

Stepping Forward

Annual Report
2022



Dear Friends,

In reflecting on 2022, it was the year that solidified Step Up Parents as a critical resource for grandparents and other relative caregivers who have stepped up to raise children so profoundly impacted by parental substance misuse. What began in 2019 as a call to action to help one New Hampshire family is now a financial safety net for kinship caregivers throughout the state.

With historical inflation, we saw an increase in applications and the amount of assistance requested in 2022. Many of our kinship caregivers live on fixed incomes with no ability to absorb higher costs. Proudly and thankfully, we have successfully fulfilled 100% of requests that meet our mission. Because of our generous donors, we have been able to answer the call of deserving kinship families for the last four years. Our organization has experienced exponential growth since its inception and has kept pace with investments in our growth and long-term sustainability. Last year we hired our first Executive Director and expanded our Board of Directors, all of whom bring significant expertise to their roles.

Our greatest joy, and the reason why we do what we do, is the heartfelt and touching gratitude from our families. They inspire our mission and motto, "Even Heroes Need a Hand." From the largest to the smallest assist, we know and hear what that small act means to a struggling family. So many of the caregivers we have helped are not only grateful for the bill we may have paid, but for the fact that they're not alone. This validation is priceless. What they do each day for the children now in their care is truly amazing and selfless. Step Up Parents is committed to honoring their efforts, preserving their dignity, and responding to their immediate needs, and it is our pleasure to help them.

Respectfully,



Denyse Richter
Executive Director

Board of Directors

- Jennifer DuChene
- Steven Morrissey
- Pam Brazeau
- Linda Sanborn
- Candie Wright
- Deb Anthony



Our kinship families

In 2022, Step Up Parents saw a tremendous increase in demand for our programming, with a 55% increase in the number of families assisted and a 91% increase in direct assistance given, well exceeding our goal and expectations. With so many of our constituent families living on fixed incomes, we recognize that it is especially difficult for them to pay for basic needs in the face of rising costs. In response, we increased our annual cap on financial assistance per family. Many kinship caregivers take on a lifetime commitment to the children in their care and reapply for assistance each year. We are happy to be a reliable resource for them. We have now assisted kinship families in all ten New Hampshire counties and 110 towns or cities.



