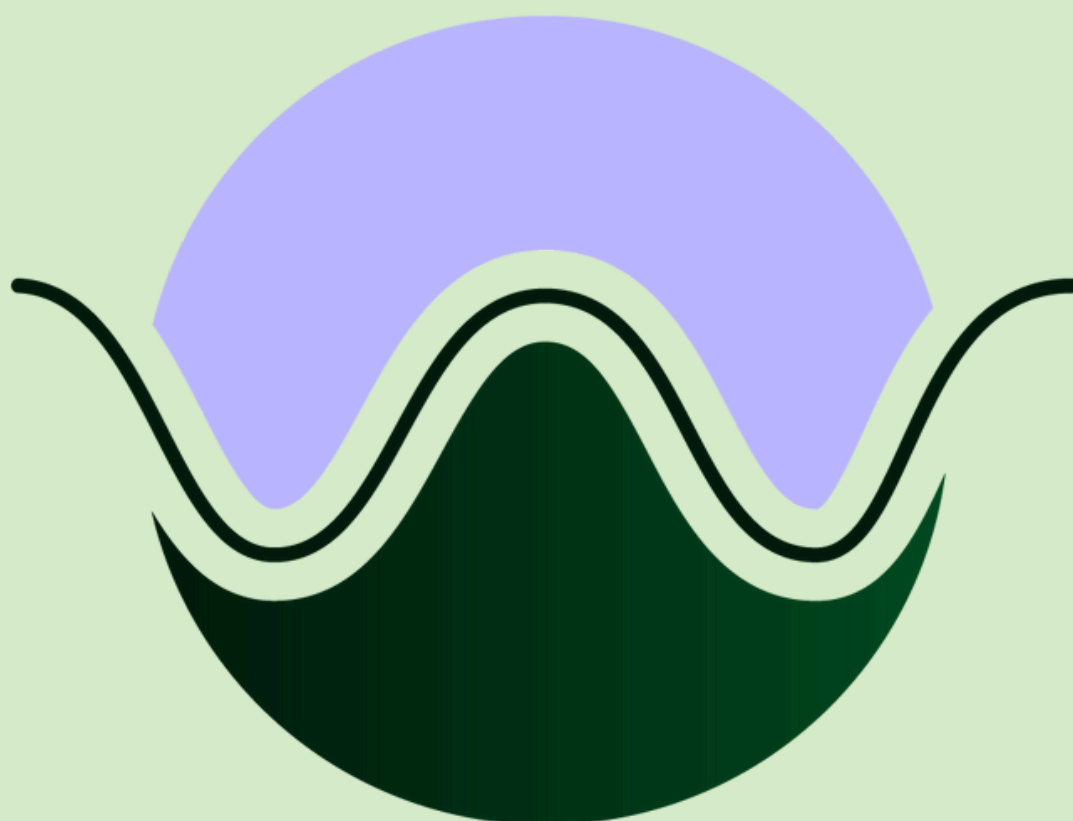


WAKE

Annual Report

2024-2025



MISSION

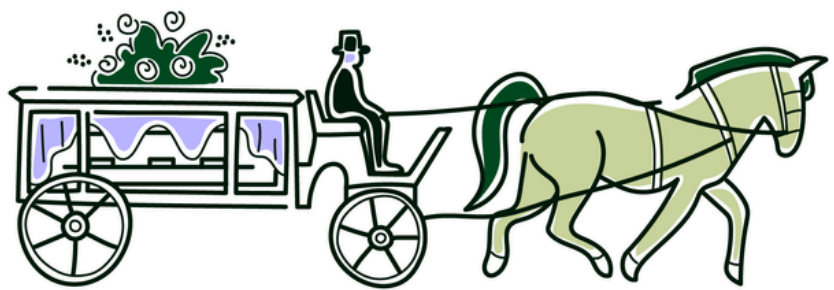
Wake provides resources for meaningful, affordable, and environmentally sustainable deathcare.

VISION

Our vision is that everyone in Louisiana receives end-of-life care that honors their life, community, and environment.

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

Dear Friends,

As we look back on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for our community and the growth of our work. Despite the uncertainty of funding, we have strengthened our programs, expanded our reach, and continued to show up for people in some of their most vulnerable moments.

In addition to the hundreds of hours we have spent working one on one with families, we have deepened partnerships with community organizations and allies who share our vision of compassionate, accessible care. We worked closely with a consortium of agencies in the wake of the New Year's attack on Bourbon Street to support victim families, and partnered with the City's emergency response unit to publish a hurricane preparedness checklist for families evacuating with a medically fragile individual. Together, we are building a stronger support system for those navigating loss.

