

2021 ANNUAL REPOR

I.

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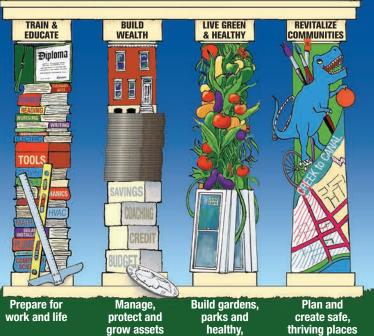
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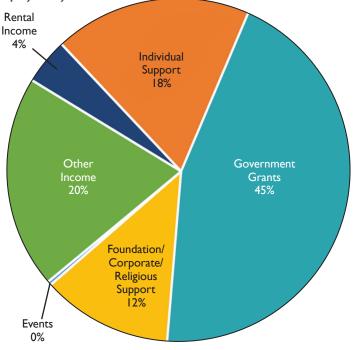
SELF-RELIANT FAMILIES AND HEALTHY, SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



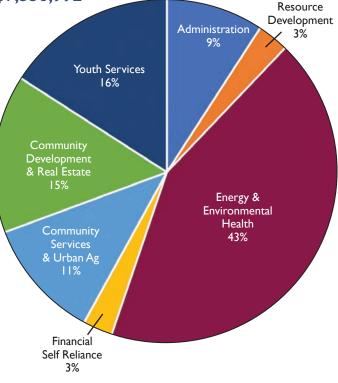
efficient homes

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2021

2021 Actual Revenue \$9,008,468



2021 Actual Expenses \$7,356,992



A complete audited financial statement will be available at our office or at **isles.org/financials**.

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

As we fight through what we hope are the final days of this pandemic, we reflect on the hurdles we have overcome and remember the loved ones we have lost. This past year gives us fresh understanding for the importance of our mission.

Here at Isles, we keep our eye on the long-term prize: services that develop long-term strategies for self-reliance — building gardens to show how community action yields change and fresh vegetables, teaching skills that students use in future-focused careers, fixing homes to prevent child lead poisoning, and so much more. And, we continued to respond to the immediate short-term effects of the pandemic, helping to get small business support dollars to endure the pandemic-induced economic slump, building parklets to give local restaurants more outdoor options, delivered 700 pounds of emergency food aid from our Isles gardens to local food banks, and most importantly, participating in local vaccination efforts to drive the push to vaccinate in hard-to-reach populations in Trenton.

So despite the challenges and disruption of the ongoing pandemic, Isles had another milestone year. Just a few highlights:

- In the beginning of the year, we launched the Social Profit Center at Mill One, permanently creating high quality office space for nonprofits, artists, and social impact businesses that fosters collaboration and growth.
- We held our first-ever virtual forum, bringing together hundreds of folks from around the country to attend more than 18 panels and workshops on community development and environmental challenges and solutions. At the same time, we began planning for a new center to grow our policy capacity, expand our technical assistance and teaching, and partner with research entities to better study the impact of our work.
- In July, we stood with Governor Murphy as he signed legislation Isles championed to close a loophole in housing inspections, making it possible for us to identify and remediate lead in rental units before a child gets poisoned. This legislation was the culmination of more than two years of advocacy, education, and coalition-building by Isles and our partners, and we are working hard in 2022 to make sure the law is successfully implemented.
- At the end of the year, we became Trenton's Community Street Teams provider, facilitating a collaboration with other community-based organizations to address Trenton's violence through quick response and prevention tactics. This critical work launches in 2022.

This report tells these stories and more about our work in 2021 and where it will lead us for 2022.

As we acknowledge our milestone anniversary and 40 years of impact, we remain so grateful for your support and partnership. If you have known about our work for decades or if are just learning about us for the first time, visit isles.org and let us know what you think. In times like these, your voice and support matter more than ever.

In community,

ake

Sean Jackson



Isles' CEO Sean Jackson joins youth from the community for a Drumming Healing Circle for Peace held outside our 33 Tucker Street location.



TRAIN & EDUCATE

Over 34% of young adults in Trenton fail to graduate high school on time, compared to a statewide rate of 10%. Isles Youth Institute (IYI) offers an alternative path to a high school diploma, leadership skills, and job opportunities for students who have become disengaged from traditional schooling. For many, this last chance changes the course of their lives.

Isles also trains adults from across New Jersey in future-focused green jobs and in energy and environmental fields. The Center for Energy and Environmental Training (CEET) offers contractors, home health visitors and community members training and national certificates in lead safe home renovation, energy efficiency, and environmental health.

