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eliminating racism  
empowering women

**ywca**  
union county

eliminating  
racism  
empowering  
women

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**ANNUAL REPORT 2022**

A photograph of a woman and a young girl. The woman is in the foreground, smiling broadly, with her hands clasped. The girl is behind her, also smiling, with her arms around the woman's neck. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

## YWCA UNION COUNTY

### MISSION

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

In this context, YWCA Union County is on a mission to:

- Empower survivors of domestic violence to become safe and free from abuse, and
- Promote social justice and eliminate violence against women and girls.

We accomplish this mission through the provision of comprehensive, client-centered services, and through education, collaboration and advocacy that builds safe, informed and supportive communities.

### 2022 MANAGEMENT TEAM

(as of 12/31/22)

**Karen Geer**  
Executive Director

**Kathryn Lynch**  
Assistant Executive Director

**Ana Y. Martinez**  
Director of Finance

Program Directors:

**Anna Marie Amaya**  
Director of Residential Services

**Sheri Groover**  
Director of PALS

**Patricia Mejia**  
Director of Community Support Services

**Lisa K. Poris**  
Director, Family Justice Center



## Letter from the Executive Director

KAREN GEER

*Dear YWCA Union County Community:*

*I am thrilled to be here working with everyone as the Executive Director. The Board of Directors, the leadership team including Kathryn Lynch, Assistant Executive Director, Ana Martinez, Director of Finance, Anna Amaya, Director of Residential, Lisa Poris, Director of the Family Justice Center, Patricia Mejia, Director of Community Support Services and Sheri Groover, Director of the PALS Program have been instrumental in making this transition a smooth one. I am grateful for their on-going support.*

*This is our 2022 Annual Report. We are proud of our accomplishments last year in reaching over 8000 survivors of domestic violence. The care and treatment of our survivors is paramount. We are grateful to our donors and our continued government support to help us meet the needs of Union County which has nearly doubled in one year. Despite this, we were able to meet the challenges and continue to provide help.*

*You will see in this new Annual Report what we do. Led by Dr. Kathryn Lynch, our Program Directors lead our social workers and specialists to provide the best advocacy, housing and care that could be provided during this time. You will also see the work by the Pinnacle Development Group Inc., to help us rebuild our headquarters which is now scheduled to open fourth quarter 2023.*

*Thank you to all who have contributed to our building, our work and our mission to empower women and eliminate racism.*

*As stated by one of our clients, "I started out a victim and now I am a survivor; thanks to the YWCA Union County."*

*Very truly yours,*

*Karen Geer  
Executive Director*

**To make a  
contribution, please go  
to [ywcaunioncounty.org](http://ywcaunioncounty.org)  
and hit the donate  
button. Every donation  
helps us meet  
our goals!**

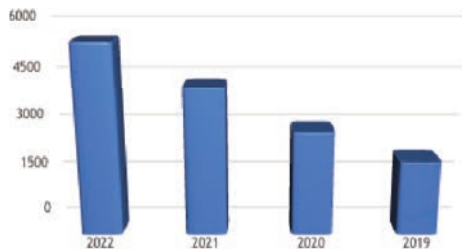
leadership



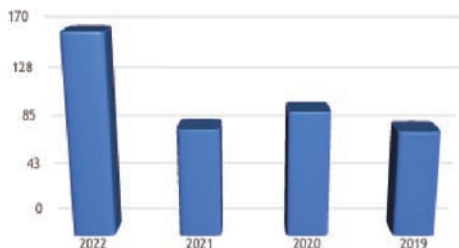
# impact at a glance

*Since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020, demand for services across the agency have been skyrocketing. Overall the YWCA Union County served 35% more clients in 2022 than we did in 2019, the last 'normal' year before the pandemic. The demand for some of our programs, such as the Hotline, have doubled.*

## Hotline Calls:



## Crisis Response Team Callouts:



## 2022 CLIENT NUMBERS

PROGRAM	2022
Hotline	5553 calls
Emergency Shelter	145 adults & children stayed 9009 nights
Supportive Housing	45 adults & children
Court Advocacy	379 clients
Counseling & Case Management	146 clients
Crisis Response Team	166 clients
DCP&P Domestic Violence Liaisons	358 clients
Emergency Room Domestic Violence Liaisons	26 clients
PALS (Peace a Learned Solution)	45 children 27 adults
STEP (Skills, Training & Empowerment Program)	81 clients
Family Justice Center	595 clients
Community Education	4,966 participants
<b>Total Individuals Served:</b>	<b>12,487</b>

