

2022-23 Annual Report



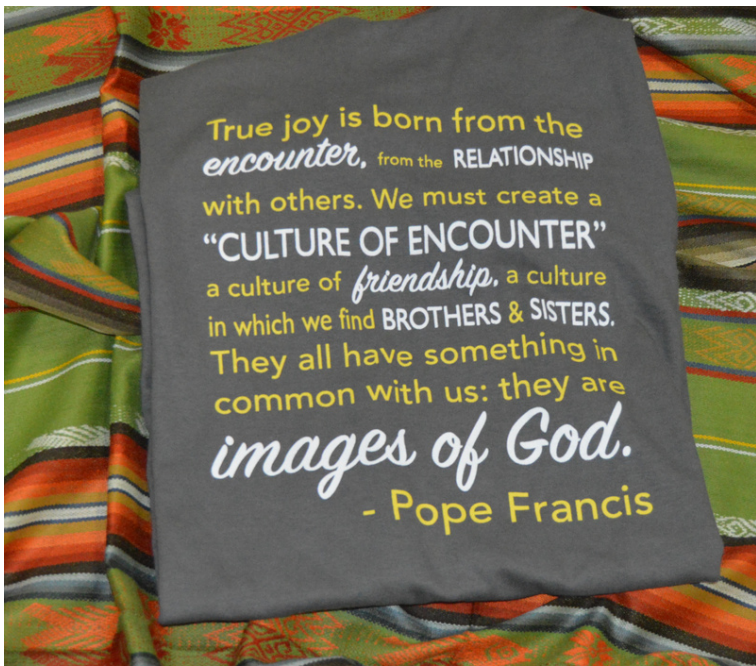
Rostro volunteers, Maggie Koch, Mark Cheffers, and Lilly Williams with neighbors Raul and Gloria.



ROSTRO DE CRISTO

**“In the morning let me hear of your mercy,
for in you I trust. Show me the path I
should walk, for I entrust my life to you.”**

Psalm 143:8-10





Front (l to r): Hannah Klein (fellow), Lilly Williams (volunteer), Erin Scherer (fellow), Mattie Gottbrath (fellow), Back (l to r): volunteers Mark Cheffers, Steven Zichichi, Maggie Koch, RdC employee, Samuel Ponce, Program Manager, Emmanuel Mendez with spouse, Crystel Quiroga, and son, Eziquiel.

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Rostro de Cristo volunteer Peter Oliver tutoring a young student at a program run by the Sisters of the Christian School.





Trust in God has always been at the heart of Rostro de Cristo. Our founder, Fr. Ronan, often reminds us that Rostro exists because God's grace has made it so. For thirty-four years our invitation to young people to choose to leave the familiar and comfortable, and live and serve on the peripheries in communities among the highest levels of impoverishment comes from a deep awareness that God's grace is necessary. It is revealed in the volunteers and retreat participants, our neighbors and partners who receive them and share life with them, and board members and benefactors who offer their time, talent and treasure in support Rostro's mission. Witnessing our neighbors each day place their trust in God inspires us to do the same, and reminds us that trust does not come easy. It comes from enduring moments struggle, doubt, fear, hardship. Reaching limits, and still believing; finding hope and a way forward.

Such was the case on a sweltering Guayaquil evening last January when Rostro de Cristo volunteers Lilly, Maggie, Mark, Nicole, and Steven learned that in the face of growing gang violence in Monte Sinai it was no longer possible for them to remain. Rather, they were asked to relocate to Quito, Ecuador's capital, where they could continue to serve the Ecuadorian people. Despite feeling disappointed and sad to leave people they came to love, volunteer Steven Zichichi said, "We trust that God is guiding you in this decision and that Rostro staff and board know what's best for us and for Rostro." Steven voiced what we needed to hear - the moment was invitation to trust God. The continuation of a commitment made six months earlier when they made the choice to serve a world in need - scared by a global pandemic, social injustice, loneliness, and violence. Trusting in God's guidance and providence, so much part of daily life in Monte Sinai, gave us all hope in moment doubt and fear.

After a brief return to Monte Sinai to say goodbye and collect their belongings, the volunteers and Rostro de Cristo fellow Erin Scherer moved to Quito. As a result of their choice and the support and dedication of so many who support Rostro de Cristo, today Rostro de Cristo volunteers are living in the community Tinwinza, on the edges of Quito sharing faith, serving the community, being neighbor, and having their lives changed by these encounters.



