RELIANT
FOUNDATION
2025
Annual Report
on Giving
Renewed Mission.
Same Heart.
Lasting Impact.

RENEWED MISSION. SAME HEART. LASTING IMPACT.

Kelsa Zereski

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on the past year, I am deeply grateful for the generosity, partnership, and trust that make Reliant Foundation's work possible. Because of you, 2025 was a year of meaningful impact—one marked not only by the dollars invested, but by the lives touched and the conversations sparked across the Central and MetroWest regions.

This year also marked an important moment of reflection and growth for our Foundation. Guided by our Board of Trustees and informed by the evolving needs of the communities we serve, we refined our mission and vision to bring greater clarity to our work. While our mission has been renewed, the heart of Reliant Foundation remains unchanged: a belief in communities where every person has access to the care, resources, and support they need to thrive.

Through your support, Reliant Foundation continued to invest in nonprofit partners who are addressing some of our region's most pressing challenges—from mental and behavioral health supports for children and teens, to substance use prevention and recovery services, to programs that expand opportunity and promote long-term well-being. These investments are not just grants; they are partnerships rooted in trust, collaboration, and shared purpose.

Beyond grantmaking, we also deepened our role as a community connector and convener. By supporting opportunities for dialogue, education, and advocacy—such as the conversations that follow our Shattered Ice screenings—we are helping reduce stigma, elevate voices, and foster understanding around complex health issues that affect us all.

To our donors, thank you for believing in this work and for entrusting Reliant Foundation with your philanthropic support. To our Board of Trustees, volunteers, nonprofit partners, and staff—your leadership, dedication, and care continue to guide us forward.

As we look ahead, we do so with clarity, confidence, and gratitude. Together, we are building healthier, more connected communities—today and for generations to come.

