

2022 Annual Report



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



Rise Above Colorado

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KAOLE VANG
Youth Partner

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DARRICK CHRISTOPHER

DANA DURAN

JOSE ESQUIBEL

ANDREA MACIAS

STAZI SNELLING

KIKI TRAYLOR

Thank you for your service!

PATRICK GAINES
Board Member, 2020-2022

GINA TINCHER
Board Member, 2016-2022
Board Chair, 2019-2022

Dear friends,

We are pleased to share our 2022 annual report, our first-ever formally produced recap! Despite the challenges that face Colorado youth as they emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we're excited to report positive signs thanks to your support.

Rise Above Colorado is a statewide prevention organization that measurably impacts teen perceptions and attitudes about the risks of substance misuse to empower youth to make positive choices for their future. Rise Above Colorado collaborates with teens, educators, community leaders, and prevention partners to provide credible, teen-centered data using the evidence-based Science of the Positive framework to correct misperceptions about substance use.

Throughout this report, you'll find a balance of sobering data about the impact of substance use and addiction on teens' mental health and behaviors, as well as highlights of the various ways Rise Above Colorado is providing youth with information, resources, and activities to support healthy choices.

In our work we're always balancing hope and concern. We don't sugarcoat the impact of substances on the teenage brain, body, and relationships, but we also celebrate all the positive choices that Colorado youth make every day. During the last five years, we've been educating Colorado teens about the data that MOST youth are NOT using drugs and alcohol. In doing so we're working to debunk the "everybody's doing it" mentality and we're seeing progress. Based on data from our 2022 Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey, we saw significant declines in the number of middle and high-school-aged youth overestimating peer use of marijuana and vaping products. The more accurate youth perceptions are, the more likely they are to join the majority of their peers in choosing not to use substances.

While that's encouraging news, we know there's more we can do to support young people in making positive choices. In addition, we're actively responding to new threats to our young people, namely the fentanyl epidemic. We'll be excited to share these resources with you as the year progresses as we work to raise awareness and share ways that Coloradans of all ages can take action to reduce fentanyl's toll.

We couldn't do this work without you. Whether you're a donor, community partner or a young person leading the way, we're grateful for your belief in our organization and a better future for Colorado youth.

Best regards,



Vy Nguyen
Chair, Board of Directors



Kent MacLennan
Executive Director



Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey

With funding support from a federal grant managed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Community Prevention and Early Intervention unit, we commissioned an assessment from March to May 2022 among teenagers across Colorado with HealthCare Research, Inc. to understand their attitudes and behaviors surrounding substance use. We have administered this survey regularly since 2009. All data collection in 2022 was completed online, gathering 718 interviews from online panels and social media recruitment.

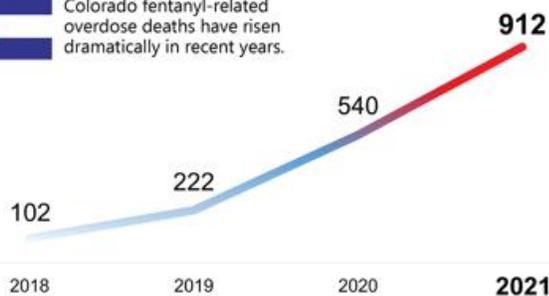
Our 2022 survey had an increased focus on understanding attitudes and use of specific prescription drugs, specifically about stimulants, anti-anxiety medications and pain relievers such as fentanyl. You will see infographics from the survey results throughout this report.

Educational Resources

Fentanyl and other contaminants remain of great concern



Colorado fentanyl-related overdose deaths have risen dramatically in recent years.



Source: CDPHE

And teens are less concerned about the risks of taking prescription pills

Teens increasingly feel prescription drugs are safer than illegal drugs

22% in 2022 compared to just 14% in 2020

Teens increasingly feel stimulant use is safe even if prescribed for someone else

21% in 2022 compared to just 9% in 2020



In 2022, we received an increase in requests for presentations in schools of our Not Prescribed prescription drug prevention resource as well as training for adults who work with youth. The infographics above reflect the increased concern about this issue, but we are also worked hard in 2022 to increase hope in the effectiveness of prevention. **A few accomplishments we're proud of:**

17,467

youth reached by our educational resources!

