

2019-2020 BIENNIAL REPORT



RILEYSWAY.ORG

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INTRODUCTION

RILEY HANNAH SANDLER



“Riley is such a sweet and thoughtful girl. She is a wonderful friend to those who know her and is definitely a people person! One of her favorite things to do is make up dances either with friends or on her own. She can often be seen twirling down the streets as she perfects her latest dance moves.

Riley is one of a kind and the best daughter a mother could ask for. I love her with all my heart and hope she knows just how special she”

**MACKENZIE SANDLER,
RILEY'S MOTHER**

LETTER FROM THE FOUNDER



“RILEY LOVED HER FRIENDS ABOVE ALL AND TOOK GREAT JOY IN INTRODUCING THEM TO ONE ANOTHER. RILEY’S WAY YOUTH LEADERS ARE MAKING CONNECTIONS AND HAVING A POSITIVE IMPACT ON HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE WORLD. IN A TIME OF GREAT UNCERTAINTY, THEY INSPIRE US THROUGH THEIR EFFORTS TO CREATE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IN INNOVATIVE AND MEANINGFUL WAYS. RILEY WOULD BE THRILLED THAT SHE HELPED TO BRING SO MANY PEOPLE TOGETHER IN FRIENDSHIP. ALL OF OUR WORK IS ONE BIG LOVE LETTER TO HER.”

Kindness and empathy are critical leadership skills, and are clearly now more important than ever. Our goal at Riley’s Way is to foster these qualities in the next generation of leaders by giving them the scaffolding and support they need to make a difference in the world.

We have persevered through what can only be described as the most challenging year in recent memory. One of the main things that drives me in challenging times is purpose. It gives me hope, and purpose, to know so many young people are working daily in these uncertain times to make the world a better, kinder, more connected place. Here is a bit of my story so you can learn a bit more about Riley and my purpose:

My life was thrown upside down nearly 7 years ago.

Prior to this point, I lived a happy and relatively care-free existence. I had a great job and a loving family. My worries seemed big but they weren’t. My goals seemed meaningful, but in retrospect they weren’t.

Everything changed when we received a phone call in the middle of the night. We were all packed to pick up our daughter Riley after her first year of sleep-away camp and head off on a family vacation. In the blink of an eye, everything in our life changed. Appointments, bank statements, petty squabbles, none of these things mattered. I spent several days in a hospital room with my daughter, holding her hand while she was hooked up to machines that made her look alive, feel alive. But we had already lost her. Part of me could have stayed in that room with her forever.

Riley was a magical 9-year-old. She loved her friends and always wore a smile on her face. We knew that we needed to keep her spirit alive. In that same hospital room, we created Riley’s Way Foundation. We had very little idea what we were going to do in the beginning, but we had to do something. In the end, we anchored on the life Riley led, her love of friendship and finding meaningful connections as the guide for our work. Our path was not linear, and we learned from every mis-step along the way until we built something inspiring and impactful. We found our purpose. Today, we are empowering a youth-led movement of kindness at Riley’s Way. Every day I wake up inspired by our community and by our teens. We are a teen-led organization and walk this walk in everything we do. Our teens are the first wave of judges for the Call for Kindness, they have seats on our Board of Directors, and they interview new hires for the organization.

At Riley’s Way, we find purpose in supporting the next generation of kind leaders. And what a positive impact they have had: from a program in Missouri providing tutoring and books to over 30,000 kids from across the country, to making thousands of home-cooked meals in Boston for those who are hungry, to running science workshops in Florida for kids who are experiencing homelessness—through the teens we support, we have reached hundreds of thousands of people and are well on our way to empowering a movement of kindness.

Along my 7-year journey, I have learned that for most of us, your life is actually defined by how you make use of your moment of greatest adversity.

Today, more than ever, we all need a sense of purpose in our lives.

Walk a life of purpose, and always dream big. If you dream big and wake up working toward that goal, you will end up in a pretty amazing place.

**IAN SANDLER, CO-FOUNDER AND PROUD FATHER OF RILEY
HANNAH SANDLER**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Riley's Way is building a youth-led movement of kind leaders who are changing the world for the better. More than ever, the world needs kind and empathetic leaders to address complex problems facing society. Empathy and kindness often are overlooked as leadership qualities, and we are changing that.

At Riley's Way, we believe every young person has the capacity to be a change-maker and are inspired and guided by Riley Sandler's lasting spirit of kindness and friendship. Our local and national programs provide young people the tools, support, community, and funding to envision and achieve change.

What an impact they are having! To date, over 100 Call for Kindness Fellows have reached over 150,000 people across the world. Our Councils continue to make an impact on important social justice issues. Our Youth Leadership Retreat has brought together hundreds of young women to build and foster a community and learn the skills they need to make a difference.

2019, a year of immense growth for Riley's Way, signaled a new stage in our development as a sustainable and purpose-driven organization. We launched two new national programs: the Call for Kindness and the Youth Leadership Retreat. We continued to grow and evolve in 2020, adapting to unforeseen challenges: the loss and hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the largest racial equity movements of our lifetime, and a deeply divided nation.

At every turn, Riley's Way rose to the challenge, and we grew stronger with renewed purpose and urgency for our mission. We kept all of our programs engaged and on track, and even hired new staff, built new programs, expanded our current programs, and thrived in a virtual world.

