

# Building the Path

2021  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



**RIVER CITY**

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CENTER

# About R City



## **R CITY EXISTS TO**

*bring together the best of our city to build a path for families to walk from cradle to career to the glory of God.*

## **RCITY EXISTS WITHIN**

*Chicago's vibrant community of West Humboldt Park amid neighbors overcoming disenfranchisement, injustice, and high levels of violence.*

## **RCITY EXISTS BY**

*building trusted, multi-year relationships with families & welcoming youth of all ages into a safe space with the resources and relationships to achieve their purposes.*



# Dear friends of R City,

Here, from the new opening of 2022, I remember where we stood last year. I remember the many memes saying good riddance to 2020. We were looking to the horizon in hopes of welcoming a better season, one of predictability and return to order. Of course, the actual story of 2021 was far more complex. There was relief, yes, but also again the unexpected.

There was a saying I encountered in Puerto Rico, written in Christmas lights on a decimated island not long after Hurrican Maria. *Danos sabiduría y resistencia antes la adversidad*. Give us wisdom and *resistencia* in the face of adversity. *Resistencia* is a powerful word, meaning both resistance, the fight against what should not be, and endurance, the strength to hold on through what should not be. In these uncertain times, how deeply we need *resistencia*.

As I look around R CITY I see it everywhere. I see it in our children who endure the grief of losing classmates to violence--and join our mentor Shawn shouting into megaphones on a peace march: NO KIDS DIE IN THE CHI. I see in our staff who daily, faithfully welcome the children facing the greatest challenges--and use every method available to bring about the children's wellbeing. With staff, families, and children together, we fight and we endure, and in that fighting and enduring is built a community powerful, able to walk through both the expected and the unexpected.

This *resistencia*, I see it in each giver as well. In our world's uncertain circumstances, the act of setting aside money for others is one of *resistencia* indeed. Our gifts proclaim that we will not give in to fear by guarding our resources, but that we'll continue to sacrificially give for the good of others. Our gifts say that we too, wherever we are, join the fight for peace and thriving in the lives of our youth. For your brave gifts that have continued to build a community of strength at R CITY: thank you.

*Elizabeth Galik*

Executive Director

# A Year at a Glance

# 156

unique individuals served in COVID-safe youth programming



While 2021 has been another year full of unexpected twists and turns, it's also been a year of growth and expansion. Physical expansion in our little triangle of Humboldt Park as we've gained new spaces for programming (see story to right), but also an ever expanding collection of partnerships to provide an network of support for our families that continues to grow.

This year was filled with many devoted friends: children, teens, parents, donors, volunteers, and partners -- but we also celebrate the many new faces and relationships that have deeply marked this year at R CITY.



50

Faithful **"Pathbuilders"** whose monthly donations enable R CITY to respond with flexibility to the needs of our families.

30

**Volunteers** served faithfully and safety in difficult circumstances.

\$33K

Over \$33,000 of **"In Kind"** donations including program space, a vehicle, shoes, clothing and homemade quilts.

# Dreams Coming True

The car lot next door and the three buildings on the property have been on the heart of River City Community Church leaders since the purchase of the building on Grand Avenue. Outdoor space is hard to come by along this crowded and busy strip and providing beautiful and safe spaces for the community has always been a high priority.

*After input from community members, MIT student Christian Turner created a rendering of what the space could look like- capturing all that our hearts hope for the space: beauty, joy, hope, & delight! What a huge difference from what we first saw on the property: a lot for cars before being repaired, a vacant auto shop, and a house with walls full of graffiti.*

After years of prayer, planning and preparation, God provided the resources for the church to purchase the property this summer, greatly increasing spaces for the work of R CITY: Harambee training space in the vacant auto shop, Print Shop in the carriage house and housing for young adults to live in community as they take next steps toward independence. With full hearts, we thank church members who made this hard and beautiful dream a reality.



Artist rendering, very "special" graffiti in the kitchen, church consecration service, and many hands.



# Dreambuilders

## BUILDING FOUNDATIONS & DREAMS

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AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM  
SUMMER DAY CAMP  
REMOTE LEARNING



## PROGRAM NUMBERS

- 41** YOUTH AFTER SCHOOL
- 33** KIDS ATTENDING SUMMER CAMP
- 52** SPRING REMOTE LEARNERS (K-12)
- 23** WEEKS OF REMOTE LEARNING SUPPORT



## NEARER TO NORMAL

Winter and spring of 2021 began our longest and most intense season of full-day programming at R CITY as Chicago Public Schools transitioned to hybrid learning. In 2021, our building was open 4 days a week from 7:30-3:30 for **23 weeks** providing a "Second Home" for 52 neighborhood students. As more students moved back to their school buildings we were thankful to begin after school programming again last Spring and plan for "*nearer-to-normal*" Summer Camp and fall After School. It's been a great pleasure to enjoy **new partnerships** this year, especially the Chicago Chess Foundation's presence in our summer camp and the Media Production class provided by The Girls' Place Chicago for our 4th-8th grade after school students.

