



ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2025-2026

September 1, 2025 - August 31, 2026



Empowering Youth. Strengthening Communities.

Stamford, Connecticut | www.irosacares.org

OUR STORY

A Year of Growth



Dear Friends, Donors, Volunteers, and Community Partners,

The 2025-2026 year was an exciting period of growth for IROSA Cares, Inc. We expanded our service programs, hosted our first Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, strengthened community partnerships, increased grant funding, and laid the foundation for year-round youth programming.

IROSA Cares was created in honor of my parents, Ira and Rose, whose example of helping others inspired a lifelong commitment to education and service. Today, that legacy continues as we create opportunities for underserved youth and their families to serve, lead, learn, and strengthen their communities.

Thank you to our volunteers, donors, grantors, Board of Directors, community partners, families, and supporters. Your investment makes this work possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "C. Stephenson".

Catherine E. Stephenson

Founder & CEO

Our Vision

A future where young people - especially underserved youth - have the opportunity to lead, give back, and shape stronger, more connected communities.



WHO WE ARE

A Stamford-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit empowering underserved youth and their families through volunteerism, education, and service.

MISSION

Empowering youth - especially underserved youth - to lead through volunteerism, education, and service.

IMPACT

2025-2026 at a Glance

A growing year of service, recognition, partnerships, and organizational capacity.

\$15,000 grant funding secured	212 volunteer participations across 3 signature events	200 hygiene kits assembled
143 letters to military service members	128 Valentine's cards for seniors	230 Holiday & Get-Well cards created
210 Kindness Rocks painted this year	553 Kindness Rocks painted to date	50 snack bags for Filling in the Blanks

10+
Community Partners
Collaborating to expand service opportunities for underserved youth and their families.



SERVICE IN ACTION | Our first 9/11 Day of Service at The Anchor School

PROGRAMS

Service in Action

9/11 Day of Service

September 2025 | The Anchor School

IROSA Cares launched its first 9/11 Day of Service with 32 volunteers, giving participants an opportunity to learn about the significance of September 11 and turn remembrance into action. Volunteers assembled 100 hygiene kits, prepared 65 sandwiches donated to New Covenant Center, and collected many items for an in-person food drive. An additional \$325 was raised through a virtual food drive and donated to CT FoodShare.

Coat & Holiday Card Drive

November 2025 | Ferguson Library

Twenty-four volunteers came together at Ferguson Library to provide warmth and encouragement during the holiday season. Together, they collected 45 coats for men, women, and children and created 230 Holiday and Get-Well cards for community members.

MLK Day of Service

January 2026 | UConn Stamford

Our annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service brought 156 volunteers together for hands-on service inspired by Dr. King's legacy. Volunteers wrote 143 letters to military service members through Operation Support Our Troops, made over 50 cards for Pink Aid, created 128 Valentine's Day cards for seniors through Small Acts, Big Change, and painted 210 Kindness Rocks - bringing IROSA Cares' cumulative total to 553 Kindness Rocks painted to date. With the help of Kids Helping Kids, volunteers also assembled 100 hygiene kits and prepared 50 snack bags for Filling in the Blanks.



Art & Inspiration: The event also featured a **live painting by artist Sahmra Sawyer**, bringing art and creativity into the day's celebration of Dr. King's legacy of service and community.

COMMUNITY

Celebrating Those Who Serve

Our first Volunteer Appreciation Dinner | May 8, 2026, | UConn Stamford



More than 110 guests joined IROSA Cares for a free evening celebrating service, culture, community, and the people who make our work possible.

4 VOLUNTEERS HONORED

Four outstanding volunteers were recognized for their commitment to service and positive example.

CULTURAL ENRICHMENT

Bokendeye African Dance Company brought African cultural dance to the celebration.

YOUTH INSPIRATION

Author and motivational speaker Carl Michel (Young ExeKutive) encouraged young people to recognize their potential.

The evening reflected an important part of our philosophy: young people should not only be encouraged to serve - they should also see service recognized, celebrated, and valued.

RESOURCES

Funding Growth & Community Investment

IROSA Cares secured \$15,000 in grant funding during the 2025-2026 reporting year, helping us expand service, cultural enrichment, local history, and future programming.

