



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

# *Her,* AT THE HEART OF US



WE ASPIRE TO LEAD IN RESPONSIBLE FASHION AND  
IMPACT OUR COMMUNITIES, INSPIRING ALL WOMEN  
AND GIRLS TO CHANGE THE WORLD.

**OUR GOAL IS TO DOUBLE OUR IMPACT**  
IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS AND THE  
CAUSES THEY CARE ABOUT BY 2025.

TOGETHER WITH OUR ASSOCIATES, CUSTOMERS AND  
PARTNERS, WE AIM TO RAISE AND CONTRIBUTE  
**\$250 MILLION IN SUPPORT OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**  
GLOBALLY TO HELP THEM BE THEIR BEST SELVES  
THROUGH OPPORTUNITIES TO LEAD, STRENGTHEN  
COMMUNITIES, AND LIVE WELL.



ascena's core purpose is to provide all women and girls with fashion and inspiration for living confidently every day. As one of the largest U.S.-based specialty apparel retailers focused exclusively on women and girls, ascena and our brands drive positive change for the women and girls we serve.

We focus on inspiring all women and girls—our customers, associates, partners, and the communities and environments where we do business. Our strong foundation is based on the responsible sourcing of our products and the sustainable operations of our enterprise. We believe that caring for women across the world, and providing opportunities to lead, give back and live well, will lead to a better future for all. Our connection to our associates and customers is deeply rooted throughout our business to bring *Her, at the Heart of Us* to life.

“OUR MISSION IS TO PROVIDE ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS WITH FASHION AND INSPIRATION FOR LIVING CONFIDENTLY EVERY DAY.”



**DAVID JAFFE**

Chairman and CEO,  
ascena retail group inc.

# OUR SUPPORT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

Our new strategy, *Her, at the Heart of Us*, is guided by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a focus on improving the lives of women and girls globally, through opportunities to lead, strengthen communities, and live well. The SDGs, launched in 2015 and agreed upon by 193 countries, call upon businesses and public-private collaborations to address social and economic challenges and drive progress for humanity. We acknowledge the importance of each of the 17 SDGs and have identified the six where we feel our work can make the greatest impact.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## OUR FOCUS

### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

We are committed to the health and well-being of women and girls.

### 5 GENDER EQUALITY

We are committed to developing women leaders and supporting gender equality.

### 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

We are committed to partnering with more suppliers in water access efforts to help more women and families secure access to safe drinking water.

### 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

We are committed to increasing our use of sustainable materials, engaging associates to reduce our materials and product waste, and helping our customers shop more sustainably.

### 13 CLIMATE ACTION

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint by working in our operations and with our suppliers to lower resource and energy consumption, waste, and greenhouse gas emissions.

### 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

We are committed to building partnerships with nonprofit organizations focused on creating positive change for women and girls.



# INSPIRING LEADERSHIP & OPPORTUNITY

## AMBITION

Through education and training, we aspire to give women and girls what they need to find their voice and lead. We promote and inspire women through our leadership, mentorship, and grants.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

### GENDER EQUALITY

### PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

GOALS	PROGRESS	PROGRESS NOTES
Engage 100% of people managers in strategies to broaden our impact for inclusion, diversity, and respect in the workplace.	 Due: 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched Enterprise Learning Portfolio, a web platform of associate learning resources.</li> <li>• Senior leaders have received Respect in the Workplace training.</li> <li>• Unconscious Bias training is being developed.</li> </ul>
Introduce mentorship programs for women and diverse associates to drive associate engagement and retention.	 Due: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched Development Days, full days focused on associate career development.</li> </ul>
Improve the transparency of the hiring and development of women associates.	 Due: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62% of our VPs-and-above are women.</li> <li>• 75% of our Directors-and-above are women.</li> <li>• 97% of our 4,600 stores are led by women.</li> </ul>
Enable 100% of suppliers with tools to provide workplaces supporting women.	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established enterprise-wide <a href="#">Code of Conduct for Merchandise Suppliers</a> to enable workplaces supporting women.</li> </ul>
Set baseline on number of women and girls impacted globally through our partnerships and signature programs.	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signature partnerships identified including Roslyn S. Jaffe Awards, HERlead, Girls on the Run.</li> </ul>



# STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES: INTERNALLY & EXTERNALLY

## AMBITION

We aim to strengthen women to care for their communities by giving back and paying forward—for our associates in our corporate campuses<sup>1</sup> and store locations, our supplier workplaces, and our customers through engagement—supporting the communities in which we operate and live.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS





GENDER EQUALITY

CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION








RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

CLIMATE ACTION

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

GOALS	PROGRESS	PROGRESS NOTES
Commit to setting environmental impact reduction goals in our supply chain to reduce our footprint to mitigate climate change risks to local communities.	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded the adoption of Higg FEM 3.0 to ascena CONNECTS suppliers. Use the data collected to set a benchmark and identify reduction targets.</li> </ul>
Validate factories manufacturing ascena brands on their performance of treated wastewater to eliminate hazardous chemicals.	 Due: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched wastewater compliance minimum requirements.</li> </ul>
Educate customers and associates on product end of life, sustainable fashion, and lifestyle through communications and marketing activations.	 Due: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collected 6,000 boxes of gently used clothing donated through Give Back Box.</li> </ul>
Increase participation in ascenaCARES programs.	 Due: Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Designated days of giving back in the community, for example, International Women's Day.</li> <li>Launched enterprise-wide tracking and reporting tool to measure associate and volunteer engagement.</li> <li>Launched Community and Philanthropy Committee with brand and campus representation.</li> </ul>