With sincere appreciation,

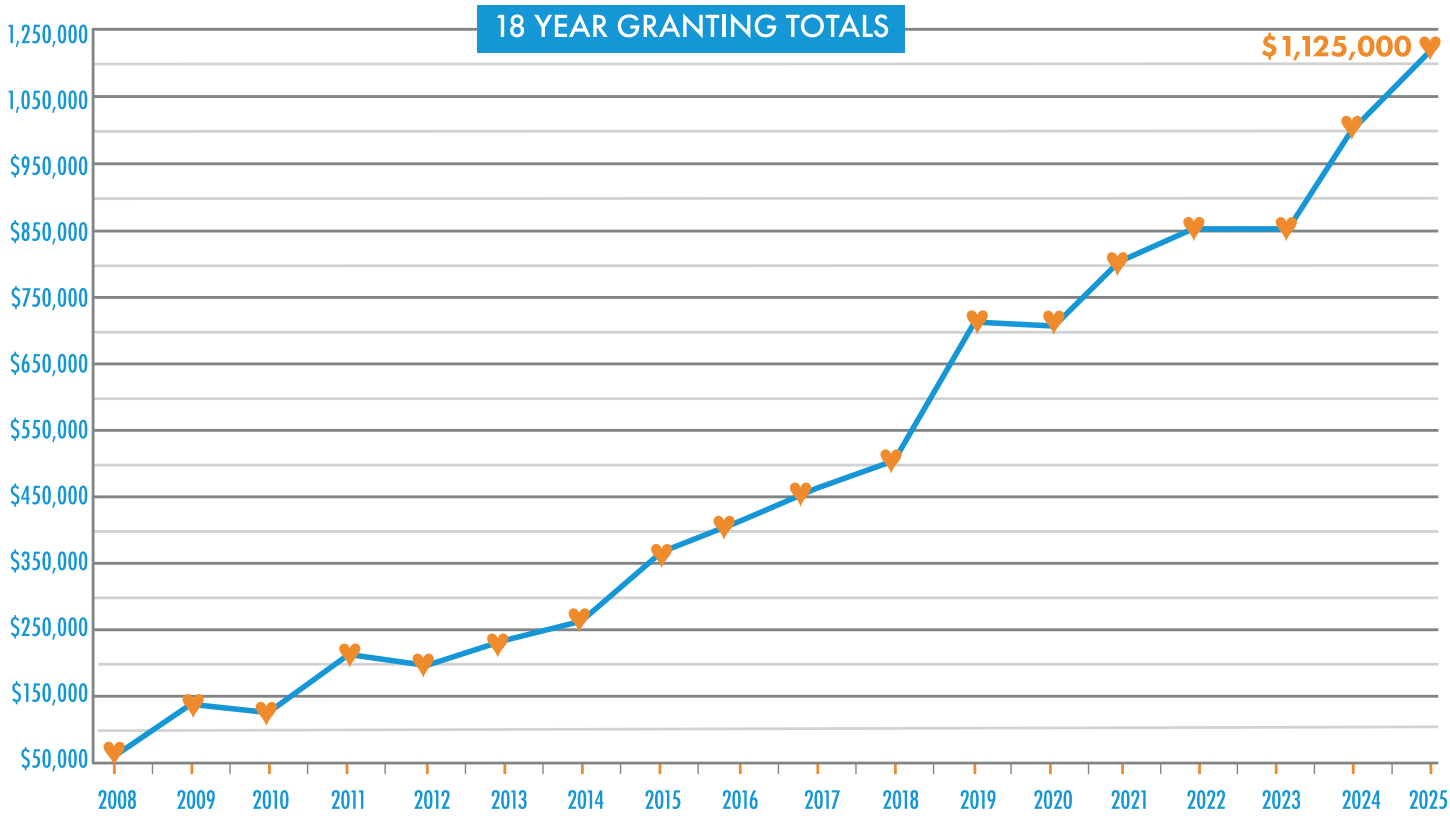
Kelsa Zereski
President

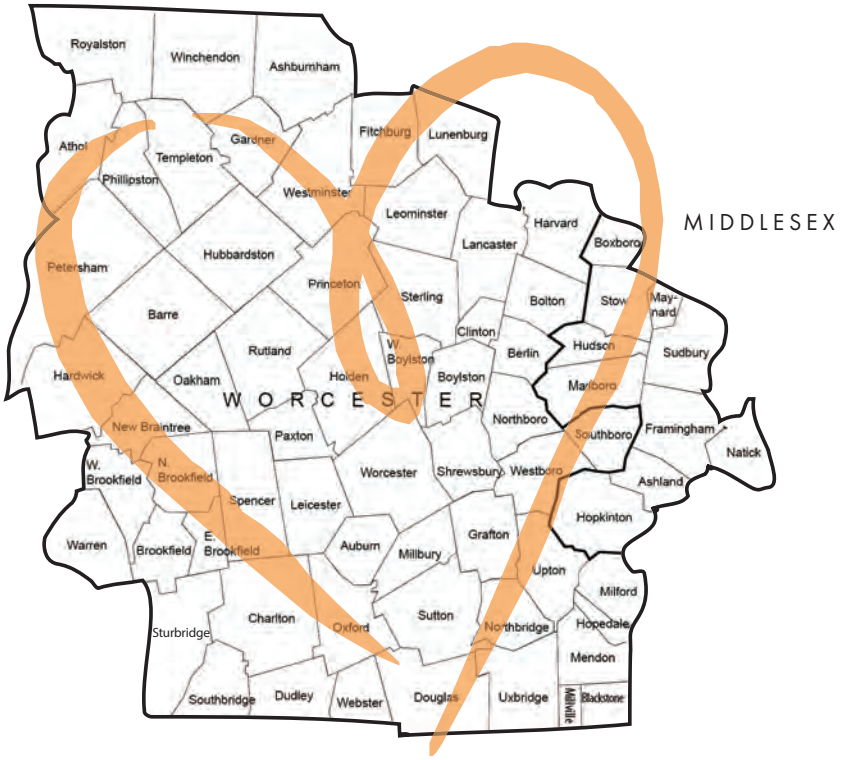
YOU CAN
Battle the Stigma
Boost Resources
Build Tools for Recovery

144
Charities
Funded in our service area since 2008

$8.9+
Million
Granted to health-focused community non-profit programs and resources in the Central and MetroWest regions of Massachusetts

100K+
Lives
Impacted since 2008





Communities We Serve

Reliant Foundation serves 70 towns in Central and MetroWest Massachusetts. Our geographic service area includes all of Worcester County and a selection of towns within Middlesex County, as shown on the map to the left.

