





Covenant
House
Illinois

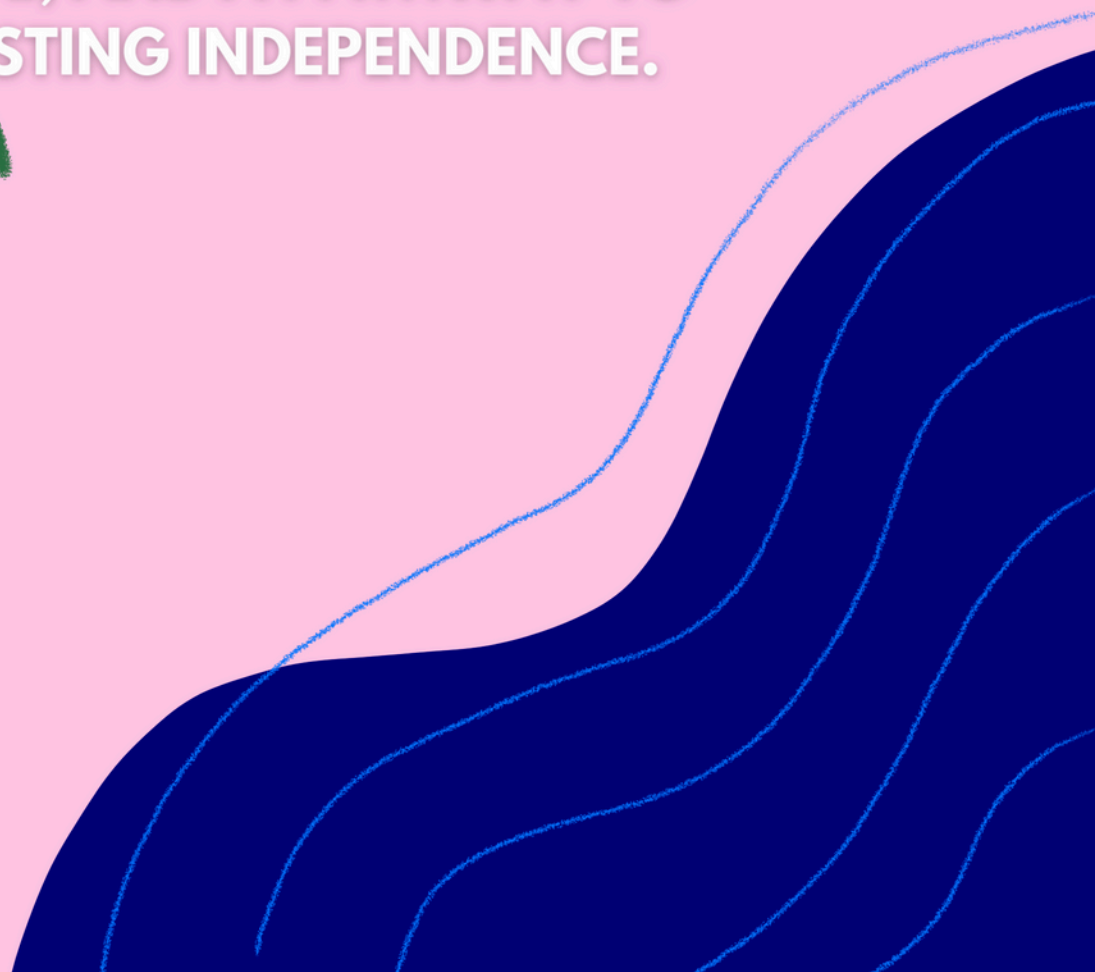

Annual Report

FY24





**THE MISSION OF COVENANT
HOUSE ILLINOIS IS TO OFFER
YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS AN AFFIRMING
COMMUNITY, ABSOLUTE
RESPECT, UNCONDITIONAL
LOVE, AND A PATHWAY TO
LASTING INDEPENDENCE.**



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WELCOME TO CHIL'S ANNUAL REPORT!

Hello, my name is Justus, and I will be your guide throughout the FY24 Annual Report. I am a young adult participating in CHIL's ROP program (more on this later) and a student at a local college here in Chicago. In this report, you'll learn about the various programs and discover the exciting ways CHIL is helping me, along with other young adults, build toward a successful future. You'll also get a sneak peek at what's next for CHIL and find out how they plan to support even more young adults on their journey to success.

