



Program Report FY23

July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023

Uplift Center for Grieving Children

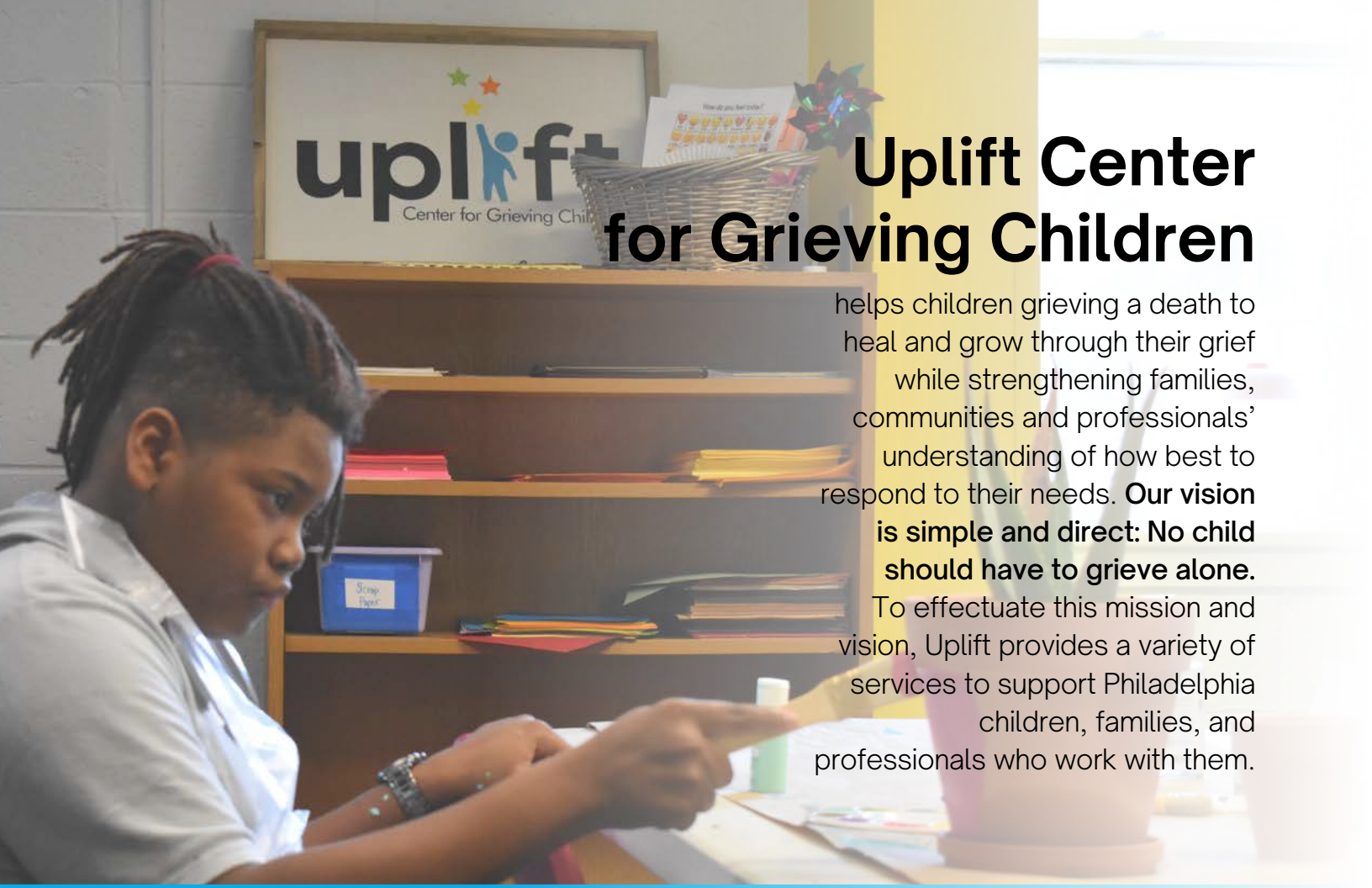
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Uplift Center for Grieving Children

helps children grieving a death to heal and grow through their grief while strengthening families, communities and professionals' understanding of how best to respond to their needs. **Our vision is simple and direct: No child should have to grieve alone.** To effectuate this mission and vision, Uplift provides a variety of services to support Philadelphia children, families, and professionals who work with them.

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Photo: A young grief group participant decorates a terracotta pot planted with aloe vera at Uplift's In-Person Family Night on April 12, 2023.

Letter from Keri Salerno, Executive Director and Dorothy Flynn, Chair, Board of Directors

Dear Uplift Community,

It is with great pride that we share our program report for the 2022-2023 fiscal year (FY23). We could not be prouder of the staff, board of directors, stakeholders, vendors, and others who have helped Uplift achieve the successes detailed inside. We want to share our special thanks to all the individuals, businesses, foundations, and government agencies who supported Uplift's work during FY23, and offer a special thank you to the youth and families who entrust Uplift as a safe place to find community and healing during their grief journeys.

