



20
20



**BECAUSE INDEPENDENCE
LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE**




THE
LEAGUE

the-league.org

THE VOICE OPPORTUNITY



A message from the President/CEO

Wow, what a year this has been! While I could focus on the struggles that everyone faced, I'd rather focus on the positive and the successes that The League and our peers with disabilities have experienced. Our services were deemed essential by our federal funders, and more importantly, they were deemed essential by those we serve. We worked hard to help keep as many people safe and independent as possible despite having to close the physical building for a period of time.



John Guingrich
President/CEO

I credit our Board, volunteers, staff, and donors for the successes we had. Board members were always ready to help us make critical policy decisions to meet the pandemic shifts. Our staff and volunteers jumped in to serve our consumers quickly and safely. Finally, our foundation, corporate, and individual donors stepped up to the plate and nearly tripled the support they gave us!

Our Case Coordination services were close to meeting the same number of people served in FY19, but Information and Referral went through the roof, exceeding our target by 25%! Case Coordinators were proactive to ensure that consumers didn't go without medication, dealing with food insecurity, homelessness, and social isolation. Our In-Home Care and In-Home Health Care teams continued to provide services in the homes of people with disabilities, allowing them to stay independent and safe, while avoiding nursing home placement. DeafLink interpreters remained steadfast in the community, and were often on frontlines of the pandemic in physicians' offices and emergency rooms where communication was most critical. **I am so proud of this team!**

This year was a time of transformation and reimagination! We formed a Resource Development Department to focus strategically on how we engage volunteers and donors. Our Advocacy Coordinator became the first certified ADA Coordinator in Allen County and at The League. To make certain we have the right people in the right positions to strengthen our impact and culture, we hired our first ever Director of Human Resources. Finally, we invested in personal and professional growth with expanded training and collaborations, such as with Mental Health of America to focus on personal wellbeing and how to assist consumers dealing with feelings of isolation.

The League benefitted from such programs as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the CARES Act. The PPP helped us keep everyone employed and serving our consumers. The CARES Act allowed us to upgrade our technology to allow for remote work, help people out of nursing homes, and forge stronger partnerships with Wellspring Social Services and Community Transportation Network, to help meet basic needs of our consumers.

We are incredibly grateful for YOU! We commit to continually leaning into our mission and being good stewards of your investment in The League. With that, we are looking forward to the exciting future ahead! **Thank you!**

