



CITY OF REFUGE

# BREAKING BARRIERS. BUILDING MOMENTUM.

2022  
ANNUAL  
REPORT



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CITY OF REFUGE





# About City of Refuge

City of Refuge was founded in 1997 to help the broken, assist the at-risk, and prevent future crises in Atlanta's Westside. The mission is to bring light, hope, and transformation to individuals and families who have suffered from a lack of opportunities. It started in 1997 by sharing meals. Yet the community needed a lot more. As neighbors sought help overcoming other challenges, from childcare to low-income and legal troubles, the organization grew to serve them. In 2003, the donation of a 210,000-square-foot warehouse on eight acres in the heart of zipcode 30314 allowed City of Refuge to add services to meet more community needs. It has not stopped since.

City of Refuge celebrated 25 years of shining light into darkness and eliminating barriers to opportunity in 2022. It started by saying yes to a simple question, **"Can you help me?"** Since that time, City of Refuge has said yes to helping more than 35,000 people arrest crises and restore dignity.

**And just like that, City of Refuge grew into what it is today—a "one-stop shop" where people in crisis can get all the care and services they need to thrive again.**

## Our Campus Programs

By providing all essential services on one campus, we enable individuals and families to experience a seamless journey out of extreme poverty, giving them a **93% chance to escape poverty**



HOUSING



JOB TRAINING



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



HEALTH & WELLNESS

CITY OF REFUGE



# A Message From Our CEO

25 years! That's right, City of Refuge celebrated 25 years of bringing light, hope and transformation to our community, a community that includes those we have the privilege of walking alongside on their journey to wholeness, our incredible staff, our generous investors and our talented volunteers. It is amazing what can take place when a community comes together around a common cause and shares time, talent and treasure. The success of the past 25 years is a testament to the fact that, collectively, we have far greater impact than we do individually.

The numbers representing the individuals we walked with in 2022 are staggering and you will see those reflected in this report. While numbers are important indicators of the work we are doing, the personal stories inside those numbers are what continue to drive me daily to be the best representative of the Kingdom and City of Refuge that I can be. The single mom with a couple children who lived on campus for six months, identified safe and affordable housing, gained livable wage employment, received a donated vehicle, and began to believe that life in the future will be brighter than the past; that's what motivates me. The young man who listened to an executive from one of our partner companies speak about the rewards of working hard, felt inspired and hopeful, and now works in the same company as the executive; that energizes me. The survivor of trafficking who allowed the wall of anger to be dismantled, accepted the love we offered and is now a student in our NAPA Auto Technician class; that wakes me up in the morning. Though you may not know all the stories, be able to identify by name those I reference, or even have knowledge of all the statistics, you were very much a part of our story in 2022 and I am grateful for your trust and friendship.

Never one to spend much time reflecting on the past and settling in those victories, I now have a vision of accomplishing in the next five years more than we accomplished in the past 25 years. In order to achieve this lofty goal, we will need to rally all the troops and set a course of: Breaking Barriers. Building Momentum. The majority of the individuals who arrive on our campus seeking light, hope and transformation were born with serious barriers in their lives; poverty, broken families, crime-ridden neighborhoods, etc. They also entered life without momentum, without anyone or anything pushing them forward and believing in their potential to be successful. Life without margin is difficult at best and devastating at worst. One vehicle breakdown, a bout with sickness, a refrigerator no longer working...barriers that many do not have the ability to overcome and the cycle of desperation gets deeper and deeper. We intend to increase our efforts in Breaking Barriers by addressing safe and affordable housing, quality educational opportunities and creating a sense of community.

Momentum is only possible when barriers have been destroyed, obstacles have been removed and a path forward has been paved. We intend to increase our efforts in Building Momentum by providing life coaches, expanding our vocational training opportunities, awarding college scholarships to deserving, hard-working students and a host of other innovative approaches. I have no doubt that years 26-30 of City of Refuge will see greater return than years 1-25 and you are a vital key to that dream coming true. Your time, your talent and your treasure will continue to be critical as we move into the next phase of evolution of this impactful organization.

So, thank you. Thank you for believing in our dream and our team. Thank you for believing in the individuals we have the privilege of walking alongside. Thank you for sharing our story, for praying, for volunteering, for giving. Thank you for the past 25 years and thank you for the next 5 years.

All the best.



Bruce Deel,  
Chief Executive Officer



## 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

# BREAKING BARRIERS. BUILDING MOMENTUM.

A **\$25 MILLION** CAMPAIGN FOR CITY OF REFUGE

## The Need

In Atlanta's Westside, the ongoing effects of systemic inequality remain profound. In virtually every category (income, employment, housing, education, health, and crime), the 30314 zip code ranks close to last. Over a third of the predominantly Black population live in poverty. Only 26 percent have earned a bachelor's degree. Less than a third of third-grade students are reading at grade level. On average, a violent crime occurs every 3.5 hours. A person born into poverty here has just a four percent chance of escaping it in their lifetime. The needs are great but with the right tools, we can break down the barriers that trap families in poverty.

