

2021 Annual Report



GRAHAMTASTIC
CONNECTION

www.grahamtastic.org



Dedicated in memory of Philip Joseph Lippolis III
April 25 2006-April 6, 2021

ANNUAL LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MY HERO, PHILIP JOSEPH LIPPOLIS III

I dedicate this Annual Report to Philip, one of the sweetest, kindest and bravest heroes I have ever met.

In 2017, while I was being honored as a CNN Hero, I received a request to support a child named Philip. At that time, Philip was eleven years old and had recently relapsed from the Leukemia he had begun fighting when he was five years old. He was being treated by the medical team at Dana Farber in Boston. Philip was interested in receiving an iPad, internet access and a tele-presence robot in order to stay connected to his school as he faced a bone marrow transplant and missing his entire 5th grade school year. We were fortunate to have the ability to support Philip with this requested technology.

When the Producers of CNN Heroes requested to film me supporting some of our children, I asked Philip and his family if they were open to being on camera. Philip's family immediately agreed expressing their desire to give back to a program that meant so much to Philip, a program that allowed him to stay connected to his world.

I met Philip in person for first time during the CNN Hero filming. As I walked past the same room Graham had his transplant in on my way to meet Philip, I held back

the tears remembering the many months my son Graham had spent on the bone marrow transplant floor battling his Leukemia too. It was a full circle moment for me.

The filming went well, and Philip appeared in the video CNN aired showcasing our work here at Grahamtastic Connection. I quickly developed a friendship with Philip and although I couldn't continue to visit him in person because of his immune system, he often called into one of the other robots in our office to say hello. We also spoke on the phone for hours at a time.

When CNN inquired who my "+1" would be for the CNN Hero Allstar Tribute in New York City, it was an easy answer for me, "Philip."



The time we had together in NYC, along with his family, will always be dear to my heart. When it was time for the All-star Tribute to begin, I watched Philip while he sat, proudly dressed in his tuxedo with a huge smile on his face. During the tribute, Anderson Cooper asked Philip to stand up. When he stood, the room gave him a standing ovation and the entire world was introduced to him that evening.

Philip and I maintained our friendship over the years. His family brought him to our Annual Dance & Auction events. When he couldn't attend one of these events in person, he attended remotely by robot, affectionally named, "Philbot". Philip became "the face" of Grahamtastic and would often accompany me and our Board of Directors (via robot) to our various fundraising events.

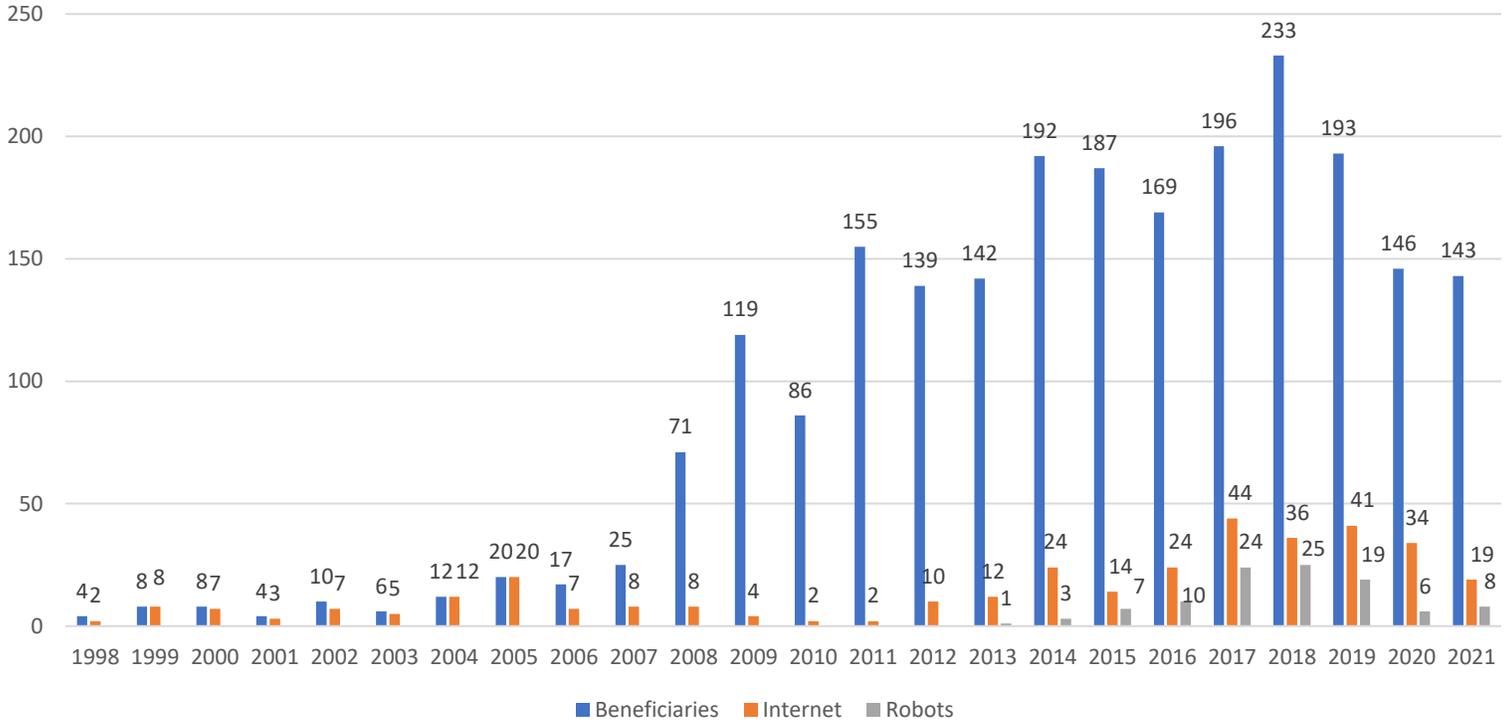
Sadly, Philip's Leukemia returned in 2021, and there were no more treatment options available. My young hero friend Philip lost his battle April 6th 2021.

