

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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# ABOUT SHINING STARS

Our mission is to transform lives through year-round recreational and social programs for children and their families challenged with pediatric cancer or another life-threatening illness. Our goal is to improve quality of life for the patient and their family, while helping to meet their basic needs for emotional and social health.

The Shining Stars Foundation is currently one of few nonprofits nationally providing long-term, year-round care for children and their families through recreational programming at any stage in their cancer battle, including treatment, relapse, or remission.

## OUR SERVICES

- **Family Services:** We provide single day events and overnight programs throughout the year for children battling a life-threatening illness and their entire immediate family.
- **Child Services:** We provide two, week-long adventure camps just for the child battling cancer or another life-threatening illness.
- **Awareness and Educational Services:** We educate the public about challenges faced by children battling cancer through regular presentations at community events. This includes presentations at local schools to help students understand the challenges some of their peers are facing and to promote acceptance.
- **Young Adult Services:** We provide a year-round mentor program and retreats for young adults ages 18+ who are survivors of pediatric cancer and struggling to transition to adulthood.



# A RECAP OF 2020



## RESPONDING TO A PANDEMIC

2020 has brought unprecedented challenges to the Foundation and the lives of the Shining Star kids and families. Pediatric cancer patients and their families have been disproportionately affected by this pandemic. They faced greater levels of job loss and income reduction, largely due to how immunocompromised their child(ren) are. Additionally, they were isolated more than the average person and already under a great deal of stress due to their child's illness.

Our services in response to the pandemic included:

- Hosting 42 **virtual programs and events** designed to help families and kids connect and find a support network. Activities included game nights, group discussions, teambuilding, cooking, art, dancing, and more.
- Providing **socially distanced outings**, which have included picking vegetables on a local farm, outdoor picnics, and a day of boating.
- Giving **meal and grocery assistance** to 231 clients hit especially hard financially by the current crisis.
- Providing **holiday gifts, toys, and a holiday meal** to 140 patients, siblings, and family members during the holidays.

## IN 2020...

**14,068**

**VOLUNTEER HOURS**

provided by 342 volunteers

**\$0**

**FAMILIES PAID NOTHING**

to attend our programs and events

**3,640**

**PEOPLE REACHED**

through programs and community outreach events

**67**

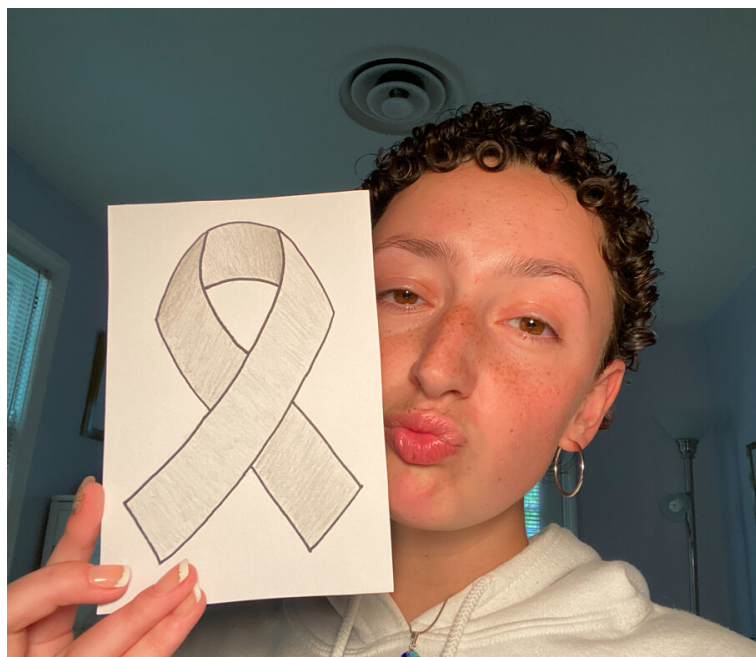
**EVENTS AND PROGRAMS**

provided both virtually and in-person

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*The pandemic has hit us hard. It has hit us mentally, emotionally, as well as financially. Your generosity has really given our family a boost mentally, emotionally, and financially. I cannot say thank you enough. The Shining Stars Foundation has been there for our family from the very start of our childhood cancer journey. – Shining Stars Mom*

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## LIARA'S STORY

18-year-old Shining Star Liara is on a mission to help others gain confidence, know they are beautiful and inspire change. Not only has Liara bravely battled Hodgkin's Lymphoma, she has also had Bells Palsy, which causes facial paralysis. Liara shared with us that, "It was my freshman year of high school when I got Bells Palsy. When you think about it, like it's not that big of a deal. But it hurt so bad and destroyed my confidence. I had the worst self-image for years. I covered the left side of my face with my hair day after day. When I lost my hair due to cancer treatment, I lost my safety net and my shield that hid my biggest insecurity. I was forced to get out of my comfort zone and see beauty in the left side of my face. I was forced to see that bald is beautiful on me and so is short hair."

