



The WARM Way

A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place

SPRING 2020

A GRIEVING FAMILY FINDS HOPE

The Koenes Family Story | By Brooke Bailey



Beckam, MaryBeth, and MaryBella Koenes

MaryBeth Koenes and her two children, Beckham and MaryBella (ages 5 and 7 at the time) started attending grief support groups at The WARM Place in February 2017. It was six months after the death of their father, Tyrel, who completed suicide. MaryBeth turned to The WARM Place for guidance in the wake of grief as a single mom with two young children.

"You never think you'll experience the death of a loved one. You don't picture yourself ever sitting in circles of grieving spouses and parents. You can't imagine your life without all the very important people in it. But when it happens to you, all you can do is hope it won't take you down..." said MaryBeth.

After attending their first group, MaryBeth said she instantly saw a change in her children, especially MaryBella. The change was in their perspective of knowing that they are not alone. They were no longer the only children who didn't have

a daddy. MaryBeth saw a change in herself as well. She felt like she had found her place and her community. The WARM Place, she said, was her haven.

"I tell people The WARM Place was my lifeline for the first two years after their dad's death because no one knows how to handle grief and grieving children on their own. There's a learning curve there." Since then, The WARM Place has become like a home for the Koenes family. MaryBeth says she and her children have made lifelong friends in the most unlikely way. "I never thought I would meet the kind of friends I found during the darkest time of my life."

After two years of attending grief support groups at The WARM Place, the Koenes family decided to close out of group. "The WARM Place gave me the tools and the resources and the support and the eye contact and the hugs and the tears and the Kleenex to get through where I could get stable enough to do it on my own."

Even though they may not attend group any more, the Koenes family still stays involved with The WARM Place through different events. They try to attend all the Family Nights they can, which are open to past, current, and future WARM Place families. They also enjoy participating in the Race 2 Remember Them every year, where they can race in memory of their dad. These opportunities allow them to continue to enjoy WARM Place community and fellowship, as well as give them chances to honor and remember their dad. Today, MaryBella is 10 and Beckham is 8. MaryBeth works as a life coach, helping others process and navigate emotional pain.

"People ask: How on earth did you handle that? How did you do that on your own with your kids?...[I tell them] The WARM Place. In one answer, that's it. I tell everybody there's this place. It's a center for grieving families." -MaryBeth

To watch the Koenes family's full story, visit thewarmplace.org/koenes-family.

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A NOTE FROM SHELLEY

Executive Director

Our 30th anniversary year was a busy one! In August, we hosted our Birthday Bash on our actual birthday, August 24th! It was so much fun to see old friends from The WARM Place alongside current families celebrating such an incredible milestone for our organization. We also hosted a 30th Anniversary Reception on August 30th for our donors who have made our mission possible throughout the years, where Co-founder Peggy Bohme gave a touching speech alongside our current board president, Joe Regan. The final celebration of our anniversary was our annual fundraiser, A Cool Night, which was hosted at River Crest Country Club on October 5th. This year the event raised a record-breaking gross total of over \$388,000 to support grieving children and their families attending The WARM Place. The evening was filled with so much love and support for our mission, especially when the family of Co-founder Dr. John Richardson accepted a plaque from The WARM Place gifted in his memory.



While 2019 revolved around our 30th anniversary, we are excited about the new opportunities ahead as we enter this new decade and this new year, 2020. We have several exciting opportunities for the community to get involved with The WARM Place, starting with our 4th annual Race 2 Remember Them on March 28th. Later this summer, our program team will be hosting several workshops on children's grief at The WARM Place, as well as presenting at the 24th annual Symposium on Children's Grief, hosted by the National Alliance for Grieving Children in Phoenix, AZ.

I encourage you to stay connected and up-to-date with us by signing up for our e-newsletters and following our blog at thewarmplace.org. Make sure to like us on Facebook as well, so you don't miss anything in 2020!



