

10 YEARS

of Investing in the Next Generation of
Kind Leaders



Riley's Way
foundation

2024 IMPACT REPORT

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10 Years OF RILEY'S WAY



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"RILEY'S WAY HAS BEEN A TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCE, HELPING ME GROW WHILE EMPOWERING ME TO CONTRIBUTE TO A KINDER WORLD."

JESSIE BAXTER

2023 C4K FELLOW | CO-FOUNDER, TATA FOR NOW



Today and every day, we remind ourselves that it is Riley’s kindness and friendship that guides our work. We celebrate and remember Riley Hannah Sandler and honor the legacy she leaves behind by investing in and supporting the next generation of kind leaders.

“

“It’s been ten years since Riley’s Way Foundation was started. I know as well as anyone what it means to have started from the vision and the light of a little girl named Riley. The Sandlers always tell me that what we’re going to create is going to outlive all of us and be bigger than any one person, even Riley. And I’m not sure that that’s true. Her hope for the world is as grand and as big as anything that we’ve done and anything that we’ll accomplish from here. Because she thought that the essence of being human was to be a friend.”

PAUL BURKE, BOARD MEMBER AND NIGHTINGALE-BAMFORD HEAD OF SCHOOL

"Always have a smile on your face."

RILEY HANNAH SANDLER ❤️ 🐰

Dear Riley's Way Community,

As I look back over the past ten years of this incredible journey, I am overwhelmed with pride and gratitude for the movement we've built—a movement that so beautifully reflects who Riley was and how she lived. **Riley's Way honors her spirit, her deep love for her friends, and her unshakeable belief in the transformative power of kindness.**

When my wife, Mackenzie, and I founded Riley's Way, it was a conscious choice to celebrate Riley's life by spreading the love, kindness, and friendship she embodied. Now, ten years later, we find ourselves celebrating her legacy in ways far beyond anything I could have imagined.

As a parent, my deepest motivation has always been to ensure that Riley's brother Brody remembers her and that Riley's sister Ruby, who never had the chance to know her, feels Riley's presence woven into the fabric of our community. It brings me immense joy to see how Riley's story and the kindness she lived by have touched the lives of thousands. This is what she wanted. She dreamed of making a broad and lasting impact, and together, we are turning that dream into reality.

The past five years, in particular, have been transformative for Riley's Way. During the pandemic, when young people faced unprecedented challenges and society seemed more divided than ever, Riley's Way became a source of hope. It offered an antidote to the isolation and competition that so often defines our world. **Today, Riley's Way is a beacon of connection and belonging for emerging young leaders across the country.**

I cannot fully express my gratitude for everyone who has supported us along this journey, especially during this past May's "**A Love Letter to Riley's Way.**" What started as a way to honor Riley during a deeply painful time has blossomed into a warm embrace—a community where my entire family finds solace and belonging.

As we enter our second decade, I believe we've only scratched the surface of what's possible. **The movement we are building is creating a ripple effect of kindness** that will echo through generations, making the world a better, kinder place. I invite you to explore this 2024 Impact Report as a testament to our collective achievements and a glimpse into the bright future ahead.

With heartfelt gratitude and kindness,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Sandler".

Ian Sandler
Co-Founder of Riley's Way

Dear Riley's Way Community,

In leadership, kindness is strength, and the Riley's Way community is proving it every day. When asked about the importance of kind leadership, Jason Hu at our recent Youth Leadership Retreat answered:

“Most of the problems that are existing in the world today stem from human problems, in order to solve those problems it comes from **understanding people and being able to connect with them.**”

Empathy, the ability to see past one's own circumstances, and clear communication are cornerstones of connection. By teaching empathy, active listening, and the value of diversity, we equip young people with tools and skills they need to be effective leaders and build meaningful connections. This helps them not only succeed in the workforce, but also to support one another through life's challenges.

The power of community is evident: students who met at our Youth Leadership Retreat room together in college; Call For Kindness Fellows find their best friends through the program; Alumni speak of the extraordinary fulfillment of mentoring new Fellows; and our highest compliment: Council members return to work for us at Riley's Way as interns and employees.

