



# **2021** **Annual** **Report**





The mission of NCLD is to improve the lives of the 1 in 5 children and adults nationwide with learning and attention issues – by empowering parents and young adults, transforming schools, and advocating for equal rights and opportunities. We’re working to create a society in which every individual possesses the academic, social, and emotional skills needed to succeed in school, at work, and in life. In 2021, NCLD focused on shaping local and national policy that dismantles barriers and ensures opportunity and access for all; upholding the importance of knowledge to our community by pursuing research to seek greater understanding; and developing valuable, insightful reports and tools to empower our community to gain a deeper understanding of learning disabilities so that we can change lives.



## Helping Students, Parents, and Educators During COVID

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted learning for all students, and many have struggled to access online resources, participate in virtual classrooms, and connect meaningfully with teachers and peers. The pandemic and the resulting school closures have had disproportionate impacts on students with disabilities and other historically marginalized populations, including students of color, students impacted by poverty, and English language learners. During 2021, NCLD created multiple resources to help students, families, and educators navigate the challenges presented by COVID. These include publications highlighting [promising practices to accelerate learning for students with disabilities](#); a [distance learning toolkit to promote evidence-based practices during the pandemic](#); a set of policy recommendations on [evaluating children for special education during COVID and beyond](#); and a report [summarizing pandemic lessons for effective teaching practices](#).

## Advocating for our Community with Congress and the Biden Administration

Shortly after the new Presidential Administration and the 117th Congress convened in Washington in early 2021, NCLD announced its [Federal Policy Agenda](#). This agenda asked the Biden Administration and the 117th Congress to:

- Increase resource equity, access to high-quality learning opportunities, and graduation rates for students with disabilities, students impacted by poverty, students who are BIPOC, and other systemically marginalized students;
- Invest in research and implementation of early, effective screening and intervention for learning difficulties;
- Prioritize the development of literacy skills from birth to grade 12 for students at risk of not achieving literacy success;
- Invest in creating safe, supportive, inclusive learning environments in order to eliminate racial disparities in discipline;
- Eliminate racial disparities in the identification and placement of BIPOC students in special education and improve the special education evaluation process;
- Strengthen and diversify the educator preparation pipeline; and
- Support the development of culturally applicable and beneficial self-advocacy skills, improve the transition planning process for students with disabilities, and increase access to postsecondary education and workforce success for students with disabilities.

**Throughout the year, NCLD worked to advocate for these goals, including holding meetings with leading administration officials such as Department of Education Secretary Miguel Cardona.**



## LD Awareness Month/ Pillars of Change

To mark Learning Disabilities Awareness Month in October, NCLD released our pillars of change, which map out a future that challenges the existing systems for the 1 in 5 with learning and attention issues.

The four pillars of change are:

- Investing in Brighter Futures: As leaders, we use our platform to speak out about how we can protect and improve funding opportunities for education. We loudly applaud beneficial moves and condemn regressive funding cuts.
- Champion Research and Knowledge: By developing valuable, insightful reports and building better resource materials, we are focused on helping everyone gain a deeper understanding of learning disabilities and make tangible improvements that change lives.
- Crafting Policy that Works: We actively work to shape local and national policy in a meaningful way that can have a demonstrable impact on reducing barriers and ensuring opportunity and access for all.
- Shining a Light on Inequality: We know how impressive the people we represent are despite the challenges they've faced. That's why we are committed to giving them a platform to amplify their voices and celebrate their achievements.

CELEBRATING

# The Pillars of Change!

Learning Disability Awareness Month  
#Forces4LD | [nclld.co/Pillar](https://nclld.co/Pillar)





## Strategic Planning/DEI

The fields of education and disability are facing many new and rapidly evolving challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the needs of all students – especially vulnerable learners, including those with disabilities. Educators need the knowledge, skills, and resources to provide evidence-based instruction to all students, whether remotely or in person. In order to ensure that we make the right investments to accomplish the most effective work that will have the biggest impact on the most people, NCLD launched a strategic planning process during 2021. With the active participation of all NCLD stakeholders – including board members, team members, partners, and funders – the new strategic plan will guide NCLD’s work over the coming years.

At the same time, the tragic murder of George Floyd in 2020 – and the national reckoning that has taken place throughout the country since then – underscored to NCLD the importance of building on our history of lifting up issues of intersectionality in our work by ensuring that racial equity is fully woven into all aspects of our mission, vision, and internal operations. Throughout 2021, NCLD’s team and board undertook a DEI learning project, which involved two steps: First, working with NCLD’s staff to examine our internal business practices and, then, to work with our board to ensure that NCLD’s commitment to racial equity is fully woven into our mission and vision.

