

# DEAR JACK FOUNDATION

Annual Report 2023



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As you flip through the pages, our hiker will take you along the Dear Jack Foundation trail. Look out for timeline events!

Let's get this journey started!



2006 DJF founded

2009 Dear Jack documentary released

## MISSION

The Dear Jack Foundation provides impactful programs benefiting adolescents and young adults (AYA) diagnosed with cancer and their families to improve their quality of life from treatment to survivorship. Through programs and strategic partnerships, Dear Jack addresses the physical and emotional needs of AYA cancer patients, survivors and their families. One-on-one patient support and wellness programs allow the Dear Jack Foundation to empower patients, survivors and their caregivers in their healing and to provide assurance that they are not alone in their cancer journey.

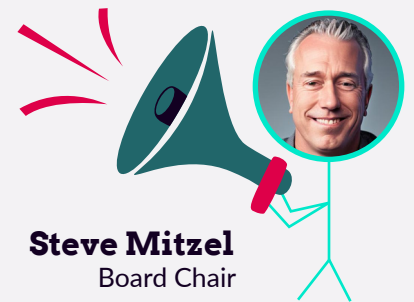
a message from our  
**BOARD CHAIR**

In 2023 the Dear Jack Foundation endured historic change and had a remarkable fundraising and program year. We embarked on executing our strategic plan to continue to offer innovative and impactful programs for our adolescent and young adult cancer community. This past year we offered four amazing Breathe Now Retreats, hit a historic high of fulfilling 100 Life List requests and revamped our mental wellness program evolving from a box to an online community. We also raised over \$800,000 in funds and crushed our fundraising challenges – a true impact to you and our incredibly generous giving community who understands the need for impactful programming for the AYA community.

In November we hired Ryan Pettengill to take the helm as executive director of the Dear Jack Foundation. Ryan brings Dear Jack deep nonprofit experience and an incredible tie into our cause. Ryan is capitalizing on the momentum that we created in 2023 with record high contributions and grants from corporations and foundations as well. We also welcomed Val Lopez, our marketing and operations manager and Lilly Dugan our new program director.

The AYA community continues to need increased resources for the saddening increase of AYA cancer diagnoses. We are privileged to have curated and to be a part of this amazing AYA cancer community where we can provide amazing programs for cancer patients, survivors and their caregivers.

We hope that you will continue to support the Dear Jack Foundation in 2024 and beyond. Together, we all make an enormous difference to thousands in the AYA cancer community that need it most.



**STAFF & BOARD**

**STAFF**

**Ryan Pettengill**  
Executive Director

**Lilly Dugan**  
Director of Programs

**Sonnie Jardine**  
Office Manager

**Susan Wandishin**  
Sr. Manager of Programs & Community

**Val Lopez**  
Marketing & Operations Manager



**BOARD MEMBERS**

**Andrew McMahon**  
Founder

**Darren Shames**  
Board Member

**Elisa Chin**  
Board Member

**Justin King**  
Board Member

**Denisse Martinez, LSW**  
Board Member

**Dr. Allison Rosenthal**  
Board Member

**Neil Sinay**  
Board Member

**Steve Smith**  
Board Member

**2010** First official 11/11 benefit concert

# HOW WE WORK

## INPUTS

89,500 AYAs between 18-39 are diagnosed with cancer yearly

## ACTIVITY

Programs and ancillary support initiatives aid cancer patients, survivors, thrivers and their loved ones, including:

- Breathe Now
- LifeList
- Letters With Love
- Mental Wellness Box
- Community Programming

## OUTPUTS

**Breathe Now**  
4 retreats a year focused on mindfulness, yoga and psychosocial support for cancer survivors and their spouses

**LifeList**  
100 participants a year, avg. 350 wishes a year

**Letters with Love**  
20,000+ Letters sent to LifeList participants to inspire hope

**Mental Wellness Boxes**  
Physical box offering support during dark times

**Community Programs**  
2 calls per each month that offer connection and support for current patients and survivors

## OUTCOMES

**Breathe Now**  
Participants avg. a 50% increase in communication & healthy lifestyle outlook

**LifeList**  
96.7% of participants feel better than before participation in the program

**Letters with Love**  
Letters with Love has positively increased the mental health of 97.8% participants

## Community Programs

- Due to a needs assessment, new community initiative launched in 2024 to combat the unmet need for AYA support
- Increased feeling of a community & connection with other AYAs (preliminary anecdotal reporting)
- All the resources included in our Mental Wellness Boxes have been included on our website in an effort to provide 24/7 support to those in need

## IMPACT

Empowering young adults facing cancer, our programs provide a lifeline of support, fostering resilience, and creating a community of understanding and strength. By offering tailored resources, mental health support, and practical assistance, we empower our participants to navigate the unique challenges of their journey with

courage and dignity. Through our unwavering commitment, we strive to enhance their quality of life, restore hope, and inspire a sense of belonging in a world where they often feel isolated. Together, we're not just fighting cancer; we're building a foundation of support that empowers young adults to thrive beyond their diagnosis, reclaiming their lives with newfound resilience and purpose.





