





2021 marked 30 years in operation at Albuquerque Oasis! We are grateful to two entities who helped Oasis establish its roots here – the St. Joseph's Healthcare System and the May Company (Macy's/Foley's) department store at Coronado Mall. The Oasis center lived in a small back corner on the second floor at Macy's/Foley's from 1991 through 2014. In 2014, Oasis moved to our current location at Menaul and Carlisle, allowing for more flexibility, classes, and volunteer tutors.

As 2021 began, who would have guessed the pandemic would continue throughout the year, with all the associated challenges? Albuquerque morphed, pivoted, and evolved in all sorts of ways to be able to offer our educational and volunteer programs. We said goodbye to Jane Ellen in May 2021, although her classes now live on through Zoom—what a wonderful silver lining to the pandemic.

The tutoring program went solely online as the 2020–21 school year began with 125 committed volunteers and returned to in-person (although masked) tutoring in the fall of 2021. When elementary schoolchildren needed our volunteers more than ever, we had a dedicated group that stepped forward to help these kids with their reading skills.



Bravo to them! 2021 had its challenges, but we evolved and continue our mission to serve older adults.

KATHLEEN RASKOB

Executive Director | Albuquerque Oasis

2022 is a milestone year for Oasis as we are celebrating 40 years. As we reflect on Oasis' work last year through our 2021 annual report, we do so through the lens of the global pandemic and how it has affected all of us. While two years is a short time compared to 40, the last two years were possibly the most challenging. It makes us appreciate our roots, the journey to get here, and our impact over these first 40 years that much more. It's even more important to consider what the NEXT 40 years of Oasis will look like. The United States is on the cusp of an unprecedented population shift. By 2060, United States Census projections anticipate that half the population will be over 50, with a 92% increase in adults aged 65 and over. This shift in age distribution is attributed to decades of lower birthrates, medical advancement, and more attention to the impact of healthier lifestyles. Longer retirement periods spark a reconceptualization of what living out the "golden years" looks like. Oasis is evolving to accommodate these changes for a world in which adults are working and living longer. We



hope that you, and new generations of older adults, will join us on this transformational journey over the next 40 years!

PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

CONNECTING TO HOME

Lois and Tom Ruby have lived all over the country but landed in Albuquerque, NM, where they lived for 17 years. Most of those years were spent immersed in a wide variety of Oasis classes.

Tom says he signed up for 35–40 Oasis classes a year, which sometimes amounted to two classes a day, three to four times a week. His classes included music, philosophy and religion, legal issues, history, science and astronomy among others. The retired clinical psychologist is passionate about continued learning about his many interests.

"I loved when the Oasis course catalog came," Tom says. "I felt like a kid in a candy shop. My biggest frustration was when two classes I wanted to attend were at the same time. How do I decide? I always sat in the front row in classes and was noted for asking questions." Lois also enjoyed the classes, especially literary topics.

Without an inkling of what was to come in 2020, the couple moved to Cincinnati, to be closer to family on March 1—just six days before the pandemic shut–downs began around the world.

"We went into immediate hibernation and were being very careful because of COVID-19," Tom says. "These delayed opportunities to meet other people or see many places in our new city. It was an odd feeling."

Leaving their active social life and regular Oasis classes in Albuquerque to be isolated in Cincinnati was challenging. "It was a loss," Tom says. "I missed all aspects of Oasis, especially the camaraderie with others in the classes. Oasis was an integral part of our life in Albuquerque. We thought we could find an equivalent to Oasis in Cincinnati, but we didn't find it. So, we did the next best thing and discovered online classes in Albuquerque."

"With virtual classes, I like the idea that we don't have to drive, find parking or worry about overcrowded classes. At home, I always have a front row seat and can dress casually." With his psychology background, Tom understood both personally and professionally the importance of social interactions during the pandemic. That's why he appreciated the value of his ties to Albuquerque Oasis even more. "Coming to a new city was difficult but taking classes through Albuquerque Oasis was a welcome connection to familiar people, places and memories," he says. "It eased the loneliness and isolation and was very therapeutic."

"My mouth is watering again for all the classes," Tom says. "It seems like the course catalog has gotten bigger with more class topics than ever!"

ALBUQUERQUE OASIS FINANCIALS



NATIONAL IMPACT



*Source: 2021 Consolidated Financial Statement Audit

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LITERACY







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Our annual report's theme of evolving is perfect for Oasis Rochester in 2021. As of April, 2021, Oasis Rochester became a fully incorporated 501c3 non-profit agency, with new freedom to expand and grow in directions not previously possible. We are thankful to the Oasis Institute for their support and guidance.

We continued to ease our way through the pandemic with classes held online but were able to open fully, and safely for in-person, Zoom, and hybrid offerings in the Fall. We continue to seek ways to welcome our long time and new participants with exciting and



stimulating offerings. Join us!

ANN CUNNINGHAM Executive Director Oasis Rochester

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next 40 years!

PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

STORYTELLER BRINGS CLASSES TO LIFE

Once upon a time, a professional storyteller was also known as a minstrel or a troubadour. In the Middle Ages, these treasured storytellers were often honored as members of royal courts.

In the modern age, a professional storyteller brings a talent for delivering meaningful stories and messages that reflect an understanding and respect for the lineage of the stories.

