

THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT DISABILITIES.

ALL TOGETHER NOW.

2021
COMMUNITY
REPORT



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PACKING LIST



ALL TOGETHER NOW.
2021 COMMUNITY REPORT

#	ITEM	DESCRIPTION	SHIPPED
PG 3	CEO LETTER	- LETTER FROM PATTI HAYS - 2020-2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS	X
PG 5	COVID-19 IMPACT	-UNEXPECTED CHALLENGES MET WITH UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO COME TOGETHER	X
PG 10	ADA 30 YEARS	-CELEBRATING THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT	X
PG 15	FINDER & IIDC	-A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR CONNECTING HOOSIERS TO DISABILITY RESOURCES	X
PG 19	GILMORE GRANT	-ARTS SHOULD BE UNIVERSALLY ACCESSIBLE	X
PG 22	GIVINGTUESDAY	-MATCHING FUNDS RAISE GIVINGTUESDAY TOTALS IN A TOUGH YEAR	X
PG 25	iCAN BIKE	-PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ENJOY THE JOY OF BIKE RIDING	X
PG 27	GRANT DISTRIBUTION	- GRANT DISTRIBUTION BREAKDOWN - 2020-2021 GRANTEEES	X

THINK DIFFERENTLY ABOUT DISABILITIES.

ALL TOGETHER NOW.

**The whole is
more than the
sum of its parts.**

Aristotle, Greek Philosopher

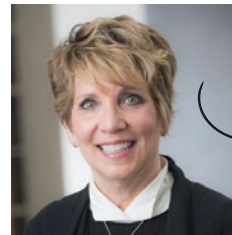
This year, maybe more than any other in our history, we are focusing on the idea of togetherness. While the pandemic may have physically separated us, it has helped us understand just how important connectivity truly is.

We've extended the idea of togetherness to this year's community report. Titled, "All together now," the report consists of individual pieces that convey unique stories about how separate organizations use AWS Foundation resources and grants to provide new experiences and opportunities for people with disabilities. While each story offers an understanding of the positive difference that a single organization, program or service can make, it's the synergy they create that continues to build an inclusive Northeast Indiana.

The prolonged pandemic has challenged us all and kept our at-risk family members, friends and neighbors apart — and prevented them from participating in many activities. Despite it all,

AWS Foundation highlights just a few of the many ways grantees have safely brought us together and provided much-needed programs and services for people of all abilities. Whether learning to ride a bike, play a musical instrument, use new technology or participate in employment awareness training, each and every grant has helped find a way to continue to bring people together.

We are all working to put the pieces together, creating a more inclusive community.



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti".

Patti Hays
CEO, AWS Foundation



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THE
**STORM
CLOUD**
of COVID-19



The COVID-19 pandemic presented non-profit organizations and community members alike with a storm of unexpected challenges — but it also created unique opportunities to come together and support one another. AWS Foundation worked with these organizations to help meet these challenges head-on, providing additional help for those in need.



Supporting the Heroes

Direct service and home healthcare providers are always heroes — pandemic or no pandemic. Non-profit organizations that support people with disabilities rely on these front-line workers to achieve their missions. But in 2020, many non-profits faced a shortage of these essential workers and caregivers, as well as rising supply costs and lengthy delivery times.

AWS Foundation stepped in to do our part by supporting these heroes as they worked tirelessly to care for the most vulnerable people in our community.

Family Employment Awareness Training

Navigating employment during the pandemic proved difficult for people in a variety of circumstances. Add the complexity of a disability, and difficult questions come to the surface for some individuals: Who will help me get a job? Can I find a job that I am truly interested in? Is there someone who can help me learn and keep my job? Will working impact any other support I currently receive?

Thankfully, there is a place for individuals with disabilities to find answers. The Center on Community Living and Careers (CCLC) at the Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) provides Family Employment Awareness Training (FEAT) to bridge the gap of information and make community connections around employment.

FEAT provides training opportunities — offered both onsite and in a virtual format — around supported and customized employment, transition services, employer and employee support, and benefits. FEAT training also includes introductions to individuals currently working and community support persons to help individuals seeking work to imagine the possibilities and realize they're not alone in their pursuit of meaningful work.

So far, more than 250 parents and individuals with disabilities from Northeast Indiana have received FEAT training. As the pandemic continues to disrupt the workforce, this vital program is offering help and hope to those in need.

Virtual Programs

The pandemic brought many programs to an unfortunate halt when they were needed most. But when the going gets tough, the tough get creative. Many of our grantees shifted their approach to ensure those with disabilities were still engaged in a time of forced isolation.

