



2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

September 1, 2024 - August 31, 2025

BUILDING OUR IMPACT



Empowering Youth. Strengthening Communities.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER & CEO

Our 2024-2025 year marked an important chapter in the growth of IROSA Cares, Inc. After launching in December 2023 and bringing 70 volunteers together for our first MLK Day of Service, we entered our first full reporting year determined to build on that foundation.

Throughout the year, our community continued to show what is possible when people come together with a shared commitment to service. Our second annual MLK Day of Service grew to 125 volunteers and expanded the number and variety of hands-on projects supporting military service members, seniors, first responders, children, individuals experiencing homelessness, and others in need.

We also extended our service beyond MLK Day. Through our winter coat drive, 45 coats for men, women, and children were collected

and donated locally to Pacific House and P.R.I.D.E. Inc. in Stamford. In June, we joined Filling in the Blanks in Norwalk for a food-packing service project supporting the fight against childhood hunger.

Our financial foundation grew as well. During the reporting period, IROSA Cares received \$6,500 in grants and raised approximately \$2,235 through GoFundMe. This support helped us continue turning community generosity into meaningful opportunities to serve.

To our volunteers, donors, grant funders, community partners, families, and friends: thank you for helping IROSA Cares grow. Every act of kindness, every hour volunteered, and every contribution strengthened our ability to serve others and create opportunities for young people to make an impact.

Catherine E. Stephenson

**Founder & CEO
IROSA Cares, Inc.**

WHO WE ARE



OUR MISSION

IROSA Cares Inc. empowers youth - especially Black and Brown youth - to lead through volunteerism, education, and service.

OUR VISION

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

OUR STORY

Founded in Stamford, Connecticut in December 2023, IROSA Cares creates opportunities for young people and community members to serve, lead, build connections, and strengthen their communities. The name IROSA honors Founder & CEO Catherine E. Stephenson's parents, Ira and Rose, and the values of family, service, and helping others that inspired the organization.

OUR GUIDING BELIEF

Changing mindsets, one volunteer at a time.

2024-2025 AT A GLANCE

A year of growth, service and community investment

Highlights included our second annual MLK Day of Service, a winter coat drive, seasonal fundraising and a June food-packing project with Filling in the Blanks.

125

volunteers at our 2025 MLK Day of Service

3

extra-large military care boxes

62

letters to military service members

57

Valentine's cards for seniors

13

thank-you cards for first responders

163

Kindness Rocks

50

hygiene kits

200+

children's books collected

45

winter coats collected

\$6,500

in grant funding received

~\$2,235

raised through GoFundMe

~\$8,735

in identified grants & community giving



2025 MLK DAY OF SERVICE

125 volunteers. Hundreds of acts of service. One community.

Our second annual MLK Day of Service brought 125 volunteers together for hands-on projects inspired by the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The event reflected IROSA Cares' growing ability to connect volunteers with meaningful ways to support people locally and beyond.

This MLK Day was dedicated to one of our biggest supporters, centenarian Ms. Blanche Sumpter. She passed away in September 2024.



Ms. Blanche Sumpter

Our work yielded:

3 Extra-Large Military Care Boxes - Packed and mailed for military service members through Operation Gratitude.

62 Letters to Troops - Written with messages of gratitude and encouragement through Operation Gratitude.

57 Valentine's Day Cards - Created for seniors through Small Acts, Big Change.

13 Thank-You Cards - Created to recognize local first responders.

163 Kindness Rocks - Painted with positive messages and shared through Ferguson Library.

50 Hygiene Kits - Assembled for New Covenant Center.

200+ Children's Books - Collected to support Books4Everyone and Channels of Hope in Jamaica, West Indies.

15 Friendship Bracelets - Created for HALO.

27 Color A Smile Pages - Completed to help brighten someone's day through Color A Smile.

GROWING OUR IMPACT

From our first MLK Day to our second

70 -> 125

MLK Day volunteers grew by 55 people - approximately 79% - from 2024 to 2025.

343

Kindness Rocks created across our first two MLK Days of Service.

