

RFA 2026-0015
Request

**Hospice Services
of Lake County**

HOPE • COMPASSION • LIFE



To the Attention of the Redbud Healthcare District
From: Jennifer Nystrom

Dear Members of the Board,

Thank you for the time you took to meet with Scott McFarland and myself. Your steadfast commitment to the South Lake area of Lake County is both evident and deeply inspiring. As an organization, we continue to evaluate the most effective ways to support the South Lake community and to meet the evolving needs of its children and families.

As per our conversation, this year we will not be hosting the 3-day camp as we are reexamining and rebuilding that program. Through the year 2025/26 we are particularly focused on expanding our presence in the region by strengthening our growing school program, providing 1-day camps, facilitating family and educator support/education and increasing access to the services and support our community deserves. Your partnership and thoughtful consideration for assistance play an important role in helping us advance this mission.

Thank you again for your dedication and for the opportunity to collaborate in service of our shared community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Nystrom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent and larger than the last name.

Jennifer Nystrom
Director of Social Service
Hospice Services of Lake County
Lake Palliative Care

Grant Narrative: Expanding Bereavement Support & Presence in the South Lake Region (2025–2026)

Applicant: Hospice Services of Lake County (HSLC)

Program: Wings of Hope – South Lake Expansion Initiative

Funding Requested: 2025–2026 Redbud Healthcare District Grant Cycle

Organizational Overview

Hospice Services of Lake County (HSLC) has been a trusted community provider for more than four decades, offering hospice care, caregiver support, and comprehensive grief and bereavement services to residents throughout Lake County. The **Wings of Hope** program provides specialized support to children, teens, and families coping with the death of a loved one. HSLC serves families regardless of income or background and remains one of the few local organizations equipped to offer child-focused grief services.

Statement of Need

Families in the **South Lake area** face disproportionate challenges in accessing grief support. Barriers include transportation limitations, fewer local community-based programs, and a higher incidence of socioeconomic stresses that complicate the grieving process. Children and teens in this region are especially vulnerable to the emotional, behavioral, and academic impacts of unaddressed grief.

Additionally, **educators and school personnel regularly serve as frontline observers** of children’s grief responses. Many have expressed a need for additional training and resources to confidently support grieving students.

HSLC also recognizes the importance of building a sustainable presence in the South Lake area by training local volunteers and participating in community events, thereby reducing isolation for grieving families and increasing awareness of available resources.

Project Description

HSLC is requesting funding to expand the Wings of Hope program in the South Lake region through **four coordinated initiatives** that increase access, support, and community capacity.

1. Family Bereavement Support Dinners (6 per school year)

HSLC will host **six family support dinners** during the 2025–2026 school year at accessible locations in the South Lake area. These dinners will:

- Offer families a safe and welcoming space to share a meal and connect with others experiencing grief.
- Provide age-appropriate grief activities for children and teens.
- Facilitate caregiver education on navigating grief and recognizing secondary stressors.
- Help families build supportive relationships within their own community.
- Identify individuals who may benefit from additional HSLC services or referrals.

These events foster family communication, provide peer support, and reduce the isolation that grieving children often experience.

2. Education for School & Youth-Serving Professionals

HSLC will provide increased educational opportunities for:

- Teachers
- School counselors
- Administrators
- Youth program staff

Training topics will include:

- How children grieve at different developmental stages
- Identifying symptoms of grief and trauma
- Communication skills for supporting grieving students
- How to support families during and after a loss
- Local bereavement resources and referral pathways

Workshops may be held in person at local schools, district training days, or through collaborative community partnerships. These trainings build long-term capacity by equipping local professionals with tools to support grieving youth.

3. Two One-Day Family Grief Camps

HSLC will host **two one-day grief camps** in the South Lake region. These camps are designed for families to participate together and will include:

- Hands-on projects and therapeutic art activities
- Guided memorializing rituals
- Age-specific and family group sessions
- Exploration of cultural beliefs and traditions surrounding death
- Activities focused on communication, coping skills, and resilience

These grief camps strengthen the family unit while honoring personal and cultural expressions of loss. They also allow HSLC staff to deepen ongoing relationships with South Lake families.

4. Volunteer Training & Increased Community Presence

To sustain long-term service capacity in South Lake, HSLC will:

- Recruit and train additional local volunteers to support Wings of Hope programs.
- Offer specialized training in understanding children's grief, supporting families, facilitating activities, and representing HSLC at community functions.
- Increase visibility at South Lake-area community events, health fairs, school events, and cultural gatherings to ensure families are aware of available bereavement resources.

This investment in volunteer development helps build a consistent, trusted presence in the region.

Goals and Measurable Objectives

Goal 1: Expand access to bereavement support for families in the South Lake region.

- Host **6 Family Bereavement Support Dinners** with a combined attendance of at least **90 individuals**.
- Connect at least **25% of participant families** with additional services or resources.

Goal 2: Strengthen caregiver and professional knowledge regarding childhood grief.

- Deliver **2–4 training sessions** for school and youth-serving professionals, reaching at least **50 participants**.

Goal 3: Provide immersive grief-support experiences for families.

- Host **2 one-day family grief camps**, serving approximately **40–60 individuals** total.

Goal 4: Build sustainable community presence and capacity.

- Train **10–15 new volunteers** from the South Lake region.
 - Attend **at least 6 community events** to increase visibility and outreach.
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Expected Outcomes

- Families report increased understanding of grief, improved communication, and decreased isolation.
 - Educators feel more prepared to support grieving students in the classroom.
 - Children who participate in dinners or camps demonstrate improved coping skills and emotional expression.
 - HSLC strengthens long-term presence and service continuity in the South Lake community.
 - Community members receive clearer pathways to bereavement resources.
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Evaluation Plan

HSLC will measure success through:

- Attendance tracking for all events.
- Pre/post surveys for caregivers and professional training participants.
- Staff evaluations of volunteer readiness.
- Follow-up calls or emails assessing ongoing family needs.
- Documentation of resource referrals and service linkages.

A full program report will be provided to the Redbud Healthcare District at the end of the grant period.

Conclusion

Support from the Redbud Healthcare District will allow Hospice Services of Lake County to deepen and expand bereavement services for children, families, and community professionals in the South Lake region. By increasing family-centered programming, professional education, volunteer capacity, and community presence, HSLC will create a stronger, more accessible network of support for those navigating grief. This proposal directly aligns with the District's mission to strengthen health, resilience, and wellbeing for South Lake residents.

Hospice Services of Lake County
2025-26 Redbud Healthcare District Request For Assistance

WINGS OF HOPE CHILDREN'S BEREAVEMENT PROGRAM AND FAMILY SUPPORT

Budget

	Request to RBHCD	Applicant	Total
EXPENSES			
Professional Salaries	\$ 29,183.00	\$ 29,183.00	\$ 58,366.00
Insurance	\$ 775.00	\$ 238.00	\$ 1,013.00
Facility Rentals	\$ 1,522.00		\$ 5,714.00
Meals & Snacks	\$ 400.00		\$ 400.00
Materials & Supplies	\$ 2,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
Family Bereavment support Dinners (6)	\$ 4,000.00		\$ 4,000.00
Education for school and youth professionals	\$ 1,500.00		\$ 4,000.00
Promotion	\$ 500.00	\$ 400.00	\$ 400.00
Volunteer Traning		\$ 1,500.00	
Mileage	\$ 120.00	\$ 133.00	\$ 253.00
	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 31,454.00	\$ 78,146.00