

2020: A Year of Perseverance



Oasis Rochester
2020 Annual Report

Greetings from Oasis

The word perseverance is defined as ‘continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition.’ This seems to perfectly describe Oasis Rochester in 2020. When we closed our doors on March 12, 2020 per executive orders of the Governor, we honestly did not know they would remain closed throughout the remainder of the year and beyond. While it took us a bit to find our sea legs, we pivoted to providing a varied cross section of our classes via Zoom and Vimeo digital platforms. Our instructors took up the challenge and found new and creative ways to share their knowledge and love for learning with our participants. Without missing a beat, hundreds of Oasis Rochester participants learned new skills and information, including Zoom itself. Who could have predicted that ‘you’re on mute’ would become a source of humor and frustration at the same time?

I am grateful to our instructors and participants for their loyalty to Oasis Rochester and immensely proud of how they adapted to a new way of learning.

Perseverance...

Our longtime partner, Lifetime Care informed us they would no longer continue sponsoring Oasis Rochester. While grateful for the years of support—we are excited to transition and about the freedom it brings—offering new programs and expanding services for Oasis participants. Oasis Rochester is now a fully formed 501c3 non-profit agency. I appreciate the guidance and support we’ve received from our national Oasis Institute staff through this shift and moving forward.

Perseverance...

We are an organization with strong roots in the community and the lives of our participants. We look forward to new beginnings, planning a fall re-opening, and growing together in 2021.



Ann Cunningham

Executive Director
Oasis Rochester

Locally, nationally, and globally 2020 was a year like no other. The social and economic impacts of a pandemic were most acutely felt by lower-income communities, families with children at home due to school closures, and those most vulnerable to symptoms of the disease—older adults. Oasis centers across the country were forced to suspend all in-person operations. Exercise, lifelong learning, and social events, classes, and programs were canceled. Tutors were abruptly cut off from the students they were mentoring with our nearly 700 elementary school partners across the country. By the end of March, we faced the immense challenge of sustaining our mission when everything about the way we connected with participants and communities was no longer possible.

Local and national Oasis leaders and teams quickly shifted focus to a contact-free form of engagement, launching virtual classes through national and regional platforms. In June of 2020, our virtual national Oasis center, oasiseverywhere.org, was born, and within months over 1,000 people were enrolling in live interactive classes. Local Oasis network centers quickly pivoted in sync, offering virtual courses to their Oasis communities, and simulcasting their best content on Oasis Everywhere. The virtual programs allowed participants to continue lifelong learning while following stay-at-home orders, protecting their health and community. Oasis quickly attracted current Oasis participants, as well as new participants discovering us for the first time as a virtual education resource.

As a leader in technology education, we are committed to teaching new digital adopters the basics of safe internet use and building confidence in navigating a digital world. Conversely, the pandemic revealed the reality of living without home internet. The “digital divide” is very real for hundreds of thousands of American families and seniors. Barriers to technology exist across a range of demographic boundaries. As a result, our virtually engaged audience is less diverse. We recognize the need to span these gaps of disproportion to reach ALL older adults. As we emerge from the pandemic and begin operating as dual-venue centers, offering the option of in-person and online classes, we are addressing disparities between our participants. Through new and renewed partnerships, resource communication, presence in community events, and programs not dependent on technology we are continuing our mission to serve seniors across the country in every economical circumstance. Perseverance got us

through 2020 making us stronger and expanding our mission. We will emerge resilient and look forward to being together again.



Paul Weiss, PhD

President
Oasis Institute

Starting a New Chapter

When Linda and Don Campese moved to Rochester in 2013, they soon sought out new friendships by joining a book club through Oasis.

“We enjoy the book club as a way to meet new people who share common interests,” Linda explains.

Don enjoys the variety of people he has met through the book club. “The people are always interesting with different ages, experiences and backgrounds. It has been nice to be part of a group and see each other each month.”

The book club chose one book a month to read. “I read books that I wouldn’t have otherwise read if I wasn’t in the book club,” Linda says. “They weren’t always my prime interests but I’m always glad after I read the books.”

