

2022



# ANNUAL REPORT

**30 YEARS OF  
WORKING TOGETHER  
AND CARING FOR  
OUR COMMUNITY**



Independent  
 Health<sup>®</sup>  
FOUNDATION

Celebrating 30 Years

**first  
night**  
buffalo


**KIDS RUN**

Healthy Options.

Good for the  
Neighborhood.

**Fitness  
for Kids**  
CHALLENGE

**SOCCER FOR  
SUCCESS**  
U.S. SOCCER FOUNDATION

  
**STUDENTPEER**  
ADVOCATE PROGRAM

**growing  
up strong**

# THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY



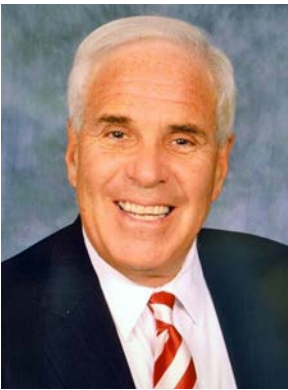
Carrie Meyer

Over the course of 2022, Independent Health Foundation celebrated our 30th year committed to enhancing the health and wellness of Western New York. Understandably, this milestone allowed us to reflect upon where we have been and what we have accomplished—none of which would have been possible without the support and collaboration of our passionate volunteers, partners, and community organizations.

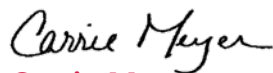
Our Foundation has coordinated efforts with so many exceptional partners in the region to build bridges, fill gaps, and connect the community with valuable resources. Although we are proud of where we have been, we are laser-focused on where we are headed. Our Foundation works diligently to ensure that community voices are being heard and that our programs provide the most impactful, accessible resources when and where they are most needed. We have shifted from one-time, drop-in events to more comprehensive, sustainable programs to engage families and make a more significant impact. With the support of our committed partners, we are able to offer free programming and events across our region, interacting with our community members where they live, work, and play.

While our efforts significantly address the disparities that our neighborhoods face day-in and day-out, we are committed to developing generational impact and change through strengthened community resiliency. It is our responsibility to respond to community concerns, acting as the catalyst for change, not just for today, but with a vision for tomorrow.

We are forever grateful to those championing the outcomes that we achieve, supporting our community members most in need. We look forward to working with our caring, dedicated board members, volunteers, and partners, assisting us in our mission to make positive, healthy changes on an even larger scale for years to come.



Stuart Angert



**Carrie Meyer**  
Executive Director,  
Independent Health Foundation



**Stuart Angert**  
Board Chairperson,  
Independent Health Foundation



Dr. Michael Cropp

A message from

**Michael Cropp, M.D., President and CEO of Independent Health**

For the last 30 years, Independent Health Foundation has been actively engaging our community in a number of ways to improve our collective health. Their mission has grown to reach thousands of children and families throughout Western New York with interventions that not only bring together people from the various cultures and demographics that make up our incredible community, but also impart knowledge and skills that enable sustainable actions for individuals and organizations. By partnering with a diverse group of community and philanthropic organizations, the team of passionate individuals at the Foundation has made doing good fun and impactful.

# INDEPENDENT HEALTH FOUNDATION'S 2022 ANNUAL REPORT

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# WHO WE ARE

## Our Mission

To improve the health and well-being of Western New York residents through awareness, prevention, and education programs focused on community health priorities.

## Our Signature Programs and Events

Throughout the year, the Foundation's signature programs and events help enhance the health and wellness of Western New Yorkers. All programs and events are free to the entire community.

## Our Team and Board

### Independent Health Foundation Team

Raby Ba  
April Gampp  
Kelsey Garvelli  
Melanie Goehle  
Tahmina Haider  
Emma Hartman  
Alana Humphrey  
Kelsi Maciejewski  
Carrie Meyer

Jen Mitri  
Zaynah Munir-Bankston  
Carri Nutty  
Jessica Robins  
Anastasia Royal  
Megan Ruszczyk  
Benjamin Sephton  
Veronica Twumasi  
Brianna Wallenhorst

### Board of Directors

#### Officers

**President:** Michael Cropp, M.D.  
**Executive Director:** Carrie Meyer  
**Chairperson:** Stuart Angert  
**Vice Chairperson:**  
John Antkowiak, M.D.  
**Secretary:** Ann McCarthy  
**Treasurer:** Karen Brim, RPh  
**Vice President of  
Finance-Affiliates:**  
Steve Timmel

#### Board Members

Patricia Clabeaux  
Pastor Richard D. Hague, Jr.  
Oswaldo Mestre  
Yvonne Minor-Ragan, Ph.D.  
Magdalena Nichols  
Robertta Rifkin  
Casimiro Rodriguez Sr.  
Tanya Staples  
Stephen Tucker  
John N. Walsh, III

We are grateful for the service of our dedicated volunteer board.



## THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Special thanks to all of the Independent Health associates who contributed to our mission through the company's *Associates Supporting the Community* Program, an optional payroll deduction allowing associates to donate to a not-for-profit of their choosing. It's all part of the RedShirt® Treatment.



## VOLUNTEERS BY THE NUMBERS



Offered **111 volunteer opportunities** across WNY through our programs

**174 volunteers** dedicated their time to the Foundation in 2022



**114** Independent Health associates  
**32** community members  
**28** students



What an awesome event and great turn out. I loved being a part of it and plan to continue to do so for their upcoming events if my schedule permits. Our RedShirt team did an amazing job!

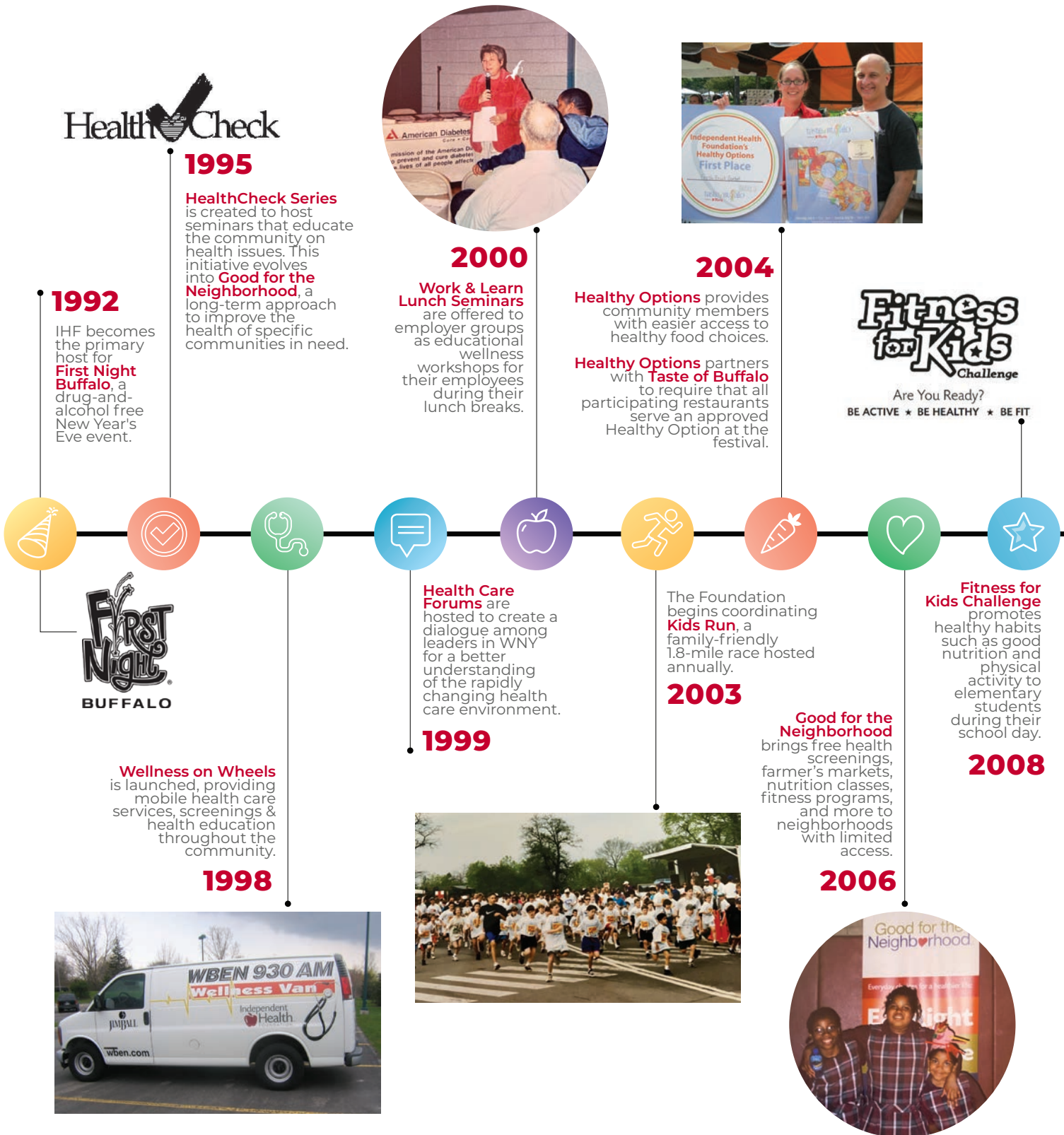


– Judy De Long, RedShirt Volunteer



# THE FOUNDATION

It all began on September 30th, 1992, when Independent Health Foundation was established by Independent Health, a community health plan. Over the past three decades, we have partnered with countless community centers, schools, parks, businesses, and organizations to improve the health of our community and provide free programming and resources to areas in need.





# THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

THEN: 1992	NOW: 2022
Coordinated 1 program	Coordinates 8 comprehensive programs
2 associates	14 associates plus interns, temporary workers, and AmeriCorps VISTA members
Hosted 1 event	Hosts over 900 events annually
Served 20,000 individuals	Serves over 200,000 individuals
Program hosted in Erie County only	Programs hosted in Erie, Niagara, Wyoming, and Chautauqua counties



**2012**

**Soccer for Success** helps kids in underserved neighborhoods develop healthy habits and critical life skills through soccer.



**2014**

**Healthy Options** partners with Larkin Square for **Food Truck Tuesdays**, requiring all trucks to offer an approved Healthy Options item.

**Behavioral Health Integration Project** is launched and licensed mental health counselors are embedded in nine primary care practices as an effort to help patients navigate their behavioral health needs.



**2017**

**Gears & Grub** is offered as a bike-friendly event. Participants rode around town and visited restaurants to try **Healthy Options** menu items.



**2019**

**Student Peer Advocate** supports high school students and provides training and learning opportunities for them to become leaders in their communities.



**Healthy Options** launches cooking classes with local chefs to make preparing fresh, nutritious meals enjoyable for the whole family.

**2013**



**Taps & Apps** fundraiser for **Soccer for Success** hosts and offers guests tasty, award-winning Healthy Options dishes from local restaurants.

**Baby & Me Tobacco Free** is launched. This evidence-based program encourages pregnant women to quit smoking through motivational interviewing and coaching.

**2015**



**Kale Yeah!