WHEN THEIR FUTURE IS ON THE LINE
AND WE SHOW UP
WE EMPOWER THEM
WHO SHOWED UP FOR YOU?
Growing up, my family of six children and immigrant parents faced many challenges, including cancer, alcoholism, and divorce. I was lucky to meet great role models in my high school basketball and football coaches. They made sure I was ok and provided me with guidance to go to college. We are still close today.”

JOHN J. LAWN, JR.
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 10TH MIDDLESEX DISTRICT

I struggle with mental health and have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), but my school placement wasn’t supporting that. I was trying to make it work but it was affecting my academics and my home life. It was my family therapist who stepped up to attend IEP meetings, advocate for my needs, and find someone at the school to work with me. She stuck with me through the whole process. She’s also the one who told me about More Than Words!”

NADIA
MORE THAN WORDS YOUTH PARTNER

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MORE THAN WORDS YOUTH PARTNER
THANK YOU FOR STANDING WITH MORE THAN WORDS AND OUR YOUTH. IN A YEAR OF RAPID EXPANSION, YOU HELPED US STEP UP, SHOW UP, AND TAKE CHARGE.

361 YOUTH SERVED, A 25% INCREASE

$3.3M IN EARNED REVENUE, A 32% INCREASE

80% OF GRADUATES ENGAGED IN WORK OR SCHOOL FOR 30+ HRS/WEEK

Dear Friends,

Fifteen years ago More Than Words began with a mission some said was unreasonable: creating a powerful business run by our most vulnerable young adults in the foster care system. Unreasonable worked, and today we stand proud of all we accomplished in 2019. We expanded both our Waltham and Boston sites, launched new businesses and a professional training institute, deepened our curriculum and evaluation, and increased the number of youth served by 25%. Our young people operated a $3.3M business and took charge of their lives.

But even with our strong model, award-winning business, proven outcomes, and the hard work of our youth, there are systemic obstacles and people that undermine their success. Too often we still see young people criminalized, traumatized, made homeless.

Last year we asked: IF NOT US, WHO? We pledged to extend our reach and stand with youth as fierce advocates outside of the walls of our program. We invested staff and resources to focus on advocacy and policy change, built effective collaborations, dialed up our individual advocacy with young people, and pushed for larger systemic change.

Now, in our fifteenth year, we are consistently showing up with our young adults in court, speaking up when cases are closed and youth are being made homeless, meeting with systems of care and engaging our leaders. Young people are learning the skills of self-advocacy and change that will help them stand long and proud in their success.

This would not be possible without the steadfast support of you, our community. Thank you for showing up with us.

John Chory
Board Chair

Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger
Founder & CEO

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WHO SHOWED UP FOR YOU?

For my first 17 years, I found unconditional love and support in a four-legged best friend. Through fights with siblings and friends, my parents’ messy divorce, two abrupt moves, and the isolation and confusion of being sexually abused, it was my dog Sweetpea who I will forever remember being there.

Jodi Rosenbaum
Founder & CEO, More Than Words

My wife, Pat, has been showing up for me for years and is still showing up. The success I have enjoyed over a 30 year legal career, filled with planned and unplanned demands on my time and attention, is only made possible with her sacrifice. Pat is awesome.

John Chory, Partner, Latham & Watkins
Chair, More Than Words Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
John Chory, Chair; Elizabeth March, Vice Chair; Michael McCallough, Treasurer; Barbara Berke, Secretary; Kenneth F. Burnes; Christopher Casgar; Christopher Farrington; Gail Garinger; Rita German; Eric Groves; Jefferson Macklin, Jodi Rosenbaum Tillinger; Jim Sloman; Mark Touhey
Through our unique social enterprise model, youth ages 16-24 who are in the foster-care system, court-involved, homeless, or out of school have the opportunity they deserve to build skills, earn money, and take charge of their lives.

**PHASE 1**

**CORE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE**

**BUSINESS JOB**
Youth work approximately 20 hours per week managing our two bookstores, online book-selling business, event space, warehouse, pop-up shops, and social purpose marketplace. They gain transferrable skills and work experience while generating revenue that helps pay for the transformational experience.

