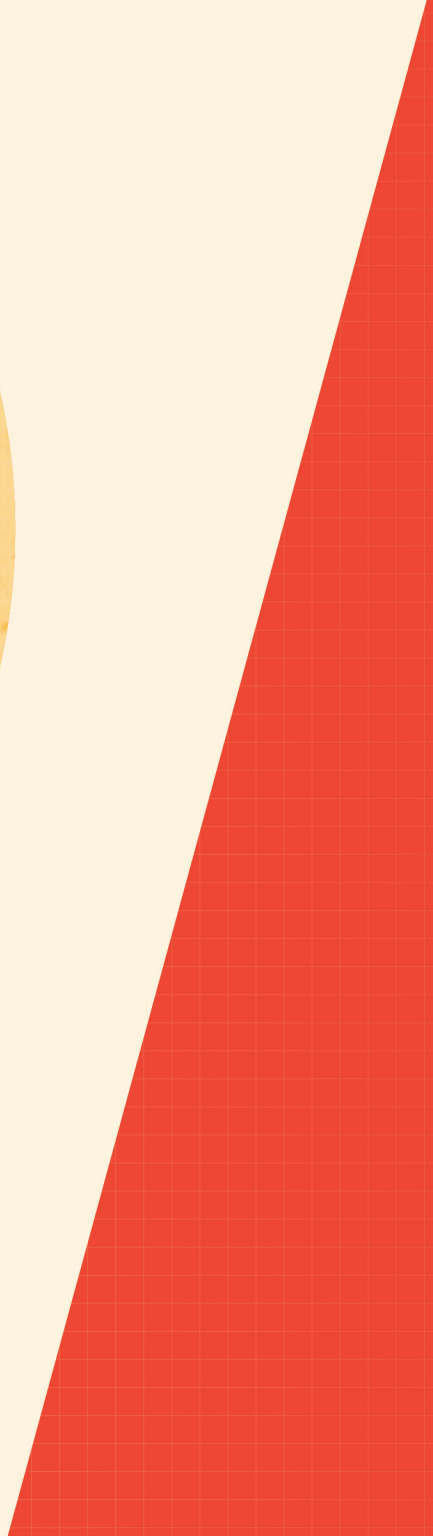


# READY & ABLE

THE BROOKLINE CENTER FOR COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH  
**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**





**WHEN COVID-19  
TURNED OUR WORLD  
UPSIDE DOWN,  
The Brookline Center was  
ready and able to care  
for our community and  
commit to a more just  
and equitable future.**

**In this extraordinary year, we thank you for demonstrating just how strong we are together.**

Dear Friends,

This year, the dual crises of COVID-19 and racial injustice challenged the mental health of millions. Each of us is impacted by the pandemic in far-reaching ways, with uncertainty and disruption at levels most of us have never before experienced.

Throughout the spring lockdown and the summer unrest, members of our community experienced soaring rates of depression and anxiety, and the economic shocks of the pandemic are creating long-lasting financial hardship.

And yet, thanks to you, The Brookline Center remained ready and able to do what we exist to do: support our community through crises. Across all program areas, from in-home therapy to child groups, Center clinicians nimbly shifted to delivering care and services via telehealth, discovering new ways of supporting our clients in the midst of a global pandemic. Your generosity made it possible to do the work needed to support the evolving mental health needs raised and exacerbated by these challenges.

As stewards of the mental health of our community, we stand together with our BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) clients, clinicians, supporters, and partners who are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and continue to experience widespread social injustice. We call out the mental health impacts of racism and white supremacy. And we recommit to helping all members of our community build the strength needed to confront racism and the resilience to heal from its effects.

As we write this letter, summer's end is nearing and the pandemic rages on. We do not know what the coming seasons hold for our community. But we know that with your continued partnership, The Brookline Center will be ready and able to meet whatever lies ahead.

In this extraordinary year, we thank you for demonstrating just how strong we are together.

With our deepest gratitude,



Georgia Johnson  
*President*



Ian A. Lang  
*Chief Executive Officer*



I'M NOT BLACK BUT I SEE YOU  
I'M NOT BLACK BUT I HEAR YOU  
I'M NOT BLACK BUT I MOURN WITH YOU  
I'M NOT BLACK BUT I STAND WITH YOU  
I'M NOT BLACK BUT I WILL FIGHT FOR YOU  
BLACK LIVES MATTER!!!!

