



Emerald Youth  
FOUNDATION

# OUTCOMES & IMPACT

*Report 2022*



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**OUR MISSION IS TO RAISE UP  
A LARGE NUMBER OF URBAN  
YOUTH TO LOVE JESUS CHRIST AND  
BECOME EFFECTIVE LEADERS WHO  
HELP RENEW THEIR COMMUNITIES.**





# CONTEXT & Summary

Emerald Youth exists to raise up a large number of youth to love Jesus Christ and become effective leaders who help renew their communities.

In tandem with our organization's mission, we also have a long-term goal of raising up 200 promising, Godly young adult leaders by 2027.

On a daily basis, our team seeks to understand how we are delivering on that goal. While it would be impossible to capture each story and anecdote, this report aims to capture some of the ways we know we are making a difference with young people and specific outcomes that speak to that in an aggregate way.

Our driving vision is a Knoxville where every child, in every neighborhood has the opportunity for a full life – the kind of life Jesus spoke of in John 10:10.



**I HAVE COME THAT THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE AND HAVE IT TO THE FULLEST.” -JOHN 10:10**

More than at any other point in our organization's history, Emerald Youth is engaging more young people in a deeper and more meaningful way.

While we have not arrived, many indicators show that young people engaged with Emerald Youth are outpacing their peers in a meaningful way in three key areas of faith, learning, and health. We know this is taking place anecdotally and desire to see it at scale.

Moving forward, continued resolve is needed to see young people flourish toward the full life Christ intends.

The following pages illustrate key outcomes in faith, learning, and health and illustrate the impact Emerald is having not only in the lives of the young people engaged but in Knoxville and beyond.

# OUR APPROACH & *Theory of Change*

Our theory of change is best expressed by our Youth Development Pipeline, shown to the right. This is a graphic representation of our mission to raise up a large number of urban youth to love Jesus Christ and become effective leaders who help renew their communities.

For Emerald, youth development is a long-term, relational response to young people, focused on preparing youth to be ready to accept adult roles and responsibilities. Emerald Youth endeavors to help young people see the importance of serving people as an expression of their faith, be academically ready for the next stage of education from elementary school through post-secondary and maintain a healthy body by being physically active and refraining from risky behaviors.

This pipeline approach outlines the outcomes we aim to achieve, the ways we are trying to achieve them, and the metrics that keep us accountable and help us gauge how we are doing. The metrics reflect what existing research has shown to be critical milestones for youth to progress from one stage of development to the next.

We aim to comprehensively engage young people. This means that we are relationally engaging with them in their development in faith, learning, and health.

Emerald Youth is focused on growing youth into promising, Godly, young adult leaders. Our 2027 goal is that 20% of urban Knoxville youth will be relationally and comprehensively engaged in programs to achieve faith, learning, and health outcomes, including annually producing 200 promising, Godly, young adult leaders for Knoxville.

We define a **promising, Godly, young adult leader as a person who is:**

- On track to complete two years of post-secondary education or training;
- Confidently moving toward gainful employment and community leadership; and
- Showing evidence of a lifestyle with exemplary behaviors regarding academics, spiritual maturity, and health.



The Youth Development Pipeline is the grounding framework to our ministry. We endeavor to achieve the outcomes outlined in the pipeline in faith, learning, and health through these core youth development programs:

**JustLead** is a neighborhood-based, K-12 urban youth ministry that partners with urban churches and other faith-based organizations to provide a caring community in which we share God’s love and provide academic support and enrichment activities.

**Emerald Youth Sports** provides urban youth with multi-sport, recreational and competitive teams, leagues, camps, and clinics. Emerald Youth Sports is implemented as a community ministry partner with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

**Calling & Career Ministry** supports eighth graders and high school youth as they transition to post-secondary experiences, as well as to successful careers and their Christ-centered calling. We operate this ministry in conjunction with university partners.