When the pandemic hit, the book club went on hiatus for a couple of months as a Zoom version was being created.

“It took some coordination and there was a learning curve for many members to learn Zoom,” Don says. “The logistics and dynamics of conversation were really different on Zoom. But the virtual format is convenient because we can get there right away and don’t have to worry about parking or weather.”

While the book club has fewer members than usual right now, the group has gotten more comfortable with the format, the technology and each other, Linda adds.

The Campeses recognize how staying engaged has strengthened their resiliency. “Everything has changed this year,” Linda says. “The book club was another thing we could do to keep ourselves healthy and social. We could have chosen to opt out but then we would lose all the things we’ve gained. We still enjoy the book club and will keep doing it as long as Oasis offers it.”

Don agrees. “No matter what format—whether in-person or virtual—the book club is a great program to be involved in.”



“I read books that I wouldn’t have otherwise read if I wasn’t in the book club. ”

Hooked on Oasis

Over the years, Joan Edelstein has tried a variety of exercise options in gyms, classes and online. But she had trouble sticking to them—until she discovered Oasis Rochester.

“I never hooked onto anything until Oasis,” Joan says. “I even tried yoga before but didn’t like it until I joined Oasis. The classes have always fit my needs and I never feel out of place like I did in some gyms or classes elsewhere that were too intense for me. Oasis classes remove all barriers.”

For the past four years as an Oasis member, Joan has consistently taken three movement classes each semester, including yoga. “The classes and instructors are beyond fabulous,” she says. “I’ve seen a difference since I started taking the classes. I have increased stamina, flexibility and my bones are stable.”

When the exercise classes transitioned to Zoom after the pandemic hit, Joan persevered through a few bumps in learning how to use Zoom and is still a loyal class participant.

“I feel I have adapted quite well to virtual learning,” Joan says. “I love the energy of a group but the transition wasn’t difficult and there are definitely plusses to the virtual format: the commute is short, parking is always available and the weather and wardrobe are never a problem. During the pandemic, the classes helped me organize my days, gave me something to look forward to, and gave me energy.”

Her resiliency even led her to become a *class sampler*. “The summer classes were only four weeks long so I liked the idea of a shorter commitment if I didn’t like a class,” she explains. “It allowed me to experiment and put my toe in to try ballet and pilates.”



“The classes and instructors are beyond fabulous...I’ve seen a difference since I started taking the classes. I have increased stamina, flexibility and my bones are stable.”

