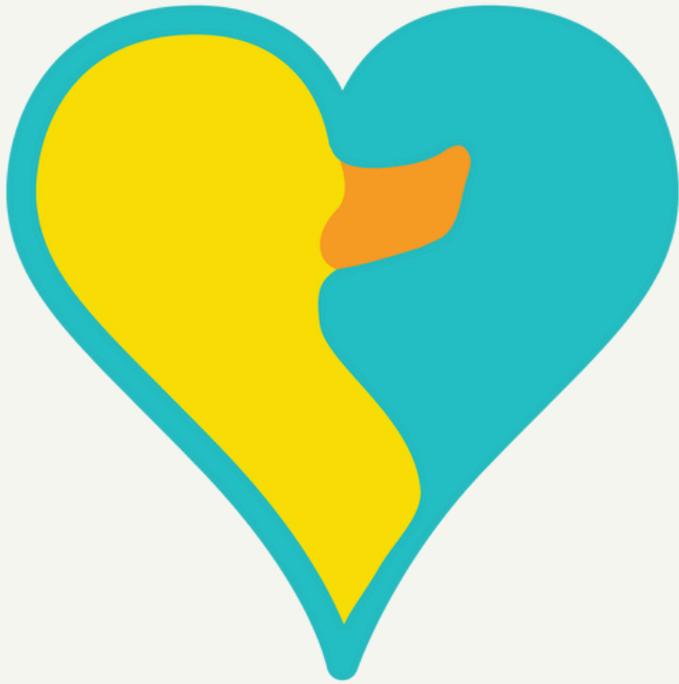




# Annual Report

2024

The Jesse Lewis  
Choose Love  
Movement



# Table of Contents

- 3 Letter from the CMO
- 4 About Choose Love
- 5 Why We Choose Love
- 6 Programs
- 9 Success Stories
- 10 Achievements
- 11 Sustainability
- 12 Choose Love Sources
- 13 Testimonials
- 14 Donors



# Letter from the Founder



## Scarlett Lewis

Founder and Chief  
Movement Officer,  
Choose Love Movement

*“You can't always  
choose what happens to  
you, but you can always  
choose how you  
respond, and you can  
always respond in love.”  
-Scarlett Lewis*

People who feel good, who feel seen, valued, and loved, don't want to hurt themselves or others. It's hurt people who hurt people. That's why, if we truly want to reduce and prevent the escalating crises of our time - mental illness, substance abuse, and violence - we must address the root cause, emotional pain. This is why I created the Choose Love Movement™.

After my six-year-old son, Jesse, was murdered at Sandy Hook in 2012, I've devoted my life to understanding the root causes of these violent acts. What I've learned is that behind every one of these tragedies is a story of deep pain. The offenders have typically endured years of bullying, trauma, isolation, and disconnection, and often fueled by toxic online influence.

The Choose Love Movement™ is a proactive solution rooted in love teaching essential life skills like compassion, courage, emotional strength, connection, and how to grow through adversity. We help children and adults learn how to transform pain into growth, and anger into love. This equips them with the essential life skills they need not only to survive, but to thrive, even in the face of challenges.

This universal program benefits learners of all ages, from preschool through adulthood, because the skills we teach are the same ones we all need: compassion, emotional intelligence, courage, and resilience. Over 10 million students have learned to respond to life's challenges in safe, healthy, and empowering ways through Choose Love.

Our children are facing academic setbacks, increased violence, rising substance use, and a growing mental health crisis. By bringing Choose Love to more schools, homes, and communities, we can address the root causes of these issues, and help millions more children feel safe, seen, and supported.

Together, we are creating the world we all want to live in, and leave for our children. A world that is safe. A world that is kind. A world that Chooses Love. We can do this, together.

# About Choose Love

Scarlett Lewis founded the Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement after her six-year-old son, Jesse, was murdered in the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy—the deadliest elementary school shooting in U.S. history.

In his final moments, Jesse heroically saved nine of his classmates. Shortly after his death, Scarlett found a message Jesse had written on their kitchen chalkboard: “Nurturing Helinn Love” (Nurturing Healing Love). She realized if the shooter had known how to give and receive love, the tragedy might have been prevented.

These three words—part of the definition of compassion across all cultures—inspired the Choose Love Formula™: Courage + Gratitude + Forgiveness + Compassion-in-Action. It's a simple, powerful method for choosing love over fear in any situation.

Choose Love programs teach this mindset in schools, homes, and communities—empowering millions of children and adults to grow through difficulty, strengthen relationships, and improve their well-being.

At its core is Jesse’s message: We can choose love, and we can teach others to do the same.



