



**2023 Annual Report of  
The Kentucky Center for  
Grieving Children and Families**

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



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# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

In 2023 we completed a two-year proof-of-concept pilot for school-based grief support groups and education, done in partnership with Fayette County Public Schools through state GEER grant funding. Between the launch of the pilot in fall 2021 and its completion, the KCGCF served more than 275 students in facilitated peer support groups. Student depression, anxiety, and stress were reduced by an average of 15-20% for each of the programs. This data showed us that school-based grief support makes a real difference in the wellbeing of students with loss.

We are grateful to be engaged in this work, and there is still much to be done. The most recent data indicates that 1 in 9 Kentucky children will lose a parent or sibling before the age of 18. Fully 25% of Kentucky's grieving children have experienced the death of a parent by overdose. Grief support programming, education, and trainings will be necessary to help Kentucky's children and teens find healthier ways to cope with the stress, anxiety, and sadness of loss.

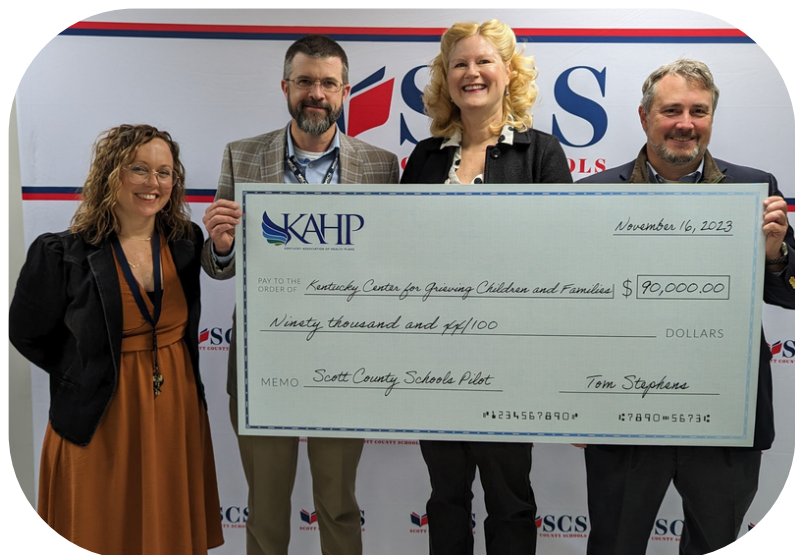
Through trainings, KCGCF staff can help equip those who work with children and adolescents with knowledge that will help them create more grief-supportive environments in their own spaces. In 2023, the KCGCF has

spoken to and trained more than 1575 individuals, including staff, case managers, caregivers, and volunteers from social service agencies, schools and educational cooperatives, government offices and departments, court-related programs, and foster care programs.

Based on the positive outcomes of the initial pilot, we are honored that this work was recognized as a needed service component for students and educators. We are also thrilled to announce that new funding for continuation and expansion of our school-based programs was awarded in fall 2023 for a new set of programs that will operate during 2024 and 2025. Significant funds from the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission will allow us to again serve Fayette County school students with grief support, and we are expanding into Madison County Schools. Generous funding from the New York Life Foundation and the Kentucky Association of Health Plans is also creating a comprehensive two-year expansion and service pilot for Scott County Schools.

We believe that grief is a natural response to loss. As an organization, we are dedicated to creating the knowledge, support, and conditions for each child with loss to have the opportunity to grieve and grow. We are heartened to see this work expanding, and we are grateful for the schools, professionals, and families who entrust us to help and care for the grieving children of our great Commonwealth.

