



## FORGET-ME-NOT GRIEF CENTER *of* ALASKA

The Forget Me Not Grief Center of Alaska is a non-profit organization in Anchorage offering free community-based grief support, with a focus on children and teens.

---- **Opening Spring 2022** ----

*Our Mission is to build a healthier community by supporting those grieving a death—especially children and teens.*

### Our History

In 2018, the closure of the Forget Me Not children's grief support program, run by Hospice of Anchorage, left an undeniable hole in the Anchorage community. During its 10+ years of service to the community, the program thrived and served many families experiencing loss and grief. The program was distinctly unique, which added to the loss.

With Alaska's high rates of depression, suicide, addiction, and domestic abuse, Anchorage communities have an enormous need for accessible grief support for our young people. Yet, there were no services.

The Forget Me Not Grief Center of Alaska was started as a direct response to this enormous need. In April of 2019, a group of professionals came together to form the Forget Me Not Grief Center of Alaska.

Full of energy and excitement, plans were made to train volunteers and open mid-2020. But COVID-19 pandemic brought the world to a halt—our plans included. But the need remained, so our vision remained.

Board members continued to move forward to obtain federal non-profit status and a recognized 501(c)3. And in the Spring of 2022, FMNGCA plans to begin providing grief support services to children, teens, and those who need it most.

### Our Services

*"We heal together."*

Program Meeting Dates:

- Opening Spring of 2022
- 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays monthly
- 6:30PM – 8PM

Grief, by nature, is partly a communal process and experience. That is why the core of FMNGCA is peer-driven grief support groups for children and teens.

These group meetings happen twice a month on, what we refer to as, "program nights". Participants are put into groups based on age and developmental stage. Trained volunteers facilitate the groups to support a healthy expression of grief.

When faced with grief, we do not want financial constraints to be a reason you do not seek support. That is why our services are offered free of charge.

We want to be clear - our program is not therapy. FMNGCA services are for the purposes of supporting participants through normal grief. Group meetings are not therapeutic interventions, which are sometimes but rarely needed by people to cope with a death.





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### Interested in our services?

If you are interested in learning more about our services, please contact FMNGCA for an initial conversation. These conversations will be scheduled to help assess your family's needs and provide an orientation to the program. After orientation, families can begin attending program nights, joining the community of others in similar situations.

To schedule an initial conversation, please email [forgetmenot.griefcenter@gmail.com](mailto:forgetmenot.griefcenter@gmail.com). We look forward to inviting you into this space.

### Get involved!

Join the network of trained volunteers positively impacting our local community by dedicating your time and resources to walk alongside those grieving. Email [forgetmenot.griefcenter@gmail.com](mailto:forgetmenot.griefcenter@gmail.com)

### Our Board

#### Rena Queja | *President*

Rena is a master's level social worker who has worked with children for more than 30 years, to provide support with learning disabilities, behavior challenges and grief. She has also worked with families that have a significant loved one with a long-term illness or who are on Hospice care.

Rena gained additional training from the Dougy Center, the nation's leader in children's grief. She is currently a supervisor of Providence Cancer Center Patient Navigation, offering adults support through their cancer journey, which may include family support.

#### Jane Barber | *Board Member*

Jane is a masters level school counselor with Anchorage School District and has extensive experience running a children's grief support program. Formerly, she was the director of Hospice of Anchorage.

#### Nathan Rogers | *Secretary/Treasurer*

Nathan comes to FMNGCA with over 10 years of experience working in areas of grief, death and dying. Most recently, he ran an adult grief support program for Providence Hospice until taking a new position within Providence in 2021. A board-certified chaplain, he holds specialty certifications in grief and thanatology (study of death/dying/bereavement).