**breathe**now wellness retreats bring together young adult survivor couples who are 1-3 years removed from their last date of treatment. This thoughtfully designed four-day retreat program harnesses the transformational powers of yoga, meditation and psychosocial therapy sessions. The retreats are professionally guided and designed to help heal and restore balance and peace for the survivor and their partner as they move ahead in their post-cancer lives together.

**BREATHE NOW 2023 STATS:**

**2** retreat locations    **44** retreat participants    **100%** participant satisfaction

“It was literally one of the most amazing experiences of my life. It’s been awhile since I felt truly seen and that I could connect with people on the level I was able to during this retreat. Everyone was so open, understanding and accepting. I told my husband that this is the first time post cancer where I truly feel seen and understood and that I am going to be ok. I haven’t felt that in years.”



“It was incredible. Meeting and bonding with other couples who have unfortunately gone through a similar experience was so powerful. Learning these mindfulness tools, talking about our values as a couple and how our relationship has changed, etc. was all so amazing and I feel like I can better process what we went through and have made new lifelong friends!”

**2011** Andrew awarded the Dr. William Dameshek Award by LLS for his work as a public figure using his celebrity to raise awareness of blood cancer

**2011** Dear Jack becomes an accredited 501c3

**2014** Andrew awarded the Social Impact Award at Stupid Cancer’s 7th annual summit

OW





# LIFELIST

LifeList is a wish-granting program that offers hope and support to young adults who are currently receiving treatment for a life-threatening cancer diagnosis. This program provides positive experiences to focus on during treatment and an opportunity to connect with a community of young adult patients, survivors, and advocates who have experienced similar journeys.

2023	Highlights
62	Partner Hospitals
30	States Served
308	Wishes Fulfilled



See quotes from several **LifeList & Letters with Love** participants on the next page!

**2014**

Partnership with Love Hope Strength begins to add concert goers to the bone marrow donor registry

**2016**

Launch of the Raise Your Voice challenge

**2016**

LifeList program started with 10 participants

**2017**

Breathe Now program started with 1 retreat [The Pearl, Laguna, CA]

# LETTERS WITH LOVE

Letters with Love is an opportunity for volunteers to provide Dear Jack's LifeList participants with words of hope, encouragement, and love as they are actively going through treatment. These notes are kept by many of our participants for years after their time in LifeList as a reminder of how many people are rooting for them.

<b>2023</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
<b>8,773</b>	letters were sent in from 750+ volunteer organizations & individuals
<b>87</b>	avg. letters sent to each of our LifeList participants
<b>98%</b>	of program participants report a positive impact on their mental health as a result of receiving Letters with Love.

  
Dear Jack  
Headquarters  
[Littleton, CO]

**Mental Wellness Boxes** are a partnership between *Dear Jack* and *Find Your Anchor* focused on bringing mental health support to those in our AYA community. So much of the time, healing the mind takes a back seat to physically healing the body and research indicates that overall quality of life increases when there is a focus on both.

<b>2023</b>	<b>Highlights</b>
<b>350+</b>	Boxes Sent
<b>43</b>	States Served

**2017** Launch of 11/10 VIP night [Denver]

**2018** Breathe Now grows to 2 retreats

**2018** LifeList grows to 54 participants

# DOCYLYNE



"I felt overwhelmed with love to know there are such good and kind people in this world. There were so many letters, I still haven't read them all. I keep them for days I need a little extra support and will open a few and hang them up."



# KELSIE

"The letters I received came at the perfect time. I was very down and sad about how I was looking and how life was going and then I received all these letters that just made me feel so much like I mattered. Grateful was an understatement."

# ALICE



"Being able to go on my LifeList trip made my cancer experience feel so small. It brought back normalcy in my life because my whole life was just chemo for a long time and pushing myself to go on this trip allowed me to feel like myself again. I was able to see and do things that would take forever to save up for and I thought I would never be able to do again like hiking for 8.5 hours. The staff was so positive and encouraging the whole time."

