

ERIN'S HOUSE CONNECTIONS

Second Edition 2026

**Learn about
Classroom Companions:**
Our In-School Grief
Support Programs

2025 Annual Report Snapshot

MEET: Tianna & Calliope

Volunteer Spotlight:
John & Luann

Next Events To Support:
Healing Heart Hustle 5K &
Wine for the Spirit



PLUS, ENTER OUR FUEL HOPE GIVEAWAY FOR THE CHANCE TO WIN A 2026 BMW!

FUEL HOPE
• BMW GIVEAWAY •



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

www.ErinsHouse.org • 260.423.2466



2025 Annual Report Snapshot



Dear Erin's House Community,

As we look back on 2025, I'm incredibly grateful for everything we made possible together. Last year marked meaningful milestones for Erin's House, including valuable learning through staff development at Judi's House, the ribbon cutting and official opening of The Wing, and the success of our Be The Light volunteer campaign. Additionally, we continued providing free programs, camps, resources, and education to families throughout our community. We remain dedicated to supporting families wherever they are in their journey and adapting to meet their needs.

Learning & Leadership with Judi's House

As part of the continuing support made possible through the Lilly Endowment grant, 10 full-time Erin's House staff members had the opportunity to visit and learn from Judi's House, a grief support center for youth in Aurora, Colorado. Our team shadowed their staff, exchanged ideas, and experienced one of their unique, research-based program nights firsthand while observing groups in action. We gathered inspiration as we continue enhancing our own spaces to best serve our families.

The Next Chapter for Teens and Young Adults

In November, we were proud to celebrate The Wing with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house on National Children's Grief Awareness Day alongside Mayor Sharon Tucker, marking such a meaningful moment for our community. With The Wing officially open and being used for teen programs, we are excited to soon roll out our pop-in style young adult programming for ages 19 to 25. These themed evenings will be all about connection, support, and community tailored to the needs of young adults who are grieving and will be provided at no cost like all other programs.

ANDREW SCHROEDER, CPA | ERIN'S HOUSE BOARD PRESIDENT | 2024-2025



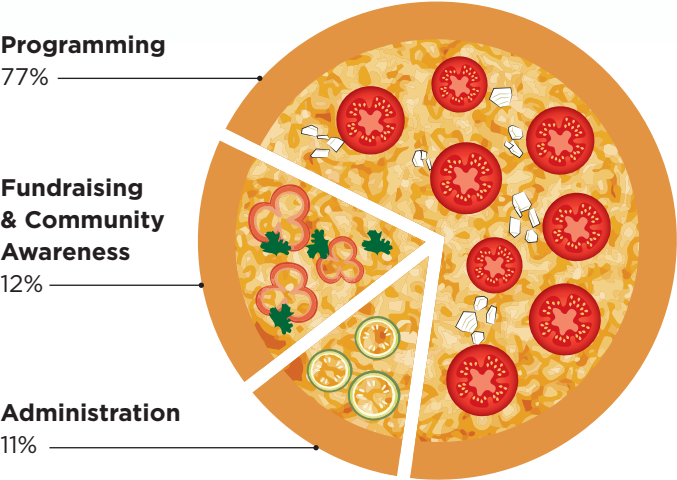
Because of your ongoing support, we can continue to be present for more young hearts as they navigate grief. We are truly thankful to have you as a vital part of our mission, supporting families, strengthening programs, and nurturing a community built on compassion. Thank you for your continued commitment.

With gratitude,

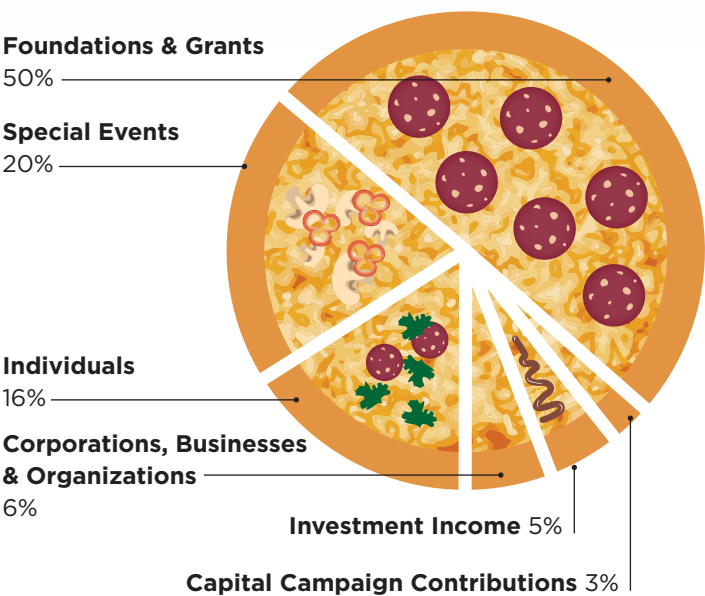

Debbie Meyer, Executive Director

Erin's House welcomed
71 NEW VOLUNTEERS
in 2025!

