

## PROJECT SUMMARY

Fernside: A Center for Grieving Children (Fernside) seeks an external capacity building evaluation to strengthen its operations, activities, identify areas of opportunity, and establish a framework for sustained continuous improvement efforts moving forward. Working collaboratively with the evaluator, Fernside seeks to further the organization's mission through the accomplishment of the following activities:

- Assessment of current processes, specifically as it relates to identifying, collecting, and using data to demonstrate impact
- Development/refinement of data collection tools and processes to capture both short-term and longitudinal impact
- Identification of opportunities to enhance or expand programming that are in lockstep with Fernside's stated mission, either through new initiatives or community partnerships with likeminded organizations
- Development of a sustainable continuous improvement evaluation plan

## ABOUT FERNSIDE

Fernside: A Center for Grieving Children (Fernside) was established in 1986, and is the nation's second oldest children's grief center. The organization's mission is to **"Offer support and advocacy to grieving families who have experienced a death, and to increase awareness of grief issues through community outreach."** Since its inception, Fernside has proudly served over 35,000 people...all free of charge.

Fernside exists to help grieving children. Childhood bereavement is one of society's most pervasive, yet not talked about, issues. **In Ohio, 1 out of 12 children will experience the death of a parent or sibling before the age of 18.** This means that in Hamilton County, there are likely over 15,800 children who have lost an immediate family member. While these statistics show the high prevalence of childhood bereavement, it is largely a silent crisis. The majority of grieving children and teens do not know other peers their age who have had a parent or sibling die, so they become isolated in their grief. Many social researchers have concluded that grief in isolation can lead to a myriad of negative outcomes, including:

- Social withdrawal
- Increased anxiety
- Increased dropout rates
- Illegal behaviors
- Increased violent behaviors

## FERNSIDE'S PEER SUPPORT MODEL

Fernside is not a clinical care provider and does not offer one-on-one counseling or therapy. What Fernside offers is peer support, which consists of bringing grieving people together to form an empathetic community who support and grow alongside one another. The impact of Fernside's

peer support approach is supported by research that shows it is more beneficial for children to be with others who have suffered similar tragedy or loss, that bereaved children's friendships with other bereaved children are more helpful than with non-bereaved friends, and that children who receive peer support following the death of a parent or sibling show improved signs of behavior such as:

- Better adjustment
- Improved self-esteem
- Improved self-efficacy

## THE EVALUATION FERNSIDE SEEKS

Fernside seeks an external capacity building evaluation that looks both inward and outward. The overall goal of the evaluation is to further the mission of Fernside by critically assessing current programs and methods, identifying areas of opportunity, and developing tools and strategies that address areas of opportunity.

Fernside envisions the evaluation progressing in three phases, which are outlined below. These phases may run concurrently, and Fernside is open to working collaboratively with the evaluator to adjust these phases as needed.

### PHASE ONE: Assessment of Fernside Programs, Processes, Tools, & Impact Reports

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#### Activities:

- Work with Fernside staff to gain knowledge of current programs, processes, tools, and impact reporting
- Provide an analysis of best practices relating to children's grief programs and service models both locally and nationally
- Provide a community scan to assess the community need and the resources/organizations that are working in grief support
- Conduct a Strength Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis based on assessment of Fernside programs and findings from the analysis of children's grief programming best practices
- Review SWOT Analysis with Fernside Executive Director and key staff
- Work collaboratively with Fernside key staff to identify areas of opportunity to be addressed in PHASE TWO of the evaluation for current Fernside programs
- Work with Fernside staff to explore and identify key metrics that will demonstrate impact for current Fernside programs
- Participate in monthly meetings with Fernside Executive Director and key staff

#### Deliverables:

- Analysis and documentation of children's grief programming models and best practices
- SWOT Analysis
- Action Plan to address areas of opportunity identified in PHASE ONE

