

# HAITIAN EDUCATIONAL INITIATIVES

ANNUAL REPORT  
FOR 2020



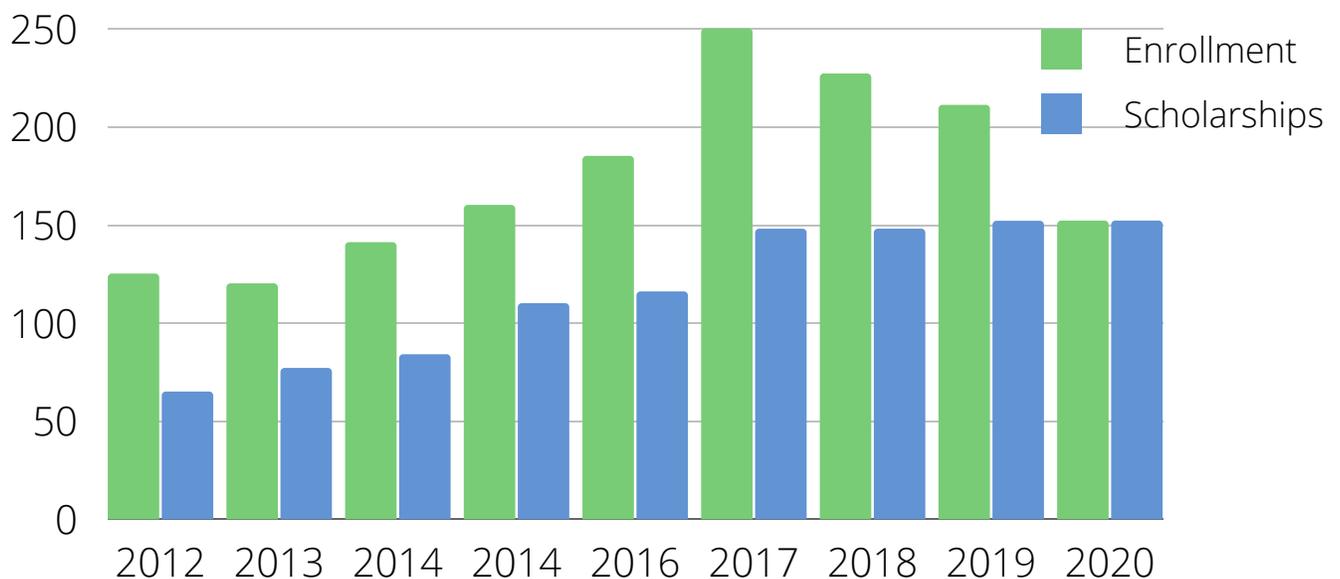
rebuilding Haiti, child by child

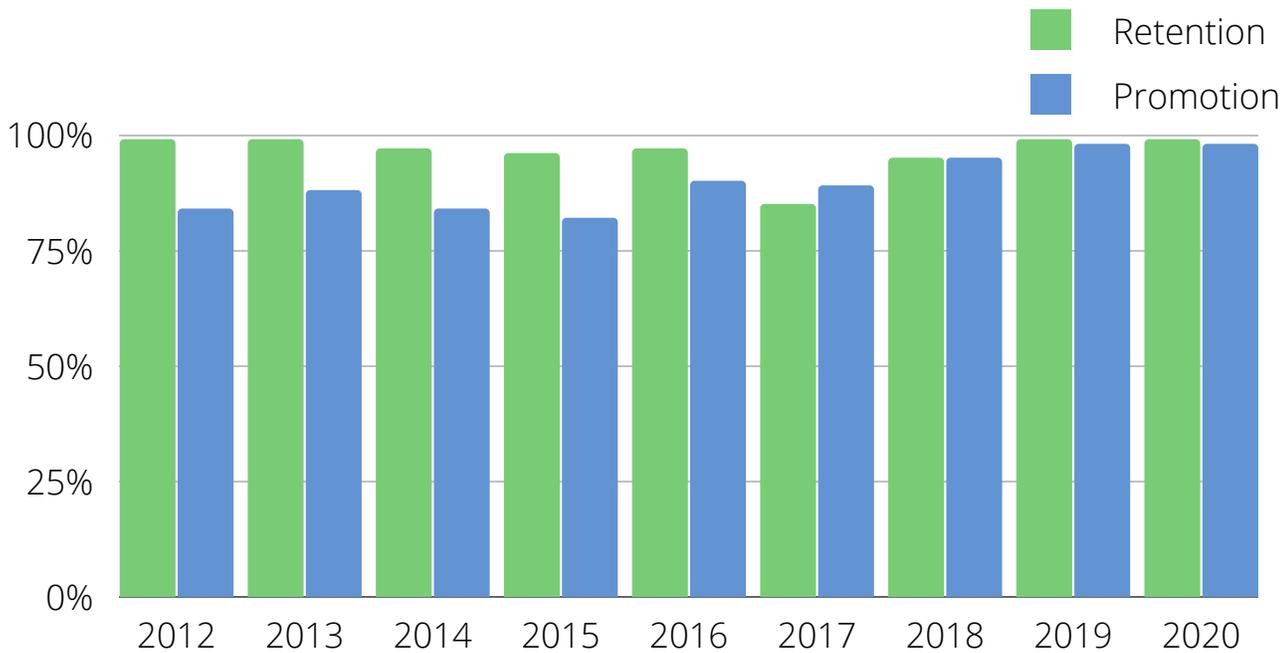
Haitian Educational Initiatives



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY FROM OUR FOUNDER

In 2020, we continued to run our scholarship programs, supervising the enrollment and performance of our 151 students. Strikes, violence, and the Covid-19 pandemic closed schools from March to October and forced us to temporarily suspend our job training programs. However, our center in Cayes-Jacmel remained open to offer counseling and meals to 65 scholarship students during the unrest. We also distributed 144 emergency hygiene kits to students in both our Jacmel and Cayes-Jacmel programs. 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 5th grade and a mere 5% graduate, we have successfully nurtured three students to graduation from secondary school and anticipate six more graduations in July. This school year, the percentage of our scholarship students that were promoted to the next grade rose to 98% and our program retention rate grew to 99%, a tremendous achievement in very challenging conditions.





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. For every dollar spent in 2020, we sent 87 cents to programs in Haiti.

*Susan P. Whitcomb*

**SUSAN P. WHITCOMB, PH.D.**

Founder

# A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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2020 – a year we in the U.S. would like to forget. Political upheaval, civil unrest, pandemic, severe economic setback, to name a few. We draw resilience from saying, “so many other places have it worse.” Haiti is one of those places: with earthquakes, hurricanes, corruption, deep poverty and a surge in violence.

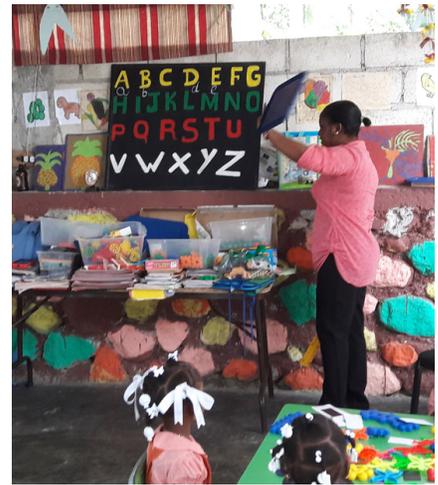
But also add school children with their neat uniforms, smiles and hair in bows. Walking miles – literally – because there are no school buses. Memorizing their lessons because there are no books. Learning French because their exams are not in Creole. They are glad to have the chance to go to school, even if they don’t have enough to eat. They are the 50% of kids with access to education.

