



ria

*We Practice  
the Power  
of Presence*

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

# Letter from *the Executive Director & Founder*

I always get to the year end and do two things in full breath, reflect with deep appreciation on how far the organization has come since 2014 when we first became incorporated as a nonprofit, simultaneously looking ahead with much anticipation of the possibilities in the new year. It is always an interesting experience to be balancing on the edge of two worlds, if you will.

In reflection, 2022 was special. Together our staff team, board of directors, donors and funders, and the people we stand with and support made space for one another. We celebrated together the sustainable steps that the organization is taking to ensure that we remain a reliable and viable option of support for survivors of commercial sex and its associated exploitation, trafficking and prostitution.

## **Some of these steps include:**

Getting *all* of our staff positions closer to earning a living wage.

Completing a program evaluation process that is informing our next programmatic steps.

Increasing the number of participants we have served for one year or more.

Piloting a monthly rental assistance program that reaches beyond eviction prevention.

Bringing more than 200 esteemed guests together to deepen knowledge about surviving and thriving after experiences of exploitation by listening to and learning from survivors.

Lastly, doubling our year-end goals and increasing our donor base unlike any year yet!

It has taken a passionate and steady community of human beings that includes, you, who have made all of this possible. I thank you by sharing a year-end story from someone the RIA

team supports. I hope its sentiments will stay with you as you go on.

*“I can’t keep in the excitement...”*

A participant wanted us to know that RIAs pilot rental assistance program was making a huge difference in her life.

Voiced by the people we serve, **The Survivor-Directed Housing Program** emerged out of tremendous need to fund more than just eviction prevention, but longer-term rental assistance. This program provides monthly rent in six-month increments – with the possibility of an additional six months of assistance based on need, progress towards an established goal, and usefulness related to where someone is in their journey of healing.

In April 2022, a small cohort of RIA participants agreed to engage in the pilot program which includes completing an anonymous monthly evaluation and an interview at the end of each six- month period.

This participant was driven to make eight months of support matter!

*“OMG I just want to cry for joy.”*

*“Yes, I’m so grateful for all of the things the team does for me.”*



Heather Wightman  
Executive Director & Founder



## **Board of Directors**

Tiffany Lillie  
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Rebecca Hawk  
Cassandra Mombrun  
Joanne Frye\*  
Drita Protopapa\*  
**Members**

*\*Term ended June 2022*



**Our vision** is a world where people's bodies are not victimized, exploited, bought or sold for the sexual gratification of another person.

**Our mission** is to stand with and support women with experience in commercial sex and its associated exploitation, trafficking and prostitution, by providing a range of community-based services.

# Meet our Team



**Stacy**  
Director of Peer  
Mentorship  
& Advocacy Services



**Malika**  
Peer Mentor  
& Advocate



**Stacey**  
Peer Mentor  
& Advocate



**Nicole**  
Intake Coordinator/  
Peer Mentor  
& Advocate



**Rachel**  
Clinical Director



**Libby**  
Clinical Intern



**Chantha**  
Development &  
Strategy Director



**Heather**  
Executive Director  
& Founder



**Margo**  
Grant Writer



**Marissa**  
Operations &  
Outreach Manager

## Peer Mentorship & Advocacy

We walk alongside people who have had similar experiences and want to share their journeys of healing and recovery.

## Clinical Therapy

Our goal is to support participants as they draw upon their inner strength to increase stability, self-worth, and resiliency.

## Support Groups

We aim to create connections that encourage community and self-care.

## Workshops/Training

We offer a variety of workshops and presentations to help bring about awareness for organizations to understand the risks and impact of commercial sexual exploitation, human trafficking and prostitution on our community.



