



Gerard's House



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Gerard's House is here for everyone in our community who is grieving. Many families experience barriers to getting help after a life-changing loss, so we energetically focus on making our services easy to access.

We offer 28 weekly peer support groups, individual sessions, a mobile unit, summer camps, teen movie nights, crisis response, and caregiver support. We also have seven adult groups. All our services are free of charge in English and in Spanish.

2024 OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



- In our Grief Connections Program, 59% of participants have experienced the death of a father, 12% a mother, and 33% a significant other (such as a sibling, grandparent, or close friend).
- Agency-wide 290 families received wrap-around casework for urgent needs, including food, bills, childcare, and access to legal or behavioral health services.

NUMBERS
SERVED:

28

WEEKLY GROUPS

1,786

INDIVIDUALS

762 ADULTS

1,024 CHILDREN



- Our volunteers gave their time and talents —valued at \$104,488—making our programs strong and sustainable!
- 1,880 hours were contributed by our student interns to gain hands-on experience and eventually help address the state's shortage of mental health professionals.

THE PEOPLE
WHO MAKE
IT POSSIBLE:

72

VOLUNTEERS

9

INTERNS

7

STAFF

In Loving Memory of Arlene Einwalter Founder of Gerard's House



On Monday, September 9, 2024, Sister Arlene Einwalter passed away in Greenfield, Wisconsin. She leaves behind a lasting legacy of service and compassion, having co-founded Gerard's House.

Based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and trained by The School Sisters of St. Francis, Sister Arlene dedicated her early years to teaching in Catholic schools and Parishes before earning a degree in Spiritual Theology. After the death of her beloved father, her life took an unexpected turn. In her own words, she felt God calling her to a new purpose. That calling led her to Santa Fe, where she trained in grief counseling, hospice care, and death education at the Elisabeth Kübler-Ross Institute at Northern New Mexico College in El Rito. As a grief counselor at Berardinelli Family Funeral Service in the mid-1990s, she worked closely with families who had lost loved ones. It was during this time that tragedy struck the community—a series of fatal car accidents claimed the lives of several local teenagers, leaving their families and the broader community reeling from these losses.

Recognizing the unsupported pain of grieving children and teens, Sister Arlene inspired a group of bereaved parents to come together to create something lasting—a safe space for young people to heal. In 1997, with the support of Rick Berardinelli and a group of dedicated volunteers, Gerard's House was co-founded. Sister Arlene's vision lives on, as Gerard's House now serves over 1,500 children, teens, and adults each year in Santa Fe, Española Valley, and surrounding Pueblos who have experienced the death or separation of a loved one.

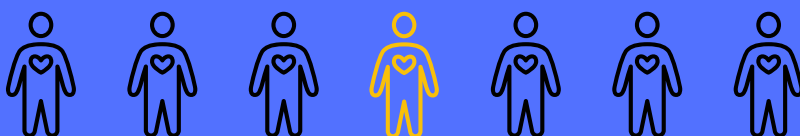
28

WEEKLY GRIEF GROUPS



New Mexico ranks second in the nation for childhood bereavement, with 1 in 7 children expected to experience the death of a parent or sibling by age 18, increasing to 1 in 6 for Native American youth.

Gerard's House makes an impact in our state by providing free, weekly peer support groups and workshops. We bring culturally responsive care directly to families in their schools and communities to make certain that even those in rural areas or facing transportation barriers are not left behind.