# Programs

## RESIDENTIAL

### Emergency Shelter

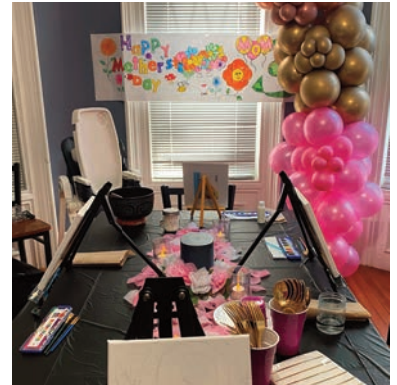
Our Emergency Shelter provides a safe, comfortable environment for victims and their children in need of immediate safety. The shelter is in an undisclosed location, and staffed 24/7 by caring and compassionate Shelter Advocates. The welcoming home-like atmosphere is fostered by special events throughout the year including holiday celebrations, self-care activities, children enrichment experiences and seasonal workshops. In 2022 throughout the year we hosted onsite events where residents could 'shop' for back-to-school supplies, thanksgiving meals, winter gear and holiday toys. Additionally, art classes, music workshops, and special self-care events like yoga were conducted for residents and their children.

To connect with our Emergency Shelter, call our Hotline at (908) 355-4357.



### Supportive Housing

Supportive Housing provides long-term housing, up to two years. Supportive Housing is only for women with children. This program is designed to allow women additional time to build self-sufficiency and independence. Residents are invited to all events held at the emergency shelter. Additionally, in 2022, all Supportive Housing families were 'adopted' for the holidays and received gifts for all members of the household including toys, gift cards, and holiday meal items.



*I feel very happy with YWCA's help. Because of your help I have been able to regain, little by little, my independence and feel safe and supported. (translated from Spanish)*

*Thank you for providing support to me and my son in this place where marvelous people work. Without your support I would not have been able to move forward. (translated from Spanish)*



- 22 art classes for children
- 12 music classes
- Spring/Easter family celebrations
- Back to school “store” for bookbags and supplies
- Halloween trick or treating
- Thanksgiving farmers market
- Holiday presents for all families
- 84 clients received transportation assistance
- 45 clients received gift cards to meet individual needs

## PIA — STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Pia has been with the YWCA for 7 years.** She has been promoted multiple times and is now the full-time case manager for the Supportive Housing program. Pia says, “It is a privilege to help clients who have fled dangerous situations and are now restarting their lives. My clients have to now face different challenges such as childcare, financial independence, immigration, and ultimately learn how to be on their own once they leave my program. It has been rewarding for me as a case manager over the years to problem solve and safety plan around my clients’ barriers. It’s my hope that when they move on to their next chapter, they do so by knowing how to better recognize the red flags in their relationships, and ultimately can lead a healthy and sustainable life for themselves and their children.”





## COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES

### STEP (Skills, Training, and Empowerment Program)

STEP is a workforce development program specifically designed for victims of domestic violence. Through supportive individual sessions with STEP staff who include a job specialist and coordinator, clients develop action plans that help them gain the skills needed to achieve economic independence through enhanced job skills, technology training, resume building and classes such as ESL and basic computer skills. Additionally, STEP helps clients on their job search and hosts job fairs throughout the year as well as informing clients about job fairs being held throughout the county. Every year, STEP holds a series of workshops on financial empowerment topics. 2022 workshops included: “The Basics of Entrepreneurship”; a four week series “Microsoft Office Computer Skills”, and also included entrepreneurship and business development; credit building and financial planning; and retirement planning.

**STEP staff provided clients with 530 financial and job coaching sessions in 2022. Workshops had a total attendance of 190 clients.**

“  
*My counselor is the most amazing, considerate, helpful, selfless person. They are so caring and understanding, I have never felt more confident and excited about the future after speaking with and receiving assistance from them.*

*Thank you YWCA! The YWCA staff know when we are finding ourselves in a difficult moment and we need to speak they will be there to listen to us. A lot of thanks to the social service angels. (translated from Spanish)*



“ Infinite thanks for the support I received. I have grown 100% and now have knowledge of my rights and have recovered my self-esteem... thank you to everyone who works there to help us overcome our fears and to know we are not alone. (Translated from Spanish ) ”

## SASHA — STAFF HIGHLIGHT

**Sasha is the case manager for Community Support Services. She has been the case manager for 5 years.**

Sasha says, “The best part about being a case manager is being able to empower clients through knowledge and being privileged to witness their growth throughout their process to stabilization.

