



2022

Annual Report



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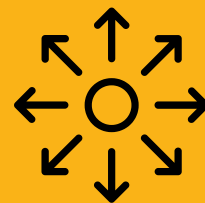
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An Open Letter from our Founder

When I founded Rising Above the Storms, being a beacon of light for for vulnerable children to find hope was an idea that resonated deeply with me on a personal level. Lighthouses, beacons of lights, are symbols of hope and safety. They provide guidance for safe passage and protect the lives of those who pass by as well as the surrounding environment.

Rising Above the Storms is a lighthouse, leading and guiding vulnerable children to safety, to dream bigger, to grow in the knowledge that their future is brighter regardless of the storms they may encounter. Our programs help protect the child and their surrounding environment, so they can pass safely through to their destiny.

On this journey, 2021 was a year of recovery. 2022 was a year of growth – and a year of reimagining, new beginnings, expanding, and success. We celebrated the graduation of six students from primary school into secondary school. We saw the first graduate of our program become our first college student –shining in his continued growth, excelling in the classroom, and emerging as a role model for his community and others. We welcomed 30 new students into our new merit-based sponsorship program, which launched in September. We learned that local Rwandan authorities are interested in and have a desire to replicate our working model because our approach has proven it changes lives. More importantly, our approach has shown that, with love, support, and guidance, our children are capable of achieving their dreams – big or small.



Alphonsine Imaniraguha Anderson

FOCUS

A Beacon of Hope

Rising Above the Storms remains steadfast in our pursuit to serve as a beacon of hope and support for vulnerable children in underdeveloped countries around the world. Our current efforts are focused on Rwanda. Longer-term we aspire to expand our efforts to other communities with similar unmet needs.

Our Programs

Our Rwanda Learning Center is the hub for our programs, serving two distinct yet related groups: at-risk and former street children and high potential students from low-income neighborhoods and families. Our street children program follows two paths: 1) basic needs assistance – warm meals, counseling, and specialized enrichment activities; and 2) educational assistance – coverage for school fees, medical care, group tutoring, and vocational training – for those students committed to pursuing an education or vocation training.

We recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach to education and empowerment does not work, which is why we develop support plans tailored to an individual child's specific needs, based on various factors such as age, ability, and interests. Our team members in the Rwanda Learning Center support each child through a rehabilitation process, which can include months of counseling to get to know the child, understand their specific situation, and meet the families before getting them back into school (for those who had dropped out). Throughout this process, students in this program have access to all basic needs assistance to facilitate stability which is particularly important at this critical stage.

Our sponsorship program, which we launched in September 2022, empowers and equips high-potential children in Rwanda with financial support and educational opportunities to propel them into the future. Our team on the ground in Rwanda works with communities to identify elementary through secondary school-aged students who have demonstrated high academic potential. Working with the students and in collaboration with their families and teachers, we create a plan designed to help them excel based on their individual goals and needs. The plan will include coverage of school fees, university scholarships, internship placement assistance, and mentorship – or a combination of these components. This program has quickly become one of our most popular programs.

We partner with Amahoro Builders, a local, Rwandan non-governmental organization (NGO) to administer our programs on the ground. Amahoro means “peace” in the national language of Rwanda, Kinyarwanda. It's clear from their mission – to build and sustain a culture of peace and holistic development in the family by empowering children, youth, and couples through counseling – why Amahoro Builders has been an incredible partner to Rising Above the Storms.



FOCUS

Program 1

Street Children Program for at-risk & former street children

Basic Needs Assistance for All Children:

- Warm meals
- Counseling services
- Change of clothes
- Access to specialized activities including sports, computer labs, and music (coming soon)

Education Assistance for Children committed to schooling track:

- All above offerings
- Coverage for school fees
- Medical care for children and families
- Paid tutoring
- Skills-based classes and vocational training

Program 2

Sponsorship program for high-performing children

Education and development sponsorship including:

- Elementary and secondary school
- Coverage for school fees
- University scholarship
- Internship placement
- Mentorship



Going Above & Beyond

We are continually evaluating, adjusting, and expanding our programs to ensure we're having the impact we intend, our sponsors expect, and our students rely on us for. As funds allow, we continue to run a variety of program elements that go above and beyond the support offered in our current programs: annual clothing donations for our vulnerable program participants; sponsorships for sports teams along with a regular equipment refresh; and annual prizes for top performing students. We are also in the process of adding health benefits and salary increases for our dedicated people on the ground in Rwanda.

