



HEALING TO ACTION

2023
IMPACT REPORT



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“We have the power to transform our lives. We seek to transform ourselves, our community, and our culture.”

In 2023, Healing to Action (HTA) advanced the three pillars of our strategic plan:

- 1. Deepening our model of survivor-leadership**
- 2. Amplifying our impact**
- 3. Developing our infrastructure to promote organizational sustainability**

From disrupting the shame and stigma around gender-based violence through peer-to-peer workshops; to launching caregiver workshops that CPS adopted to support intergenerational conversations about gender-based violence; to fostering survivor genius by sharing our lessons learned with community partners from across the country through the Survivor Power Institute, HTA’s survivor-leaders rose in their individual and collective power, shaping our communities to transform the root causes of gender-based violence.

This work is only possible because of HTA’s survivor-leaders, friends, board members, community partners, donors, staff members, consultants, funders, and allies. We hope that this 2023 recap fills you with a sense of pride for playing a role in constructing the future we aim to fight for—a future free from gender-based violence, with survivor-leaders at the helm.



In peace and gratitude,

Karla Altmayer & Sheerine Alemzadeh

Our Mission

To end gender-based violence by building the leadership and collective power of the communities most impacted.

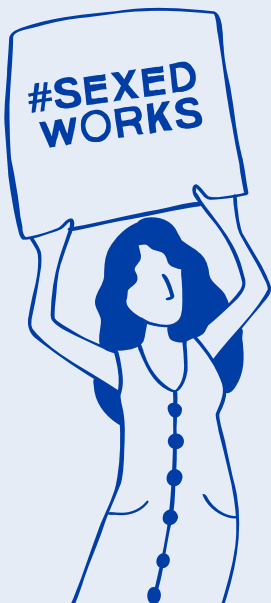
Our Vision

A future free from gender-based violence.

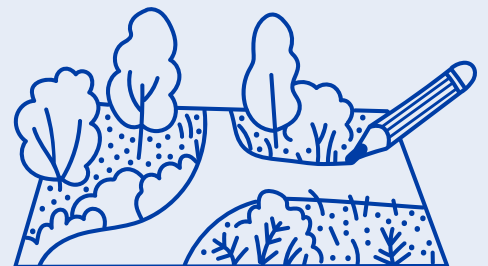
Our Model

Combining leadership development, grassroots organizing, and capacity building, HTA's program model enables survivors to develop bold solutions that address the root causes of gender-based violence in their communities.

Leadership
Development



Grassroots
Organizing



Capacity
Building

Our Values

1. We are survivor-centered and survivor-led.

Our work is directed by and for survivors, who are wise, resourceful experts uniquely equipped to identify and respond to the root causes of gender-based violence. We are accountable to survivor leaders' vision, who actively shape, implement, and evaluate the success of our work.

2. We are working towards liberation.

We see liberation as a collective state of joy where every person's experiences and emotions are valued and they feel understood, creating deep trust within our community. Our liberation work is ongoing, and requires continuous growth of our knowledge and resources.

3. We see our struggles as interconnected.

We recognize that we each bring specific experiences of privilege and oppression to our work. Through integrating our unique identities into our collective work, we strive for each person to feel wholeness.

4. We have the power to transform our lives.

We seek to transform ourselves, our community, and our culture.

5. We believe that unity makes us stronger.

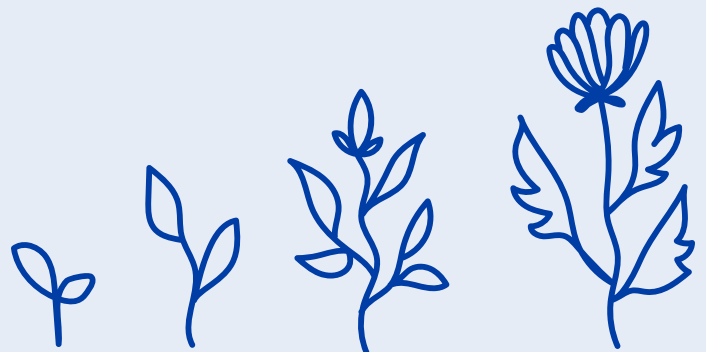
We are united in our commitment to empower ourselves and each other. We reliably support and share mutual responsibility for this work and for our community.

