

BUILDING TRUST.
IGNITING HOPE.
TRANSFORMING LIVES.



2021 ANNUAL REPORT





"PROJECT LEGACY BELIEVED IN ME UNTIL I STARTED TO BELIEVE IN MYSELF. THEY PICKED ME UP EVERY TIME I FELL, UNTIL FINALLY I COULD STAND ON MY OWN."



To the many friends, donors and supporters of Project Legacy,

First and foremost, thank you for your ongoing support of our organization during a year of challenges due to the global pandemic. Despite the hurdles we had to overcome, we are proud to say we persevered and survived thanks to the support of our community.

AND LIVES WERE CHANGED AS A RESULT.

In 2021, we offered steadfast support to our youth and young adults - those who are refugees, survivors of sexual exploitation, first generation college students, and youth paving a path out of poverty.

Through Project Legacy's wraparound support and programs that offer a way forward, we were inspired by the ways our youth showed resiliency and commitment to life-change despite the odds this year.

As you read more about our impact in 2021, we hope you are as proud of these accomplishments as we are - and the 101 youth who stand behind each story of impact, representing one more young life changed through the work of our program.

We look forward to another year of impact and partnership alongside our youth, our donors, and our community.

With tremendous gratitude,

Karen Edmonds
Cofounder & Executive Director





At Project Legacy, our mission is to provide hope, connections and support to youth and young adults of color who may have experienced poverty, trauma, homelessness and sexual exploitation; or who are sex workers, refugees from war-torn countries, or any young person who has not had a positive support system; allowing them to heal from trauma, transform their lives, and become involved members of our community.



OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES

Support 365

As a core service of Project Legacy, Support 365 offers individualized support and wraparound services, pairing young people with a staff member who assesses their needs, develops a plan to help them, and connects youth with other Project Legacy programs and services.

Healing Circles

Healing Circles are a core offering of Project Legacy, pairing the benefits of talk therapy, support groups and verbal processing by facilitating groups with a trained youth peer mentor and adult facilitator. Healing Circles are a non judgmental, compassionate space for young people to process challenges and heal from trauma.

Project Red Umbrella

Project Red Umbrella is a specialized program for young women ages 17-28 who have been sexually exploited, are survivors of sex trafficking or who are leaving the commercial sex industry. Project Red Umbrella also pairs participants with program-specific Healing Circles and Support 365 services.

Legacy Scholars

Legacy Scholars is a program led in partnership with RCTC and WSU-R to assist a cohort of at-risk or first-generation college students of color with the goal of graduating through year-round, holistic support. Legacy Scholars also includes a presence on the RCTC campus in Rochester, and pairs participants with program-specific Healing Circles and Support 365 services.

Legacy Residency

The Legacy Residency is Project Legacy's full-circle expression of our wraparound support offered to our participants through housing and mentorship, helping them successfully transition into the workforce or next chapter of their lives.



Through our collaboration with community partners and through the continued support of donors and grantmakers, Project Legacy saw record engagement and participation in our program in 2021. This resulted in the following life-changing impact across our programs:



101
youth and young adults were supported across all programs in 2021



22
teenagers and young adults were supported through Legacy 365 wraparound support services



61
first generation college students were supported through Legacy Scholars



11
college degrees were earned in 2021



25 students were connected to Workforce Development Inc. Youth Services, which provides career and academic counseling services and the opportunity to apply for a \$4,000 per semester scholarship



12
young adults were supported in completing Rent Help MN applications to avoid eviction



156
Healing Circles were attended by our participants in 2021



7
young adults were supported as they exited the commercial sex industry

44
college degrees have been earned by Project Legacy participants since we first began serving youth in 2008



40
participants received assistance in applying for health insurance and food support

Your giving provided the foundation. Here's where your donations supported our youth:

\$33,907
to fund tuition assistance

\$28,091
in rental assistance

\$28,000
to fund school supplies

\$21,313
to fund youth care including mattresses and beds, medication prescriptions, car repairs, car insurance, car payments when jobs were lost during the pandemic

\$13,158
in housing and food expenses

\$5,300
in clothing expenses

\$2,338
to fund personal supplies

\$8,105
in distance learning costs

Finally, thank you to the **110** donors in our Legacy Partners Giving Program who established the sustainable foundation that made this work possible.

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: LEGACY SCHOLARS

Legacy Scholars is an innovative program designed to help retain at-risk students and young adults of color through graduation, helping provide support, assistance and skills to contribute to their educational success.

