



THE AUSTIN CENTER FOR  
**Grief&Loss**  
*Hope › Healing › Transformation*

Newsletter

Spring 2020

## A Message from Mary Dickerson

It has been an honor to serve The Austin Center for Grief & Loss for the last 3 years as its first full-time executive director. My tenure has enriched me beyond measure. I have had the pleasure of meeting hundreds of people in the time that I have served. I have listened to the soft voices of young children who have told their story about how Dad died, and I have heard the strong declarations of vociferous advocates for The Center and the important work it does. I am humbled by the dedication and selflessness of our therapists and volunteers who give of themselves week after week. I am in awe of the many vendors who learn about what we do and want to discount the price of their services to us because they are moved by our mission. I am forever grateful to the foundations, private donors and volunteers who give of their time, talent and treasure. This place is a special place—in my opinion it is a sacred place. I am not leaving Austin Grief to accept employment elsewhere. Rather, I am passing the torch to a very capable woman who has the same great enthusiasm I have and the energy to continue on the path that The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is journeying. The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is fortunate to have excellent staff who consistently meet the needs of our community, a safe and comfortable place to provide our services, and the means to meet the financial demands of providing support to those who are grieving. I look forward to remaining involved at The Center by serving on both the Finance and Marketing & Development Committees. As such, I do not say good-bye, but rather, I'll see you soon.

With gratitude,  
Mary Dickerson

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Welcome Executive Director  
Kim Nugent-Anderson



Kim Nugent-Anderson joined The Austin Center for Grief & Loss as executive director in March 2020. Kim has been an advocate and volunteer for Austin Grief since 2017. Kim brings with her more than 16 years in public service, as a patient advocate for non-profit organizations in Austin.

With Kim's vision and dedication to the Austin community and The Austin Center for Grief & Loss' mission, we are confident in her leadership and look forward to the journey ahead.

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## A Message from our Executive Director Kim Nugent-Anderson

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss has an amazing community of therapists, staff, and volunteers who support the work of those in need of someone to come alongside them during their most difficult times. I am humbled and honored to be the incoming executive director for Austin Grief. I know we will all miss Mary Dickerson and her amazing leadership as the executive director for the last 3 years. She has been a force of energy and has brought Austin Grief to the vibrant, mission-oriented and supportive place that it is today. We wish her the best in all her future endeavors.

Let me tell you a little bit about myself. Early in my career, I worked as a television news reporter and as a litigation and regulatory attorney. Then, I developed cancer, and that entirely changed the focus of my life. After recovering, I decided to “pay it forward” by serving others. I have spent more than 16 years in public service, working as a patient advocate and patient navigator for non-profit organizations in Austin, Texas. In my capacity as an advocate and cancer coach, I have had the honor of being with many families when their loved one has died, and I am very familiar with the work of hospice and grief support. That is why I have a passion for Austin Grief’s mission. I have been an ardent supporter and volunteer for The Austin Center for Grief & Loss for the last 3 years. I have met and worked with many of its staff and volunteers by participating in the past 3 “Holders of Hope” galas, as a volunteer, as well as a sponsor. I am excited to see what we can accomplish together going forward.

As we look forward to addressing the challenges of running Austin Grief during a pandemic and a shelter in place order, I am confident with this talented team of amazing therapists, staff, and volunteers, we will weather this storm and be the stronger for the

challenges it has presented. Austin Grief has transitioned to telehealth services and is reaching out to our community partners and the general public to let them know that during this unprecedented time of disruption and uncertainty, Austin Grief is expanding services to provide support for anyone who is experiencing a sense of loss, anxiety and/or grief. I realize the disappointment and discouragement we all are experiencing due to the radical and sudden changes to our daily lives as a result of Covid-19. Please be gentle with yourselves and your loved ones during this unprecedented time of disruption and loss of normalcy. I know it will not be easy, but I know we will prevail.

