

doing life together.



Mommies Matter

2023

Annual Report

a letter from our Executive Director

Monica Flynn

In recent weeks, I came across an article that discussed a concerning trend in our society: the significant decline of what sociologists refer to as the "Third Place." The Third Place represents any social setting apart from home (the first place) and work (the second place). Consider iconic TV shows of the '90s like "Friends," "Seinfeld," and "Cheers," where the characters spent the majority of their time socializing at the café, diner, or bar, with work often taking the backseats in their lives. However, in today's world, we find ourselves working longer hours to cope with rising costs in almost every aspect of life, leaving us with less time to connect with one another.

The article highlighted a startling fact: for decades, Americans spent an average of around six and one half hours per week with friends and family. Yet, between 2014 and 2019, this figure suddenly dropped to four hours per week, marking a 37 percent decrease. It's worth noting that 2014 was the year when smartphone ownership in the United States exceeded 50 percent. Today, we are increasingly tethered to our screens, spending much more time online and alone. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, Twitch, and podcasts have become the new, placeless, Third Places.

As beings inherently designed for community, this decline in our time spent together has dire consequences for our well-being, impacting our health, relationships, and contributing to what the U.S. Surgeon General has labeled an "epidemic of loneliness." Shockingly, one in five Americans reports feeling lonely or socially isolated frequently or all the time, and a staggering 22 percent of millennials admit to having no friends at all.

The women we have the privilege of supporting through Mommies Matter are disproportionately affected by this **epidemic of loneliness**. For them, unplanned or unwanted pregnancies can intensify feelings of isolation and despair. Already facing challenges alone, the added responsibility of caring for a child can feel insurmountable. Without a welcoming "**Third Place**" – a community that embraces them without judgment, where they can find solace among others in similar situations – lives may spiral into anxiety, depression, resort to abortion, or even suicide.

This brings to mind the Latin expression "per curcem ad lucem," which translates to "through the cross to the light." Our faith teaches us that God loves us passionately and seeks to bring us fulfillment and joy. However, this does not exempt us from experiencing crosses on this side of heaven. It is through these personal crosses—be it job loss, health challenges, depression, rejection, or the loss of a loved one—that we come to know and trust God more deeply.

Over the past five years since Mommies Matter's inception, I have had a front-row seat to witness unimaginable crosses that our Mommies face daily. These stories include the sudden loss of a 21-year-old son to a tragic and untimely death, a heartbreaking incident where a three-month-old baby boy stopped breathing and hours later died, and a devastating car accident that left one mother with a broken back and bedridden with four children to care for. We also see the fall-out and often unrecoverable effects of domestic abuse, stalking, sex trafficking, and unimaginable suffering.

Mommies Matter offers authentic hospitality—a free space, that **Third Place**—where they can enter as strangers and quickly become not just friends but family. It is here that they can come to know the Lord, His love for them, and gain a better understanding of how to **suffer well**. Mommies Matter's hospitality is **not a means to change people; rather, it is a space where change can take place**. It is a place where they find refreshment and renewal through the outpouring of love and support from our Mommies Matter community. As the saying goes, "Shared burdens are lighter," and when our Mommies "let go and let God" by allowing the Mommies Matter community to rally around them, the weight of their burdens as single mothers is significantly lightened, enabling them to flourish as the mothers God intended them to be.



Monica Flynn
Executive Director, Mommies Matter

Staff

Monica Flynn
Executive Director

Gina McCauley
Executive Assistant

Lauren Steinbauer
Family Advocate

Kendra Utt
Family Advocate

Anna Salmonowicz/Jessica Erichsen
Marketing & Graphic Design Coordinator

Maura Weisenburger
Volunteer Coordinator

Daphne Suh
Outreach Coordinator

Kelly Rubadue
Enrichment Coordinator

Brandy Conley
Accountant

Advocacy Partners

Marshall Vance
Financial Advocate

Meredith Murphy
Life Coach

Board Members

Monica Flynn	Phil Kraker
Leisa Ehlers	December Summersett
Micah Haralson	Daphne Suh

