

# ANNUAL REPORT



2020

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



What a powerful year it has been for MSFC! Reflecting on the major transitions and pivots this organization has faced, I am immensely grateful for the leadership of our staff and board members. The many challenges we faced during this unprecedented year have served to strengthen our commitments and re-ignite our focus in supporting our students in their journeys to become the compassionate, culturally humble, and dedicated abortion providers of tomorrow.

The experience and foresight of our new Executive Director, Pamela Merritt, in legislative activism and grassroots organizing has been timely and invaluable in this shifting political landscape. We anticipate political challenges ahead and remain committed to supporting our students in their activism to keep their education and future abortion provision accessible, legal, and safe.

We have weathered a pandemic and the many adjustments that inevitably had to be made in abortion training and education to keep our communities and students safe. Staff worked innovatively to provide support and continued training amidst a shifting educational landscape. We put forth a Black Lives Matter values statement at the Board of Directors level, aligning our work with a commitment to a Reproductive Justice framework. This year, we facilitated racial justice reading groups and fostered relationships with organizational allies doing important work in the Reproductive Justice Movement to put our reflections into action.



We have engaged in conversations and practices to step more fully into our role as an international organization committed to supporting abortion training across the globe. We welcome a collaborative and international Co-Presidency Elect to the board. Our board members now include students based in Peru, Nigeria, and South Africa, recognizing the need for global diversity in our leadership to support the varying abortion climates that our activism faces. We thank our international chapters and board members for their invaluable wisdom in shaping us into a global organization committed to abortion training and access worldwide.

The challenges of this year were not small. But if nothing else, they continue to make clear the utmost importance of MSFC's work and the strength of our students, staff, and board members who strive every day to keep our mission alive, well, and ever responsive to educational needs and Reproductive Justice. It is an honor to serve an organization that rises to the challenges we face and responds with strength, integrity, and care. Thank you all for your support. I am so grateful we can be in this work together.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kalin Gregory-Davis". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kalin Gregory-Davis  
President 2020-2021, Board of Directors  
**University of Vermont - Larner College of Medicine**

## A MESSAGE FROM THE ED



This past year, our communities faced unprecedented challenges. We mourn those lost to the COVID-19 pandemic, and we continue to advocate for equitable access to lifesaving vaccines and healthcare. Through all the chaos and change, the Medical Students for Choice community supported each other and found new socially distant ways to advance our mission. The achievements and growth reflected in this annual report are testaments to the strength of our organization and the dedication of MSFC's staff, board, and student leaders.

I became MSFC's new Executive Director in January of 2021, and it is an honor to lead our dynamic team as we prepare and strategize for the future. We face a direct challenge to the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling that affirmed the constitutional right to abortion access in the United States. We see an increase in the number of new international chapters, and we are excited to support that growth.

MSFC will soon begin strategic planning with explicit goals around anti-racism training, supporting the growth of our international chapters, and building intentional systems to support our extraordinary alumni. We are committed to supporting our student leaders as they educate their communities on the connection between abortion education and training, and access to safe and legal abortion.

We are collaborating with new movement partners to create trainings on advocacy within religiously affiliated institutions, the Reproductive Justice framework, and community engagement on everything from infant and



maternal mortality rates to the potential impact of the climate crisis on reproductive health. Medical Students for Choice will create **tomorrow's abortion providers and pro-choice physicians** no matter what the future holds.

I want to thank my predecessor, Lois Backus, for 19 years of service that saw MSFC grow into a mission-driven, sustainable organization with over 244 chapters in 28 countries.

Thank you to our funders and donors for their generous support of MSFC.

And thank you to the MSFC community of chapters and student leaders, and our board of directors for their strong and steady leadership. I am excited to see what we accomplish together.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pamela Merritt". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Pamela Merritt  
Executive Director

# 2020

.....  
BY THE NUMBERS



## 73

**Students** attended an in-person **Abortion Training Institute**, an intensive educational weekend, taught by family planning experts.

