

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

helena



2022 IMPACT REPORT

RESILIENCE,
GRACE &
INNOVATION

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It's hard to believe I started at YWCA Helena four years ago.

Together, we've accomplished so much! And together, we'll accomplish so much more. I am honored to lead this mission and purpose in our community and privileged to do it with friends, partners, and supporters like you.

As you flip through the pages of last year's outcomes, I hope you also see the path we are preparing for the future. The accomplishments of this year come with great pride. The exceptional team working with women and children of our community are not only dreamers, but doers who are deeply committed to preventing homelessness and providing safe and supportive housing for women and children experiencing homelessness.

We are dreaming and thoughtfully considering ways to meet needs in our community – and our state. You'll read about ways we are providing therapeutic interventions for women, children, and families. You'll get an update on our response to homelessness and affordable housing.

As the women of YWCA Helena continue to experience their personal victories and successes, I invite you to join us in turning possibilities into action. There are brighter futures awaiting so many when the right help is available. Together, let's lean into the courage of our convictions and champion issues that need our voice.

Join us in advocating for affordable housing, economic security for women, and quality childcare. Join us in creating a community that promotes peace, justice, freedom and dignity. Together, let's empower women and eliminate racism while we seek to prevent homelessness.

I am grateful for *all* the ways this community supports this mission.



Jenifer Gursky
YWCA Helena Executive Director



We are fortunate to live in the Helena community.

This last year saw the return of our in-person Benefit Breakfast, where we were encouraged by women who have had their lives changed by YWCA. Members of the WINGS program continue to teach us about resilience, grace, and the importance of community. The Breakfast allowed us the opportunity to meet others in Helena who are also dedicated to making it a more supportive, welcoming place.

We've been able to watch the Caterpillars Clubhouse take on its greater potential, creating a space where kids can grow and learn with the assistance of trauma-informed support. Parents can address their daily responsibilities without worrying about the safety of their kids. The work of parents living at YWCA Helena and in our community are also supported by our Caterpillar Program, giving unmatched opportunities to create life-changing family bonds.

Even with these exciting developments, homelessness and the lack of availability of mental health care continue to be a growing problem, one that YWCA Helena remains committed to addressing. We invite you to partner with us and join our mission to help women and children in our community establish stable, fulfilling lives.

Abbie Abbie Cziok
2023 Board President

CATERPILLARS

Meet Mia & Evie

YWCA's Caterpillar Clubhouse opened in March of 2022 welcoming children ages 0-6 to receive childcare and other needed resources. Children are cared for in a licensed childcare facility with onsite therapeutic interventions.

Mia (4 ½) and Evie (3) were one the first to enroll. Mia loves playing outside and singing. Evie talks about every animal in the zoo and every fish under the sea. They have been in kinship care for most of their lives staying in the safe home of their grandmother.

Caterpillar's staff have worked with Child Protective Services and other agencies to keep the girls connected to their mom and have aided their grandmother in gaining the skills she needs to successfully parent her grandchildren.

Mia receives occupational therapy at the Clubhouse to develop her fine motor skills and improve her hand eye coordination.



Evie works weekly with YWCA's Child Therapist to work through big emotions. Both girls work independently and as a family unit on Parent Child Interactive Therapy (PCIT). This form of therapy is designed for caregivers and their young children who are experiencing social, behavioral and/or emotional difficulties.

In the short time that Mia and Evie have been enrolled in the Caterpillars Clubhouse they have seen huge leaps in their emotional, cognitive, and physical abilities. Their grandma is also gaining valuable lessons and learning more about Mia and Evie's cues for connection. She uses the tools gained at YWCA Helena daily to support their family.

WINGS

Meet Jade

My family history is one of addiction and domestic violence. My parents chose relationships and alcohol before their kids. Looking back, I see just how dysfunctional every day was, but as a child it all seemed very normal.

I had children young and with every trial or triumph life threw at me I celebrated or self-medicated by drinking and using. I couldn't hold a job, was in and out of jail, shoplifting, and sleeping with a bottle of booze under my pillow. In my mind I was being a good mother. I was functioning. I was present.

Then things changed. I spent 2 months in jail and 30 days in an intensive in-patient treatment center. I had the opportunity to live at YWCA Helena and participate in the WINGS program. I did not want to commit to the programs and people at the YWCA Helena. A week into my stay I began to see many of the women were living the life that I wanted. They were sober, living with their families, overcoming

“I believe in the programs and mission with my whole heart. YWCA Helena is part of me now and I will forever be grateful.”