SEED MONEY THAT SPARKS EXPANSION

How Reliant Foundation is Fueling Growth at Veterans Inc.

When Veterans Inc. identified critical gaps in substance use and co-occurring mental health treatment in Central Massachusetts for Veterans, they had vision, expertise, and infrastructure, what they needed was catalytic support to expand.

Reliant Foundation continues to provide that spark, allowing Veterans Inc. to launch and scale initiatives that lead the field in innovative recovery and outreach services.

With Reliant Foundation's seed funding, Veterans Inc. expanded its Residential Recovery Support – Co-Occurring Enhanced (RRS-COE) program from Independence Hall in Shrewsbury to its Grove Street headquarters in Worcester. Reliant Foundation's investment helped launch 32 new RRS-COE spaces in Worcester, immediately increasing access to integrated substance use and mental health treatment. Participants receive structured, clinically supported residential care designed to promote long-term recovery, reduce overdose risk, and support stability in housing, employment, and overall health.

Building on that success, Reliant Foundation's support has also helped Veterans Inc. expand specialized services for women Veterans, an area of significant unmet need statewide. The Co-Occurring Enhanced treatment program provides 12–16 women at a time with a stable, trauma-informed residential environment, where mental health and substance use treatment are fully integrated. Participants typically remain in the program for nine to twelve months, allowing time to build coping skills, reconnect to community, and establish long-term recovery foundations.

That same catalytic support is now advancing innovation beyond traditional facilities through the Mobile Outreach and Recovery Initiative. Supported in part by Reliant Foundation, Veterans Inc.'s Mobile Outreach RV brings recovery services directly into Worcester neighborhoods and surrounding communities. By traveling to food pantries, encampments, and high-need areas such as Worcester Common, the mobile unit removes barriers including transportation, stigma, and cost that often prevent individuals from seeking care.

Staffed by two Case Managers and a Recovery Coach and managed by a Veteran himself, the outreach team connects those in crisis to treatment, housing programs, and benefit resources. The team distributes Narcan, food, clothing, and essential supplies while offering warm beverages and building relationships that encourage individuals to engage in services. These direct interactions create a practical entry point to recovery and long-term stability.

Reliant Foundation's investments have allowed Veterans Inc. to leverage additional funding streams, including insurance billing and diverse public and private sources, strengthening long-term sustainability. What began as seed funding has grown into expanded residential capacity, gender-specific treatment, and mobile recovery services that reach some of the most vulnerable residents in Central Massachusetts.

Seed money, when placed thoughtfully, does more than support a program. It accelerates growth, unlocks sustainability, and transforms lives.

SHATTERED ICE: SPARKING CONVERSATION, REDUCING STIGMA

At Reliant Foundation, impact is not measured only by dollars granted—it is also reflected in the conversations we help create, the partnerships we build, and the barriers we work to break down together.

On November 12, 2025, Reliant Foundation co-hosted a community screening of Shattered Ice at the Worcester Palladium, bringing together residents, partners, and community leaders for an evening focused on mental health. The event generated strong community engagement and local media attention, helping elevate awareness and encourage open dialogue around issues that affect individuals and families across our Central and MetroWest region.

While the film itself was powerful – taking home the award for "Most Impactful Film" at the 2025 Sedona International Film Festival – it was the discussion that followed the screening that most clearly reflected Reliant Foundation's mission in action. Community members participated in a panel discussion that brought together voices from across professional and collegiate sports, behavioral health, and human services. The panel included a member of the Worcester Red Sox pitching staff, the head coach of the Worcester Railers, a former Boston Red Sox player, a mental health professional, and a human services professional. Together, they shared perspectives that underscored the far-reaching impact of mental health and substance use challenges—and the importance of open, honest conversation across sectors.

