



BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

# ANNUAL REPORT

— JULY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2021 - JUNE 30<sup>TH</sup> 2022 —





# MISSION & VALUES

At Best Christmas Ever (BCE), we serve families who have fallen upon tough times, through no fault of their own. BCE partners with local leaders and businesses to bless each BCE family with a custom & unique Best Christmas Ever, tailored to the family situation. BCE provides continual support to families following their BCE, through our foundational BCE Family Pillars.

We have created a proven framework for local leaders to create and experience the results of unreasonable generosity and generational impact. We operate as a faith-based organization in principle and integrity. We do not identify with a specific denomination; however, our principles of operation and service are biblical in nature.

Best Christmas Ever is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization.

## *Best Christmas Ever exists because of you.*

Over the past 11 years, tens of thousands of people have come together to lift up over 3,000 individuals who have fallen on crazy tough times.

In an age when the media wants us to believe that we are divided and against each other, the Best Christmas Ever story tells us something much different. It reminds us that our neighbors care for each other and are there to pick each other up when they fall; that even complete strangers care for and want the best for one another.

These past two years, specifically, have been a challenge for us all, with fear and uncertainty at an all-time high.

What we decided to do as an organization was to have faith, to double down, and increase our staffing and support offerings because, if there ever was a time for Best Christmas Ever, it was then and now. Together, we were able to impact more families than we ever have before and continue to expand to areas that we were not yet in.

Two notable foundation partners that have allowed for this impact are Kowalski's 4 Kids and the Astrup Family Foundation, along with numerous other foundations, families, volunteers, companies, and organizations. BCE would not exist without you, and we are forever grateful for your heart and dedication to families who have fallen on tough times through no fault of their own.

With gratitude,

**Don Liimatainen**

Founder/President

**Lou Nanne**

Chairperson

## FAITH

Falling on hard times can leave a family in a difficult place. We want them to know there is a whole community out there to lift them up. We invite each family to connect with a local church or pastor to provide them a community of hope, support, and guidance in this time of need. It's important to know that we are not alone during hard times.

## FAMILY

We want to come alongside families who have fallen on hard times by offering support and mentorship to each family, based on what they are going through. We envision being able to support families after their BCE by providing them with a trusted network of therapists and psychologists who are willing to donate their time and support to these families

## FINANCE

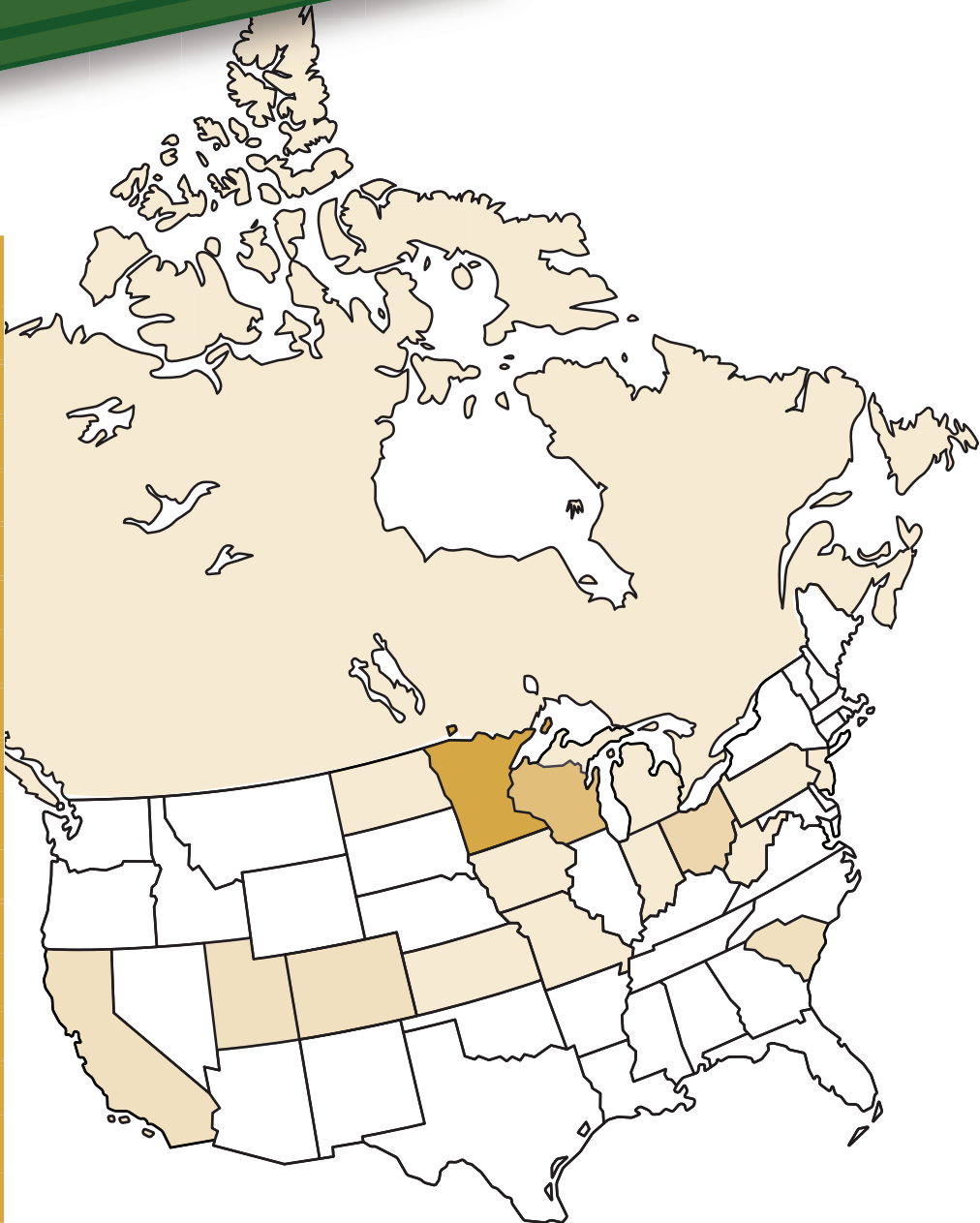
For many families, financial difficulties are a result of other difficult circumstances. We offer the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University (FPU) Course to each family receiving the Best Christmas Ever. Once they complete the course, they are given an additional \$1000 grant towards the debt of their choice. We hope this paves the path to financial freedom for each family.

