



# ANNUAL REPORT 2020

## Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Association

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT	3
ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW	4
Mission	4
Programs	4
2020 Board of Directors	4
Incoming Directors	4
Scientific Advisors	4
2020 IN REVIEW	5
Laying the Foundation	5
Launching Programs	5
Key Achievements	5
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS	6
Currently Supported Research Projects	6
Instagram Education Series	6
SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW	7
What is a Miscarriage?	7
A Complex Kind of Grief	7
Causes of Recurrent Pregnancy Loss	7
RPLA's Vision	8
RPLA Research Strategy	8
FINANCIAL SUMMARY	9
CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS	10
Statement of Financial Position	10
Statement of Comprehensive Income	10
THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS	11

# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

I selected the image for the front of this report because, as Bruce Springsteen taught us, “you can’t start a fire without a spark,” and in this first year of Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Association (RPLA) we have created a spark.

The level of engagement and enthusiasm from our stakeholders as we’ve launched our organization has been remarkable.

We’ve recruited phenomenal Board members.

We’ve spoken with numerous doctors and researchers who have validated our belief that recurrent pregnancy loss (RPL) is truly an under-funded area of reproductive medicine.

We’ve empathized with families who have experienced RPL and are desperate for answers, strengthening our conviction that “unexplained” really is unacceptable.

Covid-19 has shown us how quickly the scientific and medical communities can become galvanized to find solutions to challenging health problems. It’s not a question of capability, it’s an issue of funding and prioritization.

At RPLA we believe that by directing focused research dollars and working together as a patient and scientific community we can help couples avoid recurrent miscarriage and accelerate their path to parenthood.

Already, we’ve been humbled by the generous support of our friends, family and the RPL community who allowed us – in our first year – to support research into the genetic causes of early pregnancy loss.

We hope you will continue with us on this journey, together I am confident we use this spark to ignite a fire change.

Warmly,

Megan Hanson, Co-Founder and Board President



# ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

## Mission

*Recurrent Pregnancy Loss Association (RPLA) is dedicated to eliminating recurrent pregnancy loss through the advancement of research into causes and treatments; to providing support and resources to those affected; and to increasing awareness of the impact of miscarriage and fertility challenges on women and families.*

## Programs

Our programs fall under three pillars: Awareness, Advocacy, and Answers.

- ❖ **Awareness:** Focuses on educating intended parents, families, and friends about recurrent pregnancy loss, and sharing resources that help people navigate the process.
- ❖ **Advocacy:** Focuses on helping clinical practitioners, scientific investigators, policy makers, and industry persons to understand the experience and impact of multiple miscarriages and why additional attention, information, and resources for research are necessary.
- ❖ **Answers:** Focuses on supporting scientific activities and providing grants to investigators in the United States researching causes of, and treatments for, recurrent pregnancy loss.

## 2020 Board of Directors

Megan Hanson (President), Volunteer  
 Serena Hohmann (Vice President), Astellas Pharma  
 Benjamin Burnham (Treasurer), Amazon  
 Katherine Konefal (Secretary), Volunteer  
 Cynthia Lander, PhD, Cynapse Consulting  
 Melanie Thomas, CHI Franciscan Health

## Incoming Directors

Amy Henderson Riley, DrPH, Thomas Jefferson University  
 Jessica Ryniec, MD, CCRM Fertility Boston

## Scientific Advisors<sup>1</sup>

Winifred Mak, MD, PhD, Dell Medical School, University of Texas at Austin  
 Dana McQueen, MD, MAS, University of Chicago  
 Elizabeth Sefton, PhD, Stanford University

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<sup>1</sup> Non-Board member volunteers helping to guide the organization

# 2020 IN REVIEW

## Laying the Foundation

As a new nonprofit, a large portion of 2020 was focused laying the groundwork for future operations. Below are some of our key organizational accomplishments:

- ❖ Applied for 501c3 status which was formally granted on January 21, 2021
- ❖ Implemented financial accounting software and GAAP standard policies and procedures
- ❖ Recruited a knowledgeable and passionate group of Board and Committee volunteers

## Launching Programs

We are thrilled to have achieved the following programmatic milestones which give us a track record of success from which to grow:

- ❖ Made our first research gift in support of a Stanford University lab investigating genomic causes of early pregnancy loss
- ❖ Launched our website to share information and resources with families who have suffered recurrent miscarriages
- ❖ Created a social media presence on Facebook and Instagram and posted two official content series:
  - A fact-a-day about recurrent miscarriage during *Pregnancy and Infant Loss Awareness Month* in October
  - Thoughts on “Grief AND Gratitude” during the holiday season
- ❖ Hosted our first live event via Instagram; a Q&A about unexplained recurrent pregnancy loss with Dr. Winifred Mak
- ❖ Raised awareness about recurrent miscarriage when Megan was the guest speaker on a podcast (“Been There. Injected That.” Season 2, Episode 15)

