IMPACT REPORT



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ABOUT TRANSFORMATIONS

Transformations is a trans women of color led Midwest nonprofit organization focused on capacity building and leadership development among trans communities of color in our Missouri, Kansas, and Northwest Arkansas (Ozark) Region.

We formed in 2016 after a wave of violence impacted our communities. Specifically, local Black and Latina trans women, as well as trans femmes of color, faced escalating violence, including several murders. Our Founder and Executive Director Merrique Jenson was the lead community advocate on over five of these homicides and worked closely with the chosen family, sisters, and community impacted by these women's murders.

In response to the violence we used movement building and organizing strategies to create a trans-community led, three-day healing and resiliency summit. The summit brought trans women of color and trans young people together to collectively grieve their lost sisters and build power around a shared vision of real community safety that centers us. Our initial summit program is available on our website.

Transformations is innovative and brave in our vision to create safer, thriving communities for trans women of color. In 2021, we embraced a new chapter for our organization. As we remain committed to serving transgender, nonbinary, gender-expansive, and gender nonconforming (TGNC) young people, we pivoted to explicitly center transgender young women of color, and trans and nonbinary young people in survival mode and without traditional systems of support, in their experiences, resiliency, leadership, and wisdom.



FROM OUR CO-CHAIRS, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

LOOKING BACK:

A PROSPEROUS YEAR

As the Board Co-Chairs, we are proud to have created a full-time Executive Director role in 2022 and could not be more thrilled to have Merrique Jenson fill this role. Merrique has poured so much time and heart into this position over the last year. We wish her a huge congratulations on the recognition she has received for her leadership, including being honored with a 2022 Torch Award at the National Trans Visibility March and recognized in Kansas City's 2022 Trans Day of Visibility Proclamation.

We are also excited by the organization's growth in the last year as we doubled our fundraising and budget, meaning that we could expand our programming and compensate trans women of color for their time and talents. In 2022, we reinvested \$65,000 directly into trans communities of color through paid consulting, speaking fees, contract services, and microgrants.



We have also expanded the board to meet the organization's needs and grow our capacity to support trans women of color.



JD BEZARES
BOARD CO-CHAIR (2022)



HAILEE BLAND WALSH

BOARD CO-CHAIR (2022)





OUR FIERCE LEADERSHIP

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We are a grassroots community organization formed by and for trans women of color. During the past few years, we have built conversations, trainings and programs that explicitly focus on affirming to Black and Brown trans femmes and trans women of color. In addition, our work seeks to address the complex web of intersectional systems of power and oppression facing trans women of color, including colorism and anti-Blackness, immigration status, sexism, and trans misogyny that we face both in mainstream society as well as specifically within majority white, queer community spaces.

Part of our anti-racist practice has been a constant examination of our board structure and centering the wisdom, energy and leadership of trans women of color and trans femmes of color. We have developed policies and honed in our programs to further uplift our femme and women leaders.



JD BEZARES BOARD CO-CHAIR & COMMUNITY LEADER



HAILEE BLAND-WALSH BOARD CO-CHAIR & FITNESS AND COMMUNITY LEADER



KELLY NOU VICE CHAIR & KC TRANS ICON



AARON ARTHUR-GRAY CREATIVE ADVOCATE & MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELOR



SIMAYA CHARLIZE-TURNER MEDIA MAKER & NATIONAL LEADER



CHADWICK CAMPBELL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & HIV RESEARCHER



FYNELLE FRISTOE PERFORMER, HOST & COMMUNITY LEADER



ALEX SALAZAR COMMUNITY ADVOCATE



CARMEN
XAVIER
COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVOCATE
& TRANS ELDER



SUSIE MCCLANNAHAN HOUSING JUSTICE & ANTI-VIOLENCE ADVOCATE

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

GROWING OUR POWER

When we first formed in 2016, I never imagined that Transformations would be where it is today. I saw an immediate need for uplifting our stories, but we first needed to focus on our strategies for survival in Kansas City following the brutal murders of Black trans women, Black queer folks and a trans Latina immigrant.

Today, it honors me to serve as the Executive Director for Transformations and to work with my sisters and communities towards our collective liberation. What that looks like for me is having affirming and supportive trans people in our lives, easy access to gender affirming care and low-cost barriers to surgery, being well-paid for our brilliance and labor, our needs met, and seeing trans folks loving, thriving and leading in public spaces....things that I dreamed of when I was younger.



MERRIQUE JENSON FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I grew up in Missouri and belonged to a family where intergenerational violence and racism were all too familiar - from my White father towards my mom and her immigrant family from Mexico. After coming out as gay in my teens, I lost my place of belonging. Not just from that household, but also from my high school.

By the grace, love and support of Black queer and trans people in St. Louis, I found a new home - my new place of belonging. They helped keep me safe and alive, along with individual activists and organizers. All together, this helped show me the power of my voice and leadership.

I am proud to be one of the only trans Latina women leading a nonprofit in Missouri, Kansas and Arkansas. Transformations is intentional in how we offer our programs. And we are unique in how we showcase affirming, collaborative sisterhood among diverse trans women of color in our region.

