

Your Support Empowers Connection

Spring 2023 Impact Report

Together, We're Making an Impact

Dear Friends,

In a world that's been filled with uncertainty, you never wavered. You dared to imagine a world where no survivor ever has to feel alone. You embraced the vision of reaching more survivors earlier in their recovery.

And the impact of your generosity was felt around the world!

In this report, you will find highlights of how you helped unite the burn community last year. How you helped remove barriers that separate survivors. How you helped survivors discover better healing through our growing online resources.

Looking forward, 2023 promises more incredible growth and triumphs because of you. We're excited to announce that Phoenix World Burn Congress (WBC) is returning to an in-person format later this year! Survivors and families from all corners of the world will experience the thrill of first-time meetings and overdue reunions. Because of you, survivors will experience the hope and healing that happens when community gathers.

Thank you for making this possible. Let's keep changing the world for burn survivors, together.



With thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Acton". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Amy Acton
CEO
Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors



Phoenix WBC connects attendees with support resources, educational programming, workshops, and, most importantly, each other.

Event Details

Date
October 4 - 7, 2023

Location
Gaylord National Resort & Convention Center
in National Harbor, MD

[Register Today!](#)



Donor Impact: The Power of Support Groups

With your support, we are providing online support groups that allow our community to connect whenever, wherever. Created exclusively for burn survivors and their loved ones, Virtual Support Group provides a safe space for our community to be seen, heard, and to find healing.

You Increased Healing Through Support in 2022



24
Support
Groups Held



142
New Attendees
Joined



68%
Of Attendees
Were Injured in
the Last Three
Years

New in 2023: Special Topic Support Groups

Beginning in March 2023, Phoenix Society began offering Special Topic Virtual Support Groups to specifically address our community's common concerns and needs (for example: PTSD and grief). Held on various fourth Mondays throughout the year, group attendees will cover a special topic with guest hosts that are experts on that particular topic.

Community Calendar: Connecting Survivors Nationwide

Along with Phoenix Society's Virtual Support Group, your support helps power our community calendar that offers survivors, loved ones, and healthcare professionals numerous support opportunities and events held virtually and in-person around the country.



Burned Beauty: Your Support Brings Weekly Renewal

Tonya Meisenbach. Maybe you recognize her name. Perhaps you know her better as Burned Beauty 2018. Chances are you've seen or heard her on YouTube, Phoenix Society's Girls with Grafts podcast, Phoenix Engage, or other social media. And maybe you're familiar with her nonprofit, The Burned Beauty Foundation.

She's an influencer. Popular in the burn community. And she's bringing hope to people around the world every day. But Tonya never sought fame. Fame found her, unexpectedly, a few years after her burn injury.

Tonya was living a full and busy life as a wife, mother of two young adults, and realtor. But in December 2018, an evening around the fire pit with her husband, Donald, changed everything.

Tonya reached over to place some steaks on the grate when her arms were met by a stream of lighter fluid in a moment of devastating timing that neither saw coming. The flames instantly enveloped her. Her first instinct was to run. Her second thought was to stop, drop, and roll. But the heat only grew.

Then Donald's voice broke through her panic, "I've got you, Babe." He wrapped her in a blanket, smothering the flames. His quick response saved Tonya's life. But she was burned over the upper 35% of her body. Her care would include two months in a medical coma, countless surgeries, and skin grafts of her entire face, neck, chest, upper back and, both arms.

For two years after coming home, she hid. While her beautiful, grafted face is well-known now, she kept it to herself during those early years of recovery. And her world stayed small.

As time passed, the loneliness got heavier. Until one day, her home nurse encouraged her to look in the mirror and find herself again. When she did, Tonya saw a little of the woman she once knew. She picked up a makeup brush, and Burned Beauty began to bloom.

She started learning about self-care and experimenting with makeup and wigs. Soon, she was making videos, sharing her story and doing makeup tutorials. The world quickly started to find her. And a new road to recovery opened before her.

Story continues on next page

“ I was getting messages from people who saw my videos. They shared with me what they were going through and told me how much I had helped them. Their messages inspired me, and I didn’t want to hide anymore. ”

Tonya embraced her role as an influencer. Founding The Burned Beauty Foundation and operating social media accounts, she leveraged her platforms to help burn survivors regain confidence and recover physically. And now, with thousands of followers, she lives out her mission of supporting others daily.



Her prominence in the burn community is a privilege she adores and a responsibility she takes seriously. But with leadership comes many pressures. So, when one of her social media followers urged her to find some support for herself and invited her to attend one of Phoenix Society’s Virtual Support Groups, she was curious but hesitant. Not sure if it was something she even needed, she joined a group in 2022. What she discovered surprised her.

