



# Arose from Concrete

Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless  
2023 Annual Report



## Our 2023 Reflection

### The Rose That Grew From Concrete by Tupac Shakur

Did you hear about the rose that grew  
from a crack in the concrete?  
Proving nature's law is wrong it  
learned to walk with out having feet.  
Funny it seems, but by keeping its dreams,  
it learned to breathe fresh air.  
Long live the rose that grew from concrete  
when no one else ever cared.

## Our Vision

Everyone has a safe and stable place to call home, where they can also embrace their own power and dignity.

## Our Mission

NEOCH exists to eliminate the root causes of homelessness while loving our diverse community through organizing, advocacy, education, and street outreach.

**ANTI-RACISM**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**COMPASSION**  
**AFFIRMING DIGNITY**  
**TRAUMA INFORMED**  
**RADICALLY INCLUSIVE**  
**GRACEFULLY ACCOUNTABLE**  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**PRO-LGBTQ**  
**SOLIDARITY**  
**INTEGRITY**  
**JUSTICE**  
**LOVE**



# 2023 Award Winners

Each year, NEOCH honors those who have demonstrated exemplary commitment to ending the root causes of homelessness in our community. We have presented awards to volunteers, elected officials, city leaders, lawyers, organizers, street outreach workers, and service providers.

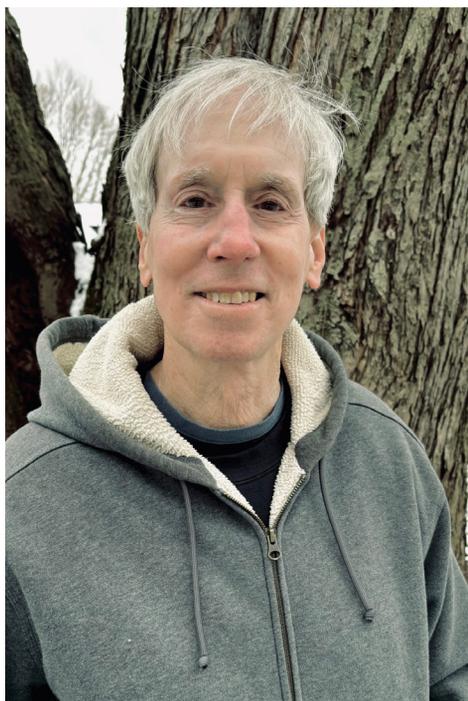


## SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

### Bree Easterling (They/them)

This year, we are dedicating the Social Justice Advocate of the Year Award to Bree Easterling for their work organizing and advocating for Care Response, LGBTQ rights, and social justice in our community. Bree's generosity, courage, and leadership are actively improving the lives of unhoused people. They have an unwavering dedication to community organizing. In their current role as a Social Justice Outreach and Organizing Specialist at Policy Matters Ohio, they are deeply committed to advocating for equitable policies at the national, statewide and local levels. In addition, Bree also serves as Program Facilitator for the Trans+ East Side Program in partnership with the LGBT Center of Greater Cleveland and Central Outreach Wellness Center, showcasing their impactful contributions within the LGBTQ community.

Bree's background in social justice advocacy, community engagement, and supportive research, positions them as a champion in the fight for equity and liberation. Their commitment to abolitionist activism, centered on Black queer liberation, reflects their steadfast passion for fostering a society that is both just and inclusive.



## HOMELESS ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

### Jack Breisch (He/Him)

This year, we are dedicating the Homeless Advocate of the Year Award to Jack Breisch for his steadfast commitment to care and compassion. Jack's years of volunteering with our street outreach team is appreciated and has impacted our community greatly. He demonstrates a committed passion to ending homelessness in our community and improving individuals' lives – one person at a time. This is not an easy task. The work is hard, and Jack have done it well.

Jack has been a street outreach volunteer for more than a decade, first with Care Alliance and now, for the last seven years, with NEOCH.

"I love this work for many reasons, especially for the great sense of gratitude that it brings me. It reminds me of something my dad would often say, "It doesn't take much to make someone happy." Serving on the street, I think of his words again and again."

Jack does street outreach three mornings a week with NEOCH. The work itself often takes liberties with the boundaries of time. For Jack, "Outreach, after all, never really ends!"

