



Annual Report

2024



*Making a world of difference,
one life at a time.*

505-323-0478 • griefnm.org

THE TALE OF THE STARFISH



A young girl was walking along a beach where thousands of starfish had been washed up during a terrible storm. When she came to each starfish, she would pick it up and throw it back into the ocean. People watched her with amusement.

She had been doing this for some time when a man approached her and said, "Little girl, why are you doing this? Look at this beach! You can't save all these starfish. You can't begin to make a difference!"

The girl seemed crushed, suddenly deflated. But after a few moments, she bent down, picked up another starfish, and hurled it as far as she could into the ocean. Then she looked up at the man and replied,

"Well, I made a difference for that one!"

The old man looked at the girl inquisitively and thought about what she had done and said. Inspired, he joined the little girl in throwing starfish back into the sea. Soon others joined, and all the starfish were saved.

adapted from "The Star Thrower" from THE UNEXPECTED UNIVERSE by Loren Eiseley. Copyright © 1968 by Loren Eiseley and renewed 1996 by John A. Eichman, III. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved.

Vision Statement

Our vision is that all grieving people will receive compassionate support needed to foster hope for the future.

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide compassionate and safe support, understanding, healing, and hope to the grieving community.

The Four Principles

- Grief is a natural reaction to a death for children as well as adults. •
- Within each individual is the natural capacity to heal oneself. •
- The duration and intensity of grief are unique for each individual. •
- Caring and acceptance help in the healing process. •

Message from the President of the Board of Directors



Dear Friends of the Grief Center,

A year ago, I began my term as president of the Board of this amazing organization. My association with the Center first began in January of 2018, when my son Colton and I attended support groups after the death of my daughter Pearla, in a car accident over the Christmas holiday.

The Grief Center is a remarkable community, which I experienced as a support group participant. But as board president, my understanding of the strength and depth of that community has changed. I've had the pleasure to meet many Friends of the Grief Center at events like our annual Benefit Concert and Healing

Hearts, as well as at volunteer trainings and appreciation events throughout the year. Thank you for helping to create this space of healing needed by so many of us when we least expect it.

The fiscal year reviewed in this annual report is one of our best. We have served more people in support groups at the Center for Hope and Healing than we have since the start of the pandemic. With the support of our community, we completed our playground and landscaping work, to welcome all who grieve.

We experienced our own grief this year too, when at the close of the fiscal year, we said goodbye to The Grief Center's longest-serving employee and first Executive Director, Jade Richardson Bock.

Our new fiscal year brings new opportunities to serve and to grow. I appreciate traveling this road with my fellow board members, our new Executive Director, Debora Garrison, and the great hearts and minds that comprise our Grief Center community.

Sincerely,

Paul Casaus

Board President



8 workshops
with **207 attendees**



64 groups per month and **539 total groups provided**



2 Camp Corazóns with **57 campers**



27 new Bereavement Facilitators



34 Professional Trainings for **934 adults** who serve our grieving community

New Mexico ranks 2nd in the nation for the number of children who will experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18. This is approximately 63,000 children or 1 in 7 NM kids vs. 1 in 12 the national average. By age 25 this number increases to 142,000.



(Judith's House/JAG Institute, 2024)

COUNTIES REPRESENTED FOR GROUP PARTICIPANTS

85% Bernalillo
9% Sandoval
3% Valencia
2% Other
1% Torrance

ETHNICITY

Hispanic/Latinx	402	Black/African American	22
White	197	Asian/Pacific Islander	8
Multi-Racial	4	Other	5
American Indian/Alaskan Native	3	Prefer Not to Say	3

GENDER

Female	402
Male	197
Prefer not to say	4
Non-Binary	3
Other	1

71% of youth participants say their group leader helps them feel comfortable sharing

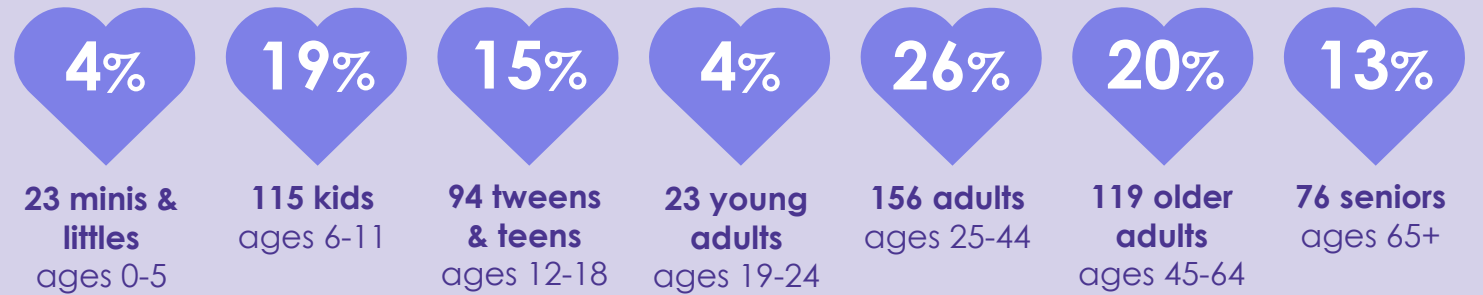
56% of teen participants report they have an easier time handling their grief feelings at school

