

GERARD'S HOUSE



ANNUAL REPORT

2022



A Welcome From Richard White, Our Board President:

Have you ever experienced the loss of someone you love and then struggled with how to manage the grief? That's what happened to me in 2009 when my father died. When I went to visit Gerard's House what struck me was the sense of loss on display. The space is filled with loss timelines, "before and after" drawings and masks sharing the sadness, anger, fear, and emptiness brought about by the loss of a loved one. I knew I was where I needed to be. At first, my involvement was with the Board, but it didn't take long to join the volunteer training and learn about the peer-based grief support model. Through my years as a group leader for the 7 to 10-year-olds, I've seen first-hand the power of Gerard's House. I've seen group dynamics unfold as children begin to feel more at ease and embrace the safety offered by their group members. Being part of an organization that ensures ongoing support, free of charge, is humbling. I am grateful to share a snapshot of all we were able to accomplish this year, and how we plan to continue meeting our community's needs.

Richard with volunteer Ruth DeLay at Camp Rainbow

Grief Support for Indigenous Students

In the late Spring of 2022, Ohkay Owingeh Community School reached out to Gerard's House following the death of a beloved school counselor. In speaking further with the principal, our staff learned that in addition to the death of the counselor, several members of the small student body had recently experienced the death of immediate family, necessitating urgent grief support.

Working alongside the principal, Gerard's House helped form an Advisory Committee of community members, professionals, and parents from Ohkay Owingeh and surrounding pueblos. This community-led collaboration allowed us to adapt our Grief Connections curriculum into culturally sensitive and relevant peer support groups to better serve grieving Indigenous youth.

In the Fall of 2022, in accordance with the Advisory Committee's recommendations and with their full approval and support, we launched a five-week pilot program for eight 5th and 6th graders.

In order to facilitate the new grief support group, an Ohkay Owingeh Community School staff member, who is also a parent, completed the Gerard's House 27 hour volunteer training. For the duration of the program Gerard's House staff commuted to Ohkay Owingeh every week to support the new group and group leader. We provided a pre-group and post-group for the group leader to help plan each session's content and activities, discuss what to anticipate each week, and debrief and problem solve.

Using the curriculum developed by the Advisory Committee, each session opened and ended with prayer. Students participated in activities around processing feelings, understanding grief, remembering when and how the person died, and honoring the person who died.

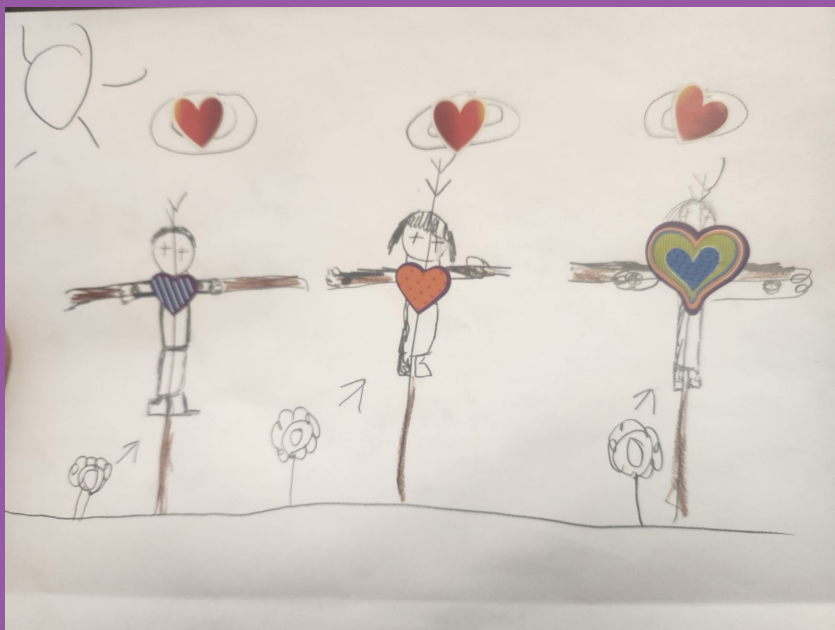


Grief Support for Indigenous Students Continued

Gerard's House staff member Roxana shares that in the third week of the program students were led in an inspiring activity where they were invited to write the different thoughts, actions, and feelings they've experienced in their grief on sticky notes. Students were then invited to place their sticky notes on a poster board; expressing their grief and visually seeing their grief symptoms next to their fellow classmates'. This activity remained visible on the walls throughout the program.

