

2021



# REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Since it began,  
The Foundation  
has assisted  
3,648 patients.

## Dear Friends of HNC Living,

We are proud to share news of HNC Living Foundation's successes in 2021. We continued to achieve great things alongside continued challenges related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

As you will learn through Charlie's story (page 3), each patient's journey is arduous and complicated. For people with head and neck cancer diagnoses, the challenges can seem never-ending. During 2020 lockdowns, many services and treatments our clients needed were unavailable. Challenges continued throughout 2021 as hospitals and care providers faced rising costs, staff shortages, and needs for more intensive patient care. The added uncertainties complicate HNC Living Foundation's clients' already-heavy burdens.

Thanks to you, our clients find hope. Your support of HNC Living Foundation provides resources that empower people to live life fully throughout their head and neck cancer treatment and recovery.

The celebrated return of signature events — MASKS for AID and our Annual Golf Invitational — raised more than \$350,000 in much-needed funding to help our clients. MASKS for AID was presented virtually in April to over 300 viewers and continues to reach more.

The program featured Melinda's journey from diagnosis to receiving dentures through HNC Living Foundation's partnership with Delta Dental; plus the debut musical performance of "Keep Me Alive," by Kaden, HNC Living's youngest patient ever.

Melinda now works at HNC Living Foundation, assisting with patient grant counseling and follow-up. "Keep Me Alive" has surpassed 60,000 streams and Kaden's music career is growing exponentially. These are just two of the thousands of patients who enjoy fuller, more meaningful lives thanks to resources provided by HNC Living Foundation. Your support for HNC Living makes it possible! Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Puzio".

Danielle Puzio  
Chief Executive Officer

# OUR PEOPLE

## HNC LIVING FOUNDATION STAFF

Danielle Puzio  
*Chief Executive Officer*

Alyssa LaVelle  
*Director of Marketing and Special Events*

Jodi Wilson  
*Director of Grants and Operations*

Melinda Kurtright  
*Patient Resource Coordinator*

## STAFF FEATURE: Melinda Kurtright

In spring 2021, Melinda joined the HNC Living Foundation Team as a Patient Resource Coordinator, after her story was featured in MASKS for AID: Interrupted. During Melinda's journey to receive dentures, her passion for supporting other cancer patients and survivors grew. "I just hope I can provide the reassurance and support that I so needed in the early days of my diagnosis." When patients call HNC Living Foundation for advice, grant information, and more, they will be in the hands of someone who truly understands the weight of their journey. Welcome to the team, Melinda!



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*"I just hope I can provide the reassurance and support that I so needed in the early days of my diagnosis."*

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Visit [hncliving.org/watch](https://hncliving.org/watch)  
to see 2021's MASKS for AID  
at anytime!



# MEET CHARLIE

Too many head and neck cancer patients face financial challenges that are as overwhelming as the cancer itself. Expenses related to medical treatments, therapies, prescriptions, and co-pays often exceed insurance limits —putting a strain on household budgets and relationships. The Martin family knows this struggle well. Charlie and Sheila were in the throes of raising four young children, ranging from 2 to 8, when Charlie was diagnosed with throat cancer.

Rehabilitation and regular follow-up care are key to recovery and long-term health. The Martins' means to afford essential quality-of-life treatments and therapies became limited. As the miles traveling to appointments accumulated on their older minivan, transportation costs took a toll. Sheila began looking for options beyond crowdfunding and handouts. She found HNC Living Foundation through a desperate Google search. The Foundation provided gasoline cards to cover dozens of trips. "Without the cards," Sheila said, "I am sure we would have missed critical radiation appointments."

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*"This Foundation also helped bring a little peace and less stress during a very sad, traumatic time in our lives."*

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Beyond the logistical strain of dealing with head and neck cancer, the disease often affects breathing, eating, drinking, speaking, and the voice. Charlie is nearing completion of radiation treatments and Sheila reports that he is "getting a little better and a little bit stronger" each day. The Martins are forever grateful.

