



2015 Annual Report

A year of accomplishment

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Legal Director
Anne Tamar-Mattis, JD



Director of Development
Rebecca Baughman Kerns



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Youth Coordinator
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Communications Manager
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Legal Fellow
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Message from the Executive Director



2015 marked my first full year serving as interACT’s Executive Director, and what a year it was! The winter brought a shift in focus for our legal team, turning our full attention in the M.C. litigation to the state court and away from federal district court. Because the law was not clearly established in South Carolina at the time of M.C.’s surgery in 2006, the federal district court found defendants had “qualified immunity” from suit, even if they had violated M.C.’s constitutional rights. The court declined to rule on whether M.C.’s surgery was a violation of his constitutional rights, leaving that issue undecided. While disappointing, the ruling did not affect the companion medical malpractice case, M.C. vs. Medical University of South Carolina, which is still proceeding in state court. 2015 was spent aggressively pushing forward on those claims.

This year also brought new energy to both our staff and board. We welcomed Emily Quinn onto staff as our new interACT Youth Coordinator, and Rebecca Baughman Kerns in the role of Director of Development. Additionally, Q Ragsdale joined the team as Communications Manager and our legal staff tripled near the end of the year with the additions of Staff Attorney Al Ittelson and Legal Fellow Sylvan Fraser. The interACT Board of Directors was also busy finalizing a new strategic plan in the spring and bringing on two new wonderful members, intersex advocate Lynnell Stephani Long and parent Eric Lohman. For me personally, I think 2015 is going to be hard to beat with work taking me from Hollywood, to Washington, D.C. and even the United Nations. Last February I spent a day on the set of MTV’s *Faking It* and watched interACT’s work in helping to shape

TV’s first intersex central character come to life. On Intersex Awareness Day, Legal Director Anne Tamar-Mattis, Communications Manager Q Ragsdale, and I presented the first ever intersex rights workshop for federal Health and Human Services staff, co-sponsored by Council for Global Equality. Speaking about intersex civil and human rights abuses to an engaged and welcoming group of more than fifty federal agency staffers was a great milestone for me personally and for interACT. Just a few weeks later I returned to our nation’s capitol as the guest and

last year by raising awareness through the popular “What it’s like to be intersex” video produced in collaboration with BuzzFeed! Our brave and talented young advocates never cease to amaze me and are truly essential voices working towards our mission to protect the rights of intersex children everywhere.

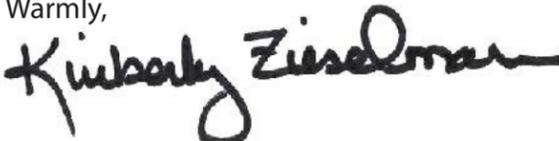
In fact, in recognition of our young advocates and our youth focused mission, at the end of 2015 we rebranded and renamed the organization “interACT: advocates for intersex youth.” We adopted the name

nominator of former interACT youth member and staffer Pidgeon Pagonis, who was recognized for their work as an intersex artist and activist.

Also last fall, I was invited to participate in an Expert Meeting held by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva during the 32nd session of the Human Rights Council. Being there as the North American intersex representative was both exciting, humbling and emotionally draining. The difficult work we do as intersex people and activists was never more apparent to me than during those three days. The magnitude and urgency of the task before us—to protect intersex children from harm—was never more clear. It is what keeps me going and what keeps interACT’s amazing board and staff moving forward each day. Our interACT Youth program made a huge impact

that our volunteer youth advocates had chosen when they launched the project a few years ago. I can’t think of a better way to honor and highlight the importance of intersex youth voices in making decisions about their own bodies and lives.

interACT is fortunate to have a strong committed group of supporters and donors, who are essential to moving forward with our work. You are all helping us get closer each year to achieving legal and human rights for children born with intersex traits. Thank you.

Warmly,

 Kimberly Zieselman

interACT Youth
Raising Intersex Awareness



interACT Youth members have become a key voice for the movement. One of our most effective tools in the fight to protect intersex children is our youth program. This year, we extended the age range for interACT Youth membership up to 29, adding opportunities for more intersex young people to get involved when they are ready. As a result, our youth increased in number, becoming an even more formidable force as they spoke passionately to the medical community, policymakers, and the public at large.