6. We are rooted in healing.

We believe healing is both a personal and collective process. If we heal our minds and bodies from trauma, then we can help others overcome the trauma that affects the mental and physical wellbeing of survivors. To heal is to free yourself from oppression.

7. We are committed to justice.

We acknowledge and uplift every experience of survivorship, because we envision a world free from injustice for all. We organize against the root causes of gender-based violence in our communities, creating tools to repair and prevent harm to ourselves and future generations.



Who We Are

HTA centers survivors from the communities most impacted by gender-based violence—survivors from immigrant, low-income, disability, LGBTQ+, and communities of color.

HTA Survivor-Leaders

94% identify as women of color	100% are low-income	65% are immigrants	19% are people with disabilities
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The HTA Community

HTA is a powerful collective representing a wide spectrum of individuals from all walks of life. We're made up of women, non-binary individuals, Black people, people of color, proud LGBTQ+ folks, energetic young people, hard-working parents, first-borns, first-gens, neurodiverse people, people with disabilities, and those with rich multi-racial and multi-ethnic backgrounds.



Deepening Our Model of Survivor-Leadership

“I have always liked to give talks to my community, it’s like you are giving your little grain of sand for society by sharing your message.”

– Margarita Trujillo,
HTA Survivor Leader & Peer Workshop Facilitator

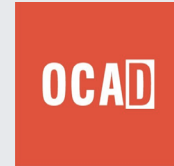


HTA survivor-leaders have been innovating alternatives for survivors that are rooted in community and peer leadership.

In 2023, HTA leaders piloted their first peer-to-peer outreach strategy in order to reach survivors in their neighborhoods, schools, community groups, and places of work and worship. Leaders designed community-based workshops to destigmatize gender-based violence in their communities, establish themselves as access points for isolated survivors, and organically recruit new survivor-leaders for the next cohort of Healing Generations.

Leaders partnered with local organizations to reach new communities of survivors in Chicago, including South Asian and Latinx immigrant communities in neighborhoods like West Ridge, Albany Park, Humboldt Park, and Back of the Yards.

PEER WORKSHOP PARTNERS:



SURVIVOR RESOURCE GUIDE



HTA also developed an interactive, digital *Survivor Resource Guide*, which provides survivors with local resources for sexual and domestic violence services, legal aid, housing, public benefits, healing, and more.

578

**conversations
were held
between HTA
leaders and
community
members about
gender-based
violence**

65%

**of those
reached
disclosed their
experience of
gender-based
violence to an
HTA survivor-
leader**

45%

**received
referrals to
individual
services and
community
resources**

#SexEdWorks

HTA survivor-leaders are addressing the racial and economic inequities in Chicago youth’s access to comprehensive sexual health education through their Sex Ed Works campaign. In 2023, HTA leaders focused on equipping caregivers to advocate for the funding and implementation of comprehensive sex ed for their children. HTA leaders developed and piloted an accessible and culturally competent curriculum for caregivers to support young people in understanding key concepts like consent, healthy relationships, and bodily autonomy to prevent gender-based violence. The curriculum empowers adults—many of whom never received this education and survived sexual violence as a result—to be critical partners in preventing violence in the next generation.

After learning about consent and bodily autonomy in a caregiver workshop with HTA leaders, one parent shared:

“In our times there was a lot of abuse in our family. I wish we had this education in our time ... spaces and teachings like this.”

— CPS Caregiver

CAREGIVER
WORKSHOP
PARTNERS:



CHICAGO
WOMEN'S
HEALTH
CENTER



CHICAGO
TEACHERS
UNION



6

caregiver
workshops
led by HTA
survivor-leaders

44

caregivers built
capacity and
advocacy skills

105

caregivers
reached through
the *Sex Ed Works*
campaign

Meet Maria Serrano, HTA Survivor Leader

From her influential role in designing our survivor leadership development program, Healing Generations, to being a powerful force behind the success of the Sex Ed Works campaign, Maria's leadership has been crucial to HTA's impact over the last 7 years.

