

A photograph of four diverse children of various ethnicities smiling and laughing outdoors in a sunny, grassy area. The children are of different ages and are huddled together, creating a warm and joyful atmosphere. The text 'Grace in ACTION' is overlaid on the image, with 'Grace' in a large, dark blue script font, 'in' in a smaller, dark blue sans-serif font, and 'ACTION' in a large, dark blue, all-caps sans-serif font.

# Grace in ACTION

**WE RAISE FOUNDATION**  
ANNUAL REPORT FY2018

# Dear Friends,

Each year, we have the privilege to share with you how your gifts are being applied in the service of others. We are pleased to offer the results of our most recent fiscal year for your review with the accompanying thanks of a grateful organization for the generosity you have shared with us.

FY18 was a significant year for our organization. We repositioned the foundation to work at the intersection of poverty, violence, and inequality; we launched a new digital marketing and fundraising platform; and we rebranded the organization to “We Raise Foundation.” All of these strategic decisions were created and enacted with one objective: to get more resources into the hands of those organizations bringing solutions to these critical community challenges.

This evolution is another step in a 113-year history of living our faith. In short, we believe freedom is grace in action and our work – supported through your gifts – is the living embodiment of God’s call to love one another (John 13:34). Since our early beginnings when we focused on the issue of tuberculosis and through the subsequent years of funding a variety of issues, we have always maintained a commitment to good stewardship and a relationship-based approach to working with our grantees. This is as true today as it was in the beginning.

The past year required extraordinary investments in our repositioning, all of which are focused on ensuring our impact for the future. We have added a unique set of “value-add services” to our financial awards as we aim to help our grantee partners become even more impactful in their work.

Our commitment to you remains steadfast – to be a good steward of the resources you have entrusted to us, leveraging your gifts to bring even greater impact to carefully selected organizations who share our vision of a world free from poverty, violence, and inequality. For your partnership, your friendship, and your generosity, we remain,

Gratefully yours,



Mr. Rick Hein  
Chair, Board of Directors



Mr. Paul C. Miles  
President and CEO



Rick Hein

Paul Miles





We Raise Foundation is honored to present our fiscal year 2018 Annual Report, which reflects the impact of your gifts and commitment activity from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018.

Called by Christ to serve others, We Raise Foundation partners with Christian organizations to support and develop sustainable programs that help people thrive.

In early 2018, Wheat Ridge Ministries repositioned itself as We Raise Foundation, refining our mission, revitalizing our commitment, and redefining our brand. We looked to the future while remaining grounded in the words of the Gospel: *It is for freedom that Christ has set us free.* (Galatians 5:1a, NIV).

We honed our mission as a heartfelt response to God's grace for us shown in Jesus Christ, freely given to everyone, rich and poor, old and young, deserving and undeserving. Grace is all about what God gives to us. Our response to that grace is what defines us. As an organization, our response is **grace in action**.

Our new mission focus brings with it a revitalized commitment to help grantees become more successful at finding resources needed to implement and sustain their programs. Value-added services for GrantsPlus award recipients means that guidance and educational support for fundraising and capacity building is part of every grant package. In raising the value of our grants, we've raised the value of your financial support.

Our work with grantees and programs that advance freedom in Christ is *grace in action*. The work of organizations and individuals that offer solutions within the areas of education, workforce development, and criminal justice is *grace in action*. Your financial and prayerful support of this work in a broken world is *grace in action*.

God's grace surrounds every organization and project leader supported by We Raise Foundation. On the following pages, you'll meet four program partners who clearly demonstrate this grace in action.



Intersect Arts Center, St. Louis, Mo.



River City Development Corporation, Chicago, Ill.

## *Our Vision*

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People free from poverty, violence, and inequality.

## *Our Mission*

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Called by Christ to serve others, We Raise Foundation partners with Christian organizations to support and develop sustainable programs that help people thrive.



# People Served in FY2018

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During Fiscal Year 2018, We Raise Foundation grant recipients  
**served over 39,750 people**  
through their programs!



By The Hand Club For Kids, Chicago, Ill.



# Volunteers Engaged in FY2018

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Volunteers are the lifeblood of so many nonprofit organizations.

During Fiscal Year 2018,

**over 4,800 individuals volunteered**

their time with We Raise Foundation grantees for a total of

**116,406 hours!**

*"Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." 1 Peter 4:10*



Breakthrough Urban Ministries, Chicago, Ill.



