



ANNUAL REPORT
2020



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

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



Together We Rise is comprised of humanitarians, advocates, artists, and visionaries who are committed to changing the world for the better. Our team of passionate volunteers, interns, and staff continue to transform the lives of children in foster care. We believe that children in foster care deserve dignity, respect, and support.

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ABOUT TOGETHER WE RISE

Together We Rise is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization comprised of motivated young adults and former foster youth. Our vision is to improve the lives of children in foster care, who often find themselves forgotten and neglected by the public. We collaborate with individuals, companies, and community partners to bring resources to foster youth and use service-learning activities to educate volunteers on issues surrounding the foster care system.

TWR 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 provides thousands of foster youth across the country with new bicycles, college supplies, and Sweet Case duffle bags, so children do not have to travel from home to home with their belongings in a trash bag.





HOW WE STARTED

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

Instead of giving up, Danny decided there needed to be ways to help children in foster care without becoming a foster parent. After telling others about his vision, he was inspired by encouragement from friends and colleagues to use his ambition to help others and start a new organization. Danny's vision became a reality as Together We Rise grew into a nationwide organization changing the way youth experience foster care.

LEADERSHIP



DANNY MENDOZA

FOUNDER



GIANNA DAHLIA MULKAY

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR BOARD

KIMBERLY MOORE

STEPHANIE BAEZA

CHRIS MEKDARA

DAVID MENDOZA

“This year has shown a dedicated, resilient and passionate team like ours can thrive regardless of environment, with our mission to help youth in foster care as its driving force.”

-Gianna Dahlia Mulkay
Executive Director

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 a prideful sense of responsibility.

INNOVATION

We love and encourage new ideas, there's unique creativity that comes from each individual within the organization and that's what makes us so special.



TEAMWORK

Working together allows us to become more efficient and effective. Great leaders come from successful teams that help strengthen our culture.

YEAR-END STATS

OVER 60,000

SUPPORTERS ENGAGED THIS YEAR

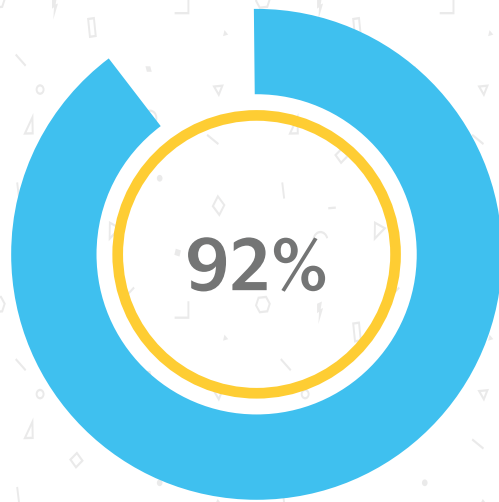
OVER 200,000

YOUTH PROVIDED WITH ESSENTIAL
ITEMS THEY NEED AND WANT

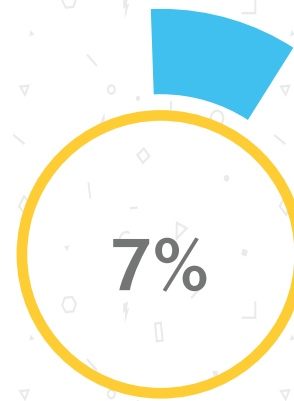
OVER \$1.2 MILLION

ALLOCATED TO STUDENTS
AFFECTED BY COVID-19

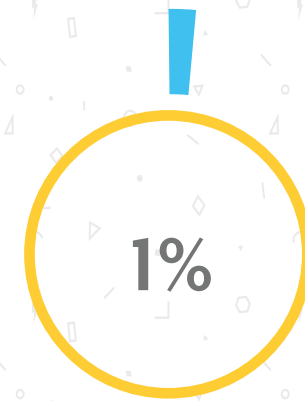
FINANCIALS



Programs Expenses



Operations



Fundraising Expenses

SOCIAL IMPACT



787,488

Social Followers This Year

↑ **16%**



1,116,073

Web Sessions Per Month This Year

↑ **64%**



IMPACT

500,000+

CHILDREN & YOUTH SERVED
HELPED IN 12 YEARS



COVID RESPONSE



RAPID RESPONSE

OUR COLLECTIVE IMPACT

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.

Rapid Response has provided services for 1000+ displaced foster care students. Over \$1.2 million has been used to address our students' needs and to fight homelessness. This program provides students the opportunity to refocus on their education while they navigate through the global pandemic.





RAPID RESPONSE

TESTIMONIAL

“Together We Rise has given me safety and security in the face of adversity. When COVID-19 first happened I was terrified for my future and worried that I would face homelessness due to being a former foster youth with a weak support network. Thanks to TWR I am not longer afraid of being homeless or going hungry. Words do not describe how incredibly grateful I am to be apart of such a wonderful organization.”

- Rapid Response Student

1000+

FOSTER CARE STUDENTS DISPLACED

\$1.2 Million

ALLOCATED TO STUDENTS AFFECTED BY COVID-19

SAFER AT HOME

SAFER AT HOME

While we may seem helpless locked up in our houses, Together We Rise developed Safer at Home Service Projects, to help harness this energy into helping kids in foster care. These service projects can be done at home, they directly help children in care, and are held to CDC standards to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

The current COVID-19/Coronavirus outbreak continues to devastate our community. As we work together to contain the spread many of us are practicing Safer at Home initiatives with our families.



PROGRAMS

SWEET CASES

When youth enter foster care, they are 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, coloring supplies, and comfort.

TEEN DUFFLES

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

38,480

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE



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, to work, or transportation to reunite with their siblings.

