



LIVE THE LIFE



STRENGTHENING MARRIAGES AND FAMILIES SINCE 1998

2020

ANNUAL
REPORT



FROM THE FOUNDERS

Dear Friends and Supporters:

It is hard to get around the fact that last year was among the worst in America's long history. We are a divided nation, and the coronavirus pandemic continues to leave us more isolated, stressed, and vulnerable than ever. Many of us are depressed, angry, and in some cases, just numb. Families are forced to adjust to constant changes at school, at work, and in daily life. Research is telling us domestic violence is at an all time high. Marriages and families are struggling in unprecedented ways. Since our founding in 1998, it is safe to say we have never needed relationship and marriage education programs and services more.

Despite these enormous challenges, with your support Live the Life has been able to pivot and try to stay relevant in the middle of the challenging times in which we live. We hope you will be encouraged as you look over our Annual Report, and conclude that in the midst of chaos, together we have been able to make a difference.

Our team is developing a "Stronger Together" campaign to bring our communities together to build stronger marriages and healthier families in 2021. As we flesh out this project, we would love to hear your thoughts and ideas, and work together to bring love and healing to our homes.

With love and appreciation,

Richard and Elizabeth Albertson
Founders



LIVE THE LIFE

CORE STRATEGIC GOALS:

1. Reduce the Florida divorce rate by 50% by 2029
2. Increase the marriage rate
3. Reduce the teen pregnancy rate and the non-marital birth rate
4. Increase church attendance

STRATEGIC PLAN TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES

Our strategic plan can be summed up in one sentence: We empower faith-based and community-based organizations to implement highly effective, self-sustaining, relationship and marriage (RME) programs across all ages and stages of the marital life cycle.

The key building blocks required to execute our strategic plan across Florida are:

1. Increase the **SUPPLY** of Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) programs based on a shared **VISION** for strong marriages and families
2. Increase the **DEMAND** for RME
3. Provide a Website Clearinghouse of RME tools and resources available in each community we serve. This is where **INCREASED SUPPLY** meets **INCREASED DEMAND**
4. Provide **SUPPORT** for individuals and couples through expanding "Circles of Care" including mentoring and coaching
5. Provide Consulting/Implementation Assistance to help faith-based and community-based organizations to implement RME program **SKILLS** in their environment
6. Provide Outcome Evaluation to measure the effectiveness of RME Programs
7. Develop and train strong and passionate local leadership teams to raise the funds needed to execute our Community Marriage Initiatives

STRONGER TOGETHER

From 2016 to 2018, Live the Life was the lead agency in a nationally funded project in Jacksonville, FL. During that time, the divorce rate in Duval County fell by 24% - a real home run! This amazing accomplishment was featured in national news articles, radio shows, and academic write-ups including three separate reports written by researchers at Florida State University, Brigham Young University, and the University of Virginia. The conclusion from all three of those reports was that while it was highly likely that this reduction in Jacksonville's divorce rate was caused by our project, this causation could not be proven from the results in only one community. Therefore, the researchers encouraged the replication of this type of approach in other communities to see if similar results would result.

The purpose of the Stronger Together campaign is to do just that. Florida is made up of 67 counties, 59 of which have populations of less than 700,000 people. Our plan is to divide up the 14 of those counties with the highest divorce rates into two categories - seven in which we will invest at the rate of \$1.00 per person per year, and the other seven in which we will not invest. Over the next five years we will watch to see how much faster the divorce rates fall in the 7 Intervention Counties than in the 7 Non-Intervention (Control Group) Counties. Both sets of counties are listed in the table below.

If successful, the Stronger Together campaign will provide very clear and compelling evidence to support what the researchers who studied what occurred in Jacksonville believed, but could not prove with only one data point - which is the cause and effect relationship between Live the Life's strategic Relationship and Marriage Education work and the 24% reduction in Duval County's divorce rate. It will also clearly demonstrate both the replicability and the scalability of this model. As a result, because of Live the Life's primary role in both of these projects, we will be well-positioned to raise the \$22 million (\$1.00 per person per year) needed for a state-wide campaign. And even if state-wide funding does not occur right away, our success in this project will set the stage to replicate more of these types of projects in communities across the state, setting Live the Life up to achieve its main strategic goal of cutting Florida's divorce rate in half by 2029.



