

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2024

annual
REPORT



www.blountkids.org | 865.981.2000

A LETTER FROM OUR

Chief Executive Officer

December 31, 2024

What a year 2024 has been! As an organization, we saw lots of change during a 12-month span. We were blessed to have several babies born into our New Hope family, we added some amazingly talented and dedicated people to our team, we implemented a new Fundraising Committee, the first annual Feast for Hope event was launched, and more.

Although there have been many changes at New Hope over the year, the core of who we are and what we do remains unchanged. We continue working toward restoring hope to abused or traumatized children and their families in Blount County. A total of 677 children were served through our agency this year, along with their non-offending families. Support groups were offered to caregivers, our therapy department's hours were extended to accommodate working parents and school-aged children, prosecution rates are up, and our prevention program continues to thrive.

With the help of our community and various strategic partners, we have been fortunate to accomplish much this year, and I am excited to share more about that with you in the following pages of this report. Our annual report is based on the objectives outlined in our strategic plan and has been compiled largely by New Hope's leadership team based on the progress made within each of their programs. You will find the objectives listed with the associated outcome(s) directly below each one.

As we launch into a new year, our plan will shift a bit to focus on some larger strategic goals. More to come on that, but for now, please review this report for the year and know that we are ever grateful for the support shown by those who hold our mission close to their hearts. A nonprofit is, as they say, only as strong as the community that supports it.

On a quick personal note, I want to express my extreme gratitude for the opportunity to lead this great organization. I do not take it lightly and I will continue to do everything in my power (along with that of our wonderful team and board) to continue building upon the foundation laid by both Trudy Hughes and Tabitha Damron before me.

I look forward to a brand new year serving and supporting the children who need us.



Gratefully,

Ashley Fontenot

New Hope CEO



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

This Year

AT A GLANCE



2024 BUDGET: \$1,128,810

677

CHILDREN SERVED

356

FORENSIC INTERVIEWS

448

CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH ADVOCACY

56

PATHLIGHTERS

\$1,667

COST PER CHILD

13

MEDICAL EXAMS

1,276

ADVOCACY SERVICES

226

TOUR ATTENDEES

135

CHILDREN SEEN IN THERAPY

2,425

THERAPY SESSIONS

26

THERAPY GRADUATIONS

567

ADULTS TRAINED IN STEWARDS

PRIORITY #1

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

2024 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Begin offering multiple options for parent support groups to allow for more accessibility.
 - We ended our last 13-week parent group in May, taking feedback and improving the group structure. In the fall, we launched our new series of parent group sessions and learned it is difficult for families to commit to the 13-week curriculum of the previous structure. Due to that learning, we pivoted to a monthly parent group offered twice per month on the same topic. Caregivers can choose to attend the first Tuesday of the month at 11am or the first Thursday of the month at 5pm. We are offering the group to both our forensic interview and therapy families and offer sitter services during both sessions, as well as refreshments. We have also utilized an in-person interpreter for our Thursday evening group to accommodate an ESL parent.
- Continue to build relationships with community partners that could provide onsite childcare for children while parents participate in groups.
 - We continue to have relationships with The University of Tennessee and Maryville College to cultivate volunteers and interns who are able to watch children during caregiver group sessions. Help has also been requested through our monthly digital newsletter and our feedback forms, and we received a healthy response from those efforts. These volunteers have helped during our extended therapy hours trial period and some have opted to continue post-trial period.
- Meet with CPIT Management team to discuss measurements and evaluation of success.
 - We met with our CPIT Management Team at the end of 2023. During this meeting, we discussed ideas around what truly measures success in all our disciplines. From there, our Director of Forensic Interview Services created a report that outlines detailed information on our cases and tells us:
 - How many forensic interviews were completed
 - Of those completed, how many had disclosures?
 - How many of those cases went to CPIT?
 - How many were substantiated?
 - How many cases included Juvenile Court involvement when needed?
 - How many were successfully prosecuted?
 - How many cases received needed resources from New Hope?
 - This then gives us a quantifiable number that we can look at as we gauge overall success.
- Meet with CPIT Management team to discuss measurements and evaluation of success.
 - Attended Everyday Heroes as a team in September.
 - Hosted bi-monthly Lunch and Learn sessions post-CPIT with a variety of speakers covering several multidisciplinary team topics.

