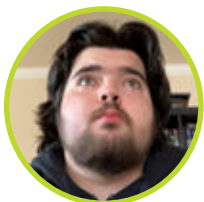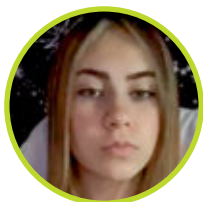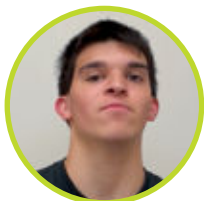# Treehouse
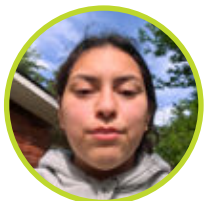# Class of 2022

Treehouse is uniquely positioned at the intersection of the child welfare and education systems in Washington State. We work to close the opportunity gap for youth and young adults who have experienced foster care through direct service and advocating for systems change. Treehouse is committed to embedding anti-racist, healing-centered practices in every aspect of our work.

Report Card
2021-22 School Year

Youth Demographics

6,379 youth & young adults served

At Treehouse, we envision — and strive to create — a world where every child who has experienced foster care has the opportunities and support they need to pursue their dreams and launch successfully into independence. Treehouse is uniquely positioned at the intersection of the child welfare and education systems. We advance educational equity for youth who have experienced foster care through direct service and systems change. Treehouse offers programs for children, youth and young adults ages 0-26 across Washington State. Youth are referred in a variety of ways, most often by their Department of Children, Youth, & Families (DCYF) caseworker. Once youth reach high school, they remain eligible for some of our services regardless of their foster care status. *The data below includes youth served by our programs, excluding Holiday Magic. (N = 3,823)*

Legal Status
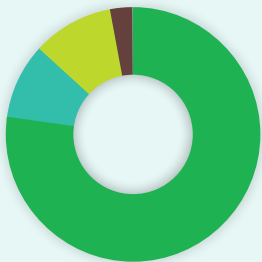
- **77%** Washington State Foster Care
- **10%** Parental or Third-Party Custody, Adopted, Aged Out, or Unknown
- **10%** Tribal Jurisdiction
- **3%** Federal Foster Care

Age
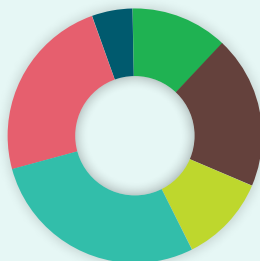
- **12%** Age 0-5
- **19%** Age 6-10
- **11%** Age 11-13
- **28%** Age 14-17
- **24%** Age 18-21
- **5%** Age 22+

Primary Race
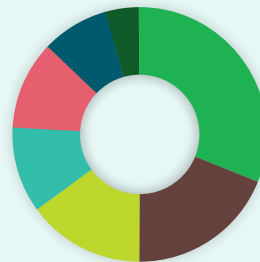
- **31%** White
- **19%** Multi-Racial
- **15%** African or African American
- **11%** Native American
- **11%** Undisclosed
- **9%** Hispanic or Latino
- **4%** Asian or Pacific Islander

Gender
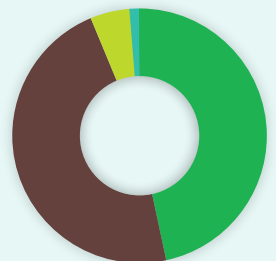
- **46%** Female
- **45%** Male
- **8%** Undisclosed
- **1%** Transgender

Advocating for Systems Change

2022 Legislative Wins

The Washington State Legislature allocated $10.6 million to provide economic and housing stability to young people who aged out of Extended Foster Care during the pandemic. In April 2022, Treehouse began distributing these funds to eligible young people.

The Treehouse Driver's Assistance Program ensures mobility and independence for youth in foster care by providing financial support for their permit, driver's education, licensing and car insurance. This year, funding was renewed for the Driver's Assistance Program, allowing Treehouse to maintain our current service levels and assist us in reaching the 1,700 eligible youth statewide.

Washington state has a number of programs and laws to support students in foster care. However, varying definitions have created barriers for students in accessing the services designed to support them. By aligning foster care terminology in education statute, we ensured that all students experiencing foster care have legal access to the education protections that will support their education stability. This expands access for youth in tribal care and unaccompanied refugee minors.

We secured funding to address Treehouse Educational Advocacy waitlists and meet the acute needs of youth experiencing exceptional placements that are oftentimes disruptive to their education experience and needs.

Treehouse advances educational equity for youth who have experienced foster care by transforming the foster care and education systems.

