



FY2022 Annual Report Compassionate Support. Community Impact.

- 857 community members & professionals attended educational events
- 723 children, family members, school employees and human services professionals supported through Children's Grief programs and resources
- 684 adults supported through Adult Grief programs
- 194 patients with serious illness supported
- 34 years of service to our community
- 10 languages spoken by our volunteers
- Programs and services are free of charge to clients - Always!

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(as of June 30, 2022)**

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(as of June 30, 2022)**

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Bereavement Support Services

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Community Resource
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Support Services

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Chief Executive Officer

Carol K. Walsh
Grants Specialist



Dear Friends of CaringMatters,

After all of the challenges, changes and turmoil of the past several years, FY2022 felt a bit more "normal," with staff and volunteers returning to the Cottage, and starting to resume in-person support and programs. However, we cannot deny all the ways which our lives, perspectives and goals have shifted. At CaringMatters, we embraced new technologies and adapted the ways we work together, while continuing to connect our community with the care, compassion and support they so desperately needed. We have held tight to our core values based on empathy and the notion of being present for each other.

Every year when we compile this report, we are mindful that the numbers, quotes and stories represent real people and families confronting some of life's most formidable challenges. The pandemic magnified these challenges, causing unprecedented illness and complicated grief. The effects will reverberate for years to come. In the face of this reality, this report highlights the ways that compassionate support can make a real difference for people with serious illness, caregiving challenges and grief. Moving forward, we will continue to connect our large network of trained volunteers with these individuals and families to provide the critical social and emotional support they need.

The work and accomplishments detailed in this report show that the organization has thrived by leveraging creativity, resilience and determination. The underlying force behind our positive impact continues to be the steadfast support of our community and the dedication of our volunteers. As a result, CaringMatters remains a strong vibrant organization that lives up to its name and exemplifies excellence and compassion. We are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Thank you!

