



LADIES of VIRTUE  
Transforming Lives. Destined for Greatness.

*Annual*  
**REPORT**

**2022**



# LETTER FROM OUR *Founder*

Ladies of Virtue stands as the premier mentoring and leadership development program, catering to Black girls aged 9 to 18 in the Chicagoland area. We distinguish ourselves as the sole community-based organization that seamlessly integrates Black culture, mentoring, leadership development, and mental health support, tailored specifically to the unique needs of Black girls. What began humbly with just six girls, has now blossomed into an annual service to over 400 young women.

Research underscores a stark reality: organizations founded by Black women receive disproportionately less funding compared to their counterparts of other racial groups. This issue is paramount because despite their resilience, outspokenness, and creativity, Black girls face higher rates of discipline within Chicago Public Schools. These disparities are further compounded by a societal reluctance to fully embrace their leadership potential in educational, governmental, and corporate realms. Compounding these challenges, Black girls often receive inadequate support, resulting in formidable barriers to accessing leadership roles and opportunities.

Thus, the significance of Ladies of Virtue cannot be overstated, especially in these times of heightened need.

Each girl we serve resonates with me on a deeply personal level. Having grown up on Chicago's south side, I vividly recall my father's unwavering encouragement, reminding me constantly, "You are an African girl, and you can achieve anything you set your mind to." Despite my parents' divorce when I was just five, their steadfast commitment to discussing college and pursuing dreams remained unshakeable. It wasn't until my junior year of high school, witnessing friends from my neighborhood drift aimlessly without guidance, that I fully grasped the transformative power of positive role models.

This realization spurred me to become a mentor during my sophomore year at the University of Illinois, a role I've embraced ever since. However, what truly distinguishes Ladies of Virtue is the collective effort of a passionate and determined community—both women and men—dedicated to the success of our organization. Thanks to our supporters, this past year has marked unprecedented achievements in the history of Ladies of Virtue. Consider the impact:

- 100% of our high school seniors secured college acceptance.
- 100% of our seniors transitioned into college, trade school, or the armed forces.
- 93% of our LOV sisters aged 16 and above secured summer internships.
- 94% of our LOV sisters reported a marked increase in their leadership skills.

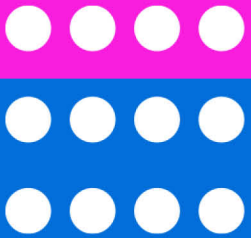
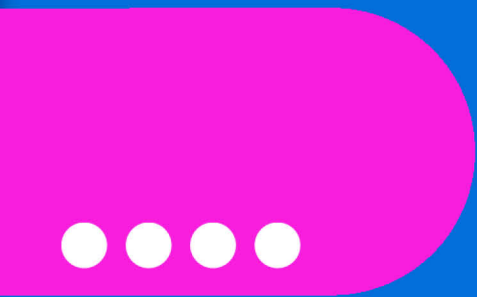
Your contributions extend far beyond the immediate lives of our girls; they shape the very future of Ladies of Virtue. Our ambitious goal of serving 600 girls annually and providing them with the mentorship, leadership development, and mental health support they deserve over the next five years may pose challenges, but with your unwavering support, we are poised to surmount them all.

But you've answered the call! We're committed to investing in the lives of Black girls! I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for walking alongside me on this 11-year journey. Your unwavering support has been invaluable, and I couldn't have done it without you.

Thank you for your dedication to Ladies of Virtue!

**Here's to a future where our Black girls feel:  
Respected. Honored.  
Protected.  
Cherished.  
We are Ladies of Virtue.**





# OVERVIEW



# THE NEED



## HOW BLACK GIRLS ARE IMPACTED

Black girls come with talent, drive, and interest, but significant barriers can prevent them from living up to their fullest potential. All are Black girls facing the impacts of systemic racism, exacerbated by living in some of Chicago's highest-poverty, underserved communities; 83% of participants qualify for free or reduced lunch, a common poverty indicator.