Intervention Counties

Rank	County	Divorce Rate per 1,000	Population
1	Okaloosa	4.99	201,104
2	Calhoun	4.81	14,982
3	Bay	4.74	179,900
7	Walton	4.32	70,352
9	Baker	4.13	28,089
11	Wakulla	3.92	32,418
12	Nassau	3.91	85,135
TOTAL			611,980

Non-Intervention (Control Group) Counties

Rank	County	Divorce Rate per 1,000	Population
4	Monroe	4.71	73,253
5	Lafayette	4.64	8,613
6	Columbia	4.43	70,614
8	Desoto	4.17	35,718
10	Union	4.00	15,985
13	Osceola	3.84	368,678
14	Putman	3.83	73,012
TOTAL			645,873

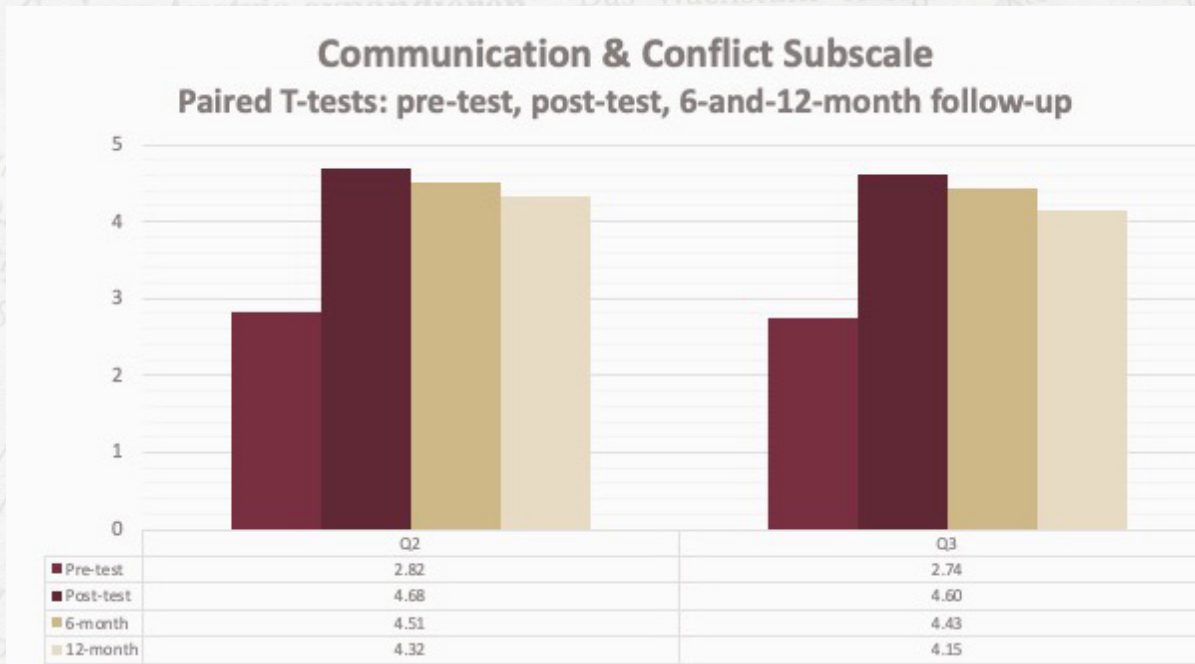


INDEPENDENT LONG-TERM RESEARCH FROM FSU SHOWS STUNNING RESULTS

For the past 4 years, Live the Life has provided Marriage and Family Resiliency Programs to active U.S. military members and their spouses at 4 different Air Force Bases. Florida State University's Florida Center for Prevention Research (FCPR) completed a long-term independent research evaluation of our Adventures in Marriage (AIM) curriculum on military couples. FCPR documented some of the largest effect sizes ever recorded for any Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) curriculum in the U.S.