93% of adults say the group activities & discussions help them cope with their grief

89% of adults report they have a better understanding of grief

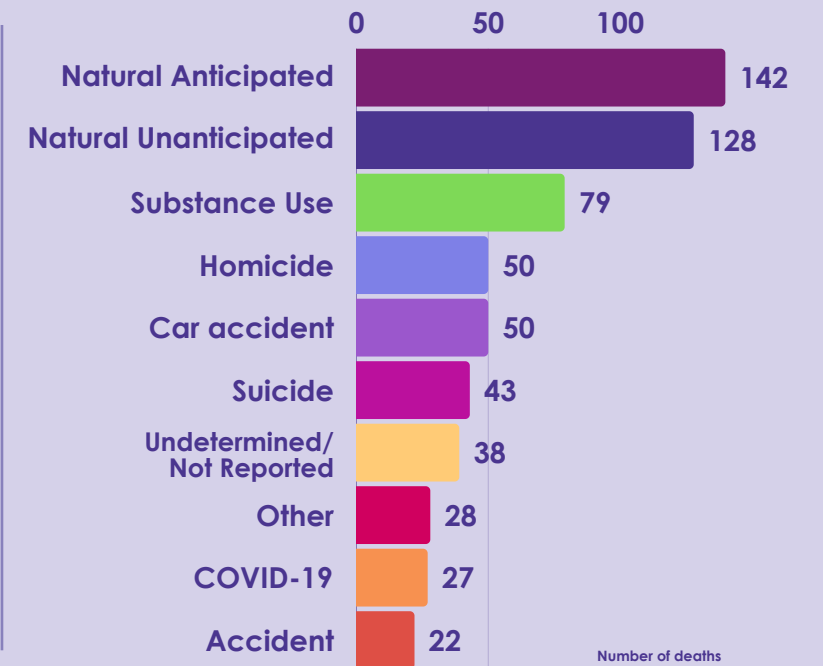
607

Grieving individuals (234 children & 373 adults) received grief support in our unique & age appropriate groups



Transforming Grief into Hope

CAUSE OF DEATH



WHO DIED FOR THE ADULT?

Spouse/Partner	31%
Child	25%
Parent	16%
Sibling	10%
Other	9%
Ex-spouse/ ex-partner	7%
Friend	2%



WHO DIED FOR THE CHILD?

Father	47%
Mother	15%
Grandparent	14%
Sibling	13%
Other	10%
Friend	1%

Camp Corazón: Where Healing Begins

Camp Corazón continues to be a beacon of hope for children coping with loss. This year's two camps were a huge success, welcoming 57 kids with supportive activities, peer connection, and emotional healing. Through shared experiences and guidance from caring counselors, our campers found comfort, resilience, and new ways to express their grief.



Playground Opening: A Place for Healing and Joy

This year, we proudly opened our new playground, designed to provide a safe and joyful space for children. It's more than just a place to play—it's a sanctuary where kids can feel free to be themselves, express their emotions, and build connections with others who understand their journey.

The Heart of The Grief Center

We had 149 volunteers help serve New Mexico's grieving families and adults. These dedicated people help make The Grief Center a special place for children, their families, and adults to find hope and healing.

- ADRIENNE LARKIN•
- AMANDA WALLACE-TRUJILLO•
- ANNIE McDONAGH•ARNIE MELNIKOFF•
- BOBBI RIEMENSCHNEIDER •BROOKE DUNN •BRYAN
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- ZINA CRUM•

Thank You!



In Memory Of:

Abran Lucero
Brianne Bigej

Adrienne & Justin Baird
Ashley Shaffer

Avi Jesus Espinoza Angel
Aimelda Mariel Angel

Baby Mabel Chavez
Brianne Bigej

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Mike Kivitz

Blake Thies
Graciela Ramos

Blanche Lange
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Mary Lou Skelton

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Deborah Williams

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Gabrielle Delgado

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Connell Rodden

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Fred Metzler

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Timothy Kee Williams & David Fike
Jan Fike

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Barbara Anaya

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Brandi Lewark

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Alicia Montoya

In Honor Of:

Jade Richardson Bock
Amy Miller
Barbara Kleinfeld
Gale Stienon
Jan Fike
Jody Karp
Ken Tallman
Marjorie Glenn
Mike Kivitz
Norma McLaughlin
Stephen Grimble

