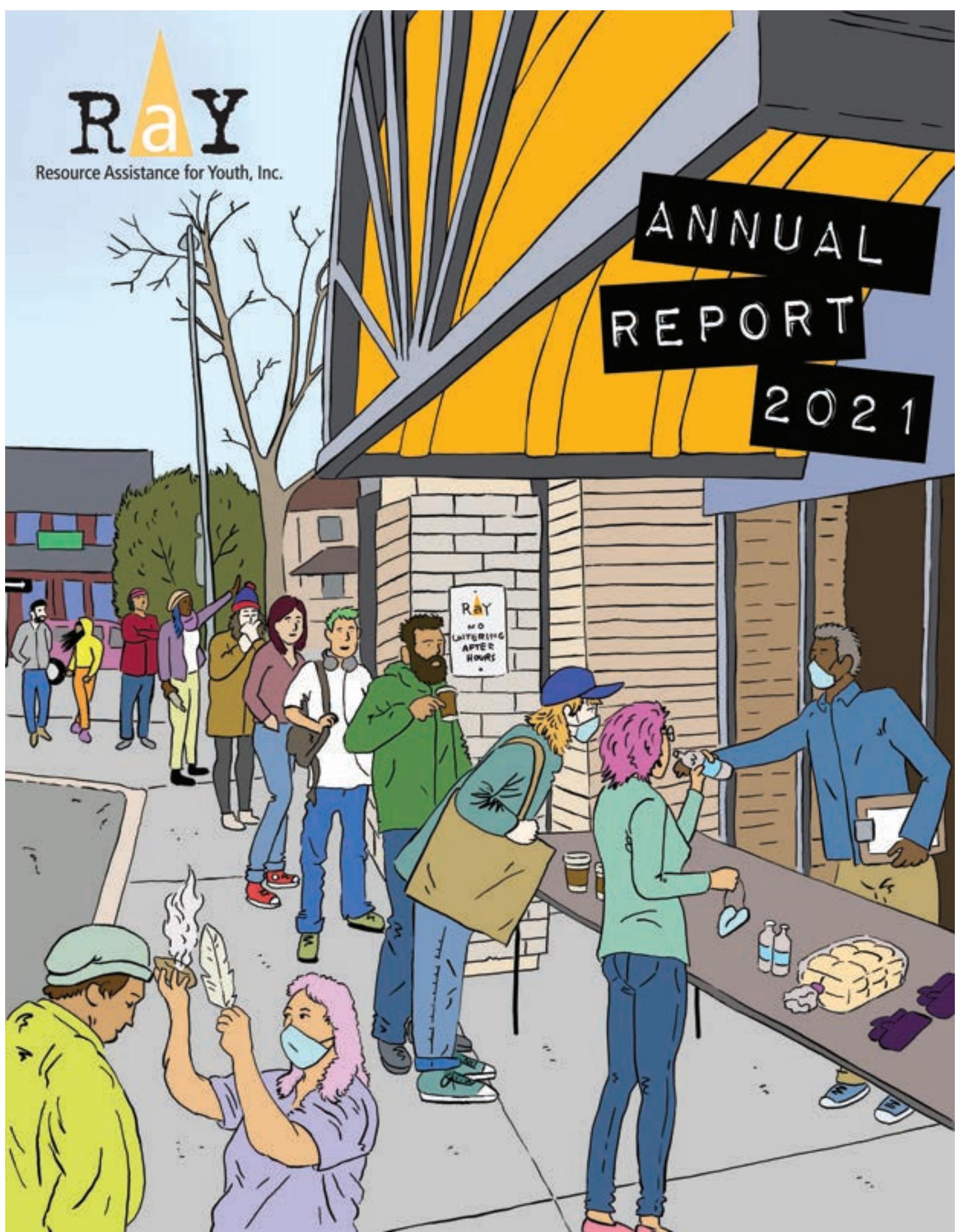


# RAY

Resource Assistance for Youth, Inc.

## ANNUAL REPORT

2021



# Land Acknowledgment

Resource Assistance for Youth (RaY) acknowledges that we operate in Treaty 1 territory, on the original lands of the Ojibway, Saulteaux, Cree and Oji-Cree peoples, and the homeland of the Métis Nation.

RaY is committed to honouring the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls.

We are dedicated to learning, healing, and collaboration whilst we strive to provide culturally appropriate programming for all youth in a safe environment.

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# Celebrating Resiliency

This year's annual report celebrates the resilience and adaptability of the youth participants and the staff at RaY. It hasn't been easy responding to the ever-present pandemic and its associated restrictions, especially with subsequent waves and variants. But we have been responding to crises for years, whether it's one of toxic drug supply or dangerous weather, so we were able to keep providing high quality services in creative ways. Thank you to Nick Friesen for this year's cover art, which represents some of those adaptations!

Thank you to those who shared their stories and voices with us for this year's Annual Report. You keep our feet on the ground when the world turns upside down. You remind us what matters and what is possible. This report celebrates you and all that you've achieved.

**Read this report online:**

## A Message from the President

Someone asked me, “what is RaY about?” “A good question,” I said and gave this explanation that I will share with you as my President’s Message.

RaY can be measured by what it does for the youth who come to its doors or it meets on the street. It provides them with opportunity to find the supports and services they need – whether it is just to get through the day, the week, the month or in the longer term to acquire what they need to change their lives.

RaY meets the youth on their terms and responds accordingly but also opens the door to more. Importantly, it accepts people as they are. For this reason RaY is a safe and welcoming place.

RaY pays attention to all the needs of the individual and so has developed its range of supports: physical, social, educational and cultural. It is truly about the all round health and well-being of the individual.

RaY is recognized for its work by its peers, the community, funders and the youth who use it and have benefited from it.

RaY is about learning, adapting and growing. RaY started off as Project Go Home – with the most simple of goals – to reunite youth with their families. It soon learned that not all want to go home or have homes to return to. So began its change, adaption and growth.

RaY is about innovating in everything it does – developing the tools needed to ensure it remains true to its focus of assisting the youth.

RaY is about not standing still. Each development in our work at RaY raises the question – What else can we do?

RaY is about relationships. The RaY Hub model speaks to this. There is also the close working relationship between the RaY Board, Executive Director Kelly Homes and

all the RaY management. The RaY Board and management also strive to ensure the relationship with our staff is constantly improved.

RaY is about speaking up. RaY works for those who have been marginalized, with no voice in decision making and often distrustful of power and authority. We will always work with them to improve their lot.

RaY is about friendships. RaY is a family and those who work here, serve on its Board or use its services develop a friendship that lasts through the years.

RaY makes a difference – and that is my final point in explaining what RaY is about.



Glenn Michalchuk  
President

## A Message from the Executive Director

If 2021 showed us anything, it’s that we are living through dangerous times. A global pandemic, increasingly extreme weather events, inflation, lack of safe or affordable housing, a drug poisoning crisis, inadequate infrastructure, and global tensions all affect life on the streets of Winnipeg and the daily lives of young people at RaY. The word “crisis” seems inadequate to describe what we’re seeing on the streets. In one of the wealthiest societies in history, scarcity is the new reality.

