



Roca 

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

DOES NOT HAVE TO DEFINE YOU

TRAUMA

CHANGES POSSIBLE



DEAR ROCA FRIENDS,

Nobody wants to be defined by their challenges. But, for many of the young people Roca finds and serves, heartache is all they've known. Asked about their aspirations, they find themselves stumped – a life outside their block, their gang, their neighborhood, seems a world away.

But at Roca, we see hope where all hope seems lost. In an era where it's easy to be pessimistic, Roca's message to young people, and to all of us, is this: change is possible.

This year, we've had the unique privilege of working with more than 1,300 young people in Massachusetts and Baltimore who made the difficult choice to consider change. Given the trauma they've experienced, their courage is nothing short of remarkable.

What we learned from their bravery is that if we want to make a difference, we must change too. If we stop looking at our own work, we can't move the needle on urban violence. If we stop changing, we can't deliver justice.

Over the past year, we have reviewed multiple aspects of Roca's work – our mission, our theory of change, our value proposition, and how we do our work on the ground. Most importantly, we asked ourselves what it takes to bring our young people's true aspirations to life. Today, we are writing to share the results of this important process with you.

Urban violence, as psychiatrist and systems change expert Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia so aptly suggests, is a result of unmet needs and unaddressed trauma – a fear that never turns off. But urban violence can be reduced, according to violence expert Thomas Abt, with relentless focus on the people, places, and behaviors closest to the violence, with commitment to “stopping the bleeding first.”

In light of that, Roca has a focused mission: *To be a relentless force in disrupting incarceration and poverty by engaging the young adults, police, and systems at the center of urban violence in relationships to address trauma, find hope, and drive change.*



Those of you who have known Roca for a while will recognize many of our signature strategies in the following pages – including, of course, relentless outreach, cognitive behavioral theory (CBT), a focus on relationships, peacemaking circles, and systems change work. You will also recognize our commitment to strong outcomes – including Roca’s low 3-year recidivism rate for high-risk young men of less than 33 percent (Statewide recidivism rates for young people of all risk levels range from 47 percent to 56 percent.)

But there is also plenty of new work that we are eager to spotlight here: creating safety, which is achieved by a unique combination of outreach, relationships, and system-level work; putting the life-saving skills of CBT at the heart of our practice; and increasing work with the police and other critical systems not only locally, but nationally.

“Self-sufficiency” is, in fact, a myth. Not one of us, but perhaps especially a young person under 25, is able to change without some help from others. To heal the trauma of urban violence, it’s going to take all of us – young people, their families, community members, and public leaders.

Every young person – no matter how angry, isolated, or afraid – matters. When we address the effects of trauma on those in the toughest situations, we disrupt the cycle of violence, young people find hope, and we drive change that ripples throughout our communities.

Change is possible. Thank you for being a part of it.

Sincerely,

Molly Baldwin
Founder and CEO, Roca

ROCA'S MISSION IS TO BE A RELENTLESS FORCE IN DISRUPTING INCARCERATION AND POVERTY BY ENGAGING THE YOUNG ADULTS, POLICE, AND SYSTEMS AT THE CENTER OF URBAN VIOLENCE IN RELATIONSHIPS TO ADDRESS TRAUMA, FIND HOPE, AND DRIVE CHANGE.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

WHO WE WORK WITH AND TO WHAT END



“

I was iffy at first because **I didn't trust anyone and I didn't want to tell anyone my business.** Now, I consider my youth worker Sam **my family.**”

—DANTE, ROCA CHELSEA PARTICIPANT

YOUNG ADULTS

AT THE CENTER OF URBAN VIOLENCE

16-to-24-year-olds who have experienced extensive trauma and are the primary victims or drivers of urban violence

- Involved in the criminal justice system
- Have low literacy and typically no high-school degree or GED
- Have no formal or sustained employment history
- Involved with guns, gangs, and drugs
- Have failed out or dropped out of programs, schools, and jobs
- May be young parents

TO WHAT END?

Reduced incarceration. Sustained employment. Improved parenting.

