

Founded in 1996 by Dr. Joanne Cacciatore following the death of her baby daughter, Cheyenne, the MISS Foundation is an international, 501(c)(3), volunteer-based organization providing counseling, advocacy, research, education, and support (C.A.R.E.S.) services to families experiencing the death of a child.

## *Media contact.*

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## *General information.*

The MISS Foundation is a 501(c)(3) international nonprofit based in Arizona. The business office is located in Austin, Texas, where the organization's executive director resides. Countless families receive crisis and ongoing support from our highly trained counselors specializing in traumatic grief at the Selah Carefarm and Family House. MISS Foundation volunteers, who are often bereaved themselves, help provide ongoing services to the organization as support group facilitators, mentors, fundraisers, event planners and more.

## *Overview and mission.*

For 25 years, the MISS Foundation has cared for families before, during, and after the death of a child of any age, from any cause.

After the death of a child, families experience unparalleled trauma and grief. The MISS Foundation is committed to helping families through local support groups, counseling, advocacy, education, emotional health services, peer-support mentoring, online forums, kindness walks, a green therapy carefarm program with rescue animals, a respite center for traumatically bereaved individuals, an annual retreat for bereaved parents, specialized training for providers in traumatic grief, and opportunities for volunteerism that allow bereaved and traumatized individuals to give back as a way to remember and honor their beloved.

Helping people in their darkest hours, we do what no other place on earth does for grieving hearts. For more information, visit our website: [www.missfoundation.org](http://www.missfoundation.org).

### **MISS**Foundation

Post Office Box 9195  
Austin, Texas 78766  
(888)455-MISS

**"A community of sorrow is the *strongest* community of all."**

## History and reach.

Since 1996, the MISS Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, has helped families suffering the most traumatic loss of all, the death of their child. The organization was founded in 1996 by Dr. Joanne Cacciatore following the death of her infant daughter, Cheyenne. With few resources available when her own child died, Dr. Cacciatore created this much-needed community that exists today based on the principles of compassion and kindness, where grieving families are able to remember and honor their beloved family member in a safe and supportive environment.

In 2020, the MISS Foundation directly helped 1,500 newly bereaved families. We provided free and affordable counseling to those in need, totaling more than \$300,000 of in-kind services. We served thousands more through our mentor network, support packets, Zoom support groups, and online forums. Through our Compassionate Bereavement Care program, we reached out to countless local communities, training more than 600 providers worldwide to support families in their own communities who have a child who is dying or who has died. We also opened one of our most significant projects to date – the 3,400-square foot Selah Family House for the traumatically bereaved. It is located at the Selah Carefarm –the first green carefarm in the United States specifically designed to serve traumatized and bereaved families. We started welcoming families in December of 2020 to the Selah Family House, on 10-acres of beautiful land near Sedona, Arizona. The first-of-its kind house and carefarm serves traumatized families in need of specialized care and support.

## Management capability.

The MISS Foundation has a stable annual operating budget and a sound financial history, along with a consistent board of directors and an executive director of more than nine years. We have 600 trained providers, as well as volunteers, throughout the U.S. and in 14 countries. Our founder and Board of Directors President, Dr. Joanne Cacciatore, is a respected researcher, professor, author, and speaker, who has dedicated her life to serving bereaved families. Funding for our programs include grants, individual donations, corporate contributions, and program fees. Our annual budget is around \$475,000.

Dr. Joanne Cacciatore, a tenured professor at Arizona State University, is the president and founder of the MISS Foundation. She is an acclaimed public speaker and author with an expertise in traumatic grief. An INDIES Gold Medal Award Winner, her best-selling book, *Bearing the Unbearable: Love, Loss and the Heartbreaking Path of Grief*, was released in June 2017, and sold out before its release date. Her newest book, *Grieving is Loving*, was released in late 2020. Dr. Cacciatore specializes in counseling those affected by traumatic death. She founded the 10-acre Selah Carefarm, now with its 40 beloved rescue animals, in 2016. The Selah Carefarm and the new Family House offers grievers a compassionate community where grief and love, pain and beauty intersect.

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## *A Different Approach – Green Care for Trauma and Grief Model.*

(Cacciatore and Gorman, 2016)

The Selah House and Carefarm, a program of the MISS Foundation, is a collective of restorative spaces within an evidence-based therapeutic community where grieving individuals, families, and groups can go to receive counseling, participate in remembrance rituals, connect with others (humans and non humans) who have suffered loss, and find space for their grief in a safe natural environment. All of the animals (40, including horses, pigs, roosters, alpacas, cats, dogs, goats, donkeys, and sheep) on the carefarm have been rescued from abuse, neglect, homelessness, and torture. Grieving families know what it means to suffer, and so do these animals.

All work is based on compassion for all, including animals and the earth. Thus, the Selah Carefarm is vegan and sustainable.

The Selah Carefarm offers a dramatically different approach to traumatic grief than traditional Western treatment facilities, which often focus on diagnosing and medicating people who are deeply grieving. The carefarm approach is simple, safe, and focuses on three restorative areas of support:

1. Carefarming, which includes offerings such as gardening and therapeutic horticulture, animal therapy, rescue animal caregiving, green recreation, landscape maintenance, and ecotherapy;
2. Contemplative practices, which include meditation/centering prayer, mindfulness based support groups, bibliotherapy, grounding, and ritual;
3. Physical well-being, which includes yoga, physical activity, and psychoeducation around sleep hygiene, healthy eating, stress resilience, and traumatic grief counseling.

Despite the high incidence of traumatic grief in communities around the world, there is no place like this anywhere. Bereaved and traumatized families need a safe place to go in crisis. A place where their grief is honored and held. A place where they are safe to feel, to remember, and to connect to a community. Families now have that much-needed place and are able to stay on site at the newly built guest house at the Selah Carefarm.

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