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MILE HIGH
YOUTH CORPS

ELEVATING YOUTH.
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES.

ELEVATING YOUTH

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

For more than three decades, Mile High Youth Corps has been a trusted success model for young adults across Colorado. Our Corpsmembers, ages 18–24, are committed to supporting sustainable communities while pursuing a meaningful path toward career success. As a leader in positive youth development, workforce development, and community-based service, MHYC delivers hands-on, credentialed service opportunities across 24 Colorado counties.

In 2024, MHYC offered 285 paid service positions in Land Conservation, YouthBuild Construction, Health & Wellness, and Energy & Water Conservation related projects. Hundreds of young adults from across the state applied for these positions, all drawn by the opportunity to gain credentials, contribute to their communities, and build a foundation for their future.

Through their service, Corpsmembers earned a living stipend, received industry-recognized certifications, and gained hands-on experience through real-world projects. They also participated in career coaching, leadership training, and education, equipping them with the tools to thrive beyond their term.

MISSION

**HELP YOUTH MAKE A
DIFFERENCE IN THEMSELVES
AND THEIR COMMUNITY
THROUGH MEANINGFUL
SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES
AND EDUCATIONAL
EXPERIENCES.**

VISION

**YOUTH ARE EMPOWERED
TO SERVE, STEWARD,
AND SUCCEED.**



FROM OUR CEO

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters,

As we reflect on 2024, we are proud to share the impact that Mile High Youth Corps (MHYC) has achieved alongside our Corpsmembers, partners, and community. This past year brought incredible accomplishments and transformative growth.

Through it all, our mission remained clear: to help youth make a difference in their lives and their communities through meaningful service and educational experiences.

Together, we empowered more than 285 young people across Colorado to build skills, earn credentials, and shape a better future—not just for themselves, but for the communities they served.

Our Corpsmembers improved over 50 miles of trails and rivers, retrofitted nearly 600 homes for water and energy efficiency, and constructed 82 units of affordable housing. They also earned over \$400,000 in education awards and reported a deep sense of pride and purpose in their work.

**98% OF CORPSMEMBERS SAID
MHYC HAD A POSITIVE IMPACT
ON THEIR LIFE AND FUTURE.**

This year also marked the beginning of a bold new chapter for MHYC. In December, our Board of Directors approved a five-year strategic plan centered around four key goals:

- **Broaden** youth engagement
- **Enhance** program collaboration
- **Champion** community-led projects
- **Equip** MHYC with the resources to grow sustainably

As we enter this next phase, we are committed to embedding equity, innovation, and belonging into every aspect of our work.

Your support—through donations, advocacy, and connection—is what keeps our mission alive. When you invest in MHYC, you are investing in the next generation of leaders, builders, and changemakers across Colorado.

At MHYC, we have always believed in the power of service to transform lives. With your partnership, we will continue to expand opportunities for young people to build skills, grow as leaders, and make a lasting difference in their communities.

Thank you for standing with us. Your belief in our mission fuels this work and ensures that young people across Colorado continue to thrive.

Sincerely,

Kia Abdool

Chief Executive Officer
Mile High Youth Corps





STEWARDING COLORADO'S PUBLIC LANDS

LAND CONSERVATION

In 2024, Mile High Youth Corps Land Conservation crews made a measurable impact on Colorado's natural environment. Across Denver, the Southern Front Range (SFR), and the Eastern Plains based out of La Junta, 173 Corpsmembers served through our seasonal and pilot programs restoring habitats, improving trails, supporting public lands, and preserving critical ecosystems.

This year, we piloted our first-ever crew on Colorado's Eastern Plains. The program, which served 6 counties and engaged rural youth in conservation service, proved that meaningful youth employment and stewardship opportunities are needed across every corner of our state.

MHYC crews also partnered with the National Park Service to preserve the Amache National Historic Site, a place of deep cultural significance. Over a 16-day project, Corpsmembers removed invasive species, restored over 10 acres of land, and gained critical experience in ecological restoration and cultural preservation.

“At MHYC, I felt like I belonged for the first time—not just at work, but anywhere. I learned how to speak up, lead, and grow.”

-JOSLYN M.

