



**connecting
people.**

**inspiring
change.**

**Leadership Buffalo's
2020 Annual Report**

Sponsored by Uniland Development

LB EXISTS TO PROMOTE A MORE **INFORMED** AND **CONNECTED** COMMUNITY THAT DRIVES SOCIAL **CHANGE**

We are making Buffalo better by connecting people and inspiring change. We look at the challenges in our community and discover ways to take action. Our programs are creating more empathic and servant leaders.



ALTHEA LUEHRSEN
CEO

Looking in the rearview mirror, we realize just how much has been accomplished in 2020. Not just by the Leadership Buffalo team, but by our entire community. We saw a year filled with a global pandemic, racial and political divides, a historic election, and a community that came together and helped each other when the

going got tough. Whether it was volunteering to help those less fortunate, learning how to be at-home teachers, or supporting our small businesses and restaurants, we did it. Not to mention that The Buffalo Bills won their first playoff game in over 25 years! Fingers crossed for better days ahead. Although no matter what 2021 brings, I am confident that the Buffalo and Western New York Community will stand strong together and make things happen.

A lot happened at Leadership Buffalo in 2020. We pivoted as most organizations had to. Some programs paused, some forged ahead; and they forged ahead with great success. I must thank my small, but mighty professional team for their hard work and perseverance in getting all this

done – all with a smile on their faces!

It is important that we recognize the Class Experience and Rising Leader Classes of 2020 – aka the longest class ever. Through this strange year, they remained positive and resilient and had an experience like no other class before them. And through it all, they created the strong bonds that Leadership Buffalo creates and will continue to grow as leaders in our community. . . connecting people, inspiring change.

We continued with much of our normal programming, virtually of course, but added some more. In addition to holding our 12@12 luncheons and class chair meetings, we also held our 17th Annual Values Award virtually



and raised a few funds in the process to support our scholarship fund and youth program. We held graduation, the open house, and the closing retreat all virtually! And we made it work. In addition, we added monthly Town Halls, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workshops, Meditation Workshops, and Mental Health Sessions which we hope helped our members cope and lead through this challenging year.

While in a pandemic, Leadership Buffalo launched its Legacy Investment fund and had success with our fundraising efforts through on-line and mobile platforms. We thank everyone who has contributed to this fund and look forward to watching it grow to support our youth program and scholarship program for years to come.

As we move into 2021, we are once again, back to a virtual platform for many of our programs. On the positive side, we know how to do this now and expertly so! We held our annual meeting State of LB virtually in February and our much beloved Bowling Fundraiser has been moved to the fall. We may be moving the Values Luncheon to later date as well. Watch for new dates!

While 2020 saw Leadership Buffalo go over the \$1 million mark in annual revenues for the first time in its 33-year history, 2021 had other ideas with the continuation of Covid-19 restrictions. We do have great faith that we will be back in a growth pattern before you know it!

I want to take a moment to thank our incredible Board of Directors,

led by Tricia Barrett. This year she was such a source of support and strength for the Leadership Buffalo team. As she closes in on her final months as chair (do not worry we are not lettering her get away that easy), I would be remiss if I did not take the time to give her my heartfelt thanks. You made this difficult year so much easier to deal with, knowing I had you in my corner. TB, know that I value, appreciate, and respect your leadership and consider you a friend for life!

Thank you to all our membership for all you to in our community to make Buffalo better! We have a community like none other and together we will see this through and come out stronger!