About Me...

I am from southwestern Michigan and have lived in several cities, including Ann Arbor, Ypsilanti, Detroit, and a few others. My family was never traditional, and after our grandmother passed away, my older sister stepped in to raise me. I moved around a lot during my childhood, staying with friends and family along the way. When I was fifteen, we were officially homeless after being evicted from the apartment we had called home for five years. This event marked the beginning of years filled with instability and uncertainty.



Eventually, I realized I didn't have to stay in Michigan. I had always dreamed of moving to Chicago, so I saved up some money and found my way there. After a quick online search, I arrived at Covenant House, and it has been more than I ever could have imagined. Covenant House has provided me with not just a safe place to live, but also the support and stability I desperately needed. It's given me the chance to focus on my future, finish school, and save money for my own apartment. I now feel more hopeful and prepared than ever before to build a better life for myself.

Now, you may be wondering, 'What's in this better life Justus is building for herself?' Well, I have lots of aspirations. I want to be a creative—produce and edit films and documentaries. I want to be a writer. I would also like to be a community leader and a lobbyist for change in our legislation. If I can do everything I've ever wanted, I would also be a librarian, because stories were my first love. Above all, I aspire to help others, tell stories, and inspire people with my own story.

As you look through the following pages, you'll see me pop back a few times to share how some of the amazing programs and services CHIL offers have helped me during my time here. For now, please continue reading through the report, and enjoy learning more!

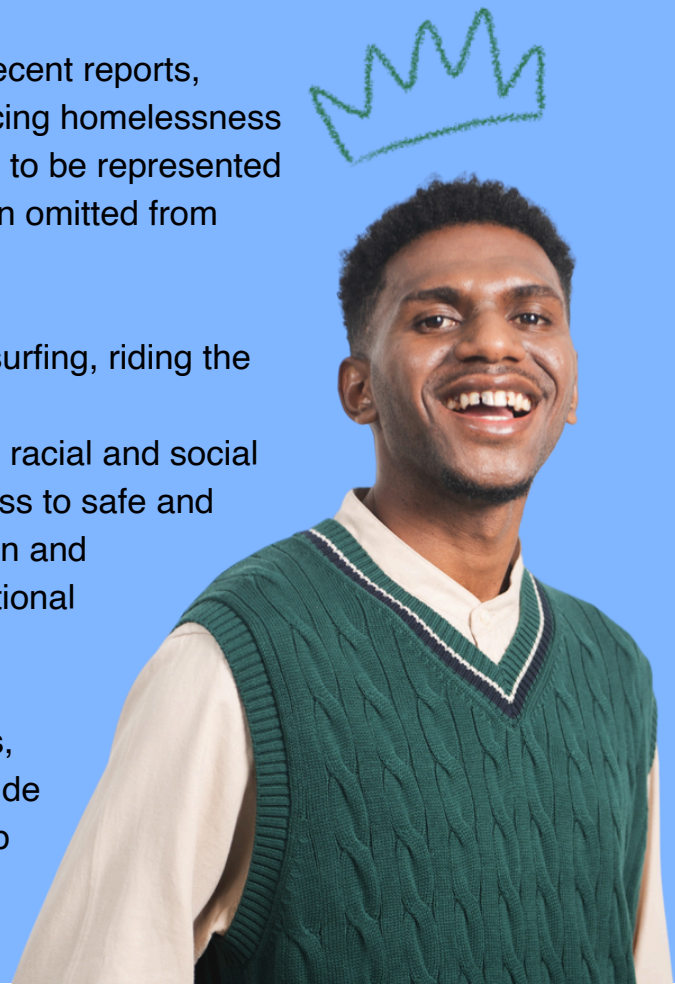
justus

WHO WE SERVE

Youth homelessness: An invisible crisis. According to recent reports, nearly 10,000 young people (ages 18-24) are experiencing homelessness in Chicago on any given night. But these youth tend not to be represented in the adult homelessness system and frequently remain omitted from official statistics.

Instead, these young folk are often doubled up, couch surfing, riding the trains or sleeping in spaces unfit for human habitation. Many of these young people face systemic barriers and racial and social inequities that hinder their ability to thrive. Without access to safe and affordable housing, a living wage, pathways to education and employment, essential resources, and mental and emotional support, they are left to navigate survival on their own.

