



The Beginning

**Aaron's Presents
Annual Report 2014**





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A YEAR OF UNEXPECTED JOYS

Putting together this Annual Report has given me the chance to reflect on 2014 both personally and professionally. After losing Aaron in June 2013, we needed to redefine the future that we as a family had been expecting but that would not be unfolding as planned, but at an even more basic level than that, most days our feelings could be summed up very simply as, "We just miss him." His absence left a hole in our hearts that would not easily be filled.



Later that summer, I had the idea to give out mini-grants in Aaron's memory to young children to do small, positive acts for others, and in January 2014, I was ready to pilot the program and had two wonderful, willing partners: YDO (Youth Development Organization) in Lawrence, MA and LCCPS (Lowell Community Charter Public School) in Lowell, MA. They invited me to share this idea with their students and see if any of them would take me up on the offer.

To my delight, 27 kids applied in groups or on their own with 12 thoughtful, inspired ideas for projects! I was so impressed with each girl and boy who had taken the initiative to come up with an idea and complete the application, having no examples or role models to follow. Working with these kids and helping them bring their visions to life brought a kind of true joy and happiness to me and my family that we could not have anticipated.

What I learned in 2014 is the very same lesson that I hope that Aaron's Presents can impart to our young grant recipients: that giving of oneself for the benefit of others brings happiness, healing and purpose. And instead of merely telling them this, my goal is to give as many kids as possible a chance to experience this message firsthand, as I have, in a tangible, fun and memorable way that is meaningful for whatever age and stage they happen to be at.

I believe wholeheartedly that the combination of a willingness to value their own ideas and take initiative with a desire to contribute to the greater good is extremely powerful, and that encouraging these young individuals to become current and future leaders can and will make our world better, kinder and more connected.

The work we did as a team of board members, volunteers, staff, teachers and school administrators, local organizations and, of course, the awesome kids could not have been possible without your support and generosity, and I cannot adequately express my gratitude.

2015 is off to a terrific start, and I am more excited than ever to keep building from here. I hope you will continue to be part of our work and mission in whichever way you choose and tell others about the capacity of young children to come up with and follow through on selfless, thoughtful, positive ideas!

Thank you,

Leah Okimoto
Founder & Executive Director



Inspiring kids to give of themselves for the good of the world.

We envision a world in which all children learn to seek happiness, healing and purpose by giving of themselves for others with empathy and passion.

Aaron Makaio Schneider was born on June 19, 2013 at 25 ½ weeks of gestation and lived 8 ½ days in two (NICUs) in Boston, MA. Aaron inspired his parents to honor his life by enabling young children to tap into their innate idealism, kindness and compassion and, by coupling these with their diverse talents and creativity, to achieve tangible results benefiting their families, neighborhoods and larger communities, and themselves.

Aaron's Presents is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is "Inspiring kids to give of themselves for the good of the world." To do this, we offer an innovative grants program uniquely designed to give young kids in 8th grade and below an opportunity to dream up and carry out a positive project that benefits at least one other human being (or animal!). In the process, they gain valuable life and leadership skills and experience firsthand the power they have to make a positive difference in other people's lives at every age.

What Makes Aaron's Presents Unique:

Child-initiated:

Voluntary and up to the child to decide to participate.

Child-led:

The children are the leaders and we entrust real resources into their hands, and allow them to take ownership of their project and be the decision makers at every step.

Non-competitive:

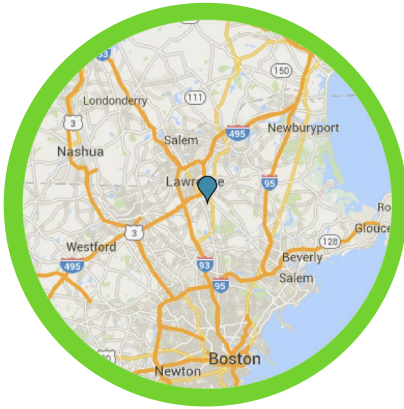
Designed to be accessible to this young age group, regardless of resources, availability of parental or other adult support, disabilities and other challenges. Our goal is to fund every feasible project.

Mentoring and Guidance:

We provide whatever support is needed to maximize successful completion of projects.

How It Works

Current Service Area:



25-mile radius of Andover, MA, with a particular focus on the Merrimack Valley and the North Shore regions.

