



CaringMatters

Facing Illness & Grief. Finding Compassion & Support.

2019 Annual Report

July 1, 2018 - June 30, 2019

301-869-4673 | [CaringMatters.org](https://www.CaringMatters.org)

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Dear Friends of CaringMatters,

Every day, we pass people on the sidewalk, drive alongside them in traffic, wave to kids riding their bikes, and share small talk with both friends and strangers. These interactions make up the rhythm of life. However, keep in mind that behind the smiles, the waves, and the friendly chatter, many people in our community are caring for a loved one who is ill, grieving the loss of a loved one, or even facing illness or end of life themselves. Every single one of those people deserve compassionate support as they move through life's most difficult challenges. Our programs connect our large network of trained volunteers with these individuals and families to provide the critical social and emotional support they need.

This report, compiled for Fiscal Year 2019, represents the scope and impact of our services and documents our progress and accomplishments. However, this analysis only tells part of the story. Behind each one of these numbers is an actual person, a family or a child – community members who allow themselves to drop the forced smile and the friendly small talk to reach out and accept support during times of illness, loss and grief. We never lose sight of this reality and the powerful impact of our work.

As we move into our fourth decade of service to the Montgomery County community, we pledge to remain focused on this mission of compassionate support. Thank you to our many volunteers, supporters, and community partners, who work with our board members and staff on this very important and special mission.

Most sincerely,



Nancy Richardson

Nancy Richardson, RN
Chair, Board of Directors



Allison Stearns

Allison K. Stearns, MS, MPH, LCPC
Executive Director

Volunteer Helping Hands

Volunteer Helping Hands is CaringMatters' caregiving program that provides community-based social and emotional support, free of charge to Montgomery County residents of all ages with serious, life-limiting illnesses. These individuals are facing an acute decline in functioning or progression of illness and can benefit from extra support. Services include, but are not limited to: companionship and emotional support, assistance with household tasks, respite care, patient advocacy, and limited transportation to appointments.

98 clients and 139 family members served this year.



100% of clients reported that visits from volunteers helped them feel less isolated.



100% of family caregivers reported that volunteer visits provided helpful respite time.



CaringMatters is licensed by the state of Maryland as a Limited Hospice Care Program. We supplement general hospice care programs and support patients who are still pursuing curative treatment, as well as those who do not have a six month or less prognosis.

**"Your volunteers were a lifeline as I cared for my daughter.
Thank you, thank you, thank you." - Family Member**

Adult Bereavement Support

Bereavement support groups, facilitated by trained volunteers, allow participants to meet others who are also grieving, share their stories, and learn from one another. Groups are organized to bring together people grieving similar losses, such as spousal/partner loss, parent loss, or suicide loss.

Each December, CaringMatters hosts Tree of Love, a community-wide memorial ceremony where participants support one another and remember loved ones.

172 people attended 46 Adult Bereavement Groups this year.

82 people attended our Tree of Love Ceremony.



92% of group members reported that they have gained some tools to use in their daily life.



90% of group members reported that the intensity of their grief isn't the same as before.



CaringMatters partnered with Montgomery Community Media to produce a video public service announcement on our grief support services.



“The most valuable thing about the group was their willingness to listen... and allow me to be myself.” - Group Member

Bereaved Caregivers' Retreat

CaringMatters developed and delivered the Bereaved Caregivers' Retreat for family/friend primary caregivers whose loved one has died within the past 2 years. This unique weekend retreat, offered free of charge at the Claggett Center, enabled participants to connect with other former caregivers who related to their experiences caring for seriously ill loved ones. Therapeutic group activities included grief support, commemoration of loved ones, self-care, relaxation and strategies for refocusing on life post-caregiving.

17 people, ranging in age from 37 to 84 years old, attended.



100% of attendees reported that they are better prepared to transition from their prior caregiving role to focus on their own life.



100% of attendees reported that they gained some tools/approaches that they will use to renew their lives.



"Feeling calmer, I can look back on happier times instead of dwelling on my loss. I found ways to move forward." - Retreat Attendee

Camp Erin Montgomery County

This weekend overnight camp for grieving children is part of a national network of Camp Erin programs. The camp serves children and teens, ages 6-17, offering age-appropriate discussions and creative, fun-filled activities designed to help children share their feelings with peers who have had similar experiences. Camp Erin Montgomery County is a partnership between CaringMatters and Bar-T, Inc.

