



Annual Report



MAY 1, 2019 - APRIL 30, 2020

REFLECTIONS

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I sit here pondering how to begin the story for this past year while living in the wildly altered present, for the first time, I find myself in a strange “in-between.” Looking forward, I don’t know what the future holds in this not-business-as-usual economy. Looking back, I’m overwhelmed by the continued support of this long-ago imagined MBA project now entering its 30th year. It’s incredible how a pandemic can quickly turn the world upside down, but even more impressive is how we, as humans, doers, givers, dreamers, and more, don’t give up fighting the good fight.

The Good Fight

Fortunate to have concluded our fiscal year before the world shut down, we ended our annual efforts with our organization’s best results.

Donated backpacks reached their highest point to date, while holiday gifts did the same. We distributed 123,833 combined units with the help of 1,500 Drive Leaders and 8,554 volunteers to 677 service agencies and schools around the Bay Area. We also ended the year very much in the black and were able to beef up significantly our financial reserves in case of a rainy day. Who knew that rainy day would arrive so soon?

We welcomed new staff members: a director of development, a development associate, and community marketing coordinator. All brought a fresh perspective and new ideas to their roles, and we couldn’t be happier to have them join our small but mighty team. And, given the competitive job market that is the Bay Area, we chose to offer better pay and more robust benefits to assure we have access to equally strong candidates in the future.

We also explored more automation and the use of tech in our Holiday Wish Drive warehouse processes. We further enhanced data collection and analysis to improve planning and anticipate changes we’d need to continue to grow. We strengthened corporate partnership with the highly popular backpack build events (see Traditions: Back-to-School Drive) and added more touchpoints with Drive Leaders. Volunteer registration and warehouse training were improved. We brightened our look and feel and refreshed our Drive materials and other deliverables.

It was a year of growth, of change, and success. It was a year that we pushed ourselves and saw results. Where we helped more, you gave more, and the community volunteered more. It was a good year well worth the good fight.

Jennifer Cullenbine
Founder and CEO





TRANSFORMATIONS



Remote Drop-offs and Pick-ups

Drive Leaders: the heart and soul of our outreach to the broader community. Because they are precious to us, we are continually seeking ways to make their job easier. We all know that traffic around the Bay Area is, well, horrendous, so we continue to expand our Drive materials pick-up and gift or backpack drop-off locations to allow Drive Leaders to begin and end their efforts on an “easy” note.

With the help of generous property owners, we were able to add two more efficient drop-off locations for the Holiday Wish Drive this year: San Francisco at Embarcadero Center 4 and the Peninsula at Stanford Research Park in Palo Alto. Both were highly popular, much appreciated, and very, very busy.

Donation drop-offs took place over four days during the second week of December at four different locations. Our staple South Bay warehouse drop-off location, kindly donated to us by Santa Clara County, received over 42,000 gifts while the repeat East Bay location at 3Crosses Church allowed Drive Leaders to drop off over 4,100 wishes. The newly established Peninsula location saw donations of over 7,400 gifts. And finally, our friends at Embarcadero Center 4 set us up in a prime location for many San Francisco Drive Leaders whose offices were mere blocks away. We managed to fill — and we mean ‘fill’ — our space with over 7,100 generous donations at our pop-up storefront location.

All in all, we spanned far and wide in the Bay Area for this Holiday Drive and managed to bring in well over 61,000 gifts over 1,300 drop-off visits from our Drive Leader community! Working together means good fun, good deeds, and excellent results.



TRANSFORMATIONS

What's
New

Partnerships

While we've had successful partnerships with unique organizations and long-term supporters, we added some brand new energy. Thanks to our Community Outreach and Membership lead, Evelyn, a Bay Area theatre artist, we embarked on arts partnerships for our Holiday Wish Drive that proved mutually beneficial to all parties. City Lights Theatre, Palo Alto Players, and Los Gatos Ballet welcomed collection boxes into their lobbies and spoke about our program before each show's start. Simultaneously, FGT staff was on-hand in the entry space to distribute wish cards and answer questions. Given the holiday entertainment offered onstage — *The Nutcracker*, *Christmas at Pemberley*, and *A Christmas Story: The Musical* — the partnerships were the perfect pairings of holiday spirit and generosity.

Other partnerships included the second annual Goombahs Christmas Lights Car Show and Toy Drive to collect toys, the Yelp Holiday House Party, and a day at the mall with country radio station KRTY. And finally, Light the World allowed FGT to place wishes in a vending machine at Christmas in the Park, San Jose. The thousands of visitors to this annual holiday display in the City had the opportunity to easily choose a local or international charity to support and quickly make a donation.