**YOU JOB**
In addition to their business responsibilities, youth receive intensive case management, workshops, and training as they set and achieve measurable goals for their education, work, and life. Youth achieve personal milestones such as opening a bank account, creating a resume and cover letter, and finding housing.

**PHASE 2**

**GRADUATE SUPPORT**

Youth stay with More Than Words for at least two additional years as they persist in other jobs and education. We proactively support them to complete high school, sustain outside employment, and make plans for post-secondary education.

**6-12 MONTHS | 270 YOUTH**

With compassionate accountability, we hold young adults to high expectations in their business and personal lives. As they grow, they earn promotions and take on additional leadership and responsibility. When issues outside of More Than Words destabilize their progress, we stand with them as fierce advocates. When youth make mistakes, we work with them to make repairs, using a codified support and re-engagement process for youth who lose their jobs to return to the core program.

**24+ MONTHS | 153 YOUTH**

My mom passed away when I was five. My dad’s house was NOT a healthy environment, including that my dad was abusive and took issue with me being gay. I struggled with substance abuse and got arrested. The Department of Children and Families finally removed me at age fourteen, but I moved around to a lot of placements. It was when I came to Waltham that I learned about More Than Words from a housemate. She asked me if I needed a job. Little did I know she probably wanted the referral bonus!

When I first started at More Than Words it was just a job, but it quickly became more like a family. I learned skills like interpreting business metrics, networking, and doing my taxes. One really important lesson was how to shut my mouth when I didn’t get along with my peers. I started out getting a lot of warnings! As I earned a promotion and got increasing responsibility, I even learned how to give my peers the chance to take initiative.

More Than Words helped me come to terms with my past, search for jobs, find housing, and look at colleges. As a graduate, I got a job, finished high school, and took classes at Bunker Hill Community College. I’m now attending Salem State University, studying social work! I hate to imagine someone my age or younger going through what I did, losing their childhood. I want to change the system before that happens to them, too.
WE MEAN BUSINESS

One year after major expansions in both our Boston and Waltham sites, there’s now so much MORE to More Than Words! Our business is bigger, and our young people are sourcing more books, making more sales, and generating more earned revenue than ever before.

WE ARE EBAY’S 2019 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR!

More Than Words was selected as eBay’s Small Business of the Year from a field of more than 1,600. The Shine Small Business Awards were created to honor the most inspirational sellers using the eBay platform. As the grand-prize winner, this high-profile award sends a powerful message to our youth and the community: that the work they do matters and is worthy of national recognition.

WHO SHOWED UP FOR YOU?

The person that surprised me most in a time of need was my dad’s college roommate. We were going through a very challenging time as a family, and Pankey stepped up and filled the gap. Even though I was not his son or family, he arranged for me to get into Upward Bound. It changed my entire trajectory by forcing me to challenge myself beyond what was being taught at a school that expected very little from poor black students. My life was forever changed because Pankey cared enough to assist when we were struggling.”

RUSSELL E. HOLMES
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 6TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

I have been lucky enough to learn and grow at More Than Words for literally my whole career, from a youth to a graduate to a manager and now as an Associate Director. As a graduate, I met a new manager who went out of his way to give me advice. He helped me prepare for my interview to join the More Than Words adult team and then find my voice in meetings. He showed me what it is to lead by example with caring and compassion.”

KRISTIN CARMICHAEL
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF ONLINE OPERATIONS, MORE THAN WORDS

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<th>SOURCE DONATED BOOKS</th>
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$3.3M GENERATED IN TOTAL REVENUE

A 32% INCREASE AS WE INVEST IN GROWING OUR BUSINESSES AND SERVING MORE YOUTH. We’re on track to reach our expansion goal of $4M annually once ramp-up is complete.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EBAY

PHOTO COURTESY OF EBAY

MORE THAN WORDS ANNUAL REPORT 2019 | 7
After opening our new two-floor hub of social enterprise this year, our business has diversified far beyond books. We’ve launched new enterprises and pushed the boundaries of our model with:

**A COMMUNITY EVENT SPACE**, where youth hosted 22 events, managed 44 rentals, and generated $80K in revenue in its first year.

