

Annual Report 2022

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



Breast Cancer Support and Education

Message from the President



We began my second year as the President of To Life! with an introspective look at the mission, values and goals of the organization. Are we doing our best? Do we know what's needed? Are we prepared for the future? Those questions were lurking in my head and in my heart. With the assistance of Nancy Preston, a seasoned professional, we launched a strategic planning process with a committee consisting of members of the Board of Directors and Staff.

In this report you will read the outcome of this work. I am forever indebted to those who joined me on the committee (Eileen Bird, Chris Breton, Mary Bowen, Jamie Brown, Barbara MacDowell and myself) for giving thoughtful consideration and review to each and every element of our plan. Items were measured by their impact, not their ease of execution. We took the time to ensure each item would strengthen the reach of our organization and allow us to provide more services to more community members. I sincerely thank them for the time and effort they each invested. Their work will make a difference for years to come.

To Life!'s Strategic Plan is now our road map. Staff and Board Members are working on projects involving Awareness, Client Advocacy, Financial Accountability, Governance, Inclusivity, Internal Resources, Programming and Services, Products, and Volunteer Base. Yes, it is an aggressive plan, but everything included is the right thing to do for the organization, our community, and our clients.

The work done to make this happen was hard, but it was important. I'm most proud of the fact that now, when we talk about what we want to do, there is a plan that shows how it fits into the big picture. It explains why and how things impact the future of To Life! It shows our donors and volunteers how their time and resources will help us achieve our goals. It enables new potential board members to see how their talents can serve their community.

Sincerely,

Rita Cox

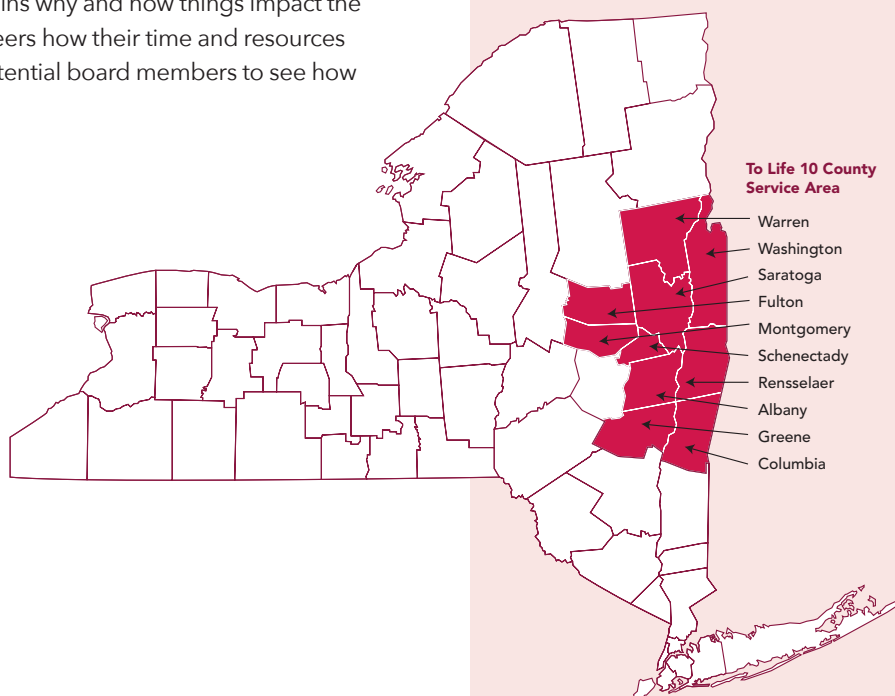
President, To Life! Board of Directors

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Christine Breton
Connie Bannigan
Jamie Brown
Alice Dunican
Hilary Miller
Carmen Rodriguez
Susan Vink-Lainas
Diane Ward

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Maureen DeRosa
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Steve Lerner
Julie Marlette
Holly Michaelson



Message from the Executive Director



As predicted by many in the early days of 2022, we would put COVID behind us, get back to normal, resume our “regularly scheduled lives”. It really didn’t seem to work out as anticipated, and many hoped for. COVID continued to have an effect on our daily lives throughout the year. In the case of To Life!, our support groups, wellness and educational programs continued to function in a virtual world. Our boutiques adhere to safety protocols. Our workforce has become more adept at working from home or in the office. We are figuring it out.