The target population has systematically been denied access to equitable education and economic opportunity based on race, income, gender, and geography. Substantial racial and gender gaps exist in youth employment: in Chicago, only 14% of Black women ages 16-19 are employed compared to 29% of white peers (2016 Census).

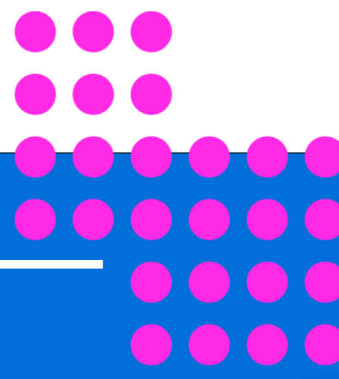
Black girls are experiencing direct or observed trauma, stress, and mental health challenges that can also impede their educational development. Building resilience in the face of trauma and systemic racism is especially important today, with prevalent sharing of videos of police brutality and murders of Black youth and young adults.

A groundbreaking 2017 study and a follow-up in 2019 by Georgetown Law found that Black girls (aged 5-19) are widely believed to be more "adult" than others their age, and need less protection, nurturing, and comfort than their white peers leading to less empathy from adults, harsher treatment in school, and pressure to behave passively rather than assertively. During the pandemic, 70% of our parents expressed concern for the mental health of their girls and/or themselves.

## WHY WE DO THIS WORK.

A significant body of research shows that career readiness and mentoring programs such as our Power to the Professional promote these characteristics and improve participants' college perceptions, mandatory testing scores, and high school perseverance (Radcliffe, 2011).

Research also shows that college knowledge is especially important for low-income, first generation college-going and academically off-track students (Hooker, 2010).





# THE SOLUTION

For more than 11 years, we've led the charge in empowering Black girls in some of Chicago's most underserved communities on their journeys to becoming confident, purpose-driven leaders through character development, career readiness, and civic engagement. We are the only organization offering our unique community-based model that integrates culture, one-on-one and group mentoring, leadership development, and mental health support specifically for the needs of Black girls.

Committed to educational advancement, in 2022, 100% of our girls have been accepted into 4-year colleges and universities and 93% of our girls are placed in summer internships compared to 14% of African American teens who have been employed.

Even greater, our impact extends beyond their high-school graduation. We mentor and support our alumni for six additional years to further their development and success.

Through the support of our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and community, we've been recognized by The Obama Foundation, The University of Chicago, The Chicago Innovation Awards, and many others.



# Ladies of Virtue (LOV) Stands In the Gap For Those Who May Not Have Positive Role Models in Their Lives

Launched in 2011, we match our girls with mentors and prepare them for leadership through character development, career readiness and civic engagement. We also provide mentoring and support up to 6 years after high-school. We want our ladies to become confident and purpose driven leaders.

## We Prepare Our Girls for Leadership in 3 Ways:



- Identifying your purpose and passion
- Fostering healthy relationships
- Developing a positive character

- Participating in Career Pipeline events (job shadows in STEM, Art, Business, Law, Entrepreneurship)
- Building public speaking skills through speed networking, hosting events and round table discussions
- Exploring colleges and identifying the best fit for their future careers

- Identifying topics that they are passionate about
- Partnering with community organizations that pertain to each topic
- Taking what they learned and teaching their peers through marketing awareness campaigns and workshops
- Presenting impact to community leaders and executives



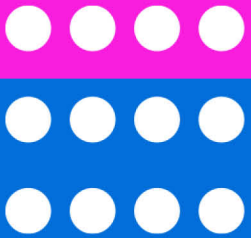
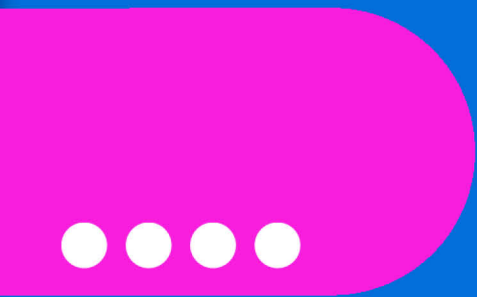


