

# REIMAGINE



# AGING



*2019 Annual Report*

# GREETINGS FROM OASIS

2019 was a fantastic year for San Antonio Oasis. In September we opened our new center Oasis at the Meadows and held numerous grand openings and open houses for our members, donors and partners.

Morningside Ministries gave Oasis the opportunity to build a new Oasis Center on their campus by providing a building and the ability to refurbish it to meet our needs. The new center has given us the needed space to build capacity by having a dedicated fitness room and larger classrooms to reach more older adults.

San Antonio Oasis has expanded the selection of classes and the new center has given us more opportunities to achieve our mission to promote healthy aging through lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement.

This spring the effects of COVID-19 challenged us to transition quickly to online classes, podcasts and reassurance calls. These programs have helped our members stay engaged and informed during these

challenging times. Oasis will continue to serve our members in the future. We are here for you!



*Brenda  
Schmachtenberger*

Executive Director  
San Antonio 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

# TAKING ON TUTORING

Debra Tapley began tutoring in 2018. **She currently tutors five children in the School of Science and Technology (SST), and one in the Northside School District.** She heard about Oasis while volunteering in the library at SST. At the time **she was experiencing what she describes as “the grandparents empty-nest” when the grandchildren she was taking care of were old enough to go to school.** She says, “Tutoring became an extension of what I do with my grandkids.”

**Debra finds tutoring most rewarding when she notices a boost in a student’s levels of confidence, comfort and ease in reading.** A teacher shared her excitement over one of Debra’s student’s improvement reading at grade-level. **She explains that many of the children speak English as a second language. She says she knew the need for help was there when she quickly went from tutoring four students to five.** Since she started two years ago, she’s worked with ten children in all. When asked what made her want to take on tutoring more children, Debra says at SST **“the focus on tech and math are particularly critical, but if you cannot read then you will be behind in all of the subjects. If I can help one child succeed as they age and mature—if I can spend an hour with them a week, that’s what I’ll do.”**

She shares some tips for success in gaining trust and cooperation from the students. **“Patience” is her number one word of advice. “Boys take a bit longer to warm up than the girls.”** She develops games and uses sight words to keep lessons dynamic. She keeps a diary for each student to reflect on their progress. She also notes that working closely with the teachers is very helpful.

