



20  
22

ANNUAL  
REPORT



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# Mission

Feminist Frequency has spent over a decade challenging harmful media representations because we believe that media has the power to change the world. Today, we are also emphasizing that it is just as important to interrogate the conditions under which creators work and our media is created.

Guided by our core values of **justice, intersectionality, accessibility, and advocacy**, we are dedicated to ending toxicity and abuse in the games industry and gaming spaces at large. Systems and structures that fail to serve and actively harm the most vulnerable among us must be **rebuilt on a foundation of justice, accountability, and care**.

Feminist Frequency is dedicated to fighting for a games community free of toxicity and harassment, which treats marginalized groups with **fairness and justice**. Together, we can make games a better place to work and play.

# Letter from the Executive Director

## Dear Friends,

In a Feminist Frequency board meeting a little while ago, we were discussing the ways we might want the organization to grow. One of our directors chimed in and said, "What if we took more time to pause, take stock, listen to our community, and not rush into growth just for the sake of growth?" This seemed like such a radical and profound statement, I couldn't quite shake it. It is an attitude that is extremely contrary to the ways we are taught business should operate under capitalism. But I took this advice to heart. At the end of 2021, we looked at our operations, our values, and our goals, and determined our roadmap and trajectory with more weight given to the human power it takes to make big changes that have a real impact. I might say this every year, but I am so proud of how much our team strives to create programs that deliver the needs of our community while also taking care of ourselves in the process.

So, I consider the sustainability and collective care of our team as our primary project. Alongside that, we launched two bold initiatives in 2022 while keeping to a kind pace for ourselves.

The first is the Games Hotline support group for people who have caused harm in games spaces and are wanting to move towards change and accountability, which we've been piloting for the greater part of last year. This was a direct response to the need we were seeing

on the Games Hotline itself, with those who have caused harm, harassment, and abuse feeling isolated and lacking guidance in how to change their behavior meaningfully. This project pushed us to deeply consider how we could offer support and accountability while centering those who have been harmed. Being a part of watching people who have been isolated come together to learn from each other, to grow, and to begin the process of ending cycles of abuse and harm has been extremely inspiring.

We also launched the Culture Shift Project (CSP) in partnership with Take This. CSP is our attempt to provide tools and resources to game studios to help them work towards healing existing harms and building a new culture that supports the well being of all workers, while acknowledging and trying to relieve the burden that has been placed on the most marginalized in many workplaces. This work is not reactionary; it is foundational, it is systemic, and we work with companies who recognize that this is not only hard work, but long term work that will have long term benefits across the entire sector.

All of this work is challenging, without instant gratification, but if we want a games community that we can be proud to be apart of – we have to be willing to sit in the discomfort, to challenge existing toxic norms, and to dare to envision an industry that uplifts and supports everyone, one that cares for the humanity of its workers and players.

**WITH GRATITUDE,**



Anita Sarkeesian  
Executive Director

# Year in Review

**The Games and Online Harassment Hotline**

**The Culture Shift Project**

**Workshops**

**Podcasts**

**Twitch Streaming**

# Games and Online Harassment Hotline

## Resources

In our second year of operation, we focused on finding more and better ways to share our wisdom and guidance with the community. We gather so much information and advice all the time around the various harassment issues that we see come up on the Games Hotline. And we want that to be accessible to as many people as possible—not just those who text in.

So we started creating resources centered on common situations and needs relevant to the community, [including a comprehensive and detailed guide for mitigating hate raids](#), which we've seen increasingly recurrent waves of in the past couple of years. We've also gotten a consistent slew of Hotline texts about horrible blackmail situations this year, so we gathered the wisdom and guidance we've collected from security and legal experts together in [Responding to Blackmail](#). And in our conversations with games studios, we heard from so many who want to better support their employees during online attacks but don't know how. This is a huge topic with many specifics to share, but we put together some common threads and sample protocols in our guide, [Online Safety Policy Recommendations for Game Studios](#).

## On the Hotline

The philosophy of providing for the needs of our community translates to providing for the needs of our agents. We are constantly striving to provide better guides, resources, information, research, expert guidance, training, and ongoing learning so that agents have as much available to them to pull on as they support people texting in.