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Jade Richardson Bock

Debbie & Alan Mask for their anniversary
Jill Trimble

A participating student
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Bobbie Kleinfeld
Kathleen McClellan

Melina Vugrin
Kay Vugrin

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Ken Mills
Tracie Mills Hager

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Dr. Paul Hopkins
Louise Firestone

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Mary Sabatini

Brian Colon birthday
Matthew Caward

Jihny
Melora Palmer



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Nora Gilbreth
Natalie Milne

Carly Worthen
Nicole Paulson

Leo & Dora Montes
Norma McLaughlin

Pearla Casaus
Phillip Casaus

Liza O'Connor
Sam Adams

Brian Colon Bday Fundraiser!
Shauna Kastle

Monique Romney
Theresa Nunez

Mariah Hernandez
Veronica DuBray

Our Compassionate Supporters | July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

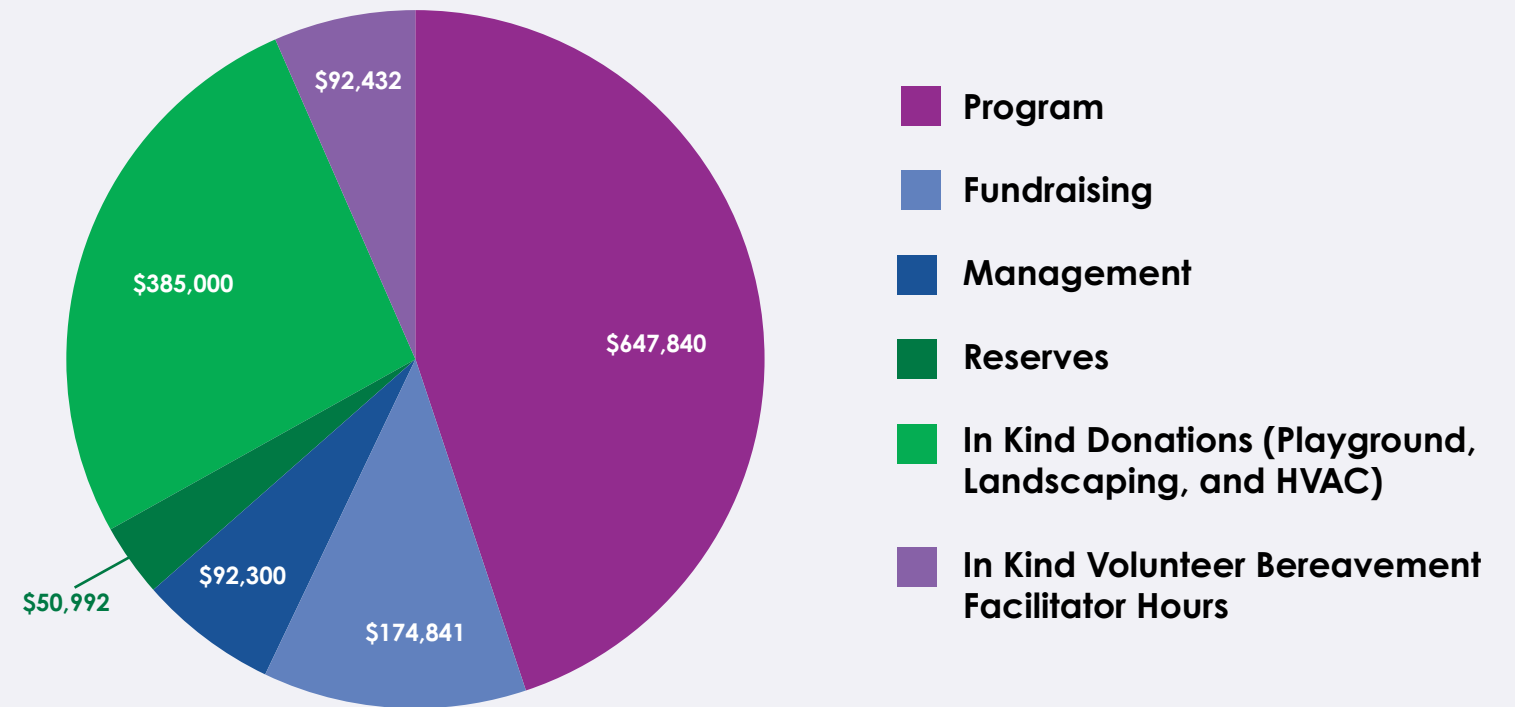
Because of the support of these businesses and foundations, plus countless individual donors The Grief Center never charges grieving families and individuals for support services. Thank you for helping make our programs possible.

