BECAUSE INDEPENDENCE LOOKS DIFFERENT FOR EVERYONE
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.

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,

John Guingrich
President/CEO
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

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.

BY DISABILITY TYPE

- **Cognitive**: 63
- **Mental/Emotional**: 31
- **Physical**: 66
- **Hearing**: 50
- **Visual**: 289
- **Multiple**: 87
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
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.
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.

10,669 individuals and followers engaged with digital platforms and social media.

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

49 community collaborations

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

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.
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.
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.

9

People with disabilities accessed In-Home Health Care

522

Consumer Hours Used
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, DeafLink made a difference.

273 People accessed communication with American Sign Language Interpreting Services

ACCESSIBLE COMMUNICATION IS 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
Total Youth with Disabilities Served in Fiscal 2020: 192
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
DEEMED ESSENTIAL SERVICES
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 love 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!
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

$3,856 Matched by AWS Foundation

$7,712 Raised

$525 Matched by Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne
The League has 2 annual fundraiser events annually: Suds in the City & Blues Bash.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic, this year's Blues Bash went VIRTUAL! Streamed live via @Can't Stop the Blues Facebook page.
THANK YOU, ORGANIZATIONAL SPONSOR!
## 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
- Blackburn and Green
- Bruce Coburn
- Caroline Collar
- Carolon 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
Matthew Goodman
David Grant
Howard Green
Alan Grinsfelder
John and Anita Guingrich
Rich Habegger
Adam Hall
Gilbert and Suzanne Hamman
Freda Harmeyer
Judy Harris
Linda L Hartley
Charlie Hatten
Allen and Vicki Hauser
Judy Henderson
Heritage Lions Club
Cheri Hitzemann
Ken & Jan Hoffman
Diane Humphrey
Keith and Sylvia Hyman
Insource
James Jaksa
Robert Johnson
Shannon Johnson
Tony and Sherry Johnson
Verleaish Jones
Andrew and Betsy Kachmar
Carl and Linda Kahlenbeck
Charles Kaplan
Dr. Sherwin Kepes
Kathleen Kish
Kroger
Karen Kurowski
Lorraine Kushner
Lake City Bank
Robert Lee
Lon & Jill Leech
Robert & Sandra Lemon
Gordon & Nancy Lewis
Laura Lindsay
Samuel Loeffler
Longe Enterprises
Judi Loomis
Carl Marcham
Mathematica Policy Research
Shawn Mc Ardle
Tim McCrea
Doug McKibben
Kathy McNeill
Michael McNett
W John Meinzen
Devin and Rene Meunier
Arthur Meusel
Eric Meyer
Stacey Meyer
James Miller
Deborah Minardi
Raymond Muller
Janice Murayama
Charity Murphy
Network for Good
Brenda Niccum
Dennis Noak
Paul Noel
Pat Norman
Kay Novotny-Yost
Nucor Building Systems
Elizabeth Nygaard
Old National Bank
Omnisource
Robert Perry
Peters Body Shop
PHP
Bruce Pinsky
PNC Financial Services
Lisa Poole
Tamara Popoff
Leigh Pranger
Psi Iota Xi - Theta Theta Chapter
Nikki Quintana
Angela Radford
Heather Ramig
John Reche
Paula Reed
Barbara Rey
Melanie Rey
Carole Reynolds
Sandra Rhoads
Shawn Rice
Julie Richardson
Adnana Richardson
Rowe Industries
Rebecca Rupright
Barbara Schroeder
Charlene and Hank Schroeder
Mary Arnold Schwartz
Michael Sera
Stan Shafer
Kevin Shook
Rena Shown
Pam Sibley
Cynthia Smith
Mark Smith
Katherine Spencer
Forest Sponseller
Garth Sponseller
Richard Stahl
Katherine Spencer
Forest Sponseller
Garth Sponseller
Richard Stahl
Steamteam, LLC
Barbara Stedge
Tom Stehn
Jonathan & Janet Steiner
Robert Stephen
Richard Stevenson
Bonnie Stubbs
Chuck & Lisa Surack
Lorenzo Sutter
Sweetwater Sound
Nicole Taylor
Lions Club Central Charity
The Looking Glass
Jeanette Thompson
Richard Thompson
Kazuhiko Tomomatsu
Ray Treen
Hattie Trigg
Turnstone
Nancy Uffelman
United Way of Allen County
Edith Vanhouten
VFW Limberlost Post 6236
Jonathan and Deborah Walker
Ann Wallace
Karen and Robert Warren
Waynedale Lions Club
Steve and Cheryl White
Stephen Williams
Susan Wygant
Avery and Pam Zook
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....