## MISSION

**Our mission is to instill purpose, passion, and perseverance in girls, ages 9 to 18, while preparing them for college, careers and to become change agents in their communities.**

## VISION

**Our vision is to become recognized as the leading mentoring and leadership development program for Black girls in the greater Chicago region, which fosters sisterhood and strengthens families and communities.**



# IMPACT







# OUR REACH IN 2022

16

**Program Sites**

Program Year

July 2021- June 2022

79

**Volunteers**

calendar year

364

**Participants**

program year

July 2021 to June 2022

1,435

**Residents Served  
Through Outreach  
Initiatives**

calendar year



# IMPACT OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
# of Girls enrolled in mentoring and leadership program	150	150	165	245	364
# of Residents served through community outreach initiatives	50	50	1220	1550	1435
Total # Served	200	200	1,385	1,795	1,799
Percent ages 16 and over placed in summer internships	96%	95%	91%	97%	93%
Percent graduated from high-school	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent trained in project management / leading projects that benefit the community	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percent accepted into college, trade school or armed forces	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

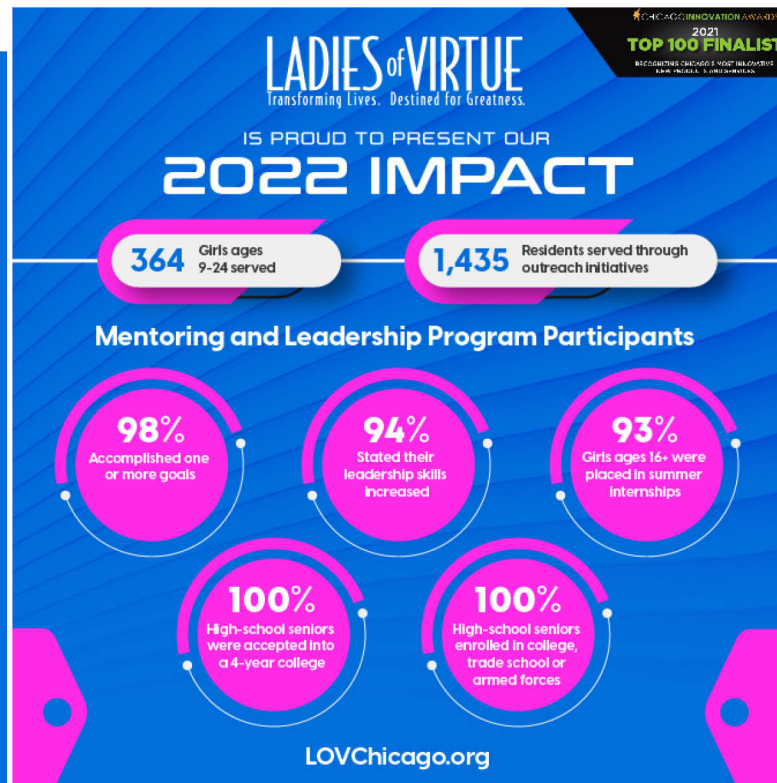
Note: Beginning in 2021, we made additional strategic investments in the lives of our girls by providing mental health workshops to every participant. In addition, we offered 1:1 and group mental health therapy free of charge.

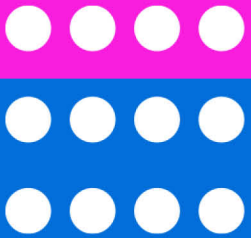
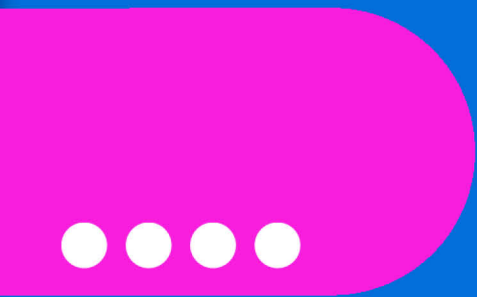
Note: In 2021, we were a predominantly a volunteer led organization. We made strategic full time hiring investment in 2022.



