

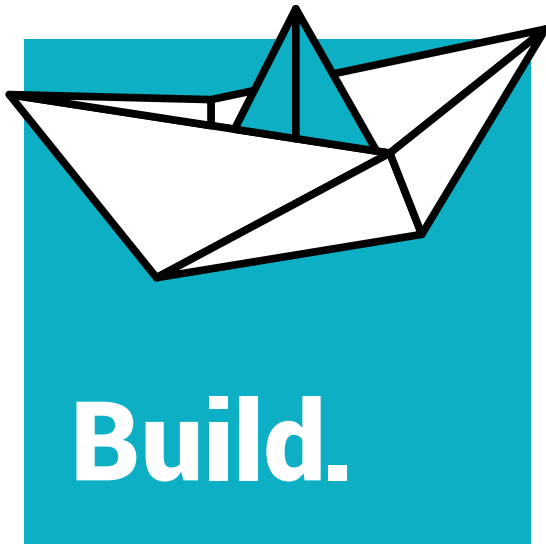


2019 COMMUNITY REPORT

AWS
FOUNDATION

Each year AWS Foundation is proud to present our community report and share what has been accomplished. This year, we add a bit of play and symbolism in our story telling through origami.

In origami a single, thin, weak sheet of paper is transformed into a 3-D object. Nothing is added or deleted. With a sequence of well-planned folds, that single sheet of paper takes on almost limitless shapes.



***Make a few simple folds and
set sail – we'll help you do it:***

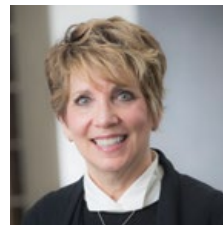
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For some people, the process is not an easy one. But through patience and repetition, the new form takes shape. Something simple becomes complex. Something flimsy can take flight or bear weight.

This has been a year of transformation, not only for us, but for many of our grantees as well. However, the ultimate transformation comes when our efforts impact the lives of those in our community, as our mission states, helping them to live as independently as possible.

Throughout the report, we invite you to join members of our staff and grantees in creating a little origami of your own. Simply look for the pages with an origami icon like the one shown on this page.

Together, we will build something beautiful.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patti".

Patti Hays
CEO, AWS Foundation



**Building
something
beautiful.**

We are all born with the potential to do amazing things – AWS Foundation empowers people with intellectual, developmental and physical disabilities to reach that potential. Through grants, advocacy and awareness efforts, we help them discover the talented, valuable people they were born to be, and we support achieving their dreams.

In 2019, AWS Foundation took steps to build our own potential. We built new connections between people with disabilities and the community resources that are ready to help them live fuller lives. We broke ground on our new home, increasing our ability to serve. As always, we continued to look for new opportunities to support the organizations that are making a difference in the lives of people with disabilities.

Every day we work to build a stronger, more inclusive community where people are valued for their unique abilities and given the opportunity to be their best – that would be something beautiful.

AWS FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Larry Adelman	Tracie Martin
Whitney Bandemer	Sherri Miller
Mike Cahill	Tom O'Neill
Chris Cathcart	Dan Skekloff
Tim Dirig	Robert Stone
Joe Doust	Susan Trent
Ben Eisbart	Tasha Williams
Todd Jacobs	

**Building a
space for
everyone.**



Imagine an inclusive community where people with disabilities are able to thrive – what would it look like? Chances are it would look a lot like the future home of AWS Foundation.

In May 2019, we broke ground for our new office building located at 5323 West Jefferson Boulevard in Fort Wayne, IN. The universal design of the 7,800-square-foot facility empowers people of all abilities to work and move about independently. It will also be a model for our region of an accessible, sensory-friendly conference and training area.

The unwavering support of AWS Foundation's Board has been vital to ensure our building's universal design is a model for others. It will show how small modifications can go beyond supporting accessibility. We can welcome and engage people of all abilities so that everyone benefits from the many contributions diversity brings to the workplace and community.

The facility will continue to support advocacy and grant making activities, while demonstrating the practicality of an inclusive public space to the community.



Our new home reflects our long-term commitment to lead advocacy efforts and provide financial support to organizations that offer programs and services to individuals with enduring disabilities.



Board Chairman Larry Adelman and CEO Patti Hays break ground on the new AWS Foundation office.