- | | |
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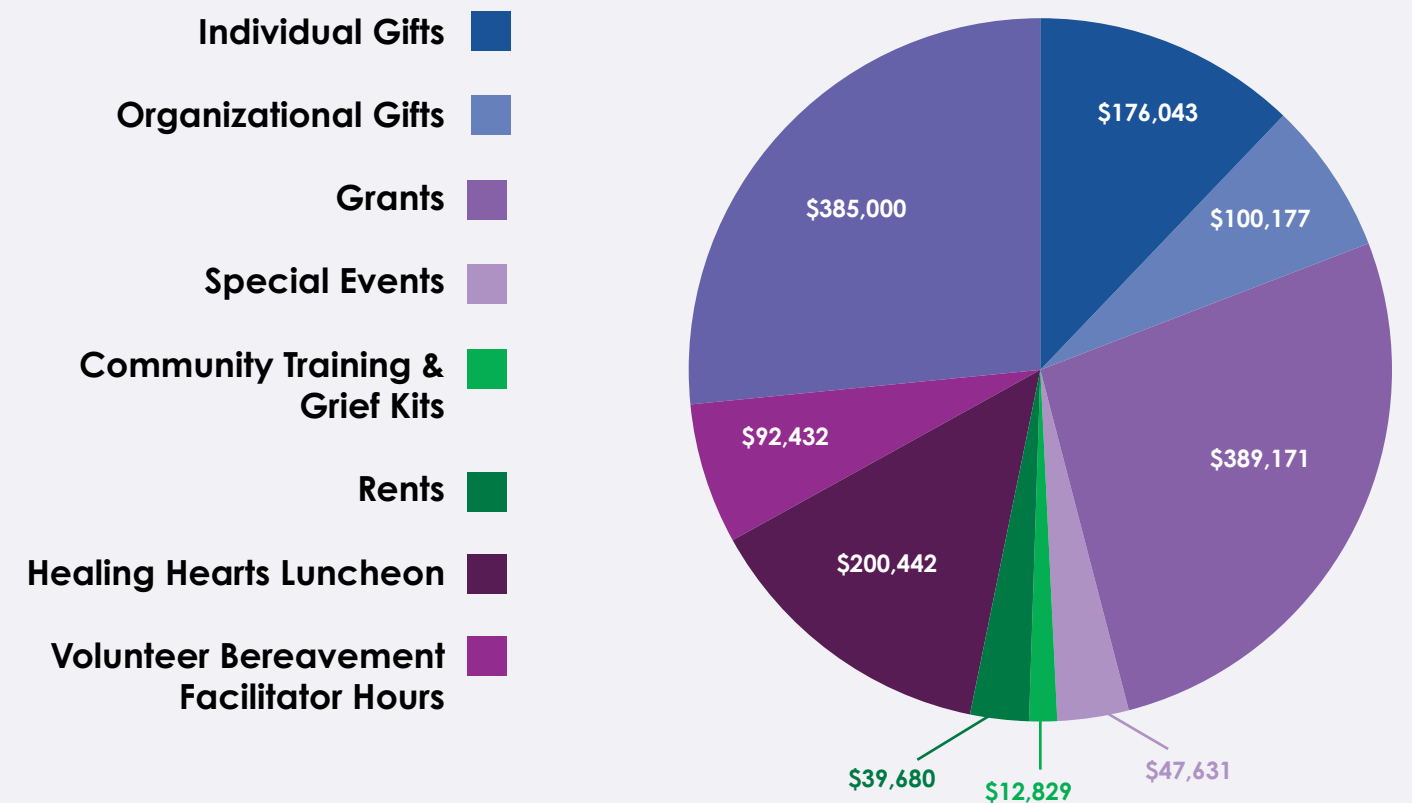


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2023 - 2024 Expenses & Reserves \$1,443,406.00



2023 - 2024 Income \$1,443,406.00



The Grief Center
Children's Grief Center of New Mexico, Inc.
4125 Carlisle Blvd NE
Albuquerque, NM 87107

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Judy Labovitz
Marty Mathisen, CPA CGFM CFE
Karla Rosales-Bush
Charlie Verploegh

**Special thanks to those
who concluded their
service in 2023-24:**
Kelly Atwood

The Grief Center Staff:
Jade Richardson Bock,
Executive Director

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Peter Moulson,
Front Desk/Admin. Assistant
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Jorie Weyer,
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Education & Outreach:
Mickey Kivitz,
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Save the Date ♥ *Feb. 14, 2025*

Save the date, February 14, 2025, and join us at the Embassy Suites Hotel as we celebrate hope and healing at the 19th annual Healing Hearts Luncheon and Silent Auction.



DONATE



VOLUNTEER

Program:
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Christina Thies,
Program Manager
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Kelly Geib-Eckenroth,
Program Coach
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