Project Education Impact

Since 2017, Treehouse has co-led Project Education Impact, a statewide, cross-systems initiative involving legislators, state agencies and non-profit partners. The workgroup's goal is **to achieve educational equity for youth experiencing foster care and/or homelessness** in Washington state from pre-kindergarten through post-secondary. Since the group submitted its annual report to the legislature in the fall of 2021, it has explored the unique and shared experiences of students in institutional education settings, identified the need for longitudinal and real-time data in post-secondary programs, and engaged with young adults with lived experience to better understand the conditions that are required for them to meet their own definitions of success.

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Essentials & Experiences

Driver's Assistance

Number of Youth Served	**421**
Number of Driver's Ed Classes Funded	**285**
Number of Auto Insurance Payments	**666**

Holiday Magic

Youth Who Received a Gift	**4,134**

Just-in-Time Funding

Youth Who Received Funding	**1,858**
Number of Requests Funded	**6,007**

Treehouse Store

Number of Youth Served	**1,610**
Number of Store Visits	**3,217**
Number of Items Distributed	**65,164**

Achievements

The Treehouse Store safely brought back in-person shopping, improving the experience of youth and families. Additionally, community engagement increased as more volunteers reentered the space, limited group engagement returned and donations were opened again.

COVID reduced the number of Holiday Magic volunteers we could safely engage in both gift packing events and individual shifts. However, even with this setback, groups packed a record number of items at our Elf Workshops in August and September and administrative volunteers were able to process all registrations by the deadlines.

In 2021, we had the opportunity to provide multiple time-limited academic and financial assistance programs including CARES Project, Chafee Pandemic Aid Relief and Extended Foster Care payments to youth who aged out during the pandemic. In total, we provided $3 million of temporary financial assistance to almost 2,000 children, youth and young adults, alongside our core Just-in-Time Funding services. We continue to expand funding as Graduation Success and Launch Success enroll more participants statewide.

What We're Learning

Holiday Magic clients wished to see a larger variety of higher quality gifts, so we are exploring new options for this upcoming holiday season. We also created a priority gift request deadline, allowing for fewer late registrations and a better client experience overall.

After the successful Spokane Pop-Up Shop in 2021, we are working hard internally and externally to plan additional Pop-Up Shops moving forward. The time and energy needed to plan these events is extensive, and we hope to streamline this to create the best experience for all involved.

In Driver's Assistance, we reassessed funding limits, increased funding caps and eliminated the auto insurance waitlist to limit barriers in accessing funding. We are actively reaching out to youth, caregivers and social workers to maximize funding and youth served.

We have continued to provide reimbursements to all those accessing financial resources. We have received positive response for our flexibility and decreased processing times.

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Essentials and Experiences:
Stories to Inspire

One of our volunteers noticed a caregiver spending a lot of time in our book library and walked over to see if they needed any assistance. The caregiver mentioned they were looking for children's books about gender identity so the volunteer went to the back storage room and found a handful of books. The caregiver was thrilled and responded, "These were all on my wish list — I'm so glad you had them!"

A caregiver contacted Treehouse to share that their youth was selected to be on their middle school dance team and they were in need of dance uniforms and shoes. We provided the necessary funding for this youth to participate in this year-round activity, including the recital at the end of the school year. The caregiver was extremely thankful, stating, "Thank you so much, we really appreciate it! She will learn a lot of valuable life skills through being a part of the dance team.

A Graduation Success participant got a job that required her to be outside for long periods of time during the day. As the weather in Seattle got rainier and colder, she did not have the proper clothes to keep herself warm and dry. Through the Treehouse Store, we got her the rain gear and boots that she needed to stay warm and dry so she could work outside through the winter.

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Educational Advocacy

938 — youth & young adults served

In partnership with the Department of Children, Youth & Families, the Educational Advocacy program works with schools, social workers and caregivers to remove barriers to school success for K-12 youth in foster care.

Achievements

Advocates rigorously collaborated with school and district staff, caregivers and social workers to ensure youth received necessary support in school, especially those who were highly mobile, and those who have specialized education plans.

We reduced the amount of time referrals were on waitlists by revising our referral and case assignment process. We also adopted a statewide team approach to ensure youth were served as soon as possible.

What We're Learning

Returning to in-person schooling presented a lot of challenges, especially for youth experiencing placement changes. These changes often result in missing documentation, transportation issues, difficulty in building relationships with school staff and increased discipline concerns.

We continue to work on standardizing the Educational Advocacy program interventions to ensure youth are receiving the same high-quality services equitably across the state.

To better support youth and their networks, we have created more opportunities for case review, including tracking outcomes over time, understanding case complexity and measuring impact.