One of our more visible successes came when BuzzFeed and interACT released "What It's Like to be Intersex," a video featuring our inter-

ACT Youth members, which has now received several million views around the globe! Huffington Post called it one of the most accessible explanations of intersex they have ever seen.

One parent reported to interACT that her child's physiology class was using the BuzzFeed video to introduce the concept of intersex and to discuss unnecessary surgery and its effects on patients. One interACT Youth member told her college dorm mates about being intersex, preparing herself for a long night of questions about her body. The response she received, though, wasn't question after question, but actually an acknowledgement: "Like in that BuzzFeed video, right?"

But our awareness raising through media isn't just changing the hearts and minds of the public - it's also impacting policymakers who are key allies in helping us protect the rights of intersex kids. Executive Director Kimberly Zieselman was pleasantly surprised when in Geneva for an expert meeting on intersex issues, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights kicked off the two-day working group with a showing of our popular video!

One of our most **effective tools** in the fight to **protect intersex children** has become our **youth program**.

MTV's teen dramedy, *Faking It*, also gave us too many moments to count where you could hear the voices of our young members speaking through Bailey De Young, the actress who skillfully played Lauren Cooper—the world's first central intersex character on TV. This has had an immeasurable impact on in the experiences of our youth. When they say they are intersex, their peers now have a starting point to understand them.

I just saw your organization mentioned on the MTV show *Faking It* and I would love to join. I never knew there were organizations out there for people like me and I honestly wanted to cry with joy when I found out. This is so exciting for me.
 – Courtney, young intersex viewer

Including authentic intersex youth voices is essential to the genuine portrayal of young intersex characters in the media. After all, we aren't that rare, but until recently we've been invisible.
 – Alice Alvarez, interACT Youth member & interACT Board member

Coming from a mom, I am so proud of what you and MTV have done... I can not express what this means to so many people in this world that have been living a lie. It gives me hope that one day [my daughter] will be in a world of acceptance. I am already seeing this as she has told some friends already and they have loved her just the same.
 – Mom of 12-year-old intersex daughter

interACT Law & Policy
Expands Reach



interACT was invited to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). This experience was both humbling, and an amazing honor, as we would be the lone voice for intersex youth in North

the true experts on our own lives, and this responsibility was not lost on any of the participants. interACT was only one voice in a group of diverse intersex people from 6 different continents

the medical community in the US, and to highlight the effective and growing voices of our young intersex advocates.

Taking our seat at the table for this groundbreaking global discussion of intersex human rights, working collaboratively with intersex activists from almost every continent. Intersex has finally arrived.

Finally, what intersex people and activists have been saying for two decades is being echoed on a worldwide stage. Medical professionals, policy makers and society as a whole are now morally obligated to examine the urgent issue of intersex human rights abuses happening every single day across

Too many people assume, without really thinking about it, that everyone can be fitted into two distinct and mutually exclusive categories," says UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein. "But in fact, human beings – like most living beings – are more diverse and complex than that. Our diversity – the differences between our experiences and perspectives, as well as the shapes of our bodies – is something that we should celebrate and protect, in all its forms.

America participating in this historic expert meeting, continuing the ground-breaking advocacy work that brave intersex pioneers started 20 years before. For the first time, intersex people were being seen as brought together to share information about our own intersex experiences. interACT's Executive Director, Kimberly Zieselman was there to speak of the human rights violations suffered at the hands of

the globe. interACT will not rest until, non-consensual and medically unnecessary irreversible surgeries on intersex children are stopped.

interACT Law & Policy
in the Courts

The road to justice is long and can take time. That gives us, though, more than one path to justice for M.C., and for other children born with intersex traits. Early in 2015, the Fourth Circuit overturned the district court's ruling in M.C. vs. Aaronson, meaning that the federal case would not go to trial. This was, by no means, the end of the fight. This ruling does not affect the companion case of M.C. vs. Medical University of South Carolina, which is still proceeding in state court. We are continuing to push forward aggressively on those claims.



