

THISTLE FARMS



Annual Report
**STRONGER
TOGETHER**

2020-2021

DEDICATED TO:

Project Redesign

Founded in 2008, Project Redesign is in the business of making dreams come true for hundreds of women and families a year in Nashville. Just like a TLC reality show where homeowners leave, then arrive back to amazing changes, Project Redesign's team of dedicated volunteers has made it possible for our graduates to walk into their first home and find it beautifully furnished from top to bottom. For most, it is the first comfortable, fully furnished home they have ever had.

As Project Redesign has grown, so has our partnership. Over the past 5 years, they have furnished more than 60 homes for Thistle Farms. This past year, they helped us open the doors to the first emergency "safe house" in Middle Tennessee for women coming through our doors in crisis mode, creating a peaceful oasis for hundreds of women a year.

Hospitality and sanctuary come in many forms. Sometimes it is a smile and a hug and sometimes it means soft blankets, cozy furniture, and soothing textiles. For Project Redesign, it means all of the above.

In recognition of the thousands of hours of volunteered time, talent, and resources to turn empty houses into beautiful homes, we dedicate our 2021 Annual Report to these unheralded community heroes. Thank you for the gift of comfort, safety, and sanctuary.

PICTURED BELOW: PROJECT REDESIGN LEADERSHIP TEAM: ALISON DOUGLAS, KAREN MOORE, SARAH FLEMING, ELLIE BILLINGTON, AND SUZANNE SYSDER



OUR MISSION:

Thistle Farms is a nonprofit social enterprise dedicated to helping women survivors recover and heal from prostitution, trafficking, and addiction. We do this by providing a safe place to live, a meaningful job, and a lifelong sisterhood of support.

Dear Friends,

Whether you found us via prisons or gated communities, corporate headquarters or a homeless camp, distant cathedrals or our own cafe, the Thistle Farms community is stronger because of your presence.

The names and faces in this year's annual report came to Thistle Farms from circuitous paths. But no matter the route taken, we know this much is true: we are **stronger together**.

In a year when uncertainty lurked around every corner, together we have broken ground on new homes, set online revenue records, expanded into new cities, and sustained social enterprises employing survivors around the world. The ties of love that bind us together are stronger than the external fraying that threatens to pull us apart. **Stronger together** means our individual threads create a powerful force for change in this world.

Thank you for writing this story with us and for believing in us.

Together, we have done amazing things. We could not be more grateful for the year we've survived and shared together or more hopeful for the road that lies ahead.

WITH LOVE AND APPRECIATION,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hal Cato".

HAL CATO
CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becca Stevens".

BECCA STEVENS
Founder & President

#THISTLESTRONG



forgive
and
feel
freedom

LOVE
HEALS



NAVIGATING THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Like every other organization in the country, the pandemic affected Thistle Farms in meaningful and profound ways. Yes, we had to temporarily limit the number of women who could come into our residential program. Yes, the social enterprises that sustain our mission took a real financial hit. But facing magnified, global levels of insecurity made us dig deeper and try harder to be a place of safety, hope, and healing this year while simultaneously building a foundation for future growth.

Thanks to the continued generosity of our donors, as well as a fully forgiven loan from the Paycheck Protection Program, we were able to maintain 100% employment while also increasing resident mental and physical health services. Other notable residential program modifications and additions included:

In partnership with End Slavery Tennessee, we opened the first “safe house” in Middle Tennessee dedicated to providing short-term emergency housing for women coming directly from the streets. This home has been continuously occupied since it opened in October 2020.

Renovating to create new office space for our growing residential management team.

Breaking ground on our first newly built residence in 15 years. When complete, this home will provide sanctuary for 8 more women.

During a year when so many people felt stuck at home, you made it possible for the women of Thistle Farms to feel safe at home. On behalf of our entire community, thank you for helping us show the world that good news abounds, gratitude cannot be quarantined, and that love can easily traverse six feet.

Safe Housing

PROVIDING SANCTUARY

We house up to 26 residents at a time in a therapeutic setting that offers healing and transformation through housing, healthcare, counseling, employment, and community building.

