



West Michigan

2022 Impact Report

No child or teen
should have to
grieve alone



Tammy Squire

Ele's Place West Michigan, Director



Dear Friends of Ele's Place West Michigan,

For 10 years, we have served children, teens, and their families grieving in Grand Rapids and the surrounding West Michigan area. In 2013, Ele's Place planted roots in our community, and since that time, we have grown and expanded into a welcoming, dedicated grief healing center – our Home for Healing Hearts.

At Ele's Place West Michigan, children and teens have a place to share their stories and memories, explore their feelings and learn coping skills alongside their peers in an emotionally safe space. Most importantly, they feel heard and understood and realize they are not alone.

Data included in the 2021 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model report estimates that one in 11 children in Michigan will experience the death of a sibling or parent before age 18. That's approximately 188,000 children in Michigan, and by age 25 that number more than doubles to 456,000. Childhood bereavement is a critical issue and an increasingly important national priority. Understanding the number of children and teens impacted by death is essential to helping every one of them find support, connection, and healing.

We are grateful to share our 2022 achievements with YOU – our supportive donors, dedicated partners, committed volunteers, and devoted staff and community board members. We are incredibly thankful for the compassion and generosity we receive from so many in our community. You are the heart of how Ele's Place positively impacts our community. You truly help ensure our peer grief support groups remain FREE OF CHARGE for as long as a family needs!

2022 – Grateful for Support, Connection and Healing:

- ♥ Trained a new class of committed volunteer facilitators to lead our evening peer grief support groups during Winter 2022.
- ♥ Provided guided tours of our healing center, allowing community members to understand our mission better and how they can support grieving children, teens, and their families.
- ♥ Hosted our 4th Annual Courage, Comfort & Cocktails event in October 2022, with over 400 guests in attendance! This fantastic fundraising event provided mission engagement and raised over \$224,000 to support our vital peer grief support programs
- ♥ Gathered with our enrolled families and volunteers for our annual "Bubble Release." This meaningful event is held every spring on the last night of the program year.

- ♥ Hosted three Family Nights during the summer 2022 break. These evenings support enrolled families as they continue to explore their grief and provide space for them to share their grief and the death of their person(s).
- ♥ Welcomed the Summer 2022 volunteer training class that included new Support Group Facilitator Volunteers, Activity Room Volunteers, Kitchen Volunteers, Adult Group Clinicians, and Therapy Dog Handlers!
- ♥ Returned to offering weekly in-person peer grief support groups two nights per program week, with therapy dogs, snacks, and activity rooms for the children and teens in Fall 2022.
- ♥ Provided twice monthly virtual support groups via Zoom for families who could not return in-person due to transportation, distance, or health reasons.
- ♥ Invited enrolled families to participate in a Family Night in November 2022 during Children's Grief Awareness Month. Families were invited to create a placemat in honor of the person who would be missing from their table during the holidays.
- ♥ Secured funding to print and distribute our Helping Grieving Students at School Manual to area school partners to support them when responding to the death of a student or helping students who had experienced a death in their family.
- ♥ The Ele's Place West Michigan Team participated in a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion training session in October to strengthen our commitment to creating a safe and welcoming space that honors all races, ethnicities, gender identities & expressions, sexual orientations, socio-economic backgrounds, ages, religions, and abilities.
- ♥ Re-engaged with school partners and their students through Ele's Group, our school-based peer grief support group, providing 9 eight-week peer group sessions during calendar 2022 which supported 86 students.

We understand that the need for peer grief support will never go away. We also know that peer grief support can have a life-long positive impact on a young person. Grieving children and teens benefit from access to a supportive environment and compassionate peer-based programming. Thank you for standing by the grieving children, teens, and their families by standing WITH Ele's Place West Michigan. TOGETHER we will continue to meet the critical need for our peer grief support services for years to come.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Tammy ♥

Jennifer Wolfe Howard, LMSW Ele's Place Capital Region, President & CEO



Dear Ele's Place Supporters throughout Michigan,

Thank you for caring about children and teens who are grieving the death of a significant person in their lives. The support of individuals, companies, and partner organizations help ensure that no child or teen will have to grieve alone.

Children and teens are coping with challenges and losses experienced through the pandemic and the grief associated with losing someone close to them. Our program staff and volunteers across the state continue to observe the increased needs of our program participants and rising requests for our services. Michigan is not alone: nationwide, the need for mental health support services is increasing. Community awareness is essential to bringing mental health support to the forefront and ensuring services are available to those who need them.

The Ele's Place team is grateful for our compassionate volunteers who devote their time and energy to creating a safe space for children and teens to process their loss in a peer setting, and learn they are not alone in their grief. We are thankful for our generous donors who continue to stand by us to help ensure our doors are always open. During the past 32 years, Ele's Place has served over 40,000 grieving children, teens, and their parents/guardians throughout Michigan. Our dedicated staff and volunteers are committed to serving the grieving families in our communities at our Ann Arbor, Flint, Grand Rapids, and Lansing branches through our onsite and school-based peer grief support programs.

As always, we thank our founders, including the entire Stover Family, who continue to honor the memory of their daughter and sister, Ele. Their continued leadership and direct work with program participants are an inspiration!

