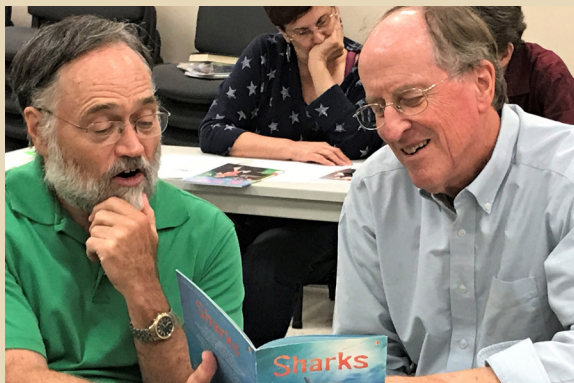


REIMAGINE



AGING



2019 Annual Report

GREETINGS FROM OASIS

2019 was a great year for Washington Metro Oasis! We attained a 10% growth in new members and a 7% increase in class participants. Our Oasis members thrived, sitting next to one another in classes and discussion groups, learning about current events, arts and humanities, how to remain healthy—to name a few. These activities help increase social engagement, reduce social isolation, and create a rich foundation for retirees seeking their next lifelong adventure.

In 2020, life as we know it changed due to the pandemic. Oasis shifted the delivery of its programs to a virtual format. While our world has changed, the joy of lifelong learning has not. “I really miss coming to Oasis—but I am grateful for all of the programs you are offering online,” says an Oasis participant.

I challenge you to take this time not to dwell on what we’ve lost, but what we can share once we reunite. We’re all in this together. We are a resilient community that will not take our health, a hug, or an in-person class for granted. We are Oasis strong.

I miss seeing all of you more than I can express. Seeing you in 2021 will be amazing. Until then, stay strong, combat loneliness with love and learning. Please, keep in touch.



Anna Stokes

Executive Director
Washington Metro Oasis

As we look to the future, we reflect on the past. In 2019 every Oasis center experienced expansion in one way or another—class additions, tutoring growth, physical space, new participants, new partnerships, and new opportunities. Entering 2020 with significant momentum, seeds planted in 2019 were turning into green shoots. In March, COVID-19 changed everything, and Oasis swiftly pivoted in response.

When Oasis began shifting programs from in-person to online and via phone, participants quickly made the shift with us. Rather than conforming to stereotypes of older adults being averse to new technologies and change, I saw the exact opposite—Oasis participants embraced it, and we have been inspired by their resilience.

As we navigate the “new normal” in the thick of a global pandemic, we beg the question, “what happens next?” We are compelled to reprioritize and express our mission differently to meet unanticipated needs. Experts paint an altered picture of how life-as-we-know-it will look post-pandemic. How will voluntary social distancing—or lack thereof, affect the lives of older adults? How can we protect the health of aging communities while simultaneously avoiding the adverse effects of social isolation?

Older adults are most at risk of severe complications from COVID-19. But, the dangers of loneliness are not new; our aging family members and neighbors were more likely to experience social isolation before the pandemic and will do so well after.

Let’s unite and reimagine aging in a new climate with both new risks and new opportunities. Whether for yourself or an aging loved one, neighbor, friend—Oasis’ mission applies to all of us. Aging is inevitable. The choices we make influence HOW we age, and the Oasis community learns, expands, moves, and adapts as we grow older. Although we can’t be together in person for the time being, we hope to connect with you through our virtual programs and volunteer opportunities.

Every tomorrow is in the future, and with it a new opportunity to learn, build confidence, and grow. We at Oasis are here for you. Let’s reimagine aging together.



Paul Weiss, PhD
President, The Oasis Institute

CONVERSATIONS THAT COUNT

“When they really open up and let loose and we go deep, it’s awesome and you feel such a human connection,” says Beth Kimel, a facilitator of the Conversations that Count (CTC) program. In 2019, Washington Metro Oasis launched the CTC program in partnership with Sunrise Senior Living of Bethesda. **CTC is a research-informed program designed to reduce social isolation and increase knowledge, skills, and self-efficacy on a range of health and wellness topics relevant to older adults.** CTC includes discussions about self- and life-care topics. With over 50 topics to choose from, participants provide input on what they would like to discuss. Participants engage in facilitated discussions one to three times per week for an hour with their cohort. Since the program launched, CTC has served 50 older adults.

