



**Between Friends**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**FY2021**



## OUR MISSION

Between Friends is dedicated to preventing domestic violence and ending the cycle of abuse by equipping our communities with the tools necessary for everyone to feel safe and equal in their relationships.

## OUR VISION

We envision a society free from domestic violence and abuse.

## OUR HISTORY

In 1986, Between Friends was founded by volunteers and friends from the National Council of Jewish Women and the Junior League of Evanston/North Shore as a small grantmaking body dedicated to raising funds for local domestic violence programs. Between Friends began to expand our efforts in 1991, by providing direct crisis intervention services for individuals and families.



# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



**Dear Friends,**

When I became Executive Director of Between Friends in the summer of 2020, I was determined to ensure that we do everything to keep our staff safe from COVID-19 while at the same time providing consistent, reliable support to our clients.

That hasn't always been easy, but the need is essential. In 2021, the Illinois Domestic Violence Hotline heard from more than 32,000 individuals seeking assistance -- an eight percent increase from 2020, which was already a record-breaking year.

The support Between Friends provides to domestic violence survivors comes in many forms. Sometimes it looks like counseling or court advocacy, sometimes like direct financial support or referrals to other services. It comes in the form of the education we give to young people in Chicago Public Schools, as well as to their parents and to a range of professional adults.

In the following report you'll learn more about what that support looks like, and how we're working towards our vision of a society free from domestic violence and abuse.

Yours,

**Sandy T. Williams**  
Executive Director

# OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

The Board of Directors' Strategic Planning Committee, with input from Between Friends employees and other nonprofit professionals, has created a strategic plan for 2022 to 2024.

The Strategic Plan outlines how, over the next two fiscal years, Between Friends will develop our programs to establish ourselves at the forefront of the movement to eradicate domestic violence. Our main program development strategies will include:

- We are looking into options to enhance **our court advocacy program** in order to address the Chicago metro area's lack of legal aid clinics dedicated to domestic violence.
- We will strengthen our **A Night Out** program using institutional support and community partners, to create events that encourage socializing and promote a sense of security, community, and personal empowerment.
- We are studying the potential to launch an **expanded counseling service program** that will fill the **long-term needs** of our clients.
- We will certify the curriculum for our teen dating violence prevention program, **REACH**, while also growing the REACH team with new educators to take the program into new Chicago neighborhoods.
- We will also be launching a new curriculum of **continuing education programs and trainings**, devised by Between Friends, for domestic violence professionals and social workers.



# SERVING OUR CLIENTS, SERVING OUR COMMUNITIES

Our survivor services provide truly essential support to people who are either in an abusive relationship right now, or who need help to heal and grow after experiencing domestic violence.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, our counseling team has found ways to ensure clients feel less isolated, like the “Connected While Apart” collective collage art project created by participants in a Between Friends counseling support group.

Our court advocacy team worked with Family Rescue, Sarah's Inn, and Metropolitan Family Services to create a legal advocacy helpline which, since April 2020, has helped thousands of callers who might otherwise have struggled to navigate the court system. Callers described the helpline as “a ray of light in this super traumatic time” and “incredibly supportive and nonjudgmental.”



More than \$30,000 in grant opportunities, public funding, and individual donations made it possible for Between Friends to provide direct client assistance to 60 clients and their families during FY21. During this economically challenging time, this program has provided financial assistance to survivors as they become independent from their abusers, enabling them to pay utility bills, rent, medical costs, and living expenses.

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**“If I had to rely on the court system alone, myself and my children would not be thriving. Between Friends helped us survive our abuser, and then they helped us survive the justice system.” - Court Advocacy Client**



After taking necessary time off during the pandemic, our A Night Out program has made a triumphant return. A Night Out lets clients experience fun and safe organized group outings. We began winter 2021 with a trip for survivors and their families to see the Lincoln Park Zoo Lights!

The Survivors for Economic Empowerment (SEE) project is a survivor-led, peer-to-peer endeavor. Participants work with each other and with community institutions to build relationships and skills that lead to long-term economic freedom.

