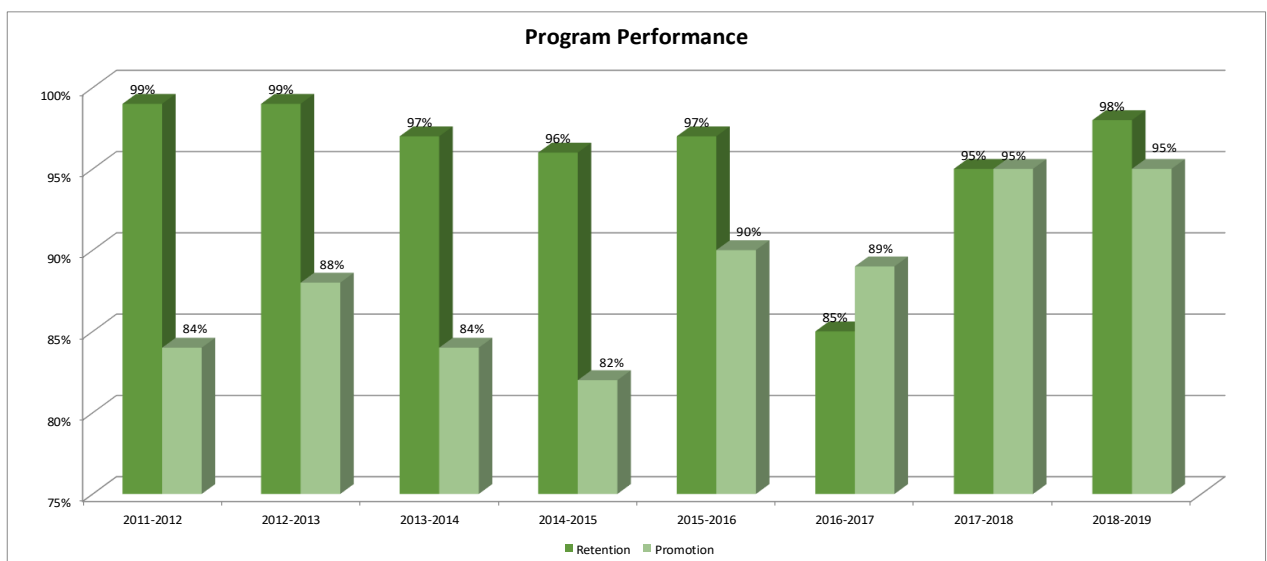
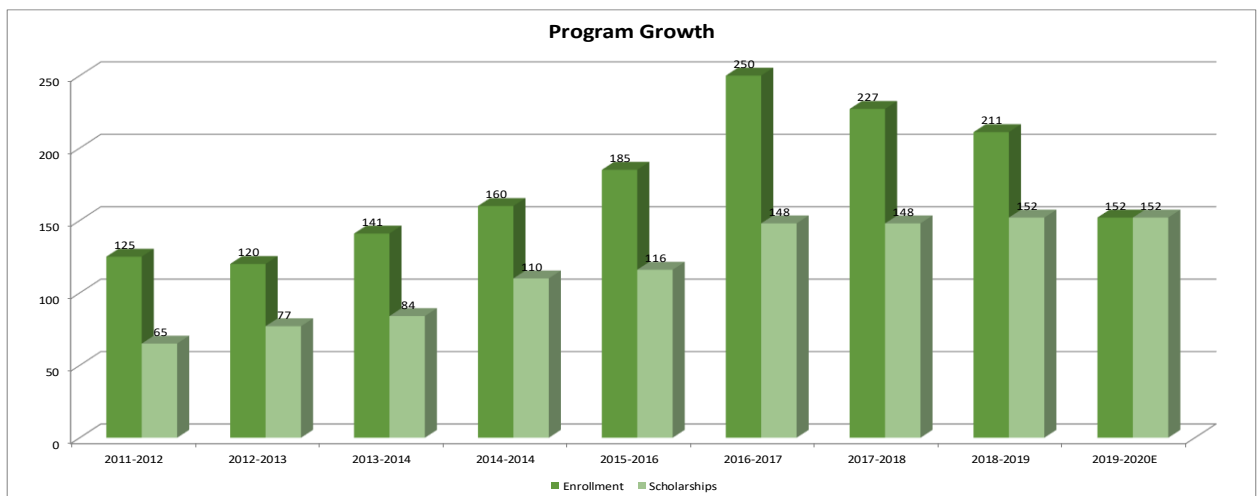