Our children's foundational stability is critical to the sustainability of our work. In the Rwandan community, working mothers keep families together. We have helped Amahoro Builders secure partnerships to empower vulnerable women through microfinancing of small business loans. We will continue to support their efforts in securing microfinancing partnerships going forward.

Lastly, we are eager to launch a music instruments program in the near future; arts have proven to be extremely effective enrichment and development tools for children. Our long-term goal is to be able to offer all of the above offerings as part of our regular programs.



2022 Highlights

\$67K

Raised to bring hope and stability

84

Kids with access to opportunity

30

Members of our new merit-based cohort

2022 was a busy year with significant momentum in our programs, underpinned by our principles of Empowerment, Community, and Empathy.

- We raised \$67,445, bringing further hope and stability to our Rwanda communities.
- We nearly doubled the number of vulnerable children supported in our programs, bringing the total to **84 children** now accessing opportunities through Rising Above the Storms.
- We established our first merit-based cohort, composed of **30 high-performing children** in our new sponsorship program.
- We grew our volunteer team in the USA to support our program expansion and impact in Rwanda.

We're incredibly excited about our progress in 2022 and the additional impact our expanded programs are having. 2023 is shaping up to be our best year yet!

Our Communities

Our Supported Children

In total, the 84 children supported in our programs reside in 13 different districts across Rwanda, spanning 5 provinces: 60 reside in Kigali City, 6 in the Northern Province, 3 in the Southern Province, 3 in the Western Province, and 12 in the Eastern Province.

N0	DISTRICT	CHILDREN
01	KICUKIRO	57
02	GASABO	2
03	KAMONYI	2
04	MUSANZE	2
05	RWAMAGAN A	4
06	NGOMA	7
07	BUGESERA	1
08	KARONGI	1
09	GICUMBI	3
10	RUSIZI	2
11	RUHANGO	1
12	NYARUGENGE	1
13	RULINDO	1
TOTAL NUMBER		84



