



# 2021-22

## Annual Report





# A message from the Chief Executive Officer

Dear Friends and Supporters of STRIDE Adaptive Sports,

This year was nearly as tumultuous as pandemic times and yet still successful in navigating the bumps in the road. As STRIDE withstood the ripple effects in a slow return to normal activity, our athletes with special needs were offered many returning activities along with some that differed from previous years. The nature of this global pandemic presented not just clinical challenges, but organizational and managerial ones as well. While there is no off-the-shelf playbook for how to navigate after-pandemic procedures, existing management research indicates that organizations can navigate uncharted times through innovative strategy and creative tactics.

A renaissance is characterized by an effort to revive and surpass ideas and achievements. Key lessons learned from Middle Ages that apply today:

- Entrenched powers and authorities are challenged.
- Priorities change and new business models emerge.
- Innovation driven by necessity is accelerated.

I recently learned in a seminar at a conference, there is "Cash in Crisis" and there is "Opportunity in Chaos." If there is one thing that comes out of a crisis, it is the opportunity for innovation.

We have been seeing the results of pandemic driven chaos at STRIDE this year with staff and program changes. Resisting change doesn't allow the door to open very wide for the transformation that should be taking place. We embraced losing our Program Director for the 2nd time, hiring new, resulting in growth in existing and new programs and procedural improvements through fresh eyes and approaches. Also, our new Development Director is exploring fresh approaches to upcoming events and new avenues for grants.

The Sled Hockey program stagnated in 2021 season and became chaotic, and STRIDE took quick action to re-invigorate the program with new leadership and management that will rebuild its future including developing a youth feeder program and invigorating the competition team with a fundraising campaign plan. Also after 17 years of building and supporting a solid adaptive ski program in Connecticut, the area management decided they wanted autonomy without STRIDE. This opened the door for expansion for snowsports with a new program at Titus Mountain in the Adirondacks, where there were no adaptive resources in the region.

As a user driven society, we seek instant gratification, better jobs, more time with family, working remotely. A sense of entitlement is linked to the emotional effects of surviving a pandemic to stave off negative mental health impact. This past year was certainly marked by a range of emotional experiences. We will tackle each crisis as an opportunity. As Helen Keller said: "I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything, I will not refuse to do something that I can do."

*Mary Ellen Whitney* CEO & Founder



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350+ trained  
and dedicated volunteers



# Board of Directors



President  
**Mary Ellen Whitney**  
Founder and CEO  
STRIDE Adaptive Sports  
Wynantskill, New York



Medical Counsel  
**Dr. Steve Ferro**  
Physician Resident  
Westerly, RI



Treasurer  
**Amy Earing, CPA**  
Partner  
Lavelle & Finn LLP  
Castleton, New York



Secretary  
**Linda Reiss**  
Retired VP Operations  
Matthew Bender Publishing  
Wynantskill, New York



Counsel  
**Patrick Fitzgerald, III**  
Attorney and Partner  
Girvin & Ferlazzo, P.C.  
Loudonville, New York



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Safety Manager - Regeneron  
Delmar, New York



Board Member  
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Retired Partner  
Farm Family Insurance  
Glenmont, New York



Board Member  
**Mark Moran**  
Retired STRIDE Business Manager  
Niskayuna, New York



Board Member  
**Tom Gilbert**  
Retired Owner,  
Catamount Ski Area  
Lenox, Massachusetts



Board Member  
**Curtis Butler**  
Financial Advisor  
Darien, CT

## Our Mission

STRIDE's mission is to educate and empower Individuals with disabilities in life-changing sport and recreation programs to sustain active, healthy, and fun lifestyles.

## Our Vision

Building a community with equal opportunity and access for sport and recreational activities. No one should be left behind because of a disability!

## Our Priority

Safety, health and well-being of everyone in our STRIDE community

## Our Core Values

**CREATE** opportunities and provide outlets for individuals with special needs to make friends, increase self-esteem, develop life skills, realize their potential and become productive members of society.

**EDUCATE** volunteers, families and communities about opportunities that exist for individuals with special needs.

**PARTNER** with leading professionals, educational institutions, agencies and communities in order to create top-tier recreational programs for individuals with disabilities.

**LEAD** in the arena of adaptive sports by providing opportunities for STRIDE participations that are safe, fun and help achieve personal goals.

**ENGAGE** a committed team of volunteers, parents, family, friends and community members in our services and mission.

**CHALLENGE** the status quo by removing boundaries and breaking down barriers of ignorance and attitude that can block the path of independence for individuals who have disabilities.



