Annual Report 2022

Introduction	
	Page 2
Walker's Story	Page 7
Why Education?	
W/by Deliey and Adversey?	Page 11
Why Policy and Advocacy?	Page 15
Why Research?	
	Page 20
Why Financial Assistance?	
Financials & Thank You	Page 24
	Page 27
Connect with Us	
	Page 30

Annual Report

2022



A Letter from the Board of Directors

Change the Air Foundation launched in June of 2022. As we look back on the six months since we launched, we are proud of the important work that we are doing to shed light on the devastating effect poor indoor air quality in our homes and buildings can have on our health.

But our work is just beginning.

Families like Walker's, Jamie's, and Shemane's teach us that it doesn't matter what state you live in or how big your home is – every single one of us can experience the negative effects of poor indoor air quality.

The average American spends more than 90% of their time indoors breathing air that is potentially bad for their health.

These indoor pollutants are often odorless, colorless, and invisible to the naked eye. As a result, they are often overlooked or dismissed as triggers for a wide range of health conditions which range from minor to severe.

What's worse – it often takes people years to make that connection between their *health* and *home* – if they ever make it at all. This translates into years of painful and mismatched treatments; lost childhoods; and missed work, job opportunities, and income. It's years of significant physical, emotional, and financial burdens on already overwhelmed individuals and families.

Finally, we know there is a great deal of inaccurate, contradictory, and even unsafe information on how to properly inspect, test, and remediate homes that have mold, water damage, and other indoor pollutants. The lack of regulation and oversight means that ineffective and unsafe practices are used far too often.

This needs to change.

That's why, with your help, Change the Air Foundation continues to be dedicated to four major initiatives: education, policy and advocacy, research, and financial assistance. We know that this problem will require a multi-pronged approach to solve. It will require individuals, health care practitioners, community stakeholders, policy makers, and those in related industries to come together to properly identify, address, and prevent indoor air quality issues and the associated health effects.

We believe that safe indoor air is a basic right. As we go into 2023, we will continue to help people make the connection between their *health* and their *homes*. No one should have to wonder if the air in their homes, schools, or buildings is making them sick.

In Health and Change,

The Board of Directors

The statistics paint an important picture:

We spend more time indoors than ever before breathing in air that is potentially bad for our health.

Here are the facts:

20,000



The average adult takes 20,000 breaths a day.

HOW CLEAN IS YOUR AIR?

@changetheairFDN

SOURCE: AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATIO

90%

The average American spends more than 90% of their time indoors.

HOW CLEAN IS YOUR AIR?

@changetheairFDN

SOURCE: THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH



Nearly 50% of buildings surveyed in the U.S. were experiencing ongoing leaks causing water damage.



HOW CLEAN IS YOUR AIR?

@changetheairFDN

HOW CLEAN IS YOUR AIR?



Concentrations of some pollutants in an indoor environment are often 2-5 times higher than outdoor concentrations

@changetheairFDN

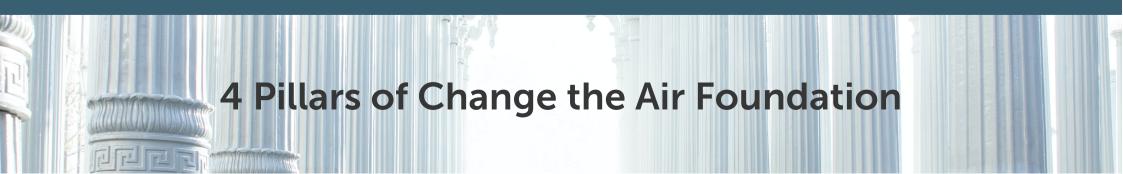
SOURCE: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

Mission

To empower the world to achieve better health by meaningfully addressing the impact water damage, mold and other pollutants have on indoor air quality.

Vision

A world free of the harmful effects from indoor air pollutants.



