



BREAKING BARRIERS WITH HOPE

**Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors
2023 Annual Report**

Hope Starts With You

At the heart of every nonprofit are **people** that dedicate their time, their skills and their financial support to give back to their community. Without our supporting members, we couldn't fulfill our mission of empowering burn survivors and their loved ones to thrive in all aspects of life.

Throughout this Annual Report, you'll see our 2023 numbers in review and read stories about healing and hope. As you review the data points, remember that each number represents one person impacted. Whether they are a burn survivor or a burn care professional – each story represents just one of the thousands of members of our community who received the support they needed because of you.

We have much to be excited about in 2024—from the launch of *Journey Forward* in hospitals, to the expansion of Phoenix SOAR into community foundations and Spanish language programs. We've begun planning the 2025 Phoenix World Burn Congress, and have many new partnerships in development.

At the center of it all—the reason we are here—are the **people** who come to us for support, for guidance, and for hope.

The compassion you show for one another is an inspiration for us all. On behalf of Phoenix Society's Board of Directors and staff, thank you for helping us impact survivors when they need it most. We can't do this work without you!

With thanks,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Acton".

Amy Acton
CEO
Burn Survivor

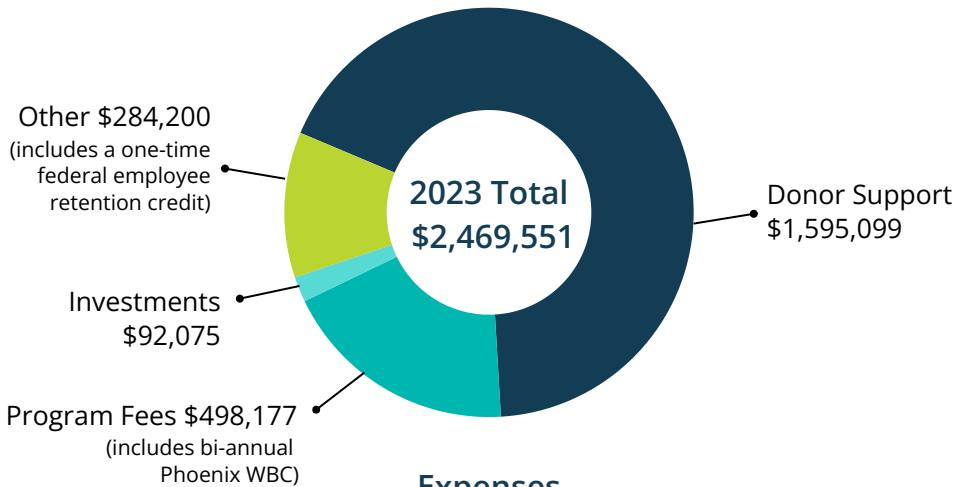


A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff".

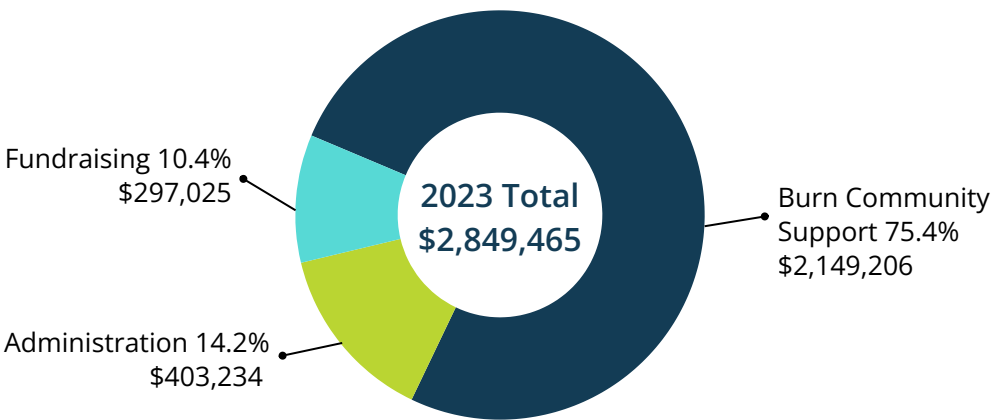
Jeff Gallinant
Board President
Burn Survivor

Financial Report

Revenue & Support



Expenses



End of Year Net Assets

\$2,849,465

Administration & Fundraising Expenses include:

- Training for staff and volunteers so that Phoenix Society can remain informed and on the leading edge of our profession.
- Record keeping for survivors and caregivers so that Phoenix Society can deliver the appropriate resources that are aligned to their stage of recovery.
- Computers and video conferencing equipment to keep the burn community connected 24 hours a day.
- Marketing, outreach and awareness efforts to build our brand and grow our community.
- Investments in development tools and resources that help us raise critical funds to advance our mission.



At-A-Glance

Your Impact in 2023

Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we have brought hope and healing to thousands of survivors, caregivers, burn care professionals, and community allies in 2023.



