



ANNUAL REPORT



2014 - 2018

Creating & Providing Personalized
Birthday Parties for **Homeless Children**

extraordinarybirthdays.org

Message from the **Executive Director**

I started Extra-Ordinary Birthdays (EOB) in 2010 with a simple vision to recognize homeless children for their birthday. Since then, the vision has expanded to ***“a community that recognizes the transformative power of birthday celebrations for homeless children, one that empowers their caregivers, and inspires moments of joy & happiness in the lives of homeless families.”***

I believed then, and even more so now, that recognizing and celebrating homeless children has an impact not only on the celebrated child but the family and community as well.



It is that belief that there is a relationship between the birthday parties and their impact that correlates with the areas that are at the core of EOB's mission and value of:



Children Feeling Valued



Community Involvement



Transformation via Hope



Caregiver Empowerment



Inspired by Books

To date we have celebrated over 850 children with our unique approach of providing individual and personalized parties that speak to the unique interest of each child. It is one that continues to set Extra-Ordinary Birthdays apart while others look to duplicate it.

We have accomplished all of this because of a committed board of directors, a solid team of volunteers and a community that believes every child experiencing homelessness should be recognized for their birthday. We share in the conviction that doing so must include all of us—wrapping our arms around the homeless community in ways that say “you matter.”

I continue to be grateful for how far we have come, for the collective vision of believers and the commitment of the many citizens of this world. I look forward to continuing this journey.

Schinnell Leake



RESPECT

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays treats our clients, colleagues and our community with dignity, equality, courtesy and consideration.



COMMITMENT

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays is committed to partnering effectively with families, shelters, organizations and communities to carry out our mission with excellence.



ACCOUNTABILITY

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays exercises honesty and responsibility in its actions, decisions and use of resources.



PASSION AND PRIDE

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays' enthusiasm and passion is conveyed in all of our communications and professional interactions.



TEAMWORK & COLLABORATION

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays' mission is successfully carried out through staff, volunteers and partners sharing ideas, talents and resources. In addition, EOB strives to work collaboratively with families, shelters, organizations and communities throughout the world.



VISION

Our vision is a community that recognizes the transformative power of birthday celebrations for homeless children, one that empowers their caregivers, and inspires moments of joy and happiness in the lives of homeless families.



MISSION

To transform the lives of homeless children by creating personalized birthday parties that make them feel valued and inspire moments of delight in their lives.

Message from the **Board Chairman**

I simply love the idea of having your own personal holiday. A time when you can be celebrated and celebrate yourself for being you. A time when you can laugh or cry just because you want too. A time when all that matters is your next smile and all your worries are a passing thought. **A time when the moment is you and you are living in it.** ♡



My love for birthdays is what drew me to Extra-Ordinary Birthdays. What's better than a day of cake, games, and presents? That's why it breaks my heart that so many kids do not get to experience the joy a birthday brings. They don't get the smiles, the cake, the games, or the presents because their families are experiencing homelessness.

I decided to be a part of the solution. I first volunteered in April, 2015 and the rest is history.

EOB has seen tremendous growth since 2016. It is a testament to the vision of our founder, Schinnell Leake. Her infectious passion has translated to an increase in volunteers, donors and shelters. While we continued to grow through 2018, the process wasn't always smooth. EOB closed 2018; the unintended victim of arson. Our headquarters was destroyed and very little was salvageable. Eight years' worth of inventory turned to ashes in an instant, and tears flowed throughout the organization. Yet, parties were scheduled for the following week, and we couldn't allow our heartache to become heartbreak for the amazing kids still expecting

extraordinary birthday parties. Fortunately, our extraordinary team of volunteers had planned the parties in advance and our young friends were none the wiser. All parties were executed in exemplary EOB fashion.

The EOB community has shown incredible resilience, as we rebuild from this tragedy. We are resilient because we believe in hope.