# ELLIE

"LifeList is such an amazingly supportive program that several times pulled me out of a funk and gave me something exciting to look forward to when I was having a bad day. They have made a huge positive impact on my mental health over the past 6 months."



**2019** Breathe Now grows to 4 retreats

**2019** LifeList grows to 73 participants

**2020** Letters with Love virtual program format formally adopted with an average of 27 letters per participant

**2021** Letters with Love averages 56 letters per participant, 3156 letters total

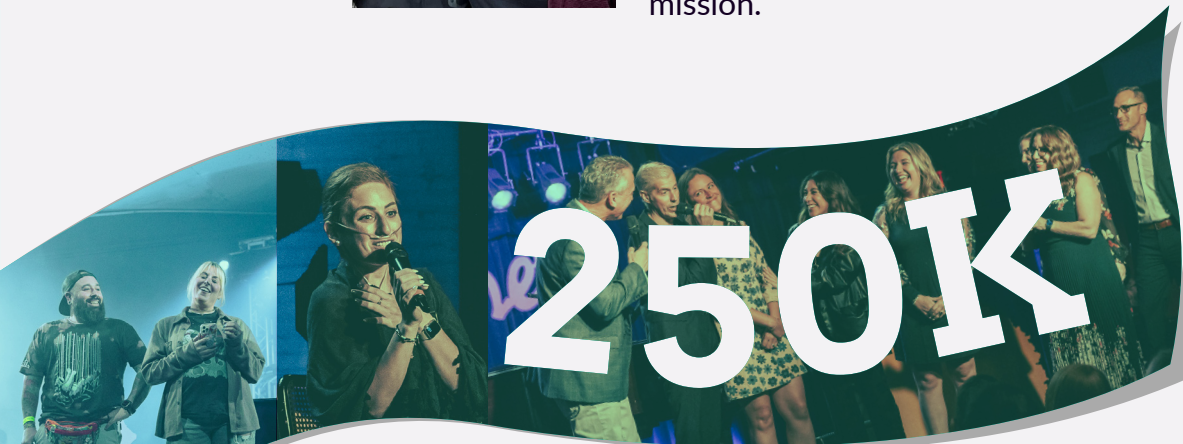


# Fundraising HIGHLIGHTS

The Dear Jack Foundation's annual fundraising challenge and benefit is a poignant event that brings together supporters, advocates, and beneficiaries in a shared mission to support young adults facing cancer. The Raise Your Voice Challenge and Eleven Eleven weekend are both held with unwavering dedication and passion.



The annual Raise Your Voice Challenge has grown out of an identified need to further close the gap in resources made available to adolescents and young adult cancer patients and survivors. Our fundraising teams this year not only contributed to reaching and surpassing our goal of \$250,000, but they also became active participant in a movement dedicated to improving the lives of young adults affected by cancer. Through their generosity and solidarity, they embody the spirit of compassion and resilience that defines the Dear Jack Foundation's mission.



This year, our fundraisers went above and beyond our goal of \$250,000 and raised an overall total of **\$350,000!**

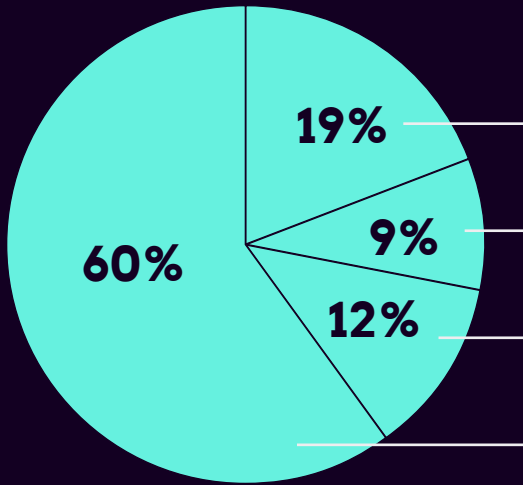


Beyond the glitz and glamor of such an event, Eleven Eleven weekend serves a critical purpose in sustaining the Dear Jack Foundation's vital programs and service, which are lifelines for the adolescents and young adults navigating the challenges of cancer treatment and survivorship.

