



# Welcoming a new chapter of change and innovation

Evergreen | 2021 Annual Report





**GEOFF CAPE**

CEO and Founder, Evergreen

## Reconnection, community and the impact of public space

2021 was a challenging year for all of us. Work from home with video conferences, combined with family and business stress and so many pivots that our heads spun from morning till night. But it was also a year where we leaned into connecting more intentionally in person while leveraging a more digital world to improve access and knowledge share of our programs such as Community Solutions Network, the Housing Supply Challenge Support Program and Climate Ready Schools nationally. We saw the importance of Toronto's favourite outdoor Farmers Market at Evergreen Brick Works, hosted dynamic kids' programs through Virtually Outdoors and welcomed our first Elder in Residence, Wyandot Elder Taqme'shre. It was a year of listening, learning and building on our strengths. As I reflect not only on the past year but on the past 33 years, I am filled with hope, pride, and a deep sense of gratitude for the people we get to work with.

When I started Evergreen in 1991, with a few friends, we believed local stewardship and engaging people in action on the ground was the key to vibrant communities, a healthy natural environment, and a sustainable society for all. Our partners, supporters, and staff continue to show me how this is true every day.

2021 marked the completion of our strategic plan to expand our impact nationally. Despite the chaos of a global pandemic, we delivered on many of the goals we set out to achieve thanks to participants, donors, partners, and staff who stepped up to make magic happen. As you read this Annual Report, I hope you feel a sense of joy in what you helped accomplish.

As when we started, the vision is simple – to integrate nature into the design of cities through public space for the benefit of both. Evergreen's environmental programs have evolved over the years and they will evolve more in the future. As the conversations on diversity and inclusion and the importance of public space take center stage in cities across the world, that vision is critical. Evergreen's history sets us up perfectly to co-create public spaces that reflect our shared values in the way they are designed and experienced.

Evergreen is a work in progress - it always has been, and I hope it always will be, because that's what progress is, a constant evolution. Change is the only constant, requiring curiosity, creativity, and hard work from all of us. I look forward to what is to come as we develop our next strategic plan. The foundation is set at Evergreen, and it is time to build the future. I hope you will continue to invest in our work of building sustainable cities where all feel welcome.

**As conversations on diversity and inclusion and the importance of public space take center stage in cities across the world... Evergreen's history sets us up perfectly to co-create public spaces that reflect our shared values in the way they are designed and experienced.**



**HELEN BURSTYN**

Board Chair

Despite some formidable challenges we faced this past year, I am proud of the resilience and adaptability Evergreen demonstrated in continuing to deliver effective and innovative programs that benefit families, communities, and cities across Canada.

Our success and growth over the past year could not have been achieved without the generous support of our staff, donors, and volunteers. Thank you for contributing your time and resources to Evergreen. And thank you for your flexibility in working with us to develop exciting and impactful programming to meet our community's emerging needs. We could not have done it without you.

Evergreen will continue adapting and advancing our programs to support more sustainable, livable, and prosperous cities where everyone can thrive. As you read through the 2021 Annual Report, you will discover the hurdles we overcame and the successes we achieved over the past year. I hope these stories of our impact will leave you feeling inspired.

We look forward to another transformative year and hope you will continue on this journey with us in 2022, and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Helen Burstyn', written in a cursive style.







Photo credit: Simon Rogers

# 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

Whether as a participant, donor, visitor, staff or volunteer, your support is foundational to creating the impact we want to see in our cities across Canada.



**3,380** children and youth were inspired to be city builders of tomorrow through virtual programs like Virtually Outdoors and Future City Builders, and Evergreen Brick Works-based camps and nature clubs.



**50** Indigenous partnerships were developed through initiatives like the Civic Indigenous Toolkit.



**2,673** municipal and community leaders, urban innovators and residents from **11** countries came together to learn from **107** speakers at Future Cities Canada: The Summit, a virtual program led by Evergreen.



**179** communities of all sizes across Canada were supported by Evergreen through the Community Solutions Network – a program of Future Cities Canada – that enables municipal, community and indigenous leaders to navigate the smart cities landscape.





