



ANNUAL REPORT 2021

**Growing Our Roots
Spreading Our Wings**

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Rise Program



The RISE program serves young adults between the ages of 18 to 24 who have aged out of foster care. By providing stability and a nurturing environment, clients can pursue professional and educational opportunities with greater concentration. RISE program clients live in the community in 2 to 4 bedroom apartments, work part-time and graduate from the program within 2 to 3 years based on their individual care plans. The goal of RISE is to meet the clients' immediate needs of housing, food and transportation while developing long-term strategies for self-sufficiency.

Roots & Wings' key to success is a dedication to the “whole individual”. The RISE program provides each client with emotional support, coping and life skills, emphasizing education, job training and building confidence. The RISE program teaches responsibility, directs focus on the client's future and addresses potential obstacles facing each client's ability to contribute to society and thrive independently.

Through individual case management, professional counseling, ongoing interaction with caring staff, and coaching in life skills, our clients obtain degrees from either 2 or 4-year colleges or attend trade schools or certification programs.

Meet Our Client

Tatiana



"I ask myself every so often how do I pick myself back up again. And I tell myself confidently, deliberately, decisively without shame that I forgive myself in full. I believe in my ability to break cycles that used to hold me hostage. I remember that my mistakes will never define me. And I always thank God for all my blessings."

- Tatiana, Authors' Lunch 2022
Client Speaker

Tatiana is a recent graduate of Roots & Wings and during her time in the program has accomplished so much! She is hardworking, dedicated, and extremely driven making her an inspiration to all.

During her time in the RISE Program, Tatiana was a full-time student at William Paterson University and ultimately graduated with her bachelor's degree

in Psychology, Women's Studies, and Disability Studies.

She maintained an A average while working several part-time jobs, taking extra courses to insure she would graduate on time, and was heavily involved in her school through mentorship programs, research labs, and clubs.

Since graduating from Roots & Wings, Tatiana is the proud mother of her daughter Aliyah and is on the Department of Child Protection and Permanency Youth Council which assists in providing resources and services for foster and adoptive individuals. Tatiana also plans on continuing her education to obtain her master's degree and meet her goal of working with individuals that have intellectual and developmental disabilities.

We are so proud of all that she has accomplished!

Meet Our Volunteer Sharon



I am so grateful for Roots & Wings. Like so many, the last few years have brought me unexpected changes. Freed from lock-down, I wanted to utilize my increasing free time volunteering in a meaningful way. The moment I clicked on Roots & Wings' website, I knew this was the place.

I was amazed that New Jersey only supports foster children until their 18th birthday! Nobody should feel hopeless and alone on that special day, but far too many are

instantly homeless. Anyone who has been that age is well aware that it takes an array of mentors to guide them on the path to adulthood. The support provided by Roots & Wings helps these vulnerable young people who have had little guidance or stability in their childhoods with the tools they need to reach self-sufficiency.

It starts with education. As the offspring of high school graduates, I know the power of both a diploma and a strong work ethic. The sacrifices my parents made enabled my sister and me to attend top-ranked universities and follow our dreams. The most important part of our success, however, has been the stability of a home and a loving family.

With the safe housing and food security provided by our generous supporters and the expertise of our amazing staff, I know that each of these positive, hopeful young people will reach their fullest potential. They are dedicated to their education and part-time jobs and work hard to overcome the traumas of their past and forge trusting relationships. I dream of a future for these young people as bright as those I envision for my own children. That is why I am at Roots & Wings.

Sharon

2021 Milestones



13 clients graduated from the Roots & Wings program.

Workshops were provided on financial literacy, nutrition, self-care, and fitness.



The FLY Program provides up to 18 months of follow-along service after graduation!



Thank you to The Toll Brothers who painted our Morris County apartments!



Overall Program Accomplishments

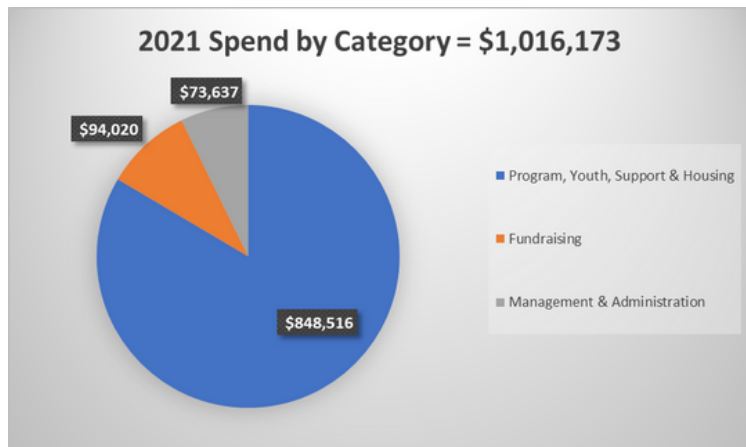
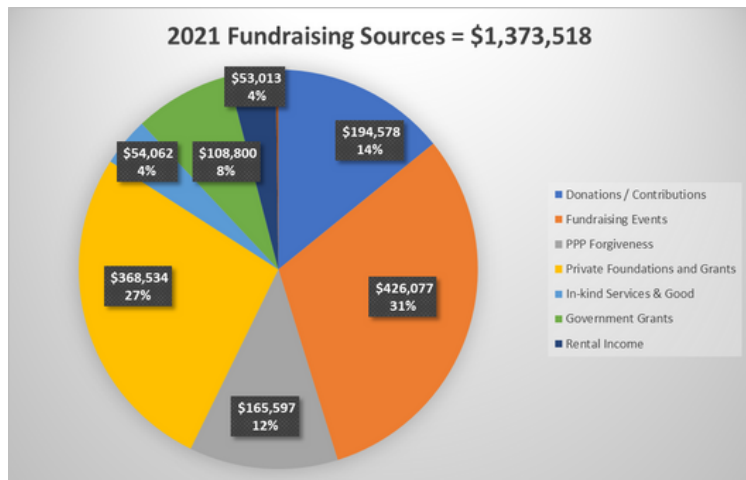


- Hannah graduated with a Bachelor's degree in public health education.
- Diana graduated from Montclair State University with a Bachelor's degree in Justice Studies.
- Maria graduated from the RISE Program and loves her career as a flight attendant.
- Thomas graduated from the RISE Program and is happily living independently on the West Coast.
- Pete is now employed as a specialized caregiver for 2 teenagers on the autism spectrum. He is also continuing his studies at Fairleigh Dickenson University.

- 5 clients are enrolled in colleges with degrees expected in the next 2-3 years.
- 2 young people completed their SORA Certificates (Security Supervisor Certificate) and one more is near completion.
- 1 client completed his associate degree and is now enrolled in a bachelor's program.
- 1 young person is completing a Medical Assistant Certification.
- Graduates of our program include flight attendants, mechanics, medical techs, retail managers, cosmetologists, small business owners, vet techs, real estate agents, social workers, news correspondents, security agents, personal trainers and so much more.



Financial Highlights



The complete audited financial statement of Roots & Wings for Fiscal Year 2021 are posted each year at www.rootsandwingsnj.org

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