

Annual Report 2021

Breast Cancer Support and Education for New York's Capital Region



Message from the Executive Director



In December of 2021, I celebrated 10 years of working as Executive Director for To Life! Where did the time go? It seems like only yesterday that I entered the To Life! building in Delmar. It was the start of a very new career for me, managing a not-for-profit organization. I was not a stranger to To Life!, having volunteered for a number of events. Those experiences gave me insight into the real needs of the survivor population and the benefits To Life! could and did offer. My professional experience was in customer service, sales and sales program management. I could tell from the start that this would be different. We were on a mission. The staff exuded fierce determination to support the survivor community, with skill and compassion. I was in awe of the number of people we touched in a week, a month, a year.

That was in 2011, and here we are ten years later. A lot has changed in our world, and I have to say that lot remains the same. I am humbled to witness the good work of our people, the tangible results of our programs/services and the ongoing way that we challenge each other to make our community a better place. As you will see evidenced in this publication, the energy and enthusiasm and commitment remain in place. My gratitude and appreciation go out to the wonderful staff, the members of the board of directors, volunteers, and supporters. We are in this together.

Warmly,

Eileen

Message from the President



2021 was full of milestones! It marked 10 years of my involvement with To Life!. It was the year I became President of the Board of Directors for To Life!. And it was the year I celebrated 10 years of being breast cancer free!

It's impossible to put into the words the impact of a To Life! support group on someone who finds their safe place for the first time, or is finally able to see the possibility of returning to their previous self during a wig or mastectomy bra fitting. For those of us who have been there, those are moments that literally changed everything.

My goal is to make sure that EVERYONE in the Capital Region who finds themselves facing a breast cancer diagnosis knows about and is able to access To Life!'s services if they choose. That's a pretty lofty goal, but no one should have to deal with breast cancer alone.

There are many organizations who work tirelessly to find a cure or better treatments for breast cancer. Until they succeed, there are thousands of our friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers right here in the Capital Region who are dealing with it. They are the ones we need to be available to and for. They are the ones that To Life! will continue to fight for.

Sincerely,

Rita

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Community Impact (# of people served)



