



Right Beside Widowed Parents, Every Step of the Way

2022–2026 IMPACT REPORT

Enduring, impactful support for widowed families.

*Four years ago, we launched with a single family and a promise.
Today, that promise has grown into a national movement for widowed parents and their
children.*

A Letter From Our Board of Directors

Dear Friend of WPRP,

On May 2, 2016, our co-founder, Kelly Orrico, survived a massive stroke at age 39. In the weeks that followed, her husband C.J. faced the very real possibility of raising their four children alone. That glimpse of what life as a widower could look like never left him, and it planted the seed for something bigger than either of them imagined.

Kelly recovered fully, but she couldn't shake the question: what is my purpose, and how am I to glorify God with the minutes I have left here on Earth? Through Bible studies and the Holy Spirit, God put James 1:27 on her heart. At the time, they had already been supporting several widowed families. She began researching the needs of widowed parents, and on National Widows Day, May 3, 2022, Widowed Parent Relief Project (WPRP) was launched publicly as a 501(c)(3).

WPRP is still the only nonprofit in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to offering wraparound care to widowed parents raising children at home. That distinction matters to us because the number one indicator of how well a child will adjust to the loss of their parent is the functioning level of their surviving parent.

In four years, we've grown from a personal mission into an organization with a full-time staff, a national volunteer base, and three distinct pathways for parents to find support: Parent Connect, Parent Community, and our personalized Parent Care Program. In 2026, we crossed a milestone we're especially proud of: the launch of Parent Connect, our fully virtual platform, opening our doors to widowed parents anywhere, regardless of geography, income, or season of life.

None of this happens without you. Every donor, Family Friend, church partner, and community sponsor is a vital part of the promise we make to every family we serve: no widowed parent has to face grief alone. Thank you for standing right beside us - and right beside our widowed families.

With gratitude and hope,

Jason Conklin, President, and all of the WPRP Board of Directors



James 1:27 - The truest form of religion is to care for widows and orphans in their distress....

Who We Are

At Widowed Parent Relief Project (WPRP), we walk alongside widowed parents as they navigate life after loss. As the only nonprofit in the U.S. dedicated exclusively to offering wraparound care to widowed parents with dependent children, we meet families where they are. We recognize that as life moves forward, consistent support can become harder to find - so we stay, providing practical help, community, and hope over time.

For widowed parents, most support ends after the first few months; however, parenting through loss does not. WPRP walks alongside families every step of the way.



Katie and her husband had just moved into a new home with their 3-year old when he passed unexpectedly. Today she is one of WPRP's biggest supporters.

OUR MISSION

Help build an enduring community support system and alleviate everyday stressors for widowed parents, so they can spend more time with their children and focus on their family's mental health and healing.

Our Why

- Our Faith: The Bible calls us to care for orphans and widows in their distress (James 1:27).
- Our Children: A child's ability to heal is closely tied to the well-being of the surviving parent, who often experiences prolonged stress after loss.
- Our Neighbors: Many widowed parents report feeling isolated and abandoned.

Who We Walk Alongside

We support widowed parents raising children at home who are navigating the emotional, financial, and practical realities of loss. Our families come from all backgrounds and experiences, but they share one truth: grief changes everything. Finding support unique to them makes a difference.

Widowed parents are part of every neighborhood. Supporting them strengthens families, helps children thrive, and builds healthier communities.

How We Support Parents

We offer multiple pathways for connection and care. Parents engage in the way that best fits their family's needs and circumstances and may participate in one program or move between programs over time, encouraging them to move forward with hope.

Parent Connect - Virtual Support | Nationwide

A private, online community exclusively for widowed parents. Parents connect with others who understand, join virtual workshops and sessions, and access trusted resources and information - from anywhere, on their own schedule.

Parent Community - Local Support | Select Regions

Our local platform for parents who desire connection, encouragement, and support close to home. These connections include family gatherings, connection to trusted local businesses, and church support.



A WPRP family enjoys a Parent Community outing.

Parent Care - Personalized Support | Select Regions

Year-long, individualized relief and compassionate support, including: paid services (professional home cleaning and organization), connections to personal and financial counselors, school supply and self-care stipends, and volunteer programs.

Family Friend Program

Trained volunteers are partnered with parents in Parent Care to offer compassionate companionship, guidance, and advocacy - showing up, listening, and providing a steady presence for one full year.

Adopt-a-Family Program

Volunteers, donors, and community partners provide targeted support during critical moments - holidays, back-to-school seasons, or unexpected hardships - whether as a short-term gesture or a long-term commitment.

Our Journey So Far

What began as one family's story has become a growing national movement.