But if Manitobans are known for one thing, it’s their resiliency. We endure season after season of wild prairie weather from extreme cold to floods to extreme heat, but we know that survival is about adaptation. RaY is no different: a home-grown, Manitoba-made solution to the challenges and barriers that youth face.

If youth on the streets are avoiding healthcare providers, we take the Nurse Practitioner to them, riding along with the Street Outreach team. If wait times for social housing stretch into months and years, we create transitional housing where youth can learn to live independently. If food security has plummeted, we create new partnerships with restaurants and in-kind donors to make sure no youth goes hungry.

We could not achieve any of this alone. Sharing our expertise and building partnerships with other organizations in the community like Spence Neighbourhood Association and Downtown Community Safety Partnership allows us to go further than we would have alone. Together, we corroborate what each other are seeing on the streets and what we know to be true. We can come up with collaborative solutions to complex problems.

Just as we cannot work towards change without our community partners, neither could we get very far without the support of our donors, funders, and supporters. They have been flexible and responsive throughout the pandemic and we appreciate their trust in us.

There is no light at the end of the tunnel, no expiration date on social issues. But the future is bright. RaY is part of an incredible community both locally and nationally.

Together, we can work towards collaborative responses to youth homelessness and make a difference for young people in our community.



Kelly Holmes  
Executive Director

**1,106**  
**unique individuals**  
**aged 0 to 29**  
**accessed RaY’s**  
**programs in 2021**

This includes youth who are accessing drop-in on-site at 125 Sherbrook Street as well as our housing and Level Up! programs off-site at other locations.

**8,280**  
**contacts were**  
**made with our**  
**Street Outreach**  
**team in the**  
**community.**

This includes 2,485 contacts with 788 known individuals and 5,795 contacts with unknown individuals. 2,841 of these contacts were first-time interactions.



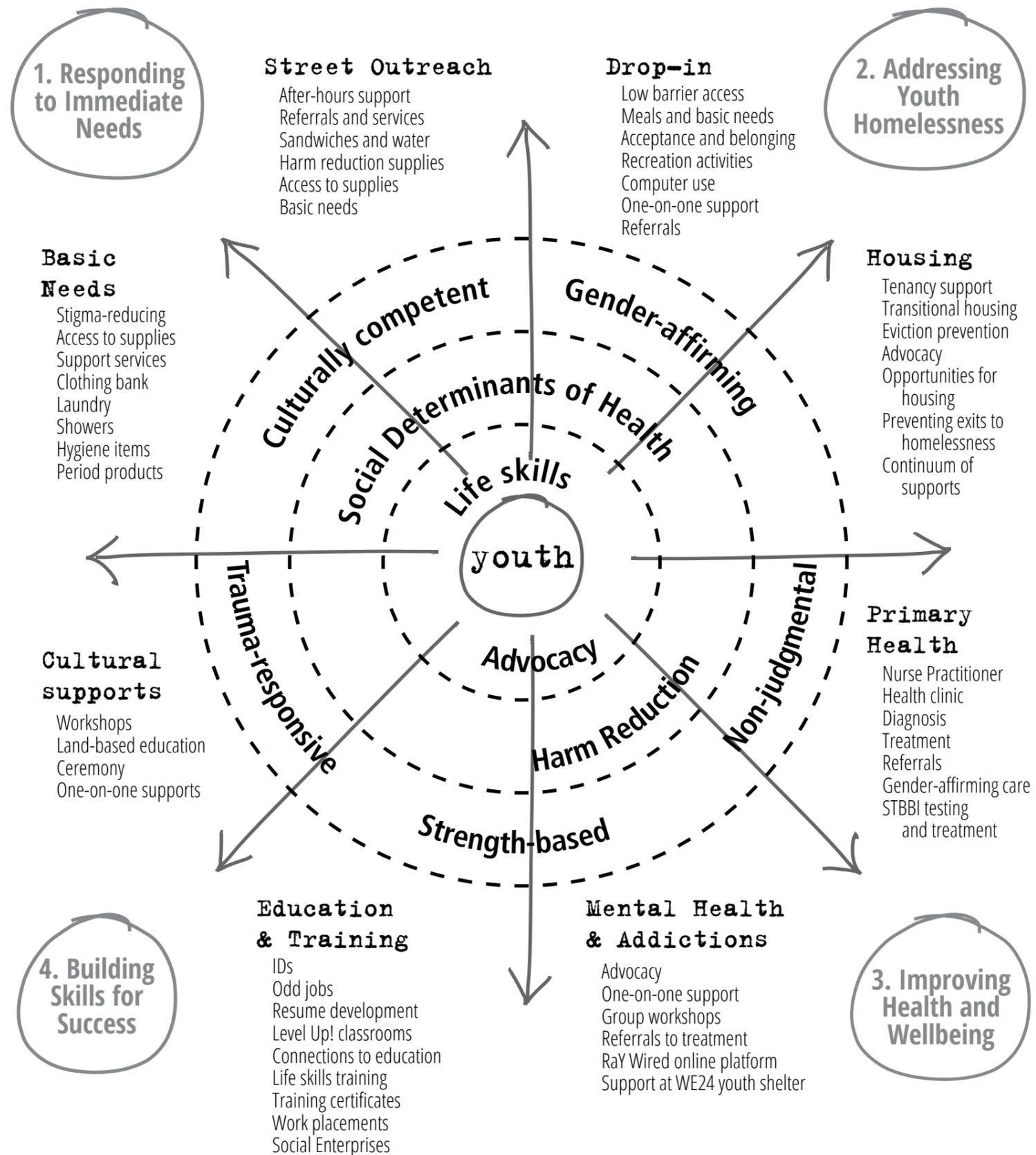
**Our Values:  
R.E.A.L.I.T.Y.**

- Respect
- Efficiency
- Advocacy
- Leadership
- Inclusivity
- Trust
- Youth-driven

**Our Mission**

To provide youth with what they need, on their terms, to better their lives.

**How we work: The Hub Model**



# The RaY Story

From humble beginnings as the Winnipeg chapter of Operation Go Home, Resource Assistance for Youth, Inc. (RaY) has grown to a nationally-recognized and award-winning agency. Our determination to provide youth with what they need, on their terms, to better their lives has redefined the way our city, province, and country approach youth care.

## Methodology

RaY operates as a “one stop shop,” providing wrap-around services for youth in need. It is a single place where street-entrenched and marginalized youth can access everything they need, on their terms, to better their lives. With a key focus on the Social Determinants of Health, this fully-integrated service model was one of the first of its kind in Manitoba.

Read more about our methodology:



# New and Noteworthy in 2021

### New website

After many years with our old website, 2021 saw us develop a new website to increase access for youth. The new website was designed to be youth-oriented and low barrier, just like the rest of our services. Increased focus was given to action, so that youth and supporters alike can understand the actions they can take to make change.

