THE TORCHBEARER
Monthly Newsletter

September 2020
UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND TRAUMA

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UNDERSTANDING GRIEF AND TRAUMA

Our theme for September is grief and trauma. According to the National Institute of Mental Health “a traumatic event is a shocking, scary, or dangerous experience that can affect someone emotionally and physically.” A traumatic loss complicates the grief process by presenting additional factors that are not present in other types of death. As an example, consider the pain of losing someone you love traumatically through homicide. A family member may have to uproot themselves and move out of their home out of concern for their safety. Fearing for safety is just one factor in traumatic losses that complicate the grieving process.

Roberta’s House (RH) Program Manager for Prince George’s County, Ms. Yolonda Nelson-Swain, has worked with many individuals (children and adults) who have experienced a traumatic loss. Most recently, she facilitated a group for adults who experienced a death due to COVID-19. “A death due to COVID-19 can be a traumatic loss. Family members cannot see or talk to loved ones who lay in a hospital bed fighting for the lives.” Ms. Nelson-Swain recalls one group member who had to watch their loved-one take their last breath through Facetime. Imagine the anguish of not being able to be at your loved-ones bedside. Imagine being the medical staff who held the phone so this person could see their loved-one as they died. Imagine all of the emotions one would feel being in this situation.

Roberta’s House is a safe place for expressing emotions brought on as a result of a traumatic loss. Participants are provided with resources to help them manage their grief and return to their lives. We recognize that a traumatic experience does not stop bills from being due. We understand that too often people have to suppress their feelings at work because they are expected to be courteous to customers when internally they are in excruciating pain. Parents ignore the desire to lay in bed all day and weep because they have to care for their children. Friends say they are “ok” when they are not, to prevent people from worrying about them.

On August 28, 2020, actor Chadwick Boseman died after a four-year battle with colon cancer. In that time, his acting career soared and he presented himself as if there was nothing wrong. One lesson we can draw from his life is that you never really know what someone is going through.

Grief and trauma can be well hidden. Through our peer support groups, Roberta’s House participants share their experiences which in turn creates a supportive network where people can heal together. We never want anyone to grieve alone. For more information about our programs and services, please visit our website: https://robertashouse.org, our social media pages @robertashousemd or contact our offices 410-235-6633 (Baltimore City) 301-880-5100 (Prince George’s County) Monday - Friday 9am -5pm.
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
ADULT PROGRAMS

H.O.P.E. PROGRAM

The Healing Ourselves through Peer Empowerment (HOPE) Program works with families who have experienced fetal or infant loss. This type of loss impacts the entire family and can put a strain on relationships. There are three components to this program all of which are now virtual: Home Visiting, Still A Mom (SAM) peer support group and their new component is Life After Loss peer support group. The support groups meet on Mondays from 5:30pm - 7:00pm using zoom from August 31st, 2020 - November 9, 2020.

Registration is required: http://bit.ly/StillaMomLifeAfterLoss
For more information, contact Program Manager Lorelle Moody at 410-235-6633.

Still a Mom
Part 1 of 2 virtual support groups for woman who’ve experienced a pregnancy or Infant loss within the last year.
Mondays
August 31 - November 9, 2020
5:30 PM to 7:00 PM

Life After Loss
Part 2 of 2 virtual support groups for woman who’ve experienced a pregnancy or Infant loss within the last year.
Mondays
August 31 - November 9, 2020
5:30 PM to 7:00 PM
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
ADULT PROGRAMS

UN TIEMPO DE COMPARTIR

Tiempo de compartir es un grupo de apoyo para adultos mayores de 18 años que han experimentado la pérdida de un ser querido. El grupo de apoyo sirve de guía y apoyo a los sobrevivi-entes, ayudándoles a entender el proceso de duelo y ofreciendo información para ayudarles a superar el proceso de pérdida. La duración de este grupo es de 8 semanas.

A TIME OF SHARING

A Time of Sharing is an adult peer support group. For the fall, there will be two groups. Group 1 will run on Thursdays at 6:30pm beginning on September 10, 2020 and is individuals who have experienced any type of loss. To register please call 410-235-6633. Group 2 will be held on Mondays at 6pm beginning September 14, 2020 for individuals who’ve experienced the loss of someone related to the COVID-19 Coronavirus. To register please call 301-880-5100. All sessions are through Zoom.
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
ADULT PROGRAMS

M.O.L.D.

Men of Loyalty & Dignity (MOLD) is a peer support group specifically for men. This group is designed to help men navigate through their grief journey and provides them with a safe place to share their grief experiences. Group runs on Mondays from September 14th, 2020 - November 16th, 2020. To register please visit https://bit.ly/MOLDMensGroup

How Do Men Grieve?
A Virtual Men’s Grief Support Group

*Open to all Baltimore area men. Special invitation to our brothers in the 21217 area

Each Monday Between September 14th - November 16th

6 PM - 8 PM

For more information please contact Adam Johnson (410)235-6633
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
ADULT PROGRAMS

HOMICIDE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

The Homicide Survivor's Advocacy Program hosts peer support groups for adult survivors of homicide called the Homicide Transformation Project. Prior to the pandemic, this peer support group was held in three locations. Those three groups will now being held virtually at various times throughout the week. Sessions are held through the video conference application Zoom. Groups begin the week of September 8th and are held on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Contact Doreen Toran at 443-986-3278 dtoran@robertashouse.org for more information.
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
FAMILY PROGRAMS

RAYS OF HOPE

The Homicide Survivors Advocacy Program sponsors a group for families call Rays of Hope. This family peer support group is for families with children ages 2 - 17 who experienced a death due to homicide. For the Fall, the program will run virtually on Wednesdays from September 9th, 2020 - November 18th, 2020 from 6pm - 8pm. Contact Doreen Toran at dtoran@robertashouse.org for more information.

