

Zen Caregiving Project

Impact Report

2023-2024

(combined 2023 and 2024 years)

Joint Message from Executive Director and Board President

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2023 and 2024 at Zen Caregiving Project, we are filled with deep gratitude for the growing circle of supporters who make our work possible—our donors, partners, volunteers, and caregivers. The strength of this community continues to fuel our mission and light our path forward.

Our evidence-based mindfulness courses helped over 95% of caregivers learn how to apply mindfulness in their daily routines and more than 93% create stronger connections with their patients.

We expanded our Mindful Caregiving Education to new audiences, including frontline healthcare professionals, family caregivers, and nonprofit staff. We also developed innovative program offerings and strengthened our evaluation practices—ensuring our work is both compassionate and evidence-based.

We also continued to invest in our dedicated volunteer program, which remains a cornerstone of our service to individuals nearing the end of life. This community of mindful presence continues to bring profound human connection to those in moments of vulnerability and transition.

Thank you for walking with us on this journey. This impact report is a reflection of your belief in our mission: to nurture caregivers and those they care for through the teachings of mindfulness, compassion, and human connection.

Warm regards,





Roy Remer,
Executive Director

Chris Panos,
Board President

Our Mission

Zen Caregiving Project's mission is to nurture caregivers and those they care for by teaching skills rooted in mindfulness and compassion while fostering connections.

Our Vision

A world in which every person is well cared for and valued.

Our Values

We see caregiving as a meaningful and deeply human activity.

Mindfulness

We practice being with things as they are, without judgment.

Service

We believe that serving others is a meeting of equals and is mutually beneficial.

Compassion

We are committed to witnessing and meeting suffering with an open heart.

Universality of Loss

We recognize and accept that the experience of loss is universal and unites us in shared vulnerability.

Connection

We welcome all persons to heal through deep connection and community, based on shared humanity.

Spirituality

We are rooted in the Zen Buddhist tradition, teaching that all beings are united by their dependence on one another.

Board of Directors + Staff

BOARD

Chris Panos,
President

Anne Vrolyk,
Secretary

Paul Haller
Treasurer

George “Chip” Feiss

Anne Kinderman, MD

Ali Shabahangi



STAFF

Alistair Shanks,
Volunteer Program Manager

Mary Doane,
Supervising Instructor

Nathalie Rivera,
Business Development Manager

Tina Synder,
Operations Assistant

Roy Remer,
Executive Director

Programs Overview

Volunteer Caregiver Program

Since the founding of Zen Caregiving Project, our volunteer caregiving program in San Francisco has been the heart of the organization offering volunteer opportunities in palliative, hospice, and chronic care settings. Our volunteers serve residents living with chronic and serious illness at two-sites in San Francisco, Laguna Honda Hospital & Rehabilitation Center and The Cadillac Hotel.

Mindful Caregiving Education Program

Zen Caregiving Project views the health and well being of caregivers as the foundation of our healthcare system. We know caregiving can be extremely difficult. Drawing on our thirty-five year history of training volunteer caregivers, Mindful Caregiving Education (MCE) was developed to address the underlying emotional challenges faced by family, professional, and clinical caregivers.

- *CAREgiving* is an online course grounded in mindfulness that introduces accessible tools and approaches that support caregivers in building emotional resilience and sustaining high quality care with wisdom and compassion. Class sessions directly address the emotional complexities and unique rewards that come with the important role of being a caregiver.
- *Essentials of Mindful Caregiving* offers a deeper dive into approaches to integrating mindfulness into all aspects of caregiving. Formatted as a four-part online course *Essentials* introduces mindfulness tools and approaches that support caregivers to build their emotional resilience and maintain high-quality and compassionate care.
- *CAREgiving Self-paced* is designed to fit into any busy schedule. An easily accessible course that allows caregivers to take up to six one-hour self-paced sessions at their convenience anytime of day. Each session of this online, self-paced course includes a short video (8 to 10 minutes), engaging activities, practical tips and tools, and suggested home practices.
- *Caregiver Support Circles* are available to caregivers upon completion of any of our MCE courses. This offering supports caregivers in strengthening their mindful caregiving skills learned while connecting with others in a relaxed format. These weekly one hour sessions are lightly facilitated and include meditation, check in, and discussion.
- Tuesday Morning Caregiver Meditations are available to any caregiver looking to establish a foundation of mindful awareness. Each session offers two back to back 15-minute guided meditations led by an experienced instructor. Following the second meditation, participants are encouraged to stay for comments and questions.