"This Foundation helped bring a little peace and less stress during a very sad, traumatic time in our lives," said Sheila. "I hope to one day soon donate to your Foundation and help others the way you all helped my husband and family."



# HEALER & PATIENT

Dr. Michael Dix, a longtime friend and supporter of HNC Living Foundation, is the dentist who helped lead our founder Teresa Walsh to the right specialists to uncover her cancer diagnosis. Dr. Dix has been a valued member of our community and has served on HNC Living Foundation's Grant Review Committee since its inception.

In 2021, Dr. Dix became a head and neck cancer patient himself.

"This diagnosis has only strengthened my resolve and passion to support patients who battle [this] cancer with limited resources. I saw and treated the effects of this disease throughout my career in dentistry, but nothing could prepare me for the debilitating effects of my own treatment and recovery."

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*"This diagnosis has only strengthened my resolve and passion to support patients who battle [this] cancer with limited resources."*

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HNC Living Foundation has served over 3,600 patients across 44 states. Much of this is thanks to the more than 2,000 donations by generous HNC Living supporters. If you would like to donate, please visit [hncliving.org](https://hncliving.org).



# OUR BOARDS

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Teresa Walsh, *Chairman and Co-Founder*

Thomas J. Walsh, *President and Co-Founder*

Rachel Cannon, *Treasurer*

Janice Benjamin, *Director*

Banks Floodman, *Director*

Gail Gottlieb, *Director*

Monica Nguyen-Francis, *Director*

Mandy Roe, *Director*

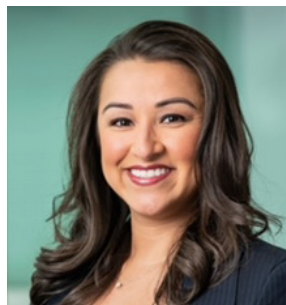
Brad Scott, *Director*

Dr. Terry Tsue, *Director*

Kristin Tyson, *Director*

Bill White, *Director*

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### **NEW BOARD MEMBER:** Monica Nguyen-Francis

Marketing and communications professional Monica Nguyen-Francis first engaged with HNC Living Foundation in 2018 as a donor at MASKS for AID. Eight months later, Monica learned first-hand how head and neck cancer devastates a family. Her father was diagnosed with stage 4-A squamous cell carcinoma of the mouth. As a patient-advocate, Monica adds true-life perspective on patient needs as well as the benefits HNC Living provides.



### **NEW BOARD MEMBER:** Kristin Tyson

Kristin Tyson serves as President of Kansas City Bank at CrossFirst Bank. She brings 37 years of experience in business, private, and consumer banking that spans a variety of industries. She serves on several boards and is cofounder of a benefit golf tournament for University of Kansas Hospital.



## IN MEMORY: Marjorie Smelstor

Marjorie Smelstor, HNC Living Foundation Board Member, passed away October 30, 2021. We are grateful for her friendship, support, and leadership. A steadfast leader and champion of HNC Living Foundation, Marge was a tireless patient advocate for years. Her personal journey with cancer helped shape the foundation's grant-making policies from a place of empathy for what cancer patients endure. Marge's presence will be greatly missed. Her memory will live on through each patient we serve.

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## MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD

Brian Burkey, MD, FACS  
*Cleveland Clinic Head and Neck Institute*

Mark Chambers, DMD, MD  
*The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center*

Bruce Cummings, DDS  
*Prosthodontist*

D. Gregory Farwell, MD, FACS  
*Department of Otorhinolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery, University of Pennsylvania*

Dennis H. Kraus, MD, FACS  
*Centura Health*

William Lydiatt, MD  
*Methodist Estabrook Cancer Center*

Terance Tsue, MD, FACS  
*University of Kansas Cancer Center*

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## NEW MEDICAL ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER: Laine Bowman

Laine Bowman has been a practicing occupational therapist for more than 30 years and is the Therapy Team leader for the Pelvic Health and Lymphedema Clinic at The University of Kansas Health System. She specializes in oncology rehabilitation and lymphedema management for head and neck cancer survivors. Laine is passionate about improving the quality of life from long-term effects of head and neck cancer treatment.



