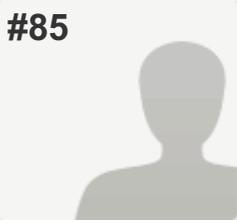


#85



**COMPLETE**

**Collector:** Web Link (Web Link)

**Started:** Friday, September 26, 2014 8:10:10 AM

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**IP Address:** 162.96.9.32

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**Q1: Has the program been in existence for at least one year (since September 1, 2013)?** Yes

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**Q2: Staff person submitting this nomination.**

Name: Cindy Fruitrail  
Title: Senior Director, Communications and Public Affairs  
Hospital/System: Fairview Health Services  
Address: 2450 Riverside Ave., FCO-1  
City: Minneapolis  
State: MN  
ZIP Code: 55454  
Email Address: cfruitr1@fairview.org  
Telephone Number: 612-672-2792

**Q3: Name of Volunteer Program you are nominating.** Fairview's Youth Grief Services

**Q4: Program Category: Select one of the four program categories.** Community Service – programs that assisted a health care organization in the design and delivery of services or programs of measurable impact to the wellbeing of individuals and/or the community.

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**Q5: Provide a brief description of the program, including its goals and outcomes. (600 words max)**

Fairview Health Services—a nonprofit, academic health system headquartered in Minneapolis—operates Youth Grief Services (YGS), a community outreach program designed to provide essential emotional support to youth and families struggling with the death of a loved one.

Since 2000, Youth Grief Services has provided significant grief support through its core programming to more than 3,000 people. In 2013, Youth Grief Services staff and volunteers provided direct services for more than 250 grieving children and teens and the adults who care for them. Another 300 youths and adults received email and telephone support or took part in a community education session.

The program started when a group of school social workers, counselors and faith community leaders recognized the lack of available resources to support young people and families through the trauma of losing a loved one. They formed a volunteer community coalition with leadership from the Rev. Elizabeth BJ Larson, senior chaplain at Fairview Ridges Hospital. Fairview provided space and support for the program, and Rev. Larson has served as its executive director since Youth Grief Services began.

Today, Youth Grief Services offers a range of support and education options—including support groups, telephone triage and a summer camp for grieving children and teens. It also provides grief education and presentations for schools and other organizations interested in learning more about childhood grief and how to support the grieving children they serve.

Grief education and support series: Fairview's Youth Grief Services offers a free, comprehensive seven-session grief support program three times a year for families with children ages 4 through 18. While children attend age-appropriate support groups, the adults in their lives attend either a Grief Education group to learn about how to best support their grieving children, or a Loss of Spouse support group. This evidenced-based support series is held in Burnsville, Minn., and south Minneapolis. Families come from around the Twin Cities metro area to participate. Each group is led by trained volunteers and supervised by staff.

Phone triage and community education: Throughout the year, YGS also offers phone triage for parents and other adults seeking support in working with grieving youth. This service provides support and evaluation to connect families with needed services and provide expert guidance. YGS staff also speak at school and community groups to educate the public and raise awareness about issues related to youth grief. On occasion, volunteers have co-presented about childhood grief.

Camp Erin®-Twin Cities: Since 2009, Youth Grief Services has hosted an annual weekend-long bereavement camp designed for kids ages 6-17 who have experienced the death of a family member or close friend. The three-day, two-night camp is held at a Northwoods summer camp 90 miles north of the Twin Cities. At Camp Erin, the focus is on the kids. The weekend works to combine all the excitement and fun of camp—such as canoeing, swimming, arts & crafts and games—with healing rituals and activities designed to help children express their grief, build trust and self-esteem, and begin to heal.

The camp experience is planned and led by trained volunteer grief facilitators. Throughout the weekend, campers participate in four Sharing Circles among their peers, where they're able to focus on their loss and healing journey. Facilitators focus on creating an atmosphere that allows for the safe expression of grief, both physically and emotionally.