Shelley Bettis
Executive Director

SAVE THE DATE

thewarmplace.org/events

Spring Pre-K Group

February 12-April 22

Spring Young Adults Group

February 4-March 31

Race 2 Remember Them

March 28

Spring Break – No Groups

March 9-12

Volunteer Appreciation

April 18

Family Night

April 24th

COUNSELOR'S CORNER

BY: JADE WENTZ, M.S., LPC-INTERN
SUPERVISED BY ANGELA HESSELBROCK, LPC-S
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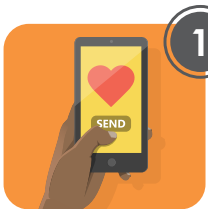
Many of our families attending The WARM Place mention that one of the most difficult transitions throughout their grief journey is knowing who will continue to support them and their children. As a Group Director, I often hear grieving families express that many of their support systems struggle with knowing ways to help them. Friends and family members often feel at a loss for how to help.

It can be hard to know what to say and what not to say. You may feel as though you want to be there for them, but you don't know exactly how. You can try to relate to them but may feel that your words fall short or don't come as planned. This challenge is not unique. Although death is a common experience, it can be difficult to know how to console a grief-stricken heart.

If you have ever asked yourself, "How can I support someone who is grieving?" we have some helpful tips just for you. Whether it is actively listening to their needs and concerns, holding them if they shed a tear, or letting them express their emotions in a safe, judgment-free space, the most important thing is to let them know you are there for them and will continue to be there. Grief is a scary place full of heartache, fear, and uncertainty, but knowing you are not alone in your grief can make it a little bit easier.

For this handout in a printable format and for more resources, check out thewarmplace.org/resources.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT SOMEONE WHO IS GRIEVING?



1

MAKE A COMMITMENT TO REACH OUT.

Grief can be hard any day of the week, but keep in mind that some days are harder than others. Holidays, anniversaries, and even average days can be difficult for someone who is grieving. Try to make it a point to call or send a text to show your support.

BE AN ACTIVE LISTENER.

2



Grief can be an isolating place, and sometimes it can be helpful to simply listen and be present in the moment. As much as we want to try to say the perfect thing, listening can be more powerful.



3

ASK WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT THEM.

Giving grievers autonomy to share what they are needing in the moment is essential. Everyone grieves differently, so it's important to get input. Try offering something concrete such as "Can I take your kids to practice?" or "Can I run an errand for you?"

MEET THEM WHERE THEY ARE.

4



This shows that you are there for them no matter what the obstacle. Avoid telling grievers where they should be in their grief or how they should feel. There is not a manual on how to grieve correctly. This approach helps them to feel accepted without judgment for where they are on their grief journey.



5

TALK ABOUT THEIR LOVED ONE.

Acknowledge that person existed and was a part of their life. At times, we may feel reluctant to bring up the deceased in conversation, but it is important to talk about them. When their name is left unmentioned, grievers may feel that their loved one has been forgotten.

BE PATIENT.

6



It is important to be patient with someone who is grieving as they navigate their path and regain a sense of normalcy. Just remember that they are experiencing their grief journey at their own pace.

2019 AT A GLANCE

14 COUNTIES
SERVED



PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



290

FAMILIES ENROLLED ON AVERAGE PER MONTH



HOSTED 2ND ANNUAL
CAMP REMEMBER ME
WITH OVER
75 ATTENDEES



954

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS HELD

6 FAMILY NIGHT EVENTS
FOR PAST, PRESENT, AND
FUTURE FAMILIES.



414

CHILDREN ENROLLED
ON AVERAGE PER MONTH



1,858

CLIENTS SERVED



2,100

INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED
PHONE SUPPORT FROM
WARM PLACE GROUP
DIRECTORS

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

3,733 PEOPLE reached through tours, speeches & outreach events.



VOLUNTEERISM

375

VOLUNTEERS DONATED

12,666

SERVICE HOURS,
WHICH IS EQUIVALENT TO

\$322,096

ACTUAL VALUE

PRICELESS



SOCIAL



7,000+ LIKES



2,900+ VIEWS
of our video "The Story of
The WARM Place"



73,000+ VIEWS
of our website



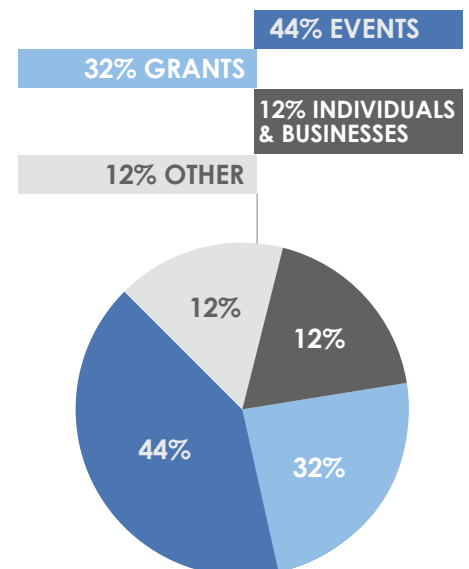
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3 MAGAZINES



Featured in
**1 NEWSPAPER,
1 TV STATION, AND
1 RADIO STATION**



FUNDING



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

What is your occupation?