In Your Service,  
Kim Nugent-Anderson

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Expanded Services Offered

Austin Grief has taken immediate action to broadly expand our mental health services to meet the needs of people suffering extreme stress, anxiety, trauma, and other impacts and disruptions due to COVID-19. People are experiencing loss of health; loss of jobs; loss of social connectedness; loss of community; and loss of any sense of security.

Austin Grief has moved entirely to telehealth services during this pandemic. We now offer individual therapy as well as group therapy sessions via secure telehealth platforms.

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### KXAN - Adapting to Coronavirus

KXAN News takes an inside look at Austin Grief's expanded services.

[KXAN News Report](#)

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### FOX 7 News KTBC - Telehealth Services

Fox 7 News Austin announces critical telehealth services to support our community during coronavirus/COVID-19.

[FOX 7 News Austin Report](#)

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### New Video Resource Series

Austin Grief therapists are offering a weekly video and audio resource series providing messages of hope and support during this season of closures and sheltering in place. Take a few minutes to include positive supportive messages in your day.

On May 6th we are excited to launch 'The Playroom', a virtual space for children. The Playroom will be a series of engaging interactive videos that will include music, dance, art, and much more. Be sure to share with friends and loved ones. Caregivers and parents at home with thank you.



[Video Resource Series - For Adults](#)



[The Playroom - For Kids](#)

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## Support Groups Reopening Online

Austin Grief is transitioning to reopen our peer based support groups using an online video platform. These groups will reopen as capacity allows. To inquire about a group call 512.472.7878.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Telehealth Therapy Groups

Telehealth Therapy-based Groups will consist of 8 group members and be led by a trained, licensed therapist. The Therapy-based Groups will meet for 6 weekly, 50 minute sessions. All telehealth services are completely HIPAA compliant, confidential, and secure. The set fee of \$15 per session will be processed through secured remote billing. Our telehealth therapy groups will be led by three seasoned, licensed therapists who combine for a total of over 60 years of clinical experience. All services are offered via telehealth and can be fully accessed using a computer, tablet or smartphone. Click the link below.

[Telehealth Therapy Groups](#)

## Camp Red Bird

NEW DATES! Session 1: July 20th - 24th

Session 2: July 27th - 31st

Camp Red Bird is a bereavement summer day camp for children ages 6-12 that have experienced the death of a parent, sibling, or primary caregiver. It is a safe place where kids can laugh, cry, play, create, remember the person who died, learn that it is okay to grieve, and to understand that they are not alone.

Camp Red Bird engages children in therapeutic activities that incorporate art, crafts, nature-based experiences, yoga, and movement to help process feelings of grief. Children who attend camp learn to develop healthy coping skills in a safe and supportive environment.

Due to an abundance of caution, Camp Red Bird session one has been rescheduled to a second week of camp in July. Click the link below for more information and to register. Please email Rachel Saffer, Children's Program Manager, at [rsaffer@austingrief.org](mailto:rsaffer@austingrief.org) for more information.

[Camp Red Bird](#)

## COMMUNITY IMPACT

### Professional Conference 2020



Austin Grief expanded the 2020 Professional Conference that presented Robyn Gobbel, LCSW, LMSW, RPT-S "Yours, Mine, Ours, When Families Grieve Together". Over 100 mental health professionals and clergy were present for this interactive conference. Mark your calendars for the upcoming January 2021 conference!

### Livestrong Cancer Survivors

Brittany Neece, LPC-S, LMFT-S, Clinical Therapist and Support Group Coordinator with Austin Grief, shared with Livestrong about the way grief impacts cancer survivors and their loved ones.

### Baylor Scott & White Opens in Austin

Austin Grief is proud to have Jessie Everline, Director of Operations of Baylor Scott & White Medical Center, on our Board of Directors. Austin Grief staff were on site for the ribbon cutting and tour of the first Baylor Scott & White hospital in Austin City limits.