Today, through Oasis Rochester, storyteller David Woodruff spins vivid stories steeped in history and intrigue as part of entertaining, informative classes members can take either in person or online through Zoom.

David brings 40 years of experience as a high school teacher, writer, author, and storyteller to his Oasis classes. So far he has taught 50 different courses on topics from Columbus to the Crimean War and everything in between.

"I find topics that I personally want to learn about," he explains. "A good story is often about screw ups they're more fun to talk about."

To create a class, he takes a deep dive into books and online sources and masterfully weaves age-old story themes with fascinating facts, buried secrets, and flawed figures. He estimates he spends a minimum of 100 hours of research to prepare each Oasis class.

In classic storytelling fashion, David often starts his classes with amusing anecdotes to "warm up" the room. Focusing on the fertile fodder from historical "screw ups," he ends his class with cliff hangers such as, "Don't worry, things get much, much worse next week." He typically teaches four classes a quarter in a "relaxed" format that allows time for questions.

"If people ask questions during class that are cogent and on topic, that's a good sign the class is going well," David says.

Prior to the pandemic, David brought his own audio-visual (AV) system to in-person classes. At around the same time, Oasis had purchased a new AV system that offered flexibility to teach classes simultaneously in-person and virtually. Thanks to the updated technology at Oasis, David continues to teach hybrid classes so people receive the same information and visuals whether they are in-person or on Zoom.

David says the number of students in his classes has grown since the pandemic. "I used to have 20 to 30 people in the in-person classes but now, because people can attend virtually, we get 40 to 50 people. And we're getting people from outside the Rochester area through Oasis Everywhere. Because of the pandemic, people can now take my Oasis classes from anywhere, whether you are limited physically or live in another city."



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"My exercise classes have made a tremendous difference to my overall fitness and well-being. I feel stronger and have better balance and flexibility. I'm grateful Oasis Rochester evolved and included Zoom classes during the unsettling times of the Pandemic."

Oaisis Rochester Participant





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2021 was an exciting year for Oasis! We were happy to welcome back many of our participants and we started two new programs to reduce social isolation among older adults—the Silver Connect Program and the In–Person Program.

I celebrated my 30th anniversary as the San Antonio Oasis Executive Director this year. It has been wonderful to have a job that I love with an organization that is so dedicated to our mission of promoting healthy aging through lifelong learning, active lifestyles and volunteer engagement.

We appreciate your support of our organization and look forward to many more years of offering high quality educational classes and programs.



BRENDA SCHMACHTENBERGER Executive Director San Antonio Oasis

2022 is a milestone year for Oasis as we are celebrating 40 years. As we reflect on Oasis' work last year through our 2021 annual report, we do so through the lens of the global pandemic and how it has affected all of us. While two years is a short time compared to 40, the last two years were possibly the most challenging. It makes us appreciate our roots, the journey to get here, and our impact over these first 40 years that much more. It's even more important to consider what the NEXT 40 years of Oasis will look like. The United States is on the cusp of an unprecedented population shift. By 2060, United States Census projections anticipate that half the population will be over 50, with a 92% increase in adults aged 65 and over. This shift in age distribution is attributed to decades of lower birthrates, medical advancement, and more attention to the impact of healthier lifestyles. Longer retirement periods spark a reconceptualization of what living out the "golden years" looks like. Oasis is evolving to accommodate these changes for a world in which adults are working and living longer. We hope that you, and new generations of older adults, will join us on this transformational journey over the next



40 years!

PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

LISTENING IS LOVE

The phone line has become a lifeline since the pandemic thanks to the Silver Connect program at San Antonio Oasis. Silver Connect, a telephone chat line, offers older adults the chance to connect and engage with friendly, trained volunteers for support, reassurance, resources, and an opportunity to share life experiences. The program began as a response to the isolation many older adults felt during the pandemic.

Nancy Thompson became a Silver Connect volunteer near the beginning of 2022. "I appreciate that Silver Connect has a clear purpose," she says. "We're there as someone to talk to, to listen, and to provide support and resources. Oasis offers excellent training, including how to be a good listener and how to handle problems, so we feel competent in our volunteer roles."

"Even a 10-minute conversation can be enough to keep someone feeling connected, socialized and productive," she says. "One of my favorite quotes is: 'Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable.' We all need someone to listen to us. As a volunteer, I'm devoted to listening. Everyone has such interesting stories to share."

While Silver Connect is designed to help older adults who call, the program benefits volunteers on the other end of the line, too, Nancy says. "Studies show volunteers live longer lives than those who don't volunteer. As a volunteer, I feel like I'm making a difference in someone's life."

Nancy often acts as a sounding board for callers. She says a common theme in calls are housing, independence, and lack of family connection. "Many seniors who call have limited or no family. Silver Connect helps people evaluate what they want to accomplish and to live their lives to their satisfaction. We guide older adults to define their concerns, decide what they want to do, and give them options, information and resources."

Nancy's commitment to volunteering for Silver Connect is rooted in gratitude. "When my mother was sick, I lived 1,500 miles away," she says. "Thankfully, friends and family helped. Someone did that for me, so I want to do the same for someone else." She continues: "I'm honored to provide a very small service through Silver Connect. I get as much out of the calls and conversations as the callers. It's not a one-way conversation. My life is richer because of hearing their experiences and learning from them."