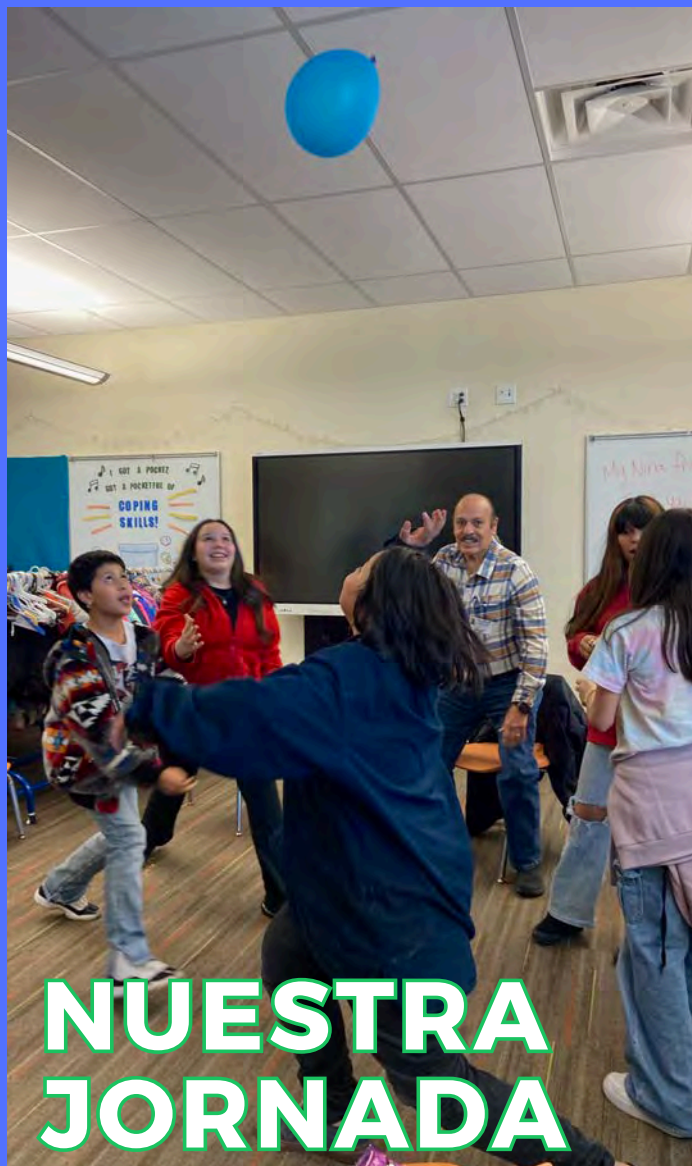
RURAL AND NATIVE AMERICAN COLLABORATIVE SERVICES

These students sculpted themselves as superheros because even in grief, we have superpowers!

In 2024, we expanded grief support services in the Española Valley and New Mexico Pueblos, serving 198 grieving people –118 children and teenagers and 80 adults. Programs included weekly support groups during the school year, Family Grief Nights and student grief workshops. We also provided three summer grief camps at Ohkay Owingeh Community School, McCurdy Charter School in Espanola and Moving Arts Española with Las Cumbres Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Española and McCurdy Ministries.

Students' parents and grandparents have gone out of their way to express gratitude for the positive shifts they have seen in their children after participating in these collaborative grief support programs, and for the support they have received for their families. And it is often the grieving children themselves who have asked for Gerard's House to come back after a visit to their school. We are partnering with the Pojoaque School District, Tony E Quintana Elementary School and Kewa Pueblo Health Corporation, with exciting new collaborative developments now underway.

Ohkay Owingeh Community School Tewa Language Teacher Daniel Archuleta co-facilitates the Woe Beedi Warriors grief group there with School Counselor Martha Tenorio and our staff. Daniel writes, *"We are excited about the future and about continuing to work together to nurture this effective and loving support to reach more grieving families and to touch the lives of neighboring communities as well. Each little step we take is letting everyone, our children and families be stronger and more flexible as they cope with waves of grief and loss. I deeply value Gerard's House and I am grateful for our partners there. My dream is that we can establish a center within our pueblo and continue sharing our love and support."*



85%
Of participants
reported their school-
based grief groups
helped them

In 2024, we proudly celebrated our 10th year of providing grief support to youth in the Santa Fe Public Schools. Our program serves students not only dealing with the loss of a loved one but also those navigating immigration-related grief, including separations through deportation, incarceration, and across borders. By offering peer support, we help students process their complex emotions and find solidarity with other kids facing similar struggles.

This year, we held our first Spanish-speaking volunteer training, welcoming new facilitators who bring cultural understanding and shared experiences to the program. This deepens the connection for students, who feel seen and supported by volunteers who reflect their language and culture. As our program continues to grow, we are also training school staff to facilitate groups, cultivating a grief-sensitive community within schools - because grief does not have to be a journey made alone.



ADULT SUPPORT

Our adult support program expanded throughout 2024, offering three ongoing weekly English-speaking groups and one Spanish-speaking group. We formed a new partnership with Red Willow Hospice, where their spiritual care director facilitated a weekly evening group. We also launched a special pilot group, WEAVINGS, for mothers who have lost a child. This group allowed participants to weave together their stories and honor their sense of forever motherhood. The feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive, and we are planning to host another session in Spring 2025.


In addition to our regular grief groups, we offered creative workshops including poetry and grief yoga. Our volunteer facilitators continue to strengthen their skills through ongoing training, ensuring groups remain a warm refuge where participants feel seen, heard, and cared for.



YOUTH SHELTERS

In our ongoing work with teens from Youth Shelters and Family Services, we focus on creating a space where young people who have experienced loss — whether through death, displacement, or instability — can find comfort and camaraderie. The grief these teens face is often complicated by their unique circumstances, but through our group support, they come together to share their experiences and process their emotions.

Activities like movie nights (with plenty of popcorn and pizza) provide low-pressure opportunities for teens to explore themes of grief and longing while finding mutual support among peers who truly get it. In this shared space, they are given the emotional and physical safety to make sense of their grief journey, knowing they are not alone.



