

No Child or Teen Should Have to Grieve Alone



We're here for YOU.
Support ♥ Connection ♥ Healing
Call us at 734.929.6640



3rd Quarter 2022 Newsletter

YOUR Newsletter Includes:

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Peer Grief Support – Program Updates

Summer 2022 Programming Wrap-Up

At Ele’s Place Ann Arbor, we know grief did NOT take a summer break. During Summer 2022, we hosted three monthly Family Nights in June, July and August. Summer Family Nights were offered to enrolled families, as well as families who completed an intake and were pending group placement. These evening programs supported families by providing space for them to share their grief and the death of their person(s) together as a unit, through guided activities, games and discussions.

Summer 2022 Volunteer Training Congratulations

Please join us in congratulating the Summer 2022 volunteer training class on their completion of training! We’re honored to get ready for fall programming by adding new Support Group Facilitator Volunteers, Activity Room Volunteers, Kitchen Volunteers, Clinicians and Therapy Dog Handlers! ♥ We appreciate the warmth, compassion and dedication this group expressed in supporting grieving children and teens in a peer setting. Thank you all – we love our Volunteers and Clinicians!



Welcome Back!

Fall 2022 Program Kick-Off Meeting

At the beginning of September, we welcomed our Program Volunteers (Support Group

Facilitators, Activity Room & Kitchen Volunteers and Therapy Dog Handlers) and Clinicians into our Home for Healing Hearts for the Ele's Place Ann Arbor Fall 2022 Program Kick-Off Meeting! This wonderful group of humans help provide a safe space for grieving children, teens and their families during our evening peer grief support programs!

We love how the HEARTS on the walls of our Potluck Room give our volunteers and clinicians a big hug! We could not do what we do without our amazing Volunteers and Clinicians!! ♥ Thank you and welcome back!



Fall 2022 Programming

This fall, Ele's Place Ann Arbor was thrilled to return to our pre-pandemic schedule, offering **weekly** peer support groups Monday through Thursday evenings for grieving children and teens ages 3-18, and their adults, **free of charge**. Evening support programs help children and teens understand that they are **not alone** in their grief and provide an opportunity to connect with others who have experienced the death of a person in an **emotionally safe environment** that supports the sharing of feelings, thoughts and experiences. ♥

Peer support groups are divided by age/grade: Preschool/Kindergarten, Early Elementary, Upper Elementary, Middle School and High School. Trained volunteers facilitate the children and teen groups with oversight by Ele's Place Ann Arbor Program Staff. Support groups for the parents/guardians of enrolled children and teens are also available. Licensed mental health clinicians facilitate the adult groups.

The school year is in full swing and the Ele's Place Ann Arbor school-based staff continue to support our school partners and their students through **Ele's Group, our school peer grief support groups, as well as through consultations with school staff members**. Working in partnership with school clinical staff to provide 8-week peer support groups in many area middle and high schools, we strive to remove barriers and meet grieving students where they are – at school! While schools continue to navigate a comfortable cadence with onsite schooling, we are pleased to support their staff and add Ele's Group sessions when schools are ready.



Grief Toolkits for Schools

We're helping local schools prepare to support students when someone in their life dies. Thanks to grants from the Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation and the Detter Family Foundation, Ele's Place Ann Arbor will be creating 83 Grief Toolkits that will be distributed to schools as needed throughout our local area.

These Grief Toolkits provide useful grief resources to help school clinical staff support their students about understanding the grieving process, coping with death, and how to provide age-specific support to children. We are in the process of distributing 33 Grief Toolkits to local elementary schools, and recently conducted a workshop

at our Home for Healing Hearts for several elementary school staff members. We look forward to providing many more Grief Toolkits to local elementary, middle and high schools soon! ♥

Winter 2023 Program Volunteer Training

One in 11 children/teens in Michigan will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18. LET US REPEAT. One in 11. Make an Impact - JOIN the Ele's Place Ann Arbor volunteer team for a unique opportunity to give back to our community! ♥

Ele's Place Ann Arbor relies on trained volunteers to provide compassionate bereavement support services to grieving children and teens, ages 3-18, through a peer support group model. Volunteers have an opportunity to support children and teens in their grief, while building their understanding of childhood and adolescent bereavement.

