

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2023

annual REPORT



www.blountkids.org | 865.981.2000

A LETTER FROM OUR

Chief Executive Officer

December 31, 2023

It is hard to believe that our 20th year is in the books; 20 years of providing hope and healing to children and families in our community and 20 years of our amazing community generously ensuring that these services not only exist but are the best they can be. We are so grateful to each person who has invested in us these past two decades, from that original task force that built our CAC from just a dream, to the board and staff that work diligently each year to ensure we meet the goals and objectives that we set for ourselves.

One of the joys of preparing an annual report is that it gives the opportunity to look back over the many tasks that have been completed. I hope as you read through all we have accomplished that you feel truly connected to our mission and can see how each dollar is making a meaningful difference in the lives of the children of our community. Each child that comes through our doors can begin his or her journey of healing.

Thank you for coming along on this journey with them.



With gratitude,

Tabitha Damron, LCSW

Tabitha Damron, LCSW
New Hope CEO



This year's report is in honor of Chuck Alexander.

New Hope would not be where it is today without Chuck, Donna, and their family. Chuck was an amazing friend, supporter, and advisor. He is forever missed.



Our Mission

TO RESTORE HOPE TO ABUSED OR TRAUMATIZED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

VISION

All children are free from abuse and trauma

VALUES | Our work is guided by:

- Safety, protection, and well-being of all children
- Integrity, transparency, and excellence
- Diversity, inclusiveness, and equality
- Community partnerships and accountability to the community we serve
- Consistent pursuit of professional growth by all staff members

PRIORITIES

1. To provide an accredited child-friendly place for forensic interviews, medical exams, advocacy, and counseling services
2. To continue to develop and strengthen the human capacity to fulfill our mission and goals
3. Create and maintain a sustainable financial model that allows for growth, top tier services, a healing environment, and competitive compensation
4. To educate Blount County and increase awareness within our community of the goals, mission, and successes of New Hope