**29** **Additional students** attended **Virtual Abortion Training Institutes** to safely learn about abortion.

## 244

CHAPTERS

IN

## 28

COUNTRIES

HELD

## 671

**Virtual educational events** for their classmates and communities.



## 665

**Papayas used for abortion simulation workshops.**



## 61

**Network-wide virtual events** that covered topics like: Reproductive Injustice and Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Navigating Abortion Training in Residency, and the Abortion Providers Panel - Latin America.



## PROGRAMS UPDATE



### Building Community in a Time of Crisis

The COVID-19 pandemic changed everything: how we go to school, administer healthcare, organize and advocate for change. Our MSFC network stepped up to support and foster their community of activists, despite all the obstacles. From the beginning of the pandemic, MSFC members organized babysitting services to help frontline clinic workers, ensuring abortion access wouldn't be disrupted. Our members volunteered to fill staff shortages at clinics. Members in Uganda organized themselves into a delivery service, transporting essential medicines from clinics to patients who could not leave their homes safely.

Our membership also worked hard to support each other. Staff created spaces for the community to call in and check in with each other, a safe space for discussing challenges, concerns, grief, and hope. Travel restrictions made it impossible for graduating students to visit potential residency sites. So almost 100 MSFC alumni stepped up to offer insight, advice, and support for students navigating this process. MSFC alumni also volunteered their time to mentor and educate MSFC students. Almost 300 people served as virtual faculty, allowing our chapters to continue their work remotely.

## Ensuring Abortion Education Has a Place in Curriculum

MSFC student leaders and chapter members work to add abortion into their school's curriculum formally. With guidance and resources from our student organizers, chapters work to establish family planning electives, add lectures on abortion, remove stigmatizing content from their curriculum, and more. Unfortunately, the pandemic made this work more difficult because access to school administrators and decision-makers was limited. However, more than 30% of chapters engaged in efforts to reform their curriculum.

Sometimes, curriculum reform doesn't mean good content gets added. It means harmful and inaccurate education is removed from required lectures. And sometimes, it's both. The University of South Carolina chapter corrected the damage done by an anti-abortion speaker in their anatomy and embryology course. They wrote a letter to all first-year faculty asking them to use the scientifically correct language when teaching about the embryo. The chapter introduced their MSFC faculty advisor to the Anatomy course director, and she was able to present an abortion lecture for all first-year medical students.





## Training While Social Distancing

MSFC held two in-person Abortion Training Institutes (ATIs) in early 2020. This program allows highly motivated students to learn many aspects of abortion over a weekend. It is an intense, small-group learning environment that exposes participants to family planning experts and diverse medical students. MSFC fully funded the 73 students who were accepted. These students were selected from a pool of 217 applicants and represented 47 medical schools.

Because it was scheduled for late August 2020, the staff reconfigured the third ATI to be administered virtually. Instead of doing one virtual ATI, staff organized three so that participants could better network with each other and the faculty in a remote environment. The virtual ATIs were scheduled regionally to accommodate time zones and allow students to learn from faculty working in their communities and a similar legislative landscape. The regional focus was an added benefit that we will continue in 2021. Twenty nine students from 26 schools were accepted. Each student received a training kit in the mail to participate in a Manual Vacuum Aspiration Workshop to gain facility and familiarity with the equipment.

66 *Thank you for helping provide the opportunity to come to the Abortion Training Institute. Not only has this been a great personal learning opportunity for me, but it has also given me so many more tools and knowledge to take back to my community to make a difference in women's lives and become a greater advocate for abortion and reproductive health.*

**Aisha, ATI Participant**

## Becoming Actively Anti-Racist

MSFC continues to examine how white supremacy and anti-Blackness are present in our work. In 2020, our student membership led the reaffirmation of our work to dismantle white supremacy and other forms of oppression in our organization, the medical system, and our communities at large. Racial justice reading groups and racial affinity groups gave space to our chapter leadership to decenter whiteness and reflect on how we show up to MSFC's work.

The MSFC student-led webinar series, Unmuted: The Intersection of Race, Reproductive Justice, and Family, explores the history of reproductive violence and oppression facing the Black community in the US and examines how this legacy of racism endures today along the entire reproductive healthcare spectrum. A cohort of Black MSFC members, primarily from Historically Black Colleges and Universities, organized this ongoing series of webinars. Speakers have included Dorothy Roberts, Jamila Perritt, MD, and Monica McLemore, PhD.

