



PHOENIX
REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
2018-19

WELCOME TO PHOENIX'S REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY, 2018-19!

A MESSAGE FROM JENNIFER

As a former Phoenix youth, it's my pleasure to kick-off this year's report by telling you a little bit about why your support means so much to the youth who access services at Phoenix.

In my case, when I was 15 years old, I was in a bad relationship and was dabbling in drug use. I ran away from home and couch-surfed with friends for a while. Once I turned 16, I started staying at the Phoenix Youth Shelter. I made regular stops at the Phoenix Centre for Youth for support, to do laundry, and to pick up healthy snacks.

I moved into Phoenix House and I really started interacting more with the programs that Phoenix had to offer. I took part in LE@P and I regularly saw someone at the Phoenix Youth and Family Therapy Program. I also got a ton of support from the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre. Once Phoenix supported me to get my life back on track, I moved into their Homes for Independence before moving back into my community to go about my post-secondary education.

I learned about the amazing community members who supported these programs when I gave speeches at the Annual General Meeting and the Canadian Progress Club Halifax Citadel Women of Excellence event, and when I played violin with Symphony Nova Scotia at the Nutcracker Luncheon. I learned about the amazing people in our community who donated money, came to volunteer, or brought gifts-in-kind.

There are people willing to give and give, who knew the benefits of Phoenix and the work they do to support the youth in their community. I was one of those youth; I felt that support every day.

Looking back now as a care provider myself for a not-for-profit organization, I can appreciate much more the way a community comes together to support each other. Whether it be making in-kind or monetary donations, providing services, or purchasing tickets for events, I am amazed at what a community can do when we pull together. When I came to Phoenix, I was experiencing the most difficult time in my life, but I knew there were people who wanted to help. I saw them, and I still appreciate them to this day for every dollar they donated, every visit they made, and every sock and mitten they gave each winter. The group of people who support Phoenix are more than a community, they are a blessing.

Thank you all.



GROWING TOGETHER

Since 1987, Phoenix has been dedicated to supporting youth and contributing to the health and vibrancy of communities. At our 10 locations in Halifax, Nova Scotia, we provide a wide range of supports for youth ages 11-24 and their families. At Phoenix, we listen to the people we work with so that we can support them with the most impactful services and programs possible. Our team of caring professionals recognizes that each person who comes to us has individual needs as well as strengths. People are the leaders in their own lives; Phoenix is a leader in supporting them.

OUR SERVICES

- Advocacy
- Youth outreach
- Community engagement
- Youth and family therapy
- Arts, recreation, and leadership
- Health services
- Parent support
- Housing support
- Money management
- Crisis support
- Education support
- Employment counselling and support

OUR PROGRAMS

- Phoenix Supportive Housing Program
- Phoenix Centre for Youth
- Phoenix Youth Shelter
- Phoenix Learning & Employment Centre
- LE@P (Learn & Explore at Phoenix)
- Phoenix Youth & Family Therapy
- Phoenix Youth & Community Centre
- Phoenix Youth Outreach Program



OVER 200 YOUTH RESPONDED TO THIS YEAR'S PHOENIX YOUTH SURVEY!

SOME OF THE RESULTS ARE FOUND IN THE FOOTERS OF THIS REPORT. PERCENTAGES INDICATE YOUTH WHO AGREED OR STRONGLY AGREED WITH THE ACCOMPANYING STATEMENTS.

"I'M PROUD OF THE HOME I'M CREATING FOR ME AND MY CHILDREN."

Jessica first connected with Phoenix seven years ago, at a critical point in her life.

"I had left an unhealthy relationship when my mom told me and my sister about Phoenix. She said it was a place with lots of support where we could get clothes and food."

In fact, the first time Jessica stepped into the Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY), she was looking for clothing.

"Someone had just donated a big box of clothes. The staff said I could take whatever I needed. I kept saying, 'This? What about this?' while pulling out the clothes. The staff said 'You might as well take the whole box.' I did! I carried the whole box down the street!"

Since then, Jessica has been involved in many programs at Phoenix. The most support has been through PCFY, where she has been part of the the parenting, trusteeship, and housing support programs. As a young mother of Evelyn (11 months old) and Joshua (four years old), having a support system is critical.

"Being with Phoenix staff... it's almost like when you're with family – it's very comfortable. Knowing they were there to help made me feel at ease."

Jessica started looking for her first apartment five years ago, with help from the staff at Phoenix.

"I had lived there for about a year when I had learned I was going to be a mother. I got my second apartment while pregnant with my first-born, Joshua. I couldn't lift boxes during the move because my belly was so big. The movers had to do all the work."

Letting others do the work isn't typical for Jessica.

"After spending five great years in that apartment, my family was about to grow again so we needed a bigger place. With the knowledge and skills that I had learned over the years through my housing support worker, I was able to find, secure, and make the necessary arrangements to move into my current three-bedroom apartment almost entirely on my own. I've become much more independent and confident in my choices since first connecting with Phoenix. I'm very resourceful and proud of the home I'm creating for me and my children, Joshua and Miss Evelyn."

Jessica once thought graduating from high school would be impossible. But, through the Adult Learning Program at Nova Scotia Community College, she was able to achieve this, with Phoenix staff cheering loudly from the audience. She plans on going back next fall to take the Baking and Pastry Art Certificate. She hopes to open her own bakery with a friend who is currently taking a business course.

"When I think about the future," says Jessica, "I see a house with a backyard that has a vegetable garden, a treehouse, a play-set, and a 'she shed' for me. I see Evelyn playing outside with Barbies and Joshua taking soccer or Brazilian jiu jitsu."

"Without Phoenix's support, my life would look a lot different. There have been a lot of ups and downs, but Phoenix has always been there to give advice, which helped a lot. I would like to thank Phoenix for believing in me, supporting me, and helping me grow and achieve my goals."

Jessica



90% OF YOUTH SURVEYED SAY PHOENIX HELPS THEM GET ACCESS TO USEFUL RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES.



Leland Lewis

AN ORDINARY EXTRAORDINARY LEGACY



Philanthropy can be many things. It can be loud and boisterous, flashy and energetic, formal and strategic, or spontaneous. It can also be like Leland – quiet, steady, and unassuming.