This Year

AT A GLANCE



2023 INCOME: \$1,030,381

765

CHILDREN
SERVED

\$1,346

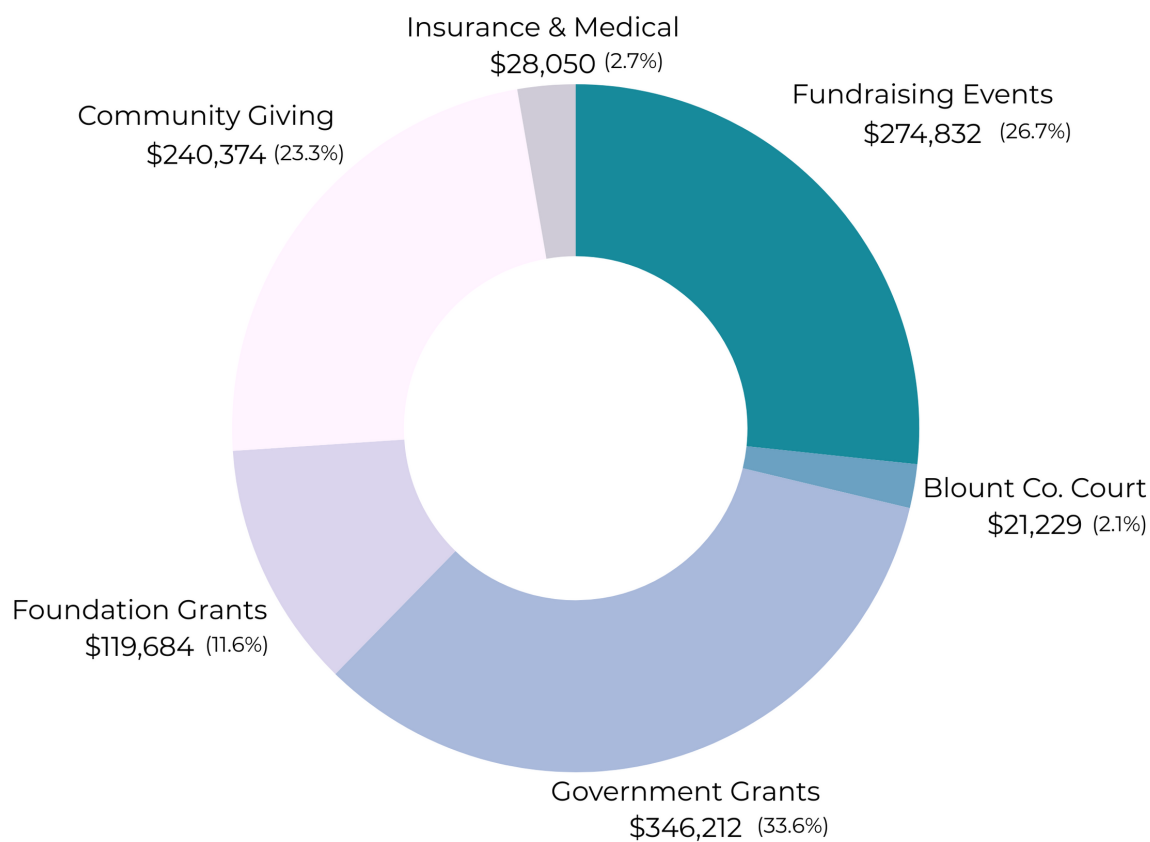
COST PER CHILD

180+

TOUR
ATTENDEES

975

VOLUNTEER
HOURS



PRIORITY #1

To provide an accredited, child-friendly place for forensic interviews, medical exams, advocacy, and counseling services.

Rating based on actual outcomes: **MEETS**

2023 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Begin at least one additional group for parents to allow for more accessibility
 - We completed two successful Parent Support and Education Groups in the 2023 calendar year, thanks to a grant received from First Horizon.
 - The morning group started in fall 2022 with six parents in attendance and ended in fall 2023 with five in attendance.
 - The evening group started with 13 parents in attendance and ended with nine parents in attendance.
 - In October, we started our third group of the year. It took place during lunch, and we had five parents participate in the group.
- Build relationships with community partners that could provide onsite childcare for children while parents participate in groups
 - We identified three consistent volunteers to provide childcare for the evening group. This allowed the children to have fun activities while their parents participated in the group. It also relieved the stress of parents having to find childcare in order to attend.
- Meet with CPIT Management team to discuss outcomes for measurement
 - Last year, we began to look at how we could better quantify the important work we do. Our CPIT Management Team met in February 2023 to discuss how best to measure success. We decided to look at data across several markers, including the following numbers:
 - Forensic interviews completed
 - Forensic interviews with disclosures
 - Substantiated
 - Referred for prosecution
 - Successfully prosecuted
 - Received needed resources
 - Juvenile Court involvement
 - Our CPIT Coordinator has been working this year to create a system to best track this data within our current database.



Top: Check presentation from First Horizon

Bottom: Team at Every Day Heroes Conference

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PRIORITY #1 *continued...*

- Schedule Zero Abuse Project to conduct a team training
 - *Zero Abuse Project did not have funding to offer team trainings this year. However, our team attended Everyday Heroes United together again in September, with 22 total participants across all disciplines.*
 - *We implemented five Lunch and Learn sessions this year, based on feedback from the team regarding the information they would like to receive. Topics included: Common Myths about Sexual Abuse Exams, Corroborative Evidence, Divisions of DCS and their Roles, Juvenile Court Overview, and Polygraphs.*
- Obtain training on new requirements for standards for all programs, begin to assess changes needed, and adjust policies and procedures for each program area
 - *All our programs have reviewed the 2023 revised standards for the National Children's Alliance. All departments have reported being on track with the current standards, having updated policies, and having no concerns with implementing the standards.*

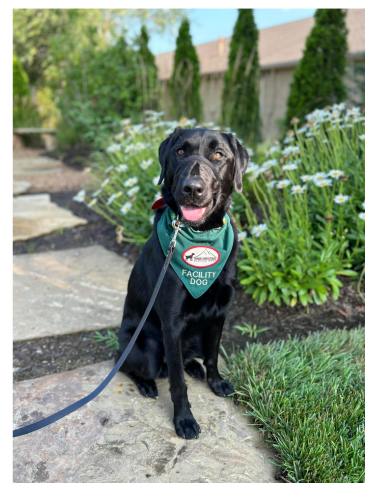
PRIORITY #2

To continue to develop and strengthen the human capacity to fulfill our mission and goals.