During FY23, Uplift continued to address the extreme need for grief support. When attending an Uplift grief group, participating youth and families shared the immediate effects of losing a significant person. Many also shared how the deaths of others in their communities due to chronic conditions, COVID-19, substance use disorder, suicide, homicide, and other causes affected them over the span of their young lives. These losses compound with trauma for Philadelphia's youth and families caused by racial and social injustice, poverty, climate change, and other barriers, especially as many participants belong to marginalized populations or live at or below the poverty level.

Uplift's clinical team worked tirelessly throughout FY23 to address this compounded trauma by using its in-school, family services, and specialized grief groups, as well as its Philly Hope Line. The administrative team — executive, development, operations, and human resources — and the board of directors supported the clinical team's efforts, physically, emotionally, mentally, and financially. While the team worked to meet the need for free and quality grief services expressed by Philadelphia's youth and families, we still have a waitlist of 67 schools (up to 670 interested youth) on Uplift's waitlist.

FY23 also included significant leadership changes at both the board and staff level. In October 2022, Uplift's Board of Directors elected our Chair Dorothy Flynn, Vice Chair Jamar Johnson-Thompson, and Secretary and Treasurer Bikram Chadha to a three-year term. Uplift's staff is also led by a new executive leadership team: Executive Director Keri Salerno, Clinical Director Crystal Wortham, and Development Director Kevin McGuire, who joined in November 2023. We welcome all the new leaders and thank those who previously served.

Thank you for being part of the Uplift Community. We look forward to continuing to work with you in FY24 and beyond, especially as we draw closer to Uplift's 25th anniversary in January 2025.

Sincerely,



Dorothy Flynn
Chair, Board of Directors



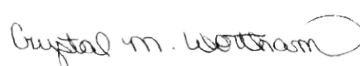
Jamar Johnson-Thompson
Vice Chair



Bikram Chadha
Secretary and Treasurer



Keri Salerno
Executive Director



Crystal Wortham
Clinical Director



Kevin McGuire
Development Director



Top: Uplift clinicians Roberto Mejía, Samantha Anthony, Darcie Rudolf, and Crystal Wortham, plus volunteer Dan Stein, hold aloe plants in pots decorated by youth and caregivers during an In-Person Family Night on April 12, 2023. Aloe plants were selected because of their association with healing.

Bottom left: participating youth and caregivers share completed memory lanterns created during Uplift's In-Person Family Night on February 22 and March 1, 2023.

Bottom right: Uplift Clinician Chabeli Angeline Noval helps a participant with a loom weaving activity at an In-Person Family Night on January 12, 2023.

What part of the group was the most helpful for you?

“The most helpful part for me was being able to share things that I didn’t understand about my grief, and everyone validated that feeling and figured it out together.”

—Adult caregiver



Family Services

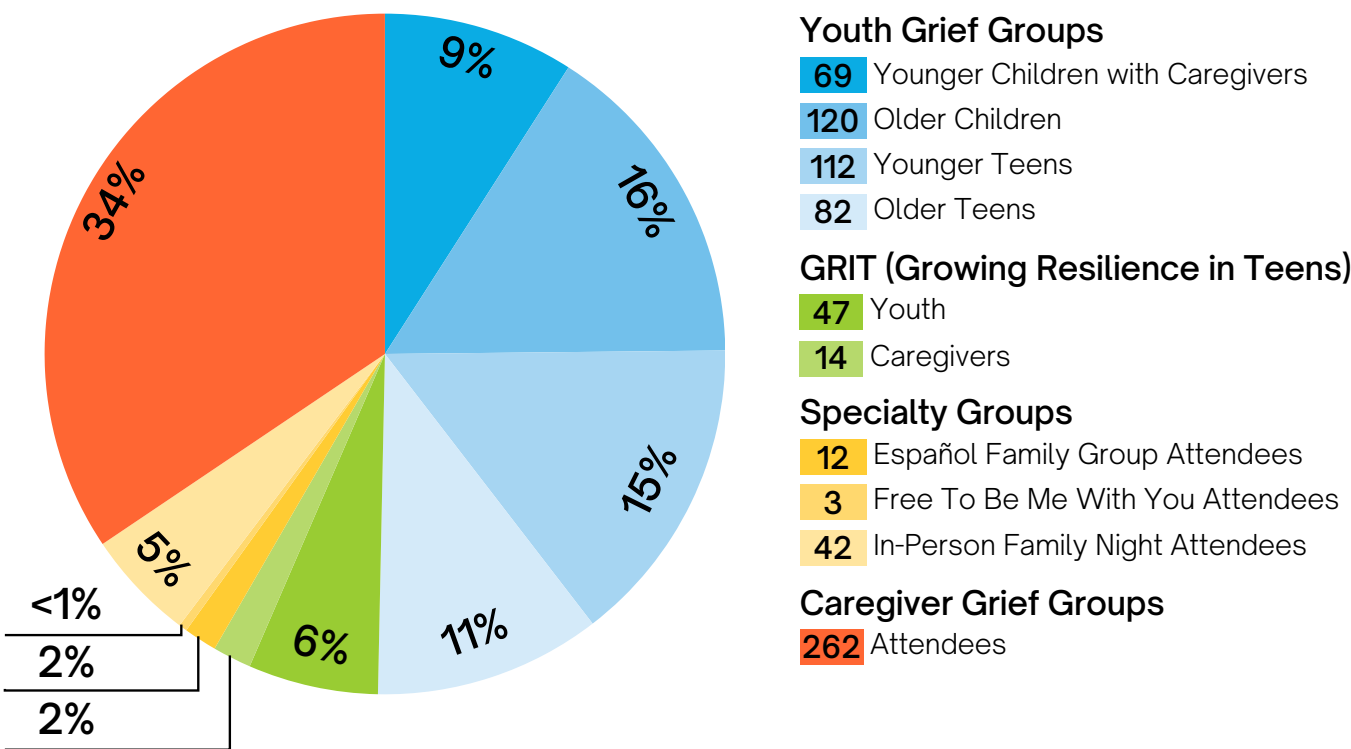
Uplift’s Family Services supports families (youth and their caregivers) who are grieving. From intakes to group work to case management, clinicians work with families in support of their grief journeys.

