of commitment from a large community of supporters that makes the work of Peter's Place possible.

Thank you for being among them.

Welcome to Our Newest Board Members

Peter's Place was proud to welcome three new Board Members in February!

Dr. Letizia Amadini-Lane is Vice President and Global Head of Employee Value Proposition at GlaxoSmithKline.

Linda Cumiskey, MSS is a social worker providing child welfare, education and trauma-related services in Delaware County for over 30 years.

Marcia Martin, Ph.D., LSW is a former Dean/Director at Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research, and is currently a faculty member at both Bryn Mawr College and the University of Pennsylvania.

We are truly grateful to Letizia, Linda, and Marcia for their leadership and commitment to Peter's Place!

Peter's Place by the Numbers

During the 2013-2014 Program Year:

413 grieving children and their adult caregivers were served through Peer Support Groups at Peter's Place's Radnor Center and through referral assistance.

18 adults were served through Ryan's Hope, our on-site eight-week Peer Support Groups for parents grieving the death of a child as the result of addiction.

285 children were served through 37 eight-week Peer Support Groups held at schools in Delaware, Philadelphia, and Chester Counties.

Peter's Place provided 10 Postventions for local schools following the death of someone in the school community

Through these Postventions:

- **36 adults were directly served**
- **80 children were directly served**
- **7,394 children were indirectly served**

After attending groups at our Radnor Center:

88% of children and teens feel less alone

79% of children and teens find it easier to talk about the death with others

96% of adults find it easier to talk about their grief

100% of adults feel better equipped to talk with their children about grief

After attending the 8-week in-school Peer Support Groups:

80% of children reported feeling better at Group completion

70% felt better able to focus at school

60% said it was easier to talk with family members about the death

Volunteers in Action

This past year, 31 Volunteer Group Facilitators donated more than 2,500 hours to Peter's Place!

Their dedication and presence in our on-site groups helped bring comfort, hope, and healing to hundreds of grieving children and caregivers.

We asked Erica, a first-year volunteer at Peter's Place, to tell us a little about her experience.

Why were you interested in volunteering at Peter's Place?

Erica: When I was 13, my mom died of cancer. Soon after, my dad, sister, and I began attending Peter's Place. It was a life-changing experience which showed me I wasn't alone in grief. Peter's Place became a unique support system for me that I hadn't found within my regular group of friends or at school.

I decided to become a volunteer because I wanted to be a part of the organization that provided me with such a comfortable place to discuss my grief journey. I am grateful for the opportunity to see Peter's Place continue to grow and to help other families.

What have you learned about yourself through your volunteer experience at Peter's Place?

Erica: I learned a lot about myself when I attended Peter's Place as a teen. Coming back five years later, in an entirely different context, reinforced the idea that grief is a journey. It's enlightening to see the many ways people experience and share their unique journey.

Did anything surprise you about your experience as a facilitator?

Erica: I was surprised by the way children articulate death and grief at times. The simple honesty and innocent, matter-of-fact delivery can come as a surprise, especially when it comes in the midst of play.



What is something you wish more people understood about children and grief?

Erica: Children grieve differently than adults and even teens. You can't force them to feel sad or happy just because someone else deems that the appropriate emotion. Grief seems to come in waves for children. They often dance back and forth between recognizing the loss in their life and just playing, going about things as normal. That is okay.

What would you tell someone who is interested in volunteering at Peter's Place?

Erica: A Peter's Place facilitator should be patient, understanding, loyal, reliable, and consistent. Go into a group without expectations. We're there to facilitate, but the kids will play a large role in dictating the dynamic of the group. As facilitators, we have to help Peter's Place be what those kids need it to be, in the safest way possible.

79% of children and adults feel they have a better support system for their grief.



When a Sibling Dies

Sibling relationships can be complicated. Siblings may love and look up to one another, feel a sense of responsibility for each other, while at the same time feeling competitive and jealous of each other. In addition sibling relationships tend to change over time in terms of how closely connected siblings feel. It is assumed, however, that siblings will have a life-long relationship. When a sibling dies young, the surviving child's grief and bereavement process is affected by these sometimes complicated relationship issues and feelings.

In addition to the feelings of sadness and loss experienced when someone close dies, common reactions for grieving siblings include:

- Survivor's guilt about being alive
- Somehow feeling responsible for the death
- Regrets and guilt about things they said or did to the sibling who died
- Seeking an ongoing connection with the deceased sibling
- Trying to "replace" the sibling who died
- Becoming more aware of their own mortality
- Resentment about the attention paid to the deceased sibling

To help their surviving children through the grieving process, parents can:

- Acknowledge that many siblings feel guilty
- Point out that arguing and fighting are a normal part of sibling relationships
- Let the child know that he or she is not responsible and could not have prevented the sibling's death
- Reassure the surviving child that all children are different and unique, and that he or she is as important as the child who died
- Help the surviving children see and appreciate their own strengths and abilities
- Identify comforting connections to the deceased sibling, for example by talking about happy memories or keeping physical reminders around
- Talk about the child who died, and in concrete, age appropriate ways about what happened
- Ask/talk about the surviving child's feelings, fears, and understanding of his/her sibling's death

Peter's Place is partnering with The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in a three-year project to investigate the needs of bereaved siblings. This project is generously funded by the Stone Family Foundation.