Rays of Hope
A Virtual Support Group for families who have experienced a loss due to homicide
Each Wednesday from September 9th - November 18th
6 PM - 8 PM
For more information please contact Doreen Toran at (410)235-6633
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
FAMILY PROGRAMS

FAMILIES HEALING TOGETHER
Families Healing Together is a peer support group for families with children ages 5-17. This group will be offered virtually on Tuesdays beginning September 15th, 2020. The children will meet separately from the adults at 4:45pm - 5:45pm. The children will break into groups by age to ensure the grief support they receive will meet them in their stage of development. The adults will meet from 6pm-8pm. Contact Adam Johnson at 410-235-6633 for more information.

FAMILIES HEALING TOGETHER
Virtual Grief Support Group
Each Tuesday from Sept. 15th - Nov. 17th
Kiddles, Middles, and Teens: 4:45 PM - 5:45 PM
Adults: 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

For more information please contact Adam Johnson at (410) 235-6633
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020
YOUTH PROGRAMS

VIRTUAL CAMP ERIN

Camp Erin Baltimore is a 3-day, 2-night overnight camp that is hosted by Roberta's House each summer. Due to safety concerns for our campers and staff this year's camp was held virtually August 13th - 15th, 2020. Plans are being made to hold another camp experience this school year. For more information email camperin@robertashouse.org.

GOOD GRIEF AND GROWING THROUGH LOSS

Good Grief and Growing Through Loss are our two school-based programs. With students returning to school virtually, our school-based team will also provide grief support to students virtually. School-based coordinators will use a video conference application to join a virtual classroom. The entire class of students will receive grief support and education. For more information, contact us at 410-235-6633.
VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING
AUGUST 2020 - DECEMBER 2020

YOUTH PROGRAMS

CHANGING THE GAME

Changing the Game is a peer support group for teens. Using the video conference application, zoom, teens from all over the city, meet together with our youth services team. The teens receive grief support and education. They also do fun activities like virtual talent shows and virtual parties with a DJ who performs live. Contact our youth services team for more information 410-235-6633.
VOLUNTEER AT ROBERTA'S HOUSE

Our volunteers support everything we do. From supporting our office staff with administrative duties, to assisting with facilitating groups. We would not be able to do all that we do without the support from our volunteers. Our next volunteer training will be held virtually this month. The training will take place for 3 hours daily from September 14 - September 18, 2020. If you are interested in being an RH volunteer sign up for the training. https://bit.ly/RHVolunteerTraining For additional information please contact Kelli Brooks at 410-235-6633.
FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

GIFTS FROM THE HEART
Gifts from the Heart is a campaign that will preserve your legacy for generations to come. The Tree of Life will be displayed in the lobby of the new Center. Visit our website to place an order for a leaf, butterfly or stone. https://robertashouse.org/tree-of-life/

GIANT GROCERY BAGS
We have a partnership with Giant Food Stores. If you purchase a reusable shopping bag from the Giant location at 6620 Reisterstown Road, Baltimore, MD, Roberta’s House will receive a $1 donation. For more information email donations@robertashouse.org
Dear Friends,

We are in the home stretch of the Capital Campaign for the new Roberta’s House. We have secured 95% of the building’s funding, and the construction itself is over half-way finished. We expect to complete the new Center in November 2020. At the same time, Roberta’s House operations and grief support programming have continued through-out construction and COVID-19 isolation. With many business and families facing financial challenges, we have seen a decrease in some institutional support. While we are happy to report that our recent Grab Crabs & Go fundraiser was a success, raising over $10,000 to support Roberta’s House children and family programs, this is far short of what we expected from our annual Crab Feast. We also had to cancel our 2020 Radiothon that was due to kick off our Annual Fund Drive. Over the next four months, we must raise an additional $100,000 from individual donors like you. We know, 2020 has been a challenging year for us all and this is especially true for our Baltimore and Prince Georges County staff and clients. There have been more than 218 homicides in Baltimore City and over 461 deaths from the coronavirus. In Prince Georges County, the statistics for deaths due to the pandemic is even more alarming since the beginning of the pandemic there have been 793 coronavirus deaths. As the need and demand for our services grow, we have sustained our staffing despite decreases in funding. We are committed to being there for all who need us, but we need your help to make this possible. Please consider contributing, $25, $250 or $2,500 today and help us reach our goal of $25,000 this month. Your gift of any amount will help us keep our commitment to our clients and our staff and volunteers. I hope you know how much we appreciate you. Send a message of hope to those who are grieving by contributing. Give today https://robertashouse.org/give/

—Annette March-Grier, President
REAL TALK LIVE is a series of live and recorded conversations facilitated by our staff to educate the community about various aspects of grief and to provide information about the programs and services we offer.

@robertashousemd
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See our website for opportunities to support our organization.