



CaringMatters

Annual Report FY 2020

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020

Our Impact

1,259 Clients
Received
Services
in FY 2020

13 Languages
Spoken by
Our Staff
& Volunteers

31 Years of
Making a Difference in
Montgomery County, MD

Cost to Access All
Programs & Services:
Free

170 Volunteers Served
11,294 Hours in FY 2020

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Maria J. Alvarez
Office Manager/Administrative
Volunteer Coordinator

Anne Baker
Trainer

Leigh Bluestein
Director of Communications & Education

Gillian Cannon
Director of Children's Bereavement

Marie Daly
Manager of Volunteer Helping Hands

Penny Gladhill
Director of Volunteer Helping Hands

Zema Meseretu
AmeriCorps – Volunteer Maryland

Jamie Phannavong
Director of Finance

Mabilia Rastello
Bilingual Children's Bereavement Coordinator

James A. Rossi
Director of Adult Bereavement

AnneMarie Simon
AmeriCorps – Project Change

Catherine Stahl
Graphic Designer

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

Carol K. Walsh
Grants Specialist

Dear Friends of CaringMatters,

In March 2020, near the end of FY 2020, CaringMatters, along with the rest of the world, shifted into a physical distancing mode that changed almost every aspect of how we do our work. In an organization with a culture based on hugs and handshakes and the notion of being present, the changes were abrupt. The constant that has remained is the care, compassion and the support we provide to every adult, child and family we serve.

So unlike a "normal" annual report, this report tells two stories, one set before Covid and one after. The first is the story of an organization expanding services, implementing a new strategic plan, on track to exceed goals and serve even more community members in need of support. The second story is one of innovation, creativity and determination where impact must be measured differently. Consider not only the number of people served and the impact of the services on their lives, but the number of hours that staff and volunteers devoted to implementing new technology, developing new resources and transforming our existing programs into virtual formats. Picture this shift against the backdrop of a community facing increasing complicated illness and unprecedented grief. Every member of our CaringMatters community, from staff, Board, Trustees, volunteers, community partners and supporters worked together to meet the needs of the community during this critical time and maintain the standard of excellence that our organization always represents.

As we move forward to a new normal, we must always be mindful that certain realities remain: many people in our community are caring for a loved one who is ill, grieving the loss of a loved one, or even facing illness or end of life themselves. Every single one of those people deserve compassionate support as they move through life's most difficult challenges. Our programs 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. We remain committed to this special mission and are incredibly grateful for your continued support.

Most sincerely,



Audrey Rothstein
Audrey Rothstein, CAE
Chair, Board of Directors



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

Volunteer Helping Hands

Volunteer Helping Hands is CaringMatters' caregiving program that provides community-based social and emotional support, free of charge to Montgomery County residents of all ages with serious, life-limiting illnesses. These individuals are facing an acute decline in functioning or progression of illness and can benefit from extra support. Services include, but are not limited to: companionship and emotional support, assistance with household tasks, respite care, patient advocacy, and limited transportation to appointments.

Due to the pandemic, our in-person services switched to focus on supporting clients through telephone calls, emails and texts. Some measures of practical support without face-to-face interaction have resumed, including grocery shopping, meal pick-up and delivery and other errands that allow for physical distancing.

89 clients and 112 family members served this year.



100% of clients reported that visits from volunteers helped them feel less isolated.



100% of family caregivers reported that volunteer visits provided helpful respite time.



Volunteer Elizabeth Tinling visits with her client (pre-pandemic).

“Our volunteer has gone way above and beyond. If she is your typical volunteer, then many families are truly blessed.” – Family Member

Adult Bereavement Support

Bereavement support groups, facilitated by trained volunteers, allow participants to meet others who are also grieving, share their stories, and learn from one another. Groups are organized to bring together people grieving similar losses, such as spousal/partner loss, parent loss, or suicide loss.

Each December, CaringMatters also hosts Tree of Love, a community-wide memorial ceremony where participants support one another and remember loved ones.