Most sincerely,



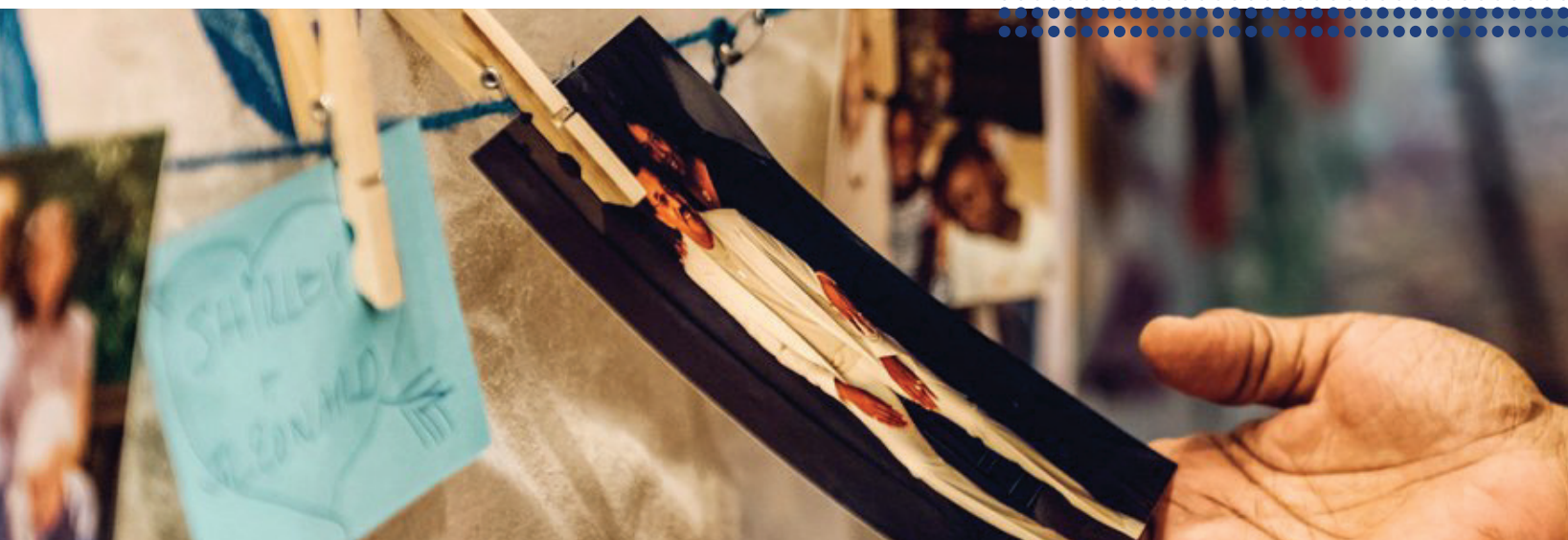
Audrey Rothstein

Audrey Rothstein, CAE
Chair, Board of Directors



Allison Stearns

Allison K. Stearns, MS, MPH, LCPC
Chief Executive Officer



Volunteer Helping Hands

The Volunteer Helping Hands (VHH) program provides social and emotional support through a network of trained volunteers to individuals in Montgomery County experiencing serious illnesses and their caregivers and families.

Services include, but are not limited to: companionship and emotional support, assistance with household tasks, respite care, patient advocacy, limited transportation to appointments, and connection with community resources.

67 clients served in FY2022

"People often say, 'It must be so depressing to be with hospice patients.' It is just the opposite. The woman I'm supporting now greets me as a dear friend. We sit and talk for hours... Everything she says is confidential and she can complain or tell me about her life from childhood. We end with a hug and that love is amazing. I thank God for this special opportunity." - VHH Volunteer

CaringMatters is licensed by the state of Maryland as a Limited Hospice Care Program. We complement General Hospice Care Programs and support patients who are still pursuing curative treatment, as well as those who do not have a six month or less prognosis.



The Whole You

Patient and Caregiver Services



The Whole You is a partnership between CaringMatters and the Shady Grove Adventist Aquilino and White Oak Cancer Centers to connect cancer patients with free and low-cost community resources and services. The program strives to meet needs that are outside the realm of prescribed medical treatments to improve quality of life and maintain the highest possible ability for patients and families to function throughout treatment and beyond.

127 clients served in FY2022

17 clients referred to VHH program for volunteer support

Spotlight: The Impact of The Whole You

Our client with lung cancer was limited to telehealth appointments because her husband wasn't able to get her wheelchair out of the house and installing ramps was cost prohibitive. Our Community Resource Specialist (CRS) contacted a local church with access to used medical equipment and secured two free ramps.

"We are so grateful that now she can attend medical appointments, while before her in-person medical care was limited to nurses coming to our home to draw blood." - The Whole You Client's Husband

Our client was struggling to pay medical bills and started receiving collection notices. The CRS worked with the client's social worker to get all of his medical bills excused through the Shady Grove Aquilino Cancer Center charity funds.

"I am forever in your debt. No one has ever done anything this nice for me in my whole life." - The Whole You Client

Thank you to our funding partners,
Healthcare Initiative Foundation and Adventist Healthcare, Inc.

Caregiver Support Groups

CaringMatters' Caregiver Support Groups meet online two hours a month, bringing together people who are primary caregivers living with and caring for a seriously ill loved one. The online, bi-weekly sessions help caregivers feel less isolated and stressed as they share their stories and connect with other caregivers. The virtual format of these groups enables caregivers to attend without leaving their family member. The group is guided by principles of confidentiality, reflective listening, assessing the caregiver's mindset, and the importance of taking care of the caregiver.

25 caregivers supported in FY2022



Facilitator Perspectives:

"The group is open with each other and have really embraced this support 'family.' What a pleasure it continues to be to partner with them as the caregiving continues, and to watch how they support each other and cheer for practicing self-care. Their gratitude for this community and the companionship it brings is palpable."

– Facilitator, Family Caregiver Support Group

"Family caregiving is a 24/7 job. The caregiver usually feels overwhelmed by the grind, disappointed by others' indifference or insensitivity, and fearful of the future. Group members listen well and chime in with relevant experiences. Finding others who understand can make a tough and isolating job somewhat easier."

