



Healthy Community Initiative

2022

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

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



30 Years Investing in **What Works!**

In the early days of Healthy Community Initiative, the founding partners could not have anticipated the ways in which the organization would expand to meet the needs of local families. But their belief in collaboration, and their vision of a community where all youth thrive, continue to guide our work today.

As HCI enters its 30th year, we have much to celebrate! We hope you enjoy reading about some highlights from 2021 that are featured within this report, and we invite you to join us in our mission to cultivate communities in Rice County that support, value, and empower youth.

We remain grateful to those early, visionary leaders, and to all our partners, volunteers, and supporters who have contributed to our efforts since 1992. There is so much more we hope to accomplish moving forward, with your help!



Zach Pruitt
Executive Director



MANY THANKS!

Healthy Community Initiative



Together, we're creating a community that supports, values and empowers youth. And we're leading the way, demonstrating to communities far and wide the remarkable impact of our intentional efforts.

Please help us continue our important work by making a donation.

**Use the QR code to access HCI's
online donation
portal, DonorBox→**





“This program has helped me communicate with the school, understand apps, and get items while in quarantine.”

Veronica, with her daughter Dennise, a kindergartner at Spring Creek Elementary

Bright futures

The **Family Engagement Navigators** initiative launched in 2020–21 at Greenvale Park Elementary and expanded to Bridgewater and Spring Creek Elementary Schools in 2021–22. **The initiative served 134 children in 2021.**

Family Engagement Navigators support connections between parents/caregivers and teachers. They implement best-practice strategies that promote school attendance and help families access school resources. Preventing absences among students in grades K-5 improves their success and helps close equity gaps.

The initiative is a partnership of HCI, Growing Up Healthy, Rice County, and Northfield Public Schools. Funding is provided by the Rice County Family Services Collaborative and StriveTogether.





Collaborating for **Success**

Collaboration is at the center of what we do at HCI. **We provide behind-the-scenes support to 30+ initiatives in Rice County,** helping them further leverage resources for programs that benefit youth and families.

HCI began in 1992 out of a desire among Northfield community leaders **to create a nurturing climate where youth can thrive.** Over the years, these efforts have expanded to include Faribault and all of Rice County.

Visit
healthycommunityinitiative.org/programs
to learn more about the initiatives we serve.



Milestones

1992

Northfield community members and medical professionals discuss forming a **youth asset-building organization. HCI is born.**

2002

HCI is awarded a federal **Drug Free Communities grant**, allowing the initiative to significantly expand its work.

2004

HCI partners with the Rice County Family Services Collaborative to form the **Rice County Chemical Health Coalition.**

2005

HCI partners with volunteers and Northfield Public Schools to launch the **TORCH (Tackling Obstacles & Raising College Hopes)** initiative to improve the graduation rate for Latine students.

2013

The **Northfield Promise** "cradle to career" initiative is born, and Northfield is selected into the national **StriveTogether** collective impact network.

2014

HCI works with Northfield Public Schools to launch **Greenvale Park Community School**; the **Faribault Community Schools** follow in 2017.

2020

RISE (Realizing Individual Student Excellence) launches at Faribault High School and Faribault Middle School.

Trained **561** community members in the evidence-based Mental Health First Aid, helping them identify individuals with mental health concerns and make referrals



Growing Up Healthy staff connected **501** individuals in Rice County to resources including early childhood programs, home energy improvements, and neighborhood advocacy training



Served **1,527** youth in 2021 through the three HCI-supported community schools (Greenvale Park in Northfield; Jefferson Elementary and Faribault Middle School in Faribault)



Supported **47** AmeriCorps members serving youth and families in Rice County



Provided **academic advising and postsecondary preparation** to **384** youth through **TORCH** and to **136** youth through **RISE**. Both programs support youth in grades 6-12 who are students of color, youth from low-income households, and potential first-generation college attendees



60 families with young children participated in the two-year ParentChild+ home visiting program



