



The WARM Way

A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place

SPRING 2024

From Healing to Helping

by Katy Roussey

For Victoria Monier, The WARM Place, in different ways, has been a part of her story for many years. After the death of her husband on April 24, 2002, she knew that as a family, with her two daughters, Samantha (11) and Lacy (6) this would be the toughest thing they ever faced. Victoria made a promise to herself that she would do whatever it took to make sure that her girls turned out okay. "As a teacher and wife of a law enforcement officer, we both had a great understanding of what traumatic experiences can do to children," said Victoria. As a single mother and widow, she wasted no time seeking help for her children. **Victoria knew that The WARM Place was exactly what her family needed in order to keep that final promise to her husband.**

Victoria and her girls started attending The WARM Place from July 2002 to December 2004. It didn't take long for her to see the direct benefits The WARM Place had on the girl's grief journey. She shared that **"not only did it help both of my children learn to grieve in a supportive environment of peers who knew what it was like to lose a parent, my oldest ended up being a mentor at a local grief camp as well. I would definitely say that we were a WARM Place success story."**

However, Victoria's WARM Place journey doesn't end there. She felt that she owed The WARM Place a debt of gratitude for helping her own family. As an educator, she wanted to do more than just suggest The WARM Place to parents or friends whose children had experienced a death loss. Victoria shared with her daughter her interest in returning as a volunteer once she retired from teaching. Her daughter pressed her and asked, "Why not start now? Why wait?" After some thought, Victoria knew she was right, and soon after that conversation she signed up for the next available Volunteer Facilitator Training. The success of her daughters and knowing she would be helping kids, like hers, is what inspired her to come back after all these years and facilitate. **"I honestly didn't know that it was only twice a month when I signed up. I would say that the rewards of knowing you are helping others 'survive' the loss of a loved one is totally worth it,"** she said. Victoria is just one of many individuals who has come to The WARM Place seeking help after the death of a loved one, experienced healing from the peer support with their children, and returned years later looking for ways to get involved and give back.



Pictured Left to Right
Victoria, Samantha, Lacy



Scan to learn
more today!

As an organization, The WARM Place has experienced incredible growth over the past year. From a mounting waitlist of grieving children, to an expanded facility in order to accommodate these many young, hurting hearts, and now to meet what might be our biggest need yet: expanding The WARM Place Volunteer family. Our program is simply not possible without Volunteer Facilitators, like Victoria, and the need for dedicated individuals with a heart for our mission right now is significant.

Many people ask, "What does an ideal volunteer look like at The WARM Place?" The answer is simple, individuals who have a heart for our mission. Our volunteers range from college students, to working parents, to retired persons who all share one common passion: a commitment to serving grieving children after the death of a loved one. If this is something that speaks to your heart or you feel called to get involved, we want YOU! We think that Victoria said it best when she shared, **"If you are going to take the leap and volunteer, please do it for the long run. You mean a lot to these kids!"** Thank you, Victoria, for your willingness to share your incredible story. To all the loyal and dedicated volunteers, The WARM Place would not exist today without you – THANK YOU!



Scott, Lacy,
Samantha, Victoria

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THEWARMPLACE.ORG/EVENTS

A NOTE FROM SHELLEY

Executive Director

Spring is just around the corner, which means we have officially welcomed 2024! As many of you know, The WARM Place has been in a season of growth over the last several years and while we anticipate that growth to only continue, we are looking forward to **settling** into our new space and new groups. The physical growth of our facility has made it possible to increase our programming and serve more children and their families at The WARM Place. After construction completed in October 2023, we were immediately able to place all the families on our sibling night wait list! By doing so, we nearly doubled that night's total enrollment overall. Our plan is to continue adding new peer support groups as needed throughout next year.