“It is wonderful for me to hear how everyone is functioning, how everyone is handling being isolated, that I am not alone” says Gail Blatt, who has been participating in the program for over a year. “We talk about food problems as a result of COVID, aging issues and how we’re handling aging, the vaccine and whether we should get tested. **Having this group and being able to think about what other people said...this group is good for me. It’s nothing short of wonderful.”**

Beth McLean, Area Manager of Sales for Sunrise Senior Living, says that she was looking

for a program that would really support their needs and the challenges of the aging process. After working for a number of years with Oasis, she decided to bring the CTC program to their senior living center. **“We are always looking to increase quality of life in all older adults,” says Beth. “I would love to offer the program at other sites; I can see it potentially growing in our area and would love to continue to partner with Oasis.”**

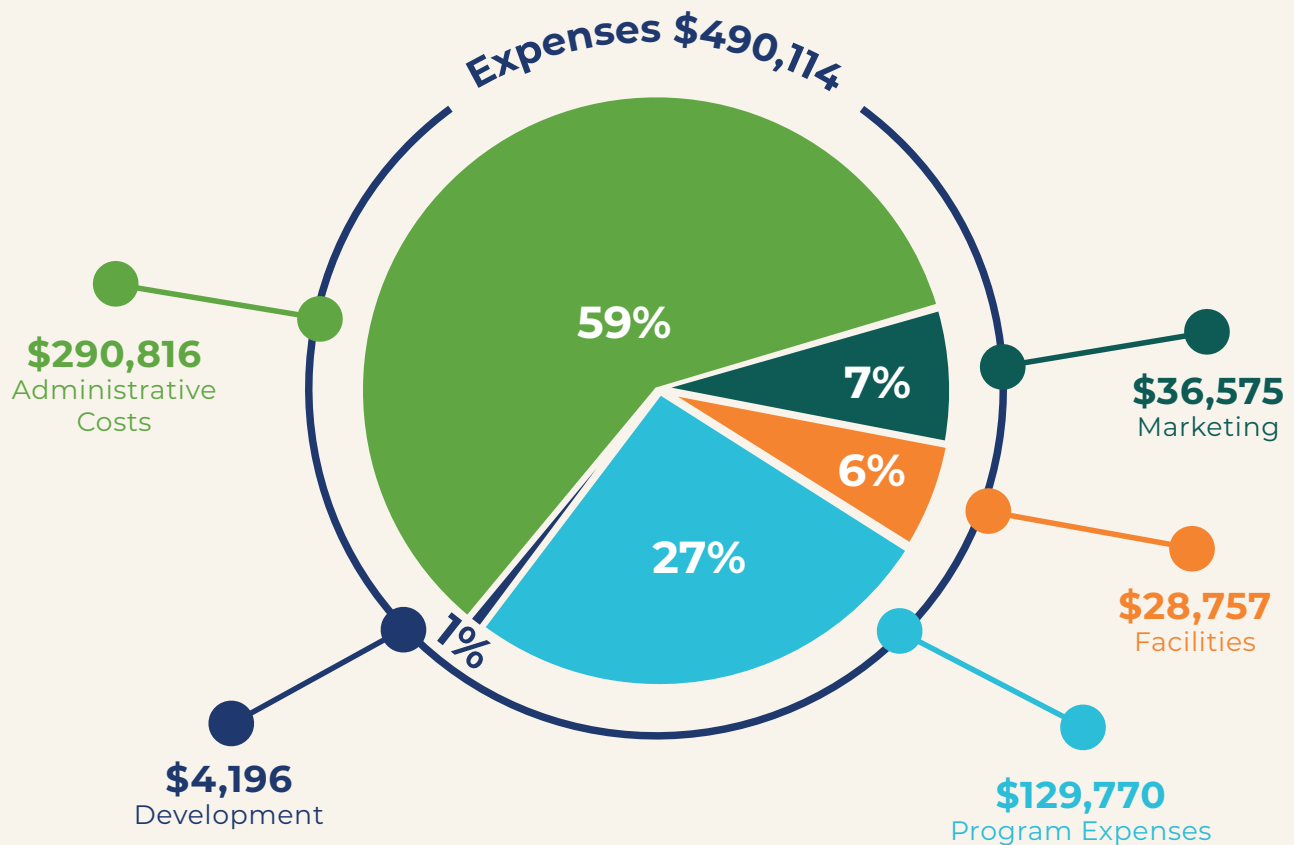
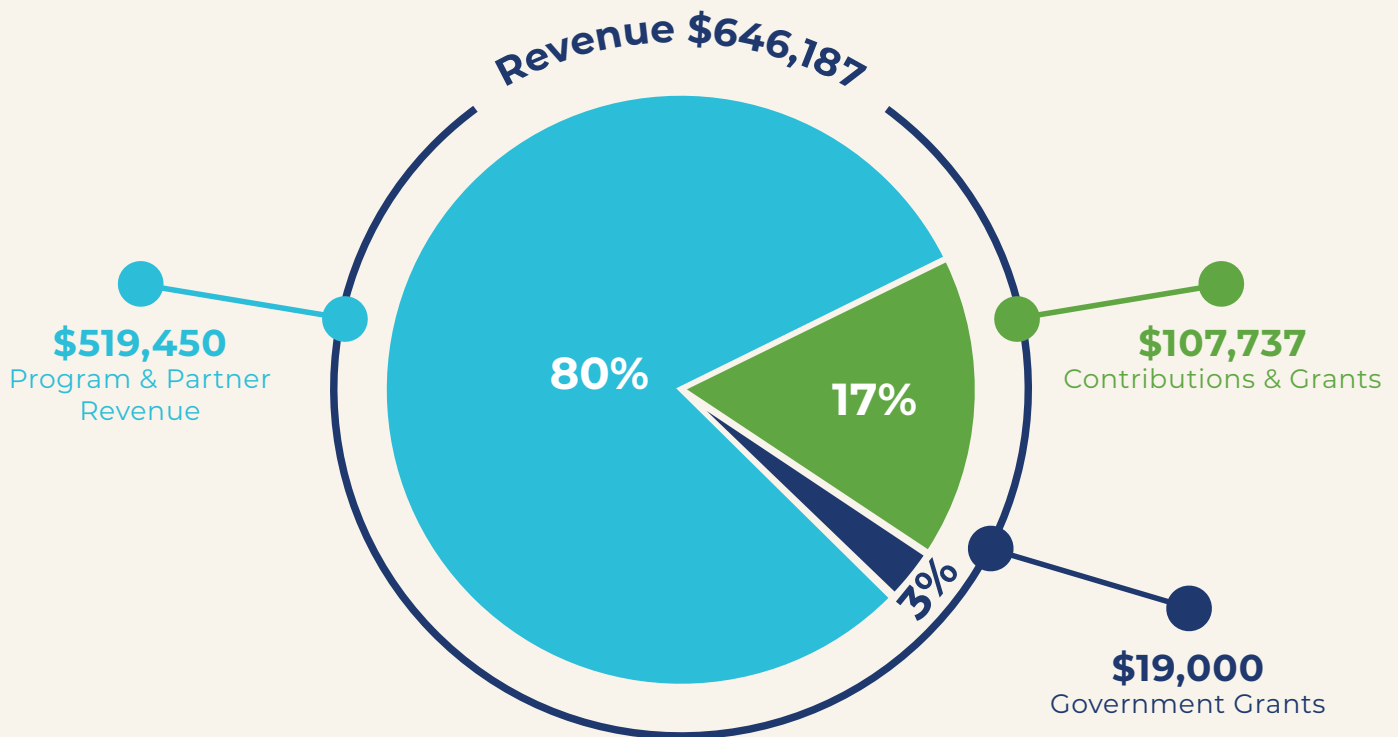
“Seeing the folks every week and the fact that they care so much about each other and really look forward to the group; that inspires me,” says Beth. **“They are like a “little” family, we’ve had laughter, and tears; if anyone has a problem, everyone discusses, and problem solves. This is a safe space.”**