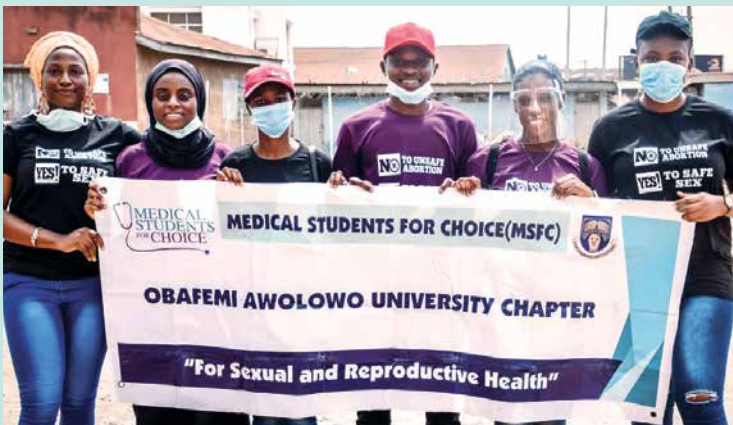
66 *Being a member of the [Unmuted] planning committee is, hands down, my favorite part of being part of MSFC. I love taking part in creating a space that centers and uplifts Black and brown voices while addressing the intersectionality of race, Reproductive Justice and family planning.*

**Asha, Meharry Medical College**

## MSFC ACROSS THE GLOBE



Being an MSFC member means being part of our strong network of committed advocates for the integration of abortion education into medical school! In 2020, 34 new chapters joined our network. These chapters developed in Nevada, Kentucky, Puerto Rico, Indiana, Austria, Japan, Peru and more. MSFC now has 244 chapters in 28 countries, with more joining each month. Our chapters are supported with funding for student events and guidance from alumni to mentor members. Despite a challenging year, 93% of MSFC's US chapters successfully transitioned leadership, ensuring continuity for years to come.



## VOICES OF OUR STUDENT LEADERS



### Oluwadusin

Obafemi Awolowo University



*Serving as a student leader with MSFC has made me see how important my career is, in terms of providing reproductive health services in my country, and has changed my thoughts towards abortion and family planning services in a good way, making me see them as an important aspect of my career.*

*My favorite memory while student organizing with MSFC is the reading groups we had. It was so educative, involving, and eye opening. It has made me see activism as an important means to speak out. I used to be not in support of it, but over the years, I've come to understand why it is important.*


### Ethan

University of Saskatchewan

*Serving as a student leader with MSFC has changed the way I think about my career with regards to how I intend to approach patient advocacy. Prior to my time with MSFC, I didn't feel like I had a voice or the tools necessary to effectively advocate for my patients. However, after learning from the organization and other leaders in the community, I have become comfortable with my ability to make an impact. This is a empowering feeling and will ultimately play a large role in my future career.*

*My favorite memory while student organizing with MSFC was the Abortion Training Institute in Philadelphia. MSFC put together an incredible weekend of informative learning sessions and fun social events. It included hands-on workshops to improve our practical skills, as well as advocacy training and education surrounding abortion regulations and laws. It was truly a pleasure to meet so many like-minded students and to share our varying experiences and struggles with activism. I'll always cherish my time there and am thankful for the many friends I met at the event!*

*Prior to MSFC, I didn't really know how to approach activism. I used to carry many opinions to myself and withhold this information without knowing how to utilize it to create change. However, MSFC has opened my eyes to the many ways*



*that one can approach activism. Activism can include anything, ranging from a traditional rally to simply educating your peers. I found this extremely useful because it allows for people to partake in activism in a manner that fits within their comfort zone.*

*My biggest takeaway from all my time with MSFC is to simply be available. I have learned that being there for my patients is everything. Abortion care is something that has classically carried stigma and for that reason, many women are reluctant to access the care that they need. I simply want my patients to feel that their needs are being met throughout their entire reproductive life.*

