



SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE

Creating a healthier future »

2025 IMPACT REPORT

THANK YOU
for turning
science
into action



Together,
we're
building
a future
where fewer
women ever
have to hear
the words
“you have
cancer.”



I'm so thankful for you! In a year marked by constant disruptions and uncertainty in federal research support, your partnership helped us stay focused on what matters most. Because of your generous support, Silent Spring continued making extraordinary progress in our mission to prevent breast cancer and curb the use of toxic chemicals that harm women and their families.

We launched our Early-Onset Breast Cancer Program, which you made possible. This new initiative is close to my heart and urgently needed. Breast cancer rates among young women are rising faster than in any other age group. We are committed to uncovering the environmental exposures that are driving this disturbing trend so we can reduce risks.

Over the past year, we published innovative and groundbreaking research, presented at 77 conferences, and reached millions through major media outlets. Our scientists exposed hidden dangers in beauty products that disproportionately affect Black women and our PFAS Exchange website now gives communities around the world effective tools to protect themselves from these harmful “forever chemicals.” Perhaps most gratifying, our research helped secure a historic policy change: Washington State passed a landmark law banning formaldehyde-releasers. Eliminating these known cancer-causing chemicals is a massive step forward for health justice.

None of this would be possible without you.

Supporters like Angela Pacheco — a young breast cancer survivor whom you'll meet in these pages — remind us why this work is so critical. As Angela says, “There's no prevention without research.”

With deep gratitude,

Mary Beth Terry
Mary Beth Terry, PhD
Executive Director

→ You are ensuring families everywhere have the life-saving science they need to stay safe.

One-of-a-Kind Resource

FOR UNDERSTANDING YOUR PFAS EXPOSURE



PFAS, which have been found in the blood of 99% of Americans, are dangerous synthetic “**forever chemicals**” that linger in the body for years. They can cause cancer, decrease fertility, and trigger other health problems.

So it was good news in 2024 when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set the first federal limits on PFAS in public drinking water supplies. But that welcome development is at risk under the new administration, as EPA has announced plans to weaken and delay these protections.

To help you, your loved ones, and your community navigate PFAS risks, Silent Spring and its partners created the PFAS Exchange (**pfas-exchange.org**), a free online resource center designed to help people understand their PFAS exposure and take action to safeguard their health.

In November of 2025, a completely revamped version of the PFAS Exchange website went live with a fresh design. It includes:

- Resources to help you reduce your PFAS exposure
- Fact sheets to inform and protect your community
- An innovative tool for interpreting drinking water and blood test results
- An interactive contamination map, so you can see if you live or have lived in an area with a PFAS problem
- Medical guidance for healthcare providers, including a high-impact Continuing Medical Education course and helpful resources to empower doctors caring for patients with high PFAS exposures
- Expanded information for firefighters and water utilities.

It’s important to keep in mind that PFAS can enter your body from many different sources, not just drinking water.

“Sometimes I think about each person’s exposure as a pie chart,” says Dr. Laurel Schaidler, who leads the PFAS Exchange project at Silent Spring. “One piece of the pie comes from water, another from food, and another from consumer products.”

We recommend:

- ✓ Steering clear of spray treatments that make rugs, furniture, or other textiles stain- or water-resistant.
- ✓ Cooking meals with stainless steel, cast iron, glass, or enamel instead of Teflon.
- ✓ Eating more foods that are fresh, not packaged.

TAKE THE NEXT STEP:



PFAS Exchange

PFAS-EXCHANGE.ORG

LEADING THE CHARGE FOR BEAUTY JUSTICE

You are helping Dr. Elissia Franklin and her Silent Spring colleagues make beauty products safer for all women.

Women ought to be able to use beauty products without increasing their risk of cancer, infertility, and other health problems. Unfortunately, that's not the case. Far too many personal care products expose us to dozens of toxic chemicals every day.

For Black women, the risks are greater. The beauty products they use often contain higher levels of harmful chemicals. Black women are also twice as likely to be diagnosed with aggressive forms of breast

cancer. That's why Silent Spring analytical chemist Dr. Elissia Franklin has been laser-focused on addressing these inequities.

In 2025, Dr. Franklin led or contributed to three impactful studies that promise to tip the scales toward beauty justice.

The most recent study she led was on toxic chemicals in hair extensions. "These products often come with claims of being flame-resistant, waterproof, or antimicrobial. But companies rarely disclose the chemicals

used to achieve these properties, leaving consumers in the dark about the health risks from prolonged wear," says Dr. Franklin.