We garnered national press attention, expanded our social media footprint, built leadership development programming, and incorporated youth leadership and feedback into all of our initiatives. We set the stage for creating a truly youth-led movement of kind leadership, including how we operate as an organization. We developed our first-ever Youth Advisory Board that puts students and alumni directly in leadership seats at Riley's Way to elevate and hold us true to our mission.

And we have no plans to slow down in 2021.

We doubled the number of awards for our Call for Kindness competition since we started in 2019, and included a separate category focused on food insecurity. We launched the Call for Kindness Partnership Pledge, with over 60 local and national partners who amplified our call to celebrate kindness and empathy as leadership qualities. We have lined up some exciting speakers for our Kind Leadership Series and continue to build our youth leadership programs.

We have done so much, have so much to look forward to, and are grateful for all of you, our community, for supporting the life-changing work at Riley's Way Foundation.

Thank you for all you do to make this world a better, kinder, more just place for us all.

With gratitude,

DR. CHRISTINE O'CONNELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, RILEY'S WAY FOUNDATION

TIMELINE 2019-PRESENT

2019

Launched our first national program, the Call for Kindness



Hired first Executive Director

Held inaugural Youth Leadership Retreat

Launched the Bronx Council

Started weekly self-care check-ins for Council members



Hosted our first virtual Youth Leadership Retreat

Launched the Buddy Reading Program



Hired a Program Manager to expand the Call for Kindness Fellowship

Rang the NASDAQ closing bell



Launched a COVID-19 response and Ambassador Program during our first Town Hall

2020

2021

Doubled the number of Call for Kindness Fellows from 2019!

Created our Youth Advisory Board



Hired a Program Coordinator

...and much more to come!



IMPACT

Gel désinfectant pour les mains

75%
v/v
ETHYL ALCOHOL
ALCOOL ETHYLIQUE

NPN 80102627 NDC 50157-505-01
Clean and fresh / purifier et frais

**Enriched with Aloe
& Vitamin E**
Enrichi d'aloë et de Vitamine E

8 FL OZ (236 mL)

Riley's Way Foundation

♡
Riley's
Way



enjoy
ice

Wishing you health
and good fortune

and

mazing

!