Education Program

439



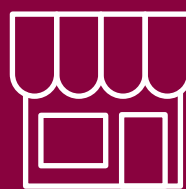
Support Groups

301



Breast Health Workshops

144



Boutique Services

476



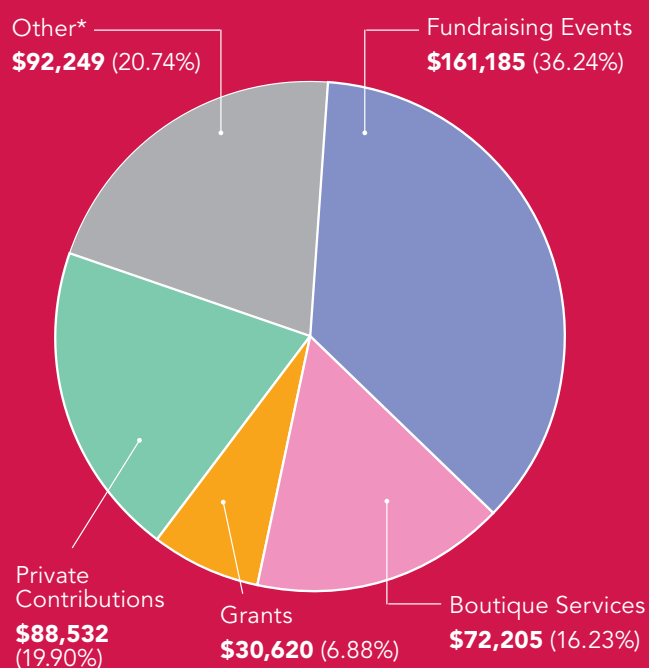
Wellness Programs

102

2021 Financial Report

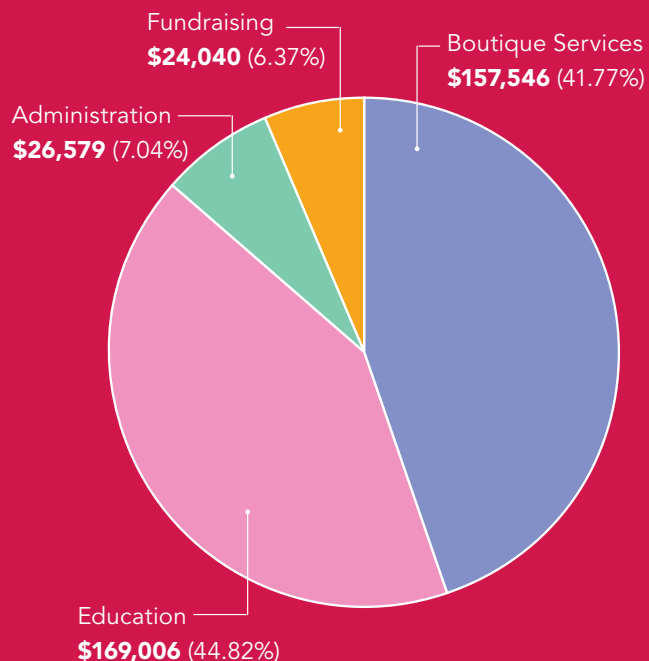
TOTAL REVENUE

\$444,791



TOTAL EXPENSES

\$377,171



*Includes PPP Loan Forgiveness

Events 2021

May 4

23rd Annual "A Toast To Life!"

Virtual program

At the heart of each A Toast To Life! event is the acknowledgement and celebration of individuals and organizations that support the breast cancer community. To Life! presented it's founder, Mara Ginsberg with the Visionary Award.

Visionary Award

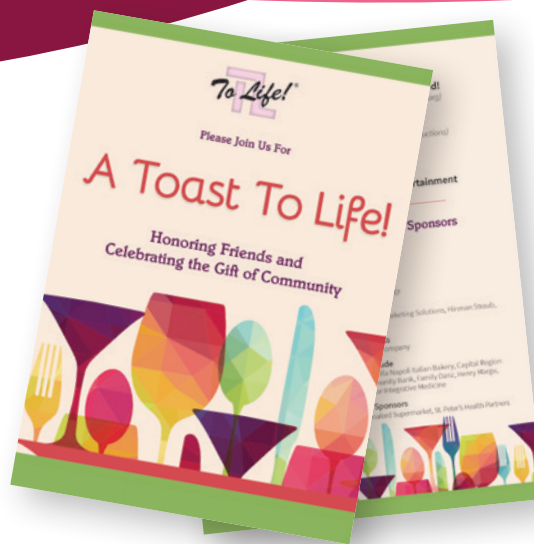
This special award is to recognize Mara Ginsberg who through her personal experience saw the need for To Life! and works diligently to continue the mission to benefit the survivor community and their families.

The Vision



Mara Ginsberg is a breast cancer survivor, one of thousands of women in our community who call themselves survivors/thrivers. As a wife and young mother of two, Mara was diagnosed with breast cancer at the age of 37.

Unlike many others who are quite surprised by this diagnosis, Mara was prepared, having lost her mother and aunt to the disease, both at a young age. But that didn't make it any easier to navigate. She was dismayed at the lack of information about treatment options, information and support were at best hard to find or simply not available. Mara sought and received good medical treatment. She had a loving family who stood by her side, provided love and care. But she needed more. Her experience was all too familiar; emotionally overwhelmed, weakened by the treatments, isolated by a disease that can be uncomfortable to talk about, Mara's questions: how do other women do this? How do those women cope? Turning these questions over and over, the answers started to crystallize. Gather



women together, foster support and information sharing, having a good laugh.