Grief groups offer families the space and time to give expression to their grief, enabling them to heal. Attendees do therapeutic activities including arts and crafts, music and movement, and practices such as grounding techniques and brain breaks.

443 youth and 328 caregivers attended Family Services grief groups during FY23.

Family Services groups use two models: **peer support**, in which youth attend groups with developmental peers, and **family support**, in which youth attend groups with a caregiver or trusted adult and both share the group activities.

Total Family Services attendees, FY23

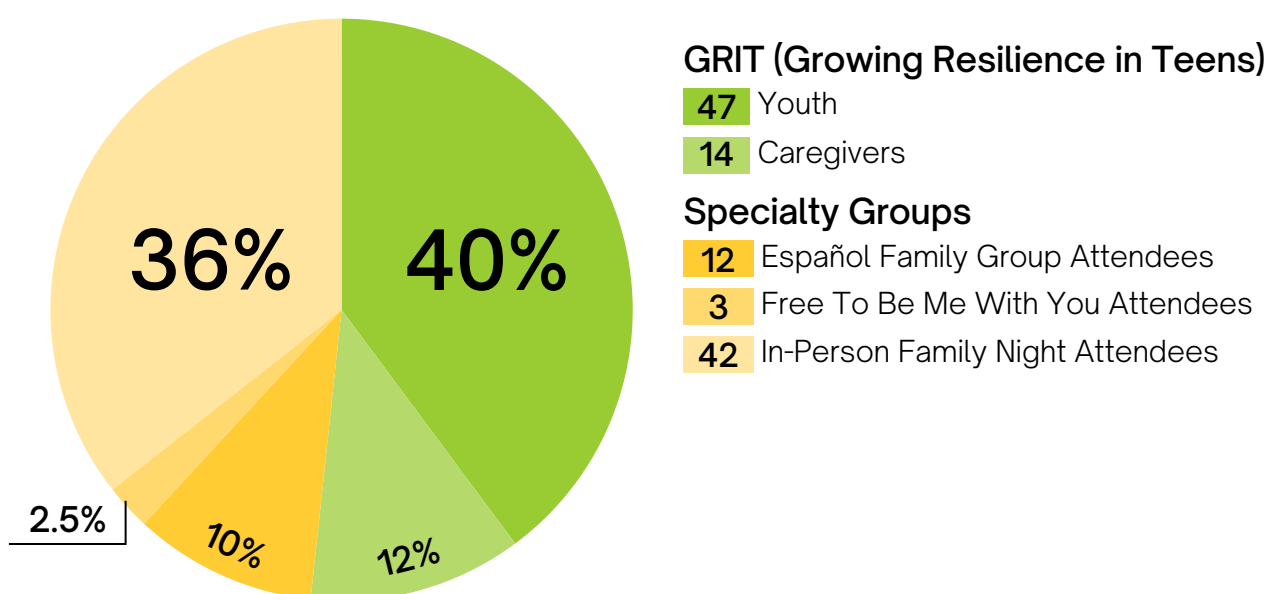


Family Services Specialized Groups

Family Services' offerings include specialty groups for diverse communities:

- **Español Family Grief Groups** are for Spanish-speaking caregivers and their Spanish-speaking children to attend together.
- **Queer & Trans Youth Services (QTYS)** are for teens 14-18 who are grieving a death and also explore the losses associated with being LGBTQIA+.
 - **Free To Be Me With You** groups explore similar themes to QTYS, but are for youth 11-13 who identify as LGBTQIA+ or are questioning their identity. Attendees participate together with a trusted adult.
- **Growing Resilience in Teens (GRIT)** groups are composed of youth 8-18 and their caregivers, who attend separate groups. All attendees have been referred by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. Cycles alternate between grief associated with death and grief associated with ambiguous loss, such as the incarceration of a parent.
- **Resilient Parenting for Bereaved Families** is a ten-week program open to adults who are parenting children whose caregiver or other significant person has died, in which they learn tools and skills for parenting a grieving child. Groups are open to adults who have previously participated in a caregiver group.