PROFESSIONAL TEAM

CEO

Althea Luehrsen (LB '10)

Director of Marketing and Events

Jenna Luehrsen (RL '13)

Operations and Finance Manager

Melissa Hall (LB '17)

Program Manager

Kaitlyn Anticoli (RL '20)

Program Assistant

Allison Congi

Director of First Impressions

Tyson "Pal" Luehrsen

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

CHAIR

Rema Hanash (LB '05)

United Way of Buffalo
and Erie County

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

Tricia Barrett (LB '15)

Crowley Webb

TREASURER

Justin Reid (LB '12)

The Bonadio Group

SECRETARY

Ashley Meganck (RL '14)

Pegula Sports and
Entertainment

Kelley Attig (LB '16)

M&T Bank

Trina Burruss (LB '14)

Northwest Bank

Emily Ciraolo (RL '15)

National Fuel Gas

Darcy Connors (RL '19)

Rich Products

Melissa Golen (LB '05)

BlueCross BlueShield

Sharon Lochocki (EB '14)

KeyBank

Heidi McCreedy (LB '11)

Moog Inc.

Valerie Muka (LB '13)

Evans Bank

Catherine Roberts (LB '17)

Community Action Organization

Stuart Scheff (LB '14)

Lawley

Fran Slavin (LB '16)

Turner Construction

Trevor Torcello (LB '18)

Gross Schuman PC

Stephen Tucker (LB '18/EB '18)

Northland Workforce Training Center

Jim Walleshauser (LB '16)

Nova Healthcare Administrators, Inc.

Morgan Williams-Bryant (LB '17)

Girl Scouts of WNY



TRICIA BARRETT
IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR

I was told that writing this letter was my last official duty as board chair, and I must admit that made me quite sad. I've had a soft spot in my heart for Leadership Buffalo ever since I went through the program in 2015, but over the years I've grown to love and truly respect this organization. While I am stepping down as chair, the good news is I'll never go far and look forward to remaining heavily involved for years to come.

Joining the board was a no-brainer for me, as it gave me access to see firsthand how to run a successful nonprofit organization. Those of you have been through LB can attest to how this "small but mighty" team runs a tight ship, and I can assure you the board is the same. The 19 individuals who make up the board are some of the most dynamic people I've met in my career and bring so much value to LB. Plus, the experience has made me appreciate proper governance more than I ever thought I could!

I had big shoes to fill after Gwen Applebaum from UB served as board chair, and I hope I made her proud. Rema Hanash from the United Way is the incoming board chair, and I just know she will be a tremendous leader for the organization. Like the rest of the board, these two women have grown to be colleagues, mentors, and friends, which again speaks to how lucky we are to be part of this LB network.

Even though we endured a lot of change in my two years as board chair, the one constant was the amazing Althea. From the moment we met in the post office we clicked, and I instantly admired her passion, energy, and commitment to the LB community, which includes all of you. I have no doubt she remembers all your names as well! She loves her job and it shows – day in and day out. We are a better, bigger, and more significant organization because of Althea's leadership, and I know the best is yet to come.

And then there's the rest of the LBhive – Melissa, Jenna, Kaitlyn, and Allison. These incredible women welcomed me with open arms and made me an extension of their team. They are so talented, so smart, so nimble, and SO FUN! LB has always been known for its incredible culture, so it's no doubt these women embody everything that is special about LB. #FULLJENNA #itsforthekids

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this extraordinary organization. It has been personally and professionally rewarding, and a definite career highlight. I know I am a better leader and person for being part of it.

Cheers!

Tricia

WHAT WE DO

CONNECTING PEOPLE.

We introduce people of different backgrounds and perspectives, and immerse them into the community to increase their knowledge. We bring the haves and the have-nots closer together to create a more empathetic and informed community. We collaborate with local organizations to secure necessary connections, or to make a bigger impact.

INSPIRING CHANGE.

Graduates of any of the Leadership Buffalo programs naturally develop a responsibility to their community to give back. Alumni are joining boards, having crucial conversations with key leaders, developing programs within non-profits, volunteering their time, talent, and treasure to agencies in need. The most significant change we see is that of an open mind because that directly creates a better Buffalo.



PROGRAMS

Our programs are why we exist. We work tirelessly to provide high-quality, immersive programs to every participant. Over the last **33 years**, we have increased the number of programs we offer from **one to six**.



CLASS EXPERIENCE

Class Experience is designed for a group of individuals from every industry who are in an established leadership role/position.



