

Annual Report



LIFE • LOVE • HEALING
CANCER COMFORT CARE

2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

In 2025 the Elixir Fund saw an expansion of our role on the state level in NJ. Our work with the NJ State Cancer Coalition's Survivorship workgroup and our affiliations with Rutgers Community Scientist and Cancer Survivorship Outcomes Center, allowed us great networking opportunities. We presented at a few different events and are currently working on developing initiatives designed to improve the quality of life for survivors and caregivers.

As we head into 2026, we plan to host a few roundtables that bring together survivors, caregivers and medical professionals to have a dialogue. Our hope is to use these discussions to develop tools that will improve communication between all parties. We have been awarded two grants that will fund these programs.

We are closing out a busy 2025 and are looking forward to more partnerships in 2026.



MISSION • VISION • GOALS



Mission

We aim to be a national resource for those impacted by cancer to access support through referrals and program development.



Vision

The Elixir Fund is dedicated to improving the comfort and care of cancer survivors (from the time of diagnosis on) and their caregivers.



Goals

We recognize that the diagnosis of a serious illness can overwhelm and exhaust both cancer survivors and their caregivers. We believe that people deserve to take a break from the cancer journey by shifting the focus from treatment to living.

PROGRAMS



NAVIGATION

A cornerstone of the Elixir Fund's mission is to provide support to those impacted by cancer; primarily emotionally, but, when possible, financially as well. Meg McQuarrie is certified as a lay navigator and is available to connect survivors and caregivers with resources in their local areas. In addition, she researches what financial support may be available. When our budget allows, the Elixir Fund may offer small financial grants to those who reach out to us for navigation.

In 2025, the requests for support came from across the country and ranged from the simple, such as sharing some pain management techniques; to the more involved which included helping a mother find financial support for her family while navigating her son's terminal diagnosis. When we receive such a request we do our best to meet the immediate need. In addition, Meg continues to check in periodically over the next few months, or as long as she receives a response, to offer moral support.

So often there is an initial influx of support when a person is diagnosed with cancer, but it dissipates quickly as friends and family meet the demands of their own lives. As part of our navigation program, Meg sends a text or email every so often to let the survivor or caregiver know that we are thinking of them and are available for support.

Last summer we were contacted by a woman who was newly diagnosed with breast cancer. After her lumpectomy, she was referred to an oncologist and a hospital that she did not have a good feeling about. Initially she reached out to us for a referral to an oncologist. Meg contacted colleagues in the woman's county and was able to provide her with some resources. In addition, we were able to send a gift card to help meet some of her family's immediate needs for food and clothing.

“Thank you so much for your help and everything you have done for me. It means so much.”

PROGRAMS



NAVIGATION continued

A participant from our Cancer Thriving & Surviving series reached out to Meg on the side for additional information regarding Jin Shin Jyutsu. Meg set up a time and conducted a personal video chat to share some techniques to help her relieve pain and to get better sleep.

A mother from California contacted us looking for help for her family. Her son had undergone years of treatment and there was nothing more that could be done. He had moved into the palliative care phase, but this still required hospitalizations and treatment. The mother could not work a steady job because she was needed to help her son, and the family had faced significant financial hardship as a result of the ongoing care. Meg reached out to our pediatric colleagues to provide some possible resources for the family.

Late in 2025, we were contacted by a hospice social worker here in NJ. Her colleague, also a hospice social worker, had recently found out that his wife had exhausted her treatment options. She was considered terminal and at the same time, her mother had to enter hospice care. The family was struggling to make peace with this diagnosis. Their hope was to be able to do some activities to make memories but also to meet some of the needs for their son who was getting ready to go to college. We used #GivingTuesday as an opportunity to organize a fundraiser. The Elixir Fund matched the money that was raised through the #GivingTuesday donations and was able to send the family \$2,000 to use in whatever way they wanted.

These are just a few of the stories from 2025.

“Thank you so much for your support and always reaching out to me. I truly appreciate it a lot!!!”