The hardest part for a survivor is deciding to leave their abuser and being able to ask for help to do so. As a case manager I recognize clients’ strengths, support their autonomy, and inspire confidence in their competency through the process of advocating and connecting them to resources. My hope is for clients to feel empowered to continue to strive for independence and feel confident in their ability to do so.”

As a case manager, she creates goals with clients based on their needs and provides them resources and information to support them in achieving their goals. She provides follow up advocacy for clients when needed to support clients in obtaining assistances that will help accomplish established goals.



## Counseling and Case Management

The YWCA Counseling Program provides victims with confidential individual counseling and support groups. Individual counseling provides a safe space for victims to begin to talk about and work through the trauma of domestic violence. The addition of group counseling provides an opportunity for victims to realize that they are not alone and reduce the isolation they have experienced often created by the abuser to further control the victim.

Additionally, clients receive psychoeducation about domestic violence, crisis intervention, and safety planning. All services are available in English and Spanish by bilingual/bicultural counseling staff. Clients can choose to receive services virtually or in-person.

- The YWCA case management team provided **428 case management sessions and 5 workshops in 2022.**
- The YWCA counseling team provided **702 counseling sessions and ran 125 support group sessions.**

Case management services connect clients to collaborative community agencies as well as other YWCA services to help them obtain the resources they need to become independent and self-sufficient. These resources fall under the general categories of housing, immigration, social services, healthcare, furniture support, resources for children, and many others.



# Programs

## **CRT (Crisis Response Team)**

The Crisis Response Team provides critical services to domestic violence victims at the time of police contact. A full-time CRT Coordinator manages a team of on-call volunteers who provide immediate support to the victim at the time of incident. The CRT member can be mobilized when police are called to an active domestic violence situation or when a survivor walks into the police station to discuss their options. The goal of the CRT program is to provide a comprehensive and collaborative response between the local, county, and state police departments and the YWCA.

In 2022 we had **22 CRT** volunteers responding to **166** police calls we received on behalf of victims.

## **ERDVL (Emergency Room Domestic Violence Liaison)**

The Emergency Room Domestic Violence Liaison is a domestic violence specialist, who provides our agency's services in a hospital setting. They work directly with victims of domestic violence who are seeking medical care in the Trinitas Hospital emergency room for the injuries they have sustained due to the domestic incident. The ER DVL provides immediate support such as safety planning, and on-going support such as case management and advocacy

This position represents a partnership of the YWCA Union County, the Union County Prosecutor's Office, and Trinitas Regional Medical Center.

## **Community and Professional Education Program**

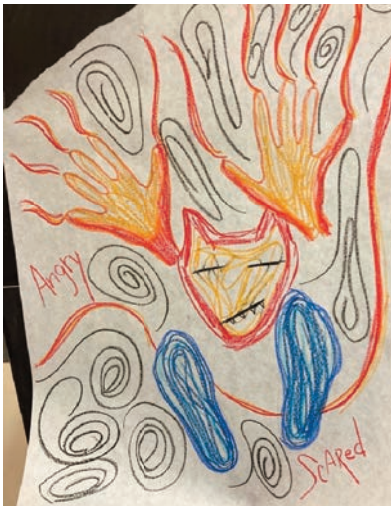
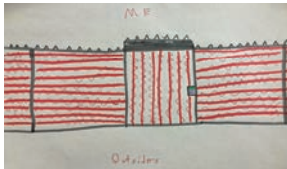
The Community Educator provides presentations across government offices, schools, and community organizations to help them understand the dynamics of domestic violence and use the knowledge to produce a coordinated community response to address the barriers survivors may face. The community and professional education program facilitates our 40 Hour Domestic Violence professional training for individuals or programs who want to expand their knowledge and work with this population. The Community Educator develops a network of connections and spreads awareness through participation in outreach events such as resource fairs, job fairs, and street fairs.

YWCA Staff gave **115 presentations** in 2022.



