



2022 Impact Report

# Sheltering Dignity and Shaping Lives for Growth

REST Centre: Empowering youth, transforming lives, and creating lasting change in 2022 through our dedicated programs and unwavering commitment to ending youth homelessness in the Peel region.



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## A message from our Founder



As the Executive Director of REST Centres, I'm thrilled to present our 2022 annual report, showcasing our progress in eliminating youth homelessness in Peel. Our vision of empowering youth to live healthier lives while contributing to a better society has driven our success.

Throughout the year, REST provided dignified shelter for 94 youth, a 59% increase from the previous year. Clients trust REST as their safest abode, meeting their unique housing and related needs. We've transformed these youth by equipping them with tools for stable, independent living.

Additionally, we provided grocery support to 219 clients and saw a 105% increase in our life skills development program, benefiting 78 clients. To improve our services, we conducted a survey to gather evidence-based data, reinforcing our commitment to culturally sensitive care. As the only Black-led organization in Peel, REST offers unique support for BIPOC youth, thanks to our staff's firsthand experience with homelessness.

Our innovative Bridge of Hope program has gained recognition and support, matching homeless youth with host families and forging connections with supportive landlords. Funding for documentation, learning, and coaching ensures scalability and sustainability.

We celebrated the achievements of our youth through events like the Rising Star Dinner, honoring their academic success and lifelong learning ambitions. I express deep gratitude to our donors, stakeholders, employees, and Board of Directors for their overwhelming support.

Looking ahead, our strategic plan for 2023-2027 focuses on enhancing governance, implementing innovative programs, promoting our brand, and strengthening our human resources. With continued support, we can effectively respond to the evolving homeless sector, transforming the lives of youth in our community.

Thank you for your unwavering support on this transformative journey.

DAGMA KOYI  
Executive Director

## A message from our Chair



I'm grateful to the resilient youth whose quest to make a meaningful impact on society became a reality with REST's support. Our landlords and households deserve recognition for opening their doors to these future leaders. As REST Board Members, we provided a solid foundation, but you have truly shown that being a bridge builder is an act of love and fulfilling your social contribution to the BIPOC population. Your youth-friendly households have provided dignified shelter, especially for black youth.

REST's achievement is anchored in the passion and support of our staff, many of whom have lived experience and offer culturally sensitive services to black youth. We acknowledge their unwavering commitment, especially during the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

I cannot overlook the funding and resource support from our donors and partners, who have placed great confidence in REST to deliver its mandate. Your sacrifices have made a significant difference in building bridges for the growth of our youth.

Personally, I was struck by the alarming nature of homelessness, with young siblings in destabilized households searching for affordable and stable accommodation and daily meals.

This adds another layer of challenge to the social problem of homelessness. REST's responsive support for these youth demonstrates our organization's ability to rise above the storm and meet their diverse needs.

I'm excited to share that REST Centre has received funds to develop a culturally informed training program for BIPOC youth under the Bridge of Hope Program. Additionally, funding support for coaching, documentation, and sharing this innovative intervention gives hope to partners looking to follow our path in ending youth homelessness.

In 2023, REST will launch our new five-year strategic plan (2023-27). I invite you to join us in rallying around these innovative interventions to scale up our efforts in eliminating youth homelessness in the Peel Region.

Thank you.

Irving Lendor  
Chair of the Board

# About REST

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.

# Core Values

These statements of core values underpin the REST philosophy and the fundamental principles, beliefs, and purpose of the organization.



## Integrity

We present to our clients and stakeholders an honest and moral account of our services that promotes the trustworthiness of the black population.



## Partnership

We believe that two heads are better than one, and through concerted efforts and collaboration, homelessness can be a thing of the past.



## Comfort

In a community, the experience of comfort is a steppingstone toward stability and independence in living for growth.



## Human Rights

Housing must be approached from a human rights standpoint, and everyone deserves a dignified place to live.



## Transformation

.REST Centers will continuously explore and implement innovative and responsive interventions that transform the lives of our clients.

# Echoes of the Reality: BIPOC Youth Homelessness

The Peel Regional PiT Count survey (2021) documented that 16% of youth 16 to 24 years are homeless.



