

For Immediate Release

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A Caring Hand, The Billy Esposito Foundation Opens The Only Existing, Free-Standing Comprehensive Bereavement Center in Manhattan

New York's bereaved children and families will now discover and learn healthy ways of dealing with grief at a special long needed program.

(February 20, 2008, New York-NY) A Caring Hand, The Billy Esposito Foundation opens its doors to Manhattan's only free-standing Bereavement Center. The Center welcomes grieving children and families, meeting them wherever they are in their grief and fulfilling their needs in a caring and knowledgeable environment. A Caring Hand, The Billy Esposito Foundation was founded by Susan Esposito-Lombardo in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, after the loss of her beloved Father on that tragic day. Her mission was to bring healing and hope to others who have experienced the pain that she endured. Since the organization began in 2002, it has helped thousands of bereaved children and teens through grants to bereavement centers as well as individuals for education related expenses.

In order to fill the void for a comprehensive center in Manhattan, the organization has now dedicated its resources to developing and running a complete center for children, teens and family members who have experienced one of life's most challenging and traumatic events, the death of a loved one. The center provides extensive services for children ages 3-18 and their caregivers including counseling, support, financial assistance for education, research, consultation and crisis response. The center's staff and volunteers help children, teens, caregivers, teachers and professionals discover and learn healthy ways of dealing with grief. Child friendly activities using art, games, music and writing are used to focus on expression, coping and remembering.

No one should feel alone in their grief. A centerpiece of the program is community building, accomplished by bringing together bereaved families who can support each other. The inaugural program at the center provides groups, offered free of charge, targeted towards children and teens, with their caregivers, who have experienced the death of a family member. The center's comprehensive program components include:

- Outreach to and liaison with individuals, schools, and organizations to provide information about services and connect with clients and group leaders.
- 8 week peer group support program for children and teens and their caregivers. The program is curriculum based on common bereavement tasks and co-facilitated by trained volunteers and mental health professionals.
- Education, training, and consultation to professionals and providers about grief and bereavement
- Evaluation of bereaved individuals to assess how best to meet their needs
- Individualized services and referrals to meet additional needs of family members
- Volunteer training and supervision for group facilitators
- Professional supervision and training of mental health trainees

A Caring Hand, The Billy Esposito Foundation Bereavement Center program empowers children and their caregivers to believe they are capable of having a life that is enriched by comforting reminders of someone special. Families are provided the tools to manage the pain of their past and find joy to take them into the future. The new center, located at 305 7th Avenue, between 27th and 28th Streets, in Manhattan, needs the continued support from all sectors of New York City to bring much needed services to the bereaved families in their midst. The program is being developed by, and requires a true partnership of, professionals and volunteers from the public as well as private and corporate sectors.

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A Caring Hand, The Billy Esposito Foundation is a 501(c) 3 not-for-profit organization. For more information on the foundation, please visit www.acaringhand.org. For press inquiries or information on the ribbon cutting ceremony and grand opening event, please contact Janet Mick at IT Management Global on 212.941.5595.