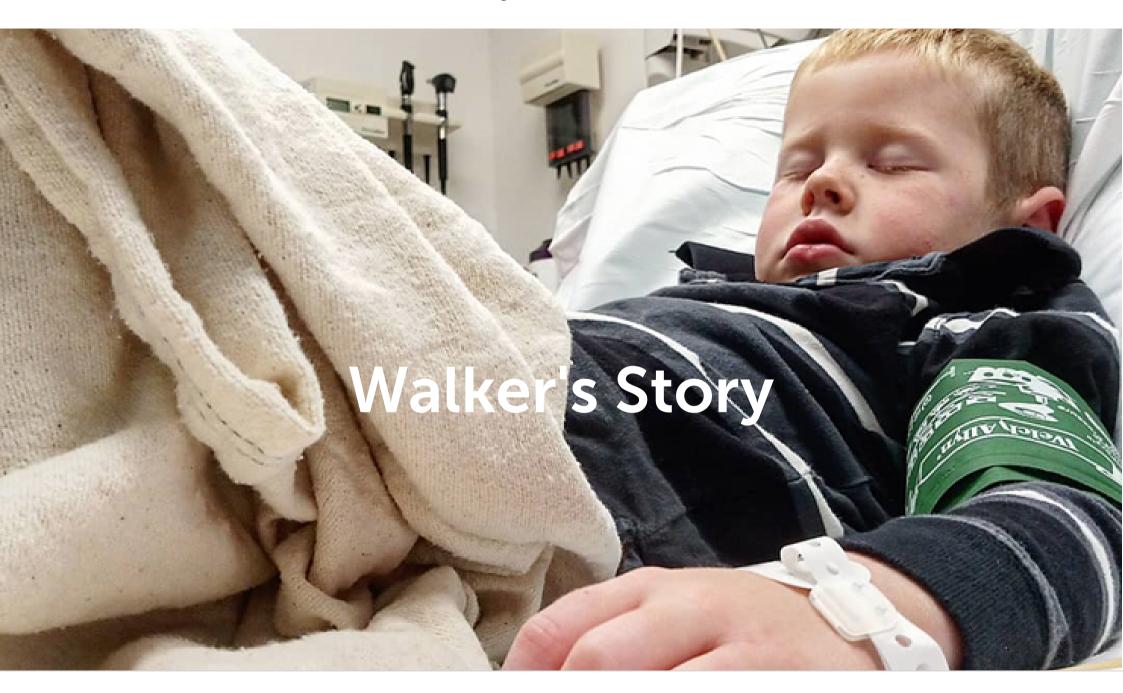
Education: Raise
awareness about the
serious risk poor indoor air
quality and water-damaged
buildings pose to public
health, and advocate for
the implementation of
researched-based best
practices to identify and
address mold, water
damage, and other indoor
air pollutants.

Policy & Advocacy:

Support initiatives to bring about meaningful policy reforms concerning mold and water damage in residential, commercial, and industrial properties at all levels of government. Research: Analyze, simplify, distribute, and fund research that answers important questions, find solutions and make recommendations for the general public, policy makers, health care practitioners, and other stakeholders to address problems created by poor indoor air quality.

Financial Assistance:

