

# WE RISE INTERNATIONAL

## NEWSLETTER

### FALL 2020

#### Our Mission

Empowering the World  
with Health and Hope

#### Our Values

Interconnection, Equity, Respect,  
Compassion, Innovation, Resilience



#### The Heart of We Rise International

We believe that every community has strengths to combat the problems that face the world today. Neighbors lift up neighbors. Strangers help each other. Working with communities of all sizes, we empower people of all backgrounds to maximize their strengths and respond to their struggles – together.

MORE  
DETAILS  
TO  
COME!

## Upcoming Events

**October 19** - Join us online for:  
*An Evening with We Rise International*

**October - November** - Check out Our  
Facebook and Instagram for: *Dance  
Down the COVID Blues Fundraiser*

**November - December** - We Rise  
International will be featured at Gifts  
that Give Hope, Harrisburg, PA.



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FACEBOOK!

## AN EVENING WITH WE RISE INTERNATIONAL



**On October 19, 2020, 7-8pm EST** We Rise International will be hosting a friendly virtual gathering in a relaxed atmosphere where you can hear personal stories presented by our Board of Directors, staff, and supporters about how they came to be part of We Rise International. and why they think you should join with us too.

Director Janelle Bitikofer will share the impact of our programs and information on some very special projects we are hosting in the community.

**Please join us! Register here: <http://bit.ly/WeRiseOct19> to attend this free special event.**

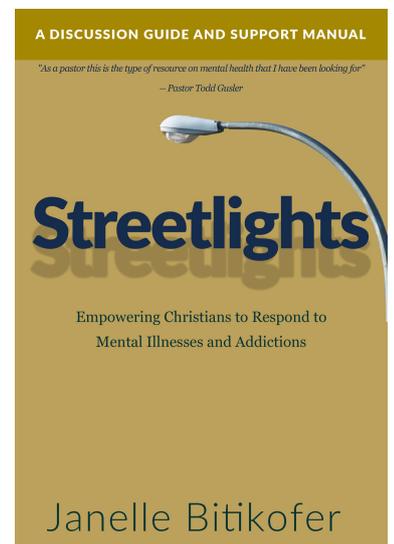
### NEW BOOK- *STREETLIGHTS: EMPOWERING CHRISTIANS TO RESPOND TO MENTAL ILLNESSES AND ADDICTIONS*

Executive Director, Janelle Bitikofer's newly released book ***Streetlights: Empowering Christians to Respond to Mental Illnesses and Addictions*** is a resource given to all participating church leaders (pastors and lay leaders) in the Churches Care Program. It's also available to the general public on amazon.com and the publisher is offering a discount for groups buying 10 or more.

Though all people in the U.S. and around the world can benefit from additional knowledge and tools to help them positively support and assist people experiencing a mental illness or addiction, this book specifically targets Christian audiences. Why? 25% of individuals experiencing a mental illness state that the first place they went to seek help was a church. But churches have stated they need more resources to know how to respond. The material covered in the book is written for individual reading or entire churches can use it as a discussion guide and resource.

Share information about the book with those you know who want to learn more about mental illnesses and addictions. Learn more about the book at: <https://streetlightsbook.com>.

**Visit the website to order your copy today!**



# DANCE DOWN THE COVID BLUES FUNDRAISER

Depression has quadrupled and anxiety tripled in the young adult age groups during COVID-19. In fact, depression and anxiety is on the rise in all age groups during the pandemic.

Dancing has been shown to create happy endorphins, get us moving, help us to smile and laugh. Though this is not a replacement for mental health counseling and support when we need it, dancing can help reduce stress, sadness and anxiety.



*We Rise International is hosting "Dance Down the COVID Blues" on social media.* Proceeds from this fundraiser will support the Mental Health/Addiction education and support programs, and COVID-19 mental health response work, we are providing.

