

ERIN'SHOUSE CONNECTIONS

Second Edition 2024

FEATURED STORY: The Identity Outreach Program for Underserved Areas

2023 Annual Report Snapshot

MEET: Rachael Burtnette,
Volunteer Facilitator

Next Event: Wine for the Spirit
Silent Auction Bidding For All!

Common Bond Event Recap

Updates on The Wing
Capital Campaign



Erin's House provides support services for children, teens,
and their families who have experienced a death.

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2023 Annual Report Snapshot



Dear Erin's House Community,

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the past year, I am thrilled to share the progress we have made together in advancing the mission of Erin's House. In 2023, we began our capital campaign for The Wing, expanded our support in schools and community organizations, celebrated 30 years of service, and continued to provide the community with grief programs, camps, resources, and education, all free of charge.

The Wing | Grief Resources for Young Adults

We began our capital campaign last year and are so grateful to have raised \$1.1 million from the generous giving of individuals, foundations, and businesses in our community. The Wing will soon be an amazing addition and expansion to our Erin's House services to support ages 18-25. Through 2024, we continue this capital campaign to raise a total of \$2.3 million—all to make The Wing a reality for our young adults.

Expanding Support in Schools

In 2023, Erin's House extended its reach and impact by providing grief support to over 800 students in schools and local organizations through our Classroom Companions and Identity Outreach programs. These initiatives have been instrumental in ensuring that students in elementary, middle, and high schools receive the care and support they need, even when they can't make it to Erin's House.

Lilly Endowment Grant

With a \$1 million grant we received from Lilly Endowment, we will be investing in staff development, increased outreach initiatives, additional Erin's House transportation, and much more over the next three years. Support like this helps Erin's House to thrive and think outside of the box on big improvements and changes to enhance our organization.

With your continued support, we will be able to touch the lives of many more young hearts in the years to come. We are truly grateful to have you as an essential part of our mission empowering our youth and programs. Thank you once again for your unwavering commitment.

Sincerely,

Debbie Meyer, Executive Director

In 2023, Erin's House welcomed
384 NEW DONORS!

2023 Expenses | \$1,346,410

Programming

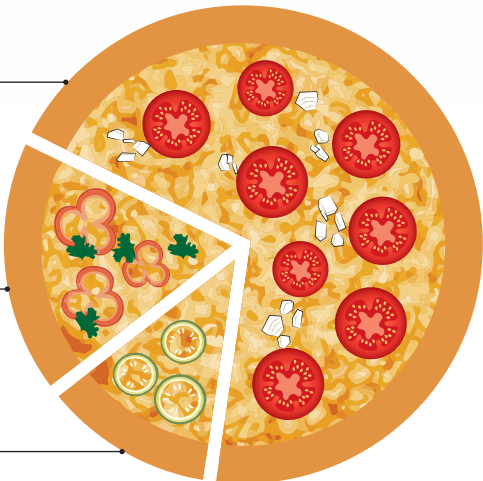
73%

Community Relations, Awareness, Fundraising

17%

Administration

10%



2023 Revenue | \$2,355,059

Foundations & Grants

57%

Special Events

20%

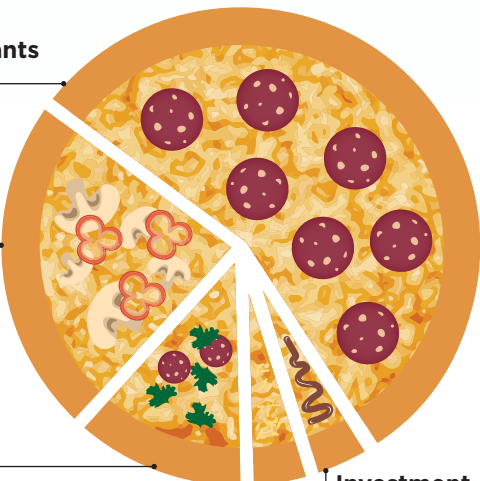
Capital Campaign

9%

Corporations & Organizations: 3%

Investment Income
4%

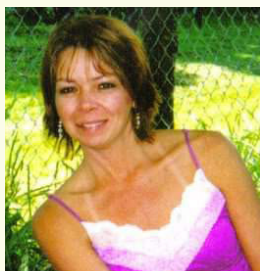
Individuals
7%



MEET

Rachael Burtnette

Volunteer and Previous
Erin's House Participant



Laura Huhn, Mom

Losing my mom when I was just thirteen turned my world upside down. While she was walking our dog, she was hit by a car and it left me completely shocked. I'll never forget the moment I passed the accident on my way home from a volleyball game, knowing deep down in my heart that it was her. The panic set in when I arrived home, and it was my grandma who gently broke the news.

