

2023 Annual Report



RIDGE | The Ridge Project[®]

Building a Legacy of Strong Families

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Thank You

NOTE FROM OUR FOUNDERS



Dear Friends,

We want to take a moment to express our gratitude for your support of The RIDGE Project. Your contributions make a difference every day. Thanks to your generosity, and the generosity of hundreds of others across the past 24 years, we have been able to continue our mission of building a legacy of strong families. Youth, prisoners, marriages, fathers, mothers, employees, and communities have reaped the benefits of your sacrificial gifts of time, money and expertise. Thank you seems too short, too cliché, and too simple to convey the depth of our gratitude for your partnership and investment into this ministry. Nonetheless, we are at a loss when trying to find better words to convey our appreciation. So, we offer a heartfelt thank you; thank you for joining us on this mission to change lives. Over the course of 2023, the RIDGE Project faced numerous challenges, from the lingering effects of pandemic to the social and economic issues that continue to plague youth and families in our communities. In response, we have launched new projects and expanded services to meet the challenges. We have served more participants and helped them build character, resiliency, and skills. Our most powerful outcome continues to be a dramatic increase in HOPEFULNESS. Hope is the number one determining factor of success in making positive changes. You are truly an ambassador of hope!

Your support has been the key to our success. Your donations have provided critical services and support to those in need, to advocate for positive change in our communities, and to launch innovative new programs and initiatives.

Five of our most significant achievements this year include:

1. Expansion of OnDemand content and increased access to life-changing resources across the country.
2. Launching the inaugural TYRO Transformational Transitional House.
3. Launching mobile Forklift Operator Certification training.
4. Expanding our reach through new state partners with TYRO Support Services.
5. Engaging in an innovative, immersive, partnership with Franklin County CBCF.

Your generosity and dedication have truly made a difference, and we are blessed to have you as part of our RIDGE Family. As we look to the future with optimism and hope, we know that there will be new challenges and new opportunities ahead. We are committed to staying true to our mission, and to adapting and evolving our programs and services to meet the ever-changing needs of youth and fragile families. We will continue to create and implement innovative programs to meet the needs of those we serve and to make a positive change in the world.

We invite you to continue to join us to offer hope and transform lives. We hope you will help us to spread the word about our important work. There are many ways to get involved, from volunteering your time and expertise, to donating, to sharing our message with your friends and family, and, most importantly, to praying for our staff and participants.

Whatever your level of involvement, know that your support is deeply appreciated and valued. Together, we can make a difference and create a better world for all. Let's Go Change the World!

Ron and Catherine Tijerina

OUR BOARD

Rev. Collins E.
Asonye

Ron Deitering

James Erven

Ron Tijerina

Cathy Tijerina

Founded by Ron & Catherine Tijerina in 2000, The RIDGE Project is a Christian, non-profit organization dedicated to empowering generational responsibility in individuals and improving the lives of families throughout the state of Ohio. Our organization believes that strong families produce strong children, who will pass on that legacy of strength to future generations.