# 2022 HIGHLIGHTS:

- ▶ We hired 4 full-time staff members
- ▶ Increased to 16 program sites
- ▶ Developed marketing plan
- ▶ Launched Live with LOV Program with Val Warner, ABC7 News to expose youth to careers in journalism
- ▶ Recipient of Chicago Foundation for Women's Capacity Building Grant which allowed us to increase health insurance coverage from 50% to 80%
- ▶ Recipient of the McDonalds Community Grant which was provided to 40 community organizations in Chicago
- ▶ Recipient of the R3 Grant program
- ▶ Selected as the University of Chicago Core Program (among only 2 organizations in Chicago)
- ▶ Notable partners include: AT&T, Northwestern Medicine, McDonald's, Chicago Bulls, Premiere International, Rush University, the Office of the City Clerk Chicago, Bright Star Community Outreach, Project Management Institute Chicagoland Chapter, Obama Foundation and Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois





# TESTIMONIALS





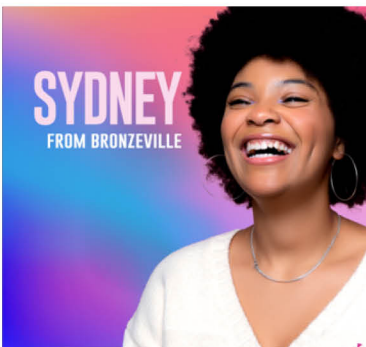
# TESTIMONIALS

## LOV Alumni



### Layla, Alum

"The guidance from LOV mentors as a junior and senior related to college and scholarship applications is something I will always praise the program for. I don't think I would have been able to navigate the process as well without the help I got from Ms. Francine and especially Ms. Thee. The time spent with them working on interview skills and essays helped me thrive in the competitive atmosphere."



### Sydney, Alum

"Ladies of Virtue has opened up so many opportunities for me such as an internship at The Chicago Center for Youth Violence Prevention, which got me published in the American Journal of Public Health. I've learned public speaking, resume writing, and so much more. I'm so thank to have been apart of Ladies of Virtue"



### Sabrina, Alum

"I did not have a role model before joining Ladies of Virtue. When I became involved with this organization I began to discover myself and my passion for writing and helping others who need the support and encouragement to tell their story. There is not just one story but there are so many stories that need to be told. I would have never discovered this if I had not joined Ladies of Virtue and received the mentorship they provide to girls of color."



### Cheyenne, Alum

"I am so proud to see where LOV is. When I joined, there were 40 girls in the Saturday institute, and now we have served 1,000. I'm proud to see LOV has grown into the best mentoring program where our girls go on college tours, develop leadership skills and become change agents in our community. LOV has helped me accomplish my lifelong dream of graduating from college and becoming a confident professional woman who can shine bright in any room."

# 2022

## NEWS & MEDIA



Ladies Of Virtue Event Aims To Empower Young Women featured on CBS News Chicago!



LOV DAY Featured on FOX Chicago

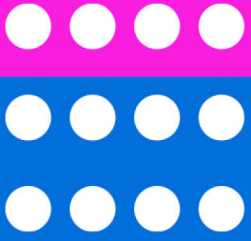


Leading with Virtue Cocktail Reception featured on ABC Chicago!





