

Love and Liberation

2021 Highlights



King County

Department of Community and
Human Services

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Love and Liberation

Love and Liberation (L&L) is a racial justice initiative focused on self-liberation and systems change to improve academic and life outcomes for young people of color. This work is undertaken by the Racial Equity Coalition (REC), a collaborative of 14 Black, Indigenous, and Community of Color partner nonprofits that have organized themselves around their common vision of addressing the lack of equity support services in the education system. L&L has created a coordinated system of youth services focused on positive cultural identity development, which refers to learning about one's racial/ethnic heritage, history, language use, cultural customs, and traditions.

L&L is funded by the Puget Sound Taxpayer Accountability Account (PSTAA) and United Way of King County. This report is a snapshot of the first year of the initiative and includes quotes from narrative reports shared by REC. Each REC organization contributes to one or more of the outcomes shared here.

For questions on this report, please contact
DCHSData@KingCounty.gov.

Meet the Racial Equity Coalition



POWERFUL VOICES



L&L has helped young people develop a positive cultural identity.

"During the summer of 2021, we created and hosted a new and exciting 9-week long summer program called Black Girls Create for Black and African identifying girls. This program was an opportunity for young people to tap into their creative side... while reflecting on topics such as racism, sexism, (un)healthy relationships and how these show up in the daily lives of Black girls. The program was led through positive adult support, creative activities, and partnerships with community leaders."

– **Powerful Voices**



Photo courtesy of Education with Purpose Foundation for Pacific Islanders

"During our [Brown Roots of Mahal] program, we took time to listen to participating youth and engage with them through seeking feedback on their interests and providing space to explore, express, and share their cultural and personal identities with us and the community around them. "

– **Filipino Community of Seattle**

99% of participants reported having developed a positive cultural identity.

Click [here](#) to listen to "The Grey Area," a podcast created by girls of color through Powerful Voices.

L&L helps young people build social emotional skills.

"We understand that during this time of great challenge, our programs have to be accessible, flexible, relationship-centered, and fun for youth to participate. We also understand that the mental and physical health of our student population must be prioritized in order for students to successfully participate in our programs, and during this time of ongoing challenge we brought in mental health support for the youth. We partnered with Puentes to bring in a mental health therapist to work with youth on supporting positive coping skills to deal with remote school and the pandemic causing depression and anxiety and isolation."

– Para Los Niños

"[Weekly] sessions have allowed us to create a safe space for brown boys and girls to appreciate themselves and to support each other, especially during these uncertain times."

– Education with Purpose Foundation for Pacific Islanders

85% of participants built social emotional skills through organized activities.



Photo courtesy of Powerful Voices

Young people in L&L developed a sense of belonging to their community.

"Group mentoring is incorporated and designed within Wellness Mentoring Circles. The circles bring youth (mentees) [and] mentors together utilizing a structured curriculum facilitated by partner agency and stakeholder Seattle CARES Mentoring Movement. The circle concept meets a critical need for community building within the youth's school environment, family and communities."

– 4C Coalition



Photo courtesy of 4C Coalition

92% of participants reported that they developed a sense of belonging to their school and/or community.

"We are able to provide [young people]... a sense of belonging and give them a chance to involve in the community by giving them paid volunteer positions and also unpaid positions [that will] cover community service requirement for high school graduation."

– Falis Community Services

"We were able to administer a \$1,500 scholarship to one of our youth, who is hearing impaired. RES has boosted her connections in the community and ultimately her confidence for life. She will be attending Gallaudet University in Washington D.C., a university specifically designed for hearing impaired students."

– Red Eagle Soaring

L&L has helped young people advocate for themselves and others.

"I've definitely become more outspoken and confident in youth organizing. I became more independent and got used to taking initiative more often."

– Youth participant in FEEST

"In the first session offered for 8 weeks of the program (held virtually) GEM was able to serve young people through a wholistic approach through support that was designed and directed for and by them.

Helping them identify and understanding who they are and how to care for themselves first and foremost was and still is critical."

– Glover Empower Mentoring

"Each school year we hire youth who devise and implement campaigns that engage peers and family members to create systems change in their schools according to the priorities determined by them and their peers. As they enact these campaigns, youth build their capacity not only to be effective leaders, but to be strong community organizers who can create impactful changes in their schools and communities that are truly youth led."