# READY FOR THIS MOMENT

A man with a beard and short hair, wearing a plaid shirt, is the central focus. The image has a light blue grid overlay. On the right side, there are abstract shapes: a teal circle at the top and a red triangle below it. The text is overlaid on the man's chest.

**READY**

**WITH CARE**

**THAT CONTINUES**

**NO MATTER WHAT**

# When the world paused, we couldn't.

We heard the urgency in our clients' voices — overwhelmed families, anxious health care workers, isolated seniors, frightened children — and knew that despite the challenges of physical distance, we had to provide continuous care for a community that needed us more than ever. So we did.

In a single week we moved the majority of our outpatient care to telehealth. We created new systems for intake and online registration, while supporting our clinicians in delivering high-quality care in a format new to everyone. And when the anticipated surge in need began, we were ready with adapted care models and expanded services designed for this moment.

Our mission is to support members of our community through hard times, through crises, through pain and sadness and fear. Where there's a need, we find a way.

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“I don't think there's anything we haven't been able to do. We haven't had to limit our services in any way, we've just had to offer them differently. Telehealth has opened up access for a lot of individuals and families who typically are stretched thin and tight on time. I'm really proud that we've continued to be a source of strength and consistency for our clients and the community. We're now providing more care than ever before. As always, philanthropy is our backbone; it's what allows us to offer the best outpatient care possible.”

**Hannah Scott**

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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“All of my clients are older and live alone, and the impact of COVID-19 on their mental health is so severe. They were completely quarantined in their buildings; nobody could visit them. We needed to stay in touch in any and every way we could. Despite Medicare’s initial reluctance to cover phone therapy, the Center switched immediately anyway. And it was seamless. There was never any question that we would stay connected.”

**Maggie DeVecchi**

CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

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“One of the things that’s so pervasive about the pandemic is that it creates such a deep sense of isolation. This is a time when we literally can’t be together. With psychotherapy, you get to go through the hard times with someone else. I think that’s especially true with groups. For people who’ve been able to be a part of our therapy groups online, there’s a real sense that, ‘here are other people who care about me, we’re still finding ways to connect, I’m not alone in the midst of all of this.’ That’s been a tremendous support.”

**Jeff Brand**

ADULT GROUP  
PROGRAM MANAGER

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“So many things were happening at once — people were losing childcare, then losing jobs, trying to pay bills and accumulating more, housing being in jeopardy. Our community team had to think outside the box to meet each individual’s needs. And we continued working as a team to address inequities in our community. Systemic racism has always been here — folks facing discrimination when looking for housing and employment, that hasn’t changed. This is our reality, unfortunately. But advocating with and for individuals and calling things out are important things that we can continue to do.”

**Lolita Gonsalves-Alston**

COMMUNITY SERVICES  
MANAGER

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“Intake calls felt heavier — especially at the beginning of the pandemic with the tremendous variety of situations people were living through: parents struggling to work with kids at home, loss of employment, domestic violence situations. You could really hear it in the nature and the content of callers and the stress in their voices. There was an incredible urgency in so many of the calls.”

**Kristina Wischhusen**

CLINICIAN AND  
INTAKE MANAGER

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“With the death of George Floyd there was a surge of people experiencing outrage in ways that Black and brown people have been dealing with racism for hundreds of years. At the Center, our equity and diversity efforts united to look at how we can do better in expanding access to care for BIPOC members of our community and how to be more welcoming and open. We’ve been intentional about challenging biases and encouraging staff to engage in work that might be uncomfortable, but to stay with it so we can do better. We’re committed to this not being just a response to a crisis but a long-standing change for our community.”

**Phillip Laidlaw**

DIRECTOR OF OUTPATIENT  
FAMILY PROGRAMS AND  
THE DIVERSITY INITIATIVE

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# ABLE TO SUSTAIN RESIDENTS IN CRISIS

**During COVID-19, needs have increased exponentially. Safety Net has expanded and diversified our services.**

Not only are we receiving many more calls for assistance, but calls take more time and are more intense. People are in significant distress with the pandemic and the losses they're experiencing.

In the past, 85% of our callers were public housing residents. Now, we're serving a whole new population — people who have never experienced this kind of financial hardship. So we've been doing more education, benefits advocacy, and referrals, and working even more closely with our part-

ners, including the Food Pantry and Brookline Public Schools. We're able to provide rapid responses through these longstanding relationships.