The Legacy Scholars Program provides support to young students through education assistance, mental health services, basic needs, recovery support and case management. This program is run in partnership with Rochester Community & Technical College (RCTC), Winona State University - Rochester (WSU-R), Jose Osuna, Founder of Restore INK, and Lilia Gonzales, co-founder of Revolutionary Scholars at California State University Northridge.

2021 UPDATE

We are grateful to share the success of Legacy Scholars has spread throughout the campuses at RCTC and WSU-R. Referrals are coming to Project Legacy from teachers, counselors and other students on a weekly basis. As a result, Legacy Scholars has continued to strengthen our capacity to serve at-risk students by enrolling BIPOC students from at-risk environments in the age range of 18-25 that are first generation college students and experiencing generational poverty.

In 2021, we supported 61 students across 10 universities through the Legacy Scholars Program. Last year we...

- Facilitated healing circles 5 times per week on-site at the RCTC campus with an average attendance of 6-12 students.
- Helped file 10 academic appeals with our participants. All were accepted, which is just one more example of partnering with youth to break down barriers.
- Helped arrange in-office therapy sessions for 6 participants on campus with a licensed therapist.
- Collaborated with students in Legacy Scholars to develop a Life Skills curriculum.
- Provided individualized tutoring on zoom and on campus to support students.
- Helped participants schedule overdue dental and doctor checkups.
- Applied for and received a SHIP Grant for a food pantry to serve students.
- Attended emergency room visits with students for emotional support and transportation.
- Provided emotional support by attending personal student events, such as a poetry slam, football games, etc.
- Provided needed household and school supplies through the support of our Operation Nourish and Operation Encourage program volunteers and donors.
- Provided job search support and employment assistance, including resume development and cover letter writing support.
- Provided FAFSA and financial aid assistance, including helping youth better understand loans, set up accounts and manage finances.
- Provided mentorship through Legacy Plans and goal setting.

THIS DAY-TO-DAY SUPPORT RESULTED IN...

- 6 students have taken the next step in their futures and are enrolled in four-year colleges
- 5 students gained employment as community engagement liaisons at the Rochester pool
- 7 students gained employment at Rochester Public Schools after Project Legacy held an Inservice with Rochester Public Schools' Human Resources Department
- 4 participants gained employment at Project Legacy
- 4 participants are actively volunteering in the community

Support makes all the difference.

We look forward to seeing what our cohort of students will accomplish in the year ahead!





"NEVER FORGET HOW POWERFUL YOU ARE!"

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT:
ALYSHA CARLISLE

"I am the first in my family to get a college degree. This is monumental. I've always loved the quote, 'it ran in my family until it ran into me.' Struggle has been a common theme in my family but getting my degree has ended that cycle in its tracks."

Project Legacy is about helping young people build a legacy by partnering alongside them as they take courageous and bold steps to change the trajectory of their life. This year was no different. We saw countless young people change the course of their lives through dedication, commitment and courage to do the hard work of change.

One young woman has been with Project Legacy for many years, moving from being a participant to a staff member all the way through her recent college graduation. We sat down with alumna and former Project Legacy Social Work Assistant, Alysha Carlisle, to learn more about her time with Project Legacy and the impact it made on her life.

How did you first get connected to Project Legacy? Can you share what was going on in your life that led you to reaching out for support?

I learned about Project Legacy through a Facebook post about 7 years ago. I had just been discharged from Generose after a suicide attempt and was at my lowest point. I was scrolling on Facebook and saw a post from a participant in Project Legacy who posted an update encouraging people to reach out to Karen if they needed a positive support system. I decided I had nothing to lose at that point, so I reached out to Karen. My daughter was just one year old and I didn't have the familial support that I needed to get on the right track.

When you first came to Project Legacy, what kind of support did you receive? What made your experience with PL different?

I received a lot of support when I came to Project Legacy. I was experiencing homelessness, struggling with depression, and struggling to raise my daughter on my own. I've received housing assistance, food support, daycare assistance and more. But the thing that made the biggest impact was the power of community and feeling like I belonged somewhere. I've made so many lifelong friends that I love like family.

What was it like transitioning to become a staff member? In what ways have you been able to work with younger youth?

I appreciate the professional development opportunities that Project Legacy has extended to me. If it wasn't for my position working with the teen girls and college students, I would not be the confident individual that I am today. I was there to help them along their journey but they helped me in ways that I will never be able to thank them enough for. My journey through Project Legacy has taught me a lot about growth, perseverance, and sacrifices (giving up old friends, putting in the hard work for long term goals, etc). Now, being able to talk to Project Legacy participants about my journey (the positives, negatives, how I messed up, how I got back on my feet) shows them that progress is not linear. You'll get where you want to be if you stay committed.

