



THE BRIDGE
FOR YOUTH

2024

annual
impact report



The background of the page is white and features several overlapping, hand-drawn style orange geometric shapes. These shapes include rectangles, trapezoids, and irregular polygons, some of which are tilted at various angles. They are scattered around the central orange box, with some appearing at the top, bottom, and sides of the page.

Mission:

The Bridge for Youth centers youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do, and empowers youth experiencing homelessness through safe shelter, basic needs, and healthy relationships.

Vision:

All youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

www.bridgeforyouth.org

A Message to Our BFY CommUNITY

Dear BFY commUNITY,

Since 1970, The Bridge for Youth has been a safe place for youth navigating crisis and homelessness. Over the last year, we have provided safety and stability to nearly 8,000 youth, ages prenatal to 24 years, through emergency shelter, transitional housing, community outreach, and 24/7 phone and text crisis intervention services.

This past year has been one of growth and innovation. We expanded the Empowering Parents for Wellness in Shelter (EMPOWER) program, a groundbreaking collaboration between youth and the University of Minnesota to better support pregnant and parenting youth. Recognizing a critical gap in services, we also established a new support and education group, along with enhanced aftercare services for young fathers aimed at strengthening family bonds and fostering healthy parenting.

Our investment in addressing gaps in services for young families led us to the launch of our Young Families Housing Campaign. In the 2024 legislative session, we requested state funds for an expansion of up to 40 new housing units to fortify the continuum of care and spectrum of support for young families ages 16+ at The Bridge. Although this request was not fulfilled in 2024, as the Minnesota Legislature did not adopt a bonding bill, we remain committed and hopeful the request will be fulfilled in 2025.

At The Bridge, we center youth voice in all we do. This is why our strategic plan includes developing a model for intersectional organizational leadership governance between youth and adults on the Board of Directors. This Youth Voice Leadership Initiative will center youth voice and wisdom to co-create an innovative, impactful, and sustainable model of intersectional board governance in 2025.

Youth voice also led our remodel of Resilience House emergency shelter. Designed in collaboration with students at Dunwoody College of Technology and our partners at Joy Collaborative and Doran Companies, this remodel transforms how we support youth in shelter. Part of a multi-year renovation project, this design aimed to make intentional space more trauma responsive for youth to heal and feel safe.

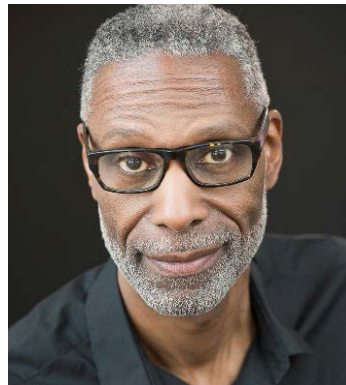
Investing in equitable compensation and well-being for our staff has allowed us to retain the passionate, skilled team necessary to meet the growing needs of youth. Thanks to this investment, and thanks to you, our community of supporters, we are better equipped than ever to disrupt cycles of homelessness and achieve our vision of a community where all youth feel safe, accepted, and supported.

The need is great, and because of you, our impact is even greater. Thank you for walking alongside us, and with the youth who depend on The Bridge for hope, healing, and opportunity.

