



MISSION STATEMENT

TO PROVIDE HEALING
RETREATS AND ONGOING
SUPPORT OF ADOLESCENT
GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN
WITH BURN/TRAUMA INJURIES
TO ACHIEVE THEIR OPTIMUM
POTENTIAL AND DEVELOP
MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS
FOR THEMSELVES, THEIR
FAMILIES, AND THEIR
COMMUNITIES

angel faces 
ANNUAL REPORT

2016

www.AngelFaces.com



Lesia S. Cartelli,
Founder & CEO



age 9

angel faces

BACKGROUND

Established in 2003, Angel Faces, based in Encinitas, California, is a national 501(c)3 nonprofit providing intensive seven-day therapeutic/educational retreats and ongoing support (post retreat) for adolescent girls and young women with severe physical disfigurements and emotional scarring from burn/trauma injuries.

Through therapeutic sessions led by licensed psychologists, educational workshops, retreat participants are taught how to reach their optimal potential and develop meaningful relationships for themselves, with their families, and in their communities.

HISTORY

Lesia S. Cartelli, founder and CEO of Angel Faces and author of *Heart of Fire*, was severely burned at the age of 9 in a natural gas explosion at her grandparent's home. She created Angel Faces with the intent of empowering girls and young women to embrace their trauma and physical appearance with resilience and gratitude - thus providing new opportunities, survival strategies, and inner strength needed for daily encounters with the public. The retreat has grown from a three-day/two-nights duration to eight-day/seven-nights. The retreat has profoundly impacted over 200 girls, their families, schools and communities, thus giving Angel Faces the opportunity to touch tens of thousands and it just keeps growing.

**For more information about Lesia Cartelli,
please visit: www.LesiaCartelli.com**

With just a few employees and one contract grant writer, Angel Faces relies on the support of dedicated volunteers who assist with outreach, and retreats. Funding comes from grants, foundations, organizations, special events, private family foundations and the public at large.



WHY ANGEL FACES EXIST?

With our medical advancements in treating acute traumatic injuries, survival rates are soaring, patients lives are saved yet leaving them severely and permanently disfigured. Both physically and mentally, enduring a traumatic event is devastating to the human spirit, particularly with female adolescents. Going back into society is where the true work of survival and healing begins. Without the support of Angel Faces, patients are high risk for social death (meaning they isolate themselves from family, friends, and the public because of their appearance). Their difficulty reintegrating into society and back to school seems insurmountable to themselves. They are prone to isolation, drug and alcohol abuse, and sometimes suicide. This cycle of trauma affects the community and the world around us. The goal of Angel Faces is to prevent this downward spiral in adolescent girls.

Simply put, they are alive, but if they don't want to leave their home, what good is our advancements in medicine? The life was saved, but ultimately lost.

Due to our healthcare system limitations, hospitals rely on programs such as Angel Faces to serve the needs of the psychological issues that arise from being disfigured.

Angel Faces offers what hospitals and burn camps do not.

Angel Faces is a one-of-a-kind program who serves girls with severe deep burns ranging from 20% to 95% of their face and total body. Utilizing the skills and tools they learn at Angel Faces, our girls lead by example, as role models, teaching their families, classmates, and communities about self-acceptance, self love and finding gratitude from their trauma.

Witnessing the resilience is life changing for all who meet our girls.

Many of our girls have come back to mentor to our younger girls coming up through the program and volunteer for Angel Faces year round.

HIGHLIGHTS

1

LEVEL 1 RETREAT Held in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire, girls from around the world attended the retreat. Retreat components covered areas of grief, loss, social interaction (how to handle staring, teasing, and unwanted questions from peers at school and the public), boundaries, healthy relationship building, corrective cosmetics, goal setting, art therapy, as well as building resilience and gratitude from their trauma. Watch recent Angel Faces news coverage during this retreat [here](#).