### New classroom

After three successful years of our Level Up! Education & Training program, we expanded to have not one but two in-class training cohorts. To differentiate them, they've become known as Launch Pad, which focuses on young adults developing the skills to live independent, self-determined lives; and Lift Off, a life skills program focused more heavily on employability skills. This expanded program works to meet youth where they're at by providing tailored learning for youth based on their past experiences and career goals.

### New location

With the introduction of an additional classroom cohort, the Level Up! program outgrew its space in the basement at RaY's main 125 Sherbrook Street location. After looking at several locations, we settled in to the building at 35 King Street, with enough space to house two classrooms, two youth lounges and computer rooms, as well as multiple offices for program and administrative staff.

### New van

Despite the restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, our social enterprise RaY Moving continued to provide valuable services and support both at RaY and to community businesses and partners. This prompted the acquisition of a second moving van, which was added to the RaY fleet in 2021.

### New awards

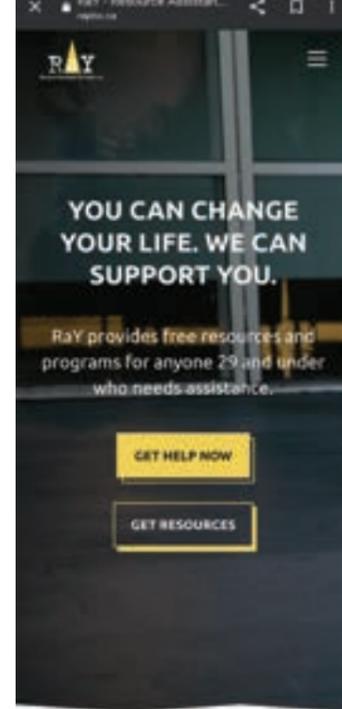
RaY's award-winning programming added new accolades in 2021. RaY was winner, Prairie Region, of the Canada Volunteer Award in Social Innovation. A virtual awards ceremony and certificate of commendation signed by the Prime Minister reminded us that we are doing well for the youth and it is not going unnoticed.

Also in 2021, RaY Executive Director Kelly Holmes was a finalist for the Lynn Factor Stand Up for Kids Award, a project of the Children's Aid Foundation. This is well-deserved as Kelly has led RaY with unwavering determination for over 20 years. Congratulations, Kelly!

### New staff

RaY is working hard to respond to increased need in the community and on the streets. As part of a period of massive growth, RaY's staff body grew 67% between 2020 and 2021. This would not be possible without our generous donors and supports or the funders who trust and believe in us.

See our new website and learn more:



*2021 saw RaY's staff team grow. The team advocated for youth through adversity and pandemic challenges, without losing sight of the bigger picture*



## The RaY Team

### Board of Directors

Glenn Michalchuk	President
Andrew Spence	Vice-President
Bruce Klassen	Treasurer
Jodi St Amant	Secretary
Angela Clark	Director
Kelsey Noakes	Director
Peter Havens	Director
Susan Peterson	Director
Shanlee Scott	Director
Mike Zacharias	Director

### Leadership Team

Kelly Holmes	Executive Director
Breda Vosters	Director of Grants & Information
Caryn Birch	Director of Education & Training
Olga Shmelova	Director of Mental Health & Addictions
Talia Potash	Director of Housing

### Access to Immediate Needs

Steve Wolfe	Basic Needs Coordinator
Scott McNicol	Street Outreach Coordinator
Brittney Nygaard	Street Outreach Worker
Eric Schweig	Street Outreach Worker

### Housing

Aaron Ghebrehiwot	Rapid Re-housing Manager
Stacey Baril	Rapid Re-housing Team Lead
Stephanie Reinheimer	Housing First Case Manager
Beverley Danha	Housing First Case Manager
Meghan Fifi	Rapid Rehousing Case Manager
Apryl Aisaican	Transitional Housing Manager
Devin Bray	Transitional Housing Team Lead
Francis Romowac	ROOM Case Manager
Jude Bradford	REST Case Manager
Ahmad Salem	REST Case Manager

### Mental Health & Addictions

Swati Bhatt	Mental Health & Addictions Manager
Laura Canfield	Mental Health & Addictions Case Manager
Amanj Palani	Mental Health & Addictions Case Manager
Carley Steen	Mental Health & Addictions Case Manager
Kyler Harper	Mental Health & Addictions Case Manager
Aisha Akano	Mental Health & Addictions Case Manager
Amanda Hopps	Nurse Practitioner

### Education & Training

Dominique Hodder	Level Up! Team Lead
Danielle Preusentanz	Life Skills Facilitator, Lift Off
Troy Taylor	Life Skills Facilitator, Launch Pad
Casey Wall	Level Up! Case Manager (on leave)
Cassandra Valmestad	Level Up! Case Manager
Kate Matthews-Lindsay	Level Up! Case Manager (on leave)
Shanice Parker	Level Up! Case Manager
Laura McNish	Classroom Assistant
Marshall Wiebe	Growing Opportunities Case Manager
Amanda Fries	Growing Opportunities Case Manager
Lauren Kroeker Lee	Social Enterprise Manager
Pete Van Loon	Kitchen Coordinator
Carlos Severight	Moving Coordinator

### Administration

Asha Harrington	Executive Assistant to the Board
Allan Bedard	Financial Controller
Dwight Samchuk	Bookkeeper
Ran-Lee Rhinas	HR Manager
Kerby Reimer	Operations Manager
Brittney Nygaard	Information Team Lead
Matthew Altieri	Grants & Information Assistant
Ayla Banks	Program Assistant
Kenny Chee	Stats & Information Assistant
Nick Friesen	Communications & Public Relations Coordinator



# Trailblazing Practitioner Research

In June of 2021, RaY's research team launched their first-ever research report which analyzed the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on street entrenched individuals in Winnipeg. The study was the first of its kind in Winnipeg, utilizing both quantitative data collected by RaY's Street Outreach team in real-time and qualitative interviewing techniques. The researchers worked in collaboration with RaY's Street Outreach team – who have collective knowledge and experience of 14 years as outreach workers.

Data examined had been collected over a two-year time period, including the year prior to the pandemic and one year following the onset of the pandemic. These two data sets were compared to determine changes in outdoor sheltering patterns and substance use trends from one year to the next, as a result of COVID-19. The key findings of our research included:

**The number of new individuals experiencing homelessness since the onset of COVID-19 has almost certainly increased, especially among already marginalized populations such as Indigenous women, with whom our first time contacts increased by 115%.**

**Outdoor shelter patterns shifted towards more people staying in encampments rather than designated shelter spaces.**

**Individuals on the streets reported**

**48%**

**fewer shelter stays than for the year prior.**

**Engaging in harmful substance use is most common for people with multiple risk factors, particularly those intersecting with street-entrenchment.**

**For youth ages 18 to 29 who are street-entrenched there is a**

**95%**

**likelihood of substance use.**

Our findings highlight the fact that Winnipeg needs to do more to ensure the safety and stability of populations who are already at increased risks of harm due to intergenerational trauma, homelessness, and substance use. At RaY, this project led to the expansion of our outreach services to help us better meet the increased demand we identified.

