

# 2024 Annual Report

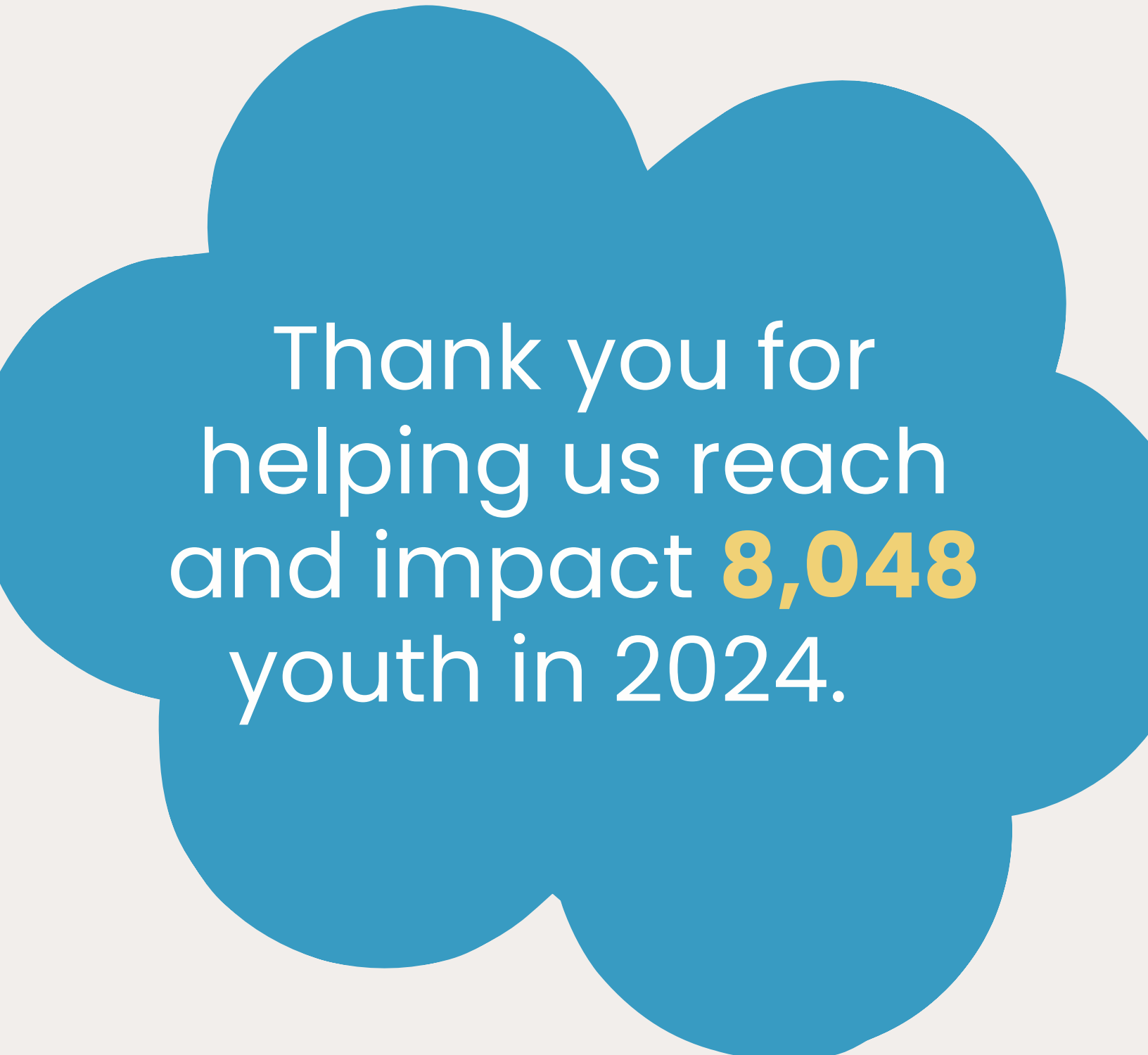
A light in the dark for grieving youth.



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At Learning Through Loss, we acknowledge the intergenerational Indigenous and youth loss and grief caused by colonialism. With gratitude, we respectfully acknowledge that Learning Through Loss works and serves on the lands of the Lekwungen speaking peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt (Kosapsum) Nations and the WSÁNEĆ peoples represented by the WJOLÉLP (Tsartlip), BOKÉĆEN (Pauquachin), STÁUTW (Tsawout), WSIKEM (Tseycum) and MÁLEXEL (Malahat) Nations.



Thank you for  
helping us reach  
and impact **8,048**  
youth in 2024.

Grief changes everything.  
Support does too.

# A note from our Board Chair, Samantha Magnus

What a year it has been for Learning Through Loss!