– Facilitator, Family Caregiver Support Group

Adult Bereavement Support

Throughout the past several years, conversations about grief have taken center stage and helped normalize the value of peer support. CaringMatters' Adult Bereavement Support groups continued to meet primarily online, facilitated by trained volunteers. The groups, organized by people grieving similar losses, allow participants to connect with others who are also grieving, share their stories, and learn from one another. Notable this year were the formation of a new group supporting young adults grieving the loss of a parent and a new in-person group at Asbury Methodist Village.

Additionally, CaringMatters provides phone support, professional consultation, resource referrals and webinars for grieving adults and the professionals who serve them.



- Our annual Tree of Love Celebration, a community-wide memorial ceremony to honor and remember loved ones, was held online in December, 2021.
- 174 people attended Adult Bereavement Group sessions
- 81 people attended the 2021 Virtual Tree of Love Celebration
- 93% of support group members reported that they have gained tools to use in their daily life
- 96% of support group members reported that they do not feel as alone in their loss

Feedback from Group Members:

"I'm more tolerant of my grief's unpredictability."

"I am able to talk about my lost loved one without crying. I have come to realize that my loss is not just my loss, but rather a loss shared by others."

"I stopped being so hard on myself and I know that it's okay to feel how I feel."

Bereaved Caregivers Workshop

The virtual Bereaved Caregiver Workshop was offered, free of charge, for family/friend primary caregivers whose loved one died within the past 2 years. Activities enabled participants to connect with other former caregivers who related to their experiences caring for seriously ill loved ones. Therapeutic group and individual activities included grief support, commemoration of loved ones, journaling, self-care, relaxation techniques and strategies for refocusing on life post-caregiving.

- 9 attendees, ranging in age from 57 to 78 years
- 100% of attendees reported that they are better prepared to transition from their prior caregiving role to focus on their own life
- 100% of attendees reported that they gained some tools/approaches that they will use to renew their lives


Feedback from Workshop Attendees:

"I am incredibly grateful for the generosity of spirit, openness and vulnerability of both facilitators and the group. These three days have helped me appreciate the healing that has happened."

"Hearing my companions' stories made me more aware of the weight I still carry. Knowing that, I can pursue activities that will help lighten the load."

"The workshop helped me get in touch with some deeper grief. I felt safe to cry."

Thank you to our funding partners, Colleen and Ron Luzier.



FINDING
CONNECTION
THROUGH RITUALS

Impacting the Community

FY2022 saw an expansion of our Children's Bereavement Services, as the community, school staff and mental health professionals faced an increased and urgent need for age-appropriate resources, information and support.

Notable accomplishments by Children's Bereavement Services:

- Presented 5 webinars for approximately 366 education and mental health professionals and parents on children's grief
- Spent 200 hours consulting with 120 requests for support from school counselors, mental health professionals, individuals and families for grief support, resources and advice
- Expanded grief support resources on CaringMatters' website for schools and families
- Regular community outreach to disseminate age-appropriate information and tools to school and mental health professionals



