



Sheltering Dignity

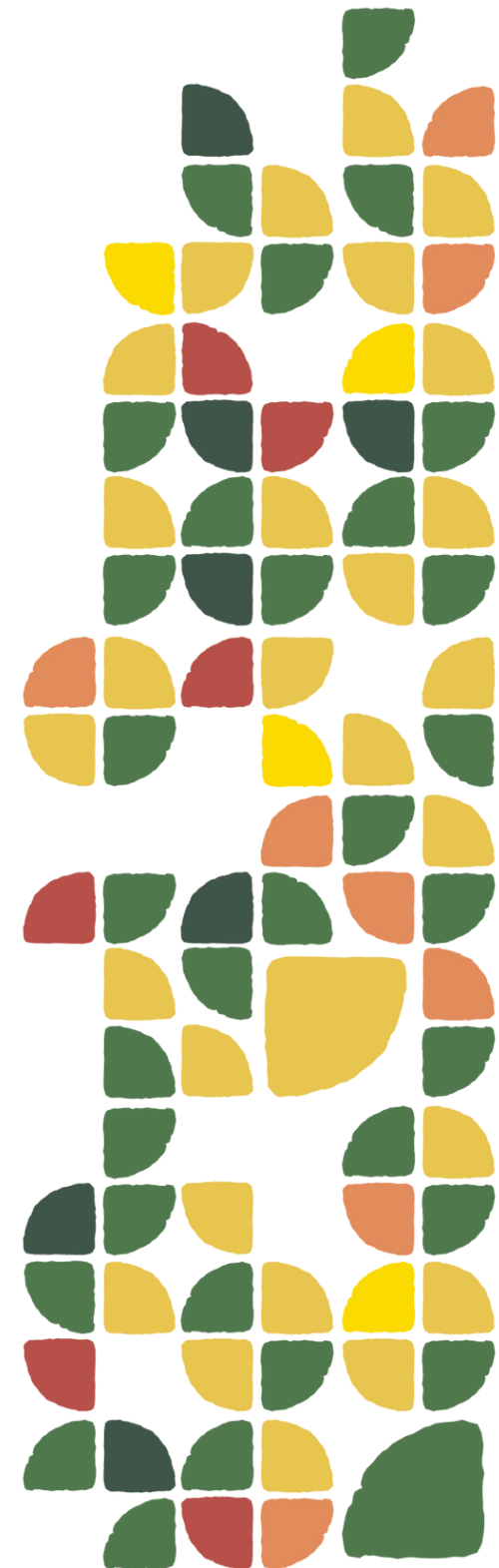
2021 REST CENTRES IMPACT REPORT

Presented by Dagma Koyi
Executive Director, R.E.S.T. Centres



Table of Contents

03	Message from Executive Director
04	Message from Chair
05	About Us <ul style="list-style-type: none">Our MissionOur Vision
06	The Homelessness Challenge: Hard Facts
08	Programs
14	Personal Impact Stories
18	Our Impact
21	Partnerships & Collaborations
23	Financials
26	People Behind Our Mission
28	References



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Message from our Founder

The unrelenting and unwavering support of our staff, partners and clients ensured the uninterrupted and sustained delivery of our core services with the goal of ending homelessness in the Peel Region. It's important to recognize the challenges of COVID and how our youth and team proved to be as resilient as expected. We hope this year's testimonials from our restored youths will inspire you as they were empowered to embrace their future through our holistic, supportive programs.

Through programs like the Bridge of Hope and the Bare Necessities Program, we connected youths to caring landlords in the community, delivered financial subsidies, provided life skills development, education and employment training support and has contributed to 72% of our youth making positive strides towards financial independence.

- DAGMA KOYI

Executive Director, R.E.S.T. Centres

In 2022, R.E.S.T. commits to ensuring that our youth have access to the support needed to reach their full potential. The development of R.E.S.T centers' social enterprise strategy, an organization rebrand, and the development of new strategic planning will provide the pillars to support our quest to end youth homelessness in the Peel Region.

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves into a chronic public health issue, we at R.E.S.T. will continue to count on your enviable support to raise the needed resources to meet the needs of our clients. The adaptation of digital platforms has allowed us to continue providing immediate support for our youth and we continue to utilize these approaches to keep our communities and loved ones safe but connected.

To our generous funders, staff, and clients, I would like to express the organization's utmost appreciation to you.

Together, we shall collaborate to address BIPOC youth homelessness in the Peel Region.

Message from our Chair

Even during this very challenging time, 2021 has been an amazing year for the REST organization. We have indeed defied all expectations during this pandemic.

It is not a stretch to say that it has been a year of transformation. The formation of a strong board of directors was a key strategic goal for REST in 2021. To that end, I was delighted to be part of such a dynamic and diverse board. I have been privileged to be part of such a talented group of people that were motivated and pleased to use their gifts and talents selflessly to help those in need.

Our second strategic goal was to meet the transition needs of our youth through rental subsidies, grocery assistants, and housing starter packs. Thanks to the generous support of our funders REST was able to deliver on this goal. We ended the year on a positive note with a Christmas Cheer campaign that culminated with an event.

I especially enjoyed being part of the "Christmas Cheer" event. Seeing the faces of the young people when they received their Christmas gifts from REST was very gratifying.

Lastly, we set out to increase operational infrastructure, by having a set marketing and fundraising plan to improve upon exposure while expanding on staff overseeing operations. While this still remains a focus going into the new year, extensive work has begun through the engagement of a fund development consultant and a Communication Marketing consultant. We are excited about REST's new brand strategy and website that will be launched in 2022. We were also able to increase our operational capacity by bringing on a part time Operations Manager.

So, with all that in mind, I am certainly looking forward to the great things that REST will accomplish in 2022, and sincerely thank all of our stakeholders for your unwavering support in helping us meet our goals in 2021.

- IRVING LENDOR

Chair of the Board, R.E.S.T. Centres

About R.E.S.T.

