



Brennan C. Wood, Executive Director
Dougy Center: The National Grief Center for Children & Families

May 9, 2025

Dear Honorable Co-Chairs Girod and Nosse and Members of the Joint Subcommittee on Capital Construction:

I write to you today to express my strong support for a \$2.1 million capital investment in a critically needed project: the establishment of a permanent Dougy Center home in Beaverton, Oregon.

For over 40 years, Dougy Center has provided essential grief support programs to children, teens, young adults, and their families after the death of a parent or sibling. As the national leader in this space, The Dougy Center Model has been replicated across the country and internationally, yet its heart remains right here in Oregon. More information about Dougy Center's mission and services can be found at www.dougy.org.

My connection to Dougy Center is deeply personal and lifelong. I first came through its doors in 1987, just three days after my 12th birthday, following the death of my mother. I know firsthand the life-saving impact of Dougy Center's support during such a profoundly difficult time. That experience shaped the course of my life—I began volunteering as a teenager and later joined the staff, starting as a Receptionist and Program Assistant. For the past 10 years, I've had the privilege of serving as Executive Director, witnessing the transformative impact of our work on thousands of children and families each year. I'm also a Dougy Center parent; after the deaths of both of her biological parents, my adopted daughter became a participant in our program. Experiencing our services as both a grieving child and a parent has only deepened my conviction in the importance of this work. And I can tell you personally—driving from Beaverton to Southeast Portland each week wasn't easy, even for me.

The proposed capital project—Dougy Center West, also known as *Malcolm's House*—will bring permanent services to the rapidly growing and diverse community of Washington County, an area long identified as a priority for program expansion. The new Beaverton facility will allow Dougy Center to significantly increase accessibility for families on the Westside of the Portland Metro area and will reduce wait times for children and families navigating the challenges of grief. Within five years of opening, the center aims to double the number of individuals it serves annually, from 2,500 to over 5,000.

This request comes at a time of unprecedented demand for Dougy Center's programs. Despite national recognition and deep local roots, the organization's current infrastructure cannot meet the growing need. Establishing a dedicated space in Beaverton is a strategic and necessary step to meet the mental health and grief support needs of Oregon families—needs that, if unmet, have far-reaching implications for education, workforce participation, and community well-being.

Because of Dougy Center's long history of financial solvency, our Board of Directors feels confident in launching construction when we hit 75% of our goal – meaning we have just \$2.1 million left to raise until this can happen. The time is NOW. A state capital investment of \$2.1 million will play a pivotal role in bringing this project to life. Dougy Center has already purchased the building for its future Beaverton home, positioning us to move forward without delay. With this funding, we can immediately begin critical renovations to transform the space into a welcoming, purpose-built environment for grieving children and families. This investment will serve as a cornerstone of the *here.now.* Campaign for Dougy Center West, catalyzing additional support from private donors and institutional partners. Just as importantly, it will affirm the state's leadership and commitment to the mental health and well-being of children and families, placing Oregon at the forefront of compassionate, community-based care.

On behalf of those who have walked through grief and those who will, I respectfully urge your support for this funding request. Together, we can ensure that Dougy Center West becomes a beacon of hope, healing, and resilience for generations to come.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Brennan C. Wood
Executive Director

Grief can be
lonely, but you
don't have to
be **alone.**

Rheagan, 7
*Dougy Center
participant*

here.now.

THE CAMPAIGN FOR DOUGY CENTER WEST

Why build?



We know grief. Dougy Center provides support in a safe place where children, teens, young adults, and families who are grieving can share their experiences before and after a death. We also provide support and training locally, nationally, and internationally to individuals and organizations seeking to assist children who are grieving.

Childhood bereavement is a critical public health issue and an increasingly important national priority. The death of a parent, sibling, or other important person in a child's life is one of the most frequently reported disruptive childhood experiences and without support, can lead to adverse health and welfare outcomes.

Our top priority is to reach more children who are grieving who desperately need our services.

Our vision for Dougy Center West

New Permanent Home on the Westside

14,000 SF Building near Public Transportation

Our Renowned Music, Art, Big Energy, Volcano Rooms

National Training Center & Recording Studio

Indoor/outdoor Play Area

Spacious Parking Lot for Families

Our campaign goals

\$12.5M

Campaign Working Goal

\$9.8M

Dougy Center West

\$1M

Catalyst Fund

\$200K

Eastside Campus Upgrades

\$1.5M

Campaign Costs

30 months



Support for people who are grieving

Dougy Center's Impact

People served through **peer grief support groups**



2024: 2,733

2014: 1,729

2004: 696



183,881

Grief Out Loud

podcast episodes
downloaded in 2024.
Visit dougyc.org/podcast
to listen

324,245

people from
194 countries
found support and
free resources on
dougyc.org in 2024



Information, crisis, referral, and intake requests
answered by Dougy Center Program staff

2024: 25,056

2014: 7,489

2004: 1,393



Volunteer Support

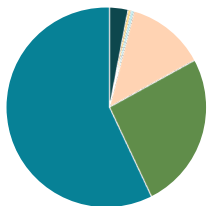
27,954 = \$936,145

**volunteer hours
contributed
in 2024**

**donation
value**
source: Independent Sector

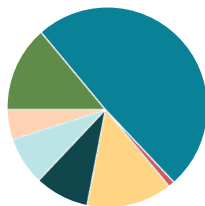
Grief Support Groups

Person Who Died:



- Father: 62%
- Mother: 21%
- Sibling: 14%
- Grandparent: 2%
- Close Friend/
Partner: >1%
- Other >1%

Cause of Death:



- Illness/Medical
(non COVID): 49%
- Suicide: 14%
- Accident: 14%
- Substance Use: 9%
- Homicide: 8%
- Unknown: 5%
- COVID-19: >1%

In 2024, the **L.Y.G.H.T. program** was accessed

239 times
by youth in foster care;
100% of youth
would recommend
L.Y.G.H.T. to their peers



The Need for Dougy Center in the Portland Metro Area



An average of
**118 kids
and 91 adults**

were on the waiting list to get into a
Dougy Center grief support group

31% of Dougy Center
families report they live
below the poverty level

Cost to families for
groups, resources,
and support **= \$0**



1 in 12

youth in the United States
will experience the death of a
parent or sibling by age 18

*source: Childhood Bereavement
Estimation Model (CBEM)*



For more information or to get involved contact:

Lani E. Faith, *Chief Advancement Officer* Main: 503.775.5683 | Direct: 971.429.4357 | lanie@dougyc.org

dougyc.org

I don't attend grief group
because my mom died.
I attend grief group
because your mom
didn't.



Adam, 16
Doug Center
participant