····· 2021 Highlights ·····

15

IYI students graduated with high school diplomas



workers were certified in Lead-Safe Renovation, Repair, and Paint Safety 157

individuals were trained in environmental health and energy efficiency

Training for a Green Future

Isles' Center for Energy and Environmental Training offers job training for a green future, focusing on home health and energy fields. In 2021, we developed an exciting new partnership with Solar Landscape, a community solar company, to offer trainings to un- and under-employed residents. Isles' Senior Training Manager Andre Thomas recruited a class of 12 to learn the basics of solar panel installation. Trainees received a \$400 stipend to participate in the class, making it more accessible for those with childcare or other obligations. Planning for additional classes with Solar Landscape is underway, as well as a referral program to quickly place trainees in solar jobs.

In addition, Trenton residents who sign up for Solar Landscape community solar project receive a \$50 gift card and can save up to 25% on their electric bills every month."The green job market is going to explode in NJ in the coming years,"

Love, Peace & Joy

As Trenton struggles with the violence that plagues many of our cities, Isles looks for ways for youth to get engaged in community activities while building life skills for achieving success. In 2021, Isles Youth Services launched the Love, Peace & Joy summer enrichment program which offered workshops and lessons in emotional intelligence, self-worth and mental health, therapeutic painting, and African drumming.

Looking for a way to make a bold anti-violence statement, our youth and staff teamed up with artist Leon Rainbow and youth group United Front to create a new mural depicting peace and harmony. The project took place at the Classico



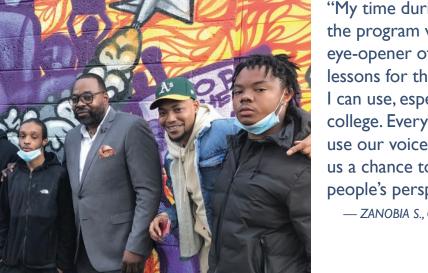
says Andre."We want to make sure residents of Trenton and similar places are given a viable pathway into these futurefocused careers."

At the same time, Isles is working with PSEG to train hundreds of entry level and incumbent energy efficiency workers and provide a testing site for national certifications, helping NJ workers lead the way in a green future for all.

Auto Glass shop in the Chambersburg section of Trenton. Our youth worked together to conceptualize the mural design, while learning new art skills from Rainbow.

"It was a pleasure watching this mural come to life and seeing people from the community stopping by and complimenting our youth," commented Youth Services and Outreach Manager Stacy Heading."We learned a lot about different painting techniques and the youth were really engaged. They really felt empowered while painting."

The team has plans to create more youth-led murals and peace messaging around the city. Check back on our social media pages for more project updates!



"My time during the program was an eye-opener of life lessons for the future I can use, especially for college. Every time we use our voice it gives us a chance to change people's perspective." - ZANOBIA S., CLASS OF '22

BUILD WEALTH

Family self-reliance requires financial stability. For most Americans, homes are the most valuable financial asset. Isles counsels and supports families wanting to buy their first home, as well as those facing the potential loss of their home through foreclosure. In addition, Isles Financial Solutions (IFS) offers financial wellness coaching for low- and moderate-income individuals and families to take control of their everyday financial decisions like budgeting, credit, savings, and debt to foster positive, long-term behavior change.

····· 2021 Highlights ·····



residents purchased a home



individuals participated in homebuyer and foreclosure counseling



customers received Isles Financial Solutions coaching

Building Wealth and Safe Homes



When Trenton resident Narcisa Delgado looked for help with purchasing a home, her research brought her to Isles. In 2018, she attended a First Time Homebuyer Class — a workshop designed to provide initial tools and advice for beginning the homebuying process. Through this training, Narcisa met with our staff who began laying out a step-by-step action plan for buying a home and gave her resources on budgeting and money management. After saving and working with Isles, Narcisa purchased her home in 2021!

But her relationship with Isles wasn't over quite yet. At Isles, we remove lead, provide free home energy improvements for qualifying households, and help people lower their utility costs while making homes more comfortable. Because Narcisa bought an older home, Isles' Lead and Energy and Environmental Health Team wanted to make sure that her home was safe, healthy and had the necessary energy and environmental repairs. Through a statewide grant program, Isles remediated lead-based paint hazards from her home to make it safe for her family. She also received a new heater, water heating system, and upgraded windows to increase the home's energy efficiency.

"To be honest, I could've never imagined there was a group of people dedicated to helping others gain access to these programs," said Narcisa about Isles' holistic approach. "I am very grateful to Isles for providing me with the right information, for the support and guidance, and for helping me make my dream of providing a healthy home to my family come true." Congrats on your new, safe home, Narcisa!