We are a black-led, BIPOC-serving charitable organization providing transitional housing and support services to youth experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, including those leaving the public care system.



MISSION

To help end youth homelessness in Peel Region.

VISION

That youth will be empowered to live healthier and happier lives with adequate support and opportunities to contribute to a better society.

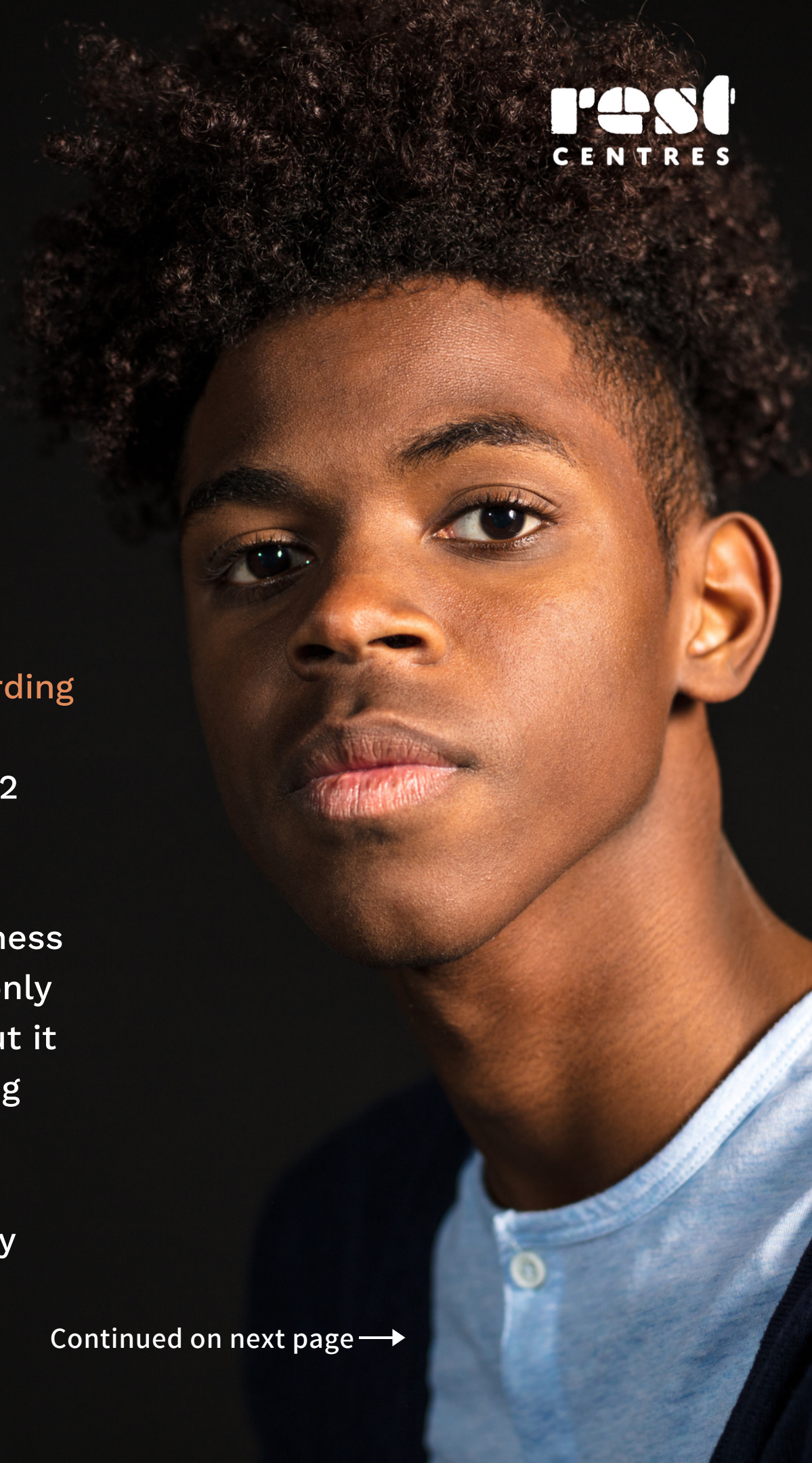
The Hard Facts of Homelessness

Homelessness is a social canker that affects the health and productive growth of individuals, families, and communities. The (City of Toronto, 2021) Street Needs Assessment documented **7,324 people experiencing homelessness** on the night of April 21, 2021. Of these, **racialized individuals accounted for 60%** of all respondents, with those from **the black community recording 31%**, whilst accounting for 9% of the entire Toronto population (City of Toronto, 2021). It was further identified that **people experiencing unsheltered (outdoor) homelessness** numbered 742 (April 2021), which was an **increase of 39% over the 2018 record** (City of Toronto, 2021).

Chronic homelessness, which is the point-in-time count of those who experienced homelessness for six months or more in the past year, which was **reported to be as high as 77%** (ibid). Not only does homelessness present concern about the economic and well-being of those affected, but it is also noted that educational attainment (i.e., non-completion of high school) of those staying outdoors is high, i.e., 35% compared to those staying indoors, 27%.

The **devastating impact** of youth homelessness **includes mental health**, which was reported by 50% of respondents, and **substance use** 42% (ibid).