## Our Vision

To reach a tipping point where people realize they can Choose Love as a thoughtful response and work from their highest and best selves to benefit our communities and world.

## Mission

The Choose Love Movement's mission is to promote Character and Social-Emotional Development (CSED) to create safer, more loving communities by teaching children and adults the "Choose Love Formula." Choose Love benefits all ages with universal essential life skills enabling individuals to choose love over fear, and transform lives by providing proactive, evidence-based resources and practices.

# Why We Choose Love

## OUR PURPOSE

To teach every child how to Choose Love, create safer schools, and more loving communities.

Our most powerful element is that the program is based on love. This makes Choose Love universal, adaptable, resonant, simple, and sustainable. This is why it transcends the classroom, age groups, or settings. Choose Love has been developed with rigor and based on science.

When practiced daily, the Choose Love principles will transform lives; improve relationships with others; and create a ripple effect of happiness, health, and productivity throughout schools, homes, and communities.



**CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH STATISTICS**  
(2024 DATA)

- **1 IN 5 CHILDREN** in the U.S. has a mental health disorder
- **ONLY ABOUT 50%** of children with a mental health condition receive treatment
- **ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION** are the most common mental health issues in children
- **SUICIDE** is the second leading cause of death for youth ages 10-14 and 15-24

Source: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

## Escalating Mental Illness

- According to the CDC, in 2023-24, a significant portion of K-12 students experienced mental health challenges, with 40% reporting persistent sadness or hopelessness, and 9% attempting suicide. In 2024, a RAND survey found 60% of K-12 teachers reported burnout, with a Pew study revealing 59% experienced frequent job-related stress, significantly higher than other professions.
- **Increased Concerns:** 61% of schools reported an increase in concerns about students' depression, anxiety, trauma, or emotional dysregulation from the 2023-2024 school year to the 2024-2025 school year.

At the Choose Love Movement, we are meeting this crisis head-on. Our programs are designed to build emotional resilience, foster inclusivity, and reduce violence—helping students feel safe, seen, and supported. With your support, we are empowering children and educators with the tools they need to thrive socially, emotionally, and academically.

“Our entire school community was engaged and captivated by Scarlett’s experiences and knowledge about loving ourselves and one another. Our school community is better today because of her.”  
-Shawn A. True, Principal, New Haven, CT

# Programs

The Choose Love Movement™ is a non-profit teaching children and adults essential life skills. These skills have been proven through decades of scientific research to be the best way to ensure a healthy, meaningful and purpose-filled life. All people have the want and need to love and be loved, and people who love themselves will not want to harm themselves or others. This lifespan program is the only one to focus on love and post-traumatic growth - our ability to learn from, grow through, and be strengthened by difficulty in our lives.



## Choose Love For Schools

Choose Love for Schools™ is an award-winning, no-cost, next-generation, essential life skills program for Pre-K through grade 12. It incorporates positive psychology, neuroscience, character, growth mindset, and mindfulness on a trauma-informed base.

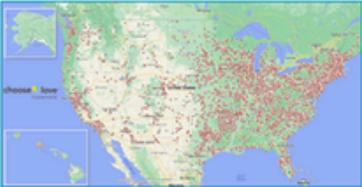
This comprehensive program was created by teachers for teachers. Students learn how to Choose Love in any circumstance through learning and practicing the Choose Love Formula™ which is woven throughout the lessons.



**choose love™** 2024  
movement

**CHOOSE LOVE IS REACHING**

MORE THAN  
**10 MILLION**  
PEOPLE GLOBALLY

**50**  
STATES 

**135**  
COUNTRIES 

OVER  
**15,000**  
SCHOOLS 

**STATES WITH HIGHEST CHOOSE LOVE SCHOOLS**

**70%** HAWAII      **70%** NEW HAMPSHIRE      **55%** CONNECTICUT

**choose love™**  
for schools

**Choose Love Educators Reported**

<b>82%</b>	benefited personally from the Choose Love Program	<b>78%</b>	believe students enjoy the program
<b>75%</b>	improvement in classroom climate	<b>69%</b>	improvement in student's overall behavior
<b>68%</b>	increased job satisfaction as a result of teaching Choose Love	<b>61%</b>	increase in academic performance

Source: Educator Survey 2024

# Programs



## Choose Love for Home

Choose Love for Home gives families a healthy way to grow together by practicing the Choose Love Formula™, and developing essential life skills. Through a series of short, engaging videos, children and parents learn to better understand themselves, and one another. Choose Love for Home helps families strengthen self-control, communicate with greater kindness. Activities, printables, and meaningful dinner table discussion topics are included to inspire connection, reflection, and love at home.