The organization would provide one-on-one and group support, include informative, educational programs, forums for local medical experts to share knowledge. Mara wanted women to feel beautiful during and after treatment. Boutiques that offered wigs, hats, mastectomy bras and prosthesis can help women regain control of their physical appearance. Mara Ginsberg, a two time breast cancer survivor herself experienced a significant gap in information about breast cancer, treatment options, and emotional support here in the Greater Capital Region. Her vision, to provide information, support and services for those dealing with breast cancer, was visionary. To Life! formed as these really good ideas became something more; became solid goals, found friends who supported such goals, developed into a plan, became real. In 1998, Mara started To Life! with \$72 in the bank and a good vision. Mara planted the seed to build a community committed to making the very best of the breast cancer journey. A foundation upon which to foster the network, the connections. To Life! continues to thrive, expanding on Mara's vision and holding true to the values she promoted from the very start.

Mara continues to serve the organization as Founder of To Life!, President Emeritus, Chair of Education and Scientific Advisory Committee.



October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Pink Ribbons in Bethlehem

Town of Bethlehem decorates the downtown area with pink ribbons to visually reinforce the awareness message and to remind all of the support and other resources available in our community.

Pink Mile Challenge

On a sunny Saturday morning, our volunteers hung the last pink ribbon on the clock tower at the four corners in Bethlehem. It was official October with a focus on breast cancer awareness was in full swing. Joining the celebration was Town Supervisor David VanLeuven, Town Board Member Maureen Cunningham, and Bronwyn Edwards, chair of the Pink Mile Challenge. (picture shown on front cover)

The Pink Mile Challenge is a month-long initiative to complete a 5K. Walk, run, bike, hike, participant's choice. The challenge, in its second year, gathered 13 teams, raising \$12,000 for To Life! programming.



October 26

Moonlight Soirée

Virtual program

An old Albany setting, fine food and good company was the vision for the Moonlight Soirée. And it almost worked out for To Life! to host the event at Jack's Oyster House in downtown Albany. Continuing safety concerns due to COVID forced the organization to carry forth a reinvented celebration. The celebration went virtual with hosts Dennis Connelly and Rita Cox. A highlight of the event was presentation of the the "Community Advocate" award to Patty Tobin.



Education Programs

To Life! continues to bring relevant educational presentations to our survivor/thrivers and medical professionals. Direction for To Life! educational programming is a group effort. The To Life! Advisory Council (consisting of community volunteers, members of the board and staff). meet periodically to guide the process. Throughout 2021 we continued to offer programs virtually out of an abundance of caution and concern for our survivor population. The Advisory Council reviews feedback from prior event participants, current developments in treatment, and networking with the up and commers in the field of breast cancer treatment.



August 11

Beat The Odds

**“Breast Cancer Immunotherapy:
Past, Present and Future”**

*Dr. Margaret Gatti-Mays, MD, MPH
(2021 Cynthia Shenker Speaker)*

To Life! was pleased to host **Dr. Margaret Gatti-Mays** for the August symposium Beat the Odds. This summer program is well known and well respected, covering new developments with leading experts in the field of breast cancer. Dr. Gatti-Mays, Oncologist with the James Comprehensive Cancer Center at The Ohio State University is one of the leading authorities in the field of immunotherapy for Breast Cancer treatment.

November - January

11th Annual Women's Health Conference Series

Entering our 11th year, the Women's Health Conference Series offers the latest information regarding treatments and trends in breast cancer and related health issues. Starting in November, a series of four individual virtual sessions included a formal presentation followed by a Q & A session. Topics covered; fear of recurrence, managing psychological trauma, nutrition during treatment, and integrative therapies. Capitalizing on the virtual presentation, we took the opportunity to bring in speakers from some of the major cancer centers. With each presentation, the speaker had a solid command of the material and was able to interject current and fresh strategies. The sessions were recorded and continue to be available to view on demand. Visit the To Life! website for the links.





