

ERIN'S HOUSE CONNECTIONS

FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN

Summer 2011 | Volume 1—Issue 2



TEEN RETREAT 2011

The second annual Teen Retreat took place this year in April. This overnight retreat provides a setting that is safe and comfortable for teens as they learn how to adjust in their lives” change to “teens, as they learn how to adjust in their “new” normal, as a result of the death of a loved one. Several of our teens this year talked about the feeling of isolation in this grieving journey. One of the great things about Teen Retreat is that our campers not only experience fun activities in nature, but they also find that they are not alone in what they are thinking or feeling as they work through their grief. We have seen some teens return from the retreat stronger and more in touch with ways to navigate their personal grief journeys.

Our volunteer facilitators, who are on hand at the Teen Retreat wear many hats. They set up activities, prepare food and are a sounding board for our campers when they want to talk. As a part of our philosophy, we can't make campers participate, we can't make them disclose their situation, but we can provide an atmosphere where they feel comfortable in sharing. That's why Teen Retreat is so special. It is an overnight experience that immediately bonds these young adults through typical camp activities like a zip line, rock wall, fishing, and a bonfire. For some teens, this experience is a first for them. Facilitators also incorporate reflective activities throughout the retreat for campers to gain a sense of perspective as they meet new friends with similar situations of losing a loved one.

After the bonfire slowly extinguishes and campers start to trail off into slumber, they are met the next morning with one activity that is truly special. It is when they get to plant the memorial tree. It is an opportunity for the group to carry forward the names of those loved ones in a vital way. This is a fitting conclusion to a retreat that creates lasting friendships and endless hope in working through the loss of someone so dear. Email addresses, phone numbers, Facebook friend requests are all exchanged as everyone heads back to their cars for the ride home. There are also a few hugs and tears as everyone goes back to their realities.

Contributions from you make these types of events possible. Through Teen Retreat we have found a way to engage these young adults and specifically address their unique circumstances of being a teenager in grief. This is a pivotal aging cohort – with or without a loss of a loved one. The work we do with this age group can impact how they go about the rest of their lives, and it wouldn't be possible without our Erin's House benefactors.

We are already looking forward to our next camping excursion with Camp Good Grief which will take place August 26th – August 28th for 8-13 year-olds. For more information, feel free to call Cindy – Camp Director at the office 260-423-2466 or check out our website at www.erinshouse.org.

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ERIN'S HOUSE

BY THE NUMBERS

Total Individuals Currently Serving:

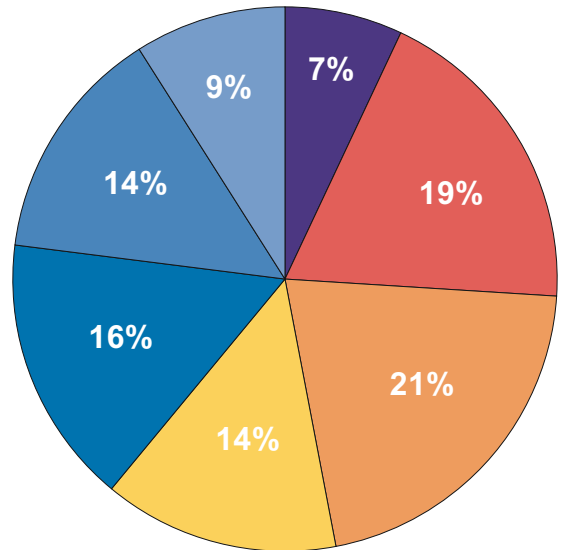
Of total 396 individuals served (including adults)

Children & Teens

- Ages 3-5 7%
- Ages 6-9 19%
- Ages 10-13 21%
- Teens 14%

Adults

- Adult Spousal Death 16%
- Adult Non-Spousal Death 14%
- Adult Child Death 9%



Volunteer



Seth Bennett

Like so many of our volunteers, Seth Bennett has gone above and beyond his role as facilitator at Erin's House. His time and dedication is a testament to his passion in helping others through life's ups and downs. You may have

seen him volunteering for Crisis Response, Teen Retreat, Grief Awareness Week or on his normal program night. He's been a smiling face at Erin's House ever since he graduated from Facilitator Training in February 2011.

"I am fortunate to know so many amazing people, some are living today or have died. Each of those family members and friends have and continue to shape me as an individual. I draw on the strength from those relationships and I know it is my duty to share my experiences with others," said Seth.

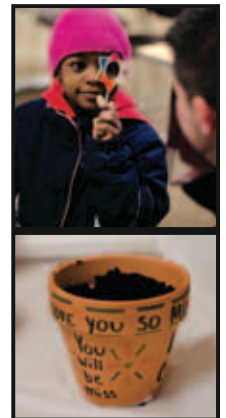
Seth's passion for volunteering goes beyond Erin's House to the gridiron. He loves coaching football. "It is amazing the personal growth one can achieve through volunteering. I've learned a lot about life, love, happiness, grief and hardships from the families I meet at Erin's House and from the kids I coach. Not to mention the many lessons I have learned from fellow facilitators and Erin's House staff members. It feels good to volunteer and give back. When you do things from the heart, it grows. I equate it to weight training for the rest of your body, the only way to grow your heart is to exercise it," added Seth.



