




ANNUAL REPORT **2021**



OVER **430,000**
CHILDREN ARE
WITHIN THE FOSTER
CARE SYSTEM AT ANY
GIVEN TIME.

OFTEN PLACED
IN UNFAMILIAR
ENVIRONMENTS, THESE
CHILDREN ARE SCARED
AND NEED OUR SUPPORT.

We believe that children in foster care deserve dignity, respect, and support. Comprised of humanitarians, advocates, artists, and visionaries, Together We Rise is committed to changing the world for the better. Together, our team continues to transform the lives of children in foster care.

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ABOUT TOGETHER WE RISE

Together We Rise is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization dedicated to changing the way children experience foster care. Our vision is to improve the lives of foster youth, who often find themselves forgotten and neglected by the public.

We collaborate with individuals, companies, and community partners to bring resources to foster youth while using service-learning activities to educate volunteers on issues surrounding the foster care system.

Together We Rise works with hundreds of foster agencies, social workers, CASA advocates, and other partners to bring our programs to foster youth across the nation. Our foundation has allowed us to provide thousands of foster youth across the country with new bicycles, college supplies, and sweet cases so that children do not have to travel from home to home with their belongings in a trash bag.





HOW WE STARTED

In 2008, Danny Mendoza discovered that his 9-year-old cousin Roger was living in a car. He wanted to help but ran into obstacles because he was under the age of 21. Danny grew disheartened after he was denied the ability to help his cousin and youth in similar situations.

Rather than give up, Danny decided there needed to be ways to help children in foster care without becoming a foster parent. After sharing his vision with friends and colleagues, he was inspired by their encouragement to use his ambition to help others and start a new organization. Danny's vision soon became a reality and Together We Rise was born.



OUR LEADERSHIP



DANNY MENDOZA

FOUNDER



GIANNA DAHLIA MULKAY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR BOARD

KIMBERLY MOORE

STEPHANIE BAEZA

CHRIS MEKDARA

DAVID MENDOZA

“The perseverance, dedication, and grit of our team and supporters carry our mission forward. Together, we continue to lift the foster care community through direct support and educational investments.”

-Gianna Dahlia Mulkay
Executive Director

OUR MISSION

TOGETHER WE RISE IS A NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION

DEDICATED

TO TRANSFORMING THE WAY YOUTH NAVIGATE THROUGH
THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM IN AMERICA.

CORE VALUES



PASSION

Our team radiates an intense enthusiasm, which allows us to develop a deeper meaning to our purpose with an eagerness and urgent sense of innovation.

INNOVATION

We love and encourage new ideas, elevating each concept while celebrating the unique creativity of each individual within the organization, embracing the spirit of teamwork.



TEAMWORK

Working collaboratively allows us to become more efficient and effective in enacting our mission's goals. Leaders rise through their actions and support of one another.



YEAR-END STATS

\$4,500,000

Raised to support youth in
foster care

OVER 60,000

Supporters engaged this year

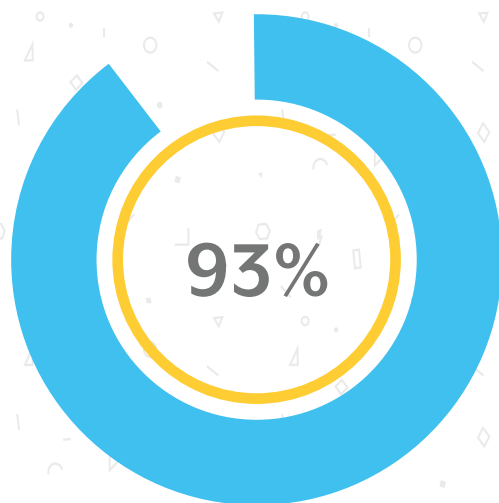
OVER 100,000

you in foster care served with items
they need and want

OUR FINANCIALS

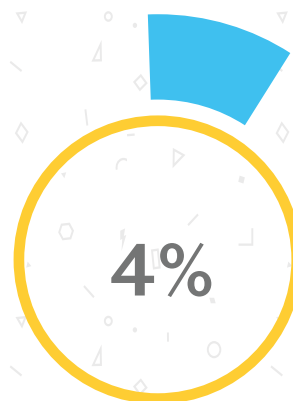
Total Income: ~ \$7,600,000

Net Assets: ~ \$9,600,027



Programs Expenses

~ \$7,164,921.00



General & Admin

~ \$300,471.00

*Waiting on final audit report



Fundraising Expenses

~ \$263,313.00

OUR IMPACT

650,000+

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVED

HELPED IN 13 YEARS



OUR COVID RESPONSE



RAPID RESPONSE

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Together We Rise created the Rapid Response program to meet the urgent needs of foster care students impacted by COVID-19. The onset of the pandemic impacted students' housing, education, and jobs, resulting in instability from the nationwide lockdown.