At The Brookline Center, everyone was all in from the start. Our community team kept up with all of the calls coming in, even as we onboarded new staff and got new procedures up and running.

The financial support we've received from our partners at the Town and the Brookline Community Foundation has allowed us to cover

needs more broadly and much more quickly. We're also able to do some psychological first aid and connect folks to mental health supports at the Center.

This crisis is allowing us to take a bigger role as a resource for the community. We're in it for the long haul, and we want people to know that we'll be here for them.

**Megan Smith**

CARE  
COORDINATION  
PROGRAM  
DIRECTOR



**The Safety Net Program provides emergency financial assistance and wrap-around support to Brookline residents in crisis. With small, timely grants and personalized referrals, the Safety Net team helps individuals and families meet basic needs, stay housed in their homes, and find stability.**

# ABLE TO HEAL AND REBUILD

## Growing up like I did, with parents who basically abandoned me, you never learn to live.

You're always in survival mode, feeling overwhelmed and afraid. Until I came to the Center, I never processed 34 years of hurt. I never had a chance to work on those emotions, on how people had just brought me into this world and said, "Hey, kid, figure it out."

I lost custody of my three children for a year and a half. When my kids were taken away, I was a complete mess. I didn't

know how to be without them. I began to have bad anxiety, full panic attacks.

One of the conditions to getting my kids back was counseling. And that's when I met my therapist, Catie. All these feelings, all these things that had been done wrong to me, I was able to sit down and talk to her and start putting them into perspective. I began working out a lot of things. And it's helped: in December, I regained custody of my kids.

Anxiety for me turns to anger. When I feel pushed into a corner, I fight. That's been a situation in my life a lot. Now I can be around people and notice if they're starting to make

me uncomfortable, and I can say, you know what, I'm going to leave. I'm not getting into it with people anymore.

When I was seeing Catie at the Center, I probably missed every other appointment because I had things going on, between running around to go to a parenting class or running to get my kids. But since COVID-19, I'm more present for online therapy than I ever was in-person. I'm home, talking about me. It feels comfortable.


I've continued working with Catie, learning to take life as it is. That has made things so much easier and happier for me. I have a solid support system I can reach out to, which

has taken a huge burden off of my shoulders.

I've gotten everything I've needed from The Brookline Center. It's all the support you could ask for when you find you don't have any.

### **Karla**

BROOKLINE CENTER  
CLIENT



**“I have a solid support system  
I can reach out to, which has  
taken a huge burden off of  
my shoulders.”**

# ABLE TO SUPPORT STUDENTS, FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS

## In the course of a weekend, everything changed.

As schools rapidly shifted to distance learning this spring, The Brookline Center's BRYT team realized that even as educators were stepping up to help students meet basic needs, schools were struggling to support students and families dealing with the social and psychological impacts of the pandemic.

Historically, BRYT programs, based on the

model created by the Center in 2004, help students facing significant mental health challenges return to the classroom after extended absences. But we knew we could adapt and adjust our work to meet COVID-created student needs.

There was a real hunger, especially for family support, so we drew on BRYT's prior experience to help parents navigate this new remote world. By mid-May, the BRYT team was running free weekly virtual parent support groups — four in English and one in

Spanish — for families across the Commonwealth.

And as schools began planning for the fall, BRYT was ready to help. We knew the new school year was going to be tough, with higher proportions of kids wrestling with anxiety, depression, and grief. Since every student returned to school this year from an “extended absence” of sorts, with their own personal mental health impacts, the core principles that underlie BRYT are being put to work helping meet student needs in

remote, hybrid, and in-person school settings.

Like others who see this moment as an opportunity to address inequities, BRYT is pushing back on the idea that school should return to what it used to be. The way school “used to be” wasn't working for a lot of students; this year is a chance to center the needs of the most marginalized kids and families.

If we can get it right for these students, there's a much better chance we

can get it right for all students.

**Paul Hyry-Dermith**  
BRYT DIRECTOR





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“Today, BRYT is in 140 schools across Massachusetts, and we’ve begun helping open programs across the country in places like Chicago and Portland, Oregon.

Because of BRYT’s success, we’ve become a trusted advisor for districts across the Commonwealth and country. Even before COVID-19, there’s been a growing recognition of the importance of meeting student mental health needs; the pandemic is calling greater attention to the need for school-based mental health services, for collective care.