** Healthy eating competition is hosted as the world's healthiest eating championship. Participants consumed as much kale as possible in eight minutes.

**2016**



**Soccer for Success** creates a mini-pitch soccer field in Lackawanna through a partnership with the U.S. Soccer Foundation and Dicks Sporting Goods to rejuvenate vacant land into a safe space for all to play.

**2021**



**Growing Up Strong** supports families and pediatricians with the developmental needs of children from birth to age five.

**2022**





A family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration filled with fun and healthy activities for all to enjoy. Families can start each year off right by making First Night® Buffalo part of their annual tradition.

ESTABLISHED  
**1988**

## 2022 Priorities:

- Providing flexible, affordable experiences for families at home
- Creating opportunities for families to spend quality time together

## Accomplishments:

- Provided a free online show with over 2 hours of interactive activities and original performances
- Hosted talent competition, providing children the opportunity to showcase their unique skills
- Distributed over 1,900 Party Packs through sales and community donations



Over **32,000** content views on YouTube and Facebook Live

**30+ submissions** were received from local kids to be featured in the talent show



**90% satisfaction rate** from participants for both the videos and Party Pack

“ The video and Party Packs were so well done! This was my family's first year participating and it certainly won't be the last. ”

- Neil H., First Night Buffalo Participant



## In the Year to Come

First Night Buffalo will continue to provide memorable experiences and encourage families to kick-start their year in a healthy way.



## Special thanks to...

John R. Oishei Children's Hospital • Tops Friendly Markets • Aquarium of Niagara • Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum



# KIDS RUN

Annual event that encourages families to start the summer in a fun and healthy way. Includes a 1.8-mile family walk/run, and a mini-dash for kids ages 2-5. Designed to motivate families to be active together.

ESTABLISHED  
**1989**



## 2022 Priorities:

- Ensuring greater accessibility to be more inclusive to all
- Promoting event to families across all Western New York counties

## Accomplishments:

- Held in-person event at Delaware Park for the first time since 2019, and offered at-home and in-school options
- Increased accessibility by introducing sensory-friendly activities and providing materials in Spanish
- Connected participants with community services from 24 local organizations



**10,000 individuals**

participated across all event formats

**94%** of Kids Run Buffalo survey respondents reported a high level of **satisfaction** with the event



**14 schools** participating in the Fitness for Kids Challenge hosted Kids Run at School



## In the Year to Come

Kids Run will expand inclusive efforts to meet kids and families where they are – in the park, in school, or at home.



