

# No Child or Teen Should Have to Grieve Alone



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



## 4th Quarter 2022 Newsletter

### YOUR Newsletter Includes:

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### Peer Grief Support – Program Updates

#### 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**, for as long as a family needs. 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.

As the first term of the school year winds down, 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.

#### Remembrance Family Night

Children's Grief Awareness Month provides a special, dedicated space for us to honor and support children and teens who are grieving. At Ele's Place Ann Arbor, we invited enrolled families to participate in a



**Remembrance Family Night.** During these evenings, families stay together as a unit and create a candle in remembrance of their person. The intention is to honor the lives of those who have died and provide a family space for remembrance. ♥

### Fall 2022 Volunteer Training Congratulations

Please join us in congratulating **the Fall 2022 volunteer training class** on their completion of training! We're honored to add new Support Group Facilitator Volunteers, Activity Room Volunteers, Kitchen Volunteers, Clinicians and Therapy Dog Handlers to our programming team! ♥ We appreciate the warmth, compassion and dedication this group expressed in supporting grieving children and teens in a peer-to-peer setting. Thank you all! We love our Volunteers and Clinicians!



### Welcome Back, Therapy Dogs!

Returning to our pre-pandemic schedule means the **therapy dogs** are back to welcome and greet families as they arrive for evening peer grief support programs at our Home for Healing Hearts! These wonderful furry friends provide comfort, compassion and a sense of reassurance! ♥ Welcome back therapy dogs, therapy dog handlers, support group volunteer facilitators, activity room & kitchen volunteers and clinicians! ♥ You help us make it happen!

### 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](mailto:mthiel@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2207.



## Thank You Volunteers!

We send ♥♥ LOTS of LOVE ♥♥ to all of our wonderful, dedicated and committed **Ele’s Place Ann Arbor volunteers!** Thank YOU for all you do. We rely on trained volunteers to assist with our peer support groups, operations and fundraising events. We could not do what we do, without our amazing volunteers! ♥ We hope everyone enjoyed the little gift of appreciation from everyone at Ele’s Place Ann Arbor!

## In Their Own Words – Quotes from Children, Teens and Families

*“Ele’s Place gave my family a sense of security.  
It was our safe space.” ♥*

*“The gentle generosity of Ele’s Place is like a soothing balm  
to the turmoil of sadness and pain.” ♥*

~ Grateful Ele’s Place Ann Arbor Former Families

## End of Year Schedule

Please note that the Ele's Place Ann Arbor building will be **CLOSED** on the following dates:

- ♥ Thursday, December 22, 2022
- ♥ Friday, December 23, 2022
- ♥ Monday, December 26, 2022
- ♥ Thursday, December 29, 2022
- ♥ Friday, December 30, 2022
- ♥ Monday, January 2, 2023

### For Donations or Gift-Related Questions:

Our Development Staff will be checking mail and voice mails. If you are interested in making a year-end gift in support of grieving children and teens, please [CLICK HERE](#)



to visit our secure donation webpage. Or, please feel free to contact Bree Arvai, Branch Director, at [barvai@elesplace.org](mailto:barvai@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2214. Thank YOU for your generosity! ♥

## For Grief Support and Grief Resources:

We know grief does not take time off during the holidays. ♥ If you are in need of assistance or have questions about grief support for children and teens, PLEASE leave a message at 734.929.6640. Our Clinical Program Staff will be working intermittently for the remainder of the year, and will return your call as soon as possible. For additional information, please [CLICK HERE](#) to visit the “Grief Resources” and “Grief Support” sections on our website.



## “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 all of the stories from those who are sharing their HEARTS with us!

♥ From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to our **2022 HEARTS OF EPA2** story tellers: **Molly Dobson** – DONOR;

**Mike Halpern** – VOLUNTEER; **Donna Roberts** – FORMER EPA2 TEEN; **Paula Crosby-Flake** – ADULT CLINICIAN; **KaDerrick Robinson** – STAFF-BEREAVEMENT COORDINATOR; **Rosalie Tocco-Bradley** – COMMUNITY BOARD MEMBER; **Rick Eder** – COMMUNITY SUPPORTER; and, **Chuck Colby** – DERBY EMCEE. ♥

## YOU fill our HEART at the HOLIDAYS – Year-End Appeal

Ele's Place Ann Arbor provides peer support in a safe space where grieving children and teens share their stories and memories, explore their feelings, learn coping skills, and meet new friends who understand them. Most important, they feel heard and realize they are not alone.