Many of the stories and experiences the Games Hotline heard in year two mirrored those of year one. Still, the standard of overworking, burnout, instability, and low retention in games studios contributes to widespread mental health struggles throughout the industry. Gender-based harm, toxicity, and abuse continues to be a recurrent issue that pushes passionate workers out of the industry.

And students in games-related fields are reporting similar issues with burnout and abuse from professors, mentors, and others, even before they enter the profession.

Within game-playing communities, we also continue to see players facing ongoing harassment campaigns, frequently with a sexist, racist, or homophobic tune, for months, even years on end. The harassment may happen in-game, but it also extends outside the game into online community spaces like Discord, Twitch, Facebook, or more broadly on social media. The exhaustion, distress, and hypervigilance that harassment brings onto a target fuels mental health struggles, isolation and loneliness, and a feeling of lost agency and worthiness.

## Accountability Support

Since its inception, the Games Hotline speaks not only to people targeted by harassment or abuse but also people who have perpetuated those types of harm. Many of these conversations revolve around intense isolation and hopelessness. Because of a dearth of resources to support people who have caused harm, but are seeking to change their behavior and engage in accountability, the Games

Hotline decided to pilot an accountability support group specifically for people who have caused harm in games spaces. This created an opportunity for folks to offer each other support, validation, and group accountability, honoring the human experience and pain of losing community and connection, while also holding each other to shared standards of survivor-centered accountability.

# Hotline Testimonials

“ Someone helped me for the few minutes I needed. They listened to me and responded with compassion and patience. That’s all I needed that day. It’s normal to need somebody to listen to you after a bad day of online gaming. ”

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“ Kind and understanding both counselors so far I’ve had conversations with. ”

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“ Helped turn my view around completely. I can’t thank you enough, you changed my life. It was a safe space for me to share my private thoughts and emotions, and I’m so thankful for that. It meant the world to me. ”

“ Really helpful and consoling. It felt good to let stuff off my chest. ”

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“ Learned about this from the game, We Are OFK, and was in a funk so gave it a shot. The person I chatted with was really helpful! I have been feeling very unmotivated and non-creative and the chat with Jamie spurred me to open my SoundCloud account after many months and found that my favorite artist on there and Apple Music had positively commented on one of my pieces and liked an album I created! That’s always something to get creative motivation going. Jamie also helped me talk over some other emotional issues. I highly recommend giving it a shot. May be what you need. ”





## The Culture Shift Project

In 2022, we officially launched The Culture Shift Project, a partnership between [Take This](#) and [Feminist Frequency](#), two organizations with over two decades of history advocating for a better cultural landscape for people who make and play games.

As an entry point to addressing workplace culture, and to account for a limited scope, CSP focuses on gender-based harm, which has gained significant attention across the game industry in recent years. However, CSP invites all intersections of identity into our conversations,

because we know that experiences of harm are not limited to gender, and even gender-based harm often looks very different depending on the other layers of identity and power involved.

We believe that gender-based harm can be reduced and prevented with a shared understanding around consent and accountability, more survivor-centered responses from both a systemic and bystander level, acknowledgment of harm that's happened and making repair, and institutional changes to reflect new norms on a policy level.

## **CSP is an adaptive three stage program.**

### **STAGE 1**

Focus on building a shared understanding of gender-based harm, including its subtler, more insidious manifestations in everyday microaggressions and culturally embedded elements. Stage 1 is also centered around listening for a shared narrative of the studio's cultural landscape around gender-based harm, and working towards identifying what needs are arising out of the lived experiences of the studio's employees.

