

Our House NYC

A Place Where Grieving New Yorkers Find Support and Hope

Our House NYC is New York City's only grief support center, and in less than a year since opening, demand has already outpaced its expectations.



Tami Schneider

When Tami Schneider lost her husband to brain cancer at 44 while raising her 11- and 14-year-old children, she discovered something surprising: Despite living in the greatest city in the world with endless possibilities and opportunities, there was almost nowhere for grieving people to find ongoing, in-person community support.

After leaving the hospital, she joined several grief support meetings but couldn't really find a connection. Many participants were in their 80s and lost their spouse of 50 years, but no one was in her situation. Though surrounded by caring friends and family, she struggled to find others who truly understood the challenges of grieving a spouse while raising two young children.

She described it as "feeling lonely in a crowded room."

Over the next decade, Schneider privately brought together widowers and families facing similar losses to build a support system for each other. Those gatherings ultimately inspired Our House NYC, a dedicated grief support center for children, adults and families.

The center opened in Manhattan in October 2025 across from Bryant Park, a central location that's

easily accessible from all boroughs and the greater New York City area. It is modeled after Our House Grief Support Center in Los Angeles, which has provided grief support, education and resources for thousands of community members for 30 years.

The model is simple: While grief may be universal, everyone's experience is deeply personal. Losing a spouse while raising children is different from losing a parent, sibling or a young child. That understanding is at the heart of Our House NYC.

At Our House NYC, children, teens and adults are placed in groups based on factors including age and relationship to the person who died. The goal is to connect people who can relate not only to one another's loss but also to the changing relationships and everyday experiences that follow it.

Groups are co-led by two trained volunteers and provide a judgement-free, supportive place to talk openly about grief with people who understand. Participants remain with the same group over the course of the program, giving everyone time to build trust and lasting relationships. There is no expectation that someone should simply "move on."

The interior setup of the center itself creates a sense of comfort: Group rooms resemble living rooms, and a child-friendly room is equipped with "feeling" balls to help children express their emotions. A communal kitchen provides space for participants to get to know each other.

Our House NYC also brings grief support into New York City schools, working with educators and school communities. "Grief is a big unaddressed public health issue," said Sarah McCollum Williams, the executive director of Our House NYC. "One in 13 children in New York will lose a parent or sibling by age 18. Studies show that unaddressed grief in children can lead to higher rates of school dropout, substance use, depression and suicide attempts, making grief support essential in our schools."

Additionally, Our House NYC provides grief support to companies and their employees.

Demand for its services has already exceeded expectations, creating a growing waiting list of New Yorkers seeking support. The challenge now is expanding quickly enough to reach them.

That requires more volunteers. Volunteers don't need any previous professional experience in grief counseling, as the center provides training and curriculum, preparing them to co-lead groups. "You just have to have a big heart," Schneider said.

Financial support is equally important. While participants contribute to the cost of group sessions on a sliding scale, no one is turned away if they are unable to pay. The organization therefore relies on

broader philanthropic support and partnerships to sustain and expand its work.

For Schneider, the goal extends beyond helping people cope with loss. It is about creating the community she struggled to find when her own family needed it.

Schneider's most memorable moment, which still brings tears to her eyes today, happened when the very first participant came to Our House NYC and told her that for the first time, they felt hope.

"There's nothing more beautiful than providing hope to a person," Schneider said.

Photos courtesy of Our House NYC