In March 2020, due to the pandemic, our support groups started meeting weekly online.

229 people attended a total of 2,411 support group sessions.

95 people attended our Tree of Love Celebration.



93% of group members reported that they do not feel alone in their loss or as isolated.



91% of group members reported that they have gained some tools to use in their daily life.



Tree of Love Celebration, December 2019

"Initially the guilt of my son's death consumed me. The support group helped me realize I'm not responsible for it. I'm learning to live with the devastating loss." - Group Member

Bereaved Caregivers Retreat

CaringMatters facilitated the Bereaved Caregiver Retreat for family/friend primary caregivers whose loved one had died within the previous 2 years. This unique weekend, offered free of charge at the Claggett Center, enabled participants to connect with other former caregivers who related to their experiences caring for seriously ill loved ones. Therapeutic group activities included grief support, commemoration of loved ones, self-care, relaxation and strategies for refocusing on life post-caregiving.

19 people, ages 35-85, attended the retreat.



100% of attendees reported that they are better prepared to transition their focus from caregiving to their current life.



100% of attendees reported that they gained some tools/approaches that they will use to renew their lives.



Bereaved Caregivers Retreat, Fall 2019

"I have been able to let go of many of my feelings of emptiness and loneliness and am encouraged for the future." - Retreat Attendee

Camp Erin Montgomery County

This weekend overnight camp for grieving children is part of a national network of Camp Erin programs. The camp serves children and teens, ages 6-17, and offers age-appropriate discussions and creative, fun-filled activities designed to help children share their feelings with peers who have had similar experiences. Camp Erin Montgomery County is a partnership between CaringMatters, Bar-T, Inc., Eluna, and The Dick and Jody Vilardo Foundation.

CaringMatters (formerly Hospice Caring) held its first children's grief camp in 2000. In 2017, the organization became part of the Camp Erin network, doubling the size of camp and broadening the age range served, hosting a weekend camp each year.

Given restrictions due to the pandemic, our May 2020 Camp Erin weekend was rescheduled for November 2020 and converted to a virtual format.



Camp Erin 2019



"We are not alone if we open our hearts to one another." - Camp Erin Camper

Good Grief Club (GGC)

These seven-week support groups 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, private schools, and other community-based organizations.

GGCs served 24 schools with 30 Clubs (178 children) by March 2020.

Many additional groups were scheduled for the spring, but were canceled due to the pandemic.



97% of students who attended GGCs reported feeling less alone than they did before the group started.



88% of middle and high school students who attended GGCs reported that they learned to identify and express feelings about their loss.

From mid-March through June, staff and volunteers spent countless hours converting age-specific curricula into virtual formats.



Anita Branson, Ellen Sirkis and Lisa Creamer attended a GGC kick-off celebration.

"Through the GGC activities, this one student worked to process the violent death of his sister and is now able to focus more on her life rather than how she died." - School Counselor

Family Nights

CaringMatters' Family Nights are designed for families who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each workshop is held prior to a major holiday so families can learn coping skills, plan for upcoming celebrations, and mark the absence of their loved ones. Families are invited to enjoy a group dinner and conversation.

14 families, including 16 adults and 20 children, attended in-person workshops.

Several Spring Family Nights were canceled due to the pandemic.



100% of those who attended Family Nights reported that they learned new strategies for handling difficult emotions around family celebrations.



92% of those who attended Family Nights reported that the program helped them share their grief within their own families.



Family Night, Fall 2019

"Thank you for providing a safe place for my son to share about his dad. I've never heard him remember him like that - it was beautiful." - Family Night Participant

Children's Bereavement: Meeting New Challenges

The pandemic resulted not only in unprecedented loss and grief, but the interruption of in-person grief support services for children and families. CaringMatters quickly pivoted, utilizing virtual platforms and developing new tools to provide support at the time it was needed most. The response included the following:

- Fielded 48 phone calls from school counselors and other mental health professionals for consultation, phone support, information and referrals.
- Created three Family Activity Worksheets, available in both English and Spanish, for use at home.
- Facilitated a webinar, "Supporting Grieving Students After a Death: How We Can Help Them Build Resilience in a Time of Physical Distancing," broadcast live to 323 attendees across the United States and internationally.
- Participated on the Social/Emotional Leadership Teams in multiple schools.