RISING LEADERS

Rising Leaders invites up-and-coming professionals to participate and enhance their leadership skills.



EXPERIENCE BUFFALO

Experience Buffalo caters to the newly relocated executives. The program introduces them to the Buffalo Niagara region.



YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Leadership is a leadership development and personal enrichment program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors.



LB REVISITED

LB Revisited was created for our alumni by our alumni. This program allows past graduates to continue learning about the city and network with other alumni.



LB ESSENTIALS

LB Essentials builds community from within organizations. Participants experience a modified version of our full-year programs.



\$30,500

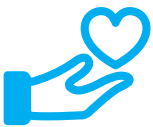
**SCHOLARSHIPS GIVEN TO
CE, RL, AND EB PARTICIPANTS**

40%

**EXCESS APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED FOR 2020 CLASSES**

2020 CLASS HIGHLIGHTS

In 2020, from our two programs (Class Experience and Rising Leaders), we graduated **117 individuals** from **100 different organizations**. We are thankful for the continued support from all of these companies.



20%

NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATIONS



30%

SMALL
BUSINESSES



9%

EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS



4%

PUBLIC SERVICE
ORGANIZATIONS



37%

LARGE
ORGANIZATIONS

As a scholarship recipient from a local nonprofit, I'm very grateful to the LB team for the opportunity to be part of this program that is truly making Buffalo better. This year allowed me to form lifelong friendships, acquire personal and professional skills and learn more than I could have dreamed about myself and our city.



Brian Field (RL '20)
Buffalo Museum of Science, Tifft Nature Preserve

\$33,990

**SCHOLARSHIPS GIVEN TO
YOUTH PARTICIPANTS**

25%

**EXCESS APPLICATIONS
RECEIVED FOR 2019/2020 CLASSES**



2019/2020

YOUTH LEADERSHIP

Youth Leadership is a ten-month leadership enrichment program for high school sophomores, juniors and seniors representing schools throughout our community. The curriculum builds a foundation of leadership skills, an awareness of **community** issues, an appreciation for **diversity**, and a commitment to lifelong community **service**.



50 STUDENTS

49% FEMALE

51% MALE



19 SCHOOLS

8 PUBLIC

8 PRIVATE

3 CHARTER

SURVEY SAYS



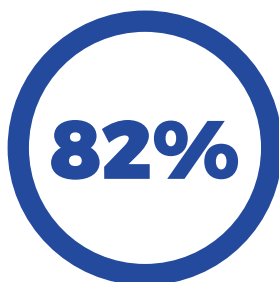
are likely to recommend LB to a friend or colleague



are satisfied or very satisfied with the value of LB network



are satisfied or very satisfied with the impact of LB



are satisfied or very satisfied with LB's management during the Covid-19.



are satisfied or very satisfied with the LB communication

This has been a very difficult time. Organizations have had to completely rethink how they communicate and engage constituents. I feel that LB has hosted some fantastic professional development sessions. I recently participated in the LB Revisited and loved it! I appreciate all the hard work that is being done to ensure we as members have relevant and enriching programming.



