



I M P A C T 2 0 2 2

# A NOTABLE YEAR

**UNEXPECTED  
PEACEMAKERS**

**PRIDE IN  
PERFORMING**

**NEW STAGES,  
MORE IMPACT**





## MISSION

Voices of Our City amplifies the voices of people impacted by homelessness through music and the arts. Members develop renewed hope, personal empowerment, and the life skills to achieve their goals.

## VISION

We envision a city where every person living on the streets has the opportunity to find joy, heal and freely express themselves.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jean Kluver**  
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Board Member

**Jolene Mayer Shumilak**  
Board Member



# A MESSAGE FROM CEO & CREATIVE DIRECTOR STEPH JOHNSON

Ever since Voices of Our City sang on *America's Got Talent*, this Choir's joyful singing inspires new audiences

to recognize the full humanity and unlimited potential of people experiencing homelessness. Together, we set the stage for unimagined growth for our nonprofit—that means greater impact as we serve our neighbors living unsheltered.

2022 was a pivotal year of development. We relocated to the campus of St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral in Bankers Hill, San Diego. For the first time in Voices' history, we have one sole space for street outreach, mobile showers, Choir Member Services, rehearsals, performances, and our growing team. This warm partnership with St. Paul's makes it possible for Voices to be here for our Choir Members five days a week.

Together we make real impact possible. Our supporters gave of their time, gifts, and energy to ensure Voices' safe space remains a dignified experience for all. In 2022, Voices' small-yet-mighty team worked tirelessly to deliver more support services and creative workshop offerings for our neighbors experiencing homelessness. Our community partners support with essential housing and emergency assistance services. On the stage, we debuted Voices' new artistic partnerships with La Jolla Playhouse, Monarch School, and the San Diego Gay Men's Chorus.

At Voices, our work is rooted in community—and that includes the community of Choir Members who have rebuilt their lives out of homelessness. Guests are greeted by veteran Choir Members, encouraged by singers who have been in their shoes, and supported by a team here for their long-term success. Together, we make Voices' creative community a place of friendship and nourishment our unsheltered neighbors can count on.

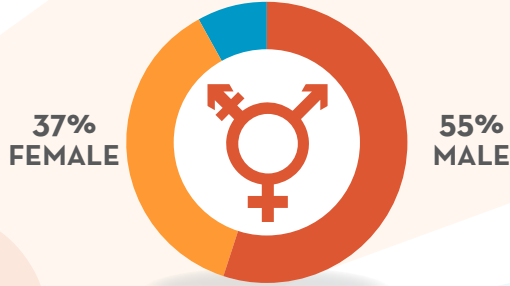
We have some special concerts planned this year, and I hope that when you see our Choir Members singing, you know that you supported their growth to get to that moment. There are so many essentials (tangible and intangible) needed before they step onto the stage. When these pieces come together for a Choir Member in their journey: you see it, and you hear their newfound confidence. I am so proud that our Choir's influence continues to be felt worldwide.

**Six years strong, you support a community where "invisible" people are welcomed by name.** From the bottom of my heart, I thank you for sustaining this creative community. We look forward to another year of offering exceptional services and making music together.

# WHO WE SERVE



8%  
LGBTQ+/NON-BINARY



OUR MEMBER SERVICES TEAM

2% ASIAN  
2% NATIVE AMERICAN  
3% OTHER



49%  
CAUCASIAN

28%  
AFRICAN AMERICAN

OUR CHOIR MEMBERS

10% AGES 36-50  
6% AGES 18-35  
14% AGES 66+

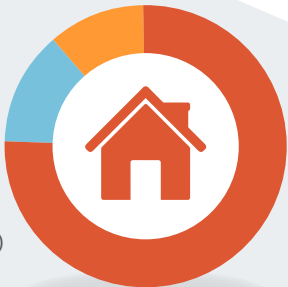


70%  
AGES 51-65

11%  
UNSHELTERED

13%  
SHELTER OR TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

76% HOUSED  
(rent supported/  
non-supported/  
single room occupancy)



VOICES' VITAL ROLE



23% of all unhoused clients placed in shelter become homeless again within two years.



Case Management alone falls short of engaging homeless populations.

Music tends to many levels of human need for our unhoused: increased resilience, connections and safe space.



