



FROM A KITCHEN TABLE
TO A NEW HOME

OURHOUSE
at

30
Years

2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

OUR HOUSE *belongs* TO ALL OF US

In the late 1980's, I worked at the live-in hospice at Cedars Sinai. One day, I asked Dr. Robert Taub, the hospice director, to come and look out the window with me. Standing at the window, we watched one of our family members, who had just suffered the death of their loved one, walk out in front of the hospital and just stand there. Alone.

This person lost more than their loved one that day. Leaving the hospice, they also lost their immediate network of support: everyone who had shared their experience. Dr. Taub and I felt this profound sense of loss, and we realized at that moment that there needed to be a place for people who were grieving to go and share with others who understood the experience. They needed a home, a comfortable place to find healing.

Dr. Taub turned to me and said, "It's your job, Joey. I'm here for you, go for it." And I did.

"Their House"? No, **"Our House"...**It belongs to all of us.



Jo-Ann

Jo-Ann Lautman, Founder

A Letter from our BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GREETINGS! We are delighted to present OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center's 2021-2022 Annual Report, which celebrates the stories and accomplishments made possible by your tremendous generosity and confidence in our work.

We have you to thank for helping us fulfill our Mission to provide the community with grief support services, education, resources, and hope, especially in these uncertain times. Your passion and commitment to supporting grieving children, teens, adults, and families across Los Angeles have moved us closer to achieving our Vision of a world where grief is embraced, understood, and respected. For this, we are deeply grateful.

OUR HOUSE is committed to providing inclusive grief support to meet the needs of our diverse community. We are honored to highlight a few of the recent ways we have increased access to essential grief resources in Los Angeles County.

Grief support groups are now back in person at our Woodland Hills and new West Los Angeles centers. We are thrilled to welcome home group members and volunteers!

A new, **online-only grief support** program, informed by our pandemic response, will be launched in January 2023. This expansion will help many griever with transportation, work, or childcare challenges access our services.

Redesigned grief support groups for children and teens will give young griever better tools to navigate their grief, and their guardians will have an easier schedule to help balance after-school activities and transportation.

Thanks to a **new partnership with the Department of Mental Health**, more Spanish-speaking griever across Los Angeles County now have access to free grief education and support.

And finally, we continue to **advance our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)** goals with expert consultants to evaluate our programs and improve the experience of our diverse community of griever, volunteers, and staff.

Together, we have achieved so much with you over the past 30 years as OUR HOUSE grew from a small group of volunteers around a kitchen table to a national leader in bereavement services. **We cannot move into the next 30 without you!**

We hope that this Annual Report, with its powerful, true stories from alumni in our community, will illustrate the accomplishments and impact of your partnership with OUR HOUSE and show all that is possible when we work together to change lives.



Jory Goldman
Board Chair



Julie Miele
Executive Director

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Centering

our work on the people we serve, OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center staff sat down with a few of our alumni to learn more about how their experiences with grief support groups and the OUR HOUSE community helped them find hope and healing.

Interviews have been edited for length and clarity.



“Not everyone grieves in the same way, but it was nice to have methods that everyone could use.”

EREN

“Littles” Alum

Being in group was very helpful because all the people there were very nice to each other, and everyone was very welcoming. It was more like a community. Everyone had this one specific shared experience, so it was very homey. It was really easy to talk to everyone and nice that OUR HOUSE brought this specific community together – people who may not have this type of support in everyday life could receive it here. Not everyone grieves in the same way, but it was nice to have methods that everyone could use.

Group made me realize that what I was going through was not as uncommon as I thought. It made me think of the death I experienced in a less horrible light. I would definitely recommend OUR HOUSE to a friend who was going through a similar time because I think everyone who experiences this should have some community that they can always go back to at the end of the day – that can teach them that you’re not alone and that there’s always something you can do to deal with your grief and feelings.

I’ve learned that grieving isn’t a bad thing. It’s taught me how to cope with all these bad things that have happened. Being in group didn’t just teach me how to cope with a parent’s death, it also taught me good methods like if you’re having trouble with anxiety or if you’re sad in general. At the end of the day, you can use these techniques for anything.

MATT

“Littles” Alum, Teen Leader

When I first came to group, I was a shy little kid. As time went on, I matured, and I realized that the kids around me were all experiencing the same thing. I felt I was part of a community. I still remember all the activities we did with the group leaders and my teen leader.