Transformations today is far beyond what I ever imagined back in 2016. This is our first annual report and I'm amazed at what we've accomplished this year! And I'm excited to continue leading the growth of this organization into new challenges and successes.

TRANSFORMATIONS PROGRAMMING





This past year we hosted our first Liberation Camp: Growing Our Power for Trans BIPOC Leaders in the Ozark mountain region of Arkansas. The idea for Liberation Camp grew out of our organizing in Arkansas, born from hosting a trans BIPOC leadership retreat in Fall 2021, utilizing healing modules and writing to discuss our journeys and organizing strategies.

A total of 24 trans people of color attended our 2022 Liberation camp, more than double the number that attended our 2021 leadership retreat. Liberation Camp: Growing our Power serves as a leadership pipeline for trans people of color to step into mentorship roles. 9 trans people of color have served as counselors, mental health support and Co-Directors at camp.



SHOWING UP

- Most campers were from Missouri and Arkansas, but we also had attendees from Arizona, Maryland, Washington, Illinois and California.
- Most participants were trans women and femmes of color (8 total) and 4 identified as nonbinary masculine or trans men.
- We were thrilled to work with KC-based artist and fashion designer, Whitney Manney, to make us custom camp sashes and merit badges - which were a hit!

TRANSFORMATIONS PROGRAMMING















Transformations has hosted "The Dolls are Thriving: A National Virtual Summit on Women of Color of Trans Experience in Leadership, Advocacy and Mentorship" annually since 2021. A total of 262 attendees have participated in the virtual summits, primarily trans women of color. Attendees have shared they found the summit empowering, healing, affirming and provided them direct access to other women doing the work in activist, artistic and organizing circles. We chose to use and embrace the word "dolls" because this language has a rich history with women of trans experience. Specifically, among many women of color of trans backgrounds, we often use it positively with each other to celebrate our successes and beauty.



SHOWING OUT

- In 2022, we had over 50 participants attend the virtual two day summit.
- The majority of attendees were trans women and trans femmes of color, and participants had conversations and formed relationships that continued beyond the summit.
- We were excited to invite trans women of color to be speakers, panelists and hosts during the summit and pay over \$12,000 for their labor and brilliance.

TRANSFORMATIONS PROGRAMMING



Transformations provided \$7K in microgrants to trans youth in 2022.

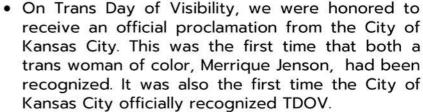
We provided direct funding to trans youth in December 2022 so they could afford necessary expenses related to their safety and well-being, such as going towards moving costs, helping with rent so a youth could move to their first apartment on their own, paying for gender affirming care and medical bills, covering meals and groceries, and purchasing gender affirming supplies to keep themselves safer.



MOMENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONS



- We were excited to host our yearly planning retreat with Trans women of color in February. This retreat was lead by our Liberation Camp Co-Directors Joelle Bayaa-Uzuri Espeut, Merrique Jenson, and Camp Counselor Monica DeJesus Anaya.
- In March we held our "What's at Stake: Community Town Hall", moderated by Joelle Bayaa-Uzuri, & featured trans leaders like Diamond Stylz, Rep. Stephanie Byers, Jordan Burns, Kendall Martinez-Wright, Nyla Foster & Rumba Yambu.





- In April, together with trans student activists, we held a student march out and rally which included legislative activist Kendall Martinez Wright - the first ever trans person of color to run for a Missouri office.
- In June, Transformations made headlines. We were featured in the Kansas City Beacon in an article by Josh Merchant: 'KC has few trans women of color in leadership, this organization is changing that'.
- And we made the news! We built relationships and in collaboration with producer Christina Santiago at KSHB 41 in order to uplift our community's voices during June Pride Month. We had the opportunity to work with reporters Sarah Blake and Dan Cohen to showcase the lives and resiliency of KC Trans leaders in 3 feature stories.





MOMENTS OF TRANSFORMATIONS

TRANSFORMATIONS KC ADVANCES STORIES OF TRANS PEOPLE OF



STILL STANDING: TRANS WOMEN IN KC SHARE THEIR STORY OF SURVIVAL EMPOWERMENT



By: Sarah Plake | 41 KSHB | June 30, 2022

- We worked closely with trans women of color leaders to host our second annual "Dolls Are Thriving" summit and featured our keynote conversation "Between Muvas & Daughtas" inter-generational dialogue about trans families. dynamics of how we structure relationships, the highs and lows of our dynamics as how we raise each other as trans sisters.
- Our keynote conversation centered trans women of color mothers/aunties and daughters. It featured Agaiotupu Viena (Deputy Director of UTOPIA Washington) Jahnell Butler (Health Educator, Member of the House of Chanel) Kerri Colby ("RuPaul's Drag Race") Sasha Colby (Advocate, Miss Continental 2012) Tepa Vaina (Program Director of UTOPIA) and was moderated by Dr. Tatyana Moaton (National Advocate, CEO and Principal Consultant for Envision Consulting, Overall Godmother of House of Chanel)
- We were thrilled to offer our first ever Liberation Camp, which was received with positive reception by our participants and direct seed-money to fund this initial camp from Third Wave Mobilize Power Fund, Emergent Fund, Urgent Action Fund, Borealis Emerging LGBTQ Leaders of Color, ACLU Missouri, ACLU of Arkansas, Groundswell Fund. Ewing Kauffman Marion Foundation & Interurban Arthouse.
- We cultivated a beautiful relationship with one of our campers, Donato Fatuesi, who's social media brilliance allowed us to elevate her into a firstever Social Media Organizer position with our organization!
- We also participated in the National Trans Visibility March in Los Angeles this past year where our Executive Director, Merrique Jenson was honored at the Torch awards for her leadership.
- Finally, a small team of our leaders attended The Giver's Revival in Miami as part of a healing and organizing retreat in December.



