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the power of one-to-one

ABCD: AFTER BREAST CANCER DIAGNOSIS is a Wisconsin-based non-profit organization established in 1999. While science searches for a cure, ABCD complements the work of healthcare providers by serving as a reliable, accessible, and highly personalized resource.

Created by women who have had breast cancer themselves, ABCD's services focus on the individual needs of each person. ABCD is not a support group. Instead, its mentoring service brings together, one-to-one, breast cancer patients and breast cancer survivors who have been trained to help others navigate the breast cancer "journey." Similar services are available for family and friends of breast cancer patients. ABCD also operates the Breast Cancer Helpline, a reliable source for breast cancer-related information. Through its MORE: Mentor OutReach and Education program, ABCD promotes awareness of breast cancer, its services and related information, especially in medically underserved communities and frequently collaborating with other organizations.

ABCD's Mission: to provide personalized information and one-to-one support to people affected by breast cancer – patient, family and friends.

ABCD works in cooperation with hospitals, clinics and organizations that help breast cancer patients and their families but does not provide medical or other professional advice and is not affiliated with any medical care providers or their agents.

All services are provided free of charge.



10 YEARS
abcd
after
breast cancer
diagnosis
*a decade of
the power of one-to-one*

A *powerful* vision

2008 ANNUAL REPORT

HELP • HOPE • SUPPORT • HELP • HOPE • SUPPORT • HELP • HOPE • SUPPORT • HELP • HOPE • SUPPORT



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“When I stop to think about that fact that it was only nine years ago when Melodie Wilson brought together a small group of women who had all experienced breast cancer to share a simple idea, I am amazed at the impact of her *powerful* vision.”

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Gretchen Bloomer-Huberty
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Kay L. Boesen

During a networking time before a professional lunch, a fellow attendee read my name tag and said, “Oh ABCD. I need to make a donation to your organization. You helped my friend so much.”
I was so proud!

This is what ABCD is all about: being there when women and men need personalized information and one-to-one support through the diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. And we have done this thousands of times over.

When I stop to think about that fact that it was only nine years ago when Melodie Wilson brought together a small group of women who had all experienced breast cancer to share a simple idea, I am amazed at the impact of her powerful vision.

She asked for input. Then she built a team and asked for assistance to create an organization that would help people through the diagnosis and treatment experience and beyond with one-to-one support. And, this support — we call it mentoring — would be free of charge so that anyone who needed it could get it.

As ABCD prepares for its 10th anniversary, this simple concept is still the cornerstone of its mission and programs. But how we have grown. Upon the

foundation of our one-to-one mentoring vision, we created the Breast Cancer Helpline and MORE: Mentor OutReach and Education.

The first year ABCD trained almost 24 mentors; today, almost 400 people have completed mentor training, including mentors with culturally focused training within the African American and American Indian communities, and soon the Hispanic community. We began by serving the Greater Milwaukee area and now our regular service area reaches from Kenosha to Green Bay. Plus, we are experiencing an increasing number of requests for support from throughout Wisconsin, as well as Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa.

To keep all services free of charge, we have worked hard to raise our annual operating resources and responsibly build a reserve fund. We have created a signature annual special event, Date with a Plate, that raises both funds and awareness. We continue to seek in-kind support from the donation of supplies to professional services. And, we are grateful to our donors — foundations, corporations and especially individuals because they provide almost 70% of our income.

Even though our name is “after breast cancer diagnosis” we have become an important messenger and community collaborator regarding the importance of early detection. Our outreach efforts have grown ten-fold with our staff and volunteers attending health fairs, community events, and speaking engagements.



Kathy Ehley, President, ABCD Board of Directors

throughout Southeast Wisconsin and have made significant progress in northern counties, particularly around Green Bay.

*Yet our extraordinary board of directors, volunteers, and staff are not resting on the laurels of ABCD's first nine years. We are ready to mark a decade of the power of one-to-one. As Melodie said in last year's annual report — **there is still so much to do.***

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Ehley". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Kathy Ehley
President, ABCD Board of Directors*

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A portrait of Audrey Warner, a woman with shoulder-length blonde hair, smiling and wearing a light blue collared shirt. The background is a warm, out-of-focus bokeh.

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Patricia Gray
Tammy Griffin-Rice
Sandra Griffith
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Rose Gullotti
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“Nothing is more powerful than ABCD’s one-to-one support mentoring. I want to train as a mentor soon.”

