YOUTH PASSAGEWAYS
2021 REPORT: strengthening the spiral
the wash
(ghosts on the land),

We are now ghosts on this land
who did a lot of leaning in, once throwing
our insecurities into a sump, learning we
are not the sum of our parts, nor the gear
we brought to
settle down, and pass,
and for some of us,
not to pass, to do so
unsurveilled.

The wind used to slap us around, having
felt wholly ceremonially ignored,
jealous of its firey children,
not ever having us without a prayer.

It passes through us now, cutting us
into the clay and sandstone beneath our
mountain elder faces, having once
cradled our cracking, city skins.

In ghost council,
we call in all who could not make it,
 aloud, knowing they will hear us.
Once living the art of dying
across from Little Tibet,
our cream cheese mountains,
chilly fingers twisting gang gang with the
stars, We were not the type to plateau,
we reached, never tolerating injustice,
or intolerance.

I AM,
we claimed something bigger than ourselves,
put our egos in check,
WE ARE,
we claimed togetherness, collective
belongingness, thou art, or WE BE,
we live in the work and the work lives through
us, we be to justice like key be to lock

the workers of the Four Shields, the medicine
wheel,
the seven directions,
the five elements,

keeping each other alive in the kitchen this
alchemy, this trust.

Once them heavy people, them heavy
conversations was a necessity
was a must.

we rest together now.
we move gracefully through conflict.
we ward away any repetition of violence, we
ward away any repetition of violence, we
ward away any repetition of violence.

reverberating in screams, in tumbling rocks,
in half-bowlin knots,
in being pushed,
in whistling air, in total silence, in downloads,
in cameos,

in dreams,
in greywater,
in compost piles,
in spell circles,
clay, and
dust, and
salt,
in skat,
in broken cell phones,
those once Scamazon folk,
those once praying people.
we the landscape of a new epoch.
we are ancestors now.

J. nyla (INK) mcneill
recent graduate of The FIRE Fellowship
find their work on Patreon, Su
stack, and Bandcamp with new, pow
erful collaborative art, audio, music,
or writings each week.
https://inktree.ml/mjvn
The mission of YPW is to help regenerate healthy passageways into mature adulthood for today’s youth.

Youth Passageways is first and foremost a prayer and a dream that ALL youth are supported, loved, and nourished on their path to adulthood, able to bring forth their unique gifts and a sense of belonging as part of healthy, healing, self-determining communities.

Within Youth Passageways, this looks like a multi-racial, multi-cultural, multi-gender, and intergenerational network of partners working to support young people in becoming healthy adults. Our more than 170 partners are carrying some form of this vision – dismantling systems that hurt our young people, and rebuilding and co-creating culture one young person, one family, one community at a time.

Youth Passageways centers the voices and emergent needs of our partners who are directly addressing ongoing injustices like youth incarceration and institutionalization, violence and discrimination, wealth inequality, colonialism, ecological devastation, and more.

We have learned that decolonization, reparations, cultural reclamation, and reconciliation are essential to our collective work, and actively listen for how we can further these aims.

**WE SUPPORT OUR DIVERSE PARTNERSHIPS THROUGH:**

- **SHARING RESOURCES**
  to grow our network’s capacity to nurture youth on the path to adulthood

- **CONNECTING PEOPLE**
  to communities and practices to meet their unique needs

- **HOSTING SPACES**
  where people can learn together and build relationships across differences.

Creating pathways of wholeness, love, and liberation for all youth ensures that no one is criminalized, isolated or abandoned.

While it will take generations to heal from the impacts of systems of oppression, and restore the health of our people and world, every young person held well is another strong seed for our shared futures.

While our strategies continue to evolve, our prayers and commitment to one another hold steady.

**LEARN MORE BY REACHING OUT OR FINDING US ON THE WEB**

PO BOX 46831 KC, KS 66188  |  www.youthpassageways.org  |  INFO@YOUTHPASSAGeways.ORG
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As of December 2021

**BUFFALO VISIONS**
Acting as passthrough for digital platform fundraising; making funds accessible, dispersing upon request, supporting efforts to hold gatherings and youth cultural camps.

