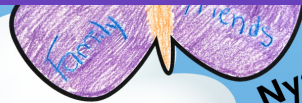


# ERIN'S HOUSE CONNECTIONS

First Edition 2024



Maddie



Nya



Kaitlin



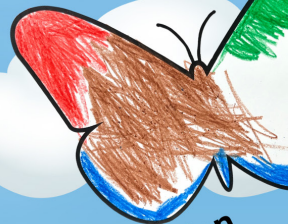
Brooke



Scarlett



Ximena



Adrian



Hellena



Noelle



Marjorie

## Big Announcement! Coach Marcus Freeman to Speak at Common Bond

2023 Mission Results

MEET: The Tretter-Hope Family

Introducing: New Board Members

Exciting Updates on The Wing –  
A Place For Young Adults



Livy

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

[www.ErinsHouse.org](http://www.ErinsHouse.org) • 260.423.2466



# 2023 MISSION RESULTS

**YOU made all this possible!**

Support through word-of-mouth, referrals, monetary gifts, in-kind donations, and volunteering helped Erin's House to thrive this past year.



**2,579**  
INDIVIDUALS HELPED  
through our free services



**368**  
FAMILIES REACHED  
by onsite peer-support programming

**185**  
VOLUNTEERS  
Facilitators, Babysitters,  
and Community Outreach



**531**  
PHONE CALLS  
from caregivers seeking  
guidance for supporting  
children and teens grieving



**172**  
NEW FAMILIES  
who joined onsite  
programming



**99**  
PARTICIPANTS IN  
Teen Retreat, Camp Good Grief,  
and Family Camp

**14** COUNTIES  
REACHED

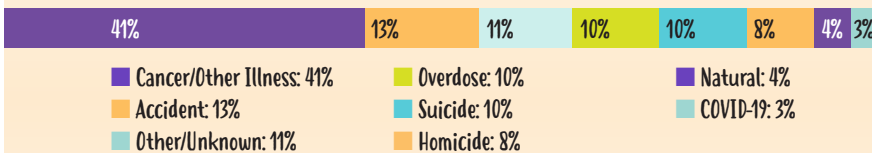


Throughout Northeast and  
Central Indiana: Adams, Allen, DeKalb, Grant,  
Huntington, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Noble, Steuben,  
Wabash, Wells, Whitley - along with counties in  
Michigan and Ohio

## FAMILIES BY PERSON WHO DIED



## FAMILIES BY CAUSE OF DEATH



## FAMILIES BY ETHNICITY



**31**

SCHOOLS ASSISTED  
by utilizing Classroom Companions  
in-school programs



**845**

STUDENTS SUPPORTED  
through School & Community  
Outreach Programs



**660**

EDUCATORS AND OTHERS  
learned grief education through Erin's  
House workshops and presentations



**21**

GRIEF BACKPACKS  
provided to Schools





# Common Bond

Thursday, May 2, 2024 | 4:00 – 6:00 P.M.

## Marcus Freeman Notre Dame's Dick Corbett Head Football Coach

At just 35 years old, Marcus Freeman earned one of the most coveted jobs in sports: Dick Corbett Head Football Coach at the University of Notre Dame. Excelling from the beginning of his football career as a Linebacker at Ohio State, his next chapter as a professional player was met with challenges. After a year as an NFL linebacker, he embraced the opportunity to hone in on his coaching skills and deepen his understanding of the game. Marcus served in various coaching positions at the Universities of Cincinnati, Purdue, Kent State, and Ohio State. He joined Notre Dame first as defensive coordinator and linebackers coach and was then selected as the 30th Dick Corbett Head Coach in 2021.

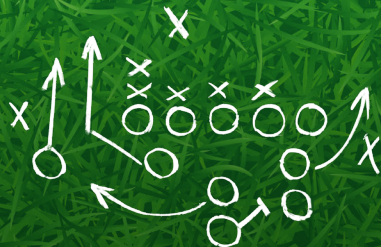
With his many accomplishments and well-respected career, Marcus's journey is marked by more than football. He brings unique insights on leadership, teamwork, and overcoming adversity as an African American with Korean heritage. He has a passion for helping young people reach their goals, and as a father of six, preaches authenticity and treating others with respect. His commitment to academic achievement and character development has earned him the respect and admiration of players, fans, and colleagues alike. Whether on the sidelines or the stage, Marcus inspires and empowers individuals to strive for excellence and the pursuit of greatness.

Marcus will be accompanied by Notre Dame Cornerback and Junior Jaden Mickey who experienced the death of his mother last year.

**Grand Wayne Convention Center | 120 W Jefferson Blvd, Fort Wayne, IN**

Open Seating	Reserved Table for 10	Corporate Sponsorship
\$150 per person	\$1,500	Starting at \$2,000

Questions? Email [Leslie@ErinsHouse.org](mailto:Leslie@ErinsHouse.org) or call 260.423.2466.