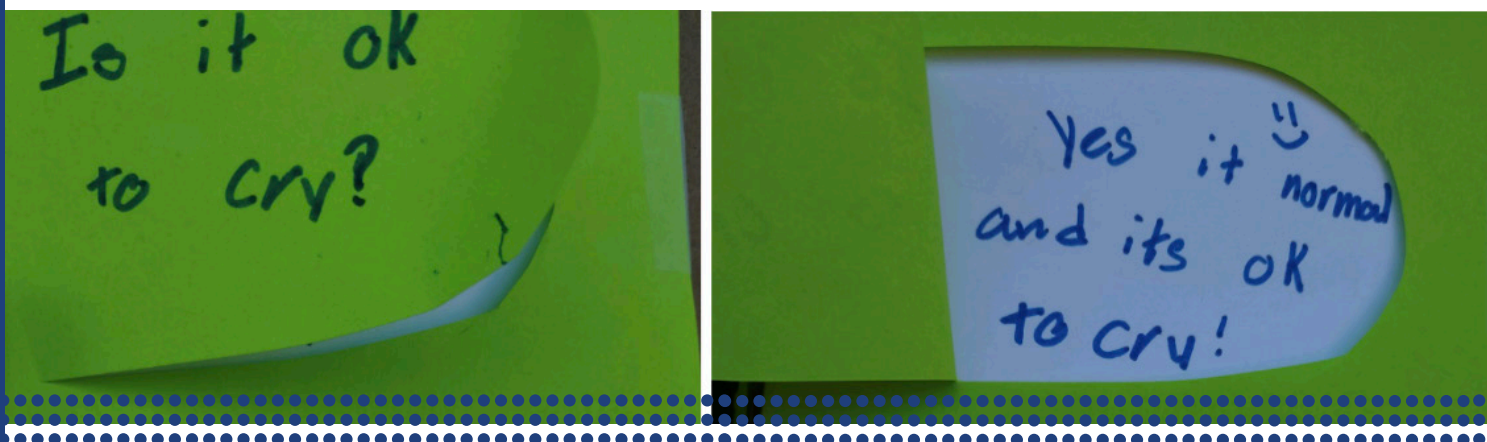
Informing the Field:

CaringMatters worked with the University of Maryland's Department of Psychology to analyze multi-year GGC data which resulted in the following:

- "I'm Not Alone: Evaluating the Efficacy of an Innovative Group Intervention for Grieving Children," a poster presentation session at the American Psychological Association's 2021 Annual Conference.
Authors: Karen M. O'Brien, Gilly Cannon, Allison Stearns, Carol Walsh, Erin M. Hill, Shereen Ashai, Dylan Cooper, Madelyn Harris, Micah Herman, Karoline Trovato, University of Maryland and CaringMatters
- "Five Deep Breaths - Helping Children Learn to Cope with Grief," a poster presentation session at the 2022 conference of the Association of Death Education & Counseling - The Thanatology Association.
Authors: Erin M. Hill, Karen M. O'Brien, Gilly Cannon, Allison Stearns, Carol Walsh, Shereen Ashai, Madelyn Harris, and Karoline Trovato
- "I'm Not Alone: A Group Intervention for Grieving Children," an article detailing a study of CaringMatters' GGCs, was published in the *Journal of Prevention and Health Promotion*.
Authors: Karen M. O'Brien, Gilly Cannon, Allison Stearns, Carol Walsh, Erin M. Hill, University of Maryland and CaringMatters

Good Grief Club (GGCs)

Good Grief Clubs are seven-week support groups to help children in grades K-12 explore their feelings, develop healthy coping strategies, and find comfort and safety in learning that they are not alone. The groups are facilitated by trained CaringMatters volunteers in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS), independent schools, and other community-based organizations.



- 28 GGCs were held (both in English and Spanish), serving 167 children
- 90% of Middle School and High School students reported that they learned how to talk about their feelings in GGC
- 97% of student group members reported feeling less alone after the group started

Middle School/High School students participating in GGC reported that they planned to use the following tools:

- *Taking a deep breath*
- *Thinking about people and pets that I have*
- *Drawing and writing letters to my person*
- *Listening to music*
- *Writing in a journal*
- *Telling an adult why I'm sad*
- *Going for a walk, playing sports and exercising*

Thank you to our funding partners,
The Wolpoff Family Foundation
and the City of Gaithersburg.

Family Nights

Holidays are often painful and difficult for grieving families as they navigate traditions without their loved one. CaringMatters' Family Nights are special workshops, held before major holidays so families can learn coping skills, plan for how to handle celebrations, and mark the absence of their loved ones. Family Nights include a therapeutic art activity, the opportunity to share within and across families about their art creations and personal grief. Materials for the art project are delivered directly to families before each Family Night.



