

Finding Hope



Bringing the Power of Possibility to People with Special Needs













Letter from the Board President

BOB GILBERTSON

Our theme this year, Finding Hope, is especially powerful for me, as it captures something at the center of my own personal evolution regarding matters of public concern. When I graduated from college here in Northfield in 1988, I was as tuned into national politics as anyone. I had plenty of opinions, plenty of critiques and plenty of energy for the battle.

But the battle has changed, and so have I. Politics and society have become so very toxic, perhaps partly because it's so easy to demonize others from behind a computer screen, and perhaps partly because of the incentives to demonize those on the other side of an ever-widening political divide. Our national conversation has devolved into an ugly shouting match. Even at the state level, I watch with disbelief as well-intentioned people succumb to political expedience and forget that politics should be about the improvement of people's lives.

Last year, for example, Republicans at our state legislature proposed a bill that would have allowed organizations like Laura Baker Services Association to raise pay (from under \$13/hour to about \$17/hour) for the wonderful people willing to devote their labor to helping folks with developmental disabilities. DFLers agreed that this should be done. But the parties squabbled and positioned, and squabbled and positioned some more, and nothing happened. Reimbursement rates stayed where they were, below what Taco Bell pays for an evening shift.

Over time, my personal response has been to grow less and less interested in the larger battle and more and more interested in how people can make a difference. God bless good people who opt for politics – we need as many of them as possible in that arena – but that's not where I'm finding hope.

I find hope in the 140 people who work for LBSA, respect our clients' life choices and dreams and try every day to help them reach their goals.

I find hope in the people who volunteer for LBSA, give their time and talent, and make great opportunities available for our clients.

And I find hope in you, our community members and supporters, who ask yourselves every year, "How can I help?" You've been there for our clients before, and with the need even more intense now, I know you'll be there again. I have not just hope, but confidence, that together we will improve people's lives.

- Bob Gilbertson
Board President

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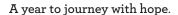
Letter from the Executive Director

SANDI GERDES

A year to celebrate 125 years of service and support for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

A year to reflect on the ups and downs, the challenges and opportunities the association has faced throughout our history.

A year to recognize that we have prevailed through those challenges and emerged stronger.





And perhaps that pattern of celebrating, reflecting, recognizing and journeying has been our pattern for 125 years.

I was thanking a staff member who has been soldiering forward in a very challenging staffing situation at the household she's working in. While it would be easier to quit, she noted that we have a responsibility to the people we support to find a way through. She recognizes that while the road has been rocky, it's evening out, and that brings hope. So did the prospect of a vacation.

365 days, more than 70 clients and more than 100 staff members. Every day, with every person, we have stories. Doug's story, Megan's story. In the face of staffing challenges, and COVID-19, and financial worries, we have the stories of triumphs – little and big. We have staff members who have persisted, and those who have joined. We have the community – all of you – who ask how we're doing, who give as you're able, who advocate with legislators, who CARE that we persist.

So, we celebrate, by reigniting our celebrations. In 2022, we celebrated:

- Our employees with our in-person Employee Appreciation Dinner
- Summer and our history with our Summer Fun Day
- Our supporters with our Golf Tournament, Flannel Gala and Finding Hope Gala
- · Our community with our Community Thanksgiving Dinner

We were delighted to be present with people again.

We reflected on 2020 and 2021, the changes we had made to keep people safe, and we determined what "normal" was now, and how we would move forward.

And we journeyed forward.

- We continued to pivot, and plan, to overcome the financial and other challenges
 presented by the ongoing pandemic and staffing situations.
- To address our staffing challenges, we raised wages, provided sign-on bonuses and retention bonuses, provided referral bonuses for staff members who encouraged their colleagues to join us and continued to develop our Employer of Choice culture.
- To assist people who needed support that we could not accommodate
 residentially, we continued to develop Family Navigation Services and expanded
 our Music Therapy services by adding a second music therapist. We restarted
 our Respite Services and began planning the launch of our Behavioral Support
 Services.
- To respond to community need, we launched Housing Support Services, supporting people who have experienced long-term homelessness in Faribault.