## PALS (PEACE: A LEARNED SOLUTION)

The PALS program provides services to the non-offending parent and children between the ages of 3-17 years old. The goal of the PALS program is trauma reduction through the creative arts. The program provides six months of creative arts therapy services to children using diverse creative arts modalities such as drama and movement, art, and music therapy. Creative arts therapists focus on PALS goals such as: increasing personal sense of safety, improving emotional well-being and communication skills, and developing healthy relationships. Individual therapists and a case manager provide the non-offending parent with resources, referrals and counseling services. PALS was thrilled to re-open our doors for in-person sessions with children in 2022. When given a choice between in-person and virtual, as the year went on, more and more clients chose to come back in-person.



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**PALS provided 467 creative arts therapy sessions to children and youth and 283 individual counseling sessions to the non-offending parent.**

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*“My daughter has been in session with the art therapist and she absolutely loves talking to her and looks forward to her time with her, it fills my heart to see her excited to talk about her feelings”*



### ALBERTO — STAFF HIGHLIGHT

Alberto came to the United States from Colombia 35 years ago, completing his education at Montclair State University where he obtained an MA in Psychology and then an MSW from Rutgers School of Social Work with a certification in Violence Against Women and Children. He has over 25 years of experience and for the last seven years Alberto has worked as the bilingual adult counselor in the PALS program.

“I have a strong commitment to end violence against women. I have worked on this field for the last 25 years and I have had a great opportunity to help many survivors of domestic violence, working on empowering them and give some hope for the future. I am glad to be part of this effort along with the YWCA staff. I am proud as a man to be able to share my experience with so many families that come to our PALS services.”

# Programs

## FAMILY JUSTICE CENTER AND COURT ADVOCACY PROGRAM



On September 13, 2022 we celebrated the five year anniversary of the Family Justice Center's opening. Having served over 2702 clients in their first five years, providing them with nearly 7000 referrals and providing over 15,000 individual services, the FJC team is looking forward to the next five years.

In 2022, the FJC team worked with 595 clients and the Court Advocates, based out of the FJC, provided support to an additional 379.

### FJC STAFF PROVIDED:

- 96 Court Preparation Session
- 983 Legal Options Sessions
- 60 Court Accompaniments
- 1359 Referrals
- 22 phones distributed
- \$2,830 in gift cards to assist with individual needs



## MARIA — STAFF HIGHLIGHT

"It has been a great experience being with FJC from the day we first opened our doors. I've seen thousands of clients come off our elevator looking upset, and it's rewarding seeing the calm on their faces when they leave. There are so many clients I've gotten to know well as they come back to us over and over – appreciative of the help they've received in the past and coming back to us for more assistance.

Maria has been the Administrative Assistant with the FJC since it first opened in September 2017.



*"A HUGE thank you to everyone that works to help women like me and our families."*

*"When I needed help they assisted me in the best way and informed me of all the rights I have and when I need help (in the future) I can go to them."  
(Translated from Spanish)*



story

Grace's

Victims first come into contact with the YWCA in various ways. Sometimes the police call in the Crisis Response Team, sometimes a client walks into the Family Justice Center, and sometimes, like Grace, a friend slips them our Hotline number. Here is the timeline of how Grace\* received support throughout the YWCA in 2022 and transformed from victim to survivor.

## Grace calls the YWCA's 24/7 Hotline.

### March 2022

Grace speaks to an advocate who provides information about safety planning.

### April 2022

Grace's son's school calls children's services after he informs the counselor he saw his father hit his mom. A YWCA Domestic Violence Liason reaches out to Grace and helps Grace understand the investigation. The DVL refers Grace to the Family Justice Center for information about her legal options.

### April 2022

Grace works with a court advocate at FJC and files for a temporary restraining order. FJC also gives Grace a new phone because her boyfriend is stalking her through her old phone.

### April 2022

After her boyfriend is served with the Temporary Restraining Order, he shows up at Grace's apartment and there is an altercation. The police are called and a Crisis Response Team volunteer encourages Grace to call the hotline again and get placed in the shelter with her son.

### April 2022

The shelter team provide Grace with counseling and case management. The shelter's child advocate helps Grace's son transfer schools because his father was showing up at school.

### May 2022

With the help of a lawyer from one of the partner agencies of FJC, Grace receives a final restraining order which includes custody of her son and child support.

### July 2022

Grace's shelter advocate helps Grace locate safe and affordable housing.

### September 2022

Grace enrolls with STEP to obtain a better paying job and also begins attending a support group through CSS.

### September 2022

Grace's son receives a new backpack for the new school year.