Riley's Way fosters connection and purpose. Our kind leadership model supports young people in their quest to develop purpose through looking outwards, to advance their leadership skills through kindness and empathy, and, most importantly, has created a supportive community through these meaningful connections and experiences. At Riley's Way, young leaders unite to make a difference where it affects others, which in turn builds far more meaningful friendships as they participate in something bigger than themselves.

Riley's Way builds resiliency. A community one can rely on when personal, political, or cultural challenges arise is critical to realizing a larger view of oneself and leading effectively. A solid foundation where values are grounded, where one is heard and seen, can help us through tough times.

Riley's Way builds a kinder tomorrow. Riley's Way's young changemakers lead communities across the country and create solutions to challenges facing our world. We empower young people to become agents of change in their own lives and the lives of others.

Since sharpening our focus on teens and young adults in 2019, Riley's Way has grown astonishingly: over 900 alumni support our programs. We lay the groundwork for a new generation of leaders in business, philanthropy, government, and communities. These individuals lead with Riley's spirit of kindness and friendship at their core. Investing early in young leaders simply works, especially when instilling core principles of kindness, empathy, and inclusivity. That is how we grow, and that is how we change the world.

I can't wait to see what the future holds. Thank you to our entire community,



Dr. Christine O'Connell
Executive Director of Riley's Way

HOW WE'RE BUILDING A KINDER TOMORROW

RILEY'S WAY'S YOUNG CHANGEMAKERS LEAD COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND CREATE SOLUTIONS TO CHALLENGES FACING OUR WORLD.



Led by 2024 C4K Fellow, Jay'Shun Mathews, the **Black Youth Empowerment Network (BYEN)** provides resources, support, and opportunities to help Black youth thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

C4GI

The **Campaign 4 Gender Inclusivity (C4GI)** advocates for safe spaces in schools and communities for LGBTQIA+ students under the leadership of 2024 C4K Fellow, Sophia Ghandi.

SAVE OUR SALMON

2023 C4K Fellow Austin Picinich, founder of **Save Our Salmon**, inspires environmental change through art in his community, bringing hundreds of community members together to paint murals and raise awareness.



Scan the QR Code or visit callforkindness.org to read more about the C4K Fellows!



MANAVI BAJPAI

2022 C4K FELLOW

YAB CO-CHAIR

FOUNDER, TUNES FOR KIDZ

I got started with Riley's Way through my nonprofit, **Tunes for Kidz**. We accept donated instruments that people don't use and give them to kids in the foster care system, kids who can't afford them, kids in the military, just kids everywhere that have a need.

Tunes for Kidz is about to enter its fourth year. We've donated over 500 instruments, and we are expanding into different states right now. I tell people this all the time: **we would not be here if it weren't for Riley's Way**.

Knowing we had the support and confidence of the Riley's Way staff the entire time made all of the difference. A lot of my really good friends are also in the Riley's Way community: Dylan, Gia, and Agha. I look up to them and talk to them all the time about the problems I'm having. Knowing that there are people who are empathetic to you and know exactly what you're going through being so young, that's how Riley's Way has supported us.

kindness
is everything



MISSION, VISION, & VALUES

OUR MISSION & VISION

Riley's Way is a national nonprofit that invests in and supports the next generation of kind leaders, providing young people with the programs, support, and inclusive community they need to thrive as changemakers. We support these young leaders to envision change and achieve it.

We envision a future where kind leaders build a better world.

OUR VALUES

Our organization is built on the values of kindness, empathy, community, and youth leadership. We believe the best leaders have these values at their core and that young people are the key to advancing social change.

Kindness

Kindness is an active choice and the intentional practice of compassion, respect, extending oneself, and showing genuine care for others.

Community

A community values and celebrates everyone's unique voices and experiences. It provides a space that fosters belonging, where diverse voices are heard and amplified, intersectional identities are honored, and authentic relationships and meaningful friendships are cultivated.