It's a safe place where these girls and young women can learn not to just survive *looking different* but to thrive in how to love themselves, embrace their new appearance, as well as continue with goals and dreams of their future. Angel Faces also provides ongoing support post retreat (newsletters, social media, Zoom sessions).

2

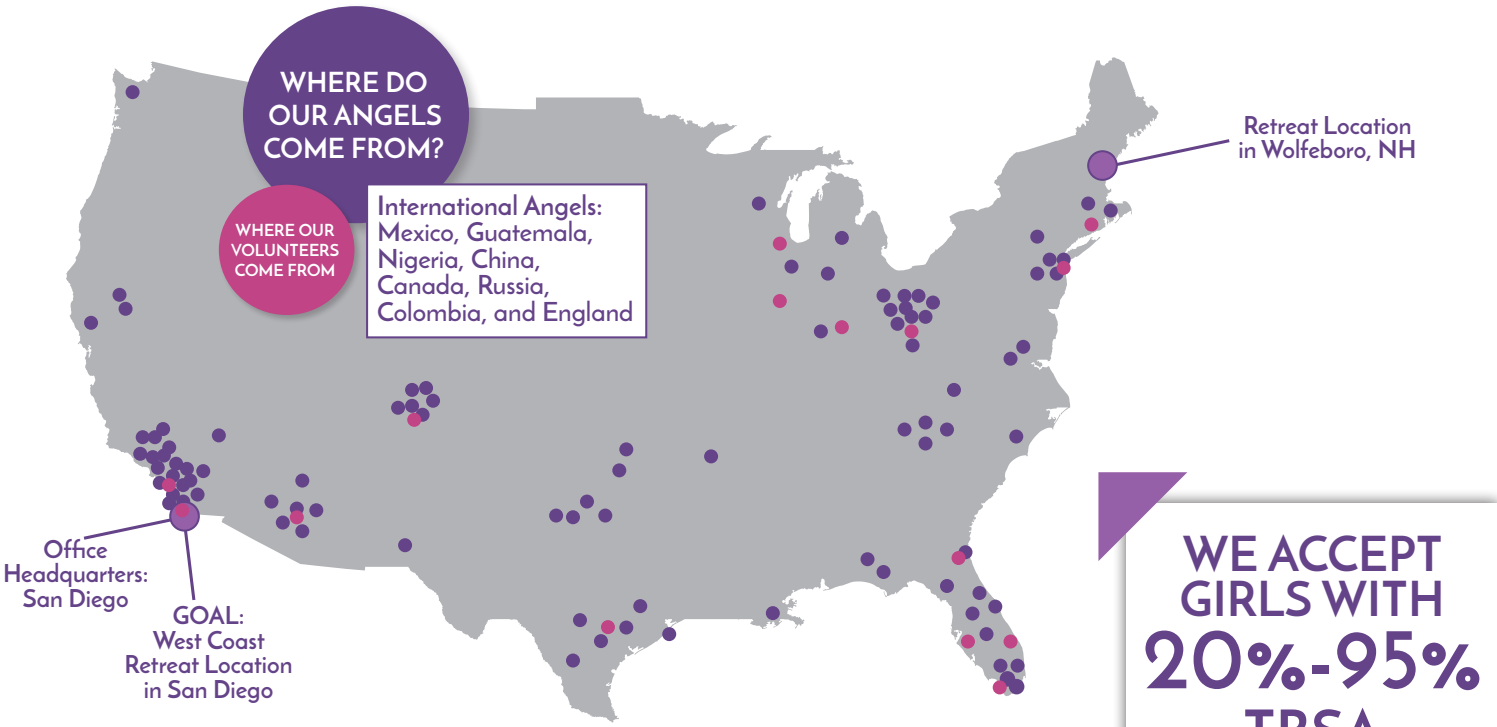
MENTORSHIP TRAINING Girls who have reached the age of 19 and who have attended Level 1 and Level 2 retreats return to Level 1 as mentors assisting the leaders with caring for, guiding, and mentoring the new (freshly wounded girls) during Level 1. These mentors also participate during the retreat in what is called, Through Your Voice (TYV), where they share their own personal story of tragedy to triumph to the younger girls in a well prepared powerpoint presentation. This training and preparation for their TYV presentation is coached by Lesia Cartelli. Preparing for the presentation (over a period of months) involves many often painful discussions and interviews about their trauma, including gathering photos of their accident, interviews with family members and medical professionals. This presentation includes the tools in their recovery process such as "what helped me get through going back to school?" This training is a crucial tool in building and recognizing their own resilience, gratitude, and leadership skills thus preparing them with life skills and college opportunities. The actual presentation is eye-opening for both mentor and girls in the audience. "She got through it, so can I!" **This year we expanded this program in length and had more presenters.**

