

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS  
2020 | ANNUAL REPORT



**LOVE** OPPORTUNITY  
KNOCKS  
**WARRIORS**

Understand, no one can kill your  
spirit if you're a warrior.

— Dr. Cornel West

## 2020 A YEAR IN MOTION

### 8 MONTHS

of After Opps & Life Shop  
Programming Canceled

### 5

Major Fundraising  
Events Canceled

Halt in Programming Translated to

## 7,200 SERVICE HOURS LOST

To Warriors in Need

### 45%

of our Projected Income  
Disrupted by COVID

### 3

New Events Created

### 2

New Program Platforms Launched

### 0

Layoffs or Benefits Cut



## OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS OUR LETTER TO YOU

It has been quite an exercise to look back on this year and reflect on all that we have been through. Even though we are still very much in the thick of it, it is impressive to take inventory of what we have endured and how we have responded to adversity.

We were forced to shutter more than 4 months of After Opps and Life Shop programming. We also had to cancel a total of 5 major fundraising events, and counting. Our operations and our budget were turned upside down. Thankfully, it turns out we are pretty good at doing handstands.

As we moved things off the calendar, our crew quickly shifted gears and drove an endless supply of positive energy into developing new program formats to deliver our mission and new fundraising events to sustain those programs. It was truly impressive to see how motivated, committed and creative we could be when faced with these challenges.

**WITHIN A WEEK** we were mobilized and making regular contacts to our Warrior Families to check in and keep up.

**WITHIN A MONTH** we had developed a virtual program platform and successfully salvaged a canceled gala.

**WITHIN A YEAR** we have reinvented every program we offer and every event we host, while holding true to our core values and mission.

We don't intend to paint a rosier than real picture of what it is. We are still up against major challenges, as we anticipate a continued slow rise and return of our program enrollment numbers and face unknown outcomes in our 2021 event plans.

All of these uncertainties turn us toward what we do know. We know that we have an amazing and resilient staff. We know that we have an awesomely generous, supportive and resourceful group of boards. We also know that we are working in a community that seems to always have our back. We are grateful beyond words for all of the support that has rallied us through this year. We look forward cautiously, but with confidence, knowing that we have assembled an army of Warriors to keep us going strong.

  
PHIL CARMODY  
PRESIDENT

  
MIKE CARMODY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

# VIRTUAL WARRIOR STANDOUTS

Warriors have never failed to uplift, no matter how bad of a day you're having. And in a year with a lot of bad days, Warriors kept our spirits high even when we couldn't connect in person.

## COLLIN BRAY

Collin Bray had a reputation for being a video chat aficionado long before Zoom was a household name. So when we launched deep into the virtual program space in March, he had his tablet charged up and ready.

**"I like talking to my friends and telling some jokes!" said Collin. "How do turtles call each other? ... On their SHELLPHONES!"**

While we may not have shellphones, we're grateful that technology has kept us connected and we're grateful that Collin has consistently brightened up our Zoom rooms with his signature comedic stylings, thoughtful questions, compliments, and emphatic meeting sign-offs: "3...2...1...Ka-boom!"

## JESSICA WOOD

We've all moved through different layers of existential darkness in this collectively grim year. When you're stuck in the shadows, there's no better friend you could have than the radiant Jessica Wood.

"I'm doing good, trying to stay positive in difficult circumstances," she said. We're all in this together and we're not alone."

Jess pours positive energy into any interaction and served as a powerful and gifted orator in our Warrior Response, Love Warriors, and Love Grows Here video series this year.

**"I want to be a voice for other people," she said. "I also want to learn how to narrate stuff so I can do my own podcast or write my own book."**



# VIRTUAL REINVENTION



2020  
TIMELINE

**MARCH 15**  
Program  
Shutdown

**MAY 4**  
Virtual Program  
Early Phase Launch

**JULY 21**  
Next Phase  
Program Launch



Due to the State of Illinois' Stay at Home Order in late March, Warrior families were cut off from crucial in-person services. Our compassionate and creative program team recognized the threat this posed and worked quickly to adapt. In a month's time, we had leveraged multiple online platforms to launch our version of virtual programs. We had also deployed all of our tech devices to our team and Warrior families so that we could assist those who needed support in getting connected.

**"The virtual programs were very important to Sonya and me. They gave Sonya something to do and to look forward to every morning. At night she'd say 'I have to go to bed early; I have to get up early and get on Zoom with my friends.'"**

JoAnne Taylor, Warrior Parent



## PROGRAM REINVENTION VIRTUAL

We had the advantage of having some great technology already in place. The team worked hard to utilize our Seesaw virtual classroom, stay connected with Weekly Warrior Check-In calls, and test our hosting abilities via Zoom. Answering the call to duty, we installed these supports and sustained them from March 16 thru July 20th without charging fees.