96

letters to military service members across our first two MLK Days.

144

Valentine's cards for seniors across our first two MLK Days.

8

military care boxes packed across our first two MLK Days.



Kids Helping Kids volunteers helping make hygiene kits.

BEYOND MLK DAY

A year of service, fundraising and organizational growth

During 2024-2025, IROSA Cares continued building beyond its signature MLK Day of Service. Fundraising, community service and strategic planning helped strengthen the organization and prepare for continued growth.

FALL 2024

Fall/Winter Fundraising Campaign

Community fundraising helped build support for the year ahead and for IROSA Cares programs and service activities.

DECEMBER 2024

Preparing for MLK Day

Planning and preparation began for the second annual MLK Day of Service, which would grow to 125 volunteers.

SPRING 2025

Spring Fundraising Campaign

A second seasonal fundraising effort helped sustain community engagement and support the organization's mission.

JUNE 7, 2025

Food Packing with Filling in the Blanks

IROSA Cares participated in a food-packing service project with Filling in the Blanks in Norwalk, Connecticut, supporting efforts to address childhood hunger. IROSA Cares also provided a \$100 donation supported by FISH Church grant funding.

JULY 2025

Strategic Planning

Leadership dedicated time to organizational planning, strengthening operations and preparing for the 2025-2026 program year.



WARMING OUR COMMUNITY



45 COATS COLLECTED

IROSA Cares participated in a One Warm Coat drive, collecting 45 coats for men, women, and children. The coats were donated locally to Pacific House and P.R.I.D.E. Inc. in Stamford to help community members stay warm during the winter.



\$135 DONATED

The campaign also generated \$135 in monetary donations to One Warm Coat.

LOCAL IMPACT

The coat drive expanded our service beyond a single annual event and demonstrated our commitment to responding to practical needs in the Stamford community. Over 190 holidays were made and mailed to Holiday Cards 4 Our Military.



PARTNERS & COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Service is stronger when communities work together.

Organization	2024-2025 Connection
Operation Gratitude	Military care boxes and letters to service members
Small Acts, Big Change	Valentine's Day cards for seniors
Ferguson Library	Kindness Rocks
New Covenant Center	Hygiene kits
Books4Everyone	Children's books
Channels of Hope - Jamaica, West Indies	Children's books
HALO	Friendship bracelets
Color A Smile	Coloring pages and messages of kindness
One Warm Coat	Winter coat drive
Pacific House	Local recipient of winter coats
P.R.I.D.E. Inc.	Local recipient of winter coats
Filling in the Blanks	June 2025 food-packing service project supporting
Holiday Cards 4 Our Military	childhood hunger relief



GROWING SUPPORT FOR OUR MISSION

Growing community confidence in our mission

During 2024-2025, IROSA Cares received \$6,500 in grant funding and raised approximately \$2,235 through GoFundMe. These funds helped strengthen the foundation for continued service and growth.

Funding Source	Amount
FISH Church - December 2024	\$1,000
Stamford Rotary - April 2025	\$500
FISH Church - May 2025	\$2,000
City of Stamford - June 2025	\$3,000
TOTAL GRANTS RECEIVED	\$6,500
GoFundMe community giving	Approximately \$2,235
2 fundraisers	Approximately \$300.
IDENTIFIED GRANTS & COMMUNITY GIVING	Approximately \$9,035

From grassroots giving to growing institutional support.

LOOKING AHEAD



Our first full reporting year showed that IROSA Cares was moving from a promising beginning toward a stronger, more sustainable community presence.

We grew our signature MLK Day of Service, expanded the types of organizations and populations our volunteers supported, responded to local needs through our coat drive, participated in a food-packing project with Filling in the Blanks, and strengthened the financial foundation needed to continue our work.

As we entered 2025-2026, our focus remained clear: create more opportunities for young people to lead through service, deepen community partnerships, and build the resources needed for year-round impact.

Thank you to every volunteer, donor, partner, funder, family, and friend who helped make this year possible.

EMPOWERING YOUTH. STRENGTHENING COMMUNITIES.

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