– FEEST

97% of participants developed leadership skills, shown through organizing and/or advocacy activities.

To hear more from youth in FEEST, click [here](#) to watch "I am a food justice leader."

Young people in L&L feel supported in navigating and disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

91% of participants reported that they feel supported by the community in navigating and disrupting the school-to-prison pipeline.

"Key to our intervention is staff that reflects the population we serve; thus, our work is led by Latinx identifying staff, all who are first generation scholars and understand firsthand the barriers youth of color face in school. [T]he culturally competent supports we offer have lasting impacts that guide youth away from the school to prison pipeline."

– El Centro de la Raza

"Our team provided professional development for our Highline School District Crisis Support team. These trainings focused on building awareness and improving our ability to support students and families who have been impacted by community violence. The crisis support team consists of school social workers, counselors, nurses, and other staff charged with supporting students, families, and staff during and after a crisis event. These trainings brought a cultural lens to the work so that the team can respond effectively to crisis and instances of community violence through a decolonized lens rooted in anti-racist practices."

– Community Passageways

"One youth had received some high school credits while in JRA – where he was at during the majority of his adolescence, but not enough credits to get his diploma. We began working with him two years ago when he was facing 5–7 years, and because of his great work in the community, he was given a deferred disposition and able to remain in the community. He spoke at many rallies about criminal legal system reform, has been on statewide work groups, and participated in restorative justice courses, and has since gotten his own housing and a job. We've been supporting him to get his GED which included matching him with a volunteer tutor, working to obtain his ID so he could register and take his GED test, and paying for his testing. He is now being offered full tuition at Central Washington University."

– Community Passageways



L&L's impact extends beyond its youth participants.

REC organizations hire and invest in staff from the communities they serve.

"While some community organizations have had to lay off staff during the pandemic or further stretch staff involved with direct services, PSTAA funding has made it possible for us to instead maintain the original capacity of our direct service staff. Given that we hire from the communities we serve and because the COVID pandemic has affected BIPOC communities the hardest, being able to increase the capacity of our staff has also increased our ability to examine systemic oppression within our organization... which would not be possible on a .5 FTE alone."

– All Girl Everything Ultimate Program



Photo courtesy of Community Passageways

"We have used this time to review our own operations to consider how we are tending to our own staff. To this end, we've provided staff with a cost-of-living adjustment in order to respond to the rapidly shifting economy in Seattle."

– Asian Counseling and Referral Services

REC provides basic need assistance to families in their communities.

"Our Pacific Islander communities have been overwhelmingly impacted by COVID-19 and the focus on basic needs were much more prioritized than our usual mission. We strongly believe that the help we provided to our youth and their families while closing out their 2020-2021 school year were much more focused on survival and housing in order to support their desires to return to academic achievement and performance. As we move into the end of the summer months, we are seeing more parents/guardians reach back to us with gratitude that we have helped them to stay afloat in order to enable them to prepare their children for school related tasks and focus."

**– Education with Purpose
Foundation for Pacific Islanders**



Photo courtesy of FEEST

"We assisted 50 [Afghan] families in receiving resettlement kits, school supplies, household goods, children's items... We purchased various household items and basic needs, assembled the kits, and distributed to families in resettlement. Many of these families did not have any family connections to the U.S. so we stepped in to assist with the essential resources to adjust."

**– Open Doors for Multicultural
Families**

REC develops a model for systems change that can be replicated elsewhere.

"REC's use of a participatory funding framework and trustworthy relationships amongst REC members allowed for a coordinated and rapid response moving resources where needed most. REC members pivoted to things they had never done previously, such as food and rental assistance, to help families in need during the pandemic. Organizations that did not have the ability to provide food or rental assistance were able to turn to other REC organizations to assist their communities, creating a coordinated system of referral and resource sharing."

- United Way of King County

"REC completed a manuscript ['Racial Equity Coalition: Harnessing the Power of Community for Love and Liberation'] to be submitted to a peer reviewed journal that highlights funder challenges and recommendations. The paper will be used for the basis of continued advocacy calling for changes in philanthropy that will have a cascading effect in building supportive funding into this field for long term engagement in BIPOC centered and led efforts to closing the opportunity gap."

- United Way of King County

Read REC's 2021
participatory
research report
[here](#).