# Top 5 Moments of 2022

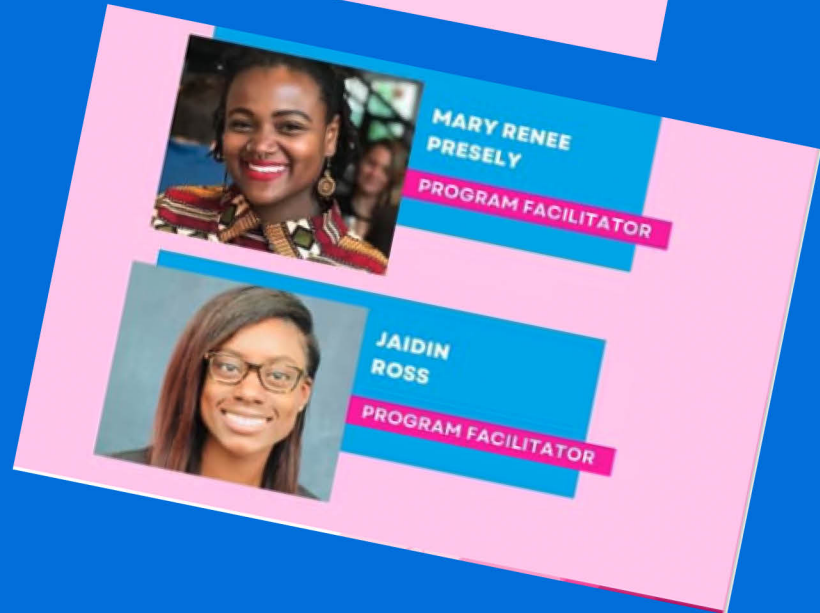
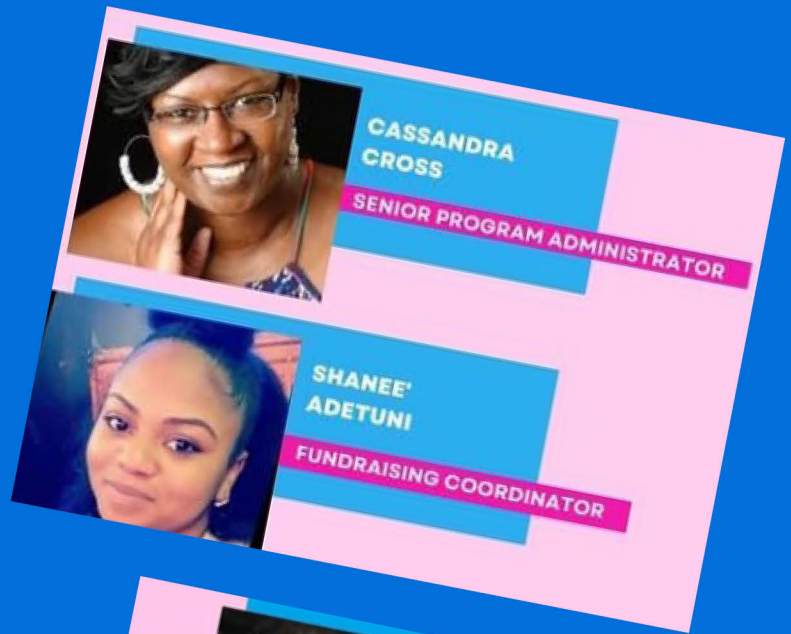


# 5

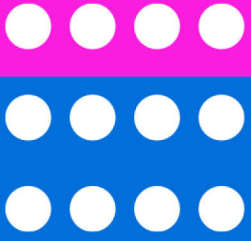
## Hired 4 New Full-Time Staff

Ladies of Virtue hired 4 new Full Time Staff members to accommodate our growth.

