

STRUGGLE OF LOVE FOUNDATION

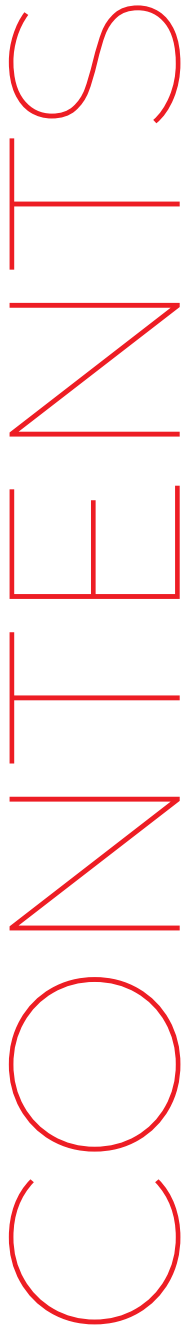
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# Annual Report



# 2022

# Table of Contents



01.

Introduction

02.

Message from our  
Executive Director

03.

Our Values

04.

Programs

05.

Program Highlights

06.

Staff & Volunteers

07.

Community Partnerships

08.

Financials

09.

Impacts

10.

Stay in Touch

# NON PRO FIT

The Struggle of Love Foundation is a 501(c)3 Colorado-based organization that provides opportunities for underprivileged youth and/or families to access year-round services and programs. These programs offer alternatives to those that may not qualify for other community-based assistance programs. Since its conception, SOLF has assisted thousands of families through community outreach events. With diverse offerings such as competitive sports and mentor teams, school supplies, food initiatives, toy drives, community picnics, and mental health awareness, Struggle of Love collaborates with other local nonprofits to reach and educate under-served communities in the Denver metro area. During their annual backpack giveaway, SOLF gives away more than 300 backpacks full of school supplies for children who need them. SOLF also hosts an annual hot Thanksgiving dinner giveaway for food insecure children and families. In addition, SOLF has led efforts as violence interrupters by Co-Chairing the RISE Network in Denver. We also provide mental health therapy and most recently opened the doors to the new community food pantry in the Montebello community.

The Struggle of Love has been recognized at both the local and national level as being a strong organization for community outreach. SOLF has been awarded Program of the Year by the Colorado Fatherhood Council's, the Denver Urban Spectrum top 25 African Americans who Make a Difference award, the Sister Enterprise Random Acts of Kindness award, the Michael B. Hancock MBK25 award, and the 1st Place winner of Denver Office of Economic Development Reimagine Retail award. Our organization founders created SOLF from their own personal experiences with adversity, violence, hunger, and homelessness. We use these experiences to help identify and offer services that they feel are incredibly valuable to people facing these difficult circumstances.

We serve underprivileged youth and families because we've been there. Having been in the same shoes as the people we serve, we truly can relate to what they're going through. God sent us on this mission, and we want to make Him proud. He opened the doors for us to be able to do all that we've done. Funding is always a challenge. It's hard to take it out of our pockets, but we make sacrifices and do what we can to make it work. Our rallying cry is "Showing Our Love to Save Our Lives."

# MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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It is with great pride and a full heart that I present to you the annual report for 2022. It has been an incredible year for our organization, and we could not have done it without the support of people like you.

Throughout the year, we have been able to provide vital resources and support to those in need, thanks to the generosity of our donors and volunteers. We have been able to make a real difference in the lives of countless individuals, and we are so grateful for the opportunity to serve our community.

We were able to provide more meals to the hungry, offer more counseling and support to those facing challenges, and extend a helping hand to even more people in need. But our work is far from finished. There is still so much more to be done, and we will continue to fight for love and compassion in all that we do. We are committed to making a positive difference in the world, and we hope that you will join us in this mission.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in the Struggle of Love Foundation. We look forward to making even more progress together in the coming year.



Showing  
our love to  
save our  
lives.

