Fostering long-term stability and growth in high-risk youth, young adults, and their families through caring relationships and supportive services since 1992.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT
Friends,

The first half of 2021 was spent living through the adjustments and evolving reality of COVID. Thankfully, by the publication of this report—businesses have reopened, students are back at school, and even the mask mandate is no longer in effect. But our fiscal year (July 2020-June 2021) was a doozy. We were still in the thick of the shut-down with grim COVID spikes at the holidays and ongoing concerns about when we would ever safely reopen.

It was a year of firsts and a lot of resourcefulness. Faithful volunteers built our inaugural parklet to expand our COVID-safe meeting spaces. We were asked to be the lead agency for the city of San Francisco's Community Hubs initiative—offering COVID-safe learning pods for K-8 children through the end of the school year. We started a community diaper bank and offered baby formula and crisis support to low-income young parents and families. And we learned how to pull off a benefit gala from a parking lot! All was made possible by unwavering partners who wanted to do their part and were happy to get creative with us.

We also enjoyed several milestone partnerships! Our youth were invited to perform at the Kronos Festival after several years of collaboration with the award-winning and groundbreaking Kronos string quartet. And we celebrated 10 years of Triple P—a 12-week positive parenting workshop that has helped us support and equip hundreds of SF parents, children, and teens.

Happily, in June—thanks to generous donors, partners, and the state of California—we reopened our youth center and resumed in-person programming. We are grieving the absence of young people we've lost this year and are scarred by our losses—but we are dancing and singing because we are in community, in the same physical space once more, and can freely hug again!

You've been a vital part of this journey and our ongoing commitment to see young people and their families thrive. Thank you for seeing the value of these precious lives and joining us in this good work!

With love,

[Signature]
WHO WE SERVE

We support the most vulnerable and disconnected youth in the city.

MOST SYS YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCE:

- poverty
- childhood trauma, abuse, abandonment, or neglect
- unsafe neighborhoods
- school suspension or expulsion
- incarceration or harmful impact from systems involvement

WHERE SYS YOUNG PEOPLE LIVE

AGE

- 14-17: 23%
- 18-24: 69%
- 25+: 8%

GENDER

- Female: 30%
- Male: 67%
- Other: 3%

ETHNICITY

- African American: 32%
- Latinx: 30.5%
- Multi-racial: 28%
- Asian: 5%
- White: 0.5%
- Other (includes Decline to State): 4%

We support the most vulnerable and disconnected youth in the city.
WHAT WE DO

PUBLI CO SCHOOLS
We bring digital arts programs and our mobile recording studio to public schools as an outreach to high-risk youth.

JUSTICE SYSTEM
Through partnerships with Juvenile Hall, Young Adult Court, and other justice stakeholders, we support systems-impacted young people as they re-enter society.

SYS builds strong families, supports healthy communities, and helps young people chart a stable path to adulthood.

FAMILIES
Teen parents and low-income families participate in our parenting classes, receive supplemental groceries and diapers, and access support through our Family Resource Center (SFRC) network.

NEIGHBORHOODS
Young people grow life skills through community internships, employment, healing arts activities, and performance opportunities.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

SOCIALLY-DISTANCED MEETUPS

VIRTUAL PROGRAMMING

BENEFIT GALA AT LAKE MERCED

FIRST-EVER DIAPER BANK AT SFRC

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

JUSTICE SYSTEM

FAMILIES

NEIGHBORHOODS
Healthy attachments create safety, security, and a sense of well-being. We provide a caring web of relationships woven throughout our programs. Connected youth are better equipped to thrive in school, at work, in families, and in other social systems.

### FAMILY SUPPORT
- **43** families in parenting classes learned to identify needs, brainstorm options, and establish positive parenting goals
- **75** families received weekly staff or volunteer-delivered supplemental groceries
- **16** monthly support group meetings
- **40** families worked with case management to access crisis support and community services
- **356** diaper boxes distributed (100 - 200 diapers per box)

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
- **43** Upstar Records interns participated in training and mentoring opportunities, operating as marketing associates, sound mixers/engineers, and music producers for the record label
- **24** Clear Path justice-involved young people worked on removing barriers and gaining job skills and employment with partners like Cal Academy
- **9** Café youth interns practiced restaurant-readiness skills, safe food handling and preparation, and earned their Food Handler's Card
- **13** youth picked up experience and skills in employment projects such as car restoration, radio production, healthcare, and sound engineering
### Justice Services

- **92%** non-recidivism rate—the percentage of youth who did not sustain convictions while in our programs.
- **120** young people worked with case management staff to remove barriers and break patterns of violence, navigate the justice system, and to participate in SYS programs.