25,000-  
30,000

Canadians experience homelessness each night.



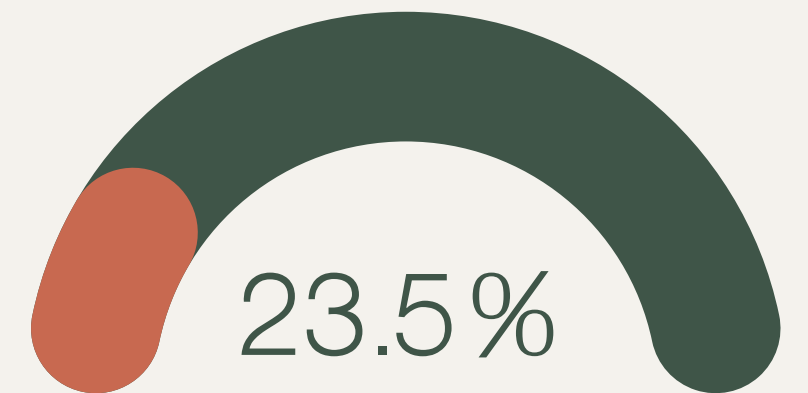
6,000

young people will experience homelessness tonight, with 28.2% from racialized communities.



3,617

people experienced homelessness in the Peel Region, a 21% decrease from 2020



Black individuals account for 23.5% of the homeless population in the Peel Region.



# Unveiling the Challenges Faced by REST's Youth

75%

of our client base are black individuals, out of which 6% identifies as Indigenous.

77%

of our client base are female, with 19% identifying as male.

77%

falls within the age range of 18-24, while 7% are aged 16-17





# Unveiling the Challenges Faced by REST's Youth

- 41% of clients earn **less than \$10,000** per year, highlighting their financial struggles.
- **Long-term unemployment** affects 46% of clients, further exacerbating their housing instability.
- Educational attainment varies, with 45% in high school and **42% pursuing post-secondary education.**



# REST Model



SHELTER



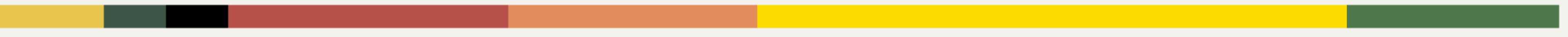
LIVING



HEALING



GROWING



# 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.



Bridge of Hope



Bare Necessities



H.E.R.O.



L.I.F.E.





# Bridge of Hope

REST's groundbreaking Bridge of Hope (BoH) program stands at the forefront of addressing BIPOC youth homelessness in the Peel region. Culturally sensitive and youth-informed, this innovative program actively involves youth in its co-design and implementation.

Through the BoH program, homeless and at-risk BIPOC youth find refuge in youth-friendly households that go beyond the limitations of traditional transitional housing. These compassionate landlords play a vital role as bridge builders, offering empathetic care and support, ensuring the stability and well-being of the youth.

Currently, the BoH program garners interest from funders, undergoing careful study and receiving coaching support to strengthen its documentation. This strategic focus on scaling-up and replication empowers partners to replicate this transformative model, fostering lasting change in addressing youth homelessness.

Focus area's:

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



# Program Outcome 2022

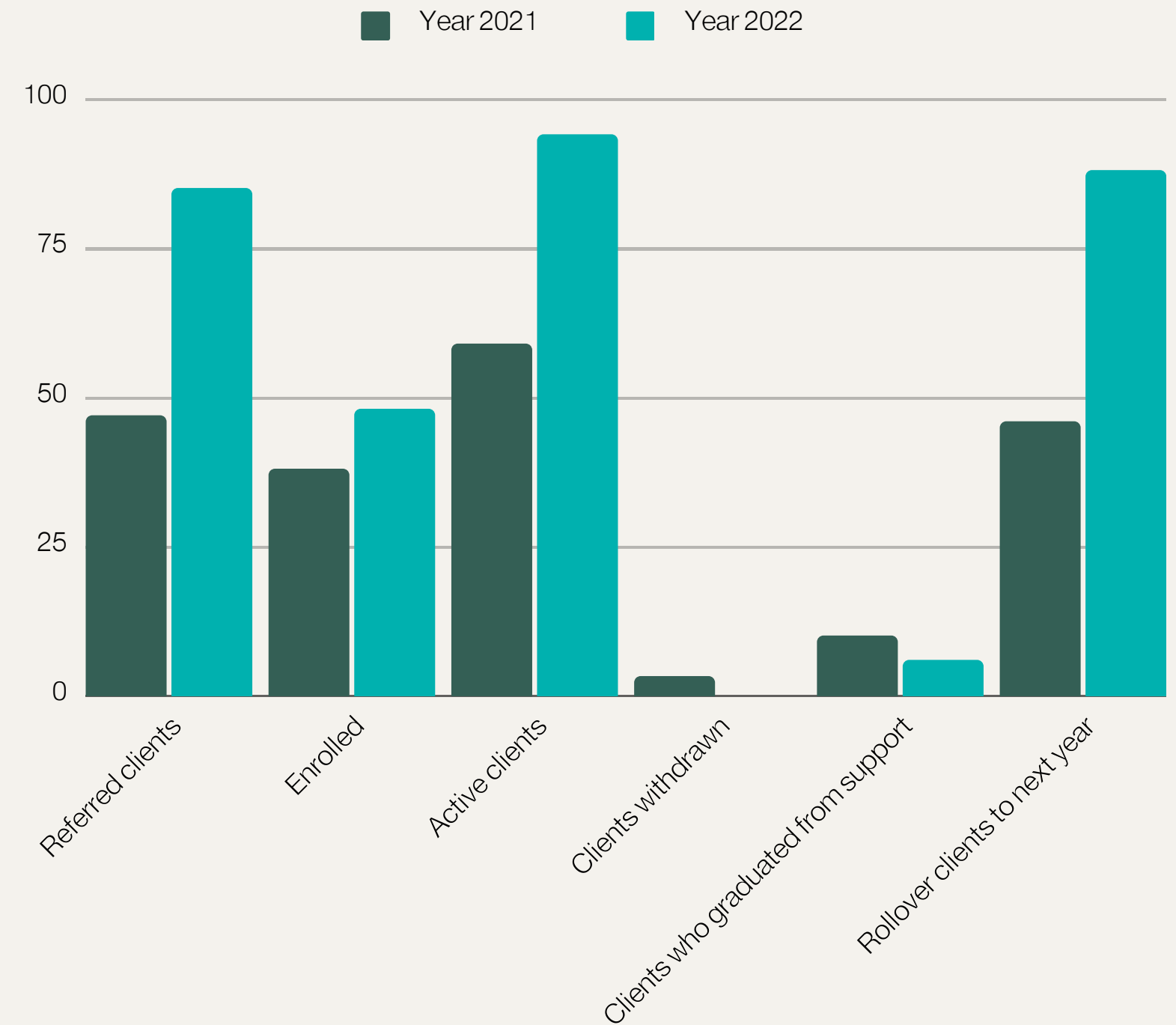
The BoH program achieved significant progress between the years 2021 and 2022, with the following milestones: increase in the number of Referred Clients from Partners (1), a significant increase in the number of active clients (2), a zero client withdrawal and high record of continuity in 2022 (3). Additionally, we saw an increase of 82.8% in approved rental subsidy support and worked with 42 landlords in the community.

**80.9%**

increase in the number of referred clients from partners in 2022 as compared to 2021.

**59.3%**

increase in the number of active clients in 2022 as compared to 2021





# 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.



Focus areas:

- Rent Subsidy
- Food Subsidy
- Household Starter Packs



# Program Outcome 2022

REST supports our clients with essential resources to meet their basic needs, including food and other necessities.

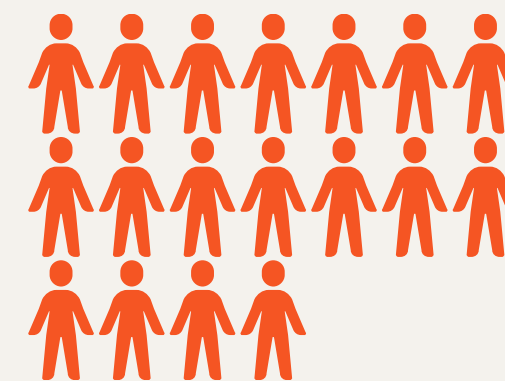
In 2021, the organization offered grocery cards and related support to 192 BIPOC youth. REST continued to prioritize this support in 2022 by increasing uptake due to upward demand, culminating in providing grocery cards and related support to 219 clients (an increase of 14.1 % from 2021).