2013-2014 DONATIONS

Donations received July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

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

The Sequoia leaf is used to recognize donors who have contributed to Peter's Place for 5 or more consecutive years. We would like to thank these donors for their continued support.

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With Gratitude

On Friday, May 30th, Peter's Place hosted our 2nd annual Evergreen event at the Merion Golf Club in Ardmore. More than 250 guests joined us for the evening, and helped us raise more than \$140,000 for Peter's Place!

We are so grateful to our Event Co-Chairs Kristin Becket and Jennifer McKenzie, our Evergreen Committee, our Sponsors, and all of our volunteers and donors for making the evening such a success!



Event Co-Chairs Kristin Becket and Jennifer McKenzie help to put the finishing touches on the Evergreen Auction. *David Campi Campi Photography*



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Thanks to our Evergreen 2014 Sponsors!

Our Community in Action— Thank You!

The Little House Shop in Wayne hosted a Shopping Event to benefit Peter's Place on Wednesday, October 23rd. The event was a great success, and we are grateful to The Little House Shop and to all of our Peter's Place supporters who stopped by!

The Valley Forge Casino selected Peter's Place as the non-profit beneficiary of their Cinderella Event on October 23rd!

Diana Murray and Abby Link organized a tee shirt sale and fundraising event in Media on November 9th. Thank you, Diana and Abby, and all of the people and businesses which supported the event!

The Women of the Palette donated a portion of the sales from their annual Art Show and Sale at Eagle Village on November 8th-10th!

Katie Miller and Tiferet Bet Israel collected supplies for Peter's Place! Your efforts will make so many activities possible, and allow so many children to express themselves through arts and crafts. We are so very grateful!



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Professional Development in Action

Last program year, Peter's Place provided 13 trainings and two Professional Development Seminars for over 415 mental health and school-based professionals. Topics addressed in these trainings and seminars included:

- The social and cultural construction of grief
- The multi-faceted aspects of child bereavement
- Interventions to support grieving children
- Reproductive trauma
- End-of-life care issues

We are excited to announce two new programs: **Caregiver Support Seminars** and the **Distance Learning Program**.

Caregiver Support Seminars provide psycho-education and limited emotional support for parents and caregivers who are raising grieving children, but are unable to attend Peter's Place groups in Radnor primarily due to distance or socioeconomic barriers.

The Distance Learning Program provides our training on childhood bereavement to mental health and school-based professionals located outside of the Philadelphia 5-county area. Peter's Place launched this program in early spring with a 6-hour-long training provided via Skype to over 60 mental health professionals.

Peter's Place is seeking to expand its reach and influence as an educational leader through these two services. We are poised to meet the ever-emerging and ever-changing educational needs of an increasingly complex and sophisticated culture that continues to face issues of death, grief, and loss on a daily basis.



As part of Peter's Place Professional Development Series, Rebecca Cammy, MSW, LCSW presented "The Elephant in the Room: Approaches to Advance Care Planning in Oncology" on May 9th.

Education by the Numbers

In the 2013–2014 Program Year, Peter's Place offered 15 professional development and training opportunities, including our first distance learning course.

- **463** professionals received training from Peter's Place.
- **7,778** children and **355** adults were indirectly served through these educational programs about grief.

Between January and March 2014, Peter's Place offered three Caregiver Support Seminars in local schools, one in Philadelphia and two in Delaware County.

- **75** adults attended these support nights, and
- **863** children were indirectly served.

