



Year in Review

A look back at 2021





Of all the gifts of the past year, Friendship Circle is most grateful for three.

Unity. Community. Hope.

The dawn of 2021 allowed the world to do more than turn a calendar page. While the entire world was eager to step out of the shadow of the pandemic, we were still unsure of what the next 365 days would bring.

We are so grateful that over the past year we saw togetherness, strengthening of community, and fresh rays of hope.

In 2021, Friendship Circle was able to open its doors once again to its full capacity. Spurred by the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and participants, we returned to weekly, consistent in-person activities, and we were incredibly grateful to see the outpouring of love that followed.

A highlight was our Mother's Day Event, where our special mothers gathered to enjoy food, wine, and the sorely missed company of others. Flowers bloomed in our hands as our guest florist taught us how to craft bouquets, and a therapist was on hand to speak about how to navigate our children through this new reality.

Another momentous gathering was the Cars4Friendship event, where the hard work and continued efforts of our volunteers really shone. One of our very own volunteers, Brandon Margudumov arranged for an exhibit of 45 exotic cars for an exciting day of community and friendship.

Summer and winter camps also returned, and allowed participants and volunteers to enjoy day trips, shows, music, and dance.

After a wonderfully successful year, it was lovely to end on a high note with a spectacular Chanukah Party on Ice for the whole family. This event, hosted by the Middletown Sports Complex, was a whirlwind celebration that featured ice skating, arts and crafts, a wonderful dinner, and a menorah lighting.

While the road to normalcy is not yet clear, we are thrilled to have forged a path toward brighter days. The enthusiasm and dedication of our Friendship Circle community is unmatched, and the difficulties we faced were not enough to keep us apart. Instead, we were able to continue our mission to engage and motivate individuals with special needs through friendship and inclusion, while providing respite to their families. No matter what the upcoming year should bring, we know that our friendships are strong enough to withstand any obstacle.



We've been busy!

720
PACKAGES
DELIVERED

46
HOURS of Virtual
Programs
on Zoom

132
Hours of
In-person
programs

50
MVP
graduates

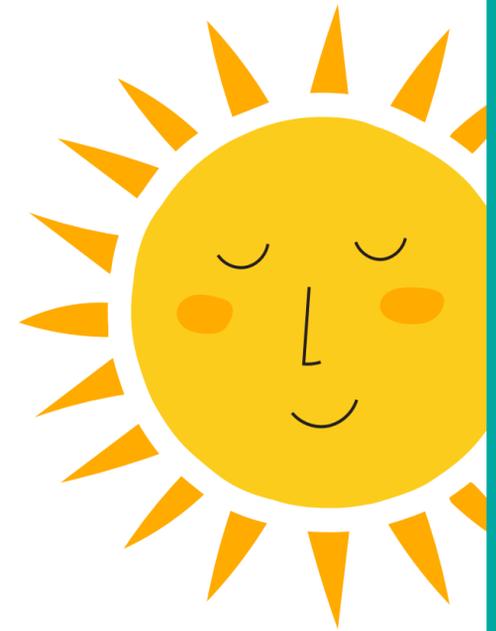
200
packages prepared by
our FC participants to give
back to the community

15
Hours of
Volunteer
training

10000 Community members
celebrating Friendship
at Walk4friends and
Cars4Friendship



Here's what we've been up to!



2021

JAN Continue Bi-Weekly Zoom Programs from 2020
 Trip to the Movies (social distancing)
 MLK Day Blessings Bags—FC participants gathered together outside to create “blessings bags” of essentials to donate to a local shelter.

FEB Zoom Hamantaschen Bake
 Zoom Dance classes with Abby
 Purim packages delivered to participants and volunteers

MAR Zoom creating delicious Cocoa Bombs
 Passover packages delivered to participants and volunteers
 Zoom Parent Night In—Cocktail evening over Zoom- parents were delivered a package filled with ingredients to create mixed drinks with a specialized bartender.

APR Virtual afterschool program created by our volunteers.

MAY In-person programming back!
 Mothers Day packages delivered to all Moms—filled with facemask, cocktails, bath bombs and more!
 In-person Moms Night Out- our Moms were treated to a fun night of delicious food, wine and crawling their own floral arrangements.
 Family Fun Day at Congress Hill Farms.
 Virtual Cheesecake Baking



JUN

JUL

AUG

SEP

OCT

NOV

DEC

Walk4friends — Hundreds came out to support our community and walk in the name of friendship and inclusion!

