Riley's Way Foundation

Leading today for a kinder tomorrow

RileysWay.org
Our Mission & Vision

Riley’s Way Foundation is a national nonprofit organization that invests in a youth-led kindness movement, providing young people with the programs, support, and inclusive community they need to thrive as changemakers.

We envision a future where kind leaders build a better world. Our three flagship programs provide young leaders with the tools and resources they need to envision change and achieve it: The Call For Kindness, Councils and Chapters, and our Youth Leadership Retreats.
Our national flagship Call For Kindness program gives young changemakers across the country the skills, connections and funding they need to run social impact projects. Call For Kindness consists of a 12-month leadership development fellowship and a startup grant of up to $3,000.

Our Councils bring young New Yorkers from public and private schools together to make a difference on social impact projects, and grow as friends and kind leaders. The Council model is also adopted by independently-run Chapters.

Our Retreats and workshops bring diverse communities of young social impact leaders together to learn from experts and each other, and build a dynamic community of young changemakers.

"Riley's Way has given me the opportunity to bridge the gap between wishing I could make the world a better place and actually doing it."
-Sophia (Riley's Way Council Member)
Our Impact

Riley's Way is committed to supporting young leaders to build a better world that values kindness, empathy, connection, and the voices of all youth. A few examples:

- Bella’s I Matter poetry and art competition helps youth process the pain of watching news coverage of the senseless killings of unarmed Black men and women. I Matter has received submissions from **650 students in 42 states and 30 countries** for their book centered on Black Lives Matter.

- Jean’s Leaders Across the World has connected **450+ youth from 45+ countries through their six-week virtual exchanges**, which provide participants with leadership and entrepreneurship training, a foundational understanding of the world, and the opportunity to develop a robust international network.

- Neal’s Codology offers free hands-on computer science courses, research programs, and resources that help guide students along their journey to becoming tech industry leaders. They’ve worked with over **10,000 students in 15 countries** to date.
Co-Founders of Riley's Way

Mackenzie and Ian Sandler established Riley’s Way in 2014 in memory of their daughter, Riley Hannah Sandler.

Read here to learn more about Ian's journey.

"Always have a smile on your face."

– Riley Hannah Sandler
Our Team

Christine O'Connell
Executive Director

Laura Dunn
Director of Operations

Lauren Shenkman
Director of Programs and Partnerships

Shonda Smith
Director of Communications

Stephanie Kingston
Events and Engagement Director

Cheyenne Rosado
Program Manager

Naya Houchen
Program Coordinator

Christina Alvarez
Communications and Operations Associate

Kris Qiu
Communications Intern

Tatiana Simmons
Alumni Engagement Intern

300+ Call For Kindness Fellows • 40 Continuation Grant Winners • 350+ Council and Chapter Members • 800 Alums • 300+ Youth Leadership Participants
Select Publications and Videos

Why Riley’s Way

About Riley’s Way video

2021-2022 Impact Report

Riley’s Way Young Changemakers’ Testimonial Videos

Kindness Matters Video

Hey Young Leaders Video Series

What Riley’s Way Means to Me Video

"Riley's Way means kindness, it means connection, it means approaching everyone as a potential friend."
–Ose (Board Director and Chair of Programming Committee, Riley's Way Board)
In the News

Teen Vogue's 21 Under 21 2022: The Revolutionary Youth You Need to Know

6 Teens Who Make the World A Better Place

Riley's Way's Co-Founder Ian Sandler's A Path Forward

Dreamers and Doers Podcast: Whatever You Do Dream Big with Ian Sandler

Connect Kindness Podcast: Riley's Way's Executive Director, Dr. Christine O'Connell, shares the mission and programs of Riley's Way
Simple Acts, Big Impact: Natalie Silverstein Chats with Call For Kindness Fellows

NYC Teens Get Creative To Give Back And Connect During Coronavirus Shutdown

17-Year-old Environmentalist Rallies Community Involvement in Sustainability Projects

Everyday Hero: Charlotte teen helps feed homeless

Young Tucsonan Creates Trans Support Group To Help Others Connect

"Whenever I come to any Riley's Way event or small group meeting, I am always so grateful for the community and second family I have gained."

–Michal (2020 C4K Fellow & Riley's Way Alum)
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