



The WARM Way



A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place | Where Grieving Children and their Families Find Hope | Spring 2018

Rylee's Story

Connecting Through Compounded Grief

At first glance, Rylee Grubbs may look like your average, happy-go-lucky teenager – and for the most part, she most definitely is. Most weeks, you can catch her hanging out with friends, going to the movies and practicing with her competitive cheer team. She is close to her family and has dreams to join the Air Force as a nurse. However, what you may not know about Rylee is that she had three friends die within a short period of just a year.



Rylee, 16

Rylee remembers the day she first experienced the death of a close friend in 2015. Traffic was heavy that day, forcing her to take a different route to cheer practice. She soon found out at practice that a wreck was the source of the traffic, but it was not just any wreck. Her friend, Hunter, she had known since middle school, had died in that wreck in a head-on collision.

"I completely lost my mind when I first found out about it," said Rylee.

Later that year, one of her friends lost his battle to leukemia. The following year, another friend died from sickle cell disease. "Everything was piling on top of one another, and it was hard because I didn't like talking about it, so I kept everything in."

Despite her hesitations about sharing her feelings, Rylee said she knew that she needed to talk about the uproar in her life.

Rylee started attending The WARM Place when she was fifteen-years-old. She said that at first, she felt a little awkward. After all, she was trying to share about her very personal experiences of the deaths of her friends with strangers. However, after some time had passed, Rylee began to feel more comfortable with her group at The WARM Place.

"At first, I didn't know who I could trust, but there's a security at The WARM Place, so I was able to open up. Talking about it helped me heal."



Rylee (13) and her friend Hunter in 2014

Rylee recalled one of her most memorable experiences at The WARM Place: "We all went outside and had a really deep conversation about our grief and our lives...I didn't think that I could get so close to people I didn't really know."

It was moments like this that helped Rylee realize she had a safe place to talk about her grief. It was important to her to receive support from other kids her age who have also experienced such loss.

When asked about what she would say to someone her age who has experienced the loss of a friend or loved one, she said: "The thing I would say to other kids is that it gets better over time. Whether it's a few weeks, months, or even years, your heart will heal. You just have to give it time and get through what you're going through at your own pace!"

"The WARM Place really opened my eyes to the fact that there are kids in the world that are going through the exact same thing, but everybody has a different grief journey."

In fact, she has talked to some of her peers about The WARM Place and its mission. Just last year, one of Rylee's classmates lost his best friend to suicide. Rylee said she could tell he was struggling and encouraged him to come to The WARM Place to talk about the death. That friend now participates in a biweekly group at The WARM Place.

Rylee attended The WARM Place for 10 months and hopes to give back to the organization because of what it did for her and her mom. On reflection of her time at The WARM Place, Rylee says, "The WARM Place really opened my eyes to the fact that there are kids in the world that are going through the exact same thing, but everybody has a different grief journey."



The WARM Place

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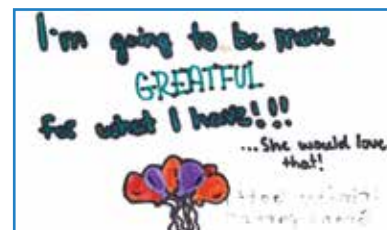


Just the other day I was walking down the hallway here at The WARM Place and noticed the new artwork that was on display outside our children's rooms — wishes for the New Year. But these weren't your typical New Year's wishes. They were WARM Place wishes.

It made me stop and think about how a new year is often viewed as an exciting time of renewed hope and opportunity. But for those of us who are grieving, it can also be a vivid reminder of what will not be — heartbreaking reality that our loved one is no longer with us and will not share in the experiences that the new year brings.

WARM Place wishes are sometimes hard to read. They are often sad, but they are also incredibly special because they are shared with our friends who support us. These special wishes are a wonderful reminder of why the work that we do here at The WARM Place is so important. A reminder that healing begins with sharing, and that can lead to hope.

As we look forward to 2018 here at The WARM Place, I hope you will plan to join us in many exciting events and opportunities we have ahead. Maybe you can plan to join us as a volunteer, attend a Family Night, or even lace up your shoes and walk in memory of your loved one at the 2nd Annual R2RT. In whatever way you plan to get involved, we want you to know how important you are to the work that we do here at The WARM Place. It's because of support like yours, that wishes like the ones below can come true. Thank you!



WARMest Wishes,

Shelley Spikes
Executive Director

New Year's wishes written by children at The WARM Place

Save the Date

February

WARM Place Family Night
February 16

Volunteer Facilitator Training
February 6, 10, 13, 17, 24

May

Firemen's 5K benefitting TWP
May 26

March

Second Annual Race 2 Remember Them
March 3

Spring Break No Groups
March 12- March 16

June

Young Adult Group
June 5, 12, 19, 26

April

Volunteer Appreciation Day
April 7

WARM Place Family Night
April 20

July

Young Adult Group
July 10, 17, 24, 31

For more information on these events please visit thewarmplace.org/events

Working Through Grief With Play

By Gina Brown, M.S., LPC
Group Director

Counselors' Corner

Children learn and express themselves through their play, artwork, music, games, sharing and listening. Children can also mourn in the same ways. Emotions that are difficult to put into words are acted out with play and movement, expressed in creative writing, artwork, abstract drawings and self-portraits.

Grief is a process. It is a set of physical, behavioral, cognitive, and emotional reactions that shape a child's inner and outer world. This set is unique and varies depending on each individual person and their loss.