And hope doesn't burn. Hope is unyielding. It is every ray of sunshine on a new day and every smile on

a child's face. Our hope lies in every personalized centerpiece crafted by a party planner, and in the details of a themed cake that each baker designs, and in the careful hands of a party volunteer putting the birthday child in the party costume. Our hope is unrelenting. It lies in the bright smiles of families being able to experience the joy of birthday parties, through the struggles of providing the daily basics of life. We are thankful for our donors who support the mission of Extra-Ordinary Birthdays, our volunteers who continue to provide extraordinary party experiences, and the families that allow us to share in these magical moments. Birthday parties are often the highlight of our childhood memories and it is my honor and pleasure to be a part of this extraordinary organization. As we rebuild in 2019, we will continue working to transform the lives of homeless children through personalized birthday parties that make them feel valued. Birthdays will continue to inspire moments of delight in the lives of homeless children.

Regards,

Jolene McNeil



“A TIME
WHEN THE
MOMENT
IS YOU
AND YOU ARE
LIVING IN IT.”

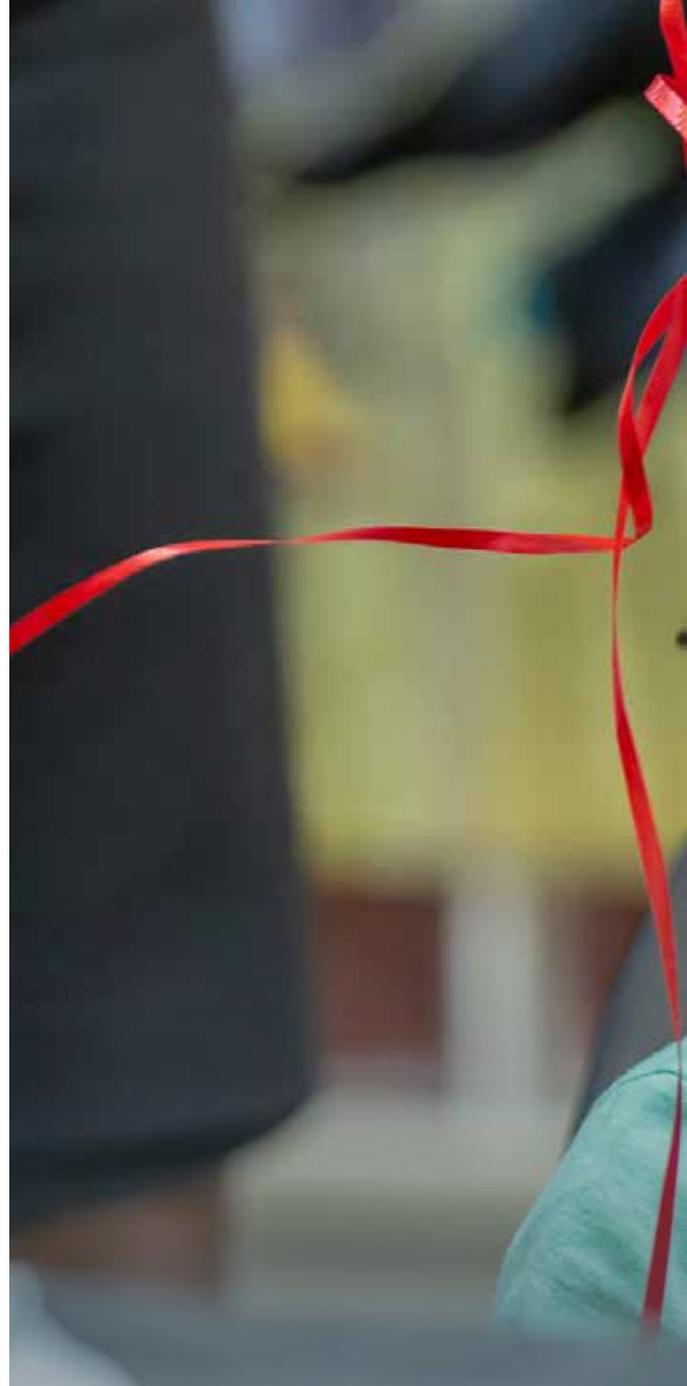
History of **Extra-Ordinary Birthdays**

Extra-Ordinary Birthdays is a nonprofit organization that creates and provides monthly personalized birthday celebrations to children experiencing homelessness throughout the District of Columbia area.