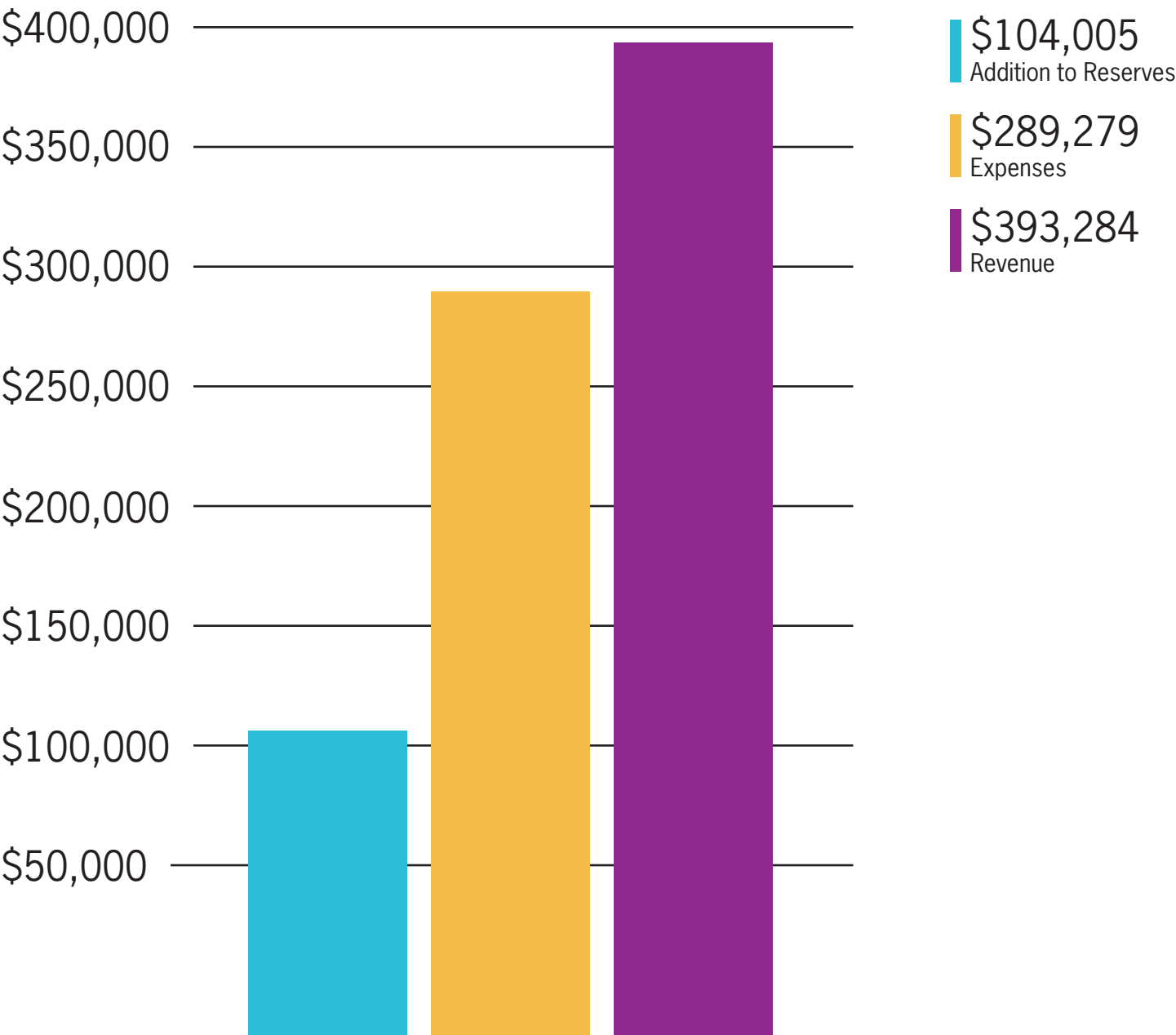
Local Impact

197
Volunteer Hours

11
Volunteers

1,099
Participants

3,903
Class Enrollments



National Impact

657

Schools

4,500

Volunteers

1,362

Communities Served

4,015

Tutors

82,675

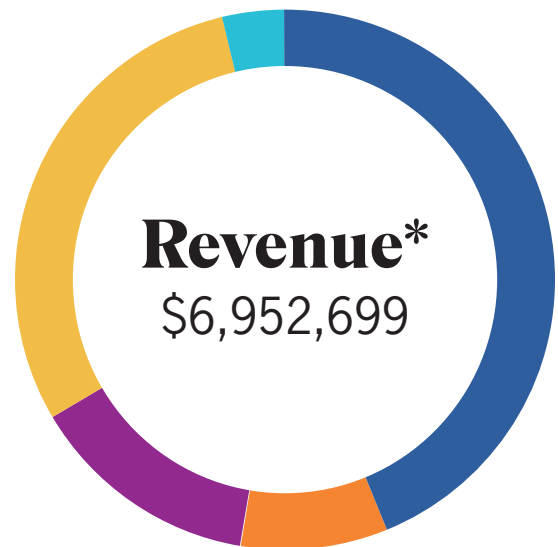
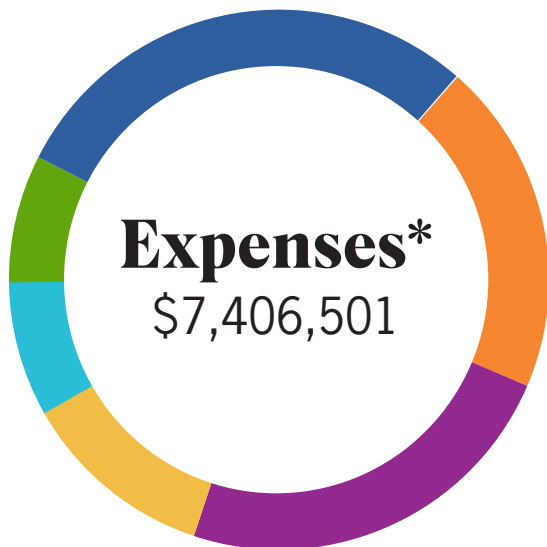
Class Enrollments

