



Annual Report
2023



MISSION

Statement

Running Rebels guides Milwaukee youth into adulthood through mentoring, positive programming, and community connection.

OUR *Founding*

Running Rebels Community Organization is a youth mentoring organization founded in 1980 by a 19-year-old Victor Barnett, who recognized that the young people in his Milwaukee neighborhood were disconnected from the guidance and wisdom of caring adult mentors. He grew especially concerned when local gangs began recruiting in his area, and in an effort to keep youth connected to a more hopeful vision for their lives, Victor founded Running Rebels on a basketball court at the corner of 20th and Olive.

He began regularly gathering a small group of young men there for informal games, which led to their establishment as an official team. Beyond his role as their coach, Vic was consistently present with these young people off the court, driven by a genuine desire to see them thrive in all areas of their life. He taught them essential life skills and instilled in them the importance of getting an education and re-investing in their communities. In the process, Victor became a trusted mentor of these youth and transformed their lives. Running Rebels' formal mentoring programs of today were born out of this initial model of service.

Rebel Board and Staff

Leadership Staff

Victor Barnett, **Founder and Executive Director**

Dawn Barnett, **Co-Executive Director**

Stacey Lindsay, **Senior Director of Programming**

Rolunda Dixon, **Senior Director of Business Operations**

Traci Amos, **Director of Mentoring Services**

Donta Holmes, **Senior Director of Community Engagement & Operations**

Eddie Roundtree, **Co-Director of Violence-Free Zone**

Philip Krull, **Co-Director of Violence-Free Zone**

Rod Mitchell, **IMP Aftercare & Credible Messenger Supervisor**

Tara Martin, **MCAP Supervisor**

Damon Shoates, **Community Organizer**

Board of Directors

Brandon Ramey, **President**

Clifton Phelps, **Vice President**

Carolyn Crivello, **Secretary**

Michael Coyne, **Treasurer**

Rodney Harris

Thomas Melton

Erin Miles

Nicholas Ramos

Fred Tabak

Tiffany Wynn

Letter from Vic & Dawn

We'd like to extend our sincere gratitude to all who were part of the Rebel story in 2023. To those who made one-time, monthly, or major gifts, engaged with our social media, were present at one of our many community events, attended or sponsored our EPIC Evening, or simply told someone about the good work we're doing at Running Rebels – we are so grateful for you.

When we think about 2023, our 43rd year of service to Milwaukee's youth and families, we see various themes emerge. We touch on all of them in this report, but health and wellness has never been as important to us as it was in 2023.

The wellbeing of Milwaukee's young people was at the heart of Running Rebels' founding in 1980. For many years we've served as young people's alternative to self-destructive choices and an outlet for them to remain physically active. But 2023 was meaningful to us because of our commitment to prioritizing health and wellness so explicitly, being intentional about saying those words out loud, and proactively equipping Rebel youth and staff with knowledge and practices to care for the whole person.





We may not be able to control what happens in most of our external world, but we can make choices about how we treat ourselves, care for our bodies, and nurture our mental and emotional health. Ensuring young people have these essential tools as they transition into adulthood will remain a top priority of Rebel programs and services for as long as we continue to operate.

In 2023 we also began the work of preserving the legacy of this organization in film format, officially launching production on a Running Rebels documentary this past fall. We're excited to not only tell the full extent of our story and weave together all threads of the "Rebel web," but help the community better understand the work that continues in this present moment.

Thank you so much for your support. We are honored to be serving Milwaukee's youth and families for another year!

With gratitude,

Victor Barnett

Victor Barnett
Founder & Executive Director

Dawn Barnett

Dawn Barnett
Co-Executive Director

2023 Impact Numbers



1,609

young people served across all Rebel programs in 2023



622

youth served through our Violence-Free Zone across 7 MPS schools



247

young people connected to mentorship, crisis management, and advocacy through our juvenile justice programs



