



# FOSTERING COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

# 2020

## REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Healthy Community Initiative

*Thriving youth. Thriving community.*

# HCI is here for you.



The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us how important community is – and how collaboration is vital to ensuring that local youth, families, and people of all ages have the supports and opportunities they need to lead healthy lives.

We often refer to HCI as a “backbone organization.” Backbones provide structure, while protecting vital organs and nerves. Backbones are also flexible. This analogy holds true for our organization as we seek to meet the growing and changing needs of our community in this time of crisis. Our partnering programs continue to identify those needs and are working diligently to address them.

Fortunately, even during tumultuous times, we do have much good news to reflect on, as we look at the past year’s highlights:

- » Northfield Promise was just the 12th partnership in the country to be named a “Proof Point Community” by StriveTogether, joining cities like Dallas and Seattle. This is because Northfield is seeing results in improving kindergarten readiness, third-grade literacy, high school graduation and postsecondary completion.
- » HCI supported three community school initiatives – the Greenvale Park Community School in Northfield, and the Faribault Community School’s two sites at Jefferson Elementary School and the Faribault Middle School in Faribault. Collectively, these projects provided out-of-school-time and enrichment programming to more than 3,000 youth and 1,200 adults last year. Greenvale Park’s funding was set to expire this year, but it has received a highly competitive grant from the Minnesota Department of Education to continue for the next six years!
- » Forty-five young adults continued their education journeys this year through the Northfield Community College Collaborative. Collectively, they earned 486 college credits through a combination of online and in-person Riverland Community College classes in downtown Northfield.

The year ahead will undoubtedly pose new challenges, but it will also provide new opportunities to continue the work that we know makes a difference. Thank you for your support.

Regards,

Zach Pruitt  
Executive Director

## ParentChild+ Encouraging Early Literacy

In the fall of 2019, sixteen families in Northfield and Faribault began participating in ParentChild+. The evidence-based early literacy program promotes creative ways of play, enhances parenting skills, and helps prepare children for preschool. Twice a week, a ParentChild+ Early Learning Specialist visits the home, bringing new toys and books and offering learning activities for the parents and children.

The program plans to enroll up to 10 new families in the fall of 2020.

**ParentChild+**  
Equal Possibilities From The Start

“He likes to play with everything she brings. Even if she’s reading a book, he’s really into it. The kinds of books she brings are colorful, and the illustrations keep him focused. I think it’s a really good program.”

Elizabeth Flores and son Thiago







## COLLABORATING FOR SUCCESS

HCI collaborates on 20+ local initiatives, convening like-minded organizations and providing assistance that allows them to further leverage resources for their programs that benefit youth. We provide behind-the-scenes support by:

- ♥ Sharing knowledge
- ♥ Writing and reporting on grants
- ♥ Building capacity
- ♥ Making connections and convening entities
- ♥ Tracking and evaluating effectiveness
- ♥ Implementing activities

Visit [www.northfieldhci.org/programs](http://www.northfieldhci.org/programs) to learn more about the support we provide and the initiatives we serve.

## HCI-SUPPORTED PROGRAMS



PRIMEtime



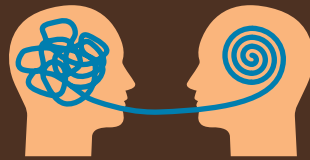
# OUR IMPACT: 2019 HIGHLIGHTS



The Northfield Youth Sports Collaborative provided **233 scholarships** to low-income youth to participate in local sports associations.



**829 community members** volunteered on HCI-supported action teams and initiatives.



**335 people completed** the 8-hour, evidenced-based Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid training last year, and 96% reported it prepared them to reach out to someone dealing with a mental health challenge.

**10,491 free books** were distributed to local children through free bookshelves at numerous community locations (including clinic waiting rooms) and via the Northfield Book Bike.



Our community has been awarded more than **\$12 million in outside grants** over the last 15 years to support local youth and families.



In partnership with the Northfield Area Family YMCA, local youth programs provided **4,416 rides** for young people and parents to get to programs/activities.

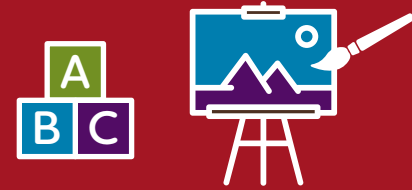


**3,033 youth and 1,204 adults** participated in the three HCI-supported community schools – Greenvale Park Community School in Northfield and Jefferson Elementary and Faribault Middle School in Faribault.

**20 local AmeriCorps members**



helped local children and youth achieve academic success.



**27 in-home childcare providers** participated in HCI-supported pilots, including a daily preschool curriculum and an arts/literacy program in collaboration with the Northfield Arts Guild. Collectively, the providers care for 172 local children.



Take It To The Box collected and safely disposed of **2,722 pounds of prescription medication** in Rice County. Developed and branded locally, the program has become a state model. More than 28,000 pounds have been collected since its inception.



# NORTHFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE COLLABORATIVE



*A new option for postsecondary learning*

The NCCC offers in-person and online Riverland Community College classes to anyone with a high school diploma or GED. Students who are taking in-person or online classes through **any** postsecondary institution have access to quiet study space, WiFi and printing services, and tutoring. Staff members are available to help students with career planning, resumes, internship research, and financial aid questions and applications.

The NCCC has continued to grow since it opened in the fall of 2018. During its first two years, it offered 15 in-person classes in downtown Northfield, supported students enrolled in 68 online classes, and provided academic advising to 55 students.

*"It has really opened my mind and made me more receptive to everything. The NCCC has helped me to figure out all the different aspects of college."*

NCCC students Maggie Lindenfesler, left, and Ray Richmond, right



*"If the NCCC didn't exist, I don't think I'd be in college. I was able to receive a lot of one-on-one support. It's just very helpful for me."*



## GROWING UP HEALTHY

*Evenings in the Park*

Growing Up Healthy organized free Evenings in the Park events in the summer of 2019 for five low-income neighborhoods in Faribault and Northfield. Funded by a grant from Allina and the Rice County Area United Way, the events provided access to fresh food, offered

*"I learned about healthy eating, and they motivated us to do some exercises. The best part was that my children had fun with all the activities."*

child/teen check-ups and other activities, and fostered neighborhood connectedness. More than 500 community members participated.

Ninety-six percent of the surveyed attendees reported making a new connection with someone they hadn't met before, and 88% reported making healthy changes to the way they eat after participating.

*"Evenings in the Park was phenomenal for my kids and me."*



# YOUTH ON BOARDS

*Nurturing Civic Engagement*



The Northfield Youth on Boards initiative received a *2019 Local Government Innovation Award* from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. The program is a partnership between HCI, the City of Northfield, Northfield Public Schools, and Youthprise. Eighty-six youth served on local boards/commissions of the city, school district, county, and local nonprofits in 2019-20.

*"I like the work HCI does for the community, focusing on certain groups of people that could benefit from efforts to achieve equity."*

Youth on Boards participants (and HCI Board members) Athena Pitsavas, Adam Vazquez Rosales, and Rahmah Abdulai (left to right)



*"HCI makes a big impact for a lot of students. Even if it's not impacting everyone directly, it reaches so many students in need, through programs like TORCH. It makes you realize it's a necessity."*

## HCI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Rahmah Abdulai (Co-Vice Chair)  
*Northfield High School Student*
- Keith Argabright
- Erin Bailey
- Claudia Bauer
- Bridget Conway
- Kris Estenson
- Natalie Ginter
- Marika Matney  
*Arcadia Charter School Student*
- Mark Mohlke
- Connie Nelson (Co-Vice Chair)
- Monte Nelson

- Randy Olson (Co-Chair)
- Stefany Perez Dorantes  
*Northfield High School Student*
- Athena Pitsavas (Co-Chair)  
*Northfield High School Student*
- Tanner Schieck (Treasurer)
- Betsy Spethmann
- Laura Stelter
- Marnie Thompson
- Linda Thornton
- Adam Vazquez Rosales  
*Northfield High School Student*
- Brisa Zubia

## HCI STAFF

- AMINA ADEN *TORCH Support Specialist*
- ASHLEY ANDERSON *HCI Coordinator*
- LAURA BALTAZAR  
*Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*  
*Rice County ParentChild+ Early Learning Specialist*
- JENNYFFER BARRIENTOS  
*Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*
- NADINE BARTOLO  
*TORCH Support Specialist, Northfield High School*
- AUSTIN BAUER  
*Director of Reporting & Analytics*
- GWEN DANIELS *Graphic Designer*
- MELEAH FOLLEN  
*Youth Engagement Director*
- BECKY FORD  
*Faribault Youth Investment Director*
- CANDACE GODFREY  
*Alumni Coordinator, Northfield Promise*
- TESSA KIESOW  
*TORCH Director, Northfield High School*
- SARAH LEE *TORCH PSEO Coordinator*
- LESLIE LIMON  
*Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*  
*Rice County ParentChild+ Coordinator*

- KATIE LOVRIEN  
*TORCH Director, Northfield Middle School*
- AMY LUNDERBY *Administrative Director*
- SANDY MALECHA *Senior Director*
- NATALIA MARCHAN  
*Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*
- DENISE MESTA  
*YouthBank Coordinator, Faribault*
- MELISSA MOWERS *HCI Support Specialist*
- JESSICA NAVARRO  
*Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*  
*Rice County ParentChild+ Early Learning Specialist*
- ZACH PRUITT *HCI Executive Director*
- KATIE REED *Rice County Chemical and Mental Health Coalition Coordinator*
- ROSMAR RIEDEL *Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*
- JOY RIGGS *Communications Coordinator*
- CARRIE ROMO *Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*
- KATIE THEIS  
*Northfield Community College Collaborative Director*
- LAURA TUREK *Northfield Promise Coordinator*
- ERIKA VELASQUEZ *Growing Up Healthy Coordinator*



1651 Jefferson Parkway  
Northfield, MN 55057

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
NORTHFIELD, MN  
PERMIT NO. 217

# 2020 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

For more information, visit  
[www.northfieldhci.org](http://www.northfieldhci.org)

