



ERIN'SHOUSE CONNECTIONS

30th Birthday Series

Second Edition 2023

Celebrating 30 years of building hope & healing hearts!

THANK YOU!

FEATURED STORY: Introducing A New Building For Young Adults, The WING!

2022 Annual Report Snapshot

MEET: Angie Hathaway
"It's ok to seek outside resources"

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

HOPE Apparel is BACK! 



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

www.ErinsHouse.org • 260.423.2466



2022 Annual Report Snapshot



Dear Erin's House Community,

I am delighted to share the impact we've had in 2022, new changes for the future, and our gratitude to the community.

Ninety-five percent of participants report an increase in family communication, the ability to identify feelings associated with grief, and new coping skills. These results have proven to us that we are making a substantial impact on the lives of children and teens in Northeast Indiana, where statistics reveal that **1 in 7 youth** will encounter the death of a parent or sibling by the age of 25 (CBEM 2023). While these statistics are disheartening, it is also with a sense of hope and pride that we have a grief center, an Erin's House, in our community that not all communities are fortunate to have.

Aimed at providing enhanced support in our community, we are thrilled to announce the launch of our new capital campaign, "The WING: A Place for Young Adults". The WING represents a significant expansion of our services, specifically tailored to meet the unique needs of young adults up to 25 years of age. Our teens have expressed a strong desire for a more specialized and exclusive environment where they can openly share their experiences of grief,

finding solace in the understanding and support of their peers. We recognize the importance of creating such a space to meet their needs and are committed to making it a reality, free of charge.

Your support is invaluable and makes a world of difference to our children, students, teens, and young adults.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude for enabling Erin's House to deliver such vital support. 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. Thank you once again for your unwavering commitment.