# Who we are *and what we do*



**1,700+** STRIDE Athletes

- A volunteer non-profit educational organization founded in 1985-86
- Provided **17,706** free/low-cost adaptive sport and recreation lessons
- **10,406** of these lessons are new SHARE Center community fitness classes
- Over 350 skilled sport instructors and volunteers
- Served over **1700** families in 2021-22
- Offered programs in **18** sports/activities in **23** locations in **3** states
- Focus is on education for individual life-time sports
- Funding goes directly to programs with a modest operating budget
- Operates with a paid staff of **4** FTE and a few hourly coaches
- Chapter member of Move United Sports
- Official US Paralympic Sports Club
- Member of Professional Ski Instructors of America / American Association of Snowboard Instructors
- Member of Special Olympics and an official Red Cross provider
- Recognized as one of the largest adaptive sport organizations in Eastern US & among the leading adaptive organizations in the USA
- Collaborate with school districts, colleges and other non-profits
- Partnerships with Warfighter Sports/Move United providing rehabilitative sports to regional Wounded Warriors and veteran communities
- Programs are primarily cost-free or low-cost for participation with scholarships available when cost is prohibitive
- Operates a tent-camping facility in Chatham NY, on 86 environmentally protected wooded acres with miles of trails, ponds, camping areas, and a large pavilion/main lodge.
- Funding is diversified and comes from grants, private donations, fund-raisers, and corporate sponsorships. No government grants are solicited.
- Operates a 5,300 sq. ft. adaptive fitness and community facility called SHARE Center (*STRIDE Health and Recreation Education Center*) that opened in 2020.
- Dave & Marisa Clark Memorial Foundation awarded **8** athletes with skiing and bike camp awards
- Receive funding through grants, individuals and corporate sponsors without government funding



# 2021-2022 Highlights

## *sport & recreation programs*

- The SHARE Center fitness classes grew as a community resource for individual fitness training and small group sessions.
- Sled Warriors practiced year-round with 2 competition tournaments; a leadership transition helped sustain the program
- Strides 4 STRIDE 5K Run, Walk, Roll built back stronger with 183 participants
- Hosted 9 camping weekends at the SCORE Center.
- Hosted Wounded Warrior Bootcamp weekend and Wounded Warrior Snowfest successfully back to normal event protocols.
- Continued to add inclusive Yoga, Zumba, Barre, HIIT, Pilates, and Circuit fitness training classes at the SHARE Center as community activities.
- Hosted a successful Brewfest /Motorcycle Ride event at S&S Brewery with outdoor seating and music.
- Built the kayak program on Crooked Lake as a fall and spring outdoor program.
- Received a large grant from Mother Cabrini Foundation that allowed structural growth of the SHARE Center including new equipment; large storage shed; pickleball and corn hole courts and hiring of fitness coaches.
- Partnered with NY Special Olympics in swimming, bowling and skiing competitions
- Utilized virtual technology for snowsport instructor pre-season training, allowing Jiminy Peak, Catamount and Ski Sundown volunteer coaches to work together in Zoom format.
- Hosted very successful Teen dances at Halloween and Christmas in the SHARE Center.
- Hosted team end-of- season banquets for sled hockey and swimming



90

veterans participated  
in STRIDE Wounded  
Warrior Programs



# 2021-2022 Highlights

## *sport & recreation programs*

*The nucleus of our winter programs continues to be alpine skiing and snowboarding, and sled hockey. This year we taught **1634** total lessons in a shortened ski season ending early March due to warm weather. The Great Race was canceled due to weather. Our sled hockey team had **18** total members including 4 Wounded Warriors totaling **3,588** lessons with 3 tournaments and a banquet. Summer program nucleus is our SCORE Camp in Chatham, NY yielding 9 weekend programs & family or group use of the grounds . We count 'lessons' that last 1 to 2.5 hours in each sport or activity.*

### Programs & Activities Offered

Archery Bowling Cycling  
Dance Disc Golf Fishing  
Fitness Training Golf Hiking  
Kayaking 5K Run Swimming  
Zumba Bike Camp Skiing  
Sled Hockey Teen Dances  
Snowboarding Snowshoeing  
Tennis Individual Fitness  
Tent Camping Alter-G Training  
White Water Rafting Yoga  
Wounded Warrior Events