IN TENNESSEE

6,900 NIGHTS OF SAFE & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

1,300 MEDICAL, COUNSELING, AND TRAUMA THERAPY APPOINTMENTS

9 WOMEN SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED OUR TWO YEAR RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

78% OF WOMEN ARE LIVING HEALTHY, INDEPENDENT LIVES FIVE YEARS AFTER PROGRAM COMPLETION

549 BEDS NATIONWIDE PROVIDE HEALING AND SANCTUARY FOR WOMEN SURIVORS

192 ADDITIONAL BEDS ADDED IN THE LAST YEAR

31 STATES AND SIX COUNTRIES HAVE HOMES THAT ARE A PART OF OUR NETWORK

AROUND THE GLOBE

HEALING HOP

Meaningful Employment

MEANS ECONOMIC FREEDOM

Meaningful employment leading to financial freedom is instrumental in the healing journey. Our 3 social enterprises provide both gateway and permanent jobs for survivors, as well as revenue for our mission.

IN TENNESSEE

278,114 PRODUCTS MANUFACTURED

113,693 MEALS SERVED IN THE CAFE

108,384 HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT

59 WOMEN SURVIVORS EMPLOYED

17% SALES INCREASE

39 GLOBAL PARTNERS IN 21 COUNTRIES

1,400 PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

58% OF SALES REVENUE IS RETURNED TO GLOBAL PARTNERS

\$35,000 WAS GRANTED TO 7 GLOBAL PARTNERS TO SUPPORT COVID-RELIEF

AROUND THE GLOBE

E & FREEDOM

Stronger Together
IN HEALING

TAMMY, 5 YEARS CLEAN,
CAFE FRONT OF HOUSE LEADER



From Healing TO HOSPITALITY

Our community is a sacred space where we are intentional about teaching and learning from one another.

As Tammy sipped her first cup of tea as a customer at The Café, she felt at home. At the time, she was only a few months into her own recovery journey, after spending nearly 25 years on the streets in addiction.

Drawn in by love, she became a volunteer, then a team member, and is now the front of house leader.

In this community, she found strength to thrive in recovery.

*This year, Tammy celebrated
5 years of sobriety.*

“I needed the positive atmosphere and supportive community to stay focused on healing and my new direction in life. I didn’t feel judged here, because women understood my story. Seeing customers every day gives me hope and something to look forward to.” - Tammy

Customers love to visit for her stories and tea, too.
With sisters like Tammy, we are stronger together.

Stronger Together In
COMMUNITY

“My sisters poured compassion and love into Stevie’s life. He matters to them, and that means the world to me.”

- Ty, 5 Years Clean, Assistant Director of Manufacturing,
2015 Graduate

KRISTIN, KIM, TY, STEVIE, SHELIA, AND GWEN



From Community to Sisterhood

For Thistle Farms graduates, sisterhood is a life-long journey with ups, downs, and beautiful rewards.

Ty relied on her Thistle Farms sisters for support while she raised her son and worked toward her goals.

Gwen, Kim, Kristin, and Shelia were intentional about being present in the life of Ty's son; attending teacher meetings and games, sharing heart-to-heart talks, and cheering with joy at his high school graduation. They all agree that their experience as "aunts" made them better women, mothers, and sisters.

"Being in a community where love is the guiding force makes it easy to love each other and support our sisters and their family. Ty and her son have shown me how beautiful family dynamics are and it has been an honor to be a part of their lives. As a mother myself, I am grateful to walk behind Ty and learn what being an amazing mother really looks like." - Kristin, 8 Years Clean, Executive Assistant to Becca Stevens, 2015 Graduate