Mindful Caregiving Education Impact

Created in **2015**, **Mindful Caregiving Education** made great strides during the two years, **2023 and 2024**. We entered a partnership with Homebridge to deliver our CAREgiving course in multiple languages throughout the state of California to IHSS care providers. Under the banner Career Pathways, thousands of caregivers gained access to techniques that help build emotional resilience and enhance the quality of care they provide. We are proud that our courses were extremely popular among the many training options available to care providers.

During this period, we offered more options for busy caregivers to access our curriculum. We made available an asynchronous version of our **CAREgiving** course in partnership with TEND, an online mindfulness education hosting platform.

We also launched **Caregiver Support Circles in 2024** offering caregivers more opportunities to receive support.

MCE Advisory Panel Members

Kate Nitze, LCSW, MFA
Christina Irving, LCSW
Cynthia Carter-Perrilliat, MPA
Sandy Stokes, RN, MSN
Eren Gutierrez
Ruben Chavez
Heather Harris, MD, FAAHPM
Nancy Shier-Anzelmo, MSG
Anne Kinderman, MD

Impact Through the Numbers

Volunteer Program Impact

Laguna Honda Hospital

Our volunteers delivered over **9,000 hours** of service each year. An equivalent of over **$300,000** of value provided.

(Based on $34.79/hour per volunteer according to Independent Sector)

The Cadillac Hotel

Our volunteers delivered over **750 hours** of service each year. An equivalent of over **$26,000** of value provided.

(Based on $34.79/hour per volunteer according to Independent Sector)

Mindful Caregiving Education Impact

2023 MCE

708 course sessions delivered
7,456 course participants

2024 MCE

645 course sessions delivered
5,390 course participants

Survey Results

98%
of survey respondents would recommend the course to others

95%
strongly agree or agree that as a result of taking the course they understand how to use mindfulness in caregiving activities

93%
feel better prepared to cope with caregiving challenges

90%
believe taking the course will improve the care they give to others

During **2023** and **2024, 112 weekly** Caregiver meditation sessions delivered

In 2023,

76 Participants in free educational webinars

In 2024,

21 caregiver support circle sessions were facilitated

Volunteer Program Impact

Alistair Shanks, our volunteer manager, recently spoke with R., a family caregiver whose mother resides at Laguna Honda Hospital. R. shared her experiences and highlighted the invaluable support she and her mother receive from Zen Caregiving Project volunteers.

R. views the volunteers as a crucial "bridge between the staff and the residents," a connection she particularly appreciated as she navigated the hospital environment for the first time with a family member there.

Over the years, R. has developed a deep bond with many of the volunteers. She feels she can discuss her mother with them in ways she can't with other family members. *"They (the volunteers) know what you're going through more than your family knows what you're going through... I can tell them things they understand."*

> These conversations are **"therapeutic"** for R., allowing her to process her experiences with her mother in the moment and release emotional burdens before returning home. "I could release it here and continue on my day."

Volunteers have also helped R. cope with her fears and anguish as her mother's dementia progresses. They normalize the experience, reassuring her that her feelings are part of a natural process. "I talk to them about this. I see different phases happen. I tell them it's a new phase I'm going through. And I share with them what I'm going through. And they tell me, oh, this is normal. This is going to happen."