Photo credit: Simon Rogers



**94,936** people enjoyed healthy, local food through Evergreen's Farmers Market at Brick Works.



**11** art installations, exhibits & performances at Evergreen Brick Works such as the world-renowned drummer Sarah Thawer as part of the Cultural Performing Arts series, *Sunrise*, 1971/2021, a reproduction of Rita Letendre's iconic mural by Tannis Nielsen and Jason van Bruggen's Lowland photography exhibit honoured the creative arts.



**25.09** tonnes of waste diversion thanks to recycling and organic composting initiatives.



**1,579** bikes repaired & refurbished as part of the Gateway Bike Hub program with **1,756** program participants and **164** community volunteers engaged



# CHALLENGE 1

Photo credit: Simon Rogers

## Toronto's favourite public markets back in full swing

The Evergreen Brick Works Farmers Market was back in full swing with more than 60 long-standing local farmers and vendors. Some vendors, like ChocoSol and Boxit TO, have been partners since the very first market in 2008. Over the years, our market has become a hub in the community where visitors can meet and shop from farmers and vendors whose products are local, sustainable and ethical. On behalf of the vendors, volunteers and all the market staff, thank you for supporting your local community

2021 also saw the return of the Sunday Artisan Market in partnership with the Ontario Vintage Market. Community gathered again and weekends at the Brick Works were filled with fresh produce, vintage finds, families gathering, friends catching up and kids exploring the grounds. Artists were able to engage with an audience for the first time since the start of the pandemic. We capped off the year with a magical Holiday Market that saw more than 10,000 people enjoy local craft and vintage goods, live music and tasty eats and drinks.

As the pandemic kept spaces around the city off-limits to the public, we experienced first-hand just how vital public spaces like the Brick Works are to the community. In 2021, Evergreen Brick Works came alive again.

[Read more about the Evergreen's Markets](#)

**Advance Evergreen Brick Works as an internationally recognized community hub and demonstration centre for urban innovation**

As Canada's first large-scale community environmental centre, Evergreen Brick Works showcased the true value of public space within our community as a safe place to gather and connect with others, experience local artists and access nature. 2021 was an exciting year in which we partnered with local artists, created new programming, and accelerated our programming online to create accessible, innovative experiences of the Brick Works with a digital twist.



**The Brick Works is a site that we love to be a part of. It's nice to have a community that is doing the extra work to be ecologically regenerative so that we can shoulder that work together.**

ChocoSol Founder Michael Sacco



## EVERGREEN BRICK WORKS - PAST AND PRESENT



Don Valley Brick Works Todmorden Mills - 1910



The Children's Garden- Present Day



Skating in Koerner Garden- Present Day



### Evergreen Public Art Program shines a light on one of Canada's most important artists

Evergreen commissioned a new artwork as part of its public art program — a replication of *Sunrise*, Canadian artist Rita Letendre's iconic mural from 1971. Obscured in 1978 with the building of a neighbouring condo tower inches apart from the mural's façade, the iconic *Sunrise* was beloved in the city and there were public protests and news stories when it was covered over.

Reproducing *Sunrise* is a gesture in both honouring Letendre's work and re-opening conversations around her significant role in public art in the context of the changing city and its changing values.

The *Sunrise* mural was painted by Toronto-based Métis artist Tannis Nielsen and is accompanied by *Ishkode* ("fire" in Anishnaabemowin) Nielsen's own mural in response to Letendre's work. With the generous support of the artist and Gallery Gevik, *Sunrise* and *Ishkode* are on display in the Pavilions at Evergreen Brick Works.

[Watch the video to learn more about this project](#)



Letendre’s work and the response by Tannis Nielsen will continue to spark important conversations about our connection to one another and to our urban landscape.

