



SILENT SPRING INSTITUTE

CELEBRATING 30 YEARS >>

2023 IMPACT REPORT

**Thank you**  
for advancing  
the science that  
protects women's  
health



Silent Spring Research Scientist Dr. Kristin Knox

**Because of  
you, we are  
ushering in  
a new era of  
precision  
prevention  
through  
innovative  
solutions  
to protect  
human  
health.**



**As you may know, breast cancer rates among young women are rising.** Two thirds of new cancers in people under age 50 are in women, and most of those are breast cancers.

That's why the work you generously support is more important than ever.

Like you, I believe in the promise of our science — in the power of prevention to lift the burden of breast cancer and create healthier communities free of toxic chemicals. I believe in the power of our innovative tools to usher in a new era of environmental health, so that people everywhere can get personalized feedback on their environmental exposures and take steps to protect their health. These tools are critical not only for shifting markets, but also as we move from the age of precision medicine to the age of precision prevention.

Your commitment to our science is moving the needle. In 2023 — thanks to you — our scientists identified over 900 chemicals that could increase breast cancer risk, collected critical data on the health effects of PFAS in drinking water, shed light on how racialized beauty standards contribute to health disparities, and helped bring about new laws banning toxic chemicals.

Please read on for much more about the tremendous impact you are making for women's health!

With gratitude for you in creating a safer world,

**Lisa Goodwin Robbins, RA, CCS, LEED  
Chair, Board of Directors**



**YOU ARE MAKING CHEMICALS SAFER.**



## Preventing Breast Cancer

NEW RESEARCH PROVIDES A ROADMAP FOR SAFETY

**Silent Spring Institute researchers led by Dr. Jennifer Kay** identified over 900 chemicals that could increase breast cancer risk. Alarming, 90% of them are found in products we use every day – from foods and drinks to pesticides and medications.

Dr. Kay is currently conducting lab experiments to further understand how chemicals alter the mammary gland in a way that could lead to cancer.

Her team’s work supports recent studies in humans that show a link between exposure to environmental chemicals, including early in life, and an increased risk of breast cancer.

With this new data, we have a roadmap for safety. We can empower our legislators and other decision-makers to push for better regulations and safer chemicals.



Thank you for powering the science to identify chemicals linked to breast cancer risk and support better regulations and safer products. Pictured here: Silent Spring Research Scientist Dr. Jennifer Kay.

“Having had breast cancer myself, I have a deep interest in continuing my support for prevention research... I can only make modest annual gifts, but it has given me pleasure to make Silent Spring a major beneficiary of my estate. It’s so easy and could do a lot of good after I’m gone.”

**ELLEN ROTHMAN**  
Longtime Supporter

**When you plan a gift to Silent Spring Institute, you protect future generations from harm.**

For more information or to discuss other options for including Silent Spring in your will or estate plans, please contact Quinn Fey, Assistant Director of Development, at 617-332-4288 ext. 222 or [fey@silentspring.org](mailto:fey@silentspring.org).

**We deeply appreciate your foresight and generosity.**



➔ **YOU PROTECT FAMILIES FROM TOXIC CHEMICALS IN THEIR HOMES.**

In Ayer, MA, PFAS HOME Study project coordinator René LaPointe Jameson explains the equipment used to collect data and samples for assessing the family's PFAS exposure.

## Everyday exposures to PFAS in the home

### THANK YOU FOR MAKING HOMES SAFER

**PFAS — forever chemicals** — are “lurkers.” They’re “sticky.” This is especially worrisome in our homes.

As Silent Spring Research Scientist Dr. Robin Dodson says, “PFAS are so persistent. If we bring these chemicals into our homes, they’ll likely still be in our homes for decades to come.”

The good news is that our scientists are working hard to address this threat. Key to our strategy is a Silent Spring initiative, led by Dr. Dodson, called the PFAS HOME Study.

