



ANNUAL REPORT

UPWARD DESIGN FOR LIFE

2022

Mission Vision Values

Mission Statement

We restore hope by transforming empty spaces into homes.

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



Furnishing Homes & Transforming Lives for Those in Need

Thank you for taking time to review our 2022 Year End Report. This was a very busy year for our small organization. I would like to begin by first expressing my gratitude and appreciation to the UDFL Board of Directors, for all of their efforts throughout the year. Thanks to their work, UDFL gained its first employee...me! I have put my heart, soul, time and energy into the growth and success of this organization since its formation in 2017. Being an employee of UDFL has brought one of my dreams to life and has allowed me to officially earn a living doing what I love and growing as a servant leader. Board members also spearheaded new initiatives to spread awareness about the organization and created systems to help us share data points regarding our key programs and their impact.

We restore hope by transforming empty spaces into homes. That is our mission. Our promise is to create HOME. Our work is not possible without the financial support of individual members of our community, foundations, corporations, human services partners, donors of furniture and volunteers. This was an amazing year for UDFL. Through an increased number of grant awards and corporate support, by way of our First Annual UPlift Design Challenge and Fundraiser, we were able to raise and receive our highest amount in funding to date.

We were awarded our largest grants this year from the Garman Family Foundation, East Hill Foundation and the Pitch10 grant competition, which was certainly one of my highlights of the year!

President's Message Continued

I am so grateful for the local and national exposure UDFL received this year, in various magazines, news articles and local news outlets. Increased exposure helps us to continue sharing our story and gain greater support.

Volunteerism efforts were high this year! Key volunteers who have been on our team for a while, have moved into more active and lead roles such as with the creation of our Donations Team, to help respond to donation inquiries and schedule donation pick-up and drop-off appointments. These roles were previously only handled by myself so I welcome the help from these trusted volunteers. Our volunteers also created fundraising initiatives and donation drives, on their own, which further shows their commitment to our cause.

As we prepare to enter into 2023 and our 5th year of operating, our focus is on sustainability. There are endless activities and initiatives that can be conducted. However; with our limited staff and resources, our efforts will focus on the key initiatives that will help the organization financially which includes the 2nd Annual UPlift Design Challenge & Fundraiser, our newly created Corporate Team Building Program that will be made available in the coming year, and securing grants.

We are working toward our strategic planning goal of serving 100 households by 2027. With continued community support, I am confident we can reach this important milestone.



In Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dionne Williamson".

Dionne Williamson
Executive Director & Founder



Teresa Vincent
Chair

Senior Director of Product
Management - Renalogic

Board of Directors



Alexa Wajed
Vice Chair

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



Amy Puca
Governance Committee Chair
Senior Evaluation Project Manager
- Via Evaluation



Cheri Alvarez
Secretary/Treasurer
CEO - Compeer, Buffalo, NY



Kelly Cultrara
President - AP Professionals of WNY



Nico Soria
Staff Attorney, Housing Unit -
Neighborhood Legal Services, LLC



Nancy Redeye
Senior Project Manager -
Flynn Battaglia Architects PC

New Board Member



Amanda Mikels

Amanda is the Senior Director of Global Partner Success at Jitterbit. She has over 25 years of experience in account management and relationship management for technology companies. She also brings accounting and budget forecasting experience to the UDFL Board.

Household's Served



1 9 S e r v e d

SINCE 2018:

76 homes furnished

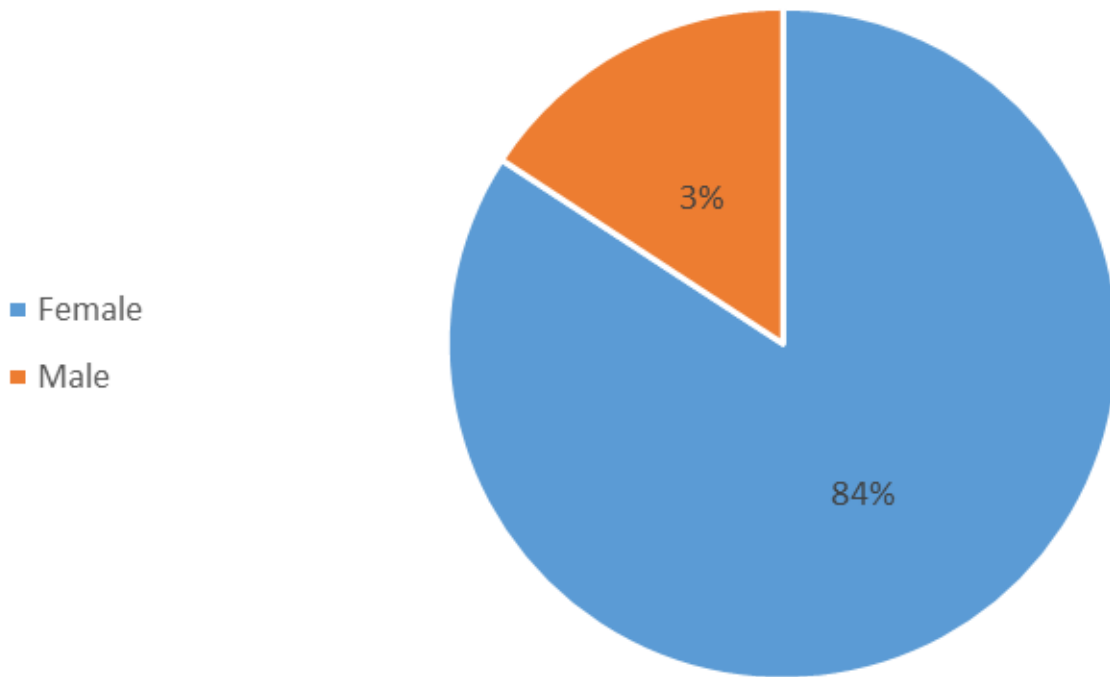
191 lives impacted

86% were female head of households served

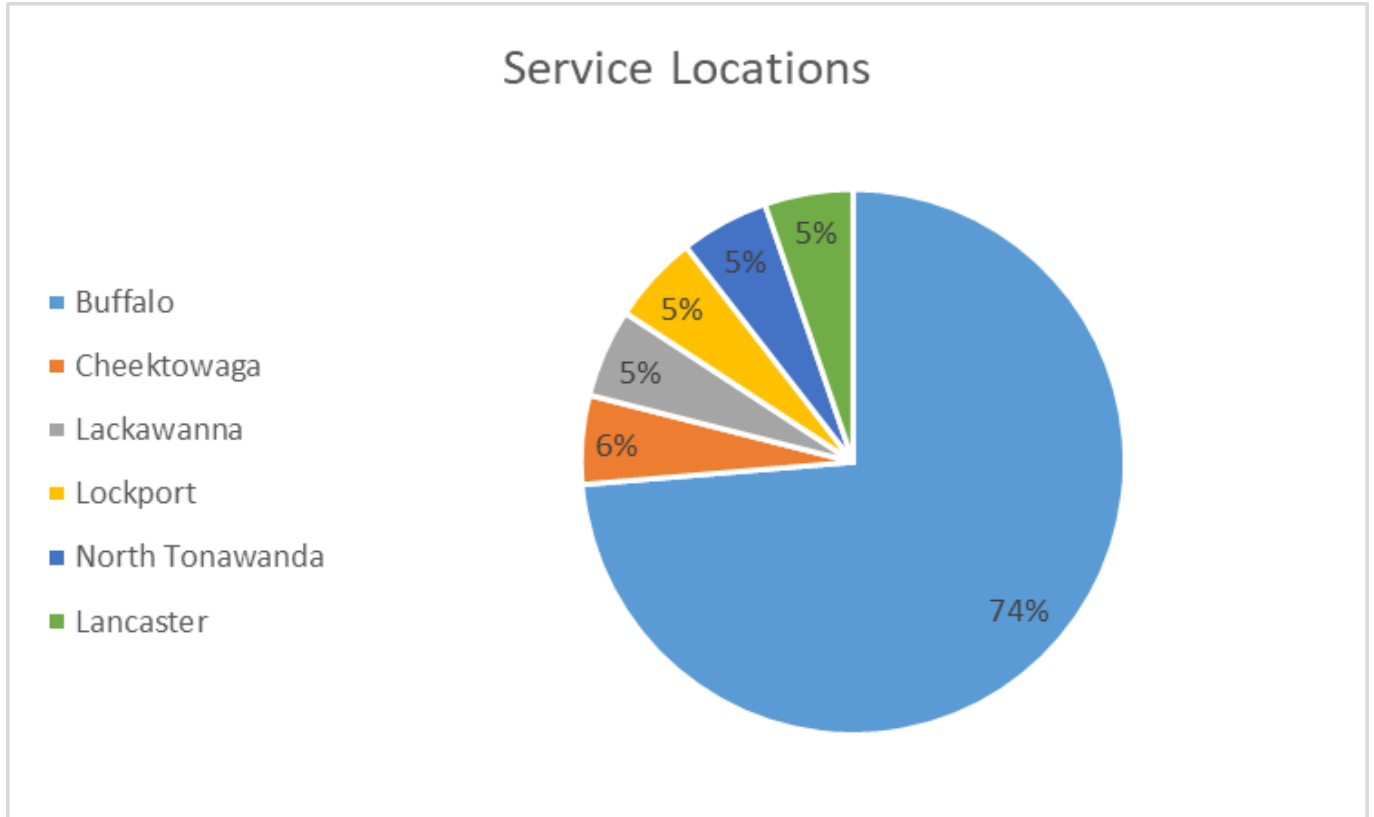
76 children no longer sleeping on the floor

Who We Served

Percentage of Female and Male Clients



Where We Served



New Partnerships

- New York State Women Inc. – Buffalo Niagara Chapter
- Queen City Revival
- Evangelical Lutheran Church – Williamsville, NY
- Ithaca College
- SheCAN!
- Sonic Buffalo with Shaq Lawson
- Buffalo Limousine
- Addy's Wine & Spirits
- Katie Jane Photography
- Bada Bing Restaurant
- HER Story | HER Sanctuary
- William Joseph Lifestyle Photography
- Karle Norman – Artist
- Naheem El Fuerte - Artist

