The journey of providing care to someone else can be long, lonely, and hard. No one needs to navigate this journey alone. It takes a lot of courage to reach out and ask for help.
"The journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step." ~ Lao-Tzu

Courage to Caregivers remains committed to our mission, aimed at preventing caregiver burnout. Many caregivers who reach out to us are in crisis, and it takes a lot of courage for them to ask for help. We work to empower those caregivers with a variety of tools to enhance their resilience.

Who better to tell our story than the courageous caregivers we have had the privilege of supporting? May their stories provide hope and healing to other caregivers.

"Support Group gives me permission to take this ONE HOUR - for ME - to be a better mom - a better ME." ~ Christa

"Courage to Caregivers offers a connection directly related to a part of my life that is a challenge and it is definitely helping." ~ Ed

"When I joined the group my stress level was extremely high and I was basically consumed by my efforts to help a family member with severe depression. The kindness of members, leaders and facilitators, the well-thought-out materials that are presented and discussed at meetings, weekly breathing meditation, and goal-setting activities have helped me rediscover personal interests like art and sewing that I'd forgotten I had. Participation in the group is helping me lower my overall anxiety level and reclaim a more balanced life." ~ Susan

"Support Group helps me be more hopeful and even though everyone is still struggling, my outlook towards the problem has changed. I feel more able to let go and let other things/people take over. I don't feel so responsible for outcomes in my life and the lives of my loved ones." ~ Cindy

"The details are always different. The stories are always different. We are all so different. Yet, the physical and emotional responses are the SAME. Courage to Caregivers offers the collective energy and compassion for the same stress and struggles." ~ Meg
Our weekly programs are guided by ONE innovative curriculum of our own design with 12 themes and 52 topics all focused on empowering caregivers in building tools of resilience.

Our THREE unique programs support mental illness caregivers now no matter where they live:

- One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support
- Breathing Meditation Classes
- Support Groups

The number of caregivers we serve grew to 145 in 2021, a 24% increase since 2020. Those 145 mental illness caregivers attended a total of 1,910 service sessions in one or more of our three programs.

31 participants from 2020 continued to participate in one or more of our programs in 2021, a 55% retention rate.

63 volunteers devoted 5,729 volunteer hours.

128 individual donors contributed $51,905 in individual contributions. An additional 119 individual donors contributed $16,846 through participation in one of our 8 Illumination! events. This is a 32% increase in individual donors. 1 State funding partner, 1 private Foundation partner and corporate support contributed an additional $41,064 in operating revenue.

We are grateful for the support of our programs from the State and these private Foundations:

- Anonymous
- Private Foundation
- Peg’s Foundation
- Neighborhood
The review of Courage to Caregivers’ 2021 financial statements was completed by our accountant, Zinner & Co., LLP, on March 23, 2022. Our 2021 990 is available on our website and Guidestar.

SUPPORT AND REVENUE

Our Support and Revenue grew by 7% in 2021 totaling $193,463.

Contributions
Board and Individual - $51,905
Corporate - $5,481
Foundation - $10,000

Government Funding - $22,079

Special Events (net) - $15,818
Donated Goods/Services - $84,676
Other Income - $3,504

KEY:

2020 Financials

2021 Financial Growth

OPERATING EXPENSES

Operating Expenses increased over 2020 by 3%, totaling $174,654.

Program Services - $133,453

Management and General - $41,201
Launched a new curriculum focused on the 6 Domains of Resilience and a caregiver's personal growth journey.

Launched our Caregiver Essentials Fireside Chat series to highlight our partnerships with our Community Alliances: Benjamin Rose Institute on Aging - Supporting Dementia Caregivers; and Families for Depression Awareness - Supporting Bipolar Caregivers. These were recorded and shared on our YouTube channel.

Created a custom journal "Courage to Caregivers Resilience Guidebook," to accompany our curriculum, available for sale on our website. Weekly entries include inspirational quotes, affirmations, breathing techniques (and descriptions), micro self-care, goals, and journal prompts.

Grew our year-round internship program to assist with special projects. Hosted 10 interns - 6 undergraduate interns, 4 graduate interns.

Initiated a 24-Day Self-Care Challenge, driven by our summer intern group, culminating in our 2nd Annual Day of Giving on International Self-Care Day - July 24, 2021, sponsored by our bookkeeper, Kickstart Accounting. The 24-Day Self-Care Challenge is available on our website.

Presented our professional workshops focused on preventing caregiver burnout at 2 professional conferences: Ohio Mental Health and Addiction Services (OhioMHAS) Trauma Informed Care Summit "Creating Environments of Resilience"; and Cleveland Leadership Center's Conference "SPARK Grit to Great."

Expanded our earned income opportunities through 4 paid presentations to: Step Forward; Ohio Association of County Boards (OACB) for People with Developmental Disabilities Professional Development Series; and Ohio State University Behavioral Health Workforce Development Series.

