



The Community Hospice Wave Riders Program for Grieving Children and Teens

School Outreach Programs



WAVE RIDERS PROGRAM

The School Outreach Program was developed as an outgrowth of our *Wave Riders Program*. Wave Riders programs traditionally offered children and family grief support groups at our six Community Hospice sites. Over the past few years we have had a significant increase from schools asking us for assistance with student grief issues. The School Outreach Program is one way we can reach out to those children and teenagers who cannot come to us. The Wave Riders School Outreach Program provides an important resource for all educators who are dealing with children's grief.

School and school friendships play a large part in young people's lives. It is tremendously helpful for grieving students to feel safe, supported and less isolated as they move through the normal, natural pain of grief that often affects their social lives and school performance. We also realize that this is sometimes an overwhelming and difficult task for school personnel to respond to. Our goal is to offer our assistance by providing the guidance and support necessary to deal effectively with issues of loss and grief within a school setting.

The Community Hospice

445 New Karner Road
Albany, NY 12205
Phone: 518-724-0200

The Community Hospice

246 Manny Corners Rd.
Amsterdam, NY 12010
Phone: 518-843-5412

The Community Hospice

47 Liberty Street
Catskill, NY 12414
Phone: 518-943-5402

The Community Hospice

295 Valley View Blvd.
Rensselaer, NY 12144
Phone: 518-285-8100

The Community Hospice

179 Lawrence Street
Saratoga, NY 12866
Phone: 518-581-0800

Available Services

Wave Riders School Groups

This six week support group can be held at your school with permission from the principal. A trained grief counselor co-facilitates each group with a designated clinical school staff. In this program, children develop skills to help cope with their losses. Sessions provide a safe environment for grieving children to share and explore feelings and concerns. The program includes activities designed to promote healing by fostering connections to self and others. Groups are designed, not as therapy groups, but as peer support groups. (Funding is limited; Program availability based on need.)

Wave Riders Individual Sessions

If there are not enough students to form a group (minimum of five students), individual support sessions are available.

Educational In-Services

- Understanding the grieving process of children and adolescents
- Impact of grief on learning and behavior
- How teachers can help the grieving child in their classroom
- Parent educational evening on "Children/Teen Grief"
- Teachers/staff as caregivers who deserve to process their own grief
- Plus a variety of other bereavement topics

Student Health Wellness Day Workshops

- What does grief look like?
- How can I help a grieving friend?

For information, please contact: tara.hempel@sphp.com 518-285-8100
Tara Hempel, LMSW, Pediatric Bereavement Specialist



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Resource Materials

- Educational Handouts on child/teen grief-related topics
- Assistance in updating your school library on grief related materials

Support Services for Schools in Crisis

When schools are faced with the death of a student or staff member, we are available to work with them to implement their school crisis plan.

Anticipated Death of Student or School Staff Member

- Assist with the development of an action plan to be used at time of death
- Provide in-service to school staff regarding
 - how child/teen grief education
 - how teachers and parents can prepare students
 - how members of school community can support each other

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Immediate Crisis after Death of Student or School Staff Member

1. Assist the school's crisis response team with their plan of action
2. Support school administrators in composing a letter to inform staff, students and parents of the death
3. Meet with staff to provide information and support to process the crisis
4. Meet with impacted students to inform, support and help them to cope with the death
5. Assist with plans to memorialize the person who died
6. Provide educational materials for staff, parents and students
7. Offer bereavement counseling to affected staff members
8. Train school staff on how children/teens grieve and how teachers can support grieving students
9. Offer an educational session to parents on child/teen grief and how parents can support the grieving process
10. Lead a private memorial service for staff members
11. Identify at-risk students, and provide intervention and/or referrals to suitable professional providers

Post-Crisis after the Death of Student or School Staff Member

1. Provide grief support groups for those children/teens most impacted by the death
2. Monitor at-risk students, and continue to provide intervention and/or referrals
3. Offer individual or family bereavement support sessions as needed
4. Meet with the librarian to review books on children/teen grief and loss

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