Two types of grants:

Reach Out (Help or serve at least one other person) and *Tap In* (Pursue a passion and then use it to help or serve at least one other person). *Children can apply on their own or as part of a group of 10 kids or fewer.*

Amount of grants:

Maximum of \$500 in materials and/or services are provided per project; no money is exchanged with the grant recipients.

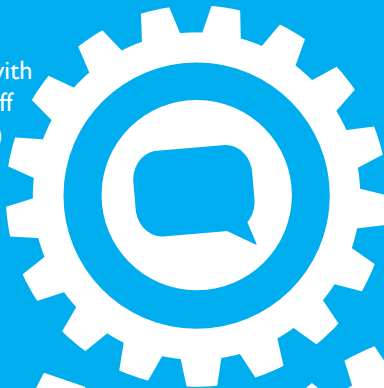
Timeframe:

We aim for projects to be completed within a *3-month period* if possible.

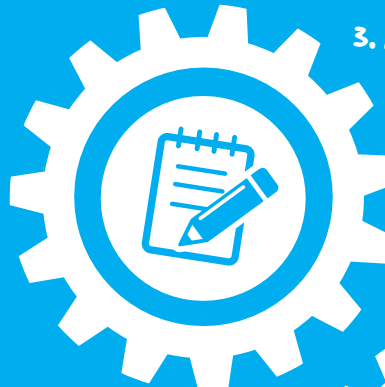
Process of a Project

2. Let's Talk!

(Optional meeting with Aaron's Presents staff to talk through idea)



3. Apply

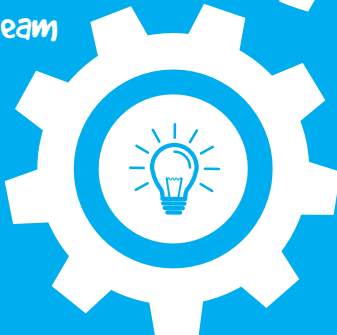


4. Make it Happen!

(Matched with a Project Mentor; supplies and materials purchased; project completed)



1. Think and Dream



5. Share & Celebrate!

(At our annual Celebration, in the media, schools, towns & businesses)

2014 Stats

30

Projects begun
or completed

59

Participants
(Ages 8-14, 2nd-8th grade)

26

Participants from
urban school
districts

46

Girls

13

Boys

Estimated # of people directly
impacted by projects:

6,113

Participants came from Lowell,
Lawrence, Salem (NH), Methuen,
Chelmsford, Beverly, Peabody,
Danvers, Andover, and Dracut

Community Partners served by the kids and their projects:

Academy Manor Nursing Home, Andover, MA
American Textile History Museum, Lowell, MA
AMG International's "Bundles of Love" program
Andover Public Middle Schools, Andover, MA
Bellesini Academy, Lawrence, MA
Boston Children's Hospital, Boston, MA
FINA House, YMCA, Lawrence, MA
Greater Lawrence Community Action
Council Child Care Center, Lawrence, MA
Higgins Middle School, Peabody, MA
Horizons for Homeless Children, Roxbury, MA
Lawrence General Hospital, Lawrence, MA
LCCPS (Lowell Community Charter Public School), Lowell, MA

Mary Baker Eddy Library, Boston, MA
Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
North Andover SEPAC, North Andover, MA
Operation Gratitude, Van Nuys, CA
Peabody Senior Center, Peabody, MA
PEER Servants, Woburn, MA
North Shore Medical Center, Salem, MA
Sanborn Elementary School, Andover, MA
Spaulding Rehab Hospital, Salem, MA
Willow Manor Nursing Home, Lowell, MA
Wingate Nursing Home, Andover, MA
YDO (Youth Development Organization),
Lawrence, MA

Project Highlights

“Clareese Cares”

By: Clareese

6th grade, Lowell, MA

Estimated # of People Directly Impacted: 31

Total Amount of Grant: \$157.37

Description:

Created a loaner program for students who walk to and from school to have reflective vests and whistles to help them feel safer.



“I want to help keep my friends safe. Lots of them walk to and from school and I feel that wearing reflective vests and having safety whistles would help keep them safer. I love my friends and want to make everyone aware that safety comes first. Some kids might think it is dorky and not want to participate. I will start with me and my friends and lead by example. I will feel proud if I make even one friend feel safer.”