# Haitian Educational Initiatives 2019 Annual Report



## Executive Summary

In 2019 the number of HEI's scholarship students remained stable at 152 children. Strikes, violence, and reduced income forced us to eliminate our after-school support program in downtown Jacmel in July, hence enrollment in our programs declined from 211 to 152 children. However, our center in Cayes-Jacmel remained open to offer counseling, meals and job training to 65 scholarship students during the unrest. Despite the unrest, we continue to see the impact of HEI and our partners in Jacmel. In a country where only 40% of students progress beyond 5<sup>th</sup> grade and a mere 5% graduate, we are successfully nurturing our students toward secondary school graduation. This school year, 95% of our scholarship students were promoted to the next grade and our program retention rate grew to 98%, a tremendous achievement in very challenging conditions.



The solar panels, stoves and upgraded computers and sewing machines we purchased in 2018 with a generous grant from Project Redwood (PRW), a charitable initiative of a group of Stanford Graduate School of Business alumni, enabled us to continue to advance our students' skills during the periods when local academic and vocational schools were closed. Our new bakery, also supported by the PRW grant, has enabled our Cayes-Jacmel partner to train students and enhance their income during the turmoil.

HEI continues to be committed to efficiency, accountability and transparency. As a result, we again achieved a 'Platinum' rating from *GuideStar* indicating our commitment to the highest level of transparency. Cost-cutting strategies implemented in 2019 have enabled us to send 84 cents of every dollar to programs in Haiti.

# Contents

Executive Summary..... 2

Contents ..... 4

A Letter from the President ..... 5

Our Partners and Programs ..... 7

Our Financial Picture ..... 9

Board of Directors..... 12

Donors ..... 15

## A Letter from the President

Dear Friends,

Ten years have now elapsed since the 2010 earthquake crushed a fragile and impoverished Haiti. We all recall photographs of the horrific devastation throughout the country. Indeed, many of you were 'first responders' in sending critical financial aid to save lives in the early aftermath.

HEI began, of course, with founder Susan Whitcomb's work in the badly hit southern town of Jacmel. In the early days following the quake, Susy joined other volunteers to provide immediate care for bereft and deeply traumatized children in partnership with local Haitian organizations. International aid resources mobilized, the US military stepped up with naval medical assets, and global news media publicized the efforts of teams and donors of kinds – from grass roots to celebrities – aid the recovery effort.

With the passing of a decade, there is much discussion of the effectiveness of that enormous and wide-ranging relief effort. CNN quickly moved on to other crises around the world, as did 'disaster relief' organizations whose resources were soon desperately needed elsewhere. Attention-grabbing 'white elephant' projects were revealed to be highly visible but often ill-conceived. The UN contingent in Haiti and some large relief organizations were implicated in scandals of child exploitation.

These serious shortcomings contrast with another picture of the many aid initiatives that have remained in Haiti, stayed the course and helped to mobilize the talents and energy of the Haitian people to build a more stable future. HEI is one of those 'remainers' and has constructed a sustainable model to support the development of children who survived that earthquake. And our results show that we're succeeding.

Haiti is not an easy place for a foreign aid organization to operate. Recent violence and economic dislocation marked by soaring food prices have postponed the stability required for comprehensive initiatives to take root. HEI's model has proven resilient in providing an element of stability for our 150 children in a chaotic maelstrom of rioting, transportation shutdown, corruption and renewed economic collapse. Working with trusted local partners, the invaluable insights and contacts of Haitian-American members of our Board, we've kept our children in school, given them access to trade skills and provided a ripple effect of hope for them, their families and the broader community.

And we've done this with the most careful stewardship of our donor funds. Cognizant of the corruption, crime and primitive financial system prevalent in Haiti, we've confined our financial support to the tuition and food support that we can verify and control, both from a distance and through on-the-ground due diligence visits.

While there are many, many more children in the Jacmel region who could benefit from our support, no expansion of our effort will outpace our ability to identify trustworthy partners and apply the controls necessary to ensure that donor dollars are applied properly.

We report below on our accomplishments over 2019 in child retention, grade promotion and trade skill training. This has all been made possible by your support of the efforts of our intrepid partners in the city of Jacmel and the nearby village of Cayes-Jacmel.

And here in the US we are delighted to announce the addition to our Board Yvrose Romulus. Yvrose, an Associate Dean at the University of Bridgeport, is a Haitian-American native of the Jacmel region where she has been a leader in community initiatives. Her wisdom and on-the-ground experience will be of exceptional value to the governance and programs of HEI.