You recently completed your BSW from Winona State University. How does it feel to have accomplished this and what does it mean to you?

I am the first in my family to get a college degree. This is monumental. I've always loved the quote "it ran in my family until it ran into me." Struggle has been a common theme in my family but getting my degree has ended that cycle in its tracks. My daughter will know a better life and will have doors open for her when she's ready. The best part about graduating was seeing my daughter in the stands watching me. That was the best moment of my life.

What do you hope to do in your career now that you've completed your social work degree?

I plan to get my Master's degree. I'm not sure what I want to do or where I'll end up, I just know that I want to continue helping people. Growing up, I didn't have many people that looked like me to help guide me down the right path. I have a deep understanding of how important this is and I am committed to continuing to show up for my community.



What's next for you? Any exciting plans post graduation?

I bought a house this year and graduated from college. Beyond that, this next year, I just want to take some time to enjoy the life that I worked so hard to build. I have had a bad habit of rushing towards the next goal without taking the time to appreciate everything I've accomplished.

What encouragement would you share to someone who is in a similar position to you when you first reached out for support?

Look down at your chest and a little to the left - you have heart and no one can take that from you even when you feel like you have nothing. Everything that you've ever needed is deeply rooted inside of you, sometimes all you need is an organization like Project Legacy to provide the tools, support, and environment to help you grow. Never forget how powerful you are.



DONOR REFLECTION: PATTY TRNKA



"My parents highly valued education for their 4 children beyond high school. They supported us in our pursuit of a degree or certificate with words, actions (like transportation to and from college or technical school) and paid our bills for tuition, books and room and board. In addition to a stable and loving home during our childhoods, this advanced education enabled us to begin our careers on a strong foot.

I give monthly to Project Legacy to support the opportunity for higher education for youth. I strongly believe that all children and youth need loving and supportive adults around them if they are going to succeed in life. When youth do not have this type of home environment, the community must step up with good programming such as Project Legacy.

I am impressed by the students' determination to heal from their trauma and move forward with their lives in a better way. This is a very difficult journey for them, so I want to support them.

I have been involved with Project Legacy since 2014 and have been very impressed with their process. Karen and John Edmonds are very thoughtful and well-informed directors who are open to new possibilities of programming while steadfastly carrying out the existing work.

A year ago, I decided to step up from being an occasional donor to a monthly donor so the program could have a reliable source of income. I would encourage others in the community to take this step also."

- PATTY TRNKA

Join Patty in supporting Project Legacy by becoming a monthly donor through our Legacy Partners Program, a monthly giving program that helps build the sustainable foundation of Project Legacy.



projectlegacy.org/donate



DONOR REFLECTION:
ANN MARIE GULLICKSON

Please consider supporting young people by joining the Project Legacy donor community.

“My donations make a real difference for young people in my community; there is no other program like Project Legacy in Rochester that invests in youth in this way, that never gives up on the youth they serve.

I am consistently impressed by Project Legacy’s growth and their commitment to continuous improvement - their program team’s ability to recognize unmet needs and to fill them. I’m also impressed by the emphasis on being a relationship-based program, not only for the youth served, but also for the supporters and donors.

I would like other community members to know that when you give to Project Legacy, your financial support stays in the community and directly supports youth in our community. Helping young people launch into adulthood is so important and can be a challenging life stage, even with family support.

The Project Legacy family offers support and fills basic needs for safety and security, including food, shelter and emotional support, so youth can turn their energy and attention to achieving their goals in school and work.”

- ANN MARIE GULLICKSON



BY OFFERING TO SUPPORT YOUTH TODAY,
YOU ARE HELPING CHANGE A GENERATION.

You are helping youth change their narrative, and overcome generational poverty and generational trauma, with access to more choices and opportunities for themselves and their children.

“There were times I wanted to quit and give up because I did not see the light at the end of the tunnel, but others did.”



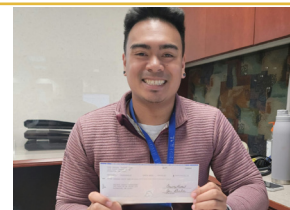
Project Legacy Changed His Life and Now He's Giving Back

“I started with Project Legacy at the age of 13 after meeting Karen at Calvary Church where I used to play basketball. Karen told me she was starting a program and wanted me to join. The program was designed to help keep kids off the streets and help them get into a safer environment. Karen offered us YMCA passes where we would play basketball, and she offered us tutoring in the subjects we were struggling with. Our relationship continued when I told Karen I was walking to school in the winter – she offered me a ride every day that winter.