The most important piece that will allow us to do this is expanding our volunteer base. We will be hosting three volunteer facilitator training sessions in 2024 to meet these growing needs of our program. **If you or someone you know is interested in volunteering, please visit thewarmplace.org/volunteer for more information on how to get involved!** As our program team continues to **settle** into the newly expanded spaces, we have been so grateful to have the opportunity to use our multi-purpose room and expanded dining room to host local school professionals for continuing education opportunities. We have hosted two in person Grief Talk Activities workshops already and we look forward to hosting others later this year. In April we will host the annual Bluebonnet Council meeting which is a gathering of all Texas based grief support centers for children. We are eager to invite our peers to see The WARM Place and collaborate on how to best support grieving children and their families.

As our program continues to grow so do our budget needs. As we **settle** into 2024 our development team is already hard at work fundraising to underwrite our growing expenditures. Coming up first this spring is the Race 2 Remember Them and our goal is to raise \$60,000 for the children and families we serve. Following that we will host The WARM Place Classic in late April and then we will finish out the fall with our signature fundraiser, A Cool Night! Each event is crucial to meeting our organizational budget needs and we look forward to your support and participation throughout this year.

Our WARM Place team is also growing! We have added two new positions to help us meet our organizational goals and to serve the growing number of children and families in our program. Every member of our team plays such a critical role in ensuring that The WARM Place is available to children and families after the death of a loved one. To offer them hope, healing, and acceptance at a time when they may feel so alone. As we **settle** into our newly expanded home and our newly established groups, thank you for your role in making this vision a reality. Without the support of our dedicated volunteers, staff, and donors this would not be possible.

WARM-ly,

Shelley Bettis,
Executive Director



<p>RACE 2 REMEMBER THEM March 2</p>	<p>SPRING BREAK- NO GROUPS March 11-14</p>	<p>VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION April 6</p>	<p>VOLUNTEER FACILITATOR TRAINING 05/28, 06/01, 06/04, 06/08</p>
	<p>MARCH FAMILY NIGHT, NERD NIGHT March 22</p>	<p>TWP CLASSIC GOLF TOURNAMENT April 26</p>	<p>IN-PERSON GRIEF TALK WORKSHOP July 19</p>



COUNSELOR'S CORNER

MAKE TIME TO SCHEDULE FAMILY FUN

By Nicole Smith, M.Ed., LPC, NCC



"We had not done a project like this in a long time, working together. The kids are older, and it was a great chance to do something fun and make up things to do. (One of our family dates) will be to buy some of their dad's favorite snacks like Gummies Lifesavers and Frito Twists and watch one of his favorite movies."

— A WARM Place Family

At The WARM Place we enjoy creating opportunities for each group to have meaningful and supportive experiences with their peers. On occasion, we offer family activities on our group nights where caregivers and their children meet all together for an opportunity to make memories, spend time, and honor their loved one. This past December, our groups offered a time for families to make family activity calendars.

Each family was given supplies to develop a two-week calendar that would spark fun, enjoyment and focus on doing things as a family unit. Adults and children developed their own ideas they could do together such as: go for a family walk, tell jokes together, and make their loved ones' favorite food.

The time and talent put into each calendar was impressive. Each family had their authentic idea of what their calendar would look like and how to make sure each family member's creativity and input shined and was reflected in what was created. It was inspiring to see all the different ideas develop into meaningful works of art. Seeing the smiles and how everyone came together was heartwarming.

It was great getting feedback on how families were able to work together on a craft that they may have never considered. One family shared they enjoyed participating all together instead of in separate groups as they normally do. They went home after group and finished putting all the finishing touches on their calendar, not wanting to wait because the night had been such fun. One of the ideas this family wanted to fulfill was baking for others. In addition, it was shared that the family activity calendar has inspired them to consider doing something similar for other times of the year, like summertime, "when days are boring and monotonous" which would allow opportunities to be innovative and make sure to have family time.



Want to make a few weeks extra special by intentionally planning to do things as a family? All you need is a little time and a few supplies you probably have like glue, scissors and markers. Other supplies such as poster board, washi tape, specialty paper, stickers and mini envelopes can be easily purchased, but are not necessary. Then you just need ideas and creativity!

Some questions you can ask yourself are: What do you enjoy doing together that maybe you have not done for a while as a family? What is an activity that makes you remember your loved one? Be silly, work together and let us know what you enjoy about implementing your own family activity calendar.