THE RIDGE PROJECT HOME OF TYRO

In 2023

We served adults in 20 facilities throughout the state of OHIO

We enrolled 1,616 adult participants in TYRO

Our average completion rate was 76%

We enrolled 78 TYROS in job training

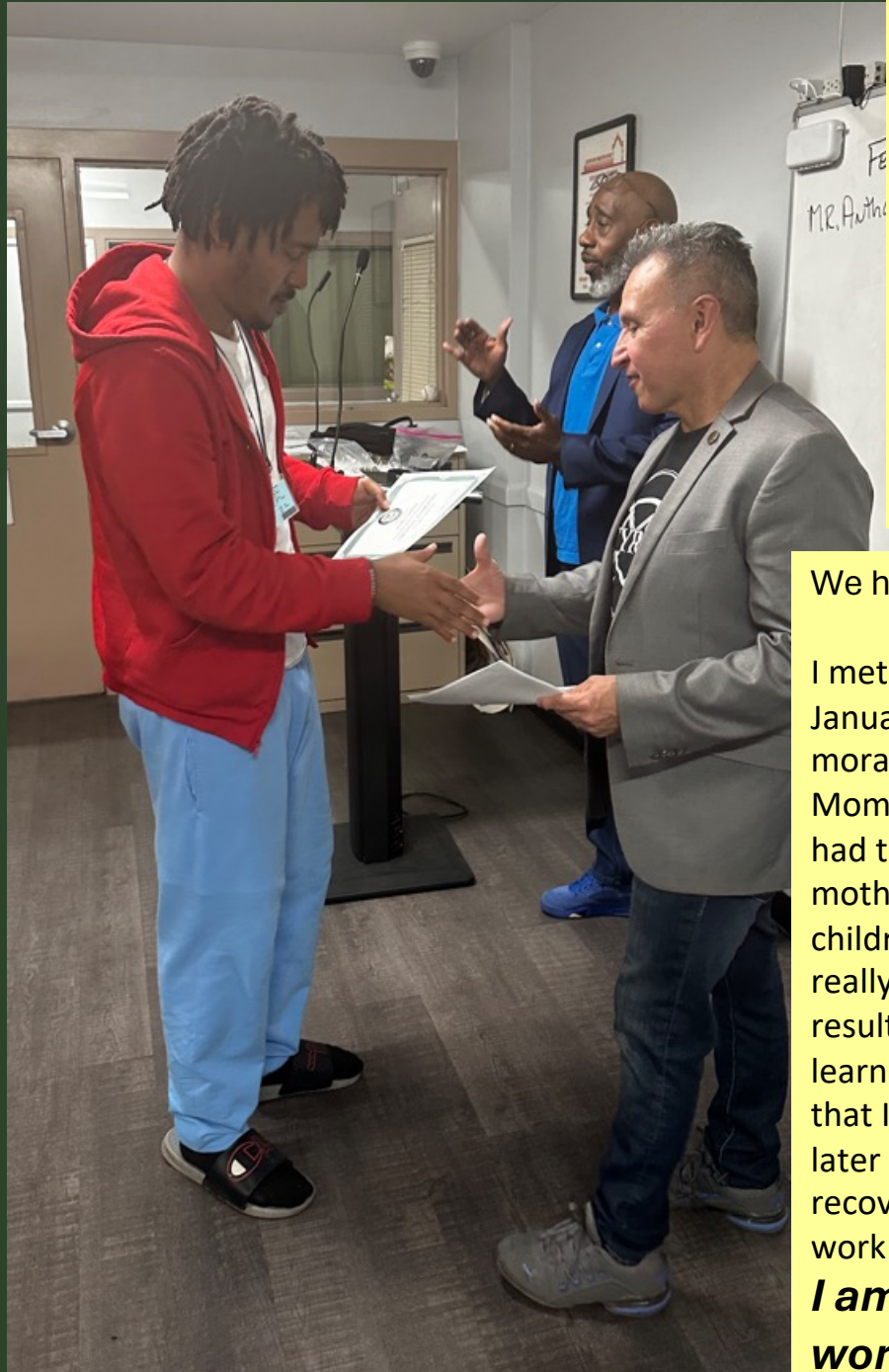
Completion rate for TYRO Couples in 2023 83%

We had 212 cohorts in 2023

We served 12,776 youth

We partnered with 7 youth organizations in 3 states: OH, MI, GA

TYRO Testimonies



Here is the story from a TYRO that is working to become a firefighter.

Ron, today I had my interview for Toledo Fire department...former Mayor Mike Bell he's the chief. He personally asked me to apply so today was a huge paradigm shift so now I'm getting ready to go to school for EMT. God is so good, Ron, and I wanted to personally thank you for helping me change my life so now I feel like I owe it to my community to do whatever I can to help protect them. I love my city so much and I feel like this is my due diligence. This is not negotiable without people like you in my life I don't know if I would've ever changed my life, so thank you for helping me save my life now I have the ability to try to help others because honestly what's the point of being alive if we can't help others?

We have another testimony from a TYRO from the WORTH center.

I met with the program while I was a resident at the WORTH center in January of 2020. I was a lost woman, child, mother, and sister. I had no morals that I stood for let alone practice in my life. I enrolled into the TYRO Moms program out of a combination of being bored and feeling something had to be better than doing nothing. I started to learn the value of what a mother was and the morals plus values that I would be passing off to my children. When I was charged with a drug charge and sent to that facility, I really thought this would be my life. Years of bouncing in and out of jail resulted in heading to prison. When I left the WORTH center, I took what I learned from that program. What I learned pulled me back from the relapse that I found myself in. I reached out for help and now 2 and a half years later I am a woman worth following. I battled cancer at the beginning of my recovery and maintained my sobriety. I know I have my CDCA license and work as a housing coordinator in a treatment facility.