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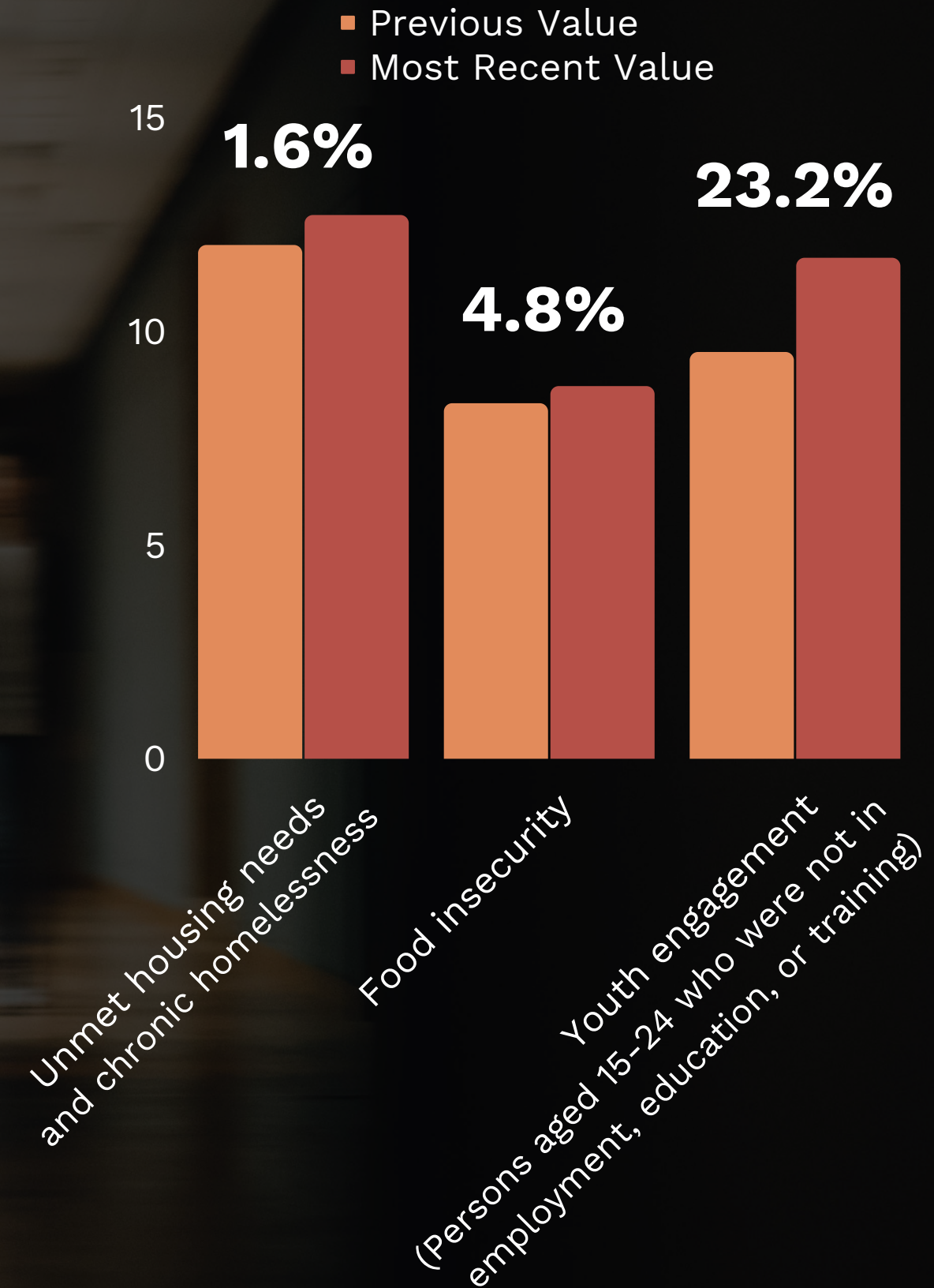
The Hard Facts of Homelessness

The Peel region reports that:

- the need for **20,000 new housing units by 2028**
 - An estimated **2,000 affordable housing units a year**
- It should be noted - **only 647 of 14,997 households on waiting list have been provided housing**

Source: (Peel Region, nd).

While the facts presented seem alarming and challenging to address, it is equally important that through our individual and consolidated efforts, much can be done to eliminate homelessness. It is for this reason that REST relies on contribution and collaboration. to scale-up effort in implementing programmatic interventions which have proven to be effective in preventing and managing youth homelessness in the Peel Region.



Source: (Statistics Canada, 2020)



Our Programs

R.E.S.T. offers diverse programming aimed at providing a positive transition for youth leaving the shelter and care systems, with the goal of preventing homelessness and providing youth with the support they need to reach their potential.



Our Model





Shelter

HOUSING IS OUR FIRST PRIORITY

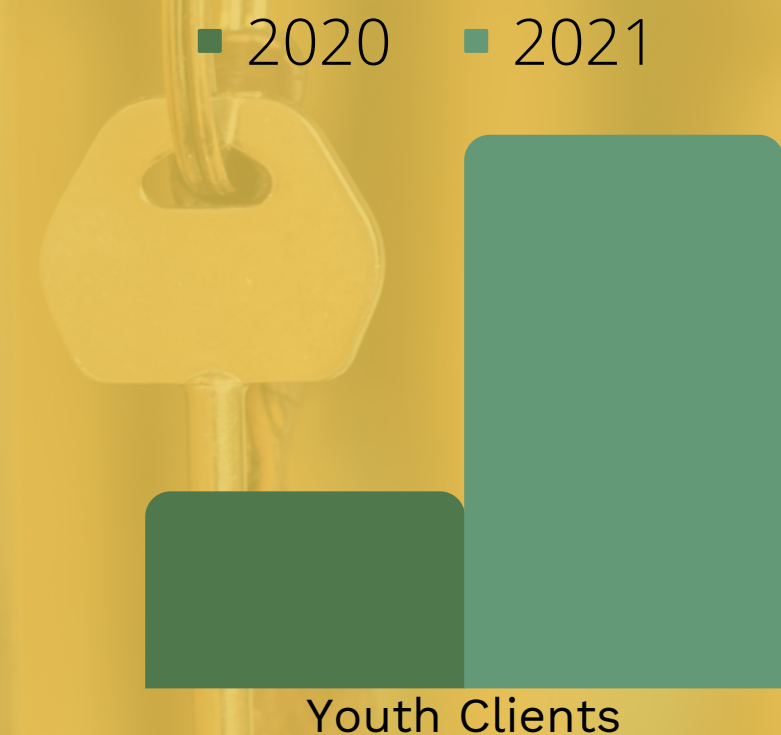
Shelter is a fundamental human right, so we work on the premise that youth are in better positions to move forward with their lives, when they have stable housing. This means working quickly to secure safe, affordable and sustainable housing, with ongoing support to maintain their tenancies, as the first step in our holistic approach.