# OUR VALUES

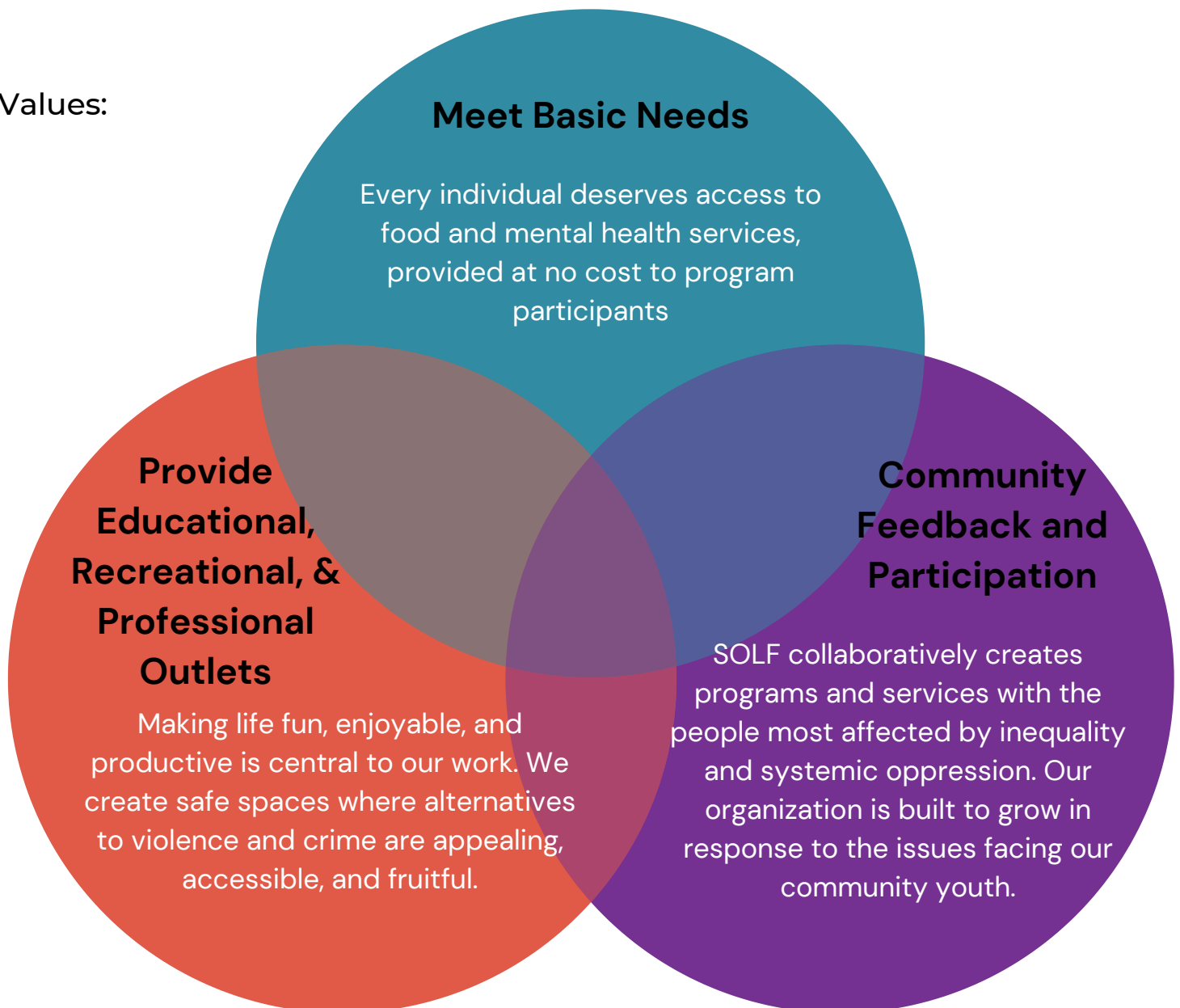
## Who is Struggle of Love Foundation?

Struggle of Love Foundation (SOLF) is a black-led, black-serving organization whose mission is to offer alternatives to violence for those with limited opportunities, especially to those who may not qualify for any other assistance programs. SOLF provides community awareness, involvement, educational, and enrichment activities for at-risk and high-risk children and youth. SOLF addresses academic gaps, youth mental health, youth violence prevention, gang intervention, and promotes healthy lifestyles.

## Our Mission:

To offer alternatives to violence for those with limited opportunities

## Our Values:



# OUR PROGRAMS

The Struggle of Love Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals and communities in need through various programs. Our programs are designed to address pressing social issues and provide support to those who need it most. From education and health initiatives to community development projects, we strive to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those we serve. Through collaboration with local organizations and the support of our generous donors, we are able to achieve our mission and bring hope to those in need.