Let me close with a message of deepest thanks to our donors – from the 'first responders' in our earliest days of disaster relief to today's 'guardian angels' of children in our neighboring Haiti....as they refuse to give up in their struggle for education, skills and a better future.

As our children and their families would tell you themselves in their local creole, "*Bondye beni w*"....God bless you!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Whitcomb". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "W".

Jim Whitcomb  
President

## Our Partners and Programs

We work with two Haitian led organizations: Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FBJJ) and Cercle Amis des Enfants en Situations Difficiles (CASED). As lawyers, teachers, school administrators, and dedicated caregivers, our partners are excellent role models for the 152 children in our programs.

### Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FBJJ), Cayes-Jacmel

The Joseph family foundation operates in the semi-rural village of Cayes-Jacmel, located about 15 minutes east of Jacmel. Led by Claude Saint Hilaire (President, right) and Paul Brunet Joseph (Director, below left), eight members of the Joseph family and their associates have provided leadership and important services to their community since



2007. FBJJ's 65 children primarily come from subsistence farming families in the mountain and coastal regions of Jacmel. This region suffers from food insecurity as crops have been destroyed by drought followed by Hurricane Matthew and other destructive weather systems. Despite the roadblocks, strikes and violence in the area, FBJJ conducted these programs in 2018-2019:



- **Scholarships for 65 children to 19 area schools:** These funds cover tuition, uniforms, backpacks, shoes, books and school supplies. FBJJ pays the fees, completes the paperwork, and oversees attendance and academic outcomes.
- **Weekly meals for 65 children:** For many we supply the only cooked meal they eat all week. Good nutrition helps children resist disease and perform better in school. These children eat only a cornmeal mush augmented occasionally with a vegetable or fruit. FBJJ provides a meal of rice and beans, fried chicken or beef stew, and a vegetable or plantains with fruit juice.
- **Weekly computer literacy classes for 30 children aged 9-19:** Computers donated by Greens Farms Academy and Project Redwood allow students to learn Microsoft Word, Excel, and to use the Internet.

- **Weekly needlework and dressmaking classes for children aged 9-19:**

The garment industry has been a long tradition in Haiti and tailoring is a proud accomplishment. Our students learn sewing, embroidery, and crochet to prepare for anticipated new jobs in factories and sewing cooperatives. We also teach jewelry-making, bead curtain-making and traditional crafts to children aged 3-8. Paper flower making



for use in parades, weddings and other celebrations is a popular industry in Haiti.

- **Cooking and baking classes for children 9 – 19:** Students learn to cook basic meals and to bake the cookies, cakes and other sweet treats they sell in the new bakery business launched in January. They have already started using their skills at home to improve their families' nutrition.



- **Enhanced job training opportunities for secondary school students:** The first 15 students enrolled after school at Jakmel Ekspresyon, a vocational training school in downtown. They completed their first year of classes in English, dressmaking and tailoring, photography, advanced computing and robotics.



## **Cercle Amis des Enfants en Situation Difficile (CASED), Jacmel**

CASED is a child advocacy organization founded in 2008 to protect vulnerable children from abuse and has 12 chapters across Haiti. Before the arrival of foreign aid, CASED gathered children in the streets and fed them, encouraged them, and taught them their rights. The Jacmel chapter aids children in prison, prosecutes abuse cases in Haitian courts, conducts anti-violence campaigns in local schools, and offers art, music and games on Saturdays for the neediest children. CASED member Rosemilka Ancioun (Administrator) and her staff of 3 teachers designed these activities for 146 children in 2018-2019:



- **Scholarships for 87 children to 44 local schools:** As with FJBJ, these scholarship funds equip the children with everything they need to enroll in school.
- **After school tutoring for 59 children:** Four sessions ran Monday-Thursday at our center in downtown Jacmel. The program provided the academic support necessary to help Creole-speaking students keep up with their assignments and learn the French they need to pass school exams. We regret that violence and administrative issues made continuing that program unworkable.





## Our Financial Picture

Unlike in previous years when we sought grants to expand our offerings in the Jacmel community, in 2019 we focused our financial resources on the core operations in which we have been involved for nearly ten years. A companion part of this re-focus was to significantly reduce our administrative expenses, yet still maintain consistent funding for our school, food and other support programs. While we have naturally seen some turnover in our donor base, it is pleasing that so many of our long-time supporters continue to share our vision of educational improvement for a manageable number of Haitian children.

