



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

During a recent family dinner conversation, our 26-year-old son, who was studying for a developmental psychology course, noted that people in their 30s and 40s were “very, very old.” He could not fathom being that old or beyond. I am sure many of us have had the same youthful perception.

I’ve just celebrated a milestone birthday myself. At 60+, with the Oasis as my model, I believe what studies tell us: our 60s, 70s and beyond can be some of the happiest times of our lives.

We also know that staying young at heart and healthy requires a curiosity to keep learning, growing and engaging with others.

In 2018, Washington Metropolitan Oasis proudly served a community of 2,600 lifelong learners who collectively participated in more than 24,923 classes. Our popular discussion groups met over 360 times, covering compelling topics while strengthening social connections. And I’m especially proud of the growing number who have discovered the benefits of volunteering with Oasis. More than 280 volunteers shared their time and talents by teaching classes, supporting our daily operations or working one-on-one with elementary school children through the **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring** program.

I hear from so many participants about how much Oasis means to their well-being and growth. Their inspiring approach to life, combined with the efforts of our committed team of staff and volunteers, and the tremendous amount of support from the community tells me that our work matters.

Gratefully,
Anna Stokes
Executive Director
Washington
Metropolitan Oasis



Finding Confidence to Prevent Falls

Bernice Bode had fallen four times in her own home before she decided to participate in “Stepping On,” an evidence-based falls prevention program offered by Washington Metropolitan Oasis. She found the classes so helpful that she didn’t miss even one.

“This class was something I needed and truly enjoyed,” Bernice says. “The teacher was excellent. She taught us how to go over curbs, how to sit down and get up from chairs, how to use stairs and how to better maintain our balance.”

As a choir member in her church, Bernice had previously tripped over her choir robe. She also stands and sits frequently in the choir. When Bernice spoke up about these issues, the class instructor personalized some solutions, so she could do these things more comfortably and safely.

Nearly 30 percent of older adults who fall lose their self-confidence and start to go out less often. This inactivity leads to social isolation as well as loss of muscle strength and balance. In turn, the risk of future falls increases.

“Stepping On” helps older adults appraise their falls risk realistically and learn important safety practices. The class covers fall risks; strength and balance exercises; safe footwear and walking; vision and falls; home and community safety; medication review and management; bone health; and coping after a fall.

The seven-week program is offered in partnership with AARP Medicare Supplement Insurance Plans, insured by United Healthcare and in collaboration with the local Area Agency on Aging and the Scotland Recreation Center. The first class had a waiting list.

“We were thrilled with the participants’ engagement and dedication to the program,” says Anna Stokes, Washington Metropolitan Oasis executive director.

Since the Scotland Recreation Center is in Bernice’s neighborhood, Bernice also benefited from additional exercise walking to class each week. “At first, it was difficult to walk up the hill, but it got easier each week,” she says. “I also met other older adults who live around my neighborhood. Overall, I feel more confident because of the class and hope it is offered here again.”



Making Life Better Together as Oasis Volunteers



Married for 55 years, Bonnie and Larry Fields have shared a lot of adventures together, including volunteering at Washington Metropolitan Oasis. Bonnie serves as an office volunteer and offsite class coordinator and Larry puts his handyman skills to good use, while also serving as a class coordinator and teaching a class on budget travel. The Fields agree that volunteering with Oasis is good for them. “Maintaining relationships with people is the core of it all for us,” says Bonnie. “It gives us a sense of self-worth and we like being productive.”

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

Let's talk!



When Libby Merrill started taking classes at Washington Metro Oasis, she was intrigued by the men's discussion groups that her husband, Ron, was engaged in at the center. She decided to launch the center's first women's discussion group in 2009 and has been leading the growing group ever since. "This provides a wonderful opportunity to interact with interesting people I didn't know before," says Libby. "We talk about current events, climate change, relating to siblings and adult children, and many other topics."

Ron enjoys the connections as well. "I enjoy the mix of people from different professional backgrounds. We get pretty deep into things," he says. "With the advent of cell phones, iPads and other technology, we enjoy the personal interactions we have through Oasis. They have evolved into friendships we wouldn't otherwise have."

Teaching History with a Twist

David Lindauer is a master storyteller. It comes naturally to this military historian and retired Army lieutenant colonel and is the secret to the wildly popular classes he teaches as an instructor at Washington Metropolitan Oasis.

Since 2014, David has taught more than a dozen classes on a wide range of topics—mostly tied to history. He taught one of his classes on the Medici family three times to accommodate demand.

"People love stories about wealth, power, conniving and skullduggery," David explains.