Leland Lewis could be considered an ordinary man, but through his generous support of Phoenix and other charities, was able to achieve extraordinary things. Leland was born in Five Islands, Nova Scotia. As a young man, he was an air force pilot who spent several years in France. While there, he met his wife, Marion. They were married for 48 years and had four children – three girls and one boy.

Upon leaving the air force, Leland attended the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS), as it was called then, and earned a civil engineering degree. Described by his daughters as a man who liked to get things right the first time, Leland approached life straight on, addressing daily activities pragmatically and logically.

Despite his practical nature, Leland wasn't afraid of adventure. His daughters told one story that described him perfectly. Leland had attended a charity auction in his community. Wanting the event to be a success, he bid up some of the auction items, but he bid one too many times and won a package of snowboarding lessons. Not one to see something go to waste, Leland

dove head first into snowboarding, despite being in his late 60s. His daughters remember watching him on the ski hill as he made friends with a group of young people, sharing tips on equipment and technique.

Leland embraced life fully. He cared about the environment and the well-being of others. He was committed to supporting those in his community who needed help.

In 1998, he heard about Phoenix and began giving annual donations. For 21 years, he steadfastly gave. His reasoning was simple – he felt blessed that his children had never needed Phoenix's services and wanted to help those who did.

Leland passed away in March 2018, but in one final act of generosity and dedication, he left a gift of stock in his will for Phoenix. His legacy gift will help to ensure youth can access the supports they need.

Leland achieved extraordinary things by considering the lives of others and donating financially to help. We can imagine a world where his extraordinary kindness and selflessness become ordinary.

For information about leaving a legacy, visit:
phoenixyouth.ca/ways-give

NOTHING BUT POSITIVE PEOPLE AND TIMES

In August 2018, twelve youth who participate in programming at the Phoenix Youth and Community Centre in Mulgrave Park (PYCC) had the incredible opportunity to visit Ottawa and the surrounding area. This was thanks to the generous support of the Rotary Clubs of Halifax Northwest, Halifax Harbourside, Dartmouth, and Rotary District 7820.

When young people learn to navigate new people and places, they experience personal growth and develop leadership skills. As they set out to learn and explore in Ottawa, our youth increased their self-confidence and strengthened the bonds with staff and other youth. Their adventure was filled with many firsts. For a couple of youth, it was their first time travelling on an airplane. For many, just spending a week away from home was a new experience that led to great personal growth.

By visiting Parliament Hill and historic monuments, the youth gained a greater understanding of Confederation and government processes. Their excursions in Ottawa and Quebec brought a deeper awareness of the bilingual nature of Canada and the diverse history and cultures that make up our country. They were opened to the possibilities that exist beyond the city of Halifax. A day spent with the Royal Canadian Air Force was so transformational that it inspired one youth to want to become a pilot someday.

Their trip even had a few grand surprises, like an astonishing meeting with retired Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield. Mr. Hadfield had some words of inspiration for them.

"I think everything is scary if you're not ready...Things aren't scary, people are just scared. The best antidote to being afraid is being competent in what you're doing. It is far easier to believe something than it is to understand it."

Carla, one of the PYCC staff on the trip, expressed that it was deeply fulfilling to watch the youth have these fantastic experiences.

"Ottawa was an amazing opportunity," says Carla. "I'll never forget that trip, but more importantly, the connections that were made with all the youth and getting to see them grow as individuals."

The surprises and opportunities to experience new things didn't end there. On the day that they visited Calypso Parc Aquatique, they rode in a stretch limousine which was a huge highlight.

Youth participant Reilly sums it up. "I had a great time on the Ottawa trip. There was nothing but positive people and times. We did more activities and ate more food than I can count. It was such an amazing trip and it will be a memory that will last forever thanks to the Rotary Clubs and the staff."



86% OF YOUTH SURVEYED FEEL PHOENIX ENCOURAGES THEM TO EXPLORE AND GROW THEIR UNIQUE SKILLS AND ABILITIES.

NEW OUTLOOK BRINGS JOY



Anne Morvan

VOLUNTEER, DONOR, BARGAIN HUNTER

When Anne Morvan was introduced to Phoenix through a family member 10 years ago, it changed her outlook. She attended one of Phoenix's signature events and was motivated to volunteer after hearing the youth speaker.

"The event tugged at my heart strings. Even though my financial support was limited, I knew there was something I could do." Since then, Anne is always looking for new ways to give back to Phoenix.

"Ten years ago, 'Phoenix' meant nothing to me. Now the word 'Phoenix' is always coming out of my mouth." She donates monthly, gathers and brings in hotel-sized toiletries from friends and her own travels, volunteers at events, and did a hygiene product drive through her Facebook page.

Last year, Anne's volunteering went a step further when she joined the Food for Phoenix committee. Donations are provided by churches, then representatives from the committee make weekly trips to buy food for the 30 to 40 young people who visit the Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) each day. When it's Anne's turn to shop, she takes the budget for the week (\$200) and a list of things needed at PCFY, like cheese, bagels, yogurt, fruits and vegetables, and other groceries. But Anne doesn't simply go to one store to fulfill the list.

"I am a bargain hunter. Food is expensive, especially things like cheese, so I check out the flyers on Wednesday and travel around to get the best deals. Sometimes, if it's not my turn to shop, but I see a good deal, I'll buy things like granola bars in advance. Then if there is some budget leftover, I'll use it to pick up things like

diapers for the babies who visit PCFY with their young parents."

"I was worried having a regular volunteer job would dominate my time, but it doesn't. I enjoy doing it – it makes me feel good. It's given me a different purpose." Getting to know some of the staff and their passion for the work, and knowing the impact her own efforts make for the youth Phoenix supports, give Anne a sense of belonging.

"I've learned a lot about poverty. I now think differently when I see a young person on the street. I think of how strong-willed they are. I feel like this is everyone's challenge – not just the person, not just Phoenix, but all of us."



SO MUCH MORE!