219

individuals served

14%

increase compared to 2021



18

youth were provided with starter packs to get them settled for independent living



# Healing Emotionally Recovering Opportunities

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.

To address the lack of mental health services for racialized and homeless youth in Peel, the H.E.R.O. (Healing Emotional Recovery and Opportunity) program was initiated. 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.

## Black Youth Support line

The Black Youth Matter support line 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.

Focus area's:

- Physical Health
- Mental Health
- Emotional Health



# Program Outcome 2022

The residual effect of COVID-19 continues to impact the economic, social, and health-related survival struggles of the youth we serve as they reconnect physically out of isolation. Healing Emotional Recovery and Opportunity Program (H.E.R.O) provided clients with an empathetic opportunity to share traumatic experiences and eventually develop close and trusting relationships for their growth.

In 2022 the H.E.R.O program recorded 62 individuals receiving counselling sessions, with 2 clients who were completely socially reclusive recovering.



62

individuals participated  
in counselling sessions

2

clients who were  
completely socially  
reclusive recovering



# L.I.F.E Skills Development

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.

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.



Focus area's:

- Tenant Education Support
- Financial Literacy
- Home Economics
- Employment Support
- Mentorship
- Work Placements



# Program Outcome 2022

The Life Skills program provides the youth with the tools and resources they need to overcome adversity and build a stable, independent life.

Between 2021 and 2022, a total of 116 young people successfully completed the Life Skills Program.

Through the program, they have gained essential life skills, including financial planning, job readiness, and home economics, among others. The success of the Life Skills Development Program is a testament of the resiliency and ability of our youth to overcome adversity and develop even in the face of significant challenges that was imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.



# 116

young people  
successfully  
completed the Life  
Skills Program



# Our Events

REST Centres held its inaugural Rising Stars Event, honoring 25 remarkable youth for their unwavering commitment to their academic journeys in the face of adversity. This special occasion provided a platform for our youth to be recognized for their accomplishments and resilience.

Additionally, thanks to the incredible support from the community, the Rising Stars event became a heartwarming Thanksgiving celebration, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie among our youth.