Since 2010, Extra-Ordinary Birthdays (EOB) has provided celebrations at facilities serving families living in homeless shelters, preschool programs for homeless children, transitional and temporary housing, and domestic violence programs.

Through personalized birthday celebrations EOB connects with homeless children from a place of happiness rather than their current circumstances giving them what other children enjoy on their birthday—to feel valued and that they matter. Extra-Ordinary Birthdays is about giving children the experience that reinforces their sense of self-worth, self-esteem and importance. Addressing the need of self-esteem in homeless children is important yet often underrated. However, celebrating birthdays is not like any other single social event in the life of a child. The connection between the acknowledgement of this milestone in the life of a child and self-esteem is that a child with a healthy dose of self-esteem has the best defense against life's challenges.

EOB strives to ensure that children throughout the Washington metropolitan area experiencing homelessness have an opportunity to celebrate their birthday with their family and friends, to feel unique, honored, and worthy of celebration. Between 2014 and 2018, Extra-Ordinary Birthdays organized and celebrated 850 children throughout Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.



9 SHELTERS
EOB Sites

In total, nine shelters have served as sites for EOB birthday celebrations. The team at EOB have been diligent in securing additional sites to serve the greater DMV area.



PARTNERING SHELTERS & FACILITIES | 2012-2018



Children face particularly adverse effects of homelessness. They are often displaced from relatives, friends, and school when their families become homeless. Children must also cope with the shame associated with being homeless.

When a child lacks a sense of belonging and significance, their self-esteem is threatened, they become discouraged. When a family is struggling for housing and to put food on the table, a child's birthday party is often last on the list of priorities, and more often completely unattainable.

Every child, especially those living without many of the necessities we take for granted—sleeping in the same bed every night, breakfast on the table, safety in the home—deserves to know that their birthday is special.

♥ **They are important.
Their growth matters.**

Through the customized celebrations of kids' birthdays, the Extra-Ordinary Birthdays team fosters and creates moments of pure positivity for children and families; moments and memories that'll be woven into the patchwork of their lives.

Schinnell Leake,
EOB Executive Director





COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Volunteers
- Shelter Partnerships
- Family and Friends
- Donors

EOB celebrations are tailored to have an impact in five areas:

community involvement, caregiver empowerment, children feeling valued, inspiration by books, lasting transformation via hope



CHILDREN FEELING VAUED



CAREGIVER EMPOWERMENT

- Parent-Child Relationship
- Skill Building
- Party Planning
- Enhancing Self-worth



LASTING TRANSFORMATION VIA HOPE

- Communiications
- Service
- Performance
- Satisfaction



INSPIRED BY BOOKS

- Pride in Ownership
- Focus on Literacy
- Interest in Library
- Parent-Child Reading

Areas of Impact



COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

EOB is able to achieve its celebrations for children within the Washington metropolitan area through the generosity of volunteers, party planners, and donors. Each celebration is planned and decorated specifically to the child's preferred and requested theme. On the day of the celebration, party planners and community members arrive at the residence and setup the designated space for each birthday boy and girl.

Each child for which the celebration is planned receives a gift donated by a community member or EOB partner. Children celebrating his or her birthday receives party favors, decorations, games, and a cake, each donated by someone in the community.

A review of the satisfaction survey revealed that parents were satisfied with EOB volunteers and party planners. Of the 217 parents surveyed, 97% expressed that they had a good experience with EOB staff (volunteers and party planners). When asked about level of engagement, 208 parents expressed that they strongly agreed that the EOB staff members were engaged and energetic, and 210 parents strongly agreed that the staff and volunteers to be professional and friendly.

EOB STAFF/VOLUNTEER(S) WERE PROFESSIONAL AND FRIENDLY.



- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

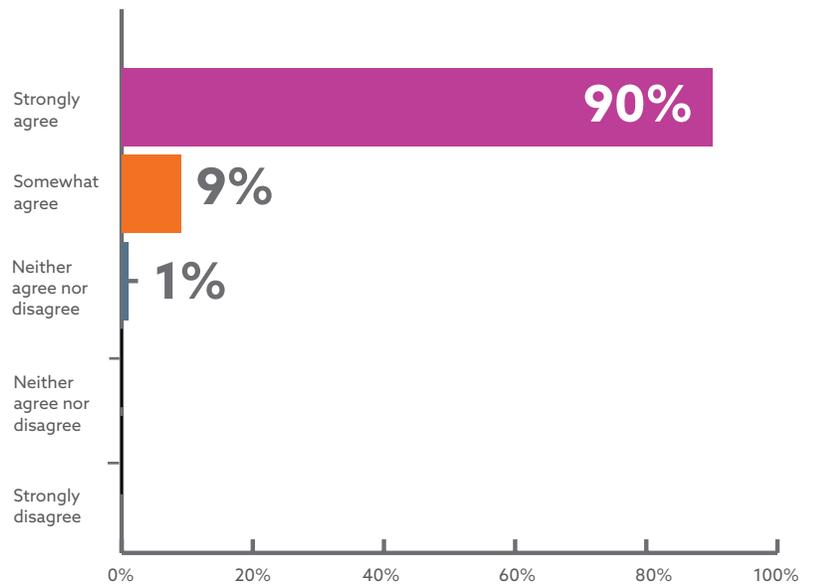


CAREGIVER EMPOWERMENT

The vision at EOB is to empower caregivers to ensure a healthy parent-child relationship. EOB volunteers and party planners work closely with the caregivers to design a unique birthday celebration that will demonstrate to the birthday boy or girl that he/she is honored and valued. This collaboration on caregiver empowerment and underscores the caregiver's self-esteem.

When asked whether EOB staff/volunteer(s) made the caregiver feel involved and acknowledged, 95% of caregivers strongly agreed that they felt involved in planning the birthday celebration and acknowledge by EOB volunteers and planners. Parents also reported feeling valued by the EOB staff, with 90% strongly agreeing that their ideas and input were valued and incorporated in planning of their child's EOB birthday celebration.

MY IDEAS AND INPUT WERE VALUED AND CARRIED OUT AT MY CHILD'S BIRTHDAY PARTY.



EOB STAFF/VOLUNTEER(S) MADE ME AS THE PARENT/GUARDIAN FEEL INVOLVED AND ACKNOWLEDGED.



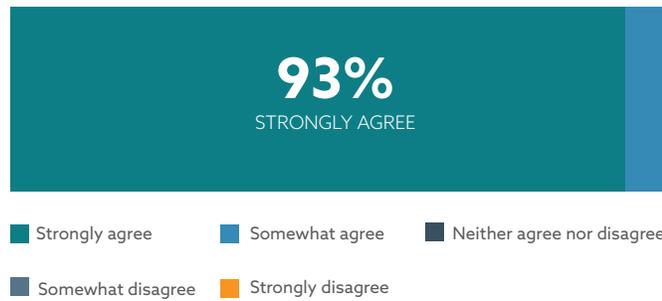
Areas of Impact



CHILDREN FEELING VALUED

EOB's mission is to design and host personalized, unique birthday celebrations that demonstrate to children they are valued and to help them feel the simple joy of celebrating their birthday with family and friends. The goal is to help caregivers make their children the center of attention and show them that they are worthy of recognition and celebration. EOB staff with the parents' input work to provide a one of a kind birthday celebration and family bonding experience for each child. Over 90% of parents strongly agreed that the EOB celebrations were customized to their child, as well as age appropriate for the child and his/her friends. Additionally, 94% of parents strongly agreed that their children enjoyed themselves, and 95% strongly agree that the children really liked their gift.

THE PARTY WAS CUSTOMIZED TO MY CHILD.



MY CHILD LIKED THEIR GIFT(S).



THE ACTIVITIES ARE ARE-APPROPRIATE.



THE CHILDREN ENJOYED THEMSELVES.



