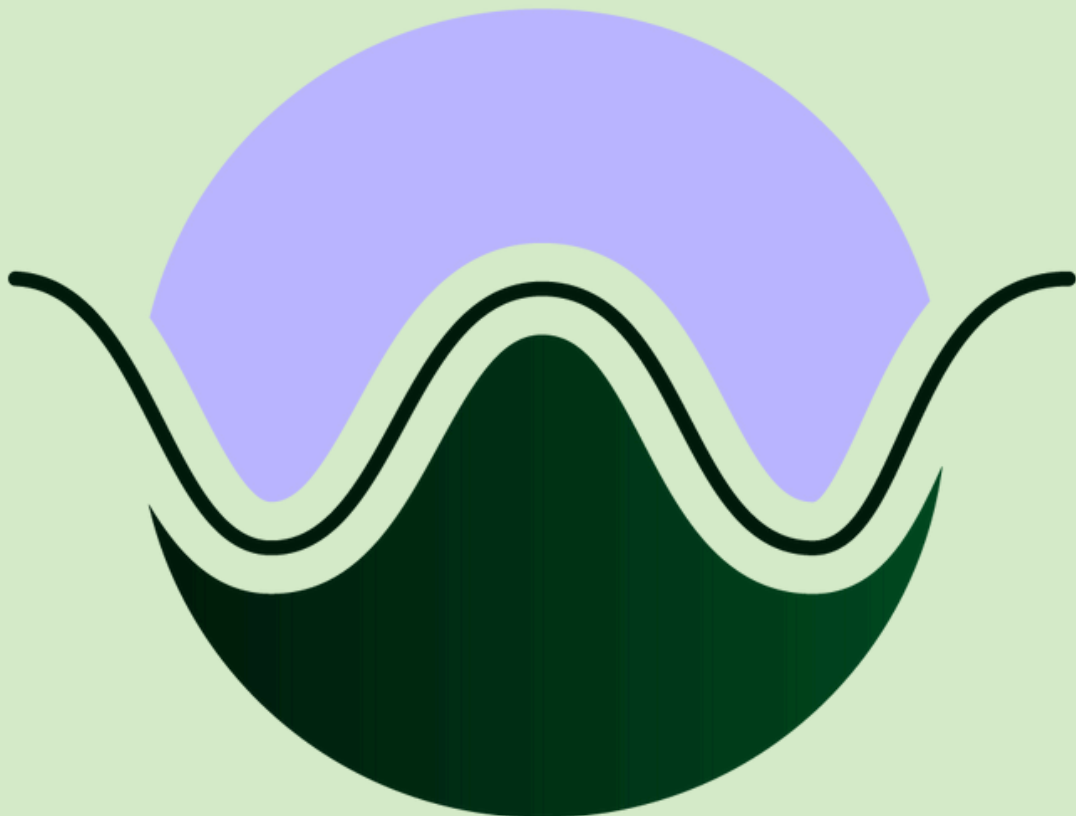


# WAKE

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*Annual Report*

2023-24



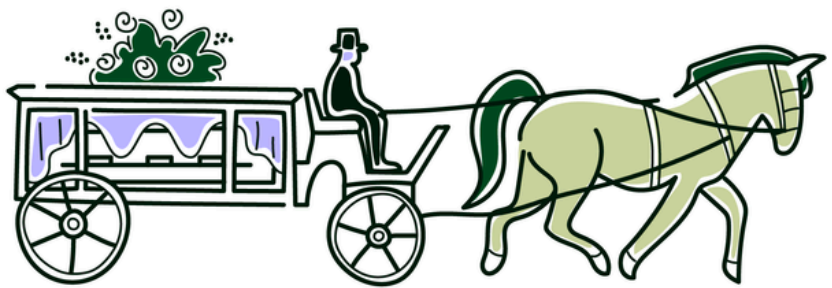
# MISSION

Wake provides resources for meaningful, affordable, and environmentally sustainable deathcare.

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## OUR VALUES

- We approach our work with **courageous compassion**, authentic presence, and humility.
- We believe in the inherent **worthiness** of all people to receive meaningful deathcare and memorialization.
- **Community** powers our deathcare work; we facilitate inclusive deathcare that meaningfully celebrates culture and difference.
- We are dedicated to fostering a sense of **agency**, providing education and access to help people make informed, personalized choices when navigating end-of-life decisions.
- We work towards **systems change** by diminishing obstacles to equitable deathcare, promoting environmental sustainability, and normalizing death and grieving.



# A WORD FROM WAKE'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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When my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer in 2012, I didn't realize that was the beginning of a process of transformation that has cut a long path to this letter. At the time, I felt blindsided and couldn't imagine how life would ever return to tolerable.

In time, I realized that, though she might have lived another 20 years, my mother had already lived a long, storied life, raised children, and grandchildren. While this was terribly sad and overwhelming, it was not a tragedy. My mom was always going to die. We are all going to die, I realized in an "aha moment" that seems quaint to me now.