PROGRAMS



CANCER THRIVING & SURVIVING

Meg McQuarrie and Bonnie Petrauskas have been working together since 2019 to co-facilitate this impactful six-week series. This year they were able to offer a fall and spring session graduating a total of 19 participants.

While the information is the same, each series is vastly different thanks to the participants. This year we had married couples, seniors, young mothers and a young newlywed who had to move home to take care of her mother. Despite their diverse backgrounds, our participants all seem to find a common ground. They all benefit from supporting each other and helping to find ways to navigate life after a cancer diagnosis.

We look forward to hosting at least two more sessions of this series in 2026.

From Our Participants:

- I am more confident in myself. I am more willing to try things and make changes to my life and routine mentally and physically. I realize I am not failing. If my original plan does not work, I just need to adapt my plan and reassess.
- I genuinely thank you for this program, it really helped shift my mindset to a more positive outlook at a time when I really needed it.
- This workshop made me think more about making goals for myself that bring positive changes. I have in the past just kept going the same way as always, not thinking too much about how something different would work better for me. Also how taking more positive steps result in feeling better emotionally.

PROGRAMS



SURVIVORSHIP

Our programs are designed for anyone who has had experience with cancer, wherever they are in the continuum of care, as well as caregivers. Someone is considered “a survivor” from the time of diagnosis on. Therefore, our programs are all targeted towards survivors and caregivers. However, the needs of survivors vary greatly depending upon where they are in their care. Our goal is to listen and learn from survivors as to what their needs are, and design programs to meet those needs. We are doing that on a variety of levels- both state and local – as well as through various partnerships.

NJ State Cancer Coalition Survivorship Workgroup

For the last two years Meg has served as the Chair of the Survivorship workgroup for the NJ State Cancer Coalition. The goal of the coalition is to reduce the burden of cancer in the state of NJ. They have outlined a plan organized around 5 key objectives - Primary Prevention, Early Detection & Treatment, Health Equity, Survivorship, and Surveillance & Evaluation. Each workgroup is comprised of representatives from healthcare, government agencies, nonprofit organizations and survivors.

In 2025 the Survivorship workgroup focused on two primary objectives. The first was to use the month of June, which is Cancer Survivorship Month, to sponsor a Survivorship Awareness Campaign. Throughout the month the workgroup shared and amplified stories from survivors and survivorship statistics.

PROGRAMS

NJ State Cancer Coalition Survivorship Workgroup continued

The second objective was to learn from Survivors what programs and services they are most interested in as well as the barriers that prevent them from accessing these services. The workgroup designed a survey and sent it to the Department of Health for approval in hopes that the Department would also share the survey. The workgroup launched the survey in June of 2025. The NJ Department of Health posted the survey on their site and has also shared social media posts announcing the survey. Members of the workgroup have worked to find ways to share the survey so that we ensure we are receiving a representative sample of responses from throughout the state. After a few months and not many responses, we decided to leave the survey up until we receive at least 500 responses. The survey is still ongoing.

Throughout 2025, our discussions in the workgroup have led to a new objective for 2026. For many years we have heard time and again from survivors who say they feel lost once they are released by their oncologist. When future healthcare issues arise, they instantly fear it is the cancer returning and are unsure of whether to call their oncologist or primary care doctor; that is if they have one. In 2023 we hosted a discussion regarding these issues and from that came the idea of instituting a “transition appointment.”

Initially the goal of the survivorship workgroup was to find doctors or an institution(s) that would work with us to test this idea. We drafted some guidelines and decided to call this “Beyond Treatment.” We were unable to find a home for this idea, but we have received support for the concept. We have continued to shop this idea and refine it in hopes of developing a program. At the end of 2025, the Hunterdon Mercer Coalition received a grant to support survivorship initiatives. Developing some institutional systems of change regarding this transition in survivorship will be part of that grant and we will be working with them on that initiative.

