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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Childhood Bereavement Increases Nationwide, Reflected in Local Community

Special challenge to help raise awareness and funds begins May 20, 2023

TRAVERSE CITY, MI., May 16th, 2023 – Research indicates that the number of bereaved children nationwide is growing. An estimated 6 million children in the United States will experience the death of a parent or a sibling by the age of 18, according to data from the [Child Bereavement Estimation Model \(CBEM\) 2023](#). This represents roughly 1 in 12 children nationwide, a ratio that has seen incremental growth in recent years.

Michael's Place, a nonprofit grief support center located in Traverse City, has seen this growth in our local community with a 41% increase in numbers served throughout their programs and services in just three months. "In a typical year, we see the number accessing our services build as we lead up to the holiday season and begin to taper off in the warmer months, but this year we have witnessed continued growth that hasn't eased," said Mindy Buell, Executive Director of Michael's Place.

With a small staff of six, Michael's Place offers a peer support model for its family-based grief support services, allowing them to engage trained volunteers to help meet the need while offering the programs without the burden of cost to the individuals and families served.

"Peer support groups are a vital part of supporting both children and adults," expressed Buell. "Bereaved individuals often feel isolated in their experiences and having a network of peers in similar situations can have a positive effect on the grief process," she added.

The numbers served at Michaels Place continue to grow, and the needs of the community continue to grow, but the cost of providing these services is also increasing. "We are able to meet the increased demand while continuing to provide our family-based programs and services because of the support of our donors and volunteers," Buell emphasized. "We feel grateful for the ability to provide a safe and accessible center for those grieving because we have such a generous community."

You Can Help Support the Mission:

Michael's Place is hosting a unique fundraising challenge and is asking the community to join in and help continue the healing.

The *Spring Challenge*, presented by North Bay Produce, allows registrants to participate individually or as a team in a "Choose Your Adventure" challenge, with the goal of logging 20 miles between May 20-May 29, 2023. Participants can also choose to create a fundraiser in memory of a loved one or simply to help support Michael's Place. Because this challenge is virtual, anyone across the globe can get in on the fun!

Join Michael's Place for a fun community kick-off event at Hull Park on Saturday, May 20th, 11:00 am – 1:00 pm. There is also a Tribute Mountain Bike Ride hosted by Suttons Bay Bikes on Wednesday, May 24th, 5:30-8:00 pm at Palmer Woods. Both events are free and open to the community and challenge registration is not required to attend.

Registration for the challenge is \$35 for adults and \$20 for kids and families. All proceeds from the event directly support the grief services of Michael's Place.

To register for the Challenge or make a donation to Michael's Place visit:

runsignup.com/Race/MI/TraverseCity/MichaelsPlaceChallenge

About Michael's Place

Michael's Place provides support and advocacy for children, teens, and adults grieving a death and serves the bereavement needs of the community including schools and workplaces. The organization gives those who grieve a voice to share their story, care, and support to survive their loss and hope to begin to live again. In 2022, Michael's Place served 2800 and provided 126 in-school grief support opportunities.

For more information, visit www.MyMichaelsPlace.net or call (231) 947-6453.

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