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/ 'karita:s / (noun) love of humankind, charity

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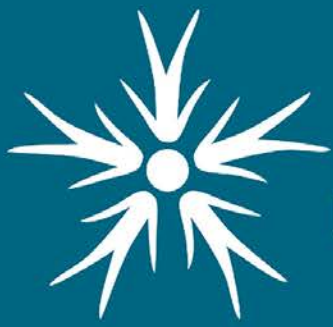
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COMMUNITY
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Enabling Utahns to make meaningful contributions through community-centered philanthropy

Valerie Phillips
Caritas Staff

Although many Utahns might not know the Community Foundation of Utah by name, they have likely felt its impact in one way or another.

Since its founding in 2008, CFU has granted over \$200 million to more than 1,000 nonprofits and charities, partnering on such diverse projects as helping low-income youth earn a bike, growing gardens, resettling Afghan refugees, providing healthcare to the homeless and mobile dentistry for seniors, funding computer science education in Utah schools, saving the Great Salt Lake — and that’s just for starters.

Currently there are about 300 different funds within CFU, according to Ian Shelledy, CFU’s chief operating officer. Last year, the CFU awarded over \$57 million in grants to nonprofits.

But it’s not just a matter of throwing money at a problem.

“We are this great convener,” said Shelledy. “We bring people from all different parts of the community to work on an issue together.”

Utah often gets ranked as one of the most charitable states for its high rate of nonprofits, volunteering and giving. “But there wasn’t a lot of coordination and some duplication,” said Shelledy. “A community foundation brings them all together to consider, ‘How can we do things more strategically to have the most impact?’ There are few places in our world today where people from diverse perspectives can come and work together,

and that is so important.”

A community foundation is a public charity that supports a specific geographical area. The first community foundation was founded in 1914, and there are over 700 across the country. Utah was the last state to get one, founded in 2008 by Fraser Nelson and Greg Warnock.

“Philanthropy is society’s risk capital,” Shelledy said. “It can’t solve every problem, but it can experiment and see what interventions work. Government has resources but isn’t able to experiment. We can take the risk out of it.”

For instance, when the Switchpoint Community Resource Center in St. George came up with

fresh ideas to help solve the problems of homelessness, CFA offered funding.

One idea was to create an aeroponic garden to grow produce. Some of the lettuce is used in nutritious meals in the homeless shelter, and some is sold in the community. The project gives jobs to those in the shelter who grow and sell the food, and revenue for Switchpoint.

“We like to create our own enterprises so we can become more self-sufficient,” said Carol Hollowell, Switchpoint’s executive director.

The group also used CFU funds to open a 24/7 daycare, after finding that many people couldn’t accept jobs because they lacked childcare.

Stepping Stones Child Care in St. George is open to the community and helps earn revenue for other Switchpoint programs.

“These were ventures that had never been tried before and they were both successful,” said Shelledy.

“Both the garden and the daycare have been open over a year,” said Hollowell. “They supply jobs for the clients we serve, they fill a gap in the community and they create revenue for us.”

She said that CFU’s investment made it easier to hit the ground running, establishing a successful track record that attracted other foundations to offer funding.

When a pressing community need arises, CFU is often the go-to organization to raise, oversee and help disperse what is called “community impact funds.” Donations vary from a few dollars earned by kids’ lemonade stands, to million-dollar gifts from a business or private donor.

When the United States evacuated more than 65,000 Afghans fleeing Afghanistan in 2021, Utah was one of the first states to reach out to Pres. Joe Biden and offer support. Suddenly, over 900 Afghan refugees were heading to Utah.

The Utah Afghan Community Fund was created, “and we were the stewards of it,” said Shelledy. “We raised about \$1.5 million to fund the resettlement organizations and a committee of community members



Through a grant from Community Foundation of Utah, the Salt Lake City Bicycle Collective taught low-income youth how to rebuild and maintain a bicycle, earning their own bike along the way. Photo from Salt Lake City Bicycle Collective and Community Foundation of Utah.



