

Labeled & LOVED

Moms
HELPING
MOMS

RETREAT
2024

SOMETHING
to sing about
Page 2

*she
said
yes*

FOREVER
CHANGED

2023 IMPACT
at a glance

OUR mission

is to embrace and strengthen families with disabilities by providing connective experiences and educational resources for the primary caretaker igniting personal growth and systemic change within the community.

Dear Friends,

We never imagined that in the span of three years Labeled & Loved would grow to a community of more than 3,000 families from 34 states, three countries and represent over 144 diagnoses.

With sincere gratitude, we thank the many volunteers and all who make our mission possible with their love, support, and generosity.

We hope you are inspired by the stories shared in this issue. ❤️

Julie Hornok *Dr. Regina Crone*

Julie Hornok
President
Co-Founder

Dr. Regina Crone
Vice-President
Co-Founder

Volunteer: Kati Moser, Colorado Springs, CO

Meet volunteer Kati who has felt the embrace of Labeled & Loved as a special needs mom and is now dedicated to building connection, support and hope for her community. As the Sisterhood Circles Local Leader in Colorado Springs this past year, she established the first sisterhood circle in her area serving 73 moms. She was also instrumental in the success of the 2023 Weekend of Hope Retreat.

Kati's daughter, Faith, has a rare diagnosis – 1 of 30 in the world – called Genetic Disorder ZNF292. Kati shares that “when you have a medically complex child with an unknown diagnosis, you don't fit in with the typical parents or anywhere in the special needs community broken up by diagnosis. It was so wonderful to find Labeled & Loved that is committed to serving special needs moms of kids any age with any diagnosis. I finally found a place to belong where I am understood and supported in this ever-changing journey that never ends.”

Thank you Kati for making such an impact in Colorado Springs!

Moms HELPING MOMS



Labeled & Loved is a registered
501(c)(3) non-profit organization

DONATE today



2 EASY WAYS TO GIVE

- 1 Scan the QR code above
- 2 Email hello@labeledandloved.org



Featured Mom: Stacy ~ Springdale, AR

"I am brave, I am bruised. *I am who I'm meant to be*, this is me," Stacy sings from the stage at the 2023 Labeled & Loved Retreat in Colorado Springs. Reflecting upon her once dream to be a professional performer, never did she dream of singing to an audience of special needs moms, *as a special needs mom herself*. However, every word she exhales carries a message of hope, and her words of strength tether the audience to unify in acceptance. In this moment, their reality transforms from "*this is me*" to the powerful realization that "*this is us!*"

Stacy is a mother to two daughters, Brooke (26) and Streme (26), and her son Tyler (28). Tyler was born with Agenesis Corpus Callosum, cerebral palsy, a seizure disorder, and an intellectual disability. This rare diagnosis has required him to undergo more than 15 surgeries and need around-the-clock care. In 2012, he transitioned to living in a group home.

We sat down with Stacy to learn of her journey as a life-long caregiver.

What does "labeled" mean to you as a mom of a special needs child?

I think for a really long time, I didn't want to be labeled. I tried really hard to "normalize" my life even though we are very different from the average family. In the early years, we never let Tyler's disabilities stop us from going to normal activities like parties, theme parks, swimming pools, and movies, until one day we just physically couldn't do these things anymore. I've realized that the label of special needs mom comes with a lot of baggage. When your child has severe needs, there is so much loss that starts early on when they don't walk, or talk, or toilet themselves, and then it continues when they don't have friends or dates or go to college or get a job. Then there's the deep sadness in the everyday minutiae like feeding, clothing,

"I am brave, I am bruised. I am who I'm meant to be, this is me."

