



HOPE  
ACADEMY  

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HIGH SCHOOL

2022-2023 Annual Report



# STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION OF RECOVERY FOR TEENS

Serving Indianapolis Area High School Students Since 2005

## Executive Director's **Message**



As Hope Academy enters its 18th year of operation, I'm reminded of

how far we have come in nearly two decades. When our recovery school opened in 2005, our mission was to provide a safe and supportive environment for teens struggling with substance use disorder.

Fast forward to 2023, and the mission of Hope Academy remains steadfast. We have been, and always will be, the place young people can come to receive the help they need to get on the path of recovery while working towards their high school diploma.

I'm proud that we have stayed true to our mission. I'm also proud of how we have proactively shifted to meet the needs of our students and families during the rapidly changing environment in both treatment and education.

Initially, Hope Academy was created to be a post-treatment option for teens. Today, as treatment programs for adolescents diminish across the state, Hope Academy has taken on more of a leadership role to help young people impacted by substance use disorder. We have worked strategically to strengthen our partnerships with other youth-serving agencies, coming alongside schools, probation and mental health providers to work collaboratively in the best interest of each young person.

As we look to the future of soon celebrating our 20th anniversary, my vision is for Hope Academy to continue to be a trusted partner, connector and an essential component for every teen in the Indianapolis area struggling with substance use disorder.

When a service provider or educator who works with teens identifies a substance use issue, I want Hope Academy to be the first call they make. With Hope Academy at the center of this equation, I believe we can strengthen the foundation for our youth and our entire community.

Thank you for supporting Indiana's only recovery high school.

Warm regards,

**Rachelle Gardner**

Hope Academy Executive Director



What

# Hope Academy

Graduates are Saying...

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**"Hope felt like a second chance. Hope offered me not only support but also so much information on what I was struggling with. It felt like they took all the uncertainty and confusion and helped my family and me make sense of it. Hope saved my life."**

*~ Ashley Mash, Hope Academy 2023 Graduate*

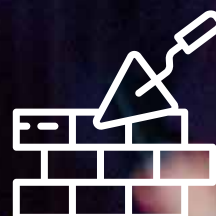


“

Hope

saved my life.

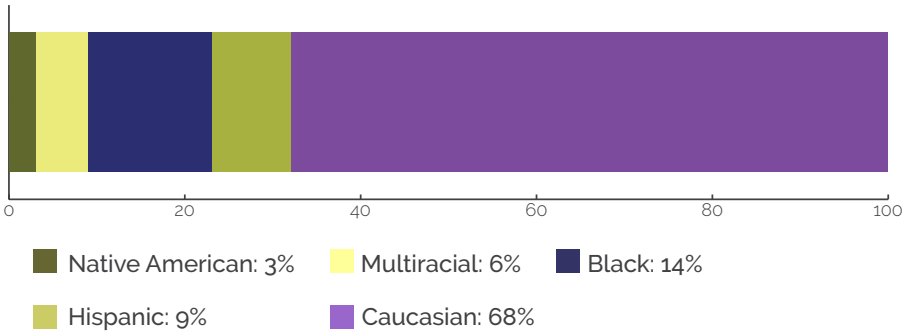
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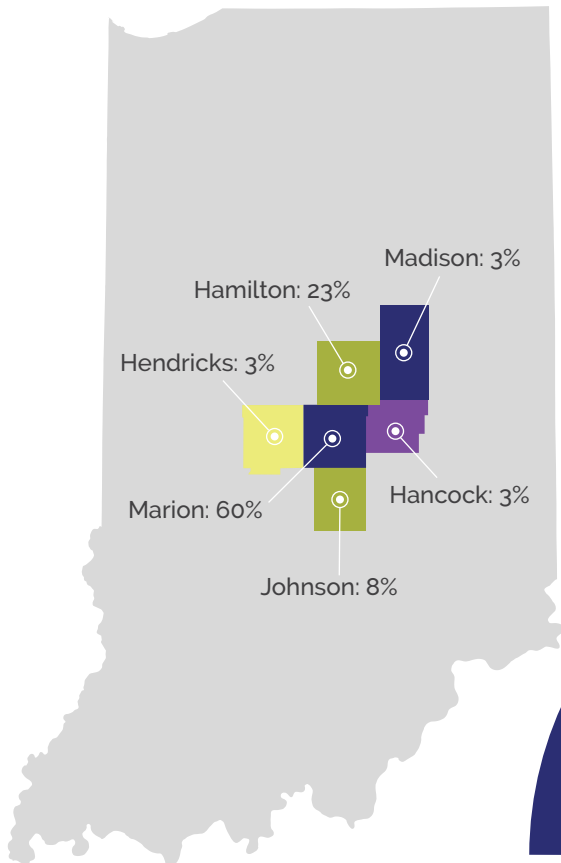
# Our Students



