

Neighbors



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100+ Women Who Care supports grieving children

BY ANGIE RAMIREZ
Progress Guest Writer

An estimated six million children in the U.S. will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18. In Arizona, approximately one in 10 children will experience one of these significant deaths.

Childhood grief often does not present the same way as grief does in adults. A child may be laughing and playing one moment, crying the next, and back to playing within moments.

While outwardly it may sometimes seem like the child is 'okay' and does not need support, they are dealing with a range of emotions that they will need loving support to work through.

Bouts of anger and behavioral issues may occur as well, and often can be triggered by unrelated, insignificant frustrations or occurrences.

It is important that the adults supporting grieving children have some understanding of how child grief is unique and how to support a grieving child while also dealing



Celebrating the donation by 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun to the New Song Center are, from left, Kim Tarnopolski, Cheryl Thomas, Debbie Shumway, Angie Ramirez, Libby Murphy and Stacia Ortega. (Courtesy of Angie Ramirez)

with their own grief.

New Song Center for Grieving Children, a program under Hospice of the Valley, provides this essential support to both grieving children and their caretakers. New Song is

held at locations throughout the Valley. Groups meet every other week and provide a loving, safe, supportive space for children and their caregivers.

Children are grouped together by similar age and adult caregiver groups meet simultaneously, all led by volunteer facilitators. While adult groups may lean more towards discussions, child groups regularly engage in play and art to help children process complex emotions they may have difficulty expressing verbally.

Group nights also include shared family time with all facilitators and families meeting together for pizza before breaking off into groups. The group nights conclude with all the facilitators and families coming back together to share closing songs as all participants hold hands in a large circle, ending the night connected as a community.

To accommodate families throughout the Valley, New Song has several locations for their grief support groups, including central Phoenix, north Phoenix, Peoria,

open to any child, teen, and young adult in our community and provides all their services free of charge.

One of New Song's most extensive programs is their family grief support groups

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Scottsdale, and Gilbert.

New Song also offers Enduring Ties specifically for families whose child has died and Luz Del Corazon for Spanish-speaking or bilingual families.

The benefits and support each of these groups offers families is invaluable by helping parents, caretakers, and children grieve and heal and support one another as they navigate devastating losses in their lives.

In addition to family grief support groups, New Song Center also offers community support which includes campus support groups at Valley schools, community workshops for schools, businesses, medical and faith groups, and comprehensive training that teaches skills to facilitate support groups.

Additional grief support resources and activities can be found at hov.org/our-care/grief-support/new-song-center-for-grieving-children.

In October, the mission of New Song Center for Grieving Children was shared with the 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun group in Scottsdale. The members were moved by her presentation and selected the charity to receive their quarterly donations totaling \$15,875.

“We are deeply grateful to 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun for their generous donation to New Song Center for Grieving Children. This beautiful gift helps us provide compassionate grief support

at no charge and heal the hearts of children and families experiencing the loss of a loved one. Thank you for such kindness and generosity,” said Stacia Ortega, director of bereavement services for Hospice of the Valley.

Since the chapter’s inception in 2015, 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun has donated over \$1.4 Million to local charities. To learn more or to register for their upcoming giving circle on Jan. 22: 100wwcvalleyofthesun.org. Guests are welcome. 