When we first shared this news in January 2015, many of our friends at interACT were concerned. So many of us are hoping that this case will open the eyes of the medical community to the harm done to intersex children through unnecessary cosmetic surgery on their genitals. At that time we spoke about what this ruling means for M.C. and for our supporters:

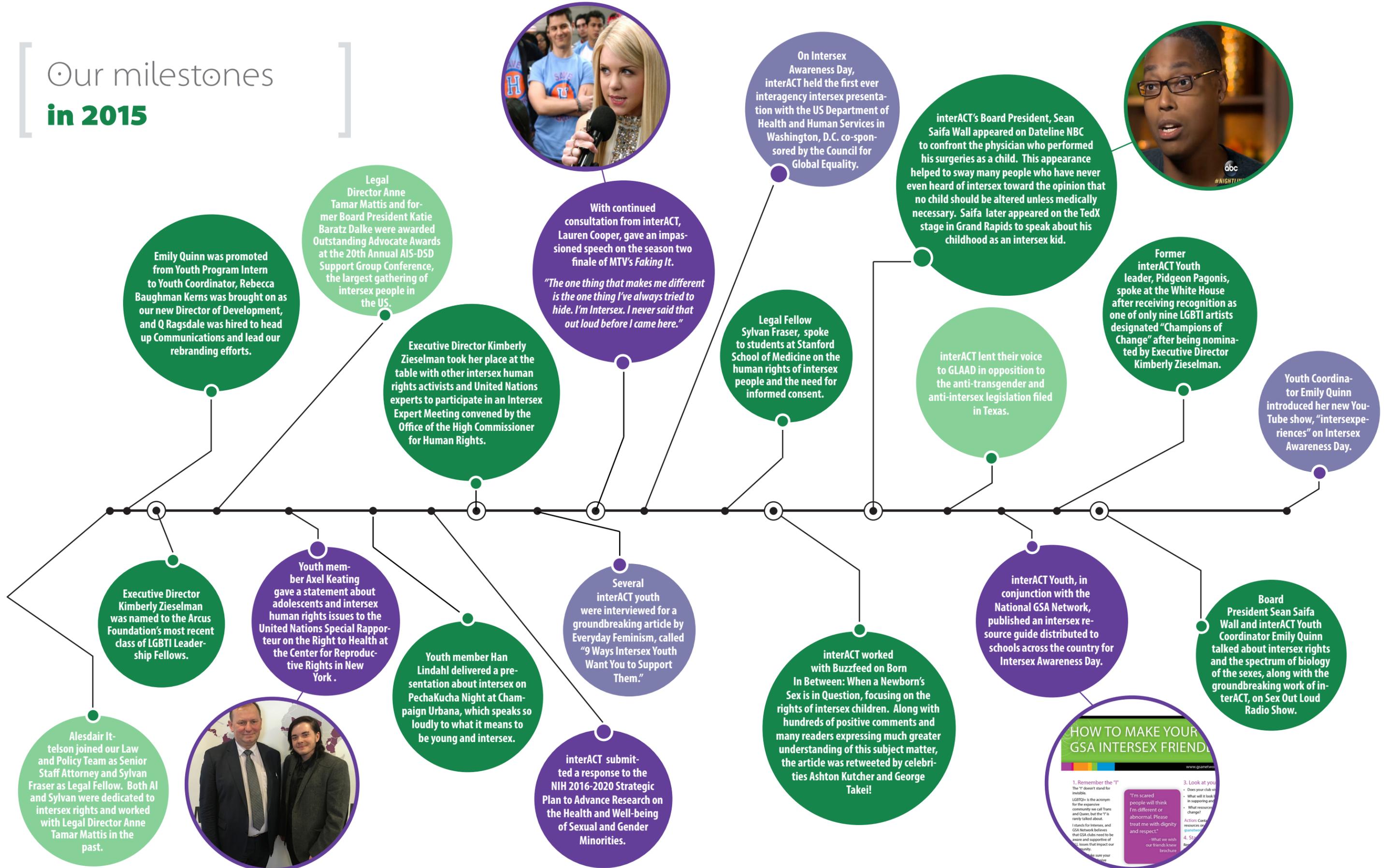
Just as importantly, we wanted to make sure you know what the ruling does not mean:

- The Fourth Circuit concluded that the defendants in our federal case cannot be held liable under federal law because the law in that jurisdiction in 2006 did not give them sufficient notice that performing medically unnecessary sex-assignment surgery on a sixteen-month old child could violate the child's constitutional rights.
- Because the law in 2006 was not clearly established in South Carolina, the court found defendants had "qualified immunity" from suit, even if they had violated M.C.'s constitutional rights.
- The court declined to rule on whether M.C.'s surgery was a violation of his constitutional rights.

