

LIGHT. HOPE. TRANSFORMATION.



CITY OF REFUGE

BUILDING UPON



2023
Annual
Report

2023 Annual Report

CityofRefugeAtl.org

1300 Joseph E Boone Blvd NW, Atlanta, GA 30314

A Message From Our CEO

As we reflect on 2023 and all that was accomplished through the ministry of City of Refuge, we are extremely grateful for the fact that we were able to build a more robust process and system for individuals and families who found themselves in need of the resources provided on our campus. In order to build something, a foundation must first be established, and that foundation has now been in place for more than 26 years. Honestly, 26 years ago, we were not aware of the size and scope that City of Refuge would eventually reach. Thankfully, we were able to establish a foundation of passion, excellence, dignity, and integrity. Those four pillars of our foundation have allowed us to grow and expand in ways we could not envision when the building process began.

When the building of a house takes place there are many individuals of varying skills that must be involved in the process. Architects will develop plans, construction teams will assemble materials and put the framing and essentials into the house, electricians will wire, plumbers will install systems, designers will select paint and finishes, and, as a result of everyone doing their assigned job, eventually a house will be completed, and a family will move in to enjoy what the labor of others accomplished. Such is the case at City of Refuge as we attempt to build and rebuild thousands of people's hopes, dreams, and destinies each year. Investors share financial resources, volunteers assemble various aspects of our programming, topic-specific trained partners assist with vocational preparation, counselors provide guidance, staff work daily to keep the machine well-oiled and running smoothly and the positive outcomes are too numerous to list here.

In 2023, all the necessary components of building momentum were present on our campus and in our community. As you review this Annual Report, you will see that the pathway to light, hope, and transformation was expanded and built in a bigger fashion, and a greater number of people than in past years received the quality care they needed. Your contribution to the building process was, and is, incredibly valuable, and we are grateful you have chosen to be a part of Breaking Barriers. Building Momentum.

By the way, our building projects (physical, emotional, spiritual) are far from complete. 2024 will see a great deal of building, of expansion, of transformation. It's an honor to have each of you on the construction committee!



Bruce Deel

2023

Who We Are

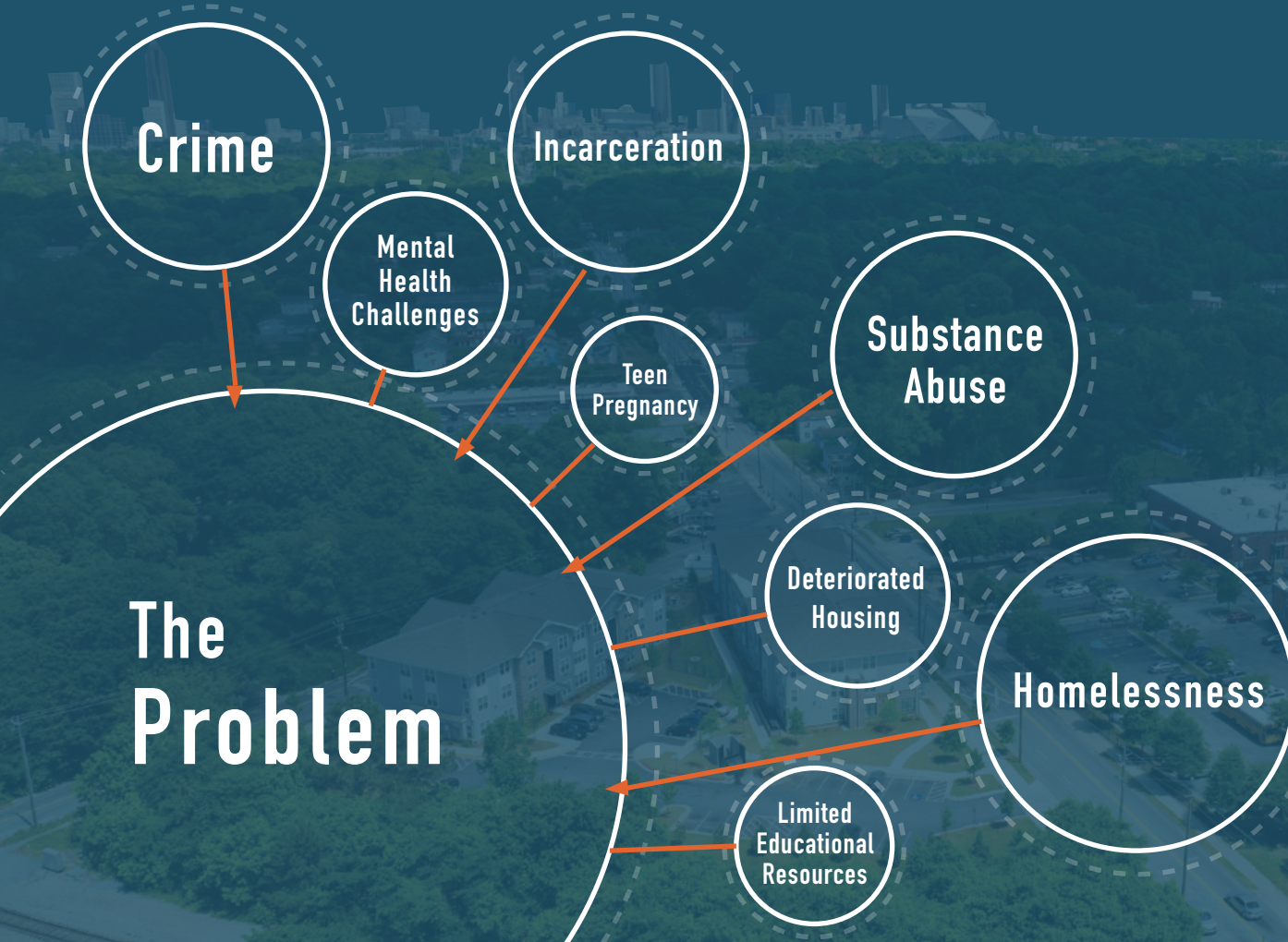
City of Refuge is a faith-based environment that helps individuals and families transition out of crisis.