As a mother of two and a Mexican immigrant, Maria makes her voice known by engaging in media interviews and writing op-eds about her experience as a mother living in neighborhoods with high rates of community violence.

“HTA is composed of families and parents who are dedicated to educating themselves, so we can educate other parents and support our kids with information we never had as youth.”

In 2023, Maria led parent workshops in Chicago Public Schools (CPS)—equipping caregivers with the tools to advocate for sex ed implementation in their child's school and information on consent, healthy relationships, gender, and sexuality that they can share and reinforce with their children at home.



“HTA provides us with the resources we need to do this work, like transportation, interpretation, and community support. But CPS gives us nothing. We do this voluntarily, without payment ... regardless, we are still going to do this work and support each other because it is needed.”

Survivor Leadership in Chicago

Since 2021, HTA has served on the City of Chicago's first-ever, Gender Based Violence Task Force. As a Task Force member, HTA led the creation of a Survivor Working Group (SWG) to ensure survivor-leadership at the city level in 2023. The city recruited four HTA survivor-leaders to serve on the SWG and HTA's Co-Director, Karla Altmayer was appointed as Chair of the Gender Based Violence Task Force. HTA's advocacy also led to the passage of an ordinance codifying the Task Force to ensure that survivors had a say in shaping gender-based violence policy regardless of the administration in power.

HTA survivor-leaders **Aurelia Aguilar, Rocio Carravantes, Esmeralda Cruz, and Diana Rodriguez** and nine other survivors in Chicago have advised the City around implementing the Chicago's strategic plan and identified priorities around gender-based violence prevention, such as investments in sexual



health education and alternatives to policing –marking a major step in acknowledging the critical role survivors must play in shaping political efforts to end gender-based violence.





Survivor-Leader Spotlight: Rocio Caravantes

“Let’s walk hand in hand in this journey to end gender-based violence ...”

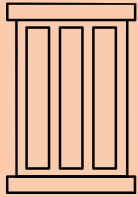
Rocio has been a long-time community leader in Chicago before joining HTA seven years ago. As a member of a local worker center, she was a leader in the campaign to pass the IL Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, a critical victory for a workforce that was largely unprotected and unseen in our labor laws. She also advocated for increasing Illinois’ minimum wage. In her spare time, she is part of several immigrant rights groups and is currently working on starting her own cooperative to support survivors of gender-based violence. Originally from Mexico city, she has lived in Chicago for 18 years.

Since 2019, she has been a key leader in HTA’s SexEd Works campaign and has spoken with CPS school board members, caregivers, and educators about the connection between comprehensive sexual education and gender-based violence.

Rocio carries a deep sense of hope and resilience—even in the face of challenges and setbacks with the administration. To those in power, Rocio says, “We are still here, waiting for you to join us in this movement”

As a member of the Mayor’s Survivor Working Group, Rocio met with Mayor Brandon Johnson at the Gender Based Violence Task Force retreat in 2023. Rocio commented,

“Maybe you don’t remember me, Mayor Johnson, but many years ago we walked hand in hand fighting for labor justice. And now ... I would like to offer to you that we walk together hand in hand as we did back then to reach the depths of our schools and our communities, so we can truly show them the inner sufferings of our children and of their parents who have suffered domestic violence and sexual violence. And in the same manner, I offer you my hand and that of HTA so that we can resolve this situation which affects everyone in the United States and the world.”



Amplifying Our Impact



truthout

“Sex education that teaches about consent and bodily autonomy is one of the most important and radical tools we have to stop the violence in our schools, in our homes and in our communities.”

—Sheerine Alemzadeh, Co-Director of HTA



“It’s important on the outset not to frame [domestic violence] as an individual problem that a survivor must figure out on their own, but rather as a community problem that we are all accountable for creating avenues of support for survivors to come forward.”