Not long after her death, my dad and older sister took me to Erin's House. I remember the pizza dinners and bouncing around in the Volcano Room as my favorite parts. Through the supportive community and open communication, Erin's House normalized my grief, showing me I wasn't alone for losing my mom. Surrounded by peers who shared similar experiences, I felt understood in a way I hadn't at school. Recalling that sense of belonging all these years later had been on my heart for a long time. I finally decided to take the leap to volunteer with the organization that had supported me in a challenging time in my life. Erin's House is such a great cause and it felt so good to come back and begin supporting others.

At each start of program, we begin with opening circle where we introduce ourselves and our person who died. I have really enjoyed seeing the kids let their guard down in groups each week knowing they're in a safe space. It feels like a full circle moment that I'm back at Erin's House talking about my mom again, now with the purpose of helping kids with their grief. I get to share the feelings I felt when my mom died and it normalizes all the experiences the kids in my 6-to-9 age group are feeling too.

For many people, grief can be an awkward or uncomfortable subject in that we don't know what to say when someone else experiences death. It can be even more challenging for a child to feel like an outsider to their peers after a death. Erin's House helps children feel like they belong and feel understood.

One thing I think is important for people to know about Erin's House is that it's not all sadness. There's so much laughter, play, and happy memories being made there, just how I remembered it. It's ultimately a safe and fun place for kids to show up as they are with their emotions to be comforted and understood by all.

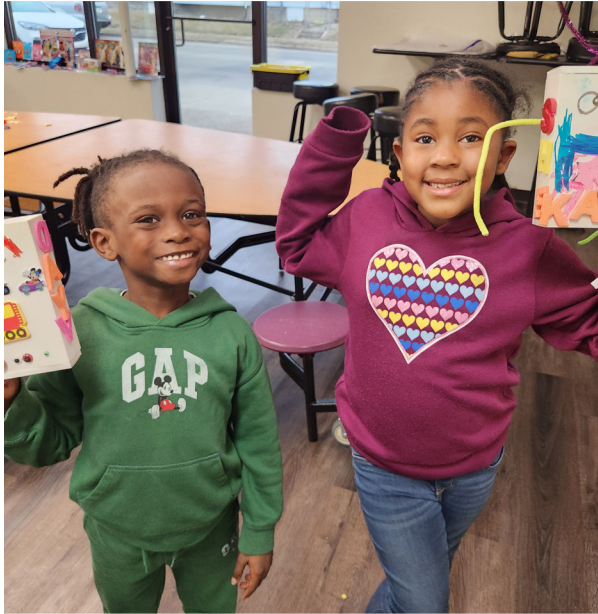


Facilitators Rachael, Beth, and JaNia with their 6-to-9 age group at Erin's House.

"For many people, grief can be an awkward or uncomfortable subject in that we don't know what to say when someone else experiences death. It can be even more challenging for a child to feel like an outsider to their peers after a death. Erin's House helps children feel like they belong and feel understood."

Rachael, her children, and husband





The Identity Program

The Identity program and our Outreach initiative began with a grant and a vision to support youth through off-site programs.

Youth who experience unresolved grief without adequate support are more prone to substance abuse, academic struggles, depression, anxiety, and difficulties in maintaining healthy relationships. We recognized that, in certain areas of our community, the need for grief services was present and the services of Erin's House were unknown. **We couldn't let these setbacks of local youth who are grieving go unnoticed.**

The Identity Outreach Program officially came to fruition through a New York Life Foundation grant in 2018 and was born with a clear plan: to provide Erin's House services to youth in areas of our community where there is an increased rate of violence, tragedy, and death.

Just like on-site programs at Erin's House, the Identity program tackles the impact of unresolved grief by offering customized peer-support sessions and engaging activities. Through a nurturing environment, group activities give participants the ability to express themselves with peers similar to them who have also experienced a death. Additionally, through collaborative efforts with organizations like The Euell Wilson Center, Fort Wayne Parks Community Centers, and The Renaissance YMCA, we are able to meet youth in their local spaces when they are available. As Identity has grown, we've seen a growing number of youth who are actively involved and working towards healing.

400 children served & **90** programs provided annually

Erick T. Baker, Director of Community Outreach, has led Identity since its inception.

"I have personally witnessed children in every program begin to learn and accept their grief. Over time they realize that, with their grief, they have a responsibility to themselves and others to direct their emotions and feelings in a positive way. Many children and teens who have been a part of the program now identify the importance of seeking support. The valuable tools learned in program groups allow participants to know that they have ownership over their future with grief."

The top priority of Identity is providing free grief services to underserved areas of our community. Secondly, we aim to inform and guide our youth and their families to ultimately join on-site programs at Erin's House for a consistent 10 weeks of healing together.

As we continue to expand our support services and spread the mission of Erin's House, we remain committed to advocating for the well-being of all youth whether they're able to make it on-site or not. We strive to create a future where every young person has the resources and peer support they need to thrive beyond their grief.

Just like all Erin's House services, Identity is provided at no cost to youth or partnering organizations.

