


# IMPACT REPORT

APRIL  
2021-2022  
MARCH







# BLYTHE'S LETTER

## *Friends,*

2021 was the most difficult year in Dressemer's history. We lost some of the initial camaraderie that the pandemic stirred up, and fatigue took its place.

Most critically, the Dressemer Network faced ongoing challenges in supporting victims and survivors of trafficking virtually. In a crisis, heightened vulnerability leads to a higher risk of revictimization for survivors and desperate times put a strain on resources required for meeting the urgent needs of victims and survivors.

In a year of ongoing uncertainty, Dressemer's mission remained the same: ***to equip a community of people to advocate for the dignity of all people, leading to the protection and freedom of millions.*** In a season where so many of us felt the urge to hunker down and hibernate, thousands of you showed up to fundraise for our annual campaign. Amidst rising inflation, tens of thousands of you gave generously and consistently. With so much going on in the world, our community of monthly supporters—The Dressemer Collective—grew 56% from 2020.

***When a crisis hits, you have shown us time and time again that you show up and double down in your role in ending human trafficking.***

Last Fall, my team and I were able to spend time with Dressemer supporters around the U.S. in person—for the first time in 18 months. On one trip, I gave an educational talk about trafficking myths and how we can combat sensationalism to better serve victims and survivors in the process of self-identifying and seeking support. A following conversation with an attendee unveiled a moment of realization for her: she had been trafficked and was in need of unique support for her past trauma. I quickly connected her with a local Dressemer Network partner to receive immediate support. This experience was a poignant reminder of the unique situation Dressemer advocates are in—potentially interacting with survivors as we're sharing reliable data— and the powerful resources Dressemer has for survivors.

Our vision is a world where all people are free, and you give us hope that this is not only possible, but within our collective reach.

With deep gratitude,

*B. Hill*

CEO/FOUNDER

# VALUES



## DIGNITY

Every human being is born with inherent dignity and is worth of respect and autonomy, regardless of gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or ability.



## CREATIVITY

Complex problems require innovative solutions. We welcome out-of-the-box thinking as we seek to disrupt a criminal industry.



## GENEROSITY

There is an abundance of resources and people looking to make an impact for good. We believe the act of giving is a gift to the giver.



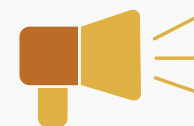
## COLLABORATION

No single person, organization, or entity has the ability to end human trafficking alone; we must work together and everyone has a role in this movement.



## ADVOCACY

The public has a role to play in creating a more just world; we create the tools, language, and action steps for a passionate public to take action.



# COMMITMENTS

## MUTUAL RESPECT

We will work hard to create and foster a community of mutual respect between our partners, advocates, donors, and team.

## LEARNING

We are committed to finding new and better ways to engage trafficking from all angles by following trends in trafficking and listening to survivors to discover where resources are needed most.

## TRANSPARENCY

We will continue to be open about our financials, partner selection, distribution process, impact, and survivor inclusion.

## LISTENING

We will actively find ways to incorporate those with lived experiences of trafficking into our organizational strategy.

## LONGEVITY

We are committed to the fight against human trafficking and the support of marginalized at-risk populations for the long haul.

# Global IMPACT

In 2021, we expanded and deepened our impact more than ever. We launched two internal programs to meet under-resourced anti-trafficking programming and grew the Dressemer Network to 20 organizations spanning twelve countries.

*Meet some of the survivors whose lives were impacted by the Dressemer Network:*



*\*pseudonym used to protect the survivor's identity*

# NETWORK DRESSEMBER NETWORK

Human trafficking is incredibly nuanced, so we resource our diverse DresseMBER Network to address this issue from every angle and region.

These leading anti-trafficking organizations range from big to small, international to grassroots, and demonstrate their effectiveness by going through DresseMBER's annual vetting process. Every spring, alongside our survivor-led external Grant Advisory Committee, we vet and audit existing and new partners to ensure we are *maximizing our impact*.