Liara has used her challenges as a platform to help others and bring hope to peers who may be struggling. She recently started an Instagram page called "Liara's Awareness Account" to help bring together a community of peers who need support. "Eventually I beat cancer, but the short hair and Bells Palsy still leave me very insecure. I've been on a mission to find self-confidence ever since and know there are other people like me, so I decided to make this account to help others and give them someone to relate to...If I could help anyone with that journey in any way, then that would mean something to me."

For Liara, her time at the 2020 Winter Games Program helped her to find her voice after realizing the life-changing power of connecting with peers understand what you are going through. "I wouldn't have done something like this [starting an awareness page] before the Shining Stars trip. I was terrified to talk about my cancer. Now I am not." When she got diagnosed, "People avoided talking about it. They didn't say anything about it to me. I only had one person who wasn't one of my best friends say anything to me about my cancer. That is why it was so cool to be able to go to Aspen and be able to talk to people who understood... It literally changed my life being able to talk to people that understood in Aspen."

# CELEBRATING 20 YEARS!



## OVER THE LAST 20 YEARS...

**66,785**

Individual experiences provided

**23**

States & 260 communities served

**680**

Total events/programs provided

**26%**

avg. growth in services EACH year

**167,463**

hours served by volunteers

We are proud to be celebrating 20 years of giving HOPE to children with cancer and their families. We were originally founded in 2001 by volunteers who saw an unmet need in the Rocky Mountains for a program that would provide emotional and social support to children with cancer. That first year we reached 15 kids with one adaptive ski program and a handful of volunteers.

As lives were changed and referrals to the program increased, we added more adaptive sport camps and events for the entire family.

We have now reached over 1,000 pediatric cancer patients and 3,500+ family members through over 60 annual programs and events under the direction of 350+ volunteers.

And we aren't stopping there...

# HOPE FOR YOUNG ADULTS

The road forward for pediatric cancer patients after battling their illness is rarely easy, especially as they enter young adulthood. These patients are entering adulthood with a wide range of burdens, including: Lack of education or access to higher education, severe financial difficulties, isolation from their peers, chronic health conditions, cognitive and learning challenges, and adjustment difficulties. So often the emotional and social scars cancer leaves behind can be more severe than the disease itself. On top of this, they are no longer eligible for support services they received as a child. This leaves a huge gap in much needed services for this vulnerable population, as they have very few options to turn to for support.

This is why we created our newest program, the Shining Star All-Stars. It began as a pilot program for 8 young adults in 2016, and it is now on pace to reach 80 young adults this year and 500+ in the next five years. The program gives these young adults the tools and support to lead successful adult lives through (1) overnight, retreat style programs, (2) education workshops, (3) single day events, and (4) a mentorship program.

**367**

## SHINING STARS

are 18 and over with another 250+ turning 18 in the next 3 years

**80**

## YOUNG ADULTS

will be helped in 2021

**84%**

## OF PARTICIPANTS

felt more hopeful and had more self-esteem/confidence

**76%**

## OF PARTICIPANTS

saw improvements in their depression or anxiety



*I felt extremely honored to be part of the young adult and mentorship programs. These are great because we get to know people our own age who have had similar experiences, and I love being able to talk to others about our cancer history and relate in ways that I'm not able to with anyone else. We've all been through the same things, so I don't feel like I'm being out of bounds or riding my high horse when I talk about my whole history. It's comforting, judgment-free, and really relaxing.*

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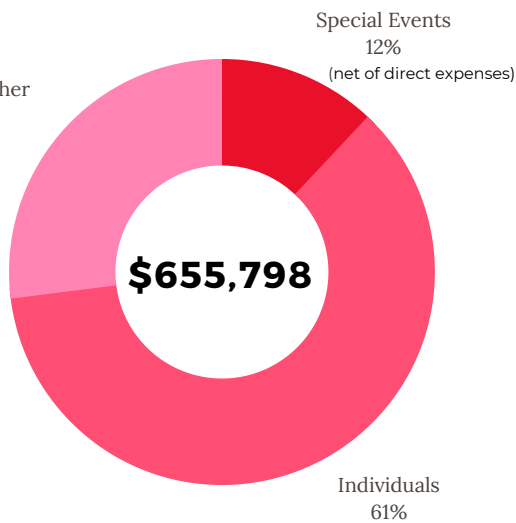
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- Brandon, Participant