Please know that all your hard work was and is greatly appreciated. My daughter had an amazing time and is ready for next year!



- Kids Run Participant

## Special thanks to...

Gelia • GiGi's Play House • Rolly Pollies • Wegmans



Western New Yorkers are provided resources to eat healthy wherever they are through education, food access programs, restaurant menu items, and more. Healthy Options ensures eating well can be accessible and easy.

ESTABLISHED  
**2004**

## 2022 Priorities:

- Increasing families' access to healthy foods and affordable meals by providing essential ingredients and kitchen tools
- Supporting schools' garden initiatives

## Accomplishments:

- Expanded Healthy Options at Home, connecting more families with resources to cook nutritious meals
- Collaborated with Buffalo Public Schools, Taste of Buffalo and Food Truck Tuesdays to increase access to healthy food
- Purchased refrigerated truck, in partnership with KeyBank, for African Heritage Food Co-Op to ensure fresh and safe food delivery



**8 tower gardens** were purchased for select Buffalo Public Schools

**446 families** were served through Healthy Options at Home



**7,136 nutritious meals** were prepared by participants

“ I'm gaining confidence in choosing healthier foods that I wouldn't normally use, and I've been introduced to new spices and methods of cooking. ”

- Healthy Options at Home Participant



## In the Year to Come

Healthy Options will promote health equity and explore ways to incorporate resources for food security. New in 2023, we will collaborate with over 20 local restaurants to create and promote a Healthy Options Restaurant Week.



**Special thanks to...** African Heritage Food Co-Op • KeyBank, in collaboration with First Niagara Foundation • New York Health Foundation • University at Buffalo Jacobs School of Medicine and Biomedical Sciences - Behavioral Health Division



# Good for the Neighborhood®

Families in underserved neighborhoods are connected to resources needed to create healthy lifestyles, eat right, be active, see their doctor, and live smoke-free. The program continues to evolve with the unique priorities of each community.

ESTABLISHED  
**2006**



## In the Year to Come

Good for the Neighborhood will adapt program incentives to further enhance participant motivation. Additionally, the program will launch a newsletter covering a variety of health and wellness topics.



## 2022 Priorities:

- Encouraging host sites to utilize their own strengths and resources to help their community thrive
- Offering disease prevention initiatives to improve participants' health

## Accomplishments:

- Trained host sites to take on more program responsibilities and ownership
- Continued to offer a blood pressure program, helping participants stay more informed on their health
- Conducted several focus groups to identify participants' needs and gather feedback



**4,000** community members were connected to **wellness resources**

**500** participants were provided with **free health screenings**



**100** individuals engaged in the **blood pressure monitoring** program



Good for Neighborhood events at West Side [are] one of the best things that happened to the center. Everyone is so friendly and there are always resources available for everyone.



- Cindy B., Good for the Neighborhood Participant

**Special thanks to...** Mobile Safety Net Team • 25 events were held throughout 7 zip codes at the following host sites: Akron Newstead Senior Center, Doris W. Jones Family Resource Center, Lackawanna City School District, Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Packard Court Community Center, West Side Community Services, Westminster Community Charter School, Rural Outreach Center



School-based program for grades K-5 that motivates students to become healthy and active while aligning with their required academic curriculum. The Challenge encourages healthy eating, getting enough sleep, physical activity, limiting screentime and sugary drinks, along with emphasizing good mental health practices such as emotional awareness, friendship building, and goal-setting.

ESTABLISHED  
**2008**

## 2022 Priorities:

- Providing materials in Spanish and Arabic to be more inclusive
- Expanding program reach into rural counties

## Accomplishments:

- Hosted in-person Play 60 kick-off, health and wellness school assemblies, and a field day celebration
- Funded 22 schools' health related projects through participation awards
- Unveiled Healthy Kids in Action room: an indoor playground and sensory hallway for the whole community at Eden's Grover L Priess Primary School



**500 classrooms**  
participated across  
**35 WNY schools**

**\$23,000** was provided  
to top performing schools



**8,810 students** were  
educated on **95210+y<sub>o</sub>** goals



## In the Year to Come



Fitness for Kids Challenge will implement a new recruitment plan that focuses on expansion into rural counties. Additionally, the program will continue to introduce new characters who represent and celebrate our community's diversity.