“ If they desperately don't want to come to Roca and will do anything on God's green earth not to work with the likes of you ... welcome aboard. It's a helluva business model. **And it's precisely the population that Roca works with who is the population we should be working with.**”

—MICHAEL JACOBSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INSTITUTE FOR STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE AT CUNY AND FORMER DIRECTOR OF VERA INSTITUTE OF JUSTICE

97%

OF ROCA YOUNG MEN WHO COMPLETED THE FIRST TWO YEARS **WERE NOT RE-INCARCERATED***

70%

OF ROCA YOUNG MEN WHO WERE PLACED IN A JOB HELD THEIR JOB **FOR 6 MONTHS OR LONGER***

ONLY **33%**

OF ROCA YOUNG MEN SERVED FROM 2012-2019 RECIDIVATED WITHIN 3 YEARS - **SIGNIFICANTLY LOWER THAN THE MA RECIDIVISM RATE OF 47-56%****

WHILE MORE THAN **85%**

OF YOUNG MEN COME TO ROCA WITH A VIOLENT RECORD, **4 OUT OF 5 STOP ENGAGING IN VIOLENT CRIME****

83%

OF ROCA YOUNG MOTHERS DEMONSTRATED **IMPROVED PARENTING**

**Abt Associates Implementation Study

* Data refers to Massachusetts participants in the last 2 years of our 4 year model FY 2019. Roca Baltimore was launched in 2018 and its participants have not yet been enrolled for 2 years, when Roca will report intermediate and long-term outcomes. ** Abt Associates Implementation Study



SYSTEM PARTNERS AT THE CENTER OF URBAN VIOLENCE

Adults in critical public systems that impact young people and influence urban violence

- Public safety leaders
- Police officers
- Judges, probation officers, and court system officials
- Corrections officers
- Prosecutors and defense attorneys
- Child protective services

TO WHAT END?

Demonstrated policy and practice changes for the highest-risk young people.

“ **Systems change when people change** and people change when they feel something.”

—DR. ALISHA MORELAND-CAPUIA, AUTHOR OF *TRAINING FOR CHANGE*

“ That isn’t a pat on the back to police and law enforcement, **it’s a pat on the back to the partnerships that are in place.** [Roca is] not just reactionary, they are preventative. They are proactive. So that’s what we celebrate about Roca.”

—COMMISSIONER WILLIAM GROSS, BOSTON POLICE

“ Massachusetts has effectively become **the national leader on emerging adult justice.** The three Sheriffs who opened specialized units and programs for young adults in their counties; DYS’s exceptional success with emerging adults; the soon to be launched specialized court at the Springfield District Court; Probation’s learning lab on young adults; the state’s funding for various initiatives for emerging adults in the justice system; and the wide support for raising the juvenile court age beyond 18 - these are not small changes, **this is a whole system changing. Roca has been a relentless partner in making this shift happen.**”

—LAEL CHESTER, DIRECTOR OF THE EMERGING ADULT JUSTICE PROJECT AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY JUSTICE LAB

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

HOW WE DO IT

No young person is too tough for Roca, even if they have lost all trust and hope for the future. Roca never gives up on addressing the trauma and urban violence impacting the hardest-to-reach young adults in our communities. They can count on us to keep showing up, even during setbacks. That's how we build trust over four years and give young people the tools and support to change the trajectory of their lives.

1 CREATE SAFETY AND STABILITY

We do **relentless outreach** and build **transformational relationships** with young people to develop the *foundation for change*. We meet basic needs, make meaningful connections, and provide moments feeling free from harm.

“They're **real consistent**, and always **push me** down the right path. It's nice **knowing someone out there cares**. A lot of us grew up in a [messed] up lifestyle and no one cared about us. **Roca shows** that they actually do.”

—DERRIK, ROCA CHELSEA PARTICIPANT

“Roca is **the only organization** that I know that **doesn't give up on you**. Their model is different because, with most programs, you violate a rule and you're out. **Roca allows you to fail, and brings you back** for programming.”

—CAPTAIN DAVID BATCHELOR, CHELSEA POLICE



2

TEACH LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

We teach a relatable and simple version of cognitive behavioral theory (CBT) in the streets, so young people can slow down when they are triggered by their traumas, disrupt negative cycles, and take control over their lives.

“

I use **CBT** every day because **it helps me with self-control.** I used to be the kid that would get mad about everything. But the other day, someone said something about a gang I was in, and **back in the day I would have fought him. But now I know it's not worth it."**

—LUIS, ROCA SPRINGFIELD PARTICIPANT



3

PRACTICE SKILLS, RELAPSE, AND REPEAT

We create tailored employment, education, and life skills programs that serve as spaces for young people to change, relapse, and change further. Not when they are “ready” to participate, but while they still struggle to move steadily forward.