—Sheerine Alemzadeh, HTA Co-Director

WBEZCHICAGO

“We need to see actions behind the words. One thing that we’ve heard from the administration over and over again, has been this idea of co-governance [with survivors] ... we really want to see that co-governance includes not just saying, ‘You’re at the table.’ But it also means we’re going to resource this work.”

—Karla Altmayer, HTA Co-Director

Survivor Power Institute

We are shaping how social justice leaders approach and collaborate with survivors through the Survivor Power Institute (SPI)—a two-day training intensive followed by ongoing technical assistance for a cohort of organizations committed to developing the leadership of survivors. In November 2023, we launched our second iteration of the SPI with a cohort representing local and national organizations.

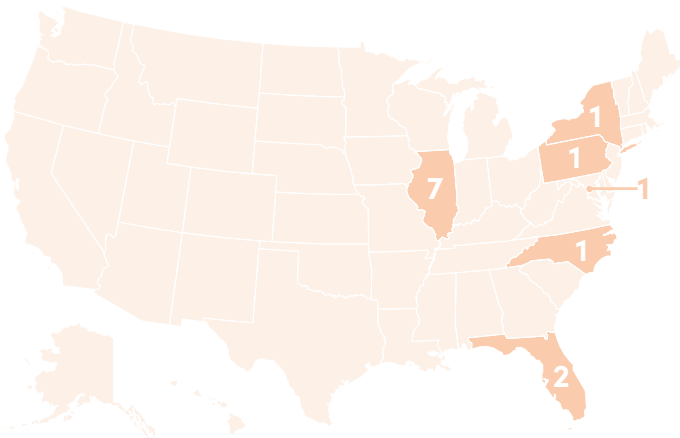


Through 2023, we provided ongoing support and technical assistance to the first SPI cohort, and we're already seeing powerful signs of organizations shifting towards survivor-leadership:

- a women's shelter formed a survivor working group to inform the direction of its programming
- a rape crisis center developed a strategy to reinvigorate its client advisory council
- a local labor organization influenced its national board to incorporate trauma-informed principles in working with survivors of workplace sexual violence

The 2023 SPI Cohort:

17 movement leaders across 6 states



Representing 14 organizations:

Swedish Hospital	JEO Speaks LLC
Surviving the Mic	Elévate
The BEE Collective	Florida NOW
National Women's Law Center	League of Women Voters of Orange County
Mujeres Latinas En Acción	Chicago Community Bond Fund
Times Up Legal Defense	Sakhi
Connections for Abused Women and Their Children	Coalition for Restaurant Safety and Health

“This is the best facilitated training I have ever been to. Thank you for all your planning and thoughtfulness! This has been just a wonderful experience.”

— SPI Participant



Sustaining Our Work

“I was excited to find a political home in HTA ... it’s been deeply inspiring to see how HTA is so agile, responsive, and loving in holding the weight of survivorship ... all while moving us into a place of centering and being led by survivors in a way that doesn’t burden survivors at the same time.”

— Amanda, HTA Board Member and Monthly Donor



Our Finances

HTA's budget grew by **39%** in 2023 thanks to the generosity of our donors and community partners. We also received our first county grant! The Starting Block Grant from the Justice Advisory Council is a two-year \$100,000 grant that will support our operational capacity and sustainability.

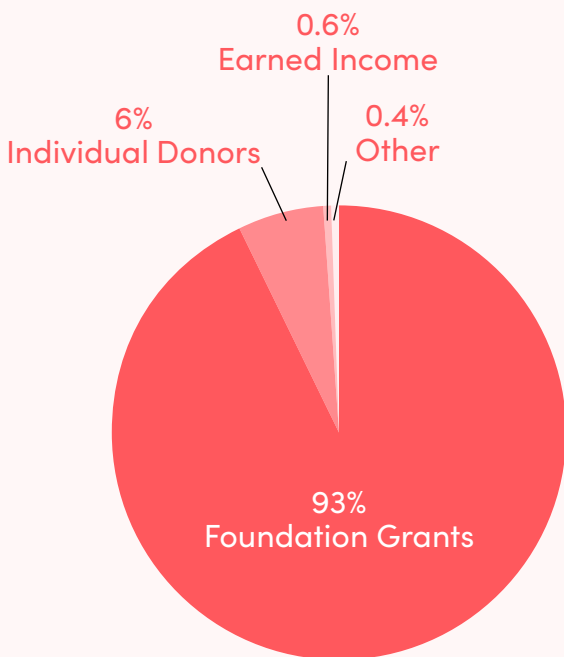
We're excited to have grown our team to **SIX** full-time staff members, including hiring our first Operations Director to support HTA's operational strategy and capacity; human resources; development; systems and data management; and financial management.

