



Mending Hearts



Lost & Found
grief center

SUMMER 2024

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

“When we lost him, my boys and I felt lost. The ground had dropped out from beneath us and it felt like I was falling down a bottomless pit. I remember the first person who told me about **Lost & Found,** even before I went there, just knowing that there was somewhere I could go was very comforting. From walking in the building for the first time and feeling that **peace and compassion** from everyone there to getting into a group and meeting other people who have gone through very similar circumstances was life changing. There were days when I honestly didn’t know if I was going to make it, but knowing that group night was coming up was what helped me push through it.

I am eternally grateful.”



- Lost & Found
Grief Center Parent

Finding Meaning

Hello, and thank you for allowing me to spend a few moments with you. My name is Mark Miller. I am the new Executive Director for Lost & Found Grief Center.

I am honored to join Lost & Found and its extraordinary staff of therapists and administrators in our mission to support those in our community who are hurting.

People grieve for many reasons — perhaps most profoundly for the loss of a loved one. I feel this daily, as my family and I lost our beloved son and brother, Luke, in 2019.

Luke, an accomplished college student and distance runner, was just 20 years old when he died due to complications from epilepsy.

Walking into our first therapy session at Lost & Found, my wife and I wondered how we would survive his loss. In the weeks and months that followed, thanks to Lost & Found, we found the solace we needed and wanted. Today, I can talk about Luke with a smile and try to live a life worthy of his memory.

I came to this role at Lost & Found following a decade of work in marketing and communications at Ozarks Technical Community College. At OTC, I participated in all aspects of the college's public relations and marketing strategy. In addition to my time at OTC, I worked in higher education communications at Drury University and the University of Colorado.

Before shifting into public relations, I had a 15-year television career as a news and sports anchor in Nebraska, Kentucky, and at local Springfield television station KOLR10.

I will use my communications experience to raise Lost & Found's profile so that more people may experience grief therapy's healing power. Ultimately, we will all suffer a loss, and grief will impact our lives.

The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche said:

"To live is to suffer. To survive is to find meaning in the suffering."

Taking on the Executive Director role at Lost & Found Grief Center is finding meaning in the suffering — an opportunity for which I am deeply grateful.

Best regards,

Mark Miller
Executive Director



Continuing My Journey

I am pleased to announce that I have recently accepted the promotion to Assistant Executive Director at Lost & Found Grief Center. Since July 2021, I have been employed at the center as a Program Coordinator. My experience at Lost & Found has been an exceptional opportunity for me to apply my personal meaning after the loss of our son, Charlie.

My husband and I received individual counseling with Dr. Karen Scott at Lost & Found in the months following the death of our son. Dr. Scott played an instrumental role in my journey and continued work here. She has been a beacon of support, providing me with guidance and helping me understand the grief journey that I was, and still am, on. Her unwavering belief in me has been invaluable, and I am grateful for her ongoing assistance.



Today, I have the privilege of supporting numerous individuals on their own journeys, and I see this role as a calling rather than a job. I take great pride in my work, and I am confident that I am meant to be here serving our families alongside so many talented and compassionate individuals.

I am excited to be a part of the next 25 years of service at Lost & Found and eager to take on the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

Melanie Blair
Assistant Executive Director

Lost & Found Staff



Back row: Susan Brown, Hailey Wiegard, Nannette Thomas, Melanie Blair, Robyn Fondren, Lauren Bailey
Middle row: Mark Miller, Sarah Brown, Brittany Johnson, Linda Blackburn, Jamie Fields, Laura Goolsby
Front row: Hannah Alarid

Forvis Mazars Room Remodel

Our teen and middle school rooms underwent a renovation courtesy of Forvis Mazars. During group nights, these spaces are bustling with activity. This renovation enabled us to increase seating capacity and adapt the space to better cater to the evolving needs of our participants.

New to the spaces...

- Fresh paint
- Sun therapy lamps
- Sensory frames
- Fidget tools
- Storage baskets
- Additional seating
- Framed participant artwork
- Feeling wheel pillows
- Acoustic sound panels



Volunteer Spotlight

Why I give back...

I choose to give back to Lost & Found, because it is an honor to walk alongside others in their grief. Lost & Found gave me the words to express the feelings associated with losing my dad three years ago, the tools to process that grief, and the people with whom I could find belonging. It is so important to learn how to lean into the difficult feelings and emotions that come from losing someone. I am grateful to be a part of Lost & Found Grief Center because they provide a safe place for healing.



Jessica Champion

*pictured with husband

➤ Find ways to get involved at www.lostandfoundozarks.com ⇐

Ways to Give

Groups are provided at no cost to participants thanks to our generous donors.

Join our Monthly Giving Program

Be a part of Mending Hearts with our monthly giving program:



Help: \$20 monthly
Hope: \$50 monthly
Heal: \$100 monthly
Other: _____

Sponsor a Child

Every \$1,000 donation helps provide one year of therapeutic grief support for a child.



Purchase a Memorial Gift

Honor the memory of your loved one by making a monetary gift in their name or by purchasing one of our hand-crafted pavers with custom engraving.