Sincerely,

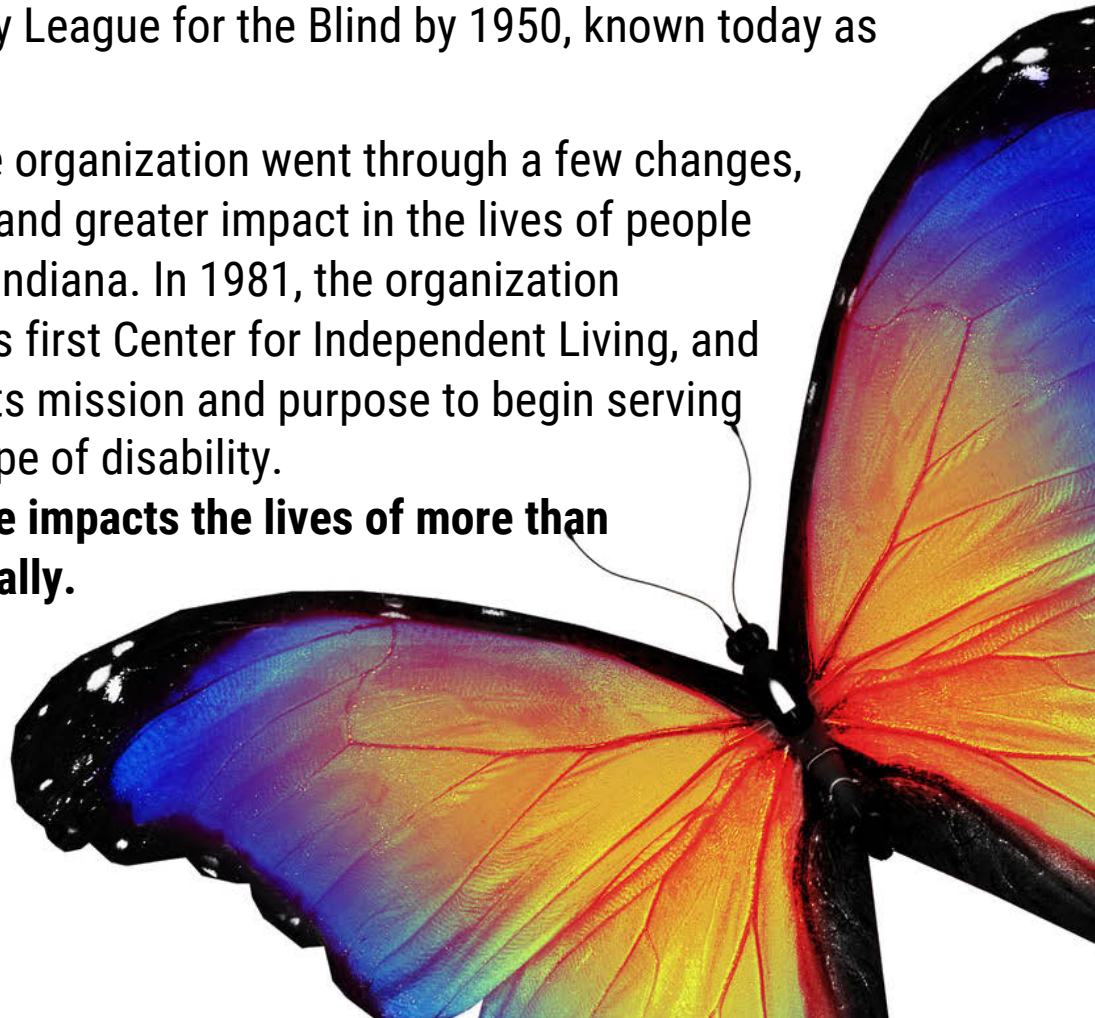
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Guingrich". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

70 YEARS Growth & Impact

The seeds of change were planted in Fort Wayne when Helen Keller came to our community to challenge residents to improve services for the Blind. Her advocacy and fundraiser resulted in the creation of the Allen County League for the Blind by 1950, known today as **THE LEAGUE.**

Over the years, the organization went through a few changes, leading to growth and greater impact in the lives of people across Northeast Indiana. In 1981, the organization became the State's first Center for Independent Living, and in 1991, updated its mission and purpose to begin serving people with any type of disability.

Today, The League impacts the lives of more than 2700 people annually.



In her own words...

I'm a Sophomore at the University, and I have been working with Remi for Orientation & Mobility Training. I began to learn the campus during the summer before my Freshman year, and learned a few routes but I lacked confidence. I needed and HAD to find help getting to where I needed to go. I was not the best at being Independent.

This summer, Remi discovered a spark of new confidence in me that likely came from simply familiarizing myself with my surroundings. I had a renewed desire to be Independent. I continued my work all summer, even though at times I would be worried or frustrated. I have continued to improve by practice and a desire to learn.

I attribute three things to my success. 1) Trust in my abilities. If I don't do this, I let worry get in my way -- I can do a lot. 2) The constant desire to learn. This motivates me to continue working on my goals to independence. And number 3) Having people who support me along the way. Remi has not only taught me, but she has supported me. Some people do their job for the money, but Remi cares deeply for all of the people she helps, including me. She wants the best for them. She encouraged and supported me every step of the way, and I am incredibly grateful for her. I do not know where I would be or what I would do without her constant care.