# What we do

## Peer Mentorship & Advocacy

## Clinical Therapy & Case Management



# 2022 Reflections



Outreach inspires engagement and helps build a community around our mission! This past year has been a time of meaningful growth for RIA's outreach as well as overall impact. Working towards developing a long-term outreach plan has required

much thoughtful research and reflection, and has brought me closer to the work and to the people we serve. Our outreach strategy aims to increase public engagement and assist in bringing about lasting benefit and change within our community. Our focus is on raising awareness, increasing participation in our programs, and getting more people and organizations involved in our mission. After setting the foundation for RIA's outreach plan this past year, we plan to build up our efforts in the coming year by placing emphasis on connection and engagement. We will strive to understand how we can better serve our population, work towards policy changes that will further our mission, and cultivate a community network built on trust. By creating and sustaining a thriving educational network, we hope that diverse people and ideas will continue to flourish. Outreach is not just about giving back to the community. We have more to benefit and learn from connections with our

diverse community members than we can possibly give! I look forward to continuing to support RIA's outreach efforts, and I know we will accomplish great things in 2023. Community and connection keep our mission moving forward!

*-Marissa  
Operations & Outreach Manager*



I want to take a moment to thank the RIA family for welcoming me to the team. 2022 was momentous year as an organization. The RIA community embraced me as their first Clinical Director as I transitioned into the new role.

There was a lot of work to be done and big shoes to fill as the organization moved from having a clinical consultant supervisor to their first full time Clinical Director position. In 2022 we prioritized trauma informed care and began to make the move towards providing Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing Therapy (EMDR) as an offering for participants. Why this feels especially important is because we are bringing therapy modalities that typically are expensive and not covered by insurance and making it accessible to the people that RIA serves. We

continue to meet our participants where they are at and work towards providing them the best care available.