In CommUNITY,



Lisa Mears
Lisa Mears, MPA
President



Geoff Jones
Geoff Jones
Board Chair

2024 Board of Directors

- **Geoffrey Jones**, *Board Chairperson* - Marketing Specialist, White Bear Area Food Shelf
- **Leanna Seiner-Chapman**, *Board Vice Chair* - Planning and Technology Assessment Manager, Xcel Energy
- **Bob Striker**, *Board Treasurer/ Finance Committee Chair* - Director of Finance, Camp Nebagamom
- **Daniel DuHamel**, *Board Secretary* - Program Officer, Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- **Robert Kraemer**, *Development and Engagement Committee Chair* - Manager, Lifetime Work Minneapolis
- **Gretchen Gromatka**, *HR Workgroup Chair* - Senior Employee/ Labor Relations Consultant, Fairview Health Services
- **Kim Branson**, *Governance Chair* - Branson Transformation Group
- **Amy Britt Jones** - Educational Consultant, ABJ Educational Consulting
- **Demitri McGee** - Youth Director/ HUD Housing Coordinator, Build Wealth MN Inc.
- **Jessica Simon-Koch** - Principal Government Initiatives, Hennepin Health
- **Joanna Dornfeld** - Vice President/ Chief of Staff, Allina Health
- **Kristine Oberg** - Vice President, Business Banking Segment Strategy, U.S. Bank
- **Mia Naseth-Phillips** - Director, Programs for Innovation & Equity, Minnesota Department of Commerce
- **Melissa Saenz** - AVP and Head of Regulatory Monitoring & Insights, Allianz Life
- **Mitchell Walstad** - Freshman Admissions Counselor University of Minnesota
- **Myles Artis** - Director of Government Affairs, Minneapolis Area Realtors
- **Scott Sundstrom** - Educational Consultant, Catapult Learning
- **Tescia Bratcher** - Director of Property Management, Partnership in Property - Commercial Land Trust



Pictured: Bridge for Youth Staff & CommUNITY members

Executive Leadership Team

- Lisa Mears, President
- Jeremiah Hawkins, Vice President of Programs
- Thomas Craig, Finance Director
- Angela Alvarez, HR & Administrative Director
- Juli Gottschall, Clinical Director
- Dr. Sheetal Kanse, Monitoring & Evaluation Director

Programs

Youth Housing Programs

RESILIENCE HOUSE

Emergency shelter focused on family reunification whenever safe and possible. Provides temporary shelter, meals, access to healthcare, and case management to youth ages 10-17.

GLORIA'S PLACE

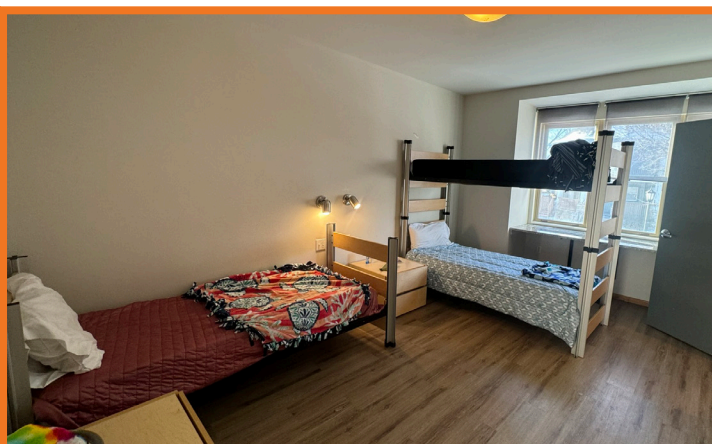
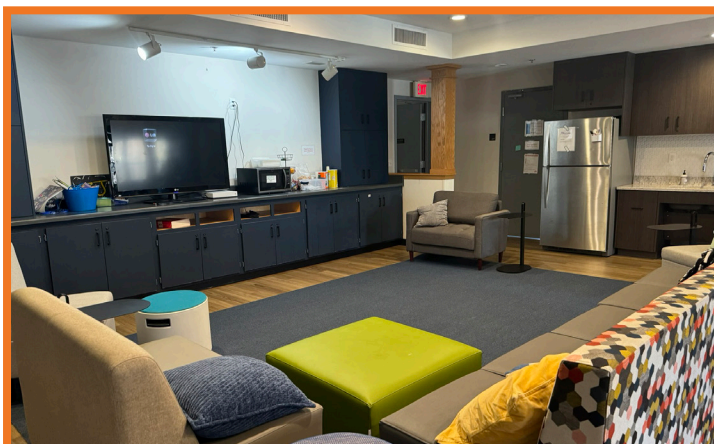
The only emergency shelter in Minnesota for pregnant/parenting youth ages 15-17 and their children ages 0-3. Provides emergency shelter, case management, healthcare, and parenting education.