“

I'm working on this now. I've failed like 10 times, but **I'm gonna get it right.** Roca helps me **practice,** and **helps me help myself."**

—ANTIONE, ROCA BALTIMORE PARTICIPANT



4

ENGAGE INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS

We help systems and reduce urban violence more effectively when we intentionally identify the system partners with the strongest influence on young people, relentlessly reach out to them, build transformational relationships, and change together - jointly practicing new skills that produce better outcomes.

“

[Roca is] helping to **change the community** in Baltimore. The police officers' interactions with young people are totally different now. And some of those young men have changed - **I saw this kid laugh and I'd never seen him laugh before."**

—MAJOR LLOYD WELLS,
BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT

1

CREATE SAFETY AND STABILITY

RELENTLESS OUTREACH

It's what Roca is most known for - and it works.

We reach out to young people while they are in crisis, instead of waiting for them to have an epiphany, drop their guns, or remove themselves from dangerous relationships and situations. We track them down through their friends, call them, show up at their doorsteps, and scout the streets until we find them. It takes **an average of 10 relentless efforts to find a young person**, and it can take **hundreds of attempts until they make it to our programs** - like a young man in Baltimore this past year (112 efforts before he joined our work crew, to be exact).

TRANSFORMATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Whether young people like us or not, whether they want to be with us or not, we know that **deep and meaningful relationships can support them and push them over time to make critical changes in their lives**. Honest conversations about the risks of dropping a gun or the fear of losing custody of one's child can't happen without a deep relationship - one that is **strong enough to have difficult and uncomfortable conversations** with young people, hold young people accountable, and challenge their thinking. This **intensive form of case management over a period of 2-4 years** is the foundation of the change process at Roca.



87,031 RELENTLESS EFFORTS MADE BY ROCA YOUTH WORKERS*	1,078 YOUNG MEN SERVED*	246 YOUNG MOTHERS WITH 309 CHILDREN SERVED**
39 MINUTES SPENT ON AVERAGE ON EACH RELENTLESS EFFORT*	80% OF YOUNG MEN STAYED IN THE ROCA MODEL*	84% OF YOUNG MOTHERS STAYED IN THE ROCA MODEL**



* Data includes both Massachusetts and Baltimore. ** Data refers to Massachusetts only.