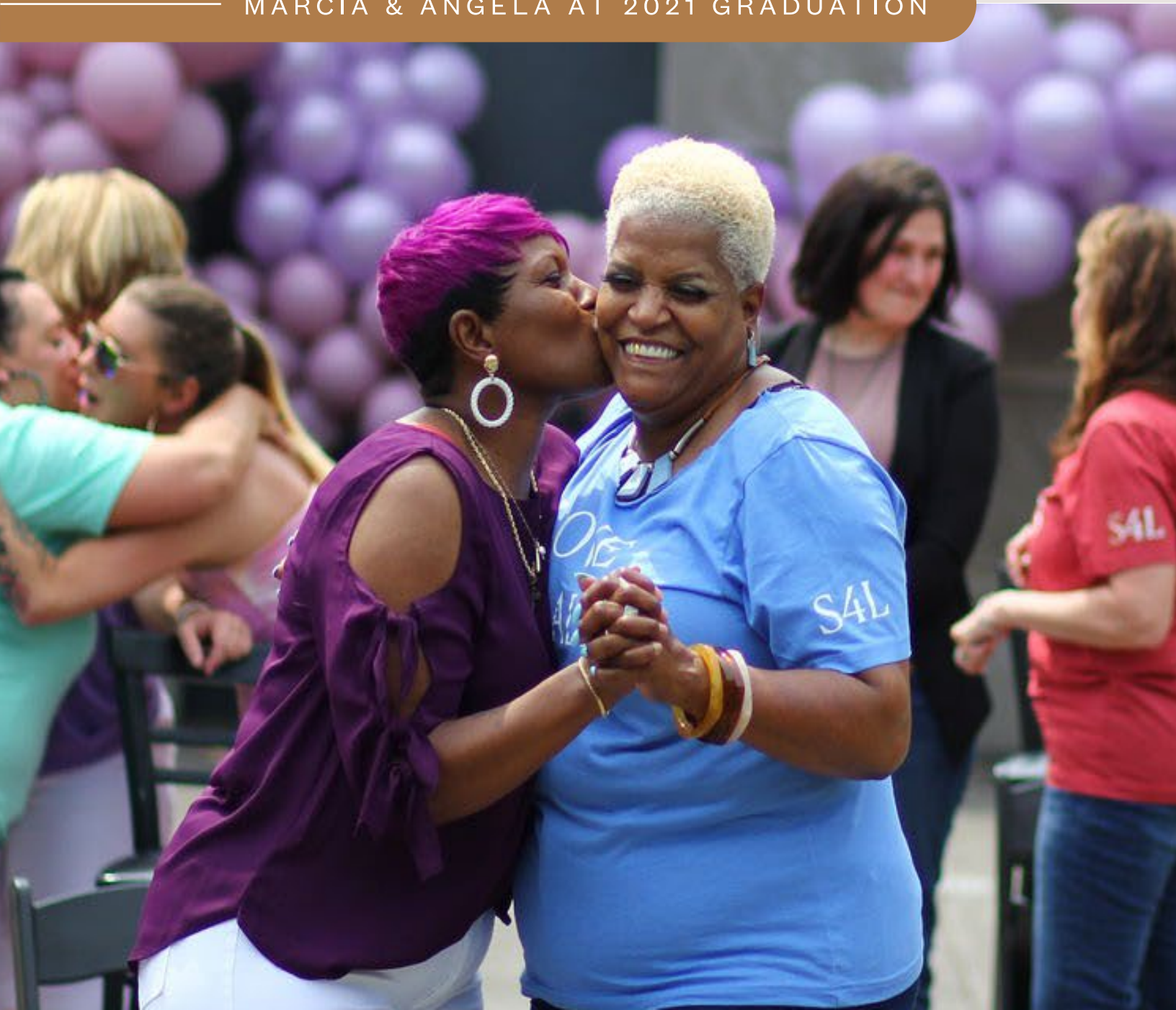
"Our bond as a community makes us family. I've always prayed I could be like my sister, Ty. I admire her compassion as a mother and I have fun being the cool aunt."- Kim, 7 Years Clean, Shop Manager, 2015 Graduate



Stronger Together In
NEW BEGINNINGS

"Through the support of my sisters, I have processed pain and healed! I have learned a new way of living that I haven't experienced in 30 years." -Angela, 2021 Graduate, 2 1/2 Years Clean

MARCIA & ANGELA AT 2021 GRADUATION



From Fear **TO FREEDOM**



MARCIA, 6 YEARS CLEAN LOGISTICS TEAM MEMBER

Marcia has worked steadily on her healing and recovery. While paying a fee to get her license, she discovered an active warrant in another county -- and \$20,000 in fines. She was devastated, but as Marcia says, "her Thistle Farms family went to work." The judge learned of and was moved by the story of Marcia's healing.

**THE WARRANT WAS WITHDRAWN. THE SENTENCE EXPIRED.
THE FINES DROPPED.**

"I am still in shock to know that nothing is holding me back anymore. It was difficult to be happy because I was always afraid that something bad would happen. This kind act freed me to get a license and a new car! I never, ever dreamed anything like this could happen to me." - Marcia

SHEILA, 4 YEARS CLEAN LOGISTICS TEAM MEMBER, 2020 GRADUATE

During Sheila's time at Thistle Farms, she demonstrated responsibility, maintained employment, and strengthened her relationship with her family. Although, she was making significant strides in her recovery, outstanding charges continued to weigh on her mind. She confided in her Thistle Farms community and a petition was presented on her behalf. Soon after, Sheila was overwhelmed with gratitude to learn the charges were dropped.