This is why CHIL exists. When youth arrive at our doors, we are here to welcome them with open arms and provide a comprehensive slate of programs and services to help them permanently break the cycle of homelessness and find a path to independence and stability.



Pathways into Homelessness

- 39%** experienced domestic violence
- 33%** foster care system involvement
- 32%** justice system involvement



OUR FY24 IMPACT



9,639

nights of shelter provided

62,000+

meals served last year



+ 24% from last year



375

youth served through
drop-in center

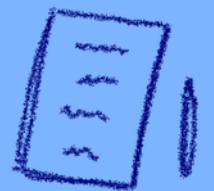
96

youth served in residential
programs



259

youth accessed education
& career opportunities



202

youth received mental
health services



INTERIM Housing

Designed to be short-term and meet the immediate needs of youth, CHIL's 37-bed interim shelter program provides young people with an affirming refuge, clinical case management, and trauma-sensitive wrap-around services in a community setting.



Our interim shelter became Jay's beacon of hope, paving the way for his return to New York and a brighter future.

about
JAY

After facing setbacks with his housing in New York, Jay turned to Covenant House Illinois, finding refuge and support in the interim shelter. There, he regrouped, deferred his college plans, and worked with CHIL staff to secure a spot in Covenant House New York's Transitional Living Program. Now, Jay is on track to pursue his education and build a brighter future, a testament to resilience and the strength of community.



Rights of Passage **TRANSITIONAL LIVING PROGRAM**

Rights of Passage is a semi-independent, life skills-based, 18-bed transitional living program, providing up to 24 months of shelter and a comprehensive slate of tailored programming in a structured, supportive environment that mirrors the obligations of a traditional household.



Adam was kicked out of his parents' house and didn't have anywhere else to go. Luckily, he found CHIL and is now a resident in our Rights of Passage program, where youth can stay for two years while they work, save money, and gain life skills with the help of our team. Adam is currently earning his associate's degree in finance. He aspires to work for a company like CME Group in the future.

"CHIL provided me with the tools I need to reach my goals. With their help, I'm able to save my money over the next two years while I'm in school, so I can get my own home one day." – Adam

Meet
ADAM



Being in ROP
has been great! ❤️



YOUTH DROP-IN

center

CHIL'S Youth Development Center (YDC) is a place where all youth can access food, showers, laundry, personal storage, case management, employment and education services, life skills training, group sessions, and a safe and welcoming place to rest.



About
TRE

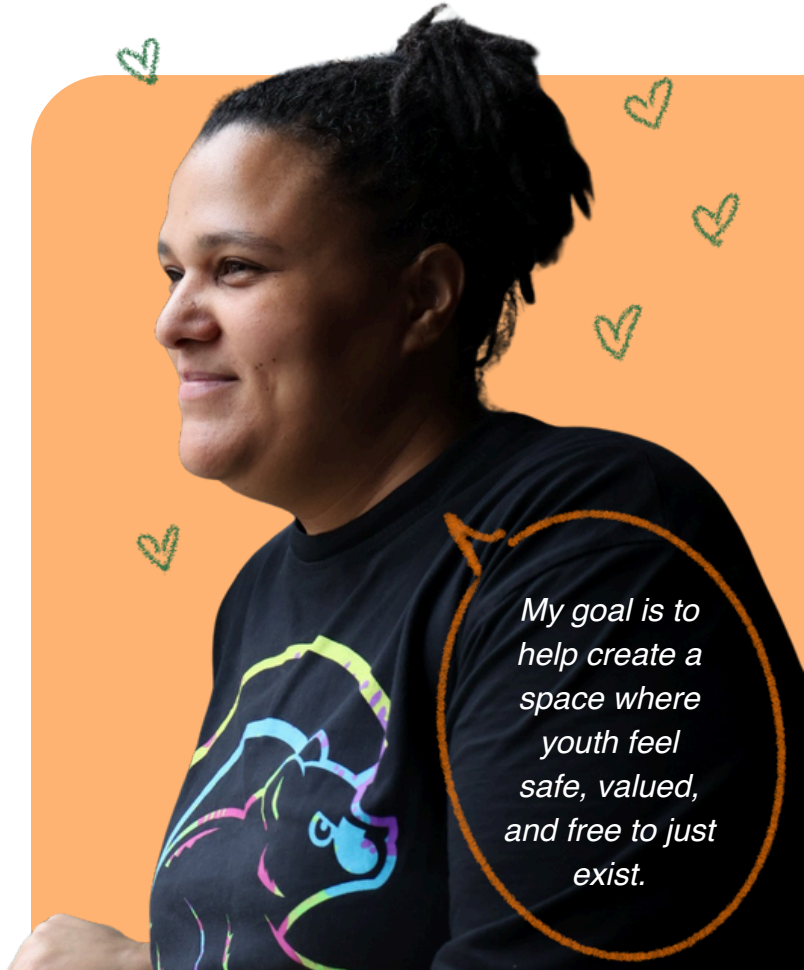
Tre's journey to CHIL began when he faced homelessness on his 18th birthday, but with determination and support, he quickly found a job and began rebuilding his life. After his stay at Covenant House, he transitioned to a similar housing program, where he continued to find stability and pursue his goals. Now working at FedEx and striving to become a driver, Tre remains grateful to Covenant House for helping him get back on his feet and recommends it to others seeking a fresh start. "Without CHIL, I would probably still be homeless."



