

# Children's Grief & Loss Support in Rural Iowa

## Program Update | May 2023

Addressing trauma, grief & loss through programs in Iowa schools.

EveryStep's Grief and Loss Services – Home of Amanda the Panda, continues to expand school-based support services throughout rural Iowa. In October 2022, two part-time staff were added to facilitate support groups in the areas surrounding Centerville and Creston. The new staff were integrated into the communities they served, where they continue to make connections with local principals, guidance counselors, school nurses, and teachers. The rural support staff provide 6-week peer support groups where students share their grief stories, connect with peers, and learn resilience skills to feel better equipped to cope with grief in healthy ways.



### RECAP: SEPT 1, 2022 – MAY 31, 2023

## 319

Students served through small support group sessions

- 182 Elementary School
- 137 Middle/High School

## 335

Students, staff and caregivers served through mental health fairs

## 6

Staff members served after the loss of a co-worker

## 28

Schools served

### WHAT OUR PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

"Being able to partner with EveryStep to bring the Amanda the Panda program into our school has been an enormous help for our grieving students. Program leaders provide a safe environment for students to interact and share feelings with each other. This opportunity to connect with peers who are experiencing similar life challenges has been huge for helping students open up and learn how to express themselves. We have noticed positive changes in our students as they have learned to accept their feelings and understand that they are not alone. We love Amanda the Panda!"

*Carlisle School Counselor – Warren County*

"I loved this group. It helped me understand and control my emotions when it comes to my loss and now I have friends that I know who went through the same thing."

*Lamoni Middle School Student – Decatur County*

"I enjoyed being able to talk about his death, so it didn't pile up day after day."

*Perry Middle School – Dallas County*

"I liked knowing I'm not the only person with the same story."

*Mt. Ayr High School – Ringgold County*



Student art created during support groups



## SCHOOLS SERVED 2022-23 SCHOOL YEAR

<b>Carlisle Elementary</b>	<i>Carlisle – Warren</i>
<b>Creston Elementary</b>	<i>Creston – Union</i>
<b>Creston Middle</b>	<i>Creston – Union</i>
<b>Emerson Hough Elementary</b>	<i>Newton – Jasper County</i>
<b>Indianola Middle</b>	<i>Indianola – Warren</i>
<b>Interstate 35 Elementary</b>	<i>Truro – Madison County</i>
<b>Lamoni Elementary</b>	<i>Lamoni – Decatur</i>
<b>Lamoni High</b>	<i>Lamoni – Decatur</i>
<b>Lamoni Middle</b>	<i>Lamoni – Decatur</i>
<b>Lenihan Intermediate</b>	<i>Marshalltown – Marshall</i>
<b>Mt. Ayr Elementary</b>	<i>Mt. Ayr – Ringgold</i>
<b>Mt. Ayr Middle/High</b>	<i>Mt. Ayr – Ringgold</i>
<b>Nevada Central Elementary</b>	<i>Nevada – Story County</i>
<b>Nevada Middle</b>	<i>Nevada – Story County</i>
<b>North Mahaska Elementary</b>	<i>New Sharon – Mahaska County</i>
<b>Orient Macksburg High</b>	<i>Orient – Adair</i>
<b>Orient Macksburg Middle</b>	<i>Orient – Adair</i>
<b>Oskaloosa Middle</b>	<i>Oskaloosa – Mahaska</i>
<b>Perry Elementary</b>	<i>Perry – Dallas County</i>
<b>Perry High</b>	<i>Perry – Dallas</i>
<b>Perry Middle</b>	<i>Perry – Dallas</i>
<b>Seymour Elementary</b>	<i>Seymour – Wayne</i>
<b>Seymour High</b>	<i>Seymour – Wayne</i>
<b>Seymour Middle</b>	<i>Seymour – Wayne</i>
<b>Thomas Jefferson Elementary</b>	<i>Newton – Jasper County</i>

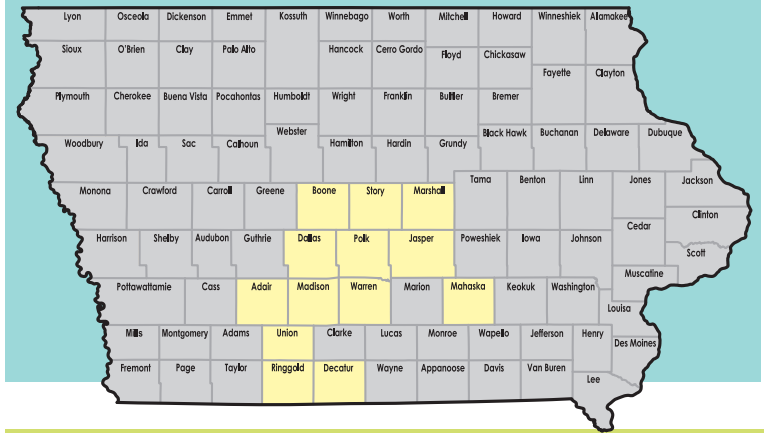
## Grief Tool Kits

In addition to programming, 25 grief tool kits were provided to school counselors throughout the state. Each kit includes support items to serve the tactile, mental, emotional, and sensory needs of grieving students.



## Counties Served

Adair      Decatur      Mahaska      Story      Wayne  
Boone      Jasper      Marshall      Union  
Dallas      Madison      Ringgold      Warren



## SCHOOLS SERVED THROUGH COMMUNITY RESOURCE EDUCATION

*Educational presentations, teacher training, etc.*

<b>Childcare Junction</b>	<i>Boone – Boone County</i>
<i>Provided support to staff after the loss of a co-worker</i>	
<b>Prairie City Monroe High School</b>	<i>Monroe – Jasper County</i>
<i>School mental health fair</i>	
<b>Roland Story City High School</b>	<i>Story City – Story County</i>
<i>School mental health fair</i>	

## Support Group Survey Results

- 89%** felt comfortable expressing thoughts and feelings about their loss
- 92%** felt connected to their peers within the support group
- 88%** reported that they improved their knowledge of coping skills
- 95%** felt supported in their loss by the group

## USE OF FUNDS

Personnel	\$151,326
Supplies	\$300
Communication	\$2,376
Travel	\$10,381
Marketing/ Client Resources	\$172
Admin/Other	\$35,445
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$200,000</b>



For more information about our programs, contact:  
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