Through our two-generation youth development model, we work to engage parents in each aspect of our ministry, treating them as partners in their child’s development.

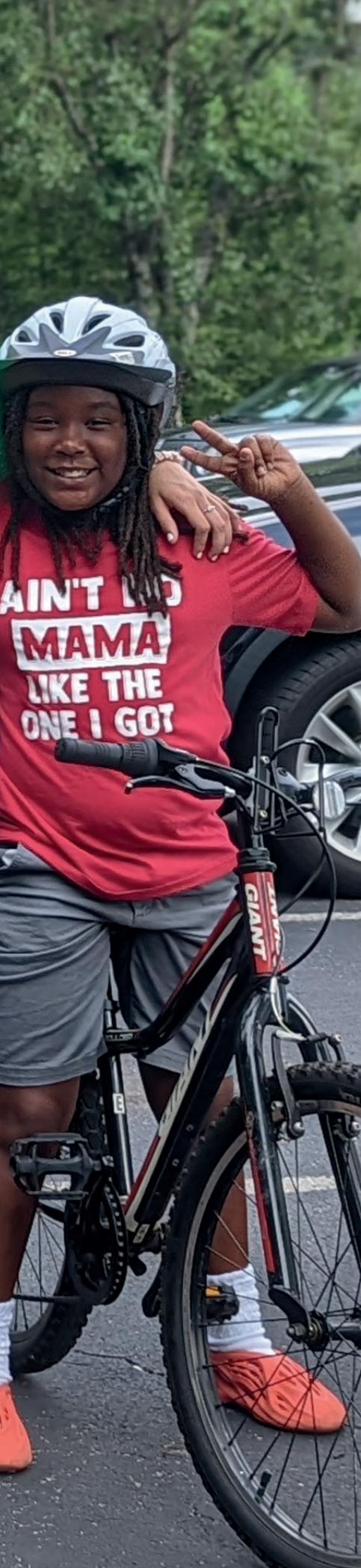
In 2014 we launched a separate 501(c)(3), Emerald Charter Schools, which remains a critical component of our work with young people. ECS operates Emerald Academy, Knoxville’s first and only public charter school - its mission is to increase the number of Knoxville students who graduate eighth grade well-prepared for high school and the college of their choice.



# YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PIPELINE

	Elementary: Knowledge	Middle School: Comprehension	High School: Application	Young Adult: Launch	Promising, Godly, young adult leaders for Knoxville
<b>FAITH &amp; Relationships</b>  More youth beginning a faith journey and shaping their lives after the servant-leader model of Jesus	Develops a Biblical foundation and an awareness of being made in God’s likeness	Learns how to live in a way that’s consistent with the teachings of Scripture	Takes responsibility for relationships with God, friends, and others	Lives out a Kingdom of God purpose in life and the community	
<b>LEARNING &amp; Relationships</b>  More youth ready for the next stage of education and career development	Moves from learning to read to reading to learn	Gets ready for high school AP and Honors classes	Can choose between either a college or a career path and develops a post-secondary plan	Pursues college or career training	
<b>HEALTH &amp; Relationships</b>  More youth physically active and avoiding risky behaviors	Learns about healthy habits and plays for fun	Uses free time constructively	Practices healthy fitness, nutrition, and lifestyle habits	Pursues preventive health care practices and services	





Total Youth Engaged and in Relationship with EYF and ECS

**NEARLY  
3,000**



Percentage City Zoned

**85%**



Number  
Comprehensively  
Engaged in Faith,  
Learning, and Health

**577**



Percentage  
Comprehensively  
Engaged in Faith,  
Learning, and Health

**21%**

# YOUNG *Adults*



Emerald Youth young people are developing into promising, Godly, young adult leaders for Knoxville. Our long-term goal is to annually develop 200 of these leaders.