- It does not mean that the state actors who performed this surgery on M.C. had a right to do so, or that future state actors will be immune from suit.
- It does not set precedent for other cases. The court's language was very focused on the state of the law at that place and time, and the particular facts of the case. Other courts, ruling under different circumstances, may find the constitutional rights in question to be more clearly established.
- It does not settle the question of whether state actors who perform medically unnecessary sex assignment surgery on young children without notice and a hearing violate those children's constitutional rights. Those who are concerned about future liability are still advised to seek court oversight before performing irreversible, medically unnecessary sex assignment surgery on children too young to participate in the decision.
- It does not change anything for our case in state court. In fact, the Fourth Circuit stated that "M.C. may well have a remedy under state law." This ruling only applied to the claims under federal law. In state court, we have brought claims against the hospitals based on the lack of informed consent and against the Department of Social Services based on gross negligence.

Much of 2015 was spent preparing our state case for trial in hopes of pursuing #justice4MC. We will not stop fighting for justice. We are continuing to pursue this case in state court, and thank all of our supporters for staying with us on this long road. Progress in fighting for our rights doesn't always happen as quickly as we want. However, no one providing treatment for intersex children today could possibly claim that they weren't aware of the serious human and civil rights issues at stake.

Our milestones in 2015



[2015 by the numbers]

interACT has more than tripled our public support in the last five years – from \$90,000 to over \$290,000! In 2015 interACT maintained our individual donor level while increasing our foundation support and met our goal of 100% Board Fundraising Participation.