In the years that followed I lost several family members in relatively close succession. While the circumstances differed for every one of them, one aspect of the experience was consistent: being overwhelmed by the logistics that immediately followed the death.

So many decisions must be made quickly after a death occurs, while one is in acute grief. And many of these decisions entail huge expenses we may be unprepared for. Even for those with the foresight to get their "ducks in a row" in life, one must often plan memorial services, wind down an estate, and process sometimes debilitating grief.

Another common experience in the aftermath of death is not knowing where to turn with questions. I founded Wake specifically to be able to respond to this sense of urgency and overwhelm; to provide clear answers to basic questions, and to refer individuals to resources and information during an otherwise challenging time.

These experiences with end-of-life—with what we have come to call deathcare—have changed my perception of existence. I'm keenly aware of how short life is and how we benefit from contemplating, and planning for, our own end so we can make the most out of life.



**LIZ DUNNEBACKE**

Executive Director



# PROGRAMS

When we near the end of life, most of us, and many of our loved ones, will face logistical, financial, and emotional challenges for which we may not be prepared. At Wake we believe every person should have the support they need when that time comes.

Wake provides no-cost information, education, and direct support to individuals and families who are navigating care needs at end-of-life.

## COMMUNITY DEATHCARE HOTLINE

Say you just lost a loved one and you have no idea what next step to take. What might be your questions?

- *Do I have to pay a funeral home?*
- *Are my only choices burial or cremation?*
- *How do I write an obituary?*

These are some of the questions our Community Deathcare Program helps people to answer through our free hotline. A person facing these questions can get clear, concise guidance on what to do next.



112 HOURS  
of hotline service

*“All the things you told me have helped so much. So, so, so much. I was able to advocate for everything that we needed and was able to get it to all work out.”*

## PRICE COMPARISON TOOLS



When a client contacts Wake, the number one question we are asked is how to afford final expenses. The cost of services like cremation, burial, and planning a memorial can be significant.

We help people navigate funeral expenses with a price comparison tool for area funeral homes and cemeteries, a roster of community resources for off-setting funeral costs, as well as individualized support.

Cremation & burial information to 24  
FAMILIES with 30 HOURS of service



# PROGRAMS

## ADVANCED CARE PLANNING & LEGAL CLINICS



12 LEGAL CLINICS

The single most important step we can take to ensure peace of mind at the end of life is to plan for it. Healthcare and legal professionals provide advance planning support, setting up the legal documents that reflect someone's healthcare and property wishes, but for many people the process can feel so overwhelming, or bring up so many questions, that they wait until the last minute or avoid it altogether.

Wake has developed a unique and comprehensive package of Advanced Care Planning documents that we make available to people for free, along with help in filling out the directives and ensuring the documents are signed, witnessed, and notarized at no cost. We also offer monthly legal clinics to answer questions and notarize forms.

Last year we piloted our first **ADVANCED CARE PLANNING TRAINING** program

“

*“Your information opens up a new window of hope for me.”*

## MEMORIAL SERVICE ASSISTANCE

Cremation and burial are expensive services, and often there is little to no money left over for a memorial. But for someone grieving a loved one, a memorial is often deeply important.

Wake can help a family put together a memorial service. This includes help drafting an obituary, gathering and laying out photos, and putting together an order of service, usually while clients are experiencing acute grief. Through a partnership with the nonprofit press Paper Machine, we create and print keepsake funeral programs to support meaningful memorialization at no cost.

22 HOURS of service supporting memorial clients

400 FUNERAL PROGRAMS PRINTED



# OUTREACH

Death and deathcare are uncomfortable topics for most people. At Wake, we aim to make important conversations about end-of-life reality less stigmatized so that people can get the information and support that they need.

## FREE PUBLIC MONTHLY EVENTS

**Death Cafes** are casual, public conversations about death, without agendas, experts, or sales pitches, designed to help normalize the conversation about end-of-life and ultimately make those conversations easier to have.



12 DEATH CAFES  
60 PARTICIPANTS

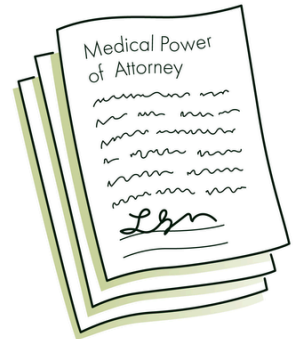


12 COMMUNITY DEATHCARE MEETINGS  
39 PARTICIPANTS

**Community Deathcare Meetings** are opportunities for people working in end-of-life to meet each other, network, share skills, and discuss and strategize about the unmet needs we are seeing in the Greater New Orleans area.

# EDUCATION

Our Education Program provides Advanced Care Planning Workshops to community members and organizations and makes in-service and CEU presentations available to interested professionals. In both 2023 and 2022, we presented at the Louisiana Mississippi Hospice and Palliative Care Organization's annual conference to help social workers and nurses working in end-of-life understand how to better support families once death has occurred.



