

"There is nothing so powerful as truth"
DANIEL WEBSTER



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Manchester grief support organization eyes expansion to help more people process loss

By Josie Albertson-Grove
New Hampshire Union Leader

As the world emerges from a grief-filled year, a Manchester organization that works with grieving families and children as they process the death of a loved one is expanding.

Friends of Aine (pronounced AHN-ya) bought several properties on Manchester's West Side last month.

Christine Phillips, the organization's director, explained the group will be moving from Lowell Street to new, bigger, digs on Coolidge Street.

"We're essentially doubling the capacity," she said.



DAVID LANE/UNION LEADER

Friends of Aine on the corner of Lowell and Union streets in Manchester is moving to the West Side and expanding.

Phillips is devastated by the losses so many people have faced, but said she is pleased her organization will be able to offer support to more people.

In the short term, the group will start holding more frequent support groups for its clients, and bringing groups back in-person from online.

By early 2022, Phillips said, she hopes Friends of Aine will be able to offer support groups for young adults, a virtual group for teenagers with packed schedules, and can bring back a group for men.

Longer-term, she said, Friends of Aine is looking to form groups to specifically support families who have lost loved ones to suicide, and to drug over-

doses.

Phillips said she is seeing more demand for Friends of Aine's programs.

"I think the pandemic has brought an awareness of grief to our culture that wasn't there before," she said.

Later this month, Friends of Aine will host a large public event for anyone who wants space to grieve a loss. The "Gathering in Remembrance" will be held at Delta Dental Stadium on June 27, at 3 p.m.

The gathering is free, though registration is recommended at friendsofaine.com/remembrance. Participants will be invited to submit a photo of their loved one, and the photos will be displayed on the stadium Jumbotron during

a speaking program, which will end with a butterfly release.

Phillips said she thinks the community needs a space to process their losses, especially because the pandemic made it harder to gather last year.

"Because of the pandemic, and because so many people haven't had an opportunity to talk about their grief, to share their grief, as an organization we felt it was an obligation that would give people an opportunity to come together and share their grief," Phillips said.

"We can't make it go away, but we can certainly

honor it."