To extend the impact beyond the screening, President Kelsa Zereski appeared on Radio Worcester's community affairs program alongside Jake Miskin, the film's writer and founder of Nehoiden Social Impact, continuing the conversation with a broader audience. Their discussion emphasized the importance of reducing stigma, increasing awareness, and creating opportunities for education and connection around mental health and substance use prevention and recovery. This outreach reflects Reliant Foundation's commitment to advocacy—using our voice to elevate critical issues and encourage collective action.

As a convener, collaborator, and leader in our region, Reliant Foundation recognizes that addressing complex health challenges requires partnership. Looking ahead, Reliant Foundation is committed to help expand Shattered Ice into six additional communities across Central and MetroWest Massachusetts. With showings this spring at Worcester State University for all Student Athletes as well as other colleges and Universities throughout our funding area, we believe it is critically important to bring these conversations directly into more communities and schools, creating space for education, connection, and advocacy where it is needed most.

As Reliant Foundation renews its investment in mental health, behavioral health, and substance use recovery services, initiatives like Shattered Ice reflect our commitment to lead with purpose and heart. Through education, advocacy, and collaboration, we continue building healthier, more informed, and more compassionate communities.

MAKING SPACE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

In today's fast-paced and often demanding world, making space for mental health is essential to overall wellbeing. Creating moments of pause—however brief—can help reduce stress, build resilience, and support emotional balance.

Meditation looks different for everyone. For some, it means sitting quietly and focusing on the breath. For others, it may look far less traditional. Meditation can happen in motion, in creativity, or in moments of deep focus—anytime the mind is given permission to slow down and be present.

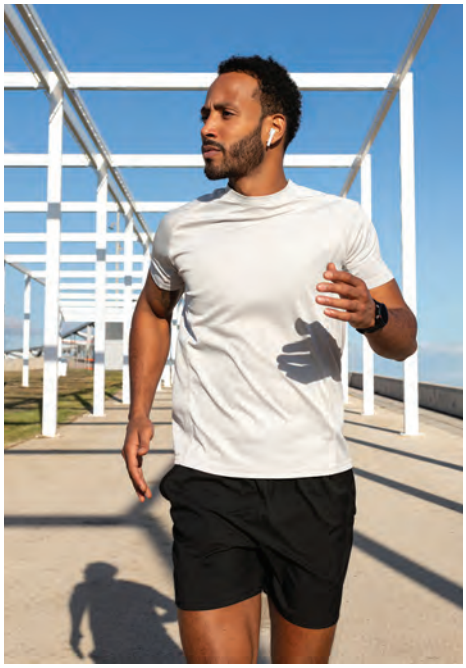
Some people find a meditative state through:

- Walking or running outdoors
- Gentle movement such as yoga or stretching
- Focusing on breath while doing a repetitive task
- Journaling or writing reflectively
- Listening to music or sound without distraction
- Gardening, cooking, or working with the hands
- Spending quiet time with a pet or in nature

What matters most is not how meditation looks, but how it feels—whether it helps create a sense of calm, clarity, or connection.

When stress or emotional challenges feel overwhelming, reaching out for additional support is an important step. Health care providers, community-based organizations, and crisis resources such as the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline are available to offer confidential support when individuals or families need help navigating difficult moments.

At Reliant Foundation, we believe mental health is strengthened through both personal practices and community care. Through our grantmaking and partnerships, we invest in programs that promote mental health, resilience, and healing—helping individuals and families build healthier, more connected lives.



COMMUNITY GRANTS

Reliant Foundation raises philanthropic support for our granting program as part of our vision to create healthy and connected communities in Central and MetroWest Massachusetts.

A record $1.125 Million in grants was distributed in 2025 to 60 deserving local nonprofits which provide critical programs and services to some of the most vulnerable people in our region. Their efforts strengthen mental health and behavioral health supports for children, adolescents, and young adults; bolster suicide prevention and stigma reduction efforts; and create a path to substance use recovery for men and women in our communities who need additional support along their journey.