### **STAGE 2**

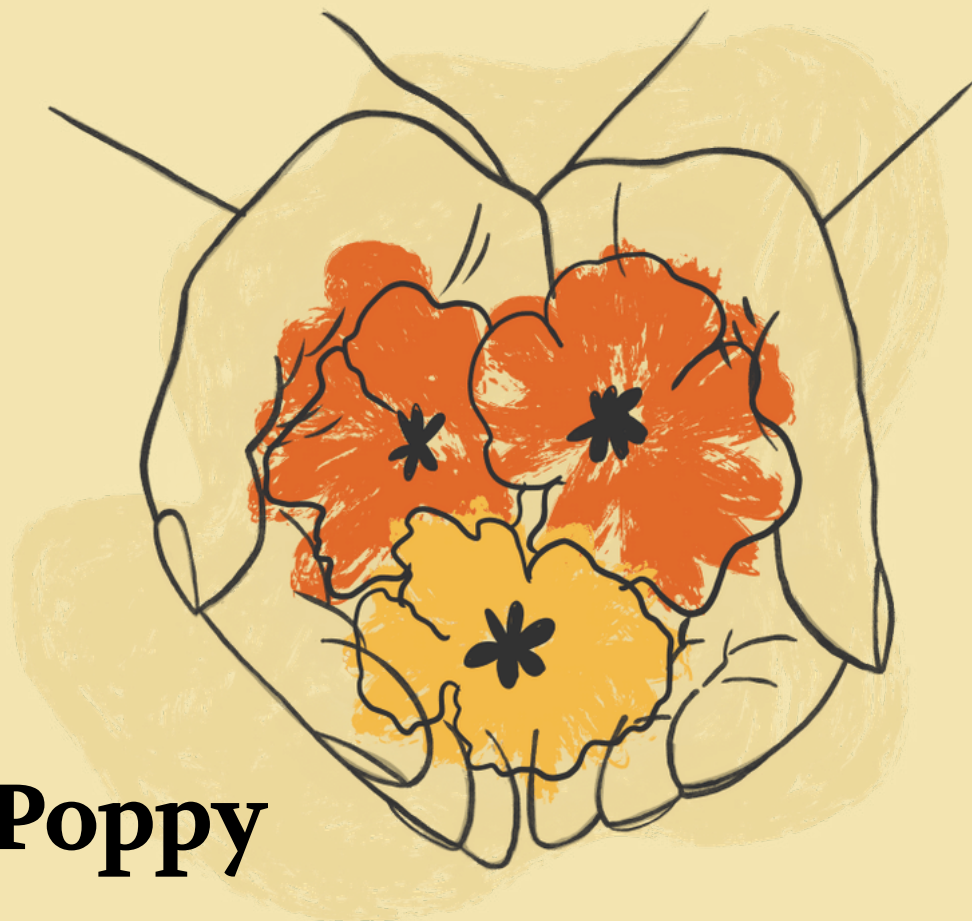
Focus on skills building and empowerment, based on areas identified in Stage 1. The studio's leadership will have the opportunity to practice ongoing accountability and responsiveness, with CSP's guidance and support, to all that was generously shared by employees in Stage 1.

### **STAGE 3**

Zero in on systemic structures, like policies, implementation, sustainability, and commitments to ongoing conversations and learning. Details and approach to this stage will be informed by previous stages.

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The program intentionally builds trust and rapport before delivering extensive skills training, in order to increase the potential for success, decrease resistance to difficult topics, and determine what the most critical needs are for the studio at large. By taking a stepwise approach, CSP is able to build a customized, responsive program that meets the needs of both the studio and its employees.



## Workshops

Feminist Frequency teamed up with Tall Poppy to create both an online safety experts dream team and a digital safety workshop specifically for streamers, influencers, and other games industry workers to help them be safer and more supported online.

### THIS YEAR, WE OFFERED LIVE TRAINING SESSIONS THAT COVERED

- Digital security up-to-date best practices
- How to build social support and interdependence
- Cultivating innate resilience in the face of pervasive harassment
- Online safety in gaming specific spaces
- How to prepare for Hate Raids
- Extended Q&A session with safety experts