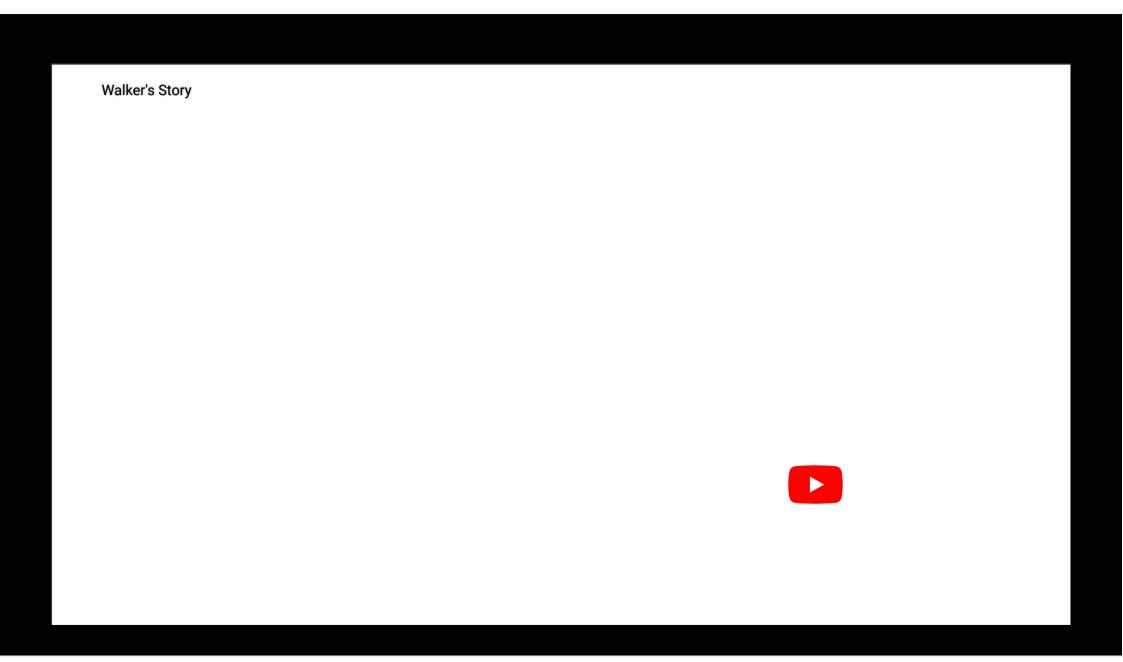
Provide needed financial assistance to individuals and families affected by poor indoor air quality.





If we could have just addressed mold right off the bat, he could be a different kid right now."

-Rebecca H., Walker's Mother



Walker's Story

On Thanksgiving Day 2019, 4-year-old Walker collapsed to the floor while setting the table for dinner. He suffered the first of what would become daily, unexplained, and life-threatening seizures.

Fast forward six months, one year, two years, and nothing stopped Walker's almost daily seizures. No medications or interventions worked, leaving many of their doctors and specialists baffled. For three long years, Walker was robbed of much of his childhood. His mother, Rebecca, was left to watch helplessly as her son slowly slipped away.

Even as the rest of the family experienced varying and unexplained symptoms, Rebecca desperately searched for answers. A random Facebook comment would ultimately lead her to a functional doctor who would determine that Walker was suffering from mold toxicity and the likely culprit was their home.

The problem?

Walker's family couldn't see or smell the environmental toxins that were making them sick.

Without access to reliable information and financial resources, Rebecca didn't know where to turn next to find out if and how their home was affecting their health.

In the fall of 2022, Rebecca reached out for help. Change the Air Foundation was able to arrange for a thorough inspection of the home at no cost to the family.

The testing and inspection of the home confirmed the doctor's suspicions. High levels of Stachybotrys, Chaetomium, and Aspergillus molds were found throughout the home, including where Walker slept each night. These molds are toxin producing and are known to cause health issues ranging from minor to severe.

Change the Air is committed to helping families like Walker's because no one should have to wonder if the air in their home, school, or buildings is making them sick.



Page 11

Why Education?

We know that without access to accurate and actionable information, it will be difficult for most people to make the connection between their *health* and their *home*. It will be challenging for their doctors to reach the correct diagnosis and determine the best course of treatment. Finally, we know there is a great deal of inaccurate and unsafe information out there on how best to inspect, test, and remediate homes that have mold, water damage, and other indoor pollutants. Far too often, ineffective and unsafe practices are used in our homes and buildings.

This needs to change.

ALOPECIA & MOLD:



AYOUNG GIRL'S STORY
OF RECOVERY

That's why in 2022, we:

- Connected people with free, reliable, accurate, and actionable information in the form of more than **30 articles, interviews, free mini classes and resources**;
- Empowered members of our community to make informed decisions when working with professionals and making choices for themselves and their families;
- Provided **35+ scholarships** to courses for those most in need aimed at understanding, identifying, and addressing common sources of water damage, mold and other indoor environmental pollutants;
- Reached over **200,000 people** through a variety of channels including Facebook and Instagram (230,000+), Website (12,000+), Newsletters (2,700+) as well as provided support to those who reached out to us directly through email and phone calls; and
- Shared stories of families like <u>Walker's</u> and <u>Jamie's</u> in order to shed light on the devastating effects poor indoor air quality can have on one's health and offer hope to those exploring the connection between health and home.