The uncertainty over COVID has added another dimension to members of our survivor community. Mixed messages and protocol standards across medical offices, scrambling for vaccines or rather the decision if and when to receive the latest dose of the COVID vaccine. An unintended consequence is often a delay in the scheduling of routine mammograms and other screenings. Beyond a doubt, there is a heightened level of anxiety within our private lives and in our community narrative.

I see evidence that we are moving beyond that sense of anxiety and helplessness when we gather in community. This year, for the first time since joining To Life!, I have become an active participant in one of our support groups. Read more about our support group outreach in this report. My gratitude and appreciation go out to the wonderful staff, the members of the Board of Directors, volunteers, and supporters. I marvel at all that has been accomplished in this past year. I am deeply thankful to our supporters; it is a collective effort. Let’s not forget, we are in this together.

Warmly,

Eileen Howe Bird
Executive Director

Community Impact

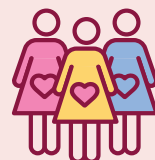
(# of people served)

To Life! provides direct services to individuals in the Greater Capital Region. Our website and social media presence enhance our outreach to over 8,000 individuals annually.



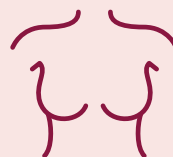
Education Programs

419



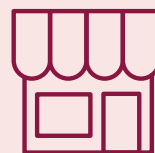
Support Groups & Peer Mentoring

533



Breast Health Workshops

132



Boutique Services

518



Wellness Programs

182

Support Groups & Peer Mentoring

Why attend a support group? "I thought I was going crazy until I heard that others felt the same way!" is a common expression.

Support groups are at the heart of To Life! outreach. To Life! has hosted group meetings since opening our doors. Groups are facilitated by one or sometimes two individuals, experienced in group facilitation, knowledgeable about breast cancer and connected to the local breast cancer medical community. Each group meeting creates a safe space to allow participants to discuss their ongoing cancer experience with others who have gone through a similar experience. Group members share experiences, feelings and information but most importantly listen and support one other. For those who prefer individual support, our Support Services Program Manager facilitates one-on-one support. A Peer to Peer Mentoring program offers an alternative option for support.

NEWLY DIAGNOSED/IN TREATMENT

This group encounter has been a starting place for survivors to gather with others who are also dealing with a diagnosis. Facilitated by To Life! staff, this group meets monthly, offering a platform to address any and all questions that come with a breast cancer journey and the emotional challenges associated with their diagnosis.

METATHRIVERS

Individuals who are dealing with advanced cancer or a cancer recurrence often face complex challenges. This group, led by a cancer survivor and an experienced

group facilitator help individuals navigate the challenges ahead.

POSITIVELY LIVING

Focus on the mental, emotional, and spiritual transition one goes through following a breast cancer diagnosis. Provides the education, tools and supportive community to work through this transition into a new phase of life.

BI-LINGUAL GROUP

An open group network supporting Spanish speaking individuals. Our bi-lingual educator manages this outreach.

PEER TO PEER MENTORING

Engaging with a fellow survivor can offer a unique connection and perspective on a survivor's journey. To Life!'s extensive survivor network has assisted hundreds on their journey. In many cases, the peer mentor relationship develops into ongoing friendship.

FORMATION OF THE POSITIVELY LIVING SUPPORT GROUP

Early in 2022, we took time to assess our support group program. We asked attendees, staff and volunteers; what was working and where opportunities arose? We formed a small group to explore the emotional needs of our community, where are individuals struggling? What do survivors need? How can we do better? Judy Rosch, a healing touch practitioner, has worked individually with many of the survivors in our community. Judy had an idea that there might be an opportunity to build a group effort focused on those individuals making the transition from active treatment into post treatment. With Judy's assistance, and with a strong endorsement from many survivors, we launched a new support initiative. The Positively Living Support Group held its first meeting in May of 2022.