Here's a glimpse of how far we've come.

2021 - Laying the Groundwork

Kelly Orrico begins researching the needs of widowed parents, and in September, applies for WPRP's nonprofit charter, receiving 501(c)(3) status the following April. Before serving its first family, the organization's inaugural year was dedicated to establishing and developing a founding board of directors, researching best practices in grief and mental health to create a research-based program model centered on the social support widowed parents need most, and building the policies, procedures, and operational processes that continue to guide both WPRP's programs and its governance.

2022 - WPRP Is Born

C.J. and Kelly Orrico officially launch Widowed Parent Relief Project on National Widows Day, May 3, 2022. In our first partial year, generous individual donors contribute over \$208,000 in support, and our first Family Friends are matched with 12 families.

2023 - Building the Foundation

The Family Friend model matures, our annual fundraiser, Family Friendly, launches, and word-of-mouth referrals from churches and community partners, such as Two Rivers Church begin to expand our reach across Knoxville, TN.

2024 - Formal Partnerships Take Hold

United Way of Greater Knoxville awards WPRP a Community Investment Grant, formally recognizing our alignment with regional priorities in Economic Mobility, Early Care & Education, and Healthy Communities. We add dedicated Family Care and Parent Services & Resource Coordinator staff roles.

2025 - A Year of Expansion

Since our 2022 launch, WPRP has served a cumulative total of 38 parents and 124 children. In 2025 alone, we mobilized 238 volunteers who gave more than 1,000 hours, and forged 29 new community partnerships. The Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee awards a \$50,000 grant to help fund our next chapter: a virtual platform for widowed parents nationwide.

2026 - Parent Connect Launches

In March 2026, we launch Parent Connect - our first fully virtual, nationwide platform - removing barriers of geography, transportation, and childcare for widowed parents everywhere to receive informational and emotional support. Within weeks, 55 parents have already joined.

2025: A Year of Impact by the Numbers

38 & 124 PARENTS and CHILDREN SERVED SINCE 2022	238 VOLUNTEERS MOBILIZED
1,000+ VOLUNTEER HOURS	29 NEW PARTNERSHIPS
\$374,134 TOTAL RAISED	\$50,000 TRINITY HEALTH FOUNDATION GRANT

In Their Own Words: What Parents Report

94% SAY WPRP HELPED REDUCE THEIR ANXIETY	100% SAY WPRP SERVICES LET THEM SPEND MORE TIME WITH THEIR CHILDREN
100% SATISFIED WITH WPRP SERVICES	94% REPORT INCREASED CONFIDENCE

Hope in Action: Donor Support

Donor support directly powers home cleaning, home organizing, service projects, self-care stipends, education supplies and extracurricular activities, community-building events, and special-occasion and commemorative gifts that remind widowed families they are not alone. Nearly half of every dollar invested directly in families helped relieve the burden of maintaining a home after the loss of a spouse.

Household Support	47%
Mental Health/Self Care	16%
Connection and Encouragement	19%
Children's Support, Education and Extracurricular	18%

Financial Stewardship

We are committed to being faithful stewards of every dollar entrusted to us. Below is a snapshot of our growth from our first partial year of operation in 2022 to 2025

2025 Financial Summary

Total Revenue	\$387,388
Total Expenses	\$135,525
Increase in Net Assets (strategically reserved - see below)	\$251,863

How Every Dollar Is Used

Classified by function, as reported on our IRS Form 990, the large majority of our spending goes directly to programs:

Program Services	85% (\$115,750)
Management & General (Admin)	15% (\$19,775)
Fundraising	<1%*

85% of every dollar spent by WPRP supports programs that directly serve widowed families—well above the 65% benchmark commonly used by charity evaluators, and reflects the officially filed classification available to any donor or funder who reviews our public Form 990.

*Per standard nonprofit accounting practice, direct costs of our Family Friendly fundraiser are reported net against event revenue on our Form 990 rather than as a separate fundraising expense line - the event itself directly raised \$15,339 in 2025. Form 990 functional expense totals (\$135,525) differ slightly from our P&L total (\$147,517.22) for this same reason.

Who Supported WPRP in 2025

Individuals and Families	57.2%	\$194,113.15
Organizations	21.6%	\$73,376.40
Grants from Other Nonprofits	15.2%	\$51,581.00
Corporate & Foundation grants	5.9%	\$20,000.00

For comparison, in our first partial year (May–December 2022), individual donors contributed just over \$208,000, launching our very first families into care. Since then, annual contributions have grown by nearly 63%.