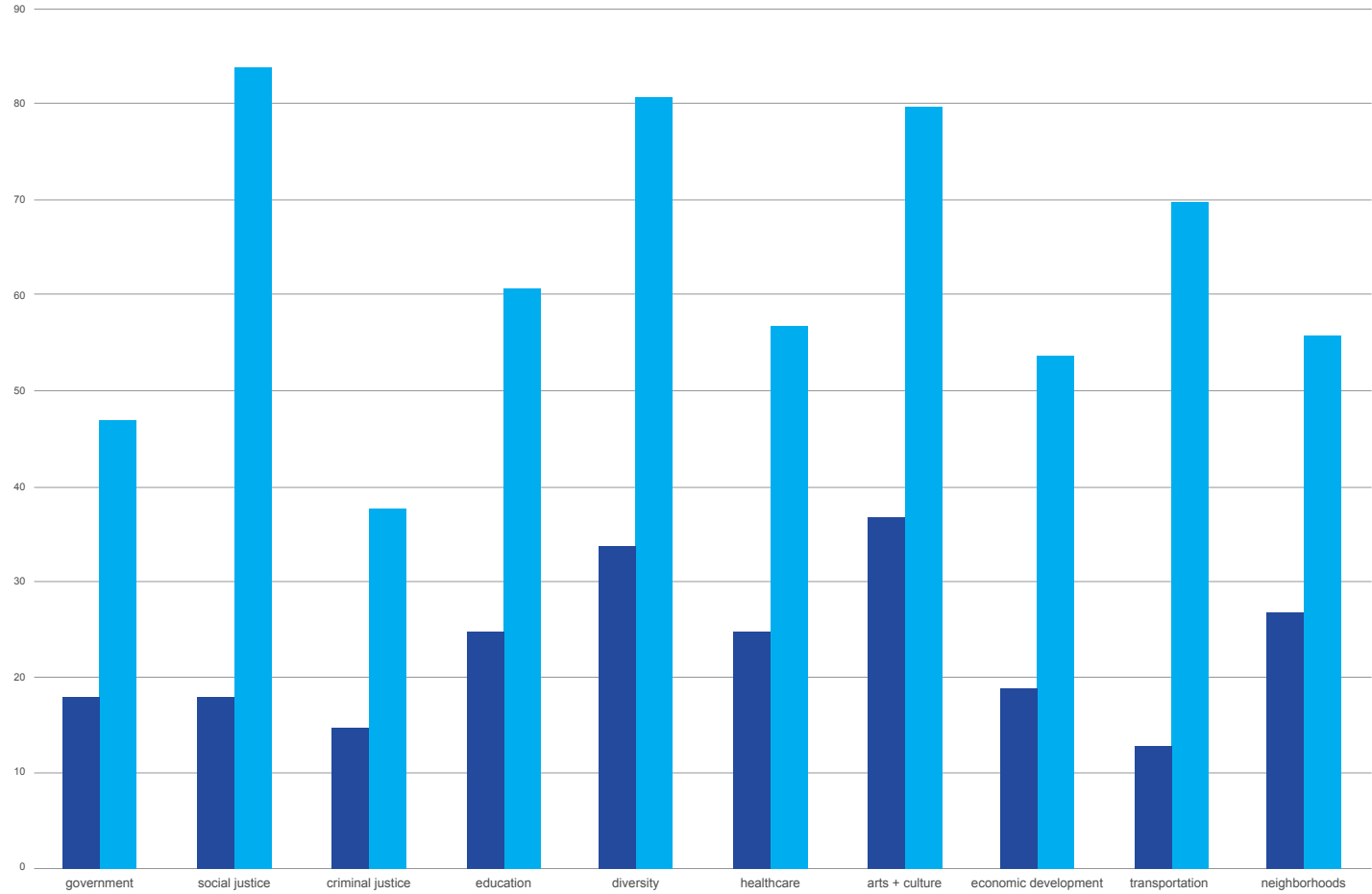
Heather Cruz (LB '16)



INSPIRING CHANGE

We survey our classes at the beginning and end of their program year to gauge the progress they have made, and the impact of the content we are providing. Each year we are pleased with the effect we are making on these individuals and our community.

KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY ISSUES



Pre-program and post-program test results from 2020 Class



FINANCIALS

**your funds
at work**

\$101,500+

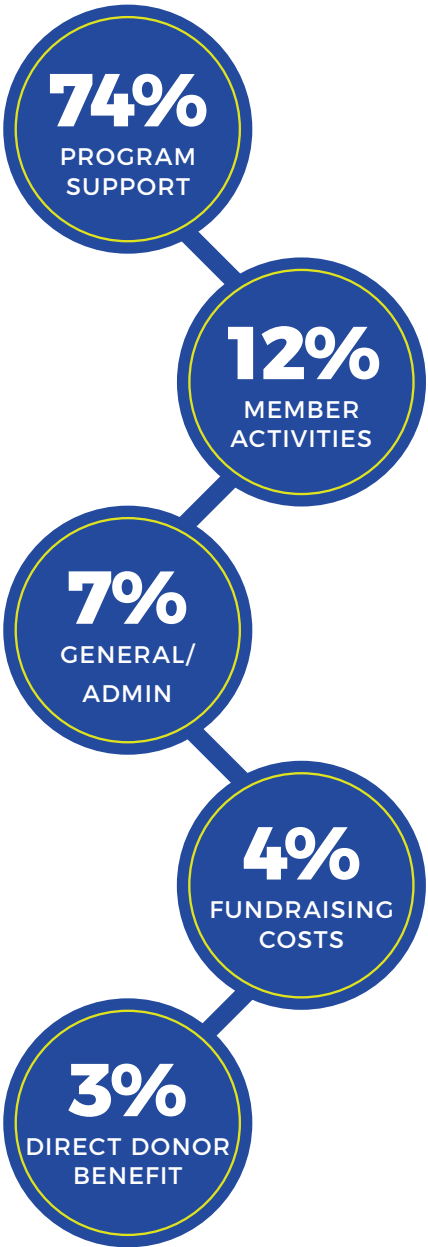
**raised in 2020
from our events**

The year of 2020 put a hold on many of our events, but the strength of our alumni base, and other supporters came through and enabled us to raise funds for our scholarships for Class Experience, Rising Leaders, and Youth Leadership.

WE THANK YOU FOR THAT!

Our largest fundraisers include the Values Awards Luncheon (\$88,203) and Ten Pin Throwdown (\$13,324).

We were able to provide 68 scholarships to individuals in our community.