"Early diagnosis and improved treatments have led to an expanding survivor community. Our vision for these individuals is to provide them with the education, tools and supportive community to help them manage their breast cancer journey."

-JUDY ROSCH

This new group effort invites those people diagnosed with breast cancer and focuses on the mental, emotional and spiritual transition one goes through following a breast cancer diagnosis. The group provides a forum for dealing with elements of grief and loss of the life previously lived and the transition to life anew. The group is a gathering place for women that will provide the education, tools and supportive community to work through this transition into their new life.

As a registered nurse, Judy has dedicated her professional energies toward healing. Also trained as a Reiki Master and as a Brennan Healing Science Practitioner. Reiki and Brennan Healing Science

are both hands on energy healing modalities that work with the Human Energy-Conscious System and its relationship to a state of optimum health. Judy strives to use a persons' current emotional state to connect to their energy system. This engagement charges the energy field, removing energetic blocks, a process that leads to enhancing the body's natural healing capability. Individuals report a feeling of deep relaxation following this experience.

Judy approaches the world through the lens of the mind-body-spirit association. Active treatment for cancer focuses on the physical aspects of treatment and its effects on the body. This journey may include a grieving process that will expand their emotional healing into other areas and evolve into the transition into post treatment life. The healing process can and should be a doorway for opening to a deeper and fuller healing. The person may begin to feel and express a desire to revisit deeper questions such as Who am I now? What is my purpose, how may I live a full and meaningful life now? This is another place of unknown, of change, that may be managed well with education, tools and a supportive community.

Boutique Fitting Services

With boutiques in Saratoga Springs and Delmar, To Life! was able to serve 518 individuals in 2022. In-person consultations and fittings ensure the best product fit and service experience. To Life! fitting services are offered complimentary to all clients. Clients will be responsible for the product itself. The To Life! Boutiques are accredited by the Center for Medicare Services and mastectomy fitters are Medicare certified. To offset client out of pocket expense, To Life! is a participating provider for many insurance providers. No one is turned away from the To Life! boutiques. Staff frequently assist with and negotiates with insurance providers both in and out of network.

Mastectomy Boutique: offers personalized fitting services for women who have had surgical procedures related to breast cancer: mastectomies, lumpectomies, and reconstruction.

Wig and Hat Boutique: solutions for people dealing with hair loss. Whether it's hair loss caused by chemotherapy treatment, chronic conditions such as alopecia or other illness or disease. The To Life! boutiques have a substantial product offering, representing many manufacturers and options.

Events 2022

February 3

Pink Zone Game – a Celebration of Survivorship

21st Annual Pink Zone Game – February 3rd 2022
To Life! in partnership with Siena College participated in the Pink Zone Game. With concerns for COVID still very much present, this year's event was held in hybrid fashion. While the game was played at the UHY Center on the Siena College Campus, a group of survivor honorees participated in a virtual "watch party". In the weeks leading up to the game members of the women's basketball team "buddied up" with our Survivor/Honorees. Team members recorded personal messages, ran a fundraising initiative through Facebook, with a virtual celebration with the slate of survivors and all team members. Survivors were made to feel welcomed and special. For the team efforts, the team was recognized by the local chapter of the American Fundraising Professionals (AFP), receiving the Outstanding Volunteer Fundraiser Award at their Annual Philanthropy Day reception.



May 11

24th Annual "A Toast To Life!"

The Century House

A Toast to Life!, a fundraiser for To Life! was held on May 11th at the Century House in Latham. This was especially significant, as it was the first in person event To Life! had hosted since early 2020. Current precautions were taken, being ever vigilant to ensure the safety of all attendees. A crowd of 210 attendees turned out for the opportunity to reconnect with friends and celebrate our honorees. Our Honorary Chairs Dennis and Cindy Connelly welcomed guests. Camile DeLongis served as our emcee to move the program along. Honorees Jessica Melchior, Susan Kugler received the "You're an Angel" Award. Paul Osterdahl (posthumously) with the "Extra Mile" award.