Memory Jar Family Night Project

- 42 children and 33 adults attended at least one Family Night workshop
- 95% of adults and 83% of children reported that they shared their feelings about their loss with each other
- 95% of adults who attended Family Nights reported that they learned new ways to handle the difficult emotions around family celebrations and holidays

Feedback from Family Night Participants:

"I felt the spirit of my Granddad tonight."

"It was such a life-giving and kind environment to share our grief, remember our loved ones, connect as a family around the loved one we lost, and to come together as a community."

"This is such a wonderful program and gives us a way to express grief. It can be difficult to initiate these types of discussions with family, so this is a helpful way to get the dialogue going."

Thank you to our funding partner, The Newburger-Schwartz Family Foundation.

Parenting While Grieving Workshop Series

This 7-week online workshop series, Parenting While Grieving: Supporting a Child Grieving the Death of a Parent (PWG), supported parents who were parenting a grieving child while also grieving themselves. During these 1.5 hour interactive online meetings, participants explored the impact of loss on children, developmental reactions to the grief process and strategies for dealing with the challenges of parenting while grieving.

The workshops also included the practice of essential parenting skills, such as listening, expressing, problem-solving, and setting limits within the context of a grieving family.



In FY2022, two PWG Workshop Series served:
12 grieving parents
21 children, ages 3-18

Feedback from Workshop Attendees:

"I remind myself to pause before reacting to parenting challenges, stepping back to consider the situation and my daughter's responses."

"I have learned to get my children more engaged in the decision-making process."

"It has been very helpful to know that my children's behavior and moods are likely a normal part of the grieving process."

Camp Erin

Camp Erin Montgomery County exceeded all expectations with its return to in-person activities in FY2022. This weekend overnight camp, offered free of charge, for grieving children and teens, ages 6-17, is part of a national network of Camp Erin programs, offering age-appropriate discussions and creative, fun-filled activities designed to help children share and connect with peers who have had similar experiences.



From our Campers: one thing I learned at Camp Erin...

- *Lots of kids have had a loved one die*
- *I'm braver than thought I was*
- *Trusting other people can be beneficial*
- *It's important to talk about my emotions*
- *Everyone grieves differently*
- *It's okay to feel sad about our loved ones*
- *It's OK to be afraid or cry*



47 campers served from 34 families

86% reported that they now know that there were others who are grieving and they're not alone

89% reported that they learned some tools and activities to help them through difficult feelings or times



Thank you to our funding partners, Bar-T, Inc., The Dick and Jody Vilardo Foundation, Eluna Network and The George Preston Marshall Foundation.

Community Education

CaringMatters' Community Education raises awareness and better equips people to address end-of-life and grief-related issues. In FY2022, workshop and webinars brought volunteers, community members, partners and human services professionals together for constructive dialogue on relevant topics.

The continued impact of the pandemic added urgency to discussions about end-of-life planning and grief. Programs about these topics provide critical information to increase understanding about serious illness, complicated caregiving challenges and heartbreaking loss. CaringMatters' programs keep the conversation about these issues in the spotlight.



Feedback from Webinar Attendees:

"OUTSTANDING! Clear, powerful and empathetic in every way."

"Excellent webinar and excellent information. The presentation was impeccable and to the point. I really enjoyed this webinar and learned new tools to better serve the Black community and other minority communities."

Webinars and Workshops

- Understanding Your Choices for Your End of Life Care
- Grief in the Workplace: Guidance for Employees and Employers
- Grief Support for Yourself and Those You Care About
- Grief Support for the Black Community
- The End-of-Life Doula: A Collaborative Approach to End-of-Life Care
- Caring for the Caregiver
- Providing Inclusive and Affirming Care for the LGBTQ+ Community

857 community members and professionals attended webinars

100% agreed or strongly agreed that they acquired new skills and knowledge to encourage healthy help-seeking behaviors by members of the Black community experiencing trauma and grief

95% agreed or strongly agreed they better understand cultural barriers that may prevent people from seeking professional counseling

Thank you to our funding partner, AARP Maryland.

