

2024 | Barren Heights

ANNUAL REPORT

Providing free weekend respite retreats & community events for families of children with disabilities since 2004





S'mores by the bonfire are a favorite family retreat activity each weekend.



Guests love playing games and eating a free meal at Family Fellowship Lunch.

**"At Barren Heights,
there is NO barrier to
entry. Your family can
just show up, and BH
takes care of the rest!"**
—Family Retreat Guest Parent



We offer optional archery at some of our retreats, which always hits the mark!



We love seeing smiles of joy on the faces of our guests!



Special needs moms have the best time relaxing at our annual Mom's Night Out.

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One in four families in the US is affected by disabilities, and yet they are often overlooked, unconsidered, and misunderstood in society. Since hosting our first retreat in 2004, we have sought to create welcoming spaces of love, acceptance, and safety for families of children with disabilities through volunteer-led family retreats at our beautiful Retreat Center in Scottsville, KY. In 2015, we multiplied our efforts by opening our Community Center to promote sustained community opportunities in the Louisville area. Through generous donor and volunteer support, we are able to offer opportunities for respite and life-changing community at no charge to special needs families—regardless of age and disability.

WHO WE ARE



Our splash pad is the place to be when the weather gets hot, and it's time for fun!

OUR MISSION

is simply to love and encourage families. We do this primarily by providing free weekend retreats and hosting community outreach events for families who have children with physical or developmental disabilities.

OUR VISION

is to create more compassionate communities through families serving families with the love of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, to further the Kingdom of God.

OUR VALUES

- honoring and glorifying God with our service
- keeping our actions above reproach
- doing all things in love
- being wise stewards of God's provisions
- striving for excellence
- bathing our mission in prayer
- keeping God's Word as our foundation

OUR TEAM

Abbi Rose, *Executive Director*
Lori Nelson, *Director of Development*
Maeghan Adams, *Marketing & Operations*
Tyler Schmitt, *Programming & Admin*

OUR BOARD

Courtney Wittsell, *President*
Doug Wood, *Vice President*
Anastasia Cummins, *Secretary*
Fritz Busch, *Treasurer*
Michael Cummins • Melissa Howell
Mark Lindeman • Dan Pierce
Maya Pierce • Vern Scheiter • John Weires

We Aim to Meet a Great Need Through Community

Families of children with disabilities often find themselves isolated and strained relationally, financially, and emotionally. It may be hard to feel understood and seen in their everyday lives, which can make finding community feel next to impossible. At Barren Heights, we aim to create opportunities that may never be possible otherwise by creating relational space for our families.

A Snapshot of Disability in the US



1 in 4
families in US
are affected by
disabilities



Of affected families,
**11.4% fall below
the poverty line**



Families affected by
disabilities are
19% less likely
to attend a church



Single mothers are
16% more likely
to have a child with
disabilities

Our Twofold Approach to Building Community

Respite Retreats

We host weekend retreats for the whole family eight months out of the year at our beautiful and nature-filled Retreat Center. Our two-to-three-day retreats offer families time to relax and refresh with their particular needs in mind. We strive to accommodate mobility, dietary, and sensory issues to make experiences that are often inaccessible fully accessible! Our uniqueness lies in our ability to serve the entire family, offer all of our services for free, and welcome all disabilities of all ages. From meals to accommodations to activities, the entire weekend is considered—and free!

Community Events

One weekend of fun and relaxation is so valuable, but what about the rest of the year? The community events we host play a vital role in creating year-round and consistent opportunities for building relationships. All of our events are a combination of support, respite, and inclusion and encourage families to connect with other families who understand their experience. We host events for the whole family, caregivers, siblings, and more around twice a month at our Community Center and throughout the Louisville area. And as always, all of our events are free!