Here are a few examples:

- **Audiences Unlimited** repurposed grant funding to purchase video equipment that allowed them to bring music classes to Life Adult Day Academy students virtually.
- **McMillen Health** used their existing virtual programming model to ensure that Varied Abilities Days, their health education program for individuals with disabilities, still reached participants from a distance.
- **Camp Millhouse** used Zoom and hand-delivered “camp in a box” kits containing their favorite parts of camp to connect with their campers when in-person experiences were not an option.
- **Jesters** didn’t just survive virtually, they thrived by expanding social groups and developing new relationships.

These are just a few of the countless grantees that figured out a way to “go virtual,” eliminating physical, geographic and financial barriers to continue their important programming. Grantees found a level of accessibility they may not have considered before, leading many to adopt a new hybrid model of providing experiences that will increase their impact far into the future.



Financial Impact

The pandemic caused cancellations on an epic scale, including strategic fundraising events that help finance vital programs. This past year, we saw many events and activities canceled for a second year, and those that were able to hold events struggled to meet past attendance levels.

As a result, these organizations turned to AWS Foundation, causing a significant rise in requests for operating grants. In some cases, programs were at risk of being reduced, cut or delayed because of rising costs and new COVID-related needs. By supporting these organizations through this time, AWS Foundation is helping to ensure they continue their critical work in serving individuals with disabilities.

The Silver Lining

The pandemic has taught all of us an important lesson: **We do not know what the future has in store.** But it has also taught us that when the storm clouds come, we can always find the silver lining when we stay flexible, innovate and, most importantly, work together toward a common goal.



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30 YEARS

Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of
the Americans with Disabilities Act

July 26, 2020 marked the 30th anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

This federal civil rights law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities in all areas of public life, ensuring they have the same rights and opportunities as everyone else. It has made a lasting impact on our country and has enabled Americans with disabilities to fully engage and thrive.



ADA

An important aspect of the ADA is working to erase outdated language. To this end, AWS Foundation and community leaders celebrated the anniversary with a special unveiling ceremony at Northside Park in Fort Wayne, Indiana, the historical site of the “State School.” A special plaque was dedicated to the site, honoring the memory of the thousands of children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who lived at the home. The plaque changed outdated wording to contemporary, person-first language that places the individual above the disability and it erased the “R” word.





Another critical component of the ADA is ensuring public buildings and spaces are designed to be accessible so people of all abilities can move about independently. AWS Foundation continues to share how small design modifications can go beyond supporting accessibility, and encourages others to adopt universal design that supports fully inclusive environments. Additionally, AWS Foundation has provided tours of its new home, highlighting features that make every guest feel welcome.



Mayor Tom Henry joined in this celebration to mark how far our community has come, and to express commitment toward continuing to promote equal opportunities.





Work stations, tables, outlets and light switches are set at varied heights, so they are within easy reach, whether standing or sitting.

AWS Foundation is committed to making the promise of ADA a reality. It proudly supports organizations and service agencies in northeast Indiana that are working to honor ADA by developing a community in which people with enduring disabilities are fully engaged in all aspects of community life.

While there is still much work to be done, the country has made great strides toward equality for people of all abilities in the past 30 years. To learn more, visit ADA.gov.



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A SMART
PARTNERSHIP KEEPS

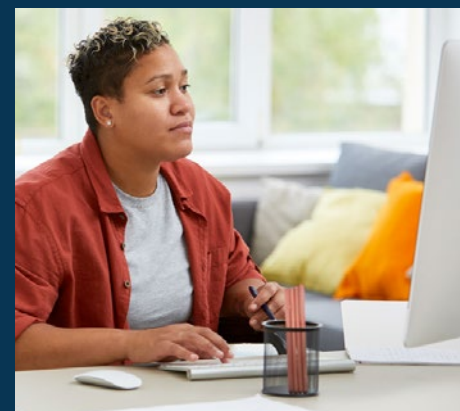
FINDER

GROWING AND
CONNECTING

AWS
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Throughout Indiana, there are thousands of professional and volunteer organizations with programs, services, equipment and information that can help improve the lives of those with disabilities.

Navigating this complex web of resources can be daunting. That's why AWS Foundation partnered with Indiana University's Indiana Institute on Disability and Community (IIDC) to implement FINDER state-wide as part of the University's library information and referral services in November 2020.