**Building
connections.**



There are thousands of programs, services and experts throughout Indiana who are ready and waiting to help people with disabilities improve their quality of life. But these resources are useless if the people that need them the most are unable to connect with them, or are unaware that they even exist.



Vicki Johnson, Director of System Navigation joins Board Chairman Larry Adelman to announce the launch of FINDER.

In 2019, AWS Foundation continued to collaborate with nonprofit organizations across the state and State of Indiana representatives to create Indiana Disability Resource FINDER, a free,

easy-to-use resource designed to give people with disabilities 24/7 access to potentially life-changing community resources.

FINDER collects and organizes the contact and service information from

organizations and individuals who can help people with disabilities and their families to deal with everything from basic needs, insurance and equipment to education, employment and transportation. Social concerns, including bullying, sexuality and inclusion are also addressed. On March 21, Indiana's Lieutenant Governor, Suzanne Crouch, helped AWS Foundation introduce FINDER to communities across Indiana and completed the website's first official search for disability-related information.

"The idea of having one central database for all of us to contribute to and access timely, accurate information is a breath of fresh air," states parent and advocate Kelly Pence.

To learn more about FINDER, go to IndianaDisabilityResourceFINDER.org.



Make a few folds and fly high we'll help you take off.

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**Building
opportunities
for teachers.**

At the beginning of the 2018-19 school year, there were over one hundred unfilled special education positions in public schools throughout Indiana. We knew something needed to change. So we launched several efforts to help build a deeper pool of professional special education talent that will last for years to come.

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) convention is a chance for special education professionals to share ideas, learn best practices and collaborate with colleagues. AWS Foundation scholarships enabled 25 special educators from northeast Indiana school districts to attend the 2019 CEC Convention. In addition, through a matching grant, school districts were provided the opportunity to send general education staff to learn more about inclusive practices.

In 2018 AWS Foundation created a scholarship endowment at Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne for special education teachers seeking

master's-level or additional certifications in hard-to-fill specialties, including intense intervention, blind low vision and school psychology.



Additionally, we targeted undergraduate as well as nontraditional students who are interested in special education careers. With our fund at Questa Foundation, 30 qualifying students who declared special education as a major will receive funding for their education. In return, these students commit to teaching special education in northeast Indiana schools for a minimum of five years after graduation.



Fold your way to origami royalty – just do what we do:

awsfoundation.org/origami



**Building
independence
through work.**

Gib's Genesis Health P...

Frosted
Sugar
Cookie
\$1.00

We all know that work provides the money we need to support ourselves and our loved ones. But for people with disabilities, work provides priceless opportunities that many take for granted – independence, a sense of accomplishment and social inclusion. That's why AWS Foundation commits funds to support learning programs designed to give people with disabilities the career skills they need to find meaningful employment in our communities.

Gigi's Playhouse provides free, therapeutic, educational and career training programs to people with Down syndrome. In 2018, they requested funding for young adult career development. We are honored to support their small group skills instruction, health and wellness and career skills programs.

In 2018, we were also presented with an opportunity to support Lutheran Social Services of Indiana's (LSSI) "Lasting Success and Stability for Individuals Works" workforce initiative. Through a grant, we helped cover the cost of their unique employment training for people with disabilities who are motivated to establish a career path. By providing personal and professional training, financial education, employment matching and ongoing support, the LSSI Works initiative helps candidates answer the questions, "How do I survive today?" and "How do I contribute to the world around me?"



Grow your own lettuce with a few simple folds let's plant one together.

awsfoundation.org/origami





**Building
a better
clubhouse.**

In Spring 2019, we celebrated with The Boys & Girls Clubs of Fort Wayne, as they moved into their new Fairfield Avenue Clubhouse. The 41,500-square-foot facility boasts many new amenities, including additional activity spaces, a gymnasium, elevators, a media room for tech-savvy teenagers, and a family restroom on each floor.

the building to making loading and unloading safer and more comfortable.

Beyond the physical space, our funding of an Inclusion Specialist will play an important role in training staff and to help create and implement plans that further enhance inclusion and diversity programs.



In an effort to open the clubhouse to every child, the new facility features an A+ rated inclusive playground, wider interior doorways, smooth flooring transitions, automated doors and quiet areas. Through an AWS Foundation grant, a sensory integration room was added, as well as a large entrance canopy outside

The new clubhouse serves 2,000 children, including more than 135 who have a disability. We were excited to join this effort to give children of every background and ability the opportunity to learn, play and grow.