Sources: San Diego Homeless Regional Task Force, 2021. Van, Vella et. al "Homelessness and Where Traditional Case Management Falls Short", American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 2020 90(5), 586-589. Ehmling, A. "People Experiencing Homelessness within Music Therapy Settings: A Description Study" University of Kentucky Theses and Dissertations--Music, 2018, 106.



# THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION

## HUMANITY

Voices of Our City Choir began out on the street: communing and connecting around music. Six years later, dignity remains the entry into, and experience within, our Choir. In 2022, we expanded our services and introduced new offerings. Voices' outreach team built relationships with neighbors living outdoors, extending personal invitations to visit our site for a hot shower (a new partnership with Humanity Showers). Our Member Services support the journey towards permanent housing by connecting Members to essential resources. Our safe, sober community also offers workshops to build self-esteem, and opportunities to nurture creativity.

**At the end of the day, it's about each person feeling their best.**

Singing in the international *Beyond Van Gogh* exhibit offered a chance to highlight mental health and created a cultural experience Choir Members might not otherwise access. We strive to honor every level of human need and effect real change in Choir Members' lives. You see the impact in their smiles from the stage, and camaraderie behind the scenes.



WAYNE

“THE CHOIR IS THE FIRST TIME I FELT JOY IN MANY YEARS.”

Wayne became a Choir Member in 2019, and has lived in his studio apartment one year. There are many unsheltered individuals living in tents outside his apartment, but Wayne said he is not discouraged because he knows there are people helping the homeless, and that, with Voices, he’s part of that work now.

To Lift Every Voice means audience members become changemakers, too.

## INCLUSIVITY

Our Choir boasts an incredibly diverse membership with ages ranging from 19 to 90—each Member bringing their unique musical styles and influences to enrich our uplifting repertoire. **We welcome unique sounds and creative spirits—that includes standing together in song with our LGBTQ+ community since day one.** In 2022, we brought unheard voices to new stages: the Choir opened San Diego PRIDE at “Light Up the Cathedral”, the only event of its kind in the United States, with interfaith leaders from 40 churches, temples, and synagogues. The Choir also performed for students at California State University San Marcos, for elected officials at the grand opening of University of California San Diego’s Park & Market downtown center, and for a dynamic collaboration with the legendary San Diego Gay Men’s Chorus at Balboa Theater.

## IMPACT

Music mends—for both our audiences and our Choir Members. The Choir’s uplifting show, *Music Brings Us Home: A Concert for the Soul*, sparked solidarity through song in response to the nation’s heartbreak after the school shootings in Uvalde, Texas. For World Homeless Day, Voices produced *Amplified: Sounds of the Community*, and shared the stage with unsheltered students from Monarch School, plus La Jolla Playhouse, and the SD Gay Men’s Chorus. **Two years following the broadcast, we still experience an extraordinary response to the Choir’s performance on America’s Got Talent.** The diverse faces on the stage spark glimmers of recognition: “this could be my grandmother/son/sister/uncle/mom impacted by homelessness”. To Lift Every Voice means audience members become changemakers, too. Uniting creativity inspires possibilities—both for Choir Members moving forward in their lives, and for collective impact. Performances continue to keep Voices’ Choir Members connected, and joyfully engage audiences around challenging social issues.

We know those closest to the problem are closest to the solution—six years later, our Choir Members continue to give voice to social issues through civic engagement. **In 2022, Voices held 33 Advocacy workshops, and our Choir Members provided comment 56 times at San Diego City Council, subcommittees, and County Board of Supervisors Meetings.** We welcomed journalists and representatives of local officials on site, and offered trainings for Members to share their lived experiences.

**In 2022, San Diego Social Venture Partners selected Voices as an Investee, recognizing our nonprofit as a high performing organization with the potential to tackle one of San Diego’s most pressing issues.** We are uniquely positioned to do so because we do this work alongside our Choir Members.





## JANUARY

Distributed grant-funded laptops to members for virtual rehearsals



## FEBRUARY

Re-launched in-person Choir

# A NOTABLE YEAR

In the Spring of 2022, the National Conflict Resolution Center honored Voices of Our City Choir with the 2022 Peacemakers Award. This Choir: an ensemble whose members are considered “troublemakers” on the sidewalk, and changemakers on the stage. Thanks to you, our mission and music continue to unite us over all we have in common—rather than our differences.