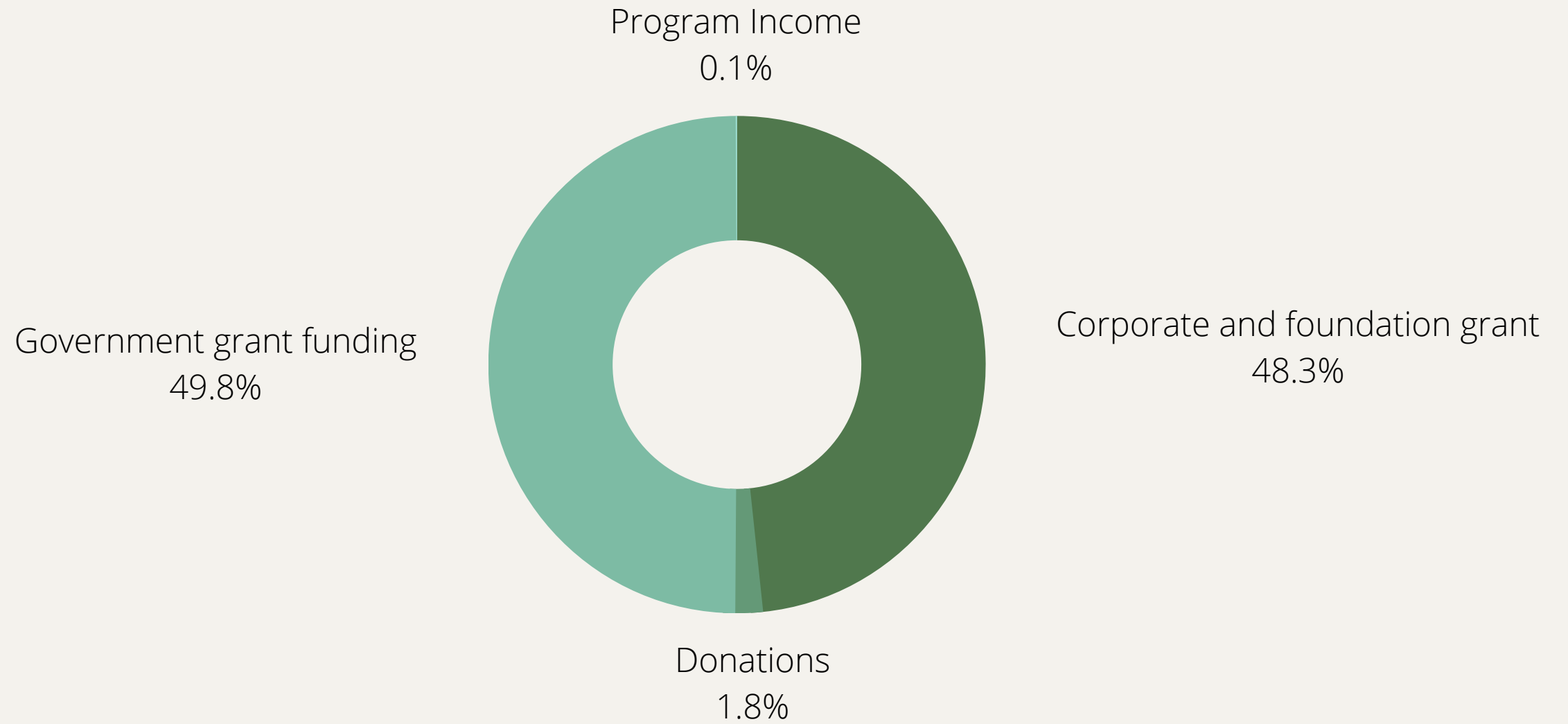


Ending the year on a high note, REST Centres launched a record-breaking Christmas Cheer Campaign. Through the generosity of our community, we brought the joy of the holiday season to 52 deserving youth under our care. They were treated to gifts, delicious food, and a festive atmosphere, creating cherished memories that will last a lifetime.

# Revenue 2022

REST's total revenue between 2020 and 2022 witnessed substantive growth of 244.64%, reaching a total of \$823,142.00.

Our core revenue sources remain corporate and foundation grants and government grant funding, each contributing 49% of the total revenue of \$823,142.00 recorded in 2022.