Orit Sarfaty, Evergreen’s Chief Program Officer



## A new climate-resilient food garden at the Brick Works

The Children’s Garden at Evergreen Brick Works is a fan favourite and it now features a special addition. Evergreen, in partnership with Foresters Financial™, has created a new climate-resilient space — the Guild Garden. Designed for children to learn about nature through play, the garden features 25 species of plants that aid in climate change adaptability by providing nutritious food

while supporting pollinating insects and other wildlife. *“The way we farm and grow food is changing and we want kids to be prepared for that by modeling innovative and wholistic food forest gardens like this one,” says Luke Howie, Senior Program Manager at Evergreen.* The bold new design for the Guild Garden centers around an existing cherry tree, expands a nearby maze-like path and introduces a centuries-old hollow white oak log that offers endless opportunities for children to explore.

[Watch a video of the garden come to life](#)

Thanks very much to Less Mess for providing the soil and materials to keep the Children’s Garden looking great!



Regenerative agricultural practices like food forests and looking to learn from nature’s wisdom will help us collectively correct course and ensure a viable future for all.

Stephanie Frenyes, Foresters spokesperson

## 2021 SOUNDBITES

Sustainability starts at home: Evergreen implements a combined geo-solar thermal system that is the first of its kind in Ontario.

[Read the story](#)

Can we live with climate change? Can we engineer our way out of it? Jason Van Bruggen’s photography exhibit, Lowlands, sparked our thinking on these questions.

[Learn more about the exhibit](#)





# CHALLENGE 2

Photo credit: Thomas Chung

Create, improve, and revitalize public spaces across Canada.

This past year, we saw the importance of parks and shared spaces as a recognized critical aspect of healthy cities. Our shared spaces allow residents to gather safely, engage with nature, enjoy public programming and events and connect with each other. Throughout the year, Evergreen collaborated with schools, communities, NGOs and all levels of government to create standout public spaces and livable communities.

## Imagine a world where every community has access to resilient, nature-rich spaces

With the Climate Ready Schools pilot project halfway to completion in 2021, we are demonstrating how that world is possible. The pilot is happening at Irma Coulson Public School, part of Halton District School Board in Milton, Ontario, and is generously supported by our partners at the Balsam Foundation, Intact Financial Corporation and an anonymous supporter. with in-kind support from Arup Canada. Evergreen's Climate Ready Schools builds on our 25-year legacy of transforming school grounds across Canada into climate resilient areas of learning and play for both children and their community. The pilot is a complete school ground transformation creating a vital space for habitat restoration, community placemaking and environmental literacy.

Led by the voices and perspectives of children, the community engagement plan included design workshops and site visioning sessions with students, meetings and surveys with school staff and surveys and conversations with parents and school community members. Through our participatory design process, the school community created and championed a tailor-made solution for their community. 2021 saw the completion of the site design and launch of the construction phase of the project, a pivotal and exciting stage for everyone involved.

Cont'd on next page

“ There is a reciprocity that is demanded of our relationship with the natural world — if we're going to harvest and take from it, then we have to give something in return.

Terence Radford, an award-winning Métis landscape architect





Construction will wrap up in summer 2022, with the transformed school ground opening to children and the wider community at the beginning of the school year in October.

And where better to start reimagining our neighbourhoods than on local school grounds? The pilot at Irma Coulson Public School will set a new example in how school boards and municipalities can transform spaces to:

- Adapt to the changing climate through managing stormwater on site while respecting the ecological landscape
- Nurture child development: physically, intellectually, cognitively and socially
- Support a significant increase in outdoor play and learning and serve the community by adding value outside of school hours

[Read a Q&A with principal Cheryl Hayles](#)

## Exploring new sides of Toronto's Ravine system

Spanning more than 11,000 hectares - making it one of the world's largest, the ravines are considered Toronto's most defining and beloved feature. The ravines form a primary connection to the urban wilderness and link river valleys with parks, neighbourhoods, and the urban landscape.

As part of Evergreen's Ravine Talk series which explores past, present and future connections to this landscape, we hosted two virtual talks this year.

We explored Dusk in the Ravines and learned about the wonderful world of the only flying mammal - bats - debunking some common myths along the way.

