



## 2020 Year in Review

June 18, 2021

*“In the midst of hate, I found there was, within me, an invincible love. In the midst of tears, I found there was, within me, an invincible smile. In the midst of chaos, I found there was, within me, an invincible calm. I realized, through it all, that in the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer. And that makes me happy. For it says that no matter how hard the world pushes against me, within me, there’s something stronger – something better, pushing right back.”*

- French philosopher, author and journalist and Albert Camus

## Introduction

As Bereaved Families of Ontario – Ottawa Region (BFO Ottawa) entered its 42nd year, we were in the process of rebuilding internally. We are known throughout Ottawa for the support we provide for people who are grieving the loss of a loved one, and for the courage of our trained volunteers with lived experience, who share their knowledge about grief and their journey with others.

And yet as a volunteer-led organization, Board members remained entrenched in helping the organization run operationally, with only part-time staff to provide support for our many volunteers and people in the Ottawa Region who were experiencing grief that stems from many different types of losses.

Everyone is welcome to participate in our programs, regardless of religion, culture, gender, sex, age, physical ability or financial status.

## Overview

BFO Ottawa started out the year on a promising note, by introducing a new French Support and Share Night on the third Thursday of each month, in partnership with the Mouvement d’implication francophone d’Orléans (MIFO). These sessions ran until the end of May 2020.

Also in January 2020, Toronto Art Therapy Institute practicum student Andrea Steinwand joined BFO Ottawa Program Director Lorrie Beaton in offering individual art therapy sessions that would continue throughout the year, in assisting people processing grief and bereavement through creative art expression.

That was before the World Health Organization declared a worldwide pandemic in mid-March. We spent most of the month of April preparing to move from in-person to virtual peer support programs in order to help people who are grieving, and now socially isolated due to the pandemic. We launched the first version of a new Website at the end of April, which proved to be great timing to help us make the shift to the virtual world.

The Board of Directors is extremely grateful that our staff and volunteers continued to stay engaged in supporting people who are grieving throughout these difficult times.

Regardless of how death occurs during the pandemic, it has become more challenging to grieve in a healthy way. Because of public health measures in place, many people have passed away without their loved ones by their side. Restrictions on social gatherings have limited the ability to put loved ones to rest the way they would have liked.

Before the pandemic, many people were supported by friends and family who gathered around them and offered their support. During COVID-19, however, there have been extended periods where people have not been permitted to come together in person. The opportunity to travel has been limited. This has left many more people to grieve alone in their physical environment, which has led to new virtual ways to stay connected.

A recent article in the New York Times, *We Weren't Meant to Grieve Alone*, published in April 2021, puts it this way: "To be bereaved is to be robbed of the loved one and of the world and the self that had existed when they were alive... During a lockdown that isolates us by forbidding physical proximity, grief finds no outlet. We are deprived of the last moments in which we can see, touch, hear or speak to the beloved as well as subsequent days and months when we can cry, laugh, hug and reminisce with friends and family."

The writer, Susan Gubar, also goes on to say this: "Yet a month or so later, the photographs, music and storytelling at a Zoom memorial did console us as well as many far-flung relatives and friends."

It's within this context that BFO Ottawa continues to offer our programs and services in a virtual environment, supporting others and creating new ways and rituals for healing and remembering.

Everyone involved in supporting our small, local charity has had to adapt to working from home and connecting remotely. What this meant for BFO Ottawa programming is that from mid-April until the end of June, we shifted from monthly to weekly Support and Share Nights in a new virtual format. Every Tuesday people joined us either to listen to our guest speaker or participate in one of our scheduled peer support groups for loss of parent, sibling, relative or friend, loss of spouse, loss of child, or loss by suicide.

We also continued our weekly Support and Share Afternoons for people to join regardless of the type of loss they've experienced. Unfortunately we had to put our weekly grief walks on hold.

Twelve volunteers stepped forward to provide individual peer support, offered either over Zoom or over the phone, and we held our first two memorial events in a virtual format. At the Butterfly memorial event in July, Scott and Anne Oake told us how they lost their 25-year old son to substance use, and how they turned their grief into hope in creating the Bruce Oake Recovery Centre. Also in July, we returned to a monthly Support and Share Night, which was still entirely virtual. Participants listened to a guest speaker by video conferencing and then joined different break-out rooms for peer support.

In the fall we held our first virtual closed groups, for loss by suicide, loss of spouse, loss of parent, sibling, relative or friend, and loss of child. In early December at the Tree of Life memorial event, Alana Kainz shared with us her memories of her husband Brian Smith, who died tragically in Ottawa 25 years ago.