WHAT WE DO



*At Barren Heights, all ages and all abilities
are loved, accepted, welcomed, & safe.*



Serving & Giving in 2024

In 2024, **411** donors invested in our mission and created more compassionate communities. What an incredible blessing! Because of that generosity, we hosted **3** specialty retreats, **16** family retreats, and **25** community events, impacting over **1,400** individuals. Overall, we served **401** families who have children with disabilities in 2024. Additionally, **405** volunteers joined in our mission to make each guest feel loved, accepted, welcomed, and safe.



405
volunteers
served our
community



25
community
events
hosted



411
donors
supported
financially



19
weekend
retreats
hosted



1,044
individuals
participated
in community



401
families with
disabilities
served



270
Children
received gifts
for Christmas



192
scoops of
ice cream
served





CELEBRATED 20 YEARS SERVING

In 2024, we celebrated our 20th year of serving families of children with disabilities!



MULTIPURPOSE BUILDING OPEN

The Lodge opened (debt-free!) with rooms for gathering, calming, and indoor sensory play.



MUSIC PARK UPGRADED

We upgraded from grass to a beautiful stone path making the music park accessible to all!



FIRST-TIME VOLUNTEERS

We had 12 new families volunteer to serve at our summer retreats, and 63 families served in total!



COMMUNITY EVENTS

We hosted a total of 25 inclusive, in-person community events throughout the year.

The Lodge has changed the game in how we can serve families throughout retreat season!

SUCCESSES



Our music park had an accessible glow up with the addition of a beautiful stone path!



*Sensory-Friendly Christmas Party
Saturday, December 7th*



2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

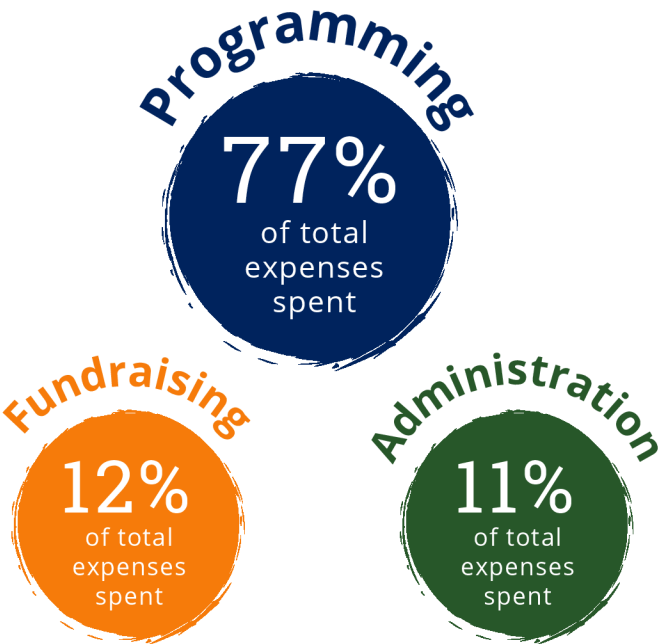
We are committed to sharing our financial status and planning with full truth and transparency. The following numbers and reports are for your review.