01

## Spreading Our Love Mentor & Leadership Program

This is a program with a comprehensive curriculum to ensure that the life skills we teach are incorporated into the lifestyles of youth and young adults. Mentorship and Leadership proteges commit to 30 hours of annual community engagement activities through a variety of outlets. This instills an understanding of the importance of giving back to one's community, as well as focusing on the importance of receiving an education, finding and growing job-related skills, building self-esteem and confidence, and creating an overall healthy lifestyle.

02

## Mental Health Services

The Struggle of Love Foundation offers 20 free in-person psychological therapy sessions for each program participant each year. Sessions are conducted at the LOVE center with licensed and certified mental health professionals. These services include one-on-one, couples, and family/group therapy.

03

### Sports Wellness

We have a year-round sports and recreation program for underprivileged youth ages 8-18 whose families cannot afford to cover the cost of organized sports. We provide an outlet for at-risk youth and those involved in gangs and uplift them through our sports program. We want to make sure our participants are included and valued. We offer an channel for youth to participate in sports activities and leadership sessions that help them grow athletically, mentally, and physically into responsible young adults.

04

### Boots on the Ground

We enter local area schools, and work with teachers and administrators to positively influence interactions and the atmosphere of the school. This program is based upon (1) the integration of empirical research and practical experience, (2) a history of balanced, comprehensive, and community-based approaches to public safety, (3) the many accomplishments of the Struggle of Love Foundation, and (4) the opportunities for coordination and collaboration presented by the SOLF Foundation and community partners. This campaign collaborates with advocate groups like Gang Rescue and Support Project, GRID, and the Youth Violence Prevention Act.

05

### Violence Interruption

The Struggle of Love Foundation (SOLF) collaborates with Community Violence Solutions (CVS) to address conflicts that may occur between groups and/or individuals. Gang Outreach Specialists (violence interrupters) are dispatched through a comprehensive referral system and tasked with contacting the individuals at risk. Our staff builds trust through the development of genuine relationships, and identifies possible threats and areas of tension.

06

### Civic Engagement

In 2022, as part of our overall gang prevention and violence prevention system, we worked with our program participants to increase civic participation in local and state politics in Denver and Aurora. This program includes learning about the various branches of government with an emphasis on local government, such as School Boards, City Council, Mayor, Colorado House and Senate, Registered Neighborhood Organizations, and Law Enforcement. In addition, students had the opportunity to meet elected officials and take field trips to various city, state, and federal office buildings to learn firsthand how their voices can impact their communities. SOLF staff organized voting drives and information sessions for participants in 2022.

07

## Night Moves

The Struggle of Love Foundation, in partnership with Denver Parks and Rec., leads the Night Moves program for teens in the Montbello, Green Valley Ranch, and Aurora communities. This took place each Friday from 6:00 - 9:00 pm throughout 2022. Activities include open gym time and organized basketball tournaments. Cash prizes are often awarded to Night Moves participants. This program helped at-risk and high-risk teens avoid violence and gang participation, offering a constructive and fun outlet for participants.

08

## Secondary Youth Violence Prevention

Secondary Youth Violence prevention is designed for gang prevention among youth who are not yet in a gang. However, several youths likely referred may have an "initial foot" into gang involvement or affiliation with a violent group. SOLF staff provide direct intervention, in addition to referring and connecting youth with other gang intervention programs with other community partners.

09

## Out of School Time Camps

SOLF is committed to providing no-cost quality year-round programming to children and families in need. Our OST programs reduce youth violence in Denver by:

- Ensuring youth have a safe, consistent, and supervised place to be while out of school.
- Connecting young people with trained professionals in a positive environment.
- Providing crucial mental health support that creates space for strong character development.

10

## Sacks of Love Food Pantry

While working with youth and their families, we noticed a steady increase of hunger and food insecurity, and we decided to do something about it. In partnership with food justice organizations like Food Bank of the Rockies, SOLF started the Sacks of Love Food Pantry in 2018. Every Monday-Friday afternoons, we distribute a variety of food to over 100 local households.



