

2023 WITH GRATITUDE

A Message from Amy Acton, Burn Survivor
+ CEO of Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors

This is a season for celebration, and you have given us much to celebrate! This report is our applause for all that your generosity accomplished this past year.

In 2023, you helped bring the burn community together in incredible ways. And one of the major highlights was the return of the Phoenix World Burn Congress (WBC) gathering. In a heartwarming and powerful reunion, the global burn community came together in person for the first time in four years!

It was only possible because of the generous support of so many visionary Phoenix partners and donors like you. Your financial gifts ensured its success, helping keep costs low and freeing us to offer a wide variety of sessions, resources, and opportunities to engage all members of the burn community. The strong support and sponsorships of our partnering regional and local burn foundations were also key to bringing people together at this life-changing event. And their active engagement, outside of Phoenix WBC, helps us reach more survivors sooner by carrying our programs to all corners of the country all year round.

With representatives from 12 countries attending Phoenix WBC this year, we were reminded of the vast challenges faced at home and around the world. We had important discussions on emerging fire problems and challenges, such as wildfire issues, product standards, and more, as we collaborated with corporate partners to broaden our impact. And we witnessed an unforgettable week of community, gathered in one location, living out the theme of "Moving Forward Together, Toward Surviving and Thriving."

Phoenix WBC was a beautiful reminder of the powerful role of community in healing. It is our mission in action made possible by you!

Your faithful support continues to grow and transform Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors as a trusted leader, connecting and convening the champions of this work, from prevention to living with a burn injury. Looking ahead to 2024, our major focus will be on evolving our "Journey Forward" program to better connect and support survivors and families throughout their lifespans. The Journey Forward program streamlines all our services to improve and simplify a lifetime of support and involvement for every member of the burn community.

Our work will focus on enhancing our partnership with burn centers to address the critical issue of survivors suffering alone after discharge. We plan to build our suite of survivor-informed educational content and resources to support the work of burn centers that serve as the first touchpoint for survivors. And we will continue growing peer support to reach survivors farther and faster through new digital resources and an expanded network.

2023 was a great year! Every story, statistic, and life represented in this report is a testament to your support and confidence in our mission. We celebrate you, the incredible things you've made possible this year, and the exciting horizons that await us in 2024. As we Journey Forward, no matter where a survivor is in their healing journey, with your continued giving, they will always find the right support, the right connection, and the reassurance that they are never alone. Thank you for making it all possible.

With Gratitude,



A white, handwritten signature of Amy Acton in cursive script, written over a dark teal background.

Amy Acton, RN, BSN

FROM ASHES TO ADVOCACY: A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION BETWEEN TRAGEDIES



In an instant, hot embers transformed Abby from carefree child to burn survivor...and launched her mother, Janine Fisk, into the complex role of parent of a survivor.

As a mom, the trauma of the accident felt like a once-in-a-lifetime ordeal. Never did Janine imagine

that the devastation of flames would revisit their lives in a profoundly different way, many years later.

Abby had only been 8 years old when she stumbled into a day-old fire on their family's California farm. The hot ash left third-degree burns on her feet, ankles, and calves, and second-degree injuries on her hands. Emergency treatment, a grueling month and a half in the hospital, and numerous skin grafts marked the outset of Abby's recovery. It also marked the beginning of Janine's lifelong journey as the parent of a survivor.

Parenting during adolescence is challenging by itself, but the physical and emotional toll of a burn injury added a layer of complexity for Janine. She grappled with the same anxieties that all parents face, but those common concerns were complicated by her daughter's scars. It was heart-wrenching to witness her daughter's struggles as she grew.

The early years following Abby's injury were very lonely. There were no other families nearby who could relate to their experience. No other young girls wearing compression socks, enduring surgery after surgery, or relearning to walk in third grade.

There was no support system in place to help Abby prepare to return to school. No guidance to aid Janine in helping her cope with the scars, fears, and uncertainty she would carry into the classroom.

Janine felt like she was fumbling in the dark. Though surrounded by friends, both she and Abby felt unseen. An invisible wall of misunderstanding separated them from everyone else. And Janine watched helplessly as her once fun, bubbly girl grew silent and withdrawn.

For years, they plodded down this solitary path until a family friend discovered Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors. And in 2014, mom and daughter packed up to attend their first Phoenix World Burn Congress (WBC).

It was a pivotal experience for Abby, and an emotional turning point for Janine.

From the moment they arrived, Janine watched as Abby began to rediscover herself. She saw her daughter's spirit begin to bloom. And it wasn't long before the young teen found her voice.

As mom and daughter heard stories of fellow survivors, they both drew hope, confidence, and life from each narrative. And a heart for advocacy began to beat inside both their chests.