For the Back-to-School Drive, we again worked closely with NBC Bay Area. For the third year in a row, we promoted their national Supporting Our Schools program with a week of noon and evening broadcasts featuring FGT build partners, FGT agency interviews, and new this year, presence at the Chevron Family Theatre Festival at Leshner Center for the Arts. We capped off the week with the annual donation day at Jamba Juice in Mountain View. Broadcasting live all day, donors had the opportunity to swing by and drop off backpacks, supplies or make a donation and receive Jamba Juice and Pizza My Heart coupons as a thank you.

We also partnered with Silicon Valley Shakespeare with donation collection boxes at all three of their shows last season, all of which were made fully accessible to Bay Area youths through free admission for 17 and under.

We can't thank all these creative and generous organizations enough. They help spread the word about FGT programs, touch countless lives and bring joy to us all.

TRANSFORMATIONS



Education Relief Fund

In response to COVID-19 and the quick and unexpected shutdown of just about everything, including schools, FGT jumped in with a new, short-term program — The Education Relief Fund.

We knew that families were already struggling to provide what their children needed to complete schoolwork and relied on the supplies available in their classrooms. With school shuttered and learning transitioned to online, it was clear there were now thousands of students at home with nothing: no pens or pencils, no paper, and no help in sight.

Quickly a plan was formed, and we began building kits filled with the items students would need to complete their work at home. The response we received was overwhelming, and in just six weeks, through the selfless support of 400 donors and a handful of volunteers, we built and distributed 3,967 kits so students could finish their year strong regardless of where they were learning.

Fortunately, distribution was easy too. The kits could be handed out to in-need students when they came to pick up school lunches in their local district. And, as a bonus, local grocery stores and Star One generously donated bags, so each kit was neatly packed and easy to pass through a car window as families drove through.

While we don't know what the future holds, we expect this successful program to grow and become a potential annual Drive to increase year-round student support in low-income communities.

TRANSITIONS



Social Media and A New Blog

As the digital world continues to grow, and more communication shifts to social media, Family Giving Tree knew we had to get on board. Nikki, the newest staff member to join our team will build FGT's social media presence and enhance direct communications via our blog, Seedlings. The goal: to share moments of joy and what the power of kindness looks like in our community.

How? Through more content. That means more stories (to build awareness of the need around us and the importance of what we do), more smiles (to understand the impact and the families we serve), and more relationships (to help others continue to learn about our incredible donors and volunteers). You'll also hear more about our excellent staff and board members and enjoy great images and fun videos.

Best practices will include posting at optimized times, building curated content for each platform, and continuously engaging with our supporters online. We seek to bring pieces of the FGT vision — a world where giving brings joy, offers hope, and opens possibilities — to everyone through their phone, tablet, or laptop, and hope that it continues to inspire community kindness, generosity, and volunteerism.



TRANSITIONS



Purchasing



Always seeking to do more with less, our Program Coordinator Kristyn accepted the challenge to transform our purchasing process and therefore increase our buying clout. How? Read on.

BUY OVERSTOCK ITEMS: As a nonprofit, we have the unique ability to purchase items from specialized vendors who receive overstock, which they can sell incredibly cheaply. Given the mission, most vendors are eager to help: they see an article come into inventory that they know we might need, take and send pictures of it, and then we don't miss out on these incredible deals.

NEGOTIATE BETTER PRICING: Looking at past BTS and HWD data, we can determine where "gaps" exist, enabling us to plan and place orders earlier in the year to ensure better pricing. When we place our order early, our vendors can approach their suppliers and secure the exact quantity needed, eliciting the best pricing possible because they know the inventory will be purchased. We can also lock in the sales and other beneficial pricing and avoid increased shipping costs that would have been in effect closer to Drive-time.

HAVE SUPPLIES HELD AND DROP-SHIPPED TO BUILD PARTNERS: Over the years, and with new guidance, FGT has cultivated unique relationships with vendors, such that they are now willing to hold and store inventory until a warehouse is locked-in for each Drive. This ability to keep, then ship, is a great benefit during the Backpack Build season. Not only does it better assure the right quantity of supplies is delivered, it dramatically reduces staff time to prepare and set-up at each Build location.

So with a little finesse, good planning, and great relationships, purchasing is making the job easier and allowing us to use more funds to serve those in need.

