



YoPhi Teen Board Grant Recipients

The Louis and Sybil Mervis Youth Philanthropy Indianapolis (YoPhi) Teen Board is composed of Jewish 11th and 12th graders from the greater Indianapolis area working as a philanthropic board focused on learning and making grants through a values-grounded, authentic, consensus-building process. During their year-long experience, Teen Board members engage in an in-depth examination of their Jewish values and understandings while raising funds to make grants in order to explore philanthropy and group process.

Questions? Contact Andrew Steele, NEXTGen Leadership and Engagement Manager, at asteele@jfgi.org.

2024-2025 Grantmaking Cycle:

Core Value

Service – Shairut – שירות

Focus Areas:

- **Mental Health** - The 2024-2025 YoPhi Teen Board supported programs that benefited their recipient's mental health. The Teen Board accepted proposals from both central Indiana and Israel. The programs supported provided mental health resources and other community resources to boost the resilience of those who struggled with mental health issues.
- **Victims of Violence** - The 2024-2025 YoPhi Board supported programs that were determined to heal the mental scars left behind by incidents of violence. This included victims of the October 7th attacks in Israel and people facing significant mental health challenges due to situations of domestic violence.

Grant Recipients:

- Israel Society of Community Centers

"B'shvil HaKehila" is an innovative program designed to address mental health needs for October 7th victims through a post-traumatic growth model. The program provides participants with psychosocial tools to process trauma, rebuild their lives, and strengthen their sense of community and belonging. The program is based on the understanding that a strong community is essential for personal healing. Through guided workshops, therapy sessions, and community engagement activities,





the program fosters mental health support, empowerment, and long-term recovery. By offering structured interventions and a safe space for participants to share their experiences, "B'shvil HaKehila" helps individuals and families navigate their post-trauma journey while reinforcing social bonds and community solidarity.

Grant Amount: \$1535

- Indiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Through their Economic Justice Fund, ICADV is dedicated to providing financial support to survivors of domestic violence. Domestic violence affects countless lives, leaving survivors not only with physical and emotional scars but often trapped in cycles of economic vulnerability. The economic impact of DV can take different forms such as loss of employment, increased healthcare costs, housing denials, increased legal bills, security costs, bad debt, transportation costs, childcare and food security struggles, and more.

Grant Amount: \$1876

2020–2021 Grantmaking Cycle:

Focus Areas:

Environment – The 2020–2021 YoPhi Teen Board supported programs that promoted environmental sustainability, innovation, and conservation. The Teen Board accepted proposals from all interested organizations (local or otherwise), provided that a portion of impact was made in Central Indiana, with a preference for organizations and programs that supported communities disproportionately affected by climate change and environmental degradation.

Equity – The 2020–2021 YoPhi Alumni Board supported programs that worked to achieve justice, respect, and equitable opportunity for the LGBTQ+ community, women, and racial minorities in central Indiana. The committee accepted proposals from organizations ambitiously working to create communities that empowered and mobilized their residents in the greater Indianapolis area (Marion County and surrounding counties).

Grant Recipients:





- Exodus Refugee Immigration / Exodus Women's Program

Founded in 2010, Exodus' Women's Program offered services to build refugee women clients' confidence and assist them in overcoming their unique barriers to self-sufficiency. These services included case management, women's groups, women's art circle, women's giving circle events, and financial needs assistance. The Women's Program had three main goals: to ensure refugee women were empowered with the support necessary to attain self-sufficiency and/or meet personal goals; to ensure refugee women were connected to their communities and Indianapolis; and to ensure refugee women had access to and knowledge of important systems.

Grant Amount: \$3,000

- Jewish Community Center Indianapolis / Community Garden Refurbishment

The "seed" for the JCC Community Garden was planted in the fall of 2010 to cultivate values that were central to the JCC: improve health, promote physical activity, improve well-being, reconnect children to nature, promote a family activity, and build a community. The beautiful grounds on the Max and Mae Simon Jewish Community Campus had proven to be the perfect location to nurture the community garden and it had been 'growing strong' for 10 seasons. The garden promoted organic gardening (no pesticides) and disallowed invasive planting to make it sustainable and environmentally responsible. The garden beds were built in 2011 and after 10 seasons of enduring hot Indiana summers and cold, snowy winters, the beds were in need of repair and replenishment.