Our friends and neighbors in Monte Sinai. Please join us in praying for them and for peace in their neighborhood and in the other communities in Ecuador experiencing violence and fear.



Rostro de Cristo volunteers and fellows walking to visit a neighbor in Monte Sinai



Rostro 2023-24 Volunteer, Alexandra Perez, visiting with Rosa, our new neighbor in Tinwinza on the outskirts of Quito.

We are grateful to Erin, Hannah, Lilly, Maggie, Mark, Mattie, Nicole, and Steven. We are also grateful to the Center for Working Families in Quito who received the volunteers when they arrived from Guayaquil, provided housing and opportunities to serve. Erin lead the search for a more permanent location and due to her efforts we have been warmly welcomed to Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Parish. Today's volunteer community is helping to expand the educational programs under the leadership of the Hermanas de la Escuela Cristiana, serve the elderly, and support local nutrition programs.

The challenges of the last few years only confirm that our mission is needed now as much as ever. With Rostro de Cristo young people are invited to make a choice to trust in God and offer a hopeful response to the many situations of pain and brokenness in our world. Through Rostro de Cristo's programs, communities in need are served and members of the next generation are shaped by faith, informed by intercultural experiences in Ecuador's most underserved communities, and grounded in hope. They leave inspired to live lives of service to others and to do their part to build God's kingdom.

It is your commitment to supporting our mission that makes this possible. May you and your family enjoy the blessings of the Advent and Christmas seasons.

In gratitude,

Evan Cuthbert
President & Executive
Director



Rostro de Cristo's Fellowship Program: "Inspiring a lifelong commitment to a faith that works for justice..."

Recruiting from our 300 alumni and beyond, Rostro de Cristo initiated a fellowship program based in Ecuador. By leveraging the professional skills and experiences of those who have served before the Rostro de Cristo Fellowship Program increases our capacity to expand programming and deepen our impact in Ecuador. We were blessed with three professional women in our first cohort: Erin Scherer (RdC volunteer 2004-2005, Mattie Gottbrath (RdC volunteer 2018-2019), and Hannah Klein (JVCI 2019-2020).

As the year unfolded Erin, Mattie, and Hannah played an essential role in helping to reestablish our community in Monte Sinai and expand our ministry. Their strong connections with neighbors and partners proved invaluable as we determined the path we needed to take to keep our team safe during rapidly deteriorating circumstance.

Upon moving to Quito, Erin drew from her years of experience of ministry in Latin America and her social work background to guide us as we establish our new location in Tinwinza and partnership with Nuestra Señora de la Asunción Parish.

Mattie and Hannah returned home last spring, and Erin will return to her home in Denver, CO this month. Rostro de Cristo alumna, Kaitlyn Buehlmann (2014-2015), has stepped forward to serve as our Program Coordinator in Quito. Kaitlyn will work closely with Associate Director, Ana López (RdC 2012-2013), to support our Retreat Program and volunteer community.

We are so grateful for these remarkable women and all our alumni who continue to live a life of faith and a commitment to creating a more just society in the U.S. and beyond. We look forward to further developing the fellowship program in 2023.

Hannah, Erin, and Mattie visiting with Don Raúl and his daughter, Rosario in Monte Sinai.



Erin supporting the children's choir in the Hacienda neighborhood in Quito.



Ana Lopez, 2023-'24 volunteers - Peter Oliver, Alex Perez, Grace Gleason - Erin, and Kati.



Rostro founder, Fr. Jim Ronan celebrates Mass with the volunteers and fellows in Monte Sinai in November 2022.



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"I am so grateful for my volunteer year. I feel like it's transformed my heart and has given me so much that I want to also give to others."

Mark Cheffers



2022-2023 Rostro volunteers Mark Cheffers (Catholic U. '22), Nicole VanVoorhis (Dayton U. '22), Maggie Koch (St. Joe's Philly '22), Lilly Williams (St. Louis U. '22), and Steven Zichichi (Westmont College '22).

In August of 2022 five Rostro de Cristo volunteers returned to our home in Monte Sinai for the first time since the pandemic. With great enthusiasm they were welcomed warmly by our neighbors and partners. As our partners were just returning to full capacity it was a good time to enlist the support of the volunteers.