We welcome all interested, kind and compassionate adults. We have a particular need for people of diverse backgrounds, including bilingual individuals and male volunteers. Applicants must be 19 years of age, able to commit to one year of service and complete our training program.

PLEASE consider applying for our Winter 2023 Volunteer Training coming in FEBRUARY 2023!

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to view/download the FLYER that includes details about all of the program volunteer opportunities, as well as training requirements, date and times. Online applications are due Wednesday, January 25, 2023. [CLICK HERE](#) to apply online!



♥ REQUIRED VOLUNTEER TRAINING PROGRAM ♥

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT GROUP FACILITATORS:

Independent Learning:

- ♥ Online Modules launch Wednesday, 2/1/2023

In-Person Training:

- ♥ Session 1: Thursday, 2/9/2023; 5:30–9:00 PM
- ♥ Session 2: Saturday, 2/11/2023; 9:00 AM–3:00 PM
- ♥ Session 3: Saturday, 2/18/2023; 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

ACTIVITY ROOM & KITCHEN VOLUNTEERS:

Independent Learning:

- ♥ Online Modules launch Wednesday, 2/1/2023

In-Person Training:

- ♥ Session 1: Wednesday, 2/8/2023; 3:00–5:00 PM

For more information about becoming a Volunteer please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit our “Volunteer at Ele’s Place Ann Arbor” webpage. Questions about our **Volunteer Training Program** ? Please reach out to **Meghan Thiel, LMSW**, Associate Program Director at mthiel@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2207.

In Their Own Words – Inspiring Thoughts from a Volunteer

“I’m here, as a volunteer facilitator at Ele’s Place Ann Arbor because I enjoy being around the kids. I love helping them on their grief journey, educating them on healthy ways to cope, and helping them to build connections with other kiddos in the group. Listening while they share memories and their big feelings and emotions even though it can be really scary is an important part of our nights. Fortunately, I didn’t have anyone pass away when I was younger, but I know that I would have wanted a place like Ele’s Place Ann Arbor to be around if that did happen.

“Some people may think Ele’s Place is a sad place, but it’s really not. There’s lots of laughter and sharing of stories and that’s what I love most. That the kids are able to take a really sad situation and turn it into something good. There’s always going to be hard days, but I hope that I play a part in making it a little easier for them.” ♥

~ Francesca Rogers, Ele’s Place Ann Arbor, Volunteer Support Group Facilitator

“HEARTS of EPA2” Stories

Have you had the opportunity to read our recent



HEARTS of EPA2 stories? This series features HEART stories shared by Donors, Volunteers, Staff, Former Families, Community Supporters, Board Members and Sponsors. Every shared heart story fills the HEART of Ele's Place Ann Arbor. ♥

Please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the Ele's Place Ann Arbor HEARTS OF EPA2 webpage and read stories from those who are sharing their HEARTS with us!

2022 Healing Hearts Society Fundraising Breakfast – 10/11/2022

The Ele's Place Ann Arbor Healing Hearts Society Fundraising Breakfast is coming up on Tuesday morning, October 11, 2022! ♥ Our guests will enjoy a continental breakfast during our event program that is filled with bravery, courage and hope, as children, teens, families and special guests share their grief journeys and their Ele's Place stories.

What is the Healing Hearts Society?

Healing Hearts Society members are community ambassadors who actively share the Ele's Place mission with others, and generously choose to make a significant financial commitment. This special group of donors provides a foundation of support for our FREE OF CHARGE peer grief support programs for children and teens by making pledges to give a minimum of \$1,000 per year over a three-year period.



Event Details

Tuesday, October 11, 2022, 7:15 – 9:00 AM
The Kensington Hotel Ann Arbor, 3500 S State St., Ann Arbor, MI 48108
7:15 – 8:00 AM: Networking Coffee
8:00 – 9:00 AM: Event Program

Event Sponsors

- ♥ Mark & Amy Blaufuss
- ♥ Old National Bank
- ♥ University of Michigan Credit Union
- ♥ Law Offices of Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick, P.C. (Michael Crowley)
- ♥ Retirement Income Solutions

Interested in learning more about the [Healing Hearts Society](#) or attending the Healing Hearts Society Fundraising Breakfast? Please contact [Lindsay Clark](#), Director of Development at lclark@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2220.