Sketch in parents. most of whom are illiterate and trying to support families on less than \$2 a day. They turn to HEI so their kids can eat at least one nutritional meal a week and perhaps escape relentless poverty by getting an education and learning a trade. We provide school scholarships, books and school supplies.

Why help Haiti? There are pressing needs here in the United States. But the growing wave of economic migrants and refugees from Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean makes clear the human cost of disorder in our neighborhood. In Jacmel, the enthusiasm and determination of HEI’s kids to put on their uniforms, walk long distances to school to gain knowledge and some vocational skills is simply too hard for our team to walk away from.

We help because we can. Administering foreign aid in a chaotic country is no easy task, so we work through Haitian partners we know and trust. In the face of rising violence, we’ve adjusted our programs to levels where verification and monitoring can be sustained to protect our donors’ funds. Your donor dollars have a transformational impact on our children. After ten years, our model has demonstrated its effectiveness with very high levels of retention and promotion. In 2020 two of our kids graduated from high school, and an older graduate attends the University of Haiti!

For 2021 we've strengthened our team on the ground with the hiring of Peterson Jean-Pierre in Jacmel, a talented graduate student who will assist with partner training and program supervision. Peterson will work closely with Rosemilka Ancion in downtown Jacmel and with Brunet Joseph in the neighboring town of Cayes-Jacmel. It is our hope in coming months to resume job training with measures to transport the children safely to the Jakmel Ekspresyon vocational school downtown.



The COVID pandemic has precluded the kind of physical gala and fund-raising events we've held in the past. It looks like social distancing will be with us for the foreseeable future, so we are developing internet-based messaging and programming to keep donors informed about the programs that they are making possible. We have a virtual gala event coming up in late April that will be informative and a lot of fun. Do plan to save the date as you receive details shortly.