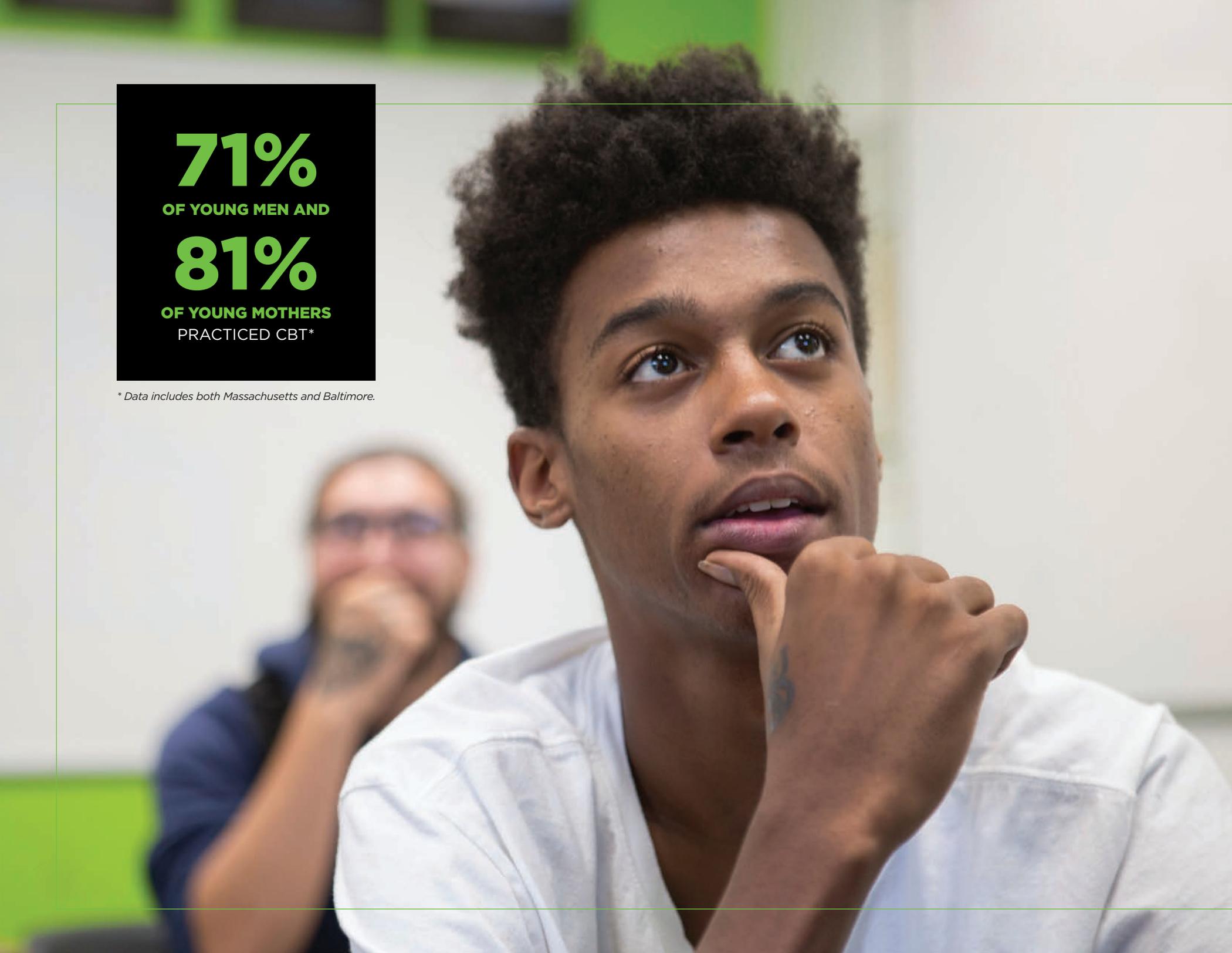
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“My youth worker Destiny **checks in on me every day.** Knowing that she cares fills me up with hope. When she visited me in jail, it seemed like **I wasn't alone anymore. I feel loved.**”

“I'd had **days where I didn't eat anything** at home. Sometimes I had a Cinco de Mayo tortilla, one of those little ones, with some cheese and water, and that's it. Now, I know **a meal here is dependable.** And they give me a triple decker sandwich, and don't say 'only have one.' They give you a whole feast.”

“Right now I like the expressive [CBT] classes - how to **handle anger, anxiety.** I'm learning how to act in a job, be respectful and listen. I'm not ready for my GED yet, and the staff know that. **But I will be.**”

—KEVIN, ROCA CHELSEA PARTICIPANT



71%

OF YOUNG MEN AND

81%

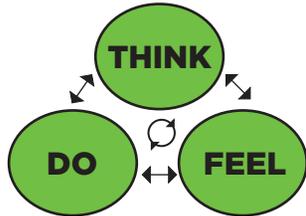
OF YOUNG MOTHERS

PRACTICED CBT*

**Data includes both Massachusetts and Baltimore.*

2

TEACH LIFE-SAVING SKILLS



CBT

Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) is a way to understand the connections between what we think, feel, and do – how situations affect what we say in our head, what we feel in our bodies, and what we do in response. CBT helps us see our own ‘think-feel-do’ cycles, identify when we get stuck in them, and learn the skills to disrupt them.



CBT IN THE STREETS: ADDRESSING TRAUMA BY TEACHING LIFE-SAVING SKILLS

CBT helps young people respond better in situations that put them in harm’s way. Instead of letting their trauma take over and send them into “survival mode,” young people find safety, learn to choose how they want to respond, and gain control over their lives.

- 7 simple skills
- 20 minutes for each skill
- On the corner, in class, on the go
- Non-clinical, taught by youth workers
- Developed with Massachusetts General Hospital
- English and Spanish versions

“

For the first time, I realized how numb I felt. CBT helped me to **think about what my body was actually doing** in a situation, to name my feelings, and **learn to sit still** and relax.

—HENRY, ROCA CHELSEA PARTICIPANT

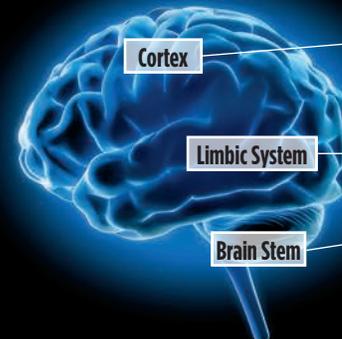


SKILL 4: ACT ON YOUR VALUES

...Not only did Corey's boss let him leave early, but he transferred him to a different store where he would be safe.