Nancy appreciates the variety of programs and classes at Oasis that make such an impact on older adults. "I love the lifelong learning Oasis offers," she says. "Losing social connections leads to depression. But Oasis offers something for everyone and opportunities for relationships that keep the brain synapses popping to keep us alert with a healthier mind."

The Silver Connect chat line is available Monday–Friday, 5–9 p.m., and weekends 9 a.m.–9 p.m. To chat with a volunteer, call Silver Connect at (210) 756-5551.



SAN ANTONIO OASIS IMPACT



*Source: 2021 Consolidated Financial Statement Audit

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2021 was the impetus for growth in several key areas, while building a stronger foundation for 2022, during which San Diego Oasis will celebrate its 35th anniversary. We continue to be grateful for the vision of Marylen Mann, our founder, who had the foresight and passion to create cutting-edge environments in which senior adults have thrived for well over three decades.

As an organization of learning and wellness that creates opportunities for engagement, socialization, and community service, San Diego Oasis has thrived despite the challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic.

Our **Bridging the Digital Divide** provided over 700 tablets, training, and internet for older adults allowing them access and connection to family, friends, doctors, and resources that enhance their daily lives. Patricia's story is one of many that conveys the impact this program has in our community.

Our **Rancho Bernardo Expansion** in 2023 will be an intellectual, fitness, creative, and social hub that will bring a wide variety of elements together in a beautiful, safe, and convenient location for our North County members.

Our **Intergenerational Tutoring Program** found new and inventive ways to reach at-risk elementary students challenged by the impact the pandemic had on their education. Online tutoring allowed us to continue investing in these deserving students, and book drives put reading materials in their hands to help prevent "summer slide."

We invite you to read the stories of 2021 and be inspired by the many ways San Diego Oasis is impacting its community for the good.



SIMONA VALANCIUTE President & CEO | San Diego Oasis 2022 is a milestone year for Oasis as we are celebrating 40 years in operation. As we reflect on Oasis' work last year through our 2021 annual report, we do so through the lens of the global pandemic and how it has affected all of us. While two years is a short time compared to 40, it felt as long in some ways in that it was possibly the most challenging. It makes us appreciate our roots, the journey to get here, and our impact over these first 40 years that much more. As we ask our friends, funders, partners, and communities to recognize this milestone through giving and sharing our story, it's even more important to consider what the NEXT 40 years of Oasis will look like.

The United States is on the cusp of an unprecedented demographic population shift that will unfold over the next four decades. United States Census projections anticipate that by 2060 the ratio of adults under 49 to adults over 50 will shift from 70/30 to 50/50, with a 92% increase in adults aged 65 and over. This seismic shift in age distribution of American adults is attributed to decades of lower birthrates, medical advancement, and more attention to the impact of healthier lifestyles. The implications for society, medicine, business, money, and distribution of a roughly 20-year "retirement period" will spark a reconceptualization of what living out the "golden years" looks like.

Oasis is evolving to accommodate these changes. Our technology literacy program includes workforce development for older adults seeking work-fromhome opportunities. Our lifelong learning classes will include more practical skill-development and work-like opportunities. Oasis health programs will increasingly be led by Oasis-trained peer-educators focused on active lifestyles and maintaining peak physical function.

We hope that you, and new generations of older adults, will join us on this transformational journey over the next 40 years!



PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

PLANTING SEEDS OF CONFIDENCE

Highlands Elementary students have a fun way to prevent the notorious "summer slide" in reading thanks to San Diego Oasis's annual Book Giveaway. This year, San Diego Oasis tutors and staff delivered more than 1,500 books to Highlands students.

Students kicked off summer with a small but mighty personal library of books to give them an opportunity to continue reading at home and maintain the gains they made throughout the school year.

San Diego Oasis and Highlands have been longtime partners in bringing literacy and a love of reading to local students. Oasis tutors are an integral part of Highlands and read with students weekly during the traditional school year. "Our goal is to have a book giveaway in every one of our partner schools where we have tutors," says Kristen Amicone, Director of Intergenerational Programs. "This year, we wanted our tutors to have the experience of giving the books to the students and experiencing their excitement. Seeing the students' faces and their gratitude is so impactful. The feeling in the room when they are choosing books is such happiness and joy."

Each Highland student was able to choose three books. Kristen points to research that shows when a student chooses their own books, they are more likely to read them.

"Some kids have no books at home at all and lose learning over the summer," Kristen explains. "When kids have their own reading material that they chose intentionally, they are more likely to read the books and share them."

Kristen says the books and tutors are more important than ever because the pandemic negatively impacted students' reading levels across the country. "More students are reading below grade level and that impacts their sense of self. That's another reason why Oasis tutors are so important. They read with students one on one and create positive relationships, which increases the likelihood of students' success. It's lifechanging for both the student and the tutor."

One success story was with a third grade student who was only reading at the first grade level at the beginning of the school year. After working with an Oasis tutor each week, the student was reading at the ideal third grade level by the end of the school year.

Mary Saxon has been an Oasis tutor since 2010 at Highlands Elementary. She is happy to share her love of reading with students to help them succeed.

"I have always loved to read—it opened doors for me," she says. "When I tutor, a student has my full attention. We read books together, talk about it, and then write about it so it's full circle."