IN THE LAST TWO YEARS,

100+ CALL FOR KINDNESS FELLOWS,

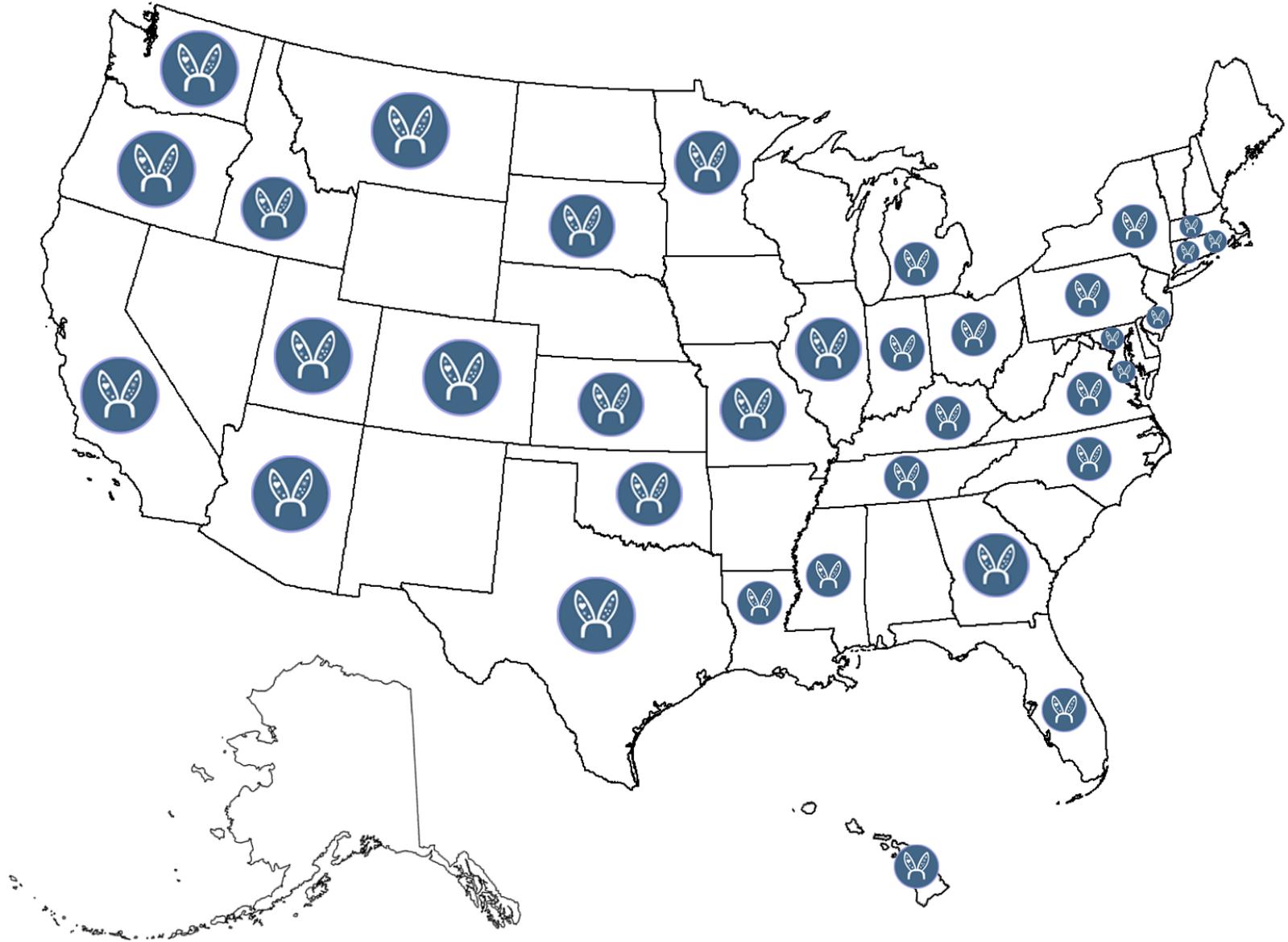
100+ COUNCIL MEMBERS AND ALUMNI, AND

200+ YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREAT PARTICIPANTS

HAVE REACHED OVER

150,000 PEOPLE

2021 CALL FOR KINDNESS APPLICANTS NATIONWIDE





STUDENT VOICES

“I enjoyed every moment of this Retreat! It was all beyond inspirational and just amazing overall. It was so nice being a part of a community where I feel connected to. It was so nice knowing there are other teens like me who want to change the world. Thank you so much everyone! Also, what gives me hope is our voices and leadership!”

2020 RETREAT PARTICIPANT

“With the help of Riley’s Way, I have been able to start programs and facilitate connections among people who live in the same city, but may have never met before in beautifully kind and empathetic ways! I am forever grateful.”

NYA, COUNCIL MEMBER

“We had an engaging discussion on identity and played comprehension games surrounding the book after our Buddy Reading session. It was exciting to see my buddy connect with the book and its message about kindness!”

ARIANNA, BUDDY READER

“Being part of the 2020 Call for Kindness brought me together with other teens in a year when personal connections seemed few and far between. At our meetings, I met remarkable leaders doing remarkable work—all while still in high school. I’m deeply grateful to have learned from such a fantastic group of peers.”

**HAYLEY ZIMMERMAN, 2020 CALL FOR
KINDNESS FELLOW**



Riley's Way



Ms. Dore (Hewitt)



Mr. K (Hewitt)



Allison (TYWLSA)



Miranda (Hewitt)



TYWLSA



Victoria (TYWLSA)



Gia (Hewitt)



Sofia (Hewitt)



Vida (Hewitt)



Hewitt

RILEY'S WAY COUNCILS



mya tywlsa



Hewitt



Hanna (Hewitt)



Phoebe Grace (TYWLSA)



Marjorie (Hewitt)



Sasha (TYWLSA)



Hewitt



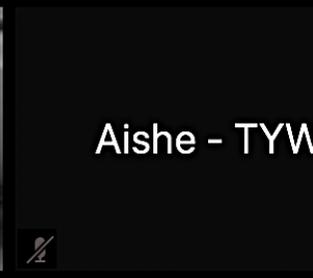
Carley (Hewitt)



Grace (Hewitt)



Kate Hewitt



Aishe - TYW

MISSION

Riley's Way Councils connect public and private high schools to inspire teens to lead with empathy and kindness, and create programs that drive positive change in their communities. We directly empower youth to lead the Riley's Way movement by building connections and fostering meaningful relationships with peers, mentors, and community members. Through the Council, teens practice leading with kindness and building bridges across barriers in their communities.

IN PRACTICE

A single Council consists of about 20 students, accompanied by two faculty members, from two partnered schools—one public and one private—who meet regularly and learn, grow, and serve together as community change-makers.

“When our planned events during the spring of 2020 were canceled, my Council was able to use the new virtual setting to our advantage by inviting everyone in the Riley's Way community to Conversations in Solidarity, an event we held in partnership with Circles of Support. I am so honored to have learned from and worked with such an amazing group of students, and I am excited to see all of the amazing work the Council does with Circles of Support and other organizations in the future.”

JULIA, THE NIGHTINGALE-BAMFORD SCHOOL

2019-2020

COUNCIL PROJECTS

Nightingale-Bamford—TYWLS East Harlem Council

- 2019 Family Matters Dinner: The Council worked with Circles of Support to host a dinner for the women of Talk2Me to better understand and connect to women who have been impacted by incarceration.
- 2020 Conversations in Solidarity: The Council created a virtual forum to discuss incarceration and racial injustice after the death of George Floyd.

Hewitt—TYWLS Astoria Council

- 2019 Teen-to-Teen Letter Writing Event: The Council hosted a letter-writing event with the grassroots organization Don't Separate Families, reaching out to the 2,000 teens being held at the Homestead Detention Center in Florida.
- 2020: The Council partnered with KIND (Kids In Need of Defense) on an immigration rights guidebook.

Horace Mann—TYWLS Bronx Council

- 2020: In the Council's first year, they spent time developing connections between members and worked with GEMS, an organization for empowering girls and young women who are survivors of human trafficking.



“Not only were we able to connect with the women and their families, we were also able to better understand their experiences and their life beyond their connection to incarceration, forming meaningful connections.”