We also signed a lease for a physical office space in West Town for our team and leaders to gather, collaborate, and host events!

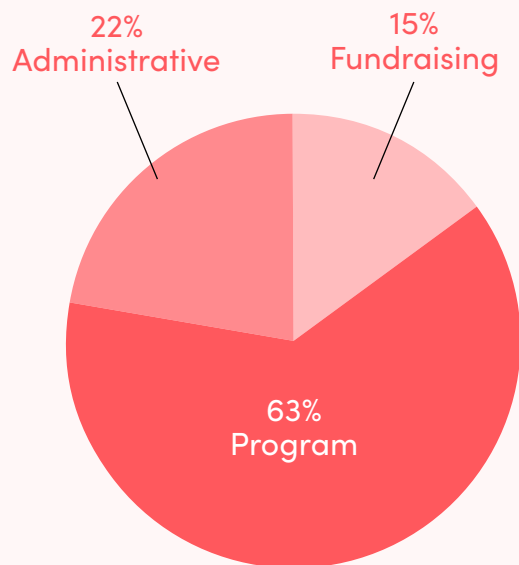


Finance Fact

Almost one-fifth of HTA's program expenses ensure our programs are accessible to survivors most impacted by gender-based violence through:



FY23 Revenue



FY23 Expenses

Supporting Survivors



29

monthly donors

137

individual donors

\$54,247

from individual
donations and
sponsorships

“HTA really cares about the people that want to be a part of it ... The thought that transportation is taken care of is a big one for me, I don’t drive. Commuting around is not always safe. I was once out alone and I was scared.”

– Diana Rodriguez, HTA survivor-leader

Thank you to our community of supporters!

We're incredibly grateful to each person, organization, and institution for their financial and energetic support. Because of our community, we can sustain our work of building the leadership and power of survivors. Your generosity has not only fueled the growth of our staff and programming this year, but has also empowered marginalized survivors and effected change in communities most impacted by gender-based violence. Thank you for your partnership and solidarity.

Funders

Kolibri Foundation
Michael Reese Health Trust
Fund for New Leadership
New Pluralists
Collective Futures Fund
Raliance Foundation
Field Foundation of Illinois
Racial Justice Pooled Fund
Julian Grace Foundation
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation
Woods Fund Chicago
Arch Community Fund
Evans Family Foundation
Chicago Foundation for Women
Groundswell Fund
Albert Pick, Jr. Fund
Seabury Foundation
Crossroads Fund
Reva and David Logan Foundation
Adobe Employee Community Fund
Builders Initiative

Sponsors

Fish, Potter, Bolaños, P.C.
Salk, Flores, & Broderick, Ltd.
Amanda Blair (former board member)
& Kyle Gardner
Mujeres Latinas En Acción
Raise Your Hand
Women Unite!
Hopewell Brewing
Good Beer Hunting



Thank you to our powerful and leaderful team!

