

# Impact Report 2021

Women Unite!,  
Change Happens

women  
UNITE!



## **A MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIZ JANSEN**

I started thinking about what I wanted to say in this opening letter back in June 2021. At that point, the pandemic seemed to be abating, the new administration was reversing course on some of the previous administration's destructive policies, and we all felt a renewed sense of hope.

Cut to December 2021. Rather than a renewed sense of hope, we are in what feels like an inescapable, Groundhog's Day-esque cycle of systems failures, morality failures, and basic human decency failures.

Amidst a constant and consistent barrage of these failures—at the city, state, nation, and world levels—Women Unite!'s community remained



constant and consistent too, proving once again that when we come together, we can move the needle on justice, equity, and empathy. This strong community is what allows each of us individually and all of us collectively to thrive. When we're stuck in this endless loop of obstacles, when our work feels like a series of Sisyphean tasks, that's when it's most important to show up day in and day out.

And that's what we did in 2021. From diversifying our Board of Directors, to launching an Outreach & Engagement Committee, to prioritizing people over profit through our work and charitable contributions, thanks to our incredible community, Women Unite! has become stronger and more solid than ever. November 2021 marked Women Unite!'s five year anniversary. It's hard to believe that it has been five years since a group of like-minded people came together and decided to use their resources to make change in their communities. In the past five years, we've accomplished so much—because of you—and we can't wait to see what the next five years hold.

Without your belief in our mission and your support, we wouldn't be where we are today. But our work is far from done. We must continue to demand more and develop new ways of solving old problems. When we do this, we create space and opportunity for transformation. When we do this, we take care of our community and we take care of each other.

Stay kind. Stay generous. Stay radical.

Liz Jansen, Executive Director



# 2021

## By the numbers

We raised

**\$175,169**

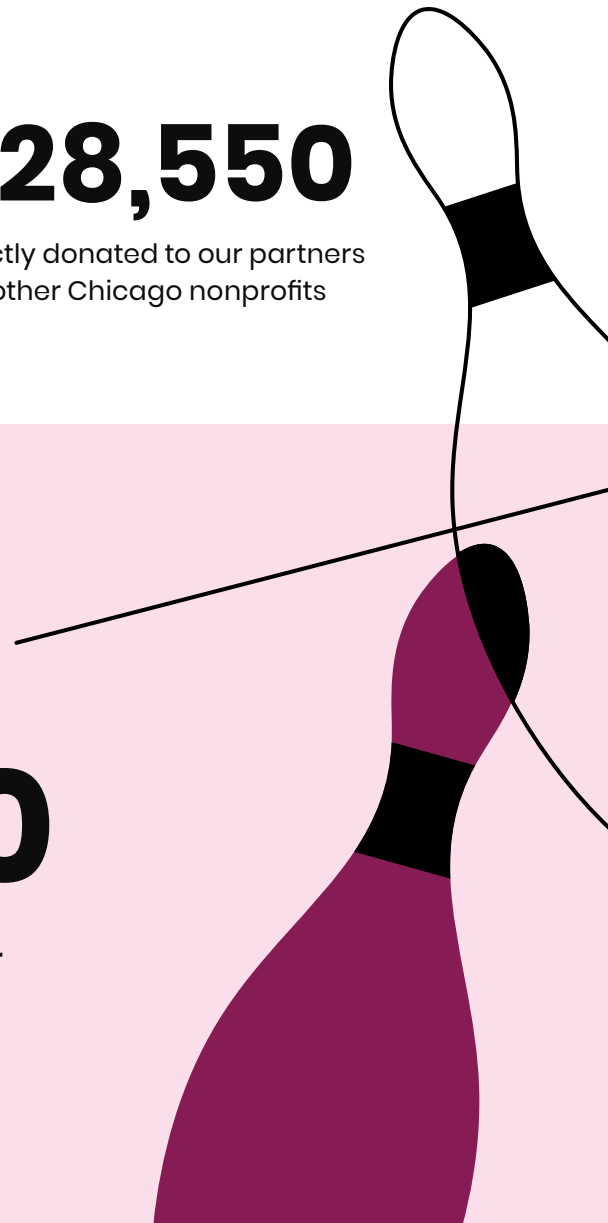
for four of our clients and partners  
through end-of-year campaigns

**\$28,550**

directly donated to our partners  
and other Chicago nonprofits

**\$3,000,000**

awarded to clients & partners through our  
grant management services





# 26 new grants

awarded to clients & partners through our grant management services

# 727

hours of free services provided to partners, a 69% increase from 2020



# 9,953

hours of services provided to clients on a sliding scale



# Transparency & Equity

Since our founding, Women Unite! has committed to making the world a more just, compassionate place—and we do so transparently. This year, we released our Transparency & Equity page on our website, where you can see our stats and progress. Here are a few ways we're changing the fundraising landscape and living our values:

## STATUS QUO

Revenues of Black-led organizations are 24% less than white-led organizations and only 8-9% of foundation funding goes to communities of color.

The Federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour. Chicago's minimum wage is \$15 per hour.

84% of foundation board members are white, 90% of executive directors are white, and only 42% of organizations are led by women.

## WOMEN UNITE!

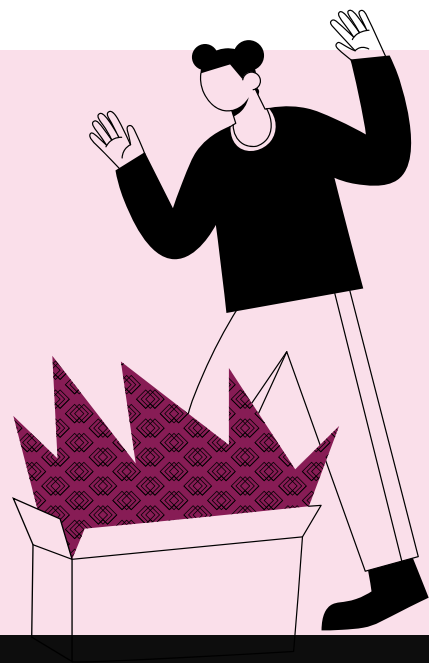
90% of WU! services provided to Black- and POC-led clients are either free or on a sliding scale and 68% of all funds donated since our founding has been to Black- and POC-led organizations.

Our average hourly rate is \$33.72, and we also provide contractors who work 60 or more hours per month with benefits such as annual childcare and wellness stipends.

As of 2021, 100% of WU! Board members are women or nonbinary and 46% are people of color. 100% of WU! full-time staff were women of color, including our executive director, and 37.5% of WU! Board, staff, and contractors were LGBTQIA+.



# Spreading Our Roots



Harkening back to last fall's Putting the People Back in Philanthropy campaign, we again wanted to show that it doesn't take millionaires with their strings-attached donations to make a difference—gifts of any size from a committed community can effect change. As usual, our WU! community stepped up and demonstrated their dedication to making an impact for grassroots nonprofits. The funds raised during the month-long April campaign helped to support our work and the work of our partners.

## Spreading Our Roots



The campaign surpassed its goal,  
raising

**\$5,270** from

**72** donors, with an average

donation of **\$73**



# Stepping Up for Our Community

This year, Women Unite! launched its Outreach & Engagement Committee, which identifies volunteer opportunities for our community. In its first year, this committee supported incredible organizations and showed the impact we can have when we all work together.



## SHARING SOME LOVE WITH THE LOVE FRIDGE

The first volunteer event was held on April 18 where WU! supporters, Board, and staff came together to clean up and stock fridges for The Love Fridge, a Chicago mutual aid group whose goal is to nourish our communities. The day was a success, and set the stage for future volunteer events and opportunities.







### **GYRLS IN THE H.O.O.D**

In August, WU's Outreach & Engagement Committee hosted a supply drive for Gyrls In The H.O.O.D Foundation, a nonprofit that provides girls with the reproductive and sexual health education needed to make informed and responsible choices. Through donations from our generous community members, as well as a \$500 contribution from WU!, we provided critical items, such as underwear, toothpaste, deodorant, and shampoo, to stock HOOD kits.



### **GROWING HOME'S WINTERFEST DRIVE**

Women Unite!ers came together to host a donation drive for Growing Home's WinterFest. Hosted at Avondale Bowl, we collected approximately 10 bags of donated goods. A holly jolly thanks to our friends at Avondale Bowl, who created the WU! Fizz drink, the proceeds of which went to WU!.



# A Very Welcome Respite from Zoom

Over the spring and summer, we took advantage of the brief reprieve from the pandemic to come together in solidarity and support with some of our partners, clients, and friends.



# women UNITE!

## 3RD ANNUAL LAUNCH PARTY

On June 6, Women Unite! held our 3rd Annual Launch Party at Outside Voices to welcome our three 2021–2022 partners, Apna Ghar, #LetUsBreathe Collective, and Sista Afya Community Care, as well as reflect on the past year of partnership with Chicago Women’s Health Center, Growing Home, and Healing to Action. The event gave us the opportunity to reconnect in person, relish in the past year’s work and collaboration, and just enjoy one another’s company.