As I reflect on the many, many challenges 2021 brought, the challenge of losing such a sweet friend as Philip was amongst the most difficult. As I look ahead to 2022 and beyond, I can only hope we can bring joy to many more dear children like Philip who in return bring joy to myself as well as all of our Grahamtastic team.

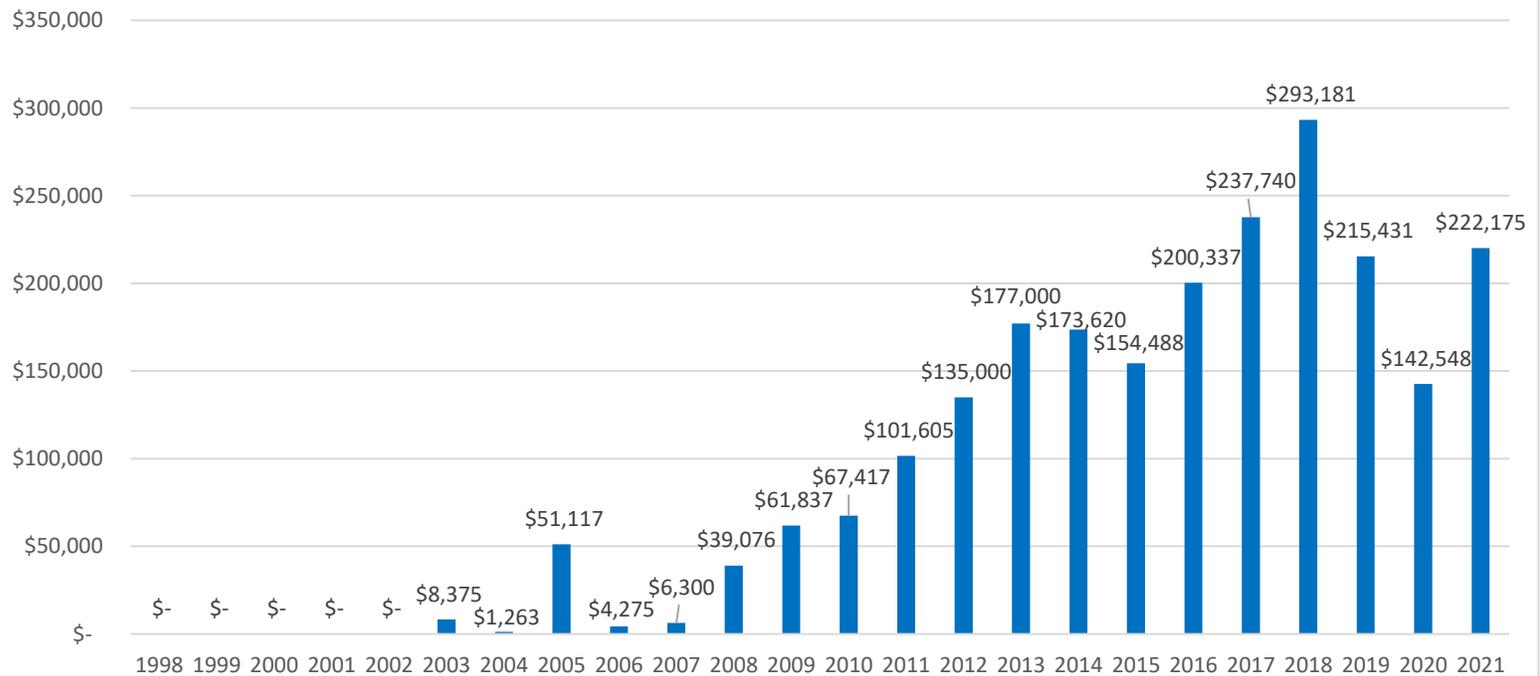
Leslie Morissette

Leslie Morissette,
Founder/Executive Director

Beneficiaries, Internet & Robots Supported



Revenue



ABOUT GRAHAMTASTIC CONNECTION

Our mission is to provide free technology to children with cancer and other serious illnesses to support their education, as well as their social and emotional well-being. 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. This connection is especially vital during this time of COVID isolation.