Children's Grief Awareness Day – 11/17/2022

On Thursday, November 17, 2022, please join Ele's Place Ann Arbor as we "BLUE OUT" to acknowledge and honor Children's Grief Awareness Day. Show your support of children and teens who are grieving, wear BLUE, and share with others WHY you are wearing BLUE! Let's help make a difference in young lives!

Save the Dates – 2023 Ele's Place Ann Arbor Events



Saturday, May 6, 2023
**6th Annual Ele's Place Ann Arbor
Derby Day Soirée**



Saturday, June 24, 2023
**3rd Annual Ele's Place Ann Arbor
Healing Hearts Family 5K
Walk/Run**



Tuesday, October 17, 2023
**Annual Ele's Place Ann Arbor
Healing Hearts Society
Fundraising Breakfast**

Interested in becoming an **Event Sponsor** or a **Volunteer** for one of our 2023 events? Questions? Please contact **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator at sbodner1@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.

Tours of the Heart – Schedule a Tour & Visit Our Peer Grief Support Center

Tours of the Heart are an inspirational opportunity to learn more about Ele's Place Ann Arbor, and to visit our dedicated healing space for grieving children, teens and their families.

We welcome scheduling in-person tours of our program facility. A Tour of the Heart provides you with an opportunity to learn about our peer grief support programs, meet our staff, and find out ways you can help support our mission.

PLEASE NOTE, these tours are NOT intended for families seeking grief support. If you need assistance or have questions about grief support for children and teens, our Clinical Program Staff is available to help! Please call Ele's Place Ann Arbor at 734.929.6640 or annarborinfo@elesplace.org.

Questions? Or, to schedule a Tour of the Heart, please contact **Lindsay Clark**, Director of Development at lclark@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2220.



Grant Funders Supporting Ele's Place Ann Arbor

Thank you to the **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation**, the **Kiwanis Club of Ann Arbor Foundation** and the **Detter Family Foundation** for presenting us with impactful grant awards that makes it possible to create and distribute Grief Toolkits to 83 local schools! We're so grateful for these generous foundations. You fill our hearts and we appreciate that you stand by grieving children, teens and families in our community, by standing by us! Together we make it happen! ♥

Thank you to the **William J. Nicholson Foundation** for awarding us a technology reimbursement grant that will allow us to further professionalize our operations with the addition of new laptops and tablets, as well as provide professional development for our staff. Many thanks for these incredibly needed upgrades for our staff! ♥

We are grateful for our **Grant Funders!** Their investment in Ele's Place Ann Arbor helps us accomplish our goals and serve the children, teens and their families who are grieving in Ann Arbor, and the surrounding southeast Michigan area.

Are you a **grantor organization** wanting to learn more about the Ele's Place Ann Arbor mission? We LOVE our grantors! Please reach out to **Lindsay Clark**, Director of Development at lclark@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2220.

Community Partners & Friends GIVE BACK



We're smitten with **Mitten Timber Tree Service LLC** in Gaylord, MI! ♥ This amazing tree stump is a perfect addition to our Memory Garden - a beautiful place to stroll or sit and remember your person

who has died. Thank you Austin Gelow for donating this "sweet" HEART to Ele's Place Ann Arbor! ♥



Thank YOU! ♥
Eileen & Ted Thacker
50th Anniversary
Third-Party Fundraiser

Thank you and hugs to Eileen & Ted Thacker! ♥ We are thankful that Eileen serves on our Community Board, and we wish Eileen & Ted a Happy 50th

Anniversary! At a celebration earlier this month, family and friends donated over \$1,000 to Ele's Place Ann Arbor in their honor! We are so grateful! ♥

Do you have a **Third-Party Fundraising Event** idea that would support the Ele's Place Ann Arbor mission? We LOVE our Community Partners & Friends! Please reach out to **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator at sbodner1@elesplace.org or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.

