

Pink  
Pearl

Cancer, we get it.  
Support for young women.

# Annual Report

May 1, 2020 – April 30, 2021

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# Letter from our Founder

Dear Pink Pearl Community Members,

I am pleased to present you with Pink Pearl Canada's 2020/2021 Annual Report.

First off, I hope you and your loved ones are keeping well. 2021 has certainly proven to be another interesting year for everyone.

Receiving a cancer diagnosis at a young age is never an easy situation. Add on the challenges of navigating a diagnosis through COVID and our members needed additional support. Seeing this need, Pink Pearl's key objective for this fiscal year was to focus on supporting the mental health of our community. We formally welcomed social worker Ashley Meitzkel to our team. Ashley has been a part of Pink Pearl family for years and with this permanent role we are looking forward to continuing to grow and develop programs that support our populations mental health. This year we introduced our Peer Support Program and expanded our One on One Counseling Program.

Melaina Gasbarrino continues as our Programs & Communications Manager. On the program side, we have supported over 3,000 women to date. We continued to run our Learning Series online and introduced our Local Socials in the same format.

Additionally, we have been fortunate to have all of our Board Members stay on to help continue to guide the organization through these unprecedented times.

2021 marked our 15th Annual Black & White with a Touch of Pink fundraiser. Once again we held it virtually, and were supported by the events team Courtney McNamara at King Events and Laura Blinkhorn at Blinkhorn Communications. The evening was a tremendous success, raising over \$26,000 to fuel our programs. This brings our cumulative funds raised from Black & White events to just over \$600,000 over the past 15 years.

We also held our second annual Together 5K virtual Fun Run where we raised over \$12,000 to support our programs. Participants took part by organizing runs in their own towns. We are looking forward to holding this again next summer.

The growth and success of Pink Pearl would not be possible without it's dedicated volunteers. This year, we recognized Courtney McNamara for the hard work and years of dedication she has brought to her role overseeing our fundraisers. We are very fortunate to have her among our extraordinary team of dedicated volunteers and supporters. To name a few from this past year, Kristine Dustin with Harness the Hope, Maria Mavridis with Anchor Niagara and Tony DiFruscia with Crane.

I am grateful for the year we have had, and look forward to working together to make a difference in the lives of young women with cancer.

Thank you for your continued support of Pink Pearl Canada.

Stay well,  
Elise Gasbarrino  
Founder & Executive Director Pink Pearl Canada



# OUR STORY

Pink Pearl Canada was conceived by ovarian cancer survivor Elise Gasbarrino. While undergoing cancer treatment at 21 years old, Elise felt certain elements were missing from her experience—a way to connect with women her age facing the same issues, and a means for them to conquer their issues together. Her vision transformed into Pink Pearl Canada.

# OUR CAUSE

Pink Pearl Canada is a registered charitable organization that provides support, facilitates connections and empowers self-identifying young women who are courageously overcoming the social and emotional challenges of being diagnosed with cancer across Canada. We have successfully raised more than \$650,000 to date through reputable initiatives, such as *Black & White with a Touch of Pink*, our annual fundraising event, and *Together 5k*, our virtual fun run and fundraising initiative. Funds raised provide effective and fully-funded programming for young women facing cancer of any type.

## OUR MISSION

Pink Pearl Canada is a community-based charitable organization that provides support, facilitates connections and empowers young women facing cancer.

## OUR VALUES

Peer support enables us to connect with other young women to face the mental and emotional challenges of cancer together.

We can use knowledge to empower decision-making throughout the cancer experience.

Take the time for reflection and self-care.

Everyone has a story, and cancer is only one chapter.



"Receiving a support package was the first time I didn't feel alone when I was first diagnosed with cancer. It reminded me that I would feel supported and be able to connect with to others who just got it"

Program Participant

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*Amanda Marshall, Chair of the Board*

Amanda Marshall joined Pink Pearl in 2015 to oversee the finance and tax function of the organization. She is a Partner at KPMG LLP where she leads the tax due diligence and structuring elements of transactions. Amanda holds a degree in Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University and a CPA, CA designation. She also volunteers with a non-profit organization providing customized experiences to young women facing metastatic cancer.



*Laura Mitchell, Medical*

Laura Mitchell is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in the Adolescent and Young Adult Program at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre and was one of the leaders in the development and launch of the program in 2014. Laura is also an Adjunct Lecturer in the Lawrence S Bloomberg Faculty of Nursing; University of Toronto. Laura is active in AYA initiatives locally, nationally and internationally and has been the co-author of several AYA publications. Laura is looking forward to working more closely with the AYA community partners and is honoured to be a member of the Pink Pearl board.