FOCUS

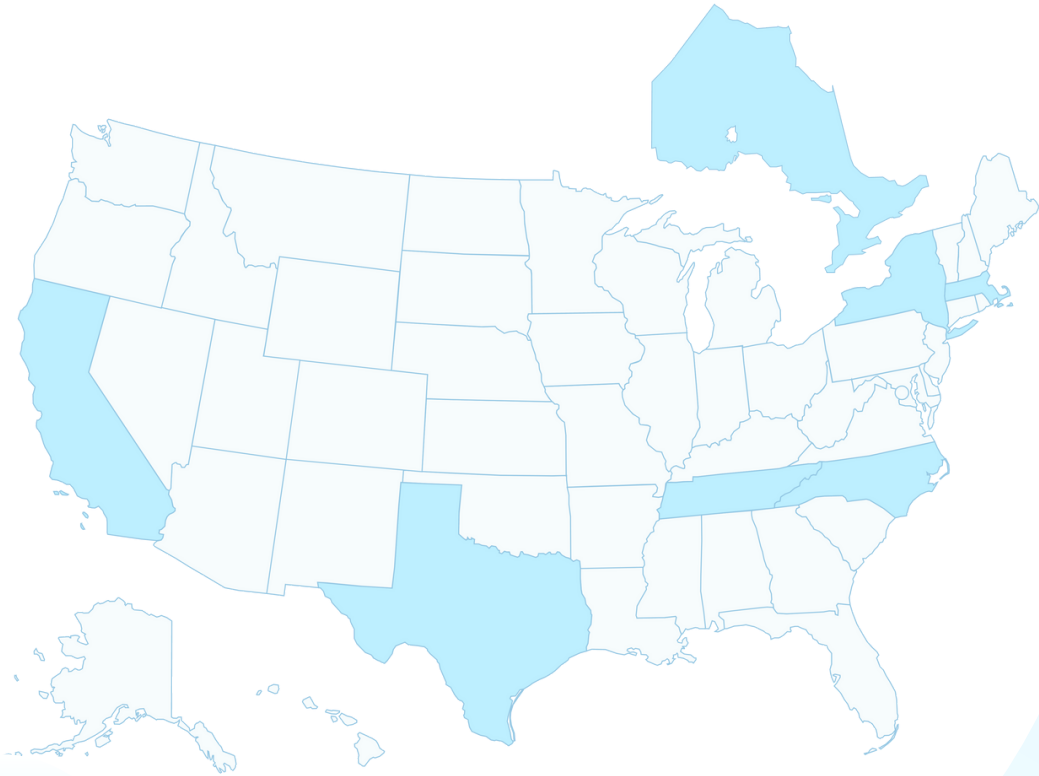
Our Teams

Rwanda Team

We have six full-time employees on staff in Rwanda supporting our children and facility. Over the next 3 to 5 years, our strategy includes growing this number to 30 full-time employees.

Our Volunteers

With the 10 new volunteers added in 2022, our total volunteer community, which includes our Board members, is now 24 people in Canada and the United States, specifically California, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Toronto.



15

**US-based
volunteers**

2

**Canada-based
volunteers**

7

**US Board
Members**

6

**Rwanda-based
employees**

FOCUS

Our Teams

Rwanda Team

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**US Board
Members**

6

**Rwanda-based
employees**

Our Board of Directors

Alphonsine Imaniraguha Anderson

Chief Executive Officer & Founder

Michele Day

Chief Operating Officer

Jenny Hooks

Chief Marketing Officer

Luann Kennedy

Chief Financial Officer

Vinay Nichani

Chief Growth Officer

Anisha Sivakumar

Chief Strategy Officer

Tschudy Smith

Chief People Officer



Major Milestones

Thanks to our partnership with Amahoro Builders, our staff, volunteers, and donors, in 2022 we:

Graduated 6 children in our street program from primary school

Our students have been excelling in school, and we're incredibly proud to celebrate the graduation from primary school, an important milestone toward their goals. Each of these students is now progressing to secondary school. Be sure to check out short profiles of these students in Meet Our Graduates below.

Launched our merit-based sponsorship program

Our sponsorship program launched this September with 30 students. Our first cohort in this new program is composed of high-performing students (Grade 1-12) from low-income families across Rwanda, who have maintained a score of 70% or greater on their report cards.

Visited our Rwanda facilities twice

Our founder, Alphonsine, visited Rwanda in August and December to connect with our local team and community of children. She learned that local authorities are inspired by the transformational changes Rising Above the Storms is driving and would like to use our program as a blueprint for other programs to form and expand in the future. Alphonsine also had a chance to speak with more than 80 children about their career development, their futures, and gain an even better understanding of the impact Rising Above the Storms has had on the Rwandan community.

Grew our volunteer community

We are incredibly grateful for every volunteer who has worked with Rising Above the Storms. We're thrilled to welcome 10 new volunteers to our US and Canada based team!



IMPACT

Rising Above

FUTURE

Meet our Newest Graduates



Samuel MANIRAGUHA

Age 14, School: GS Busanzaz

Samuel enjoys school and spending time with his friends. He hopes to enlist in the military once he graduates secondary school.

David KWIZERA

Age 15, School: GS Busanza

David is looking forward to his new life in secondary school. He plans to study hard and be the top of his class. Once he graduates, he wants to become a policeman.



Fabrice MANISHIMWE

Age 16, School: GS Rubirizi

Fabrice loved his primary school class, but he is looking forward to the new life in secondary school. He hopes to major in Mechanical Engineering and land a job as a mechanic.



Olivier BYIRINGIRO

Age 15, School: GS Busanza

One of the best team players at his school, Olivier hopes to continue playing in secondary school and eventually become a professional soccer player.



Enock MUGISHA GISUBIZO

Age 16, School: GS Busanza

Enock loves school competitions in various games and excels in soccer. As he starts secondary school, he's already envisioning graduating and getting a job to support himself and his family.



