

ANNUAL REPORT



WWW.TOGETHERWEATHER.ORG

Est. June 2022

[#togetherweweather.org](https://twitter.com/togetherweweather.org)

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Letter From our President

JOYCE WILLIAMS:
FOUNDER, PRESIDENT, & SURVIVOR

Dear Survivors, Supporters, and Community Members,

Wow! What a year it has been! From the bottom of our hearts, thank you! Thank you for your support in helping us meet our mission to empower local breast cancer patients. It has been an incredible year of growth, both financially and with program implementation, and we are thrilled to be able to share it with you.

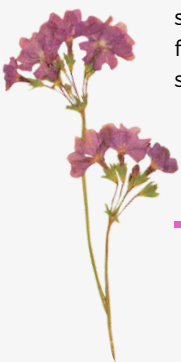
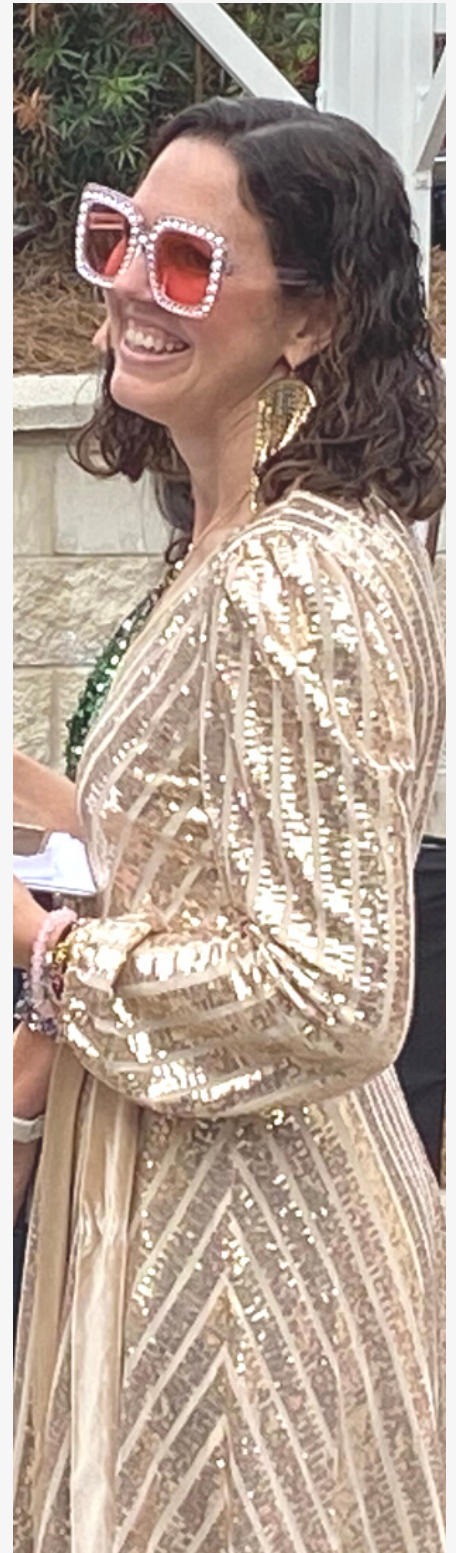
My story: I was diagnosed with invasive ductile carcinoma back in 2017 at the age of 36, and though every patient's story is unique to them, the common thread spun throughout our stories is: "This was never supposed to happen to me." I felt the same. It hit me like a semi-truck, a punch in the gut. I could hardly breathe. Yall, it was awful! It was physically and emotionally exhausting in ways that I never before could have dreamed possible. It was as if a giant tsunami snagged me from the safety of the shore I'd come to know so well and dumped me in the depths of the darkest sea. I learned the hard way (through lived experiences) that courage and strength aren't in avoiding our falls; instead, they're found in CHOOSING to put one foot in front of the other despite the falls. What makes us truly beautiful and strong is in owning our complete authentic selves, scars and all.

Keepers of the Flame: It was through my own personal trials where I learned the power of our metaphorical lighthouse in the distance. The more we unite, the brighter the light shines for those thrown into their own turbulent seas, and the less alone and more hopeful they become. Together we weather this storm! Together we can support our local breast cancer community with physical and emotional hardships that they face.

