



# 2022

## ANNUAL REPORT

# LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR



*Julie Burns*

**JULIE BURNS**  
President & CEO



*Steve Pollock*

**STEVE POLLOCK**  
Board Chair

## Dear Friends,

In 2022, we commemorated our fifth year in the fight to end the overdose crisis with pride in our progress and steadfast determination toward our vision of zero stigma, zero deaths.

From the beginning, we have worked to end the stigma associated with addiction, keep people safe from overdose, and ensure access to quality care for anyone who wants it, no matter who they are or where they live. We better understand how social determinants of health like poverty, racism, social isolation, sexual exploitation, and trauma impact people's vulnerability to addiction. The overdose crisis cuts across every sector of society and endangers not just one population, but an entire ecosystem of interconnected individuals and interests. Such a broad crisis requires an equally broad, and collaborative response across all sectors.

To that end, we invested over \$2.5 million in novel approaches to ending the overdose crisis and increasing access to person-centered treatment, bringing our total investment to

over \$12 million to date. Through initiatives like Together We RIZE, we awarded nearly \$600,000 to bold, community-driven projects across the state. And, through an innovative training program called Housing First University, we brought together harm reductionists and housing providers to find common ground and better support people transitioning into low-threshold housing.

We also proudly launched the Joanne Peterson Award for nonprofit organizations that demonstrate unwavering dedication to improving lives affected by the overdose crisis. As a founding board member, Joanne's many contributions as a devoted leader in the peer-led support community and her strong voice for people with lived experience remain central to our approach.

In the year ahead, we will remain focused on a coordinated response, while strengthening our grasp of root causes and how best to address them. The more we can keep pace with the evolving nature of the crisis, the sooner we will be able to end it. We invite you to learn about our work and our partners who make it possible.

# OUR APPROACH

RIZE's multi-faceted strategy is designed to address the complexity and enormity of the overdose crisis. It is effective because it is based on the evolving realities on the ground. We listen to and learn from our partners, monitor the progress of our collaborations, and hold each other accountable toward a common vision of eliminating stigma and deaths.

For more information on our work, visit:

[rizema.org/impact-areas](https://rizema.org/impact-areas)





# INVESTING IN COMMUNITY

In partnership with the community, we increased our support for comprehensive, compassionate, and sustainable approaches across the care continuum to have the most impact.

**\$3M**  
raised in 2022



**\$2.5M+**  
grants awarded



**72**  
community partners  
received funding



subject matter experts and people with lived/living experience served on our grant review committees and advisory committees

## Together We RIZE

Through Together We RIZE, we marked our fifth anniversary by investing nearly \$600,000 in six bold, community-driven projects and initiatives that have the potential to bend the curve of the overdose crisis.

**Berkshire Harm Reduction** (Pittsfield)  
Enhancing mobile harm reduction services in a rural setting

**Brockton Neighborhood Health Center** (Brockton)  
Expanding drug-checking services

**Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center** (Boston)  
Enhancing 24/7 overdose prevention hotline

**North Suffolk Community Services** (Chelsea)  
Implementing It Takes a Village/Se Necesita un Pueblo, an evidence-based group therapy model co-facilitated by a clinician and a recovery coach

**St. Francis House** (Boston)  
Implementing an intensive outpatient treatment clinic in a day shelter

**South Shore Health** (Weymouth)  
Increasing hospital initiation of methadone by increasing peer supports



# GENERATING KNOWLEDGE

We continue to fund and promote research and evaluation to increase visibility, expand the evidence base, and inform policy. In 2022, RIZE was proud to have our portfolio of programs and research shared and thought leadership included in several wide-reaching spaces, from national conferences to well-known media outlets.

RIZE’s work was featured in **9 presentations** at **5 national conferences**:

- American Public Health Association
- AMERSA
- National Council on Social Work Education
- National Harm Reduction Conference
- Rx Summit



 **41** press mentions in 2022



(from left to right) BHCHP: Dr. Jim O’Connell, President, Stephanie Sullivan, CEO, and Samantha Ciarocco, Dir of Trauma Services; RIZE: Sarah Merrefield and Dianne Powers; Jack Connors, Camp Harbor View Co-founder & Chairman and RIZE Board Member

## Boston Health Care for the Homeless

In October 2022, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program recognized the bold and forward-thinking work of RIZE with the Tim Russert Award at their Medicine that Matters Gala.

*“RIZE is committed to dismantling barriers and systems that drive deep inequities in morbidity and mortality due to the opioid epidemic, particularly those fueled by racism. Their focus on collaboration has ensured that no one is confronting this public health crisis alone.”*

Samantha Ciarocco, Director of Trauma Services, Boston Health Care for the Homeless



# CONVENING FOR ACTION

RIZE is building stronger networks and creating opportunities to learn from, listen to, and invest in the needs of our communities most impacted by the overdose crisis by engaging over 1,400 people from across sectors of healthcare, social services, government, business, and advocacy.



**1,431**  
people engaged



**8**  
events

## TRAININGS

- Housing First University: Intro to Low-barrier Housing
- The Impact of Stigma on Substance Use Treatment, Continuing Education for Social Workers

## EVENTS

- Learning from Lived Experience: Understanding Barriers to Recovery
- Supporting the Workforce that Supports the People: Harm Reduction
- The Keys to Low-Threshold Housing

## NETWORKING

- An Evening with Cassandra Frederique, Drug Policy Alliance
- Briefing with Sam Rivera, OnPoint



Sam Rivera (right), Executive Director of OnPoint NYC, with guests at a briefing about overdose prevention centers



Kassandra Frederique (center), Executive Director of Drug Policy Alliance, with harm reductionists at a networking reception





**THANK YOU**

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