Sincerely,

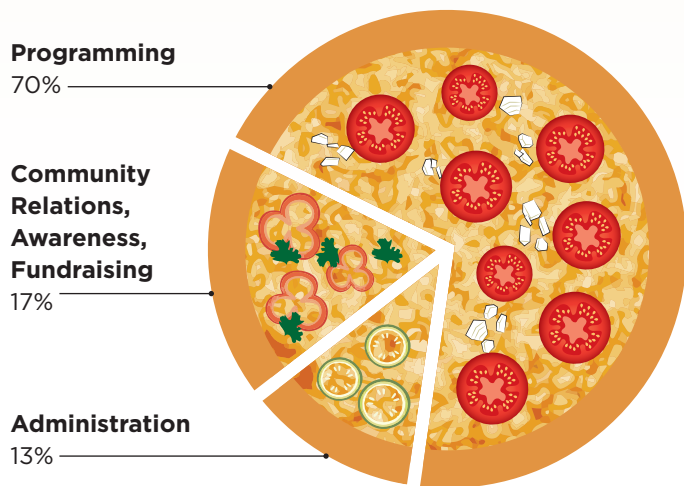
Debbie Meyer, Executive Director

Fun Fact: In 2022, Erin's House supplied

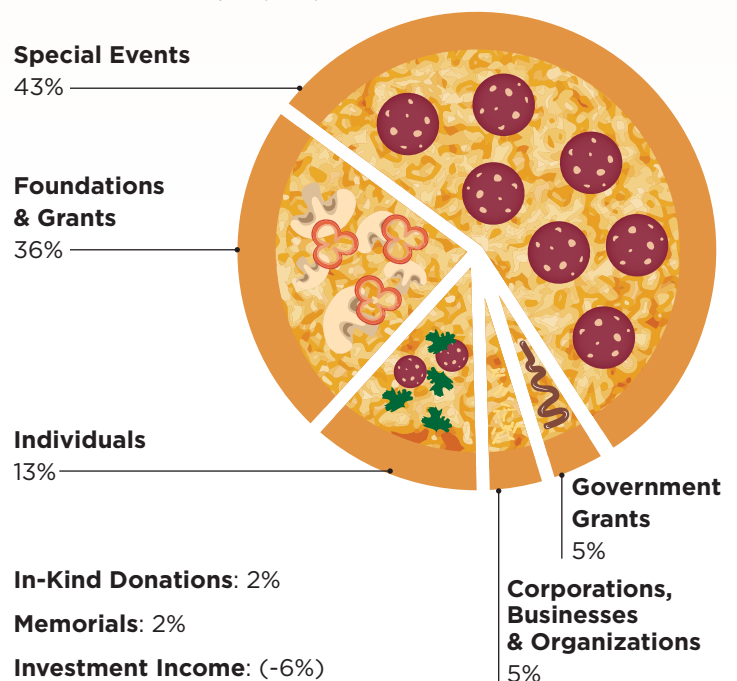
2,633 PIZZAS

to families on peer support program nights!

2022 Expenses | \$1,171,538



2022 Revenue | \$1,229,521



MEET

Angie Hathaway

Former Erin's House Family



The Reality of Grief

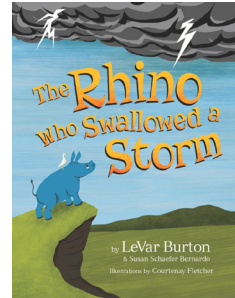
Seven years ago, I utilized Erin's House for Grieving Children for my family. My son, Ryan Hathaway, died on January 16, 2016. It has been seven years of the most heart-wrenching grief and healing I will ever have to experience and endure. As a single and grieving mom, now labeled as a child suicide loss survivor, I had no choice but to work and

continue to provide when the comfort of my bed called my name more times than not. Additionally, I had to learn to navigate grief as a busy business owner. Some self-help tips I utilized seven years ago I still use today in my grief journey, and they're just as relevant. I give myself the time, space, and energy I need to grieve while I'm trying my best as a mom to Alivia and boss to my cherished staff.

After 7 Years...

Today, my business provides cleaning services to families, businesses, and organizations like Erin's House, which I see as more than just disinfecting and tidying up. I may cry every single month I clean at Erin's House, but I also find so much more healing in the words on the walls, the handwritten notes, the drawings, and the countless other things I see, touch, smell, and hear while in the facility. I can walk into Erin's House every month and I physically and emotionally know just how much healing I have done each and every day. The cycle and stages of grief and healing come full circle to

me and remind me of where I was and where I am now... And for that, I am so thankful.



Unexpected Comfort

Last month, I had a particularly rough week. I walked into Erin's House and there was a book on the counter in the office. It felt like a sign from the heavens that was saying, "You're doing well." The book: **"The Rhino Who Swallowed a Storm"**. Why would that be important? My son who died by suicide was well known by his nickname "Rhino". For as long as I can remember, people called him "Rhino". From the bleachers to the ball diamonds, to the courts and the fields, "Go Rhino" was a well-known phrase in our family. This book felt like a reminder that I may have needed after my week. I picked it up and read one of the pages... Yes! I stopped to read a children's book.

"After every dark night comes a new day. Be kind, do your best, and you'll find your way. Up comes the sun. There are steps to complete. There isn't a map. Just follow your feet."

Grief teaches us a little more about love. Love for others. Love for ourselves. As you navigate the unknowns in life, don't forget to make yourself a priority.

