eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Hartford Region

A Tapestry Of Love

2022 GRATITUDE REPORT

Together, We Sew Strength

A LETTER FROM MY HEART TO YOURS

Dear Friend,

Like you, I love to see the end result.

There is nothing like the look on a young mom's face when she walks across stage to accept her degree. Or the light in her children's eyes as they bear witness.

Or the fifteen-year-old's posture as she reaches out her hand and says, "Hi, I'm Gabrielle." The clarity that she has the power to shape her own bright future.

If you talk to our staff, our program participants, or our partners, you'll hear it over and over again… It takes a village. And as trite as that may sound, it's the simple truth. In 2022 as always…

Your big heart helped to weave together a more hopeful future for women and girls.

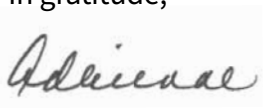
And although the pandemic's ripples are still upon us, you have shown us that with you on this team we can continue to do what it takes to make equity inevitable. Together.

Please let this Gratitude Report be a testament to the fabric of community you are co-creating and the transformations you've helped inspire.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment to a future where justice "just is."

And thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping weave this tapestry with care, with strength and with love. We simply cannot do this work without people like you.

In gratitude,



ADRIENNE W. COCHRANE
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Hartford Region

Anarelis is Standing in Her Power

YOU HELPED WEAVE THE FABRIC OF TOMORROW

"Do it even if you're scared." That's Anarelis's advice to other moms considering the YW Career Women program. "It's definitely life-changing."

Over the past two years, your generosity helped her sew new strands into the tapestry of who she is — and who she is becoming.

Mom of three. Future Dean. Community College graduate. First-generation Latina college student. All-Connecticut Academic Team awardee. Multi-lingual life-long learner. Full scholarship recipient (bachelor's and master's). Powerful change-maker…

She wants you to know her story — and to share it with women who might see themselves in it
Not just for her own sense of accomplishment, but also for the women who are hesitant to take a chance on themselves. "I think that's the most important thing – that I'm able to share my story and able to empower other women to be able to take that step forward as well."

And by being part of this caring community, you are a thread in Anarelis's story.

Because as you know, society's stigmas and prejudices have nothing to do with reality; women deserve to give themselves a chance to realize their dreams. And just like you, Anarelis wants those coming up behind her to know that they, too, have the power to transform their lives — in any way they'd like to.

Your generosity helped her create space to extend herself grace and expand upon her dreams
"I feel like a lot of times as women, we don't extend grace to ourselves because we're extending grace to everybody else," she says. Her advice to anyone else considering the program? "Even if you're afraid just like I was, do it scared. Extend some grace to yourself for once."

Through YW Career Women, Anarelis found that room to extend grace to herself — to see that there was space in her life for dreaming. And since the program is designed for women like her who are balancing work, school and families, your support meant that she had care and kindness to guide her along her journey.

The career coaching, the one-on-one mentorship, the financial advising, the holistic wellness support… she says it all made a difference.

"The YWCA is like a cheerleader," she says. "It's like having someone seeing your struggles and being able to assist you with them, while also celebrating your accomplishments. It's feeling supported – feeling seen, feeling heard."

Having spent the first part of her career working in K-12 education, she hadn't considered what it might be like to consider a track in higher education.

That's where the cheerleading came in. Thanks to a nudge from her career coach and the tools she gained through YW Career Women, she's now working as an Executive Assistant to the Campus Chief Executive Officer at CT State Community College Tunxis while pursuing her bachelor's and then her master's at Charter Oak State College…on full scholarship for both!

Now she's spinning new threads to strengthen others' futures. Anarelis knows firsthand just how much it matters to feel like you have someone on your team, cheering you on. And whatever her future holds, she will be that cheerleader for others.

WHERE LOVE GROWS, WE ALL GROW

Your Strength Shows in Our Numbers

In each of these numbers is a story. And in each of these stories is a thread of your love and generosity. Thank you.

Early Learning Centers

253

children, ages 6 weeks to 5 years, built their foundation for life-long learning success through active play, exploration and discovery.