A personal note from Hailey*, age 18

Hailey is blind, and has been involved with The League for many years. She first became involved with our Youth Service program and advocacy support for her IEP, and now as a young adult in college, receives Orientation & Mobility Training.*

**Name changed for privacy*

MISSION

The League's mission is to provide and promote opportunities that empower people with disabilities to achieve their potential.

VISION

The League's vision is full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life.

The League Board of Directors

**Lana Keesling, Board Chair
Robert E. Lee, Ph.D, Vice-Chair
Shannon Johnson, Secretary
Lisa Poole, Treasurer**

**Kimberly Bell
Ronald Duchovic, Ph.D.
Fred Eckert, MS,PCC
James Ezell
Kamonte Grayson
Alan Grinsfelder
Charles Hatten
Verleish Jones, Ed.D.
Jenny Kissel, PHR
Lon Leech, P.E. LEED AP
Nikki Quintana**

VALUES & BELIEFS

At The League, we:

Value people with disabilities

Value consumer control

Value equal opportunity

Value diversity of thought & ideas

Value the community

Value quality

.....

We believe that people with disabilities are the experts in what they need and the goals they choose to create. We simply serve as partners and guides in the process.

WHERE WE SERVE



11

Counties in Northeast Indiana*

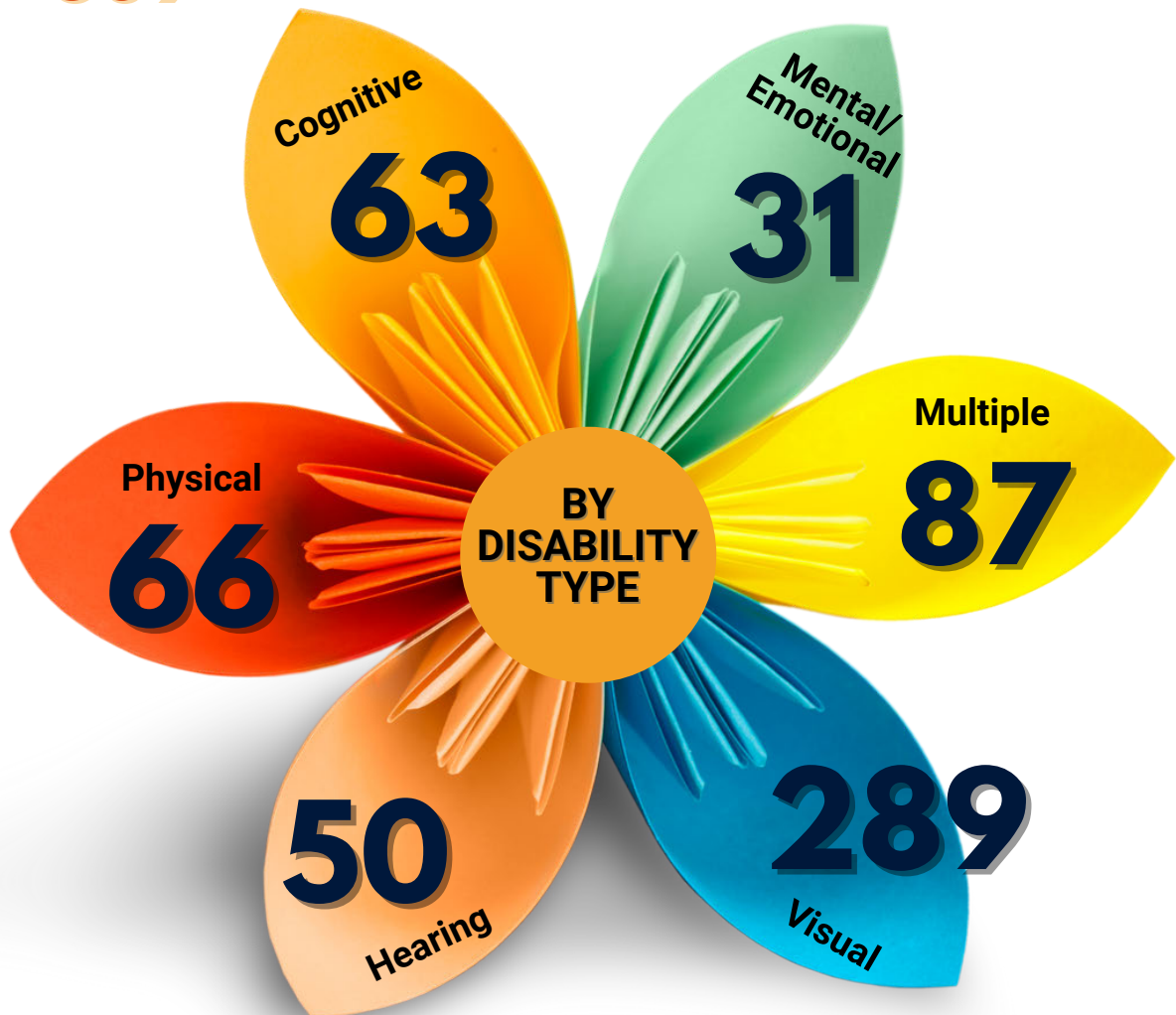
Adams Allen DeKalb
Huntington Jay Kosciusko LaGrange
Noble Steuben Wells Whitley