Deborah Woolway

VOLUNTEER, SUPPORTER, JOURNALIST

When a friend suggested Deb consider joining the Phoenix Charitable Foundation as a trustee in 2011, she didn't hesitate. Four years later, she became the chair of the foundation. When her tenure ended in 2018, she thought, "What else can I do, besides making financial donations? How else can I contribute?"

Deb decided to use the journalistic skills she acquired during her career at CBC Radio to benefit Phoenix. She started visiting the programs that Phoenix offers youth and sharing her experiences through a personal blog.

"As a trustee, I didn't get the chance to visit all the sites or really understand on a practical level how all of the programs Phoenix runs fit together. And I wanted to raise awareness of the huge range of services Phoenix offers youth and their families -- that's something many people don't know about."

Deb says writing her blog and getting to know Phoenix's programs were also personally rewarding.

"Even though each location had its own flavour and personality, three things stood out for me: just how interconnected the programs were, the intense dedication of the staff, and how positive and open youth were in sharing their stories with me. After one deeply personal interview at the shelter, I asked one young man why he even agreed to talk to me. His reply? 'Because I want you to get it right.' He wanted me to tell people just how much of a difference Phoenix was making in his life."

The youth Deb met were motivated and optimistic.

Deb visited nearly all the Phoenix sites, and promoted the blog on her own social media, within her networks, and on CBC Radio. Her many hours of skilled volunteerism have contributed to the public's awareness of Phoenix in a way that can't be measured.

"Some people who read it were surprised. They came back to me saying, 'I had no idea Phoenix did all that!' That was music to my ears. I support Phoenix because I see the direct impact. You see youth achieving personal goals. And you know that your contributions of time or money are going to the right places and being used effectively."

The blog "*Phoenix – A House and So Much More*" is found at: www.phoenixnovascotia.com



WE HAVE LIFT OFF

ACADEMIC COACH GOES FROM PILOT TO PROGRAM

Transitioning from junior high to high school and then into post-secondary education can be challenging. When issues like poverty, housing and food insecurity, mental health conditions, and the stigma and discrimination that go along with them are added, young people may need extra support to succeed. Education is a vital foundation for a young person, not only to develop academically, but to build important life skills as well.

Phoenix launched the Phoenix High School Student Support Program as a pilot project in January 2018 to provide that extra support. It was made possible by the Out of School Time Learning grant through the Government of Nova Scotia's Education and Early Childhood Development Department. It was developed in partnership with Citadel High School.

Doug Coldwell became our Academic Coach for the program. During the pilot project, he offered part-time academic coaching and emotional support, both one-on-one and in groups, to Phoenix youth attending Citadel. Students worked with him either at school during out-of-class time or at one of Phoenix's other locations.

"Being the Academic Coach for Phoenix Youth Programs has been very rewarding to both myself, and the young people I have worked with," says Doug. "Having a background in education and youth work, it became an amazing opportunity for myself and I am truly blessed to be part of such an incredible program."

In the program's first semester, 27 Phoenix youth worked with Doug and saw significant improvements in their grades and greater participation in school activities.

Seeing the level of youth engagement in the project, and the successes participants had, Phoenix was determined to keep the program going. With help from TELUS, the program was expanded in September 2018 to full-time support for youth attending other high schools and post-secondary institutions. The number of youth who worked with Doug speaks to the need for this support as well as its value. The program has had incredible participation since September 2018, helping 56 students: 14 in junior high school, 33 in high school, 6 in adult learning programs, and 3 in post-secondary studies.

Reflecting on the program's impact, one youth says, "I always knew what I wanted to do and where I wanted to go for my future, but along the way I lost track trying to figure it all out. Doug helped guide me through the process and gave me [the] constant support I needed from Citadel to a few months at BFEC [Bedford and Forsyth Education Centres] and I am very thankful for that."

IN THE BUSINESS OF HELPING

PEACE BY CHOCOLATE

Peace by Chocolate has been spreading love and positive messages across the globe since it was started by the Hada family in 2016. After losing their chocolate factory in a bombing, they were forced to leave everything behind and flee the war in Syria. They resettled in Antigonish and started Peace by Chocolate shortly after. Their strong message and delicious chocolates have made them a huge success.

Last summer, they released an exclusive line of Pride-themed chocolate bars, raising over \$4,000 in support of Phoenix.

LEARN TO GIVE

The Brace Space is owned and operated by Dr. Sarah Davidson and Dr. Dan Stuart. Four years ago, they started Learn to Give, an oral surgery conference that doubles as a charity event. They aim to give back to the community they serve along with their team of contributors — The Brace Space, Stuart Davidson Orthodontics, Citadel Oral Surgery, and Bezanson Orthodontics. Since the event began, over \$100,000 has been raised for children's charities in the Halifax area.

"We all benefit when a community is happy, healthy, and strong. As residents of HRM, we will continue to do our part to make positive changes in this direction," says Dr. Davidson.

At the event, a panel of speakers share expert knowledge with participants from around the Maritimes. It's always inspirational, combining professional development and charitable giving. For the past two years, Phoenix has been a beneficiary, receiving an incredible \$30,884.



Pete's Frootique and Fine Foods finds many opportunities to support Phoenix, including hiring youth, donating food, and doing personal care item drives.

This year they sold pancakes on Shrove Tuesday with all proceeds going to Phoenix.





BRANDY

"SOMETIMES I TALK TO OTHER YOUNG PARENTS ABOUT HOW HARD IT IS TO BE A SINGLE MOM, BUT ALSO HOW BLESSED I FEEL"

When Brandy first connected with Phoenix about five years ago, going to school was a challenge.

"I used to be embarrassed in high school because I wasn't getting good grades. I skipped a lot; I was running away from math. Eventually I felt I needed to leave home, so I came to Phoenix," she says. Through Phoenix, Brandy was connected to the Phoenix Centre for Youth and got involved with the Housing Support Program and the Trusteeship Program.

"Marsha (Phoenix's Housing Support Worker) helped me find an apartment where I've been for four years now, and the trusteeship program helps me manage my bills."

She also connected to the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC) where she's received help with résumé writing, filing her taxes, and work placements. Nearly two years ago, the team at PLEC connected Brandy to Nova Scotia Community College. At NSCC, she completed an assessment to determine her academic level and prepare for post-secondary school.