NEXT GENERATION SEL	CASEL STANDARDS	Choose Love For Schools
Self-Awareness	✓	♥
Self-Management	✓	♥
Social Awareness	✓	♥
Responsible Decision-making	✓	♥
Relationship Skills	✓	♥
Neuroscience		♥
Character Development		♥
Positive Psychology		♥
Emotional Intelligence		♥
Growth Mindset		♥
Mindfulness		♥
Post Traumatic Growth		♥



The most overlooked aspect of school safety is essential life skills programming.



## Choose Love For Communities

Choose Love for Communities extends the principles of the Choose Love Formula™ beyond the classroom, providing resources and training for community leaders and businesses to foster essential life skills, improve morale, and build stronger connections within the community. Local clubs, organizations, businesses, politicians, and law enforcement have used it to create more loving and peaceful communities.

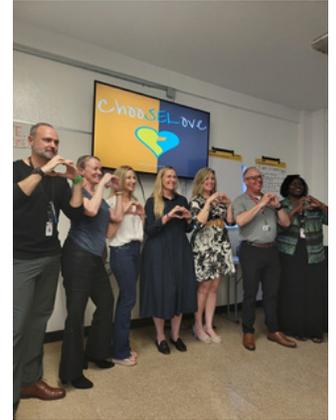
“I love Choose Love. Hands down my favorite character education curriculum I have ever taught in the 10 years I have been a school counselor. All this to say that I am grateful for you! Thank you for having the courage to share your vulnerability and growth through your continual process of healing.”  
 -Andrea Ackerly, Counselor, Madison Elementary School, NH

# Programs



## Choose Love For Corrections

Choose Love for Corrections™ was launched by the New Hampshire Department of Corrections (NHDOC) NH Correctional Facility for Women in 2021, and at the State Prison for Men in August, 2022, as well as the Transitional Housing Units. The program was launched in Florida's Miami North Corrections Community Release Center in 2024. In 2024, over 200 residents have completed the program with more than 250 waitlisted. There are 70 residents currently enrolled.



“Truly forgiving someone is an incredibly powerful and freeing action. We have learned to embrace this way of thinking and let go of the toxic anger, frustration, and the Choose Love Movement has had a profound effect on how we process our feelings.”  
-NH DOC resident

“Thank you, Scarlett for what you are doing! Now we remind each other to Choose Love! When it's said out loud and you show a hand heart to your co-worker, guess what? You get a smile back and it is so much better than feeling alone to carry such a heavy burden of a difficult day. Our whole staff took something away from your talk that was meaningful and personal.” - Angela Reich, Roxbury Animal Hospital, CT

## Choose Love in Hawaii



Hawaii has been Choosing Love since it was piloted in 2014 with 70% of schools using the program today.

Aloha in Action was inspired by the documentary, “Shaka: A Story of Aloha.” Lessons were created to help students connect the values to Hawaii-based vignettes, while the Choose Love Movement’s lessons provide tools for cultivating emotional intelligence and building supportive relationships.



## Choose Love Ambassadors

The Choose Love Movement has grown organically through word-of-mouth.



Choose Love Ambassadors spearhead the effort in their respective region to spread awareness of Choose Love programs to educators, counselors, administrators, politicians, parents, caregivers, community leaders and anyone who wants to learn more about our essential life skills programs and how to be a part of the solution to the issues our society is facing.

# Certified Schools Success Stories

Choose Love Certification provides a proven framework for creating a positive school culture, plus public recognition that shows parents and the community that these schools are taking a proactive approach to student and staff's well-being. This is the foundation to becoming a safe, supportive environment where students and staff can thrive. Certification was launched in 2024 with seven schools including Spaulding Academy and Family Services and Hillsboro Intermediate District.



## Spaulding Academy and Family Services

Since the initial adoption of the Choose Love For Schools in 2022, the entire campus has seen astounding results. Garrett Lavalley, Spaulding's principal and director of special education, attributes the increase to creating a community and culture filled with Courage, Gratitude, Forgiveness, and Compassion. This has helped create an environment where students support each other and celebrate accomplishments.

**35%**

decrease in crisis behaviors in the classroom.

**50%**

increase in student test scores in reading, writing and math over the last two years.

## Hillsboro Intermediate District

Hillsboro Intermediate District adopted Choose Love in 2018. In 2024, Hillsboro Elementary and Hillsboro Intermediate became Choose Love Certified Schools, and have become a living, breathing part of daily life. It is not just a lesson taught at school, but daily choices extending beyond the classroom walls.

“Choose Love has made a huge difference in the climate and culture of this school, and it has created a peaceful, safe place for kids and for adults,” said Shae Owen, Counselor and Choose Love Ambassador. “Behavioral changes have been evident in students and staff since it began in the district five years ago.”

