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PIVOTING IN 2020

ANNUAL REPORT  
SPACE OF HEROWN

# FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



To say it has been a challenging year for our organization, and for SOHO's girls and their families, is an understatement. At the onset of the pandemic, in-person programming ceased abruptly. Our staff started working from home, virtual art and science classes were developed, and we pivoted to provide emergency support to families. Despite many difficulties, it has been a year of learning, organizational growth, and deepening relationships—driven by necessity and informed by trial and error.

Ensuring that our girls are emotionally secure and socially connected has always been our top priority; post-pandemic, these goals have become even more important and urgent. For the first time since our program started in 2002, we observed among our girls a decrease in developmental assets, the essentials that children need to be successful, which include support by non-parent caring adults, constructive use of out-of-school time, positive identity, and social competencies. What does this indicate? Despite numerous interventions, the impacts of the pandemic and associated public health measures are simply overwhelming.

Our findings reveal uncomfortable truths about vulnerable young people's prospects in this difficult time and they also teach us that SOHO programming must be more creative and stronger than ever to help our girls navigate so many challenges. We take both these findings to heart. As schools' doors remain closed in Alexandria, we continue to develop and deliver engaging programming, provide essential family support services and build organizational capacity. With constant refinement and unwavering effort, we believe we are slowly beginning to stem the tide.

In partnership with MENTOR Virginia, we are re-imagining how best to provide services moving forward by participating in the National Quality Mentoring System organizational improvement process. We are revamping our mentor recruitment strategy to increase diversity among our volunteers and developing a system for re-matching girls and mentors to strengthen program continuity. We are also refining our visual arts and STEM projects and developing a wellness program. Our signature space transformations, which have occurred in each girl's home for nearly 20 years, are being re-considered. Moving forward, we may pivot to support and empower families to spruce up their own homes.

Our donors and volunteers continue to be essential to all our work. You pivoted with us as we made the decision to shift towards emergency support; you've continued to encourage these efforts, which remain essential, and we are grateful beyond measure. We cannot wait for in-person SOHO meetings to resume, to recruit 26 new fifth graders and 26 new mentors to join our sisterhood, to fully reactivate our long-time partnerships with the likes of Alexandria City Public Schools and The Art League, and build on our new partnerships with organizations like Building Momentum and Sleep in Heavenly Peace. We hope to see your smiling faces at SOHO this year and welcome you to visit!

Linda Odell  
Founder & Executive Director

[ CREATIVE MENTORSHIP ]

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# RESPONDING TO CRISIS

OUR SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY PIVOTED WITH US TO MEET ESSENTIAL NEEDS. HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS

July 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020

\$22,400  
TARGET GIFT CARDS



758  
FAMILY DINNERS

### ACT FOR ALEXANDRIA

Awarded a \$10,000 ACT Now COVID-19 Response Fund grant providing grocery store gift cards to families who needed them.

### ALICE AND JOHN HOCKENBURY

Donated gently used furnishings from an entire two-bedroom apartment, and had the items delivered to SOHO homes.

### ALICE'S KIDS

Provided activity books and special gifts to SOHO mentees and their siblings.

### ALLY HEMLER (SOHO MENTOR)

Raised \$1,000 through a Facebook fundraiser for additional grocery store gift cards.

### THE ART LEAGUE

Designed engaging virtual classes that have helped girls release and relax, including a SOHO sketchbook/journal where girls drew schematics of their homes and mapped a typical day in their life during COVID-19, poetry and typography lessons, Zentangle tote bags, and contributing to the snowflake lamp post art exhibit on King St.

### BEST WESTERN TRADE SHOW AND FREEMAN

Donated 300+ trade show furniture pieces, many of which were donated to SOHO families. Additional items were sold, raising \$5,915 for COVID-related family assistance.

### BUILDING MOMENTUM

Stored, moved, purchased, and helped sell donated furniture to support SOHO families.

### BUSINESS WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE OF THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Enabled SOHO to hire Dr. Thao Do, a curriculum developer, inventor, pilot, scientist and instructor, to inspire and enhance our STEM programming.

### CAPITAL YOUTH EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

Stepped up to start a STEM-based mentoring program for boys, DECODED is SOHO's new partner program.

