



Ella's Umbrella
IMPACT REPORT

Keeping Kids' Hearts Beating

2024

Sometimes moments that make us feel *powerless*
can *empower* us to do incredible things.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD

Dear Friends and Supporters,

What a year it's been! As Ella's Umbrella continues to grow, 2024 has brought a sense of clarity and momentum that we're so grateful to share with you.

This year, we redesigned our website, hosted new events to expand our reach, and focused on creating resources that help grieving people feel less alone. We released the audiobook of *Unraveled: When Loss Changes Everything* and began work on *Threads of Gold: Stories of Hope for Hurting Hearts*, a collaborative anthology filled with honest, hopeful stories from others who have experienced loss. Overall, it was a very successful year!

When we first started Ella's Umbrella, our purpose was simple and broad. We wanted to turn our grief into something positive. Our biggest hope was to protect even one other child from what happened to Ella, but now we've realized we can dream a little bigger. To set ourselves up for greater impact, we're narrowing our purpose and broadening our vision. Moving forward, we're streamlining our energy and resources toward one goal: **keeping kids' hearts beating.**

Thank you for joining us on this journey. We're excited to see what lies ahead!

With Heartfelt Gratitude,
Ella's Umbrella Board of Directors

Betty Mertens, *President*
Kyle Mertens, *Treasurer*
Pamela Kraus, *Vice President*
Lynn Mertens, *Secretary*
Michael Mertens

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ELLA'S STORY

In May of 2017, Ella Mertens passed away due to an undiagnosed genetic heart defect. Congenital heart disease (CHD) accounts for approximately 40% of deaths in children with birth defects in the US. Ella's Umbrella is a nonprofit established in Ella's memory to keep what happened to her from happening to other kids.



OUR MISSION

To provide inspiration, connections and resources to save kids with heart conditions.

OUR VISION

To keep kids' hearts beating.

WHAT WE DO



Advance Heart
Technology



Fund Pediatric
Heart Research



Uplift People
Who Are Grieving

Our WORK



Advance Heart Technology

In partnership with The Ollie Hinkle Heart Foundation, we are improving outcomes in pediatric heart care by collaborating with innovators on cutting edge advancements in technology.



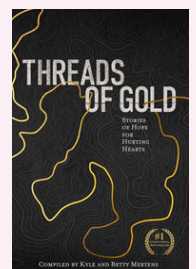
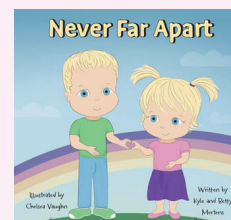
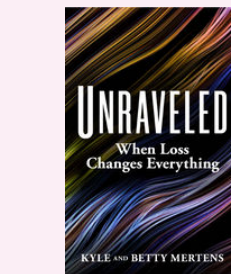
Fund Pediatric Heart Research

In partnership with St. Louis Children's Hospital, we are funding pediatric heart research through an endowment fund, and supporting improved testing and diagnosis of heart kids in the St. Louis and surrounding regions.



Uplift People Who Are Grieving

In collaboration with a community of talented editors, artists, designers and fellow authors, we have published a series of supportive resources to help grieving people and those surrounding them.



Our IMPACT



Ella Mertens



Nearly **1 in 100** babies are born with a **Congenital Heart Defect (CHD)**.



CHDs are the **leading** cause of birth defect-related infant deaths.



Research funding for CHDs is **limited** compared to other childhood conditions.