**20**  
CREATIVE + LIFE  
SKILLS WORKSHOP  
OPPORTUNITIES  
MONTHLY, WITH MEALS



## NOVEMBER

Expanded face-to-face outreach to unsheltered neighbors in Balboa Park

**1,000+**  
HOURS OF  
FACE-TO-FACE  
SUPPORT FOR  
CHOIR MEMBERS  
IN CRISIS

## DECEMBER

Performed Voices' 3rd Annual Holiday Concert at St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral



SCAN TO LISTEN

## MARCH

Performed at *Beyond Van Gogh* Exhibit for Mental Health Awareness Month



SCAN TO LISTEN



## APRIL

Received NCRC Peacemakers Award

Expanded in-person program offerings (life skills, wellness, and creative workshops)

Grew to 5-days a week case management aka "Member Services"



## MAY

Moved to St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral (first-ever space for outreach, rehearsal, performances, and member services staff)

# 207

### UNSHELTERED NEIGHBORS ATTENDED VOICES' NEW MOBILE SHOWER OUTREACH DAYS

## JUNE

Launched our Inaugural La Jolla Playhouse choir workshop

Performed *Music Brings Us Home: A Concert for the Soul*



SCAN TO LISTEN

# 8,500

### AUDIENCE MEMBERS AT 17 LIVE PERFORMANCES THROUGHOUT SAN DIEGO



## JULY

Opened San Diego Pride, performing with San Diego Gay Men's Chorus and the San Diego Women's Chorus

# 640+

### HOURS OF COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS SERVING MEALS, SUPPORTING MOBILE SHOWERS, AND WELCOMING GUESTS TO VOICES' PUBLIC PERFORMANCES

## AUGUST

Kicked off our daily in-house recording sessions for Choir Members' original creative content

## SEPTEMBER

Got the keys to our own ADA Shuttle, funded by Las Patronas



## OCTOBER

Honored World Homeless Day with Monarch School, Gay Men's Chorus, and La Jolla Playhouse

Launched on-site outreach with Humanity Showers

# 70+

### CHOIR AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS SINGING TOGETHER AT OUR WEEKLY OPEN REHEARSAL



# WE'RE IN THIS FOR GOOD



**JOJO**

## “THIS CHOIR SAVED MY LIFE.”

“I heard about the Choir from Naylenie (Voices’ Outreach Coordinator), who invited me to Voices’ Thursday showers. I could tell someone really cared. Naylenie was the one who first saved my life. I get \$23 on my EBT [food assistance] card a month. Now, I eat three times a week, and that’s because I come here to Voices.

It’s tragic when you don’t have anyone to turn to. My friends are in Mississippi. All the people in my past disappeared. When you disappear, they disappear. The choir, more than anything else, has given me friends. It’s not like we are a family. We are family. When you walk in, immediately you’re at peace. The choir is a place where my mind and my heart can enjoy being free.”

*JoJo joined Voices of Our City Choir in October 2022. She is 77 years young and currently resides in her truck. She is actively working with one of Voices’ housing partners—although, with the housing shortage, no one can tell her how long the wait will be. JoJo has composed 7,000 poems in her lifetime. In partnership with Voices’ Case Manager, Enrique, JoJo is working in our studio to record her memoir.*





**STACEY**

**“CHOIR MEMBERSHIP MAKES ME FEEL LOVED AND IMPORTANT. IT INSPIRES ME TO BE MY BEST SELF.”**

Stacey experienced homelessness for over 20 years. He has been a Choir Member for over six years, is now housed and happily employed with health benefits. Stacey participates in all of Voices’ workshops throughout the week; he said, “This is a place of great minds.” In addition to Choir, Stacey started a group to keep his community clean that he has successfully turned into a registered nonprofit.

**“I WOULDN’T BE ALIVE WITHOUT THIS CHOIR.”**

“I had no ambition, no hope. My life was just a joke. But then I found this life-saving choir, and it’s good and it’s only going to get better. I’ve been here three Christmases now. When I first started, I weighed much more, and I was only able to walk a block. I gave up drugs, alcohol, and smoking, and that saved my health. I gave it up because I want to be a part of this. I helped save a life: we all have this in us.”

“Just because I’m lonely, homeless on the street, don’t think of me as a forever lost sheep.” -an excerpt from Kathy’s poem “A Forever Lost Sheep”

Kathy was invited to join Voices of Our City Choir by another Member three years ago. Kathy has lived in her apartment for a decade, but she holds a vision for what she truly wants in her own place. “I want a good, clean place to live, in a good neighborhood, where everyone is friendly and everyone cares for one another.”