With research projects like this, RaY is not only able to better understand the needs of the populations we serve. They also help provide context and evidence of need for increasing the level of support in our broader community. Only with more support will we be able to provide enough services to meet people where they are at, with ethical and culturally appropriate services.

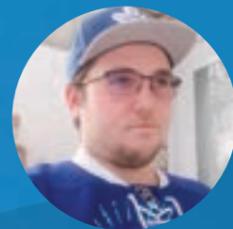
Read the full report online:



**“These findings showed that the strongest predictor of substance use is housing situation.”**



**Brandon Skuce**  
 January 13, 1987  
 - January 27, 2021



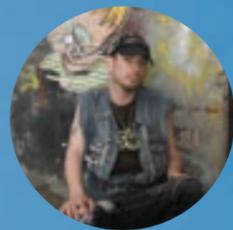
**Jesse Footit**  
 December 28, 1994  
 - June 7, 2021



**Tamara Kapeluch**  
 March 25, 1985  
 - January 27, 2021



**Les Bruyere, "Taunto"**  
 January 30, 1987  
 - July 4, 2021



**Harlan Kinsilla**  
 January 10, 1985  
 - March 29, 2021

***Gone too soon.***

Every year we say 'goodbye' to youth and alumni who have made their journeys onward. In the over 25 years RaY has been operating, it never gets easier for staff and the youth left behind, those who worked, lived with, and loved these young people. It is difficult to quantify the grief and trauma that these losses leave behind, but we feel it anew every time we learn of another young person gone too soon.

These young people are sorely missed and our love is with their families, friends, support networks, and loved ones.

**Rest in Power.**



**Cheyenne Belcourt**  
 October 31, 1990  
 - July 24, 2021



**Jasmine Normand**  
 May 18, 1993  
 - May 10, 2021



**Joshua Pashe**  
 February 25, 1995  
 - September 26, 2021



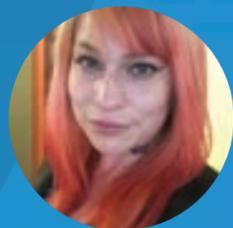
**Thomas Cameron, "Tommy"**  
 October 8, 1990  
 - May 23, 2021



**Cassandra Woodhouse**  
 June 7, 1988  
 - November 9, 2021

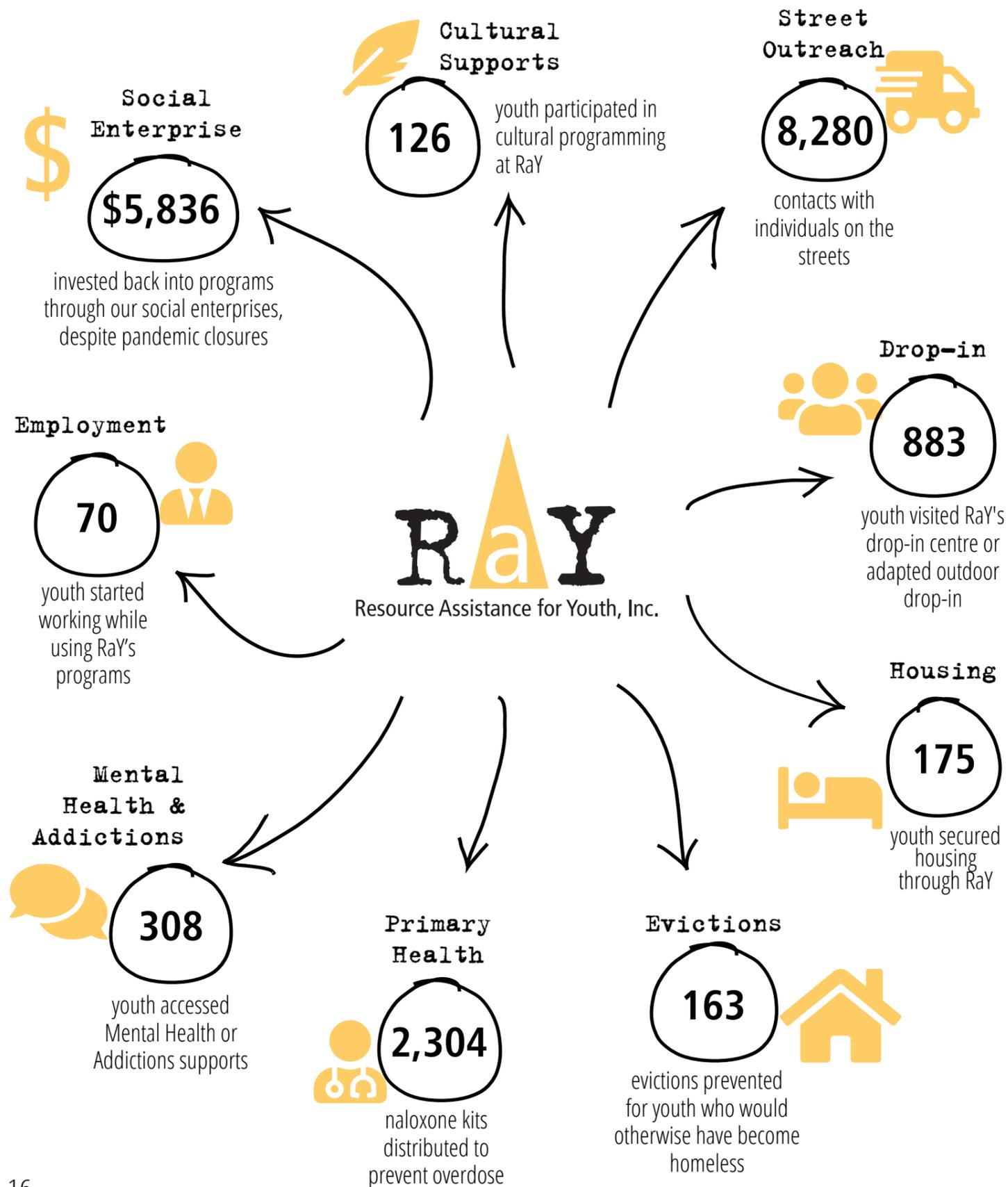


**Tryphena Houle**  
 June 10, 1984  
 - June 4, 2021



**Carrie-Ann Pena**  
 May 12, 1993  
 - December 3, 2021

# Impact Report 2021



## From youth-in-care to youth care superstar

“ The Level-up program changed my life! Let me tell you how! I started the program in June 2021, after seeing a friend post about this amazing opportunity on their social media. So I took a chance and applied!