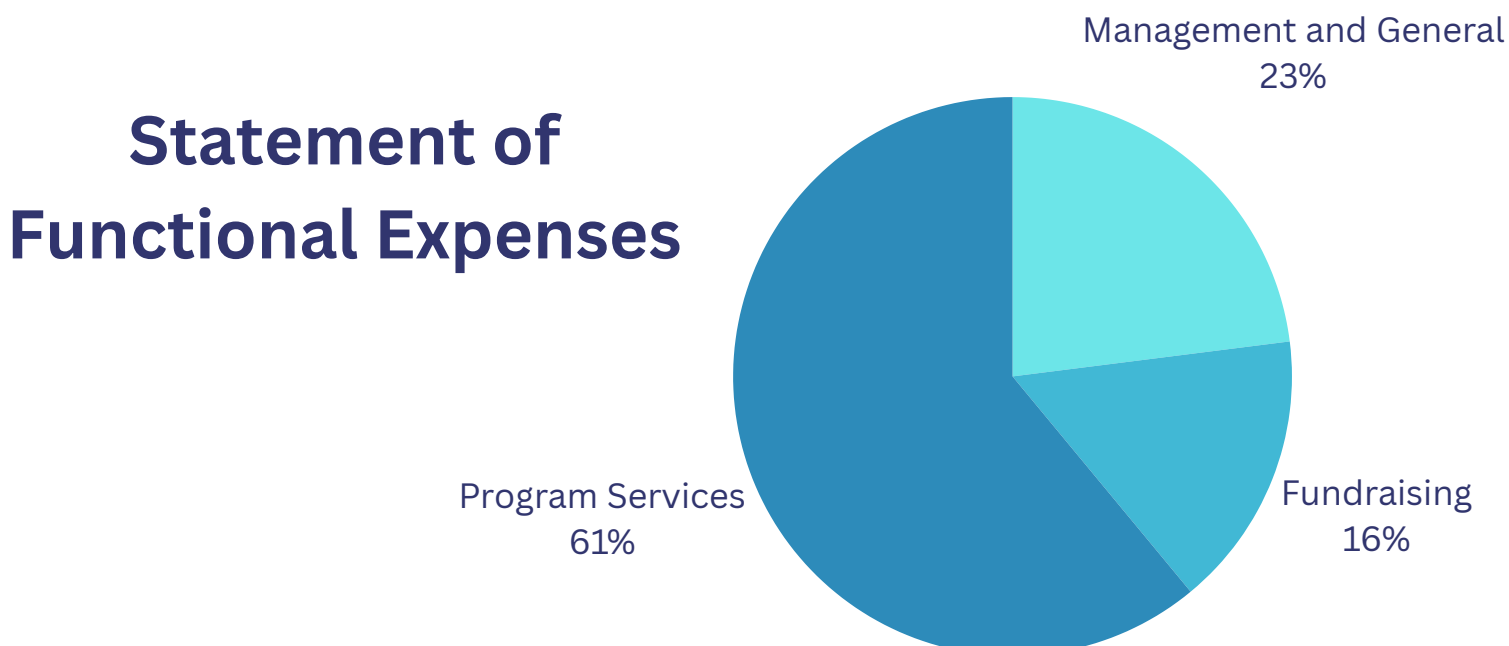
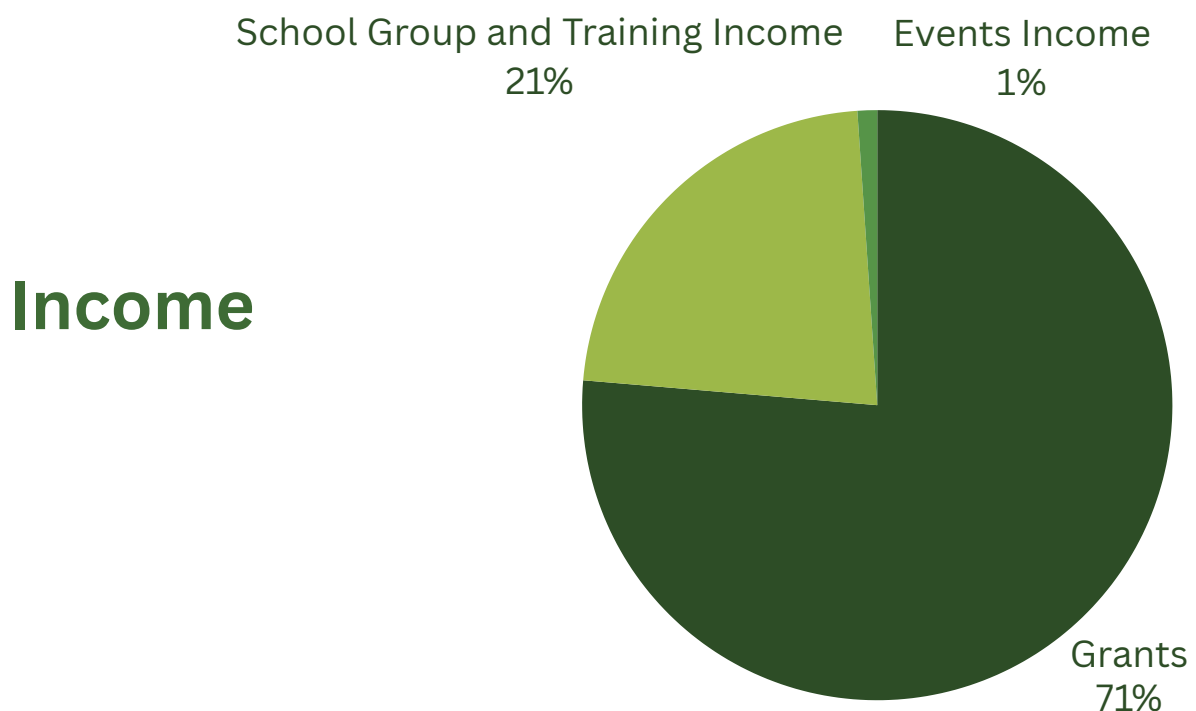
**Leila Salisbury, Executive Director  
KCGCF**