According to CDC and Children's Heart Foundation

2024 Highlights

56

VOLUNTEERS

6

**FUNDRAISING
EVENTS**

110

**BUSINESS
SPONSORS**

\$20,000 given towards an XMR Suite at St. Louis Children's Hospital (twice matched, bringing the total impact to \$60,000)

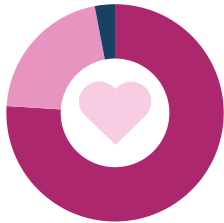
\$2,600 given towards advancing heart technology with Ollie Hinkle Heart Foundation

150 books given to children who have lost siblings with Blessings for Barrett

Our RESOURCES

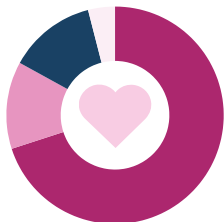


TOTAL REVENUES AND SUPPORT



76% Event Income
21% Non-Event Donations
3% Merchandise Sales

TOTAL EXPENSES



70% Funding Distributed
13% Fundraising Expenses
13% Admin Expenses
4% Merchandise COGS

REVENUE

Event Income	\$33,410.29
Non-Event Donations	\$9,456.96
Merchandise Sales	\$1,406.13
Total	\$44,273.38

EXPENSES

Funding Distributed	\$27,344.00
Fundraising Expenses	\$5,054.67
Admin Expenses	\$4,968.30
Merchandise COGS	\$1,636.57
Total	\$39,004.54

Total YE Net Change	\$5,269.84
Net Assets Dec '23	\$8,923.53
Net Assets Dec '24	\$14,193.37

Our

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

ELLA'S TRIVIA NIGHT

In April, our 5th Annual Trivia Night was our largest event yet, bringing in a total of \$23,222. The majority of the proceeds were donated to St. Louis Children's Hospital to support the development of the XMR Suite, which will help heart kids in the St. Louis and surrounding regions.



CONNECTING THE PIECES PUZZLE COMPETITION

In June, we hosted our first ever puzzle building competition, where teams of 4 raced to complete a 1,000 piece jigsaw puzzle. It was a blast and as a result, 150 books were given to children who have lost siblings through a nonprofit called Blessings for Barrett.



Our FUNDRAISING EVENTS

ELLA'S UMBRELLA 5K

In October, we hosted our first ever 5K! Participants could walk or run in honor of someone, or just for fun. It was a great way for people to get some exercise and all the proceeds went towards advancing heart technology.



WINE SOIRÉE

In November, we hosted our second Wine Soiree at Das Bevo. It was a blind wine tasting event that encouraged attendees to test their knowledge and learn more about their own preferences. We raised \$2,600 to support pediatric heart technology advancements through partnership with the Ollie Hinkle Heart Foundation.

Our

FUNDRAISING EVENTS



F45 FAITH AND FIT

In July, F45 in O'Fallon hosted a fun faith-based session where all fitness levels were welcome. Attendees experienced a great workout and \$847 was donated to Ella's Umbrella.

CORNHOLE EVENT

In September, we hosted our second cornhole tournament. The event was held at Cool Shades in Weldon Spring, and we raised \$2,300 to create resources that support grieving people like the Threads of Gold Anthology.



SUNFLOWER FESTIVAL

In October, we spent a sunny day participating in a Sunflower Festival hosted by a nonprofit called Bree's Gift! It was great to collaborate with another nonprofit founded to make something positive out of grief.



Thank YOU

We are deeply grateful for all our 2024 sponsors and donors. We could not do what we do without your support!

For a complete list of donors or to get involved for 2025, visit: www.ellasumbrella.org