After being accepted into the program, I knew my journey to a better life was about to begin. What I didn't know, was that my dreams were about to come true.

I grew up in the care of the child welfare system, and because of that I have faced many barriers and high risk situations, such as struggles with addiction, inadequate mental health support, financial instability, and homelessness, which seemed to push my dream of helping my community further and further out of reach.

After a decade of struggling and working dead-end jobs, I still found myself daydreaming about the changes that needed to happen in the child welfare system. I wondered how I, as a struggling youth myself, could even begin to make that change happen. I realised I had to start with myself.

Enter Level-up! The folks at RaY helped me gain the skills I needed, along with the confidence, to pursue my dreams, and turn that daydream into a reality. Today I am working with Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care Network, an advocacy and rights based non-profit organization that engages, equips, and empowers youth in and from CFS care.

I love my job, which doesn't feel like work at all! Because of RaY, I now know what the phrase “if you do what you love, you'll never work a day in your life” means, and I never thought that was possible. I am forever grateful for everyone at Resource Assistance for Youth, for all they have done to support me, and so many others achieve their goals.

Love ya fam! <3

-Lyn ”



## Street Outreach

RaY's Street Outreach Team provides connection and builds relationships on the streets so that people can get low-barrier, non-judgmental care. With the support of RaY's Nurse Practitioner, they provide first aid care on the streets, respond to drug poisonings, help bandage frostbite injuries, and more.

The past year saw an increase in people living on the street, and throughout the pandemic the Street Outreach team saw more drug poisonings than in the entirety of some of their careers up to that point. Most months have six or seven drug poisonings, while August had 12 or more.

The ongoing pandemic meant things were constantly evolving for the Street Outreach

team. Encampments, filled with more people than ever before, were constantly on the move in 2021. To better locate people in need, the Outreach van and its team began providing daytime outreach, utilizing existing connections with other outreach organizations and participants to great success.

The team handed out an average of 25 naloxone kits for drug poisoning prevention daily, and continued to provide first aid, harm reduction supplies, hospital transports, and assistance from a Nurse Practitioner. Whether it's training someone in first aid, booking an appointment, or simply telling a participant that they should go to a hospital, the Nurse Practitioner has been warmly received by the community, which has resulted in more at risk people seeking out the RaY van for help.

**“Simply meeting people where they're at is half the battle.”**

**RaY's Street Outreach team had 8,280 interactions with folks on the streets.**

**This includes handing out basic needs supplies like water, food, and warm clothing, but it also includes overdose response, harm reduction supports, and connections to detox and treatment.**

## Drop-in and Basic Needs

### Basic Needs

With participants only occasionally able to be indoors (if at all) as a result of pandemic restrictions, and only limited staff on-site, the Basic Needs department relied heavily on other programs to assist in meeting participants' basic needs. The Housing department chipped in by delivering supplies to program participants' doors, while Drop-in staff worked the front lines at 125 Sherbrook to provide in-person needs.

### Drop-In

Participating in RaY programming is all about respect, and everyone knows that works both ways. To come to RaY's Drop-In means having a safe space to grab a bite, check Facebook or YouTube for the latest news, relax, and retreat from the elements.

When pandemic capacity restrictions prevented participants from accessing Drop-In indoors at 125 Sherbrook, the staff pivoted to providing basic needs at the building's front door. Sometimes this meant passing out clean socks or a hot meal, sometimes it meant case managers working with participants outside in extreme winter weather, and sometimes it meant transporting youth without transporting them - by providing bus tickets or meeting at a neutral safe space. When restrictions lifted somewhat and a few participants at a time were allowed indoors, youth were always understanding about time constraints, sharing with other participants, and complying with mask mandates.

These young people understand they're part of a community at RaY and act accordingly.

**We distributed 2,304 naloxone kits to reverse opioid poisonings**

**That's an average of about 10 kits per day. Anecdotally, people on the streets are telling us that the kits we gave them saved their life or that of a friend.**



# Housing

## The pandemic continues

After 2020's emergency response to the first wave of Covid 19, the Housing department shifted gears from using the Marlborough Hotel for transitional housing to utilizing 14 additional Manitoba Housing units across three buildings in 2021. While some of these units were problematic due to location and gang activity, others worked well and basic needs were provided for participants.

In addition to the regular food and hygiene products, participants also received sketchbooks, art supplies and various other activities to pass the time in a productive way. One participant read through more books than we could provide them with!

Due to this isolation and lack of regular programming, the pandemic has had a dramatic impact on the mental health of participants. With many being exposed to the

virus, the Housing staff worked to accommodate them during the isolation period, in addition to providing multiple vaccination clinics at 125 Sherbrook and home vaccination visits from our nurse practitioner.

## Challenges

The 14 new housing units meant more participants, so staff case loads in the transitional housing programs grew substantially. Many landlords have been resistant to in-person viewings during the pandemic, resulting in a lack of movement from the program into the private housing market. As the number of participants in rapid rehousing was reduced and Drop-In became the focus, Housing staff were re-deployed on the front lines. Using half of the staff as skeleton crews at any given time meant only half were at risk. Eliminating services completely is a matter of life and death for RaY participants, so it was not an option.

We carried on, as we always do.