Family Services Specialized Groups attendees, FY23



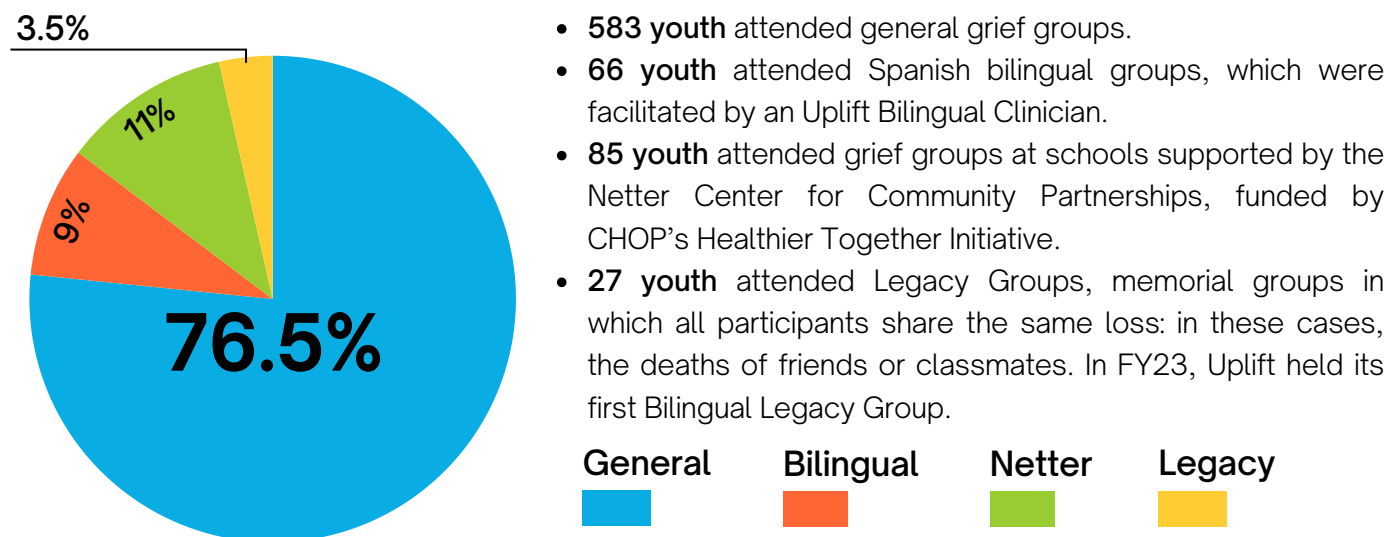
In-School Services

Uplift's In-School Services are therapeutic grief peer support groups for youth in grades K-12. Partners include School District of Philadelphia-operated public schools, as well as charter, private, and religious schools.

All In-School Grief Groups are facilitated by an Uplift Master's degree-level clinician. Grief groups are designed to be **trauma-responsive and healing-centered** and prioritize the agency, voice, and choice of attending youth.

751 youth at 99 schools attended a six-week In-School Grief Group during FY23, totaling **594 group sessions**.

In-School Services group attendees, FY23



40% of youth attending In-School Grief Groups reported that they were grieving **a death by homicide**.

Uplift works with the **Network of Neighbors Trauma Response Network** when a student or staff member dies in a school, often to homicide (gun violence), but also to other causes of death. Uplift's close partnership with the Network allows schools to receive a continuum of support. Following Network supports, Uplift often offers schools a Legacy Group, a six-week therapeutic grief peer support group for the students most significantly impacted by the death.

In-School Services: PJJSC

Uplift partners closely with the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center (PJJSC), the only secure youth detention center in Philadelphia, to provide therapeutic grief peer support groups with justice-involved youth during their stay at PJJSC.

125 youth attended Uplift grief groups held at PJJSC during FY23.

Because PJJSC is a transient setting, it is not feasible for youth to complete a traditional five- or six-week grief group. **Uplift condenses its' in-school grief group curriculum to two 3-hour groups**, so youth have the opportunity to close with the group before they are moved.

In April 2023, Uplift's clinicians presented to the PJJSC Juvenile Probation Officers to foster more partnerships with JPOs and build connections to Uplift grief support services as youth transition back to their homes and communities.

Excerpt from **“Grieving Youth in the Justice System: A Call for Help from the Legal Community,”** an editorial co-written by clinicians Samantha Anthony and Michelle Gonzalez and board members Kristine Derewicz and Brian O. Sumner. Originally published in *The Legal Intelligencer* on November 17, 2022.

“Research confirms that grief impacts the brain in ways that compromise the youth’s ability to make healthy and safe decisions. Grieving youth may engage in risky behaviors which can include drug and alcohol use. They withdraw socially and experience change in activity levels. Their concentration and productivity are affected. They are restless and often don’t sleep well. They often experience symptoms of depression, anxiety, and panic. Fundamentally, their decision-making capacity is affected as a result of grief.”