Clinical CASE MANAGEMENT

We welcome young people into a safe, caring environment where they are respected and supported by a team of professionals committed to helping them meet their needs and achieve their goals. Case Managers work in partnership with each youth to develop an individualized success plan, with the ultimate goal to achieve and maintain long-term housing.

my case manager!

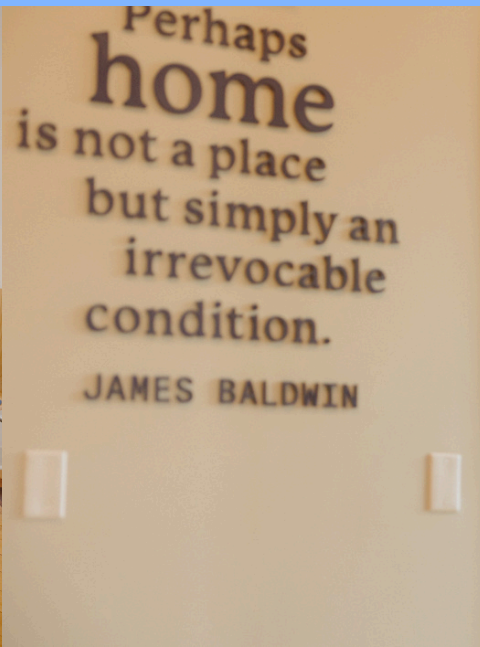


My goal is to help create a space where youth feel safe, valued, and free to just exist.



EASTON

Since starting at CHIL in July 2020, Easton has held roles as a Youth Engagement Specialist, Kitchen Manager, and Case Manager. She finds the greatest joy in spending time with the youth, particularly in moments when they feel comfortable enough to laugh, talk, and simply be themselves. Even during difficult times, Easton values being a source of support and making a positive impact. What sets CHIL apart, in her view, is the organization's program model, which is deeply committed to meeting youth where they are and doing everything possible to help them remain housed.



EDUCATION AND

Employment

We provide workforce services and access to other occupational and educational resources on-site. We offer a comprehensive range of workforce training, support, and job placement services. Youth can access these services as many times as they need while they continue to work toward a brighter future.



“When you pray for the rain, you have to deal with the mud too. Everything you go through builds character, and right now, I’m building character.”