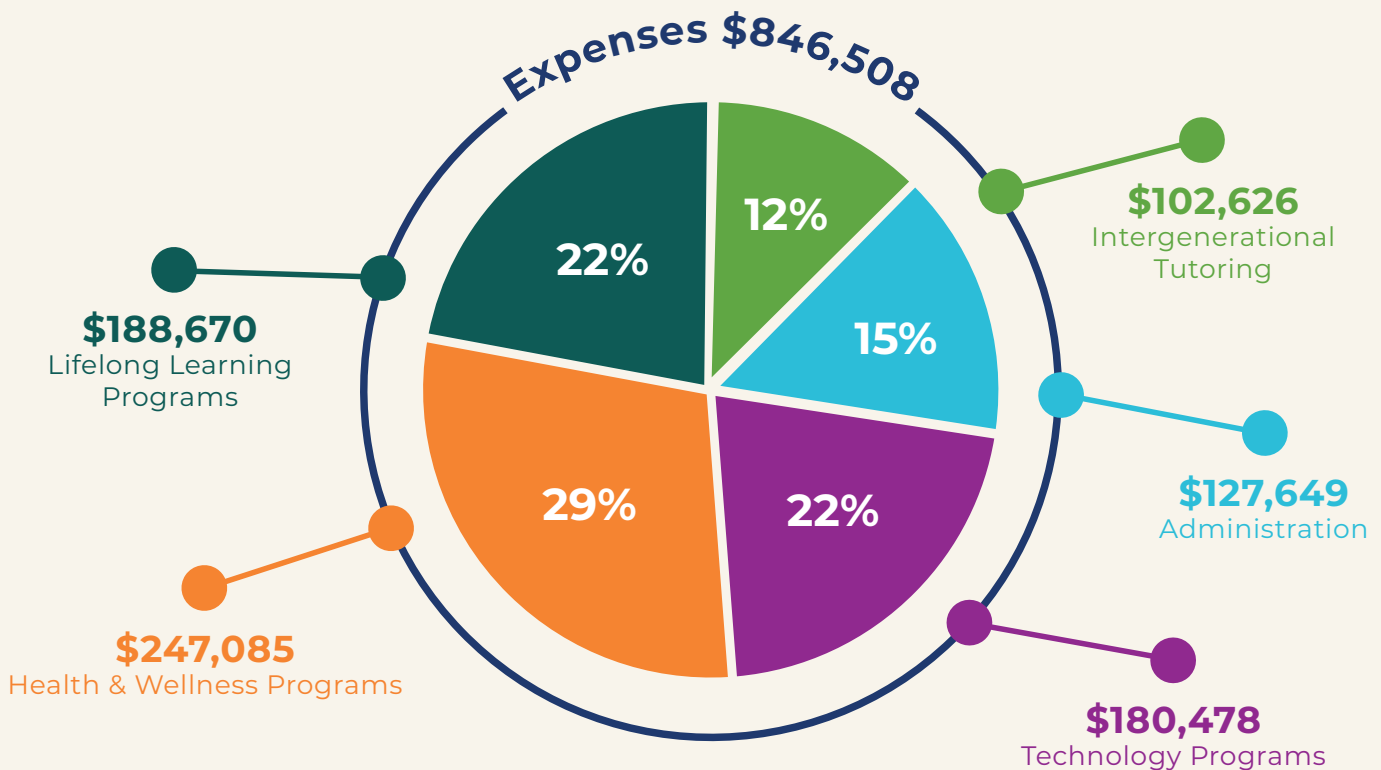
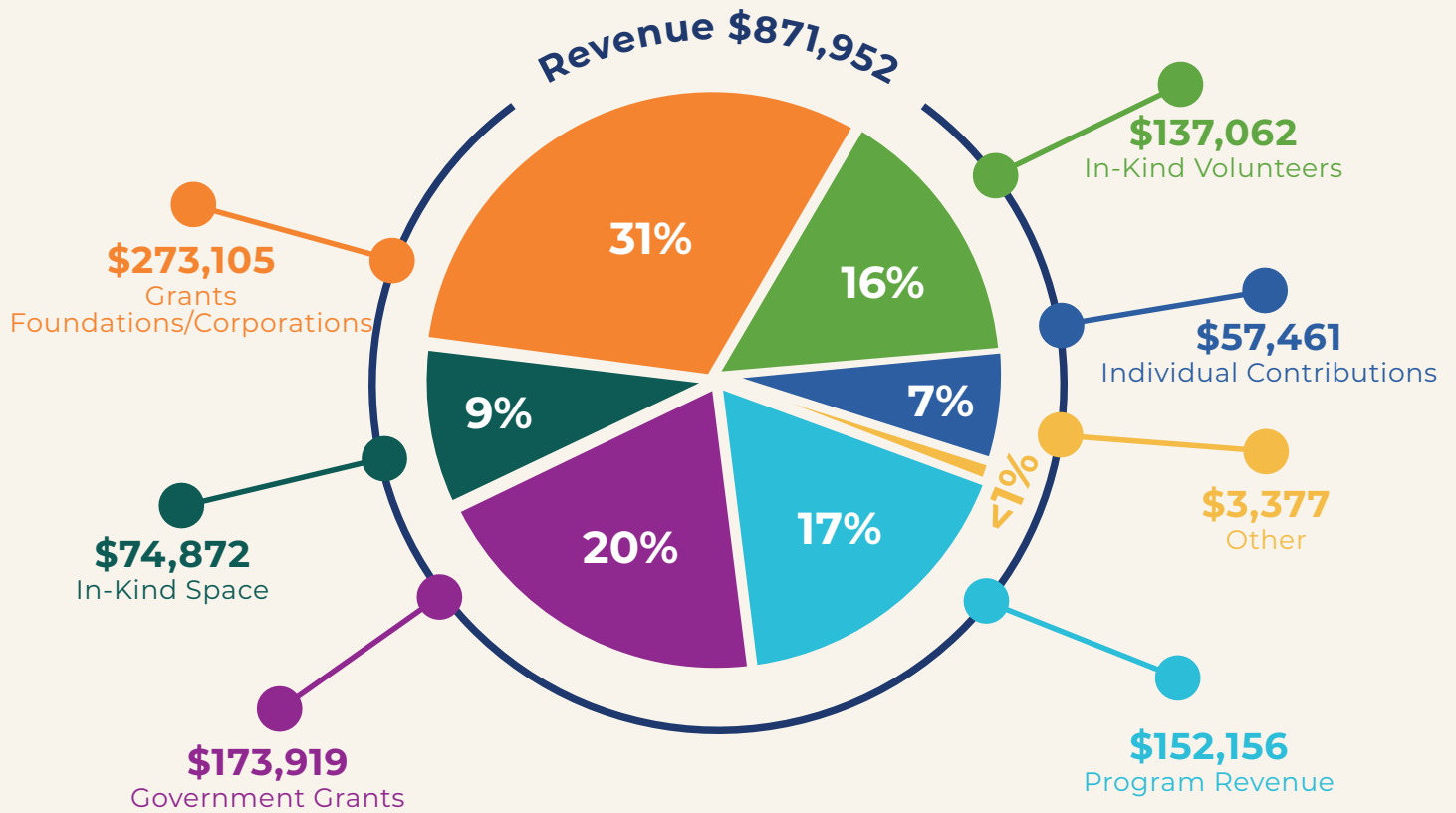
On the San Antonio Oasis Tutoring Program, Debra thinks the support and training is top notch. She advocates for reaching more older adults to recruit new Oasis Tutors. **Her belief on reimagining aging: “Getting retirees to help even just one child for an hour, can make a difference.”** Her personal goal, to receive the 25-year tutoring pin, is evidence of her pure dedication and immense passion for helping children succeed.