## Race & Ethnicity



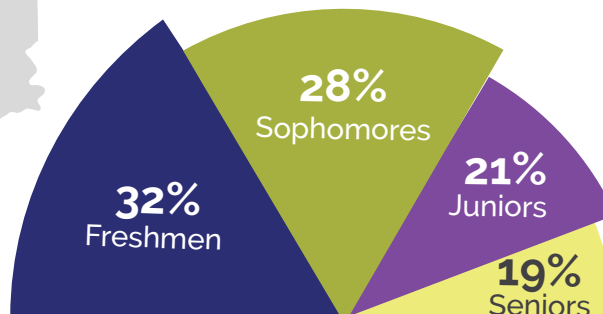
## Enrollment by County



## Gender



## Grades Represented



**90%** Attendance Rate

**57** Number of Students Enrolled

**39%** Free and Reduced Lunch

**46%** Special Education

**86%** Student Retention Rate



# Rise and Shine for Hope

## Rise and Shine for Hope Raises Over \$72,000

The 2022 Rise & Shine for Hope breakfast, presented by Strada Education Network, was a huge success.

Our dynamic emcee, Samantha Johnson with WTHR, brought the Sunrise News energy to the early morning event, where nearly 250 guests gathered to celebrate Hope Academy.

Guests witnessed impactful stories from Hope Academy students, honored the incomparable Dr. Virginia Caine with the Faces of Hope Award and listened intently to a powerful keynote speech from Councillor Vop Osili. **Best of all, the community came together to support the students at Hope Academy.**

The 2022 Rise & Shine for Hope breakfast raised over \$72,000 to support Hope Academy and our students in recovery from substance use disorder.

The 2023 Rise & Shine breakfast is scheduled for Thursday, November 2nd from 7:30 – 9 a.m. Learn more and purchase tickets at [hopeacademyrhs.org/riseandshine](https://hopeacademyrhs.org/riseandshine).



## What Funders are Saying about Hope...

**"It makes me, and others I know, realize all the more that the Indianapolis community is extremely lucky to have Hope Academy. The seniors who spoke were so open about their experiences prior to arriving at Hope Academy and how because of Hope Academy they have now turned their lives around. They now have a very different future ahead of them."**

- Anonymous Rise & Shine Supporter



Top: Rise and Shine Emcee Samantha Johnson with Hope Academy Students Ashley and Will.

Middle: Rise and Shine Keynote Speaker Vop Osili shares remarks from the podium.

Bottom: Hope Academy Executive Director Rachelle Gardner and Board Chair Colleen Kenney present the 2022 Faces of Hope Award to Dr. Virginia Caine.

## Our Staff

### Superheroes at Hope

Hope Academy is an ideal environment for learning. But why? The small class sizes and recovery supports play a key role, but the superheroes behind our students' success are, without a doubt, our teachers and recovery coaches!

Hope Academy teachers and coaches are creative, supportive and committed to helping our students thrive. Hope Academy students and parents will attest—Hope Academy employees are one-of-a-kind.

Click [here](#) to watch a video featuring Hope Academy English Teacher Elisabeth Sharber and Hope Academy Math Teacher Kate Knoll as they share what they love most about teaching at Indiana's only recovery high school.



### What Teachers are Saying about Hope...

**"I like working in intimate settings with youth where I can help them learn but also help them be aware of their own emotions, thoughts and feelings while expressing it through art to help them take control of their life in an abstract way."** ~Hope Academy Art Teacher Gianna Dowell

### Providing Connection Through Recovery: A Spotlight on Director of Recovery Services Caroline Vas, MSW, LSW

To support each student in achieving academic success and sobriety, we offer a complete recovery curriculum where students learn how to live their life clean and sober.

In addition to working towards a Core 40 diploma, students at Hope Academy learn basic life skills to prepare them for life after high school – including managing a bank account, interview techniques, how to write a resume and time management. They also receive guidance from a recovery coach who can help them maintain their sobriety.