By the Numbers

Number of Youth	938
Number of Caregivers, Social Workers, Community Providers and School Personnel Trained	800+
Number of Schools	650+

Goals of Educational Advocacy:

- Build the skills of supportive adults who can advocate for youth
- Youth receive relevant academic support
- Increased school stability and reduced absences
- Decreased exclusionary school discipline

738 youth connected with a supportive adult who will advocate for them

433 youth connected to general education academic supports

362 youth had special education accommodations created or improved

150 youth had school transfer(s) prevented or expedited

189 youth had a suspension, expulsion or discipline issue prevented or reduced

33 youth had credits gained or transferred, or were connected to credit recovery
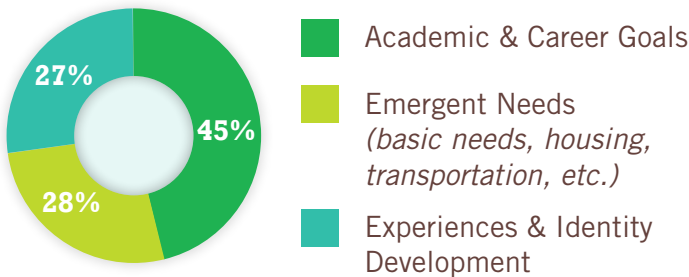
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Graduation Success

1,276 — youth & young adults served

Graduation Success partners with high school aged youth in foster care to engage and invest in their education and future.

Access to Resources

Youth received material and resource support to explore interests, engage in their communities and remove barriers to their success. More than 3,280 Just-in-Time Funding requests were provided for 806 youth in Graduation Success.

Types of Funding

- **45%** Academic & Career Goals
- **28%** Emergent Needs *(basic needs, housing, transportation, etc.)*
- **27%** Experiences & Identity Development

By the Numbers

Number of Youth	1,276
Number of Schools	300+
Number of School Districts	100+

Goal Setting & Skill Building

80% of youth set personally meaningful goals as they worked toward high school completion and beyond. Youth made progress on **3,138** goals.

Youth Well-Being

We surveyed our Education Specialists at the end of the year and found that out of 724 youth, 24% needed additional mental health support. Youth who were in need of additional mental health services were on average 4.5 times more likely to be rated as disengaged from school.

Barrier Removal

There were more than **16,000** interventions related to addressing education barriers like school transitions, special education needs, disciplinary actions and credit retrieval.

Partnering with Support Networks

More than **16,900** interventions were provided in direct communication with a social worker, caregiver, school personnel or other service provider.

Achievements

Statewide, Graduation Success improved our service array throughout the communities we partner with by lowering waitlists, hiring more Education Specialists and reinvigorating and building partnerships with referral sources and schools.

In addition to the services we currently provide, we learned our youth need services that are culturally relevant and centered in their specific communities. We established a team for Specialized Populations and look forward to supporting the unique needs of youth.

What We're Learning

Youth were disengaged with school, their service networks and peer relationships. This was attributed to challenges in accessing housing, mental health support and support during transitions between providers, placements and schools.

We are striving to find ways to lean in with youth and understand what their needs are. We are curious about how our program aligns with what they want, including pivoting to focus on aspects of support in addition to education for a holistic approach in working with them.

Noticing service inequities across the state, we began looking at an integrated model of service, including more intention and collaboration around transfers between the Treehouse programs.

Celebrating Graduates

Thanks to the investments made by our generous community, dedicated Treehouse staff—and the incredible resilience and determination of our youth—**170** students served in Graduation Success completed high school in 2022.

Graduates of 2022 persevered through a challenging year. Treehouse partners with students as they work towards completing high school with a plan for their future. We are thrilled for these seniors as they take the next step in their journey!

Post-Secondary Plans
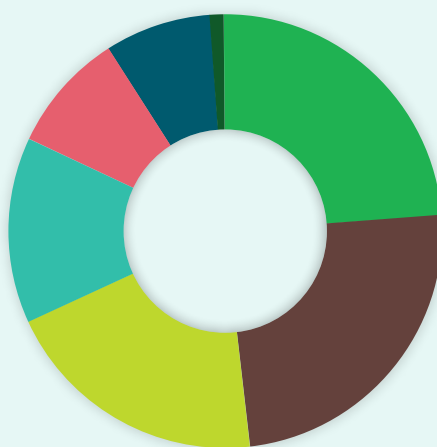
- **24%** Undecided
- **24%** 2-Year College
- **20%** 4-Year College
- **15%** Other / not disclosed
- **9%** Technical/Vocational School
- **8%** Career/Employment
- **<1%** Military

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Recent Graduates

Class of 2022:
Why is Graduating Important?

