



PHILLY

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



# A LETTER FROM THE CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Resolve Philly has had a tremendous year, in spite of the fact that as individuals, as a team, and as Philadelphians, we have been *through it* over these last twelve months. Together, the Resolve Philly staff have moved through 2022, growing, learning, laughing, loving, and grieving together. Because we are humans first, it's important to acknowledge, appreciate, and hold space for all of the ways we show up to work together.

Notably, this year saw the kick-off of Shake The Table, Resolve's third community-centered journalism initiative; the welcoming of Germantown Info Hub as part of the Equally Informed Philly initiative; and the launch of Modifier, our practice change and consulting enterprise. You can read more about each of these new additions on the coming pages. What we want to highlight as Co-Executive Directors about this expansion is how incredibly proud we are, not just of the work being carried out through these projects, but also the internal energy that went toward supporting this expansion. Our entire team invested a great deal of energy, time, compassion and intention to both ensure that GTown Info Hub was welcomed fully into our larger organization and to build internal systems that are enabling Shake the Table and Modifier to now flourish.

We appointed two new board members this year, Letrell Crittenden and Sandy He, welcomed several new additions to Resolve's staff, hosted a squad of incredible interns, and facilitated two fellowships for early-career journalists. Resolve prioritizes professional development investments which take shape in different ways, including financial support to attend conferences or courses, as well as the opportunity to utilize working hours to serve in advisory/leadership roles with outside organizations. We've spent nearly \$17,000 in 2022 on professional development for folks across the organization. Our colleagues are regularly invited to participate in panel discussions and engage in other speaking opportunities, as our wider team is increasingly being recognized for the outstanding work you'll read about on the following pages. This year also saw Resolve Philly staff members [winning awards for their journalism](#), [community advocacy](#), and [nonprofit leadership](#).

This year has also been a record year for fundraising. As Resolve's chief fundraisers, our ability to level up our 2022 fundraising game was a testament to the

hard work of our entire team and our ability to track and communicate the impact that our work has had on Philadelphia and the journalists who serve its residents. Resolve has more multi-year commitments from funding institutions heading into 2023 than we've ever had at the end of the calendar (and fiscal) year; this is in addition to welcoming a record number of individual donors into partnership with us. The opportunities for earned revenue through Modifier are numerous and most importantly, mission-aligned. We're so excited to double down on the value we can offer to newsrooms and other narrative-building and storytelling organizations across the country in 2023.

Our vision for the future remains clear: unfettered access to news and information that is representative, equitable, accurate, and oriented around community voices and solutions. Next year we look forward to even bigger strides toward this horizon as Broke in Philly, our flagship collaborative reporting project, transitions to a new topic, as Shake the Table introduces a new mechanism for civic engagement and community journalism, and as Equally Informed Philly continues to facilitate new networks of neighborhood level reporting that will then take shape as a city-wide community wire service.

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Photo by Diana Henderson for the Online News Association (ONA)

As co-founders and Co-Executive Directors, we are keeping top of mind the fact that we must continue to solidify Resolve's internal structures so that they keep up with the pace of growth. The two of us will be focused on ensuring that our Operations team has optimal capacity and support. We'll also be investing time and energy into Board recruitment and development to ensure that Resolve's leadership and governance aligns with our evolution beyond the start-up stage.

We couldn't be more energized by our colleagues and the impact of Resolve Philly's activities on residents in our community and local media in Philadelphia and throughout the world. We'll continue to put one foot in front of the other as we move into 2023—listening and learning along the way. Whether you're a longtime champion of our work or just getting to know us through this report, we're glad you're here and we hope you'll stick with us in advancing more equitable, collaborative, and community-driven journalism.

In strength and with deep gratitude,  
Jean Friedman-Rudovsky & Cassie Haynes



# SHAKE THE TABLE

[Shake the Table](#) is Resolve's newest initiative, launched in April of 2022. It is a six-year reporting and community engagement program with the goal of empowering Philadelphians to hold their elected city officials accountable. The program specifically focuses on reform efforts of the city's Operating Departments, such as Lincses & Inspections, 311, and other frontline desks. Shake the Table aims to achieve this goal by creating clearer, more sustainable methods for people to engage with city government and taking their issues out of the one-on-one silos, where most of their interactions occur. Instead, we want to equip folks with the skills that are needed to understand and interrogate the larger systems that prevent long-term resolutions to issues. By connecting people to local media and giving them the tools to participate directly in these larger discussions, we can create a structure that supports an action-oriented feedback loop.