[Watch the talk](#)

We discussed how re-wilding rice connects Indigenous communities to food sovereignty by revitalizing our traditional knowledge and using it to restore our traditional food sources. This talk focused on Indigenous storytelling and practices centered on wild rice as ceremony, food and social interaction.

[Watch the talk](#)







Photo credit: Thomas Chung

## Breaking down barriers, one bike at a time

The Gateway Bicycle Hub is a community project that supports the repair and repurposing of bicycles in order to reduce waste, promote cycling culture, and offer capacity-building opportunities. Launched in 2019, the Hub is supported by the City of Toronto's Community Reduce & Reuse Program and other funders, and is an initiative in partnership with The Neighbourhood Organization, Flemingdon Health Centre, and Evergreen

The Hub engages the community with programs like Earn-a-Bike, a workshop that teaches participants basic bicycle mechanics so they can refurbish a donated bike that they get to keep afterwards.

*"When the Bike Hub was created, the premise was to focus on waste diversion first — repairing and upcycling bikes — and community development second," shares Ed Mark, a manager at the Bike Hub. "But what we found was, community development became the primary focus."*

This shift in emphasis helps prioritize active transportation and encourages a healthy lifestyle. In 2021, as a result of a grant through Canadian Healthy Communities Initiative, the Hub expanded its youth programming with an introduction to trail cycling and weekly mountain bike rides. The program has since engaged more than 2,000 youth.

[Watch the video to learn more about this project](#)



**Thank you very much for the bike! It's in very great condition and it's very easy to use. It fits me very well and I am very excited to go on multiple adventures this summer. Have a great summer!**

A happy Bike Hub customer

## 2021 SOUNDBITES

Launched two new nature-based activity books for children generously funded by Ontario Trillium Foundation.

[Download Mindfully Outdoors and Nature Allies](#)

Evergreen's Virtual Outdoors program inspires wonder, curiosity and empathy towards nature in our communities.

[Read the story](#)





# CHALLENGE 3

**Convene and activate national cross-sectoral networks.**

Collaborative tools, and a cross-sectoral exchange of ideas to influence policy and action are critical in solving the complex issues facing our cities. Evergreen continued, albeit in new ways, to create, adapt, and amplify urban development solutions to make our cities more livable, green, and prosperous for all. When communities work together to share innovation and placemaking capacities, the combined strength has the potential to drive social and economic prosperity across Canada.

We are deeply thankful for the support of visionary government agencies, including Infrastructure Canada (INFC), and our Future Cities Canada partners TD, Suncor Energy Foundation, The McConnell Foundation, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and Community Foundations of Canada. We look forward to sharing our insight and partnerships as the basis for future-looking and sustainable policy and development across Canada.



**Humans have very diverse needs and we have to come up with solutions that meet those needs.**

Tonya Surman, Founder and CEO, Centre for Social Innovation





## A new and improved digital innovation hub

In April 2019, the Community Solutions Portal was established as a digital resource hub for community leaders to accelerate innovation across the country. It serves as a platform for every type of Canadian community: big, mid-sized, Indigenous, small and northern.

In December 2021, we re-launched the Portal integrating other critical city building resources related to housing and soon, placemaking. This re-development featured a more accessible digital user-experience and further established the Portal as a destination for learning and engagement around innovative solutions for communities across Canada under the Future Cities Canada Initiative. The Portal is home to the Community Solutions Network and the Housing Supply Challenge Support Program.

Today, the Community Solutions Portal has a growing collection of over 300 reports, case studies and best practices related to complex and emerging smart cities issues in both French and English. It is Canada's largest curated library of smart cities and housing resources and a go-to destination for examples of smart city approaches that can help turn bold ideas in to solutions.

[Intrigued? Access the latest city-building resources today](#)



## The Summit reimagined the future of cities

2021 was a pivotal moment to come together and create our shared vision for a bold, bright future where all people in our communities will thrive. Through Future Cities Canada: The Summit 2021, a series of monthly virtual talks and events with 107 experts from May through October, Evergreen created space to share new ideas, ask questions and search for answers together to build, reflect and adapt to the changing situations in our communities.