Ele's Place Ann Arbor Servant Leader Spotlight

Support. Connection. Healing. ♥ These three words are simple, yet they mean so much. We're filled with immense gratitude when we reflect back on 2021. Our **donors, sponsors, partners, volunteers, staff and community board members** came together to ensure our community is able to provide a safe and welcoming space where children and teens do not have to grieve alone. [CLICK HERE](#) to access the **Ele's Place Ann Arbor 2021 Impact Report**.

Shout out to **Ele's Place Headquarters** for caring about the wellness of the organization's statewide staff. To help prevent workplace burnout, the decision was made to close our branches on Fridays during the months of July and August, so that employees could practice self-care. ♥ #Grateful

Hats off to **Meghan Thiel, LSMW**, Associate Program Director, **Samantha Gumul, LMSW**, Bereavement Coordinator, and the entire **Ele's Place Ann Arbor Clinical Program Staff** for updating and streamlining our comprehensive volunteer training program and successfully completing the Summer 2022 Volunteer Training Program.

Thank you to ZingTrain trainer, Timo Anderson, for leading our **Ele's Place Ann Arbor TEAM** through an amazing visioning session in August! We are committed to our mission of creating awareness of and support for grieving children, teens and their families. Now, we are prepared to vision for the future of Ele's Place Ann Arbor so we can make it happen for those grieving in Ann Arbor and the surrounding Southeast Michigan area! ♥ Stay tuned for more about our visioning journey!

This fall we returned to weekly evening programming with 20 peer grief support groups per week for children and teens who are grieving! You may wonder, "how we make this happen?" For Ele's Place Ann Arbor, the answer is consistently **Susan Kaercher**, Program Administrative Assistant! ♥ Susan gave all of the children and teen group rooms a much needed "fall refresh," and every week she gathers and prepares all of the program activity supplies with care and compassion.

In September 2022, we welcomed two new members to our Community Board. Welcome back to **Tom Randall** (Fifth Third Bank), and welcome to **Leyla Conlan** (The Write Touch by Leyla) – we look forward to working with both of you, and benefitting from your contributions as Board members.

It takes a lot of teamwork to give our community an amazing gift of Grief Toolkits for local elementary, middle and high schools! ♥ Hugs of gratitude to **Lindsay Clark**, Director of Development, for researching the needs in our community and successfully securing three grants to fund 83 Ele's Place Ann Arbor Grief Toolkits! AND, more hugs to **Alexa Schrock, LLMSW**, & **Zoe Hilbert, LMSW**, School-Based Program Co-Coordinators, **Grace Prisby**, Summer Intern, and **Hannah Brown**, Program Director, for choosing all of the supplies and activities that go into the Grief Toolkits with such care, and distributing them to local schools with a complementary grief support workshop.

In September 2022, we welcomed three Master of Social Work interns: **Hannah Abdelhady**, Wayne State University School of Social Work, **Eunice Rocha**, University of Michigan School of Social Work and **Allison Stone**, University of Michigan School of Social Work. These wonderful humans will spend the school year learning from our clinical program staff about child/teen grief and bereavement and non-profit work, and participating in all aspects of what it takes to run a robust peer grief support program such as Ele's Place Ann Arbor! Welcome to the EPA2 Team!

In October 2022, two of our clinical program staff members, **Alexa Schrock, LLMSW** and **Meghan Thiel, LMSW**, will present "Supporting Grieving Students in the Educational Environment" during a breakout session at the 2022 Michigan Association of School Social Workers Annual State Conference.

YOU make the difference! ♥ THANK YOU for standing by Ele's Place Ann Arbor as we stand by grieving children, teens and their families in Ann Arbor, and the surrounding southeast Michigan area. YOUR gift to Ele's Place Ann Arbor ensures that our peer grief support groups remain FREE OF CHARGE. PLEASE click on the button below to make a secure online donation today! ♥

[DONATE NOW!](#)

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TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER



**THANK YOU to the Ele's Place Ann Arbor
2022 Healing Hearts Society
Fundraising Breakfast Sponsors**





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