



**THE BRIDGE
FOR YOUTH**

2025

annual
impact report



October 2024 —
September 2025

bridgeforyouth.org



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.

A Message to Our BFY CommUNITY

For over 55 years, The Bridge for Youth has been meeting the moment of crisis for youth by standing the test of time, evolving through oppression, and loving even more deeply in the face of harm. With you as our supporter, cheerleader, and BFY commUNITY in 2025, we supported over 11,000 youth across all programs: emergency shelter, transitional housing, community outreach, aftercare, holistic health supports, and 24/7 phone / text crisis intervention services; all of this despite operating under unprecedented threats. With your support, we invested in more ways to ensure every young person finds immediate safety, a sense of belonging, where they can be seen for who they are, and find a community that loves and supports them.

In October 2025, The Bridge completed a two-year facility renovation. Informed by youth perspectives and needs, this project centered trauma informed designed features for a total remodel of our shelter floors, along with vital updates to all shared common spaces. These spaces went from “tired and well used” to inspiring, functional, and supportive of the whole person. Thank you to our partners The Joy Collaborative, Dunwoody College of Technology, Dolezal Creative, as well as our funders at The Patrick and Aimee Butler Family Foundation, The Minnesota Office of Economic Opportunity, and donors like you!

More change awaits as The Minnesota State Legislature awarded The Bridge \$250,000 for pre-design funding during the 2025 session, paving the path for the early due diligence work of our future shelter and housing expansion tailored to support up to 45 young families. More information can be found on page 7 of this report.

The Bridge seeks to address gaps across the spectrum of services of youth homelessness. Always seeking wisdom of youth, young families shared that young fathers are consistently and pervasively unsupported across the system of supports for youth experiencing homelessness. In FY25, we secured funding, partnered with youth and peer providers to design a program, and launched the Twin Cities’ first Young Father’s Initiative for youth experiencing homelessness. This new program welcomes young fathers aged 15-24 to a place of safety and growth.

Centering youth voice, justice, and equity in all we do is the tenant of our mission. Since 2025, we have invested in a justice forward contract with Mr. Jesse Ross. The central framework is the Intercultural Developmental Inventory framework, where staff, board, and the Youth Advisory Board have made an individual and collective commitment to cultural understanding and development. This includes monthly trainings, individual and team coaching, implementing restoration/reparation practices, and intentionally celebrating culture.

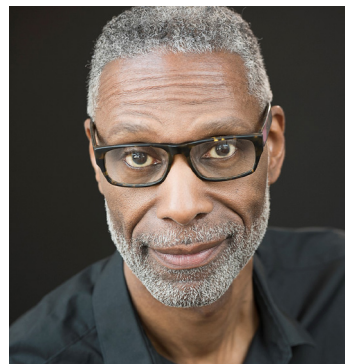
In 1970, The Bridge for Youth was founded on the belief that being “responsive in real time” and “evolving as needed” are necessary ingredients to meeting youth “where they are at”. None of this is possible without the generous hearts and necessary resources shared by our BFY commUNITY. This spirit of abundance was on display at the launch of our new signature fundraising event, CREATE, where we exceeded expectations in cultivating friends and resources to support The Bridge’s mission.

On behalf of the board, staff, and most importantly youth, thank you for being a beacon of hope and love at The Bridge. We invite you to continue your walk alongside us in the years to come. Together, we empower youth through safe shelter, basic needs, holistic supports, and building healthy relationships.



Lisa Mears

Lisa Hicks Mears, MPA
President



Geoff Jones

Geoff Jones
Board Chair

2025 Board of Directors

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- **Scott Sundstrom**
- **Tescia Bratcher**
- **Zoe Babalola**

All Board of Directors members serve on a voluntary basis without compensation.



Pictured: Bridge for Youth Staff

Executive Leadership Team

- Lisa Hicks Mears, President
- Jeremiah Hawkins, Vice President of Programs
- Angela Alvarez, HR & Administrative Director
- Thomas Craig, Finance Director
- Dr. Sheetal Kanse, Monitoring & Evaluation Director
- Felor Rostami, Clinical Director
- Sloane Kohnstamm, Director of Individual Giving

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 main lobby and group room.



