

**CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET**

Date 12/16/2021

**Contact Information**

Organization Name: Peter's Place  
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Website: www.petersplaceonline.org  
Year Incorporated: 2000  
FEIN: 23-3062819

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Board Chair Name: William G. Kiesling, Esq.  
Board Chair Approval (check here): X   
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**Organization Information:**

**Field/s of Interest:**

Arts, Culture & Humanities       Environment/Animal Welfare       Education  
 Health       Human Services       Religion

**Mission:** To provide safe and supportive environments for grieving children and families and to act as a community resource to foster understanding of the effects of death and grief.

**Geographic Area Served** (If not all of Chester County, specify primary Chester County regions served):

Peter's Place serves the five-county Philadelphia area and Camden, NJ.

**Describe Population Served & Annual Number of People Served:** Peter's Place serves grieving children, ages K-12, and the families and professionals who support them. Many are navigating life after the loss of a parent or significant person in their lives; all are navigating loss and uncertainty brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. Annually, we serve approximately 1,500 individuals.

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|---|---|
| <u>Annual Budget</u> \$ <u>863,719</u>            | <u>5</u> # of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff |
| <u>75</u> % of budget for program expenses        | <u>19</u> # of Board Volunteers               |
| <u>16</u> % of budget for administrative expenses | <u>135</u> # of Active Non-Board Volunteers   |
| <u>9</u> % of budget for fundraising expenses     | <u>1,800+</u> # of Volunteer Hours            |
| <small>100 % total</small>                        |   |

**Top 3-5 funding sources:** Helen's Hope (\$30,000), NY Life Grief Reach (\$20,000), Connelly Foundation (\$10,000)

**Is this grant proposal for:** Capacity Building  or General Operating ?

**If Capacity Building Proposal, the focus is:**

Mission, Vision & Strategy     Governance & Leadership     Partnerships & Collaborations  
 Fundraising, Development & Marketing     Technology    Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Grant Amount Requested from the Community Foundation:** \$ 10,000

**Proposal Summary:** The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating the challenges of bereaved children and creating an environment of uncertainty, isolation, and loss in which we all must navigate. Today, our bereavement services have never been more important. Peter's Place is addressing the increasingly complex emotional needs of a community in grief, mitigating the risk of poor outcomes, and building more resilient communities. Your investment will ensure quality programming as we strive to meet increased need and demand.

**ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW** After the sudden death of Peter Morsbach at age 10, family and friends were disheartened to find few support options for grieving families, particularly for families unable to afford care. In loving memory of Peter, Peter's Place was launched in 2001 with a ***mission to provide safe and supportive environments for grieving children and families and to act as a community resource to foster understanding of the effects of death and grief.*** Since our opening, Peter's Place has provided direct support to over 10,000 grieving children and adult caregivers and indirect support to tens of thousands in the five-county Philadelphia area and Camden, NJ. Programming includes peer support groups for children, young adults, and caretakers as well as school and community-based education, training, and grief support services, particularly in under-resourced communities where children and families might otherwise lack essential grief support.

Peter's Place is a member of the Greater Philadelphia Grief Collaborative, along with Uplift Center for Grieving Children (Philadelphia), Center for Loss and Bereavement (Skipack), Safe Harbor (Willow Grove), and A Haven (Exton). The group was originally formed to participate in Judi's House/JAG Institute's Childhood Bereavement Changemaker Collaborative (CBC), a project that resulted in a 2021 detailed report and analysis about grief in our community. As the lead organization of CBC, Peter's Place continues to meet monthly with the Greater Philadelphia Grief Collaborative to share insights, best practices, and information about the evolving need for grief support services across the Delaware Valley.

After 20 years of service, Peter's Place continues to have the distinct honor of being the only bereavement center in Delaware County and the first to offer school-based services in the greater Philadelphia area. We are uniquely qualified to address the needs of our community as the pandemic requires us to persevere through this unprecedented and challenging moment in our global history.

## **FUNDING REQUEST**

***Community Need and Programmatic Response:*** Childhood bereavement is a critical public health issue and is tragically misunderstood. Because children grieve differently from adults, their responses are not always apparent to their parents, teachers, or even their support professionals – children often grieve in isolation; some suffer devastating consequences from lack of appropriate support. The June 2021 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model (CBEM), developed by Judi's House/JAG Institute, reported that in our service area (Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties), a total of 38,700 children under 18 were currently bereaving the death of a parent or sibling, and an additional 34,800 children were predicted to experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18, representing 1 in 12 children in our service area. As aggregated by the New York Times, as of 12/12/2021, our five-county service area has experienced 10,059 unforeseen deaths since March 2020 because of COVID-19. An April 2021 study published in JAMA Pediatrics reports that as of February 2021, an estimated 37,300 to 43,000 children aged 17 and under have lost at least one parent to COVID-19; a 17.5% to 20.2% increase in parental bereavement absent COVID-19 – and these rates are still rising.

In the wake of the pandemic, Peter's Place has a unique calling to be a primary resource for a community in grief. As the pandemic persists, we remain an important resource as children and families continue to process the direct and indirect losses of the past 21 months and cope with an uncertain future. In response to the needs of our community, Peter's Place is advancing our mission through collaborative programming with schools, youth serving programs, and community organizations across the Delaware Valley with revised programming in both virtual and in-person environments. Prior to the pandemic, all our programs were designed to respond to the emotional needs of children and families who are experiencing grief resulting from death. Given the ways in which the pandemic has exacerbated grief, our programming now includes addressing secondary grief and non-death related grief. Services include:

Onsite Groups: Peer support groups for children ages 4-17 are provided to help guide a supported grief process. Parent/caretaker groups run alongside each of our children's groups to support family well-being. "Ryan's Hope", a specialized group for parents who have lost a child to substance abuse is also offered.

