



*Lauren's*  
FOUNDATION

*Building Community in Berks County*

**2023**

ANNUAL  
REPORT



# LAUREN'S FOUNDATION

Lauren's Foundation was created by the family of Lauren Fitzgerald, a life-long Berks County, PA resident who died in 2005 from complications related to a brain tumor, at the age of 20. The Foundation honors Lauren's memory by supporting local families through a variety of charitable funds that support high school seniors, families with seriously ill children, brain tumor research and organ donation awareness.



Lauren Fitzgerald

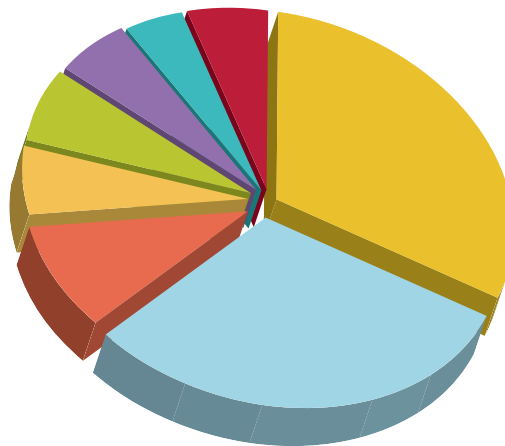
A quote from American poet Maya Angelou, adopted by Lauren following her diagnosis, serves as a guiding principle for much of the Foundation's work. That quote reads "I can be changed by what happens to me. I refuse to be reduced by it." The Foundation recognizes, supports and celebrates individuals and families that persevere despite significant, adverse life circumstances. Lauren's Foundation is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit, registered with the PA Bureau of Charities.

## OUR MISSION

1. Support families that are caring for loved ones afflicted with a brain tumor or other serious illness by providing financial assistance with living expenses.
2. Provide scholarships and recognition for students that have faced adverse life circumstances, yet persevered in the face of their adversity to excel academically and personally.
3. Support recreational and educational programs that serve families, children and adults in the Berks community.
4. Promote brain tumor research and awareness with the American Brain Tumor Association (ABTA).
5. Raise awareness of the organ donation process and encourage organ donation enrollment.

## TOTAL GIVING TO DATE

- 1 BERKS HIGH SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIPS  
\$112,000, (96 awards)
- 2 SUNFLOWER FAMILY FUND  
\$107,185
- 3 AMERICAN BRAIN TUMOR ASSOC.  
\$30,000
- 4 COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIPS  
\$19,000



- 5 LOCAL CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS  
\$26,500
- 6 BERKS NONPROFIT DONATIONS  
\$22,068
- 7 BERKS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
\$15,000
- 8 GIFT-OF-LIFE FAMILY HOUSE  
\$21,000

## OUR 2023 GIVING

- ✓ \$12,000 BERKS HS SCHOLARSHIPS
- ✓ \$ 7,385 SUNFLOWER FAMILY FUND
- ✓ \$ 4,000 COMMUNITY PROGRAMS
- ✓ \$ 3,068 OPP. HOUSE, JP II CENTER
- ✓ \$ 3,000 GIFT-OF-LIFE FAMILY HOUSE
- ✓ \$ 700 ABTA BRAIN TUMOR RESEARCH

## SCHOLARSHIPS

A scholarship program was created for high school seniors who have overcome significant adversity in their lives to successfully complete high school, and who will continue their education at an accredited college/university or trade school. Students can apply annually from Jan. 1st to Mar. 31st at [www.laurensfoundation.org](http://www.laurensfoundation.org).





# GIFT-OF-LIFE FAMILY HOUSE



## GIFT of LIFE Family House

In 2018, Lauren's Foundation began supporting the Gift-of-Life Family House, located in Philadelphia, PA. Their stated mission is to serve as a "home away from home for transplant patients and their families by providing temporary, affordable lodging and

supportive services to those who travel to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania for transplant-related care..."

Lauren's Foundation is a committed advocate of Gift-of-Life. Lauren chose to donate her organs and as a result, was able to give five (5) people the gift of life – her heart, lungs, liver and kidneys were used to serve those in need. Become a donor! Enroll at Gift-of-Life, [www.donors1.org](http://www.donors1.org).



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & INVOLVEMENT



Earth Day Poster-Making

Lauren's Foundation believes in giving back to the community in ways that create and cultivate civic engagement. **WE LOVE KIDS!** They represent our future - that's why we support and provide resources for children's activities and programs offered and conducted by local municipalities. We are

also proud to support other local organizations, schools, and nonprofits, such as the Opportunity House in Reading and the John Paul II Center for Special Learning.



Planting flowers at Happy Hollow Park on Earth Day, 2023

# SUNFLOWER FAMILY FUND



Xavier with Dad, Noel and Mom, Lisa

In 2023, your support allowed us to provide several months of rent assistance for a local Reading family. Xavier has Neurofibromatosis type 1. He has tumors that lie near major organs, his eyes and blood vessels that are inoperable. As a result, he takes daily chemotherapy medication. His condition requires frequent hospital visits and constant monitoring.

The Sunflower Family Fund helps local families struggling with

the costs of caring for a seriously or terminally ill child by helping with household expenses - rent/mortgage, utilities, and insurance. This fund also helps with travel, lodging and meal expenses for extended visits at out-of-town medical facilities, providing much needed relief for parents, by allowing them to focus on their child's health and well being.

# THE DREXEL UNIVERSITY CONNECTION

Lauren's Foundation enjoys a special relationship with Drexel University, Lauren's first choice for her studies as an Interior Design major. She rowed for the Crew Team, worked in the intramural sports program and joined a service sorority, Delta Phi Epsilon. To this day, DPhiE sorority members from Drexel University come out in force to participate in our annual Fitzy's Halloween 5K Run as volunteers in various capacities.



## DREXEL UNIVERSITY College of Medicine

to offer assistance with our 5K run. Students set up a tent and engaged children with an educational and informative display as well as interactive activities with their Cutting Edge Anatomy Club. In 2023, medical students from the Health Outreach Projects (HOP) organization that provides community-based healthcare and programs also participated.

In 2021, a new Drexel connection was created when students at the newly established Drexel Medical School in West Reading reached out



Drexel Health Outreach Project students

*"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."* Coretta Scott King

# Thank You to Our 2023 Sponsors!

*Helping Us to Build Community in Berks County*



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They care about the Berks community - and their support allows us to fulfill our mission to help those in need. Email us at [sponsors@laurensfoundation.org](mailto:sponsors@laurensfoundation.org) to learn how you can get involved by becoming a sponsor!

*Thank you runners, participants, volunteers, Wyomissing Boro & Police Dept., the sisters of Delta Phi Epsilon, Drexel Medical School students and the Fleet Feet West Reading staff for your support!*

**WWW.LAURENSFOUNDATION.ORG**