HNC Living Foundation has spent \$1,090,636 on specialized dental care for head and neck cancer patients.

# ENGAGE WITH HNC

## HNC HIGH DESERT INVITATIONAL | OCTOBER 3–5, 2022

The HNC High Desert Invitational is a luxury golf tournament hosted over two days in picturesque Santa Fe, New Mexico. October 3–5, 2022, this prestigious tournament will offer a premium experience for golfers and their guests, including top-shelf food and beverage experiences, exceptional company, and options to explore Santa Fe. Learn more information and to register, please visit [hncliving.org/hncgolf](https://hncliving.org/hncgolf).

## VIRTUAL MASKS FOR AID | MAY 15, 2022

HNC Living Foundation's signature event, MASKS for AID, incorporates visual, culinary, and performing arts to raise funds to support those living with head and neck cancer. All proceeds benefit patient services. The 2021 virtual event raised more than \$250,000 that directly met patient needs. Watch for more information and registration at [hncliving.org/MASKS](https://hncliving.org/MASKS).







HNC Living Foundation  
has provided more than  
24,000 trips to and from  
treatment.

## **VOLUNTEER + ADVOCATE**

Your knowledge of HNC Living Foundation has the power to give others hope! Cancer is close to all of us. When you hear of a person's head and neck cancer diagnosis, will you tell them about HNC Living Foundation? Funds available for individual head and neck cancer patients, including criteria for consideration, application process, and other available resources are at [hncliving.org/for-patients/apply-for-financial-assistance](https://hncliving.org/for-patients/apply-for-financial-assistance).

## **FOLLOW + SHARE: @HNCLiving**

Like, follow, and share @HNCLiving content on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. When you share our posts, events, and stories on social media our mission is introduced to multitudes who may need our services.