In 2023, we continue our journey:

- We will reopen houses closed during the pandemic, providing services for some of the people on our waitlist. To do so, we will again adjust our wage scales.
- We will advocate for increased funding for our services so we can sustain those raises long term.
- We will launch our Behavioral Support Services.
- We will continue our launch of Housing Support Services.

Community is our source of hope. You are our source of hope. Connections are our source of hope. Our hope for tomorrow is rooted in joining together as a community and finding a path forward. When one is weary, others step in to keep the work moving forward.

Connections are our source of hope.

We invite you into 2023 in that spirit of hope and journey and ask you to continue to give as you are able.

Advocate with your legislators for increased reimbursement for our amazing staff members and encourage everyone you know to do the same.

When I look at the light, I see you, our community, glowing brightly. Continue to shine and be our beacon.

- Sandi Gerdes

Excecutive Director

2022 ROBERT BONNER DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

Abby Grismer



Abby Grismer's relationship with LBSA has seemed a bit like a line from REO Speedwagon's song Can't Fight This Feeling. "What started out as friendship has grown stronger."

It all began when Abby signed up for LBSA's College Friends program during her freshman year at St. Olaf. Over time, she developed a great relationship with her friend Tonya and Tonya's family. That friendship was the foundation for Abby's growing involvement with LBSA during her college career. She

organized a variety of fun events, recruited student volunteers, and served as the main contact between LBSA and the St. Olaf community for the last several years. When COVID-19 hit and life became virtual for all of us, she found creative ways to engage with Tonya virtually.

During the pandemic she organized other St. Olaf students to assemble and distribute gift bags with art projects to LBSA clients. She organized a trick-ortreat-for-food event with St. Olaf students and LBSA clients, collecting over 1,500 pounds of food for our local food shelf. She was instrumental in recruiting a team of volunteer student athletes to serve as valets for the LBSA Gala. Fortunately for LBSA, Abby joined the direct support team in October 2021. At that same time, Abby joined the LBSA Board of Trustees as our student board member. Even with all of this going on, Abby somehow found time to play on the St. Olaf women's softball team, lead the St. Olaf Student Athlete Advisory Board and play a key role in the local chapter of Special Olympics. Somewhere in all of that she found time to attend classes, do schoolwork and graduate from St. Olaf!

Abby has a unique blend of pragmatic intelligence, expansive heart, get-it-done attitude and passion for people with developmental disabilities and the mission of LBSA. She has left a legacy to the LBSA community.

As Abby's household director says, "The world would be a better place with more Abby Grismers!"

The Robert Bonner Distinguished Service Award honors people who have been constant in their association with LBSA and who have made consistent and personally significant contributions of time, energy and resources.





2022 TEAM MEMBERS

On June 21, 2022, we hosted our annual Staff Appreciation Dinner to honor our everyday heroes. Congratulations to these award recipients!



★ INNOVATOR

Molly Halls, Giselle Renteria and Roger Walia

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Judy Schotzko, Arturo Gomez and Linda Castle

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ROLE MODEL

Grace Casson, Donald Gangloff and Penny Hillemann

RISING STAR

Ruben Perez, Joseph Flores and Teresa Krueger

★ SPIRIT OF LAURA BAKER AWARD*

Megan Olson

Our Administrative Team and Board of Trustees would like to acknowledge **ALL STAFF** for their incredible dedication, compassion and persistence during the past several, difficult years. Thank you for your heroic efforts every day!

^{*} The Spirit of Laura Baker Award is given annually to one individual who best embodies the mission, vision and values of LBSA – and the spirit of Laura Baker. Recipients care deeply for the people we serve and make a difference in their lives and in the life of the organization as a whole. Leadership and teamwork are the hallmarks of award winners' work in the organization.

Meet **Doug**



It's possible you already know Doug. He has been an active part of this community for almost 90 years, and he has nearly as many interests as he has friends. Sports, trains, emergency vehicles, looking at old magazines, going out to eat, music, laughing, doing things, being with people and having fun. In other words, life.

Doug came to LBSA in the mid-1930s when there were not a lot of options for individuals with developmental disabilities. The most common scenario at that time was a large state institution where people were mostly kept isolated from the community. Given Doug's enthusiasm for life and everyone he meets, living in a state facility with limited options for engaging in the community likely would not have been a good fit.