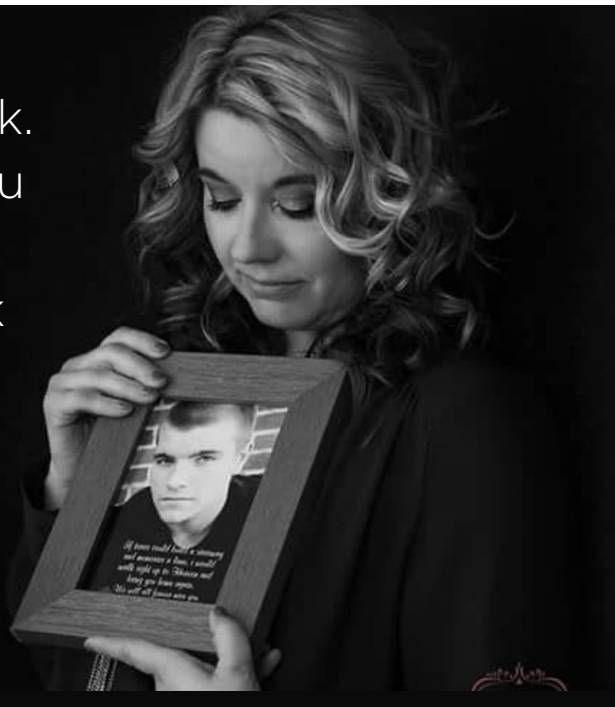
Wishing you the best,

Angie Hathaway

But Ryan "Rhino" just calls me "Momma"

CLEANING QUEEN LLC

"It's ok to not feel ok. It's ok to realize you may need outside help. It's ok to seek outside resources."



The WING – A Place for Young Adults

Vision: The WING will be a free-standing, 4,500 sq. ft. structure behind the existing Erin’s House property that will increase capacity to serve more teens and young adults, enhance their program experience, and improve participant retention.

Erin’s House has been constant in our community for 30 years mainly serving 3 to 18-year-olds who have experienced a death. In the ten years of on-site grief support at our facility, there has been an overwhelming need for grief support services for teens proven by overcrowding in program rooms. With additional research, **young adults 18 to 25 years old are an underserved age who also need peer support more than ever.**

Northeast Indiana has seen a substantial incline in homicide, suicide, and overdose deaths with increasing mental health issues among children and young adults (Indiana Youth Institute’s 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey). When young adults are asking for a mental health room with an on-call counselor, we need to listen. Erin’s House has heard their voices and The WING will be that safe space—that common bond area—for these young adults to focus on their grief and their new normal.

The WING will be an oasis where there is a quiet room, three counseling rooms, and a large “hang-out” room for sharing memories and supporting one another. The WING building will add **29% more program space** to provide grief support services at **no cost to families.** This space will increase the

Average of individuals attending monthly grief programming

2017 450 INDIVIDUALS

2022 900 INDIVIDUALS

THE WING

A PLACE FOR ERIN’S HOUSE YOUNG ADULTS

Capital Campaign

“HEAL HEARTS. BUILD HOPE.”



STORAGE
17
143 SF

KITCHENETTE
16
164 SF

MECHANICAL
13
113 SF

COVERED PORCH
18

REF

RESTROOM
9
58 SF

RESTROOM
10
58 SF

MSKTD
& Associates



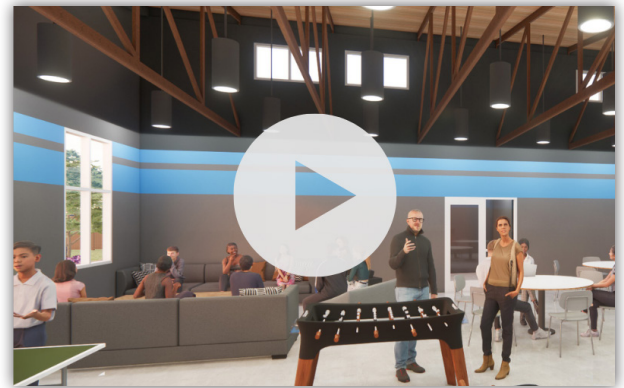
Karrie Kitch and Mary Ann Ziembo are the Capital Campaign Co-Chairs for The WING.

overall age range offered at Erin's House from 3 to 18-year-olds to 3 to 25-year-olds. We anticipate a **15% annual growth rate** for young adults despite being the hardest age group to get to walk through our doors. Building Committee Chair, Chris Gomez stated, "This project is so important for the mental health of young adults in our community."

This year, we celebrate **30 years** of success as a crucial community resource and have served approximately

35,000 individuals since 1993. "Erin's House is blessed to call Fort Wayne home. None of this would have been possible without the support of the entire community in Northeast Indiana. In the words of one of our Erin's House children, it truly will continue to be **'the happiest place to be sad'.**" Stated Debbie Meyer, Executive Director of Erin's House for Grieving Children.