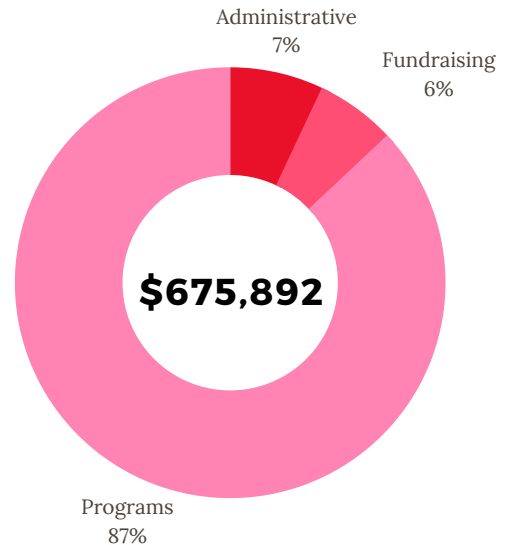
# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

The data shown below is derived from the Shining Stars Foundation's 2020 financial statements, reviewed by Taylor, Roth and Company, PLLC for the year ending December 31, 2020. Complete financial statements and tax returns are available at [ShiningStarsFoundation.org](http://ShiningStarsFoundation.org). The charts below reflect revenues and expenses, net of contributions in-kind.

## TOTAL REVENUE



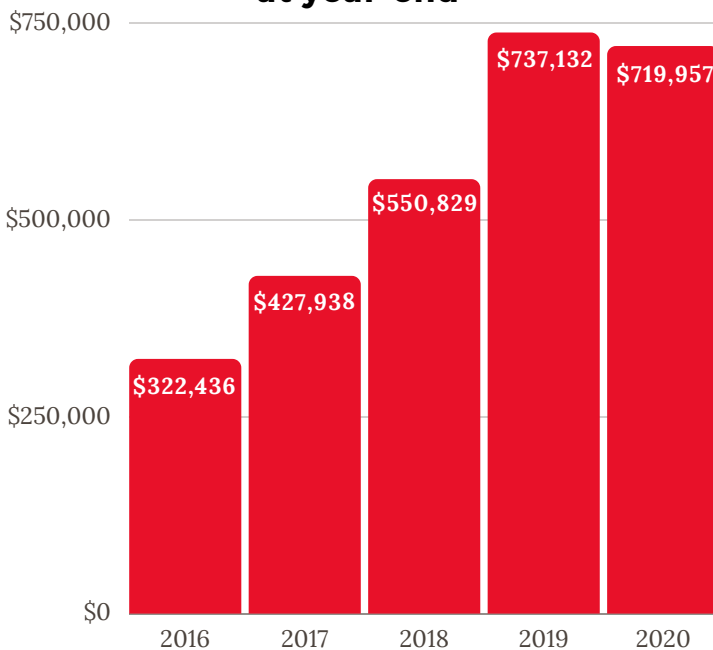
## TOTAL EXPENSES



## CONTRIBUTIONS IN-KIND

In addition to the cash revenue and expenses in the above diagrams, Shining Stars Foundation also received in-kind contributions totaling \$548,591. This primarily represents adaptive sports instruction, lodging, meals, and medical care.

## NET ASSETS at year-end



# 87%

of cash expenses directly support programming



# Our Staff

**CEO & Founder** Kathy Gingery

**Director of Operations** Rosemary White

**Program Director** Mackenzie Brenneman

**Director of Development** Megan Nelson

# Our Board

**President & Medical Director** Larry McCleary, MD

**Vice President** Marty Roberts

**Treasurer & Foundation Attorney** John LaSalle

**Secretary** Reilly Gallagher

## Members

Laura Calabrese Kruger

Tim Cottrell

Michael Ditchfield

Mike Engelbert

Bill Kritzik

Kevin Moore

Karen Smith, PhD

Tom Smith, MD



*The Shining Stars Foundation is a public 501(c)3 non-profit foundation ID #84-1526586 approved by the IRS. Donations to the Foundation are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.*

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