## Key Achievements



**\$8K**

To Research



**131 Views**

Of Live Event



**300 Followers**

On Social Media



**99 Donors**

New in 2020

# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

## Currently Supported Research Projects

Dr. Ruth Lathi's lab at Stanford University School of Medicine is investigating **genomic causes of unexplained pregnancy loss**. Data have emerged that suggests single-gene changes (DNA changes on one particular gene) may contribute to a proportion of unexplained pregnancy loss. Unlike chromosomal anomalies, single-gene changes may be inherited. Investigations into the single gene changes that play a role in pregnancy loss may lead to new understanding of the biologic pathways that are essential to human development and potentially suggest new avenues for therapeutic interventions. Investigating this requires a comprehensive, "hypothesis-free" sequencing approach. Dr. Lathi and her team will use their unique expertise in infertility, genomics, bioinformatics, and gene discovery to advance this science. RPLA has supported their efforts with a research gift of \$8,000.

## Instagram Education Series

Our live education series kicked off in December and will continue throughout 2021. The intent is to have focused Q&A sessions with clinical and scientific experts to answer patient questions about the evaluation and treatment of recurrent pregnancy loss. More than 100 people watched the first session, during which Dr. Winifred Mak gave an overview of recurrent miscarriage, discussed the standard workup, and talked about emerging areas of research. Future sessions will focus on specific contributing factors and their management.

# SCIENTIFIC OVERVIEW

## What is a Miscarriage?

A miscarriage is defined as a pregnancy loss before the 20<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy. Within that period several sub definitions exist. A loss before the 6<sup>th</sup> week is an early embryonic loss, sometimes called a biochemical pregnancy. A loss before the 9<sup>th</sup> week is considered an embryonic loss. A loss past nine weeks is considered a fetal loss. To the family experiencing the loss, these definitions matter little. A pregnancy loss is devastating at any stage. But for doctors and scientists these definitions are essential to diagnostic evaluation.

## A Complex Kind of Grief

Miscarriage is an isolating experience accompanied by feelings of deep sadness, helplessness, and guilt. Because it is hard to talk about, its impact often goes unnoticed and misunderstood, but it can cause a significant and lasting impact on the mental and physical health of couples trying to conceive.

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*1 in 6 women experience long term anxiety or post traumatic stress disorder following a miscarriage.<sup>1</sup>*

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With time, most couples go on to have healthy pregnancies after a loss, however a percentage of women experience recurrent miscarriage—the loss of two or more clinical pregnancies before the 20<sup>th</sup> week. Of those who experience

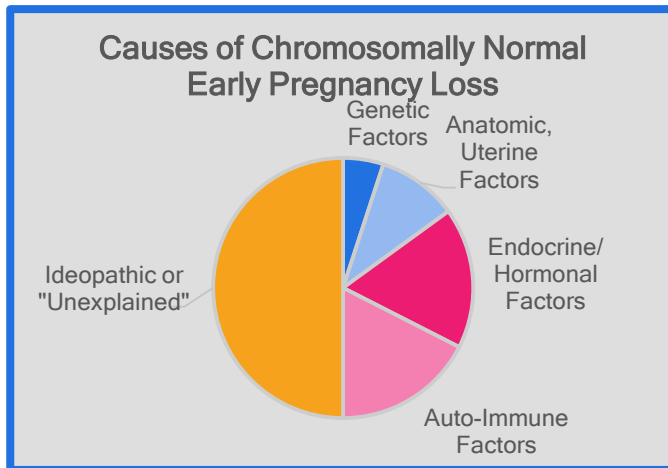
multiple miscarriages, the underlying reason often remains medically “unexplained.” These couples are not only repeatedly traumatized by the recurrent losses, but often undergo numerous medical procedures and fertility treatments in their efforts to have a baby.

## Causes of Recurrent Pregnancy Loss

Most miscarriages occur because there is something chromosomally abnormal about the embryo (usually too many or too few chromosomes). This can be a result of egg quality, sperm quality, or random mutations that occur as the embryo begins to develop. These types of losses are considered “sporadic.” They are difficult to prevent, often occur early in the pregnancy, and can happen to anyone. A woman may experience multiple sporadic losses, however, the more losses she has, the less likely it is that this is the cause.



There are several other reasons a woman may lose pregnancies that don't have anything to do with chromosomal abnormalities, as shown in the chart below. Some of these causes of pregnancy loss are well understood and can be effectively managed; others cannot.



