

## **Tucker's Treehouse IMPACT 100 Finalist Grant Summary:**

Tucker's Treehouse was once merely a vision for HPC Bereavement Coordinator, Caleb Potter, back in 2018. In his capacity as a bereavement coordinator, Caleb has dedicated significant time collaborating closely with local recovery programs such as Dismas House Charities and Friends of Sinners. While actively engaged within this community, Caleb discerned a profound correlation between adult addiction, recovery, and the formative childhood experiences many of them encountered, primarily the death of a loved one or dissolution of their household (i.e. divorce). Recognizing the significance of addressing childhood grief early on, Caleb embarked on researching organizations nationwide that specialize in supporting children dealing with grief. He firmly believed that by intervening in grief at an early stage, the potential negative, long-term impact on their adult lives could be significantly reduced. Our focus is on catering to children and youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Additionally, we aim to offer resources and educational support to parents and caregivers involved in nurturing the children who participate in Tucker's Treehouse.

Tucker's Treehouse will be located at 3419 Wathens Crossing in Owensboro, Kentucky, located on the lower level of the HPC - Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Kentucky administrative building. During the startup phase, HPC generously provided this space to Tucker's Treehouse, stipulating a nominal rental fee of \$1 for future use. Initially, the space will offer four rooms available for utilization, with the potential for expansion to include an additional eight spaces in the future. HPC generously covered the painting expenses to enhance these spaces and make them more appealing to children.

At Tucker's Treehouse, we firmly believe in offering a secure haven for every child to navigate the complexities of grief. Our establishment will provide a comforting and empathetic setting where children can engage with peers for mutual support. Our primary objective is to equip children and families with the tools to face grief's trials with resilience and optimism. Within Tucker's Treehouse, it is acknowledged that it is healthy to acknowledge one's struggles. We are dedicated to delivering empathetic support and access to resources that aid in the healing and flourishing of children and caregivers. Through the funding requested in this program, our aim is to cultivate a nurturing environment for children to interconnect through recreational, emotional, and artistic outlets while progressing through their grieving process. Our aspiration is to instill hope and assure a brighter future for those children and young adults who are unfamiliar with healthy grieving practices. Securing funding from Impact 100 would greatly facilitate the enhancement of these existing spaces, transforming them into inviting and vibrant environments for the children.

Since the beginning, HPC has been a steadfast supporter of the vision for Tucker's Treehouse. Through direct observation, HPC has recognized the critical need for enhanced children's grief support in the face of bereavement. For years HPC has extended its free grief counseling services beyond hospice-related losses to encompass children coping with the loss of a parent or loved one due to circumstances such as sudden and unexpected deaths by suicide, addiction, and or other tragic events. For 25 years HPC hosted Camp Courage, a single-day children's grief camp. However, over time it became evident that a more extended program was necessary to truly address the needs of the attending children.

In 2022, after years of pursuit, Caleb received the gratifying news that HPC had secured funding from the Eluna Network (a nationwide grief support organization). This support enabled the launch of Camp Erin, a weekend-long children's grief and healing camp. The upcoming third edition of the camp is set to take place at Gasper River in Bowling Green, KY, attracting over 40 children annually, between ages 6 and 17, with a growing number of new applicants each year. Through this extended camp experience, HPC has observed the profound impact of unaddressed grief on the youth within our local community and beyond. While primarily serving children from the local service areas, the camp has also welcomed families from out of state, one traveling from as far as Philadelphia and Illinois. This camp was groundbreaking for the realization of the steadfast need for Tuckers Treehouse. So often we hear from campers the weekend wasn't long enough, they are eager to continue growing those relationships with individuals with the same grief as themselves.

An organization such as Tucker's Treehouse can enhance its community impact by fostering numerous partnerships to maximize the services it provides. Caleb Potter, the Executive Director of Tucker's Treehouse, has successfully cultivated strong affiliations with various entities, including local schools, churches, health care systems, and rehabilitation centers. With a wealth of experience as a bereavement coordinator at HPC Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Kentucky, these established relationships are poised to connect Tucker's Treehouse with a diverse group of young individuals who can greatly benefit from its resources and services. The involvement of community adult professionals, ranging from educators to healthcare providers, psychologists, and mental health clinicians through HPC's Camp Erin, showcases the collective commitment to youth bereavement education within the Greater Owensboro Area and beyond. These individuals represent organizations dedicated to providing personalized grief support, fostering meaningful one-on-one interactions within our community.

Hospice and Palliative Care of Western Kentucky (HPC) has demonstrated a profound commitment to Tucker's Treehouse by allocating time from several senior leadership members and sponsoring educational travel expenses for Caleb Potter, the Executive Director of Tucker's Treehouse. This support aims to raise awareness within the community about the program's future potential. Additionally, HPC facilitated the acquisition of Tucker (therapy dog), the dedicated mascot of Tucker's Treehouse, who plays a vital role in engaging and comforting the children in attendance. Tucker underwent extensive training to become a certified therapy dog, with all associated costs for training and maintenance covered by HPC. The Chief Financial Officer, Janie Mahoney, played a crucial role in collaborating with HPC to facilitate the establishment of Tuckers Treehouse as a recognized 501C3 entity. Brenda Knollenberg, the acting CEO of HPC, has been a dedicated advocate from the project's inception, providing unwavering support to realize the vision of Tuckers Treehouse to the HPC Board of Directors. Through the steadfast assistance of this organization, we are confident that Tucker's Treehouse is poised for a promising future.

**FORM D**  
**GRANT CAPITAL REQUEST BUDGET**

**Name of Organization:** Tucker's Treehouse

**Time Period:** 2024-

<i>Items typical for capital project:</i>	
<b>REVENUES/SUPPORT</b>	<b>BUDGET</b>
Corporate grants	100,000
Foundation grants	
Gov't. grants/contracts/per diem	
Contributions	2,000
United Way	
Other federated campaigns	
Fine Arts Funds	
Membership dues	
Special events, fundraisers	
Sponsorships	
Admissions	
Sales, rent	
Revenue, tuition	
Investment income	
Interest, dividends	
Loans	
Tax credits	
Other	
<b>Total Revenue</b>	102,000
<b>CAPITAL EXPENSES</b>	
Purchases - Playground	32,768
Installations - Playground	8,000
Site preparations - Volcano Room	10,746
Furnishings	49,090
Professional fees	
Contingency	
Other	
<b>Total Capital</b>	100,604