# FEMINIST FREQUENCY

Radio



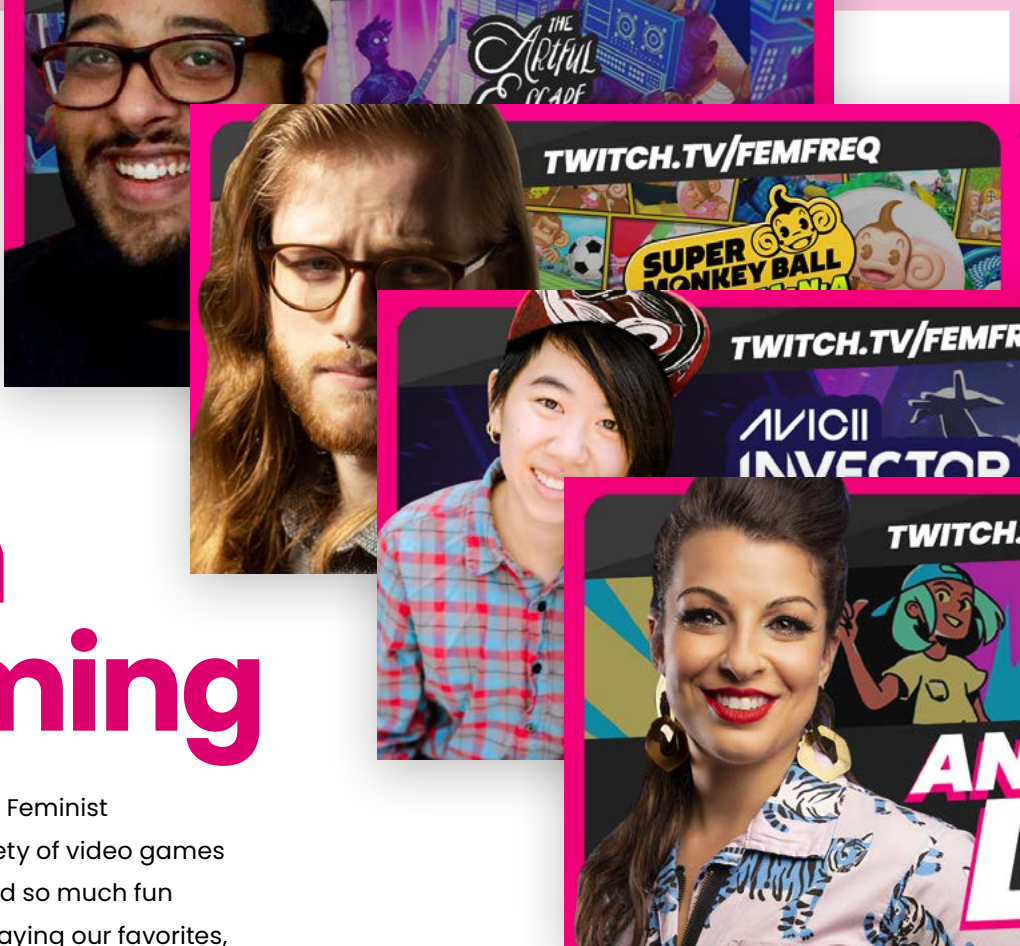
## Podcasts

Founding podcast co-host Ebony Adams left the pod this year to start an exciting new job. While we miss her dearly, we brought on a new co-host, Kat Spada from *The Blaze with Lizzie and Kat*. Kat is a writer, storyteller, and podcaster who began her career working at Universal Pictures, Sony Pictures Animation, and Columbia Pictures, before shifting into the nonprofit space. Along with a stint at the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media, her work as a marketing and communications professional for the Greater Los Angeles Zoo Association and Women In Film has been covered by major publications and garnered awards, and she has guest lectured on social media best practices at UCLA and at several national conferences.

We decided to experiment with the Feminist Frequency Radio format this year by doing themed mini-series seasons. First, we looked at films by female directors such as Jane Campion and Karyn Kusama. Then, we took a look back at Hollywood through the ages with an exploration of how marginalized people worked and were represented in films through the 1910s–1980s. We had amazing guests such as silent era academic Shelley Stamp, media critic Walter Chaw, and our very own Carolyn Petit! This summer, we decided to hack into the main frame with Cyberpunk Summer! We revisited classics like *Hackers*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, and *Blade Runner*.

# Twitch Streaming

Through the first part of the year, Feminist Frequency staff streamed a variety of video games every Thursday on Twitch. We had so much fun laughing with our community, playing our favorites, discovering new worlds, and sometimes even interviewing the developers while we played!