NICOLE, TYWLS EAST HARLEM



RILEY'S WAY
PROGRAM

MISSION

Riley's Way Program, started in 2015, is a partnership with four New York City elementary schools to promote kindness and empathy. We provide a 5-year, \$60,000 grant that focuses on social and emotional learning projects and activities for both their teachers and students. We also provide professional development and training for the teachers, and curriculum, lesson plans, and activities for the students. The Riley's Way Program is being phased out in 2021, but read our highlights from the past few years below:

PS 33 CHELSEA PREP

- The GIANT Room, monthly virtual spaces for students to come together, form meaningful connections, and develop community values
- Classroom copies of "Stamped (For Kids): Racism, Antiracism, and You"
- Materials and support for a school-wide community service project and mindful rock garden

PS 81Q JEAN PAUL RICHTER SCHOOL

- Virtual dance program for students to be able to better understand themselves and their bodies from home
- "Mindfulness Fundamentals" training for teachers through Mindful Schools

SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL OF HARLEM

- Purchased Chromebooks to help students with virtual learning
- Supported a schoolwide food pantry for families affected by the pandemic by purchasing food, supplies, and providing kind letters



YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREAT

A CHANGE-MAKING WEEKEND FOR YOUNG WOMEN LEADERS

Whether virtual or in-person, the Retreat created a shared space for teen leaders who identify as women to come together, network, grow their leadership skills, and, of course, have some fun. While there were topic-based and skill-building sessions where teens learned from experts, the highlights were the teen-led workshops on topics ranging from fundraising to self-care.

One of the most important outcomes of the Retreat is the connections forged and the community of kind leaders that emerged. Participants from 2019 came back and participated as mentors in 2020; both years maintain an active Slack channel where they stay connected throughout the year.



“Before the Retreat, I saw kindness as a positive trait to have in leadership (and in life in general), although ruthlessness and assertiveness were often valued in the spaces I work in... In a little under 48 hours, I realized that kindness isn’t just a positive trait to have. Kindness is a crucial trait to have if you intend on creating effective and sustainable change, and it doesn’t have to be mutually exclusive with taking initiative, working hard, or making yourself heard. The girls and staff at the Retreat showed me that. They showed me how to listen to, learn from, and lift up others through kindness.”

ASHLEY, 2019 PARTICIPANT

2019 RETREAT



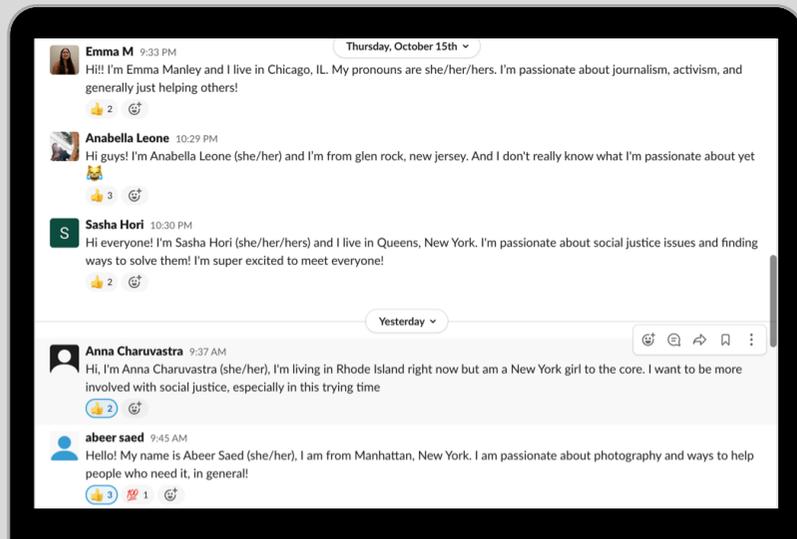
Our first Youth Leadership Retreat in fall 2019 brought together nearly 100 kind leaders who identify as women, and their mentors, from around the country for a powerful community- and skill-building weekend at Timber Lake Camp, New York. The teens bonded over campfires, team-building activities like a ropes course, and discussions on kind leadership and their vision for a better world. Participants left feeling more confident, prepared, and inspired to work on projects that make a difference in their schools and communities. Most importantly, they left with a network of other kind leaders and change-makers they can lean on in the future for inspiration, ideas, and partnerships.

“I learned how being kind and being a leader go together, because before the Retreat, those two things felt separate.”

2020 VIRTUAL RETREAT

In 2020, the Retreat evolved into an empowering virtual space over two weekends with 80 teens learning from, listening to, and inspiring each other. Our theme was Kindness in Action: Civically Engaged, Virtually Connected, Intentionally Kind. Around the world, we watched as teens pushed movements forward like climate change and racial equity. How can you effectively amplify your voice and the stories of others? How can you be civically engaged to make a difference on critical issues? How can you model kind leadership? The 2020 Retreat focused on these important questions.

Teen-led workshops during the Retreat included Confidence 101, Fundraising, Intersectionality, and Climate Action. We hosted our first Adult Mentor Networking Event, with roughly 30 accomplished professionals from fields ranging from media, law, STEM, nonprofit, and policy. Two panels that showcased the work of experts in organizing and activism included our partners at Close Up, TheBlackManCan, Khloe Kares, and Giving Tuesday Spark. The 2020 virtual Retreat had nightly bonding sessions throughout the week including trivia, yoga, and college prep.



PANEL SPEAKERS



BRANDON FRAME

Founder & Chief Visionary Officer,
TheBlackManCan, Inc.