**QUEER NATURE**
Provide ongoing fiscal sponsorship.

**ALL NATIONS GATHERING CENTER**
Tending to the ongoing ‘alliance’ formed during the 2018 gathering and exploring next steps, supporting in grant writing and web development.

**LOVE YOUR NATURE**
Ongoing fiscal sponsorship and support with HR and administrative systems.

**EVER FORWARD CLUB**
Ongoing fiscal sponsorship, HR and administrative support, program and project development support.

**RITE OF PASSAGE JOURNEYS**
Provided a board and staff ECC initial training and consultation; Transformative Justice and Repair Work, Spring 2021. Provided an open enrollment ECC program: Untangling the Threads of the Past, Spring 2021.

**THE OJAI FOUNDATION**
Co-sponsor and co-guides for The FIRE Fellowship, currently co-developing Re-Calling our Ancestors, a new program launching soon, participating in the Council & Social Equity project.

**RITES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

**FIERCE ALLIES**
Providing fiscal sponsorship, acting as thought partner in the development of the Centering Justice Project.

**CIRCLE WAYS**
Working in partnership to rethink language of services, as well as total overhaul of branding, website and various merchandise offerings.

**UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO**
Partnering with faculty at University of San Francisco, Dominican University of California, and Naropa University to conduct research on the impacts of rites of passage on health outcomes in young people.

**WILDERNESS AWARENESS SCHOOL**
Conduct annual “Power & Privilege in Nature Connection” workshop with their Adult 9-Month Immersion program since ECC began in 2019.
Youth Passageways entered 2021 feeling the impacts of 2020, a year which highlighted the resilience of our partners and Youth Passageways as a whole, yet left many of us, our communities, and our projects under-resourced and deeply frayed. Youth Passageways certainly entered 2021 worn around the edges.

As we listened for what was next, it was clear that Youth Passageways needed a season of renewal. We invited financial support from the wider network to allow space to tend to essentials only; focusing on rest, renewal, and making space for new growth to emerge.

Given the disproportionate impacts of COVID, police violence, and other events of 2021 on Black and Brown communities, white leaders in Youth Passageways asked white-led partner organizations, and white members of the community to provide the financial support needed for this season of renewal. The community responded with our most successful fundraising campaign to date, sharing resources that supported the center through the winter. We extend our deepest gratitude for those of you who participated in this community upwelling of support!

As we re-emerged in the springtime, we moved slowly, practicing moving at what adrienne maree brown calls “the speed of trust,” as we brought on an additional part-time staff member, Katheryne Lewis. The staff and Stewardship Council created Youth Passageways Pathway for the Next Cycle, a picture of what we know of our priorities and goals through 2022 and beyond.

All along the way, a picture has come into focus, of how Youth Passageways truly serves our partners: directly, through relationship and collaboration. We are witnessing many of the founding impulses of Youth Passageways take shape through direct requests from partners, collaborators, academic researchers, schools, communities, and individuals. The majority of our energy goes towards tending these collaborations (see page 4).

Even as our energy flows outward toward collaborations, we continue to nourish and tend the center. At Youth Passageways, those of us tending the center are continually practicing ways to repair harm and dismantle systems of oppression, inner and outer, at all levels of our work, as we bring forth practices that support healing, love, and regeneration.
Some of the flowers and fruits of 2021 have been:

Completing the inaugural year of the FIRE Fellowship (in partnership with The Ojai Foundation), an immersive learning journey for young leaders working on the frontlines of social change, designed to weave together spirituality, social justice, nature connection, and leadership for relevant action, serving 13 fellows from across the Los Angeles area. As we listen for what’s next with FIRE, Youth Passageways continues collaboration with The Ojai Foundation on two separate projects, the Council & Social Equity Project and Re-Calling our Ancestors.

Partnering with faculty at University of San Francisco (School of Nursing Public Health Department and Environmental Studies Department), Dominican University of California (Global Public Health Department), and Naropa University (Interdisciplinary Studies) to conduct research on the impacts of rites of passage on health outcomes in young people, and develop a long-term research strategy to serve our partners and impact policy and funding priorities in ways that meet the needs of young people, families, and community.