#### Timeline:

- June to November, 2020

## PHASE TWO: Development/Refinement of Data Collection Tools & Processes

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### Activities:

- Work with Fernside staff to develop any new/refined tools or processes that address the areas of opportunity identified in PHASE ONE for current Fernside programs
- Work with Fernside staff to create an action plan for testing and implementation of any new/refined tools or processes
- Create a one-page logic model for Fernside that incorporates new processes
- Participate in monthly meetings with Fernside Executive Director and key staff

### Deliverables:

- Development of new and/or refined tools and processes
- One-page logic model

### Timeline:

- October, 2020 to February, 2021

## PHASE THREE: Opportunities for Growth & Sustainability

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### Activities:

- Based on the SWOT Analysis and community scan performed in PHASE ONE, identify areas of community needs/service gaps that align with Fernside's mission and could be addressed through Fernside programming
- Identify likeminded community organizations that provide complimentary services to Fernside and could enhance/expand programs through partnerships
- Work with Fernside staff to create a template for continued internal evaluation moving forward
- Conduct an exit interview with the Fernside Executive Director and other key staff

### Deliverables

- A written analysis highlighting opportunities to expand/enhance Fernside programs to meet unaddressed community needs/service gaps through new initiatives, expansion/refinement of existing programs, or through strategic community partnerships
- Creation of a template for sustained internal evaluation or continuous improvement

### Timeline:

- February to June, 2021

## THE EVALUATOR FERNSIDE SEEKS

Fernside seeks an evaluator that will work collaboratively, seeking input from staff and volunteers who work directly with grieving children and families. The ideal evaluator should also display an acute sensitivity to the unique needs of grieving children while making recommendations and considerations. The ideal evaluator should always keep front of mind that Fernside serves children who have experienced the trauma of losing a loved one, in many cases a parent or a sibling. For many children served by Fernside, it is their first experience in processing the permanent nature of

death and the overwhelming emotions that accompany intense grief. How children process death, and how they are treated when they are grieving, can have long-term ramifications, either positive or negative, on the adult that they grow to be.

Fernside also seeks an evaluator who can be flexible or receptive to new ideas that may occur through the collaboration process, and in return should feel comfortable providing suggestions or ideas they may have to yield a more impactful evaluation. The ideal evaluator should value and enjoy the process of collaboration and can expect to work with a family-friendly organization that puts a premium on respect, results, and relationships.

## PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

### **The proposal packet should:**

- Be up to six pages long, single-spaced
- Use a type font not smaller than 12 points
- Have margins of not less than 1 inch

### **Proposals must include the following:**

- Provide the name(s) of the proposal submitter(s) and point of contact information. Teams should list all teammates and point of contact information for each (mailing address, e-mail, telephone and fax). When submitting point of contact information, please provide both a business/financial and technical point of contact, if they are not the same person. If an extension is required to reach a party by telephone, please include this with the telephone number.
- An overview of experience and success with capacity building evaluations
- A preliminary plan outlining how the evaluator(s) for this project will approach the activities and deliverables to be completed
- An overview of any anticipated challenges and how the evaluator(s) for this project will manage any challenges
- A proposed budget not to exceed \$50,000. All project expenses should be included in the budget. Note: Fernside does not pay administrative or indirect costs.
- A list of three references
- Please attach the CV or resume of the individual(s) that will be working on the evaluation

## DEADLINE & SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

**The proposal is due no later than midnight on March 1, 2020 (EST).**

Please submit your proposal via email to [victoria\\_ott@trihealth.com](mailto:victoria_ott@trihealth.com)

If there are additional questions, please contact Fernside at 513.246.9140

## PROCESS

Fernside will review all submitted proposals and acknowledge receipt. Finalists will be contacted to participate in an in-person interview at Fernside. Applicants not selected to move forward in the process will also be notified. Fernside intends to make a selection after all finalists have been interviewed, notifying all parties of the result. If needed, a follow-up interview may be requested.