1,485

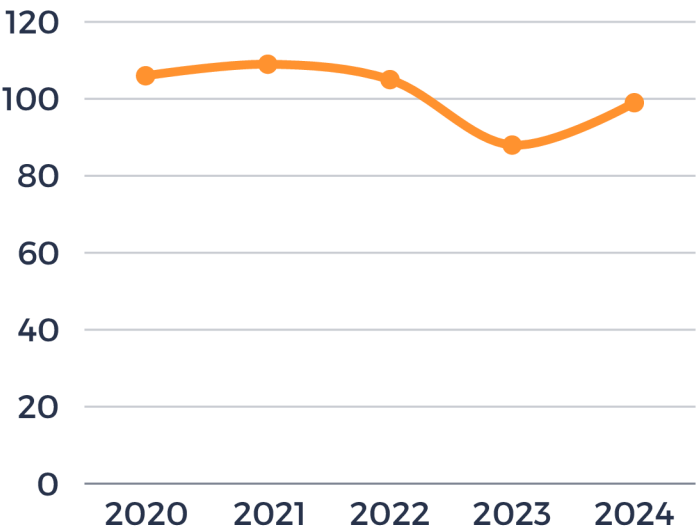
Total Number of Donations

411

Total Number of Donors

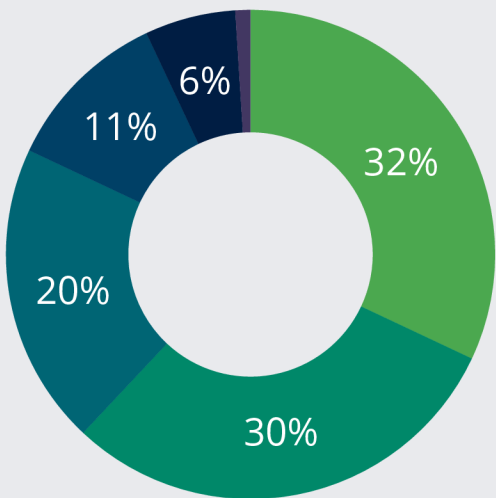


Monthly Donors



Percent of Income by Source

32%	Grants
30%	Monthly Donations & Individual Gifts
20%	Benefit Dinner
11%	The Lodge Fund
6%	Businesses
1%	Miscellaneous



2024 Strategic FOCUS AREAS

2024 was the year of the Lodge at Barren Heights! This long-anticipated multipurpose building significantly expanded our capacity to serve families and provide sensory-friendly spaces. Not only were we able to provide an indoor space to enjoy during inclement weather designed specifically with special needs families in mind, the Lodge provided new volunteer sleeping quarters with attached bathrooms making volunteering more comfortable and enticing for our families.

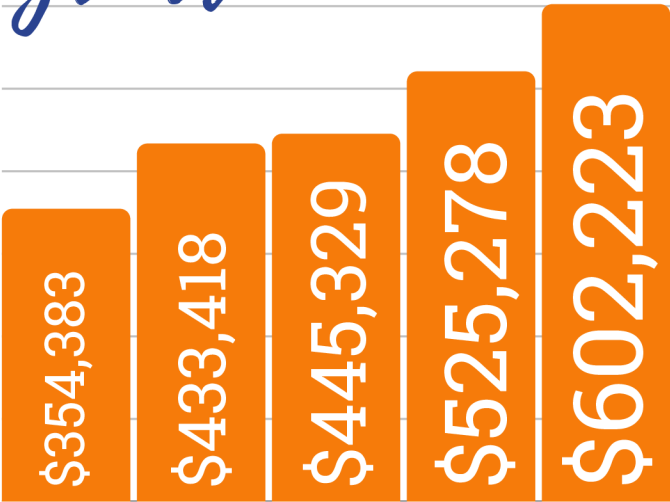
Speaking of volunteers, we successfully trained six new leader families and welcomed 12 new host families in 2024. Leader families are experienced feet on the ground throughout the weekend who coordinate the other volunteers, set the schedule for each day, and in short, make the retreat possible. Training and adding leaders and hosts are critical steps toward sustainability and our ability to add retreats to the season in the future.

Lastly, in 2024 we chose to shift our focus from quantity to quality. We hosted less events with increased intentionality to ensure we were accomplishing our vision to create more compassionate communities with the love of Christ, led by the Holy Spirit, in order to further the Kingdom of God.

