



# The WARM Way

A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place

SPRING 2021

## FINDING PEACE DURING A PANDEMIC

by Dana Minor, MS, LPC, Program Director

Over the past year, we have been faced with so much uncertainty and loss. We have longed for a sense of comfort and have been grateful for every small act of kindness and unconditional support. Throughout this time, many have struggled with the fear of the unknown, and in the midst of a pandemic, those fears have been amplified. Children and families who have experienced the death loss of a loved one have been faced with many additional struggles and challenges.



Struggling to cope with a death loss can be overwhelming, and many have experienced what could be described as "grief overload." Dr. Alan Wolfelt, one of the leading death educators and grief counselors, describes grief overload as "what you feel when you experience too much loss all at once in a relatively short period" and that you have "been exposed to more loss than anyone could reasonably take in stride." COVID-19 has brought a myriad of unknowns, lifestyle adjustments, and secondary losses. Many children and families have been faced with more changes than they have felt capable to handle.

David Kessler, grief expert and co-author with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Grief and Grieving: Finding the Meaning of Grief through the Five Stages of Loss* and author of *Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*, believes "we are grieving the world we have now lost...our normal life, our routines...everything has changed." Kessler affirms that "we know it is temporary, but it doesn't feel that way, and we realize things will be different." It can be difficult for children to understand what these changes mean and how to cope with the feelings that are associated with these changes. Many have experienced anticipatory grief during this time and struggle with their thoughts. Anticipatory grief is when our mind launches us into the future, and we imagine the worst possible outcome. Kessler provides, "unhealthy anticipatory grief is really anxiety." When our mind begins to show us these images, Kessler states the "goal is not to ignore these images, but to find balance in the things you're thinking." It is important to focus on the present and stay in the now.

"...we are grieving the world we have now lost...our normal life, our routines... everything has changed."

It has been increasingly difficult for children and caregivers to find comfort in the grieving process while facing so many unknowns and changes. Children and families need the comfort of knowing they are supported and that there is hope. It is important to focus on what you can do and what you can do **today**, instead of focusing on all of

the "what ifs." Added comfort comes from acknowledging what is outside of our control and focusing on what is within our control. It is also important to reach out to someone that you trust when you are feeling overwhelmed and need to talk about what you are experiencing.

Children often look to their caregivers for additional reassurances and feel comforted when they are given a safe space to express themselves. This has been a very stressful and confusing time for everyone. Now, more than ever, we need to make compassion a priority. Compassion for ourselves, compassion for others, and embrace the importance of prioritizing our own care. Being patient with ourselves during this time, will help to develop a better understanding, provide much needed comfort, and healing.



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Grief Support Center for Children

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# A NOTE FROM SHELLEY

## Executive Director



Happy New Year! We along with many others are excited to kick off 2021 and are looking forward to what is ahead for The WARM Place. You may be familiar with the practice of choosing a word to inspire your new year. Many people do this to set a tone for the year ahead. When looking towards 2021 for The WARM Place, I wanted to think of a word to guide us, and after thoughtful consideration landed on the word "connect." Connection is something I think we struggled with as a community in 2020. Whether it was the lack of connection we had with our loved one, our school, our work, or even ourselves. Reflecting on last year, it's easy to point out the struggles, but I recently challenged my staff to point out some positives, and the results of this made for quite an inspiring list.

“ I learned that kids could still smile with their eyes while wearing a mask...and we could do air hugs and high fives.”

“ I got to work more closely with the program team and got to know some of our WARM Place families more closely as well! It made me feel like I was making a bigger impact in our mission!”

“ Witnessing the sincere generosity of our donors who still said yes, donated early, or even donated more than usual, to ensure the continued support of grieving children and families in our community.”

“ I am grateful to our donors for their big hearts and for how they showed up for us in this this tough year!”

“ I learned through the pandemic that FAMILY is everything! At The WARM Place we are a family, serving families who are grieving. When one family hurts we all hurt; helping each other is what binds us together.”

“ I loved connecting with our families during this time in alternative ways, especially our drive-thru family nights.”

I feel so fortunate to work with such a dedicated staff and countless volunteers whose CONNECTION to our mission is steadfast. At The WARM Place, we are committed to providing CONNECTION to our families through grief support, even if it may look differently than in the past.

