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Rainbows is the largest international children's charity dedicated solely to helping youth successfully navigate the very difficult grief process. Every day, children are touched by emotional suffering caused by a death, divorce, deployment of a family member, incarceration of a loved one, or any of a multitude of significant event traumas including natural or manmade disasters. While a few children may be resilient to these events, we know that most do not bounce back without help.

Children need guidance and compassion to prevent a loss event from literally defining their lives through later destructive choices. In fact, research proves that unresolved grief leaves children vulnerable to major at-risk behaviors:

- According to the *Center for Disease Control*, 75% of children/adolescents in chemical dependency hospitals are from single-parent families.
- The *National Center for Health Statistics* has determined that 1 out of 5 children have a learning, emotional, or behavioral problem due to the family system changing.
- More than one half of all youths incarcerated for criminal acts lived in one-parent families when they were children. (*Children's Defense Fund*).
- Research by the *Annie E. Casey Foundation* has found that 9 million American children face risk factors that may hinder their ability to become healthy and productive adults. One in seven children deal with at least four of the risk factors, which includes growing up in a single-parent household. Children confronting several risk factors are more likely to experience problems with concentration, communication, and health. (*1999 Kids Count Survey - Annie E. Casey Foundation*).

Since our founding in 1983, Rainbows has helped and supported over 2.5 million children and teens. Rainbows programs have been implemented in all 50 States (the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam) and 17 other countries.

Rainbows philosophy is based on four principles:

1. Children and teens are often left with no one guiding them through the turbulent seas of grief because their parents and caregivers are grieving too.
2. Children don't know how to grieve and the emotional and psychological consequences of this can be devastating.
3. Children of divorce grieve as deeply as children who have had a loved one die.
4. Children can be healed and thrive after loss with appropriate guidance and support.

Armed with those principles, Rainbows programs offer coping tools to build the confidence and self-esteem of these hurting children, improve communication in their families and peer relationships, prevent destructive behaviors such as involvement with gangs, alcohol and drug abuse, and ultimately improve school attendance and academic performance.

The strength of our curricula has been Rainbows commitment to provide the necessary training for all those adults who are chosen to become compassionate companions with the children and teens on their journey of grief. The program materials can be utilized by professional educators, counselors, or other community members/volunteers who have interest and experience in working with children, teens, or adults.

Pre-schoolers (ages 3-4) can find support on their level by participating in the SunBeams program which combines puppetry, manipulative activities, and music, as well an ongoing Parent Guide which reinforces session topics at home with the child's caregiver.

Elementary age children (5-13) form a strong bond of support and often want to keep attending support groups even after they have worked through the changes in their family. A unique Alumni Program is designed just for these young people so they can continue their Rainbows experience.

Kaleidoscope is available for adults, 19 years and older, who have experienced death, divorce or abandonment at some time in their life. No matter how old you are, you are still someone's child and may be carrying the grief of this childhood experience. This program has also been used successfully with incarcerated individuals who have had loss previously in their lives and want to examine the unhealthy behaviors they have made in regard to that loss.

Prism is a peer support group for single parents and stepparents. Through Prism, parents come to understand their own grief process, have an opportunity to become attuned to their child's grief, learn single parenting skills, and with enthusiasm and love, recreated "family" again. This program has also aided many grandparents who are raising their grandchildren because of its inspiration and parenting skills presented throughout the sessions.

Silver Linings Community Response Program is a community support program for counselors, volunteers, faith communities, and relief organizations needing additional tools to assist youth experiencing emotional turmoil due to loss/change. Children ages 5-8 and 9-13, as well as teens, are able to share their feelings and thoughts about these changes with others their own age. This resource is ideal for agencies and organizations that assist children and families during community crisis events, including military deployment.

Since 2003, our Registered Sites across the United States have administered age-group level specific evaluations to their participants both before and after their Rainbows experience. The collection of this data have included descriptive measures or percentages to show change over time, and also allow Rainbows to determine whether the children experience statistically significant and positive change in their feelings from pre-test to post-test.

The evaluation completed in October 2006 by Dr. Michaela L. Z. Farber, PhD of the National Catholic School of Social Service, The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC yielded the following findings:

1. Participants who experience Rainbows exhibit statistically significant, positive change in their ability to communicate their feelings from pre-test to post-test evaluations.
2. These participants experience this positive change regardless of age, gender and despite the type of loss or number of losses that caused them to join the Rainbows support groups.
3. Participating in the Rainbows program provides the children with a higher appraisal of their well-being and may enable them to confidently cope with life's changes and make better choices in behavior.

For more information on Rainbows, including available programs, training, volunteer and support needs, please contact

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