Every time I went to group, it was a new experience, and I found new ways to deal with my grief. When dealing with tough times, having someone around you that is also dealing with those times makes you feel less alone. The community space was just so beneficial to my grieving process and everything that I was going through – I could talk freely and would feel comfortable and not judged because I knew that the kids around me were all experiencing the same thing. That process opened my eyes and allowed me to experience my emotions and let them come out instead of keeping them inside.

“The beauty of grief is not just sadness and anger. It also comes with the happiness of the memories that you had.”



My OUR HOUSE group completely changed the way I see things. It taught me that you can still experience all those grieving emotions and learn how to handle them. Those two years being part of a group, knowing that every time I went that I would overcome a new boundary in my grief, changed my life. The beauty of grief is not just sadness and anger. It also comes with the happiness of the memories that you had: for me with my father.

At the Run for Hope, I still see my teen leader and group leaders—the people that really changed my life. It is an amazing experience that I look forward to every year. My teen leader was very, very, very important to me, someone I looked up to because he also experienced being in group. Now I am a teen leader, and I want to be that person for the kids who are in my group. I know that if these kids stay dedicated and come to group, their lives will be changed for the better.

Grief Support

CHILD & ADOLESCENT PROGRAMS



In-House Grief Support Groups

Grief support groups for “littles” (elementary), “middles” (middle school), and “teens” (high school) at our centers in West Los Angeles and Woodland Hills, offered online between April 2020 and July 2022. All group fees slide down to \$1.

“We just wanted to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you have done for our son. He really loved going each week, and we noticed a significant change in his willingness to talk about his feelings since he started going to Grief Group. Thanks so much for the work you do. It really made a difference to our whole family.”

180

Number of children and teens who received grief support through our centers.

Grief Support Groups at School

Free school-based grief support groups for elementary, middle, and high school students. Groups meet at school during the school day for ten weeks.

400

Number of children and teens who received grief support at 43 different schools across Los Angeles County, in two unified school districts and seventeen charter school systems.

Three Things that really helped me in group were:

- 1 Talking to others who have similar experiences
- 2 Finding different ways to express how I feel
- 3 Knowing what exactly I'm feeling

Three Things that really helped me in group were:

- 1 Be more open
- 2 Be more strong
- 3 learned from others and it's okay to cry.

14 Three Things that really helped me in group were:

- 1 Not to be shy
- 2 expressed my feelings.
- 3 Trust people.

15 Something I would change about group would be:

- 1 Nothing
- 2

181

Number of campers who received grief support at Camp Erin LA.

130

Number of guardians who received grief support at Camp Erin LA.

Camp Erin L.A. Grief Camp

Free grief camps for children and teens. Adapted to an in-person, one-day camp in December 2021, June 2022, and August 2022. A new Adult Camp was piloted to support on-site guardians with parallel programming.



“At Camp Erin, it was so powerful for my son to be with other teens who have lost a parent. They connected as a group and have a group chat established. When Monday came and they were still processing things, my son was able to tell me that all of them felt like taking a day off school. That simple sense of solidarity is priceless. I wish everyone who has lost a loved one could go through this. So meaningful and I am filled with gratitude for this experience.”

Family Support

Free workshops in English and Spanish to support and empower caregivers.



178

Number of caregivers who received grief support at workshops.

“I want to really thank OUR HOUSE for having this group and for helping all the other kids who also lost their parents. Attending group changed my feelings about grief.”



MIA

“Littles” & Camp Erin Alum

I was a bit shy when I first started group because it felt like everyone there already knew what to do. My group really helped me figure it all out because now I’m not that shy anymore. I loved my group at OUR HOUSE, and we have stayed in touch since it ended. We play lots of video games together and go to each other’s birthday parties.

I would like to say thank you so much to the teen leaders and group leaders who helped me cope and to all the kids I met there. I want to really thank OUR HOUSE for having this group and for helping all the other kids who also lost their parents. Attending group changed my feelings about grief.

KATY

Adult Widows Group

When my husband died, I had no great desire to share my grief, my tears, my sadness with a group of individuals that I had never met. Surprisingly, the group became a lifeline, if you will, for me. Gradually, that kicking and screaming turned into, “Yes, I’m looking forward to today’s get-together. Today’s call.” We created a bond. What we’ve been able to do is not just share the grief that we’ve gone through but also lots of things about us individually, our personalities.