“Many grieving youth do not have support or resources to understand and manage their emotions, and as a result may engage in behaviors and make choices that lead to engagement with the juvenile justice system. Typical grief responses in youth—risk-taking and compromised cognitive processing primary among them—are exactly the behaviors that underlie many juvenile offenses. Their response to a loss may be the very thing that lands them in the juvenile justice system, perhaps more than once.”



What did you learn during groups about dealing with your grief?

“I learned you can always say pass and they will never force you to do something you don’t want to do.”

—Younger Teens group (6-8th grade)

Top: In-School Services, PJJSC

Masks created by youth during Uplift’s grief groups at the Philadelphia Juvenile Justice Services Center. Youth used masks to represent their outward-facing selves and inner feelings.

Bottom: In-School Services

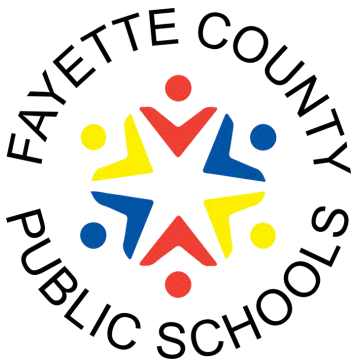
Students create calm-down bottles as part of an in-school grief group at Simon Gratz High School Mastery Charter. Bottles were decorated with markers and filled with glitter, glue, and other objects.



Training Services

Uplift provides training to professionals in and beyond the City of Philadelphia to equip professionals including teachers, counselors, social workers, and therapists, to better understand grief and trauma and to support grieving children.

During FY23, Uplift's clinicians trained **932 professionals** at more than **50 schools, agencies, and workshop settings**.



Between September and November 2022, Uplift's clinical team trained **five social workers and student support faculty** at **Fayette County Public Schools** in Lexington, Kentucky. FCPS, which administers 70 schools serving more than 41,000 youth, purchased Uplift's grief curriculum and faculty received four training sessions on how to implement Uplift's grief peer support model.

FY23 Training Sites



Belmont Charter Network
A FAMILY OF SCHOOLS



Andrew Hamilton School
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA



**Our Mother of Sorrows
St. Ignatius of Loyola
CATHOLIC SCHOOL**
An Independence Mission School



MERCY
CAREER & TECHNICAL
HIGH SCHOOL



ONE BRIGHT RAY
COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL



PAN AMERICAN ACADEMY
CHARTER SCHOOL



**College of
Arts & Sciences**
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



Penn
Social Policy & Practice
UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA



**POTTSTOWN AREA
HEALTH & WELLNESS
FOUNDATION**



**TURNING
POINTS
FOR
CHILDREN**
a PHMC affiliate



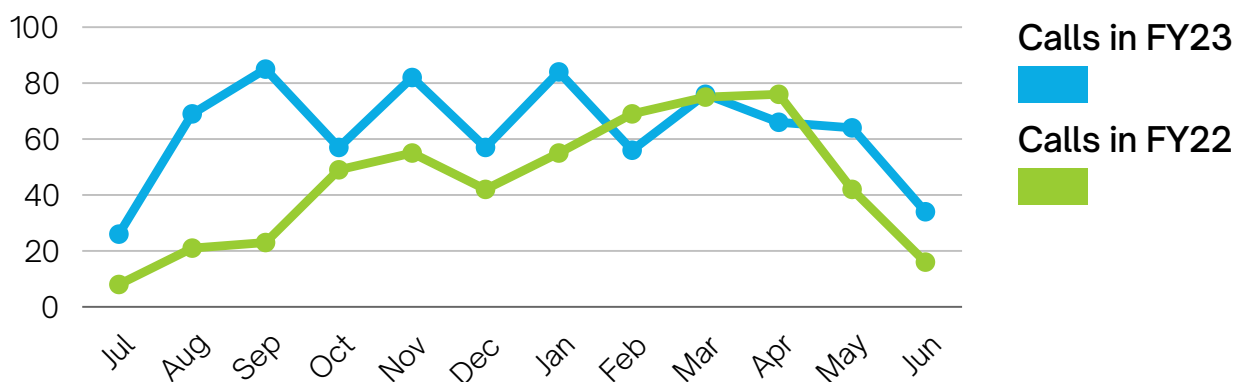
West Philadelphia High School
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA

Philly HopeLine

Uplift's Philly HopeLine (1-833-PHL-HOPE) is a free and confidential helpline that is staffed by Uplift's Master's degree-level clinicians. The Philly HopeLine is open to all youth and caregivers in the Philadelphia region. In addition to interpretation services in more than 100 languages, the Philly HopeLine includes dedicated support hours for callers who are Spanish-speaking or are part of the LGBTQIA+ community which are staffed by clinicians who self-identify as Spanish-speaking or LGBTQIA+.

During FY23, the Philly HopeLine received **756 calls total**, a 42% increase over calls made in FY22 (531 calls).

Number of calls per month, FY23 vs FY22



The rise in calls is due in part to **increasing the capabilities of Uplift's Philly HopeLine**. First launched in 2020 as a way for youth and families to receive remote trauma-informed grief and emotional support at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Philly HopeLine is now a connection point for families to sign up for grief groups and connect with community resources, and for service providers to make referrals.