Through grant money from the Community Foundation of Utah’s Housing and Homelessness Fund, Salt Lake City’s Fourth Street Clinic collaborated on a program to provide healthcare to those experiencing homelessness. Photo from Fourth Street Clinic and Community Foundation of Utah.

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handled the grants.”

When Gov. Spencer Cox announced the initiative, Utahns responded with thousands of donations, as small as 32 cents and as large as \$200,000, that were pooled together by CFU. The money helped refugees with food, housing and legal and medical needs. The International Rescue Committee, Catholic Community Services and Utah Muslim Civic League collaborated to distribute the funds, ensuring that they weren't duplicating one another's efforts.

He said that CFU prides itself on its flexibility to respond to situations where government funding can't be flexible. During the thick of the COVID pandemic, CFU partnered in a community impact fund to provide direct cash to families who didn't qualify for the federal government's Economic Impact checks.

“If one member of their family was undocumented, the entire family wasn't eligible,” Shelledy said.

Many of them worked in the retail and restaurant industries, which were shut down, leaving them without an income.

“We partnered with Salt Lake City to provide \$500 or \$1,000 debit cards and worked with several nonprofit partners to get the cards to them. It was amazing, because with a debit card, you could see the things the money was used for. It was mainly for basics like food and rent, but also funeral expenses for family members who had died from COVID.”

When news of the war in Ukraine reached Utah, CFU partnered with the Larry H. Miller Co. and the Larry H. Miller & Gail Miller Family Foundation to sponsor an emergency response fund. The Driven to Assist community fundraiser and donation drive benefited refugees fleeing Ukraine, with many other foundations offering to match the donated funds.

The Community Foundation of Utah also serves as the fiscal steward for the Great Salt Lake Watershed Enhancement Trust. In 2022, the water level of the Great Salt Lake hit a historic low, threatening the economic, environmental and public health of Utah. As part of an effort to protect the lake, the Utah State Legislature passed House Bill 410 authorizing the establishment of a \$40 million water trust to enhance water quantity and

quality in the lake.

The CFU partners with the National Audubon Society and the Nature Conservancy — the co-managers of the trust.

“About three-fourths of the fund is used to purchase or lease water for the lake, and we oversee the disbursement of funds,” said Shelledy.

When someone wants to donate to a cause they are passionate about, they may choose to go through CFU to have their funds deployed. “You don't learn philanthropy in school,” Shelledy said. “A lot of times donors are clear about what they are passionate about, but not sure which organizations to fund, or how to coordinate that funding. We can help them with an actual strategy.”

The nonprofits are well-vetted by CFU “to make sure this money goes to legitimate organizations.”

CFU also houses “donor-advised funds,” which are “essentially a private foundation without the administration headaches,” said Shelledy.

“When you start a private foundation, it's like starting a business. You have to file with the IRS, create a board of directors and do legal compliance,” Shelledy said. “Instead, you can contribute to your donor-advised fund, recommend where the money goes and we take care of all of the administration work.”

By having one entity manage



One of CFA's “Full Spec” philanthropy seminars was introduced by Chandana Haque of Altitude Lab, which supports Utah healthcare innovators.

numerous funds, “you get an economy of scale and more of the money can go to the charities,” Shelledy said. “You can see your balance and investment performance at any time.”

He pointed out that private foundations are mandated to distribute 5 percent of their assets every year, “And for most foundations, that's about what they give. But advised funds have no specific requirement.

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Community Foundation of Utah partnered with the Senior Charity Care Foundation to fund a mobile clinic to bring affordable dental care to patients in senior apartments and care facilities. Photo from Senior Charity Care Foundation and Community Foundation of Utah.



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Through grant money from the Community Foundation of Utah's Housing and Homelessness Fund, those experiencing homelessness are able to receive healthcare. Photo from Fourth Street Clinic and Community Foundation of Utah.



