Since the inception of Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home, the physical and psychological well being of children has been of paramount importance. In fact, Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home was the first and is still the only funeral home in the region with a playroom, making a strong statement of our commitment to children. Nestled between the much larger cities of Baton Rouge and New Orleans, the citizens of Hammond and Ponchatoula enjoy a much slower, more rural pace of life and our well known for their southern hospitality.

Several members of the Thompson Team's children had recently lost beloved family pets, leaving them with many questions and the wide array of grief related emotions that often accompany a death. With this rationale in mind, "Furever In Our Hearts" was created. Designed for children ages four and up, the goal of the workshops is to educate children about the physiological and psychological aspects of death, in a casual, accepting, and even fun environment.

The first "Furever In Our Hearts" Pet Loss Workshop was held on Saturday, May 4, 2013 at Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home's Hammond location. Prior to the event, flyers were displayed at all local veterinarian offices, pet grooming and supply shops, and local libraries. In addition, the event was advertised in the local newspaper, on the local radio station, and on the funeral home's Facebook page.

On the day of the big event, the weather was beautiful and a bit cooler than an average May day in Louisiana, providing the perfect opportunity to hold the event outdoors. The funeral home was brightly decorated to resemble a birthday party. As the children arrived, they played with sidewalk chalk, hula -hoops, and a bean-bag toss. Next, Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home's Grief Counselor, Lindsey Hornsby welcomed the children, shared her personal story of her pet's death and read the story, Saying Goodbye To Lulu. Then, the children were asked if they would like to share their stories of their pets' deaths, and many did. Tears were shed as the children made heartfelt comments such as, "Lance was the best frog ever", and "My cat Sam, was just too old to stay alive". Afterwards, The Big Red Barn, a local art studio, assisted the children in creating one of a kind, keepsake photo frames. To top things off, Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home's mascot, Teddy Tenderheart, made his grand debut! The children enjoyed taking their photos with Teddy as he gave them their very own stuffed animal. Each child left with a keepsake frame, animal crackers snack, and most importantly, a better understanding of death. The parents were very appreciative of our concern for their children and felt much more confident in their abilities to help their children cope with their grief. For several, it was their first time to come to the funeral home, which provided an opportunity to see first hand, what sets Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home apart from others.

Since the first "Furever In Our Hearts" pet loss workshop, Brandon G. Thompson Funeral Home staff, including Teddy Tenderheart, has made appearances at local preschools, a pet fair, and a health and wellness expo, to read stories, take photos and give stuffed animals to children. The response from local veterinarians, groomers, and other pet enthusiasts has been phenomenal. The free publicity that the event received was worth far more than the relatively low, monetary investment. The idea was so well received, that plans are being made to expand the "Furever In Our Hearts" Pet Loss Program to include adult workshops, and monthly support groups.