



A BRIGHTER

TOMORROW

begins with us



SEEDS *of* CARING

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

FROM OUR LEADERSHIP



It's quite a path we've been on for some time now, isn't it? There are moments, we can admit, it's been a bit hard to see the forest for the trees. While the way forward has at times seemed unclear, something else has shone through like a stubborn ray of light: confidence that we're headed in the right direction.

And the journey is taking us someplace we're so excited to go as, collectively, we move toward a more inclusive tomorrow. The only way we'll get there is with each of us making the conscious, determined decision to seek — and share — empathy, social awareness, and an unshakable sense of “we're in it together.”

2021 was our biggest year of impact to date. That's an exceptional thing to claim in the midst of a pandemic, and the uncertainty, confusion, and exhaustion it sometimes meant to all of us. By staying focused on our vision of a kinder, more connected world, led by our youngest members, here is just a sampling of what we were able to accomplish:

Bigger capacity, for bigger impact.

- Secured our first official “home,” a welcoming office space that allows for co-working, collaboration, program supply storage, and family service programming
- Took significant steps toward building our road map for growth, through Central Ohio and beyond
- Invested in technologies and operating systems to build capacity
- Added staff to support programming, marketing and development initiatives

Programming that continues to improve in quality.

- Implemented strict COVID-19 protocols so we could safely bring back essential in-person programs
- Offered 193 projects allowing kids to participate from home, in their classroom, with their scout troops, etc.

- Supported families in tackling challenging, but critical, topics like racism, grief and loss, inclusion, mental health, etc., through new partnerships and programs
- Partnered with 37 local non-profits, donating more than \$105,000 in material donations
- Grew our equity initiative, The Kindness Corps, to ensure every child, everywhere, can understand their capacity for making a difference in their community

The effect of all these individuals — small and big ones alike — coming together with a shared purpose is powerful. It's transformative. It's hope in, and for, a generation that will see the world, and their role in it, differently.

It's a generation that will ensure there are brighter days ahead for us all.

Warmly,

Brandy Jemczura, MSW, LSW
Founder & Executive Director

Victoria Selhorst
Board Chairperson



2021 Board of Directors

- Victoria Selhorst**, JPMorgan Chase
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Emily Smith, AEP
Rob Littleton, CoverMyMeds

Executive Leadership Team:

- Brandy Jemczura**, Founder and Executive Director
Noelle Juday, Program Director
Sarah Jorgenson, Operations Manager

The volunteer team that makes it all possible:

Our 75 volunteers poured their hearts and their time into Seeds of Caring programs in 2021, helping to organize and lead projects, serve as porch drop sites, deliver donations to non-profit partners, prep supplies, and so much more. This talented, dedicated team delivered a volunteer value of \$29,453 (as calculated by Independent Sector), significantly reducing our program expenses. To each of you, thank you! We simply could not do it without you.



OUR MISSION
Seeds of Caring empowers kids to create a kinder community with their hearts, hands, and minds.



OUR VISION

A kinder, more connected world — led by our youngest generation.

2021 IMPACT



29,973 volunteer hours
contributed to the community



3,800 books
collected to support youth literacy efforts



200+ Head Start preschoolers inspired
to help their community through our 7-week Kindness Corps Littlest Helpers program



200 comfort kits
for youth entering foster care



538 welcome gifts
for New Americans



19,000 sack lunches
for hungry and unhoused neighbors
and much more!



“Seeds of Caring taught me I can be kind to someone no matter what!”

—Shreya, age 6

14,507 child participants*
empowered to create a kinder community



\$105,880 in material donations
to meet critical community needs

“I’m so glad I’ve found your organization! Teaching kids + breaking stereotypes + service projects + social emotional learning + DEI...you all have made it very easy to integrate this into the classroom, so I can’t thank you enough!”

