

AVENUES
FOR YOUTH

2021-2022

ANNUAL REPORT

**REPORT TO
COMMUNITY**

With your support, your ideas, your work, and your love, we know that Avenues will continue to succeed in this mission.



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Minneapolis, MN 55411



@avenuesforyouth



I'M AT HOME

Dear friends,

Earlier this year, while at Minneapolis Avenues, I overheard a young person in the hallway talking on their phone, saying **“No, I haven’t left yet, I’m still at home.”** This casual line and the sentiment behind it struck me. It’s what we want every young person at Avenues to feel, that while they are with us that **they are at home.**

Over the course of this last year, much of the pre-pandemic life has returned to Avenues. We have been building back to full capacity, while maintaining emergency quarantine spaces. We have resumed activities that not only support the youth in their journeys, but that also create the homey and familial atmosphere that makes Avenues so special.



It is often the small things that create the biggest impact. For example:

- **Taylor**, a Youth Support Specialist at Brooklyn Avenues, coming in on a day off to decorate the door of a young man who didn’t think anyone would remember his birthday.
- **LaReina**, a Youth Advocacy and Engagement Specialist at Minneapolis Avenues, starting a walking club and getting several youth outside twice a week to explore their neighborhood and take photos.
- **Maia**, with ConneQT, diligently delivering bikes to every youth staying in our community-based housing program.
- **Karesia**, the Young Families Program Manager, scheduling her young moms to have a photo-shoot with their little ones for Mother’s Day.

It is a continuous source of pride for Avenues that we have staff who are so dedicated to the success of young people.

The number of young people that we supported was slightly lower than in past years, but we know that this was due in part to the longer than average stays in programs. We are so proud that 71% of youth transitioned from Avenues programs to stable housing and are on a pathway to achieving their dreams and goals.

As we look forward to the future and as we continue to explore ways to deepen our impact, we are determined to make sure that every youth who comes through our doors knows that this is their home for as long as they stay with us. With your support, your ideas, your work, and your love we know that Avenues will continue to succeed in our mission.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katherine Meerse".

Katherine Meerse, Ph.D.
Executive Director

“It’s just like your own house if you were to stay here.”

- Tia, a former youth of Avenues

WHO WE ARE



Avenues staff out and about in community.



Minneapolis Avenues

Minneapolis Avenues supports youth experiencing homelessness with shelter and transitional housing in North Minneapolis.



Brooklyn Avenues

Brooklyn Avenues supports youth experiencing homelessness with shelter and transitional housing in Brooklyn Park.



ConneQT

ConneQT supports LGBTQI+ youth experiencing homelessness with host homes and holistic supports.



Young Families, Our Future

Young Families, Our Future supports youth-led families and their children in scattered-site housing with holistic supports.

Avenues for Youth

Avenues provides emergency shelter, transitional housing, rapid-rehousing, and host homes to youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota. Whether youth need a place to stay for one night or eighteen months, we're here for youth 24/7 during this part of their journey. In all of our work, Avenues keeps youth at the center by using a trauma-informed approach and emphasizing social justice.

Mission

Avenues partners with youth experiencing homelessness to achieve their dreams.

Vision

A community where all youth flourish.

Values

Equity, community, respect and dignity, trust, liberation, and anti-oppression

YOUTH ARE

RESILIENT, INSPIRING,

AND THE DRIVERS OF THEIR OWN JOURNEY.

OUR IMPACT

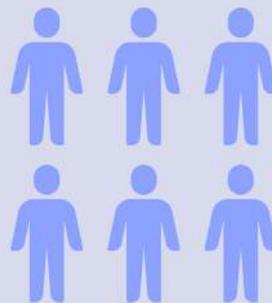
Avenues for Youth stayed open 24/7 to support 187 youth experiencing homelessness in FY22. The impact across all programs is as follows:



"Avenues had a positive impact on me. I still keep in contact with my host almost 4+ years later... It made me feel like I was important to someone, a priority of some sort. I was no longer doing this on my own; I felt supported."