## HEALTH

Most families fall on hard times due to some sort of health issue. Typically, there has been something that happened within the year that turned their life upside down. We hope to provide families with additional follow up for health that includes \$1000 in gift cards for fresh healthy food upon completion of the Total Wellness Health Program.

**94.8%**  
OF OUR REVENUE GOES TO OUR PROGRAMS!

TEAMS BY STATE	
State	BCE Teams
California	2
Canada	1
Colorado	2
Iowa	1
Indiana	1
Kansas	1
Michigan	1
Minnesota	93
Missouri	1
N. Dakota	1
New Jersey	1
Ohio	3
Pennsylvania	1
S. Carolina	2
Utah	2
Wisconsin	21
West Virginia	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>135</b>



**THE BCE MOVEMENT IS GROWING!**

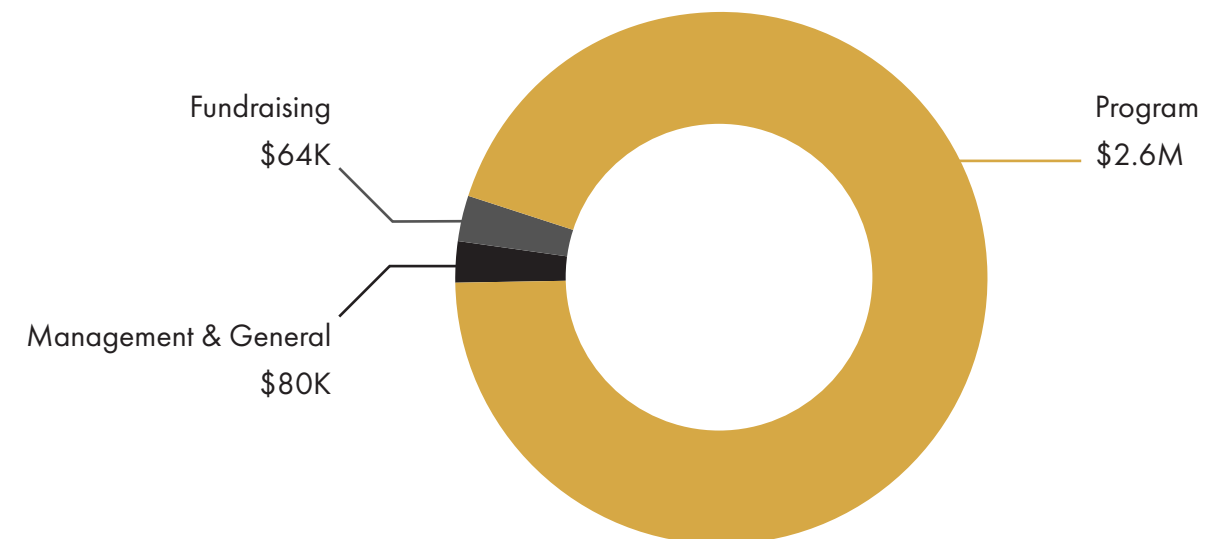
# FINANCIALS

For Fiscal year July 1st, 2021 - June 30th, 2022, Best Christmas Ever raised \$2.8 million in contributed revenue. This surpassed our revenue from the previous year by over \$600K, which is our largest increase year to year.

## OPERATING REVENUE \$2.8M



## OPERATING EXPENSES \$2.78M



## The Story of Brittney

Brittney M. has been my best friend for over a decade now. She has always been there for me and others in any way she could. When I first met Brittney, she worked at a store next to where my brother worked in the Mall of America. After meeting her a few times, I found out that she had to walk a long way to reach her home after getting off the bus at night, so I decided to offer to drive her home from then on. She accepted the offer, and I was surprised when I found out that she was working to support herself and her younger sister all on her own. Her mom and father were not around, so as a child, she took over the role of a parental figure. I am still amazed by her ability to do all she did and raise her younger sister, especially with what little she had. Multiple times, I saw her pick up food for her sister but none for herself. She always made sure she provided for her sister first.



Now, she is older and has two beautiful daughters that she works endlessly to try and give the world to. No matter what life throws at her, she finds a way to be there as a mother and wife. One day, she was in unbearable pain while at work, and she needed to go to the hospital as she was becoming physically sick from the pain. Brittney has no health insurance due to how expensive it is for the family, and she does not qualify for state insurance. She has always made sure that both of her daughters are seen by doctors, which usually didn't cost too much; however, this