2024 marked a thrilling chapter in our organization's journey – our first full year with the incredible Meg Kant as Executive Director. With her steady leadership and bold vision, we've taken enormous strides in expanding our reach, deepening our impact, and bringing compassionate, youth-centered support to more communities than ever before.

This year saw the official launch of our Light in the Dark Schools program, our new on-demand program designed to equip teachers with the tools, training, and confidence to support grieving youth in their classrooms when they need it.

We also welcomed new counsellors and facilitators to our team, including our outstanding Program Director, Tamara Cotton. With their support, we delivered a record number of grief support workshops, served more youth in counselling than ever before, and provided more professional development sessions than any previous year.

And we're not slowing down.

Looking ahead to 2025, we're thrilled to announce our first-ever program funding in Richmond, helping us expand our footprint across B.C. – with special thanks to Casey Stainsby for her tireless support in making this possible. We've also secured our first funding for programs specifically supporting youth grieving due to the illicit drug crisis – an urgent need in our communities.

None of this would be possible without our passionate, committed Board of Directors. I want to extend my deepest thanks to every board member who volunteered their time, energy, and expertise – and a warm welcome to the new leaders who have stepped forward to help guide us into our next phase of growth.

We are closer than ever to realizing our vision: that no young person feels alone or unsupported in their grief.

Thank you for being part of this vital journey.

With gratitude and hope,  
Samantha Magnus  
President & Chair, Board of Directors  
Learning Through Loss

*Samantha Magnus*



# 2024 at a glance

8,048



Youth we've  
reached &  
impacted

↑209%

43



Good Grief  
Workshops

↑230%

200+



Counselling  
Sessions

141



Adult Workshop  
Participants

35



Counsellors  
Trained

2,786



Unique  
Website Users

↑39%

# From the people you helped support

## Students

"When we were talking in my group. I get different ways from each person how to face grief. **Today was so worth while of my time.**"

"I learned that **it is alright to think about loss.** I always try to forget about things that has happened."

"I really liked the workshop because I don't get taught about dealing with grief in school or from my family and I have to learn about it myself and **it's hard sometimes to do it alone.**"

"I learned that grief can come back, and that you will never be "over it" it will keep coming and changing as you live."

## School Staff

The teachers were happy to have someone who knows how to present to youth in an engaging way. It was a great experience.

# From the team

→ *What has been one of the most meaningful moments for you in this work?*



"Seeing the youth participants have "aha moments" during workshops – where they come to understand that loss spans many life experiences – not just death. They feel validated in their pain."

**Tamara Cotton**

Program Director & Facilitator

"Several students have come up to me and thanked the curriculum for recognition of the different kinds of loss that exist in a young person's world."

**Layla Casper**

Facilitator



→ *What is one thing you wish people understood better about youth grief?*



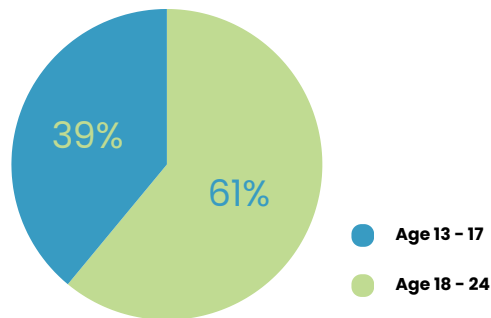
"Youth are very good at hiding their grief, like many of us are. Just because it isn't evident, doesn't mean it isn't there."