Funder / Support	Amount
First Presbyterian Church of Stamford (FISH Church) - Grant 1	\$2,000
First Presbyterian Church of Stamford (FISH Church) - Grant 2	\$2,000
Stamford 2026 Community Microgrant	\$3,000
City of Stamford Arts & Culture Grant	\$3,000
AmeriCorps / 9/11 Day Grant - awarded July 2026	\$5,000
TOTAL GRANT FUNDING SECURED	\$15,000

Note: The \$5,000 AmeriCorps grant was received in July 2026 for the September 2026 9/11 Day of Service. Program outcomes will be reported in the 2026-2027 Annual Report.

Additional Fundraising

Two direct catalog sales fundraisers - one in the winter and one in the spring - generated approximately \$500 in combined profit, providing flexible support for organizational and program needs. Approximately \$2,610 from GoFundMe donations.

Staying Connected

Our quarterly newsletter keeps supporters, volunteers, donors, and community partners connected through program highlights, volunteer stories, upcoming opportunities, partnerships, and organizational news.

Our Leadership Invests, Too

IROSA Cares' commitment to sustainability begins with our own leadership. **Our Board members make an annual financial contribution to the organization**, demonstrating their personal investment in our mission and the communities we serve.

Their support helps strengthen the foundation of IROSA Cares and reflects a shared commitment to our continued growth and long-term impact.

From Events to Year-Round Impact



IROSA Cares Impact Club at Stamford PAL

A new partnership with Stamford PAL created an important next step for IROSA Cares: moving from primarily individual service events toward consistent, year-round youth engagement. The IROSA Cares Impact Club is designed for students in grades 5-8 and combines hands-on service with leadership, teamwork, empathy, communication, problem-solving, and civic responsibility.

Looking Ahead: 2026-2027

- Grow the IROSA Cares Impact Club at Stamford PAL
- Continue our annual MLK and 9/11 Days of Service
- Advance the Stamford Black History Heritage Walk
- Expand year-round opportunities for underserved youth and their families
- Increase youth leadership opportunities
- Grow corporate and foundation partnerships
- Secure sustainable general operating support

Our goal is not simply to host more events. It is to build a sustainable organization where young people have consistent opportunities to serve, lead, learn, connect, and make a difference.

Partner With Us

We invite corporate and community partners to invest alongside us—helping IROSA Cares build the capacity needed to provide consistent, meaningful programming for underserved youth and their families.

Our partnerships to date include:

- **The Anchor School** – 9/11 Day of Service
- **UConn Stamford** – MLK Day of Service and Volunteer Appreciation Dinner
- **Ferguson Library** – Coat & Card Drive , our Kindness Rocks will be in their South End branch Rock Garden
- **Operation Gratitude** – Supported collection and shipment of requested military wish-list items.
- **Operation Support Our Troops** – 143 military letters
- **Small Acts, Big Change** – 128 Valentine's cards for seniors
- **Kids Helping Kids** – 100 hygiene kits at MLK Day
- **Filling in the Blanks** – Annual food pack and 50 snack bags from MLK Day of Service 2026
- **New Covenant Center** – recipient of 65 sandwiches from the 9/11 Day of Service
- **CT FoodShare** – recipient of the \$325 virtual food-drive proceeds and food-drive support
- **Stamford PAL** – partnership developed during the reporting year for the IROSA Cares Impact Club
- **Pink Aid** – comfort cards make for breast cancer patients
- **Books4Everyone** – over 200 children's books collected
- **HALO** – Friendship bracelets made for their teens

Supporting IROSA Cares' operations means supporting every program we deliver.

Corporate and unrestricted support gives us the stability to plan, coordinate, communicate, and serve consistently.

Your Support Helps Sustain

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Maintain our part-time Administrative Assistant position so programs, volunteers, grants, and partnerships stay organized.

ESSENTIAL OPERATIONS

Cover insurance, website maintenance, technology, communications, and quarterly newsletter production.

CONSISTENT PROGRAMMING

Provide materials, coordination, and infrastructure for reliable year-round service and youth leadership opportunities.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

Recruit, communicate with, and support the volunteers who make community projects possible.

PROGRAM GROWTH

Expand the Impact Club and create more opportunities for underserved youth and their families.

SUSTAINABILITY

Build the organizational capacity needed to plan ahead, pursue funding, and respond to community needs.

Invest in Year-Round Impact

We invite corporations, foundations, community organizations, and individual donors to partner with IROSA Cares as we grow. Flexible operating support allows us to direct resources where they are most needed while maintaining the systems that keep our programs strong.

LET'S BUILD STRONGER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER.

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