



The WARM Way

Celebrating 30 years of hope and healing



A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place | Where Grieving Children and their Families Find Hope | Fall 2019

Living up to Legacy

Every day the first thing Dr. John Richardson would say to himself as he put his two feet on the ground was **"Today, I'm going to save a child's life."** And that he did. He saved thousands of lives through his service to others, not only through The WARM Place, but through many other organizations and his career as a pediatrician.



Dr. John Richardson and Peggy Bohme

On April 29, 2019, WARM Place cofounder Dr. John Richardson died peacefully surrounded by his family. He lived a full and wonderful life that left such a huge impact on our community and beyond. As we celebrate our 30th anniversary this year, it is bittersweet to do so without Dr. Richardson.

In 1989, Peggy Bohme and Dr. Richardson turned a vision into a reality. They took an idea with a limited track record and made it happen. Out of a need, The WARM Place was born. Bohme and Dr. Richardson strived to ensure that no child in our community would have to grieve alone. As we look to the next thirty years, we keep our history and this incredible vision at the forefront of our minds.

Several people have asked us at The WARM Place,



Dr. John Richardson, 11/19/1930 - 4/29/2019

"How do you plan on honoring Dr. Richardson as you move forward?" We ask ourselves the same thing. How do you honor someone with such a wonderful legacy who was so instrumental in the formation of this organization?

Our answer? We will strive to do the same thing he did. Every morning as we enter 809 Lipscomb Street, we will say to ourselves, "Today we will save a child's life." The truth of the matter is that the work we do is life-saving. Just the other day, a Young Adult who currently attends our grief support program said, "The WARM Place saved my life."

It's the compassion, determination, leadership and so much more that we will carry in honor of Dr. John Richardson. These values are at the very heart of The WARM Place and what is needed to carry on. Our mission is our legacy, and fulfilling it is our destiny.

So many people ask themselves tough questions when someone influential in their life dies: How do you move on? How do you survive in the shadow of their legacy? How do you live up to their expectations?

At The WARM Place, we are now telling ourselves the same things we tell the surviving family members who attend our grief support program. We remember and honor the ones who have died and left an imprint on our hearts. We will always remember Dr. Richardson and honor his legacy.

30
years



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A Note from Shelley



It was a busy summer for us here at The WARM Place, as I'm sure it was for many of you! Our bi-weekly groups continued to meet Monday through Thursday throughout the summer, and our Young Adult group met as well for an eight-week session. The staff spent a lot of time planning special celebrations for our 30th Anniversary including our Birthday Bash in August and A Cool Night, which will be held on October 5th! We also began recruiting new volunteers to attend our fall session of volunteer facilitator training.

As summer winds down and the school year begins, we look towards a season of change, but also familiarity. We often hear that our families are comforted by falling back into a regular routine once the school year starts. After a death there may be chaos, and families may find security and structure in a schedule. We are grateful to be a part of that structure and routine for our families and want them to know that they are supported throughout this time.

The other day I was intrigued to investigate the meaning of autumn to see what symbolism it can represent. I discovered that in literature, autumn may refer to ripeness, change, maturity, beauty, comfort, and even sadness. As soon as I read that I immediately thought of The WARM Place. We have ripened and matured over the last 30 years and remain dedicated to our mission of providing grief support to children and their families. 2019 brought about change and sadness with the death of our beloved co-founder Dr. John Richardson in April, but at the same time, there is constant beauty and comfort in the healing that takes place within the walls of The WARM Place.

Shelley Spikes, Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE

For more information on
WARM Place events, please
visit thewarmplace.org/events

Pre-K Group
September 11-November 13

Young Adult Group
September 17-November 5

North Texas Giving Day
September 19

A Cool Night by Candlelight
October 5

Camp Remember Me
November 1-3

Children's Grief Awareness Day
November 14

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

What a Great Smile...

By Dana Minor, M.S. LPC

How do we honor our loved ones? How do we share the memories we hold so dear? There are many ways we honor our loved ones every day and many people we encounter know the pain of losing a loved one. Just because we are smiling doesn't mean we are not still grieving. Those in our inner circle may be more aware of what we are experiencing, while others may be avoiding our glance. Do we smile? Do we awkwardly greet them? Do we tell them we're all right?

