

# Me Fine

2020 Impact Report

## *Adapting to Change*

New Look

New Leadership Model

Same Impactful Mission





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## Letter from the Executive Team

Friends,

The past year brought turmoil and change for everyone. The pandemic forced us to reconsider our priorities, lean on our strengths, and question the old ways of doing things. At Me Fine, we turned this turmoil into opportunity with a broad, self-guided, sensible, and eye-opening review of our operations and organizational structure that resulted in a co-leadership model and the elevation of one of our own.

You may know Meredith Richbourg as Me Fine's Program Director. She interfaces with our hospital partners and is the direct conduit of Me Fine resources to the families we serve. But in her over five years with the organization, Meredith has brought so much more to the table, in the form of strengths like data management, grant-writing, and donor stewardship.

She and I have a strong and tested working relationship, and our informal practice of co-leadership over the years has proven incredibly productive. Even then, Meredith's contributions were under recognized and her talents underutilized. Thus, our internal reflection led us to promote Meredith to Director of Operations, formalizing her as a peer member of Me Fine's Executive Leadership.

The two of us will continue to guide Me Fine forward together, sharing the joys and challenges of running a growing nonprofit. We hope you'll join us in thanking Meredith for her dedication and innovation on behalf of our families, and in our excitement for what the future brings.

Joey Powell  
Executive Director

Meredith Richbourg, MSW,  
Director of Operations

# In Their Own Words

*“Every bit of help makes a huge difference in our lives now. Food, travel expenses, mounting hospital bills, miles of travel each week to the clinic, and missed work all affect our finances directly. Support such as the gas cards and Walmart cards from Me Fine help so significantly. As simple as it may seem, it helps us breathe a little easier. Another week covered; another grocery bill handled... among all the worries and stressors that we cannot control, having some of that burden removed is indescribably helpful.”*

– Jenny K, mom of Bristol K., treated at UNC Children’s for Rhabdomyosarcoma

## *Our Mission:*

To provide hope through emotional support and financial assistance to families whose children are receiving care at North Carolina partner hospitals.

## *Our Vision:*

To build and sustain partnerships to eliminate barriers so families can focus on their children.

*“I have no words to express my **appreciation** for what you have given to this patient. She is very medically complex, and the hearing aid you helped provide is going to **improve the quality of her life tremendously.**”*

–Duke Pediatric Social Worker

**At Me Fine Foundation,  
we have one guiding  
principle:**

**Families come first.**

# 2020 in Review

**377**  
FAMILIES SERVED

**JAN**

**FEB**

## Record Levels of Assistance

Me Fine began 2020 on a wave of growth. Our financial assistance reached record levels of monthly support, driven by the success of the Hospital Resource Boxes we installed in Fall 2019. *[See page 10 for more on this critical method of family support.]*

In January 2020, we served **50% more families** compared to the previous January, with a sustained **average of nearly 70 families per month.**



Our emotional support offerings flourished, too. Attendance was growing for UNC's Teen Cancer Support Group and we launched a Teen Diabetes Support Group at UNC in January. Teens enjoyed group activities like bowling, cooking classes, and sporting events while building relationships with peers who share their diagnosis.

Dozens of NICU families met each month for food and fellowship at each of our partner hospitals. We expanded the Beads of Courage program to new units, and Child Life and nursing staff regularly gathered patients and families in groups to distribute beads and share treatment experiences.

Patients at Duke Children's enjoyed theatrical storytelling and arts-in-medicine offerings from Arts for Life NC sponsored by Me Fine.

# 2020 in Review



## Pandemic Begins

In mid-March 2020, the world changed. All in-person emotional support programs were halted. As hospital partners postponed non-emergency surgeries and appointments, fewer children were inpatient or traveling to clinics. Those who could not delay treatment found the inpatient experience even more logistically challenging than before. As the hospital prohibited visitors under age 16, finding child care for siblings became mandatory, yet school closures and Covid-19 concerns left parents with few options. Pediatric patients were limited to one accompanying caregiver, and Covid-19 restrictions prevented that caregiver from trading out with another adult or from making trips home for a change of clothes. Concerns about surface contaminants and social distancing eliminated hospital playrooms, unit activities, and all shared toys and games.