MARLENE'S PLACE

The only site-based transitional housing program specifically for pregnant/parenting youth ages 16-20 and their children ages 0-3 in Hennepin County. Provides housing, case management, healthcare, and parenting education for young families.

RITA'S HOUSE

An intentional living community providing affordable rental housing, case management, and independent living skills for youth ages 18-21.



Pictured: The recently renovated shelter space in Resilience House.



Outreach & Supportive Services

Youth Response Center

Provides immediate support and resources for youth and families 24/7/365. The Bridge also hosts YSNMN, a mobile app that connects youth with available shelter and resources in real time.

Counseling & Aftercare

Gives youth a safe place to talk about challenges and find peer support. Current groups include So What If I Am, crime victims, young fathers, and general support. Individual, group, and family counseling that utilize positive youth development and trauma-informed approaches to promote awareness and personal growth.

Your support provided HOPE to nearly 8,000 youth. **Here's a glimpse into the real stories of youth impacted by our commUNITY of support:**

After Janae (She/Her) moved across different shelters and foster homes, she struggled to find the safety and stability needed to grow. One-month pregnant and looking for safe housing, she came to Gloria's Place, the only emergency shelter in the state of Minnesota specifically for unaccompanied, pregnant or parenting youth (ages 15-17) and their children (ages 0-3).

Janae and her daughter, Esme, found comfort and safety in the staff at The Bridge. She encouraged other new moms to take advantage of the resources offered such as diapers, wipes, and clothing for their children, transportation to school or work, and parenting classes.

Some of Janae's favorite memories at The Bridge were the monthly CommUNITY in the Courtyard celebrations with staff and youth. In her own words, "There was a feeling of unity that we didn't have at other shelters."

Through her resiliency and with support from The Bridge for Youth staff, Janae and Esme were able to find safe and stable permanent housing and now live happily in their own home. Janae and Esme still return to visit The Bridge for celebrations and support, and they continue being part of the commUNITY that helped her grow.



"Being at The Bridge made all the difference. They helped me grow as a person. I wouldn't have been able to find housing if it weren't for The Bridge."



Nova (They/Them) found commUNITY at The Bridge for Youth. After living at Rita's House, an intentional living community which provides affordable rental housing and teaching independent living skills to twelve youth ages 18-21, they quickly learned that they were not alone.

"I was in six shelters over four years," Nova reflected. "Finding stability at Rita's House saved me."

While living at Rita's House, Nova began attending The Bridge's long-running LGBTQ+ support group, So What If I Am. Through participating in the group, Nova found friendship, a sense of community, and greater security in their own identity.

Now living independently, Nova continues to attend support group, recently completed their legal name change, and is celebrating living authentically.

"These programs aren't just life changing, they are life saving."

Our Impact in 2024

100% 

Parenting youth participated in parenting and healthcare education

89% 

Youth made progress toward personal goals

84% 

Youth have a positive relationship with a caring adult at exit

80% 

Youth served identified as BIPOC

80% 

Youth engaged in holistic health & wellness services

76% 

Youth exited emergency shelter to safe and stable housing

SAFE. ACCEPTED. SUPPORTED.

- 7,952 youth were served across all programming.
- 7,741 received intervention and prevention resources and referrals through community outreach and therapeutic supports, including individual and family therapy and groups.
- 311 youth participated in aftercare services.
- 234 youth ages prenatal to 24 years were supported through shelter and housing programs.
- 17% of youth served identified as LGBTQIA+.
- 56 volunteers donated 1,264 hours of their time.
- Donors gave \$239,786 worth of in-kind gifts to support youth through care kits, essentials, holiday gifts, and more.



Young Families Housing Campaign



In 2024 The Bridge for Youth began our Young Families Housing Campaign. In the 2024 legislative session, The Bridge for Youth requested state funds for pre-design, design, property acquisition, project management, construction, and occupancy for new housing units in Hennepin County for youth (ages 16+) who are pregnant and/or parenting and have experienced homelessness.