2,127

Survivors & Caregivers Received Online Support

Every day, survivors and caregivers reach out seeking tools and support. Because of you, survivors and caregivers are getting connected earlier and more easily than ever before.



582,685

Online Resources Accessed

We know the importance of finding information when and where you need, and that is why we are continuously expanding our website and adding new resources.

720

Phoenix World Burn Congress Attendees

Our flagship event returned in 2023 and thanks to our community's generous support, 416 attendees had their first opportunity to connect with others on the journey of burn recovery.



3,596

Support Sessions Held



With your support, we hosted virtual and in-person support groups and peer support visits that provide a safe space for our community to be seen, heard, and to find healing.

“

“I want to express my heartfelt gratitude for the virtual group conversation. It was an incredibly powerful experience for me to witness burn survivors bravely sharing their stories and shedding tears. In that moment, I felt newfound readiness to share my own story and journey, which previously felt impossible.” —*Saima, support group attendee*

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Phoenix SOAR Hospitals



Bridging the gap as survivors transition home starts with early connection in the hospital. In 2023, we provided support services to our Phoenix SOAR network and onboarded five new burn centers.

969

Trained Peer Support Volunteers



Your generosity helped train 53 new volunteers last year. Our trained Phoenix SOAR Peer Supporters provide hope and healing when its needed most.

“

“The online support group is how I was introduced to others like me. And speaking with them changed the entire outcome of my recovery. It helped me accept myself and made me determined not to hide or be ashamed of who I was when I left the hospital.” —*Brian, support group attendee*

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Research & Advocacy Initiatives



Our team has participated in and recruited community members to represent several national clinical task forces, research projects, and advocacy efforts to improve care, our understanding of survivors' long-term health issues, and prevent future burn injuries. Our team also presented at several burn medical conferences on the community's needs and concerns.

From Hopeless to Hopeful

The Powerful Healing of Support

DeAnne Gulick didn't have a detailed plan on the evening of October 3, 2015—but she did know she was planning to give up her life. Feeling the stress and pressure of caring for her parents, both of whom were sick with cancer, and struggling to manage her own mental health illnesses, DeAnne was giving up.

She headed to the store to drink herself away and, while checking out, grabbed a lighter from the cashier. DeAnne recalls that she was going through a nervous breakdown and didn't know why she was doing what she was doing.

"My whole life, I've had a fear of fire, even as a child. And I don't know why I grabbed a lighter."

After a failed attempt to overdose, she started a fire, and once her garage was engulfed in flames, DeAnne snapped out of her disassociation mindset. She doesn't remember much from that moment, but she knew her only way out of the fire was to jump through the blaze, stop, drop, roll, and get help from her neighbor.

DeAnne suffered burns on over half of her body and spent the next three months in the ICU and rehabilitation before coming home. During her hospital stay, she is thankful that her mother, aunt, and counselor visited often and provided much-needed love and support.

However, the challenges still remained even once DeAnne was at home. It was very difficult for her to talk about her self-inflicted burn injury. Her counselor kept trying, but after the loss of her mother in 2017 and her father in 2020, DeAnne was barely speaking. From the heartbreak of losing two parents to the PTSD she was struggling with after her injury, DeAnne didn't see a way forward.

Over time, she was making small steps in talking more and began attending a National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) support group, but she was still seeking more. That all changed when her counselor found Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors.

Story continues on next page.



"My counselor sent me the website, so I go to the site, and I just start crying. This was incredible, awesome."

Since her injury was self-inflicted, DeAnne was not sure if she would be accepted into our community - but that didn't stop her from trying. She connected with Liliana Palacios, Phoenix Society's Community Resource Specialist, and instantly felt a sense of hope and community.

Eight years after her injury, DeAnne finally opened up about what happened. She attended her first Phoenix Society virtual support group in 2023, and that's when things finally changed.

"It's nice to hear other survivors talk about what they've been through. Depression, anxiety, PTSD, even things like taking a shower again. I was terrified to take a shower by myself...I love hearing survivors say, 'Oh, you felt that way, too?' It's great to hear that what I'm thinking and feeling is normal."

Once feeling helpless, DeAnne now feels hopeful. Her biggest advice for other survivors is to never give up hope and not be afraid to ask for help.

DeAnne's story powerfully demonstrates how shared experiences and community connection are vital to healing. Each of us—whether peer supporters, volunteers, or donors—can play a pivotal role in ensuring that no survivor has to heal alone.

Beyond Physical Recovery

Connecting Patients to Hope & Healing



Over the span of 20+ years, Sarah Scoins has dedicated herself to healthcare, tending to patients from all walks of life, but has found a calling to caring for patients who have survived a burn injury. As a nurse with extensive knowledge in all aspects of burn care, she has fought to implement an aftercare program at the well-respected Parkland Burn Center in Dallas, Texas.

Healthcare workers often get tied up in the everyday procedures and appointments for rehabilitation and wound care, and the emotional journey is easily overlooked and not talked about enough. This is something that Sarah is trying to change.

