

2020: A Year of Perseverance



San Diego Oasis
2020 Annual Report

Greetings from Oasis

2020 proved to be an amazing year in ways we could never have imagined. With fears of isolation and loneliness looming, we constantly worked to reinvent how we connected. In addition to converting over 200 classes a month for virtual access, we connected with our partners and funders to develop new and expanded programs that fit the changing conditions.

Our annual “Get Connected: Technology Fair for 50+” became a four-morning virtual event that was attended by over 2,500 people, a record for San Diego Oasis. We hosted 197 cities, 22 states and 3 countries, and had another 3,000 views on YouTube at the conclusion of the event. We plan to do the event virtually in 2021 as well.

A new project called “Bridging the Digital Divide” was well received by funders who made it possible for us to serve 350 low-income seniors by providing each a Samsung tablet (to keep), technological training, internet access, and Oasis classes for six months. The program made a significant impact in the lives of these individuals by providing a new channel for communication and connectivity.

While in-person intergenerational tutoring was not possible, the school districts conveyed that students would appreciate receiving books to encourage their love of reading. We worked with each school to combine efforts by using the free-lunch drive-through to distribute books, ultimately supplying 30,000 books to students in need.

Only with support from you as champions and donors are we able to continue to be adaptive, innovative, and expansive in our work to ensure that older adults in our community thrive.



Simona Valanciute, MBA

President & CEO
San Diego Oasis

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

Turning Pages During a Pandemic

For several years, the San Diego Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program has collected books to distribute to children to help improve their reading skills.

“Tutors told us many kids didn’t have books to take home as their own,” says Jolyn Parker, Vice President of External Relations for San Diego Oasis. “That was the beginning of the book distribution initiative.”

During a typical year, Oasis tutors collected books and then schools would have a book day once a year where students could select three books to take home.

When the pandemic hit, in-person tutoring stopped and schools and libraries closed, which made books more important to learning than ever. That drove Oasis to ramp up their efforts to collect and distribute the books while the world socially distanced.

Oasis connected to the area’s Free Lunch Program already in place where families would drive through and pick up lunches at various sites. It was a perfect partnership to allow an Oasis drive-through book giveaway in conjunction with the lunch program.

“We coordinated with the teachers and some of the tutors and Oasis staff to give books to all the children in each car along with their lunch,” Jolyn says.

Creative minds took the program a few steps further. Teachers added a portal to school websites so students could pick out their books online and then come for individual days to pick up the books at their school.

“The school administrators, teachers, parents and students were so grateful for all the donated books,” Jolyn says. “They told us thanks for remembering them and said they felt someone really cared.”

So far, San Diego Oasis has distributed 30,000 books during the pandemic. “We believe we provided an opportunity to encourage kids to continue a love of reading,” Jolyn says. “In the future, we plan to continue this effort to engage students and distribute books to school districts.”

And that’s a relief to the dedicated Oasis tutors who strive to build reading skills and instill a love of reading.



“We coordinated with the teachers and some of the tutors and Oasis staff to give books to all the children in each car along with their lunch.”

The Digital Divide Program Connects Technology to the Most Vulnerable

At the beginning of the pandemic, San Diego Oasis identified an entire group of older adults left out of the technologic movement that came with quarantining. Oasis reached out to low-income senior living facilities to help reach this population.

“Oasis created a Digital Divide program for low-income senior adults who are the most vulnerable during this pandemic,” explains Jolyn Parker, vice president of external relations for San Diego Oasis. “The goal of the program is to engage people to prevent isolation.”

The solution was to provide low-income older adults with a technology package that includes a tablet, technology training either in-person or by phone, Zoom support, six months of free Internet access and free Oasis virtual classes.

Through community partnerships, Oasis identified many low-income senior housing organizations with whom we had never worked before.

“We reached people who rarely get offered a lot,” Jolyn says. “More than 75% of them are living alone so the program opened the door for reaching people who are significantly isolated. And more than 50% of this population are minorities so now we’re attracting a more diverse population.”

Jolyn was excited about the positive response to the Digital Divide program. Oasis distributed more than 500 tablets and 75% of the people reached are now taking Oasis classes from the safety of their homes.

Yet Jolyn admits launching the program wasn’t easy. “It took three months to get it working well. We needed a lot of coordination and it took significant effort and multiple phone calls to reach participants. Then we organized a task force of volunteers to deliver the tablets and provide training over the phone and in-person when possible.”

To further support tablet recipients, the team created a reference manual to accompany the devices. Oasis also



collaborated with the city’s Parks and Recreation team to implement the phone training program.

The efforts were all worth it, Jolyn adds. “Seniors said the program has changed their lives. It has given low-income older adults more confidence in their ability to navigate technology so they can connect to family and friends, benefit from telehealth appointments and take classes to reduce isolation.”

Donors were essential in developing the Digital Divide program. “Without the donors, this program wouldn’t be possible,” Jolyn says. “Their support allows us to provide the tablets, internet services and the staff time to implement the program. We’re grateful to the organizations that funded this program so we can reach the older adults who need help.”