Jade, WINGS Graduate and Mentor



their past traumas and they were happy. Seeing them made it feel possible for me. I committed to all programming and loved what I learned during my therapy sessions and parenting classes. I lived at the YWCA for one year and they helped me through every challenge I faced, big and small, giving me the tools to overcome and persevere.

I am proud to say that I've been sober for 2 years, have been living with my son in our apartment, and have been working in our Helena community serving others.

2022 Growth & Financials

COST TO RAISE \$1: \$0.09

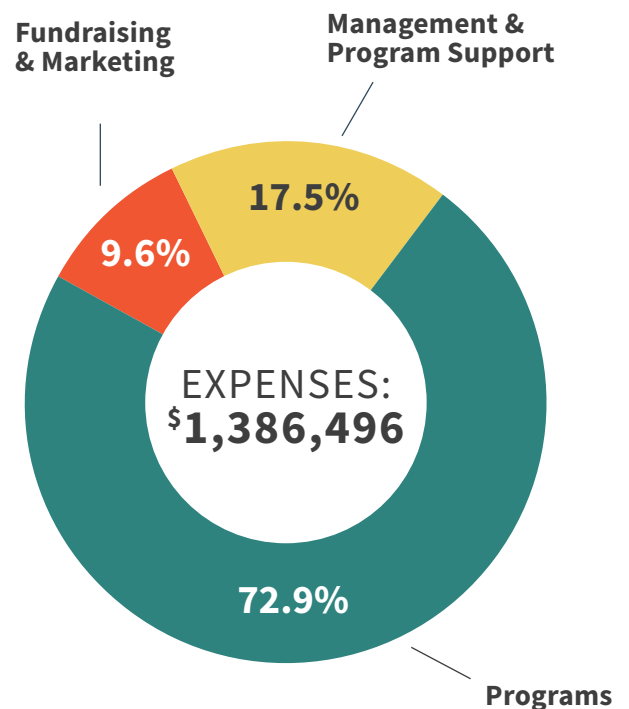
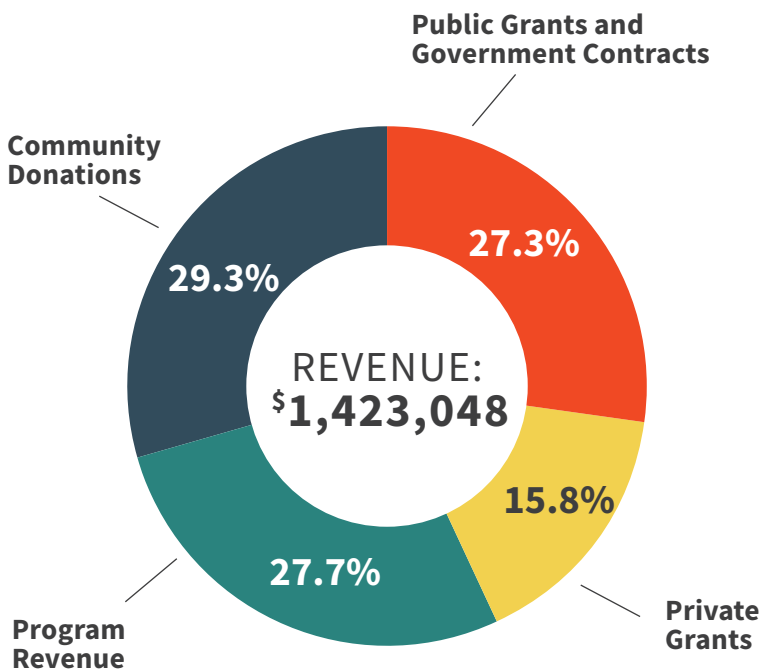


In **2022**, we added **PSYCHOTHERAPY SERVICES** for the children at YWCA Helena and now offer **INDIVIDUAL, GROUP, and FAMILY THERAPY** to address the parallel healing process necessary for whole family wellness.

With the opening of YWCA Helena’s Caterpillars Clubhouse, we extended our services to include **TRAUMA-INFORMED, THERAPEUTIC CHILDCARE** to residents living at YWCA with children, and to the Helena community. The Clubhouse is licensed for up to 30 children. With the addition of this new program, we also increased our

staff, introducing qualified teachers to the care team. **EXTRA PARENTING CLASSES** were also added so all women living at YWCA as well as members of our community can learn about child development and healthy parenting.

We have focused **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CLINICAL STAFF** on the unique perinatal and postpartum needs of our residents who are pregnant or who are new moms. We have also focused on **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ALL STAFF**, including training on secondary trauma and resiliency.