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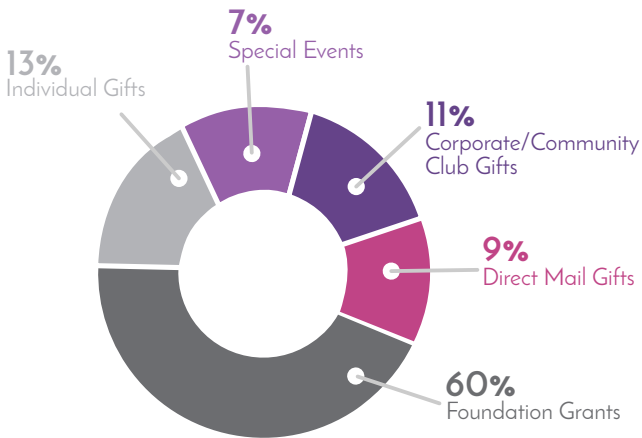
RESEARCH We have been collecting data since 2009. In 2015, Dr. Michael Murphy and his evaluation team from Massachusetts General and Shriners Hospitals began to help Angel Faces to compile, analyze, and write up the results. (Click [here](#) to see full report written in 2016). The evaluation provided evidence that over the course of the retreat participants showed statistically significant improvements on five of the seven measures used, with improvements in self-esteem, hopefulness, and quality of life and decreases in depression and social anxiety.

These findings have been summarized in a poster that has been accepted for presentation at the American Burn Association Annual Meeting in Boston in May 2017 and are being written up for publication in a psychological journal. Click [here](#) to see poster abstract.

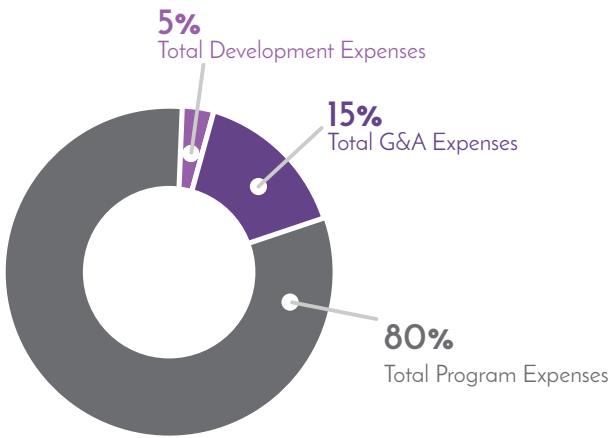
BY THE NUMBERS



WE ACCEPT GIRLS WITH 20%-95% TBSA
 Medical term for Total Body Surface Area burned



2016 YTD Contributions (Excluding In-Kind Donations)



2016 YTD Expense Breakdown



OUR NEED

Level 1 retreat is our flagship, the first step for girls with severe injuries (some just months out of the hospital) come to heal, learn survival skills and tools for coping with their injuries and the path ahead, such as reentry back to school, how to handle when people stare or ask unwanted questions.