The Bridge for Youth’s Strategic Plan Framework directs the organization to make significant investments in housing to address a critical gap of options in the 7-county metro by expanding between 30 to 40 new housing units for young families, including 15 new transitional living and up to 24 non-time limited supportive housing units on a new site in Hennepin County. This investment would fortify the continuum of care and spectrum of supports for young families ages 16+ at The Bridge.

The Bridge’s new continuum of care vision includes:

Prevention	Emergency Shelter	Transitional Living Program (TLP)	Non-Time Limited Supportive Housing	Aftercare Services
Community outreach & mental health services	Gloria’s Place	Expansion of Marlene’s Place from 5 to 15 units	New portfolio of 20-24 units	Continuation of wholistic supports

This request was not fulfilled in 2024 as the Minnesota Legislature did not adopt a bonding bill. The Bridge for Youth remains committed and hopeful, moving forward with this project and returning to the legislature in 2025 with an updated request. Now more than ever, we need your advocacy and support to fulfill this critical vision alongside young families experiencing homelessness.

To get involved visit our website at bridgeforyouth.org/advocate/



Financials

October 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024

Statement of Activities

Support & Revenue

Contributions & Grants:	\$2,038,236
Government Contracts & Grants:	\$2,855,121
United Way:	\$179,071
Special Events:	\$45,231
Investment Income:	\$60,373
Miscellaneous Income:	\$251,289

Total Support & Revenue: \$5,429,321

Expenses

Program Services:	\$4,069,287
Management and General:	\$730,189
Fundraising:	\$385,327

Total Expenses: \$5,184,803

Total Change in Net Assets: \$244,518

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

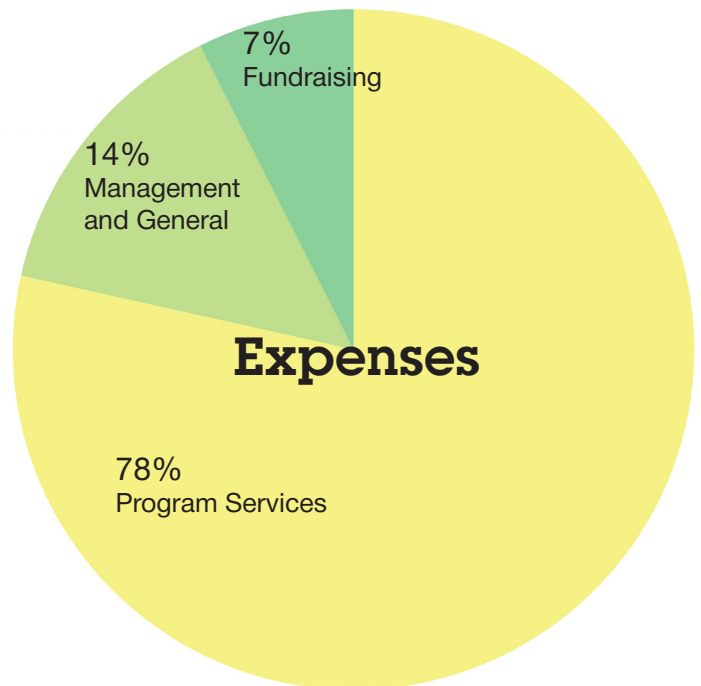
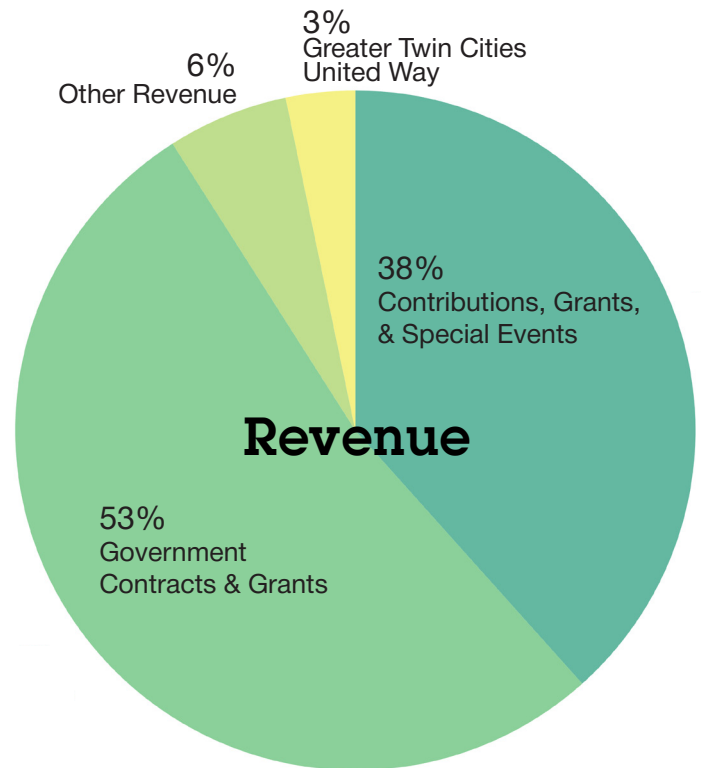
Current Assets:	\$3,953,893
Property & Equipment (Net):	\$5,693,700
Other Assets:	\$153,245