During the time when children divide into their age groups for grief support, the adult caregivers meet as well. Recently, we shared pictures of our loved ones in one of our adult groups. It was such an incredible honor to hear their stories and the love they shared. So

many of our memories are captured in our family photographs and help us to preserve some of our most cherished stories. They can bring smiles and laughter to our world, and tears of comfort to help us heal. Some stories are still in our mind's eye and long to be told. In our groups we often share memories we have with our loved ones, and it is a powerful way to connect with others and honor our loved ones.

How we connect with others is an important part of our healing process. There are no magic words, phrases, or time frames. Just being present with someone as they grieve can be most helpful. Don't be afraid to say their loved one's name or share a story about them. Ask to see one of their favorite pictures and watch as their face lights up as they tell you all about it.

Be present, be available, be brave, and know you are in the presence of love. *Hearing the words, "what a great smile, you have his eyes, tell me more about them," are a welcome change and sharing in that moment is such a gift.* Take a deep breath, embrace your fears, and take a chance.

The gift of caring and truly listening to others can bring about a smile, help them to reflect on the past, live in the present, and have hope for the future.



Above are a few cherished memories recently shared by some of our WARM Place families of loved ones.
Top row, left to right: Sarai (7), Derrick (24), Brenden (13). Bottom row, left to right: Eric (15), Kaylee (16), August (2).

The WARM Place 30 Fast Facts



The WARM Place logo was created by Margie Atkins in **1988**

476 Lbs

of b-day cake are made every year to celebrate TWP children's b-days



The WARM Place was founded in 1989 by **Peggy Bohme and Dr. John Richardson**

The WARM Place is funded by **100% private donations**

TWP was the **sixth** grief support center in the nation



Back when TWP was first founded, people would **travel out of state** to attend group sessions

The WARM Place Day was established on **8-24-04** in the city of Fort Worth

500+

stuffed animals are given to TWP children each year at intakes



8 families started on the first night of group. Now we have served over **38,000** children and families



409 children are currently enrolled

Over **300** volunteers make our program possible

WARM is an acronym: **What. About. Remembering. Me.**

From 1989-2001, TWP property was Ginger Rogers' girlhood home. We rented this property from Cook Children's for **\$5 a year**.

In 2010, The WARM Place founded the **Bluebonnet Council** for children's grief centers in Texas

TWP serves children as young as **3 1/2** and as old as **25**

For a decade, Friday Night at the Zoo was our annual fund raiser



A playhouse replica of TWP was donated to the Fort Worth Botanical Gardens and resides there today



TWP was the **first children's grief support center** in TX



TWP now serves **over 13 counties** in the state of TX

Each year, we hold over

950

individual grief support groups



We have a room called the **emotion commotion** room that has padded walls to let aggression out in a safe way

WARM Place families participate in our program for an average of **9 months**

In 1990, The WARM Place was honored with President George H. Bush's 230th Daily Point of Light Award for the work of its volunteers with grieving children.

Facilitators write notes to the children in their groups each night. These notes are mailed between sessions to provide encouragement.

Seashells are given to children when they close from group to represent smooth and rough days ahead



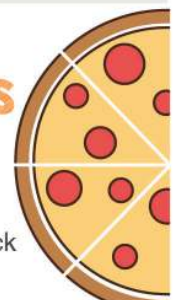
A Cool Night has raised a gross of **\$1,650,300** over **6** years

6,928 miles have been run in the R2RT since 2017



TWP hosted **A Phone Call from Santa** for 24 years

490 pizzas will be consumed each year during potluck dinners



At 13 years old, Parks Blackwell experienced the death of her father, which brought her to seek grief support at The WARM Place. Since then she has maintained her involvement as a volunteer, donor, and board member. She even started one of our favorite fundraisers, The Race 2 Remember Them (formally known as The W2RT)! We asked Parks to reflect on her different roles within The WARM Place and how it has impacted her life.



Parks and her dad

What brought you to The WARM Place? Tell us your story.

