



Annual Report

UPward Design for Life

2021

Mission ● Vision ● Values

Mission

We furnish homes and transform lives for those in need.

Vision Statement

UDFL will be a sustainable organization responsive to community need.

Values Statements

We are committed to treating all people with respect and dignity.

We serve with empathy, integrity and kindness.

We ensure privacy, confidentiality and safety.

We connect and collaborate with intention.

We utilize all resources with conscious care.

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President's Message



Gratitude is something I express on a daily basis. I am very grateful to our hardworking Board of Directors. Their efforts and commitment helped guide us through an amazing and productive experience which was our strategic planning process. This was major for our small organization.

The development of our strategic plan has brought many things into the light including many areas in which to improve and build upon. There was a fair amount of time invested into this process and our Board was fully engaged during the entire duration of development. Through the strategic planning process, we formally established our Mission Statement; We restore hope by transforming empty spaces into homes; as well as our Vision and Values Statements. We also established our overall goal which is to serve 100 households annually by 2027, a target we're working hard to reach and exceed.

President's Message Continued

On the operations side, we continued to bring on new volunteers and community partners that helped us carry out our mission and deliver on our promise to create HOME. I am deeply grateful for our team of volunteers who continuously step up to execute our furniture installation projects and serve on committees that help us advance our mission. We continue to gain community support from various organizations and companies that help us move closer to reaching our 2027 goal. Increased community awareness equals greater support. Greater support equals growth for UDFL.

There are many households in need of our services so we'll continue to work hard, share our message, establish valuable strategic partnerships and continue our fund development strategies, to keep us moving toward being a sustainable organization responsive to community need. We look forward to serving our community in 2022!



In Service,
Dionne Williamson
Executive Director & Founder

Board of Directors



Melonya Johnson
Chair

Connect Life - Training & Employee
Education Manager; Owner -
BSMART Coaching



Teresa Vincent
Governance Committee Chair

Senior Director of Product
Management - Renologic



Alexa Wajed
Board Vice Chair

Project Manager & Creative Designer - Alexa
Joan Designs; Co-Founder - Eat Off Art



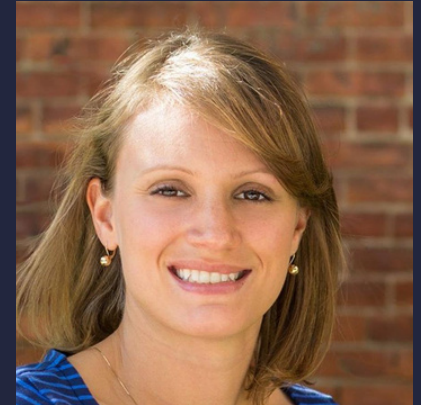
Kelly Cultrara

President - AP Professionals of WNY



Cheri Alvarez

CEO - Compeer, Buffalo, NY



Amy Puca

Senior Evaluation Project Manager -
Via Evaluation



Nancy Redeye

Senior Project Manager -
Flynn Battaglia Architects PC

New Board Member

Nico Soria



Nico Soria is the Staff Attorney for the Housing Unit at Neighborhood Legal Services, LLC. Nico has legal expertise in the areas of providing representation to civil litigants throughout Erie County on housing matters including enforcement of fair housing laws, eviction matters, and tenants' rights.

