



EDUCATE.

EMPOWER.

SUPPORT.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from our Executive Director

CHALLENGES FACED. RESILIENCE FOUND.

Much like the previous year, 2021 was extraordinarily challenging for children and families. Many schools resumed remote or hybrid learning arrangements through the spring, creating additional disruption for parents. The prolonged isolation experienced by children, teens, and young adults took a toll on their mental health, with increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. The Youth Mental Health Project was dealt a further blow with the untimely passing of Carina Rush, the charismatic and dedicated Chair of our Board of Directors.

Adversity strengthened our resolve to help more families through our ongoing programs, and we are deeply grateful to our staff and volunteers for persevering through these challenging times. We continued to support multiple weekly meetings of The Parent Support Network throughout the year via in person and virtual platforms, reaching participants in 46 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, and Singapore. We signed partnership agreements with the Idaho State Department of Education and Idaho Aware to bring three new Parent Support Network Chapters to rural counties. We joined forces with the Florida Children's Volunteer Health Network to develop two new Parent Support Network Chapters in Walton County and Okaloosa County.

We continued our work to raise awareness about the urgent need to focus on the mental health of our nation's youth. We held monthly educational webinars and participated in numerous virtual speaking engagements to educate communities about mental health. We were delighted to partner with Jesse Cody, the founder of Hike the Good Hike, as he walked 1,700 miles of the Pacific Coast Trail to draw attention to the mental health crisis among young people.

We brought powerful youth voices into our work through a partnership with The Mental Health Monologues and in the fall were joined by our first class of YMHP Interns, an impressive group of young people who enhanced our work immeasurably.

We were fortunate to add seven stellar individuals to our Board of Directors, who bring new perspectives to our work and who join our intrepid long-serving board members.

Importantly, our brilliant founder, Randi Silverman, transitioned from her Executive Director role to focus her time and energy on speaking, writing, and special projects. I am personally grateful to her for building this organization from the ground up and creating a culture that leads from the heart. It is for this reason that I jumped at the chance to lead The Youth Mental Health Project to honor her work and continue to expand our programs to reach more families experiencing mental health challenges.

I am deeply grateful to our generous donors who have enabled us to continue our work at this most urgent time and to meet our ambitious goals for bringing The Parent Support Network to more communities across the country. We will continue to expand our work to educate, empower, and support parents, caregivers, families, and communities wherever the need exists.



With Gratitude,
Valerie Barton
Executive Director

Scan to donate today!



REMEMBERING
Carina Rush



Carina served as the founding Board Chairperson of The Youth Mental Health Project, working closely with Randi Silverman, Founder of The Youth Mental Health Project, to launch and grow the organization. She passed away on January 25, 2021 at age 56 after a long battle with leukemia. Carina was a true “Shero” and warrior who was beautiful, inspirational, kind, and empathetic.

When Carina believed in something, there was no stopping her. Our film, NO LETTING GO, and The Youth Mental Health Project exist because of Carina’s dedication, direction, and passion. “Without her,” observed Randi, “our nonprofit would not have been created and we would not be able to do the work we do.” Carina was the Executive Producer of NO LETTING GO, and inspired Randi and many others to share their stories of mental health struggles.

We are forever grateful for all Carina did to make a positive difference in the world.

2X

Globally, depression and anxiety among young people has doubled during the pandemic, including **25%** of youth experiencing depression and **20%** report anxiety symptoms.¹

In the U.S., emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts were **51%** higher for adolescent girls and **4%** higher for adolescent boys in 2021 compared to 2019.²

1 in 5 children in the U.S. has a diagnosable mental health condition.³
(almost 18 million)

Fewer than 20 percent of youth who struggle receive adequate treatment to manage their mental health condition.

50% of all lifetime cases of mental health issues begin **before the age of 14** and **75%** before the age of 24.

Suicide is the **second leading cause of death** for youth ages 10 - 24.

¹Racine, N., et al., McArthur, B.A., Cooke, J.E., Eirigh, R., Zhu, J., Madigan, S. (2021). Global Prevalence of Depressive and Anxiety Symptoms in Children and Adolescents during COVID-19: A Meta-analysis. JAMA Pediatrics, 175(11), 1142-1150.