Providing fiscal sponsorship and administrative assistance for 5 organizations and initiatives, predominantly Queer, Black, and/or Indigenous-led projects. Putting relationship first, we’ve gone beyond offering a transactional service to providing the infrastructure support needed for partners to focus on the work on the ground in their communities. We consistently receive feedback that the way we work with money, and support others in doing as well, creates healing for all involved. This is part of the larger dream of the network, and we are excited to see it being fulfilled.

Building forms of economic redistribution in our diverse network, facilitating resource flow towards Black, Indigenous, and Queer community members, both as mutual aid and as compensation for work that is often unpaid/undervalued.
Bringing on Katheryne Lewis as a part-time Special Projects Coordinator, strengthening our partner tending capacity and our overall operations:

I was first introduced to YPW through a mentor during my time in Hawaii, hearing briefly of the efforts they put forth in connecting community leaders in practices of self-initiation. A couple of years passed before I was able to come in a bit closer and witness the uniquely thoughtful processes at one of their annual gatherings. As someone who often finds herself as either the only or one of very few people holding intersecting minoritized identities, it felt incredibly special to step into a community where many of my core values were present from the lenses of people from all walks of life. At the end of that weekend, I knew I was called to step in closer to YPW.

-Katheryne Lewis

Continuing to develop the Youth Passageways Education and Consulting Collective (ECC) including providing training and consulting to partner organizations; one-on-one mentoring with clients seeking transition support, strengthening trust and systems for the existing team while moving towards inviting new members of the collective; further clarifying our protocols regarding money and compensation, and initiating a ‘peer mentoring circle’ practice.

Supporting the groundwork for a newly-emerging podcast series, Rites of Decolonization, produced by Sobey Wing. This podcast by and for People of the Global Majority is fruit from seeds sown by Youth Passageways, and the culture-bearer work of Kathara Pilipino Indigenous Arts Society, inspired by Greenhouse Theater’s Future is Ritual project. Here’s how Sobey describes the emerging project:

The intention of this podcast is to expand awareness of the global efforts to renew initiatory rites of passage to societies around the world that have been historically disrupted from their Indigenous practices. Bridging the divide between people of their homelands and the diaspora, this is an emergent strategy to make use of the pandemic to give rise to a future that has understood the past well enough not to perpetuate its harms. With analysis we make movement towards holding change with mutual aid, reparations grounded in ceremony.

-Sobey Wing
Along the way, here are some of the learnings we’ve been integrating while living into our four core values of Kinship, Unity, & Interconnection; Equity, Solidarity, & Justice; Relationship with Time & Place; and Leadership as Loving Service:

Compassionately pacing ourselves through illness, death of close family or community members, and other losses experienced by members of the Youth Passageways’ leadership: Many members of our leadership experience health challenges (50% of our Stewardship Council identify as persons with disabilities). Some lost multiple close family and/or community members over the last year. Others faced housing instability, wildfire threat, and more. As a network committed to relationships first, and putting humans before “productivity,” we are continuing to learn about how to show up for one another and not stretch beyond individual and collective capacity.

Finding ways to gather virtually, discerning what is and isn’t possible, and understanding how current limitations to gather in person impact social cohesion: We haven’t gathered in person since November 2019. Since Youth Passageways’ founding, our work has been primarily remote. In some ways, this made it easier to adjust to COVID limitations. Yet we have always relied, as a community coming together across differences, in our ability to build relationships through practices less possible on screens. Gathering in person is a significant priority for 2022.

Finding our way in this moment of massive cultural reckoning: YPW is a crossroads between generations, cultures, races, genders, nations, and more. Amid the complexities of compounded trauma, systemic oppression, intersecting realities, and climate crisis—to name just a few—we continue to learn about what it means to serve our partners, on behalf of all youth. We continue to work with commitment and care, creating the culture of justice and love that we want to see blossom in the world, within our own organization. We are diligently asking ourselves how to dismantle the supremacy culture that we unconsciously continue to manifest, even as we heal.
Navigating leadership transitions: The changes in leadership we experienced in 2020 were significant enough that their reverberations continue to be felt throughout 2021, even as new leadership and support found its way toward the network’s center. As a network committed to spiral leadership, we continue to grapple with how to be with authority, decision-making, and accountability. Key questions we’ve been holding include: How does Youth Passageway ensure that decision-making systems are consistent with the commitment to holding the most vulnerable members of our circle at the center? How do we hold ourselves and one another accountable, reflecting our best intentions, without reproducing cultural patterns of disposability and punishment?

