



COMFORT ZONE CAMP

2023 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



WWW.COMFORTZONECAMP.ORG

A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER



What a year 2023 was for Comfort Zone Camp! CZC was on the move from Times Square to TIME Magazine; from Massachusetts to Florida; Utah to California—all leading to an increase in camps and campers. We responded to the need for the first-of-its-kind weekend camp for overdose loss and doubled the number of campers and parents attending our camp for loss by suicide.

Our philosophy? "Lead with heart and common sense and good things will happen." Never stray from our Core Value of, "Kids Come First!"

Our reward? Wonderful parents and guardians willing to share their children with us, supportive volunteers who give us their valuable time, committed donors who understand that grieving children need a voice and a place and tangibly want to do something to help with children's mental health! Our ultimate reward? Feedback from campers and parents with this beautiful message:

*"To the Comfort Zone Village,
My 14 year old son began to flounder in September. He talked about "ending it all," began cutting, and had behavioral issues at school. I am so grateful to your team. He went to camp in the first week of November and came home a healthier person. I so appreciate your unique ways of reaching kids like my son and ensuring he is not alone in his grief journey."*

Cheers to CZC turning 25.

Cheers to YOU for the 24,000 lives you've impacted along the way.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lynne B. Hughes".

Lynne B. Hughes
Founder & CEO



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

The definition of success varies depending on the context – most businesses measure success based on profits. The success of a student usually relates to a grade point average. Success comes in many different shapes and sizes. How lucky are we that as members of the Comfort Zone community, we get to measure our success on how many lives we change. And in 2023, boy, were we successful!

I am thrilled to report that 2023 was the most successful year in Comfort Zone history. We hosted 29 camps in 9 states and welcomed 1,351 campers along the way. Other highlights include being featured in Time Magazine and having one of our volunteers, Molly Moran win the NASCAR Foundation's Humanitarian Award, which resulted in a \$100,000 donation to CZC! In addition, our fearless leader (and some may say the heart and soul of CZC) was highlighted in a variety of media outlets and was invited to join a number of podcasts and radio shows to amplify CZC to new and related audiences. Our volunteer base continues to grow, and I am confident when I say that we have some of the most dedicated and passionate volunteers that any organization has ever seen. The CZC community is a special one and the volunteers create the most magical environment for our campers. And last, but certainly not least, Lynne, Kelly and our entire staff continue to ensure everything runs as smoothly as possible and we are so appreciative of all of their hard work. Our staff work hard, have hearts of gold, and truly are the engine of the entire organization.

When I took over as Chair of the Board, one of the first things I shared with my colleagues was my dream that Comfort Zone would become a household name for child bereavement services. I believe we are well on our way to achieving this goal. The Board continues to strategize about our strategic growth so that we continue to serve even more children in 2024. Not to mention, 2024 is our 25th anniversary and we have already started to put the wheels in motion to ensure that everyone associated with CZC will have an opportunity to celebrate this remarkable milestone.

Of course, I would be remiss if I did not thank and acknowledge all our donors and supporters who continue to give so generously year in and year out. Thank you for changing lives – you are truly making a difference and there are thousands of children who will never have to grieve alone because of you.

All my best,
Mitch Decter and the CZC Board of Directors



2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mitch Decter, Chair
Derek Mohar, Vice Chair
Craig Heah, Secretary & Treasurer
Lynne B. Hughes, Founder & CEO

Karen Bouchard
Carlisse Davis
Ginger Drysdale
Rob Fink

Elaine Haney
Joe Harrold
Patrick Nunn
Chris Pellegrino

Kelly Plageman
Matt Togna
Marty Wilson
Sahmon Zoughi

MISSION

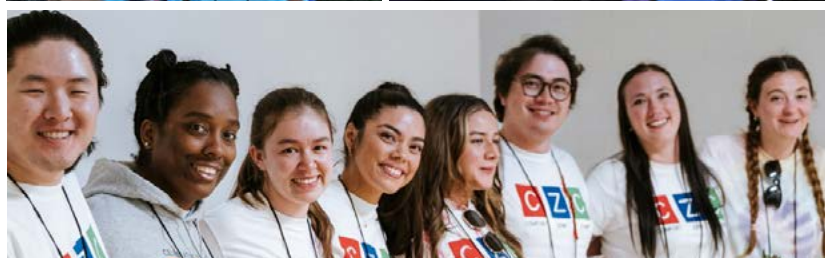
Comfort Zone's mission is to empower children experiencing grief to fully realize their capacity to heal, grow, and lead more fulfilling lives.