115,000

Volunteer Hours

27,250

Participants



\$2,139,445
Health Programs

\$561,469
Technology Literacy

\$1,488,532
Education Programs

\$1,750,172
General & Administrative

\$862,741
Volunteer Programs

\$604,142
Fundraising

\$3,049,109
Contributions & Grants

\$609,670
In-Kind

\$2,074,862
Government Grants

\$257,121
Other

\$961,937
Program & Partner Revenue

*Source: 2020 Consolidated Financial Audit

Fitness Without Boundaries

Oasis Rochester fitness instructor Rosalind Walker understands resiliency. She started teaching fitness on the side in 1993 when she was an IT manager in corporate America. It was a healthy outlet to counter her desk job.

"In my day job, I often found myself working on things that didn't really impact anyone," she recalls. "I wondered who I was helping."

So in 2004, she took a leap and started her own full-time fitness business, Victory Fitness, to help others be healthier. Four years later, she started teaching a variety of fitness classes for Oasis.

Then 2020 cast its dark cloud that put a temporary halt to the fitness classes. When classes transitioned to Zoom, Rosalind admits she was hesitant. "At first I didn't want to teach online but I love it now. It's a big timesaver and through Oasis Everywhere we can reach out to people who couldn't join before. We can include friends and families from anywhere."

One of those distant members is Rosalind's mother, Mary Jane Henry, who lives in Atlanta. Through Oasis Everywhere, she faithfully takes Rosalind's exercise classes.

"I like seeing her there exercising with me even though we live in different cities," Rosalind says. "It also gave me peace of mind to know she was OK through the pandemic. My mom is 73 and very consistent with her exercise. She finds it beneficial for keeping her body healthy and she recommends the classes to others. We've even had classes that are like family reunions with four to five family members all in different locations."

Rosalind has made many adjustments along the way to fine tune her virtual classes. She created a Zoom class studio in her home by removing all the furniture. She also had to go through three different laptops to find the right fit with the right size screen.

"The technology can be challenging because the music, visual and audio have to be in sync and Wi-Fi connections can be spotty," Rosalind explains. "In addition, different classes have different movements, from the floor to standing, so I have to adjust the camera so my whole body is in view for participants."

Her efforts have paid off with a growing class list. "We have more people participating virtually than we did in person and we don't have the physical space limitations," she says. "People who went online enjoy the flexibility and accessibility of the classes from wherever they live."

As someone who has been through a lot of change over the years, Rosalind believes the pandemic has made everyone more resilient. "It has helped open people's minds up to new ways of doing things and the possibilities and opportunities that come with that. People have been bouncing back from adversity for generations but this is the first pandemic in our lifetime. Now we know we can do hard things."



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University of Rochester
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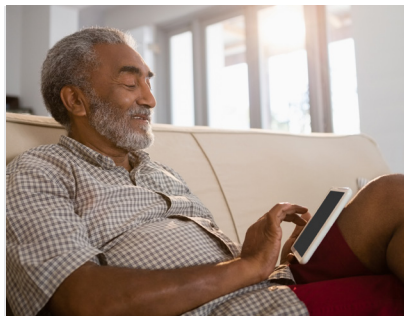
Lifetime Care Home Health
Care & Hospice

North Coast Radio WJZR

Monroe County Office
for the Aging

“ Thank you for giving us the opportunity to stretch and grow and to nurture our minds, bodies, and spirits during a time that was so vital to care for one another and all the while keeping us all safe and healthy! ”

Rhonda Wright, Instructor



To connect with Oasis, call or check us out online.

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