164
families helped



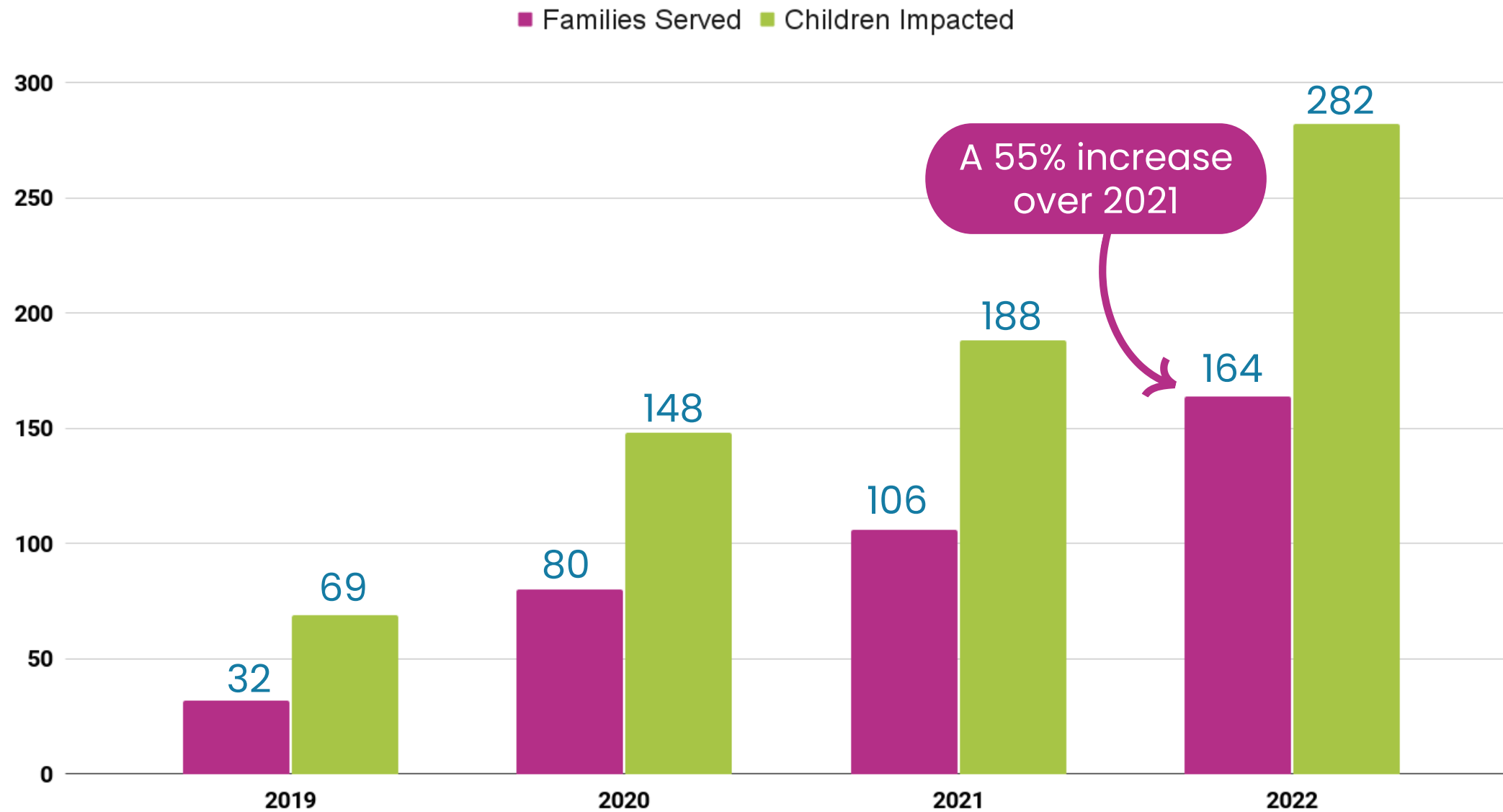
282
kinship kids
impacted

\$101,195
given in
assistance



Lending a hand

Families and Children Impacted by Step Up Parents



We helped with...

- Utility bills
- Groceries
- Housing costs
- Daycare
- Vehicle repairs
- Music lessons
- Sports teams
- Medical bills

And more

Since our mission began, Step Up Parents has helped 382 families and impacted 687 kids.

Shining a Spotlight

Working collaboratively with our local community partners is critical to our outreach and programming. In 2022, we increased our network of referring partners, our "validators," who provide the initial interface with kinship families and refer three-quarters of our families to us. Our validators include the New Hampshire Kinship Navigators, DCYF, family resource centers, health centers, schools, city and town welfare and human services departments, and other social service agencies. We are grateful for these working relationships, which have enabled us to expand quickly throughout the state and, most importantly, to reach and serve deserving kinship families.



Shannon Lavertu, pictured left and on the cover of Parable Magazine, is one of Step Up Parents' community validators. She is a Kinship Navigator with NH Children's Trust's Kinship Navigator Program, which links grandparents and other family caregivers with resources and support groups.

