



*elin pelin*  
FOUNDATION

# 2019-2020 REPORT

Overview of Elin Pelin Foundation  
activities and finances between  
June 1, 2019 and May 31, 2020.

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## Letter from the President

Dear Members and Friends of Elin Pelin Foundation:

It is my pleasure to report that the past year has been fulfilling and successful for Elin Pelin Foundation.

On June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019, as Ms. Mariya Kostova and Mrs. Darina Koleva retired from the Board of Directors, Ms. Elena Nikolova and Mrs. Vessi Andreeva stepped in. If last year I was astonished at the unprecedented success of the organization, this year I feel reassured that the foundation will continue to grow and build-up its good reputation. Much can be said about the accomplishments of the new board: Three concerts, a couple of theatrical performances and several social gatherings – some casual (like Happy Hour), and some extremely formal (like New Year’s Eve); 2019 ended with a boom and 2020 was promising nothing less.

The unfortunate and unexpected circumstances of the COVID-19 outbreak threatened to stop us in our tracks and forced us to quickly change strategy. I would begin with the word “luckily”, but there is no luck involved as long as the foundation and school are in capable hands. When the Houston and Harris County leaders announced a “Stay Home, Work Safe Order”, our team was able to rise to the occasion and minimize the negative impact of the mandatory quarantine on the foundation and school. All social and cultural events were temporarily canceled, while we swiftly transitioned to virtual meetings and online school. It is the board, and their completed projects from 2019 we have to thank for keeping Elin Pelin Foundation financially safe despite the critical times for the country and the world we live in. While many companies reported financial strains and some even closed doors, our non-profit foundation suffered little to no losses. Thank you, ladies of the Board and Officers, for your efforts!

While I am grateful to the whole Elin Pelin Foundation Board, Staff, and Faculty Members, I would like to take this opportunity and recognize three individuals.

Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, who stepped in as principal of Elin Pelin Bulgarian School in the Summer of 2019, handled her duties with professionalism and fortitude. She is always willing to go above and beyond to ensure she can provide the best possible environment and education for her students. Under her leadership, Elin Pelin School not only survived the quarantine without missing a day of instruction, but also the online school was established and fully functional by the end of Spring Break 2020. The online school even gained a few new students. As I have said before, the First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin is our first and most important project. We need more people like Dimitria, who have both the competence and determination to teach and lead our children to success.

Mrs. Diana Angelova also deserves to be recognized for her outstanding contribution to the First Bulgarian School. She had only recently moved to the United States when she joined the Elin Pelin School Faculty in Fall 2018. Today, her class consists of students in four different grade levels, yet she handles the instruction with ease and professionalism. She has a modest personality, yet she is very passionate about

her job as a teacher. We thank her from the bottom of our hearts for agreeing to teach at the Elin Pelin School!

I would like to thank Ms. Elena Nikolova specifically for taking over the project of revamping the foundation's website. The website has been one of our oldest projects. Elin Pelin Foundation was established in June 2012 and only in the last three, years the organization grew enough to be able to afford projects that do not pay for themselves. Until last year, none of us was able to find a volunteer or find funds and hire an expert to update our website. Ms. Elena Nikolova took this project upon herself. She herself made a donation which was matched by Wood Mackenzie, thus she funded a good part of the entire project. With her help, the board found and hired a professional webmaster. She then spent numerous hours working out the details, so the webmaster could revamp our website. The completion of this project was long-anticipated, and we, the team of Elin Pelin Foundation, could not be more grateful to Ms. Elena Nikolova for handling it so efficiently!

I must also express my gratitude to our corporate patrons! We have received tremendous support from local businesses. Some of them are Houston-based, others have offices in Austin, then there is even a company that serves in both cities. We owe the success of B.T.R. Concert to our local corporate supporters. Thank you! Without your help, it could not have been accomplished!

