

Dougy Center Launches New Website

The new website, at dougycenter.org, is an accessible and comprehensive resource dedicated to supporting children, teens, young adults, and parents/caregivers who are grieving.

Children, teens, parents, caregivers, and young adults who are grieving before and after the death of a family member or close friend often feel alone and unsure where to turn for resources and support. Dougy Center's new website, launched in January, is a trauma-informed, grief-informed, helpful, and easy-to-use resource for all ages. At dougycenter.org, those who are grieving, as well as professionals and supporters of grievers, can find hundreds of free activities, articles, tip sheets, podcasts, and more. The site can also assist users in finding peer grief support programs in their communities.

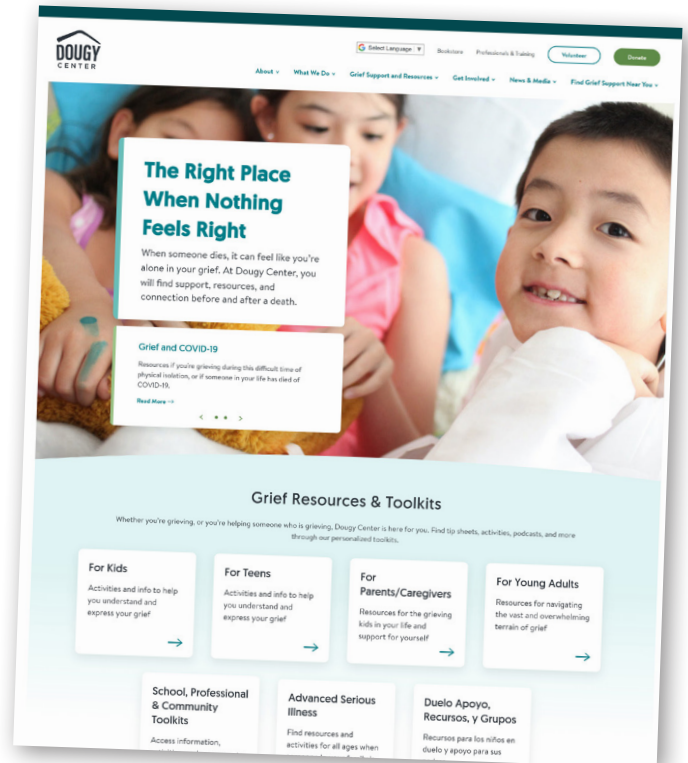
The new website, funded by a generous grant from the **New York Life Foundation** and created in partnership

with **Daylight Studio** in Portland, is an accessible and comprehensive resource dedicated to supporting children, teens, young adults, and parents/caregivers who are grieving.

"With pandemic-related deaths increasing in the United States and around the world, this new website is more important and more critical than ever," said Brennan Wood, Dougy Center's Executive Director.

"Dougy Center has had a strong web presence for many years, but this new site is completely redesigned and easy to navigate for people in crisis, as well as for returning users."

Founded in 1982, Dougy Center has provided peer grief support to more than 55,000 people through direct services. The first organization of its



kind in the United States, The Dougy Center Model has been replicated in over 500 sites throughout the world and is considered a gold standard of practice in the field of loss and grief.

You may also notice our updated logo! While building our new website, we also took the opportunity to

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Becoming Grief-Informed: A Call to Action

Dougy Center's position paper stresses the importance of understanding how grief is a natural and normal response to loss, and outlines the 10 core principles and tenets of grief-informed practice.

Grief is a natural response to loss. How people grieve privately or publicly varies based on many factors, including their personality and what their social context has shown, taught, or demonstrated as "appropriate." Mainstream society — as well as proponents of pathologizing some people who are grieving based on a set of "symptoms" — often implies that something is wrong with you if you

don't grieve in the "right" way and for the "right" length of time.

Here's the problem with that thinking: Everyone responds to grief in a unique way and grief can last a lifetime...and that is completely normal. After listening to and supporting thousands of children, teens, young adults, and adults who are grieving the death of someone in their lives, and with pandemic-related deaths increasing worldwide and in the U.S., it is time, now more than ever, to understand what it means to be grief-informed.

"Becoming Grief-Informed: A Call to Action," written by Dr. Donna Schuurman and Dr. Monique Mitchell, Dougy Center's Senior

Director of Advocacy & Training and Director of Training & Translational Research respectively, is more than a position paper: It's a Call to Action.

It is time that we as a nation take a stand and acknowledge grief for what it truly is: a natural and normal response to loss that is interwoven into a sociocultural context. Grief is not an experience that needs to be "silenced," "treated," or "pathologized." Grief, and all the many complications it imposes on the griever, is an experience that needs and deserves understanding, support, and community.