Kids Link

272

kids had access to before and after-school programs where working parents could rest assured that their children were learning and growing in a safe, fun space.

Shelter

91

women sought safety at the Emergency Shelter for Women.

In the Company of Women

1,100

people supported our signature annual event to help fuel our programs and services that advance equity for women, girls and families in the Greater Hartford community.

YW Career Women

39

working mothers received academic and career counseling in community with other women pursuing college degrees and career growth.

Soromundi

34

adults secured permanent supportive housing in a safe space and received unparalleled wrap-around services.

YW Leadership Corps

132

young women, ages 13-18, learned by doing in programs focused on leadership, advocacy, diversity and inclusion, self-empowerment and college and career exploration.

Advocacy

75

partnerships were strengthened and 8 laws were passed to further racial justice and gender equity for women, girls and families.

Financial Literacy

306

women and girls participated in programs to enhance skills and knowledge that will help them build a stronger financial future.

WOMEN SHOULD BE SEEN ***AND*** HEARD

Your Generous Heart Made Our Voices Loud & Clear

As you know, wins like these don't come easy. Making policy change at the intersection of racial justice and gender equity takes many voices, many hands, many generous hearts… And persistence.

Thanks to people and partners like you, we're celebrating several BIG wins on the road to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. To name just a few…

- Nearly 700 women at York Correctional Institution will be ensured greater accountability for their health outcomes.
- $100M additional COVID-19 relief funds were allocated to subsidize childcare and help alleviate the ongoing impacts of the pandemic on our families.
- Doula services now have a pathway to Medicaid reimbursement so that financial barriers won't prevent those who stand to benefit most from accessing this transformative form of healthcare.
- We became first in the nation to legally protect medical providers and patients travelling here seeking abortion care from states with abortion bans.
- We expanded access to our right to choose in CT by broadening practitioner eligibility to perform certain abortion-related care.
- $2M was included in the state budget to address period poverty and advance menstrual equity by offering free menstrual products in our public school restrooms, at colleges and universities and in our shelters.

"Advocacy seems like something that's just done with your mouth on behalf of other people, or with other people. But it takes resources to get loud," says Melinda Johnson, YWCA Hartford Region's Director of Community Engagement and Advocacy…

That's why — whether you opened your mouth, your generous heart or both — you made a difference for hundreds of thousands of women and families in 2022.

But don't take our word for it. Just ask Marisol about what it meant to her to learn to use her voice as an intern in our work with the Regulate DOC Healthcare CT Coalition…

Getting Loud Means Weaving Community and Policy Together

BY LEARNING TO USE HER VOICE, MARISOL'S STORY HELPED CHANGE NEARLY 700 OTHERS

She wasn't sure she'd be able to juggle it all. Her last semester coursework at Trinity College was no joke. But when she got the call about interning over winter break, she knew she had to figure it out.

"The policy and legislative advocacy work that I was going to be working on was a project of love for me, dealing with health policy and mass incarceration. As a formerly incarcerated woman who had volunteered in hospice at York Correctional, the bill and policy work were something that cut straight through to my heart."

But her final decision was made, she says, after seeing the passion and devotion of our staff.

"Participating with them in the Regulate DOC Healthcare CT Coalition introduced me to other grass roots organizations throughout the state and enabled me to take part in other legislative work… I made connections with the Katal Center, Community Partners in Action and Hartford Health Initiative, and established meaningful relationships that I can use in my journey forward."

And when she says she participated, she means it. The kind of advocacy training opportunities you're helping support truly get women and girls learning to use their voices. And learning to make themselves heard…

"My internship at YWCA Hartford Region was an experience I will never forget."

Marisol spoke at a press conference… She spoke in front of statewide coalitions… in front of numerous government bodies… And she served as a panelist at one of our Community Matters Conversations, YWCA's quarterly series providing safe space to learn and talk about important issues impacting the quality of life for our families, neighborhoods and communities.

By putting her voice to action, Marisol brought to life the theory she's been studying in her political science coursework. And what's more, this is just the beginning for her…

"Although a department of two with some interns — they are a small army that moves mountains through empowerment and education. I am proud to have collaborated with them and will gladly do so again."