From Climate Change Adaptation to Smart Cities to Housing, over 2,500 leaders, innovators, city builders, artists and change-makers from around the world came together to learn about, discuss and accelerate opportunities that generate impactful, adaptive solutions.

[Watch the 2021 Summit sessions](#)

**An Open Smart City is where all sectors and residents collaborate in mobilizing data and technologies to develop their communities through fair, ethical, and transparent government that balances economic development, social progress, and environmental responsibility.**





## The Housing Supply Challenge Support Program helps bring innovative housing supply solutions to the finish line

In the midst of a housing affordability crisis in Canada, investment in innovation is needed to unlock new ideas to tackle this complex problem. Evergreen's Housing Supply Challenge Support Program helps applicants of the Housing Supply Challenge, led by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), by providing guidance, mentorship and the resources needed to develop and improve their submission. To help foster innovation, each round of the Challenge invites residents, communities and experts from across Canada to propose innovative solutions that help break down the barriers that limit new housing supply.

In 2021, Evergreen promoted the Challenge to nearly 35,000 individuals and organizations, supporting over 2,600 people with over 200 hours of support. In the Data Driven Round, Evergreen supported 21 shortlisted applicants who received incubation funding to prototype their solution with 14 prototypes selected for funding to start implementing their solutions. These data technology solutions will help improve decision-making for housing supply by improving the collection, sharing, analysis and integration, and/or presentation of data.

[Explore the list of Data Driven Housing Supply Challenge solutions](#)

In 2021, Evergreen also supported the launch of the Getting Started Round to address pre-development barriers to housing, such as long approval timelines, community resistance to projects and lack of affordable collaboration tools. Evergreen connected with more than 2,200 potential applicants, helping to drive 167 applications, and supported 29 shortlisted applicants to further develop and refine their proposed pre-development solutions.

[Explore the list of Getting Started Housing Supply Challenge solutions](#)

### 2021 SOUNDBITES

Mega Trends for Mega Cities: The TD Future Cities Speaker Series presents ideas from some of the world's leading minds in urban systems, from technology to inclusion to mobility.

[Read the story](#)

Reliable access to the internet is an essential service in any community. But there are barriers to bridging the "digital divide," especially in northern and Indigenous communities.

[Listen to the Future Fix Podcast on Connecting Communities to Broadband](#)





# CHALLENGE 4

Photo credit: Cameron Collyer

**Develop the Evergreen Process as a demonstration of urban innovation and a key market differentiator.**

With the last two years shifting our priorities and challenging our assumptions for two years, we were able to assess, and stress test the resilience of Evergreen’s signature innovation process. This has brought about an improved level of programming to the many people and communities we serve and has led us to focus on the foundational work of putting stronger internal systems in place to navigate a post-pandemic world. This shift will enable us to accurately reflect and acknowledge a broader ecosystem of partners as well as the internal processes needed to support the change. In 2021, Evergreen invested in a new Customer Relationship Management System, as well as Project Management tools for cross-team collaboration that supports continuous planning and our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

## OUR VALUES



### Connection

We prioritize relationships, person-to-person, person-to-place, person-to-planet.



### Innovation

We work together to learn, adapt and scale ideas that create effective solutions.



### Sustainability

We enable a future that is livable, green and prosperous where all can thrive.



## A year of building stronger. A year of welcoming our differences

In a year of constant change, we are grateful for the continued support from our community, our staff, partners, volunteers and funders. Throughout 2021, Evergreen focused on driving towards a more diverse, equitable and inclusive work environment to further strengthen our culture and the contributions to the communities we serve.

2021 was also a rich year of learning for the Evergreen team. Through various learning models offered to staff we covered topics from on-site de-escalation training to virtual design thinking workshops; from teaching nests on Indigenous protocols to seminars on equitable and inclusive recruitment practices and mastering feedback. All professional development opportunities placed a high degree of emphasis on building skills that can both improve our internal work environment and our capacity to deliver impactful programming.