We launched the initiative in partnership with the [Scattergood Foundation](#) to ensure that these issues are front and center in next year's mayoral race. We also plan to provide a foundation for accountability throughout the mayor's tenure and the next class of city councilmembers' upcoming terms.

What does this mean in practice? As with all of Resolve's work, Shake the Table is powered by our Community Engagement (CE) team. Over the past six months, our CE team organized and facilitated numerous community conversations, which we call Sound OFF's. These dialogue sessions have allowed us to understand the questions, concerns, and ideas that our city residents have about elected officials and the inner workings of local government. In our Mantua and Kensington Sound OFF's, residents voiced a desire to understand the power that our mayor has over different parts of the city government. They also voiced a need to know ideal ways that they should be able to interact with our city's services, as well as real pathways toward making the city work for them. We get consistent feedback that the spaces our CE team creates for this initiative are both empowering and educational.

We are very aware that in the nonprofit and journalism world, there is often little follow-up or follow-through after community listening sessions. Sometimes, it's hard to identify the impact that these discussions have on the future work of the host organizations, leading community

members to feel like their time was wasted or the act of listening was just for show. This is an important problem, so Resolve makes sure to act on what we hear to the best of our ability. An example: Resolve had already established a partnership with [Better Civics](#), a local nonprofit that focuses on increasing civic literacy and engagement. We had the idea of creating accessible information that revolves around the role and powers of the mayor and other branches of city government in Philadelphia. We've used our Sound OFF events to listen and better understand which elements of city government feel the most relevant—and the most obscure—to community members. We are then prioritizing an explanation of how decisions get made with respect to those departments in the toolkit.

Another example: our CE work uncovered a strong desire from community members to learn how to ask political candidates questions in a way that limits the respondent's ability to spin or evade an answer. So, we partnered with [WHYY](#) to create a workshop for Mantua residents on how to ask candidates better questions. This event was our most energetic Sound OFF to date. It was exciting to see residents invested in learning something new and hear that they felt empowered by the workshop. This event also demonstrated how Shake the Table can connect local journalists with communities in ways other than reporting on them. This kind of information exchange will build trust in newsrooms and increase participation with local elected officials on a deeper level.

In developing Shake the Table, we also looked to our newsroom partners in the Broke in Philly reporting collaborative to inform the direction of our work. Early on, we had conversations with colleagues at several local outlets who mentioned the potential value of a program called [Documenters](#). This project was started by Chicago-based newsroom [City Bureau](#) and is now being replicated nationally. Documenters trains everyday folks to document public meetings and hearings and pays them to attend. By bringing City Bureau's model to Philadelphia, Resolve is addressing a fundamental challenge in holding our local government

accountable. Public meetings are where local policy is shaped and where residents can witness, learn about, and participate in the systems that impact their lives. Yet, many of the City of Philadelphia's meetings and hearings happen without any public knowledge, let alone any oversight or input from the community. The reporters who previously interpreted these meetings for the public are disappearing. These poorly attended and often intentionally inaccessible meetings are a point of failure in our civic information system and a missed opportunity for genuine democracy. Our newsroom partners recognized that by documenting what they no longer had time to cover, Resolve could revolutionize local government accountability reporting. We recently secured funding from the [Every Voice, Every Vote](#) initiative of the [Lenfest Institute](#), and we'll be launching Documenters early this year.

We'll be honest—the launch of Shake the Table was a challenge! With such an important, overarching goal of improving government accountability, our teams spent a lot of time and energy brainstorming, exploring, developing, and changing our ideas of success and the specific activities to get us there. We are really proud to be at the point we are now: with a clear understanding of our focus, with community and institutional partnerships to ground our work, and with a foundation of trust among the city's most under- and mis-represented that will continue to guide our initiative every step of the way.