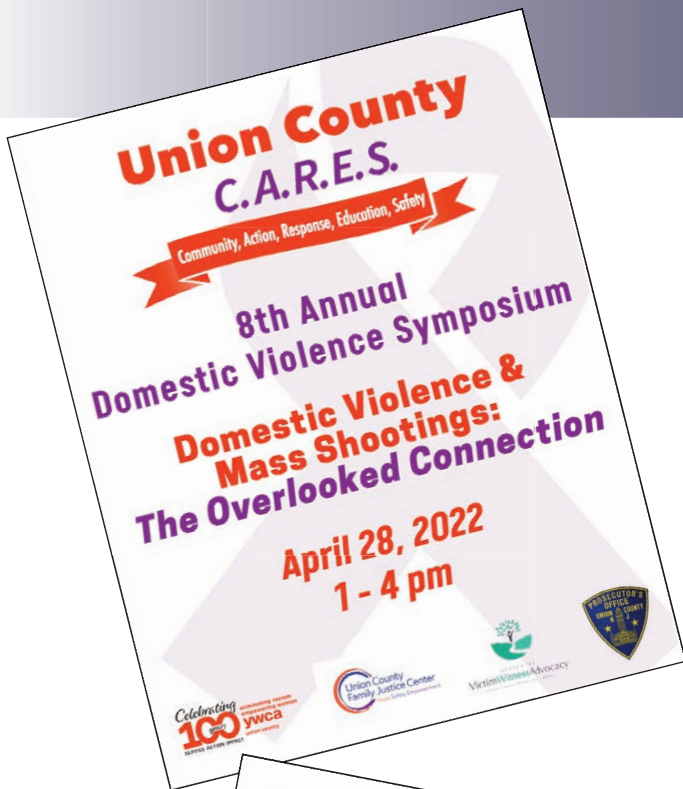
### October 2022

Grace's son begins drama therapy with PALS.

### December 2022

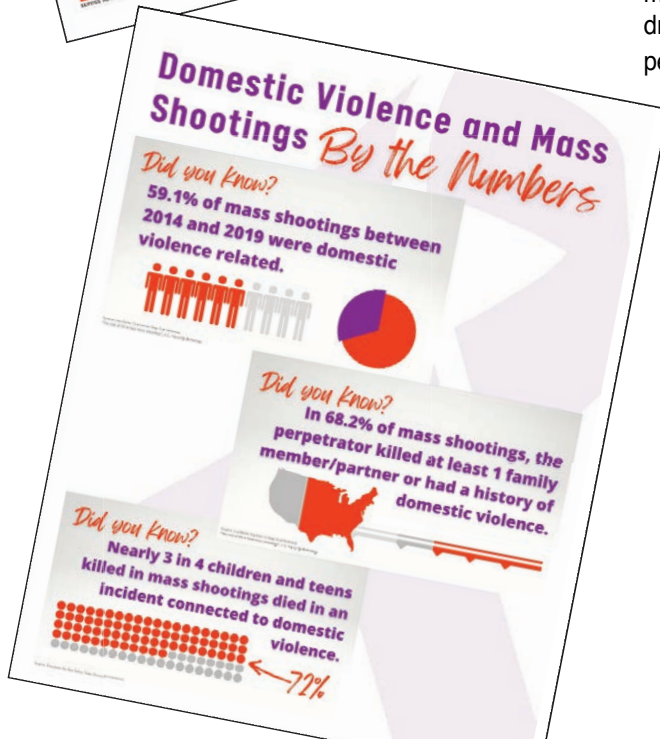
Through generous donations to the YWCA from various partners, Grace and her son receive holiday presents and gift cards.

*\*Grace's story and timeline is a compilation of several survivors' stories served by the YWCA through our programs in 2022.*



## Domestic Violence Symposium

For the 8th Annual Domestic Violence Symposium, “Domestic Violence & Mass Shootings: The Overlooked Connection”, we focused on an upsetting and ongoing concern in our society – mass shootings, and in particular the intersection of mass shootings with domestic violence. We were honored to have Attorney General Matthew Platkin; Chair of Union County Commissioners, Rebecca Williams; and Union County Prosecutor William Daniel; kick off the symposium by speaking on the timeliness and criticalness of this topic. Additionally, Shannon Watts, the head of Moms Demand Action spoke about gun violence in our society. Academic Lisa Geller, the director of state affairs at the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, elucidated the research underscoring the intersection between gun violence and mass shootings. And Michele Lefkowitz, Director of Legal Programs at Partners, and Theresa Hilton, the head of the Domestic Violence Unit in the Union County Prosecutor’s Office, addressed removing firearms from domestic abusers. Over 200 people attended via Zoom.