Dr. Alan Hawkins from Brigham Young University has been looking at studies on marriage programs/curricula for decades, and when he saw the AIM data from FSU, his response was: "These are some of the most impressive results I have ever seen in the RME field."

The Bar Chart below highlights the dramatic long-term shifts for U.S. military couples regarding essential communication and conflict resolution skills: Before, After, 6 Months After and 12 Months After the AIM program.



SOURCE: Florida State University, Florida Center for Prevention Research, June 2020

The Adventures in Marriage curriculum has been independently researched and validated as one of the best RME programs in the country to save marriages. This strong research base provides hope for countless marriages across the nation.

SOUTH FLORIDA

2020 was a year of beauty and pain for everyone worldwide. We were all impacted and most of us had to make changes. Many of us had an empty seat at our holiday tables because a loved one has passed. Some of us have suffered isolation and we've longed for life-giving gatherings. But it's been a beautiful year as well. The pace of life has slowed, we've read a book, put together a puzzle, had long conversations, worked in our homes, and people have been in settings where they've needed to come together and proactively face their "tomorrows" together.

Live the Life South Florida can bear testimony to both the pain and the beauty and we too have had to make changes. Some have come brokenhearted, in need of healing, and others have come because they're deeply committed to loving well. As an organization we had to reassess how we would continue our mission of strengthening marriages and families in a time where we couldn't gather together hence our move to online platforms for students and couples. God enlarged our territory and expanded our tents. This year we've provided a minimum of 10 hours of gospel-soaked relationship education to more than 2900 students and 3000 seriously dating or marrieds, in 8 countries and 28 states, in Spanish and English. So what's ahead for 2021?

• In addition to in-person classes, we will permanently offer Zoom online courses a minimum of 4 times a year in Spanish and English.

• A continued relationship with the WinShape Foundation (Chick-fil-a) providing marriage workshops and our marriage intensive, HOPE Weekend on the WinShape campus in Rome, Georgia.

• A partnership with Church United offering Adventures in Marriage to pastors and spouses.

• Providing our StudentLIFE curriculum to nearly 3,000 students in 35 schools in Broward and Palm Beach county.

As we start this new year and next season of ministry together, we are convinced that God is up to something. That's just who our God is. He's always creating and recreating, always saving and redeeming. He says so in Isaiah 43:19... "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" (ESV).

Thank you for all you've done in 2020 and we pray that you'll continue alongside us in 2021. We are Stronger Together!



Because of YOU – Top Ways you made a difference for families in South Florida:

1. Middle School/High School partners: **35**
2. Number of REAL Essentials Instructors certified: **42**
3. Student program graduates: **2,931**
4. Relationship Education adult program graduates: **3,176**

What people are saying:

Thousands of couples participated in Adventures in Marriage via Zoom but one couple, specifically, displayed God's sovereignty in the middle of uncertainty, Daniel and Nora. This Canadian couple soon won our love and they shared their online experience with us: "Life since the pandemic is all very different, but we found some really neat things, meeting your team via Zoom. Listening to teachings and the other couples sharing has become a form of worship for us. God put us together to become one and by studying how we can be closer to one another, by understanding His plan for us, it's a form of worship." Daniel and Nora continue to stay connected, participating in The Power of Us online and even a virtual Date Night!

"The 'Reclaim' weekend has been absolutely, unbelievably, fantastic!!! Such an amazing ministry to couples, (And especially to Faye & I).....so well presented, so much variety of emotions, we laughed, we cried, we prayed, we hugged, we talked, We fellowshiped with amazing people, we were ministered to by your incredible staff and coaches, cannot say enough great things about the reclaim weekend. Most of all we grew in our love for God and for one another, and you gave us very, very healthy and practical tools to implement for the betterment of our relationship and our upcoming marriage"

SOUTH FLORIDA STAFF

Lisa May, Executive Director

Charlie Halleran, Director of Marriage Programs

Amanda May, Director of Student Programs

Elliott Bartlett, Student Program Coordinator

Jessica Campbell, Digital Media Coordinator

April Halleran, Administrative Assistant

NORTH FLORIDA

We had many victories in 2020! One of them started with a phone call from a pastor friend that knew of a high-profile affair in the community, but also knew it was going to take some serious work to help this struggling marriage.