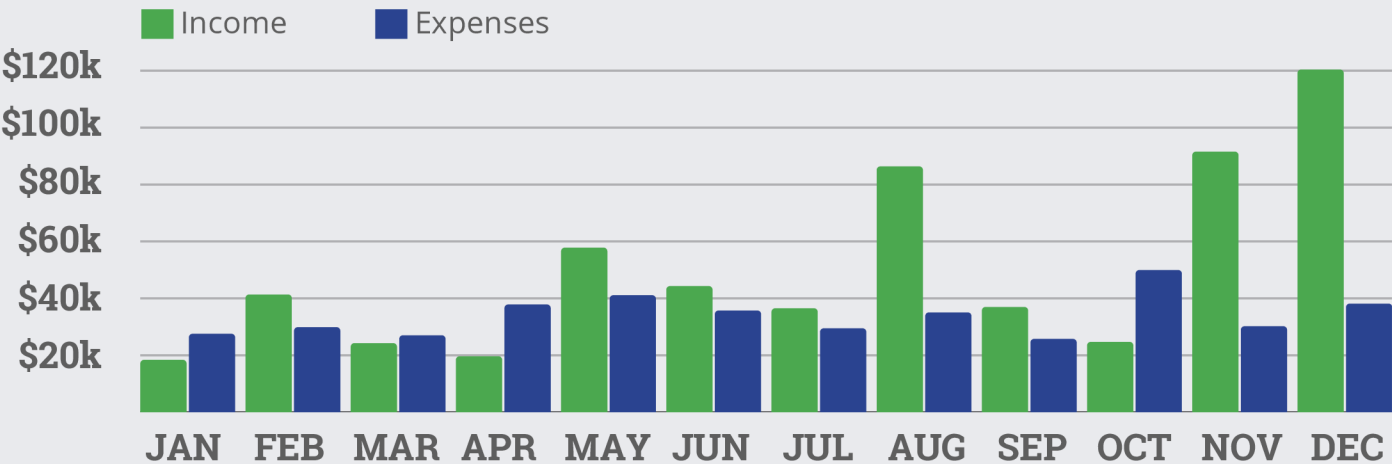
FY2024 Balance Sheet

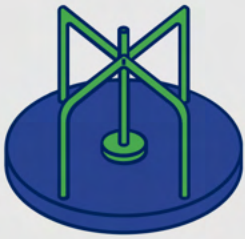
\$602,223	Total Revenue
\$407,666	Expenses
\$194,557	Excess/Deficit
\$1,485,804	Net Assets - End of Year

Annual Income Growth



2024 Monthly Income vs Expenses





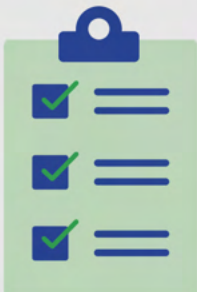
Create a new
**accessible
playground**



**Update
& repair**
Retreat Center
facilities



**Create
partnerships**
outside of the
Louisville area



Maintain &
recruit more
volunteers

2025 AND BEYOND

Building on the incredible momentum of 2024, we enter 2025 with a renewed commitment to growth, sustainability, and accessibility. Our goals will be to:

- **overhaul our current playground** with fully accessible standalone units on a unified surface that guests of all abilities and mobilities can enjoy!
- **update and repair our Retreat Center infrastructure** with new flooring, water heaters, paint, and siding to ensure its longevity and our ability to continue serving families for years to come.
- **seek partnerships outside Louisville** in areas like Owensboro, Bowling Green, Shelbyville, and Nashville, TN.
- **train leaders & retain volunteers** while continuing recruitment efforts—critical steps toward sustainability and the ability to add retreats to the season.

With these priorities at the forefront, 2025 promises to be a year of meaningful progress as we continue to strengthen our foundation, grow our community, and create transformative experiences for the families we serve.

OUR GOALS

Our volunteers have the best time playing with guest families during retreats!





Sometimes special needs caregivers just need time to get out and have fun with people who can relate to their struggles.



Kiddos love playing with the toys, games, and LEGO® blocks available in the Lodge.

*"You will make new friends who have many things in common with you and your struggles. Come pray, praise, and play together for a weekend away from home and daily stresses of life."
—Family Retreat Guest Parent*



There's nothing better than swinging in the sunshine on a beautiful day!



Pickleball and tennis are always a hit during our retreats.



The primary job for our volunteer children is to play and make our guests feel welcomed.

Barren Heights

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