# FINANCIAL REPORTS & CHARTS

In 2023 the organization saw an increase in operating reserves, a better than budgeted pool of grant funds, and an increase in individual donations. The KCGCF is seeking to further diversify revenue streams as it connects with new service partners.

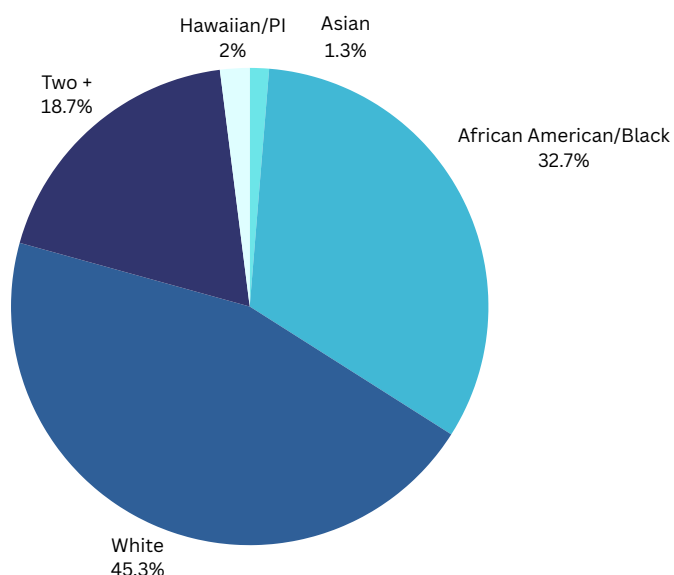
## 2023 Statement of Activities



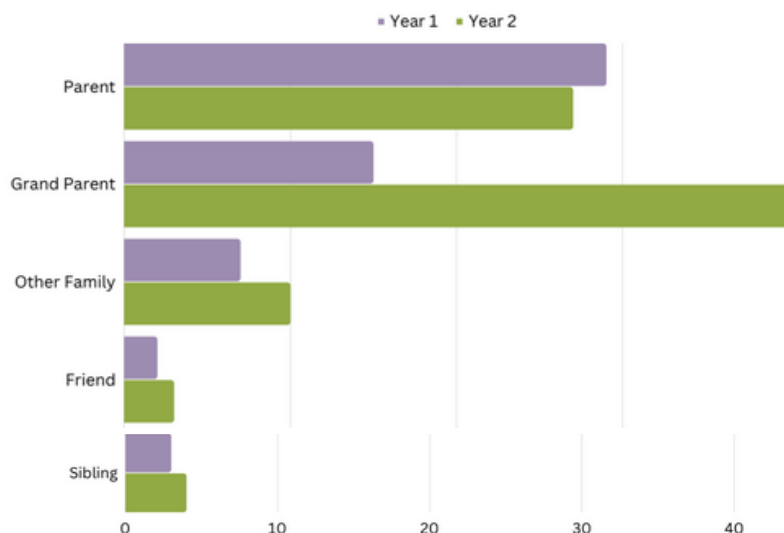
# WHO WE SERVED

These charts offer a snapshot of the students who participated in our groups during the 2021-2023 FCPS school-based pilot program, where more than 275 students received services. The students served