The pastor told us he did not have the skills or experience to deal with this crisis couple. This was where our team stepped in to do what we absolutely love to do - help strengthen marriages and families. We started with the presenting problem and went from there. Like many couples, there was a lot going on underneath the surface that had not been addressed. We helped build communication and conflict resolution skills. Trust started to be built again. After taking this couple through several of our relationship education programs and services, finally there was a breakthrough. Today they report that their marriage is the strongest and healthiest it has ever been!

But wait, there is more! Later on, this couple agreed to become marriage coaches for Live the Life in order to help other couples discover the joy they had found. In December of 2020, they went to one of our marriage retreats and helped coach other couples. God can restore broken marriages. It takes both parties, a lot of hard work, some skills training, forgiveness, and the grace of God...but it can be done. We are glad to join God in this incredible work. If you, or a couple you know are in crisis, pick up the phone or drop us a line and get the process started for reconciliation.

Because of YOU – Top Ways you made a difference for families in North Florida:

1. Active Church partnerships: **23**
2. Middle School/High School partners: **8**
3. Number of REAL Essentials Instructors certified: **21**
4. Student program graduates: **1,208**
5. Relationship education adult program graduates: **1,834**
6. Marriages saved: **56**
7. Cost savings to U.S. Taxpayers: **\$1,725,752**

What people are saying:

"I believe the Lord brought you to my mind tonight. Chris and I are doing well and are so thankful for you and your ministry in our lives. You and the teaching that you've developed were a special gift from God at the perfect time in our lives. We still continue to implement the tools that you gave us to better our communication. So- thank you. Know (and rejoice) that God is using you in a special way. Keep going strong."

"Our team debriefed after the call and agreed that your team excels at authentic partnerships. It is clear that the communities value the work being done – even in the midst of a pandemic. I am excited about the upcoming year even though it might look differently than normal." Tiffane N. Evans, State Adolescent Health Coordinator, Florida Department of Health

"Today was amazing! Thank you for sharing the Live the Life lessons with our teachers and staff. The presentation was very inspiring, to say the least! The three sessions that you covered with our faculty and staff were life altering. Passion and Purpose, Communication Skills & Barriers, and Healthy People Ask were all delivered with so much passion. I believe that the lessons shared today will be helpful to our staff in their personal and professional life. Thanks for continuing to work with our team to provide practical learning opportunities for our staff and students." Maurice D. Stokes, Principal, James A. Shanks Middle School

NORTH FLORIDA STAFF

Doug Stephens, Director, North Florida Region
Tank Ackerman, Business Development Director
Sarah Ackerman, Director of Marriage Programs
Ashley Albertson, Communications Director

Kaylyn Hudson, Executive Assistant
Zakiya Robinson, Program Assistant
Alphonso Robinson, Communications Assistant
Cameron Briggs, Multimedia Intern

NORTHEAST FLORIDA

2020 was a year that tested all assumptions: about how to maintain healthy relationships while socially distant; about how we interact as families; and about how we serve our community well during a crisis. In such a challenging environment, we anchored ourselves to our purpose and our values. Fundamentally, Live the Life Northeast Florida exists to strengthen marriages and families and lower the divorce rate. We provide marriage and relationship education knowing that strong families create strong communities. This year, despite its challenges, we continued to demonstrate that mission.



As just one example among many, we created a new approach to conducting programs. We moved most of our programming online and increased our social media presence by 300%. This year taught us that we are capable of much more than we previously thought, and going forward, flexibility and creativity like this will help us find new ways to fulfill our purpose.

