

# THE GRIEF BRIEF



## Emma's Place Staten Island Grief Center for Children and Families

*Support ~ Community ~ Hope*

January, 2015  
Volume 1, Issue 1

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## A Blessing Comes From Tragedy

In 2012, 5 year old Emma Trapp, a spirited and happy little girl, witnessed the horrific deaths of her mother and father. She and her younger sister, Sophia, were sent to live with their grandmother, Francine, and their Aunt Jamie. Knowing that Emma was having difficulty adjusting, her grandmother contacted Karen Goldman, LMHC, for grief counseling for Emma. In the comfort of Karen's private office and through play and art therapy, Karen and Emma built a safe trusting relationship. Initially, Emma remembered little of the trauma of her parent's death. As the therapeutic relationship progressed, Emma began recalling the details in bits and pieces. Eventually vivid memories surfaced and Emma was able to draw on the love and able

to draw on the love and strength of her family and nurturing relationship with Karen. Emma learned it was okay to be happy, playful and sad all at the same time. Soon, she was even comfortable enough to draw the nightmares she had been suffering from and incorporate them into her concrete memories of that time. The breakthrough was astonishing. The change in Emma was increasingly evident. She regained her sparkle and joy. She developed a new set of coping skills that made it easier to talk about what had happened, not only with Karen, but also with her family. It made tremendous difference as the family attempted to move forward from their loss. As much as Karen had affected Emma and her family, they also

inspired her. After two years of counseling, Karen asked the family if she could name her burgeoning not-for-profit grief center after Emma. With their blessing, Emma's Place was born. Both Francine's and Jamie's compassion, great strength and positive energy inspire everyone who is a part of the organization. Everything we do stands as a testament to Emma and her ability, with help from both her family and a caring counselor, to find her smile through her tears, her courage through her nightmares and the truth that allowed her to live despite the deaths she had suffered. This is what Emma's Place is committed to bringing to countless other children and families as Staten Island's only Grief Center.



Emma Trapp

### "FUN-D" RAISING

Emma's Place inaugural fundraiser was held on October 26 at Alor Café at 2110 Richmond Road where Children from the Staten Island Community dressed, as princesses, pirates, hippies, and in other imaginative costumes were entertained by other children rock groups

organized by the Holding Up Each Other Mic. Families and children attending enjoyed delicious food, got to meet Frozen characters, received gifts, and filled their hearts with the joy knowing they were helping bereaved families in the community.



### At Emma's Place you will

- Be supported by those who have journeyed through their own path of grief.
- Find a community of welcoming, caring and committed individuals who will listen.
- Learn healthy grief processing in a private, safe-setting which facilitates healing while offering the hope and tools to move forward to a meaningful life.

## Happy to Meet You



**Karen L. Goldman, Founder / President, Emma's Place-Staten Island Grief Center**

is a NY State Licensed Mental Health Counselor and Board Certified Psychotherapist specializing in Bereavement Counseling. She is the Bereavement Coordinator for the local Hospice and was the founding creator and the Clinical Director of Camp Good Grief of Staten Island (2009-2013). Karen serves the community through various institutions: schools, church groups, hospitals and private practice

Karen runs adult and children's bereavement groups and counsels individuals, couples, children and families, guiding them through loss, depression/despair and life's transitions. Karen has been dedicated to the treatment of grief for over twenty five years.



**Dr. Carolyn Oglio-Taverner is our Vice President.** She counsels children individually and in groups. She has a Master's Degree in Developmental

Psychopathology from Columbia University, Teachers' College and a Ph.D. in Developmental Psychology from CUNY. As an Adjunct Professor at Wagner College and the College of Staten Island, she teaches Developmental Psychology, Child Psychology and Death and Dying. She also is honored to facilitate the Little Angels Children's Bereavement group at St. Joseph St. Thomas Parish and is a NY Registered Director for Rainbows, Inc., an organization which works to guide children through the losses in their life. As a consultant for the Archdiocese of NY she helped establish additional children's groups and train others to do this rewarding work.



**Kristin Bermudez is our Administrative Assistant.** She graduated from The College of Staten

Island with a Major in Social Work. She has over twenty years of experience working with the physically and mentally challenged and Autistic population. Kristin completed her undergraduate internship with the Department of Education providing individual and group bereavement and at risk counseling to students, ages 5-15. Kristin has also been dedicated to assisting Karen Goldman in her grief arts, activities and education throughout the years.

## Message from Executive Director Karen Goldman

As the founder of Emma's Place, I am excited not only about our mission for the grief center but also about the idea that there will be a place for children, teens and adults to find comfort from one another while going through the grief process. Emma's Place provides grieving children with age-appropriate coping skills that will help them manage grief in their day-to-day lives. Emma's Place staff will also be sharing our counseling skills with local schools by running bereavement support groups, as well as training school personnel in grief and loss education. I am excited our mission is moving forward to help more bereaved children, teens and families in a consistent, manageable manner.

SI Grief Center will allow children and teenagers grieving a death of a parent, primary caregiver, sibling, or any loved one, to gather in a safe and secure environment and share their grief experiences, feelings and memories. It will also allow families to work through their grief together with a professionally trained staff. Most of us - donors, volunteers, staff - work to support the Grief Center because we know what it's like to lose someone. Simply, we know Grief.