72% of calls made to Uplift's Philly HopeLine are from callers expressing **interest in joining a grief group**, with the remaining 28% of calls being for program inquiries, emotional support, and referrals to other services.

How Philly HopeLine Works

All callers—youth, caregivers, and service providers—can receive **trauma-informed grief and emotional support** during their call.



Philly
HopeLine

Youth and families can be linked to community resources: clinicians will dial a number and will stay on the line until the caller has a warm hand-off to the next service provider.

Mental health and human services providers can call the Philly HopeLine to make referrals.

Youth and families can sign up for grief groups: Uplift uses a short intake process for anyone interested in enrollment in grief groups.

Youth and families can enroll in grief groups: Enrollment calls can happen within the first call to our Philly HopeLine, or the clinician on call can schedule an appointment with a Family Services clinician. Enrollments explore the impacts of the death on the family, including the youths' understanding of the death and support for the family's caregivers.



Left: Six of Uplift's clinicians attended the 2023 National Alliance on Children's Grief (NACG) Symposium in Pittsburgh, PA from June 17-19. Established in 1996, The NACG Symposium is the longest running and most comprehensive Childhood Bereavement Symposium offered in the United States. The NACG Symposium draws more than 400 children's grief support professionals and volunteers from organizations throughout and outside the United States each year.

From left: Sam Middleton and CJ Roseberry participated in the Symposium poster session, presenting *Grief Interventions for Youth in the LGBTQIA+ Community*. Darcie Rudolf, Lamya Broussard, and Katherine Streit presented *Availability vs. Accessibility: Systemic Barriers to Accessing Grief Support During Unprecedented Times*. Samantha Anthony presented *The Injustice of Grief: An Exploration of Childhood Grief and Juvenile Crime*.

Bottom: Uplift's staff gather for a photo at *An UPLIFTing Evening* on May 4, 2023. As Uplift's largest annual fundraising event, *An UPLIFTing Evening* brings together influential philanthropic donors, industry professionals, and community leaders, united in support of Uplift's mission. The event includes a cocktail hour, a program recognizing Uplift's impact on participating youth and families, raffles, and live and silent auctions.

Top row, from left: Kristan Vaughn, Sherrie Rucker, Lamya Broussard, Tiffana Mclean, Katherine Streit, CJ Roseberry, Crystal Wortham, Katherine DiPierro, Dave Pannepacker, Kevin Peter, and Keri Salerno. Bottom row, from left: Michelle Gonzalez, Samantha Anthony, Nissa Gustafson, and Bethany Wagner.



Uplift Team Directory

Keri Salerno, MGA¹

Executive Director

Crystal Wortham, MSW, LCSW³

Director of Clinical & Education Services

Adriana T. Rivera, MSL²

Director of Operations

Teresa Méndez-Quigley, MSW

*Associate Director of Family Services
& Innovative Practices*

CJ Roseberry, MSW

Family Care Clinical Coordinator

Samantha Anthony, MS, LPC

Senior Uplift Clinician

Michelle Gonzalez, MS

Senior Uplift Clinician

Yaa Allen, MA, E-RYT, SEP

Uplift Clinician

Sherrie Rucker, MSW

Uplift Clinician

Roberto Mejía, MSW⁵ ⁶

Part-Time Bilingual PHL Clinician

Dave Pannepacker⁸

Office Manager

Bethany Wagner²

Grants Writer

Christopher Barrett Politan²

Interim Executive Director

Kevin Peter, M.Ed.²

Director of Development

Katherine Streit, MSW, LCSW, M.S. Ed.

*Associate Director of School Services
& Professional Trainings*

Darcie Rudolf, MA, LPC, NCC

Family Care Access Coordinator

Tiffana Mclean, MSW⁴

Healthy Families Clinical Coordinator

Lamya Broussard, LSW, MSS, MLSP

Senior Uplift Clinician

Sam Middleton, MS

Senior Uplift Clinician

Chabeli Angeline Noval, MSW, LSW⁵

Uplift Clinician

Kristan Vaughn, MHS

Uplift Clinician

Joy Mosley, MSW⁷

Part-Time GRIT Clinician

Dominique Downes, MHRM

Human Resources Manager

Katherine DiPierro

Development & Communications Associate

¹ Hired in March 2023.

² Left Uplift during FY23.

³ Promoted in October 2022.

⁴ Hired in October 2022.

⁵ Received title promotion in FY24.

⁶ Hired in February 2023.

⁷ Left Uplift in FY24.

⁸ Hired in May 2023.



Top: Rajus Korde, Poorva Korde, Board Member Kris Derewicz, Interim Executive Director Christopher Barrett Politan, and Arvind Korde pose during a check presentation at the reception for Uplift’s Golf Outing on September 12, 2022.