### CENTER FOR MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Staff members purchased 45 holiday gifts for SOHO girls. An additional thirty-one \$25 Amazon gift cards were donated, which we are using for incentives and prizes.

### CHARLOTTE LINDELL (OF BUSINESS WOMEN'S GIVING CIRCLE)

Along with family and friends, collected cupcake baking materials for each SOHO girl, as well as groceries & essential household items for SOHO families.

### CHEF CHARLES

Prepared family dinners and delivered them along with essential household items, and art and STEM supplies for SOHO's virtual meetings.

### KIDS HELPING KIDS

Raised an additional \$1,600 for grocery gift cards, and donated a laptop and games.

### LOCAL ALEXANDRIA BUSINESSES

Penny Post, Red Barn Mercantile, Seward Group and Tulusa Goods pitched in to provide extra support.

### RUNNING BROOKE

Shared their Move2Learn program as part of SOHO's wellness initiative. They provided training to SOHO staff and mentors and donated toolkits with fun exercises to keep our girls active.

### SALON DEZEN

Owner and SOHO mentor Maria Elizabeth and team contributed \$3,200 to support girls and families.

### UPCYCLE CREATIVE REUSE CENTER

Developed and assembled innovative, cost-effective STEM kits which included a pencil holder, weather vane and wind sock.

### VOLUNTEER MENTORS

Listened and cared, provided outreach to families, helped with homework, picked up and delivered supplies, shifted to virtual meetings, and rolled with the punches.





# YOU ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## SOHO SPOTLIGHT

When day comes we step out of the shade, aflame and unafraid, the new dawn blooms as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it. - Amanda Gorman

### ODALIS + LISETTE, SOHO 2012-2013



Odalis Honored with 2019 Points of Light Award

After contracting the COVID-19 virus last December and being extremely ill for three weeks, Odalis Delcid (19) is grateful to be alive. She is back at work at Target and attending Northern Virginia Community College, where she is working toward a degree in criminal justice. Her mentor, Lisette Torres, has been a tremendous support.

“Lisette helped me find myself. She really listened, she understood my perspective and shared her perspective. She’s like an older sister I can talk to.” Having experienced major childhood trauma, Odalis struggled as a ninth grader and was on a path toward dropping out of school. Lisette “pulled me up and helped me.” She convinced Odalis to become the first youth representative with Alexandria’s Campaign on Adolescent Pregnancy, where she has been a leader in bringing sex education and mental health awareness to youth. For this volunteer work, which exceeded 100 hours of service to the community, Odalis was honored with a 2019 Points of Light Award. “I am so grateful and happy that Lisette was there when I was in a dark place in my life. She broke my shell. Lisette has given me so many opportunities and I have met so many people.”

Mentor Lisette Torres shared the impact Odalis has had on her, “Being Odalis’ mentor has been one of my greatest honors. Odalis shared with me that I helped her grow as a person, but the feeling is mutual. She has taught me so much about resilience and courage. Odalis has faced a lot of hard situations in life, but what I admire most about her is the bravery she has exhibited by sharing her story to bring hope and healing to others facing similar challenges. Through it all, she never lost her caring personality and kind heart. Odalis will always be a special person in my life. I had the opportunity to transform Odalis’ room, but it was Odalis who changed and transformed me.”

### JENNY & ERIKA, SOHO 2012-2013



SOHO Sisters or SOHO Twins? Erika and Jenny were surprised to find one another dressed alike during a recent get together

Jenny Martinez and her mentor, Erika Stratmann, were matched eight years ago when they joined SOHO. The two hit it off and have maintained a solid relationship throughout the years, spending quality time together and celebrating each other’s milestones. Jenny’s fondest SOHO memory is of the program’s kick-off camping trip, where she met Erika. Jenny had never been away from home overnight, not even for a sleepover. Over the years, Jenny and Erika have shared memorable experiences, such as ice skating, playing mini golf, attending a Washington Spirit soccer game and visiting Baltimore’s National Aquarium. Jenny’s first time seeing the ocean was with Erika.

For Erika, who had recently moved to Alexandria prior to joining SOHO, Jenny “helped connect me to this community... [she] is very caring and naturally wants to help people.” Erika is grateful to have had Jenny in her life as she got married and had children, adding, “Jenny is my SOHO sister.” “I had never been to a wedding before,” Jenny shared, “It was so special.”