These peer support groups will allow children, teenagers and adults to feel less alone and to know that there are others who are also walking this path. Although there will be similarities in their stories and experiences, it is important to realize each person travels through grief in a unique and individual way, and these differences are respected as well.

I have chosen to open Emma's Place because this mission is near and dear to my heart. I was fourteen years old when I lost my father to a terminal illness. I find great comfort in knowing there will be a place for families to share their journey with peers and staff that can understand and relate. I'm also grieving the death of several family members and my three closest friends who died within the past few months and years. I know the importance of being able to identify with someone else that has experienced a similar loss and to know that "I'm not alone". I remember that a great portion of my healing after my father died came while meeting with a group of other bereaved children that also had a parent, friend, brother or sister die. Even though they all died in different ways—tragically, long-term illness and suicide—it was still a comfort to be able to be with other kids who knew what I was feeling and going through.

I have made grief education my life's work, in order to help guide others through the pain and confusion of their losses. One of my greatest rewards came along three years ago, when I met my then five year old client, Emma. She had tragically lost both of her parents and was living with her grandmother and aunt. With the permission of Emma's family, Emma's story of grief and our hard work together in understanding her losses and her subsequent healing led me to create our Grief Center.

We often receive calls from families from around the community that have lost loved ones, and don't have or know of any resources nearby. I encourage you to take a moment to look through our website and consider how you may be a part of Emma's Place. [www.emmasplacesi.com](http://www.emmasplacesi.com)

*"I know the importance of being able to identify with someone else that has experienced a similar loss and to know that I'm not alone".*

# MY HEART IS FILLED WITH LOVE

**ON EACH HEART, WRITE A WORD OR DRAW A PICTURE DESCRIBING SOMETHING YOU LOVED AND REMEMBER ABOUT THE PERSON THAT DIED.**



**Emma's Place  
Staten Island Grief & Loss  
Center For Children and  
Families**

1076 Forest Avenue  
Staten Island, NY 10310

[www.emmasplacesi.org](http://www.emmasplacesi.org)

Contact us at:

Telephone: 347.850.2322

E-mail:

[info@statenislandgriefcenter.com](mailto:info@statenislandgriefcenter.com)

Support ~ Community ~ Hope



*We rely on you.*

Our Center is supported through donations, grants, memorials and bequests; which will allow us to provide these services at no cost to the children and families it serves.

There are a variety of ways to support Emma's Place and to help reach grieving children and families. Emmas' Place receives no government grants and relies entirely on community support to sustain the organization. We are currently looking for a permanent, cozy home for Emma's Place. Anyone with knowledge of a safe, house or building for rent or as a donation would be greatly appreciated.

Donations can be made out directly to Staten Island Grief Center and mailed to Emma's Place, 1076 Forest Ave. Staten Island, New York 10310. Emma's Place staff members are available to make presentations or talk further on the phone – please contact us at 347-850-2322 or [info@emmasplacesi.org](mailto:info@emmasplacesi.org)

*We greatly appreciate your generosity!*

**Emma's Place** is a Staten Island not-for-profit organization of care giving professionals and volunteers committed to supporting grieving children and families year round. Its purpose is to facilitate healing through grief and loss education, including individual and group counseling, family talk, play and, art therapies and special events.

**Our Vision:** A free-standing, independent grief and loss center, supported by the compassion and generosity of community funding, and therefore dedicated to having the capabilities to support the growing needs of the community. Emma's Place will become the primary resource for local grief and loss education.

**Emma's Place** services are free to the Staten Island Community, please check our calendar at [www.emmasplacesi.org](http://www.emmasplacesi.org) for our program schedule and appointment availability. **Emma's Place:**

- Helps children and families deal with the emotional impact of loss
- Provides individual and group counseling for children, teens and adults
- Uses multiple modalities such as art, music, and play therapy to help participants process through grief.
- Conducts educational conferences, workshops, seminars and memorial services.
- Is staffed with professional counselors, hospice workers, community professionals and trained volunteers

Read more about Emma's Place at [http://blog.silive.com/inside\\_out\\_column/2014/11/insout\\_25\\_1.html](http://blog.silive.com/inside_out_column/2014/11/insout_25_1.html)

## Questions and Answers

### *How can I help a child get-over a loss?*

It is important to remember that loss is not something that is "gotten-over". Therefore, a first step in helping a child who has suffered a loss is to help them understand that loss is not something that is "gotten over" but dealing with a loss is the process of learning how to incorporate the loss into a new lifestyle. You can help a child see that they can still maintain a

connection to their deceased loved one by helping them find ways to honor and remember the person with activities like making memory boxes, drawing hearts and writing things they loved about the person on the heart, planning a memorial, etc. When children grieve they can feel many different feelings, even some conflicting feelings at the same time. It is important that you reassure children that any feeling they have is

OK.

Encourage children to talk about the person and create a space where they are comfortable talking about both the positive and negative characteristics of their loved one that died. Different children have different coping styles and different timetables of grief, and it is important that children feel their grief is being validated.

*"Loss is not something that is "gotten over" but dealing with a loss is the process of learning how to incorporate the loss into a new lifestyle."*