Significant funders included the Gary and Mary West Foundation, the North County COVID Recovery Fund, the San Diego Foundation COVID-19 Community Response Fund, and SDG&E, the local utility company.

As the pandemic has worn on, Oasis has received additional funding so the Digital Divide program can continue as more low-income people are found who can benefit.

“We worked with 15 different organizations and that’s just the tip of the iceberg,” Jolyn explains. “So many people are on the low-income scale. They often can’t afford the technology or don’t know how to use it. The program helps them be part of the 21st century.”

Local Impact

693

Volunteers

15,100

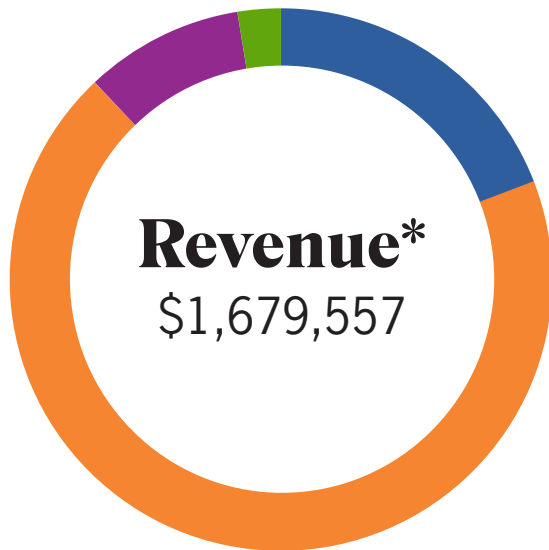
Volunteer Hours

3,444

Participants

20,809

Class Enrollments



Revenue*

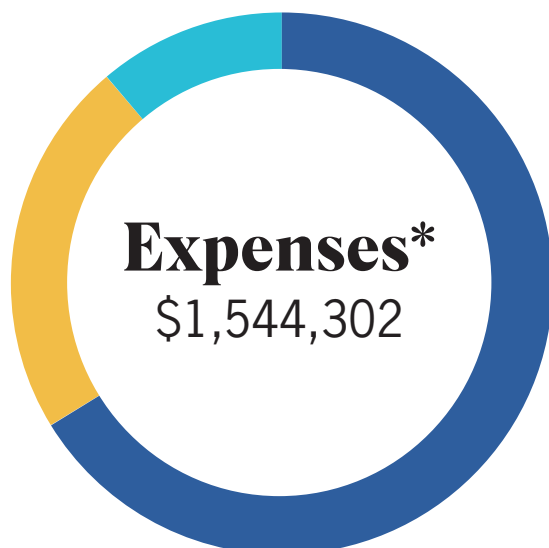
\$1,679,557

\$1,141,678
Contributions & Grants

\$316,759
Program Revenue

\$157,512
In-Kind

\$63,608
Other



Expenses*

\$1,544,302

\$1,023,620
Program Services

\$173,050
Fundraising

\$347,632
Administrative

* Source: 2020 Financial Audit

National Impact

657

Schools

4,500

Volunteers

1,362

Communities Served

4,015

Tutors

82,675

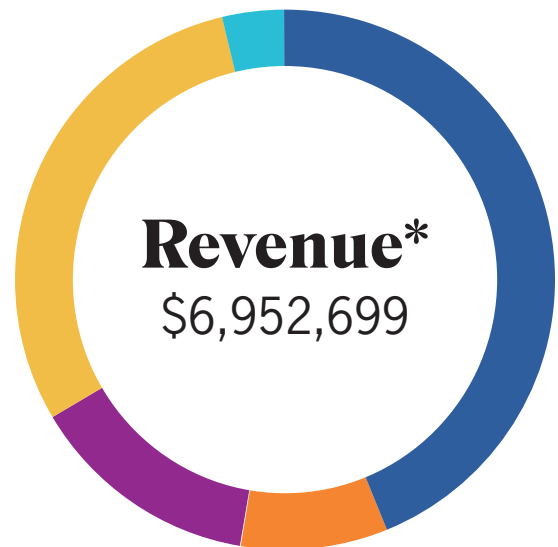
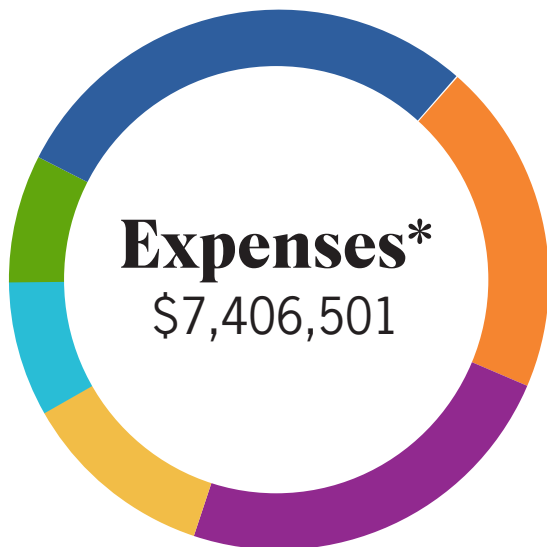
Class Enrollments

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

Eliminating Fear & Isolation Through Virtual Classes

When Jan Garbosky was widowed in 2013, she needed to rebuild her life. For the retired educator and life-long learner, that included taking classes through various organizations, including San Diego Oasis.