The bill she fought for became a legislative victory — the first step towards ensuring accountability for the physical and mental health of the nearly 700 women at the institution where she was formerly incarcerated.

And yes, we do need folks like Marisol in our small army of love who are willing to move mountains with their actions and voices. And that work, day in and day out, is only possible because of many other unseen hands and generous hearts.

Your commitment to being one of those hearts means voices like Marisol's have the resources behind them to get loud and be heard.

Persimmon Petals is Blooming *Thanks to Your Care & Nurturing*

Her tagline has always been, "I love art, algebra and altruism." So when award-winning floral designer Kirstin Havelevitch saw the new position posted, she knew it was meant to be.

"To be able to bring that all together and have it tie back to the mission of the YWCA is just like, I still can't believe it all fit together in this puzzle," she says. "Really, it's been amazing."

Kirstin came on as manager in July 2022. And she brought her award-winning colleague Annette Peck to join her shortly thereafter… And on November 21, Persimmon Petals was officially born. Just in time for the holiday season!

How you can empower with flowers

It started with a simple concept in 2021 when we were chosen by the Hartford Foundation as one of just six nonprofits for its social enterprise accelerator.

A flower shop, you ask? Yes! But not just any flowers. These are flowers that empower.

See, this flower shop has a triple bottom line: spreading beauty and kindness in the community; delivering best in business floral design and service; and eliminating racism and empowering women. That's because every dollar of profit goes straight back into our mission.

We're in year one of a three-year business plan. And month after month, we're seeing our numbers on the rise… thanks to people just like you who have purchased from Persimmon Petals and spread the word to others.

"Whether it's a person literally walking down the street that sees our shop and wants one wrapped rose to give to their grandmother or it's a $3,000 event, we want to be sure it's a hit," says Kirstin.

"The experience of the person who's going out of their way to choose us is going to walk away happy they did."

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving threaded the loom of success…and you've helped weave the tapestry

Their generosity and yours is how we got things started. But once the seeds were sowed, they kept on watering. "Theirs was our first big event," says Kirstin, "and thanks to their Greater Together event and the rave reviews of our work, word spread organically, and we already have so many five-star reviews on Google."

Whether it's a wedding, a funeral, a birthday, anniversary, or a small impromptu gesture just to show you care... your support and patronage of Persimmon Petals is one more way your love and care is beautifying our community and growing a better future for women and girls. So thank you. Truly. And we hope to see you soon at our online flower and gift shop!

To learn more, visit persimmonpetals.com.

THE HEART(S) OF THE CAPITAL CITY'S UNITY PARTNERSHIP

Threads of Trust Built Strong Relationships

Kristina's WhY
Kristina Baldwin is the head of Hartford's Department of Families, Children, Youth and Recreation. So the idea of UNITY (Understanding the Needs of Today's Youth) just makes sense to her. In fact, she's dedicated over 20 years of her career to meeting those needs.

"Ever since I was young, I knew I wanted to work with youth. There's such an honesty and a purity about young people; you know what they're thinking, there's no masking it. And so being able to honor and respect their truth is what keeps me driven in the work."

2022 was the time for UNITY
Since 2020, Kristina and her colleagues have been seeing the after-effects of the pandemic. And they've observed the unique set of challenges faced by young girls and women.

"The young people themselves had been expressing their need for additional mental health supports. They were asking for critical face-to-face peer groups that they were feeling disconnected from."

"To be able to have the Young Women's Leadership Corps program be able to start up again," says Kristina, "and be a real support in the community was a really important component of us, as a city, being able to provide very holistic programming for our girls and young ladies coming out of the pandemic."

Weaving in Aetna CVS Health to strengthen our UNITY
Donna Sodipo is our Chief Program Officer. And she can attest to all that goes into creating a sense of unity in all our programs. "There's a lot of passion, expertise, strategy that goes into moving multiple partners to make sure it's whole for our students and our women once it comes together," she says.

So what happened when 57 executives from Aetna CVS Health, the City of Hartford's UNITY funding and our YW Leadership Corps came together for a day of connection and networking?

"It was electrifying," says Donna.