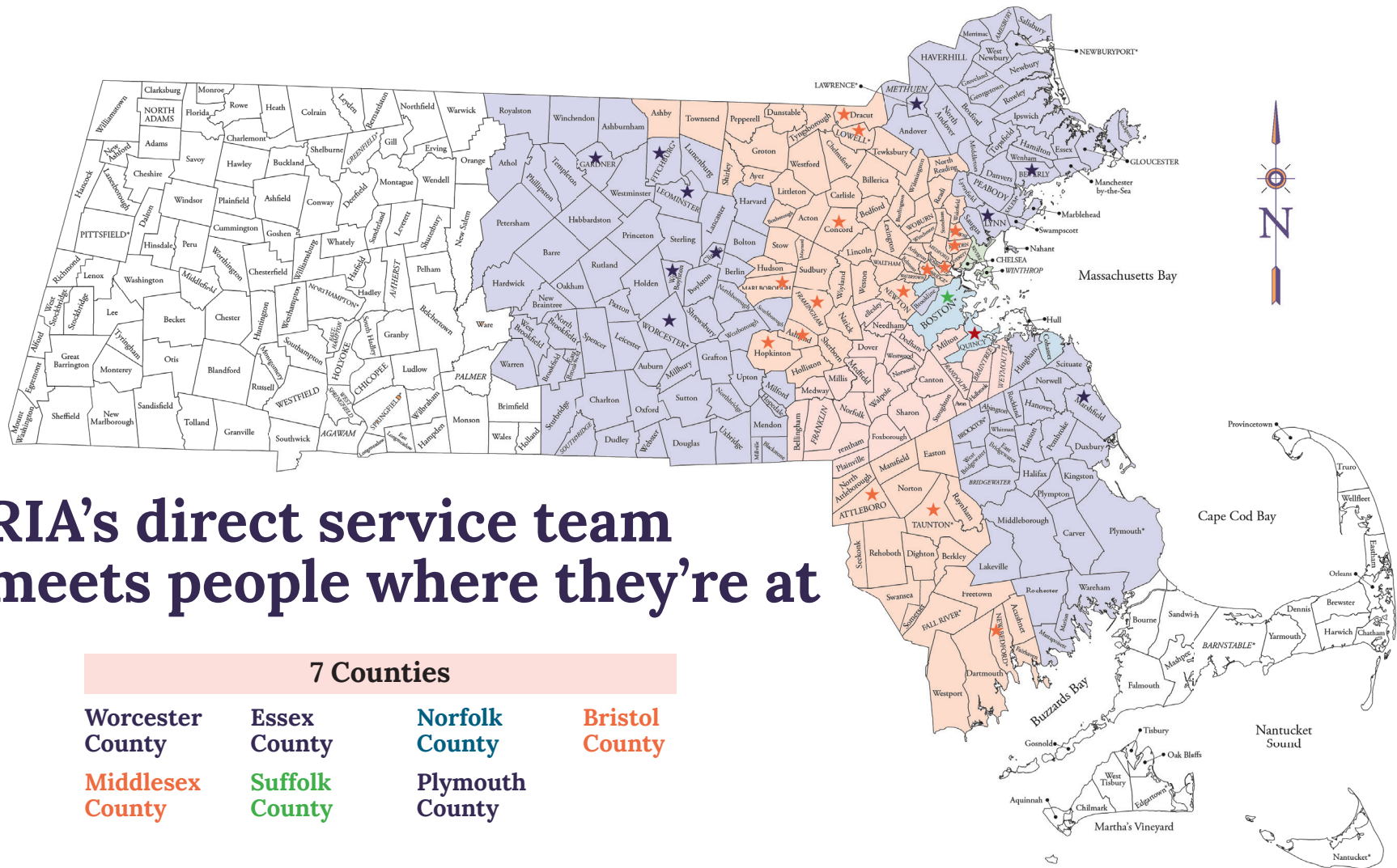
In my role as the Clinical Director, I aim to prioritize trainings for the clinical team, such as crisis management, harm reduction, and the intersectionality of race and gender in order to provide culturally attuned services. The commercial sex trade has a culture of its own which many therapists are unfamiliar with. This can lead to participants feeling misunderstood and judged which complicates therapeutic alliance. The clinical team is grounded in the work to better serve survivors, understanding the impact, realities, and nuances connected to commercial sex. This magnifies our ability to build trusting relationships and support the participants to be seen. Moving into 2023, we will continue to go above and beyond to meet participant needs, growing ourselves as clinical providers, and modeling trauma informed care with survivors of trafficking, prostitution, and commercial sex. We are in the process of expanding the clinical team and continuing to train graduate level interns. We are excited for what the future brings!

*-Rachel  
Clinical Director*



BEING A CLINICAL INTERN AT RIA has been a special experience. Every story shared by our participants has taught me about resilience, strength, and perseverance. They have also taught me about hardship, struggle, and trauma. Having the opportunity to support and empower women alongside a team of strong, kindhearted women has been a once in a lifetime experience. The RIA team is welcoming, hardworking, and deeply compassionate. They all welcomed me with open arms and hearts and support and tend to each other just as deeply as they do to our participants. Every single person I have met at RIA evidently has a mission to understand and learn how to best support survivors of commercial sexual exploitation. It has been an honor to be supported through supervision by Rachel, Clinical Director to counsel and support the participants of RIA. I learn and grow everyday thanks to the team. This work is hard, yet RIA stands strong for those who need it most. I feel blessed and joyous to have met such special people who are doing difficult, powerful, and crucial work.