For our 13th birthday, we had a horror-themed party where 13 streamers came on our channel and played a variety of games for 13 hours (on Friday the 13th). It was a frightful good time! Thank you to our whole lineup of party hosters: Kishonna Gray, Nikatine and friends, Greg Miller and SnowBikeMike, Jessie Gender, Jordan Crucchiola, Laura Hudson, Ebony Adams, Vanessa Guerrero, Anthony Carboni, Sarah Gailey & their horror author pals.



And to wrap up the year, we had our annual holiday party stream, where Carl and Jae played Unrailed!, building train tracks for a moving train. In the second half, they were joined by Caroline, Kerri, and Kat to play Keep Talking and Nobody Explodes!

# Champions



**JESSIE "GENDER" EARL**



**AUGUSTANA COLLEGE  
ESPORTS**



**KARIM CHEESE**



**TANYA DEPASS**



**NIKATINE**

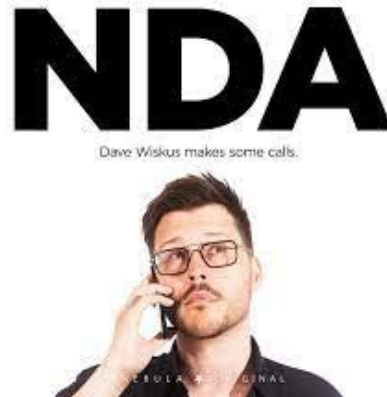
Games Hotline Champions are our community representatives, using their unique voice to spread the word about the Games and Online Harassment Hotline in the communities where they work and play. As a Games Hotline Champion, they use their platform to stand up against systemic prejudices, fight stigma against mental health, and push for a games community that is more compassionate and inclusive.

**THANK YOU TO OUR CHAMPIONS IN 2022!**

# Shows & Podcasts



[Game Dev Advice: The Game Developer's Podcast](#) with Jae Lin



NDA Podcast [Episode 4 Anita Sarkeesian](#) – Feminist Frequency



[The Two Vague Podcast](#) – Empathy



Social Priority Podcast [Episode 16](#) – Games and Online Harassment (Ft. Carl Murray Olsen)



HaiBobby – [BIG THINGS COMIN](#)



Jae Lin on [Mxxiety's Twitch Show](#)



Ethics and Video Games [Episode 54](#) – The Games and Online Harassment Hotline (with Jae Lin)



Whitethorn's Games Hotline Charity Stream

# Press

## USA TODAY

[A woman said she was 'raped' in the metaverse. When will it matter?](#)

Alia E. Dastagir, February 22, 2022

## THE DEANBEAT

[Wordle creator's inspirational talk was a joy to hear at GDC](#)

Dean Takahashi, March 25, 2022

## AXIOS

[Sarkeesian reflects on 10 years of "Tropes vs. Women in Video Games"](#)

Megan Farokhmanesh, March 25, 2022

## WASHINGTON POST

[The five biggest takeaways from GDC](#)

[Shannon Liao and Nathan Grayson](#), March 28, 2022

## DIGITALTRENDS

[For game developers, GDC 2022 was a battle for reality](#)

Giovanni Colantonio, March 28, 2022

## PROTOCOL

[Anita Sarkeesian says the fight against sexism in gaming is far from over](#)

Nick Statt and Janko Roettgers, March 29, 2022

## IGN

[Games and Online Harassment Hotline Adds Resource to Protect Against Hate Raids](#)

Rebekah Valentine, August 2, 2022

## GAMESINDUSTRYBIZ

[Games And Online Harassment Hotline launches hate raid protection resource](#)

Marie Dealessandri, August 3, 2022

## THE GAMER

[Games And Online Harassment Hotline Puts Together Guide On Handling Twitch Hate Raids](#)

James Troughton, August 3, 2022

## THE PSYCHGEIST

[TL;DR: August 2022](#)

Rachel Kowert, August 30, 2022

## TUBEFILTER

[Pop culture and politics collide in Anita Sarkeesian's new web series](#)

James Hale, October 21, 2022

## WIRED

[Anita Sarkeesian Hates Talking About Gamergate—but She Has To](#)

Megan Farokhmanesh, November 10, 2022



# Events

Dipping our toe back into in person events, we attended the Game Developers Conference in March. Both Anita and Jae had the opportunity to speak about the work we are doing with Feminist Frequency.