# EQUALLY INFORMED PHILLY

[Equally Informed](#) is Resolve Philly's initiative that focuses on bridging the digital divide in Philadelphia. We operate a set of free English and Spanish news and information service SMS text lines and organize a cohort of community-based reporters called Info Hub Captains. Equally Informed Philly (EIP) also houses [Germantown Info Hub](#), a newsroom serving the information needs of residents in a historically Black neighborhood in Philadelphia. Germantown Info Hub originated through a project based at Temple University and came to Resolve earlier this year. It is also soon to be the cornerstone of a city-wide community-level newswire service that Resolve is in the process of building.

Over the last year, our focus has been on solidifying and strengthening the core components of this multi-faceted program. When it comes to our text lines, we worked hard to grow both our general Q&A line, as well as our Equally Informed Survivors text line, which serves those directly impacted by gun violence. Thanks in part to a grant from the [Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency](#),

we now have over 300 families connected on this line. Our team developed these relationships by hosting community events and forming partnerships. We worked hard to prove the value of this line for our subscribers by finding and sending out news stories that might not have been easily available in Philadelphia otherwise. One example of this practice was a small collaboration with the L.A. Times, who wrote a piece about how to talk about gun violence with kids. After a mass shooting on South St., our EIP team reached out to the L.A. Times to ask if we could have the piece translated into Spanish. The English and Spanish versions of the piece were then sent out on our text line and included in a set of online local resources coordinated by a partner organization called [Up the Block](#).

We also worked hard to refine our Info Hub Captain program, which is now in its second year. The Info Hub Captains contribute to and distribute a print newsletter based on our monthly conversations and their knowledge of what their friends, family, and neighbors would find useful. This year, we were able to identify "core" Info Hub Captains, who show up with great regularity and have become more integrated into Resolve's other initiatives. "I come here [to our monthly meetings] because it feels like we are getting the work done," said Derrick Pratt, one of our longtime Captains.

Our Info Hub Captains also involve the Resolve team as allies in their own neighborhood programmatic work. Pratt has reached out to us for event support with his organization We Embrace Fatherhood, based in Mantua. Two others, John Zerbe and Neyda Rios, have also looked to the team for partnership with their work in Kensington, including activities for kids at the McPherson library.

A parallel goal of the Info Hub Captain program was to elevate the lived experiences of residents. We wanted to improve reporting in and for communities that local media aims to serve and demonstrate that people who are typically the ones covered by media outlets can also play an integral role in this coverage. Daisie Cardona exemplifies our success in this area. She began as an Info Hub Captain and

now works as a full-time journalist for the Kensington Voice, an awesome hyperlocal newsroom that serves Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood. She got connected to Resolve via our Community Engagement (CE) team and then received training from Resolve on journalism basics. Her new role is a step towards rethinking the traditional mentality of who gets to be a journalist and who doesn't.

From the start, Resolve's CE team has been central to this work. For example, CE Editorial Associate Valerie Dowret reported in collaboration with our Info Hub Captains on resources and solutions to Kensington's drug market. This reporting for our print newsletter led Equally Informed to connect with Stop the Risk, a program that provides people experiencing homelessness in Kensington with food and a safe place to stay while transitioning into a recovery home. From this partnership, EIP was able to strengthen our relationship with people experiencing homelessness in one of the neighborhoods we aim to serve.

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**OVER THE LAST YEAR, OUR FOCUS HAS BEEN ON SOLIDIFYING AND STRENGTHENING THE CORE COMPONENTS OF THIS MULTI-FACETED PROGRAM.**

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The CE team has also been instrumental in helping spread the word about the Equally Informed text lines. They forged a relationship with the food distribution nonprofit [Double Trellis](#), which allowed us to advertise the text line using Resolve-sponsored stickers on meals. This collaboration helped grow our subscriber numbers and broaden our distribution for the print newsletter.

This year, we also undertook a fun project experimenting with a new way to understand what kind of information people need from the news media and when they need it. With funding from the [Google News Initiative](#) and in partnership with Reach, our texting platform partner, we enabled almost 100 people, who were not in Resolve's audience at the time, to answer a series of prompts via SMS throughout the day. We ran waves at two different intervals during the year. It was fascinating to see the issues that arose for different people. The desire to have more information on transportation and resources for senior citizens really jumped out at us. We plan on using this insight and knowledge to do more community-informed reporting in the future.

