

# 2018 Annual Report



GRAHAMTASTIC  
CONNECTION

[www.grahamtastic.org](http://www.grahamtastic.org)



**20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY**



# ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR "OUR 20TH ANNIVERSARY"

**W**ow, what a 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary YEAR this has been! We launched 2018 with a full plate of activities and a continued focus on improving and advancing support of our children and their families-and the year never slowed down.

We did take a pause early in the year to gather with long-time supporters, donors, volunteers and some of the kiddos we've supported over the past 20 years to celebrate accomplishments and success stories, to reflect fondly on those no longer with us, but still a part of us, and to re-energize for the years to come. Thank you to all who joined us in celebration and to those who have supported Grahamtastic Connection in so many ways over the years.

As I look back on 2018 and on the past 20 years, it is amazing to look at the number of children we have been able to support and to see how the ways in which we offer support have evolved. Gone are the days of me lugging a desktop computer to a child's doorstep. Now I'm sending robots down school hallways on their behalf! Please be sure to read through the pages that follow in this

annual report for more exciting details.

I remain humbled by the recognition Grahamtastic Connection has gar-



nered this year. As you may recall, we started the year just as I'd been honored as a Top 10 CNN Hero of the Year for 2017, which led to some wonderful press for the organization and some time well spent in non-profit advancement training. Spring brought an appearance on the Today Show for a Mother's Day Special honoring Moms who give back and related articles across the Women's Day publication network.

Fall brought the opportunity to participate in the annual Lonza Harvest golf tournament, where we were one of two non-profits to receive over \$40,000 in donations. As I write this, we are in the final days of 2018



