



JOY IN YOUR GENEROSITY

We Raise Foundation | Annual Report FY2023

Dear Friends & Partners,

It is a privilege to offer our thanks to you for the support you have provided over the past year. Enclosed in this annual report is an accounting of your generosity, highlights of the work you have supported, and our expression of gratitude that you chose We Raise to impact the lives of others.

Our aim is to be the hands and feet of Jesus in communities that, too often, are left behind. We do this by following His example of valuing relationships, finding ways to be helpful and supportive of others, being proximate to the people you serve, and by recognizing we are all better than the worst thing we've done. We recognize that you have many choices when you consider your philanthropy. We remain truly grateful that you directed your support to us and are steadfast in our commitment to deploy your gifts in a manner that multiplies its impact. "Smart philanthropy" that expands the influence of your giving is the hallmark of our approach. Thank you for helping us make a difference.

Gratefully,

Mr. Mark Duesenberg
Chair, Board of Directors



Mr. Paul C. Miles
President and CEO





**Empowering Youth: Enhancing Academic
Success through Tutoring
Sunshine Gospel Ministries, Chicago, Ill.**

- Joy in Your Generosity -

We Raise Foundation is honored to present our fiscal year 2023 Annual Report, which reflects the impact of your gifts from July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023.

“Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)

God is the quintessential cheerful giver. He delights in giving extravagantly and desires that we, as His image bearers, reflect His character. Scripture teaches that generosity is inextricably tied to loving others. After all, God so loved the world, He gave His only Son to meet the greatest need of all time.

In response to Christ’s sacrificial love, We Raise Foundation strives to collaborate with like-minded individuals and organizations who are eager to demonstrate God’s love with action. We Raise is committed to steward your generosity wisely and strategically for deeper impact and invest in compassionate program innovators who offer sustainable solutions within the areas of education, workforce development and criminal justice.

We Raise is blessed to be in community with those who share our vision of a world free from poverty, violence, and inequality. Your partnership enables us to invest in people and ideas that can result in healthy communities, opportunities for growth, and thriving individuals. Knowing that our time, talent, and treasure can make a positive impact to those around us, we are filled with a sense of purpose and fulfillment—resulting in joy.



**Partners in Hope Paid Training Program
Community Warehouse, Milwaukee, Wis.**

Our Vision

People free from poverty, violence, and inequality.

Our Mission

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 FY2023

During Fiscal Year 2023, We Raise Foundation grantee partners served over **22,000 men, women, and children** through their programs!



**Social Emotional Learning Initiative
By The Hand Club For Kids, Chicago, Ill.**

Volunteers Engaged in FY2023

Volunteers are the lifeblood of so many
nonprofit organizations.

During Fiscal Year 2023,

over 700 individuals volunteered

their time with We Raise Foundation grantees for a total of
over 58,000 hours!

*"Each of you should use whatever
gift you have received to serve
others, as faithful stewards of
God's grace in its various forms."*

1 Peter 4:10



Farming Hope Impact Expansion
Farming Hope, San Francisco, Calif.



Program Support in FY2023

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 FY2023
\$900,920**

**MAAFA Redemption Project
Chicago, Ill.**



**Building Stability & Prosperity
for Community Transformation
St. Marcus Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wis.**

Donor Support in FY2023

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

We received donations from nearly 3,400 individuals during fiscal year 2023.

Donors supported the work of We Raise in a variety of ways including planned gifts, IRA charitable rollover gifts, gifts of stock, memorial/honorariums, Thrivent Choice Dollars, and Amazon Smile.

Grantee Highlights

On the next few pages, we've highlighted four We Raise program partners that inspired us this past year, projects made possible only by our partners and donors working together.

Grantee Highlight

Empowering Youth: Enhancing Academic Success through Tutoring Sunshine Gospel Ministries, Chicago, Ill.

Your life-changing generosity and partnership with We Raise enables Christian non-profits to address disparities with sustainable solutions to create a more equitable landscape for students, such as those in the Woodlawn community, on the South Side of Chicago.

Classrooms across the country, including those in Woodlawn, continue to reel from learning disruptions caused by the pandemic.