She and her team tested a range of popular hair extension products and found dozens of dangerous chemicals, many more than previously thought. These are chemicals that can cause cancer, hormone disruption, developmental problems, and other negative health effects. Seventeen of the chemicals are on Silent Spring's list of breast cancer chemicals because they alter hormones in ways that could increase risk.

The global hair extension market is projected to surpass \$14 billion by 2028, and the United States is the leader in imports of these products. It's with this in mind that Dr. Franklin emphasizes, "Stronger oversight is urgently needed to protect consumers and push companies to invest in making safer products."

Dr. Franklin also co-authored a study with Silent Spring's Dr. Robin Dodson, in which they found personal care products commonly used by Black and Latina women (such as shampoos, lotions, and body soaps) contain chemicals that release formaldehyde, a known carcinogen. Companies add formaldehyde to personal care products to extend their shelf-life. Formaldehyde-releasing



preservatives are often used as an alternative, but they too are similarly harmful.

The study revealed critical safety gaps in the regulation of personal care products and their disproportionate health impacts on women of color. The findings have already helped secure a significant first step toward filling those gaps. Last year, the state of Washington became the first in the U.S. to ban 25 formaldehyde-releasing preservatives in cosmetics, and more states are expected to follow suit.

The study was part of a larger effort called Taking Stock, a community-engaged research collaboration between UC Santa Barbara, Black Women for Wellness, Silent Spring, and Columbia University.

Beyond the laboratory, Dr. Franklin is reaching communities directly. Through



“The beauty industry has long overlooked the health of Black women who should not have to choose between cultural expression, convenience, and their health.”

Dr. Elissia Franklin
Research Scientist,
Analytical Chemistry
and Exposure Science

the POWER Project, she collaborated with social media influencers to educate Black women about hormone disrupting chemicals in beauty products. The campaign reached thousands, with followers reporting they would now consider ingredients when shopping and avoid specific harmful chemicals.

“The beauty industry,” Dr. Franklin says, “has long overlooked the health of Black women who should not have to choose between cultural expression, convenience, and their health.”

Because of you, Dr. Franklin is helping lead the charge for beauty justice ... and change is coming.

Keep this research going for a safer, more just world

Groundbreaking research by Dr. Franklin and her colleagues is critical for changing policies to protect consumers from harmful ingredients.

But the federal funding needed to keep this work moving forward is disappearing.

That’s why monthly giving matters more than ever. As a Silent Spring Sustainer, you

will provide the steady, reliable funding that allows Silent Spring to plan long-term studies and see them through to completion.

You can build a safer, more just world by starting a monthly gift to Silent Spring.

Join our monthly giving community at SilentSpring.org/Sustainer.



Your Impact in 2025

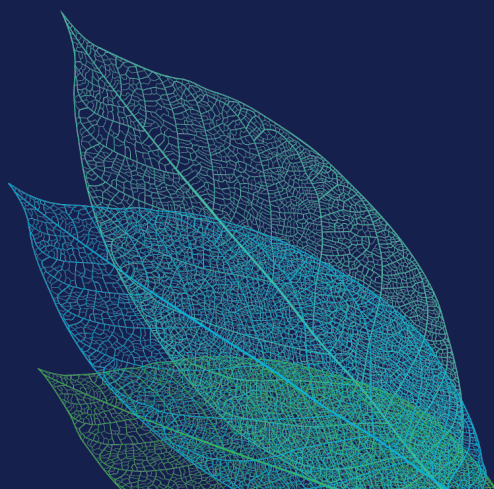
Save
the
Date

SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE GALA CELEBRATION

Celebrating the breakthroughs, the bold ideas, and the leaders advancing breast cancer prevention — bringing cutting-edge prevention science to life.

Thursday, October 1, 2026
6:30 p.m.

The Museum of Science
Boston, MA



Science That Leads the Way

Your support powered the publication of **20** peer-reviewed articles viewed over **40,000** times. Our most-read studies uncovered toxic chemicals in everyday beauty products and exposed disparities in drinking water quality, providing the data needed to protect public health.

Science on the Road

Our scientists presented at **77** conferences, workshops, and community meetings. This outreach brought critical prevention research to over **4,000** people, from fellow researchers to families looking for answers.



The Boston Globe

More young women are getting diagnosed with cancer than ever. Why are we investing so little in prevention?

In the News

Silent Spring's work appeared in over **200** media outlets, including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *National Geographic*, *NBC News*, and *Consumer Reports*. Executive Director Dr. Mary Beth Terry helped drive the national conversation on early-onset breast cancer with a powerful op-ed in *The Boston Globe*.