Farming Hope, San Francisco, Calif.

## *Program Support in FY2018*

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We Raise's Grant Programs are about much more than money. Long-term successful programs and leaders also benefit from expert advice, connections with other inspired leaders, and additional funding opportunities. We Raise grants aim to provide both **financial**

**support and expert resources**

to strengthen the program for sustainable impact.

**Total Program Support in FY2018**  
**\$2,183,149**





Harbor House Ministries, Oakland, Calif.

## *Donor Support in FY2018*

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Everything We Raise Foundation does is made possible by our generous, faithful supporters.

**We received donations from 12,584 individuals during fiscal year 2018.** Donors supported the work of We Raise in a variety of ways including planned gifts, IRA charitable rollover gifts, gifts of stock, memoriam/honorariums, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and Amazon Smile.

Our volunteers helped us make thousands of thank you calls and write hundreds of thank you notes.



# *Grantee Highlight*

## Grace for the Children

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By The Hand Club For Kids, Chicago, Ill.

*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. Romans 12:6*

In an area known for unrelenting gun violence, a 36% household poverty rate, and under-resourced public schools, the By The Hand Club For Kids – Moving Everest (BTH-ME) site is an oasis of God's grace and care. BTH-ME provides after-school literacy, health/wellness, and spiritual programs for students who need them the most.

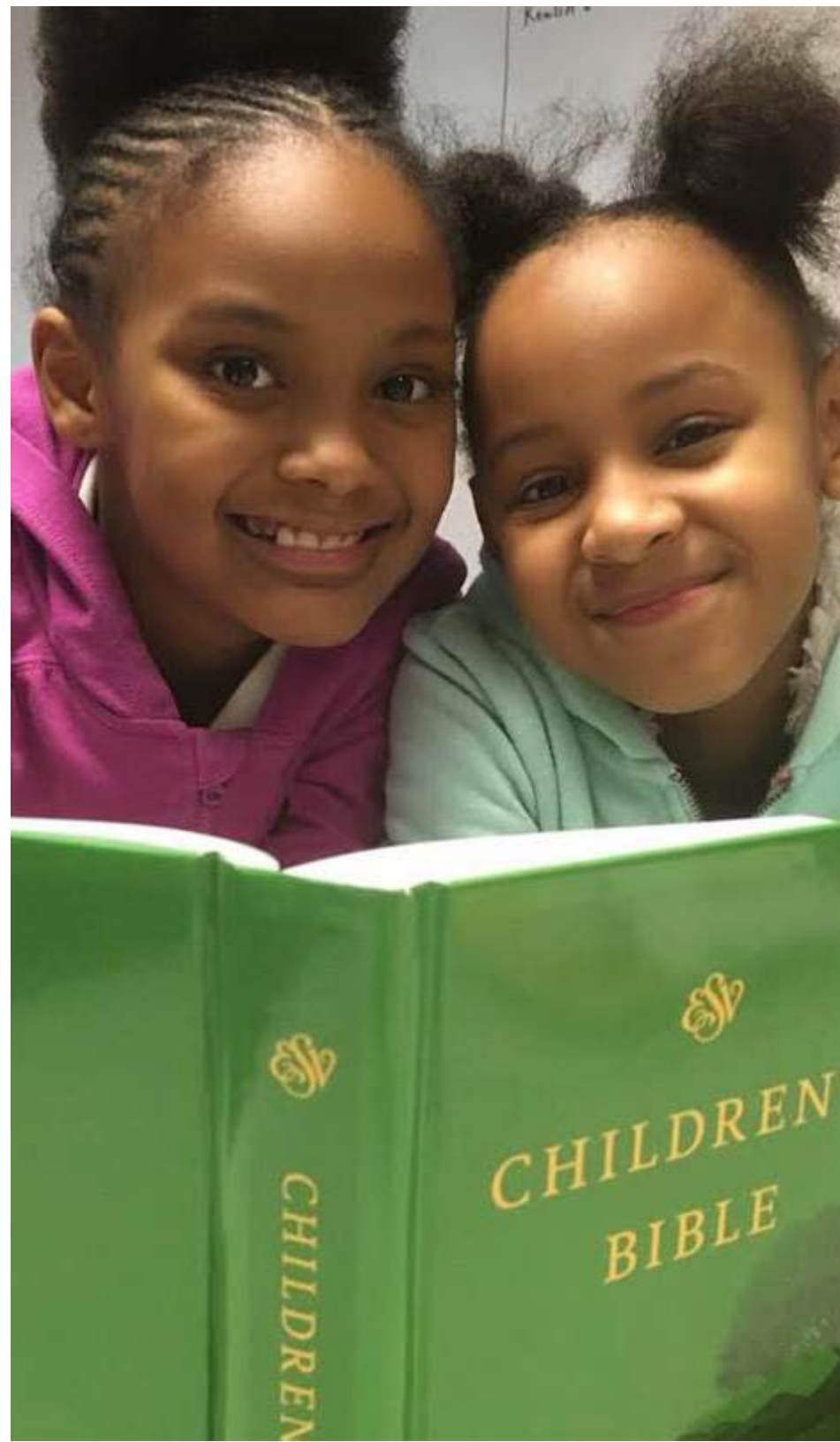
Students like Tanilya, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader who serves as a BTH-ME youth ambassador, sings in the choir, and loves to attend chapel. She came to BTH-ME a very quiet, very shy 1<sup>st</sup> grader with trouble reading. Today she is proud to tell you that she reads at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade level due to her studies in My Lexia, the web-based literacy intervention program used by BTH-ME.