TRAUMA AND THE BRAIN

Trauma is **fear that never turns off**. It sends our brain to survival mode, as if the brain is responding to a threat, **just like the brain functioned when the traumatic incident initially occurred**. In survival mode, the pathways to The Thinking Brain are effectively blocked – the brain focuses on survival (“fight, flight, freeze”), lets the Limbic System and the Brain Stem take over, and is not open to learning or change. **For people who experienced trauma, threats as severe as shootings and as mild as constructive criticism from a boss trigger the survival response regularly**, and they struggle to make balanced decisions until they feel safety.



Pre-Frontal Cortex – The Thinking Brain: executive functions: learning, planning, logic, will, decision making

Limbic System – The Emotion Brain: feelings, relationships, nurturing, play

Brain Stem – The Survival Brain: vital functions: breathing, heartbeat, startle response, instincts

3 PRACTICE SKILLS, RELAPSE, AND REPEAT

All of Roca's programs are designed as learning experiences. In Transitional Employment, for example, each young person is fired and re-hired 2-4 times on average (and some up to 7 times) before successfully completing the program.

“

I just had a daughter and I really want to do right by her, but I had a hard time in Transitional Employment at first. I would overreact and throw things, act out. Luckily, Roca kept letting me **practice CBT and come back every time I blew out.**

Now I **stop and think in that split second.** I am now **able to think about possible outcomes of my situation** before I choose wrong. Everyone should give Roca a try because it will help you in the long run and could **save your life.”**

—RAEQUAN, ROCA BALTIMORE PARTICIPANT



“

I always tell new staff that Roca is not a jobs or an employment program, but rather a behavioral health program. Young people are dying in the streets of Baltimore too fast - **if they don't learn and practice CBT skills by the time they learn a job, it will be too late. We give them the space to do something different** while practicing these critical life-saving skills.”

—KURT PALERMO,
DIRECTOR, ROCA BALTIMORE

THE FIRST YEAR OF
ROCA BALTIMORE

95

YOUNG MEN ENROLLED

13,538

RELENTLESS EFFORTS
TO CONNECT
WITH YOUNG MEN

6,588

HOURS WORKED BY
YOUNG PEOPLE ON ROCA
WORK CREWS

91%

OF YOUNG MEN ENGAGED
IN EMPLOYMENT,
EDUCATION, OR LIFE
SKILLS PROGRAMS

“

I wanted to work. I wanted to get to the 60 days [in Transitional Employment], but **it was hard to keep showing up at first. I eventually made it to the 30 days** to become a **team leader**, and got to work in the kitchen.

After I leave the program, I think I'll have a lot of options for jobs. **I want to be in customer service.**”

—BRIANA, ROCA YOUNG MOTHERS' PROGRAM PARTICIPANT

85%

OF YOUNG MOTHERS ENROLLED 24+ MONTHS PLACED IN OUTSIDE JOBS

96%

OF YOUNG MOTHERS ENROLLED 24+ MONTHS **AVOIDED ADDITIONAL PREGNANCIES**

87%

OF CHILDREN WHO NEEDED EARLY INTERVENTION UTILIZED THEIR REFERRALS

“

Building a safe environment in which moms succeed and children thrive means that every new skill must be practiced again and again. Our moms may struggle - they may even be at the risk of losing custody of their children - but we are there to make sure that every setback is an opportunity for learning. I know each one of these moms. Nothing is more important to them than their children, and **all they need is a place to practice** so they can turn their love of their children into a life plan. They are amazing mothers.”

—SUNINDIYA BHALLA, CHIEF OF 2-GENERATION PROGRAMMING



“**We are only as strong as the relationships and the partnerships we build.** And it’s having the strong relationship with probation and police officers, DA’s, judges, that allows us to do this wrap around service, because **alone we can’t do this work.**”

—THA THAI, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF ROCA BOSTON

RELENTLESS OUTREACH — WITH SYSTEM LEADERS

Roca **doesn’t wait for system partners to come to us** or to be “ready” to do differently. **We approach systems change using the same principles that help young people change:** First, we identify the people within the systems who are directly facing urban violence, and we relentlessly reach out. Then, **we build meaningful relationships, have hard conversations, expect setbacks to be part of the change process, and always work towards better outcomes.** This process improves not only those systems, but also makes us more effective and better partners.