Anita reflected back on the history and impact of Feminist Frequency's work with a talk entitled "It's Been 10 Years Since Tropes vs Women in Video Games: What's Changed?"

Jae introduced the Games Hotline with a talk that shared our findings from the first year of operating the Hotline in "A Hotline for the Games Industry." Jae also collaborated with Eve Crevoshay and Cassie Walker from Take This to present "Accountability & Repair in Games: Healing Harm," which was a two-part presentation followed by roundtable on what accountability and transformation of harm could look like in the games industry.

## SOME OTHER EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- Anita spoke at Keyword Studios on "Harassment, accountability and justice. Where is digital culture going?"
- Anita spoke at a Microsoft meet up sharing the exciting work we are doing with the Games Hotline.
- Anita moderated a couple Women in Film discussions: interviewing the creative visionaries behind the hit HBO show MINX, and moderating a film screening Q&A for HAPPENING with director Audrey Diwan and actor Anamaria Vartolomei.
- The Games Hotline was featured in the Wholesome Direct and Day of the Devs digital showcase.

# Charity & Fundraising

## CHARITY STREAMING

We were deeply honored that a number of our community members chose to host charity streams to support us this year. Not only did they raise very impactful funds for us, they also did the crucial work of spreading awareness about the Hotline. With sincere gratitude to: Team Overture, that\_deangelo & Latinx in Gaming, SweetNShady, Age of Queens, prince\_harming, Whitethorn Games, Cospilates.

## CRAIG NEWMARK PHILANTHROPIES

Thank you to [Craig Newmark Philanthropies](#) for their grant in support of the Games and Online Harassment Hotline. Craig Newmark created this organization with the goal to support and connect people and drive broad civic engagement. Thank you for investing in our work to create a more inclusive games industry!

## PATREON

Thank you to the 290 amazing [Patreon](#) donors who support Feminist Frequency every month, including our work on Feminist Frequency Radio and the Feminist Frequency Star Trek Podcast! Patrons enjoy early access to podcast episodes and engage with us through polls and the Feminist Frequency Discord server.

## OMIDYAR NETWORK

Thank you to [Omidyar Network](#) for their grant in support of Feminist Frequency. We resonate deeply with their mission to build more inclusive and equitable societies and are grateful for their support!

## DON'T GO IT ALONE, HOTLINE BIRTHDAY, & LEVEL UP FOR FEMINIST FREQUENCY

Through the grassroots support of our community and corporate partners, we raised over \$110,000 this year via three successful crowdfunding campaigns. Thank you to the 367 donors, as well as Landfall Games, Devolver Digital, Double Fine, SuperHot, and Whitethorn Games for supporting these efforts to expand the Hotline hours, fund our games industry trainings, and provide resources to our community.

## AMPLIFIERS

We are so grateful to the 207 awesome donors who have signed on to boost our anti-abuse signal and help us turn up the volume on just and fair representation in the media as monthly donors. As the sustaining backbone of Feminist Frequency, Amplifiers get special perks and a bit of exclusive behind-the-scenes access to the FemFreq team. Thank you, Amplifiers!

# Coming Up

**The Games and Online Harassment Hotline**

**The Culture Shift Project**



## The Games Hotline

Our biggest focus in 2023 will be continuing to improve the support and training that we offer agents and transitioning to an internal agent system (rather than the current call center partnership that we have). We'll be writing and improving the training that we provide and building out infrastructure to be able to recruit and train agents completely on our own.

With in person events ramping up again, we are hoping to find more of a presence at conferences and conventions to help get the word out about the Games Hotline. We'll continue to make decisions and show up to in-person spaces with COVID consciousness and precautions in mind. We want to table and talk about the Hotline, offer workshops and talks,

and potentially even extend Hotline services during the hours of big events, so that we can be more available to event-specific needs.

We have just finalized the capability for our system to start taking chats via WhatsApp. We'll be pushing that live soon and publicizing it more widely in 2023. We are excited to offer this new method of contact that allows for encrypted messaging and access for folks who may not have SMS.

Finally, we have many plans for continuing to create resources around the topics and issues that come up on the Hotline so that anyone can access them for free online.