“ I have been involved with the Fitness for Kids Challenge since day one. I have always believed in this concept and have been passionate about using the FFKC as a tool to help convey the reason for healthy living. ”

- Anne D., Fitness for Kids Challenge Coordinator,  
Panama Central School

## Special thanks to...







After-school youth development program serving children in grades K-8, encouraging kids in underserved areas to establish healthy habits and develop critical life skills through soccer. Each site is staffed by nationally trained, caring Coach-Mentors who are invested in the successful development of players and provide them with role models from their own communities.

ESTABLISHED  
**2012**



### In the Year to Come

Soccer for Success will focus on rural expansion to provide children in additional counties the opportunity to engage in healthy lifestyles.



## 2022 Priorities:

- Creating safe, inclusive spaces for all players
- Increasing confidence and comfort levels among female players to keep them engaged in sports
- Supporting the whole-child by focusing on players' mental, social, and emotional well-being

## Accomplishments:

- Hosted Girls in the Game programming on newly built mini-pitch in Lackawanna
- Incorporated U.S. Soccer Foundation's new social emotional learning curriculum and provided Coach-Mentors with Mental Health First Aid training



**2,011 players** participated and engaged in healthy lifestyles

**38 sites** hosted programming throughout Erie and Niagara counties



**65 performance hijabs** were distributed to female players

“The program has impacted my family by teaching my daughter that she can do whatever she sets her mind to! It also gave her the confidence to do so!!”

- SFS Participant's Parent

## Special thanks to...

Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation • United Way of Buffalo and Erie County • City of Buffalo Division of Parks and Recreation • City of Lackawanna Parks and Recreation Department



## 2022 Priorities:

- Creating opportunities for teens to come together and develop into well-rounded, community-focused individuals
- Connecting students to local organizations that offer training and education services

## Accomplishments:

- Challenged students to create monthly health and academic goals
- Coordinated immersive field trips that students may not otherwise have access to
- Engaged students in wellness and professional development workshops



8 learning opportunities were offered to **prepare students** for life after high school

Over **50%** of students partook in **volunteer opportunities**



“ I have learned important lessons in mental health, financial wellness, and the impact of personality traits on your career. I have also grown my leadership skills and built friendships. ”

- Emily L., Student Peer Advocate Participant



## In the Year to Come

The Student Peer Advocate program will provide assistance to next year's seniors by offering a scholarship for students to apply to, and if awarded, can be used toward college or other post-graduation paths.



## Special thanks to...

John R. Oishei Foundation • Larkin Development Group





Inter-disciplinary program that starts young children off on the right path to healthy futures by supporting families and pediatricians with the developmental needs of children from birth to age five, setting the stage for their social, emotional, and physical well-being.

ESTABLISHED  
**2022**



Growing Up Strong partners with HealthySteps™, a national evidence-based program of ZERO TO THREE™, to achieve improved outcomes for babies and toddlers, with an emphasis on families living in low-income communities, by embedding a child development professional into the pediatric primary care team.



### 2022 Priorities:

- Supporting pediatric teams in providing enhanced care through HealthySteps model
- Providing early childhood resources and incentives to support families with young children

### Accomplishments:

- Enrolled five pediatric care centers in HealthySteps
- Hosted “Cradles to Crayons” event to connect families to resources and childcare items such as diapers and children’s books



### In the Year to Come

The Growing Up Strong program will cultivate relationships with child-focused organizations to expand our reach and strengthen the safety net of resources for children and their caregivers.



Provided **200 fresh produce** vouchers to families, in partnership with Broadway Pediatrics



Worked with pediatric primary care teams to onboard Social Workers, as HealthySteps Specialists, to reach approximately **6,000 children** and their families

