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**COMPANIONS ON A JOURNEY RECEIVES GRIEF REACH GRANT  
FROM THE NEW YORK LIFE FOUNDATION**

*Nonprofit receives funding to support the need for bereavement  
resources within school communities*

**WEST CHESTER, OH - May 11, 2022** – Companions on a Journey announced today a \$100,000 Grief Reach grant from the [New York Life Foundation](#), administered by the [National Alliance for Children’s Grief](#), to ensure that school communities have information and dedicated bereavement resources to meet the needs of grieving students and their families. With this grant, Companions on a Journey will expand its School-Based Bereavement Support program into new schools and will focus on updating and expanding professional development for staff and volunteer facilitators.

In Ohio, **1 in 11 children** will experience the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 18\*. When a parent, sibling, grandparent, or another significant person in a child’s life dies, a child experiences great sadness and emotions that are often difficult to verbalize. Unaddressed grief and trauma can lead to decreased academic performance, mental health issues, and early mortality. Timely grief support can make a difference in the life of a grieving child.

"We are thankful for the New York Life Foundation’s investment in addressing the impact grief has on school communities across the country. We are deeply grateful that our Cincinnati community was awarded this grant especially as we have seen the need for grief support rise dramatically since the pandemic. This funding will help us ensure students’ social, emotional, and bereavement needs are understood, addressed, and supported," said Sheila Munaf-Kanoza, Executive Director.

“Acknowledging the long-term impact of the pandemic on students and teachers led us to dedicate Grief Reach Grant funding to focus on providing school communities with bereavement support,” said Maria Collins, vice president, New York Life Foundation. “There is a growing need for more social, emotional and grief support in schools across the country and we are addressing these gaps through a multi-tiered and holistic approach focused on investment, collaboration, and resources.”

Vicki Jay, CEO, National Alliance for Children’s Grief shared, “We are grateful for the investment that the New York Life Foundation continues to make in positively impacting the lives of bereaved children and their families across the nation. For over a decade, funding from the Grief Reach program has worked to address the gap in resources and funding, increase access to bereavement support services in local communities, especially diverse communities, and innovatively seek to address the unmet needs of our youngest grievers. We are honored to be a partner in this work.”

Over 360 Grief Reach grants totaling more than \$12 million have been awarded since the program’s inception in 2011. The New York Life Foundation has been one of the leading funders of the childhood bereavement field, investing nearly \$70 million to date in support of grieving children and their families.

### **About the New York Life Foundation**

Inspired by New York Life’s tradition of service and humanity, the New York Life Foundation has, since its founding in 1979, provided nearly \$390 million in charitable contributions to national and local nonprofit organizations. The Foundation supports programs that benefit young people, particularly in the areas of educational enhancement, childhood bereavement and social justice. The Foundation also encourages and facilitates the community involvement of employees and agents of New York Life through its Volunteers for Good and Grief-Sensitive Schools programs. To learn more, please visit [www.newyorklifefoundation.org](http://www.newyorklifefoundation.org).

### **About National Alliance for Children’s Grief**

The National Alliance for Children’s Grief (NACG) is a nonprofit organization that raises awareness about the needs of children and teens who are grieving a death and provides education and resources for anyone who supports them. The NACG is a North American network comprised of over 1,400 professionals, institutions, and volunteers who promote best practices, educational programming, and critical resources to facilitate the mental, emotional, and physical health of grieving children and their families. We educate, advocate, and raise awareness about childhood bereavement through our member and partner collective voices. For more information about the NACG, please visit [www.childrengrieve.org](http://www.childrengrieve.org).

### **About Companions on a Journey Grief Support (COJ)**

Companions on a Journey was founded by Sheila Munaf-Kanoza in 1997 as a faith-based, community volunteer organization. COJ has steadily grown to become one of the largest faith-based bereavement service organizations in the region and is a proud member of the NACG. Presently, COJ facilitates grief-specific support groups including our school-based program which serves over 800 students a month in 60+ schools. We offer family and adult grief programs, corporate support, first responder support, training & education, school and community crisis response, Suicide Postvention, Bereavement Facilitator Training, and QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) Gatekeeper Training. For more information, please visit [www.companionsonajourney.org](http://www.companionsonajourney.org)

\* <https://judishouse.org/research-tools/cbem/>

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