This year, we have so much to look forward to in the way of CONNECTION. Our program team continues to look for innovative and creative ways to CONNECT with our families and is excited to host more webinars to educate and spread awareness about children's grief and bereavement in our community. In the fall, we will get to CONNECT with our donors as we host our annual fundraiser, A Cool Night. And we look forward to working with new and old volunteers alike as we continue to serve our families and CONNECT with them throughout the year.

As we start 2021, we are hopeful because we have the opportunity for new and deeper CONNECTIONS...with our families, donors, and volunteers. We look forward to staying CONNECTED with you this year.

Warmly,

Shelley Bettis, Executive Director

# COUNSELOR'S CORNER

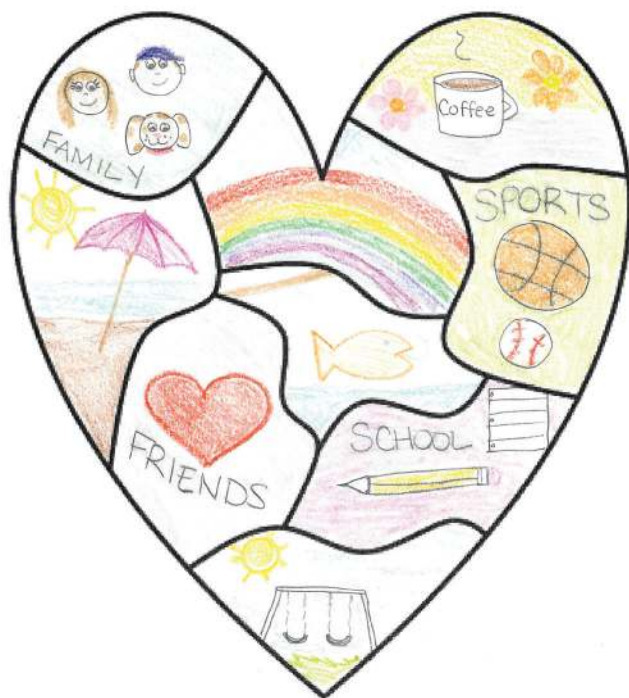
## The Pieces of My Heart

by Alicia Franklin, LMSW, Group Director

Memories help keep loved ones that have died alive in our hearts. Often, we may try not to think about those memories in order to avoid the pain of grief. However, holding those memories close and remembering what you loved most about your loved one can be beneficial, and help others know more about the person who died.

Our WARM Place Group Directors plan a lot of activities that are memory-based. This allows children to explore the memories of their loved ones and process any emotions that are attached to those memories.

One of our favorite activities is called, "The Pieces of My Heart." In this activity, the children are given a sheet of paper with a large heart on it. The heart is sectioned off and children are asked to draw or write about some of their favorite memories that remind them of their loved one or things that are closest to their heart. They can use crayons, markers, colored pencils, whatever they choose to decorate their heart! Children can then discuss their memories with the group. This is a great activity to do with smaller children as they often express emotion through art and play but is also great for any age. With the supplies, this activity is easy to do at home with your children.



### SUPPLY LIST:

Paper and writing utensils

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Draw a large heart and make several different sized sections.
2. Allow the child time to draw or write about some of their favorite memories with their loved one that died.
3. Process with the child by talking about the memories. Share your own favorite memories of that loved one with the child! This lets them know their loved one won't be forgotten,

Memory exploration is healthy for grieving children. Each child's grief journey is unique, even if they are grieving the same person as someone else. Exploring these memories normalizes their grief experience and helps them to see and feel the impact that person left behind for them. To be alive in our hearts through memories is something that can never be taken away and can be shared for years to come.

For more ideas on activities to do with your child, check out our blog on our website!





“The sense of **community** I feel from The WARM Place is genuine and unique... I appreciate the normalization of grief and death most of all.”



**The WARM Place®**  
Grief Support Center for Children

## 2020 AT A GLANCE

### PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

**1,446**



CLIENTS SERVED

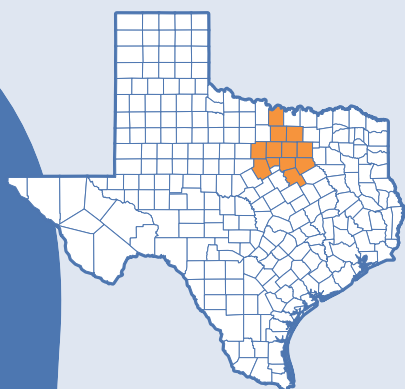
**341**

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS HELD

**2,060**



INDIVIDUALS RECEIVED PHONE SUPPORT FROM WARM PLACE GROUP DIRECTORS



**12**

COUNTIES SERVED

**10,145 CARDS MAILED**

VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF SENT THOUSANDS OF HANDWRITTEN NOTES OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENROLLED IN OUR PROGRAM.