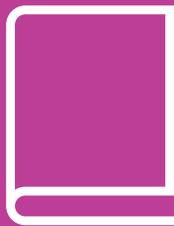
INSPIRED BY BOOKS

In 2015, EOB officially launched the Extra-Ordinary Readers (EOR) program. The program seeks to encourage self-worth and forward thinking toward a bright future for homeless children. Each child who receives an Extra-Ordinary Birthdays celebration is also treated to a very special party favor—a brand new, age-appropriate children’s book, chosen especially for them by the party planning team.

EOR supports literacy for all children, regardless of socioeconomic status, as well as pride in ownership of a new book. Books are generally collected for the program via the annual book drive and Amazon book drive wish list. Since its inception through the end of 2018, EOB received 4,000 books from various donors.

The Extra-Ordinary Readers program seeks to instill a pride in the ownership of a book, especially a brand-new book. Ideally, the program exists to encourage children to develop an interest in reading, and to facilitate parentchild bonding as they begin to or continue to read together.

By December 2018, EOB had gifted 2,550 books to children.



2550
books gifted



TOP DONORS



Mr. Steve Poston

Ms. Sherry Evans

Colm Research Group, LLC

Areas of Impact

child house strive
awesome girl strong birthday
fun content experience young successful
love potty health



LASTING TRANSFORMATION VIA HOPE

EOB parties offer parents and children an opportunity to wish and hope for the future. The transformation of children and parents' lives by being able to celebrate a birthday at a time of significant uncertainty is undeniable. One standard practice of EOB celebration is to make a wish. As children are encouraged to make a wish as they blow out their birthday cake candles, parents are also offered the opportunity to make a wish for the child. This practice is also aligned with the Caregiver Empowerment area of impact. Parents are provided the space to envision a future for their child beyond their homeless status. When asked of their one wish for their children, some parents hoped for tangible rewards, like potty training, living in a house, and getting through kindergarten. But most parent want their children to be happy.

school
life growth
happiness
great true
things everyday
better year
people grows
wonderful
blessing reading
birthday big
read kindergarten
enjoy alphabet school
love true
successful
home amp
awesome

Parents are also asked what they believe their children will remember about the celebration. Indeed, children will remember the themes, like Sesame Street and Lego, but mainly parents and children were amazed at the decorations, gifts, and definitely, cake!



Headquarters - **December 2018**

On December 14, 2018, the world of Extra-Ordinary Birthdays was literally razed to the ground. Our headquarters in College Park, MD became collateral damage after an arsonist targeted a neighboring business.

Arriving at the scene of the crime to find our space unrecognizable — party supplies, gifts, computers and equipment, documents and photos were reduced to indiscernible gray flakes flitting along the floor.

But EOB refused to let the devastation keep us from doing our mission and, if anything, the fire enlivened an even greater sense of commitment to our work.

The fire took away our space and those materials things that went into providing personalized birthday parties for homeless children. What it did not do was take away our hope to move beyond our circumstances.

Our belief and saying of “offering them hope in spite of their circumstances” was being challenged as we had to walk-the-walk of that “hope” -- something homeless families do every day. EOB had this circumstance and had to keep moving on because the families were watching us.

It's this greater mission to be an example of determination and persistence to which Extra-Ordinary Birthdays is devoted.

Despite the setback, EOB remains undeterred to center the organization around what matters most: the families it serves. And EOB has not missed a beat in continuing celebrating homeless children.

We're embracing the fact that the losses were material because the heart of EOB lies within its Founder, its board of directors, the community, the volunteers and everyone coming together to continue to make this organization happen.



EXTRA-ORDINARY
BIRTHDAYS, INC.