Emmanuel HAKIZIMANA

Age 14, School: GS Rubirizi

Beyond cheering on his soccer team and dressing up as their biggest fan, Emmanuel loves to play jokes and make everyone around him laugh. He is excited to start secondary school and learn new things.





Success Stories

Our staff at Amahoro Builders shared some inspiring stories of children who have excelled both in academic performance and behavioral progress since joining the Rising above the Storms programs. We're thrilled to see the children in our programs thrive and become beacons of light for others.

FUTURE

Children from our Street Program

Emmanuel BYIRINGIRO

Emmanuel joined Rising above the Storms to escape a life that pushed him closer and closer to ending up on the streets. Despite having both parents in his homelife, they were unable to provide basic needs. They struggled to make ends meet, and by the time Emmanuel became a teenager, he realized his parents were pushing him toward a life on the streets. When he came to Rising above the Storms, the team discovered he needed a place to stay. Emmanuel both resides and learns at the center.

Emmanuel enjoys spending his days and nights with other children from similar backgrounds. He is currently a senior 1 (7th grade) at GS Rubirizi and performing above-average in school. He loves playing soccer in his free time, and dreams of one day becoming a professional soccer referee.



FUTURE

Children from our Street Program

Meet Nshuti ITANGISHAKA

Nshuti came to Rising above the Storms as a child heavily involved in street life, living with his mother and siblings on occasion. When he first arrived, Nshuti's behavior was unruly.

Since joining our street children program as part of our first recruitment group, Nshuti has transformed into one of our most well-behaved children and serves as an example for others. He is the second-highest performer in his class and excels in welding at Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) school. He dreams of supporting his mother and siblings through a steady career in welding.



FUTURE

Children from our Sponsorship Program

Meet Honorine Promise IRAKOZE

Honorine came to Rising above the Storms to pursue the opportunity to go to school, as her family could not afford to pay her school fees. Her parents are unemployed, and keeping food on the table is a daily challenge. Before joining Rising Above the Storms, Honorine was unable to receive her own report card, and many began writing her off as another child destined for the streets. She felt defeated in school, and questioned whether she should continue.

After joining the Rising above the Storms sponsorship program, Honorine scored a 92% in her following trimester, one of the highest marks achieved by a student in our programs. She is working extremely hard and dreams of one day scoring #1 in Rwanda on the national examination.