SOMETHING to sing about

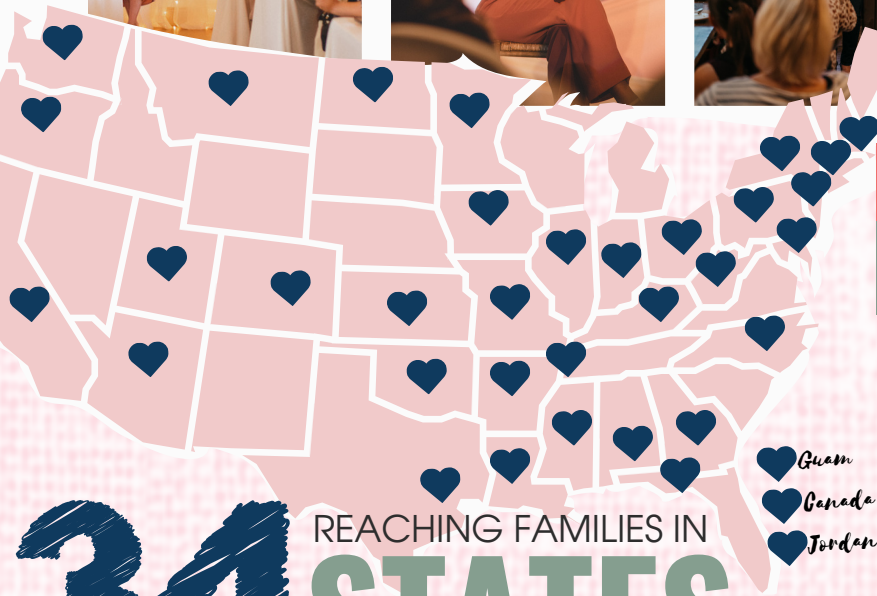
and changing a diaper on a grown adult. Some of it is very heavy and most of it is just plain ugly. So we kept it hidden behind a pretty package and lots of smiles that tells the world that everything is great because no one wants to know the brutal reality, or so I thought.

Reflecting on your experience of 28 years, how has being a special needs mom influenced who you are today?

Having the time to do the hard work of self care has really allowed me to enjoy Tyler for who he is versus sitting in the anger of all the things he has missed. I find joy in the little things like his smile or in a moment of laughter. I see how he can light up a room and definitely how he lights up my soul. I have come to realize that even as the mom of a special needs child who is not in my everyday care anymore, I still wear a label. I will always wear it. This label has shaped me in countless ways. I'm clean and organized, compassionate and patient, calm yet driven, tenacious and resilient, and ultimately unphased by most things that may seem dramatic to others. Once you've walked to the door of death with a child over and over again, there's not much else in life that you think you can't overcome. Everyone has a story to tell, and being a special needs mom is a huge part of mine.

How is the mission of Labeled & Loved important to you?

I would have loved to have something like this when Tyler was younger. We didn't even have the internet yet, so I was going through all of this completely blind and very much alone. At the end of the day, even though we are all very different women with very different children with a wide variety of needs, we are ultimately all moms who love our families and we are looking for a place to belong and find some peace with this very different life that we've been given. *See cover photo



243

CAREGIVERS

JOINED

support groups

♥ Sisterhood Circle Groups
♥ Friendship & Faith Groups

34 STATES

REACHING FAMILIES IN

and 3 Countries

7 CITIES

COMMUNITY
OUTREACH
EVENTS

♥ Inspirational Speakers
♥ Building Communities
for Emotional &
Mental Health

Impacting
OVER
3000
FAMILIES
representing
144 DIFFERENT
LABELS
of their child's diagnosis





she said Yes! FOREVER CHANGED

Pictured L&L Houston Chapter Founding Members: Morgan Gordon President, Brittany Marchesi Secretary, Laura Williams Treasurer

Morgan, president of the Labeled & Loved North Houston Chapter, said "YES" to her heart's desire to bring to her city what she had experienced at the 2021 Weekend of Hope retreat in San Antonio, TX. She rallied her close friends Laura and Brittany to formulate a vision to pilot the in-person Sisterhood Circles program in their area. In just two years, their group in Houston has grown to impact over 300 moms. In addition to virtual support groups, Labeled & Loved has now piloted the in-person Sisterhood Circles program in three additional cities: Colorado Springs, Harlingen, and Memphis.