Empathy

Empathy is the willingness to see, feel, and learn beyond your own lived experiences. It requires actively listening and learning from others.

Youth Leadership

Young people are at the forefront of decision-making, creating change, mobilizing their peers, and contributing innovative solutions to pressing issues they care about most, with adult allyship and support from others.

OUR KIND LEADERSHIP MODEL



COMMUNITY

Curating ongoing, diverse, & supportive communities

- Partnership Opportunities
- In-person Retreats
- Peer & Seasoned Mentors
- Alumni Support

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Investing in young emerging leaders & providing them opportunities to lead & grow

- Skill Building, Networking, & Workforce Development
- Expert/Staff Support & Coaching
- Opportunities to Lead

PURPOSE

Supporting students in developing their agency to create a better, kinder world

- Social Impact & Entrepreneurship
- Issue-based Learning
- Funding

THE PROBLEMS WE AIM TO SOLVE

Leadership Pathways Don't Prioritize Empathy and Kind Leadership

Today more than ever, the world needs kind and empathetic leaders to address the complex challenges facing society, but traditional leadership pathways don't prioritize these qualities. Research consistently shows that leading with kindness and purpose fosters happier workplaces, more productive teams, and increased innovation. Our Kind Leadership Model centers on kindness, purpose, and community.

Inequitable Access to Youth Leadership Development and Funding Opportunities

Cultivating kind leaders starts by giving young professionals leadership opportunities and challenges early. We curate an inclusive and diverse community of young people who are committed to building their kind leadership skills by providing them with the resources, skills, and support they need to grow into successful leaders. Removing economic barriers around program participation, providing funding for youth-led projects, and conducting targeted outreach to diverse communities ensures students who are committed to developing their kind leadership skills are included.



Building Community Among Youth

The mental health crisis among youth is characterized by rising rates of anxiety, depression, and loneliness, with 73% of Gen Z reporting feeling alone. At the heart of combating loneliness is building genuine connection and fostering authentic community. The ripple effects lead to more resilient individuals and to building gaps between people. When people see or experience acts of kindness, they are more likely to be kind themselves. It can serve as a catalyst for building and strengthening relationships and fostering an individual's sense of purpose.

OUR IMPACT



400+

Call For Kindness
Fellows

THE RILEY'S WAY SOLUTION

Investing in Emerging Young Leaders through Programs Grounded in Kindness and Empathy

Since 2014, Riley's Way has brought together passionate youth changemakers who are positively impacting their communities through the lens of kindness and empathy. Today, Riley's Way focuses on emerging leaders, ages 13-23, who have an idea to make their local or global communities a better, kinder place through our youth leadership development programs: Call For Kindness Fellowship, Youth Leadership Retreat, Councils, and Chapters. Empathy and kindness are often overlooked as critical leadership qualities - but at Riley's Way, we're changing that.

We believe effective leadership is defined by being a kind, empathetic, and community-focused changemaker. By teaching empathy, active listening, and inclusivity, we equip young people with the tools and skills they need to become kind leaders throughout their careers and to build meaningful connections with others. Riley's Way's young changemakers are leading in communities across the country and creating solutions to challenges facing our world today. We see Riley's Way Alumni as future leaders in business, government, nonprofit, and public service, all leading with kindness at their core.



I don't think I'd be where I am today without the support of Riley's Way. In Flint, I saw the disastrous impacts that the water crisis had on families, especially kids, the most vulnerable people in our society. Kids don't have a voice that they can use to uplift and advocate for themselves. That led me to pediatrics and understanding how we can help advocate for the health of children. Riley's Way impacted me not just in what I want to do in the future, but also in how I lead my life every day, incorporating kindness and empathy into everything I do. It's helped me gain a community and meet new people that I would not have met if it hadn't been for Riley's Way.