—Megan, local elementary school teacher



98% of grown-up participants say Seeds of Caring programs **increased their kids’ knowledge and understanding of community needs**

91% of grown-up participants say their kids **showed more initiative in making a difference in their community** after participating with Seeds of Caring

**duplicated – some kids participated in one project, some participated in more #moreparticipationmoreimpact*

96% of grown-up participants say their kids **demonstrated empathy more frequently for others** after participating with Seeds of Caring

96% of nonprofit partners said Seeds of Caring **meets a real need for their organization**

WORLD KINDNESS DAY

in partnership with



On November 13, Seeds of Caring and The Columbus Foundation’s Center for HumanKindness celebrated World Kindness Day by providing educators with a World Kindness Day Teacher Toolkit to help engage students in thoughtful conversations, reflection, and community-building activities. From engaging over 2,000 students to one teacher telling us it was the most meaningful lesson she’d done with her students all year, we declared year one of this collaboration a big success and are already planning for the next one!

“It was an inspiring day that helped us be respectful and kind to other people without having limits or expecting anything in return.”

—Student participant

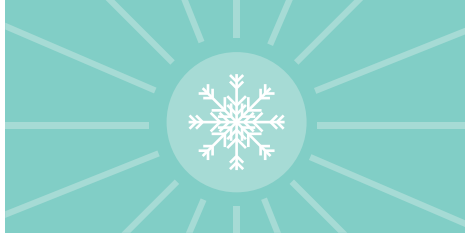
2,376 students engaged
in World Kindness Day activities

13 local school districts
were impacted

\$5,000 in donations
directed to
38 community nonprofits

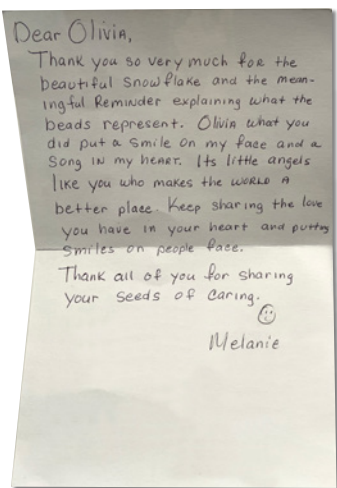
“Thank you, Seeds of Caring and The Columbus Foundation, for empowering my students to begin a life of philanthropy. This, my friends, is how our world gets better. This is how our world heals—by letting our young people lead us.”

—Teacher participant



EVERY AVALANCHE BEGINS WITH THE MOVEMENT OF A SINGLE SNOWFLAKE.

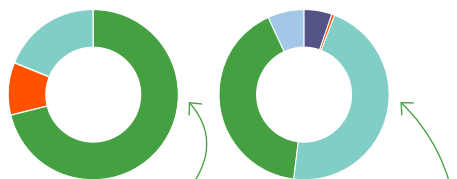
They say each snowflake is unique, and Olivia's was no exception. With simple but beautiful beads, she created a small keepsake and attached it to a handwritten poem. She may never have known how special her gift truly was, if it weren't for the heartfelt letter she received a short time later.



As part of our programming to combat senior social isolation, kids like fourth-grader Olivia learn about the challenges many older adults must face as they make the difficult decision to leave their homes and move into a senior living building.

By taking the time to reflect on how hard it might be to lose your hearing, or move away from the neighbors and friends you've known for so long, kids learn empathy, the power of kindness, and that we all need help sometimes. But more importantly, they learn that we can all give help sometimes.

FINANCIALS



Expenses (\$356,161)

● PROGRAM SERVICES:.....	\$253,900
● ADMINISTRATION & GENERAL:.....	\$35,009
● DEVELOPMENT:.....	\$67,252*

* A portion of this was investment in fundraising infrastructure to set Seeds of Caring up for long-term sustainability

Revenue (\$474,769)

● CORPORATE DONATIONS.....	\$25,524
● EVENT FEES.....	\$2,605
● FOUNDATIONS & GRANTS.....	\$218,868
● INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS.....	\$195,315
● OTHER.....	\$32,457

“Seeds of Caring has brought a joy like no other to our community. The simple acts of kindness go a long way among our residents and it is greatly appreciated! We look forward to many more memorable programs together.”

—Senior Living partner

“My girls loved putting together the welcome kits for refugee families. I appreciated the lesson, gaining an understanding for the experience and emotions the families may be going through. Such an important and complex topic to share in a loving and helpful way. Thank you!”