VISION

A society that is actively engaged in meeting the ongoing and complex needs of grieving children.

HISTORY OF COMFORT ZONE CAMP

Comfort Zone Camp is the first nonprofit bereavement camp for children, with the first camp taking place in 1999. Founder and CEO Lynne Hughes lost both of her parents at a young age and created Comfort Zone as an adult to give grieving children a safe, fun place to connect and to know that they are not alone. From what started as a small camp in Virginia has evolved into a national organization that has served over 24,000 children at no cost to the families.



WHY CAMP MATTERS

Nationally, 6 million children have lost a parent or a sibling before the age of 18. That number more than doubles to 14.7 million before the age of 25 (CBEM, 2023).

All bereaved children, no matter where they live or their circumstances, should have the support and resources they need to grieve their loss in a healthy way and move forward in a positive direction in their lives. Children with unaddressed grief are:

5X

More likely to die
by suicide
(USDHHS, Bureau of
the Census)

9X

More likely to drop
out of high school
(National Principals
Association)

10X

More likely to engage
in substance abuse
(Rainbows for
All Children)

20X

More likely to have
behavioral disorders
(Center for Disease
Control)

Your support helps children to overcome these statistics by providing the resources necessary to offer camp weekends free of charge.

2023 SNAPSHOT

Thank you for impacting so many lives in 2023!

28

CAMPS FOR GRIEVING
CHILDREN & FAMILY
MEMBERS

1,351

GRIEVING CHILDREN
ATTENDED CAMP

189

PARENTS/GUARDIANS
ATTENDED CAMP

9

OF STATES
THAT HOSTED CAMPS

31

OF STATES
THAT CAMPER
RESIDE IN

1,676

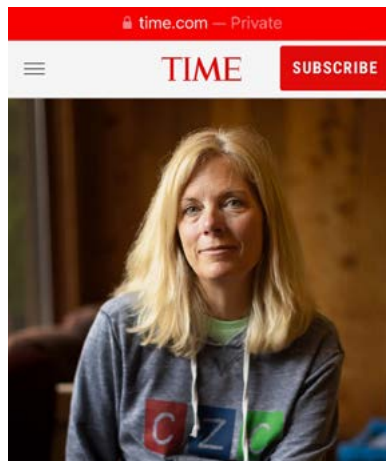
CAMP VOLUNTEERS
HELPED GRIEVING
CHILDREN

628

VOLUNTEERS
TRAINED



NATIONAL IMPACT & RECOGNITION



- **CZC was featured in TIME Magazine**, highlighting our pioneering camps for suicide loss. The first camp took place in 2015.
- Lynne Hughes won a national award from **M&M** for *Flipping the Status Quo* on children's grief. Lynne was featured on the Jumbotron in Times Square in New York City!
- Comfort Zone Camp was awarded **\$100,000 from the NASCAR Foundation** thanks to Molly Moran, her amazing volunteerism for CZC, and the many people who voted for her! 460 people signed up for the "Pit Crew" to receive daily reminders to vote.

AS SEEN IN:

TIME

©CBS NEWS

People

CNN

Parade

Parents

yahoo!
news

POPSUGAR.

