

# 2021

ANNUAL REPORT





**DEEP ROOTS** BEARING FRUIT.

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# A Letter from Steve

“Every crisis has both its dangers and its opportunities. Each can spell either salvation or doom.”

—  
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dear Friend,

Surviving through the pandemic sometimes feels like living through history in slow motion. We understand how unusual this period of time is, but it is getting harder to remember what life was like pre-COVID-19.

I miss being together in a full (usually cramped) office and seeing all the students and volunteers talking and laughing without masks, but there is no time to reminisce about what used to be. The needs of the present are pressing now.

With crisis can also come opportunity. At the beginning of 2021, rather organically, Little Lights began to work with a group of high school students and recent high school graduates. As our staff spent time at the public housing sites, we realized that several high school students and recent graduates were struggling. They were struggling with virtual learning and also trying to navigate the college process.

Public schools were trying to manage the pandemic as best they could with limited resources, but some of our students were slipping through the cracks.

So using virtual technology in addition to our physical sites, we began to intensively work with older students and young adults to provide wrap-around supports.

The Next Step College and Career Program has been a revelation with more than 40 students now participating from middle school and up. You will read more about this exciting new program in the report.

In addition, Little Lights responded to the ongoing pandemic by providing Learning Hubs from January through May to provide safe, nurturing, and high-tech spaces for students to attend school virtually. We were thankful to return to in-person Homework Club and Saturday programs in the fall.

Also, in 2021, Little Lights continued to educate hundreds of participants in Race Literacy 101 to help our community better understand the issue of race and systemic racism through a faith lens. The power and engagement of the class led to a follow-up program called Race Literacy Connections to help graduates of the class move further on their journey of race literacy and anti-racism. Hearts and minds have been truly transformed by the class and the conversations.

Little Lights has spent 26 years deepening our roots in the community and maturing as a ministry and organization. It has been meaningful and exciting to see the fruit borne from the years of commitment, support, and trust-building.

Thank you for your partnership in our work. Please stay connected to us through social media, prayer, volunteerism, and giving.

With gratitude,  
Steven Park, Founder and Executive Director



“

**LITTLE LIGHTS HAS SPENT 26 YEARS DEEPENING OUR ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITY AND MATURING AS A MINISTRY AND ORGANIZATION. IT HAS BEEN MEANINGFUL AND EXCITING TO SEE THE FRUIT BORNE FROM THE YEARS OF COMMITMENT, SUPPORT, AND TRUST-BUILDING.**

—  
Steven Park, Founder and Executive Director





# Mission + Vision



## MISSION

To empower underserved youth, families, and communities in Washington DC by sharing the hope of Christ through compassionate action, caring relationships, and racial reconciliation



## VISION

To help build communities of compassion and joy where underserved children, youth, and families flourish through holistic, wrap-around support and practical resources



**WE ENVISION** a community of racial and class reconciliation where mutual respect and authentic fellowship provide a place of healing and joy.



**WE ENVISION** all children and youth thriving in every way through academic support, character-development, and arts and recreation.



**WE ENVISION** adults engaged in gainful employment and moving out of the cycle of poverty.



**WE ENVISION** families being strengthened, children and youth becoming healthier and safer, and loving relationships flourishing.

This Year

# DEEP ROOTS, BEARING FRUIT





In this second year of the pandemic, Little Lights continued to adapt our program offerings. As we stepped back to reflect upon the year, we realized that the deep roots that we've developed over the past 26 years are bearing fruit.

Our students are maturing into adulthood, which led to the launch of the Next Step College and Career program. Middle and high school students have a vision for their future; some of our high school students have tangible plans to attend college, with substantial scholarships.

This year, Little Lights employed 24 community members, providing a sustainable income and professional development. Little Lights is still the largest private employer in the community.



Our Race Literacy 101 Class participants wanted to remain connected, which led to the creation of our Race Literacy Connections program. This year, 148 people committed to continuing to grow together and invest in Little Lights' anti-racism work.

Year upon year, we're grateful for the generosity of partners—some who have been involved since the beginning of Little Lights—who have come alongside us to connect with kids as tutors and mentors, and provide for their emotional, physical, and spiritual needs as volunteers, donors and prayer warriors.



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New in 2021

# NEXT STEP COLLEGE & CAREER



Left: Deniesha, a high school senior in our Next Step College and Career Program, will graduate this spring.

The Next Step College and Career program offers wrap-around support for teens living in Potomac Gardens, Hopkins, and Benning Terrace public housing communities as they prepare for life after high school—whether that means college, learning a trade, or even military service. This program is highly relational—a hallmark of Little Lights’ programming—and customized to each student, based on their unique hopes for the future.



**LINDA RICE SCHOLARSHIP**

In 2021, Little Lights created a Scholarship Fund to honor a precious member of our community, Linda Rice, who passed away in 2020. She first joined Little Lights as the Choir Director in 2002 and eventually served as an Associate Director. Her indomitable spirit of hospitality made everyone feel welcome and special. In 2021, \$47,533 was raised for the Linda Rice Scholarship for Little Lights alumni and participants in our College and Career program.

→ DONATE TO THE LINDA RICE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our goal is to provide an ongoing support system to help remove many of the obstacles that often keep low income students stuck in a cycle of poverty.

