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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VALERIE'S HOUSE PENSACOLA CELEBRATES ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY
Children's Grief Center quickly expanding to help families in need

PENSACOLA, FLA., May 7, 2022 – Valerie's House -Pensacola, a non-profit with its sole mission of helping children grieve the death of a family member, is celebrating its one-year anniversary providing services to the community this month. The special birthday celebration kicked off May 3 with a birthday party luncheon at the Pensacola Little Theatre with a packed room of supporters, Valerie's House family members, elected officials, and community leaders.

"The support over the past year to bring Valerie's House grief support services to our community has been nothing short of remarkable," said Valerie's House- Pensacola founder Crista Brandt. "As someone who lost my own mother when I was 11-years-old and had nothing like Valerie's House to help me, I know our community needs Valerie's House."

Valerie's House -Pensacola started with 20 children and 10 grieving parents a year ago and has grown to help more than 100 children and adults grieving in the community. The organization provides peer grief support groups in a safe, comfortable place on an ongoing basis, using a variety of art therapy, music, and other child friendly techniques to help children cope with the traumatic death of a parent or sibling.

"We are getting about three to four new calls a week from families who need help," Brandt said. "They finally have a place where they can go to talk about their grief and not have to stuff it inside any longer."

Valerie's House is currently seeking a permanent location for its groups, and are working with supporters to find a cozy, homey location to call their own. Since opening in



Pensacola, Valerie's House has been utilizing space generously donated by Big Brothers Big Sisters off Creighton Road.

"We are looking for an actual house that we can turn into our grief support center," Brandt said. "When we find that location there will be no limits to how many children we can help in our region."

Valerie's House is in the process of finalizing a formal partnership with the City of Pensacola. This partnership would allow the organization to utilize one of the larger community centers to hold grief groups. We are also exploring other partnerships which will be announced once finalized.

One in 11 children will lose a parent before the age of 18 in Florida, and currently there are close to 10,000 children in Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties grieving.

Valerie's House would like to extend a heart-felt thank you to each donor that contributed during their inaugural year, including Humana, Pen Air Federal Credit Union, International Paper Foundation, The Chadbourne Foundation, The Kugelman Foundation, The Bear Family Foundation, Cox Charities, Community Foundation of Northwest Florida, Neal & Company, LLC., Gulf Power Foundation and the Escambia County Sheriff's Office, and many generous donors. The success seen in their first year would not have been possible without the generous support of the members and business within the community.

Valerie's House is a 501 © 3 non-profit and is fully supported by community donations. More information can be found at www.valeriesthouse.org/pensacola. To get involved, please contact Crista Brandt at crista@valeriesthouse.org.

About Valerie's House

Valerie's House has a mission to provide a safe, comfortable place for children to share, grieve and heal together following the death of a close family member. The vision is that No Child Will Grieve Alone.

Valerie's House was founded in Fort Myers, Florida in January 2016 by Angela Melvin, whose mother Valerie, died in a car accident in 1987. Since its inception, Valerie's House has expanded into three additional locations, including Naples, Port Charlotte, and Pensacola.

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Attachments

- 1) *Valerie's House- Pensacola logo*
- 2) *Photos*