In the support group, she wasn’t a social media influencer. She wasn’t a public figure. She was simply Tonya. No expectations. No pressure. Just unconditional, mutual support...and privacy. She had found a space where she could talk freely—or not at all. And it was a welcome relief she hadn’t realized she needed.

Story continues on next page

“

My place in Phoenix Society's Virtual Support Groups is a break from my normal, public position. No wigs, no makeup, no preparation. I am safe there. I need that.

”

Since that first meeting a year ago, Tonya joins the weekly online support groups as often as she can. She has found they play an important and unique role in her healing journey. Listening to others' stories in that environment gets her through her own hard days and recharges her spirits, so that she can continue her work in the spotlight.

Phoenix Society's virtual resources open the door to a kind of support survivors can access anytime from anywhere. Tonya only wishes she had known about them earlier in her recovery:

“

I spent years not knowing how to look for support and felt very alone. There needs to be a big push to let more survivors know about online support...they should be reached while they are still in their hospital beds!

”

Tonya knows what it's like to both give and receive support—in person and online. And she finds both are critical to healing. But virtual connections have been her lifeline. They're the platforms that have paved her path to healing. And the avenue she walks with others on a journey to rebuild their confidence and rediscover the beauty in life after a burn.



Connect with Tonya Online



@burnedbeauty2018

Donor Impact: Online Tools Available 24/7

Your support helped us launch a new way to find, share, and connect with tools and support: a [Resource Marketplace](#). This one-stop shop was released in October 2022 and features resources for and from survivors, loved ones, healthcare professionals, and Phoenix partners.

You Increased Access to On-Demand Resources in 2022



49
Resources
Added



4,504
Marketplace
Page Views



72
People Had Their
First Connection
to Phoenix Society
Through the
Marketplace

Resource Highlight: [A Caregiver's Guide to a Burn Injury](#)

Written by André Xavier



We recently collaborated with André Xavier, a husband of a burn survivor, to develop a guide specifically for caregivers. Caregiving for a loved one after a burn injury can be overwhelming, and many are not sure where to turn to for help.

Inside this guide, André shares tips to help others that are impacted by a burn injury, including:

- How to advocate for a loved one
- Information about a patient's bill of rights and power of attorney
- Questions to ask about post-hospital care
- Tips for caring for children while supporting a loved one with a burn injury
- Sharing your story with confidence
- Finding your way around the hospital



Scan with your phone to download the free ebook!

Donor Impact: Sharing Survivor Stories

Your gift supported the launch of [Girls with Grafts: A Burn Community Podcast](#). Hosted by Amber Wilcox and Rachel Kudlak, the podcast features in-depth conversations with burn survivors, resources for managing a burn injury, updates on Phoenix Society and community news, and information on burn prevention and advocacy.

You Increased Our Global Reach in 2022



13
Episodes
Released



1,831
Podcast
Downloads



21
Countries
Reached

What Our Listeners Are Saying



Amber and Rachel have really good rapport with their guests and each other. The topics they cover are both interesting in general and are very usual to the burn survivor community and those who support them.



I enjoy tuning in to Girls with Grafts every week! The hosts do a great job interviewing guests with inspiring stories to share. This is a great resource for the burn survivors community!



The hosts are both burn survivors, have great guests, cover relevant topics, are entertaining, and are dedicated to helping the burn community, and I take away valuable insights from each podcast.



Now Streaming!

Scan with your phone to access Girls with Grafts or find the show wherever you stream podcasts.

Your Gift Now Streaming: **Can't Miss Episodes**



I'm a Fighter: NHL Player, Burn Survivor, and Visualization Expert, Aaron Volpatti

Release Date: December 9, 2022

In this episode, we talk with Aaron Volpatti as he shares his story as a burn survivor and the intimate details of his journey to playing for the NHL through his work with visualization.

And catch Aaron Volpatti on the mainstage at Phoenix World Burn Congress 2023!



Beauty Influencer & Burn Survivor Tonya Meisenbach Shares Beauty Tips & Inspiration for Getting Back Out There After a Burn Injury

Release Date: February 23, 2023

Learn more about Tonya as she shares her inspiration, wisdom, and advocacy as a burn survivor and social media influencer in her community.



Cheering On Charlie: A Loved One's Journey Supporting a Burn Survivor

Release Date: October 11, 2022

Hear from both André and Charlie Xavier share their story of survival, and discuss Andre's new book "I Almost Lost Her," and the new challenges survivors face when returning home.

Thank You For Your Support!

You've been a pillar of support for our organization, and this year, we want to make an even bigger impact on the burn survivor community.

We encourage you to continue your support by making an online gift today. Your support goes directly to programs and resources that help connect more burn survivors to a community of healing.