Our Mission

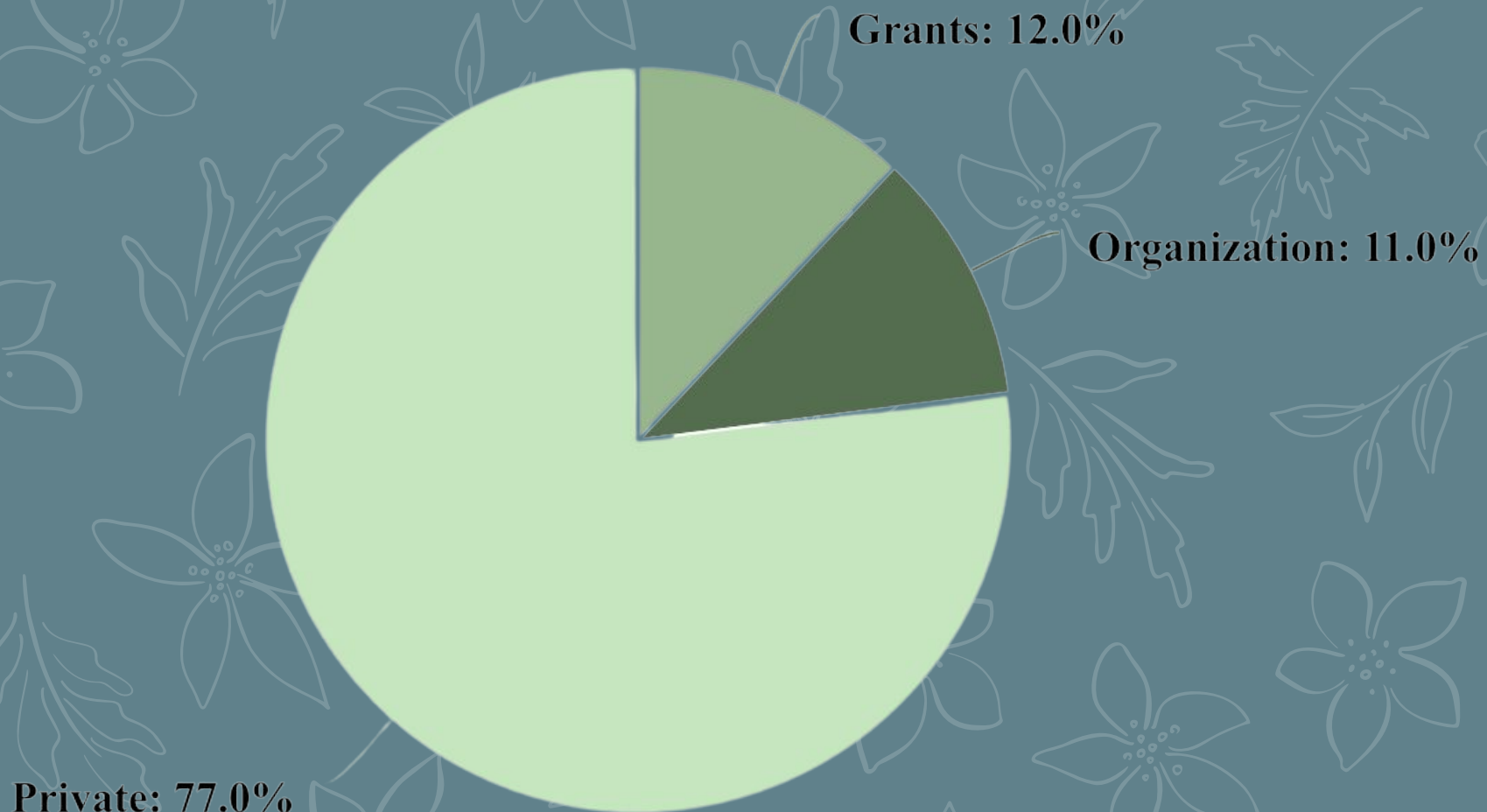
Empowering single, pregnant women by "Doing Life Together."