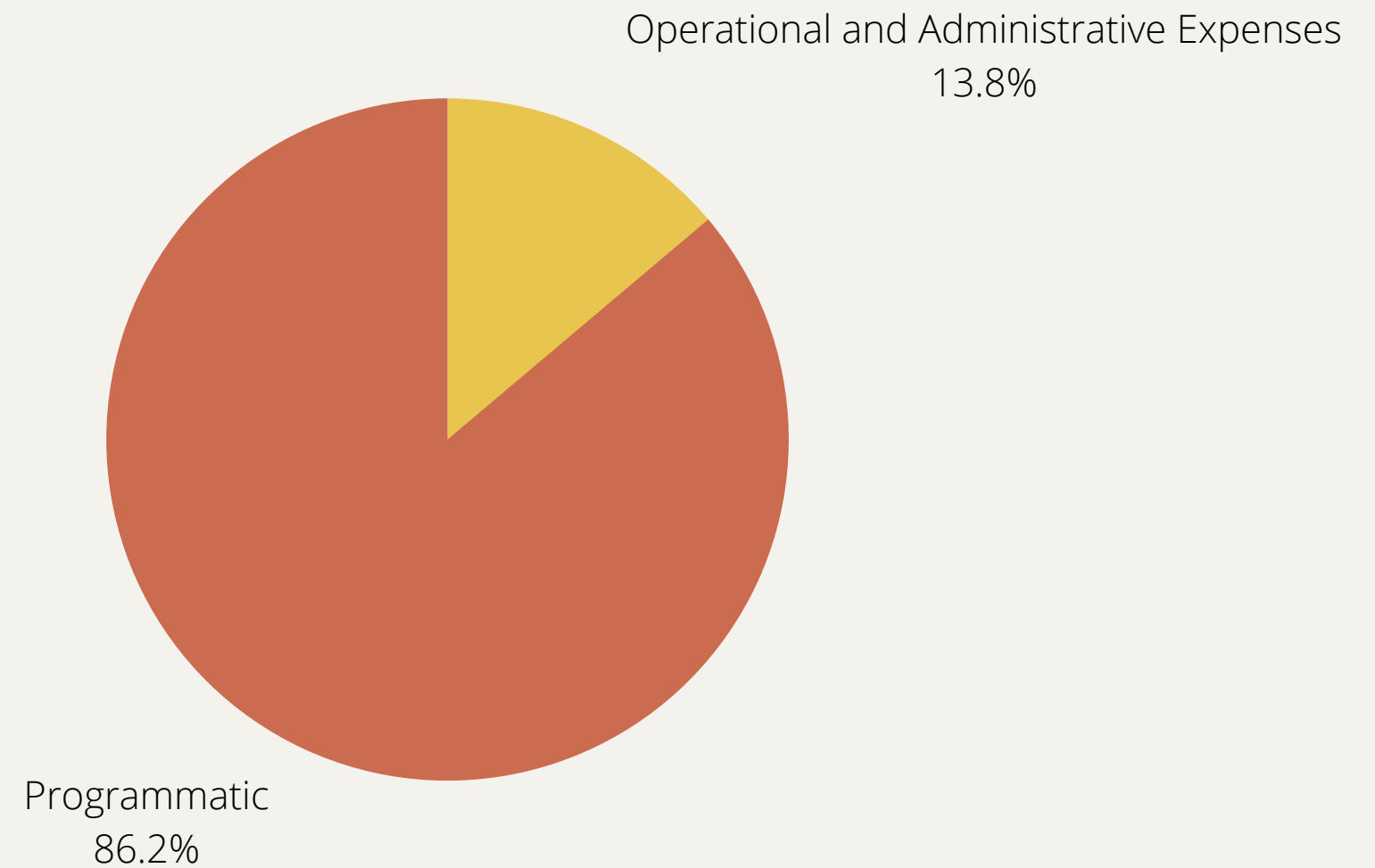


# Expenditure 2022

The expenditure summary highlights the allocation of funds across major areas of program delivery, administration, and operational related supports. In general, the bulk of REST expenditure outlay was directed to support program delivery.

Programmatic expenditure for 2022 was \$653,326.00, representing 86% of the grand total expenditure.

Operational and administrative expenses account for approximately 14% with a total of \$126,560.00 (2022).





# Personal Impact Stories



# One Family's Story: Sisters Find Home and Hope to be Heroes.

*"I feel comfortable coming here and talking my problems out. Whenever I am at my lowest, I can just run to REST..."*

REST Centres  
Impact Report 2022

Sierra (19), Julia (18), and Rebecca (16) are three sisters who came to REST Centres when their mother suddenly passed away.

Shortly after her death, the sisters were evicted by their landlord, and they sought shelter with their late father's niece, her husband and their five young children. Between rising relationship tensions and the non-existent privacy for these growing girls, Sierra, Julia, and Rebecca knew that they needed to find independence and a place to call home. When Julia referred them all to REST Centres, they and the REST team got to work immediately on rehousing them.

Special care was taken to ensure that the girls weren't separated since, as Sierra puts it, „we've been through so much together, so we need to stick together.“ After a few months of searching and thanks to the dedication of REST's Housing Coordinator, Oona, and the girls' Case Manager, Jacqui, these sisters now have their own apartment!

The ongoing counseling and support from REST has helped the girls feel very hopeful about their future, and with the help of their case manager they have been actively pursuing their future goals. Sierra is now in college, and Rebecca is an up-and-coming actress who practices and performs her craft in her community.