Leading the recovery team is Hope Academy's Director of Recovery Services Caroline Vas, MSW, LSW. Caroline joined the Hope Academy team in January of 2021 as the Guiding Paths to Success (GPS) Coordinator. As the GPS Coordinator, Caroline oversaw the after school and summer activities for students at Hope Academy. But more than just organizing outings, Caroline's efforts are a direct correlation to the student engagement with the program. GPS is encouraged but not required. Even so, more than half of the students have become involved, largely thanks to Caroline's planning, communication and creativity. In 2022, Caroline was promoted to Recovery Coordinator and in 2023 she was promoted to Director of Recovery Services.

Hope Academy's lifeblood is the recovery team, as they provide the critical supports to students with substance use disorder. Thanks to Caroline's leadership, students are more engaged in their recovery program, allowing them to have success in their sobriety and academics.



# Graduation Day



Hope Academy's 17th Graduating Class from left to right: Ryan Wuertz, Carter Friedman, Ashley Mash, Payton Thurlow, Austin Gildea and Harrison Montgomery.

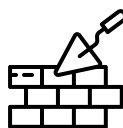


Carter Friedman celebrates his graduation with a fist bump.



Top: Payton Thurlow shares a smile with family members during the post-ceremony reception.

Bottom: Ryan Wuertz poses for a photo with his mom Lisa following commencement.



## Six Graduates Honored During Hope Academy's 17th Commencement

On Saturday, May 20, 2023, Hope Academy celebrated its 17th Commencement Ceremony at the Christel DeHaan Fine Arts Center on the campus of the University of Indianapolis. During the ceremony, six graduates were honored for their academic and recovery achievements.

Graduates of the Hope Academy Class of 2023 included: Carter Friedman (Westfield, IN), Austin Gildea (Indianapolis, IN), Ashley Mash (Noblesville, IN), Harrison Montgomery (Fortville, IN), Payton Thurlow (Fishers, IN) and Ryan Wuertz (Indianapolis, IN).

Guest speakers included Jacob Gilliatte of Gilliatte General Contractors, serving as the ceremony's voice of recovery, and Doug Huntsinger, State of Indiana Executive Director for Drug Prevention, Treatment and Enforcement, serving as the keynote speaker. During his keynote speech, Huntsinger commended the graduates for overcoming the obstacles of being young people in recovery from substance use disorder.

Valedictorian, Ashley Mash, received the Dr. Sig Zielke Scholarship and Jim Barnes Scholarship. The Simon Youth Foundation Scholarship was presented to Ryan Wuertz.

"It's the culmination of four years of work—good times and bad—working towards a greater goal and moving towards my future," said Ryan. "To me, graduating from high school means pushing forward to a new future, a new career and a new life path." ~ Ryan Wuertz, 2023 Graduate

"We've come a long way from where we were when he [Ryan] first began at Hope," said Lisa. "He can now continue on with his life. Things are just starting for him, and how he has his whole world open to him, whatever he can do." ~ Lisa Wuertz, Parent

[Watch the 2023 Hope Academy Graduation video featuring Ryan and Lisa.](#)



# Hope Fest 2023



Above: Hope Fest Presenting Sponsor Kyle Morris (fourth from left) poses with friends during the celebration.

Top right: A Rock Garage band performs one of their original songs at Hope Fest.

Bottom right: Hope Academy is grateful to the 20 sponsors that supported the 2023 event.



Fundraising events are a critical component to helping Hope Academy fulfill its mission of creating a safe, sober and challenging academic experience for teens struggling with substance use disorder.

Hope Fest, presented by Morris Property Group, took place Saturday, June 3, 2023 at Schwitzer Park on the Campus of the University of Indianapolis.

This year's event featured live music from Rock Garage, food trucks and Colts in Motion. Thanks to sponsors and individual donors, Hope Fest raised \$15,000.

## What Supporters are Saying about Hope...



**"Morris Property Group is extremely grateful to sponsor Hope Fest and support Hope Academy. With the lack of resources available to teens and their families in Indiana, we want to do our part to strengthen the gem that is Hope Academy! As someone in long-term recovery myself, I know firsthand the positive impact that being a part of a sober community can have on someone's recovery."**