We expanded our programming for middle and high school students. This includes one-to-one tutoring as well as workshops on college and career readiness. Workshops focused on thinking about good fit college and career options, including by bringing in professionals from various industries to share about their careers and passions. We’ve guided students through the DC high school lottery and college application processes, and helped navigate the financial aid process.

During the summer, 10 teen interns supported our hybrid Summer Lights program, and had the opportunity for enrichment. They participated in a coding class, worked on personal statements, and practiced for standardized tests like the SAT. They also worked on developing soft skills and organizational skills.



**THIS INTERNSHIP GIVES ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE MORE INDEPENDENT, AND I THINK THE CODING AND WRITING ACTIVITIES WE’RE DOING, TOO, IS GIVING ME EXPERIENCE FOR JOBS I MIGHT TAKE ON WHEN I’M OLDER.”**

— Summer Lights Teen Intern: Jaylyn

**IMPACT**

44

students and young adults participated in the Next Step College and Career program



middle and high school students are improving their grades, getting into choice high schools, and gaining a vision for their future careers

\$472,128

amount college-bound students have already secured in scholarships while receiving admissions!

**PRESSING NEED**

46%

Someone without a high school diploma will earn 46% of the median annual earnings of someone with a bachelors degree

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2019



Watch our new video about our College and Career program!

→ WATCH VIDEO

# Restoring In-Person Programming



## SPRING LEARNING HUBS

Initially launched as a response to the pandemic in 2020, when our students were not able to effectively engage in virtual learning, this spring we kept 3 Learning Hub sites open to 130 students 5 days a week. While staying physically distanced and masked, our students got a meal, access to a computer and the internet, and ongoing and much needed homework support.

## IMPACT

# 171

students participated in Little Lights programs

# 70.5%

of students increased or maintained their reading assessment scores (Fall 2020 – Fall 2021)

# 82%

of students increased or maintained their math assessment scores



## SUMMER LIGHTS: HYBRID

Summer Lights is always highly anticipated, with kids often lining up at the door waiting for their day to begin! This year, we were able to offer our five week program, hybrid-style. Kids came to the center for chill time, to receive a nutritious meal and participate in activities and crafts. Then, they headed home for the afternoon for their virtual one-on-one tutoring in math and reading, with their Math and Reading Heroes.

# 41

students enrolled for virtual academic time

# 1016

one-to-one Zoom Heroes sessions



## FALL: IN-PERSON

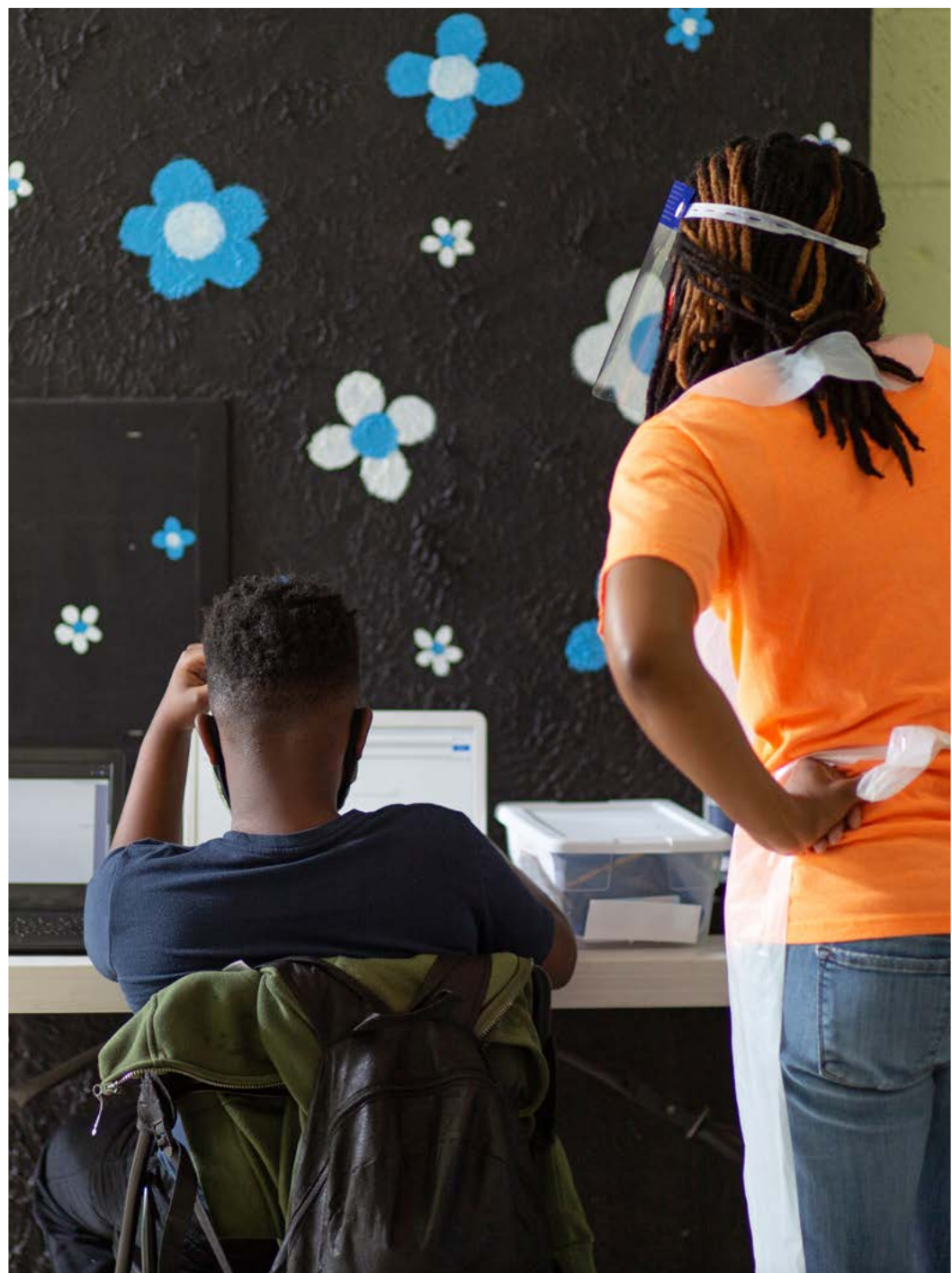
Finally, this fall, we were able to resume more of our programming, in-person. Our Homework Club met in-person, Monday through Thursday. Students met with their tutors who helped them reinforce academic skills and complete their homework assignments. Math and Reading Heroes continued to meet virtually. We were also able to restore our relational Saturday programs, in-person. Volunteer groups provided a meal and organized fun activities, whether playing basketball or other games, for our kids.