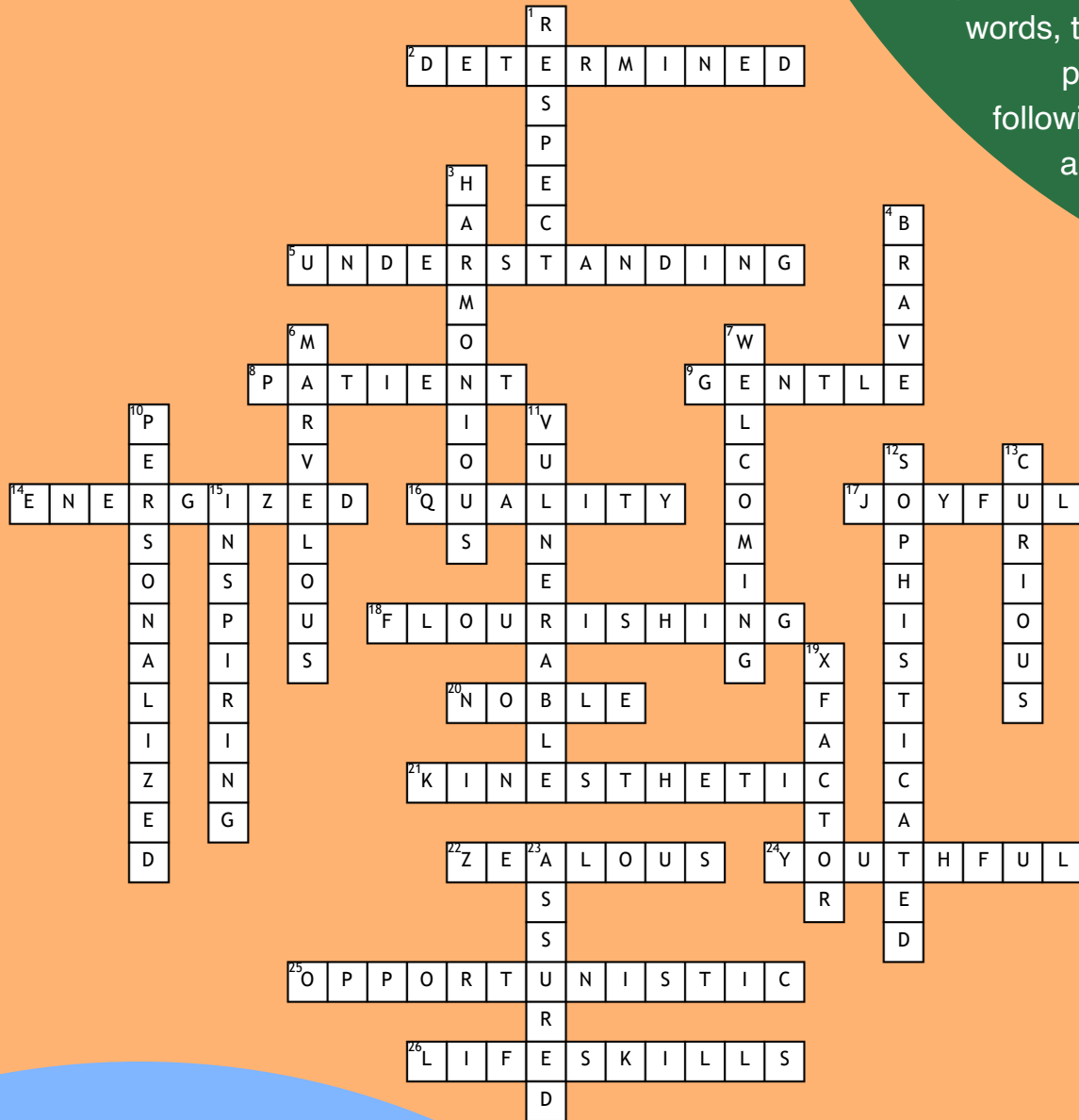
About DAVID

David, a 22-year-old from the Southside of Chicago, has transformed his life with the help of CHIL after facing incarceration, the loss of his mother, and a lack of direction. At CHIL, he found hope, completed a job training program, excelled in an entrepreneurship competition, and learned valuable life skills. Now, with a clear vision for his future, David is saving money, pursuing his entrepreneurial dreams, and embracing the lessons of resilience, gratitude, and character-building.



THE ABC'S OF CHIL YOUTH

In the summer of 2024, as part of a youth listening session, we asked our young people to come up with a list of words that best described who they are and how they feel about themselves. Using each letter of the alphabet to begin their words, this exercise produced the following powerful and insightful results:



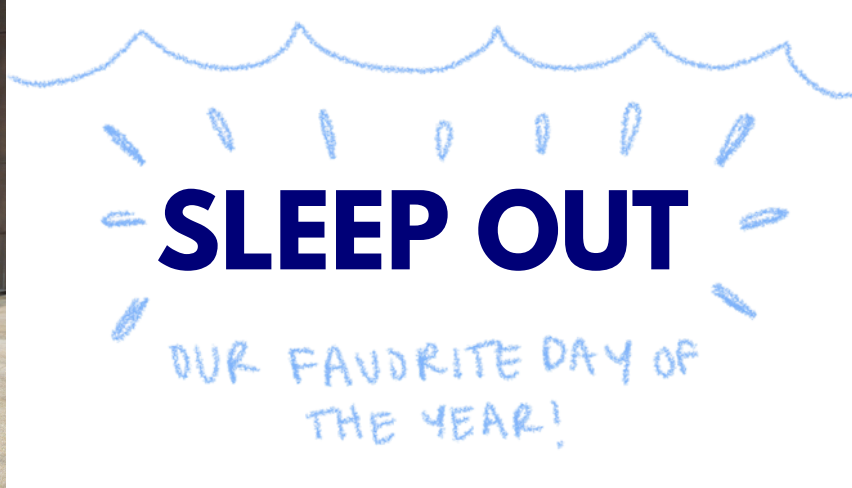
Across

- 2. Committed
- 5. Awareness
- 8. Calm
- 9. Tender
- 14. Revitalized
- 16. Caliber
- 17. Happy
- 18. Thriving
- 20. Honorable

Down

- 1. Admiration
- 3. Balanced
- 4. Courageous
- 6. Wonderful
- 7. Inviting
- 10. Tailored
- 11. Open
- 12. Elegant
- 13. Inquisitive
- 15. Motivating
- 19. Special Quality
- 23. Confident





Since 2017, Sleep Out has been a cornerstone of Covenant House Illinois. This unique fundraiser invites participants to spend one night outdoors, gaining insight into the challenges faced by youth experiencing homelessness while raising critical funds for CHIL's life-changing programs.

Participants set fundraising goals, rally support from their networks, and gather on the Thursday before Thanksgiving—either in person or virtually—for an evening of education, storytelling, and solidarity.

In 2024, Sleep Out: Chicago raised more than \$564,000 to help CHIL provide shelter, support, and solutions to break the cycle of homelessness. Beyond fundraising, Sleep Out amplifies the voices of youth and shines a light on the homelessness crisis.

Join this growing movement by visiting our website or emailing chilinfo@covenanthouse.org.



Gloria Gibson,
CHIL Board of Directors



Standing Together in Uncertain Times: A Message from Our CEO and Board Chair

At Covenant House Illinois, we are deeply aware of both the growing challenges faced by the young people we serve and the incredible opportunities we have to make a difference. Our vision, shaped by our three-year strategic plan, reflects our unwavering commitment to meeting these challenges head-on while fostering hope and progress.

The Growing Need

The need for our services has never been more pressing. According to a recent Chicago Coalition to end Homelessness report, nearly 10,000 young people in our service demographic (ages 18-24) are currently experiencing homelessness in Chicago. This staggering figure underscores the vital role CHIL plays in providing shelter, support, and a path forward for some of our city's most vulnerable youth. While the challenge is immense, we are inspired by the collective dedication of individuals, foundations, corporations, government agencies, and community partners who stand with us.

As we continue to implement the objectives of our FY24-FY26 strategic plan: Nurturing Potential, we also must remain adaptive and responsive to the evolving needs of young people, ready to address emerging priorities as they arise. Over the past year, we have seen a significant increase in the number of young people seeking drop-in services. Our Youth Development Center (YDC) frequently operates at capacity, and it has become clear that we must expand to meet the growing demand.

Responding to Emerging Needs

Guided by the support of CHIL's Strategic Directions Committee, we are focusing on immediate actions to address pressing challenges while keeping our long-term vision in sight:

Near-Term Solutions: We are actively exploring opportunities to expand our capacity by establishing an additional Drop-In Center. This space would provide young people with essential services, including meals, showers, case management, and connections to housing and employment resources. By increasing our capacity, our goal is to ensure that no young person is turned away when they need us most.

Pathways for Growth: Our long-term vision includes the possible creation of a new, larger campus in or around the East Garfield Park community that offers holistic support to young people. This potential campus would feature an expanded Drop-In Center, increased amenities, and a range of shelter and housing options. Guided by input from youth focus groups, CHIL staff, and the local community, this vision emphasizes sustainability, trauma-informed design, and strong community integration. We know this will be a journey, but we remain focused on taking steps toward this transformative goal.



