



# ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22

20+ YEARS OF NURTURING  
CHANGE-MAKERS AND  
OUTDOOR LEADERS



In partnership with nature, YES nurtures leaders who champion the wellbeing of our community.

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Letter From Our

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Over the last 23 years, YES has evolved alongside the needs and desires of our community. Our work has grown beyond summer experiences and now, thanks to our supporters and partners, YES provides youth and adults alike with support and training year-round to be community leaders and change-makers. As we've grown, **one thing has remained constant: our belief in the power of nature to inspire, teach, and restore.** That's why supported experiences in nature continue to be at the heart of YES's leadership development work for all age groups.

The past year has been marked by significant growth in our programming and capacity; so much that **YES is now poised to support over 600 participants each year with multiple activities in the outdoors and local community.** We're looking forward to expanding our breadth of outdoor adventures with trips to national and state parks, white water rafting and outdoor rock climbing, and even more overnight and multi-day excursions. For our youngest members, we've added a new, science-based afterschool program. With this, our Youth Leadership Pathway is now providing educational opportunities year-round for young people ages eight and up.

Alongside our growing program offerings is a rapidly expanding team. Our team grew from 10 to 16 in the past year—including a full-time, in-house wellness specialist, providing one-on-one support to YES members of all ages, at no cost to families. To accommodate our expansion, **YES proudly purchased our office building in the fall of 2021,** establishing a home-base in the heart of Richmond which will serve as a source of support and engagement for young people and families for generations to come. This year, as we embark on a capital campaign to fund a structural addition and renovations, marks an outstanding milestone in our journey to ensure YES's long term financial sustainability and to realize a vision of a thriving community, rich with leaders of all ages.

I am proud to share a summary of YES's 2021-22 work and impact with you in the following pages. As you revel in the stories of joy, confidence, and connection, **I hope you are able to reflect on the ways that your support of YES—of our community, of our work, of our vision—has made these moments possible.**

With gratitude,



Eric Aaholm

September 2021 - August 2022

# IMPACT AT A GLANCE

519



COMMUNITY MEMBERS ENGAGED

116,295



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY MINUTES

249



DAYS IN NATURE

86%



Youth reported **improved academic performance** and increased engagement in out-of-school time extracurricular activities

93%

Participants reported increased ability to identify and choose healthier coping strategies



700+

VOLUNTEER HOURS



\$100K+

in Resilience Fund payments disbursed to YES families since 2020



61  
COMMUNITY PARTNERS





# FAMILY & SUMMER CAMPS

## Family Camp

Family Camp is a weekend we look forward to all year. It is a profound experience enveloped in connection, discovery, and acts of caring by participants of all ages and backgrounds. This spring, entire families, from toddlers to grandparents, joined us for a weekend packed with all the quintessential summer camp activities—everything from sleeping in cabins, to moonlight hikes, to exploring the creek. Cautiously coming closer together after so much time spent at a distance, families left YMCA Camp Loma Mar feeling safe, replenished, and more connected to one another, their community, and the nature around them.

*YES made it possible for everyone to participate in such a beautiful way. You cannot put a number on the bonds created in this space. Truly an invaluable experience.* — Camper



131 CAMPERS



AGES 4-85



## Summer Camp

171 CAMPERS



This year marked our return to regular summer camp offerings after a two year, pandemic-induced, hiatus—and it was just what we all needed. Dozens of YES families, relieved by the availability of affordable and trusted camp options, visited our office to register soon-to-be campers for exciting and new opportunities. In just a few short weeks, 171 campers embarked on a week-long adventure to experience joy, belonging, confidence, and friendship within the grand natural settings of our host camps.

62 FIRST-TIME CAMPERS





The **Youth Leadership Pathway** is a progressive series of programs that engages young people from ages 8-18 in outdoor adventures and leadership development opportunities. From a week of summer camp, to a 10-month research and civic action program, the YLP facilitates age-appropriate outdoor and community engagement that fosters a connection with nature and social-emotional growth.

The **Explorers** (Ages 8-10) introduces youth to the outdoors through summer and day camps and family events. **The Rangers** (Ages 11-13) challenges youth to go beyond their comfort zone by introducing overnight outdoor experiences and developing more social-emotional and outdoor skills.

## ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT Esmeralda Najera



*The C3 program helped me step out of my comfort zone and encouraged me to do many things that weren't directly related to the program. I began speaking my native language and translating for others, speaking in front of many people, and even started a [nature] club at my school.*

The **Camp-to-Community (C2C) Leaders & Fellows** (Ages 14-18) programs continue to expand teens' comfort in the outdoors while building leadership capacity through increased facilitation and management roles in YES's programming.