*Pictured: Debra Tapley*



# SAN ANTONIO OASIS

## 2019 Financial Snapshot





# PROGRAMMING IN NEW PLACES

Kathy Steves has been volunteering for Morningside Ministries for ten years and has been an Oasis participant for eight years. **She first heard of Oasis through a friend who was participating in classes and volunteering. Kathy took some classes and was hooked.** As time went by, Kathy fell in love with the program and became an Oasis volunteer.

She's gained countless friendships through class participation and volunteering. **What first appealed to Kathy was the diversity of the classes offered. She appreciated the variety of topics covering a range of interests from each end of the age spectrum, and easily found classes she felt comfortable in.**

The move into the new location at Morningside has been like "night and day" according to Kathy. **"Before, we were in the backside/bottom floor of a building built in the 1950's. Everything from the cooling system, larger classrooms, and the flooring in the fitness rooms—even the restroom facilities are more accommodating for older adults. The new space is at least ten times better than the old place."** As Kathy mentioned, the new center boasts a dedicated fitness area with floating floors to improve stability and comfort while working out.

The expansion demonstrates how Oasis reimagines aging every day through their dedication to grow, reaching even more of **the community.** Oasis helps Kathy and others recognize that people are constant learners—something often overlooked by older adults. **"Our bodies may be getting older, but our brains are not slowing down. We need to keep them strong and Oasis is a great avenue for that. It is the most wonderful place for expanding your knowledge."**