In conclusion, I would like to thank our individual supporters! As of May 2020, the donations received from individuals are more than the donations from corporations. That is proof that the mission of Elin Pelin Foundation to provide a cross-cultural experience is what the Bulgarian-American society requires. Each individual donation, however small, serves as a form of encouragement for us (the volunteers) to continue working for the good of the community. I respectfully thank every single one of the supporters of Elin Pelin Foundation's cause!



*Sincerely,*

***Gergana Araktchiev***

***President, Elin Pelin Foundation***

***31 May 2020***

# Bulgarian School

## School Year 2019 – 2020 enrolled 37 Students

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of September, with yet another record number of Pre-K students, the First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin opened its doors for classes.

For a 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, our School's main location was at the historic Dow School building, home of MECA (Multi-cultural Education and Counseling through the Arts – a community-based nonprofit organization). Recently, the Sixth Ward Dow School Park was renovated. The park is important to our young students as it provides a playground and shaded area for their recess.

We secured a secondary location in the North at Hosanna Lutheran Church (HLC). Back in 2013, HLC provided classrooms for the just-established Elin Pelin School. We are delighted to work with Hosanna Lutheran Church once again. Our largest class consists of Pre-K and Kindergarten age students. Hosanna's spacious building with two adjoining kindergarten rooms and a shaded playground meets our ever-increasing needs. Our school's 8<sup>th</sup> consecutive schoolyear was successful, the number of enrolled students reached thirty-seven (37).

***Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev & Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – coordinators***

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – principal***

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova, Mrs. Diana Angelova,***

***Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Mrs. Valentina Kamburova – instructors***

## Extracurricular Activities

Teachers and volunteers have been exceptionally creative to keep students interested in learning by engaging them in various extracurricular activities. A small example is Mr. Yankov's performance on traditional Bulgarian bagpipe. Another example is Mrs. Nihtianova showing students how to make homemade ice-cream.

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator***

***Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova, Mrs. Valentina Kamburova – instructors***

***Mr. Nedyalko Yankov – volunteer***

В двора на МЕКА се случва нещо. Не е далече времето на любимите на учениците, а и родителите, игри след часовете.



## Day of the National Revival Leaders – November 2019

In observance of the Bulgarian National Revival Day – November 1st Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova and the 6<sup>th</sup>-grade students held a Q&A on the topic of Bulgarian cultural and spiritual leaders – enlightened men and women who strove to form an independent nation, church, culture, and language.

Volunteer Mr. Nedyalko Yankov spoke about the fighters who contributed to Bulgarian liberation. He brought some replicas of the authentic revolutionary pieces. One example is the flag with the slogan “Freedom or Death” used during the Bulgarian national liberation struggles by the Bulgarian revolutionaries. The little ones sang and danced for the parent audience.

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator***

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Valentina Kamburova – instructors***

***Mr. Nedyalko Yankov – volunteer***



## Breakfast with Santa – December 2019

Breakfast with Santa has become a tradition at Elin Pelin Bulgarian School. Once again, there were traditional Bulgarian Christmas arts and crafts and a hearty breakfast for every child. Our Bulgarian-American Santa and his



***Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator foundation***

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator school***

***Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Diana Angelova, Mrs. Valentina Kamburova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova – instructors***