We know that we can go to one another and discuss any problems we might have. Also, we laugh a lot. We really, really have a great time together and seriously know that we will all be in each other’s lives for the rest of our lives. Since our group ended, all nine of us have been in touch with each other frequently. We have dinners together; we celebrate each other’s birthdays; we have cocktails and Zoom calls. We have traveled together. We share a lot with each other.

“My group provided a wonderful sense of belonging. People understood how I felt, and in turn, I understood how they felt.”



Being a part of group changed my feelings about death. It is inevitable, but I’m not as afraid. I’ve learned to deal with it. I’ve learned to be able to share it. I understand that when feelings come over me or I hear a song or I smell an aroma or something reminds me of my late husband, I will get through this. My group provided a wonderful sense of belonging. People understood how I felt, and in turn, I understood how they felt.

If you are afraid, as I was, of sharing those feelings, sharing those tears, sharing the innermost part of you, don’t be, because the people in the group have experienced exactly what you’re experiencing and are probably the only ones who can really understand what you’ve gone through.

I will tell anyone who is experiencing grief and the loss of a loved one that OUR HOUSE is absolutely the place to go. You are going to meet people who share your suffering but have come through it, done well, and gone on with life.

Grief Support

ADULT | ENGLISH & SPANISH

In-House Grief Support Groups

Grief support groups for adults at our centers in West Los Angeles and Woodland Hills, and our co-location in Mid-City/Koreatown. Groups are age and relationship specific and were offered online between April 2020 and October 2022. All group fees slide down to \$1.



“It gave me hope that there is a life after the death of a loved one. In the beginning, I felt no hope and no joy. Now I see endless possibilities alongside my love for my deceased spouse, and I realize that those two feelings can coexist.”

1,187

Number of adults who received grief support through our centers.

“I’m incredibly grateful for my experience with Our House. I was in dire straits when I started the group. I didn’t have anyone to share my grief with. This group brought me such peace, clarity, insight, and warmth through the darkest, most difficult time of my life. I will always recommend Our House and grief counseling to anyone going through hardship.”



Spanish Satellite Program

Free grief support groups and workshops in Spanish that address culturally specific grief reactions within the Latinx community.



303

Number of adults who received grief support in Spanish.

“Sí, yo estoy muy agradecido por todo el apoyo que usted me brindaron y también doy gracias a las coordinadoras que tomaron el tiempo para nosotros. Mil gracias. Dios las bendiga.”

English Translation

“Yes, I am very grateful for all the support you gave me, and I also thank the coordinators who took the time for us. Thank you. God bless you.”

“Me dio confort. Me apoyaron con mis sentimientos y mi dolor a afrontar mi pérdida porque la gente que esta amo alrededor no saben exactamente lo que yo sentía y su apoyo ha sido fundamental a superar y no caer en depresión. Doy gracias a Dios por estos grupos.”

English Translation

“It gave me comfort. They supported me with my feelings and my pain to face my loss. My loved ones do not know exactly what I felt and this support has been fundamental to me overcoming and not falling into depression. I thank God for these groups.”



Sharing Grief. Finding Hope.

Alumni Stories

CAROL

Adult Widows Group

My husband died during COVID, when the traditions that normally accompany a death were gone. I couldn't have a funeral. I couldn't visit him in the hospital. He died alone.

Being in a group of people who had a similar experience—not just the death of a spouse but also grieving during the pandemic, when many of us were isolated and all alone—was a unique and affirming experience for all of us. My group was so supportive and so loving.

OUR HOUSE was exactly the community that I needed at that particular time. It was really meaningful. We were all going through the same thing and feeling alone. We were able to connect and share experiences. We actually call ourselves the “Solo Sisters.” We had our first meeting in person after five months on Zoom, and we were like giddy teenagers! The Solo Sisters have been meeting ever since.

I loved the dynamic of meeting everybody and hearing their stories. They were just different versions of my story. My group bonded in a way that I think is deep, and we'll be friends for life.

“There were some very heart-wrenching, heart-breaking times, but we also learned to laugh.”



I treasure that. These are women I never would have met, and we continue to support each other. It is a safe space. There were some very heart-wrenching, heartbreaking times, but we also learned to laugh.