PROGRAMS

 SURVIVORSHIP

Ocean Monmouth Health Alliance

Based on the work Meg has been doing with the Survivorship workgroup, a member organization, Ocean Monmouth Health Alliance, invited her to talk about Survivorship and the work happening at the state level. Meg was the featured presenter at OMHA's June "Our Health to Hold" lecture, which is also survivorship month. OMHA invited her back at the end of the month to present at a "Coffee Talk" program in which we answered questions from survivors and professionals about resources and programs that are available.

Rutgers Cancer Survivorship Outcomes Center

In 2025 Meg continued to participate in the regular meetings and presentations offered by Rutgers Cancer Institute's Cancer Survivorship Outcomes Center. During these meetings, current research in survivorship is presented. This affords Meg the opportunity to keep up to date, as well as to network with doctors and researchers to see how we might be able to work together. These discussions are ongoing.

Rutgers Community Scientist Program

Meg has served as a community scientist since 2018. In this role she is invited to monthly meetings where Community Scientists are kept up to date on research projects and study designs that may require feedback. In addition, Community Scientists are invited to participate in Science Cafés where they provide their feedback directly to the researcher. For example, in 2025, Meg participated and offered feedback on verbiage for materials designed to educate prostate patients. She has been invited to participate as a panelist in 2026 to discuss her experiences as a Community Scientist at Rutgers' Annual Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence Research Symposium.

PROGRAMS

GUIDED MEDITATION

Meg has been offering guided meditation, free and open to all, since 2021. While our weekly attendance averages 7-8, we have a mailing list of 25. We are adding new attendees regularly. We have a few that attend weekly, and other return to the group every few months. All have expressed their gratitude for the peace and comfort that they group meditation brings to them.

Thank you for your meditation class. It was great. Everyone is so kind and the meditation feels light and peaceful.

Thank you... all the sessions are wonderful, but today's meditation was very helpful to me especially in terms of letting go of that which doesn't serve us. It always awakens me internally and takes me to the next level.

PORT PILLOWS

In 2025 we were able to donate 20 comfort bags which included an Elixir blanket, port pillow and an Elixir Bag. We donated 10 to Hunterdon Hematology & Oncology and 10 to Atlantic Health Oncology. Our sincere thanks to Kathy McFarland who donated her Thrivent Action team money to the Elixir Fund which made these donations possible.

PROGRAMS



SURVIVORSHIP

JIN SHIN JYUTSU

This was our second year offering Jin Shin Jyutsu self-help to survivors and caregivers. Most of our attendees are former Cancer Thriving & Surviving participants. All are extremely grateful for the program and the comfort that it brings to them. Part of our sessions often include participants sharing how they have used what they have learned in their daily lives. They often describe how they have also shared it with others.

In addition to our bi-monthly Jin Shin Jyutsu sessions, Meg was invited to share some information about the modality with the Emmanuel Cancer Foundation and Rutgers Project ECHO series. The Emmanuel Cancer Foundation offers support to pediatric cancer patients and their families. Meg shared some simple techniques with some of the parents and the social workers.

Rutgers Project ECHO is a cooperative educational program that brings together members of the community and healthcare professionals. There is often a lecture topic and case study. Meg was invited to share the Jin Shin Jyutsu modality as a case study in the importance of survivorship resources.

Studying Jin Shin has given me the gift of confidence, knowing that I can improve any situation I find myself in.

A friend said that she was anxious, and I shared the holds I had learned in Jin Shin Jyutsu with her, and it worked!

FUNDRAISERS

TCS New York City Marathon

The Elixir Fund has been a charity partner of the TCS New York City Marathon since 2015. In 2025, family and new friends comprised our team of 5. Cassidy Reyda (cousin to Kevin), Kenny Carney, Jennifer O'Donnell, Jeremy Broadbear and Dominique DeCora raised over \$13,000 for the Elixir Fund.



As always, we are incredibly grateful for the time and dedication it takes to train and fundraise for the marathon. We developed a great relationship with our runners and are excited that two would like to return for 2026.