**The overall objective was to develop a community of leaders working to advance racial equity across the organization, understand current policies and practices through an intersectional racial equity lens, and build and implement a plan for sustained change.**

The results of our strategic planning and racial equity activities will enable NCLD to continue to meet the needs of individuals with learning and attention issues along the trajectory of their lives, while ensuring that our efforts are always guided by a clear focus on advancing racial equity.



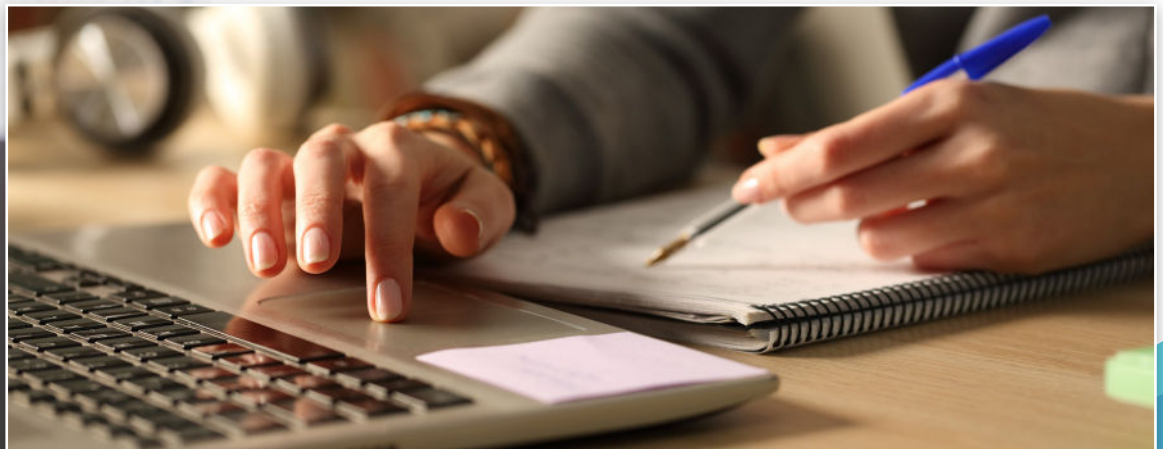


## Empowering Young Adults

The critical transition after high school can be a daunting experience for young adults with learning and attention issues. Many find themselves asking where they should go to college, what career path they should choose, or how to find support and resources. Through our Young Adult Initiatives, NCLD seeks to empower young adults with learning and attention issues by building community; providing leadership opportunities; and conducting research.

Throughout 2021, NCLD's Young Adult Leadership Council members made their voices heard in many ways, including joining activists from five partner organizations to explore different approaches to young adult advocacy that center racial and disability justice; speaking at virtual conferences and webinars and participating in collective actions with coalition partners to raise important issues that impact students with disabilities; and participating in organizing training and storytelling bootcamps to improve their advocacy and organizing skills.

A highlight of the year came in June, when more than 100 NCLD advocates, including both young adults and parents, came together for our annual LD Day of Action: [Together We Stand](#). During this event, participants advocated on behalf of the disability community to Members of Congress and their staff, and came together for an LD Town Hall to raise awareness and celebrate the achievements of individuals with learning disabilities.





2021

## THE ANNE FORD AND ALLEGRA FORD THOMAS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Each year, NCLD awards scholarships to students with learning disabilities to support their pursuit of secondary education and career advancement goals. [The Anne Ford Scholarship](#) is a four-year scholarship granted to a graduating high school senior with LD and/or ADHD who will be enrolled in a full-time bachelor's degree program. [The Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship](#) is a two-year scholarship granted to a graduating high school senior who will enroll in a two-year community college, a vocational or technical training program, or a specialized program for students with LD and/or ADHD.

During 2021, NCLD received the largest number of scholarship applications to date – with nearly 3,600 applications from individuals across the country.

## 2021 Anne Ford Scholarship Recipients



### Jocelynn Dow

Jocelynn Dow is a graduate of Freehold High School in Freehold, New Jersey. She is an artist, scholar, athlete, and activist. At FHS, Jocelynn served as class president, was a three-sport varsity athlete, and excelled academically as an AP scholar and National Honor Society inductee with a 4.6 cumulative GPA. Jocelynn has dedicated herself to using her gifts and talents to improve her community through volunteerism and has completed well over 1,000 hours of service to date. As a result of her volunteerism, Jocelynn has been recognized and celebrated locally, regionally, and even nationally via numerous Gold Presidential Volunteer Service Awards. Jocelyn discovered a passion for art in elementary school; as an artist, Jocelynn wants her creations to inspire others and ignite change, to bring communities together, and to give an expressive voice to the unheard. Through hard work and dedication, positivity, and commitment to others, Jocelynn aspires to help a new generation of young people find their voice to bring greater visibility and representation to women of color and marginalized groups everywhere. Jocelynn is pursuing a bachelor of fine arts degree while minoring in Africana studies and creative writing at Rutgers University's Honors College as a student of the Mason Gross School of the Arts.