Jenny appreciates Erika’s mentorship and having “another person to give me advice--mature advice-- about life situations.” Jenny credits Erika for giving her the courage to try things outside of her comfort-zone. “I had a fear of speaking in front of a group and I feel like I can do anything when I am with Erika.” The two have presented at mentor recruitment events, at a grant award luncheon with the Rotary Club at Belle Haven Country Club, and on Fox 5 News for Mentoring Monday.

Jenny takes on tremendous responsibility to ensure the well-being of her mother and two younger brothers, one of whom is severely disabled. She schedules doctors’ appointments and school meetings and helps to pay the bills. The first in her family to attend college, Jenny is considering a career in nursing, business or special education. She began attending Northern Virginia Community College last fall and aspires to transfer to a four-year university. SOHO recently nominated Jenny for a “Beat the Odds” college scholarship.

Jenny paid for her own braces and is now saving to buy a car. “I’m getting my permit in February. Watch out, I’ll be on the road soon!”

### MIRINDA + JENNIFER, SOHO 2006-2007

Diplomatic Security Officer with the U.S. Department of State, Mirinda Haynes, is now in a position to give back. Her life has soared since joining SOHO 16 years ago. Mirinda appreciates SOHO, particularly her mentor, Jennifer Tutuska, for helping to motivate her. “My mentor Jenn was there for me after my mom died and she is here for me to this day. She has always listened and helped me to understand things and stay focused on my priorities.”

Jenn transformed Mirinda’s childhood bedroom—a memory that Miranda still shares with others. Then, after high school graduation, Jenn helped Mirinda pack for college, decorate her dorm room in Richmond, and then move her into her D.C. apartment after she earned her degree. The two meet up regularly to just sit and talk. Jenn is an avid traveler, which has influenced Mirinda to try and see the world. Last October Mirinda celebrated her 27th birthday with a trip to Los Angeles and Long Beach, California. She hopes to visit Puerto Rico next.

When she became a mentor, Jenn Tutuska did not anticipate what a strong role Mirinda would play in her life over the course of 15 years. Jenn admires Mirinda’s gentle and kind heart, her work ethic, perseverance, and girl power. “Mirinda is an inspiration to any young or grown woman who crosses her path.”

Mirinda graduated from Virginia Union University in 2017 with a BA in Criminal Justice and Criminology. In addition to her current career, which has provided her with a top security clearance and great potential for advancement, Mirinda is a budding entrepreneur. She started her own small business, New Creations, making and selling body butters, body scrubs, face washes, and gift baskets.

Mirinda is paying it forward to SOHO, providing supplies and teaching young participants how to make body scrubs. Her goal is to inspire the girls to stay focused, communicate with their mentors, aim high, and perhaps start their own businesses.