Or students like Chakola, who was so withdrawn her first weeks at BTH-ME that she sat in the corner of the classroom and cried. But every day BTH staff gently encouraged her, showing her she was loved and valued—showing her grace. Because of their dedicated support, Chakola not only began participating in class but today actively helps her classmates. She also progressed from a 1<sup>st</sup> grade reading level to a 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level in one year. And one day, she was able to stand up and recite all nine fruits of the spirit during a parent orientation. Shown grace, her joyful response is showing grace to others.

"Rather than helping children catch up, we want to move them forward," notes Allison Daze, BTH Fund Development Manager. "Our partnership with Moving Everest allows us to serve kids deeply and address some of the complex needs they might have growing up in a low-income neighborhood."

The We Raise grant is helping BTH-ME progress in their goal of expanding one grade level each year, which will mean an additional 90 students receiving a nourishing meal, religious education, academic support, enrichment activities, and athletics.

"I appreciate that We Raise treats us as partners," notes Daze. "We can be honest about our challenges and how we can grow with We Raise over the grant term."



*Grantee Highlight*

## Grace for People Struggling with Homelessness

Farming Hope, San Francisco, Calif.

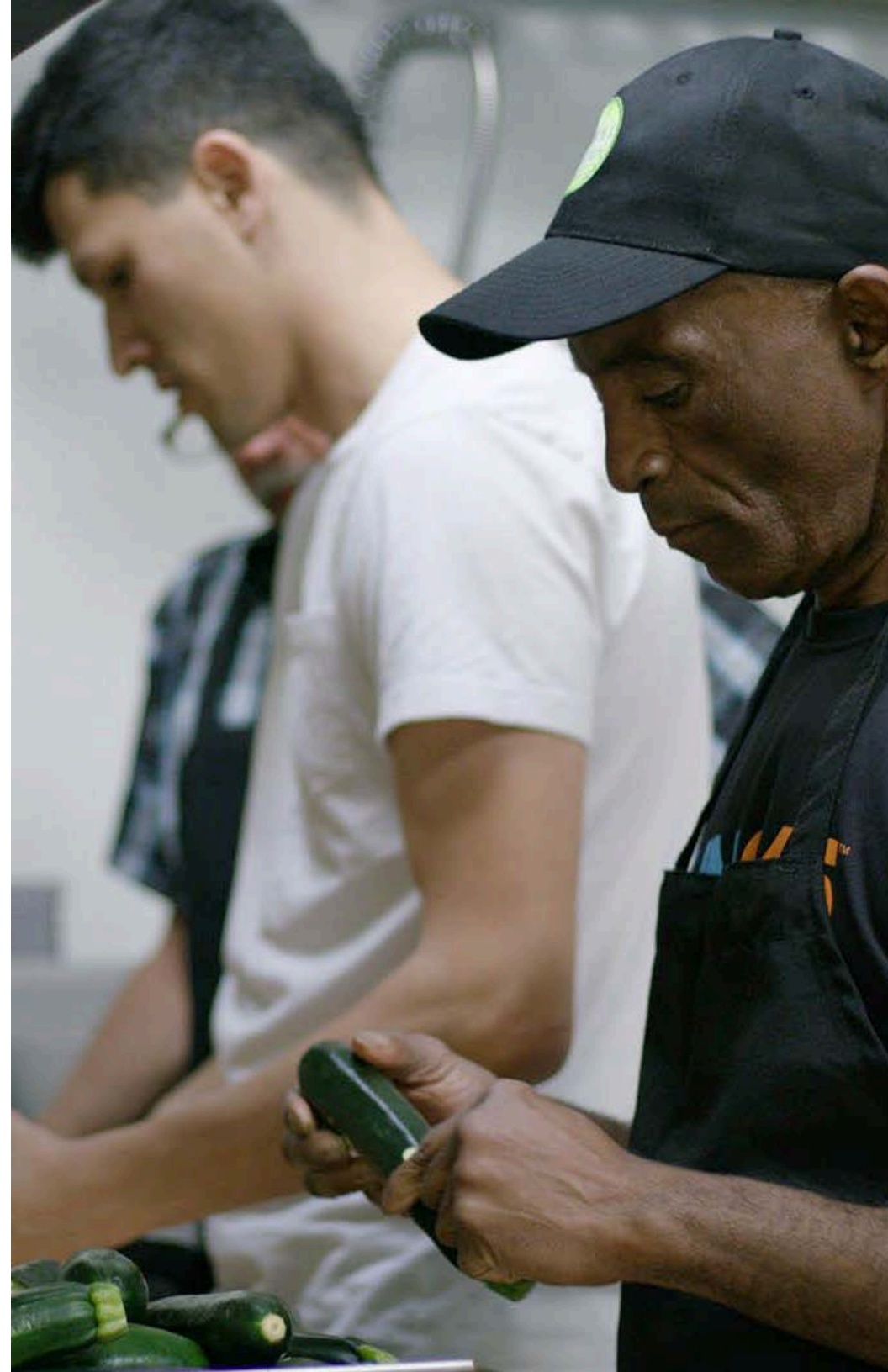
*See to it that no one misses the grace of God. Hebrews 12:15*