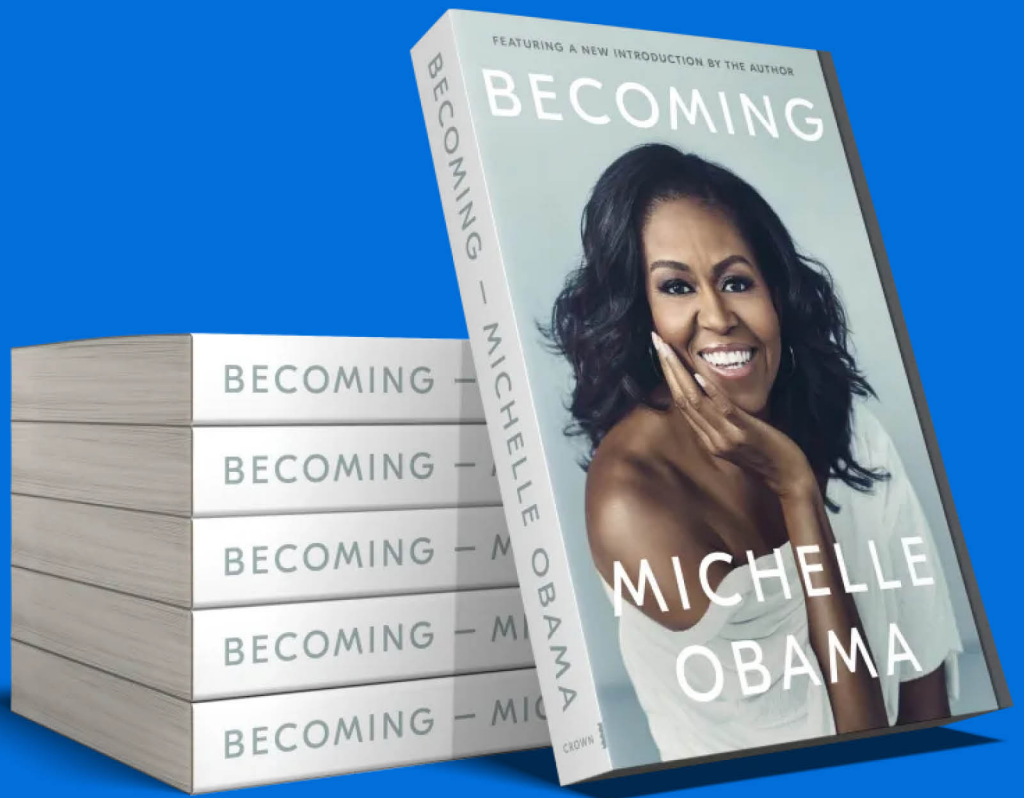
▶ Cassandra Ross, Shanee' Adetunji, Mary Renee Presley, and Jaidin Ross, will continue to push forward the plans and goals of Ladies of Virtue, all while ensuring to elevate the deserving work that the sisters of LOV all need.







# 4



## **Michelle Obama Names two two of our LOV Sisters in her books, *The Light We Carry***

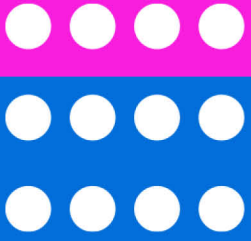
Our LOV sisters Kourtney and Madison participated in a conversation with First Lady Michelle Obama at a roundtable discussion with girls from mentoring programs across Chicago! The event was hosted by the Obama Foundation and the participants learned more about the Girls Opportunity Alliance and how they planned to impact Chicago.

Thus resulting in both LOV sisters, Kourtney and Madison being mentioned in First Lady Michelle Obama's newest book on page 47 in, "The Light We Carry".

"Meeting Michelle Obama was eye-opening and inspiring. She taught me a lot about being a young woman and I learned what I must do to succeed in America."  
- Kourtney

"When Michelle Obama hugged me her perfume transferred to my blazer. I'm never wearing this blazer again! I was so inspired by her. Thank you so very much for including me in the event. I will cherish this memory forever."  
- Madison

Thank you to Michelle Obama for continuing to serve as a source of inspiration and light!



# 3

Val Werner, ABC 7 Chicago News Anchor, joined LOV as a mentor for our LIVE With LOV Campaign this year!

During the LIVE With LOV session, Val Werner met with some of our LOV sisters, who were interested in media, journalism, broadcasting, and communication careers. Val shared her amazing journey from her childhood dreams of being an actress, to hosting one of Chicago's most popular talk shows, Windy City Live. The LOV sisters asked such thoughtful and pertinent questions, allowing them to walk away with many gems and inspirations.

***“Make yourself available to the people who are already in the profession that you truly want to do.”- Val Werner***

Val Werner continues to be a shining example to our LOV sisters and was honored during The Ladies of Virtue 2022 Leading with Virtue Annual Fundraiser for her dedication and hardwork.