—The Merino Family

The comforts of home

“Despite our very best efforts, the fight for social justice will continue for generations.”

These words from Jamille Jones, founder of Pint Size Protesters, are a weighty reminder that we must engage our young people — starting today — to fight the injustices around us now, and those awaiting us in the future.

With immigration being such a divisive topic, and ‘refugee’ spoken like a bad word by some, we’ve worked extra hard to open our arms wider, to keep our smiles broad, and to ease the transition for New Americans, making sure the message is clear: **You are welcome here.** As Jeremy Hollon of CRIS says, **“It’s a very powerful message to hear.”**

In 2021, Seeds of Caring kid participants supported and welcomed our newest community members with personal care bags, welcome kits, art and activity packs, and so much more.



“When we posted about making welcome packets for refugees, we had some backlash. Some people were criticizing my daughter for helping refugees instead of veterans or people from the U.S. I was afraid she would be upset, but she stood strong in her beliefs and it helped to cement how she feels about helping others. Seeds of Caring has helped her to think about her values, and I don’t think that would have happened at such a young age without it.”

— Parent participant

Each and every one of our programs is designed to engage kids’ hearts, hands, and minds, because we know that empathy is a critical component of any service-based learning program. Our curriculum is specially designed with developmentally appropriate discussion guides, videos, books, and exercises that help kids build key social-emotional skills.

The reason we focus so much attention here is clear:

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation determined that FOR EVERY \$1 COMMUNITIES INVEST in social-emotional learning for children, THEY’LL SEE \$11 IN BENEFITS through positive health, academic, and economic outcomes.



Our programs are all about helping our youngest generation to grow in social awareness and empathy by considering life from another point of view. In doing so, our youth are inspired to take action and make our community a kinder, more connected, and more inclusive place for all of us to live and grow.



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT: *Sandy Pond*



For years, Sandy has been an advocate, a volunteer, and a generous contributor to Seeds of Caring and OhioHealth Hospice. In 2021, she approached both organizations with a bold idea: She wanted to empower young people — like her seven-year-old grandson, Brady — to explore grief and loss more openly, and to support the families relying on hospice services.

With a financial gift to both groups, Sandy provided the resources to make this partnership come to fruition. And from the kickoff project on, the collaboration has been remarkable.

“...the need for Seeds of Caring in our world has never been more pronounced.”

—Sandy Pond

“Our hearts are so full — you and your families are making an enormous impact not only on the kids in our program, but on all of our care team members who are looking for any glimmer of hope like this during such a complicated time.”

—Dana Booth, philanthropy advisor, OhioHealth Foundation

Through the inaugural project, **86 KID PARTICIPANTS** created and donated **140 KITS FOR KIDS AND TEENS** who had recently lost a loved one.

For Sandy, it highlighted that “the need for Seeds of Caring in our world has never been more pronounced. Brady’s presence reminds me every day that children absorb and reflect, and take pride in serving others. They thirst for an outlet to channel their innate goodness.”

For us, it reflected the incredible influence that people like Sandy can have when they’re called to make a difference in their communities and, often, in their own families.

“This particular project hit home for us as we lost both of my parents just two years ago. So we had a lot of tears! Doing this reminded my four kids to think about what others are going through, to be kind, and to do things to help them through it. It also reminded all of us how helpful and healthy it is to talk about our feelings, whether it’s sad, mad, frustrated, etc., as we are still going through those feelings ourselves. So glad we could do something to hopefully bring a little cheer to some other grieving children.”

— Parent participant

ONE MIGHTY LITTLE CHANGEMAKER

Elijah Gehrs is a Seeds of Caring veteran... at the ripe old age of seven. Since his family started participating — when Elijah was only two — they’ve done **more than 50 projects**: brightening days for seniors through Tunes & Togetherness, addressing racism and exploring the need for greater representation in children’s literature, assembling backpacks for Home for Families, and packing snack bags for WARM were just a few of Elijah’s favorite activities. He was even featured on Good Day Columbus for his dedication to service!

Elijah is an inspiration for us all to find ways to show kindness; for him, it’s already a way of life.



“Kindness is showing someone you care. When people come together, we can make a difference!”