Our Vision

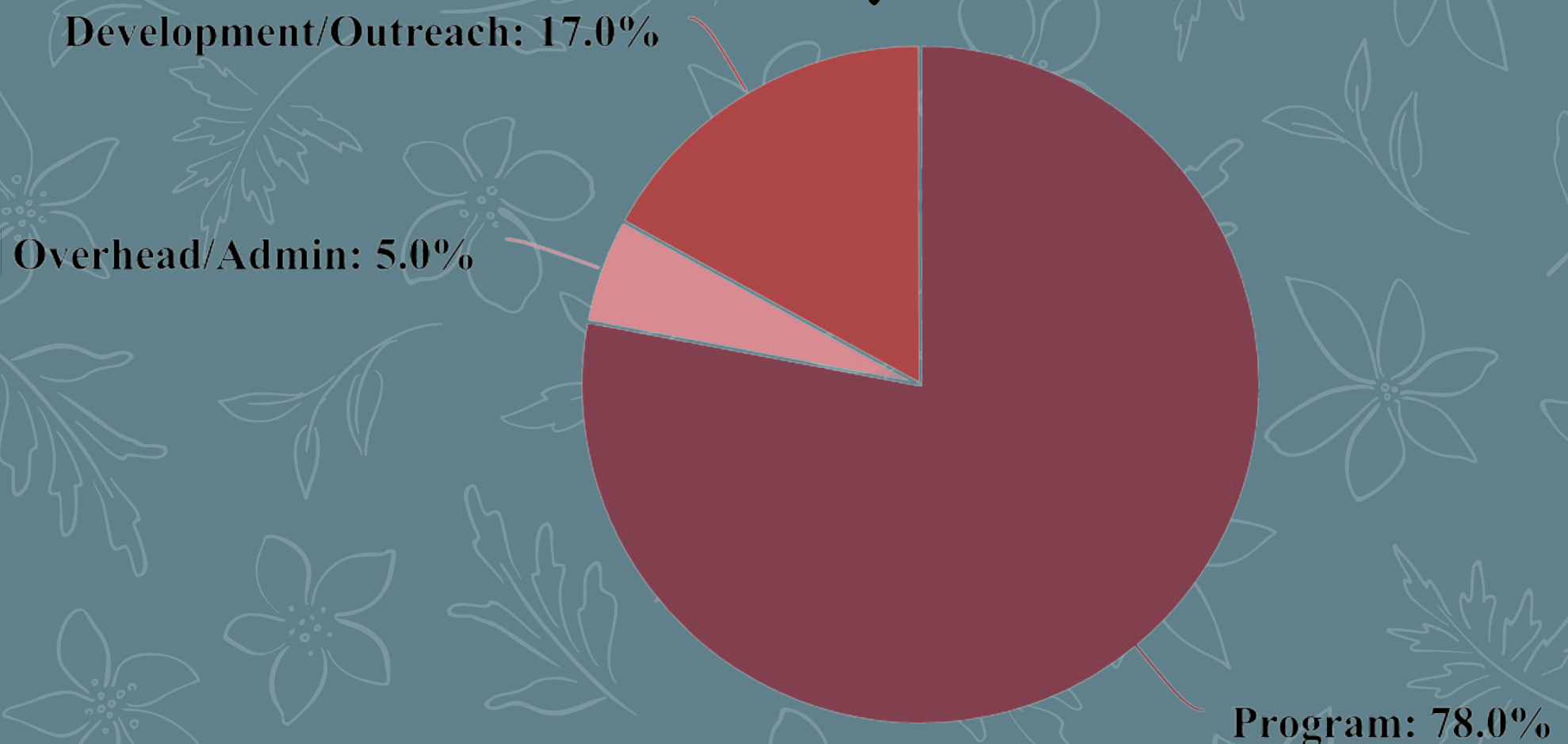
For every mother to embrace her dignity and value as a woman.