**Building on
big ideas.**

“ Art should know no limitations and should be able to be experienced by all.”

Alexandra Hall, Art This Way Coordinator

Sometimes big ideas just need a little boost. That's the idea behind AWS Foundation's Mighty Money grants. These grants provide up to \$2,500 to not-for-profit organizations in northeast Indiana who have inspirational ideas with the potential to make a major difference. The modest amount allows us to simplify the application process and give approval within 30 days. Of the 97 grants awarded in 2019, 27 of them were Mighty Money grants. Here are just two examples:

“Art should know no limitations and should be able to be experienced by all,” says Alexandra Hall, coordinator of Fort Wayne's Art This Way downtown wall mural program. We couldn't agree more. We awarded a Mighty Money grant to the Art This Way program to install inclusive signage on five of the Art This Way murals in downtown Fort Wayne. The new plaques hang at an accessible height and feature a 3D-printed, tactile model of the artwork, as well as QR code access to an audio file of the artist describing their work.

Election Day is an opportunity for everyone in the community to make their voices heard at the polls, but for

people with disabilities, simply getting out to vote can be an insurmountable obstacle.

We provided Fort Wayne's Citilink with a Mighty Money grant so their buses could operate fare-free from 5:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on November 2018 Election Day.



Small gifts, big impact – AWS Foundation's Mighty Money grants and their grantees are making a difference, one idea at a time.



Artist: Matthew Plett
112 W. Wayne Street





Turn this humble piece of paper into a piano – we'll show you how:

awsfoundation.org/origami

**Building
an inclusive
art campus.**



Art entertains, educates and inspires – it adds immeasurably to our quality of life. When we learned that Arts United was raising funds to make their historic Louis Kahn-designed building accessible to everyone in northeast Indiana, we knew we had to be a part of it.

AWS Foundation is working with Arts United to incorporate the universal design principles, structural interventions and technologies necessary to transform the theater into an all-inclusive venue where people of all abilities can participate in the arts as patrons, performers, volunteers and employees.

“By partnering with Arts United, AWS Foundation is advocating loudly and proudly for the importance of the Arts Campus becoming a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming place for everyone,” said Susan Mendenhall, President of Arts United.

“ AWS Foundation is advocating loudly and proudly for the importance of the Arts Campus becoming a more inclusive, accessible and welcoming place for everyone.”

Susan Mendenhall, President of Arts United





**Building
richer lives.**

“Life is what you make it.” We believe this applies to anyone, regardless of age or ability. AWS Foundation grants are regularly committed to supporting local life-enrichment programs and activities that promote emotional, spiritual, social, physical and educational health – 2018 was no exception.

For the fourth year, an AWS Foundation grant was used to support Fort Wayne Youtheatre’s Backstage Insight program. This program provides students with disabilities and their families the opportunity to experience theater together. Creative drama classes and workshops in schools, as well as monthly classes at Brightpoint and Camp Red Cedar, are exposing students with disabilities to the full theater experience. Backstage Insight also invites students backstage at Fort Wayne Youtheatre’s spring production



for a behind the scenes look at props, scenery, lighting – and a chance to meet the actors before the performance.

Fort Wayne Ballet received a grant to support sensory-friendly productions of *Cinderella* and *The Nutcracker*. The performances removed pyrotechnics and flashing light effects. Loud noises

were shortened to a comfortable length for those with sensory challenges. These simple modifications allow for all family members to enjoy the performances together.

AWS Foundation camper scholarships to Summer at Last Teen Camp, Camp PossAbility, Camp Red Cedar and Kosciusko Community YMCA SOAR Camp give campers of all ages and abilities access to a fun, safe way to discover exciting new activities. These grants offer opportunities to continue to build daily skills that may otherwise erode over the summer months.

**Building
houses
that feel
like home.**

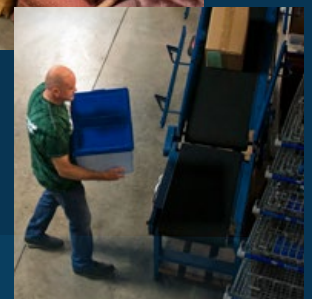


At the end of the day, everyone wants to come home to a safe and comfortable place. For people with disabilities who deal with obstacles all day long at school, work and play, it is vital that their home meets their personal needs.