## PRESSING NEED

# 31%

A study of public and public charter schools in DC found that in the spring of 2021, 31% of at-risk students were at or above their reading levels, down from 58% in 2019

Source: EmpowerK12 report, 2021





# Work that Sustains

Working in a community in which our families have limited incomes and job opportunities, Little Lights' goal is to hire as many people from the community as possible. Residents of public housing are an integral part of our staff and serve as tutors, academic support staff, van drivers, and members of the Clean Green Team.

## FAMILY CENTER

Little Lights Family Center provides community members with access to a computer, trained staff and assistance with job searches. Staff also help with resumes, cover letters and interview preparation.



**WORKING FOR LITTLE LIGHTS HAS GIVEN ME AN OPPORTUNITY TO GET BACK INTO THE WORKFORCE AND GIVE BACK TO THE COMMUNITY. IT MAKES ME FEEL GOOD AND MOTIVATES ME. EVEN THE PHYSICAL EXERCISE OF GOING TO THE CENTER AND WALKING UP THE STAIRS IS HELPFUL."**

— Ms. Danyel



## CLEAN GREEN TEAM

The Clean Green Team is about “quality landscaping, affordable prices, and doing good.”

Now in its 11th year of operation, this social enterprise landscaping business is steadily growing and improving. The Clean Green Team's nine member crew offer services such as mowing, tree trimming, and removing leaves. And, it offers ongoing job training and employment for our community members in need of a job.

This year, the Clean Green Team has been focused on improving efficiency in business practices, communications among the team and with clients, and leadership.

## IMPACT

1005

jobs completed across Washington, DC



maintained a DC Housing Authority contract

171

customers served

# Deepening Relationships

At Little Lights, we believe that kids and communities are transformed by personal relationships. Our mentorship program invites mentors to love mentees as God loves them, freely and unconditionally, and model for mentees what it means to love and follow Jesus. Mentors commit to their mentee for at least one year and meet with their mentee at least 6 hours a month.

For the past four years, Danielle and K'Morie have been walking alongside one another. Danielle was inspired to serve as a mentor after volunteering at Summer Lights and hearing Steve Park teach on loving those around us. K'Morie had been part of Little Lights for two years, as part of the Homework Club and Girls Night program, before signing up for a mentor. Together, Danielle and K'Morie have shared their faith, many walks and lots of boba tea. They meet on a monthly basis, building a trusting relationship. K'Morie credits Danielle for teaching her about the character of God, one who is good and trustworthy. Danielle has taken joy watching K'Morie grow up and their relationship has deepened her own faith. K'Morie has shown Danielle new memes while Danielle has introduced K'Morie to Korean fried chicken. Now in high school, K'Morie and Danielle continue to meet, trusting that whatever comes their way, they'll face it together over food and laughter.

## IMPACT

31

mentor/mentee pairs

537

hours mentor/mentee pairs spent together

## PRESSING NEED

55%

increase in likelihood for young adults who face an opportunity gap and have a mentor to be enrolled in college, compared to those who did not have a mentor