"He always wants to do things and go places," says Kent Holden, who met Doug in 1974. At the time, LBSA staff sought out community members to engage with residents who didn't have a lot of family to interact with. Kent and Doug were

introduced because they shared a passion for sports. Kent says one of the first outings he can remember with Doug was a trip to explore a cave in southern Minnesota. "Doug seemed to enjoy that. He was a lot of fun and we got to know each other and enjoyed being together." It was clear that Doug felt the same way. Kent started taking Doug out to high school and college sporting events, Twins games and regular trips out to eat. Kent would even bring Doug out to his farm. "Doug enjoyed that, even though he would mainly sit in the truck and give us orders and tell us what to do," Kent says with a laugh.

"Doug likes doing almost anything, and he just really likes being out in the world."

When he was more mobile, Doug would often walk to downtown Northfield from the LBSA campus to visit stores and hang out at the library to look through magazines and newspapers. LBSA's music program provided additional opportunities to be part of the local community. He has participated in many musicals and other performances over the years. He sang in the LBSA choir up until just a few years ago. Many years back, he even played in the LBSA band. According to Kent, Doug always wanted to be the band director, so at performances they would usually let Doug direct one song.

After he first meets you, Doug will remember you. According to LBSA's Dietary Manager, Eileen Anderson, who has known Doug for nearly 40 years, "He is a really kind person. If you're nice to him, he knows he's got a friend and he will ask about how you are doing all the time." Although Doug doesn't always know how to express himself with words, his friends are clearly an important part of his life and have made an impact on him. When Doug was told recently about a friend who would be having surgery, Doug said repeatedly, "Poor Jim. Poor Jim." When one of Doug's friends, Jerome (who used to bring Doug ice cream from time to time), passed away several months ago, Doug would periodically be seen crying to himself. "No more Jerome. No more Jerome."

The LBSA kitchen has been Doug's place of employment as long as anyone can recall, and it also provides Doug with a sense of community. Doug worked in the LBSA kitchen washing dishes. sweeping, taking out trash, mopping the floor and helping with whatever needed doing. About three years ago, Doug retired, although he would probably still be working today if he wasn't confined to a wheelchair. Doug is still part of the kitchen team, as he comes to work with Eileen each day and hangs out in the kitchen office interacting with kitchen team members (and maybe giving a few orders).

Doug is a people magnet. He is quick with a smile and a question with people he encounters, and people enjoy Doug just as much, resulting in the mutual benefits of friendships with people like Eileen and Kent and the many, many other people that Doug calls a friend. Kent shares that he has not only enjoyed Doug's sense of humor and fun and their friendship, but that he has learned a lot from Doug's positive outlook on life. "We are all the same in terms of our wants and needs. The importance of appreciating the joy of life and the humor of life."

In December, Doug will turn 95.

Doug still seems to be energized by the experiences of daily life. So much so, that Doug refuses to discuss death. Kent, who is now Doug's legal guardian, shared a conversation he tried to have with Doug recently to understand more about Doug's post-life wishes. Doug responded, "I'm not going to die."

If there is any correlation between a person's positive attitude and zest for living and longevity, Doug will likely be with us for many more years. More time to laugh, to have fun and to experience the joy of community.





We are grateful to YOU – our supporters, volunteers, board members, partners and amazing staff. Together, we have continued our mission during the last several challenging years. We find hope in the events and successes of 2022.

- Most importantly, we continued to provide housing and support services, continuing to respect the life choices and dreams of people with developmental disabilities and help them reach their goals.



- We **implemented our third pay increase in two years** for LBSA staff to help attract and retain our amazing team members. The pay increases represent a total of a 65% increase for direct support professionals.
- LBSA **doubled the size of its Music Therapy program** by hiring a second full-time music therapist, McKenna Selissen, to join Music Therapist Jenny Solar. Together they conducted 747 individual music therapy sessions in 2022, in addition to conducting group sessions in the LBSA households.



- On August 21, we celebrated 125 years of service with a special edition of our annual Summer Fun Day. Nearly 300 people came to our Oak Street campus to enjoy music, lunch, Mags and Molly (pet therapy dogs), and horse and wagon rides. We even hosted a mini museum celebrating our history.
- LBSA **onboarded its first Family Navigation Services clients**. LBSA ended the year with five active and eight prospective clients.
- Construction began on the Spring Creek II development in Northfield. When complete, LBSA will be providing support services to four units in the development.