Mirinda on Graduation Day



# FINANCIAL INFORMATION

JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

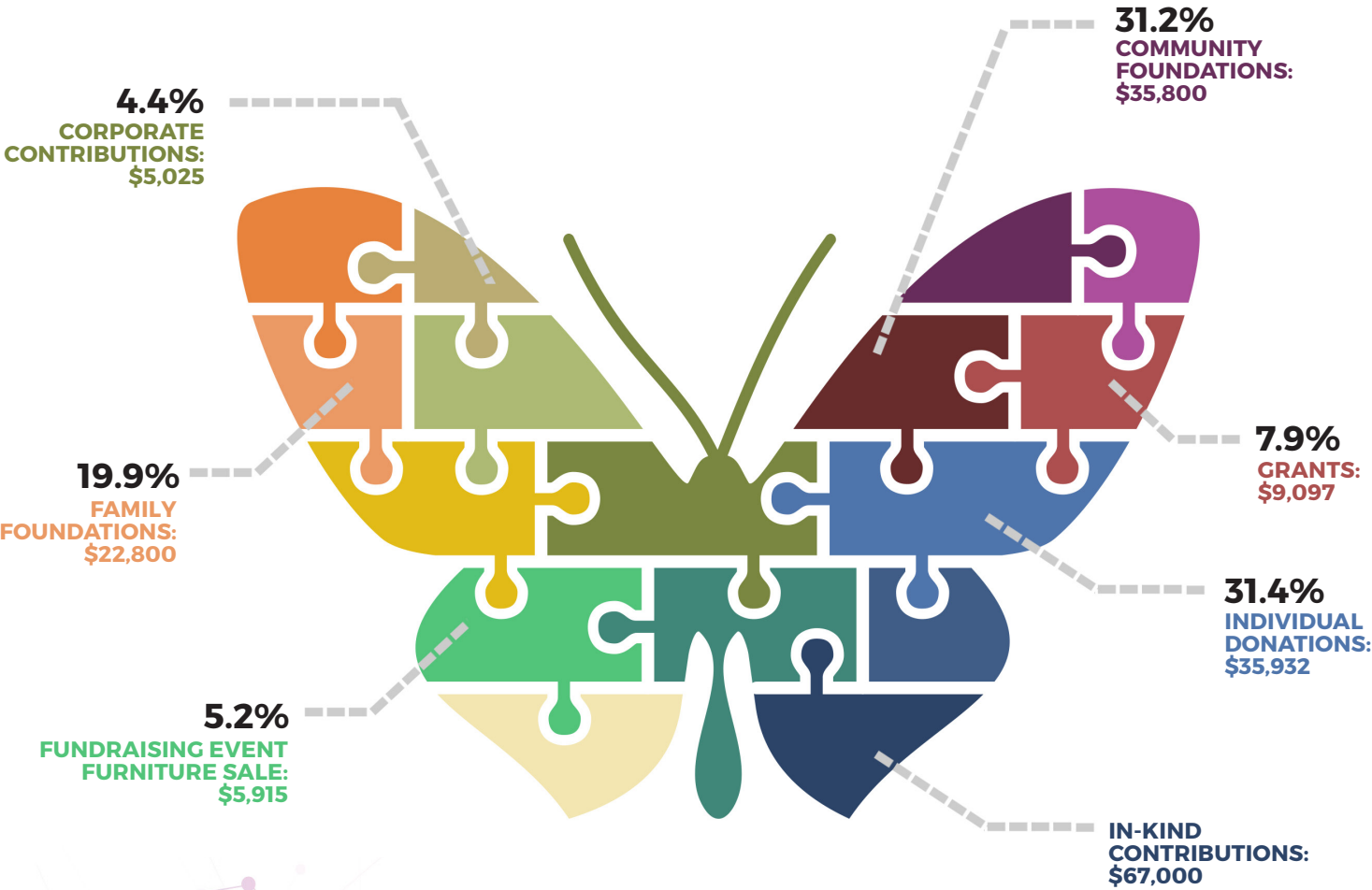
## PROGRAM INCOME

Total Income for Space of Her Own: \$114,569

In-Kind Total: \$67,000

The City of Alexandria provided program managers for SOHO's Old Town and West End programs, at an approximate value of \$50,000. The Art League provided art lessons taught by professional artists, staff, meeting space, and funding for emergency support.

Grand Total Income for 2019-2020 Fiscal Year: \$181,569



## PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

Total Expenditures for Space of Her Own 2019-2020 Fiscal Year: \$ 178,155

**82.5%** SERVICES TO YOUTH - Total: \$147,007  
Space of Her Own Inc. Funded: \$80,007  
\*In-Kind Support: \$67,000

**17.3%** GOVERNANCE & OPERATIONS - Total: \$30,872

**0.2%** MARKETING - Total: \$276

**DIRECT PROGRAM SERVICES**  
Total: \$72,008

- Personnel: \$19,118
- Program Managers: \$50,000\*
- Transportation: \$243
- Workers Comp: \$303
- Program Liability Insurance: \$1,920
- Communication Tools: \$424

**40.4%**

**19.9%**

**OPERATIONS**  
Total: \$29,452

- Financial & Legal Services: \$3,150
- Payroll Processing: \$1,425
- Personnel: \$20,693
- Dues & Subscriptions: \$1,075
- Donor Database: \$738
- Office Supplies: \$478
- Technology: \$595
- State & Tax Reporting: -\$122
- Misc. Bank Fees: \$60
- Fundraiser: \$1,359