654

youth served through our year-round, out-of-school time programming



112

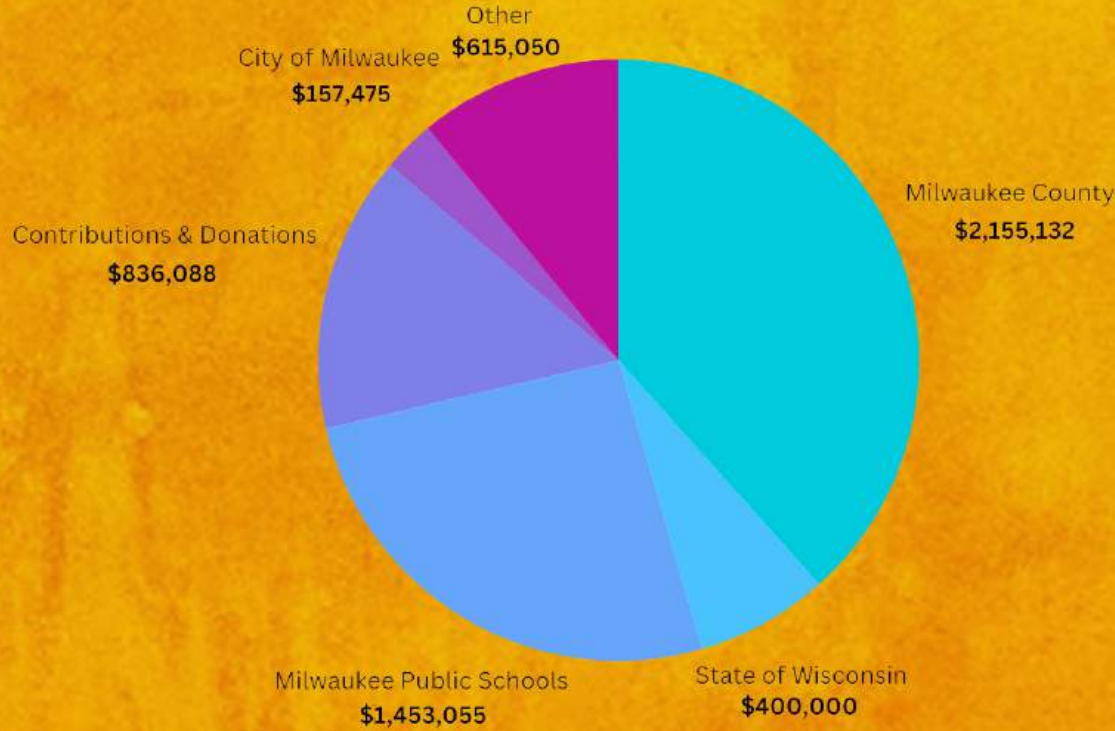
personal or academic goals completed by the youth in our Community Mentoring Program



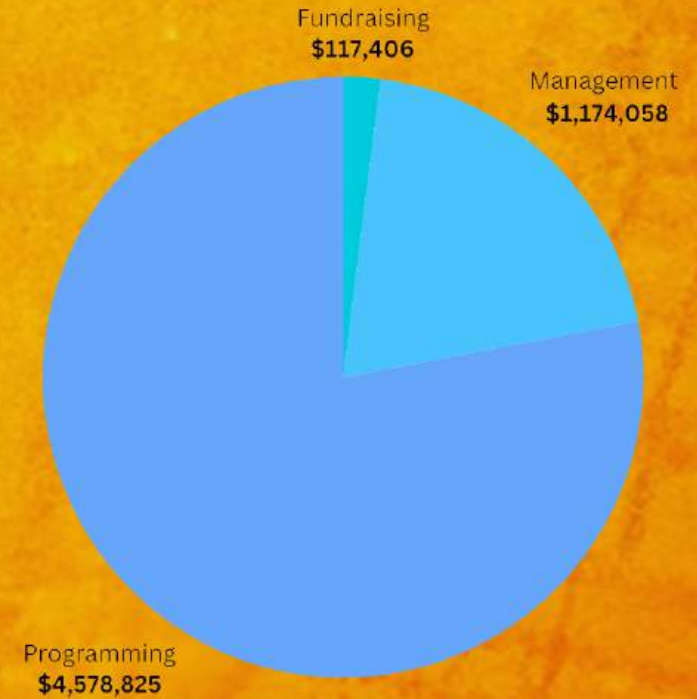
37

people gained meaningful employment via our youth employment program or our initiatives with community adults

2023 Financials



Revenue
\$5,616,800



Expenses
\$5,870,289

Health & Wellness

Wellness was a top priority for Running Rebels throughout 2023. Our goal was to teach Rebel youth how to nurture all aspects of their personal wellness and provide regular opportunities for them to actively engage in these practices through our programming and alongside their mentors. We offered a range of activities centered around physical health, emotional regulation and mindfulness, stress reduction, cancer and substance abuse prevention, and nutrition/healthy food access. The health and wellness of our young people will always be a priority for our organization.



