



2023

ANNUAL REPORT

Transformation, One Circle at a Time





VISION

We build transformative environments for youth and adults to heal, find purpose, and build meaningful lives of service.



MISSION

Inside Circle empowers system-impacted people to lead change from within by providing opportunities for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people to heal and serve both themselves and others. We exist to reduce recidivism and all forms of violence - physical, emotional, and psychological - in our prisons and communities.





REFLECTIONS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As I reflect on 2023, what stands out is COLLABORATION. We were able to partner with others committed to bringing growth and empowerment to those society marks as disadvantaged, underserved or at-risk: we found partnership and courage to forge new paths in the face of the seemingly insurmountable quicksand of ‘what has always been.’ In a field that can feel solitary and segmented, it’s been a breath of fresh air.

From concerts with The Greenhouse Collective in California Medical Facility and California State Prison, Sacramento to working with the National Association for the Advancement of Returning Citizens in the suburbs of Washington DC and the countryside of New Jersey, we were able to bring Inside Circle across the nation this year. In particular, two places stand out: Memphis, TN and Brooklyn, NY.

In Memphis, we were able to work with the Sheriff to enter our first adult pretrial detention environment. The residents and staff in the jail committed to the process, from digging deep personally to supporting the residents for success. In an environment that’s historically antagonistic, it’s nothing short of life-changing.

In Brooklyn, we were part of a groundbreaking collaboration with District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, The Justice Ambassadors, Columbia University, Both Sides of The Violence, Bridge Street Development Corporation, and the Mayor’s Office on Criminal Justice. Together, we launched a year-long pilot program in the Bed-Stuy neighborhood, creating space for two groups of young people to tackle trauma that’s long plagued their housing projects. What was born there has the potential to bear fruit for generations.

As we look at 2024 and beyond, we’ll be expanding organizational capacity to support longer-range goals. We have our eyes set on opening programming in more prisons in California and bringing more facilitators into the fold. We even envision an Inside Circle transformational Healing Home and training academy, so that as our inside family comes home, they have a place to land, integrate, and train to meet life.

This truly transformational work is possible because of you and your commitment to this organization.

ELDRA JACKSON III
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



WORDS FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Inside Circle changed my life. I know personally how important, and how impactful this organization is. I'm sitting as the Board Chair because Inside Circle believes not that they can help incarcerated men and women, but because Inside Circle believes incarcerated men and women can help everybody else. It does not matter where we find ourselves. We have the strength and lived experience to be credible messengers, contributors, and change-makers.

I've learned, alongside the organization and as part of it, the importance of doing the work inside, as well as outside. This is why I'm so proud of the work we've done this past year as a Board. Each member has been personally dedicated to improving what we collectively believe in. We spent time together tackling hard topics, and found our way to consensus with compassion. We committed to pacing ourselves so we could make sure we're strong enough internally to hold the growth being asked of us. We stretched our comfort zones, broke bread together, and laughed alongside each other. We brought our strengths and expertise in spreading the mission of Inside Circle. Most inspiringly, we've imagined a future grounded in healing. This year has been one of work, caretaking, and intention-setting as we look to next year's Board and programmatic expansion.



MANUEL RUIZ
CHAIRMAN



YEAR IN REVIEW

HIGHLIGHTS

This past year our team of dedicated facilitators and group members worked tirelessly across the country from New Jersey to Texas to Tennessee and back home to California, to seed communities with our transformative practices and support their continued growth.



INSIDE PROGRAMS

Our programs at New Folsom and the California Medical Facility continue to run weekly. In addition to four circles running inside every week, we hosted our first weekend intensive since before the pandemic. Twenty-six individuals from outside the walls, including seven initiates from Brooklyn and New Jersey, joined in this deep circle. The core of our work, inside circles are an ongoing source of self-discovery, radical support, and communal healing.