Internally, this year saw a lot of transformation for the EIP team! Two of our original members transitioned to new roles at Resolve, taking them out of EIP's daily work. We brought in new folks as well, including Rasheed Ajamu and Maleka Fruean, who are the heart and soul of the Germantown Info Hub. We worked incredibly hard to make them feel comfortable and included into the EIP team and our organization as a whole. We had to adjust workflows and communication styles to ensure that we were moving forward together, and not in silos. This change was definitely a challenge, but we feel very proud of how far we've come over the last year in strengthening the foundation of this important work while continuing to grow.

We are incredibly excited about what 2023 will bring. We will be taking concrete steps towards operationalizing a community wire service, which will offer neighborhood-level solutions journalism to a network of hyperlocal publications around the city. This has been a dream of Resolve for a while now, and we can't wait to tell you all we've accomplished along this path in our next report.



Photo by Drew Dennis





# BROKE IN PHILLY

Resolve's longest-standing initiative is Broke in Philly, a collaborative reporting project that focuses on economic mobility and solutions to poverty. It is widely considered the national gold standard in local news collaboration, and Resolve's model has been replicated in dozens of cities and regions across the world. This year, we have grown to 29 partner newsrooms, most recently adding Metro Chinese Weekly, Metro Korean News, and Metro Viet News.

Our partner newsrooms cover these issues together and independently in a way that seeks to center the experiences of people working to improve their economic situation using person-first language. We place an emphasis on solutions journalism, meaning reporting that not only diagnoses a problem our community faces, but also takes a critical look at potential models for fixing it. These could be efforts underway locally or ones showing promise elsewhere that we could bring to Philadelphia.

This year, we've had a major focus on our Collaborative's internal process, as we plot a course for our future together. When Broke in Philly (BiP) first launched in April of 2018, it was envisioned to be a one-year collaboration, similar to its predecessor, the [Reentry Project](#). Within six months, however, we and our partner newsrooms realized that this topic was too large and too important to cover in only a year. So, our partner newsrooms committed to five years of working together. Your math is right! This spring, BiP will conclude and something else will take its place.

Therefore, a lot of our Collaboration team's energy this year went into facilitating a process for discerning what project we will take on next. Our newsroom representatives divided into working groups on Editorial, Professional Development, and Membership and Workflows.

Why the second two groups? It's because we have come to understand that many newsroom representatives in our Collaborative get so much more out of it than just the ability to do great shared reporting. They keep showing up month after month, for years, because they feel supported, buoyed, and inspired, knowing that there are a wealth of opportunities within this wonderful group of people.

Evidence of this impactful community shows up everywhere. It's when we get half of the Collaborative showing up to our monthly Lunch and Learn's—mini professional development sessions on everything from shooting good photos with

your iPhone to practicing more trauma-informed reporting. When newsroom partners work together on a project that isn't officially part of Broke in Philly, it is made far easier by the connections that people forge in our group. Our participatory funding model enables new projects because it's more flexible than annual budgeting. Jos Duncan Asé, the founder of Love Now Media (LNM), has repeatedly said that this funding has been crucial to LNM's growth and success. Sometimes it's just feeling like we are all a part of a special family with a shared vision for the future of journalism. Melissa Mitman, editor at Metro Philadelphia, has told us that during the height of the pandemic, our Collaborative served as a lifeline for her. She leads a three-person team and found remote work very isolating, but she leaned into the Collaborative for friendship, camaraderie, and new points of view.

The enthusiasm for this work and the relationships that drive it were also demonstrated in the participation of our working groups themselves. All of our partners are super busy, and it can be hard for people to take on additional work. Yet, when we asked people to volunteer for one of three working groups that would make recommendations



to the whole Collaborative, so many people jumped at the chance. Furthermore, they met together, hashed out ideas, and wrote up detailed lists of recommendations for what we should change, what we want to keep the same, and what we might focus on in our new project.

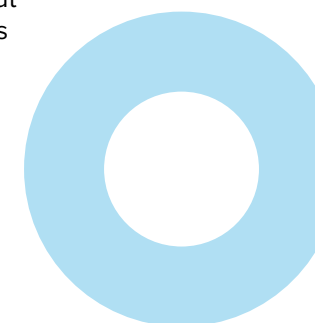
As with all of our work, the Community Engagement (CE) team played a crucial role in the continuing growth and success of the Collaborative. We recently brought in a new newsroom partner, New Mainstream Media (NMM), the company behind Metro Chinese Weekly, Metro Korean News, and Metro Viet News. This partnership never would have happened without Jingyao Yu, Resolve's CE Program Manager. She kept the idea alive for NMM's founder Dan Tsao and made a point to connect Dan with Gene Sonn, Resolve's Director of Collaborations. Past correspondence

had been dropped because NMM was too busy, but Jingyao knew that the newsroom would benefit from learning more about our Collaborative—and they did!