# Advocacy



- Co-Chaired and informed the publications of Cuyahoga County's first-ever unsheltered strategic plan.
- Partnered with The Cuyahoga County Greater Cleveland Reentry Leadership Coalition to host a Housing Justice Campaign Strategist at NEOCH.
- Organized events to host Director Richard Cho from HUD, explaining new guidance regarding criminal background screening in housing.
- Partnered with United Way and Legal Aid to further the reach of the Right to Counsel program by canvassing over 700 households facing eviction and educating over 150 residents facing eviction to educate.
- Convened 10 Cuyahoga Affordable Housing Alliance meetings, with presentations with from National and Local leaders, and implemented extensive group visioning process to achieve greatest community impact.
- Advocated for Care Response Program by hosting a series of panels, focus groups, and community engagement events which ultimately culminating in the formation of a pilot program.
- Supported in the formation of Care4Cle Coalition advocating for non-police response to behavioral/ mental health and nonviolent public health and safety concerns arising from the experience of homelessness and systemic racism.



# Organizing

- Built a Leaders with Lived Experience working group to ensure that justice-involved individuals are leading the conversation on policy change in the community including the Cuyahoga's County's 8-point Justice Housing Plan.
- Hosted 20 Homeless Congress meetings on the East and West sides of Cleveland, with over 400 people participating to share information and advocate for improved policies in the homeless services system.
- Mounted a multi-faceted campaign; resulting in extensive local news coverage, on the reality of unsheltered homelessness in our community, which led to funding of seasonal shelter programs, ensuring safety for those who are unsheltered during the coldest time of the year.
- Hosted our Annual Memorial to remember over 50 family members and friends with lived experience of homelessness who passed away. Over 200 people attended the event.
- Hosted a public memorial to remember 4 people that passed away on the streets of Cleveland within one month.





# Cleveland



# Our Organizing Map



## 1. Euclid Beach Mobile Home Community

- Won the voluntary adoption of the Uniform Relocation Assistance Act from the Western Reserve Land Conservancy.
- Collaborated with partners, including the Legal Aid Society, local housing experts, and Collinwood community organizations to provide support to United Residents of Euclid Beach (UREB).
- Hosted benefit concert for UREB at Beachland Ballroom, raising thousands of dollars for the tenant union.
- Mounted a campaign strategy, resulting in extensive local news coverage, of the mass displacement of residents, including several high profile actions, demanding alternatives for residents, including disrupting the WRLC's ROC in the CLE annual breakfast fundraiser.



## 2. Winton Manor

- Provided humanitarian aid during residents' displacement.
- Helped negotiate per-diem compensation for residents' while displaced.
- Collected condition issue complaints and provided support to tenants in preparation for a HUD visit and inspection.



## 3. Kirby Manor

- Worked with Council Woman Spencer to elevate resident concerns about tenant-landlord issues.
- Tenant organizing resulted in improved conditions and accommodations for residents.
- Worked with the Fair Housing Center for reasonable accommodations for residents on fixed incomes.
- After engaging with the tenant association, a HUD visit produced swift changes in management and removal of many fraudulent lease violations.



## 4. Euclid Estates

- Worked with Councilman Harrison and the new property developer to extend the projected renovation timeline to allow tenants to find suitable housing.
- Helped to negotiate relocation packages and coordinate to find new housing for residents.
- Collaborated with mutual aid groups to deliver water and supplies for three months.



## 5. Milton Manor

- Worked with residents to expose illegalities in their leases, including fair housing violations.



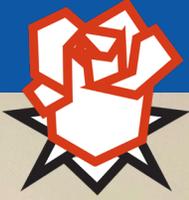
## 6. Granada Gardens

- Worked with Warrensville Councilman Walter Stewart to build capacity within the tenant association.
- Organized a public pressure campaign to raise awareness around conditions issues resulting in new management.
- Our campaign led to the City of Warrensville filing extensive criminal charges against the property owners.



## 7. Shaker Square Moreland Group

- Supported tenants' association and Moreland Group to fill capacity gaps in tenant engagement.
- Offered technical assistance to organizers.



