

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

Central Carolinas



ANNUAL REPORT 2023



**YWCA CENTRAL CAROLINAS
IS ON A MISSION
TO ELIMINATE RACISM,
EMPOWER WOMEN
AND PROMOTE PEACE,
JUSTICE, FREEDOM
AND DIGNITY FOR ALL.**

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DEAR YWCA FRIENDS & FAMILY,

“If you don’t like the way the world is, you change it. You have an obligation to change it. You just do it one step at a time.”

These words from Marian Wright Edelman, founder of The Children’s Defense Fund, call us to action not only to benefit our loved ones but also to benefit others, most of whom we will never know.


YWCA’s mission aspires to change the world. **The future we envision is equitable and just, devoid of racism and sexism.** Opportunities are shared rather than hoarded. Children flourish with patient, caring adults who have their best interests at heart. And having a safe place to call home is a right no one is denied.

The staff and volunteers at YWCA Central Carolinas see up close and every day the growing gap between the cost of housing and income needed to afford it. Economic inequality has grown so deep. But no one sees it more clearly than the women and families in our transitional housing programs who struggle to secure housing. Affordability is the primary barrier to stable housing. This country does not have a housing shortage. It has a lack of commitment to house those in need.

This situation, far from improving, has considerably worsened over time. The market is not solving this problem. On the contrary, in recent years, corporate investors have increasingly purchased single-family homes for the purpose of converting them into rental properties. Charlotte is consistently at the top of the list for high levels of this investor activity. **If we truly believe that racial equity and economic mobility are non-negotiable goals, increasing our supply of affordable housing must be a key strategy to achieve those goals.**

Often these steps we take – one at a time – feel like a marathon, not a sprint. **Each day, we witness women and families changing their own worlds with the support of YWCA. Last fiscal year, we celebrated with five families and 22 women who left YWCA for permanent housing, knowing full well that more needs to be developed.** Their tenacity, determination and hope fuel our next step. Your confidence, partnership and generosity fuel our next step. Thank you for changing the world with us, one step at a time.

In solidarity,



Kirsten D. Sikkelee
Chief Executive Officer
YWCA Central Carolinas



Brittany Conner
Board President
YWCA Central Carolinas



YWCA's Families Together Manager, Isabelle Musafiri, supports participants in their journey to securing permanent housing.

JUST KEEP SWIMMING

In our eight Youth Learning Centers across two counties, YWCA operates free, accessible literacy-based programs for K-5 grade students, after school and all day during the summer.

While literacy is the main focus of YWCA's Youth Programs, we are committed to empowering and honoring all aspects of our students' identities, both in and out of the classroom. During the summers, YWCA emphasizes exposing our students to new experiences they might not otherwise have the opportunity to access, whether it be a pottery workshop with a local studio, visiting art museums in Uptown or learning how to swim in YWCA's Fitness Center. **Over the course of the summer of 2023, YWCA was proud to welcome all eight of our Youth Learning Centers to a series of four swim classes!**

At Sunridge Youth Learning Center, many students started off the summer scared of the water. But over the course of the summer, and with the help of YWCA's welcoming swim instructors, the students gained confidence not just in the water but in themselves. **"My students didn't know how to swim at the beginning of this summer. They were scared, and their parents were nervous,"** shared Carrie Tucker, the coordinator at Sunridge. It has taken the building up of trust - between students and YWCA's swim instructors - to get the students excited about being in the water and the fun it can hold. By the end of the summer, the joy was evident on their faces as they confidently jumped into the pool and worked on their "ice cream scoop arms," a more fun term for the freestyle stroke. **"These lessons are opening doors for our students,"** shared Carrie.





YWCA swim instructor Katie helps a Sunridge Youth Learning Center student learn to float on her back.

**“IT’S ABOUT
EMPOWERMENT,
IN ALL ASPECTS
OF OUR
STUDENTS’
LIVES.”**

CLINTON REYNOLDS

Regional Director of Youth Programs

In a city like Charlotte where not every child has access to water safety instruction, these lessons are more than strokes and splashes. They symbolize inclusivity and empowerment. By equipping our students with the ability to swim, we’re equipping them with the ability to survive and thrive. **“Swim lessons just add to the list of resources we provide to our students for free. We’re here to level the playing field,”** shared YWCA’s Regional Director of Youth Programs Clinton Reynolds.

A NEW BEGINNING

“I came into Families Together wounded, unprotected, violated, voiceless and confused. I left that program with my kids on the side of me, shielded, protected and armored. I left prepared. I left rejuvenated. I left ready.”

Casandra is a strong, family-oriented woman raising her four children. But when faced with domestic violence in her home, Casandra knew she had to leave. She and her four children left an abusive relationship and moved into a domestic violence shelter. **“Enough was enough. I was willing to take that risk - We deserve better,”** shared Casandra. She was then referred by the domestic violence shelter to YWCA’s Families Together transitional housing program. Casandra and her four children moved into one of YWCA’s ten Families Together furnished townhomes in February 2021.