Family Activity Worksheet – Butterfly Messages

"Thank you for a powerful and informative morning and for bringing us these wonderful resources at no charge. It is truly a gift!" - Children's Bereavement Webinar Attendee

Community Education

Our Community Education programs work to raise awareness and cultivate constructive conversations about end-of-life and grief-related issues. We host workshops, film screenings, and webinars for our volunteers, clients, community partners, and health and mental health professionals. While many planned in-person workshops were canceled due to the pandemic, staff developed new webinars focusing on relevant topics.

FY 2020 Programming:

- Supporting Grieving Students After a Death: How We Can Help Them Build Resilience in a Time of Physical Distancing
- Grief and Self-Care in the Time of Covid
- Caregivers' Toolkit: Community Resources for Patients & Families Facing Serious Illness
- *Nine to Ninety* Film Screening and Discussion
- *Voices of Grief* Film Screening and Discussion

596 people attended educational sessions this year.



97% of attendees indicated that they gained specific knowledge consistent with the workshop's learning objectives.



95% of attendees indicated that they would use this information in their personal and/or professional lives.



"This webinar actually helped validate my feelings after my Mum's death, especially after not being able to visit her for two months due to Covid." - Webinar Attendee

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, their willingness to provide assistance during times of need, and their many interests and talents that support all aspects of the organization.

170 volunteers served 11,294 hours in FY 2020.

\$333,286

The value of the volunteer hour is \$29.51, for a total of \$333,286 for FY 2020.



*Based on information from independentsector.org

"I've volunteered with a lot of organizations and I have to say, CaringMatters is the most grounded, supportive and passion-drive place of them all." - Volunteer



Our AmeriCorps volunteers, AnneMarie and Zema, spent their year of service working at CaringMatters, helping volunteers and staff meet the challenges of the pandemic.

Our volunteers speak the following languages: American Sign Language, Amharic, Chinese, English, French, German, Gujarti, Hebrew, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Spanish, and Taiwanese.

Connecting Our Volunteer Community

CaringMatters has always taken pride in fostering community with our volunteers. During this unusual year, the following existing and new virtual programs helped volunteers stay connected.

- Annual Valentine's Day Red Tea for administrative volunteers
- Monthly volunteer-led Book Club discussing books about topics relevant to CaringMatters
- Weekly yoga classes
- Weekly meditation & reiki sessions
- Weekly online lunch gatherings for administrative volunteers
- Periodic gatherings for program-specific volunteers to provide program updates, ongoing training and support.



Sloane Cooper and Anna Saylor

Red Tea for Administrative Volunteers, February 2020

"Our weekly online lunches keep the connections and conversations going until we can be together again at The Cottage. " - Volunteer

Special Accomplishments

- CaringMatters was named the 2019 recipient of the Brooks Saltsman Award by the Healthcare Initiative Foundation (HIF) for our commitment to volunteerism in the health and wellness field.
- CEO Allison Stearns assumed another term as co-chair of the Montgomery Palliative and End-of-Life Coalition.
- CaringMatters coordinated a partnership between Board Member Allison Henderson and County Cable Montgomery to produce a video sharing her cancer journey. Ms. Henderson passed away six months after the video's release.
- CaringMatters launched a new program, The Whole You, in partnership with Shady Grove Adventist Aquilino Cancer Center, to provide people diagnosed with cancer and other blood disorders and their families access to social support and community resources, including companionship, support groups, transportation, food, respite care and other critical services.

Accountability



In 2020, CaringMatters was again awarded the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, showcasing our focus on mission-based results, as well as providing transparency to current and potential donors.



CaringMatters maintains its Standards of Excellence designation with Maryland Nonprofits, recognizing our consistent, high-level of professionalism in ethics and accountability.