With the return of Chicago Public Schools Safe Haven program at the end of 2021, we have enjoyed returning to a full 5 days a week of after school programming.



# Peacebuilders

YOUTH MENTORING  
& SKILL BUILDING

AFTER SCHOOL MENTORING  
PRINT SHOP/ART SHOP  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
FIELD TRIPS  
OPEN GYM

## PROGRAM NUMBERS

33 AFTER SCHOOL TEENS

**PRINT SHOP:**

11 TEEN ARTISTS

**\$3,697** IN CUSTOM APPAREL SALES



## WELCOMING HOUSE OF HOPE

This year has been marked in every way by **the addition of mentoring and outreach programs lead by Shawn Childs**, founder of the House of Hope. Funded by generous donor's, Shawn's work on the R CITY team is marked by passion and experience. Partnering with community leaders, he has organized "No Kids Die in the CHI" peace marches across Chicago. Through Shawn's work, it is clear that the same kids who might be vulnerable to gang recruitment can be mentored as powerful forces for peace. R CITY students rose to the opportunity provided, shouting powerful anti-violence messages through the bullhorn.

The youth of our **Print Shop and Art Shop** continue to express their creativity and spread beauty around the community creating custom t-shirt designs and completing another community mural in the Children's Garden of Hope.

# Citybuilders

WORK EXPERIENCE &  
APPRENTICESHIPS

DREAMBUILDERS INTERNS  
HARAMBEE SUMMER &  
AFTER SCHOOL  
GRADUATE CREW



## PROGRAM NUMBERS

- 12 AFTER SCHOOL TEEN AIDES
- 10 GRAD CREW MEMBERS
- 58 HARAMBEE TEENS
- \$10,451 PAYMENTS BY HOMEOWNERS
- \$45,710 VALUE OF TUCKPOINTING PROVIDED
- 12 TUCKPOINTING PROJECTS COMPLETED



## BIG CHANGES, BIG ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Since the beginning of Harambee tuckpointing in Chicago in 2014, program founders Michelle and Anthony Johnson have pleaded with God for a training and storage space. As they waited, more and more of their personal basement and garage were filled with the increasing supplies of a successfully growing program. At the midnight hour of Anthony's last summer in Chicago, Harambee crews spent the final days of summer **moving into Harambee's very own training space** next door to R CITY. There was great rejoicing!

In addition to the space, R CITY also celebrates **the promotion of Charnesha Collier** to Director of Apprenticeships. Her skill and talent in the new role is apparent as **revenue from homeowners more than doubled from 2020**. Faithful to the work, our teens continue to come back year after year to work even despite the dirt, heat, cold and, because it's Chicago, sometimes a little snow.

# Successbuilders

YOUNG ADULTS EQUIPPED  
TO PERSEVERE

SCHOLARSHIP FUND  
SUPPORT NETWORK  
COACHING



## PROGRAM NUMBERS

3 UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS FUNDED

**\$5,391** IN SCHOLARSHIPS

4 HVAC COURSE GRADUATES

5 YOUNG ADULTS LIVING IN COMMUNITY

## NEW OPPORTUNITIES



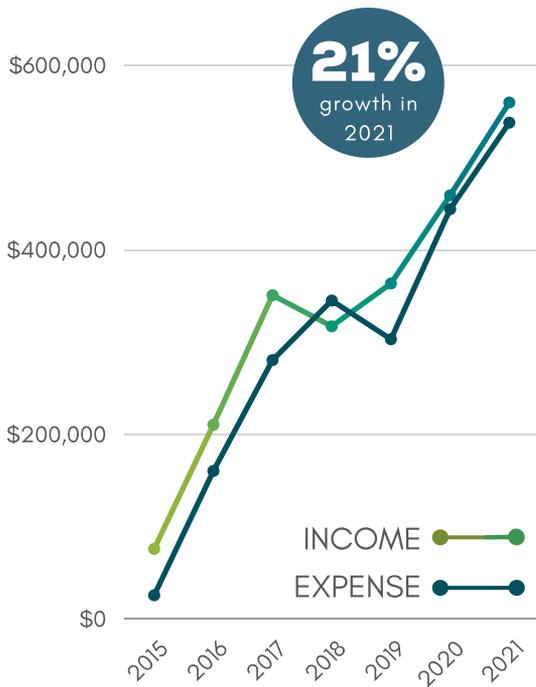
One of the great blessings of completing another year of programming is witnessing another round of young people graduate out of youth programming and enter the adult world. It fills us with excitement and hope, but also concern for what lies ahead. We continue to ask how we can prepare our these beloved young adults to tackle every obstacle and meet every opportunity with their best.

