

## Growing Through Grief Program



For over 25 years, supported entirely by philanthropy thanks to our generous donors, the Growing Through Grief (GTG) program has provided no-fee, school-based grief support and education to elementary, middle and high school students who have experienced the death of a family member or friend.

Our unique GTG program is provided across **16 partnering school districts in 114 school locations**, providing crucial grief support and education to children, families and school communities.

**In 2022, 10 GTG counselors served 665 students each week**, helping students learn about grief, develop coping skills and build resiliency. Counseling is provided weekly through group or one-to-one sessions during the school year, for students in kindergarten through high school graduation. Students are provided support at key developmental waypoints in their lives. In 2022, GTG provided 10,281 hours of support to students and parents.

Collaborative death-related crisis support is also provided to our 16 partnering school districts, and includes education and counseling support to school staff, teachers and special groups particularly impacted. In 2022, 18 death-related crisis events occurred. GTG provided support to 25,383 students, family members and school staff related to these crises.

### The Bush family reflects with gratitude

In 2005, John Bush was diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer and died a year later, leaving his wife, Nancy, and their three children devastated.

Nancy knew she and her kids—who were 13, 11 and 7 years old at the time—were going to need help. She checked out various programs and therapy options, then heard about the Park Nicollet Foundation Growing Through Grief program, provided right at their Edina schools.



Jack, Maggie, Hank and Nancy

“For my kids to be able to have a place to share that’s outside of family, to be able to talk about it, to be able to talk about their feelings, their sadness, I think it’s more important than they even realized at the time,” she said.

Today Maggie (29), Jack (27) and Hank (23) are healthy and successful adults. “My kids are amazing and have adjusted incredibly well to their dad’s death,” Nancy shared. “I would absolutely credit the Growing Through Grief program for helping them move forward and having productive, happy experiences in life.

“As a parent, you try to do as much as you can yourself. But that’s not enough because I was grieving too. To have a program available to them right in their school, during the school day, that provided them with an understanding of grief and an outlet to share their feelings—to talk with other kids who are going through similar situations—that’s invaluable.”

Nancy shared, “It definitely helped my kids manage their grief and move forward into their futures. Having this program available for them was such a gift to our family.”

**1 in 18**

One in eighteen children in Minnesota will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18

**25,383**

Students, family members and school staff were supported through 18 death-related crises

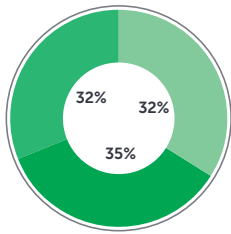
**10,281**

Hours of education and counseling support to students and parents

Thanks to the generosity of our donors in 2022, the Growing Through Grief program gave vital support services to children and youth bringing them a significant dose of hope and joy through specialized counseling services. While many of our children and teens attended school remotely or via a hybrid in-person/remote schedule, the GTG program adapted to be there for them.

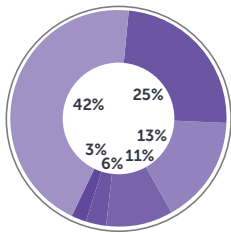


## Demographics



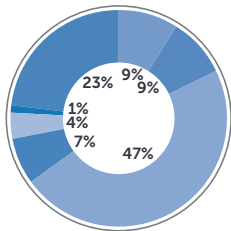
### Participant Grade Level

- 32% High School
- 32% Middle School
- 35% Elementary School



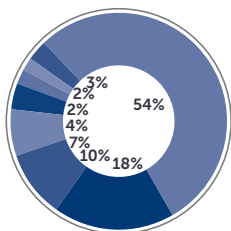
### Student Relationship to Person Who Died

- 42% Father
- 25% Mother
- 11% Sibling
- 13% Extended Family
- 3% Friend/Classmate
- 6% Other



### Cause of Death

- 47% Medical
- 9% Alcohol/Drugs
- 9% Accident
- 7% Suicide
- 4% Violence
- 1% Other
- 23% Don't Know



### Ethnicity

- 54% Caucasian/White
- 18% African American
- 10% Multiracial
- 7% Latinx/Hispanic
- 4% Asian/Pacific Islander
- 2% American Indian
- 2% African
- 3% Declined

## 2022 Highlights

**665**

Student participants in weekly sessions

**587**

Students participating in 107 grief groups

**78**

Students participating in individual grief counseling sessions

- Assisted school districts in responding to 18 death-related crisis events supporting 25,383 students, parents and school staff.
- Continued to expand curriculum and resources for school staff, counselors and students.
- Conducted a survey of GTG elementary students which indicated GTG positively impacted 95% with feelings of hope, and helped 92% feel less lonely through their grief experience.
- The 11-member GTG Advisory Council consisting of health-care and school professionals, parents, first responders and community members shared insight to inform GTG programming and community engagement.
- Partnered with the National Alliance for Children's Grief to develop "Grief Talk: School Tool Kit" designed to help promote grief sensitive and responsive schools. The kit includes content on peer-to-peer grief support, and guidance and tools for implementing individual bereavement plans.
- Partnered with the National Coalition to Support Grieving Students to promote National Childhood Grief Awareness Month within our partnering school districts.



## Student Outcomes

Improved knowledge of grief process

**99%**

Improved ability to recognize and name feelings such as sadness and joy

**91%**

Improved concentration in the classroom

**90%**

Improved knowledge and use of healthy coping skills

**100%**



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