387

ACRES OF PUBLIC
LAND RESTORED

52

MILES OF TRAILS AND
RIVERS IMPROVED

808

NATIVE TREES AND
SHRUBS PLANTED



IMPROVING EFFICIENCY.
EMPOWERING YOUTH.

ENERGY & WATER CONSERVATION



Partnering for Climate Resilience

In partnership with the City and County of Denver's Office of Climate Action, Sustainability & Resiliency (CASR), MHYC was proud to support the Promotoras Climáticas initiative—an innovative, community-centered outreach program aimed at addressing the climate threats of extreme heat and water scarcity.

As trusted messengers, MHYC's Climate Education Corpsmembers worked in neighborhoods most impacted by climate change, including Westwood, Montbello, and Globeville, offering workshops, resources, and education that empowered nearly 3,500 residents to take practical steps toward climate resilience.

This final pilot year of the program strengthened community trust, deepened local partnerships, and advanced MHYC's role in building equitable, youth-led climate solutions across Denver.

Corpsmembers in the Energy & Water program installed resource-saving upgrades in homes across Colorado, helping families lower their utility bills while gaining valuable, hands-on experience in sustainability and residential energy efficiency. By combining service with sustainability, our Energy & Water Conservation crews are helping to build a cleaner, more equitable Colorado - one home, one Corpsmember, and one conversation at a time.

This year's crew gained practical skills in retrofitting homes with low-flow fixtures, LED bulbs, and weatherization materials. They also gained communication and career development skills through hands-on service and direct engagement with residents.

594

LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS
RETROFITTED

8.5 MILLION

GALLONS OF
WATER SAVED

370,000

KILOWATTS OF
ENERGY SAVED





“Before YouthBuild, I was homeless and had dropped out of school. I had no one in my corner. But through this program, I found support, structure, and people who care. I’m graduating with my GED and now I want to help others.”

- ALEXIS, CORPSMEMBER

BUILDING FUTURES. EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES.

YOUTHBUILD

2024 was a year of growth and transformation for Mile High Youth Corps' YouthBuild program. Through a powerful blend of education, career exploration, and hands-on service, young adults in YouthBuild Construction and Health & Wellness gained skills, credentials, and confidence to move toward brighter futures. In both the construction and wellness tracks, YouthBuild Corpsmembers not only built community, but they also rebuilt their own futures. Their service helped create housing, expand access to healthcare for those in need, and realize what's possible on a path to a bright future.

MHYC served 55 young adults across two YouthBuild cohorts in 2024. Participants received support in earning their high school diploma or GED, explored career pathways, and engaged in meaningful service projects throughout the Denver metro area. The program emphasized personal development as much as professional growth, offering coaching, leadership training, and comprehensive resources to help Corpsmembers in establishing strong foundations for their futures.

A new partnership with BuildStrong Academy allowed YouthBuild Construction Corpsmembers to earn the nationally recognized Pre-Apprenticeship Certificate Training (PACT), gain access to employer networks, and attend specialized construction bootcamps that simulate real job site conditions. This partnership represents an exciting step forward in deepening career outcomes and building a more direct bridge from service to employment.

4,818

HOURS OF COMMUNITY SERVICE DELIVERED

82

UNITS OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONSTRUCTED

639

MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTED WITH HEALTH AND WELLNESS SERVICES



CORPSMEMBER SPOTLIGHTS



CHRISTIANA,

YOUTHBUILD H+W CLASS OF 2024

Before joining Mile High Youth Corps, Christiana Stephens was a devoted mother working a job that offered little sense of purpose or long term opportunity. She dreamed of completing her education and pursuing a meaningful career, but balancing that goal with her responsibilities as a parent felt out of reach.

Through Mile High Youth Corps' YouthBuild Health & Wellness program, she earned her High School Equivalency diploma, completed a Certified Nurse Aide certification (CNA), and discovered a deep passion for serving others through patient care.

Today, Christiana is thriving in her role at Life Care Center of Littleton, where her career in behavioral health reflects both her talent and her heart for community service. Her journey is a powerful example of what happens when young people are given the tools, training, and encouragement to transform their future.