> She was overwhelmed with emotion when she saw the students faces as they chose books. "When we told the students they could choose three books, they were so surprised and excited," she says. "I helped one little boy find a "Pete the Cat" book that he desperately wanted. He was thrilled and I was on a high all day from that."

> > Kristen is grateful for the dedication of tutors like Mary. "Our tutors are the best people in the world. They take initiative with students and keep going even when it's challenging. I'm inspired by them every single day. When even one child makes progress, it changes the classroom and positively affects all the students."

Mary is excited to continue tutoring and making a difference. "I enjoy being a tutor because I feel like I'm part of something important," she says. "I love seeing the progress students make and their confidence grow. As tutors, we're planting seeds."

OPENING NEW WORLDS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

After recognizing a gap in tech tools, funding and services for lower–income older adults—made even more obvious during the pandemic—San Diego Oasis took action to fill the need.

The result was the San Diego Oasis Digital Divide program, designed to keep people from being isolated by equipping them with technology and training.

Eligible low-income older adults receive a technology package that includes a specially configured tablet to keep, internet connectivity for 12 months, training to use the tablet, and vouchers for free Oasis classes.

So far, San Diego Oasis has provided 700 tablets to older adults since the program began in the middle of the pandemic.

David Beevers spearheads the Oasis Digital Divide program. "We work with lower-income older adults who don't have the technology necessary to even text or email," he says. "During the pandemic, they had no ability to stay connected to their family and friends and it was extremely difficult and isolating for them. In addition, many older adults have mobility issues and can't get out as much."

Thanks to grants from generous partners, more older adults now have access to the technology they need along with essential training. Significant funders include the San Diego Foundation, San Diego Gas & Electric, The David C. Copley Foundation, the Gary and Mary West Foundation, the North County Recovery Fund, and San Diego Rotary 33.

Through the Digital Divide program, San Diego Oasis assists residents at Catholic Charities, St. Paul's Place, Trinity Place, Lion's Manor and Community Housing Works and several other residences that serve lower–income adults. David is responsible for configuring the tablets and training older adults to use them. "You can't just hand them a tablet—they need training so it doesn't become a dust collector," he explains. "We make it as simple as possible for the users and create training around their needs at the time. We create a Gmail account for them and teach them how to check email and order groceries online, among other things. We also download key apps for them and set up an Oasis account."

His in-depth training includes how to access sites such as YouTube, how to use Zoom, how to use their Oasis online account and even how to take photos with a tablet. "I try to find as may resources to benefit them without overwhelming them," David says. "And I leave them with step-by-step directions."

He typically conducts training with groups of five so everyone receives one-on-one time and can ask questions. Sometimes he returns for second and third trainings to serve as a refresher. "Taking the classes together builds camaraderie," David says. "I teach the basics to get them started and then they continue to learn as they play with it."

David says the ability to use technology is life-changing for older adults. "Everything today is app or technology based. Even some laundry mats now require apps to use the washer and dryer. And to get back in the job market, you have to be able to apply online. They may be scared at first to use the technology but as they learn, it's rewarding to see them smiling, communicating with family and their doctors, and Googling things. Learning to use technology opens a whole new world for people who had been left in the dark."

Patricia "Tish" Flemming, a resident of Lion's Manor, received her tablet in the middle of the pandemic. "When we had to stay home, I had no one to interact with," she says. "I had been involved in lots of organizations and had lots of friends before but I couldn't see them or talk to them during the pandemic. So when I received a tablet, it was a lifesaver for me."

Once she was up to speed on how to use her tablet, she quickly signed up for virtual exercise classes and other Oasis classes. She also used the tablet for telehealth visits with her doctor. And since libraries were closed during part of the pandemic, she was able to use a cloud library to get e-books.

"This tablet is a lifeline," Tish says. "It's an incredible gift. We need to be online to get through the world today. The tablet allows me to communicate in ways I was not able to before."

David says Tish has helped spread the word about the Oasis Digital Divide program. As a result, San Diego Oasis has given more than 30 tablets to residents at Lion's Manor.

"I'm hopeful we can continue the program through the kindness of our partners and community members," David says. "Our goal is to keep the community engaged no matter how big their wallet is."

SAN DIEGO OASIS FINANCIALS



NATIONAL IMPACT

Partnered with **281** schools across the country.

Placed **1,230 tutors** in the Tutoring Program.

Provided **2,250 volunteers** to local communities.

Provided **46,250 volunteer hours** to local communities.

Served **1,044 communities** across the country.

Enrolled **78,225 participants** in Oasis programs. Supported **15,750 participants** through Oasis programs.



• \$5,585,044 Government Funding

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- \$310,146 In–Kind
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• \$2,535,594



- \$4,510,929 Health Programs • \$1,837,158 Administrative • \$1,215,897 Education Programs
- \$998,187
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- **\$531,905** Fundraising
- \$453,413 Technology Literacy Programs

CELEBRATING GIFTS FROM THE HEART

San Diego Oasis is dedicated to helping every member live life as vibrantly as possible. A new way Oasis is doing that is with the addition of a new Rancho Bernardo Oasis location that is scheduled to open by mid-year 2023.

