



2024/2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Together, We Build a Compassionate Community



Michael's
Place

let the healing begin

OUR MISSION

Michael's Place serves the bereavement needs of the greater community through support, advocacy, and education.



OUR VALUES

- Create a Safe Space
- Support with Respect and Care
- Embrace Growth
- Lead with Integrity and Authenticity
- Inspire a Compassionate Culture

OUR BOARD & STAFF

Board of Directors

Karen Browne, President
Judy Harrison, Vice President
Gretchen Overbeek, Secretary
Doug Morgenstern, Treasurer
Mindy Buell, Trustee
Chris Dennos, Founder, Trustee
Leslie Heimburger, Trustee

Michael's Place Staff

Mindy Buell, Executive Director/CEO
Connie Wintzinger, Development Director
Kristi Spencer-Nemec, Grief Services Director
Melissa Dunklow, Grief Services Coordinator
Sarah Schultz, Grief Services Coordinator
Elizabeth Boomer, Community Partnership Coordinator
Pam Jones-Robinson, Communications Coordinator
Marlee Harrison, Office Coordinator



A LETTER FROM THE CEO



Dear Friends,

It is an honor to present the Annual Report covering the period from July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025. At the heart of Michael's Place lies a steadfast commitment to support families in their grief journey, made possible through the trust of the families we serve, and the unwavering dedication of our donors and volunteers.

Throughout the year, Michael's Place has diligently pursued its mission by offering a diverse array of grief support programs tailored to individuals of all ages. We are proud to report that this year alone, we welcomed nearly 300 new participants and saw increased program attendance, reaching over 4800* individuals across 17 counties in northern Michigan.



Central to our efforts last fiscal year was the continuation of in-school grief support groups and the building of our volunteer team. Serving as a beacon of hope and healing, Michael's Place strives to provide essential support to children and teens navigating the complex landscape of grief. With over 240 in-school grief support groups conducted across 8 counties, we have endeavored to offer solace and encouragement, ensuring that students feel supported in their grieving process.

Our on-site grief support programs continue to be no-cost through the generosity of our benefactors who invest in our mission through one-time gifts, multi-year pledges, and planned giving strategies that include provisions in wills and trusts. Each gift plays a vital role in our mission, helping us bring hope and healing across our region.

At Michael's Place, healing is not just our mission—it is our commitment to building a healthier community today and laying the foundation for a resilient community tomorrow. We extend our deepest gratitude to each of you for your generosity and steadfast support of our vital work.

Warm regards,

Mindy Buell CEO

For more information on planned giving opportunities,
please reach out to the Development Director at
231.947.6453 or connie@mymichaelsplace.net.

**May include duplicate numbers if individual accessed multiple services*

IN-HOUSE PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Creating a safe space for grieving children, teens, and adults

100% *of in-house support services are provided at no cost to the individuals and families served.*

PEER-FACILITATED SUPPORT GROUPS

Support groups provide a safe, compassionate space for those coping with the death of a loved one. Guided by trained facilitators, participants share their experiences, support one another, and find comfort in knowing they're not alone. Through open discussion and shared understanding, the groups foster healing, connection, and hope.

PEER NAVIGATION

The Navigation Program offers compassionate, short-term support for griever. Peer Navigators listen, build trust, and help identify needs, connecting individuals to additional Michael's Place services, including support groups, as well as community resources. They provide up to six sessions, guiding participants on their healing journey.

ROBIN'S NEST

This monthly, activity-based program offers "Best Day" experiences designed to support grieving children and their families. Through joyful, memory-making activities, families are given the opportunity to feel understood, connected, and to rediscover moments of happiness.

WORKSHOPS AND SPECIAL EVENTS

Mindfulness & Grief • GriefShare • Create-A-Keepsake • Hands-On Healing • Adult Social Events
Educational and Creative Workshops

We try to comfort others with the comfort we ourselves have received.

Harry K., Volunteer

COMMUNITY OUTREACH SERVICES

Empowering communities through support and education



SCHOOL-BASED INITIATIVE

Michael's Place provides support and guidance to school communities through:

- In-school support groups for elementary, middle, and high school students grieving a death.
- Guidance and training for schools to develop Grief Crisis Plans, immediate support following the death of a school community member, and ongoing grief education for faculty and staff.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Customized training and presentations tailored for community groups and organizations on topics related to grief.