Me Fine was not immune to the turmoil. **Our leadership team responded quickly to prepare contingency plans for worst-case scenarios** and manage concerns about cash flow. It soon became clear that Music for Me Fine 2020 would not come to pass. Second Hope Shop, our Johnston County thrift store that helps fund our work, suspended operations in April.



# 2020 in Review



## Bright Spots Emerge

By the end of March, and extending through August, numerous state and federal programs had been established in response to the pandemic. Landlords, utility companies, and lenders suspended bills due. Stimulus payments and more generous unemployment benefits increased families' income. Gas prices fell sharply and hospital parking decks waived their fees, allowing transportation funds to stretch further for those who could not delay treatment.

During this time, **we filled an average of 30 requests for financial assistance per month.** Financial assistance patterns continued to shift: rent and mortgage requests fell 40%, while grocery assistance rose from 11% to nearly 25% of overall financial assistance. Hospital Resource Boxes proved to be key to delivering resources to families safely and quickly.



Thanks to Chiesi USA's corporate match in May, **Me Fine raised \$51,000 in 2 weeks**, our most successful campaign ever!

# 2020 in Review



## Delayed Distress

The pandemic relief programs that buoyed families for several months began to expire in August. As eviction and utility disconnection moratoriums were lifted, families who had suspended payments began to receive bills for 5+ months of housing and utility costs. Supplemental unemployment payments ended, as did free hospital parking and record-low gas prices. Hospitals resumed procedures postponed in the spring. Ronald McDonald Houses remained closed to new families, leading **hotel assistance to increase 174%**.



*"Thank you! It's definitely been a tough time for families recently, and your assistance continues to be a real bright spot for them."*

—UNC Pediatric Social Worker

# 2020 in Review

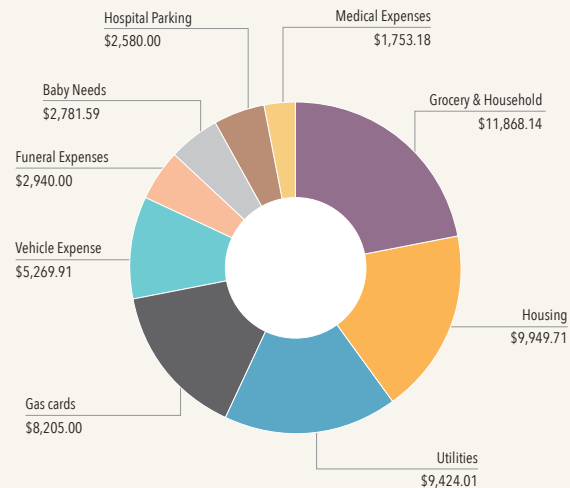


## Finding Our “New Normal”

As outside supports decreased, referrals for Financial Assistance began to increase. **In-person emotional support programs pivoted to virtual formats** as hospital staff regained their footing. Me Fine hosted our first ever “Comfy for a Cause” virtual fundraiser to replace the annual Me Fine Gala, and our supporters stepped up in a major way. Proceeds from that event combined with another major funding win from the Louise Oriole Burevitch Endowment helped to stabilize months of cautiousness and uncertainty for Me Fine’s revenue streams. [See page 11 to learn how Me Fine is partnering with the Louise Oriole Burevitch Endowment to support Eastern North Carolina families.]

*“2020 would have been even harder without Me Fine Foundation. So many more needs came up with our pediatric transplant families, and unfortunately many of the resources that we used to be able to access are no longer available. It’s been incredible to have that consistent support from Me Fine.”*  
– Duke Pediatric Social Worker

### Financial assistance breakdown





# 2020 in Review



## Looking to the Future

Me Fine modified our annual Hope for the Holidays program to ensure safety for our families, donors, and volunteers. Volunteers and members of our holiday Dream Team masked up and coordinated socially-distanced drop-offs to ensure patients, siblings, and caregivers experiencing a new diagnosis or sudden hospitalization over the holidays had gifts to share. In spite of pandemic challenges, our Dream Team delivered holiday magic to 37 families! **Thank you to our Dream Team donors, Program Committee volunteers, and all who contributed gifts through our Angel Tree Wish List on Amazon.**

In December, after six months of deep exploration and conversation, **Me Fine officially transitioned to a co-leadership model**, promoting Meredith Richbourg to Director of Operations and formalizing her role as a peer member of Executive Leadership alongside Executive Director Joey Powell. Our Board of Directors voted member San Parikh to the role of Chair-Elect, solidifying the next phase of Me Fine's leadership.