Julio's Journey

When IYI Alum and Trenton resident Julio Vasquez wanted help with a savings plan, he reached out to the Isles Financial Solutions team. He first began working with Isles Financial Services Manager Kit Patel to build credit. Since Julio never had a credit card, his goal was to make small purchases — such as buying gas — and pay them off quickly to get into good habits and avoid interest.

Although Julio was building credit over time, Kit noticed that Julio wasn't able to save as much because of high rent payments. They soon discussed the option of homebuying, where making a mortgage payment would be cheaper than monthly rent. Isles assisted Julio with qualifying for a mortgage where he was now able to save \$400 a month over his previous rent.

"It's just a sense of peace knowing that we'll be able to have something that is ours," says Julio. "And that we can create generational wealth for future family members." Congratulations on making your dream of becoming a homeowner a reality!



Watch a short video on Julio's first-time homebuyer journey at isles.org/julios-journey

LIVE GREEN & HEALTHY

Every year, lead poisons thousands of New Jersey children, who ingest it mostly through dust in their own homes. Nearly 50% of Trenton school children have blood lead levels that can affect their IQ, school performance, behavior, and health. The cost to those families and society, for special education, drop-outs, crime, prison and early enrollment in Medicaid, is huge. Isles tests homes and removes lead and other environmental hazards. We also educate the public, help other communitybased organizations, and improve public policies that help kids thrive.

Many communities also lack access to healthy food. Trenton only has two supermarkets for 90,000+ people, forcing many residents to shop at high-price, high starch convenience stores. Isles helps residents and youth to grow their own food in community and school gardens. Families save money, access great food, learn to work together, and clean and beautify vacant land. In addition, elementary school students, the next generation of gardeners, learn to grow and eat their own food in schools and summer camps across the city.

····· 2021 Highlights ·····



homes were remediated for lead and/or weatherized



achieved passage of the new Lead Safe Certificate bill 70+

online interactive workshops, including nutrition education, were offered to youth

Pollinator Garden

This past May, Isles partnered with community gardeners, the Mercer County Horticulturist, and the Master Gardeners of Mercer County to install two large pollinator gardens at the Chambers-Locust garden. The community garden, which was founded over thirty years ago, features vegetable production, fruit trees, extensive perennial beds, as well as social space. The project was made possible by a materials grant from the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, and Pinelands Nursery & Supply. The two planting beds that were developed cover over 1,000 square feet and include an array of pollinator-friendly native plants.

The regional planting initiative focuses on providing habitat for the eastern monarch, which has declined in population more than 80% in recent decades. Isles staff helped identify suitable space for the proposal, and worked to prepare the ground by tilling up the turf and removing invasive weeds. Once the site was prepared, a team of 20 community participants began to tuck the nearly 1,000 plants allocated for the project into the soil — followed with a healthy dressing of compost and

Groundbreaking NJ Lead Law

This year, New Jersey joined a handful of states to be at the forefront of lead poisoning prevention, by passing S1147/A1372 into law. This law, signed by Governor Murphy on July 22nd, requires a proactive inspection process for lead-based paint hazards in rental properties built before 1978, closing a loophole that allowed single family/two family rental units to go uninspected. It is estimated that there are more than 250,000 rental units in NJ with lead-based paint.





mulch. The plants thrived with abundant rainfall from over the summer, and members of the initial planting team also went back to weed the beds. Justin Allen, Urban Agriculture Project Manager at Isles commented, "This was an exciting collaboration that added a unique habitat to a community garden, while also reducing the amount of lawn that needs to be mowed. We look forward to doing more projects like this." Thank you to everyone involved who helped preserve and revitalize our local environment!

This legislation represents a major policy achievement for Isles, as we successfully advocated for its passage through meetings with lawmakers, researching other states' bills and best practices, and coalition-building. Partners in this victory for NJ families include the Housing and Community Development Network of New Jersey, Green and Healthy Homes Initiative, Advocates for Children of NJ, New Jersey Future, Lead Free New Jersey, Environment NJ, Lead Safe Cleveland, and the Coalition to Prevent Lead Poisoning (Rochester, NY).

The vast majority of nearly 4,000 new childhood lead poisoning cases each year in New Jersey are caused by lead-based paint that deteriorates and turns to dust in the home. Prior to this legislation, most families did not discover they have a lead paint poisoning problem until their child tests positive for an elevated blood lead level. This law ends the practice of using children as lead detectors and is one of the most impactful ways to prevent childhood lead poisoning, as it ensures that families know their home is lead-safe before they move in.

Now, we are working to help State and local municipalities like Trenton create mechanisms to implement and enforce the new law, which goes into effect 7/22/22.