Provided **20 families** with essential childcare items



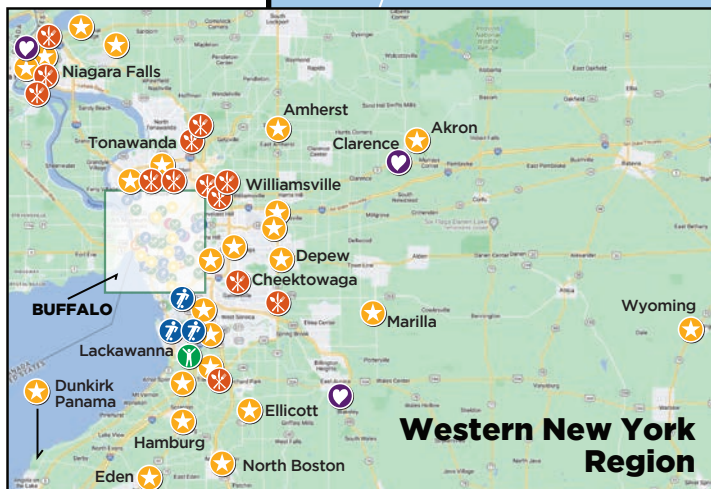
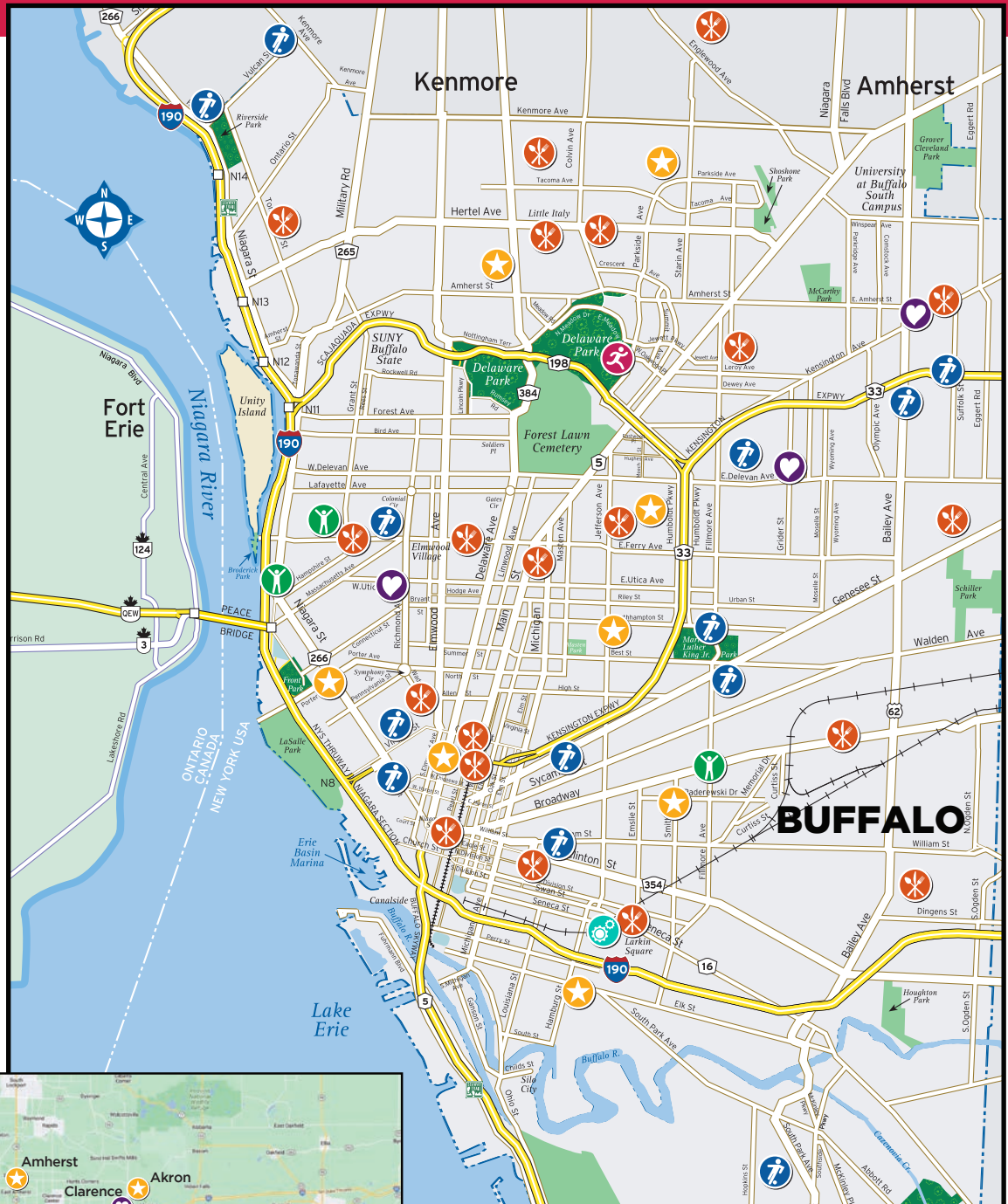
“ This team-based model is really beneficial in healthcare because these families are not only receiving necessary medical treatment for their child, but the entire family is receiving support for any social-emotional or behavioral concerns. ”