♥ YOU Make THE Difference ♥

♥ THANK YOU for HEALING HEARTS at the HOLIDAYS! ♥

YOU may [CLICK HERE](#) to make a secure 2022 online donation. YOU help heal grieving hearts in our community and YOUR gift ensures our peer grief support groups remain FREE OF CHARGE for as long as a family needs!



## 2023 Derby Day Soirée – Saturday, May 6, 2023



### Save the Date!

Our Derby Day Soirée will be back at the Historic Earhart Manor at Concordia University on Saturday, May 6, 2023 from 5:00 – 10:00 PM! ♥

MARK YOUR CALENDAR - this is an evening filled with entertainment, engagement, big hats, bow ties, connection, mint juleps, and LIVE coverage of the 149th Kentucky Derby!

♥♥ TICKETS go on sale Monday, January 16, 2023! ♥♥

♥ It's time to head to the 2023 Derby Day Soirée starting gate! Get inspired to purchase your tickets for 2023 – [CLICK](#)

[HERE](#) to check out the PHOTOS from the **2022 Derby Day Soirée** fun and festivities!

♥ RETURNING to the 2023 Derby Day Soirée: the Derby Wager Raffle; Emcee, **Chuck Colby**; AV Experts, **Elysium Experience**; DJ, **Nicole Myint**; and, Auctioneer, **Jim Alban**!

♥ INTRODUCING our 2023 Derby Day Soirée Event Chairs: **Toby & Kathy Brzoznowski** ! Thank YOU for volunteering to serve as our Chairs...we can't wait to make it happen for Ele's Place Ann Arbor with both of you by our side!

### First Call for Derby Volunteers!

Are you looking for a creative and fun volunteer opportunity that supports our mission of creating awareness of and support for grieving children and teens?

Look no further, you've found it! The Ele's Place Ann Arbor 2022 Derby Day Soirée Committee Chairs, **Toby & Kathy Brzoznowski**, have gotten the ball rolling and are actively recruiting volunteers to chair AND serve on the Planning Committees - the Auction, Entertainment, Guest Experience, Décor and Logistics Committees!

♥ THANK YOU, **Tom Randall** for volunteering to chair the Sponsorship Committee AND **Kathy Gaines** for volunteering to chair the Logistics Committee! ♥ Come join in the fun!

For detailed descriptions of each Derby Day Soirée Planning Committee, and to learn more about the volunteer opportunities available on each committee, please [CLICK HERE](#).

To complete your VOLUNTEER APPLICATION in the "Fundraising Event Volunteer" section of our webpage, please [CLICK HERE](#)!

♥♥ Sign-up TODAY ♥♥

♥♥ The DERBY Planning Committees "STRIDE INTO ACTION" in January 2023! ♥♥

Interested in becoming a **Derby Day Soirée Sponsor** ? Questions? Please contact **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator at [sbodner1@elesplace.org](mailto:sbodner1@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.

Interested in volunteering on a **Derby Day Soirée Planning Committee** ? Questions? Please contact **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator at [sbodner1@elesplace.org](mailto:sbodner1@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.



### 2023 Healing Hearts Family 5K Walk/Run – Saturday, June 24, 2023



♥ Mark Your Calendars! ♥

On Saturday, June 24, 2023, we'll host the **3rd Annual Ele's Place Ann Arbor Healing Hearts Family 5K Walk/Run** on the Ann Arbor campus of Thomson Reuters!

Interested in becoming an **Event Sponsor** or a **Volunteer** for our 2023 Walk/Run? Questions? Please contact **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator at [sbodner1@elesplace.org](mailto:sbodner1@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.

### 2022 Healing Hearts Society Fundraising Breakfast – Wrap-Up

In October, we hosted our **Healing Hearts Society (HHS) Fundraising Breakfast!** It was a beautiful morning program filled with bravery, courage and hope, as children, teens, families and special guests shared their grief and healing journeys, as well as their Ele's Place stories. Once again, we thank all of our guests who attended the breakfast.