**In addition to its primary service area in Northeast Indiana, The League's Senior Blind Services also serves the following Indiana Counties: Elkhart, Marshall, St. Joseph, and LaPorte. DeafLink also provides American Sign Language services across the Tri-States.*

WHO WE SERVE

The League serves people with any type of disability of all ages within its geographic service area. Individualized case coordination is provided to meet the unique needs of the people we serve.

609 people were served across all programs this year.





The League's mission is fulfilled through three divisions and more than 14 different programs and services. As a Center for Independent Living, The League requires the following **FIVE CORE SERVICES:**

INDIVIDUAL & SYSTEMS
ADVOCACY

INFORMATION & REFERRAL
INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS
TRAINING

PEER SUPPORT
TRANSITION

5 CORE SERVICES



INFORMATION & REFERRAL

2,078 Individuals

who received Information & Referral services during the year. The pandemic resulted in an increase of nearly **30%** as people with disabilities and others in the community were seeking resources.

The League's Information & Referral program assists people with any type of disability by connecting them with and locating the resources they need to maintain, gain, or increase their independence. People who do not qualify for service, live outside The League's service area, businesses or loved ones of people with disabilities are able to call to ask questions about disability related topics or resources.

Individual and Systemic

ADVOCACY

A heart-shaped hole is cut into a piece of weathered, teal-painted wood. The wood shows signs of age with some peeling paint and small holes. The heart is the central focus of the image.

**is at the HEART
of all we do!**

Advocacy is a key element in achieving The League's vision of full inclusion of people with disabilities in all aspects of community life. Through systemic advocacy efforts, The League works to educate the public about barriers to full inclusion such as accessibility, public transportation, housing, education and more. Individual advocacy is achieved by empower people with disabilities how to self-advocate while at times, working alongside them in more difficult and personal challenges with systems and supports.

1,100 hours

devoted to community change including: Advocating on key community issues to reduce barriers to people with disabilities being fully included in community life.

13

League staff engaged in systemic advocacy through education and involvement on national, state, local, and community boards, committees, and advocacy projects.

10,669

individuals and followers engaged with digital platforms and social media.

49 community collaborations

Together is better. We collaborated with 49 organizations in northeast Indiana to open opportunities for young people and adults with disabilities.

A person is sitting on a wooden floor, wearing a black top, a light-colored jacket, and a patterned skirt. Their right leg is a prosthetic, and they are wearing white sneakers. The background is a wooden floor with a herringbone pattern.

TRANSITION

6 People transitioned
OUT of Institutions

32 People diverted
FROM Institutions

because home &
community living
IS independence

COMMUNITY LIVING SKILLS

(Formerly known as Independent Living Skills)

This program provides the individualized case coordination and the training, tools, advocacy and supports for consumers (people with disabilities) at risk of losing their independence in some way due to their disability.