**124 AT-HOME ACTIVITIES**

ACTIVITIES WERE SENT TO FAMILIES VIA EMAIL AND CURBSIDE PICKUPS TO HELP FACILITATE GROWTH IN GRIEF JOURNEYS.

#### COMMUNITY OUTREACH:

**638**

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH TOURS, SPEECHES, WEBINARS, TRAININGS & OUTREACH EVENTS



**6**

FAMILY NIGHT EVENTS HELD WITH

**829**

PARTICIPANTS



**286**



FAMILIES ENROLLED ON AVERAGE PER MONTH



**415**



CHILDREN ENROLLED ON AVERAGE PER MONTH

“

You guys are awesome! Thank you for taking the time to coordinate everything and still help the families... grief does not care that COVID is here, we still continue to grieve. Thank you for providing fun activities that we can **grow, share and experience** as a family!”



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

## Tell us a little bit about yourself!

My absolute favorite thing to do is to spend time with my family. They all indulge my love of cards games and hiking, especially my mom. She's an absolute card shark and will take you for everything your worth. I have a blue heeler named Winnie that I consider a genius. If you've seen her bag of tricks, you'd probably agree. She is the best friend a girl could ask for. I started dabbling in stained glass work and currently have 4 projects I've halfway finished. Designing and cutting the glass is my favorite and then when it comes to the tedious work, I just pause and start a new one! I also have an obsession with home decor and interior design, so my house is always changing themes based on my mood.

## What brought you to TWP as a volunteer?

I actually attended The WARM Place as a child! After experiencing the death loss of my dad and attending The WARM Place, I grew up always wanting to be what I needed when I was younger. In college I volunteered at Camp El Tesoro de la Vida, a grief camp for children and had so much fun. I met a lot great people who also volunteered at The WARM Place and they all reminded me I could have those experiences more than just one week in the year!

## How long have you been volunteering with TWP?

I went through facilitator training at the end of 2019, so I've made it a full year!

## What is your favorite thing about volunteering with TWP?

For me, it's all about the relationships! I volunteer in a teen group. Being a teenager is a lot of change and figuring out who you are, then add a death loss on top of it- it's a lot! As a facilitator, I get to meet our teens exactly where they are and help them process their experience.

## What's been one of your most memorable moments volunteering at TWP?

Anytime a new teen joins our group! Everyone knows how intimidating it can be to walk into a group of strangers, and usually their expectation is that everyone is going to start crying or be sad the whole time. By the end of their first group, they're sharing about how great it is to have people who understand what they're going through. They're usually surprised by how fun it can be, how easy it is to be yourself and to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

## How has your experience as a former WARM Place client impacted/ influenced your volunteering?

I was so much younger than the teens in my group when my dad died, sometimes my experience doesn't translate, and I think that is actually what makes it so relatable. Because it's such a reminder that everyone's experience is so different, there are no rules to what grief looks like, and that it is an ongoing process. My heart behind volunteering, wanting to be what I needed when I was younger, that transcends the age I was when my dad died. I needed someone when I was 5, 10, 15, 20, and so on! As you grow up, you change and this person you loved is gone and you have to reprocess life without them continually.

## What would you say to someone who is thinking about volunteering at The WARM Place?

There is no time like the present! Whether you've experienced the death loss of a loved one or not, you have something to offer. The requirements are to show up and listen! Don't doubt your skillset, your experiences, or that tug in your heart. There's a reason you feel called to volunteer, so do something about it!



Tori Mudge, Volunteer, 1 Year

"After experiencing the death loss of my dad and attending The WARM Place, I grew up always wanting to be what I needed when I was younger."