hospital visit turned out to be much more expensive than she thought it would be. Brittney's gallbladder needed to be removed immediately; it was so bad that it had already become septic and was causing her serious health issues. She made sure to be very clear in her communication with the practitioners, explaining that she had no health insurance and asking them to reduce the cost by any means possible and get her released from the hospital as soon as possible. In the end, the bills from the hospital and her surgery were so high that they would take her approximately 5-10 years to pay off fully. As a result, the family has been on a very limited

budget to make monthly payments. So, many of their dreams have not been an option due to this burden, one of them being moving closer to their family and turning their rent payment into a mortgage payment.

Brittney has always been there for so many of us, and it breaks my heart that she is struggling. She has been a rock for so many of us in her life. Yet, through all this, she has had a positive attitude and has tried to stay strong for her family. Sometimes, even a rock needs a little help from its surroundings to get through a storm. That way, the rock can continue to be "the rock" that holds the bigger structure together.

### What BCE was able to help this family with:

Over \$10,000 was raised for Brittney, Jose, and their two little girls, Mila and Mia. BCE was able to pay five months of their rent, pay off two medical bills and a credit card, get their car fixed, and get braces for the two kids.

*"This was a surprise to top all surprises. This blessing has changed my entire family's life. The weight of being unable to pay my medical bills was suffocating me; now, I can breathe. Thank you all for all you do.*

*In the past, I never dreamed that I would be able to pay off so much debt. The medical bills just kept coming. It seemed like I was drowning. BCE and all the wonderful workers, captains, organizers, volunteers, donors, and others have changed my family's lives. I can breathe easier knowing there is hope.*

*Thank you from all of our hearts. This Christmas was a miracle." -Brittney*

# FINANCIAL PEACE University

For many families, financial difficulties are a result of other difficult circumstances. We offer the Dave Ramsey Financial Peace University (FPU) Course to each family, receiving the Best Christmas Ever.

Financial Peace University is a nine-lesson course that teaches families how to save for emergencies, pay off debt fast, spend wisely, and invest for the future. Once they complete the course, they are given an additional \$1000 grant towards the debt of their choice. We hope this paves the path to financial freedom for each family.