The volatile situation both on the ground in Haiti and in the wider world requires constant workarounds to provide our children some measure of continuity and stability, where little otherwise exists. Haiti's problems are entrenched and will take generations to solve. It will take young people with more literacy and a stake in a functioning economy to nurture the stability required. So we're going to stick with these children for the long pull and we extend our deepest thanks to our donors for staying by their side.

Very best regards,

Handwritten signature of James H. Whitcomb, Jr.

**JAMES H, WHITCOMB, JR.**

President

# Our Partners and Programs

We work with two Haitian led organizations: Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FBJ) 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 151 children in our programs.

## Fondation Jean Bellande Joseph (FBJ), 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 right), eight members of the Joseph family and their associates have provided leadership and important services to their community since 2007. FBJ's 65 children primarily come from subsistence farming families in the mountain and coastal regions of Jacmel. This region suffers from food insecurity because of crop shortages and skyrocketing food costs. School closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic, strikes, and political violence affected our programs for much of the 2019-2020 academic year, nevertheless, FBJ was able to provide these services:



- **Scholarships for 65 children to 19 area schools:** These funds cover tuition, uniforms, backpacks, shoes, books and school supplies. FBJ 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. FBJ provides a meal of rice and beans, fried chicken or beef stew, and a vegetable or plantains with fruit juice.
- **Emergency hygiene kits for 65 students:** FBJ distributed masks, disinfectants, wipes and water purifiers to program participants at the beginning of the pandemic and conducted demonstrations of handwashing and other hygiene procedures.
- **Weekly computer literacy classes for 30 children** aged 9-19 (when possible): Computers donated by Project Redwood allow students to learn Microsoft Word, Excel, and to use the Internet.

- **Weekly needlework and dressmaking classes for children aged 9-19 (when possible):** 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 (when possible):** 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 (when possible):** Fifteen students enrolled after school at Jakmel Ekspresyon, a vocational training school in downtown. They took 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 Ancion (Administrator) supervised these programs:



- **Scholarships for 86 children to 45 local schools:** As with FJBJ, these scholarship funds equip the children with everything they need to enroll in school.
- **Emergency hygiene kits for 86 students:** CASED distributed masks, disinfectants, wipes and water purifiers to program participants at the beginning of the pandemic and conducted demonstrations of handwashing and other hygiene procedures.

# Our Financial Picture

With all the challenges brought on by the pandemic, we are very grateful for our dedicated donors, many of whom increased their level of giving in 2020. We also thank the many new HEI patrons for their contributions, especially a couple of individuals who gave substantial amounts. This generous support not only enabled us to fund our program outreach in Haiti but also has ensured a solid financial footing for 2021 and beyond.

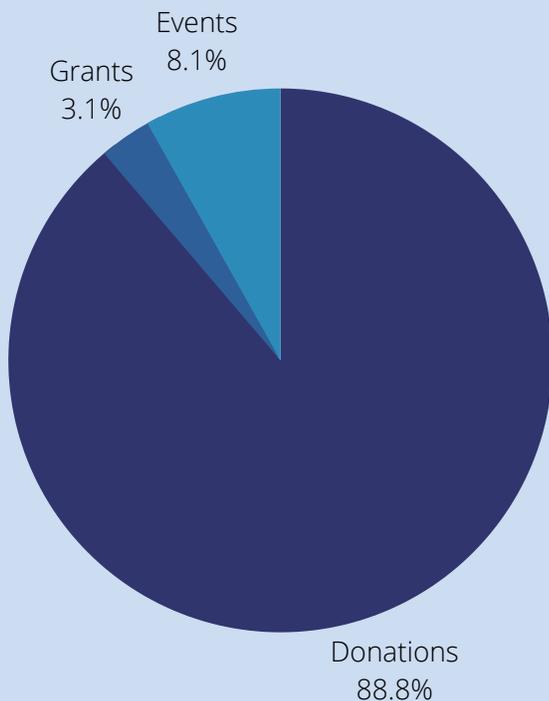
Sadly, our students and their families suffered greatly from the coronavirus. Not only was there lost educational experience, but many families went without adequate food supplies and needed the hygiene kits we sent for their protection. While our primary mission has been focused on education, we have also considered nutrition as a twin goal. Last year, as teaching became problematic, we stepped up our feeding programs to help as much as possible.

The Income and Expense chart reflects, on the one hand, the wonderful support from our faithful friends, yet on the other hand, it shows our inability to fully carry out our intended mission in 2020. While we were financially capable of increasing the food programs even more, local conditions prevented it.

