2021 Annual Report
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Dear Friends of Chicago HOPES for Kids,

We are happy to share our 2021 annual report and impact story with you and all the members of our community. 2021 was a year of collaborative rebuilding, and together we reached over 435 students and families with consistent educational support. Throughout 2021, we provided a variety of exciting enrichment to children including a virtual music and trauma recovery program with Harmony Hope & Healing, building robots and drones with NextWave STEM, and hands-on art with SkyArt. These enrichment opportunities provided a vital outlet for children to keep them engaged with our programs and their learning. Adding enrichment to literacy and homework support creates a more diverse program that fuels children’s natural curiosity.

In 2021, we were also able to invest in a new literacy assessment program. The LEXIA platform provides better and faster information, facilitating overall curriculum improvements as well as individually tailored reading instruction. Real-time student level data enables HOPES site coordinators and volunteers to identify and address specific areas of needed practice for our students. Students are elated when they have the tools to overcome challenges and become better readers.

Much of our rebuilding efforts were focused on recruiting qualified volunteers, the heart and soul of HOPES after school program. Due to COVID-19, we were forced to close or reduce the size of many of our in-person programs for pandemic safety; and we had to cancel in-person community volunteering opportunities. In 2021, with the support of our partners, we rebuilt HOPES community volunteer program to approximately 50% of pre-Covid levels and the outreach has continued. HOPES has re-established relationships with former volunteers as well as colleges, universities and corporate partners. We now hold monthly virtual information sessions for interested parties and have found these sessions to be an effective, low-commitment means of introducing new supporters and potential volunteers to Chicago HOPES and our mission. HOPES volunteer training also has an updated curriculum with added focus on racial equity, trauma-informed care, and health protocols.

We owe so much of our success to partnerships. In collaboration with A Better Chicago, we expanded the Literacy Leaders (middle school) program and added basic needs support including dinner two days a week. Not only does dinner provide students with needed nourishment but also gives us a chance to connect with students in a more relaxed setting. HOPES was also able to provide students in the shelters with backpacks in August stuffed with school supplies thanks to Amazon in the Community; and Reva and David Logan Foundation partnered with us once again in November to provide warm winter clothing including snow boots to children staying in the shelters. Addressing the full range of needs of our students requires a community effort, and we are fortunate to be part of a Chicago community dedicated to protecting children from the trauma of homelessness. We want to extend our heartfelt gratitude to our staff, board members, volunteers, donors and funding partners including The Reva & David Logan Foundation, The Joseph & Bessie Feinberg Foundation, A Better Chicago, Amazon in the Community, The Donley Foundation, SC Johnson & Sons, The Poetry Foundation, The Joyce Foundation, GATX and Robert U and Roberta Goldman Foundation.

With HOPE and Gratitude,

Rita Kahn
Executive Director

Tonya Rice
Board Chair
Since 2010, Chicago HOPES for Kids has offered direct academic services and invested in the success, resilience and future prosperity of Chicago children experiencing homelessness. The pandemic amplified educational inequalities for our students. Chicago HOPES after school and family programs were more necessary than ever as students continued to navigate the challenges of the pandemic as well as the trauma inherent in homelessness.

As HOPES fully returned to in-person programming in 2021, we provided our students and families with the tools and space to heal and share their own stories. We encouraged their creative expression; we celebrated their voices and their resilience. Through our social and emotional learning (SEL) and trauma-informed curriculum, we provided them with mitigation strategies to process the lived experience of the pandemic.

Kasandra, one of our former Chicago HOPES for Kids parents who was at our Cornerstone Community Outreach partner shelter in 2021, shared the following with us:

“This was the first time my daughter, Makayla, would be in an in-person learning environment since the pandemic. The program provided Makayla a routine of consistent time, activities, and volunteers and staff showing up for her. During the time Makayla was in our program, I would practice self-care and sought housing and job opportunities. With my background in social work, I was a support for other shelter parents, providing parenting and career advice, helping them navigate the healthcare and childcare system, as well as seeking out further available resources.”

Providing parents like Kasandra with support equips them to be better agents of their child’s education, and empowers them on their own healing journey.

Our enrichment partners have also been pivotal in providing our students with accessible and valuable opportunities, engaging them with hands-on STEAM activities. In 2021, Our enrichment partners including Juicebox, MathCircles, and MusicHouse provided children with experiences that stoked their natural curiosity and love of learning.

As we celebrate a successful year of program delivery and growth in 2021, we want to thank our staff, board members, donors, partners, and volunteers for their dedication to our mission. Together, we move forward with renewed commitment to breaking the cycle of intergenerational homelessness in Chicago.
An activity that is a big hit for the students at Primo-Sangamon Shelter is “Extra Yarn” with looms. The loom activity involves yarn weaving on a wooden frame. The students first set up the loom with a background color by weaving the string around the wooden teeth of the loom. Then they take another piece of string and weave it over and under the base color string. They can design the color pattern however they choose. Students love the opportunity to do something with their hands as a way to connect with a book on the subject we read together. One student, Tiffany, was skeptical of the activity at first. She thought it “looked boring”, but once we showed her how to get started and create patterns with the different colored yarn, she really got into it. Even after other students moved on to other activities, she added to her design each day. I think she found the repetitiveness of the activity really calming. Tiffany told me that she enjoyed seeing her work grow and being able to build on it each day. She liked the activity so much that she wanted to try out knitting. To get her started with knitting, we gave her a present of knitting yarn and needles. Tiffany had some trouble getting along with other students at the start of the program, but her behavior improved when she was busy working on her loom and she seemed happier and calmer.