The Income and Expense report on the following page reflects, perhaps, the grave economic, political and civil conditions Haiti faced in 2019. While we experienced a reduction in direct donations, increased funding from special events enabled us to continue our normal programs as conditions in Haiti allowed. Furthermore, an unforeseen grant did allow us to furnish books for a new library. By reducing our administrative expense base, we were able to operate more efficiently, whereby for every dollar we raised in 2019, we were able to spend 84 cents on programs in Haiti. This compares favorably with just 65 cents the preceding year.

Although the continuing austere conditions in Haiti are forcing us to limit some of our activities, we still plan to provide scholarships and training for more than 150 children. While we will not seek outside grants to support new initiatives in 2020, we will need the generosity our loyal donors to keep our operations going.

Once again, we wish to thank our many friends who include HEI in their charitable giving plans.

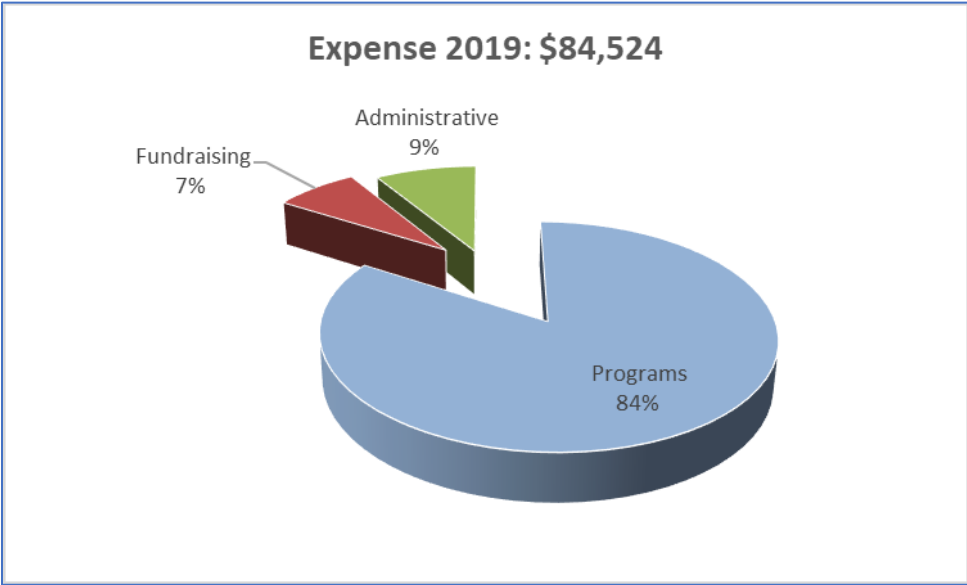
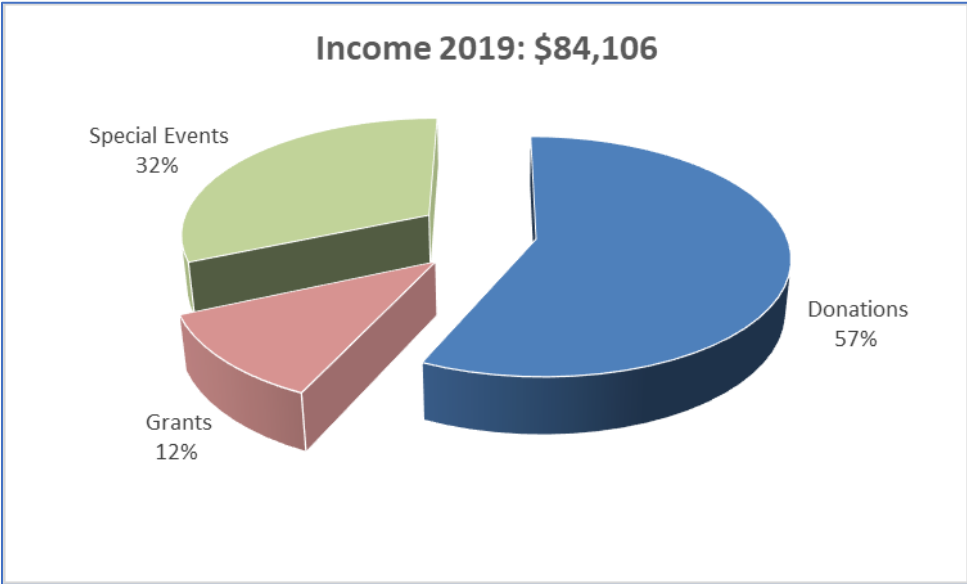
## INCOME AND EXPENSES SUMMARY