## LUNCH WITH A WARRIOR VIRTUAL

One of the most popular virtual programs this year has been our Zoom lunches with a special guest each day - ranging from members of our Auxiliary Board and Board of Directors to former staff to community partners to members of the community.

"It's a fun way to connect Warriors with our community and vice versa," said Executive Director Mike Carmody. "It has been amazing to see the progression of how Warriors have asked questions and been inquisitive."

## RETURN TO PROGRAMS VIRTUAL & ONSITE

"It was nice to stay connected one way or another and felt better and better as we used new technology and people became more comfortable and engaged," said Program Director Oscar Montanez.

	May 1	June 1	July 20
Virtual	2 hrs/day x 5 days/wk	4 hrs/day x 5 days per week	2 hrs/day x 2 days/wk
Onsite	NO ONSITE	NO ONSITE	6 hrs/day x 3 days/wk
TOTAL per Week	10 hrs/wk	20 hrs/wk	28 hrs/wk

## BACK TOGETHER AGAIN ONSITE

Over the course of the 4 months we were restricted from in-person programming, we were working hard to develop health-safety guidelines to operate under when we returned. We developed a new version of OK programs. One that was framed in a unified, compressed style of smaller group gatherings.

We were forced to sacrifice some of the blending, socializing and partnering that we normally feature in OK programs, but it was all for the good of public health. After months of training, hours of conversations and pages and pages of protocol preparation, we were returning to onsite programs on July 20!







WORKING

**17**  
TOTAL POP-UP  
DINNER  
EVENTS

**86**  
MEALS DONATED  
TO WARRIORS  
IN NEED



**311**  
MEALS DONATED TO  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS

# POP-UPS & GENEROSITY



While our Knockout Catering Company was able to keep operating and keep employing Warriors from the first phase of COVID restrictions, we had to pivot our approach to meet unprecedented challenges. Unable to cater to large events, KCC launched a series of weekly pop-up dinners in March and started producing and selling a line of smoked Knockout Meats this summer.

## POP-UP BENEFICIARIES

Offering curbside pickup from Urban Pioneer Group or no-contact delivery options, KCC hosted 17 pop-ups this year and donated a portion of the meals to community causes and groups. We connected with Turano, Lyman Avenue Bread, Kinslahger, and Timberfeast farm to round out menus ranging from Knockout Burgers to Smoked Reubens to Jambalaya and more.

## KNOCKOUT MEATS

With catering event opportunities few and far between, the Knockout crew turned their attention to new markets. What better chance to build our BBQ skillset! So we fired up the smoker and developed a line of smoked meats that we have taken directly to consumers and local businesses alike. Our smoked meat portfolio now includes bacon, pastrami, corned beef and turkey. We are also the proud meat provider to the Daly Bagel and hopefully many more to come in 2021!



## FOOD WITH HEART AND SOUL

**8** local organizations were the beneficiaries of the KCC pop-up dinners, including:

- SARAH'S INN
- L'ARCHE CHICAGO
- NEW MOMS
- PACTT
- HOUSING FORWARD
- THANKFUL FOR CHICAGO
- BEYOND HUNGER
- OPRF INFANT WELFARE SOCIETY



# LOVE FOR THE COMMUNITY

Even through tumultuous times, we found a way to keep growing love on the Knockout Farm. As in-person programs took a pause from mid-March thru late-July, we used the farm as a space to redirect our workforce. The team worked hard to get the farm ready for the return of Warriors.

The traditional direction of produce coming off the farm was completely reinvented this year. We could not safely re-introduce our trademark culinary programming that would utilize the fresh produce for cooking, learning and eating. So we came up with a bunch of other great ideas to find that food a good home. We were able to preserve the therapeutic and vocational interactions hosted on the farm when programs came back on site.

30

TYPES OF  
CROPS  
PLANTED

49

TOTAL  
VARIETIES  
PLANTED

1,400

TOTAL POUNDS  
OF FOOD HARVESTED

## GROWTH



## KNOCKOUT CSA

### COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE

With our normal end points for produce significantly reduced by program and enterprise restrictions, we decided it was a great opportunity to try our hand at a CSA. The trial run of the Knockout Farm CSA fed 13 members with a monthly box of mixed seasonal produce and also included featured add-on items from our local partners, including Kinslahger Brewing Co, Lyman Ave. Bread Co., several of the newly developed varieties of smoked meats from the Knockout Catering Crew, and of course, Knockout Pickles. The CSA launched late in the season and operated from August through October. We also kept our enterprise goodwill initiatives going via the CSA by providing 30% of the CSA memberships to Warrior Families struggling with food insecurity.

## POP-UPS WITH PURPOSE

### FROM OUR FARM TO NEW TABLES

We utilized fresh farm produce from salad greens to watermelon in our Knockout Catering pop-up menus, which kept Warriors employed and supported community beneficiaries each week.