RAQ MASSEY

Operations Associate,
Riley's Way Foundation



CAROLYN HALL

Scientist & Artist



KHLOE THOMPSON

International Philanthropist &
Founder, Khloe Kares

“Thank you so much for giving us an invaluable space to connect with youth and mentors, as well as participate in both lighthearted and critical discussion this past week at the Retreat. It was so special to come back to this space for the second year, to form bonds and build knowledge, all under a construct of kindness. I met friends and mentors this week, and I am grateful to you for making it all happen.”

STUDENT REVIEWS

“These two days have been so awesome! I feel like I have learned so much and met so many new people. I felt really supported by all the other people here—the mentors, the other teens here, and everyone on the team! Thank you all so much!”

“I absolutely loved how this year’s Retreat connected me with leaders in Riley’s Way, kind mentors, and young women across the country. Like last year’s Retreat, I feel empowered and inspired by those around me (on the computer screen!) who I feel honored to spend time with. I could not have been more enthusiastic and dedicated, hugely in part because of my peers’ leadership, to step up and work to make this world a better, kinder place.”

“This Retreat was exactly what I needed to break away from the stressful world of school. I was amazed by how creative and kind the minds of people in this Retreat were. Even if we didn’t know each other, we chose to spread empathy and kindness in projects, advice, or just anything relatable. I have never felt more happy and fulfilled.”

“I loved getting to know many Riley’s Way Fellows from all over the country and how committed they were to their projects and to Riley’s Way. I loved listening to the workshops and they were very inspirational.”



CALL FOR KINDNESS

My name is Sarah. I am
in my second year of school.
and I like to write.
I made this poster for
teachers for you. Please
tell them your name and
no name with your friends
and family. The more you
share with the teacher the
better. Thank you for being
my teacher. I hope
you like it. Sarah

My name is Sarah. I am
in my second year of school.
and I like to write.
I made this poster for
teachers for you. Please
tell them your name and
no name with your friends
and family. The more you
share with the teacher the
better. Thank you for being
my teacher. I hope
you like it. Sarah

My name is Sarah. I am
in my second year of school.
and I like to write.
I made this poster for
teachers for you. Please
tell them your name and
no name with your friends
and family. The more you
share with the teacher the
better. Thank you for being
my teacher. I hope
you like it. Sarah

INTRODUCTION

The Call for Kindness launched in 2019 and is an annual contest that offers teens the chance to participate in a dynamic leadership development fellowship and win up to \$3,000 to fund a project that inspires kindness and strengthens their local or global communities.

Teens (aged 13-19) are invited to submit a new or existing project idea, tackling anything from pressing equity and social justice issues to building meaningful connections within their school or community. We grew each year, with 15 teen-led projects receiving awards in 2019, 22 projects in 2020, and 30 projects in 2021. In the first two years of the program, over 100 Fellows have had a positive impact on over 100,000 people!

“It’s obvious that Riley’s Way has been an indispensable force behind our project, but in other respects, becoming a part of the Call for Kindness community has had a little bit of an impact on almost every part of my life.”

ARIA, 2020 FELLOW

“With the support of Riley’s Way and my fellow Call for Kindness Fellows, I’ve grown to be a more resourceful and versatile leader.”

EVEREST, 2020 FELLOW

FELLOW HIGHLIGHTS

2019



RPRSNTD.

is a proposed book club and online community to highlight books that represent minority authors, marginalized stories, and topics important to young women today so that all voices can be heard and shared.



TONY'S PLACE PARTNERSHIP

helps homeless queer youth by providing them with free, home-cooked meals and revitalizes clothing donations by reinventing donated clothing for teens.



YOUTH OVER GUNS

provides workshops for teens in underserved communities in New York City, which provide advocacy skills, youth empowerment, and civic engagement.

2020



FLINT JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

aims to serve and connect with the community of Flint, Michigan, and educate University of Michigan students about the Flint water crisis.



LIAM'S LUNCHESES OF LOVE

goes out every Sunday to deliver to people experiencing homelessness in Boston, Massachusetts.



DONATE 2 DANCE

has helped over 6,000 dancers by holding drives for dance items and donating them to local dance studios around the world.

THE PROGRAM

The Riley's Way Call for Kindness offers a robust leadership development fellowship for participants of the winning projects. The three pillars of the fellowship focus on skill building, connection-making, and project support.

1 SKILL BUILDING

Throughout the year-long fellowship, participants will gain skills that will build their efficacy as a leader and help them further their project. Riley's Way will provide a series of workshops and professional development opportunities that are designed to enhance Fellow's leadership and project management skills.

2 CONNECTION -MAKING

Connection-making is at the heart of Riley's Way. Over the year-long fellowship, participants will not only learn how to share their story and strengthen their networking skills, but they will become part of a national network of like-minded teens, adults, and experts who are there to inspire and support them.

3 PROJECT SUPPORT

Through the Call for Kindness, Riley's Way offers direct financial support for projects (up to \$3,000) and 1:1 project support, mentoring, brainstorming, and problem solving.

To learn more about the Call for Kindness and take a look at all the projects, go to <https://www.rileysway.org/call-for-kindness/>

EXPANSION IN 2021

In 2021, Riley's Way offered up to \$3,000 to 30 teen-led projects. Given the effects of COVID-19, we selected seven projects specifically focused on food insecurity to address the growing need for solutions in this critical space.

We also announced our Call for Kindness Partnership Pledge, where over 50 organizations joined us in celebrating kindness and empathy as leadership qualities and connecting youth leaders across the country.