"HIF is proud to invest in the work of CaringMatters, as they tackle every issue with poise, resolve, and compassion." - Crystal Carr Townsend, HIF President & CEO

CaringMatters in the Media

- County Cable Montgomery video featured the Volunteer Helping Hands program, September 27, 2019.
- *Montgomery Magazine* named CaringMatters as a 2019 Charity Honoree and profiled the organization in their December 2019 issue.
- Nancy Richardson, Immediate Past Board Chair, was named 2019 Washingtonian of the Year.
- Montgomery County Caregivers Podcast, "End of Life Care with CaringMatters," featured Allison Stearns and Penny Gladhill, January 8, 2020.
- Hola Montgomery El Podcast: "Diálogo sobre la Muerte," featured Maria Alvarez, February 7, 2020.
- Nonprofit Village's Studio 501(c)3 Podcast featured Allison Stearns, May 13, 2020.



Office Manager, Maria Alvarez, was the guest on the Montgomery County Media podcast, Hola Montgomery El Podcast: "Diálogo sobre la Muerte."

"Thanks to Nancy, we can serve more grieving children, and families' heart-wrenching stories gradually evolve into heartwarming stories." - Vivian Bass, Vice Chair, quoted in *Washingtonian*

Fundraiser Highlights

October 2019 – Pearls of Hope Gala honoring Irma Poretsky, Steve Ornstein, and M&T Bank

November 2019 – Bubbly & Bling Jewelry Party hosted by Deneen Wilson and Tyson's Watch & Jewelry

December 2019 – Barnes & Noble Holiday Gift Wrapping

February 2020 – BOWL-A-THON sponsored by Shulman Rogers

May 2020 – Virtual Raise Your Glass Wine Tasting and Living Room Concert



"The event was fantastic!! Every single part. I am honored to be part of this very special organization and relish the chance to work with this incredible team." - Gala Attendee



Financial Highlights

Fiscal year July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020

Revenues

Grants, Awards & Donations	\$311,816	39.0%
Special Events	\$351,402	44.0%
In-kind Contributions	\$ 86,698	10.9%
Net Investment Earnings	\$ 48,991	6.1%
Total Revenue	\$798,907	

Expenses

Program Services	\$699,223	83.2%
Management & General	\$ 81,429	9.7%
Fundraising	\$ 59,318	7.1%
Total Expense	\$839,970	*

When needed, CaringMatters uses funds from its investment accounts to support operations.

For every \$100 in expenses, \$83.20 is spent on program services.

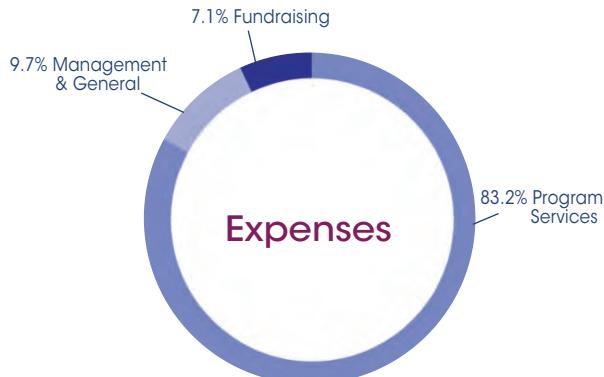
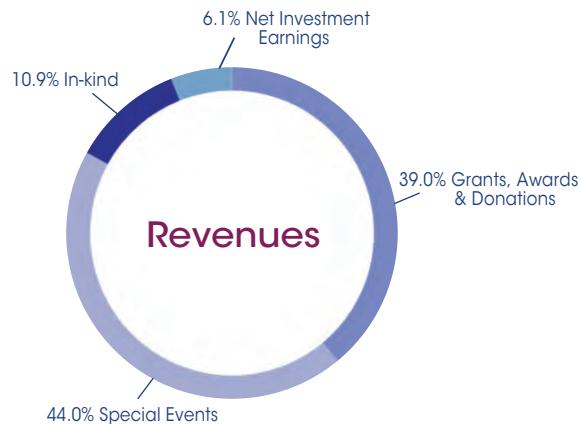
*Includes in-kind and depreciation expenses

Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets

Statement of Financial Position Summary

As of June 30, 2020	
Total Assets	\$3,897,220
Total Liabilities	(\$ 149,787)
Net Assets	\$3,747,433

Our services are not reimbursable by Medicare or funded by any other Federal or State source. All services are free of charge.