*-Libby  
Clinical Intern*



# RIA's direct service team meets people where they're at

7 Counties

**Worcester County**

**Essex County**

**Norfolk County**

**Bristol County**

**Middlesex County**

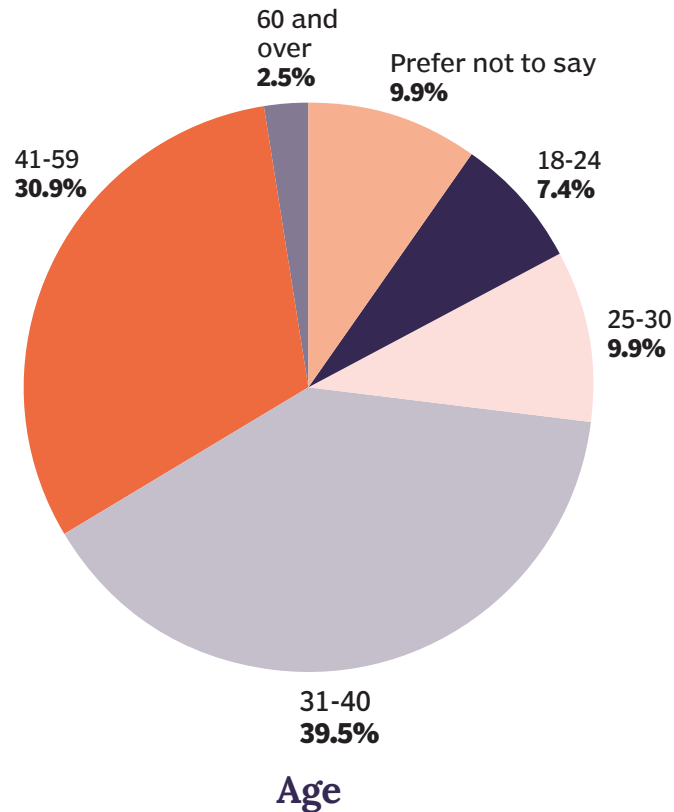
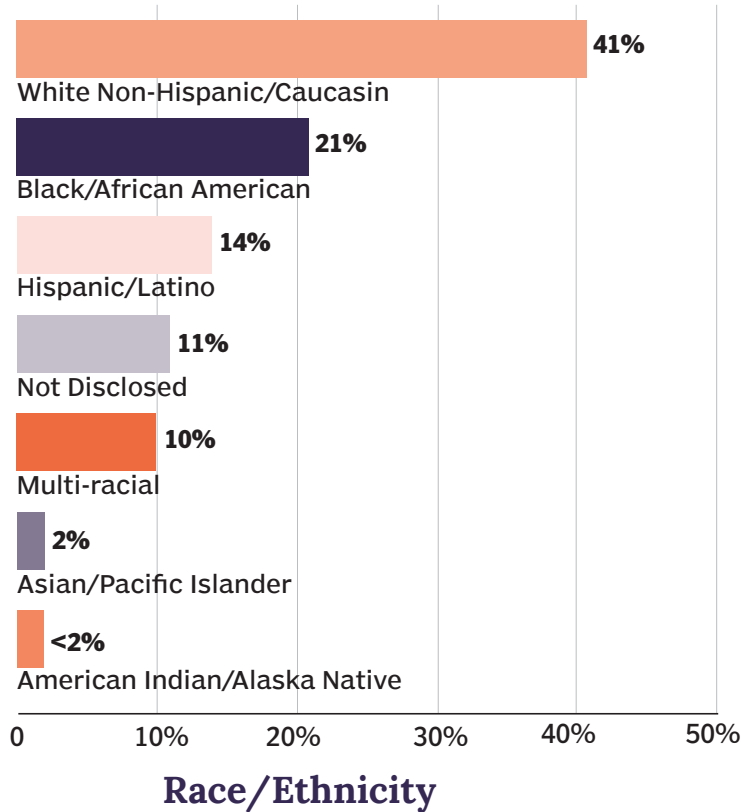
**Suffolk County**

**Plymouth County**

Nantucket Sound



# Who we serve



- 98%** identify as female
- 73%** have a history of substance use
- 62%** have children
- 35%** identify as disabled (mental, physical, or cognitive)
- 23%** identify as LGBTQIA+
- 4%** are immigrants