2023 AT A GLANCE

PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS



2,139

CLIENTS SERVED



782

FAMILIES SERVED



6,291

PEOPLE WERE REACHED THROUGH
TOURS, SPEECHES, AND OUTREACH EVENTS



2,723 INDIVIDUALS

received phone support from
WARM Place Group Directors



498 PARTICIPANTS

attended our 5 family nights



296 VOLUNTEERS

donated 10,141 service hours valued
at \$322,484



*"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."*

— A WARM Place
Family Member

2023 HAPPENINGS



JANUARY

Despite an unexpected flood, group nights continued uninterrupted thanks to First Presbyterian Church of FW and Southside Church of Christ allowing use of their facilities!



MARCH

Hosted the annual Race 2 Remember Them with 660 participants!



JUNE

The WARM Place program team presented at the National Alliance for Children's Grief Annual Symposium.



SEPTEMBER

Annual WARM Place fundraiser, A Cool Night, raised over \$450,000!



OCTOBER

The WARM Place celebrates the completion of its expansion project, enabling waitlisted children and families to start receiving services.



NOVEMBER

The WARM Place hosted its annual Donor Appreciation Reception, a wonderful opportunity to appreciate and thank the many donors that make this grief program possible.



DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Awesome Service

By Katie Lane, CFRE

Amarillo National Bank in Fort Worth, Texas? Absolutely! And in Austin, San Antonio, Lubbock, College Station, and of course Amarillo. And a proud supporter of The WARM Place! ANB is actually the largest family-owned bank not just in Texas but the whole nation and is currently managed by the fifth generation of the Ware Family.

The WARM Place connection with Amarillo National Bank began years ago when a couple of ANB employees experienced death losses themselves and brought their families to The WARM Place for support. After receiving the help and resources they needed, they have now become great advocates for The WARM Place and have gotten their employer, Amarillo National Bank, involved.

Since 2021, Amarillo National Bank has supported The WARM Place through a capital campaign investment in the recent expansion, through annual program support, and even as an event sponsor for the Race 2 Remember Them. Amarillo National Bank's commitment to the communities they are in is central to who they are as a family-owned bank. Those deep roots—from Amarillo to Fort Worth—allow them to give back to the nonprofits, charities and ministries that make their communities strong. They donate millions every year to local organizations, including The WARM Place! They believe in The WARM Place mission and are grateful for the incredible work that is done on behalf of the next generation of Texans.

We are so grateful for supporters like Amarillo National Bank who wholeheartedly believe in The WARM Place and make this important work possible!

There are so many ways to get involved with The WARM Place, just like ANB! Scan to learn more!



When an ANB Executive was asked what they would tell someone who is thinking about getting involved with The WARM Place, they said...

“ This organization fills a void in the community. It supports every child in our community that has experienced loss. As a working professional, I didn't know there was an organization that could help my family through tragedy. I was actively looking for support groups for my daughter and it was very limited. After one of my coworkers told me about The WARM Place, I reached out and it really helped my daughter through losing her mother. She is now a normal 4th grader living her best life. ”



Amarillo National Bank Fort Worth Team at 4501 Camp Bowie Blvd. (Left to right) Salma Purvis, Harper Bunnett, Crystal Daffan, Shelley Bettis (TWP Executive Director), Eric Reed, Susie Smith, and Michele Esicheid (TWP Development Specialist)

OUR 2023 MAJOR DONORS (\$5,000+)

We are so thankful for the support from the many individuals, businesses and organizations within our community. Your commitment makes our mission possible and ensures that no WARM Place child will ever have to grieve alone!



**THANK
YOU!**

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SAVE THE DATE!

