

Mourning Hope Grief Center

2013 -2014 Annual Report



Thank you.

Thank you for Believing.

For Volunteering.

For Donating.

For Helping.

For Providing Support to Grieving Families.

For Extending Our Reach.

But most importantly, for giving the gift of HOPE.

And thank you for each of the last 20 Years.

Mourning Hope's Past and Present



PAST: Mourning Hope Grief Center was founded in 1994 by Pam Dinneen and Kay Kronholm – two public school counselors on their local crisis teams looking to support bereaved youth in their middle school. Groups were originally offered to middle school teens only.

PRESENT: Groups are now offered to youth between the ages of kindergarten – 18 and their adult caregivers. Mourning Hope has also started a support group for young adults between the ages of 18 - 30, recognizing that support for that age category in our community was challenging to find.

PAST: Originally, the only groups offered at Mourning Hope were 10-week grief support groups. Mourning Hope's 10-week sessions were available for families grieving the death of anyone significant in their lives, such as a sibling, parent, grandparent or close friend.

PRESENT: While the 10-week Family Grief Series is still the core of our program, 20 years later we now offer many diverse opportunities for families. These grief-related programs include an annual reunion, programs that pair local artists with bereaved youth, groups designed to help families through the difficult holiday season, a young adult specific group, 8-week school-based grief support groups in the Lincoln Public School System, and a weekend-long grief camp called "Camp Erin." This camp is offered in partnership with The Moyer Foundation.

PAST: Twenty years ago, Mourning Hope support groups were held anywhere that Mourning Hope could set-up shop. Volunteers carried supplies and brochures around in their cars to a number of locations which would allow the organization a small degree of free space.

PRESENT: Mourning Hope currently leases a former single family home just off the Nebraska Wesleyan campus. The warmth emanated by the very essence of the structure and the caring volunteers inside makes the house a wonderful location for hosting our grief support programs.

PAST: For the first 12 years, Mourning Hope was completely volunteer-driven.

PRESENT: Mourning Hope now operates with five part-time staff, however 20 years later, we STILL rely heavily on volunteers! Our volunteers, on both an individual and group basis, have won a number of well-deserved awards during the past few years, most recently honored with the "2013 Volunteers in Action" award through Volunteer Partners. Mourning Hope's program simply would not exist without the volunteers who dedicate thousands of hours to leading support groups and providing all of the "behind the scenes" work.

PAST: During the first full year of operation, Mourning Hope served 86 kids and caregivers through support groups.

PRESENT: In 2013, Mourning Hope served 4,077 people. While many of these folks were simply seeking grief resources or participated in our grief education offerings, 349 unduplicated participants joined our internal grief support groups just last year.

PAST: Mourning Hope volunteers paid for all supplies and program-related items...no budget or significant revenue sources existed for the first 12 years.

PRESENT: Twenty years later, our Center receives funding from private donations and fundraising events, foundations and grants, and through financial support from the United Way. Without the generous support from all of the foundations and individual donors, Mourning Hope would not be flourishing in the same capacity.



MISSION

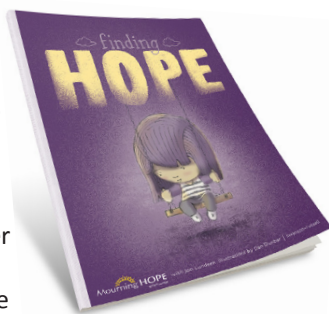
Mourning Hope Grief Center companions grieving children, teens, young adults and their families when someone significant in their lives has a serious illness or has died. Mourning Hope provides support groups, community education, grief resources and referrals.

To learn more about Mourning Hope, or to watch the video "Hope is a Wonderful Thing," visit Mourning Hope's website: www.mourninghope.org.

20 Years of Hope

FINDING HOPE

In honor of Mourning Hope's 20-year anniversary, a **children's grief book – "Finding Hope"** – was created and distributed. The book tells the story of Hope, a young girl who is grieving the death of her mother. Hope's father takes her to a grief center where she is able to share her feelings, not feel alone and find happiness in the memory of her mother. Words and phrases in the book are based on actual comments made by children in Mourning Hope support groups.



Bereaved youth are often referred to as 'forgotten mourners' in our society. Childhood bereavement is extremely common, yet rarely discussed. And it's very difficult to find any children's literature that illustrates a child seeking support at a grief center. Numerous bereaved children and teens feel isolated and alone in their grief and as a result, many youth in our community suffer in silence. "Finding Hope" is a way for us to acknowledge that they are not forgotten and that there is support, healing and hope to be found. "Finding Hope" also features a dedication "to the courageous youth and adults, who for over 20 years, have allowed Mourning Hope volunteers and staff to walk alongside them during their personal grief journeys. And to all of the volunteers who give so freely of their hearts—thank you for ensuring that no child ever grieves alone, and for helping bereaved families, once again, find hope."

Mourning Hope Grief Center wrote "Finding Hope" with Jon Lundeen, a writer/producer at Swanson Russell in Lincoln. Dan Dunbar, a graphic designer at Swanson Russell, did the illustrations. Mourning Hope worked with Infusionmedia of Lincoln to publish the book.