- Audrey Warner

Audrey & Therese

A portrait of Therese, a woman with short brown hair and bangs, smiling and wearing a blue textured jacket. The background is a warm, out-of-focus bokeh.

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Audrey Warner is a warm and friendly woman who describes herself as a type A personality. She's the mother of twin girls with a sometimes hectic, always challenging full-time job. When she was diagnosed with breast cancer Audrey initially expected the experience to be serious but a challenge she would handle head on. "I had great family and friends to support me," says Audrey. "And I am a person of faith."

Her breast cancer journey included lumpectomy and radiation, and eventually, a second surgery. In some ways, the hardest part of the journey was toward the end of her treatment. "I was so very tired," Audrey explains.

Despite all the support she had, in her heart Audrey thought talking to someone who had *been there* would make a world of difference. So did her health care team. Audrey was given ABCD materials at her doctor's office and a nurse encouraged her to call. She was amazed by how well she was matched with Therese Burkhart.

Therese had *been there* alright. Her breast cancer diagnosis and treatment plan was similar to Audrey's, involving many of the same medical team and similar surgery and treatment decisions. She, too, was married, working full-time, raising children and involved in community activities when she heard the heart-stopping words, "breast cancer."

"I got through it because of the support I had, including my faith," says Therese. She adds, "But talking directly with someone with breast cancer, someone who's been in 'your shoes' — that's the key. I became an ABCD mentor because I understand that personally. I have this need to give back now."

According to Audrey, Therese's support kept her focused. "She was really good at reminding me to take care of myself. She encouraged me so that when I spoke with my daughters I could be honest without frightening them. And, like no one else, she got the 'how do I manage breast cancer in a professional setting' concern 100%."

As it turned out, Audrey and Therese worked across the street from each other. So, after several heart to heart telephone conversations, they met in a coffee shop. Audrey was almost finished with radiation treatments and the holiday season was underway. Therese brought her a gift — an angel ornament.

Audrey hangs that ornament on her Christmas tree each year, a reminder that her "new normal" life is joyous and full — and that her ABCD mentor helped her get there.

Recently, her husband's cousin was diagnosed with breast cancer and Audrey sent her the same angel ornament. She observes, "Because I've experienced the support of someone who's been down this road, I know how important it is that she knows she isn't alone."

Reflecting that she can carry ABCD's vision forward, Audrey says, "Nothing is more powerful than ABCD's one-to-one support mentoring. I want to train as a mentor soon."

Therese, who now serves on the ABCD Board of Directors, isn't surprised that Audrey is interested in mentor training. She says, "Mentoring is fulfilling. Helping someone in a uniquely qualified way — that is immensely powerful."

THE POWER OF THANK YOU

Lynette Ruppel


"The time following my mother's breast cancer diagnosis was fraught with almost suffocating uncertainty, fear, and endless questions." That's how Lynette Ruppel describes how she felt when she learned her mother had breast cancer. As it does for so many others, the world just stopped.

Lynette's mom is blessed with close family and friends and yet, the words "you have breast cancer," could have made the world a very lonely place. But she turned to ABCD for support, which in turn, was good for the whole family. Lynette explains, "While we struggled to come to terms with all that would soon unfold, ABCD was there to help us. The support, guidance, and resources offered through their wonderful organization greatly helped sustain us during my mother's breast cancer treatment and recovery."

But Lynette had a vision of how she could help ABCD "be there" for others, too. **Without telling anyone, she nominated ABCD for a \$10,000 award for community commitment sponsored by her employer, Trustmark Insurance.** The award recognizes charities that have had a powerful positive impact on those it serves and is part of the company's active community service vision.

"When ABCD learned of the award our world stopped — but in a good way," notes ABCD Board President Kathy Ehley. A few weeks later at a company-wide celebration, Scott Robb, Trustmark Second Vice President presented the award on behalf of the Trustmark Foundation and employees of Trustmark's Mequon, Wisconsin office to Kathy and ABCD Founder, Melodie Wilson.

Kathy observes, "To be nominated for an award by someone whose family member has experienced ABCD's one-to-one support speaks volumes. We are grateful to Trustmark, its employees and the Ruppel family." From Lynette's point of view, "My nomination seemed like the very least I could do to convey our sincere thanks."



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“Mentoring is a gift
you give yourself.
Just giving someone
encouragement and
support fills you up.”

-Vernetta Crum

Annette Hopgood is very open about her breast cancer journey. Living a “normal” life, working and enjoying hobbies with her husband, she was just 45 when she found a lump in her breast.