"I have a new sense of freedom knowing that I can go anywhere and not be afraid anymore. I can finally go back home and enjoy visits with my grandchild, without looking over my shoulder in fear." - Sheila

Stronger Together In **ACHIEVING GOALS**



LYNNITA
3 YEARS CLEAN
Residential Case
Coordinator,
2016 Graduate

Lynnita became a first-time homeowner. "There were a few bumps in the road, but Becca and Hal told me not to give up. Now, when I look at my house, I realize all the hard work and even the waiting was worth it."

Shelia earned her Masters of Social Work from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. "Our community encouraged me to dream big and walked with me on my journey of education. They empowered me to be the best person that I could be."

SHELIA
17 YEARS CLEAN
Director of Residential
Services, 2007 Graduate



JOSETTE
4 YEARS CLEAN
Manufacturing Team
Member, 2019
Graduate

"My car is more than transportation. It symbolizes everything that I have accomplished and my independence. I love my life now. I never want to go back to my old lifestyle. My car key represents my hope and motivation to keep moving forward."



JESSY

4 YEARS CLEAN
Café Front of House
Coordinator

Jessy built her credit, bought a car, purchased her first house, celebrated 4-years of sobriety, and regained custody of her two sons.

“My sons are so happy now that we are together in our new home. I told them, ‘This is your house.’ Finally, I feel like I am the woman I was always supposed to be. I’m the mother my children need and deserve.”

With her recently restored voting rights, Rachel cast her first ballot in 10 years. “Thistle Farms helped me recover from 20 years of bad choices. Now that I can vote again, I feel strong and confident. I know my voice will be heard and that is invaluable.”

RACHEL

7 YEARS CLEAN
Graduate Liaison
to Board, 2017
Graduate



LEIGH

3 YEARS CLEAN
2021 Graduate

Leigh regained custody of her daughter and reunited her family. “Because I took the time to heal, I can experience love and live in the light. I can look forward to building a beautiful future with my children.”

Stronger Together IN CELEBRATION

“Our graduates are the story of beauty that beckons us to come sit and watch. This is what love looks like.”

- Becca Stevens

2021 GRADUATION CELEBRATION AT BI-CENTENNIAL MALL



2021 GRADUATION

LOVE ON SO MANY LEVELS

Regina, one of our very first graduates, stands tall at the podium, kicking off the ceremony.

SHE IS A LIGHT.

She came before them and knows their journey.

Behind each of the graduates sits a mentor, ready to present the certificate of completion. They represent love that shows up. Over and over again.

Current program participants line the front row: holding handmade signs. Their sisters' stories give them hope and light their way. One day, they will be graduates too.

The Tennessee State Capitol bears peaceful witness that women survivors feel freedom and stand tall like a field of thistles.

Their strength and resilience is beautiful, undeniable, and palpable.

LOVE HEALS

LOVE HEALS EVERY BODY

Stronger Together In LIGHTING THE WAY HOME

The power of sisterhood has connected each woman:
Beginning with our founder - all the way to one of our
2021 graduates.



BECCA

Thistle Farms
Founder & President

"Regina, one of the first program graduates, showed me how it is possible for us to take up our crosses and follow love." - Becca



REGINA

25 Years Clean
1999 GRADUATE

"Being trafficked, I lost everything, including myself. Becca was my lifeline. She believed in me." - Regina



ERICKA

20 Years Clean
2003 GRADUATE

"I didn't think there was redemption for my life, but Regina changed my mind when she visited the jail and told me her story. She was my hope shot. She's the reason why I never went back." - Ericka

SISTERS FOR LIFE

LIGHTING THE WAY FOR OUR NEXT SISTER

As women complete our 2 year program, then they reach back to light the way for the next woman. Sisters for Life has roots in the Benedictine tradition. Our residents move from being guests, then long-term participants, and into taking life vows of sisterhood. It's a vow to community, to being there for each other, and unconditional love.



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SHELIA

17 Years Clean,
Director of Residential
Services

2007 GRADUATE

"I was in jail with Ericka. When she got released I found out that she had changed her life, It gave me hope that I could too." - Shelia



5

LEIGH

3 Years Clean
2021 GRADUATE

"When I hit rock bottom, I called Shelia. Watching her gave me hope. She told me, 'Always dream.'" - Leigh

IN GRATITUDE FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

2020-2021

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*Only gifts over \$1,000 are reflected in the list. We are extremely grateful for nearly 2,000 additional donors.