**Lonza Tournament**

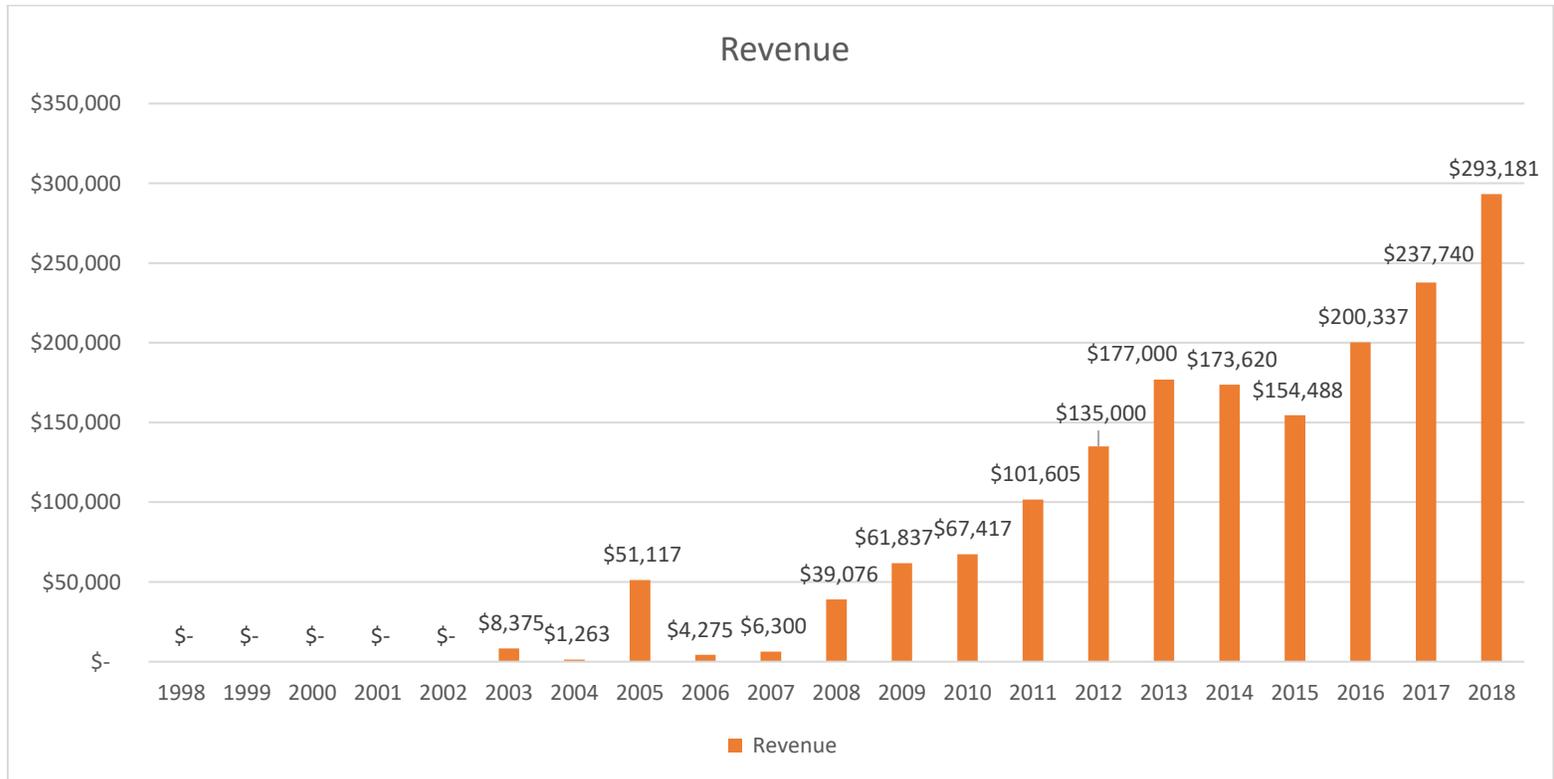
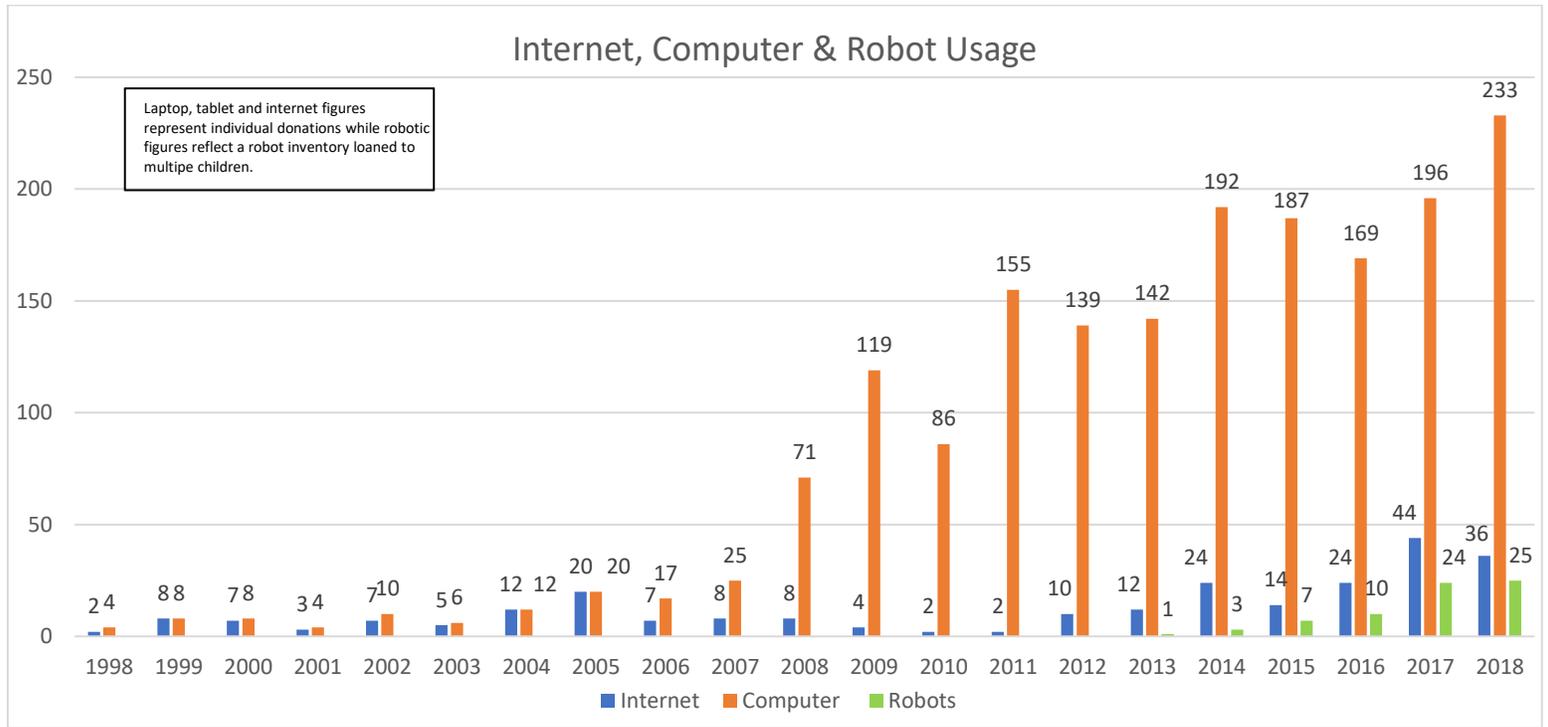
and deep in conversation with new corporations and foundations interested in partnering with Grahamtastic Connection.