WINGS

Women Initiating New Growth and Stability

YWCA Helena is licensed as both a Substance Use Disorder Treatment Program and a Mental Health Center. As such, the WINGS program is a part of an integrated array of services designed to support women, parents, and whole family care.

The Program

We all know the adage “If nothing changes, nothing changes.” YWCA WINGS program works to support the positive change our residents are seeking for themselves and for their children if they are parenting.

Single and parenting women with their children, begin their journey in our transitional housing where they can reside for up to two years while they work towards recovery and stabilization.

Our interdisciplinary treatment approach is grounded in research and evidence-based approaches primarily from the Covington model, “Helping Women Recover,” and is focused on the unique treatment needs of women who have experienced significant trauma and who have co-occurring substance use and behavioral health disorders.

The WINGS model incorporates a blend of individual mental health therapy and addictions counseling along with educational classes and group therapies focused on recovery from trauma and addiction. The program helps women master healthy self-care and life skills while they gain confidence and skills to live independently.

We understand the parallel process of trauma in family systems and the need for the family and children to heal and change together. As parenting women stabilize and bring their children into their care, we include family and child therapies. And when WINGS graduate into independent community living, they are welcome to continue their therapeutic services on an outpatient basis with YWCA Helena.

The Team

The WINGS Care Team is interdisciplinary and includes licensed therapists for both adults and children. Addictions Counselors and Peer Support Specialists, along with the added support of our Child and Family Advocate through the Caterpillars Parenting Center round out the team.

Meeting weekly to assure that treatment services are coordinated and concurrent, the team supports our clients and children in their ability to consistently engage in their programming.

Parenting women are able to work with the Child and Family Advocate to address parenting plans, enroll in any of the array of Caterpillars services and utilize the liaison services with other entities such as CPS, Pureview, Helena Indian Alliance and Early Headstart.

“We feel continually cared for by our community, which allows us to serve families who need our integrated and individualized services.”