Board Members

Samantha Lee

Chair, Governance Committee

Michelle Roseborough

Vice Chair, Development Committee

Jasmine Benjamin

Secretary, Finance Committee

Gillian Shapiro

Treasurer, Finance Committee

Amanda Hwu

Governance Committee

Elana Kopp

Development Committee

Michael Kiser

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Saul Padilla

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Emily Werth

Personnel Committee

Staff

Sheerine Alemzadeh

Co-Director

Karla Altmayer

Co-Director

Jocelyn Moreno

Campaign Organizer

Romina Vargas Bezzubikoff

Community Organizer

Ashley Hart

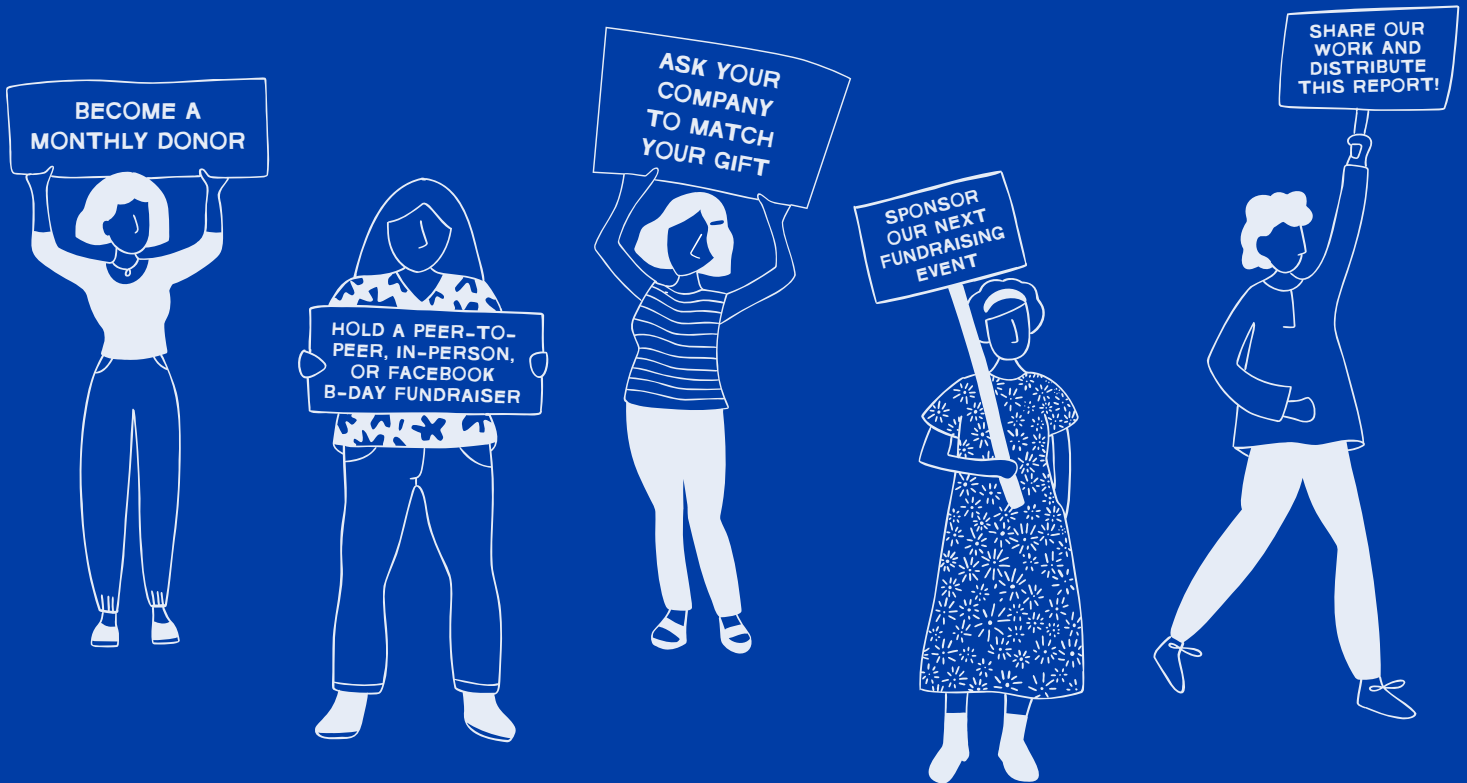
Development Associate

Mac Grambauer

Operations Director



Thank you for reading about HTA's impact in 2023! If you feel moved to further engage with our work and uplift the power and leadership of survivors, here's how you can support us:



Contact us with any questions or opportunities at admin@healingtoaction.org

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