

Newsletter of The Kentucky Center for Grieving Children and Families

Volume 4: Spring 2023



Peer Healing Groups Are Making a Difference in Grief Support for Kentucky Teens

A teen peer-led grief group, Peer Healing focuses on providing grieving teens with connection and community. The group's main goals are to assist bereaved teens in building and improving communication skills, as well as creating supportive, understanding spaces for them to address and process their grief and losses.

Peer Healing is curriculum that has been developed as an effective resource for teens with death loss, one that acknowledges that they are both an adolescent and a person grieving the loss of a loved one. The KCGCF is one of only two sites in the nation piloting this evidence-based program for the University of Chicago Medical School.

We talked to one of our Peer Healing Teen Leaders, Haleigh Allen. She shared some of her thoughts about what she liked about serving as a teen leader and how the Peer Healing groups are making a difference for the teens that participate.

"One thing I love about serving as a teen leader is getting to hear everyone's stories and seeing how different and similar they are from each other. Everyone has a different story to share, and they know that we won't judge and that we will keep it confidential. They are able to tell as much or as little as they want. There is no pressure to have to share if they don't want to. It is just an open place for teens to come and meet other teens who have lost loved ones at a young age. We share lots of helpful things that help teens deal with the loss of a loved one."

Peer Healing groups are free for Kentucky teens ages 13-18 and meet once a week for 8 weeks. Games, conversation, and connection help teens find a healing space and skills that will help them navigate their new normal. To register, call 859-813-2759 or email: kychildrengrieve@gmail.com. For more information check our website at www.kcgcf.org.



How has KCGCF Peer Healing groups helped you?

“Peer healing has helped me to find a better way to communicate my grief. It has helped me to work through parts of my grief that I hadn't interacted with in years.”

Katarina Salisbury

Fayette County Student



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A Note from the Executive Director

Leila Salisbury

Nearly two years into full-time service, the staff, facilitators, and volunteers of The Kentucky Center Grieving Children and Families are busy! Since April of 2022, we've reached over 1162 individuals, educators, and community service partners with trainings, outreach, and educational presentations and materials on how they can support the grieving children and teens in their worlds.

One of the goals of the KCGCF is to equip each of those individuals with tools, strategies, and resources that they can take back into their homes, classrooms, workplaces, and communities. Person by person, these caring souls exponentially amplify our ability to create more grief-sensitive spaces for Kentucky's grieving families.

The KCGCF is especially glad to have expanded its school-based work to 14 schools in Fayette County, with more sites in surrounding counties to come. Staff have presented to the district's mental health professional staff and FCPS community partner groups focused on supporting at-risk and underserved youth. We have partnered with the Kentucky School Counselors Association to provide free access to a national training on supporting students after stigmatized deaths. In November, KCGCF staff and affiliates also presented a specialized training for Jessamine County Public Schools counselors and school psychologists to help support them in their work with grieving students in their district.

We are dedicated to direct service through our school-based, community-based, and online groups. We are also incredibly grateful to be elevating the need for increased grief support across the Commonwealth through advocacy and outreach to government officials, service providers, and school districts. **Every grieving child needs a champion.** The KCGCF is honored to do the daily work of growing a team of compassionate and dedicated champions in every corner of Kentucky.

Leila Salisbury
Executive Director



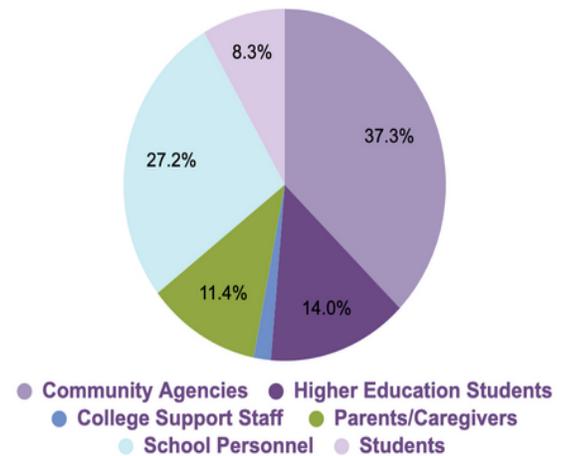
Thank you to the Lexington Theatre Company for allowing KCGCF to attend their January Concert with the Stars. The smiles say it all!

Connect with Us!

859-813-2759

www.kcgcf.org

Training and Outreach: Who KCGCF serves



Thank you!

KCGCF programs and families consistently benefit from the volunteer hours, services, and financial support of several Central Kentucky organizations. We give a huge thank you to the following partners for their recent support:

- **The Junior League of Lexington** for a 2023 grant to purchase activity and therapeutic supplies for our community grief support groups for children and teens
- **LFUCG's One Lexington Program** for partnering with KCGCF staff for training during their It Takes A Village Conference in November 2022
- **The Lexington Theatre Company** for sponsoring KCGCF families and volunteers to join them for their 2023 Concert with the Stars
- Student volunteers from the UK Chapter of **Kappa Kappa Gamma**, who have given their time at KCGCF Family Fun Nights and community programs



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