

*Empowering youth to make healthy connections,
decisions, and change.*

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Our Team

Messages from our Executive Teens



Joining Rise Above Colorado's Teen Action Council (TAC) is something that I have wanted to do since I was little, since my older sister worked here for a few years. I remember coming to a project presentation of TAC's while I was in elementary school, and the community and mission of the organization really impacted me to want to be a part of it. Rise Above Colorado has taught me so many skills and introduced me to new things, and I always look forward to meeting with the action council and staff.

Avalon

I joined Rise Above Colorado after witnessing the effects that substance abuse was taking on people in my life and feeling a strong desire to bring about positive change. Seeing Rise Above's approach to dealing with substance abuse felt welcoming, empowering, and focused on prevention rather than judgement. Through being on this youth council I have developed skills to help support people in making safe and informed decisions in my community while also being able to meet amazing people with amazing stories.

Aesha



Staff

KENT MACLENNAN, Executive Director
JENNA GARROW, Director of Prevention Education
JONATHAN JUDGE, Director of Media & Campaigns
PAUL CONZEMIUS, Director of Development & Operations
BEN EDWARDS, Manager of Communications & Community Partnerships
ANGELICA OCHOA, Manager of Youth Engagement
KAOLE VANG, Youth Engagement Coordinator
SUYASH SHRESTHA, Youth Partner

Board of Directors

AMY GRAHAM, (Board Chair), Pragmatic Marketing
KELSEY BURTON, Evermore Partners
DANA DURAN, Boys & Girls Clubs of Northwest CO
APOORVA GUNDU, Downtown Denver Partnership
DAVE SJERVEN, Transwest
STAZI SNELLING, Teens, Inc.
REED THOMPSON, Isaak Bond Investments, Inc.

Thank you for your service!

VY NGUYEN - Board Member (2019-2025), Board Chair (2022-2025)

JOSE ESQUIBEL - Board Member (2018-2025)



We were thrilled to welcome Suyash Shrestha to the team as our Youth Partner in 2025! Suyash previously served on the Teen Action Council and was an Executive Teen.

Our Team

Meet the Teen Action Council (TAC)



Throughout 2025, our Teen Action Council, a group of 24 youth representing 13 counties across Colorado, learned about substance misuse prevention, engaged their peers and communities in educational resources and shared their learnings locally and statewide.

Our TAC members worked through our civic engagement model of Lead The Change Colorado to better understand different communities around Colorado and explored different prevention methods to address barriers that individuals in specific communities face, as well as to increase access to resources in order to support mental health and well-being.

Youth explored the ways in which low-income communities are targeted by drug and alcohol companies and how that contributes to the disparities that exist within them. They created awareness-raising infographics and flyers linked to a hub of resources for those interested in learning more about alcohol and tobacco cessation.



TAC Members

Aanya, Aurora
Addie, Yuma
Aesha, Thornton (Executive Teen)
Alexia, Wray
Avalon, Evans (Executive Teen)
Dahlia, Fort Collins
Davis, Greeley
Derek, Denver
Eli, Arvada
Fareeha, Broomfield
Giada, Trinidad (Executive Teen)
Gianna, Denver
Jaydyn, Colorado Springs
Jayla, Greeley
Manikya, Aurora
Mariah, Denver
Mark, Denver
Richie, Aurora
Riko, Broomfield
Ryan, Bayfield
Soleil, Fort Collins
Taylor, Loma (Executive Teen)
Tyler, Grand Junction
Vidyaa, Aurora

Centering art as a form of expression and connection, youth members created an opportunity for their peers to engage in prevention by sharing their personal stories and unique perspectives around substance use and mental health.

With a focus on rural communities, youth created a hub of mental and behavioral health resources to address the barriers that may exist in accessing or awareness of resources within these communities.

Our Team

Meet the Denver Organizing Committee (DOC)

"It was first super scary, but being able to share your experience was my favorite part and I have learned so much by presenting. It has helped me grow so much."