Evergreen also completed the first phase of the Progressive Aboriginal Relations certification process, through the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business. Evergreen continues to advance towards our goal of achieving certification and tangibly improving Indigenous relations across the work we do.

Evergreen engaged in its first third-party led DEI Assessment, in partnership with consulting firm Feminuity. The results of this assessment have formed a rich foundation of data and knowledge that has helped Evergreen's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion committee advance its work. Evergreen staff were engaged in multiple design sessions following the assessment, leading to the development of a full DEI strategy. Early progress related to strategy included the implementation of mandatory DEI onboarding training, a revamp of internal policies, implementation of more transparent pay and review processes, and the introduction of new tools and resources for staff – for example, a new anonymous reporting tool. A third-party DEI review and assessment will become an annual process for Evergreen, allowing us to continually track progress and advance new strategies to ensure a positive workplace experience for all. While we acknowledge that many of these changes could have been made sooner, we are excited by the change that is underway. We are growing into the organization we want to be, one where all our staff and partners feel welcome and celebrated.

To build a culture of caring, Evergreen's Recovery Committee created new systems for safe re-opening of the Evergreen Brick Works during the various phases and implemented a four and a half-day work week for staff during the summer to provide relief and refreshment.

We recognize that the future of work is changing and partnered with firm BloxHub to create design sessions that would allow staff to challenge traditional assumptions about their work environment and brainstorm what optimal conditions for work might look like in the future.





# A LOOK BACK AND A LOOK AHEAD

*Photo credit: Anthony Masucci*

When we released our 2019-2021 strategic plan, we couldn't have imagined a global pandemic that would test our resilience and the basic assumptions underlying our operations. As we focused on our strategic pillars – advancing Evergreen Brick Works as a community hub, revitalizing public spaces across Canada, and convening national networks to transform cities – our values of connection, innovation and sustainability held us in good stead. With the unwavering support of the communities we serve and, our staff, volunteers and partners, we made an impact.

**“ Canadian cities and communities are resilient, but they are also vulnerable. Today, we have an opportunity to bolster that resilience, and ensure that our cities are helping to drive global sustainability. Green and welcoming public spaces, lively markets and gathering spots, natural assets that offer millions of dollars' worth of air and water filtration – all these and more represent golden opportunities to ensure that cities are truly inclusive, thriving and sustainable at their core.**

Lois Lindsay, Evergreen's Chief Advancement Officer

**YOUR SUPPORT MAKES A DIFFERENCE.**

**Here's a look at Evergreen by the numbers over the last three years**

**13,567**

students learned how to be stewards of the environment through our Visiting Schools Program with **6,603** of these students served through our bursary program

**92**

Indigenous partnerships developed and we welcomed our first Elder in Residence.

**15**

schoolboard partnerships created greener, more resilient public-school grounds across Ontario

**225**

podcasts, research papers, articles and webinars connected people to Evergreen and its Community Solutions Network initiatives.

**7,500+**

municipal and community leaders, urban innovators and residents engaged and inspired by The Summit.

**263,332**

People accessed and enjoyed healthy, local food through Evergreen's Farmers Market.

**200+**

farmers, local food and small businesses in the city supported through the Farmers Market and Artisan Market.

**23**

Art installations, exhibits & performances such as virtual Expansive Dances solo performances in partnership with The National Ballet of Canada and *Prison Dispatches*, 2020, by artist Kristin Li

**67**

resources/tools developed about public spaces.