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: SACKS OF LOVE FOOD PANTRY

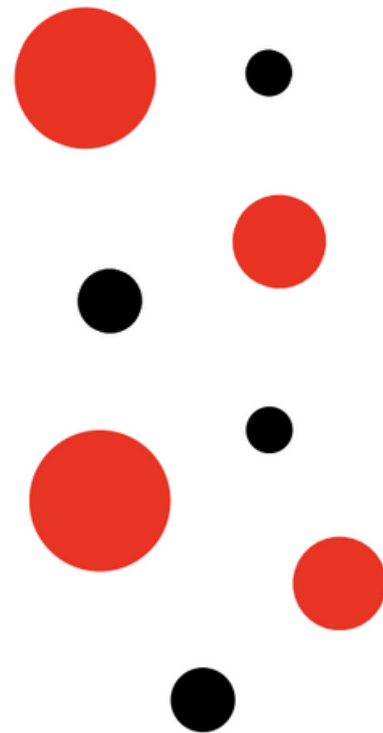
Sacks of Love is a community food pantry in Montbello started by and administered by SOLF. Powered by donations, we distribute food to those in need every Monday - Friday afternoon. We provide a mix of fresh produce, meat & dairy, and prepared foods. We prioritize nutritious, delicious, and culturally relevant food. For every \$300 raised for the Sacks of Love Food Pantry, we fed 25 families twice a month. We are uplifted by the ability to provide food to our communities.

**1,459,800** Pounds of Food

Total Individuals Served **195,092**

Including **82,367** Children

And **33,012** Seniors



# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: SPREADING OUR LOVE MENTORSHIP & LEADERSHIP

Since 2018, SOLF has integrated our Mentorship and Leadership programs into local area schools such as Byers Middle & High School, Elevate Northeast High School, and the Hallett Academy. The program empowers students to develop new skills and strategies for interpersonal conflicts and general life challenges. The program also supports and provides a foundation for the Byers School peer-to-peer mentoring initiative. A majority of students at Elevate Northeast High School are involved in the program, and students organized the spring 2023 Sol & Salsa Festival to promote diversity, nonviolence, and community building. The charter group of teenagers in the program are growing and maturing, becoming more confident in having courageous conversations about the issues affecting them. Some participants are also working on a business plan and branding campaign for their own clothing line. We see confidence, trust, and resilience emerge from the students participating in our program, and we are excited to continue our work with these students in the coming year.

**1,680** STUDENT CONTACTS

**SCHOOLS SERVED**

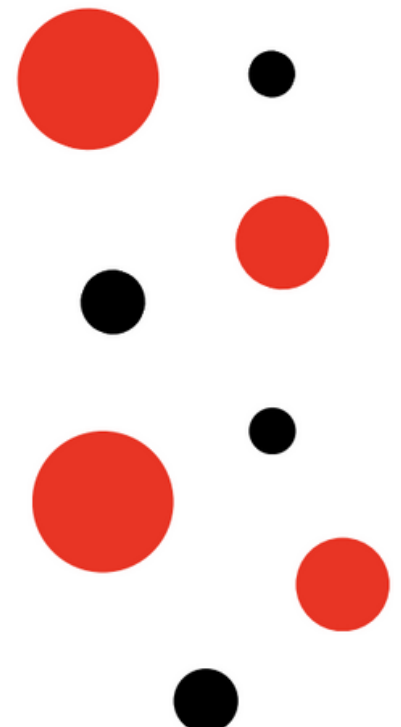
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# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: MENTAL HEALTH

The Mental Health Department was successful in 2022 as we continued to provide quality services to the community, and we expanded our reach through various partnerships and collaborations. We established new partnerships with school administrators, probation officers, and other community leaders. We also gathered valuable feedback through surveys, provided more training for our staff, and participated in community events to source more participants for the mental health program. SOLF Mental Health program participants gain access to 20 free mental health therapy sessions per year, administered by licensed and certified mental health professionals. We also provide referrals to other mental health services and organizations when SOLF identifies opportunities beyond our capacity. This service will continue to grow in 2023 and beyond as we see a dire need for more accessible mental health services in our communities.