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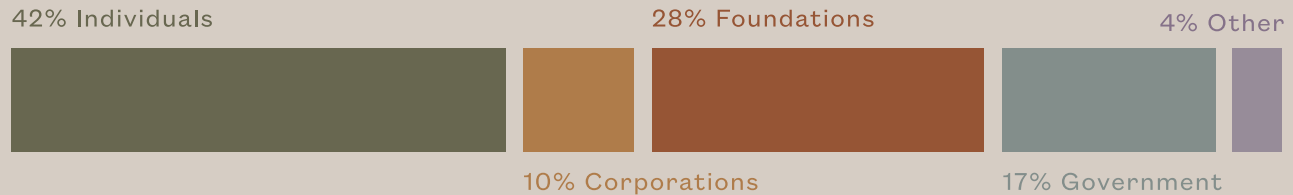
Dr. Kit Evans-Ford, Davenport, IA



Global Shared Trade Partner: ZUAHAZA
Colombia, South America

FINANCIALS

TOTAL DONATIONS BY DONOR TYPE



Statement of Financial Position

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

ASSETS

	FY 2021	FY 2020
Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,780,344	3,035,422
Accounts Receivable	263,912	294,162
Other Current Assets	296,352	228,871
Inventory	706,741	551,920
Property & Equipment	5,455,203	4,197,245
Intangible Assets, Net	39,712	69,125
TOTAL ASSETS	\$9,542,264	\$8,376,745

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES

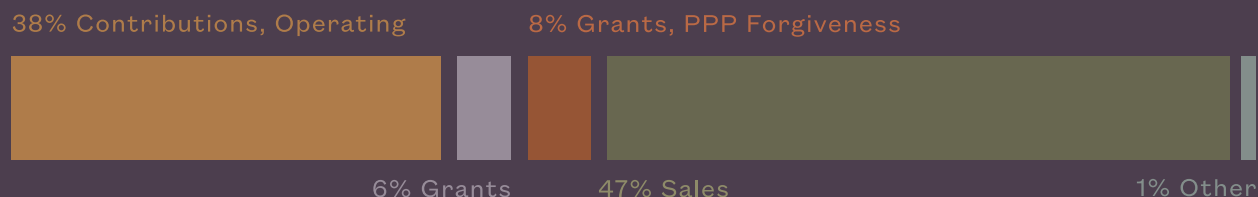
Accounts Payable	115,881	181,571
Accrued Liabilities	346,586	187,660
Deferred Grant	695,577	695,500
Other Current Liabilities	121,440	84,294
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$1,279,484	\$1,149,025

NET ASSETS

Temp. Restricted & Unrestricted Net Assets	8,073,166	7,162,114
Change In Net Assets	189,614	65,606
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$8,262,780	\$7,227,720
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$9,542,264	\$8,376,745

THISTLE FARMS

REVENUE SOURCES



Statement of Operating Activities

FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2021

REVENUE	FY 2021	FY 2020
Contributions, Operating	3,209,901	3,048,516
Grants	541,411	738,500
Grants, PPP Forgiveness	695,500	0
Sales	3,995,112	3,851,620
Other	71,224	41,927
TOTAL REVENUE	\$8,512,638	\$7,680,63
EXPENSES		
Direct Expenses	2,381,013	2,260,382
Payroll Expenses	3,356,129	3,045,929
Professional Fees	620,483	536,862
Travel and Entertainment Expenses	71,835	94,982
Advertising and Promotion	109,891	96,692
Other Program Expenses	378,890	371,251
Other Operating Expenses	294,838	243,173
Facilities	437,703	363,962
Deprecation and Amortization	672,313	601,724
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$8,323,023	\$7,614,957
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS, TOTAL	\$189,615	\$65,606

*FY21 Results as shown are unaudited

*Capital contributions not shown in operating activities totaled \$845,447 in FY21 and \$1,379,503 in FY20



WE ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

In the circle, there is no “us” or “them.” Only us.

And we will go so much further together than any
one person can go alone.

It is by walking alongside one another that we can
fully experience how love heals.

THISTLE FARMS

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THISTLEFARMS.ORG