Why We Carry a Reserve

Our 2025 net income reflects intentional, board-approved reserve-building. As we grow, that reserve is earmarked for five specific priorities: transitioning our Executive Director from a volunteer role into a compensated position that reflects the scope of leading a growing organization; hiring dedicated technology and data infrastructure staffing to support our expanding platforms; building out the Parent Care Hybrid and Parent Connect platforms; funding expansion into new cities beyond East Tennessee; and establishing our first endowment fund to protect WPRP's long-term sustainability.

A Broad, Community-Powered Donor Base

While institutional grants like Trinity Health Foundation and United Way of Greater Knoxville have been instrumental to our growth, our funding base is not limited to a handful of large gifts. Family Friendzy, our signature annual peer-to-peer fundraiser, is supported by more than 400 individual donors every year - reflecting broad, grassroots community investment in our mission alongside our institutional partners.



Team spirit at our annual Family Friendzy fundraiser.

Heroes Hope Stipend: 2025 Snapshot

The Heroes Hope fund provided a \$500 educational stipend per child, benefiting 22 children in 2025 - primarily for extracurricular activities, educational support, and after-school care. Remaining funds are held in a dedicated reserve to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Heroes Hope program as more families are served. Spending reflected full compliance with fund policy, with no indication of prohibited expenses.

Governance & Accountability

WPRP operates under a full governance framework established at our founding. Thus, established policies include: Conflict of Interest, Whistleblower, Privacy, Confidentiality, among others. As an organization, WPRP carries Directors & Officers (D&O) liability insurance. Our 2026 goals include a scheduled review and refresh of these existing policies as we grow.

WPRP has filed a Form 990 every year since our founding, available upon request or through GuideStar/Candid.

Stories of Hope

Behind every statistic is a family. Here is what your support has made possible.



Teresa, WPRP Parent, with her son at a Valentine's Day cookie decorating day, hosted by Farragut High School Home Economics teacher.

"WPRP stepped in and became our family. They fully supported us and helped fulfill every need we had. They provided services that relieved so much stress during a time when everything felt overwhelming."

- Teresa, WPRP Parent

"WPRP helped to reduce my stress during the toughest time in my life. It's amazing knowing that so many wonderful people are in my corner. This organization has had a profound impact on my son. If you don't get involved with WPRP for yourself, do it for your child!"

- Katie, WPRP Parent

"Walking alongside my parent on her journey has been deeply rewarding. Together, we've built a support system she can truly rely on, and I've seen firsthand how strength and resilience grow when someone feels genuinely supported."

- Susie, WPRP Family Friend



A Family Friend and WPRP parent, walking the journey together through the parent's pregnancy.

"WPRP is an amazing organization that was able to come alongside our family after the passing of my wife to provide love, support, and a path forward as we tried to put life back together."

- Scott, WPRP Parent

Milestones that Matter

- A parent who once said, "I can't open my bills" received financial counseling and legal support. She then was able to begin pursuing a career as a Physical Therapist.
- A frozen bank account was restored within two months through the help of a WPRP legal partner.
- A widowed parent received mentorship and launched her own small business.
- Guardianship papers and wills have been created or revised for families who had no plan in place.
- A mom who strived to obtain a drivers license for 3 years passed her test and was a beneficiary of a donated SUV, helping her transport her 6 children.
- A mom started her own cleaning service after receiving the gift of paid home cleaning from WPRP. It was such a blessing to her to receive these services. She felt compelled to help other WPRP families going through similar situations.
- A failing high school student was named "Student of the Month" by the end of the year.

Alumni Giving Back

One of our most meaningful outcomes is watching families with whom we have partnered turn around to serve others. Over the years, alumni parents have been inspired.

- Founded a peer support community for alumni parents and widows in the broader Knoxville area, offering social engagement and Bible study.
- Launched "Mom, You Are Not Alone," a podcast coaching single parents on financial confidence and freedom.
- Taken on leadership of the local chapter of Never Alone, offering support groups, conferences, and retreats to widows across the country and widowed community.
- Two of our Alumni Parents have joined the WPRP staff, one serving as Community Engagement & Resource Coordinator (full-time) and the other as Family Care Coordinator (part-time).
- An alumni mom who is a law professor has generously volunteered her expertise in estate planning, providing clinics and pro bono legal services to help ensure every WPRP family has a will in place. This service strengthens long-term family security and financial stability. She also engages her law students in serving WPRP families, giving students valuable real-world experience while providing parents with an essential legal service.
- An alumni mom has been a guest speaker and strong advocate for WPRP through her engagement with Farragut Ladies Society, Tiles and Testimonies, TVAMP Night to Replenish, and other social groups to bring awareness of WPRP. These engagements increase the success of WPRP and the likelihood of increased individual donations, community involvement and volunteers.