Focus Areas:

- Transitional Housing
- Applicant Assistance
- Eviction Prevention
- Landlord Training & Support

Flagship Program: The Bridge of Hope

The first program of its kind in Peel Region, Bridge of Hope is an evidenced-based program that offers an alternative to shelters, by matching youth tenants with host families in the community. After being matched and moved in, REST leads regular follow-ups to support youth and host families with ongoing support and to ensure positive outcomes.



**180% increase in
need in 2021**



INCOME, FOOD & BASIC NECESSITIES

From housing, we subsidize and help youth secure essential sources of income, food, personal care and household items.

Focus Areas:

- Rent Subsidy
- Food Subsidy
- Household Starter Packs

Flagship Program: Bare Necessities

Homelessness is bigger than housing. Our ability to meet basic needs like food, personal hygiene and household furnishings are essential to creating a sense of stability in our lives. Of course, the same is true for youth experiencing homelessness. Bare Necessities is our response to extend support into these areas and to address the rising needs in our region. Through subsidies, gift cards and household starter packs, we empower youth to maintain a standard of living with a sense of safety and dignity as they work towards their independence.



192 Youth
supported with over
\$80,000
through the Bare
Necessities Program
in 2021



Healing

PHYSICAL, MENTAL & EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

Due to a lack of accessible resources and health care, especially for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth, our programs offer support to help heal the trauma that many homeless youths have experienced in their lives.

Focus Areas:

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Emotional Health

Flagship Programs: Black Youth Hotline

The Black Youth Matter hotline is an emergency response line developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, that offers support to youth dealing with social isolation and facing factors that may lead to homelessness. We offer support from trained counsellors and guidance in where they can go for help.

H.E.R.O.

To address the lack of mental health services for racialized and homeless youth in Peel, R.E.S.T. hopes to launch H.E.R.O. (Healing Emotional Recovery and Opportunity). The program aims to reduce stigma and improve youth mental health through group therapy and professional counselling. At its core, we help youth address the factors that may or have led to homelessness and the impact of personal experiences, in order to empower them to shift their mindset, stories and future outlook.

Programming Launching 2022



Growing

CULTIVATING ESTEEM, ABILITY AND SELF-BELIEF

Education is a foundation of our approach. Through tailored learning and development opportunities, youth build confidence, career and life skills that support their transition to independent living and beyond.

Focus Areas:

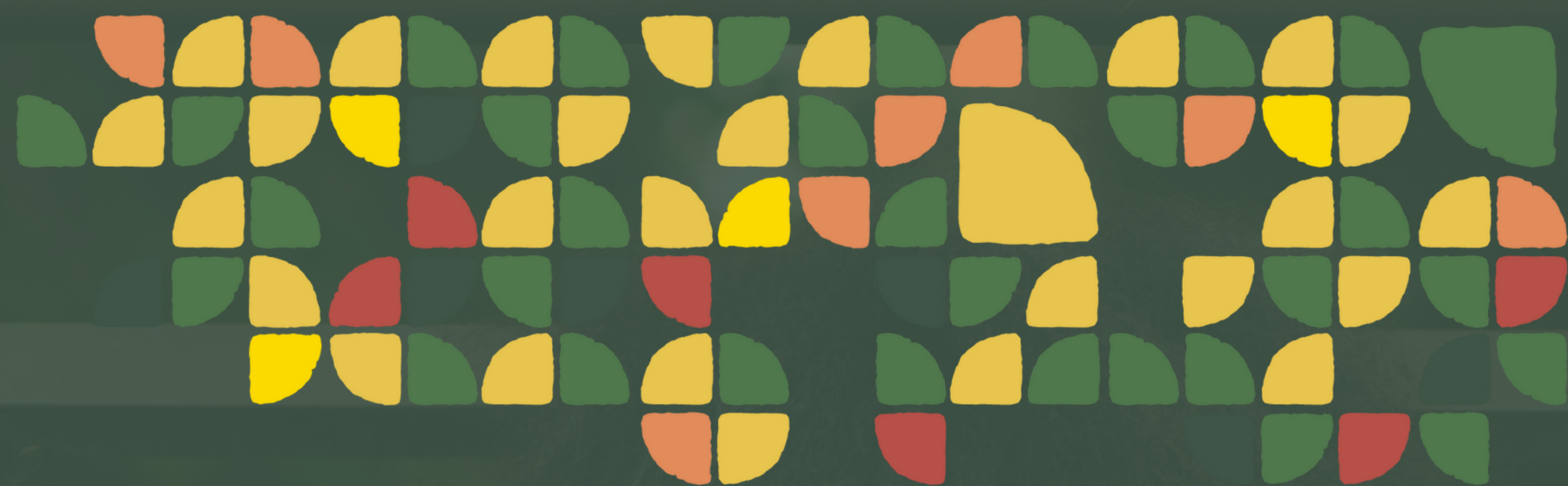
- Tenant Education & Support
- Financial Literacy
- Home Economics
- Employment Support
- Mentorship
- Work PLacements

Flagship Programs: L.I.F.E.

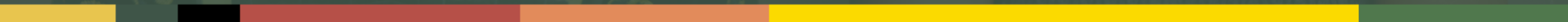
Through remote counselling and support groups, the L.I.F.E. skills program (Learning Initiative Fostering Employment) supports youth in developing fundamental personal, domestic and professional skills that support their independence, development and employment candidacy.