In its Invest In Success program, the Community Foundation of Utah helps provide a week of training for selected leaders of Utah nonprofits. Photo from the Community Foundation of Utah.

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Our payment rate is around 20 percent to 22 percent per year. That's giving a lot more money to local charities."

CFU has developed a specialty in accepting complex charitable gifts, where donors want to donate assets, such as private stocks.

"We don't provide tax or legal advice, but we can advise people that from a tax standpoint, there are better ways to give something than others," he said. "But we don't know anyone's particular financial situation. They need to work with their own accountants and attorneys to make sure it works for their situation."

CFU has its own initiative to strengthen local Utah nonprofits, so they can better serve their clients and community.

"We have a belief that people are the most important asset," Shelledy said. "How do you attract and retain good people in the nonprofit sector?"

With that end, CFU has a partnership with Morgan Stanley to offer a grad student a year-long fellowship working in a nonprofit.

"It attracts and gives them an experience that inspires them to dedicate their career to this field," said Shelledy.

CFU also offers a week-long leadership course for selected staffers from nonprofits. They build skills such as board governance, organizational finance and strategic management to help strengthen their organizations.

This year, for the first time, CFU is funding a two-week sabbatical to give a nonprofit leader time away from daily responsibilities to recharge and focus on strategic issues.

"For a lot of nonprofit leaders, it's very challenging to try to create the space to think strategically, because they are spending so much time on

triaging and short-term problem-solving," Shelledy said.

A designated staff member will receive a stipend to take over during those two weeks, developing leadership skills.

These are just a sampler of the philanthropic efforts and partnerships that CFU's staff of 10 covers in its work.

It's no wonder that in the five years that Shelledy has been with CFU, "I haven't been bored for five minutes."



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Christine Wilson, president of Chartway Promise Foundation, helps assemble a playground set for Kaladin Tolman of Lindon, who is battling kidney cancer. Photo by Valerie Phillips.

The Chartway Promise Foundation aims to provide medically fragile children and their families memorable experiences that bring joy, hope and smiles

Valerie Phillips
Caritas Staff

On a warm July morning, a group of volunteers from Chartway Credit Union and the Roc Solid Foundation descended on a backyard in Lindon. Armed with electric drills, hammers and other tools, they went to work on pieces of a playground set.

Within a few hours, the slide and swings were fully assembled, to the delight of Dane and Oakley Tolman's three young children. The Tolmans' middle child, Kaladin, 3, has spent the past year undergoing treatment for kidney cancer. A chance to play in their backyard will offer their children a welcome respite from fighting illness.

"This is something we're very excited about, and it's not something we could provide on our own," said Dane Tolman. "It blows my mind to see how good people can be, to come out and help us. This is the best of humanity."

The Tolmans' gift was one of the 12,000-plus dreams fulfilled by the Chartway Promise Foundation over

the past 18 years.

As Chartway Credit Union's charitable arm, the foundation partners with companion nonprofits to "provide medically fragile children and their families memorable experiences that bring joy, hope and smiles,"



Oakley Tolman and her son, Kaladin, enjoy the swing set assembled by the Chartway Promise Foundation. Photo from Chartway Promise Foundation.

according to its mission statement.

"The credit union philosophy is to help children," said Christine Wilson, president of the Chartway Promise Foundation. "We go beyond that mission."

Funds are always given through other nonprofits, not directly to individuals.

In Kaladin Tolman's case, CPF partnered with the Roc Solid Foundation, a Virginia-based nonprofit that provides playground sets for children with cancer. Its founder, Eric Newman, is a pediatric cancer survivor.

"We're unique in that we're not going to cure cancer, but we are going to change how a family lives with it," said Chris Schaefer of Roc Solid. "We love our partnership with Chartway."