Volunteers Add Value

CaringMatters' services are delivered by screened and trained volunteers, all of whom receive ongoing guidance, continuing education and supervision. Our volunteers are valued for their compassion, willingness to provide assistance in time of need, and their many interests and talents that support all aspects of the organization.

"CaringMatters' staff truly care about the volunteers as human beings, not just as commodities. The inclusivity far surpasses most any other organization I've ever volunteered with." – CaringMatters Volunteer

"The work is meaningful and satisfying. CaringMatters is an exquisite organization where you can meet like-minded people committed to volunteerism and community support." – CaringMatters Volunteer

151 volunteers served 8,734 hours in FY2022.

*The value of the volunteer hour was \$32.92 in Maryland for a total of \$287,523 in FY2022

Our operating budget would increase by 31.5% if it included the monetary value of volunteer time.

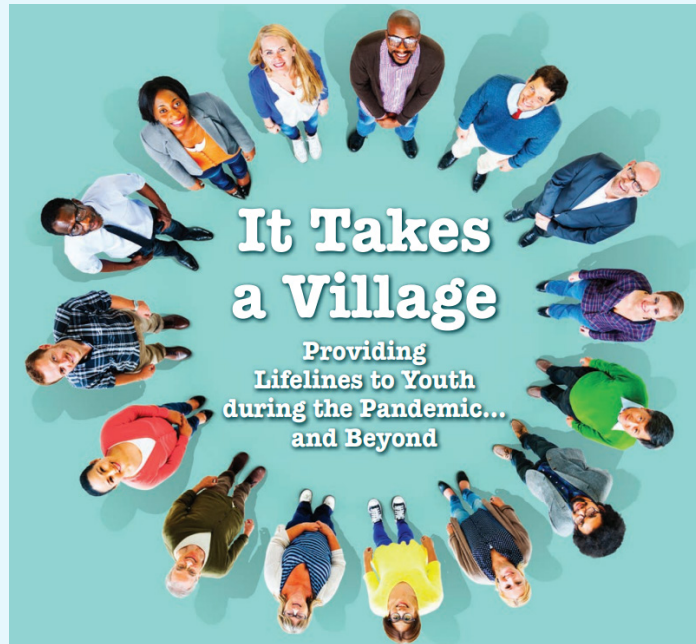


*Based on information from independentsector.org

CaringMatters has always taken pride in fostering close connections with our volunteers. Staff and volunteers made great efforts to stay connected and support each other.

Visibility in the Community

- InGaithersburg (Fall/Winter 2021) featured CaringMatters' Children's Bereavement Services.
- Two online series: Smith Life Homecare Ask the Expert and Kibbitzing with Kagan, featured interviews with Allison Stearns, CaringMatters' Chief Executive Officer.
- CaringMatters collaborated with the Montgomery County Coalition for Palliative and End-of-Life Care on an advance care planning webinar presented in English with Spanish interpreters.
- The Montgomery County Commission for Women selected Allison Stearns, CaringMatters' Chief Executive Officer, to receive a 2022 Women Making History Award.
- Judi's House/JAG Institute selected CaringMatters as one of 30 grief-centered organizations nationally to participate in the Childhood Bereavement Changemaker program to build capacity for data collection and program evaluation through a series of trainings, workshops, and collaborative learning sessions.



Accountability



CaringMatters also maintains its Standards of Excellence Designation with Maryland Nonprofits. Organizations receiving this prestigious recognition have been carefully evaluated and found to consistently model high professionalism in their self-regulation of ethical and accountability practices.



CaringMatters earned the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, showcasing our focus on mission-based results, as well as providing transparency to current and potential donors.

Fundraiser Highlights



Silver Linings Virtual Celebration – September, 2021



In September, 2021, CaringMatters hosted its second virtual Gala. Rep. Jamie Raskin (D-Md.) joined CaringMatters Board Member and Montgomery County Councilmember, The Hon. Craig Rice, to discuss the importance of grief support and his own grief journey after the loss of his son, Tommy, to suicide. Honorees included Colleen Luzier, New York Life and the Montgomery Village Rotary Club.