59 Future Leaders
supported with training opportunities



Personal Impact Stories



PARRIS' STORY

My name is Parris Alleyne. I am 23 years old and suffer from bipolar disease, a personality disorder, and anxiety and depression. My life has changed drastically in the last three years. I didn't think I was going to make it because I thought no one cared about me, as I still go through this at times. I do not think I would make it without the help of friends, family, doctors, and most importantly, the R.E.S.T. center. I worry about many things on a daily basis. It's like my mind races 24-7, and sometimes it can lead me into a depression where I either binge or do not even eat at all. At times, I do not know when or how I will eat this week or the next. With the help of the R.E.S.T center, a lot of stress has been taken off my back, especially with food in my fridge. By getting out of bed, eating, and helping to avoid falling back into the dark space that I know so well, I am learning how to cope with my daily life. Having the grocery card delivered every week, I perceive it as if someone cares about me, a team that they are cheering me on, a team that wants to feed me, care for me and especially loves me. Many people may look at it as a grocery card, but I look at it as someone caring for me, a thing that will help me succeed, a thing that says "Paris, you are OK. Stand up and push forward" and a thing that makes sure that I AM GOOD.

Thank you so much, R.E.S.T, for helping me and contributing to a successful life.

Warm regards,

Parris Alleyne

"It's like my mind races 24-7,...with the help of the R.E.S.T center, a lot of stress has been taken off my back"

Next →

AISSATOU'S STORY

“I don’t always feel comfortable searching for support by myself, with R.E.S.T, I feel that I fit in.”

Though some may believe youth chose the path of homelessness, 18 year old Aissatuo disagrees. “Something happens in your life, such as trouble in your family or financial hardship.”

In the case of Aissatuo it was aging out of the protection of Children’s Aid Society. Being a student and unemployed made it next to impossible for her to secure affordable housing within the Peel Region. “It was very stressful, I had no help”.

In July 2021, Aissatou was referred to the R.E.S.T. Bridge of Hope and Bare Necessities program by her Social Worker. “The unique services offered by R.E.S.T felt like exactly what I needed and when I met with members of R.E.S.T. team I was relieved from my stress. I can now focus on school.” With the Help of R.E.S.T, Aissatou found a safe place to stay with a caring landlord. She currently attends Collège Boréal with the hopes of becoming as social worker herself.

Aissatou is grateful to be connected with R.E.S.T. staff who are helping her with budget planning and navigating support searching for a job.

Sadly, many youth in situations like Aissatuo have to make the hard choice of choosing survival over education. Through R.E.S.T programs youth like her can have the support they need to reach their full potential.

CHELSEA'S STORY

"I don't think I would have been able to do it, especially by myself."

Chelsea is 19 and identifies as a Black Jamaican youth and does not have the best relationship with her mother and older brothers. Despite excelling at school & athlete, the environment at home was becoming increasingly toxic. As a result, her mental health deteriorated, and she knew she was in trouble and had to leave the environment. Chelsea made the difficult decision to leave her home and ended up homeless.

The experience of homelessness was very challenging for Chelsea. She went from a promising athlete to a victim of the streets. She remembers the various hardships she had to endure and recounts them with a hopeful approach. When asked for what advice she would give to someone in a similar situation as hers, she said "Keep your head up, because there are people behind you that can help you- you just have to look for it."

Since joining R.E.S.T Centres, Chelsea feels like she can count on someone to be there for her, always ensuring she was safe and secure. She believes that because she can count on the support of R.E.S.T., she can focus more attention on herself, her mental health and her long-term goals of becoming a journalist. She is currently a second year student at Humber College studying journalism.

Without R.E.S.T Centres, Chelsea believes that it would have been next to impossible to face her struggles. Fortunately, with a bit of faith, determination, and a little help along the way-youth can go from victim to victor. Chelsea is a living example of it.

Our Impact



The Impact of R.E.S.T.

We set forth in 2021 to scale-up our effort to provide more youths with support under the Bridge of Hope Program. REST receives many referrals into the BoH, with a total of 47 prospective clients from the Peel Region in 2021. A total of 38 clients were approved following an in-depth assessment of rental subsidy support. There was a roll-over of 21 clients from 2020, which ensured that, cumulatively, REST provided 59 clients with a seamless and comprehensive package of services in 2021. The services included connecting them with bridge builders (host families) and provision of six-month and twelve-month rental subsidies, as well as wrap-around support including life skills and empowerment training. Though the challenges of COVID-19 limited their high-spirited efforts, REST witnessed the successful completion of 10 youths from the BoH program with respite and the capacity to live independently.

We strived to meet clients in need of basic necessities by providing them with support that supports their daily food requirements to enjoy their healthy well-being. While this program became a life-line food support during the peak of COVID-19, we perceived that the demand would decrease following the opening of the economy. However, the clients in need continued to soar high. This buttresses the anecdotal evidence of the impact of COVID-19 on homelessness and related challenges. In 2021, REST served a total of 192 clients in need of necessities, which entailed the issuing of bi-weekly grocery cards worth \$35,000 in addition to other related interventions.

The Impact of R.E.S.T.

We could not have achieved these successes without your donations in cash and in kind, which helped us to mobilize the resources needed to deliver on our mandate and mission of contributing to ending youth homelessness. We'll share our success with you and firmly trust in your commitment to support the 2022 agenda of REST. REST seeks to broaden the scope of program by launching the Healing Emotionally Restoring Opportunity (HERO) program in 2021. The HERO is a mental health and wellness intervention targeting youth who have aged out or are transitioning out of foster care and may be homeless or at risk of homelessness. REST will strengthen its efforts in resource mobilization through the finalization and implementation of the Social Enterprise strategies, meant to develop a program that will reduce resource dependency whilst supporting the capacity development of clients. In 2022, REST's branding and repositioning efforts to deliver its mandate will culminate in the launch of a new website which will complement our marketing and communication efforts. In 2022, the organization will develop a new strategic plan which will serve as a road map to guide the achievement of its objectives and goals.

REST will continuously count on your resolute support and commitment to end youth homelessness in Canada.

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Partnerships & Collaborations

REST acknowledges the resourcefulness, numerous contributions, and support throughout 2021. Together, we nurtured strong partnerships and collaborated to implement all our programs. This was critical and timely as the challenging times of COVID-19 demanded interdependence in pulling our strengths and resources together to be able to provide safety, security, and a dignified place of abode to racialized and homeless youths.



