Making Rice County a place where youth want to grow up, live, work, and give back

2021 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY
It’s been quite a year. From the global pandemic to social unrest around racial injustice, our world, our nation, and our communities have faced many challenges. Yet we have also seen great resolve and tremendous innovation.

From helping children get connected to the internet to supporting collaborative food distribution efforts across Rice County, HCI has delved into areas that weren’t part of our original plans when the year began, but arose based on emerging needs and requests from partners.

As I look back at this unforgettable year, I am continually impressed and inspired by the willingness of HCI staff, board members, and community partners to do whatever was necessary to help support families during these challenges. Terms like “nimble” and “pivot” have been frequently used. However, they do begin to highlight the rapid shifts that were adeptly made to help those most in need.

People often say that change – and especially systems change – is hard and takes time. However, this past year showed that we ARE able to rapidly shift systems – in education and government and nonprofits – to serve families. As this new day begins, how do we hold on to that spirit – and ensure that systems are keeping kids and families at their center, particularly those from populations far too often overlooked?

We are excited about the opportunities ahead. We thank you for your continued support and look forward to partnering with you on this work!

Regards,

Zach Pruitt
Executive Director
HCI collaborates on 25+ local initiatives. We help organizations further leverage resources for their programs that benefit youth. Through our behind-the-scenes support we:

♥ Share knowledge
♥ Write and report on grants
♥ Build capacity
♥ Make connections
♥ Track and evaluate effectiveness
♥ Implement activities

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

Thank you to our more than 750 community volunteers and partners who supported our work this year.
**Our Impact: 2020 Highlights**

**Engaged 2,423 youth** and 482 adults in programming at three HCI-supported full-service community schools – Green Vale Park Elementary School in Northfield, and Jefferson Elementary and Faribault Middle School in Faribault.

**Connected 429 students** from 222 families to the internet in 2020-21 through 100% Connected.

**Connected 189 young children** with high quality early childhood programs and resources through the Early Childhood Navigator efforts.

**Supported 93 high school students** serving on 24 different boards/commissions through Northfield Youth on Boards; launching Faribault effort in 2021.

**Supported 75 local students** in pursuing their post-secondary degrees through the Northfield Community College Collaborative.

**Served 406 students** in grades 6-12 through TORCH in Northfield. 100% of the TORCH Class of 2020 graduated on time – even amid the pandemic.

**Launched the RISE program** (modeled after TORCH) in the Faribault Middle & High Schools. RISE served 155 youth in grades 6-12 who are students of color, from low-income homes, and/or will be first-generation college attendees.

**Distributed over 200,000 pounds of food** to families in need during the pandemic, through the partnership of Growing Up Healthy and the Community Action Center.

**Trained 142 community members** in the evidence-based Youth or Adult Mental Health First Aid training, helping them identify and respond to individuals with mental health concerns.

Across its initiatives, HCI staff and volunteers provided **102,842** direct contacts with youth and families during 2020 – ranging from academic advising to connecting families with resources.

In the past 16 years, HCI has helped bring in nearly **$18 million** in grants from outside Rice County to benefit local children and youth.
CLOSING GRADUATION GAPS

In the past year, TORCH (Northfield) and RISE (Faribault) helped more than 500 students succeed in school, explore careers, and pursue post-secondary opportunities. These are students in grades 6-12 who come from low-income families, are students of color, and/or will be first-generation college attendees.

“They push you, in a very good way. They make you want to become somebody.”
— Xochitl, TORCH participant

16 years of success; located at Northfield Middle School and Northfield High School
• 100% of TORCH students from the Class of 2020 graduated on time
• 98.6% graduation rate for students served by TORCH over the past 15 years

RISE has given me a quiet work place, academic support when I need it, and keeps me on track with my school work each week. It has helped me explore career opportunities and participate in events I might otherwise have not thought of myself.”
— Omar, RISE participant

Launched in 2020-21 at Faribault Middle School and Faribault High School
• Provides tutoring, academic advising, and social-emotional resources

• 100% of TORCH students from the Class of 2020 graduated on time
• 98.6% graduation rate for students served by TORCH over the past 15 years
NEW HOME HOSTS MORE STUDENTS

The Northfield Community College Collaborative (NCCC) moved into a larger space at the Northfield Community Resource Center in fall 2020 to accommodate its growing numbers. Since it launched in 2018, the NCCC has:

- offered 30 in-person Riverland Community College classes in Northfield
- supported students enrolled in more than 300 online classes
- provided holistic advising to more than 100 students

Collectively, its students have earned more than 1600 college credits.

“I am a student at Dakota County Technical College and am hoping to become a trauma nurse. I really enjoyed the connections I made with educators and NCCC staff. They helped me get my foot in the healthcare field, and I am forever grateful.”

— Jorge, NCCC student