Non-Profit Organization	Grant Given in Support of	Grant Amount
508 CHEERS	Teen Trauma Tuesdays programming	$7,500
Abby's House	Evidence-Based Support for Improved Health Outcomes program	$30,000
African Community Education (ACE)	Think/Give learning activities at the Saturday Program	$12,500
Addiction Referral Center	Project BRAVE	$10,000
Adolescent Consultation Services (ACS)	Mental Health support for court-involved youth	$15,000
Advocates	Providing clinical care to uninsured and underinsured youth	$30,000
Anna Maria College	JOBS initiative - pathway for training, and student support	$30,000
Bancroft - Worcester Partnership Program	Worcester Partnership Program with Elm Park School	$6,000
Behavioral Health Partners of MetroWest (Advocates)	MetroWest Care Connection	$20,000
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central MA and MetroWest	Rise Together Mentoring Program at Girls Inc. and the Big Champions collaboration with CASA Project Worcester	$30,000
Boston Bulldogs Running Club	Boston Bulldogs Running Club's Weekly Run program in Worcester	$17,000
Boys & Girls Club of MetroWest	Contracted licensed social worker for the Framingham Clubhouse	$22,000
Boys & Girls Club of Webster Dudley	Healthy Minds, Respectful Voices: Strengthening Youth Mental Health and Resilience	$20,000
Boys & Girls Club of Worcester	Strengthening the Mental Health and Behavioral Health of Kids at BGCW	$20,000
CASA Project, Inc.	Shine the Light program	$30,000
Center for Health Impact (CHI)	Multilingual Recovery Coach Training	$15,000
Community Harvest Project	Nutritious Foods for Worcester's Residential Recovery Programs	$10,000

Non-Profit Organization	Grant Given in Support of	Grant Amount
Community Healthlink (CHL)	Expand Revive of the USA health programming at Residential Recovery homes and SUD Continuum Programs	$29,000
Dismas House	Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative	$5,000
Doc Wayne Youth Services	Community Clinic for youth and families in the Metrowest region	$7,500
Edward Street	Master Teacher Coaching Program	$15,000
GAAMHA	R.O.O.T.S. Therapeutic Farm Program at Evergreen Grove	$30,000
Genesis Club	Zero Stigma Project	$15,000
Girls Inc of Worcester	Wellness Institute Program for Teen Girls	$10,000
Girls on the Run Worcester County	Mind & Motion: Building Resilience in Girls across Central MA	$20,000
Jeff's Place Children's Bereavement Center	Grief Support Programs for Children & Teens	$20,000
Jeremiah's Inn	Renovations for the new Edward Street Residential Recovery Program	$20,000
Latin American Health Alliance (LAHA)	Bilingual Recovery Coach Training	$15,000
Legendary Legacies	Legacy Transport program	$25,000
MA Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC)	Survivor Services program for children and youth	$7,000
Massachusetts Adoption Resource Exchange (MARE)	Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) Caregiver Training Series and a TBRI Family Support Group	$20,000
Nehoiden Street Films LLC	Funding for a public screening of the film, "Shattered Ice," followed by a panel discussion to encourage community conversations about mental health and suicide	$15,000
Open Sky Community Services	Inner Voice Outer Change self-empowerment model at THE PLACE for Empowerment	$20,000
Our Bright Future	Our Bright Future SEL Coordinator	$25,000
Pernet Family Health Service	Pernet Youth Program	$15,000
Rainbow Child Development Center	Mental Health Program - Four-Part Model	$23,500
REC (Regional Environmental Council)	YouthGROW program	$10,000
Recovery Collaboration Project	Program Support Services including sober housing scholarships and outreach supplies	$10,000
Revive of the USA	Sustaining programs and services at Recovery homes in Leominster and Worcester for women and men	$30,000