MICHAL RUPRECHT, 2020 C4K FELLOW

FOUNDER, THE FLINT JUSTICE PROJECT

YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER & CO-CHAIR



350+

**Council & Chapter
Members**



500+

**Youth Leadership
Retreat Participants**



1,250+

**Alumni Community
of Changemakers**



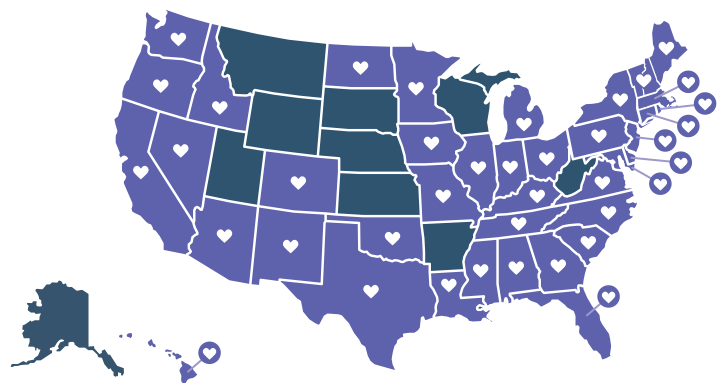
CALL FOR KINDNESS

The Call For Kindness (C4K) Fellowship gives young leaders (ages 13-23) across the country the skills, connections, and funding they need to run social impact projects that inspire kindness and strengthen their local, national, or global communities.

The 2023-2024 Call For Kindness Leadership Summit was in Atlanta, Georgia. Sixty young leaders were brought together from across the United States for a weekend of learning and connection. Fellows participated in workshops designed to support their project growth from fundraising to advocacy to networking.

Our youth changemakers left Atlanta knowing that they are not alone in their determination to make the world a better place.

C4K Fellows have been from 40 states across the country.



"I WANT TO BUILD A FUTURE WHERE MORE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN FIND THEIR PASSION PROJECTS AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE, AND FIND ORGANIZATIONS LIKE RILEY'S WAY TO HELP THEM GROW, DEVELOP, AND IMPACT THE WORLD."

RHIA GUPTA
C4K 2023 FELLOW
2024 CONTINUATION GRANT WINNER
TEAM MEMBER, WHISKEY BRAVO

Every year we have a special category chosen by our youth community. The 2024-2025 Special Category is Education Equity. We also expanded our Sponsored Categories to include the Interfaith Connections Award sponsored by the Sandler Family, and A Kinder World For Animals Award sponsored by A Kinder World Foundation.



PHOTO (ABOVE): RILEY'S WAY WAS FEATURED ON THE NASDAQ TOWER TO CELEBRATE OUR FELLOWS.

PHOTO (BELOW): WE VISITED THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS WHERE OUR FELLOWS LEARNED ABOUT THE HISTORY OF YOUTH CHANGEMAKERS.



PROGRAM FEATURES



1:1 COACHING & PROJECT SUPPORT



12-MONTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FELLOWSHIP



IN-PERSON LEADERSHIP SUMMIT



STARTUP GRANT OF UP TO \$5,000



VIRTUAL SKILL-BUILDING SESSIONS



PEER & EXPERT MENTORSHIP

Fellows can apply for **Continuation Grants** with ongoing project support & coaching.



SHRUSTI AMULA

2023 C4K FELLOW

FOUNDER, RISE N SHINE FOUNDATION

Riley's Way showed me the impact that youth leaders can have. It is hard creating an organization as a youth leader because it is hard to feel like you can make a difference, especially in comparison to adults. Riley's Way has built such an amazing community of youth leaders, and being able to talk to them and learn from them has been really helpful in my journey.

I hope to make a difference, specifically towards food waste as the largest contributor to climate change. Most people don't know this, so I want to bring awareness through spreading our food recovery and compost programs. A lot of the work I do is with youth volunteers, so I want to instill leadership habits in younger children so that they can continue to become leaders in their communities when they grow up.

CALL FOR KINDNESS PROJECT IMPACT

OVER THE PAST DECADE:

Riley's Way has invested in more than **3,500** young people across the country with over **\$4 million** in grants and programming.