Jamie Stark believes that planting, harvesting, cooking, serving, and sharing food around a community table can lead to deep healing in the world. Stark and other Stanford University students developed Farming Hope to turn the concept of soup kitchens on its head, hiring the people who usually stand in line to receive food and giving them an opportunity to produce food and feed others.

People like Munir, who came to Farming Hope with cooking experience but needed help moving on after being homeless for a while and living in shelter. “Munir quickly became a leader and helped run a lunch pop-up café,” Stark says. On his first payday, Munir told Stark how much it meant to receive his first Farming Hope paycheck. “He called it a restart,” Stark remembers. Munir later ‘graduated’ from Farming Hope, accepting a full-time job at a Japanese restaurant.

Or people like Jesse, whose life changed after he started working in the Farming Hope kitchens and gardens. “It got me to where I wanted to do something for myself,” he says. “I realized I didn’t have to give up.” Jesse poured his passion and energy into his work and showed real promise for leadership—and soon was hired full-time at Whole Foods. “Cooking makes me feel good when I can look out there and see everyone else enjoying my meal,” he says.

The We Raise grant supported Farming Hope’s addition of three gardens at partner churches. But for Stark it goes beyond the check. “We Raise’s personalized approach to advising has really made my interactions with We Raise staff stand out among support from other foundations,” Stark says. He also participated in the annual Emerging Leader Convening. “The information and inspiration I gained there has really stuck with me and helps keep me going at tough times,” he says.





## Grantee Highlight

# Grace for Returning Citizens

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St. Leonard's Ministries, Chicago, Ill.

*God is able to make all grace abound in you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work. 2 Corinthians 2:8*

For more than 85 years, St. Leonard's Ministries (SLM) has provided comprehensive residential, case management, and employment services for formerly incarcerated men and women. Statistics show their holistic program works, but for Executive Director Erwin Mayer, it's much more than numbers.

"St. Leonard's is a caring community, a place where no one is judged when they come to us: all that matters is that they need a place to stay and access to services," Mayer says. "Here people care about you, they know you by your first name instead of by a number."

SLM cares—and SLM trains. The success of their culinary and construction programs—and the positive results for career growth for those enrolled in the Advanced Culinary Training Program—inspired staff to develop an Advanced Construction Skills Training program, which will help raise participant earning income from minimum wage to middle-income, potentially alleviating the consequences of poverty that can lead to reincarceration. We Raise's grant was given to support this program expansion.