Kimberly Gardner, LCSW, LAC
WINGS Chief Clinical Director

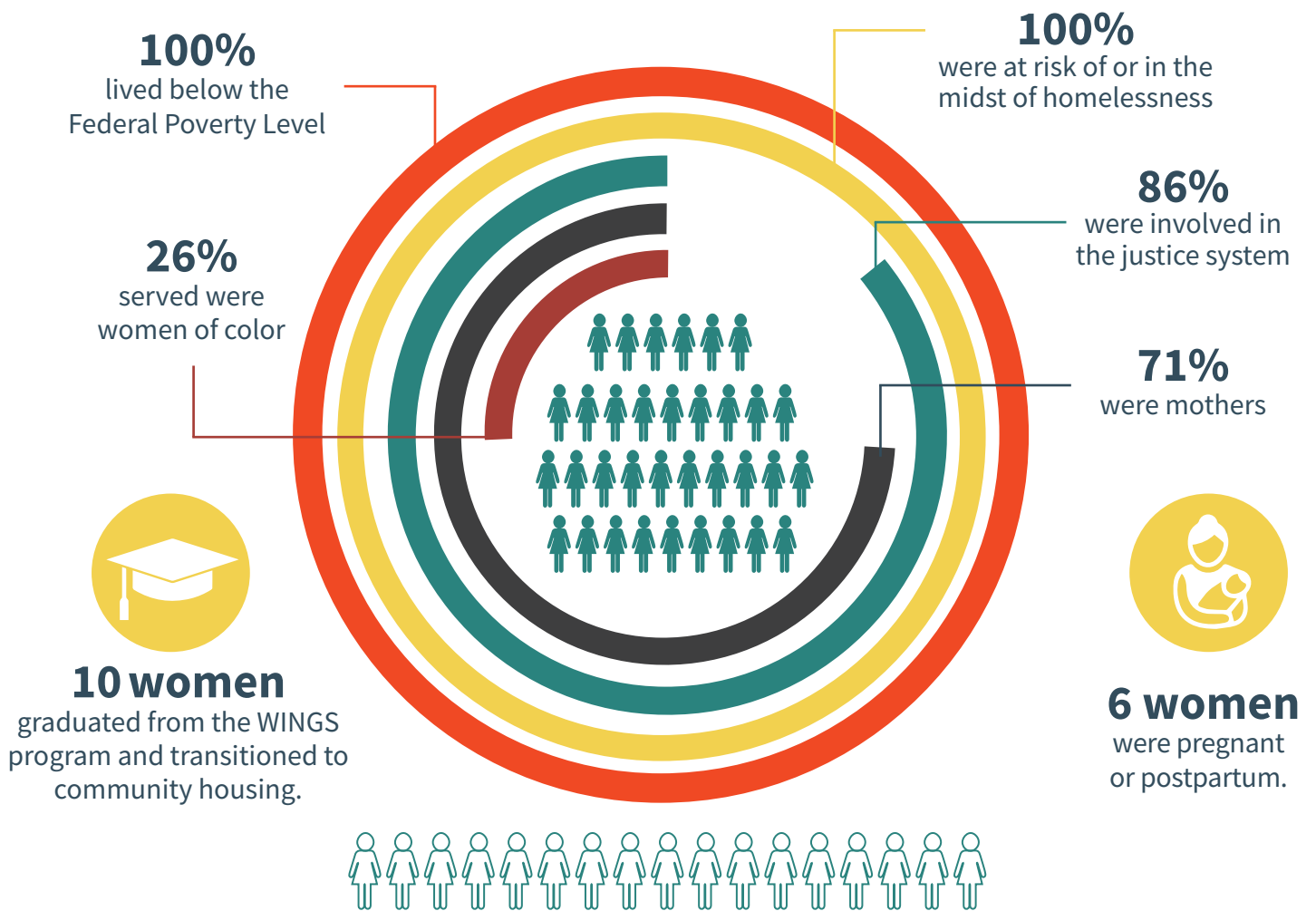




2022

The WINGS Program housed 34 women.

We continue to grow and learn to meet the needs of our clients and to ensure that positive foundations are put into place during their time at YWCA. The changes women make while in our care create happy, healthy, independent, and self-sufficient futures for those YWCA Helena serves.



On average **17 women** were on the **waitlist** for YWCA Helena services.

CATERPILLARS

Parenting Center, Clubhouse, and Counseling

YWCA's Caterpillar Programs provide children with the very best care that strengthens their resiliency, celebrates milestones, addresses needs based on past trauma, and creates lasting family bonds.

The Programs

Through the different facets of the Caterpillars Program, YWCA provides the tools needed for parents, caregivers, children and family units to prepare for unique challenges that they face or that may come their way in the future.

At the Caterpillars Clubhouse our trained teachers and staff welcome each new day with the opportunity to do what is best for children. Each child joins us with their unique needs, having experienced trauma. These needs make it imperative that our staff is specially trained and ready to implement strategies that help them meet developmental milestones and address emotional needs. All of this is done while leading with love. Every child at the Clubhouse is secure in knowing that their teachers love them, will not give up on them, and are looking out for their best interests.

The Caterpillars Parenting Center focuses on giving tools to help moms and dads succeed in their role as parents. This portion of the program offers supervised parenting, safe exchanges, parenting classes, coaching, individual parent advocacy, and liaison services between clients and Child Protective Services.

While Caterpillars Clubhouse focuses on children's growth and stability and the Parenting Center supports moms and dads, Caterpillars Counseling works with the family unit. This ensures parents know how to support their children through their behaviors, troubles, and triumphs. We partner with physical therapy, occupational therapy and have specialized therapeutic interventions such as Parent and Child Interactive Therapy and play therapy. We create a team between parents, providers and staff to best serve each child's needs.

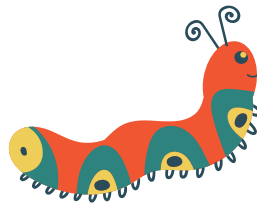
All YWCA Caterpillar services are provided to families participating in the WINGS program and members of our local community free of charge.



“Each integral component of the Caterpillars Program helps families build a toolkit that will serve them now and for years to come.”

Jessie Fuzesy
Caterpillars Program Director





Caterpillars Parenting Center, Clubhouse, and Counseling

Caterpillars addresses different areas of support and provides wrap-around care for families.



65

PARENTS

completed our parenting classes.



23

CHILDREN

reunified with their parents.

Twenty-three children whose families utilized Caterpillar Services were reunited with their parents in 2022. These families accessed parenting classes, 1-on-1 parent coaching, YWCA's Child and Family Advocate and regular supervised visits. The tools gained helped families reach milestones in parent and child bonding and are now empowered to be partners in their child's development.



100%

OF THE CHILDREN served at Clubhouse were 150% below the federal poverty line.



22

CHILDREN were housed at YWCA Helena's shelter.



41

CHILDREN were served by Caterpillars Child Care.



16

CHILDREN were served by Caterpillars Counseling.



HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING CRISIS: HOW YWCA HELENA IS RESPONDING

We provide safe and secure shelter for women and their children and address the systemic and underlying causes of homelessness.