I am a woman worth following. Made me a mom worth having.

The Power of TYRO – One TYRO's Story

Here is the story of a TYRO Peer Facilitator located at Grafton Correctional Institution (GCI). He first became a TYRO at Richland Correctional Institution (RiCI) in Mansfield, Ohio. TYRO Dad's made such an impact that he became a regular participant in the TYRO Alumni Community (TAC) there. In 2021, he was transferred to Grafton Correctional Institution. After he arrived, he sought out participation with the GCI TAC. Several months later, RIDGE began delivering TYRO Leadership under the DOJ CAREERS grant. This grant relied on peer facilitation at GCI. He sought out the opportunity to become a TYRO Peer Facilitator. He was accepted and trained and began delivering TYRO Leadership to other residents in 2022, where he taught for about a year.

In the summer of 2023, he was transferred to GCI's specialized subdivision called the Grafton Reintegration Center (GRC). GRC is an incarceration environment specially focused on preparing non-violent residents who are near release for re-entry. When he arrived, there was no TYRO programming at the specialized camp. However, because of his enthusiasm for TYRO Programming, he began asking institutional staff if there was any opportunity to teach TYRO. He subsequently discovered that there were approximately 50 TYRO books that had been stored in a closet several years ago. Without any funding or grant project support, he sought out the opportunity to teach TYRO. He was authorized by staff to use the books and began teaching. He created nearly 50 TYRO completers before the institution made a request to purchase more books, bringing the unusual situation to the attention of The RIDGE Project and TYRO Support Services. His efforts have resulted in TYRO Leadership being recently integrated into GRC's new recovery unit.

His journey highlights TYRO Programming's impact. However, his life hasn't been changed simply because of the curricula, but also because of the way TYRO forms community. For him, the impact resulted from the value he experienced as a result of participation in the community. He experienced the consistency of the TYRO experience in multiple institutions. This is part of the reason he has the confidence to promote TYRO, even in places where it isn't currently being offered.

ADULT DIVISION HIGHLIGHTS

2.6%
TYRO
Recidivism

In 2016, only 2.6% of TYRO graduates re-offended compared to the 12.1% of the ODRC general population. Thank you, ODRC for your partnership with The RIDGE Project, Home of TYRO. We are rehabilitating, reinventing, and reestablishing!

41
TYRO
Locations

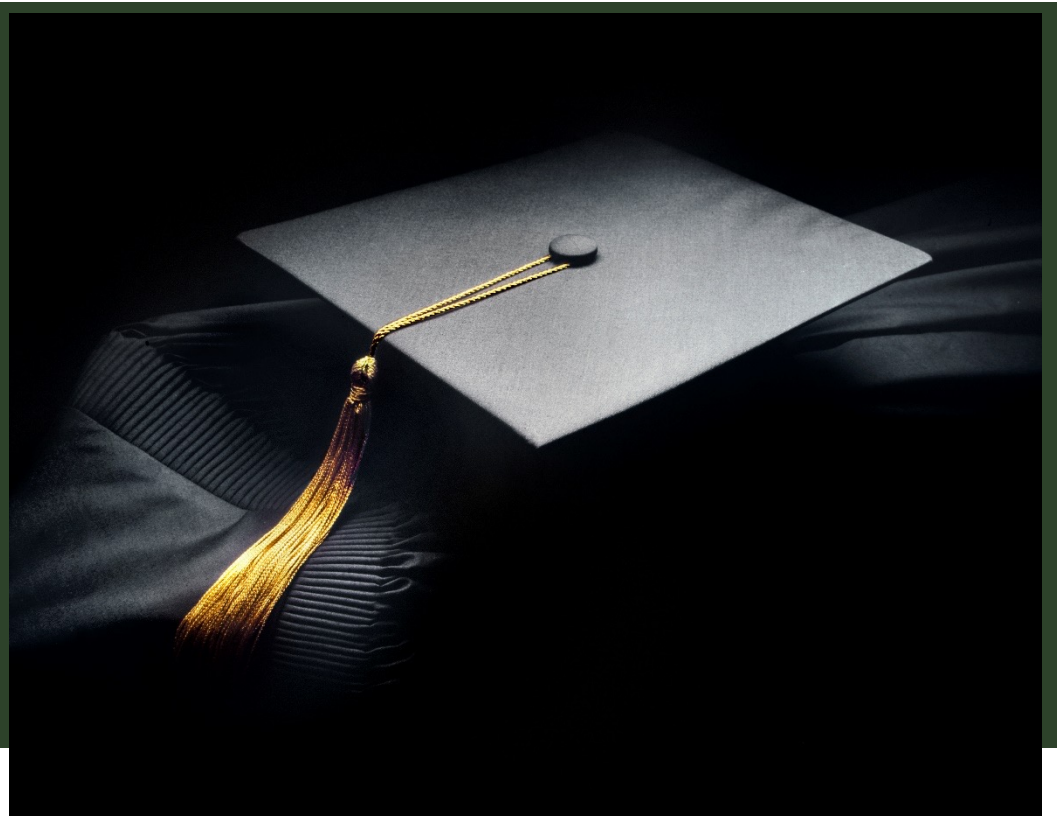
In 2023, we taught TYRO in 20 of the 29 prisons in the state of Ohio. From 2016 to present, we have serviced TYRO programming in 40 facilities, including CBCF's. Over 24,000 men have been through the TYRO program!