Most studies have focused on people’s exposure to PFAS in drinking water in areas where the water has been contaminated by local industry or by firefighting foams. Silent Spring’s

PFAS HOME Study, on the other hand, focuses on people’s exposure to PFAS in the home, through household products like cookware, carpeting, and even ski wax, and through their daily behaviors and diets.

René LaPointe Jameson is the study’s project coordinator. She is visiting 50 homes in two communities — Hyannis and Ayer, Massachusetts. During a first visit, she sets up air samplers to measure indoor air pollutants. Then she asks the resident about any behaviors that might increase their exposure to PFAS. Four weeks later, she returns, gathers the equipment, collects a house dust sample, and conducts a final interview.

“Participants are super

engaged,” says LaPointe Jameson. “They are eager to help and learn about their personal risks. They are enthusiastic about contributing to this important study.”

The PFAS HOME Study is not a solo effort. It builds on a multi-year study called the Massachusetts PFAS and Your Health Study, led by Silent Spring Senior Scientist Dr. Laurel Schaider. In that study, residents in Ayer and Hyannis had their blood tested for PFAS. The PFAS HOME team will use that data to understand how much of the PFAS in the residents’ bodies came from contaminated drinking water, and how much came from items in their home.

A goal of the PFAS HOME

Study is to gather the evidence we need to stop PFAS at its source by getting companies to stop putting PFAS in products in the first place. By highlighting the role of the home environment in PFAS exposure, the study aims to promote the use of safer chemicals in products and building materials. First we pinpoint which sources are the biggest PFAS offenders, then we equip decision-makers with the data they need to target those sources.

The initial phase of the study is wrapping up in early spring of 2024. The team will analyze the air and dust samples for more than 30 types of PFAS and then report-back the results to participants, along with tips for reducing their exposures.

Our homes ought to be

safe havens, free of persistent, toxic chemicals. Thank you for being the kind of person who “sees” the invisible risks of toxic chemicals like PFAS. The kind

of person who is committed to helping make such invisible threats visible — so we can better protect our health, our families, and our homes.



Dr. Robin Dodson and René LaPointe Jameson examine a dust sample taken from a participant’s home. The sample will be analyzed for PFAS, and the results will help the family learn about their personal risks. **Thank you for funding Silent Spring’s cutting-edge exposure science!**

## Community Voice

### PFAS HOME STUDY



Laurie Nehring, President of PACE (People of Ayer Concerned about the Environment), mobilizes her community for the PFAS HOME Study.

“I’ve always been passionate about protecting my town.

I was so excited when I was asked to participate in Silent Spring’s PFAS studies. I want to understand the risks of these chemicals in my environment and in my body.

It’s been eye-opening to learn just how widespread PFAS are. My participation isn’t just about my family’s health. It’s about empowering the community with knowledge. I’m proud that our town proactively addresses PFAS contamination — but we need the science to guide us further.

While there’s still much to learn, the knowledge we gain will help people make safer choices for themselves and their families. That’s the kind of impact that matters to me.”

**LAURIE NEHRING**, Community Partner

Save  
the  
Date

SILENT SPRING  
INSTITUTE'S  
**GALA  
CELEBRATION**

Join us to celebrate 30  
years of building healthier  
communities together!

Tuesday,  
October 8, 2024  
at 6:30 p.m.

Museum of Science  
Boston, MA



# Your Impact in 2023

A SNAPSHOT OF WHAT YOU HELPED ACHIEVE

## Spreading the News

**Public awareness of toxic chemicals** such as PFAS and phthalates is rising. Many in the media have been eager to hear from Silent Spring scientists. In 2023, over 160 news stories featured our work. *The Boston Globe* and *NPR*



*The Boston Globe* ran pieces on rising cancer rates among young adults. *The New York Times* showcased our Detox Me app. Other media outlets that covered Silent Spring's work include *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, *National Geographic*, and *The Guardian*.

