



2023 IMPACT REPORT



CEO Minute:

A Beacon of Hope - Reflecting on the Past Year at Vita Nova Inc.



Jeff DeMario,
Chief Executive Officer

Dear Esteemed Donors and Community Members,

As we look back on 2023, I am filled with immense pride for the strides we have made in our mission to support homeless youth. Our organization has expanded its reach and deepened its impact, thanks to the tireless efforts of our staff, volunteers, and the unwavering support of our community partners.

Our Key Accomplishments of Fiscal Year End 2023 have been the strengthening of our partnerships. We forged stronger collaborations with local businesses, schools, and government agencies. These enhanced partnerships have resulted in increased resource sharing and collaboration, allowing us to serve over 500 more youth in our Drop-in Center. This expansion has ensured that more young people have access to basic needs and essential life skills to help end homelessness.

The other accomplishment was Enhancing Housing Programs. As you know Vita Nova cannot reduce youth homelessness without increasing housing opportunities. This year we introduced a new model called Housing+. The plus (+) is our unique way to not only expand housing options but also integrates additional supportive services such as basic needs assistance, mental health counseling, and mentorship. These elements are crucial in providing holistic support to help youth overcome trauma and build social capital.

Despite these significant achievements, we faced challenges that underscore the ongoing need for our services. Although our model of investing \$18,000 per youth per year yields a young adult who is working, completing school and contributing to the community. The challenge has been finding landlords and housing to place youth in Palm Beach County. Our efforts are hampered by a tight housing market and increased demand, which has made the placements we do have even more precious. The second challenge has been the increasing numbers of homeless youth coming to our doors in 2023. Vita Nova has seen an increase of nearly 20% and this increase makes the placements for housing we do have even more precious. This surge highlights the growing need for our services and the importance of continuing our efforts to provide stable housing and support.

As we move into 2024, our priorities will remain focused on helping youth secure housing, employment, and complete their education. We are committed to building on our successes and addressing the challenges we face with determination and collaboration.

I am confident that with your continued support, we can create a brighter future for homeless youth and ensure they have the opportunities and resources needed to achieve their full potential. Together, we can make a profound difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication and support.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J DeMario'.

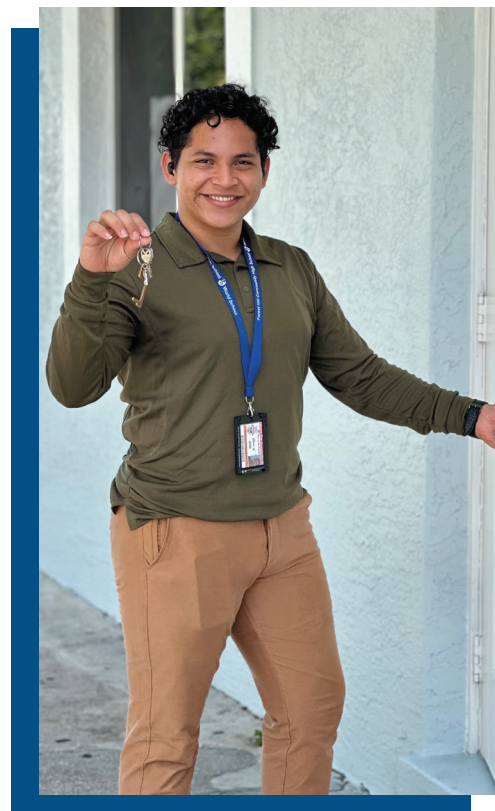
Jeff DeMario

Our Mission

Vita Nova is a safe bridge to independence for former foster care, and homeless youth through supportive housing, education, employment and life skills training.

As the voice of homeless young adults, Vita Nova is working to eliminate homelessness for youth ages 18 to 25 years old in Palm Beach County.

To learn more getting involved in our mission and helping to change the life of a young adult go to www.vitanovainc.org





Let us tell you a story about a starfish. ---

One day, an old man was walking along the beach when he noticed a boy picking something up and gently throwing it into the ocean.

Approaching the boy, he asked, “What are you doing?”. The youth replied, “Throwing starfish back into the ocean. The surf is up and the tide is going out. If I don’t throw them back, they’ll die.”

“Son,” the man said, “Don’t you realize there are miles and miles of beach and hundreds of starfish? **You can’t possibly make a difference!**”

After listening politely, the boy bent down, picked up another starfish, and threw it back into the surf. Then smiling at the man, he said...

 “I made a difference for that one.”



The Difference of One

IMPACT STORIES

Meet SOPHIA

One of my favorite songs is “The Climb.” When I was growing up in Foster Care, and then later homeless, I used to think this verse defined me,

*“I can almost see it
That dream I’m dreaming
But there’s a voice inside my head saying
You’ll never reach it.”*

You see when I was a child, I was removed from my family and put into foster care. The system that was supposed to keep me safe only continued the physical, mental, and verbal abuse. I guess you could say the “dream I was dreaming” back when I was a child was safety.