"Can anyone guess how many grams of sugar are actually in this juice?"



Learning to prepare their produce



Mixing a fresh fruit smoothie in our kitchen



Rebel mentor and mentees at our winter wellness fair



Rebel mentor leading a self-map workshop



Sound bowl healing



Staff donating blood at our fall wellness fair



Youth-grown produce at our fall wellness fair



Volleyball clinic with partner Milotso

Art

In 2023, Rebel arts programming gave youth of all skill levels the chance to engage in a wide range of creative pursuits across the visual, performing, media, and culinary arts fields. Rebel youth had time for exploration, practice, and training, as well as numerous opportunities to perform and showcase their talent. Running Rebels also partnered with several outside organizations to give our young people additional opportunities for artistic exploration and development.



A finished mural at our East location



Creating in our podcast production studio



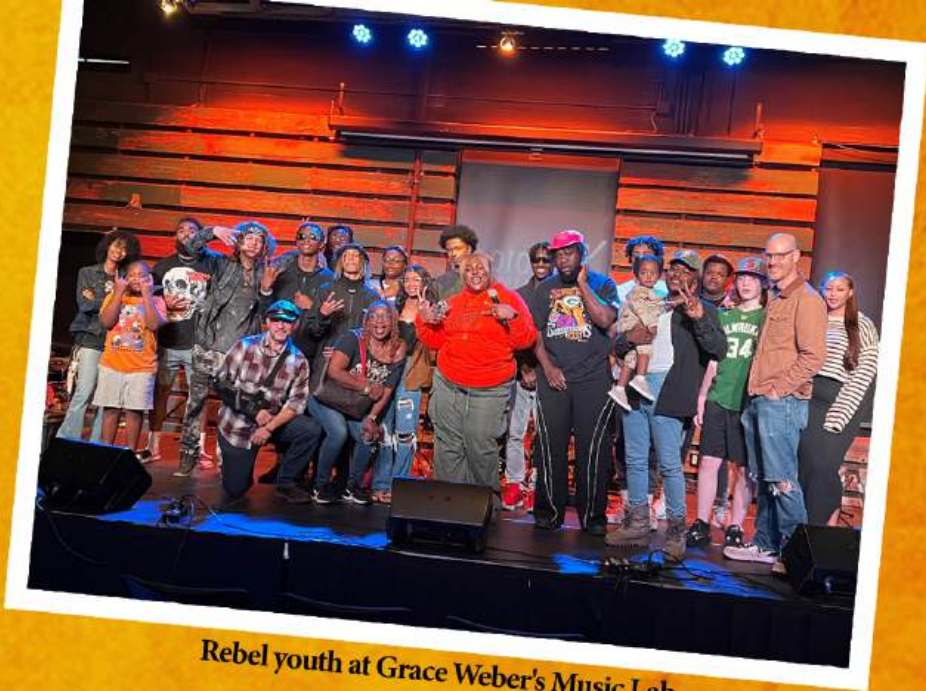
Hands-on audiovisual training



Group drum lessons



Exploration in our music lab



Rebel youth at Grace Weber's Music Lab



Music recording and production at our Central location



Rebel youth in our music lab

Community and Cultural Connection

An important part of our mission is keeping young people connected to the community around them in meaningful ways. In 2023, Rebel youth joined community-wide conversations, engaged in regular community cleanups, and helped host events that improved the lives of the residents in their community. We also celebrated and honored Running Rebels' identity as a Black organization.