**“Eliminating services completely is a matter of life and death for RaY participants, so it was not an option.”**

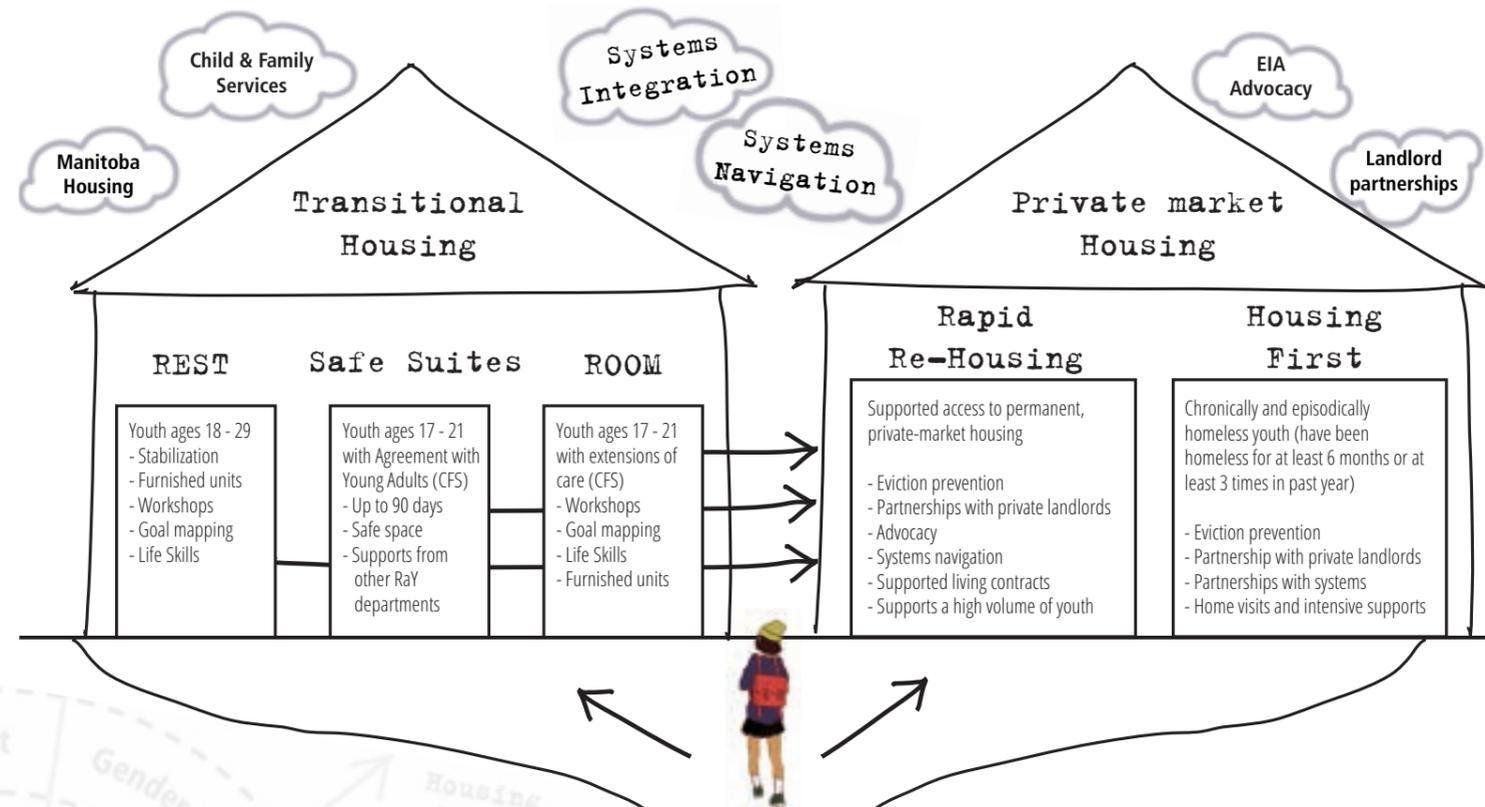
**175**  
unique youth accessed housing supports at RaY

This includes transitional housing programs, rapid re-housing of youth in the private market, and housing first.

**We prevented 163**  
evictions for youth who would otherwise have become homeless.

This includes creating accountability for illegal evictions, advocating with systems and landlords, and tenancy support for youth. This amounts to nearly one per service day.

# The RaY Integrated Housing Model

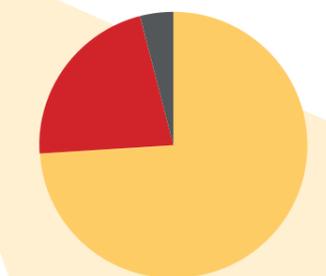


Of the youth in RaY's housing programs,

**26%**

accessed more than one housing program.

This might mean accessing support from rapid re-housing to find a permanent home while living in transitional housing. RaY staff coordinate across programs and across departments in the Hub Model to help youth access supports they need.

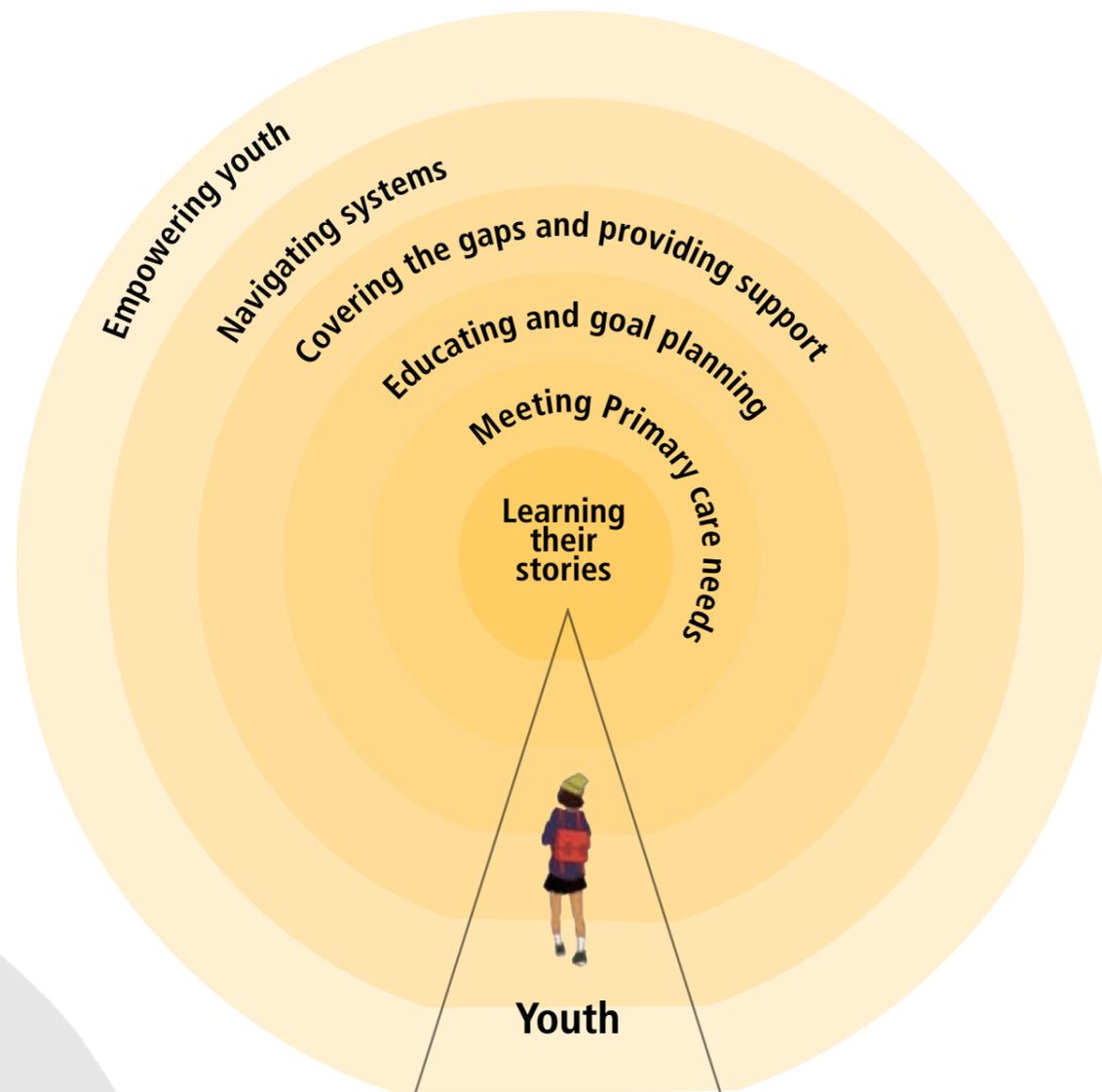


Used one housing program - 74%  
Used two housing programs - 22%  
Used three housing programs - 4%

# RaY's Mental Health Model: Walking the Journey

As mental health and addictions become more recognized and understood in mainstream culture, the language we use to describe them is changing. As usual, our team at RaY has been ahead of the curve. For many years, we've pushed back against terms like "mental illness" in favour of more person-centered and strength-based language like "mental wellness." The development of new programs and platforms has lent itself to the creation of this visual model of RaY's mental health and addictions model, seen below.