PEER SUPPORT



WHY?

People with disabilities are the experts in what they need and want. Peer Support is a way for people with disabilities to come together to share social time, help each other navigate challenges or simply participate in educational activities.

Peer Support Groups

Allen County Adult Peer Support Groups meet on the 1st, 2nd, & 4th Thursdays each month. Rural Adult Peer Support Groups meet regularly each month. The Youth Services program offers Peer Support Groups for both youth with disabilities and parents/caregivers of children with disabilities throughout the year.

The background of the entire graphic is a soft-focus photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair and blue-rimmed glasses. She is looking slightly to the right. In the lower-left foreground, a hand is being held gently, with fingers slightly curled. The overall color palette is warm, with yellows, oranges, and soft blues.

36

**People with disabilities
accessed In-Home Care**

The logo for HOME CARE plus features the word "HOME" in a bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by a stylized graphic of two overlapping curved lines, one red and one yellow, resembling a rising sun or a smile. To the right of this graphic is the word "CARE" in the same bold, black, sans-serif font, followed by the word "plus" in a smaller, italicized, black, serif font.

HOME CARE *plus*

The League's Home Care Plus program was created in 2009 to help people with disabilities receive the homemaking and attendant care services they need to support their independence. It provides non-medical staff services in the homes of the people we serve.

8,665

Consumer Hours Used



9

People with disabilities accessed In-Home Health Care

Since 2017, the Home Health Care Plus program helps League consumers receive the in-home support services they need to maintain their independence. Services are provided by skilled healthcare staff in the homes of people who are elderly or have a disability.

522

Consumer Hours Used

HOME HEALTH CARE *plus*



ACCESSIBILITY

the ease by which people can receive, understand and act upon communications and services being offered

FACT: Did you know that 5% of the world's population is Deaf or Hard of Hearing?

According to the World Health Organization

In Fiscal 2020,



made a difference.

273

People accessed communication
with American Sign Language
Interpreting Services

IS ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION
A MISSING PIECE TO INCLUSION!

2,245

Fulfilled Sign Language
Interpreting Assignments

YOUTH SERVICES



Serving youth with any type of disability ages 3 to 24

**Inclusive Activities * Lifeskills * Adult Transition
Social Skills * Peer Groups * Self-Advocacy * Camps**



192

Total Youth with Disabilities
Served in Fiscal 2020

Total Youth who attended
inclusive camp programs

38

**“I can’t change the direction of
the wind, but I can adjust my sails
to always reach my destination.”**

~ Jimmy Dean

161

**Consumers received
of Assistive Technology**



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

BRAILLE SERVICES



2,215

Braille documents
produced

15,496

Braille pages
produced

15,482

Braille business
cards produced

DEEMED

ESSENTIAL SERVICES



PANDEMIC

COVID-19

RESPONSE AT THE LEAGUE

To say that 2020 was a challenge is an understatement. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the lives of many in our community, nation and across the globe.

At The League, our services are deemed essential. While at the beginning, we were forced to leave the building for the protection of our team and consumers, we did not cease services and we did not furlough any team members.

The demand for our services saw an increase in many of our programs, especially in our Information & Referral (32%) as people with disabilities and their families sought out critical resources. We saw a need growing for people with disabilities to secure basic resources such as food, but due to increased health risks - they were unable to go out of their home to secure them.

We partnered with agencies such as Wellspring on Wheels, CTN, and Community Harvest to meet some of these basic needs during the pandemic. We took advantage of the Cares Act Fund to help people with disabilities transition out of nursing homes and secure independent housing and/or home modifications as the increase of COVID19 and death was greater in institutionalized settings.

We took the time to reimagine HOW we did our services, and got creative to meet the needs of the consumers we serve during this year. When possible, many services and meetings were attended remotely, or as we returned to the building, with added safety measures of wearing masks, social distancing and by addition more sanitizing stations.