Extending Our Reach

Our virtual Science Cafés broke records with **100+** people attending each program, and our inaugural Summer Institute trained **100** students. We also engaged over **400** healthcare professionals through our Cancer & Environment Forum, ensuring science reaches those who can use it.





A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT YOU HELPED ACHIEVE

Your investment in research is driving historic policy changes nationwide.

Safer Beauty for All

Thank you for turning science into safety! In May, we revealed the widespread presence of formaldehyde-releasers in personal care products used by Black and Latina women. Just three months later, Washington State passed a landmark law banning these cancer-causing chemicals, a major victory for health justice.



Your Voice in the Room

Your support brought science to the table where decisions are made. Silent Spring scientists provided expert testimony on **11** critical bills and regulations in 2025, from protecting children from toxic products in Massachusetts to strengthening EPA safeguards nationwide. When policymakers debate health protections, your investment ensures that independent science has a voice.

Protecting Kids at Play

Where children play matters. Our scientists identified **49** breast cancer-relevant chemicals on EPA’s list of chemicals found in artificial turf. These findings are being used to advance advocacy efforts seeking municipal and state legislation restricting the use of artificial turf to protect the next generation.



Your Guide to Safer Choices

Silent Spring’s Detox Me app provides science-based recommendations for reducing exposures to harmful chemicals. The free app translates decades of research into personalized guidance for healthier living.

➔ **DOWNLOAD** Silent Spring’s Detox Me app at detoxmeapp.org – your guide to smarter, safer choices for you and your family.

.....
“I love all the guides on the Detox Me app. They helped inspire me to be healthy and take action to reduce my risk.”
.....

Angela Pacheco
Silent Spring donor



To receive our emails and get information about all of our upcoming events, scan the QR code or visit our website: silentspring.org/sign-up



After her diagnosis, Angela became passionate about helping women reduce their exposure to toxic chemicals — and about supporting Silent Spring’s prevention research. The Detox Me app has helped guide her safer choices.

ANGELA'S STORY: Turning a Diagnosis Into a Mission for Prevention

Rates of breast cancer are rising fastest in women under 40, derailing far too many young women in what should be the prime of their life. You're helping change that.

Angela Pacheco used to feel *invincible*, though she'd never have said so, even to herself. That changed the day she found a lump in her breast. Ten days and several appointments later, her oncologist delivered the news, “It’s cancer.”

So began a journey that would lead Angela to starting her own business and giving a TEDx Talk. But first, she faced a medical mystery.

How can this be happening to me? Angela thought. I’m only 34!

She had no family history of cancer. She was in good shape, went to the gym often, and was thoughtful about what she ate.

“After my diagnosis, I was Googling constantly,” says Angela. “I had to know: *What does this mean? What am I putting on my body? What in the world are endocrine disruptors?*”

It was the lack of regulations that shocked her the most: how little companies are required to disclose, and how difficult it is to understand what’s actually in the products we use every day. “Our bodies are constantly fighting off toxic chemicals. It’s *infuriating*.”

Like many young women facing a cancer diagnosis, Angela had to confront a wrenching decision. She wanted to preserve the option of having children

after her treatment, so she had her eggs retrieved and frozen. Then she had a double mastectomy and started chemo — eight hours a day, once every three weeks. Soon she was, she says, “bald, frail, and depleted.”

Recovery took over seven years. Angela remained positive through it all. She stayed focused on what she could control. At last her doctor declared her cancer-free, and she was able to stop taking medication.

“Today, health and balance are the framework for how I live,” Angela says.

Silent Spring played a big part in that. While undergoing treatment, Angela began to read about Silent Spring’s work, attend its events, and change some of the things she bought and used in her everyday life to reduce her exposure to toxic chemicals. Our Detox Me app helped guide her through this. Quickly, she came to see rigorous, independent research as essential. “Everything Silent Spring does is imperative. My partner works in marketing and data, so he’s all about the evidence. Ever since we attended the Silent Spring gala together, his curiosity has turned into real commitment.”

Such experiences helped inspire Angela to pivot from a globetrotting career as a Chief Human Resources Officer and draw on her background in HR, communications, and psychology to start a business with a mis-

sion. It’s called Good Better Best, which she co-founded with her friend Erin Karb. She and Erin supported each other through their breast cancer journeys. Then they decided to join forces to help other young women like themselves. Through their store,

“How can this be happening to me? I’m only 34!”

Good Better Best, they help support women who want to reduce their exposures to toxic chemicals by providing consultations and offering products with fewer toxic ingredients that are also more sustainable for the planet.

