



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

Newsletter

Spring 2019

A Message from our Executive Director

This month marks my second anniversary as the Executive Director of The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. It has truly been an honor and a privilege to work for this wonderful organization. The Center's dedicated Board of Directors and Board Committees have provided wonderful counsel as the agency has grown and expanded its services, staff, and outreach in the community. When I initially interviewed, I asked the board members with whom I met if it was intentional that My Healing Place/The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is "the best kept secret in Austin, TX"? They unequivocally said, "No!".

I am very proud of the increased visibility Austin Grief is enjoying. It has been a team effort and has been accomplished by expanding our programming, offering quality training opportunities, developing new services to address community needs like a crisis response team and offering EMDR, grief day camps, therapeutic yoga, and additional grief groups. Community support has also been instrumental to our growth, visibility, and success. We can depend on a team from Samsung to garden and paint, artists decorate our interiors walls with paintings and photos, [Austin Subaru](#) is sponsoring an appreciation party this month for our amazing volunteers, and businesses, foundations and individuals keep our doors open with donations and grants.

We are both honored and excited to host Paula D'Arcy in May as she reads from her new book, *Winter of the Heart*. Paula is a prolific author, retreat facilitator and thought leader on the subject of grief and loss. She has supported Austin Grief from its genesis, and the red bird on the My Healing Place logo and our summer day camp, Camp Red Bird are tributes to her many contributions to the Center. Please join us on Monday, May 13th to hear Paula read, share her wisdom, and entertain questions on grief, loss, and life lessons.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awarded Topfer Family Foundation Grant

The Topfer Family Foundation has awarded The Austin Center for Grief & Loss a \$3,500.00 grant in support of our work with grieving children. We are delighted to have this partnership with the foundation. This is its second year to support Austin Grief and our work with grieving children.

Career Opportunities at Austin Grief

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss has opened two employment opportunities. We are actively recruiting for a Bilingual Service Coordinator and a Volunteer/Event Coordinator. Please see the [Get Involved](#) section on our website for more information.

Holder of Hope Chair

Austin Grief is delighted to announce that Catherine Morse will serve as chairwoman of the 2019 Holders of Hope Gala. Catherine is an attorney with the law firm Enoch Keever, PLLC and is a fixture in the Austin community. Prior to joining Enoch Keever, Catherine was General Counsel and Senior Director of Public Affairs at Samsung Austin Semiconductor. Throughout her career, Catherine has created and implemented corporate philanthropy and employee volunteerism programs and distributed company grants of approximately \$1 million annually to community organizations. On a personal note, Catherine and her husband Kevin have been married for thirty years and have two sons, Mitch and Robbie. Mitch recently signed with the Buffalo Bills as their new center. Go Bills!

Educational Conference for Mental Health Professionals **Robyn Gobbel, LCSW, RPT-S**

Mark your calendars now for Friday, January 31, 2020. The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is pleased to announce that Robyn Gobbel, LCSW, RPT-S, will be the featured presenter at its Educational Conference for Mental Health Professionals. Robyn has a rich teaching, training, and consulting practice and regularly offers educational opportunities for therapists. This workshop will focus on the parent-child relationship with respect to grief and loss.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Volunteer Appreciation Celebration

Saturday, April 27th

3:30 - 5:30 pm

Location: Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

Austin Grief has declared 2019 the 'Year of the Volunteer' and will be hosting a volunteer appreciation celebration April 27th. Many thanks to [Austin Subaru](#) for sponsoring this special event. In addition to an afternoon of fun and giveaways our volunteers will have the opportunity to meet with photographer Dan West, artist for our current art exhibition, Hope in the Abstract. RSVP today!

Grief in Schools Brown Bag Lunch & Learn

Friday, April 26th

12:00 - 1:30 pm

Location: Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

While all people will experience grief over a lifetime, the age at which grief occurs affects how it manifests. Children and adolescents experience and manifest grief differently depending on their developmental stage. In this training, you will learn how grief looks in children and adolescents at different developmental stages and learn how to support these children in managing their grief as they return to the school environment.

An Evening with Paula D'Arcy

Monday, May 13th

7:00 - 8:30 pm

Doors open at 6:15 pm

Location: St. Louis King of France Catholic Church

Main Sanctuary - 7601 Burnet Rd. Austin 78757

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is honored to present Paula D'Arcy, noted author and spiritual retreat leader in the main sanctuary of St. Louis King of France Catholic Church on Monday, May 13th. Paula will read from her most recent book WINTER OF THE HEART: Finding Your Way through the Mystery of Grief (2018). Paula will share from her intimate knowledge of loss and will also answer questions from the audience.

Paula D'Arcy is a writer, playwright, retreat leader and conference and seminar speaker. In 2001 she established Red Bird Foundation, which supports the growth and spiritual development of those in need throughout the world. A

former psychotherapist, Paula survived the loss of her husband and young daughter in an accident in 1975. Among her best-selling books are *Gift of the Red Bird*, *Waking Up to This Day*, and *Sacred Threshold*. Paula's newest publications are: *STARS AT NIGHT: When Darkness Unfolds as Light* (2016) and *WINTER OF THE HEART: Finding Your Way through the Mystery of Grief* (2018).