Looking ahead to 2023, we plan to expand our education initiatives to include:

- Launching the first annual **Change the Air Foundation Summit** that brings together much-needed awareness around the importance of indoor air quality and provides actionable ideas and suggestions that will lead people to healthier homes and lives:
- Increasing the number of **scholarships** to courses for the nonprofessional on understanding, identifying, and addressing common sources of water damage, mold and other indoor environmental pollutants; and
- Introducing a **doctor outreach program** that provides educational materials and support to health care practitioners regarding environmentally acquired illnesses and how they can help their patients.



Getting this scholarship has been the absolute greatest thing for our family. It's helped my husband and I learn how to look at our home with new abilities. We especially are glad to have these skills when looking for any other future homes we might purchase and hopefully these skills would help us avoid a mold situation in our future."

- Stephanie W.

At the age of 4, my daughter started to lose her hair. By the time she was 5, she lost every hair on her head, face, and body. This is our story about how my little girl's condition ended up saving our home, and everyone in it."

Read Jamie's full story here:
"It's Not Just Hair: My Daughter's Journey to Healing Alopecia"

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Why Policy & Advocacy?

The average American spends 90% of their time indoors, yet there is little focus at the state and federal level on indoor air quality standards and regulation and its relation to public health. State Health Departments across the country are lacking adequate health information for the public regarding the serious effects from exposures to pollutants in water-damaged indoor environments. Finally, most states do not require companies to follow accredited industry standards on mold remediation, nor do they require certifications or licensing for mold inspections.

This needs to change.

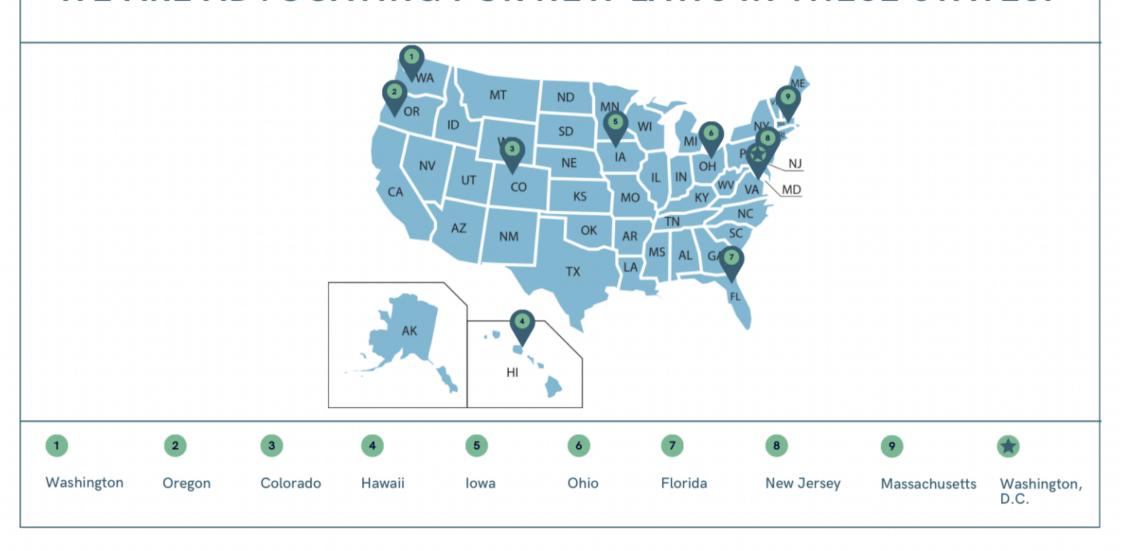


That's why in 2022, we:

- Advocated for meaningful policy reforms for mold and water-damaged indoor environments with legislators and staffers in **12 states!** Of those, Change the Air Foundation's efforts were directly behind the drafting of mold and indoor air quality-related legislation in **three states: Ohio, Florida and Hawaii**;
- Partnered with the Armed Forces Housing Advocates
 (AFHA) and the Institute of Inspection Cleaning and

 Restoration Certification (IICRC) to strengthen our voice in fighting for improved standards and awareness about mold and water damage; and
- Traveled with AFHA and the IICRC to **Washington**, **D.C**. to meet with staff members from various Congressional offices and advocate for S.4742, the Military Housing Readiness Council Act that would have created a 17-member council to advise the Department of Defense on the best practices and policies for solving the problems seen throughout military housing across the country.

WE ARE ADVOCATING FOR NEW LAWS IN THESE STATES!





"I am thankful for those that have helped me get to this point and Brandon Chappo from Change the Air Foundation, with giving me direction on how to change the regulations in our state."

> -Amanda Steinbach, PT State Lead Volunteer, Iowa

Interested in spearheading policy reform in your state? Volunteer at

https://changetheairfoundation.org/volunteer/

Looking ahead to 2023, we plan to expand our policy and advocacy initiatives to include:

- Pushing for passage of legislation in Ohio, Florida and Hawaii in their respective state legislatures;
- Setting up additional **advocacy trips** to Washington D.C. to meet with staff members from various Congressional offices to fight for meaningful policy reform for mold, waterdamaged indoor environments and indoor air quality;
- Introducing 1 2 new bills in states we're advocating within;
- Advocating for appropriations and funding at **Federal level** for mold and water-damaged indoor environments; and
- Expanding relationships with **strategic partners**.





Why Research?

From conception to the grave, our indoor air can keep us healthy or make us sick. Many indoor pollutants are odorless, colorless, and invisible to the naked eye making them difficult to identify and remedy. As a result, they are often overlooked as potential triggers behind a wide range of health conditions. Credible and actionable research needs to be conducted and distributed to the public, health care practitioners, policy makers, and those in related industries. The way we heal our bodies and build and maintain our homes needs to be based on the most up-to-date science. Poor indoor air quality is a neglected, dismissed, and underfunded public health issue.

This needs to change.

That's why in 2022, we:

- Began recruiting a **Scientific Advisory Panel** from a cross section of professions including health care, academia, indoor air quality, and related fields; and
- Provided an extensive response to an **EPA Request for Public Comment** seeking input on ways to improve indoor air quality that included references showing toxins produced by certain molds cause a wide range of health effects. The foundation also provided constructive suggestions on how to improve poor indoor air quality with the knowledge and tools we already have at hand.

Please meet David Fontaine, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Panel:

David Fontaine is Chair of the Scientific Advisory Panel. David has a Master's degree in Systems Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology and leverages 20+ years' experience in aerospace systems engineering.

David and his wife, Lissa, lost home and health due to water damage hidden in their home and exposure to multiple species of toxigenic mold. After a failed remediation of their home, they purchased an RV, which has been their full-time home since 2018, while they travel with the seasons, treating with specialists along the way.

David has a deep appreciation for the interconnectedness of things. While doing research to aid his own recovery, he has examined our IAQ problem from many different perspectives. Studying winners and losers across the landscape of state and federal agencies, commercial industries, and our healthcare systems, he quickly recognized deep, widespread, and totally inconsistent patterns of messaging and behavior around mycotoxins in different contexts. He hopes his unique perspectives, passion, and tenacity will help bring improved awareness of our epidemic of water-damaged buildings and the health impacts of the associated contaminates.



Looking ahead to 2023, we plan to expand our research initiatives to include:

- Recruiting additional members to the **Scientific Advisory Panel**;
- Developing evidence-based **position papers** to support our educational and policy initiatives and help build our advocacy network;
- Simplifying complex topics related to indoor air quality so that anyone can implement practical, safe, and effective interventions; and
- **Highlight the hidden costs of poor indoor air quality** and the associated negative health effects, so public health policy makers, industry, and the public can make properly informed decisions.