**GOVERNANCE**  
Total: \$1,421

- Board Insurance: \$587
- Board Training: \$293
- Meetings: \$540

**0.8%**

**SOHO CLUB & SPECIAL EVENTS**  
Total: \$10,208

- SOHO Club: \$7,653
- Mentor/Mentee Retention Events : \$2,556

**5.7%**

**0.2%**

**MARKETING**  
Total: \$276

- Website: \$255
- Postage and Mailing: \$21

**1.3%**

**MENTOR DEVELOPMENT**  
Total: \$2,240

- Parent & Mentor Training: \$702
- Developmental Assets Pre/Post Survey: \$800
- Mentor/Mentee Database: \$738

**35.1%**

**FOOD & SUPPLIES**  
Total: \$62,551

- EMERGENCY FAMILY SUPPORT: \$22,732
- Nutritious Meals: \$6,581
- Meals Supplement: \$5,000\*
- Donated Furniture Storage, Moving, Delivery + Mattresses: \$4,411
- STEM + STEAM Supplies: \$5,028
- Other Supplies: \$6,538
- Supplies Supplement: \$6,000\*
- Art Instruction: \$6,000\*
- Printing and Copying: \$261

# YOU MADE IT HAPPEN



"THE GREATNESS OF A COMMUNITY IS MOST ACCURATELY MEASURED BY THE COMPASSIONATE ACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS."  
CORETTA SCOTT KING

## VOLUNTEERS

Our outstanding volunteer mentors pivoted with us during this pandemic, attending group Zoom meetings and connecting one-on-one with their mentees via phone, Facetime and, with their masks on, during socially distanced walks. They helped girls with homework, picked up and delivered supplies, and served as social workers to identify family needs and help connect them with services. They attended programmatic brain-storming sessions, participated in mentor training and support sessions, helped with STEM curriculum development, and initiated a book club. Many mentors raised and donated funds to support our girls and families. Their patience and tenacity are remarkable. In addition to fundraising for the organization, our working Board of Directors provides countless hours of support in the following areas: governance, finance, marketing, strategic planning, mentor recruitment and community outreach.

## DONORS

288 individuals who care tremendously about SOHO's girls contributed a total of \$35,932. Special recognition goes to the following:

Mason Hirst Foundation \$15,000  
Business Women's Giving Circle of the Community Foundation for  
Northern Virginia \$10,000  
\$10,000 ACT for Alexandria - ACT Now COVID-19 Response Fund  
Kids Helping Kids \$6,600  
IVAKOTA Foundation \$5,000  
Crowell & Moring Foundation \$5,000  
Harry & Zoe Poole Foundation \$5,000  
The Harvey S. Lowe, Jr. & Susan Hitchcock-Lowe Foundation \$5,000  
Susan Lily Gerock \$5,000  
Bruhn-Morris Family Foundation Fund \$2,000  
The Meltzer Group of  
The Greater Washington Community Foundation \$2,000

Mike & Louise Kenny Fund \$2,000  
Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church \$1,829  
Rotary Club of Alexandria \$1,500  
Anonymous Donor \$1,200  
Markon Solutions \$1,250  
Anonymous Family Foundation \$1,075  
Ally Hemler's Facebook Fundraiser \$1,000  
Anonymous Donor in Honor of a SOHO Mentor \$1,000  
CDK Global \$1,000  
Frantz Family Fund \$1,000  
John Marshall Bank \$1,000  
Pax Community \$1,000

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The Art League  
Alexandria City Public Schools  
Alexandria Coalition of Community and Human Service Organizations  
Alexandria Juvenile & Domestic Relations Court Service Unit  
Alexandria Mentoring Partnership  
ACT for Alexandria  
Alice's Kids  
Building Momentum  
Business Women's Giving Circle  
Center for Missing and Exploited Children  
Chef Charles Smith

City of Alexandria  
4-H Youth Development  
Jazzercise Arlington  
Kids Helping Kids  
MENTOR Virginia  
Old Dominion Restaurant  
Ruby Tucker Family Center  
Running Brooke  
Sleep in Heavenly Peace  
UpCycle Creative Reuse Center  
Volunteer Alexandria

## KEEP IN TOUCH WITH SOHO



[spaceofherown.org](https://spaceofherown.org)



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[SOHOspaceofherown](https://www.youtube.com/SOHOspaceofherown)



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