Accompanied by our growing number of corporate sponsors, on May 6 we announced the 2021 Fellows, as well as celebrated the 2020 cohort.

To learn more, go to:

www.CallforKindness.org



“Being involved in the project and with Riley's Way gives me inspiration that despite all the problems and things happening in different places around the country and the world, there will always be a group of people working to solve these issues.”

ALEX, FOUNDER OF FAIR HAVEN CONNECTS & 2020 FELLOW

CONTINUATION GRANTS

In order to provide long-lasting support, in 2020 Riley's Way introduced the Continuation Grants, a \$2,000 award to previous Call for Kindness Fellows to continue to work on their projects. As part of the award, the Continuation Grant winners take on a leadership role within the Call for Kindness program, mentoring new Fellows and providing leadership workshops for the new cohort.

2020 Continuation Grant winners:

Crafternoon (2019 Fellow)

Purple America (2019 Fellow)

We Dine Together (2019 Fellow)

2021 Continuation Grant winners:

Birthday Giving Program (2019 Fellow)

The Colorization Collective (2020 Fellow)

Modern Divergence (2020 Fellow)

#CALLFORKINDNESS PARTNERS



“Now, more than ever, we can all use a little more kindness in our lives. Kindness holds the power to bring us together...Through these shared human experiences and connections, we will lift each other up in a time where a little kindness goes a long way. And together with our partners, we hope to spread this feeling far and wide.”
VERIZON, CALL FOR KINDNESS PARTNER





BUDDY READING
PROGRAM

Decolonize
This Place



MISSION & PRACTICE

The Buddy Reading Program pairs New York City high schoolers and elementary school students with the goal of building connections and improving literacy skills. For 30 minutes each week, buddies meet over Zoom to read a book, check in with each other, and play some fun games. Guided by the Riley's Way values of empathy and kindness, buddies have access to a wide array of e-books that are a part of our growing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) curriculum. Key to the mission of the program is the importance of representation in the books our students read to ultimately cultivate an inclusive and welcoming environment. In addition to the educational aspects of the program, connection building is equally important to our buddies. Buddies spend time each week checking in and playing games through Zoom, speaking to the importance of presence and connection even in an online format.



MEDIA & PRESS SPOTLIGHT

My (Virtual) Buddy Reading Experience, a blog by Maeve

<https://www.rileysway.org/2020/07/09/my-virtual-buddy-reading-experience/>

The Buddy Reading Experience with Shamima R., a blog by Thea

<https://www.rileysway.org/2021/06/21/the-buddy-reading-experience-with-shamima-r/>

CBS New York Coverage

<https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/05/25/nyc-teens-give-back-during-coronavirus-shutdown/>

Fox News Coverage

<https://www.foxnews.com/media/teen-empowering-kindergarteners-with-virtual-reading-in-underserved-communities-amid-covid-19>

PROGRAM UPDATE

- Partnered with Sisulu-Walker Charter School of Harlem
- Expanded in fall 2020 from kindergarten to first and second grade
- Tripled our readers—now 85 teens!
- Increased outreach—new teens and high schools
- Nya and Amber, our summer interns, expanded and deepened our curriculum with a DEIA lens
- Created trainings and orientations
- DEIA training with Pax Crew
- Read about one Buddy Reader's experience by clicking the link below

<https://www.rileysway.org/2021/06/21/the-buddy-reading-experience-with-shamima-r/>

“With my buddy, I helped her with words she might not have known, and it seemed like she had fun as well. It was just fun seeing that.”

SHAMIMA R., BUDDY READER

“The SWCSH community is profoundly touched by your willingness to help us fulfill our mission to foster a love for reading while developing literacy skills in our citizens.”

MICHELLE HAYNES, PRINCIPAL
SISULU-WALKER CHARTER SCHOOL
OF HARLEM



COMMUNICATIONS

Jayla's School Closets

BACK AND WINS RILEY'S WAY CALL FOR KINDNESS NATION
AS SHE MAKES A DIFFERENCE

“You are never too young to organize to make a difference and a bigger impact. Those are the voices in our country and our world who are saying, ‘This is not ok. We need to do better.’”

LAUREN SHENKMAN, RILEY'S WAY PROGRAM DIRECTOR

PRESS

Positive People in Pinecrest: Everest Maya-Tudor (Call for Kindness)
<https://communitynewspapers.com/positive-people/positive-people-in-pinecrest-everest-maya-tudor/>

Finding Purpose in Kindness, by Ian Sandler
<https://thriveglobal.com/stories/finding-purpose-in-kindness/>

Riley's Way teens coverage on CBS New York
<https://newyork.cbslocal.com/2020/05/25/nyc-teens-give-back-during-coronavirus-shutdown/>

Jayla's School Closets
<https://citylifestyle.com/atlanta-ga/articles/life-and-culture/jaylas-school-closets>

Lady Gaga's Born This Way Foundation Launched #BeKIND21 Campaign
<https://bornthisway.foundation/bekind21-press-release/>

A Call for Kindness, in Psychology Today
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/decisions-teens-make/202001/call-kindness>

Be a Kind Leader, in the American Camp Association magazine
<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/camping-magazine/be-kind-leader>

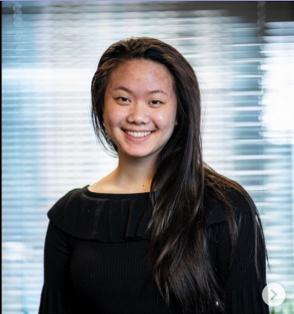
For more press and articles, go to: <https://www.rileysway.org/media-press/>

KIND LEADER SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Every Friday, Riley's Way spotlights a kind leader on our social media platforms. Whether it be on the local, national, or international level, Riley's Way aims to appreciate advocates and leaders who embody the Foundation's core values and inspire future kind leaders.

