



A green rectangular block containing the PALS logo and the text "2020 Annual Report". The logo consists of the word "PALS" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, with a green curved line underneath it. Below the logo, the text "2020 Annual Report" is written in a white, sans-serif font.



The pandemic response here at PALS showcases the extreme flexibility, grit, and enthusiasm of every participant among the PALS family. The positive and welcoming attitude is evident from the moment you log onto Zoom until you sign off at the end of each day of camp.

The virtual world has created new opportunities to extend the inclusive, embracing nature of PALS to communities far and wide.

- PALS Volunteer Leader

From the Executive Director

This past year was unlike anything the organization has experienced before. Like many, we started off our 2020 fiscal year with big plans and new goals.

To celebrate the new year, we hosted our annual PALS Holiday program, bringing together over 150 participants for a week in the winter, and inviting families and friends to join us on New Year's Eve for an epic celebration. A few weeks later we hosted our annual Great Wolf Lodge event, and were thrilled to continue that partnership.

We launched a new commitment to Diversity & Inclusion, sharing our belief that PALS should be an organization that is accepting and welcoming to every identity, and in fact that we can only achieve our mission if we are doing just that. We began considering the data we had learned from the recent research report on PALS outcomes, and the vision we had for building a more inclusive world. Considering this reflection, the Executive Board created a task force to review and update our mission, which now reads: "PALS creates inclusive camp experiences for people with and without Down syndrome. Our volunteer-led programs change attitudes, transform lives, and inspire a world of belonging."

As we headed towards our biggest summer yet, we were confident in our ability to share this new vision and perspective with our community. We were grateful to secure significant restricted grant funding to work towards expanding the PALS reach to more diverse communities.

However, the world came to a halt with COVID-19, and we had to cancel our summer programming for the safety and protection of all participants. This news was devastating to the entire PALS family, but we knew that PALS could still create community and connection when we needed it the most. This global pandemic puts individuals

with Down syndrome at a greater health risk for complications and serious consequences, and thus our community was more isolated than ever before. Our PALS volunteers and staff gathered together to make phone calls, check in on families, and begin gathering together on Zoom for some much needed laughter and joy.


From April to September, PALS hosted 19 straight weeks of free Zoom calls, offering everything from trivia to Zumba to virtual visits with miniature horses. Hundreds and hundreds of campers and volunteers joined us, and we found solace in seeing familiar faces, when it seemed like nothing in the world was familiar at all.

We want to thank all those who supported us over the past year. We know that this was not the year that anyone expected and it impacted every family, and every community in different ways. We are grateful for every one of you and we send prayers and best wishes to you all as we navigate our way back to normalcy.



Jenni Newbury Ross
Co-Founder & Executive Director

Jenni Newbury Ross



PALS Programs began in 2004. The vision was clear—changing perspectives through relationships built on shared experiences. We pair up individuals with Down syndrome one-on-one with their peers to grow in independence, to tackle new experiences, and to build friendships along the way.

The programming is simple—we go on trips, we try out new activities in small groups, we compete in the PALS Olympics, and we host the best dance parties you’ve ever seen. While the programming is simple, the rest of it is magic. Over the years we’ve built a commitment to this place—to this world where the boundaries of judgment, the fear of exclusion, and the stress of fitting into some pre-designed mold are gone.

Our programming begins with Camp PALS, our week-long summer sleep-away camps held on college campuses across the country. The experiences continue with weekend getaways during our off-season at PALS Holiday and PALS Great Wolf Lodge. And we strengthen our community with The Congratulations Project, reaching out to congratulate and welcome new families of babies with Down syndrome through letters written by our campers.

While our programming continues to expand, our model stays the same. We believe in one-to-one pairings that create strong bonds and lifelong friendships. We focus on peer-to-peer relationships, trusting in young volunteer leaders to develop age-appropriate programming and to be eager to enact social change. We value residential experiences — recognizing that real impact comes from immersive experiences, and real change comes in the moments you least expect it. We hold specific values of who we are. We are welcoming and supportive. We are a family that is passionate and genuine, and always has fun.

PALS has shaped the lives of thousands of individuals since our first program in 2004. Half of us have Down syndrome, but all of us know the value of friendship, the thrill of being on a team, and the best place to experience summer. Together, we challenge each other to be a little better, and to see the world a little differently.

This is our place.



2020

PALS Holiday

PALS Holiday 2020

Malvern Retreat
House,
Malvern PA

60 Campers

80 Volunteers

Programming:

Adventure Aquarium, Dave & Buster's,
Great Wolf Lodge, Malvern YMCA, PALS
Plunge with Malvern Fire Dept



Camp PALS is truly the highlight of her year, so to be able to have another experience mid-year is amazing. She has gotten to know many of the counselors & campers from previous PALS camps and it's made her Holiday even more meaningful and fun.