### **Youth Engagement Team (YET) | Ages 14-15**

The Youth Engagement Team (YET) is an eight-month program where teens meet regularly to learn about nutrition and physical activity, promote healthy practices in their community, and advocate for community improvements.

### **Coastal Conservation Corps (C3) | Ages 16-18**

The Coastal Conservation Corps (C3) addresses environmental justice, climate change, and conservation science. Over the course of 10 months, members are supported to identify and pursue goals, graduate high school, and access scholarships, internships, and job opportunities to successfully navigate young adulthood, and to be empowered leaders.

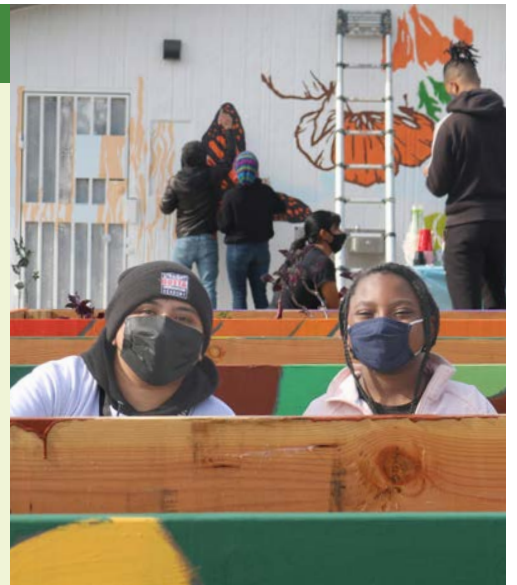




*Being a part of YES has helped me so much. Before YES I really felt isolated and struggled with talking to other people, but after joining the program, I felt like I had a big, yet close-knit circle of friends. This program gave me the courage to branch out and interact with new people with more self-assurance.* — YET Graduate

## Nicholl Park Beautification

Thanks to a Love Your Block Mini-Grant funded by the City of Richmond City Manager’s Office, Economic Development and Community Services Department, the creative mind and expertise of local muralist Richard Muro Salazar, and the efforts of dozens of community volunteers, YET members realized their vision of bringing a long-neglected corner of Nicholl Park to life. The new garden beds, a water fill station, and a vibrant mural wrapping around the park’s central structures, achieve the team’s mission of creating a safe and energetic green space for families to enjoy the outdoors right here in their own neighborhood.



*It’s exciting for our youth to see the impact they are able to make when they work together and get the community involved to beautify a space.*

— Joanna Pulido, Camp-to-Community Leaders Coordinator

**30 TEENS** participated in advanced summer leadership opportunities



**92%**

of eligible YLP participants continued to the next step of the pathway



**100%**

of YES teens graduate from high school and 85% enroll in college



**89%**

of C2C youth identified spending **MORE TIME OUTDOORS** beyond their engagement with the program

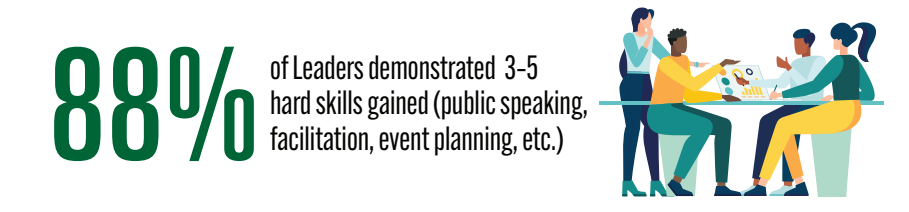
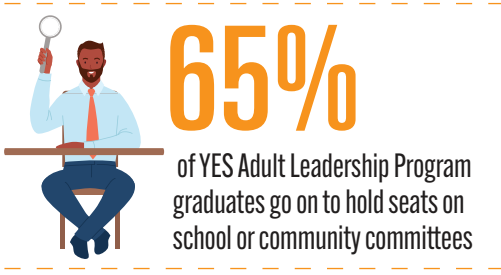




The Adult Leadership Pathway is a progressive series of leadership development programs focused on nurturing young adults' and adults' strengths to achieve their personal goals, support their families, and be leaders in their community.

ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT  
DANTE MIGUEL

*“If our educational system integrated more of what we are learning in the YES Program and what I learned in my college classes, I think a lot of youth would be more driven to make positive changes. And that’s what I want to see and envision for communities that I have grown up in: youth who are trailblazers paving the way for better futures, youth that are aware of the social issues and the deep rooted effects of racism, and youth and all others free of injustices.”*



**TREES, Teaching Racial Environmental Empowerment Series | Ages 19-26**

Formerly known as the Young Adult Program, the Teaching Racial Environmental Empowerment Series (TREES) studies the historic and current impact of substance use and the War on Drugs on their communities and, in turn, focuses on raising awareness around these issues and promoting healthy coping strategies. **Throughout the program, young adults receive job skills training and opportunities for paid internships with YES programs and other community partners in the fields of public policy and youth development.**





*“The [TREES] internship really pushed me out of my comfort zone and challenged me to be more confident in my own abilities to do work. I have been able to apply the skills that I have learned here to my university work or other internships and vice versa. I have become more open and involved with the work that I do while contributing more to the conversation as a result.”*

— TREES Graduate

## Nurture Your Power and Use Your Power | Ages 21+

**Nurture Your Power**, formerly the Adult Leaders, is a program for Richmond adults to harness their strengths and passions to achieve their personal goals and grow as leaders. Participants gain clarity of purpose, increase self-confidence and awareness, and improve their communication and collaboration skills. **The Use Your Power program provides graduates of Nurture Your Power with opportunities to further their development and engagement as leaders.** Participants engage in a nine-month program for leadership training, individualized mentoring, and community-based action projects.



## ALUMNUS SPOTLIGHT, PETRONILA FERNANDES

As a Use Your Power fellow, **Petronila Fernandes set out to raise awareness about the important role of K-12 school committees in ensuring the academic success of students.** Along with her peers in the program, Petronilla gathered and analyzed surveys from more than 100 community members and, upon graduating, has continued to use the data to mobilize caregivers in advocating for policies that better serve students and families.



*“My experience in Nurture Your Power made me reconnect with myself. I learned about the history of Richmond, social justice, and about nature and personal well-being. It gave me a voice and thanks to this I finished my GED and graduated.”*

— ALP Leaders Graduate



*“There are few organizations across the country doing this work like YES does. YES is not parachuting in; instead YES is situated and invested IN the Richmond community, attending to entire families. Plenty of organizations do family engagement, plenty do outdoor ed. Few develop community pride and sense of place, and move the needle on long term societal issues.”*

— YES Supporter

In Fall 2021, YES conducted a series of listening sessions to gain insight into how our community would like to see our growth in capacity, programming, and funding materialize in the coming years. Their interests and the ideas they had for future outings and curriculum will expand the lessons in YES programs and lead us all to exciting new destinations.

Additionally, YES will be playing a role in expanding outdoor access for youth across West County cities as the backbone organization of the Richmond Outdoors Coalition, which is in the planning phase of an exciting **new collaboration with local schools to provide repeat, reinforcing experiences in nature for 2,500 students and family members.**

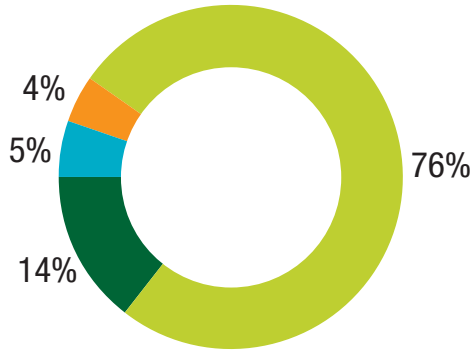
**We're endlessly grateful to be part of the Richmond and West County community, and remain passionately committed to bringing the restorative power of nature to more youth and families in the coming year.** As we set forward to provide these opportunities, we hope you'll join us.



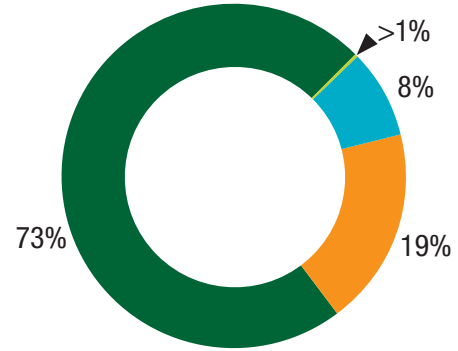


# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



- GOVERNMENT GRANTS
- CORPORATE
- PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS AND TRUSTS
- INDIVIDUALS

- RESILIENCE FUND
- GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE
- FUNDRAISING
- PROGRAMS

TOTAL INCOME\*.....\$1,759,847.88

TOTAL EXPENSES .....\$1,734,601.33

\*YES also received \$250,000 for the launch of its capital campaign. This funding will be spent in the year ahead.  
 \*Audited financials will be available in January 2023.

## Institutional Support

Bernard E. & Alba Witkin Charitable Foundation  
 California Coastal Commission  
 California Coastal Conservancy  
 The California Natural Resources Agency Youth  
 Community Access Grant Program  
 The California Endowment  
 The Center at Sierra Health Foundation  
 Chamberlin Family Foundation  
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 11th Hour Project  
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**YES also extends our sincere gratitude to the hundreds of individuals, business sponsors, and agencies whose generosity and vision make our work possible.**



**YES**   
Nature to Neighborhoods

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