The assembly team included volunteers from Chartway Credit Union's team members, board members and President and CEO Brian Schools. CCU serves more than 200,000 members with branches in Utah, Texas and Virginia. Although the CPF is headquartered in Virginia, many recipients are in Utah.

"Credit unions have a responsibility in terms of giving back to the community," said Schools. "We take it to the next level to make the situation better for kids with fragile medical situations."

Since its founding in 2005, CPF has donated over \$14 million to the cause.

"We are strong fundraisers and engage personally," said Schools. "We have a number of events, corporate partners and grassroots fundraising through Chartway."

Chartway Credit Union team members (the company doesn't use the term "employee") volunteer more than 8,000 hours each year through foundation projects.

"And frankly, it's team-building as well, when we give back," said Schools.

Wilson, who has been with CPF just over a year, said that volunteer opportunities are filled quickly among credit union staffers. "We

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post that we need 20 people to build a playground set and boom! It's filled."

Lara Shields, a CCU board member from Tooele, was one of the volunteers helping to build the playground set in Lindon.

"I have a little one with complex medical needs, and I've been a recipient of programs like this," Shields said. "So I like to give back when I can."

For the Tolmans, the playground set is a boon to the whole family. They had moved in with Oakley Tolman's parents, planning to live with them just a short time while saving for a place of their own. Then they got Kaladin's cancer diagnosis, followed by 14 rounds of chemotherapy. The Tolmans have split their time between the hospital and caring for their other two children.

"With his latest hospital trip, he was there for a whole month," Dane Tolman said. "From being in the

hospital, his muscles have atrophied. Climbing and playing will be a nice physical therapy to help rebuild those muscles."

But with his medical issues, it was challenging to take the kids out to a community park.

"It's been hard on his older sister, because she wants to go out and play," said Dane Tolman. "Since we moved here, she hasn't made a ton of friends. So this is a great opportunity for her to reach out to the neighbor kids and say, 'Come and play with me on my swing set.'"

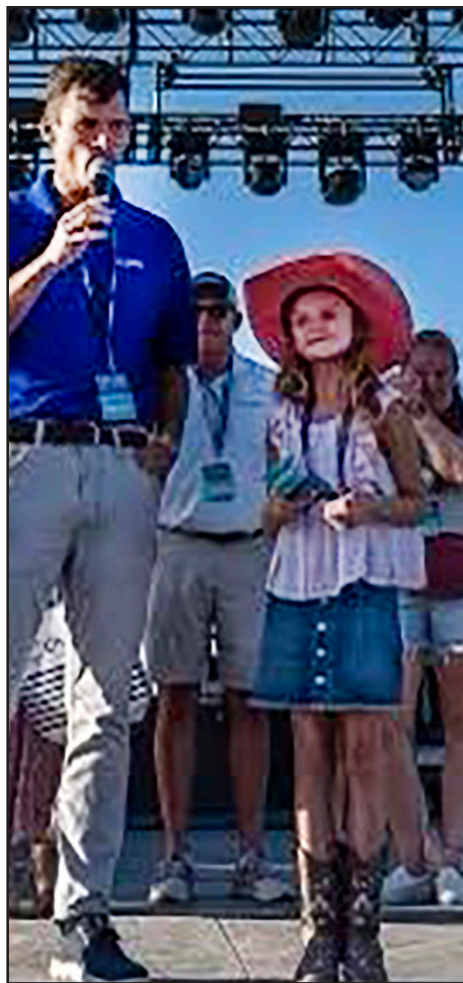
He said that before Kaladin's cancer diagnosis, "This is a world I never knew existed. I never would have been able to fathom the altruism we've experienced."

The night before the playground assembly in Lindon, CPF was part of a Make-A-Wish "reveal" at Tooele's annual Country Fan Fest. When 8-year-old Brinlee (CPF prefers to use only first names of recipients) was called onstage and heard she was going to Disney World, "the whole crowd went crazy. There wasn't a dry eye in the crowd," said Wilson.