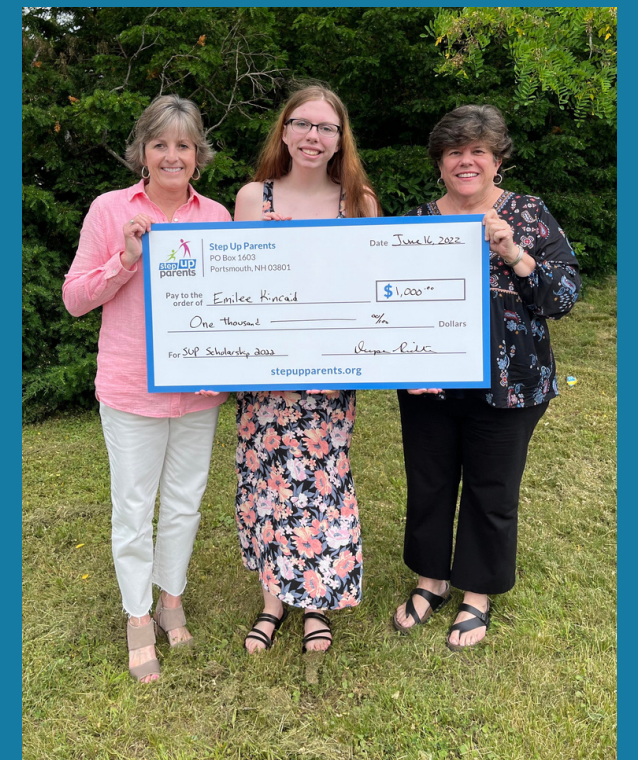
"Step Up Parents makes our families feel like they matter. They truly make them feel valued and special," Shannon said.

Shannon is a kinship caregiver herself. She is raising her two grandnephews, pictured with her on the Parable cover, along with two adopted sons.



Parable Magazine, published by the Diocese of New Hampshire, did an extensive feature article addressing the challenges and needs of the growing number of kinship families in northern New England. We were thrilled to be the impetus for the article and help shed light on these heroes among us.

Emilee Kincaid, a deserving Rochester student being raised by her aunt, was awarded our second annual college scholarship. Good luck to Emilee in all her future endeavors!



In their own words

"The boys are our family's everything. Keeping them safe and watching them blossom is my biggest blessing."

—Naomi, a grandmother raising her two grandsons. We helped her with legal fees to support her fight to keep the boys in her care.



"We are raising three of our eight grandchildren, an 11-year-old boy and two girls, 8 and 7. Their parents passed away from substance use disorder. It is wonderful programs like yours that make what could be a painful situation doable."

—Karen, a grandmother who, with her husband, adopted three of her grandchildren when their parents, now deceased, lost parental rights. We helped the family with a car payment.



"My sister and I were always so close even though our lives were so different. We love each other's kids and she was the best person in the world to laugh with. I am broken without her but would never dream of doing anything but trying to help her kids. I love them."