In 2021 we found many new ways to walk with our young adults on paths that lead to success. We continued to provide **scholarships** for post-secondary educational pursuits and pursued **tuckpointing projects** to keep our Grad Crew working. This year we pioneered new ways to engage graduates with individual coaching, quarterly networking dinners. R CITY also welcomed Church Outside the Walls and their skilled volunteer instructor who provided our very first **Introduction to HVAC** course. Through River City church and local landlords, we also formed partnerships to provide **community living** right next door to River City.

# Growth through Uncertainty

Through the many changes of the past years, God continues to provide during uncertain times in both ordinary and extraordinary ways: through numerous individuals, corporate sponsorship of our Fall Mixer, government funds through PPP loans, a deeply devoted group of monthly givers, generous foundations, and local homeowners faithfully paying their sliding scale tuckpointing payments each month. In all these ways, big and small, the work of R CITY has been provided for!

## INCOME & EXPENSE FUNDING TO PRESENT

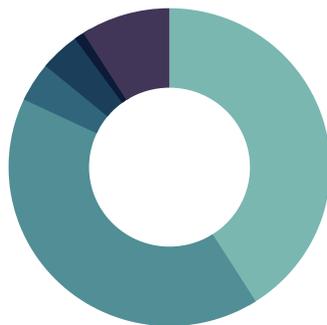


## 2021 SOURCES OF INCOME



- 42 % Donations
- 5 % Earned Income
- 31 % Foundation Grants
- 17 % Government Funds
- 5 % In Kind Gifts

## 2021 PURPOSE OF EXPENDITURES



- 41 % K-8 After School & Summer Programs
- 41 % Harambee
- 4 % Mentoring
- 4 % Print Shop
- 1 % Scholarships
- 9 % Operation Costs



# The Best of Our City

This year leadership of R CITY experienced many exciting welcomes and several heart-felt goodbyes. Our staff team swelled during remote learning and summer programming with many talented young people who remained excited and passionate about the kids we get to love each day.



This spring we welcomed two new directors to our team. **Dr. Y'Shanda Rivera** became **Director of Strategy, Research & Partnerships**. **Charnesha Collier**, who began as a Harambee apprentice in 2014, was **promoted to Director of Apprenticeships**.



We also said goodbye to significant program founders this year. Jeffrey Peltz ended his time leading Print Shop, which he began in 2019, to **pursue his calling as an artist full-time**, and Anthony Johnson served his last season with Harambee after **14 years of teaching teens to tuckpoint** to accept a pastoral position in St. Louis, Missouri.



We see God's continued provision through so many people as each season has brought new leaders and volunteers who bring their whole hearts and all their skills and talents to the neighbors of West Humboldt Park.

## 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

R CITY has the tremendous benefit of a dedicated board whose hearts beat for the most vulnerable children and families of Chicago's West Side.

DANIEL HILL, PRESIDENT

KIM MORELAND, TREASURER

BETH BLACKWELL, SECRETARY

MARK BLACKWELL

BRANDON GREEN

YOLANDA RICHARDS

JOSE RIVERA



# Abundant Gratitude



## **FOUNDATIONS & FUNDING PARTNERS**

*Calvary Church Impact, Chicago Community Trust, Christopher Family Foundation, Covenant Children's Ministries, CPS Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, Global Children Foundation, IL State Treasurer's Charitable Trust, Mennonite Central Committee, MIGMIR Fund, National Christian Foundation, & We Raise Foundation.*

## **ORGANIZATION & BUSINESS PARTNERS**

*All Construction, Back of the Yards Neighborhood Council, Chicago Youth Service Corps, Cameron Elementary School, Chicago Chess Foundation, Greater West Town, House of Hope Foundation, Job Corps, Lilla P., Ministry Management Services, Moody Bible Institute PCM Department, Mustard Seed Foundation, New Life Centers of Chicagoland, One Summer Chicago, PKG Center for Public Service at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), River City Community Church, Rooted Reps, S & S Activewear, The Church Outside the Walls, The Girls' Place Chicago, & The Good Board.*

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**RCITYCDC.ORG**