Follow
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Lost & Found Event Recap

SAVE THE DATE

Game Day: October 27, 2024

Evening of Hope: January 25, 2025

Run & Remember: May of 2025

Golf Fore Hope: June 9, 2025



“Game Day combines all of my favorite things: Lost & Found Grief Center, Chiefs football, and the fun atmosphere of BigShots.”

Marty Diebold, Junior Board President

GAME DAY

October 8, 2023

Game Day is the ultimate tailgate experience with all the food, drink, and football a fan could want. This event is presented by the Lost & Found Junior Board, and they put in extra work during the off-season to coordinate an unbeatable game plan. Join us on October 27 when the Chiefs take on the Raiders for Game Day 2024! Kickoff is at 3:25 p.m. at BigShots Golf. Regardless of the game's outcome, everyone is a winner by raising money and awareness for the grieving families we serve.



Lost & Found Event Recap



EVENING OF HOPE

January 27, 2024

The generosity and support from our community made Evening of Hope 2024 a triumphant night. The event raised more than \$420,000, which funds nearly a third of Lost & Found's annual budget.

Our Sponsor a Child initiative supported a record number of children to receive therapeutic grief support at no cost. Attendees sponsored 140 children at \$1,000 each.

The keynote speaker, Aimee Caldwell, brought the crowd to its feet for a heart-warming standing ovation when she shared about life following the loss of her 10-year-old daughter, Abigail.

"When the world pulled back and away from us, from our painful story, Lost & Found leaned in," Aimee said.

We are grateful for all who attended to support Lost & Found and our dedicated sponsor partners, volunteers, and staff who made this impactful night unforgettable.

"Evening of Hope is a special event where donors, group participants, and the staff come together to celebrate the help, hope and healing that take place at Lost & Found Grief Center," said former Lost & Found Board Member Shannon Nagy. "This meaningful event leaves a lasting impact on everyone who attends."



Lost & Found Event Recap

RUN & REMEMBER

May 20, 2024

Run & Remember is a memorial event to honor the memory of loved ones who have died. On May 20, over 700 attendees and 35 area businesses gathered at Jordan Valley Park to run, walk, and honor their person during the memorial program.

We were honored to stand alongside every participant who crossed the finish line for this impactful event. Run & Remember is only possible because of the volunteers who created every heartfelt detail and the sponsors who show up each year to support our vision that no one should grieve alone.

Mary Jane Holmes, a past participant and current group coordinator shared, "After losing my son, Lost & Found saved my soul. Run & Remember is such a meaningful event because everyone who participates has a common bond – we all understand the great pain of grief. We are connected to one another as we gather to honor the ones we've lost."





Impact Report

our mission in action!

THE NEED FOR LOST & FOUND

1 in 10



One in ten children in Missouri will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18*

THE COST OF INACTION

Leaving people unsupported in their grief is detrimental to communities:



Teens with unresolved grief are 5 times more likely to die from suicide.



Children with unresolved grief are 9 times more likely to drop out of high school.



More than \$32 billion per year is lost in worker productivity due to unresolved grief.

*Judi's House (2023). Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model. Retrieved from www.judishouse.org/CBEM

GRIEF SUPPORT

Since June 1, 2023, Lost & Found has provided:



5,502 service hours of therapeutic grief support group sessions.



923 individuals with help, hope, and healing through our therapeutic grief support groups.



663 individual counseling sessions.

THE IMPACT OF HOPE

After receiving our grief support services:

76%

OF CHILDREN/TEENS
Able to identify feelings associated with grief

96%

OF CHILDREN/TEENS
Able to talk positively about the future

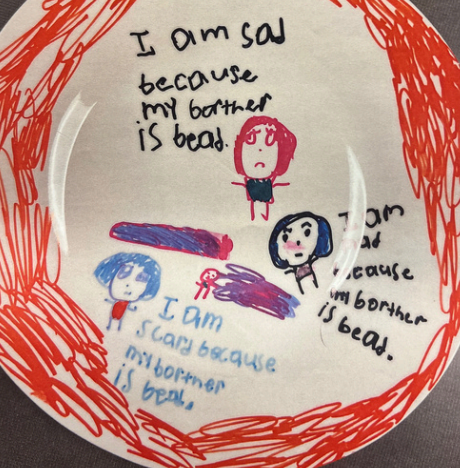
89%

OF ADULTS
Report feeling less isolated



For Henry & Liam

group was a place to meet other children who had gone through similar circumstances.



Services Offered

Groups

Lost & Found acknowledges that grief and loss present themselves in various ways. Our services support participants socially and emotionally to equip them on their grief journey.

- Little Ones (age 4 - 1st grade)
- Children's (2nd - 5th grade)
- Middlers (6th - 8th grade)
- Teens (9th - 12th grade)
- Caregiver group
- Young Adult (sibling & parent loss)
- Adult (sibling & parent loss)
- Spouse Loss
- Child Loss

Individual Services

- Individual Counseling
- Play Therapy
- Child Life Consultations

Grief Services for Workplaces

- Crisis Response Services
- Consultations
- Employee Education

Grief Services for Schools

- Staff Trainings
- Crisis Response Services
- Administrative Consultations





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"My dad was really goofy. He made me laugh. Chasing me around was my favorite. **I miss everything about him**"

- Lost & Found Youth



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