Grant Amount: \$1,115

- Jewish Family Services / Supportive Services for Survivors of Domestic Violence

Jewish Family Services met the needs of local community members, whatever those needs may have been, and served domestic abuse survivors with the care and confidentiality that they sought. Each client was offered individualized support and solutions, including emergency aid, by JFS social workers every step of the way to safety and security. Safety could be expensive: JFS often had to provide a range of resources, including multiple nights' stay in a hotel, Kosher food, and transportation. After those initial steps of removing a survivor from their situation were complete, clients continued to rely on JFS staff. At the heart of

what JFS did was case management work and crisis counseling. To recover from and make progress after domestic abuse was to juggle the physical, financial, social, and emotional ramifications of abuse.





Grant Amount: \$1,500

2019–2020 Grantmaking Cycle:

Core Values:

Justice – Tzedek – צדק

Understanding – Binah – בינה

Compassion – Rachamim – רחמים

Respect – Kavod – כבוד

Focus Areas:

Environment – The 2019–2020 YoPhi Teen Board Environment Committee supported programs that promoted sustainability, innovation, and conservation efforts for the environment. The committee accepted proposals from all interested organizations, with a preference for organizations based in greater Indianapolis (Marion County and the surrounding counties).

Education – The 2019–2020 YoPhi Teen Board Education Committee supported education enrichment programs for low-income students. The committee sought proposals from programs that not only addressed educational competencies but also strengthened community safe spaces, prevented violence, and promoted positivity. The committee accepted proposals from organizations working in greater Indianapolis (Marion County and surrounding counties).

Equity – The 2019–2020 YoPhi Teen Board Equity Committee supported programs that were determined to achieve justice, respect, and equitable opportunity for marginalized groups in central Indiana. The committee accepted proposals from organizations ambitiously working to create communities that empowered and mobilized their residents in greater Indianapolis (Marion County and surrounding counties).

Grant Recipients:





- Indianapolis Public Library Foundation / Warren Branch Teen Programs

The Warren Branch served a large population of teens after school and sought to further develop programs to engage students in the Library after school. The *Snacks and Stories* Book Club allowed participants to select books they wanted to read and discuss and provided copies to all participants to read. The *Teen Zone* turned the branch's community room into a teen-centric space during after-school hours. In the Teen Zone, students could do homework, play board or video games, and be in a safe space at the Library.

Grant Amount: \$3,000

- Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Inc. / Adopt-a-Block Tree Distribution

The mission of Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) was to engage diverse communities to create vibrant public places, helping people and nature thrive. In October 2020, KIB distributed approximately 200 free native trees to Adopt-A-Block captains. These individuals were dedicated community volunteers, having committed to engaging their neighbors to keep their blocks free of litter on an ongoing basis. Distributing large, free trees to be planted throughout the city put the resources to improve the community—our shared world—into the hands of residents at the smallest level: their own block.

Grant Amount: \$2,700

- School on Wheels, Inc. / Volunteer Training & Recruitment

School on Wheels provided one-on-one tutoring and educational advocacy, including education-based case management, for homeless children of all grade levels and their families. Due to a growing need and an increased number of requests from homeless-serving agencies and schools throughout Indianapolis, the services expanded into new locations to serve more children in need.

Grant Amount: \$1,700

- Trinity Haven, Inc. / Resident Allowances

When Trinity Haven opened its doors in 2020, it became Indiana's first and only home for LGBTQ young people who did not have a safe place to go. Trinity Haven was a fully staffed and licensed transitional home,





where professionals helped the young residents identify their goals and provided support as they completed their education, prepared for independence, and achieved their dreams. The Personal Care program provided residents with funds to buy clothing, toiletries, and other critical items.

Grant Amount: \$2,920

2018–2019 Grantmaking Cycle:

Core Values:

Community – Kehillah – קהילה

Justice – Tzedek – צדק

Empathy – Hizdahoot Regshit – הזדהות רגשית

Mission Statement:

To empower the youth of greater Indianapolis, the 2018–2019 YoPhI Teen Board, inspired by our Jewish values, invested in education experiences that promoted appreciation of diversity, empathy, and a strong sense of community.

Grant Recipients:

- Boys & Girls Clubs of Indianapolis / Power Hour

The goal of Power Hour was to help young people develop academic, behavioral, and social skills through homework completion, high-yield learning activities, and tutoring. BGCI sought to provide an outcome-driven Club Experience that helped young people achieve academic success, good character and citizenship, and healthy lifestyles.

Grant Amount: \$4,115

- Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council / Student to Student

Student to Student was a program where the JCRC trained 10th, 11th, and 12th grade Jewish students to go into classrooms where there wasn't a Jewish presence and talk about Judaism through their individual lens. *Student to Student* was a powerful tool in areas that lacked a Jewish presence. Young people who





had this experience could now put a “human face” to Judaism—the best antidote to bigotry and intolerance. The program reached high school students to foster understanding and counter stereotypes.

Grant Amount: \$600