Dismantling internalized supremacy and healing our interpersonal relationships: As we look at our organizational structure and ‘Spiral Leadership’ we acknowledge the relationship between how we organize and how we feel and treat each other in our collaborations. In the beginning of 2021 a group of white leaders in staff and volunteer positions initiated a white caucus space intended for anti-racism study and growing accountability. As interpersonal challenges emerge within our work together, we recognize that these patterns have deep systemic roots which play out within both Youth Passageway and the wider cultures of which we are a part. We continue to tend to harm and unravel these patterns while simultaneously moving forward together. We have sought out skilled outside facilitation to bring deeper awareness to our positionality and intersectionality.

2021 YPW Spiral Leadership Call
LOOKING FORWARD TO 2022

As part of our work in spring and summer of 2021, we put forth Youth Passageways’ Pathway for the Next Cycle, our roadmap through 2022. As we created that plan, we identified these guiding questions to inform our next steps:

**GUIDING QUESTIONS**

How do we make what we do & how we do it
- as uncomplicated as possible? *(simplicity)*
- realistic about our purpose and capacity? *(humility)*
- available to as many people as possible? *(accessibility)*
- part of repairing wrongs and injustices? *(reparations)*
- part of returning of lands and lifeways? *(rematriation)*

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As we continue to make progress towards the goals and priorities outlined in that plan, here are significant next steps we see:

- **Building more accessible tools of engagement for new and existing partners.**
- **Our biggest priority is following through on our commitments to our partners, tending especially to existing collaborations with partners.**
- **Launching Rites of Decolonization, a podcast specifically by and for BIPOC members of our community.**
- **Hosting an in-person gathering for members of our community for the first time since 2019.**
- **Engaging support for the leadership of Youth Passageways to tend to intra- and interpersonal healing and conflict repair, toward the next iteration of our spiral leadership system.**
- **Engaging in a strategic planning process, helping us to think beyond one of 2 or even 5 years, and towards the hundred-year picture of where**

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*Many of the so-called ‘skills’ taught in the fields of nature connection and ancestral arts are not skills — these are lifeways — Indigenous, multi-species pedagogy for time immemorial. We have the right to access and reclaim our lifeways. *—Pamela Sinopoulos-Lloyd*
Since the inception of Youth Passageways, the prayer for healing and transforming our ways with money has been central, watered by our Guardians Gigi Coyle and Orland Bishop among others (see our way with money here). Early on we were gifted with funders who provided foundational support. Over the last years, we have been working to widen our base of support and share responsibility for finding financial partners. We also extended our financial risk, as we stretched ourselves to grow our capacity. This meant that we ended 2019 with approximately $30,000 in debt.

2020 saw Youth Passageways regain financial ground as new sources of revenue allowed the organization to meet financial obligations and pay back some of the debt, while shifts in leadership and reduced expenses due to the pandemic decreased expenses. The year also saw us stretch into new ways of prayers for healing through economic redistribution efforts to Black and Indigenous led projects, and/or Black and Indigenous leaders directly.

These efforts at redistribution and solidarity funding have continued in 2021. Some specific manifestations of this include: engaging in fundraising for Youth Passageways’ central operations while simultaneously inviting contributions for BIPOC-led Solidarity Partners; providing services for lower fees for Black and Indigenous-led efforts; and offering higher take-home percentages for BIPOC members of the Education and Consulting Collective.

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*Finance & Flow*  
*Edgar Villanueva*  
Author and social justice philanthropy expert

> Money is like water. Water can be a precious life-giving resource. But what happens when water is dammed, or when a water cannon is fired on protestors in subzero temperatures? Money should be a tool of love, to facilitate relationships, to help us thrive, rather than to hurt and divide us. If it’s used for sacred, life-giving, restorative purposes, it can be medicine. Money, used as medicine, can help us decolonize.