Roxana shares that this activity was particularly powerful because though most students were very shy to begin with, being able to write down their experience of grief and to see their sticky note surrounded by everyone else's broke the ice, resulting in a more bonded group where everyone was able to open up and share in new ways. At the end of this activity, one participant shared a picture of their loved one that they always keep in their pocket. After the fifth and final week, the group leader commented on how successful and impactful this program was for the students, noting big shifts in their comfort levels in talking about their losses.

We are delighted that the success of the pilot program will ensure a continued relationship between Gerard's House and Ohkay Owingeh Community School. Plans are underway with the school administration to train the new school counselor in the Gerard's House model so that she and the current group leader can continue offering grief support groups in the future. Starting in 2023 Gerard's House staff will provide weekly support to the group leaders via Zoom.



Much like the Nuestra Jornada program, our plan is to do whatever is necessary to guarantee the continuation of this program which is in its essence collaborative, culturally specific, and community-driven.

We are excited to share that the success and impact of the Ohkay Owingeh Community School pilot program has inspired a collaboration between Gerard's House and the Santa Fe Indian School. We will work to form an Advisory Committee there in the Summer of 2023, with the goal of launching grief support groups in Fall 2023.

Grief Connections Update:

Gerard's House Staff and Grief Connections volunteers worked together to bring back in-person after school support groups in a way that felt safe for everyone. After school programming continues to thrive, and we continue to extend our outreach and connect with new families in need of grief support through intakes and in-person orientations.

Fall of 2022 saw the revival of our collaboration with Youth Shelters & Family Services after low census and closures due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic. Grief Connections volunteers remain the backbone of the program, and in 2022 we made it a priority to bolster the support and resources we provide our indispensable group of facilitators.

"I have healed so much in the process of being with these kids. The bravery, vulnerability, and hope they have shown is very touching. Each time I leave Gerard's House after volunteering I feel more compassionate and stronger. I hope these kids feel the same when they leave." - Grief Connections volunteer

In 2022, 41% of participants experienced the death of a father, 15% percent experienced the death of a mother and 24% experienced the death of an important person such as a sibling, grandparent or aunt/uncle.

"There is a certain peace I feel when I attend and for days following, while feeling that my presence and my experiences serve as help to others too." - Adult group participant



Adult Support Update:

Gerard's House continues to offer peer-based support groups for grieving adults thanks to the tireless efforts of our long term volunteers Sarah Heartt, Bob Dorsett, Jude Anderson, and Kate Drahm. Our two ongoing adult groups met weekly. Participants gathered to share in stories of loss, offer mutual support and foster community both virtually and in person. Our Parenting in Grief group met in the Spring and Fall for a total of 20 weeks. Nine parents and caregivers connected with each other to share in the struggles and joys of parenting their grieving children while also grieving themselves. Regardless of age, our peer support model offers space for our participants to be the experts of their own grief, be deeply listened to and support others.



Nuestra Jornada Update:

We are so proud and excited to share that Nuestra Jornada is nearing a decade of providing grief support for children, youth, and families with immigrant roots. The success of Nuestra Jornada and our trustworthy reputation is reflected back to us at the beginning of each school semester when, without fail, our inboxes fill up with emails from school staff requesting groups the moment they return from break! Though Nuestra Jornada's success and positive impact is undisputed, Gerard's House has to address the persisting shortage of volunteers in the program to ensure we can continue meeting community needs. Because we depend so much on their experience and support, we made it a priority in 2022 to develop new ways to recruit, train, promote and retain Nuestra Jornada volunteers.

"It helps talking to the people that I trust the most and that it's okay to not be okay"



Mamas Compartiendo y Sanando update:

In keeping with the program's original mission, Mamas Compartiendo Y Sanando (Moms Sharing and Healing) continues to serve families with immigrant roots who have suffered a wide range of losses including death, deportation, incarceration, and separation by borders.

Our program offers grieving parents a monthly support group in addition to community resources to help alter generational patterns of inherited grief through monthly hybrid support groups. Participants are surrounded by a safe community of other Spanish-speaking moms, their kiddos, and expecting moms. We are excited to share that since its beginning two years ago, Mamas Compartiendo Y Sanando has increased nearly fifteen fold from its original 5 moms.



"In a new country as a single mom and alone without any family members close by has been very difficult for me but thanks to these support groups, I am trying to better my life and be a better person for myself, but more importantly, for my children."

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

GRIEF & BEYOND

Our work building trust and companionship with grieving children and families opens doors to provide care and resources beyond the scope of grief. In 2022, Gerard's House with the help of our collaborative partners hosted a number of drives, clinics, crisis responses, and events for the greater Santa Fe community.

Back To School Community Day

On Saturday, August 20th Gerard's House, the Museum of International Folk Art, Father's New Mexico, and the Santa Fe Community Foundation Baby Fund hosted a Back-to-School Family Day.