As you read your local branch's 2022 Impact Report, we hope you feel the same sense of accomplishment that we do in serving families grieving in our community.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Howard
President/CEO
Ele's Place

Total Served in 2022:



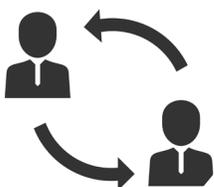
FAMILY-BASED SUPPORT GROUPS – 152 PEOPLE (96 CHILDREN/TEENS & 56 ADULTS)

Family-based programming offered onsite at our healing center. Provides peer grief support to children and teens ages 3-18, with optional support group for their parent/guardian.



SCHOOL GROUPS – 86 STUDENTS AT 9 SCHOOL PARTNERS

Peer support groups within the school setting, primarily in Middle and High School. Conducted in partnership with school clinical staff. Ele's Place school-based staff conducted 11 onboarding meetings with current or future school partners.



CLINICAL CONSULTATIONS – 227 PEOPLE

Clinical staff members provide families who are grieving with individual guidance and support upon request. In addition, they assist parents/guardians in helping their children through the grief process with helpful information, guidance and intake meetings prior to participation in our family-based program. Includes the initial intake appointment for families.



COMMUNITY OUTREACH – 160 PEOPLE

Community awareness presentations, clinical workshops and Tours of the Heart.

All services are provided free of charge to families, schools and all members of our community.

"For me, going to Ele's Place allowed me to re-find a sense of family. They were individuals who really understood what I was going through. We listened, talked, cried, and even laughed at times. We needed each other for strength, and to get ready to take on the next day or week. We grew stronger. Ele's Place was all I had. I could relax and let down. I was happy that I was also hopefully doing something good for my three girls."

~ Becky, Former Ele's Place Adult Group Participant

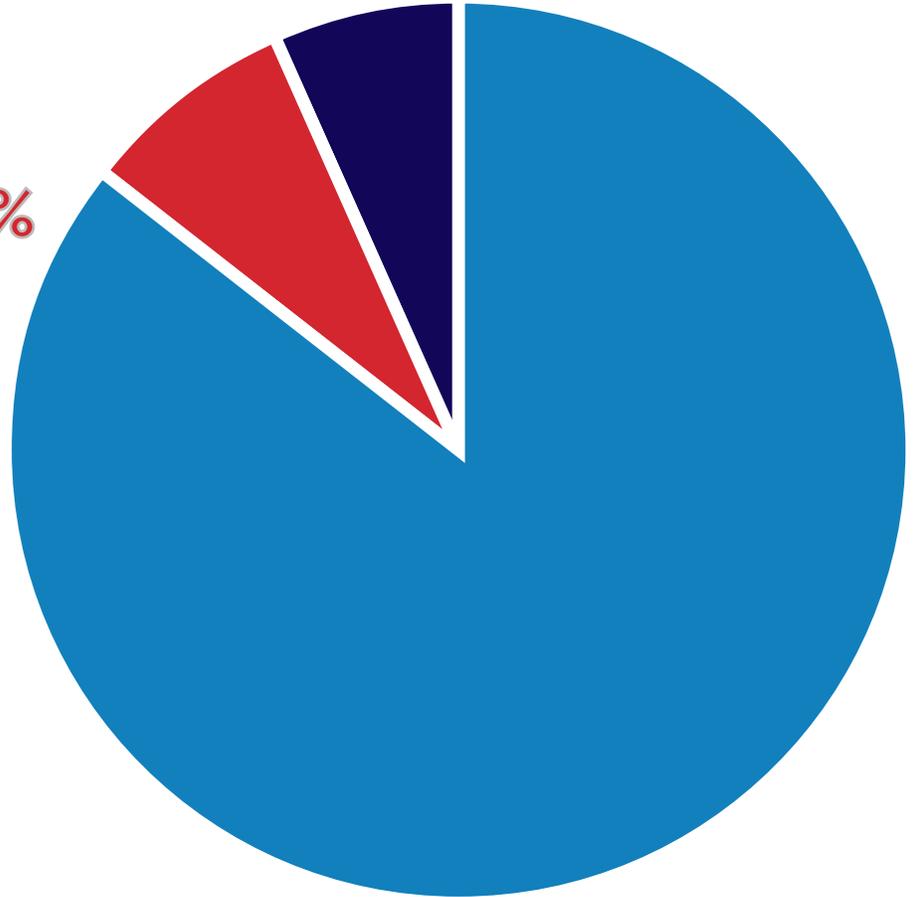


2022 EPWM Expenses:

Program: 70.87%

Admin/General: 7.77%

Fundraising: 6.55%



"My brother and I started at Ele's Place Ann Arbor soon after our little sister died. We were both in the early elementary group together. At first, I was unsure about attending a grief group because I thought it would feel uncomfortable to share my feelings with people I didn't know well. To my surprise, it was the one place where I actually felt like I belonged during that time. It was comforting to know that the families, volunteer facilitators and staff at Ele's Place understood how I felt. Some kids in our group had a sibling die too so they truly knew what we were experiencing. The early elementary grief group provided the safe space that I needed to work on my grief. Although we had a lot of support from friends, family, and our community, it was at Ele's Place where most of my healing took place."

~ Mia, Former Ele's Place Early Elementary Group Participant



Thank You to Our Community Sponsors



Ele's Place-West Michigan
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www.elsesplace.org

Ele's Place is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization

