



2022

Annual Report

For Washington Metro Oasis, 2022 has been a year filled with challenges and success stories. While recovery from pandemic-induced enrollment declines has been slow, we have many reasons to look toward the future optimistically. The Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program, for example, has more than doubled in size over this past year, thanks to the leadership of our tutor coordinator, Kathleen McDaniel. Consequently, our tutors can help more children who have fallen below grade level in reading and many who desperately need a trusted adult to be there for them as a mentor.

2022 has also seen us branch out in new ways. Looking towards future sustainability, we have begun contacting local businesses and organizations to secure sponsorships and form partnerships. These new relationships will not only help diversify our revenue sources but also facilitate the introduction of Oasis to groups of individuals who may be unaware of our organization. A prime example was the Cybercrime Prevention event in the Fall of 2022. AARP Maryland generously sponsored and widely publicized the two-day program to their statewide network. The event was attended by over 100 people – many of whom were brand new to Oasis.

Another partnership beginning to bear fruit is with Erickson Senior Living, which will open a new senior housing development close to our center. Unfortunately, we decided to discontinue our printed class catalog in the summer of 2022. With Erickson's support, we brought that catalog back in 2023, enabling us further to spread the word about our classes and programming.

Despite these successes, we still have an uphill climb to return Oasis from its pandemic-related declines. In-person enrollment continues to be relatively low compared to pre-pandemic levels, and we have also lost many participants over the past several years. We are confident, however, that with our growing community partnerships, our volunteers' steadfast dedication, and our participants' curiosity to continue their lifelong learning journey, we will come back stronger and more resilient than ever.

Yours in Lifelong Learning,

Anna Stokes

Executive Director
Washington Metro Oasis



**Washington Metro Oasis
2022 Impact & Financials**



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Sharing a Love of Learning

Although the pandemic slowed the Washington Metro Oasis Intergenerational Tutoring Program, it has made a strong comeback in 2022. **Today, both students and volunteer tutors are reaping the benefits.**

Bill Rippey started as a Washington Metro Oasis tutor in 2015. Although he didn't have children of his own and didn't have a teaching background, **he wanted to share his love of learning.**

"I was lucky to have had good teachers growing up," he says. "Learning was always easy for me, and I enjoyed getting good grades and mastering topics. Tutoring is a way to leverage my talents and do good for others."

Before Oasis, Bill tutored students for GED (general educational development) tests. **But he was drawn to Oasis because of the training the organization provides its tutors.**



"Oasis had a workshop to learn to be a tutor focusing on teaching reading," he says. **"The support and education from Oasis made me feel more comfortable and confident as a tutor.** If you're looking for an opportunity to volunteer, tutoring is a good one."

Bill found tutoring to be as beneficial for him and the students. "After I retired as an electrical engineer, I was afraid of a hollow space, but I've been busy. **Tutoring children is a way to feel like I'm helping someone. It's rewarding.**"

He also appreciates the camaraderie among Oasis tutors. **"I've gotten to know many Oasis tutors who have been teachers, librarians, or reading specialists. We all learn from each other and share our favorite tutoring techniques."**

Bill spends a lot of time choosing books that match a student's interests. And he celebrates **"tiny tutor victories" when he is able to help a child learn new words.**

"What I enjoy most is experiencing each student as an individual. It's crucial we show enthusiasm for reading and learning. It's rewarding to spark that in students, too."

"We get a lot of feedback from Oasis and schools telling us that we're making a difference," Bill says. "Hearing that keeps us working hard. **When the classroom door opens, it's nice to see the kids run out to us,**" he says. "We're rewarded with their enthusiasm."

In building rapport with students, **Bill is known for his signature sign-off: "See you later, alligator." And he's thrilled when kids learn to respond: "After a while, crocodile."**

With a background in computer software training, Lisa Shofnos started at Oasis using her skills to teach computer classes. But she soon discovered a new pathway at Oasis.

"When I discovered the Tutoring Program, I thought, **'Bingo, this is exactly what I need.** I went through two days of training and learned the building blocks of reading. I took to it like fish to water and liked the flexibility. It wasn't about teaching from a script but allowed us to individualize tutoring for each child. **Oasis gave me the confidence to do what I felt was right."**

Ten years later, Lisa is a veteran tutor. "I have confidence now, having done this for a while. I always have such a sense of fulfillment and a smile on my face when I walk out. I know these children depend on me."

She had previously tutored for a different organization in a structured program for under-resourced students. She also taught citizenship classes for eight years for seniors from the former Soviet Union. **Becoming an Oasis tutor was an easy transition for her.**

"This program fits an interest of mine so perfectly," she says. **"It felt like a natural thing to do. I have a ball. I**



learn so much and love the time I spend with students. When struggling readers learn to read with fluency, it's an empowering moment. It's uplifting to see that as a tutor."

The skills Lisa has learned as a tutor have translated to her personal life with her young grandchildren. "I appreciate the skills I've developed because it helps me read with my grandkids with greater understanding. And I have Oasis to thank. **There are many ways Oasis enriches lives. Right now, for me, it's this."**

Learning to Spot Scams

Older adults are often a target for scams. To arm them with information to protect themselves, [Washington Metro Oasis partnered with AARP Maryland last October for a Cybercrime Prevention Event.](#)

Two experts led the class. Deeva Garel, who has taught numerous technology classes at Oasis over the past eight years, teamed up with Victor Rezmovic,



an IT consultant for the U.S. Department of Justice, who also teaches at Oasis.

“Every day, we hear about a new email scam,” Deeva says. “So, in this class, we taught older adults how to spot scams. **People are left with a higher awareness to protect themselves.** People also shared their experiences, which were good learning opportunities.

Deeva advises older adults to be wary of phone calls or emails, especially those that ask for sensitive information, are threatening, or are pressuring for anything. **“It’s important for older adults to stay up to date on current scams and not let their guard down,”** she says. “These criminals are quite skilled, so it’s easy to fall for something. If it sounds too good to be true, it is.”

The hybrid class drew nearly 30 people in-person and over 100 who watched virtually. “Cybercrime scams are a topic everyone is interested in,” Victor says. “The key takeaway was if you can spot a scam, you can avoid it. But often, it’s hard to distinguish a real email vs. a scam email. We provided participants with a list of things to look for. For example, anytime someone asks for you to buy a gift card, it’s a scam. **The goal for the class was for us to show enough examples so people feel confident in seeing what’s not real.**”

Victor and Deeva created a take-home document with lists of common phone or email scams and multiple cybercrime prevention resources, including web links. In addition, AARP provided materials and other resources.

Oasis plans to offer another cybercrime prevention class again in October 2023. **“We can keep doing this class because the scams are always changing,” Victor says.**

Community Partners

AARP Maryland

Kay Family Foundation

Macy’s Foundation

Montgomery County Community Grants Program

Richard E. & Nancy P. Marriott Foundation

Suburban Hospital, John Hopkins Medicine

Bethesda-Chevy Chase Rotary Club

Bethesda Regional Services Center

Family and Nursing Care

Montgomery Art Association

Montgomery County Historical Society

Montgomery County Public Schools

Montgomery County Recreation Department

Starbucks Coffee

Village Ambassador Alliance

Washington Performing Arts Society

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