

# Lost & Found Grief Center

# MENDING HEARTS

Offering help, hope, and healing to grieving individuals and families in the Ozarks.



**SPRING 2026**  
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



## Walking with our Grieving Community

Founding Father Benjamin Franklin famously said,

**“In this world, nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.”**

Dr. Franklin could have added **grief** to his list of certainties because grief follows death. Death is final, but grief lingers for years afterward.

At Lost & Found Grief Center, we walk alongside people who have experienced a major loss. Every day, we receive calls and messages from those grieving the loss of a child, parent, or spouse.

I first came to Lost & Found as a participant in 2019, following the death of my son Luke. He died at the age of 20 due to complications from epilepsy. I was able to move forward in my life with hope, but more than seven years after Luke’s death, grief isn’t done with me.

In February, I learned that Luke’s childhood friend Caleb had died suddenly at 27. A mutual friend of theirs sent my family a high school photo of the two of them. At a balloon glow, they stood young and smiling, arms around each other’s shoulders. The joyful image highlighted their youth and limitless futures. Realizing both were gone, I was overcome by grief, tears, and heartache. My co-workers noticed and comforted me. After a moment, my grief subsided.

The pain from losing my son remains. With time and the support I received from Lost & Found, grief’s sharpness dulled.

In 2024, I became Lost & Found’s executive director. Today, as I meet people who enter our building, I can empathize with their pain. I know they are embarking on a journey they do not want to go on, and they are facing heartache and despair.

**This is why Lost & Found exists: to walk with people in their pain and ensure no one grieves alone.** We are a place where it is okay to share all the emotions that come with death and the grief that follows.



Mark Miller, Executive Director



Lost & Found staff photo from Evening of Hope 2026. Linda Blackburn, Not Pictured.

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# WHERE HEALING BEGINS & RIPPLES GROW

**Grief therapy is not a luxury; it is a necessity for a thriving community.**

At Lost & Found, we help one person at a time, which creates ripples of hope across families, across generations, and across the community.

In 2025, Lost & Found celebrated its 25th anniversary of providing help, hope, and healing. Last year was a time for gratitude and reflection. **Gratitude** for the community that supports us, and **reflection** on our founding and how our organization has evolved to meet the needs of the community around us.



## THE FIRST DROP

Since day one, we have offered therapeutic grief groups at no cost. Lost & Found began with one group for children and one for parents and caregivers, led by professionals with graduate degrees in counseling, social work, or similar fields. It was our first attempt to soften the devastating impact that losing a parent or sibling could have on children and their families.



## TODAY'S RIPPLE

Twenty-five years later, **no-cost therapeutic grief groups** are the core of what we do. What has changed is the number of people we serve as we offer groups for children, parents, and adults.

In fiscal year 2025, which ended on June 30, 2025, 741 people were enrolled in our therapeutic grief groups. Group participants ranged in age from 4-year-olds experiencing the death of a parent or sibling, to young adults who lost a parent, to older adults (as old as 95+) grieving the loss of a spouse or adult child.



Additionally, more than 100 people found grief support through one-on-one counseling or consultation with one of our professional grief staff.

## A GRIEF-INFORMED COMMUNITY

Lost & Found works to create a grief-informed community. We educate hundreds of people each year about grief through community events and online resources. We offer educational presentations on our campus, online, and for local businesses.

**If your company or organization would like a tour of Lost & Found or would be interested in an educational presentation, reach out to our office at 417-865-9998.**





VALERIE & PHILLIP SHANE

# THE GREAT GRIEF QUEST

## PART 1

THE EARLY DAYS

When Brandon Shane died from COVID-19 in June of 2021, it made headlines. A Springfield News-Leader headline announced, “Brandon Shane, leader of popular VisionCon events, dies at 31 from COVID complications.”

Brandon was well known in the comic book, sci-fi, and fantasy fan worlds for leading the local Comic-Con-style festival.

“He was a nerd, God bless him. A self-proclaimed king of nerds,” said his father, Phillip.

While his notoriety in the comic book and fantasy world drew attention and praise from friends and family about what a kind, inclusive young man he was, it did not save his parents from devastating grief.

“Father’s Day was just a few weeks after his death,” his mother, Valerie, said. **“How could I celebrate something when my heart was just broken? It was completely broken.”**

Brandon also worked in the family’s pest control business. For Brandon’s father, he not only lost his son, but also a co-worker he could count on. **“I shut down,”** Phillip said. **“I don’t know how I survived those first few months without him.”**

Following Brandon’s death, Phillip and Valerie enrolled in a child-loss grief group at Lost & Found.



## PART 2 THE GREAT GRIEF QUEST HEROES WITHOUT CAPES

Like many new participants, Phillip and Valerie were reluctant to attend their first grief group, but that reluctance faded after their first night.

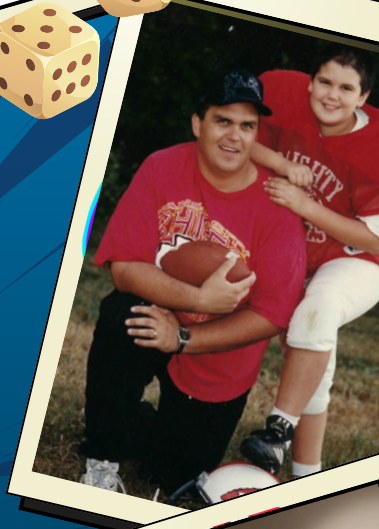
“I remember thinking, **‘These are my people now,’**” Valerie said. **“It didn’t matter how their child died or how old they were; these were people who missed their children.”**

Phillip and Valerie attended Lost & Found for nearly three years as they continued to find help, hope, and healing through their grief support group. As they reached a place of healing, they felt ready to give back as volunteers. They completed facilitator training and began serving in two very different groups in the fall of 2024.