Their lives were forever changed.

The connection they found through Phoenix WBC was like a new beginning for Abby and Janine. They realized that not only were they not alone, but they were an important part of a community that needed them as much as they needed it.

They became regular attenders at Phoenix WBC. Abby found her place in the youth support program and began telling her story at every opportunity. And they both grew as supporters, fans, and active members of the burn community over the years.

After Abby and her brothers were grown, Janine embarked on a new chapter in life. She moved to Hawaii and began working as an educational specialist for the Maui District Office of Education—a job that has her working with students and schools all around the island, including the Lahaina school district.

When she made that move, she had no way of knowing that decision had put her life on a path intersecting once more with the devastation of fire.

Four years after she arrived, wildfires swept the Lahaina area. Schools closed, and some were destroyed. Students went missing. Families were displaced. And Janine found herself in the middle of crisis and chaos.

She was deeply affected for her community as she saw the early signs of trauma begin to emerge amongst her neighbors. Her heart was heavy, understanding many of the needs and struggles they were about to experience in the aftermath.

The psychological toll on both teachers and students in the area has been immense. And it's been frustrating for Janine to watch the state and federal resources fall short in comprehending the trauma that survivors are facing...and the delay in reaching them with critical aid.

“It's hard to understand the impact of a burn injury or even just being in fire if you've never lived through it. These kids need survivors to come alongside and help them process what they're going through. And they can't wait for that kind of support,” Janine stated.

But in her frustration, she has hope because she knows there is a network of survivors at Phoenix Society responding to the overwhelming need in all sectors.

Representatives and supporters are on the ground in nearby regions, collaborating with healthcare providers and others to reach survivors as quickly as possible. They are encouraging

caregivers and loved ones to utilize Phoenix Society's virtual support groups and online resources as they begin their healing journey. And the Phoenix SOAR (Survivors Offering Assistance in Recovery) program at the Straub Burn Unit in Honolulu is activating to connect survivors and their support systems with trained volunteers who have experienced similar trauma.

In her role as educational specialist, Janine has been doing all she can to partner with Phoenix Society, gather resources, and organize aid for the affected students and teachers. And as she works, she awaits Abby's arrival.

Now 23, Abby has been attending school and living in Colorado. But feeling called to help, she has decided to move to Hawaii to join the Phoenix SOAR program where she hopes to serve as a trusted guide for children who have been traumatized by the recent fires.

Looking back over the last fifteen years, Janine still wishes she and Abby had found Phoenix Society sooner. That wish drives their dedication to the burn community, as both women do their part to ensure that others can find support earlier in recovery.

Their journey from survivors to advocates exemplifies the transformative power of Phoenix Society and the importance of early connection and support for survivors and their families. Their story serves as a powerful reminder to each of us to do our part as peer supporters, volunteers, and donors—to reach survivors without delay. *To get involved or to learn more, contact us at info@phoenix-society.org.*

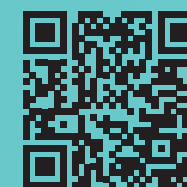
DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT & JOIN OUR MONTHLY GIVING CLUB

It's truly life changing to have the support of people who see and understand you.

By making a donation today, your gift will make a powerful impact on survivors and caregivers, support year-round programming, and keep the burn community moving forward together.

Your gift can change a life - and thanks to burn survivors, and board members Howard Tellepsen and Tony Gonzalez - **by joining our monthly giving club, your impact will be DOUBLED.**

End the year with a commitment to helping survivors and caregivers on their journey forward. Don't delay, join our monthly giving club today at <https://give.phoenix-society.org/match23>.



PWBC 2023 RECAP



“Attending Phoenix World Burn Congress 2023 was amazing. Every person from burn survivors and supporters, staff of Phoenix Society, all the volunteers to all the guest speakers, workshop presenters, fire service, medical fraternity, first responders, everyone so welcoming and interesting. So much love and genuine care to embrace.”

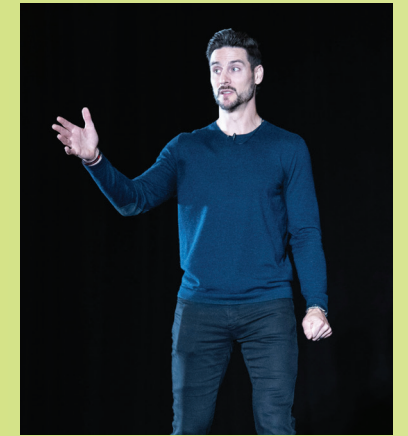
- Angelique Barnes

“I met survivors from all over with incredible stories of resilience and strength, attended workshops led by rock star therapists and listened to inspiring and motivating speakers. I finally got to meet people I've been speaking to online for months and it felt like we had known each other for years...I absolutely flourished in the smaller group sessions where I was able to share and connect with others about the journey of healing, self-acceptance, motherhood, beauty trends and more. There was so much beauty and growth in all the love and acceptance. Sometimes healing yourself is connected with the healing of others.”