—Elijah Gehrs, 7, kid participant



KINDNESS CORPS:

Because Kind is Cool

The Kindness Corps program, an equity initiative to ensure that every child knows their power to make a positive difference in their community, has seen tremendous expansion since its debut in 2020.

84% of our summer camp participants say they FELT MORE CONFIDENT in their ABILITY TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE in their community

88% increased their BELIEF THAT KINDNESS IS A POWERFUL TOOL they can use every day

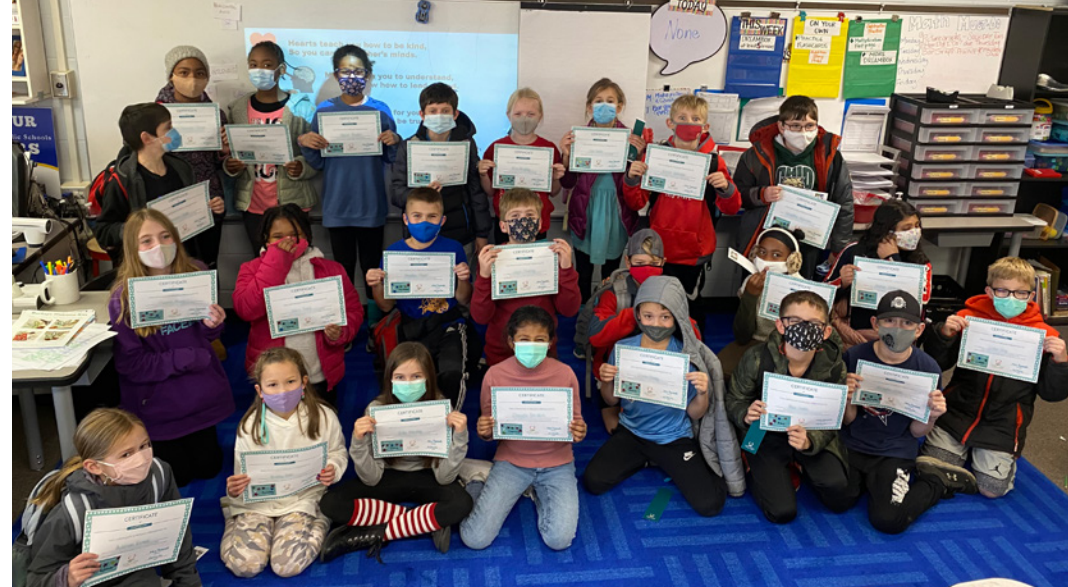
In 2021, Seeds of Caring partnered with Head Start classrooms, summer camps in under-resourced neighborhoods across Columbus, and local school classrooms. We empowered 650 kids to be the change they want to see in the world through innovative social-emotional and service-based programming. Kids learned about senior social isolation, challenges faced by New Americans and hospitalized kids, standing together against racism, and more. Along the way, as they grew in empathy and kindness, they also created thousands of donations for local non-profit partners.



“Instilling this idea of ‘doing for others’ gets woven into who these kids are. Come on, who wouldn’t want to be a part of that?”

—Suzanne Schwartz, recreation supervisor, Columbus Recreation and Parks

Through the Kindness Corps and all Seeds of Caring programming, you’ll see that we’re intentional about the language we use; we are careful to minimize othering, and encourage kids to find common ground with one another and those they help. We recognize the power of words — especially when it comes to creating a kinder, more inclusive community.



ANYWHERE PROJECTS: MAKING SERVICE ACCESSIBLE — AND MEANINGFUL

When Seeds of Caring first shifted to provide “anywhere projects” during the pandemic, we had no idea just how far-reaching the impact would stretch.

By providing a curriculum that supported and empowered caring grown-ups to lead kids through discussion and action, we opened doors across Central Ohio — some we didn’t even know had been closed.

Gretchen Taylor, mom of four-year-old Lucy, explained that some in-person projects could be challenging for Lucy because of her developmental disability, but at Seeds of Caring we want every child to know her power to make a difference. For this, our Anywhere projects were perfect — each of the three Taylor kids could play a role and contribute. Communicating through her assistive device,



Lucy tells Seeds of Caring she likes being a helper. Her favorite part of the projects is filling bags, whether it’s snack bags for unhoused neighbors or welcome gifts for New Americans. Mom Gretchen says, “There were very clear, available roles for everyone and so everyone felt a sense of ownership with the project.”