COMPASSIONATE WORKPLACE

Michael's Place provides support and education to businesses and organizations who have experienced a death within their workplace.



Michael's Place stands as a stellar pillar of bereavement care in northwest Michigan, offering unwavering compassion and critical services to underserved and under-resourced rural communities. For 24 years, this organization has demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to evolving and expanding its programming, ensuring that schools, workplaces, and individuals of all ages receive the vital grief support they need.

Jane Rohl, Tribal Council Vice Chair,
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and
Chippewa Indians



Your Impact: A Year of Support

In 2024–2025, our community showed up in powerful ways for those navigating grief. These efforts reflect more than just services delivered—they represent lives touched, hope restored, and the shared belief that no one should grieve alone.

2024 / 2025 IMPACT



IN 2024-2025, MICHAEL'S PLACE PROVIDED:

4,850*

Children, teens, and
adults w/grief support

1,150

Grief support
opportunities

17

Counties with
support services

IN-HOUSE SUPPORT

2,800*

Children, teens, and
adults received no-cost
grief support services

240

New participants
were welcomed
with first-time care

450*

Youth and families
attended monthly
Robin's Nest opportunities

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

800

Community members received
grief support and education

240

In-school support groups
were provided in our region

220

Staff & students were served
with school crisis support

**May include duplicate numbers if an individual accessed multiple services.*

A young woman with long brown hair in a ponytail, wearing glasses and a blue backpack, is looking up at a building with a wooden structure. The background is blurred, showing a warm, golden light. A dark blue horizontal band is overlaid on the image, containing the title and text.

Compassion in Action

Behind every milestone are the people who make it possible. The following pages highlight just a few of the remarkable individuals, schools, and businesses who stand beside grieving children, teens, and adults in our community.

THE VITAL ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN HEALING



When grief goes unaddressed, the impact can be profound:

- *97% of teachers report that grief negatively affects learning*
- *Bereaved youth are **175%** more likely to develop substance use disorders*
- ***1 in 4** youth who die by suicide have experienced the death of someone close*

Educators across our region are taking important steps to support grieving students. Their dedication to grief-informed practices ensures that no child walks through loss alone.

Michael's Place is proud to partner with schools that go above and beyond to foster safe, compassionate spaces where healing can begin.

This year, we provided Grief Crisis Training to several rural school districts, including:

- ***Manton Consolidated Schools***
- ***McBain Rural Agricultural Schools***
- ***Kingsley Area Schools***



Michael's Place has profoundly influenced McBain Schools' approach to grief care. Their guidance has deepened our understanding of how to support students, staff, and families through loss with compassion, dignity, and hope. Their work has helped us recognize that grief support is not just important- it's essential to the well-being of our school community.

Scott Akom, Superintendent,
McBain Rural Agricultural Schools

Where Generosity Meets Service

Some of our most impactful partners provide more than just financial support—they also show up. These businesses roll up their sleeves and serve alongside us, turning generosity into action.



Since 2022, MSUFCU has been honored to support Michael's Place and the incredible work they do for grieving children, teens, and families in our community. Being selected as one of our 2025 charity partners means our employees are not only raising funds year-round, but also standing behind a mission that truly makes a difference in Northern Michigan. We're proud to walk alongside Michael's Place in offering hope and healing.

Arianna Ridderbusch, MSUFCU Vice President of Community Impact



TBACU has been a committed partner of Michael's Place for over a decade, offering both financial and volunteer support. In times of tragedy, Michael's Place has stood beside our employees and their families with compassion and care, welcoming them into their supportive programs. We are honored to invest in an organization that provides such meaningful service to our community.

Karen Browne, President, TBA Credit Union



At Auto-Owners Insurance, we're proud to support Michael's Place because of the compassionate care they provide to those navigating grief. Their mission reflects our commitment to giving back and supporting the communities we serve.

Mitch Lawens, Regional Vice President, Auto-Owners Insurance

Local Support, Lasting Impact

The compassionate support of local businesses and organizations makes the mission of Michael's Place possible. Their generosity reminds us that healing is not just personal—it's a shared commitment.



Thank you to these
Robin's Nest Host Sites
for providing over \$12,000
of in-kind support!