Bottom: Eileen Heisman, Uplift Board Chair Dorothy Flynn, Dan Stein, Board Member Kris Derewicz, Executive Director Keri Salerno, and Clinical Director Crystal Wortham pose during An UPLIFTing Evening on May 4, 2023. Heisman, who is the CEO and President of the National Philanthropic Trust, and Stein, an Uplift volunteer since 2017, were selected as the year’s honorees.

The Board of Directors supports the work of Uplift Center for Grieving Children and provides mission-based leadership and strategic governance. While day-to-day operations are led by Uplift’s Executive Director (ED), the Board-ED relationship is a critical partnership.

The Board of Directors serves as trusted advisors to the Executive Director; review outcomes and metrics created by Uplift for measuring its impacts; approves Uplift’s annual budget, audit reports, and material business decisions; represents Uplift to stakeholders and acts as the organization’s ambassadors; assists the Executive Director and board chair in identifying and recruiting other Board Members; serves on committees and task forces; and ensures Uplift’s commitment to a diverse board and staff that reflect the communities that Uplift serves.

Uplift Board of Directors

Board Leadership

Dorothy Flynn, MS¹

Board Chair

Broadridge Corporate Issuer Solutions

Jamar Johnson-Thompson¹

Board Vice-Chair

Avalara

Bikram Chadha, MBA¹

Secretary and Treasurer

PFM Asset Management

Board Members

Janice Block, MSS, EDM, LCSW²

Clinical Social Worker and Therapist

Barbara J. Chance, Ph.D.

CHANCE Management Advisors, Inc.

R. Ryan Conner, MPA

Tactix Real Estate Advisors

Abby DePrimo³

Think Company

Kristine Grady Derewicz, JD

Little Mendelson P.C.

Ashwin Korde⁴

AAJ's Foods

Duane Lacsamana

WSFS Bank

Eryn Santamoor, MPA

Elliott Wilson, MBA, PMP

CDW Healthcare

Board Members Emeritus

Brigitte Addimando, MBA

RavenPoint Consulting

Steven Bohner

AmeriHealth Caritas

Steven Doherty, MBA

CBRE

David Lafferty

Wescott Financial Advisory Group

¹ Elected to Board of Directors leadership, beginning a three-year term in October 2022.

² Left the board in October 2022.

³ Elected to the board in June 2023.

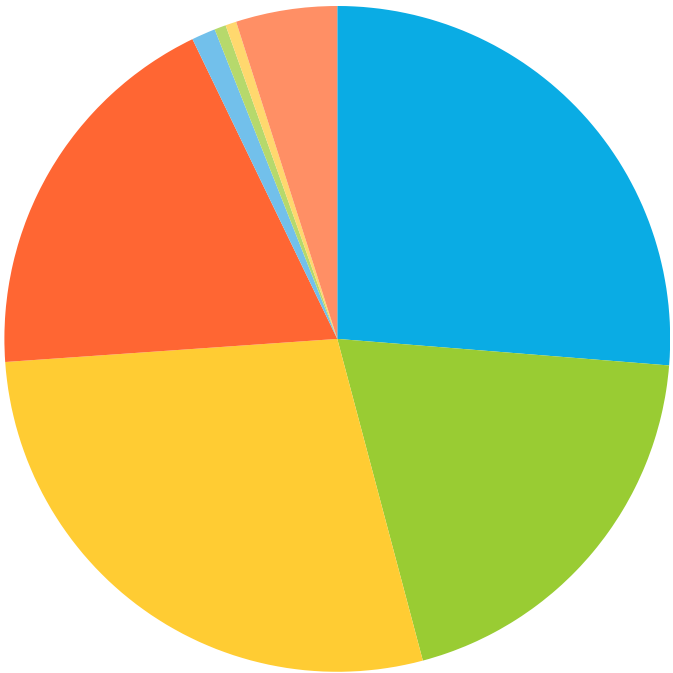
⁴ Elected to the board in February 2023.

FY 2023 Audited Financials

July 01, 2022 – June 30, 2023

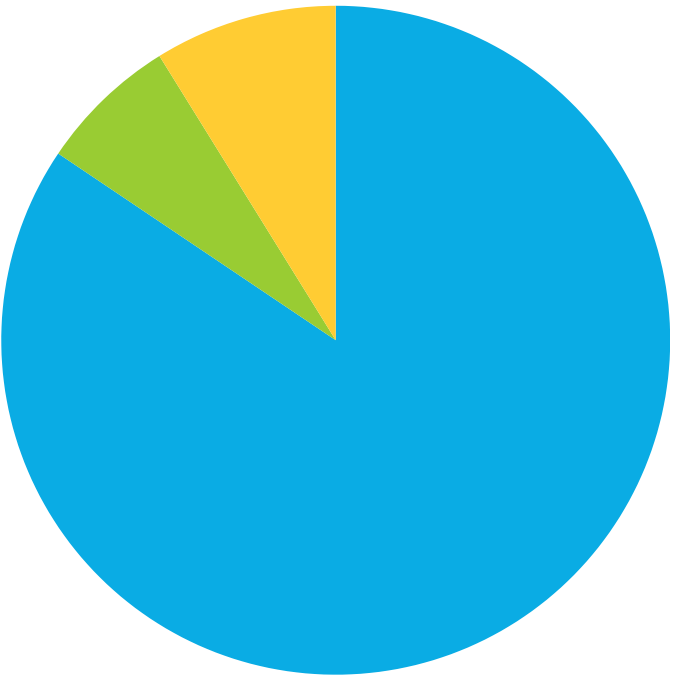
Revenue and Support

Foundations	26%
Individual & Corporations	20%
Government Grants	28%
Special Events	19%
Training & Consultation	1%
Net Investment Return	0.5%
Interest Income	0.5%
Other Income	5%