# Year in Review

## 81

Unique Participants Served

**74** Participated in the Peer Mentorship Program

**35** Attended Support Groups

**30** Received Clinical Therapy Services

\* Some individuals participated in multiple programs

## 3,772

Total Service Encounters

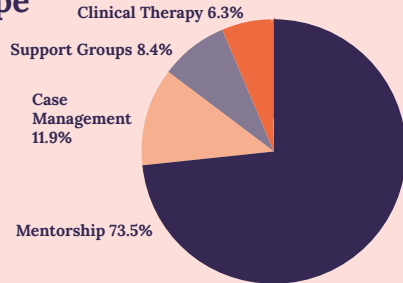
**2,772** Peer Mentorship

**448** Case Management

**315** Support Groups

**237** Clinical Therapy

Total Encounters  
By Type



## 174

Highest # Of Encounters  
for a Single Participant

## 46

Average # of Encounters  
Per Participant

## Measuring Our Impact:

Each service encounter encompasses multiple personal interactions between participant and staff. Individual interactions are categorized and logged by mode of communication to reflect engagement time.

**2,439** Text Messages

**2,140** Phone Calls

**1,309** Virtual Meetings

**968** In-Person Meetings

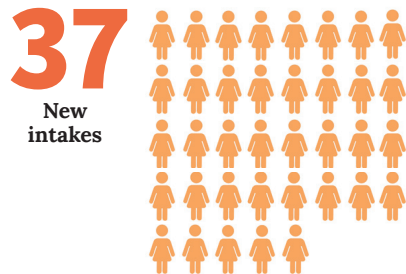
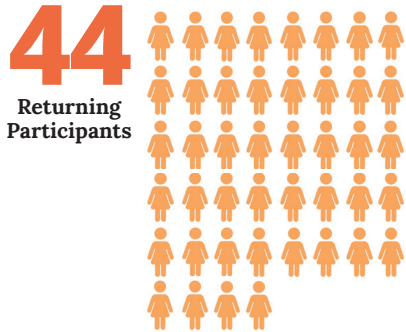
**942** Social Media Check-Ins

## 7,797

Individual Interactions

# 2022 Statistics Historical Experiences

81 Unique Participants  
Served in 2022



*“Homelessness and housing instability are safety issues  
and predators become a safe haven when you are homeless.”*

-Nicole, Intake Coord. Peer Mentor & Advocate

100%

of RIA participants have traded sex for anything of value such as food, shelter, drugs, diapers, etc.

70%

of RIA participants experienced commercial sexual exploitation as a child

73%  
report  
polyvictimization

60%  
have a history of  
domestic and/  
or family violence

31%  
have a history  
of kidnapping

21%  
report teen  
dating  
victimization

75%  
have a known  
history of  
sexual assault

51%  
report stalking/  
harassment

27%  
report identity  
theft/fraud  
/financial crime

12%  
are survivors  
of homicide  
victims

80%

of RIA participants have felt manipulated, threatened, or controlled in some way related to their experience in commercial sex.

15%

of RIA participants have been exploited by an employer.

58%

of RIA participants report experiencing homelessness on intake

# Survivor-Directed Housing Pilot Program

The intersection of trafficking and high costs of living in Massachusetts makes housing a major barrier to long-term economic empowerment for survivors. In 2022, RIA designed and implemented a pilot housing program that provides consistent rental assistance to survivors as they work towards achieving financial independence. This program is survivor-directed – meaning survivors have the choice of where they want to live and they direct decisions on their personal goals. Longer term housing support, rather than one-time emergency assistance, offers survivors a tool in breaking the cycle of sexual exploitation and its associated poverty, violence, abuse, and instability that can last for years, and often decades.

In 2022, RIA distributed a total of \$63,834 in rental assistance approximately \$53,000 of this total was through our Survivor-Directed Housing Program, covering 83 total months of rent across 9 unique survivors. An additional ten family members (children of survivors) were housed. During the first 9 months of the pilot program, participants achieved significant progress towards personal and financial goals, including participants who reunited with family, regained custody of children, established one or more small businesses, started a new job, and moved into a safer neighborhood.