**Matt**

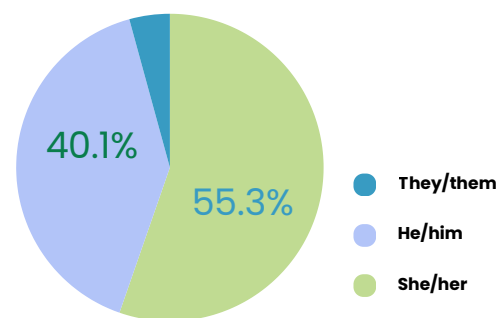
Counsellor

# Counselling Overview

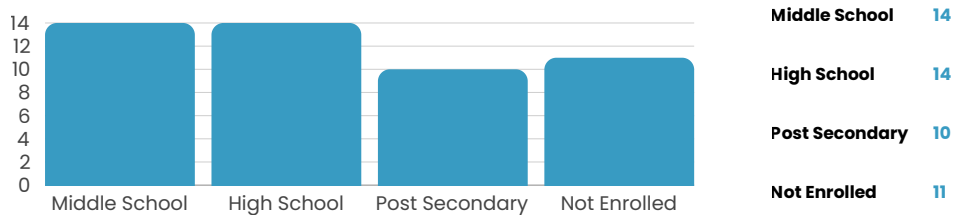
## Age



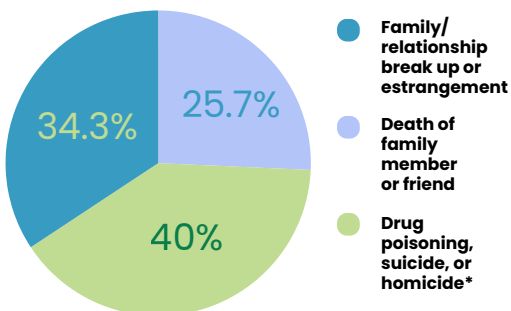
## Gender Identity



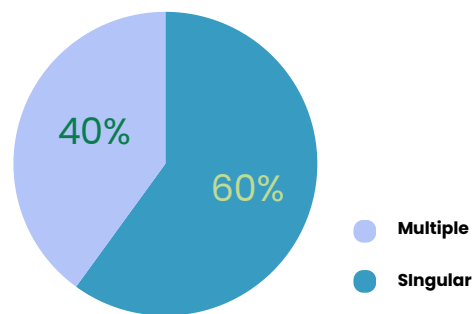
## School Attendance



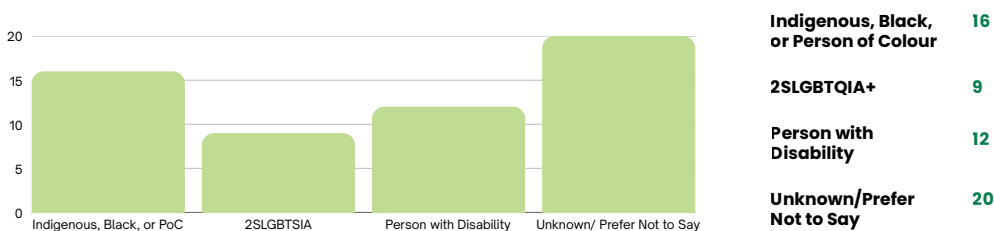
## Cause of Loss



## Singular vs. Multiple Losses



## Member of a Marginalized Group\*\*



\*For reporting purposes loss related to drug poisoning, suicide or homicide were categorized separately from death of a family member or friend.

\*\*Note % above 100% attributed to youth with multiple group identifiers

# Team Updates

## We hired a dedicated Program Director!

**Tamara Cotton**  
Program Director & Facilitator



One of our biggest highlights of 2024 was welcoming Tamara to LTL. With over 20 years of experience as a Child Life Specialist, Tamara brings deep expertise, incredible heart, and a fierce commitment to ensuring no young person has to grieve alone.

She's also a proud local, living in Victoria and actively contributing to her community for years. We're so lucky to have her on board.

## On top of that, we grew our team of counsellors and facilitators!

We welcomed 4 new counsellors and 3 new facilitators to the LTL family this year. They've already been making a huge impact in schools and communities across the province. We're so grateful for their wisdom, care, and dedication.

**"Bringing grief and loss awareness directly to youth in school is the best way to connect."**



**Layla Casper**  
Facilitator

# Volunteer Highlights

2024 was an incredible year for volunteer growth and we couldn't do this work without them. In addition to our powerhouse board of directors, we want to give a huge shoutout to:

- Laura Gomez – Social Media Manager
- Parsa Gerani – Marketing Associate
- Erika Scherschel – Communications Support Specialist
- Olivia Hahn – Youth Ambassador
- James Ngara – Website Support
- Casey Stainsby – Grant Writer Extraordinaire

You are all absolute magic. Thank you for helping us grow and glow!

TEAM &  
VOLUNTEERS



# Program Highlights



## Vancouver; here we come!

Thanks to two new grant funding streams, we're expanding our Good Grief Workshops into Vancouver and Richmond schools!

**This is a huge step in our goal to serve more youth across BC, and it wouldn't have been possible without the amazing Casey Stainsby.**

Casey, one of our longtime volunteers and facilitators, championed this project and helped secure the funding. We're so grateful for her dedication, passion, and vision.

## Indigenous Youth Loss & Grief Program

For the first time ever, LTL received funding from the Community Action Initiative (CAI) through **the BC Ministry of Health's Overdose Response Branch**. This three-year grant is going to help us provide life-changing support and culturally grounded resources for youth and families impacted by the **toxic drug crisis**.

We're honoured to be partnering with the **WSÁNEĆ Tribal School to co-develop an Indigenous Youth Grief and Loss program**. This collaboration is rooted in respect, reciprocity, and relationship, and we're excited for the journey ahead.



# Program Highlights

## Light in the Dark Subscription

This year, we launched something brand new: the Light in the Dark Subscription (LIDS), a first-of-its-kind grief education resource for schools.