You're an Angel Award



Susan Kugler has served as a volunteer with To Life! for the past ten years, serving on the Toast/Gala committee. Sue's work with To Life! auction initiative has helped our effort to raise funds, and bringing joy to those who participate in the auctions. With sincere gratitude

for the countless hours and attention to painstaking detail.



Jessica Klein Melchior was first introduced to To Life! through the support group program. She quickly became a mainstay for support group meetings long after her own treatment was complete. Jessica continues to serve in a leadership capacity with the Young

Survivor Coalition Facebook group – an active online community. For her ongoing engagement with breast cancer survivors of all ages and her steadfast support of this community, we are proud to honor Jessica with the "You're an Angel" award.

The Extra Mile Award



Paul R. Osterdahl Sr, MD was a beloved Capital Region obstetrician. He received the Extra Mile award (posthumously) for his 40 years of practice with Albany Obstetrics and Gynecology, P.C. With this award he was recognized for his dedication in the care of women and families in the Capital Region.

Guests Enjoy "A Toast To Life!" Celebration



August 5

Fabulous Fillies Day

Saratoga Race Track

On a beautiful Saturday in August, the Saratoga Racecourse hosted Fabulous Fillies while also being Whitney Day, one of the highest attendance days of the season. Festivities started with Tammy Ogsbury singing the National Anthem in front of a crowd of 40 thousand. Other highlights included procession into the inner circle with the entire survivor/honoree group offering the "riders up" signal leading into the fifth race of the day, a To Life! named race. From the survivor standpoint, the group appreciated the opportunity to gather with fellow survivors and enjoy the races.



Events 2022

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

This national initiative has inspired many individuals and organizations to host events and activities that help raise awareness and funds to support those dealing with a breast cancer diagnosis. To Life! staff and volunteers supported fitness events, walking tours, health fairs, fundraisers and themed walks throughout the month of October.

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.



Sue Abbuhl with David Van Luvan, Supervisor, Town of Bethlehem

AAA Hudson Valley

Employees of AAA Hudson Valley Automobile Association hosted a Brookes BBQ drive through to support To Life!



Pink Mile Challenge

The Pink Mile Challenge was a month-long virtual fitness challenge and fundraiser that channels the energy of the local community to support and raise awareness about breast cancer. Participants created their own challenges, choosing a fitness activity; running, walking, biking, kayaking, etc.. All activities were completed in the month of October.



October 21

The Pink Ball

Wolferts Roost Country Club

Awardees

THE INNOVATION IN CARE AWARD

Heather Stahura, MD FACC has been part of Capital Cardiology Associates, since 2018 and is Chief of Cardiology at Samaritan Hospital in Troy. Dr. Stahura has a passion for preventative cardiology, women's heart health, valvular heart disease, congestive heart failure and coronary artery disease. Dr. Stahura was instrumental in the development of the Cardio-oncology division at Capital Cardiology Associates. She has worked extensively with breast cancer patients helping them live their best quality of life.

THE COMMUNITY ADVOCATE AWARD

Joni Richter is the Manager of Cancer Support and Strategic Partnerships for the American Cancer Society, Joni oversees Patient and Family Programs and works with hospitals and health systems throughout Upstate NY. Joni has also taken on a facilitator/leadership role with the Capital Region Cancer Care Consortium, a large group of regional oncology practitioners and support services organizations. Joni has partnered with To Life! on many support and educational initiatives including the development of the To Life! support group, Positively Living, for which she serves as the co-facilitator.

Survivor Art Showcase

The Pink Ball reception featured a display of curated creative works by breast cancer fighters and survivors. Graciously donated to benefit the silent auction, each piece was displayed along with the artist's personal/professional statement. The showcase made a powerful and dramatic impact on all attendees.



Pictured above are Board Member and Co-Chair Barbara MacDowell, Awardees Dr. Heather Stahura and Joni Richter, Eileen Bird, Jamie Brown, and Board Member and Co-Chair Maureen DeRosa.



Education Programs

To Life! continues to bring relevant educational presentations to our survivor/thrivers and medical professionals. Throughout 2022 we continued to offer programs virtually out of an abundance of caution and concern for our survivor population."