- Kyle Morris, Morris Property Group, Hope Fest Presenting Sponsor



# Community Leaders

## Hope Academy Board of Directors

2022-23

Colleen M. Kenney, *community volunteer, Chair*

Marissa Manlove, *retired, Past Chair*

Amy Levander, *Krieg DeVault LLP, Vice Chair*

Janine Shopp, *Urology of Indiana, Treasurer*

Phyllis Land Usher, *Usher Funeral Home, Secretary*

Dr. Eric Afuseh, *Indiana University School of Nursing*

Darren Craig, *Frost, Brown Todd LLC*

Janice Gabe, *New Perspectives of Indiana*

Marlon Llewellyn, *Marian University*

Leah Mannweiler, *retired attorney*

Jennifer McVey, *Greenwalt CPA*

Angela M. Tomlin, Ph.D., HSPP, *Riley Hospital for Children at IU Health*

Dr. Victoria Wilburn, *IUPUI School of Health and Human Sciences*

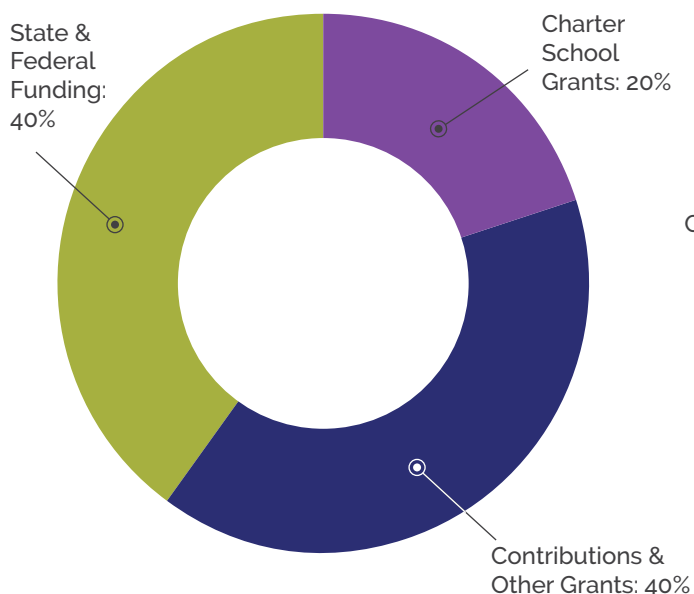


"The contribution that Hope Academy makes to Indiana and Indianapolis is so important in ensuring that our youth are given the best foot forward as they start their future."

~ Doug Huntsinger, Executive Director for Drug Prevention, Treatment, and Enforcement, State of Indiana

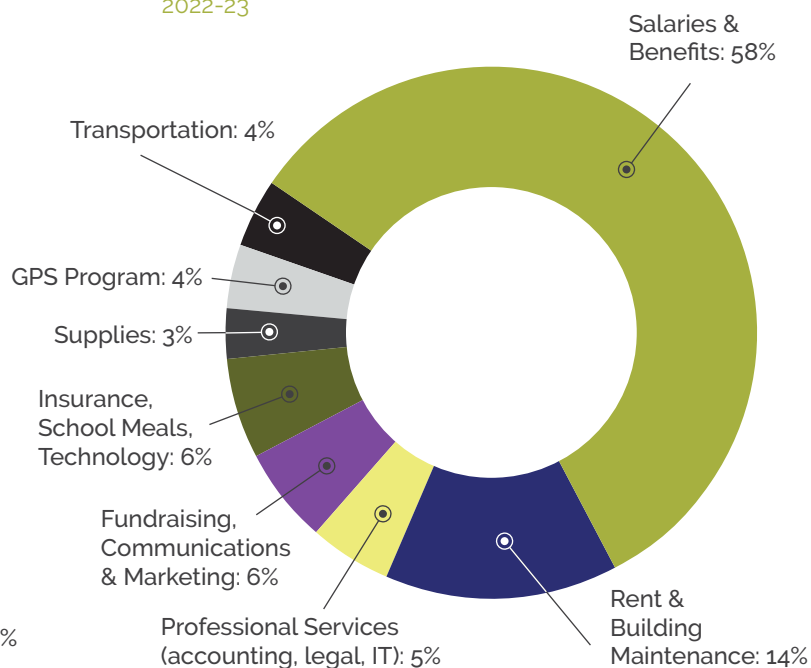
## Hope Academy Revenue Sources

2022-23



## Hope Academy Expenses

2022-23



# Our Supporters

## \$100,000 & ABOVE

Tom and Julie Wood Family Foundation  
Mr. Jim Irsay & The Indianapolis Colts

## \$50,000 & ABOVE

Lilly Endowment, Inc.  
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## \$20,001 & ABOVE

DJ McManus Foundation, Inc.  
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## HOPE ACADEMY HIGH SCHOOL

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