Valerie serves with adults who’ve experienced the loss of a parent or sibling. Phillip became a facilitator in a kids’ group. While unexpected, he has found great joy in being “Mr. Phillip” and helping young children (ages 4-6) navigate the death of a parent or sibling.

Now, nearly two years into volunteering, Valerie recently shared that “volunteering has been another type of therapy,” and Phillip added, **“I know we’re making a difference for people, and that’s all that matters.”**

This couple’s presence as Lost & Found volunteers is an example of two people who battled the loss of their son, and who are dynamic **ripples of hope** for others walking a similar path of grief.





# Evening of Hope

We kicked off 2026 with our annual Evening of Hope gala on January 31. More than 400 supporters came together—not just to attend an event, but to make a lasting difference for grieving children and families. Guests gave generously, making for a night with an impact that extends far beyond a single moment. Events like Evening of Hope allow us to ensure children and families in our community have a place where they can receive therapeutic grief group support at no cost.

Carrying on the theme of *Ripples of Hope*, we opened the program with a video about Mr. Phillip and J.B. This duo became unlikely friends as Mr. Phillip began volunteering in the Little Ones group. *(Read more about Mr. Phillip on pages 4 & 5.)*

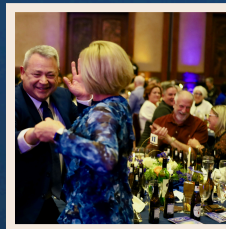
Keynote speaker, Dustin Rich, inspired the audience as he shared his journey of finding hope at Lost & Found after his wife, Ali, died of cancer in 2019.



During the Sponsor-a-Child commitment moment, we highlighted the Greenwade-Blair family, who came to Lost & Found after the death of Jaime, Allison's husband and a devoted father to Dylan, Lily, and J.B. Their story inspired 88 donors to sponsor a child in 2026.



**To every sponsor, donor, volunteer, and attendee – thank you. You didn't just make Evening of Hope a success. You created ripples that continue to reach children and families when they need it most.**

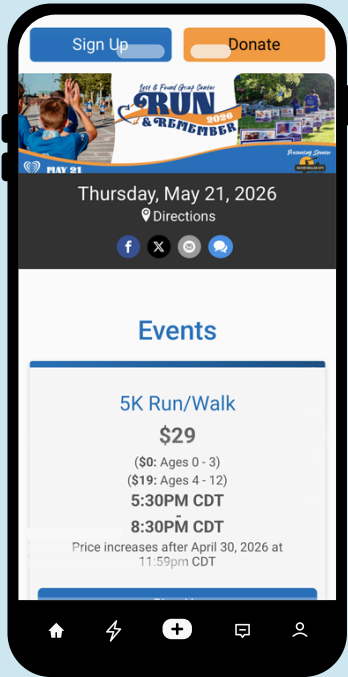


**THURSDAY  
MAY 21  
6:30 PM**  
Jordan Valley Park

Lost & Found Grief Center  
**RUN  
& REMEMBER** 2026



Scan to register



Lost & Found Grief Center's annual Run & Remember brings together hundreds of grief center participants and community supporters to run, walk, and remember. This is more than a 5K Run or 1-Mile Memory Walk; it is a time to reflect, remember, and honor friends and family who have died.

Run & Remember will be held on Thursday, May 21, at Jordan Valley Park. As part of the evening, we have a Memorial Sign Garden. Memory Signs are a visual way to honor your person, and are available for \$55 each. The deadline to purchase a sign is May 5. We will also have a family tent with special grief activities for all ages. Following the 5K and 1-Mile walk, there will be a remembrance program.

Pre-registration and event activities will open at 5:30 p.m. on May 21. The run will begin at 6:30 p.m. Anyone in our community can participate in Run & Remember park activities and the remembrance program, even if you are not registered to run or walk. If you plan to run or walk, please register online. Registration is open through race day.

Register to run, walk, and order memorial signs at RunSignUp or go to: [lostandfoundozarks.com/runandremember](http://lostandfoundozarks.com/runandremember)



Lost & Found Grief Center  
**GAMEDAY**  
THE ULTIMATE WATCH PARTY



**Golf, football, and fun was the name of the game on Sunday, November 2, 2025, at BigShots Golf.**

Hosted by Lost & Found's Junior Board, GameDay patrons were treated to great food, golf-themed games, and a silent auction while watching the Kansas City Chiefs take on the Buffalo Bills. It was a big win for Lost & Found, no matter the actual score.



**FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL FOR OUR Gameday '26 DATE ANNOUNCEMENT.**





# Lost & Found

grief center

## Our Mission

We strive to improve lives in our community by providing help, hope, and healing through professional grief support services.

## Our Vision

No One Should Grieve Alone

## Our Donors

Lost & Found Grief Center is almost entirely donor-funded. Your generosity helps us provide no-cost therapeutic grief support groups for our community. Thank you.



*Be a ripple of hope today  
Scan to donate.*

[lostandfoundozarks.com](http://lostandfoundozarks.com)

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