You can find a link to the complete position paper on the homepage of our website at dougyc.org.

Finding Support During the Pandemic

While Dougy Center families, volunteers, and staff miss being together in person, the switch to virtual groups continues to provide support and healing for hundreds of kids, teens, young adults, parents, and caregivers each month.

Ann Dagostino, and her kids Andrew (11), Alexis (7), and Nicholas (5), started coming to Dougy Center in 2017, after the death of their husband and father, Mark.

“He was funny, loved to tickle us, let me rest in his lap while he watched the 49ers, loved Pepsi and pizza,” they said when describing Mark. “He loved fishing, putting together models, and spending time with his family — all of us.”

Through both in-person groups before the pandemic, and now in virtual groups, the Dagostino family has found a safe place at Dougy Center. “It has given us the words and space to talk about our experience and our feelings, and about how our life has changed and moved forward



Mark Dagostino with Andrew, Alexis, and Nicholas.



Ann Dagostino, and her kids find comfort and support at Dougy Center.

since Mark’s death,” said Ann. She appreciates having a place to feel “normal” and where they can be with other families who are going through similar situations.

Even though the kids miss playing on the playground with other Dougy Center participants, they still enjoy the connection and friendships they’ve made through virtual groups. “It helps us not miss Dad so much, it helps us to be happy and connect with other kids like us,” they said. “And we still were able to get stuffies at Christmas!” Alexis added.

“Dougy Center is a remarkably welcoming place,” said Ann. “We have never felt that our grief, our story, our experiences weren’t valued or honored. Dougy Center has given

all of us a new community that we are grateful to have as we navigate our lives moving forward.”

New Website

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refresh our brand. Watch for more in the coming months.

Support from our community allows us to continue to develop grief resources and offer grief support at no cost to families who are grieving. The new website provides donors with more options and an easier path to giving, providing increased sustainability for the organization.



Beyond Portland

DOUGY CENTER TRAINING & COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Did you know Dougy Center extends beyond the Portland Metro area? Despite the pandemic restrictions, 4,045 people received training, consulting, or community support and response from Dougy Center over the past year. Whether in person or virtual, Dougy Center's expert staff offer customized trainings in large or small groups, as well as to individuals, on a number of critical topics, including:

- Becoming Grief-Informed
- Understanding and Supporting Children & Teens Who are Grieving
- Crisis Plans for Schools and Communities
- When Violence Impacts a Community
- Understanding and Supporting Youth and Communities Impacted by Suicide

Below are a few of our virtual national and international trainings since the pandemic began. To learn more about Dougy Center outreach and trainings, visit dougycenter.org.



Nova Scotia, Canada

Virtual training for Colchester East Hants Hospice Society



Boise, Idaho

Virtual training for Idaho Suicide Prevention Hotline



Manchester, New Hampshire

Consultation for Friends of Aine Center for Grieving Children & Families



New Brunswick, Canada

Virtual training for NB COPES Child & Family Grief Center



Washington, DC

Speaker for Child Welfare League of America webinar



Eugene, Oregon

Keynote speaker for virtual conference by the Oregon Juvenile Law Academy

Registration Now Open for 2021 International Summer Institute; Scholarships Available

Dougy Center's annual International Summer Institute, set for July 26-30, 2021, will look a little different this year. We're offering a virtual professional seminar, which will explore the fundamentals of grief education across the lifespan. While the majority of helping professionals do not have formal grief education, the 2021 Virtual Professional Seminar will provide the tools and information to become grief-informed.

In addition, Dougy Center is offering four scholarships to the 2021 Virtual Professional Seminar, thanks to a grant from the New York Life Foundation. Scholarship applications are due April 1, 2021. Both the Summer Institute registration form and scholarship application can be found on Dougy Center's website under the Professionals & Training tab at dougycenter.org.

New Online Learning System Coming Soon!

With support from the New York Life Foundation, Dougy Center is developing a new online learning system to offer grief education courses on best practices for supporting children, teens, young adults, and families who are grieving. This online tool, available later this year, will allow us to significantly increase our training capacity and provide access for people worldwide interested in learning how to support children and families who are grieving.



OUR MISSION AT WORK

2020 by the numbers



636

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS
both in person and (mostly) virtual



217

STUFFIES
distributed safely to Dougy
Center kids in December

“
100%
OF FAMILIES
said that they were satisfied with
Dougy Center's level of engagement
during the pandemic
”

7,861

VOLUNTEER HOURS
DONATED

=

\$213,819

DONATION VALUE
source: Independent Sector



13 GROUP CANDLE
LIGHTINGS

in honor of Children's Grief
Awareness Day



6,203

DONATIONS

=

\$2,784,858

(including in-kind and restricted)



735

PARTICIPANTS
have experienced Dougy
Center in the virtual setting

Number of family
pets we have met
during virtual groups:



Too Many to Count

The Need:

25,000+ (1 in 17)

children in the Portland area currently
live in homes where a parent or
stepparent has died



A survey of grieving kids by the New York Life Foundation
and the National Alliance for Grieving Children found...