63% of Alumni Parents return to volunteer for WPRP.

54% of our Parents have participated on a fundraising team for our annual Family Friendly event.

Community Partners Standing Beside Us

Churches, businesses, healthcare partners, and community organizations across East Tennessee have made our work possible - and their confidence in WPRP's next chapter speaks for itself.

Heritage Family

As a regional funeral home network spanning 13 East Tennessee locations and more than 75 homes nationally, Heritage Family has sponsored WPRP's annual Family Friendly event and offered a letter of support for our expansion into virtual programming, citing the "quiet pain, emotional isolation, and logistical overwhelm" widowed parents face every day.

Two Rivers Church

Over the past three years, Two Rivers Church has completed more than 25 home improvement projects for WPRP families through their Acts 2 program, in addition to annual financial gifts, fundraiser support, and volunteer recruitment. Deacon Danny Matthews has called WPRP's mission "deeply aligned" with the church's own commitment to caring for those in need.

Trinity Health Foundation of East Tennessee

Trinity Health Foundation awarded WPRP a \$50,000 grant to support the development of our virtual Parent Connect platform - a foundational investment in reaching widowed families beyond our local footprint.

United Way of Greater Knoxville (UWGK)

WPRP is a UWGK Community Investment Grant partner, aligned with the organization's priorities in Economic Mobility, Early Care & Education, and Healthy Communities. Over an 18-month reporting period, WPRP onboarded new families, launched Parent Connect, and formed twelve new nonprofit, business, and church partnerships - including the Tennessee Nonprofit Network, Crisis Hotline 211, 100 Women Who Care-Knoxville, and the University of Tennessee's College of Social Work (SWORPS), which now provides rigorous third-party evaluation of our programs.



A WPRP Parent Community gathering at Summer Moon Coffee.

Where We're Going

OUR BIGGEST 2026 MILESTONE

Parent Connect Has Launched

Our first fully virtual, nationwide platform is live - giving widowed parents anywhere in the country a safe, private, stigma-free space to connect, access resources, and engage at their own pace. Fifty-five parents have already joined, and we're just getting started.

Our 2026 Action Plan builds on this momentum. Over the next year, we are working to:

- Serve 75 Parent Connect parents and 20 Parent Care / Parent Care-Hybrid families.
- Test and launch our new Hybrid platform, blending virtual and in-person support.
- Establish 6 new church partners and 10 new agency or business supporters.
- Launch a redesigned website and new platform-specific marketing materials for parents, donors, and community partners.
- Recruit 15 new Family Friends, including at least 5 serving virtually.
- Secure \$30,000 in corporate sponsorships and continued financial support from four church partners.
- Deepen our evaluation practices in partnership with UT's SWORPS, using validated tools like the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale to measure reportable outcomes.
- Launch processes for allocations to mental health counseling.

Every one of these goals exists for one reason: to make sure that as we grow, widowed parents move forward with hope - no matter where they live.

Our Leadership

Founders & Board

Kelly Orrico	Co-Founder & Executive Director
C.J. Orrico	Co-Founder & Board Vice President
Jason Conklin	Board President
George Steinbarger	Board Director, Treasurer
Beth Eichhorn	Board Director, Bookkeeper
David Luhn	Board Director
Deborah Noe	Board Director
Melissa Mijares	Board Director
Dr. Angie Liske	Board Director
Rebekah Stephens	Board Director, Secretary

Staff

Dana Karnowski	Family Care Coordinator
Aly Taylor	Family Care Coordinator
Stephanie Evans-Hall	Parent Services & Resource Coordinator

Our board and staff bring decades of combined experience in finance, law, HR, medicine, and nonprofit leadership - and, in several cases, lived experience as widows or children of widows themselves. That mix of professional expertise and personal understanding is at the heart of how we serve.

Join Us

Together, we can make sure no widowed parent faces grief alone.

Ways to Get Involved

- Give Financially: Fund direct services like home cleaning, self-care stipends, mental health, and educational support.
- Become a Family Friend: Walk alongside a widowed parent for a year as a trained, consistent presence.
- Adopt a Family: Provide targeted support during holidays, back-to-school, or unexpected hardships.
- Partner With Us: Churches, businesses, and community organizations can sponsor events, host volunteer opportunities, or offer pro bono or discounted services.
- Host a team in our Family Friendly annual event.

Contact Us

wprp.org | support@wprp.org | 865.888.7274 | P.O. Box 22545, Knoxville, TN 37933

All platforms and services are completely free to the widowed parents we serve - made possible entirely by donors and partners like you.