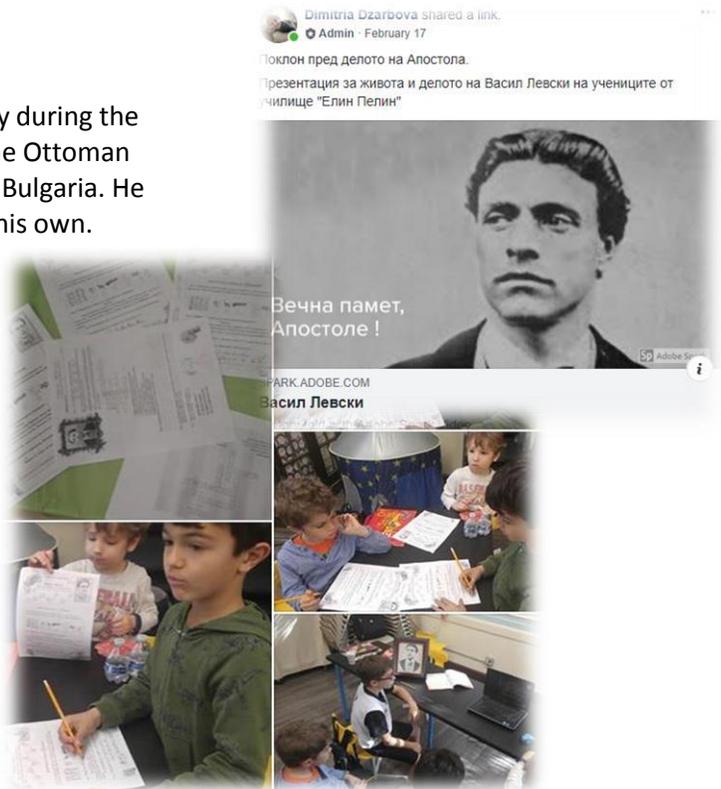
helper listened to the students’ poems, songs, and Bulgarian Folk Dance -Svornato horo, performed by the students of Elin Pelin Bulgarian School. A special treat this year was the gifted performance by Max (4<sup>th</sup>-grade student at Elin Pelin School) on the kaval, accompanied by a guest (Hristo) on clarinet.

## Vasil Levski Day – February 2020

Vasil Levski is honored for his leadership and bravery during the Bulgarian movement to liberate the country from the Ottoman Empire. Levski sacrificed his life for the liberation of Bulgaria. He placed the interests of the Bulgarians nation above his own. To honor this great Bulgarian, the students of Elin Pelin School created a short video with pictures, drawings, and interesting facts about the life and legacy of Levski – The Apostle of Freedom.

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator**

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Diana Angelova – instructors**



## Springtime Arts & Crafts – March & April 2020

To mark the arrival of Spring, and International Women's Day (March 8) the students had an Arts and Crafts Day. They created beautiful greeting cards and martenitsas for their families and themselves. The much-anticipated celebration of March 8 had to be cancelled, due to the COVID pandemic. Shortly after a social distancing strategy was put in place and Elin Pelin School launched its Virtual Classroom.

During Easter Week, our

kindergartners had an Online Easter Bunny Decoration class. Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova donated the supplies, Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova drove to each family to deliver those and the event was successful.

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator**

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova – instructors**



## Virtual School Launch – 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2020

After the National Emergency Announcement on COVID-19, with amazing speed and dedication, Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova almost single-handedly launched the virtual classroom. She adjusted the academic curriculum to engage students positively during the pandemic. Thanks to her devotion and efforts, Elin Pelin School students did not miss any instruction time, and the faculty remained fully engaged. As a direct result of the school switching to online instruction, there were three new student enrollments.

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator**

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Diana Angelova, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva – instructors**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT support**



## End of the school year – Virtual Presentations and meeting – May 2020

**Вазата на Русе**

Един от символите на Русе е Вазата в Парка. Тя е висока почти 4 метра. Най-широката ѝ част достига 7 метра. За украсата ѝ всяка година се използват около 30 000 килимни цветя.

Рисушка: Диди

This school year ended with a virtual celebration. Using the Zoom application, the students of First Bulgarian School in Houston Elin Pelin recited poems, sang songs, and made presentations about their parents' hometowns. Grandparents and friends were able to view the celebration of our student's accomplishments by streaming from Facebook Live. The celebration ended with a parent-teacher meeting where Summer School information was announced.

**Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator**

**Mrs. Dzarbova's 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Students: Alexandra and Emilia – hosts,**

**Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova – instructors**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT support**

## Summer School – Virtual Instruction – June & July 2020

This Summer Elin Pelin School is organizing a Virtual Summer Classes in two blocks of 3 weeks each, in June and July, every Tuesday and Thursday, for 2 hours using Zoom. The Summer School will allow current and future students to refresh their knowledge of Bulgarian while participating in fun and creative activities. The curriculum will include children's songs, games, virtual field trips, crafts, fairytales, and much more.

**Mrs. Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova – coordinator**

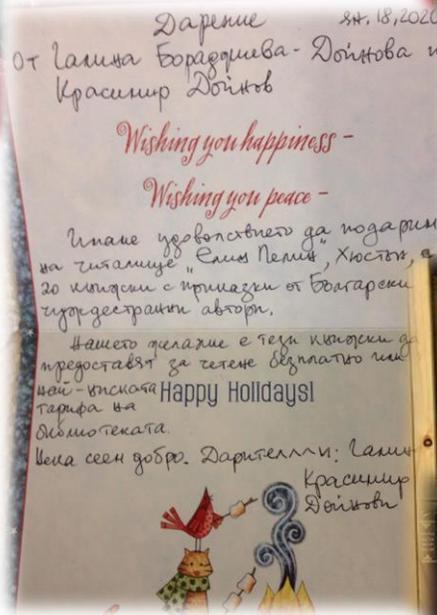
**Mrs. Diana Angelova, Ms. Daniela Kashukeeva, Mrs. Dimitria Dzarbova, Mrs. Snejana Nihtianova – instructors**

# Library

## Book Gifts 2019 – 2020



A new addition to Elin Pelin Library was the book by Stefan Ranov, donated to the foundation by his daughter.



“The Animal Orchestra-children’s songs”  
The school and library received also a children’s book with song-lyrics by the poet Ivan Bozhensky and a disc with recordings by the composer and jazz-musician Ilko Iliev. The gift is from an artist from Austin, TX.

A collection of children’s books from Bulgarian and foreign authors was donated by Galina and Krasimir Doinovi.

Ms. Elena Nikolova, one of our new Board Directors, donated three 2019 bestseller Bulgarian books. In March 2020 Vazdigane Foundation donated 40 comics books to the library and school. Now kids can learn about Khan Krum and his legacy in an engaging and easy to understand way.

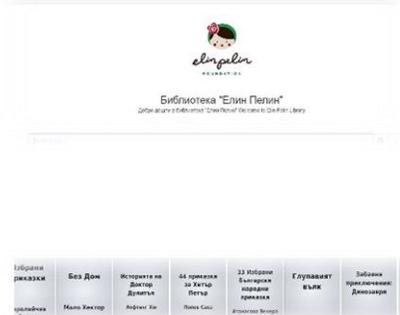
**Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator**  
**Mrs. Vessi Andreeva – librarian**



## Book Club on the Horizon Fall 2020

With a catalog of more than a thousand titles, Elin Pelin Library is exploring opportunities for creating an online catalog, monthly virtual book club, and a literary competition for the students and members who like to read. More information will be available in the Summer of 2020.

**Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator**  
**Mrs. Vessi Andreeva – librarian**



## Movie Night

Movie Night remained a hit 2019! Members and guests of Elin Pelin Foundation were able to come and enjoy a Bulgarian movie every first Friday of the month. English closed captioning was available to the English speakers in the audience. We are grateful to the two individuals whose donations funded the purchase of more comfortable chairs for the audience. We are looking forward to being able to resume Movie Night Events in the Fall of 2020. Movie Nights are free of charge with popcorn and wine served by volunteers.

***Mrs. Ina Pavlina – coordinator & concessions***

***Ms. Martha Kasabova – concessions volunteer***

***Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT support***



## Fundraisers, Social & Public Events

### Reliant Gives

Our most significant corporate supporter for 2019-20 is Reliant, an NRG company. With several charitable programs, their contributions have funded the website revamp, our new step & repeat, and T-shirts for the students in the Bulgarian School.

***Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Step & repeat coordinator***

***Ms. Elena Nikolova – Website coordinator***

***Mrs. Hristina Pavlina, Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – T-shirt coordinators***



### Bulgarian Happy Hour

Organized for the first time as an Elin Pelin Foundation initiative, on September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019 professionals and busy individuals gathered after work at Eureka Heights Brewery for a beer and a friendly conversation. Topics included Elin Pelin Foundation's upcoming events and information on more opportunities for volunteers in the Fall.

The Happy Hour on 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2020 was held at the King's Head Pub.

***Ms. Elena Nikolova – coordinator***

***Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – volunteer***



## “Detective” Theater Performance by Anthony Shaffer

Elin Pelin Foundation hosted the theater play “Detective” in October 2019.

Andrew Wyke, an immensely successful mystery writer, lives in a home that reflects his obsession with the inventions and deceptions of fiction and his fascination with games and game-playing. He lures his wife's lover Milo Tindle to the house and convinces him to stage a robbery of her jewelry, a proposal that sets off a chain of events that leaves the audience trying to decipher where Wyke's imagination ends and reality begins.

Ivan Radoev and Dobrin Vekilov-Doni delivered a funny and action-packed performance.

**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – Head of logistics & Theatre Performance coordinator**

**Mr. Petar Gerdzhirov – Sound & Lighting Engineer**

**Ms. Elena Nikolova, Mrs. Mariya Shumareva, Ms. Martha Kasabova, Mrs. Vessi Andreeva – volunteers**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – photographer**



## Milena Concert

Milena Slavova, one of the most famous and widely known Bulgarian punk/rock stars of the nineties, was kind to include Houston as a stop on her US tour. Not only is she known as The Lady of Bulgarian Rock, but she is also the symbol of open-mindedness and rebellion of the new generations.

**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – Head of logistics & Concert coordinator**

**Mr. Petar Gerdzhirov – Sound & Lighting Engineer**

**Ms. Elena Nikolova, Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – volunteers**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – photographer**



## Bulgarika Concert

Elin Pelin Foundation hosted Bulgarika's concert in November 2019. Once again, the talented folk musicians sang and played, while people danced traditional Bulgarian group dances. The Houston International Folk Dancers were among the guests.

**Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – coordinator**

**Mrs. Hristina Pavlina, Ms. Elena Nikolova, Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – volunteers**



## B.T.R. Concert



Elin Pelin Foundation was proud to present the one and only B.T.R. for the first time in Houston. The Bulgarian legends (top left) were supported by the local band Scrollkeeper (top right). This amazing rock and heavy metal party took a great amount of planning and funds. A big shout out to the sponsors (bottom left) of the event: ARA Computers And Consulting, Holy Christmas Lights, Well Resolutions Technology, Kintex Plumbing, and G's Dental Studio! Thank you!

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – Head of logistics, Concert coordinator & Photographer**

**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – Logistics**

**Mr. Paul Gantcher – Chauffeur**

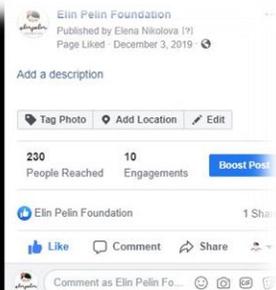
**Mrs. Hristina Pavlina, Mrs. Mariya Shumareva, Mrs. Gergana Araktchiev – volunteers**



## Giving Tuesday Initiative

Ms. Elena Nikolova organized this fundraiser and it one of our most successful campaigns for 2019. #GivingTuesday refers to the Tuesday after U.S. Thanksgiving. It is a movement to create an international day of charitable giving at the beginning of the holiday season. We raised \$875 from 10 donors. All funds were matched by Wood Mackenzie. Thank you for your generosity!