Overcoming Barriers

If a person is born into poverty in Atlanta, there is just a 4% chance of escaping poverty in their lifetime.

Due to the complexity of poverty, there is not a quick, one sized fits all solution.



A Proven Solution

By providing all essential services on one campus, we enable individuals and families to experience a seamless journey out of extreme poverty, **dramatically increasing the chance to escape poverty.**

Transformation Process

1

Get Stable

MEALS

HOUSING

MEDICAL CARE

CHILDCARE

2

Learn New Skills

JOB TRAINING

SOFT SKILLS

RESUME

LIFE SKILLS

3

Thrive in Community

EMPLOYMENT

FAMILY SUPPORT

MENTORSHIP

EDUCATION





Sustainable Transformation

Surrounded by support



Meet Dondrea

Job Training

Housing

Health & Wellness

Youth Development

In 2018, Dondrea and her son Tobias suddenly found themselves facing homelessness after losing their apartment. As a 24-year-old single mom, her options were limited.

“Homelessness doesn’t always look crazy,” she said. “It can happen to anybody. I made good money. I don’t have any drug problems. It just became overwhelming because I was doing everything on my own. I was making \$1,000 a week and still couldn’t afford to live on my own.”

Dondrea’s journey to City of Refuge (COR) was not an easy one. At a previous shelter, she and Tobias had to share a room with seven other women and their children, a situation rife with “animosity and negativity.”

However, her life took a turn when she was accepted into City of Refuge in January 2023. “It was beyond my expectations,” she said. “I thought it was going to be another place where I was going to have to struggle to make things work, but this place has been a huge blessing.”

In Eden Village, they were given their own private room and space—a semblance of stability and dignity they hadn’t known in years. For Dondrea, it wasn’t just about having a roof over their heads; it was the comprehensive support that allowed her to break free from the cycle of struggle. Tobias, a fourth grader, enrolled in City School, COR’s on-campus school.

While living at City of Refuge, Dondrea gave birth to her second son, Roger. She says she felt tremendously supported throughout the pregnancy and birth experience. Whatever she and the baby needed—clothes, diapers, etc.—was provided.

By accessing all the support services she needed “under one roof”—housing, full-day preschool, healthy food, educational opportunities, job training, support classes—Dondrea was freed up to focus on personal growth and development.

With Roger in full-day childcare at City Kids and Tobias at City School, Dondrea enrolled and completed the NAPA Automotive Technician Training, a 16-week job training program.