If there was a word to describe the community that Lilly, Maggie, Mark, Nicole, and Steven formed together it is devoted. They shared a deep devotion to their relationship with Christ which was reflected in their devotion to prayer, to one another, and to their neighbors. Their devotion to their faith and to each other carried them through a challenging year. Thank you, Steven, Nicole, Mark, Maggie, and Lilly!

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"There have been several struggles this year...But a true blessing has been the opportunity to teach and connect with my students. I have been touched by the love the students openly give. It's this kind of fearless love they show that makes me want to live and love everyone around me with the same passion."

Nicole Van Voorhis



Arts and Crafts with the children from Monte Sinai.

Service to others

Rostro de Cristo volunteers provided over 5,000 hours of unpaid teaching, tutoring, social work, and pastoral support to our partners in Ecuador.



Celebrating Carnival with the teachers and staff at the Centro Una Familia de Familias in Quito.

Building Community

Immersed in their neighborhood the volunteers are part of the minutia of everyday life, visit neighbors, join in soccer and volleyball games, shop at the local tiendas, and celebrate birthdays and holidays.



Hanging with neighborhood children under our patio in Monte Sinai.

Hospitality

Part of the experience of any volunteer is receiving the hospitality of neighbors when offered. In addition, volunteers create space for children to grow and learn. As important as these expressions of welcome are, it is the hospitality of the heart that defines the relationship between volunteers and neighbors.

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"I am so grateful for the Rostro volunteers! They have been a tremendous support and source of joy."

Olivia Young,
Center for Working
Families,
Quito, Ecuador



Nicole serves as sous chef to neighbor Monica

Living Simply

More than just living on less, living simply draws volunteers closer to the lives of our neighbors and focuses each day on being present as Christ is present to each one of us.



Steven and Mark join the neighborhood children in their re-enactment of the birth of Jesus.

Sharing Faith

Grounded by daily prayer and spiritual reflection Rostro volunteers have their own faith enlivened by the way their neighbors share their faith so openly. In each other they encounter the presence of Christ.

On October 16, 2022, we inaugurated the Rostro de Cristo Mustard Seed Award with a Mass of Thanksgiving and a Luncheon Reception which included the Presentation of the Awards to our honorees:

Pat McTeague and Sonya Rendón have been great friends to Rostro de Cristo since our beginning. Drawn to work together by their shared faith and their belief that a quality education is the main pathway to overcome poverty they founded the Nuevo Mundo (New World) School and Foundation. Generations of Rostro de Cristo volunteers and retreatants have been impacted by them. In the words of Fr. Ronan, "Pat and Sonya have been a truly formative inspiration in their relationships with our volunteers due to the relationships they have had with the people they serve which is, of course, fueled by their relationship with God which has caused them to dream and envision a new world."

Nancy Lukitsh is a woman of deep faith and commitment to young people in their faith journeys. Nancy served on Rostro de Cristo's Board from 2012 - 2021. Bringing her many successful years working in the financial sector her critical guidance and support ensured Rostro de Cristo's promising future. Close friend of 40 years and fellow Board Member, Barbara Rosiello, said of Nancy, "The mustard seed imagery is truly perfect in describing how Nancy moved Rostro forward. Graciously, gracefully, and generously."

Paul Saleeb, M.D. is a Rostro de Cristo alumnus (1999-2000) and physician in infectious disease. Since his year with Rostro Paul has volunteered in Kenya and Sudan; conducted research and offered technical support in Mali and Tanzania; and served as a resident faculty director in Botswana. In addition, he has worked at the National Institutes of Health. Currently, Paul practices medicine in Baltimore and serves on the faculty of U. of Maryland School of Medicine. Rostro de Cristo volunteer and Paul's community-mate in Ecuador, Claire Ribando, introduced Paul at the awards sharing, "I think Paul has always had a great faith. I have seen how he has carried it forward in his work, his research, his service, and his travels."



"Like the Mustard Seed, the presence of God in us continually grows and expands to fill our very being." Sr. Evelyn Ronan, S.S.N.D., Emeritus Board Member

The Mustard Seed Award was created by the Rostro de Cristo Board of Directors to honor individuals who have nurtured Rdc's mission and who exemplify a lifelong commitment to a faith that works for justice through their association with Rostro de Cristo. It honors the way the encounter of God Ecuador to grow and expand in their lives.

Honorees Pat McTeague and Sonya Rendón with Fr. Jim Ronan.