You have given such an enormous gift to those of us who are left behind. I don't know what I would have done without the group. It was so comforting to be with people who have experienced the same things. I think one thing that OUR HOUSE does is recognize the significance of a human connection. Anybody who participates in it, donates money, volunteers, I can't thank you enough.

REBECCA

Grieving A Parent Group



“Connecting with others who are grieving was so healing.”

Group honestly exceeded all of my expectations. I joined during the pandemic, so it was online, but we all immediately bonded. At first, I definitely was a little weary of how much it was going to help, especially being online, but it really changed my entire grieving process.

I found a community. These were the first people I met who understood the experience of losing a parent so young. It feels like they all know my mom, the parent I lost. We actually all kept meeting every Wednesday after the group ended. We still talk about our parents and cook their favorite dishes at potlucks.

Connecting with others who are grieving was so healing. I remember after one group meeting I reached out to someone whose story resonated with me. We got lunch, and she's still one of my closest friends. Just having people in my life who I can always talk to and who get that experience just makes things so much easier.

I think that grief feels so isolating, but it's one of the most common things. We're all going to lose someone and having people who also lost someone close to them at a young age just made everything feel a lot better.

In making these very meaningful connections, I thought about my mom, and I think that she would be really happy that I found people who I can connect with on such a deep level. It really did give me some of the closest friends I will ever have, which is a rare experience, especially once you're out of high school and college.

Grief Support COMMUNITY

On-Site Grief Responses (OSGR)

Short-term grief support after a death in a school or business community. Free for public schools and sliding scale for businesses.



401

Number of adults and children who received grief support from OSGRs.



3,677

Number of professionals who participated in educational workshops.

Professional Education

Educational workshops for medical professionals and students, school support staff, therapists and mental health professionals, and clergy. Professionals learn clinical models and interventions to use in the places where they work.

“I think this session was really helpful in regard to both our personal and career lives. I really appreciated the safe and supportive environment that was created for us to share our personal stories. I wish all medical students and residents got this training. We didn’t get these sorts of reflections during our pre-clinical years. Having this skillset will help both the patient and physician handle situations appropriately and with utmost respect and empathy. OUR HOUSE is an amazing resource for our patients’ family members. All of our classmates should know about this.”

YOUR *passion* AND *generosity* WILL GIVE HOPE FOR THE NEXT 30 YEARS.

The creativity and transformative vision at that kitchen table 30 years ago is still driving OUR HOUSE Grief Support Center to expand, innovate, and find new ways to better support our large and diverse grieving community.

As we look to the next 30 years, we know that your passion and generosity will continue giving hope to griever and paving the way for OUR HOUSE to launch new grief support programs to expand our reach in high-need and under-resourced neighborhoods.

EXPANDING ONLINE GRIEF SUPPORT OPTIONS

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, OUR HOUSE quickly re-imagined our services online to continue delivering uninterrupted grief support to our community. We are now able to formalize and expand this digital infrastructure in pursuit of more accessible and inclusive grief support.

In January 2023, OUR HOUSE will launch a new Online Grief Support Program to serve adult griever who may struggle to travel to our centers due to geography, transportation challenges, and work or childcare schedules. This effort will directly remove barriers to receiving

grief support and is in alignment with our Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals. Online grief support groups will complement the in-person groups at our centers and provide more options for griever to choose their own path toward hope and healing at OUR HOUSE.





HELPING FAMILIES FIND HEALING TOGETHER

After 30 years of successfully providing grief support groups to children and teens at our centers, OUR HOUSE is envisioning new ways to make these groups even more accessible and impactful for our client families. We are proposing a radical expansion of our flagship Child & Adolescent Program to launch a new Family Grief Support Program that will:

- Combine all youth grief support groups to one night, creating a holistic, family model.
- Provide enough space to serve children, teens, and caregivers at the same time.

- Offer psychoeducational training and support for parents and guardians to increase positive family outcomes.

This program will significantly reduce challenges for caregivers who bring their children to our grief support groups. For example, a parent with three children ages 10, 13, and 15 would normally drive to our centers three times for each child to attend their group on different nights. This is further complicated by lack of access to public transportation in Los Angeles and scheduling conflicts for caregivers balancing work, school, and after-school commitments.

