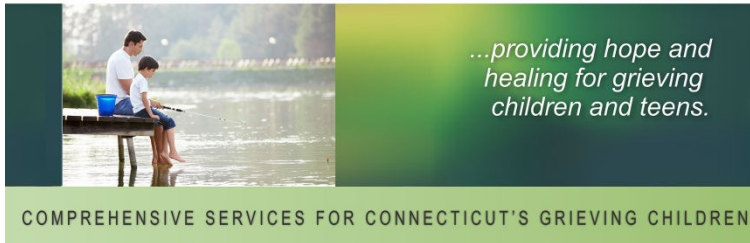


# THE Cove Center for Grieving Children



## ABOUT THE COVE

The Cove is the preeminent agency in Connecticut working with grieving children, and acts as a national leader among children's grief programs. With 7 Cove Family Sites and statewide programming for schools, outreach and professional development, it is an important resource for Connecticut's grieving children.

The Cove Center for Grieving Children has successfully delivered the Cove Family Program for the past 22 years throughout the state of Connecticut. One in 5 children will experience the death of a significant person in their lives before age 18 and over 38,000 children in the state of Connecticut will grieve the death of an immediate family member this year. Utilizing a peer support model, The Cove provides support, guidance and age appropriate activities for children and teens.

The key objectives of the programming are as follows:

- Engage children in processing their grief in healthy ways.
- Help children and teens avoid the devastating consequences of unresolved grief which include: low academic performance, increased incidence of dropping out of school, anger, depression, increased drug use and addiction, promiscuity, acting out, cutting and even suicide.
- Assist parents in understanding their child's grief process and how to support it appropriately.
- Engage parents in processing their own grief in healthy ways.
- Recruit new families in need of supportive services, through increased awareness and outreach.
- Provide additional grief support through a free summer camp experience at Camp Erin Connecticut.

The Cove Family Program includes a module for each school age group (elementary, middle and high school) developed through extensive research on child development and bereavement. Each site has a Site Director who is an LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) or LMFT (Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist) who serves as a parent/caregiver educator and Program Director. The Site Director is supported by trained volunteer facilitators who work directly with grieving children in peer support groups. Children are invited to explore, express and process their grief through age appropriate projects and activities involving art, journaling, grief process group work, movement, music, sports and games. Over 70% of the processing activities are art-related, to open up expression and help children to process their grief in a positive and safe environment. Educational materials and resources are provided to supplement processing activities. Children are given tools to understand that their grief is a normal process that can be managed in healthy ways. Parent/Caregivers are educated to support their child's grieving process and open up family communication.

Of the over 550 persons we provide direct services to each year in our family program, we anticipate that the vast majority will benefit with improved family communication and ability to process and understand their grief. A very small minority drop out of the program early on due to family issues and stressors. However, close to 96% of families evaluated report marked improvements in the areas of behavior, academics and ability of their children/teens to process their grief in healthy and effective ways since the start of the Cove program. The Cove program pre and post evaluations consistently show the positive effects of the program over the 20-week schedule and throughout life.

The Cove works with schools, hospitals, funeral homes, and mental health care professionals to provide information and training, as well as resources for grieving children and families and the professionals who work with them. We are part of CT's statewide 2-1-1 program. In 2013, we provided Camp Erin Newtown for grieving children across the state of CT in collaboration with The Moyer Foundation whose program model has successfully supported the implementation of 45 free bereavement camps across the US in collaboration with local bereavement support centers such as The Cove. This camp was renamed Camp Erin CT and in 2014, and The Cove received a 10 year commitment from The Moyer Foundation to partner to provide an annual summer camp experience for CT's grieving children and children from the tri state area. In 2017 we provided camp for 120 children. We also respond to traumatic incidents in communities such as suicides and untimely deaths with support for schools and families.

With 7 satellite sites, The Cove is able to reach families across the state of CT in need of bereavement support through our unique model designed to strengthen family communication, resiliency and provide support and education for children and teens to access as they travel the difficult journey through grief. The Cove organized the first two National Symposia on Children's Grief Support, drawing together hundreds of children's grief professionals from around the country to share learning. Out of these sessions, The National Alliance for Grieving Children was formed and has recognized Cove founder Mary Ann Emswiler with an award for her groundbreaking work in bringing together a national network of bereavement organizations. The Cove continues to be a member of The National Alliance for Grieving Children and utilized the collaborative input of psychologists, psychiatrists and bereavement professionals nationwide in the wake of Newtown to create a National Advisory Committee for Camp Erin Newtown. The Cove is proud to partner with The Moyer Foundation who along with the filmmakers recently received a Creative Arts Emmy in the Children's Programming category for the HBO Documentary Film's "ONE LAST HUG: Three Days at Grief Camp" featuring The Moyer Foundation's Camp Erin Los Angeles. Camp Erin Los Angeles has a similar model to Camp Erin CT and has provided guidance, input and collaborative support to The Cove in developing Camp Erin Newtown and Camp Erin Connecticut.

Cove founders Jim and Mary Ann Emswiler's book "Guiding Your Child Through Grief" has been featured in "Time" and "Health" Magazines and on "The Today Show" and in articles for national distribution through the National Alliance for Grieving Children. Cove personnel speak locally and nationally on the topic of childhood grief and have been contacted to consult on articles for Time and Newsweek magazines and schoolfamily.com. The Cove Center for Grieving Children is listed as one of the national providers on the Sesame Street "When Families Grieve" website and distributes the program CD and resource materials to families seeking support.

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