“For the first time since high school, I’ve been able to complete a program because I didn’t have to worry about childcare or feeding my kids or making ends meet,” she said.

After completing the NAPA course, the COR team helped Dondrea land a job at MARTA, where she’s already begun their year-long training program.

Beyond vocational training, Dondrea also took advantage of some of the support classes offered at City of Refuge, recognizing the positive impact on her mental health. She particularly enjoyed the art classes, which she said helped reduce stress and anxiety.

As she considers the future, Dondrea is filled with hope. She’s eager to secure independent housing for her family. She’s excited about the idea of decorating the boys’ rooms. She’s looking into buying a car. Her final words echoed profound gratitude for the compassionate support she received at City of Refuge:

“I’m thankful for City of Refuge. I really am. Everybody here is so caring. They’ll go out of their way to help you get to where you belong. The opportunities that have been afforded to me—I wouldn’t have gotten them anywhere else.”



Meet Jenice

Housing

Health & Wellness

Youth Development

Jenice was just 25 years old when she found herself carrying more burdens than she could handle. While working in a Pittsburgh hospital during the 2020 pandemic, she became pregnant.

After giving birth to her daughter Mireya, Jenice battled postpartum depression, bipolar disorder, and anxiety. Worse, her daughter's father became abusive and she had to file a restraining order.

Jenice moved to Atlanta with Mireya, but she struggled to find consistent work or housing. In 2022, they found refuge at Eden Village. With Mireya in City Kids, Jenice began rebuilding her life. Through counseling and support from partners like House of Cherith, Mercy Care, and Go Church, she began to heal. She also enrolled at Atlanta Tech and started studying cosmetology.

Her growth culminated in securing permanent housing near City of Refuge so Mireya could continue her schooling. Jenice now has a full-time job and aims to finish school, obtain her cosmetology license, and save for a car.

Meet Mike

Job Training

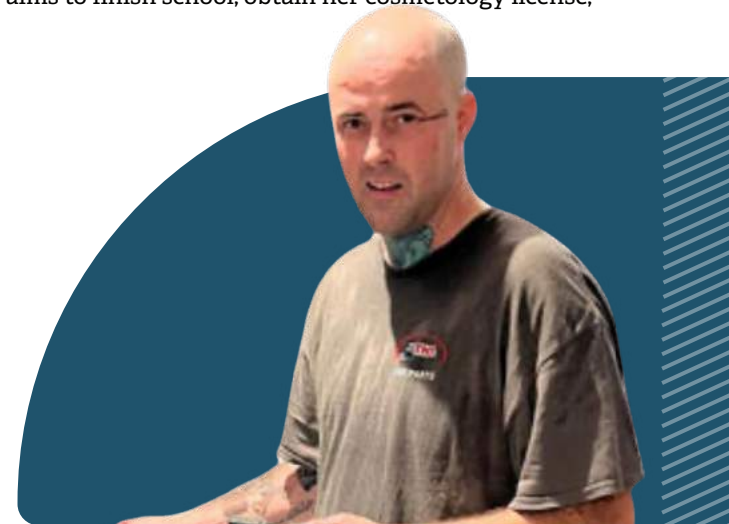
Housing

Reentry

After growing up in an orphanage and struggling through the foster care system, Mike had an extremely challenging start to life. Eventually, he developed a drug problem and faced homelessness.

He began breaking into homes out of desperation for food and shelter, then ended up in prison. While serving time and "hoping for a change," Mike signed up for City of Refuge's TYRO Reentry program and became our very first individual to go through our transitional housing program in 2021. Through the program, Mike received a cell phone, transportation, and temporary rental home.

After two years of holding two steady jobs, building his credit, saving up, staying sober, and working hard, Mike officially secured permanent housing for himself.



Meet Rodrigo

Job Training

Health & Wellness

Growing up in Brazil, Rodrigo never imagined he'd one day go from being a professor to a plumber to a web developer at a global tech company.

Born and raised in Sao Paulo, Brazil, Rodrigo was a professor at a local university before political problems and violence led him and his wife to immigrate to the United States. But adapting to a new culture and language was tough. Despite being a professor, he worked physically demanding construction jobs for eight years.

As he hit rock bottom, Rodrigo found hope in City of Refuge's Tech Transformation Academy. At the encouragement of a friend, he enrolled in the Web Developer Course. The class was challenging, but he received ample support and encouragement from his instructors, classmates, and case manager.