SCHWINN

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

2,023

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE





PROGRAMS

SKATEBOARDS

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.

Every board comes equipped with brand new grip tape on top for a smooth ride. The wooden finish on the bottom is decorated with a simple design allowing each foster youth to have the freedom of customizing their board to express themselves. Along with the skateboard you can also sponsor a sleek black Together We Rise Helmet to make every ride safe!

526

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

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.

Every Birthday Box comes with a birthday card to give a child a special message. Decorations are also an important part of the celebration, so included in the box are party streamers, assorted paper stars, paper hats, colorful confetti, balloons, candles, and a festive birthday banner, to make their special day memorable.

1,473

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE





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.

You will help them feel S.U.P.E.R. (Self Assured, Uplifted, Proud, Empowered, and Resilient)! Superhero Boxes come packed with a cape, mask, power cuffs, and bracelet so the child can look like the hero they are! We also include a pencil, eraser, pencil pouch, a bouncy ball, temporary tattoos, and a Hero ID card. Add on a super pillowcase so the adventure can continue in their dreams!

8,819

YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP



SUPPORT BEGINS WITH FAMILY

The Family Fellowship program, in partnership with the Fund II Foundation, provides a comprehensive network of support for young adults exiting the foster care system. Each year, more than 23,000 youth leave foster care and are forced to enter adulthood without the traditional family and communal support systems that many of us take for granted. With only 15% of current and former youth in foster care attending college and a 3% graduation rate, our scholarship program aims to alter the statistic through measurable change. The Family Fellowship program serves students

across the country by focusing on personal development, mentorship, emotional support, and mental wellbeing through full-tuition scholarships and monetary assistance for college-related expenses.

The mission and expectation of this program is to build, nurture, and sustain a permanent network of relationships and resources that enable scholarship recipients to graduate college, become active members of their communities, pursue advanced degrees, and enter into the professional workforce with confidence and security.

The Family Fellowship program has graduated 18 scholars, with 100% of the program's first cohort reaching full completion of their undergraduate programs. Thirteen of these graduates are currently pursuing advanced degrees in the fields of medicine, law, computer engineering, accounting, public health, and psychology. The remaining 5 students have secured stable full-time employment in their desired fields of study.



FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Only 3% of foster youth who attend college make it to graduation. To change this, we created the 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

15 SCHOLARS

**FUND II
FOUNDATION**




FAMILY FELLOWSHIP
 TOGETHER WE RISE



Tuition

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



Housing

Monthly housing allowance as well as housing for summer and winter breaks.



Academic Supplies

Academic supplies are provided to give fellows the tools they need to succeed.

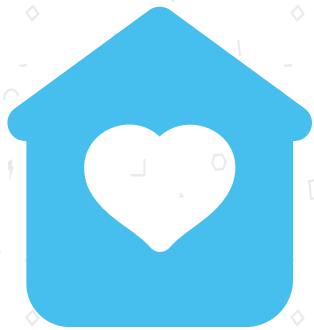


Family

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

CAMPAIGNS

#GIVINGTUESDAY
BETTER TOGETHER



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, 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.

FEEDING FAMILIES

Since the start of the pandemic more and more resources have become limited to those in the foster community. But the stresses and work continue to increase as families and group homes try to re-establish structure and routine. Support these families by providing them with a meal. It may seem simple but it is a strong reminder that we support foster families and they are loved.

CAMPAIGNS



BACK-2-SCHOOL PACKS

The Back 2 School Pack was created to give children in care everything they need to start classes. Whether those classes are in person or online. We believe that it is up to the community to step up and ensure that children in care have what they need to succeed. A student's education should not be hindered because of a lack of resources.

“Keeping children engaged in their education is so hard. Especially when a child is already feeling low in their personal life. Thank you for providing my student with a backpack. Her demeanor in class has changed dramatically. She is proud to have so many great tools to use.” - Educator



HOLIDAY STOCKINGS

Even during the holiday season, up to 1,200 youth enter the foster care system each day. The uncertainty of this transition can heighten anxiety and depression during a traditionally joyous time. Through our Holiday Stocking Initiative, we aim to provide these youth with hope, comfort, and peace. By providing 1,000 stockings to children in foster care, we spread the magic and cheer of the season to those who need it most.



Superhero



Heroes



Champions



Allies



SUPPORTERS

Carmax Foundation
Denver Foundation
Fund II Foundation
In-N-Out Burger Foundation
Inland Empire Community Foundation

Adoptionly Yours
Albanese
All Together ATX
Appfolio Property Manager
ArcBest
Avalon Bay
Benevity
Bristle
Cadman Group
Channel Bakers
Covia
Crown Toyota

Foundations

Karakin Foundation
National Christian Foundation
Omron Foundation Inc.
Reissa Foundation
Steve Tisch Family Foundation

Supporters

DigitalFilm Tree
Edwards
Experian
HBO
Humble Brands
Live by Being
Macy's
Netflix
New York Life
Saban Brands
Sage
San Bernardino County Sheriff's

Stuart Foundation
The Figgers Foundation
Silicon Valley Community Foundation
Walter S. Johnson Foundation

Southern CA Edison
Sundt Corp
The Dermot Company
The Write Life
Thrivent Financial
TJX
Ulterior Project
Vertical Bridge Reit LLC
Visa
Water Marq
ZipRecruiter
Zotec Partners



THANK YOU

FOR HELPING US MAKE 2020 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. 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. The incredible work of Together We Rise and our partners outlined in this report would not have happened without you. Thank you!”

-Gianna Dahlia Mulkey
Executive Director