"I've been going to the Cunard Learning Centre to get my levels two and three. I'll go to NSCC to get my level four. Then I want to go into nursing."

For Brandy, this academic experience is different.

"I am eager and determined to get this done. I don't miss time and I actually enjoy it. The teachers explain things differently. I used to feel worried about looking dumb, but I know I'm in a class of people who are all at the same level and are determined to learn like me. I feel smarter than I thought I was."

Since Brandy became a young mom, first to three-year-old Brooklyn ("Bumps") and then to seven-month-old Kashae ("Daddy"), her mother and the parenting support program at Phoenix have been essential for her.

"Being a young mom and going to school on a tight budget is really hard." Luckily, the Phoenix Trusteeship and Parenting programs offer assistance.

"The parenting program helps me with supports when I need them, like diapers, milk, food, and clothing. Having these things means I can spend my money on other things we need. That's a big help! Phoenix even helped me fill out a child subsidy form so I can afford child care for Kashae while I'm in school." They participate in parenting workshops as well, like the child and youth dental hygiene program in partnership with the Dalhousie School of Dental Hygiene.

Having a network of people at Phoenix has been great for Brandy and her kids, too.

"Bumps loves coming to PCFY! Everyone is so nice to her and she gets to play with the toys. She is very active and outgoing...I feel really comfortable here. Sometimes I talk to other young parents about how hard it is to be a single mom, but also how blessed I feel. Leah, the parenting support case manager, is someone I really connect with – she's my girl!"

When Brandy dreams of her future, she sees a bigger apartment with a career in nursing, an active life, going to the gym and playground, and two happy kids, fitting in and doing well in school. It's easy to picture, isn't it?



SMALL THINGS

MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE

Things that may seem small and simple can make a huge impact in a young person's life. Here are some little things that have made a big difference for youth at Phoenix...

A GYM MEMBERSHIP

A Zatzman Sportsplex Pay What You Can membership has changed the life of one youth. He uses it daily and says, “I didn’t once think about my life problems [while swimming]. It was a healthy escape, like meditation.”

A HEARTBEAT

Sometimes Phoenix staff are there for the biggest moments in a youth's life. One staff member was asked to go with a youth to a doctor's appointment. She was happy to be present when the youth heard her baby's heartbeat for the first time.

FANCY SHOES

One key worker took a youth shoe shopping for her prom and together they shared the joy of trying on pair after pair. It was a wonderful way to celebrate an incredible accomplishment.

A FIRST STEP

Sometimes young parents go to the Phoenix Centre for Youth to get supplies they need for their families, and sometimes they go to simply hang out. During one visit, the daughter of a youth took her first steps. It was a special moment for everyone there.

A SMILE

A youth who had not seen a dentist for several years was able to get much-needed dental work done. The youth said that they could now smile again without feeling self-conscious.

AN ID

Staff helped a youth gather the documents they needed for identification cards to access services. It made the youth proud to have their ID in their possession. They said it made them feel “like I actually exist.”

ENCOURAGEMENT

A youth wanted to live independently, but was struggling with anxiety, and had found living on his own challenging in the past. Staff told him about Phoenix House and took him on a tour. He realised that in this environment he would have his own space where he could focus on prioritizing school and eventually work, without having to worry about things like buying groceries. He decided to move in and is now attending school.

A GUITAR

A youth whose mental health made socializing difficult was looking for a way to express himself through music. A staff member knew of a friend who had an old guitar that belonged to his late brother. He felt his brother would want it to be used by someone who had a passion for music and was happy to donate it. Now, the youth is practicing guitar and learning to sing. He is even talking about starting a band with a friend.

RECOGNITION

A talented young artist with a disability wanted to showcase his work. Staff at Phoenix reached out to the organizer of the JRG Art Show, an annual event at City Hall that exhibits the work of artists with disabilities. They were happy to display the landscape sketches that this youth had created. He sold a piece and met other amazing artists with disabilities who inspired him.



A CARING COMMUNITY

Phoenix offers essential support to youth who are going through difficult times. One young man told the staff at Phoenix that he had not eaten in a few days. They took him to a food bank in his community. The people at the food bank were generous to him and he was incredibly grateful for the help in that difficult moment.

A CAT

A young animal lover has taken a step toward independence by getting a cat. Staff help them learn how to take care of their first pet. It is rewarding for everyone to watch the kitten grow and see the youth develop these skills. Having a pet supports the youth's health in addition to learning about responsibility.

A LISTENING EAR

A youth staying at the shelter had lost her motivation and stopped attending classes. After speaking to a member of staff about her options, she decided to transfer to a school that better met her needs. She is now excited to go to class and continue her education.

A LOAD OF GROCERIES

A family was struggling through an intensely challenging time, with the mother doing her best to juggle financial, personal, and parenting pressures with no extended family around and few supports in her life. In the middle of a particularly overwhelming week, a staff member picked up and delivered a load of groceries, a small way to acknowledge the size of her challenges, while conveying that we care and she is not alone.

A SHOWCASE

One youth recently took part in the Art Factory Program, organized by LE@P (Learn and Explore at Phoenix) and NSCAD University. Phoenix staff framed her artwork and hung it in the living room of the shelter while she was out. She says, “Participating in something I’d never done, at a time when I was at my lowest, and then having my work showcased in a space where everyone can see it is such a great feeling.”

BOOSTING YOUTH INTO CAREERS WITH PEP!

PHOENIX EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

In 2018, Phoenix was granted over two years of funding by the Government of Nova Scotia's Department of Labour and Advanced Education to help 10 youth start their careers. The funding covers relevant training and two years of wage subsidies. Ten employers came on board to provide youth with the opportunity to work in a field of their choosing, where they can build experience and skills for long-term careers. Most importantly, all the employers are committed to finding a way to keep the youth on after the project funding ends.