Outreach & Supportive Services

Youth Response Center

Provides immediate support and resources for youth and families 24/7/365. The Bridge also hosts YSNMN, a website 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 over 11,000 youth.

Here's a glimpse into the real stories of youth impacted by our commUNITY of support:

Meet Cody...

When Cody (they/them) was 16 years old, they struggled to find a place where they could show up as their authentic self. Home became an unsafe space, and Cody missed school regularly. This would all change when they found The Bridge.

Cody's time at Resilience House, shelter for youth ages 10-17, and in The Bridge's longrunning LGBTQ+ support group, 'So What If I Am', made them feel safe, accepted, and supported.

For the first time, Cody heard people use their correct name and pronouns. They were surrounded by staff who were willing to listen and walk alongside them in their journey.

"Staying at The Bridge helped me overcome so many roadblocks in my life," Cody shared. "I was able to get relevant care that met my needs and was able to rebuild my family relationships. Being in this environment gave me the strength to move forward."

Since exiting The Bridge, Cody has gone on to serve on the Youth Advisory Board, and The Bridge's Youth Voice and Leadership initiative. Because of the love and care Cody received, they felt empowered to show up as their authentic self and advocate for others.

"I would not have been empowered to be a leader if it weren't for the love and care I got at The Bridge."



Meet Taty...

Taty (she/her) first turned to The Bridge as a teenager experiencing homelessness, and would later return as a single mother. Staying at Marlene's Place, the only site-based transitional housing specifically for pregnant and parenting youth (ages 16-20) and their children (ages 0-3) in Hennepin County, she found the love and care she needed.

Taty's experience at The Bridge taught her what it means to be determined – Determined to not only create the best life for her sons, but to ensure that every young person has the love, care, and opportunity they deserve.

"The staff helped me discover my passion. Going through everything I did made me realize I want to give back and help others, just like the staff at The Bridge helped me," Taty reflected.

Since moving on from The Bridge, Taty has continued to use her voice at the State Capitol to advocate for solutions that will help young families experiencing homelessness, and serves on The Bridge's Youth Advisory Board.

"From the moment I arrived, The Bridge provided more than just a roof over my head. They offered me a safe, supportive space to grow as a mother and as a person."



Our Impact in 2025

92%



Parenting youth participated in parenting and healthcare education

92%



Youth made progress toward personal goals

85%



Youth have a positive relationship with a caring adult at exit

81%



Youth served identified as BIPOC

85%



Youth engaged in holistic health & wellness services

77%



Youth exited emergency shelter to safe and stable housing

SAFE. ACCEPTED. SUPPORTED.

- 11,000+ youth were served across all programming.
- 10,575 received intervention and prevention resources and referrals through community outreach and therapeutic supports, including individual and family therapy and groups.
- 749 youth participated in aftercare services.
- 236 youth ages prenatal to 24 years were supported through shelter and housing programs.
- 27% of youth served identified as LGBTQ+.
- 86 volunteers donated 1,422 hours of their time.
- Donors gave over \$70,000 worth of in-kind gifts to support youth through care kits, essentials, holiday gifts, and more.



Young Families Housing Campaign



In 2024, over 5,000 youth representing more than 1,930 young families were served by the homeless prevention, assessment, shelter, and housing system across all parts of Minnesota. These families included 2,900 children who were with their youth parents. For youth who are pregnant or parenting while experiencing homelessness, their family’s need for support is critical and impacts two generations for a lifetime. (Wilder Research, 2025)

The Existing Gap Facing Young Families: Only 161 youth focused shelter beds and housing units across Minnesota for 5,000 youth & their children. (Wilder Research, 2025)

The Bridge requested state funds during the 2025 Legislative Session for land acquisition and to pre-design, design, construct, furnish, and equip a new multiuse facility in Hennepin County; and received \$250K dedicated to pre-design and due diligence. The new facility shall include youth program and recreational space, administrative and program office space, and up to 45 new units of transitional and affordable housing and emergency shelter space for unaccompanied homeless youth and young families experiencing homelessness.