THANK YOU 2020 SPONSORS

Presenting Sponsors

Buffalo News KeyBank

Platinum Sponsors

Business First Buffalo Spree Independent Health

Diamond Sponsors

BlueCross BlueShield

Gold Sponsors

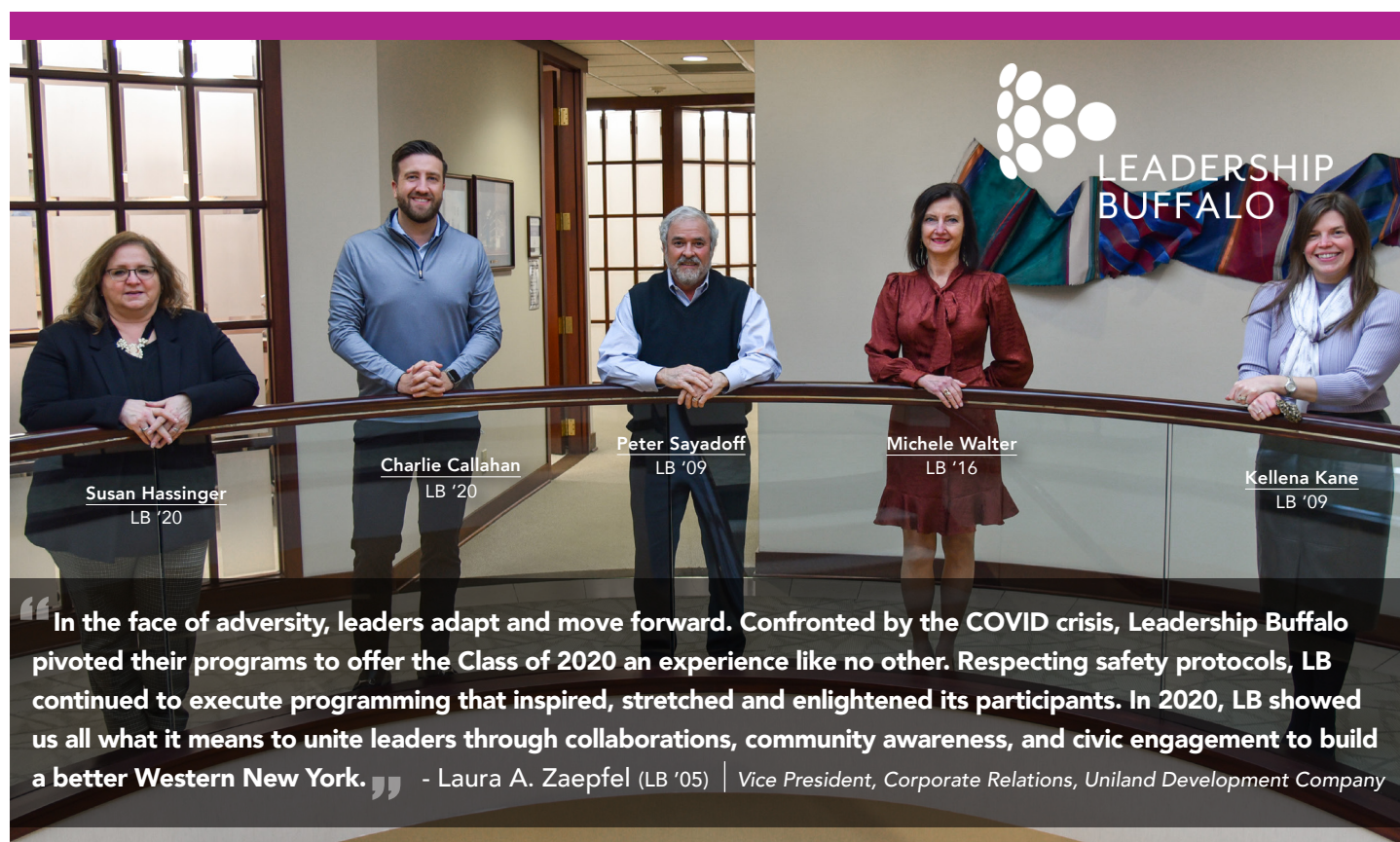
Kaleida Health
Northwest Bank

Silver Sponsors

Bank on Buffalo The Bonadio Group Buffalo Bills/PSE Evans Bank Moog
National Fuel Savarino Companies Uniland Wegmans

Bronze Sponsors

Ellicott Development LVBW National Grid



Leadership Buffalo

Susan Hassinger
LB '20

Charlie Callahan
LB '20

Peter Sayadoff
LB '09

Michele Walter
LB '16

Kellena Kane
LB '09

“In the face of adversity, leaders adapt and move forward. Confronted by the COVID crisis, Leadership Buffalo pivoted their programs to offer the Class of 2020 an experience like no other. Respecting safety protocols, LB continued to execute programming that inspired, stretched and enlightened its participants. In 2020, LB showed us all what it means to unite leaders through collaborations, community awareness, and civic engagement to build a better Western New York.” - Laura A. Zaepfel (LB '05) | Vice President, Corporate Relations, Uniland Development Company



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Development

Construction

Sales & Leasing

Property Management

Hospitality

Residential



CLASS PROJECTS

2020 CLASS

The 2020 Class has selected five organizations to work with post-graduation. Those agencies include Peaceprints of WNY, Project Mona's House, Sleep In Heavenly Peace, St. Luke's Mission of Mercy, and WNY Raptor and Wildlife Care, Inc.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

One of our favorite words is **connections**! We're in the business of people, so it's only a natural fit that we collaborate with so many incredible organizations in our community. Together we are all **connecting people and inspiring change**.