RESERVE YOUR SEAT BY APRIL 22!

Scan code or visit [ErinsHouse.org/common-bond](https://ErinsHouse.org/common-bond) for tickets and sponsorships.

NEW LOCATION!

## Save the Date

# Friday, October 11, 2024

**GE CLUB AT ELECTRIC WORKS | 1020 SWINNEY AVE, FORT WAYNE, IN**

Indulge in an unforgettable evening at *Wine for the Spirit*! Experience the thrill of our live and silent auctions, complemented by exceptional wine and tantalizing bites curated by our top local chefs. Join the fun, partake in the community spirit, and be a part of purposeful giving.

We can't wait for you to join us for our one-of-a-kind Wine for the Spirit gala.

*Follow us on social media for all the updates regarding events.*



New Location!

# Tributes from the Heart

We are touched by the donations we receive to further the mission of Erin's House that are made in memory, celebration, or honor of family and friends. We are pleased to share these special tributes made throughout 2023.

## IN LOVING MEMORY OF:

Kevin Adkins	Erin Renee Farragh	Brittany LeAnn Hix	Fiat Lee Lewis	LeighAnn Marie Palmer	Carolyn Strater-Terry
Joshua Archer	Dominik A. Files	Declan August Patrick Hix	Phoenix Lewis	Quinlan Partington	William Striker
Eric Armstrong	Robert Emerson Fisher	Jude Andrew James Hix	Romeo Lawrence Lewis	Bill Pierce	Bob Sumney Jr.
Steve Arnold	Steven B. Fisher	Richard Hodupp	Gage D. Linnemeier	Lee Pilz	Brandon M. Sutton
Faith Judith Austin	Kelly Fitzharris	Jacqueline Hogue	Dawson Edward Lothamer	Brittany Raymond-Arnold	Zalana Ariess Taylor
Dave Baker	Elijah Foster	Matt Holt	Kelly Patrick Lynch	Collin Ream	Patrick Thibeau
David Batchelder	Lori Franke	Darwin Horine	Zeke Malone	David Rehder	Charles Thomas
Gary Batchelder	Maggie Rose Frecker	Deb Hosier	Emoni Martin	Billy Reitz Jr.	Matthew Thomas
Nancy L. Batchelder	Bill Friend	Bonnie Howey	Ray Martin	Elizabeth Richardville	Brian Thornson
Karen Baumert	Marilyn Friend	Jeff Humphries	Sharon L. Martin	Logan T. Riehle	David Tinsley
Rosemary Becker	Valerie Friend	Karissa Hunter	Jim McClaurin	Matthew Roe	Jessica Tipton
Levi Blake	Jim Frosch	Karen Ivanson	Walter A. McComb Jr.	Mike Root	Joanne Tobin Koch
Bryan & Elizabeth Boggess	Papa Mike Fuller	Bertha Jackson	Barbara McGlothin	Owen Roughia	Thomas Tountzios
Kyle Brooks	Jon Gaerte	Cody Jedwabny	Denise Meincke	Chad M. Rumple	Benji Tretter
Evins Brooks Jr.	Alphonso Garcia	David W. Jump	James A. Meyers II	Orion Runion	Benny Twibell
Chris Brown	James Garman	Lucas Junk	Gregory P. Miller	Abigail Ryan	Gary Vanderbilt
Elliott Brown	Joshua Garrison	Roxanne Kahn	Anthony J. Miller Sr.	Lucia Salazar	Jane VanGilder
Charly Butcher	Jackson Garton	Wauneta Kegerreis	Bryan James Miller Sr.	Richard Sanson	Nicole C. Walker
Cynthia Centlivre	Audrey D. Gerson	Jeff Keller	Ainsley Jo Mitchell	Owen Scheele	Ilar M. Wattley
Robert Cleveland	Tim Gettzleman	Donald "Kidd" Kidd	Frederick L. Mock	Allen James Schmucker	Lexi Weber
Chris Clopton	Steven Gibson	Corey Kimble	Jerry & Patricia Moore	Taylor Schnebelt	Nick Wells
Kevin Cogar	Grace Gospodareck	Ann Kramer	Thomas & Donna Lee Moriarity	Jeanne Schouweiler	Rodney Werling
Tony Cole	Joe & Nettie Green	Herb Kramer	Marcus Mullins	Duane R. Schrock	Rosalie Westropp
Denny Collins	Michael L. Green	Jack Krouse	Pam Munk	Colin Schuhmacher	Paula M. Whitmore
Linda Comstock	Shirley Green	Bree M. LaBuda	Dan Nelson	Tramaine L. Scott	John Wilks
Jake Crawford	Terry L. Green	Ronita Ann Lauer Shepherd	Ross Nichols	Jonathan Shafer	Carol Williams
Mary Peg Crouch	Debra Gundy	Graham Lessing	Patty Norman	Samuel James Snyder	Dani Wolfgram
Lon A. DeLong	Nicholas Hackman	Adalynn Letner	David Cecil Nunnally	Megan LeAnn Sparks	Bobby Lee Wurster
Danita Dowdell	Tony Hayden	Emma Lewis	Dr. Jennifer Nunnally	Lee Springer	Melvin Zehner
David Dumser	Lucy Hilger				