Pictured: Virtual CTC Class



WASHINGTON METRO OASIS

2019 Financial Snapshot



SUPPORTING EVERY STUDENT

“My role is to help give the kids a sense of self; a chance to get a kid to see themselves other than a “victim” or “slow learner,” says Ray Lane, an Oasis Tutor at Hyattsville Elementary School in Prince George’s County. “Oasis tutoring is a wonderful opportunity that my parents didn’t have,” says Ray. “Through this program, I can help people have a better life.”

Ray is one of 175 tutors that volunteers with Washington Metro Oasis’ Intergenerational Tutoring Program, an in-school literacy-based mentoring program pairing trained older adult volunteers with academically at-risk elementary students reading below grade level. Ray and his wife have been involved in volunteering in public schools since the 1990’s, and two years ago, decided to become tutors with Oasis. **Since then, Ray has tutored over seven students in grades 3-5 who are boys, and he says, “the learning is just as much for me as the kids!”**

“Children can forget things,” says Ray. “That’s why with all my kids, I start the school year with a three-ring binder for each. Their name is written in large print on the front. It is not a ‘school-book.’ It is their book. Everything we do is captured in that binder. I include their drawings, little stories they write, the games we play, titles of books we read, and anything and everything that we do together.”

Ray says that tutoring has helped him work on his interpersonal relationships. “We can live in a bubble sometimes, and these kids push your bubble,” says Ray. **“I’m learning different worldviews from different lenses. In this world we touch**

people, and we can do it well or we can do it badly. Oasis gives you the opportunity to do it well.”

One thing Ray has noticed since he began tutoring with Oasis is that the kids benefit from a non-judgmental, pleasant adult who cares about them. **“It’s been a positive experience for them; they feel like they aren’t being ignored,” says Ray. “A boy I worked with had a troubled home life, and he was pleased that I came in and tried to work with him, I felt a sense of comfort from him.”**

Pictured: Ray Lane



NATIONAL IMPACT

2019 *Basis Institute*

5,900
Volunteers

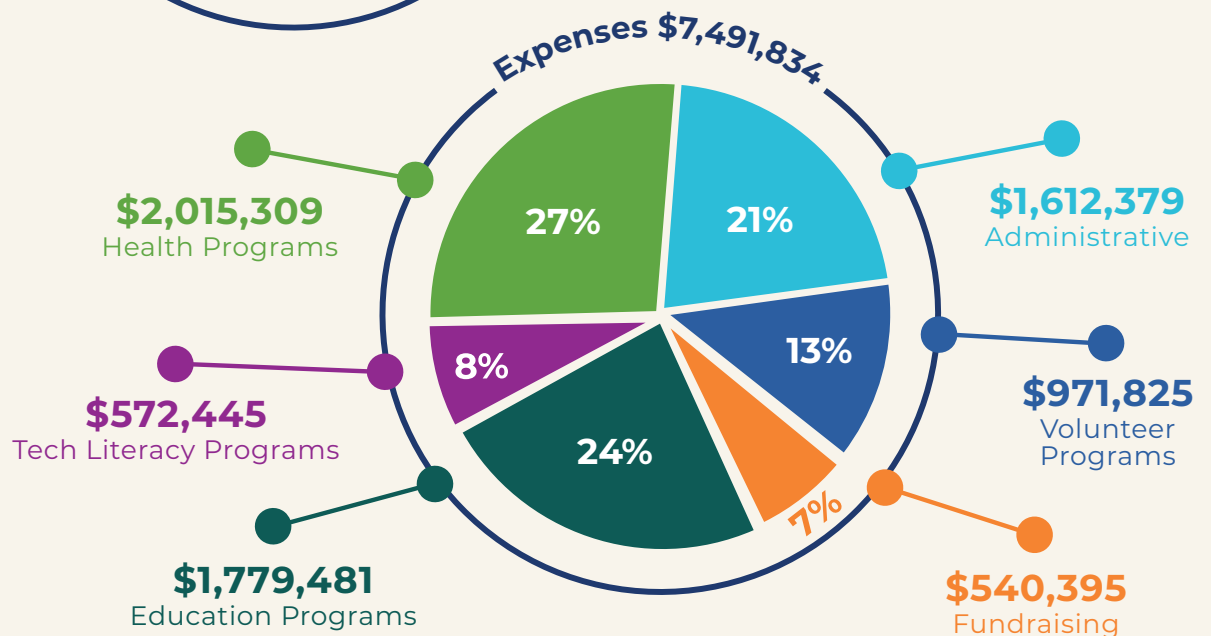
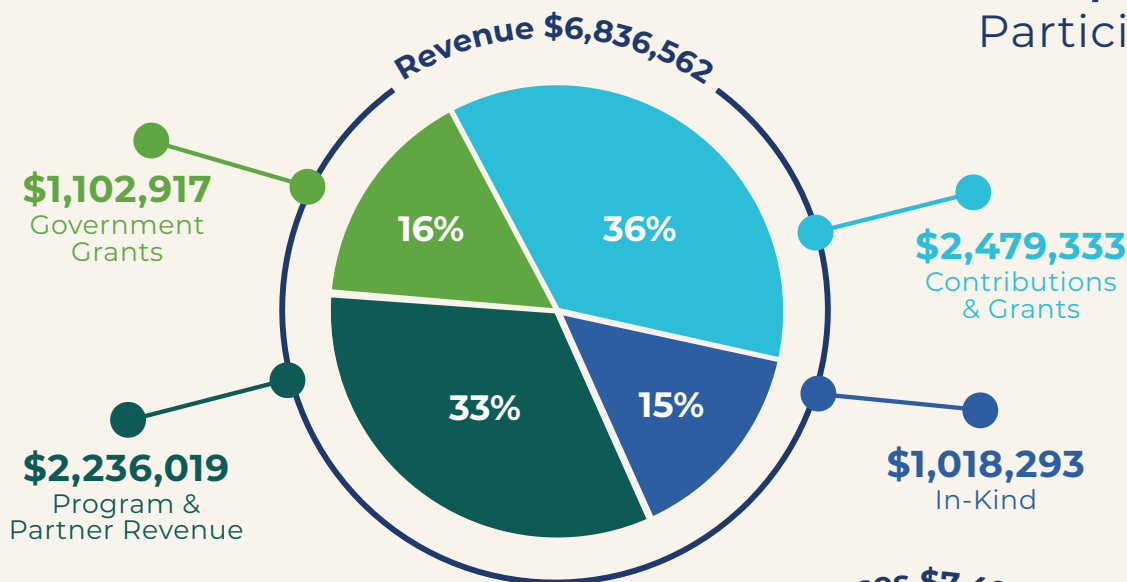
147,500
Class Enrollments