# Education



- Led 26 Crisis Intervention trainings in partnership with the ADAMHS Board to promote outreach services to community members and first responders.
- Published 4 issues, over 17,000 copies, of the Cleveland Street Chronicle, a street newspaper that is written, purchased, and sold by vendors with lived experience of homelessness.
- Presented 8 workshops for over 500 people, including social workers, shelter staff, service providers, and community advocates. These webinars focused on understanding the Root Causes of Homelessness, Housing and Homeless Navigation, Domestic and Gender Based Violence, and best practices in Homeless services.
- Worked with over 100 high school and college students to dive into the realities of poverty and the root causes of homelessness, such as systemic racism and the commodification of housing.
- Our Street Voices program, which centers the voices of those with lived experience, spoke to over 20 faith communities, volunteer groups, and classrooms.



# Street Outreach

- 497 unique individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness engaged with NEOCH's street outreach services.
- 130 unique individuals received permanent housing through our street outreach.
- 156 people were assisted in obtaining identification, birth certificates, and social security cards.
- 277 people received crisis intervention services, such as linkage to behavior health services, addiction services, and emergency shelter.
- NEOCH's housing clinics served 986 people, helping to get access safe and affordable housing through application support, housing location, and other interventions.
- Responded within 48 hours to all 206 calls from the community (city council members, businesses, neighbors, etc.) concerning people experiencing homelessness throughout the year.
- Hosted 20 Cleveland outreach collaborative meetings to coordinate and improve services for those experiencing unsheltered homelessness, including supporting 12 volunteer evening outreach groups.
- Partnered with medical and behavior health providers to deliver services directly to unsheltered individuals living on the streets.
- Provided short-term supportive housing for 70 people experiencing homelessness and living with HIV/AIDS. This allowed 58 program participants to access permanent housing.
- We received 17,913 donated items (tents, socks, sleeping bags, and others) with an estimate value of \$219,139.00.
- The first year of volunteer outreach program, "Moore Love" hit the streets 23 times with 138 volunteers.
- Our LGBTQ outreach program provided services to 58 LGBTQ people experiencing homelessness, including accompanying 35 of these individuals into permanent housing.
- We worked with 22 organization to enhance access and support for LGBTQ+ individuals, including trainings in trans affirmation and trauma informed services and LGBTQ+ Cultural competency.