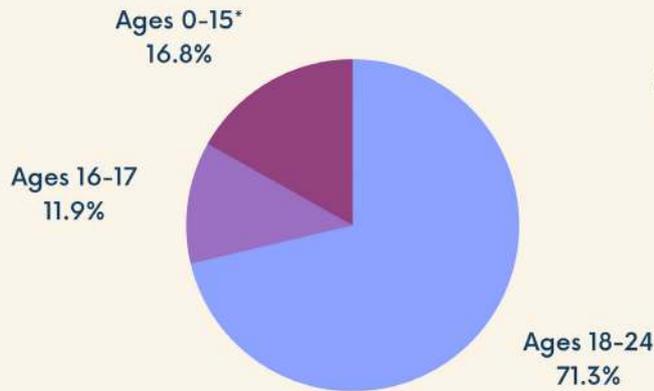
-Tabitha, a former youth from ConneQT

Outcomes:



SIX Youth Graduated From Academic Programs

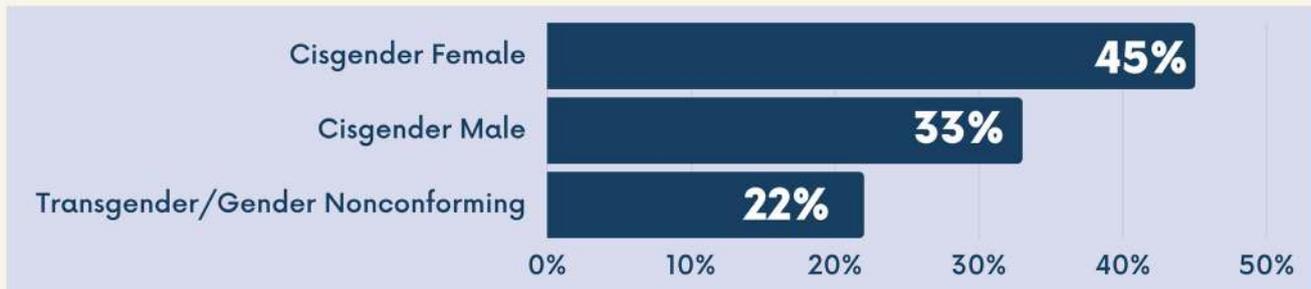
Demographics:



85%

Of Youth in Avenues' Programs identified as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)

*Children of youth-led households in the Young Families program



**“WHEN I CAME TO AVENUES, THEY
IMMEDIATELY
SIGNED ME UP FOR EBT,**

food stamps, and got me jobs,
paid for my GED. A lot of
shelters don't do that. They
just provide a roof.”

-Emerson, a former youth of Minneapolis
Avenues



**“AVENUES GAVE ME
THE CHANCE**

to focus on myself. I got the chance to
grow and become the adult I want to be.

**They gave me food, a warm bed, a
place to stay, but most of all people
who love and support me!”**

-Judy a former youth of Minneapolis
Avenues

“One of the biggest things I want people to
know is that being here is

LIFE CHANGING.

You will have people here that support
you, program staff feels like a family, and
Avenues feels like a second home.”

-Alexi, A youth of Brooklyn Avenues



**YOUTH
VOICES**



**“I MET A LOT OF GOOD
PEOPLE.**

I FELT SAFE.

I felt safe with everyone, I still feel
safe with everyone. It is weird to
have adults in your life that care
about you.”

-Angel, a former youth of ConneQT

STAFF VOICES



"Avenues is like home because I feel psychologically safe. We are a team. No one is above another."

-Karesia Coley
Program Manager, Young Families



"Brooklyn Avenues feels like home similar to being at your grandma's house for the weekends/holidays when you were younger. You know how all your cousins are there, aunties and uncles? All in one place, at the same time. Learning and growing through interacting with one another. Everyone brings their own uniqueness to the home as well as acknowledging and accepting the greatness in others. We all come individually with a different journey. But together we want a positive outcome and to have made a difference."

-Rosie Irons
Youth Advocate and Engagement Specialist,
Brooklyn Avenues



"I love coming to work and seeing the inspiring artwork, smelling the great meals being prepared, and feeling the warmth of a home."

-JJ Fournelle
Human Resources Manager



"I am just going to speak what is on my soul. Avenues feels like a strong, loving, and caring family. Its safe, you feel like you belong."