The REACH (Relationship Education: A Choice for Hope) program addresses the need to talk to young people at an early age about relationships and abuse. Since 1995, REACH has served tens of thousands of young people. During the last two years, we've taught the REACH curriculum to hundreds of Chicago students in-person and remotely. Now we are expanding the size of the REACH team to six Prevention Educators, to serve the West Side as well as the North and South Sides of Chicago.

Our adult education and training work continues apace, both online and in-person: Last year, we held 47 trainings for 826 professionals and 8 community awareness events reaching 1,743 people.

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**“Financial abuse was a tactic used by my partner to control me. Thanks to the SEE project, I learned how to make my own decisions independently.... I empowered my family, my community, and myself with knowledge and resources.”**  
**- SEE Project Participant**

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# **FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT**

**AbbVie**

**Accuity**

**Alphawood Foundation**

**Amita Health St. Francis**

**Walter J. & Edith E. Best  
Foundation**

**Bright Funds**

**Fred J. Brunner Foundation**

**Calmoseptine, Inc.**

**Cantigny Golf**

**CARE Yoga Teacher Training**

**CBIZ**

**Chicago Foundation for  
Women**

**Chicago House & Social  
Service Agency**

**Susan Crown Exchange, Inc.**

**Crown Family Philanthropies**

**DLA Piper**

**Egerter Family Foundation**

**Flora Blahnik Real Estate**

**Givinga Foundation**

**The Greer Foundation**

**Havenga Family Charitable  
Fund**

**Interior Define**

**JLL**

**Evon D & Jack H Keck  
Foundation**

**Fourth Presbyterian Church**

**Irving Harris Foundation**

**Lavelle Law Charities**

**The Reva & David Logan  
Foundation**

**Ernest & Sally Micek Family  
Foundation**

**Mutual of America**

**Polk Bros. Foundation**

**Michael Reese Health Trust**

**S&C Electric Company Fund**

**Tito's Handmade Vodka**

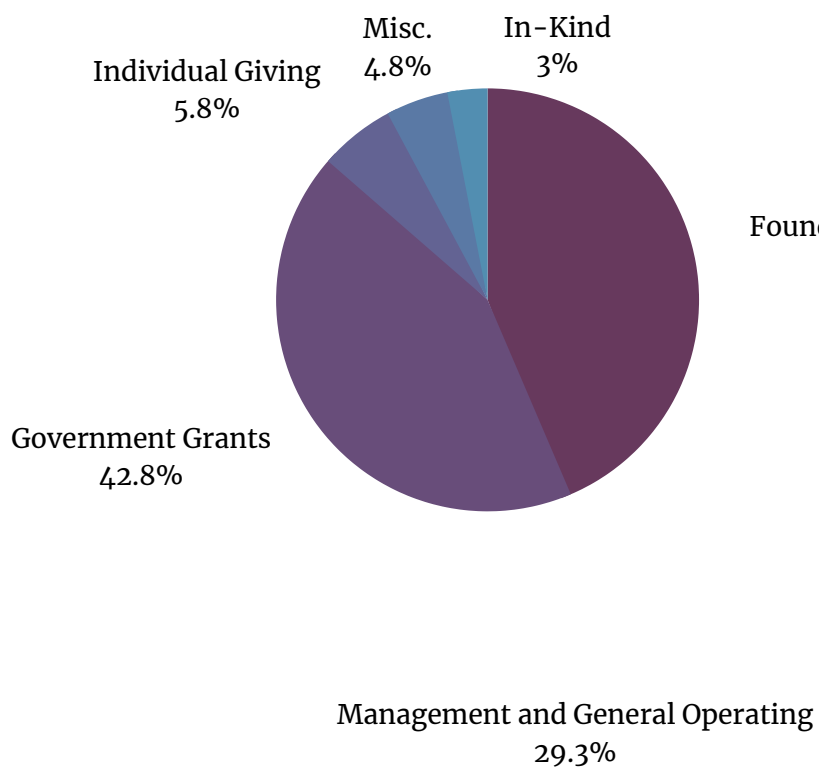
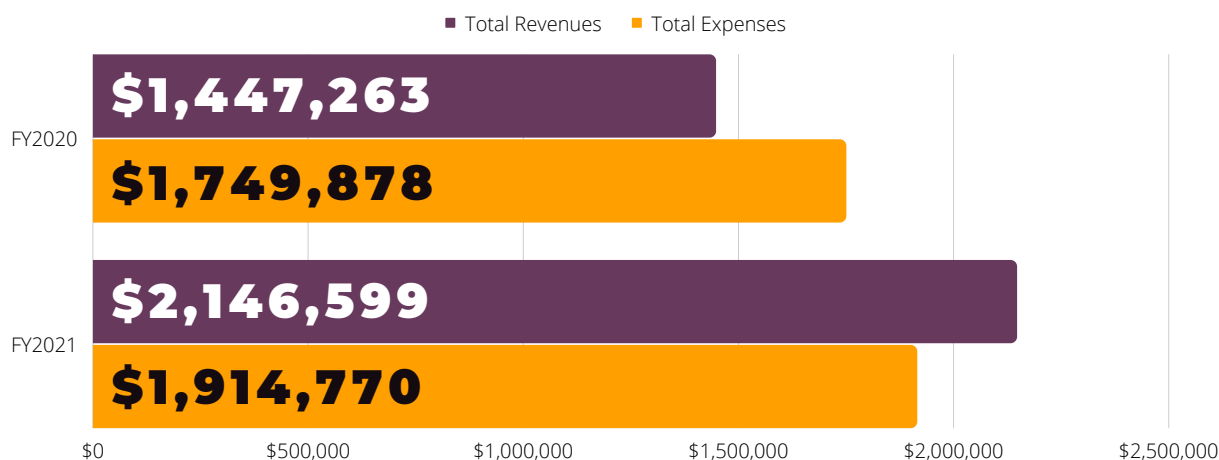
**VNA Foundation**