"Finding Hope" is now available in Mourning Hope grief kits at Lincoln public and parochial school libraries. It can also be purchased online through the Centering Corporation website www.centering.org/findinghope.

GRIEF KITS

This year, Mourning Hope placed two **grief kits** for youth and their caregivers in each elementary, middle and high school library within the Lincoln Public School System. These kits were also placed in parochial schools throughout the Lincoln community.

The kits include grief-related resources for the entire bereaved family including educational books, DVDs and other materials focused on the needs of grieving youth and their caregivers. Similar to other educational materials in school libraries, these resources are available for checkout as needed.

These grief kits have truly made a significant impact on the community and the lives of children throughout Lancaster county. Made possible by the Rogers Foundation and the United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County, these gifts lead straight to a child's heart and a family's healing.

CAMP ERIN LINCOLN

In late 2013, Mourning Hope was selected to implement and host a weekend-long "Camp Erin Lincoln" during the fall of 2014. Camp Erin, created and funded by The Moyer Foundation, is the largest nationwide network of free bereavement camps for children and teens ages 6-17 who have experienced the death of someone close to them. It is a weekend-long experience filled with traditional fun camp activities, combined with grief education and emotional support – facilitated by grief professionals and trained volunteers.



Each Camp Erin is facilitated through a long-term partnership with a local bereavement agency. Together, these organizations and The Moyer Foundation help bring the healing experience of Camp Erin to children each year. Only 44 camps exist throughout the U.S. and Mourning Hope is honored to have been selected as the lead agency for this new event in Nebraska.

Thanks to funding from Rotary Club #14 and New York Life, Camp Erin Lincoln was successfully held in late September at Camp Kitaki. It was an exhilarating, inspiring, rewarding, stunning weekend, where volunteers and staff were able to support our mission at the very core.

In the words of our Campers:

"It helped me by learning other people's stories and what they're going through. And learning that we should be grateful for meeting them and to be living. And that we are awesome and amazing. And that we can do anything!" – Age 11

"Camp Erin helped me through the grieving of my dad, and the activities were really fun. I really enjoyed the company of other kids that are grieving over the death of a loved one. It really made me feel like I wasn't the only one that felt this way. I hope that we can do this every year. It was a blast!" – Age 12

"I'm never alone!" – Age 6



20 Years of Hope

LEGACY OF HOPE

Last year, Mourning Hope implemented the **Legacy of Hope Society**, which requests donors commit to a monetary pledge of \$1,000 or more annually for five years. Through Legacy of Hope Society members, Mourning Hope is able to better plan resources, serve more children through new and expanded programming, and encourage other community members to donate as well. This additional financial stream greatly contributes to the enduring sustainability of our programs and services.

Mourning Hope expresses deep appreciation to the following individuals for serving as the Legacy of Hope Society Members:

- Dr. Jeff & Sarah David
- John & Pam Dinneen
- Terry & Dave Hansen
- Tonn & Holly Ostergard
- Pat & Larry Ruth
- Bill & Judy Roper

For more information on how to become a Legacy of Hope Society member, contact Mourning Hope at hope@mourninghope.org or call 402.488.8989.

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BECOME A FRIEND OF MOURNING HOPE

Mourning Hope exists because every child deserves the opportunity to grieve in a supportive and understanding environment. Because the death of a family member brings financial instability, along with other life-altering changes, our services are available at no cost to the participants, and no family is ever turned away.

☐ **YES! I would like to help grieving children through Mourning Hope.**

Enclosed, please find my gift of \$_____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

My gift is given in remembrance of: _____

Mail donation to: Mourning Hope Grief Center, 4919 Baldwin Avenue, Lincoln, NE 68504

Donations may also be made online via credit card at mourninghope.org.



100+ WonderWomen



2014 WONDERWOMEN

In celebration of Mourning Hope's 20 year anniversary, women in the Lincoln community were invited to become members of our "100+ WonderWomen." We were looking for 100+ women to be a part of a powerful new group that would have a significant impact on bereaved families in our community without the time-consuming effort we all associate with fundraising.

As a Mourning Hope WonderWoman, participants were each asked to commit an annual donation of \$100. This provides our organization with operating funds each year which go directly to the bereaved youth and caregivers served by the Center; families are not charged for grief support services at Mourning Hope. The donated dollars are primarily free of fundraising burden or overhead costs! As a "thank you," participating WonderWomen were invited to join forces for an October cocktail party to celebrate friendships and a legacy of charitable giving.

Mary Abel
Barbara Anderson
Sheree Bacus
Leirion Baird
Sarah Baltensperger
Nancy Bare
JoAnne Bettenhausen
Jan Blumer
Linda Bouwens
Beatty Brasch
Tina Breitenbach
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Jana Tanner
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Barb Tegt
Jan Thelen
Jenny Unruh
Tracy Vuchetich
Pam Wessel
Susie Windle
Judi Wittwer
Barbara Woythaler
Rebecca Wubbels
Marcia Yost



Interested in becoming a WonderWoman?

Contact Carly Runestad at
crunestad@mourninghope.org
or call 402.488.8989.

Our Supporters

\$15,000+

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& Lancaster County



\$10,000 - \$14,999

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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Lincoln Rotary Club #14 Foundation

\$2,500 - \$4,999

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...because no child should ever grieve alone