We also shared more than 100 pounds of fresh harvest with community groups Beyond Hunger (formerly OPRF Food Pantry) to support their local hunger-relief programming and the Chicago co-op program Veggie Rx, which helps patients with diet-related diseases who are also food insecure.

## ACCESSIBILITY ACHIEVED

### LOVE GROWS HERE — LOVE ALSO BUILDS HERE

In spite of all of the changes and challenges in the early Spring and Summer, we were able to work with a couple of our most loyal corporate partners to keep our farm accessibility projects on track. Bulley & Andrews and McAdam Landscaping helped us excavate and install three new pathways to the farm's upper berms, making the farm fully accessible. We also landscaped and laid down new crusher fines gravel to re-establish the accessibility of all of the pathways on the ground level. The place looks like new again!

## FINDING FOOD A GOOD HOME

**13** Total CSA Memberships

**30%** of Memberships  
Donated to Warrior Families

**20%** of Pop-UP Meals  
were Donated to Partners  
with Need







**“Our employees are constantly searching for ways to make a meaningful impact beyond their job — and they want to know they work for a company that values and supports that desire. When we find an organization like OK that has such a great mission and such great people, it's a perfect match for what our employees are seeking.”**

Tim Puntillo  
President of Bulley and Andrews

## BULLEY & ANDREWS

ALWAYS HELPING LOVE GROW

The Bulley and Andrews team has long been among OK’s most supportive corporate partners. Over the years, their level of support has continued to grow, from both a financial support standpoint and in giving through in-kind support. They have done everything from writing some of our biggest checks, to laying down paver pathways on the Knockout Farm.

Tim Puntillo, President of Bulley and Andrews has been the connector on the Bulley team to the OK Mission. “OK is important to the community for so many reasons,” said Puntillo. “First and foremost because the resources and services OK provides are so limited and so needed. We are so fortunate to have OK in our community.”

Tim and his family are long-time residents of the Oak Park community. They ardently supported the OK mission, even before the partnership with Bulley was formed. Tim has served in an advisory capacity as OK has pondered multiple building expansion, remodel, and other construction projects that needed the keen eye of a career developer/contractor. He and his family and network have also been very loyal attendees of our fundraising events.

“My favorite OK memories are from the Classic when my kids were younger. We would walk to the softball fields and spend the afternoon with them running around (and eventually working their way to the press box PA system) as we enjoyed the festivities with friends,” said Puntillo. “The Gala is also one of my favorite events of the year, as it provides an opportunity to spend time with friends and neighbors celebrating and supporting such a great organization.”

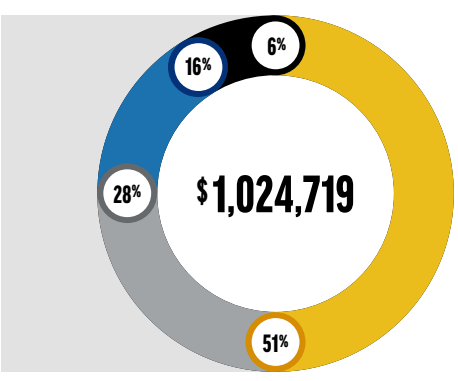


# MEETING THE MOMENT



## THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID IN 2020

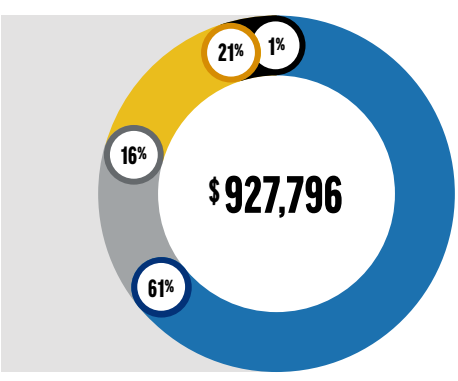
The impact of the COVID crisis touched all of our operations and programs and constrained our financial resources. It has been a year of pivots and adjustments as we work to maintain our commitment to our Warriors and staff.



### OUR RESOURCES

#### REVENUES & SUPPORT

- \$ 517,504 GRANTS/CONTRIBUTIONS AND IN-KIND DONATIONS
- \$ 283,241 SPECIAL EVENTS (NET)
- \$ 159,121 PROGRAM REVENUE
- \$ 64,854 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE REVENUE



### HOW WE USED OUR RESOURCES

#### TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

- \$ 569,901 PROGRAM SERVICES
- \$ 152,168 SOCIAL ENTERPRISE
- \$ 198,842 CORE MISSION SUPPORT FINANCE, HR, BOARD
- \$ 6,885 CORE MISSION SUPPORT FUNDRAISING AND PARTNERS



## WHERE WE USED OUR RESOURCES

### TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES: \$ 722,020



All financial results are unaudited. Details on Opportunity Knocks financial statements are available online: [www.opportunityknocksnow.org/about/financial-reports](http://www.opportunityknocksnow.org/about/financial-reports)