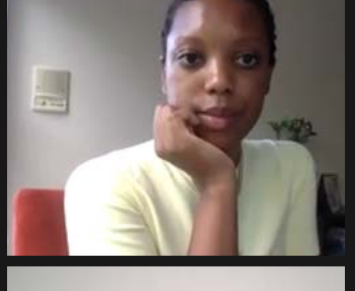
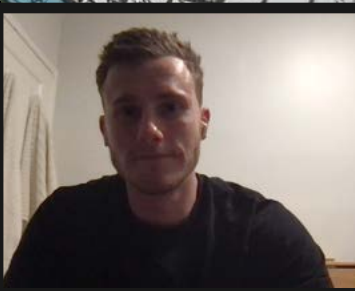
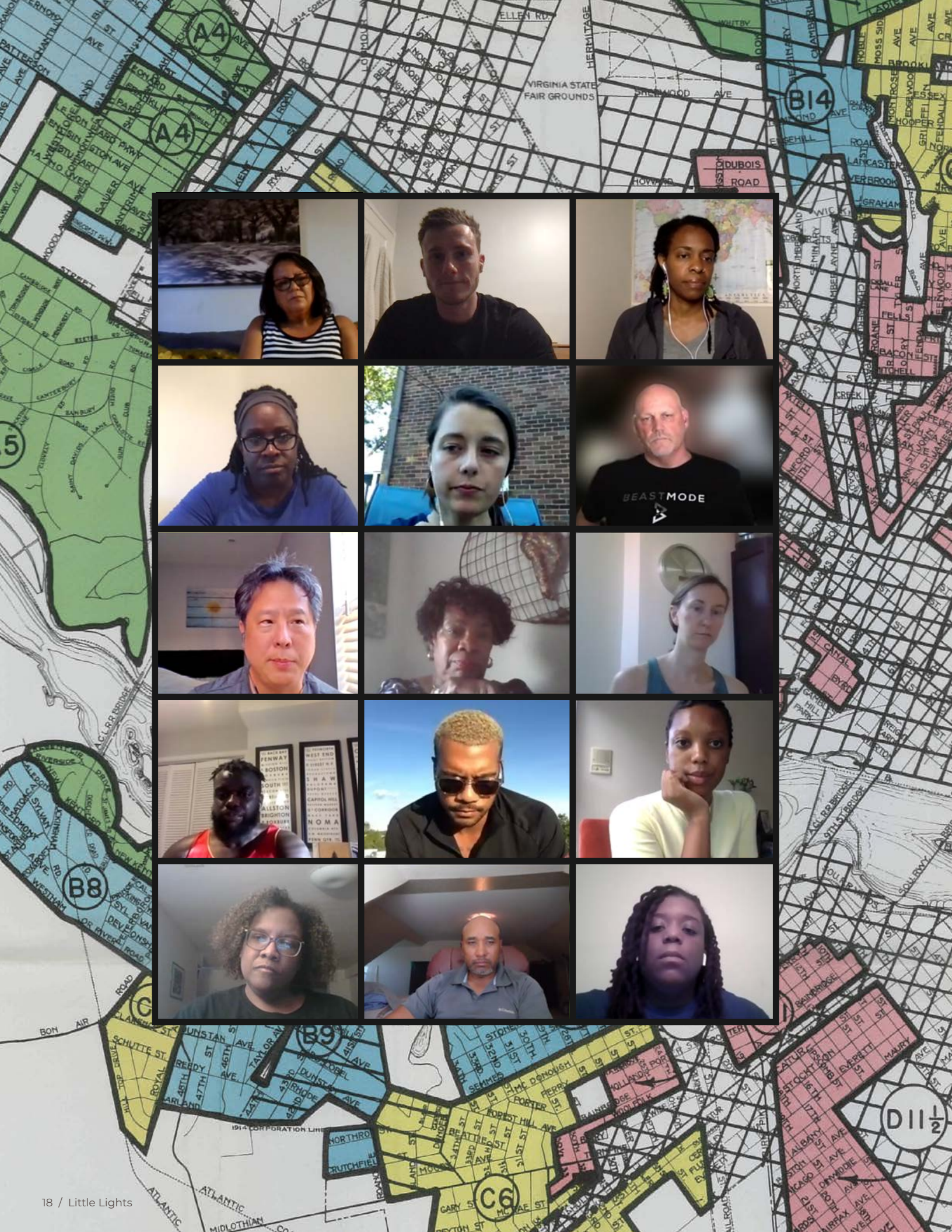
Source: The Mentoring Effect, 2014



Left: Danielle and K'Morie enjoy spending time with one another, over bubble tea. Right: Jayon and his mentor, Josh, enjoying an outing to Topgolf.







# Race Literacy

First offered in the spring of 2016, our Race Literacy 101 class is a 12 week study to understand the history and science of race and become more racially literate and educated to work towards healing racial divides.



Since the start of the pandemic, we have hosted six virtual cohorts with participants from across the country, and even a few from other countries. The participants learn about the issue of race through a theological and historical perspective and build a sense of community with the help of trained small group facilitators. The conversations tend to be honest yet grace-filled.

In 2021, we held three virtual cohorts and for the first time provided a 4 week modified Race Literacy 101 virtual training for a church in San Francisco.

Left, foreground: Virtual gathering of small group facilitators for Race Literacy 101. Left, background is a 1937 map of redlining, one of the topics addressed in the course. (Image source: Mapping Inequality).



This year, we launched Race Literacy Connections. Building upon our Race Literacy 101 class, this membership program provides a brave and safe space for those who want to continue anti-racism learning and invest in Little Lights' anti-racism efforts. Programming includes connection to affinity groups, classes and workshops, special speakers and ongoing ties to Little Lights.