Sierra, Julia, and Rebecca are profusely grateful to REST Centres, and Sierra wants everyone to know, „I feel comfortable coming here and talking my problems out. Whenever I am at my lowest, I can just run to REST. They are so supportive. No one is ever going to let me down.“



# Overcoming Obstacles: Ally Journeys out from Homelessness with REST

*"...the more support systems like REST that we have, the easier it will be to help people like me get off the streets."*

REST Centres  
Impact Report 2022

One of the leading causes of youth homelessness is family breakdown. Ally (19) has experienced homelessness four times due to her volatile relationship with her mother. The final time her mother pushed her to the streets, Ally came to REST Centres with nothing but the clothes on her back. Ally worked tirelessly with Simren, her REST Centres Case Manager, for three weeks to search the housing market for Ally's new home. Ally had a hard time being taken seriously by landlords due to her young age and the landlords' strict requirements. Ally was even denied a place days before she was supposed to sign the lease because the landlord didn't like the look of Ally's situation.

Ally says that most people don't see the true severity of youth homelessness when they aren't experiencing it, themselves. For instance, Ally, like many youths in similar circumstances, didn't tell anyone about her homelessness while she was in high school because she didn't want to be labelled as problematic by her teachers and peers.

However, despite the uphill battle, Ally and Simren won! Ally has moved into her new home and even received some furniture with the support of REST Centres. Ally says, "the more support systems like REST that we have, the easier it will be to help people like me get off the streets." Ally says that Simren and REST Centres' support made a big difference in her finding a place to live since having someone in her corner to vouch for her helped her prove the skeptics wrong and show them that she is not a lost cause.

# Restoring Lives: Katherine's Path to Improved Mental Health

*"If it wasn't for the kindness of our funders and the wider support of the community, Katherine says that a lot of homeless youth would find themselves "dead or on the streets."*

REST Centres  
Impact Report 2022

Katherine (23) lives with borderline personality disorder, a mental illness that impacts her ability to regulate her emotions, but thanks to REST Centres, she has made strides for herself, her happiness, and her peace of mind.

Katherine admits that finding support for her situation is still difficult, but it has become easier since coming to REST Centres. „Besides REST, there isn't really much help out there. REST has helped me with learning, having a place to go, and knowing that I'm not alone. They've helped with finding places to live, they've helped with paying for food and transportation."

Katherine says that REST is the reason her mental health is as stable as it is, as our support allowed her the independence she needed to set healthy boundaries. Circumstances have led Katherine back to her mother, but because of REST's support, Katherine and her mother are now able to work on their relationship. Without REST, Katherine believes that she would not have been able to work on her mental health: „I would have kept making excuses and depending on my mom and hoping that somebody else would do it for me, whereas REST gave me the stability, the motivation—all of it—to do this on my own."

Katherine believes wholeheartedly that REST Centres „saves a lot of lives—mine included." If it wasn't for the kindness of our funders and the wider support of the community, Katherine says that a lot of homeless youth would find themselves „dead or on the streets."

# Deepening Housing Stability: Ethan's Positive Relationship with REST Case Manager

*"With Alyssa's help, Ethan has accessed a subsidized phone plan through Peel Children's Aid Society..."*

REST Centres  
Impact Report 2022

Ethan is a 20-year-old youth client. Ethan is originally from the United States, but when he came to REST Centres, he lived in a foster home in the Region of Peel. Ethan's social worker referred him to REST as he had aged out of foster care and needed to transition into independent housing. Ethan said his transition was good because he felt he got the freedom and independence he needed, but bad because he lost a lot of the built-in supports of his former community, such as free gym access.

REST Centres helped Ethan find a home, and Ethan especially appreciated the REST Centres Landlord and Tenant training program, which taught him about his rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Ethan has a positive relationship with his REST case manager, Alyssa, who he credits as a huge help to his transition into independence. Alyssa has gotten Ethan in touch with a number of opportunities and organizations, as well as helped him make the most of his resources as a Crown Ward. With Alyssa's help, Ethan has accessed a subsidized phone plan through Peel Children's Aid Society and support from Kerry's Place, a service provider for those on the Autism spectrum.

Despite his hardships, Ethan is grateful for his experiences because, in his words, „something bad can lead to something good, like a blessing in disguise. Because I was in trouble, I met some really good people.“

Ethan thanks all of the generous folks who donate to and support REST Centres because, without their support, REST wouldn't have been able to help him when he needed it most.

