



changing
the face of
aging



Dear Oasis Friends,

“Do you mind if I ask your age?”

It’s a question that reveals one of the most misunderstood aspects of our self-presentation to others: the arbitrary number that reveals when we arrived on the planet. Some embrace it with gusto and enthusiasm, others with wisdom and introspection, but an alarming majority of us often assign shame, self-doubt and dread about chronological age.

Growing older is universally shared. Being authentic and emotionally unburdened about the number that represents our age, while embracing in full measure the opportunities we have before us, is liberating and can affect real change for ourselves and the communities in which we live.

How different might things be if we agree to make a radical shift in the way we describe people? What if instead of labels that reflect how long we’ve been around—*older adult, senior, elder*—we choose to lead with language that captures what we’re doing now and what we want to do in the future—*volunteer, artist, enthusiast, activist, friend and mentor*?

This is what I love about Oasis and the powerful work we do nationwide to celebrate and encourage adults who are learning, growing and changing the narrative about getting older. We’ve been changing the face of aging for over 35 years, and I hope when Oasis is 70 we will look at what we’ve accomplished, be proud of the wisdom we’ve earned and maintain a humble optimism about what we’re going to learn and accomplish as an organization in the years ahead. I’m proud of this journey, and so thankful for the people who support Oasis and the older adults who share it with us.

Warmly,
Paul Weiss, PhD
President
The Oasis Institute

Upstate Oasis is growing!

In 2018, we added 548 new participants. There are many reasons that Oasis is evolving from the best-kept secret in Syracuse, NY, to the go-to resource for older adults who are looking for inspiration and exploration.

Our programs are at the heart of our success. We offered 482 classes in 2018 and the most classes ever in one trimester. Our nationally-recognized *State of the Union* series continued to draw enthusiastic crowds, and we were excited to launch other promising new programs, including **Tai Chi for Arthritis, beginning and intermediate tap dancing, Sound Healing with Gong Meditation, After World War: A New World** and **Egyptian History**.

We have also become more accessible. Collaborating with community partners to offer our programs in more locations means that nearly 12,000 people who look to Oasis for lifelong learning and personal growth simply have more paths to find us.

The **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring** program has grown by 150 percent in 2018. We have added several new schools in the Syracuse City School District, and now have Oasis tutors working one-on-one with students in other area districts as well, including Liverpool, Central Square and Marcellus.

All of these gains have inspired more donors than ever who share our belief that getting older represents opportunities for growth and impact. I’m proud of this growth and so thankful for those who support Upstate Oasis in keeping people active, engaged and aging well.

Sincerely,
Cynthia Woods
Executive Director
Upstate Oasis



Staying On Your Feet with Tai Chi

Sandra Gowing rides a bike, plays tennis and is generally steadier on her feet these days. She credits taking **Tai Chi for Arthritis** classes at Upstate Oasis for her newfound confidence.

"I used to fall all the time," says Sandra. "But taking Tai Chi has helped me become more aware of my footfall. I feel stronger and more in control of my body, so I'm no longer afraid of falling."

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Studies show that fear of falling actually increases one's risk for future falls, which prompted Upstate Oasis to step up their falls prevention efforts. In collaboration with the Onondaga County Office for Aging, Oasis secured grant funding to offer free **Tai Chi for Arthritis** classes, along with chronic disease self-management courses, in area senior centers in 2018.

Tai Chi for Arthritis helps people improve balance both mentally and physically, significantly reducing the rate of older adult falls. Additional benefits include improving vitality, posture, even immunity. Those taking the class report reduced knee pain, as well as improved blood pressure, memory and ability to concentrate.

Longtime instructor Genoa Wilson, who teaches all of the **Tai Chi for Arthritis** classes at Upstate Oasis, says it's all about the breathing. "The slow, sustained breathing we do in class, combined with moving your feet helps with lung capacity and opens up the ribcage," Genoa says. "The focused breathing triggers a relaxation response that helps slow down our brain waves. As people progress through the classes, we're developing a new vocabulary of movement."