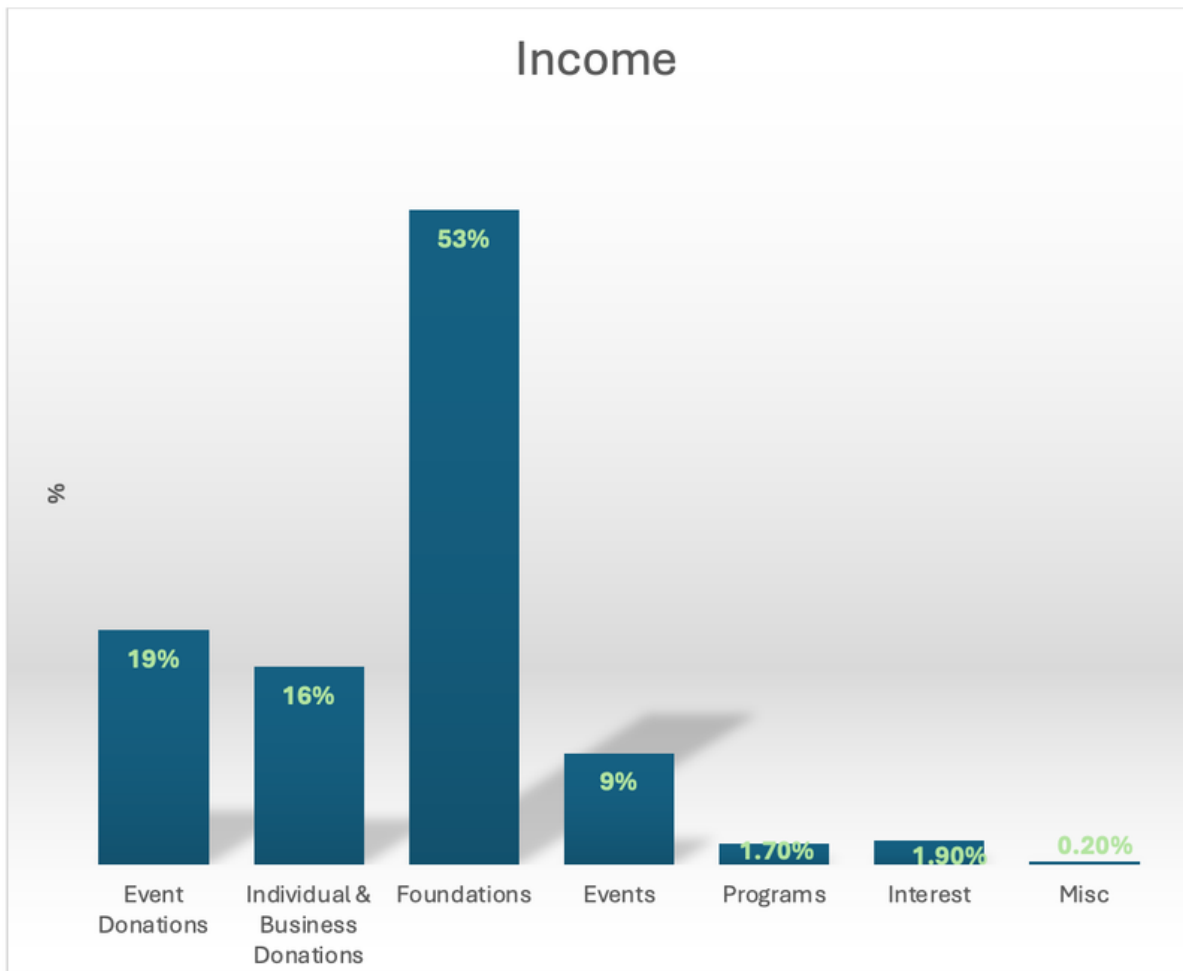
Cocktail Party & Auction

Our Cocktail Party & Auction is always a wonderful event. It is a casual afternoon event that brings together family, friends and beneficiaries of our programs. Our guests enjoy the atmosphere and the slightly competitive bidding environment, but they know it is all for a good cause. Thanks to our attendees and sponsors, we raised almost \$10,000 at our 2025 event.