Michael's Place provides some of the most meaningful and compassionate support in our community, walking alongside individuals and families during their most difficult times. Their work—often quiet and behind the scenes—helps people navigate grief with dignity, connection, and hope. At Incredible Mo's, we are committed to supporting that mission in any way we can. If our center can offer even a brief moment of joy, a smile, or a sense of normalcy during such a heavy period, we consider that a privilege and look forward to supporting Michael's Place for years to come.



Adventure Island
Bay Meadows Family Golf
Centre Ice Arena
City Opera House
Crystal Mountain
Dick Family Farm
Great Lakes Children's Museum
Grand Traverse Mall
Incredible Mo's
Jacob's Farm
Lakewood on the Green
Norté
Old Town Playhouse
Reining Liberty Ranch
St. Patrick's Church
TC Curling Club
The Homestead Resort
The War Zone
The Wex

**CITY
OPERA
HOUSE**

After the cards and condolences cease, we can offer a happy few moments to sad hearts.

The Heart of Michael's Place

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization.

Each time they sit with someone in grief, lead a support group, or help in the office, they bring hope and healing.



I love volunteering at Robin's Nest activities and seeing all of the smiling faces. The events help families bond and forget about their sadness for just a little while. Volunteering has also helped me heal and bring hope to others, as I am a widow myself.

Melanie W., Volunteer



What truly impacts me is when someone shares their grief in the most raw and intimate way, allowing me to join their sorrow and to feel their loss and despair. It is then that I realize the depth of their love, and I am humbled to receive such a boon! It is the person's ability to share and for others to compassionately listen that moves the healing process forward.

Ken H., Volunteer



The journey through grief has no detailed script or timeline. My hope is that, in some small way, I can help others find their way, one baby step at a time, through the dips and detours of this uncharted path.

Jane F., Volunteer

Interested in volunteering?
Visit www.MyMichaelsPlace.net/volunteer

WITH GRATITUDE TO OUR 2024-2025 VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers, over 90% of Michael's Place programs are offered at no cost to grieving families. **This year alone, interns and volunteers contributed 2,700 hours – an estimated value of nearly \$94,000.***

Fred Anderson	Irene Cotter	Lisa Gruber	Geri Morris	Bill Smith
William Anderson	Jill Coverdill	Kristin Hall	Penny Morris	Rustine Stachnik
Auto-Owners	Connie Debney	Judy Harrison	MSU Federal	Julie Taylor
Insurance	Kari deBoer	Leslie Heimburger	Credit Union	TBA Credit Union
Dianne Baker-Hale	Heather Deegan	Catherine Hendges	Julia Nelson	Tyler Telfor
Marlene	Pamela DeMerle	Jennifer Hoelscher	Camille Nitschky	Andrea Thompson
Baldwin-McCann	Chris Dennos	Ken Homa	Amy Oosterhouse	Kostas Tsoukalas
Kristin Bauman	Kristy Denny	Rita Kane	Penny (Penelope) Ort	Paige Waldron
Elizabeth Beck	Christine Derks	William Kayuk	Gretchen Overbeek	Mary Ann Wehr
Marika BeVier	Amy Devey	Kim Koehler	Glen Petersen	Danielle Wichern
Shelby Blodgett	Mary Dillinger	Harry Kroll	Shea Petaja	Mark Wilson
Sloane Blodgett	Jacob Engholm	Laurie LaCross	Avory Pettinato	Roberta Wilson-Page
Kecia Brick	Robin Flannery	Megan Madion	Rachel Rademacher	Melanie Wise
Carol Brock	Jane Fochtman	Kerry Marsh	Christina Ribel	Bryan Wood
Karen Browne	Cameron (Cam) Fuller	Michele Marshall	Jennifer Richardson	Pat Woods
Heather Bruce	Dawn Fuller	Jim McCann	Mason Richardson	CeCe Wylie
Mike Buell	Kate Gallup	Liz McCormick	Yasmin Richmond	Mike Zwarych
Krista Cain	Jim Goodall	Beth McMail	Michael Rohs	
Samantha Charnes	Kay Goodall	Jill Miklos	Greg Seman	
Ellie Charnes	Teri Gorsline	Courtney Miller	Karla Shappee	
Mike Cotter	Erik Gruber	Doug Morgenstern	Annabel Skrocki	

* Based on the Current
Estimated National Value



I volunteer at Michael's Place to bring joy, comfort, and support to children and adults who are dealing with loss. Being present, listening, and witnessing the perseverance of the participants has increased my empathy and compassion and reminds me that small acts of kindness can make a positive difference not only in the lives of others but in mine as well.