**KATHY**



**RAVEN**

**“THIS CHOIR ACCEPTS YOU WHETHER YOU’RE HOMELESS, GAY, BLACK, BLUE, OR GREEN—THEY ACCEPT YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE.”**

“This Choir gives you an opportunity to sing, be happy, enjoy yourself, and eat after! What more can you ask for? I’ve had times I wanted to harm myself, and Voices was there for me saying ‘You’re more important’. You guys give me something to do, instead of letting me be alone in my head. I get sick of being alone. Here, I can be free, loved, and appreciated for who I am. I got right back into outpatient care, I go every day before Choir. It’s nice to feel like my life is gonna be okay.”

Raven has been a Choir Member of Voices for five years. Born in New Mexico, and raised in NYC, she lived unhoused in San Diego for five years. She was walking from a recovery support meeting and saw the choir rehearsing and decided right then she would join.



# LOOKING AHEAD

## A MESSAGE FROM DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LINDSEY SEEGER

**Thank you for your generous support in 2022.** It was an exciting year of new original Choir-produced songs and shows, and **your support makes it possible to tell a new story about homelessness.** Voices' partnerships with the Homelessness Regional Task Force, The Monarch School Project, La Jolla Playhouse, and UCSD Park & Market will continue to foster Voices' next chapter of **arts, innovation, and impact.**

Thanks to you, Voices combines music and support services to sustain this innovative community, with support available through our Choir Members' highs and lows. In the year ahead, we will expand referrals and resources that support our Choir Members' moves towards permanent housing, their increased wellbeing, and their improved quality of life.

In 2023, we're **growing Choir Membership** (welcoming folks off the street, into community; expanding Mobile Shower offerings), **increasing Music & Arts Programming** (including our original songwriting and La Jolla Playhouse playwriting collaboration), and **Lifting Every Voice** (recording the original songs by our Choir Members, and bringing unheard voices to new stages). We are also **integrating Voices' advocacy** efforts into our

public engagements through Choir Member testimonies, publications, and recordings (including a podcast in-the-works).

**On Saturday, December 9, 2023,** we will perform our annual holiday concert at the renowned Conrad Prebys Performing Arts Center in La Jolla.

We look forward to sharing with you **Voices' first Three Year Strategic Plan**, created in partnership with San Diego Social Venture Partners, Voices' Staff, Board, and, of course, our Choir Members.

A choir isn't a solo act—it works because everyone joins together. It means even more when you are part of this ensemble: a happy note amidst the complexities of homelessness. Your generosity and commitment to Voices' cause have been amazing. We've achieved much and, with your support, we can do more. Thank you for being part of our journey and continuing to support Voices' mission and members.





**“Voices of Our City Choir saved my brother’s life and gave him passion and purpose in his life. Forever grateful!”**

**– Suzanne, Voices’ donor**

# WHAT’S POSSIBLE TOGETHER

In 2022, Voices of Our City Choir relocated to a neighborhood needing support, services, and solutions for its unhoused residents. Your gifts of time, talent, and contributions made this year’s impact possible. Thank you to our generous donors, including individuals, foundations, organizations, and government offices who made gifts from January 1, 2022 - December 31, 2022.

Thank you to our generous volunteers and community partners who grow Voices’ impact beyond our city. The partners listed below support Voices in offering Choir Members food and hospitality, clothing, safe shelter, and new creative opportunities.

**Thank you to each of our supporters who donated from \$5 to \$25,000 in 2022.**

**Government, Foundation, Corporate Supporters**

- Art Pratt Foundation of Old Mission Rotary Club
- California Arts Council
- Conrad Prebys Foundation
- County of San Diego
- Funders Together to End Homelessness
- Jewish Community Foundation
- Las Patronas
- Lucky Duck Foundation
- MusicPower
- National Conflict Resolution Center
- Rolf Benirschke Legacy Foundation
- Rotary Club of San Diego Foundation
- San Diego Arts & Culture Commission
- San Diego Downtown Breakfast Rotary Foundation
- San Diego Social Venture Partners
- The William Hall Tippett And Ruth Rathell Tippett Foundation

**In-Kind Supporters**

- BOMBAS
- Bekker’s Catering
- Downtown Rotary Club of San Diego
- Humanity Showers
- La Jolla Playhouse
- Ryan Bros. Coffee
- St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral
- Studio West

**Community Partners**

- Alpha Project
- Father Joe’s
- Humble Design
- Monarch School
- Options for All
- PACE
- PATH
- Regional Task Force on Homelessness
- San Diego Housing Federation
- So, Quilters Sew
- UCSD Park & Market
- Voice of San Diego



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

In 2022, Voices received unprecedented support to help our neighbors out of homelessness for good. We are humbled by the 8,500 audience members and 11,349 YouTube worldwide viewers who responded generously to the voices and shared humanity behind our Choir's music.