"The women executives were motivated by the young women, the young women were motivated by the mentors and the staff was on fire…" For Donna and the program staff it was "just a really proud moment overall, witnessing the power of partnerships and YW Leadership Corps."

Trusting relationships are our 'special sauce'
When Kristina conducted a site visit on behalf of the City, she could feel the electrifying energy in the air. And the authenticity of positive, trusting relationships.

"It's one thing hearing from the organization [that youth are engaged], but to hear firsthand from the youth themselves, to me is what speaks to the true impact of the program."

You won't necessarily be able to distinguish each and every thread of each and every partner woven through-out all of our work. But you will see the unity of authentic relationships, the care, the trust and the growth.

Kristina's message to you
That's why, just like us, Kristina is grateful to all who come together to make this work possible. And we couldn't say it better than she does…

"Don't underestimate the power of what it is that you have to give. Every amount makes a difference. Whatever you have to give — whether it's time or resources — is enough. You are enough."

So thank you for trusting and for building trust with us. Your generosity is invaluable.

SMALL(ER) BUT MIGHTY

Leading the Region With Genuine Care

Highest Rates of Success in Permanent Housing Placement

Between 2021 – 2022, the number of our neighbors experiencing homelessness went up by 13%. But that's just part of the story…

The other part is that chronic homelessness went down by 30% — and that's precisely where your generosity truly made a difference for those who came to our door when they had nowhere else to safely call "home."

Around 75% of the folks who come to our shelter have mental health diagnoses. Fifty percent are struggling with a substance abuse disorder. Another 50% are survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault… 60-70% have chronic health issues…

Yes, we humans are complicated.

Which means supporting the myriad of needs and challenges that some of our neighbors have to face requires something special.

That something is genuine care, creativity and love.

By generously sharing yours, you make YWCA's shelter and housing programs unique. Not just because we're the only emergency shelter serving exclusively women and individuals who identify as non-binary. (Which we are). But that's not the only thing you help us do differently…

Thanks to the care and compassion of people just like you, YWCA has been leading for three years and running with permanent housing placement rates above 80%.

And with the Hartford area averaging between 50-60% each year, that says something BIG.

"I'm just really proud that my team is having such high success rates," says Cathy Zeiner, Chief Strategy and Operations Officer. "Not marginal success, but significantly higher success rates. And we do that feeling proud of the way that we serve folks."

We thank you for entrusting YWCA with your hope and love so we can continue providing the kind of wrap-around support that gets people out of shelter and into homes.

UNFOLDING THE QUILT OF OUR LEARNING COMMUNITIES

The Return of Parents, Families and Volunteers is Re-Awakening Our Collective Imagination

The COVID years have been challenging, to say the least. But in 2022, you helped breathe new life into our early learning centers and our school age programs.

"We were able to start opening up our doors to normalcy again in 2022," says Tina Gladden, Director of Early Learning and School Age Programs. "We went from parents dropping off kids outside the door to really being able to start letting families back into the classroom."

Relationships are at the core of everything we do at YWCA. And as you know, those earliest relationships in a child's life are some of the most important. It truly does take a village to raise a child. And the collective care and imaginations of our whole community to help set our youngest members up with a foundation for life-long learning success.

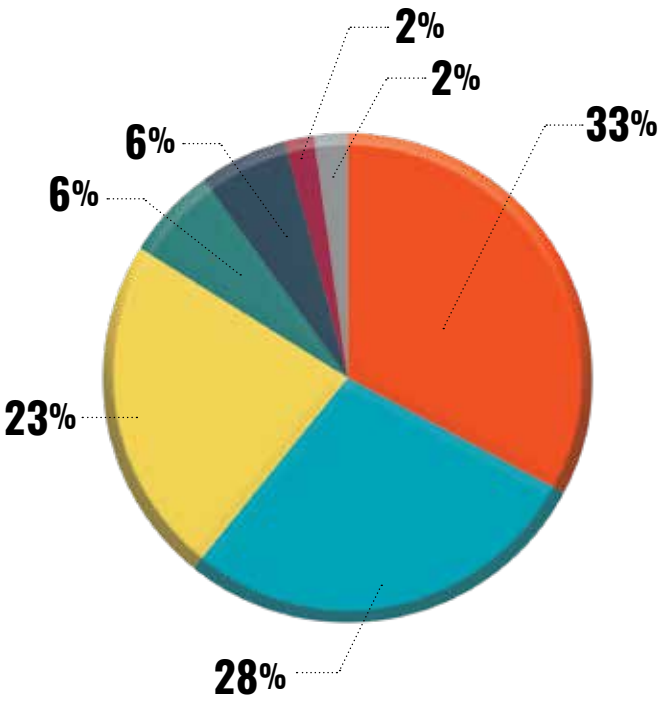
We are so incredibly grateful to count you among that village.