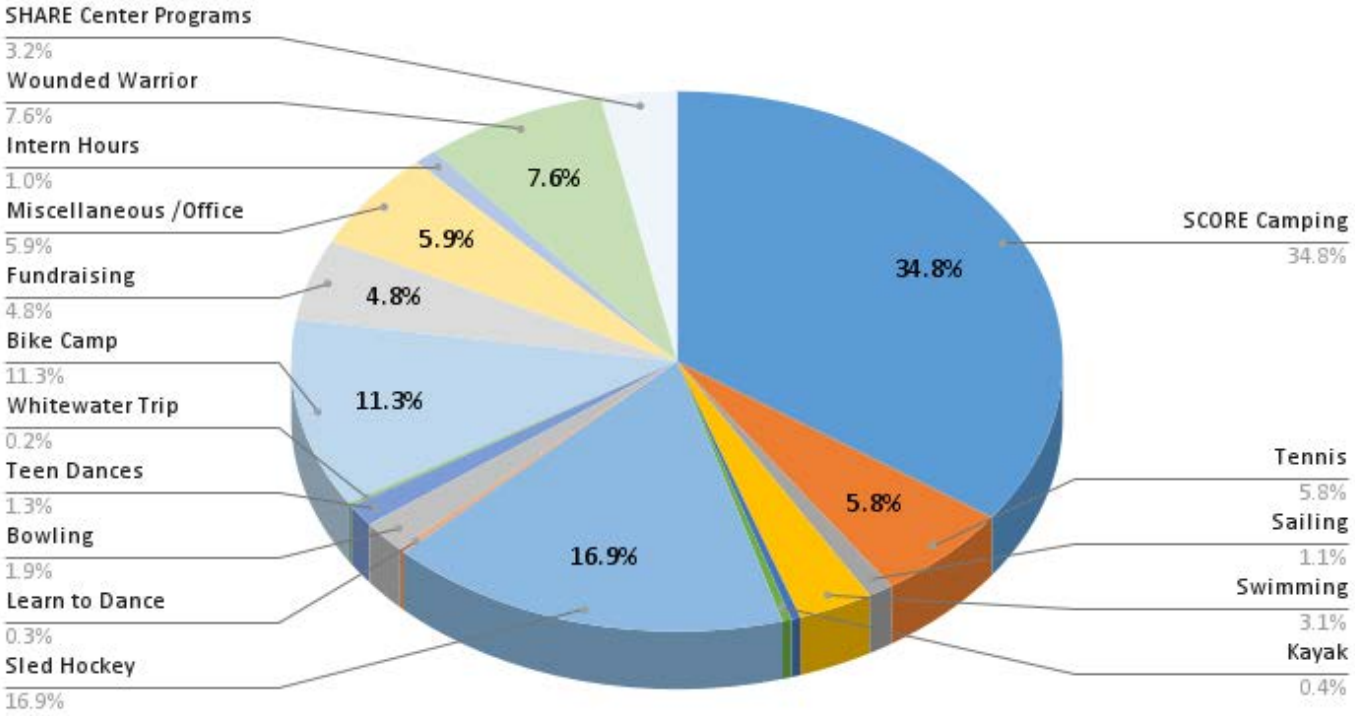
**1,634** adaptive ski and  
snowboard lessons provided



# Volunteer hours = \$ 1,009,154

Volunteer hours expressed by dollar amount per program at average NY, MA, CT rate \$34.85 / hour

Volunteer Values





# 2021-2022 Highlights

## STRIDE Adaptive Sports

### Staff:

- ~ STRIDE Administrative team operates with 4 full-time staff with oversight from the Executive Board of Directors; we had turn-over in two positions and 2 new staff this year.
- ~ We had no college interns; and hired multiple hourly fitness instructors.
- ~ We utilized resources of corporations and agencies who provided employees for outdoor work days at our facilities.

### Development:

- ~ We lost revenue from major fund-raisers, and our investment portfolio is significantly lower than 2020-21.
- ~ Program revenue from administration fees is returning to normal.
- ~ In-kind donations were back up post-pandemic level.
- ~ Corporate sponsor support decreased in fund-raising events.
- ~ Growth in the 100K Vertical Challenge increased by 30%.
- ~ Our 5K race event was successful, but needs a new look for 2023.
- ~ Grants and individual contributions remain steady streams of revenue.
- ~ Mother Cabrini Foundation grant for \$125K was th largest in history.
- ~ Two PPE loans were 100% forgiven.

### Communications/Marketing:

- ~ Our social media presence is still growing and used more.
- ~ We launched a new website and continue to make improvements in our IT developing the database.
- ~ STRIDE's presence in the community continues to grow in awareness through many avenues including media, press and recognition awards.
- ~ Nearly all of our materials and registrations are now digital, and we are primarily a paperless organization with conscious efforts to be 'green'
- ~ We have integrated Safe Sport athlete training into every volunteer application with criminal background checks annually.
- ~ We are rated Platinum level for transparency by GuideStar.



**51** new athlete applications  
received this year





# Athlete of the Year

## Joseph Pierson



There hasn't been a practice, workout or competition where Joe did not put his best foot forward! Not only does he show up determined to grow personally as an athlete, he expects the same from his teammates. This high level of dedication, sportsmanship and leadership is infectious. He cheers on teammates during difficult sets and reminds them of their lofty goals.

A true testament to Joe's commitment was when he began to volunteer with beginner swimmers. Joe worked to teach freestyle, backstroke and critical swim skills to new learners. For these reasons Joe was named STRIDE Stingray's Swim Team Captain. His altruistic behavior extends beyond serving as a role model on the pool deck. Joe completed his Eagle Scout project with STRIDE, building a bocce scoreboard. His compassion for community health has led to his new role at a local nursing home where he ensures that residents are receiving nutritious meals round the clock. Joe has definitely set a very admiring bench mark for aspiring athletes at STRIDE. With great honor we recognized 2022 Athlete of the Year - Joe Pierson aka Captain Joe!



**18** adaptive sport  
and recreation programs  
offered year round





STRIDE Moments 

## Volunteer of the Year Dave Graham

Dave Graham serves as Program Leader for STRIDE's Tennis Program. Dave began his journey with STRIDE in 2010 when he was looking for a sports program for his son Luke, who has autism. After positive experiences, he and his son had with STRIDE, Dave agreed to take over STRIDE's tennis program which was a fledgling summer event. He created a tennis curriculum and format for individuals with disabilities including wheelchair tennis players that emphasizes basic fundamental tennis skills while providing the opportunity for social interaction and a place to have fun! After over a decade of stellar service, with the advent of a pandemic, Dave rose to the occasion to teach STRIDE tennis players with disabilities that they can have fun and play the game even while at home during quarantine by making fun videos for virtual skill development. When it became reasonably safe to return to in-person play, he got our program back on the courts. He has fantastic volunteer assistance too, his father David Senior, wife Michelle, daughter Rory, and a number of HS students which help make the program run seamlessly.

**Congratulations Dave Graham, STRIDE 2022 Volunteer of the Year.**

over **28,958**  
volunteer hours



STRIDE honors our **350+** volunteers for making a huge difference in the community. Whether they run a lap with a biker, rake leaves, clean the gym, teach a ski lesson, decorate for an event, take a child camping, or collect a raffle prize; every single volunteer hour has a ripple effect that positively affects the lives of individuals with disabilities in our communities. Our program services wouldn't exist without the assistance we receive from so many big-hearted people. Calculated volunteer hours given for the year were **28,958** at a NY, CT, MA average value from Independent Sector of **\$34.84**, equaling **\$1,009,154** given in time! The intrinsic rewards received from volunteering for STRIDE are valued much higher than any tangible award we can think of. We honor all those who help us throughout the year.



# Strategic Plan 2020- 2025



**24** active partnerships with educational organizations through Partners in Education

## 1 TRANSITIONING PRODUCTIVE NEW LEADERSHIP

1

- Execute a succession plan for transition of leadership within 5 years
- Create a work staff team that promotes and sustains growth and productivity
- Build community activity in the SHARE center for awareness

## 2 LONG TERM SUSTAINMENT

2

- Develop a long-term funding plan and solidify funding relationships
- Measure success through quantitative and qualitative means
- Full use of the SHARE Center and SCORE camp for income stream

## 3 GROWTH IN SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIPS

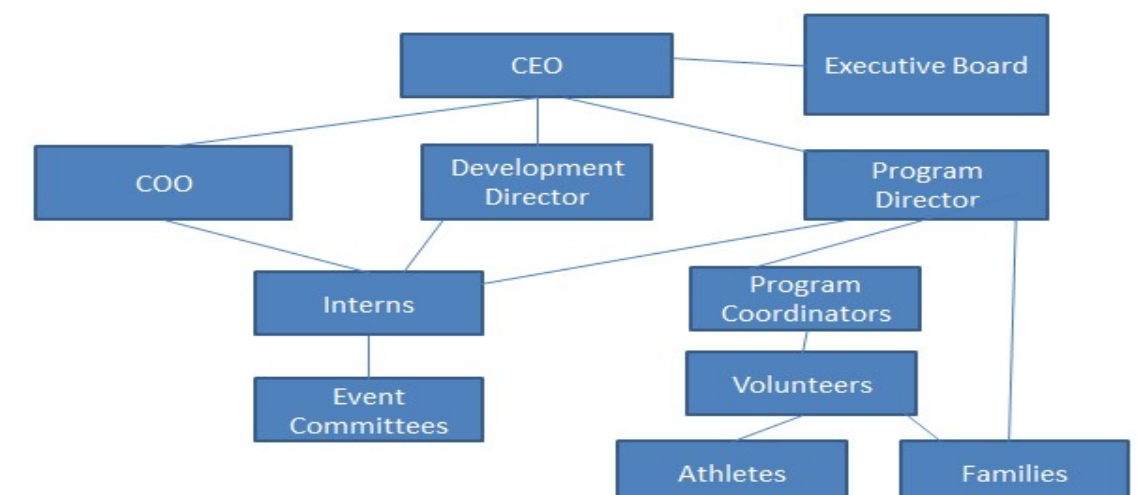
3

- Build a base of volunteers to enhance the quality of programs and allow growth
- Partner with other organizations to meet mission goals
- Maintain quality administrative staff with long-term career goals to meet the need of organizational growth and sustenance

## 4 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM EXPANSION

4

- Develop a full schedule for use of the SHARE Center with varietal activities
- Develop and strengthen new and existing athletic and recreational programs working with partner organizations and community
- Strategic growth in developing competitive elements in existing programs such as competition tournaments and races, to further develop athlete skills





# STRIDE Honorary Board

**Greg Adams**

Vice President, Americas, SABIC  
Houston, Texas (retired)

**Phil Bayly**

Anchor, WNYT News Channel 13, NBC  
Clifton Park, NY (Retired)

**Robert Braverman**

Attorney/Partner Braverman/Greenspun  
New York, NY

**Tyler Fairbank**

CEO, The Fairbank Group  
Jiminy Peak Hancock, MA

**Pat Flaherty**

NFL Consultant Coach  
NY Giants

**Chris Gibson**

President of Siena College  
Former U.S. Congressman, 19th District, NY  
Kinderhook NY

**John Gray**

News 10 ABC Anchor  
North Greenbush, NY

**Thomas Haffner**

Attorney (Retired)  
Schenectady, NY

**Kathleen Jimino**

Rensselaer County Executive (retired)  
Lansingburgh, NY

**Brian P. McLane**

CEO Paradigm Solutions  
Syracuse, NY

**Dr. Ann Myers, Ed.D.**

Director of Doctoral Programs, The Sage Colleges  
Rensselaer, NY

**Honorable David Paterson**

Former NYS Governor  
New York City, NY

**John Robinson**

CEO, Our Ability  
Glenmont, NY

**Chaplain (Major General) Donald L. Rutherford, US Army**

23rd U.S. Army Chief of Chaplains  
Averill Park, NY

**CSM Frank Wicks**

Command Sergeant Major (Retired), US Army  
West Sand Lake, NY

# STRIDE Adaptive Sports Staff

**Mary Ellen Whitney**

CEO & Founder

**Joe Russo**

Chief Operations Officer

**Christine Golden**

Development Director

**Carly Ronan**

Program Director

# Thank You Major Sponsors & Funders

Major Corporate Sponsors (\$1,000 +)

AllSquare Wealth Management, LLC  
American Infidels VMC New York  
American National Insurance Company  
CapCom Federal Credit Union  
Diisabled American Veterans #38  
Don Reutemann  
GE Foundation  
Hannaford  
Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort  
Lavelle & Finn  
Lia Nissan  
NPA Financial  
Nine Pin Cider  
Phillips Hardware  
Plastic Extruded Parts, Inc.  
RADM Martin Leukhardt  
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals  
Veterans of Lansingburgh