## The Campaign

**Our Breaking Barriers. Building Momentum.** campaign is seeking to secure \$25 million in investments, which will enable us to bring more light, hope, and transformation over the next 25 years. This ambitious campaign is designed to break down more barriers in Atlanta's Westside and provide opportunities for men, women, and children to escape poverty thrive in the community

### Transformation Center

City of Refuge owns an empty lot just a two-minute walk from campus. Our vision is to build a new Transformation Center, a 36,000-square-foot, three-story building dedicated to providing economic, health, and wellness services to help residents, including veterans and returning citizens, achieve their full potential. The Transformation Center will include a 24/7 medical and mental health clinic for survivors of trafficking and domestic violence, a new credit union, social entrepreneurship hub, and 20 units of affordable housing.

### Paths to Homeownership

While City of Refuge has helped thousands transition to more stable living, leaving the safety of our campus is not always smooth. To address this need, we're building townhomes on Andrews Street just around the corner from campus. Each three-bedroom townhome will offer permanent supportive housing and an ownership plan for residents to purchase the homes at 0% interest in ten to fifteen years.

### City of Refuge Communities

While City of Refuge will always remain focused on overcoming the historical injustice in Atlanta's Westside, we have an incredible opportunity to help others put our proven and scalable model to work in their cities. Plans include the buildout of City of Refuge South, a sprawling rural campus in Thomaston, GA to establish therapeutic options for those in need, including equine therapy, ropes course, climbing wall, sports fields, and more. City of Refuge will also build an Impact Training Center in Fairburn, GA to provide a place of renewal, restoration, and retreat for those working in the nonprofit spaces. Funds will also go towards launching planned City of Refuge locations in Nashville, Las Vegas, and St. Louis.

### Campus Improvements & Capacity Building

To continue serving each person with compassion and excellence, we need to invest in our existing campus and programs at 1300 Joseph E Boone Blvd. Proposed improvements include building a Welcome Center, amphitheater, new garden, and outdoor area, improving IT infrastructure, upgrading 40 housing units in Eden Village, and adding new personnel.



# BREAKING BARRIERS. BUILDING MOMENTUM.

A **\$25 MILLION** CAMPAIGN FOR CITY OF REFUGE

## Campaign Summary

Transformation Center	\$11,000,000
Paths to Homeownership	\$6,400,000
COR Communities	\$5,200,000
COR Campus Improvements & Capacity Building	\$2,400,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$25,000,000</b>

City of Refuge is committed to offering transformation for people living in the Westside of Atlanta. Delivering all the resources needed for individuals to turn their lives around, all in one place, has been an essential component of our impact over the past 25 years. To continue to break barriers and build momentum, it is critical to keep providing everything needed for people to flourish again. This campaign will allow us to do just that. And since we have a proven and scalable model that leaders in other places want to replicate, it will also enable us to serve in a bigger and broader way. Together, with our investors and community partners, City of Refuge will continue our mission to bring light, hope, and transformation to thousands of individuals in need.

## Help us Break Barriers and Build Momentum for Families in Need.



Learn more by visiting [cityofrefugeatl.org/campaign](https://cityofrefugeatl.org/campaign) or contacting Edward Phillips, VP of Development at [ephillips@cityofrefugeatl.org](mailto:ephillips@cityofrefugeatl.org)



# Meet Justice

## Bringing Justice to Justice

Growing up, Justice's mother wasn't around much. She sold drugs and was in and out of jail. "The moments I remember seeing her, they're not really good," said Justice. "I don't have any fun memories with my mother."

Not surprisingly, Justice and her mom didn't get along. "She was very toxic," she said. So Justice ended up getting her own apartment, car, and job at Autozone. That's where she met the father of her kids.

A few years later, Justice was 25 years old with two kids and virtually no support. "I couldn't afford a hotel. I had no real friends." She tried to work at McDonald's and other places, but since she didn't have childcare, she couldn't keep a steady job. Eventually, she and her kids became homeless.



Scan To  
Watch Story

## Shelter from the Storm

Understandably, Justice was nervous about bringing her family to City of Refuge. When she heard the word, "shelter," she imagined endless rows of bunk beds, soup-kitchen-style meals, and cops everywhere.

But what she discovered at City of Refuge blew her away. Justice and her family got their own beautiful room. They ate three amazing, healthy meals a day. Suddenly, they had stability.

"I feel like I was saved," she said. "I was like, 'Yes. My kids are safe. I got this room. We're warm. And we're fed.' This was the best place I've ever been in my life."