Financials

FISCAL YEAR 2022

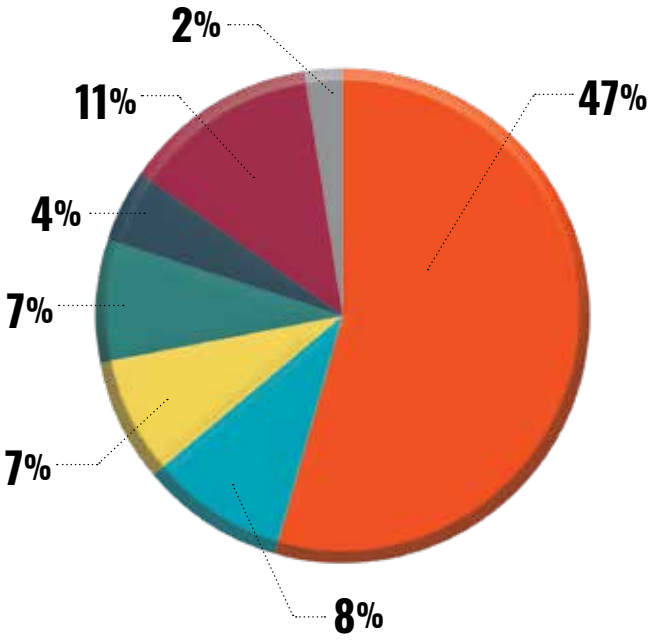
YWCA Hartford Region Revenues

Program Fees	$2,588,914
Governmental Grants	$2,238,114
Endowment Contributions	$1,826,978
Contributions & Special Events	$494,507
Non-governmental Grants	$508,537
United Way	$153,003
Miscellaneous Income	$132,736
Total Revenue	**$7,942,789**



YWCA Hartford Region Expenses

Childcare Services	$3,796,078
Housing	$679,666
Women and Girls Programs	$566,024
Advocacy	$587,865
Community Facilities	$350,862
Fundraising and Marketing	$872,981
Management and General	$1,307,307
Total Expenses	**$8,159,983**



To see the full 2022 audited financials, visit **ywcahartford.org**

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Thank you to the more than 75 education professionals that help advance our mission as staff in our Early Learning Centers in Hartford, East Hartford, West Hartford and South Windsor, and our KidsLink before and after school program staff in Bolton, Rocky Hill and West Hartford.

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Why Your Thread Matters

THANK YOU FOR
BEING YOU

Dear Friend,

If I could, I would hold up a mirror to you right now and invite you to look yourself in the eye.

And when you did, I hope you'd feel as proud as I do. Because you should.

As you've seen in each of these pages, it truly does take a village to fight for the world we know is possible. And you are an important part of that village, and an important part of our WhY.

Because you cared, your thread is woven throughout each of these pages. Your whY, your reason for giving, is certainly your own. And by choosing to contribute it towards a greater purpose, you have strengthened the fabric of this community.

Everything in these pages has happened because people and partners like you have chosen to weave your threads and your hearts into a better tomorrow for women and girls.

Thank you for being you.

Sincerely,

ANDREA BARTON REEVES
Chair of the Board of Directors

eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
Hartford Region

135 Broad Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860.525.1163
860.543.8919
ywcahartford.org

#YWCAHARTFORD

OUR MISSION

YWCA Hartford Region is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to become a community with unlimited opportunities to un-limit opportunity.