**Ms. Elena Nikolova – coordinator**



## New Year Bulgarian-American Social Gathering – 2020

For a second time, Elin Pelin Foundation organized a New Year's Potluck Party for all Bulgarian-American families in Houston and their friends at the Sterling Banquet Hall. The guests celebrated the New 2020 with Bulgarian music and dances. The new step-n-repeat with the companies who supported the BTR Concert was the background of all formal pictures.



**Mrs. Nevena Nikolova – coordinator**

**Mr. Petar Gerzhikov – Sound & Lighting Engineer**

**Mrs. Vessi Andreeva, Ms. Elena Nikolova, Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – volunteers**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – photographer**

## Comedy Night – Trifon Zarezan Day – Two Men and a Half by Nikolay Atanasov

Elin Pelin Foundation hosted the first of its kind comedy show performed by the playwright Nikolay Atanasov – Shushi, and Georgi Nizamov – Nizama.

The two actors made us laugh about politics, soccer, and everyday challenges.

This turned out to be the most praised performance of the year. Guests were lining up to express their joy and gratitude to Elin Pelin Foundation for organizing such a delightful event.

Thanks to volunteers, the actors had the opportunity to enjoy Texas cuisine and visit NASA.

We also celebrated Trifon Zarezan - Bulgaria's Wine Day. Thanks to an in-kind donation from Total Wine and More, we served Bulgarian wine to our members and guests.

**Ms. Elena Nikolova –Project coordinator**

**Mrs. Vessi Andreeva - Head of logistics**

**Mr. Petar Gerdzhirov – Sound & Lighting Engineer**

**Mrs. Mariya Shumareva, Mrs. Nevena Nikolova, Mrs. Hristina Pavlina – volunteers**

**Ms. Martha Kasabova – concessions**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – photographer**



## Other

### Website Revamp and Newsletter Launch

Countless hours were spent on revamping our website. Thanks to Ms. Elena Nikolova who handled the projects with promptness and professionalism we are proud to present the new [www.elinpelin-houston.org](http://www.elinpelin-houston.org) Please visit our website to find out more about our projects, events, and school curriculum.

Mrs. Mariya Shumareva took over the responsibility to distribute the

newly designed Newsletter. If you wish to be included on our mailing list, please send us your e-mail address to [newsletter@elinpelin-houston.org](mailto:newsletter@elinpelin-houston.org) or click [here](#) to subscribe.

**Ms. Elena Nikolova – Website coordinator**

**Mr. Boyan Stanoev, Progress with Us Consulting – Webmaster**

**Mrs. Mariya Shumareva – Newsletter coordinator**

**Mr. Mintcho Araktchiev – IT Support**



Скъпи членове и приятели,

- Фондация „Елин Пелин“ ще направи годишната си среща на 6-ти юни, събота от 10:00 до 12:00 часа като ZOOM среща
- Добре дошли си да присъстват всички настоящи и бъдещи членове!

## A Shout Out to Our Biggest Supporters:



- **NRG Reliant** – Donation of \$3,000 or more – To encourage and reinforce employee contributions to those in need, NRG supports a variety of goodwill programs year-round such as Reliant Gives, NRG Matching Gifts, and Volunteer Days.
- **BP Foundation** – Donation of \$1,000 or more – BP Matching Gift Program and Volunteer Grant. BP matches employee donations to charitable organizations around the world.
- **ARA Computers and Consulting** – Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Holy Christmas Lights** – Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Well Resolutions Technology** – Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Kintex Plumbing** – Donation of \$1,000 or more
- **Wood Mackenzie** – Donation of \$1,000 or more – Wood Mackenzie matches qualified donations and qualified fundraisers made by individual employees to nonprofit organizations in the United States and the United Kingdom
- **G’s Dental Studio** – Donation of \$400 or more
- **Elena Nikolova** – Individual Donations of \$400 or more
- **Teddy Kostov** – Individual Donations of \$400 or more
- **Mathew Law Firm** – Donation of \$300 or more
- **Amazon** – Recurring Quarterly Donations of \$50 or more - AmazonSmile Foundation donates 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products to a charitable organization of the buyer’s choice.
- **Kroger** – Recurring Quarterly Donations of \$50 or more - Kroger is committed to helping our communities grow and prosper. Year after year Kroger supports local schools, churches, and other nonprofit organizations through Kroger Community Rewards Program.