# Aline's Thirst for Belonging: Navigating Adversity and Finding Home with REST

*"... I came here with the purpose of stabilizing myself and getting that support."*

REST Centres  
Impact Report 2022

Since her early years, Aline has been searching for the feeling of belongingness. Her biological parents were busy at work, and this made her to be an independent person at a young age. In search of what was missing in her life, she fell into the wrong group of friends and eventually got into a bad relationship. This resulted in a rebellious relationship with her foster mother.

At the age of 15, she felt that she was a burden, and she doesn't want to cause stress to her foster mother. She decided to part ways with her and eventually moved in with her boyfriend. But as problems and arguments arise, she finds herself being kicked out in the streets. It was a challenge for her to navigate social services by herself. She went from one shelter to another looking for a place to stay for the night, not to mention thinking of ways to live by each day. It was truly a very dark time in her life.

Aline was referred to the REST Centres by her social worker with promises of a rent subsidy and programs that will get her "back on the right path". During her journey with REST, she gained a new outlook in life and became even more independent. She credits her access to grocery gift cards, bus tickets, rent subsidies, mental health support, landlord and tenant training, game nights, and fun group gatherings like the 2022 Christmas Cheer and Do Your Part celebrity basketball game for this transition in her life.

Without REST Centres, Aline says that she would have a very difficult time providing for herself and finding shelter. „I.d be on a very different pathway. I see myself in jail or even scavenging for money or in very negative spaces. I see myself in a hole. I don.t think I would be doing good for myself." She also added that "REST had an extremely positive impact on me because I came here with the purpose of stabilizing myself and getting that support."

Aline is now an 18-year-old high school graduate with 94% GPA. She's applying to Humber College in the fall to study paramedics, but her long-term goal is to start her own fashion line. Her creative skills made her decide to create her own fashion brand called "Inevitable". Just like her brand name, she believes that things are bound to happen in her life. She is bound to be prosperous in every type of way.

## Excerpts from REST Five-Year Strategic Plan 2023-27

REST's five-year strategic plan (2023-2027) is focused on five strategic pillars to enhance our impact and sustainability. Through these pillars, we aim to strengthen our governance and leadership, develop innovative and proven programs for maximum impact, increase our organizational identity and visibility, improve our human resources for better service delivery and productivity, and provide a framework for research and knowledge management.

To achieve these strategic objectives, we have outlined several interventions, such as establishing systems for programmatic operations and support, increasing partnerships for mutually beneficial relationships, leveraging the effective use of integrated marketing and communication channels, expanding staff capacity and welfare programs, and scaling up the implementation of our client-centered programs and services.

Within the five years, we shall secure off-site program delivery spaces, conduct implementational research, mapping, and documentation to improve our performance management, monitoring, and evaluation for value creation.

Through this five-year strategy, further commit to ensuring compliance with policies, regulations, and standards governing our operations management. We will also strengthen our board structure and capacity to improve decision-making processes and create a conducive working environment for our staff.

With your support, we can successfully implement these interventions and achieve our strategic objectives to better serve our clients and communities.

Dagma Koyi, Founder, Executive Director



# People behind the 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
- Charmaine Lane, Board Advisor

## Executive Team

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

## REST Team

- Nikima Leslie, Program Manager
- Jacqui Henry, Case Manager
- Simren Basra, Case Manager
- Alyssa Berdan, Case Manager
- Alya Harvey, Program Support Worker
- Oona Goslyn, Housing Outreach Coordinator
- Alyssa Berdan, Program Social Worker
- Phillip Otchere, Social Worker

# Acknowledgements

REST's mission to eliminate youth homelessness is fueled by the unwavering support of our partners and donors. Together, we create a powerful force for change, enabling us to provide essential services, safe shelter, and life-transforming opportunities for vulnerable youth.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated partners and generous donors who believe in our vision and invest in our cause. Your contributions empower us to make a meaningful impact in the lives of young individuals, offering them hope, stability, and a brighter future. Together, we are transforming lives and building a community where every youth has the chance to thrive.