As you know, I started this organization in honor of my son Graham and his brave battle. As I look forward, I remain committed to helping other children until medical advancements wipe out the need. I thank you for your continued support of that mission, for your donations, time and friendship and for your love of our children.

Now, let's go see what comes after robots!

*Leslie Moissette*





# ABOUT GRAHAMTASTIC CONNECTION

Our mission is to provide free technology to children with cancer and other serious illnesses for educational purposes. Technology, including iPads, laptops, robots, and internet access, enables our children to continue their education during treatment while also remaining connected to family, friends and medical providers.



This technology is virtually bringing them to the places they want to be and connecting them when their world is out of reach.

The organization was founded in 1998 by Leslie Morissette in honor of her son, Graham, who sadly lost his battle to cancer in 1997 at the age of 8. Leslie learned first-hand what it was like to spend months at a time in the hospital while her son was in cancer treatment at Maine Children's Cancer Program and Boston Children's Hospital. One of the key needs during such times, and the inspiration behind Grahamtastic Connection, is to

remain connected to school, to family and to friends during extended periods of isolation. Often this access is out of reach due to medical and financial limitations.

The program started by supporting six qualified children in 1998, providing them with computers and internet access. This enabled them to continue their education while being treated and to communicate with family members and



friends. Today, we are proud to have supported over 1,800 individual children receiving treatment at children's hospitals across the country. Additionally, thousands of ill children have utilized our computers placed in shared areas in hospitals and clinics.

Abby Snyder, Classroom teacher at Barbara Bush Children's Hospital in Portland Maine writes, "Being diagnosed with cancer is an extremely life altering and stressful

*event for both patient and their family. Many kids are hospitalized for weeks at a time, ending up missing countless days of school. The iPads and laptops*



*Grahamtastic provide allow kids to stay connected with their home classrooms. They are used for research, video chats and for creating documents for school assignments. I also had the absolute pleasure of working with several patients who were able to attend school virtually through a Grahamtastic robot. Thank you again and again."*



# OUR CURRENT PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

- PLACING COMPUTERS in medical facilities where they are accessible to hundreds of children.
- PROVIDING COMPUTERS to individual patients for contact and interactive learning with online learning programs and schools.
- SUPPLYING ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY in a patient's school, allowing them to move around their classroom, walk up and down the school hallways, attend assemblies and field trips and interact with their teachers

and peers from their hospital bed or home.



*Brooklyn Prince, Child Actor*

- OFFERING FREE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS.
- SPONSORING OUR "KIDS HELPING KIDS" PROGRAM, where teenage students provide technical support to Grahamtastic Connection while learning valuable skills and the importance of helping those who are less fortunate.

# RECOGNITION

2018: Today Show Mother's Day Special featured guest

2018: Tourist & Town "Local Heroes" featured story

2018: Woman's World, Redbook, Good Housekeeping & Woman's Day articles published

2017: Top 10 CNN Hero

2017: Huffington Post, "5 Innovators Creating Human Connection Through Technology"

2017: Maine's 20 Outstanding Women, Maine's Coast 93.1 and Hannaford Supermarkets

2014: Town and Country Federal Credit Union "Good Neighbor Award."

2012: Toyota 100 Cars for Good. Winner of a Toyota Highlander.

2011: Parent's Magazine, August issue "Power of Parents."

