



CHOOSING OUR ROOTS

# 2022 COMMUNITY REPORT

5 years old and still growing strong

## A Year to Celebrate

KATIE MCKAY BRYSON - BOARD PRESIDENT

Quietly, riotously, gorgeously, COR turned five in 2022.

Five years of showing up together to make visible how much our communities need – and collectively benefit from – safe, affirming homes where queer young people can thrive.

We exist because we must exist. And the need for COR's message is clearer than ever right now – ringing out over the harmful policies and tired stigma; reminding people that none of us are here alone. **Queer and trans young people are a GIFT, now and forever.**

Our COR community has grown in ever-widening ripples over these five years. People have moved in and through our services, our staff, our volunteer community. We have stretched together to answer the call, over and over. This winter we've turned inward together, to reflect and learn about sustaining our necessary work over the next five years.

I am so glad to be here with you, five years in. COR's role is to make unconditional love a tangible thing in the lives of young Alaskans who are seeking safety and support for their own self-determination. I'm excited to see what we do next, together.

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Participants at the COR and Identity, Inc. HalloQueer Carnival, October 2022

# 2022 in Review

In 2022, COR helped support an average of 8 host families each month.

We reached out to previous and current hosts, and assessed that we need to build in more resources supports to hosts, so we've added that to our 2023 plan



172 stipends were given to youth, and 39 households were helped with stabilization (housing, groceries, utilities, etc.)

Thanks to a grant from the Municipality of Anchorage, COR purchased a six-plex apartment building for a bridge housing program. Participants were involved in envisioning programming, writing policies, and giving feedback.



We continue to collaborate with community partners in Anchorage, Bethel, the MatSu Valley, and the Kenai Peninsula.

Community donations make it possible for COR to give cash stipends directly to our participants and hosts!  
Our community donated over \$112,000 in 2022.



“This year I was finally able to get my hysterectomy and my top surgery done so I’m as fully transitioned as I want to be. I’m working on becoming a peer support person and I’ve never been more excited about a job. I’ve been so happy lately and part of it is thanks to COR but most of it is because of all the work I’ve been doing for myself.” - Quinn

# Each of your gifts helps make a difference in the lives of queer Alaskan youth...

## Letter from a graduated participant

TW: Domestic violence, drug abuse

Hi all! My name is Donnie (she/her bisexual)

I joined COR at the end of the summer after living in the My House youth transitional housing program for a little over a year. I had gone through severe emotional abuse and lost my sobriety. I was struggling to find anywhere safe for myself and my daughter and eventually lost custody of her for 8 months.

After sobering up and doing all of the steps, I regained custody of my daughter and had my son too. We were still in transitional housing, and I was becoming frantic to find a home for ourselves. My sister then told me about a program for homeless LGBTQIA+ youth. I thought it was too good to be true. I mean come on, a whole program dedicated to helping people like me whom society would soon rather ostracize than help? I decided on a whim to make an intake appointment. I was immediately welcomed with warm hellos and just an overall 'what do you need and how can I help you' attitude.

With the help of COR & my case manager, I obtained a grant that would help me pay my rent for a whole year. I also got another grant that allowed me to pay a security deposit on a lovely apartment, right next to my sister! I was able to fully furnish and make our apartment home all within 2 months of joining COR. They even got me a Christmas present after stepping out of the program. They didn't just boot me. They made sure I was stable and financially able to step out and they are still providing supportive services.

I was met with nothing, but love and compassion from COR leaders. I still am in touch with my case manager often and I still receive support in areas I need. COR is the only reason my family has a stable and loving home. This program has helped so many like me and my sister and with more love and support they just might be able to make a memorable impact on lowering the number of homeless LGBTQIA+ youth.

-Donnie



\*SCAN ME TO MAKE A DONATION  
DIRECTLY TO COR 

# 2023 and beyond!




Choosing Our Roots has come a long way from its humble living room origins and volunteer collective days. We still hold tight to our original dreams of safe housing for all lgbqia+ Alaskan youth and our principles: dignity & respect, empowerment, cultural relevancy, community, and hope. And we like any person or organization, have learned as we went and grown. We are now in Anchorage, the Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, and Bethel. With each additional region, our admin and programmatic needs have grown.


In 2023, COR is excited to adapt our internal structure in alignment with the scope of our services and vision by adopting a co-leadership model. Our Co-Director of Programming and Co-Director of Operations will work collaboratively with all staff, Board members, and volunteers in leading the organization forward. We are working to innovate our volunteer & host training, create more support for host families, help participants voice and receive the life skills training, and to continue to explore alternate housing models in addition to the host home model.

Excitedly,  
COR Staff

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