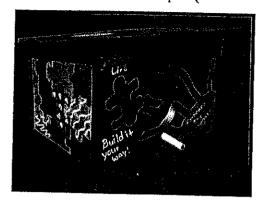
Broadway Mortusiy

The Birdhouse Project



As funeral service professionals, we understand the importance that the funeral and/or memorial ceremony plays in the grieving process. The time spent with family and friends offers the possibility of significant support, comfort and the opportunity to share memories and reflections of a special life. In the days, months and years following the ceremony, the reality of loss often sets in and the need to work through the grieving process becomes essential for "getting back to normal". The death of a loved one can be particularly difficult for children and teens, especially those who have experienced the death of a loved one through accident, illness, suicide or violence.

In 2010, Broadway Mortuary partnered with Hospice Care of Kansas to help sponsor the *Healing Hearts* summer bereavement camp. This camp provides a safe place for kids ages 7-17 to get away for a weekend and connect with others who have had a similar experience. It focuses on children and teens as they work through the emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of grief.

This year, the camp took place on June 3-5, 2011 at the Horizon Camp and Recreation Center near Arkansas City, Kansas. The central focus of the weekend was the Birdhouse Project. Each child built a birdhouse with artwork reflecting their own unique memories of their loved one and the loss. This project-based healing experience teaches that lessons become more meaningful because the process of making something gives the mind a context for what has been learned. The learning experience thereby becomes more deeply ingrained in the learner.

Broadway Mortuary is proud to partner with organizations, such as Hospice Care of Kansas, in order to help make a positive impact in the lives of others. We believe that we have a commitment to our community that goes beyond providing compassionate, caring and meaningful funeral services. Our goal is to not only be there for others at the time of a loss, but also to help them along the road to recovery and healing.

Basic Requirements (H)



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"Keeping the kids happy"

Have you ever gone to a funeral and a family member, a neighbor, a friend, or even yourself has to bring the kids to the funeral of a loved one and they are noisy, rowdy, wiggly, totally bored and out of control? This year we are happy and proud to say that Deseret Memorial Mortuary has come up with the perfect solution to that problem, a kid's playroom. This year we gathered together some toys for all ages, a table to sit at to color, a Lego table with Lego's and cars, coloring books and crayon's, puzzles, books to read, dolls, a TV, and video's to watch so that families can keep the kids happy and still get to hear the funeral over the speakers, all while the kids play.

The area is in an old office that wasn't being used and very close to the chapel and viewing room where the service is being conducted. This room has windows to see out and in if needed by the parents and children, to ensure security for the child who is able to see that the parent is still there and the parent to see how their child is doing, plus the kids can be a little noisy in there while not to disturb the service.

We at Deseret Memorial Mortuary have found this to be a great help to families and have had many of them tell us how nice it is to have a place for the kids to go and to keep them occupied and happy.

Another good use of the playroom is when families come to discuss the funeral plans of their loved one, or to meet with our Pre plan and insurance sales people, it is helpful to them to be able to sit and talk with the director or pre need person without distraction and interruption.

By providing this service to our families it has made it an easier place for them to come, it provides help and also a homier environment, to create ease at a sometimes difficult time.

Basic Requirement H



Statement of Achievements Category I Achievement H

THE ART OF GRIEF: A SUMMER GRIEF CAMP FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE LOST A LOVED ONE

Gunderson Funeral Home serves a diverse population throughout Dane County in six locations, both urban and rural, encompassing a wide range of economic resources as well as cultural diversity. Community service has been a hallmark of its history and present day commitment. A special commitment to programs serving children has been very evident in all these past years. So when Molly Tomony, a board certified Art Therapist and expert in Children's Grief approached Pete Gunderson for help funding a few scholarships for children who might otherwise be unable to attend, Pete not only provided these, he underwrote the costs of the entire camp!

Molly had envisioned a five day Summer Grief Camp for children 6 to 12 years of age. The motivation came from her extensive experience in helping children to express their grief and to heal from profound loss. She spoke of children's amazing ability to respond and to share their experiences and the need in the community to provide venues for this to happen.