# 2

LOV was selected as one of the five nonprofit winners for the Chicago Foundation for Women grant. This grant enables LOV to enhance its capacity and advance our mission even further.

This includes:

- Covering 80% of full time benefits for LOV Staff
- HR support
- Mental health days for LOV Staff

A healthy team creates a healthy organization and that creates a healthy community.



IS PROUD TO PRESENT OUR  
**2022 IMPACT**

**364** Girls ages 9-24 served

**1,435** Residents served through outreach initiatives

**Mentoring and Leadership Program Participants**

**98%**  
Accomplished one or more goals

**94%**  
Stated their leadership skills increased

**93%**  
Girls ages 16+ were placed in summer internships

**100%**  
High-school seniors were accepted into a 4-year college

**100%**  
High-school seniors enrolled in college, trade school or armed forces

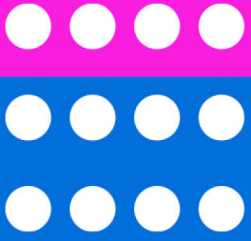
LOVChicago.org

**1**

For 2022, LOV served 364 girls through 9 programs offered including our Saturday Institute, in-school, after school, summer camps and alumni program.

LOV has served over 1,435 Chicago residents through our outreach efforts as well by providing school supplies, laptops, desks/chairs, PPE, and food distribution.

Thank you to our supporters who continue to invest in Ladies of Virtue, so that we can provide more mentoring and leadership opportunities to girls further in 2023.



# OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS, PARTNERS & SPONSORS





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

as of December 31, 2022

## Board Members

**Elsie Cardell**

President at Results Driven  
Marketing  
Board President

**Risa Davis**

Retired as Vice President of Corporate  
Development at United Way  
Board Vice President

**Veronica Obianwa**

Corporate Controller at Walmart  
Board Treasurer

**Averil Edwards**

Managing Counsel at United Airlines  
Board Secretary

**Tiana Conley**

Vice President Global Portfolio  
Strategy at Mars  
Board Member

**Sheilina Henry**

Group Vice President of Diversity and  
Inclusion at Bloomin' Brands  
Board Member

**Leah Hobson**

Vice President of Finance at  
Northwestern Memorial Healthcare  
Board President

**Jelani Rucker**

Vice President of Marketing at  
Zeckelman Industries  
Board Member

**Sizwe Kamara -**

Regional Director at Morgan Stanley  
Investment Management  
Board Member



# OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS



# OUR SPONSORS

LADIES of VIRTUE  
Transforming Lives. Destined for Greatness.

## LEADING with VIRTUE Cocktail Reception

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

### BUILDER



Veronica Obianwa



Sizwe Kamara



OLD NATIONAL BANK

Tiana Conley

### ADVOCATE



Henry Family

Bruce Taylor

### MENTOR



Craig Leva

Joseph & Bessie  
Feinberg Foundation

Ravi Rao and  
Tony Kremer

Risa and Charles  
Davis

Leah  
Hobson

Averil  
Edwards

Mironda  
Ross

### SUPPORTER



Fran Bell

B & G Heinz

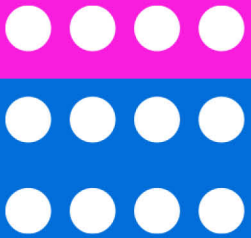
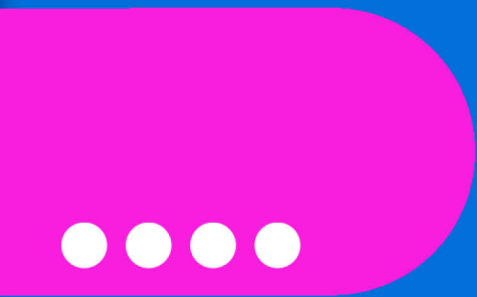
Mackenzie Phillips

Robin Beaman

Toi Salter

Joan A Akalaonu

John & Nicole Smith



# THE PATH FORWARD





# 2022 – 2026

## 5 Year Strategic Plan

*Vision:*

**Ladies of Virtue** is recognized as the leading mentoring and leadership development program for Black girls in the greater Chicago region, which fosters sisterhood and strengthens families and communities.