## Key outcomes and indicators about this group include:



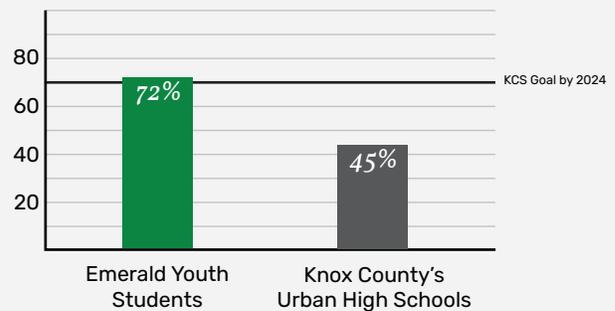
EY youth are choosing to continue in their faith journey as young adults.



Over half of the young adults engaged with EY engaged in faith in their first year after high school.

*Emerald Youth are outpacing the KCS and statewide average with 72% of young adults surveyed who enrolled in a college or university. This exceeds our community's goal of reaching a 70% college going rate for Knox County students by 2024, and it also exceeds the college going rate for Knoxville's urban high schools which is less than 45%.*

### College Going Rate



More and more EY young adults are pursuing physical wellness.

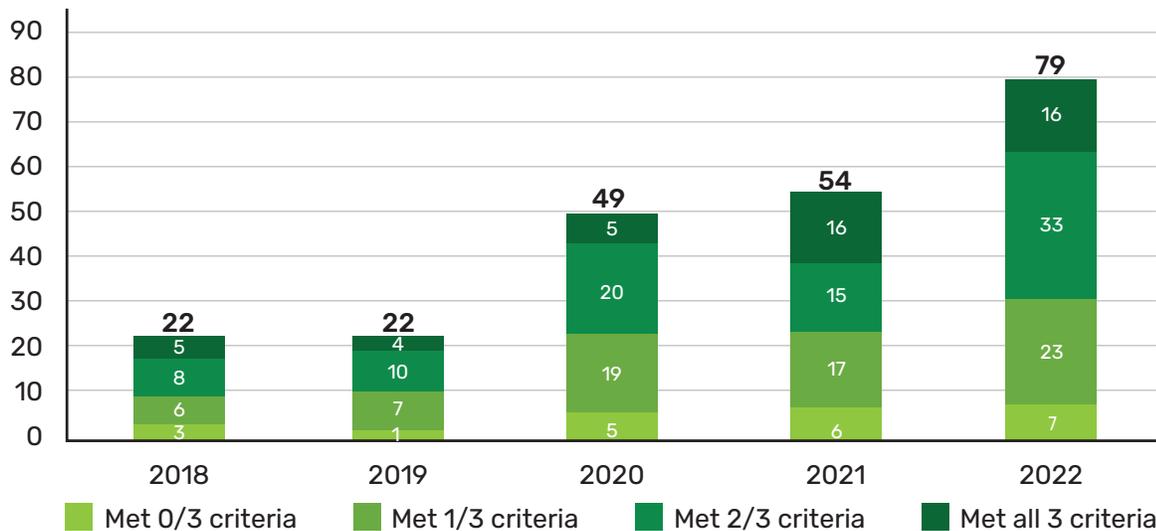


The number of young adults who are on a trajectory of becoming promising, Godly, young adult leaders is growing steadily.



# NUMBER OF YOUTH ON A TRAJECTORY TOWARD BECOMING PROMISING, GODLY, *Young Adult Leaders*

**We define a promising, Godly, young adult leader as a person who is:** On track to complete two years of post-secondary education or training; Confidently moving toward gainful employment and community leadership; and Showing evidence of a lifestyle with exemplary behaviors regarding academics, spiritual maturity, and health.



**More than 700 high schoolers and young people engaged with Emerald Youth over the past year. We are working to continue to engage and develop this group into promising, Godly leaders for our city.**



Anna Imani graduated from Fulton High School in 2022. While at an Emerald Youth college fair, she spoke with a representative from Tennessee State University and became interested in the school. Currently, she is a freshman at TSU on a full academic scholarship studying nursing.