This bright, beautiful, convenient facility will be an intellectual, fitness, creative and social hub in the North County area. It will include a demonstration kitchen, a lush garden area, an art studio, a 200-person lecture hall, a gaming center for bridge, a health and wellness center, a coffee cart and an exciting Oasis Innovation Center where members can test out and learn about new technology.

"The incredible remodeled facility with its many amenities is possible because of the generosity of Oasis donors," says Jolyn Parker, Vice President of External Relations at San Diego Oasis. "We're grateful for their kind support that benefits the entire community and we're excited about the possibilities this new location brings to our members." San Diego Oasis launched a capital campaign in early 2021 to support the remodel of the Rancho Bernardo location. Two recent gift commitments in particular have advanced the project.

Sandra Nimitz Lawhon, a San Diego Oasis board member, made a generous gift commitment of \$1 million in honor of her mother, Joy Ann.

Sandra's fond memories of her mother include an image of a hard-working, persevering, generous, kind and brave woman who was ahead of her time. Sandra says Joy Ann was devoted to family, friends and to the country even though women didn't have the right to vote yet when she was born. Her commitment to service aligns with Oasis's mission.

"This building is a symbol of all that my mother represented as she continued to reinvent herself and to triumph in a world that did not have a vision for women or seniors," Sandra says.

She believes her mother would be proud to know that Oasis provides purpose and meaningful engagement to encourage continued learning and community service.

Bonnie and Krishna Arora are also making a difference in the community with a generous gift commitment of \$700,000 to Oasis in honor of their daughter, Shamily Angeli Arora, who passed away in April 2022. Krishna is the Oasis board chair who is passionate about ensuring seniors have a place to relax, learn and socialize. The Arora's gift will be dedicated to the development of a demonstration kitchen and social space at the Rancho Bernardo location.

Shamily loved to cook and was trained at the California Culinary Academy in San Francisco after earning a bachelor's degree in social welfare from University of California-Berkeley. As a personal chef who also worked with a number of restaurants throughout San Diego, she kindly donated catering for some Oasis events. Her mini pecan pies were a fan favorite.

"In honor of Shamily's love for cooking, we will be able to host cooking demonstrations and social gatherings for our Oasis members in our new demonstration kitchen at Rancho Bernardo," Jolyn says.

> Donors are changing the face of Oasis, Jolyn says. "Because of the heartfelt giving from Sandra, Bonnie and Krishna, and a number of other generous donors, Rancho Bernardo will be a warm, welcoming location with unique activities that offer friendship, engagement and fun. Oasis members and others who believe in the mission still have an opportunity to support the North County Oasis expansion and help open the Rancho Bernardo location doors even faster."

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2022 is a milestone year for Oasis as we are celebrating 40 years in operation. As we reflect on Oasis' work last year through our 2021 annual report, we do so through the lens of the global pandemic and how it has affected all of us. While two years is a short time compared to 40, it felt as long in some ways in that it was possibly the most challenging. It makes us appreciate our roots, the journey to get here, and our impact over these first 40 years that much more. As we ask our friends, funders, partners, and communities to recognize this milestone through giving and sharing our story, it's even more important to consider what the NEXT 40 years of Oasis will look like.

The United States is on the cusp of an unprecedented demographic population shift that will unfold over the next four decades. United States Census projections anticipate that by 2060 the ratio of adults under 49 to adults over 50 will shift from 70/30 to 50/50, with a 92% increase in adults aged 65 and over. This seismic shift in age distribution of American adults is attributed to decades of lower birthrates, medical advancement, and more attention to the impact of healthier lifestyles. The implications for society, medicine, business, money, and distribution of resources over the next 40 years are staggering. The notion of a roughly 20-year "retirement period" will spark a reconceptualization of what living out the "golden years" looks like.

Oasis is evolving to accommodate these changes. Our technology literacy program includes workforce development for older adults seeking work-from-home opportunities. Our lifelong learning classes will include more practical skill-development and worklike opportunities. Oasis health programs will increasingly be led by Oasis-trained peer-educators focused on active lifestyles and maintaining peak physical function.

> We hope that you, and new generations of older adults, will join us on this transformational journey over the next 40 years!

> > PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute



"The one thing we all have in common is aging, and we need to figure out how to do that the best we can."

Marylen Mann,
 Oasis Founder

CELEBRATING THE ESSENTIAL VOICES OF VOLUNTEERS

Oasis administrative volunteers are the heart of St. Louis Oasis. They're the first faces people see when they enter Oasis and the friendly voices they hear when they call.

Those voices were more important than ever the past couple of years. When the pandemic hit in early 2020, Oasis temporarily closed amidst a worldwide shutdown. Behind the scenes, Oasis leaders and volunteers were diligently working to determine next steps and find solutions to continue offering classes to members.

Step one was engaging the Oasis volunteers so they could assist members. Deb Abbott and Karla Toal, co-captains of the St. Louis Oasis administrative volunteers, led the charge in turning their kitchen tables and home offices into an Oasis hub where people could reach out for help in taking classes.

Other administrative volunteers, including Linda Schumacher, Tish Preston-Stubbs and Martha Lane, followed their lead and jumped in to provide seamless assistance every day. They answered the office phone from home, learned a new database system, held Zoom meetings, trained new volunteers, and more.