DOC Member

The Denver Organizing Committee is a partnership of organizations including: EYE for Prevention, PATCH (Providers and Teens Communicating Health), Rise Above Colorado's Teen Action Council (TAC), & Youth Pride Coalition (YPC). Our committee focuses on diving deep in our prevention efforts within schools and spaces that support Denver youth.

This initiative builds knowledge and skills among youth, the adults who support them, and interested families through comprehensive programming to positively impact behavioral health outcomes among Denver youth.

The DOC trained 1,286 youth across a variety of 14 programs in both Denver Public Schools and community spaces.

DOC Members & Affiliations

Leo, EYE
Gilly, EYE
Dani, EYE
Devin, PATCH
Ella, PATCH
Yma, PATCH
Mariah, TAC
Gianna, TAC
Mark, TAC
Emily, YPC

EYE:
EYE For Prevention
PATCH:
Providers and Teens
Communicating Health
YPC:
Youth Pride Coalition
TAC:
Rise Above Colorado's
Teen Action Council



Through these efforts, the DOC expanded access to prevention education across Denver.

Many DOC members were cross-trained in partnership resources - How to Be a Good Friend, Closing the Gap, Not Prescribed, and the Peer Overdose Prevention Training - to strengthen impact and increase capacity. We hosted two in-person trainings to support skill-building in public speaking and deepen youth connections. Alongside this, we held monthly virtual meetings to create space for sharing reflections and wins.

This work has directly advanced RAC's mission to empower youth to make healthy choices by increasing access to prevention education, elevating youth voice, and strengthening collaborative, community-driven approaches across Denver.



RESOURCES & RESULTS

Educational Resources Have Made an Impact

8,871 youth

were reached by our educational lessons in 2025

16% → 63%

of students selected **“having a lot of knowledge”** about the dangers of fentanyl/counterfeit pills before vs. after participating in our Not Prescribed lesson

17% → 64%

of students selected **“having a lot of knowledge”** about the dangers of misusing prescription drugs before vs. after participating in our Not Prescribed lesson

52% → 81%

of students felt that they were equipped to have a conversation about prescription drug misuse and/or advocate for this issue before vs. after participating in our Not Prescribed lesson

New Website Launched



One of our major projects in 2025 was the creation of a new Rise Above Colorado website. In partnership with Design Like You Mean It and Rehab Creative, we were able to take the best of our previous two websites and combine them into one hub for adults and youth alike to learn about our organization and be empowered with resources to make a difference across Colorado: riseaboveco.org!


See how teens are telling their stories across Colorado

Using murals to spread their message



Our website is a trustworthy source of information, advice and inspiration for youth across Colorado. Within the pages of the site, youth will find reliable and accurate information about various substances while also finding pages created by Colorado youth, giving ideas for how their peers can rise above in their daily lives.

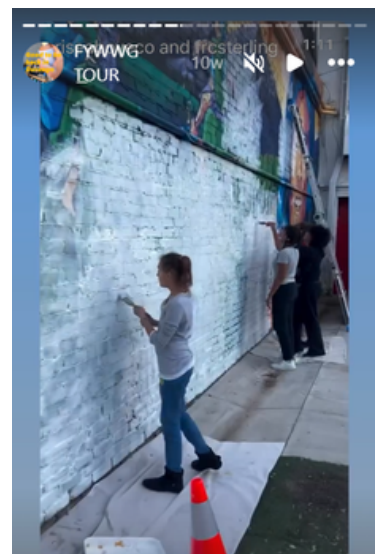
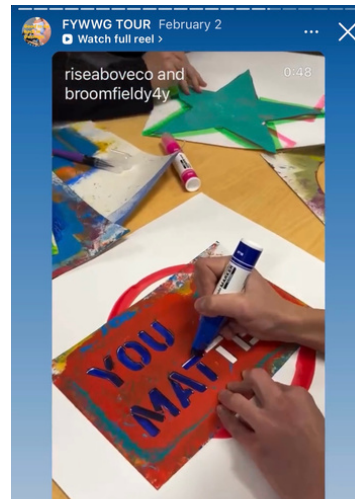
Campaigns & Partnerships

Fill Your World With Good Tour

In 2025 we embarked on the Fill Your World With Good Tour! We hit 9 communities, touched up 17 murals, gave 42 presentations, and worked with over 300 Colorado youth to create one of the most collaborative murals ever! Check out the final mural on the cover!