The Peel Alliance to End Homelessness recognizes REST Bridge of Hope program as innovative with "the potential to scale and positively impact many young black youths in the Peel region."

Daphna Nussbaum,
Project Coordinator and
Analyst, PAEH

My name is Valda and I work for the Peel District School Board, at Louise Arbour Secondary School (LASS). As a guidance counsellor, I truly believe in the work that the centre is doing. They work assiduously to ensure that the maximum number of youths can be helped. We appreciate that REST is addressing this need of housing through the Bridge of Hope Program.

Valda Keldo-McDonald,
Guidance Counsellor,
Louise Arbour SS

I am pleased that we have formed a strong partnership with the R.E.S.T Centres. We welcomed them into our shelter to facilitate programs for the youth pertaining to securing & maintaining housing, as well as eviction prevention. The feedback has been remarkable. Youth reported having acquired knowledge to help accommodation searches and working alongside their housing stabilization workers.

Pratiksha Naraine
Youth Development
Worker, Salvation Army

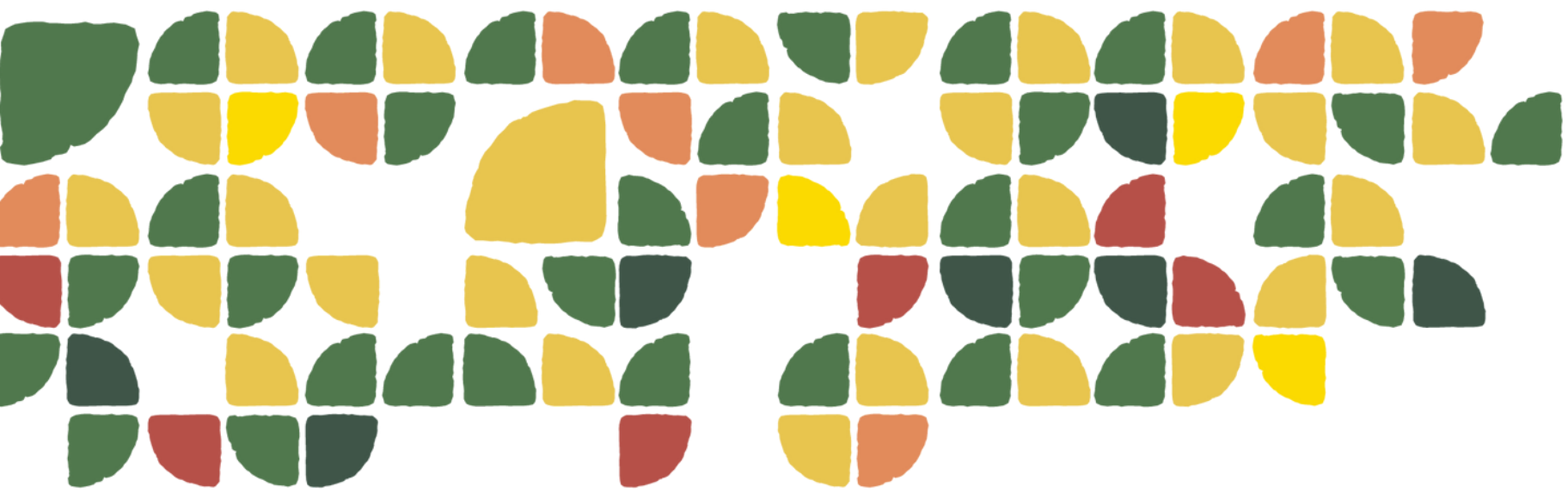
Our team at Peel Children's Aid, has utilized The Bridge of Hope Program, as well as other transitional supports programs to support our youth. R.E.S.T.'s response to addressing the service gaps that exist in the community for black youth has helped them attain positive outcomes.

Alicia Boothe
Team Lead
Adolescents and
Independence Team
Permanency Branch,
Children's Aid Society

REST has been instrumental in the delivery of services working towards our collective mission of helping youth in the region reach their potential. The Bridge of Hope has been a great program. If we identify youth in need of housing support, we are confident in referring them to this program, where they will be provided with safe housing and a supportive host family.