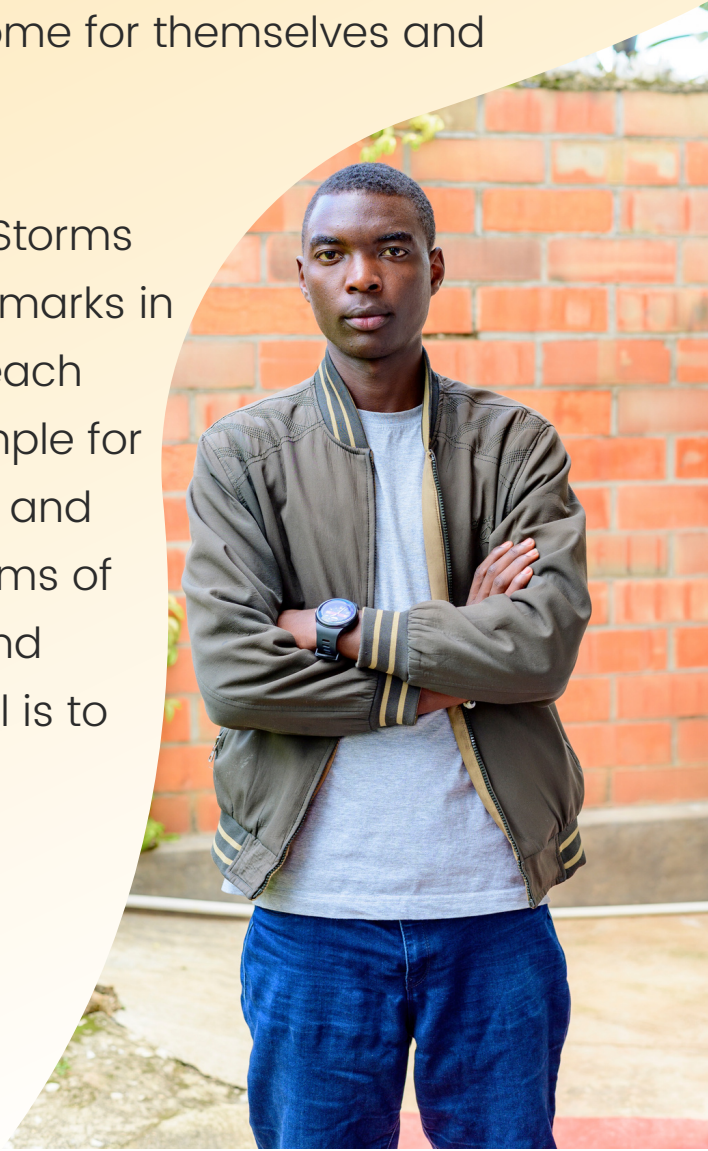
FUTURE

Children from our Sponsorship Program

Meet Fabrice NGIRAKAMARO

Fabrice joined Rising above the Storms as an orphan. He and his siblings lost their parents at a young age and had since been supported by an elderly village woman. Despite living far below the poverty line, the woman brought Fabrice and his siblings into her home to raise them as her own. When not in school, Fabrice and his siblings find any activities possible to generate income for themselves and their caregiver.

Since joining the Rising above the Storms program, Fabrice has scored high marks in school and continues to improve each trimester. He strives to set an example for his siblings and to provide support and stability for his caregivers. He dreams of one day graduating high school and attending university, where his goal is to be at the top of his class.



FUTURE

Children from our Sponsorship Program

Meet Aime Christian NDIZEYE

Aime Christian lost his mother at a young age, and his father abandoned their family soon after. As a result, he cares for 4 siblings while attending school, scraping together enough money for food and shelter.

Since becoming sponsored by RAS, he has performed well in classes - scoring an 81% on his last report card - while working to support his family. Teachers are impressed by Aime's ability to balance school, work, and care for his family and excel in all. His dream is to one day be able to support and sustain all his relatives through a career.



FUTURE

Children from our Sponsorship Program

Meet Acqueline IRADUKUNDA AKALIZA

Acqueline comes from a broken family – her father left her mother to marry another woman in a neighboring province years ago. Her mother has struggled to generate income ever since. Jacqueline and her mother earn money by washing clothes, helping farmers cultivate land, and assisting various technicians in their province when possible.

Despite these challenges, Jacqueline has made impressive strides towards excelling in school since joining the Rising Above the Storms program, scoring 80% in her last trimester in school. She dreams of becoming a university professor and helping her mother get back on her feet.



FUTURE

Children from our Sponsorship Program

Meet Heaven Marline AHISHAKIYE

Heaven resides with her parents, who are both unemployed. Her parents make just enough money to put food on the table by helping throughout the community, however, they are unable to pay for Heaven's school fees. Heaven was unable to receive a report card in school and felt frustrated with the education system, constantly wondering if she was learning and performing well.

After joining the Rising Above the Storms program, Heaven has had a standout performance at the FAWE Girls School, and school leaders are excited to continue helping her grow. She dreams of being a top performer at university and finding a career for herself.



FUTURE

Checking in on Idrissa

2021 brought Rising Above the Storms our first high school graduate, Idrissa Dusengimana, who joined our program in January of 2017. Struggling to make ends meet and grappling with the loss of his father, Idrissa joined our program for street children. Over the next four years, we watched and supported him as he grew into a man his father would be extremely proud of. Idrissa graduated from high school and officially started university at Integrated Polytechnic Regional College Kigali (IPRC) Kigali in March. He is studying Mechatronics Engineering and has been performing well in his studies.

In his spare time, Idrissa continues to read as much as possible and has recently discovered a new love for music and movies. He learned how to drive this past year and enjoys showing off his new driving skills! We are incredibly proud of Idrissa and have no doubt he'll one day achieve his goal – being one of the best engineers in the world. Idrissa thanks every one of his sponsors at Rising Above the Storms for helping guide him along his journey. He is looking forward to giving back to Rising Above the Storms in the future.