This progress has not come without challenges. Funding has been inconsistent, often limited by a cultural hesitation to face the realities of death. Yet we remain steadfast in our belief: deathcare is healthcare. Every person, regardless of circumstance, deserves dignity, care, and compassion at the end of life, and in grief.

As we step into the year ahead, we are cautiously optimistic. With your support, and with the courage of funders willing to break through old taboos, we can continue to transform the way communities care for one another through loss. Thank you for walking alongside us. Together, we are changing what care looks like when it matters most.

With gratitude and resolve,



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?*

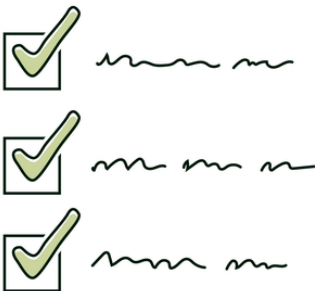
140 HOURS
of hotline service

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.



“It was my first time planning a funeral and we were dealing with so much stress. I was trying to be strong for my mom and my nephew. People along the way kept letting us down. Wake showed up and actually did what they said they were going to. They helped me figure out payment for the funeral, showing me where to go and how to apply for assistance. They came in clutch with the obituary and funeral program design and printing, and those came out so nice. Wake also referred us to legal assistance to help with custody issues that came up when my sister died. It was so helpful.”

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 offsetting funeral costs, as well as individualized support.

Funeral Service Navigation to 54
FAMILIES with 85 HOURS of service

PROGRAMS

ADVANCED CARE PLANNING & LEGAL CLINICS



12 LEGAL CLINICS

Last year we served over 45 families with
ADVANCED CARE PLANNING TRAINING

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.

“*I just wanted to follow up with you and give you my appreciation and gratitude for helping us. Everything went smoothly. You were like an angel at the right time when we needed help the most*”

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.

60 HOURS of service
supporting memorial clients
1,000 FUNERAL PROGRAMS
PRINTED



EDUCATION & OUTREACH

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

Because the healthcare system ends at death most healthcare professionals don't know what awaits families once their loved one has died. Wake's Education Program provides Advanced Care Planning workshops to community members and organizations and makes in-service and CEU presentations available to interested professionals who wish to better support families beyond the moment of death.



12 DEATH CAFES

75 PARTICIPANTS

12 COMMUNITY DEATHCARE
MEETINGS

70 PARTICIPANTS

Educating the public about options at the end of life is central to achieving our vision and we offer regular gatherings to normalize conversations about death in order to demystify and destigmatize the subject.

Wake hosts regular **Death Cafes**, which are casual conversations about death, without agendas, experts, or sales pitches, and that are free and open to the public. **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.



“Wake’s thoughtful presentation empowered our seniors to take control of their choices and begin important conversations with their families. The session was not only informative but also deeply reassuring, helping many of our members feel more prepared and supported.”

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), a national group working on the crisis of affordable burial across the United States.

SUPPORTERS

Auntie Rae
Brie Bastianson

Heidi Bayer

Zeal Beale

Amelia Bird

Annie Bisone

Keri Bissette

Taylor Bovero

Lola Bravo

Andrea Brawner

Cortney Busch

Beatrice Byrd

Jaye Calhoun

Greg Carr

Tania Castellanos & Bartley Mulligan

Tiffany Challis

Damian Clark

Julio Bermudez Clotter

Matt Cohen

Amy & John Connolly

Chelsea Donison

Allison Lindsey Durant

Cate Esser

Melissa Goldin Evans

Valeska F.

Dan Favre

Fred Finkelstein

Emily Ford

Marion Freistadt

The Funding Seed

Genevieve Gagon

Charlene Gagon

Eleanor & Terry Gagon

Miranda Ganzer

Moira Glace

Shana griffin

Maggie Hadleigh-West

Rachel Houge

Lisa Howell

Kate Irvin

Kelly Jacques

Cathryn Jones

Sam Kanellos

Kristina Kent

Ena Konjolka

Isabella Kulstad

Joan L.

Tyler Lamson

Maria Ludwick

Marta Machío & Ben Hamawy

Bethanie Mangigian

Melissa Manuselis

Sadie Marinaro

Knege Martin

Aron Michalski

JP & Catherine Morrell

Melanie Munsey

Kimberly O'Bannon

Adrian Oteiza

Jennifer Pearl

Lauren Pete

Rose Preston

Rachel & Colby Lamson

Tommy and Mallory Ryan

Scott & Stacey

Olivia Sears

Tim Sigur

Patricia Siodmak

Michelle Slagle

Cory Sparks

Jamillia Stevenson

Casey & Aaron Stone

William Takewell

Blue Taylor

Amber Tucker

Dezarae Tyler

Javelynn Tyler

Randy Tyler

Ed Vail

Erin Wallus

Alex Weingarten

Betsy Weiss

Constance West

Jane Wilbert

Brian Wilson

Mona Zaitooni

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORT

COUGHLIN-SAUNDERS FOUNDATION

MERRILEE W. KULLMAN LIVING TRUST

NEW ORLEANS RECREATION AND CULTURE FUND

PROPELLER CATALYST COLLECTIVE

ROBERT E. ZETZMANN FAMILY FOUNDATION

STAFF & CONTRACTORS

Morgan Davis

Laurie Dietrich

Liz Dunnebacke

Amiyah King

Isabel Knight (The Death Designer)