Summer in-person programming

Volunteer Apperication Event
 Summer in-person programming

Summer Camp
 Summer in-person programming

Volunteer Orientation

Cars4Friendship - showcased over 45 exotic cars, Dj, magician-amazing day for the community!
 In-person Sunday Program
 In-person Yad Jr / YAD

MVP Session
 Volunteer Seminar
 In-person Sunday Program
 In-person Yad Jr / YAD

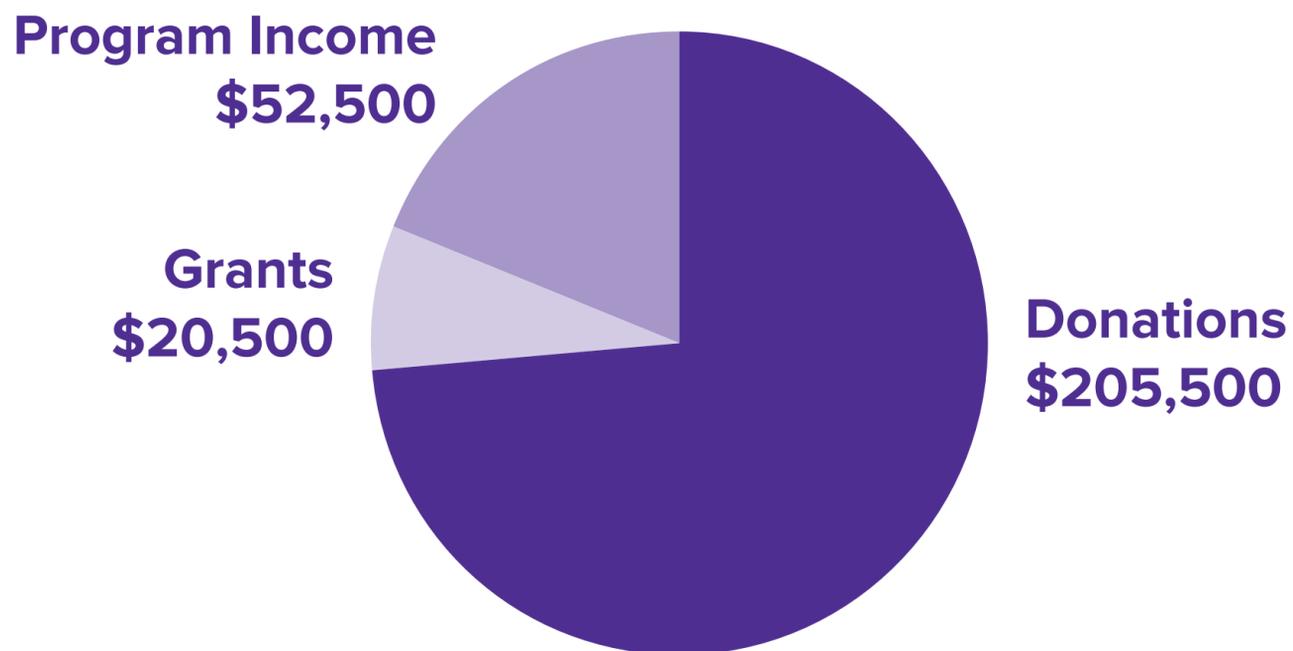
Winter Camp
 Chanukah on Ice



2022

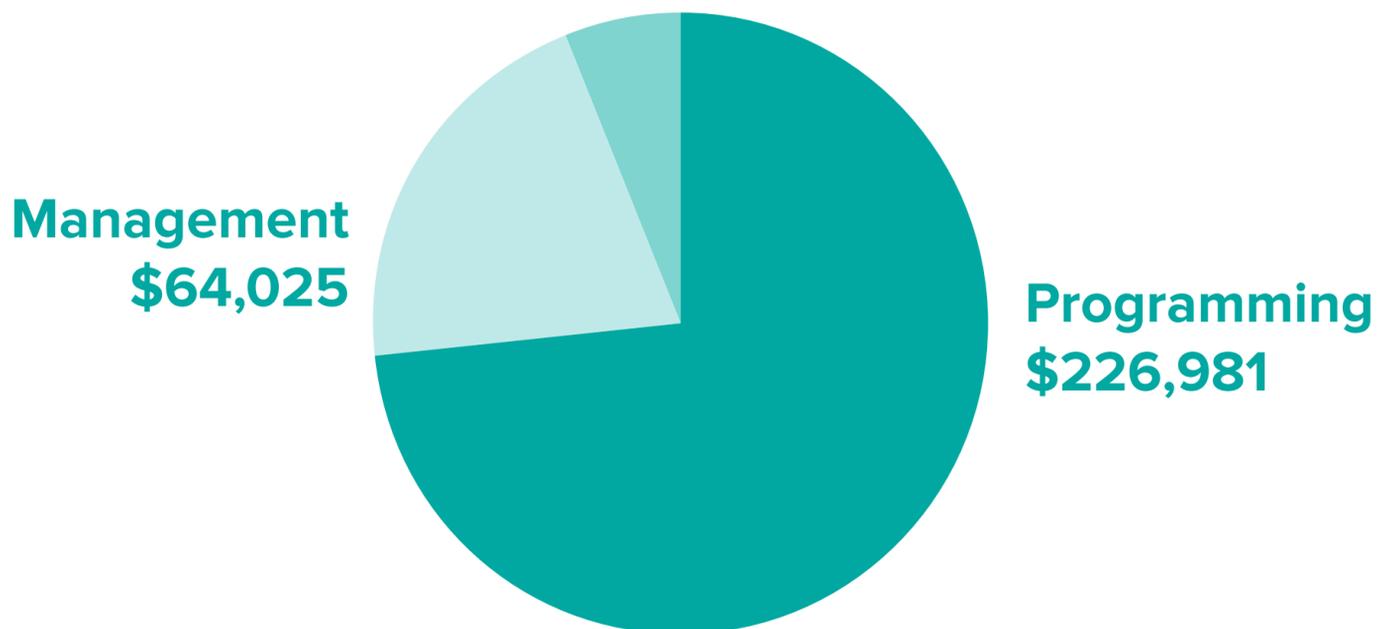


A look at the numbers



Revenue Total \$278,500

Development & Fundraising \$18,193



Expenses Total \$309,199



Testimonials



Friendship Circle has been a part of our family's lives for years now. The amazing staff and volunteers have watched my son, Jack, grow and change over time and have welcomed every member of our family. The past two years have been a challenge for everyone, but for people with special needs... this has been especially trying. My son didn't grasp why he couldn't go to school or why we have to wear masks everywhere.

Friendship Circle was there for him. Virtual programs gave him something to look forward to when he couldn't go anywhere or see anyone. That small amount of socialization and interaction with the outside world, each week, was so important. And the occasional gift drop offs brightened our day every time. Even in isolation, we were reminded that we are part of a community. We, but especially Jack, weren't forgotten! Now that Friendship Circle programs are back in person, Jack is thrilled. To see a child with autism so happy and excited to have somewhere to go and be social and stimulated is a beautiful thing. And he comes out with the biggest smile on his face every week! As a special needs parent, there is no greater joy than to find people and activities that make your child happy. They get him, they accept him, they challenge him. Jack is happy at Friendship Circle in a way he isn't happy anyplace else. And we are so grateful for everything they do.