- PALS Parent



It truly brings joy to my heart as her Mom that she has her PALS family. She has a place where she belongs, is accepted and celebrated for the individual that she is. It is truly priceless to see her so happy.

- PALS Parent

This was the greatest experience of my life. I had a blast and would not change it for the world!

- PALS Camper

2020

PALS Holiday

98%

Overall
Programming
Satisfaction Score

99%

net promoter score



2020

PALS Great Wolf Lodge



PALS Great Wolf Lodge 2020

Great Wolf
Lodge,
Scotrun PA



40 Campers

44 Volunteers

2020

PALS Great Wolf Lodge

94%

**Overall
Programming
Satisfaction Score**

97%

net promoter score



congratulations

Project

Accomplishments

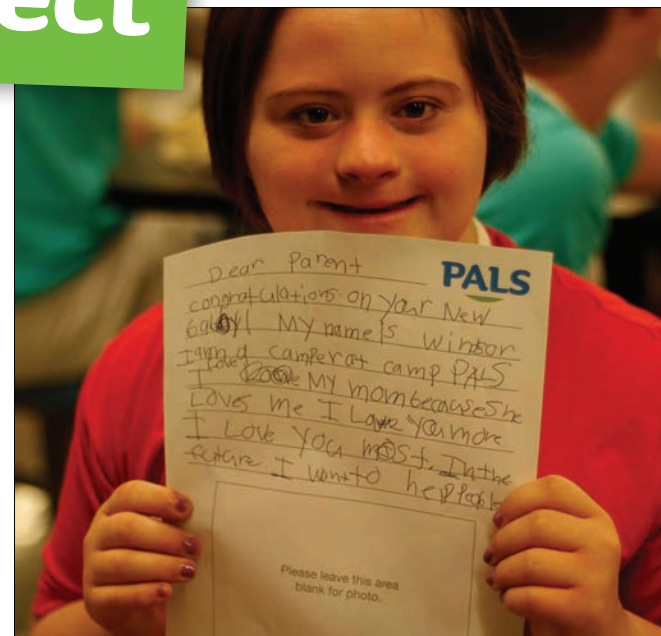
1,440
Letters

1,929
Books

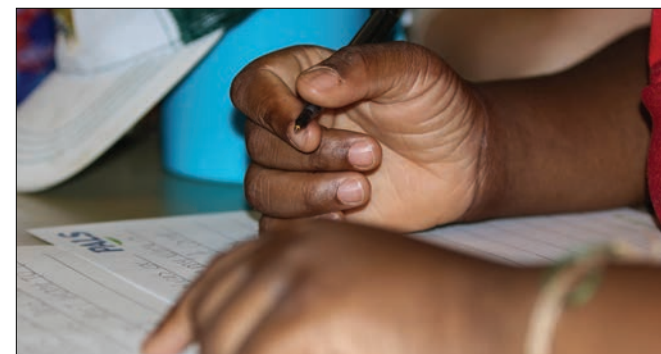
50
States

47
Countries

15
Partnerships

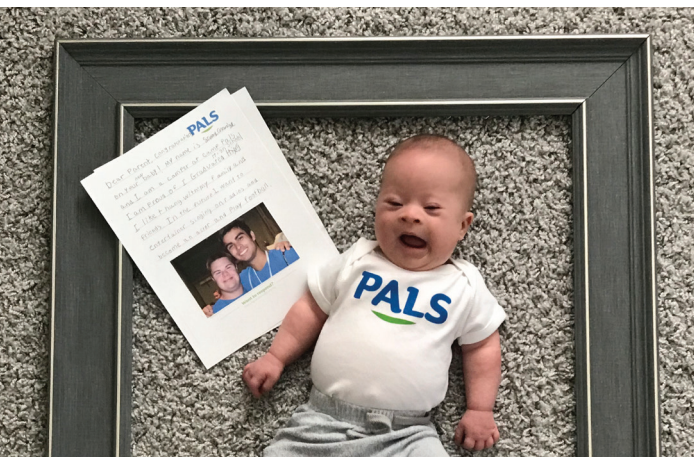


In an era of sweeping restrictions on in-person gatherings and travel, PALS quickly identified one area where we could safely continue to serve the at-large Down syndrome community: The Congratulations Project. This brought connection for new families at a time when they needed it most. From the moment a new family receives their first Congratulations letter, they are welcomed into the PALS family with open arms. This is paramount to building understanding, fostering inclusion, and changing attitudes.