Abigail Hamilton, B.A.
Executive Director,
Co-/Founder
ResQ Youth Int'l Inc

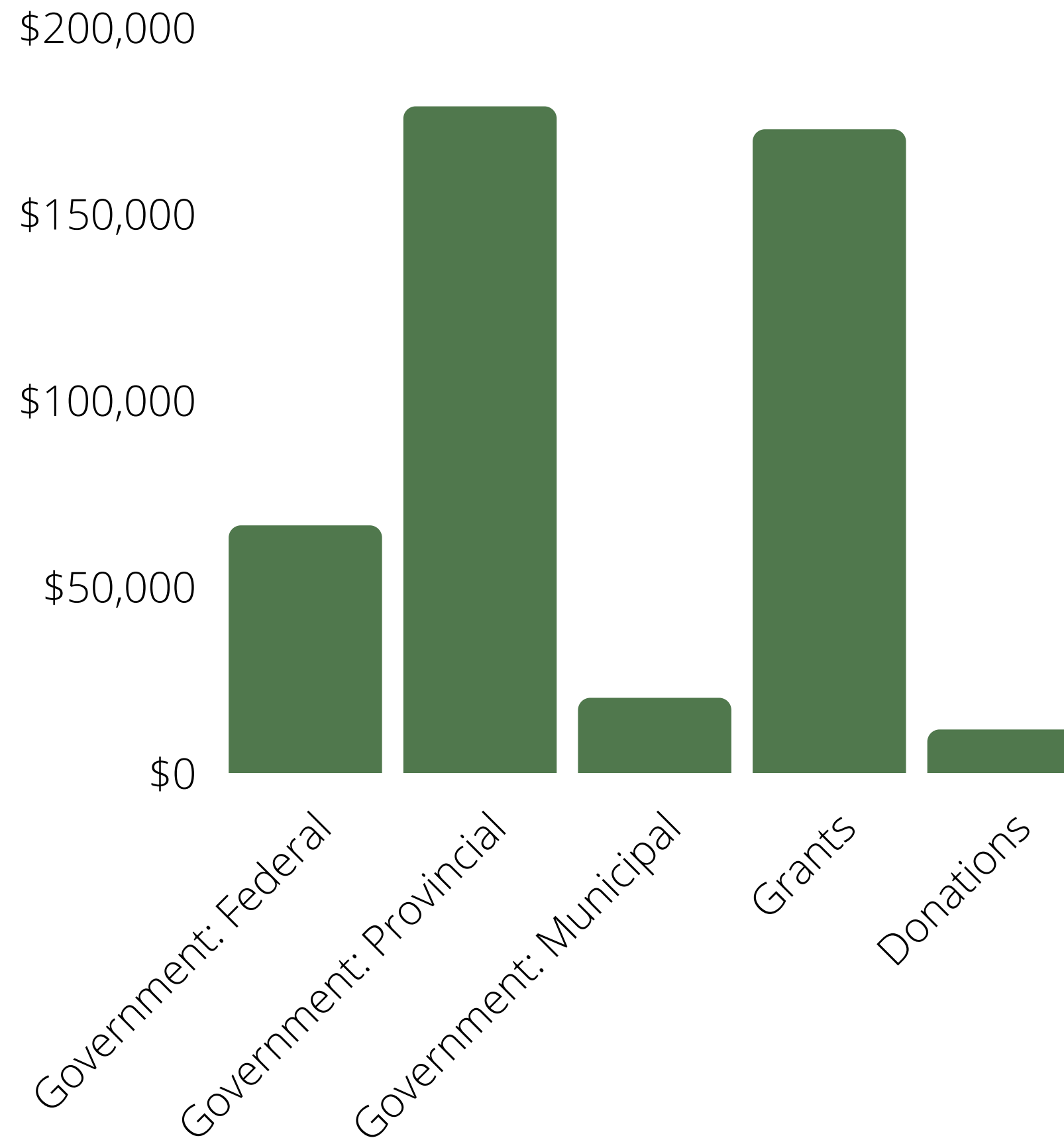
Financials

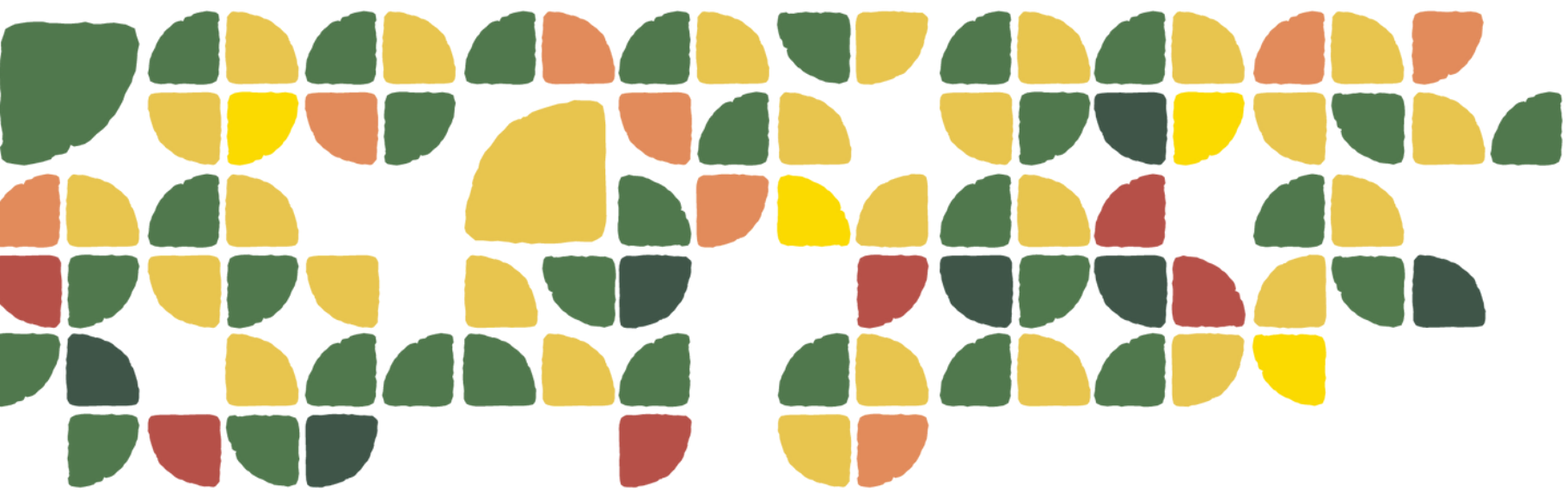


WHERE IS OUR FUNDING COMING FROM?

R.E.S.T. recorded a total amount of \$448,786.81 from all sources of funding for the year 2021.

The major sources of funding for the year were from the government (i.e., municipal, provincial, and federal), contributing 59% of our total revenue. Grants and donations accounted for 38% and 3% of total revenue, respectively.