Another example of our CE team's incredible work is the open newsroom in Mantua, which was a phenomenally positive experience. Open newsrooms are events in which members of the media come together with community residents to talk. Community members have the opportunity to ask reporters questions and offer suggestions for their work. These sessions help community members understand the reporting process more deeply and give reporters a new perspective on their coverage of these communities. The newsroom partners who attended gave us incredible feedback. They appreciated the opportunity to hear authentic concerns at the neighborhood level and felt valued for what they could contribute to the conversation. The newsrooms have been asking for more events like this, and we're in the process of planning them.

This kind of newsroom participation in events organized by Resolve's CE team represents a larger change in the mindset of our Collaborative partners. In 2021, the CE team's work organizing Sound OFFs to support our special series [The Toll](#) gave many partners first-hand experience with the value in engaging with community members before reporting. This year, we received enthusiastic support when proposing community engagement efforts for our next collaborative reporting project, even before we locked down what we want to do.

We are very excited to tell you soon about what will come after Broke in Philly wraps up this spring. We are honored and humbled to be the facilitators of what is arguably the nation's most recognized and dynamic long standing news collaboration, and we are giddy with the energy and anticipation of what comes next.







Since its founding, Resolve has been considered an expert in collaborative journalism. In the early days, when it was just Jean and Cassie, the two would receive almost weekly requests from journalists or funders from across the globe. “Could I pick your brain...,” about how Resolve got so many newsrooms to work together, about how you sustained those relationships over time, about how you do the things you do? We always said yes and felt bolstered knowing that we were not only pioneering a new model, but also helping others understand “the how” so that they could do it too.

As the organization evolved, demand for Resolve’s in-house expertise grew in every facet of our now wide-ranging work. Our Community Engagement team was constantly asked to share their knowledge, insight, and process of effectively establishing real, trust-based relationships with community organizations and community members. Jean, Cassie, and the Operations team were often sought after for their advice in building organizational scaffolding that supported resilient and equitable policies and practices. In 2021, Jean and Cassie realized that this could be a valuable revenue stream for Resolve—and at the same time, bring added value to the industry. We spent a little over a year advancing this work in an ad-hoc manner, still offering free services while also trying to spin up a consulting practice.

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**JUST A FEW MONTHS INTO ITS OFFICIAL LAUNCH, MODIFIER IS ALREADY HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE NEWS INDUSTRY.**

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Running parallel to this work was Reframe, our incredible initiative that was dedicated to helping journalists improve their daily practices by using more human centered language and equitable news frames since 2019. In 2020 and 2021, Reframe experimented with many methods to reach journalists and support their goals, from one-off workshops to month-long newsroom-wide projects to digital software development. Some projects worked, some

didn’t, and some got totally scrambled by a worldwide pandemic. In the end, the team focused efforts on projects with the highest impact: deep, long-term relationships with newsrooms, aimed at specific changes, alongside digital content for journalists, when they need guidance most. In 2022, for example, Reframe worked with [Spotlight PA](#), an investigative nonprofit newsroom in Pennsylvania, to develop their first-ever source tracking program. Our team also facilitated monthly conversations and trainings amongst six newsrooms in the U.S. and Canada who report on Indigenous communities.

Sometime in the spring of this year, something crystalized: since all of Resolve’s teams hold important knowledge and skills, and we’ve developed ways to share this knowledge with others in our industry effectively, it made sense for us to bring these practice change skills together, under a new brand, in a way that allows us to maximize our impact.