“**Roca has pioneered an effective model for working on the ground with systems and communities to help young people.** Probation’s role is to engage, assess and put in place the elements of a plan to change the trajectory of a young person’s life, but the duration of that engagement is limited to the term of their sentence, a duration not necessarily correlated to their longer term needs. By partnering early on with Roca around young people, we ensure that each gets the supports they need long-term. And Roca meets each young person where they are on their specific developmental path. At Roca **it’s not ‘come to our program’ — it’s ‘we’re in your world’** and we see the challenges you face. Roca gets that it’s not a linear pathway to success, and that it’s going to take all of our support.”

—EDWARD DOLAN, COMMISSIONER OF THE MASSACHUSETTS PROBATION SERVICE



4 ENGAGE INSTITUTIONS AND SYSTEMS



How does Roca **change the conditions** that hold a problem in place?

STEPS WE TAKE

1. **Analyze systems** for its most **impactful** parts
2. **Identify people** with the strongest **influence**
3. Do **relentless outreach** to connect with these people
4. Develop **transformational relationships** to earn trust
5. **Work together** towards a common systems change goal by **doing something different**
6. **Learn from the results** and do even better

TOOLS WE USE

1. **Peacemaking Circles** for mutual understanding
2. **Focused Working Groups** for problem-solving
3. **High Levels of Data Sharing and Reporting** to coordinate our efforts
4. **Investing Resources** in partnership projects that impact young people

“

For the past 31 years Roca has sought to understand the causation of urban violence and work tirelessly to prevent needless death and incarceration. Through this process, Roca has successfully partnered with police to bolster their capacity to impact communities. Based on this history, Roca is now **positioned to be transformational in how police officers relate to young adults** for the purpose of not only disrupting the cycle of violence but also **helping all people self-actualize.**”

—MICHAEL DAVIS,
VICE PRESIDENT FOR CAMPUS SAFETY,
CHIEF OF POLICE, NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY



TO OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS WHO DARE TO HOPE WITH US,
THANK YOU

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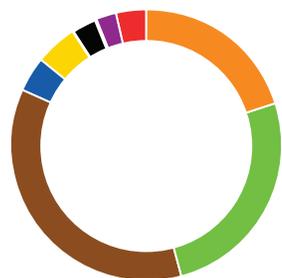
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The selected financial information represents the results of the combining operations of Roca, Inc., Pallin Youth Center, Inc., and Roca Baltimore, LLC.

Pallin Youth Center is an affiliated not-for-profit corporation of Roca, Inc., formed in 1996 as a 501(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code for the sole purpose of holding title to property. Roca Baltimore, LLC is a fully consolidated legal entity that provides the same services in Baltimore as are provided in Massachusetts. Each shares a common Board of Directors with Roca, Inc. Combining statements is required under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles.

ROCA, INC., PALLIN YOUTH CENTER, INC., & ROCA BALTIMORE, LLC

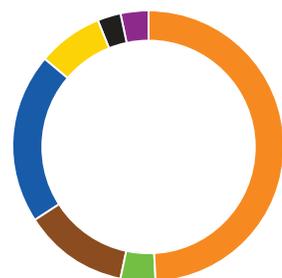
FY 2019 CONSOLIDATED REVENUES (in millions)



Government - Federal & State	\$3.159	20.2%
PFS	\$4.008	25.7%
Private Grants & Contributions	\$5.608	36.0%
Special Events	\$0.661	4.2%
Earned Revenue	\$0.743	4.8%
Income from Investments	\$0.492	3.2%
In Kind Donations	\$0.360	2.3%
Rental Income	\$0.569	3.6%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$15.600	100%

ROCA, INC., PALLIN YOUTH CENTER, INC., & ROCA BALTIMORE, LLC

FY 2019 CONSOLIDATED EXPENSES (in millions)



Adult Wages	\$7.140	49.2%
Youth Wages	\$0.592	4.1%
Payroll Taxes & Fringe	\$1.830	12.6%
Program Services	\$2.967	20.4%
General & Administrative	\$1.106	7.6%
Development & Communications	\$0.412	2.8%
Capacity Building/Evaluation	\$0.465	3.2%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$14.511	100%

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