In action: We were founded in June 2022, and have since established our board, received our 501c3, grown our organization financially, developed long-lasting partnerships that help provide support, and most importantly, we've launched programs that have already made a difference in the lives of survivors that you know and love so well.

Our board is excited to share these benchmarks with you in this year's annual report. None of this would have been made possible without your generous support! Thank you for being a Keeper of the Flame and helping the light shine into the darkest hours of local survivors. Your support has done so much!!! Please continue to look for us in the community, share our resources with patients and survivors, and support us where you're able.

KINDEST REGARDS,
JOYCE WILLIAMS



Our Mission

TO SHINE LIGHT INTO THE DARKNESS, EMPOWERING BREAST CANCER PATIENTS TO WEATHER BREAST CANCER BOTH PHYSICALLY AND EMOTIONALLY.

What we do:

We bridge the gap between the physical and emotional trials of breast cancer by providing:

- Educational opportunities
- Access to counseling
- Transportation assistance
- Hardship Assistance
- Research
- Care bags for patients
- Experiences for local survivors
- Support for local survivors
- Connection to resources

Information Empowers

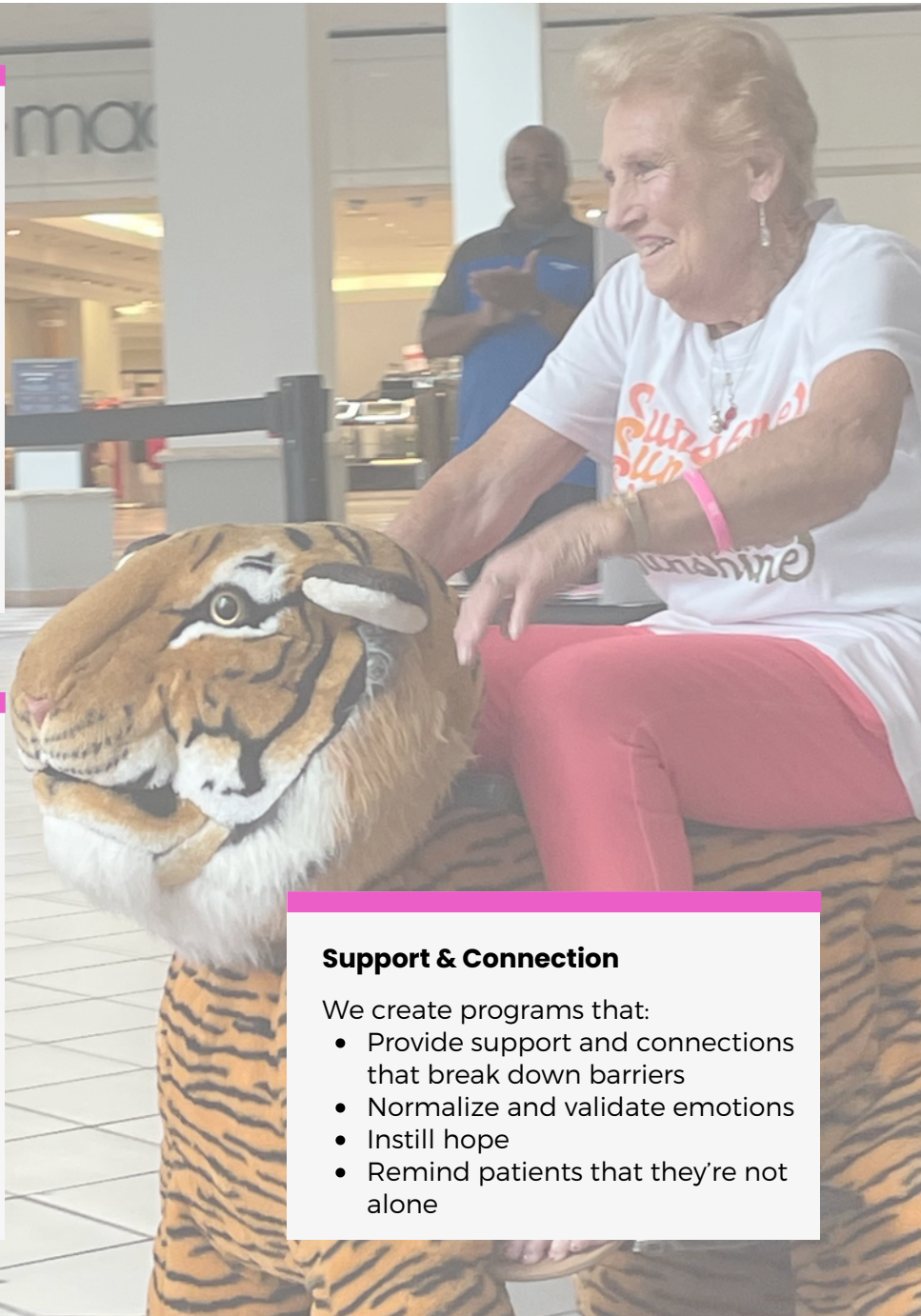
We are committed to educating patients, support teams, and our community on the physical and emotional sides of breast cancer, including:

- Prevention
- Diagnosis, treatments, & what to expect
- Effects of trauma
- Resilience, mental health, & coping strategies
- Research
- Reframing Beauty

Support & Connection

We create programs that:

- Provide support and connections that break down barriers
- Normalize and validate emotions
- Instill hope
- Remind patients that they're not alone





Accomplishments & Timeline

| TASK | DATE |
|---|------------------|
| SSWE PUBLICATION RESEARCH & EDUCATION | JANUARY 2023 |
| THE GROUP PSYCHOLOGIST RESEARCH PUBLICATION | MARCH 2023 |
| ACUPUNCTURE PILOT PROGRAM | MARCH-JULY 2023 |
| REFRAMING BEAUTY PROGRAM LAUNCH W/ EMPOWERMENT PHOTOGRAPHY | APRIL 2023 |
| CARE BAGS MASTECTOMY & CHEMO PATIENTS | MARCH-APRIL 2023 |
| SUMMER HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE PATIENT SUPPORT | JUNE 2023 |



Accomplishments & Timeline

| TASK | DATE |
|--|-------------------|
| NIPPLE TATTOO SURVIVOR SUPPORT | JUNE 2023 |
| JOURNAL OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH PUBLICATION | SEPTEMBER 4, 2023 |
| FALL HARDSHIP ASSISTANCE PATIENT SUPPORT | SEPTEMBER 2023 |
| TRANSPORTATION FUND UWCE WOMEN'S UNITED MINI GRANT | SEPTEMBER 2023 |
| GALLERYLIVE REFRAMING BEAUTY & CARE BAGS | OCTOBER 5, 2023 |
| TRAVELING GALLERY REFRAMING BEAUTY | OCTOBER 2023 |



Accomplishments & Timeline

| TASK | DATE |
|--|-------------------|
| HONORHER SPOTLIGHT COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION | OCTOBER 13, 2023 |
| DISCO NIGHT COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION | OCTOBER 19, 2023 |
| CSWE ORAL PUBLICATION RESEARCH & EDUCATION | OCTOBER 27, 2023 |
| CLINICIAN CURRICULUM 2 HR PRESENTATION ON RESEARCH | NOVEMVER 14, 2023 |
| HOLIDAY HARDSHIP COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EDUCATION | NOVEMBER 30, 2023 |
| SABCS POSTER PRESENTATION RESEARCH & EDUCATION | DECEMBER 6, 2023 |

Hardship Assistance

SUPPORTING LOCAL BREAST CANCER PATIENTS .

KotF is collaborating with social workers at each of the 3 hospitals in the area to provide patients in need with assistance with hardships such as co-pays, phone activation, child-care, transportation, groceries, etc.



\$5,500

Hardship Funds
Distributed this Year

Peer-Counseling

CONNECTING WITH NEWLY DIAGNOSED PATIENTS, PROVIDING SUPPORT AND CONNECTION FROM SOMEONE WHO HAS BEEN THERE

Sometimes it can be helpful to hear from someone who's gone through what you're about to go through. It offers hope and gives patients a sense of connection. It can be helpful to hear about how things felt, ways to prepare, tips and tricks from the insider's perspective.

Phase One included two local mentors, 21 local breast cancer participants, and 45 peer-counseling sessions.

Phase Two involved literature review of best practices and collaboration with After Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCD). Through our partnership, we're able to make referrals for both potential mentors and participants, providing increased access to one-to-one peer support. Mentors complete a training curriculum through ABCD in efforts to provide high quality mentorships.

Phase Three strategic planning will continue in 2024 with goals to increase the number of qualified/trained local mentors and plan for future mentor support meet-ups.