“I work in healthcare but I froze,” she recalls. “My husband was wonderful. He called the doctor, made sure I had the right diagnostic tests. But I just sat there like a doll.” Her doctor talked to her about ABCD but Annette was still numb and unsure. She did not know anyone who had survived breast cancer.

“The doctor said ABCD could contact me if I consented, so I signed the form and ABCD called right away,” Annette recalls. “They were so compassionate and they assured me there were breast cancer survivors. A doctor can say ‘don’t worry’ but that’s not the same as talking to a survivor.”

ABCD matched Annette with Vernetta Crum. When Vernetta was diagnosed with breast cancer she wanted to talk to someone right away to take the mystery out of the experience. She learned about ABCD through a support group that included ABCD mentors as members and trained as a mentor herself in 2006.

The two women both insist that ABCD could not have made a better match. “I felt Vernetta’s spirit leap over the phone,” Annette remembers. “I get emotional just talking about the power of that first phone call. The connection was instant. Vernetta wasn’t starchy or tense; she just wanted to make me feel comfortable.”

The pair settled into a pattern of speaking every Thursday. “I would say a prayer before I called her each week. Those calls are important. A woman with breast cancer needs to know that she is not alone so she knows the *real deal* when it comes to getting through it all,” notes Vernetta.

Like many breast cancer patients, Annette had challenges during surgeries and treatment, but credits ABCD with making her journey pleasant because her ABCD mentor saved her from imagining the worse. “Vernetta made it clear that you have to be positive about the outcome but also that you have to put effort into getting through the journey.”

“My mentor taught me so much, especially that talking and listening has real healing power; it takes the burden off. The only way I could give back and honor Vernetta was to become a mentor, too,” observes Annette.”

“When Melodie Wilson was first diagnosed, I wrote her a letter of support. I didn’t mail it, but instinctively I knew reaching out is what women who have had breast cancer should do,” Vernetta confides. “Now that I’m a trained mentor, I am more confident. After all, mentoring is a gift you give yourself. Just giving someone encouragement and support fills you up.”

Vernetta was really pleased when Annette called her after completing mentor training. “She was so proud,” Vernetta remembers. “She said, ‘I did it’ and I told her, yes, you did.”

THE POWER MULTIPIES Kay Van Boxl

ABCD is proof of the infinite possibilities that are born of faith in yourself and others. It is this faith that encouraged me to become involved with the organization, and challenges me to enact change within my own community.

As both a mentor and the director of the Breast Cancer Family Foundation, **I’ve seen firsthand the power of one-to-one. And its potential — multiplied by the collective strength of a community** — has helped to inspire a new vision for the greater Green Bay area: Triumph Cancer Resource Center.

By partnering with organizations like ABCD, I believe we can enhance the support systems available to survivors and co-survivors in Northeast Wisconsin, while working to promote cancer survivorship across our state.

The power of one-to-one can be the foundation for changing the experience of cancer.

Kay Van Boxl
Director of Operations,
Breast Cancer Family Foundation,
Co-Founder & President,
Triumph Cancer Resource Center



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“ABCD listened to my needs as a whole person and matched me with someone who understood completely.”

- Helene Parker

An archeologist and attorney, Helene Parker's resume reflects her sense of adventure. Her husband is a police officer and she has two active children — being ready for anything is a way of life. But a breast cancer diagnosis stopped her in her tracks.

Helene explains, "I was a deer in the headlights, which is a very odd feeling. You have no control of your life. Of course, we really never do but until you hear the 'C' word you just don't know it; before then you have no idea what "no control" actually means."

Reviewing the materials and brochures provided by her doctor's office, Helene contacted ABCD early in her breast cancer journey. She knew that she needed to speak with someone who would understand all the emotions that she was confronting in addition to the medical considerations.

Her mentor, Amy Kielma, agrees. "I remember learning I had breast cancer like it was yesterday and how that feels. ABCD was just in its infancy; it didn't formally exist yet. But Melodie Wilson had openly spoken about her breast cancer when she was a newscaster. So, I just called her and she invited me to have coffee."

Amy then committed to being part of ABCD and helped to build it going forward. Now an experienced mentor, she describes how "humbling it is to acknowledge that there is no way I could get through this on my own."

Helene remembers their first phone call clearly. "Amy told me we could speak as long as I needed and she shared some of her own journey so that I would understand that there was hope and life after a breast cancer diagnosis."