LEYDI BORGES
2023 C4K FELLOW
CO-FOUNDER
SCIP14ALL

I grew up loving math. When I first moved to this country, I didn't know English. English didn't make sense to me, but the math did. Even today, I still think about it in the same way that I did when I first started math. It is a way to not only learn, but also to connect and communicate with others. One day I was thinking about how some kids, especially kids that grow up in low socioeconomic situations or go to schools that receive less funding, may have less access to STEAM education. I called my best friend Alex and we started talking about it and bouncing ideas off of each other.

I saw something about Riley's Way on Instagram and thought it was really interesting. I liked the idea of a foundation based on kindness, empathy, and empowering young people. Over time, I've gotten to know the staff and the people at Riley's Way, and it's been an amazing experience. **Belonging to a space where you can meet other like-minded individuals makes your mission feel a little bit more tangible and a little bit more manageable.** You have a community of people if you have questions, not only with other Fellows but also Riley's Way staff.



AUSTIN PICINICH
2023 C4K FELLOW
FOUNDER
SAVE OUR SALMON

Being a part of the Riley's Way community has opened up my mind to all the ways that we can make a difference and how to be impactful, intentional, and realize that it is not out of reach for a high school or college student to make an impact in their community and beyond. For me, I have had more than 700 painters come to participate in the Save Our Salmon paint-by-number murals. **I have had over 3,000 people attend Community Paint Day events to learn about salmon, their local salmon streams, and learn how to be a better steward of their environment and their community.**

It is so much more than just providing mentorship for one student, because that student has the possibility to reach hundreds of thousands of people. It really creates a kindness chain, or a "pay it forward" effect, where you give grants to a couple dozen students and they reach a lot of people, and the people they reach continue to ripple outward.



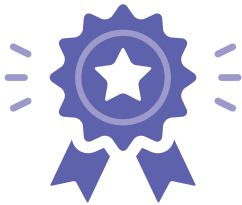
100,000+

People Reached Globally



50+

Continuation Grant Winners



42+

Call For Kindness Annual Awardees



400+

Call For Kindness Fellows

“AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE CALL FOR KINDNESS FELLOWSHIP, I KNOW THAT KIND LEADERSHIP MEANS BEING A COLLABORATOR AND LISTENING TO OTHERS.”

CELINA SIMONE
C4K 2023 FELLOW
TEAM MEMBER, ASTER LIT



PHOTO: AUSTIN PICINICH (AN ARTIST & STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON) LENDS A HAND TO DYLAN ZAJAC (A STUDENT AT BABSON COLLEGE) TO PAINT A MURAL FOR ZAJAC'S NON-PROFIT COMPUTERS 4 PEOPLE. PHOTO COURTESY OF DYLAN ZAJAC & FORBES MAGAZINE

Forbes

Riley's Way is featured in Forbes Magazine

On May 16, 2024, *Forbes* published the article “Teens Teaming With Teens To Create A Better World,” which highlights the youth collaborations fostered by Riley's Way's programming.

Dylan Zajac, founder of Computers 4 People and Austin Picinich, founder of Save Our Salmon Through Art, collaborated to create a joint mural to celebrate the launch of Computers 4 People's new Boston-area office.

Hattie Shapard, founder of The Amity Program, and Amelia Wang, co-founder of Riley's Way's Portola Chapter, collaborated to design a pen-pal program to foster meaningful relationships between teens and senior citizens.

COUNCILS & CHAPTERS

COUNCILS

Through Riley's Way Councils, teens practice leading with kindness and building bridges across barriers in their communities. A single Council is comprised of about twenty students from two partnered schools – one public and one private – to learn, grow, and work together as community changemakers. A Riley's Way team member and a faculty member from each school support the Council.

Changemakers in Riley's Way Councils:

Build connections across and within their schools while meeting other like-minded leaders they may not have met otherwise. Riley's Way Councils provide students with opportunities to build relationships, challenge assumptions, and gain a deeper understanding of different identities and experiences.

Build and practice leadership skills that emphasize kindness, empathy, and inclusive community.

Learn about and make a difference in their communities.



2024 COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

The TYWLS Astoria and Hewitt Council focused on environmental justice, and worked with Battery Park Urban Farm to learn about supporting community health wellness through sustainable farming practices.