School Based Services: Following the safety guidelines and restrictions of our partner schools, comprehensive grief support and education is provided, including student groups, postvention services upon the death of a student or teacher, and comprehensive professional development training programs to guide school personnel as they work towards meeting the emotional needs of their entire school community. Professional development has skyrocketed as the effects of the pandemic have taken their toll. In FY2021, we trained a total of 648 professionals to effectively support bereaved children, compared to 256 professionals in FY2020.

69% of our partnering schools serve a student population where at least 50% qualify for the free/reduced lunch program and 59% of our partnering schools serve a student population where 50% or more are BIPOC. Chester County partner schools where we've provided school groups, professional development, and/or postvention services have recently included Collegium Charter School, West Chester East High School, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Cyber Charter School, General Wayne Elementary School, Pierce Middle School, and Achievement Cyber Charter School.

Youth Outreach Services: Through unique collaborations with youth-serving programs, Peter's Place addresses specific emotional needs of bereaved children. For example, facilitating a 5-week live virtual group with Child Guidance Resource Center, for children ages 7-12, to address grief responses that may be creating educational barriers. We are building a similar partnership with Philadelphia Outward Bound School and are working with Chester Community Coalition to build our capacity for work with schools, such as Mastery Charter School, to address grief resulting from gun violence.

Professional Development and Adult Outreach Services: To support the development of a resilient community and acknowledge how COVID-19 is impacting grief, Peter's Place expanded our professional development and adult outreach services. We are now providing support services for service providers like VNA (Visiting Nurse Association) of Philadelphia Hospice Division, offering community outreach and education via social media, and presenting a new, on-going, 6-series workshop for bereaved adults.

***Objectives and Impact:*** Peter's Place is committed to being a trusted source of community care – our primary goal is to ensure that no child ever grieves alone. Children and youth often feel socially isolated and disconnected from family, peers, and their community, when those connections are exactly what they need to heal.

Your \$10,000 investment will help us meet the following objectives in pursuit of our goal:

1. Maintain the same level of quality care through remote and virtual service models
2. Serve 325 youth through school and outreach services
3. Expand professional development services to support and guide the professionals who care for youth
4. Provide community education on the effects of death and grief and the many forms of grief, and in doing so, broaden community awareness of Peter's Place so that families, schools, and professionals alike are aware of the services we provide free of charge
5. Accomplish these service offerings while maintaining financial sustainability

Peter's Place measures program impact against specific risk factors for bereavement that lead to poor outcomes, such as reduced self-esteem, fear, loneliness, academic problems, and difficulty talking about grief. Children self-report on a survey developed in-house and administered at the end of services. This evaluation tool helps us measure change over time and provides insight about our impact.

We expect youth participants will report similar outcomes as our previous participants, indicating improved outcomes:

- 84% feel better after group
- 80% feel better about themselves
- 78% feel less scared
- 62% feel less alone
- 68% can focus better in school
- 80% enjoy spending time with friends
- 51% say it is easier to talk about the death
- 58% say it is easier to talk to family about the death

We are encouraged by these outcomes and the ability of our services to advance a healthy grief process, particularly in light of the current mental health impact of the pandemic. As COVID-19 deaths continue to rise, alongside mounting non-death losses, bereavement support for children and families across the nation is paramount. The urgent need for comprehensive grief support led a coalition of bereavement groups, including Hospice Foundation of America, Funeral Service Foundation, and Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, among other groups, specialists, and researchers, to submit a letter to President Biden in February of this year, urging him to prioritize funding for far-reaching bereavement support, including direct therapeutic services, professional training to provide therapeutic services, and public education about grief and coping strategies. These are the exact services Peter's Place provides to the five-county Philadelphia area. With these interventions in place, potential long-term and devastating consequences of grief can be mitigated.

***Your Support is Critical Today:*** Like non-profits across the nation, Peter's Place experienced increased operational expenses because of the pandemic, including new costs for technology and program supplies that are necessary for service delivery in a virtual environment. The opportunity to receive COVID-specific funding through foundations, corporations, and in the form of two PPP loans helped us bridge the extra expenses. However, we have concerns that the COVID-specific funding we received will not be available again for FY2022 and individual giving may dip after a COVID-inspired increase we experienced in FY2021, creating a more immediate impact on our FY2022 budget. Further, prior to the pandemic, our long-range plan included a celebration of our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, including hosting a black-tie fundraising event. Long-range budgeting expectations were built with these fundraising activities in mind. The event will take place, but it has been postponed a full year from its original date and will be greatly reduced in size, impacting our projected revenue.

As the pandemic lingers children are losing parents, grandparents, family, and other significant people in their lives at an astonishing pace. In addition to these deaths, children have missed out on special events and traditional milestones; have endured disruptions to their school structure and school community, some are managing the fear of a parent's lost job or ongoing health issues from long COVID. All are navigating an uncertain future. Peter's Place must build our capacity to address the growing need in our community, making your partnership critical. Together, we can build a resilient community where children and families can thrive.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- 501c3 letter
- Board of Directors
- Annual Report
- Audit
- FY2021 Actual vs. Budget report
- FY2022 Operating budget vs. YTD Actuals
- Strategic Plan Summary