Roberta, Volunteer

JOIN US FOR STORIES OF HOPE & CONNECTION

Michael's Place invites you to attend the annual **Restoring Hope Luncheon**. This one-hour fundraising event provides a deeper understanding of the organization's mission and its impact on the community. Join us to bear witness to the stories of those directly impacted by the work of Michael's Place.

Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025 • Noon - 1:00pm
Park Place Hotel Conference Center



Contact us to reserve your seat/table today at
events@mymichaelsplace.net
or **(231) 947-6453**.
There is no cost to attend.

FINANCIAL GIFTS RESTORE HOPE

Ways to Support Michael's Place

- *General Contributions*
- *Gifts of Stock & Securities*
- *Pledge Gifts*
- *In-Kind Contributions*
- *Volunteerism*

Planned Giving and Endowment

Along with immediate gifts that support the mission, Michael's Place accepts deferred or planned gifts that help us look ahead strategically to ensure our programs and services are here permanently for our community.

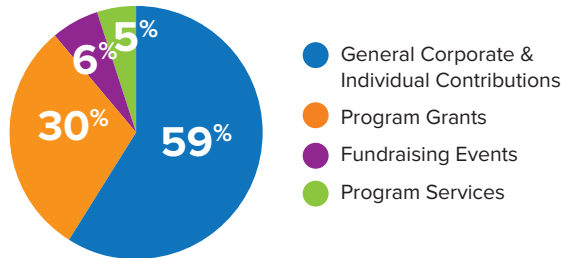
Please contact our Development Director, Connie Wintzinger, for help with your questions at **231.947-6453** or **connie@mymichaelsplace.net**.

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS (CASH BASIS)

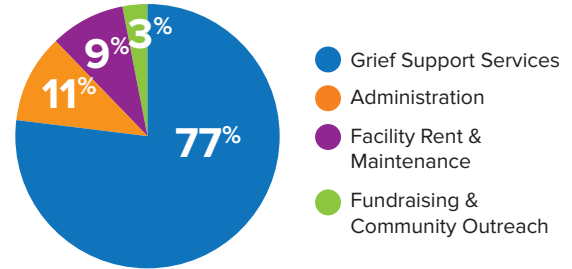
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2025



REVENUE



EXPENDITURES



OPERATING STATEMENT

REVENUE	
General Corporate & Individual Contributions	530,658
Program Grants	269,525
Fundraising Events	54,155
Program Services	40,216
Total Revenue	894,554
EXPENDITURES	
Grief Support Services	624,803
Administration	92,566
Facility Rent and Maintenance	70,749
Fundraising and Community Outreach	20,454
Total Expenditures	808,572
Operating Surplus or (Deficit)	85,982

BALANCE SHEET	
Assets	
Checking and Savings Account	298,633
Endowment Fund	56,160
Rental Security Deposit	3,250
Short-term Pledges Receivable	147,800
Pledges Receivable Beyond One Year	331,239
Furnishings and Equipment (net of depreciation)	4,413
Total Assets	841,495
Liabilities and Fund Balances	
Accounts Payable	0
Payroll Taxes and Benefits Payable	4,786
Restricted Grant Balance	207,371
Unrestricted Net Assets	629,338
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	841,495



Meaningful Legacies

Tribute gifts are a powerful expression of love, remembrance, and hope. We are humbled by the families and friends who chose to honor their loved ones through a gift to Michael's Place. Their legacies live on in the healing made possible for others.

THANK YOU FOR THESE TRIBUTE GIFTS:

IN HONOR

Mike and Mindy Buell (2)
Kevin Connors Crowley
Chris Dennos
Conrad Gordon
Oxford High School
Riley's Candles
Robin's Nest
Eric Spry and
Little Preston

Tucker Byl
Linda Byun
Patricia Callahan
David Carlson
Michael Chaput
Martin J. Cianciolo
Daniel Clark
Kerstin Colmus
Sandy K. Coon
Mary Corbett
Oswell Henry Corbitt

Zachary Fochtman
Sarah Fuhs
Max Galbraith
Isla Kay Glaze
Aurea Gonzalez
Brad Graczyk (2)
Abby Gross
Jusin M. Hansen
Kathy Hardy
Timmy Hautz
Mary Sue Hautz