Rating based on actual outcomes: **EXCEEDS**

Actual Outcomes as of December 31, 2023:

- Identify major supporters that have not served on the Board of Directors and invite them to tour
 - *At the beginning of the year, the Governance committee reviewed a list of major supporters that have not served on the board. They identified specific people and agencies to target for the year. Although none signed up for a regularly scheduled tour, we did have several attend our Donor Reception in September.*
- Create a written process / policy for board and committee nominations
 - *The Governance committee created a written policy and process for board and committee nominations. The policy was adopted on October 18, 2023.*
- Create operations manuals for every position at New Hope
 - *All staff have been working on operations manuals for their positions. These are to be reviewed with their supervisors at the end of the year to determine if additional information is needed before finalizing.*
- Cross-train all advocates and forensic interviewers to allow for further business continuity
 - *As of September 2023, all our advocates and forensic interviewers are cross-trained. Celina Sikes was able to attend the First Witness ChildFirst Forensic Interview Training in Minnesota from September 11-15.*
- Identify a first-year master's student to assist with the Advocacy Program
 - *We were able to identify a first-year master's Student from the University of Tennessee to assist with our Advocacy Program. She has been shadowing both advocates in their roles. This allows the intern to gain additional experience and is giving our advocates more time for key aspects of their roles.*
- Research grants that can assist with capacity building for our advocacy/forensic interview program
 - *We were not able to identify any capacity-building grants for this year to add an additional advocate. However, we were able to fill the gap left from our VOCA funding through individual donations and funds received through State appropriations.*
 - *Despite not being able to add a staff "person," we were able to enhance our Advocacy//Forensic Interview programs with the addition of a Facility Dog. This was made possible through grant funding from Ronald McDonald House Charities in Knoxville. Having a facility dog has been a long-time dream for our CAC and we were finally able to make this a reality through a partnership with Smoky Mountain Service Dogs. Our new dog, Peyton,*



Top: Celina Sikes, Child & Family Advocate successfully cross-trained as Forensic Interviewer

Bottom: Facility dog, Peyton

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PRIORITY #2: *continued...*

has become a wonderful addition to our team, providing much needed comfort and support to children during their forensic interviews and while they await court hearings.

This year, we found it harder than ever to fill vacant positions and to maintain therapists due to the opportunities currently available in private practice. Our board felt that it was imperative for us to review our current salaries and benefits to be able to be competitive when hiring and to retain the staff that we invest so much time and money into training. After surveying the staff regarding their priorities, the Finance and Executive Committees reviewed multiple health benefit options and salary surveys and information, both nationally and locally. It was determined that many of our positions were below the median salary range and our benefits lacking. As a result, the board has included in the 2024 budget (a) raising every salary to the median range compared to other Child Advocacy Centers, and (b) increasing the health stipend to make health insurance more affordable.

PRIORITY #3

Create and maintain a sustainable financial model that allows for growth, top tier services, a healing environment, and competitive compensation.

Rating based on actual outcomes: **MEETS / EXCEEDS**

2023 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Identify 2-3 new businesses that have the heart for our mission and the capacity to sponsor and invite them to tour
 - The following businesses were identified and invited to tour with us this year: PrintFX (resulted in a 20% discount on all print services, so we switched providers), Tip Signs (resulted in a \$1,200 yard sign sponsorship), The Local Food Truck Park (resulted in several auction items and offering to partner for a benefit event), Company Distilling, CityFarms, DENSO, and Pellissippi State Community College.
 - Thanks to Mary Rich for engaging PrintFX, Shane Hair for engaging DENSO, and Todd McNitt for engaging the President of Pellissippi State.
- Increase monthly giving to raise an additional \$10,000, with focus on \$20 a week/month for 20 years of service
 - We ran a “20 for 20” campaign in the spring - a challenge to give \$20 per month in honor of the 20 years New Hope has served Blount County. This campaign raised \$22,790.05, including monthly pledges, one-time gifts, and a \$10,000 match from Clayton.
 - Our monthly giving has surpassed expectations, increasing by \$1,161 per month and nearly \$14,000 yearly.
- Research what other CAC's are doing for fundraisers
 - Tabitha Damron attended a statewide Chapter retreat in March. While there, she was able to meet with several different CAC directors to ask about successful events that they are implementing. In addition, she posted a question on the National Children's Alliance listserv to get ideas from CACs across the United States. Some of the ideas received were Botox parties, Purse events, Ask Events with famous speaker, and lawn bowling. In reviewing each of these ideas, we felt that our time and energy would be better spent on actively engaging our major donors and our monthly donor campaign.
- Create access to materials for planned giving that can be shared with local attorneys and funeral homes
 - Ashley Fontenot met with local Attorney Leigh Cowden to discuss planned giving and what her recommendations would be to pursue that. Based on feedback, Ashley created a short introductory video for Leigh to include in her materials she presents to clients as they plan out their giving. This video along with a planned giving pledge form and additional information is now updated on New Hope's website.
 - We plan to continue expanding by bringing materials to more attorneys and funeral homes in 2024.
 - This partnership with Leigh also resulted in New Hope being asked to present during one of the first Smart Women, Smart Business meetings as the benefitting charity. New Hope received \$469 from the speaking engagement.