Percentage of Participants

**100%**

With strong RIA relations

**100%**

Working toward personal goals

**86%**

Report an exit from commercial sex

**57%**

Feeling stable and capable in life

**12%**

Experiencing extreme financial stress

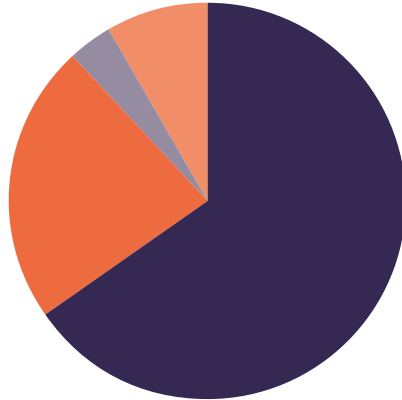
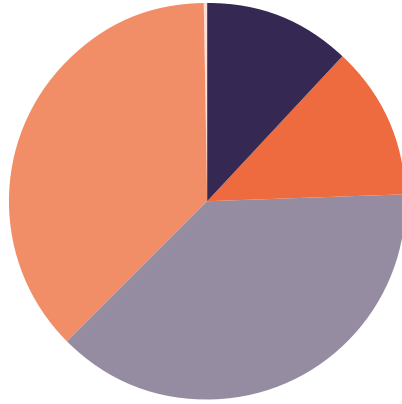
## 2022 FINANCIALS

### Income

Individual & churches	\$117,898
Events & Corporate Sponsorships	\$123,520
Federal	\$368,684
Foundations (Private & Corporate)	\$363,185
Justice Enterprise	\$187
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$973,474</b>

### Expenses

Personnel	\$563,536
Operations	\$198,075
General & Administration	\$29,145
Fundraising	\$71,559
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$862,315</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>\$108,159</b>



## SheFund totals

Participant Financial Support	Total individuals
Clothing	25
Coffee & Meals	38
Education/Training	3
Gift Cards	73
Groceries	22
Medical	4
Rent/Housing/Utility	15
Transporation/Car/Gas/Car Insurance	22
Telephone	12

**SheFund - Total Individuals** **77**

**Total \$ spent for SheFund** **\$88,587**



READY · INSPIRE · ACT  
*Celebrates*



2nd Annual Gala

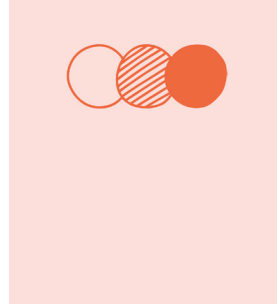


Photos by Ben Esakof



**\$123K**  
Total raised

**200**  
Total attended



# Thank you!

## Financial Contributors

Albert W. Rice Foundation  
Anonymous  
Avidia Bank  
Baker Design Group  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC)  
The Boston Foundation  
BayState Charitable Savings  
Boston University School of Social Work  
Kristin Canty  
Clark University  
Cummings Foundation  
Cornerstone Bank

Clipper Ship Foundation  
Fred H. Daniels Foundation  
Deaconess Health Center  
Deborah Noonan Fund with Bank of America  
Dunkin Donuts  
Digital Federal Credit Union (DCU)  
Eastern Bank  
Vanguard Charitable  
Lincoln & Therese Filene Foundation  
Fletcher Foundation  
Foundation of MetroWest  
Framingham Police Department

First Parish Unitarian Church of Concord  
First Parish Unitarian Church of Stow & Acton  
Generations Insurance  
GS Fuller Foundation  
Gardiner Howland Shaw Foundation  
Greater Worcester Community Foundation  
George & Jan LeMaitre  
Agnes Lindsay Trust  
MAPA Translations  
Mark Fuller Foundation  
Massachusetts Office for Victim Assistance  
MetroWest Health Foundation