We’re so grateful for helpers like Lucy who remind us no one is ever too young to make a difference. And the opportunity for the Taylor family to do something important, and to do it together, emphasizes that we’re all part of a greater community.

“Children want to help and they want to show how much they care. Seeds of Caring shows them the way, and what happens next is powerful!”

—Liz Martin, Kindness Corps coordinator

What did The Kindness Corps teach you?

that I can help with my heart, hands and mind, I also learned how to know how to put yourself in someone else's shoes, I also learned that small things can make a big impact

—Kindness Corps student participant





HI, FIVE!

2021 marked Seeds of Caring's fifth birthday! As we wrapped up the year, it was incredible to look back on just how far we've come.

Child participants*

2016: 285

2017: 1,424

2018: 1,742

2019: 3,001

2020: 9,114

2021: 14,507

While numbers matter in any business, these numbers are particularly meaningful to us. What they truly reflect is growth and benefit across Central Ohio, and thousands of young people empowered to create kinder communities with their hearts, hands, and minds.

We are especially grateful to The Columbus Foundation and The Center For HumanKindness; the capacity-building grant they provided has been instrumental, and inspirational, in helping us achieve this level of growth.

*duplicated – some kids participated in one project, some participated in more #moreparticipationmoreimpact



“Knowing that you send a ripple of kindness in the world makes me happy.”

—HENRY



HOW YOU CAN HELP

PARTICIPATE IN A PROJECT

Want to help your kids or students build empathy and realize their potential to make an impact? Register for a service, social action, or community-building project today!

PARTNER WITH US

Are you a nonprofit, an educator, a business, or a community leader who believes in the power of kindness and the capacity for kids to change our world? Let's talk!

SHARE YOUR SKILLS

Interested in becoming a leadership team volunteer, helping behind the scenes with supply prep, or contributing your talents in technology, photography, or another skill? Contact us.

MAKE A DONATION*

Help us grow our capacity to empower thousands of young children – our future leaders – to work for the change they want to see. We have big plans for creating a more inclusive world – join us by making a generous donation, including us in your planned giving strategy, or providing an in-kind gift.

Visit www.seedsofcaring.org for more information on how to get involved with Seeds of Caring in any of these ways.

*THERE IS A NEW WAY TO SUPPORT YOUR FAVORITE ORGANIZATION!

Seeds of Caring is now able to accept gifts of stock and other appreciated assets.

The benefits:

Tax benefits: Gifting appreciated stocks/securities avoids federal capital gains and most donors can also claim a fair market value income tax deduction.

Bigger impact: Your gift can be up to 20% larger because you avoid the taxes you'd incur from selling and donating the cash. This means greater impact for our kids and community.

It's quick and easy: Seeds of Caring has a fund established at The Columbus Foundation to quickly and easily receive your gift.

Reach out to Brandy@seedsofcaring.org to learn more.

Any decision you make regarding the tax implications of investments and donations should be made in consultation with your personal tax advisor

WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR OUR 2021 NONPROFIT PARTNERS!



IT WORKS!

A quick note about how Seeds of Caring works to shape an individual child participant into a kind, empathetic, inclusive person. Collectively, we look to shape a generation who will see their community (and their role in it) in transformative ways. And **it's working!**

Parent participant Jenn wrote in to share the following:

“My kids have learned how to show kindness and compassion through this organization, and I know it has shaped them into who they are today. I am proud to share an email I received from my son Noah’s second grade teacher just last week as a testament to the kindness he has learned over the years...much of that is thanks to Seeds of Caring.”

*Hi Jenn,
I just wanted to take a minute to tell you that Noah always shows such kindness and compassion to everyone in our room. He is a positive role model for peers, looks out for others, and helps guide fellow students to make good choices. He will reach out to someone that may have trouble finding partners and always makes sure everyone is included. It is such a pleasure to be his teacher and work with him every day.*



LEARN MORE AT
www.seedsofcaring.org

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