



SCHOOL SERVICES PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

STATISTICS ON STUDENTS AND GRIEF

- **1 in 12 students** in the US will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18.
- In Pennsylvania, that rate rises to 1 in 11 students — totaling approximately **240,000 students** throughout the state.
- **7 in 10 teachers** currently have at least one student in their class who is grieving a death in the last year.

WHY PARTNER WITH THE HIGHMARK CARING PLACE?

In schools across western and central Pennsylvania, the Highmark Caring Place strives to:

- Raise awareness of the impact of death on students and of their need for support.
- Increase the overall sensitivity of the school culture toward students who have had someone close to them die.
- Increase the knowledge and skills of teachers and administrators regarding the impact of grief on students in the classroom and how to help grieving students cope after a death.
- Increase the knowledge and skills of students in how to provide support to their grieving classmates.

FREE SERVICES AVAILABLE TO SCHOOLS

These goals are accomplished through the following services and resources provided at no cost by the Caring Place to interested schools:

- **TOURS** - School staff and administrators are welcome to tour the Caring Place to learn more about the impact of death on children as well as how the Caring Place is a resource that can help. Specialized tours for students can also be arranged.
- **ANNUAL CARING TEAM FOR GRIEVING STUDENTS SUMMIT** - Educators and student leaders are invited to join hundreds of other students and school staff at the annual Caring Team Summit held at each Caring Place site. The summit is a fun and educational day during which students and staff members have the opportunity to tour the Caring Place facility to learn how grief impacts students, to learn more about how the Caring Place can help,



and how to organize awareness-raising events in their own schools.

- **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** - Caring Place staff members are available to provide training about the grief of children and teens in general and/or its specific impact in the school environment.
- **CONSULTATION** - Caring Place staff members are available to consult with school staff when death impacts your school.
- **ASSEMBLIES & CLASSROOM PRESENTATIONS** - Caring Place staff members are available to present to students, as part of a classroom curriculum or as a special guest speaker, about the impact of grief, how to get support if they need it, how to support a friend who is grieving, the Caring Place program, or Children's Grief Awareness Day.
- **RESOURCES** - A variety of written resources are available as well as electronic information on the Caring Place website and social media sources including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.
- **PEER SUPPORT GROUPS FOR GRIEVING STUDENTS** - Caring Place staff members are available to facilitate a peer support group within your school for students who have had someone close to them die, while at the same time training school staff to become group facilitators.

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS FOR GRIEVING STUDENTS

WHAT IS THE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ADDRESS?

The program is designed to systematically address non-complicated grief of children and teens in elementary, middle and high school within the school setting.

WHAT IS THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAM?

The program works to provide a safe environment for participants to connect with peers who are also grieving, and to be able to express their feelings related to the death and to share memories of the person who died. Through this process the children have the opportunity to learn that they are not alone; to become familiar with peers who understand what they are going through so they can go to them for support if needed; and to learn healthy coping mechanisms.

WHO IS THE PROGRAM DESIGNED TO SERVE?

The program is designed to serve children and teens:

- who have had a family member or friend die at any point of time in their lives
- who have been identified by a designated staff person at their school as appropriate for a school-based group
- who are not suffering from untreated symptoms of trauma related to the death
- who can function appropriately in a peer support group

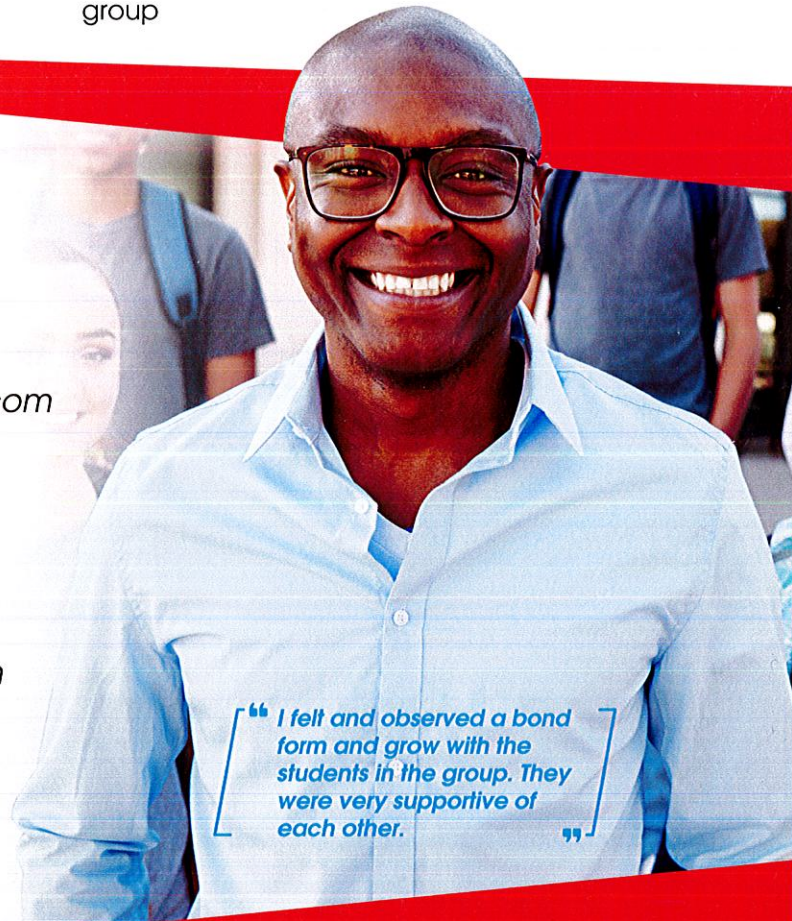
If you are interested in your school becoming involved in the Caring Team for Grieving Students, please contact:

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“ I felt and observed a bond form and grow with the students in the group. They were very supportive of each other. ”