2024 SPONSORS

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1st Phorm | F3 St. Charles | OG Cares Hospitality Group |
| April's Taxes | F45 Training, O'Fallon | Olga Verschoore, Compass Realty |
| Arcane Bagz | Fabletics | Olive & Oak |
| Arrowtown Designs | First Community | Patriot Machine, Inc |
| Autozone | Fox & Riley Real Estate, Marilyn Gibson | Professional Fire Fighters of Eastern Missouri |
| Barrels Taphouse and Grill | Fresh Thyme, St. Peters | PrimeTime Fitness |
| Bevo Mill | Good News Brewing | Purina |
| Big Mike's Jerky | Goodcents | Renaissance Plastic Surgery & Medical Spa |
| Birdie Bakes | Hawkins Construction & Flat Work | Rotary International, West County St. Louis |
| Blessings For Barrett | Huffords Jewelry | Six Flags |
| Blooming With Joy | Integrity Consulting | Southern Glazers of Missouri |
| Bubble Bus, St. Charles | Jackaroo Roofing & Construction | SportsBarn |
| Busy Bee Bling, Brandi Suhre | Jeri Sewell, Compass Realty | St. Louis Cardinals |
| Byrne & Jones | Jump Company | St. Louis Children's Hospital |
| Chicken N Pickle | Kendra Scott | Stages |
| Christina White Salon | Kind Soap, Webster Groves | Target |
| Cookies by Katy | Kylie's Cake Pops | The Axe Depot |
| Cookie Creations by Jan | Lohr Distributing | The Clowns |
| Cool Shades | Maggie B's Sweets | The Edge Fitness Center |
| Cooper's Hawk | Magic House | The Happy Elephant |
| Corner Pub and Grill | Mid Rivers Music | The Inn at Hermannhoff |
| Costco, St. Peters | Mira Smart Conferencing | Thirty One, Beth Petric |
| Crecelius Family | MirrorMe STL | Tim's Chrome Bar |
| Dance Pizazz | MiTek | Trader Joes |
| David Luxton, USA Mortgage | Moonlite Travel Plus | Trend Media STL |
| Defiance Ridge | Nestle Purina | Two Little Bees |
| DP Cornhole | Nidec Motors | Urban Chestnut Brewing Co |
| Eden Chiropractic and Wellness | Nothing Bundt Cakes, St Peters | Y-Kiki Divers |
| Embroider the Occasion | Nutrishop | |
| Erio's Ristorante | | |

Our VOLUNTEERS



Thanks to our hard-working volunteers for making our events possible!

2024 VOLUNTEERS

Reid Buckingham
Bryan Carr
Aether Cointin
Hailey Cooper
Katie Crecelius
Jason Crecilius*
Rachel Daniels
Kristen Docter
William Dotson
Grant Epstein
Kim Epstein
Bree Friedrichs
Asia Gleggorn
Trinity Gleggorn
Dawn Helderle
Brad Kay
Al Kraus
Glen Kraus*

Pamela Kraus*
Mary Krause
Amilia Lott*
April Mertens*
Betty Mertens
Brett Mertens
Chris Mertens
Don Mertens
Kyle Mertens
Lynn Mertens*
Mike Mertens*
Margo Newman
Maya Newman
Kate Niere*
John Pettis
Kelly Pettis
Eli Pippin
Greyson Pippin*

Kelly Pippin*
Lois Pippin
Michael Pippin
Rebecca Sabogal
Brianna Schnardthorst
Katerina Schnardthorst
Justin Seiwel
Doug Simino
Jenn Steward
Bacardy Taylor*
Haylee Teklinski
Ali Vazquez*
Izzy Vazquez
Ali Wright
Andrew Wright
Lindsay Wright
Matt Wright
Kevin Zufall

*Indicates participation in multiple events or projects

Our PARTNERS

We are all better when we work together. It is our honor to collaborate with these amazing nonprofit partners to help accomplish our mission.

2024 PARTNERS



Books Donated to Blessings for Barrett



Improve Constituent Communication

We want to improve how we communicate with our community. We want you to feel more connected to the heart of what we're doing. You're an important part of this mission, and we want to make sure you always know what your support is helping make possible.



Streamline Events For Impact

We're focusing on fewer, high-impact events that align with our mission and values. By prioritizing quality over quantity, we aim to create meaningful experiences that build connection and drive engagement.



Identify New Opportunities to Achieve Vision

We're committed to finding new and innovative ways to keep kids' hearts beating. Whether through partnerships, initiatives, or strategic funding, we're exploring bold ideas and practical solutions that can help protect more children.



Expand Our Board

We're working to expand and diversify our Board of Directors, welcoming new voices and perspectives that will help guide Ella's Umbrella with greater insight, inclusivity, and impact.

Stay informed at www.ellasumbrella.org.



The *good* of having something special
far *outweighs* the pain of losing it.



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