# Program Spotlight

## Round-the-Clock Access to Family Support

Two programs that Me Fine launched in 2019 proved to be essential in 2020 to address family needs during the pandemic: **Hospital Resource Boxes** and **Clothing & Toiletry Closets**.

**Hospital Resource Boxes** contain gas cards, hospital parking passes, meal vouchers, and grocery cards to address the immediate costs families face when seeking a child's care. Seven Resource Boxes are installed in inpatient units and outpatient clinics across all three hospitals for our trusted referral partners to access as needed. Before we installed the Resource Boxes, Me Fine mailed gas and grocery assistance to families' homes; as pandemic restrictions prevented parents returning home, that option was no longer viable. Without this on-site access point for hospital partners to quickly and safely meet families' needs, many would have fallen through the cracks.

**Clothing & Toiletry Closets** contain an assortment of new clothing items in a range of sizes for adults and adolescents to support families during unplanned admissions. We stock the closet with men's and women's underwear, cozy tops and pajama pants, sports bras, and sweats. Me Fine maintains a Clothing & Toiletry Closet at each of our partner hospitals. Throughout the pandemic, hospitals restricted whether or how often parents could return home, even to pick up a change of clothes. Families were confined to their child's hospital room for multiple days without access to a shower. Under these conditions, use of the Clothing & Toiletry Closets increased exponentially! **Thank you to all who participated in our Amazon Wish List drive to restock the Closets in Summer 2020!**

*"A mother and grandmother from out of town (who followed an ambulance in with nothing but the clothes on their backs) were THRILLED when I brought them shower kits, deodorant, and changes of clothes."*

—WakeMed Pediatric Social Worker

# Program Spotlight

## Eastern NC Counties

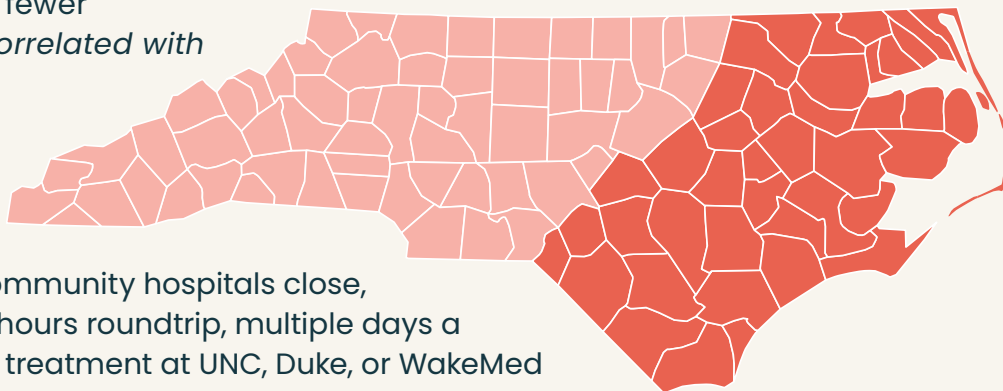
Our state is rapidly growing in population and wealth, but economic opportunities have not extended to rural and historically marginalized communities, particularly in the eastern part of the state. The systemic and institutional barriers these communities face range from limited employment options to substandard housing to fewer healthcare providers—all factors correlated with poor health outcomes.

**Nearly 40% of the 377 families who received Me Fine financial assistance last year live in Eastern NC.**

As financially distressed rural community hospitals close, families in Eastern NC may drive 8+ hours roundtrip, multiple days a week to seek their child's life-saving treatment at UNC, Duke, or WakeMed Children's Hospitals.