Camp Red Bird

Session 1: June 10th - 14th

Session 2: August 5th - 9th

Location: Austin Grief - 2413 Greenlawn Pkwy., Austin, TX 78757

The Loewy Family Commons

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is hosting the only camp of its kind in Austin. 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. 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.

To register for the above events and for more information on upcoming programs, please click the link below.

[Austin Grief Events](#)

SUPPORT GROUP SPOTLIGHT

Parent Loss Support Group

This is a new support for adults who have experienced the loss of a parent. This group is facilitated by two trained volunteers and supervised by a licensed clinician. Groups meet twice monthly.

Children's Bereavement Groups

Middle School - High School

Teens' understanding of death and loss is different from adults, so it is only natural that the way they grieve and mourn is also different. Support groups help children gain a sense of belonging, knowledge that their problems are shared with their peers (normalizing), provide emotional support, and aid in the development of positive coping skills. Children's support groups are interactive with the freedom and safety for each child to express their grief in their own way.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Amplify Austin Impact

Thank you for making Amplify Austin a success for Austin Grief! Donations totaled \$15,100, allowing us to focus on our mission to assist children and adults as they move from loss to life!

University of Texas

Students in the Master's program of the LBJ School of Public Affairs have been working with Austin Grief as a consulting team. The team has been proactive and is contributing valuable insights in the area of policy research and implementation.

HOLDERS of Hope Kick-off meeting

Executive Director, Mary Dickerson, hosted the 2019 Holders of Hope Committee kick-off meeting. Over 25 committee members were present representing the largest committee for Holders of Hope to date! With Catherine Morse as Holder of Hope chair, a power house committee, and getting the momentum started early, we look forward to what's in store for Holders of Hope 2019! Sponsorship opportunities are open now. You won't want to miss being a part of this years event!

Austin Family Magazine Camp Fair

Camp Red Bird was represented at the Austin Family Magazine annual Camp Fair by St. Michael's student volunteer, Mary Catherine and Rachel Saffer, LCSW Children's Program Manager. It was a great opportunity to showcase Camp Red Bird to the Austin Community.

Stephen's Ministry

Austin Grief volunteers Paula Loring and Jill Baumgarner are providing a series of presentations on the topic of grief and loss to the Austin area Stephen Minister's organization. Stephen Ministry is a one-on-one lay caring ministry affiliated with churches throughout Austin.

Kikupal

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss was introduced to Kikupal through Austin Grief friend, Naomi Bourgeois. Kikupal provides a gap in the online care support system. This service can be a helpful resource for loved ones and friends wanting to support someone who is grieving.

YOUR AUSTIN GRIEF COMMUNITY

A Message from our Clinical Director

The springtime is one of my most favorite times of the year. It's a time of newness and growth, and as a resident of Central Texas - the best weather of the year in my opinion! My first three months at Austin Grief have been a time of newness and growth on a personal and professional level. While amidst my learning curve, I want to highlight three different events that I've been able to be involved with as I've joined the Austin Grief team.

In late January, we hosted a very successful 6-hour training entitled "Exploring How Attachment Patterns Influence Grief" which was delivered by Marshall Lyles, LPC-S, LMFT-S, RPT-S. This was Austin Grief's initial effort in offering a full-day training targeting mental health clinicians - for a first-time endeavor this event was incredibly successful.

The other two events I'd like to highlight are related to our amazing volunteer program. We are so fortunate to have an amazing team of volunteers at Austin Grief who are incredibly passionate and dedicated to our mission. Without our dedicated volunteers, we wouldn't be able to offer such a robust offering of support groups, in addition to many other aspects of service that our volunteers support us in. In early March, we offered the first of four ongoing training opportunities for our current volunteers - this too, is a new offering for us and something I will look forward to continuing to grow. In late March, we also began training our newest group of volunteers - by the end of the spring, we'll have eleven new volunteers at Austin Grief! And while my learning and growth will continue indefinitely as a newer member of the Austin Grief team - I am reminded that newness and growth are very beautiful things from which one can take great pride.

Warm regards,
Becky Morales, LCSW

Welcome Board of Director Sarah Carney

Sarah Carney is the Campaign Manager, Communications and Marketing Specialist, and Community Outreach Facilitator with Dignity Memorial (Service Corporation International). Sarah graduated from Texas Tech University with a focus on Journalism and Marketing. She has experience teaching abroad in the Czech



Republic and Japan. Sarah has been a TV news reporter, producer, and anchor, as well as a freelance reporter for Austin's KVUE-TV. Sarah is active in the Austin community serving on the Austin

Corporation Engagement Council, Junior League of Austin and working on the Grief to Peace project. Austin Grief is excited to welcome Sarah to the Board of Directors.