## YOUR AUSTIN GRIEF COMMUNITY

### A Message from our Clinical Director

Hello Austin Center for Grief & Loss Community,

Let me begin by saying that we miss seeing each of you in-person at The Center. We have been blessed with a team of therapists and professionals who helped us to convert our therapy programs completely to telehealth within 72 hours of our having some understanding of the initial impact Covid-19 would have on our community. Additionally, we worked to expand our scope of services to include all people experiencing difficult thoughts and emotions during this time of uncertainty and isolation.

As many of you know, we made the decision to pause our support groups and all other services provided on-site at The Center. We are excited to share that after a few weeks of planning and partnering, we will be launching our very first Zoom support group on Monday, April 20th and our very first telehealth therapy group on Wednesday, April 22nd. This will be a big week for us in reengaging our beloved community with these virtual groups.

In the weeks to follow, we will be diligently working to resume additional support groups, and it is our goal to have 3-5 support groups up and running again by the end of April!

May 6th will see the launch of our video resource series on YouTube that we will call The Playroom. The Playroom will be a virtual space where kids 7-17 (and their parents) can go to engage with staff and supporters of Austin Grief who will be creating fun, often interactive videos with activities such as: song writing, dance, fitness, drawing, painting, musical instrumentation, singing, cooking, art and crafts, creative writing, and more. Our purpose will be to convey and celebrate a message of hope, community, healing, and resilience. Currently we plan to run new videos throughout the month of May. Please reach out if you would like to discuss submitting a video for our Playroom programming.

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is deeply grateful for our partnerships and our community. We have been inspired and touched

by the support and interest that we have been shown as an organization during this difficult season. We will continue to creatively and collaboratively partner with our Austin Community and we will weather this adversity and find meaning in the season of recovery and rebirth to follow.

Very Sincerely,  
Scott Van Camp, LMFT  
Clinical Director

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## Volunteer Opportunities

April is Volunteer Appreciation month and we are grateful to our community of volunteers for bringing life to our mission. We miss seeing each of you and look forward to coming together again. The COVID-19 pandemic is uniquely touching each of our lives in a broad range of emotions and experiences with grief and loss. When we can come together again and you would like to be a part of transforming lives after loss, please consider joining our compassionate volunteer community. There are numerous ways you can support hope, healing and transformation, including event coordination, fundraising, gardening, group facilitator and as a board committee member, to name a few. For more information on volunteering please visit the [Get Involved](#) section of our website and contact Regina Smith at [rsmith@austingrief.org](mailto:rsmith@austingrief.org).

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## Holder of Hope Giving Circle

Please financially support The Austin Center for Grief & Loss and become a Holder of Hope Giving Circle member. Hope can be fleeting for those experiencing a loss - death, divorce, or other tragedy. A death often leaves people isolated and alone. By contributing a gift of \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 per month, you will become a Holder of Hope Giving Circle member. You will help sustain our important mission and work.

On behalf of our clients, staff, and board of directors, thank you for your support and for helping The Austin Center for Grief & Loss bring about transformation in the lives of our clients and making aspirations, ambitions, expectations and dreams possible again.

[Holder of Hope Giving Circle](#)

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## Support Austin Grief

**Donate**, without your support, we could not continue to change lives

providing hope, healing and transformation. To make a donation visit our [website](#) or click the link below.

**Holder of Hope Giving Circle**, by contributing a gift of \$10, \$25, \$50, or \$100 per month, you will become a [Holder of Hope Giving Circle](#) member and will help sustain the much-needed work of providing hope, healing, and transformation.

**Sponsor** Holders of Hope 2019. For more information visit our website, [Holders of Hope](#).

**Referrals**, individuals can schedule an intake appointment by phone at: 512.472.7878 or [online](#) anytime. For consultations or trainings in the community please call 512.472.7878.

**Shop** and give at the same time! When you shop using [Amazon Smile](#), [Freytag's Austin Community Bloom's program](#) and even using your Randall's card!

**Spread the word** and let your community know why you support The Austin Center for Grief & Loss.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

[www.AustinGrief.org](http://www.AustinGrief.org)

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