We address the issue of human trafficking through four key impact pillars:



*Advocacy & Education*



*Prevention*



*Intervention*



*Survivor Empowerment*

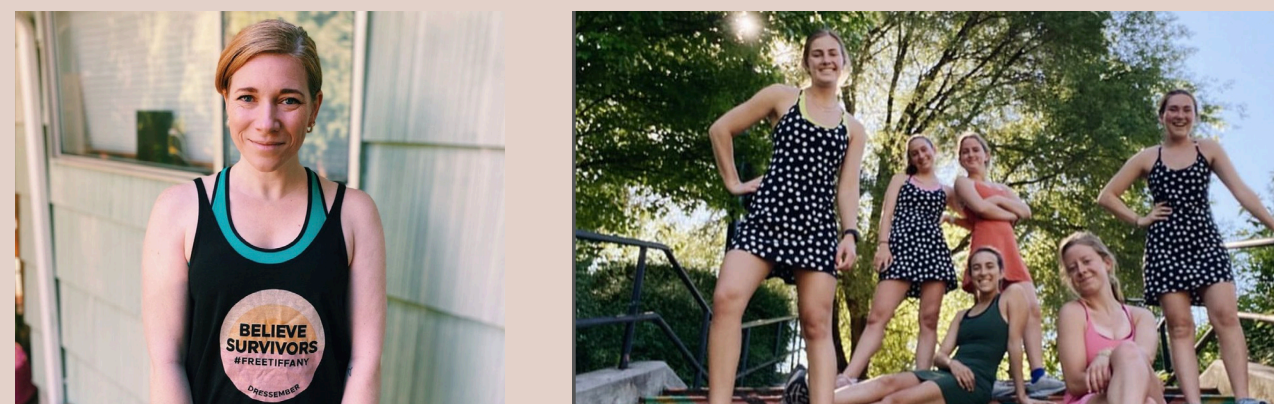


## Advocacy & Education

We mobilize the our community to learn, stir public interest, and demand change by providing reliable data for ongoing learning, followed by action steps and campaigns to accelerate change and raise vital funding. When we collectively advocate, we put pressure on the current system to dismantle injustice.

## Program Spotlight

In 2021, we launched the Survivor Justice Initiative in partnership with Karana Rising, a survivor-led organization committed to supporting survivors for life from incarceration to healing and wellness. Survivors of trafficking may have a criminal record as a direct result of their exploitation, impacting their ability to access education and employment opportunities.



*The Survivor Justice Initiative exists to bring awareness to the criminalization of trafficking victims in the US Justice System and connects survivors to resources to facilitate criminal record relief.*

Through Dressemer's Spring 2021 5K, we raised \$30,000 USD to support incarcerated survivors with care packages, educational fees, trauma therapy, and legal advocacy support. Over the last year, the Dressemer community has advocated for Tiffany Simpson, a Karana Rising advocate and survivor of child sex trafficking who was sentenced to 30 years in person for a crime she was forced to commit during her victimization. **Tiffany's petition has received nearly 80,000 signatures to date** and her case was heard for a habeas hearing in January 2022. Tiffany is currently awaiting the next step, which is writing the brief for submission to the judge to determine her sentencing.





# Prevention

We focus on addressing the root causes of trafficking to prevent people from becoming victims in the first place. We look upstream to address factors and systems that make certain groups more vulnerable to trafficking.

## Program Spotlight

In 2021, we added a new partner to the Dressember Network that works to prevent labor trafficking and ensures humane wages and working conditions in the agricultural field. In February 2022, **the Fair Food Program (FFP) was recognized by the U.S. Department of Labor as a national model for eradicating forced labor** due to its success in addressing, and preventing, farmworkers' vulnerability to trafficking. There are several recurring vulnerabilities of trafficking within the agricultural industry: immigration status, seasonal or temporary work, and isolation of work.



The FFP has been a leader in empowering America's farmworkers to protect their own rights and the rights of other farmworkers from sexual violence, trafficking, and forced labor. The FFP's unique model of farmworker leadership, dedicated third-party monitoring, and binding agreements with fourteen major retailers has led to a transformation in the industry, one farm at a time. Since 2011, the FFP has expanded from its roots in Florida tomatoes to multiple crops and growers across nine U.S. states, and has pioneered the Worker-driven Social Responsibility model for other low-wage worker sectors internationally.