Gunner's Mate Second Class (GM2) Craig Carter graduated from Dr. Paul Kelley Volunteer Academy in 2022. He engaged with Emerald Youth through Calling and Career, and through academic support, increased his ASVAB score to have more opportunities in his military career. He joined the Navy and graduated boot camp on July 15, 2022. He is currently in San Diego for additional training and will be serving as on the USS Oscar Austin out of Norfolk, Virginia.



He looked in the fridge.  
"Nope!"

The answer is the fridge.  
"Nope!"

BOOK  
KILLER

# THE PATH TO BECOMING A *Promising, Godly Leader*

Emerald Youth begins preparing young people for Godly, community leadership in the elementary grades and continues that preparation process throughout middle school and high school. EY young people are distinctive from their peers in all three components of leadership: faith, learning, and health.

*The longer a young person participates with Emerald Youth, the more likely they are to become a promising, Godly, young adult leader.* The majority of all promising, Godly leaders have participated with EY for five years or more.

## FAITH

A greater proportion of EY youth are engaged in a faith journey than their non-EY peers.



VS.



Close to half of EY K-12 participants are routinely engaged in faith development through a neighborhood church, compared to about 15% of all urban youth. **Over 50,000 discipleship encounters were recorded in 2022.**

# 80%

of parents said their child has grown in their faith since participating with EY (2021-22 parent survey).

## LEARNING

Youth who participate with EY longer perform better academically.



More Emerald Youth young people are meeting education milestones that indicate readiness for the next stage of their education, compared to their non-EY peers.



Elementary and middle school participants in EY's afterschool program outpaced their peers in the urban Knoxville elementary and middle schools in both reading and math outcomes. EY youth also outperformed the elementary and middle school district averages for Shelby County.



Emerald Academy is unequivocally the top-performing urban middle school in Knox County, based on the percentage of scholars performing on or above grade level.



Emerald Academy's Black scholars, as well as its economically disadvantaged scholars, outperformed their 3rd – 8th grade peers in Knox County and all other major metropolitan districts in Tennessee in both reading and math.



The increase in Emerald Academy scholars' math proficiency over the last three years was in the 91st percentile among all public schools in Tennessee.

*Emerald Youth is engaged with 60% of the scholars who attend Emerald Academy.*

**80%**

of parents said their child has grown academically since participating with EY (2021-22 parent survey).

## HEALTH

**More and more EY youth are physically active, and the percentage of EY youth managing a healthy weight outpaces their peers.**

- Over the past six years, an average of 88% of EY youth engaged in sports have completed at least one sports season, even as the number of youth participating in sports grew by 40%.
- Similarly, an average of 80% of those participating in a health activity did so for a majority of months they were engaged with EY, even as the number of youth participating in health has increased by 35%.
- In 2022, 89% of EY youth engaged in sports managed a healthy weight.

**85%**

of parents said their child is healthier or stronger since participating with EY (2021-22 parent survey).

**EY expects to engage over 2,300 youth in sports in 2023, through 13 sports that involve 144 teams.**

*A growing proportion of EY youth are refraining from risky behaviors that would hinder their development into Godly, young adult leaders.*

- The percentage of EY youth refraining from risky behaviors has doubled over the past six years, even as the total number of EY middle and high school participants has increased by 25 percent.





# 96%

of Emerald Youth parents report their child has built friendships and strengthened positive relationships with both peers and caring adults in their programs. Research shows that supportive relationships correspond to a child's avoidance of risky behaviors.

Even as the number of EY youth has increased (from 2,200 in 2017 to 2,800 in 2022), a growing proportion of EY youth are engaged in all three of EY's core programs: developing their faith, enhancing their learning, and pursuing health. We refer to this as **comprehensive engagement**.