Total Assets: \$9,800,838

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities:	\$1,055,064
Long-Term Liabilities:	\$2,052,581
Net Assets:	\$6,693,193

Total Liabilities & Net Assets: \$9,800,838



Engaging in commUNITY in 2024

Throughout 2024, The Bridge for Youth hosted three events to Amplify, Elevate, and Inspire Action through youth voice that raises awareness about programs at The Bridge and, more importantly, the resiliency of youth in our community.



Our third annual Sprout event celebrated motherhood and gave a glimpse into the strength and journey of pregnant and parenting youth.

Our guest speakers and entertainment showed us the power of mothers and the importance of The Bridge's programs for young families. We also unveiled our Young Families Housing Campaign, and learned how it will help more young families like Janae and her daughter Esme find the housing and holistic support they need to build hopeful futures.



Our third annual commUNITY Juneteenth block party celebrated Juneteenth and amplified Black excellence and liberation.

We unified for an afternoon of music, performances of African Drumming, food from Black-owned businesses, engaged with dedicated volunteers from our sponsors' BIPOC Employee Resource Groups, and more.

Liberation is love at The Bridge. We deliberately gather in commUNITY to recognize the importance of Black Liberation as we commemorate Juneteenth.



Joy filled the room as supporters, friends, youth, and staff gathered at Surly Brewing for our third annual CommUNITY LGBTQ+ Celebration.

Raising a glass to the LGBTQ+ community, we celebrated the strength of LGBTQ+ youth with dances from Luna Muse and rock music from Rebel Queens. Our youth speaker, Will, shared his story as a transmasculine and queer youth, and how The Bridge helped him to embrace his queer journey.

The Bridge invites you to engage in commUNITY throughout 2025.

Learn more at bridgeforyouth.org/events

Our Values

PATIENCE

We give space for youth to make decisions on their own timeline in their own way.

LOVE & CARING

We believe in acceptance, empathy, and non-judgment.

COMMUNICATION

We engage in intentional dialogue to understand each other's truths.

INTEGRITY

We actively learn, grow, and change to align our actions in equity and justice.

CO-CREATION

We seek connection to amplify the voice of youth and each other.

COMMUNITY

We stand together for youth and for each other.

Thank You To Our 2024 Sponsors



Mears Family



Thank you to the many individual donors, volunteers, and community partners for your support this past year!

Contributions of all forms make a difference.



**“You loved me when
no one else did.”**

-Former youth at
The Bridge



THE BRIDGE
FOR YOUTH



Learn how to get involved at bridgeforyouth.org