Wilson said the foundation is currently fulfilling lots of Disneyland wishes, because it wasn't safe for immune-compromised kids to travel



Dane and Oakley Tolman of Lindon with their children, while volunteers with Chartway Promise and Roc Solid foundations assemble a playground set for Kaladin, 3, who is fighting kidney cancer. Photo by Valerie Phillips.



Eight-year-old Brinlee's upcoming trip to Disney World was announced onstage at the annual Country Fan Fest in Tooele in July. Photos courtesy Chartway Promise Foundation.



Brinlee trades her cowboy hat for Minnie Mouse ears after hearing that she's going to Disney World, thanks to the Make-A-Wish and Chartway Promise foundations.

during the COVID pandemic.

"So there's a backup of kids getting to go now," she said. "When you think about what kids love, Disney is a big one that comes to mind."

But the CPF helps fulfill many other wishes, "such as a golf cart so they can get around the neighborhood, or to go to New York and walk the red carpet at a theater," Wilson said. "One teen had lost a leg, and he wants virtual reality goggles so he can feel like he's running again."

Last spring, 18-year-old Alexis, who had battled ovarian cancer, received \$7,500 for tuition to enroll as a freshman at Utah State University this fall.

"It was amazing how she handled her situation with such grace and strength," Wilson said. "Instead of a trip, she's thinking about her future. Her mom sent us a note saying how great it was to see her on the college campus, and that she wouldn't be there without the grant."

Alexis's Make-A-Wish "reveal" was announced during CPF's Seventh Annual Putting for Promises golf tournament held at Thanksgiving Point last May. The tournament raised more than \$70,000 to benefit Utah's medically fragile children. Following

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the tournament, Chartway presented Make-A-Wish Utah with a charitable grant of \$200,000 to fulfill the wishes for 40 children with critical illnesses.

“We love our partnership with Make-A-Wish Utah,” said Wilson, adding that CPF has given over \$2.5 million to the group.

In 2022, CPF gave \$770,000 to companion charities, which included wish fulfillment, adaptive equipment, toy surprises, mental health art therapy services, fishing trips, playground sets, field trips/excursions and “Ready Bags.”

Roc Solid works with CPF to supply Ready Bags for families when their child is suddenly hospitalized. They’re filled with handy items such as toiletries, water bottles, games, a blanket and journal, and given to hospitals to have on hand.

“So in a family’s darkest moment, someone doesn’t have to leave and go home to pack a bag,” said Shaefer. “They can all be together in the hospital.”

Other Utah partners that CPF



Volunteers through Chartway Promise and Roc Solid foundations built a playground set in Lindon for the family of Kaladin Tolman, who is being treated for kidney cancer. Photo from Chartway Promise Foundation.

works with include Ability Found, which provides equipment to people with disabilities, and EyeCare4Kids, which provides vision exams, screenings and glasses for low-income children. Recipient families are referred

by Primary Children’s Medical Center’s Child Life Services.

Wilson said the CPF seeks more Utah partners.

“If you have a nonprofit that works with medically fragile children,

you are welcome to apply for a grant,” Wilson said.

Applications and eligibility requirements are found on the foundation’s website at chartwaypromise-foundation.org.



Alexis, 18, who had battled ovarian cancer, received a \$7,500 grant to enroll at Utah State University, through Make-A-Wish and Chartway Promise foundations. Photo from Chartway Promise Foundation.



Chartway Credit Union CEO/President Brian Schools assembles a playground set in Lindon with Lara Shields, a Tooele Chartway Credit Union board member, and Kaitlin Knutsen, daughter of a Chartway team member. Photo from Chartway Promise Foundation.



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*Each child is invited to paint a block honoring their loved one, and stack it into a wall at The Sharing Place.
Photo from The Sharing Place.*



Comfort for grieving kids and their families

Valerie Phillips
Caritas Staff

The Sharing Place recently celebrated 30 years of helping Utah's grieving children and their parents heal.