HIGHLIGHTS:

RILEY'S WAY
KIND LEADER
SPOTLIGHT:



Ashley Lin

change maker
and author of
'Youth Organizer'

RILEY'S WAY
KIND LEADER
SPOTLIGHT:

YOU

What is an
intentional act of
kindness you can
commit to?

RILEY'S WAY
KIND LEADER
SPOTLIGHT:

Manar Alkamil



writer of the kid
friendly comic,
"GET SAFE
FROM THE
CORONAVIRUS"

"SINCERELY, HUEMAN" PODCAST SERIES

In 2020 and 2021, Riley's Way partnered with "Sincerely, Hueman" to highlight Call for Kindness winners and youth leaders in our community.

The short segments, called Kindness Calling, are about 3-5 minutes long. You will hear directly from some of the teens of Riley's Way and the impact they are having through the Call for Kindness, our Riley's Way Councils, and Youth Leadership Retreat.

2021 Call For Kindness Fellows like Anya Shukla and Kathryn Lau are given a platform to share their experiences about a lack of diversity in the arts and their story building the Colorization Collective. Listen to the episode featuring Anya and Kathryn [here](#). The Kindness Calling segment begins at minute 15:30.

"If I was someone who didn't have any exposure to South Asian people and then I saw a lot of artwork or a lot of TV shows that had this nerdy Indian stereotype, that would be the mental image that I would subconsciously get. 'This is what all Indian people are like.'"

ANYA SHUKLA, CO-FOUNDER OF THE COLORIZATION COLLECTIVE



EPISODE HIGHLIGHTS

Sincerely, hueman podcast

"HEY!
THIS IS STILL
GOING ON.
PEOPLE STILL
HAVE TO USE
WATER
FILTERS"



MICHAL RUPRECHT
Co-Chair of the
Flint Justice Partnership



Sincerely, hueman podcast

DIVERSE SKILLS AND
INTERESTS TO REALLY
**RAISE
AWARENESS**
FOR SOMETHING
THAT WE ALL
CARE ABOUT



FAITH AJANAKU
Founder at Modern Divergence



Sincerely, hueman podcast

I REALIZED THAT IT'S
NOT ONLY IMPORTANT
TO SPEAK ON THE
ISSUE, BUT IT'S **ALSO**
**IMPORTANT TO
TAKE ACTION**
ON THAT
ISSUE AS WE



AGHA HAIDER
Founder & Executive Director
of Literacy Initiative



"I think overall, it just makes me super optimistic about the future and all the young leaders that are out there to make a positive change."

MICHAL RUPRECHT, CO-CHAIR OF THE FLINT JUSTICE PARTNERSHIP

"It's just hard for some minorities to really talk about mental health. And especially for minority parents, some of them don't really understand that mental health is an actual thing."

FAITH AJANAKU, FOUNDER OF MODERN DIVERGENCE

"You can either sit on the sidelines and watch everybody else do great work or you can get up and make an impact. It's just up to you and what you want to do."

AGHA HAIDER, FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF LITERACY INITIATIVE

EPISODE HIGHLIGHTS

TURNING GRIEF INTO A KINDNESS MOVEMENT WITH IAN SANDLER AND CHRISTINE O'CONNELL



“It became very clear this wasn’t going to be about what happened to Riley, it was going to be about who she was and the fact that this little girl took her friends’ successes as her own and there was joy in meeting new people and joy in connecting two of her friends in different worlds and letting them be friends.”



Turning Grief Into a Kindness Movement with Ian Sandler and Christine O'Connell

Anchor

Sincerely, Hueman: Stories of Kindness and Doing Good • By Hueman Group Media • Jan 7, 2020



00:00

Support Share

20:08

STUDENT BLOG HIGHLIGHTS



QUESTIONS AND SOME ANSWERS WITH MATTHEW TENGTRAKOOL, BY BRODY SANDLER

“If we all take small individual efforts, recognize issues, and foster conversation, our communities will be exponentially improved. It’s really about harnessing the powers that we all have. We have to speak up and create action, tackling challenges with our own hands. Broad and overwhelming issues like global empathy and sustainability can be tackled if we all consider our actions in our communities.”

MATTHEW TENGTRAKOOL



What Do the Council Check-Ins Mean to Us

BY ARIANNA & TIARA, COUNCIL MEMBERS

WHAT DO THE COUNCIL CHECK-INS MEAN TO US? BY ARIANA AND TIARA, COUNCIL MEMBERS

“During times like these right now in our world, it is so vital that other young leaders like ourselves unite as a team and use what we see on social media and the news as inspiration to create a better tomorrow. We are reminded from 8:00 – 8:30 p.m. every Wednesday night that we have the power and capability to achieve one of those dreams — to change the world.”

ARIANNA AND TIARA

KIND LEADERSHIP SERIES

The Riley's Way Kind Leadership Series was started in 2020 to inspire young leaders during the pandemic. Since then, there have been 10 Zoom meetings with leaders from organizations like Giving Tuesday, Coalition Z, and Invisible Hands. The Kind Leadership Series gives students the opportunity to connect to and learn from leaders about storytelling, empowering communities, and creating concrete political change.