## IMPACT

288

participated in a 12-week Race Literacy 101 class

148

people enrolled in the Race Literacy Connections



Race Literacy content reach expanded with Little Lights Executive Director speaking at 6 churches across the country



Listen to a podcast with BitterSweet Monthly on our Race Literacy program!

→ LISTEN



**AS A RESULT OF THIS CLASS, I COMMIT TO ENCOURAGING YOUNGER PEOPLE (IN MY SPHERE OF INFLUENCE) TO HAVE OPEN CONVERSATION ABOUT SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND TO APPLY THE BIBLE AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR LORD AND SAVIOR AS A GUIDE TO LIVE IN A MANNER THAT CREATES A SOCIETY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE!"**

— Sonja, Participant in Race Literacy 101

# Generosity upon Generosity

Our community experiences generosity upon generosity from partners near and far who provided for material needs.

During the pandemic, our community faced new challenges. As an example when schools went virtual, our students no longer had access to breakfast and lunch. But partners like Capital Area Food Bank stepped in to fill the gap with grab and go lunches.



## IMPACT

# 15,151

nutritious meals were served through our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank and DC Central Kitchen

# 18,400

diapers distributed (valued at \$5336). Little Lights served as a DC Diaper Bank site, providing diapers to families in our community and \$6946 worth of baby products

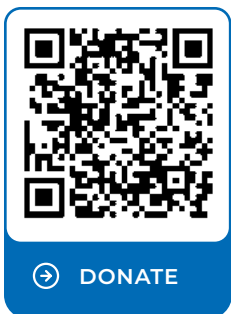


# 300

Thanksgiving baskets filled with non-perishable food and a grocery gift card for a turkey, provided by churches and the Little Lights Junior Service Council

# 170

Christmas gifts provided by One Kind Act for students to pick gifts for their families. These donations made it possible for a total of 400 gifts in total to be distributed through our Christmas store





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# Partners

We are so grateful for our partners —whether first time donors and volunteers, or long time partners who have helped sustain our programming during a critical time in the lives of our community members.

## COMMUNITY

11th Street Bridge Park  
Black Swan Academy  
Building Futures  
Capital Area Food Bank  
Christian Community Development Association  
DC Central Kitchen  
DreamWakers  
Dress Lab  
Falls Church Fellows  
Fuller Asian American Center  
Fund for American Studies  
Gonzaga College High School  
Greater DC Diaper Bank  
Guerrilla Gardeners  
Hill Havurah

Howard University Chicago People's Union  
Initiative on Faith and Public Life  
Little Lights Junior Service Council  
One Kind Act  
SHARE Food Network  
St. Albans School  
Turning the Page  
Tyler Elementary School  
University of Maryland Terps for Change



**CORPORATE**

B.Lin Catering  
Chu Contracting  
First Citizens Bank  
Fulcrum Properties group  
The Gaskins Team  
Highlands Residential Mortgage  
SuprTEK, Inc.

**CHURCH**

All Saints Church  
Bridgeway Global Church  
Capitol Hill Baptist Church  
Chesterbrook United Methodist Church  
Christ Central Presbyterian Church  
Christ City Church  
Christ Church Washington Parish  
Christian Reformed Church of Washington DC  
Church of the Advent  
Citizen Heights Church  
District Church  
First Baptist Church of Glenarden (Willing Workers Ministry)  
First Rock Baptist Church  
Great Commission Community Church  
Grace DC  
Gracepoint DC  
Grace Capital City Church  
Grace Community Church of Arlington  
Grace Community Church of Howard County  
Korean Presbyterian Church of Washington  
Lord Jesus Love Presbyterian Church  
National Presbyterian Church  
Open Door Presbyterian Church  
Passion City Church  
Redemption Hill Church  
Restoration Anglican Church  
Washington Community Fellowship



**FOUNDATION**

The Capitol Hill Community Foundation  
Clark-Winchcole Foundation  
Crowell & Moring Foundation  
Heinz and Liselotte Nehring Stiftung  
Herb Block Foundation  
JKBae Foundation  
John Edward Fowler Memorial Foundation  
The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation  
New Life Foundation  
Richard E. and Nancy P. Marriott Foundation, Inc.  
United Planning Organization  
4G Foundation

**GOVERNMENT**

DC Housing Authority  
DC Public Schools  
Department of Employment Services  
Learn24 OST