Care Bags

PROVIDING MASTECTOMY, CHEMO, AND PATIENT/SURVIVOR SUPPORTING CARE BAGS TO OUR LOCAL BREAST CANCER COMMUNITY

\$98,162

In care bag essentials



With Target grants and a partnership with UBCF, Oglethorpe Mall, and Macy's, we've been able to serve our local breast cancer community by providing over \$98,000 worth of care bag essentials, including assorted beauty items, cleaning supplies, gift cards, mastectomy pillows, and chemo and surgery support items.

Research

PEER-REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS & ORAL PUBLICATIONS

WE HAVE PARTNERED WITH DR. ELISABETH COUNSELMAN-CARPENTER FROM ADELPHI UNIVERSITY TO INVESTIGATE BREAST CANCER PATIENT PREFERENCES ON PHYSICIAN DRIVEN REFERRALS TO PSYCHOTHERAPY.



Society on Social Work Education 27th Annual Meeting, Title: *Emotional expression, suppression, & breast cancer patient preferences about physician driven referrals to psychotherapy*

The Group Psychologist - Title: *Breast cancer patients and their perceptions and recommendations of groupwork*

Journal of Health and Social Work - Title: *Lived experience of breast cancer patients during the COVID-19 pandemic*

CSWE 2023 - Title: *Voices of survivors: recommendations for working with breast cancer patients in a triple-demic world*

Curriculum for clinicians Title: *Breast Cancer 101: Understanding the clinical needs of breast cancer patients from the voices of survivors*

SABCS 2023 Title: *Breast Cancer Patient Perspectives on the Need for Psychotherapy and the Role of Physician Referrals for Improved Quality of Life During and Post Treatment.*

Transportation Assistance

MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH A MINI GRANT FROM UWCE WOMEN'S UNITED TRANSPORTATION FUND

This fund helps us break down barriers by providing transportation assistance to our local breast cancer patients. It's through this mini-grant where we're able to put systems in place to provide breast cancer patients with the ability to get to their life-saving treatments. The fund provides gas cards and Uber passes to ensure reliable transportation.



"I am so grateful to the Keepers of the Flame and United Way for the transportation grant. I'm not sure what I would've done without it. I ran out of volunteer drivers and had several radiation treatments left. Thanks from the bottom of my heart!"

Kathy M.

Pictured: Joyce Williams; Cheri Dean; Aileen Gabbey; Alyssa Schoonover

Pilot Programs & Experiences

INTEGRATIVE THERAPY, NIPPLE TATTOO, AND PHYSICAL & EMOTIONAL HEALING EXPERIENCES

Through partnerships and public donations, we've been able to offer local breast cancer patients with 4 acupuncture sessions, a nipple tattooing, and two sets of life-experiences, including chair yoga and a sky diving opportunity.

ACUPUNCTURE

NIPPLE
TATTOO

GROUP YOGA

SKY DIVING

Reframing Beauty Gallery

USING EMPOWERMENT PHOTOGRAPHY SESSIONS TO REMIND US THAT ALTHOUGH BREAST CANCER CAN HAPPEN TO ANY OF US, BEAUTY AND STRENGTH BELONG TO ALL OF US

We developed a traveling gallery where 8 local survivors of varying ethnicities, ages, socio-economic status, and treatments participated in Empowerment Photography Sessions to reframe what it means to be beautiful. The gallery was on display throughout Savannah the entire month of October. This gallery's initiative was to inspire and empower breast cancer patients and community members to know that they too have beauty, courage, and strength within themselves. Investment was provided by the City of Savannah's Weave a Dream grant, and Alicja Colon with Embolden Photography was our photographer.

GalleryLive

In partnership with Oglethorpe Mall, Macy's, and UBCF, our Empowerment models participated in a fashion show and kick-off display of the traveling gallery.

HonorHer

Through a Spotlight grant with the Savannah Cultural Arts Center, we held a special event for local Girl Scouts working on their HonorHer badges. The Stamper's Boutique from Effingham sponsored card making crafts for youth to write encouraging messages for patients; the gallery was on display; and a panel of experts was there to educate and inspire further.



Testimonials

Keepers of the Flame's Empowerment Photography sessions made me remember how important it is to love yourself as you are. I am more important than long hair, more important than a pairs of breasts. These photography sessions help you forget the process you are in. It is a very human initiative. Thanks for the opportunity. It has been a wonderful healing experience.