Leta Kelley
Ginny and Bill Kildee
Art Killian
John and Ruth Knitz
Paul Kujala
Cathy Layman
Barb Lemcool
Mia Levy
Mimi London
Anthony Lucero
Anna Grace Luciani

Mirabelle Ovie
David Peacock and
John Peacock II
Mike Perdue
Ron and Maureen
Pomaranski
Sydney Grace Potjers
Thomas Reay
David Reincke
Juanita Lynn Renaud
Sarah Richardson-Burns

Wyatt Stanley
Dr. and Mrs. Edward
and Elizabeth Stokes
Bruce and Sheryl Struik
Pamela Sullivan
Treg Szerlong
Little John and Kate Taft
Jimmy Tamlyn
Drake Tester
Nick Treacy
Bernice Tylutki

IN MEMORY

Doris Abbott
Gladys Ann Alford
Cameron Alpers
Landon Anderson
John Bader (2)
Daniel Baldwin
Steven Ballance
Joziena Ballintyn (Oma)
William Brady and
Karen Buell
Mr. and Mrs. Robert
and Marijean Brick
Jennifer Broekhuizen
Hayden Brown
Joseph D Browne (3)
Kalee and Ted Bruce
Kalee Bruce

Alix Crawford
Kevin Connors Crowley
Lisa and Brandon Davis
Pam Davis
Sam DeKuiper (6)
Carol DeMerle
Margaret Ann (Peggy) `and Peter Chris
Dendrinis (2)
Rick Deneweth
Mike and Barb Dennos
Gerald A. Dillinger
and David White
Robert Vernon Donick
Jim Drinan
Gail Elhers
Julie Janis Finch (2)
Joel Findley

Dave and JD Helmstetter
David J. Hendrickson
Larry Henry
Michael Hertler
Albert and Catherine
Heustis
Jeffery N. Howell
Donna Howland
Philip A. Hoyt
Vivian C. Hughes
Shalyn Jackson
Laila Jamil
Krystina John
Julie Johnson
Diane Johnston
Paula Kalich
Clint and Stephen Kane (2)
Michael Keene

Whitney Lyon
Donald Maidens
Julie Marshall (2)
Gary McMail
Daniel "Beechie" Miller
William Modzel
Parents of Doug and
Jennie Morgenstern
Adrian Morris (2)
Matthew Moyer
Carson Needham
Melin and Ruth Nielson
Todd Oetjens
Ruby Ogemagegedo
Ames A. O'Neal
John Ort
Chloe Ostema
Hailey Hall Overholt

Mark Richmond
James Rider
Deborah Ritchie
Ginny Rogers
W. Bruce Rogers
Isaac Romero
Kathy Rymal
Thomas C. Sanfilippo
Ken Schmidt
Art and Mary Schmuckal
Damon Schopieray
Tyler Schroeder (3)
Emily Shagley
Beryl Skrocki (4)
Terry A. Smith
Allison Spencer
Kathryn K. Staley
and Susan Taylor

Michael Wagoner
Dave Walker
Barry Ward
Ann Marie Warner
Denise, Peggy, Jim,
Doris Warrick
Ted Weatherhead
Archer Wheaton
Mike Wheelock
Emily Wilson
Beth Winans
Jack Davis Wittler (2)
Dr. Robert Young
Arthur and Phyllis DiAnn
My Mother

Treg Szerlong Memorial Golf Scramble



We're deeply grateful to everyone who came out for the annual Treg Szerlong Memorial Golf Scramble. Thanks to the generosity of participants, sponsors, and organizers, this year's event raised over \$10,000 for no-cost grief support. **To date, the outing has raised more than \$65,000** — a powerful tribute to Treg's memory and a reflection of the healing that comes from turning loss into purpose. A heartfelt thank-you to Alex Moravec and Steve and Heidi Fite for their tireless dedication.



My granddaughter and I really enjoy going to the Robin's Nest events because they provide an opportunity to do fun things with people who understand the grief journey we have been on. Knowing it's a chance to laugh and enjoy life without feeling guilty because we are doing fun things without our departed loved one. For those brief few hours, we can give ourselves grace, which is sometimes very difficult to do. It is a true blessing!

Lisa D., Program Participant



1212 Veterans Drive, Ste. 100
Traverse City, MI 49684



Michael's Place serves
the bereavement needs
of the greater community
through support, advocacy,
and education.

231.947.6453

goodgrief@mymichaelsplace.net

MyMichaelsPlace.net