Have a Seat with the Choose-A-Chair Challenge

People attending events in the Lecture Hall at Upstate Oasis will be seated in style by Fall of 2019, thanks to a fund started by longtime participant and volunteer Diana Biro. "I'm trying to plant a seed," says Diana, who launched the Choose-A-Chair Challenge to make possible the purchase of new chairs for a space that is used by hundreds of older adults who come to Oasis for classes and events. With her jumpstart gift of \$1,000 and a promise to match additional donations, the project is well on its way. For Diana, it's not really about the chairs. "It's my hope that this challenge will inspire people to think about other things that are important for Upstate Oasis," she says.





Music Programs Grow After Grand Piano Donation

Imagine being able to attend concerts featuring both local and international classical music artists without having to buy a ticket. That's something participants at Upstate Oasis enjoy regularly, and it all started with a magnificent piano.

In 2011, Harold and Barbara Jones gifted Upstate Oasis with an Ivers and Pond grand piano, which was built in 1918. They created an endowment in 2013 to ensure upkeep and maintenance of the piano, followed by another gift in 2018, which made it possible to offer concerts free of charge for all.

"Our participants really do appreciate musical events and education," says Upstate Oasis Executive Director Cindy Woods. "This year, nearly 600 people enjoyed seven exceptional concerts in our Lecture Hall at no cost, thanks to the generous gift of Harold and Barbara."

Leaving a Lasting Legacy

"Oasis has become my new passion and a central part of my life," says Mary Pat Oliker, who serves as chair of the Advisory Council for Upstate Oasis and has been taking classes for over eight years. Mary Pat recently made a gift to Oasis through a charitable gift annuity, and will be recognized on a new Legacy Donor Giving Tree. "Now that I am retired, I have more time to renew old friendships and make new ones, to learn new skills, consider my life experiences from a new perspective and share these insights with others. It has led me to wonder, 'Shouldn't all older adults have the same opportunity to get the most out of life?'"



Working with Children One-On-One

After four years as an Oasis tutor, William Cohen doesn't mind the new name his young friends have for him: "Mr. Bill." He has worked with as many as 24 children, mostly second graders, since his first day as a tutor. He's come a long way. "After I retired, I was looking for something to do that was meaningful," says William, who admits he was reluctant at first, primarily because it had been so long since he'd even been in a classroom. "I didn't want to fail, but the teacher has been very supportive. It's nice to see when a child makes progress, and I've reached a point where I look forward to my tutoring days. It's nice to be expected somewhere!"



William is among the 122 tutors who volunteered with the **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring** program in 2018, working one-on-one with children in grades K-3 in Syracuse City, Central Square Central, Liverpool Central and Marcellus Central Schools.

It was tutoring stories much like William's that inspired longtime Upstate Oasis participant Glenys Tobin to make the program a charitable priority in 2018. A retired teacher who volunteers at the front desk at Upstate Oasis, she was moved by what she heard at a volunteer luncheon and established the Glenys and John Tobin Oasis Tutoring Program Endowed Fund. "It's a way to help ensure that at-risk students have a chance at a brighter future and that caring adults have the opportunity to give them the special attention they need," says Glenys.

Encouraging a Love of Learning

She simply loves being a student. Classical music, history and yoga are just a few of the classes that Annette Ferris has sampled over the years at Upstate Oasis, and thanks to the generosity of someone who loves learning and Oasis just as much, she's been able to keep participating. Annette was among the first five participants to benefit from the Elinor J. Spring-Mills Tuition Assistance Fund.

"I feel very blessed to receive the scholarship," says Annette. "This allows me to enjoy the classes I love without the stress."