### Healing Arts

- **200** total hours of healing arts and therapy that created emotional and relational safe spaces and promoted healing and growth.
- **14** young people engaged in trauma-recovery groups with mental and behavioral health activities.

### Digital Arts & Technology

- **134** youth artists worked on creative projects, gaining skills in songwriting, digital audio recording and engineering, beat sequencing, DJing, live sound, photography, and video shooting and editing.
- **33** Upstar TV and Upstar Records music videos created.
From the beginning of our work 30 years ago, we’ve seen firsthand the devastating effects of incarceration on young lives, families, and communities. There were many things we could do to buffer kids from the harm, but punitive systems were never designed to help kids heal, learn, or grow. Juvenile hall mirrors prison, enforces isolation, and cuts kids off from supportive family members and advocates—hardening hearts and stealing hope. We offered direct services, diversion programs, and caring relationships…but we knew we had to do more.

In 2018 we began talking to systems partners. Could juvenile hall be closed down? What would it take? Could we imagine something better? How would it be funded? What kind of political will would be needed?
We spent hundreds of hours in meetings, collaborating with community members, partners, and local officials to press for change. By June of 2019 city supervisors voted almost unanimously to close an “outdated and expensive” juvenile hall—the first major city in the U.S. to do so.

In 2020 the Juvenile Justice Providers Association (a network of 20+ SF agencies that we help to lead), began meeting weekly through quarantine to research and write a blueprint for justice reform. We spent hundreds more hours in committees and subcommittees, gathering input from stakeholders and community members and refining ideas, so that we could present the following JJPA Blueprint recommendations to city supervisors:

- Reduce the footprint of juvenile probation in the life of SF youth
- Immediately implement policies to reduce the number of youth in detention
- Commit to closing juvenile hall in order to reduce harm to youth
- Change the system to prioritize the health and wellbeing of young people

In the process, we helped define what community-based care might look like in homelike environments with therapy, education, and other resources in partnerships with teachers, families and others invested in the life of the young person. Our recommendations included how to finance these changes by reallocating specific city funds.

We're now helping to reimagine what comes next. How will youth, their families, and communities be prioritized and given a voice in the process? What barriers need to be removed to see these young people grow and thrive? What kinds of collaboration are needed to prevent further harm and foster healing and hope?

While the work is frustrating, slow, and often mired in mind-numbing bureaucracy—we believe this process has the potential to lay the groundwork for wide-ranging juvenile justice reform and a restorative justice model where young people are not treated as problems to be solved so much as essential partners and community members whose health and well-being are essential to the thriving of our communities.
Our Faithful Individual Donors
We’re humbled by your generosity and sacrificial giving. Thank you!

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YOU MAKE OUR WORK POSSIBLE!

Income
- Individual Donors: 15%
- Private Foundations & Corporations: 11%
- Gala: 2%
- Public Funders: 72%

Total: $2,630,582

Expenses
- Administration: 10%
- Fundraising: 8%
- Programs: 82%

Total: $2,139,395

YOUR DONATION AT WORK
WHO WE ARE

STAFF

Executive Team
Dawn Stueckle, Co-Founder, Executive Director
Delvin Mack, Co-Founder, Director of Operations
Ron Stueckle, Co-Founder, Director of Justice Services

Justice Services
Natalie Rodriguez, Case Manager
Kaitlin Wahl, Case Manager

Digital Arts & Technology Program
Joel Tarman, Director
Wendy Baker, Facilitator
Rymo Cortado, Creative Lead
Miguel Navarro, Creative Lead
Pedro Reyes, Creative Arts Specialist
Beronica Zelaya*, Creative Arts Specialist

Workforce Development Program
Vicky Fashho*, Employment Coordinator
Mutaseem Dajani*, Life Skills Coach

Family Support Services
Maria Dajani*, Family Success Coach
Carrie Peng, Family Success Coach

Healing Arts Program
Erika Pappas, Director

Development, Communications and Finance
Mary Loebig Giles, Assoc. Director, Dev. & Comms
Melissa Laureta, Assoc. Director, Dev. & Comms
Mary O’Reilly, Executive Assistant
Marissa Majid, Bookkeeper

*Former SYS youth

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