

2023

West Michigan

Impact Report



Tammy Campbell

Branch Director

Ele's Place – West Michigan



Dear Friends,

I am honored to share with you the significant impact Ele's Place – West Michigan has had over the past year. Since 2013, we have dedicated ourselves to providing a safe, compassionate space for grieving children, teens, and their families throughout Grand Rapids and the surrounding West Michigan area. We offer a place where young people can find solace, understanding and hope — and most importantly, realize they are not alone.

The importance of our work is underscored by the sobering data from the 2024 Childhood Bereavement Estimation Model report, which estimates that one in 11 children in Michigan will experience the death of a sibling or parent by age 18. This is approximately 201,000 children, a number that more than doubles by age 25. Ele's Place – West Michigan is committed to providing the support and resources needed to help young people cope with grief.

In 2023, thanks to the unwavering support of our donors, partners, volunteers, staff and community board members, Ele's Place – West Michigan continued to expand our outreach, enhance our programming, and meet the needs of our community — all while remaining to FREE OF CHARGE to all.

Here are some highlights of what we accomplished together in 2023:

- ♥ We served 179 children and teens through our on-site and school-based support programs.
- ♥ We had 43 volunteers who gave their time to our weekly support groups, including five therapy dogs.
- ♥ We delivered presentations about Ele's Place and children's grief to more than 111 attendees.
- ♥ We hosted our fifth annual Courage, Comfort & Cocktails event on October 17, with over 400 attendees! This fantastic fundraising event provided mission engagement and raised more than \$255,000 to support our vital peer grief support programs.

These achievements would not have been possible without the dedication and compassion of each of you. Your support allows us to continue offering hope and healing to grieving children, teens and their families. Together, we are making a significant difference in West Michigan, one heart at a time.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Ele's Place – West Michigan family. As we look ahead to the future, we are excited to continue our mission and expand our reach, ensuring that every grieving child and teen in our community has access to the support they need.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tammy" with a small red heart at the end.

Tammy Campbell
Branch Director, Ele's Place – West Michigan

Jennifer Wolfe Howard, LMSW

President/CEO

Ele's Place



Dear Supporters,

Thank you for your interest in the mission of Ele's Place. Betsy and Woody Stover founded our organization in 1991 after the death of their daughter, Helen Louise "Ele" Stover. The idea was simple, but profound: Kids of all ages grieve, and by acknowledging and giving them a safe space to express their grief, we can enable them to effectively move through their healing journeys. At Ele's Place, children and teens have the opportunity to talk to others their age who truly understand what they are going through. They have the space to express their feelings in age-appropriate ways through words, art and play.

At Ele's Place, "all feelings are OK." Because even though there are tears, there is also an abundance of joy and laughter — joy that comes from the connections made here!

Over the past three decades, Ele's Place has established a large footprint in Michigan, proudly serving over 3,100 individuals in 2023 alone. Thanks to the generosity of our volunteers and donors, we have provided grief support services to over 43,000 individuals since we opened our doors.

In 2023, Ele's Place staff and volunteer leadership completed a new strategic plan for the organization, which will serve as our north star through 2026. Our areas of focus will be programs; communications; operational excellence; diversity, equity, and inclusion; and fundraising. This plan is a collaborative effort that will help us on the path toward our vision of ensuring no child or teen in Michigan grieves alone.

We are thankful to each of you — our supporters, advocates, volunteers, donors and friends — for all you do! We would not be here to serve our communities without your passion and generosity. Thank you to Betsy and Woody Stover and family for your vision and for establishing this magical place. Thank you to our families for sharing your hearts and your stories! It is our honor to be a small part of your journeys.

With immense appreciation,

Jennifer Howard, LMSW
President/CEO, Ele's Place



Total Served in 2023



FAMILY-BASED SUPPORT GROUPS – 167 PEOPLE (97 CHILDREN/TEENS & 70 ADULTS)

Family-based programming offered on-site 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 – 82 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 three onboarding meetings with current or future school partners.



CLINICAL CONSULTATIONS – 333 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 – 111 PEOPLE

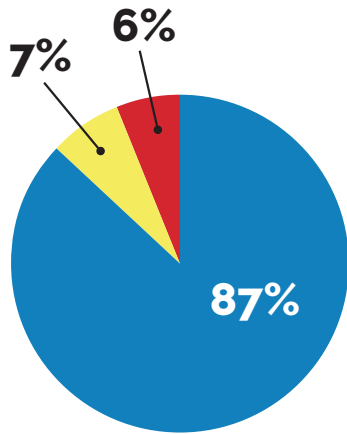
Community awareness presentations, clinical workshops and Tours of the Heart. All services are provided free of charge to families, schools and all members of our community.

“ My father succumbed to acute myeloid leukemia only six weeks after his diagnosis when I was just four years old — an experience that cast a shadow of grief over my childhood. Amid the darkness, Ele's Place emerged as a beacon of hope, offering my family the lifeline we needed to navigate the storm of our sorrow. With the support of Ele's Place, we learned to heal, find solace and reclaim our lives. ”




— Stacia Schaefer, Ele's Place – West Michigan
Community Board Vice Chair
and former Ele's Place participant



2023 Expenses



Nonprofit industry standards state that 70% or more of donor dollars should be spent on programs. Ele's Place takes great pride in being good stewards of your dollars.

-  Program
-  Fundraising
-  Administration

You Are the Heart of Ele's Place – West Michigan



Clockwise from top left: Phil, Eva and Ellie Pratt shared their family's story at our fifth annual Courage, Comfort & Cocktails; Ele's Place – West Michigan celebrated its 10-year anniversary; seventh-graders at Dutton Christian Schools donated hand-selected snacks for the kids and teens who attend our weekly programs; the team at Country Fresh Dairy made a gift from the Giving Cow Foundation



Want to get involved? We are in need of Program Volunteers, Sponsors, Community Board Members and more. Whether you give your time, treasure or talent, we welcome your support of Ele's Place! Learn more at elesplace.org/about/get-involved/how-can-i-help.



Thank You to Our Community Sponsors



More cash back.
Faster payments.



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