	2019	2018
<b>Income</b>		
Donations	\$ 47,789	\$ 59,436
Grants	\$ 9,750	\$ 28,500
Special Events	\$ 26,567	\$ 21,980
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$ 84,106</b>	<b>\$ 109,916</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Partner Programs		
CASED	\$ 20,960	\$ 26,088
FJB	\$ 45,970	\$ 45,490
Pasquette	\$ 4,050	
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 70,980</b>	<b>\$ 71,578</b>
Fundraising Expense	\$ 6,169	\$ 6,920
Administrative Expenses	\$ 7,375	\$ 25,997
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 84,524</b>	<b>\$ 104,495</b>
<b>Net Surplus (Shortfall)</b>	<b>\$ (418)</b>	<b>\$ 5,421</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31

	2019	2018
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 20,201	\$ 24,619
Other Current Assets	\$ 3,097	\$ 200
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$ 23,298</b>	<b>\$ 24,819</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Payables & Accrued Expenses	\$ 15	\$ 1,117
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>\$ 15</b>	<b>\$ 1,117</b>
<b>Equity Funds</b>		
Restricted Funds		\$ 17,474
Unrestricted Funds	\$ 23,283	\$ 6,228
<b>Total Equity Funds</b>	<b>\$ 23,283</b>	<b>\$ 23,702</b>
<b>Total Liabilities &amp; Equity Funds</b>	<b>\$ 23,298</b>	<b>\$ 24,819</b>

# Analysis of Income and Expense



## Board of Directors

### **Susan Whitcomb, Ph.D., Founder**

Susan founded HEI in December 2010 after serving as a volunteer teacher with Global Volunteer Network in Jacmel. She taught English and French to adults recovering from the earthquake and also assisted in childcare facilities in the city. She has taught at Purchase College and the University of Saint Joseph, where she also directed the Honors Program. Susan served on the Board of Directors of the A Better Chance program in Ridgefield, CT and is a docent emerita at the Morgan Library in New York. She earned her B.A. from Wellesley College and Ph.D. in English Literature from Yale University. She lives in Southport, CT.

### **Jim Whitcomb, President**

Jim is a Managing Director at Westbury Group, an investment banking firm headquartered in Westport, CT. Previously with firms such as The Chart Group, Lehman Brothers and predecessor firms of JPMorgan Chase, Jim has advised corporate clients on mergers, acquisitions and corporate finance in markets around the world. He served as Director, President and Treasurer of The Southport Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of an historic Connecticut village. Jim was educated in England at Rugby School, received a B.A. in History from Williams College and an M.B.A. from the University of Virginia's Darden School of Business. He and his wife live in Southport, CT.

### **Abigail Franklin, Secretary**

Abigail has 25 years of senior management experience in fundraising and marketing with organizations such as The New York Academy of Medicine, New York Common Pantry in East Harlem, NY, The Ms. Foundation for Women, Columbia University and the Brooklyn Academy of Music. She is a graduate of Wellesley College and holds a graduate degree from Yale School of Drama.

### **Bill Duncan, Treasurer**

Bill is a retired executive of JPMorgan Chase where he held a variety of management positions over a thirty-five-year career. He sits on the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee of Conair Corporation, Stamford, CT and has served as Director of

International Studies at Stony Brook State University's College of Business. As a volunteer, Bill served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Junior and Senior Warden of Christ Episcopal Church, Greenwich in the 1980s. In 2008 Bill was elected to the Vestry of Trinity Church, Southport and has served as Treasurer and financial advisor. He was also on the Board of Directors and Chairman of the Finance and Audit Committees of Lighthouse International, NYC. Bill and his wife, Peggy, live in Southport, CT.

### **Gerard Azor, Jr., Liaison to the Haitian-American community and the Haitian diaspora**

Gerry is Sales Manager for Cardinal Health. He is also the Vice-Chairman of the United Haitian-American Society of Connecticut and the Executive Director of the Haiti Relief Fund. He has been a leader in the Haitian-American community for over 30 years, organizing numerous activities in the tri-state area. He serves as an advisor to many Haitian-American media outlets. Gerry studied Business Management at Sacred Heart University. He lives in Fairfield, CT.