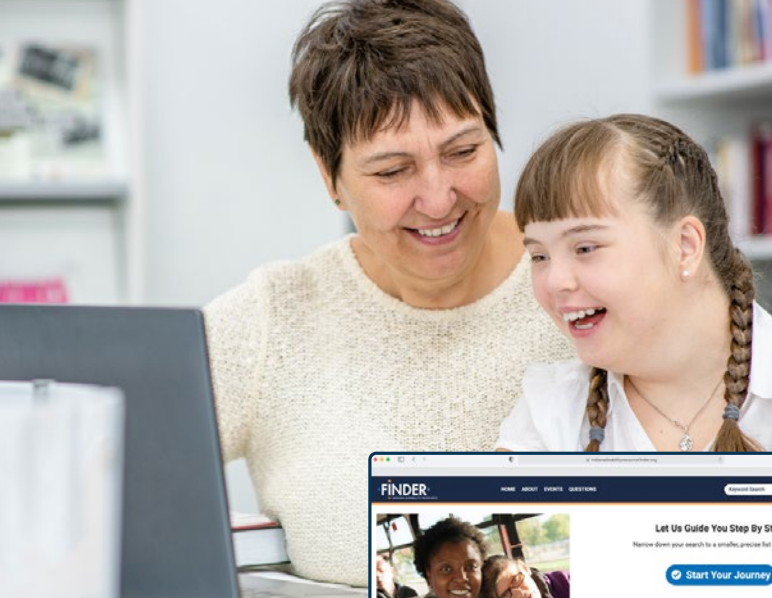


A one-stop-shop for connecting people to disability resources —

With guidance from nonprofit organizations, disability-focused state agencies and Indiana families, AWS Foundation launched Indiana Disability Resource FINDER in 2019.

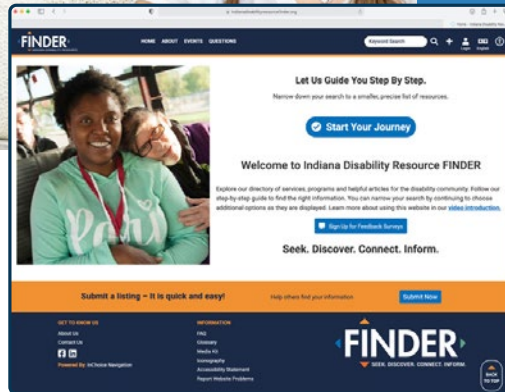
FINDER is a free, easy-to-use online resource specifically designed to provide Hoosiers with disabilities and those that care for them 24/7 access to the

programs, services and organizations in their communities that can help enhance their quality of life. First-time users can use a step-by-step instruction guide, while more experienced users can take advantage of advanced search features. Regardless of how information is located, search results are immediately available and can easily be shared or saved for future use.



INDIANA INSTITUTE ON DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY

The mission of Indiana University's Indiana Institute on Disability and Community is to work with communities to welcome, value and support the meaningful participation of people of all ages and abilities through research, education and service. To learn more, visit www.iidc.indiana.edu.



IndianaDisabilityResourceFINDER.org

FINDER empowers parents, teachers, caregivers and others across Indiana to find answers to disability-related questions and quickly locate the services they need – anytime, day or night. Today, our partnership with IIDC connects even more people with the resources they need, right where they live, work and play. And as the platform continues to grow, AWS Foundation

hopes to bring the power of FINDER to other states across the country, connecting even more people with the resources they need.



FINDER

Seek. Discover. Connect. Inform.



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GILMORE GRANT

is a
Work of Art



Art is a special and rewarding part of life — it entertains, educates, inspires and empowers. And at AWS Foundation, we believe the arts should be universally accessible.



The Gilmore Inclusive Arts Grant helps make that possible by supporting special projects devoted to including and engaging individuals with disabilities in local art communities throughout Northeast Indiana. Named in honor of Lynne Gilmore, the first executive director of AWS Foundation, the Gilmore Grant awards up to \$25,000 to a single organization that positively impacts the community through art.



In December 2020, the Gilmore Grant was awarded to Gigi's Playhouse Fort Wayne for a new music initiative, Gigi's Music: Skoog Lab. This inclusive program enriches the lives of individuals with disabilities by making music more accessible with the Skoog instrument, a squishy cube that allows students to produce errorless music. Color-coded buttons make the device more accessible for those who learn visually, and its tactile musical interface encourages experimentation with the instrument.



SKOOG INSTRUMENT

The Skoog enriches the lives of participants beyond music-making though — it also helps instill important life skills, such as decision-making, concentration, social interaction and more.



GIVING
TUESDAY

It's a Match!

AWS Foundation
Matches \$130,000

Matching Funds Raise GivingTuesday Totals in a Tough Year

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost everything – including charitable giving. Asking people to give during such uncertainty was difficult. However, Northeast Indiana disability service providers were able to meet, and in many cases exceed, their goals for GivingTuesday and received matching funds from AWS Foundation for their hard work.

“We are incredibly proud of them,” Patti Hays, AWS Foundation CEO, says of the non-profit service providers.

“We saw their staff work hard and creatively to reach out, and their donors

responded! The work of these organizations profoundly impacts our efforts to promote inclusion in our region, and I would encourage everyone to consider supporting their work, not just on GivingTuesday.”

GivingTuesday has become a world-wide sensation, encouraging people everywhere to make donations to charitable organizations on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. AWS Foundation began an annual match in 2017 as part of its tenth anniversary.

“We are incredibly proud of them. We saw their staff work hard and creatively to bring in the donations, and their donors responded!”