- Edgar Villanueva

*BUFFALO VISIONS, LAME DEER, MT*
This last year has also provided continued economic stabilization. Youth Passageways’ sources of financial revenue continue to diversify, decreasing our dependence on any one service or member of our community. The circle holding fundraising for the organization is growing, while fee-for-service services provided by the organization continue to broaden. This includes income from practitioners developing the Education and Consulting Collective. This has allowed Youth Passageways to continue to pay down our debt; $3,764 remains as we begin 2022.

And, our financial position continues to feel unsustainable: staff positions remain part-time without benefits, pay scales are below what is needed to provide for working families and haven’t been adjusted for inflation, and we continue to operate without cash reserves. How to make adjustments to address these issues is part of our work ahead!

The proliferation of fiscal sponsorship within Youth Passageways has required big shifts to our systems of accounting; the information provided here does not speak to revenue and expenses of Queer Nature, Ever Forward Club, Fierce Allies’ Centering Justice Project, and Love Your Nature, and others, all sovereign projects (some with their own LLC designation) housed under Youth Passageways’ 501(c)3 tax designation. These projects are powerful organizations and projects in their own right; including them in Youth Passageways’ revenue (as we do when we file our tax forms) means that $752,178 moved through Youth Passageways’ bank accounts between January 1-December 31, 2021.

![2021 Revenue by Source](image)

**2021 ACTUAL NUMBERS**

**Revenue**

- Contributions & Grants: $70,536
- Program Revenue: $60,644
- Misc Revenue: $6
- Total Revenue: $131,186

**Expenses**

- Program: $67,270
- Administration: $32,651
- Fundraising: $7,745
- Total Expenses: $107,666

**Net** $23,520
Thank You From Youth Passageways!

Thank you to our donors, volunteers during this year of renewal and re-emergence, as well as those who have provided foundational support.

Volunteers

LIA BENTLEY
ORLAND BISHOP
HUBERT BLACKWOLF
SHARON BLACKWOLF
DAVID BLUMENKRANTZ
ASHANTI BRANCH
MARISA TABORGA BYRNE
JETT CAZEAUX
DALLAS CHIEF EAGLE
REBECCA CHIEF EAGLE
GIGI COYLE
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KRUTI PAREKH
RAMON PARISH
SHLOMO PESACH
TEENA PUGLIESE
LUIÍS RODRÍGUEZ
SHAY SLOAN
TREE WILLARD
SOBEY WING
CAMERON WITHEY

Donors

CASCADES
THOSE WHO GAVE $1000+ WITHIN 1 YEAR.

GRANT & TINA ABERT
GIGI COYLE & WIN PHELPS
KRYSTYNA JURZYKOWSKI – IN HONOR OF SYLVIA SILVIA BELGARDT
TIDES FOUNDATION
ROGER & MARGOT MILLIKEN
JOE PROVISOR
ANDREW SHAPIRO
WILD MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS RETREATS
EARTHWAYS FOUNDATION
ABRAHAM LATEINER
FRANK PHOENIX FENWICK FOUNDATION
JUSTINE EPSTEIN
ANONYMOUS

SUSTAINING FLOW
THOSE WHO GAVE $500+ WITHIN 1 YEAR.

MICHAEL WITHEY – IN HONOR OF CAMERON WITHEY AND MARISA WITHEY BYRNE
ANONYMOUS
REIKES FOUNDATION – MATCH FOR PAM ASTROF
ANONYMOUS
JOSHUA GORMAN
MICHAEL MCGEE SARAH BLECHMAN
ORLAND BISHOP

SYSTEMS FOR MUTUAL SUPPORT:

A special shoutout to those who have been part of building of Youth Passageways’ fee for service offerings. This includes both organizations and individuals; our fiscal sponsees and our Educational and Consulting Collective Members.

BUFFALO VISIONS YOUTH CAMP
EVER FORWARD CLUB/SIEMPRE ADELANTE
FIERCE ALLIES CENTERING JUSTICE PROJECT
LOVE YOUR NATURE
QUEER NATURE

JETT CAZEAUX
SIRI GUNNARSON
DARCY OTTEY
KRUTI PAREKH
RAMON PARISH

CLEMENT WILSON
SOBEY WING
DANE ZAHORSKY
Donors Continued

STEADY BROOK
THOSE WHO GAVE ON A MONTHLY BASIS AT ANY AMOUNT.