If you feel that the Identity Program would be a beneficial partnership to your organization or business, please contact Erick@ErinsHouse.org.

The Wing Groundbreaking

The Wing’s groundbreaking ceremony on May 3, 2024, marked a new chapter for the community and the mental health of young adults who have experienced a death. At the ceremony were smiling faces from the Farragh family, board members, volunteers, staff, foundations, and supporters as shovels broke ground to the beginning of grief support for ages 18 to 25 at Erin’s House.

The new facility adds 29% more program space for peer-support services, with an anticipated 15% annual growth rate, despite being the hardest age group to get to walk through our doors. The building is planned to be completed this fall, with services commencing in the winter.



With \$1.2 million left to raise for The Wing, we are asking for YOUR help to support this new building for young adults who are grieving. Learn more and donate online at ErinsHouse.org/the-wing, or use the remittance envelope in this newsletter.

All gifts are tax deductible

\$250
HELPS TO PROVIDE
furniture
for our free
counseling rooms

\$500
HELPS TO STOCK OUR
kitchenette and
coffee bar with all
the essentials

\$1,000
HELPS TO FUND
resources, supplies,
and new technology
for The Wing



Goal: \$2.3 Million



\$1.1 Million Raised • \$1.2 Million Remaining

THE WING
A PLACE FOR ERIN'S HOUSE YOUNG ADULTS
Capital Campaign



Erin's House staff

Common Bond Recap & Results

The Notre Dame Dick Corbett Head Football Coach, Marcus Freeman, and Cornerback Jaden Mickey were featured speakers this year at the Common Bond fundraiser.

Thank you to all who sponsored, attended, and supported Common Bond! We were able to raise \$130,000 for our mission of providing grief support at no cost to children, teens, and their families.

At the event, Marcus shared how he envisions the upcoming Notre Dame season, the ways he inspires young people, and how he supports Player Jaden Mickey through grief as his coach. Jaden experienced the death of his mom on December 28, 2023 and it was his dad who notified him the day before the Sun Bowl game against Oregon State. Central to Marcus's narrative was the unwavering support he extended to Jaden during his time of mourning, a testament to the coach's commitment to fostering not only athletic excellence but also personal growth and resilience among his players.

Jaden, to honor his late mother's memory, seeks to spread awareness about screening for colon cancer early—a message close to his heart.



Congratulations to Laura McCoy for excelling as a Volunteer Facilitator and winning this year's Healing Heart Award.

At the event, we also recognized Heather Crawford, a passionate Volunteer Facilitator for teens who died earlier this year.



Erin's House staff with Marcus, Jaden, and Katy of Notre Dame



Presenting Sponsors



Supporting Sponsors



You're Invited

Friday, October 11, 2024

New
Location!

GE CLUB AT ELECTRIC WORKS – 1020 SWINNEY AVE., FORT WAYNE, IN 46802

Wine for the Spirit pairs an exhilarating live auction and array of silent auctions with superb wine and hors d'oeuvres made by local chefs, all to support a worthy cause.

Scan the QR code to purchase individual tickets or view corporate sponsorships.

PREMIER SPONSOR



EVENT SPONSOR



Reserve your seat today before we're sold out!

Visit ErinsHouse.org/auction. For event questions, email Leslie@ErinsHouse.org or call 260.423.2466.

Mark Your Calendar

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 9 – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11, 2024

Silent auction packages will be online for all to bid. Enticing experiences, gift bundles, local treats and more will be available. Register for free now to get notified on auction sneak peeks and event announcements.





Check out our newest video!

Produced by Punch Films, this short video shows the playful, fun, and supportive space that Erin's House is to children and their families who receive grief support.



Sign up now

July 26
Gearing Up For Grief in the Classroom Workshop

August 2 - 3
Camp Good Grief for ages 8-13

Calendar of Events

October 9 - 11
Wine for the Spirit Online Auction, anyone can bid!

October 11
Wine for the Spirit In-Person Event

November 21
National Children's Grief Awareness Day & The Wing Open House

December 3
#GivingTuesday End-Of-Year Giving

December
Holiday Gatherings for Families

View our wish list



Thank you to our program sponsors!



Erin's House provides support services for children, teens, and their families who have experienced a death.

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Madi Wurster – School Program Coordinator
Erick T. Baker – Director of Community Outreach, P/T
Ashley Kipfer – Donor Relations Coordinator, P/T
McKenzie Leffel – Community Outreach Coordinator, P/T
Kristen Burdine – Child Grief Specialist, P/T
Celestia Mai – Child Grief Specialist, P/T
Sarah Woodle – Special Projects Assistant, P/T
Russ Eggeman – Building Maintenance, P/T



www.ErinsHouse.org



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Administrative Office Hours:
Monday – Friday 9:00 A.M. – 5:00 P.M.

Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our mailing list. Call 260.423.2466.