HCI has helped bring in more than **\$19 Million** from outside the community to help benefit youth initiatives



13,486 people accessed HCI's **online resource** directories of chemical and mental health

Supported the college journeys of **95** local individuals through the Northfield Community College Collaborative, making it possible to earn a postsecondary degree without leaving Northfield



HCI-Supported Initiatives in Rice County



RICE COUNTY
Chemical and
Mental Health
Coalition

YOUTHBANK



Mejorando la Salud de los Adolescentes



Northfield Alliance for
Substance Abuse Prevention



Early Childhood Navigators





“

What I enjoy about being on that committee is that I get to learn and be part of decisions that are being made.”

Ella Chappuis

Faribault Youth on Boards
Paradise Center for the Arts



“

It's easy for adults to underestimate young people and not take them seriously. I have loved giving them a platform where they can be passionate about solving issues that are important to them, as well as issues that are important to me.”

Natalie Gonzalez
Northfield YouthBank



“

Having witnessed the effects of addiction firsthand, I am passionate about trying to stem substance abuse in any way I can. Joining the Youth on Boards program and N-ASAP has allowed me to promote this work throughout the community, and it has been a highlight of my time in high school.”

Brekken Modory
Northfield Youth on Boards,
Northfield Alliance for
Substance Abuse Prevention

Giving Youth a Voice

Our communities are stronger when young people have seats at our decision-making tables. Through two innovative programs—**YouthBank** and **Youth on Boards**—Rice County youth have their voices heard and are actively engaged in civic life.

Youth on Boards

In Northfield, **Youth on Boards** started in 2007 with the establishment of the **Mayor's Youth Council**, which works with city officials to identify issues important to young people and help design solutions. Northfield youth also serve on the **District Youth Council**, which provides youth input to Northfield Public Schools; and on civic and nonprofit boards and commissions. Through the **Faribault Youth on Boards** program, which launched in 2021, youth have the opportunity to serve on city, school, and nonprofit boards and commissions.



9 Faribault-area high school students served on **7** boards and commissions in 2021



122 Northfield-area high school students served on **33** boards and commissions in 2021

YouthBank

Funded by **Youthprise**, YouthBank is a youth philanthropy program in which trained youth grant-makers award funds to youth-led projects in the community. Northfield's chapter is the most established in Minnesota, and Faribault's chapter is one of the newest. Since 2015, YouthBank has granted more than **\$160,000** to projects created by and for youth in Rice County.

Projects have focused on topics like **climate action**, **mental health support**, and **racial justice and equity**. YouthBank does not elect officers; each member has an equal say on how the money is distributed. The chapters include a balance of students from different grades and backgrounds. New members are brought into the group through an application process.



It's important that YouthBank is driven by youth because youth offer a different perspective. When youth are doing well and feel like they are heard, the community as a whole definitely benefits."

Amira Haileab, Northfield YouthBank





Pathways to **Careers**

In response to the growing need for diversity in a variety of professions locally, the Northfield Community College Collaborative (NCCC) offers two different types of career fellowships.

Chemical and Mental Health Fellowships provide financial and other support to people interested in pursuing a career in the mental health, chemical health, or social work fields. **Public Sector Fellowships** support those who pursue careers in the public sector—working in health care, law enforcement, education, social services, or serving in other city or county roles.

Fellows must live in Rice County, be students of color and/or be bilingual in English and Spanish or Somali, and be able to work in the United States. They receive help in

finding career-related experiences and mentorships, tuition assistance, a laptop, textbooks, and other supportive services.

The NCCC served **41 Fellows** in 2021.



I am studying to become a behavioral mental health therapist for children and teens. The many ways this fellowship has helped me include buying my textbooks for me and offering job opportunities that correlate with what I want to become."

Litzzy Conde Acosta

Chemical and Mental Health Fellow
and NCCC student

HCI BOARD MEMBERS

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Junior, Northfield High School

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