**1,849** INDIVIDUALS SERVED

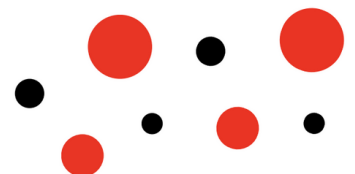


# PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: VIOLENCE INTERRUPTION

Youth violence is a complex social phenomenon that varies by age, degree of gang involvement, and severity of offending. Risk factors associated with the probability of participating in violent behavior cuts across family, school, peer, and community lines. Accordingly, no single program or strategy operating independently is likely to have a lasting effect on reducing gang activity. Comprehensive anti-youth violence initiatives, however, coordinate multiple approaches, recognizing that each strategy plays a role in the overall effort.

Struggle of Love Foundation is here to mitigate violence within our communities using multiple approaches and avenues. We seek to achieve peace in our neighborhoods by tailoring our outreach and interventions to the specific needs of those involved in and affected by interpersonal violence. SOLF Secondary Prevention Specialists realize this, and work to decrease the likelihood of joining a gang among youth who have already displayed early signs of problematic behavior or who are exposed to multiple known risk factors for violent activity.

These services typically include some form of individual risk assessment and often focus on youth aged 10 to 24 years and their families. Younger siblings and family members of gang-involved youth are particularly suitable for these services. We work directly with school administrators, probation officers, police departments, and other community leaders to identify high-risk actors. In 2022 we were embedded within 7 Denver and Aurora schools. Our Secondary Prevention Specialists then invite them to join our programs, which include organized recreation activities, mental health therapy sessions, roundtable discussions, mentor partnerships, job readiness training, employment opportunities, and other social activities. We also excel at providing gang awareness training for school personnel, parents, and students, and teaching students just how dangerous gangs can be.



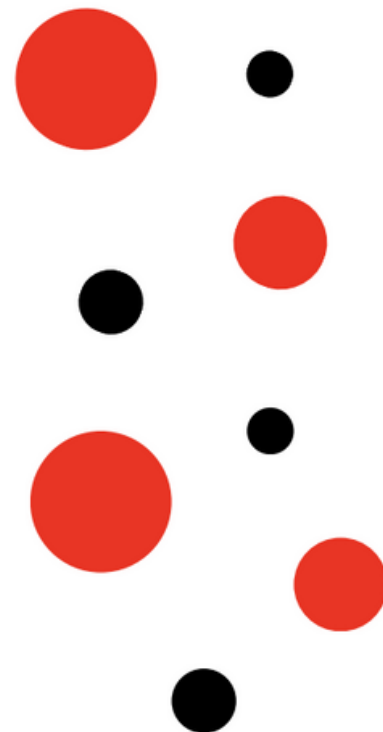
# OUTREACH EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

## REACH 4 PEACE PICNIC

The Reach 4 Peace Picnic is an annual event that brings local businesses and organizations together to educate the community, offer free food and activities, and celebrate outstanding fathers. With health screenings, non-profit booths, and recognition of Father of the Year award winners, the event promotes community awareness and togetherness. Individual donors in conjunction with city grants and private foundation contributions make this event possible, and we look to expand this event in scope and impact in 2023 and beyond.

### 2022 Father of the Year Awardees:

Rodney Bates  
Charles McClure  
Ronnell Jackson  
Cory Tyler



# OUTREACH EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

## BACKPACK GIVEAWAY

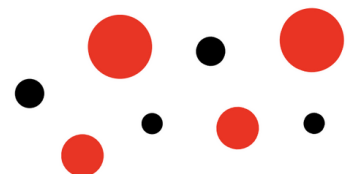
The Struggle of Love Foundation once again conducted its annual Backpack Giveaway event. This event provides students in need with the essential tools they need to succeed in the classroom and helps to ensure that every child has the resources they need to reach their full potential. This year, we distributed over 1,000 backpacks and other essential school supplies to local students across 7 area schools. The foundation is dedicated to preparing students to have enriching, productive school experiences.

## NEED TO FEED:

In 2022, The Struggle of Love Foundation, in partnership with the Families Forward Resource Center and the Montbello Organizing Committee organized and executed the inaugural "Need to Feed" Thanksgiving food basket giveaway. One Thanksgiving meal box was distributed to local area families during the week before Thanksgiving 2022. The giveaway provided those in need with the resources to celebrate a delicious and fulfilling Thanksgiving meal, bringing joy and comfort to families during the holiday season. Each box contained enough turkey meat and side dishes for an entire family.