In the decade since her mother moved to Laguna Honda, R. has become close to some long-term volunteers, and observed others come and go. She makes a point of expressing her gratitude to new volunteers. "Every time I meet new people, I want to tell them, thank you for volunteering. It means the world, not only to the resident, but also to family members." Initially, she felt guilty for taking up their time, believing volunteers were solely for residents. However, she now recognizes that volunteers support the entire family, which ultimately enhances the resident's experience.

As R. puts it, *"I'm like, helping me helps her. OK. So you're not just helping her. You're helping me. When you help me, when you talk to me, this is helping me. I'm a better helper with her because you're talking to me. So I use it that way. So you're helping both.“*

R. found it meaningful to discover that volunteers are "just regular people," like herself. She grew up with a perception of volunteers as "luminaries and socialites" from old movies. "When I found out volunteers were just regular people, I was surprised. Because I had them on such a pedestal. Which they should be on a pedestal. But I thought that only a certain group of people did this. Those who were wealthy and had the time to do it. And I realized it was just everyday people. And I found that refreshing and enlightening. It never crossed my mind."

These "regular people" have a profound impact: "...they're like a linchpin to me” R. says, “And they make a difference."

Client Partners

HOMEBRIDGE

Enso Village SM
A KENDAL AFFILIATE

ELEGANCE BERKELEY

INFINITO HOMECARE

IMERMAN ANGELS

Curry Senior Center

1440 MULTIVERSITY

momentive

ARCH hospice

2023 INCOME

Contributions and Grants $ 648,460
Program Service Income $ 164,943
Investment Income $ 41,298
Total Income $ 854,701

2023 EXPENSES

Program $ 408,632
Management $ 209,149
Fundraising $ 103,074
Total Expenses $ 720,855
Net Operating $ 133,846

2024 INCOME

Contributions and Grants $ 203,381
Program Service Income $ 78,189
Investment Income $ 71,208
Total Income $ 352,778

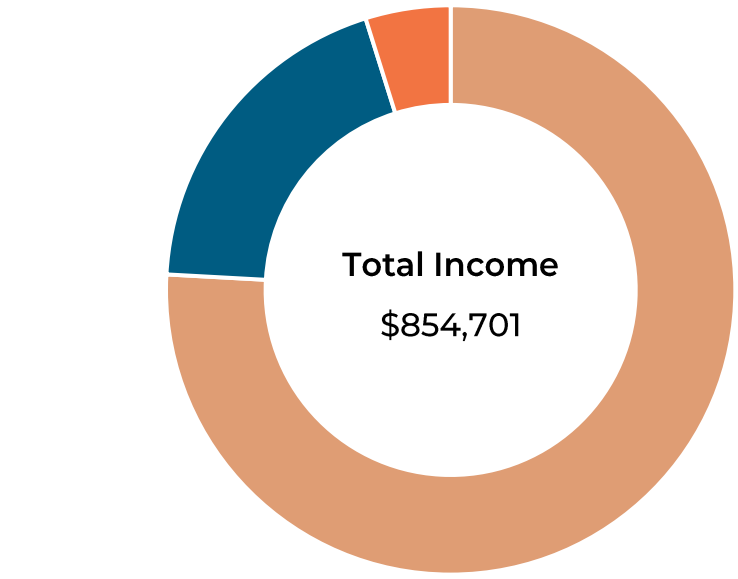
2024 EXPENSES

Program $ 528,947
Management $ 218,558
Fundraising $ 972
Total Expenses $ 748,477
Net Operating ($ 395,699)

*This large deficit in 2024 was a function of a longer than expected timeline to build a steady fee-for-service revenue stream from contractual partners and the unexpected loss of California state funding for a grant to our program partner Homebridge for their Career Pathways program.