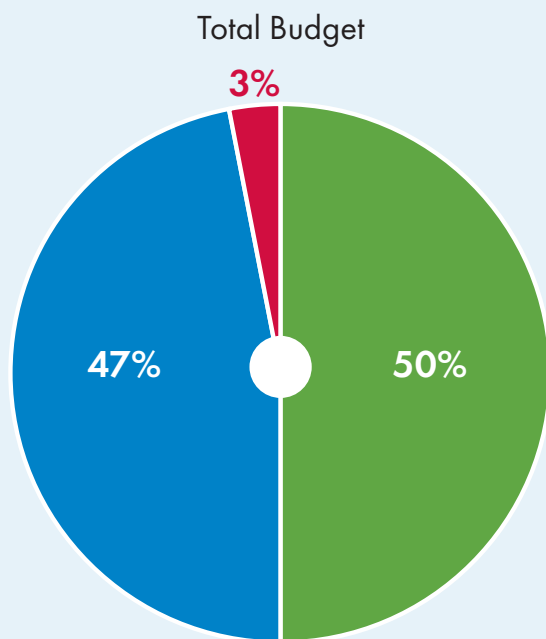
It's exactly what Elinor Spring-Mills (pictured at right) had in mind when she created the endowment last year. In addition to providing tuition assistance, the fund also covers instructor expenses for Upstate Oasis community outreach efforts in under-served areas.

"I have explored new subjects, refreshed others and made many interesting new friends," says Elinor. "I have seen the joy Oasis brings to my classmates, and I want others to be able to participate now and in the future." The added benefits of Oasis aren't lost on Annette, either, who considers the impact life-changing.

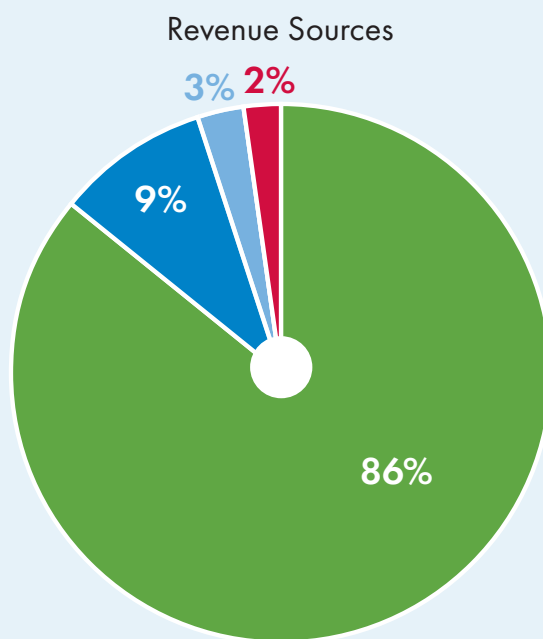
"I have made new friends here and would say that Oasis has been spiritually uplifting for me. I know I would be at a loss if I didn't have Oasis to turn to for connections and just learning. I love to keep learning!"



Upstate Oasis 2018 Financial Snapshot



- Total Revenue - **\$415,452**
- Total Expenses - **\$388,235**
- Surplus - **\$27,217**