*Nicole Almond, Strategy*

Nicole Almond joined Pink Pearl's board in the fall of 2017. Nicole brings her knowledge of the non-profit sector with a decade of experience at Enactus Canada, a national charity focused on youth leadership development, including five years as its President. Nicole has been involved in other charitable causes and organizations, including serving as the Chair of Ovarian Cancer Canada's walk of Hope in Toronto. Nicole holds a Bachelors of Business Administration from Wilfrid Laurier University.



*Rena McDonald, Finance*

Rena McDonald holds a CPA/CMA accounting designation. She is currently on the Board for the Hotel Dieu Charitable Foundation and served previously as the Treasurer and Board member of the Niagara Community Foundation. Also, Rena was a member of the Hotel Financial & Technology Professionals board of directors, a former member of the Ministry of Tourism Policy Advisory Council and the Financial Advisory Council of Holy Rosary Church in Thorold.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



*George Gasbarrino, People*

For over 30 years George has been in Human Resources Management where he led various companies in different sectors (process & assembly manufacturing, services lodging & food services across Northern communities in Canada, Alaska, and the Gulf of Mexico). The most recent of his roles as the Labour Relations Officer with the Police Services Organization. George has been apart of BOD's for various charities; George Jeffery Children Centre, local United Way Chapters and most recently Pink Pearl and has organized employee events for United Way, the Shelter House and Habitat Home builds.



*Vittoria Varalli, Strategy*

Vittoria has been with Pink Pearl since its inception. Vittoria is the VP of Sustainability at Sobeys. She holds a BBA from Wilfrid Laurier University and a JD from Osgoode Hall Law School. She is a member of the New York State bar.



*Nicole Le Dressay, Finance*

Nicole is a Senior Manager in the M&A Tax practice at KPMG LLP. Nicole holds a degree in Business Administration from the University of Toronto and a CPA, CA designation. Nicole joined Pink Pearl in 2017 to assist Amanda Marshall with the day-to-day finance and tax function of the organization.



*Dr. Punam Rana, Medical*

Dr. Punam Rana is a medical oncologist working at Humber River Hospital. She completed her medical oncologist training at University of Toronto and completed a fellowship at McMaster University where she participated in research related to the Adolescent and Young Adult (AYA) population. Punam has a special interest in the AYA population and improving the quality of life of these patients.

## OUR PROGRAMS

Our programs are developed using experience-based design, taking into consideration the needs of self-identifying young women between 18-40 years, and building effective programming to fulfill those needs, at no cost to the participants. Over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have hosted all programs virtually.

**Retreats** encourage program participants to connect, self-reflect, and share experiences in a safe and peer-supported environment

**One on One** offers individual counselling sessions for young women to feel supported while navigating a cancer diagnosis

**Local Socials** provide a relaxed environment for young women with cancer to connect and to learn more about our support-based programs

**Learning Series** provides a supportive space for participants to learn from experts about a topic of interest

**Pink Pearl Support Packages** contain helpful resources, guided questions, and a symbolic bracelet of hope for young women newly diagnosed with cancer in participating hospitals and wellness centres across Canada

**Post-Secondary Scholarship** is awarded to a young woman with cancer who is involved in her community and attending a post-secondary institution

**Legacy Program** is an ever-evolving list of resources, tools and experiences for young women to begin exploring their own journey with end of life planning

**Ambassador Program** invites our program participants to facilitate Local Socials and lend a listening ear to young women facing cancer

**Private Facebook Group** provides an online community of support for young women with cancer to share and learn together





## PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES



"Receiving the Pink Pearl Scholarship has been a blessing. It helped reduce my concern about the costs associated with pursuing my master's degree and the well wishes from Pink Pearl have meant a lot. I am so grateful."

*Olivia*  
- 2020/21 Scholarship Recipient

On Christmas Eve in 2019, Michelle was diagnosed with Acute Promyelocytic Leukemia. She underwent treatment at Princess Margaret Cancer Centre with her friends and family by her side. Though now in the past, cancer will always be one part of her story.

*"This is why I wanted to get involved in an organization that provides unique support to young women with cancer in ways other support programs may not be able to. It's such a unique and meaningful organization — I am so grateful to be apart of it."*