## Seeking Beauty Justice



**Your generosity is making possible** new research on the intersection of racialized beauty standards and health disparities. A groundbreaking study, by postdoctoral research fellow Dr. Elissia Franklin and colleagues, suggests socioeconomic factors lead more Black women to use intimate care products (douches and wipes) that often contain harmful chemicals. This research not only raises public awareness but also informs policy discussions, moving us closer to beauty justice and healthier choices for all women.

## Making Progress, One Law at a Time

**Each new law you help bring about** is a victory for women's health. We saw many victories in 2023. Silent Spring scientists provided testimony on 15 bills. Minnesota signed into law the first-ever U.S. ban on PFAS in cookware, dental floss, and menstrual products (part of the broadest PFAS policy package in the country).



Washington State signed into law the Toxics-free Cosmetics Act. Oregon passed similar legislation banning specific groups of chemicals from cosmetics. **All this progress we celebrate with you!**



## CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH, THANKS TO YOU!

Silent Spring's message about reducing our exposures to chemicals that harm our health reached large, new audiences of clinicians, policymakers, and community groups. This underscores the ongoing impact of our 30 years of groundbreaking science that you have made possible.



### Changing the Story

**Building on the success** of our 2022 Cancer and Environment Forums hosted by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Silent Spring spearheaded a second forum in June 2023, this time hosted by Columbia University along with other major New York cancer centers. This successful one-day forum, attended by more than 150 people, focused on the role that physicians, nurses, community leaders, and public health practitioners can play in engaging patients on environmental chemicals and cancer risk reduction.

### Making Drinking Water Safer

**On March 14, 2023**, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed the first-ever drinking water standard for PFAS chemicals, setting a legal limit for six PFAS. Silent Spring publicly supported this groundbreaking initiative, calling for its swift finalization. The extensive evidence linking PFAS with harmful health effects underscores the urgency to act, particularly in communities most impacted by contamination. This new EPA standard, once finalized, will mark a major advance in public health protection, aligning with Silent Spring's core commitment to environmental justice and to safeguarding our drinking water supplies.



### Uncovering PFAS Risks

**Silent Spring Senior Scientist Dr. Laurel Schaider** and her team finished recruiting participants in Hyannis and Ayer for the Massachusetts PFAS & Your Health Study, part of a national study funded by CDC. Now in its fifth year, the study is investigating the harmful effects of PFAS in drinking water on the immune system, thyroid function, development, reproduction, and other health measures. The team has reported back PFAS blood levels and other test results to nearly 800 adults and children. Now, they are analyzing the data to learn how exposures to PFAS may increase the risk of disease.



### YOUR GUIDE to a healthier home

Silent Spring's Detox Me app



**DOWNLOAD** our Detox Me app at [detoxmeapp.org](https://detoxmeapp.org)

### Creating a Healthier Home with Detox Me

**Silent Spring's free Detox Me app** provides science-backed tips to reduce harmful chemicals in your home for cleaner air and a healthier you!

**“An evidence-based, action-oriented reference that takes a precautionary approach toward common sources of indoor air pollution.”** –*The New York Times, Wirecutter*

# THE SCIENCE THAT HELPS keep toxic chemicals out of consumer products



A groundbreaking Silent Spring study brings invisible toxics into plain sight — arming decision-makers with the science they need to support stronger regulations.

**One of the tenets of Silent Spring’s mission** is our commitment to making our science accessible to those who can create change. Unfortunately, most science in the environmental health arena is produced by industry. Legislators and decision-makers need access to independent science to create strong policies that protect public health, not industry’s bottom line.

Your support in 2023 allowed us to invest in the strategic planning, relationship building, and thoughtful communications needed to turn our science into action. You helped us to make significant progress in consumer product safety — first, by making the best science possible; second, by ensuring its impact is

shared far and wide.

For example, using publicly-available data from the California Air Resources Board, our team identified over 30 different types of everyday consumer products — from nail polish to automotive cleaners — that frequently contain multiple chemicals known to cause cancer, birth defects, or other reproductive harm.