Casandra was relieved to be in a safe environment with her children, but she knew her work was cut out for her. **As part of the program, Casandra received one-on-one support to set and realize her goals.** She was working as a driver for DoorDash at the time and wanted to advance her career. She wanted to get her finances in order and save money. She wanted to focus on her health to be able to better show up for her children. And, most importantly, she wanted her children to feel safe and protected and be able to flourish. **With the support of YWCA’s Families Together program, Casandra worked hard, day in and day out, towards these goals.** *“I was transitioning spiritually, financially, career-wise, friend-wise,”* shared Casandra.



Casandra’s children celebrating Christmas in their new home.

Casandra's hard work has certainly paid off. She started a new job, managing a peer support business, making twice what she was when she entered Families Together. Thanks to the financial literacy component of YWCA's program, she's learned how to become a "budgeting guru" and has learned to be very cautious about her spending. **After learning to budget and building up her savings during her stay at YWCA, Casandra achieved her ultimate goal: graduating into permanent housing. She found the perfect home - a four bedroom, two bathroom house complete with a backyard and friendly neighbors - where she and her children can grow and thrive.** Her kids love the house. They've made friends in their new neighborhood and are learning the ropes of taking care of their new home.

Before, Casandra didn't have a support system. Thanks to her hard work and time at YWCA, she's built one for herself and her children. **"It wasn't an easy process - but the opportunities it has created, the doors it has opened, have been incredible," shared Casandra of her time at YWCA.** And her own experience in the program has inspired her to give back in her career of peer support work: "If I can do it, you can too," shared Casandra.

YWCA is incredibly proud to have played a role in Casandra and her children's story. Thank you to YWCA's generous donors who support our transitional housing programs. Casandra's story is made possible because of you.



One of YWCA's ten townhomes that house our Families Together transitional housing program.



Casandra and her youngest two daughters.

2022-2023 FINANCIALS

SUPPORT & REVENUE

SUPPORT:

Contributions & Grants	\$2,240,057
Governmental Agencies	\$33,969
United Way of Greater Charlotte	\$261,933
In-Kind Support	\$76,344

REVENUE:

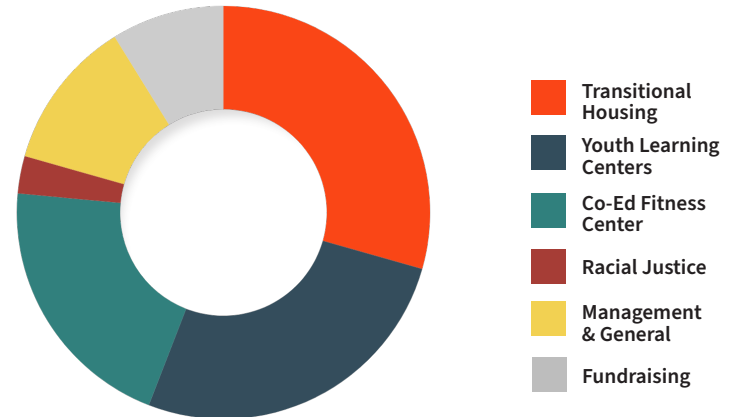
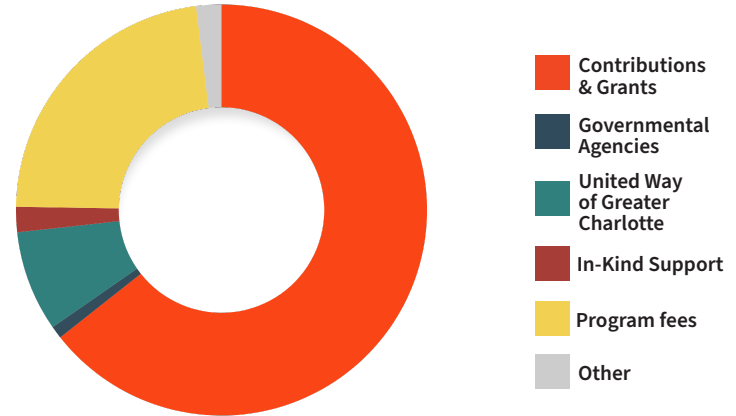
Program Fees	\$777,900
Other Income	\$59,266

TOTAL SUPPORT & REVENUE \$3,449,469

EXPENSES

Program Services	
Transitional Housing	\$1,124,568
Youth Learning Centers	\$1,008,009
Co-Ed Fitness Center	\$785,860
Racial Justice	\$98,157
Management & General	\$438,859
Fundraising	\$326,811

TOTAL EXPENSES \$3,782,264



*The financials above reflect YWCA's internal financial statements from our 2022-2023 fiscal year, which ran from July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023. Audited financials are available upon request.



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