*Michelle*  
- Ambassador + Program Participant





## PARTICIPANT PERSPECTIVES

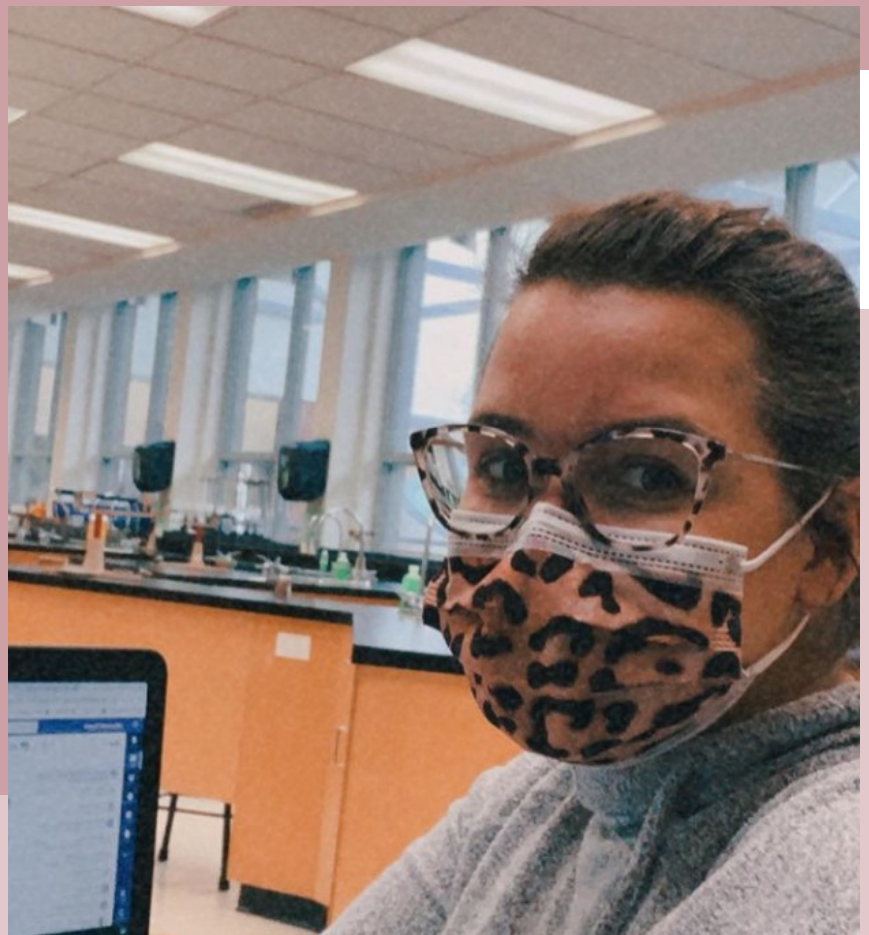


"Pink Pearl is an amazing support group that helps women impacted by cancer, and I am so grateful for all they have done for me. I am also so grateful for all of the amazing women I have met through this organization, I've truly made lifelong friendships with women across Canada."

*Vanessa*  
- Program Recipient

"The scholarship was a huge financial blessing! COVID in general was such a huge hit to our lives so having the burden taken off of how I was going to pay for school made it so much better. I was able to focus on my studies without needing to pick up a part-time job."

*Mary*  
- 2019/20 Scholarship Recipient



## OUR FUNDRAISING EVENTS & INITIATIVES

We have successfully raised more than \$600,000 to date to directly fund our support programs for young women facing cancer through our key annual fundraising initiatives.

### Black & White with a Touch of Pink

Black & White with a Touch of Pink is our annual springtime fundraising event generating donations for our suite of support-based programming. This year, we hosted our second VIRTUAL EVENT to raise funds, awareness and spirits from the comfort of our own homes. On February 11, over 300 people tuned into the live event, raising over \$26,000 to support our programs. A special thank you to all of our sponsors, hosts and supporters. We greatly appreciate your support.



### Together 5k + Third-Party Events

This year, we wanted to bring our community together in a unique way, hosting our second virtual fun run, Together 5k. From the comfort of our own neighbourhoods, we ran or walked 5km or 10km raising over \$12,000! Many of our supporters have also hosted their own virtual events and donated funds back to us, together raising over \$25,000.





## KEY LEARNINGS

Pink Pearl Canada is continually supporting young women facing cancer. By working alongside our team and in connecting with our partners, we are expanding the organization to best suit the needs of our unique population. Our key learnings are highlighted below:

### Our Programs

This year, with our quick pivot to virtual programs, we were able to support young women facing cancer in all regions of Canada. We connected on ways we can best support our young population during these isolating times. By listening to the needs of our community, we developed a One-on-One counseling program, where we provide psychosocial support for our participants. We will continue to expand this program as we see the need of providing mental health support while facing a cancer diagnosis.

To commemorate those who have passed away, our team hosted our first virtual 'A Time to Remember', and created a Legacy Program to support members of our community through end of life planning.

In October, we hosted our first Virtual Retreat where we welcomed over 60 young women from across Canada. Our team also continued to host Virtual Learning Series sessions on a monthly basis. In partnership with Sephora, we hosted virtual Brave Beauty Classes to learn about some beauty tips and tricks while navigating a cancer diagnosis. We also partnered with other CBO's to connect with our wider population to educate others on how to navigate life during COVID. Finally, during the holidays we partnered with BeautyCounter to deliver hundreds of beauty care packages to young women facing cancer in select hospitals. We are continually working on expanding our programs across Canada. This upcoming year, we will continue to offer all programs virtually.