Rapid Response ensures holistic support, stable housing, and resources for students to succeed in education and life.



625

FOSTER YOUTH STUDENTS WERE SUPPORTED



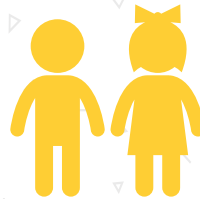


RAPID RESPONSE

OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

Rapid Response has provided services for 982 displaced foster care students. Over \$500,000 has been used to address our students' needs and to fight homelessness.

This program has provided students the opportunity to refocus on their education while they navigate through the global pandemic.



982

FOSTER CARE STUDENTS DISPLACED



\$500,000

TO HELP STUDENTS IN NEED

OUR PROGRAMS

VIRTUAL SERVICE PROJECTS

The global pandemic has created lasting effects on how we come together as a community. To support safer at-home practices Together We Rise developed a variety of Virtual Service Projects.

These service opportunities are held to CDC standards to prevent the spread of Corona virus while providing families, groups, and corporate companies the opportunity to safely give back from any location.





OUR PROGRAMS

SWEET CASES

When youth enter foster care, they are often given two trash bags and 10 minutes to pack. Our Sweet Cases program changes this by providing duffles filled with a bear, hygiene kit, blanket, and most importantly, comfort.

TEEN DUFFLES

Our Teen Duffel program brings confidence, comfort, and security to teens across the nation. By replacing trash bags with duffles, we remind foster teens that they matter.

41,569

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

OUR PROGRAMS

BICYCLES

Childhood memories matter. When youth experience foster care, they often lose the simple joys of childhood like riding bicycles. Therefore, we provide FREE bicycles to hundreds of children, which sparks lasting memories of laughter, hope, and community. Additionally, we provide bicycles for teenagers that need help getting to school, work, or transportation to reunite with their siblings.

SCHWINN

Together We Rise and Schwinn partnered to bring the joys of riding a bicycle to youth across America.

1,883

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE





OUR PROGRAMS

SKATEBOARDS

Every day, 1,200 youth enter the foster care system. While navigating the system, many children miss out on joyful childhood activities, such as riding a skateboard. We are on a mission to change that.

Through our Build A Board program, we provide hundreds of skateboards to children in foster care throughout the nation. Skateboards not only offer adventure and community but also provide a consistent and reliable form of transportation.

1,089

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

OUR PROGRAMS

BIRTHDAY BOXES

Childhood birthdays create lasting memories. Unfortunately, as children navigate the foster care system and transition from home to home, their birthdays can easily go forgotten.

Through our Birthday Box program, we ensure that thousands of children in foster care feel celebrated, recognized, and supported on their birthdays.

8,898

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE





OUR PROGRAMS

SUPERHERO BOXES

Navigating the foster care system can be a challenging experience for children and can negatively impact their self-esteem.

We created the Superhero Box to remind foster youth that they can overcome any challenge, big or small.

This program provides foster youth with the tools needed to embrace their future with confidence and reminds them that the greatest superhero already lives within them.

2,989

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

OUR PROGRAMS

STEM BOXES

Together We Rise is committed to ending educational inequality through our academic scholarship (the Family Fellowship) and supplemental initiatives like our STEM Boxes. To help foster youth further, Together We Rise pledged to introduce STEM education to 5,000 children in foster care by 2022.

Thanks to the support of the community we are helping ignite a trend among foster youth in hopes of increasing high school graduation rates and career readiness.

5,000

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE





OUR PROGRAMS

SOCKTOBER

During the month of October we shift our focus to providing an essential resource to children in foster care. Socks! Socks are the number one most requested item from foster care agencies because often when children enter foster care, they come with little to no personal items.

For the third year in a row, we came together and raised funds to ship out tens of thousands of socks to foster youth nationwide.

78,000
YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP



SUPPORT BEGINS WITH FAMILY

Through the generous introduction by Hope D. Smith with her husband Robert F. Smith, president and founding board of director of the Fund II Foundation, Together We Rise has partnered with the Fund II Foundation to support college bound foster care students with financial, educational, and wrap-around support. Our unwavering commitment is to provide higher education scholarships to youth in foster care. Each student chosen receives up to \$18,000 per year for up to five years with the goal of not only providing financial support but continued guidance during & after their tenure. The vision

of the Family Fellowship is to change the legacy of aged-out foster youth by transforming the way foster youth are supported through their college journey. Our program emphasizes the need to innovate, explore, and discover new ways to develop our young individuals for a modern workforce. The Family Fellowship creates a comprehensive strategy to achieve students' educational and professional goals, developing their support networks and fostering the necessary life skills to propel a student to excellence. The Family Fellowship is built on the foundation of scholars from all across

the country attending the nation's leading colleges and universities. Students of the program graduate at a 95% rate. Many go on to pursue advanced professional degrees and secure employment in their field of study within 6 months of graduation. As alumni, students are given the opportunity to champion younger scholars through their journey, further solidifying the family aspects of the program.



FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Only 3% of foster youth will graduate from college. That's why we created Family Fellowship, the nation's largest scholarship fund for aged-out youth in foster care. Through the Family Fellowship program, we come alongside youth in need to ensure they have the tools and support needed to achieve their education and career goals.

\$1,000,000

IN SCHOLARSHIPS AWARDED TO

17 SCHOLARS

FUND II FOUNDATION



Tuition

Up to five years of financial support to help with tuition, books, and tutors.



Housing

Support with utilities, room, and board for up to five years



Professional Development

Personal life skills and career-focused support to prepare students for a modern workforce.



Family

Emotional and wrap-around services to all fellows year around.

OUR CAMPAIGNS



GIVING TUESDAY

Giving Tuesday strives to create a world in which the power of giving is at the heart of the society we build together. This year, with hundreds of people supporting us, we were able to help bring comfort, support, and transformation to the 430,000 youth navigating the foster care system in America.

Every day, we help over 250 children in foster care nationwide. In the months, weeks, and days leading up to Giving Tuesday, our supporters joined the global generosity movement to help us generate further awareness and provide additional support to more children across the U.S.



BACK-2-SCHOOL PACKS

The Back 2 School Pack was created to give children in care everything they need to start classes. We believe that it is up to everyone in the community to step up and ensure that children in care have what they need to succeed in school.

For those children who grow up in the system, they can move more than 15 times in their young lives. When they are moving this often includes schools. A student's education should not be hindered because of a lack of resources.

OUR CAMPAIGNS



FEEDING FAMILIES

For several years Together We Rise has worked with community partners nationwide to bring traditional Thanksgiving Meals to foster families. Food is often a complex struggle for many foster youths and their families as it can be one of the few things children in foster care can control.

The goal of the Feeding Families program goes beyond food, it is an initiative that helps remind the foster community that they are not alone. It is an act of kindness to help nourish the soul of those struggling to find hope.



HOLIDAY STOCKINGS

The holidays can be a complex time for children, especially for those who are new to foster care. Our Holiday Stockings efforts help support foster families and group homes by providing stockings, gift cards, and other gifts.

Holiday Stockings ensure that regardless of the placement or the timing, children in foster care will feel valued during the holidays.

Thanks to your support Together We Rise is able to inspire, educate, and engage more volunteers.

HELPED YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

OUR SUPPORTERS

Foundations

California Wellness Foundation Fund II
IDEXX Foundation
Walter S. Johnson Foundation

Carl C. Anderson, Sr. and Marie Jo Anderson Charitable
In N Out Foundation
Zwagil Foundation

Fund II
Karakin Foundation

Supporters

AT&T Raleigh
Albanese
All Together ATV
Arc Best
Avalon Bay
BDO Boston
Benevity
Berkshire Bank
Channel Bakers
Cisco
Credit Union of Southern California

Dakota Supply Company
HBO
Karen Nation Food Creation Nation
Lemonade
Macy's
McDonald's
MediRevv, A Tegria Company
NBC Universal
Netflix
New York Life
Papaya Global

Saban Brands
Sage
Sundt Corp
TJX
Thrivent Financial
Verizon Media
Vertical Bridge Reit LLC
Water Marq
Year Up!

In-Kind Supporters

Bombas
COS
Cotton On

Hurley
Park & Faith
TechStyle

Thrive Cosmetics
Triple Fat Goose
Wayfair



Superhero



Champion



Ally



Friend



PROGRESSIVE



SHEIN



AWAY

ĀURA

anthology

DISCOVER

SPARKLING
ICE

WARNER
MEDIA

SCHWINN



jetBlue



CHASE

FOX

HUMANITEA





THANK YOU!

for helping us make 2021 a success!

“Every year, I am proud of the work Together We Rise staff and partners champion to build supportive and innovative solutions to help the foster care community. This challenging year, I’m especially proud of our unrelenting and committed work in the face of all the uncertainties this year has brought. Our greatest strengths continued to be our team, loyal supporters, and enduring network of partners that sprung into action to combat the straining effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the foster care community. This incredible work of Together We Rise and our partners outlined in this report would not have happened without you. Thank you”

-Gianna Dahlia Mulkay
Executive Director

#FOSTERLOVE
TOGETHERWERISE.ORG



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www.togetherwerise.org