August 2

Beat The Odds

"Recent Progress and Emerging Challenges"

Dr. Renzo Canetta, MD

(2022 Cynthia Shenker Speaker)

To Life! was pleased to host **Dr. Renzo Canetta** as our featured presenter for the annual Beat the Odds program. Dr. Canetta is a Clinical Oncologist experienced in cancer research and drug development, retired from role as Vice President of global R&D for Bristol-Myers Squibb. The program was presented virtually.

Dr. Canetta addressed current and future treatments as a number of new drugs will become available in the foreseeable future. In particular, Dr. Canetta addressed hormonal therapy, implications for Her2+ Metastatic breast cancer, and other drugs in the pipeline that will positively impact treatment protocols.

November - January

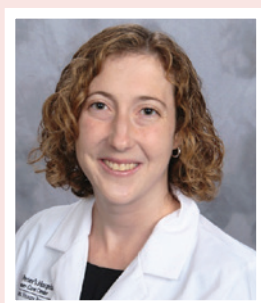
12th Annual Women's Health Conference Series

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. Enlisting local medical experts, topics covered; surgical treatment, medical research, cardio-oncology and interpretation of a breast pathology report. Our appreciation to all the presenters who were well prepared with insightful concepts with fresh information. The sessions were recorded and continue to be available to view on demand. Visit the To Life! website for the links.



Breast Cancer Information Today, Treatment Decisions for Tomorrow.

A series of four presentations, offering the latest on treatment and trends in breast cancer. Presenters and content are presented so as to be informative to an audience including: cancer survivors and thrivers, healthcare professionals, caregivers and friends interested in hearing from expert professionals in the area of women's health.



November 15, 2022 De-Escalating the Surgical Process

Dr. Sarah Pesek, Breast Surgeon, St. Peter's Health Partners
Dr. Sarah Pesek focused on current surgical options and how physicians will tailor treatment to meet patient's needs and optimize outcome.



**November 29, 2022
The Latest
Research on
Breast Cancer**
Douglas Conklin, PhD, Associate Professor at University at Albany School of Public Health, Cancer Research Center.
Research scientist Dr. Douglas Conklin shared recent insights in the areas of cancer cell behavior and signaling and the impact on breast cancer treatment. Dr. Conklin and his team continue to investigate genetic behavior and impact on a breast cancer diagnosis.



**December 13, 2022
Cardio-Oncology
and Patient Care**
Dr. Heather Stahura, Cardiologist with Capital Cardiology Associates.
Dr. Heather Stahura discussed how the growing field of cardiooncology can help breast cancer survivors navigate cancer treatment and minimize impact on cardiovascular health.



**January 13, 2023
How To Read
Your Breast
Pathology Report**
Dr. Sandra Shin is Professor and Chair of the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at Albany Medical Center. As an expert in the field of breast pathology, Dr. Sandra Shin spoke about reading a breast pathology report. The pathology report is an important tool for breast cancer patients to gain insight about their diagnosis and treatment options.

Recordings available at <https://tolife.org/education-and-resources/educational-programs/womens-health-conference>

Friends Fundraisers

1st National Bank of Scotia
 AAA Hudson Valley
 Albany Empire
 Bliss Juice Smoothie
 Circles
 Clinton Heights Fire Dept
 Cohoes Fire Department
 Debbie Ferla Team Christi
 Facebook
 Fenimore Asset Management
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 Niskayuna Youth Football
 NYSTEC
 One Hope Wine
 Onesquethaw Volunteer Fire Co
 Patroons Coaches' Clinic
 Pink Paddock
 Quad Graphics
 Saratoga Springs Girls Swim
 Booster Club
 Saratoga Trunk
 Siena Women's Basketball Team
 SKS Bottle & Packaging
 Spirit of Dance Performance Arts
 Swifty's Restaurant

Grants and Foundation Support

New York State Department
 of Health
 The Community Foundation
 Review Foundation
 Kia's Accelerate The Good
 Program
 Soroptimist International of
 Saratoga County
 Cap Com Cares Foundation
 SEFCU