Yocasta Encarnacion



Jessica Anderson

Keepers of the Flame Foundation has played a significant role in my breast cancer journey. They have provided me with support and mentorship during the difficult and up swings that accompany chemo. Joyce has taught me to allow my body the space and time it needs to recover and that the difficult emotional lows will pass. It means so much to me to have someone who has been there and is truly empowering me to sift through the dark to find light and beauty and to take advantage of the time God has given us to find the opportunity to rise up and conquer this and come out stronger, more understanding and more passionate. I thank God he has blessed me with crossing paths with Keepers of the Flame Foundation!!

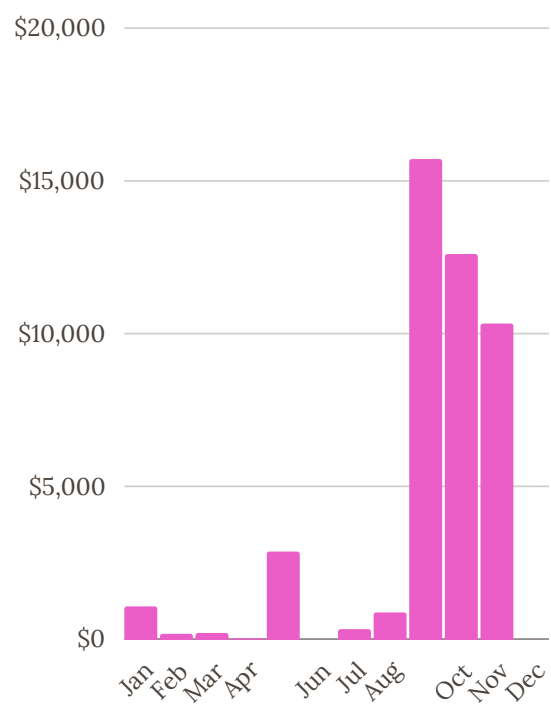


Financials

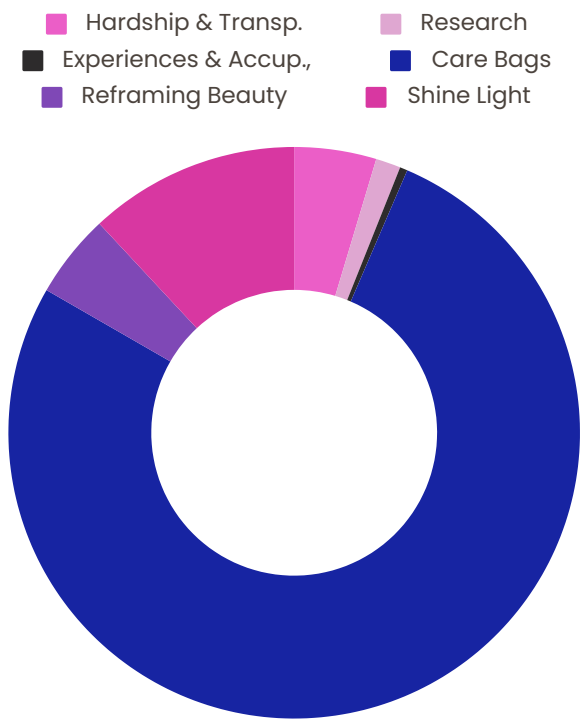
| FUNDRAISERS/GRANTS | AMOUNT |
|---|--------------|
| SHINE THE LIGHT DISCO NIGHT FUNDRAISING & COMMUNITY EVENT | \$35,974 |
| UWCE WOMEN UNITED MINI GRANT TRANSPORTATION ASSISTANCE | \$500 |
| TARGET GRANTS CARE BAGS & REFRAMING BEAUTY | \$350 |
| UNITED BREAST CANCER FOUNDATION CARE BAGS - INKIND | \$93,073 |
| MACY'S GRANT CARE BAGS | \$2,800 |
| CITY OF SAVANNAH'S WAD GRANT REFRAMING BEAUTY | \$3,500 |
| SCAC SPOTLIGHT REFRAMING BEAUTY - HONORHER | USE OF VENUE |

Financials

REVENUE BY MONTH
(not including inkind donations)



FUNDS FURTHERING MISSION



\$157.K

Total Income
(Revenue + Inkind)

\$127.K

Furthering Our Mission

\$10.K

Donation from
Memorial Health,
Presenting Sponsor



Partnerships

Savannah Country Club & Brianna Welch

graciously hosted our second annual Shine the Light Disco Night.