Erin's House anticipates The WING to be complete next year. Over the next few months, there will be opportunities for the community to support the Erin's House capital campaign project.



Please visit ErinsHouse.org/the-wing to see current updates on the project.

Stay tuned for groundbreaking news, COMING SOON!

In the teen house, I'm hoping for...

"Ping pong tables! It's easy and fun to play with others... you can have a lot of fun with ping pong." – Ethan, 16

GROW TOGETHER."

A teen house is impactful because...

"Losing a close person to you... you're different. You go through things differently. I'm the only kid at school who doesn't have a mom or a dad, so it's like we can't really connect."
-ayah, 15



Common Bond

BREAKFAST

In May at the Erin's House Common Bond Breakfast, keynote speaker Mina Starsiak Hawk shared her reality television story and voiced her own personal grief journey to the 450 in attendance at the Parkview Mirro Center. With all her relatable stories, Mina brought the same energy and enthusiasm for the cause that she portrays on her HGTV renovation show, *Good Bones*. At the breakfast, our supporters raised over \$76,500 to enable Erin's House to continue providing exceptional services and programs to children and teens who are grieving. We appreciate all the support from those who purchased a ticket, bought a book, donated during the event, or mailed back a remittance envelope. You helped impact a young heart that is hurting.

Linda and Krista's Story

This year, our very own **Board President, Linda Jackson**, and her on-air colleague, **Krista Miller**, shared their respective grief stories on the death of a sibling. Linda experienced the death of her twin brother unexpectedly at the age of 17 in a car crash. "It was sudden and so difficult for our family and friends." Linda said. "Since then, I've always said I wished every community in the country had an Erin's House. Grief is difficult at any age, but it's especially difficult for children because they haven't lived life very long and hurt in unique ways."

Linda has been on the Erin's House Board of Directors since 2020 and Board President since 2021. "I appreciate the staff so much and how the people there help children and teens at crucial times of need."



Krista Miller (left) and Linda Jackson



Mina Starsiak Hawk (middle) with Diveeta Thompson and daughter Imani; former Erin's House family



Erin's House Staff with Mina Starsiak Hawk (middle)

"Talking about the uncomfortable things is so important."

- Mina Starsiak Hawk

Krista didn't know anyone her age who knew what she was going through after the death of her 15-year-old brother to cancer in 2006. "After losing Bryan, my parents, grieving the unimaginable loss of a child, worried about me." Krista's parents registered her for the teen peer support programs at Erin's House that year. In these groups, Krista felt like she could finally let her guard down and "just feel normal" with teens and kids going through similar situations. Krista expressed, "My feelings were validated, and it was comforting to know I wasn't alone." The two co-anchor together at 4 and 5 P.M. on 21Alive News that focuses on community and family.

Why do we call it Common Bond?

Krista: "It's hard to put into words how meaningful it is to have this **common bond** with Linda. She is my mentor, my colleague, and my friend. But because of the loss of our brothers, Linda is so much more than that. She 'gets' it, in a way not many people do. Just by a squeeze of my hand across the anchor desk, Linda reassures me when something in the news triggers my grief."

Linda: "Having that kind of loss in common with her created a bond that touches me, deeply. Krista and I are both from small towns, and often times, stories really touch our hearts. Our **common bond** helps us communicate better with our viewers."

In our community, Common Bond is more than a breakfast with a featured speaker—it's a reason to get together, talk about your story, and share memories. For more event photos, please visit our Facebook page: Erin's House for Grieving Children.

Presenting Sponsors



Supporting Sponsors

Ambassador Enterprises

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PNC Bank

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HOPE BUILDERS

GIVING PROGRAM

Hope Builders is a community of individuals who give monthly making an ongoing impact by providing a steady, reliable source of funding.

This season, we are highlighting our Classroom Companions programs and the Grief Backpacks we provide to schools in need of additional support for students dealing with a death. To support this program through Hope Builders, please consider a \$75 recurring donation that can provide two Grief Backpacks every month to a school in our community in need of additional grief resources.