Angela is especially concerned about the troubling rise in early-

onset breast cancer. She finds purpose in helping make sure others never have to go through what she went through. “I have a group that I’ve been a part of since my diagnosis, all women under 40,” she says. “One thing we all agree on: there’s no prevention without research.”

That conviction underlies the TEDx Talk she will be delivering this spring: how the decisions we make every day affect not only our minds and bodies, but also the broader ecosystem . . . and every living thing within it.

Asked about her support for Silent Spring Institute, Angela emphasized the urgency of moving research forward — not just for cancer treatment but for cancer *prevention*. Because, she says, “This impacts the entire next generation.”



Angela with her partner, Aaron, who became passionate about Silent Spring’s research after attending a gala together. Thank you for funding the prevention science that gives families like theirs hope for a healthier future.

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Executive Director

DOCTORS ARE ASKING:

How Do I Talk to Patients About Environmental Exposures and Cancer Risk?

More than 400 physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals came together in November 2025 for the Cancer & Environment Forum, a continuing medical education event hosted by Silent Spring Institute and the Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center at Columbia University.

Led by Silent Spring Executive Director Dr. Mary Beth Terry, the one-day forum highlighted the latest research on the links between environmental chemicals and cancer, translating science into practical tools for clinical care.

Silent Spring scientists Dr. Laurel Schaidler and Dr. Robin Dodson joined board member Marybeth Hans to share strategies for addressing environmental risk factors with patients. Sessions were tailored to key specialties, including obstetrics and gynecology, pediatrics, and primary care, covering topics from PFAS in drinking water to everyday plastics to taking an environmental health history.

“Patients are asking these questions,” says Hans, who is the Clinical Director of the Comprehensive Breast Care Center at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. **“Having trusted, science-based resources from Silent Spring at my fingertips means I can guide them with reliable information on how to reduce their risk and make informed decisions about their health.”**

This was the third Cancer & Environment Forum co-hosted by Silent Spring and the second at Columbia University. By investing in clinician education, you’re helping lifesaving research reach patients where it matters most.



Marybeth Hans



FINANCIAL INFORMATION FISCAL YEAR 2025

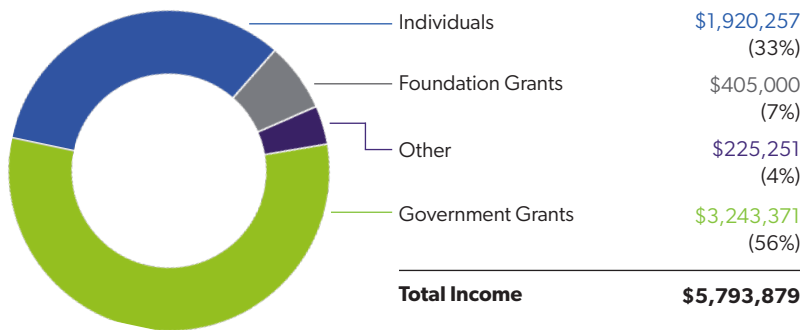
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We are deeply grateful for your partnership in creating a healthier future for everyone. That's why we work hard to turn your generosity into groundbreaking research, using every dollar efficiently to maximize our collective impact.

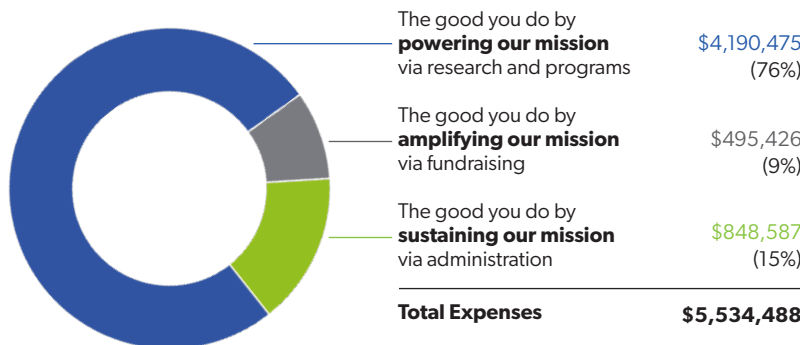


You're
advancing
the research
that helps
prevent
cancer
before it
starts.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT



HOW WE USE OUR FUNDS



You power the innovative science that makes a healthier future possible. To learn more about how your investment is making a difference in breast cancer prevention research, please contact Quinn Fey, Assistant Director of Development, at: fey@silentspring.org or 617-332-4288 x222.

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SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE
Researching the Environment and Women's Health