New American Youth Ballet donated their time at our first Healing with the Arts Event



A teen drawing expressing their emotions of grief



Activities from our first Memories in Nature Event



Volunteers at Fox Island for Memories in Nature Event

Around the House



Debbie Meyer and Board President Rick Henvey with judges and members of the BBB.

BBB Torch Award winner

On April 29, Erin's House was awarded the Better Business Bureau Torch Award in the non-profit category. This award is given to a business that demonstrates ethics, honesty and integrity. Erin's House was nominated for this award by Luke Squires, Erin's House Volunteer Facilitator. We are honored to be given this award, and to be recognized as a business that embodies these high standards.

Erin's House at IPFW – *Grief with Friends*

Starting this fall, Erin's House will provide a peer support group geared solely for young adults, ages 19-25. There are few resources for this age group, who may not only be dealing with the death of a loved one but who are also undergoing many transitions in this life stage. Based on the Erin's House peer support group model, this group would be an opportunity for young adults to have a safe environment to share, ask questions and provide support for others.

In partnership with Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne, *Grief with Friends* will meet on the IPFW campus

twice monthly during the school year. To foster productive group sessions, each night will include a theme to focus the discussion. Themes range from "What is Grief?" to "Grief & the Holidays".

At Erin's House we are committed to finding new ways to fulfill our mission. *Grief with Friends* is just another opportunity for Erin's House to serve.

If you are interested in joining this group, or have any questions, call Jessica Sharpe at 423-2466.

15th Annual Puttin' on the Ritz



This year, Erin's House was proudly selected to receive a portion of the proceeds from the 15th Annual Puttin' on the Ritz event. This signature black tie event is organized by The Active

20-30 Club of Fort Wayne and was held on March 5th, at the Indiana Hotel Lobby. Guests enjoyed hors d'oeuvres from local restaurants, wine and beer tasting, a silent & live auction and music provided by the Chris Worth Band.



This very successful event raised more than \$17,000. "We are truly grateful for the generosity of The Active 20-30 Club for their hard work in planning this event, as well as the event sponsors; the Mad Ants, Med Partners, Three Rivers Federal Credit Union, Steel Dynamics, Sweetwater and many other

Fort Wayne companies," said Debbie Meyer, Executive Director of Erin's House.

The Active 20-30 Club of Fort Wayne allows young professionals to develop leadership skills and build lasting friendships while improving children's lives in Northeast Indiana. They differ from many other service organizations because they not only raise money for the special needs of children in the community, but encourage active and direct participation.

Looking for ways to support the Active 20-30 Club? Become a member for those who meet the age requirements or keep them informed of events that benefit children in the Fort Wayne community. More information on The Active 20-30 Club of Fort Wayne is available on their website: www.fortwayne2030.org. Or contact membership chair: Adrienne Bennigan, Membership@FortWayne2030.org, 441-2030.

In Appreciation:

A special thank you to those organizations who gave generously to Erin's House this quarter:

- 1st Missionary Church – Children's offering
- Harris Elementary Penny Drive
- University of Saint Francis Spring Fling
- EZ Car Credit
- NEW YORK LIFE – sponsor of TEEN Retreat
- Active 20-30 club – Puttin' on the Ritz



Tony Farragh, Melanie Bloom, Megan Farragh, Eugenia Farragh, Gail and Dave Farragh (Erin's family)

Common Bond Appreciation

The 12th Annual Common Bond Breakfast raised more than \$45,000 and was attended by 377 guests. The keynote speaker, Melanie Bloom inspired the crowd with her amazing story and generosity. It was truly a memorable morning.

In addition to her time, Melanie waived her speaking fees and paid her own travel expenses. Erin's House is so fortunate to have her among our friends of the organization.

Thanks to all of our sponsors for the event:

- Parkview Health, *Grand Event Sponsor*,
- Vera Bradley, *Event Sponsor*,
- *Table sponsors:* Cap N' Cork, Do It Best, NIPSCO, Fort Wayne Medical Oncology and Hematology, Indiana Michigan Power, Ambassador Enterprises, D.O. McComb & Sons, Superior Auto, Wealth Advisors Group, Indiana Tech, DeKalb Memorial Hospital, Lincoln Financial Foundation, Lutheran Children's Hospital, New York Life, Baden Gage & Schroeder, ONE, Sweetwater Sound, Frontier and Brotherhood Mutual.