Tori volunteering at Camp Remember Me in 2019



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: BILL HARRELL

By Katie Lane  
Director of Development



Meet Bill Harrell, or as he is affectionately known to many... "Poppa Frog." Bill proudly graduated from TCU in 1968 and has been a dedicated and generous member of our Fort Worth community ever since. After serving as the president of the Frog Club for two years, serving as the president of TCU's National Alumni Association, and serving on their Board of Trustees as well, he was invited by a colleague to serve on the board at The WARM Place. It was on The WARM Place **board of directors** that he found a diverse and dedicated group of people committed to the critical mission of supporting grieving children and their families. Bill is such a firm believer in the **mission** that he has made over 200 donations to The WARM Place! In addition, he is one of our donors in our **"Remember Me Giving Program,"** a group of loyal supporters who make ongoing monthly contributions to The WARM Place to help fund the ongoing budget needs of the organization. Bill has made regular monthly donations for over 16 years! When asked what he would tell someone who is considering getting involved at The WARM Place, he said *"I would turn that around. YOU should ask to be a part of an organization that eases a child's grief with the loss of a loved one. Being able to communicate in a setting with their peers facilitates a safe environment to help them cope with that loss. Is there any better reason to say yes?"*



You too can be a part of our Remember Me Giving Program  
by making your monthly donation online at [thewarmplace.org/donate](http://thewarmplace.org/donate)



Last year, we had to cancel our largest fundraiser due to the pandemic. In place of that fundraiser, we asked our community out of the goodness of their hearts to help ensure our services remained available. We are pleased to say that YOU helped us exceed our goal! From the bottom of our hearts – thank you.

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# COOKING WITH HEART

By Brooke Bailey, Director of Communications

Our sense of taste and smell can bring back vivid memories. Whether it was a holiday dish or a timeless favorite, family recipes often have a special place in our hearts.

Jennifer Galindo and her two girls, Alesandra and Sophia, attend The WARM Place and love honoring their Aunt Bebe by making two special recipes: pumpkin pie and potatoes. Even though Aunt Bebe didn't like to cook too often, these were her two recipes that she always made around the holidays. "She always made us laugh because she reminded us that she never cooked except on the holidays, so we had better enjoy the food," Jennifer said.

Cooking with their aunt brings back a lot of warm feelings and reflection on time spent together. "Making the pumpkin pies brings back a lot of great memories. For each of my girls the pumpkin pie was the first thing they ever helped bake with my aunt. They would each take a turn in the kitchen, so they always had that one-on-one time with my aunt. They were her little assistants. They were the only ones allowed to help her, so it became a special time for them to spend together," Jennifer said.

The pumpkin pie is special because the girls have memories of making the pie with their Great Aunt and have made it since her death. They enjoyed sharing those special memories with their cousin who they invited to help with making the pie over the holidays.

The potato recipe is an original creation and also holds a special place in the Galindo family's hearts. Bebe potatoes have been in the family for 8 years! "Making the potatoes is special to me because my aunt wasn't really much of a cook or baker so by us remembering the one recipe she came up it means a lot," Jennifer said.

Family recipes are generational and are a way to remember our loved ones. For the Galindo family, it is pumpkin pies and Aunt Bebe's potatoes. Even though we may not always be able to recreate them perfectly, the art of cooking our family recipes with memories at the forefronts of our minds can provide comfort.

As for the recipes themselves. Jennifer said the tried-and-true pumpkin pie recipe can be found on the back of a can of pumpkin puree. **The potatoes, however, are an original creation that her girls love to recreate:**

## AUNT BEBE'S POTATOES

### Ingredients:

5 russet potatoes  
Garlic powder  
Onion powder  
Land o lakes stick butter  
Cooking oil

### Directions:

Wash and peel potatoes. Dice potatoes into bite size pieces. Season with garlic powder and onion powder. Coat medium casserole dish with oil so potatoes don't stick. Layer potatoes in dish. Bake in oven at 350 degrees. Check every 10 minutes and stir slightly. Once potatoes are nice and soft remove from oven.



Great Aunt Cecilia (Bebe)  
with Alesandra and Sophia



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who helped us provide hope and healing throughout the year!

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CHILDREN AND THEIR  
FAMILIES FIND **HOPE**



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- Lysol Disinfectant Spray
- Disinfecting wipes
- Disinfectant spray cleaner
- 8-count crayons



**The WARM Place®**  
Grief Support Center for Children

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**For our complete wish list,  
visit [thewarmplace.org/wish-list](http://thewarmplace.org/wish-list)**