# Revenue and Expenses

## REVENUE

CONTRIBUTIONS \$316,470.90

FOUNDATION GRANTS \$279,730.00

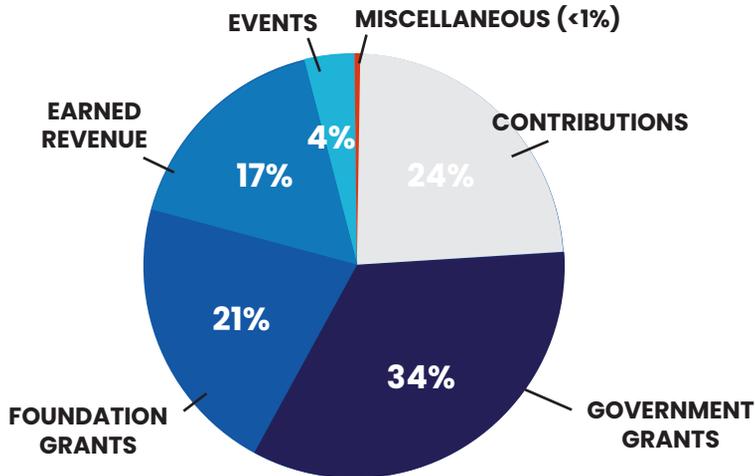
EARNED REVENUE \$224,234.44

GOVERNMENT GRANTS \$448,501.15

EVENTS \$47,783.85

MISCELLANEOUS \$3,349.09

**TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,320,069.43**



## EXPENSES

ORGANIZING/ADVOCACY \$325,150.32

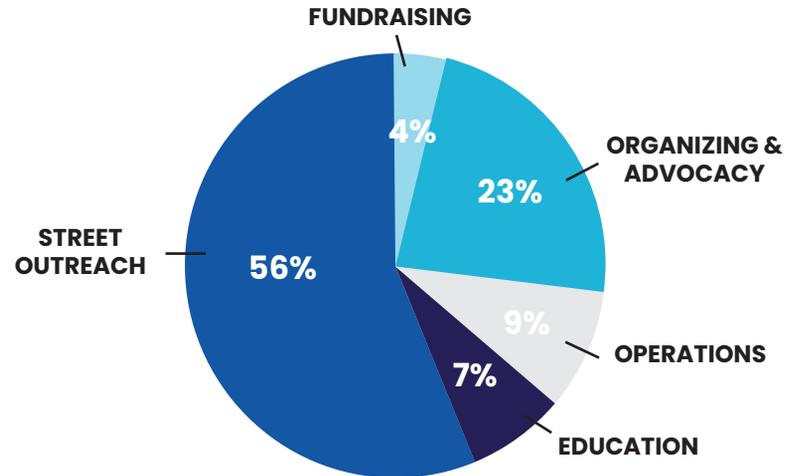
EDUCATION \$105,524.77

STREET OUTREACH \$789,374.83

OPERATIONS \$133,116.36

FUNDRAISING \$55,133.03

**TOTAL EXPENSES: \$1,408,299.31**



# Staff and Board

## Board Of Trustees

Alyssa Figueroa - President  
Andre Dailey - Vice President  
Anita Cook - Treasurer  
Kim Goodman - Secretary  
Avidan Cover  
Bishop Chui  
Calder Mellino  
Denise Abboud  
Leila Hojat  
Mary Wilson  
Natasha Lopez  
Tiffany Allen-White  
Sarah Gelsomino  
Suzanne Ferrara  
Timothy Lewis  
Jen Kocan - Board Emeritus

## Volunteers & Interns

Teresa Kelly  
Mohamed Manaa  
Angelo Anderson  
Brenda & Peter Horth  
Becca Huntington  
Suncere Shakur  
Rosemary Kozak  
Michael Seidman  
Brent Stowe  
Jack Breisch  
Nancy McCrickard  
Elena Yanchar  
Andrew and Eli Berger  
Stephen Claybaker

## Staff

Chris Knestrick - Executive Director  
Latanya Burton-Mickey - Office Manager  
Josiah Quarles - Director of Organizing and Advocacy  
Renee Williams - Housing Justice Community Organizer  
Liam Haggerty - Street Outreach Director  
Ange Mastandrea - Street Outreach Coordinator  
Khoriana Randall - Street Outreach Specialist  
Jonathan "2 Braids" Harris -  
Veteran Peer Outreach Specialist  
Dennis Ashton - Street Outreach Worker  
Jean Kosmac - Street Outreach Worker  
Jim Schlecht - Street Outreach Worker  
Carey Gibbons - LGBT Community Access Director  
Kathryn Boor - Communications Coordinator  
Molly Martin - Advocacy Liason  
Veronica Bennett - Office Assistant  
Lane Davis - Data Specialist  
Etienne Engles - Full time from the Action Reconciliation Service for Peace