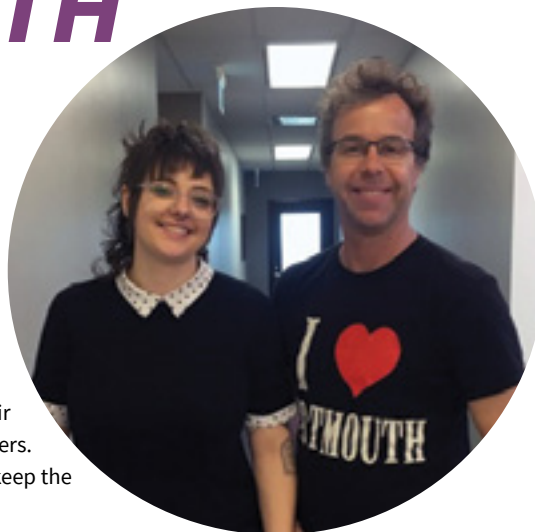
In its first nine months, the Phoenix Employment Program (PEP) has seen some incredible results! One youth has already been hired full time and others are receiving raises and promotions. Others are the learning and relationships that have formed between employers and PEP participants.

SPIDER VIDEO – CRAIG AND KATE

Craig: I'm the owner and operator of Spider Video, where the focus is on being "corporate storytellers" through video and live streaming. Before this opportunity came through PEP, I was the only employee and hired freelancers as the workload required. With the ebb and flow of production work, it was a challenge to consider bringing in a full-time employee. When I crunched the numbers with PEP support, it all made sense and I could take the risk of bringing in a member to create a team of two.

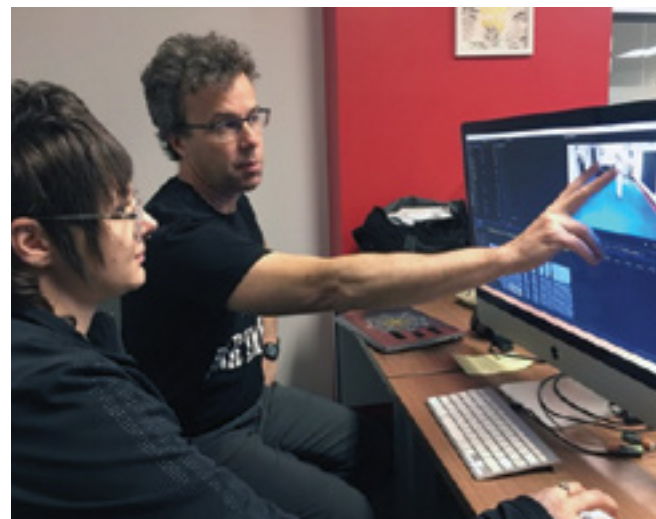
Kate: Living at one of Phoenix's Homes for Independence was huge for me. It helped me with all the pressure I was feeling. I finished NSCAD University and was wondering what to do next. I knew what I wanted to do but couldn't quite do it on my own; I wanted a job in my field, not just something to pay the bills. PEP came around at a perfect time for me.

Craig: I was even more excited to offer the chance for another NSCAD grad to work in the field. I wanted to give Kate the right opportunity to grow – this was important to me. Kate and I have different styles, which means we had a few challenges starting off in our work together. She is less conventional than I am, but I think we are a great fit because we have a similar work ethic. We're both compromising and learning from each other. Now when we're on a job people say we work together seamlessly.



Kate: I'm learning about taking direction and being in a structured environment, really for the first time. Craig has been running the business alone for 15 years. Recently he's been trusting me with more work. I'm learning about working with different types of clients and about the industry. Craig is so awesome. He can say things I might not want to hear but need to hear. He's more than a boss – he's teaching me life lessons and is very supportive of my mental health.

Craig: I used to wish I had someone I could trust to pass things off to when I'm busy. Now I have an opportunity to take on more work and do it better and faster. I needed the opportunity to get to a place I was hesitant to expand into before because of the risk involved. Now I have someone I can trust to get the work done.



YWCA – LINDSEY AND ALISHA

Lindsey: I'm the Community Programs Manager at YWCA Halifax. At the YWCA, we also offer employment programs for our clients. We saw PEP as a great opportunity for us to collaborate with another community partner, and we have specialized skills to support a young mother looking for her first employment opportunity in a field of her interest. It's a great fit.

Alisha: I've been connected to Phoenix for seven years. Recently, I felt like I was going nowhere in a circle. I was at risk of homelessness, and so were my kids, when a Phoenix staff told me about PEP. I was hands-down interested. I have always wanted to work in family and youth care. It's been my dream since I was eight years old, experiencing foster care myself.

Lindsey: Alisha was the most interested in working with youth, but until very recently, our program focus has been on families and young mothers. So, we've been giving her a wide range of experience under various programs at the YW. I think this has been helpful in showing what working in a non-profit is like. We all do a little of everything. She's been showing great initiative.

Alisha: I like that I get to do a number of things. I expected to be stuck only doing one specific thing, but I get to see all aspects of the YW and work with a lot of people in different roles. When I came in for my interview I was SO scared, but when I walked in, four people said hello to me. They were so friendly I felt it would be a good fit. Lindsey has been very understanding and accepting.



Lindsey: Hiring someone without choosing from a pool of candidates is different from what we typically do. Everyone on the team has a different style and I try to accommodate my management approach accordingly. Because we typically would hire someone with the most experience, this is a new experience for me, too. I'm learning how to helpfully manage someone who's new to work.

Alisha: Being in a structured environment is new, but good for me. I'm learning a lot about time management. I feel calmer. Some may say being a stay-at-home mom is easy, but I was always wondering how I would support my family. Now my kids have a home. Life seems easier, or at least I feel more willing and ready to take on the struggles.

Lindsey: Alisha has become an important part of the team. She is able to take and apply feedback. She's building confidence and can vocalize her needs to get the job done. Her life experience is also beneficial when we're working through things like the child care benefit.



We recognize all PEP employers who are boosting youth into life-changing careers, with coaching and support.
Thank you!

Spider Video, YWCA Halifax, 4th Generation Contracting, Stewart McKelvey, Killam Properties REIT, Metro Non-profit Housing, Coastal Restorations & Masonry, NDS Landscaping, Saint Vincent's Nursing Home.

“I'M WORKING REGULAR HOURS, MAKING AN INCOME. I'M MOVING TOWARD FINANCIAL INDEPENDANCE.”