31
Adult
Grants

Since the Adult Division inception, The RIDGE has been awarded 31 different state/federal grants from several different funding sources and counting!



ADULT DIVISION 1,254 TYRO GRADUATES IN 2023 ALONE!



Had 1,254
TYROs
Graduate at
19 different
locations



626
Graduated from
TYRO Couples



247
Graduated from
TYRO Leadership



120
Graduated from
Core
Communication



190 cohorts

TYRO Family Impact

- From October 2022 through March 2024, we have held 40 Family Events, which include:
- 161 TYRO's who had family attend by Zoom or in-person
- 208 family members
- 38 TYRO partners



TYRO TALKS



The TYRO Talks speaking series was launched in 2022 through the generous support of Larry and Karen Stearns. The mission of TYRO Talks is to inspire, empower, and bring hope to men to live out the TYRO principles including honor, righteousness, and virtue. TYRO Talks is a platform for speakers, including TYROs that have achieved success since coming home, inspirational businesspeople, and community leaders. Through their stories of perseverance, achievement, and determination, speakers have challenged thousands of incarcerated men across Ohio to live up to their highest potential.

TYRO Entrepreneurship Program



The RIDGE Project recently completed its first TYRO Entrepreneurship Program (TEP) at the Richland Correctional Institution. The TEP was funded by the Frameworks grant. Through this program delivery, 22 men received entrepreneurship training over a six-month period. During the course of the training, many of the men made actual plans to begin their re-entry journey with a focus on starting a small business as either a complement or an alternative to their goals for post-release employment.

The program culminated in a Pitch Night Event on March 12th, 2024. During the event, four men pitched their business concept to four entrepreneur judges. The judges were all successful businesspeople from around the state. Financial awards for the participants came from private funding. The judges awarded a prize for Best Business Presentation and a prize for Best Business Concept. The financial awards ranged from \$500 to \$1500. All four participants received at least the minimum award for their participation.

All of the participants will receive their funds and additional business startup support over the next year from Case Managers and collaborative partners located in the various communities where the participants live. This year's finalists came from locations as diverse as Cleveland, Canton, and Toledo, Ohio.

PEER FACILITATED DELIVERY

Peer Facilitated Delivery supported with professional Case Management at Richland Correctional, Grafton Correctional and North Central.

Peer facilitated classes expand our reach and provide services to individuals that don't qualify for grant funded delivery.

In these prisons, we have:
Richland – 8 Peer facilitators
North Central – 9 Peer facilitators
Grafton Correctional – 9 Peer facilitators



Since 2018, Grafton and Richland have completed 1,039 TYROS through non-grant funds.