52 children and youth, ages 6-17, were served.



88% of campers reported that Camp Erin helped them talk about their feelings.



88% of campers reported that they have new tools to help them with their grief after attending Camp Erin.



"We are not alone if we open our hearts to one another." - Camper

Good Grief Club

These seven-week support groups help children in grades K-12 explore their feelings, develop healthy coping strategies, and find comfort and safety in learning that they are not alone. These groups are facilitated by trained CaringMatters volunteers in partnership with Montgomery County Public Schools, independent schools, and other community-based organizations.

247 students, grades K-12, attended Good Grief Clubs during the 2018-2019 school year.



100% of students who attended Good Grief Clubs reported feeling less alone than they did before the group started.



100% of middle and high school students who attended Good Grief Clubs reported that they were able to better identify and express their feelings about their loss.



The Good Grief Club "Duck Fishing Game" helps younger students share memories connected with their person who has died. This colorful, interactive, age-appropriate activity lightens the atmosphere and often brings laughter. CaringMatters' volunteers crafted the quilted "duck ponds," created the fishing rods, and attached the questions to the colorful ducks.

"One student has not spoken about his father's death. He coped by acting as class clown. Since participating, his behavior and grades have improved." - School Counselor

Family Nights

CaringMatters' Family Nights are designed for families who have experienced the death of a loved one. Each workshop is held prior to a major holiday so families can learn coping skills, plan for how to handle celebrations, and mark the absence of their loved ones. Following the activities, families are invited to enjoy dinner and conversations with one another.

16 families comprised of 23 adults and 31 children (ages five through adult), attended at least one Family Night.



91% of adult participants reported that they learned new ways to handle the difficult emotions around family celebrations and holidays.



87% of child participants reported that they learned new ways to handle the difficult emotions around family celebrations and holidays.



Family Nights' art educators presented the program to 300 attendees at the National Conference for the Art Education Association in March, 2019.

"It was very helpful to hear other people's stories. Now I understand that I'm not the only one going through grief and missing my dad." - Participant

Community Education

Our Community Education program works to raise awareness and better equip people to address end-of-life and grief-related issues. We host an educational series called Seasons of Caring, offer continuing education (CEU) workshops for professionals, and facilitate dialogue on relevant topics in the community.

446 community members and professionals attended workshops and trainings this year.

Professional Development Workshop

Suicide: Exploring the Research to Foster Understanding and Healing
*Offered in partnership with National Institutes of Health



Our specialized Advance Care Planning workshops, funded by the Maryland Department of Health, continued in FY 2019, providing information on resources to complete an advance directive, a plan for end-of-life care and the appointment of a health care agent.

Seasons of Caring Workshops

- Managing Grief in the Age of 24-Hour News
- *Voices of Grief* Film Screening and Discussion
- Caregivers' Toolkit: Community Resources for Patients and Families Facing Serious Illness
- *Nine to Ninety* Film Screening and Discussion



95% of Seasons of Caring attendees agreed or strongly agreed that they would apply what they had learned.



92% of Seasons of Caring attendees found the workshops appropriate to the cultural/ethnic diversity of themselves and those they served.

“An excellent and informative seminar! I plan on sharing this information with my entire school counseling department.” - Community Education Attendee

Volunteers Add Value

CaringMatters' services are delivered by screened and trained volunteers, all of whom receive ongoing guidance, continuing education and supervision. Our volunteers are valued for their compassion, their willingness to provide assistance in time of need, and their many interests and talents that support all aspects of the organization, including operations and fundraising.

CaringMatters leveraged 16,071 hours of volunteer support, the equivalent of nearly eight full-time staff.

\$418,118

\$418,118* is the monetary value of volunteer hours in fiscal year 2019.

61%

Our operating budget would increase by 61% if it included the monetary value of volunteer time.



Our volunteers speak the following languages: English, French, German, Gujarati, Hindi, Italian, Korean, Mandarin, and Spanish

*Based on information from independentsector.org

"The work we do, whether it's caregiving or bereavement, puts us in a sacred place with people. It connects us as human beings." - Volunteer

Special Accomplishments

- Completed Organizational Rebrand, including the development of a new website.
- Conducted Strategic Planning Workgroups, which included board and senior staff, to develop the Strategic Plan for FY 2020-2022.
- Selected by *From the Heart Productions* and the film's director for exclusive screening rights in the Washington, D.C. area for *Voices of Grief: Honoring the Sacred Journey*, an acclaimed documentary offering a new perspective on how to honor, transform and integrate our grief.
- Earned GuideStar 2019 Platinum Seal of Transparency.

