



# The WARM Way

A Publication for the Families and Friends of The WARM Place

FALL 2025

## Salma's Story: Grief, Growth and Rediscovering Joy

When Salma reflects on what brings her joy, it's the simple, meaningful moments with her family—watching her favorite childhood TV shows and movies with her siblings and spending quiet time at the library or lost in a book. But behind her calm demeanor and routine lies a story marked by unimaginable pain.

BY KATY ROUSSEY

Salma's world was overturned when her father, Julio, was fatally attacked during what was supposed to be a joyful family vacation. The sudden violence of his death, and the long legal aftermath that followed, left her reeling. "Coming back home without my father was incomprehensible," she recalls. "What was meant to be reconnecting with loved ones became the worst trip of our lives."

The grief didn't just belong to her—it settled heavily over her mother and younger siblings, making the return to daily life feel impossible. In the midst of their pain, Salma's mother and two youngest siblings began attending sessions at The WARM Place. Hearing how much those sessions helped sparked something in Salma. She wanted to understand how others navigated the same kind of loss and decided to join the Young Adults group. "I didn't know anyone my age who had lost a parent—I felt so isolated."

"This space became a lifeline. It reminded me how loss connects us, how healing happens in community. And it helped me rediscover joy, even when that joy feels bittersweet."

-Salma •



Salma with her father Julio and her siblings

Walking into The WARM

Place for the first time, Salma was filled with anxiety and hope. "I was desperate to connect with people who knew what living with grief is—people I didn't have to tiptoe around." In the Young Adults group, she found exactly that: honest conversations, shared understanding, and a sense of belonging. "It was liberating. I didn't have to soften my words for the sake of others. We could all relate, offer real advice, and be fully ourselves."

The impact has stayed with her. "This space became a lifeline. It reminded me how loss connects us, how healing happens in community. And it helped me rediscover joy, even when that joy feels bittersweet." To other young adults who have experienced a loss, Salma offers gentle encouragement. "Nothing prepares you for this. But hearing from others who've walked a similar path can break you out of that loneliness. If you're hesitant about The WARM Place, just try it. It's a space to grow, to grieve, and to keep living."

**The Young Adults program at The WARM Place is available for those 19 to 25 years old and is offered three times a year for eight-week sessions. If you or someone in your life would benefit from this program, like Salma did, please give us a call today at (817) 870 2272.**

Scan to learn about the different grief support groups available at The WARM Place.



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# A NOTE FROM SHELLEY

## Executive Director

As the leaves begin to change and we embrace the pace of fall, I'm filled with gratitude and excitement for the season ahead. Here at The WARM Place, we've been especially encouraged by a theme that has emerged over the past several months - **consistency**. Whether it's in group attendance, volunteer engagement, or family participation in events, this strengthened commitment has deepened our community in powerful ways.

In the spring, we shared an update about our renewed focus on consistent attendance in our grief support groups. I'm so pleased to share that we've already seen a remarkable impact: this summer, we experienced **record group attendance, reaching 70%** across our bi-weekly groups. That kind of commitment creates a more connected, supportive, and healing environment for everyone involved. It's something we can all celebrate!

This consistency has extended beyond our regular support groups and into our **Family Night events** as well. If you're not familiar, Family Nights are special evenings designed for WARM Place families to come together for food, fun, and connection outside of group time. Whether we're crafting, playing games, or simply sharing a meal, these nights help strengthen the bonds between families and remind us all that even in the midst of grief, there's still space for joy and togetherness. We've seen growing attendance at each Family Night, and it's a beautiful reflection of the community we have here at The WARM Place.

Of course, as our attendance grows, so does our need for support—especially from our dedicated volunteers. To meet this increased demand, we've added a **fourth volunteer facilitator training this November**, and we're eager to welcome new individuals into this amazing team.

All of this - group nights, Family Nights, Camp Remember Me, volunteer training - is made possible through the unwavering generosity of our donors. **Your support is felt in every detail.** From the craft supplies used in group to the meals shared during Family Nights. Every dollar you give makes a direct, tangible impact on the lives of grieving children and their families.

At The WARM Place, we believe that healing happens through connection. And it's through **consistent attendance, shared experiences, and the willingness to walk this journey together** that our families begin to heal. We're so grateful to each and every one of you for being part of this incredible community.

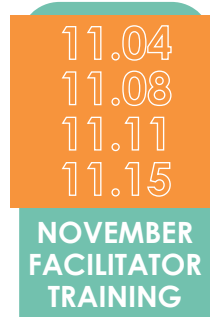
With heartfelt appreciation,



Shelley Bettis



## UPCOMING EVENTS



# 10

## THINGS GRIEVING CHILDREN WANT YOU TO KNOW

Grief is never easy, especially for a child. When a child loses someone they love, the world can suddenly feel uncertain, confusing, and overwhelmingly painful. As adults—whether we're parents, caregivers, teachers, or friends—it can be hard to know the right thing to say or do. We may worry about saying the wrong thing or feel unsure about how to support them through such a deeply personal experience. Luckily, what grieving children need most isn't perfection—it's presence, patience, honesty, and compassion. They need to be seen, heard, and supported in ways that honor their unique grief journey. The following insights offer a window into what grieving children wish the adults in their lives understood about what they need. These truths can help guide us in creating safe, nurturing spaces where healing can begin.