**Wines For Humanity**

**Wintrust Bank Rogers Park**

# OUR FINANCES

Despite the significant challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, from FY2020 to FY2021 Between Friends increased our revenue in all major areas (individual giving, foundations and corporate giving, and government grants), overtaking our expenses to create greater financial stability for the agency.



## REVENUE

Foundations and Other Organizations  
43.6%

Fundraising  
11.3%

Survivor Services  
43.1%

Prevention and Education  
16.2%



## Our Board of Directors

### Daniel Hernandez (President)

Principal and Managing Attorney  
NextLevel Law

### Arthur Beredjick

Reporting & Compliance Lead  
Allies for Community Business

### Norman Jones (President-Elect)

Director, Diversity and Inclusion, JLL

### Dejanae Byrd, LCPC, CPP

Clinician  
Centers for New Horizons

### Jim Javorcic (Treasurer)

Director, CBIZ

### Erin Ryan

Senior Vice President  
The Night Ministry

### Cathy Carmody (Secretary)

Retired Principal Owner and Consultant  
Declaire Associates

### Jennifer Splinter

Immigration Manager, Facebook

### Michele Cohen (President Emeritus)

Senior Director, Revenue Management  
Choice Hotels International

## Our Advisory Council

### Bonnie H. Chan\*

H + K International

### Diana Palomar

ABC7

### Rev. Charles Dahm, OP

Archdiocese of Chicago

### Anne P. Ray\*

Markel Insurance

### Noeleen McGrath

McGrath Comm.

### Michele Weldon

Northwestern University

### Caroline Moellering\*

@properties

\*Board Member Emeritus

# Our Leadership Team

**Sandy T. Williams**

Executive Director

**Bernard Mariano**

Chief of Staff

**Verda Bhatti**

Director of Prevention and Community  
Education

**Fawn O'Brien**

Director of Development

**Tonya H. McDonald**

Director of Finance

**Nancy Toncy**

Director of Survivor Services

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Pages 1-2: Staff and Board members at the Light Up The City vigil 2021, by Aaron Cynic.

Page 4: Clients, staff, and volunteers visit Medieval Times as part of A Night Out.

Page 5: Director of Survivor Services Nancy Toncy (far left), Executive Director Sandy T. Williams (far right) and other members of the Between Friends team.

Page 6: Participants in the Survivors for Economic Empowerment program at a "Money Tree Decorating" holiday-themed event.



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24 Hour Help Line

**773-274-5232**

General Business Line