- Our 27th Annual Gala **broke a new event fundraising record** for LBSA. The event held on Saturday, December 3, at Carleton College raised over \$305,000! Thank you, everyone!
- LBSA's Family Navigation Services **was awarded a DEED VRS Contract** which will serve as a funding mechanism for prospective Family Navigation clients to pay for the service.
- LBSA restarted its monthly
 Saturday Fun Respite events after
 a three-year hiatus. Saturday Fun
 events are now under the umbrella of
 our new Family Navigation Services.
- LBSA began providing support services to eight units in the Lofts at Evergreen Knoll. This program is focused on individuals who have experienced long-term homelessness.



- We awarded three staff members with a Gary Martin Memorial Scholarship* award. Congratulations to Kelcey Aspelund, Britani Christensen and Teadora Young.
- We invested in our leaders with our continuation of leadership workshops for LBSA management facilitated by Sarah Carlsen of Carlsen Coaching & Consulting.
- We returned to hosting our Community Thanksgiving Dinner after a three-year COVID-19 break. Thanks to our amazing kitchen staff and our team of volunteers we fed over 300 people, including 160 delivered meals.
- We **grew our outreach** by increasing our mailing list by 18.2%, our email distribution list by 10.4% and our social media following by 6.2%. Growing our following strengthens our ability to raise money and advocate for people with developmental disabilities.
- We received a "Top Rated Nonprofit" designation from GreatNonprofits and a Gold Transparency rating from Candid (Guidestar).
- *The Gary Martin Memorial Scholarship is for LBSA staff members who are working on a degree, certificate or certification program while maintaining employment at LBSA. The scholarship honors Gary, who was a longtime LBSA resident. The scholarship is made possible through generous donations from Eugene and Mary Anne Dietz and Dave and Amy Tonsager.





Meet Our Good Neighbors

LBSA is a founding member of Providers' Network, Inc. (PNI), and each year PNI hosts a Good Neighbor banquet. This is an opportunity for member organizations like LBSA to nominate Good Neighbors (people and/or entities that have been good partners to our organization). On Wednesday, November 9, we honored our 2022 Good Neighbors with a dinner at the Sportsman's Club in Lake City.

Julie Eddy & The Defeat of Jesse James Days Ambassadors

The Defeat of Jesse James Days (DJJD) Ambassadors program has been a consistent, valuable connection to Laura Baker Services Association for more than 15 years. And although the Ambassador candidates themselves change annually, one thing that hasn't changed is their leader, Julie Eddy. Julie is passionate that the Ambassadors have connections to the community through service, engagement and volunteering.

Julie reaches out to LBSA throughout the year to find out how she and the Ambassador team can assist us. The Ambassadors have become a regular part of our Golf Tournament, Summer Fun Day, and Annual Gala, and they have assisted in many other events over the years. They help with organizing games, serving food, selling raffle tickets, staffing our fundraising auctions – and assisting us with whatever else we need.

The connection between LBSA and the DJJD Ambassadors is an example of how relationships and connections can help remove barriers and ensure inclusion for everyone. This year at our 125-year anniversary Summer Fun Day, DJJD Ambassadors and LBSA residents were dancing together and creating chalk art, and the Ambassadors group helped ensure that everyone in attendance had a great time.



Laura Baker established our organization in 1897 on the notion that people with developmental disabilities can be useful, contributing members of the community and in return the community would benefit as well. DJJD Ambassadors and their leader Julie Eddy have helped ensure that these important community connections continue, and that *inclusion* is not just a word – but a regular part of their relationship with our organization and our residents and clients.

Jeff Johnson & KYMN Radio 95.1 The One

KYMN Radio is a hometown radio station, committed to being a community friend and neighbor to all. Over the years, KYMN has become a trusted partner of Laura Baker Services Association because of the wide variety of ways that they support our organization.

They have helped give a voice to the people we serve. In 2020, KYMN worked with us to produce a series of six broadcasts called Why Community Matters, which put a spotlight on our staffing challenges and provided education about the needs of developmental disability service providers.