“Gifts for Grandparents”

By: Valerie, Larybeth, Nick and Keith

6th grade, Lowell, MA

Estimated # of People Directly Impacted: 15

Total Amount of Grant: \$188.51

Description: Visited elderly residents at a nursing home in Lowell, MA on three Saturday afternoons and carried out activities that brought smiles to many elderly residents.

“I love just being able to help out with just something small. I look forward to helping the elderly and benefit them by visiting them and bringing them a present. They would love it! Sometimes the family of the elderly people is not able to visit them, so we would like to help by visiting them. I think I would be feeling very good and amazed at what I had just done with my amazing group. My group thought of this because we all like helping out and serving others. I learned that I have to be very patient with the elderly. When you help people you can make them smile and change the world.”

“Costume Collection”

By: Holly

3rd grade, Andover, MA

Estimated # of People Directly Impacted: 42

Total Amount of Grant: \$375.99

Funded by:

The Dr. Alan Metwally Presents Fund
Partial sponsorship by Spirit Halloween

Description:

Assembled individualized Halloween costume packages for 21 children living in transitional housing.



“I would like to find a homeless shelter that [has] children...so a homeless child will be able to trick or treat. [I would feel] happy because I helped a kid...I put my best effort into each and every step. In this project I learned that one good deed could change the world.”

“Thank you so much for making my project possible! This, for me, was an opportunity of a lifetime. I will never forget the joy you have given me by being able to help others through my talent. Your money is greatly helping kids such as me gain confidence in themselves and learn their true potential.”

“Cute and Girly Hair Bows”

By: Annette

7th grade, Andover, MA

Estimated # of People Directly Impacted: 20

Total Amount of Grant: \$228.72

Funded by: The Dr. Alan Metwally Presents Fund

Description:

Created handmade, original hair bows and packaged them to be sold at a fundraiser for PEER Servants (a microfinancing organization that helps people living in poverty around the world start their own businesses) and a school craft fair to benefit Bundles of Love (program by AMG International that sends care packages of school and other supplies to children in Guatemala). Annette made over 100 hair bows and raised approx. \$300 for PEER Servants and Bundles of Love.



2014 Fundraising & Finance Stats

Total Donations

\$38,128

Total Expenses

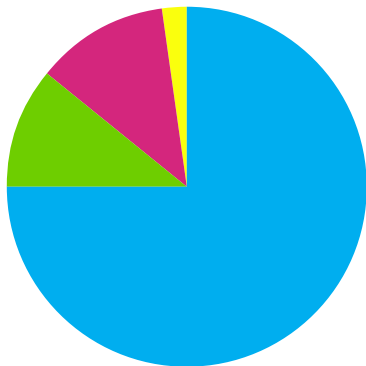
\$14,421

Year-End Net Assets

\$23,707

Detailed financial statements available upon request.*

Donation Sources



- **75 % Individual**
- **11% Business and Local Organization**
- **12% Presents Funds**
- **2% Donor Advised Funds**

Looking Forward

At this early stage as an organization, we are not eligible for many grants and rely exclusively on individual and corporate donations. In 2015, we anticipate a significant increase in the number of interested children and are preparing to support an estimated 50 new projects. We have hired a part-time Regional Director who focuses on project mentoring, marketing and fundraising in the North Shore region, and we are developing a Volunteer Program to pilot in September 2015. Reaching this fundraising goal will make it possible for us to continue supporting the growth we expect to see going into 2016.



2015 Fundraising Goal



2015 Projected Expenses

Donors

THANK YOU!

Individuals:

Anonymous (multiple)
Yasmine and Jorge Allen
Dr. Nancy Andrews
The Bartlett Family
Emily and Andrew Bedell
Barbara Benson
Tom and Megan Benson
Steve Bertolino
Marjorie Sherman-Bindman and Carl Bindman
Jeff Boice
Wayne and Mary Lynne Boardman
Maureen Boland
Bea Caruso
Meghan and Ken Chan
Patrick Chang
Dr. Christine Chung
Dr. Connie Chung
Dr. Daniel Cohan
Sheila and Jeff Corbitt
Marjorie Crider
Monique Cueto-Potts and Tim Potts
Stephanie Curci and Shawn Davis
Melanie and Mark Cutler
Kathleen and James Cyrier
Nancy Davies
Julie Derderian
Khiem DoBa and Linh Nguyen
Brad Dolian
Joseph Drago
Patrick and Karen Farrell
Shawn Fulford
Tami Furuta
Dr. Lisa Glickstein
Dr. Frank and Cathy Greer
Sean Grennan and Kathy Santen
Carol Grosky
Marijane Gryk
Helene Gwizdak
Janna Hansen and Dr. Susan Cheng
Shari Hersh and Samuel Robinson
Jennifer and Scott Hoenig
Paul Hurteau and Lilia Cai-Hurteau
Enoch and Grace Huang
Kevin Irwin and Karen Go
Clara Isaza-Bishop and Hugh Bishop
Kristen and Chris Johnson
Robin Johnson