Two years ago, Amber had a stroke that resulted in a visual impairment. Despite this new challenge, she stayed focused on getting her Business Administration Diploma at Nova Scotia Community College. After graduating, she tried finding work through other agencies before noticing the sign for the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC) on Quinpool Road.

“Because of my partial blindness, I can’t drive and needed to find work close to my place. When I first came to PLEC, I had a brief meeting about my background with the employment counsellor. These meetings got my wheels turning about where I might want to work.”

An opportunity opened for a work placement at Saint Vincent’s Nursing Home through Phoenix’s Home Depot Canada Foundation Regional Partnership Grant. It seemed perfect for Amber.

“When I first heard about the interview with Saint Vincent’s, I thought, ‘Sounds awesome! It’s right next door.’ I had a little self-doubt going into the interview, but it was a spark of hope.”

That spark grew: as her placement through the Home Depot was ending, a new opportunity opened up with the Phoenix Employment Program (PEP). Through PEP, her allowable hours per week grew from 20 to 30 in this two-year subsidized work placement.

“I’m working regular hours, making an income. I’m moving toward financial independence.”

Along with the extra hours and longer placement term came more responsibilities.

“In addition to general administrative work, including uploading documents to residents’ electronic charts and making internal transfers using Point Click Care, I’ve also started working in staffing. I take sick calls and reach out to nursing staff to fill empty shifts. I’ve also the had opportunity to sit in on a board of directors meeting to take minutes and work on several projects for the executive director and other members of the management team.”

Amber loves the opportunities to learn and is excited about the possibilities to expand in her role. It also helps that the environment is very supportive.

“I used to be very anxious. It was hard for me to leave my house, which made it hard to work. The people I work with have been so supportive. They say I’m friendly and approachable – it bleeds into the rest of my life. I’m more comfortable and confident.”

In the future, Amber sees herself staying in Halifax and working in the health care sector.

“I can see a long-term career in the health care sector, over time moving into a higher administration role. I’m also passionate about video games and technology and would love to learn how to code so I can work on some personal projects. I’d also like to volunteer at Phoenix.”

“When I first came to Phoenix, I was a little directionless. To anyone like me who felt lost and hopeless... It’s never hopeless. There are people and programs out there to help. I don’t know what I’d be doing right now without support from Phoenix. Good things happen.”

AMBER



COMMUNITY KINDNESS INTO ACTION

31-DAY DIP

In January 2019 childhood friends Koko McNeill, Sid Fraser, and Mitchell Hippern were inspired to take on a challenge that would benefit youth living with mental health issues. For 31 days straight, in rain, snow, and sleet, they took a dip in freezing cold waters all over Halifax.

Having lived with mental health issues themselves, they chose Phoenix because of the help it provides other youth who are coping with the same challenges.

"I've struggled with my own mental health, so I've wanted to do something to support mental health for a long time, I just didn't know how or what," says Koko. "My friend Sid suggested we do a polar dip every day for a month as a fundraiser. We picked Phoenix because I thought many youth dealt with mental health challenges and the staff offer important support and resources."

They had three goals: to raise funds for Phoenix, to reduce the stigma surrounding mental health, and to continue the conversation about the importance of mental health. The support from their community was even greater than expected, with some even joining them in the water. The trio broke their fundraising goal of \$10,000, bringing in over \$13,000 for Phoenix.

PANCAKE SUPPER

The Social Action Committee of St. Andrew's United Church holds an annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper in support of Phoenix. For three years, the event has brought people from the community together with members of the church to celebrate and reflect. As our close neighbour, the church has a strong relationship with Phoenix. Their delicious pancakes have helped raise over \$1,800 to support youth in the community.



ATLANTIC DRAG STAR

Kings, queens, and non-binary performers competed for the crown of Atlantic Drag Star during Pride Week in July 2018. Vlad Snytkin, owner and operator of clubCOUTURE, began this spectacular annual event to support Phoenix. clubCOUTURE is a homegrown showcase of Haligonian, Canadian, and international artists, featuring DJs, dancers, drag queens, entertainers and performers. Fourteen performers competed for the ten spots in the event. Part of the selection process was to raise funds for Phoenix through pledges, with the top fundraiser securing a spot in the competition. In total, \$7,910 was raised for Phoenix.

Glitter Gary hosted the event, with Cathy Jones, Jeremy Webb, and Ginger Minge judging the competition. Congratulations to the winner of the 2018 Atlantic Drag Star crown, Kristi Davidson. We look forward to seeing Kristi host the event in July 2019.

HIT THE DECK

After a short hiatus, Adam Bowes, coordinator of Hit the Deck from 2013 to 2015 brought this energetic, third-party fundraiser back in partnership with Giant Halifax. Participants gathered pledges to cycle for eight hours straight. On a cold February day, the cyclists spun on stationary bikes outside the store, facing the wind coming off Citadel Hill to fulfil their commitment to Phoenix. In total, they raised \$4,235.



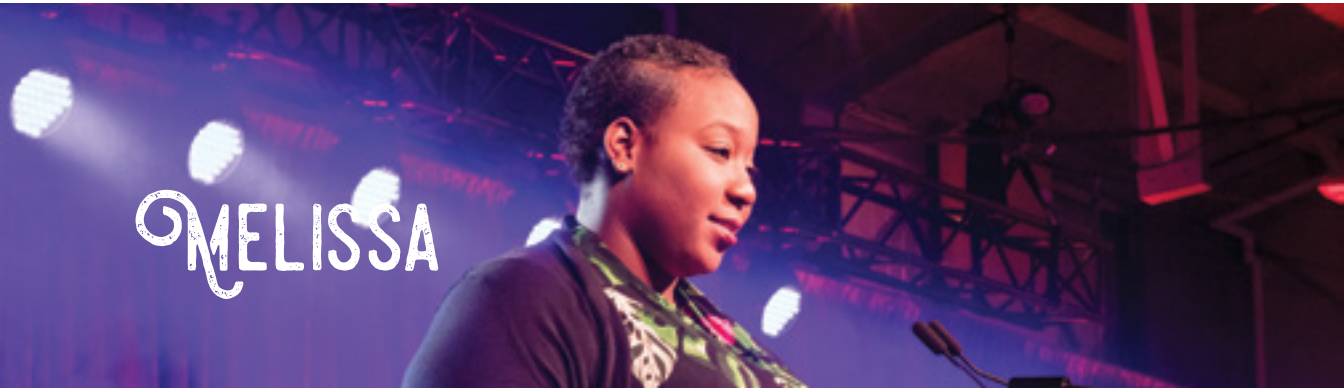
Participants in Atlantic Drag Star walked with Phoenix in the Pride Parade. Together, we won the award for "Best Walking Entry."