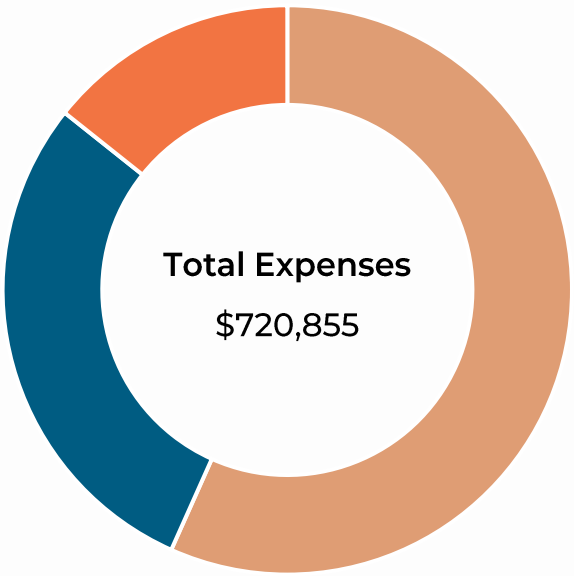
2023 Financials

2023 Income



- Contributions and Grants $648,460
- Program Service Revenue $164,943
- Investment Income $41,298

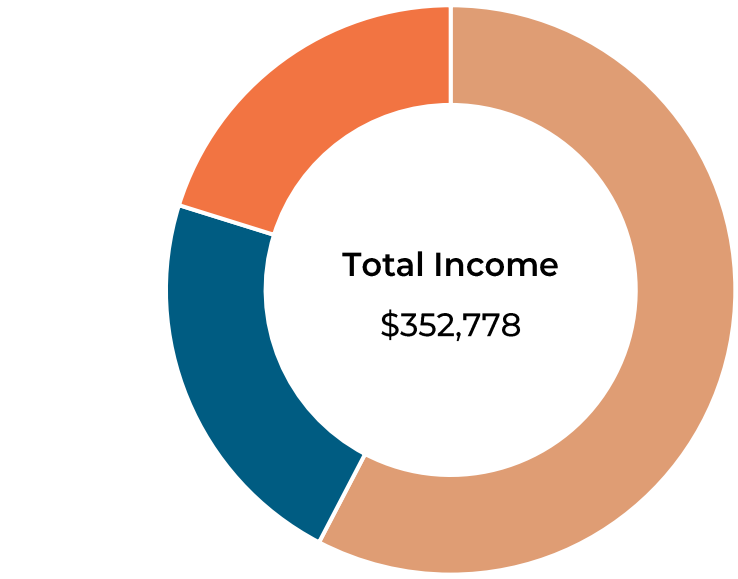
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- Program $408,632
- Management $209,149
- Fundraising $103,074

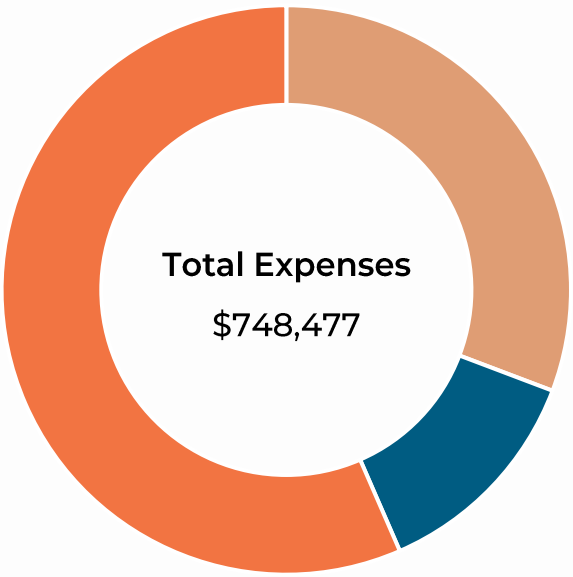
2024 Financials

2024 Income



- Contributions and Grants $203,381
- Program Service Revenue $78,189
- Investment Income $71,208

2024 Expenses



- Program $528,947
- Management $218,558
- Fundraising $972



For any further information,
please contact tina@zencaregiving.org, or visit
our website at www.zencaregiving.org.