After a competitive selection process, Me Fine received news in October 2020 that we had received a grant from the Louise Oriole Burevitch Endowment, founded by the Wilmington philanthropist to benefit this region of our state. **Me Fine is honored to further Mrs. Burevitch's legacy through our financial assistance program.**

**41 county area:** Beaufort, Bertie, Bladen, Brunswick, Camden, Carteret, Chowan, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Currituck, Dare, Duplin, Edgecombe, Gates, Greene, Halifax, Harnett, Hertford, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir, Martin, Nash, New Hanover, Northampton, Onslow, Pamlico, Pasquotank, Pender, Perquimans, Pitt, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Tyrell, Washington, Wayne and Wilson



# How You Raised Awareness

ME FINE FOUNDATION  
**COMFY FOR A CAUSE**

*A Night at Home with Me Fine*

As with everything else in 2020, the traditional in-person Me Fine Gala was revamped to ensure that we considered social distancing needs due to the pandemic. Realizing that Me Fine families still needed financial help, our amazing volunteer event committee pivoted in short order, and in a window of just a few months, reimaged our annual gala in a virtual environment. Enter, “Comfy For A Cause”.

Designed to incorporate some elements of Music for Me Fine and the Me Fine Gala, **Comfy For A Cause** provided unique opportunities that Me Fine otherwise wouldn't have been able to experience. By hosting our event online, we were able to entertain guests from all over the country. Using a streaming platform from Title Sponsor Centrifuge Media, our attendees were able to get together as they felt comfortable, either within their “bubbles” or by themselves from the comfort of their homes. We partnered with Empire Eats, Wonderpuff, and local beer and wine vendors to add a take-home meal option so that participants could experience the gala as they remembered it in years past and provide a much-needed break from domestic monotony.



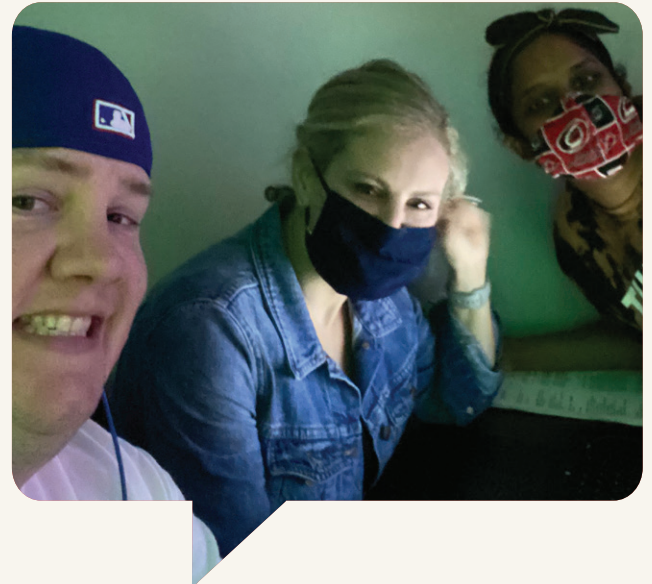


The program for the evening kept viewers on their toes: cocktail demonstrations from our friends at Crude Bitters, an appearance by the Durham Bulls' Wool E. Bull and Stormy of the Carolina Hurricanes, and video messages from Hurricanes Alternate Captain Jacob Slavin and Country Music Star Chase Rice. Exclusive musical performances from BJ Barham of American Aquarium, Pierce Freelon, Jack the Radio, and The Blue Dogs kept up the tempo for the evening. As always, our program featured stories from families who shared how they have been positively impacted by the work done by Me Fine.

Me Fine's Hero For Life award was presented to Carla Thompson, a longtime ally of pediatric patients. Carla was nominated by Valerie Jarrett for her over thirty years of service

to complex care patients at Duke Children's Hospital. The Hero For Life award recognizes those who go above and beyond to help critically ill kids and families in ways aligning with Me Fine's mission.