**A TRAINING INSTITUTE** that educated 43 providers and social entrepreneurs about our model in hands-on seminars—changing heads and hearts about what services should look like for vulnerable youth.

**A MARKETPLACE OF GIFT ITEMS** made by other mission-based businesses around the country that generated $55K and supported 30 social enterprises in our field.

**AN EXPANDED WAREHOUSE OPERATION** to process books and clothes and send out wholesale shipments—over 225 trailers carrying 4,500 tons of books this year!

**A NEW BUSINESS LINE** selling used and restored furniture in stores and online, with 143 pieces sold this year.

**A PILOT VENTURE** sourcing and selling used clothes, shoes, and household textiles, to expand in the coming year.

Our businesses are the vehicles for youth empowerment. Beyond revenue, each new business line offers new skill-building opportunities for young adults. Youth drive every step, learn transferrable skills, and develop core long-term competencies in these new enterprises.

NEW BUSINESSES = NEW SKILLS

More than words
OUR YOUTH SHOW UP

More Than Words youth are finishing high school, enrolling in postsecondary education, and securing employment.

361 YOUTH

served by More Than Words in FY19, including 270 in our core social enterprise and 153 graduates in the community.

Our growth in Waltham and Boston means

MORE YOUTH | MORE JOBS | MORE SUPPORT

We served 43% more young people this year than before we expanded in FY17!

MTW YOUTH LEARN MORE

Our young people are securing the credentials they need to advance in life.

93% OF MTW GRADUATES WERE ON TRACK WITH HIGH SCHOOL*

50% of foster youth attain a diploma by age 18**

49% OF MTW GRADUATES PURSUED POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

27% of foster youth have completed at least one year of post-secondary education by age 21

MTW YOUTH EARN MORE

Our graduates are finding—and keeping—jobs too.

83% OF MTW GRADUATES WORKED IN 2019

Only 51% of former foster youth work over the course of a year.**

MTW GRADUATES WERE ENGAGED IN WORK OR SCHOOL FOR 30+ HRS/WEEK.

80%

43% 45+ HRS

11% 15-30 HRS

37% 20-45 HRS

43% 15-30 HRS

37% 20-45 HRS

87% HELD A JOB FOR 3+ MONTHS

65% HELD A JOB FOR 6+ MONTHS

43% 45+ HRS

11% 15-30 HRS

37% 30-45 HRS

43% HELD A JOB FOR 3-6 MONTHS

37% HELD A JOB FOR 6-12 MONTHS

80% HELD A JOB FOR 13+ MONTHS

THEY BUILD SKILLS THAT LAST

Youth deserve to thrive in their next job and throughout their adult lives.

Data helps us hold ourselves accountable for preparing them, and we are fanatic about improving our program to achieve better outcomes. We’ve identified five research-based competencies that young adults need for a successful transition to adulthood and tied each one to core tasks and skills development on every shift at More Than Words. We rollout new curriculum and tracking to help youth build and understand their progress on each one.

HIGHER-ORDER THINKING: Managing time and resources, solving problems, making decisions

SOCIAL INTERACTION: Giving and receiving feedback, being a member and leader on a team, resolving conflicts

COMMUNICATION: Speaking and conversation, listening, reading and writing, interpreting data and information

POSITIVE SELF-IMAGE: Identifying personal positive traits, taking positive risks

SELF-MANAGEMENT: Planning and following through on commitments, staying focused, advancing long term goals

* "On track" refers to youth who earned a diploma or equivalent or who are enrolled in and passing classes through the end of FY19.

** Does Extending Foster Care Beyond Age 18 Promote Postsecondary Education Attainment? (Chapin Hall, 2010)
Our young people are living and working in a world that does not support and often even undermines their best efforts.

Every day, we see the impact of these statistics on the youth at More Than Words.