Major Accomplishments of 2020

- Translated letters into the language of the receiving family with the help of volunteers in the PALS community.
- Translated a Congratulations Project letter to American Sign Language (video)
- Families in 50 states and 46 countries read the words “Congratulations” directly from individuals with Down syndrome at PALS.
- Partnered with the organization, Joy 21, to bring 100 Congratulations Project books into hospitals in Northern Ireland.

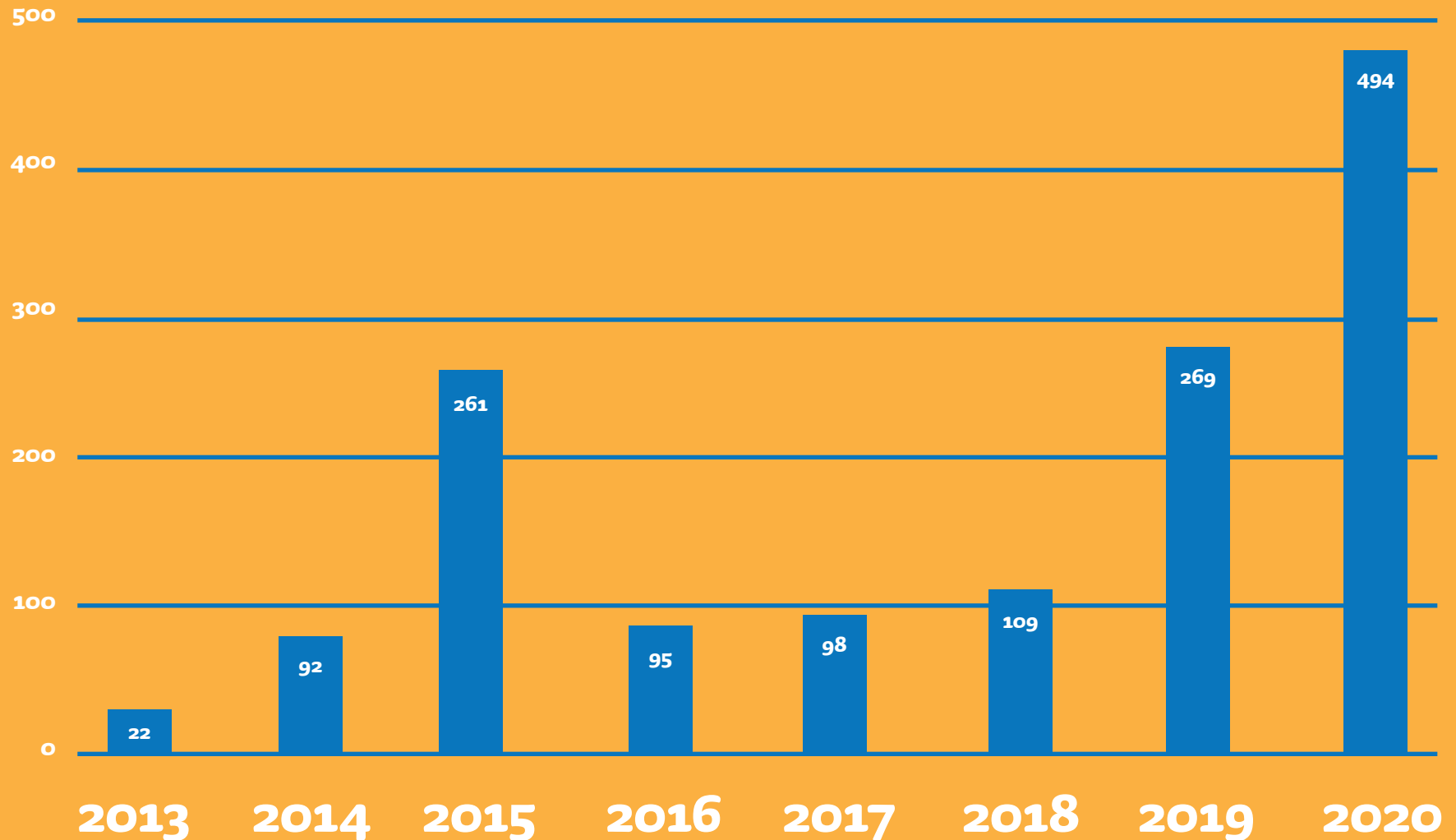


growth

since

2013

Congratulations Project Letters Delivered per year





The Congratulations Project gives us palpable proof of love circulating through this spectacular global community. And we hope some day, through the Congratulations Project, our Baby T will make someone as happy as we were when we received Zack's letter. Thank you for this great gift of love, encouragement, and connection, and for making it work even during these challenging times.