²Yard, E., et al. (2021). Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Suicide Attempts Among Persons Aged 12-25 Years Before and During the COVID-19 pPandemic - United States, January 2019-May 2021. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 70(24), 888-894.

³Perou, R, et al. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mental Health Surveillance Among Children - United States, 2005-2011. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR). May 17, 2013/62(02); 1-35

⁴ Department of Health and Human Services, 2017. Accessed October 15, 2021. <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/mental-health-myths-facts>

⁵ Kessler RC, Angermeyer M, Anthony JC, et al. Lifetime prevalence and age-of-onset distributions of mental disorders in the World Health Organization's World Mental Health Survey Initiative. World Psychiatry 2007; 6: 168-76

⁶ Hedegaard, H, et al. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. NCHS Brief. No. 398. February 2021.



THE PARENT SUPPORT NETWORK™

PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

The number of children, teens, and young adults who are struggling with mental health disorders is on the rise. During the pandemic, families were overwhelmed and isolated more than ever.

The Parent Support Network™ provides all parents, guardians, and adult caregivers with the opportunity to find guidance and support from other parents.

We were dedicated to growing The Parent Support Network™ in 2021 in order to provide support to as many parents, guardians, and adult caregivers as possible.

In 2020, we launched our virtual platform for support meetings, in collaboration with Support Group Central, and opened meetings to include any parent concerned about their children's mental health regardless of their location.

As always, The Parent Support Network™ is a parent-driven, family focused program that provides parents who are concerned about their children's mental health with a dependable and caring network, valuable peer support, and access to peer recommended resources.

QUOTES FROM PSN PARENTS

"This was my first meeting and I am beyond thankful for both the facilitators and members of this group. Everyone was open and honest and extremely supportive. I came away from this meeting realizing that I am not alone and I also learned of some new ways to help my child."

"I liked the small size, and that the leaders were very aware and monitored for confidentiality. Great ideas were shared in a safe space."

"Just to be able to express myself about our own situation, and hear the different perspectives from other parents, was very valuable."

“It was so helpful to hear other parents talking about similar experiences. Sometimes I feel very alone dealing with all the struggles. I plan to attend more of these support groups.”

"Really nice facilitators and well run. Hearing other parents' stories and having people who understand what we're going through is very helpful. Thanks to all."

"They are very assuring and very understanding and I feel that I am not the only one who has life challenges."

"This was the first time I have gone to any support group. I enjoyed how easy it was to talk to them. I also loved how there was no judgment toward others."

"Wonderful group! Great listeners and supportive. So great to have people going through the same thing together."

"I felt the group members are very kind and they are genuinely very helpful and they feel for my trouble."

"Opening up to anyone is difficult for some, but opening up to a group of strangers is frightening. I felt safe in this group and was able to learn from this great group of facilitators and members. Thank you."

OUR IMPACT

The Parent Support Network Meetings Held: **144**

Total Participants Meetings of The Parent Support Network: **583**

Social Media Connections: **12,132**

Website Visits for Educational Content: **37,141**

Educational Webinar Attendance: **1,110**

Community Speaking Event Attendance: **2,543**

THE PARENT SUPPORT NETWORK PARTNERS

Alliance for Safe Kids (ASK)