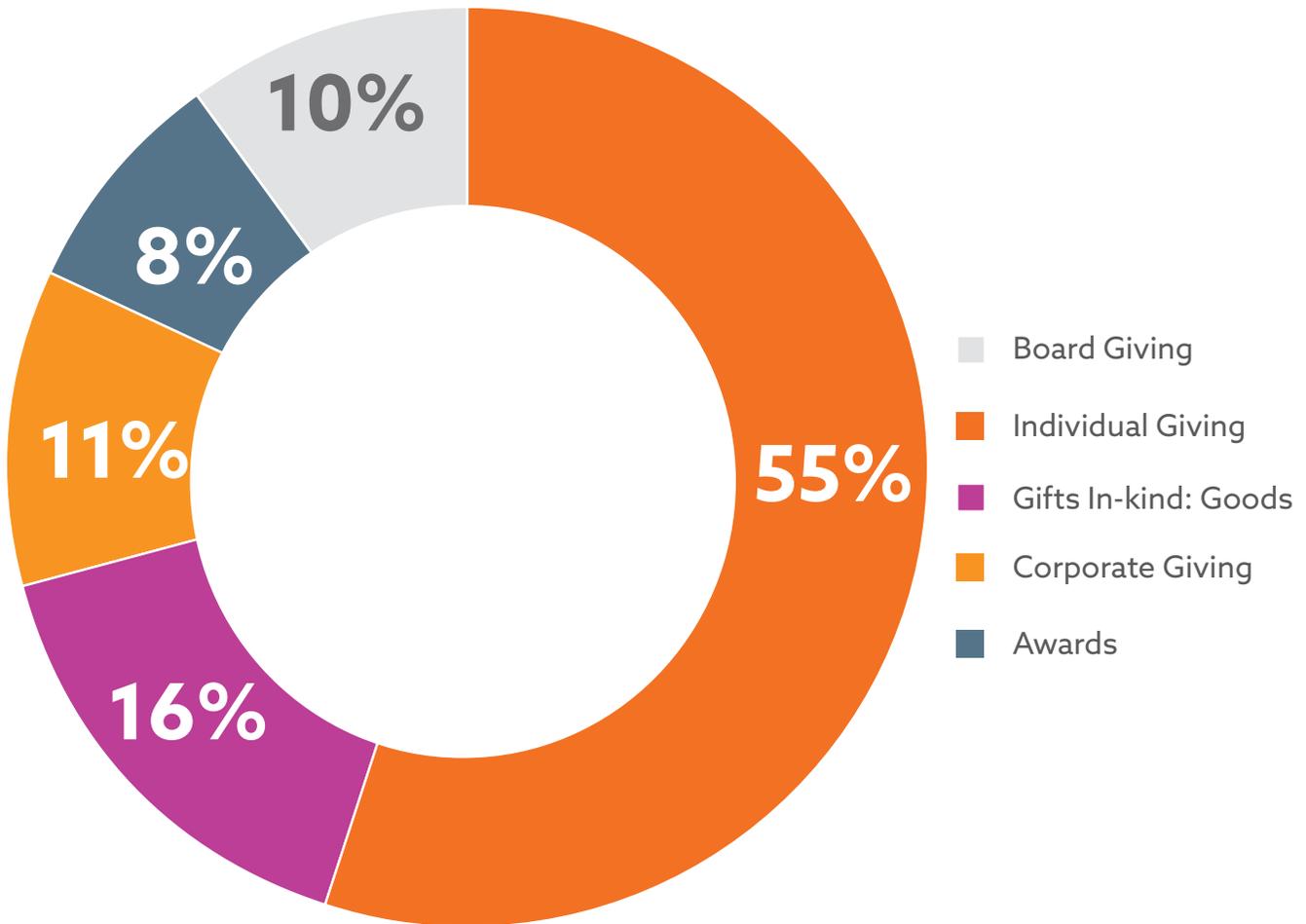
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DESPITE THE STORMS...
**WE WILL
PREVAIL.”**