Hundreds of families attended this fun day at the museum filled with hands-on activities, free school supplies, and giveaways including gas cards and popsicles. Live entertainment was provided by Wise Fool, New Mexico Wildlife Center, Books & Babies from the Santa Fe Public Library and a children's dance class from Belisama Rhythym Sol.

In addition, Chanbreakers Collective, Las Cumbres Community Services, Santa Fe Children's Museum, Esperanza Shelter, and Santa Fe Mountain Center joined us to table and share information about their services.

Rental Assistance Clinic

On October 20th, Gerard's House helped 18 families in need of rental assistance apply for funds through the state-run Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP). Three families received immediate rental assistance from Las Cumbres while they waited for their ERAP application to be processed. We could not do it without our community partners.

Crisis Responses

In 2022 in collaboration with the Postvention Team, we provided emergency grief support for NYE Elementary, NM School for the Arts, Unitarian Universalist Church, Upstart Crows Shakespeare Productions, and Meow Wolf in response to the sudden deaths of community members.



Giving From The Heart Drive

On Friday, December 16th Gerard's House hosted 242 people for an amazing day of giving and receiving. During the two hour drive, we distributed the following:

- \$5,350 in gift cards
- 200 Christmas gifts
- 50 art activity kits for kids
- 135 new winter coats
- 30 bags of diapers
- 7 delicious holiday meals

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ANNUAL STATS

We estimate that 152 children and 90 adults benefited from our drives (food, coats, clothing, gift cards, and holiday gifts).



Gerard's House helped meet more than 350 basic needs requests.



Thanks to the Diaper Depot, we distributed over 35,000 diapers to grieving young parents.



We received 38 referrals from community partners for group and individual grief support and sent 86 referrals to outside agencies to meet needs beyond grief. Go teamwork!



Gerard's House served 867 children, teens, and adults with grief support services.

We facilitated 19 weekly groups



We held 6 weekly Grief Connections groups for youth grieving the death of a parent or significant person

We led 16 Nuestra Jornada grief groups in 11 different Santa Fe Public Schools

60 Volunteers donated 2,000 hours saving \$49,380 in salaries which is the equivalent of 3 part-time employees



Thank you for making Santa Fe a more grief sensitive city!

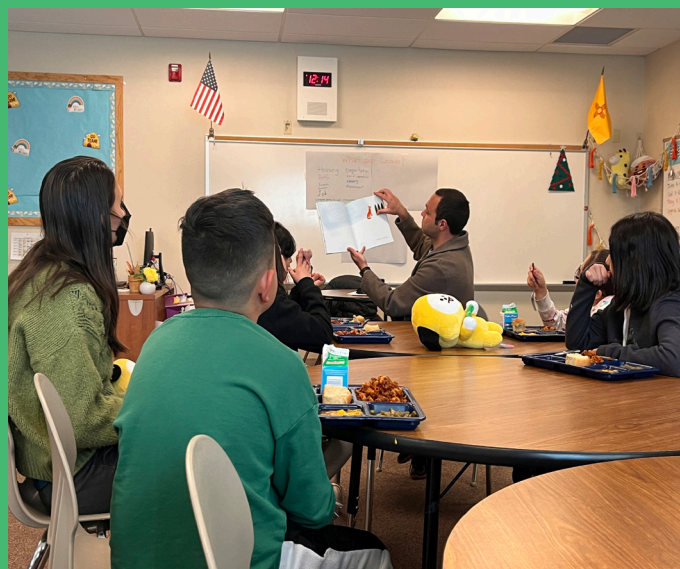
5 Graduate Interns contributed 1,889 hours saving \$46,640 in salaries which is the equivalent of 2.5 part-time employees



Final Words From A Volunteer:

A facilitator of a Nuestra Jornada group for boys at Ortiz Middle School shares about the solidarity and compassion he saw steadily growing in that group this Fall:

"It's not necessarily enjoyable for them to share about losses. It's difficult. It's risky. It hurts. I see that free time at the end is integral because the activities we do ask a lot of them, to bring their grief to the surface. It's a lot especially for boys who don't get practice doing that. There are a few boys who have been in a group before and can show the other boys the ropes. It's heavy lifting and just like physical exercise, you need to rest afterwards to get stronger. During freetime you have kids from different cliques and grades having fun together. We open up the space to whatever they want to do. Suddenly they are joking, enjoying their snacks, and playing Uno. It normalizes the fact that they did this intense grief work and got through it together. I like going and being consistent with the kids every week, because life is not consistent for them, but the rhythm of our group is."



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...for grieving children