## 2020 By the Numbers

10 people who participated in 135 art therapy sessions

12 new peer support facilitators trained  
35 people who we helped through individual peer support  
45 volunteers (excluding Board members)  
49 people who we helped through closed groups, over eight consecutive weeks  
72 people who remembered their loved ones at the Tree of Life memorial event  
127 people who remembered their loved ones at the Butterfly memorial event  
214 people who joined Support and Share Afternoon (SSA)  
522 people who joined Support and Share Night (SSN)  
1062 enquiries through emails and phone calls to our office  
1085 volunteer hours by facilitators with lived experience  
1240 Board of Director volunteer hours

In addition, we currently have:

1975 email subscribers  
2479 Facebook followers  
3713 monthly Website page views

2021 marks the second year that we have completed an independent audit of our finances.

### Changing Roles

We were very pleased to welcome Jane Davey back to BFO Ottawa in 2020, now as our part-time bookkeeper, along with Michel Desloges and Dan Read as new Board members.

We'd also like to express our deep appreciation to staff members Barbara Simpson, Lorrie Beaton and Lisa Vadeboncœur, and to Board members Barb Hayduk and Antoine Babinsky, who left our team in 2020 and who each generously shared their expertise while they were part of our team. They will always be welcome as members of the BFO Ottawa community!

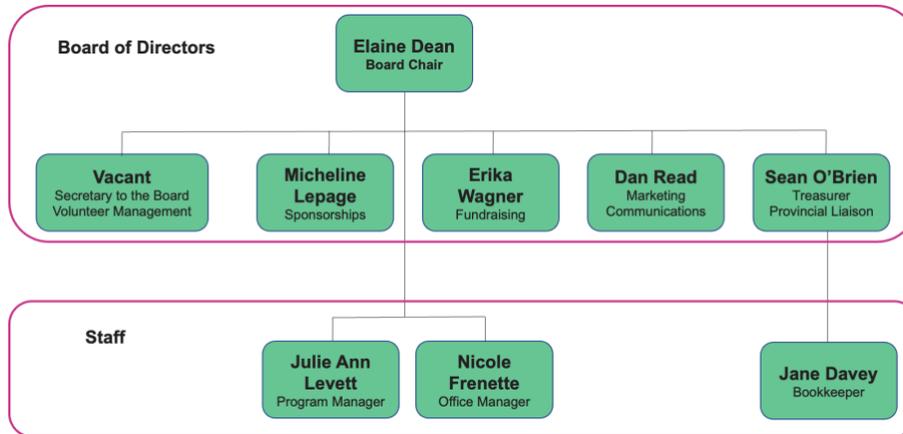
### What's Next in 2021

In February 2021 we welcomed Julie Ann Levett as our new bilingual Program Manager and Nicole Frenette as our new bilingual Office Manager. Now with two full-time employees, our small local charity is taking another huge step forward!

Erika Wagner and Micheline Lepage joined our Board of Directors, and are recruiting new Board members as volunteers to take on the positions of Secretary to the Board, Volunteer Management and Marketing Communications.

We'd like to thank Michel Desloges, for his contribution to Human Resources and for helping us create a bilingualism policy. Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to Doug Cargo, for serving as our corporate memory and as Provincial Liaison. Doug is leaving the board after more than 10 years of service with BFO. And we wish Dan Read much success in returning to his studies in September 2021!

Here is our Board and staff composition as of June 22, 2021 :



As a team of new Board members in 2021 we created job descriptions for our positions, and we began to work on a three-year strategic plan, which includes a new vision, mission, mandate, values and work streams.

We recognize that while we have had a deeply operational focus in 2020, we need to shift to being more present in the community, to focus more on relationship building.

We have been successful in our grant-writing efforts, which has allowed us to create a series of video testimonials, and to create a new fundraising plan. We are currently waiting on responses from recent grant submissions.

As we begin to emerge from the pandemic, there will be a period where the organization will again need to reflect and take action on what our renewed programming will look like. To prepare for this, we are gathering best practices, shared with us by BFO provincial affiliates, and by doing our own research in the Ottawa community. We will be looking for a new central location to hold Support and Share Nights in person when the time comes.

Going forward we intend to place more emphasis on serving people in Ottawa in both official languages, and in reaching out to community groups to make sure that no one is left to grieve alone and in isolation. We are actively working on improving our back-office processes, to become more efficient and to ensure business continuity.