“If I had never joined Mile High Youth Corps and received the love and support I did, I would’ve never known the resilience I now have. Through the program, I earned my GED, became a first-time college graduate with my Certified Nurse Aide certificate, and landed a job within the medical field. Along the way, I also learned the importance of supporting our youth and giving back to the community.”

— CHRISTIANA



ROB,

*SFR LAND CONSERVATION
CORPSMEMBER, CLASS OF 2023*

Rob Garcia, a 2023 Southern Front Range alum, served as a Land Conservation Leader where he honed his technical skills and built confidence as a mentor. His leadership and dedication led him to a position on a federal fire suppression crew with the Bureau of Land Management. Today, Rob is actively protecting public lands, proving that service at MHYC can be a powerful springboard into long-term careers in public land management and wildfire response.

EMPOWERING YOUTH

CORPSMEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

CORPSMEMBER SPOTLIGHT: JOSIAH

ENERGY + WATER CLASS OF 2024

Josiah entered the Energy & Water Conservation program in the Fall of 2024 and immediately became a trusted and impactful member of the team. Josiah came to the program motivated to help the community, and set very clear goals for his own professional development. During his term, Josiah completed an HVAC training course, gained industry-recognized certificates, and attended a one-week heat pump installation workshop. Josiah's dedication to the program and to his own personal growth were outstanding, and he quickly transitioned from the program into a national HVAC apprenticeship program.

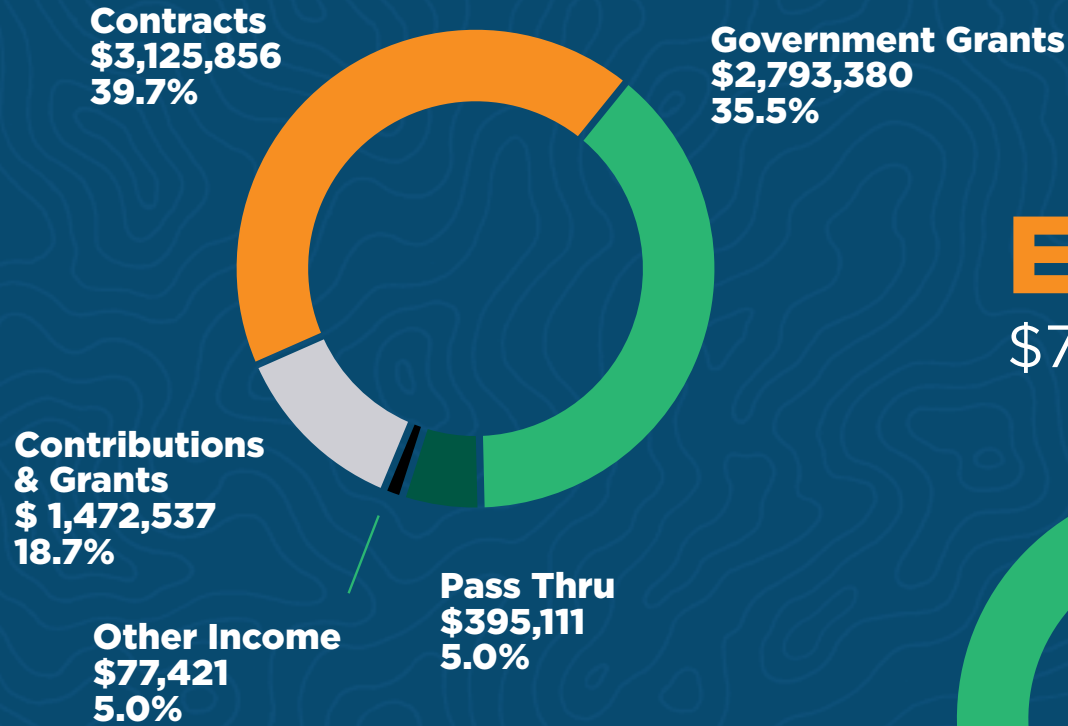
“MHYC has impacted my life in so many ways. MHYC changed my perspective. Being here opened my eyes to all the problems that plague our communities and gave me the solutions to help with those problems. It also opened my eyes to all the meaningful jobs out there. Jobs that will make me feel satisfied with the work I do. My world feels so much larger now and I'm so thankful for my experiences at MHYC.”