The TYWLS Bronx and Horace Mann Council worked with the Talk To Me women's support group from Circles of Support, which provides a safe space for women whose loved ones are incarcerated. The Council also partnered with The Pink Agenda, an organization that creates awareness of breast cancer for women of all ages.

The TYWLS Manhattan and Nightingale Council worked on three areas of social justice: food insecurity, housing insecurity, and period poverty in prisons.



PHOTO:
MEMBERS OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF MICHIGAN
CHAPTER

CHAPTERS

CREATING A MOVEMENT OF KINDNESS: PILOTING RILEY'S WAY CHAPTERS

Riley's Way Chapters bring together a group of young changemakers within one high school, college, or community group to create opportunities to model leading with empathy and kindness, and make a positive change on a social impact issue that matters to them. This is a student-led model, where Riley's Way staff provide support and facilitate meaningful connections among Chapters.

2024 CHAPTER SPOTLIGHTS

THE PORTOLA CHAPTER (LOS ANGELES, CA):

- **Delivered handmade cards to seniors** through the Angel Cards Program
- Partnered with Easterseals and **facilitated virtual interviews for seniors** to share their life stories

THE BROWNING CHAPTER (NEW YORK, NY):

- **Collected and donated computer hardware, including over 30 laptops**, during a computer drive hosted with C4K Fellow Dylan Zajac, founder of Computers 4 People
- **Raised nearly \$500 for Animal Haven**, a local animal shelter and a Riley's Way partner

THE BREARLEY CHAPTER (NEW YORK, NY):

- Doubled its membership this year
- **Designed & led an intergenerational technology class** to teach basic computer literacy at the community center and partner BronxWorks

CHAPTERS WORKING TOGETHER:

- Addressed food insecurity in New York City, the Brearley and Browning Chapters collaborated to **make and distribute 200 sandwiches**

NEW CHAPTERS:

- New Chapters were launched in **Georgia, Chicago, Rochester, and Harlem, NYC**

LAUREN BELOUS & NOAH WEBER

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

CHAPTER FOUNDERS

Lauren Belous & Noah Weber founded the first Riley's Way college chapter at the University of Michigan (UMich) in 2023 after hearing a powerful lecture from Riley's Way co-founder Ian Sandler. "Lauren and I came together initially after Ian spoke during one of our classes," said Weber. "It was one of the most inspiring and touching stories. Both of us knew this needed a place at Michigan's campus."

In their first semester, the Chapter had over 50 members, and they hosted a campus wide Kindness Pitch Competition. Leaders from across UMich's campus pitched their entrepreneurial ideas to the Chapter. "Everybody had amazing projects and really big aspirations," said Belous, "and we had a great outcome."

One of the ways the Chapter intends to grow is by "tapping into the vast Riley's Way network of incredible and intelligent individuals," says Belous. "Whether they're entrepreneurs or leading with kindness and empathy, we want to see that for our students." The UMich Chapter strives to bring the Riley's Way values of kindness and empathy to their campus and beyond.

YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREAT



Riley's Way Youth Leadership Retreats bring together high school students from across the country who are motivated to make the world a better, kinder place.

Participants spend the weekend building meaningful connections, developing leadership skills, and participating in fun camp activities.

The Riley's Way Youth Leadership Retreat (YLR) is a free program that covers travel, lodging, food, and program costs for all participants. Support from generous sponsors provides access for young leaders from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds.



KIM CORTES MARTINEZ

2023 YLR PARTICIPANT

2024 TEAM MENTOR

The 2023 Youth Leadership Retreat was focused on identity, which was really important to me. There was a speaker that was Hispanic and first gen and gender inclusive and LGBTQ+, and they were talking about how much their life changed once they owned every single piece of their identity. I have an intersectional identity: I'm queer, I'm Hispanic, I'm first gen, I'm a woman. I feel like I always neglect pieces of my identity, specifically the pieces that are harder to see. Hearing that speaker affirmed everything that I felt about my identity, and it made me feel that much more open and willing to talk about it. Before the Retreat, I was very nervous being in big spaces and introducing myself using my pronouns. Now it's something that I do all the time. Going to the Retreat reminded me that although identity isn't confining or defining, it's still something that's a big part of who I am. Because of my experience at the 2023 Retreat, I was excited to return as a Team Mentor in 2024.