November 9, 2021
**Breast Cancer
Recurrence:
Managing the
Fear & Living
Your Life**

Two-time breast cancer survivor, **Lillie Shockney**, RN., BS, MAS, ONN-CG, spoke on the topics of fear and anxiety around breast cancer recurrence, coping with that fear so it doesn't paralyze survivors from living their lives. Lillian was an engaging storyteller and emphasized quality of life as a priority. Lillie Shockney was the former Director of the Johns Hopkins Breast Center, Baltimore, Maryland.



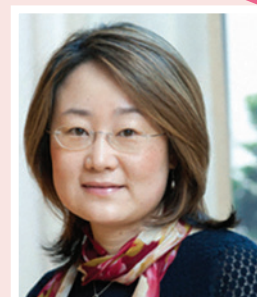
November 17, 2021
**Psychological
Trauma and
Breast Cancer**

Cheryl Hysjulien, RN, PsyD presented on the stress and trauma of a breast cancer diagnosis, the sympathetic nervous system response, and about post-traumatic growth, and mind-body tools for mitigating stress and trauma around a breast cancer diagnosis and treatment. Dr. Hysjulien is a registered nurse and licensed clinical psychologist at the Sanford Roger Maris Cancer Center, in North Dakota, specializing in health psychology with further specialization in psycho-oncology.



December 8, 2021
**Nutrition for
Breast Cancer
Patients and
Survivors**

Oncology Nutritionist, **Julie Bosworth**, RD, LDN, presented on practical and scientifically-sound nutrition for breast cancer patients and survivors. Having been diagnosed with breast cancer, at age 41, Ms. Bosworth will speak from the perspective of nutrition expert, as well as breast cancer patient and survivor. Julie Bosworth, RD, LDN, is an oncology nutritionist, registered and licensed dietitian, and Senior Dietitian at Dana Farber Cancer Institute with special training and skill in assessing, diagnosing, and treating dietary and nutritional problems.



January 13, 2022
**Integrative
Therapies in
Breast Cancer
Care**

Ting Bao, MD, DABMA, MS, spoke on the role of integrative therapies, in complementing more conventional breast cancer care and mitigating the side effects of breast cancer treatment and the use of aromatase inhibitors, to meet treatment goals and maintain the best quality of life possible. Ting Bao, MD, DABMA, MS, is an Integrative Medicine Specialist and the Director of Integrative Breast Oncology at Memorial Sloan Kettering.

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 Booster Club
 Bethlehem Boys Varsity Soccer
 Booster Club
 BEX Salon
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 Joni Richter - One Hope Wine
 Knights of Pythias -Albany
 Knolls Atomic Power Laboratory
 - Pink Day
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 The Spinney at Van Dyke
 Toast to the Ta Ta's
 Patty Tobin with J McLaughlin -
 Share the Love
 VFW breast cancer walk



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In Honor of Tammy L. Frodyma and
In Memory of Linda L. Frodyma
Amy Murphy,
In Honor of All Brave Thrivers
Debra & Karl Parker,
In Honor of To Life! Thank you!
Helen Salamone,



Thank you to our supporters

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In Appreciation of To Life!
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In Appreciation of
Eileen Howe Bird
Ethan Howe & Emily Berkovitz,
Merry Christmas from
Ethan and Emily!
Francesca Mancino,
In Appreciation of the
To Life! Staff
Peter & Elena Spitalny,
Thank you to the Ellis Family!

Facebook Fundraisers

Bronwyn Perez Birthday
Fundraiser
Kelly Blodgett's Birthday
Fundraiser
Michelle McCoy's Birthday
Fundraiser
Nina's Birthday Fundraiser
Peter Howe Birthday
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Siena Women's Basketball
Pink Zone Game Fundraiser

Pink Mile Challenge - A Virtual 5K Event

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Buddies
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Kelly Whitbeck, Captain for
Team Kelly's Unicorn Army
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A Toast to Life!

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