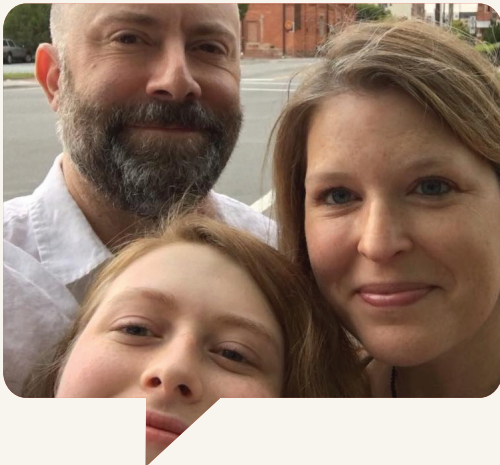
"We are overwhelmed with gratitude for everyone who came together for Me Fine and the exceptional families that we support", said Comfy For A Cause co-chairs and board members Emily Fera and Shriya Soora. "During such an unusual year, through the support of our community partners, we were able to put on a successful, unique event to celebrate Me Fine Foundation. Our sponsors, vendors, donors to our auction, and attendees gave generously to ensure that we could continue to provide services to deserving children and families."



# How You Gave in 2020

## Major Donor - Mike Iovino

"When my friend Mandy Howard introduced me to Me Fine five years ago, I listened intently to what she was saying. I believe she contacted me because she knew there would be a match in philosophy. I am person who believes in simply getting things done. The most impact you can make in a situation is taking care of the matter directly and efficiently. I know of no other charitable organization that responds to the need of families with such precision. One has to respect this means of delivering care."



## Me Fine Sustainer - Jill & Mark Berrong

"Medical costs can be astronomical and cause more strain on an already stressful situation. We can't offer the right emotional assistance always, so helping others financially works for us. We have been fortunate to have a healthy child but have known other parents who have gone through major issues, struggling with finances, overwhelmed by emotion, and worrying about where the little things may come from. We're happy to help others in need and are glad that Me Fine is able to support local families"

# How You Gave in 2020

## Corporate Sponsor - Hallam-ICS

"At Hallam-ICS, we view social responsibility as a cornerstone of our company mission and understand the value of giving back to the communities in which we live and work. We especially like to support organizations that focus on helping families and children. The services Me Fine provides to the families of North Carolina are incredibly valuable and we are honored to be able to play a small role in helping Me Fine achieve their mission." - Chris Guisto, Director of Industrial Projects



Hallam-ICS  
AN EMPLOYEE OWNED COMPANY



## In Kind - Wyrick Robbins

"We are very proud of the financial and in-kind support we are able to provide Me Fine to better enable it to provide hope to the most vulnerable of our community and their families as they deal with life-altering medical challenges. As a firm, we place a strong emphasis on our community involvement and appreciate the opportunity to provide pro bono legal services to Me Fine as it continues to grow and support our community. We value our partnership with Me Fine and look forward to providing our continued support. It is truly a privilege to be associated with such an exceptional organization." - Jimmy Yates, Managing Partner

# The Bigger Picture

## Statement of Financial Position (condensed), as of 12/31/20

Current and Other Assets:	\$668,990.99
Fixed Assets:	\$128,116.48
<b>Total Assets:</b>	<b>\$797,107.47</b>

Long Term Liabilities:	\$44,752.81
Equity:	\$728,509.23
Short Term Liabilities:	\$23,845.43
<b>Total Liabilities:</b>	<b>\$797,107.47</b>

## Statement of Financial Activity (condensed), as of 12/31/20

Donations and Grants:	\$564,890.29
Event Revenue:	\$210,515.62
Retail Proceeds:	\$238,998.78
Miscellaneous Income:	\$72,757.18
<b>Total Revenues:</b>	<b>\$1,087,161.87</b>

Org. Performance:	\$534,427.06
Fundraising:	\$48,438.85
<b>Total Expenses:</b>	<b>\$582,865.91</b>