## Testimonial

*"I was able to pay off debt, make sure I have a good emergency fund that can't be touched aside from an emergency, and understand what the differences in retirement savings are and how much to be saving for retirement. As a widow, it is important that I keep good track of all our finances and especially think of my future. Also, it has equipped me with knowledge on savings for my kid's college as well. This course has helped me a lot in the knowledge of finances, and I feel so much better equipped for our financial future."*

- BCE family who completed FPU

## TOTALWELLNESS

At BCE, we understand that families typically fall on hard times due to a health issue, which can turn their whole family's lives upside down. As a result, we have partnered with TotalWellness. At TotalWellness they empower people to live healthier so they can be better employees and live more full lives in their communities. The program includes preparing healthy meals and teaching ways to live a healthier life to achieve this goal for each individual.

## Testimonials

*"This experience, especially after the loss of my husband, has helped me love cooking again. Not to the same extent but I'm once again putting in effort to make the kids and I healthier meals and snacks."*

*"Loved all the videos and activities that correlated with the topics. Highly recommend this program to others!"*

*"I absolutely enjoyed and thrived during my 6-week total wellness journey. It felt good focusing on myself and my health. I started going to the gym, being more active, cutting out soda, and have been eating healthier. I even lost 9 pounds since starting the program. I feel good about myself. I love the great tips, learning how to read food labels, be more aware of my food and health choices. This program has taught me to take care of myself and to celebrate the small and big strides."*

# The Story of Jillayne

Recently, Best Christmas Ever was featured in a CBS article about an incredible family from Rosemount, MN. The family's story began with Jillayne Lazer, a then-college student, meeting a man named Jared over summer break. They soon fell in love and later started a family together, having three children, Audrey, Peyton, and Parker. Everything about their lives was beautiful. Then, one Father's Day, Jared passed away after a deadly car accident. The family's hearts were broken; their peace was taken. Before Jillayne knew it, Christmas came around, and she did all she could to keep Jared's memory and joy alive.



When we at BCE heard the family's story, we knew we could help bring some light and joy to their holiday. We planned a surprise, in which we gathered gifts upon gifts for them, including a visit from two fire trucks filled with the first responders that helped the family on the day of their accident. The family was so grateful and surprised that Jillayne felt called to serve other families who have experienced great trauma in the same way.

The next Christmas, Jillayne became a team captain, bringing extravagant Christmas joy to another newly single mother and her family. She said that the smiles on their faces inspired her to continue volunteering her time to BCE every year since, with her daughters helping to raise \$800 through selling bracelets. Jillayne explained that her kids experience more joy in planning BCE Christmas surprises for other families than they do in getting their Christmas presents and says she knows Jared would be so proud of them, as is she.

Through the spirit of giving, our incredible volunteers here at BCE, and Jillayne and her family, Jared's legacy is living on, providing special Christmases for families around the country.

## LEAVE YOUR MARK WITH BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

We are always looking for team captains for the upcoming season. If you are interested or know of someone, please get in touch with us!

BCE Captains see Best Christmas Ever as an opportunity to leave their mark on this world, using their skills and talents, connecting their networks, businesses and communities to come together during the Christmas season to majorly impact one family each Christmas with the Best Christmas Ever.

The BCE Captain is a local leader within their community or is seeking for an opportunity to make a difference. This person brings people & communities together to do good, is energized by unreasonable generosity, and isn't afraid to put a little work in.

[bcmovement.org/captainapplication](http://bcmovement.org/captainapplication)

# The Story of Pascale

Pascale Darbonne and her family of 6, who had been living in a hotel for several months, were blessed with a home for Christmas! All four children have special needs, and this family was struggling to make ends meet.

In December of 2021 Best Christmas Ever gave the family many gifts, and the biggest of them was a home. The BCE chose the Dabonne family as their wish recipient.

*"This is very overwhelming, not something that I expected,"*  
- Pascale Darbonne

Best Christmas Ever, along with The Backpocket, a podcast production company, raised \$40,000 for the family in the fall.

*"We'll support the family for an entire year in a home...We'll pay their rent for an entire year. So we're pretty excited about it."* - Declan Brown, of The Backpocket



The Story featured on CBS News

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**THE BCE CLASSIC**  
Golf Tournament and Christmas Luncheon  
Thursday, June 29th 2023

**THE HOVDE PARTY**  
Fundraiser and Fireworks  
Sunday, September 3rd, 2023



# SPONSORS



# PROMOTIONAL PARTNERS



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Founder & President/CEO

## STEPHANIE NYNAS

Director of Operations

## STEPHANIE ZERVAS

Bookkeeper

## JENNI HOVDE

Volunteer Coordinator



BEST CHRISTMAS EVER

**GET INVOLVED TODAY!**

**Nominate a Family | Become a Captain | Donate**

*[bcemovement.org](http://bcemovement.org)*