Sponsorships

- AP Professionals of WNY
- MidCity Office Furniture
- Strauss Group
- Berkshire Hathaway Homeservices - Zambito Realtors
- Xtreme Discount Mattress Warehouse
- Sativa Remedy
- Eat Off Art
- Via Evaluation
- Partners Packaging
- Theresa Campbell - MJ Peterson
- Rosiek's Vacuum
- Bird of Paradise Design
- IPTALY Luxury Travel
- Don & Jeannette Kreher Heberling
- Child & Family Services
- Walter S. Johnson Building Co. Inc.

New Referral Agencies

- Heart, Love & Soul
- SayYes Buffalo
- Plymouth Crossroads
- Fostering Greatness



Strategic Plan Update

UPward Design for Life continues to maintain a dedicated team of eight Board members who help guide the organization toward its goals as stated in its strategic plan. Teresa Vincent, former UDFL Governance Committee Chair, was voted in as Board Chair, for a two-year term, starting in January 2022. Alexa Wajed remained Board Vice Chair and Cheri Alvarez was voted to the position of Board Secretary.

With a solid strategic plan framework in place, the initial goal for Board members were to focus attention on creating a salaried position for, Executive Director & Founder, Dionne Williamson. The team worked diligently with the legal and accounting team as well as payroll and other companies to move UPward Design for Life toward having its first paid staff member. Although Dionne Williamson had operated the organization as a full time volunteer since the organizations' formation, the Board understood the importance offering a compensation packet, in order to move UDFL toward sustainability.

Fundraising initiatives, securing grants and creating a fund development strategy were additional priorities for 2022. Creating a culture of philanthropy within UDFL was also an initiative designed to keep the Board focused on fund development and the variety of ways that can be accomplished.

Strategic Plan Update Continued

Board Highlights

- Held its third annual board retreat, with Linda Ray as facilitator, to provide insight on the importance of building a culture of philanthropy in UDFL, from the ground up.
- Making the culture of philanthropy a topic during every Board meeting so members can share their individual actions taken to help the growth of the organization.
- Created a full-time salaried position for Dionne Williamson, Executive Director & Founder.
- Created an updated system to track clients referred to us and served by us. This system provides an ongoing dashboard from which detailed information can be used for grant applications as well as to share with the community.
- Increased systems and record keeping have been improved upon by the Governance Committee, such as Board member tracking, key events/focus reminders for the year, revised Board member self-evaluation forms and Executive Director evaluation forms and procedures.
- Created a Finance Committee, for additional financial oversight, to reach strategic goals.
- Helped Fundraising & Events Committee reach its highest fundraising goal.

Community Awareness

As UDFL continues to gain increased community awareness, opportunities and invitations to share the organizations' story, continues to grow as well. In 2022, Dionne Williamson and UDFL was featured in Woman's Day magazine, Buffalo Healthy Living Magazine and on Lockport Community Television. Dionne was the recipient of the Women in Leadership Award from the New York State Women Inc, Buffalo Niagara Chapter, Buffalo Business First Woman of Influence Award and the Minority Bar Association's Community Service Award, for her efforts.

Dionne also had speaking engagements at Creative Mornings BUF, Ithaca College, for their Annual BOLD Women's Leadership Network Retreat, Albright Knox as part of their In These Truths Exhibit, SheCAN, the WIVB Channel 4 Hope Rises segment and the Bus Association of New York State Annual Conference held in Niagara Falls.



Fundraising/Financials



Executive Director and Founder, Dionne Williamson, continues to work diligently, with the support of the Board, to generate revenue for UDFL. For instance, her participation in the Pitch10 competition, allowed her to take first place and win the grand prize of \$10,000, to help further UDFL's work.

Income:

- Corporate Contributions: \$10,709.00
- Individual Contributions: \$19,519.60
- Give716: \$5,443.60
- Elmwood Festival of Arts: \$351.00
- Shaq Lawson Madden Tournament: \$1,080.00
- Grants: \$45,150.00
- UPlift Design Challenge: \$14,400.00
- Indirect Public Support: \$2,687.04
- Other Types of Income: \$3,159.50

Total Income: \$102,499.74

First Annual Design Challenge



UDFL successfully held the First Annual UPlift Design Challenge and Fundraiser! Congratulations to our design team sponsors who enthusiastically worked hard to turn empty spaces into beautiful and comfortable homes for three deserving families. All are welcome to view the UPlift Design Challenge video, on our website, to see these teams in action as they give back to our community.



In Summary

Best year to date, best describes 2022. With all the day to day challenges we face, the organization, Board, committees and volunteers remain positive and committed to our mission. Board members increased their efforts on a variety of different projects and fundraising initiatives. Volunteers stepped into more independent roles, in order to lighten the load for the Executive Director and expand operations.

Our UPward momentum is on track as we continue to aim toward our goal of serving 100 households annually by 2027.