- 1 Tell us the truth.
- 2 Reassure us someone will be there to care for us.
- 3 Our grief is life-long, and it will change over time.
- 4 We often cope with grief and loss through our play.
- 5 We sometimes feel alone and different from others.
- 6 Most of us want to talk about our loved ones and hear stories of their life.
- 7 All children grieve differently.
- 8 We often feel guilty, even if the guilt is not based on reality.
- 9 Our intense grief emotions often look like we're acting out on purpose.
- 10 If you're not sure what we need, you can ask us. Be patient, because sometimes we may not know what we need either.

Scan for  
additional  
resources  
to support  
grieving  
children.







**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Saturday, March 7th**  
**3024 Acme Brick Plaza**  
**5K and 1 Mile Fun Run**

We'd love for you and your entire family to be a part of this community-wide memorial race in support of The WARM Place! Whether you're a runner or a walker, all experience levels are welcome. Your participation helps us continue offering hope, healing, and support to grieving children and their families— at no cost to them. See you at the finish line!



Scan to learn more  
 about the Race 2  
 Remember Them!

## WALL OF MEMORIES

### Create a Lasting Tribute with a Personalized Plaque

The Wall of Memories at The WARM Place offers a meaningful way to honor a loved one or celebrate someone special with a personalized bronze plaque. Each plaque surrounds the inspiring "New Season" sculpture and directly supports the organization's mission to provide free grief support to children and young adults. By purchasing a plaque, you create a lasting tribute while helping ensure that The WARM Place can continue to serve families for years to come. For more details or to purchase your plaque, contact Emilee Jordan at [emilee@thewarmplace.org](mailto:emilee@thewarmplace.org).



**SEPT. 18  
 2025**

COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION of TEXAS  
**NORTH TEXAS  
 GIVING DAY**

SPONSORED BY amazon

### HELP US RAISE \$50,000 FOR THE WARM PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 18!

Your gift on North Texas Giving Day helps provide grief support services to children and families at no cost to them. No matter the amount, every gift makes a difference. Thank you for supporting The WARM Place mission!



**EVERY GIFT  
 MATTERS!**

- \$80 provides one day of services for **one** child
- \$200 provides a month of services for **one** child
- \$600 provides a month of services for **three** children



# Restaurant Solutions Shares a Heartfelt Legacy with The WARM Place

The WARM Place is continually inspired by the generosity of our community—and few partnerships illustrate this spirit more beautifully than our connection with Restaurant Solutions, LLC.

For Marla May, supporting The WARM Place is more than a corporate contribution—it's a personal mission rooted in her family's story. After the loss of her first husband in 2002, Marla and her two young sons, Addison Allen and Bryce Allen, found comfort and healing through The WARM Place grief support program.

*"My boys and I attended The WARM Place from January 2003 through December 2004 after my first husband (their father) died on November 9, 2002," Marla shares. "I was 33 and my boys were just 3 and 8."*



Marla, Bryce & Addison having fun at The WARM Place fundraiser, Friday Night at the Zoo in 2003



Marla and Addison visiting The WARM Place, where Marla shared her scrapbook filled with memories from their time together at The WARM Place.

Today, Marla's oldest son, Addison Allen, co-owns Restaurant Solutions alongside her husband, Frank May. Marla and Frank have now been married for 18 years—proof of love, resilience, and new beginnings. Reflecting on their family's journey, Marla adds: "The WARM Place made a BIG impact on our lives back then and will always hold a special place in our hearts. That's why we're so thankful we can give back now as event sponsors."

Since 1992, Restaurant Solutions has supported restaurant operations across DFW and the U.S., serving major brands and local family-owned spots alike. Their expert team works behind

the scenes to keep kitchens running smoothly, so restaurants can focus on serving their communities.

With a team of 37 dedicated employees, Restaurant Solutions operates with a shared vision rooted in family values and a commitment to giving back. They proudly prioritize people over profits, investing in causes that have touched their lives—with a special focus on The WARM Place.

We're deeply grateful for their generous support—and even more moved by the heartfelt connection they have to our mission. Their story is a powerful reminder that every donation, every partnership, plays a vital role in helping families heal and build hope for the future.

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2025**  
**THE LEGENDS CLUB AT AMON G. CARTER STADIUM**

**Thank you to our event committee!**

**Event Co-Chairs: Lindsay Bloomer and Sasha Denman**

Amanda Badgett, Sarah Barwinski, Hannah Boenker, Hanna Bowen, Whitney Cotten, Holly Daley, Sanae Fulkerson, Alyson Gasper, Janice Hargrave, Courteney Holub, Kari Hutchison, Bridget Karr, Marissa Kelly, Hallie Martin, Lauren Muckleroy, Katy Watson, Stephanie Wellman, ReillyJo Wescott, Katie Woolf, Alaina Woolsey, Renee Yingling

**Individual Tickets are still available through Sept 15th! Scan here to learn how you can support The WARM Place through A Cool Night!**



# Volunteer Spotlight: Kira Johnson

**What has been your favorite experience so far volunteering at The WARM Place?** Every experience has been wonderful, but if I had to choose, I would say seeing the children respond positively to the help they receive at The WARM Place and watching them grow into more confident and well-adjusted young people, who will know better how to face whatever challenges life brings.