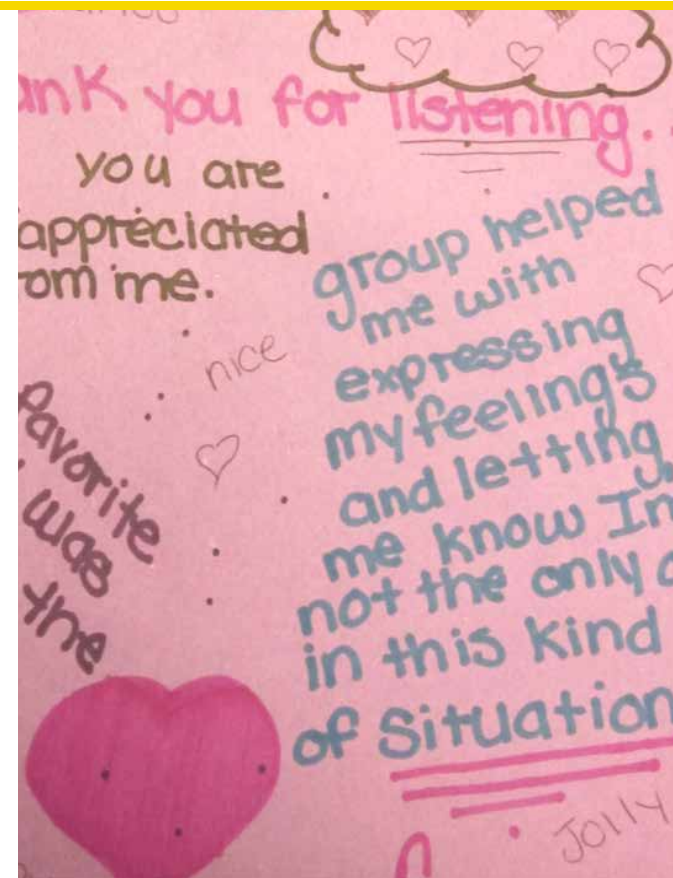
Memories in a Box



Participants in a children's Peer Support Group experience the healing power that comes from sharing similar experiences and feelings following a death. Trained facilitators lead each group in activities specially designed to help foster a healthy grieving process.

One of the most important tasks of mourning is to remember the person who has died. Creating a Memory Box is an activity designed to help children honor their memories and continue their bond with the deceased. The children decorate colorful boxes while with the group. Filling the Memory Box is an activity that happens at home, and may be done with the help of other family members. What gets put in the box is a personal choice. The idea is to capture items that have a special connection to the person who died, such as photos, jewelry, cards, etc. Children may then choose to bring their filled Memory Boxes back to Peter's Place to share with the group.

As time goes on, they are able to add new treasures to the box. Making and preserving memories is an important part of the work that we do at Peter's Place. The Memory Box activity enables children to revisit their cherished memories with the simple opening of a box.



To Make a Donation

Gifts by Check or Credit Card

Checks should be made payable to Peter's Place and mailed to:

Peter's Place
150 N. Radnor-Chester Road,
Suite F130
Radnor, PA 19087

Credit card donations can be made by calling us at (610) 687-5150 or online at www.PetersPlaceOnline.org.

Matching gifts

A great way to make your donation go even further! If your company matches gifts, please let us know.

United Way

To designate Peter's Place as the beneficiary of your United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey gift, indicate Donor Choice #14576. For other United Way agencies, please write in our name and address.



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

How You Can Help

With a small staff and **no fee charged to the families we serve**, it is our community that makes these programs possible. Here are some ways that you can help.

Make a Gift

We provide support services at no cost so no one is turned away because of financial limitations.

Support or Host an Event

Attend or sponsor a Peter's Place event, or host your own fundraiser. Events can be organized by any person, group, company, school, or other type of organization. Contact us for ideas!

Volunteer

With only a small paid staff, Peter's Place depends on the commitment of volunteers. Volunteer Grief Facilitators assist with our bi-weekly Peer Support Groups. There are also opportunities to support the work and mission of Peter's Place at community events or by offering administrative support.

Shop!

Amazon will donate up to .5% of your eligible purchases to Peter's Place! Simply go to smile.amazon.com and select Peter's Place as your designated charity. Please call 610-687-5150 x4 to find out more.



Leave a Legacy

Bequests are a wonderful way to make a gift that will last beyond your lifetime. By naming Peter's Place as a beneficiary in your will or trust, you will ensure that grieving children and families receive support for years to come.

Sample Language for a Bequest

"I hereby give, devise and bequeath to Peter's Place, a nonprofit corporation organized and operating under the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the sum of \$_____ (or _____ percent of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate) for its general purpose as an unrestricted gift."

If you are interested in helping Peter's Place in any of these ways or if you have any questions, please call (610) 687-5150, ext. 4, or visit our website at www.PetersPlaceOnline.org for more information.

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Upcoming Events

Thursday, November 20th, 2014 Children's Grief Awareness Day & Open House

Peter's Place, Radnor, PA
Join Peter's Place and people and organizations throughout the country in recognizing Children's Grief Awareness Day. Show your support for grieving children by wearing blue! Join us for a light breakfast from 8-10AM, and take a tour of our Radnor Center! For more information, please visit www.PetersPlaceOnline.org.

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Friday, February 13th, 2015

Professional Development Training

Peter's Place, Radnor, PA
Mark your calendar! Peter's Place will be offering the latest in our Professional Development Series, "Helping Grieving Students: A Colloquium for School Social Workers and Counselors". Registration will open online in January.

Spring 2015

Evergreen Gala

Details to follow! To request an invitation, please call (610) 687-5150.

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