Leslie Molson (NOLA Bookkeeper)

Carolina Murriel



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Amelia Bird

Allison Durant

Moira Glace

Miranda Ganzer

Taja Kenney

Charmaine Baker-Fox - RIP

Bartley Mulligan

Ezra Salter

Jamillia Stevenson

Amber Tucker

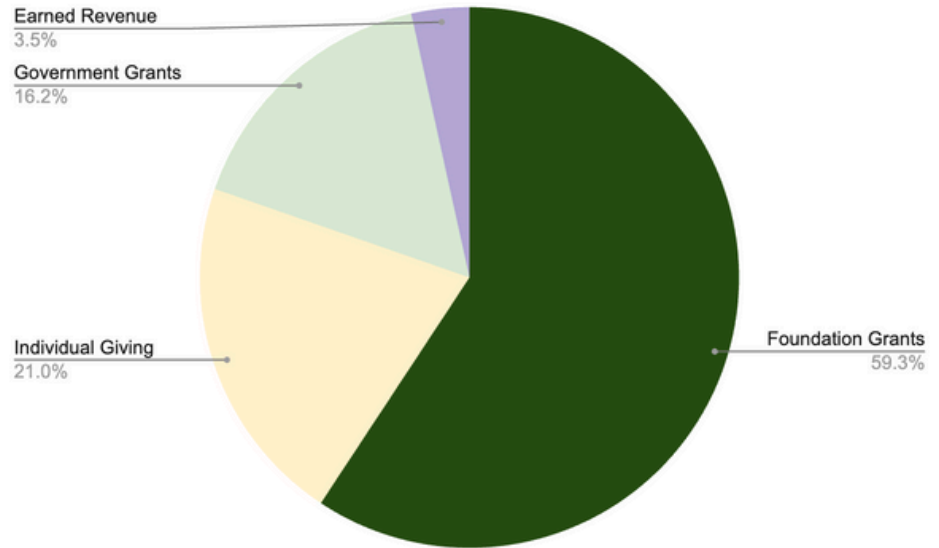
Javelynn Tyler

FINANCIALS

REVENUE

Foundation Grants - \$71,300
Individual Contributions - \$25,275
Government Grants - \$19,500
Earned Revenue - \$4,172

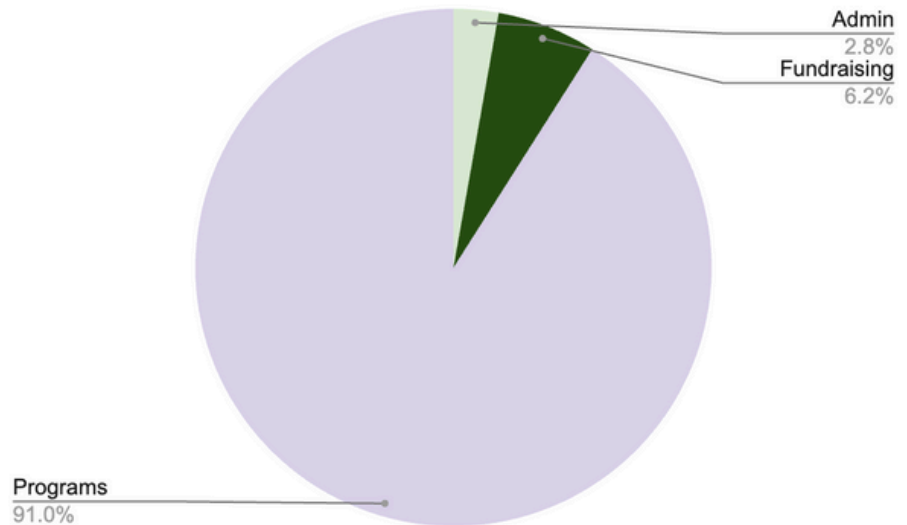
Total Revenue - \$120,247



EXPENSES

Programs - \$110,412
Fundraising - \$7,545
Admin - \$3,410

Total Expenses - \$121,367



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

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504-689-6330



@wakedeathcare