In October 2022, we officially introduced Modifier, the new home of Resolve Philly’s practice change work. Modifier is where newsroom decision-makers and leaders of analogous organizations can come for personalized instruction and consulting. It’s also where individual journalists and writers can find advice, guidance, and resources. The collective expertise means that there are opportunities to work with us across a variety of areas, including operational resilience, collaboration, community engagement, language and



*Jean and Cassie are the answer to the question “who ya gonna call?” when you are trying to figure out how to create a collaboration (and make it stick), how to talk about diversity and inclusion (and make it work) and how to best reach out to your community of readers (in an authentic way). And of course: fundraising. Collaboration is new, messy, and hard. But Jean and Cassie’s experience in this emerging field of journalism is unmatched by others. You will want them at your side.*

**— Sharon Broussard,  
Northeast Ohio Solutions Journalism Collaborative**

framing, and more. We offer solutions for organizations of all sizes and for individuals seeking a range of new skills, from in-person group training to free educational content.

Why Modifier? We worked with Philly-based branding firm Myth to find a new name that would tell our story. The word “modifier” describes our role in practice change: helping media makers, researchers, writers, and more adapt their current workflows and adopt new habits. It’s also a nod to our origins as Reframe and our focus on language, as in an adjective attached to a noun to modify its meaning. Modifier’s tag line is: “for the ever-evolving.” We love this motto because it truly captures our belief that no matter how long you’ve been a journalist or founder or editor or executive director, there is still room to learn and evolve. And as long as you’re committed to the journey, we’re excited to support you in moving forward on your path.

We held a soft-launch in September at a mixer in Los Angeles during this year’s Online News Association Conference. Our worldwide public launch the following month kicked off with an online campaign. Online and off, our colleagues and partners responded positively to the announcement. They cited the immense need in the industry for Resolve’s flavor of professional development, the impact we’ve had on our peers so far, and the way our marshalling of internal resources makes our offerings clear to potential partners. (They also praised our beautiful Rorschach test of a logo—depending on which way you look at it, it reflects an abstract “M,” two folks shaking hands, an Alexander Calder mobile, and more. Regardless, it symbolizes the creativity and energy it takes to enact change.)

This positive response has already resulted in outreach from prospective clients. Since the launch, we’ve entered into conversations with dozens of journalists and news organizations seeking support in our areas of expertise. We can’t wait to see what the next year will bring, as we contribute to their journalism and help them reach their goals.

Until then, we celebrate a year of positive impact. We’ve strengthened valuable relationships and forged new ones, from new media stars, like Capital B, burgeoning networks, like the Dallas Media Collaborative, and even academic partners, from the Philadelphia Economic Equity Project at the University of Pennsylvania to NHK and Waseda University all the way in Japan. Jennie Trejo of the Dallas Media Collaborative recently sang the praises of their work with our Community Engagement team, explaining to a cohort of other collaborative leaders how they discussed an engagement report in a way that made members feel receptive to feedback. Lauren Williams, Co-Founder of Capital B, said their work with Modifier “is helping us support the editorial mission of Capital B with an organizational foundation that will reflect our core values and allow us to build a first-of-its-kind newsroom. [Cassie and Jean’s] thoughtful counsel and targeted guidance have been invaluable during the early stages of building our nonprofit.”

We’ll also continue our contributions to journalism discourse through partnerships with academic initiatives. We recently released highly anticipated [research](#) in collaboration with the [Center for Media Engagement](#) at the University of Texas at Austin; its results showed that small changes in reporting language can positively impact community trust in news. And our new year-long partnership with the Solidarity Journalism Initiative will support a series of free online workshops for journalists covering topics, like reporting on democracy, the climate, and abortion.

Just a few months into its official launch, Modifier is already having a positive impact on the news industry. We will continue to create free ways to engage with our expertise — and we’re prioritizing developing relationships with funders who foot the bill for newsrooms that can’t afford to hire Modifier. But, we’re excited for this to be a revenue driver. And most importantly, we’re excited to spread our organization’s learnings as wide as possible, planting seeds for a future of journalism that will make us all proud.