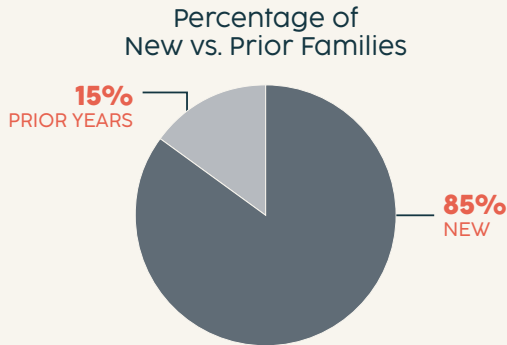
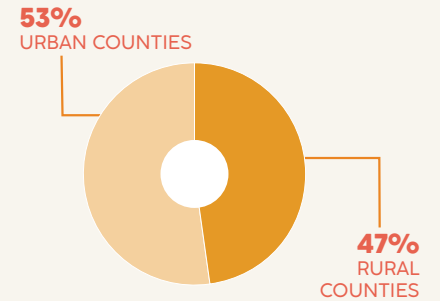
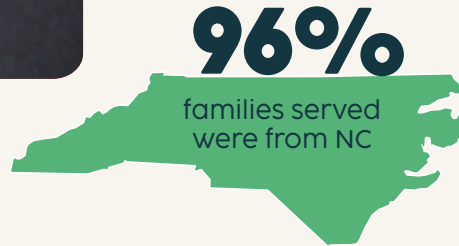
*\*Since hospital procedures were drastically limited, the volume of referrals for Me Fine services decreased last year. This allowed for Me Fine to use net proceeds from 2020 to establish an operating reserve for the first time in the organization's history.*





# The Bigger Picture

## Impact by the Numbers



**584**  
total assistance  
payments




**145**  
at Duke Children's

**386**  
total financial  
donors in 2020

**77** donors gave  
more than one time



**218**  
at UNC Children's



**55**  
at WakeMed Children's

Donations ranged from  
**\$10 - \$35,000**

# Continue to Provide Hope

## Second Hope Shop

Me Fine's thrift store, Second Hope Shop, resells gently-used items to raise funds for our mission.

Want to make a bigger impact? Coordinate a neighborhood drive by posting on social apps like NextDoor or your neighborhood email listserv. Thrift Drives are a great way to involve your work team, civic or religious group, and other groups of people. The Second Hope Shop team can even come pick up your group's donation!

Second Hope makes regular pickups around the Johnston/Wake/Durham County areas. You can schedule a pickup online or contact Mary Angel Bastin, Store Manager, during business hours.

**Second Hope Shop store line - 919-202-0445**

**Mary Angel's direct line - 919-631-5323**

**MaryAngel@mefinefoundation.org**

**www.secondhopeshop.com**

**Facebook @SecondHopeShop**



### Wish List:

Clothing- all seasons and sizes	Small furniture
Shoes	Electronics
Household decor	Toys
Kitchenware	Baby items
Purses	Bedding
Jewelry	Books - all ages, baby to adult

### Items that Second Hope Shop does NOT accept:

*Mattresses/boxsprings, computers, printers, couches, executive desks, or other large furniture, tube tvs, pianos/organs, rolling infant walkers, cribs, car seats, newspapers or magazines, ammunition and firearms, non-working electronics, items that are broken or in need of repair*

# Who We Are

## 2021 Board of Directors

**Colleen McGowan** – Chair

**San Parikh, Esq** – Chair-Elect, Governance Chair

**Garrett Klas** – Finance Chair

**Jaclyn Starritt, PhD** – Programs Chair

**Emily Fera** – Events Co-Chair

**Shriya Soora, MPH** – Events Co-Chair

**Matt Phillips** – Development Chair

**Stephanie Mazze** – Marketing & Communications Chair

**Marie Ambroise Thigpen, MD** – Board Member

**Claudia Cadet, MD** – Board Member

**Jen Chandler** – Board Member

**Leslie deRosset, MSPH, MPH** – Board Member

**Rob Hamilton, CPA** – Board Member

**Kerry Henderson** – Board Member

**Katherine Hutchinson, PhD** – Board Member

**Erin Rinn, Esq** – Board Member

**Bryan Strothmann** – Board Member

## Me Fine Foundation Staff

**Joey Powell**, Executive Director

**Meredith Richbourg, MSW**, Director of Operations

**Mary Angel Bastin**, Second Hope Shop Manager

**Kayla Merrill, MPA**, Outreach Coordinator

**Heather Campbell, CPA**, Director of Finance



Give, volunteer,  
spread the word—  
whatever your  
heart moves  
you to do. **We're  
thankful for it.**



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Me-Fine-Foundation



MeFine.org



**Me Fine**

**Me Fine Foundation**

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