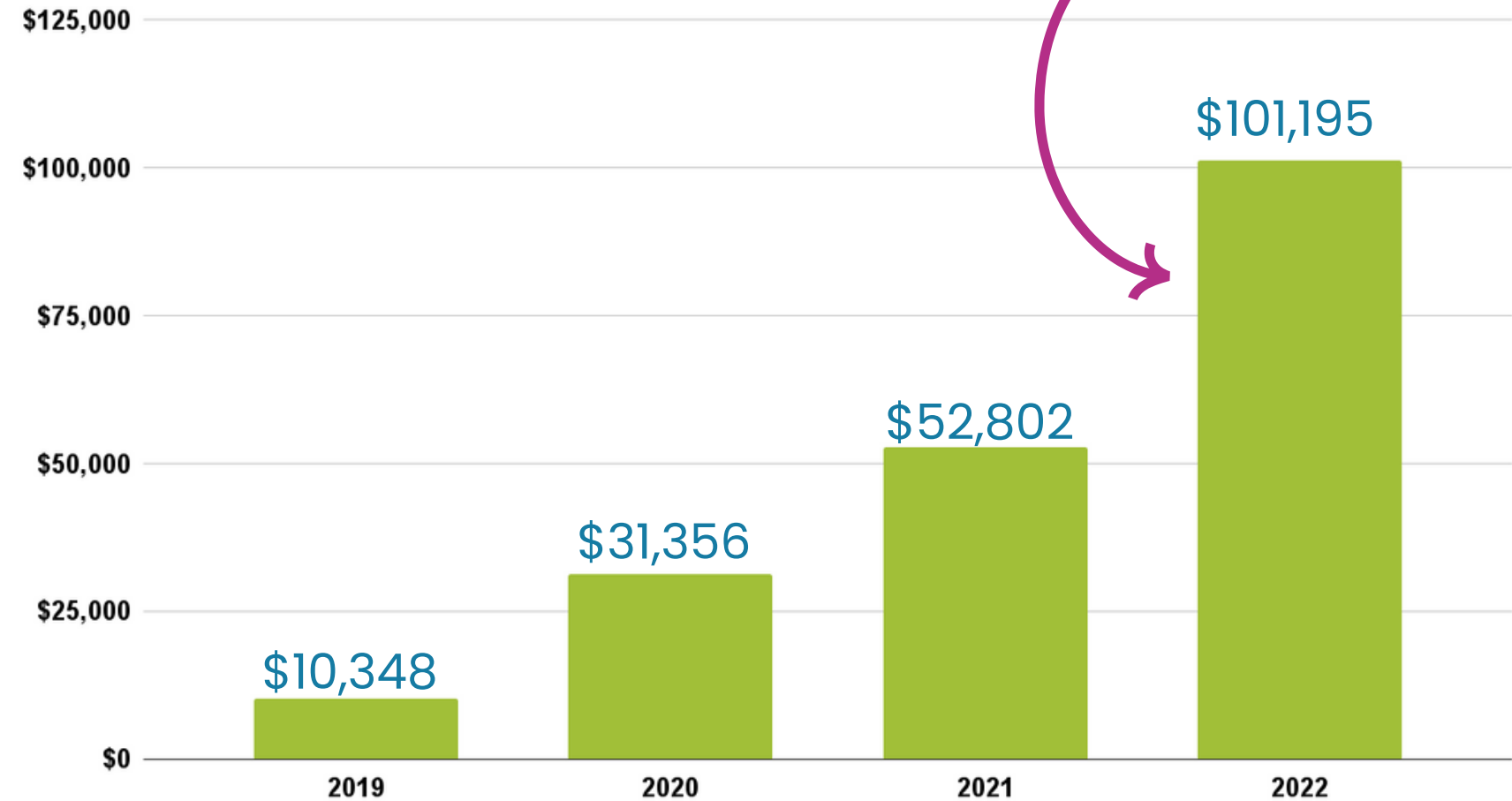
—Melissa, an aunt who took in her sister's two children when she tragically passed away from substance use disorder. At the time, Melissa was in recovery from major back surgery and struggling financially. We provided her with a gift card to purchase new clothes for the kids.



Finances

Since we began helping kinship families, we have answered the call of every family whose situation aligns with our mission. In 2022, Step Up Parents hired an Executive Director, made possible by capacity-building and sustainability funding. Step Up Parents is profoundly grateful to all its donors in the increasingly competitive landscape for charitable giving. Many have been with us from the beginning and enabled us to start our mission. Our work is made possible by our generous supporters and their belief in what we do.

Direct Assistance Given to Families



Revenue

Grants	\$111,575
Individual	\$23,105
Events	\$19,730
Corporate	\$12,385
Other	\$4,500

Total: \$171,295

Expenses

Direct Assistance & Programming	\$122,380
Fundraising & Administrative	\$30,912

Total: \$153,292

Thank you to our generous donors, big and small! You make our work possible.



Here are some of Step Up Parents' community, corporate, and foundation partners in 2022.

NH Charitable Foundation

Spinning Generosity

Neil and Louise Tillotson Foundation

Foundation of Seacoast Health

Award reception with Governor Sununu at Portsmouth Elks 97

Rotary Club of Portsmouth

Kennebunk Savings Bank Spotlight Fund

Service Credit Union

Meredith Village Savings Bank