Mission, Vision, Values

One of the early initiatives for 2022 was a review of the To Life! mission and organizational priorities. The To Life! Board of Directors engaged the services of Nancy Preston, an expert consultant in the field of strategic solutions for not-for-profit organizations, was asked to lead this effort. A committee consisting of staff and members of the Board of Directors came together to work on this endeavor; Christine Breton, Mary Bowen, Jamie Brown, Barbara MacDowell, Eileen Howe Bird and Rita Cox. Nancy led this group through many thought-provoking discussions which led to the Vision, Mission and Strategic Goals outlined below. These goals and objectives have been officially adopted by the board and will serve as a framework for the organizational efforts in the years to come.

Vision Statement

Our vision is a Capital Region where everyone affected by breast cancer has access to a trusted, independent community resource for comprehensive information, education, and support.

Mission Statement

For those affected by breast cancer in the Capital Region, To Life! provides personal support, empowers informed decision making, and enhances quality of life.

We do this by:

- Facilitating community support groups
- Providing individualized guidance and mentoring
- Delivering reliable and unbiased information and resources
- Presenting dynamic educational programming
- Offering personalized fittings for mastectomy products and wigs, and
- Developing community partners

Thank you to all committee members for your service toward this effort, and to Board of Directors and volunteers for embracing this direction forward.

To Life! Strategic Plan

To Life! Strategic Goals

In support of our mission - providing personal support, empowering informed decision-making, and enhancing quality of life for those affected by breast cancer in the Capital Region - the following overarching priorities will inform our decision-making:

January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2027

Awareness - we will be recognized as the premier resource in the Capital Region for people impacted by a breast cancer diagnosis.

Client Advocacy - we will be a supportive and committed voice for our clients by being proponents for their individual needs.

Financial Accountability - we will exhibit fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the organization's financial obligations are met.

Governance - we will attract and retain diverse board members who represent the communities we serve and embody the values of the organization.

Inclusivity - we will be open and welcoming to all members of the communities in our constituent areas.

Internal Resources - we will curate the infrastructure needed to achieve our organizational goals.

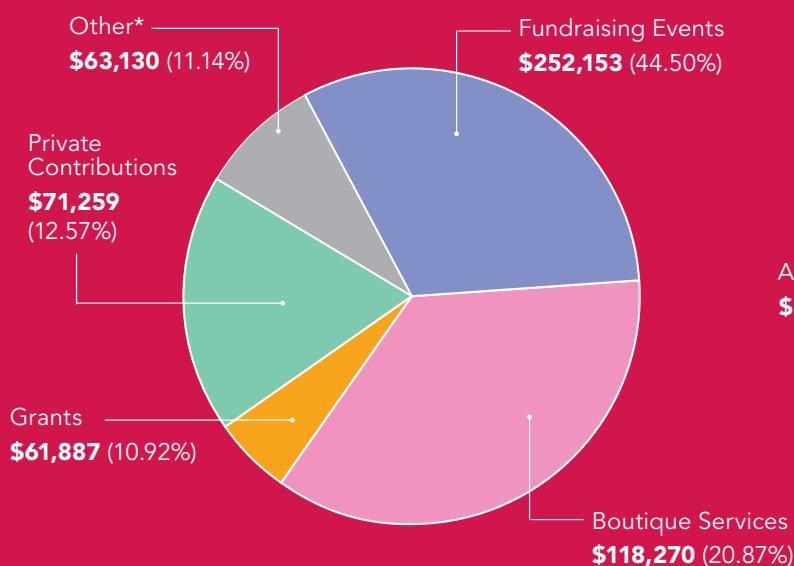
Programming and Services - we will deliver high quality education and support free of charge.

Products - we will provide high-quality wigs, head coverings, and mastectomy products for our clients.

Volunteer Base - We will build a strong network to support our clients, our programs, and our goals.