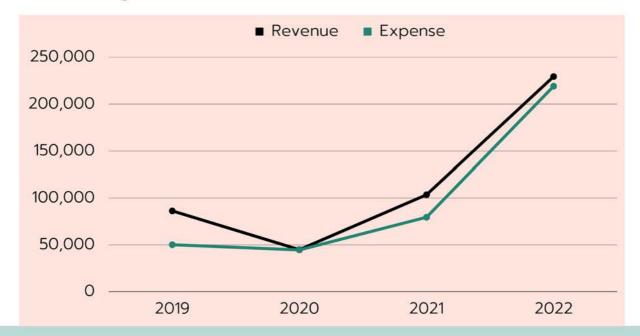


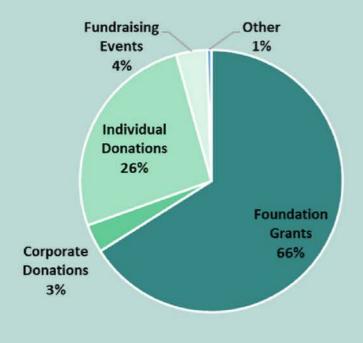
YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WERK

FINANCIAL REPORT

We doubled our fundraising and budget in 2022.

Having been deeply impacted by the COVID pandemic in 2020, like many other regional nonprofits, we are thrilled to have had such significant growth last year. We've been able to provide a space where we can invest in our collective leadership, nurture our youth and give them the resources they need, and amplify our ability to reach more community members within our region.





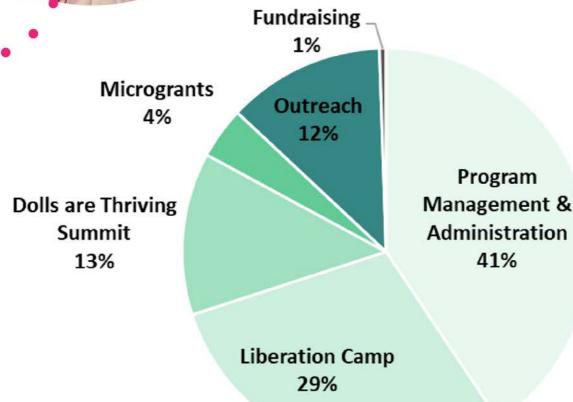
2022 FUNDING SOURCES

Our growth this past year is was made possible thanks to foundation and community grants supporting our programatic work, along with individual and corporate giving supporting our microgrants and personnel costs. We are grateful to all of our funders for making it possible to expand our work and more deeply support our communities.



YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS AT WERK

FINANCIAL REPORT



2022 EXPENSE BREAKDOWN

Most of our annual budget goes toward our programming and outreach activities. We are intentional about leaning into the brilliance and leadership of our trans and gender-diverse communities and have reinvested \$65,000 back into our communities through paid consulting, speaking fees, contract services, and microgrants.

OTHE KANSAS CITY BEACON

KC HAS FEW TRANS WOMEN OF COLOR IN LEADERSHIP. THIS NONPROFIT IS CHANGING THAT.



By: Josh Merchant | The Kansas City Beacon | Jun 15, 2022

FUNDING OUR WORK IN 2022

GRANTMAKERS FOR GIRLS OF COLOR:

HOLDING A SISTER INITIATIVE

TRANSCEND:

COMMUNITY IMPACT FUND

TRANS LIFELINE:

UNTIL WE'RE FREE CAMPAIGN

AIDS SERVICE FOUNDATION OF GREATER KANSAS CITY

THIRD WAVE FUND:

MOBILIZE POWER FUND

EMERGENT FUND

BOREALIS PHILANTHROPY:

EMERGING LGBTQ LEADERS OF COLOR FUND

URGENT ACTION FUND

HAILEE BLAND-WALSH

KELSEY & MARCUS PERRY

LAURA BETH & SPENCER WALSH

TERESA & TOM WALSH

GROUNDSWELL FUND:

RAPID RESPONSE FUND

TRANS JUSTICE FUNDING PROJECT:

RE-UP GRANT

THE BAND THAT FELL TO EARTH KC:

BOWIE TRIBUTE SHOW

STONEWALL SPORTS KC

EWING MARION KAUFFMAN FOUNDATION

PROMO MISSOURI

INTERURBAN ARTHOUSE

ACLU OF MISSOURI

ACLU OF ARKANSAS





