

RISE PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION

Uplift Center for Grieving Children



Overview

Uplift Center for Grieving Children (Uplift) in Philadelphia helps grieving children heal and grow while strengthening families and communities. Founded in 1995 as The Center for Grieving Children by the Bereavement Program at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, Uplift became a separate nonprofit organization in 2000. Its mission is to provide grief support and education, primarily to children who have lost someone important in their lives, as well as support for their caregivers in the community. Uplift supports more than 4,000 children and families each year through peer-to-peer grief support groups, in-school support groups, caregiver workshops, and more.

Uplift, like many youth-serving nonprofit organizations, encountered unprecedented challenges during the pandemic. But Uplift's situation was unique given the sheer number of COVID and COVID-related deaths, paired with an increased homicide rate in Philadelphia. Moreover, the organization's grief support groups and workshops traditionally took place in person, so not only did Uplift need to determine how to bring



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Kevin Carter, Clinical Director at Uplift

its programming online, it had to do so when the demand for grief support had never been higher.

“It was extremely difficult because what we do is actually directly related to the pandemic,” said Kevin Carter, clinical director at Uplift. “We’re probably the major go-to organization around grief in the city.”

Uplift is further enhancing its impact as one of 15 organizations selected to participate in the RISE Partnership’s “Implementation” phase.

Uplift sought support from RISE to better gather data and begin doing evaluation that would be useful – not just for program evaluation but with funders as well.

“We were doing minimal kinds of work in that [evaluation] arena at that time, so we decided to get involved with the project,” Carter said. “The foundational part of this was actually trying to find a way of thinking about data and organizing data and really utilizing what we have available in the organization to make this [evaluation] happen.”

RISE helped Uplift rethink what data it collects and why, resulting in a shift to collect less data on clients and develop a new standardized intake form and process. This helped Uplift focus on what’s most important; it also made the data collection process more reasonable for children and families.

“What we’re working to do is narrow down what we can get from people because their capacity to answer a lot of complicated questions due to the level of trauma that they’re negotiating is compromised,” said Carter. “The exciting part about working on these questions now is we can get some good information and we don’t have to spend a lot of time with people.”

Uplift also created the HopeLine, in partnership with the Philadelphia School District, which students and families can call for support around grief and loss. In addition to serving the community over the phone, the HopeLine is also used for client intake and registering clients for different programs.

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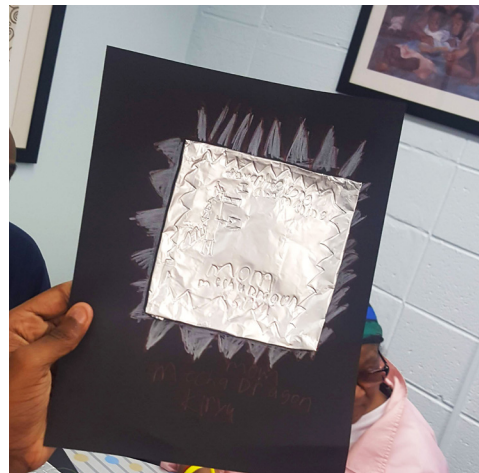
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people and what the outcomes are, and really turning that into helping us develop the intake as well,” Carter said.

Uplift is starting to use the HopeLine and intake forms developed with RISE to help answer several questions. What program components are most helpful? Which are least helpful? And what do children and families perceive as the biggest benefit of participating in services? This information will eventually be used to inform future programming and communicate Uplift's impact to key stakeholders.

“What we're trying to figure out is, what is it that we can learn about what we're doing that's helpful?” said Carter. “And what can we pass on to funders and partners to say, ‘Even amid all of this chaos, this is what families are telling us about what Uplift has helped to do in our lives around grief and loss.’”

Uplift's evaluation journey with RISE is in many ways just beginning. The support has come at a time of great need and great opportunity, and Uplift is now better equipped with the skills to accomplish their evaluation goals and tell their story.



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Established in 2018, The RISE (Readiness, Implementation, Sustainability for Effectiveness) Partnership supports promising Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey nonprofit organizations. The RISE Partnership Evaluation Funders Learning Community is the first convening supported by a network of funders in the region. The Learning Community is a collaborative effort with the Barra Foundation, Campbell Soup Company, Horner Foundation, Nelson Foundation, Philadelphia Foundation, PropelNext/Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, Scattergood Foundation, and United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey, and a partnership with YaleEVAL of The Consultation Center at Yale. The Partnership provides nonprofits with resources and training to strengthen organizational effectiveness and ensure a greater impact on social, economic, health, and educational conditions in communities, including the effects of racism, intergenerational poverty and trauma.

For more information visit therisepartnership.org