EXPANDING OUR REACH IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES

OUR HOUSE has been evaluating how we can strategically expand our services in high-mortality regions of Los Angeles County, such as South L.A. In 2019, South L.A. reported the second-highest mortality rate in L.A. County and the highest homicide rate, nearly two times higher than any other region. This need was magnified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which impacted the same neighborhoods that also experience increased mortality rates for homicide, suicide, drug overdose, heart disease, and cancer. COVID-19 related deaths were three times higher in high-poverty neighborhoods than in wealthier areas.

The time is now for OUR HOUSE to strengthen grief support services in South L.A. by:

- Opening a satellite site at a central human services hub in this region, which we identified with the JAG Institute in 2021 as a region with a very high unmet need for children's bereavement services.
- Training 12-15 MSW interns from local graduate programs each year to lead grief support groups at high-poverty schools, extending the reach of OUR HOUSE's School Program.
- Replicating OUR HOUSE's in-house grief support program by training community-based clinical staff to facilitate grief support groups under the supervision of OUR HOUSE's clinicians.

Expanding OUR HOUSE's grief support programs by extending our training and supervision models to new communities and community partners will pave the way for significant increases in the numbers of griever served as well as cost-effective replication of the OUR HOUSE Grief Support Program Model.



HOW YOUR SUPPORT WILL CHANGE LIVES

OUR HOUSE helps grievers navigate the journey from raw grief to reflection, acceptance, and hope. Right now, thousands of grievers across Los Angeles need our support.

WILL YOU HELP THEM?

THERE IS A GRIEF
CRISIS IN LOS ANGELES

34,000

Angelenos died from COVID-19. The Los Angeles homicide rate increased 31%. National overdose deaths increased 29%.

OUR HOUSE needs your help to meet this surging demand for grief support in our community. Requests for grief support have increased 300% since 2019 and an additional 8% this year alone.



WHAT YOUR GIFT FUNDS

- \$35 pays for one grief support group session for an individual in need.
- \$500 orients and places 5 new grievers with OUR HOUSE supportive grief programs
- \$1,000 enables 100 professionals to access grief medical education seminars to help the communities they serve find hope and healing through grief supportive care.
- \$3,000 provides On-Site Grief Response at 3 schools following a death in the community.
- \$5,000 funds a 10-week adult grief support group for adults grieving the death of a partner/spouse, child, sibling/parent, or close friend/relative.

HELP A CHILD IN GRIEF FEEL LIKE A KID AGAIN.

Experiencing the death of a loved one can be the most stressful event in a child's lifetime. When that child's grief is unsupported, it can undermine their sense of bonding and increase lifetime risk for chronic health problems, substance misuse, mental health issues, and job and family instability. It is critical that grieving children and teens have a safe space to express their grief, process difficult emotions, and find hope together.

WHAT YOUR GIFT FUNDS

- \$500 buys a year's worth of art kits for the Children's Program.
- \$5,000 provides 10 children and teens access to a 10-week grief support group at OUR HOUSE's two centers in West Los Angeles and Woodland Hills.
- \$10,000 enables 3 families to experience OUR HOUSE's three-day Camp Erin LA grief camp.
- \$15,000 facilitates OUR HOUSE partnering with 5 public schools to provide on-campus grief support to kids in grades K-12.



116,000

Number of children in Los Angeles County who are currently grieving the death of a parent or sibling.

**COVID-19 WAS THE
SECOND LEADING
CAUSE OF DEATH
FOR LOVED ONES AT
CAMP ERIN LA.**

1 in 19

Children in Los Angeles County will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18. This nearly doubles to 1 in 10 by age 25.

(Source: JAG Institute / CDC)



How Your Support Will Change Lives

ALIVIEMOS EL DOLOR. LET'S EASE THE PAIN.

In Los Angeles County, 49% of people identify as Hispanic/Latinx and Spanish is commonly spoken. Although cultural differences can impact how people grieve, there are very few grief support resources available to Spanish-speaking grievers.

WHAT YOUR GIFT FUNDS

- \$100 facilitates monthly translation, interpretation and other services to hundreds of Spanish-speaking individuals seeking grief support.
- \$1,000 provides 2 grief education workshops to 25 Spanish-speaking grievers across Los Angeles.
- \$5,000 enables 10 Spanish-speaking grievers to attend a 10-week grief support groups after the death of a partner/spouse, or close friend/relative.