## A TIME TO GIVE

The Struggle of Love Foundation hosted its annual "A Time to Give" toy giveaway event, bringing joy and hope to children in need. Over 300 children aged 0-12 were invited to attend and receive toys. The event is held in a safe and friendly atmosphere, providing a warm and welcoming environment for all participants. The foundation's goal is to bring the magic of the holiday season to as many children as possible, and generous donations and contributions made that a reality. In 2022 over 3,000 toys were distributed.



# OUR TEAM



LaKeshia Hodge  
Founder & Executive Director



Joel Hodge  
Founder & Program Director



Ashley Smith  
Youth Mental Health Director



Dini Hodge  
Operations Manager



Betsy Chanth  
Therapist



Jason McBride  
Secondary Youth Violence  
Prevention Specialist



Elon Hodge  
Star Program Director

# OUR TEAM



Rodney Bates  
Secondary Youth Violence  
Prevention Specialist



Tim Sanders  
Night Moves Coordinator



Sandy Williams  
Receptionist



Claudia Kouakou  
Therapist



Brian Brooks  
Sacks of Love Food Pantry  
Manager



Eris Griffin  
Sacks of Love Food Pantry



Terrell Bransford  
Sacks of Love Food Pantry,  
Assistant Manager



Chiniqua Jackson  
Night Moves Coordinator



Matisse McKnight  
Love Center Manager



# OUR TEAM

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are central to the work we do. In each of our programs and in every facet of our organization, we rely on dedicated volunteers to execute our work. We utilize general community volunteers, as well as participants completing court-ordered community service.

**130** Active Volunteers

Total Volunteer Hours **2,040**



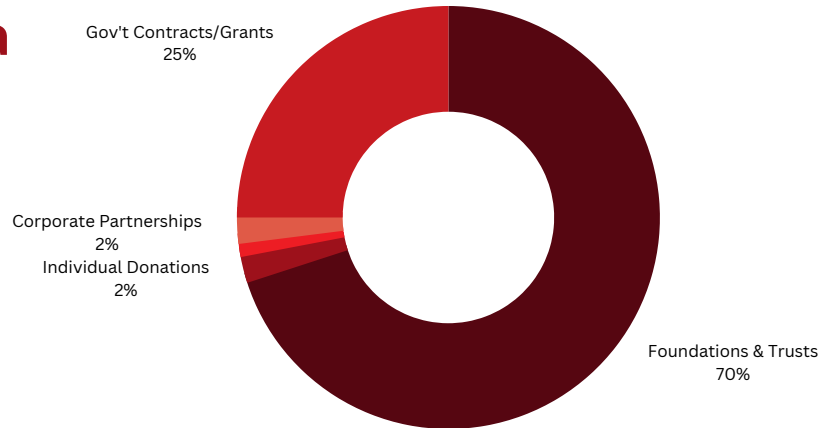
# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

We work with the following organizations and community leaders to excel in our work. Our community partners allow us to succeed with our current programs, as well as identify future opportunities for our organization and our participants. We could not do our work without the dedication and resources provided by these partners, and we are always looking for more fruitful partnerships in the various sectors in which our programs perform.