**As EY serves more youth, in greater depth, program quality has remained robust.**

For example, the percentage of EY elementary and middle school youth achieving targets for academic growth increased from the 2020-21 to 2021-22 school year:

- Percentage of EY youth meeting MAP growth goals in reading:  
2021-22 45%  
2020-21 32%
- Percentage of EY youth meeting MAP growth goals in math:  
2021-22 47%  
2020-21 33%



Every child.  
Every neighborhood.  
Every full life.  
John 10:10



# LYDIA'S Story

For Lydia, a senior at Fulton High School, Emerald Youth has been part of her life for as long as she has been in the United States. Lydia was born in Tanzania and moved to Knoxville 11 years ago, and shortly thereafter became involved with Emerald.

"In first grade when I moved to Knoxville, I joined the Emerald Youth Choir. Back then I didn't even know what any of the songs meant, I didn't understand them at all. Now, those songs mean a lot to me. I learned so much about Jesus during that time, and I still remember the songs. They comfort me and give me courage when I go through hard times."

Along with choir, Lydia was involved in Emerald Youth's afterschool program, and is now in the high school and young adult ministry.

"I would always be the first to try and answer questions during Bible study because I was just really interested knowing about God. I didn't know much when I moved here, but Emerald Youth helped me figure out who God really is. I've been encouraged throughout high school ... by seeing how God works through the different leaders in my life, the love they have for God, and their love for me ... it has improved my relationship with God and has kept me so close to Him."

When Lydia first connected with Emerald, she wasn't outgoing, and often kept to herself, only wanting to be around her older sister. Through her experiences and the knowledge she has gained, Lydia now considers herself a leader, and isn't afraid to speak up even though her sister has graduated and is no longer with her all the time.

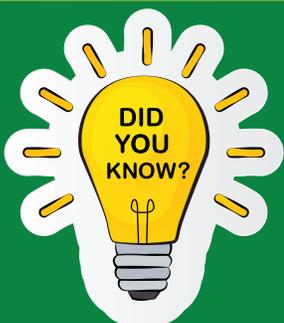
"I used to be so shy, but I'm a lot more comfortable talking to people. My family definitely notices I'm not as quiet. My goal is to make a difference in my school even if it's something small like holding the door for someone or saying 'Hi!'

I was an Emerald Ambassador for two years, and it was cool getting to know other people and recruit students. I'm glad I helped and was part of that because for a lot of the people I recruited, Emerald became a safe space for them and it has made a difference in their lives." (Emerald Ambassadors are high school students with exemplary leadership skills who help connect other students to the ministry.)

Following graduation this May, Lydia plans to attend college. While she hasn't yet decided on a major, she knows she wants to help people no matter what she does.

Lydia is excited about her future and hopes that other young people can be touched by Emerald like she has for all these years.

"Emerald is such a blessing to me and so many others. I'm so grateful for what it provides in my life, and I want other students to be part of it, too. I always emphasize to students I talk to that Emerald is not just here to help with school, but they do care and want to help with everything in life. I really want them to know that."



## *Fun Facts about Lydia:*

- She is a Fellowship of Christian Athletes representative and Johnson University Future of Hope leader.
- Blueberry muffins are her favorite!
- She was crowned 2022 Homecoming Queen at Fulton High School.

# OPPORTUNITIES & Challenges

As these pages have illustrated, more than at any other point in our organization's history, Emerald Youth is engaging more young people in a deeper and more meaningful way.

While we have not arrived, many indicators show that young people engaged with Emerald Youth are outpacing their peers in a meaningful way in three key areas of faith, learning, and health.