GOALS	PROGRESS	PROGRESS NOTES
Align product donations to organizations committed to supporting women and girls.	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$2.35 million in product donations with over \$1 million in product directed to women and families recovering from hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.</li> </ul>
Partner with more suppliers in water access efforts in local communities, helping women and families secure access to safe drinking water.	 Due: 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launched a multi-year partnership with the Planet Water Foundation to secure clean water in global communities.</li> </ul>
Launch Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) as a strategic business imperative.	 Due: Complete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsored the Human Rights Campaign's Business Coalition for the Equality Act.</li> <li>• Ranked on Forbes' Best Employers and Best Employers for Women lists in 2018.</li> <li>• Scored 100% on the Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index, earning recognition as a Best Place to Work for LGBTQ Equality.</li> <li>• Signed the CEO Action Pledge for D&amp;I.</li> </ul>
Launch D&I Committees and Associate Resource Groups (ARGs) on each corporate campus. <sup>1</sup>	 Due: 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ascenaPride and Working Parents ARGs and have launched across our campuses.</li> </ul>
Commit to setting an ambitious enterprise-wide carbon reduction target.	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gathering data to set a baseline in 2019.</li> </ul>
Achieve zero-waste certification in distribution center and fulfillment facilities.	 Due: 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repurposed 3.5 million vendor cartons to pack product to stores and recycled over 6,000 tons of cardboard, the equivalent of over 100,000 trees saved.</li> <li>• Reduced the purchase of new cartons by 70%, saving up to \$3 million in a year.</li> </ul>
Launch recycling and waste minimization awareness programs in all corporate campuses. <sup>1</sup>	 Due: 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During Earth Month, provided our corporate and retail associates with tips on conservation and waste reduction.</li> <li>• Held a clothing drive competition among select corporate campuses and stores, collecting nearly 40,000 items.</li> </ul>



GOALS	PROGRESS	PROGRESS NOTES
<p>Reach 1 million pounds of donated store fixtures and materials through our community impact program.</p>	<p> Due: 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieved 700,000 pounds in donations since 2012.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul>
<p>Extend product life cycle through recycling, upcycling, and partnerships contributing toward our journey to a circular commitment.</p>	<p> Due: Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively exploring opportunities to upcycle materials from our product samples and returns, turning waste and used materials into new products.</li> </ul>
<p>Increase sustainable raw materials sourcing in our apparel, focusing on more sustainable natural and synthetic fibers.</p>	<p> Due: Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Launched Sustainable Materials Committee with brand and campus representation.</li> <li>Lane Bryant piloted a Sustainable Collection, its first eco-conscious collection of T-shirts and jeans made from Repreve,<sup>®</sup> an eco-tech fiber produced from recycled plastic bottles.</li> <li>The ANN brands have partnered with the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). Since launching the partnership in 2015, they have significantly increased the volume of Better Cotton sourced from approximately 5% to 15%. In 2017,<sup>2</sup> sourced over 2,000 metric tons of Better Cotton through BCI.</li> </ul>
<p>Extend our policies and best practices across all ascena brands to drive humane and ethical sourcing.</p>	<p> Due: 2020</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Our brands will no longer source new private label products with mohair, and our Animal Welfare program will extend across all of our brands over time.</li> </ul>





# PROMOTING HEALTH & WELL-BEING

## AMBITION



We invest in women and children's health and well-being, actively helping them live their best lives in thriving communities through our long-term health and charitable partnerships supporting causes important to her.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

GENDER EQUALITY

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

GOALS	PROGRESS	PROGRESS NOTES
Advance corporate partnership with the Breast Cancer Research Foundation (BCRF) to commit to 1.2 million research hours by 2022. <sup>2</sup>	 Due: 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Since 2005, recognized as BCRF's top corporate fashion donor; raising nearly \$40 million, together with our clients, funding 25 BCRF researchers and nearly 800,000 research hours.</li> </ul>
Expand women's empowerment initiatives to a broader group of women in our supply chain, and extend our global reach and impact through increased training.	 Due: 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empowered 100,000 women in our global supply chain in partnership with BSR's HERproject by providing training to improve health and financial literacy outcomes.</li> </ul>

 Pending
  In-progress
  Completed



ANN TAYLOR

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LOU & GREY

maurices

dressbarn<sup>EST. 1962</sup>

LANE BRYANT

CATHERINES<sup>®</sup>

Justice

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> ascena campuses, owned and leased, include locations in Columbus, Ohio; Duluth, Minnesota; Etna Township, Ohio; Mahwah, New Jersey; Milford, Connecticut; New Albany, Ohio; New York, New York; Hong Kong; Riverside, California; Shanghai, China; and Seoul, South Korea.

<sup>2</sup> Calendar year.