— *JOSIAH BASTIAN*



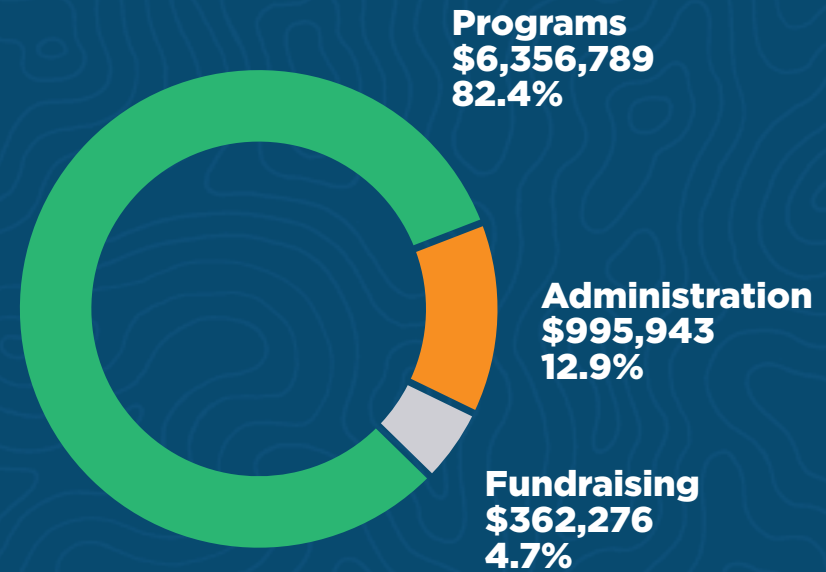
Revenue

\$7,864,306



Expenses

\$7,715,008



STAFF

KIA ABDOOL
Chief Executive Officer

ANTONIO BARREIRO
Chief Operations Officer

NAOMI BOLTS
HR Data Coordinator

TARA CASTANEDA
Program Manager: Eastern Plains

TIERNI CHUN
Youth & Community Engagement Coordinator

KRYSTYNA CISNEROS
Health & Wellness Field Coordinator: YouthBuild

DAZHA CREAL
Supportive Service Navigator: Denver

NATE EDGE
Director: Energy and Water Conservation

GWEN FARNSWORTH
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MELISSA FLORES
Operations Manager

CHRISTIAN GILES
Construction Field Coordinator: YouthBuild

PRASHAN GURUNG
HR Specialist

ELENA HERNANDEZ
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HEATHER HURD
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NARYA JACOBSON
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XAVIER JENNINGS
Director: YouthBuild

JULIA LOBATO
Development and Marketing Coordinator

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Project Coordinator: Denver Land Conservation

LALITA MARTIN
Program Coordinator: SFR Land Conservation

GE'VON MARTIN-COLLINS
Program & Pathways Manager: Energy & Water Conservation

ROSE MICHAEL
Supportive Services Navigator: SFR Land Conservation

SAMANTHA MOONEY
Education and Outreach Coordinator: Energy & Water Conservation

CLAIRE MORRISSY
Regional Manager: Denver Land Conservation

LENE NICHOLS
Director of Finance

AMBER PALMERI
Director of Program Initiatives

DEMETRIUS PARKER
Program & Pathways Manager: YouthBuild

PHILLIP PONCE
Project Coordinator: SFR Land Conservation

JESSE ROEHM
Director: Land Conservation and Operations

ALYSSA ROMERO
Accounting and Grants Manager

CJ RUNGE
Regional Director: SFR Land Conservation

JULIA SCHALLER
Youth & Community Engagement Manager

MAKENNA SCHMITZ
Program Coordinator: Denver Land Conservation

CHANTAL VARGAS-JIMENEZ
YACE Specialist: Denver

JASON VAUGHN
Director of Supportive Services

MARYCELA VILLEScaZDER
HSE Lead Teacher

COLLEEN WALLACE
Development Manager: Grants

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ALE SPRAY
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 MILE HIGH
YOUTH CORPS

DONATE NOW

Help youth make a difference in themselves and their community through meaningful service opportunities and educational experiences.

SCAN TO DONATE