While traditional clinical work uses language like "assessment" to describe the early stages of a youth and support worker relationship, our team recognizes that this is a critical part of goal planning and treatment. As with other areas of our organization, it is about staff listening in a non-judgmental way, regardless of whether a clinical lens is being used. Youth are not "cases" to be "managed," they are human beings. Rather than viewing "recovery" as a discrete and quantifiable task to be completed, we talk with youth about "walking the journey" of their own mental well-being. We don't know how far the journey will take us, but every day contains opportunities for discovery.



# Mental Health & Addictions

RaY's Mental Health and Addictions department has grown considerably throughout the last year, from one case manager to a diverse team of six, each bringing their own expertise and cultural backgrounds to the table. The team is lead by clinical therapist Olga Shmelova and works collaboratively with Nurse Practitioner Amanda Hopps.

The members of the department are very hands-on, working as strong advocates who are well-connected with various communities and agencies throughout the city. It's not enough to send an email; strong connections are established through on-site visits, in-person conversations, and tours, allowing RaY staff to connect face-to-face with therapists, participants, and key players in the system. It's this personal connection that makes all the difference in the mental health and addictions field.

## New Program: RaY Wired

So, how do you establish a connection like this online? Enter RaY Wired. An immersive online mental health and addictions platform that has quickly become the foundation of the department, RaY Wired is the main entry point through which services are offered. It's as diverse and accessible as the participants using it, offering such resources as workbooks, trackers, resource libraries and more. But it's not just about resources, RaY Wired is a connection platform. Introducing every participant to a case manager through online chat, participants are able to safely seek out the help they need. The program's adaptable and responsive structure allows for sessions and initiatives to be tailored by the team to the services required, not set in stone by an out of province psychologist. This is Manitoba-made, youth-led content for youth.

## New Partnership: West End 24-7 Safe Space

Another program established over 2021 is Victims of Crime, a partnership with West End 24-7 Safe Space (WE24). Collecting information through both agencies allows for a more streamlined, around the clock approach to assisting youth in the city, with a goal of one day gathering enough information to create RaY's own justice department. Providing mental health supports to victims and perpetrators of crime is a delicate topic, but the conversation has just begun.

**308**  
youth accessed Mental Health or Addictions supports at RaY.

We are seeing an increased demand for mental health and addictions supports as the pandemic takes its toll on young peoples' mental health.

**74**  
youth talked with us about substance use.

This number is specifically about our Mental Health and Addictions team at RaY. This does not include the hundreds of individuals that our Street Outreach team sees on the streets of Winnipeg.



## Education & Training

The year 2021 was one of substantial change for the Education and Training Department. In April, we started to move into our new space at 35 King Street. Due to the ongoing pandemic and the program continually expanding, we felt as though a beautiful new space was appropriate and necessary. The team would like to extend a big thank you to Kerby Reimer for all of his hard work in getting the space up and running.

In August we received word that funding to launch an additional classroom under the Level Up! program was approved. This exciting new program, Launch Pad, involves nine weeks of in class training and 16 weeks of on the job support. These classroom sessions are for youth who are new to living on their own, are leaving CFS care,

or for those who are new to the city. The program focuses on life skills, independent living skills, and employment skills.

The addition of this new class resulted in the addition of four new members to the team to support with facilitation and case management!

Both classrooms excelled in quickly shifting between in-person and virtual classes due to pandemic restrictions throughout 2021.

**39**

**youth started subsidized work placements.**

These placements are at local businesses and organizations in the community who provide on-the-job experience for graduates of the Level Up! classroom programs.

**“a beautiful new space was appropriate and necessary.”**

Pictured below: the new location at 35 King Street.



## Thank you, 2021 employment partners!

Thank you to those businesses and organizations in our community who worked with our Level Up! Education & Training program to create employment opportunities and paid work placements for youth at RaY in 2021!

Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs  
Chamois Car Wash  
CHEP  
Daly Burgers  
Dog Loft Co.  
Express Employment Professionals  
Farmer Jane Cannabis Co.  
Feast Café Bistro  
FrenchWay Café & Bakery

Food Fare Maryland  
Graffiti Art Programming  
JA McDonald Automotive  
Kidi-Garden Day Nurseries Inc.  
Little Goat Food & Drink  
Makoonsag Day Care  
Makoonsag Transition Centre  
Ma Mawi Wi Chi Itata Centre  
Manitoba Theatre for Youth People

Marcello's Meats  
RaY Gift and Thrift  
RaY Moving Company  
Roughage Eatery  
Shannon's Block Painting  
Thrive Thrift Store  
Victoria Inn  
Voices: Manitoba's Youth in Care



## ***A young person becomes a Sundancer***

After migrating to Winnipeg from a rural community looking for new opportunities, Elisha was faced with how different life in the city could be. Navigating bus systems, housing, and employment all presented unexpected challenges. After connecting with RaY through an uncle, Elisha was able to access transitional housing and got a job through the Level Up! Education & Training program. Elisha also connected with RaY's cultural programming and, in July of 2021, participated in the Eagle Wolf Sundance ceremony as a dancer. This ceremony is known for being challenging and we could not be more proud of Elisha for going outside of her comfort zone to participate!

## ***Culture and Identity***

In 2021, the cultural department underwent many changes at RaY. Over the years, we've been honoured to be connected with knowledge keepers Heather and Lionel Houston, who exposed RaY staff and youth participants to ceremonies including Full Moon ceremonies and the Eagle Wolf Sundance. Connections were made with community members from Nations across Canada and youth were able to meet and learn about a variety of cultures.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and work of long-time RaY staff Erica Chatelain. After 19 years at RaY, Erica has moved on to new and exciting opportunities, leaving behind a legacy of cultural exploration and inclusion.

Providing culturally appropriate supports for youth is a critical part of responding to youth homelessness in Winnipeg and beyond. Of the youth in Winnipeg experiencing homelessness, nearly 80% are Indigenous in any given year. Being able to support youth with knowledge and ceremonies to help navigate their healing journeys is key to responding to this reality.

It has been difficult to create access to knowledge keepers and elders in our community during a global pandemic when our older relatives are particularly at-risk of COVID-19 related complications and worse outcomes. The vaccine campaign "Protect our elders" illustrates the dangers faced by those who carry important knowledge. In light of this, much of the supports last year were provided online through Facebook and other platforms.