Every June, for 12 days, a team of 16 women who are professionals in their selected fields (paramedics, teachers, nurses, occupational therapists, yoga instructors, firefighters) volunteer at our Level 1 retreat in Wolfeboro, NH. In addition to the volunteers, two paid licensed psychologists whose specialty is in trauma lead sessions and private consultations throughout the week.

It is the mission of Angel Faces to serve and reach more girls with this educational and healing program.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Angel Faces is about self-responsibility. We teach the girls that **THEY** are responsible for their healing and path to the future. We teach that although they survived a traumatic event, they get what they work for and effort into, not just because they are injured.

"It is their responsibility to create something good from their injury." Often the girls will ask, "Why did this happen to me?", I respond, "Why not you! And what good will you create from it!?" ~L. Cartelli

**HOPE, HEALING,
AND SELF-RESPONSIBILITY
FOR THEIR FUTURE IS UP TO THEM.**

We need funding to:

- 1 Support and sustain our Level 1 retreat on the east coast in Wolfeboro, New Hampshire.
- 2 Add an additional Level 1 retreat to be held on the West Coast in the United States. The west coast retreat location is needed because it is difficult for a parent to allow their newly wounded adolescent daughter to travel across country for seven days. In addition, it is a challenge to the girls we serve to be so far away from home.

Having retreats on both sides of the coast we will be able to serve more girls, who are in great need of this unique program.

WHO WE TOUCH

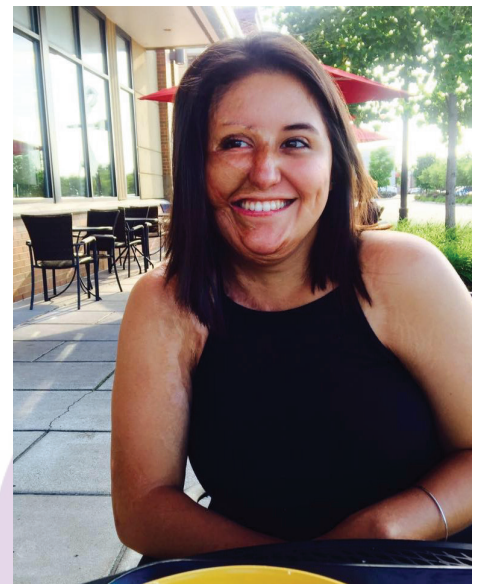
ADRIANA, 19

Adriana attended her first retreat at 13. She was burned over 40% by scalding water at age 2. Adriana has attended four retreats and now will be joining our volunteer team to mentor young girls who have also suffered severe injuries. She is currently a freshman at the University of Indiana. Adriana recently posted on social media 11/29/16:



"Today is Giving Tuesday and as some of you may know, about 7 years ago, I attended my first Angel Faces retreat, it was there that I first realized what my purpose in life was with all that I had gone through with my burn injury. It became my safe place. I've attended several retreats and during each one, I found new sisters and reunited with old ones.

Angel Faces has changed my life so much and I wouldn't be the person I am today if it wasn't for what I learned and these girls and women who continue to hold such a special place in my heart. This program changes lives and with more donations, it will be able to help more girls. Anything helps. With donations over the years, girls like myself have been able get the resources and tools we need to embrace our scars, our beauty, confidence, and story. This is an organization that I am so passionate about. It is enriched with such hope and love and I know that it will continue to change the lives of girls everywhere."



Adriana today

WHO WE TOUCH

KELSAY, 15

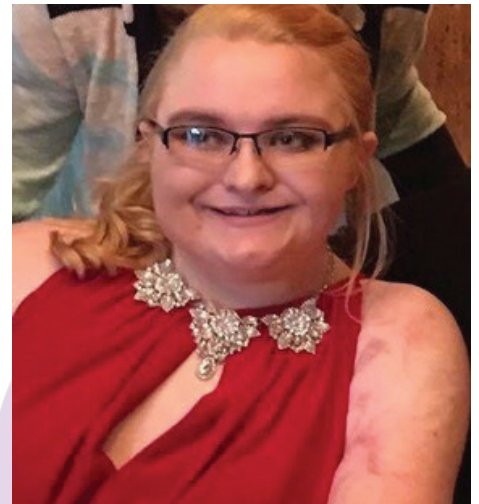
At age 4, Kelsay was burned when a candle caught her dress on fire. After six months in the hospital enduring painful surgeries and treatments, Kelsay was released to a life of isolation, looking different, and feeling like an outcast. Last June Kelsay attended AF for the first time. Days after the retreat, we received this from Kelsay:

"I look at my life completely differently now. I want to come back this was an experience of a lifetime and honestly that's just the beginning of what I learned!! I truly honored and blessed to have experienced such an amazing place and have been a part of it. Thank you so much. I can't express to you my gratitude. Every single one of the donors, the women that helped everyday, the mentors, the girls I met, everyone! A lot of it didn't hit me until I got on the plane. Then I thought about how much it changed me. I learned so much! I learned my inner being! Then I started tearing up (and I'm not a crier) cause I'm like, wow I will honestly never be the same again. It was incredible! I want to come back!"

Since last June, Kelsay has volunteered for us, while helping other girls through hard times. We are grooming her for a mentorship position when she is older.



Kelsay at the retreat



Kelsay post-retreat

WHO WE TOUCH

KATIE, 22

At age 17, Katie was making a zombie costume for Halloween. Flammable liquids combusted and Katie was burned 40% of her body. Katie attended her first retreat six months after being released from University of California Irvine Burn Center. While hospitalized Katie's mother passed away, unexpectedly. Katie is now a freshman at University of California Santa Barbara. Katie recently posted on social media:



Katie receives a scar massage at the retreat

"Hard to believe it's been 5 years already, and at other times it seems like a lifetime ago! (or someone else's life entirely). I'm grateful to not only be alive, but to have grown so much from this experience, and gained so much through painful times. I've met the most inspiring and fascinating people and was able to develop such meaningful relationships with them. Although my injuries still effect me daily, I wouldn't be where I am today without all the strong and compassionate folks around me, namely an organization called, "Angel Faces!"

I have had the best support group and that has made all the difference. It hasn't been a perfect journey at all -to say the least- but it has been fulfilling and taught me how to be brave. If you haven't yet, check out www.AngelFaces.com - they changed my life for the better and so many other girls need this impactful experience as well!...help them continue to do so.

Happy 5 year anniversary to me!"



Katie speaking at an Angel Faces dinner

WHO WE TOUCH

CAMPBELL & XIAOLI

CAMPBELL, 16

At the age of 12, Campbell was burned 81% when her home caught fire. She came to Angel Faces at the age of 14 scared and wounded. Over the course of two retreats, her resilience strengthened, her gratitude enhanced, and she recently spoke at an Angel Faces dinner.



Campbell, her grandparents, and her aunt at an Angel Faces dinner

Watch her story [here](#).

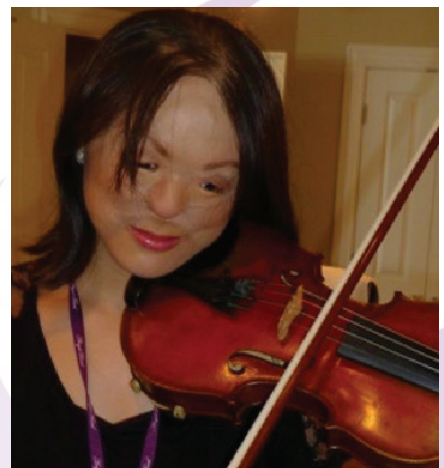
XIAOLI, 19

Xiaoli was burned in China as an infant. She has attended two retreats. The skills and tools she has learned through Angel Faces has helped her tremendously.

Watch her story [here](#).



Xiaoli (age 3)



Xiaoli (today)



angel faces 

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