# Thank You to Our Sponsors...

David Abbott

Dennis Abboud

Charles Ackerman

Waldo Acosta

Bryn Adams Adams

Kathleen Alto

Owen Ammann Ammann

Anonymous Anonymous

Archwood United Church of Christ

William Asazawa

Danielle Ashakih

B. Riley House

Lauren Bajbus

Timothy Barber

Dorothy Baunach

David Beach

Whitney Beatty

Timothy Becker

Brian E Bell

Deborah Bercik

Michael Bernot

Bessemer Giving Fund

Kathleen Betz

Kristin Betz

Eric Henry Beversluis

Mike Boddy

Mary Boyle

Bill & Karen Brace

Mayer Brach

Karen Bradley

Elizabeth Brake

Renee Brickman

Jean Brinich

Charles Bromley

Janet Brown

William Bruml

Ricardo Buentello

Tom Buford

Kevin Burroughs

Sheila Burton

Carolyn Cacho Bowman

Thomas Callahan

Kathleen Campbell

Phil & Linda Catanzaro

James Chadam

Shelly Marie Chadwick

Angel Chapin

Lena Chapin

Hillel Chiel

Janis Christopher

Church of the Redeemer UMC

City of Cleveland

Gary Claxton & Mitsi Wagner

Rich Claybaker

Cleveland Housing Network

Cleveland Vots

Ashley Close

Daniel Cohen

Community Shares USA

Community West Foundation

Ann Conaty

Tom & Anita Cook

Marge Corfias

Mike Cosgrove

Charlie Cunningham

Cuyahoga County

Diana Cyganovich

Jane Dangler

Gretchen Davidian Davidian

Chris Davies

Carol Dayton

Nicholas Degnan

JOEY DESIMONE

Dennis Dingow

Aaron Dobres

William Doll

Ed & Vera Dunagan

Alina Dunbar

Elaine Gimmel

EHA Solutions LTD

Christopher Ellicott

Enterprise Community Partners

Enterprise Holdin

Brittany Ervin

Rueben Ervin

Everlasting Baptist Church

Ewing Landscape

Andrew Fabiny

Antony Fair

Patricia Fallon

Suzanne Ferrara

Mike & Maryellen Eickman Fiala

Alyssa Figueroa

Jackie Fiocca

First Presbyterian Church in Cleveland

Brad & Beth Fischer

Gwen Fischer

George & Suzanne Fitzpatrick

Leslie FitzSimmons

Rebecca Flach

Phil Fogarty

Mike Foley

Forest City Lodge

Chrissy France

Andy Francis

Carlos Franco-Paredes

Alex Frank

Drew Frankel

Friends of Bridget O'Brien

Friends of Nickie J. Antonio

Joseph Frolik

Misty Funk

Jennifer Furin

Jay Gardner

Michael Garvey

Claire Gauntner

Mia and Joseph Gelles

Sarah Gelsomino

Gesu Church and School

Give Lively Foundation

Cheryl Gordon

George Graham

Marcelle Grair

Melissa Graves

Greater Cleveland Community Shares

Richie Gryn

Peter & Lee Haas

Brendan Haggerty

Patrick Haggerty

Rob Hall

Barbara Hanselman

Malva Harris

Phyllis Harris

Ed Hatgas

Heather Hillenbrand

Grace Heffernan

Audrey Heinen

Jessie Hill

Terri Hisel

Jaleh Hojat

Leila Hojat

Jamie Holkovic

Kathryn Holzheimer

Sarah Honig

Douglas Horner

Brenda Horth

Tanese Horton

Housing Research & Advocacy Center

Howmet Aerospace Foundation

Jessica Hubbard

Hudson Community Foundation

Wells Fargo Clearing Services

Rebecca & Neal Huntington

Eugene Iannucci

Nozomi Ikuta

Inter-Religious Task Force on Central America

Timothy & Cheryl Ita

James Budkie James

Brenden Jenks

Andrea Jevenn

Toni Johnson

R L Jones

Joseph and Mary's home

Erin Kanary

Celia Kaplan

Steven Katz

Elizabeth Kaufman

Nora Kelley

Patricia Kellner

Eileen Kelly

Kris Keniray

Bill Kenneweg

Susan Kenney

Robert Kerczewski

Douglas & Mary Ann Kerr

Key Bank Foundation

Kichler Lighting

David Kircher

Karen Kircher	Medusa Property Preservation	Ward Pallotta	Jonathan Scharfstein	Swanson-Harbage Giving Fund	Josephine Wardle
Matt Klocek	Michael Melampy	Caitlyn Palm	Kayla Scheuffer	Nemath Syed Shah	Linda and Chris Warren
Bob Kloos	C. Bruce Melville	Sarah Parran & Susan Gregg	REACH (Responding with Empathy, Access and Community Healthing)	Phyllis Syracuse	Sam Watson