### Goal 1

#### Programs

LOV's program model becomes a proven and unique mentoring and leadership program for black girls in order to scale throughout the greater Chicago region by 2026.

### Goal 2

#### Infrastructure

LOV will develop and execute a plan for new facility space, technology and operation platforms which allow staff to serve and scale programs effectively.

### Goal 3

#### Team

LOV will attract, develop, and retain high performing talent, building a full-time cross-functional staff along with a highly engaged board, mentors and volunteers.

### Goal 4

#### Development

LOV will have a diverse, sustainable development model to support a minimum of a \$2 million annual budget.

### Goal 5

#### Marketing

LOV will develop an integrated marketing approach to support Ladies of Virtue's growth model.

# FUTURE PLANS

## In 2022, we plan to:

### Infrastructure Goal

- Identify and implement a CRM (customer relationship management tool) to track data more effectively
- Identify and implement a project management tool to manage internal projects more effectively
- Identify technology that will enhance communication throughout the organization

### Team – Begin the groundwork for a performance management system:

- Enhance HR processes, procedures and structures

### Programs

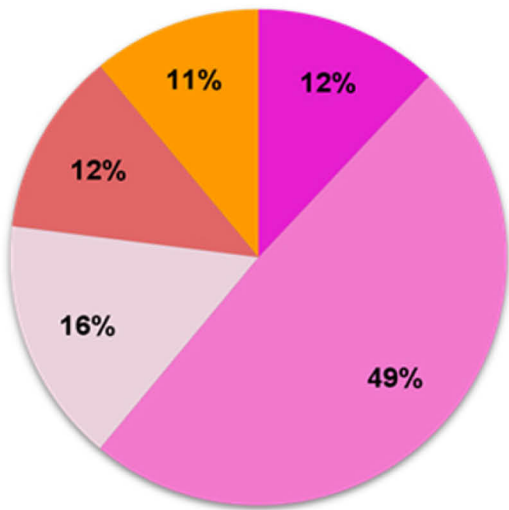
- Hire a full-time Senior Program Manager who will oversee Saturday Institute, Outreach and Summer Programming
- Increase the number of girls we serve to 400 annually
- Enhance career, college and cultural experiences
- Create more opportunities for participants to hold leadership roles within Ladies of Virtue

# FINANCIALS

As a result of the pandemic and the unrest that takes place in Chicago throughout the year, our supporters truly answered the call for support. In total, we raised \$1,532,517.

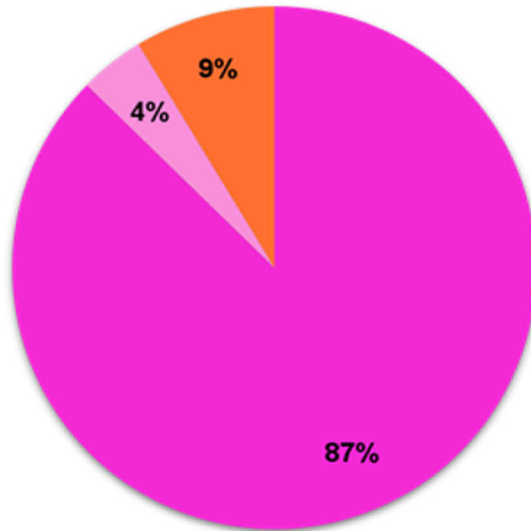
## \$1,532,517\*

### 2022 Revenue



- Corporate Contributions
- Foundation Contributions
- Government Contributions
- Individual Contributions
- Program Revenue

### 2022 Expenses



- Fundraising Expense
- Program Expense
- Operational Expenses





Thank You!