Campers learn they are not alone in their grief, which fosters a sense of belonging that is often shattered after a parent or sibling dies. Lasting friendships develop, creating an extended support community. Campers also participate in camp-wide remembrance activities, including a luminary ceremony and memory board.

**Q6: Describe the role of volunteers in planning, developing, implementing and maintaining the program. (400 words max)**

Fairview's YGS has a professional staff of 1.8 FTEs. Volunteers are critical to the delivery of all its programs and services. YGS draws from an active pool of almost 100 volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life—including medical technicians, social workers and college students. The seven-week grief support series, offered three times a year, relies on about 20 volunteers, while Camp Erin operates with the help of 50 volunteers.

Retention is high. A handful of volunteers have been with YGS since it began in 2000. In 2013, the retention rate for volunteers at Camp Erin was 85 percent. Currently, there's a waiting list of 30 people who hope to volunteer with YGS.

Volunteers have a lot of responsibility. They lead grief support groups, help develop curriculum for the different age groups, and plan activities and oversee programs at Camp Erin. "They're actually helping change kids' lives—it's powerful, valuable work—and they can see that," says Jenny Simmonds, YGS lead program coordinator.

All YGS volunteers go through a 20-hour volunteer training program where they learn about the program and its objectives. They also gain knowledge about childhood grief and how children grieve differently than adults.

In the grief support series, youth are divided into five age groups and three adult volunteers facilitate each group, leading discussions and hands-on, age-appropriate activities. Two volunteers also lead the adult Grief Education and Loss of Spouse support groups for parents and other adults who care for the youth. After each session, the volunteers gather to debrief, problem solve and support one another.

Camp Erin has a Leadership Team of five dedicated volunteers who meet regularly throughout the year. They facilitate volunteer training sessions prior to camp and lead team-building activities for volunteers prior to campers' arrival. Their primary role is to support the 45 volunteer leaders throughout the weekend.

Each cabin has two adult volunteers serving as "Cabin Big Buddies." Each camper also is paired with two adult volunteers who facilitate their four "Sharing Circle" discussion sessions throughout the weekend. Volunteers oversee all camp activities—swimming, canoeing, arts & crafts and a memorial luminary ceremony and memory board.

Volunteers also help with important behind-the-scenes tasks such as mailings and organizing supplies. They recently created 600 personal, handwritten notes about why they choose to volunteer at YGS for a fundraising letter campaign. Some have even hosted fundraising dinners in their homes.

**Q7: Describe how this program is unique and/or innovative.(400 words max)**

Fairview's Youth Grief Services is the only program in Minnesota that offers consistent grief support and education for the entire family, with kids divided into groups by age. It's unique in providing both children and adults the opportunity to share with peers. Families and kids form friendships that carry forward beyond the program.

All YGS services are completely free for families. In the words of parent Nikki Shaffer: "When you lose someone, there's always some degree of financial uncertainty. It's a huge gift to not have the burden of having to pay for this program, and it means Youth Grief Services can serve all families in need." YGS also is innovative in how it provides extensive training to volunteers and then gives volunteers the important responsibility of directly supporting grieving families, under the careful supervision of staff.

YGS recently started an initiative to train a small number of mature high school students as volunteers. These junior volunteers typically work with our younger participants, helping lead group activities and facilitate conversation. "I'm very excited to start this next upcoming series!" says Alex Kulstad, 17, a junior volunteer. "It really is refreshing being around such amazing people every Thursday night."

The evidence-based curriculum used for the support group series has been developed by Jenny Simmonds, YGS lead coordinator, with help from volunteers. Each week during the series, volunteer facilitators focus on a specific topic—such as identifying and safely expressing feelings, anger management techniques and coping with regrets.

Camp Erin®, the nation's largest network of free bereavement camps for grieving children and teens ages 6-17, operates with help from the Moyer Foundation and other funders.

Camp Erin-Twin Cities has filled to capacity—and had a waiting list—every year since it began in 2009. It serves an average of 60 campers, but in 2014, the camp was able to add an additional cabin and serve 72 campers.