75%
feel their
pervading
emotion is
sadness

39%
have trouble
sleeping

45%
have more
trouble
concentrating
at school

41%
act in ways they
know might
not be good
for them



27,569

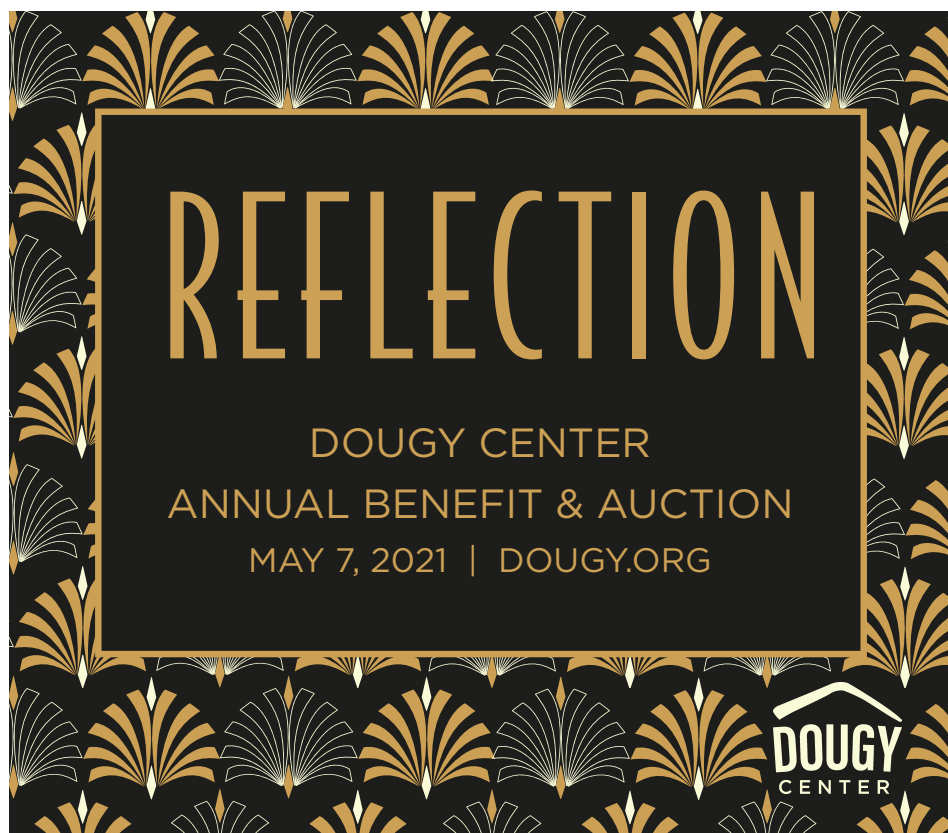
information, crisis, referral, and
intake requests responded to by
Dougy Center Staff



213,595

GRIEF OUT LOUD
podcasts downloaded
Visit dougy.org/podcast to listen

Save the Date for the Reflection Benefit & Auction



Don't miss your chance to celebrate the impact of Dougy Center's mission and services at the Reflection Benefit & Auction. This year, the virtual event features an exciting online auction, an online gallery of children's art, testimonials from Dougy Center families, and the final drawing for the winner of our Porsche Boxster Raffle!

Save the date for the 2021 Reflection Benefit, May 7, 2021

Show your support for families in our community who are grieving by becoming a Reflection Benefit Sponsor. Contact Rebecca Sturges at rebeccas@dougy.org or by calling 503.775.5683 for more information on how you can become part of this important event.