2.5 million

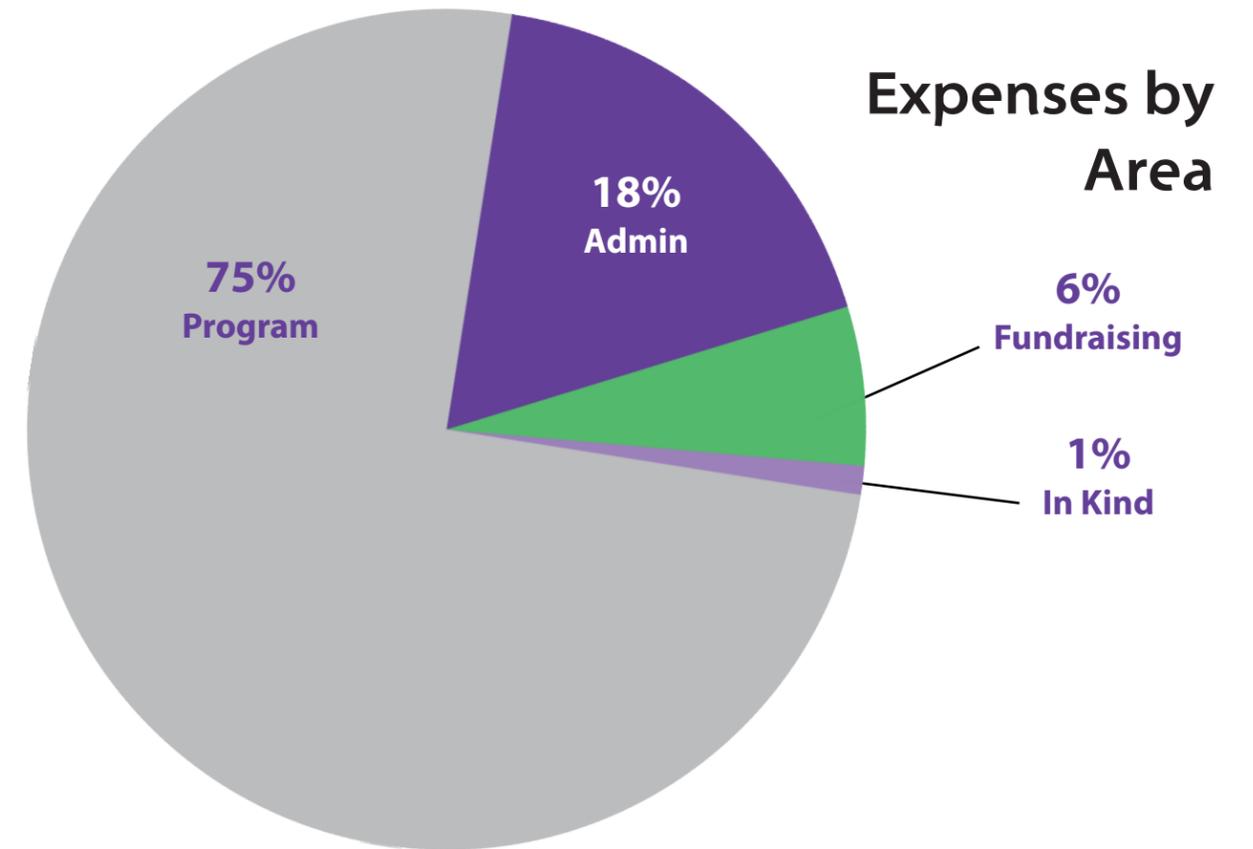
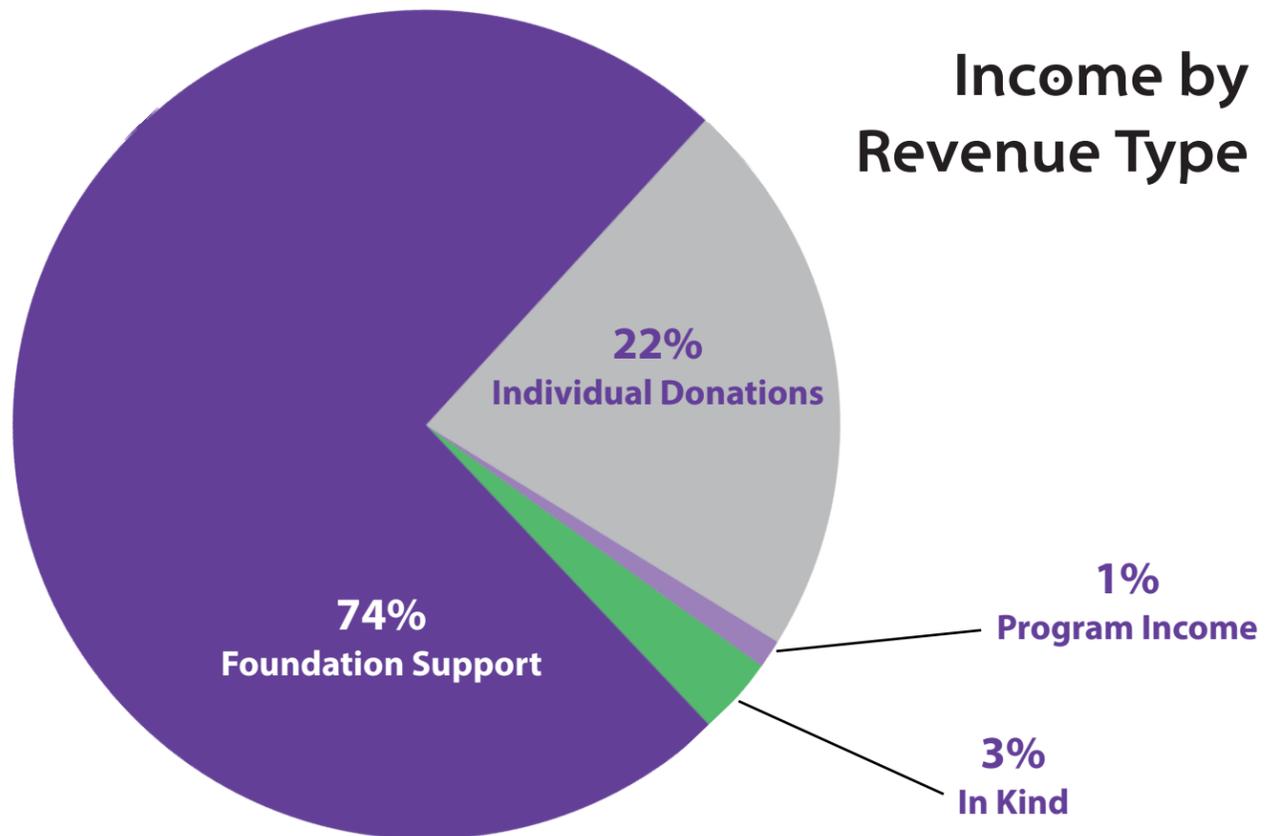
Number of times our BuzzFeed Video, What It's Like to be Intersex, was viewed.