While her kids were in childcare, Justice started meeting with her case manager to get her life back on track. In doing so, she felt more and more empowered.

"I felt like a grown-up. Because before, I felt like a child with children, running around with her head cut off," she says through tears. "I just followed the instructions, and look at me now."

## A Firm Foundation

Slowly, Justice's life started to change. Through City of Refuge's extensive resources and wrap-around services (all available under one roof), she was able to build a life of dignity, self-sufficiency, and purpose.

Today, Justice has her own apartment and works as a preschool teacher at City of Refuge, serving children and families who are just beginning their journey of restoration. When asked what she would say to current or future CoR residents, Justice had this powerful message:

"There's not a lot of programs out here like this that will feed you, house you, and give you the instructions. So take advantage of it. They're giving you a foundation. They're teaching you how to be a better mom and a better adult in the world."

# Meet Joel

## From “Stuck” to “Successful”: How CoR’s Tech Academy Transformed Joel’s Life and Career

Joel was stuck in a dead-end job. “I felt stagnant,” he said. “I wasn’t living the life I knew I could be living.” Born in the U.S. but raised in Tanzania, Joel had dreams of a better future. But he just didn’t know how to get there.

Then he heard about City of Refuge’s Tech Transformation Academy, which offers multiple job training courses, free of charge. Joel jumped at the opportunity and enrolled in the Cybersecurity course. But it wasn’t easy. In the process, he failed his certification test three times.

“After the second time, I called my girlfriend and mom and said, ‘This is not for me. I’m an imposter. I don’t know what I’m doing here. But I’m not going to give up.’ That’s been the theme of this whole experience. I’ve learned that failing is part of the process. It was the greatest growth I’ve felt I think ever in my life,” he said.

Eventually, Joel got his certification and landed a great job as an Associate Cybersecurity Analyst at Delta. “It’s a big deal,” he said. “And I’m very, very thankful.”

Through it all, Joel didn’t just grow professionally. The program also left a deep impact on him personally and spiritually.

“The shift from who I was nine months ago to who I am now...it’s two completely different people. I feel like I’ve also grown in my connection with God. I’ve had to walk by faith when I didn’t know what I was doing.”

As Joel thinks about the future, he’s filled with hope, gratitude, and a desire to give back. “I feel like I’m hopeful now...I want to be able to give back. I want to go back home and teach people what I’ve learned...I wouldn’t be here if it wasn’t for God using you guys so that I can be the best version of myself.”



Scan To  
Watch Story



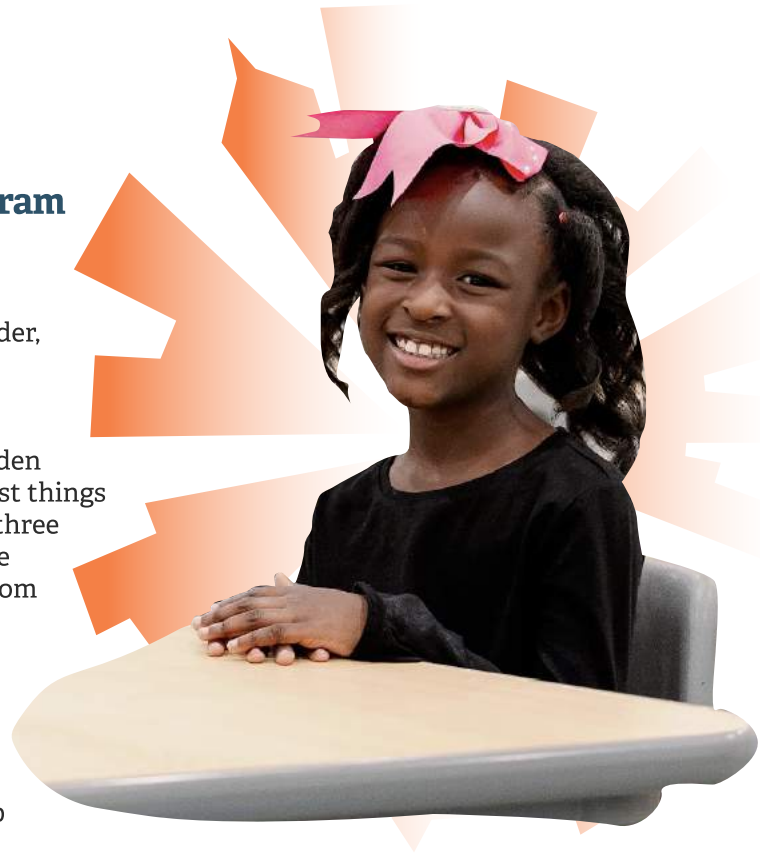
# Meet Ryleigh

## How City of Refuge's Afterschool Program Helped This Second-Grader Blossom

When Ryleigh Ariel England, a 7-year-old second-grader, first started going to City of Refuge's after school program, she was a little excited and a little scared.