We would like to express our profound appreciation to our extremely dedicated volunteers, and to our donors, grantors, sponsors and partners. Without the active support of the Ottawa community, we simply not be able to offer the quality of programs that we do, to inspire hope and healing for people in the Ottawa region who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

## Community Supporters

Abundance Canada Foundation  
Beechwood Cemetery  
City of Ottawa  
eQ Homes  
IT World Canada  
Kelly Funeral Homes  
Knights of Columbus

Maison funéraire Racine Robert et Gauthier  
Ontario Trillium Foundation  
Ottawa Community Foundation  
Maison funéraire Racine Robert et Gauthier  
Revera Prince of Wales Manor  
Taggart Family Foundation  
Welch LLP

### **Angel Donors**

Pat Captain  
Doug Cargo  
Susan Clarke and Don Miller  
Cathy Crepin  
Jane Davey  
Elaine Dean  
Jessica Foley  
Heather and Rob Gawenda  
Alana Kainz  
Micheline Lepage and Barrie Marfleet  
Sean O'Brien

### **Dedicated Volunteers**

Clodelle Abdo  
Manii Aponte  
Greg Atkinson  
Dina Bell-Laroche  
Jan Casselman  
Susan Clarke  
Cathy Crepin  
Gail Christy  
Anne DeButte  
Madeleine Desloges  
Carl Dowsett  
Barb Duncan  
Kathryn Dunlop  
Karen Gardner  
Lisa Glavin  
Linda Goldberg  
Kathryn Harper  
Barb Hayduk  
Mary Ellen Henniger  
Rita Jackson  
Lynne Lajoie  
Lorraine Lefebvre  
Sue Lefebvre  
Allene Lewis  
Tara McMaster  
Barrie Marfleet  
Mary McQuillan  
Samantha Medaglia  
Paula Naponse

Catherine Paris  
Nathalie Pickell  
Andrea Purcell  
Marion Rattray  
Rebecca Ross  
Jadzia Romaniec  
Hilda Sabadash  
Vanessa Scott  
Donna Sharkey  
Randy Sorenson  
Andrea Steinwand  
Christine Tomlinson  
Cathy Trebinskie  
Donna Troop  
Joey Ward  
Lisa Vadeboncœur

## Finances

BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO - OTTAWA REGION  
STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS  
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2020

	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Donations	\$ 39,113	\$ 78,523
Grants	22,810	20,950
Government contributions - note 4	19,287	-
Debt forgiveness - note 7	10,000	-
Sales and other revenue	5,108	21,160
	<u>96,318</u>	<u>120,633</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Professional services	44,803	48,440
Salaries	36,451	38,835
Occupancy	13,392	13,983
Services	6,074	5,148
Office	4,254	11,431
Bank and credit card charges	2,922	2,139
Insurance	1,743	1,427
	<u>109,639</u>	<u>121,403</u>
<b>NET EXPENSE</b>	(13,321)	(770)
<b>NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>	<u>61,114</u>	<u>61,884</u>
<b>NET ASSETS, END OF YEAR</b>	<u>\$ 47,793</u>	<u>\$ 61,114</u>

**Notes :**

- Donations from individuals down 50% yr/yr driven by lack of face to face programs and trivia event held in 2019
- New grants from City of Ottawa = \$7,800. Subsidized fall closed groups.
- COVID-19 subsidies a big help in 2020 = \$29,287
- \$6,000 in recurring grants
- \$4,600 from BFO provincial (Nevada)
  
- Staff remuneration continues to be largest annual expense. In 2020 we moved all staff to salaried employees versus consultant status.
- Office supplies had significant yr/yr decline due to our office being closed most of the year and not hosting any face to face programs
- 2<sup>nd</sup> year BFO Ottawa has had formal audit from Welch LLP

Audited financial statements prepared by Welch LLP

BEREAVED FAMILIES OF ONTARIO - OTTAWA REGION  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
DECEMBER 31, 2020

<u>ASSETS</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 60,002	\$ 69,131
Accounts receivable	90	2,045
Government rebates receivable	462	1,407
Government contributions receivable - note 4	2,367	-
Prepaid expenses	2,648	2,640
	<u>65,569</u>	<u>75,223</u>
<b>INVESTMENTS - note 5</b>	<u>30,022</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>\$ 95,591</u>	<u>\$ 75,223</u>
<b><u>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</u></b>		
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 3,480	\$ 3,000
Deferred revenue - note 6	14,318	11,109
	<u>17,798</u>	<u>14,109</u>
<b>LOAN PAYABLE - note 7</b>	<u>30,000</u>	<u>-</u>
	<u>47,798</u>	<u>14,109</u>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	<u>47,793</u>	<u>61,114</u>
	<u>\$ 95,591</u>	<u>\$ 75,223</u>

**Notes :**

- \$60k cash at end of year has BFO Ottawa in strong financial position
- \$30k interest free loan repayable to federal government in December 2022.
  
- Deferred revenue driven by \$10k grant from City of Ottawa in December, which was used in Q1 to support closed groups, video testimonials and facilitator training.

Audited financial statements prepared by Welch LLP