Most of all, we thank everyone who donated – current and new HHS members who made multi-year pledges, and donors who made recurring and one-time gifts – **TOGETHER** we raised approximately \$235,000 to help sustain the Ele's Place Ann Arbor peer grief support programs, and ensure that these programs continue to be **FREE OF CHARGE** for all who come through our doors. ♥

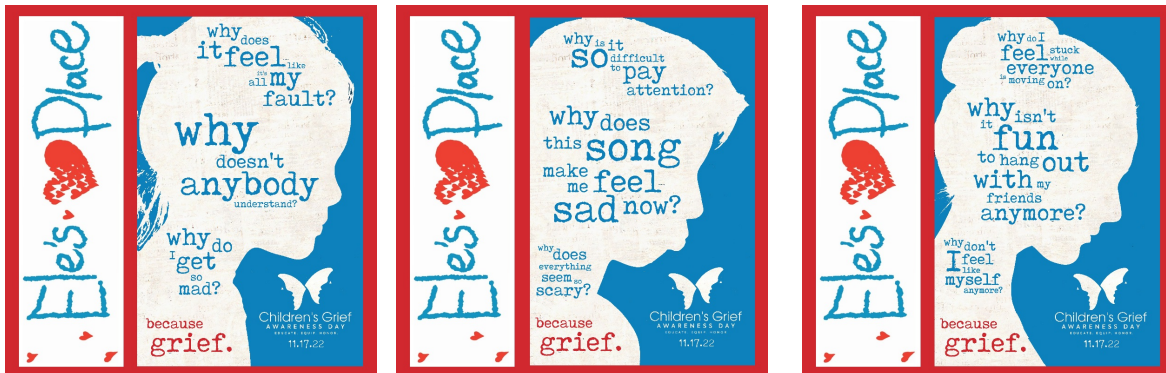
**HUGS of GRATITUDE and THANKS to our SPONSORS:** Mark & Amy Blaufuss, Old National Bank, University of Michigan Credit Union, the Law Offices of Conlin, McKenney & Philbrick, P.C. (Michael Crowley) and Retirement Income Solutions.



**MANY THANKS to ALL of our Breakfast Ambassadors:** Bree Arvai, Christy Barker, Maria Birkett, Anita Bohn, Kathy Brzoznowski, Lindsay Clark, Kathy Clark, Leyla Conlan, Jeanne Cooper, Michael Crowley, Chris DeRuyver, JPaul Dixon, Rick Eder, Cindy Elliott, Heidi Ewing, La Sonia Forté, Marilyn & Al Gileczek, Mike Halpern, Lauren Holleman, Ann Hollenbeck, Kate Powers, Vanessa Keyes, Hillary LeVasseur, Michele Loveless, Megan Mazurek, Carolyn McFarlane, Kelly Muldoon, Tom Randall, AJ Scheidt, Ray Singer, Beckley Stover, Betsy & Woody Stover, Eileen Thacker, Lori Thomas, Angela Tirion, Tom Tocco, Kathy Wood and Tracy Wraight.

**THANK YOU and GRATITUDE to our Guest Speakers:** Julia Austin, Donna Doleman Dickerson, Rick Eder, Drake Kalita, Renee Kalita, AJ Lewis, Danielle Pitzer, Kailyn Tosto and the Overweg Family.

### Children's Grief Awareness Month – Wrap-Up



Throughout the month of November, we highlighted our support of children and teens who are grieving. Grief impacts many different parts of a child or teen. It can change how they act, their emotions, how they hang out with friends and family, or even how their bodies feel. The graphics above provide a reminder of what a child, a middle schooler or a teen who is grieving may be thinking and feeling during their grief and healing journey. ♥ #BecauseGrief

### 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

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

We love reaching out to our community, AND inviting our community into our Home for Healing Hearts! ♥ We recently welcomed **UTEC** into our safe, dedicated, healing space so their employees could see where AND how our peer grief support programs make a positive impact throughout our community!