In April of 2021, Ryleigh and her family moved into Eden Village on the CoR campus. Initially, one of the biggest things she loved about City of Refuge was the food. Eating three healthy meals a day was a welcome reprieve from the instability of living in and out of shelters with her mom and siblings.

Eventually, Ryleigh joined City Kids, City of Refuge's afterschool program. There, she got to do all sorts of fun, educational activities like making slime, taking ballet, and doing Girl Scouts. It also freed up her mom to interview and eventually land a great job as a tech trainer at Children's Hospital.



## Summer Camp Highs

Although Ryleigh was very shy at first, over time she grew more and more comfortable. According to Virginia Richburg, Program Manager for City Kids, Ryleigh really started to blossom during Summer Camp at City of Refuge.

"[She and her siblings] were so excited every day," said Virginia. "She would come in the mornings of summer camp and just talk and talk and talk."

Over the summer, the kids and leaders also got to go on an overnight trip to Camp Lighthouse. There, Ryleigh got to swim in the lake, play outside, eat popsicles, make new friends, sing gospel songs, and learn about Jesus. She had such an amazing time at camp that she cried the whole way home.

## Helping Kids be Kids Again

According to Virginia, Ryleigh's growth is emblematic of what the City Kids program hopes to achieve.

"It's encouraging to see her learn that it's okay to be a kid. It's fun to have friends. It's good to go to school. She feels comfortable here. She can talk to us about things. She's able to be a normal kid."

Ryleigh's transformation has also been a reminder to Virginia about why City of Refuge exists in the first place.

"I've seen kids come and go, and I've had plenty of hard days. Ryleigh's story reminds me that what we're doing here matters. How we treat the kids, how we talk to them, how we show them love, and how we teach them about Jesus—it really does make an eternal impact."



# 2022 Impact Metrics

225,000

Meals Served

8,600

Medical services provided

2,050

Counseling hours

511

Youth impacted

20

College scholarships through J17 Fund

98

Reentry citizens served

322

Job training graduates

1,930

Job fair participants

727

Jobs placed

6,174

Housing requests

351

Women and children housed

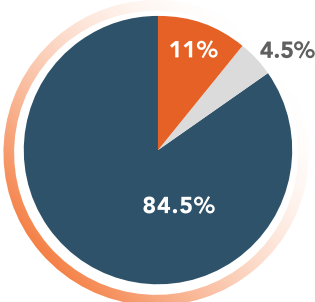
City of Refuge  
House of Cherith  
Mercy Care


ion. Celebrating 25 years of Light



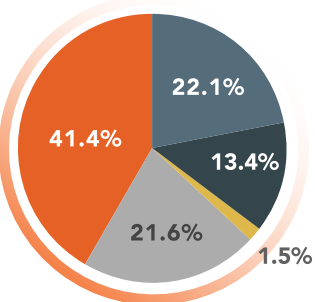
# Financials






## 2022 Expenses



 <b>Programs</b> \$9,755,732	 <b>Development</b> \$1,269,977
 <b>Operations</b> \$519,536	<b>Total:</b> \$11,545,245

## 2022 Revenue



 <b>Individuals</b> \$7,826,318	 <b>Events &amp; Corp</b> \$4,091,036
 <b>Churches</b> \$274,526	 <b>Other</b> \$2,540,222
 <b>Foundations</b> \$4,178,673	<b>Total:</b> \$18,910,775

\*temporary restricted assets \$4,180,000

## Net Assets

<b>Start</b>	\$ 18,338,622	<b>Change</b> \$5,891,867
<b>End</b>	\$ 24,230,489	



Over 25 years of impact



Atlanta's Westside

210,000 SQ FT

ring 25 y

25

Year



# Our Board

**Jon Bridges** (Chairman)  
Chick-fil-A

**Richard Cox**  
Delta Air Lines

**Mark Pighini**  
Deloitte

**Chris Gabriel**  
Merrill Lynch

**Amy Reavis**  
EY

**Mike Haynes**  
XL212

**Quincy Springs**  
Chick-fil-A Vine City

**Bob Patton**  
EY

**Mark Toro**  
Toro Development

**Kelsi Franco**  
House of Cherith

**Kevin Herron**  
NAPA Auto Parts

**Kelly Janzen**  
BlueLinx

**Nicole Walters**  
Inherit Learning Company



**Together, we can  
empower communities  
and restore hope.**

2022 Annual Report

# 2022



CITY OF REFUGE

[CityofRefugeAtl.org](http://CityofRefugeAtl.org)

1300 Joseph E Boone Blvd NW, Atlanta, GA 30314