43North
Anti-Stigma Coalition
Association of Leadership
Programs
B.C.A.T.
BestSelf
Boys and Girls Clubs of
Buffalo
Bryant and Stratton College
Buffalo Arts Studio
Buffalo Niagara Business
Ethics Association
Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Buffalo Olmsted Parks
Conservancy
Canisius College
charitySTRONG
Charter School for Applied
Technologies
Clementine Group
Crisis Services
D'Youville College
Daemen College
Erie Community College
Explore & More Children's
Museum

Family Justice Center
Family Promise of WNY
Grace Guest House
Habitat for Humanity
Hilbert College
Homespace
Kevin Guest House
Leadership Genesee
Leadership Niagara
Leadership Rochester
Leadership Syracuse
Let's GOAT Buffalo
Matt Urban Hope Center
Mayor Brown's Office/City Hall
Meals on Wheels
NAWBO
NFJC
P.A.T.H. of WNY
Partnership for the
Public Good
Peaceprints of WNY
Project Mona's House
Racial Equity Roundtable
Ragan and Amos
Rural Outreach Center
Seneca Street CDC

Service Collaborative of WNY
Sleep In Heavenly Peace
St. Luke's Mission of Mercy
Stanley Falk School
SUNY Empire State College
Tifft Nature Preserve
Trocaire College
UB's C.L.O.E.
UB's Center for Entrepreneurial
Leadership
United Way of Buffalo and
Erie County
US Army Corp of Engineers
US Coast Guard
VIA
Visit Buffalo Niagara
WNY Raptor and Wildlife Care
WNY Women's Foundation
Women Who Lead
Women's United
YNPN

A LOOK BACK

The year of 2020 was unexpected, but we are proud of our organization's tenacity and strength; including the professional team, Board of Directors, and extensive alumni base. We were able to adapt to the circumstances and still provide quality content for our supporters. We look forward to continue our work with all of you!





The word of the year for us (and probably most of you) was **pivot**. We adjusted our programs to an all-virtual format, then a hybrid format, and back to an all-virtual format. We were able to provide quality and valuable content. Our 2020 class adjusted beautifully, while remaining close as a class (in the figurative sense).



We introduced a new virtual series of town halls, **Connecting Conversations**. In these regular sessions, we discussed timely topics beginning with effects of Covid, to mental health, and racial equity. These will continue through 2021.



Most of our larger events were unable to occur in person, so we adjusted to **virtual format**. Our Values Award Luncheon was a weeklong celebration in August honoring five incredible honorees in our community. We hosted a number of virtual Open Houses for our 2021 class, and held a graduation for the 2020 class.



We officially launched our **Legacy Fund** to support our Youth Leadership program and Scholarship Fund (with a larger rollout to come in 2021). To date, we have already raised more than **\$105,000** toward this goal.



A LOOK AHEAD

Leadership Buffalo just completed its strategic planning process with board and professional team that will lead us from 2021 through 2023.

The five areas that we will be focusing on include:

- Recruitment
- Marketing/Communications
- Fiscal Stability/Financial Growth
- Alumni Engagement
- Program Development

All of the above will have a focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion



We welcomed a new staff member, **Allison Congi**. She joins us with an extensive background in community volunteering. We're excited to have her join our team as Program Assistant.



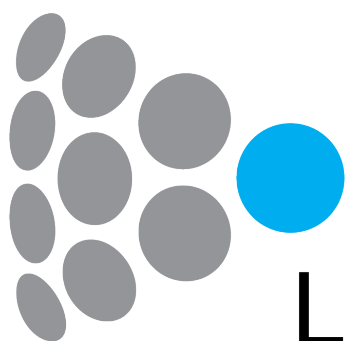
Our conversations continue into 2021 with our Town Halls that focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We will be hosting **Cultural Humility Workshops** with Ekua Mends-Aidoo (RL '14) and more topics to be announced soon.



We continue to follow NYS guidelines for Covid protocols, but we are looking forward to hosting **in-person events** when possible, even if at an adjusted format. Our Annual Golf Tournament will occur in September, and our Ten Pin Throwdown is postponed to later in 2021.



Following a similar format as our Connecting Conversations, we will host **Mental Health Workshops** for everyone (LB graduates and non-alumni). It is important to Leadership Buffalo to provide as many outlets for folks during times of uncertainty.



LEADERSHIP BUFFALO

Connecting People. Inspiring Change.