Dr. Tom and Jennifer Kane
Jooé Kim and Victor Sheen
Stephanie Leone Kim
Mary Kobrenski
Drs. Adrienne and Justin Kung
Juliette Lee
Kevin Lee
Everett and Molly Leonard
Marianne Leonard
Jack Levin
Naomi Levin
Elizabeth Lim
Deborah Lucci
Fabio Malagisi
Vivien and David Mallick
Kate and Jim McQuade
Margaret Metwally
Dr. Mark Metwally
Natalia Metwally
Vimala Mohammed
Cristel Mohrman
Rose Mary Morrissey
Drs. Paul Nguyen and Sophia Koo
Natalie and Jonathan Nicholson
Caroline and Dr. Christopher Odden
Mary O'Donoghue
Monica O'Reilly-Jacob and Joel Jacob
Ellen O'Sullivan
The Palsetia Family
Dr. Amy Patel and Jason York
Barb Petricone
Dr. Anna Raji
Mimo Gordon and David Riley
The Rising Family
Bella Robinson
CC and Lewis Robinson
Sarah and Keith Robinson
Glenn and Jennifer Rogers
The Rothberg and Schneider Families
Aggie and Guido Segovia
Douglas Shaw
Evelyn Shen and Jason Tong
Annie (Chung) and Brian Shiraishi
Heather and Ken Shows
Barb Silversides
Lani and Steve Silversides
Matthew Smith
Jessica (Chia-Yun) Sun
Joanna and Steve Suomi

Ameet Talwalkar
Dr. Jocelyn Thein and Albert Chang
Dave Thompson
Erik Thompson
Jesi Thompson
Joan Thompson
David Tsai
Felicia van den Broeke
Dr. Christine Marshall-Walker and Steven Walker
Nora Waystack
Jessica Wilson
Kimberly and Timothy Yantz
Janos Zahajszky

Businesses & Organizations:

Altera
Augmenix
Andover Family Dental (Dr. Aparna Sharma)
Barefoot Books
in vivo Productions
Kiwanis Club of Greater Lawrence
Orange Leaf
Rotary Club of Dracut
Salvatore's
Sheila's Art
Walker Clark Coaching, LCC

In-Kind:

Cookies by Julie
DLA Piper
EforAll
Lawyers Clearinghouse
Mill No. 5
NetImpact Boston
NextJump Inc.
Red Ember Marketing
Spirit Halloween

Presents Funds

The Dr. Alan Metwally Presents Fund
The Sequin of Kindness™ Presents Fund

How You Can Get Involved!

Create a Presents Fund

Fund thoughtful projects in memory or honor of someone, or with your family or other group, while building a unique living legacy.

Sponsor a Project

Visit our website and choose a project to support, or ask your company to sponsor a local project.

Shop!

Click on the "Shop to Support Us" button on our website and then shop at 150+ stores including Amazon, Target, Kohl's, Snapfish, Drugstore.com. Aaron's Presents will receive a donation of 2.5-20% of your purchase without any extra effort!



Volunteer!

Help SHOP for project materials, help CONNECT us with organizations to receive acts of service, and/or MENTOR our young leaders through projects.

Connect Us!

Tell everyone, adults and kids, about us! Introduce us to schools, youth programs, local nonprofits and businesses that might like to partner with us in some way.

Staff

Leah Okimoto, Executive Director
North Shore Regional Director:
Kimberly LaBonte-Kay

Board

Chair: Jooé Kim
Vice Chair: Marianne Cashman;
Secretary: Paul L. Nguyen, MD
Treasurer: Victor L.H. Sheen
Directors: Heidi Burgess, Connie Chung, PhD,
Aldonsa Pereyra
Net Impact Board Fellows:
Elizabeth Dill, Rishub Solan

We can't wait to hear from you!

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