*Pictured: Kathy Steves*



# NATIONAL IMPACT

2019 *Basis Institute*

**5,900**  
Volunteers

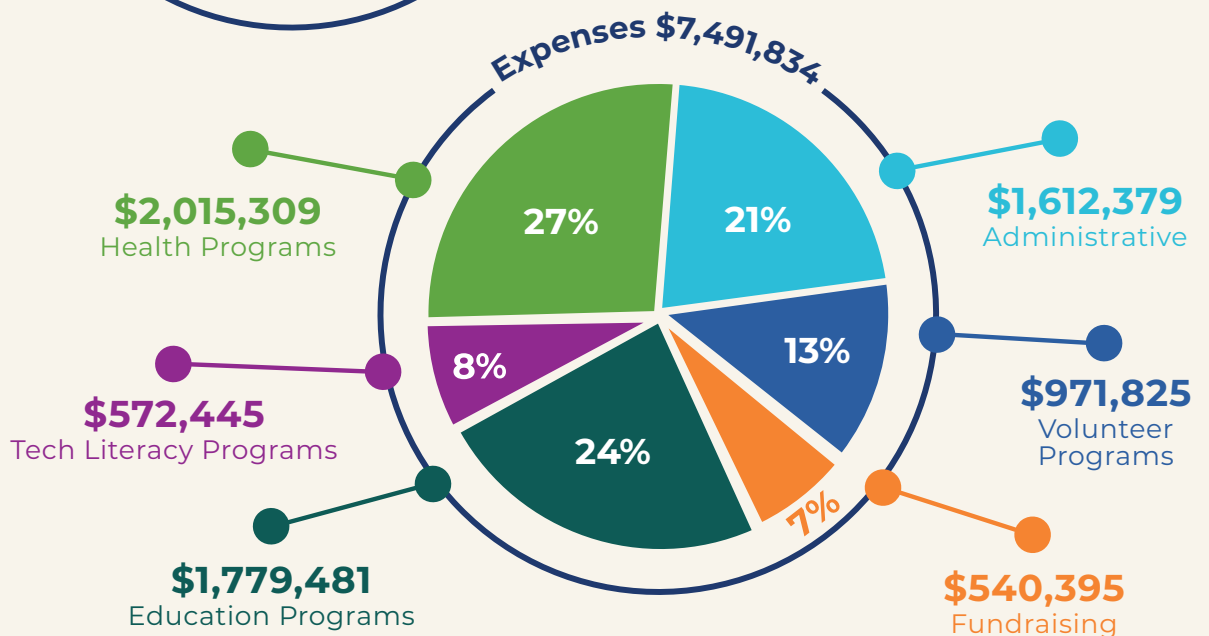
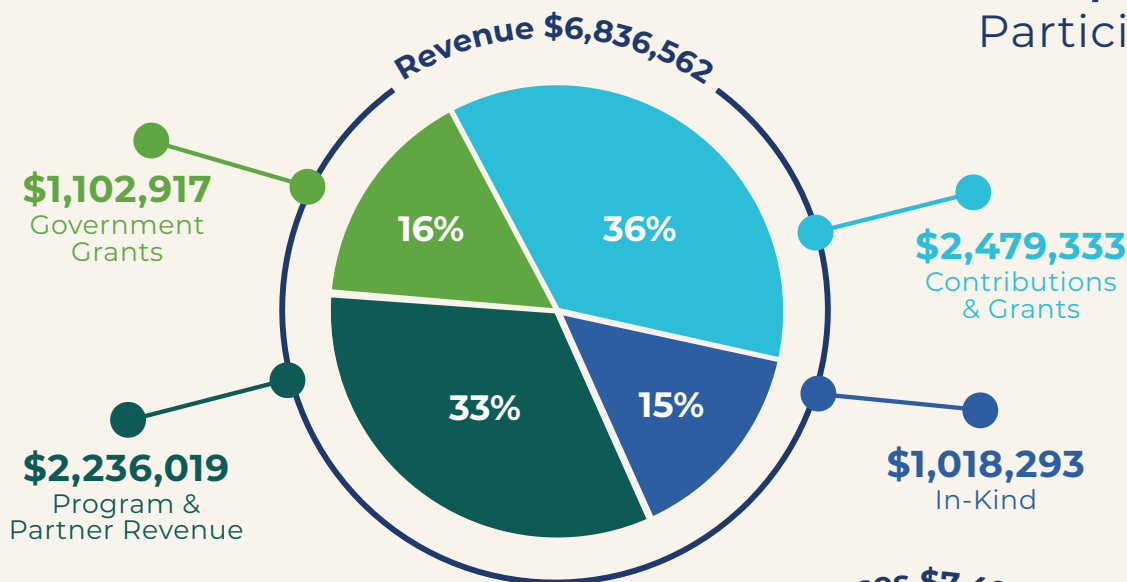
**147,500**  
Class Enrollments

**643**  
Schools

**408,000**  
Volunteer Hours

**4,500**  
Tutors

**49,400**  
Participants



Source: 2019  
Consolidated  
Financial Audit

# MAKING MOVES WITH MORNINGSIDE

In 2019, San Antonio Oasis moved to a new headquarters on the campus of Morningside Ministries. **The move has been great for participants and the community, offering much more space for classes, specifically fitness, and more chances for Morningside Ministries residents to get involved by not having to travel.**

The partnership allows Morningside Ministries residents to take Oasis classes for free. Khalilah Bilal has been taking classes with Oasis since 2002, back when they were located in Macy's department store. When travel became difficult, she had no choice but to stop participating. After moving to Morningside two years ago, she was ecstatic to learn Oasis was operating there. "I wanted to be in as many classes as possible!" **For Khalilah, Oasis is more than just a means for entertainment and education—the programs are therapeutic.** Khalilah suffers from depression and was diagnosed with Agoraphobia, a type of anxiety disorder in which you fear and avoid crowds and places or situations that might cause you to panic or feel trapped. Khalilah says with little motivation to socialize she needed something that required very little effort to get her out the door. With classes less than a five-minute walk from her home, participating became the emotional inoculation she needed to cope with her anxiety. **"I find I can get involved as much or as little**

**as I want to be around people in a way that feels safe. It really has saved my life as far as my mental health goes."**

She loves that there are so many people she has things in common with at Oasis and feels comfort knowing they can relate to each other. Khalilah's donations to Oasis is her way of "paying it forward" for the immeasurable support they provide her. She's grateful for the partnership with Morningside as she would not be able to participate otherwise, considering she doesn't drive. On reimagining aging, **"I don't know if it is going to make my life longer, but it encourages me to wake up each morning with a sense of purpose for the day."**

*Pictured: Khalilah Bilal*





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

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