Through navigational skills, patience, and commitment, these volunteers have been on the frontline to help Oasis to evolve for all members. Linda began as an Oasis tutor in September 2019. With her advertising agency background, she was well prepared to assist when she saw Oasis needed more administrative volunteers.

"I was in the office the last day before we had to shut down in March due

to COVID," she says. "Oasis Everywhere had been an idea before the pandemic but it was not fully baked yet. But Oasis pivoted quickly. By June, we had switched to online classes. We didn't realize the gravity of what we were doing at the time. Now we realize how critical it was. The leadership successfully made the shift to Oasis Everywhere and pulled it off with remarkable speed. That impressed me."

During the height of the pandemic, the volunteers set up Google Voice so they could pick up Oasis calls from a central phone number. "I was glad to have something to do during the pandemic and was happy to continue to contribute—it's rewarding to help others," Linda says. "My technical background with computers was a saving grace when we had to change to a new registration system in the middle of the pandemic. This change was difficult for some so I was able to contribute to training new volunteers on it."

She says she is grateful to Deb and Karla who expertly spearheaded the training and education aspect of the new database.

As the pandemic restrictions eased, some Oasis administrative volunteers still take calls from home. But Linda is drawn to be "live" in the Oasis office to see people.

Today, you'll find Linda volunteering in the administrative area at least once a week. She also tutors and teaches one to two classes a month, including a class on digital safety.

"I enjoy talking to people and helping them register online or do whatever else they need," she says. "And I like how you never know what each day will be at Oasis. I like the variety and I'm part of a great team."

In addition to her other efforts, Linda continues to train Oasis volunteers

who have a broad range of experience and backgrounds, including a former chemistry professor, a kindergarten teacher, and a health care worker.

To make training and orientation smoother, Deb and Karla created a list of frequently asked questions for volunteers.

"We are always looking for more volunteers," Linda says. "It's very rewarding to be part of Oasis." While her own volunteer commitment is impressive, she says she admires the long-term dedication her fellow volunteers Deb and Karla have. "Deb and Karla have been at Oasis much longer than me and volunteer more hours—they are the real stars. This year, Deborah even did her Oasis volunteer shifts from St. Louis Cardinals spring training in Jupiter, Florida. That's dedication."

> Linda, Deborah, Karla, Tish and Martha are just a few of the hundreds of volunteers who help Oasis shine each year.

Visit st-louis.oasisnet.org/volunteer or call (314) 862-4859 ext. 24 to learn about the many opportunities to volunteer at Oasis.

OPENING NEW WORLDS THROUGH TECHNOLOGY

Eight decades have flown by for Parks Smith. Maybe because the cyclist is always steadily pedaling along on his bike. Parks has been a volunteer at St. Louis Oasis for nearly 20 years, first in the intergenerational tutoring program, then teaching cybersecurity classes. Yet his greatest joy is helping with the Oasis bike program and enabling it to evolve.

As a cross-country cyclist, Parks used to ride about 2,000 miles a year but he has slowed down now to rides of 20 to 30 miles a day. He has pedaled from southern Wisconsin to Door County, and the Natchez Trace among other destinations and adventures.

Along with Brenda Tripp and Maria Gholson, Parks was instrumental in starting the Oasis biking group more than 10 years ago with just a handful of local rides, which gradually amped up in frequency and attendance. Then the pandemic hit and rides were put on hold. As the pandemic restrictions eased, the rides returned with an ever-growing list of people interested. "People want to get outside," Parks says. "I'm so pleased with the attendance."

With extensive cycling expertise, he and five other biking group leaders, who are also good friends, help each other with the rides. One leader always rides in front, while another is the "sweeper" who rides in back to ensure no one is left behind or to address any flat tires or broken chains.

A retired district manager with the former Southwestern Bell Telephone, Parks says organizing the group fits in his wheelhouse. "I enjoy organizing and planning and the Oasis team gives us a lot of latitude with the bike club. I love working with the people at Oasis."

The growing popularity of the rides meant they had to be capped at 20 people for safety reasons. Usually between 10 and 20 people join the rides as the Oasis biking email list has burgeoned to 110 names. The cyclists range from age mid 50s to mid 80s. "Some riders are new while others have biked all over the country," Parks says. "As a bike leader, we can accommodate everyone."

The Oasis biking group rides every Friday, rain or shine, during April, May and June and then breaks to avoid the extreme summer heat. The rides resume in September and October.

Rides range from 12–15 miles through Forest Park, on the Meramec Greenway, the Dardenne Greenway, Creve Coeur Lake to St. Charles, and Edwardsville to Marine, Illinois, among other locations. A 5-mile Twilight Bicycle Ride was even planned.

"We're often biking somewhere to eat," Parks jokes. "And some people do just part of the ride. The leader shows up no matter what the weather is and then we can decide if we're riding."

During the off months in summer and winter, the biking group offers educational round tables. Topics have included the pros and cons of E-bikes (electric bikes) or learning how to bike.

Parks says the biking group offers many benefits. "I've enjoyed watching people grow with biking," Parks says. "Early on, the group would ride at about 8 miles per hour. Recently, 12 of us rode in the rain at 11 miles per hour."

He continues: "There's a real social aspect to this. I look forward to the rides and talking with people. I've made good friends."

In the past year, Parks admits he has slowed down and sometimes switches to an E-bike, which has a battery to help with pedaling when needed.