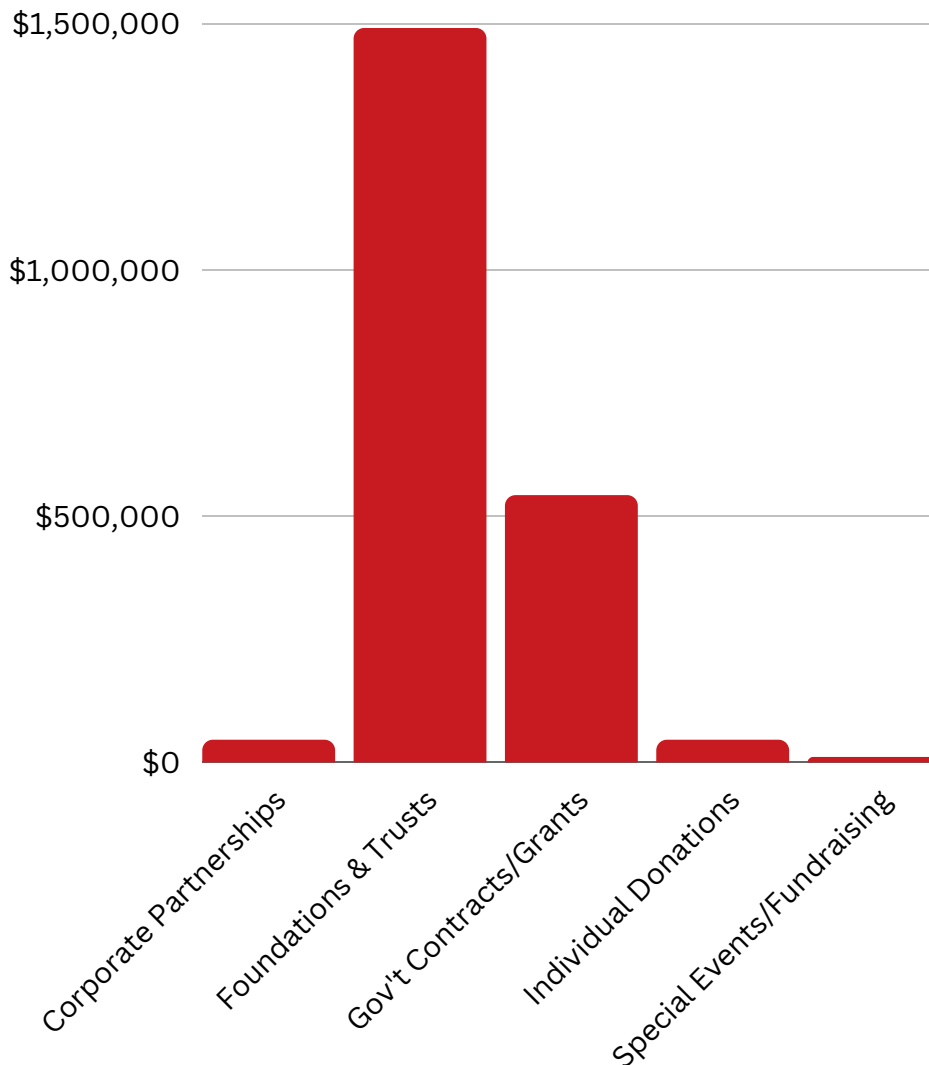


# FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

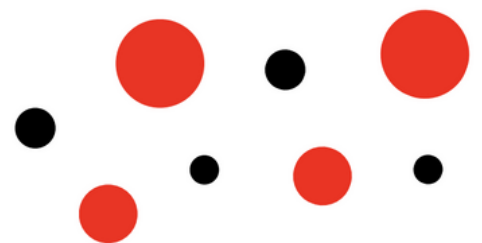
## Individual Donor Data



## Fiscal Donation by Type



SOLF relies on a diverse group of corporate, government, and individual contributors to promote our mission. With their support, our work to achieve peace and prosperity in Denver and Aurora neighborhoods is possible.



# OUR IMPACT:

Throughout the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, the Struggle of Love Foundation supported seven school sites in various capacities. We believe in working with each school site to bring programs that best fit their school culture. We work directly within schools and also at the SOLF LOVE Center.

**629** STUDENTS SERVED

**54%** MALE STUDENTS

**88%** BIPOC STUDENTS

**46%** FEMALE STUDENTS

**1,680** STUDENT CONTACTS  
for Mentoring and Leadership

**1,849** INDIVIDUALS SERVED  
for mental health services

**POUNDS OF FOOD**  
Distributed through  
Sacks of Love Food Pantry

**1,459,800**

WORKING ACROSS **12** ZIP CODES

EMBEDDED WITHIN **7** LOCAL SCHOOLS

## STAY IN TOUCH



 (720) 923-6122

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 [comms@struggleoflovefoundation.org](mailto:comms@struggleoflovefoundation.org)

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 12000 E 47th Ave #403, Denver, CO 80239

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 [struggleoflovefoundation.org](http://struggleoflovefoundation.org)

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 [coloradogives.org/organization/Struggleoflovefoundation](http://coloradogives.org/organization/Struggleoflovefoundation)

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