Colleen McKenna  
The MetroWest Women's Fund  
Middlesex Savings Charitable  
MutualOne Charitable Foundation  
George H. & Jane A. Mifflin Memorial Fund  
New England Regional Black Nurses Association (NERBNA)  
Platinum Physical Therapy  
Progress Software  
The Philanthropy Connection  
People's United Bank  
Point32 Health

Katharine C. Pierce Trust  
Red Sox Foundation  
Robins Kaplan LLC  
Lauren & Ronny Rojas  
Rockland Trust  
Stoddard Charitable Trust  
Thomas H. Shaw's Foundation  
Manleen & Sunny Singh  
Tito's Handmade Vodka  
TJX Corporation  
Town Fair Tire  
TD Charitable Foundation  
The John H. and H. Naomi Tomfohrde Foundation  
U.S. Department of Justice, Violence Against Women Act



U.S. Department of Justice, Executive Office of Public Safety

U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Victims of Crime, Human Trafficking Collective

UMass Memorial Health Women Connect4Good

Walmart Community

Wegman's

Webster Five Bank

Wellesley Village Congregational Church

Women's Business Connect Group

WomenAde Boston

Wagner Family Foundation

Whole Foods

## Special Thanks

Catherine Aldrich, Annual Report

Diya Kallivayalil PhD Licensed Psychologist

Cy Poon, Statistician RIA Event Committee

Members ...and dozens of individual donors, staff & Board of Directors

## In Kind Contributions

Abroad Modern

Athleta

Annie Newman Art

Boston Baby Photos

Christie Dustman

Landscaping

Costco

The Cypress Cabinet

Encore Boston Harbor

EventKore

ICA Museum

Inn at Ocean's Edge Resort

Island Creek Oysters

J. Lohr Vineyards & Wines

Long's Jewelers

Mallory Portraits

Mary Erickson Art

Neiman Marcus

New England Botanic Garden

Omni Hotel Seaport

Oris

Portland Harbor Hotel

Royal Jewelers

Roche Brothers

Skin Spa New York

Stonewall Kitchen

Sustainable Fashion by Carla Shaw

Strands Hair Studio

WooSox

Tafari Wraps

Tasting Counter

Tim Zue w/Boston Red Sox

Total Wine & More

Tree House Brewing Company

Woods Hill Pier

Wachusett Mountain

## Collaborative Partners

Amilia's Light

Amirah Boston

Ascentria HT Legal Services

Anchored in Recovery

Boston University School of Social Work

BU Law Human Trafficking Clinic

Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA)

Department of Homeland Security

Dignity Matters

DOVE

EVA Center

Framingham Police Department

Gifts of Hope Unlimited

HEAL Trafficking

Highpoint

Hope Rising

Jasmine Grace Outreach

Lawyers Clearinghouse

Linda Faye House

Massachusetts State Police

Massachusetts Coalition to End Human Trafficking

Massachusetts Service Alliance

MetroWest Legal Services

Middlesex County District Attorney's Office

Natick Police Department

New Life Home Refurnishing

Polaris Project

SMOC: Rhodes House,

Serenity House, Shadows

Wayside Youth & Family Services

Sisters of St. Joseph's Parish

Wesley United Methodist Church

William James College

World Without Exploitation

YOU Inc.

# Highlights

Social Innovation  
Forum Acceptance  
for 2023

First full time Clinical  
Director

Operations role  
expanded to include  
Outreach

Piloted Survivor-  
Directed Housing  
Program

10-year Cummings  
Grant

The Philanthropy  
Connection Calayst  
Award



# Looking ahead to 2023

## GOAL 1:

Expand Survivor Directed  
Housing Program.

## GOAL 2:

Grow community interest in  
our work. Expand social media  
and communication presence  
to build awareness of mission/  
vision across all platforms.

## GOAL 3:

Deepen our program  
evaluation.



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# Keep In Touch

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