SLM is intentional about hiring formerly incarcerated men and women across seniority levels. Most of their staff is made up of individuals with first-hand experience navigating the criminal justice system and surmounting barriers to reentry. Staff like Heather, who faced her release without a job, a place to live, or the support of family or friends. Upon arriving at St. Leonard's, she lived in Grace House, attended the Basic Construction Skills Training program, and gained confidence and strength through counseling and the encouragement of staff. "SLM gave me the foundation I needed to straighten out my life," she says. "It's life changing!"

Today Heather works as part of the St. Leonard's building maintenance staff servicing the plumbing and electrical needs at six buildings. She loves her job, but what she enjoys the most is making connections and offering encouragement to women in the program. She often stays after clocking out to talk to the women just coming into the program. "That's my way of giving back what was freely given to me," Heather says. "If I can help one person with anything, I'll feel successful!"





## Grantee Highlight

# Grace for Community

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Intersect Arts Center, St. Louis, Mo.

*[God] has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. 2 Timothy 1:9*

Intersect Arts Center (IAC) began as a vision of Sarah Bernhardt, an artist and professor of art at the University of Missouri in St. Louis. After Bernhardt's husband was placed as pastor to the small historic struggling urban congregation of Holy Cross Lutheran Church, she set up her studio and began interacting with her neighbors.

Holy Cross is located in Gravois Park, where 75% of residents are below the poverty line and families struggle to keep their children enrolled in school. Vacant, neglected buildings underscored a general disinvestment in the community. And, according to Pastor Bob Bernhardt, there was a definite stigma against the church. But Sarah was determined, starting a weekly children's art class which soon grew into after-school programs, art exhibitions, concerts, and conferences.

Originally, IAC was housed in the shuttered Holy Cross Lutheran School. However, with the help of partners like the Lutheran Development Group, RISE community development organization, and others, the former school was transformed into a charter school and the former Lutheran seminary property nearby was renovated for IAC's use. The center features a 4,000-square-foot gallery, dance studios, recording studios, a variety of creative workspaces, and a commercial kitchen. The third floor houses 25 working artists' studios.

We Raise Foundation provided a grant in support of a new summer program for at-risk youth called Camp Resolve, which focuses on conflict resolution skills taught through the arts. The two-week camp for 30 middle and high school youth offered culinary arts, visual arts, dance, and drama.

IAC is a place where the community's disparate population – the church congregation, the community, and artists – can truly come together. In an interview with St. Louis Public Radio, Bernhardt expressed hope that the space will lead to growth and a healthier, more productive community. "When we create a space for that mix to happen, we end up caring more about each other as a community," she says.



# 2017 Richard E. Herman Emerging Leader Award

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## Dr. Justin Beene



A native of Grand Rapids, Mich., Beene is the director/founder of the Grand Rapids Center for Community Transformation, a collective between a non-profit, Bethany Christian Services, two social enterprises, Building Bridges Professional Services and Rising Grinds Cafe, a for-profit, Double O Supply and Craftsman, and Tabernacle Community Church. Together these partners work to create opportunities for community transformation. Beene is also a lecturer/faculty member at Acton University, Grand Rapids, and regular guest speaker at many local, state, national, and global conferences.

Beene holds a bachelor's degree in social work and family studies from Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich., a master's degree in social work in management of human services from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, a master's in ministry leadership from Grand Rapids Theological Seminary, and a doctorate in transformational leadership with a focus in entrepreneurial transformation from Bakke Graduate University, Seattle, Wash.

**"My heart is truly humbled and I am deeply thankful for the work of We Raise in honoring and investing in community leaders. This award is affirming, not necessarily just of me, but also of my supportive family, my amazing team, church, community, and the work that the Holy Spirit is doing in all of us."**

*-Dr. Justin Beene*

# Thank You!

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“We are called by our creator to care for one another; we are called to serve our neighbor,” notes We Raise President Paul Miles.  
“If we take our faith seriously, we have to take that call seriously.”

Our donors make it possible for We Raise to respond to God’s grace by supporting, encouraging, and collaborating with organizations working to solve the societal issues at the intersection of violence, poverty, and inequality—organizations working to set people free from the bondage of these issues so that they can, in turn, respond to God’s grace and share it freely with others.

Your financial support is an important example of grace in action. Thankful for all that you have been given through God’s grace, you share your blessings with us. And for that we are both grateful and humbled. In his letter to Titus, Paul tells us that the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people (Titus 2:11). Through our work with program partners and our communications with donors, we are privileged to experience that grace every single day. Thank you.