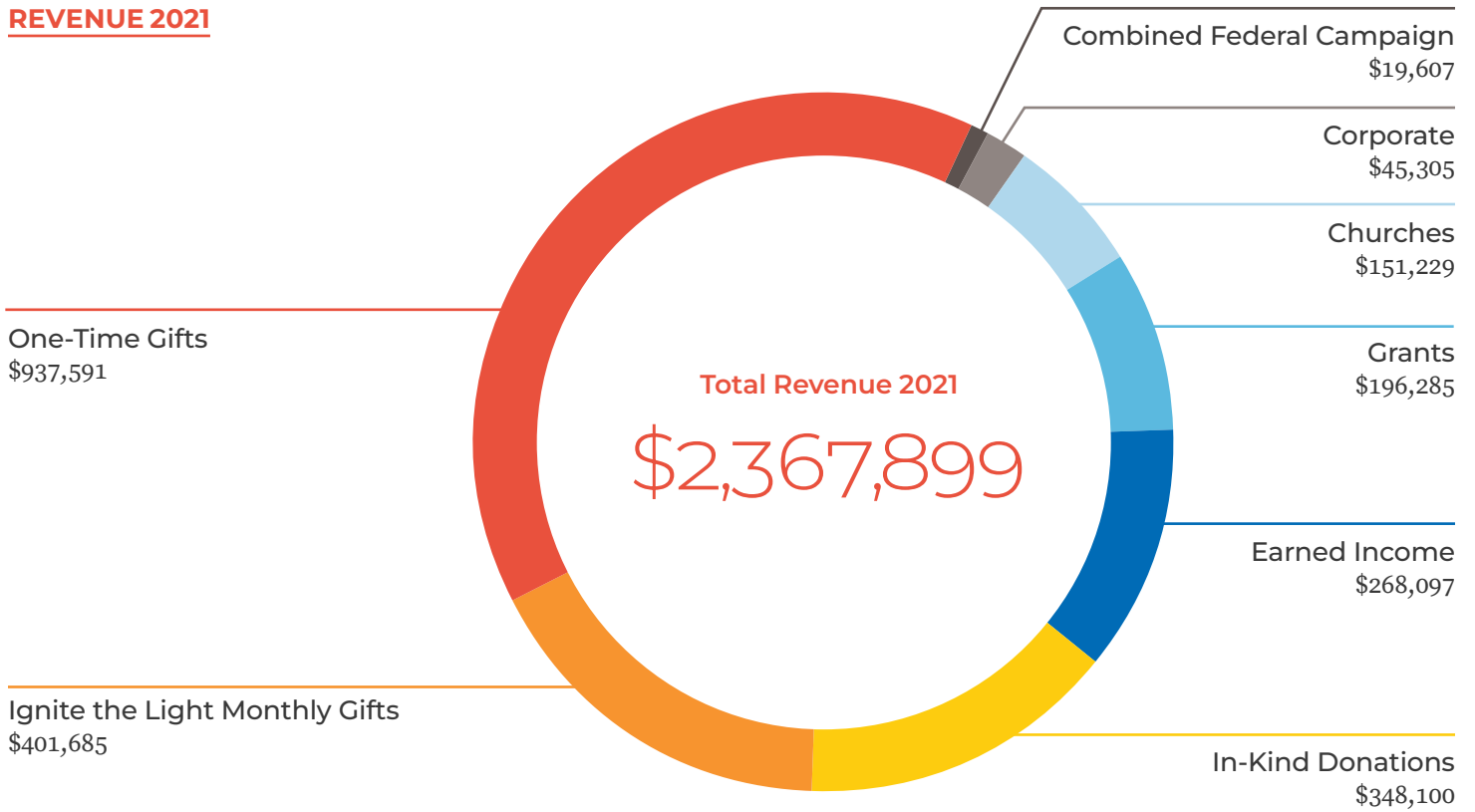
**IMPACT**

295  
volunteers

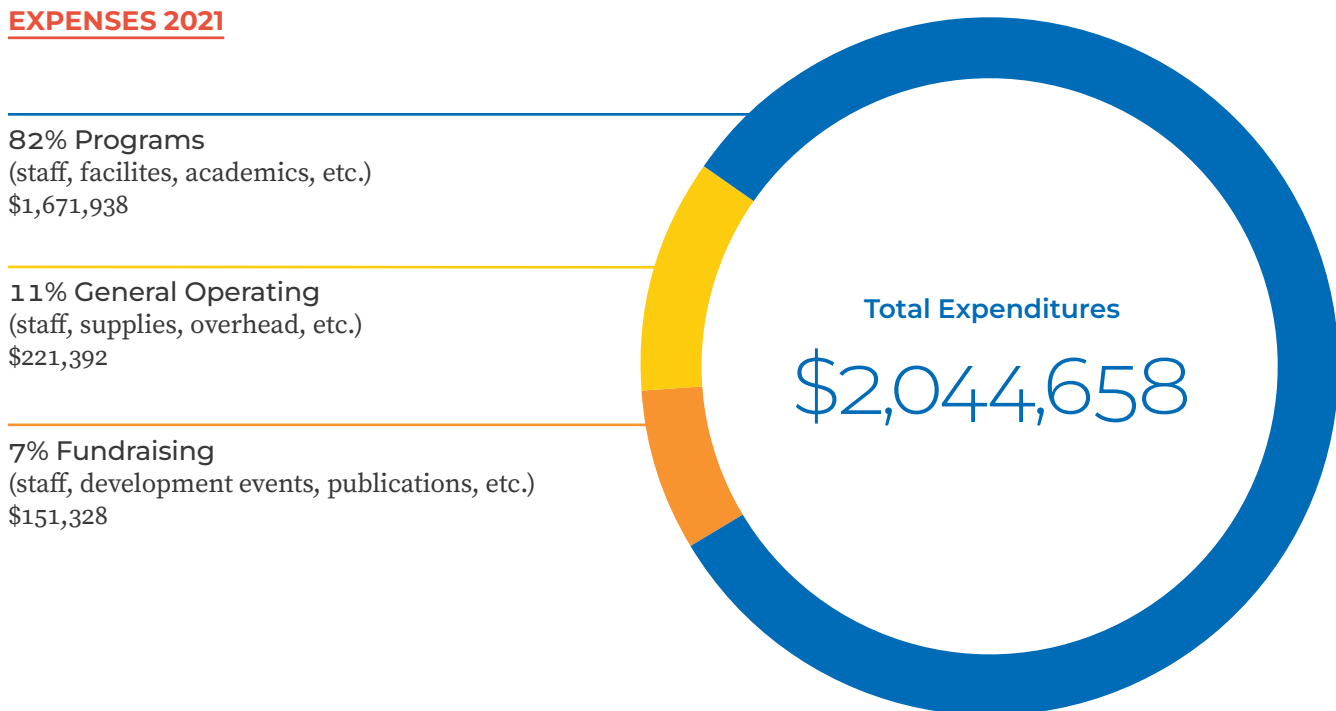
3,426  
volunteer hours served

# Financials

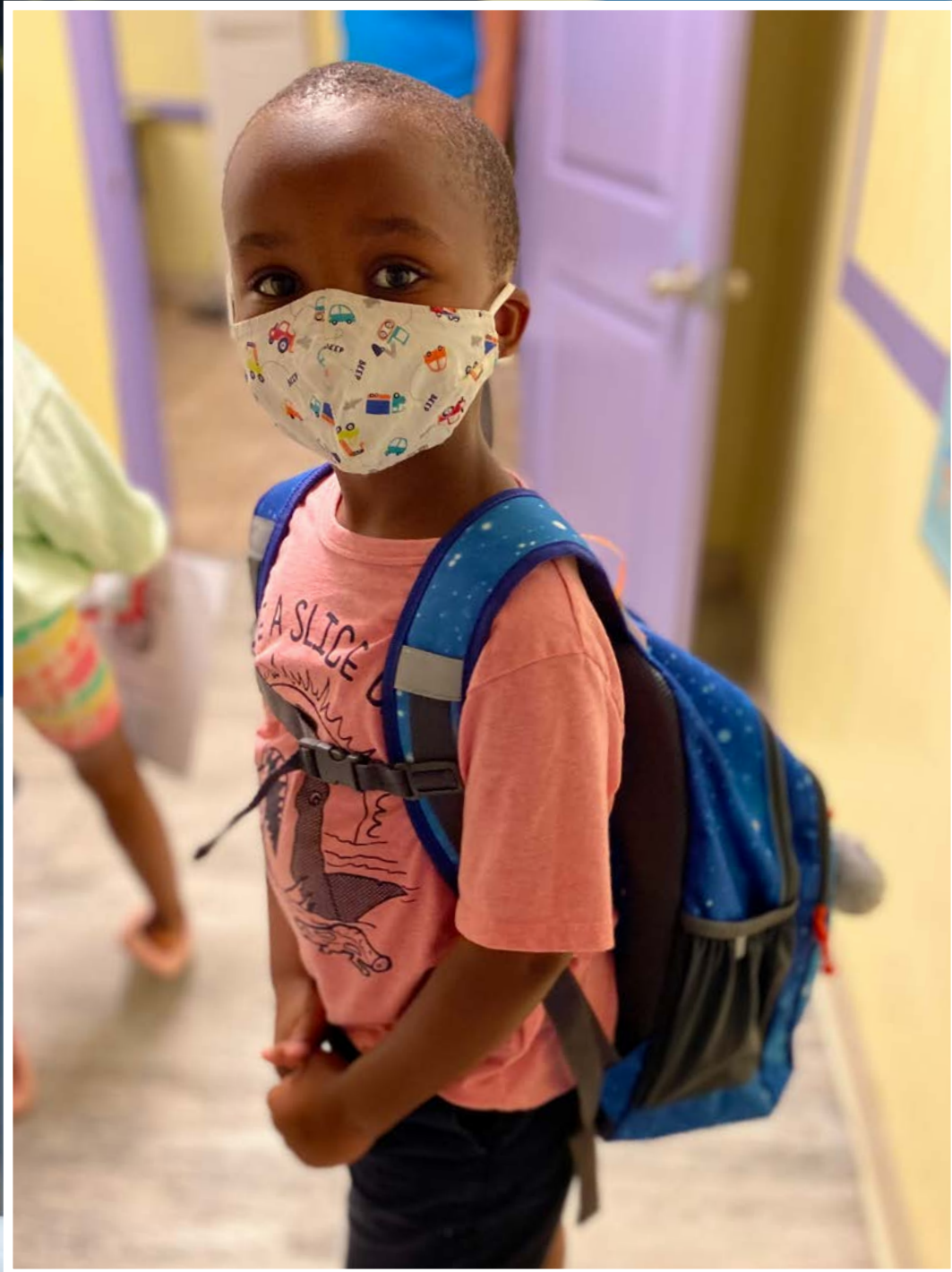
## REVENUE 2021



## EXPENSES 2021









# Staff and Board



## FULL-TIME STAFF

Linda An\*  
 Theodora Beschel  
 Mary Daniel Cheek  
 Isaac Choi  
 Aaronica Glover  
 Ashley Hill\*  
 Kathryn Larkins  
 David Lee  
 Amy Leonard\*  
 Sophia Nalty  
 Mary Park  
 Steven Park  
 Cierra Peterson  
 Liberti Robinson\*  
 Dominique Scruggs  
 Karmen Taylor  
 Naomi Thompson\*  
 Naomi Venerable\*  
 Kristy Wallace