## The Culture Shift Project

We learned so much in this first year of running the Culture Shift Project. In 2023, we'll be booking speaking engagements, talks, roundtables to share some of our revelations from doing this work, the process of it, and what we want to build moving forward.

We'll also be shifting the offerings that this program provides – our new packages will be more targeted and responsive, with a particular focus on those who hold the most power in an organization.

Throughout past years, we have very informally offered incident response to harassment, abuse, or other violence happening within or around games studios. We'd offer a listening ear, emotional support, and accountability guidance as they moved through a crisis moment (and its aftermath).

We'll be officially offering that to games studios (alongside support packages for pre-emptive guidance) starting in 2023.

# Financials

2022 was a challenging year for many, and we are humbled by the generosity of the individual donors and corporate partners that helped bring our year's activities to life.

We are happy to start 2023 with big aspirations and an even wider reach for our operations. From our

podcasts, to the Hotline, to more work for hire initiatives that aim to stop harassment in game studios, Feminist Frequency believes that this will be another incredible year. We wish to offer our deepest thanks to all of our donors – without you the work we do would not be possible.

# 2022 Financials

Retained From Previous Years 353,433.41

## Revenue

Corporate Donations	246,500.00
Individual Donations	169,049.28
Grant Funding	126,000.00
Merch Sales	634.38
Work For Hire	25,000.00
Other Income (Ads, Interest, etc.)	2,354.74

**TOTAL REVENUE 569,538.40**

## Expenditures

Programming	244,498.94
Administrative	38,051.68
Development	74,181.96

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES 356,732.58**

**Net Revenue 212,805.82**

**Restricted Funds Adjustment\* (115,000.00)**

**Closing Balance 451,239.23**

\*Restricted Funds refers to any funds received in the previous fiscal year released into this year, or funds received this year restricted to use next year.

# Who We Are

## 2022 Team

### **ANITA SARKEESIAN**

Executive Director

### **JAE LIN**

Programs Manager and Hotline Director

### **CARL MURRAY OLSEN**

Hotline Coordinator

### **ASA GREENRIVER**

Marketing Manager

### **CAROLINE RENSEL AND ARIEL**

### **GLASSMAN OF COMMON GREAT**

Development

### **ROB PERA**

Audio Engineer

### **KERRI STIMSON**

Podcast Support, Operations Manager

### **SARAH GULDE**

Finances

### **AARON WILLIAMS**

Graphic Design

### **KAT SPADA**

FFR Co-Host, Social Media

### **JON ARTEAGA**

Social Media

### **KAT MARTINEZ**

Social Media

## Feminist Frequency Board of Directors

### **ANITA SARKEESIAN**

Chair

### **MITU KHANDAKER**

Secretary

### **DAVE PROCTOR**

Treasurer

Ebony Adams

Maile Martinez

April Glass

Kishonna Gray

Terrence Williams

## Hotline Advisors

Kishonna Gray

Kat Lo

Chris Le

Eve Crevoshay

Leigh Honeywell



# Acknowledgements

This year more than ever we have been blown away by the consistent and overflowing support of so many people around us, in community with us, and lifting us up. Nothing we do would be possible without all the deep and beautiful connections we have with so many, including so many of you reading this report. We feel so abundant and grateful.

Our Patreon community, individual donors, corporate supporters, granting bodies, and our monthly Amplifiers reminds us every day that this work is more than worthwhile. We have so many people relying on us to keep pushing our services and projects forward; we also rely so much on all of them—it's this strong mutual need and support of each other that makes us powerful in the best ways. We have never been afraid to speak truth to power, but that doesn't mean it's not scary sometimes; in those moments, remembering our supporters are behind us gives us courage.

It is an incredible privilege to run the Games Hotline with the brilliant Hotline agents, supervisors, expertise advisors, as well as the peers and partner organizations working alongside us to make games a better place to work and play. There is so much vibrancy in this effort and community; we can't wait to see where it takes us.

Finally, our communities on Discord, Twitch, and Patreon, as well as all the Hotline Champions and other streamers who have spread the word and done charity streams – y'all are the sunshine in our skies.

**WITH ALL OUR HEARTS, THANK YOU,**  
The Feminist Frequency Team