- Mekenna Walter, LMSW at Neighborhood Health Center

**Special thanks to...** Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo • Garman Family Foundation Administered by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo • Health Foundation for Western and Central New York • New York Health Foundation • **Participating Primary Care Centers:** Broadway Pediatrics and Niagara Street Pediatrics, part of John R. Oishei Children’s Hospital • Jericho Road Community Health Center • Neighborhood Health Center

## WHERE WE ARE: 2022 IMPACT MAP

The Foundation has grown to meet the changing needs of our community over the last 30 years, but our work is not done. Perhaps it's just getting started. This map shows the locations of all Independent Health Foundation programs in 2022.



### IHF Programs

-  **Fitness For Kids Challenge**
-  **Soccer for Success**
-  **Student Peer Advocate**
-  **Healthy Options**
-  **Kids Run**
-  **Good for the Neighborhood**
-  **Growing Up Strong**
-  **First Night Buffalo**  
(hosted virtually since 2020)



## COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

“Great job to all the staff who continue to keep this program up and running. My school and myself appreciate all of the hard work, prizes and incentives that are sent every year!”

– Kristina Young, Fitness for Kids Challenge School Coordinator



“This was so much fun! It was our family’s first time and my two kiddos loved it! Thank you for putting it all together.”

– Leslie Ann, First Night Participant



“I am beyond thankful that you chose me for this program. It’s helping my family a lot and I’m finally grasping the concept of healthy cooking which I’ve always wanted to do but didn’t know how. My family is better off and I’m very grateful for you all.”

– Healthy Options at Home Participant



“For us, it’s a great opportunity to get people into our building who have never been here before and let them know what kinds of programs and services are available here.”

– Crystal Selk, Good for the Neighborhood Site Coordinator



“I feel that the partnership is wonderful. The Health & Wellness Ministry is dedicated to guiding our community to better health and our partnership with Independent Health Foundation is instrumental in our efforts.”

– Wendy Anderson, Good for the Neighborhood Site Coordinator



“Our first time attending. My 5-year-old had a blast. So many activities and things to keep us up and motivated to stay healthy and fit.”

– Kids Run Participant



“We love soccer and the coaches, how the program is [run] and the love they show to the children. [My daughter has] been in the program for about two years now and we’ve enjoyed every minute.”

– SFS Participant’s Parent



“Thank you for including us at JH Williams Park [for this volunteer opportunity]. We knew exactly where to be and what to do at all times. This was a tremendously enjoyable and rewarding experience.”

– Lisa Wardynski, RedShirt Volunteer

# THANK YOU TO OUR VALUED PARTNERS

Thanks to the following corporate partners, organizations, and individuals, whose generous contributions directly support our community programs.

## SPONSORS

Advantmed  
AP Professionals of WNY, LLC  
Arbor Capital Management  
Beacon Health Options  
Buffalo Blacktop + More  
Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network  
Clarity Software Solutions, Inc.  
Compu-Mail, LLC  
Computer Task Group  
Crown Benefits Group  
D'Avolio  
Deloitte & Touche LLP  
Dr. Rebecca Falsafi Orthodontics  
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Erie and Niagara Insurance Association  
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Gelia Marcom + Martech  
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(Opus MedStrategies, Inc.)  
Hospice & Palliative Care Buffalo  
Kevin Imm (on behalf of TIBCO Software Inc.)  
Independent Health  
Innovative Information Solutions Inc.  
Jewish Family Services of WNY  
John R. Oishei Children's Hospital  
Krames  
Lamparelli Construction  
Larkin Development Group  
Lawley Insurance  
Lice Clinics Upstate NY by Naughty Nits  
Magellan Cares Foundation  
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University at Buffalo  
- Division of Athletics  
University Pediatric Dental Associates  
Wegmans Food Markets  
Western New York Immediate Care

## DONORS

The Joyce & Stuart Angert Fund  
at the Community Foundation  
for Greater Buffalo  
Dr. Anthony Billittier & Barbara Billittier  
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Garman Family Foundation  
administered by the Community  
Foundation for Greater Buffalo  
Health Foundation for Western  
& Central New York  
John R. Oishei Foundation  
KeyBank in Partnership  
with First Niagara Foundation  
National Philanthropic Trust  
New York Health Foundation  
Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation  
U.S. Soccer Foundation  
United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