Financial Summary

Income



Expenses



As a volunteer & donor of Mommies Matter I am constantly amazed by the dedication and commitment of the organizers and staff. Mommies Matter provides not only physical help, but much more importantly a network of caring individuals to walk alongside young, single moms trying to raise their children in this challenging world.

- P.

Year in Review

42

*Mommies in
the program*



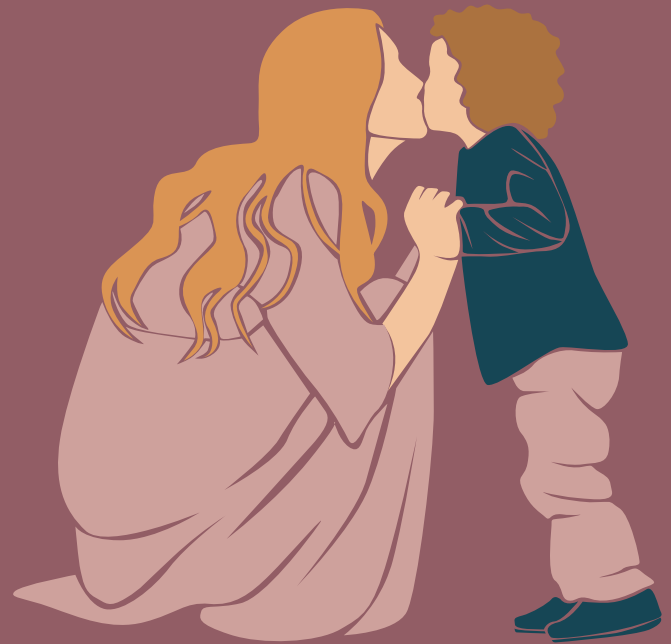
*Babies Welcomed
in 2023*

20



155

*Total number of Mommies
and children served*



*Number of
Volunteers*

215

2,889

Volunteer Hours



Featured Mommie *Cindy*

My name is Cindy and I am a mother to two beautiful girls. They are two years old and five months old. This past summer I was living with my aunt. She treated me very unkindly and it was an unhealthy living situation for myself and my daughter. While I was living there I was six months pregnant with my daughter. I was in an abusive relationship with the father of the baby and one day when he tried to harm me and my daughter I knew that I had to leave.

Before coming to Mommies Matter I was really struggling. I felt like I was stuck in a huge nest and couldn't get out. I had no where to go and no support. I felt horrible and was crying all the time. I learned about Mommies Matter in June from Ms. Elena at Columbus Public Health. I joined the program and since then I have found true happiness and feel extremely blessed. A volunteer hosted a baby shower for me and Kendra was by my side during the birth of my daughter. Kendra even had me over for Thanksgiving to be with her family. The Mommies Matter family has supported me in ways I could never have imagined.

The Enrichment nights are the best. I remember the first one I came to, it made me so happy. I learned so much. The speaker talked about boundaries. I learned things that night. I can choose who I want to be around me and my children. I'm more careful and focused. I'm being that protective mom. I'm always learning something new every time I go to Enrichment. I am growing and it's helping me and they are fun! I get to see other moms and talk to them. It really helps to know there are people who care about me and there are other moms going through the same thing.

I am very happy and one day hope to give my story to other moms to help them. I want to show everyone going through a lot that it's not going to be easy and you might feel alone, but there are people who care. I was not going to church, but now I want to. Mommies Matter talks about Jesus and God, and I love that and want church to be a part of my family's life.



Volunteer Spotlight *Shawn Borden*

It is a privilege and honor to spotlight volunteer, Shawn Borden. Shawn has volunteered with Mommies Matter since its inception in 2018. She was searching for an organization where she could devote more of her time and really connect to those in need. Shawn has served as an Ally to eight of the Mommies in the program. In 2023, Shawn volunteered roughly 245 hours for Mommies Matter!