We  our volunteers!



In spite of the pandemic, resulting in some volunteer positions being put on hold, our Volunteers made a difference!

THANK YOU!

1963

Volunteer Hours contributed to IMPACT!

#GIVINGTUESDAY

On December 3, 2019, The League participated for the first time in the National Giving Tuesday day of philanthropy.

We took advantage of a giving match from AWS Foundation, up to \$10,000.

**\$7,712
Raised**

**\$3,856
Matched by**



Due to COVID19 - The League participated in a responsive Giving Tuesday NOW campaign made possible by the Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne on May 5, 2020.

**\$3,275
Raised**



**\$525
Matched by**

COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
of Greater Fort Wayne

The League has 2 annual fundraiser events annually:
Suds in the City & Blues Bash.



\$35,325

Total Revenue Raised

Location: Fort Wayne Country Club

\$24,324

Total Revenue Raised

**Due to the COVID19 pandemic,
this year's Blues Bash went VIRTUAL!
Streamed live via**

@Can't Stop the Blues Facebook page.

**BLUES
BASH 2020**

August 23 & 24, 2020

VIRTUAL Event

Organizational Sponsors

Sweetwater[®]



Music Instruments & Pro Audio

Chuck & Lisa Surack

**THANK YOU,
ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSOR!**

THANK YOU, DONORS!

Foundations & Trusts

Arnold, Howard P Foundation
AWS Foundation
Baade Charitable Trust
Colby Family Foundation
Community Fdn of Greater Fort Wayne
The Council on Senior Services
DH Jones Family Foundation
English, Bonter, Mitchell FDN
Foellinger Foundation
Journal-Gazette Foundation
Kuhne, Charles Charitable Foundation

Lela M Fetters Trust
Lincoln Financial Group Foundation
Magee O'Connor Foundation
Marie H. Brookreson Trust
McMillen Foundation, Inc.
National Christian Foundation
Noecker Family Foundation
Percy Hammond Walsh Foundation
The Prophet Sisters Foundation
Raker, M.E. Foundation
Renaissance Charitable Foundation

RMSM Foundation
Schneider, Dr. Louis & Anne B
Somerville Charitable Trust
Stucky, Mary Margaret
Testamentary Trust
United Way of Allen County
The Waterfield Foundation
Wilson, Edward M. & Mary
McCrea FDN
Zollner Foundation

Individuals & Businesses

3 Rivers Federal Credit Union
Douglas Abramowski
Tony and Tina Acosta
Sylvia Adams
Kenneth Albin
Ambassador Enterprises
Anna Andrews
Arcola Lions Club
William Argus
Tom Barfell
Beacon Heights Church of BRE
Pamela Beckford
Kimberly Bell
Anita Bencivengo
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Toby Berk
Kelley Beuchat

Blackburn and Green
Loufoua and Angelina Bounoug
Lance Bowman
Nelson Brackin
Sandra Brehse
Brimfield & Rome City Lions Club
Claudia Burrus
Patricia Butler
Mike Bynum
Marianne Capriano
Carriage House
Sean Cassidy
Richard Cater
Dr. Anthony & Vivian (Tran) Cheng
Kathleen Choka
Justin and Jessica Clupper

Bruce Coburn
Caroline Collar
Marty and Julie Collins
Sean Collins
Katia Cook
Marge Costa
Council On Senior Services
John Court
Elizabeth Craker
Current Mechanical
Roseann DiCapua
Ronald and Catherine Duchovic
Larry and Donna Duhamell
Elevare, LLC
LO and CI Engquist
Melvyn Erdos

James Ezell
Ronald and Karen Fecher
David Fee
First Merchants Corporation
Gordon Fisher
Fort Wayne Children's Zoo
Frontstream
Fred Fulkerson
Palermo Galindo
James Ganaway
John Ganjamie
Tadd & Jean Garshwiler
Belinda Garza
Nancy and Paul Gasparini
Chris and Deb Goeglein
Lucinda Gonzalez