YWCA Helena typically hosts the Longest Night Memorial, an annual service that honors the lives of those who died due to being unhoused. This year we remembered 17 lives.

In 2021, nearly 300 homeless individuals were counted in the Point in Time Survey, a survey conducted every January by United Way and sponsored by Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This represented nearly a 50% increase from the prior year. In 2022, largely because of the injection of one-time-only COVID aid, that number dropped to a still-staggering 143 housing-insecure individuals. United Way believes this number is an undercount. But that funding that supported 20% of shelter beds and 30% of Rapid Rehousing beds is now gone. And people scrambling.

In January, the Helena School District reported that 283 children were counted as insecurely housed. This includes children whose families are sharing housing with others due to loss of housing or economic hardship; living in hotels or campgrounds; living in emergency or transitional shelters; living in cars, parks or public spaces; or living in abandoned buildings. Of those 283 children, 34 were staying in hotels and 38 were living completely unsheltered (see cars, campgrounds, and abandoned buildings).

This is a small snapshot of what homelessness in Helena looks like right now. According to HUD's 2022 PIT, individual women represent 40% of the sheltered and

unsheltered homeless population but make up 60% of those in families. A study based in Texas found that 84% of families experiencing homelessness are female lead. And according to HUD's 2022 PIT, family homelessness had the most significant increase in suburban and rural areas, areas that Helena serves.

YWCA Helena's mission is to provide supportive housing for women and children experiencing homelessness. To do so, we have taken a multi-pronged approach to both identify systemic barriers to being safely and securely housed and to provide direct services for those in the midst of homelessness.

Our wraparound services provide critical interventions and support for families. We provide safe and secure shelter for women and their children, trauma-responsive and therapeutic childcare for families, mental health services for women and children and substance use recovery programming for adults. We have a vision of our world where women are empowered to create a future they seek and children are provided opportunities to thrive. And mission is supported with advocacy goals and efforts at the local and state level as we innovatively and creatively approach the challenges facing women and children.

As our community finds solutions for our housing crisis, YWCA Helena will be there as a partner both supplying critical direct services and advocating for the future our neighbors deserve.

Innovative. And solutions-seeking.

YWCA Helena is determined to prevent homelessness. We provide safe and supportive housing for women and children experiencing homelessness, and providing services that restore hope, self-sufficiency, and happy and healthy lives.

YWCA Helena one of three building partners in a housing project situated on 9.8 acres within Helena city limits. The project is innovative and the first of its kind in the state.

Deemed the “ORLC Project” because it is located on Our Redeemers Lutheran Church property, the project brings together YWCA Helena for a planned 20-25 high efficiency transitional and supportive apartments, Rocky Mountain Development Council for 78 homes of subsidized family apartments in six different buildings, and Habitat for Humanity for 33 homes to be built for ownership on land permanently placed in trust so all homes stay affordable in perpetuity.

YWCA Helena envisions this project being an extension of the crisis housing that WINGS provides. One of the chief hurdles we experience for women transitioning to community living is affordable and safe housing for their next step. With this project, we are hoping to create solutions for a community housing crisis and extend our data-driven model of care for women and children. Families can experience success on their road to restoring hope, self-sufficiency, and happy and healthy lives given the right resources.

To read the Preliminary Architectural Report (PAR) visit ywcahelena.org/ourfuture.



ywca 2022 SUCCESSES

helena



JANUARY

COVID response continued with six women and two children staying in hotels while still receiving wrap-around therapeutic care.

FEBRUARY

Successfully launched first resident of 2022 and her teenage son into the community.

MARCH

Caterpillars Clubhouse therapeutic, trauma-informed childcare center opens.



APRIL

Staff Retreat focused on secondary trauma and how to best support women and children who have adverse experiences.

MAY

11,800 diapers, 250 packs of wipes and over 550 toiletry items collected during our Annual Mother's Day Diaper Drive!

JUNE

YWCA received Mental Health Center License.



JULY

Flash flood causes water damage at 501 N Park. Community responds with over \$25,000 in gifts and helping hands.

AUGUST

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation begins.

SEPTEMBER

Rise and Shine Benefit Breakfast, together again, in person celebrating our shared work in empowering women.



OCTOBER

Construction begins on porch addressing water damage in the basement caused by leaking from the porch.

NOVEMBER

Innovations and Stabilization grant opened eight spots for infants for therapeutic and trauma-informed childcare.

DECEMBER

Hosted Longest Night Memorial Services in memory of 17 individuals who died while experiencing homelessness in 2022.