Enhancing Resources and Collaboration

While the road ahead presents challenges, we are encouraged by the collaborative efforts taking place across Chicago and throughout the region to address youth homelessness. Recent systemwide capacity building opportunities, including the Youth Homelessness Demonstration Program (YHDP) and the Youth Homelessness Systems Improvement Grant (YHSI) from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), are bringing new resources and hope to this critical work. These initiatives will enable Chicago's Continuum of Care (CoC), of which CHIL is a committed member, to enhance collective efforts, create systemic improvements, and ensure that young people have access to safe housing and supportive services.

CHIL is proud to play a key role in these collaborative efforts. Together, we are building a more coordinated and effective system that addresses the unique needs of young people experiencing homelessness, offering them not just support but also opportunities to grow and succeed.

Moving Forward Together

At Covenant House Illinois, we believe that hope is stronger than any challenge. As we respond to immediate needs and pursue long-term solutions, we are inspired by the resilience of the young people we serve and the unwavering support of our community. Together, we can continue to be a beacon of hope and possibility, lighting the way for Chicago's youth to build brighter futures.

Gratefully,



Mark J. Hennessy
Board Chair



Susan Reyna-Guerrero, LCSW
Chief Executive Officer



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"I first learned about Covenant House through the Insurance Industry Sleep Out in New York City, where I was deeply moved by the resilience of the young people I met and the unwavering dedication and genuine support of the staff. As a 'late bloomer,' their stories resonated with me personally, having faced challenges in my youth. When I moved back to Chicago, shifting my support to Covenant House Illinois felt natural. I am grateful for the opportunity to continue helping young people find stability, hope, and a brighter future. What I didn't anticipate was the deep pull to become more involved, which I believe is rooted in my Chicago ties, creating a stronger bond with the Covenant House Illinois community."

Claudette Monsier, CHIL Donor



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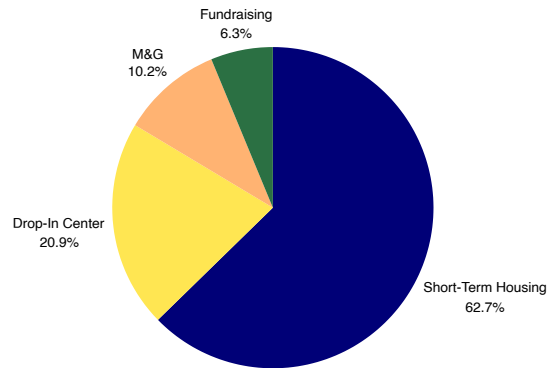
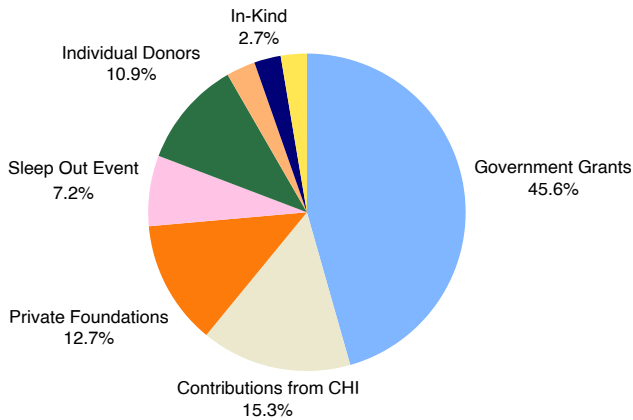
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FINANCIALS



REVENUE

Government Grants	\$2,608,177
Contributions from Parent Org	\$877,120
Private Foundations	\$724,582
Sleep Out Event	\$411,538
Individual Donors	\$623,005
Other Income	\$168,990
In-Kind Gifts	\$155,322
Interest Income	\$151,662
Total Operating Income	\$5,720,406
Capital Campaign Revenue	\$1,171,615

EXPENSES

Youth Development Drop-In Center	\$1,080,217
Short-Term Housing and Crisis	\$3,240,649
Supporting Services	
M&G	\$524,897
Fundraising	\$323,344
Total Operating Expenses	\$5,169,107

NET INCOME – OPERATING \$551,299

Hi again! I hope you enjoyed learning about all the ways CHIL has been providing us with phenomenal resources and tools for success.

Now that you've seen the amazing work CHIL has done, I hope you'll continue to support their efforts to uplift young adults experiencing homelessness. Thank you for reading the FY24 Annual Report.



**Covenant
House**
Illinois

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www.covenanthouseil.org

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