Molly had formerly developed a Comprehensive Children's Grief Program for HospiceCare of Madison for the past 15 years which included not only services to the children but resources for those who loved them...parents, guardians, siblings. She is now on the staff of The Center For Life & Loss Integration in Madison where she works with grieving children and their families. She also teaches in the Masters Programs at both Edgewood College and The University of Wisconsin School of Social Work. The Center For Life & Loss Integration has worked closely with Gunderson Funeral Home and has great respect for Gunderson's incredible commitment to the Madison Community and communities throughout Dane County.

The Grief Summer Camp was held in Madison's East side at an art center with access to a beautiful park setting. The children attending all had either a parent or a sibling that died. Three of the children had special needs including ADHD, Attachment Disorder and Cerebral Palsy. All of them seemed to love art, telling stories and meeting other kids who have been through similar losses.

Experience for the kids included using the large foam fingers to create things that were special about themselves and special about their loved ones; talking about life cycles and beginnings and endings, seeing that circles have no endings just like memories. They tie dyed t-shirts using spiral ad circle themes.

One of the days with the theme of "Take A Walk In My Shoes", had the kids decorating flip flops which they could then wear in honor of their loved ones. They created a mural of foot prints and the children shared their stories of how the person died, memorials, funerals, beliefs and how their lives are different since their loved one died.

Parents or guardians were involved both at the beginning and at the end and seemed thrilled and touched by the experience for their children and their family. The last day there was a program for the parents where the children shared their experiences.

When we can help children express their grief and cope with their losses we help parents and families and really the community at large in fostering healthy emotional lives.

Molly had shared her ideas of ways to help children during the time of a funeral or visitation in an in service training program for all of Gunderson's Funeral Directors and staff. She spoke of this camp at that time as well. The funeral directors welcomed her ideas and her support in an area that is sometimes tricky and yet so important to a family's experience of the funeral.

With the success of this program, we hope it can continue to be offered, and to see it grow and prosper. To know that kids benefited from it and were helped is all the reward needed.

We'll Laugh Again

Smith Family Mortuary is located in Derby, Kansas. Derby is a suburb located about 5 miles South of Wichita, KS, and has a population of about 23,000. Derby is a bed room community of Wichita and still has a small town feel, with a good mix of blue collar and professional demographic. While members of the staff at Smith Mortuary volunteer and participate in many activities each year, this year we decided to highlight Micki Urton's continued commitment to Hospice Care of Kansas Kids Camp. Micki has represented Smith Family Mortuary the past two years at the Hospice Care of Kansas Camp. This years camp theme was "Camp Healing Hearts... We'll Laugh Again".

Often times, the hardest hit by grief are children. They do not know exactly how they are expected to act, and are somewhat confused by death as a whole. Camp Healing Hearts is in support of children and teens, ages 7 to 17, as they work through the emotional, physical and spiritual aspects of grief.

Micki Urton, Assistant Funeral Director, contributes her time as a companion to these children. Micki is the only funeral director that actively participates in the program. The companion to camper ratio is 1:2, so there is plenty of one-on-one attention to each child. Campers are able to reflect, share feelings and experiences, and ask any questions in this accepting environment.

One of the most rewarding activities the campers took part in this year was *Project: Birdhouse, Collaboration of the Heart, Mind, and Hands*. This is an innovative idea conceived in 2009 by Kris Munsch and Jeff Fouquet to help with their own grief recovery. Kris and Jeff travel the lower 48 states giving workshops and demonstrations of what they call project-based healing. The basis of the project is that each piece of the birdhouse represents a portion of the recovery process, for example, the walls are for the crisis and regret, load-bearing walls for affirmations and goals, and once these walls are strong enough, they are able to support the roof of safety and stability. Each participant writes affirmations and thoughts on the inside pieces of the house before it is assembled. As the birdhouse goes together, it represents their life returning to its whole self. The constant message is that one can pick up the pieces and rebuild their life, one wall at a time.

Besides its obvious benefit to these children, the camp reminds all the funeral directors and staff that it's not just the adults that are grieving. Children are affected, too. The "Birdhouse project" has given our staff another tool to help communicate through examples of project based healing. Micki learned hands on with the children at the camp, and was able to bring the enthusiasm back to the staff at Smith Mortuary so that we can pass on another avenue toward supporting the grief process and rebuilding a future.