REVITALIZE COMMUNITIES

Isles partners with residents and other stakeholders to develop community plans, then works over time to make positive change. We clean and reactivate buildings, gardens, parks, and open spaces, integrating mobile recreation, community events, and locally-created public art to change how visitors experience them.

In addition, we operate the Social Profit Center at Mill One, a historic former textile mill converted into an innovative 70,000 square foot office, studio, and warehouse facility for social profit organizations, artists, and events.

In addition to improving places in the region, Isles continued to play a leadership role in the Capital City Youth Violence Coalition (formerly Trenton Prevention Policy Board) and in gathering data to support informed decision-making around Trenton's redevelopment, including an updated survey of vacant and abandoned property across the city.

···· 2021 Highlights ····



local artists contributed artwork to the Reflecting Trenton mural project



parklets were constructed outside of local businesses

\$**I.8**M

was secured in investment for the SPC through the Historic Tax Credit Program

Re-Thinking Neighborhood Spaces

TRENTON ICE CREAM P

As part of our community revitalization efforts, Isles helps transform outdoor spaces into vibrant, usable public places for residents and visitors. Over the course of the pandemic, we've increased our efforts in creating "parklets," or a sidewalk extension that reclaims and utilizes a parking space or unused pavement. They consist of raised platforms with seating and planters that feature flowers, herbs, and native plants.

This year, in partnership with the City of Trenton and the Trenton Downtown Association, Isles designed and constructed several outdoor parklets for qualifying Trenton businesses to assist with economic recovery during the pandemic by increasing options for outdoor dining. One parklet was for the Trenton Ice Cream Parlor located at 969 South Broad Street, who had to close their business due to COVID only days after opening in 2020. When they were able to re-open, the parklet provided seating, attracted customers, and helped residents take ownership of their neighborhood.

As Trenton Ice Cream Parlor owners Eric McRoy and Konjit Hailemichael commented, "The increased visibility and increased number of outdoor diners have also contributed to the overall cleanliness of our neighborhood. Many neighbors and individuals passing throughout the community now make a concentrated effort to sweep, clean, and use nearby trash receptacles."

We're proud to work with Trenton Ice Cream Parlor and others to demonstrate how reimagining public spaces can lead to stronger communities, and to great ice cream!

Trenton Goes Electric

The Electric Vehicle revolution is just beginning. Major car companies are planning to convert to all electric fleets over the next 5-10 years and federal rebates for electric vehicles and solar panels are providing incentives for this transition to cleaner sources.

However, lower wealth communities like Trenton are in danger of being left out of this revolution, exacerbating the issues of poor air quality and lack of affordable transportation for Trenton residents as more affluent areas of the state move to cleaner options.

This experience led us to become one of the founding members (and the first environmental justice member) of a new statewide organization to promote EV adoption: ChargEVC. Our goal was to ensure that the growing investment in EVs occurred in places like Trenton and impacted the basic human and environmental challenges residents face.

Isles, with our partners ChargEVC, Environment NJ, NJ Clean Cities Coalition, City of Trenton, and NJ DEP, conceived of a first-of-its-kind electric vehicle pilot. It will offer a Car Share (like Zipcar), Ride Share (like Uber Pool) and Shuttle/ Van service, employing local residents as drivers and offering low-to-no cost rides for low-income families to access food, healthcare and jobs.

In February of 2021, Isles was awarded with start-up funding from NJ DEP for this pilot, and Stage 1 is well underway. Charging sites as well as our headquarters have been selected across the City, and we'll be announcing the project name, breaking ground on the charging stations and beginning initial operations of the Van Service by mid-2022.

2021/Cane

Stock



40 Years of Impact

Over the past 40 years:

- We launched NJ's first YouthBuild, helping more than 1,200 students learn important life, job, and educational skills.
- We got our hands dirty, learning about soil health, its connection to other environmental toxins, and how to test and remediate homes for lead toxins, making more than 450 lead-safe and weatherizing more than 1,000.
- We fostered wealth creation and investment, helping residents purchase and save 660 homes, building or renovating more than 500 homes, and bringing more than \$7M in tax credit funding to Trenton.
- We started or maintained gardens that have enabled residents to grow hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh produce.

And much more! See highlights at isles.org/40years



This year, Isles completed construction and opened the doors of the Social Profit Center at Mill One. The Center provides high quality office, training, conference, and flexible spaces to nonprofits, social impact businesses, and artists in a unique, formerly vacant historic textile mill. To date, we've brought on more than 25 tenant members, leasing 75+ percent of the building. These members represent statewide nonprofits, cutting edge tech start ups, both traditional and visual/audio artists, and more. Learn more at **socialprofitcenter.org**

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Judy Ha Kim

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