Big Clean MKE neighborhood cleanup



Group painting at our Black History Celebration



Field trip to the Black Holocaust Museum



Pop-up training with Rebel partner MERA



Rebel staff celebrating National Wear Red Day



Unity March 2023 with Rebel youth, staff, and County Executive David Crowley



Rebel youth representing in the 2023 Juneteenth parade



Rebel youth helping with our community holiday giveaway

Workforce & Leadership Development

In 2023, with the guidance and support of their mentors and our community partners, Rebel youth increased their capacity to lead, communicate, build relationships, achieve personal and academic goals, thrive in a workplace, and understand the world around them.



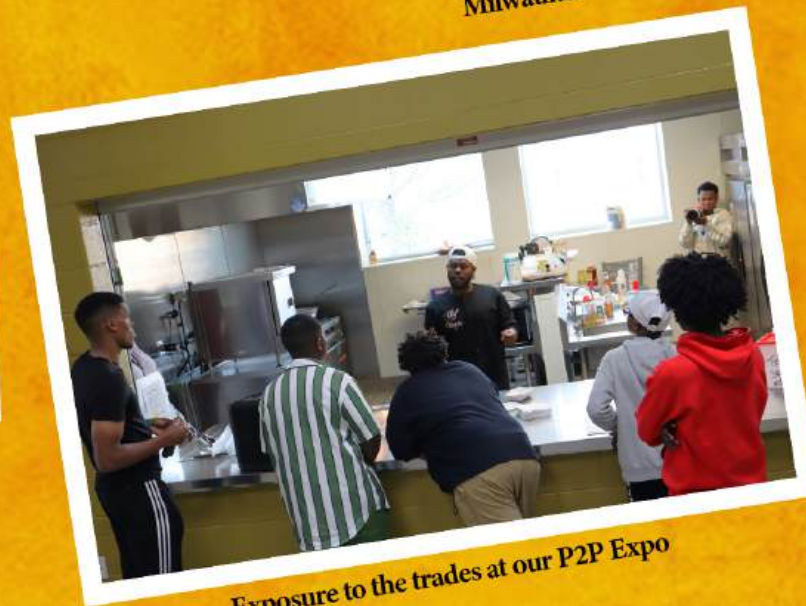
Be the Change youth presenting their elevator pitches



Milwaukee Zoo field trip



Financial literacy workshop with CLIMB USA



Exposure to the trades at our P2P Expo



Learning to harvest their garden plots



New Vines plant care program



Public speaking practice



Rebel youth awards



Youth workers and staff at our community garden

Recreation

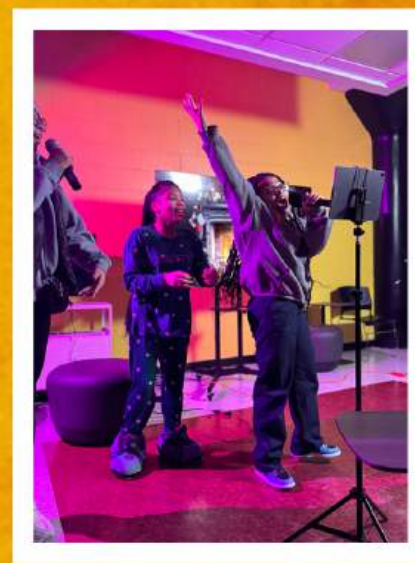
Recreational activities have remained a valuable component of Rebel programming since our founding in 1980, when Executive Director Victor Barnett began gathering a small group of young men at the local Tot Lot for informal games of basketball. Rec programming enhances nearly all aspects of young people's personal wellness and provides a context for our mentors to begin or continue building quality relationships with their mentees.



Youth and staff 2 ball championship



A Rebel cookoff with youth and staff



Karaoke at our youth holiday party



After-school recreation at our East location



Lady Rebels creating homemade candles



Rebel youth hooping in our gymnasium



Youth and staff rollerskating field trip

Rebel Legacy

We celebrated 43 years of service to Milwaukee's youth and families. Rebel alumni Kevon Looney, Power Forward for the Golden State Warriors, returned to Milwaukee during our anniversary week to host his annual youth basketball camp and compete in our Rebel Rumble event. That summer we also launched the production of our Running Rebels documentary. In the fall, we raised over \$187,000 at our 2023 EPIC Evening for Rebel youth. Thank you again to all who attended and supported us that night! (A full list of event sponsors can be found on the next page.)