Speaker  
Shannon Watts  
Founder,  
Moms Demand Action



*Tribute to*  
**WOMEN**  
 &  
**INDUSTRY** eliminating racism  
 empowering women  
**ywca**  
TM

*Women Empowering Women*  
**2022 YWCA TWIN AWARDS**  
 Friday, May 6, 2022

**2022 TWIN Event Committee**

Chris Aliotta	Lissette Gonzalez	Luanne Moreno
Alison Banks-Moore	Tricia M. Gormanly-Lombardi	Pam O'Shaugnessy
Lois Bass	Nicole Gasaway	Mary Phillips
Edward (Casey) Bednarzyk	Lissette Gonzalez	Nancy Sadlon
Tamila Benton	Stacey Harris	Ursula House Siberry
Cara Cioni	Kathleen Hooper	Crystal Terry
Linda Crowell	Dolores Kochan	Jamar Tyndale
Helen Delinko	Melissa MacCollum	Cheryl Williams
Tina Earley	Lucinda Malmo	Linda Woodruff
Jazmine Francis-Burton	Robert Markiewicz	

**THANK YOU TO OUR  
 2022 TWIN SPONSORS**

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 WAKEFERN**

**CHARTER  
 INFINEUM**

**PARTNER  
 HORIZON BLUE CROSS/BLUE SHIELD**

**PATRON  
 NOVARTIS  
 PHILLIPS 66**

**2022 TWIN NOMINEES**





# Events

Throughout the year, YWCA staff took additional steps to show their commitment to our mission of empowering women and ending racism. Staff made declarations to Stand Against Racism, wore denim in April to raise awareness against sexual assault, rainbow colors in June to show support for the LGBTQIA+ community, and purple in October to raise awareness of domestic violence.



2022 Gala

With the help of emcee Brittany Bell, award-winning meteorologist at ABC7NY, and auctioneer Assemembly-woman Linda Carter, on October 27, 2022 we celebrated the work being done throughout the YWCA and in particular highlighted our PALS program. Actress Milena Lavin brought one of the dramatic compositions written by one of our PALS clients during her therapeutic sessions with our drama therapist to light. The audience was brought to tears by the story that was shared and awarded Ms. Lavin with a standing ovation.



We honored the memory of our late CEO, Jan Lilien by awarding the Jan C. Lilien Humanitarian Award to M. Theresa Daniels, who truly embodies, like Jan, a commitment to advocating for women and families. For more than 30 years, Ms. Daniels has worked to improve services and policies for survivors of domestic and sexual violence, as well as crime victims, and has worked to enhance women's health care, protect reproductive rights, support women's leadership and help women get elected to office.



### Thank You to Our Sponsors

**Premier**

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- THE PUERTO RICAN ALLIANCE OF ELIZABETH
- ELIZABETH DEVELOPMENT COMPANY

**CREATIVE ARTS THERAPY HONOREE:**

- ANNETTE VACCARO



# Outreach



Throughout the year, YWCA staff engage in outreach all over the county to help community members better understand domestic violence and to be aware of what resources are available for neighbors, friends and loved ones. We regularly conduct educational workshops and attend events in the community such as mental health fairs, celebrations, and food distribution events. This year we were also thrilled to be able to talk about domestic violence on the Community Vibes with Brown Eyes podcast and to facilitate a virtual roundtable discussion around sexual assault with national violence prevention activists, educators and filmmakers Jackson Katz and Byron Hurt.



services



# Financial Highlights

## Fiscal Year 2022

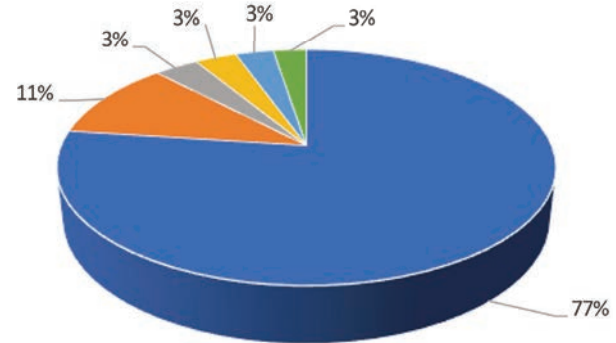
### Operating Revenue

Government Grants and Contracts	\$ 2,648,040	77%
Donations & Contributions**	\$ 369,918	11%
Contributions In-kind	\$ 118,227	3%
Special Events	\$ 110,858	3%
Program Service Fees	\$ 100,951	3%
Realized & Unrealized Gain on Investment /Other	\$ 87,972	3%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$ 3,435,966</b>	<b>100%</b>