In response to the growing need for grief and loss support in classrooms and communities (especially in rural and remote areas), we created an online platform for educators, school counsellors, and school professionals.

LIDS includes video lessons, scripts, printable resources, and professional tools to help school staff support youth through grief, whether they're in the midst of a loss or preparing for one.

Our long-term goal for the LIDS subscription is that every student in BC (and beyond) grows up with the skills, language, and support they need to navigate loss.

This resource isn't just for prevention, it's making a difference for young people right now.



# Media Highlights

*Our work matters, and the world is taking notice. Here's a look at how we've been featured in the media this year.*

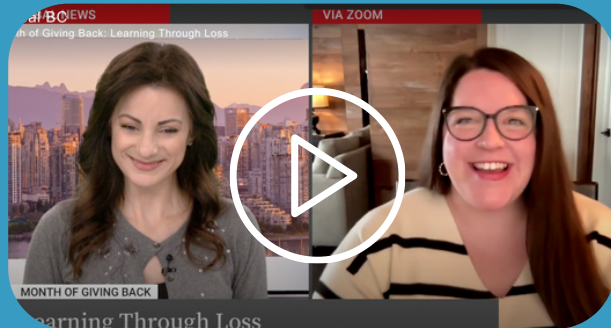


## PSA

30 Years of Bringing Light to the Darkness of Grief for Youth in B.C.

## Interview with our Executive Director

Global News Month of Giving Back



## No Youth Grieves Alone

Learning Through Loss Program Overview

# Raising Youth Voices



## EAT | CONNECT | INFLUENCE

In 2024, we hosted EAT | CONNECT | INFLUENCE, an incredible event focused on helping youth find their voice. Youth gathered for a day of great food, honest conversations, and community building.

A huge thank you to Fort Tectoria for donating their beautiful Rocket Lounge space, it made the day even more special.

This event was made additionally special, as we recorded our very first Podcast Episode for our Light in the Dark Podcast! Featuring the brilliant and wonderful Olivia Hahn.

# Looking ahead

## Megan Kant

Executive Director, Learning Through Loss

### 2024 was a huge year for LTL.

In our 30th year, Learning Through Loss made big, strategic, and mission-aligned moves. **We reached more young people. We deepened partnerships. We listened closely. We showed up in hard moments. And while we've made amazing progress, we know there's still so much more to do.**

When I stepped into the Executive Director role in February, I was lucky to follow in the footsteps of the brilliant Kathryn Dafos, who left us with a strong and thoughtful foundation. From there, our team, board, and volunteers took that momentum and ran with it. The energy, creativity, and care everyone brought to this work was next-level—and it's only the beginning.

### Looking ahead, here's where we're going:

- Deepening our partnership with the WSÁNEĆ School Board as we co-create culturally grounded grief support for Indigenous youth and families impacted by the toxic drug crisis.
- Continuing to invest in our team so we can grow with intention and stay grounded in what matters.
- Amplifying youth voices in everything we do, because they're the heart of this work.
- Expanding our Light in the Dark Subscription (LIDS) into more schools and communities.
- Growing our presence throughout BC so more young people can access the support they need.
- Building an inspired, engaged board and volunteer team that reflects the communities we serve.
- Strengthening community connections and partnerships right here in Victoria.

We're stepping into this next chapter with energy, thoughtfulness, and a whole lot of heart. We're here for the long haul, and we're so grateful to have you alongside us.

**Thank you for believing in this work. Together, we're creating a world where no young person has to face their grief alone.**

With so much love and gratitude,  
Meg Kant,  
Executive Director of Learning Through Loss

*Meg Kant*



# Thank you to our funders & contributors

Thank you to our funders and private contributors for recognizing the critical importance Learning Through Loss services to youth and families throughout Greater Victoria. We are deeply grateful for your ongoing financial support and would like to acknowledge the following funders who enable us to continue our mission.



**United Way**  
Southern  
Vancouver Island



**BRITISH  
COLUMBIA**  
Supported by the  
Province of British Columbia



**VICTORIA  
FOUNDATION**



TELUS Friendly  
Future Foundation

Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Community Services Recovery Fund

**Canada**



**community  
action  
initiative**



**RCHF**  
RICHMOND COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

It takes one light to see in the dark.  
**And each of us holds a spark.**



## **Your light is powering a dream.**

A world where no young person faces grief alone.

Today's youth are caught between a toxic drug crisis and a loneliness epidemic. And it shows: 40% of youth who reach out to us for no-cost counselling are grieving loss related to drug poisoning, suicide, or homicide.

Demand for youth grief support workshops has nearly tripled since 2023. Too many youth are sitting in the dark.

**Donate today at:**  
**[learningthroughloss.org](https://learningthroughloss.org)**