Thank you to our Volunteers

Administrative, Garden and Community Outreach Volunteers

Wai Ping Chan • Sloane Cooper • Joan Crowe • Monica A. Czaplinski • Alalya Ha • Wini Herrmann • Viraj Lathigra • Deborah McIndoe • Zema Meseretu • Bonnie Miller • Joyce L. Miller • Margie Powell • Toni Robinson • Anna Saylor • Denese Scott • Marcia Sherman-Ehrman • AnneMarie Simon • Ellen M. Sirkis • Jeffrey Slavin • Victoria Soffer • Hazel B. Strahorn • Cecilia Thonet • Elizabeth Tinling • Marie Waldron • Carol Ann Walsh • Malla Wedberg • Karen Yee • Lucy Yee • Sue Zarrett • Ellen Zeff • Lynn E. Zepp

Adult Bereavement

Anne Baker • Cathy Bamji • Deena Barlev • Johanna Boyer • Difan Chuang • Catalina Conneally-Salazar • Patrick Curtis • Christopher Daly • Caroline Finn • Steven E. Garellick • Josephine James • Hilary Kaplan • (Deborah) Ann Kline • David Lassen • Viraj Lathigra • Colleen Luzier • Diane M. Marks • James McCann • Cecilia Rajnic • Nina Ravick • Denese Scott • Kathleen Sheehy • Marcia Sherman-Ehrman • Ellen M. Sirkis • Deborah Stewart • Hazel B. Stahorn • Laurene Thomas • Elizabeth Tinling • George Tressel • Morelyn Weisman • Anne Willoughby

Community Education and Training

Nina Chace • Jade Davis • Gerald Gimmel • Clyde Horton • Donna Murphy • Toni Robinson • Margaret Rosario • Anna Saylor • Carolyn Schick • Jacquelyn Tennant • Elizabeth Tinling • Karen Tuohy

Family Nights

Joan Miller • Kiara Mobley • Jessie Nathans • Toni Robinson • Anna Saylor • Marcia Sherman-Ehrman • Ellen M. Sirkis • Ben Tellie • Cecilia Thonet • Amy Tran

Good Grief Club

Deena Barlev • Allyson Booth • Anita Branson • Robin Chernoff • Monica A. Czaplinski • Lois Geller • Barbara Goldberg • Amy Greenberg • Beth Ingber • Leslie Libby • Debbie McIndoe • Toni Robinson • Stacie Rogers • Anna Saylor • Denese Scott • Becki Segal • Marcia Sherman-Ehrman • Ellen M. Sirkis • Cecilia Thonet • Katy Vilardo

Leadership Montgomery Service Project Team Members

Susan Binder • Lawrence Center • Susanne DeGraba • Larry Eldridge • Joyce Katz • Neville Levi • Patricia Maclay • Melissa Urofsky

Special Events

Melissa Amoabeng • Vivian Bass • Tobey Berlin • Susan Binder • Andy Bluestein • Sarah Bluestein • Lawrence Center • John A. Coggins • Kenneth Cook • Michelle Daniels • Jade Davis • Susanne DeGraba • Dominique Duong • Larry Eldridge • Jody Engel • Joyce Katz • Neville Levi • Lynne Lewis • Andre Lightfoot • Patricia Maclay • David Marks • Diane M. Marks • Steve Ornstein • Toni Robinson • Anna Saylor • Marcia Sherman-Ehrman • Jeffrey Slavin • Theresa Testoni • Melissa Urofsky • Judy Mostyn White • Judy Williams

Thank you to our Volunteers

Volunteer Helping Hands

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