FUTURE

Bringing Dreams to Life

What do our children love about RAS?

- Paying for school fees regularly
- Providing them school materials
- Access to computer labs
- Providing them with meals while they are at the center, and occasionally in their homes
- Providing them soccer gear
- Providing school backpacks, clothes and shoes.
- Providing them emotional support and becoming a second or sometime the first family

What makes a child successful in the RAS family?

Our most successful children share a few qualities – predominantly, they are curious and questioning. They seek to understand what being sponsored by RAS truly means, and what they can accomplish through RAS. Our success stories are growing day by day, in large part because of the children above. Our children look up to them and are determined to succeed in the same ways they've seen other members of their RAS family succeed. We continue to be impressed by our children coming together to support one another, building a tight-knit community, and serving as lights to guide one another.

FUTURE

Bringing Dreams to Life

Our children are working toward a future where their dreams – big and small – become reality. From eradicating poverty globally to helping others in the ways that Rising Above the Storms has helped them, these determined children are making a difference in the world. Our team interviewed some of them to learn more about their ambitions.

“I want to provide support to vulnerable children in different ways – school fees, food, shelter, clothing”

“I hope to practice my technical skills from RAS to make my own money and provide for my family”

“I want to be a good accountant”

“I want to eradicate poverty across Rwanda and the whole world.”

“I want to be a useful engineer who solves lots of problems”

“I want to be a good teacher”

“I want to work for the government to help support and raise the child development standards in Rwanda”

“I want to live a good life with my family”

IMPACT

**Spreading our
Light**

IMPACT

2022 Financials

Income Sources

Bright Funds (corporate matching)

Marketing Campaigns

Triangle Community Foundation

Cisco Matching Gifts Program

Individual Contributors (Donors)

Amazon Smile Program

Expenses

Rwanda Learning Center Building (Rent)

Payroll and Taxes (Rwanda Staff)

Transportation & Utilities

School Fees

Grocery & Living Expenses

Administrative Tools

Marketing & Advertising



Financials

\$67K

total consolidated revenue in the past fiscal year compared with \$102K in 2021.

In 2022, we invested:

- \$60K in the Rwanda Learning Center
- \$2.4K for operating expenses

Net Assets

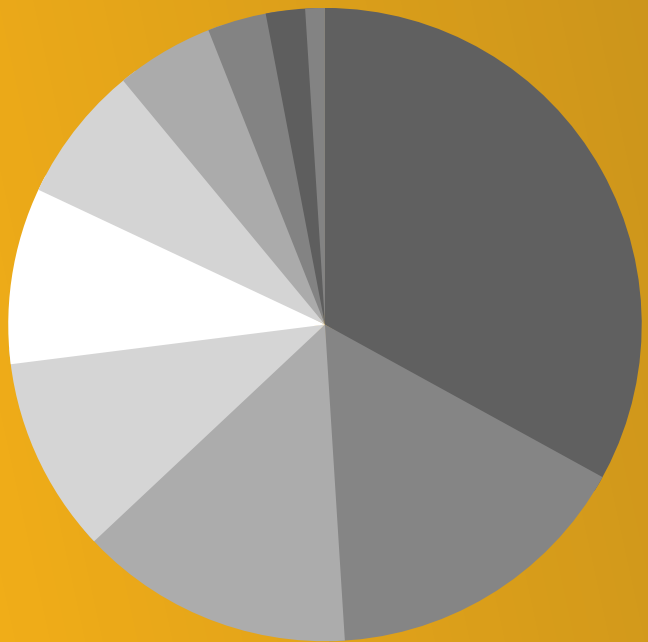
- 2022: \$81K
- 2021: \$78K



IMPACT

Allocation of Program Expenses

Payroll	33%
Taxes	16%
Groceries	14%
Quarterly School Fees	10%
Transportation	9%
Living Expenses	7%
Rent	5%
Administrative	3%
Utilities	2%
Computer Lab	1%