Thank You for Your Support



The *Children Grieve, Too!* events in April were a success and made possible by the hard work and dedication of the

Children Grieve, Too! committee members:

Jane Wilks, Board Member

Kristi Abel, Facilitator

Chris Douse, IPFW

Alice Jordan-Miles, IPFW

Colleen Carpenter, IPFW

Lili Carroll, Visiting Nurse and Hospice Home

Bonnie Davis, Visiting Nurse and Hospice Home

To all those who attended these activities, Erin's House truly appreciates your participation.

Thank you to the following people and organizations who donated their time and services:

Nancy Jackson, Director of Music Therapy, IPFW

Amanda Martin, Assistant Deputy Director, Fort Wayne Museum of Art

Condra Ridley, Storyteller, Retired from Allen County Public Library

Friends of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic

New American Youth Ballet

New York Life

Tomkinson Autoland

Broadview Florist and Greenhouses

Paul Van Camp, Videographer

Joe Romie, Photographer

Alice Jordan Miles, Caterer

Erin's House would like to give a special thank you to the Fort Wayne Museum of Art and Fox Island County Park for the use of their facilities and their gracious staff!

Housequest

School Contributions

On April 20, Erin's House received a surprise donation from a student.

Her note stated,

"Dear Erin's House,

Inside is one dollar I am hoping you can use it and I want you to know my teacher did a report today about

Erin's House, it sounded very interesting. Please use the dollar wisely and help a child in need. She shared with us that you provide support for children that have had a family member or friend die. I would appreciate it if you would please send me more information. Thanks."

The kindness of this student touched all of us at Erin's House, it is a reminder that no gift is too small, whether monetary, your time, service, or kind words. Thank you!



Harris Elementary Penny Drive

Erin's House visited Harris Elementary to thank the children for their participation in their Annual Penny Drive in honor of Erin Farragh.

During that March 16th visit, a group of girls had created a song and sang it over the intercom, for the entire school to hear.

The song: "Erin's Drive Through, Erin's Drive Through Bring your quarters, and your dimes, and your penny's and your nickels and your dollars. You know you want to help other's reach their goals for the ice cream party. Yah yah yah you know you want to make money for Erin's House. Yah yah yah Erin's House"

Thank you girls, for your talent and the wonderful song you wrote! Your heartfelt support is very much appreciated!

Camp Good Grief Wish List 2011

(needs to be delivered by August 23rd)

- Capri Sun (5 boxes)
- Graham Crackers (5 boxes)
- Marshmallows-large kinds (5 bags)
- Hershey Bars-fun snack size (5 bags)
- Granola Bars (4 boxes)
- Fruit Snacks (8 boxes)
- Cookies (assorted kinds) snack sizes (8 boxes)
- Plastic Plates (150)
- Plastic Cups-8oz size (75)
- Paper Towels (12 rolls)
- Kleenex (10 boxes)
- Wet Wipes (8 containers)
- Masking Tape (4 rolls)
- Gel Pens (50)
- Fabric Markers (8 boxes)
- Disposable Cameras (8)
- Lawn Games (lawn darts, ring toss, etc) any game
- Gas Cards-\$15 each (35)
- Gift Cards-Walmart or Meijer any amount

If you rather we do the shopping, monetary donations are greatly appreciated!!!



Our 2011 Board Officers:

President -Rick Henvey – Parkview Health
VP Strategic Planning, Mark Vanderhagen – Wealth Advisors Group
VP Finance – Mike Ziembo – Baden Gage & Schroeder
VP Board Development – Jane Wilks – Community Volunteer
Secretary – Cathy Krouse – Construction Control
VP Development Committee – Kim Grant – Community Volunteer

Board Members:

Jon Albright-Community Volunteer
Tina Bennett- Hallmark Home Mortgage
Steve Brody – Community Volunteer
Carmen DeBruce – Lutheran Hospital
Joe Doust – Cap 'N Cork
Kris Foate – Community Volunteer
Jan Forbing – Lincoln Financial Group
Tim Frey – PNC

Doris Green –Community Volunteer
Jim Houlihan – Houlihan LLP
Paul Jamison – Jamison Meats
Bob Jesch – D.O.McComb & Sons
Karrie Kitch – Community Volunteer
Carol Lindquist – IPFW
Shelly Meyer – Tower Bank
Norine Martin – Community Volunteer

Tim Miller- Do It Best, Corp.
Mark Millett – Steel Dynamics
Henry Najdeski – Barrett & McNagny
Theresa Wagler – Steel Dynamics, Inc
Shirley Woods – Euell Wilson Center

Honoray Board Members:

Tracie Martin – WANE-TV
Tom Trent – Rothberg, Logan, and Warsco

Erin’s House provides support services for children, teens and their families who have suffered the death of a loved one.

How to contact us:

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Development Director, Michelle Parish
Volunteer Director, Kathleen Benson-Chaney
Program Directors: Jessica Black
Cindy Maldonado-Schaefer
Jessica Sharpe
Community Outreach Director, Chariee Reason
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