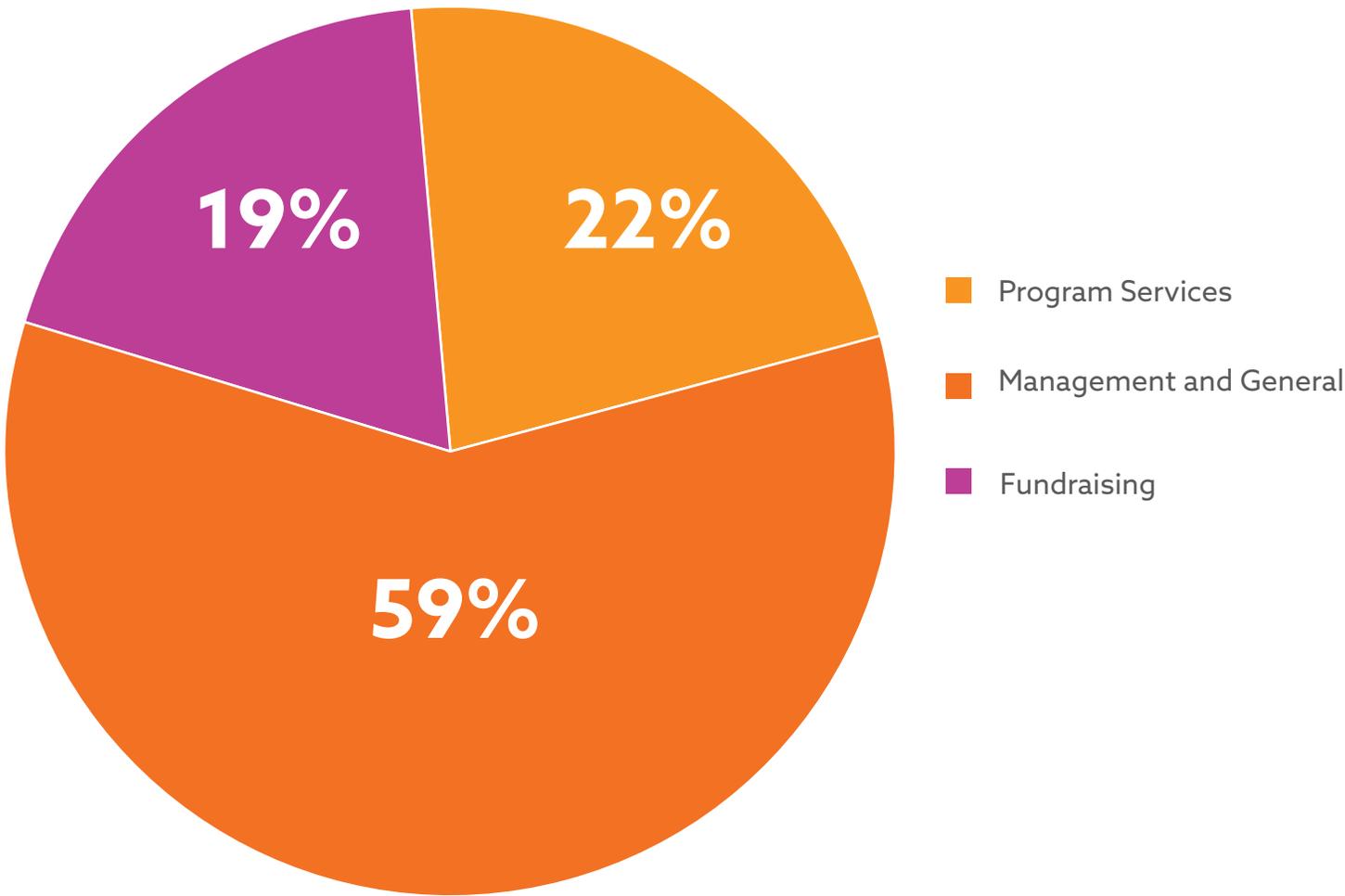
-EOB Facebook Post

Sources of contributions



Board Giving:	\$11,952.51
Individual Giving:	\$65,456.25
Gifts In-kind: Goods:	\$18,800.63
Corporate Giving:	\$12,430.00
Awards:	\$10,000.00

How we spend our funds



Program Services:	\$12,166.99
Management and General:	\$32,628.15
Fundraising:	\$10,755.00

Friends #SameAs
 Extra-Ordinary MAKING MAGIC HAPPEN
 #Celebrate Life Party Family Valued
 Glad you were born
 You Matter Community #EOB
 Gifts Self-worth FUN
 LET THEM EAT CAKE
 MEMORIES

a community that recognizes **the transformative power of birthday celebrations for homeless children, one that empowers their caregivers,** and inspires moments of joy & happiness in the lives of homeless families.



Many thanks to the team at **Colm Research Group** and **Mrs. Bernadette Zeminski** for their expertise and assistance in the development of this Annual Report.