"The pandemic has negatively affected our students at a higher magnitude than students in other places," said Taryn Fears, youth outreach director for Sunshine Gospel Ministries. "Math and reading are essential building blocks that galvanize students in other activities. That's why it's important that we take preventative steps now to ensure all students have every opportunity to thrive."

Your generous financial support enabled We Raise to award a \$100,000 three-year GrantsPlus Grant to Sunshine for its "Empowering Youth: Enhancing Academic Success through Tutoring" program, which kicked off in September to help mitigate pandemic setbacks. The grant enables Sunshine to elevate their program offerings to help boost



reading and math capabilities by targeting the unique needs of the 130 students in Sunshine's afterschool enrichment program.

Approximately 95% of participants attend a nearby elementary school. According to research, the school placed in the bottom 50% of test scores with a math proficiency of 3% and a reading proficiency of 8%.

A portion of the We Raise grant will pay for eight part-time, experienced tutors for five hours a week for 32 weeks per school year. The paid tutors work with groups of five youth for 30 minutes twice a week, one day is dedicated to reading and the other is to math. In addition, students from Moody Bible Institute volunteer to mentor the youth and teens.

"It's not just academics. It's about relationships. Tutors and volunteers are role models who are pouring into these young lives," Fears added. "We believe in radical hospitality and eagerly partner with organizations, like We Raise, that seek the expansion of God's kingdom and restoration of Chicago. Just like We Raise, Sunshine aims to create sustainable programs that positively impact the lives of Woodlawn and beyond so that they may live abundant lives."

Grantee Highlight

Digging Deeper: Expanding Chopping for Change Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry, Cleveland, Ohio

Your generosity is a recognition of the intrinsic value and dignity of every person and reflection of a sincere desire to promote healing, which in turn perpetuates a cycle of hope for those impacted by the criminal justice system.

While serving time at Grafton Correctional Facility, Bobby found a new purpose and gained confidence when he had the opportunity to obtain culinary arts training through Chopping for Change (C4C)—an innovative pre-release workforce development initiative. In September, Bobby landed a job at a restaurant in Strongsville, Ohio, where he earns a living wage.

“Some of us in here really struggle with the negative self-image of being a burden on society and our families,” said Bobby. “It takes a lot of reconciling. It’s amazing to be able to work again, knowing that it’s helping my kids.”

Bobby can put his earnings in escrow until his release. Having a financial cushion when he returns home will make a difference between a fresh start and recidivation, said Elizabeth Stiles, who oversees C4C in her role as Academic Program Manager for Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry in Cleveland.



We Raise awarded Stiles an Emerging Leader Grant for her work with C4C. She also teaches several classes including Food Justice, Food Systems, and ServSafe, which offers food safety certification.

Stiles said she’s grateful for the vision of We Raise donors and their commitment to create a more just, equitable and joyful world. “This grant will enable me to gain leadership skills that will further improve the program for our students,” she added.

C4C is a partnership between Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry in Cleveland, The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry. The program initially began for women at Cleveland’s Northeast Reintegration Center and has now expanded to include a male population from Grafton. Participants of C4C can earn a culinary training certificate after six months, a hospitality diploma after nine months, or an associate degree in culinary arts after 18 months.

But the learning doesn’t end in the kitchen, students also receive counseling and support services to overcome challenges that can hinder their success. To date, more than 250 students have participated in the program, and 97% have stayed out of the criminal justice system after release.

Grantee Highlight

Building Stability & Prosperity for Community Transformation St. Marcus Lutheran School, Milwaukee, Wis.

When generosity is strategically invested and focused on people, it promotes stability and healthy individuals, families and communities—and a brighter future for hard working parents like Colette in Milwaukee. Little did Colette know that enrolling three of her children at St. Marcus Lutheran School would lead to the joy of home ownership.

In 2021, We Raise, in partnership with Siebert Lutheran Foundation, awarded a \$300,000 grant that enabled St. Marcus to expand support services aimed at empowering all school families and the Harambee neighborhood in which they live.

While Colette's children were focused on academics and acquiring leadership skills at St. Marcus, she attended classes and workshops through the community engagement program. Every month, she met with Life Coach Moe Lawrenz to review spreadsheets, keep track of Colette's finances, and make goals. Through the program, Colette became involved with Habitat for Humanity.