### Our Volunteers + Team Members

With the guidance of our board of directors, and the work our volunteers we are continuing to reach more young women facing cancer. Our part-time Executive Director and part-time Programs and Communications Manager continue to work closely together to ensure all aspects of the organization are running smoothly and we are developing programs that speak to the needs of our community.

### Our Fundraising

Pink Pearl's revenue is generated through various streams – third-party fundraising events, generous donations by our supporters and our annual *Black & White with a Touch of Pink* event. This year, we hosted the B&W virtually, and hosted our first Together 5k, a virtual fun run to raise awareness and support from our sponsors and community. We continue to minimize expenses and partner with likeminded organizations to support our programs.

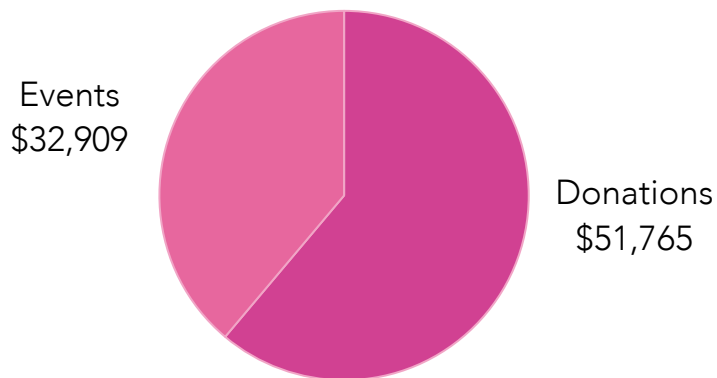
# FINANCIALS

Pink Pearl Canada relies on the financial support of our community through net funds raised at our fundraising events, with third-party fundraisers and donations from our supporters. Donors provide the funds to fuel our program expansion as our team continue to support young women facing cancer across Canada.

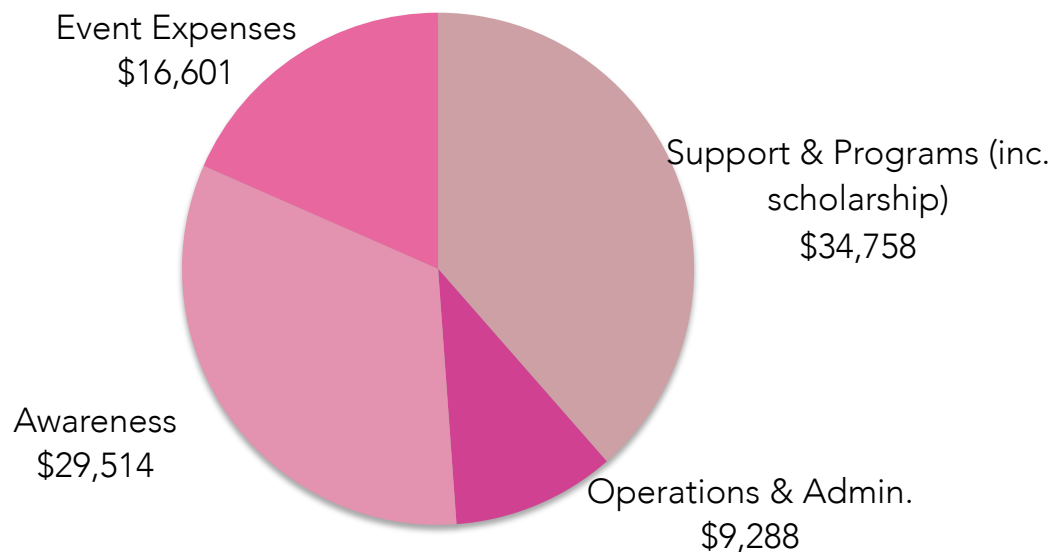
Below is a breakdown of our revenue sources and expenses in FY2020-2021. As we continue our fundraising efforts in FY2021-2022, we continue to shift our focus to increasing personal and corporate donations, while reducing event-related expenses.

The audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending April 30, 2021, including the notes to the financial statements and the auditor's report, are available via [info@pinkpearlcanada.org](mailto:info@pinkpearlcanada.org).

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES





## SUCSESSES

To date, Pink Pearl Canada has supported over 3,000 young women with cancer

Hosted 14 Retreats in Niagara, Toronto, Kingston and virtually

Supported hundreds of women at our Local Socials and Learning Series

Provided over 2,500 Support Packages to young women recently diagnosed with cancer in hospitals + wellness centres

Awarded twelve \$1,000 Post-Secondary Scholarships