2025 Expenses | \$1,863,163



2025 Revenue | \$2,200,389



MEET

Tianna and Calliope

Erin's House Family



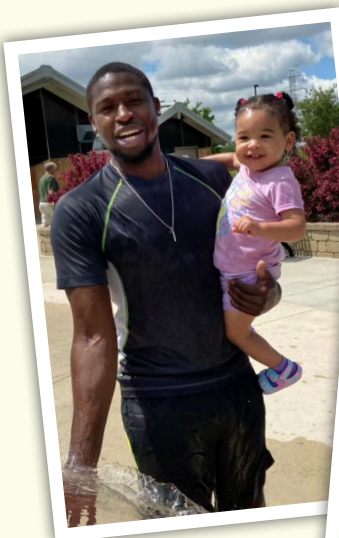
When three-year-old Calliope's dad, Gawon, died suddenly, it left their family heartbroken and searching for answers. "It was the worst feeling in the world," her mom, Tianna, shared. "Our hearts were just broken and we were left with so many questions." In the midst of overwhelming grief, her focus shifted to one thing, how to help her daughter.

Calliope didn't understand what had happened or why. "It was confusing for both of us, and in those early days, we just cried a lot."

She first heard about Erin's House on the radio, when Tim Burger on K105 FM shared his own family's experience with grief and the 10-week Healing Journey program. "Hearing him talk about his story made it feel like a safe place for us," she said. "I'm so glad I signed us up." Through the program, they learned simple but meaningful tools like intentional breathing and counting to help during the hardest days. "The program helped us more than I ever expected," she shared.

Even at such a young age, Calliope felt the weight of her father dying. Before Erin's House, much of that grief showed up as anger and emotional outbursts. "Now, we both have a better grasp on how to grieve in a healthy way," her mom said. **Calliope began finding ways to express her emotions, while Tianna gained the tools to support her through each moment.**

While Erin's House is designed for children, teens, and young adults, the impact extended far beyond Calliope. "The adult group gave me a sense of community and support as a mom and as a grieving person that I feel so thankful for," Tianna shared. In a time that felt incredibly isolating, she found comfort in being surrounded by others who truly understood. **"Erin's House got us through the hardest time of our lives." Because of that experience, Tianna became a monthly donor.** "I want this support to continue for as many families as possible. Joining the program made us feel like we weren't alone, and I hope my gift provides that same sense of comfort and connection to another child or family."



ErinsHouse.org/hope-builders

As a special thank you, monthly donors receive a set of greeting cards designed by Erin's House participants! Each pack includes three blank cards featuring original artwork, perfect for sharing gratitude, encouragement, or sympathy. When you give monthly, you help share hope, support Erin's House, and spread awareness of our free grief services.

 **HOPE BUILDERS**
GIVING PROGRAM

FUEL HOPE &

ENTER TO WIN A 2026 BMW!

TEXT FUELHOPE TO 33100
OR VISIT [ERINSHOUSE.ORG/GIVEAWAY](https://erinshouse.org/giveaway)



YOU COULD WIN A
2026 BMW
X3 xDrive30



We're putting an exciting new twist on fundraising with the launch of the **Fuel Hope BMW Giveaway**, giving you the opportunity to win a 2026 BMW X3 xDrive30!

Starting at just \$50 for 10 entries, every entry in the giveaway directly supports the Erin's House mission by keeping all grief support services completely free of charge. That means more healing, more connection, and more families receiving the support they need when it matters most.

This nationwide sweepstakes is open to participants across the country, not just Indiana residents, with multiple entry levels available. The grand prize winner of the BMW will be drawn November 19, 2026 on **National Children's Grief Awareness Day**, a powerful moment to recognize the hope your support helps create.

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

KELLEY
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THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

**MidWest
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FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

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a Berkshire Hathaway company



FORT WAYNE METALS



NO PURCHASE OR PAYMENT NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. LEGAL RESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES (EXCLUDING RESIDENTS OF NY). 18 YEARS AND OLDER (EXCEPT 19 IN AL AND NE AND 21 IN MS). SWEEPSTAKES ENDS NOVEMBER 13, 2026 AT 11:59 P.M. EST. DRAWING IS NOVEMBER 19, 2026 AT 11:00 A.M. EST. THE WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT TO WIN. VOID WHERE PROHIBITED BY LAW. VIEW OFFICIAL RULES AT [ERINSHOUSE.ORG/GIVEAWAY](https://erinshouse.org/giveaway).

Volunteer Spotlight

John & Luann VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS

For cousin-in-laws John and Luann, volunteering at Erin's House is more than giving back. It's a shared commitment rooted in service, personal loss, and the belief that no one should grieve alone.