To learn more about all our events, go to www.rileysway.org/events/

KIND LEADERSHIP SERIES

COALITION Z: YOUNG PEOPLE MOVING FORWARD

Join us on **Wednesday, April 21 at 5:30 EST** to hear from some of the amazing leaders of Coalition Z a national, youth-led organization creating concrete political change by bridging the gap between Generation Z and our government. You will be inspired by their work and learn how to get involved!

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21ST
5:30 - 6:30PM EST
2:30 - 3:30PM PST



KIND LEADERSHIP SERIES

GIVING TUESDAY SPARK

#GivingTuesdaySpark is a global, youth and young adult-led, celebration of generosity and social change, happening on Giving Tuesday! Join us to learn how you can take action and spread the culture of generosity through your community. This session will be led by Dante Plush, Director of Youth Engagement and Outreach at Giving Tuesday, and Raziel, a Spark Leader.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 23
5:30 - 6:30PM EST
2:30 - 3:30PM PST



GIVING TUESDAY SPARK





OUR TEAM

STAFF



CHRISTINE O'CONNELL
Executive Director



LAUREN SHENKMAN
Director of Partnerships and
Programs



LAURA KIKUCHI
Director of Operations



CHEYENNE ROSADO
Program Manager



RAQ MASSEY
Operations Associate
(until June 2021)



AMBER GREENE
Assistant
(hired April 2021)



NAYA HOUCHEN
Program Coordinator
(hired September 2021)

INTERN CORNER



JUSTIN JAMES
2019



**BRENDA HERNANDEZ
ROMERO**
2019



NYA MARSHALL
2020



NICOLE MATEO
2020



AMBER RAHMAN
2020



ASHLEY LIN
2020



AMARANTHA DYL
2021



THEA BERMAN
2021



TESS ABRAHAM
2021



ERMINA CHOWDHURY
2021

INTRODUCING: THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

The Youth Advisory Board (YAB) brings a youth voice into what we do and how we operate as an organization at Riley's Way. We are flipping traditional power structures and providing the young people we work with a direct line to leadership and decision-making at Riley's Way—from hiring to strategic planning to voting spots on the Board. The Youth Advisory Board works closely with the Executive Director and are voting members on Board committees. The representatives on the YAB represent the students and alumni in all of our programs and carry their voices directly to the Board. We are really excited about this new model and can't wait to kick this off in 2021!

"I have deeply enjoyed participating in nearly all of Riley's Way's programming and feel as though I have become a part of the Riley's Way family over the past 3 years. The connections I have made and leadership skills I have built by leading a Riley's Way student council, presenting at the virtual leadership retreat, judging Call for Kindness, helping with Buddy Readers, and participating in Riley's Way's elementary school program have helped me become a much more confident and empathetic person over the course of my high school career."

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD



AGHA HAIDER
CO-CHAIR



GIA GAMBINO
CO-CHAIR



AMBER RAHMAN
CO-FOUNDER



BRYANNA FLORES
DEIA COMMITTEE



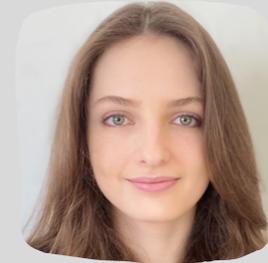
NIA HUFF



JONATHAN TAMEN



JULIA WESTRA



EVEREST MAYA-TUDOR



SONIKA MENON



TIARA SOTO



PHOEBE GRACE ASEOCHE



EMMA LIN



CAMPBELL ARNONE



WELELA SOLOMON

INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBERS



YOLONDA MARSHALL
CEO, Student Leadership Network



KATIE LEONBERGER
Former President & CEO, Community
Resource Exchange



OSELOKA IDIGBE
Senior Consultant, Community
Resource Exchange



DR. LINDSEY LEVINE
Clinical Psychologist, Columbia University

Visit <https://www.rileysway.org/leadership/> to learn more.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

IAN SANDLER

Co-Founder and Chair

PAUL BURKE

Director

GIA GAMBINO

Co-Chair of the Youth
Advisory Board

NOAH HELLER

Director

MINDY JACOBS

Director

DAVID KERSTEIN

Director

YOLONDA MARSHALL

Director

MACKENZIE SANDLER

Co-Founder

ERIC FRANK

Director

LAURA REBELL GROSS

Chair of DEI Committee

JOHN HORNER

Chair of Governance
Committee

LAUREN HYMAN KAPLAN

Director

KATIE LEONBERGER

Director

BRIAN POTASH

Treasurer and Chair of
Finance Committee

AMY BERSH

Secretary

JORDAN FREUNDLICH

Director

AGHA HAIDER

Co-Chair of the Youth
Advisory Board

OSELOKA IDIGBE

Chair of Programming
Committee

TERRY KAPLAN

Chief Creative Officer

LINDSEY K. LEVINE

Chair of Development
Committee



“ At the Riley's Way Foundation, we create a platform, a conversation to inspire a teen-led youth movement in kindness and leadership. Whether a teen is part of our Call for Kindness, participates in meetings with our Councils, or attends our Retreat, these individuals think beyond themselves and see a need in their community to create a program that leads with kindness to make a difference.

”

MINDY JACOBS, BOARD MEMBER