## IN-KIND

360 PSG  
Aquarium of Niagara  
Explore & More-The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr.  
Children's Museum  
G&G Fitness  
Lemur Studios  
Master Khechen's Martial Arts Academy  
NFTA  
Rolly Pollies  
Tops Friendly Markets

## MEDIA

Audacy Buffalo  
Buffalo Business First  
Buffalo Criterion  
The Buffalo News  
Buffalo Spree Publishing Inc.  
Lamar Advertising Company  
Townsquare Buffalo  
WKBW- Channel 7

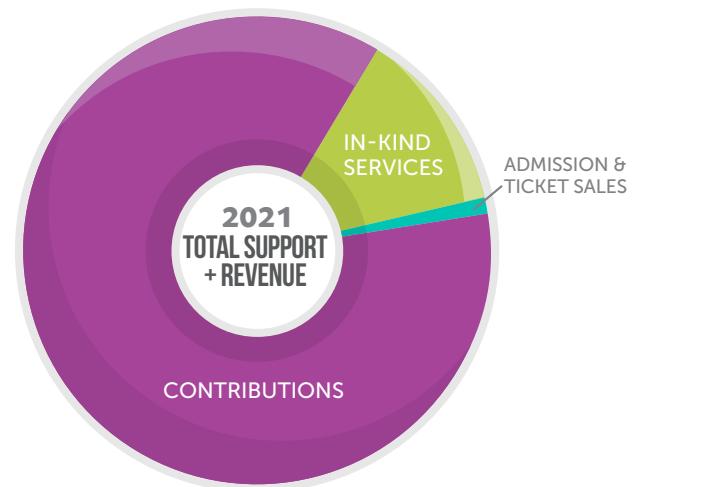
## FINANCIALS

As a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, tax-exempt, charitable organization, all administrative and operational expenses are supported by our parent company, Independent Health Association (IHA). The administrative grant provided by IHA ensures that all other contributions directly support those we serve.

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2021 (in thousands)

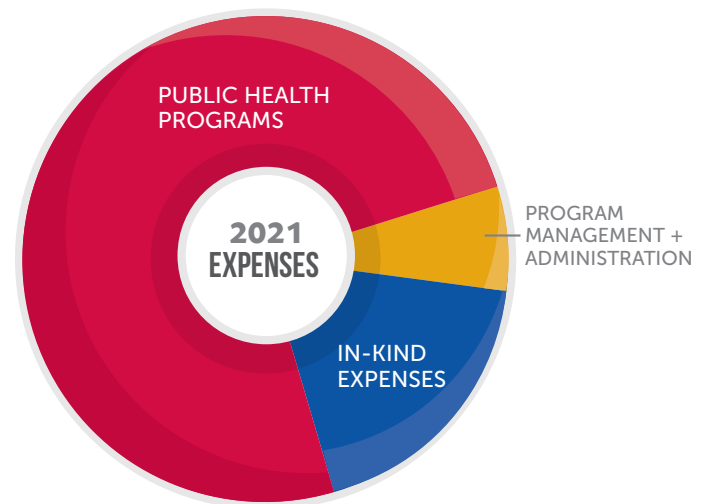
#### SUPPORT AND REVENUE:

Contributions	\$3,177
Admission & Ticket Sales	41
In-kind services	463
<b>Total support and revenue</b>	<b>\$3,681</b>



#### EXPENSES – Program services:

Public health programs	\$2,418
In-kind expenses	598
Support services	
Program Management & Administration	219
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>\$3,235</b>



CHANGES IN NET ASSETS FROM OPERATIONS	\$446
INVESTMENT AND OTHER EXPENSE – NET	\$152
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	\$598
NET ASSETS – Beginning of year	\$3,629
NET ASSETS – End of year	\$4,227



# A STRONG COMMUNITY IS OUR FOUNDATION

Independent Health Foundation couldn't do it alone.  
It takes a community. A community that cares. A community of doers.



## 2022...

In collaboration with over **500 community partners** and the generous help of **174 volunteers**, we provided **989 health-focused activities** to impact approximately **212,000 Western New Yorkers**.

Join us and help us do more.  
Contact the Foundation today to give your time, talent, or treasure.  
**Volunteer – Become a Community Partner – Make a Donation**



Celebrating 30 Years

511 Farber Lakes Drive, Buffalo, NY 14221  
[www.independenthealthfoundation.org](http://www.independenthealthfoundation.org)  
[foundation@independenthealth.com](mailto:foundation@independenthealth.com)