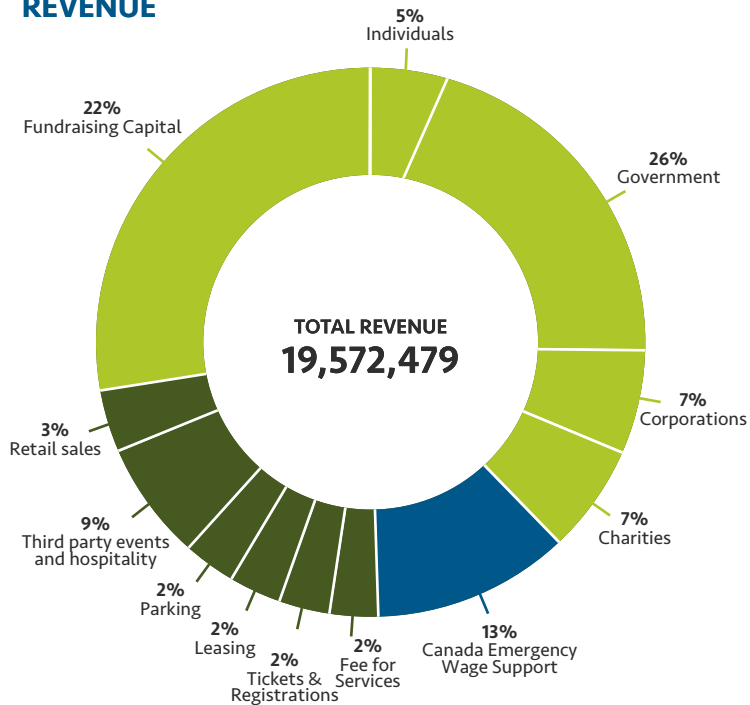
Your support makes a difference! Our work has always been in service to and made possible by phenomenal communities of people. COVID surfaced deep divisions in our society, but it also reinforced what we have in common: our connections to one another, our reliance on community, and the crucial role of shared spaces and places – from virtual forums to local markets and parks. As we look to what's next, we are taking with us the lessons learned over the last three years, the most important being that people are at the heart of driving long-term change. We will continue to nurture and prioritize relationships – person-to-person, person-to-place and person-to-planet – working together to learn, adapt and scale effective solutions, enabling a future where everyone belongs, and all can thrive. Thank you for continuing to support the important work of making our cities more livable, green and welcoming to all!





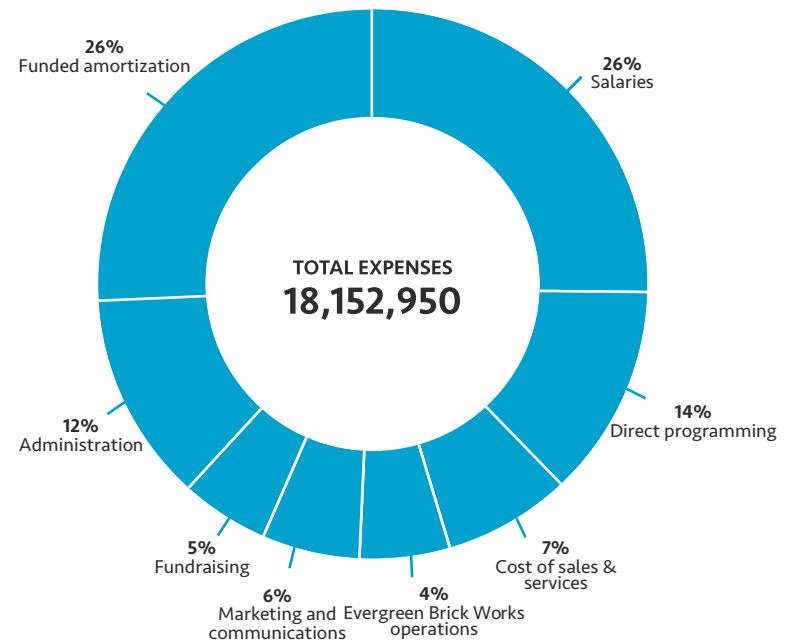
# FINANCIALS AND COMMUNITY OF SUPPORTERS

## REVENUE



● Fundraising 67%    
 ● Social Enterprised Earned Revenue 20%

## EXPENSES







# Thank you to our donors, volunteers and Board of Directors

Evergreen's national impact is made possible thanks to the generous support of public and private funders and our leadership volunteers. We are proud to acknowledge the following individuals, organizations, foundations, and partners whose contributions totaled \$500 or more from January 1 to December 31, 2021.

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Nickerson Family  
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Evergreen Brick Works  
550 Bayview Avenue, Suite 300  
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