**Do you have a personal death loss that connects you to the mission of The WARM Place?** My own father died when I was 4 years old, and his death impacted me for the rest of my life. Having experienced the loss of a parent myself, I understand so well the range of emotions these kids go through when they lose a parent at an early age.



Baby Kira and her Father

**As a facilitator, what would your message be to those thinking about volunteering at The WARM Place?** Volunteering at The WARM Place was one of the best decisions I ever made. Helping the children to face their grief and discover constructive ways to deal with a wide range of emotions in a safe environment is so rewarding. It brings me so much joy to see their sweet faces light up when they realize they are not alone. And we have so much fun with the creative art projects and activities provided by the staff. Helping kids to have fun and find joy is also an essential part of the healing process.



Scan for volunteer opportunities

Are you interested in becoming a volunteer at The WARM Place like Kira? We would love to have you join our volunteer family! We host four volunteer facilitator trainings a year, scan for information on upcoming sessions!



## HEALING STARTS WITH YOU – EVERY MONTH

At The WARM Place, every child's healing journey is made possible through the generosity of our community. By joining the Remember Me Giving Program, you can make a lasting impact with a monthly gift that provides consistent support for grieving children and their families. Monthly giving is simple, sustainable, and full of heart—just like the love you're honoring. Start your recurring gift today and help ensure that no child ever has to grieve alone.



## GRIEF JOURNEYS

In a continued effort to serve our WARM Place families, we piloted a new 10-week closed group called **Grief Journeys** in January 2025. This program was offered to our families to provide in-person weekly groups for children and caregivers on Wednesday evenings. This group was provided as an alternative format to our year-round bi-weekly support groups.

The 10 weeks followed a curriculum focused on various topics including navigating their grief journey, exploring emotions, sharing grief stories and memories, and developing healthy coping skills. Our families had the option to continue to participate in our year-round bi-weekly groups following the conclusion of the 10 weeks.

Nearly **20 families** enrolled in our Grief Journeys program, and we're proud to share that over 80% chose to continue with our year-round support. As we move forward, we're actively evaluating the program's impact and long-term sustainability. We're thrilled to offer this meaningful opportunity on an as-needed basis, ensuring families receive support when they need it most.





## THANK YOU TO OUR 2025 MAJOR DONORS!

We are deeply grateful to our 2025 Major Donors whose generosity and compassion have made a lasting impact on grieving children and their families. Each name below represents a heartfelt commitment to ensuring no child ever has to grieve alone.



THANK YOU!

### \$20,000+

Ann L. & Carol Green Rhodes  
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Texas Christian University  
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Texas Mutual Insurance Company  
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Fort Worth Neonatology  
Restaurant Solutions, LLC  
RMP Industrial Supply, Inc.  
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The Souther Family Giving Fund  
Virginia Street Smith Charitable  
Fund at the North Texas  
Community Foundation

Donations received January 1 -  
August 18, 2025.

Scan to view all our  
amazing Donors!



## THE 5TH ANNUAL WARM PLACE CLASSIC - FORE THE CHILDREN!

The spirit of community and compassion was on full display at the 5th annual WARM Place Classic golf tournament, held on April 25, 2025, at the beautiful Squaw Creek Golf Course in Willow Creek. With 119 golfers on the course, the event brought together generous players, sponsors, and donors—all united in their commitment to support grieving children and families.

Thanks to their generosity, The WARM Place raised over \$98,000 to fund our year-round grief support program. Every swing and every sponsorship helped ensure that no child will ever have to navigate loss alone.

Thank You! Your kindness powers our mission. Because of events like this, The WARM Place continues to provide hope and healing at no cost to families in need. Together, we are building a community where hope lives on.



Thank you to our event committee: Shannon and William Adams, Turner Bettis, Jason Clark, James Delaune, Joe Greenhill, Charles McKinney, Matt Orlie, Jennifer and Brian Roosth



Stay tuned for information about our tournament scheduled for April 2026!



## OUR WISH LIST

Your in-kind donation helps supply essential items that The WARM Place uses every day. These simple gifts make it possible to provide grief support services at no cost to families!

- Country Time Lemonade
- Small styrofoam bowls (5 oz)
- Dinner napkins
- Play Doh (4 oz)
- Paper towels

Scan to  
view our  
full wish list



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



The WARM Place®

Grief Support Center for Children

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As the season of gratitude approaches, it's a perfect time to consider how your generosity can bring comfort and healing at The WARM Place. Here are a few tax-efficient ways to make a meaningful impact:

- Stock Donations
- Donor-Advised Fund grants
- Qualified Charitable Contributions
- Bequests

To learn more, contact  
**Katie Lane, Director of Development**  
817-870-2272  
[katie@thewarmplace.org](mailto:katie@thewarmplace.org)



**TAX-SMART  
GIVING  
THIS  
SEASON**