Rostro de Cristo Board Chair Ed Hardiman with honoree Paul Saleeb, M.D.



Rostro de Cristo Board members Jim Miller, Ros Kane, Dennis Hanson, and Jerry Kehoe.



Rdc alumni and Board Member Katie Madson with alumni Celso Perez and Caitlyn Long



Rdc Board member Barbra Rosiello with honoree, Nancy Lukitsh.



Students from Catholic University after a soccer game with Rostro de Cristo volunteers and students at the Centro Una Familia de Familias.

Rostro de Cristo co-hosted five retreat groups in 2022-2023 despite the relocation to Quito. We are grateful for the support and collaboration of Olivia Young and the Centro Una Familia de Familias. And thank you to our partners schools in the United States who were able to join us in Quito!

- Catholic University of America (Washington, DC)
- Xaverian Brothers H.S. (Westwood, MA)
- St. John Paul II H.S. (Hyannis, MA)
- Assumption University (Worcester, MA)
- John Carrol University (Cleveland, OH)

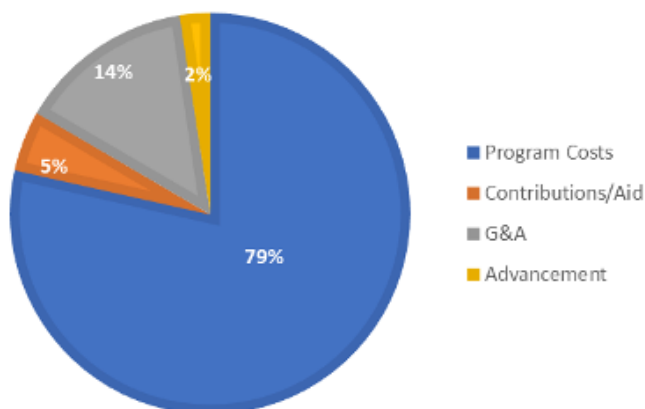
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"The week was transformative! You sure know how to recruit good and holy and human volunteers!"

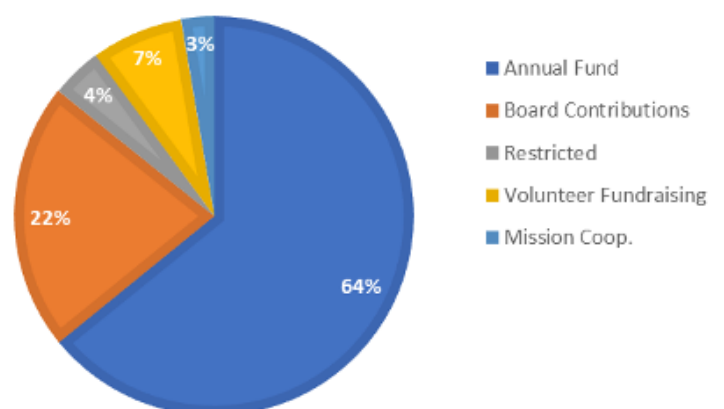
Br. Daniele Caglioni, A.A.,
Assumption University

Financial Information

FY 2022 OPERATING EXPENSES
\$356,763



FY2022 OPERATING INCOME
\$358,837



Rostro de Cristo 2023-2024 Volunteers Cohort with alumna and Quito Program Manager, Kati Buehlmann. (l to r): Kati, Peter Oliver (Holy Cross '23), Anna Zenk (U. of Michigan '23), Alex Perez (Santa Clara '23), and Grace Gleason (Loyola – MD '23). At 10,000 feet, Tinwinza offers views of the city of Quito in the valley below and of four volcanos on a clear day."



Please donate using the QR or by mailing a check or money order to:



Rostro de Cristo

66 Brooks Drive Braintree,
MA 02184

Phone: (617) 746-5890

Email: give@rostrokecristo.org



May we find solace in compassion and struggle.
We go not to do, but to be.

...not to lead, but to accompany.
...not to preach, but to practice.
...not to enlighten, but to discover.

May we find solace in compassion and struggle.
We go not only to make change, but to be changed.

...not to bring Christ to them, but to encounter
Christ with them.
...not to go with pride but to enter with humility.
...not to seek comfort in our excess, but to
embrace simplicity.

May we find solace in compassion and struggle,
Para encontrar el rostro de cristo en cada persona.