In 2012, YGS introduced a half-day parent camp for parents whose children are attending Camp Erin. Parents have the opportunity to meet other parents who are also grieving the loss of a loved one, exchange stories, gain knowledge about childhood grief and develop tools to support their children and teens.

Looking for new ways to support youth and adults struggling with grief after the death of a loved one reflects Fairview's mission of improving the health of the communities we serve.

**Q8: Describe how the program benefits the service recipients, the health care organization and/or the community. (400 words max)**

Ninety percent of the children who attend Fairview's Youth Grief Services support groups have lost a parent. The death of a loved one can be an overwhelming experience for anyone. But for a child, the death of someone they love can be particularly isolating, confusing and life altering. While other family members are overcome with their own grief, children often become forgotten mourners.

In children and teens, grief responses can appear mild and transient, when, in fact, the grief is threatening the very foundation of the child's world. Adults can recognize and understand what is happening with their emotions; children often cannot.

The consequences of untreated grief are profound. Research suggests at least 86 percent of young people in drug rehabilitation programs have experienced the death of someone important to them (Columbia University). One study showed that the children of parents who die suddenly are three times more likely to develop depression than non-bereaved children (Brent & Melhem, 2007).

Fairview's Youth Grief Services is recognized in the health, grief, and youth services community as an exceptional resource and essential service for children and families struggling with grief. In 2004, the Rev. Elizabeth BJ Larson, YGS executive director, was named a "Champion of Health" by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota for fostering a new sense of meaning, purpose and hope in participants of youth and adult grief services.

In a survey of YGS support group participants, more than 90 percent said they "strongly agreed" that Youth Grief Services helped their family talk more about their grief as a family and that sharing with peers who understood was very helpful to them.

Youth Grief Services' benefits are best articulated by people who've participated in its programs:

- "My favorite part about Youth Grief Services is that I know I'm not alone in losing a daddy," says Luke Shaffer, age 6.
- "They say that every cloud has a silver lining and, for us, in the wake of the loss of our husband and father, Youth Grief Services was ours," says Susan Spaulding, who took part in the program with her son A.J. after the death of her husband.
- Widower Peter Vogt says he, his 11-year-old son and his 5-year-old daughter have all benefited from Youth Grief Services' support group and grief camp. "When something like this happens in your life, it's both comforting and empowering to know you're not alone."

**PAGE 6: Contacts**

**Q9: Chief Executive Officer of the nominated hospital/system.**

Name	Rulon F. Stacey
Title	President and CEO
Email Address	rstacey1@fairview.org
Telephone Number	612-672-6618

**Q10: CEO Support.**

Checked box confirms that your CEO supports the submission of the nominated program.

**Q11: Administrative Assistant to the CEO.**

Name	Roxie Aase
Title	Executive Assistant to the CEO
Email Address	raase1@fairview.org
Telephone Number	612-672-6618

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**Q12: Name of the volunteer or auxilian who will be representing the program at the AHA Annual Meeting, May 4, 2015.**

Name	Karen Lahn
Title	Group facilitator and camp counselor for Youth Grief Services
Home Address	7253 Hunters Run
City	Eden Prairie
State	MN
ZIP Code	55346
Email Address	karennee@uwalumni.com
Telephone Number	612-910-3139

**Q13: Volunteer Service Professional/Manager.**

Name	Jenny Simmonds
Title	Lead Program Coordinator, Fairview's Youth Grief Services/ Camp Director, Camp Erin-Twin Cities
Email	jsimmon3@fairview.org
Telephone	952-892-2797

<b>Q14: In submitting this application, we give the American Hospital Association permission to use and disseminate the information herein.</b>	Agree
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**PAGE 9: Your survey has been submitted!**

**Q15: YOUR SURVEY HAS BEEN SUBMITTED!** Thank you for completing this nomination for the HAVE Award. Please print a copy of this screen, by selecting CTRL P and sending to your printer, if confirmation that your nomination has been sent and received is needed. Please press the "Survey Completed" button below to submit your nomination.

*Respondent skipped this question*