Pictured: Tour groups

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PRIORITY #3: *continued...*

- Develop a standard donor communications calendar from which to base all communications off of, including but not limited to: donor-specific digital newsletters, personalized spring and fall appeal letters, special Christmas cards, other misc. mailers, birthday recognition, social shout-outs when appropriate, “random” phone call check-ins, possible thank-you video links, etc.
 - *We have been utilizing the 2023 Communications Calendar as both a social media calendar and a donor communications calendar so that all communications are streamlined as Coordinator training is taking place. Once training slows down in 2024, a separate calendar will be utilized for donor communications. This has already been created for 2024.*
- Meet with 3 potential or past donors per quarter
 - *Meeting frequency was not able to be as consistent as planned due to role shifts, continued training needs, and limited introductions.*
- Create a metric for measuring board engagement that includes in-kind donations, monetary gifts & sponsorships, and utilization of circle of influence that allows for better accountability and helps grow revenue
 - *Tabitha and Ashley, with feedback from the Executive Committee worked on a metric regarding board engagement. The plan was to review the metric at the retreat and then implement it throughout the year. However, following the retreat the Executive Committee did not feel that the board was receptive to the idea and decided to not utilize the metric for this year.*

Additionally:

- *The Spring campaign letter was focused on the “20 for 20” challenge mentioned above. We saw \$22,790.05 come in from this letter, including a generous \$10,000 match from Clayton. This campaign was utilized to help recoup the funding loss from our Victims of Crime Act Federal Funding. We learned late last year that we should anticipate a 25% decrease in 2023. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we were able to continue providing all our services at the same level.*
- *The fall campaign letter highlighted the story of Katie Wiggington who spoke at our Donor Reception in September. We are fortunate to have had a \$10,000 match for this campaign, bringing in a total of \$20,349.*
- *Fundraising events have brought in the following:*
 - *Tennessee Winter Beer Fest: \$25,000*
 - *The Young Fables Benefit Concert: \$1,607*
 - *Heroes for Hope 5K: \$21,000*
 - *British Car Club: \$2,500*
 - *Bacon at the Bear: \$38,500*
 - *Black Tie & Blue Jeans: \$129,000 (record breaking event!)*

Pictured at right, from top to bottom: TN Winter Beer Fest check presentation, Heroes for Hope 5K starting line, Chef Michael Sullivan and wife at Bacon at the Bear, Celina Sikes speaking at Black Tie & Blue Jeans, Brian Tuggle remembrance at Black Tie & Blue Jeans



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PRIORITY #3: *continued...*

- We held a donor reception to celebrate our 20 years of service. We had about 40 people attend with food and wine donated by Foothills Wines & Spirits, Amici Maryville, Walnut Kitchen, and Airport Hilton. We loved being able to celebrate the people in our community that make our work possible.
- We held a dedication for the pavilion built with funds donated in honor of Kahren White. We are grateful that her family allowed us to be a part of honoring her. They were also able to see the beautiful art piece commissioned by Donna and Chuck Alexander and Cindy and Rick Shepard. Special thanks to Knight Vision Construction for the building of the pavilion.

Pictured at right, from top to bottom: Tori Thomas at Donor Reception, Lori Barrett, Missy & Bill Pope, Katie Beeler at Donor Reception, mingling at Donor Tree during Donor Reception, Andy White and daughters in front of pavilion honoring Kahren White during Pavilion Dedication, Andy White speaking at Pavilion Dedication



PRIORITY #4

To increase awareness and education within our community of the mission, goals, and successes of New Hope by having a consistent presence in the community.

Rating based on actual outcomes: **MEETS / EXCEEDS**

Actual Outcomes as of December 31, 2023:

- Educate 600 Blount County residents through Stewards of Children
 - We trained 648 adults.
 - Our Prevention Coordinator and 12 facilitators became re-certified in facilitating the new Stewards of Children training. We started using the new training in July.
 - During April, 2,500 pinwheels were distributed throughout Blount County to different schools, colleges, businesses, non-profits, and private homes. The participation was wonderful and helped to create visibility and increased awareness about child abuse prevention.
 - The Young Fables did a benefit concert benefitting New Hope at Bluetick Tavern with close to 80 in attendance. This was sponsored by Jackie S. Mills Homes.
 - We partnered with Capitol Theatre to host Ice Cream for Prevention where children 12 and under received a free cone of ice cream and their parents received information about New Hope and Stewards of Children training opportunities. Helping Mamas also had a booth and gave out free items. We had 100 adults and children in attendance at the event.
 - The Alcoa High School Dome and the Arconic Tower were both lit up blue in honor of Child Abuse Prevention Month during the month of April.
 - Heroes for Hope 5K rounded out Child Abuse Prevention Month.
 - Dr. Jenny O. Smith sponsored a prevention billboard during the month of May.
- Create a plan for our school liaison to work for 2023
 - Originally, we had someone identified to serve as a school liaison, but her position changed and she was unable to fulfill this role. We have identified another person to potentially work with us next year. The role of the liaison would be to work with the Child Abuse Coordinators in the schools and to serve as a facilitator for the Stewards of Children trainings.
- Create an in-person training for abuse coordinators
 - We are working on a PowerPoint presentation to provide an in-person Abuse Coordinator Training. All of our staff have completed their updates, but we are still awaiting needed information from other participating team members.



Pictured at right, from top to bottom: The Young Fables Benefit Concert promotion, The Capitol Theatre hosting Ice Cream for Prevention, Becky Rials at her Stewards of Children facilitators luncheon

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PRIORITY #4: *continued...*

- **Host a legislative day at the CAC**
 - *Due to the busy schedules of our local legislators this year, it was decided that it would be difficult to get participation in a legislative day. However, Congressman Tim Burchett has expressed interest in touring New Hope and was scheduled for a visit in October. Unfortunately, he was called back to Washington DC and is planning to schedule a new time to visit in early 2024.*
- **Board & Staff to meet with local and state legislators to discuss financial needs for New Hope**
 - *New Hope's CEO Tabitha Damron attended Advocacy Days in Nashville in March. She was able to meet with key legislators, including Lt. Governor Randy McNally.*
 - *Although we were unable to find a good date to host a Legislative Day at the CAC, we are continuing to build strong relationships with our local and state representatives on an individual basis.*
- **Increase social following by at least 8%**
 - *Since January (through September):*
 - *Facebook: 5.02% increase*
 - *Instagram: 9.51% increase*
 - *LinkedIn: 23.45% increase*
 - *We are averaging a 12.66% increase across all social platforms, 4.66% ahead of the increase we had hoped for.*
 - *Looking toward 2024, we are aiming for an overall 10% increase from January to December 2024.*
- **Conduct a focus group with children / teens / young adults**
 - *New Hope was represented at the Maryville College Nonprofit Fair earlier in 2023 and a small student panel was formed from a group of interested students. The students were engaged via an on-campus brainstorming meeting.*

Additionally:

- *More than 180 people have attended a tour this year.*

Digital Media



SOCIAL MEDIA

We have seen an average of 12.66% increase across all social platforms this year:

- Our Facebook following has increased by 5.02%
- Our Instagram following has increased by 9.51%
- Our LinkedIn audience has increased by 23.45%

3,179

FACEBOOK
FOLLOWERS

185

LINKEDIN
FOLLOWERS

1,068

INSTAGRAM
FOLLOWERS

35

YOUTUBE
SUBSCRIBERS

1,906

EMAIL
SUBSCRIBERS



A SPECIAL 'THANK YOU' TO OUR

Monthly Partners

Scarlet Jones
Niki & Chad Schrock
Teresa Tate
Vanessa & Kevin Painter
Mary Sutherland
Chris Houtchens
Jackie Beckner
Susan McElrafth
Bethany Pope

Allison Falin
Tabitha & Steve Damron
Linda Webb
Jerry Heiny
John Stuart
Kim Emery
Thomas Small
Monet & Scott Maddux

NEW PARTNERS AS OF 2024:

Carol Bristow
Danielle Reggio
Ashley Lowe
Patti Clevenger
Pete Carter
Kristina Creekmore
Alice & Phillip LaFoy
Rhonda & Gary Stinnett
Donna Alexander
Becky & Tim Rials
Mark Russell
Karen & Denny Crabtree
Alisa Mason & Allen Rathbone
Jennifer Roberts

Betsy & Bill Smith
Ned Willard
Carol & Charles Woodward
Alma Straney
Lisa & Oliver Thomas
Angel Hudson
RIO Revolution Church
Holly Smith
Connie Bell
Stacey Rodriguez
Jane Zeiger
Alan Smuckler
Kimberly Mizysak
Alexandria Jones