Revised Not Prescribed to address the increased dangers of prescription drug misuse due to fentanyl and counterfeit pills

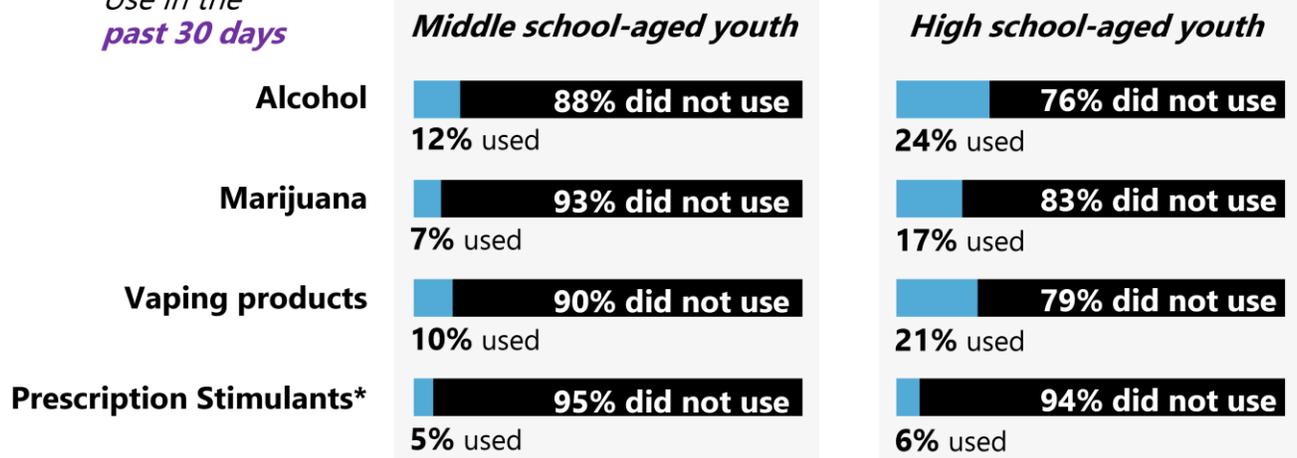
Created fentanyl and alcohol substance pages within our Straight Dope series on our teen-facing website: www.iriseaboveco.org

Positive Community Norming

Our 2022 RAC Youth Survey results reinforced our core belief: that the vast majority of youth are NOT misusing substances and ARE making positive choices daily.

Most Colorado teens are **NOT** using drugs

Use in the
past 30 days



*not prescribed to you

Fill Your World With Good is our positive social norming campaign that celebrates all of the healthy choices that youth are making every day across Colorado. Youth can upload pictures and videos directly to our website so that they see themselves reflected in our ads - and they win prizes for doing so!

Fill Your World With Good advertisements on Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat & TikTok achieved:



To get inspired by all the amazing, healthy choices Colorado youth are making every day, scan the QR code on the left or visit <https://riseaboveco.org/fill-your-world-with-good/>.

To follow along with our campaign, visit our Instagram or Facebook @riseaboveco!

Statewide Teen Action Council

CHRISTOPHER CHEN
Executive Teen

ALLISON DAME
Executive Teen

ALIYAH ACEVEDO
DOLORES CASTILLO
SAVANNAH COCHRAN

ADDISON DOLAN
DEREK GARCIA

ALEJANDRA GUTIERREZ
RYAN LEMLEY

CAITLIN MCCRADY

SAMANTHA MORALES JURADO

ADITYA NANDYAL
WILLOW SCHULZ

CASSIE SMITH
SPENCER TIMMERS

Denver Teen Action Council

CAROLINE BROWN
LILY EMMANUEL

OLIVIA HERNANDEZ
SEAN HUNDLEY

GABRIELA KOBAK

CHINA REIGN OMENAI

KENIA RODRIGUEZ
LILAH ROHNSTOCK

STELLA WAGNER

Teen Action Councils

Across our two Teen Action Councils, **24 teens** from all over Colorado come together to learn about substance misuse prevention, build important life skills, and empower their peers to make healthy connections, decisions, and change. 15 of these teens served on our statewide Teen Action Council representing communities across Colorado and 9 served on the Denver Teen Action Council, representing 7 schools, in partnership with Denver Public Schools and Denver Health.



These young leaders represented Rise Above Colorado in the media and at public events and lent their expertise to inform many of our programs and resources. We're proud of the ways they have supported each other as they have navigated the past few difficult years. The infographics below illustrate just how much parents and youth across Colorado have been struggling.

Household use is up significantly

Four out of ten teens live with someone misusing substances

41% of teens report they are living with someone who has a substance use disorder or is addicted to alcohol or drugs (**up from 25% in 2020**)

Female teens are more impacted

47%, more than twice the rate reported in 2020 (**up from 22%**)

Teen use is more likely when living with an adult with a substance use disorder

Teens living in these situations are **at least 2x as likely** to have misused substances in the past 30 days