643
Schools

408,000
Volunteer Hours

4,500
Tutors

49,400
Participants



Source: 2019
Consolidated
Financial Audit

GOING VIRTUAL

After being involved with Oasis for about three years, Oasis instructor Victor Rezmovic decided to research the feasibility of setting up classes online for Oasis participants. **Two years later, he has taught a variety of classes online, including “Cutting the Cord”, a class on switching from cable TV to online streaming to help older adults save money.** Victor, alongside a few other volunteers, has greatly expanded Washington Metro’s online class offerings, and during 2019, Oasis offered 18 online classes, reaching over 270 participants. “After the virus hit, we were sort of already prepared for this,” says Victor.

Victor says the virtual programs started out as an experiment, and he would take an existing class and would offer the option of joining remotely, limiting to small groups at first. Victor thinks that online learning will continue to become even more common for older adults as a result of COVID-19. **“The majority of reactions are positive, and people still seem to enjoy learning from virtual classes,” says Victor. “People are still learning and being motivated to do things, which to me is the success of the class.”**

Lisa Friedman has been involved with Oasis for over 13 years, and last year, moderated many online classes for Oasis, including art history and meditation.

“I have seen people prefer Zoom classes to in-person classes because of the scheduling and they can save time by not having to drive,” says

Lisa. **“People really like the convenience of just ‘hopping on’ in the comfort of their own home.”**

When Alan Lipschultz moved to the DC area in 2013 and semi-retired from electrical engineering, he was looking to get involved in the community. Someone recommended Oasis to him, where he quickly volunteered as a tutor, and most recently added his newest role, helping moderate online classes. **He says his students have become Zoom experts, and that they have become the “go-to-experts” for family members during COVID.**

Pictured Clockwise: Lisa Friedman, Alan Lipschultz, Victor Rezmovic



COMMUNITY PARTNERS

2019 Washington Metro Oasis

AARP® Medicare Supplement Plans,
Insured by United Healthcare Insurance

AT&T

Bethesda Chevy Chase Rotary Club

Bethesda Regional Services Center

Go4Life

Family & Nursing Care

Macy's Foundation

The Richard & 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



A STAR VOLUNTEER

Fran Raab is known as Washington Metro's Oasis "star" program volunteer in recruiting high profile speakers including most recently NPR Host Diane Rehm and Deborah

Tannen. After retiring from her position as Director of Programming for the American College of Cardiology, Fran and her husband Robert began taking Oasis classes. Oasis is located in Westfield Montgomery Mall, about 30 minutes away from their home. They didn't mind the distance. They would make a day of it shopping, going out to lunch, running errands—it became an event they looked forward to. When an opening for the volunteer Program Committee became available, Fran immediately jumped at the opportunity. She

"selfishly" wanted the position to be more involved in choosing class subjects and presenters and eagerly began recruiting.

After 5 years, she is considered a recruiting "rock star". Fran is a go-getter, not shying away from cold contacting potential speakers of any prestige, conducting investigations to seek out emails, phone numbers, and even mailing addresses to make a pitch. While a loyal member, Fran takes classes outside of Oasis to evaluate speakers and gain new ideas for classes. "Oasis keeps my mind active, learning new things all of the time. I will take a class, become more interested on the topic, and Google it to learn more." As grateful as Fran is for Oasis, we are just as appreciative, if not more, to have her!

Pictured: Fran Raab

To reimagine aging with Oasis, email or check us out online.

washingtonmetro@oasisnet.org | oasisnet.org/washington