### **Joanne Delone**

Joanne has over eight years of experience in working with the nonprofit sector in providing clinical, management, program development, fundraising, and event planning services. She is a Clinical Therapist with Bridges-Community Support System and Graduate Resident Coordinator at Fairfield University. Joanne is also the Co-Founder of Haitians Building Unity (HBU). Joanne earned her B.A. and M.A. in Community Counseling at Hampton University and an M.A. in Global Development and Peace at the University of Bridgeport. She lives in Fairfield, CT.

### **Joan O'Connell**

Joan O'Connell brings 40 years of experience in computer software. She recently retired from a career in software sales and consulting. Joan graduated from Boston College, and lives in Darien, CT, with her husband Rick Agresta. She is a member of the Technology and Communications Committee of Project Redwood, spends too much time on a computer, and is always reading more than one book.

## **Nelson North**

Nelson North recently retired as Executive Director of the Connecticut Audubon Society. Prior to this he enjoyed a successful career in domestic and international sales management. A committed volunteer, he has chaired fundraising campaigns for The Ruffed Grouse Society, Ducks Unlimited and the Coastal Conservation Society. In addition, Nelson has chaired the Fairfield Harbor Management Commission and served as the Senior Warden of Trinity Episcopal Church. A graduate of Suffield Academy, he earned a B.S. from the University of Maryland and was honorably discharged from the U.S. Air Force. Nelson and his wife, Peg, are residents of Southport.

## **Rosemond Joseph**

Rosemond Joseph was born in Fond des Blancs, Haiti and attended Jean Price Mars High School. Arriving in the U.S. in 1997, he attended Norwalk Community College and The University of Phoenix. After working at Virgin Atlantic Airlines as lead trainer, he has spent the last 15 years in retail banking with Chase and HSBC/Key Banks. He lives in Norwalk with his wife and four children. Rosemond enjoys travel and sports, especially football, soccer, and basketball.

## **Yvrose Romelus**

Yvrose Romelus has over twenty years of experience in Higher Education and has been the Associate Dean/Associate Director of the School of Professional Studies & UB Online at the University of Bridgeport. She has been the President of Fraternité Valléenne of CT for 3 years. Yvrose has served as an Advisory Council Member for Family Economic Security Program (FESP) for Fairfield County's Community Foundation at Housatonic Community College and as Senior Advisor for the Advising Department at Gateway Community College. In 2009, Yvrose was the Marilyn Gordon Woman of the Year Award recipient at the University of Bridgeport and the 2014 Purple Knight Partnership Award Recipient. Yvrose has a keen ability to assist, inspire, and guide others. She earned her M.A. in Counseling with a focus in College Student Personnel from the University of Bridgeport. She lives in Monroe, CT.

## Donors

**We are deeply grateful to the donors who make our work in Haiti possible. Every dollar makes a difference!**

### **\$5,000+**

Dillon Fund

Peggy & Bill Duncan II

Irwin & Dorothy Nessel  
Foundation

Trinity Episcopal Church

### **\$2,000 - \$4,999**

Virginia Dean

Fullen-Smith Foundation

Kurtz Family Foundation

Anne & Bob Svensk

### **\$1,000 - \$1,999**

Joan & Rick Agresta

Harvey & Donna Allen

Anonymous

Michael & Alison Barry

Tom & Jeannine Carr

Jane Dean

Joan Frost

Morris & Molly Jenkins

Nelson & Peg North

Belinda Shepard

Jim & Camille Whitcomb

### **\$500 - \$999**

Bahman & Andrea Azarm

Elizabeth Beaudin

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Valerie Brown

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Joe Coci

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Michael & Julie Whitcomb

Susan Whitcomb

Robert & Mary Woods

### **\$250 - \$499**

Shelly & Drummond Bell III

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Park Duncan

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Fleischmann

David Fletcher

Jonas Hanschke

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Fox

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John & Leigh Anderson

Jeanne & Bill Barry

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Georges Holzberter	Sally Waugh	Jill Kelly
Betsy Hume	Alexander Whitcomb	Zohrab & Deborah Kouzoukian
Monica Keady	<b><u>\$1-\$99</u></b>	jean & Victoire Legerme
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Revs. John & Sallie  
Vandervort

Beatrice Vornle

Elizabeth Vozzola

John & Elieen Weber

Laura Wilbur

Rosalie Wolf

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Karen Betts

Half Full Brewery

Bill & Peggy Duncan

Jim Swaffield

Melody Wagstaff

Susan Whitcomb

Jim Whitcomb