Dr Elisabeth Counselman-Carpenter &

Adelphi University partnered with Keepers of the Flame Foundation to do integral research, literature reviews, and publications on the psychosocial aspect of a breast cancer diagnosis.

Jeffrey Schifanelli & Sav Comm Acup, Inc.

collaborated with us to bring a pilot acupuncture program to our community.

After Breast Cancer Diagnosis (ABCD)

partners with us to bring one-to-one peer mentoring to Savannah.

Alicja Colon and Embolden Photography

was our Reframing Beauty Photographer. photo credit: cover page, table of contents, and p. 10 and p. 16

United Way of the Coastal Empire

Women United Transportation Fund partners with us to bring qualifying breast cancer patients transportation assistance so that they may get to their life-saving treatments.

Social Workers at Effingham Health System,

Lewis Cancer & Research Pavillion at St. Joseph Candler, and Anderson Cancer Institute at Memorial have partnered with us to further connect and support breast cancer patients in our area.

United Breast Cancer Foundation, Brookfield Women and Oglethorpe Mall

Partnered with us to bring \$93.K worth of assorted personal care items to local survivors.

Girl Scouts partnered with us on youth outreach on breast cancer awareness and Reframing Beauty as part of their founder's (also a survivor) Honor Her badge.

A SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL OF OUR DONORS, SPONSORS, VOLUNTEERS, SUPPORTERS, SURVIVORS, AND OUR 2022 MODELS, IT'S THROUGH ALL OF OUR EFFORTS THAT ALLOW US TO BRIGHTEN THAT LIGHT.