## *Intervention*

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We work with local organizations to remove child victims of trafficking from situations, as well as provide support and exit pathways for trafficked adults. Our Local Network Leaders lead these initiatives through culturally sensitive and appropriate methods.

## *Program Spotlight*

Dressember resources prevention, intervention, and survivor care for survivors of online sexual exploitation of children (OSEC) in the Philippines. As a result of the pandemic and continued increased digital use, Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) continue to increase. Since 2020, Dressember has been supporting OSEC training for local authorities, technology to detect and block child sexual exploitation material production, prosecution of traffickers facilitating OSEC, and bringing children to safety. With support from Dressember in the last year, ***our Philippines intervention partner trained 3,812 key individuals (police, prosecutors, judges, social workers, partner organizations, and community members) to recognize and respond to trafficking.***



*I testified against my abusers so that I can help in giving justice to all who have been victimized and exploited.*

*Charito, Philippines*



# Survivor Empowerment

We empower survivors' sustained liberation through capacity-building initiatives to build long-term stability. We resource holistic aftercare, job skills training and placement, therapy, education, basic needs support, and more to ensure survivors' are empowered to make their own choices.

*Our Survivor Scholarship Program was built in response to survivors expressing frustration around the lack of flexible educational resources, as well as the desire to pursue education to achieve financial stability. We hit the ground running with this program and have supported six survivors since launching the program in 2021. I am thrilled to see how this program evolves to help more survivors attain their goals through educational opportunities.*

*Marissa Marx, Dressemer Director of Strategic Partnerships*

## Program Spotlight

In 2021, we established the Dressemer Survivor Scholarship Program to fill a gap that survivors identified: access to education. Through Dressemer's flexible academic scholarships, we are helping survivors close the gap between physical freedom and long-term economic empowerment.

*Financial instability is something I had to deal with my whole life. It has put me in situations that I never imagined and I am truly grateful for the Dressemer Scholarship. This semester has been challenging for me because I am enrolled in five classes while juggling two jobs. Dressemer helped me alleviate my financial worries and it has also helped me to focus on being able to pay my bills. I am truly grateful for Dressemer's support for survivors like me. It has given me hope that there are people who believe in me and my future despite my past circumstances. I am thankful.*

*Jasmine\*, United States*

*\*pseudonym used to protect survivor's identity*



DRESSEMBER  
COMMUNITY  
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COMMUNITY

Every December, advocates from all over the world pledge to wear a dress or tie for the 31 days of December. The style challenge is something anyone can do—with whatever they have in their closet—to make a significant impact. As an advocate, you can make the style challenge your own and adopt sustainable and ethical fashion practices: style the same dress or tie every day, host a clothing swap with your fundraising team, or shop DresseMBER's Ethical Fashion Directory.

