



# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

## Dear Friends and Neighbors,

For over 25 years, Youth First Mentoring has remained true to its mission: to ensure all youth have access to nurturing mentor relationships. That translates to over 10,000 hours of direct support to kids in our community.

**Mentoring changes lives, enhances the quality of life of our youth, allows them to explore new directions, strengthens our community, and lets kids know they are important.**

Since taking over as program director in January, I have been continuously inspired by the dedication of our mentors who so generously share their lives with a child, our committed advisory board who tirelessly volunteer their time to this cause, and by our many donors who put their money behind their ideals. Though youth continue to face the challenges stemming from the pandemic that upended their social and educational lives, and more recently, the devastating floods that hit our community, the future is bright and the opportunities are many.

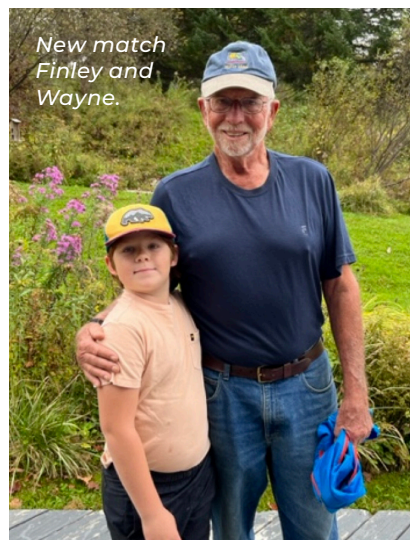
Over the course of the next year, YFM will embark on creating an exciting vision for the next 25 years. I hope this annual report helps you learn more about what we do and inspires you to continue to support our mission of mentoring children in Central Vermont.

Sally Russell, program director

## Program Highlights FY22-23

After being known as Girls/Boyz First for over two decades, last year **we underwent a makeover!** Through a specialized grant from the Vermont Department of Health, we launched our new name, logo, and website. We love the new logo of a tree reaching upwards as it reminds us of what mentoring is all about: growth, stability, and hope. Our new name is gender expansive and puts youth at the center of all we do. Our new tagline—**empowering youth, building community**—is the perfect reminder of the impact of mentoring on individual lives and our broader community.

Five additional caring, dedicated, and adventurous adults in our community committed to mentoring this year, which means **five more children (and families) benefit from the gift of mentoring.** One new family moved from across the country to make Vermont home, and through YFM, has begun the process of integrating into the community and forming long-lasting relationships. Mentoring doesn't just help kids, it strengthens families and the community, too!



New match  
Finley and  
Wayne.

This year, Youth First Mentoring worked with local and regional partners to provide **cultural enrichment opportunities to our youth.** Mentor pairs had opportunities to watch Uganda's Dance of Hope performance at the Barre Opera House, spend the day learning about Vermont and American history at the Shelburne Museum, attend Mountaineers baseball games, and enjoy our natural resources with passes provided by the Vermont State Park system. We thank our partners for their generous support of our mission!



Camp Downer scholarship participants.

Once again YFM collaborated with Camp Downer in Sharon, VT to send **six program participants to overnight camp.** Overnight summer camp is a rite of passage for many of our mentees who develop independence, try new activities, and meet new people from all over the state and region. It's a treasured tradition that would not be possible without the financial support of our donors and the generous scholarships Camp Downer provides. Thank you!

# Last year, Youth First Mentoring . . .

Served  
**21**  
youth  
with over  
**600**  
hours  
of direct 1:1  
mentor support.

Provided **Mentor 101 training** for our new mentors, which covers important topics like setting boundaries, addressing challenging issues, and cultural humility.

Provided **LGBTQI training** to our mentors as we strive to increase our awareness of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and its role in mentoring.

Hosted **community-building events** at locations around the region: Wrightsville Reservoir, Mountaineers, Lamb Open House at Center Farm and more. We look forward to adding more opportunities for our mentors and mentees to gather as a group in the coming year!



Right, mentors and mentees at a Mountaineers baseball game.

*“Viewing the world through the lens of a young man gives me a different perspective on things I had taken for granted.”*

—adult mentor

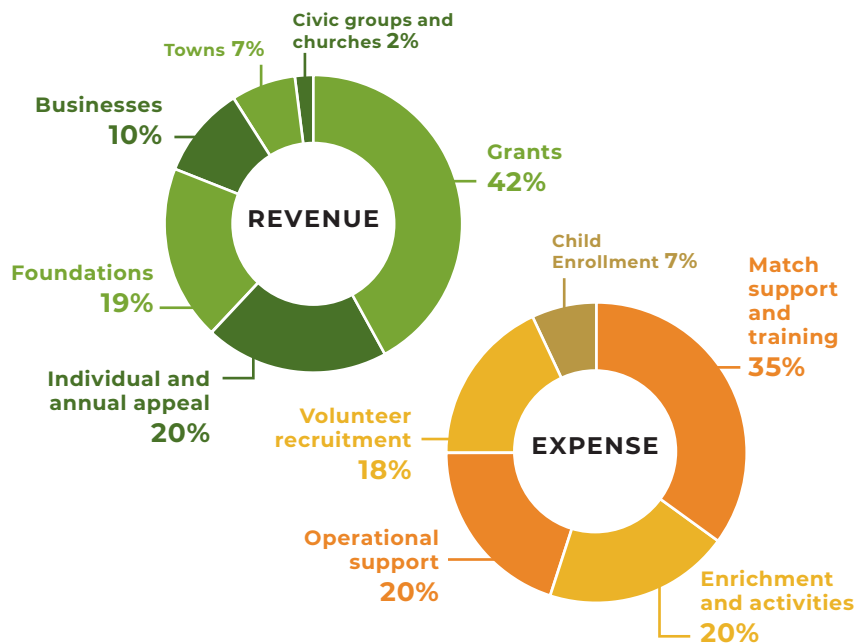


*“[Having a mentor] has allowed me to experience and participate in things I never would have been able to before. It allows you to make older friends that can provide advice.”*

—youth mentee



## Financials FY22–23



## Youth First Mentoring Advisory Board

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## With Gratitude

None of this would have been possible without the dedication and support of our volunteer mentors and advisory board, families and children who open their hearts to mentoring, and our many individual, business, civic, and grant donors who heed the call to invest in local children.

A special thanks to these donors:

Camp Downer  
MENTOR Vermont  
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Concept II Rowing  
Hoehl Foundation  
Northfield Savings  
Bank  
National Life  
Montpelier Community  
Fund  
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