These are chemicals that are listed under California’s right-to-know law, Proposition 65, which mandates the labeling of hazardous substances in consumer products sold in California. Although Prop 65 has reduced people’s exposures by encouraging companies to make safer products—with impacts on



➔ **THANK YOU  
FOR AMPLIFYING  
THE REACH OF  
OUR PIONEERING  
STUDIES.**

With her background in economics, Dr. Kristin Knox uses her data science skills to advance environmental health policy.

supply chains nationwide—too many risky products remain on the shelf.

The study was conducted in collaboration with the University of California, Berkeley and spearheaded by a team of Silent Spring researchers led by Dr. Kristin Knox. Dr. Knox, who holds a doctorate in economics from Harvard University, uses data science to advance environmental health policy. The study caught the attention of major media outlets, as well as experts in academia and government, because it makes crystal clear: *we need safer chemicals now.*

Because of you, we've been able to get this crucial data in front of reporters, scientists, and decision-makers, people who have influence and can create change.

For example: In July of 2023, the entire study team presented to the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, which oversees the state's Safer Consumer Products Program. In August, Silent Spring's Dr. Robin Dodson, co-author of the study, presented at the annual meeting of the world-class International Society of Exposure Science. In November, the team presented to Biomonitoring California, a program jointly administered by the California Department of Public Health and the California Environmental Protection Agency, to make the case for more testing of people for toxic chemical exposures.

Asked about the interest among scientific and



regulatory communities in using Silent Spring's new research to get hazardous ingredients out of products, Dr. Knox says, "It's what we hoped for, and very exciting."

Our latest study on Prop 65 is due for publication later this year. It seeks to answer the questions: 1) Did concentrations of Prop 65 chemicals in people's bodies go down nationally after the law was passed? 2) How do concentrations in California compare with those in other states? 3) Are manufacturers replacing dangerous chemicals with equally risky substitutes? The answers to these questions are bound to lead to important leverage for change.

**Thank you for your loyal commitment to the science that protects women and their loved ones.**

## Why I give...



## “Decades ago, I lost my mother and grandmother to breast cancer.

For years I held fast to the adage, 'Early detection is the best prevention.' However, it finally clicked in my head that not developing the disease in the first place is the better way to go. Silent Spring's prevention science helped guide me to this deeper understanding.”

**JEANNE MOCKARD**

Silent Spring Donor and Board Member

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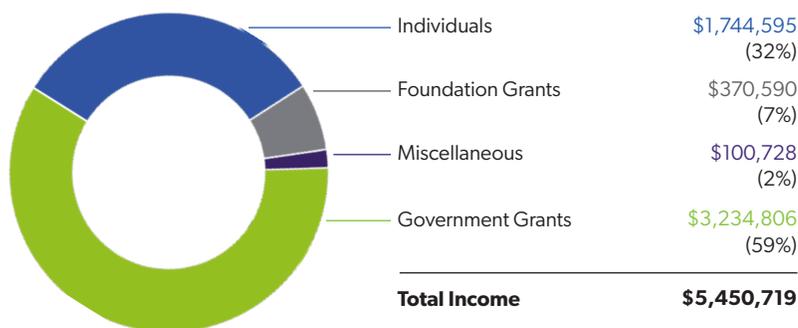


## FINANCIAL INFORMATION CALENDAR YEAR 2023

# Donors, OUR RESEARCH STARTS WITH YOU

**We are grateful for your generosity** to protect people from cancer-causing chemicals in their everyday environments. That's why, at Silent Spring Institute, we effectively and efficiently use your gifts to maximize your impact.

### SOURCES OF SUPPORT



### HOW WE USE OUR FUNDS



We value your contributions and your trust. If you would like more information about your impact on our innovative research, please contact **Rachel d'Oronzio Sarvey, Director of Development**, at: [sarvey@silentspring.org](mailto:sarvey@silentspring.org) or 617-332-4288 x215.



**We are grateful to celebrate  
30 years of groundbreaking research  
because of your enduring commitment  
to science that is paving the way to  
a cancer-free future.**

**Our heartfelt thanks to you.**

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