BRIDGING PROGRAMS

Our Youth Empowerment Program (YAE) continues to positively redirect the trajectory of many young lives in New Jersey. Our collaboration with the Healing Home in Washington, DC, founded to provide safe reentry housing for young people in this program, continues to inspire healthy choices and demonstrates the need for Inside Circle's unique blend of inclusion, accountability, and support. We believe this collaboration has planted a seed for significant future growth, paving the way for our own transformative home dedicated to healing.



COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Our efforts yielded the successful launch of three transformative community development projects spanning across New York, New Jersey, and Tennessee. These initiatives, tailored to address the needs of both justice-involved individuals and custodial staff and law enforcement, serve as catalysts for fostering meaningful connections and mutual understanding. By nurturing these vital relationships, we are building a solid foundation for profound and lasting change within these communities.

EDUCATION & ADVOCACY

Inside Circle extends its mission beyond program delivery, engaging in a holistic approach to promote awareness, education, and advocacy. These efforts aim to catalyze meaningful change within individuals as well as systems. Central to our efforts is the **Inside Circle Podcast**, a cornerstone platform for authentic discourse and storytelling. Through candid conversations and interviews, the podcast delves into the lived experiences of those impacted by incarceration and reentry, fostering empathy and understanding among listeners.

In addition to our podcast, Inside Circle actively participates in **speaking engagements and public forums**, leveraging personal narratives to challenge misconceptions and advocate for systemic reform. Our speakers share their journeys of redemption and resilience, inspiring audiences to reconsider preconceived notions about incarceration.

Our newsletter is an important point of connection both inside and outside. We provide a **monthly newsletter** to our subscribers, sharing updates, speaking engagements, and highlights to our community on the outside. Additionally, our **Inmate Newsletter** is mailed four times a year to all 200+ Inside Circle participants in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation system, keeping them connected, supported, and inviting them to share their thoughts and reflections to those outside.

Our **PenPal Program** facilitates correspondence between individuals inside and outside correctional facilities. Through letter exchanges, participants find support and connection, providing a sense of community and solidarity.

These initiatives collectively underscore Inside Circle's dedication to advancing education, empowerment, and advocacy. We invite you to join us in our mission to promote empathy, challenge stigma, and champion the rights and dignity of all individuals impacted by the justice system.



TESTIMONIALS

Individuals share stories from their experience with Inside Circle's initiatives. These personal accounts vividly illustrate the profound impact our programs have had on people and communities, showcasing the deep, lasting changes fostered by our work.

"Rick Misener changed my life when I was in New Folsom. He took the time and patience to help this first timer and he started me on the right path in prison life."

- Thomas Franklin

"It's up to us that are no longer numb To heal those who can't speak For what they don't know they are missing Compassion."

- Roland Stoecker,
Valley State Prison

"[Because of my work with Inside Circle] I am now the head coordinator on a yard for In-Building Self-Help Program training other inmates to be facilitators I have a solid team ready to fight this war that is internal."

- Phillip White,
California State Prison



"I have dedicated the rest of my life to creating circles where ever I find myself... whereby turning the greatest challenges in my life into the promise of establishing a positive legacy."