Why Financial Assistance?

Living in unhealthy buildings can create a significant physical, emotional, and financial burden. The cost to inspect, test, or remediate a home for mold, water damage, and other indoor air pollutants can get costly. Further, insurance often covers very little, if any, of the cost. This puts a substantial and, in some cases, insurmountable burden on the renter or homeowner. Many people are simply left with no resources or options to understand how their homes may be contributing to their health symptoms. No one should have to wonder if the air in their home, schools, or buildings is making them sick.

This needs to change.



That's why in 2022, we:

• Piloted a **financial assistance program** which helped Walker's family receive a free inspection of their home so they could finally understand how their home was affecting their health.

Looking ahead to 2023, we plan to officially launch our financial assistance initiative to include:

• Providing and expanding our **financial assistance program** to support qualifying homeowners and renters in the US so that more individuals and families can test and inspect their home for indoor environmental pollutants.



I never would have thought that at the beginning of this when he was having that seizure that it would have all culminated into having our home inspected, finding mold in the couch, in finding out Walker has mold toxicity. I never would have put that together...if we could have just addressed mold right off the bat, he could be a different kid right now.

-Rebecca H. (Walker's mother)



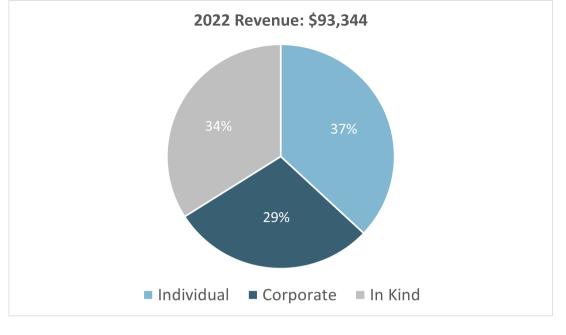
Walker's mother, Rebecca, reached out to Change the Air Foundation in the fall of 2022 for help.

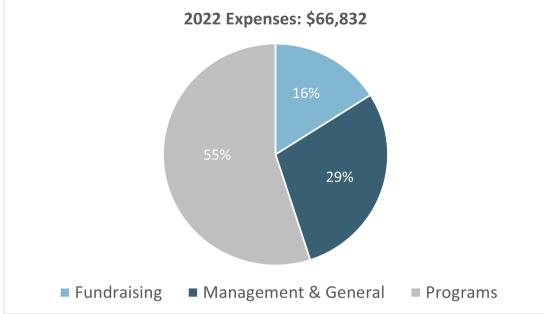
Without access to reliable information and financial resources, Rebecca didn't know where to turn next to find out if and how their home was affecting their health.

Watch Walker's full story here.









Looking back on 2022, we are proud of what we have been able to accomplish because of people like you!

Every post shared, every legislator called, and every dollar donated brings us one step closer to helping people make the connection between their health and their home.

To our more than 75 donors we want to say thank you! To our corporate donors who gave not only cash but in-kind donations like scholarships, we want to say thank you! It is only because of your generosity that we were able to empower members of our community to become their own advocates and begin to address the overlooked and dismissed problem posed by poor indoor air quality.

Change the Air Foundation continues to be a 100% volunteer run organization so please accept our sincere gratitude and appreciation for your generosity and continued support.

Together, we can make safer indoor air a reality for everyone.

With Gratitude,

Change the Air Foundation

THANK YOU!

Every post shared, every legislator called, and every dollar donated brings us one step closer to helping people make the connection between their *health* and their *home*.

2022 Board of Directors	Strategic Advisors	Ambassadors
Michael Rubino, Chair	Justin Nahama	David Fontaine
Kendra Seymour, Vice Chair		Brian Karr
Brandon Chappo, Director of Public Policy		Jordan Kirkham
Cory Levy		Mark Levy
Betsy Maldonado		



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