



Michael's Place

*let the healing begin*

19 YEARS OF  
**RESTORING HOPE**



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2019/2020 ANNUAL REPORT

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# National Children's Grief Awareness Month

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A nationwide effort takes place each November to advocate and educate regarding the unique grief of bereaved children.

Last November, Michael's Place partnered with the Denmos Museum Center for a special program, ***The Art of Mourning: Expressions of Youth***. The multi-media event featured storytelling, poetry reading, dance, music, and visual art. Artwork included both nationally-recognized select pieces from the ***Scholastic Art and Writing Awards***, an exhibition curated by the New York Life Foundation, and original art by Michael's Place youth.



ZOE CHEN, Grade 12, Lynnfield High School, Lynnfield, MA, Pulling Tight, 2019 Gold Medal, New York Life Award, Drawing and Illustration



## LOCAL ARTIST FEATURED IN ***THE ART OF MOURNING: EXPRESSIONS OF YOUTH*** EXHIBIT

**Cover Image:** "The Moon"

**Art Credit:** Nyilee Smith, GRADE 6, East Middle School, TC, MI

*My art represents my loved ones because when I look at the moon and sky, it reminds me that they are always with me no matter what.*

**Nyilee, Michael's Place Program Attendee**

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## Margaret Ann "Peggy" Dendrinis

April 27, 1929 – April 7, 2020

Margaret 'Peggy' Dendrinis, the mother of our organization's namesake, Michael, was a dear friend to Michael's Place. Peggy had a compassionate heart and a kind and thoughtful presence. She was known as "Aunt Peggy" to the founder of Michael's Place, Chris Denmos, who remembers her as "a smile waiting to happen in our family."



Peggy lived a life exemplified by love and kindness, even while deeply marked by grief from the loss of her son, Michael, at the age of 14. We will cherish her memory and miss her sweet smile.

A memorial contribution to Michael's Place in support of Peggy's beautiful legacy is a special way to honor her memory and support the many grieving families in our community.

# A Letter From Our Executive Director

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Dear Friends,

It is with great privilege that we present the Michael's Place 2020 Annual Report representing our fiscal year of July 1, 2019, to June 30, 2020.

The fiscal year began on a highnote as our staff and board set heightened goals for the new year. Michael's Place collaborated with the Dennon Museum Center and presented ***The Art of Mourning: Expressions of Youth***. We strengthened our partnerships with workplaces and schools, welcomed a greater number of children and families into our program, facilitated 25 ongoing in-school support groups reaching underserved students and families, and provided monthly Robin's Nest events focusing on the unique grief of children.

As 2020 unfolded and the world changed abruptly, requests for grief support services increased significantly, with many of our bereaved experiencing complications due to extreme isolation. Our staff compassionately responded by discovering new and creative ways of reaching our grieving children and families. Phone support calls, Zoom, and FaceTime gave us the opportunity to connect, and we also went "old school" with handwritten notes and mailed packages of supplies and activities.

We were saddened in April to learn of the death of Peggy Dendrinis, the mother of our namesake, Michael, who died at the age of 14. We remember Peggy warmly and send loving condolences to Peggy's children, Pete and Katie, and their families.

Our in-person grief support groups resumed with outdoor meetings at the end of July. At the end of our time together, each person described how he or she was feeling. To our surprise, despite the pandemic, the loss of their loved ones, and their tremendous grief, the overwhelming feeling was hope. Thank you for finding value in the mission of Michael's Place.

With much appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mindy Buell". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Mindy Buell





## Michael's Place Board & Staff

### Board of Directors

Chris Dennon, Founder  
 Karen Browne, President  
 Dan Brady, Vice President  
 Gretchen Overbeek, Secretary  
 Doug Morgenstern, Treasurer  
 Marika BeVier, Trustee  
 Mindy Buell, Trustee  
 Judy Harrison, Trustee  
 Bill Smith, Trustee

### Michael's Place Staff

Mindy Buell, Executive Director/CEO  
 Breanna Broering, Social Worker  
 Elizabeth Judson, Robin's Nest Coordinator  
 Melissa Fournier, Program Director  
 Pam Jones-Robinson, Volunteer Management  
 and Resource Coordinator  
 Connie Wintzinger, Development Director

## Programs And Services



Michael's Place mission is to provide support and advocacy to children, teens, and adults grieving the death of a loved one and serve the bereavement needs of our community. Michael's Place provides a safe environment to enable healthy healing after the death of a loved one, and a network of peers who understand.