We see young people who have spent their lives in the foster care system suddenly made homeless when they turn 18 and their cases are closed without a transition plan. We see youth who have been removed from their homes for their own safety penalized for their first mistake in a group home and pushed into the criminal justice system. We see children face harsh punishment rather than receive the resources and diversion opportunities they need to move forward. Every time systems fail our youth, we see their hard-earned progress at More Than Words come under threat.

For our youth to persist at More Than Words and stand in their success as graduates, they need to overcome these barriers. And they need us to have their back.

CONFRONTING SYSTEMIC FAILURES IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR MISSION
For the past 15 years, we’ve supported youth outside of our walls, and this year we’re dialing up this work with even more resources. We’ve made advocacy an explicit part of our model and allocated staff and leadership resources to invest in our young people all the way. We are moving into FY20 with an approach that is effective, proactive, and sustainable.

**YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY**
We support young people to take the lead in meeting with key supports and resources. Whether meeting with their court and family law attorney, social worker, or public defender, youth set their own agendas for their meetings and learn to develop their voice, negotiate for their needs, and take direction over their own future.

**STAFF TRAINING**
More Than Words staff at all levels are trained to be on the phone and in the community when a challenge undercuts youth success. We show up to court dates, push back on service case closures, hold agencies accountable, and link young people to resources.

**INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKERS**
We ensure that key decision-makers have a holistic understanding of our young people. We collaborate with district attorney offices and public defenders to ensure youth are held accountable in a developmentally appropriate way. We push for dialogue with social workers, state systems, and community partners to align resources and services. When a young person is being failed, we voice up.

**POLICY CHANGE**
Our young adults and staff meet with legislators to advance a youth-driven policy agenda focused on ending the child welfare cliff, expanding diversion programs, and expanding mental health and substance abuse supports. We’re one of eight organizations funded by the Department of Public Health as part of a coordinated effort to decrease gun violence.

Supporting youth fully requires us to go far outside our walls and even, some would say, out of our lane. We say: This is our lane.

**WE GO WHERE OUR YOUTH ARE**
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I came to the US from Haiti when I was six. I never had a family that took care of me and was placed in state custody, where I spent the rest of my childhood.

I went to More Than Words when I was 16 and living in a group home. I liked working there and being part of a team. I was successful but still had a hard time in the community. I got in trouble and was arrested as a juvenile. When I was 18, I faced adult charges for stealing and was put in jail with people much older than me. It was like a set up for failure.

When I got out, I completed my high school certificate, but then the Department of Children and Families closed my case and I was suddenly homeless. I didn’t know what to do. More Than Words helped me look for work and housing options.

Even though I had graduated More Than Words, being homeless, you don’t think clearly. I made a desperate choice to get money and was arrested. Without the best legal representation, I took a felony plea. State prison was tough. I was assaulted, got in fights, and once had my jaw broken.

Then I found out that I was facing deportation back to Haiti, and when I finished my sentence I was transferred to ICE. Jodi and Marcella at More Than Words stepped in again and said this wasn’t OK. All I had ever known was abuse and neglect, being in foster care, being homeless, and being locked up. How could I get sent back to a place I hadn’t lived since I was a child? They found the right lawyer to help me get released.

At 24 years old, I had to figure out how to live for the first time. Marcella spent a lot of time helping me find housing and mental health services. I got the opportunity to work at More Than Words as an alumnus, and Brandt, a donations manager, made sure I felt like I had a community at work every day.

I am now getting housing through the Department of Mental Health. I also just graduated from a culinary training program at the New England Culinary Arts Institute. For the first time in my life, I feel like I’m headed in a positive direction.
WE MAKE IT COUNT

Our highly sustainable hybrid-funding model lets us make the most of every donation, putting every grant and donor dollar to work for youth. This year, our rapid entrepreneurial expansion was fueled by a comprehensive growth campaign.

The cost of our high-impact program is a fraction of what the public would pay if the same young people were incarcerated, homeless, or unemployed. Through our innovative social enterprise model, youth contribute to their future stability and success by generating revenue that offsets the cost of services.