—J.L.

The Friendship Circle opened their arms and hearts to us since the day we joined about nine years ago. In the past two years, this group rose to the challenge of the pandemic and continued to provide a sense of community, even during the lockdown. They found a way to make zoom calls relevant to my daughter with communication disabilities and then managed to open and provide in person programs. They provide my daughter with the senses of acceptance, friendship, support, hope, happiness, and independence.

—B.C.

Friendship Circle made a huge difference in the life of my daughter during the pandemic. Unable to go anywhere during most of 2020 and 2021, my daughter became very anxious and stressed. I can't imagine what her social life would have been like without Friendship circle's virtual program and Friends at home during the pandemic. The programs worked like magic! Her excitement was obvious in the beautiful smiles on her face. Thank you Friendship Circle for giving the children something to look forward to and for making my daughter's life better!

—C.E.



The Friendship Circle is dedicated to creating a supportive community for individuals with special needs, their families as well as high school and adult volunteers. It gives our community an opportunity to unearth their potential, make positive life changes and realize their dreams. Since 2001, The Friendship Circle has worked tirelessly to fulfill its mission.

Get involved • Support Inclusive Friendships • Make a difference



FriendshipCircle

O F C E N T R A L J E R S E Y

707 Tennent Road, Manalapan, NJ 07726

T: 732-536-2319 **W:** www.friendsnj.com

Instagram: [@FCcentralJersey](https://www.instagram.com/FCcentralJersey)