Programs offered by Labeled & Loved positively impact the very grim statistics for special needs families. Primary caretakers of special needs children are at serious risk of burnout. Nineteen research studies have identified parents of children with disabilities to have a **95%** increased risk for **depression** and a **90%** increased risk for **anxiety**. The **divorce rate** is over **85%** for parents of children with a disability. (Scherer N, Verhey I, Kuper H., 2019; Buscho, 2023).

To accomplish our commitment to building strong families and to provide tools to navigate the challenges a diagnosis brings, we are shaping local leaders through the Sisterhood Circles program. When one mom's transformation leads to her willingness to say "**YES**," followed by other moms joining together with a resounding "**YES**," caregivers begin to experience support, healing, and hope that results in families' lives being changed forever.

yes!

- ♥ I will love families labeled by diagnosis
- ♥ I will encourage others out of isolation and into acceptance
- ♥ I will bring resources to my community that facilitate emotional & mental health
- ♥ I will start a sisterhood circle to support my community

I was immediately
overwhelmed...

every single mom in this giant room
understood what I was going through.

The intentional activities and
conversations allowed me to connect
and refocus on my own needs for the
first time in years."

~Morgan (Houston, TX)

SH
SA
YE
forever



Labeled as a mom
to a child with
Severe Traumatic
Brain Injury



Labeled as a
mom to a child
with Rare Genetic
Disorder



Labeled as a
mom to a child
with Cerebral
Palsy

THE AID ES *er changed*



Labeled as a
mom to a child
with Down
Syndrome



Labeled as a
mom to a
child with
Autism



Labeled as a mom
to a child with
Mitochondrial
Depletion Disorder

WEEKEND OF HOPE *retreat*



Biodegradable Balloons were released to symbolize healing, unity, and strength.

“Finding the beauty in our brokenness made me feel more worthy, like maybe I am capable of this,” Rachel B. shares about her retreat experience alongside 185 other special needs moms.

It's called the "Weekend of Hope" because every speaker and session carries an intentional message to **combat life-long caregiver burnout**.

On the last day of the retreat before final goodbyes, the sky in Colorado Springs was taken over by a breathtaking view of pink balloons. During a moment of reflection, each mom wrote powerful, positive "I am" statements on her own balloon. The moms released these balloons into the world together as a metaphor for **never being alone**, especially when feeling overwhelmed as a mother to a child with a life-long disability.

The day before moms participated in a similar activity but with broken pottery and using a 15th

century practice called kintsugi which means "joining with gold". This reminded moms that like a broken piece of pottery, their lives may be infused with fragility, setbacks, and unpredictability, but like a plate that is broken it can be pieced back together becoming more beautiful. They then repaired the broken plates and covered the cracks with gold paint **symbolizing the healing** that leads to strengthening themselves to care for their families.

Through powerful connective experiences like these, forever friendships are formed. Speakers at the retreat addressed topics related to mental and emotional healing, acceptance, resilience, self-help, grief, and faith. Then beyond the retreat Labeled & Loved nurtures caregivers and their families through our year round programs, including community outreach events, curriculum-based support groups, a free inspirational weekly text subscription, and other resources.