And there was plenty to talk about. Helene needed several months of bed rest due to complications and her youngest child was quite stressed to see his mother bald. Both mothers, Helene and Amy could talk comfortably about how to comfort children while still taking care of themselves.

Helene is ready to begin professional adventures again and is planning to return to work soon. She notes, "it is a cliché but it is true: so much of life is consumed with problems that are actually silly. But you don't truly appreciate that until life really challenges you — like breast cancer does."

Amy agrees. "So much happened this year with family and friends but because of my breast cancer and years of mentoring others through ABCD, I can transfer what I've learned to every day life."

Helen credits ABCD's commitment to one-to-one support as a powerful ingredient in her journey.

"Because of the one-to-one approach, ABCD listened carefully when I asked for a mentor who was a woman of strong faith," Helene observes. "Treatment can be a lonely time because no one can do it for you. ABCD listened to my needs as a whole person and matched me with someone who understood completely. My mentor's help got me to the other side of breast cancer."

THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Oza Holmes

I've committed my professional life to assuring that breast cancer patients, their families and caregivers get what they need to triumph over breast cancer. Since it's beginning, ABCD has been a partner and an enthusiastic community collaborator.

ABCD and the Pink Shawl Initiative together shared their lessons learned in culturally-focused breast cancer education with our health care providers and has allowed me opportunities to recruit and educate African-American breast cancer survivors as volunteer mentors. Through the mentor-training program, ABCD is closing the gap in reaching out to African-American women by empowering breast cancer survivors to reach out and end the code of silence about breast cancer in the African-American community.

Most recently, ABCD worked hand-in-hand with the new Milwaukee Affiliate of the Sisters Network, Inc., a national organization dedicated to raising breast cancer awareness in the African American community and providing support for those impacted by this disease. **Most of the affiliate's founders are ABCD mentors, taking the powerful vision of personalized support into a new realm of community service.**

ABCD works with every health system, independent clinic and ethnic community to ensure services are provided to all who need it. When it collaborates, ABCD sends a powerful message if you hear the words "breast cancer, ABCD is there for you."

Oza Holmes, RN, MSN OCN

Breast Care Coordinator
Aurora Sinai Medical Center, Milwaukee
Member, ABCD Medical and Community
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Balestreri Owned & Operated Sendik's Food Market
Cedarburg Junior Woman's Club
Melanie Holmes
Jason, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. Dennis J. Kuester
Mr. and Mrs. D.F. McKeithan, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Train

\$2,000 - \$5,000

Elizabeth Brenner and Steve Ostrofsky
Michael J. Cleary
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Gentine
Erin Luedtke
Pamela and Leslie M. Muma
Oconomowoc Women's Club
Peck Foundation Milwaukee Ltd.
Dr. Jonathan G. Pellegrin
Quad/Graphics
Sargento Foods, Inc.
Time Warner Cable
Julie and James Tynion
Wisconsin Jaguars Ltd.

\$1,000 - \$2,000

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Brighton Collectibles
Bluemound Country Club
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory B. Bultman
Dyne Systems, Inc.
M. Kathleen Eilers and Barry Blackwell
Extencicare Health Services, Inc. – Charitable Giving Committee
Judy and Jeff Gauvin
Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Inc.
Mr. and Mrs. George Hoff
Sarah and Jeffrey Joerres
Mr. and Mrs. James Keyes
Jan and Vincent Martin
Park Bank Foundation, Inc.
Jerry Renner
Rite Hite Foundation – Mr. and Mrs. Mike White
CG Schmidt Construction
Nancy S. and John Sennett
Slim McGinn's Irish Pub
Mr. and Mrs. Richard F. Teerlink
Mary N. Vandenberg
We Energies
Whole Foods Market
Woman's Club of Wisconsin Foundation
Diane and Edward Zore

\$500 - \$1000

Joan and Richard Abdo
Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Asmuth
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Baumgartner
Roman H. Claas
Kathy and Kent Ehley
Mr. and Mrs. James L. Forbes
Mr. and Mrs. Frederic Friedman
Mr. and Mrs. Mark Furlong
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Gentine

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Grant F. Langley
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Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Pindyck
Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Robbins
Rohr Jewelers, Inc.
Andrea Schloemer
Bonnie L. Steindorf
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Joan C. and Richard A. Van Deuren Family Foundation, Inc.
Dr. Marjorie Vukelich
James B. Young II