Faith Based Contract

TYRO Keeping FAITH Contract features the TYRO Man of God (MOG) curriculum. This ODRC contract allows us to teach TYRO the way it was originally designed to be taught. TYRO MOG focuses on Biblical principles that encourage an ever-increasing faith in God and a like-minded community that provides celebration and accountability. TYRO Keeping FAITH is currently serving six different ODRC prisons, helping men become the Men of God they were designed to be. TYRO Keeping FAITH program has five intentional components. First, participants will take our ten-week TYRO class that is steeped in Christian values and Biblical principles. This class is designed to deepen your faith in God as participants explore their purpose and the love God poured into creating us intentionally for this time. Next, program completers will have the opportunity to participate in our TYRO Accountability Community (TAC). TAC is a small-group format designed to provide support, encouragement, resources, and accountability while inside. Once released, TAC connections are made to TYROS from around the country who continue their journey as men and women worth following. Third, participants will underpin the value of family by participating in family events approved by the institution. Fourth, we will offer CORE/Couple Communication, a four-week class that empowers TYROS to communicate effectively and efficiently in every area of their lives. Lastly, after completing TYRO Keeping FAITH participants will have at their disposal a myriad of aftercare services, including, but not limited to, intentional referrals, case management, mentoring, networking, job referrals, and community connections. THIS PROGRAM IS DESIGNED FOR ALL TO PARTICIPATE AND EXPERIENCE PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. EVERYONE IS WELCOME, REGARDLESS OF FAITH, RELIGION, RACE, GENDER, OR SECURITY STATUS.



**We have served
13 classes at
6 facilities,
graduating 96
TYROS in 2023!**

THE RIDGE PROJECT TYRO YOUTH DIVISION

A photograph of four young people standing in a row against a plain wall. From left to right: a young man in a white and blue baseball-style shirt with his hands clasped; a young woman in a dark brown t-shirt looking towards the man next to her; a young man in a dark blue long-sleeved shirt with a white graphic on the front, smiling at the camera; and a young man in a plaid shirt partially visible on the right edge, also smiling. The lighting is soft and indoor.

We work to establish young leaders who can stand up against the negative influences, peer pressures, and low expectations that exist for young people in society today. Youth leadership development is essential in creating a positive youth culture.



“I have a more realistic idea of what I want my future to look like.”

- High School student, Lucas County

“(The) class showed me that it is really important to value myself. It has changed the way I think about sex.”

- 9th grader, Female, Lucas county

“I want to save sex for marriage because I am not grown up enough to be a dad.”

- High school, Male, Lucas County

2023-2024 YOUTH DIVISION

- Hosted film camp at Youth Treatment center for 24 adjudicated youth. We partnered with Tramaine Hall to deliver a powerful motivational message to the youth to help encourage them to keep making progress toward healthy relationships.
- Served in the Metropolitan areas of, Dayton, Atlanta, and Dallas
- November 2023 Hosted an all-day event at the Northwest Ohio Juvenile Detention Center to celebrate Thanksgiving
- Served 25 Counties in Ohio
- Received two new youth grants funded through HHS
- TYRO Reset: Focused on justice impacted youth and will involve partners in Georgia, Michigan, and Ohio
- TYRO Youth Collaborative: concentrates on youth in Ohio and is a collaborative partnership with three other organizations.
- Ohio Youth Congress (OYC), started a mental health campaign, Students write positive messages on sticky notes and place them on the lockers at their school. The feedback has been positive from both students and teachers at the schools.
- Completed our TYRO Youth On Demand Grant that focused on reaching online gamers.



We are excited to begin a new project. We will be working with incarcerated fathers and their children at Grafton Correctional. The youth will have the opportunity to meet with their incarcerated parent and walk through the TYRO Youth Curriculum. The Goal of this project is multifaceted. We want to engage youth in a positive youth development program, as well as encourage parent participation. For these fathers, it will be an opportunity to “parent” their children, creating strong relationships despite the barrier of incarceration.

YOUTH IMPACT

A student at Lucas County Youth Treatment Center (YTC) was very disengaged at the beginning of our film camp. However, by the end of the week he was leading his group with enthusiasm and a positive attitude. The reports from the staff were encouraging, because since being at YTC he had not fully engaged and was very hard. TYRO facilitators took their time with him, understanding what it took to break his tough shell and allow his true self to shine through. This young man has been a leader for his peers and an example for all YTC students to follow. In February of 2024 he was selected, by the staff of YTC, to speak to the Federal Project Officers for the Ohio Department of Health SRA Grant, virtually. This young man displayed such poise and professionalism in his answers and how he presented himself. He is a true warrior, a TYRO through and through.

- Maggie Westrick, Youth Project Director



YOUTH DIVISION



What's Coming in 2024?