His approach is to "peel back the skin of the onion" to tell the rest of the story not always covered in textbooks. "I enjoy doing the research for these classes and finding out new things about subjects I thought I knew," he says.

David spends about 150 to 200 hours researching, writing and preparing for each new class. This detail results in engaged, enthusiastic students who often become "groupies" of his classes.

"It's gratifying to interact with the students and see them understand and enjoy what I've presented," he says.

David's next venture is teaching classes commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day.

"Oasis promotes interest in learning that is both amazing and gratifying. It's why I'm both a student and an instructor with Oasis. It gives me a chance to broaden my horizons. My grandfather taught me that learning is an integral part of living. Oasis is a lifeline to the world of learning," he says.

Each year, more than 525 lifelong learning classes covering a variety of topics, from history to current events to the arts and literature are offered through Washington Metropolitan Oasis.



Gaining New Perspective Through a Child's Eyes

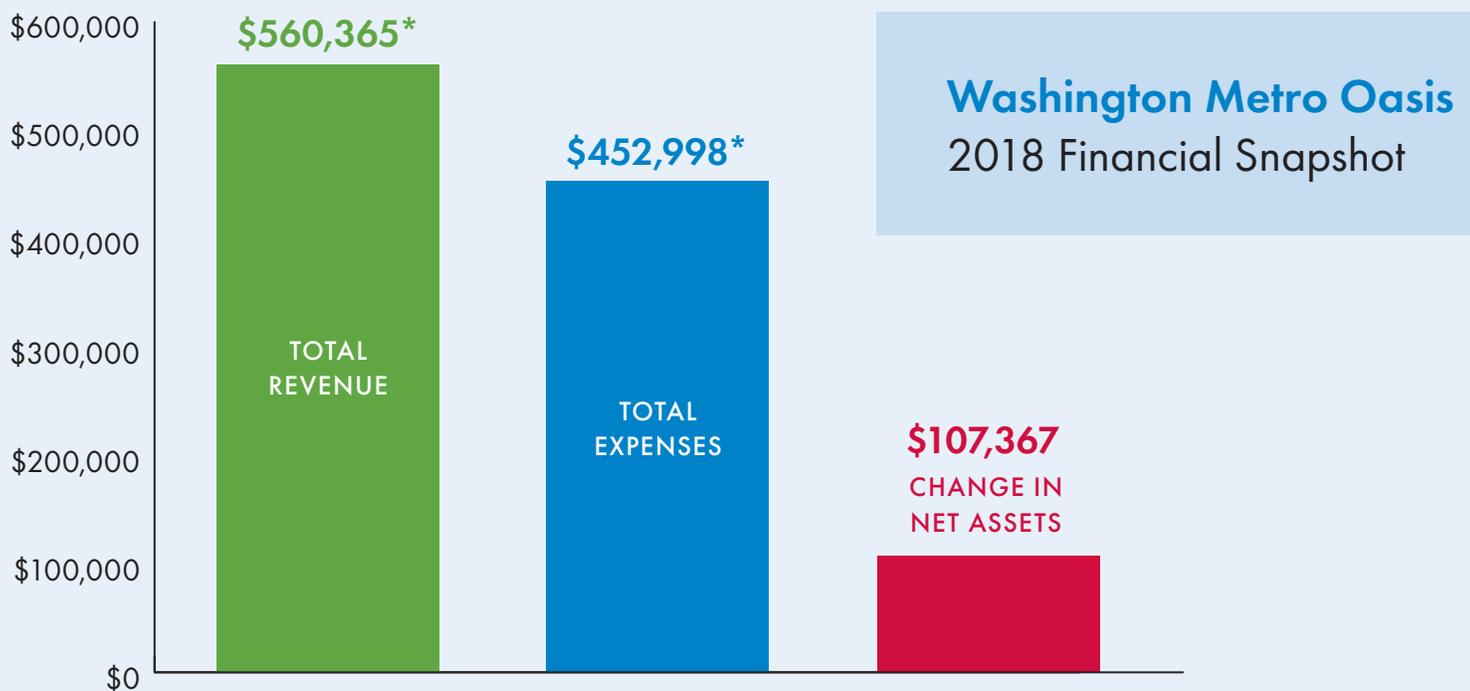
After retiring in 2016, Dena Saltzman Puskin, Sc.D, was ready to do something new. "I was looking for things to meet my intellectual needs and to meet new people," she says. "I wanted to fill in my dance card in a way that makes a difference for others."

The answer was Oasis. Dena began taking classes, joined the program planning committee and eventually discovered **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring**. The volunteer program pairs older adults with children in grades K-3 to work one-on-one each week as their tutors, mentors and friends. Dena's first students were two boys who arrived after the school year had started and were significantly behind their new third grade classmates. "The students I tutored made a huge jump in skills by the end of the school year," Dena says. "It was a wonderful experience."