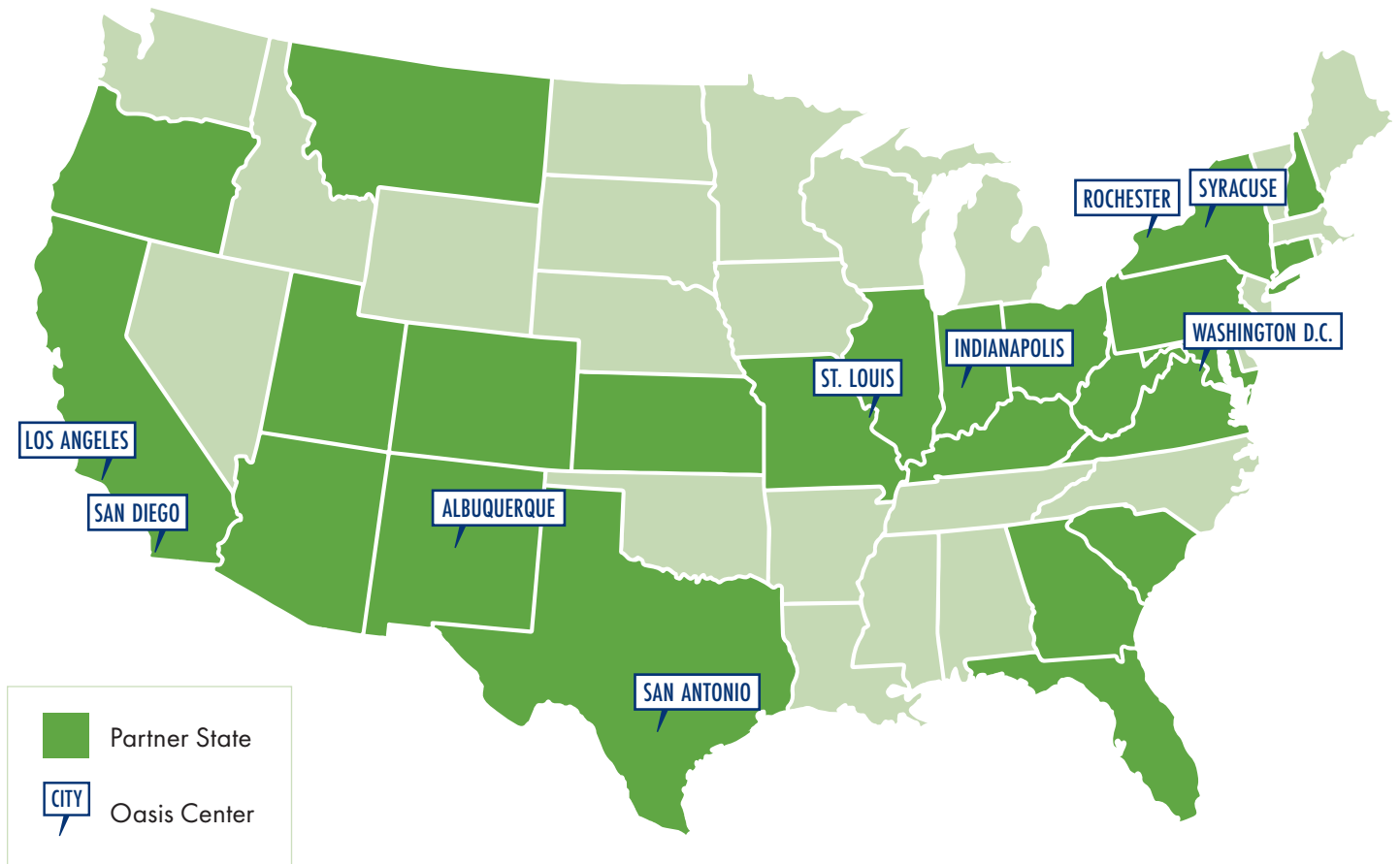
- Earned Revenue - **\$358,051**
- Individual Contribution - **\$34,911**
- Partner Support - **\$13,131**
- Grant Support - **\$9,359**

NOTE: Excludes \$389,389 in in-kind support from Upstate Medical University and endowment funds totaling \$171,000

See the full 2018 Annual Report online at annualreport.oasisnet.org.

National Impact in 2018

A national education organization, Oasis reaches a broad audience in more than **250 communities** through **nine education centers** and a national network of over **700 partners** in **23 states**. And we're growing!



4,000
tutors



6,100
volunteers



52,000
participants



630
schools



332,000
volunteer hours



140,000
class enrollments

Growing Population, Growing Opportunity

Americans older than 65 by 2035 will be in good company. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the year represents a turning point: for the first time in U.S. history, people 65+ are projected to outnumber children. While it's critical to address the many challenges that this demographic shift will present, it is just as important to recognize the opportunity that exists when such a large group of people are healthy, active and empowered to be the answer to many of society's most pressing needs.