**UP TO $172,000**
The cost of incarcerating a juvenile in Massachusetts*

**UP TO $83,000**
The cost of serving a chronically homeless person**

**$22,000**
The average cost to serve a young person at More Than Words for one year***

**$12,000**
The average cost to serve a young person at More Than Words for one year, offset by earned revenue from the youth-run business****

* Sticker Shock: Calculating the Full Price Tag for Youth Incarceration (Petteruti, 2014)
** Home Not Found: Cost of Homelessness in Silicon Valley (Flaming, 2015)
*** More Than Words serves young people for three years: 6–12 months in the core program followed by two years of career services support

**FY19 REVENUE**
- Earned Revenue (47%) $3,317,500
- Philanthropy (41%) $2,889,577
- Government (12%) $866,028

**FY19 EXPENSES**
- Bridge Capacity Building from Growth Campaign $836,225
- Adult Staff (40%) $3,136,136
- Youth Stipends (13%) $1,056,802
- Occupancy (11%) $840,410
- Sales Expenses (24%) $1,932,294
- Other (36%) $2,875,982

**FY19 EXPENSES***
- $7,909,330

WHO SHOWED UP FOR YOU?

Shortly after moving for a new job, my wife and I welcomed our second son. Feeling overwhelmed and isolated, a neighbor arrived carrying a hot meal. Two days later, another neighbor arrived, then another. It turned out that someone who didn’t know us well had organized a meal train. Friends we had yet to meet helped us by graciously welcoming our family to their community.

MICHAEL MCCULLOUGH
MANAGING DIRECTOR, GLOBAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, GENERAL ELECTRIC, MTW TREASURER AND FINANCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

In 5th grade I was struggling. My cousin had just died in community violence, and I was having a hard time with school and personal stuff. My teacher stepped up for me even though it was her first year. She’d help me after school and I ate lunch in her classroom every day. She bought me a book to read, and I remember thinking—wow, she thought about me and spent her own money. She went from teacher to mentor and we’re still close today.

HONEY A
MORE THAN WORDS GRADUATE

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HONEY A
MORE THAN WORDS GRADUATE
Every milestone and positive outcome celebrated in this report was fueled by generous individuals, businesses, and foundations who match the efforts of our young adults.

Thank you for showing up for our youth.
Cheryl Carnear, Crystal Financial

Ken Fiske, Gordon Brothers

Kevin Martig, Reimer & Braustein

Keith Vercauteren, Wells Fargo

At the inaugural event, our shared stories with 300 guests who collectively raised over $400,000. Thanks to all who showed up for our event!

Early in my career, a coworker accused me of using illegal substances at work—a lie designed to damage my reputation. The CEO gave me the benefit of the doubt and then went further. He investigated and found out I was telling the truth. My coworker was later fired. The CEO stood by me. This is the type of leader who goes further to show up for you.
Early in my career I was receiving a lot of positive pressure at work to take a promotion, even though there was another, different role that interested me more. A busy senior executive ultimately made the move that was a better fit for me. He continued to be one of my biggest supporters. After months of fundraising, I was almost $1,000 short. When a client at my spin studio offered to help, it gave me the confidence I needed to see the project through.
WHY NOT TODAY?

You’ve seen what youth can do when given the chance to shine. Now is the time to step up.

WILL YOU HELP US SHOW UP AND SPEAK UP FOR YOUTH?

- Make or renew a gift
- Visit our stores
- Donate used books & clothing
- Buy books online
- Attend an event
- Rent our event space
- Sign up for a training
- Shop for social impact
- Find out how: www.mtwyouth.org

WILL YOU SHOW UP?

FIND US
Waubeke Baskateau
56 Felton Street
Waltham, MA 02154

Baskateau and Event Space
262 East Berkeley Street
Boston, MA 02118

781.788.3035
www.mtwyouth.org
SHOW UP

THINK BIG

DO MORE

HOW WILL YOU SHOW UP FOR YOUR COMMUNITY?