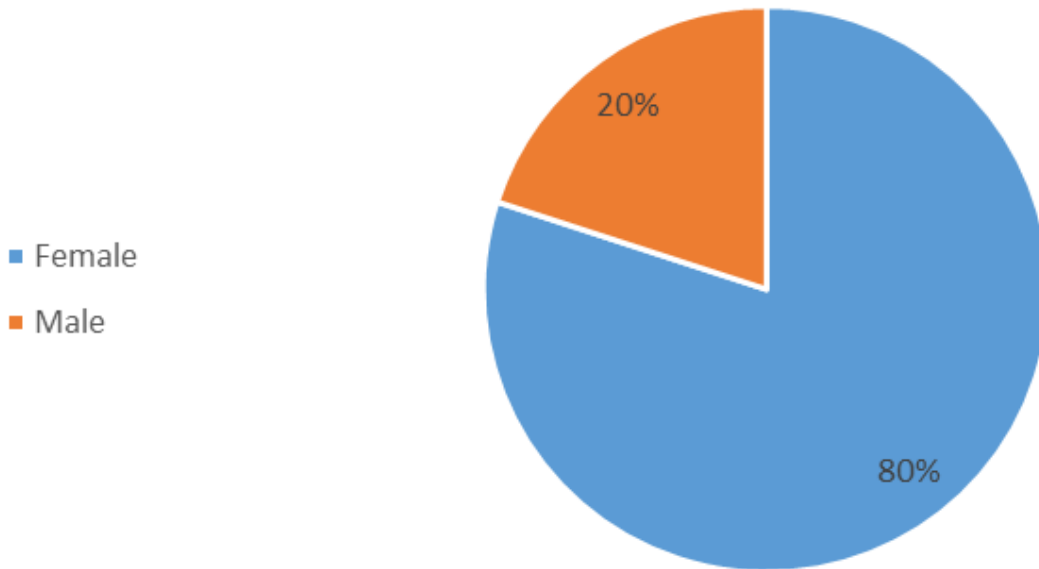
Household's Served

20



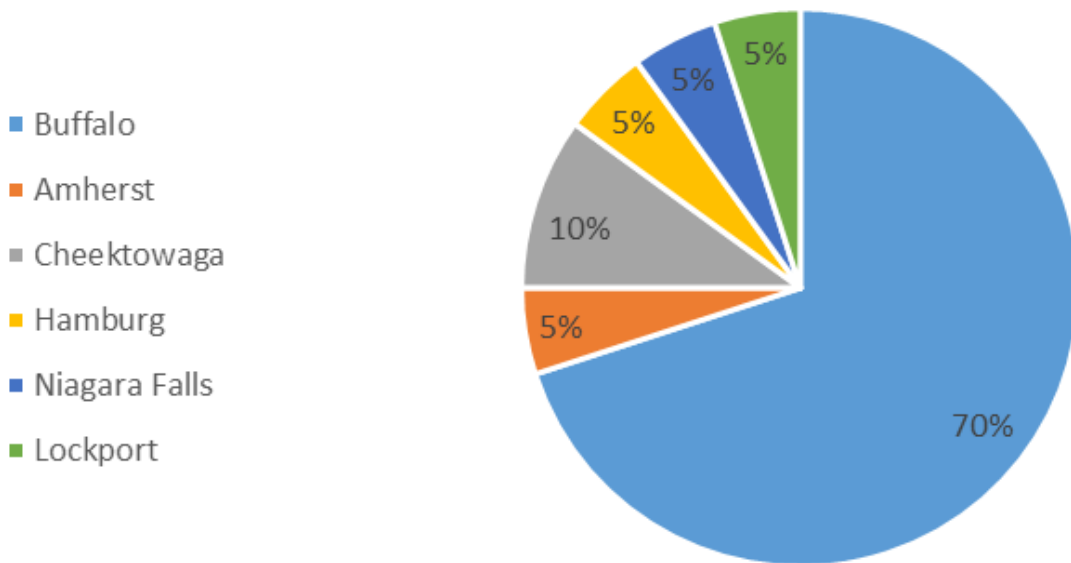
Who Was Served

Percentage of Female and Male Clients



Where Served

Service By Location



New Partnerships

- Infant Safe Sleep Project
- Buffalo Candle Company
- Hamburg Chalk Art Fest
- Explore & More - The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Children's Museum
- Little Salmon Company
- IIDA-NY Chapter

We cannot thank our our partners enough for their generous support of the UDFL mission. Without their support, we would not be able to make a positive difference in the lives of the individuals and families we serve.

Sponsors



It is through the generosity of our local corporate sponsors that we are able to carry on our mission. This year Ingram Micro supported us as the first company to sign up as a Design Team Sponsor, for our First Annual UPlift Design Challenge & Fundraiser, and helped us move closer toward financial sustainability.

New Referral Partnerships

UPward Design For Life continues to expand its outreach capacity with new and exciting partnerships with referral agencies. This year we added to our list an impressive group of agencies that serve Western New York in unique and powerful ways:

- Harvest House
- The Salvation Army
- Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network
- Community Services for Every 1

Strategic Plan Updates

Board Development, Strategic Plan and Leadership Development

UPward Design for Life carried out its mission throughout 2021, with a dedicated team of eight Board members lead by Board Chair, Melonya Johnson, who completed her Board term at the end of the year.

The primary focus, for the Board in 2021, was to create a formal 3-5 year strategic plan that will help guide the organization to a point of sustainability. Leadership development training, for Dionne Williamson, Executive Director, was a top priority as well. Dionne Williamson participated in the nine-week Linda Ray Fund Development Boot Camp in order to learn about various fund development strategies. Dionne was also selected to participate in the week long Karen Lee Spaulding Oishei Leaders of Color Leadership Development Retreat, sponsored by the John R. Oishei Foundation

Board Highlights

- Barbara Leggett of Leggett Consulting was hired to facilitate the strategic planning process
- Held its second annual board retreat during which Leggett Consulting facilitated the first session for strategic planning
- Met weekly from May – October to work on strategic plan
- Helped support the Fundraising Committee with planning the First Annual UPlift Design

Challenge and Fundraiser

- Personally created individual fundraising initiatives
- Successfully completed the 3-5 strategic plan

Community Awareness



The story and mission of UDFL is steadily growing throughout our community. We appeared in the Building a Better Buffalo Segment of Buffalo Business First, The Buffalo News sponsored by Independent Health, Buffalo Spree and featured in the Good Neighbors segment on WGRZ Channel 2 news. Lastly, thanks to the support of Life Storage who sponsored the project, a video and blog was created by Addo Productions, to share our story in action.

Fundraising

Income:

- Corporate Contributions: \$10,029.00
- Individual Contributions: \$28,364.89
- Give716: \$3,218.63
- Grants: \$9,100.01
- UPlift Design Challenge: \$4,500
- Indirect Public Support: \$3,543.19
- Other Types of Income: \$2,873.43
- Sales of Product Income: \$130.51
- Total Income: \$61,759.66

In Summary

2021 would be best described as the year of organizational strategic planning. The strategic planning process allowed the Board to look deep into what the organization needs to accomplish, and how it intends to carry out the work.

Volunteers and Donations

UDFL's group of dedicated volunteers are the backbone of the organization. Without them we would not be able to perform our mission. They work tirelessly to transform the lives and homes of the people we serve and for that we are forever grateful.

Donations

Western New Yorkers never fail to come to the rescue. Their contributions of gently used home furnishings and decor make our work possible. This is truly a community effort to serve those most vulnerable. It's Western New York at its best!