One of her favorite memories was when one her students made a card for her that said, "I love you, Dr. Puskin." "It was the best reward that I have ever gotten in my whole career," she says. "Tutoring gives you a different perspective on life. I've learned so much from these students."

Dena continues to tutor and impact lives through other roles. "It's a joy and honor to be associated with Oasis and I believe very much in its mission," she says. "Oasis provides a way to give back, continue to learn and a reason to get up in the morning."

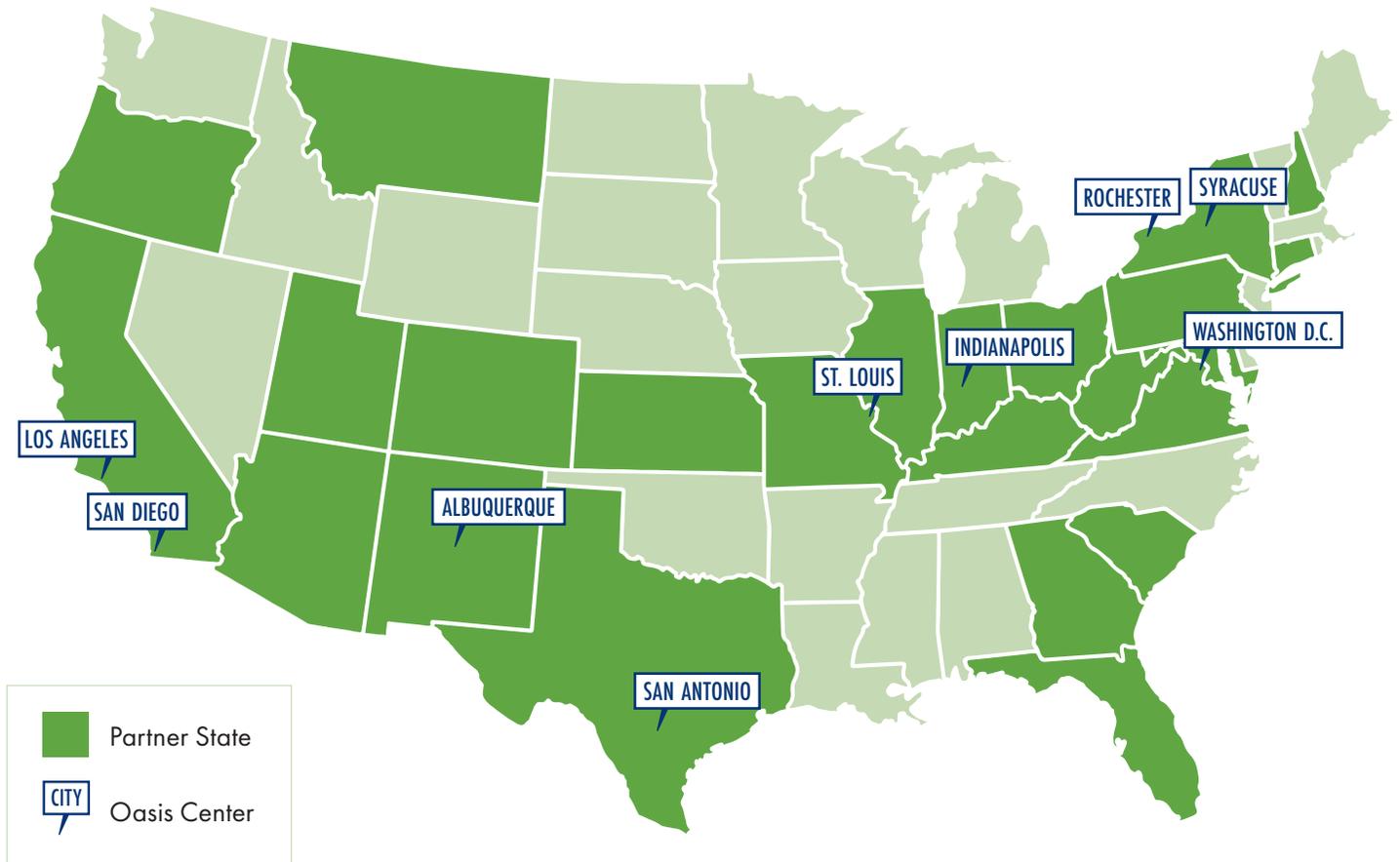
Dena joins the ranks of more than 4,000 Oasis tutors who volunteer in over 20 U.S. cities. In 2018, Oasis tutors helped 20,000 children in 630 schools across the country. Launched in 1989, **Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring** is the largest older adults tutoring program in the U.S., having reached more than 485,000 children.