MOMENTS OF GREAT SIGNIFICANCE

Phoenix’s signature events, Dreamscape and the Holiday Luncheon, always offer something new and spectacular. These events raise funds for the program areas of greatest need at Phoenix, and year after year, they get bigger. They are also a platform for youth to share their stories.

This year youth Melissa and Lawrence bravely spoke from the heart, captivating nearly 1,500 guests at the two events.



“I grew up in Jamaica and had never left before moving to Halifax... While in my room one day my mom walked up to me and said, “Melissa, you will be moving to Canada.” This was exactly two days before she had planned to leave with me...

“After three months of helping me settle here, my mother had to return home for her job. She had to leave me with my young son, Melique.

“Throughout this phase, my high school principal saw me struggling, and referred me to a Phoenix outreach worker, Alana. Alana was respectful of the fact that I didn’t know her, and I was not comfortable and ready to open up to her straight away. She worked with me though, and most importantly, she took the time to get to know me. Soon after, she got to know my son.

“If you were to ask me why I came to Canada or why I chose to redirect my life, I don’t think I could give you a straight answer. What I can say is that Phoenix played a major role with the changes I’ve made in my life. They fed me when I was hungry, clothed me when I was cold, and listened to me when I was scared and alone. They encouraged me, and impacted me in a way I never saw possible.”



This year Phoenix’s two signature events raised \$445,056

Our cost to support one youth per day is \$12.50. Financial support is vital.

 **85% OF YOUTH SURVEYED SAY PHOENIX HELPS INCREASE THEIR SENSE OF STABILITY IN THEIR LIVES.**



“It all started when I was 16. My father had recently separated from my stepmother, so she was tasked with raising and providing for my three siblings and me. As you can surely imagine, that’s no small task for an unemployed person.”

“I was informed that I would have to move to a shelter for youth called Phoenix. I knew nothing about this program or even what a shelter was. I arrived at the shelter in mid-July with nothing but a bag of clothes and a heavy heart. I had no idea what to expect.”

“It wasn’t long before I moved to Phoenix House, just before starting tenth grade... I also took advantage of the services offered by the Phoenix Learning and Employment Center. I ended up getting a part time job at a grocery store as a cashier.”

“After about a year, I was referred to a different program within Phoenix. It was their Supervised Apartment Program, now called Phoenix Homes for Independence. This was my favorite program because it encouraged independent living with less supervision, which I craved.”

“I honestly don’t know where I would be today without all the help and guidance I received from Phoenix’s various programs and staff. They helped instill confidence where there wasn’t much, and they made me feel like I had something important to contribute to the world.”



Holiday Luncheon Committee Members
Left to right: Kim Machum (2018 co-chair), Karen Bezanson, Carol Chipman, Shawn Hirtle, Lisa Rounsefell, Joanna Zed
Missing from photo: Stewart Robinson (2018 co-chair), Colleen Keyes (2019 co-chair), Karen Wentzell, Krista Dempsey, Miriam Regan, Pearleen Moffard

KIM MACHUM ON THREE YEARS AS PHOENIX HOLIDAY LUNCHEON CO-CHAIR

What inspires you about the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon?

The overwhelming feeling of community and how so many people are motivated to help empower and support youth.

How do you encourage others to give to this special event?

Most of these youth are facing circumstances that they haven't created. They haven't lived enough life to have the wisdom or experience to guide them. To give our support makes our community stronger. Just watching the youth find that determination within them to achieve is so inspiring!

What’s the biggest takeaway from your time as co-chair of The PHL Planning Committee?

It's both fun and fulfilling to work alongside a dedicated group who all share the same motivation. Great things are accomplished when varying ideas and experiences are brought to the table.

"I'VE LEARNED MORE ABOUT WHAT I WANT AND WHAT I LIKE — NOW I KNOW WHAT I WANT OUT OF LIFE."

Shawn's desire to help a friend first brought him to Phoenix three and a half years ago.

"I researched options and found Phoenix," he says. "I didn't know much about Phoenix but thought, 'this place looks alright.' I went with her to the holiday youth party that year, and about six months later, I decided it was best to leave home because of family struggles that couldn't get resolved without putting some space between us, and I went to the shelter too."

Shawn needed permanent housing and a job, and he connected with the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre and the Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY).

"One time I went to PCFY to get bus tickets. Three different workers said they were my key worker and all wanted to help! It was funny and made me feel good."

Shawn has been living at Phoenix House for about two years now. He's gaining new skills and getting to know himself.

"Now I have more freedom of choice. I understand myself more and have friends and relationships. I've learned about my interests and that I'm good at things like cooking and sewing. I can be really resourceful. I always could cook, and as a diabetic it is important to me to eat healthy, but I didn't have access to many ingredients before Phoenix. Now, my diabetes is under control."

Food is becoming another passion of Shawn's. Through Phoenix, he has volunteered at the

North Dartmouth Community Food Centre and Soul's Harbour Kitchen. He also works in the deli department at a local grocery store.

"They say the deli is the hardest job there. I got used to it so fast – I can handle anything."

"I feel more confident. Before, I felt caged in. I still keep my feelings to myself, but I do feel more open and less timid. I'm a lot more talkative and willing to go out and do something new and get to know myself even more."

Shawn is now looking into participating in Phoenix's Housing Support Program, which will allow him to move out on his own.

"I've been buying bits and pieces of kitchen stuff. I want to get my own place and be able to create my own clean kitchen to work in."

This summer, Shawn is looking forward to being a counsellor at a diabetes camp for the second year. After that, he sees his passion for cooking becoming a career.