Welcome Board of Director Joe Cava

Joe has over 37 years of advanced technologies experience primarily within the semiconductor manufacturing industry. His career has spanned sales, installation, commissioning, and operations. Joe is Senior ME Engineer with JE Dunn Construction and leads the efforts to collaborate with design engineers, architects, and clients in all stages of projects to ensure value, sustainability and performance of critical systems.



In the community, Joe has given his time to working with Austin Divorce Recovery. Joe has extensive experience in facilitating small break out groups within workshops led previously by Dr. Larry Miller. Joe has worked with hundreds of divorce recovery clients helping them navigate through some of the most trying times in their lives. By investing in each other and focusing on rebuilding the fundamentals necessary for personal growth, individuals learn to see through the haze with the encouragement and support of their peers. Austin Grief is happy to welcome Joe to the Board of Directors.

Volunteer Spotlight

The Austin Center for Grief & Loss has experienced dramatic growth



in the past 24 months. We have expanded our services to add summer camps, grief groups in schools, additional support groups at Greenlawn Parkway, and a crisis response team to aid schools and businesses that experience a sudden loss. These are just a few of the positive additions and improvements to our services. As a small non-profit in a period of expansion, we have growing pains.

Just as we were launching many of these new initiatives, Paula Loring, LCSW, seemed to magically and mysteriously arrive on our doorstep. She was introduced to Austin Grief by our own Lynne Levinson, LPC. Lynne and Paula are dear friends and neighbors. Paula was recently retired and looking for a place that her extensive background in grief counseling would be helpful and appreciated, and Lynne knew the perfect place! Then something quite extraordinary happened, Paula kept coming! She did not just want to volunteer for an hour or two--she wanted to volunteer in a nearly full-time capacity. The first major task that Paula undertook was to update our 24-hour long volunteer training course. This was a huge undertaking—one that she worked on both at Austin Grief and at home. It required interaction with everyone at Austin Grief. The result was not just a revised training guide, there was a transference of Paula's sage advice and wisdom to all who interacted with her. As our growing pains presented, Paula's recommendations, experiences, and counsel were heeded to minimize discomforts and our growth progressed more fluidly.

The next extraordinary thing that happened is Paula's husband, Ed Fasanella, PhD, wanted to know where his wife was all the time, and could he volunteer too? Ed can be found in our garden, behind a computer or walking down the hall with a toolbox fixing whatever might be broken. Ed always has a smile on his face, a twinkle in his eye and a kind word for everyone.

Paula and Ed have been married for 35 years. They have two adult children, Joseph and Cecilia. Ed grew up in the Bronx and attended the City University of New York. He taught math and biology in a variety of settings and eventually made his way to Austin where he had friends whom he'd met through his interest and practice of transcendental meditation.

In 1999, Paula's family asked them to return to her hometown of San Antonio to run the grief counseling services at the family business, Porter Loring Mortuary. Paula and Ed remained in San Antonio until retirement in 2015—Paula retired from grief counseling and the family mortuary, and Ed retired from Educational Testing Services where he had been a test writer. The two wasted no time in moving

back to Austin and looking for ways to give back to the Austin community. When Ed isn't volunteering at Austin Grief, he can be found teaching math to students with disabilities or tutoring residents at LifeWorks in preparation for their GED. Paula and Ed both enjoy traveling, entertaining and working in their garden. The Austin Center for Grief & Loss is grateful for their tireless volunteerism and service to advancing our mission.

Volunteer Opportunities

Austin Grief has a compassionate volunteer community. We are so grateful for the dedication and heart of our volunteers. In gratitude we are making 2019, *The Year of the Volunteer!*

If you would like to be a part of transforming lives after loss, please consider joining our volunteer community. There are numerous ways you can support hope, healing and transformation, including child care during our evening support groups, event coordination, fundraising, gardening, and as a board committee member.

For more information on volunteer opportunities please visit the [Get Involved](#) section of our website.

Holder of Hope Giving Circle

We want you to be a part of the Holder of Hope Giving Circle supporting the important work of The Austin Center for Grief & Loss. By supporting the Austin Center for Grief & Loss and becoming a Holder of Hope Giving Circle member you are helping provide hope. 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 and will help sustain the much-needed work of providing hope, healing, and transformation to those who have lost partners, children, and loved ones.

The biggest benefit you receive from being a part of the Holder of Hope Giving Circle is knowing you are making a difference in the lives of grieving individuals. Additionally, you will be invited to art exhibitions, book signings, and one private party each year. Thank you in advance for your support. We will provide you a Holder of Hope pin - we hope you will wear this proudly and often. Please also spread the word about Austin Grief's mission and the important work we do.

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](#)

Your Story

What is your story of hope, healing and transformation? Would you be willing to share the impact of Austin Grief in your life? We would love to hear from you! Please contact Mary Dickerson at mdickerson@austingrief.org, to share your story.

How can you support your Austin Grief Community?

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.

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

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.

[DONATE TODAY](#)

www.AustinGrief.org

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