



WAVES FOR HOPE

# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Youth and Community Development -

Changing Lives through Community-Based Mental Health  
and Sports for Development Programs



# Introduction

2023 marked an important year of growth and innovation for Waves for Hope. While our core mission of supporting children and young people through sport, connection, and mentorship remained unchanged, this year we took a meaningful step forward with the **introduction of our Skate Therapy Program and an internationally recognized Freediving Course.**

These two new interventions **expanded our impact** by combining physical activity with emotional support, life skills, and positive role modelling. Skate therapy created a powerful new way to reach young people who may not always connect through water sports, offering them a safe space to build confidence, resilience, and trust while learning new skills. And the freediving course, combined with mental health teachings, let a small group of beneficiaries experience the power of mental calmness and emotional control firsthand.

The launch of Skate Therapy and the Freediving Course were the highlights of 2023. It opened new doors for engagement, strengthened our community presence, and reinforced our belief that movement, mentorship, and consistency can change lives.

Throughout the year, we continued to learn, adapt, and grow — guided by the needs of the young people we serve and the dedication of our team.

As we reflect on 2023, we are proud of what has been achieved and excited to build on this momentum in the years ahead.

Best,  
Manuela Giger  
Co-Founder / Director

## About us

# Youth and Community Development in under-served communities on the north-east coast of Trinidad

### **Mission**

Waves for Hope is a local non-profit organization providing youth development programs in underserved communities along the east coast of Trinidad. Our mission is to reduce poverty and empower at-risk youth through education, mentorship, and sport, with a strong focus on physical, emotional, and mental well-being.

### **Vision**

We envision communities where young people are empowered to thrive and create better opportunities for themselves and their families. Our goal is to reduce poverty, crime, and dependency while fostering positive, resilient, and healthy communities.

Waves for Hope operates in the coastal communities on the north-east coast of Trinidad, where delinquency, unemployment, crime, family breakdown, school dropouts and teenage pregnancy are omni-present. There are limited public human and financial resources, lack of professional capacity, limited options to place children in need of care and protection, limited treatment and follow-up services.



## Challenges & Lessons Learned

### Weather disruptions, resource limitations and transport challenges.

In 2023, several challenges shaped our learning and future planning.

The **Skate Therapy Program** was frequently affected by **weather disruptions**, as rain made sessions unsafe and led to cancellations.

In addition, the small number of participants meant that our **impact data was less precise and harder to generalize**.

As a small team, we had to balance our ambitions with **limited resources**, which required careful planning and prioritisation throughout the year.

At times, **transportation was another challenge** due to our reliance on an external driver and vehicle, which occasionally limited access and consistency.

These experiences highlighted the importance of building stronger team capacity, improving logistical independence, and running outdoor programs during more reliable weather periods to ensure consistency and greater impact.



## Impact & Outcomes

Improved overall well-being and more skills.

**+6.1%**

Improvement in overall well-being.

An increase of 6.1% in overall wellbeing can be noted in the beneficiaries at the end of the skate therapy intervention. Data was collected from the surf and skate therapy interventions.

*The World Health Organisation Five Well Being Index (WHO-5) was used in pre and post surveys to measure current mental well-being.*

**+2**

New programs

Skate Therapy and a Freediving Course were introduced with the goal to gain wider reach and offer more skill training opportunities. The new interventions are also an opportunity to work with beneficiaries that already attended the surf therapy program and refresh their mental health teachings.



# Financial Overview

## Income and Expenses in 2023

### Income

A total of TTD 94'448 was received in funding and donations.



- Donations (56.22%)
- Equipment Donations (43.78%)

### Expenses

A total of TTD 66'619 was spent in 2023.



- Salaries (67.55%)
- Program Costs (8.79%)
- Administration (11.97%)
- Transportation (11.68%)



# Year in Review

2023 was a year of growth, learning, and meaningful milestones for Waves for Hope.

We successfully continued and completed our running Surf Therapy Program, providing consistent support and structure for young people in our community.

Two of our beneficiaries were also **awarded ISA Scholarships**, which enabled them to receive much-needed laptops to support their education — a powerful step toward greater opportunity and independence.

This year also marked the introduction of two new and exciting initiatives: **Skate Therapy** and **Freediving**. These programs expanded our ability to reach and inspire young people through different forms of movement, challenge, and self-discovery.

As part of the Skate Therapy Program, we **trained our young leaders to assist in sessions and to build skate obstacles**, strengthening leadership skills and ownership within the community.

Environmental awareness remained an important part of our work. Through **beach cleanups and trash education**, participants learned about responsibility, teamwork, and the importance of protecting their natural surroundings.

Waves for Hope also gained international visibility in 2023 by being **featured in a global freediving documentary**, helping to share the story of our community, our ocean, and the impact of our programs with a wider audience.



## Beneficiary's Voices

“ My best memory I had with Waves for Hope was learning how to drop the ramp. I also learned breathing exercises. Joining the skate therapy program means freedom for me.

– Skate Therapy Beneficiary



“ My best memory is making new friends and trying new things that I have never experienced before. I have learnt to do Take 5s (meditation), it really helps with my asthma and other stuff and it also helps me to be relaxed and to calm down. I have noticed changes in myself, I feel more settled than I was before. My favorite thing is that I get to do stunts on a ramp and overall do new things. The mentors have helped me when I was stressed about school etc. Whenever they saw that I was sad they asked and said it would get better. They are literally the best people I have ever met. It means to be at ease when I come and skate. I just forget about everything going on in my life right now and just skate, and that is something I never want to stop doing.

– Skate Therapy Beneficiary

“ My best memory is when everyone started catching their first waves and their facial expressions when it happened. I learnt to use the Take 5 (meditation) which helped me a lot since I used to often get angry quickly at home and school. I have more patience and am more confident. I like to surf and it became something I look forward to on weekends and could see myself doing in the future.

– Surf Therapy Beneficiary



# Year in Numbers



## Programs Overview:





**Thank you to our supporters:**

Repsol Trinidad, Vans, Florida Freedivers, PFI International, ISA, Paul Wilson, Virgil Price

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Report by:

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