Non-Profit Organization	Grant Given in Support of	Grant Amount
RFK Community Alliance	Behavioral Health Services to Children initiative	$25,000
RIA, Inc. (Ready Inspire Act)	Sisters Leading Sisters Peer Support	$6,000
RICA (Refugee and Immigrant Community Advocate)	Refugee and Immigrant Mental Health program	$12,000
RISE Above	Pro-social opportunities that improve mental and physical health and build resiliency for children in foster care	$25,000
Riverside Community Care	Pediatric Behavioral Health Urgent Care (PBHUC) Program	$25,000
Safe Exit Initiative	Harbor drop-in center support	$15,000
Senior Connection	Carelink: Mobile Mental Health for Grandfamilies	$26,000
Seven Hills Behavioral Health	the expansion and full implementation of a Social Disconnection Specialty Practice within the Seven Hills Behavioral Health system of care	$30,000
Spark Kindness	Addressing the Emotional Health and Resilience of Children, Youth and Families Project.	$15,000
Spoonfuls	Food recovery and hunger relief work in MetroWest to Recovery homes.	$13,000
SYFS (Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services)	Clinical and Psychoeducation Supports for Vulnerable Youth	$25,000
The Club - Lunenberg Teen Center	GROW SMART Initiative-Gaining Resilience and Overall Wellness through Skills Mastery and Resilience Training.	$10,000
UMass Chan Medical School	Supporting the 2025 cohort of the Dynamic Futures workforce development program	$25,000
Veterans Inc	Recovery Coach and Mobile Case Management Positions.	$30,000
Westborough Connects	Together We Thrive: Connecting Community to Strengthen Mental and Behavioral Health	$14,000
Whitin Community Center	WCC Youth Outreach and Social Skills Program	$10,000
Worcester Addresses Childhood Trauma (Worcester ACTS)	Trauma Training Tuesdays	$12,500
Worcester RISE for Health	Ubuntu: RISE's behavioral health program	$30,000
Worcester State University	Peer to Peer Healthy Minds Initiative for WSU Students	$10,000
YMCA of Central MA	Behavioral Health Clinician at the Montachusett YMCA	$26,500
Youth Villages Massachusetts	LifeSet program for young people aging out of foster care	$10,000
YWCA of Worcester	Social Emotional Health support in the Early Education and Care Center	$18,000
	TOTAL 2025 COMMUNITY GRANTS	**$1,125,000**

EVENTS THAT BRING OUR COMMUNITY TOGETHER

Reliant Foundation's events are more than fundraisers—they are opportunities to connect, celebrate, and come together in support of better health for our community. Through these moments, we build relationships, raise critical resources, and strengthen the shared commitment that fuels our mission throughout our service area.

Drive for a Difference Golf Classic & Auction

On May 19, 2025, Reliant Foundation hosted its annual Drive for a Difference Golf Classic and Auction at Pleasant Valley Country Club—bringing together longtime supporters, community partners, and new friends for a day filled with spirited competition, connection, and generosity.

Watch Impact Video here

The event raised more than $211,000, including nearly $70,000 raised on the day of the event alone, in support of Reliant Foundation's Community Grants Program. From a lively auction to shared moments on and off the course, the day reflected what makes Reliant Foundation special: people coming together with purpose.

Proceeds directly support nonprofit organizations working to advance mental health, behavioral health, substance use prevention and recovery, and overall community well-being across our region.

RELIANT FOUNDATION 5K

Held on October 4, 2025, the Reliant Foundation 5K brought together more than 200 runners and walkers on a beautiful fall morning around Indian Lake in Worcester. Participants of all ages gathered to celebrate movement, connection, collaboration, and community spirit—enjoying a scenic, welcoming course and festivities to follow.

The event raised over $30,000 in support of better health for our community and the Foundation's Community Grants Program.

Presented in partnership with the Bancroft School and the Greendale Family Branch YMCA, the 5K continues to grow as a fund- and friend-raising event—bringing people together around a common goal while promoting health, wellness, connection and collaboration.

As part of the 5K Series for Good, Reliant Foundation partners with Veterans Inc. and Abby's House to offer multiple ways to support local nonprofits while encouraging physical and mental well-being throughout our communities.