"Play gives children the opportunity to search for and experiment with alternative solutions to their problems."
-Jerome Singer



Children playing "Meet the Press" at The WARM Place

Children play microphones and recorders while one child is the interviewee telling his/her story. The reporter draws a question and asks it of the interviewee. The questions range from get-to-know-you questions to personal questions about grief such as: "How did your loved one die?" "Where were you when you found out?" or "What is one thing you miss about your loved one?" The facilitators of the group can engage the other group members in discussing whether they have had similar feelings or experiences. Children open up with this activity because it creates an emotional outlet where they feel in control.

Activities like "Meet the Press" often allow children to express their feelings in a more comfortable, relaxed setting. Families can easily recreate these types of activities at home with items around the house. For more ideas about ways you can talk about grief at home through play, visit our resources page: thewarmplace.org/resources.



Children draw family portraits to represent how they view their families after a death.

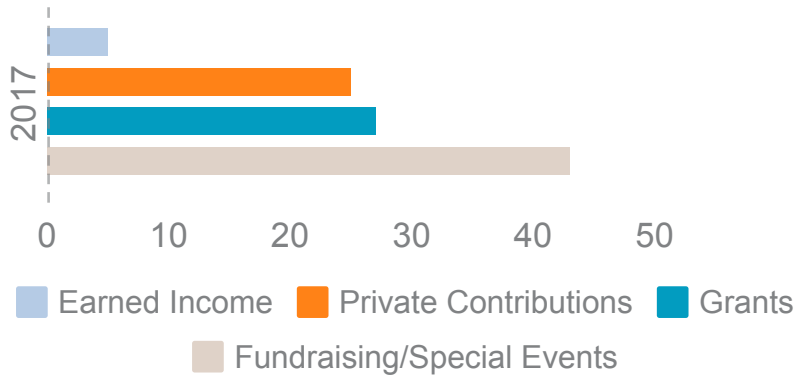
The WARM Place provides many opportunities for children to share their stories and experiences and to identify and explore their grief feelings. Children engage in a wide range of hands on activities in a safe supportive environment. We gear our activities toward helping children understand grief, memorialize loved ones, tell stories, release emotions, and develop healthy coping skills. Through these activities, conversations are created amongst group members which allows children a release from the heavy burden of grief.

Children in our group environments learn "grief is normal" and "you are not alone."

One of the activities we love is called "Meet the Press." The children pair up and interview each other. They can dress up and pretend they are reporters using

2017 AT A GLANCE

Funding Sources for 2017



Because of our loyal supporters within the community, we are able to provide our Grief Support Program at no charge to our families.

1,555

TOTAL NUMBER OF CLIENTS SERVED

1,893 people

reached through tours, speeches, & outreach events



Volunteers



Service hours

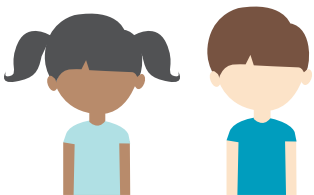


Dollar value

DID YOU KNOW?

The WARM Place currently has

355 children



enrolled in our Grief Support Program.

We conducted

919

individual support groups in 2017.

The WARM Place currently has



250 families

enrolled in our Grief Support Program.

What is your occupation?

I am a School Counselor at a FWISD Middle School.

How long have you been volunteering with TWP?

I've been a facilitator with S&D II since I finished volunteer training in September 2016.

What brought you to TWP as a volunteer?

I was introduced to TWP through working as a Professional Counselor in FWISD and making referrals for my students. Secondly, I experienced my own personal losses (my mother December 2015 and sister April 2016) and my own personal counselor recommended TWP for my family and I. Lastly, I was reintroduced to it through being a member of Leadership Fort Worth and going through the Board shadowing program. I started training shortly after that. Now that I am here, I feel this is where God wants me to be to relate, understand, and provide empathy and compassion to those who have shared similar grief/loss experiences.



What is your favorite thing about volunteering with TWP?

I love that fact that I feel I am letting God use me to provide a service to those in need. I like to work with the teens because I spent most of my education experiences in elementary school and now work with pre-teens daily. I wanted a different challenge. I wanted to work with those who are mature enough to fully articulate their feelings. Additionally, I have teens at home (who were grieving as well), and I feel that it can be mutually beneficial if I kept that same age group while at TWP.

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We always have such a blast at WARM Place Family Nights. This year we are excited to announce that we will be hosting six events in 2018. Stay up to date on when they will be by following The WARM Place on social media! Family Nights focus on making new memories as a family after a death. Each Family Night has a theme and includes fun activities for all ages. Family Nights are open to past, present, and future families of The WARM Place.

Family Nights



Football Family Night



Painting the Strokes of Grief



Superhero Fall Festival



Family Day at the Zoo



We are thankful for the support of hundreds of individuals, businesses, and organizations within our community. YOU helped us reach our 2017 fundraising goal to ensure no WARM Place child will ever have to grieve alone.

For a complete listing of all donors for 2017, please visit thewarmplace.org/complete-donor-list/

Major Donors \$5,000+

(Donations listed are from 1/1/2017-12/31/2017)

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-SAVE THE DATE-

10.06.18



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Where grieving children and their families find hope

Register Today!
thewarmplace.org/r2rt



Join us at Acme Brick Co.
along the Trinity Trails

March 3, 2018 | 8AM

10K, 5K and 1 mile fun run

Entry Fee- \$30 (add \$10 for 10K)

All proceeds benefit The WARM Place.



The WARM Place®

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