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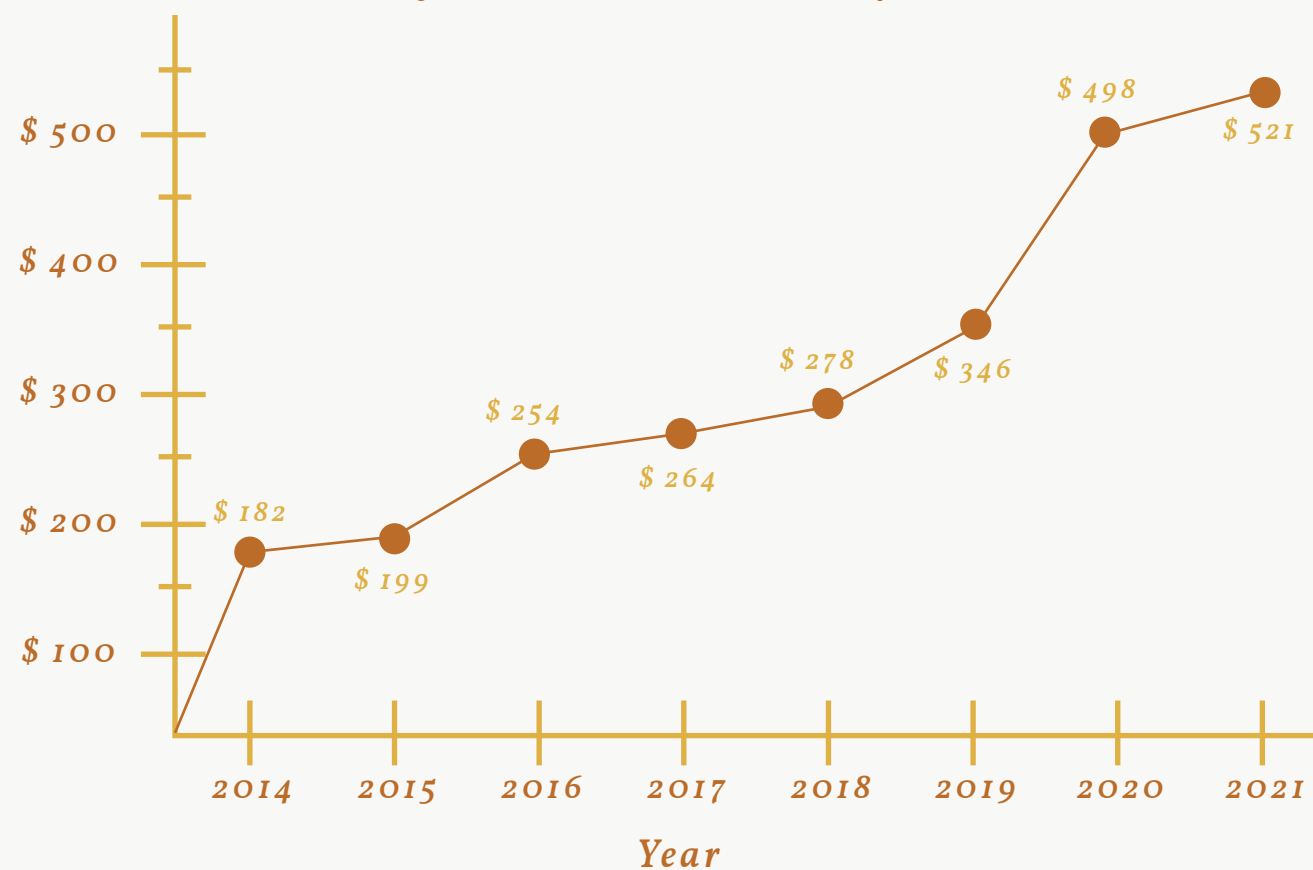
*DresseMBER's style challenge has mobilized thousands of people around the world to make a difference and own their influence across their social circles. Advocates belong to a passionate community that creates a groundswell of support for the anti-trafficking movement.*

*When enough people use their voice to advocate for change, things begin to shift: DresseMBER advocates are the catalyst for resourcing the DresseMBER Network's 20 programs.*

# Oh, How We've Grown!

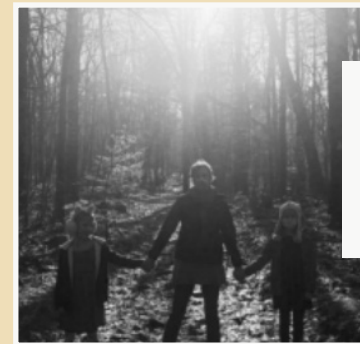
- **165,480** Supporters
- **21,612** Advocates
- Supporters from **72 Countries**

Average USD Amount Raised per Advocate



## Top Advocates

### TOP WORLD ADVOCATES



**ERIKA ANDERSON**

*Brookline, MA, USA, Raised \$23,000 USD*

**CHRISTINA MCKINNON**

*Reno, NV, USA, Raised \$21,900 USD*



### TOP CANADA ADVOCATES

*(and Sisters!)*



**HANNAH AU (RIGHT)**

*Vancouver, BC, raised \$14,900 CAD*

**SARAH CHIN (LEFT)**

*Vancouver, BC, raised \$14,300 CAD*

# Meet Thrive: The Top Dressemer 2021 Team



*"I'm a Dressemer advocate because I believe that small acts of kindness add up to big impact. I started leading our team in 2015! I love equipping and supporting other advocates to reach their goals and stretch their comfort zones, and advocacy is always better with friends."*

**-RuthAnn Deveney, Team Leader**



*"I have learned so much about the injustices that exist and because of the overwhelming support for fighting these issues (truly, starting In November, people now ask me, "When are you doing that dress thing?")."*