OVER 99% OF PARTICIPANTS
WERE LIKELY OR VERY LIKELY
TO RECOMMEND THE PROGRAM

2024 YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREAT

Inspiration • Motivation • Connection

Those are the words we heard over and over again from our 120+ high school participants and alumni Team Mentors. Participants joined us from across the country from September 20th-22nd for our 6th annual Youth Leadership Retreat. This year's theme was "Creating Space for Yourself and Your Community".



"I WANT TO FIND MY "WHY"
AND INSPIRE OTHERS TO
DO THE SAME."

2024 YLR PARTICIPANT



CRYSTAL YEH

2023 YLR PARTICIPANT

2024 TEAM MENTOR

The greatest thing I learned from the Youth Leadership Retreat is how to create lasting relationships through a strong support system. Knowing there are such kind people out there, especially considering the state of the world right now, has been very helpful to me and making progress within society. The people who are a part of Riley's Way are so willing to help. If you ever need support with anything, there will always be someone there for you.

On a personal level, Riley's Way helped me to find my college roommate! Finding friends, finding a support system, and even finding a roommate - I think that is what a lot of people from the Retreat have also found. Transitioning into a new period of life while knowing I already have these people is very comforting to me.

LEADERSHIP

OUR TEAM

Dr. Christine O'Connell | Executive Director
Lauren Shenkman | Director of Partnerships and Programs
Laura Kikuchi Dunn | Director of Operations
Stephanie Dore Kingston | Development Director
Cheyenne Rosado | Program Director
Ava Mateo | Communications and Impact Manager
Christina Alvarez | Communications and Development Coordinator
Naya Houchen | Program Coordinator
Thais Salas | Program Coordinator
Grayson Weatherwax, Amanda Steele, Kris Qiu, Nicole Mateo | Interns



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Mackenzie Sandler | Co-Founder
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Amy Bersh | Secretary
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Morgan Elwyn
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Dylan Zajac
Sarah Zhao



NICOLE MATEO

RILEY'S WAY INTERN

2020 C4K FELLOW

Every day, I thank Riley's Way for encouraging young adults like myself early on, because everything I've gained or learned from Riley's Way has stayed with me—from friendships to projects.

As I have started my first full-time position after college I have found that my job requires the same skills and traits that Riley's Way first encouraged me to apply in all my endeavors. As the first point of contact for individuals who may have just experienced the worst moments of their lives, **I draw on the lessons from Riley's Way about the importance of kindness and listening to understand rather than speaking.**

Alongside my full-time role, I am also working with Riley's Way on Alumni and Mentoring Initiatives. As a Riley's Way alum of all programs, it is no surprise that when I knew I would be returning to NYC after graduating from the University of Chicago, I wanted to return to Riley's Way. Riley's Way has always felt like a return home. A return to compassion, empathic listening, and above all, kind leadership.



GET INVOLVED

BECOME A MENTOR

The Mentorship Initiative connects Call For Kindness fellows with Expert Kind Leader Mentors to enhance their personal and project development through monthly one-on-one meetings throughout their year-long fellowship.

OFFER OFFICE HOURS

At Riley's Way Office Hours, individuals provide 1:1 coaching or consulting for our youth community. They offer tailored guidance on topics such as PR/Marketing, storytelling, project management, and workforce development, including LinkedIn profiles, personal branding, resumes, and college essays.

JOIN OUR ANNUAL NETWORKING WITH KINDNESS EVENT

The Annual Networking with Kindness Event brings together youth from across Riley's Way programs for skill-building workshops and speed networking with leaders from various industries.

JUDGE THE CALL FOR KINDNESS

Become a Call For Kindness Judge and help select the next Call For Kindness Cohort! This is a meaningful opportunity to review and provide feedback on fellowship applications nationwide. Judging will occur from March 11, 2025 - March 25, 2025.