I came to The WARM Place in 1993 when my dad, John Blackwell, died of a sudden massive heart attack while on a morning bike ride. I remember that day, and the days following it, as if it were only yesterday. As an only child, my parents were my friends and my mentors. We did everything together. The loss was felt in every facet of my life... from daily school drop off to special events. Losing a parent leaves so much uncertainty, even when your remaining parent is a rock - there is this unknown component of "how will anything ever be ok" and "what am I supposed to do now." No one can prepare for that, and coping with it feels like too much to handle. The WARM Place was such a lifeline for my mom and me. We kept my dad alive (still do) by talking about him, but The WARM Place gave us a place to process - to talk through our feelings and our fears. Having the structure, the peers who were dealing with a similar issue and the safety of empathy was (now when I look back) such a blessing. At the time I was appreciative, but I'm not sure I realized how much help I was receiving in the moment.

Describe any favorite memories you have of your time as a family at The WARM Place.

Most importantly for me was the sense of place that TWP provided. There was room for my grief, room for my anger - frustration - sadness. While we attended for over a year, the every-other-week session was always so solid and constant. That's one of the biggest takeaways I have. When you experience a death loss, "constant" isn't something you get very often. I always enjoyed the dinners, sitting and talking to others about their week...finding that I wasn't the only one who'd been teased or missed my dad...In the end, my mom and I made lifelong friends with families on our night, and for the many years following our closure at TWP we stayed in touch and spent time together.

How have you seen things evolve/change at TWP from the time you started attending to present?

The WARM Place has evolved in many ways. I for one attended the little house for group - so the size and scope of TWP's support is amazing to me. I've watched as people from every corner of DFW (and beyond) have come to seek compassion, and TWP gives everything they can. There has also been an increase in awareness. There's rarely a time I mention TWP that someone hasn't heard of it, either from someone they know who has attended, a volunteer or a donor. It's sad but amazing, we all have death in common - but handling grief from death is not something we will ever fully understand.

Tell us about your past and current involvement with TWP after attending as a family.

It's always been important to me to stay connected to TWP. After everything I learned and the support my mom and I received, we've both been dedicated to supporting the cause. I've been a facilitator, a donor, a friend, and am now Secretary of The WARM Place Board of Directors.

What motivated you to start the R2RT (formerly known as W2RT)?

TWP does many fundraisers every year to support the cause, but at the time - there wasn't anything that involved the families of TWP. Being a former family, I know how much TWP means to the families that attend. My mom and I felt it was so important to give them an opportunity outside of their group night to interact, to invite others to experience the support, and to help spread the word about all that was happening. I also wanted to do something in honor of my dad. He was a giving, kind and sympathetic man - and I know he wanted me to contribute to something that had meant so much to me.

Why do you feel it's important to stay involved with TWP?

Ultimately, I believe that our society, our culture needs more support - more empathy. TWP provides it when you need it the most. My experience there means more than words on this page will ever convey, so I know that my time is the best way to show my appreciation. Death doesn't go away, and there will always be a child who needs support.



Katherine Giuliani (left) and her daughter Parks (right) talking at the Race 2 Remember Them.



Join us for A Cool Night by Candlelight

A signature event benefiting
the children at The WARM Place

Saturday, October 5th at 6:00pm

River Crest Country Club
1501 Western Avenue
Fort Worth, TX 76017

Sponsorships and tickets available now at
thewarmplace.org/coolnight

Save the Date March 28, 2020

10K | 5K | 1 Mile

**Registration opens
Nov. 18, 2019!**

thewarmplace.org/r2rt



Thank you
for helping us provide
30 years
of hope and healing!



We are thankful for the support of hundreds of individuals, businesses, and organizations within our community. You help make our mission possible and ensure that no WARM Place child will ever have to grieve alone!

Major Donors \$5,000+

Donations listed are from
1/1/2019-8/15/2019

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- Forever stamps
- Bug spray
- Bottled water
- Dinner-size paper plates
- White copy paper
- Crayons (24 count)
- Play-Doh
- Pipe Cleaners

For our complete wish list, please visit
thewarmplace.org/wish-list/



Where grieving children and their families find hope

Save the Date to DONATE!

#NTGD2019

www.northtexasgivingday.org/the-warm-place

GET UP & GIVE

**NORTH TEXAS
GIVING
DAY**
9.19.19

powered by
COMMUNITIES
FOUNDATION of TEXAS

Don't have time
on the 19th?

You can schedule your
gift on The WARM Place
North Texas Giving Day
page between Sept. 9-18!

30 years



The WARM Place®
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