

# *Happy Holidays from Oasis*

**Warm Winter Greetings and Farewell to the highlights and low points 2023 brought us.**

Highlights for which I am most grateful:

Working with the most incredible staff (Janice, Kathleen, and Leah) inspires me daily. They are dedicated to keeping our mission alive and purposeful by implementing creative, efficient strategies to promote needed growth and funding sources through sponsorships and grants. New funding was brought in through Janice's Maryland State Arts Council and Kathleen's Nora Roberts Foundation applications. Leah beautifully crafted our catalog's return with Grandview Senior Living sponsorship.

Our family of volunteers, instructors, and lifelong learners continue to support us with their generous donations and talents. We raised over \$56,000 from individual donors.

An increase in new members: 562 in 2023, 267 in 2022.

A dream trip to Israel and Egypt in February allowed me to soak in the beauty of ancient history. It was a spiritual journey and left me thirsting to learn more about the history of the birthplace of civilization.

My husband, Kem, and I celebrated milestone birthdays, absorbing the fascinating geology, history, and beauty of the British Isles.

My son, Stefan, who is on the autism spectrum, celebrated his first anniversary as a Medical Assistant for a primary clinic in DC. I couldn't be prouder. My daughter Bethany loves living in DC with my tenacious granddog, Luigi, who met his long-lost sister at a dog park. She balances her science writing career with sketch comedy and improv.

Low Points of 2023:

There is unrest and violence in the world, disasters, and much to sadden us, but we need to believe that we can all play a small part in supporting peace through our actions and words - be role models for our youth and all to see.

Stronger together in 2024.

*Anna*

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I'm going to go with the gratitude theme for my holiday message. I am grateful for another year in which I had the privilege of working at Oasis, truly the best job I have ever had. Oasis participants and volunteers, my supportive and talented colleagues, the daily tasks, and even the challenges, keep me going and give my life purpose.

I am also grateful for my family – my husband Jeff and two twenty-something daughters Rachel and Sarah. They bring light and love. Physical and mental health is another thing I am grateful for. Challenges will surely come and I hope to handle them with the grace and resilience I observe in many of you.

Finally, I am grateful to live in this country. My father used to say, “Jan, you don’t know how lucky you are to live in the United States.” As a World War II veteran, he lived through dark times. The current days sometimes seem even darker. Which brings me back to gratitude. My hope for 2024 is that all of us can find a way to be present for the many small blessings each day brings.

Best wishes for a fulfilling and healthy 2024,

*Janice*



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It is hard to believe that we are already embarking on the conclusion of 2023! As Ferris Bueller said, "Life moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it." Fortunately, my family, friends, and I, took the opportunity to pause and create everlasting memories I will cherish. I began the year by joining my best friends since childhood in the Dominican Republic, to celebrate our birthdays together. We enjoyed celebrating our February birthdays in the sun far away from the cold and dreary days of a DC winter. Later that spring, we'd share another trip together. This time to the "Music City", Nashville, Tennessee.

My sons, Luke (9) and Macky (7), successfully completed kindergarten and third grade. Luke continues to demonstrate perseverance and a love of learning, especially reading and writing. Luke found enjoyment in the Boy Scouts and continues to love the fresh air and freedom of nature. His special place, where he enjoys spending many weekends, is on the rolling hills and in the swimming pool of my mother's Mount Airy Farm.

Macky continues his love of creating and building things, often helping my husband, Peter, and I assemble items around the house. Macky found success on the soccer field and we loved cheering him and his teammates on! He spent most of his summer days hitting baseballs in the backyard and many nights at Camden Yards watching the Baltimore Orioles.

We celebrated the start of summer with Peter's brothers' family, watching fireworks on the Fourth of July in Nokomis, Florida. As with each year, we capped off our Florida trip with our favorite family adventure, an airboat ride through Everglades National Park. The summer ended with our annual extended family trip to Nags head in the Outer Banks, North Carolina where the kids spent days on the beach and stayed up way too late playing with their cousins.

I'm finishing the year feeling blessed for the memories, but more than anything for health and happiness. Being a part of the Oasis family has contributed to that happiness immensely. Looking forward to 2024, I'm hoping for more time to stop and look around, enjoying new and different memories with my loving family, dear friends, wonderful colleagues and generous volunteers!

Cheers,

*Kathleen*



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Dear Oasis Friends,

2023 has been quite a year filled with lots of ups and downs. Through it all though, I am most thankful for a loving, supportive family and for my wonderful Oasis family who inspires me to live each day with curiosity and gratitude.

Some highlights this year included welcoming several new volunteers to our Oasis team. These volunteers continue to keep our center operations running smoothly and our online classes going strong. Their comradery and dedication to giving back is inspiring. Personally, another highlight was a summer vacation with my family in Bucerias, Mexico where we learned to surf, enjoyed lots of amazing food and just relaxed!

I'm looking forward to 2024 and all the promise that a new year brings. My hope is that we at Oasis will welcome many new lifelong-learners, volunteers and community partners into our fold. I wish all of you a joyful holiday season and a new year full of good health and exciting possibilities.

Warmest wishes,

*Leah*