redbook

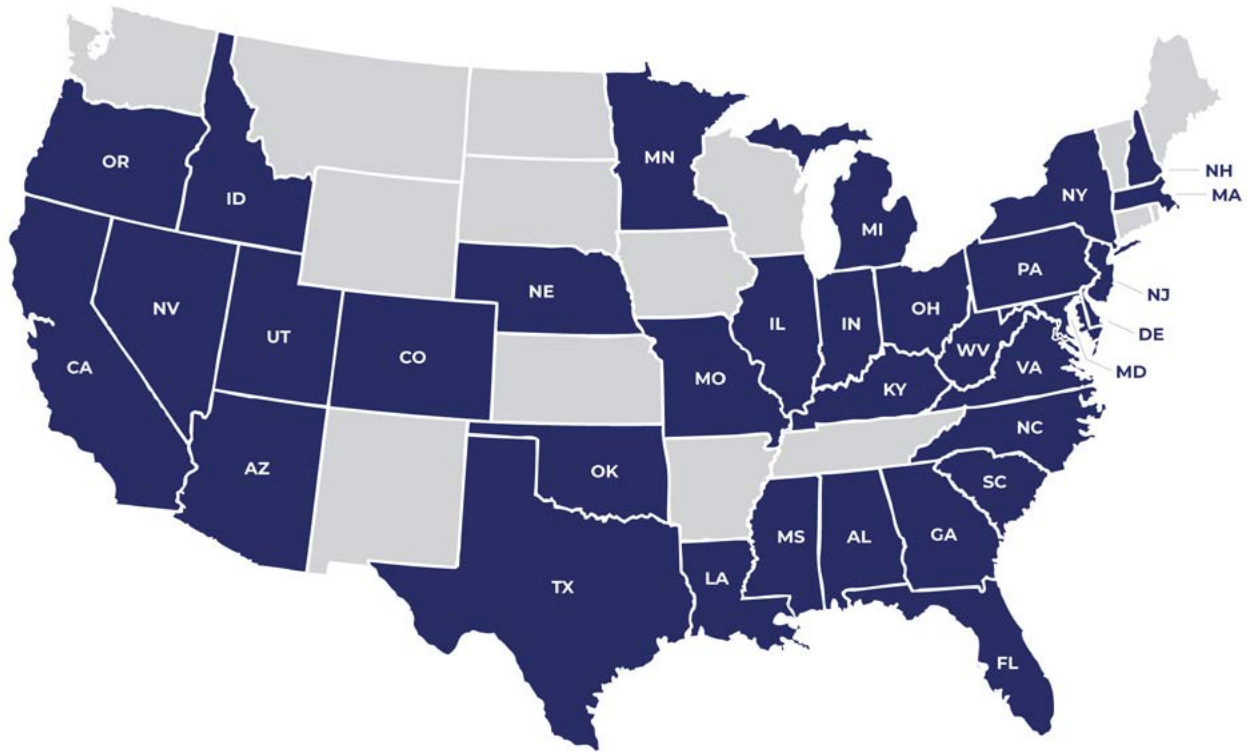
USA TODAY

TODAY

ESPN

NASCAR

Highlighted in **BLUE** are the states where our campers resided in 2023.
We also had campers join us from Canada, Netherlands, and U.S. Virgin Islands.



OUR CAMPS

1,351 grieving children's lives were changed
in 2023 thanks to our amazing supporters!



"CZC is a place for
belonging and growth. I
am never alone because
I am always surrounded
by people who get me."



PARTNER CAMPS

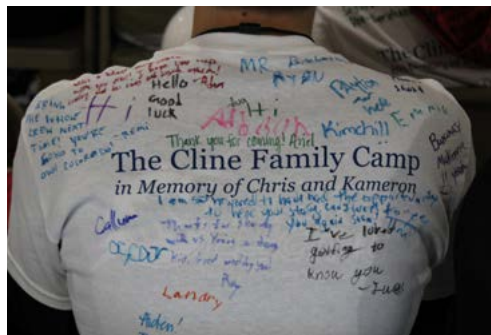
We held 12 camps with our amazing partners in 2023, allowing us to reach more grieving children across the country.

Partnership camps took us to **CA, FL, NJ, NY, UT, VA, and WV!**



“I really love that I was able to come here as a stranger and be welcomed in as a family member.”

- Kelly, CZC Camper



SUICIDE LOSS CAMP

"My son's father died by suicide in 2018; he was 7 years old. Since then, Comfort Zone Camp has been his place to find a community of other kids who share similar experiences, and grieve with kids and caregivers who are there to support him, lift him up, make him laugh, and allow him a safe place to be vulnerable."

- Kerry Keyes
Camper Mom

67

GRIEVING
CHILDREN

20

PARENT/
GUARDIANS

63%

INCREASE
IN APPLICANTS
FROM 2022



NEW CAMP FOR OVERDOSE LOSS

CZC responds to the national need and epidemic.

1ST

WEEKEND
CAMP IN THE
COUNTRY

59

GRIEVING
CHILDREN

7

PARENT/
GUARDIANS

11

STATES
CAMPERS
TRAVELED FROM



PARENT/GUARDIAN CAMPS

"I walked into CZC Parent Camp fresh in grief, unsure, and alone. I walked away with lasting connections while knowing I'd always have a place to "get real" in my grief journey."