Then I became a teen and left foster care only to fall immediately into homelessness. The supports I was told would be there all fell down, and I was on the streets. I guess you could say the “dream I was dreaming” when I was a teen was to have a loving household.

As days went on, and I grew older I realized I was alone. I guess you could say the “dream I was dreaming” when I was an older teen was having a family.

Then I met Vita Nova and my life quickly turned around. They listened to me, supported me when I did not have the means to do so, and most of all, they loved me. In an instant I found myself housed, back in school, working (at The Breakers West), and safe. Most of all Vita Nova gave me the confidence to use my voice to help others, and the ability to give back in ways that are improving foster care for younger youth still in the system. Now, thanks to Vita Nova I hear the song, “The Climb” and feel this verse defines me and my life better,

Keep on moving, keep climbing, Keep the faith, It’s all about the climb.

Thank you for your support of an agency that is truly changing lives and helping youth every day climb out of bad situations – youth like me. Thanks to Vita Nova I have found safety, a loving household, and the family I was dreaming about.





Living Forward

HOUSING EFFORTS

Meet **BEATRICE** (5/22)



Every youth who comes to Vita Nova have experienced a trauma in their lives. These take the form of emotional, physical, or psychological traumas that can easily become a setback for youth on the road to adulthood. Despite these negative experiences, We are astounded by the amount of resilience these youth possess to rebound and make something of their lives.

A prime example is Beatrice. Beatrice will tell you that one of her ways to cope from past abuse is by reading. At a young age Beatrice found herself as the main character in a lurid nonfiction novel about a young girl stuck in a cycle of abuse. Reading became a gateway to escape and find success in school. She regained a sense of control while reading while her homelife was spinning out of control. Thankfully, someone at school identified some of the indicators of abuse, and Beatrice was taken into State care at the age of 12 and remained until she turned 18. That was when she found Vita Nova.

It did not take long for Beatrice to thrive once she had a safe place to live. She graduated high school while at Vita Nova and attended and graduated from Palm Beach State College with an amazing grade point average of 4.0. After graduating she began to pursue her Bachelor's Degree in Neuroscience at Florida Atlantic University. One day soon Beatrice will achieve her dream of becoming a doctor so she can give back and help others.

TOTAL YOUTH SERVED **306**
IN VITA NOVA HOUSING AND RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.

VITA NOVA VILLAGE: **54**
LGBTQ HOUSING: **17**
RENTAL ASSISTANCE: **148**
PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE: **7**

YOUTH HOMELESS DEMONSTRATION PROGRAM

Rapid Re-housing: **34**
Transitional Housing: **46**



The first type of housing, **Vita Nova Village** exists to provide two-year assistance to youth from foster care, or homeless who need help with learning life skills in four critical areas. These include: Health & Wellness, Financial Literacy, Education, and Employment. Vita Nova served 36 youth at Vita Nova Village.

The second type of housing support assists youth to move directly from the street and into temporary housing where they can live for up to 90 days and then move to housing that provides help and assistance for two years. During their residence youth are helped with finding employment to eventually assume the full payment of the lease in a two-year period. Vita Nova has capacity for 22 youth under this **Rapid-Re-Housing Model**.

The third type of housing assistance Vita Nova provides help to divert youth from entering the homeless system all together. This can be with a temporary payment to prevent homelessness or our counselor who encounters a youth with a support system in place can tap into existing resources to help a youth avoid living outdoors and avoid ever entering the county's homeless system. Vita Nova served clients with **Diversion and temporary payment services**.

Program Highlight: **Dress for success (10/2021)**

It doesn't take a big commitment to make a big impact in the lives of our youth.

Here at Vita Nova we provide all of our youth with professional attire to secure employment, but we are about much more than simply a new outfit.

Besides physically equipping our youth with apparel and accessories for a successful interview, our programs give them the confidence and skills to realize their full potential, and achieve financial independence through securing a job.





the Spot - YOUTH DROP-IN CENTER

Vita Nova operates the only drop-in center for homeless youth and youth at-risk of homelessness in the county, called the Spot. Located in West Palm Beach, the Spot is a safe and non-judgmental center for youth ages 18-25 years old.

At the Spot, a youth ages 18-25 years old can easily enter a cadre of services related to housing, healthcare, mental health, employment and education by just entering the front door.

Once a youth enters the Spot then they are met by an Intake Specialist who can conduct an assessment on immediate needs and goals for year youth. Each youth will then meet the following Spot members for follow up and services:

- Mental Health Therapist
- Employment Coordinator
- Health Care Specialist
- Education Services

In addition to supportive team members the Spot features also features a shower, laundry facilities, computer lab, music therapy room, food pantry, hygiene essentials, and clothing.

THE SPOT SERVED 542 YOUTH DURING THE CURRENT YEAR.