What happened in Project Legacy really changed my life. I had two Operation Encourage sponsors during my time in Project Legacy – I developed a great relationship with both and still talk with them on a monthly basis.

Project Legacy opened the doors for opportunities I could not imagine. I was the first one in my family to graduate college, and that made my family, Karen and everyone who helped me proud. The endless support and resources played a huge part in my success. There were times I wanted to quit and give up because I did not see the light at the end of the tunnel, but others did. I was able to find myself and become a better person, which helped me become who I am today.”

I recently gave a donation to Project Legacy – it's just the start of me giving back. This program has allowed me to use my resources and encourage other people, businesses and others to do the same and support programs like Project Legacy.



“I would like to thank all of our donors at Project Legacy. Without you, we would not have a strong foundation as a program. Every donation we receive helps relieve the stresses of keeping this program going strong.

Finally, to the current participants of Project Legacy: Stay patient and use the resources around you. We can get caught up in things so fast and end up burning ourselves out, but enjoy the process through the good and bad because life will put you to the test to see if you can handle it. Don't be afraid to ask for help, because in Project Legacy, we want everybody to succeed.”

- PAUL ROS



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

FOUNDATIONS

- State of Minnesota
- Mayo Clinic
- Olmsted Medical Center
- Mardag Foundation
- Otto Bremer Trust
- Harper Family Foundation

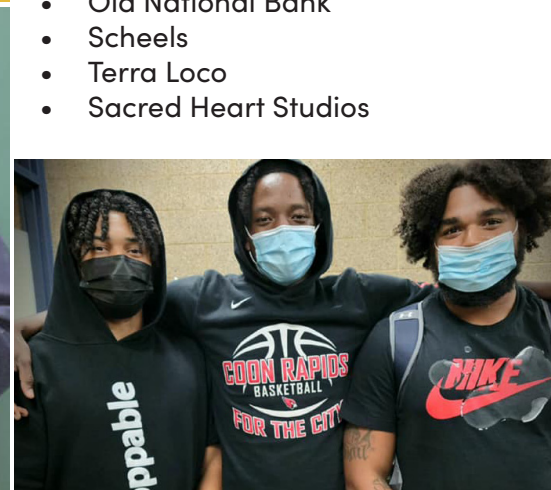
FAITH COMMUNITIES

- Peace United Church of Christ
- Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
- Academy of Our Lady of Lourdes
- Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
- Rochester Friends (Quakers)
- Pax Christi

BUSINESS GIVING

- Trail Creek Coffee Roasters
- People's Food Co-op
- Victoria's
- Pasquale's
- Thesis Beer
- Sing Out Loud
- Tilson's Auto Repair
- Rochester Male Chorus
- Mayo High School Hope Club
- Capital Nine Inc
- Old National Bank
- Scheels
- Terra Loco
- Sacred Heart Studios

Thank you to our partners, grantmakers and local businesses who made our work possible in 2021, alongside our 110 monthly individual donors.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF PROJECT LEGACY

To the Project Legacy community,

The past couple of years have reminded us of how connected we are as a global community, and of the ways that individual actions can have a ripple effect. By being a part of Project Legacy, you are choosing to engage locally, and because of that, 101 youth strengthened the pathways to their goals this past year.

As a board we have a responsibility to fulfill the commitment we have made to these youth, to honor their stories and visions, to highlight the gaps and barriers present in our society, and to advocate for improvement. In the upcoming year, our board is preparing for an internal assessment and identifying opportunities for growth with the help of St. Thomas University and GiveMN. We acknowledge we don't have all the answers, and it takes a village as can be seen from our individual donors, to the foundations, faith communities, and business that share our cause.

In 2022, we hope to continue to see the power of collaboration, connection and community. The path forward for Project Legacy involves continuing to walk alongside our youth. Your continued support helps us do just that - to provide hope and opportunities to youth and young adults seeking access and inclusion in our shared future.

Con amor,



Cesar Bravo Wolfe, MSSW, LICSW
2022 Board Chair

2021 BOARD MEMBERS

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WILL YOU PARTNER WITH US IN THE YEAR AHEAD?

Become a Legacy Partner today by making a one-time donation or setting up a monthly giving plan.

Your support makes all the difference!



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