During this year, we supported 143 children with free technology. Each child supported receives a Backpack of Joy containing a laptop or iPad with OtterBox case



Miya displaying her Backpack of Joy

and wonderful accessories such as a homemade quilt, stuffed animal, toy, art supplies and a book.

This year marks the 9th year that we have provided free tele-presence robots for hospitalized or homebound children with 8 children utilizing our robots this year. We have had a total of 66 children using them since our first robot acquisition. We were an early leader in providing this service to sick children.

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 2,346 children with cancer and other serious illnesses, with 353 children receiving internet access as well. Additionally, thousands of ill children have utilized our computers placed in shared areas in hospitals and clinics.



William gives a thumbs up!

OUR CURRENT PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

- Advocating, proactively, at the local, state and federal level for critical measures and action plans focused on closing the Digital Divide and ending Digital Inequality for all children across our country.
- Placing computers in medical facilities where they are accessible to hundreds of children.
- Providing laptops or iPads to individual patients for contact with clinics and interactive learning with schools.
- Supplying robotic technology in patients' schools, allowing seriously ill children 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 room or home in real time.



Phoenix enjoying her laptop, our 110th recipient of the Steven M Perez Foundation

- Providing high-speed Internet access to families with seriously ill children.
- Sponsoring our "Kids Helping Kids" Program, in which children of all ages support Grahamtastic Connection while learning valuable skills and the importance of helping those who are less fortunate.
- Supporting Computer Technology Curriculums by seeking opportunities to collaborate with career-bound and college students who work on our technical issues and repair of our laptops, iPads and robots. These students are not only solving real life technical challenges, but also are completing community service required from their schools.

RECOGNITION

- 2020: FCC Digital Opportunity Equity Recognition (DOER) Award
- 2019: Down East Magazine Giving Back Issue featured Non-profit
- 2019: On the Marsh Golf Course Charity Give-back Month of June
- 2019: Turbocam Laptop Drive & Charity Spotlight Month of July
- 2019: Marc Motors Charity Spotlight Month of August
- 2019: Prime Motor Group Charity Spotlight Month of October
- 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."



Laiken delivering her donated art kits Leslie (l), Laiken (c) and Kathy (R)

2021 FUNDRAISING EVENTS

December - Holiday Trail of Lights

Dennis family decorated their home for Grahamtastic

\$525 was raised

October - Jason Bigonia runs Last Man Standing Ultramarathon

Jason ran 208 miles in 48 hours for Grahamtastic

\$3,010 was raised

October - Virtual Challenge Event

Virtual Event: Run, Walk, Bike, Hike, Swim

\$26,472.40 was raised

October - Pete Harrison's Run for the Kids

Pete ran Mt. Agamenticus 50K in 9 hours

\$3,275 was raised

October - Ray Lauk runs Chicago Marathon

Ray completed the Chicago Marathon in 7 hours

\$2,645 was raised

September - Cornhole Tournament & Auction

Hosted by Jane & Dan Archambault of Pine Ridge Camping Ground

\$7,000 was raised



Virtual Challenge Event



Jason, Last Man Standing Ultramarathon



Pete Harrison at the Finish Line!



Pine Ridge Campground



Ray Lauk, Chicago Marathon

STAFF AND SUPPORT

Staff:

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

Volunteer Board of Directors:

Executive Committee:

Beth Brown, President, Director
William Frank, MD, Vice-President, Director
Gwen Bedell Gadbois, Treasurer, Director
Denise Pepin, Secretary, Director

Directors:

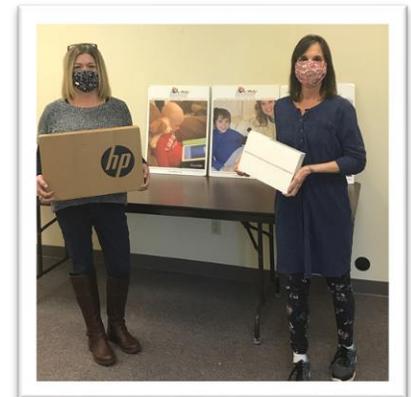
Kimberlee Caron
Gwen Genest
Kimberly Lachance
Lori Laurendeau
Nanci Nason
Lawrence O'Bryan
Matt Wirth
Adam Quinlan

Advisory Board:

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

Additional Volunteers:

Christine Beaudoin
Sue Matthews
Heather Thomas (Web-design)
Donna Temm & student, Laiken
Carol Matheson
Bobbi Macrum
Tessier Family
Mary Francis Frank
Priscilla Parisien
Darlene Burns
Favolise Family
Avery Morissette
Konnor Simons



Leslie Morissette, Founder/Executive Director, (R) with Kathy Tranchemontagne, Program Coordinator (L)



Beth Brown, Board President, Director (playing at the Cornhole Tournament)



Superhero Kim Caron, Director (R), participating in the Virtual Challenge along with Rob Caron, Advisory Board, and their Square Pond friends.



Darlene Burns, Burns Quilts



Favolise Family delivering toys & games



Nanci Nason, Director (2nd from R), and friends participating in the Virtual Challenge