Our Team

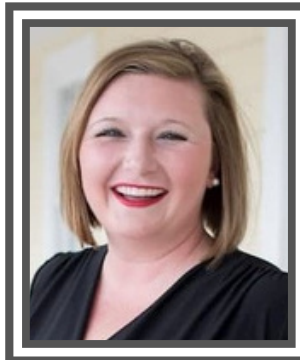
THE AWESOME BOARD BEHIND THIS ORGANIZATION



JOYCE WILLIAMS
FOUNDER/PRESIDENT
SURVIVOR



CARRIE MOTT
DIRECTOR/ VP
SURVIVOR



ASHLEY MOORE
DIRECTOR/ TREASURER
THERAPIST



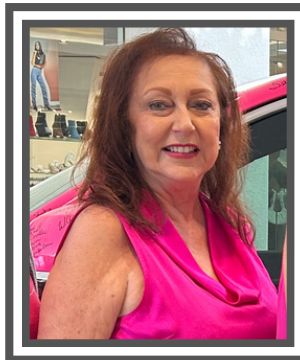
JEN DAVIS
DIRECTOR/ SECRETARY
WOMEN'S HEALTH NP



VANESSA BRINK
DIRECTOR
NP MEDICAL ONCOLOGY



JENNY WOODWARD
DIRECTOR
SURVIVOR



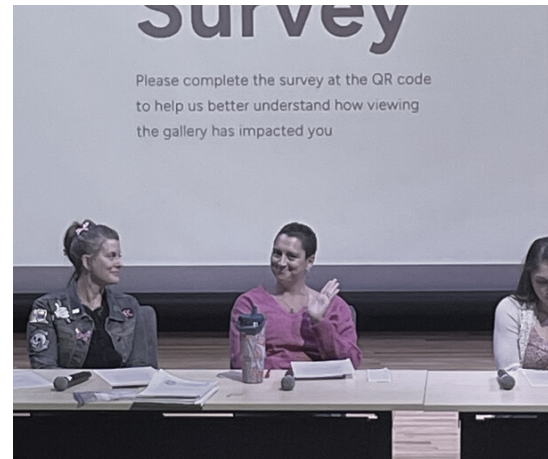
VIVIAN PALEFSKY
DIRECTOR
ONCOLOGY NURSE



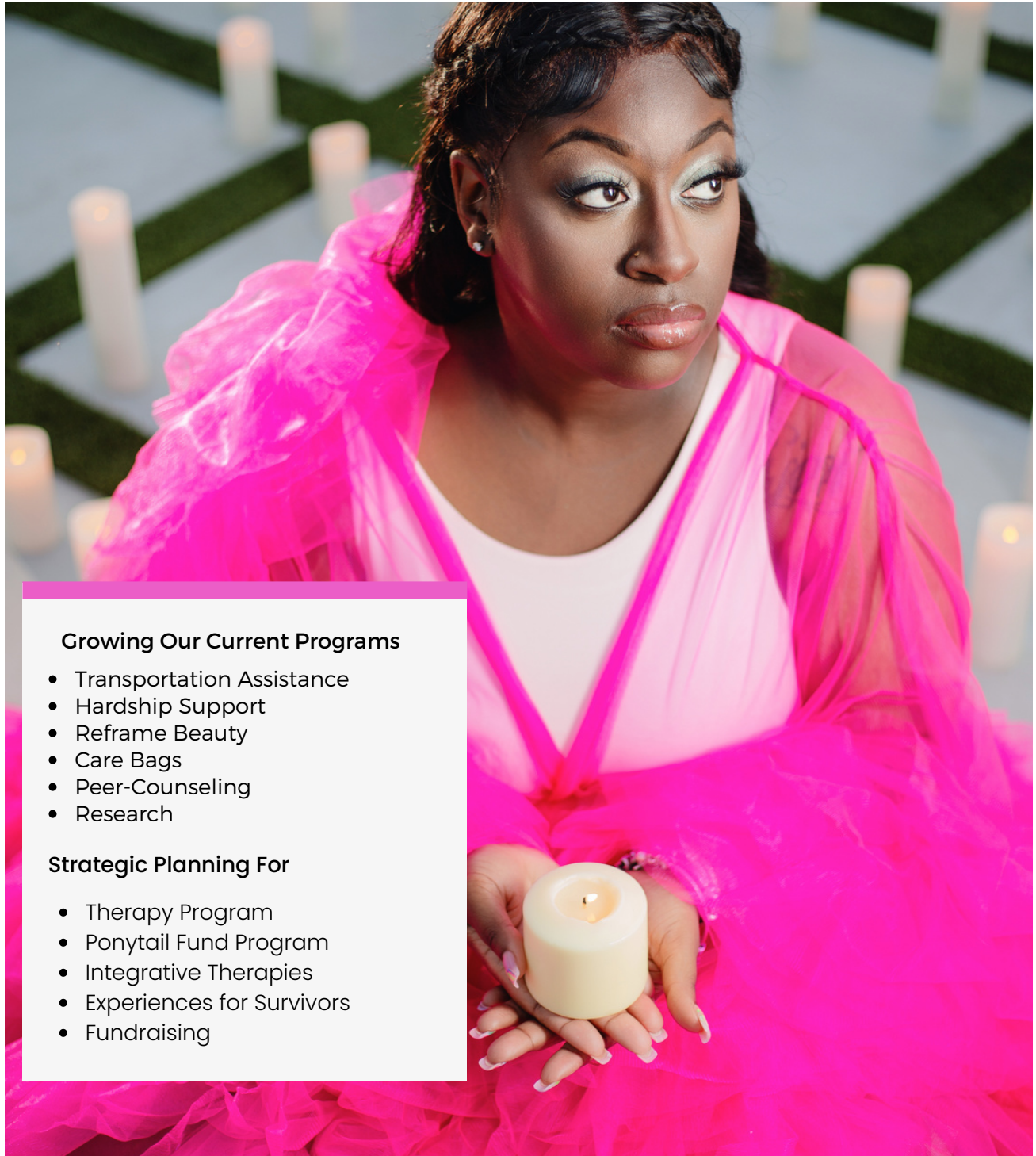
SHERRY SMITH
DIRECTOR
SURVIVOR

Photos from 2023

A LOOK BACK



A Look Ahead



Growing Our Current Programs

- Transportation Assistance
- Hardship Support
- Reframe Beauty
- Care Bags
- Peer-Counseling
- Research

Strategic Planning For

- Therapy Program
- Ponytail Fund Program
- Integrative Therapies
- Experiences for Survivors
- Fundraising

Contact Us

BECAUSE TOGETHER WE WEATHER
THIS STORM



www.togetherweweather.org



info@togetherweweather.org

We thank you for
your continued
support in our
efforts to support
local breast
cancer patients.

Donate Now



SCAN ME