Our focus in 2021 will be creating a new community-wide marriage initiative called Stronger Together, building scale with sustainability. The core elements of this project will be to: INSPIRE, PROVIDE RESOURCES & SUPPORT, and to MOBILIZE the COMMUNITY. Our goal is to become thought leaders on marriage support, family strengthening and divorce reduction. The Stronger Together campaign will significantly lower the divorce rate in Northeast Florida and exponentially increase our organizational capacity by the end of 2025.

To our supporters and constituents, thank you for everything you have done to move us forward on the journey toward a stronger Northeast Florida. None of it happens without you.



Because of YOU – Top Ways you made a difference for Families in Northeast Florida:

1. Active Church partnerships: **42**
2. Middle School/High School partners: **8**
3. Number of REAL Essentials Instructors certified: **28**
4. Relationship education program graduates: **511**
5. Marriages saved: **46**
6. Cost Savings to U.S. Taxpayers: **\$1,417,582**

What couples are saying:

“It has been several years since we worked with Live the Life, but HOPE weekend saved our marriage 5 years ago when even our marriage counselor said she couldn’t help us. We still do the temperature reading every night before bed. Please pass on our thanks for the gift of a repaired and happy marriage.”

NORTHEAST FLORIDA STAFF

Rossi Wright, Division Director

Mieko Paige, Marriage and Family Program Manager



NORTHWEST FLORIDA

2020 was a challenging year to be sure for all of us. In Panama City and NW Florida, the double whammy of catastrophic hurricane Michael and the global pandemic has put us at the proverbial “2 steps forward, 1 step back,” but God is working. 2020 started with great momentum as we engaged a church new to Live the Life, Eastgate Fellowship, on Panama City Beach with a highly successful “Adventures in Marriage” (AIM) event that produced 32 graduates.

Like so many, we have adapted and offered virtual AIM classes online. One of those couples (unknown to us) would later start their very own church, Calvary Panama City in late September. We launched an “Adventures in Marriage” event with Calvary and had our biggest event to date, with 24 couples! Many marriages were deeply impacted and the church is intent on having us back in 2021.

With in-person events being halted for so many months, we switched gears to provide regular Facebook Live video teachings as well as meeting with couples via phone and Zoom for couples coaching. One such couple, which was headed for divorce, was rescued and their marriage restored. We also led another young couple through the “Start Smart” pre-marital training via Zoom. We're already seeing receptivity like never before with opportunities for marriage ministry and partnership.

What couples are saying:

One of our favorite testimonials came from a sweet couple at Eastgate Fellowship, Clay and Lisa Stretch. Clay is a combat veteran who suffers from severe PTSD which causes those affected to shut down and exhibit extra precaution in everyday life. For the last 10 years, this caused almost a total breakdown with communication and intimacy in their marriage. They had seen several therapists and counselors through the VA system, but there wasn't much success. They attended our “Adventures in Marriage” event, and they received follow up coaching afterwards. In their words, “having tried multiple other methods to close our communication gap, we can honestly say that the conference excelled in being the catalyst we needed to bring us marital growth and healing”

This is why we do what we do, and we know that many more stories like these await us in 2021 and beyond. We are already seeing receptivity like we've never seen with partnership opportunities for marriage ministry and education.

Because of YOU – Top ways you made a difference for families in Northwest Florida:

1. We held our largest “Adventures in Marriage” event to date in NW Florida, **24** couples attended the December event at Calvary Church, which is more than a quarter of the church's congregation.
2. Lighthouse Church began their first full year of marriage ministry, generating **116** graduates of “Adventures in Marriage”.
3. Our marriage column for “Go Magazine” reaches **30,000** readers in NW Florida each quarter
4. Relationship Education Program Graduates: **230**

NORTHWEST FLORIDA STAFF

Dennis Stoica, Division Manager
Logan Kelly, Marriage Ministry Specialist
Raquel Tripp, Marriage Ministry Specialist

MILITARY RESILIENCY

The primary goal of Live the Life's Marriage and Family Resiliency Program is to provide targeted resiliency events in order to help preserve the health and well-being of military warriors and their families. To this end, we seek to preserve military families, help reduce the stress of separation, help enhance communication between spouses, develop healthy relationship skills among all family members, and foster teamwork.