- Kenneth Allen,
California Men's Colony

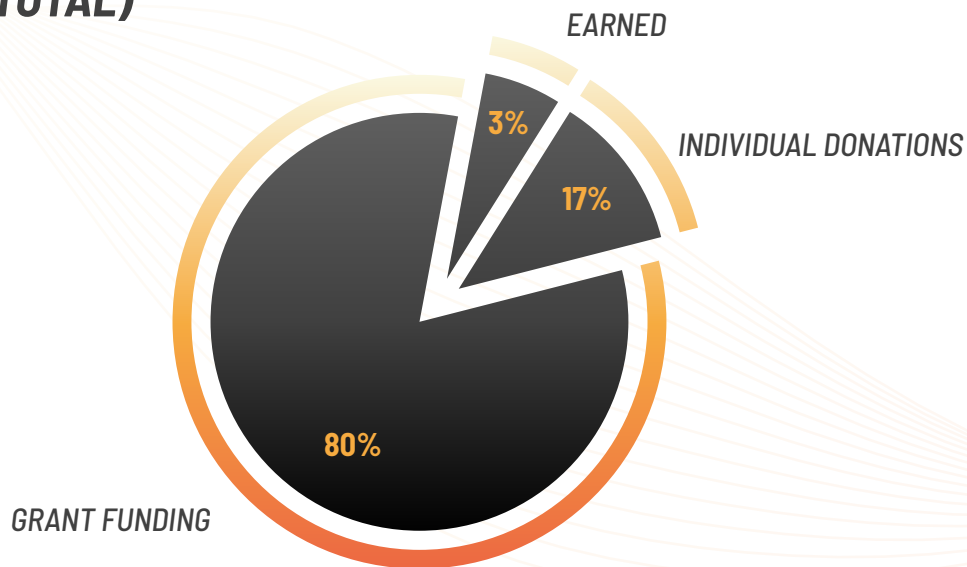
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

SUMMARY

We've put great effort into diversifying our funding sources. We've done this through increasing our foundation grant support, securing critical funds to invest in new partnerships and responding to requests to explore long-term collaborations, and have secured expanded support for our youth programming from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Most notably, we've doubled our individual giving from last year. This is a critical marker of support and sustainability, and we believe an area we will continue to grow.

REVENUE 2023

\$1,179,370 (TOTAL)



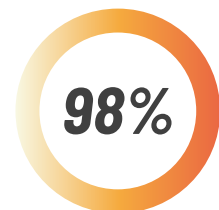
GROWTH FROM 2022



increase in revenue from 2022
\$874,735 in 2022



fueled by 30% growth in
grant funding



growth in individual donations
from 2022

LOOKING AHEAD

FUTURE GOALS

As we look ahead, it's evident that Inside Circle will need to undergo significant growth in the coming year. There's a widespread recognition across the nation that our current justice system is flawed, necessitating a deeper and more profound transformation. With the increasing demand for our facilitators, programming, and services, we are proactively taking steps to ensure that we can meet this demand while upholding the same standards of integrity, accountability, and compassion that define all our endeavors.

01

INVESTMENT IN BUILDING OUR BOARD:

Both our Board capacity and membership, as part of a larger organization-wide effort to build our infrastructure and expand the reach and impact of our programs. Inside Circle is being called to grow, and we're committed to growing responsibly.

02

INVESTMENT IN FACILITATORS:

Our facilitators are the backbone of Inside Circle, driving meaningful change in every circle both inside and outside. As demand increases, we're intensifying our comprehensive training to expand our pool of skilled facilitators, and moving some from contract positions to staff.

03

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE:

This coming year we're building the blueprint and business plan for our own healing-centered transitional home. A non-traditional space that will provide reentry housing, ongoing training for facilitators, and serve as a national hub for peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and learning. This will be a bold step forward in our commitment to holistic and long-term support for transformation and healing.





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THANK YOU

We extend a heartfelt gratitude to the dedicated team of **facilitators** whose unwavering commitment ensured the success of our Outside Circles, empowering them to realize their fullest potential. Special thanks to Natasha Taylor, Randy Rusk, Min Harris, Cindy Christensen, Martha Preble, Maggie Anderson, Manuel Ruiz, Dr. James McLeary, Jairus McLeary, Rick Misener, Aaron Burris, and Roxanne Burroughs. This past year, the collaborative spirit infused new energy into our endeavors, underscoring the remarkable outcomes achievable through collective action. From expanding Inside Circle's footprint nationwide to forging innovative partnerships in Memphis and Brooklyn, our joint efforts have not only challenged conventional norms but also laid the groundwork for profound societal change.