### ON-SITE SUPPORT GROUPS FOR ALL AGES

Support groups are team-facilitated by trained volunteer facilitators who provide guidance along with peer-to-peer support. Children meet in age-appropriate groups and participate in discussions, art projects, games, and activities. Teens have a support group customized to meet their needs. Adults meet with others who have a greater understanding of their grief journey.

### IN-SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUPS & SCHOOL GRIEF CRISIS SUPPORT

Michael's Place provides in-school support groups to elementary, middle, and high school students grieving the death of a loved one. We work with schools to develop grief crisis plans, assist with aftercare following the death of a school community member, and provide ongoing grief education and training.

### BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY

Michael's Place provides guidance to businesses and community organizations to develop grief crisis plans and provides grief education and training to meet the unique needs of the requesting organization. Specialized support services are available to those who work in high loss environments including healthcare providers, law enforcement, and first responders.

### ROBIN'S NEST

With the help of mentors, the Robin's Nest program provides best day activities and educational opportunities designed to help grieving children and their families feel normal, bring joy to their lives, and create new memories.

### COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS AND SUPPORT OPPORTUNITIES

Create-A-Keepsake | Writing Through Loss | Healing Garden  
StoryCorps Inspired Sessions | Educational Workshops and Presentations

***Please call us about our current calendar of support group offerings and enrollment information or visit [www.MyMichaelsPlace.net](http://www.MyMichaelsPlace.net).***

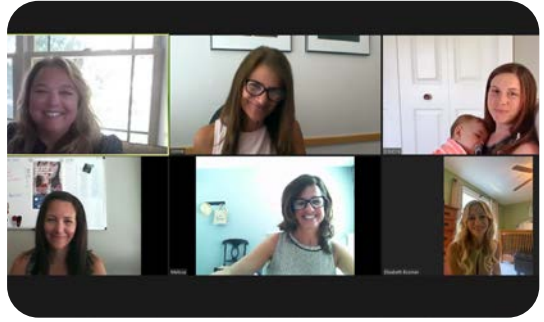
*Thanks for all you do for so many! Each of you makes a huge difference for others and we are very grateful you are serving our community.*

**Barbara Zupin & Tom Gardner, Pledge Supporters**

## Stay Home, Stay Safe

### Amid the COVID-19 crisis, Michael's Place Programs and Services continued through:

- Online grief support groups and workshops provided through video-conferencing platforms
- Telesupport for those grieving the death of a loved one
- Grief crisis and support services to businesses and schools
- FaceTime calls, personal letters, and care packages filled with activities and supplies were provided to children and families while safe at home



*Through online support groups and one on one phone calls, we've heard time and again how isolated our bereaved feel and how deeply the current state of our world is triggering the pain of losing a loved one or loved ones. We're hearing the plight of single parents whose spouses have died trying to quell the fear and anxiety in their grieving children and the dismay of those who could not see their dying loved one or have a funeral for them because of the virus. Yet, each day we've been able to continue connection, bring peace to those emotionally triggered, calm fears, and restore hope."*

**Melissa Fournier, Program Director**



Michael's Place is the only bereavement center in northern Michigan providing no-cost grief support programs to children, teens, adults, and the community.

## 2019-2020: BY THE NUMBERS

**2,696**

Children, Adults, and Community Members Served

**328**

Grief Support  
Programs Provided

**12**

Counties  
Served

**111**

Volunteers Helped Michael's Place Save

**\$44,499.20\***

by Providing

**1636**

Direct Service Hours to Our Families

*\* The current estimated national value of each volunteer hour is \$27.20*







# Our Impact: Robin's Nest - Best Day for Grieving Children



**1 in 5**

children will experience the death of someone close to them by age 18

**254**

youth and their families attended

**13**

Robin's Nest 'Best Day'

## Thank You to Our Host Sites:

Incredible Mo's Bowling/Laser Tag/Arcade

A Day of Golf at Bay Meadows

Twilight Skating at Centre Ice Arena

Skiing & Snowboarding at The Homestead

Cookie & Gingerbread House Decorating

Christmas Shopping at the GT Mall

Biking with Norte

Snowshoeing at Crystal Mountain

Reining Liberty Ranch

Jacob's Corn Maze

City Opera House Performance of The Alphabet Experience

James & the Giant Peach at St. Francis

A Slice of Pie at GT Pie Company

All of the Michael's Place events are provided at no cost to our families thanks to the generosity of local businesses and donors who host these 'best day' events!