Other notable outcomes under the “Operations” umbrella this year:

- We had one completely empty office and one mostly-empty office during the week, so we were able to reallocate office spaces to allow the two detectives that are housed with us to have separate spaces, allowing for more productivity and a better working environment. This also allows our Prevention Coordinator to be in the same hallway as Marketing, making for more efficient communication.
- Simmons Bank graciously awarded us with the Make a Difference grant, allowing us to erect a privacy fence around our entire therapy garden. This has been the most notable facility update for the year, allowing for total privacy, safety, and peace of mind.



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PRIORITY #1 continued...

- Wade Richardson, Chester Richardson, and Anderson Lumber graciously donated time, talent, and product to erect a beautiful swingset in our therapy garden to enhance our outdoor SMART program.
- Implemented the GroupMe platform as an easy communication method for both staff and board, creating better boundaries for work / home and ensuring no one gets left out of communications. This platform was also successfully utilized for team communication at Everyday Heroes conference.
- Implemented a tracking spreadsheet for all leadership to access monthly to input numbers, success stories, and client / caregiver feedback. Leadership is continuing to work with NCA (National Children's Alliance) to make regular reports more realistic and accurate.
- Implemented a quarterly impact report for Monthly Partners and significant contributors outlining our numbers and successes for a snapshot of what they have supported that quarter.
- CPIT leadership continues to review CPIT protocol at the end of every year and update appropriately.
- First Horizon graciously awarded us with a grant this year which allowed our therapy team to receive ongoing training. Our therapists traveled to Nashville in August to be trained in Trauma Play and completed SMART training in October. Both of these modalities are evidence-informed and complement our evidence-based modalities of TF-CBT and EMDR.
- Ronald McDonald House graciously awarded us a \$2,500 grant for our Facility Dog Peyton's expenses through the year.
- Our therapy team expanded their hours to 7:30am - 6pm Monday through Thursday to better accommodate student and working caregiver schedules.
- Since April (now that our therapy team is fully-staffed), our waitlist has not exceeded 15 children at one time, allowing therapy services to start within one month of the referral.
- Last, but certainly not least, we were honored to receive the Community Impact award at Best of Blount in February. What a wonderful community we serve!



PRIORITY #2

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

2024 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Identify major supporters that have not served on the Board of Directors and invite them to tour.
 - *This is an ongoing process and, once identified, these people are being asked to tour and then are documented in our “Future Board Candidates” spreadsheet.*
- Create an ongoing list of prospective board members that we keep engaged as gaps arise.
 - *This is an ongoing process and, once identified, these people are being documented in our “Future Board Candidates” spreadsheet.*
 - *We are in the process of working to ensure board members are selected based on skill, talent, and passion needed to support the long-term goals of New Hope.*
- Facilitate regular meetings between our advocates and the Witness Coordinators at the DA’s office.
 - *We are currently working with the District Attorney General’s office to schedule a court tour and then will be starting conversations around how New Hope Advocates can partner with Witness Coordinators to benefit the families we serve at an even higher level.*
- Identify a first-year master’s student to assist with the Advocacy Program and allow time for advocates to offer court accompaniment.
 - *Through our relationship with the University of Tennessee College of Social Work, we have a first-year master’s student who will be with us for the 2024-2025 academic year. Jennifer Jeter started in September and, as a non-traditional student, she comes with a wealth of experience. Jennifer is currently working with our advocates to learn the role with the hope of helping us build and strengthen our advocacy program in the spring.*
- Research grants that can assist with capacity building for our advocacy/forensic interview program.
 - *Fortunately, we have been able to lean on interns, volunteers, and staff to fill this gap in the short-term, specifically during this season of maternity leave.*
 - *This year, we were able to hire an additional interviewer who has been cross-trained in advocacy. We have also cross-trained all our other forensic team staff so that all four are able to do both interviews and advocacy, allowing for a much more flexible scheduling system. One interviewer is our Director and CPIT Coordinator; the other three now have the title of “Forensic Interviewer & Advocate.”*
 - *With the help of memorial funds that were sent to New Hope in honor of the late Chuck Alexander, we were able to hire a part-time employee to help in the interim while two of our Forensic Interviewer & Advocate positions took maternity leave.*
 - *We are working to refresh and revamp our advocacy / forensic interview program once we are fully staffed next year, potentially reallocating roles as needed and implementing new ideas.*