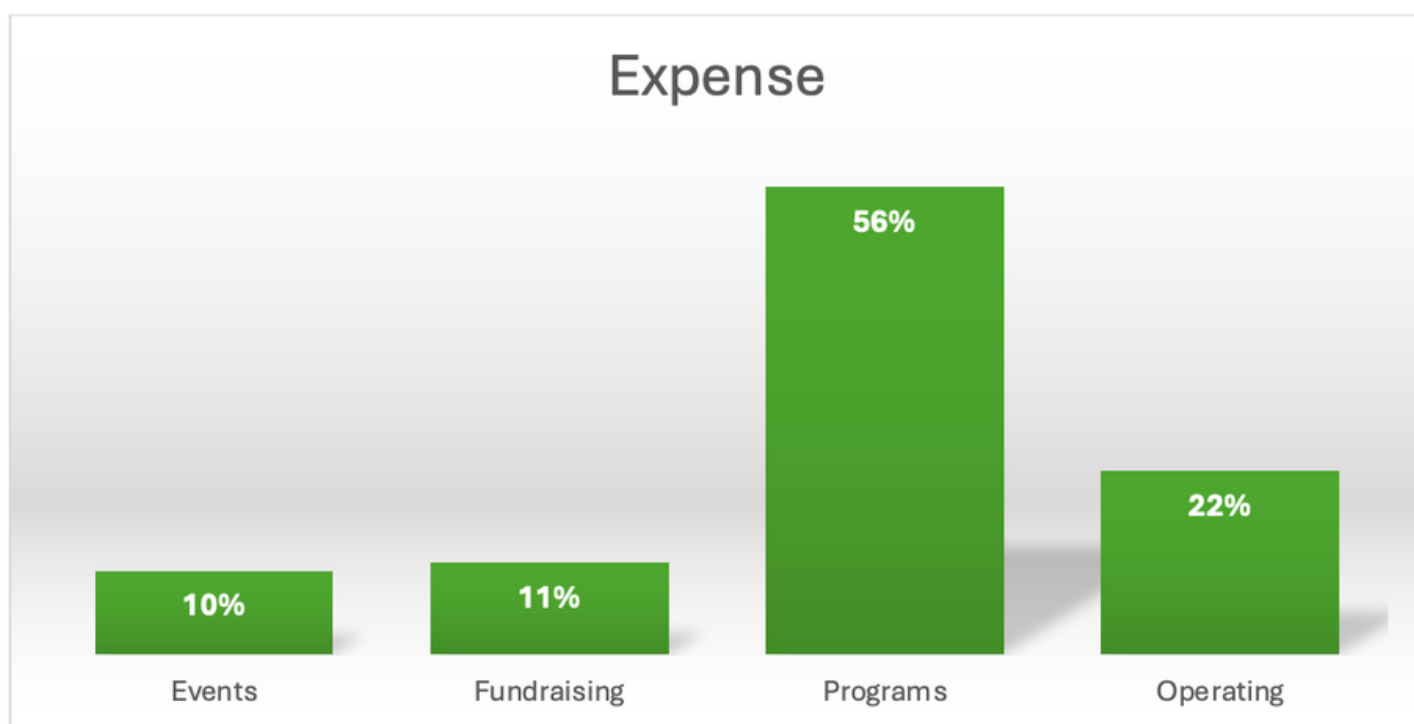
FINANCIALS

 INCOME



FINANCIALS

 EXPENSE



LOOKING AHEAD

 2026

As we close out 2025, we are very much looking forward to continuing our work with the State Cancer Coalition, particularly in regard to Survivorship. Meg has been asked to continue as the Chairperson of the workgroup.

Two coalitions from the State Cancer Coalition, Hunterdon Mercer and Ocean Monmouth have written grants that include money to develop programs in partnership with the Elixir Fund. We are looking forward to future developments in that area.

Through Meg's work with the Rutgers Cancer Survivorship Outcomes Center, we have already had some discussions about hosting a future Survivor/Physicians Roundtable at Rutgers Cancer Institute.

We look forward to updating you on these programs in 2026.