# HNC IN 2021



174 people helped

132 NEW patients



\$1,058

spent per patient

\$255,000

in NEW Dental Grants Received



## 2021 Individual Assistance

\$184,077



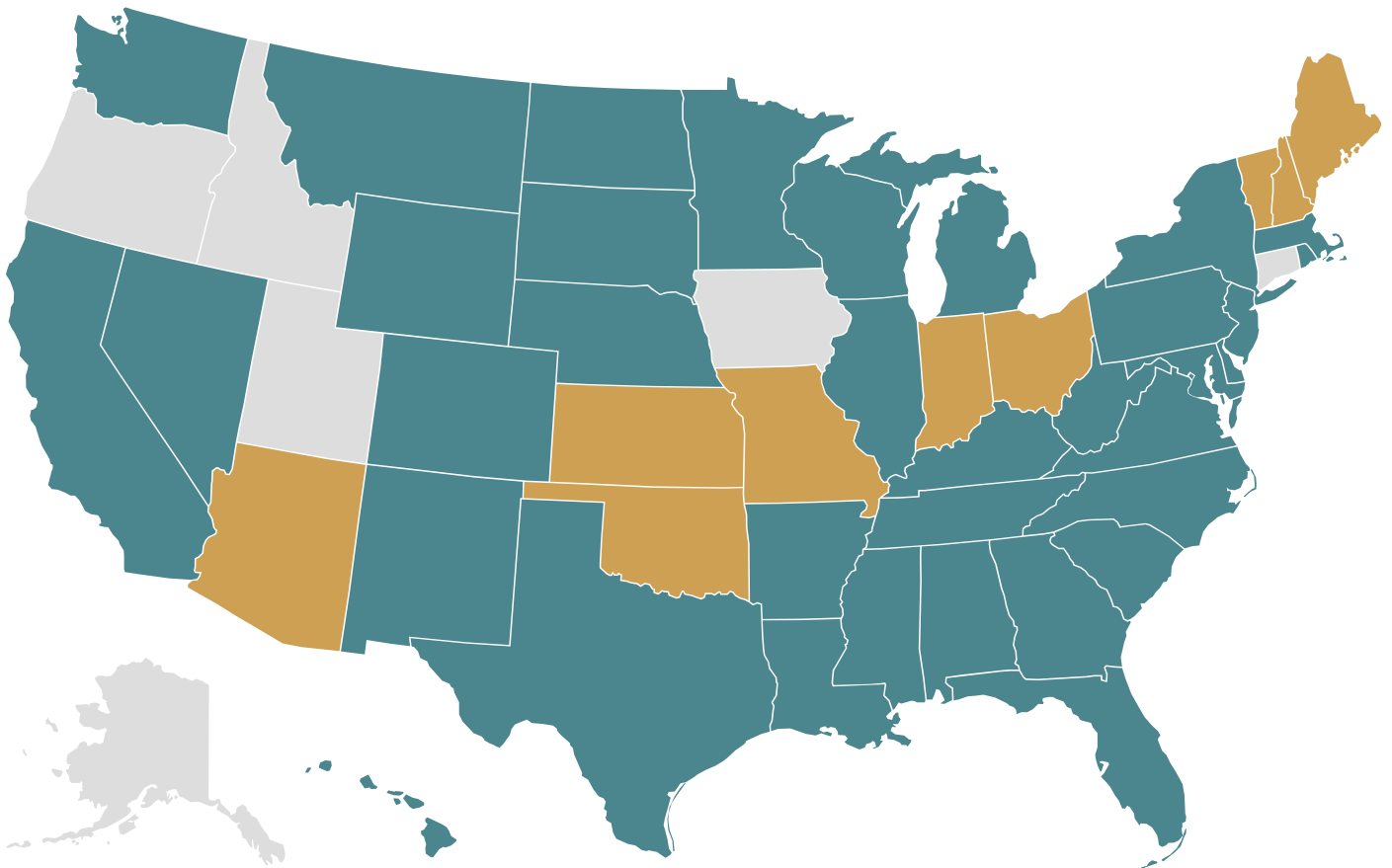
Dental Care	\$163,101 (89%)
Prescriptions	\$250 (0.1%)
Nutritional Supplements	\$6,593 (3.6%)
Displacement	\$11,680 (6.3%)
Equipment	\$2,237 (1%)
Copays Deductibles Therapies	\$216 (0.1%)

26%  
saved in  
negotiated  
discounts,  
\$53,604  
in savings



# ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Generous grants from partners across the country allow HNC Living Foundation to provide nationwide services. We have proudly provided financial assistance to over 3,600 patients across 44 states.



*States with Delta Dental partnerships allow HNC Living Foundation to provide patients with expert dental care related to their cancer diagnosis.*

*States HNC Living Foundation has provided patients with resources from gas cards and nutritional supplements to dental treatments, and beyond.*

## NEW DENTAL GRANTS FOR 2021:

Delta Dental of Oklahoma - \$50,000

Delta Dental of Kansas - \$100,000

Delta Dental of Arizona - \$25,000

Delta Dental of South Carolina - \$25,000

Delta Dental Foundation (IN, OH, MI) - \$50,000

New England Delta Dental (VT, ME, NH) \$5,000

HNC Living Foundation has granted \$1,810,796 since 2014 to support patient care.



**EMAIL:** [info@hncliving.org](mailto:info@hncliving.org)

**PHONE:** 913-402-6028

**WEB:** [hncliving.org](http://hncliving.org)

HNC Living Foundation is an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to helping head and neck cancer patients live life fully during and after treatment by providing financial aid. Grants fund services and programs that directly benefit head and neck cancer patients, supporting their treatment and recovery.