Golfing For Good, March, 2022

Our first Annual Golfing For Good was a fun-filled family event that brought many members of our community together in-person to enjoy high-tech hitting bays, support CaringMatters and enjoy long-overdue reunions.



Raise Your Glass Fundraiser – May, 2022



The 8th Annual Raise Your Glass Wine Tasting Fundraiser was held at Windridge Vineyards in May, 2022. Guests joined Event Co-Chairs, The Hon. Jeffrey Slavin and Theresa Testoni, for delicious wine, hors d'oeuvres, an exciting raffle, an inspiring testimonial from a CaringMatters client and live music.

Thank You to Our FY2022 Event Sponsors!

Silver Linings Gala

Gold Sponsors

Sandra & Pete Bracken
The Hard Family
Colleen & Ron Luzier
Irma Poretsky
Crystal Sponsors
Aaron and Cecile Goldman Family Foundation
Vivian & Raymond Bass
Linda & Ian Kramer
Sandy Spring Bank and Ken & Julie Cook

Silver Sponsors

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Joan & Ken Miller
Montgomery Village Rotary Club
Surveillance Secure
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Golfing For Good

Event Sponsors

Bill Hard
The Sotak Family

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Beat the Pro Sponsors

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Raise Your Glass

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Toni Robinson
Ernest "Chico" Rosemond
Snyder Cohn
VWG Wealth Management

In-Kind Donors

The Bean Bag Deli & Catering
EDGE Floral Event Designers
Jerry Frishman Photography
Windridge Vineyards

The Pam Hard Legacy Circle

The Pam Hard Legacy Circle, named for a dedicated CaringMatters supporter, loyal volunteer and dear friend who passed away in October 2020, is a forward-looking initiative to help sustain our compassionate support programs into the future. Pam was at the heart of this organization for many, many years. Her legacy of compassion and love will always inspire us to do more, reach farther and be our best.

The gifts pledged by the generous members of the Pam Hard Legacy Circle have energized our efforts to strategically grow and strengthen our programs. The initiative reinforces and sustains the standards of excellence that our community has come to expect from CaringMatters.

A planned gift is any major gift, made in lifetime or at death, as part of a donor's overall financial and/or estate planning. Planned giving allows donors to support nonprofits with larger gifts than could usually be made from ordinary income. These include gifts of equity, life insurance, real estate, personal property, or cash. For more information on the Pam Hard Legacy Circle, visit caringmatters.org/planned-giving.



Pam & Bill Hard

The Pam Hard Legacy Circle Members

Vivian & Raymond Bass
Debra Berner
Sandra & Pete Bracken
Marsha & Kenneth Braunstein
Lisa & Sean Creamer
Dominique Duong & Peter Wong
Penny & Jim Gladhill
Steve & Jane Halpin
Bill Hard & Family
Sara & Jim Harris
JC Hayward
The Honorable Cheryl Kagan
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Kathleen McCallum
Lisa McKillop
Joan & Ken Miller
Toni Robinson
Anu Sharman
The Honorable Jeffrey Z. Slavin
Allison & Eric Stearns
Tori & Matt Tomlinson
Stephen & Lucy Yee



Financial Highlights

Fiscal year July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

Operating Revenues*

Grants, Awards & Donations	\$566,589	60%
Special Events	\$308,490	32%
In-kind Contributions	\$ 76,869	8%
Total Revenue	\$951,948	

Expenses

Program Services	\$781,211	85.5%
Management & General	\$ 79,343	8.7%
Fundraising	\$ 53,422	5.8%
Total Expense	\$913,976	

*Investment Earnings/Loss (\$629,674)