The Bridge's new continuum of care vision includes:

<p>Prevention</p> <p>Community outreach & mental health services</p>	<p>Emergency Shelter</p> <p>Gloria’s Place 6 Units</p>	<p>Transitional Living Program (TLP)</p> <p>Expansion of Marlene’s Place from 5 to 15 units</p>	<p>Non-Time Limited Supportive Housing</p> <p>New portfolio of 20-24 units</p>	<p>Aftercare Services</p> <p>Continuation of holistic supports</p>
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Supportive Services

- Culturally responsive and youth informed holistic programming.
- Basic needs- food, housing, clothing, personal care.
- Case management and aftercare services.
- Access to pre- and post-natal healthcare and birthing supports.
- Individual and family therapeutic supports.
- Parenting education, mentorship, health education, and support groups.
- Young Father’s programming.
- Life skills addressing the whole self.
- Recreational activities and community building for the whole family.



Learn more about our Young Families Campaign: bridgeforyouth.org/advocate

Financials

October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025

Statement of Activities

Support & Revenue

Contributions & Grants:	\$1,777,382
Government Contracts & Grants:	\$3,143,808
United Way:	\$186,393
Special Events:	\$105,648
Investment Income:	\$55,572
Miscellaneous Income:	\$144,510

Total Support & Revenue: \$5,413,313

Expenses

Program Services:	\$4,578,636
Management and General:	\$597,874
Fundraising:	\$574,309

Total Expenses: \$5,750,819

Total Change in Net Assets: (\$337,506)

Statement of Financial Position

Assets

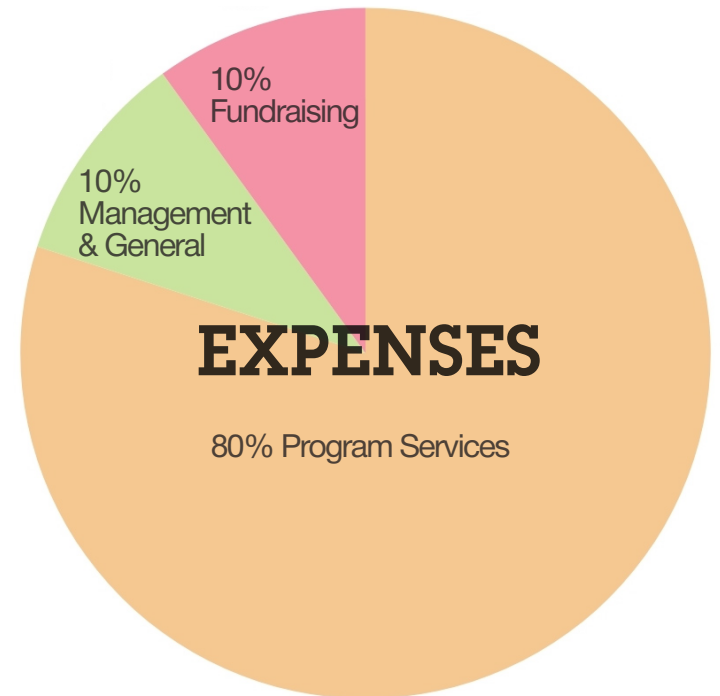
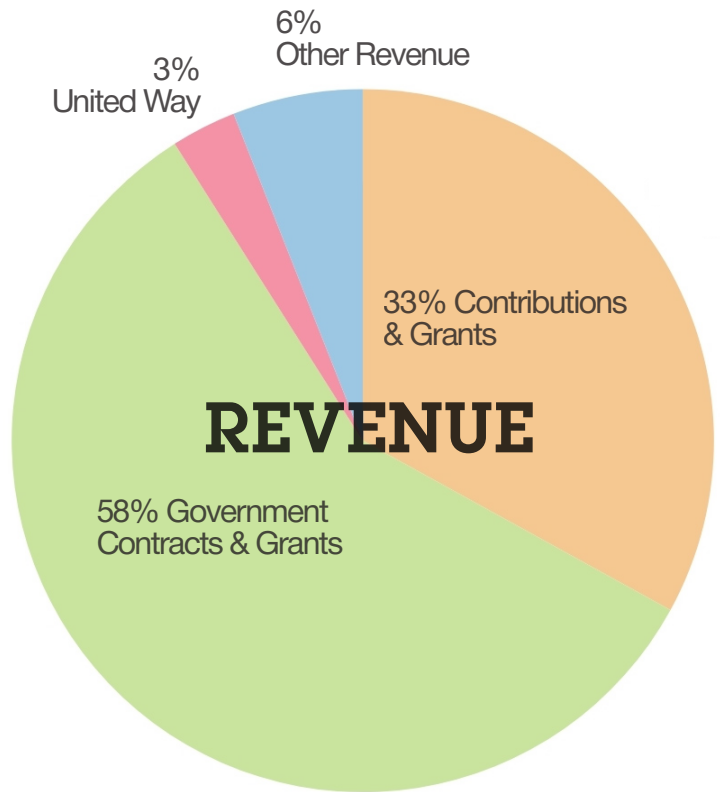
Current Assets:	\$3,438,156
Property & Equipment (Net):	\$5,852,638
Other Assets:	\$0

