



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Children's Grief Support Nonprofit Names Leader

Crista Brandt Selected as Valerie's House Northwest Florida Director

PENSACOLA, FLA., July 11, 2023 – Valerie's House, (VH) the leading nonprofit dedicated to helping children grieving the death of a loved one, is pleased to announce the appointment of Crista Brandt as the Northwest Florida Director. Brandt brings her extensive managerial experience and personal passion for supporting grieving children to this pivotal role.

Brandt's journey with Valerie's House began when she spearheaded the launch of the Pensacola Chapter in late 2020. As a dedicated volunteer for two years, Brandt played a crucial role in serving grieving families in the community. Now, as the Northwest Florida Director, she will lead Valerie's House, Pensacola full-time, providing invaluable support to those grieving a loss.

The demand for VH programs has been rapidly growing, with an expansion of nearly 50% in 2023 alone. With the recent establishment of a permanent location and the receipt of funding from Escambia Children's Trust, the timing was ideal for Brandt to dedicate her efforts full-time to Pensacola clients.

In her new role, Brandt will continue to serve grieving families and oversee group nights at the VHP location on East Gadsden Street. As the Northwest Florida Director, Brandt will be a prominent figure and advocate for VH in the panhandle region. She will be more involved in developing community partnerships, expand her executive leadership responsibilities, and contribute to the management of programs for children and families, ensuring that VH makes a positive impact in the community.

Brandt is a graduate of Leadership Pensacola 2020 and brings over 25 years of leadership and advocacy experience to her position. With a degree from the University of Georgia Terry College of Business, she has excelled in various technology and software consulting, sales, and project management roles. However, it is her personal journey as a grieving child that fuels her passion for helping others navigate through loss.

Having lost her mother to cancer when she was only 11 years old, Brandt understands firsthand the challenges faced by grieving children. It was through her own healing journey and volunteering that she witnessed the transformative power of children connecting and sharing their experiences with peers. Brandt's mission is to turn her own tragedy into a gift for others, ensuring that no child feels alone in their grief.

Valerie's House, Inc. was founded by Angela Melvin in Fort Myers, Florida, following the tragic loss of her mother in a car accident in 1987. When Brandt and Melvin crossed paths, they recognized the potential for a successful partnership that would bring much-needed grief support to children in Northwest Florida. Melvin expressed her enthusiasm for Brandt's appointment, stating, "Pensacola and Valerie's House are fortunate to have someone with Crista's background and personal experience join the team."

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According to the 2021 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model, one in eight children in Florida is predicted to experience the loss of a parent or sibling before the age of 25. Valerie's House remains committed to addressing this critical need by providing essential support services and resources free of charge.

About Valerie's House Pensacola

Valerie's House, Inc, founded in January 2016, has grown to serve over 3,000 children and their families across Florida. With locations in Fort Myers, Naples, Port Charlotte, and the newest addition in Pensacola, Valerie's House is dedicated to ensuring no child grieves alone. The organization relies on the generous support of the community to fulfill its mission at no cost to clients. For more information about Valerie's House, Pensacola, and its services, visit <https://valerieshouse.org/pensacola> or email pensacola@valerieshouse.org.

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