KYMN is truly unique in that it operates with a service mindset, helping inform the community but also taking interest in the well-being of local businesses and nonprofit organizations like LBSA. KYMN played a role in assisting the Northfield community during the pandemic by allowing deeply discounted advertising rates for LBSA and other local businesses at a time when our organization and



many others in the area were struggling. This became an important component of our strategy to help resolve our staffing shortage.

KYMN has been a mainstay at LBSA fundraising events for decades. And so has KYMN's owner. Jeff Johnson, Jeff and KYMN have sponsored nearly every Golf Tournament and Gala in the last decade. Not only does KYMN sponsor our events, but Jeff attends nearly every fundraiser - whether he's golfing in our Golf Tournament, wearing flannel and listening to music at our Flannel Gala, or wearing some fancier clothes at our Annual Gala. KYMN and Jeff provide sports and event tickets to our organization that we auction off to help raise money. Jeff always welcomes us to come on the air to promote our upcoming events, share our stories and invite community support - at no cost to our organization. He consistently helps amplify the voice of our staff, our clients and our organization. Jeff and his radio station are the definition of a Good Neighbor.

Meet Megan



"Our clients are welcomed in the community in a way that I haven't experienced before."

According to Qualified Developmental Disability Professional (QDDP) Megan Olson, the way clients are accepted in the community is one of her favorite things about working at Laura Baker Services Association. Megan shares, "Every time Glen goes to a restaurant or to the movies in Northfield, everyone we run into says, 'Hi, Glen' and waves. Even if clients are upset or loud, people are still accepting of them - and that seems different than other places." Integration and acceptance in the community is a core value of what Laura Baker envisioned when she established the Laura Baker School 125 years ago.

Megan joined LBSA in 2018 after working in the Twin Cities as a behavior analyst for 10 years, providing in-home services throughout the metro area. Megan and her husband, Daniel, decided they wanted to be in one spot and gain a sense of community, so they began looking for a place to live in Northfield. "The plan was to buy a hobby farm," Megan chuckles. "But that never quite happened." Nonetheless, they made the move to Northfield, and Megan quickly realized she wanted to be "helping people in my own community." Shortly afterward, she joined the LBSA team.

As a QDDP, Megan is responsible for conducting behavioral assessments and developing goal plans. She emphasizes the importance of client-centered plans. "It's really about what things they [the clients] want to work on." Although some goal areas like medication administration, hygiene and community involvement are mandated, clients, in conjunction with families and guardians, have a say in their own goal plans. Megan

works closely with each client's household director and direct support staff, and together they help ensure that everyone is aware of how to best support each client throughout the day. Megan also works closely with families, guardians and other providers as part of a team to help monitor progress and make changes to behavior plans as needed.

Megan says one of the most amazing things she has witnessed in her time at LBSA was with a client who arrived just weeks before the pandemic started in 2020. The individual was nonverbal and had been cared for his entire life by his grandmother and aunt. "The pandemic started and, of course, his grandma couldn't visit him for months and months [because of the safety protocols] which must have been very difficult. I was really impressed by the way the staff rose to the occasion during that time to help him make the transition. His grandma was astounded at how well he was doing."

Even with incredible community support and amazing staff, LBSA continues to struggle with maintaining staffing levels. Community-based developmental disability service providers across the nation were challenged with staffing issues before COVID-19. Now the issue has reached a crisis level. LBSA's Oak Street campus currently operates with two empty cottages because of a shortage of direct support staff. Megan thinks that part of what makes Northfield such an accepting community may also contribute to its inability to hire staff. "We don't have a huge population to



draw staff from. Other organizations in the Twin Cities are short staffed as well, but not like we are."

Despite being short staffed, LBSA is fortunate to have such an exceptional group of direct support professionals, QDDPs, household directors, a health care team, kitchen staff and organizational support that, together, have helped carry the organization through the last two difficult years. At the annual Staff Appreciation Dinner in June, Megan was announced as the 2022 recipient of the Spirit of Laura Baker Award*. In her nomination, a colleague said,

"Megan answers every phone call with kindness and honesty. She shows immense compassion for her clients and their families. She treats everyone she meets as her equal and never fails to make those around her smile."

Thank you, Megan, for all you do!