Whether through a day on the course or racing around Indian Lake, Reliant Foundation events invite our community to show up, get involved, and make a meaningful difference—together.

For more information about upcoming events, visit **reliantfoundation.org.**

DONORS

This report includes donations of cash, pledges, auction gifts and in-kind contributions received between the dates of January 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.

Chairman's Circle: $10,000+

Amazon

Heart of New England Council, Boy Scouts of America

North Bridge Wealth Management Group at Morgan Stanley

President's Circle: $5,000+

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Mass General Brigham Health Plan

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Gold: $2,500+

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TRIBUTES

Honor and Memorial gifts received between the dates of January 1 and December 31, 2025

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OUR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Reliant Foundation's Board of Trustees plays a vital role in guiding our work with integrity, purpose, and care. Composed of leaders from health care, business, and community sectors, the Board brings a depth of experience and perspective that strengthens the Foundation's ability to respond to evolving community needs.

As the Foundation refined its mission and vision this year, the Board remained a steady source of leadership—ensuring that growth and clarity are balanced with the values that have always defined Reliant Foundation. Through thoughtful governance, fiduciary oversight, and strategic guidance, trustees help ensure that every decision reflects both responsibility and heart.

Board members generously contribute their time, talent, and resources in support of the Foundation's fundraising efforts and Community Grants Program. They actively engage with nonprofit partners, thoughtfully review grant recommendations, and help steward donor contributions so they create meaningful, lasting impact across Central and MetroWest Massachusetts.

The Board's leadership helps ensure that Reliant Foundation remains a trusted partner—one that listens, leads with compassion, and invests in solutions that strengthen health, wellness, and opportunity for individuals and families.

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RENEWED MISSION. SAME HEART. LASTING IMPACT.

Dear Friends,

Kristine Bostek

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, thank you for your continued partnership and trust in Reliant Foundation. Your generosity allows us to steward resources with care and intention—ensuring that every dollar entrusted to the Foundation is used to strengthen the health and well-being of our communities.

This past year was one of both reflection and progress. As the Foundation refined its mission and vision, the Board remained deeply committed to the values that have long guided our work. While our language has evolved to reflect greater clarity and focus, our purpose remains the same: to support organizations that create meaningful, lasting change for individuals and families throughout Central and MetroWest Massachusetts.

The Board of Trustees takes its responsibility seriously, providing thoughtful governance, fiduciary oversight, and strategic guidance in partnership with the Foundation's leadership and staff. Together, we carefully evaluate community needs, listen to our nonprofit partners, and work to ensure that Reliant Foundation's grantmaking is both responsive and impactful.

Your support makes this work possible. In a time when demand for services continues to grow, your generosity helps bridge critical gaps in care, expand access to resources, and foster hope for those who need it most.

Thank you for being part of Reliant Foundation's mission and for believing in the power of community. We are grateful for your trust and inspired by what we can accomplish together.

With gratitude,

Kristine Bostek

Kristine Bostek
Chair, 2025 Board of Trustees

CALLING ALL VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are at the heart of Reliant Foundation's work. Their time, energy, and generosity help bring our mission to life—supporting events, strengthening connections, and ensuring that our efforts run smoothly behind the scenes.

Throughout the year, volunteers play a vital role in supporting signature events like the **Drive for a Difference Golf Classic & Auction** and the **Reliant Foundation 5K**. From guest registration and course support to raffle sales, event setup and breakdown, and cheering on participants, volunteers help create welcoming, meaningful experiences for everyone involved.

Behind the scenes, volunteers also provide invaluable support during our busiest times of the year. Whether assisting with mailings, event preparation, or other administrative tasks, their contributions help keep the Foundation moving forward.

No matter how they choose to get involved, volunteers bring enthusiasm, compassion, and a shared commitment to better health for our community. We are deeply grateful for the time and talents they give so generously.

Thank you for showing up, lending a hand, and helping make our work possible.

THANK YOU!

To volunteer for future events, please email foundation@reliantfoundation.org

reliantfoundation.org
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