Lashaya, Evergreen High School:

"Graduating is important to me because, well one, I'll be the first one in my family to graduate from high school and also into college, which I'll be going to Central in the fall in Ellensburg. In 10 years, I see myself, hopefully, maintain a career of some sort. My goal is to become a social worker and start helping to change procedures and policies about foster families and how case workers do things because… I know how things work and I think it'll be a good opportunity to help other foster youth such as myself. One word to describe graduation to me is proud because I am truly proud of myself and how far I've come as an individual and as a student and I hope in the next 10 years I see myself doing things I love and being around people I love as well and just continuing on being a great student and great person."

Israel, Graham-Kapowsin High School:

"Graduating is something that's important to me because it's something I've worked on doing my whole life, and it lets me know that I'm ready to start a new journey. In 10 years, I see myself in a self-sufficient situation with a house and a job I love doing. One word that describes how graduating makes me feel is accomplished."

Jonah, Cascade Parent Partnership Program:

"Graduating is important to me because it would be hitting a huge achievement in my life so far, one step closer to being independent. In 10 years, I see myself for one being happy and successful. I think one word to describe myself for graduating would be proud."

Nah'Sira, Skyview High School:

"Graduating is important to me because I feel you've got to finish what you start. In 10 years, I see myself as a nurse. And one word describing how graduating makes me feel is relief."

Alicia, Foss High School:

"Graduating is important to me because I want to go to college. In 10 years, I see myself teaching in a high school or elementary school. One word to describe how graduating makes me feel is proud."

Reylvi, Hazen High School:

"Graduating is important for me because I have learned so many things. I have met a lot of people. I have made a lot of new friends. I see myself in 10 years working as a barber in my own business. I feel so excited. I feel proud of myself."

Kevin, Shoreline Schools – District Based Transition Program:

"Graduating is important to me because I want to work. In 10 years, I see myself helping people. One word to describe how graduating makes me feel is happy."
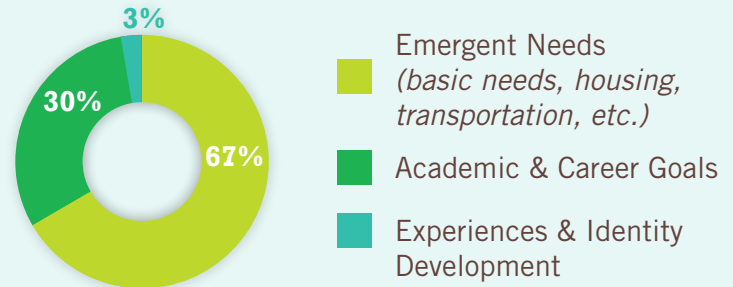
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Launch Success

383 — youth & young adults served

Launch Success continues Treehouse's partnership with youth after graduation by providing ongoing access to goal setting, and financial and material resources.

By the Numbers

Number of Youth	383
Number of Young Adults Who Received Resource Funding	250
Number of Resource Requests Funded	885

Types of Funding

- 67% — **Emergent Needs** *(basic needs, housing, transportation, etc.)*
- 30% — **Academic & Career Goals**
- 3% — **Experiences & Identity Development**

Achievements

In the 2021-2022 program year, Launch Success moved from a pilot program to full scale implementation while making best practice improvements that tailor services to each participant and build skills for self-determination. These changes included:

- Searched nationwide for a program model that is centered on young adults, culturally competent, focused on self-determination and relationship driven.

- Integrated voice and choice into services, allowing for young adults to select their coach, determine the cadence of communication and create transparent service arrays so that participants can access all that Treehouse offers.

- Created a Participant Bill of Rights in partnership with young adults, explicitly stating young adults' rights when engaged in Launch Success services and what Treehouse will be accountable for in the partnership.

- Partnered with Treehouse Youth Adult Partnership, to convene and facilitate a co-design space with young adults, creating authentic partnership to identify and advance initiatives that meet the needs of young people who have experienced foster care.

What We're Learning

To create programs for young adults that are reflective of adolescent development, honor emerging adulthood, center on healing and create authentic relationships, we embarked on programmatic and process analysis where we took the best from previous models and searched for what was missing. Our deep dive over the last year brought us to focus on building integrated services between all Treehouse programs for seamless transitions, to examine our processes and programs through healing centered lenses, and center everything we do on the young adults we serve. We are looking forward to:

- Expanding services for young adults with dedicated Learning Pathways Coaching for support in post-secondary and apprenticeship navigation, in addition to ongoing coaching for life skills support, including more expansive financial security education.

- Continuing to invite, listen, respond and adjust processes and services to center on the needs of participants.

- Training intensives for coaches focused on evidence-based tools to support employment/career, education, living situations, personal wellbeing, financial security and being a part of community.

- Opening eligibility to mirror Graduation Success's statewide expansion while retaining quality and accessibility of services.