To our esteemed **donors and partners**, we express our deepest appreciation for your steadfast support, which has propelled us on this transformative journey. Your generosity has emboldened us to venture into uncharted territories, bringing hope and transformation to countless lives. Together, we've woven a tapestry of change, where each contribution serves as a vital thread in the fabric of a brighter, more inclusive future. As we chart our course for 2024 and beyond, your continued collaboration remains paramount in nurturing the seeds of change we've sown.

Thank you for standing shoulder to shoulder with us as we forge ahead, translating aspirations into tangible reality and continuing to redefine the realm of possibilities through collective action and shared purpose.



PARTNERS AND SPONSORS

DONORS

500,000+

- Annie E. Casey Foundation

\$50,000 - \$499,999

- City of New York
- Gordon & Michele Brown
- State of California
- Unlikely Collaborators

\$10,000 - \$49,999

- City and County of San Francisco
- National Association for the Advancement of Returning Citizens
- National Philanthropic Trust
- Pottery World Inc
- Shelby County Sheriff's Dept.
- Warner Music Group

\$5,000 - \$9,999

- USIT Foundation
- Ashim Gupta
- Will Harper
- The HUBB
- Jesuit Volunteer Donor Circle
- Holiday Johnson
- Rex Foundation
- E. Rosen
- Karen Piretti Rosen
- The Table At Central UMC
- Steve Taylor

\$1,000 - \$4,999

- Andrew & Lisa Blum
- Jessica Campbell
- Monica Chi
- Scott Copeland
- DTUI.com LLC
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- Jennifer Jerde
- Stephen Kawaja
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- Jeff Moseley
- Dee Rogers Photography
- Ari Rosen
- Carol Ryan
- Maxim Sirenko
- South Carolina Dept. Juvenile Justice
- Matthew & Paige Tolmach
- Veronica Vargas

\$500 - \$999

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- Donald Berry

- Rio Bethune
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- Michael Dimock
- Amirose Eisenbach
- Andrew Ellis
- LPL Financial
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- Jake Reason
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- David White
- James Zhang

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- Al Brown
- Angela Bucher
- Cindy Christensen
- DePaul Pop Culture Conference
- Christopher W Davis
- Martin Dunelr
- Sherry Edensmith
- Boukje Eerkens
- Christopher Fenaroli

- Progressive Insurance Foundation
- Network for Good
- Soren M. Gordhamer
- Sarah Graves
- Lyuba Kolomiyets
- Taya Levine
- Vern Ludwig
- Kimberly MacDonald
- Crispian Mudd
- Thomas J Nerger
- Tiffany Nikolov
- Matthew Pielert
- Candida M Ramirez
- Scott Raymond
- Parker Simon
- Natasha Yvonne Taylor
- James Wavro

UP TO \$199

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- Gary Arnstein
- Rod Bacon
- Jason Beccaris
- Melissa Blaustein
- Ryan Blum-Kryzstal
- Sarah Lundy Boudreaux
- Melissa Bryant
- Jeff Buenrostro
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- Cole Cameron
- Fidelity Charitable
- Timothy Dimock
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- Maraba DiRaddo
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- Margo Downs
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- Alex Edelstein
- Michael Fogelman
- Faith Fuller
- Finno Furre
- Seth Gale

- Nicholas Gardner
- Samantha Gerrity
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- Nancy Grover
- Sarah Community Hainstock
- Jill Harris
- Lisa Hertel
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- Steve Spitzer
- Sarah Taylor
- Stephen Taylor
- Olga Terekhin
- Depaul University
- Jeff Warner
- Michael Weston
- James White
- Aprill Winney
- Vincent Woo

WAYS TO GIVE

HEALED PEOPLE HEAL PEOPLE

Each dollar you donate helps us to build the transformative environments needed within prison and reentry communities to heal trauma, build life skills, and find purpose.

Support us in reducing violence in our prisons and communities and diverting youth from lives of incarceration by donating today. In addition to online donations, we accept cryptocurrency and gifts of stock. You can also mail checks to:

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Francisco, CA 94115