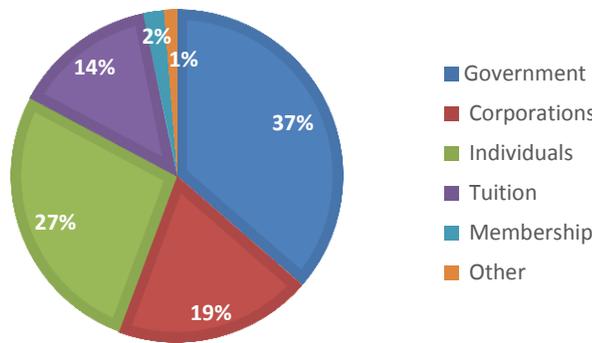
*The recognition of our generous community is important to us, and we have worked hard to ensure that all information is included and accurate. If you find any errors or omissions, please contact us at 713-715-8101.*

# Finance

## Unaudited Financial Data Summary for 2019-2020

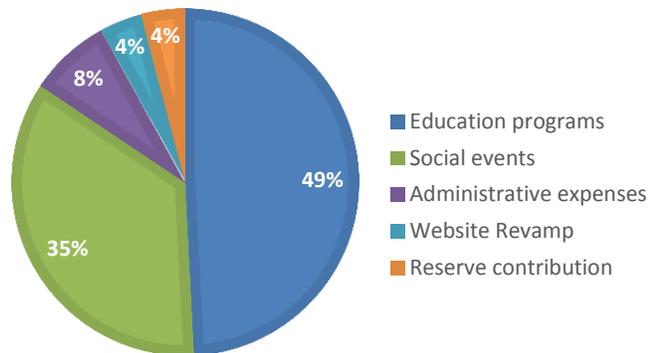
### *Inflow*

<i>Government</i>	\$ 19,616	37%
<i>Corporations</i>	\$ 10,391	19%
<i>Individuals</i>	\$ 14,629	27%
<i>Tuition</i>	\$ 7,545	14%
<i>Membership</i>	\$ 1,075	2%
<i>Other</i>	\$ 645	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 53,901</b>	<b>100%</b>



### *Expenses*

<i>Education programs</i>	\$ 26,509	49%
<i>Social events</i>	\$ 18,991	35%
<i>Administrative expenses</i>	\$ 4,096	8%
<i>Website Revamp</i>	\$ 2,120	4%
<i>Reserve contribution</i>	\$ 2,185	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 53,901</b>	<b>100%</b>



The financial summary includes gifts and activities between June 1, 2019, and May 31, 2020, and is produced internally by Elin Pelin Foundation. The recognition of our generous community is important to us, and we have worked hard to ensure that all information is included and accurate. If you find any errors or omissions, please contact us at 713-715-8101.

## Elin Pelin Foundation Staff and Board

### Board of Directors 2019-2020

Martha Kasabova.....	Director
Elena Nikolova.....	Director
Vessi Andreeva.....	Director
Hristina Pavlina.....	Director
Mariya Shumareva.....	Director

### Officers

Gergana Araktchiev.....	President
Nevena Nikolova.....	Treasurer
Mintcho Araktchiev.....	Secretary
TJ Hayes & Co.....	Controller
Vessi Andreeva.....	Librarian

### Faculty

Dimitria Dzarbova.....	Principal
Valentina Kamburova.....	Teacher
Diana Angelova.....	Teacher
Daniela Kashukeeva.....	Teacher
Dimitria Dzarbova.....	Teacher
Snejana Nihtianova.....	Teacher