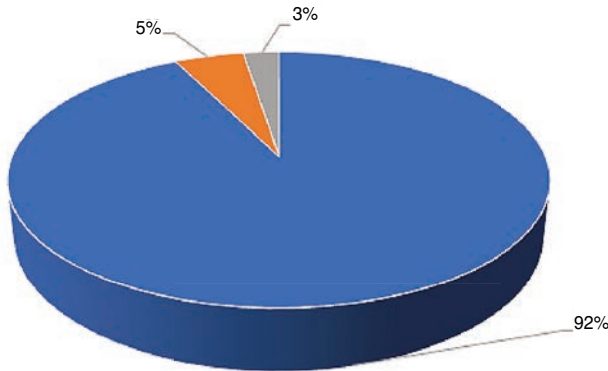
\* Un-audited financials

\*\* Does not include capital contributions

### OPERATING REVENUE\*



### OPERATING EXPENSE\*



### Operating Expense

Program Services	\$2,952,408	92%
Management & General	\$156,466	5%
Fundraising	\$81,333	3%
<b>Total Operating Expense</b>	<b>\$3,190,208</b>	<b>100%</b>

\* Un-audited financials

# Thank You Volunteers and Interns



We wouldn't be able to accomplish all of the work that we do, without the help of our volunteers and interns. Volunteers help across the agency in all capacities. Among other things, in 2022 volunteers helped beautify our shelter, accompanied clients to court hearings, staffed outreach tables and, of course, responded to crisis callouts on the Crisis Response Teams. Our interns have also provided invaluable help, from case management to counseling to court advocacy, we are truly grateful to all those that have so generously given their time to support victims of domestic violence.

Our Volunteers gave **3,399.75** hours of service

“Cannot put into words strong enough how this advocacy has changed my life. It is difficult to see the pain and suffering these victims endure, but when you see how your presence on their behalf gives them confidence and strength to overcome their situation, you will feel an unspeakable peace.”  
Court Advocacy Volunteer



“At YWCA I got hands-on experience on my first day there, and this is the best way to learn. The team of YWCA is amazing, everyone is very kind and ready to help if needed.”  
CSS STEP Intern



# Our New Flagship Building

Ever since our flagship building was destroyed by the fire in 2019, we have been anxiously awaiting the day we can walk into our new permanent space. In 2022 the new building has truly taken shape, and our spirits have risen along with the building as we have poured over every new detail and photo, and watched excitedly as the building progressed. We can't wait until we can finally move in at the end of 2023 (fingers crossed) and are grateful to the partnership with Armando J. D'Errico, President, of Pinnacle Development Group, Inc. and the amazing work of the team over there.



## Thank You to Our Building Supporters:

- DCA Shelter Support 2021
- DCA Shelter Support 2020 Covid-19
- DCA Legislative Grant
- Elizabeth Development Company, NJ







# Thank you

## TINA EARLEY PRESIDENT



On December 31, 2022, Tina Earley's term as President of the Board of Directors of the YWCA Union County came to a close. Over her three years as Board President, Tina stepped up to lead the organization through every major crisis that arose – rebuilding after the fire, pivoting service provision during COVID, and stepping into the role of Acting CEO, without pay or fanfare, following Jan's passing in May 2021. Without Tina's keen leadership, the YWCA, would not have been able to survive, let alone thrive, during the past three tumultuous years. Through hundreds of hours and countless meetings, Tina proved to be the strong and compassionate, if unexpected, leader the agency needed in order to keep moving forward under the most difficult of circumstances. Everyone at the YWCA Union County, is deeply grateful to Tina for her commitment to the agency and the victims that we serve.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (as of 12/31/22)

Tina Earley, *President*  
Aretha Johnson, *Vice President*  
Kate Coscarelli, *Secretary*  
Jean Lachowicz, *Treasurer*

Sherry Heidary  
Lisa Hiscano  
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