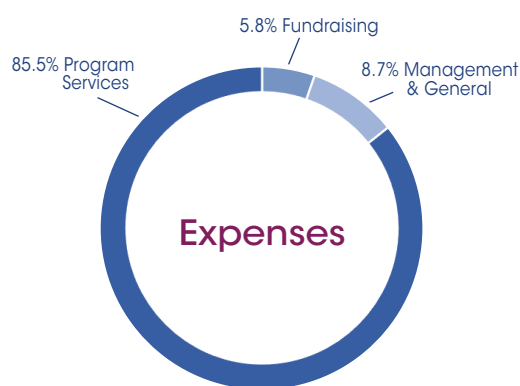
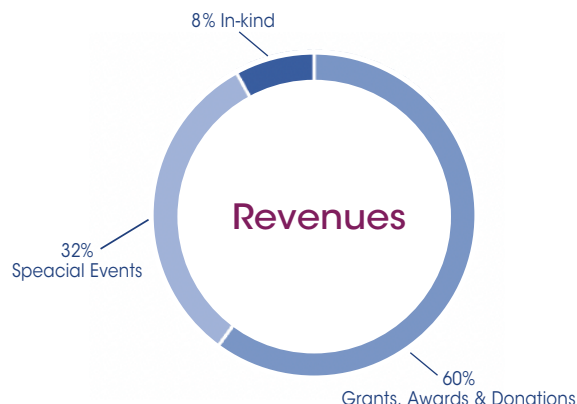
For every \$100 in expenses, \$85.50 is spent on program services.

Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets

Statement of Financial Position Summary

	As of June 30, 2022
Total Assets	\$4,251,564
Total Liabilities	(\$ 81,848)
Net Assets	\$4,169,716

None of our services are reimbursable by Medicare. All services are free of charge to clients.



Thank You to Our Volunteers

Administrative

Wai Ping Chang
Difan Chuang
Sloane Cooper
Joan Crowe
Monica A. Czaplinski
Wini Herrmann
Viraj Lathigra
Joyce L. Miller
Toni Robinson
Anna Saylor
Elizabeth Tinling
Marie Waldron
Carol Ann Walsh
Sue Zarrett

Adult Bereavement

Anne Baker
Cathy Bamji
Deena Barlev
Jane Bell
Bharath Biyyala
Sarah Bluestein
Johanna M. Boyer
Lawrence Center
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Catalina Conneally-Salazar
Sloane Cooper
Patrick Curtis
Ursula Daniels
Jade Davis
Dana Duran
Caroline Finn
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Monique Singletary
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Hazel B. Strahorn
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Morelyn Weisman
Anne Willoughby

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Valerie Carter
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Chris Daly
Maggie Daly
Coleen Djouha
Sonya Everett
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Nicole D'Uva
Anna Maria Izquierdo-Porrera
Judy Peres
Valoria Walker

Family Night

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Deena Barlev
Difan Chuang
Lisa Creamer
Monica A. Czaplinski
James Griffin
Joan Miller
Jessie Nathans
Toni Robinson
Anna Saylor
Marcia Sherman-Ehrman
Ellen M. Sirkis
Laurene Thomas
Cecilia Thonet
Elizabeth Tinling

Garden Group

Gina Becker
Nina Chase
Susanne DeGraba
Carol Plummer

Good Grief Club

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Allyson Booth
Robin G Chernoff
Difan Chuang
Monica A. Czaplinski
Caroline Finn
Leslie Libby
Deborah McIndoe
Karen O'Brien
Toni Robinson
Anna Saylor
Marcia Sherman-Ehrman
Cecilia Thonet
Katy Vilardo

IDT

Marsha Aaron
Stephen M. Anderson
Difan Chuang
Donna Murphy
Jacquelyn Tennant

Parenting While Grieving

Deena Barlev
Robin G Chernoff
Difan Chuang
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Golfing For Good



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This Annual Report is dedicated to the memory of our cherished colleague,

Jamie Phannavong,

and represents the last full fiscal year of her 21 years of service to this organization, its important mission and the people of Montgomery County. Her unwavering dedication, professionalism and vibrant spirit has left an indelible mark on all of us.



Photo by Jerry Frishman



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Our Mission

To provide social supports and community education so that no one dies or grieves alone.

Our Vision

To envision a community that accepts death as a part of life; where the processes of dying and grieving are embraced without stigma; where everyone has access to support services without charge; and where no one dies or grieves without support.