In 2018, we worked with several northeast Indiana organizations to ensure that home is sweet for everyone.

The Neighborhood Homes & Apartments is a city- and state-supported affordable housing project developed by Stop Child Abuse & Neglect (SCAN) and Biggs TC Development. It represents 25 single-family rent-to-own homes. With the support of AWS Foundation, construction was initiated on 12 homes modified with self-closing doors, motion sensor faucets, visual doorbells and smoke detectors, along with other amenities designed to assist those with disabilities.

But we didn't stop there. We also teamed up with Mustard Seed Furniture Bank to help expand their outreach to the disability community. With support from AWS Foundation, Mustard Seed continues to fill requests for household furniture, cookware, bedding and more for people with disabilities as they transition into independent living.



Comfort.

Folding a chair is easy to do take a seat and learn how:

awsfoundation.org/origami



A fold here, a fold there and you're home – we'll show you the way.

awsfoundation.org/origami

**DIRECT
SERVICES
\$1,515,900**

**TRANSPORTATION
\$302,500**

**EDUCATION &
EMPLOYMENT
\$1,208,565**

**2019
Grant
Total
\$6,333,783**

**SOCIAL
ENRICHMENT
\$2,580,111**

**HOUSING
\$335,000**

**OTHER
\$69,207**

**EARLY DIAGNOSIS &
SYSTEM NAVIGATION
\$322,500**

AWS Foundation is honored to work with area organizations to help build a more inclusive community. The dedication of our grantees is vital to our purpose – to help our communities to think differently about disabilities.

2018-2019
97
GRANTS AWARDED

2018–2019 Grantees

Adams Central Schools
Adams Wells Special Services
Ancilla College
Arc of Noble County
Arts United of Greater Fort Wayne
Audiences Unlimited
Autism Society of Indiana
Bethesda Lutheran Communities
Bi-County Services
Byron Health Center
Camp Millhouse
Camp PossAbility
Camp Red Cedar
Cardinal Services
Carey Services
CASS Housing
Children's Autism Center
Children's Choir of Huntington County
Choices Coordinated Care Solutions
Claypool Elementary School
Citilink
Community Foundation of Greater Fort Wayne
Community Transportation Network
Council for Exceptional Children
Crossroad Child & Family Services
Down Syndrome Association of Northeast Indiana
Drake Goetz Memorial Park
East Noble School Corporation
Elkhart County Schools
Family Voices Indiana
Fort Wayne Ballet
Fort Wayne Civic Theatre
Fort Wayne Curling Club
Fort Wayne Downtown Improvement District
Fort Wayne Fire Fighters Museum
Fort Wayne Youtheatre
Gigi's Playhouse Fort Wayne
GiveHear
Goodwill Industries of Northeast Indiana, Inc.
Grace College Student Council for Exceptional Children Chapter
Greater Fort Wayne Inc.
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Fort Wayne
Healthier Moms and Babies
HearCare Connection
Heartland Sings
Huntington University
Indiana Legal Services
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Ivy Tech Foundation
Joe's Kids, Inc
Kosciusko Community YMCA
Indiana Governor's Council Leadership Institute
Life Adult Day Academy
Lutheran Social Services of Indiana
Manchester Elementary School
McMillen Health
Mental Health America of Northeast Indiana
Middle Waves, Inc
Monroeville Park Board
Mustard Seed Furniture Bank
Northeast Indiana Disability Collaborative
NeighborLink Fort Wayne
Northeast Indiana Special Education Cooperative
Parkview Huntington Family YMCA
Passages, Inc.
Pathfinder Services
Purdue University Fort Wayne
Questa Education Foundation
Rise, Inc
RSVP of Allen County
Science Central
Southwest Allen County Schools
Summit City Music Theatre
Summit Middle School
Trine University
The League for the Blind and Disabled
Turnstone
University of Michigan
University of Saint Francis
United States Association of Blind Athletes
Visually Impaired Preschool
Volunteer Lawyer Program
Wellspring Interfaith Social Services
Whispering Meadows Elementary
Whitely County Consolidated Schools



Artist:
Amanda Butcher
Carey Services



Artist:
Charlotte Neuman
*Pathfinder Creative
Abilities Studio*

BUILDING SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL



Artist:
Mary Solloway
*Pathfinder Creative
Abilities Studio*



Artist:
Denny Kneller
Passages, Inc.





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Fort Wayne, IN 46809

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