This was a massive undertaking only made possible through the support of our incredible partners and the youth they serve! Thank you to all of our tour partners:

The Hive - Durango
Boys & Girls Club of Steamboat Springs
Prowers County Youth Council
JeffCo CTC
Centennial Mental Health Center, Inc. - NE Colorado
Family Resource Center - Sterling
Sterling Middle School
Denver Public Schools
Morey Middle School
Broomfield Public Health
Broomfield Youth 4 Youth
Yuma High School
Yuma Middle School



9

→ We hit 9 communities

We touched up
17 murals

17

42

→ We gave
42 presentations

More than 300 youth painted
one of the most collaborative
murals ever

300

Financial Overview

Gifts in Tribute

We deeply appreciate those donors who have made gifts in honor of someone whose lives have been touched by our work, those taken by addiction and overdose, and also celebrating those in recovery.

In that spirit, we pay tribute to the following individuals who left this world too soon:

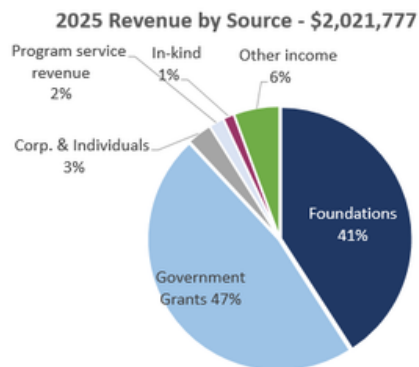
- Ritchie White
- Phil Kleiman
- Marciano (*last name withheld for privacy*)

Revenue & Expenses

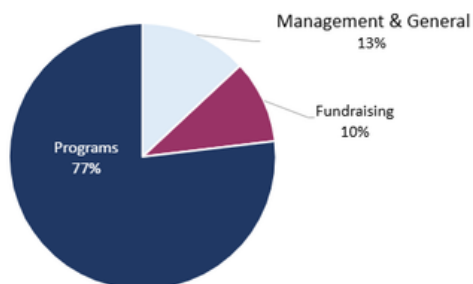
In 2025 we reached our revenue goals to enable a surplus to protect against grant and economic uncertainties projected in 2026.

Our Total Net Assets are \$1,095,010, which includes \$888,107 in Board Designated Reserves.* The organization continues to work to diversify its funding sources moving forward.

** Fully audited financials available by summer 2026*



2025 Expenses by Category - \$1,622,552



Event Committee Volunteers Drive Support for RAC

We are grateful to our dedicated volunteers who have helped in the fundraising and execution of our 2025 #IRiseAbove Celebration and the planning for our 2026 event.

Terry Adams, Grant Carlson, Stephanie Monahan, Donna Montgomery, Amy Graham, Apoorva Gundu, Dave Sjerven, Kelsey Burton, Jamie Burgher, Jennifer Thompson, Steve Woods

We continue to seek volunteers who can help us cultivate new supporters so that we can diversify our revenue sources. To get more involved contact Paul Conzemius (paul@riseaboveco.org).



Endowment

\$77,829

Rise Above Colorado's endowment enables supporters to invest in the future of the organization to ensure its impact empowering our state's youth.

Our endowment grew 22% in 2025 to \$77,829.

If you're interested in making an endowment or legacy gift to Rise Above Colorado, we'd be honored to talk with you! Please contact Director of Development and Operations, Paul Conzemius (paul@riseaboveco.org) for more information.

Art-Driven Prevention

Murals



YUMA



DENVER



LITTLETON



STERLING



LAKEWOOD



GRAND JUNCTION



STERLING



DELTA