+22.4%

Increase in Twitter followers

350

Number of times we were retweeted



[Our Donors]

Our Champion Donors make a fantastic commitment to interACT their gifts are \$1,000 or more each year and the difference that they make is immeasurable. Our sincerest gratitude goes out to our 2015 donors at this level.

Champion Donors (\$1,000 +)	Champion Donors (\$1,000 +)
Arlene Baratz, MD	Taylor Mattis
Carter Covington	Danny Michael
Pam and Mark Crawford	Elizabeth Reis
Milton Diamond, Ph.D.	Meg Robertson and Sheila Jaswal
Emily Doskow, JD	Tracy Schmidt
Jim Dykes	David Cameron Strachan & Peter S. Tannen
Janet Green	Karen Walsh
Julie Greenberg, JD	Reid Williams
Bo Laurent	Ilene Wong, MD
Mano Marks	Kimberly and Steven Zieselman

Our Guardian Donors give at a level which keeps our work going. We are thankful everyday for those who put their trust, and their gifts, in our hands so that interACT can work toward making the changes we want to see for intersex children.

Guardian Donors (\$250-\$999)	Guardian Donors (\$250-\$999)
Kenneth April	Jan Patterson
Tamara Beck	Jacob Richards, JD
Frank Brown	Leslie Richards
M. Laurie Cammisa, JD	Virginia Ryan, JD
Tiger Devore, Ph.D.	Susan Stred, MD
Judith Geizhals, Ph.D.	Barbara Taylor
Jane Goto, in honor of Kimberly Zieselman	George Von Klan
Agnes Khu	Laurene Von Klan
Mike Chich Feng Kung	Richard Walsh
Charles Mascott	Nina Williams, Psy.D.
Rebecca Mascott	

Sustaining donors give on a consistent basis, understanding that interACT can achieve more if we know what funding we can depend upon. Most give monthly, some quarterly or even annually, but knowing that this funding is around the corner helps to keep our programs active and on track. A special thank you goes out to these 2015 donors and their planned, recurring gifts.

Sustaining Donors	Sustaining Donors
Alice Alvarez	Rebecca Kerns
Arlene Baratz, MD	Julie Muscarella
Tamara Beck	Tracey Prazer
Emily Doskow, JD	Jacob Richards, JD
Jim Dykes	Meg Robertson
Arin Hilton	Nina Williams, PsyD.
Amanda Hinrichs	
Kyle Johnson	

Also, thanks to all of our donors who have given anonymously at all levels. Your quiet, consistent giving has made a great deal of difference in the work we do.

Thank You



We are humbled every year when we get the chance to look back at all of the amazing people and foundation partners who have supported our work and have entrusted us with the chance to be the voice for intersex kids. It is only with you that we will succeed, in the long run, in our fight to protect the legal and human rights of intersex children and youth.

This year we have seen our youth become bolder, a lot more willing to tell their stories, and your support has been integral in bringing their voice to the forefront. This year our legal battle has continued, and as it comes to a close, you are the driving force which allows us to continue to fight.

We are a small organization. We squeeze every possible benefit out of every donation we receive. We are incredibly proud of the trust you have placed in us, and of the amazing support we have received from you, our donors and trusted friends. You are what makes our work possible.

2015 Foundation Grantors

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Small Change Foundation

Former Foundation Supporters

Ashoka Changemakers
Echoing Green
Equal Justice Works
Gill Foundation
MS Foundation

Special thanks to our amazing volunteers!

Volunteers and Legal Interns:

Bo Laurent, Maayan Sudai

Nonprofit partners in the M.C. litigation:

David Dinielli, Kristi Graunke, Chinyere Ezie, and Morris Dees of the Southern Poverty Law Center

Pro bono legal partners in the M.C. litigation:

Raisa Daigneault, John Lovi and William Ellerbe of Steptoe and Johnson, LLP; Jacob Raehn and Kenneth Suggs of Janet, Jenner & Suggs, LLC.



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