- André Xavier



Highest Attended Learning Session: The Healing Power of Laughter



“It was more than just a gathering; it was like this collective feeling of understanding, of 'I've been there too.' The stories I heard, the people I met... wow. Some made me laugh, some brought tears to my eyes, but all of them made me proud to be a part of this incredibly strong community. Honestly, [Phoenix WBC] reminded me of something vital: our scars might tell the world about our past, but the way we wear them? That tells the world about our strength.”

- Kanisha Anthony



Highest Attended Wellness Session: Almost Everything You'll Need to Know About How to Sleep Well

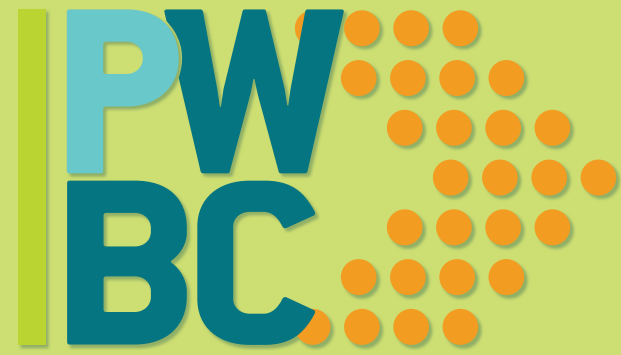


Thank You to the **53 Organizations, Foundations, and Individuals** Who Sponsored Attendees to Attend Phoenix WBC!



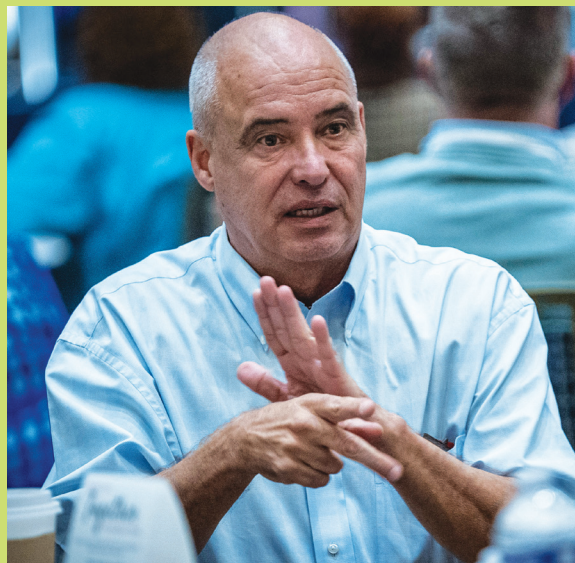
Coming Soon: Phoenix WBC 2023 On-Demand!





FINANCIALS

Total Revenue:	\$538,780
Registration Revenue:	\$238,780
Sponsorship Revenue:	\$277,500
Exhibitor Revenue:	\$22,500
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Total Expenses:	\$693,117
Programmatic Support & Marketing Expenses:	\$350,428
Food & Beverage Expense:	\$284,553
Convention Center, Hotel & AV Expenses:	\$58,136
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Net loss from Total Revenue:	(\$154,337)
Phoenix Society subsidized the remaining Phoenix WBC expenses.	



ATTENDEES

Total
720

- 314 Burn Survivors
- 164 Caregivers
- 120 Burn Care Professionals
- 88 Supporters & Friends
- 34 Fire Service Members

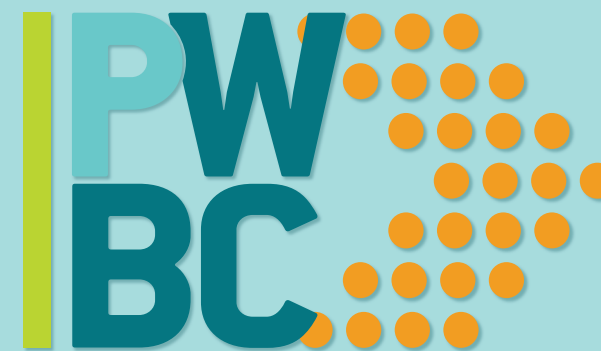


SAVE THE DATE

PHOENIX WORLD BURN CONGRESS

2025

October 29 – November 1, 2025
Gaylord Texan Resort & Convention Center in Grapevine, Texas



Sign up for updates at www.phoenix-society.org/phoenix-wbc-2025