

I. CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION GRANT PROPOSAL SUMMARY SHEET

Date 2/3/25

Contact Information

Organization Name: Peter's Place
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Year Incorporated: 2000
FEIN: 23-3062819

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Board Chair Name: William G. Kiesling, Esq.
Board Chair Approval (check here): X
Primary Contact Name: Trish Corvo
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Organization Information:

Field/s of Interest:

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

Mission: The mission of Peter's Place is to provide safe and supportive environments for grieving children and families and 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):
Greater Philadelphia (Burks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties).

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. Annually, we serve approximately 1,500 individuals.

Annual Budget \$ <u>994,000</u>	<u>7</u>	# of Full-Time Equivalent Paid Staff
<u>72</u> % of budget for program expenses	<u>22</u>	# of Board Volunteers
<u>19</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
<i>100 % total</i>		

Top 3-5 funding sources: Shanahan Family Foundation (\$75,000 over 3 years); Neighborhood League Shops (\$20,000); Philadelphia Foundation (\$20,000)

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: \$7,500

Proposal Summary: As the pandemic evolves to endemic, reports from schools, health centers, and national research groups indicate that children and adolescents are continuing to struggle from the cumulative losses brought on by the pandemic. In response, we are broadening our partnerships with school districts and forming new partnerships with community services, most recently with county Intermediate Units, to provide professional training as well as open dialogue that will support students and youth. We have also grown our staff by 2.5 FTE over the last 2 years and launched an internship program for graduate level clinical students to support our capacity needs. Nevertheless, we've been forced to open waitlists for our groups as demand continues to rise. Your general operating investment will help us ensure children and families most in need of our critical bereavement support services will get the care they need to thrive.



PETER'S PLACE

A Center for Grieving Children & Families

PROPOSAL TO THE CHESTER COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

February 2025

STATEMENT OF NEED 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, including poor academic outcomes, behavioral problems, depression, suicide, and substance use disorder. Grieving children are considered “at-risk” due to their increased propensity towards these poor, long-term health and wellness outcomes.

The June 2023 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model (CBEM), developed by Judi's House/JAG Institute, reported that childhood bereavement increased by 46% compared to pre-pandemic levels. One in eight children newly bereaved by a parent death in 2021 experienced a COVID-19 death. While COVID-19 accounts for a portion of the increase, high stigma deaths, including drug overdose, homicide by gunshot, and suicide, also significantly contributed. One in five children newly bereaved by a parent death in 2021 experienced accidental overdose, an increase of 60% compared to the pre-pandemic average. Death by homicide increased by 48%. While losing an important person can be traumatic for all children, 41% of the students we serve through School Services lost their person through violence, specifically homicide, which can complicate a grief process and increase the likelihood of poor long-term outcomes. Most children we serve (89%) lost a parent or grandparent. For many, the care we provide is their only opportunity to process their challenging feelings, gain protective coping skills, and build a network of support.

ORGANIZATION BACKGROUND With a mission to offer safe and supportive environments for grieving children and families and to foster understanding of the effects of death and grief, Peter's Place mitigates risk and creates a path towards healing. Our vision is to create a culture where grief is better understood and supported. We provide both direct care and education to advance this vision, bringing grief to the forefront of public discourse. Since our 2001 opening, Peter's Place has provided direct support to over 15,000 grieving children and adult caregivers and indirect support to tens of thousands in the five-county Philadelphia area, particularly in under-resourced communities where children and families might otherwise lack support.

FUNDING REQUEST Your general operating investment will support our core services, listed below, as we build capacity to address growing need and demand.

Onsite Groups: Peer support groups for children ages 4-17 help guide a supported grief process. Groups are free of charge and inclusive to neurodivergent youth. Parent and 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. In FY2024, we served 259 individuals through onsite groups.

School Based Services: Free, comprehensive grief support and education is provided in schools, including student support groups, postvention services upon the death of a student or teacher, and comprehensive professional development services to guide school personnel towards meeting the emotional needs of their entire school community. In FY2024, we served 800 individuals, including 22 postventions and 38 student groups.

Community Services: To support the development of a resilient community, Peter's Place provides specialized adult grief support services and partners with local organizations to provide professional development services, education, and youth programming. Adult virtual groups include such topics as spousal loss, COVID death, parent loss, and loss of a child through substance use; youth programming is provided in partnership with such programs as Philadelphia Outward Bound School; and professional development is offered to social workers, mental health and healthcare professionals, and student to such organizations as county Intermediate Units and service agencies. Our curriculum is approved by the Pennsylvania State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, and Professional Counselors to provide continuing education credits for licensed professionals.

EVALUATING OUR IMPACT A large body of evidence indicates that peer support is an effective intervention for multiple mental health issues, including mental illness, substance use disorder, anxiety, and depression. Peer support is also shown to improve participants ability to move through challenging life transitions and experiences, including bereavement. The peer support model ameliorates feelings of isolation and stigma, creates a safe space to share feelings and insights, and builds a sense of belonging and hope. Our evaluation measures reflect these findings – most of our children self-report improvement against risk factors for bereavement that lead to poor long-term outcomes, including reduced self-esteem, fear, loneliness, academic problems, and difficulty talking about grief.

We are encouraged by these outcomes and the ability of our services to advance a healthy grief process, particularly considering the mental health impact of the pandemic and rising rates of mental health issues, especially among children, adolescents, and young adults. In March 2023, the Pew Research Center reported that 44% of high school students said they felt sad or hopeless most every day; the CDC reports that 22% of high school students indicated they had seriously considered suicide in 2021, up from 16% in 2011.

Peter’s Place can aid in the reversal of this disturbing trend by attending to the emotional health and wellness of children and families across the five county Philadelphia area. Led by a team of professional clinicians and subject matter experts, our peer support groups, professional development, and grief education services can mitigate the potential long-term and devastating consequences of grief and lead children and families to improved overall well-being.

With your support, we will reach the following goals:

1. Directly serve approximately 350 children through school groups. Groups follow an 8-week psycho-educational curriculum and are designed to normalize grief and create a safe environment where students can share and learn from each other.
2. Serve 300 individuals through onsite support groups at our Radnor facility, including 150 children.
3. Provide postvention services as requested. We work collaboratively with school administration to create a customized school-wide response, facilitate discussions with staff and faculty, meet with parents about how to best support their children, and offer support groups to students.
4. Deepen current partnerships and develop new partnerships to provide professional development services that offer approved continuing education credits to school personnel and direct grief support services to youth.

CONCLUSION After 22 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, including across the Chester County area. As the pandemic evolves to endemic, reports from schools, health centers, and national research groups indicate that children and adolescents are continuing to struggle from the cumulative losses brought on by the pandemic. In response, we are broadening our partnerships with school districts and forming new partnerships with community services, most recently with county Intermediate Units and the Radnor Police Department, to provide professional training as well as open dialogue that will support students and youth. We have also grown our staff by 2.5 FTE over the last 2 years and launched an internship program for graduate level clinical students to support our capacity needs. Nevertheless, we’ve been forced to open waitlists for our groups as demand continues to rise.

As we lean on our current philanthropic partners to help sustain our services, we are also ambitiously pursuing strategic initiatives to expand our capacity and build our long-term sustainability, including the development of a planned giving program, establishment of an endowment fund, and development of corporate partnerships. Your general operating investment is critical as we pursue these capacity building initiatives to meet the needs of our community. Together, we will ensure children and youth most in need of our bereavement support services will get the critical care they require and develop long-term emotional wellness and resiliency.