Megan Chytraus Alvarado remembers sitting in the very first Sharing Place discussion group with five kids who had each experienced a loved one's death. Her father had suddenly passed away just four days before her sixth birthday, and she was struggling with it.

"It was life-changing to be with other kids that you could relate to and who understood what you were going through," Alvarado said. "I wasn't going to get that at school or in a counselor's office."

Alvarado's mother, Chris Chytraus, founded the nonprofit with

child therapist Nancy Reiser. After her husband, Jeff Chytraus, died suddenly from heart failure, she sought help for her two young children.

After learning about a children's grief center in Oregon — The Dougy Center — she wanted to create a similar place in Utah, where families could heal together.

Today, the Sharing Place offers a caring haven for children from ages 3 to 18, whose lives have been shattered after a loved one's death. Children share their emotions and develop positive coping skills and resilience through discussion groups, art, play and physical activity. Meanwhile, in a separate group, their parents can process their own emotions with other adults who are also grieving.

The fledgling program started in 1993 in Reiser's office, and then expanded to a house in Millcreek, which has been expanded and remodeled to accommodate the growing program. Over the years, The Sharing Place has served over 6,000 youth,



The Sharing Place's first center in the Millcreek area of Salt Lake City. The house has been expanded over the years. Photo from The Sharing Place.

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The wall in the backyard of The Sharing Place in Millcreek is made from blocks that each child made for their loved one. Photo from The Sharing Place.

FROM page 12

and has grown to three centers — Millcreek, Taylorsville and Pleasant Grove. This past year, it has served nearly 500 youth, with 82 on the waitlist.

Although people are more aware of mental health today, grief is still often overlooked, said John Gold, who has been The Sharing Place's CEO for seven years.

"If you don't learn to deal with your grief, it can lead to things like substance abuse, increased risk of suicide and poor academic performance," said Gold, who has a master's degree in counseling. "And if the parent or caregiver isn't dealing with their grief, it's hard for them to help their kids."

The nonprofit's mission resonates with him, because when he was age 20, his own father died suddenly. "I know how grief treats people."

It's common for grieving children to experience anxiety, unexplained anger, crying, difficulty concentrating,

physical illness or school disruption. Kids at school may treat them as "different," or say hurtful things.

"You feel different and that's one of the hardest things, because as a child, you don't want to be different," said Megan Alvarado. After being in that first support group when her father died, she came back at age 10, "when my dad's mom took her life. I have seen two sides of grief and they are very different. There's not anything like it."

Currently, there are 24 groups that meet twice a month for 90-minute sessions, from September to May. While the children meet in peer groups, adults attend a separate session. This gives children the freedom to express things they prefer their parent or guardian not to hear — and vice versa.

Kids are grouped by age; they process grief differently in different ages, said Gold. Each group has eight to 12 similar-age children, a group coordinator and four to six volunteers.

There's a suicide-specific group, as "roughly 30 percent of our families have someone who died from suicide," said Gold. There's also a "complicated grief" group, where other factors are involved, such as multiple deaths, custody issues or trauma.

The Millcreek Center is a large house on a corner lot that has been expanded over the years to include age-specific spaces, while retaining a home-like ambiance.

There are areas where younger children can use art, crafts and play to express and process their feelings.

"They love to paint rocks and they love Model Magic clay," said Hollie Shelton, a group coordinator who leads the kids in art projects. Kids have made their own creations using pipe cleaners and another group participated in making a giant "grief amusement park."

The Volcano Room is a padded room filled with things to squish and throw, so kids can "go bananas," as Gold puts it, and safely process loud, intense or wordless feelings of grief and emotions.

A memory garden offers a place to reflect, and each center has a "sanctuary," — a wall where families can leave a photo of their loved ones. In the backyard, kids have painted blocks with their loved one's name on it, stacked into a colorful wall.