However, an examination of these outcomes also point to challenges and continued opportunities for growth:

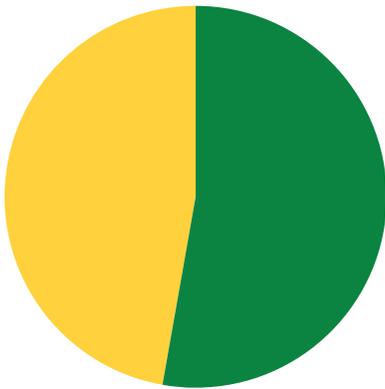
- **"On the Verge"** - With large numbers of high schoolers and young adults in the pipeline to become promising, Godly leaders, now is not the time to let up steam. We must persevere to more deeply engage the large numbers of youth that are on the verge of becoming a promising, Godly leader.
- **Youth Discipleship** - There is a growing need to ensure that a greater number of this generation is engaged in a growing relationship with Christ. Urban church mobilization will be a critical component to accomplishing this.
- **Youth Retention** - We know that youth retention remains a critical issue, given that the longer a young person participates with Emerald Youth, the more likely they are to become a promising, Godly young adult leader. We also know that youth who are comprehensively engaged with Emerald have very high retention rates. Therefore, we must place a continued focus on increasing youth retention year over year as well as increasing comprehensive engagement.
- **Academic Proficiency** - Additionally, while young people engaged with Emerald continue to outperform their urban peers academically, there is need for a continued focus on reaching academic proficiency. While the ability to influence that in a meaningful way is deeply challenging outside the school day, we must remain diligent in doing so.

Our prayer remains that young people in Knoxville would grow into promising, Godly leaders. Evidence is showing that this is happening and that it is on the right trajectory. We must remain diligent in our efforts to continue to focus on raising up more urban leaders who love Jesus Christ who will help renew their communities.



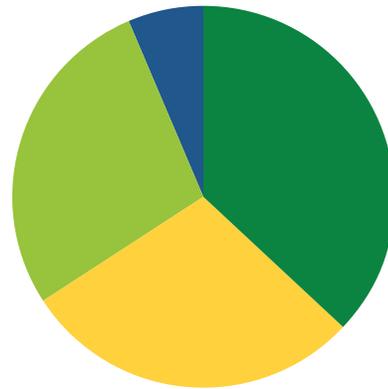


# WHO WE SERVE



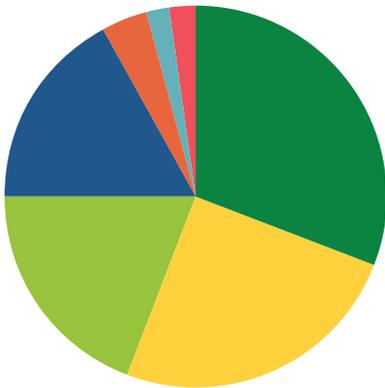
## GENDER

- 53% Male
- 47% Female



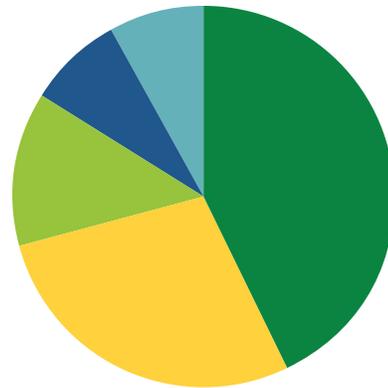
## GRADE LEVEL

- 37% Pre-K & Elementary School
- 28% Middle School
- 27% High School
- 6% Young Adult



## LIVING SITUATION

- 31% Both Biological Parents
- 25% Single Mom
- 19% Two Parents (One Biological)
- 17% Unspecified/Other
- 4% Grandparents
- 2% Single Dad
- 2% Adoptive/Foster Parents



## RACE/ETHNICITY

- 43% Black/African American
- 28% White
- 13% Other/Unspecified
- 8% Hispanic/Latino
- 8% Multiracial

# MINISTRY PARTNERS & Leadership

## MINISTRY PARTNERS

AmeriCorps  
City of Knoxville, Parks & Rec. Dept.  
Emerald Avenue UMC  
Emerald Charter Schools  
Fellowship of Christian Athletes  
First Baptist Roseberry City  
Hillcrest Community Church  
Hope Central  
Johnson University  
Laurel Church of Christ  
Life Church