Total Assets: \$9,290,794

Liabilities & Net Assets

Current Liabilities:	\$404,743
Long-Term Liabilities:	\$2,530,364
Net Assets:	\$6,355,687

Total Liabilities & Net Assets: \$9,290,794



Engaging in commUNITY in 2025

Throughout 2025, The Bridge for Youth hosted three events to Amplify, Elevate, and Inspire Action through youth voice that helped raise funds, build community, and celebrate the resiliency of youth.



Create

Creativity, culinary arts, and commUNITY came together at the debut of Create: An infusion of art and food to support youth experiencing homelessness.

At our new signature fundraising event, guests celebrated the arts with a gallery of work created by youth with lived experience, enjoyed elevated dishes from culinary artists, were empowered by music from DJ Sophia Eris and Known MPLS, and more. It was a beautiful night of commUNITY-based fundraising.



commUNITY JUNETEENTH CELEBRATION

The smells of great food, the sounds of uplifting performances, and the centering of liberation were ever-present at The Bridge for Youth's fourth annual commUNITY Juneteenth Celebration.

Gathering in commUNITY, this annual tradition is a demonstration of our deepest values. Together we enjoyed live music from Brass Solidarity, a performance from Kumbayah: The Juneteenth Story with actors from Rose McGee's Sweet Potato Comfort Pie, and a drum circle led by our friend Brother Ghana.



commUNITY LGBTQ+ CELEBRATION

Joy and inclusivity shone bright as LGBTQ+ youth from across the Twin Cities came together to celebrate their identities at The GAYla Masquerade! Attendees experienced drag performances, engaged in gender affirming activities, and embraced their truth in a safe space.

The evening featured a style station with glitter face paint and nail polish, DIY mask making, a screening of The Rocky Horror Picture Show, and performances from local drag artists.

The Bridge invites you to engage in commUNITY throughout 2026.

Learn more at bridgeforyouth.org/events

2025 Legacy Award Winners

The Bridge for Youth's Legacy Award honors community members who have made meaningful and impactful contributions to our work of ensuring all youth are safe, accepted, and supported. For our third annual Legacy Award, we honored five staff who have upheld The Bridge for Youth's legacy by being committed to the mission for over 10 years, each for a collective of 73-years!



Our Legacy Award winners are Angela Alvarez (13 years, beginning as an intern and now HR & Admin Director), Felor Rostami (13 years, Youth and Family Advocate), Ramaa Hudnell (25 years, Youth and Family Advocate), Richard Bell (11 years, Youth and Family Advocate), and Sue Hostetler (11 years, Data & Evaluation Manager).

For over a decade, these staff showed up with courage and investment amid crisis, centered every youth's voice, used their own voice to advance the mission, and loved youth when it feels for them that no one else does. Thank you and congrats to our 2025 winners.

Our Values

PATIENCE

LOVE & CARING

COMMUNICATION

INTEGRITY

CO-CREATION

COMMUNITY

Thank You To Our 2025 Sponsors



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

Contributions of all forms make a difference.



**THE BRIDGE
FOR YOUTH**

Here for Youth 24/7.

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Text: 612-400-7233

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Learn how to get involved at bridgeforyouth.org