Mental health adds to challenges

Nearly half of teens report living with someone with mental health concerns

46%

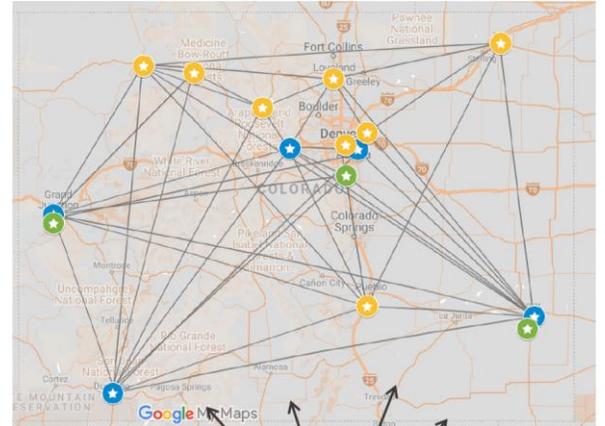
4 out of 10 teens who report living with someone with a mental health concern have at least 6 or more challenging mental health days a month

Recent substance use increased among teens who live with someone who is struggling, with a significant increase in marijuana usage



Constellation Project Partnerships

Our Colorado Constellation Project provides a network of youth and adults across the state to implement substance misuse prevention efforts in a meaningful way. Our partners co-create campaign messaging, educational resources, and community learning opportunities to shape environments that support youth and prevent substance misuse. **We were grateful to bring on two new Constellation Partners in 2022: Jefferson County Communities That Care and Broomfield Youth for Youth Communities That Care.** Both communities have impressive youth engagement efforts and have already brought incredible energy to this work!



Positive Community Norming Cohort

We have **seven partners** across the state who work with us on our Positive Community Norming (PCN) Efforts to correct youth misperceptions about substance use, **bolded in the list below.**

In our statewide RAC Youth Survey, we were excited and impressed to see that more youth in our PCN partner communities think there is a great risk in using marijuana on a regular basis compared to other youth in Colorado.

“How much risk, if any, do you think there is in using marijuana on a regular basis?”

TOTAL (Statewide + Partner Communities)	Our Partner Communities
49%	57%

... think regular marijuana use is a "Great Risk"

Constellation Project Partners

Boys & Girls Clubs of Colorado
 Colorado State University - *Family Leadership Training Institute of Colorado (FLTI)*
 CU Denver - *The Evaluation Center*
 Aurora Partners for Thriving Youth
Broomfield Youth for Youth
 Centennial Mental Health Center
 City of Fruita
 CO Consortium for Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention
 Crossroads Turning Point - *Pueblo*
Denver Public Schools - Prevention Services Team

Douglas County Healthy Youth Coalition
Jefferson County Communities That Care
Mountain Youth Network - Clear Creek Partners - Larimer & Weld Partners for Youth - Northwest Colorado Partners for HOPE Center - Lamar Prowers County Public Health Public Health Institute at Denver Health San Juan Basin Public Health - ROAR Coalition The Montana Institute Western Colorado Area Health Education Center

Gifts in Tribute

We 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:

Nate Coleman
William Dravland
Tyler Vincent Merthen
Lily Primus
Michael Simmons

Endowment Fund

Rise Above Colorado is committed to supporting our state's youth well into the future. We launched our endowment fund in 2020 and our individual donors have helped us build it since then. Through matching funds from our Board of Directors and Rose Community Foundation where our endowment is held, individual supporters helped us meet \$15,000 challenges in 2020 and 2021.

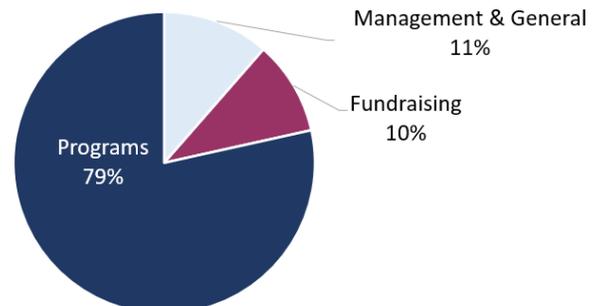
As of December 31, 2022 our endowment fund stands at \$45,595.91.

Financials

2022 Revenue by Source - \$1,465,423



2022 Expenses by Category - \$1,347,559



**Fully audited financials available by summer 2023*

Community Events

In August we painted our 50th Colorado mural! You can see that mural on the cover page and below. We want to thank all of the volunteers and Teen Action Council members who painted with us in addition to a BIG shout out to the following folks who made this dream come true: Pat Milbery, Colorado artist, creative collaborator, and co-founder of So-Gnar; Jonathan Judge, our Director of Media & Campaigns; and Katherine Harvey, our Summer Prevention Fellow who coordinated the overall logistics of the project.



Attorney General Weiser

In October, we convened friends and supporters in downtown Denver to connect with one another and celebrate the completion of our 50th mural. Attorney General Phil Weiser joined members of our staff, Board and Teen Action Council in sharing key findings from our Rise Above Colorado Youth Survey.



Christopher & Allison, Teen Action Council

Murals Painted by Youth

Denver – 50th



Minnesota



Highlands Ranch



Wheat Ridge