## **GOODS SALE FOR A GOOD CAUSE**

We hosted a yard sale on June 13 in Logan Square where sales items included adult and children's clothing, books, household goods, and more. All proceeds benefited WU!, our partners, and our collective work. In just a few hours, we raised more than \$400!



## PLANTASIA

Our fourth annual Plantasia event was a huge success, thanks to our incredible community! We welcomed 15 new members to the WU! Crew and raised \$8,541—translating into a \$1,500 donation to each of our partners: Apna Ghar, #LetUsBreathe Collective, and Sista Afya Community Care.





# From Virtual to Visits

From the hoop houses at Growing Home, to the warehouse filled with adventure gear at Chicago Voyagers' new facility, to the gardens of Urban Growers Collective's Grant Park Art on the Farm location, WU! was on the move and excited to experience the work of our clients and partners firsthand.

## Growing Home





# Chicago Voyagers



# Urban Growers Collective





# What Our Clients & Partners Are Saying



“As an Executive Director of a new non-profit organization, Women Unite!’s consulting services have supported my leadership and non-profit organizational structure. From everything to accounting, fundraising, and executing events - Women Unite! is always in reach to help Sista Afya Community Care deepen our impact in Chicago communities. I am so grateful for their expertise and would recommend their services to anyone looking to take their non-profit to the next level.”

Camesha L. Jones, LCSW - Executive Director  
of Sista Afya Community Care, NFP







“Everything that WU! stands for resonates with us as people focused on empowering women. At Apna Ghar we always talk about being in community with survivors, breaking down barriers and connecting at the human level. We jumped at the opportunity to partner with WU! because often we get pro-bono support but not often so resonant. And especially with the communications support, that’s an opportunity to highlight who we are and the work we do so that’s really exciting and meaningful.”

-Neha Gill, Executive Director of Apna Ghar



“Women Unite! has been an incredibly instrumental part of our projects. They provide the same level of attention and care to their work, whether they are part of a long-term project or are engaged for a limited time, at key strategic moments. The team members at WU! are able to jump in, ask thorough and provocative questions, and are always responsive to the complicated contexts within which we are often working. Their approach is thoughtful and inspiring, and working with them puts us at ease knowing that our communications will be much stronger with their support!”

-Kareeshma Ali, Design Research Lead, Greater Good Studio



# Women Unite! Donors Make Change Possible

Year after year we are blown away by the tremendous support of our Women Unite! community. 2021 was no exception. Thank you to all who supported WU! this year. It is only through your commitment that we can continue our work.

**180**

Individual donors

Largest one-time gift

**\$1,100**

“I support WU! as a monthly donor because it’s empowering to see a group of inclusive, smart womxn doing awesome work in our communities. WU!’s work is focused and anchored in supporting womxn and I love being connected to their mission. Regarding my actual dollars, I 100% trust WU! to make decisions that make the best use of my donation. I feel that when I donate to WU!, my dollars are actually worth more in their hands.”

Christina Cosio, WU! Crew Member



Average one-time  
gift amount

**\$79**

Average WU! Crew  
membership size

**\$17.50/  
month**

“I support WU! because of its mission of promoting growth and education to amplify the voices of individuals and other organizations. As someone who is a mental health practitioner, I strongly believe that providing support and advocacy through programming and fundraising can leave a strong impact on communities. Every little bit counts. It really helps knowing my money can go toward an expansion of programming, fundraising, and advocacy efforts.”

Angelica Marrufo, WU! Crew Member

**89**

**WU! Crew  
Members**

# Board of Directors

**Sherin Khan**  
Board President  
she/her/hers

**Catie Mouton**  
Board Secretary  
she/her/hers

**Ally Burns**  
Co-Founder +  
Board Treasurer  
she/her/hers

**Jameelah Adas**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers

**Emily Barish**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers

**Angel Buchanan**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers

**Beth Duffy**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers

**Jessica Gwilliam**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers or  
they/them/their

**Sterling Haukom  
Anderson**  
Co-Founder  
+ Director of  
Professional Training  
and Development  
she/her/hers

**Emily Lusk Battle**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers


**Kiran Pinto**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers

**Andreanna Triliegi**  
Co-Founder +  
Board Member  
she/her/hers


**Jasmine Watkins**  
Board Member  
she/her/hers


**Gabriela  
Zapata-Alma**  
Board Member  
they/them/their

**Darcie Young  
Tashey**  
Co-Founder &  
Lifetime Member  
she/her/hers

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**Learn more:**  
[womenunitechicago.org](http://womenunitechicago.org)

**Donate at:**  
[womenunitechicago.org/donate](http://womenunitechicago.org/donate)

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