had experienced many different types of loss, ranging from health issues to overdose and homicide.

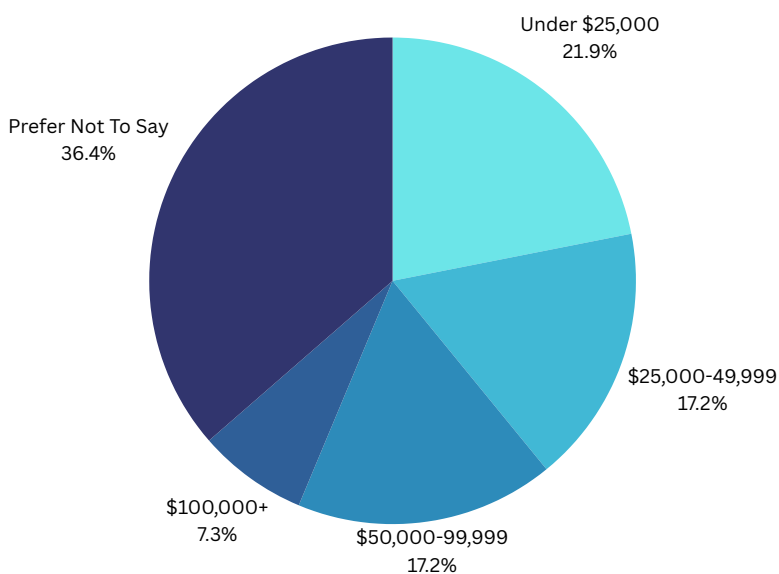
## Race



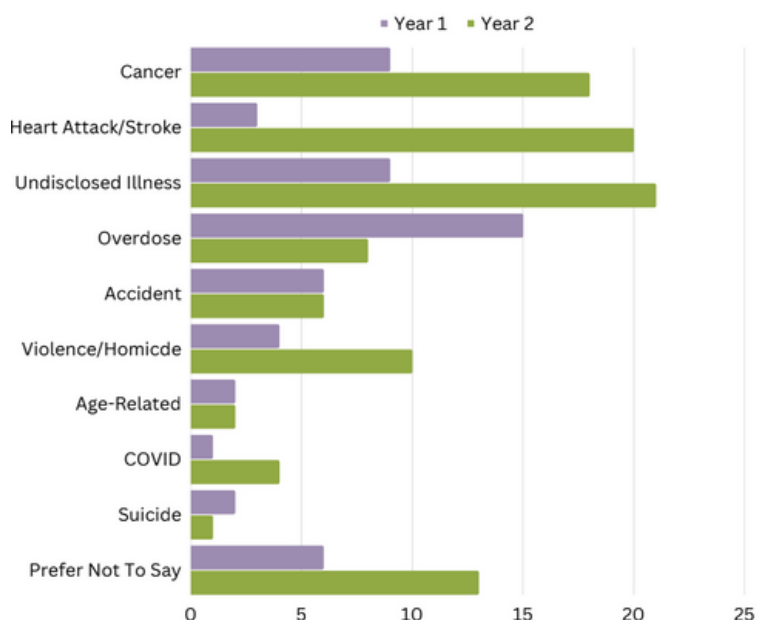
## Who Died



## Income



## Cause of Death



# GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIPS

In 2023, we were delighted to work with ONE Lexington, community centers part of Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Bluegrass, and the Lexington Public Library to create community-based experiences in new spaces. The KCGCF is always looking for meaningful partnerships to help expand our reach.