2022 BY THE NUMBERS

RESOLVE PHILLY SURPASSED  
**\$7 MILLION**  
IN TOTAL FUNDS RAISED



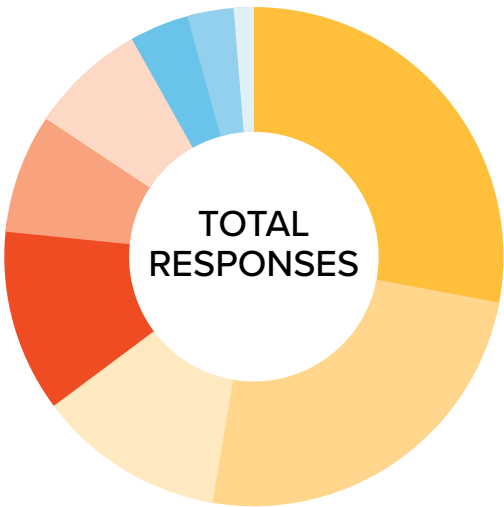
EQUALLY INFORMED PHILADELPHIA

**1,374**  
SUBSCRIBERS TO  
**83%**  
RETENTION RATE FOR  
**THE EIP TEXT LINE**

Our Equal Info text line, provides our subscribers, their families, and wider communities with information and opportunities that are life-affirming, life-sustaining, and life-saving.



AVERAGE OF  
**30 RESPONDENTS**  
PER TEXT



- 474 • Public Safety
- 419 • Civic Engagement
- 206 • Health
- 200 • Money & Jobs
- 131 • Life & Family
- 128 • Housing & Utilities
- 65 • Environment
- 51 • Transportation
- 22 • Education

Through our Equally Informed initiative, we experimented with a new way to assess information needs by launching “texting diaries.” With funding from the Google News Initiative, and in coordination with our text platform partner Reach, we were able to get a better understanding of the kinds of information that people want and would find useful in their everyday lives. Here you can see the variety of topics that surfaced from our regular text communication with 133 residents across 50 different Philadelphia zip codes.

BROKE IN PHILLY



**226**  
STORIES  
PUBLISHED



**6**  
PUBLISHING LANGUAGES  
NOW REPRESENTED



**29**  
NEWSROOM  
PARTNERS

Arabic • Chinese • English • Korean • Spanish • Vietnamese



MODIFIER

**\$145,000+**  
TOTAL VALUE OF  
MODIFIER CONTRACTS

**25+**  
NEWSROOMS  
IMPACTED

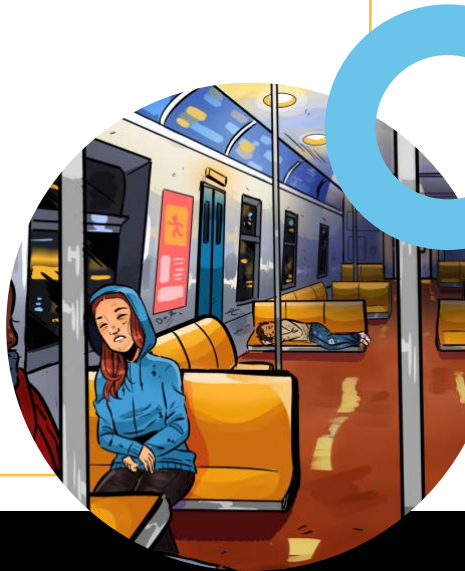
**300+**  
JOURNALISTS  
IMPACTED

OUR KIDS

**\$1 MILLION**

the average amount of money which Philadelphia used to siphon away annually from young people in foster care because of a loophole in the Supplemental Security Income benefits policy. Thanks to reporting by Resolve Philly which exposed this practice, City Council approved legislation to ensure that this money will soon be put into individualized accounts for the youth.

**300+ YOUTH**  
EXPECTED TO BE  
IMPACTED BY THIS  
POLICY CHANGE.





# OUR KIDS

By Steve Volk

In March of 2022, I became the first journalist to receive a Stoneleigh Fellowship. Founded to improve the life outcomes of our community’s youth by advancing change in the systems that serve them, the [Stoneleigh Foundation](#) offers a small number of three- to five-year fellowships annually. Fellows typically bear multiple master’s degrees or doctorates, substantial time in academia, and/or decades of work in the youth services field.

How did a life-long reporter with “only” a bachelor’s degree get here? It began in January 2020, when Resolve hired me to cover the foster care system as its first Investigative Solutions Reporter. This decision in itself represents a typical Resolve-style innovation. Traditionally, the media only focuses on the foster care system in the wake of some rare child tragedy; there are likely only a handful of reporters in the entire country who cover the child welfare system full-time. I also joined the team as a shared reporter: publishing in the over two dozen local newsrooms that make up the Broke in Philly reporting collaborative. This multi-faceted position was also a novel concept.