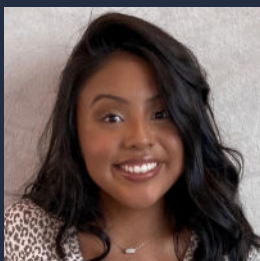
### Chidera Ejiofor

Chidera Ejiofor grew up in Houston, Texas, and will attend the University of Houston to study biology. Chidera was known as the kid who blurted out during class, could never sit still, and struggled in math class. She was diagnosed with ADHD when she was in second grade and acknowledges that it has been a major factor for shaping the woman she is today. She graduated from Westside High School in 2021 in the top 15 percent of her class and became a certified pharmacy technician at the age of 17. At WHS, Chidera was the president of her campus's Black Student Union. In addition, she participated in the National Honor Society, HOSA (future health professionals), and student council. When asked how she would like to advocate for others, she spoke about what advocacy means to her and what she hopes to do in the future. She explained: "Advocacy means making sure there are resources available in all communities." Chidera hopes to set up programs that will provide easy access to psychiatry and mentoring for individuals with ADHD. She believes that a learning disability only makes your journey more unique.



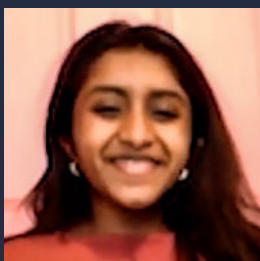
## 2021 Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship Recipients

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### Lys Fabian

Lys Fabian, of Mayfield, Kentucky, is a 2021 honors graduate of Mayfield High School, with a 3.86 GPA and class rank of 19 out of 103. She will attend West Kentucky Community and Technical College in Paducah to major in dental hygiene. Lys was diagnosed with a specific learning disability in the sixth grade. She learned so many ways to be successful in her education with the support of her family, friends, and teachers. She is also very active in her local community and school. Lys played the alto saxophone in the marching band during all four years of high school, was involved in the Graves County ASAP club to make a difference in her community, and served as a Beta Club member. Lys also volunteers daily as a peer mentor for students with special needs at Mayfield Middle School. She is honored to receive this Allegra Ford Thomas Scholarship, especially as she never thought she would come this far to be one of the 2021 scholarship recipients. Her goal is to be successful in life, to serve as a role model for other students who have the same disability she does, and to never let her learning disability stop her from achieving her ambitions. Lys plans to graduate with her associate's degree and to become a dental hygienist, her dream job.



### Juliana Ramai

Juliana Ramai is from Centereach, New York, where she graduated from Centereach High School as an honor student. During high school, Juliana was the treasurer for SkillsUSA in the cosmetology program. She received several accolades at graduation for being a member of the National Technical Honor Society and for receiving the Presidential Award for three consecutive years, in recognition of her completion of more than 100 community service volunteer hours with the Girl Scouts. Juliana also received the Presidential Academic Excellence Award for being on the honor roll for four years, as well as an award from the National Honor Society for her academics. Juliana graduated with a license in cosmetology. She hopes to be a special education or early childhood teacher and plans to major in mathematics. She will attend Suffolk County Community College and plans to transfer to St. Joseph's College to complete her bachelor's degree.

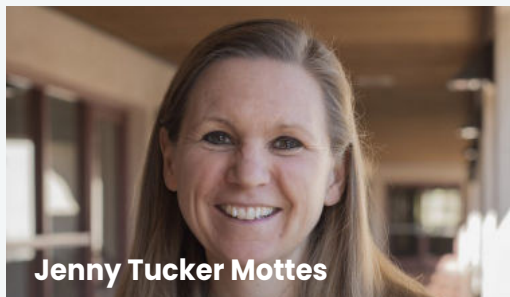
## COVID-19 Impact Scholarships

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant disruptions to the college and life plans of young adults with learning and attention issues all across the country. Students were faced with difficult decisions such as changing their college plans, reducing credit loads, losing out on internship and job opportunities, and dealing with the consequences of a global pandemic. Recognizing the hardship our young adults are facing, NCLD launched a new scholarship intended to support those students whose college and life plans have been significantly impacted by COVID-19.