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Often after a death, well-meaning acquaintances may offer “helpful” advice, or comments that are actually hurtful. In one discussion session, said Gold, “Kids shared things people had said to them, that they wished they hadn’t. And then, they turned it around into what they wish people would say.”

For those who are grieving, sometimes it’s not a matter of saying the “right” thing, but just listening, with no judgment, said Gold.

Meanwhile, adults can share their feelings and experiences with other parents and caregivers. In one session, Gold said, a widowed mother was concerned about the upcoming Daddy-Daughter Day at her child’s school. Another mom said she dealt with it by checking her daughter out of school that day and taking her to the doughnut shop where she used to go with her dad. Over doughnuts, they talked together about memories of her dad. Sharing that option helped spark ideas for the other parents in similar situations.

Parent Mina Moylan said the program is helpful for 9-year-old son. After his father’s death, “He wasn’t talking about it with friends, and he didn’t express emotions,” she said. “Now he’s very open to talking about it, and that’s pretty powerful. He likes the friends that he’s made here — and especially the Volcano Room. It’s a good outlet for boys to get out their aggression in a safe place.”

Moyland said she has learned from others in the adult discussion group.

“You can’t NOT talk about it, because it will tear you up, and you can help others who will eventually experience it,” she said.

Coleman and Kathy Nay have attended The Sharing Place with their teenage daughter for five years. Their world changed when their older 21-year-old daughter overdosed on Father’s Day 2017.

“We knew we needed to help our daughter grieve,” said Kathy Nay. But counseling services were scarce, even with health insurance to pay for it. They were able to get into The Sharing Place after a six-month wait.

“Our daughter has made friends here who are going through the same

thing,” said Nay. “As parents, it’s helpful talking to parents also going through a tragedy, to remind you that other people might be sad at this time, too. It’s not just me.”

Grief has no time limit. Even after five years, the Nays can experience sudden overwhelming feelings of grief. On the way to a recent soccer game, their daughter burst into tears because she couldn’t remember the sound of her sister’s voice.

This is why The Sharing Place has no time limits for clients. Gold said the average client family stays around two years, but some families have stayed five-plus years.

“As long as the family needs our services, they are welcome to stay here,” he said. “However, we do have a waiting list.”

He added that some of the group coordinators are former clients who

are now helping other families.

Besides helping clients in person, The Sharing Place’s website is a resource for topics such as how to inform a child of a death, understanding how different age groups grieve, myths about grief, tips for teachers and a directory of grief support programs nationwide.

Last year’s annual operating budget was \$488,000, Gold said. Clients are not charged a fee, although they may contribute through a confidential monthly pledge. Funding comes from individual donors, corporate gifts and foundations and not through any federal or state funding. The Sharing Place is a 501(c)3 (nonprofit) organization and donations are tax-deductible.

The annual Day of the Dead gala celebration is the group’s big fundraiser, scheduled on Oct. 21 this

year at Venue 6SIX9 (669 S. West Temple). This traditional Mexican holiday becomes a celebration of life and remembrance with an auction and a Mexican dinner. Last year’s event raised over \$180,000, according to The Sharing Place’s website.

The group has about 125 volunteers and welcomes more. They must be at least 18 and receive a day of training on topics such as the grief cycle and active and reflective listening.

As The Sharing Place website points out, “Remember, we are not here to ‘fix’ or ‘treat’ grief; we are simply providing a safe space to gather with others to talk about it. Children and adults in our groups are often coping with so much after the death of a family member that simply being heard in a safe space is greatly appreciated.”



Group coordinator Hollie Shelton shows some of the kids’ art projects, and lyrics that the kids sing together at The Sharing Place in Salt Lake City. Photo by Valerie Phillips.



Children use creative play as a way to work through grief at The Sharing Place. Photo from The Sharing Place.



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