Rebel alumni Kevon Looney at his annual basketball camp



Community youth at Looney Camp



Launching production of our Rebel documentary



Rebel alumni with his mentee



Rebel friends and alumni at our 43rd Anniversary



Rebel staff Damon celebrating 25 years of service to the agency



Rebel youth and staff at our EPIC Evening

Our 2023 Epic Evening

Thank you to the sponsors and attendees of our 2023 EPIC Evening! We celebrated 43 years of service and raised over \$187,000 for Milwaukee's youth and families.

For details about our 2024 event, tune into our Rebel social media pages!

Our 2023 Sponsors

Presenting: BMO

MVP: Quad Graphics, Chris & Jennifer Abele, and Tabak Law

Superstar: Brewers Community Foundation

Coach: Ralph Evinrude Foundation and SWICKtech

Captain: Weyco Group, Chase Bank, Democratic Party of Wisconsin, Maximus Foundation, and Van Horn Automotive

Point Guard: Gruber Law Offices, Vizance, and Forward TS



Our 2023 Help Scholarships

Congratulations to the 2023 recipients of our HELP scholarships!

Running Rebels' Higher Education and Learning Program supports community youth throughout their college career, equipping them with independent living skills, providing emotional support, and awarding financial assistance, including annual scholarships. In 2023, Running Rebels distributed \$15,500 in scholarship funds among the youth listed.

Victor Barnett Jr.
Maximus Bryant
Kendall Williamson
Nevaeh Berry
Ron Mitchell

Amaya Bauldwin
Payton Parrish
Ahveon Smith
Nadiatier Hamilton
Jerome Terrell

Honorees:

Kelli Simmons
Imunique Triplett



How to Support Us



Donate Online

runningrebels.org/donate



Donate Holiday Gifts

We accept new, unwrapped gifts to give away at our annual holiday party



Donate via Mail

Write a check to Running Rebels, send to:

225 W. Capitol Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53212

Follow & Share



Runningrebels

Stay Connected

Follow & Share: engaging with our social media pages is a great way to support us. Follow our pages and like/share our posts to get the word out about the great work Running Rebels is doing with Milwaukee's youth and families!

Subscribe to Our Newsletter: visit runningrebels.org and scroll to the bottom of our homepage to enter your email. You'll be tuned into the latest Rebel updates and events!

2022

HONOREES

Kalan Haywood II
Andre Lee Ellis
Danielle Williams
Tia Cannon
Anthony McHenry
Vaun Mayes
David Muhammad
Reggie Brown
Ray Nitti
Tara Martin
Victor Barnett
Kevon Looney
Jacob Latimore

2023

HONOREES

Ajamou Butler
Muhibb Dyer
Keyon Jackson- Malone
Jasmine Tyler
Farina Brooks
Walter Lanier
De Von D.
Homer Blow
Derrick Rogers
In Memory of
Cozette McLemore
Rico Love

2024

HONOREES

Kwabena Nixon
Gaulien Smith
Lena Taylor
Dell Williams
Lanelle Ramey
Christopher Rivers
Tequila Matthew

Mission Statement

AS A COLLABORATIVE AND INTERGENERATIONAL MOVEMENT, UNITY MKE BRINGS INDIVIDUALS AND ENTITIES TOGETHER NOT FOR PERSONAL GAIN, BUT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE ENTIRE COMMUNITY; SUPPORTING PROJECTS AND EVENTS FOCUSED ON BUILDING GENERATIONAL WEALTH, RESILIENCY, AND COMMUNITY CONNECTION.

ANNUAL EVENTS

UNITY MARCH & RALLY

JULY 2025

#USEYOURVOICE - GET OUT & VOTE

UNITY BLACK EXCELLENCE AWARDS

AUGUST 2025

BACK TO SCHOOL GIVEAWAY

AUGUST 2025

UNITY HOLIDAY GIFT GIVE AWAY

DECEMBER 2025





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 [Instagram.com/RunningRebels](https://www.instagram.com/RunningRebels)

www.runningrebels.org