The twelve winners of the NCLD COVID-19 Impact Scholarship each received a \$1,500 award to mitigate the financial and academic disruptions created by the pandemic. The winners were:

- Jaiden Brooks - Harrisonburg, VA
- Amanda Cistrelli - Colonia, NJ
- Lance Dutenhafer - Roscoe, IL
- Eddith Figueroa - Placios, TX
- Robert Johnson III - Pearland, TX
- Makayla Kovar - Mesquite, TX
- Kindra Lee Blyeven - Elmira, OR
- Mayumi Lometillo - Arcadia, CA
- Lilli Millender - Hampsted, MD
- Thuren Miller - Bryan, TX
- Hench Wu - New York, NY
- Alan Yee - Gaithersburg, MD

## Everyday Champion Awards



**Jenny Tucker Mottes**



**Susan Maurer**

For the second consecutive year, NCLD presented its **Everyday Champion Award**. These awards recognize educators and school administrators who have gone above and beyond to help children with learning and attention issues during the COVID-19 pandemic by providing support, resources and advocacy.

In 2021, NCLD was proud to recognize the exceptional achievements of **Susan Maurer**, an educator from New Jersey, and **Jenny Tucker Mottes**, a school administrator from California.





**2021**

## THE YEAR IN NUMBERS

### 2021 Financial Report

#### Total Revenue

\$2,695,985

#### Total Expenses

\$2,898,620

#### Net Assets

##### Beginning of the Period

\$10,244,194

#### Net Assets

##### End of the Period

\$10,041,559

#### Breakdown of Program Services Expenses

##### Policy and Advocacy

\$897,036 (30.9%)

##### Young Adult Initiatives

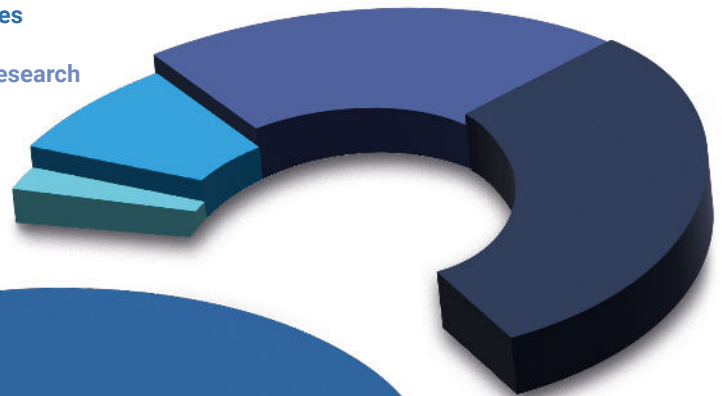
\$633,874 (21.9%)

##### LD Resources and Research

\$230,963 (8%)

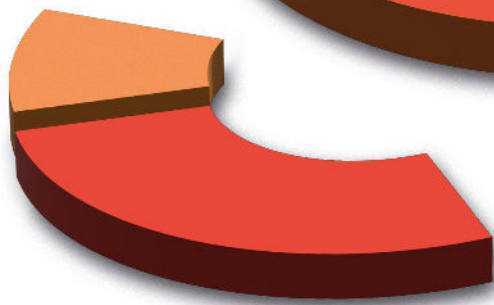
##### Innovation

\$56,374 (1.9%)



**Support Services**  
\$1,080,373 (37.3%)

**Program Services**  
\$1,818,247 (62.7%)



#### Breakdown of Support Services Expenses

##### Management and General

\$806,049 (27.8%)

##### Fundraising

\$274,324 (9.5%)

## Board of Directors

**Margi Booth, Co-Chair**

**Joe Zimmer, Co-Chair and Treasurer**

**Ken Plevan, Secretary**

Kristy Baxter

Jody Bellows

David Chard, Ph.D.

George Duran

Jenna Ellis

Shanti Fry

John G. Gantz, Jr.

The Hon. Thomas H. Kean

Brian Hindo

Rachelle Johnson

Mark A. Michael

G.M. O'Connell

Cassia Schifter

Janet Steinmeyer

*Anne Ford, Chair Emerita*

## Team

Kena Mayberry, Ph.D., Chief Operating Officer

Joey Hunziker, Director of Leadership and Organizing

Lindsay Kubatzky, Director of Policy & Advocacy

Amelia Malone, Ph.D., Director of Research and Innovation

Cierra Mangal, Director of Communications

Jamille O. White, Director of Human Resources and Operations

Brittany Greer, Senior Program Manager

Kate Bartlein, Project Manager

Nicole Fuller, Senior Policy Associate

Adolfo Ferrario, Development Associate

Mackenzie Schondelmayer, Communications Associate

Jessica Snyderman, Policy Research Associate