Voices made strategic advances to increase our impact: this included moving, staffing, and investing in legal and professional services. Moving reduced overhead by \$1,300, staffing increased capacity to support Choir Member Services, and investing in legal and professional services for Voices Publishing LLC maintained music ownership and a channel for future earned revenue.

**We invested \$140,304 in direct support for Choir Members' essential needs**—this includes securing emergency motel stays, stepping in to support utility bill payments to keep Members housed, or purchasing professional clothing for job interviews. To welcome more members into the Choir, we invested **\$118,878 in hygiene and nutrition support** for Voices' new outreach and mobile shower operation. These operations are greatly supported by in-kind donations of supplies and equipment, and are facilitated with partnerships to prevent duplicating services.

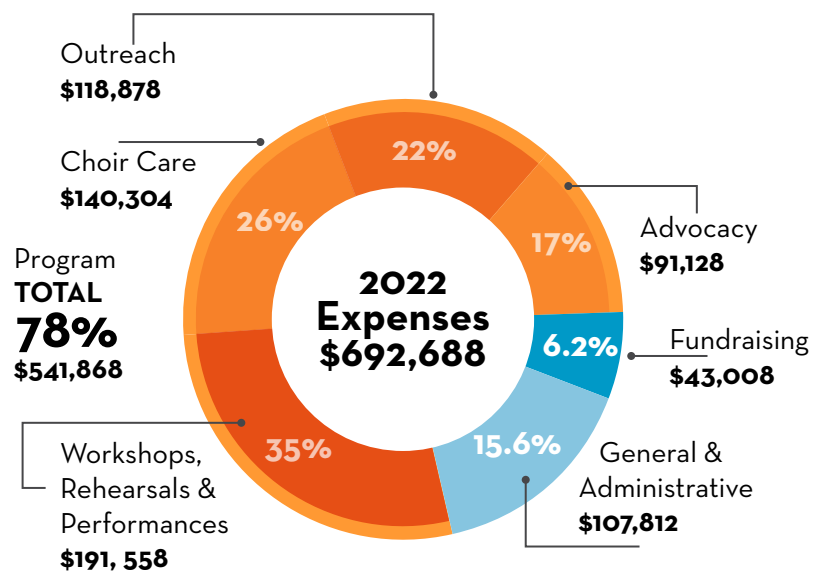
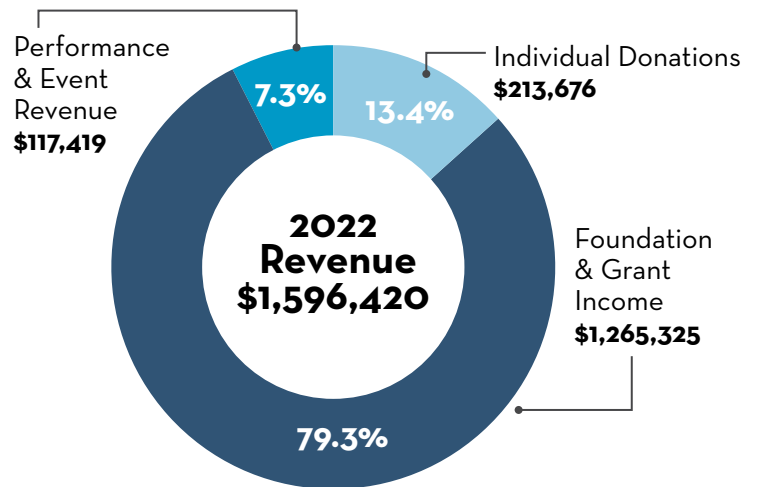
## 2022 REVENUE

Contributed Revenue	\$1,553,507
Earned Revenue	\$42,913
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,596,420</b>

## 2022 EXPENSES

Program	\$541,868
General and Administrative	\$107,812
Fundraising	\$43,008
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$692,688</b>

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Platinum  
Transparency  
2023

Candid.