^{*}The Spirit of Laura Baker Award is given annually to one individual who best embodies the mission, vision and values of LBSA – and the spirit of Laura Baker.

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THANK YOU PROGRAM EXPANSION SUPPORTERS

Thanks to your gifts over the last two years, Family Navigation Services and Housing Support Services have become a reality. And we are excited by the future of Behavioral Support Services. Thanks to your generosity, we will help address unmet needs in the community and create long-term sustainability for LBSA!

Foundation/Sterling Pharmacy Aurora Pharmaceutical Patricia Baldwin Anndora Barvir Lois Bjorlie & Corey Mohan Blesener's Quality Exteriors Jean Bloom Bob & Barbara Bonner Judy Broske Dr. David & Anne Brust Frank & Karen Brust Dr. Dave & Cheryl Buck Barbara & John Buss Bill & Charlotte Carlson Carl & Faye Caskey Rod & Deb Christensen Clifford & Grace Clark Greg & Patty Closser College City Sertoma Jonathan & Lauren Davis Dan Doughty Barbara & Kevin Dunn Drs. John & Gretchen Ehresmann The Enterline Foundation Kenneth & Jill Ewald

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THANK YOU LEGACY CLUB MEMBERS

Thank you to our supporters who have included LBSA in their estate plan!
Legacy Club members help create a lasting impact on LBSA's future.

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Greg & Patty Closser
Dan Hill & Karen Bernthal
Brent & Tobi Larson
Emily Rufer
Phil & Alice Strom
Harley Tate
Julie Thorsheim

THANK YOU GRANT AND FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Your support has helped us navigate through difficult times and fills us with hope as we look toward the future!

Astrup Family Foundation/Sterling Pharmacy
Dugan-Scallon Foundation
The Enterline Foundation
Groves Foundation
Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research
Northfield Hospital + Clinics
Otto Bremer Trust

THANK YOU LIFETIME DONORS

Thank you to our Lifetime Donors who have generously contributed over \$100,000 to Laura Baker Services
Association. Your sustained support has made a significant impact in enriching the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

Over \$250,000

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In Honor of LBSA's 125th Anniversary

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In Honor of Lynn Matta Bram & Lori Middeldorp

In Honor of Ruth Neuger

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In Honor of Allison

In Honor of Allison Resnick

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Financials

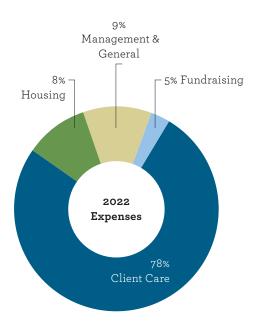
Statement of Activities For the Year Ending December 31, 2022

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Total Support & Revenue	\$ 5,659,836
Net Gain/(Loss) on Investment	(87,034)
In-Kind Donations	37,891
Other Income	303,468
Donations	853,555
Client Services	\$ 4,551,956

OPERATING EXPENSES

Total Expenses	\$ 5,971,338
Total Support Services	\$ 842,168
Fundraising	285,941
Management & General	\$ 556,227
Total Client Care Expenses	\$ 5,129,170
Other Client Care Expenses	242,195
Food	181,939
Housing	468,593
Purchased Services	315,334
Client Program Expense	210,067
Salaries & Benefits Client Care	\$ 3,711,042



Statement of Financial Position As of December 31, 2022

ASSETS

Total Assets	\$ 6,785,435
Other Assets	217,646
Building & Equipment (Net)	3,722,548
Investments	516,702
Current Assets	\$ 2,328,539

LIABILITIES

Current Liabilities	\$ 816,866
Long-Term Liabilities	719,993
Total Liabilities	\$ 1,536,859

NET ASSETS

Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 6,785,435
Total Net Assets	\$ 5,248,576
With Donor Restrictions	\$17,500
Without Donor Restrictions	\$ 5,231,076
NEI ASSEIS	

2022 financial results audited by LB Carlson, LLP



- Direct mail
- Newsletters
- Annual reports
- Brochures and flyers
- Catalogs, sell sheets and price lists
- Letterhead, envelopes and business cards
- Pocket folders
- Calendars
- ▶ Programs
- Fundraising materials
- Invoices and forms
- Posters and signage
- Window clings, magnets and stickers



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