## **Ian**

Oklahoma University- TU School of Community Medicine

*MSFC has completely changed my life. I am so grateful for all the work this organization has done to make family planning and abortion education available to students, especially at schools that don't include abortion as part of the standard curriculum. I am hoping to continue keeping abortion available to patients in Oklahoma and surrounding states as part of my future career.*

*Although there are so many great memories to choose from, I would say my favorite one so far is probably our chapter's papaya workshop during COVID. We had to come up with a way to do this workshop over Zoom to maintain social distancing. The planning was very stressful and we were really worried the workshop was going to completely fail due to the inability to be face-to-face. It ended up being a highly attended event and many people felt like it was MSFC at its best. So glad that we could keep programming going given all the limitations we had with COVID.*

*I always pictured activism as holding up signs and yelling in the streets in protest. MSFC has shown me that there are so many ways to advocate beyond protest and picketing. Learning, teaching, and sharing our stories as medical students trying to get comprehensive knowledge about family planning and abortion puts us in a unique stance to be active. We advocate for our future patients. Keeping the conversation about abortion alive on campus makes us advocates. That's how we change hearts and minds. MSFC has done a great job inspiring me to do this.*

## FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS 2020



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Foundation**

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**The Leavens Foundation**

**The Lisa & Douglas Goldman Fund**

**The Scherman Foundation**

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Foundation**

**The William & Flora Hewlett  
Foundation**

*Thank you to every individual donor who has supported MSFC during this past year. We could not continue this work without your generosity and support.*

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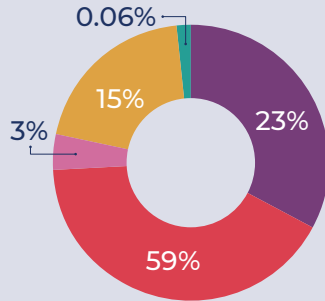
# FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2020

## INCOME

|                                      |    |           |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----------|
| ● Individual and Trust Contributions | \$ | 550,586   |
| ● Foundation Grants                  | \$ | 1,400,797 |
| ● Investment Income                  | \$ | 74,914    |
| ● Net Gain/(Loss) on Investments     | \$ | 339,106   |
| ● Other Income                       | \$ | 1,514     |

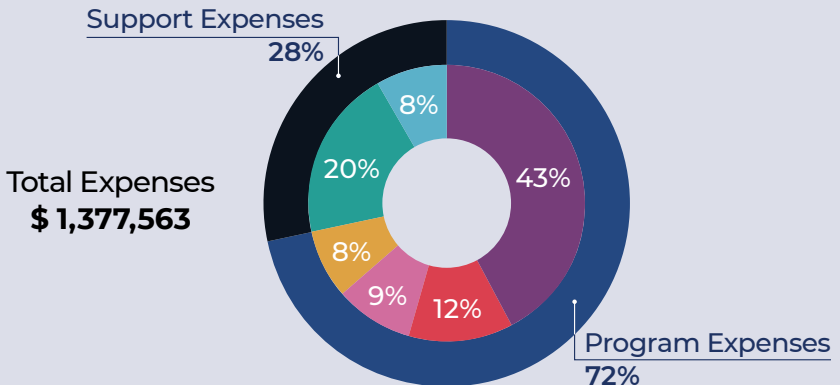
Total Income  
**\$ 2,366,917**

Total Net Assets  
**\$ 5,565,772**



## EXPENSES

|                              |    |         |
|------------------------------|----|---------|
| ● Student Organizing         | \$ | 584,474 |
| ● Conferences and Meetings   | \$ | 167,587 |
| ● Externship Program         | \$ | 122,810 |
| ● Outreach and Communication | \$ | 109,357 |
| ● Management and General     | \$ | 278,725 |
| ● Fund Development           | \$ | 114,610 |

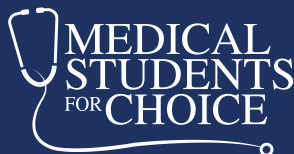


Total Expenses  
**\$ 1,377,563**



# THANK YOU!

2020 was a year of challenges, triumphs and growth. Our work would not have been possible without continued investment from our supporters, partners and the resiliency and dedication of our student leaders.



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