-Toni Wagner
Youth Support Specialist, Minneapolis Avenues



"Home is about feeling supported, about being able to be your full self without having to censor aspects of who you are in order to get your needs met. It's where you're among people who are kind to you and if you're in trouble, they will help you. It is community. ConneQT aspires to be that."

-Ryan Berg
Program Manager, ConneQT

COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS!

In every week, of every month, and in every way, our community shows up for Avenues for Youth to ensure our shelves are stocked and our youth have the resources they need to be authentically themselves and find success on their journey to stable housing and bigger life goals!

While there is not enough space to recognize every supporter, partner organization and activity, we would like to highlight a few special and innovative ways our community has supported Avenues for Youth.



September Sustainers with a Favorite Senator!

Minnesota State Senator Scott Dibble made a personal challenge to the community that he would donate \$25 for every new sign-up for our September Sustainers Campaign. Thanks to Scott and his husband Richard Leyva's generosity and advocacy over 40 people signed up!



Boston Scientific Leads a Binder Drive

Boston Scientific's Pride Employee Resource Group led a first of its kind drive to supply chest binders for transgender youth in the ConneQT Program. Boston Scientific donated enough so that each youth could have multiples!



Topline Financial Credit Union's Bike Bonanza

Topline Financial came through with a donation of a dozen bikes for youth in the ConneQT Program and Minneapolis Avenues house. These bikes provided the youth with transportation, freedom, and some summer fun.

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteers and community partners both highlighted and those not mentioned.

WE  **OUR VOLUNTEERS!**

296 Total Volunteers Engaged

2,762 Total Volunteer Hours Contributed

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Blom, President
 Shawn Sorrell, Vice President
 Linnea Eiden, Treasurer
 Rachelle Haroldson, PhD, Secretary
 Kojo Baafi
 Kweku Bankah
 Sam Blackwell
 Corey Falls
 Susan Grelling
 Russ Heilbrun
 Sheri Johnson
 Molly Monahan
 Mikal Nabors
 Jeffrey Nasers
 Kopper Joi Overton

LEADERSHIP

Katherine Meerse, Ph.D.
 Executive Director

 Zayed Ahmed, Ph.D.
 Director of Programs

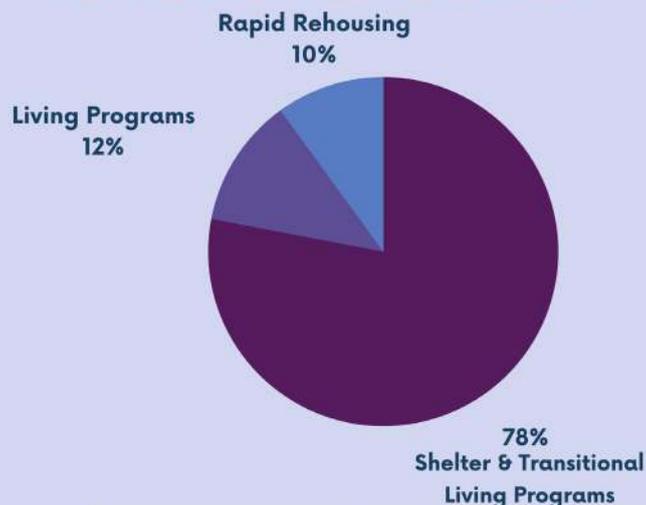
 Melissa Cuff
 Director of Development and
 Communications

 Beth Haney, Ph.D.
 Director of Finance and
 Operations

 Rachel Hatch
 Director of Programs

FINANCIALS

FISCAL YEAR: JULY 1, 2021- JUNE 30, 2022



NET ASSETS	AMOUNT
Beginning Net Assets	\$4,129,554
Ending Net Assets	\$4,025,817
Change in Net Assets	(\$103,737)

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

REVENUE	AMOUNT
Donations	\$1,629,559
Government Grants	\$1,030,259
Program Services	\$167,139
In-Kind Contributions	\$110,590
Special Event Revenue	\$107,622
Investment Income	\$1,960
Other Income	\$4,078
Total Revenue	\$3,051,207
EXPENSES	AMOUNT
Programs	\$2,023,790
Fundraising	\$505,779
Management & General	\$370,406
Total Expenses	\$2,899,975