Thank you for being the light

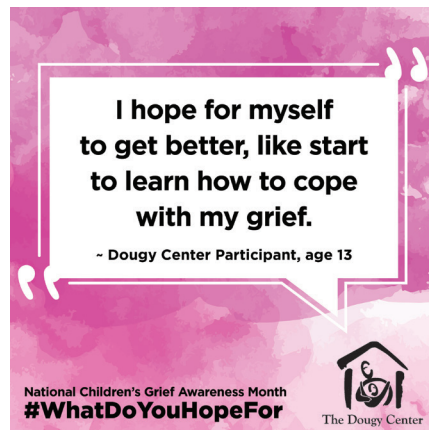
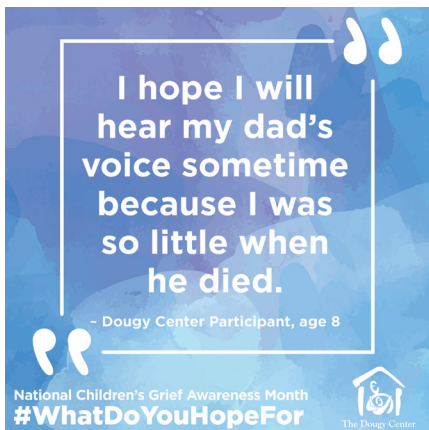
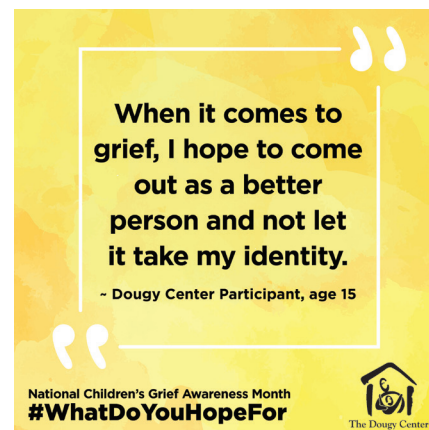
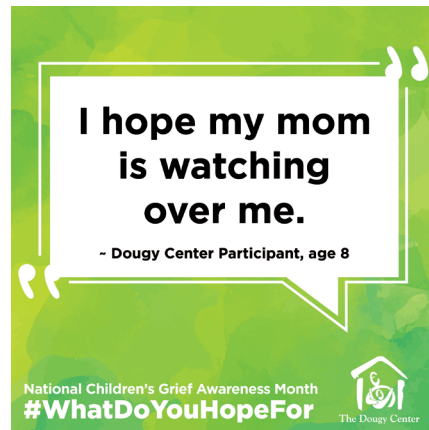
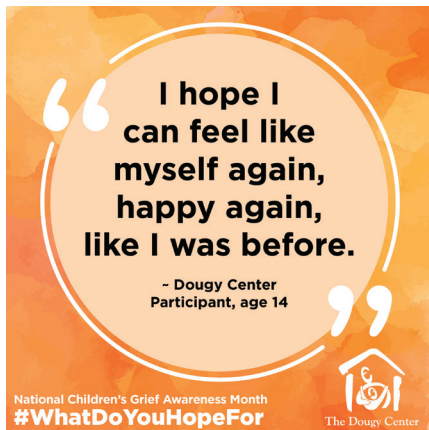
We are so grateful to our generous community!

Our sincerest thank you to everyone who gave so generously to Dougy Center during our year-end giving campaign. With a goal of raising \$150,000, we are thrilled to announce that donors contributed an incredible \$204,000! In addition, a record \$25,270 was also donated through the *Willamette Week Give!Guide!* These gifts will have a direct impact for the 600 people in our virtual support groups right now, and for the thousands of families we serve each year through resources, activities, phone calls, and more.

#bethelight 
in someone's darkness



What Do You Hope For?



In recognition of National Children's Grief Awareness Month last November, we asked kids attending Dougy Center virtual groups what they hope for. The above is just a sample of what they said. When we're grieving, everything can feel hard and unfamiliar. Add in the pandemic and how it's altering our daily routines, plans, and ability to gather with others, and things can feel extremely overwhelming. We are grateful that Dougy Center groups continue to provide kids a place to share their feelings, to feel understood, and to have hope.

L.Y.G.H.T. Program Helps Youth in Foster Care

L.Y.G.H.T., a Dougy Center program serves youth in the foster care system experiencing grief from both death and non-death losses.

Based on The Dougy Center Model, Listening and Led by Youth in Foster Care: Grief, Hope, and Transitions

(L.Y.G.H.T.) is a trauma-informed peer grief support program, organized and implemented much like our traditional groups. L.Y.G.H.T. provides a safe space for youth in foster care to listen, talk, and offer support to one another as they cope with missing family, friends, and other important people, as well as other losses in their lives.

At the core of the L.Y.G.H.T. program, Dougy Center works to raise awareness about how youth in foster care who are grieving experience marginalization on various levels, to create ways to provide trauma-informed peer support to youth in foster care, and to promote the importance of moving the child welfare community toward a grief-informed holistic model of care.

Thanks to the generous funding of our community partner, The Duke Endowment, the L.Y.G.H.T. program has been offered to youth in foster care in three cities in South Carolina. We look forward to growing L.Y.G.H.T. to sites across the country. If you are interested in learning more about L.Y.G.H.T., contact Monique Mitchell, Dougy Center's Director of Training and Translational Research, at monique@dougy.org.





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AND HELP KIDS AND TEENS
WHO ARE GRIEVING

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