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Gov. Stitt Proclaims November 19 as Oklahoma Children's Grief Awareness Day

OKLAHOMA CITY — Gov. Kevin Stitt has proclaimed Nov. 19, 2026, as Oklahoma Children's Grief Awareness Day, recognizing the need to raise awareness of childhood grief and ensure grieving children have access to compassionate mental health support.

In recognition of the proclamation, Calm Waters Center for Children and Families is inviting Oklahomans to honor loved ones who have died through its annual Butterfly Window Campaign, a community tribute featuring the names of loved ones submitted by grieving families.

Located at 501 N. Walker Ave., Suite 140, in downtown Oklahoma City, the display features butterflies bearing the names of loved ones who are deeply missed. Calm Waters invites clients and community members to submit names creating a shared space for remembrance and recognition of the many families navigating grief. The window display will remain in place through Jan. 5, 2027.

The proclamation acknowledges that children are often overlooked in their grief. Well-intentioned adults may avoid conversations about death, minimize a child's feelings, or rely on phrases such as "you'll be okay" or "time heals all wounds." These responses can unintentionally leave children feeling isolated in their grief. By increasing awareness and creating a physical tribute to honor loved ones, Calm Waters Center seeks to better equip Oklahoma families, schools, and communities with a visible reminder that every life matters and every story deserves to be remembered.

“Children deserve to have their grief recognized and their experiences understood,” said Trisha Koelsch, CEO of Calm Waters. “This proclamation and campaign are an opportunity to remind our communities that children are grieving, even when their pain is not visible. With the right support, children can learn healthy ways to navigate their grief and know they do not have to face it alone.”

According to the Judi’s House/JAG Institute’s 2026 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model Report, 1 in 10 children in Oklahoma will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18. This staggering reality highlights the importance of raising awareness and ensuring children who are grieving are not left to navigate their loss alone.

To learn more about Calm Waters’ free grief support services or submit a loved one’s name for the Butterfly Window Campaign, visit https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/11u0YPgZ7R

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About Calm Waters Center for Children and Families

Calm Waters provides grief support services for children, individuals, and families on their grief journey caused by death, divorce or other significant loss. Since beginning in 1992, Calm Waters has impacted more than 94,000 Oklahomans. For more information about Calm Waters and their services, visit calmwaters.org.

Link to photos:

https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/p6bzgasqn7bzb4twi8qyd/ALyvQxpr0M44I6NOnosJHgs?rlkey=n6fjxeeh03uc75fobgupvzcyg&st=cpqqa3c9&dl=0