PRIORITY #3

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

2024 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Forecast 2025/2026 Revenue to identify funding gaps and areas of focus.
 - We continue to work with the Executive Committee and the Finance Committee to identify opportunities and gaps in the budget. From there, we are working with the Fundraising Committee to implement new and out-of-the-box funding ideas, along with tried and true efforts like campaigns, grants, and dine out days.
 - Adjustments and pivots are being made as needed / necessary.
- Grow 5 additional major givers by December 31st by identifying mid-range givers that have the capacity to increase their giving to at least \$2,500 per year and totaling at least \$25,000.
 - We have increased by at least three new major donors this year outside of fundraising events. Within fundraising events, we have been able to build relationships with even more people and businesses who are passionate about our mission and who we hope to continue partnering with in future years.
 - Due to several transitions this year, we have had to put our focus mainly on training, transitioning roles, implementing a new Fundraising Committee to help with capacity, and increasing community business involvement.
 - We have worked to increase event sponsorship levels in 2025 to help with this goal and are excited to launch a new Restoring Hope Campaign spearheaded by our Fundraising Committee to bring in brand new donors.
- Identify 2-3 new businesses that have the heart for our mission and the capacity to sponsor and invite them to tour.
 - We have been thrilled to build relationships with the following businesses who support our mission: Barndo Co, Hickory Construction, Inc., and Covenant Health.
- Increase monthly giving to raise an additional \$12,000.
 - This year, we have increased our monthly giving by \$4,652 yearly. Although we did not hit our \$12,000 goal, we have added a new Marketing & Events Director to our team, Anna Ferrell, who is making this her focus in 2025.
 - This year, Anna has cleaned up our monthly donor system, created a specific branding for monthly partners (Pathlighters), and has implemented a brand new platform for monthly giving.
 - Next year, our goal is to grow monthly recurring giving through our new Restoring Hope Campaign. We also plan to utilize 'Pathlighter' (formerly 'Monthly Partner') benefits on social media and through email marketing.
- Distribute materials for planned giving with local attorneys and funeral homes.
 - Our partnership with Leigh Cowden has continued this year. She was gracious enough to donate a Rosewood Virtual Tour to us, distribute brochures at her office, and has a video available about New Hope when people ask where they should put their legacy dollars.
 - Our Advancement Team is continuing to work toward getting similar material out to more attorneys and funeral homes.
- Meet with 3 potential or past donors per quarter.
 - The Advancement Team has met with more than 15 past or potential donors combined this year.



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PRIORITY #3: continued...

- Each board member to identify at least two fundraising engagement opportunities and provide at least 5 new contacts for New Hope by the end of Q1 to assist with fund development.
 - Board members provided contacts that they planned to engage with during the year on pledge sheets during January's retreat.

Other notable outcomes under the "Finance & Development" umbrella this year:

- Implemented 'thank you' videos, with the first one being sent via email to Thompson Charitable Foundation by Anna and Maddie. A QR code was sent in a physical card as well.
- We had a successful migration from Quickbooks Desktop to Quickbooks Online. This platform, combined with our new donor management system Bloomerang, has streamlined receiving donations and ensuring they are all accounted for by also being integrated with Quickbooks Online. This has helped our Marketing & Events Director and our Finance & Administration Director communicate needs such as thanking donors and has made it simpler to see how much has been donated to New Hope in total. Through this process, it has become easier to forecast where we will likely be in the coming year. It has also been an important piece of keeping our Pathlighters (monthly recurring donors) informed on the impact that their donations make.
- The Finance Committee is in the middle of having conversations about what it could look like to move our fiscal year from Jan - Dec to Jul - Jun.
- We have implemented a Fundraising Committee which is focused on "boots on the ground" efforts around organic fundraising. Some examples of their initiatives include: dine out days, corporate grants, and the Restoring Hope campaign.
- Our Advancement Team has worked toward creating new giving structures and processes for acknowledgement, utilizing shared spreadsheets for communication and Bloomerang as our new donor management system and giving platform (formerly used iCheckGateway and Kindful).
 - Our giving acknowledgement process has been updated to be more collaborative (shared tracking spreadsheet with certain acknowledgements based on criteria).
 - Monthly Partners will now be called "Pathlighters."
 - Quarterly impact reports will be sent from the CEO via email to Pathlighters and significant contributors / supporters.
- Black Tie & Blue Jeans raised a record-breaking amount of \$246,000 at this year's event.