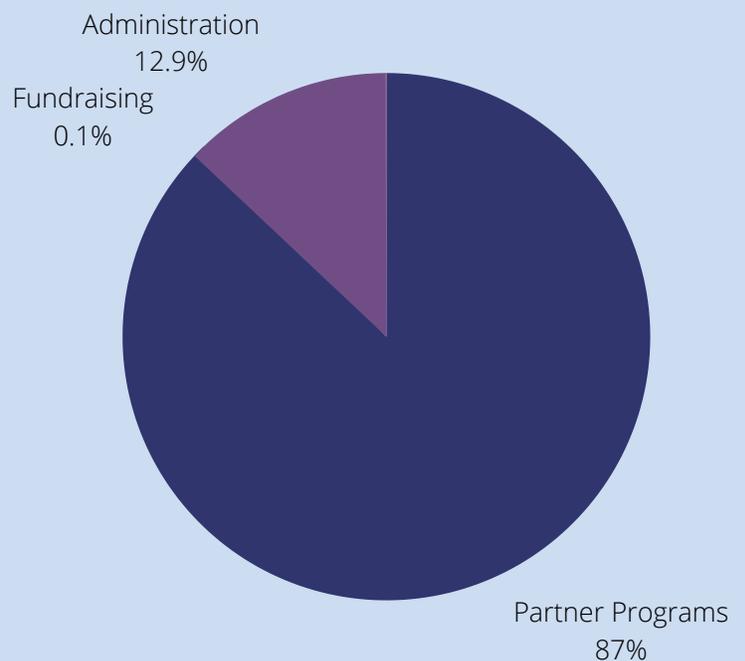
As we plan for the next school year, we expect to resume our usual K-13 scholarship support for the remaining 148 students, plus an additional 25 scholarships for vocational education.

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

## Income 2020



## Expenses 2020



## INCOME AND EXPENSE SUMMARY

Income			
		<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>
Donations		100,565	47,789
Grants		3,500	9,750
Special Events		9,220	26,567
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 113,285</b>	<b>\$ 84,106</b>
Expenses			
Partner Programs			
CASED		15,044	20,960
FBJ		32,601	45,970
Pasquette		754	4,050
Total Program Expenses		<b>\$ 48,399</b>	<b>\$ 70,980</b>
Fundraising		30	6,169
Administration		7,182	7,375
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 55,611</b>	<b>\$ 84,524</b>
<b>Increase (Decrease) Reserves</b>		<b>\$ 57,674</b>	<b>\$ (418)</b>

## BALANCE SHEET AS OF DECEMBER 31

Assets			
		<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>2019</u></b>
Cash		80,657	20,201
Other Current Assets		630	3,097
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>\$ 81,287</b>	<b>\$ 23,298</b>
Current Liabilities			
Payables & Accrued Expenses		330	15
<b>Total Liabilities</b>		<b>\$330</b>	<b>\$15</b>
Reserve Funds			
Restricted Reserves		11,550	0
Unrestricted Reserves		69,407	23,283
<b>Total Reserve Funds</b>		<b>\$ 80,957</b>	<b>\$ 23,283</b>
<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>		<b>\$ 81,287</b>	<b>\$ 23,298</b>

# Board of Directors

## James 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 a 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 Westport, CT.

## Susan Whitcomb, Ph.D., Founder and Secretary

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 Brevard, NC.

## 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

Originally from Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Gerry is a Core Account 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.

## Abigail Franklin

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. She lives in New York City.

# Board of Directors (cont.)

## 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.

## Nelson North

Nelson North retired after ten years 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.

## 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.

## Yvrose Romulus

Yvrose Romulus 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 and has family in La Vallee, near Jacmel, Haiti.

# Thanks to our Donors

## **\$5000+**

Jeanne and Bill Barry  
Virginia Dean  
William II and Peggy Duncan  
Irwin & Dorothy Nessel Foundation  
Kurtz Family Foundation  
Project Redwood via Tides Foundation  
Jan Ritzel

## **\$2,000 - \$4999**

Peter and Zora Dunn  
Joan Frost  
Dawn Stegelmann  
Anne and Robert Svensk  
Trinity Episcopal Church

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

Joan and Rick Agresta  
Bruce & Melinda Berdanier  
Tom and Jeannine Carr  
Jane Dean  
Ruth Freeman  
Sarah and Tony Menchaca  
Michael and Juliet Patsalos-Fox

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

Harvey and Donna Allen  
Alliance of Non-Profits for Insurance  
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Michael and Cynthia Crawford  
David Fletcher  
Abigail Franklin and Derald Plumer  
Kensington Congregational Church  
Dennis McCarthy  
Nelson and Peg North  
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Amy Curry  
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Susan and Dan Drake  
Mary Escherich

# Thanks to our Donors (cont.)

## \$100 - \$249 (cont.)

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## \$1 - \$99

Aetna Foundation  
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