The KCGCF is also thankful for Tates Creek Christian Church, which generously donates space to the KCGCF for its community group evening programming. We are grateful for their ongoing hospitality and the supportive environment they help us create for the families we serve.

Our community programs received new, significant support this year from the United Way of the Bluegrass. We are thrilled to now be a partner agency! The Junior League of Lexington also supported the KCGCF through a grant of \$2500 to support community-based programs. These organizations help us bring fun and togetherness to our Thursday night support groups.

We are also so glad for the support and partnership of the UK chapter of Kappa Kappa Gamma, who have helped serve dinner at Family Fun Nights at our local schools, helped pack and prepare school group supplies, and supported us financially.



# OUR PEOPLE



People are at the loving heart of what we do at the KCGCF. Our Clinical Program Manager, Emily Johnson Rommelman, LMFT, oversees our school and community children's programming, as well as the collection and reporting of our clinical impact data and assessments. Johnson is a clinician who is also completing a PhD in Family Sciences at the University of Kentucky.

Our school group facilitators are an incredible group of individuals with both clinical and school-based experience. These caring men and women conduct the weekly sessions of our school-based grief support groups, creating supportive listening spaces for grieving children in K-12 settings. We love how they bring their own unique insights, ideas, and experiences to this work as they help students process and problem solve.

They are some of the greatest advocates and allies we have in this work, and we could not serve as many schools as we do without them.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our community-based work with children and their caregivers. Our trained volunteers facilitate our groups for children and teens, listening with empathy and playing alongside them. We have also had several volunteers from UK's Child Life program, and these students' specialized knowledge and expertise have made them a valuable addition to our community groups.



GRIEF IS A PROCESS.

# SUPPORT

The work of the KCGCF cannot be billed as therapy, and it is important to us that our groups and programs are free of charge to all children and families. Our operating funds come from grants, contract work, and individual donations. People are at the heart of what we do, and in support of our people and operations, the KCGCF accepts gifts of cash, as well as stocks/equities and planned gifts. We are also happy to work with individuals wishing to include the KCGCF in their estate plans. We maintain a KCGCF Wish List on Amazon's registry page for donations of program supplies, and we always welcome in-kind donations.

Please consider volunteering time with us, either directly with children or in support of our outreach, fundraising, and social media work.

Most of all, please help us spread the word about our free services. There are still many people who do not know that these programs are now available for our children and their families.





# STAFF AND BOARD

## 2023 KCGCF Board of Directors

Katherine Adams, Retired Attorney

Ryan Adams, CPA, Baldwin CPAs (Board Treasurer)

Dr. Nicole Breazeale, Prof. of Community Leadership Development, UK

Lauren Broadbent, LPCA, Safe Harbor Counseling

Ryan Butler, New York Life Agent

Derek Humfleet, Attorney, McClelland and Associates

Dr. Margaret McGladrey, Department of Public Health, UK

Monica Mobley, Retired School Counselor

Jessica Mohler, Kentucky Pharmacists Association (Board President)

Elizabeth Owens, Retired School Counselor, First Lady of Shiloh Baptist Church

Dr. Lindsay Ragsdale, CMO UK Children's Hospital

Richard Royster, LPCA, Counseling Associates of Kentucky

Kathyn Warnecke Ryan, Retired Attorney

**Leila Salisbury**  
**Executive Director**



**Emily Johnson, LMFT**  
**Clinical Program Manager**