"I want to start NSCC's Culinary Arts course in the fall and work in a professional kitchen. Ten years from now, I'd like to have my own diabetic-friendly family restaurant. I see myself starting a family with a partner and spending our lives together. The only thing I knew for sure as a young kid was that I wanted to grow up to be a respectable and loving father. Because of having support, I've learned more about what I want and what I like – now know what I want out of life."

SHAWN



YOUR SUPPORT PROPELS US

A MESSAGE FROM ELIZABETH AND TIM

We hope you’ve enjoyed learning about the impact Phoenix has had over this past year, thanks to your incredible support.

Every year we are encouraged by the dedication of our staff, the strides youth and families make, and the commitment of our community. You enable us to work one-on-one with people, building trusting relationships that create opportunities to grow and aspire. At the beginning of this report, former youth Jennifer passionately shared what support from community meant for her and continues to mean for all Phoenix youth.

While youth and families dream big, we are dreaming along with them. Every day we listen and we learn about supports that are needed to better change the trajectory of young lives. Our developing strategic plan is laying out a path for us to build up and out, while maintaining the current work that we are very proud of and privileged to do. Our sights are set on doing even more for youth, families and the communities with whom we are engaged. We hope you will continue to walk with us as we step into this exciting journey – because youth matter!

We are grateful for your support.

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PHOENIX ASPIRES

NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

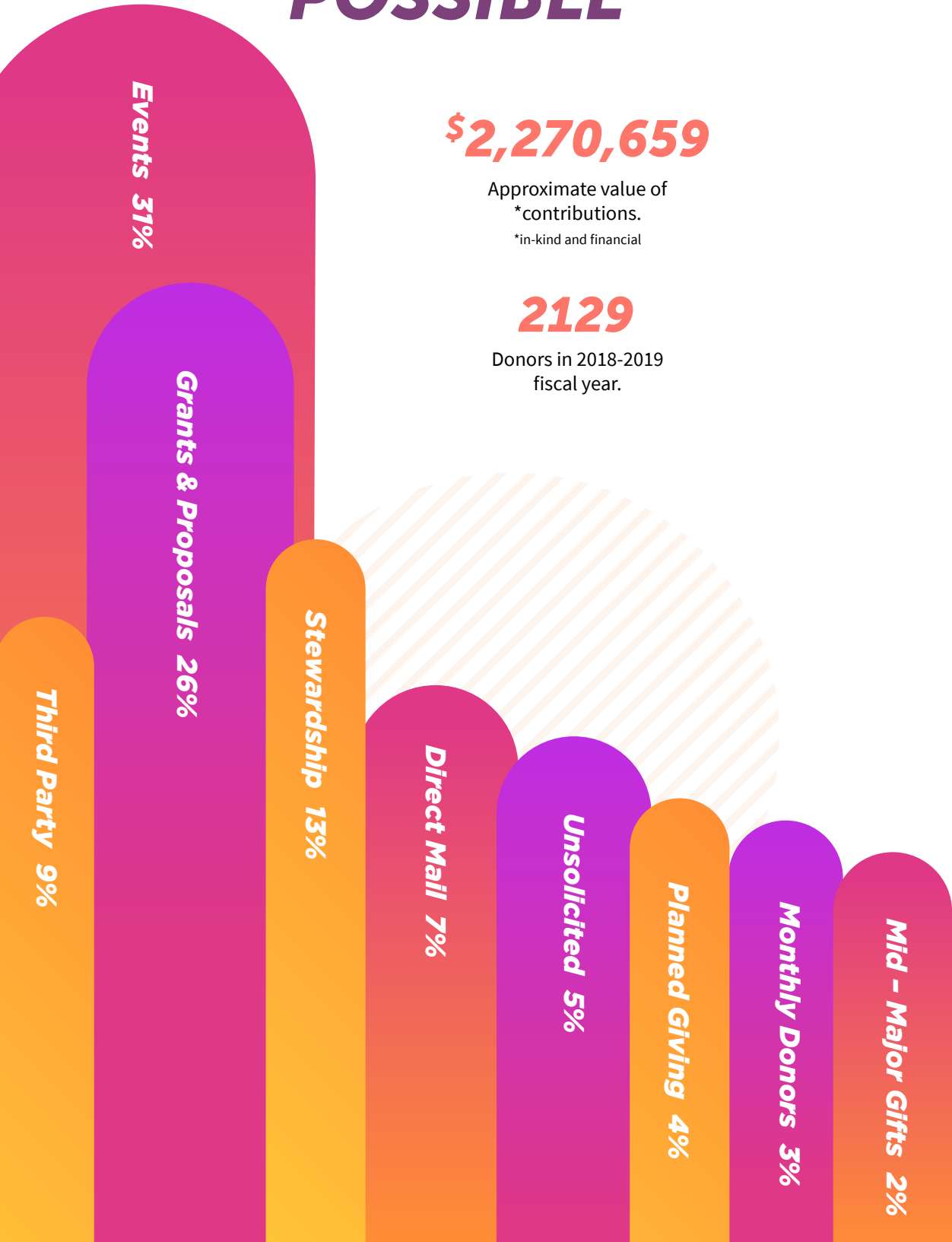
Phoenix is creating a new strategic plan. To ensure our best path forward, we have engaged the youth, families, and communities we serve. In addition, staff at all levels of the agency, volunteers, and board members, have had input. We reviewed relevant literature, researching promising practices and important lessons from other regions. We know that mental health supports and systemic issues like poverty and discrimination are highly relevant and will be addressed through much of the work we seek to achieve. We will move on the four strategic directions outlined below, stay true to our principles of social justice, and continue to be guided by the social determinants of health. We look forward to making more of our plan available when it is fully developed in the fall of 2019.

OUR DIRECTIONS



Thank you for all your support as we work to provide the most impactful services for youth, families, and communities!

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83% OF YOUTH SURVEYED SAY PHOENIX INCREASES THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING.

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Production of this report was made possible by generous contributions of friends of Phoenix.

Concept & design: Amy Corbett
Editing & wordsmithing: Watkins Campbell Communications
Photos of youth: Kelly Clark Photography
Print production: Bounty Print
Photos of youth speakers at events: Michelle Doucette Photography



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