Visit [weraise.org](https://weraise.org) for more grantee stories.

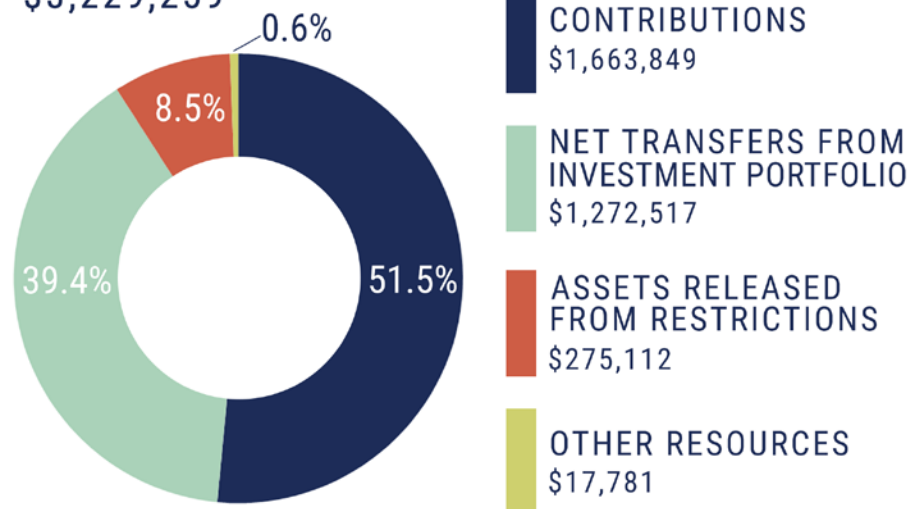




# FY2018 Financials

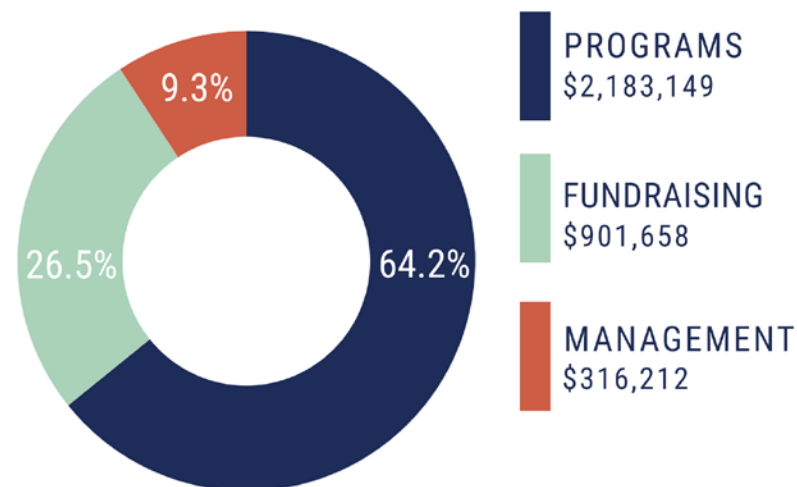
## BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING REVENUES

\$3,229,259



## BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING EXPENSES

\$3,401,019



Program Expense is comprised of: Grants and Projects (\$797,759), Program Education (\$856,676), and Program Support (\$528,714).

Total Net Assets at 6/30/18 were \$11,703,833.

Note: Net Transfers from Investment Portfolio for the year ended June 30, 2018 includes investment for the rebranding and launch of We Raise Foundation.

We Raise Foundation does not accept any government funding.  
A full copy of our audit report is available online at [weraise.org](http://weraise.org).



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Fiscal Year 2018

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**Dr. Roderick McCallum**, Professor Emeritus of Microbial Pathogenesis and Immunology, College of Medicine, Texas A&M University Health Science Center, College Station, Texas

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**Ronda Bischoff**, Director of Finance

**Meredith Capocci**, Staff Accountant

**Matt Croll**, Director of Finance

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**Eric Hawley**, Assistant Director of Programs

**Gail Maher**, Ministry Programs Assistant

**Abigail Miller**, Manager of Digital Strategy

**Joanne Otte**, Director of Programs

**Anne Schoenherr**, Director of Communications

**Jennifer Sievers**, Manager of Advancement Services

**Jacob Smutz**, Philanthropic Advisor

**Tanya Thomas**, Executive Assistant to the President/HR Administrator



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