Luann began volunteering in 2014 after stepping in as a House Parent for a friend. After that night, she shared, "I immediately knew I wanted to be part of this program." Just months later, after the death of her brother, that connection became even more meaningful and she stepped into the role of Volunteer Facilitator guiding conversations and leading activities in program groups. **Over the 16 years of volunteering, she has witnessed many powerful moments when participants realize they are not alone in what they are feeling, forming bonds that turn grief into connection. Through her experience, she identified someone close to her who could also make a meaningful impact in this role.**

After a 34-year career with the Fort Wayne Fire Department, Luann knew John's caring heart and lifelong dedication to his community would make him a wonderful male role model for the youth at Erin's House.

Encouraged by Luann, John joined the volunteer training class in fall of 2025 following the death of both of his sisters within just two years. While his career had prepared him to help others in many ways, the training became a meaningful turning point. He learned how to be more present, how to be a better listener, and how powerful simply showing up can be. **"If there was just one kid that I could help out and let know that they had a safe place with us in the midst of their grief, it would be worth it,"** he shared.

John now serves as a Volunteer Facilitator in the Erin's House Classroom Companions program in local schools, supporting students as they navigate grief. Together, he and Luann embody what it means to step outside your comfort zone and into something truly impactful. As John puts it, "Just do it!"



If you've ever considered getting involved, this is your sign. Take the step, get out of your comfort zone, and become a Volunteer Facilitator at Erin's House! Learn more at ErinsHouse.org/volunteer

Classroom Companions

After experiencing a death, many students carry their grief into the classroom, making it harder to focus, connect with others, and keep up with academics. Through Classroom Companions, Erin's House brings a six-week, in-school support group for K-12 students using activities and guided conversations to help students process emotions, build coping skills, and feel less alone.



"We noticed a huge shift in the students within just two weeks. They expressed so much and shared more than I could have imagined. The connections they made with each other were beautiful to see." -Elementary School Counselor

"My students gained confidence and began sharing about their person who died and feelings associated with grief. Plus, they loved the snacks!"

-Middle School Teacher



To learn more about Classroom Companions and see the impact it makes in local schools, **watch our new video at ErinsHouse.org/classroom-companions**

The Erin's House HEALING Heart HUSTLE 5K 2026 RUN • WALK

Sunday, August 30 at 2:00 P.M. | Purdue Fort Wayne

Lace up and join us for the 2nd annual Healing Heart Hustle 5K!
This family-fun 5K is a meaningful remembrance run/walk for the whole community
to come together, honor loved ones, and support the mission of Erin's House.



Registration

In-Person Participant

Adult: \$40 | Youth ages 3-18: \$25

Children under 3 participate for free!

INCLUDES

Race day t-shirt
Official race timing
After-race snacks,
snow cones and family fun
Fun Run for ages 3-8!

*Virtual Participant
registration is also
available for those
who'd like to join
from afar.*



Register Now!

Adult, youth and virtual
registrations available at
ErinsHouse.org/race



\$25

Add-on a custom Memorial Yard Sign

to be displayed along
the race path. These
personalized signs honor
your loved one, include a
photo and tribute message,
and are yours to take
home after the race. Have
a sign from last year's
race? We'll include it along
the 2026 race path!



YOU'RE INVITED

Wine for the Spirit

Friday, October 2, 2026

DON WOLF CONFERENCE CENTER IN DO IT BEST

Electric Works - 1626 Broadway Suite 100, Fort Wayne, IN 46802

Join us for our 21st annual Wine for the Spirit fundraiser featuring an exhilarating live auction, silent auction packages, a full selection of beverages, and delicious tastings crafted by local chefs, all to support the mission of Erin's House. Purchase individual tickets, a table of eight, or explore corporate sponsorships.



Reserve your seat and register for the silent auction now!

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

Mark Your Calendar

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30 – FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2, 2026

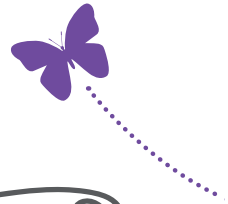
Our silent auction will be hosted online and open to everyone! Bid on exciting experiences, curated gift packages, local favorites, and more. Register for free to get auction sneak peeks and event updates.



*Thanks to our Event Co-Chairs,
Nick and Beth Talarico*



A LOOK INSIDE: Program Nights in Action



Sensory Sandbox

Each program night, participants have the opportunity to visit specialty spaces like the Sensory Room. There, a large sandbox features a projected topographic map across its surface. Facilitators use this visual to guide meaningful conversations about the highs and lows of grief, helping participants explore their feelings and own experiences.



Connections & Reflections

Holding onto the end of a ball of yarn, one participant shares something they learned from someone in the group, then tosses the ball to that person. Each participant continues by sharing what they've learned from another group member or about themselves. As the yarn is passed, a web begins to form, creating a powerful visual of connection.



Special Messages to Our Person

Using dissolving paper, families write a special message or wish they want to share with their person. Each message is gently placed in a bowl of water, and as the words fade away, a closing poem is read. This meaningful activity brings all families together for a final closing circle, marking the end of their 10-week journey.

Thanks to our program sponsor!



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

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ERIN'S HOUSE
FOR GRIEVING CHILDREN™

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.