# Achievements

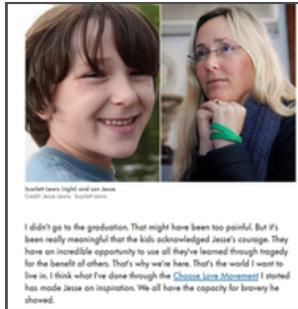
## Awards



## In the Media

### People

The Kids of Sandy Hook Are Growing Up: What's Ahead for 10 Teen Survivors and Victims' Families



**The Lisa Wexler Show**  
Gracie-Award Winner Lisa Wexler interviewed Scarlett Lewis to talk about what Choosing Love means.



## Choose Love History

**2012** Sandy Hook shooting killed Jesse Lewis and 26 others. 

**2013** The Jesse Lewis Choose Love Movement was established as a 501(C)(3) 

**2015** The Jesse Lewis Empowering Educators Act was introduced. 

**2016** The pilot of the Choose Love Enrichment Program was launched. 

**2018** Choose Love was included in the Federal Commission of School Safety. 

NH became first statewide rollout of Choose Love program. 

Choose Love for Homes was launched. 

**2020** Choose Love for Schools and Choosing Love in Our Brand New World are launched. 

**2022** Choose Love for Corrections was launched. 

**2024** Choose Love Certified Schools and Memberships programs are introduced. 

[www.ChooseLoveMovement.org](http://www.ChooseLoveMovement.org)



**Choose Love Podcast**  
**100,000 Monthly Listeners**

Dreamvisions 7 Radio Network, a Boston-based Holistic syndicated Internet radio station hosts.

# Sustainability

Choose Love has created new revenue streams to support sustainability, including Certified Schools, memberships, coaching programs, and the Choose Love online store. Community fundraisers at venues like the Prospector Theater and Piper and Dune also help fuel our mission to spread love, resilience, and compassion.



## Certified Schools

The school certification program is launched with seven schools becoming certified. Spaulding Academy and Family Services was the first school in the U.S. to become certified in August, 2024.



## Membership

Membership provides exclusive resources available through a paid subscription supporting Choose Love no-cost programs. More than 500 members enjoy the Daily Dose newsletter, monthly calendar, Think Tank with Scarlett Lewis, and more.



## Professional Development

Transformative workshops inspire educators to step beyond their comfort zones, embrace growth, and become their best selves.



## Prospector Theater

The Prospector Theater hosted a screening of HBO's documentary, *The Truth vs. Alex Jones*, followed by a moderated discussion with Scarlett Lewis.



CHOICE MOMENT COACHING  
by the Choose Love Movement

## Coaching

Choice Moment Coaching empowers practitioners to amplify their impact both professionally and personally.



## Online Store

All proceeds from the Choose Love store support the organization's no-cost programs.

# Sources

## 2024 Revenue Sources

- Individual Contributions/Grants — 58%
- Workshops & Speaking Fees — 31%
- Investment returns - 6%
- Book & Program Supplies — 3%
- Fundraisers — 2%

## 2024 Expense Sources

- Programs 89%
- Mgmt & General 7%
- Fundraising 4%



We thank you for your continued support and for Choosing Love.



# Testimonials



“Scarlett Lewis, a mom who lost her son in the Sandy Hook School tragedy, turned her pain into a powerful mission to help children learn compassion and love. Instead of losing herself to grief, Scarlett has chosen to heal, and to move humanity forward.”

– **Maria Shriver**, Peabody and Emmy Award-winning journalist and producer, NY Times Best Selling Author



“Scarlett, you define bravery and kindness...Your movement will save lives, and honor one very, very special one.”

– Lady Gaga, Grammy Award Winning Singer, Actress, Philanthropist

“Scarlett is one of my heroes. She is so kind, so brave. We all need to tap into love, compassion, and kindness.”

– Cynthia Germanotta, Co-Founder and President, Born This Way Foundation



“Scarlett taught me SO much about forgiveness, healing, and choosing to spread love even in the wake of unimaginable heartbreak.”

– **Nick Ortner**, CEO, Tapping Solution, and NYT Best-Selling Author



“If our students don’t feel safe and cared for then they are unable to access their education. It is my number one priority as a Principal and Special Education Director to create a community where our staff and students feel safe, loved, and cared for. Everybody deserves to love and to be loved! Our Spaulding Family lives by these words each and every day!”

– **Garrett Lavalley**, Principal & Director of Special Education, Spaulding Academy and Family Services



# Donors

## 2024 Financial Supporters

Our work relies on donors of all kinds, including individuals, corporations, foundations, and civic groups. We are immensely grateful for your support. We could not do this critical work without you

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