**2022** | Letters with Love averages 54 letters per participant with 5438 letters total



## REVENUE



**TOTAL: \$867,880**

**\$165,111** | Sweepstakes / Auctions / Other Income

**\$77,865** | Foundation / Other Non Profit Support

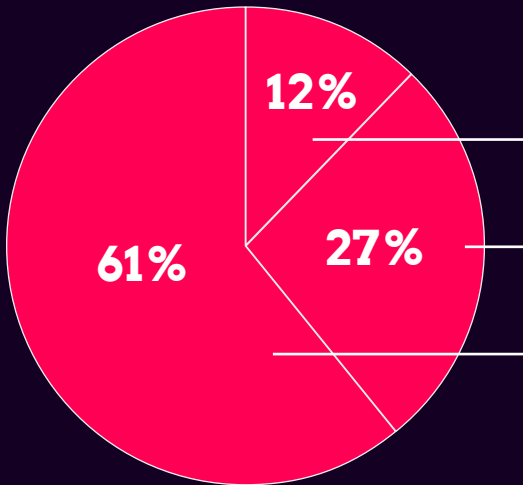
**\$102,442** | Corporate Contributions

**\$512,463** | Individuals / Small Businesses

**TOTAL: \$857,880**

# 2024 FINANCIAL DATA

## EXPENSES

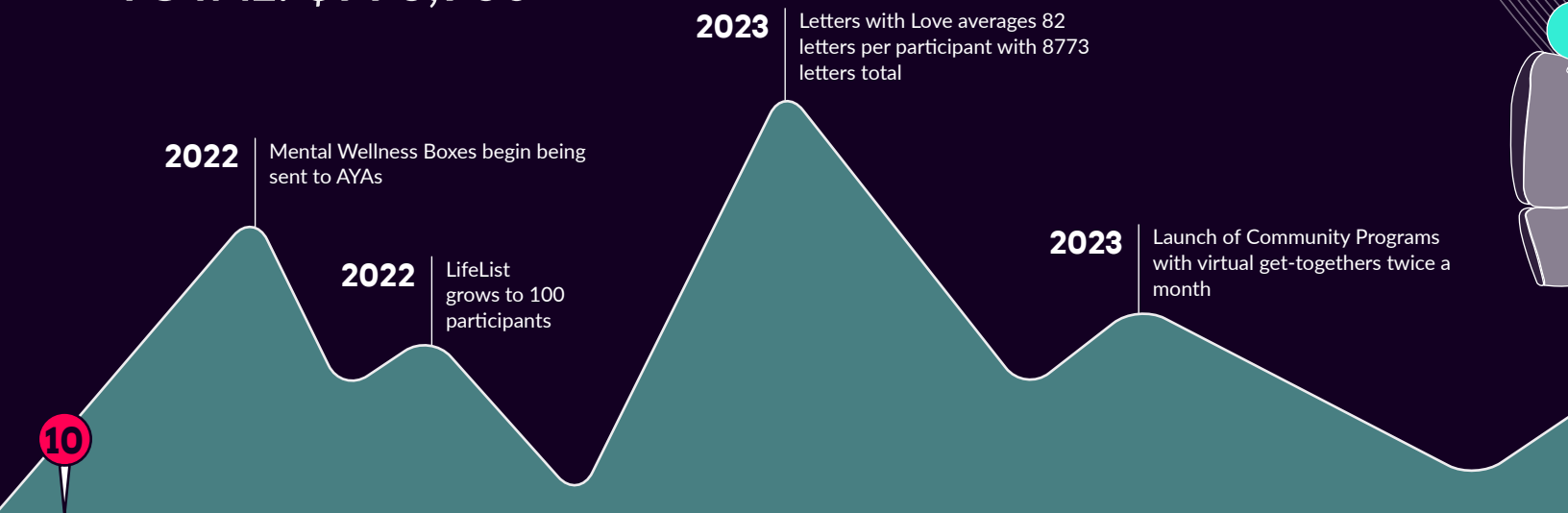


**\$117,529** | Management / General

**\$270,790** | Fundraising / Marketing

**\$608,640** | Program Related

**TOTAL: \$996,960**



# LOOKING AHEAD



This last year felt so special as we closed out with more support than ever. In 2024, the Dear Jack Foundation is poised to expand its reach and impact, aiming to empower even more adolescents and young adults from treatment

through survivorship. In the year ahead, the Dear Jack Foundation seeks to foster a community of resilience and inspiration, ensuring that no young adult facing cancer feels alone in their battle for a brighter future.

So, what's next?

**2024**

Launch of Community web page for AYA patients, survivors, and thrivers

## OUR PLANS INCLUDE:

**125** LifeList recipients in 2025 & **150** in 2026... **6** Breathe Now Retreats in 2025 & **7** in 2026... **125%** increase in visits to our community webpage from 2024 to 2025... **8** new hospital partners... **12** new Breathe Now program retreat sponsors... **8** new travel partners... **150** in-kind supported LifeList wishes



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