JAMES BAILON
IRIS BRILLIANT
JETT CAZAUX & ANGUS BAGUINHO – IN HONOR OF QUEER TRANS YOUTH
BEIT GORSKI – IN MEMORY OF LESLIE FEINBERG
EDITH KUSNIC – IN MEMORY OF STAN CROW
ABRAHAM LATEINER
KATHERYNE LEWIS
TREE WILLIARD
TEENA PUGLIESE
ANNA ZELINKSY
KRUTI PAREKH – IN HONOR OF REDIN CUBAS
ANONYMOUS
KARI STETTLER
NICKY WILKS – IN MEMORY OF ROMEO DANIELS MY LITTLE CUZ
KIRSTEN WESTBY – IN MEMORY OF ANSON CREDILLE
KATELYN CROSSLEY
SIRI GUNNARSON
DANE ZAHORSKY

WELLSPRING
NEW DONORS WHO GAVE THROUGH EVENTS OR SOCIAL MEDIA.

ANONYMOUS
MARY ANN
VALORIE WALLACE
GINNY MUIR
GRENARD MADRIGAL
RACHEL L
KURT KUTAY
ROBINSON EATON
ANNE KUTAY
TRACI BROWN
ONNA JAEGGER

RIVER DELTA
THOSE WHO GAVE BETWEEN $1 - $99 WITHIN ONE YEAR.

KATIE AKERS
SOLOMON BOTWICK– REIS
MALLORY CLARKE
ERIN SELOVER
KRISTEN HENSHAW
TESS HOWELL
NICO KLAIDIS
ANONYMOUS
BETSY PERRUSS
DARCY OTTEY
NINE PASSAGES
MARC ROSNER
WILL SCOTT
ELRIC CENTER
ALEXANDRA SILVESTRU – FOR ALL OF OUR ANCESTORS AND TO THE ANCESTORS TO BE

STRONG CURRENT
THOSE WHO GAVE $500+ WITHIN 1 YEAR.

LISA KUBIAK – IN MEMORY OF FRANK H. KUBIAK
PETRA LENTZ–SNOW
TEENA PUGLIESE – IN MEMORY OF MILES ALLARD
SHAY SLOAN BRENDA
ANONYMOUS
DAVE TALAMO / WAS STAFF
PAM ASTROF – IN HONOR OF TAREK KUTAY
JACK ZIMMERMAN
ROB MELTZER – IN HONOR OF KAREN MELTZER
CAROL LEWIS
LEVITICUS LEWIS – IN MEMORY OF LEVITICUS LEWIS, SR.
JOHN & MARCIA GUNNARSON
ROSE WOLF
BEAU LEONHART & JAMES SHIPMAN
MEREDITH LITTLE FOSTER
KYLIE LOYD
WARREN MOON
RALPH MOSKOWITZ
CAMERON & MARISA WITHEY BYRNE – IN MEMORY OF REDIN CUBAS
SUZANNE CAROL OLSEN
RHODA WALTER
ERIC SPIEGEL
BILL PLOTKIN

Thank You From YPW!
What we are able to accomplish is a direct result of what resources (financial, relational, spiritual, ecological, and more) are available to us. We invite you to join us in support of the long-term dream of a diverse, intergenerational global network of partners supporting youth in becoming healthy adults, rooted in belonging and connected to their gifts. Here are some of the ways you can help:

**TIME**
There are eleven core activities/goals where we are focusing our energy at this time. Each of these activities is served by additional supportive minds, hearts, and hands. If any of these activities is of interest to you or matches with your skill set, or if you’d like to learn more generally, please reach out to info@youthpassageways.org

**RELATIONSHIP**
Youth Passageways are evolving organically, through relationships. If there is someone who would be served by being connected with the network, or you believe could serve the long-term prayer we are holding, please build the bridge!

**MONEY**
We are working to raise $30,000 between now and the new moon of January 30th to support our operations in this coming season. This will allow us to tend the roots of Youth Passageways, as well as sow seeds for this next cycle.

It costs approximately $12,000 a month to support Youth Passageways operations. This includes costs for three part-time staff, stipends for 1-3 additional members of our team, and ongoing expenses like website maintenance, financial software, and a small marketing budget.