Thank you **UTEC** for providing this time and space for your team! ♥ **BE. LIKE. UTEC.** If you'd like to bring your team to a "Company" Tour of the Heart, please reach out to **Lindsay Clark**, Director of Development at [lclark@elesplace.org](mailto:lclark@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2220 to learn more today!



## Grant Funders Supporting Ele's Place Ann Arbor

Thank you to the **Speckhard-Knight Foundation** and the **J.F. Ervin Foundation** for presenting us with impactful grant awards to support our ongoing general operating needs. These unrestricted grants are so important for our regular day-to-day needs – so grateful! ♥

Thank you to the **Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation** for presenting us with an impactful grant award the help fund Ele's Group, our peer grief support program! Working in partnership with school clinical staff to provide 8-week peer support groups in many area schools, we strive to remove barriers and meet grieving students where they are – at school! ♥

Together we make it happen! ♥

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](mailto:lclark@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2220.

## Community Partners & Friends GIVE BACK



Thank you to **Orangetheory Fitness Ann Arbor** for choosing us as the Charity Check-In beneficiary for the month of August! ♥ Because of your "check in" fundraising, we were

thankful to receive a check for over \$500! ♥



Sending lots of gratitude to this wonderful group of **Thomson Reuters** employees! ♥ Our Home for Healing Hearts was ready for a fall clean-up

and you made it happen for us - job well done by all! ♥



Thank you to **The Write Touch by Leyla** for hosting a generous shop for a cause give back fundraiser on Children's Grief Awareness Day, and thank you to everyone who came out to shop! ♥

We're very grateful that 20% of proceeds (\$1,000+) were donated back to us! ♥



Thank you to all the **American Motorsport Association** racers who got together online in September to participate in the 2022 **CARE4KIDS200** race! ♥

We were honored to be chosen as one of the beneficiaries of this event, and to have Doug Wysocki present us with a \$1,000 check! ♥

In honor of Children's Grief Awareness Month,

Hugs to the **Hatch Stamping Company**



**Chelsea State Bank** dedicated its Blue Jeans for Charity donation drive to supporting the grieving children, teens and their families we serve! ♥ Thank you to our community partner for

presenting us with a \$1,350 check! ♥



employees who "voted" for us when they chose the beneficiary of their company-wide softball tournament this year! ♥ We were so grateful to be presented with a check for over \$2,000! ♥



Thank you to **Rock Paper Scissors, Ferne Boutique, Thyme & Honey, Third Wheel Mobile Bar and Olive's Bloombox** ♥ for hosting the HAP-HAP-HAPPIEST Holiday Cocktail Party at **Studio**

in November! What an incredible evening of connection, laughter and holiday cheer! We were thrilled to be named the beneficiary of the event, and to be presented with a check for \$4,300! ♥



Thank you to the law firm of **Hickey Hauck Bishoff Jeffers & Seabolt PLLC (HHBJS)**! ♥ During the month of November – Children's Grief Awareness Month – they hosted awareness event

for the HHBJS TEAM and their clients! We were grateful for the donations of \$1,500 donated from this event! ♥



Thank you **Tracy Wraight** for serving Ele's Place Ann Arbor as a peer grief support group volunteer facilitator & Community Board Member, AND for celebrating her November birthday with a Facebook

fundraiser! ♥ This beautiful human and those who celebrated her with a donation raised over \$190! ♥



Thank you to **Taybor Pepper**, the San Francisco 49ers long snapper, for highlighting Ele's Place with his My Cause My Cleats during the football game on Sunday, 12/4! We're so grateful! ♥ We can't wait for Taybor and his Ele's Place cleats to visit during the off season!