## IN HONOR OF:

Tina Albertson	Molly Davidson	JaNia Guy	The Linker Family	Ryan Powell
Jessica Bair-Wilkening	E. Mark Deister	Elaine Haag	Celestia Mai	Jamie Rice
Erick T. Baker	Irwin F. Deister Jr.	Austin Hatch	Tracie Martin	Dr. Matthew Runyan
Daniel Berger	Ray Dusman	Heidi Hesseling	Emily Miller	Katie Staton
Jennifer Boyle	Anthony Easton	Beth Hirschy Kuettel	Mark & Abby Millett	Shawn Sumney
Maggie Brennan	The Erin's House Staff	Judy Hogg	Tim & Lori Minnich	Gail and Robert Wilensky
Michelle Castle	Travis & Krista Friend	Aaron Hoover	Laren Therese Molinari	
Denise Cayot	Mindy Gayheart Shakoor	Betsy Hull	Mike & Brenda Norwood	
Will Certain	Lincoln Gray	Joni Kinder	Elyssa Pittenger	

Please accept our apologies if we've missed your loved one's name. If you should find an error, contact us and we'll include it in our next tribute list.



**MEET**

# The Tretter-Hope Family

## Former Erin's House Family

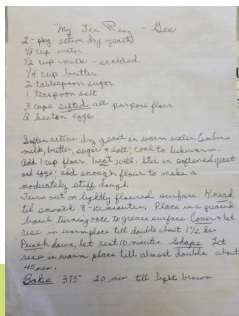


When we talk about Erin's House, we acknowledge it as a safe, loving place to heal. My sons, Grayson, Trenton, and Dalton, each needed a different direction of healing and were met with just that after my mom died. Mary Jo Tretter, or Gee as the kids called her, passed away at the age of 74 and it deeply affected my kids as they just adored her.

Together, we would celebrate Easter and Christmas morning and she'd come over whenever the kids needed a hair trim. As a professional hairdresser, my mom owned and operated Be-Love-Lee Beauty Shop in Ferdinand, Indiana for 27 years! She was the strongest person I have ever known and an inspiration to her family. Even though most of her grandchildren were young when she died, her love made such an impact on them that they continuously tell stories about her, pray for her, and miss her. She was also a seamstress, and before she passed away, she made "lovey" blankets for each of the grandchildren and me that we have slept with every night since.

I did not realize how much mom's death affected the boys, especially the young ones. The boys think of Erin's House as a place to celebrate her and be able to talk openly about their grief without upsetting me or making me sad. Through all the grief we experienced as a family, Erin's House offered open ears and hearts for us to recall our precious memories. I appreciate the patience that they have with my boys, especially since two of them have autism. Erin's House accepted their challenges and understood each person's desire to grieve without judgment. I cherish the family crafts we have done at program in memory of my mom, which are now displayed proudly in our home.

**-Maria Tretter, Mom**



Each holiday morning, it was a tradition for the Tretter-Hope family to have Gee's Tea Ring for breakfast. Check out this recipe on our website and try it for yourself!

"One of the biggest lessons we learned while at Erin's House was that going on with life and having fun is okay, even though Gee is no longer here with us."



# INTRODUCING

## New Board Members



**KATHY FRIEND**  
Community Volunteer

**KIND, CONSCIENTIOUS, HELPFUL**

"I'm thrilled to rejoin the board post-retirement from Fort Wayne Community Schools, eager to contribute to the organization's growth and impact once more.

I aspire to be an attentive and supportive member in various areas, including finance and volunteering!"



Sausage



Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs



**JULI JOHNSON**  
Chief Nursing Executive Officer at Parkview Health

**HONEST, COMPASSIONATE, HARD-WORKING**

"I hope to support Erin's House through my time, resources, and healthcare background. I have been a nurse for almost 29 years, and I have seen the unimaginable in healthcare. I've seen the tragedy, but through Erin's House I can see how grieving families can be helped during their worst times."



Thin Crust Mushroom, Onion, and Green Pepper



The Lion King



**KARRIE KITCH**  
Community Volunteer

**FRIENDLY, FUN-LOVING, OPEN**

"I feel empathy for kids who are grieving and was inspired to join Erin's House because of the crucial resources and support provided in our community. I plan to bring some of my

past knowledge from prior years serving on this board as well as financial expertise and professional relationships."