**45% of participants
said the group has
connected them with
other moms who have
supported them during
difficult times.**

COMPARTIENDO Y SANANDO (SHARING & HEALING)

Our Compartiendo y Sanando program continued to be a one-of-a-kind resource in 2024 for families with immigrant roots experiencing grief and loss. 100% of the moms in this program are Latina immigrants, navigating parenting on low incomes, and 40% are young parents between the ages of 18 and 24. Once a month, families gather at our partner's building, Many Mothers, for family nights where they can participate in one of our four support groups: a grief support group for mothers, a parenting support group for fathers, a youth grief group for school-aged children, and childcare for babies and toddlers. These nights have become an important opportunity for families to build connections, create lasting friendships, and find a sense of community during one of the most difficult times of their lives.

One mother shared that attending these family nights with her children after her husband's death was healing for them all, saying, *"These are mine and my kids' favorite nights, we always feel better when we leave."*

Another mom expressed how the group has helped her feel less isolated, especially during the times when she felt most alone, sharing, *"This group has helped me during difficult moments. During the times I felt the most lonely, I came to the group and received support and care here."*

These heartfelt connections remind us why this program is so essential—offering comfort, understanding, and a sense of belonging when families need it most.



GRIEF CONNECTIONS

The Grief Connections program is our foundational program that takes place after school on site offering a space for healing and shared support for youth ages 3-21. After a loved one dies it can feel very lonely, so for many kids, group is *the* place where they felt seen, heard, and surrounded by others who understand the unique pain of loss. This year, participation increased across all age groups, with the 11-14-year-old group doubling in size.

Caretakers found validation and belonging among others by participating in the concurrent Parenting in Grief group designed for caregivers who are grieving and caregiving at the same time. This ripple effect of support strengthened families as a whole, equipping them to better care for one another through loss.

Older teens (15-21) joined us for quarterly Teen Movie Nights, where the power of peer support extends through films exploring themes of longing and loss. As we grow these gatherings, teens are encouraged to bring a friend along—offering an added layer of reassurance while also teaching friends how to stand alongside those who have faced early, big losses.

Volunteers, many of whom have their own lived experiences of grief, are the magic ingredient in each group, creating an open space where participants feel safe to express themselves creatively and authentically without judgement.