Become a Hope Builder monthly donor today by scanning the QR code or visiting ErinsHouse.org/hope-builders. Thank you!

“These programs and supplies provide vital support to an experience we will all face at some point.”

- Lindsay, Waterloo Elementary School Counselor and Classroom Companions participant in April 2023



Each month, you can support students just like Zoey and Liam with a **Grief Backpack**

Wine for the Spirit 2023

Friday, October 13, 2023

PUNCH FILMS – 200 6th St., Fort Wayne | Doors open at 6:00 P.M.

Wine for the Spirit pairs an exhilarating live and silent auction with superb wine and hors d'oeuvres made by local chefs, all to support a worthy cause. Purchase a ticket, a table, or corporate sponsorship today! Seats are limited for this event.

Wednesday, October 11 - Friday, October 13, 2023

Silent auction packages will be online for all to bid.

Enticing experiences, gift packages, local treats and more will be available. Register for free now to stay up to date on auction sneak peeks and event announcements.



Don't miss this sell-out event!

Scan the QR code or visit ErinsHouse.org/auction to register or buy your ticket. Questions? Email Audrey@ErinsHouse.org or call 260.423.2466.

THEY'RE BACK IN STOCK!

LOOK GOOD FEEL GOOD

We're continuing the 30th birthday celebration of Erin's House with a restock of our 1993, throwback apparel. Get an exclusive 90s-inspired "HOPE" sweatshirt or t-shirt when you make a donation honoring this milestone.

\$20

Receive one (1)
premium SHORT-SLEEVE SHIRT
(adult and youth sizes available)

\$30

Receive one (1)
crewneck SWEATSHIRT
(adult sizes only)

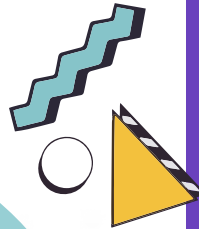


Choose the free local pick-up option at checkout and get a complimentary tote bag with your donation.

The last day to order apparel is Thursday, August 31.



Scan the QR code to get your Erin's House swag or visit ErinsHouse.org/shop.



2023 Calendar of Events

All-Year-Long
Erin's House 30th Birthday!

August 4
Gearing Up For Grief in the Classroom Workshop

October 11 - 13
Wine for the Spirit Online Auction, anyone can bid

October 13
Wine for the Spirit In-Person Event

October 20
Gearing Up For Grief in the Classroom Workshop

November 4 - 5
Family Camp

November 16
National Children's Grief Awareness Day

November 22 - December 3
Lights of Love Memorial

November 28
#GivingTuesday
End-Of-Year Giving

December 1 - 21
Holiday Gatherings
WISH-LIST COMING SOON!

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

2023 Board of Directors

Linda Jackson - *President*
Andrew Schroeder, CPA - *President-Elect*
Luke Squires - *Governance*
Sarah Schenkel, CPA - *Treasurer*
Josey Seabolt, CPA - *Secretary*
Peter Adams
Dr. Mark Daniel

Justin Dunbar
Dr. Ray Dusman
Natalie Eggeman
Travis Friend
Chris Gomez
Marcus Heminger
Keven Linker

Dave McComb
Kate Miller, CTFA
Mike Nutter
Edmond O'Neal
Nick Talarico
Brian Ternet
Dr. Lesa Vartanian

Honorary Board Members:
Tracie Martin
Tom Trent

Staff

Debbie Meyer - Executive Director
Cindy Maldonado-Schaefer - Director of Operations
Ellen Roemke - Director of Volunteers
Audrey Gilbert - Director of Development & Events
Anna Magner - Marketing Specialist
Emily Mock - Director of Family Services
Lauren Boles - School Partnership Manager
Leslie Augustyniak - Donor Relations Coordinator

Tammy Else - Lead Child Grief Specialist
Madi Wurster - Program Assistant, P/T
Erick T. Baker - Director of Community Outreach, 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



www.ErinsHouse.org



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260.423.2466 | 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.