

# Buddy's Place

## A program for bereaved families and children

Grief is a natural reaction to the death of a loved one. When provided with a safe and supportive environment, both children and adults have a natural ability to heal after a death. Pillars Community Health's Buddy's Place offers family-based support groups to grieving children, teens, and their families. One of the longer-standing bereavement support programs in the Chicago suburbs (dating back to 2000), the program provides support groups, education, and outings for grieving children, teens, and their families. With the help of our staff, children feel less alone and find a safe, accepting, nurturing environment where they can grieve in their own way.

### Our Services

Buddy's Place provides a variety of services including:

- **8-Week Session:** Buddy's Place offers an 8-week support group each spring and fall for bereaved children and teens and their parent(s)/caregiver(s). Children and teens engage in goal-oriented activities that are age-appropriate. At the same time, the parent(s)/caregiver(s) participate in a group where they focus on understanding children's grief and how to better help the children work through their grief.
- **Monthly Support Groups:** The Buddy's Place Monthly Gathering meets on the second Monday of each month. During this gathering families share a meal and complete a creative grief-related activity. This allows family members to interact with each other, which aids in healing.
- **Counseling:** Pillars Community Health encourages attendance at the 8-week session first; if a family needs more than the support of Buddy's Place, clinical staff are available on a sliding fee scale (payment based on income) for individual and family counseling for people of all ages who are grieving the death of a loved one.
- **Presentations and Consultations:** Buddy's Place staff are available to make presentations and consult on children's grief to groups of people who are influential in children's lives.

### Our Goals

- Provide emotional support to grieving children and their families
- Provide opportunities for families to meet and support each other
- Educate the community and those who are influential in a child's life about the grieving process in children and teens
- Increase awareness of the needs of grieving children, teenagers, and their families
- Refer to additional bereavement services when appropriate

### Our Guiding Principles\*

- Grief is a natural reaction to loss for children as well as adults.
- Within each child and adult is the natural ability to heal their loss when given a safe and supportive environment.
- The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual.
- Caring and acceptance foster the healing process.

*\*Adapted from the Dougy Center, Portland, OR*

### Fast Facts

- Services are available for grieving children ages 4-18 and their families for any length of time.
- All services are provided at NO COST to participants; donations are always welcome.
- A portion of our budget is fulfilled by generous donations from the Lyons Township Mental Health Commission and gifts from individuals, faith-based organizations, foundations, clubs, organizations, and businesses.
- There are no restrictions on where families must live to benefit from the program.



**Pillars Community Health**

Healing. Caring. Educating.

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Pillars Community Health is the result of a merger between Community Nurse Health Center and Pillars in January 2018.

Pillars Community Health provides health, social and educational services to build strong, healthy communities. We envision communities where all people have equal access to the care they need, when they need it.