Thank you to all the **Hot Rods Motorcycle Awareness & Suicide Prevention Foundation** members (AND family & friends) who gathered for the annual Christmas Party at American Legion

Post 268! ♥ We were honored to be chosen as one of the beneficiaries of this event, and to be presented a \$1,000 check! ♥



Thank you **My Urban Toddler** ♥ for hosting a wonderful shop for a cause give back fundraiser on Children's Grief Awareness Day! Thank you to everyone who came out to shop – we're so grateful that 20% of proceeds (\$500) were donated back to Ele's Place Ann Arbor! ♥



ON SALE NOW!! It's. Holiday. Cocktail. Time. ♥ Add this FESTIVE canned cocktail to your shopping list – the Ele's Place Ann Arbor "Cranberry Cinnamon Sour"! THANK YOU to our community partner, **Ann Arbor Distilling Company (A2DC)**, for GIVING BACK to us AGAIN! ♥ Order online and schedule your pickup (curbside pickup is offered too!) at A2DC (220 Felch St., Ann Arbor, MI. Order Ele's Place Ann Arbor "Cranberry Cinnamon Sour Cocktail" here: <https://www.toasttab.com/annarbordistilling/v3#d6c58b080-48d4-4c30-a6cd-d76d7f54fe00de400cf24-69a5-4257-aea1-6fc498200f3b>

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](mailto:sbodner1@elesplace.org) or 734.929.6640, Ext. 2221.

## Ele's Place Ann Arbor Spotlight

Congratulations to the entire **Ele's Place Ann Arbor Clinical Program Staff**, led by **Meghan Thiel, LSMW**, Associate Program Director, for successfully completing the Fall 2022 Volunteer Training



Program. ♥

Thank you to ZingTrain for leading our **Ele's Place Ann Arbor TEAM** through an amazing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) training session in October! We are committed to creating a safe and welcoming space that honors all races, ethnicities, gender identities & expressions, sexual orientations, socio-economic backgrounds, ages, religions and abilities! ♥ Stay tuned for more about our DEI journey!

Congratulations to the entire **Ele's Place Ann Arbor Development Staff**, led by **Stacey Bodner**, Events Coordinator, and **Lindsay Clark**, Director of Development, for hosting the amazing Healing Hearts Society Fundraising Breakfast in October! ♥

In October & November 2022, we welcomed two new members to our Community Board. Welcome **Doug Barber** (Rehmann Wealth Management), and **Michael Spath** (Kapnick Insurance)! ♥ We look forward to working with both of you, and benefitting from your contributions as Board members.

Thank you to **Bree Arvai**, Branch Director, **Gail Hullstrung**, Office & Building Administrator and **Ele's Place Headquarters** for making sure our accessible doors front doors now have automated openers! ♥ We were so thrilled to be able to install electric openers - with just one touch of a button, the west side entrance door and vestibule door open and close automatically. This allows easy access and exit for everyone into and out of our Home for Healing Hearts. ♥

Thank you to **Hannah Brown, LMSW, KaDerrick Robinson, LLMSW** and **Meghan Thiel, LMSW** for reaching out into our community and recently presenting to: Network 180, Saline High School, University of Michigan School of Social Work and Ypsilanti Rotary.

On November 17, 2022, Children's Grief Awareness Day, Ele's Place Ann Arbor **Staff, Volunteers & Clinicians** wore **BLUE** to honor and support children and teens who are grieving. Thank you for making a big difference in young lives carrying such a large loss. ♥

On December 12, 2022, the teams at Ele's Place Branches in Ann Arbor, Flint, Grand Rapids and Lansing welcomed **Jennifer Wolfe Howard** as the new President/CEO of Ele's Place, Inc., commonly referred to as Ele's Place Headquarters. ♥

Thank you to the generous **community of supporters** who purchased items on our Amazon WISH LIST! These items are useful, helpful and needed for our evening and school-based grief support programs, and in the the office and around the building. [CLICK HERE](#) to view our Amazon WISH LIST. ♥

On December 31st, we will bid farewell to **Mike Halpern** in his role as an Ele's Place Ann Arbor Community Board member. Mike has served on the Community Board since 2015, and for the past two years, he has served as the Chair. Mike also serves on the Ele's Place Governing Board, currently as Chair. ♥ We know Mike won't be far from the action, and will always be a forever friend of Ele's Place Ann Arbor. Mike, and his wife Kelly, will continue to be Healing Hearts Society members, dedicated advocates for the grieving children and teens we serve, and volunteer facilitators for our peer grief support groups. Thank you, Mike! ♥

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!](#)

Ele's Place is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

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Ele's Place is committed to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.  
TOGETHER WE ARE BETTER



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