- Sarah, AmeriCorps Member

Putting the "Dow!" in Empowerment

It’s always exciting to see what learning areas students will gravitate towards, especially when they have a favorite book. Tyler, one of our English as a Second Language Learners (ESL), loved reading a specific Star Wars comic because of Chewbacca’s scream. He would run and get it and pretend that he had a different book and say “It’s a secret which book I grabbed,” and always asked for me to read it to him.

Tyler was shy and quiet when he first started program with us. As the semester progressed, though, his personality exploded. He built confidence and began to participate more in group activities, raising his hand to ask questions on enrichment projects he found fascinating. His reading and English also improved. Our staff facilitated his growth by giving him space to speak in Spanish or English, whichever came first to him. Now, Tyler is rushing to create comics of his own! He loves drawing. At first he refused to have any dialogue for his comics, but in the past two weeks he has started to add more and more words to his comic pages. It is exciting to see him go from reading stories to telling his own!

- Margaux, Site Coordinator
Bridging the Gap

One of the most rewarding aspects of the work that we do is the ability to watch someone grow as a learner and as a role model right in front of you. As someone who was just barely within the cutoff age range for our Ready Readers program, I imagine it was difficult for Jaiden because he was much older than the other students. At first, he would keep to himself and only interact with our staff and his sister, and was definitely reluctant to share during group circle. Over time, we tried to find ways to give him space to branch out and express himself, and this is where we really started to see progress. Jaiden loves to draw, and if you’ve ever seen his drawings you’d know why we were always hoping he’d come to program with a new piece to show us. He took it upon himself to be a bridge between the staff and the younger kids, almost like an ambassador. Jaiden not only modeled behavior for the younger ones, but also took the lead during transitions and group activities to make sure the program ran smoothly. By the end of the summer, you could hardly tell him apart from a HOPES staff member. He was a true leader among his classmates. Since then, Jaiden has aged out of Ready Readers and into Literacy Leaders, and I am excited to see how he will engage with older students.

- Jake, AmeriCorps Member
435+ students and families impacted

60% of students showed improvement in reading

62% of students felt more confident in their reading

550+ hours of individualized literacy support

10 shelters across Chicago

3,000+ program impact hours

Our Enrichment Partners

We had 7 enrichment partners provide STEAM and SEL enrichment activities in 2021.
Get Involved

Volunteer
We are always in need of volunteers to invest their time in helping our students grow. Volunteer commitments are generally once a week for two hours. For more information, visit chicagohopesforkids.org/volunteer

Join Our Associate Board
Are you a young professional in Chicago looking for a way to get more involved with a local nonprofit? Consider joining our Associate Board! For more information, email associateboard@chicagohopesforkids.org

Run A Marathon
Fundraise for HOPES as a runner in the Bank of America Chicago Marathon. For more information about running with the 2023 Hustle for HOPES team, contact Jocelyn Tenorio at jocelyn@chicagohopesforkids.org

Donate
Every dollar counts. With your support, you can purchase much needed materials for our programs. We are always happy to help you create a fundraiser for your office, club, or class.

Host a Snack Drive
We provide healthy snack options in each of our shelter sites everyday. Help us ensure students have snacks during program by hosting a snack drive at your work of school
In 2021, we had 9 AmeriCorps VISTA members and 32 AmeriCorps State and National members provide over 14,000 hours of service. We are grateful for their commitment to making a difference in our students’ lives!
## 2021 Financial Statements

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<td>Grants</td>
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<td>Contributed goods and services</td>
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<td><strong>Total public support and revenues</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Net assets, beginning of year</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Net assets, end of year</strong></td>
<td>981,746</td>
<td>177,416</td>
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Special thanks to all our donors.

**Scholar Sponsors**

$20,000+

- Anonymous Supporter
- A Better Chicago
- Amazon
- AmeriCorps VISTA
- Binny's Beverage Depot
- Gannett Foundation
- Joseph and Bessie Feinberg Foundation
- Patricia Rivera
- Pfizer
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**Library Sponsors**

$5,000+

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Donna Finocchiaro
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THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 HOPES HUSTLERS TEAM!

Thank you to our 2021 HOPES Hustlers team that ran the Chicago Bank of America Marathon! Thanks to their hard work and dedication, our marathon team raised over $24,000 for Chicago HOPES for Kids!

Connect With US!

www.chicagohopesforkids.org
@chihopesforkids

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