## PART-TIME STAFF

Amanda Briggs  
 Milton Brown  
 Markeith Davis\*  
 Emily Delfera\*  
 Christopher Dellaporta  
 Grace Dickerson  
 Alexandra Fraioli\*  
 Caulah Francis  
 Dorothy Francis\*  
 Anna Laura Grant  
 Bonita Guerrero  
 Shakyra Harris  
 Charmaine Hart

Keith Hicks  
 Kirsten Jackson  
 Deborah Joyner  
 Sophia Kaiser\*  
 Shelly Malcolm  
 Abigail Maraya\*  
 Deverrick McAllister, Jr.  
 Jane Pak  
 Shantelle Powell  
 Kassidy Powers  
 Toluwani Roberts\*  
 Anna Rozzo  
 Samuel Rule\*  
 Jamiyah Scruggs  
 Katherine Shapiro  
 Asia Shorter\*  
 Camille Smith  
 Jerry Smith  
 Maria Smith  
 Lyndi Tsering\*  
 Danyel Turner  
 Joseph Washington  
 Sandra Wilfong\*

## CLEAN GREEN TEAM

Sheldon Clark\*  
 Henry Dent\*  
 Lawrence Dozier  
 Kelvin Gordon  
 Gary Sams, Jr.  
 Antonio Smith  
 Christian Staton\*  
 Bernard Tyree  
 Antwan Wright

## BOARD

**Ted Kim**  
 Board Chairman  
 Deputy Associate Director,  
 Refugee, Asylum, and  
 International Operations, USCIS

**Steve Park**  
 Board President  
 Executive Director at Little Lights  
 Urban Ministries

**LaToya Archibald**  
 Secretary  
 Doula & Birth Justice Advocate

**Derek Sykes**  
 Treasurer  
 Vice President of Finance and  
 Operations at Community of  
 Hope

**Matt Luecke**  
 Member  
 Deputy Associate Director at  
 Board of Governors of the Federal  
 Reserve System

**Andrew Biggers**  
 Member  
 Partner/Realtor at The Gaskins  
 Team / Keller Williams Realty

**Jake Thomsen**  
 Member  
 Principal at Sovereign's Capital  
 Management

**Anthony Minter**  
 Member  
 Pastor of First Rock Baptist  
 Church

**Kay Kim**  
 Member  
 Director of Practice Innovation,  
 Simpson Thacher LLP

**David King**  
 Member  
 President & Founder, Neuma  
 Consulting, LLC

**Jared Noetzel**  
 Member  
 Director of Strategic  
 Partnerships, Stand Together

**Cherie Bellamy**  
 Member  
 President, LaVie Medical

**Alex Knight**  
 Member  
 Vice President of Business  
 Development, Cooley LLP

**Andrew Ho**  
 Member  
 Director of Development, The  
 National Academies of Sciences,  
 Engineering, and Medicine

**Michael Oh**  
 Member  
 Director, FINRA, Office of  
 Financial Innovation

**Phillip Lee**  
 Associate, DLA Piper LLP

**Audrey Donnell**  
 Founder, Audrey Donnell  
 Coaching & Consulting

24  
 community  
 members employed  
 by Little Lights

\*Indicates that they no longer work at Little Lights.



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[www.littlelights.org](http://www.littlelights.org)

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Facebook icon [/LittleLightsUrbanMinistries](https://www.facebook.com/LittleLightsUrbanMinistries)

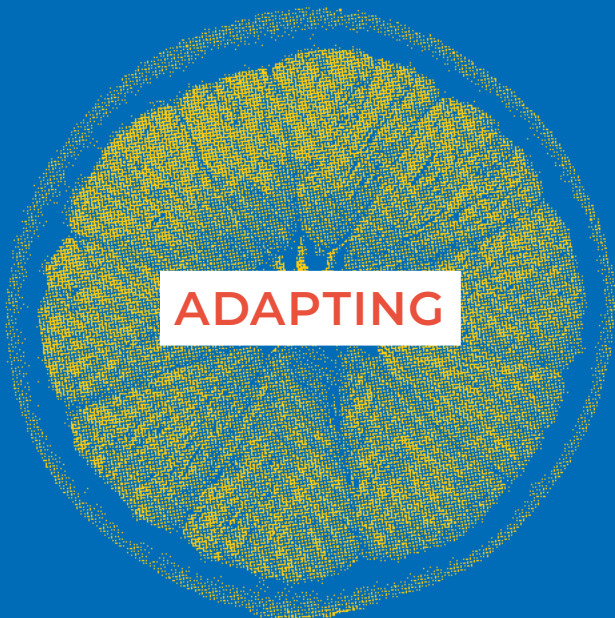
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**MATURING**



**CONNECTING**



**ADAPTING**



**RESTORING**