Having been a renter for most of her life, Colette was hesitant to sign up for Habitat's ownership program; however, she was encouraged by Lawrenz's response: "when I asked Moe, she said, 'I don't see why not!'"

Colette, a mother of seven, had the opportunity to gain new skills as she worked on siding, dry wall, and painting on her new home. She also clocked in many hours at Habitat's resale store in addition to her full-time job as a resident service specialist/certified nursing assistant at St. John's on the Lake in Milwaukee.

"God is the head of all of this," Colette said. "I wouldn't have made it without Him. And I'm grateful for all the support from We Raise donors. This is a huge deal for my family. I appreciate everyone who prayed and worked to make sure we have a better life. It gives me chills just to think about it."



Grantee Highlight

Foodshare Greenville:RX – A Comprehensive Healthy Eating Prescription Program Mill Village Ministries, Greenville, S.C.

Generosity rooted in love has the power to transform lives, foster connections with the community and interrupt the cycle of poverty.

With the belief that access to healthy, affordable food shouldn't be limited to a person's income or location, FoodShare Greenville in South Carolina began supplying fresh produce boxes at a discounted price to community members facing food insecurity. Volunteers assemble and distribute the boxes every other Tuesday at different drive-by sites in Greenville County.

The non-profit organization expanded its FoodShare model after observing correlations between access to healthy foods and chronic illnesses. The holistic FoodRx Healthy Eating Prescription Program is an opportunity for community members to be released from the constraints of food insecurity, said Morgan Wilson, development manager for faith-based Mill Village Ministries, which oversees the FoodShare Program.

"We offer more than a food box. When individuals make healthy choices, it impacts their families and relieves the burden on healthcare systems," Wilson explained.

We Raise awarded Wilson with an Emerging Leader Grant for her hands-on work with FoodRx. Part of the \$10,000 grant will help increase the



program's reach to 1,000 families in low to moderate-income neighborhoods in Greenville County over the next two years.

"The grant will make a significant impact by allowing us to serve as the hands and feet of Christ to more people in the Greenville community," Wilson said. "I'm also humbled, grateful, and excited that through this grant, I will also expand my leadership skills to grow as a servant leader through the resources that We Raise offers."

FoodShare partners with two medical clinics to offer the FoodRx program. Participants are screened for preexisting conditions and food insecurity. Then, they are given a voucher for a bi-weekly produce box, which includes a recipe card, either in English or Spanish, with ideas on how to utilize the fruits and vegetables. After patients receive the free produce boxes for a year, they will be referred to instructions on purchasing a FoodShare box on their own.

"The vision of We Raise aligns with FoodShare's goal: to free people from the chains of inequitable systems that have left our neighbors in environments where they will not thrive without being provided the proper resources they need. FoodRx is a sustainable program that addresses the challenges our patients face and bridges the gap in the search for a healthier and fulfilled life."

2022 Richard E. Herman Leadership Award

Ms. Rachel Patterson



Rachel Patterson has served as the Executive Director of Oak Tree Ministries in Birmingham, Ala., since 2018. Oak Tree provides gospel-centered, trauma-informed community support to Birmingham's largest public housing community, Marks Village.

Since Patterson first began with Oak Tree Ministries as a volunteer in 2015 before joining the team as programs director in 2017. Oak Tree is located in the neighborhood where they work, living alongside the families who have been pushed to the margins, learning from them, and dreaming together about God re-writing the story in the community. They do this through relationships and programs and aim to be a preview of God's Kingdom where all people are gathered around the same table and everyone has what they need to thrive.

Patterson is involved with a number of community organizations, including the And Campaign Birmingham Chapter, which she helped start and currently serves as secretary of the leadership team. She is also a member of EmpowerED Birmingham, the Birmingham Coalition for Student Mental Health, and Birmingham Gospel Outreach.

"Being selected for the We Raise Leadership Award is an honor I never would have expected to receive. Being in a position of leadership is a sobering and humbling privilege that I do not take lightly. I view leadership as a gift and a responsibility to steward and leverage for the good of others, especially those our society has purposefully left behind. I hope that receiving this award will shine a spotlight on all of the incredible people doing the work right along side of me. I don't feel worthy, but I am deeply grateful for the honor of bearing witness to our collective and individual stories as we write the next chapter in Birmingham together!"

