

# ALIGNMENT

## ROCKFORD



# ALIGNING THE STARS

2020 / 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# DEAR FRIENDS

If 2020 taught us anything, it's that our community shines brighter together. We succeed when we work together - not only during a pandemic, but when we are preparing our children to illuminate the future.

At Alignment Rockford, we believe that our educators, community leaders, businesses, and organizations are the stars that light the path toward our children's success. That's why we partner with them in an effort to provide students with opportunities they need to learn, grow and thrive.

Our work begins well before school even does, with a kindergarten readiness program aimed at improving early childhood education throughout the community. It carries through to high school, with on-the-job experiences and information on a range of career paths.

The work we do is vital to our community's future success and prosperity. And now more than ever, our Board of Directors are working collaboratively to be better aligned, more engaged and more responsive to drive positive social and economic change for our community.

Whether partnering with a school or with a local employer, Alignment Rockford is the conduit for our community to enlighten today's students. That's why we are so thankful for your support and cooperation as we give the next generation a solid foundation to build successful careers and, subsequently, brighten the economic and social well-being of our community.

**LET'S SHINE TOGETHER.**

Sincerely,

ANISHA GRIMMETT  
Executive Director



BECKY KENDALL  
President, Board of Directors



# WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE OUR 2020-2021 DONORS

## GENERAL CONTRIBUTIONS

---

UW Milwaukee Illinois Bank & Trust Thomas A. Kress  
The Unitarian Universalist Church Bob & Marion Guirl Holmstrom Kennedy  
Bergstrom Rockford Public Schools ANE Hennig  
Alignment Rockford Governing Board Members Geoff Roemerma

## PATHWAY SPONSORS

---

Collins Aerospace MembersAlliance Credit Union Rockford University  
Woodward SwedishAmerican, A Division of UW Health  
OSF Healthcare Northern Illinois Building Contractors Association  
Rock River Valley Machining & Tooling Midland States Bank Winnebago County  
Associated Bank (in-kind) Goodwill of Northern Illinois (in-kind)  
Rockford Area Habitat for Humanity (in-kind) Rockford Bell Credit Union (in-kind)  
Rockford Park District (in-kind)

## GRANTS

---

Great Lakes College & Career Pathways Partnership  
*funded by The Joyce Foundation*

Community Foundation of Northern Illinois

Community Parenting Support Saturation Program  
*funded by philanthropic partners: CME Group, Crown Family Philanthropies,  
J.B. and M.K. Pritzker Family Foundation, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation,  
Irving Harris Foundation, Robert R. McCormick Foundation,  
and Steans Family Foundation.*

# READY TO LEARN

We know that early childhood development is key to lifelong educational success. That's why we work with other community stakeholders to support young children and families throughout the community.

And thanks to a three-year, \$210,000 grant from the Community Foundation of Northern Illinois, we hired a full-time project manager dedicated to raising kindergarten readiness and engaging volunteers to push change in our region. We remain committed to recruiting more community partners in this effort.

## AND THE BEST IS YET TO COME. WITH A THREE-YEAR, **\$500,000 AWARD**

from the Illinois Action for Children's Community Parenting Support Saturation project, we are shining brighter with our early childhood efforts.

Our ongoing efforts will center around those areas, as well as gather additional data so we can continue to know the best ways to help children in our community. Already, we've developed a plan to promote the **BEGINNING WITH BABBLE** app, which will provide parenting tips and guide parents on how to best use language with young children.

Additionally, we have created a plan for **OPENING DOORS/ABRIENDO PUERTAS**, a 10-session program that addresses topics such as brain and early childhood development, early literacy and math, bilingualism, positive use of technology, civic engagement, and parent leadership.



**150**  
Volunteers  
engaged

**1,400**  
Hours donated by  
program volunteers

**700**  
Families who benefited  
from the RTL data and  
received food during  
the pandemic

Thanks to data we've collected, we know that our children could benefit from resources in the following ways:

Family and community empowerment

Early childhood continuity

Advocating for better local and state early childhood policies



# COLLEGE AND CAREER AWARENESS



As our community continues to progress with virtual work and learning, we have adapted our programming as well. The RPS 205 Academy Program offers high school students the chance to learn through the lens of a specific career path - business, production, health or public service. Academy students can take advantage of smaller learning communities, interact with working professionals and earn college-level credits.

A major component of the Academy Program is the **PATHWAY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**, which connects area employers with RPS 205 in an effort to engage students in work-based learning.

Our programs quickly adjusted to the pandemic to continue working with students virtually. We hosted industry panel discussions via YouTube, produced career awareness videos so students can access them anytime online and generated virtual-based mock interviews for students. We even added Pathway Sponsors and are implementing volunteer efforts at the high schools to help design curriculum and to facilitate in and out of school experiences.

**17**

Industry-focused virtual panel discussions hosted

**78**

Career awareness videos produced

**7,000+**

Times those videos have been viewed

**63**

New business partners joined our efforts

**36**

Professional mentors signed on to connect one-on-one with high school seniors

**50+**

Guest speakers and mock interview partners joined our efforts



In spring 2021, we partnered with Rockford Public Schools, the Rockford Park District and City of Rockford to develop an unprecedented summer extended learning plan to help Rockford-area students recover from the academic and nonacademic challenges of the pandemic. This was a coordinated, strategic, and intentional effort to redesign summer programs and support Rockford students year-round - both this summer and in the future. Together, we successfully recruited more than 30 community partners.

For more information, visit [alignmentrockford.com/livelearnplay](https://alignmentrockford.com/livelearnplay).

# OUR MISSION

To align community resources in support of public school strategies to raise student achievement, improve the health and happiness of our children, and advance the economic and social well-being of our community.



# OUR OUTCOMES

- INCREASE** Kindergarten Readiness
- INCREASE** High School Graduation Rates
- INCREASE** College and Career Readiness
- IMPROVE** Community Prosperity



**ALIGNMENT**  
**ROCKFORD**  
\*SUPPORTING OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS\*