- ❖ OYC is planning a trip to Washington D.C. to educate our legislators about the importance of Sexual Risk Avoidance Education.
- ❖ The Youth Department in conjunction with OYC is preparing to record and launch a pod cast called “What’d They Say”. This will be a podcast that brings the youth voice forward on topics that affect our youth on various levels. We are so excited to hear what they have to say, stay tuned for more information about this podcast.
- ❖ Adding an additional Youth Institution to our Film Camp Schedule for summer 2024.





TYRO Support Services

Our goal with TYRO Support Services is to create TYRO as an international brand along with providing an exceptional customer experience by building up a community of TYRO front line champions and TYRO achievers with content, experience, opportunities, and platform.

2023 TSS HIGHLIGHTS

TSS created and/or launched the following services

- TYRO TV - over 1 million downloads nation wide
- Completed build out of TYRO Leadership on prison multiple platform LMS systems
- Expanded Army offerings
- Trained over 60 peer facilitators for the state of Louisiana
- Trained an additional 15 peer facilitators for prisons in Georgia
- Created OnDemand Extended products
- Celebrated California partner with TYRO Champion trophies
- Conducted multiple program trainings
- Attended ACA conference
- Partnered with Viapath (prison tablet company) with premium content
- Partnered with Moodle partner (Oriana House partner)
- Updated website design
- Partnered with Massachusetts Department of Corrections
- Launched new resources for tablet delivery

TSS Partners

TYRO Support Services makes major strides toward their goal of branding TYRO internationally as they expand in different countries and establish new partnerships with other states.

Louisiana Department of Corrections - New Orleans, LA - doc.louisiana.gov
Christian Formation Ministries - New Albany, IN - christian-formation.org
New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary Orleans, LA - nobts.edu
Friends Outside - Los Angeles CA - friendsoutsidela.org
Box Elder Family Support Center - Box Elder County, UT - befsc.org
Shine - Kingsland New Zealand - 2shine.org.nz
Enhance U - Dayton OH - enhance-u.com
PI & I Motor Express - Ohio - piimx.com
ParamoUnt - Beaver Falls PA - lisapurk.com

“Great things in business are never done by one person; they’re done by a team of people.”

Healthy Visions - Cincinnati, OH - healthyvisions.org
BON SECOURS HEALTH SYSTEM - Baltimore, MD
Anthem Strong Families - Dallas, TX - anthemstrongfamilies.org
Ohio Dept. of Corrections - Ohio - drc.ohio.gov
City of Refuge - Atlanta GA - cityofrefugeatl.org
Emerge Aotearoa - Auckland, New Zealand - emergeaotearoa.org.nz
Cherry St Mission - Toledo OH - cherrystreetmission.org
Pillars Ka Pou Whakahou - Christchurch, New Zealand - pillars.org.nz
Camp David of the Ozarks - Rolla MO - campdavidozarks.org
Oriana House - Ohio - orianahouse.org
Massachusetts Department of Corrections
Above Pete’s Garage - Michigan

TYRO SUPPORT SERVICES - PARTNERS



Partner Locations Abroad:

- Australia
- Canada
- Denmark
- Finland
- Germany
- New Zealand
- Nigeria
- South Korea

Each **MARKER** represents an organization or government entity that TSS is providing, or has provided, technical training and assistance.

TYRO partnership data as of 2023.

FISCAL DIVISION

The RIDGE Project

Fiscal year 7/1/2022 – 6/30/2023, we provided the following:



| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <p><u>\$1,122,506</u></p> | <p><u>\$2,950,894</u></p> | <p><u>\$224,979</u></p> |
| <p>Spent on youth services reaching over 43K students and teachers</p> | <p>Invested in adult services reaching over 1,475 adults in 19 different locations. This is an average of only \$2,000 per person to deliver life-changing services.</p> | <p>Revenue earned from fees-for-services activities. These services were provided to organizations outside of The RIDGE Project to expand the impact of TYRO across the world.</p> |
| <p><u>838,186</u></p> <p>The approximate number of students we have served since the Youth Division's inception</p> | <p><u>\$234,688</u></p> <p>Spent on Management and Administration (that's 5.8% of what we spent on Adult and youth services)</p> | <p><u>\$84,500</u></p> <p>Received in donations from over 1,500 unique donors.</p> |

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

***I am a TYRO. I am a man of Honor, Integrity, and Promise.
I pursue all righteousness. I love my family.
I will not put my family in harm's way.***

***There is nothing that will keep me from doing the right thing.
I am an Ambassador of hope and a man of discipline.
I am a man worth following.
I am a TYRO.***