“I have had the privilege of being an ally to eight mommies who I love with all my heart and for whom I have endless admiration. I have accompanied them to doctor’s appointments, rejoiced at their ultrasound photos, shared the joy of learning if it’s a boy or girl, and had the honor of holding their newborn babies. I’ve witnessed their awe at the outpouring of generosity at their baby showers, where women they’ve never met provide for all of their baby’s needs so they can rest easy knowing they are ready. I’ve helped them move out of homeless shelters into beautiful new apartments. I’ve shared their tears and cheered their triumphs.

Along the way they have taught me what real strength is, and what one person can accomplish with the love and support of a community like Mommies Matter. I also received an unexpected gift - an amazing new network of friends in my volunteer colleagues. They are an inspiration to me in the way that they serve with such selflessness and joy.”

We are grateful and blessed for the many hours and gifts that Shawn has shared with the Mommies Matter family.



A Night to Remember

It is hard to believe that we held our 5th Annual Fall Fundraiser this year. As I reflect on the event I am filled with immense gratitude for the incredible and overwhelming gift of your support of Mommies Matter. As I looked around the room, I was in awe of the way the Lord has provided the Mommies we serve with such an amazing community to support them and truly walk beside them by doing life together.

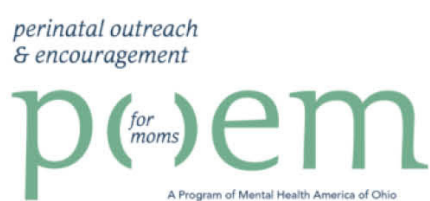
A special thank you to Myles Harris, Michael Griffin, Dave Powers, the numerous sponsors, churches and Knights of Columbus Counsels that made the night a success. And a very special thanks to the Mommies who were featured in this year’s testimony video and who joined us for the evening. We were grateful for your presence and courage to share your testimonies!

Thank you for helping make this place we call Mommies Matter possible as a place of connection, grace, and transformation. We are excited to see what's to come as we continue to grow and look forward to seeing you again next year!

-Monica Flynn, Executive Director



Referring and Supporting Agency Partners



Church Partners and Financial Partners

Church Partners

Church of the Resurrection Catholic Church
Columbus Christian Center
Ethos Church
Immaculate Conception Catholic Church
Life Church at Easton
Palmetto Presbyterian
Powell Faith Community Church
St. Agatha Catholic Church
St. Brendan Catholic Church
St. Brigid of Kildare Catholic Church
St. Catharine Catholic Church
St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church
St. Joan of Arc Catholic Church
St. John Neumann Catholic Church
St. Matthew the Apostle Catholic Church
St. Patrick Catholic Church
St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church
St. Peter Catholic Church
Sunbury Christian
Westerville Christian

Corporate and Financial Partners

3M
Connected Pathways Early Learning Center
D7 Foundation
Good Samaritan Ministry at St. John Neumann
Grange Insurance
JP Morgan Chase
Knights of Columbus state and local chapters
Lynch Family Foundation
Serenity Fairway Foundation
St. Martha's Giving Circle
The Catholic Foundation
The Mary Foundation
Trinity Financial
Young Catholic Professionals

Other Partners

2SHEA Creative
Align Health and Wellness
Abigail Erdy Photography
Anna Lincoln Photography
Amanda Mahle Photography
Baby Bundles
Big Walnut Friends Who Share
Byers Motor Mart
Christ Child Society
Diocesan Office of Social Concerns
Donatos
Dr. Sam Parkhurst — The Educated Pelvis
Steve Fulkert Foundation
Great Harvest Bread Co. Upper Arlington
Kona Ice
Little Ladies Soft Serve
Maire Richards Doula Services
Newborns in Need
Pastaria
SJN HUGS
Sondra Yothers Catering
St. Gabriel Catholic Radio
St. Vincent De Paul Society, Lancaster
Teaxas Roadhouse
The Catholic Times