Accountability



In 2019, CaringMatters was again awarded the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency, showcasing our focus on mission-based results, as well as providing transparency to current and potential donors.



CaringMatters also maintains its Standards of Excellence Designation with Maryland Nonprofits. Organizations receiving this prestigious recognition have been carefully evaluated and found to consistently model high professionalism in their self-regulation of ethical and accountability practices.



“ Thank you for making this important film available to the public and for moderating such a constructive discussion.” - *Voices of Grief* Film Screening Attendee

Fundraiser Highlights

- **September 2018** – Silver Linings Gala honoring Toni Robinson, Bar-T (Nancy and Joe Richardson) and the Vilardo Family, in memory of Dick and Jody Vilardo
- **October 2018** – BOWL-A-THON sponsored by Shulman Rogers
- **December 2018** – Barnes & Noble Gift Wrapping
- **May 2019** – Raise Your Glass Wine Tasting at the home of The Honorable Jeffrey Z. Slavin



“What a fabulous evening! I’m so inspired by the CaringMatters community and plan to register for volunteer training!” - Gala Attendee

Financial Highlights

Fiscal Year July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019

Revenues

■ Grants, Awards & Donations	\$332,530	35.5%
■ Special Events	\$338,467	36.1%
■ In-kind Contributions	\$133,614	14.3%
■ Net Investment Earnings	\$132,231	14.1%
Total Revenue	\$936,842	

Expenses

■ Program Services	\$754,592	83.1%*
■ Management & General	\$ 88,363	9.7%
■ Fundraising	\$ 64,823	7.1%
Total Expense	\$907,778*	**

When needed, CaringMatters uses funds from its investment accounts to support operations.

* For every \$100 in expenses \$83.20 is spent on program services

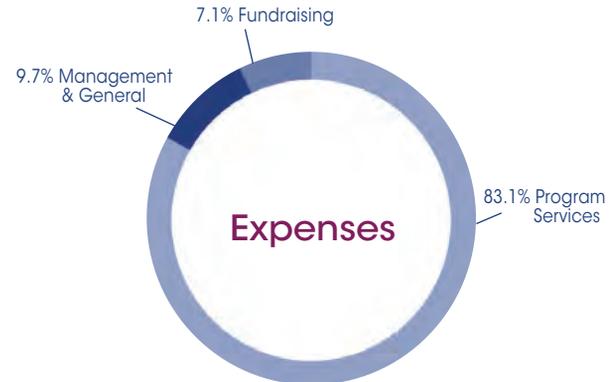
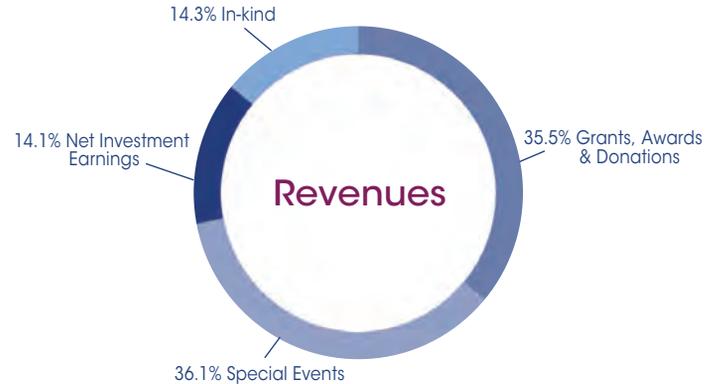
**Includes in-kind and depreciation expenses

Assets, Liabilities & Net Assets

Statement of Financial Position Summary

	As of June 30, 2019
Total Assets	\$3,874,182
Total Liabilities	(\$ 85,686)
Net Assets	\$3,788,496

None of our services are reimbursable by Medicare or funded by any other Federal or State source. All services are free of charge.



Thank you to our Volunteers

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Thank you to our Volunteers

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Our Vision

CaringMatters envisions a community that accepts death as a part of life; where the processes of dying and grieving are embraced without stigma; where everyone has access to support services without charge; and where no one dies or grieves without support.



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