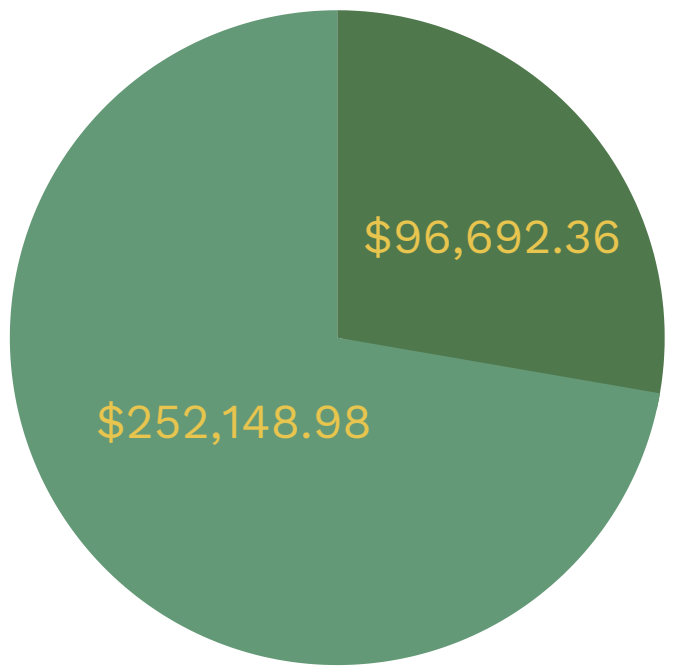






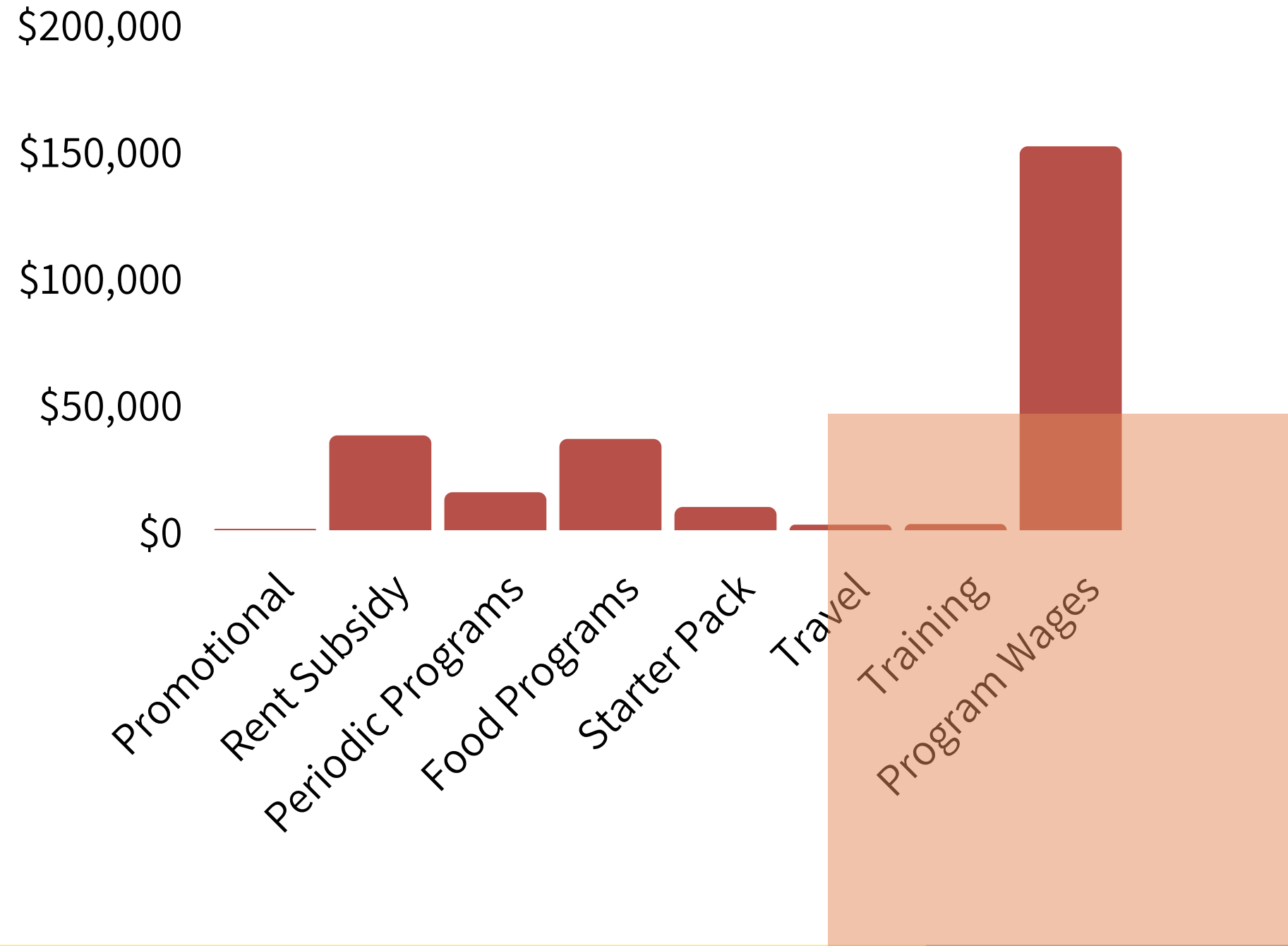
The bulk of the expenditure outlay for 2021 was for the implementation of programs which accounted for 72% (\$252,148.98).

The specific breakdown of the programmatic spending is as shown below:

WHAT DID WE SPEND OUR FUNDING ON?



- 
Operational Expenditure (Administrative related Expenses)
- 
Programmatic and related Expenditure





People Behind Our Mission

Board of Directors

- Irving Lendor, Chair
- Glenda Wilson, Secretary
- Dami Okunade, Treasurer
- Romaine Redman, Youth Advisory Council Chair
- Emmanuel Bonney, Board Member
- Steve Goldby, Board Member
- Dr. Marylyn Morris, Board Advisor
- Charmaine Lane, Board Advisor
- Karly-Anna O'Brien, Board Advisor

Executive Team

- Dagma Koyi, Founder & Executive Director
- Dr. Ben Bempah, Operations Director

R.E.S.T. Team

- Jacqui Henry, Case Manager
- Oona Goslyn, Housing Outreach Coordinator
- Alyssa Berdan, Program Social Worker



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- Peel Region. (nd). Facts on housing and homelessness. Retrieved January 26, 2022, from Peel Region: <https://www.peelregion.ca/housing/homelessness/support.asp>
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Thank You.

restcentres.org