As we look to the future of cultural programming at RaY, we will need support from the community and from those who live the culture. Not only traditional knowledge, but connecting Indigenous youth with those who look like them, understand contemporary Indigenous culture, and are working towards Indigenous sovereignty and self-actualization is critical to addressing youth's sense of identity and place in the world.

We thank the young people who are helping lead the way in our cultural programming. Only by listening to Indigenous youth voices will we be able to respond with what they need, on their terms, to better their lives.

***RaY's cultural team supported***

***126***

***young people in connecting with cultural activities***

***This includes understanding the importance of culture and identity; attending ceremony or land-based learning opportunities; or connecting one-on-one with a staff or knowledge keeper.***



# Youth Awards

**RaY's Youth Awards celebrate outstanding achievement in the face of overwhelming adversity.**

Youth recipients are nominated by staff who recognize the change these young people have made in their lives. During the first year of the pandemic, it was difficult to determine award winners, since all youth were overcoming adversity simply by surviving. This year, we celebrate both our 2020 and 2021 award recipients and congratulate them for their hard work!

**The Lynn Thompson Pay It Forward Award**  
Awarded to a deserving individual who has benefited from supports in the past and ensures that these good deeds are repaid by providing much-needed support to others.

**The Youth Ambassador Award**  
Awarded to a deserving individual who has continually shared their story to shed light on the issues of youth homelessness for the benefit of future generations.

**The Phoenix Award**  
Awarded to a deserving individual who has shown incredible resilience through difficult circumstances and not only survived but emerged stronger and more vital as a result.

**The Level Up! Award**  
Awarded to a deserving graduate of RaY's Level Up! Employment & Training Program who has enthusiastically worked to learn and apply new skills, face new challenges, and take steps forward in their career.

# RaY Champion Awards

**RaY Champion Awards celebrate community partners who have made an impact in our community and supported our work.**

Recipients are nominated by RaY staff for their outstanding contributions to the mission of RaY and for their support of the young people we work with.



**Art Reid**  
**Express Employment Solutions**

The Level Up! team met Art Reid in 2018. A RaY participant was connected with Express Employment Solutions and they introduced us. The rest is history! At that time, the Level Up! Education & Training program was in its infancy as a pilot program and Art helped us build strong connections with employers, many of whom we're still working with to this day. Art and the team at Express have employed many Level Up! participants and alumni over the past years. They support us whether we need to brain storm new career paths for a participant or determine next steps in the job market. It is our honour to present Art Reid with a RaY Champion Award in recognition of his outstanding commitment to RaY and its youth participants.

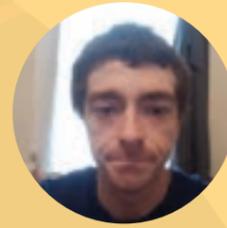
# Youth Award Winners



**Rosalie**  
**2020 Lynn Thompson**  
**Pay It Forward Award**



**Emily**  
**2021 Lynn Thompson**  
**Pay It Forward Award**



**Matthew**  
**2020 Youth**  
**Ambassador Award**



**Georgie-Lynn**  
**2021 Youth**  
**Ambassador Award**



**Brittany**  
**2020 Phoenix Award**



**Oliver**  
**2021 Phoenix Award**



**Stella**  
**2020 Level Up! Award**



**Brendon**  
**2021 Level Up! Award**

## Social enterprise

Last year the team focused on making changes to its social enterprises that will enable more growth and financial stability. We made the difficult decision to close the RaY Level Up! Gift and Thrift store in September 2021, based on research done by students and our contracted Social Enterprise Coach Pat Krewac.

In 2021 we acquired a second moving truck with plans to begin using both trucks in the summer of 2022.

In 2021, we worked at strategic planning for the social enterprise and exploring ideas for the many different services that we may want to offer over time. This includes existing moving services, but may also include

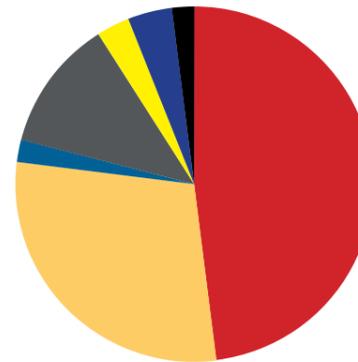
business to business supports and moves, junk removal, and other social enterprises well into the future.

The strategic vision has been informed by the Social Enterprise committee, which includes staff, volunteers from RaY's Board of Directors, and an external consultant. We have evaluated the existing structure and how it can be expanded to better serve youth and improve sustainability for our organization.

This work represents a massive shift in perspective and will take RaY's social enterprises into the future. Stay tuned in 2022 for the exciting re-launch of RaY's social enterprises!

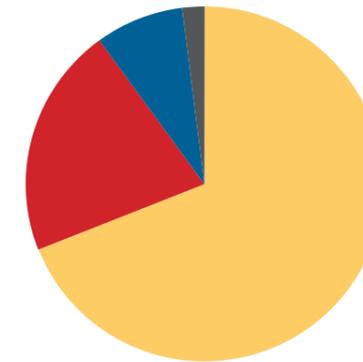
## Financial Report 2021

### Revenues



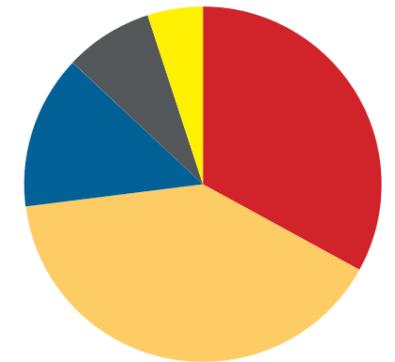
- Government of Canada - 48%
- Government of Manitoba - 29%
- City of Winnipeg - 2%
- Grants and Foundations - 12%
- Donations and Fundraisers - 3%
- United Way - 4%
- Earned income and social enterprise revenue - 2%

### Expenses



- Programs - 69%
- Administration - 21%
- Building and vehicle - 8%
- Fundraising - 2%

### Programs



- Housing - 33%
- Employment and training - 40%
- Mental health and addictions - 14%
- Drop-in, basic needs, street outreach - 8%
- Culture - 5%

## Fantastic Funders and Supporters

We appreciated the continued support of our funders and new partners, through all the changes that were required in 2021, and especially the flexibility we were given as we adjusted our programs to the needs of our youth. We were able to adapt because so many of our funders contributed additional funds for COVID-19 relief. In addition to the financial support from funders and individual donors, we also want to recognize the support of in-kind donations from organizations and individuals. Thank you all for your generous support in 2021!

## Third Party Events

While we were busy supporting young people, members of the community were out there supporting us! A special thank you to the students of 5 Days for the Homeless, the committee, organizers, and volunteers at Hockey Helps the Homeless, and our dear friends at Brothers of the Fork who hosted the first annual Bridge to Nowhere cycling fundraiser. Your support makes a difference!



# Thank you to our valued funders and supporters!