- Congratulations project letter recipient

I have kept our letter of congratulations on our card tree since we got it over three years ago. It was touching and much needed in a time of uncertainty. This is our bundle of joy, Baby L and we love being a part of the PALS program and we are willing to help out other families gain the knowledge and strength to move forward and enjoy everything about their newest family member.

- Congratulations project letter recipient



zoom calls

At the height of the pandemic, a time when our community needed connection more than ever, PALS shifted gears and ventured into the virtual world. We began this journey with our first Zoom call hosted on World Down Syndrome Day with over 300 attendees. After this event everyone wanted more virtual PALS! We created a team of 17 volunteers to fulfil a full summer calendar of weekly, one hour virtual engagement opportunities. In the 2020 summer Zoom season we hosted over 35 calls with hundreds of unique participants, and virtual programs became a brand new programming option within PALS.

One of my favorite parts of virtual programming is getting to meet and connect with folks across the country I wouldn't normally see at camp. It was so much fun to engage with folks from all different camps and participate in our favorite parts of camp together. In a time where we all needed a sense of connection, virtual programming brought connection and so much more!

- PALS Volunteer



a world of belonging

PALS was founded on a mission of inclusion, with the vision of building a world of belonging for all people. Well before the events in the Summer of 2020, PALS made strong commitments to building a more inclusive space for all participants and working towards a community that better represents the communities where we serve. As our country came together in support of the movement for Black Lives in the Summer of 2020, PALS came forward to recommit to the work of anti-racism and to invest time in training for all staff and participants to better understand the history of racial injustice in our country and the role that plays within PALS. Our vision of belonging, although dedicated to those with Down syndrome, must be a vision of unity. PALS is excited to lead our community in the work of celebrating difference and building a brave space where we can all work towards interrupting biases and ensuring that PALS is part of building a world of belonging for ALL people.

Thank you

to these donors who kept the PALS magic alive during a difficult year.

\$5,000+

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\$1,000- \$5,000

Justin Osborne • Kyle Stolarz • Pledgeling Foundation • Jared Culotta & Family • Karen & Bill Matthews • Kelly Roed • Beth Freeman • Yajing Qi • Adelson Family Foundation • Schwab Charitable • Fox & Roach Charities • James and Carolyn Hintlian • John & Lisa Butler • Steve Kernie • American Legion Post 104 • Jeffrey Warmke • Michael Hawes • Derek Weber • Meredith Seigle • Thomas Schulten • Helen Lowenwirth • Nancy Walker Litteken • Edward Fabula • Kaitlin McCall • Celeste McBride • Qiya Hui • Dale L. Reese Foundation • Paul & Pamela DiNicola • Princeton Football Families • Maureene & Brian Abbe • Steven & Jenni Ross • Robyn & Mark Newbury

\$100- \$1,000

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2020

Expenses

2020 Financials

	Programming	Administration	Fundraising	Total
Food	\$28,693	\$25	-	\$28,718
Housing	\$64,858	-	-	\$64,858
Supplies & Apparel	\$30,567	\$7,859	\$30	\$38,456
Travel	\$9,500	\$1,533	\$316	\$11,349
Programming	\$14,472	-	-	\$14,472
Office Expenses	\$14,699	\$9,978	\$17	\$24,694
Insurance	\$9,190	\$1,314	-	\$10,504
Employee Salaries	\$249,131	\$30,730	\$48,794	\$328,655
Employee Benefits & Training	\$2,770	\$17,366	\$1,896	\$22,032
Payroll Taxes	\$22,008	\$1,208	\$4,194	\$27,410
Professional Fees	\$14,075	\$19,800	-	\$33,875
Total	\$459,963	\$89,813	\$55,247	\$605,023

2020

Revenue

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Contributions	\$399,896		\$399,896
Contributions, In-Kind	\$42,703		\$42,703
Grants	\$72,895	\$280,105	\$353,000
Tuition, Net	\$95,150		\$95,150
Misc Income	\$4,409		\$4,409
Investment Returns, Net	\$5,186		\$5,186
Total	\$620,239	\$280,105	\$900,344

2020

Change in Net Assets

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Expenses	\$605,023		\$605,023
Revenue	\$620,239	\$280,105	\$900,344
Net Gain	\$15,216	\$280,105	\$295,321



looking

ahead

We began 2020 heartbroken when suspending our in-person programming. We left the season inspired, fulfilled, proud, and most importantly connected: to each other, to our mission and values, and to PALS.

- PALS Volunteer