*"Miscarriage is still a gray area of medicine, with very few well-funded, large clinical trials and research studies compared to other areas of medicine like cancer and cardiovascular disease.<sup>2</sup>"*

*Lora Shahine, MD, FACOG*

## RPLA's Vision

At RPLA, we envision a future where women and couples can get explanations for their pregnancy losses and create clear plans to grow their families. To this end, we provide grants to doctors and scientists in the United States who are studying recurrent miscarriage.

## RPLA Research Strategy

RPLA is committed to funding research focused on both the causes of, and potential treatments, for recurrent miscarriage. This may include investigations into the diagnosis, management, or biological origin of the condition, or explorations into contributing genetic, biochemical, physiological, psychological, pharmacological, or environmental factors.

**If this inspires you to help find causes and cures for recurrent pregnancy loss, please consider a donation of any amount: [www.rplassociation.org/donate](http://www.rplassociation.org/donate)**

1. American journal of obstetrics and gynecology. (2000). American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, 183(3). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajog.2019.10.102>

2. Shahine, Lora. "Not Broken: An Approachable Guide to Miscarriage and Recurrent Pregnancy Loss." *Not Broken: an Approachable Guide to Miscarriage and Recurrent Pregnancy Loss*, Lora Shahine, Seattle, WA, 2017, pp. 5-5.



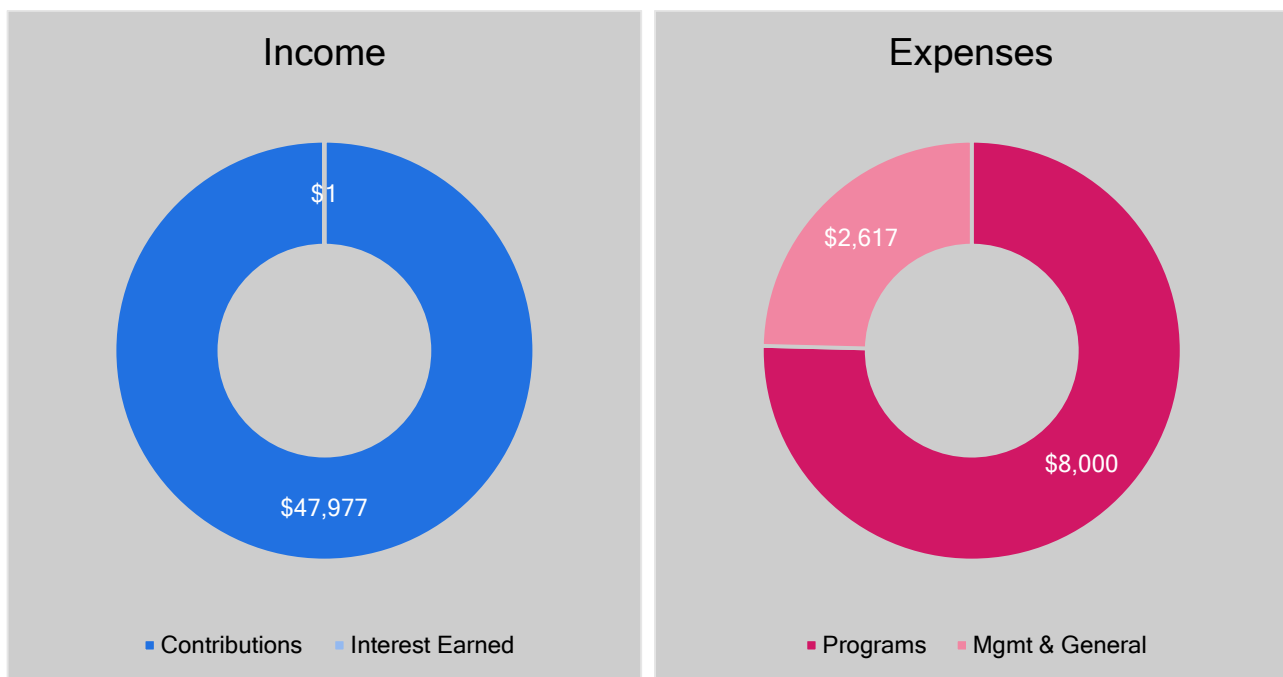
# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Over the course of 2020 RPLA received \$47,977 in unrestricted gifts from 99 different donors. This generated \$1 in earned interest which combined with the donations comprised the entirety of our income.

Total expenses for the year were \$10,617. The largest single expense was the \$8,000 research gift to Dr. Ruth Lathi's lab. Management and general expenses totaled \$2,617, representing 5% of total income.

Our cash balance as of December 31, 2020 was \$38,699.

0% of FY2020 expenses included fundraising or salaries. RPLA is an entirely volunteer run organization. Our goal is to direct as much money as possible towards our mission.



# CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Financial Position

Fiscal Year Ended December 31, 2020

### ASSETS

Checking	41,401.96
Cash in Transit	-2,710.15

<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>38,691.81</b>
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### LIABILITIES

<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<b>0.00</b>
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### NET ASSETS

General Fund - Unrestricted	38,691.81
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<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<b>38,691.81</b>
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<b>Total Liabilities + Net Assets</b>	<b>38,691.81</b>
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## Statement of Comprehensive Income

Period of January 01, 2020 to December 31, 2020

### INCOME

#### Donations

Contributions	47,977.10
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<b>Total Donations</b>	<b>47,977.10</b>
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#### Other Income

Interest Earned	1.15
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<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>1.15</b>
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<b>Total Income</b>	<b>47,978.25</b>
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### Expense

#### Program Expenses

Scientific Gifts & Grants	8,000.00
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<b>Total Programs</b>	<b>8,000.00</b>
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#### Management and General Expenses

Government Filings	634.60
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Bank Fees	894.86
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Office Supplies	16.46
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Information Technology	402.54
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Professional Services	100.00
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Travel & Events	569.00
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<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>1,982.86</b>
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<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>10,617.46</b>
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<b>Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>37,360.79</b>
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# THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

## \$10,000 and Up

- Ben Burnham & Megan Hanson

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

- Judy Jones

## \$1,000 - \$4,999

- Mike & Laurie Burnham
- Jon Chappell
- Jim & Melissa Coleman
- Tim Hanson\*
- Serena Hohmann
- Sonia Koenig
- Joseph & Karen Konefal
- Joseph & Katherine Konefal
- Rob Lemmons
- Abhi & Jasmi Shah
- Bob & Jane Simpson
- Clint & Melanie Thomas
- Paul & Stephanie Van Hook
- Jeff & Susanna Zens
- Eric & Amberly Zwiener

## \$500 - \$999

- Tom & Suzanne Bolling
- Michelle Engleman & Tim Fisher
- Jacob Gillen & Natalie Karp
- Pete Greenberg & Carrie Harwood
- Orion & Jacqueline Hindawi
- Katie Payne
- Deborah Talbot
- Chris Wang & JW Victor
- Adam & Christina Wolf

## \$100 - \$499

- Pascal & Allie Arcese
- Brad Austin & Gillian Casten

- Brian & Anne Marie Ayson
- Michael & Carolyn Beaugrand
- Chris & Katie Bolling
- Alexandra Borst & Mike Neuss
- Matt Byrne
- Jeni Carr & Philip Spanheimer
- Ryan Confer
- Kevin & Lara Chu
- Craig & Nancy Davis
- Andrew & Claire DiMattina
- Danny & Gretchen Fitzgibbon
- Greg & Anita Flanagan
- Conor Gettings
- Randy & Nancy Green
- Jeremy Greene
- Jane Hansen & Bob Stanton
- Jeanne Hanson
- Amanda Henry
- Hameed & Jasmin Hirani
- Mike Honerlaw & Joan Verchot
- Juliet Horton
- Zina Jacque
- Chirag Jindal & Puja Gupta\*
- Jon Katz
- Brent & Susan Kaziny
- Dick & Ellie Kilbourne
- Alex Kowell
- Marie-Adelle Kress
- Lance Lanese
- Tim & Heidi Lardner
- Lia Larson
- Scott & Monica Lemmon
- Renee Locker
- Donald & Mary Lofty
- Urmi Marshall
- Tom & Kara McDermott
- Brett & Sarah Mitchell
- Chris & Claudia Murray
- Frances Muzio Papell
- Gary & Michelle Polvere
- Elizabeth Rahn\*
- Maureen Shanahan

- Greg & Caroline Stabler
- Tyler Wellington
- Matt & Ayn Dietrich Williams
- Craig Wolf
- Raj Vasnani
- Mark & Anjum Abbasi Voight

## Up to \$99

- Joshua & Karen Adland
- Vigdis Bronder & Brian Haas\*
- Jeffrey & Theresa Carroll
- Carly Dummer & Danny Room
- Elizabeth Ermer
- Lauren Green
- Abigail Huber
- Julie Griffin & Adam Hughes
- Darris & Brandi Jackson
- Tony & Whitney Konstant
- Greg & Nancy-Jeanne LeFevre
- Nasim Lari
- Lara Mann
- Stephen & Lissa Marcu
- Gail Marin
- Vicool Patel
- Ashley Philips
- Stephanie Polvere & Jackson Spiller
- Posalootly Art
- Kevin Pukala
- Grace Rumford
- Ryan & Jessica Schultheis
- Sheila Stuewe

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\* 2019 Donation