Brookfield Cares

Children's Volunteer Health Network

Great Lakes Recovery Center

Idaho State Department of Education & Idaho Lives Project

FACILITATORS OF THE PARENT SUPPORT NETWORK

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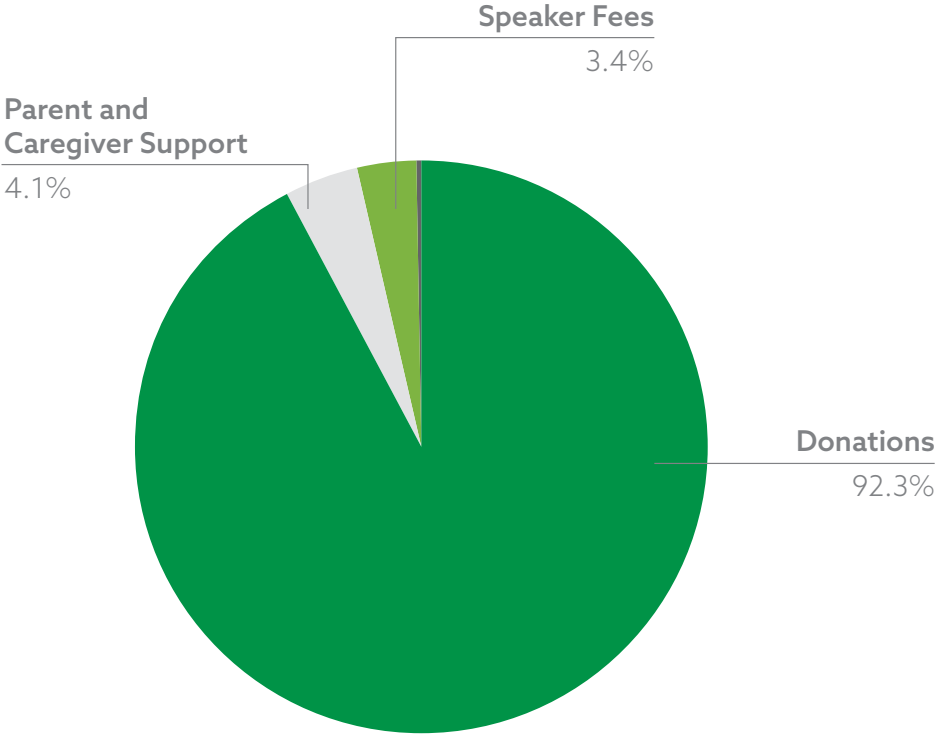
Jenny Collins
Director of Programs

In addition to my role as The Director of The Parent Support Network, I am also a volunteer Facilitator. I have been Facilitating meetings for over three years, and I have seen first hand the benefits to the parents and caregivers of children struggling with their mental health. Because the stories we hear are intense, we close every meeting with gratitude. I often hear parents report that they are grateful for our meetings. They feel they are not alone and can share their struggles without feeling judged. I see many parents returning to our meetings because they feel better from the support they receive and learn new information and tools to help them cope.

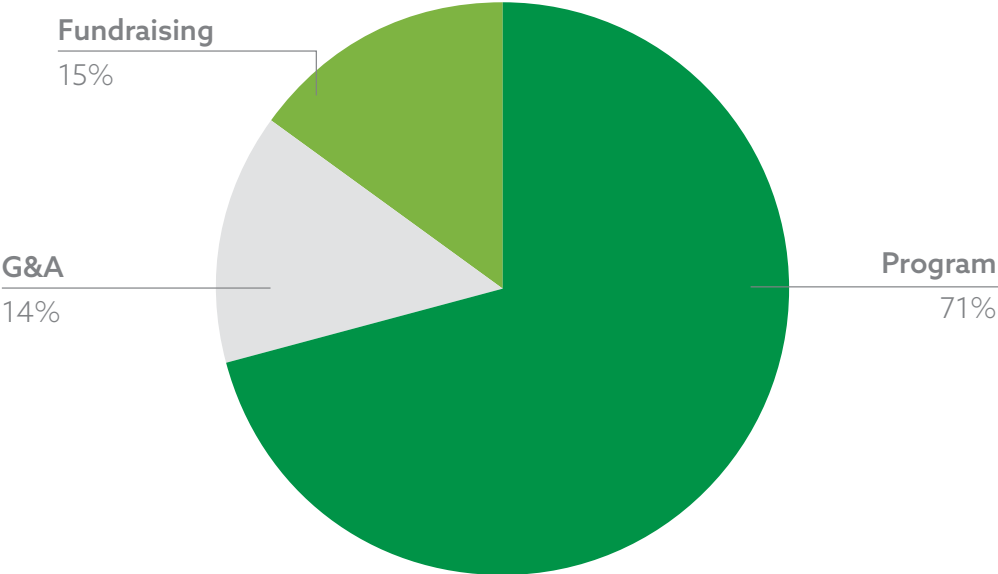


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MISSION

To educate, empower, and support families and communities to better understand and care for the mental health of our youth.

VISION

We envision a world made up of informed families and caring communities that realize and strengthen the mental health of our youth—a world where people are just as aware of their mental health as their physical health, where families are validated and able to readily access the care they need.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that:

Mental health lies on a continuum and includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.

A healthy mind is as important to a child's development as a healthy body.

In order to address the devastating consequences of the current mental health crisis, early intervention and prevention must become the norm.



Thank you!



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