\$250 - \$500

Mr. and Mrs. David Anderson – David and Carol Anderson Family Foundation
Sheila L. Ashley
Mrs. Bruce and Elizabeth Axelrod
Mr. and Mrs. Saleem Bakhtiar
Janet Balding
Joyce and Bernard J. Bobber
Mr. and Mrs. Roger Boerner
Mr. and Mrs. T. Michael Bolger
Books Are Fun
Connie Brickman
Mr. and Mrs. Terry Briscoe
Carol Cameron
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Raymond Eichholz
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Patricia Ellworth
Ginny Finn and Evan Lenhardt
Mr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Fuller
Lorrie Gaudynski
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Glaisner
Drs. Karen and Robert Greenstreet
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Mr. and Mrs. Len Kasper
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Tom Landwehr
Linda and John Mellows
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John Mollwitz
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Louise Hermsen
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Valerie Kaiser
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Gail Langemak Young
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Catherine McEvoy
Dennis McEvoy
Myron Parks
Darryl Reinick
Angela Pervault
Emma Muniz

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 Mr. and Mrs. G. Woodrow Adkins
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 Diane and Edward Zore

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 Ellen and Richard Glaisner
 Sarah and Jeffrey Joerres
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 Mr. and Mrs. D.F. McKeithan, Jr.
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 Jonathan G. Pellegrin
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 Maria and Henry Schreyer
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Betty Babik
 Mr. and Mrs. Helmut Adam
Susie Block
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Therese Burkhart
 Mr. and Mrs. Vincent McAvooy
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UPS women & all women who have survived breast cancer, in the name of Mike Eve
 Kathleen Heinritz
UPS women & all women who have survived breast cancer, in the name of Jan Spanger
 Kathleen Heinritz
Wisconsin's Tribal Pink Shawl Initiative
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Robert and Marge Weiss' birthdays
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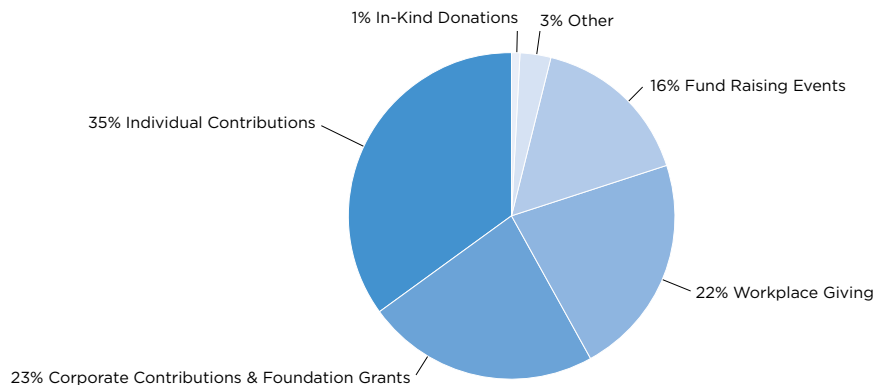
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 Richard Voss
 Timothy Wachter
 James B. Young II

	2008	2007
Assets		
Cash	\$614,515	\$545,850
Accounts Receivable	58,582	26,993
Inventory	1,392	0
Prepaid Expense	1,882	1,775
Fixed Assets	6,404	6,404
Software	3,405	3,405
Less Depreciation	(8,345)	(7,268)
Total Assets	\$677,835	\$577,159
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Liabilities	\$2,175	\$1,745
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	659,728	575,414
Temporarily Restricted	15,932	0
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$677,835	\$577,159
Gross Revenue		
Individual Contributions	\$122,098	\$102,630
Corporate Contributions & Foundation Grants	83,291	31,414
Fund Raising Events	55,989	59,195
Workplace Giving	79,156	76,704
In-Kind Donations	1,668	11,292
Other	9,990	20,695
Revenue	\$354,692	\$301,930
Expenses		
Program Services	\$203,157	\$184,033
Administration	38,575	31,541
Development	12,714	18,394
Total Expenses	\$254,446	\$233,968
Change in Net Assets	\$100,246	\$67,962
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	575,414	507,452
Net Assets at End of Year	\$675,660	\$575,414

2008 Revenue Sources



You can make a difference.

All of ABCD's services are provided free of charge, so we depend on the generosity of our friends and supporters.

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Thank you!

Jackie Adams
Program Coordinator

Judy Mindin
Outreach and Operations Coordinator

Joyce Sipes
Special Projects Assistant

Ginny Finn
Executive Director