## How can you join in on the fun?

Beginning on October 10 and running through December 15th - Post a 20 second video of yourself, family, pet, or friends dancing to a favorite song and upload it to your Facebook, Twitter or Instagram account. Tag us using the following hashtags: #WeRiseIntl, #DanceDown, #COVIDblues. Tag your friends encouraging them to join by posting their dance video and donating a few bucks to We Rise Int'l as described below:

You can make a \$3, \$5, \$10 or larger donation at: [bit.ly/donatewerise](https://bit.ly/donatewerise) using your PayPal or Cash app account, or credit card. You can also visit our website at [www.weriseinternational.org](http://www.weriseinternational.org) to make a donation.

Throughout the 2 month event we will be sharing, posting and tagging videos from people participating in this fun and happy challenge, on our social media sites.

Check out the fun dance videos our staff are posting!

## Our Social Media Team

**Chelsea Brubaker** - Biology Major, Intern

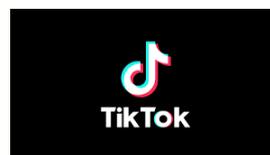
**Michaela Thomas** - Film Major, Intern

**Liz Irvin** - Coordinator

and the wonderful students from

**Hempfield High School**

who are volunteering with this event from Lancaster, PA.



## Donations are Tax Deductible

WRI is a US based 501c3 global non-profit organization. All donations received are tax deductible. Tax exempt 501c3 letters are available upon request.

## We Rise Adapts And Expands Programming During The Pandemic

The COVID pandemic has temporarily changed the look of programming for many organizations and We Rise is no exception. We scheduled the initial trainings for the Chambersburg, PA Cohort of the Churches Care Program to occur in September and October bringing twenty or thirty new churches into the program.

But as the numbers of COVID cases continued to fluctuate. We Rise International made the tough decision to reschedule those trainings to Spring of 2021, when we will host in-person trainings:

- Lancaster, PA training February 20th and March 6th.
- Chambersburg Cohort of leaders into the training program March 13th and March 27th.
- Trainings for our 4th Cohort in Philadelphia will roll out in the fall of 2021.

While these training have been pushed back to 2021. We Rise International has adapted and expanded our work in other ways.

## Join Us -- Five Ways to Get Involved with We Rise International

1. Stay informed! Sign up for our quarterly newsletter, at <https://weriseinternational.org/home>
2. Refer a college or graduate student you know to apply for We Rise Int'l internships – a great way to get involved and build their resume!
3. Volunteer yourself! We Rise International loves retirees and volunteers of any age, living anywhere on the planet!
4. Encourage church leaders, and mental health and addictions professionals you know in PA to sign up for the trainings and support on mental illnesses and addictions offered through the Churches Care & Streetlights Programs.
5. Support We Rise International financially through an individual or business donation any time of year, or by helping organize an event in your community during our annual fun"draising drive. All donations are tax deductible.

- We have been working with our partner Churches in the Churches Care Program providing an assessment of their needs through webinars of interest to them and with Eastern Mennonite Univ. are offering webinars on: Anxiety, & Grief & Loss during COVID-19.
- **October 17** - Exec. Dir. Janelle was Guest Blogger on the Anabaptist Disabilities Network Blog. Topic "[Depression and Anxiety Rise Among Young Adults During COVID-19](#)"
- **October 23** - Exec. Dir. Janelle Bitikofer will be present on mental health at the Faith Communities Nurses & Church Leaders Conference "Meeting the Challenges of COVID-19: Spiritually, Emotionally and Economically" at Eastern Mennonite University. [Click to register](#)
- **November 13** - Exec. Dir. Janelle Bitikofer will be serving as a panelist for a discussion with families offering insight on: "Losing a Loved One due to Adduction" hosted by GOAL project.
- Check out the We Rise Int'l website for more upcoming events and upcoming and past recorded webinars

## Board of Directors and Staff

Founding Board of Directors:

Amy Vercler, JD  
Karin Shank, MS, MLS  
Beth Good, RN, PhD

Founding Executive Director  
Janelle Bitikofer, MSW, LCSW

Research and Logics Coordinator  
Janel Long, RN, MA

Churches Care Program Clinician  
Christina Miles, LPC

Program Development Associate  
and Volunteer Coordinator  
Desiree Irvin

"Dance Down" Coordinators  
Liz Irvin  
Interns  
Michaela Thomas  
Chelsea Brubaker