Grant Makers

10th Mountain Division Foundation  
Andrew Sabin Family Foundation  
Berkshire Bank Foundation  
Bryant Asset Protection  
CapCom Federal Credit Union  
Dralla Foundation  
Fredericka V. Slingerland Family Foundation  
John E. Sackett Foundation  
Killington World Cup Foundation  
Marc S. Zelpin Foundation, Inc.  
Mother Cabrini Foundation  
Move United Sport  
Pfc Dwyer Program  
Seymour Fox Memorial Foundation  
Stewart’s Foundation  
Stuart and Joan Seliger Sidney Family Fund  
Sunmark Federal Credit Union  
The Chiastawa & Gill Charitable Fund  
Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation  
U.S. Tennis Association (USTA)  
Warfighter Sports

Third Party Fundraising Events

American Infidels VMC  
Blade Day/Owen Hilton  
Kayla & Zoey B’Nei Mitzvah Project  
Everyday Warriors Inc  
Michael Riccardo Jr.  
NPA Financials / Vermont Agency

Major Donors (\$1,000+)

Ancient Temple Lodge #14 Free &  
Accepted Masons  
Bethlehem Hockey Boosters  
Collucci’s Floor Covering, Inc.  
Daniel Bopp  
Daniel Rhatigan  
David Bartlett  
Don Reutemann  
Exit 21 Carwash & Quick Lube Center  
Frank & Wilma Schmeier  
James Duffy  
Jay & Deirdre Epstein  
Jeff & Kim Sutton  
Jon Phillips  
Kim Wilson  
Randall Duprey  
Sigrid Gray  
Ski Sundown

United Way Major Donors:

Greg Adams  
Matthew Baumeister  
Jesse Gilbert  
Kolby Kanellis  
Lori Woodcock  
David Van Hoesen

Major In-Kind Donations

Albany Dutchmen  
Anon Optics  
Bern  
Brown Coach  
Catamount  
Commercial Investigations  
Delmar Fire Company  
Gary & Deb Favro  
Girvin & Ferlazzo  
Grunt Style Company  
Hannaford  
High Adventure Ski Shop  
Indian Meadows Courts  
Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort  
Joel Glickman  
Lansingburgh V.F.W.  
Lavelle & Finn Attorneys  
Lois Whitman  
Mary Beth Wenger  
Mary Ellen & LJ Whitney  
Mess Hall  
Michael Reilly & EPIC  
Insurance Brokers  
Milliman Insurance  
Mirror Lake Inn  
Nine Pin  
NPG Furniture Outlet  
NPR Radio  
Ottmar Klaas  
Patrick Fitzgerald  
Paul O’Leary  
Phoenix Confidant  
Repeat Business Systems, Inc.  
Route Fore Golf Facility  
S&S Farm Brewery  
Santa’s Workshop  
Saratoga Lake Yacht Club  
Stewarts Shops  
The Sagamore  
Transpak  
Union College  
United Asphalt  
Veterans Business Council  
Veterans Miracle Center

Together we change lives!



# Financial Performance & Outlook

As a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization, STRIDE depends on the generosity of its donors and funders to support our athletes and programs.

STRIDE now operates with a budget just over \$600,000, making us one of the larger and strongest independent adaptive sport organizations in the Northeastern USA. Being good stewards of the money we receive, we put our athletes and people first. We are family.

For every dollar we receive, more than 83 cents goes directly into our programs, better than the

national average and earning STRIDE a Guidestar Platinum ranking, the highest.

Nearly 45% of STRIDE program resources are supported by in-kind donations ( non-cash items such as food, venue rental, professional services, equipment, and auction items or prizes) and other donated services. This helps maximize our impact. This year, we received two PPP grants loans totaling \$75,000 that were 95% forgiven.

	2021/22	2020/21
Total Revenues & Program Support	\$ 719,452	576,832
Total Expenses		
Program Services	\$ 541,443	416,376
Management & General Operating	\$86,706	69,887
Fundraising	\$37,677	47,462
Total:	\$ 665,826	533,725
Change in Net Assets	\$53,626	43,107
Net Assets - Beginning of Year	\$1,425,977	1,382,870
Net Assets - End of Year	\$ 1,479,603	1,425,977



We feel a great responsibility to our donors, large and small.  
That is why we are proud of our efficient operations.

Over 80% of our budget is a direct expense to our programs that provide life-changing experiences for individuals with disabilities through participation in adaptive sports and recreation. We are masterful at keeping costs low with our leverage of in-kind donations! Thank you to every donor, large and small!



**\$174,753**  
donated in-kind  
products and services





STRIDE CENTER FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION & EDUCATION

## ***STRIDE Adaptive Sports***

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