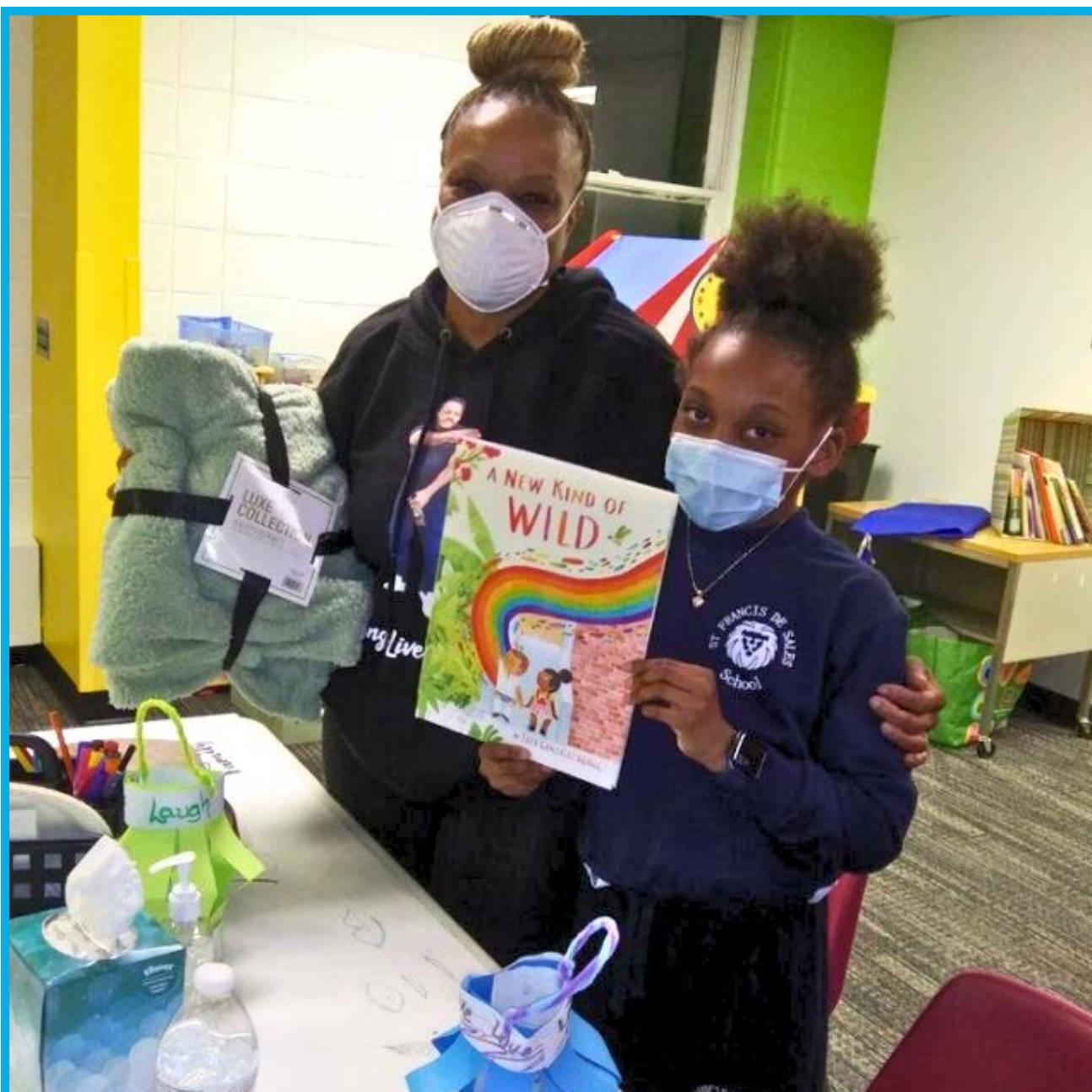
Expenses

Program Services	84%
Supporting Services	7%
Management & General Fundraising	9%



**Net of direct special event costs to donor of \$82,697.*

Financial information in Uplift's 2023 Program Report is based on audited data. For a full report, please contact Kevin McGuire, Director of Development, at kevinm@upliftphilly.org



Would you recommend the services at Uplift to other families?

“Yes, because Grief Group has given me and my child a place to feel safe, heard, and understood about our grief.”

—Adult caregiver

Photo: A participating family at Uplift’s In-Person Family Art Night on February 12, 2023. During this family night, participants made and decorated memory lanterns, and also received blankets donated by Acts Retirement-Life Communities and picture books donated by First Book.