**-Ann Deveney**



*"I believe in the inherent dignity of all people and want to make an impact in the lives of others."*

**-Becky Miner**



*"Being part of a team with dedicated advocates and an inspiring team leader, helps motivate me to continue the race to raise funds for anti-trafficking organizations and awareness on the issue."*

**-Christina Wu**

*"Everyone deserves to be free, and get a chance to thrive."*

**-Tamara Miner**



*"It is deeply important to me to work toward restoring freedom and dignity to those that are oppressed."*

**-Miriam Mullin**



*"I want to aid in the fight against human trafficking and to help survivors with their recovery."*

**-Ashley Bloxom**



*"Learning about human trafficking is so heart-breaking and being on a team buoys me to continue to care and engage even when I want to run from the facts to not feel so sad."*

**-Katie Bhadra**



Team "Thrive with Dressemer", led by RuthAnn Deveney, has been the top team for the last 6 years, raising a total of over \$615,000 USD! Here's what Thrive, the 2021 Top Fundraising Team, has to say about advocating with Dressemer:



*"I am constantly in awe of the awareness and funds the Dressemer organization raises each year, but I feel humbled and honored to be able to use my voice to contribute to the end of human trafficking."*

**-Sarah Deveney**



*"I want to make the world a better place."*

**-Peter Yee**



*"The dress fatigue usually sets in by day 15, but it's always so encouraging to have teammates to keep me accountable and to remind me that this cause is far bigger than the minor inconvenience of wearing a dress."*

**-Kristianna Nelson**



*"To be a part of a local team that is a part of a worldwide team, adds to concept of being a part of something bigger than just yourself and helps you to focus on the victims and survivors of human trafficking."*

**-Beth Mariner**



*"It is an honor to be part of a team that is made up of ordinary people who use their everyday lives to advocate for freedom & dignity for all people."*

**-Elyssa Harootian**



*"It's so amazing to advocate together with a group of passionate people and I feel like together we are so much stronger!"*

**-Stephanie McClure**

# Dressemble Collective

The Dressemble Collective is a group of committed monthly supporters who ensure we have the resources needed to protect vulnerable populations at risk of trafficking, provide a pathway out for victims, and empower survivors year-round. As Dressemble grows, this community is critical to sustaining our efforts in fighting human trafficking.



*"I joined the Dressemble Collective because I wanted to commit to supporting this cause outside of just advocating in December."*

Kayla G.



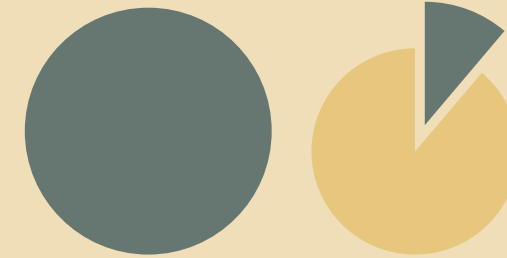
*"I believe in the vision of Dressemble - a world where ALL people are free and that takes time. I joined the Collective to ensure there's consistent funds going towards their mission and team. By giving monthly, it says I believe in the long game and I'm here to support you."*

Dana S.

Since April 2020, we've seen:



**56%**  
Increase in  
Members



**112%**  
Increase in  
Annual Funding

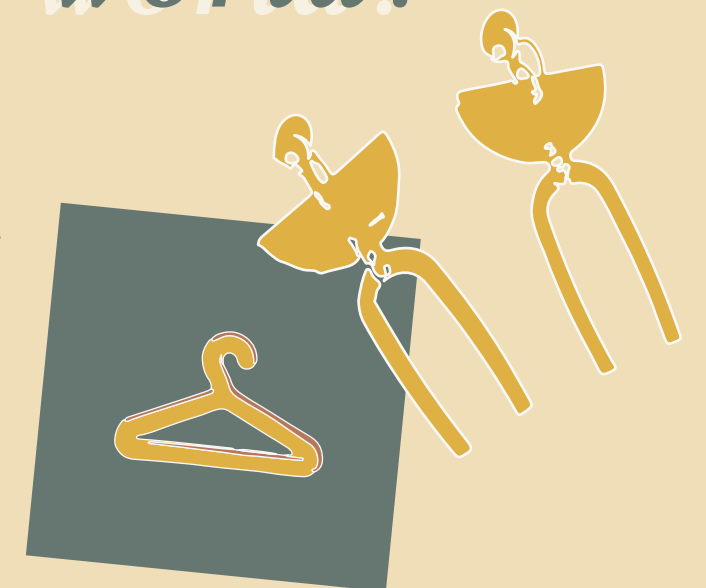


**47%**  
of Collective  
members are  
also advocates

*Join the Collective, a community of people changing the world!*

When you join, you will receive:

- Exclusive updates from the field
- Ethical brand partner offerings
- Annual branded merchandise



# *Dressember Documentary*

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In November 2021, we launched the Dressember Documentary to demonstrate how a decade of dresses and ties have impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands around the world. With key players from our movement— advocates, survivors, and partners— we are sharing our story.



*“This documentary was an investment we contemplated and carefully planned for years. We chose to invest time, money, and energy in creating this film so that it would become a powerful tool for our community to use to share about our work and their role in it.”*

**Blythe Hill,**  
*Dressember CEO & Founder*



# Equipping Our Community

*“We equip our community to be empowered advocates by providing survivor-led education, transparent ways we can (and do) make an impact, and a curated ethical fashion directory.”*

*-Stephanie Schindler, Dressemer Content Manager*

## THINGS SURVIVORS WISH YOU KNEW

During National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, we passed the mic to survivors for our *“Things Survivors Wish You Knew”* content series and webinar. ECPAT-USA Survivors’ Council members Citali, Faith, and Sean, as well as Lived-Experience Expert and Dressemer Blog Contributor Hannah Blair, offered their expertise on *trauma-informed advocacy, psychological coercion and sustained liberation.*

*“I didn’t need some extravagant rescue team breaking down my trafficker’s door to come in and carry me to safety. I needed the urgent care clinic to notice that it wasn’t normal that I visited seven times in the span of a couple weeks for recurrent UTIs. I needed my teacher to notice how I went from having perfect attendance and straight A’s to failing tests and not showing up for class.”*

**Hannah Blair,**  
*Survivor Consultant, Lived Experience Expert*



## WHERE DOES MY MONEY GO?

FAQ: “Where does my money go when I support Dressemer?” During the peak months of our fundraising season, we answered this question through in-depth blog posts and shareable social media graphics, unpacking the ins and outs of the *diverse impact* made through the 20 programs that make up the Dressemer Network.

## ETHICAL FASHION DIRECTORY

*Every purchase we make holds the power to make a difference.* It is our responsibility as consumers to consider how our clothes are made, who they’re made by, how those people are treated, and if they’re being paid fairly. Dressemer is committed to bringing awareness to the connection between *labor trafficking and the fashion industry.*

We will encourage you on your journey of conscious consumerism by curating resources to shop ethically, and recommend thrifting and shopping second-hand *as the most ethical and sustainable items any of us own are already in our closets.* We’ve vetted dozens of brand partners to present alternatives to fast fashion. Our Ethical Fashion Directory is a great resource to shop year-round and especially for the style challenge dresses and ties!





# INGIVING TRANSPARENCY INGIVING



Dressember is a platinum-level Guidestar participant, demonstrating the highest level of transparency. Only 15% of charities meet Guidestar's requirements for the Platinum Seal.