TRANSITIONS

Technology in the Warehouse



With the help and guidance of Frank, a retired CIO fellow, FGT piloted two inventory management projects designed to improve data collection and operational scalability for the Holiday Wish Drive.

Using his operational and programming experience, he created a user interface and database that collected deeper-level data and defined the associated process. With the help of trained volunteers using handheld scanners, we tracked an accurate count of donated wishes and whether the first or alternate wish was supported. (Each recipient provides a primary and alternate wish in case the primary one cannot be supported.) Collecting data on which wish came through the warehouse door was a first in the organization's history. This data can now be analyzed to determine donor behavior regarding which gifts or age ranges, to name a few categories, are more appealing or easier to purchase/support.

The second pilot Frank implemented was designed to alleviate finding a large enough warehouse to conduct our Holiday Wish Drive. Considered to be a mainly two-dimensional process, the Holiday Drive currently requires 1-2 buildings with 115K sq. ft. of open floor space — a challenge to get donated these days. The pilot involved an inventory tracking process using a software program that could be used by trained volunteers. Again, using handheld scanners, volunteers scanned and placed the donated gift onto multi-tiered shelving. At a later time, using a fulfillment report, order picking can begin, and any unfulfilled wishes can be shopped for and supported. The primary “win” in this approach is that by “going vertical” with the process, FGT would require less square footage. Less space means a larger pool of buildings and building owners to approach about a Holiday Wish Drive warehouse, thus alleviating this particular resource strain — a win-win for everyone.



TRADITIONS

TRIED AND TRUE PROGRAMMING

Back-to-School Drive

Simple tools can profoundly affect learning, but the Bay Area's educational gap often leaves students from low-income families without the basics. Given this reality, the 2019 Back-to-School Drive focused on the need to ignite the imagination of students in this disadvantaged position. Proudly, this year was a high-water mark for this 24-year-old program with the most number of backpacks distributed ever — 41,648! Since realigning our requirements for qualification for the program, fewer schools and agencies received our help. Still, for those that do, we know we are reaching deeper into their needy population and making a difference in low-income communities around the Bay Area.

Our Backpack Build program was highly popular in 2019 — we nearly ran out of slots because of the positive response— continuing to build backpacks through August. As the name implies, this program blends volunteerism and filling bags with grade-appropriate supplies. For a fee, FGT brings all the necessary items to the donor, and they plan an event with their staff or group to build backpacks and give back. The experience is always positive, and we sometimes are the beneficiary of matching dollars for volunteer time.

2019 also saw the introduction of new backpack tags. Colorful and sure to stay attached to the bags, these were a welcome addition to the program. Our Drive Leaders loved them because they were smaller, brighter, and easier to secure. We also added more digital resources as we continue to migrate to a more green-focused business model. All available on our website, these useful graphics, emails, printable tags, and more help to make our Drive Leaders job more manageable and their communications more effective.

As the Bay Area grows and changes, so does the need for this critical program. Our dream is to reach every one of the 330,000 students who qualify, and we will not give up the good fight to do just that. It's what ignites *our* imagination.



TRADITIONS

TRIED AND TRUE PROGRAMMING

Holiday Wish Drive



With the theme of “Celebrate Giving,” the 2019 Holiday Wish Drive was indeed a celebration. The lobby of the donated warehouse space in Santa Clara was awash with color and lights, and corporate Drive Partners were celebrated with uniquely decorated trees featuring their brand colors. All of this was the setting to welcome 7,500 volunteers, who helped to sort and distribute a record number of 82,235 gifts to 413 agencies.

We can't run this Drive without our essential Drive Leaders who conducted 1,043 Drives on our behalf and granted 61,000+ wishes. While not the largest number of Drives FGT has had in the past five years, they indeed were the most effective averaging 59 gifts per Drive Leader. One Drive Leader brought in an astonishing 1,790 gifts.

Also, now a standard piece of this holiday effort is the wrapping parties hosted and funded by corporate partners. It's a chance to get into the holiday spirit wrapping wished-for gifts in support of others right in their backyard. Each event is an excellent opportunity for FGT to educate about the need while encouraging volunteer participation and preparing highly anticipated gifts that will bring joy to the intended recipients.

Daily, for two weeks, the warehouse was bustling with families, volunteers, staff, and the media too. The thought of receiving, processing, and distributing 80,000+ gifts is daunting to some, but for those who return to this celebratory space year after year, it's a source of joy — a celebration of giving in its purest form.