One of the challenges as we grow: how do we define our work and make sure that how we move is equitable? When you’re thinking about equity and inclusion, it even bears down to which students get BRYT services.

Schools are being asked to do more with less right now but are so bought into the BRYT model that even with disruptions, schools and district leaders are saying, ‘Let’s stick with BRYT, even though we might not be able to scale up as quickly as we had planned.’

To me, the question right now isn’t how big BRYT can get, but how much BRYT programs can help students in these times. That is unlimited.”

**Courtney Tucker**

BRYT ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR BUSINESS  
AND PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

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# ABLE TO FACILITATE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS

Getting the right support to those most vulnerable requires a “big tent” approach. When new needs surface, we make the most of cross-team and inter-agency collaboration to produce better outcomes for individuals and strengthen support systems all around.

This year, our community team and school-based clinicians joined together to ensure that Coolidge Corner’s new FamilyAid shelter residents and staff – and staff at the Florida Ruffin Ridley School – could quickly access a broad range of stabilizing supports.

**Rachael Hennessey-Crowell**

MANAGER OF SCHOOL-BASED SERVICES

**Mitra Tummino**

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING  
PROGRAM COORDINATOR







## RACHAEL

Within the shelter world, families move frequently. And for families with young children, schools are one of the first places where the impacts of instability begin to show. Having a shelter open near a school where we already work felt serendipitous. Schools are often where we first connect with families who have complex needs and who otherwise might not have access to outpatient care given the many, many barriers families in shelters experience. For families living in the shelter, their first Brookline Center experience might be through the clinician in their child's school.

## MITRA

Collaboration is a big piece of what we try to do as a community mental health center. For families dealing with so many stressors, a wraparound team approach is hugely beneficial. Once our clinicians begin working with a family, they can connect with those of us on the community team to figure out how else we can help. We've connected families to Safety Net with basic needs like food support and diapers, as well as referrals to other Center programs and services.

## RACHAEL

It's so hard to get to know all of a town's available services and potential referrals, so we brought the shelter supervisors to meet with various Center teams and agency partners. Our teams could hear what they were seeing and feeling challenged by, and we could respond in the moment so that families could access services as quickly as possible.

## MITRA

A critical support the Center offers families is help finding permanent housing. One of the families we met through our in-school work is now in

the Center's Transitional Housing Program, and another family is applying. Finding a safe place to call home means a family can stay in a community where they already feel supported.

## RACHAEL

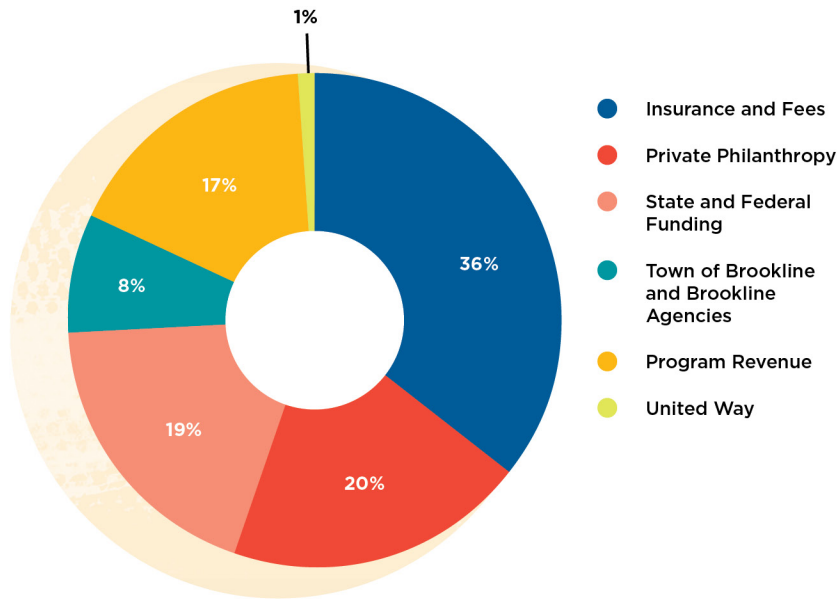
The experience of homelessness, especially with young children, is such a vulnerable one. It's been so positive to partner with the school and community agencies to prioritize families and their needs.