Youth Story: M. Johnson

Diversion services aim at assisting youth with diverting from the homelessness system. Through coordinated entry the Diversion program can ensure that there is an 80% reduction in youth seeking shelter services and entry into homelessness. All qualifying youth receive employment readiness training, educational assistance, assistance with navigating health services and therapeutic services if needed. M. Johnson participated in services provided through Diversion such as financial literacy and maintaining life skills workshops. Through his engagement with services, he was able to relocate to Orlando, FL pursuing his education at University of Central Florida and maintaining his own apartment. He also maintained his own vehicle that was in good condition and reliable. He also established employment while working in Diversion full-time with TD Chase Bank in West Palm Beach, FL. He was able to transfer his role to a branch in Orlando, FL, although he had not been there more than 6 months. Through the skills learned, he completed his time in Diversion successfully.



94% OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH INCREASED SUPPORT NETWORKS RELATED TO SCHOOL AND WORK AS EVIDENCED BY JOB MAINTENANCE, AND PRE/POST TESTING.

88% OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH INCREASED EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AS REPORTED ON POST TESTING.

81% OF DISCONNECTED YOUTH GAINED EMPLOYMENT OR ENROLLED IN AN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION.

100% OF ALL YOUTH AT RISK OF OR EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS PARTICIPATING IN INTAKE AND ASSESSMENT SERVICES RESULTING IN LINKAGES TO COMMUNITY SUPPORTS.



Independent Living Services

Vita Nova focuses on youth ages 18 to 25 to achieve a realistic goal of ending homelessness. We champion the formula of **Housing + **Employment** + **Education** + **Supportive Living** = **Self Sufficiency** as a solution to deliver our youth into independent adulthood one by one.**

Many services for older foster youth end at the age of 18 years old. At Vita Nova we know this is the most crucial time on a young adult's life, so services are created to help youth ages 18-22 with continuing education, learning life skills and/or finding employment.

Vita Nova served 118 youth through Vita Nova Independent Living Services this year.

59% of youth involved in PESS
[Post-Secondary Education & Supports] are employed



19%

of youth involved in PESS
[Post-Secondary Education & Supports]
earned a college degree or certificate



70%

demonstrated forward progress
towards a degree in college





Bold Collaboration

Revolution requires allies. Vita Nova embraces the power of partnership to upset the usual and usher in change. Knowing we are stronger together, we employ a courageous collaborative strategy to move our cause and community forward.






Foundations for Fiscal Year 2022

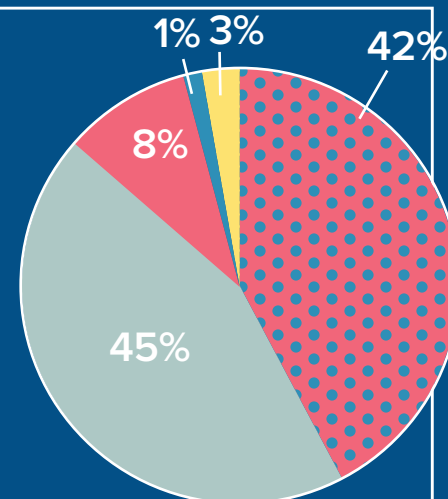
Frank J Lewis Foundation
Gratis Foundation
Impact the Palm Beaches
J M Rubin Foundation
Jim Moran Foundation
Jonathan's Landing Cares Inc
Mary Alice Fortin Foundation
Mirasol Foundation
Networking to Help Children
PBSO Law Enforcement Trust Fund
Publix Super Market Charities
Quantum Foundation
Schneider Charitable Fund
TD Charitable Foundation
Teaumen & Grace Fuite Foundation

The Breakers Palm Beach
The Herbert Bearman Foundation
Truist Foundation
United Way of PB County
Vanguard Charitable
W & H Thomas Charitable Trust
Walmart
Wells Fargo

FUND ALLOCATION

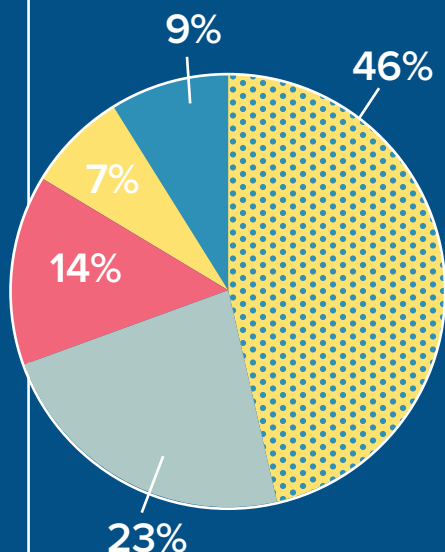
REVENUE





	Government Grants	\$ 1,785,312
	Foundation Grants	\$ 1,904,237
	Contributions & Events	\$ 346,895
	Other Income	\$ 60,443
	Investment Income /Unrealized gain/loss	\$ 111,144



Total Revenue **\$ 4,208,031**

EXPENSE



	The Spot	\$ 1,687,374
	Village	\$ 830,226
	Management & General	\$ 266,763
	Independent Living	\$ 520,306
	Fund Raising	\$ 329,328

Total Expense **\$ 3,613,997**



www.Vitanovainc.org
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2023