I work for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) as a project manager in aircraft certification. I will be retiring the end of April with 33 years of federal service, 25 years with the FAA and 8 years with the Department of Defense in Patuxent River, Maryland.

What brought you to TWP as a volunteer?

I was looking for a way to give back. After being at The WARM Place I soon realized that my passion was for kids who are grieving. This stemmed from my love for my fiancé's daughters, Tiffani and Tammi who were 11 and 8 when their dad died. They did not have an opportunity to attend a place similar to The WARM Place. That is why it has been important for me to volunteer so that as many children as possible have the opportunity.

What is your favorite thing about volunteering?

Watching the children from their first night to their last and seeing the friendships they form and the things they've learned and put to action. I also love to see the reaction when one child hears a similar story to their own from another child.

What would you tell someone who is thinking about getting involved at TWP?

It's one of the most rewarding things I've ever done.

What was your favorite activity/hobby as a child?

I enjoyed reading, swimming and skiing. All things I'm looking forward to doing more of when I retire along with traveling, riding my bicycle and becoming a Grauntie to Tiffani and her husband Rickey's first child who is due June 30th.



Jennifer Kuehn, Volunteer, 12 Years



WARM Place families created treasure boxes to fill with memories from camp.

2ND ANNUAL CAMP REMEMBER ME RECAP

We hosted our 2nd annual Camp Remember Me during the first weekend in November at Camp El Tesoro in Granbury, Texas! Camp Remember Me provides WARM Place families an opportunity to grow together as family in their grief journey, while making fun new memories in a camp setting. We were so fortunate to have 20 families, an incredible group of volunteers, and many of our WARM Place staff members join us for this fun-filled camp weekend. This year's camp theme was Treasure Island, complete with treasure maps, treasure boxes, and an island party! We look forward to this year's fun camp memories and adventures!



"It was a safe environment, and we were surrounded by people with similar losses...We felt each activity was carefully planned around our needs. Camp Remember Me was definitely the highlight of our fall. – WARM Place parent & Camp Remember Me Participant"



A Cool Night

OUR NEXT CHAPTER



Benefiting Children
at The WARM Place

Save the Date!

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 10TH
RIVER CREST COUNTRY CLUB

SPONSORSHIPS AND TICKETS AVAILABLE NOW AT
THEWARMPLACE.ORG/COOLNIGHT



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS FOR A COOL NIGHT 2019!

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who helped us provide hope and healing throughout the year



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Donations are listed from 1/1/2019 – 12/31/2019. For a complete listing of all monetary donors for 2019, visit thewarmplace.org/complete-donor-list

2020 FAMILY NIGHTS

Family Nights are hosted six times a year at The WARM Place and focus on making new memories as a family after a death. Each family night is free to attend and open to past, current and future WARM Place families!



JANUARY 31
Bunco and
Breakfast



APRIL 24
Out of This
World



JUNE 5
Hula Luau



AUGUST 28
Art Night



OCTOBER 23
Dia De Los
Muertos



DECEMBER 4
Gingerbread
House
Decorating



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AT THEWARMPLACE.ORG

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WHERE GRIEVING
CHILDREN AND THEIR
FAMILIES FIND **HOPE**



REGISTER NOW!

Join us for the R2RT, Fort Worth's
community-wide memorial race event.

March 28, 2020 at Acme Brick Co.

1 Mile Fun Run/Walk: 8:00am | \$20*

10K Run: 8:30am | \$35*

5K Run: 8:35am | \$25*

**Fees increase on March 1st and Race Day*

Register at
thewarmplace.org/r2rt

All proceeds directly benefit children
attending The WARM Place.



The WARM Place®

Grief Support Center for Children

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