Eventually, Rodrigo landed a job at Capgemini, a global IT services and consulting company. Reflecting on his life and journey, Rodrigo sees nothing short of transformation. "My life has completely changed," he said. "I couldn't be happier...I can make plans and dream again."



2023 Impact Metrics

2023

317,922

Meals Served

11,714

Medical services
provided

86

Reentry citizens
served

331

Youth impacted

23

College scholarships
through J17 Fund

705

Jobs placed

36,880

Housing requests

271

Job training
graduates

3,280

Job fair
participants

309

Men, women and
children housed

City of Refuge
House of Cherith
Mercy Care



Jon Bridges (Chairman)
Chick-fil-A

Chris Gabriel
Merrill Lynch

Mark Pighini
Deloitte

Mike Haynes
XL212

Amy Reavis
EY

Bob Patton
EY

Brittany Hartnett
Merrill Lynch

Kelsi Franco
House of Cherith

Quincy Springs
Chick-fil-A Vine City

Kelly Janzen
Fernweh Group

Mark Toro
Toro Development

Brent Layton
Sharecare

Kevin Herron
NAPA Auto Parts

☑ Time

☑ Talent

☑ Treasure

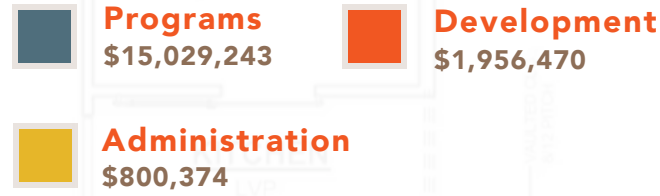
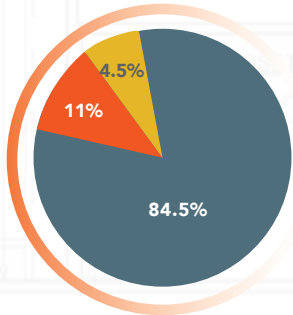
2023

COR

Financials

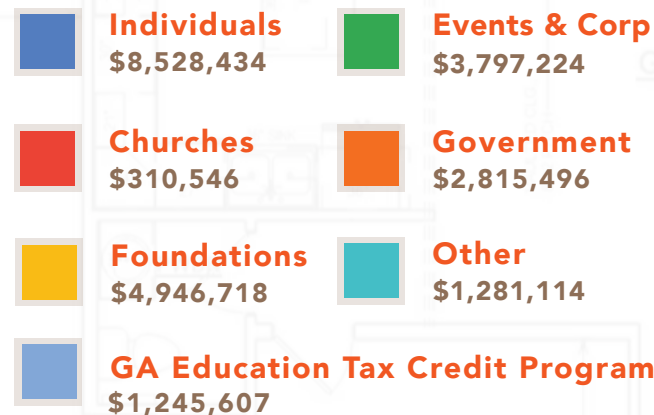
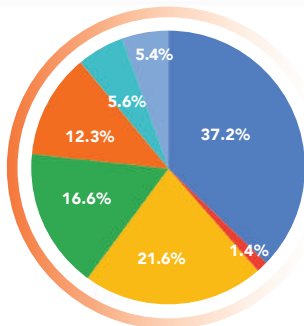
2023

2022 Expenses



Total: \$17,786,087

2023 Revenue



Total: \$22,925,139



Net Assets

Temporary Restricted Net Assets	\$9,542,854
Start	\$35,626,889
End	\$40,942,765
Change	\$5,315,876

Thank You For Building With Us In 2023



Annual Report | **COR** | **2023**

BUILDING LIGHT. HOPE. TRANSFORMATION.