"You are part of the club now," said one of Sarah's former patients to a recent survivor at a community bowling event designed to connect burn survivors with the community and other survivors. This quote stood with Sarah as a burn injury is like no other, and only those who have spent multiple days or months in the burn unit can express feelings for it.

With help from Phoenix Society and other team members at Parkland, Sarah makes biweekly rounds to all the patients and family members in the burn unit and clinics. She introduces them to outside resources and offers Phoenix SOAR visits if possible. Sarah believes it is important for burn survivors to realize that the journey is different for everyone, and at one point, they will have to face the emotional journey of healing. This journey again is different for everyone, but it is a lot easier when you have the resources and other survivors to connect with and learn from. Sarah celebrates small wins with burn survivors in the hospital as they take their first steps or can feed themselves as they once did prior to the accident. It is a keen concept to continue celebrating everyday wins like returning to work or school with rebuilt confidence in their new appearance and skin.

Story continues on next page.

Sarah first connected with Phoenix Society in 2010 while working as a trauma nurse in California. She learned how instrumental the organization's programs can be for burn survivors and their loved ones. She has been instrumental in rebuilding the Phoenix SOAR program and aftercare services at Parkland, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to helping burn survivors.

For Sarah, the healing journey from a burn injury extends far beyond physical recovery. Her focus is on guiding her patients through the emotional and mental aspects of their journey, fostering resilience and strength. Her dedication to holistic patient care is evident in the lifelong relationships she has built with many survivors and the joy she derives from seeing them thrive after their burn injury.

Expanding Our Reach & Removing Barriers With **Hope** > **That Starts With You**

Thanks to our supporting members, Phoenix Society's resources and programs are more accessible than ever. Our ability to remove barriers and meet survivors where they are is a direct result of the generosity of our community.

But there is so much more to come this year, and thanks to the support of two burn survivors, your donation will go twice as far. Board members and lifelong Phoenix Society supporters Howard Tellepsen and Tony Gonzalez have pledged \$100,000 to match first-time and increased gifts – 2X!

Howard, Tony, the entire Phoenix Society staff, and the Board of Directors are committed to providing hope, healing, and community to even more burn survivors in 2024.

YOU can help make this possible!

Make a donation at www.phoenix-society.org/spring2024 and give the gift of hope today.



The Year Ahead

The past year has been nothing short of remarkable. As you can see in this report, the need for connection has never wavered, and the power of healing through our community is unmet.

While I only officially joined the staff this year, my support for Phoenix Society has been a long-standing commitment. I've witnessed and experienced our community's transformative power firsthand, and I'm honored to be now leading Phoenix Society's programs and services.

As a burn nurse and manager by trade, I look forward to collaborating more closely with burn centers and nonprofits nationwide to enhance aftercare programs and survivor resources. One of the most critical milestones during a burn survivor's journey is the transition from the hospital to home, and in 2023, our team laid the groundwork for the Journey Forward program, which officially launched earlier this year. The program provides early access to a lifelong connection to Phoenix Society and delivers specific resources to meet survivors and caregivers where they are.

Along with expanding our Journey Forward program to more hospitals, there is much to be excited about this year. As a member of the National Advisory Committee that built Phoenix SOAR, I'm humbled to now help expand the program to community organizations, including the Alisa Ann Ruch Burn Foundation and the Firefighters Burn Institute. Additionally, in 2024, Phoenix Society will expand our virtual support offerings with more special topic support groups and launch continuing education units (CEUs) for burn care professionals.

Our team is committed to evolving Phoenix Society to better serve those in our community. I'm proud of what this team accomplished in 2023 and even more excited about what's to come in 2024!



With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jill L. Sproul, MS, RN". The script is fluid and cursive.

Jill Sproul, MS, RN
Senior Director of Programs & Services



At-A-Glance

What's to Come in 2024

In the United States alone, 398,000 burn injuries will require medical attention this year (Source: American Burn Association's Burn Incidence Fact Sheet). Although survival rates are high, living with a burn injury can be challenging in every aspect of life. Our work is more needed than ever, and our team is committed to reaching survivors earlier and meeting the needs of our community at every phase of the journey, no matter where they are in the world.

Expected Program Outcomes

- Identify and engage 10 Journey Forward hospitals
- Offer 6 continuing education courses (CEUs) on our Resource Marketplace
- Through hospitals and community-based programs, establish 6 new Phoenix SOAR partnerships
- Facilitate 30 virtual support connections per month
- Develop Spanish-language literature and serve on the World Burns Week Steering Committee
- Finalize 2025 Phoenix WBC schedule and speakers

Additional Goals

- Develop school-aged and young adult programming
- Continue to develop and offer virtual webinars on survivor's top concerns
- Recruit and engage additional volunteers to champion our mission
- Increase website users and online engagement through awareness-building campaigns so no one journeys alone

Board of Directors

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Sandra Cramolini

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