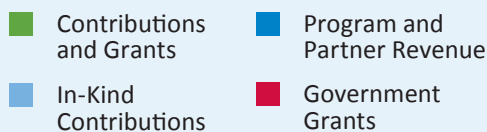
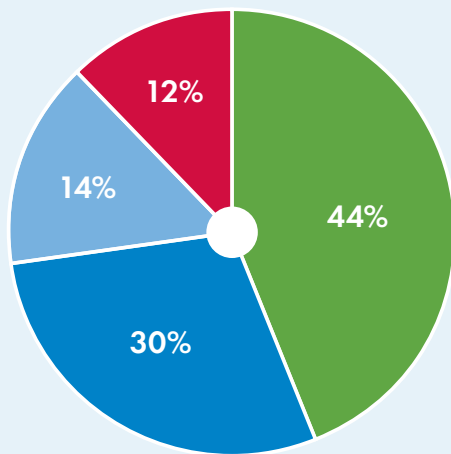
Since 1982, Oasis has inspired thousands of older adults through programs that encourage lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement. In 2018, 95 percent of participants surveyed indicated they recommend Oasis to friends. Here's why:

- > **To learn something new and connect with others.** Oasis lifelong learning classes in the arts and humanities, as well as **Oasis Connections**, an award-winning technology literacy program, attract adults who are still ready to explore and know more.
- > **To stay active and healthy.** Older adults find fitness, stay on their feet and gain the know-how to make healthy choices with a wide variety of Oasis health and wellness programs nationwide.
- > **To give back to our communities.** Through Oasis, adults discover the joy of making an impact volunteering. Whether working one-on-one with children through the **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring** program or serving as class instructors and peer leaders, Oasis participants make a difference.

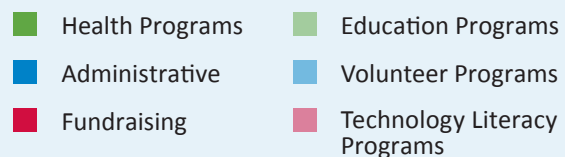
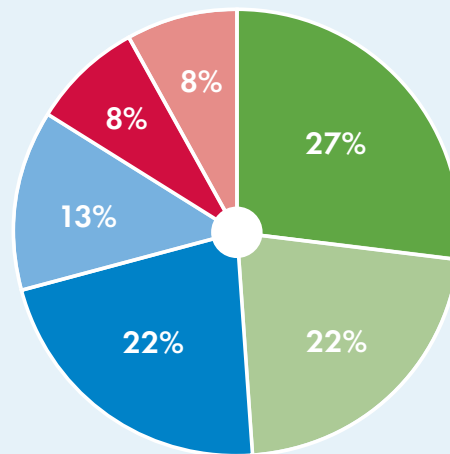
2018 Oasis Institute Statement of Activities

(Source: 2018 Consolidated Audit for FY Ended 12/31/18)

Support & Revenue – \$6.13 million



Expenses – \$7.24 million





Honoring an Oasis Champion

Former Upstate Oasis Executive Director Lauren Feiglin and her husband, David, established a legacy fund to honor the memory of Roslyn Bilford, who passed away in 2018. In addition to serving as the first commissioner of the Onondaga County Department for Aging, Ros was an Oasis champion, whose guidance helped to establish Oasis in Syracuse. The fund will be used to support operational needs of Upstate Oasis.

2018 Upstate Oasis Sponsors

The AT&T Foundation

The Advocates of Upstate Medical University

Dollar General Literacy Foundation

Upstate Medical University

Onondaga County Department of Adult
and Long Term Care Services

2018 Upstate Oasis Advisory Council

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Tom Henry, Vice Chair

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Beth Broadway

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Martha Ryan

Cynthia Stevenson

Ex-Officio:

Sharon Brangman

Leah Caldwell

Eileen Pezzi

Cynthia Woods

We offer programs throughout the community!
To start your Oasis adventure, stop by, call or check us out online.

Upstate Oasis

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