*Excludes \$259,264 in in-kind contributions of space, instructor services and financial and administrative services

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.

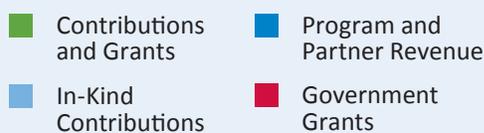
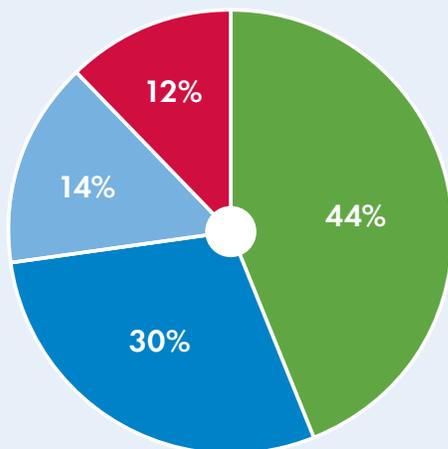
Since 1982, Oasis has inspired thousands of older adults through programs that encourage lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement. In 2018, 95 percent of participants surveyed indicated they recommend Oasis to friends. Here's why:

- > **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.

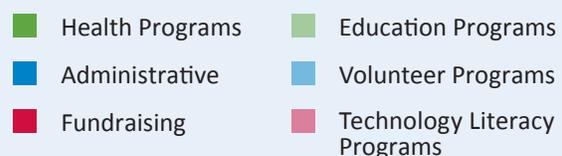
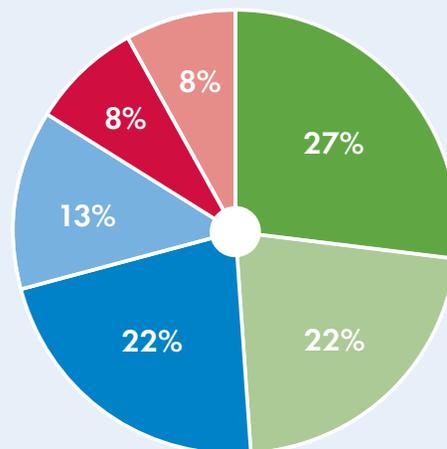
2018 Oasis Institute Statement of Activities

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

Support & Revenue – \$6.13 million



Expenses – \$7.24 million





Teaching Technology Provides Front Row Seat to Priceless and Ageless “Aha” Moments

In 2002, Gary Cahn retired from the corporate world and began volunteering for a number of organizations, including Washington Metropolitan Oasis. Much of his volunteer work involves his first love, teaching, and is focused on helping older adults learn to use computers.

“Gary is a Renaissance man with a big heart who loves to teach,” says Janice Pliner, the center’s program manager.

Since 2003, Gary has taught nearly 400 classes at Oasis, logging more than 400 volunteer hours each year. He creates his own comprehensive, yet easy-to-understand curricula and student materials. His classes are usually full thanks to his reputation as an interesting and helpful teacher. For Gary, having a front row seat to an “aha” moment makes teaching especially satisfying.

“There’s nothing like teaching somebody and see them ‘get it,’” he says. “It doesn’t matter if they are eight years old or 80. When that light bulb goes off and they realize what technology can do for them, it’s very rewarding.”

Gary serves as the unofficial Oasis IT department, maintaining, updating and fixing computers in the center’s computer lab. He also founded Recycle My Computer, a program that collects used computers, refurbishes them and then gives them to individuals, primarily older adults, who otherwise couldn’t afford a computer.

2018 Washington Metropolitan Oasis Community Partners

AARP Medicare Supplement Plans
insured by United Healthcare

ArcLight Cinemas

AT&T

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club

Bethesda Regional Services Center

Go4Life

Family and Nursing Care

Macy’s Foundation

The Richard and Nancy P. Marriott Foundation

Montgomery Art Association

Montgomery County Community Grants Program

Montgomery County Historical Society

Montgomery County Recreation

North Potomac Community Center

Potomac Community Village

Rotary Club of Rockville Maryland

Starbucks Coffee

Suburban Hospital, Johns Hopkins Medicine

Sunrise of Bethesda

Washington Performing Arts Society

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

Washington Metropolitan Oasis

Macy’s Home Store, Westfield Montgomery Mall

7125 Democracy Blvd, Bethesda, MD 20817

(301) 469-6800, press 1, ext. 211 | oasisnet.org/washington