*My family feels blessed to have a wonderful resource like Michael's Place. The holiday events helped me get my spirit back. We really feel that Landon is with us and we feel like we are honoring him when we are attending these events.*

**Angelina R., Program Attendee**

*We meet such wonderful people at Michael's Place and we are all about wonderful people. We love to see and share in the healing that happens with the families and the horses and all the animals. Everyone is healing from something and Reining Liberty feels blessed to share in the healing as it gives us a purpose. We love our collaboration with Robin's Nest and Michael's Place.*

**Becki Bigelow, Reining Liberty Ranch, Robin's Nest Host**

# Our Impact: Schools And Community

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## SCHOOLS

MICHAEL'S PLACE PROVIDED:

133

Students with Support in the Ongoing  
In-School Grief Support Program

123

In-School  
Support Groups

According to the New York Life Foundation's 2017 Bereavement Survey of Educators and The Coalition to Support Grieving Students:

70%

of teachers have at least one grieving student in their classroom.

7%

of teachers have had any amount of bereavement training.

92%

of educators say childhood grief is a serious problem that deserves more attention

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## WORKPLACE & COMMUNITY

MICHAEL'S PLACE PROVIDED:

120

Individuals in Local Businesses and Organizations with Grief Support

615

Community Members with Education on Grief and Loss

*Michael's Place has been a tremendous support to me over the past year following the passing of my mother, as well as the passing of a young coworker. Both of these losses were completely unexpected and have been a lot to navigate. Having Michael's place come to Hagerty the morning after we received the news about our colleague gave us a much-needed opportunity to come together and begin to process our loss.*

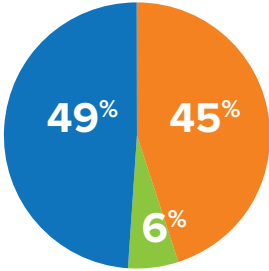
**Wendy D., Compassionate Workplace Recipient and Program Attendee**

# Michael's Place Financial Statements (Cash Basis)



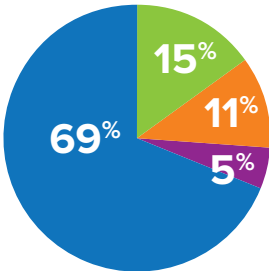
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2020

## REVENUE



- General Corporate & Individual Contributions
- Program Grants
- Community Fundraisers

## EXPENDITURES



- Grief Support Services
- Administration
- Facility Rent & Maintenance
- Fundraising & Community Outreach

## OPERATING STATEMENT

### REVENUE

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| General Corporate & Individual Contributions | 253,743        |
| Program Grants                               | 230,166        |
| Fundraising Events                           | 29,571         |
| <b>Total Revenue</b>                         | <b>513,480</b> |

### EXPENDITURES

|                                       |                |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Administration                        | 71,300         |
| Fundraising and Community Outreach    | 24,715         |
| Grief Support Services                | 316,350        |
| Facility Rent and Maintenance         | 49,756         |
| <b>Total Expenditures</b>             | <b>461,824</b> |
| <b>Operating Surplus or (Deficit)</b> | <b>51,656</b>  |

## BALANCE SHEET

### Assets

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Checking and Savings Account                       | 170,198        |
| Rental Security Deposit                            | 3,250          |
| Short-term Pledges Receivable                      | 98,000         |
| Pledges Receivable Beyond One Year                 | 220,606        |
| Furnishings and Equipment<br>(Net of Depreciation) | 11,603         |
| <b>Total Assets</b>                                | <b>503,657</b> |

### Liabilities and Fund Balances

|  |                |
|--|----------------|
| Accounts Payable                           | 1,525          |
| Payroll Taxes and Benefits Payable         | 6,195          |
| Restricted Grant Balance                   | 0              |
| PPP-SBA Loan Payable                       | 60,240         |
| <b>Unrestricted Net Assets</b>             | <b>435,697</b> |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Fund Balances</b> | <b>503,657</b> |



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MyMichaelsPlace.net

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*To put into words what Michael's Place has done for our family is an overwhelming task. In short, they allowed me to feel like I could breathe, even if only for a moment. When you speak to someone who truly understands your pain and absorbs it without trying to "fix" it, it is one of the most comforting feelings imaginable.*

**Elizabeth K., Michael's Place Attendee**