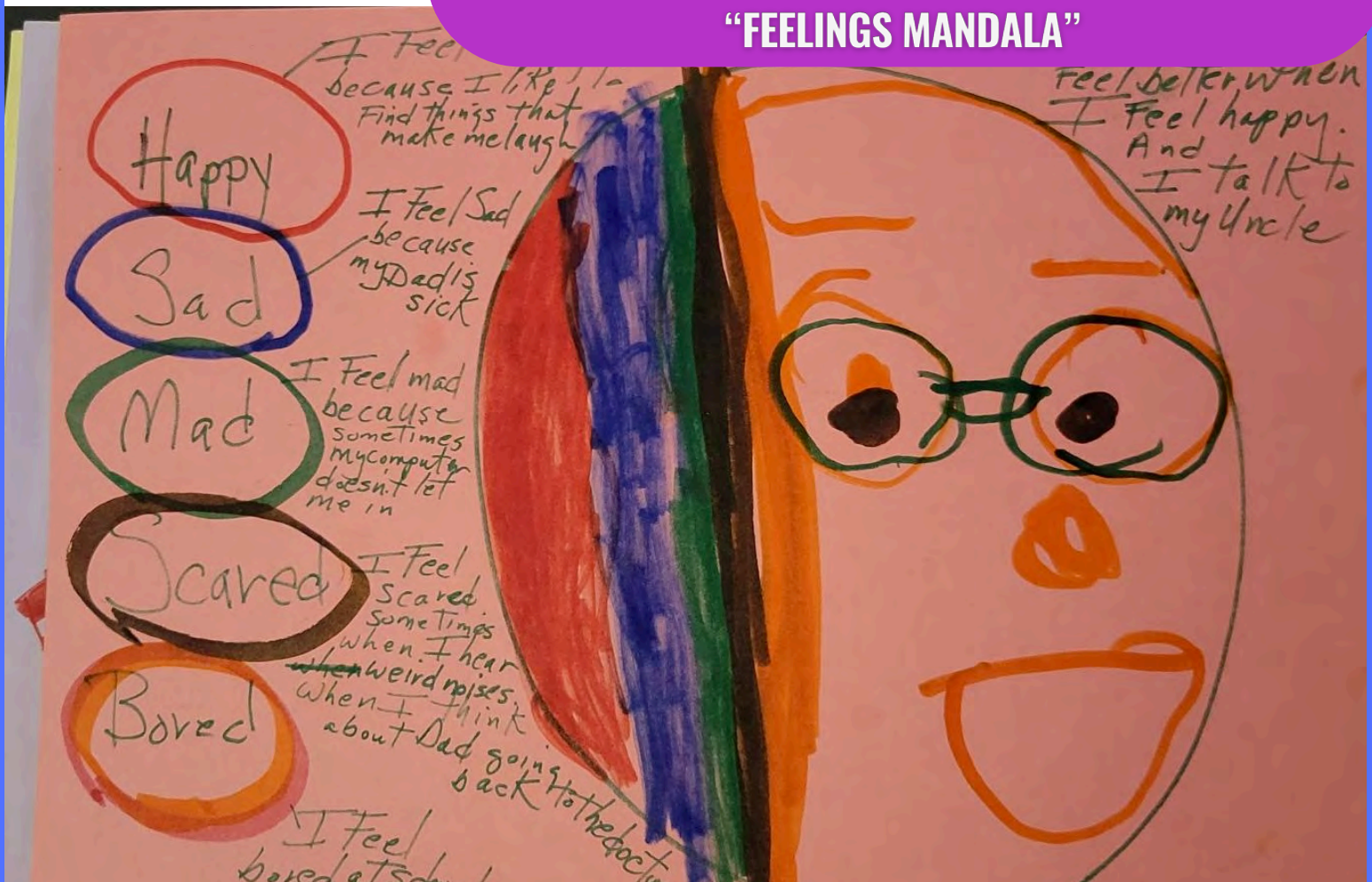
STEPPING STONES

Stepping Stones supports families living with anticipatory grief, where a caregiver or child is facing a life-threatening or terminal illness. Our team of volunteers provides in-home visits, offering gentle support through a combination of art and reflective conversation to meet the unique needs of children and their caregivers.

Though one of our smaller programs, it is deeply trusted by school counselors, therapists, and hospice workers who rely on us to offer compassionate support during some of life's most tender moments. These personalized, flexible visits allow families to receive support in the comfort of their own homes.

In October, we hosted a virtual training session led by JJ Tellatin, one of the program's creators, where we trained eight new volunteers to join this on-call team, ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of families facing anticipatory grief with care and empathy.

**WORRIED ABOUT A LOVED ONE WHO IS SICK?
TRY MAKING A COLOR CODED
"FEELINGS MANDALA"**



2024

HIGHLIGHTS



New Program Outreach Videos: For the first time ever, we now have two promotional videos in Spanish. The first is a Nuestra Jornada orientation video, which we send to families so they can hear directly from kids and adults about our peer support model and get a sense of what it's like to be in a grief group. For our second video, we partnered with Las Cumbres, The Birthing Tree, and local doulas to create a series of short films designed to support new Latina mothers on their journey.

Breaking Language Barriers: We proudly hosted our first-ever volunteer training in Spanish. With the completion of our translated training manual, volunteers can now learn our peer support model in their native language. This milestone allows our first cohort of Spanish-speaking facilitators to support youth and adult peer groups, ensuring that grieving individuals can find comfort and connection in the language of their hearts.



Giving From the Heart Winter Drive: In the spirit of giving, we extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made this year's Winter Drive a success. On December 13th, 156 caregivers and their 209 children walked through our doors and left with their arms full of gifts—and the reassurance that they are part of a caring community. Each year our families look forward to this show of support during a time of year that can be especially hard for grieving families.

EXPANDING OUR REACH, TO SUPPORT HEALING

In 2024, we also expanded access to grief support by offering workshops and presentations in schools and workplaces, meeting people where they are across Northern New Mexico.

While we can't start a weekly group everywhere they are requested, we can offer interactive workshops that explore how grief looks across the lifespan and share nurturing ways to support youth and adults.

As we thoughtfully expand our services, these presentations also help us connect with individuals who are inspired to volunteer and co-create future peer support groups.

We facilitated Grief 101 Workshops for 68 students and 130 adults, reaching:

- Staff and teens at the new Santa Fe Teen Center
- Staff at Las Cumbres' Santuario Del Corazón program
- Caregivers in Las Cumbres' Grandparents Raising Grandchildren program in Santa Fe & Española
- CONNECT case navigators throughout the City and County
- Students and staff at the Santa Fe Indian School
- Students, staff and caregivers at McCurdy Charter School
- Volunteer advocates for foster youth at CASA First

We can be flexible to adapt to the different needs of grieving families because of the generosity of our donors, volunteers, and community partners.

Your support allows us to provide free, bilingual, accessible grief support to those who need it most.

From all of us at Gerard's House—THANK YOU!
When we make space for grief there is more space for
all of us to heal together.



Gerard's House
...for grieving children