*“The workshop helps put you in the frame of mind to take care of things in the now, so that you can take care of your loved ones in the future. It gives you peace of mind.”*

## EQUITY & ACCESS

The high cost of burial or cremation should not mean a family loses their right to their loved ones. Wake works with individuals at risk of forfeiting their loved one's remains to the State's Indigent Death Program due to lack of funds. Wake is also the fiscal sponsor of the Equitable Disposition Alliance ([www.equitabledisposition.org](http://www.equitabledisposition.org)), a national group working on the crisis of affordable burial across the United States.

# SUPPORTERS

John Bellinger  
Sara Berry  
Amelia Bird  
Annie Bisone  
Keri Bissette  
Janice & Gerry Bodet  
Mackenzi Bovero & Chad Brooks  
Andrea Brawner  
Cortney Busch  
Jaye Calhoun  
Jo Carter  
Tania Castellanos & Bartley Mulligan  
Sarah & Walter Cockerham  
Heather Colgin  
Amy & John Connolly  
Tann Cordell-Schneider  
Margaret Davis  
Laurie Dietrich  
Chelsea Donison  
Annie Dunnebacke

Allison Durant  
Dan Favre  
Paula Flynn  
Jason Frey  
The Funding Seed  
Charlene Gagon  
Eleanor & Terry Gagon  
Genevieve Gagon  
Miranda Ganzer  
Moirra Glace  
Michelle Grissette  
Maggie Hadleigh-West  
Elizabeth Hollinger  
Suzanne Lacey  
Joan Jungbin Lee  
Maria Ludwick  
Cassie Manley  
Knenge Martin  
Lisa & Walter McArdle  
Aron Michalski

Leslie Molson  
Cynthia Murdoch  
Jennifer Pearl  
Neil Ranu  
Emily Bingham & Stephen Reily  
Teresa Roberts  
James Ryan  
Ezra Salter  
Shana Sassoon  
Tim Sigur  
Michelle Slagle  
Cory Sparks  
Adrienne Sparrow  
Casey Stone  
Javelynn Tyler  
Ed Vail  
Tony Vazquez  
Erin Wallus  
Alex Weingarten  
Brian Wilson

## ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

COUGHLIN-SAUNDERS FOUNDATION

EMERGING PHILANTHROPISTS OF NEW ORLEANS

GREATER NEW ORLEANS FOUNDATION LGBTQ FUND

NEW ORLEANS CULTURE & TOURISM FUND

PROPELLER IMPACT ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

## STAFF & CONTRACTORS

Becca Chapman  
Veronika Lee Claghorn  
Tann Cordell-Schneider  
Morgan Davis  
Laurie Dietrich  
Liz Dunnebacke  
Taja Kenney  
Amy Mackie  
Leslie Molson (NOLA Bookkeeper)  
Carolina Murriel



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

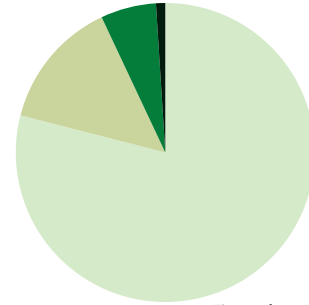
Charmaine Baker-Fox  
Amelia Bird  
Amy Connolly  
Allison Durant  
Bartley Mulligan  
Glenn Owings  
Ezra Salter  
Cory Sparks  
Jamillia Stevenson

# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE

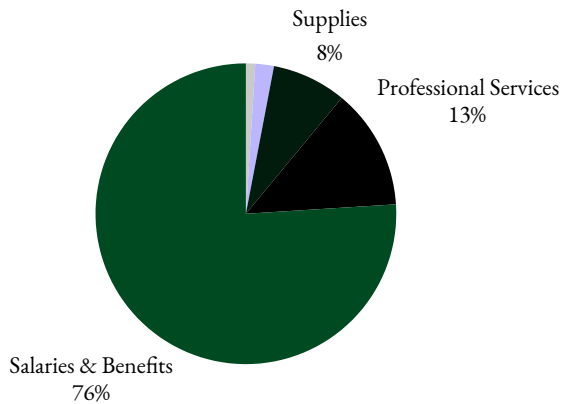
Foundation Grants - \$73,000  
Individual Contributions - \$12,946  
GiveNOLA Day - \$5,635  
Earned Revenue - \$311  
  
**Total Revenue - \$91,892**

Individual Contributions  
14%



Foundation Grants  
79%

## EXPENSES



Salaries & Benefits - \$54,508  
Professional Services - \$9,506  
Program Materials & Supplies - \$5,926  
Printing & Shipping - \$1,196  
Rent & Utilities - \$697

**Total Expenses - \$71,833**

# Thank you

for helping to ensure that everyone has access to meaningful, affordable,  
and environmentally sustainable deathcare.



## CONTACT US TO STAY INVOLVED

[www.wake.education](http://www.wake.education)

[info@wake.education](mailto:info@wake.education)

504-689-6330



@wakedeathcare