But whether he is on battery power or pedal power, he continues to enjoy the weekly rides with his friends at Oasis.

OASIS NATIONAL IMPACT IN 2022

Partnered with 281 schools across the country.
Placed 1,230 tutors in the Tutoring Program.
Enrolled 78,225 participants in Oasis programs.
Supported 15,750 participants through Oasis programs.
Provided 46,250 volunteer hours to local communities.
Provided 2,250 volunteers to local communities.
Served 1,044 communities across the country.



NATIONAL FINANCIALS



• \$5,585,044 Government Funding

- \$2,535,594 Contributions & Grants
- \$888,305 Program & Partner Revenue





• \$4,510,929 Health Programs

- **\$1,837,158** Administrative
- \$1,215,897 Education Programs
- \$998,187 Volunteer Programs
- \$531,905
 Fundraising
- \$453,413 Technology Literacy Programs

POSTAL PALS DELIVERS SPECIAL FRIENDSHIPS

When is the last time you received a handwritten letter in the mail? While some adults may still send cards and notes, most children and teens are accustomed to just reading and writing texts and an occasional email.

The pandemic presented Oasis tutors an opportunity to change that and encourage students to communicate with pen and paper rather than technology through the Postal Pals program.

This national program organized by Oasis, used letter writing to keep students and tutors connected while tutors weren't allowed in schools due to COVID–19. The program also improved students' written expression, among other benefits.

Charlie Street began as an Oasis tutor five years ago. "Tutoring is the best 30 minutes you can give someone," she says. "Oasis gives you everything you need as a volunteer. They offer encouragement, train you, and help you along the way. It's a neat program for adults who might sit home otherwise." As an Oasis tutor, Charlie was excited to participate in the Postal Pals program in the Fox School District.

"I had a pen pal when I was in school and thought this would be fun," Charlie says. "And I love working with children."

Through the Postal Pals program, students and tutors receive everything they need to send letters, including the paper, envelopes, stamps, and inspiration. Charlie was partnered with four students. Three were in second grade and one was in fifth grade.

"At first, the students' letters were only a few sentences but by the end they would share all kinds of things in their letters," Charlie says.

Based on students' interests, details about their family and pets and other news, Charlie made creative, personalized bookmarks to send to each of her Postal Pal students.

When the time came for a school meet and greet with Wyatt, one of her Postal Pals, Charlie realized she had a scheduling conflict and couldn't attend. Disappointed to miss the opportunity to meet Wyatt personally, Charlie worked with the school to coordinate a Zoom call with him instead.

"Anything to help a child I will do," Charlie says. Wyatt sent Charlie a thank you letter along with priceless artwork he created. "Seeing the light in his letter gave me such joy," she says. "When they share with you, it's therapeutic for them and for you."

When the Postal Pals program began in spring 2021, Charlie only had a short time with the students in person before summer break began. So she created postcards—customized to each students' interests—and mailed them each month during the summer.

One child loved dinosaurs so she wrote the greeting in shaky letters and added dinosaur stickers to the postcard. Another was fascinated with pirates so her greeting was "Land-ho!"

"Knowing I'm helping to boost the students' confidence is so rewarding," Charlie says. Charlie believes there is a place for the Postal Pals program long after the pandemic ends. "This program is so beneficial because we don't write many letters anymore. Writing helps children express themselves and builds language and reading skills. I'm glad to be able to help a child who just needs a little extra boost."

> The Postal Pals benefits go both ways. "I might be having a bad day and then I go to the mailbox and find a letter from a student," Charlie says. "It lights a fire in you and makes me so happy."

She continues: "Sometimes they just need a little spark to get them going. It's so much fun to see the light turn on."

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If 2020 was our year to change course because of a pandemic, then 2021 was the year we utilized our national connections, and Upstate Oasis as we know it, evolved. We learned that online classes were here to stay as many Oasis participants were freer to travel and continue to take Oasis classes virtually. This meant we needed to get creative with the content we offered in order to continue our robust class offerings. Through our partnerships with other Oasis centers, we were able to offer interesting topics and new instructors vetted by the other centers. Our "snowbirds" were able to continue classes as they went south. Others chose to remain online for health and safety reasons. Some even brought along a few new friends to class with them as they shared their love of Oasis. As more and more people enter retirement and the older adult population grows, Oasis programming will be more important than ever in keeping us connected and living our best lives.

Here's to the continued evolution of our Upstate Oasis as we meet the needs of older adults here in Central



New York, across the country and around the world!

CYNTHIA WOODS Executive Director | Upstate Oasis

2022 is a milestone year for Oasis as we are celebrating 40 years. As we reflect on Oasis' work last year through our 2021 annual report, we do so through the lens of the global pandemic and how it has affected all of us. While two years is a short time compared to 40, the last two years were possibly the most challenging. It makes us appreciate our roots, the journey to get here, and our impact over these first 40 years that much more. It's even more important to consider what the NEXT 40 years of Oasis will look like. The United States is on the cusp of an unprecedented population shift. By 2060, United States Census projections anticipate that half the population will be over 50, with a 92% increase in adults aged 65 and over. This shift in age distribution is attributed to decades of lower birthrates, medical advancement, and more attention to the impact of healthier lifestyles. Longer retirement periods spark a reconceptualization of what living out the "golden years" looks like. Oasis is evolving to accommodate these changes for a world in which adults are working and living longer. We hope that you, and new

generations of older adults, will join us on this transformational journey over the next 40 years!



PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

TIMELY TOPICS & OPEN MINDS

In partnership with Washington Metro Oasis, Upstate Oasis collaborates with the Foreign Policy Association's Great Decisions, America's largest discussion on world affairs. The program highlights eight to nine critical foreign policy challenges facing Americans each year. In groups across the country, participants discuss and debate each issue and complete a national opinion ballot to communicate their view to Congress and the White House.

While the pandemic was the catalyst for the Syracuse-Washington Metro Oasis collaboration with the Great Decisions program, the program continues to evolve and grow today. Great Decisions offers a unique platform for sharing varied perspectives and lively, enlightening conversations.

With a background as a retired police officer, military veteran and Homeland Security employee, Mark Wadopian was immediately drawn to the Great Decisions program. "The topics are so timely," he says. "We have discussed Russia's invasion of Ukraine and how China's role in the supply chain affects interest rates around the world, among others topics. Great Decisions gives us a better perspective on the interplay of all the events happening in the world."

Participants are given a book with articles and background on eight to nine foreign policy issues to read before discussions. The program spans 18 weeks, with discussions every other week. "Joining with the Washington Metro Oasis offers a better blend of ideas," Mark says.

"Not everyone agrees with each other, but we have polite, interesting discussions without shutting others down. The discussions are well moderated. Many participants are well-educated and well-traveled with worldly points of views to present valid arguments. I've learned quite a bit and see other ways of looking at things."

The Great Decision group participants offer feedback online after each topic, which is then shared with Congress and the White House. "This allows our opinions to have more horsepower behind them," Mark says.

Mark has taken two Great Decisions classes so far. "We have different topics each time," he says. "I've seen how the world changes and how that influences our topics. I most enjoy the interaction between people. We listen and comment in a wellorganized format where we all cooperate."

He says he is impressed by how Oasis adapted during the pandemic. "Oasis transitioned to online classes smoothly and gave us the ability to continue taking courses with more flexibility. It also opened the door and highlighted the national Oasis Everywhere program. Oasis continues to offer a wonderful forum and opportunity to interact."

UPSTATE OASIS FINANCIALS



NOTE: Not included in the graphs, Endowed Funds have a combined balance of \$337,087 as of 12/31/2021.

NATIONAL IMPACT



*Source: 2021 Consolidated Financial Statement Audit

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Our hopes for an end to the Covid-19 restrictions and a return to our "former normal" did not take place in 2021. What did transpire? An evolution of programming in response to the needs of our community—a change which will surely include a permanent online component as we move forward. We will continue to evolve and respond to the many twists and turns of this pandemic as well as the resulting changes in consumer behavior that we see amongst our community of learners.

Despite the uncertainty that we currently find ourselves in, I have found that beginning every day with a note of gratitude keeps me on track to purposefully fulfill our Oasis mission.

Our world has evolved, but so have we. Our resolve to move forward over the past year has deepened our commitment to foster



aging with curiosity, strength, and resilience.

ANNA STOKES Executive Director Washington Metro Oasis

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PAUL WEISS, PHD President | Oasis Institute

GREAT DECISIONS

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While the pandemic was the catalyst for the Syracuse-Washington Metro Oasis collaboration with the Great Decisions program, the program continues to evolve and grow today. Great Decisions offers a unique platform for sharing varied perspectives and lively, enlightening conversations.

Jack Welch (pictured below, left) from Washington Metro Oasis moderated the Great Decisions discussion group in collaboration with Shelly Lee from Syracuse Oasis. After working for Voice of America for more than 30 years, Jack was well suited for his moderator role. "As a news junkie, I was always interested in current affairs and politics. It gave me an ideal background to moderate the Great Decisions group."

To prepare for the 8–session class, the group receives a book with eight to nine essays on different foreign policy topics such as Russia, China, space, drug policies and climate change, along with questions. The group tackles one topic every other week.

When Allan Sull (pictured below, right) learned Oasis was offering a structured foreign policy discussion—the Great Decisions program—he jumped at the opportunity. The retired history teacher has participated in the discussion group twice already, squeezing in the Great Decisions program between his other daily Oasis classes and ballroom dancing classes. "If they offer it again, I'll do it a third time because the program is great," Allan says. "There will always be foreign policy problems."

The Great Decision participants offer feedback online after each topic, which is then shared with Congress and the White House. "This feedback gives a sense of what citizens are thinking on important foreign policy issues," Jack says. "Great Decisions is a great program to get people informed and engaged."

"The quality of conversation has been a good learning experience and expands my thinking," he says. Because of technology, we can have this discussion no matter where participants live. Plus, I've gotten to be friends with Shelly Lee, my co-facilitator, even though we live 500 miles apart."

Like Allan, Jack says he is an "Oasis addict" since he started taking classes after he retired five years ago. "Oasis has terrific speakers and very interesting topics. With the pandemic, Oasis evolved so we're no longer limited to classes in the Washington area or to how far people will drive. We have a lot of flexibility. Oasis rose to the challenge and didn't skip a beat."

WASHINGTON METRO OASIS FINANCIALS



*Source: 2021 Consolidated Financial Statement Audit

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