Gluten Free Mushroom from 800°



Dumbo



**DR. MATT RUNYAN**  
Medical Director Inpatient Psychiatry at Parkview Health

**DEDICATED, COMPASSIONATE, APPROACHABLE**

"Having been on the board previously I am excited to re-engage with my main focus of supporting the staff, assisting in the construction of The Wing, and expanding programming structure. The mission, the staff, the kids, and the opportunity to make a meaningful and lasting impression in the community make it a perfect fit for me."



Deep Dish Meat Lover's with Garlic Crust



Star Wars: A New Hope





**MARY ANN ZIEMBO**  
Community Volunteer

**PASSIONATE, STRONG-WILLED, KIND**

"I have been involved with Erin's House for many years, serving both as a committed board member and passionate volunteer. Now, I'm eager to contribute by bringing forth new

ideas and connections to aid the growth of this wonderful organization within our community."



 Detroit-Style  
at Buddy's Pizza  
 Cinderella

**Special thanks to the foundations  
who partnered with us in 2023:**

- Adams County Community Foundation
- Arby's Foundation
- Howard P. Arnold Foundation
- BAE Systems
- City of Fort Wayne
- American Rescue Plan Act  
State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds
- Community Foundation DeKalb County
- Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne
- Community Foundation of Noble County
- Community Foundation of Whitley County
- English, Bonter, Mitchell Foundation
- Foellinger Foundation Inc.
- Indiana Youth Institute Inc.
- The James Foundation
- Charles, Kuhne Charitable Foundation
- Lassus Brothers Oil Foundation
- Lilly Endowment Inc.
- The Lutheran Foundation
- Northeastern REMC Community Trust Inc.
- Owen & Jean Pritchard Foundation
- Plymouth Congregational Church
- Pritchard Foundation
- Prophet Sisters Foundation
- Ian & Mimi Rolland Foundation
- Starbucks
- Steuben County REMC
- Mary Cross Tippmann Family Fund
- Charlie Tippmann Foundation Charitable Trust
- Wells County Foundation
- Edward M. & Mary McCrea Wilson Foundation
- The Donald F. Wood and Darlene M.  
Richardson Foundation
- Zollner Foundation



# Update: The Wing

Breaking ground is right around the corner for The Wing, and we need your help! We remain steadfast in our commitment to healing hearts, building hope, and supporting young adults to grow together so they can lead fulfilling lives after a death.



A PLACE FOR ERIN'S HOUSE YOUNG ADULTS  
Capital Campaign

## 1 THE Need

Young adults ages 18-25 are an **underserved population** who need grief support.

## 2 THE Plan

**Increase program space by 29%** and expand our services to provide more guidance.

## 3 THE Impact

\$2.3 million to fund this important initiative. Grief support is provided to young adults at **no cost**.



Learn more about The Wing and Sponsorship Opportunities at [ErinsHouse.org/the-wing](https://ErinsHouse.org/the-wing)



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

### 2024 Board of Directors

Andrew Schroeder, CPA – *President*  
 Luke Squires – *President Elect*  
 Edmond O'Neal – *VP Governance*  
 Josey Seabolt – *Secretary*  
 Sarah Schenkel, CPA – *Treasurer*  
 Linda Jackson – *Past President*  
 Peter Adams

Dr. Mark Daniel  
 Justin Dunbar  
 Natalie Eggeman  
 Kathy Friend  
 Travis Friend  
 Chris Gomez  
 Juli Johnson

Karrie Kitch  
 Keven Linker  
 Kate Miller  
 Dave McComb  
 Mike Nutter  
 Dr. Matt Runyan  
 Nick Talarico

Brian Ternet  
 Dr. Lesa Vartanian  
 Mary Ann Ziembo  
**Honorary Board Members:**  
 Tracie Martin  
 Tom Trent

### Staff

Debbie Meyer – Executive Director  
 Cindy Maldonado-Schaefer – Director of Operations  
 Ellen Roemke – Director of Volunteers  
 Anna Magner – Marketing Specialist  
 Emily Mock – Director of Family Services  
 Lauren Boles – School Partnership Manager  
 Leslie Augustyniak – Director of Development  
 Tammy Else – Lead Child Grief Specialist

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  
 Russ Eggeman – Building Maintenance, P/T  
 Madi Wurster – Program Assistant, P/T



[www.ErinsHouse.org](https://www.ErinsHouse.org)



5670 YMCA Park Drive West, Fort Wayne, IN 46835  
 260.423.2466 | [Info@ErinsHouse.org](mailto:Info@ErinsHouse.org)

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.