FINANCIALS

	FYE 2016	FYE 2017	FYE 2018	FYE 2019	FYE 2020
Total Revenue	5,985,531	5,655,440	6,332,437	6,415,473	6,627,356
Total Expense	5,782,492	5,880,550	6,350,466	6,199,226	6,357,961
Grants Expense	3,337,963	3,532,358	3,878,796	3,839,790	3,736,897
Grants Exp % to Total Exp	57.7%	60.1%	61.1%	61.9%	58.8%
Purchases	659,163	667,350	635,962	592,024	700,520
Purchased percentage	19.7%	18.9%	16.4%	15.4%	18.7%
Granted Units	109,461	115,536	120,869	118,903	124,119
Growth Rate - Granted Units	4.4%	5.5%	4.6%	-1.6%	4.4%

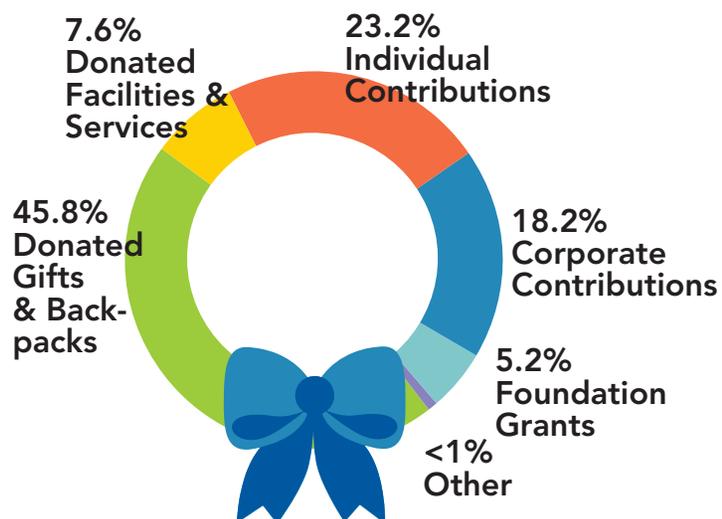
REVENUE

Cash Contributions	
Individual	1,537,884
Corporate	1,206,083
Foundation Grants	341,974
Other	-1,784
Subtotal Cash	3,084,157
Donated Gifts & Backpacks	3,036,377
Donated Facilities	491,822
Donated Equipment	15,000
Total Revenue	6,627,356

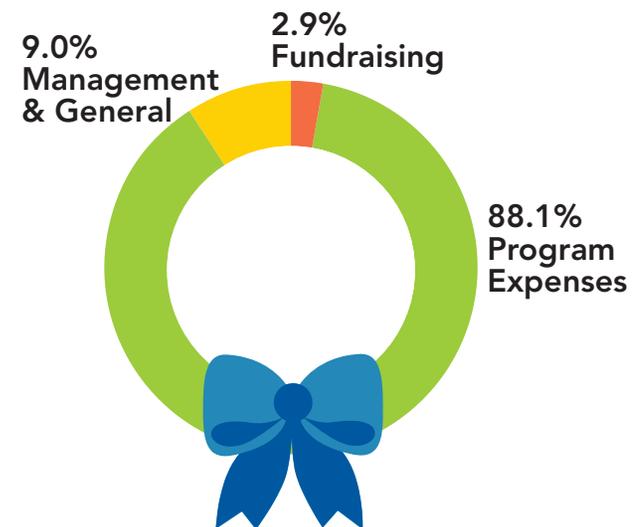
EXPENSE

Program Expenses	5,603,893
Management & General	569,229
Fundraising	184,839
Total Expenses	6,357,961

INCOME



EXPENSES



FGT BY THE NUMBERS

LIFETIME
BACKPACKS



403,787

LIFETIME
HOLIDAY GIFTS



1,440,467



2019-20
Warehouse Volunteer Hours

10,976

Estimated Value of
All Donated Backpacks and
Gifts in FY 2019

\$3,727,000

Lifetime Volunteers

140,180

Lifetime Drives
by Drive Leaders

28,836

Lifetime Recipients

1,844,254



OUR MISSION

By inspiring community kindness, generosity, and volunteerism, The Family Giving Tree fulfills exact holiday wishes and provides backpacks filled with STEAM-based school supplies to those in need.

OUR VISION

The Family Giving Tree envisions a world where Giving brings joy, offers hope, and opens possibilities.

LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jennifer Cullenbine
CEO and Founder

Al Galan
Operations Director

Charlotte Wood
Director of Marketing

Jess Gutierrez
Chief Financial Officer

Jill Mitsch
Director of Development