Lonsdale Union of Churches  
Mount Moriah FBH  
Mount Zion Baptist  
Oak Valley Baptist  
Overcoming Believers Church  
Peace and Goodwill Missionary Baptist  
Second UMC  
The Restoration House of East Tennessee  
United Way of Greater Knoxville  
Western Heights Baptist Center  
Woodlawn Christian Church

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Jerry Askew  
Michael Cermak  
Kay Clayton  
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Carlton Long

David Martin  
Larry Martin  
Gwen McKenzie  
Alvin Nance  
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Sharon Pryse  
Dr. John Simmons

Eddy Smith  
Richard Stair  
Wes Stowers  
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Bryn Todd  
Dennis Upton

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Angel Bowman  
Lynn Clemons  
Pastor Jeremy Cox

Wendy Laman  
Kori Lautner  
Steve Simpson  
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Pastor Derrick Washington  
Clayton Wood

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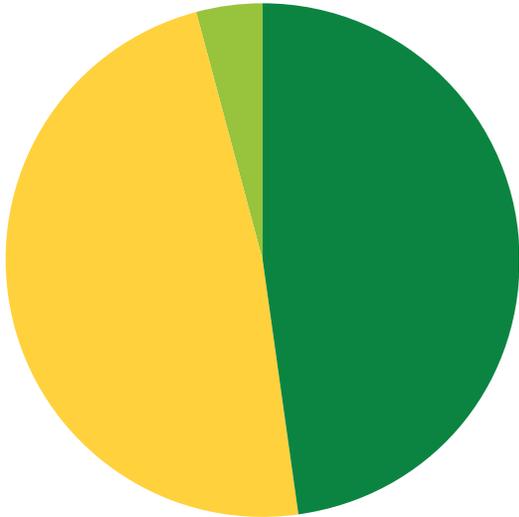
Chad Culver  
Vanessa Draper  
George Ewart  
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John-David Roddy  
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Derry Thompson  
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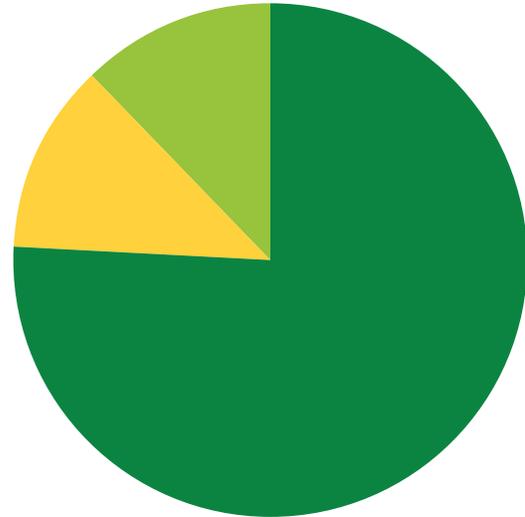


# YOUR GENEROSITY



## INCOME

- 48% Contributions & Grants
- 48% Other\*
- 4% Earned Income



## EXPENSES

- 76% Programs
- 12% Management & General
- 12% Advancement

*\*Combination of prior year pledges and gifts used to achieve a balanced budget.*

A complete copy of Emerald Youth Foundation's annual audit by Mitchell Emert & Hill, P.C. is available online at [www.emeraldyouth.org](http://www.emeraldyouth.org).

<b>Total 2022 Income</b>	<b>\$10,690,505</b>
<b>Total 2022 Expenses</b>	<b>\$10,690,505</b>



Emerald Youth Foundation remained a Four Star Charity by Charity Navigator. This rating means Emerald Youth demonstrates strong financial health, is committed to accountability and transparency, adheres to sector best practices and executes our mission in a financially efficient way.







Emerald Youth  
FOUNDATION



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