Because of YOU – Top Ways you made a difference for military families:

1. The number of couples who lacked the knowledge and skills to communicate well dropped from 151 down to 1. That is a **99% drop**
2. The number of couples in distressed marriages headed for divorce dropped from 59 down to 5. That is a **92% drop**
3. The number of couples able to resolve conflicts in a healthy way increased from 144 to 398. That is a **176% increase**
4. Number of military bases served: **4**
5. Adult Program graduates: **914**

What military couples are saying:

"Literally everything was helpful and we both feel like a huge weight was lifted off our shoulders"

"I learned how to properly relay my feelings instead of bottling them up to protect my wife"

"I enjoyed every aspect of this weekend. Even the awkward moments made me realize we need more and better communication."

"This weekend saved our marriage. I think it has made a huge impact in our marriage in a very positive way"

"It helped give us tools to fix a relationship that my spouse didn't know was broken, and has made me change my mind about a separation"

"This gave us the opportunity to reset. We are so busy, and while we were not fighting or having major problems getting along, we just had started drifting a bit and weren't making US a priority"

"I believe this can transform our marriage if we will use the tools"

"This was life changing for us"

"Contractor performed at the highest level of expertise; received positive feedback on materials, activities, locations, presentations, and involvement. This is one of the most popular resiliency programs at Hurlburt Field.
U.S. Air Force CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

The Contractor's passion to provide individuals and couples the practical tools, skills, and resources needed to transform marriages and families were highly effective. The participants consistently rated the quality and delivery of the Adventures in Marriage and Family Frontiers programs highly. Overall, the contractor provides a quality product to Airmen and families." U.S. Air Force CONTRACTOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT



2020 BY THE NUMBERS



5,783

Total hours volunteers donated



4,585

Total Student Program Graduates



\$4,160,295

Cost Savings to Taxpayers from marriages saved in 2020



5,751

Total Adult Program Graduates



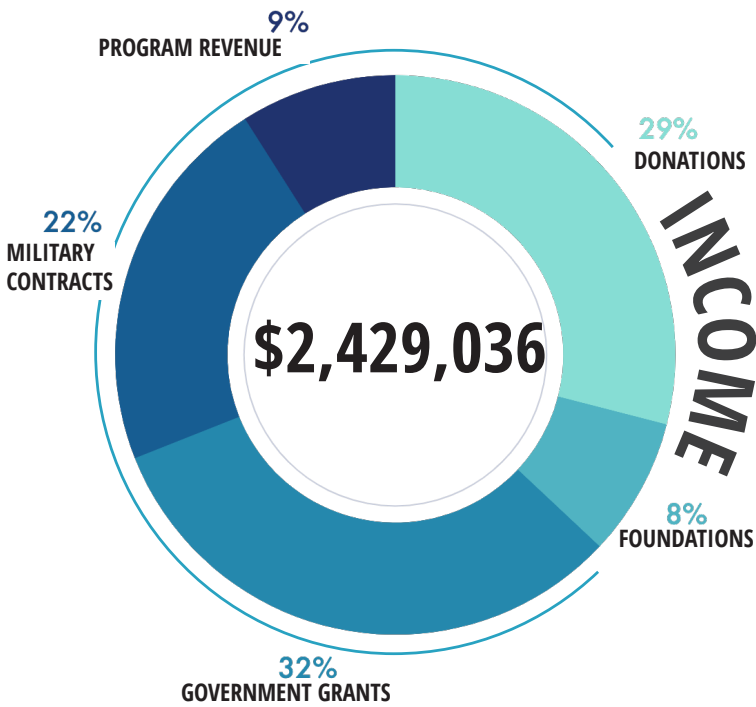
OTHER IMPACTS OF YOUR SUPPORT IN 2020:

Middle School/High School partners: 51

Number of marriages saved: 135

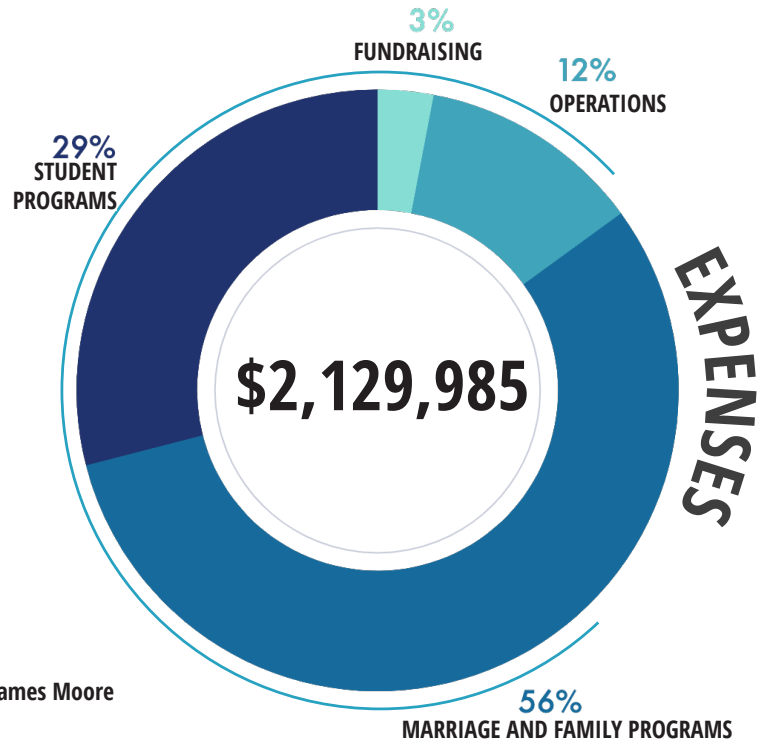
Number of volunteers: 508

Average program dosage: 9.34 hours



2020 INCOME
\$2,429,036

2020 EXPENSES
\$2,129,985



For a copy of Live the Life's most recent Financial Review completed by the James Moore Company, please email richard@livethelife.org

One Couples Story:
 Curtis and Suzanne Whitfield



We are and will forever be grateful for the ministry of Live the Life. Our marriage was on the brink of divorce and Live the Life ministries was there for us. Communication was gone, unfaithfulness had occurred, jobs were lost, and we were going through this publicly as my husband was a pastor of our local church.

As we were grasping for help, which we didn't think anything or anyone could help our situation, Live the Life was the ONLY place we knew to go. Within a few days, we were seen by Bob Garment, and in two weeks, we went through a 2 day intensive session. God knew exactly what He was doing when we were paired with Bob. The practical tools and skills we were given during this time were a huge help. We learned to communicate effectively. We dug through our past to see how that shaped us into who we are and how we react. We learned how to meet each other's needs, and how to heal deep wounds.

After major struggles in our marriage of 13 years, we have found healing, peace and joy in our marriage. Since we have connected with Live the Life, we have also seen countless others benefit from your services as well. We love that we have a safe, effective place to recommend to others.

We will forever be thankful for Bob Garment, Live the Life, and the staff that works tirelessly for families.



LIVE THE LIFE

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LIVE THE LIFE CORE PROGRAMS



Adventures in Marriage: Highly interactive, internationally acclaimed marriage education program provides practical skills for healthy, happy, and successful relationships.



True North Project: Provides relationship education to students to help them learn how to live and love well, and set clear goals for a successful future.



Start Smart: Comprehensive premarital program for dating and engaged couples. When it comes to your most valuable relationships, an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure.



Hope Weekends: Intensive weekend program has saved 80% of troubled marriages since 2003. It transforms good marriages into great marriages, and helps troubled marriages become healed and restored.



Family Frontiers: Parents and children are more stressed, tired, and rushed than ever. Family Frontiers provides the strategies, tips and practical tools to work through the everyday challenges of raising a modern family.



Date Nights: Bringing the community together for fun, food and marriage enrichment

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