“Pues que sigan ayudando a más personas que necesiten de sus servicios.”

English Translation

“Keep helping more people who need your services.”



67%

of children in California who lost a primary caregiver during the first fifteen months of the COVID-19 pandemic identified as Hispanic/Latinx

51%

of all reported COVID-19 deaths in L.A. County came from the Hispanic/Latinx community

90%

of students served by OUR HOUSE at schools last year identified as Hispanic/Latinx

2021-2022 OUR HOUSE GRANT PARTNERS

Gave Grievers Strength

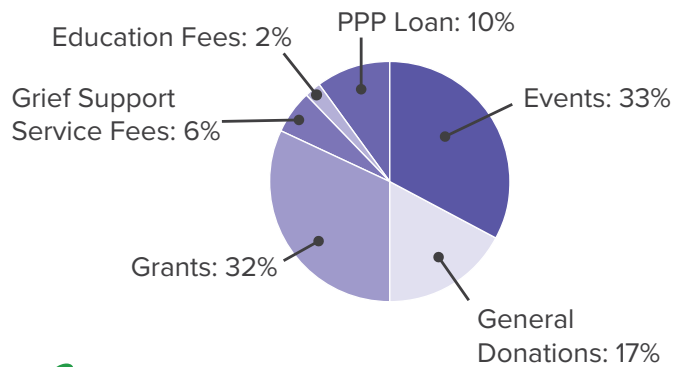
Adams Legacy Foundation
The Ahmanson Foundation
Armanino Foundation
Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund
Cedars-Sinai
City of Beverly Hills
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
Crail-Johnson Foundation
Eluna
Goodwin Family Memorial Trust
The Green Foundation
Hillside Memorial Park & Mortuary
Kars4Kids
L.L. Foundation for Youth
Leonard M. Lipman Charitable Fund
Los Angeles County Department
of Mental Health
Los Angeles Trial Lawyers' Charities
Marian and Pink Happ Fund
MDRT Foundation
Molina Family Foundation
Mount Sinai Memorial Parks & Mortuaries
New York Life
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Robert J. Keown Trust
Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Foundation
Rotary Club of Beverly Hills
Rotary Club of Santa Monica
Steven & Susan Cobin Family Foundation
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl
The Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation
Tower Cancer Research Foundation
USC Good Neighbors Campaign
Windsong Trust
Yabuki Family Foundation

HOW YOUR GENEROUS GIFTS ARE RECIEVED AND INVESTED

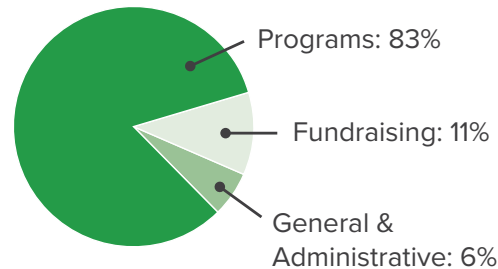
OUR HOUSE operates on a high-impact, low-cost model that maximizes your investment in our grief support programs. **83% of every dollar raised goes directly to serving grieving children, teens, adults, and families** in Los Angeles County.

We strategically raise funds and effectively put them to use to bring the greatest possible impact and support to griever across Los Angeles.

Income



Expense



of Volunteer Hours:

13,450

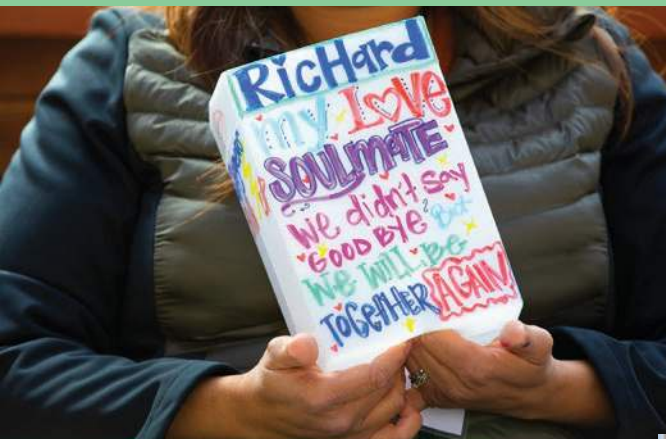




Finding Hope.



Sharing Grief.





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