



EVOLVE
2021 St. Louis Oasis Annual Report



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 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



“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.

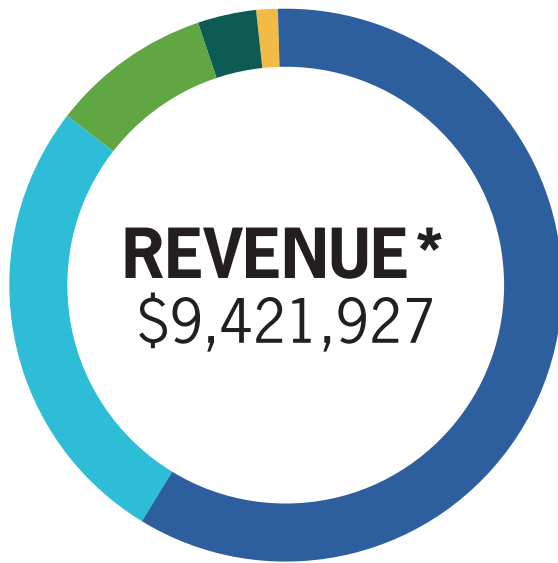
Provided **46,250 volunteer hours** to local communities.

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

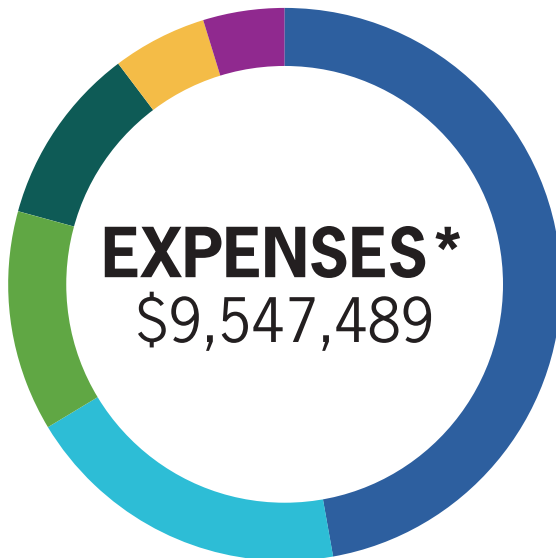
Served **1,044 communities** across the country.



NATIONAL FINANCIALS



- **\$5,585,044**
Government Funding
- **\$2,535,594**
Contributions & Grants
- **\$888,305**
Program & Partner Revenue
- **\$310,146**
In-Kind
- **\$102,838**
Other



- **\$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

*Source: 2021 Consolidated Financial Statement Audit

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."

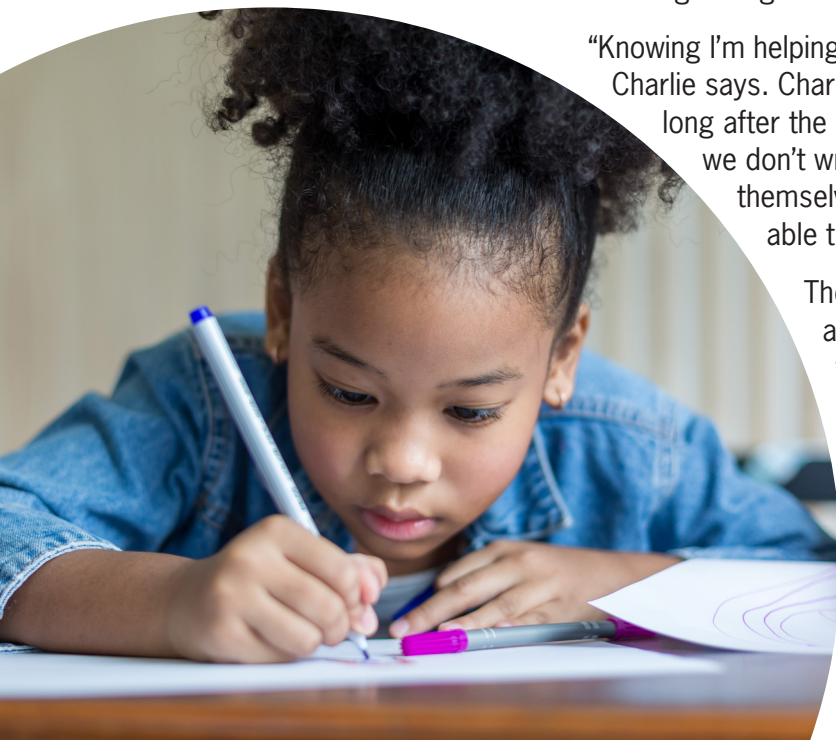
When the Postal Pals program began in spring 2021, Charlie only had a short time with the students in person before summer break began. So she created postcards—customized to each students' interests—and mailed them each month during the summer.

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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