- Beth Fraley
Camper Mom

189

GRIEVING PARENTS/GUARDIANS
ATTENDED CAMP FREE OF
CHARGE IN 2023

13

SEPARATE PARENT/GUARDIAN
PROGRAMS OFFERED
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY



YOUNG ADULT CAMPS

36

GRIEVING YOUNG ADULTS ATTENDED
CAMP FREE OF CHARGE IN 2023

3

YOUNG ADULT PROGRAMS OFFERED
THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY



“People think all you do
at a grief camp is cry, but
I can assure you, there is
a LOT of joy and healing.”

“When I’m at CZC, there’s no place I’d rather be. I think of this place as a model for what all of life should be like: having a blast with other people, finding so much joy with each other, and also banding together against the dark parts of life. Comfort Zone Camp is true connection.”

- Sarah Rowe
Young Adult Camper

CZC IN THE COMMUNITY

32nd Annual School Health Conference
American Academy of Pediatrics Annual Conference
Athletes for Hope
Richmond Bereavement Coalition
Berkshire Bank
Bernards Township
Beverly Middle School
Bliley's Funeral Home
Blue Cross Blue Shield Staff Meeting
Bon Secours Hospice
Brandito
Camden Crisis
Central Virginia CSA Resource & Training Day
Charlottesville School Counseling Directors
Charlottesville Schools Full counseling staff
Chesterfield Mental Health Fair
CISM Team presentation
Family Insight P.C.
Federal Reserve Bank
Goochland Mental Health Fair
James City Elem. and Middle Schools
Kentucky Center for Grieving Children & Families
Kind Hearts for Kids
Lakeside Presbyterian Church
Lara Teague Curry 5K
Law Enforcement Against Drugs & Violence (LEAD)
Lieutenant Powers - Henrico Police Dept
MA School Counselor Conference
Mass Mutual 2023 Kick Off Event
Massachusetts School Nurse Organization Fall Conference
Meeting with SCOR Sports
Mental Health Team - Goochland Schools
Mental Health, Suicide, Awareness Drug Abuse Summit
Midlothian Rotary Club
Municipal Alliance of Bernards Township
National Assoc Social Workers, NJ
NC State FIGI Chapter Presentation
New England School Nurse Conference (NESNC)
New Jersey School Counselor Association
Newport News Counselors
NJSSNA Spring 2023 Conference - Reimagining School Nursing
NJSSNA Spring 2023 Conference
Non-Profit Collaborative meeting
NY School Counselor Conference
Online Counseling Program Coordinator - William & Mary
Petersburg CIS Coordinator
Petersburg School Counselors
Powhatan Family Resource

Priority Center
Provincetown School Counselor
QPR Training
Richmond Public Schools
Ridge Elementary
Shiloh Baptist Church widow group
Somerset County Traumatic Loss Coalition
Somerset Hill Rotary Club
Southside TICN Petersburg
Spotsylvania School Counselors
Suicide Prevention Interagency Advisory Group
Thalhimer Real Estate
Bergen County School Counselor Association Meeting
The Children's Room Light of Hope Event
The Game of Life
University Counseling Center, Azusa Pacific Univ
University of Richmond Center for Civic Engagement
Va. Medical Center Community Hospice Event
VaCPNN
Virginia Society of Association Executives Luncheon
Wake County School Counselors
West Virginia School Counselor Association Conference
Westfield Church
WHOA
Widows Tea Talk
William & Mary School of Education
William & Mary Volunteer Fair
Williamsburg Community Leadership Health Fair
WV Caring Hospice of Morgantown WV
York County Elementary Counselors
Youth at Risk Conference
Youth Suicide Prevention Advisory Council (YSPAC)



OUR REGIONAL RACS GET THINGS DONE

In 2023, our Regional Advisory Council (RAC) Members accomplished A LOT! Together, they raised over **\$637,000**, trained over **100 volunteers**, and organized **8 events**! Thank you to all of our **RAC MEMBERS** coast to coast.