2023 IMPACT

at a glance

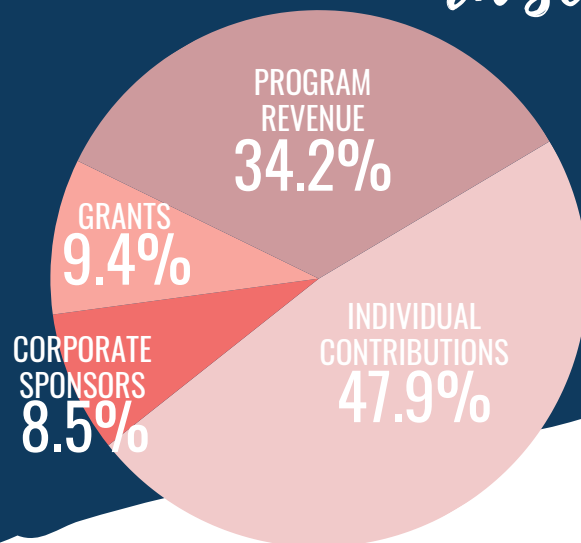
What is Labeled & Loved's impact in 2023?	
Who we serve	
Inclusion of families representing	144 disabilities
Families Served Nationally across	34 States
Families Served Internationally across	3 Countries
2023 Weekend of Hope Retreat	
Location	Colorado Springs, CO
Moms attending Retreat	186
Moms receiving Scholarships	24
Retreat Volunteers	14
Retreat Sponsors	14
Community Outreach	
National Leader Led Outreach Events	7
Local Leader Led Outreach Events	26
Support Groups (Sisterhood/ Faith & Friendship)	
Caregivers joined for Support Groups	243
Volunteer Local City Leaders	8
Volunteer Virtual Leaders (Support Sisters)	9
Volunteer In Person Leaders (Support Sisters)	40
Other	
Sticky Notes for the Heart Text Subscribers	964
Total Volunteers	79
Total Financial Contributors, Donors, Sponsors	395

\$261,336.67 FUNDS
raised

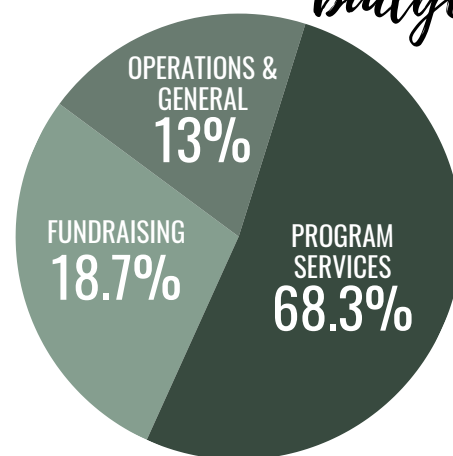
*Is fundraising
efficient in 2023?*

FOR EVERY
\$1.00
received only

15¢
*was spent
fundraising*



EXPENSE
budget



Labeled & **LOVED**

2023 DREAM TEAM

With gratitude, we thank you for countless volunteered hours, love & support! Because of this team Labeled & Loved's mission is made possible.

SERVED ON BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Julie Hornok, Co-Founder & President
- Dr. Regina Crone, Co- Founder & Vice-President
- Kami Schaal, Secretary
- Laura Lopez Williams, Treasurer
- Dr. Lisa Pena, Co-Founder & Board Member
- Stephanie Hanrahan, Co-Founder & Board Member
- Ellen Herbert, Board Member
- Morgan Gordon, Board Member

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- July Bekker
- Karly Gonzalez
- Kati Moser
- Leigh Dusek
- Megan Greenlaw
- Monica Everett
- Nikki Drago
- Selina Ortiz

SPECIAL *thank you*
TO OUR PREMIUM PARTNERS

Southwest



ANGELS OF CARE
PEDIATRIC HOME HEALTH

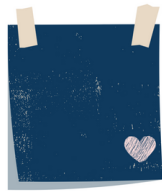


Wealth
Management

PROGRAMS THAT MAKE AN *impact*



SISTERHOOD
circles



STICKY NOTES
for the heart



FAITH &
friendship



COMMUNITY
events



WEEKEND



Memphis, TN

WEEKEND OF HOPE

2024

retreat

IMPACT A LIFE *today*

PARENTS THAT HAVE
children WITH A DISABILITY
have a

divorce
rate **OVER 85%**

90% INCREASED RISK
for anxiety

95% increased risk for
DEPRESSION

(Scherer N, Verhey I, Kuper H..., 2019; Buscho, 2023).



Thank You!



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