- Ms. Rachel Patterson

The Leadership Award recognizes the commitment and service of one leader interrupting the cycles of poverty, violence, and inequality in the United States, whether through their professional work or as a volunteer.

The Leadership Award was established in honor of Dr. Richard Herman, We Raise Foundation's fourth president (2006-2015), a passionate supporter and encourager of young adult Christian leaders.

Thank You!

By generously investing in the ministry work of grantee partners, we are investing in the numerous lives of those they touch. Second Corinthians reminds us that God promises to bless us abundantly for our obedience and multiply our giving beyond our expectations. So, in turn, we can continue to serve as conduits of His blessing to those in need.

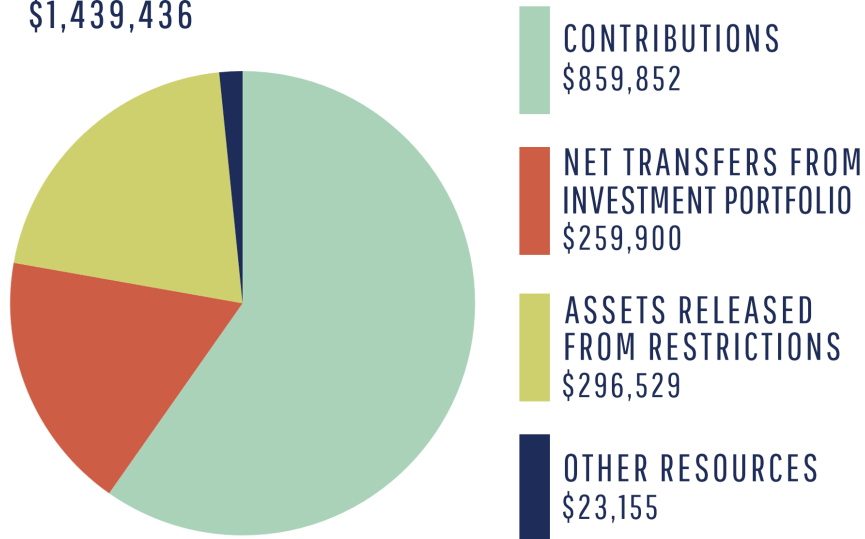
“Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.” (2 Corinthians 9:10-11)

We are thankful for your dedication and for your generous sharing of what God has placed in your hands to bring hope and lasting, positive change so that others can be filled with joy and hope for a better future.

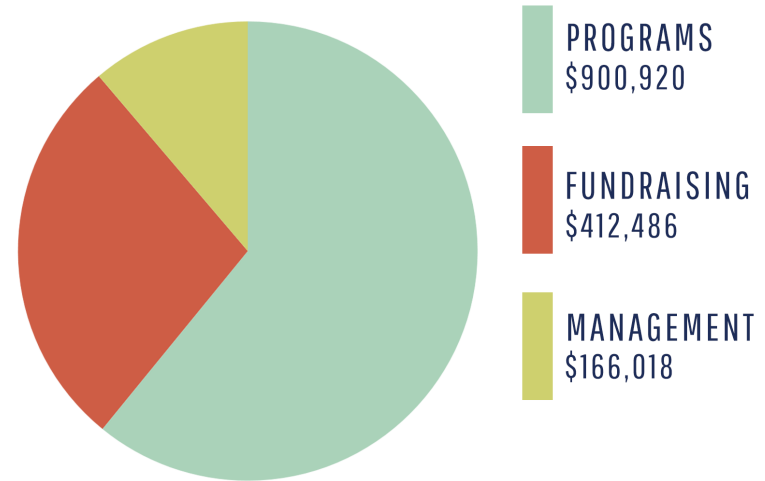


FY2023 Financials

BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING REVENUES \$1,439,436



BREAKDOWN OF OPERATING EXPENSES \$1,479,424



Program Expense is comprised of: Grants and Projects (\$340,041), Program Education (\$355,751), and Program Support (\$205,128).

Total Net Assets at 6/30/23 were \$10,632,789.

A full copy of our audit report is available online at [weraise.org](https://www.weraise.org).



Board of Directors

Fiscal Year 2023

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One Pierce Place, Suite 250E
Itasca, Ill. 60143
800.762.6748 | info@weraise.org
weraise.org