Contact Lauren Shenkman, Director of Partnerships and Programs (lshenkman@rileysandler.org) for more information.



OPT-IN TO MORE KINDNESS

Sign up for the Riley's Way Newsletter and stay updated on our latest news, events, and programs.

IN THE NEWS

In 2024, a wide range of media outlets, including *Forbes*, *Psychology Today*, *Boston Herald*, *Milken Institute*, and more, featured Riley's Way staff and young changemakers!



An Uber driver became this dad's unsung hero at a time of crisis



Youth Across the Nation Are Called to Answer the 2024 Call for Kindness



Teens Teaming With Teens To Create A Better World



Youth Across the Nation Are Called to Answer the 2024 Call for Kindness



Call For Kindness Grants To Fund 40 Youth-Led Projects: How To Apply



Youth Across the Nation Are Called to Answer the 2024 Call for Kindness



42 Youth-Led Projects Earn Distinguished National Riley's Way Foundation Fellowship



Employers Advancing Whole-Person Health through Empathetic Leadership



Columbus teen awarded \$5,000 grant to start debate program in local middle schools



Cultivating Kindness and Nurturing Youth Mental Health



Local teenager wins national Call For Kindness competition



Organization aims to inspire young Mainers to run for office



Celebrate! East Brunswick Elks Lodge Hosts LGBTQ+ Prom, Reaches Out to Community



I've worked with thousands of emerging Gen Z leaders. There's a fundamental reset in what this generation wants career-wise



Riley's Way Foundation gives grants to young entrepreneurs helping communities

BLOGS

Through our blogs, we spotlight youth voices as they work to make the world a better place.



[Supporting Young Leaders in Building a Kinder World: Riley's Way at the READ Alliance YOUth Summit](#)

BY MARIAH MOLINA & ISABELLA ORTIZ

Mariah Molina and Isabella Ortiz, Riley's Way Council members, re-cap their masterclass at the Read Alliance Power of YOUth summit.



A LOVE LETTER TO RILEY'S WAY

A Love Letter to Riley's Way brought together 600+ people to celebrate and honor ten years of Riley's Way Foundation.

Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and guests, Riley's Way raised **2.2 million dollars** with 1.2 million dollars from sponsors and individuals, and a 1 million dollar match by the Sandler family. Riley's Way entered its 10th year dreaming big and envisioning even bigger impact and growth. **Let's build a kinder tomorrow, together.**

Thank you to the Host Committee, generous sponsors, and everyone who contributed to this event.



PHOTO (ABOVE): PIX11 NEWS INTERVIEWED CO-FOUNDER IAN SANDLER FOR THEIR STORY FEATURING A LOVE LETTER TO RILEY'S WAY.



SCAN TO WATCH OUR
TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY VIDEO:
"A LOVE LETTER TO RILEY'S WAY"



Networking with Purpose

BY AMANDA STEELE
Amanda Steele, Riley's Way Program Marketing Intern, walks us through her experience at the Riley's Way Networking Event on March 13th, 2024. Over fifty youth leaders attended skill-building workshops and developed meaningful connections.



Call For Kindness: Through the Lens of a Judge

BY HANNAH CRYSTAL
Hannah Crystal, Riley's Way Communications Intern, shares some behind-the-scenes tidbits from her experience as a judge at the 2023 Call For Kindness Retreat.

INVEST IN KINDNESS

YOUR DONATION DIRECTLY SUPPORTS YOUNG LEADERS WHO ARE MAKING AN IMPACT IN THEIR LOCAL, NATIONAL, & GLOBAL COMMUNITIES.



DONATE NOW

SCAN THE QR CODE
OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
[RILEYSWAY.ORG/DONATE](https://rileysway.org/donate)

“With so much happening in the world today, it is important to be there for each other, find community, and inspire each other to do great things that influence change. Riley’s Way helps us do that.”

TIARA SOTO
RILEY’S WAY YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER



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