**Give again
this year!**

November 30, 2021

Regardless of the success of GivingTuesday, no one knew what to expect during the pandemic. AWS Foundation partnered with 12 regional disability service providers to match their fundraising in order to support them by encouraging larger donations and inspiring giving.

Remarkably, even during a year like no other, the 12 organizations exceeded the initial goal of \$130,000 to raise a total of \$329,340 with matching dollars. Even more remarkable, ten of the 12 organizations exceeded their \$10,000 goal and received extra matching dollars.

AWS Foundation applauds the hard work done by these select disability service providers that received matching funds:

Arc of LaGrange County

Arc of Noble County

Arc of Wabash County

Bi-County Services

Cardinal Services

Carey Services

Easterseals Arc of
Northeast Indiana

LIFE Adult Day Academy

Passages, Inc.

Pathfinder Services

The League

Turnstone



JOY IN MOTION

The iCan Bike program is fostering happiness and independence in Wells County.



iCan Bike

The freedom and fun of riding bikes, especially when we were kids, is something that many of us take for granted. However, it is often out of reach for people with disabilities. That's what the iCan Bike program is working to change.

Thanks to this unique program, people with disabilities can experience the sheer joy of bike riding. AWS Foundation is thrilled to help bring the program to the Caylor-Nickle Foundation Family YMCA in Bluffton, Indiana.

The iCan Bike program helps participants ages eight and up learn to ride a two-wheeled bike while trained volunteers help by acting as spotters. The program cultivates independence and brings the simple pleasure of bike riding to those who may otherwise never experience it.



Since the program's launch in 1999, it has helped nearly 20,000 children and adults with disabilities across the country experience the excitement of independent bike riding. Today, more individuals are able to enjoy the fun and freedom of riding bikes, thanks to the iCan Bike program.

2020-2021 GRANT DISTRIBUTION

AWS Foundation is proud to work with organizations that share our passion for creating a more inclusive community. Thank you to our 2020-2021 grantees for your hard work and dedication.

EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT \$1,064,081	TRANSPORTATION \$429,800	SOCIAL \$618,833	HOUSING \$5,000
EARLY DIAGNOSIS \$239,450	SYSTEM NAVIGATION \$777,679	OTHER \$1,589,917	

98

**GRANTS
GIVEN
TOTALING**

\$4,724,760

2020–2021 GRANTEES

A Rosie Place for Children
Arc of LaGrange
Arc of Noble County
Arc of Wabash County
Arts United
Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum
Audiences Unlimited
Bi-County Services
Bishop Dwenger High School
Blue Jacket
Blue Star Recyclers
Boys and Girls Club of Fort Wayne
Camp Millhouse
Camp PossAbility
Camp Red Cedar
Cardinal Services
Carey Services
CASS Housing
Churubusco United Methodist Church
Community Choirs of Huntington County
Community Foundation DeKalb County
Community Transportation Network
Concord Community Schools
Crossroad Child & Family Services
Daniel's Place
DeKalb County Eastern Community School District
Down Syndrome Association of NE Indiana
Early Childhood Alliance
East Allen County Schools
Easterseals Arc of Northeast Indiana
Easterseals Passages
Elkhart Community Schools
Family Voices Indiana
Fort Wayne Ballet
Fort Wayne CitiLink
Fort Wayne Civic Theatre
Fort Wayne Dance Collective
Fort Wayne Park Foundation
Fort Wayne Rotary Foundation, Inc
GiGi's Playhouse
GiveHear
Glorious Gate Rowing Association
Greater Fort Wayne, Inc.
Headwaters Counseling
Healthier Moms & Babies
Heartland Sings
Huntington County Community Schools
Huntington University
Indiana Deaf Camps Foundation
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Joe's Kids
Judy A Morril Recreation Center
Junior Achievement of Northern Indiana
Kiwanis Club
Kosciusko Parkview Community YMCA
L.I.F.E. Adult Day Academy
Little River Wetlands Project
Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
Manchester Elementary School
Marion Community School of Arts
McMillen Center for Health Education
Mental Health America
Nappanee Elementary
North Adams Community Schools
One Heart Disability Ministry
Otis R Bowen Center for Human Services
Pathfinder Services
Purdue University Fort Wayne
Run Hard Rest Well
Science Central
Southern Wells Elementary School
Southwest Allen County Schools
Special Friends of Fort Wayne, Inc
Special Olympics Indiana
Super Shot Inc.
The Arc of Noble County Foundations
The League
The Lighthouse
The Rescue Mission
Turnstone
Visiting Nurse
Visually Impaired Preschool Services
Warsaw Community Schools
Wellspring Interfaith Social Services
Whitley County 4-H Inc.
Whitley County Consolidated Schools
World Baseball Academy
YMCA of Greater Fort Wayne



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