Individuals & Businesses

Manny Gonzalez	Lon & Jill Leech	PHP	Katherine Spencer
Matthew Goodman	Robert & Sandra Lemon	Bruce Pinsky	Forest Sponseller
David Grant	Gordon & Nancy Lewis	PNC Financial Services	Garth Sponseller
Howard Green	Laura Lindsay	Lisa Poole	Richard Stahl
Alan Grinsfelder	Samuel Loeffler	Tamara Popoff	Steamteam, LLC
John and Anita Guingrich	Longe Enterprises	Leigh Pranger	Barbara Stedje
Rich Habegger	Judi Loomis	Psi Iota Xi - Theta Theta Chapter	Tom Stehn
Adam Hall	Carl Marcham	Nikki Quintana	Jonathan & Janet Steiner
Gilbert and Suzanne Hamman	Mathematica Policy Research	Angela Radford	Robert Stephen
Freda Harmeyer	Shawn McArdle	Heather Ramig	Richard Stevenson
Judy Harris	Tim McCrea	John Reche	Bonnie Stubbs
Linda L Hartley	Doug McKibben	Paula Reed	Chuck & Lisa Surack
Charlie Hatten	Kathy McNeill	Barbara Rey	Lorenzo Sutter
Allen and Vicki Hauser	Michael McNett	Melanie Rey	Sweetwater Sound
Judy Henderson	W John Meinzen	Carole Reynolds	Nicole Taylor
Heritage Lions Club	Devin and Renee Meunier	Sandra Rhoads	Lions Club Central Charity
Cheri Hitzemann	Arthur Meusel	Shawn Rice	The Looking Glass
Ken & Jan Hoffman	Eric Meyer	Julie Richardson	Jeanette Thompson
Diane Humphrey	Stacey Meyer	Adnana Rizvic	Richard Thompson
Keith and Sylvia Hyman	James Miller	Lanette Robinson	Kazuhiko Tomomatsu
Insource	Deborah Minardi	Rowe Industries	Ray Treen
James Jaksa	Raymond Muller	Rebecca Rupright	Hattie Trigg
Robert Johnson	Janice Murayama	Barbara Schroeder	Turnstone
Shannon Johnson	Charity Murphy	Charlene and Hank Schroeder	Nancy Uffelman
Tony and Sherry Johnson	Network for Good	Mary Arnold Schwartz	United Way of Allen County
Verleaish Jones	Brenda Niccum	Michael Sera	Edith Vanhouten
Andrew and Betsy Kachmar	Dennis Noak	Stan Shafer	VFW Limberlost Post 6236
Carl and Linda Kahlenbeck	Paul Noel	Kevin Shook	Jonathan and Deborah Walker
Charles Kaplan	Pat Norman	Rena Shown	Ann Wallace
Dr. Sherwin Kepes	Kay Novotny-Yost	Pam Sibley	Karen and Robert Warren
Kathleen Kish	Nucor Building Systems	Cynthia Smith	Waynedale Lions Club
Kroger	Elizabeth Nygaard	Mark Smith	Steve and Cheryl White
Karen Kurowski	Old National Bank	Katherine Spencer	Stephen Williams
Lorraine Kushner	Omnisource	Forest Sponseller	Susan Wygant
Lake City Bank	Robert Perry	Garth Sponseller	Avery and Pam Zook
Robert Lee	Peters Body Shop	Richard Stahl	Jane Zwienink

Looking ahead:

the
future
is
good

VISION

2025

After an extensive research project and sustainability study, The League is looking forward to the future with its next service expansion. The last service expansion for our agency occurred in 2017 with the addition of the Home Health Care Plus program.

The League is strategically planning its moves for the following:

A Pooled Trust

A Cafe & Facility Expansion

Revolutionizing Youth Transition

Stay tuned as developments continue....