David Kloos	Amy Metlesitz	Theodore Pavlich	Eric Schneider	Take a Lap Foundation	Weitzel Family Foundation
Andrew Kluth	Daniel Mikusa	Judy Payne	Cleveland Softball	Joy Tennent	Christina Welsch
Jennifer Kocan	Geoffrey Miller	Chelsee Pengal	Carol Schulien	Ari Terjanian	Fr. Bob Wenz
Jennifer Kons	Kathleen Milton	Mark Pestak	Jean Seasholtz	The Callahan Foundation	West Shore Unitarian Universalist Church
Quentin Kraft	John Misak	Jane Peterson & Philip Star	John Sedor	The Cleveland Foundation	West Side Catholic Center
Kretz Family Foundation	Margaret & James Misak	Harriet Petti Harriet Petti	Michael Seidman	The Federated Church	Weston Hurd LLP
Dr. Christine A. Krol & Mr. David A. Sagerser	Haley Morris	Laura Pfancuff	Greg & Lois Selker	The George Gund Foundation	Laurel Whippie
Martha Kutik	Atriel Morrow	Zainab Pixler	Jane Semple	The Haven Home	Catherine White
Lakewood Congregational Church	Drew Mosley	Kathleen Pokorny	Michael Sering	The Lakewood Supply Company	Long Play Communication
Nicholas Lanese	Samantha Murphy	Laura Potter	Brandi Shaffer	The Legal Aid Society of Cleveland	Megan Wilson-Reitz
Eric Langston	Tim and Bev Musser	Dr Thomas Pretlow	Emma Shook	The Reinberger Foundation	Joshua Wilt
Madeline Lee	Stuart Naifeh	Gary & Frances Previts	Robert Shores	Jan Thrope	Julie Wisneski
Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland	Rachel Napolitano	Peter Quilligan	Dr. Howard Simon	Joanna Tomassoni	Women Speak Out for Peace & Justice
James Levin	National Western Life Insurance Co	Todd Rasmussen	Sisters of Charity Foundation	Nancy & Roger Towers	Elena Yanchar
Beth Linderbaum	Mary Ann & Timothy Naughton	Ronald & Deborah Ratner	Will Skora	Judith Towner	Yugan Sakthi Yugan Sakthi
Josh Lins	Nicholas J Lanese Nicholas J Lanese	Carla Rautenberg	Kempton & Nancy Smith	Barbara Trepal	Elizabeth Zak
Lion and Blue	Darlene Nichols	Margaret Reading	Maria Smith	Ron Triolo	Steph Zambelli
Rob Loftis	Jeff Nichols	Kesha Reed	Sheryl Lynn Smith	Pam Turos	Cynthia Zawadski
Natasha Lopez	Faith Noble & Chris Checkett	Paul & Katja Rehm	Tim Sokal	Karis Tzeng	Janice Zweigart
Judith Lucas	Northern Ohio Recovery Association (NORA)	Matt Renfroe	Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church	Union Miles Development Corporation	
Donna M OBrien	Valerie Novack	Brian Rice	Jeffrey Spada	United Way of Greater Cleveland	
Chester Madej	Jane Nowicki	Robert L. Stark Enterprises	St Thomas More Church	Unity Spiritual Center	
Joseph Madigan	Patrick O'Connor	Lynn Rodemann	St. Barnabas Episcopal Church	University Hospitals LGBTQ+ and Gender Care	
Caitlin Magner	Donna OBrien	Catherine Ross	Diane Stack	Urban Hope	
Russell Maurer	Leticia Odell	Anne Rossi	Michael Staudt	Cheryl Urminski	
Kevin McClelland	Ohio Voice	Dawn Ruebensaal	Eleanor Stein	Ursuline Sisters of Cleveland	
Nancy and Jim McCrickard	James Onysko & Drum Play	Sarah Rutowski	Johnathan Steinbach	Carole Usaj	
Tom & Ruth McDermott	Judy Opalach	Jonah Sachs-Wetstone	John Stephens	Jack & Blanche Valancy	
South Haven UCC	Susan Osherow	Chris Salay	Stonewall Sports Cleveland - Dodgeball	Barbara VonBenken	
Martha McGraw	Doug Ott	Erica Sammon	Beck Strauss	Sam W	
McMaster-Carr Supply Company	Melissa Owen	Susan Sanders	Michael Stroup	Michelle Walsh	
	Padua Franciscan High School	Patrick Sbrocco	Studio Think	Holly Wang	
		Gino Scarselli			





## SPECIAL THANKS TO

The Community West Foundation and their SocksPLUS program. Their dedication to this program, and to people experiencing homelessness, helped us distribute more than \$17,913 worth of necessities to people experiencing homelessness in our community.

**[neoch.org](http://neoch.org) | 3631 Perkins Ave. #3A-3 | Cleveland, OH 44114 | 216.432.0540**