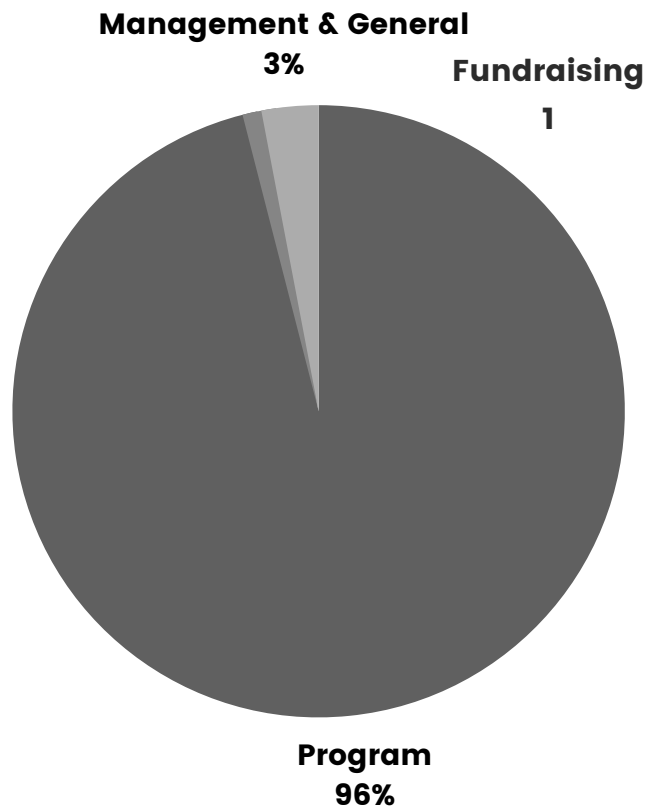
Overall Expense Allocation

\$63K

Total expenses in 2021

In 2020, we spent

- \$60.3K on program-related expenses
- \$500 on fundraising
- \$1.9K on management and general expenses



Donor Information

55

Number of donors

\$1.2K

Average Donation

Donor type	Percentage of donors	Average donation
First time	16%	\$145
Recurring*	11%	\$413
VIP** recurring	13%	\$6.5K
Non-recurring	49%	\$116
VIP non-recurring	11%	\$2.3K

*at least two quarters in a row

**VIP means one donation over \$500 or total of \$1K over 4 quarters



A Look Ahead

Our team has successfully scaled our programs in Rwanda year-over-year, and we are on track to expand beyond Rwanda to other underserved communities. Over the next five years, our team aims to:

- Raise and maintain a yearly operating budget of \$1Million USD to support our programs
- Establish a permanent facility in Rwanda
- Expand our services into one country beyond Rwanda
- Fund payroll for paid staff in the United States

Our vision for our permanent Rwanda facility:

- Capacity for 500 children in our street children program
- 200 scholarships per year supporting our low-income children
- 30 paid staff members on-site
- Mobile satellite centers deployed across Rwanda to provide more children with access to the support and services provided by Rising Above the Storms



Alphonsine's Closing Letter

As we close out 2022, I want to express my gratitude for the generosity of the many people whose support makes Rising Above the Storms a success: our children, our donors, our Rwanda team, our volunteers and Board, as well as our fans and followers. We have set audacious goals to further increase our impact and realize our vision for the future – from establishing permanent facilities, to increasing our curricular offerings and scholarships, to substantially increase the footprint of Rising Above the Storms by empowering vulnerable youth in the years to come.

As a global nonprofit, we set our sights beyond Rwanda, and our strategy reflects this goal. We have laid the foundation to double our annual fundraising efforts and reach \$1 million (USD) by 2027. We are thrilled by this momentum and are focused on accelerating it in the coming years.

Rising Above the Storms was founded on a dream, one where children's financial and familial status does not define who they are or who they can become. Instilling hope and tirelessly advocating for children who are not able to advocate for themselves motivates all that we do. From the bottom of my heart, I am so grateful for every person who has invested their time and support in bringing Rising Above the Storms to life. The light of our non-profit shines through each of you, as we change the world child-by-child.

Rising Above the Storms on social media



@RAS_NonProfit



@RisingAboveTheStorms



Rising Above the Storms



Rising Above the Storms





Please donate here

*RAS is a registered 501(c)(3) Non-Profit organization (EIN: 45-4808527). All donations made in the United States are tax-deductible in full or in part



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