In January 2020, Jan—who had been otherwise healthy and a consistent exerciser—was diagnosed with double pneumonia that led to a heart condition. As the pandemic was looming in early February, Jan underwent a procedure to treat her heart condition.

“I was so frightened because I was normally so healthy and lived alone,” Jan says. “I had to monitor my heart and blood pressure as I recovered and was worried I would get COVID-19. I quickly became a bubble of one.”

Isolated at home, she relied even more on Oasis. She became a prolific learner. Since the pandemic began, Jan has taken more than 120 virtual classes through Oasis.

“Oasis virtual classes have been a lifesaver,” she says. “During quarantine, I signed up for everything that would fit into my day. With no travel time, I can pack in a lot of things! I needed something to fill my days and offer contact with people, even virtually. I take whatever strikes my fancy and appreciate the wide range of classes available. I’ve also taken some classes through Oasis Everywhere. The incredible instructors know their stuff and are always well-prepared with materials and visuals.”

Jan’s learning curve for Zoom was short. She says the Oasis staff support was responsive in helping her get started. Learning Zoom opened up opportunities to her for learning, socializing, and new conversations with friends and family.

“The classes helped me structure my days and took away my feelings of isolation and fear,” Jan says. “I’ve also gone to monthly virtual happy hours with Oasis and gotten to know classmates and the staff better. So I’ve added new people in my life. Taking these classes has given me more to talk about with friends and family on Zoom, too. I’m eternally grateful to Oasis.”



“Oasis virtual classes have been a lifesaver.”

Board of Directors

Krishna Arora
Board Chair

Julie Derry
Vice Chair

Michael Bardin
Secretary

Jonathan Doering
Secretary

David Chong
Governance Chair

Deni Saxod Carpenter
Chair Emeritus

Hon. William H. Wise
Sandra Nimitz Lawhon

Sue Bradham

Barbara Noerenberg

Kathy Gamez

Bill York

Frank Hoffstadt

Paul Weiss, PhD
President, Oasis

Simona Valanciute
President, San Diego Oasis

Advisory Board

Don Ambrose
Sister Mary Jo Anderson
Michelle Candland

Peg Eddy
Henry George
Bob Kelly

Maureen King
Jordan Z. Marks, Esq.
Mark Riedy

Ellen Schmeding
Alejandra Sotelo-Solis
Deborah Szekely

Charles Van Vechten
Dr. Ken Druck, PhD

Legacy Circle Members

Anonymous Donor
Anonymous Donor
Anonymous Donor*
Claire & Carlos Arias
Family Trust
Krishna & Bonnie Arora

Michael & Arlene Bardin
Donald & Nadene
Bruders
Heather Chisholm-Chait
Donna Dotson
Cynthia Haney*

E. Miles & Kathryn
Harvey
John & Collette Michelle
Hessler
Emily Keeler
Rupert Kessler*

Ed Kmosena*
Sandra Nimitz Lawhon
Trevalyn Tracy Lawler*
William H. & Jolyn Parker
Nancy Scott
Herma G. Sullivan*

Glenn Walker
Pitt Warner*
Wayne Yee*
Arleigh Yewchan*

*deceased

Sponsors

Palomar Health
SDG&E
Walter & Betty Zable
Foundation
Barnes & Noble
San Diego Rotary 33
Keesler Chavez Fund@TSDF
AT&T
DeFalco Family Foundation
Care Patrol
Sharp Healthcare
Cushman Foundation
Thrivent Financial Office
of Jonathan Doering &
Matthew Molstre

May & Stanley Smith
Charitable Trust
Carol & Henry F. Hunte Fund
@TSDF
Umpqua Bank Charitable
Foundation
Hervey Family Fund@TSDF
Nordson Corporation
Foundation
AARP
Paul & Oliver Jones Family
Foundation
La Jolla Golden Triangle
Rotary Club
Stanley/Stearns Fund@TSDF
Cox Communications

Auerbach Family Foundation
County of San Diego Aging &
Independence Services
Knight Angels Foundation
Montera Senior Living
Strauss Family Foundation
CECO
Issa Family Foundation
Melvin Garb Foundation
Kreutzkamp Foundation
Provo Financial
U.S. Bank
ESET North America
East County Mortuary

Lido Advisors
Front Porch Innovation
San Diego County Credit Union
Airbnb
Aurrera Healthcare Group
Scatena Daniels
Dr. Seuss Foundation
Eva May Fleet Fund@TSDF
North County Covid19
Recovery Fund
Gary & Mary West Foundation
The San Diego Foundation
Scarano Family Foundation
Catholic Charities

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

5500 Grossmont Center Drive, Suite 269, La Mesa, CA 91942
619.881.6262 | sandiegooasis.org

