

Kaleidoscope offers free counseling during times of loss for kids, families

By Sarah Kirby Transcript Staff Writer | Posted: Tuesday, October 6, 2015 9:19 am

Suzy Price hopes people will never have to meet her.

Price is the founder of a local organization, Kaleidoscope, that offers free grief support to children and families who have experienced the loss of loved ones.

“Children grieve differently than adults do,” Price said. “Sometimes how they grieve looks like they’re not grieving or they either act out or play, and so there is a barrier for understanding what the children are going through.”

Price created Kaleidoscope after discussions with local teachers, clergy and school administrators who highlighted a lack of support services available for grieving children and their families.

“I love working with children. It’s a passion of mine,” Price said. “I think it’s a needed service.”

Since its inception in March 2006, Kaleidoscope has served more than 250 children and adults, offering free peer support groups for school-aged children and their parents or guardians who have had a loved one die.

“There are no geographic boundaries for who may attend,” Price said. “We have served families in Lawton, Edmond, Moore and Noble and, of course, Norman.”

Families, on average, participate in grief support sessions in a group setting twice a month for approximately a year.

Sessions are ongoing, meaning families or individuals may participate in the support groups until they are comfortable exiting the program. Children are divided into appropriate age groups, and there is an adult group.

Each group is facilitated by trained Kaleidoscope volunteers, many of who have counseling licenses. The groups use books, activities and discussions to explore their emotions.

“We have a curriculum that we follow, it’s always a very organized meeting — either a story and a craft — but the whole purpose is to give an opportunity to show their feelings in a very accepting way, where nobody is going to take away their feelings, but we’re going to support them in their feelings,” Price said.

Kaleidoscope will mark its 10th year as a Norman organization next year. Price said the organization has an all-volunteer staff.

“Everybody who volunteers also has a full-time job,” Price said. “So we don’t have as many hours as some organizations might have.”

Price credited United Way for financial grants and First Baptist Church for its use of their building to host sessions.

“The community has been great to us,” Price said. “The money we get from United Way is used for supplies and training. The United Way has been great. They’re very supportive.”

For more information about Kaleidoscope, visit unitedwaynorman.org.

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