OCTOBER 12, 2024

River Crest Country Club

COMMITTEE:

Lauren Muckleroy, Committee Chair

Sarah Barwinski, Lindsay Bloomer, Sasha Denman, Melanie Dow, Sanae Fulkerson, Alyson Gasper, Emery Harbuck, Janice Hargrave, Courteney Holub, Marissa Kelly, Hallie Martin, Madison Muckleroy, Ashley Parrish, Katy Watson, Stephanie Wellman, ReillyJo Wescott, Katie Woolf, Renee Yingling



The WARM Place hosted their **5TH ANNUAL** family camping experience, Camp Remember Me, the first weekend in November at Camp El Tesoro in Granbury, Texas. Camp Remember Me gives WARM Place families an opportunity to grow together as family in their grief journey while making fun new memories. We were so fortunate to have **29 FAMILIES**, an incredible group of dedicated volunteers, and many of our WARM Place staff members join us for this fun camp weekend. This year's camp theme was Treasure, complete with treasure boxes and an island luau party.

Families arrived on Friday evening, and everyone got settled into their cabins. We enjoyed dinner, playing games, and spending time together as families. We had an opening campfire ceremony, and each family was circled around the campfire and held a small lantern with a candle in memory of their loved one. We went around the circle and each family shared the name of their loved one. We sang our WARM Place "Remember Song" and concluded with yummy s'mores. It was such a special way to start off our family weekend.

On Saturday morning, our WARM Place families participated in several fun camp activities including archery, canoeing, and hiking. Saturday afternoon consisted of creating family flags and treasure boxes in memory of their loved ones. Families also had the opportunity to experience the challenge course.



Families had the opportunity to scale a rock wall, climb a telephone pole, and even zip line. Our families gave it their all and worked hard to overcome their fears. For so many, reaching the platform at the top of the tower was such a powerful moment and proud accomplishment. Families demonstrated so much determination and courage. It was wonderful to see everyone supporting one another.

Saturday night we had an island luau party with colorful leis, bright decorations, limbo, fun group dances, and lots of family laughter and, of course, more dancing. On Sunday, we concluded our family weekend with a special remembrance ceremony at the camp chapel. Each family shared their unique family flag and a favorite memory they experienced at Camp Remember Me. For their flag, they received a special flagpole made from branches at camp. The flag poles represent the support we hope to be for our families at The WARM Place. We are looking forward to next year and all the fun camp adventures to come!



Save the date for November 1st!
CRM 2024 – here we come!



Presented by



SAVE THE DATE FOR APRIL 26TH!

**JOIN US FOR THE 4TH ANNUAL
WARM PLACE CLASSIC!**

Squaw Creek Golf Course
10AM Check-In & Breakfast | 11AM Tee Time
\$1,400 foursome | \$700 twosome | \$350 individual

- On-course contests and prizes
- Incredible raffle packages
- Breakfast provided at check-in
- Player gift bag and on-course BBQ lunch
- All alcohol included with registration
- Awards ceremony & 9th hole celebration happy hour



**TEAMS AND SPONSORSHIPS
AVAILABLE NOW!**



GRIEF TALK RECAP!

On January 19th, we hosted our first in-person Grief Talk Activities Workshop for 2024! We were excited to have counselors, social workers, chaplains, and compassionate participants from around the community join us for this interactive training session. This opportunity provided grief related activities and resources to help support children, adolescents, and families who are grieving the death of a loved one. We were thrilled to use our new multipurpose room to discuss various grief related activities and create make and take items in our new group rooms. After this experience, everyone walked away with instructions for numerous creative activities to explore feelings, memories, coping strategies, and tools to help others share their personal grief journey. **We are looking forward to our next in-person Grief Talk on July 19th and hope you can join us!**

OUR WISH LIST

Group nights at The WARM Place are growing thanks to the recent expansion, and YOU can help meet the greater need for supplies by donating items from our Wish List! Your gift helps The WARM Place continue to provide children's grief support services at no cost to the families. Thank you! **Scan the QR code for our complete wish list.**

- Postage Forever Stamps
- Country Time Lemonade mix
- White Cardstock- 65 lb
- Copy paper
- White Standard Size Pillow Cases
- Liquid White Glue



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



READY. SET. RACE!
JOIN US MARCH 2, 2024

8:30AM
3024 ACME BRICK PLAZA
FORT WORTH, TX

NEW SPONSORSHIPS
AVAILABLE NOW!

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THEWARMPLACE.ORG/R2RT



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Grief Support Center for Children

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Fort Worth, TX 76104-3121

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