# READY TO EXPAND ACCESS TO CARE

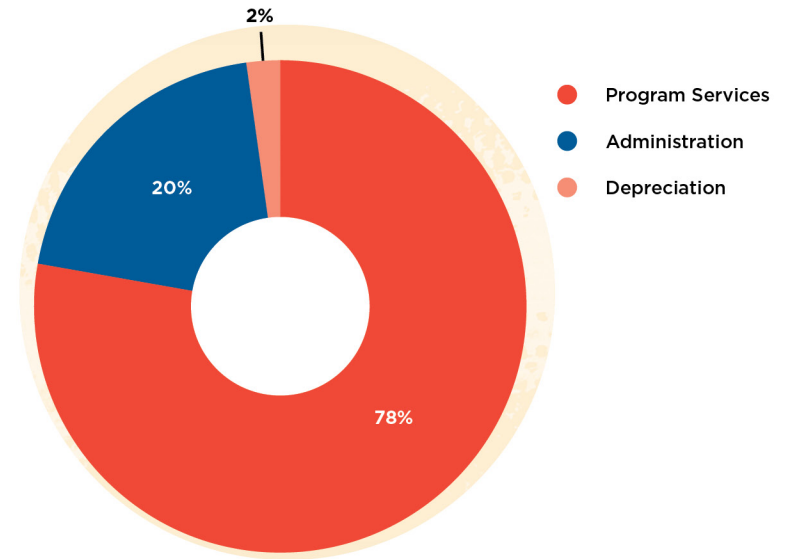
**Because of your support, The Brookline Center is ready and able to deliver mental health care that reflects and is responsive to community needs.**

Your generosity ensures the Center stands committed to serving all, especially BIPOC residents and members of other underserved groups, by eradicating common barriers to accessing care, including income, insurance coverage, and clinical complexity.



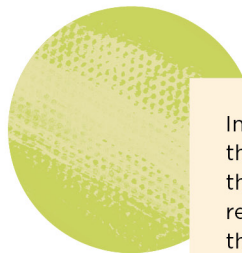
## REVENUE

Philanthropy accounted for 20% of The Brookline Center’s income this year. In total, 1,438 generous individuals, foundations, and companies made new gifts and pledges totaling \$1,336,539, bringing critical mental health care to individuals and families across our community.



## EXPENSES

We carefully manage our \$7.8 million budget to ensure that every donation has its intended impact: providing the best possible mental health care to all who need it. This year, 78% of our operating budget focused on mental health programs, services, and clinic operations. Administration costs were slightly higher this year, in part because of a facilities project underway to increase handicap accessibility, expand clinical space, and update systems at the Center.



In April 2020, The Brookline Center received a loan of \$1.09 million through the Paycheck Protection Program. The loan helped stabilize the Center at the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak, enabling us to: remain fully staffed without layoffs or furloughs; expand services to those in need; and cover unbudgeted costs related to the pandemic. We expect that all or most of the loan will be forgiven in fiscal year 2021.

# READY & ABLE BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT

Your support this year was remarkable, a true testament to your shared commitment to the mental health and wellbeing of all – no matter what. From the very beginning, community support has been integral to The Brookline Center’s survival and growth and our readiness to do whatever is needed in times of crisis. Our ability to successfully navigate the uncertainty of these times is made possible by the strong base of philanthropy our supporters and friends provide. Thank you!

## \$100,000+

Brookline Community Foundation  
Klarman Family Foundation  
Ruderman Family Foundation

## \$25,000–\$99,999

Anonymous  
Allyn Family  
Sandy and David Bakalar\*  
C.F. Adams Charitable Trust  
Hamilton Company Charitable Foundation  
Nancy Lincoln and Louise “Reddi” Ford\*  
Oswald Family Foundation

Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation

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United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley

## \$10,000–\$24,999

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Commonwealth Fund  
Cosette Charitable Fund  
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Overbrook Foundation

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Leah and Jonathan Stearns\*

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## \$5,000–\$9,999

Allison and Mark Allyn\*  
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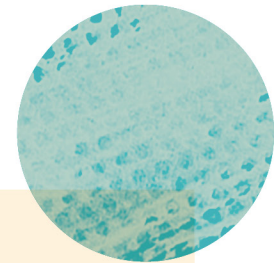
Susan and James Snider\*

### \$1,000-\$2,499

Anonymous (3) • Deborah Abner\* • Sally  
Abrahms and David Rosenthal\* • Abrams  
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Architectural Team, Inc. • Jerry Avorn and  
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• Henry and Barbara White\* • Wilderman  
Family Charitable Fund • Susan  
Winshall\* • Wayne and Donna Wnuck\* •