2009: John Baldacci, Maine Governor "Exemplary Service Award."

2008: Guest on CNBC's "The Big Idea" with Danny Deutsch

2006: WCSH, United Way and TD Bank's "Six Who Care Award."



*Leslie and Phillip with Dannika on robot!*



# 2018 HIGHLIGHTS

As of December 31, 2018 Grahamtastic, Connection has supported 1,847 children since the program began in 1998. During the



year, we delivered 233 pieces of technology (laptops, iPads and robots) to individual children and another 5 to facilities where hundreds of children are able to utilize them.

2018 marks the 6th year that we have provided free tele-presence robots for hospitalized or



homebound children. We increased our robot fleet to 21, with 25 children using them this year and 55 children using them since our first robot acquisition. To our knowledge, we are, proudly, the only non-profit in the country providing this service to sick children.

With the tremendous amount of national recognition on both CNN



and NBC this year, we saw a steady increase of donations but also a large increase in requests for our services. Immediately after the show, our requests increased by 60%, leading to an overall increase of 22% in 2018 over 2017. To help manage our rapid growth, we hired a part-time employee in December as our new Program Coordinator.

As part of the CNN Hero prize, in February our Executive Director

Leslie Morissette and Board President Donna Perkins were invited to attend a complimentary 4-day Non-Profit intense training at the Annenberg Foundation (Alchemy Training) in California. During the training Donna and Leslie learned from experienced non-profit leaders who are highly regarded in their fields of expertise. This world-renowned training brought positive change to how Grahamtastic operates, teaching us how to work smarter, not just harder. We returned home to share our learnings with our Board of Directors and Volunteers, enabling all of us to grow from this opportunity and put our newfound knowledge and energy to work on behalf of Grahamtastic.



Wireless Zone!



# 2018 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES



## Events Held by Grahamtastic Connection

- ❖ March 24 20th Anniversary Celebration
- ❖ October 21 The Eight Annual Run/Walk



## Events Held on Behalf of Grahamtastic Connection

- ❖ January 25 Marshwood Great Works Elementary School Pancake Breakfast
- ❖ February 18 Sweet Frog Frozen Yogurt Fundraiser
- ❖ March 4 Ethan Wadell's ½ Marathon & Fundraiser
- ❖ March 28 Guest Speaker York Rotary Club
- ❖ April 12 Guest Speaker Career Day, Kennebunk High School
- ❖ May 17 Guest Speaker MCCC Board of Directors
- ❖ May 21 Keynote Speaker Berwick Academy Innovation Celebration
- ❖ July 14 Southern Maine ATV Club Ride & Fundraiser
- ❖ July 24 Sanford Mainer's Baseball Game
- ❖ September 13 Lonza Harvest Golf Tournament
- ❖ September 26 Gwen and Chris Genest Meet & Greet
- ❖ September 29 Great Pumpkin Bake Sale with Town Square Reality Group
- ❖ October 9 Keynote Speaker -20 Amazing Woman Awards
- ❖ October 12 Keynote Speaker- SHLB (School, Hospitals, Libraries, Broadband Coalition) Conference
- ❖ November 5 Keynote Speaker-Sanford High School Key club



*Deliah!*



# STAFF AND SUPPORT

Staff:

Leslie Morissette, Founder and Executive Director  
Kathy Tranchemontagne, Program Coordinator

Volunteer Board of Directors:

*Executive Committee:*

Donna Perkins, Ph.D. – President, Director  
Beth Brown - Vice President, Director  
Shannon Troop-Smith - Treasurer

Directors:

Terri Bronder  
Kimberlee Caron  
Lory Chase  
William Frank, MD  
Kimberly LaChance  
Lori Laurendeau  
Nanci Nason  
Lawrence O'Bryan  
Denise Pepin  
Taryn Southard  
Sharlene Troop

Advisory Board:

Robert Caron  
Dan Cummings  
Melody Martin-Robie  
Vanessa Nason  
Bruce Wooding



Additional Volunteers:

Beauchesne Family  
Morissette Family  
Morrell Family  
Favolise Family  
Heather Thomas (Web-design)  
Sanford High Key Club Students  
Sanford Regional Technical  
Center Students & Instructor,  
Rebecca Test.