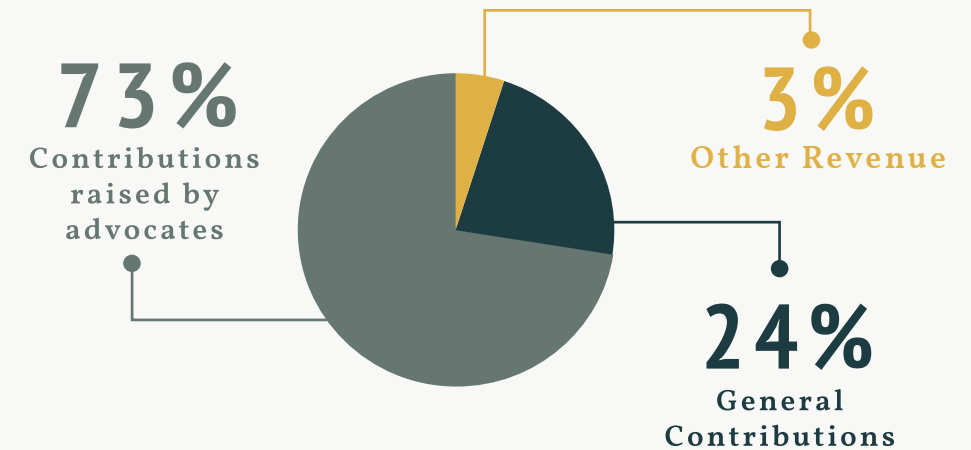


Dressember holds a 100% rating on Charity Navigator demonstrating the highest level of transparency and accountability.

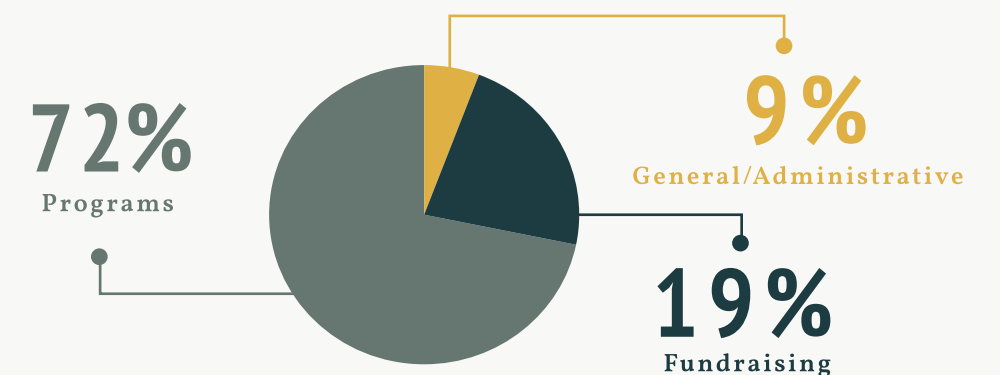
Access prior annual reports, 990s, and independently audited financial statements at [www.dressember.org/financials](http://www.dressember.org/financials)

## Financials

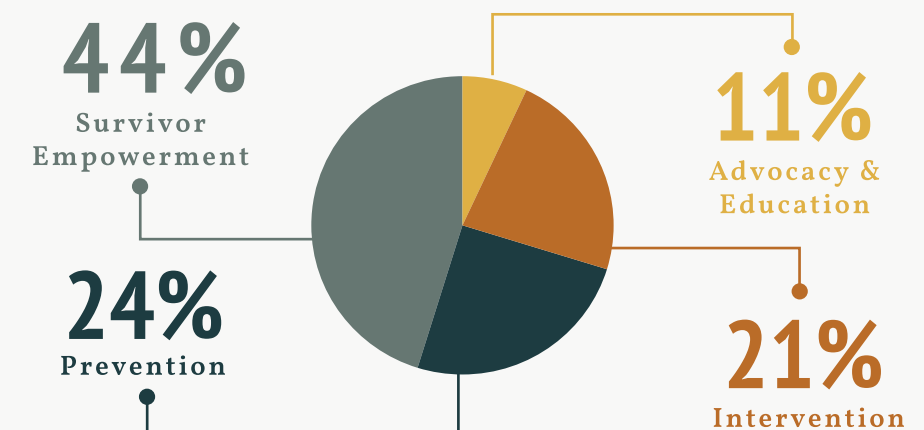
### Total Revenue (\$2,280,528)



### Total Expenses



### Program Expense Breakdown



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**We've made an incredible impact over the last nine years because of people like you who are committed to spreading tangible freedom and healing.**

**We are cultivating the next generation of advocates. Your gift to Dressemer fuels the work around the world and plays a role in growing the advocacy and generosity of our fundraising community.**

**With your support, we'll continue providing life-changing programs to thousands of people and, ultimately, create a world where all are free to live vibrant, autonomous lives.**

**Thank you for fighting human trafficking with the Dressemer community!**



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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*Join the Collective:  
[Dressember.org/collective](https://Dressember.org/collective)*

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