Prior to my post as an Investigative Solutions Reporter with Resolve Philly, I only had minimal experience covering child welfare specifically. But, I was excited by the opportunity to explore a system, which I began to have a sense was not covered as accurately as it could be.

The next two years of dedicated reporting on this topic, published under the banner Our Kids, allowed me to understand—and bring to light for millions of readers/viewers—a series of astounding truths and realizations. First, the dominant narrative that most kids are removed from their homes for abuse is a myth. In the majority of circumstances, there are charges of “neglect,” which typically hinge on factors associated with the consequences of poverty, such as lack of nutrition and/or warm and stable housing/childcare. The second truth is that the system is steeped in racism.

In the summer of 2021, I published a compelling [story in Next City](#) about this racial bias, which was distributed widely among child welfare professionals. A few weeks later, I got a note from a program officer at Stoneleigh asking if I had any ideas for a fellowship proposal.

Fast forward to now: I am a little over 6 months into my three-year fellowship, with the primary goals of promoting more reporting on the foster care system’s day-to-day operations, exposing the system’s inequities, and perhaps leaving the system better than I found it by covering solutions like more transparent and fair court proceedings.

Here’s some of what I’ve been up to so far:

- I’ve worked with Aubrey Nagle, Resolve’s Director of Practice Change, to construct a study that will quantify



how the media has traditionally covered, and not covered, the foster care system.

- I hired and began working with a journalism mentee—a young person who spent time in foster care and has an interest in becoming a member of the media.
- I worked with Dio Roberson, Resolve Philly’s Associate Editor of Community Narratives, to form the *Our Kids Vision Hub*. It is composed of 14 people with direct experience in the foster care system, including alumni of foster care, parents or family members who fought removal cases, and foster parents. The Hubbers, as we call them, will read my work, serve as editorial thought-partners in the planning of future reporting, and potentially write, speak, or record their own stories as well. This group—the first of its kind—was the heart of my proposal because I believe that journalists must directly involve people with lived experience in our editorial efforts to improve coverage of the system.
- I launched an effort to network with and support reporters who share an interest in covering the child welfare system nationally. I plan to create a set of best practices for the field in collaboration with these new colleagues.
- I also continued to write and publish stories about the foster care system under the moniker Our Kids. [One story](#) that I wrote with Resolve’s Director of Data and Special Projects, Julie Christie, for *The Philadelphia Inquirer* revealed that the city of Philadelphia had taken millions of dollars in social security benefits intended for kids in foster care—and kept it for themselves. This year, Philadelphia City Council passed legislation to end that practice forever.

I believe that, over the next few years, this collective work will produce a significant narrative shift in media coverage of child welfare, not just while I’m on this beat, but for years to come.

# A LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Greetings, friends of Resolve,

Throughout this report, you have learned about Resolve’s exponential growth—fueled by deep listening to our constituents, a belief in the power of collective, radical imagination, and the passion, talents, and skills of a deeply committed team. This is supported by a strategy that highlights “sustainability and a rock solid foundation” as key organizational goals. Yes, this “rock solid foundation” consists of the monetary, human, and systems resources that are needed to be sustainable. But, I also believe what makes Resolve’s foundation truly “rock solid” is its resolve to be compassionate, just, and equitable in all its practices.

From Resolve’s inception, Jean and Cassie have modeled the changes they desired to see, not just in the field of journalism, but in our world. This understanding allowed them to assemble a team of similarly spirited individuals, whose creativity, innovative energy, and focus on community have spawned the initiatives and partnerships about which you have read. I’ve been fortunate to witness many instances when their commitment to compassion, equity, and justice was made actionable. This unwavering dedication to their founding values is why I joined the Resolve Board of Directors and served as Board Chair for the past three years.

With my tenure as Board Chair ending, I am extremely proud of Jean, Cassie, and the entire Resolve Team for what they have built and how they live out, on a daily basis, the values they profess. The growth you see is because of this commitment—and the fact that they are some of the most innovative and talented folks I know. Kudos to you, Resolve, for being teachable, willing to engage in the toughness of equity work, and helping to shift the field of journalism and thus our world one conversation, one story, one event, one initiative, at a time.

Onward,  
Jamaine Smith

# THANK YOU, FUNDERS

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