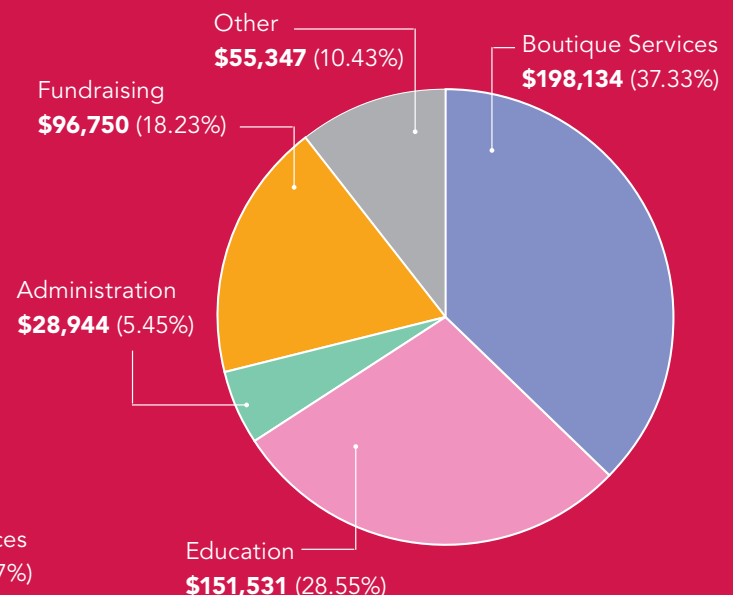
2022 Financial Report

TOTAL REVENUE \$566,699



*PPP Loan Forgiveness

TOTAL EXPENSES \$530,706



Thank you to our supporters

Annual Appeal, 2022

Joseph Altobello
Mary Lou Anatriello
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Lyle VanVranken
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Debbie Youngelman
Carmela G. Zaccardo

TRIBUTE DONATIONS

Gifts in Honor

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In Honor of Diane and Judy
Anonymous
In Honor of Moms & Daughters &
In Memory of all those lost
Debra Antonelli
In Honor of Stacey Lybrand
Brian Aviles
In Honor of Bronwyn Perez and Kim Lynch
Judith Byrnes-Enoch
In Honor of Denise Buono
Rachel Dunn & Bill McEllen
In Honor of Christi Merola Van Royen
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In Honor of Christi Merola Van Royen &
In Memory of Anna G. Cuozzo
Elizabeth Scott
In Honor of Meg Distell
Mary Ellen Tedesco
In Honor of Christi Merola Van Royen &
In Memory of Anna G. Cuozzo
Jen Towne
In Honor of Stacey Lybrand

Continued >

Thank you to our supporters

Annual Appeal, 2022 (continued)

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In Honor of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Carl Young
In Honor of Mark Conroy

Gifts in Memory

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In Memory of Mark Conroy
Dorothea Alonge
In Memory of Mark Conroy
Christopher Archibee
In Memory of Anna G. Cuozzo
Trudy Arena
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
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Wendy & Larry Barnet
In Memory of Debra Lynn Ginsberg
Raymond & Elizabeth Bell
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Kristen Bellini
In Memory of Mark Conroy
Renee & Greg Berg
In Memory of Noreen Cheney
Catie & John Black
In Memory of Debra Ginsberg
Sorelle Brauth & Robert Pomeranz
In Memory of Debra Ginsberg
Sorelle Brauth & Robert Pomeranz
In Memory of Karen Norlander
Judith Breen
In Memory of Mark Conroy
Kathie Bruso
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino

Cabrini University
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Blair Clancy
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Anna & David Hummel Colello
In Memory of Debra Ginsberg
Kathleen Concordia
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Judith & Gary Conlen
In Memory of Mark Conroy
Mary Corrigan
In Memory of Mark Conroy
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In Memory of Mark Conroy
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In Memory of Christi Merola Van Royen
Kathleen Deguire
In Memory of Theresa Del Giacco
DeSanctis
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In Memory of Linda M. Papale
Sal DiGangi
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Joseph Dussich
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
John Emmett
In Memory of Mark Conroy
Kathleen Fairbank
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino

Francine Federici
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
Robert Fenton
In Memory of Anastasia Fenton
John J. & Lisa Ferguson
In Memory of Debra Lynn Ginsberg
Ellen Ferrari
In Memory of Joan Marie Buzzallino
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