CA	MA	NC	NJ/NY	VA
Xavier Caceres	Eric Gorewitz	Patrick Nunn	Sarah Ash	Charlie Connell
Kendi Epley	Cyndi Holohan	Lydia Ross	Brenda Catalano	Craig Heah
Mike Gaines	Isabella Grillo	Kim Lawrence	Caitlin Fabrocini	Sara Heisler
Will Grewal	Judi Harrington	Izzy Larscheid	Kara Feigeles	Tim Hoerrner
Carly Oaks	Jenn Harris	Nick Margroff	Karina Grossman	Anthony Jackson
Craig Peck	Joe Harrold	Tom Murray	Colleen Horstmann	Ryan Keuster
Steve Pomerantz	David Hull	Brooke Conn	Jason Kleinberger	Tom Love
Maya Puterbaugh	Steven Kunevich	Jenn Tate	Joe Mastrogiovanni	Kelly Merkel
Dave Storch	Molly Moran	Jess Rigel	Chris Pellegrino	Dawn South
Sahmon Zoughi		Allison Hudson	Niki Russo	Michele Stehle
			David Weber	Ryan Tagg
				Daniel Wright



FUN FUNDRAISING & BREAKING RECORDS!

Thank you to everyone who put the “fun” in fundraising in 2023 and helped us raise:

\$831,000!



WHAT'S NEW FOR 2024

- **CELEBRATE CZC TURNING 25!**
 - **5 NEW CAMPS:** Michigan Camp (Suicide Loss), California, Florida, North Carolina & Utah
 - **NEW 4-DAY CAMP** added in Virginia with the return of "Zone Games"
 - **Hello Grief Podcast!**
-

2024 PIN THEME



As Comfort Zone Camp turns 25, we celebrate our past chapters - all the events and amazing lives who've shaped and impacted us! As we turn the page to 2024, we also celebrate the beginning of our next chapter!

We look forward to new adventures and opportunities; campers and volunteers; and our amazing supporters who will be intersecting with us in profound ways!

2024 CAMP DATES & LOCATIONS



JANUARY 5TH - JANUARY 7TH

Harrisonburg, VA

FEBRUARY 5TH - FEBRUARY 26TH

Virtual Support Group

MARCH 8TH - MARCH 10TH

Simi Valley, CA

MARCH 8TH - MARCH 10TH

Greensboro, NC

APRIL 5TH - APRIL 7TH

Williamsburg, VA

APRIL 19TH - APRIL 21ST

Fruitland Park, FL

APRIL 19TH - APRIL 21ST

Hardwick, NJ

MAY 3RD - MAY 5TH

Palmyra, VA

MAY 17TH - MAY 19TH

Johnsonburg, NJ

MAY 17TH - MAY 19TH

Cowen, WV

MAY 31ST - JUNE 2ND

Sandwich, MA

JUNE 6TH - JUNE 9TH

Williamsburg, VA (4 Day Camp)

JUNE 21ST - JUNE 23RD

Martinsville, IN

AUGUST 2ND - AUGUST 4TH

Wading River, NY

AUGUST 2ND - AUGUST 4TH

Occidental, CA

AUGUST 9TH - AUGUST 11TH

Salt Lake City, UT

AUGUST 16TH - AUGUST 18TH

Wanship, UT

AUGUST 23RD - AUGUST 25TH

Los Angeles, CA

SEPTEMBER 6TH - SEPTEMBER 8TH

Charlotte, NC

SEPTEMBER 13TH - SEPTEMBER 15TH

Palmyra, VA

SEPTEMBER 13TH - SEPTEMBER 15TH

Fishkill, NY

SEPTEMBER 20TH - SEPTEMBER 22ND

Ortonville, MI

SEPTEMBER 27TH - SEPTEMBER 29TH

Palmer, MA

SEPTEMBER 27TH - SEPTEMBER 29TH

Salt Lake City, UT

OCTOBER 4TH - OCTOBER 6TH

Wake Forest, NC

OCTOBER 11TH - OCTOBER 13TH

Simi Valley, CA

OCTOBER 25TH - OCTOBER 27TH

Hardwick, NJ

NOVEMBER 1ST - NOVEMBER 3RD

Mechanicsville, VA

NOVEMBER 4TH - NOVEMBER 25TH

Virtual Support Group

NOVEMBER 15TH - NOVEMBER 17TH

Fruitland Park, FL



25 YEARS



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