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.

2024 Objectives & Outcomes:

- Educate 600 Blount County adults through Stewards of Children.
 - We recently received a newly updated “tipping point” map from the TN CAC Chapter which outlined where every county lands in relation to the 5% tipping point. (When 5% of the total population is aware of a social issue, it starts to affect a change or creates a ripple effect.) Blount County has exceeded its goal by 28%, thanks to our Prevention Coordinator and her volunteer facilitators.
 - In 2024, we trained 567 adults in Stewards of Children. We did not reach the 600 person goal due to no-shows after registration.
- Identify someone to serve as a school liaison.
 - Sharon Earley has been identified as someone who would be an excellent liaison for New Hope in the schools. When approached about facilitating a new child prevention program, she was immediately on board and, after talking with her principal at John Sevier Elementary School, she volunteered to be the one to facilitate the program.
- Determine if schools are interested in training for students on child sexual abuse prevention.
 - John Sevier Elementary School has expressed immediate interest in a child prevention program, so we will be starting with them. Other schools would like to see how the “pilot” at John Sevier goes and then add the program afterward depending on positive feedback.
- Board & Staff to meet with local and state legislators (Brian Ritchey, Jerome Moon, Tim Burchett) to ensure they tour and understand our program needs.
 - Tours have been hosted for Tom Hatcher and Tim Burchett this year.
 - We were glad to engage with Jerome Moon in both Maryville and Nashville this year and look forward to hosting him and his wife for a tour after election season.
- Increase social following by at least 10%.
 - We have exceeded an overall increase of 10% in social media. Facebook has seen a 27.2% increase, Instagram has seen a 18.3% increase, and LinkedIn has seen a 396.2% increase.

Other notable outcomes under the “Awareness & Prevention” umbrella this year:

- Ashley attended Hill Day in Nashville with the CACTN Chapter to advocate for funding.
- We continue to engage legislators on a regular basis by attending legislative briefings, sending invitations to events, hosting tours, visiting Nashville offices, etc.
- One of our long-term volunteers advocated on behalf of New Hope and Stewards of Children at a Blount County Commission meeting earlier this year, explaining what New Hope does, that we offer Stewards of Children, and outlining potential policy changes.
- Ashley, Prevention Coordinator Becky Rials, Child & Family Advocate Maddie Redd, and District Attorney General Ryan Desmond attended Connecting for Children’s Justice Conference in November.

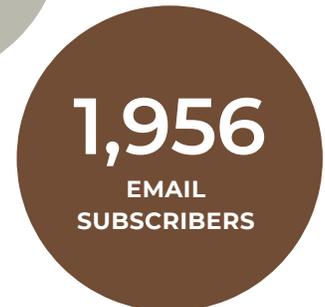




SOCIAL MEDIA

We have seen a significant increase across all social platforms this year:

- Our Facebook following has increased by **27.2%**
- Our Instagram following has increased by **18.3%**
- Our LinkedIn audience has increased by **396.2%**



A SPECIAL 'THANK YOU' TO THOSE WHO
COMMIT TO GIVING EVERY MONTH

Pathfinders

Thank you for lighting the path to hope and healing for so many children.

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
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
Alisa Mason & Allen Rathbone
Karen & Denny Crabtree

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

NEW PARTNERS AS OF 2024:

Melissa LaRue
Eli Lindstrom
Joy Newvine
Richard Gates, Jr.

Maria Johnson
Craig Richardson
Stacy & Patrick Miller
Fred Walker
Geneen Kennedy

Sam Delk
Patricia & Richard Jaloszynski
Jaina & Richard Castro
Summer Dale