### COVID-19 FUND

In early April, we launched the COVID-19 Emergency Mental Health Response Fund with four goals: (1) Provide care to existing and new clients who have suffered health or financial hardship related to the pandemic; (2) Design new programs and adapt current ones to meet mental health needs emerging from the crisis; (3) Build staff capacity to meet the projected increase in need for mental health services; (4) Protect against COVID-related revenue losses that would impact Center programs and services. To date, close to 150 donors have contributed to the Fund, helping ensure that mental health is centered in our community's response to COVID-19.

\*Edna Stein Leadership Giving Society Member

Donnie and Jerry Wolosenko\* • Harris and Audrey Yett\* • Sarah Zimman\* • Linda and Jerry Zindler\* • Robert and Molly Zuker\*

### **\$500-\$999**

Anonymous (8) • Morton Abromson and Joan Nissman • AllianceBernstein • Caroline Alyea and Peter Herman • Elda and Moris Aner • Rajeev and Rachna Balakrishna • Barnes Family • Stacey Batista • James and Fiona Benenson • Joe Bergantino and Candy Altman • Ricardo Bianco and Gloria Salazar • Deborah Bitran • Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts • Zvi and Judith Bodie • Elizabeth Bolgiano • Jim Brown • Cabot Risk Strategies LLC • Tad and Peggy Champion • Carroll-O'Connor Family • Chestnut Hill Realty Company • Mila Chun and David Clark • City on a Hill Church • Deborah Cotton • Gordon and Wendy Cromwell • Andrew Dankwerth • Kha and Sam Dickerman • Melinda Donovan • Jake and Hilary Elkins • Marc Foster and Andrea Roberts • William Ganong, III and Marilyn Newman • Gibson Sotheby's International Realty - Kyle Kaagan Team • Liberty Mutual Foundation • Amy and Jeff Glass • Matthew and Stephanie Governali • Myra and Dick Grand • Kat Gregor • Grimes Family • Jill and Bernard Grossberg • Therese Hansen • Kathy and Ernie Herrman • Mary Hoffee • John Hosken and Nancy Friedlander • Paul and Dalil Hyry-Dermith • Mark and

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### **\$250-\$499**

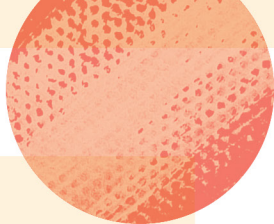
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## OUT OF AN ABUNDANCE OF HOPE

When COVID-19 forced the cancellation of our annual Believe in Brookline Kids Gala, you didn't stop believing in children's mental health for a minute! While we missed the fun of Believe in Brookline Kids, this year's "Out of an Abundance of Hope" UnGala campaign was a big success.

Gifts made to the campaign safeguarded the wellbeing of hundreds of children this year, helping vulnerable kids cope, enabling fragile families to navigate time at home, and preventing local families from becoming homeless. Across Massachusetts, you fueled our BRYT team's work with more than 140 schools, remotely supporting students with mental health needs and creating equitable, mental health-centered plans for a possible return to onsite classes.

We look forward to the day when we can celebrate in person. For now, you have our deepest thanks for your continued support of children and families in our community.

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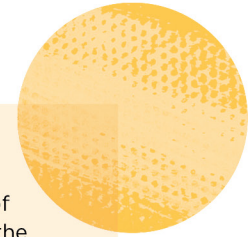
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### A MISSED MARATHON

In March, Team Brookline runners were closing in on their final weeks of training, eagerly looking forward to the 2020 Boston Marathon, when the pandemic forced the program to an early finish. Incredibly, team members continued their fundraising through May, raising over \$250,000 to benefit The Brookline Center and our four partner organizations. We share our runners' sadness on the historic cancellation of the race and applaud the tenacity of the many team members who ran the virtual Boston Marathon in September. During a Team Brookline season like no other, we are so grateful to the 11 runners who ran to support The Brookline Center: Kyle Blaylock, Erica Kawas, James Leary, Gabriela Lupatkin, Jacqueline Mandella, Tracy Marino, Shahzad Mumtaz, Karin Parodi, Sarah Reilly, Hannah Scott, and Hannah Wright.



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We are ready and able to help.



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