CITY OF REFUGE

CityofRefugeAtl.org

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You Helped Us Build An Impactful 2023

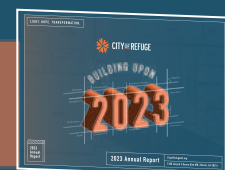
How You Broke Barriers and Built Momentum

2023 was a year of building at City of Refuge—building homes, health and wellness programs, vocational skills, educational opportunities, support, and our reach in the community. In short, thanks to you, we built momentum for those who needed it most. Here are our top 10 highlights from the past year:

- 1 The 345:** The 345 opened as our first men's housing program, giving shelter to 30 men, including veterans and returning citizens.
- 2 City School Atlanta:** We merged with Bright Futures Academy and expanded educational opportunities for 4th through 12th-grade students in the Westside, offering a quality private education to 136 students.
- 3 The Welcome Home House:** To break the barrier of limited transitional resources for women returning from incarceration, we built and opened The Welcome Home House in partnership with PRUMC and Atlanta Habitat for Humanity. The unit has housed two ladies already!
- 4 5 Single-Family Burbank Homes:** In partnership with the National Community Revitalization Coalition, we broke ground on five single-family homes on Burbank Drive to create opportunities for Westside residents to become homeowners.
- 5 Noble Clay Fitness:** As part of our commitment to providing quality health and wellness opportunities, we launched a partnership with Noble Clay Fitness by building a state-of-the-art fitness center on our campus. The gym serves residents, the community, and staff.
- 6 5 Car Giveaway:** In 2023, we gave away the most cars in any one day in our history: five! In one morning, our team gifted five ladies with new cars. Among them were mothers, staff members, and ladies who were commuting via public transit beforehand.
- 7 20th Auto Technician Class:** This year we celebrated our 20th graduating class of the NAPA Auto Technician Training Course. We are so grateful for this program and how it has built momentum for graduates to secure employment at places like MARTA, Delta, Nalley Toyota, Hertz, John Thornton Chevy, Nalley Honda, and more.
- 8 Most Refuge Run Registrants:** In 2023, we had the most registrants for our annual Refuge Run 5K! Participants all over the world ran virtually to support our mission, too.
- 9 The 2023 Gathering:** We had another successful Gathering with musical guest Amy Grant!
- 10 Most Attended Job Fair:** On December 7, 2023, we closed out our last job fair of the year with the most attendees at any one time: 327 people! Our job fairs are open to the entire community and assist people with resumes, interview tips, and applications.

View our 2023 Digital Annual Report

CityofRefugeAtl.org/annual-report



Our Top 10 Goals for 2024

Our foundational mission remains the same: provide light, hope, and transformation for individuals and families transitioning out of crisis. It's a foundation that leaves a lasting impact on its own, yet we know building upon it can transform even more lives. Here are our top 10 new initiatives we want to build upon in 2024:

- 1 Increase student enrollment**
Increase the number of students served in City School, City Kids Preschool, and Afterschool so we can positively impact more youth
- 2 Add counseling for youth**
Implement professional counseling and behavioral therapy services for kids in order to address emotional, social, and academic challenges
- 3 Expand job training programs**
Increase the amount of job training programs through additional employer partners and a new skilled labor workshop
- 4 Offer career workshops**
Offer opportunities for career restart with monthly Career Catalyst and Digital Fluency workshops
- 5 Expand housing for men**
Enhance and expand our housing program for men by offering therapy and substance abuse counseling
- 6 Expand our reentry program**
Broaden the reach of our reentry program to two new prisons or transitional centers so more returning citizens have access to quality resources
- 7 Launch nutritional learning experience**
Provide residents and students with educational experiences on proper nutrition and healthy eating habits
- 8 Offer therapeutic equestrian activities**
Build a riding arena and launch a "Ponies and Petting" operation at our Sunny D Farms location that offers therapeutic equestrian activities for kids
- 9 Strengthen parent involvement**
Enhance parenting support for students by offering hands-on resources, workshops, parent/ teacher programs, and a parent advisory committee
- 10 Continue progress with Capital Campaign**
Break ground and complete new projects included in Breaking Barriers. Building Momentum. Capital campaign

IMPACT

How You Can Help Us Impact More Lives in 2024

In order to accomplish our big goals this year, we need your help! Here are three ways you can help us serve even more families in crisis in 2024:



Continued financial support

If you're already a financial supporter of City of Refuge, we can't thank you enough for your generosity. This year, would you consider an increase in your giving? Visit cityofrefugeatl.org/donate to give now.



Invite three friends for a tour of City of Refuge

The best way to help people catch the vision for our work is to show it to them in person. We challenge you to invite three friends for an in-person tour of City of Refuge campus. Visit cityofrefugeatl.org/tour to learn more.



Volunteer your time and talent at City of Refuge

Leverage your gifts to serve families in crisis and experience transformation yourself. Visit cityofrefugeatl.org/volunteer to learn more.