Presented our programs, workshops and breathing meditation model to 14 behavioral health partners in the community, including Akron Children's Hospital, Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital for Rehabilitation, Cleveland Rape Crisis Center, National OCD Parent Groups, University Hospitals Grand Rounds and EAP, and Western Reserve Area on Aging to grow our Community Alliances.

Expanded our special event fundraising model - Illumination! - a series of individual gatherings. 166+ individuals participated in 8 Illumination! events with 168+ donations raising $16,846. This represents a 41% increase in participation and donations as well as a 131% increase in funds raised.

Extended our strategic stakeholder engagement process, formalizing our Community Alliances. Proud of our partnerships with:
NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC

As we continue to navigate the pandemic, our Strategic Planning Committee focused their work on creating a Strategic Scenario Plan. They facilitated an agency-wide retreat for our team, including staff and volunteers. Guided by the vision of our Board of Directors, and supported by every Committee of the Board, Courage to Caregivers is well positioned for a variety of scenarios that may come our way in 2022 and beyond!

PROGRAM IMPACT

When we launched the pilots of our three programs in 2019 we set about reducing the stress of caregiving. What we have quickly realized is that it's nearly impossible to reduce that stress. However, we CAN empower and support caregivers to better cope and manage the stress of caregiving. We remain committed to preventing caregiver burnout.

SHARE OUR WALLET CARD

Our Community Outreach Committee created a wallet card to help spread the word about our programs and services. You can help us - download a copy on our website or request a printed copy online.

The stress of caregiving has been found to take TEN years off of a caregiver’s life.

WE SUPPORT FAMILY CAREGIVERS

Our mission is to provide hope, support, and courage to caregivers and loved ones of those living with mental illness.

We're in the caregiver burnout prevention business.

We do this through our three innovative programs:
One-to-One Caregiver Peer Support
Breathing Meditation
Support Groups

WE ALSO PROVIDE:

Support for professional caregivers, community agencies, and corporations
Innovative programming through workshops, speakers, and presentations
Referrals and resources for those in need of additional support
PREVENTING CAREGIVER BURNOUT

Caregivers often feel STUCK. Stress and the culture of burnout takes its toll, and we want to be a resource to you. We support caregivers of all kinds - unpaid family caregivers and professional caregivers. We meet them where they are - at home and in the workplace. If you are interested in hosting us for a custom workshop or presentation focused on burnout or one of our many other topics, please reach out to Kristi@CourageToCaregivers.org or 216-536-7699.

SHARING OUR RESOURCES

Check out our website for these resources (and more): Caregiver Information Resource Sheets regarding diagnoses, substance use disorders, suicidal ideation, and essential caregiver skills including acceptance and letting go, active listening, and healthy boundaries. You can also find handouts for caregiver self-care tips and a caregiver courage tool kit.

RIPPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

We love to talk about the ripples of support that a person living with mental illness needs to thrive. It starts with the primary caregiver and includes so many other circles of support, including family, friends, neighbors, colleagues and professionals. You, or someone you support, can register for our programs, subscribe to our weekly inspirational emails and monthly newsletters, purchase our Caregiver Resilience Guidebook Journal, follow us on social media, or watch our Breathing Meditation and Fireside Chat recordings on your YouTube channel.

What do YOU need? How can we best support you?
The mission of Courage to Caregivers is to provide hope, support, and courage to caregivers and loved ones of those living with mental illness.

Follow us:

- Instagram - @CourageToCaregivers
- Facebook - @CourageToCaregivers
- Twitter - @Courage2CareCLE
- LinkedIn - Courage to Caregivers
- YouTube - Courage to Caregivers

Join our Move With Courage Challenge throughout July!

Courage to Caregivers is hosting its first nationwide virtual fundraising event - MOVE WITH COURAGE throughout July. We know that movement of ANY kind is beneficial to your health - not just to your physical health, your mental health as well! There are benefits for your muscles - bones - joints - heart - lungs AND your brain. As caregivers provide support to those they love, it’s also important that they take care of their own health and well-being.

Throughout July we’re encouraging you to MOVE - ANY way you want: walk - run - hike - bike - swim - paddle - dance - garden - yoga - meditate (movement for your mind). First, set a movement challenge goal - anything that feels like a challenge to YOU and track it. Next, set a fundraising goal - and invite your family and friends to join you. Join us via our social media accounts daily throughout the month of July for tips. If you live in or near Cleveland - JOIN US for our Move With Courage culminating event on Wednesday, August 3 from 6-8 p.m. at the Shaker Lakes Nature Center in Shaker Heights, OH. We’ll have Jazzercise with Mary Beth and healthy food options with Jamie from Heinen’s Club FX.

Every dollar you raise through MOVE WITH COURAGE makes an inspiring impact for caregivers in need of support to prevent caregiver burnout. Join us!

The challenge culminates on our 4th Annual Day of Giving - July 24 - International Self-Care Day. Your donations make a significant difference for caregivers in need and support their overall health and well-being. We look forward to interacting with you in the month of July to promote movement and personal growth!