Youth who have suffered trauma can become our future leaders
Dear Friends,

As we reflect on UCAN’s first full year of operation at our Drost Harding Campus in North Lawndale, a quote from Nelson Mandela comes to mind: “People respond in accordance to how you relate to them. If you approach them on the basis of violence, that’s how they’ll react. But if you say, ‘We want peace, we want stability,’ we can then do a lot of things that will contribute towards the progress of our society.”

UCAN came to North Lawndale with a clear approach of peace and stable collaboration. During this past year, we’ve been heartened at how quickly those we serve embraced our new home and how often the neighborhood as a whole looks to us as a resource. As a young man in one of our Violence Intervention and Prevention Services stated, “UCAN is different.” And he’s right!

We can pore over statistics and percentages, but nothing is more compelling than seeing the smiling faces of young people walking through our hallways each day. The young man mentioned above and others are our hope for the future and inspire us each and every day. We invite you to come out for a visit so that you can be a part of this excitement and bear witness to the palpable impact your contributions are making on the lives we touch.

Together, as we continue forward in our mission, there are three key tenets that will become our mantra:

• The desire to ensure that the Holistic and Lifelong Relationship forged as youth enter care becomes an unbreakable bond, traveling with them as they embark on their own path to adulthood.

• The passion to grow our Deep and Lasting Impact on the North Lawndale community where we are trusted neighbors, working together to do what is right for the community’s growth and development.

• The interest in building and maintaining a Strong and Sustainable UCAN that continues to attract quality resources for our human, financial and technological needs.

Our plans are ambitious, but well within reach. We are grateful to have the best staff and board members by our side as we continue this journey, and loyal supporters like you to help us grow. We invite you to reflect on these three tenets and consider visiting our campus to witness how we are turning them into a reality. You are part of the UCAN family and we want to show you our success.

Sincerely,

Zack Schrantz
President/CEO

Markell Bridges
Governing Board Chair
PROGRAMMING THAT
UCAN works with youth in care of the state’s child welfare system and those transferring out of care to help them live independently. We also work with schools and in the community to provide youth with an array of supportive services that guide them in making smart decisions and provide them with tools for future success. We work with families of these children to enhance the full spectrum of support.

UCAN provides a continuum of care that enables youth to seamlessly move from one program to another as their needs change, sparing them the transitions and gaps caused by moves through multiple agencies. All of our programs are united by a common clinical philosophy, ensuring that our approach to healing is cohesive and consistent.

Below is a list of UCAN’s areas of service:

**HEALING TRAUMA**
UCAN provides a core of counseling services and staff support for families suffering separation, abuse and neglect. The nature, extent and impact of trauma are unique to each youth we serve.

**BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES**
UCAN provides services and resources for foster care, teen parenting and family education. The goal is always to keep families together when possible and provide all parties with a high level of guidance during their difficult transitions.

**EDUCATING & EMPOWERING YOUTH**
UCAN designs programs to assist youth in any aspect of their education, including traditional schooling, leadership training, career readiness and self-sufficiency. We empower our youth by assisting them in identifying and building on their strengths.

**PREVENTING VIOLENCE**
UCAN programs empower young people to create life-changing opportunities that ensure safer futures. We work with schools and other community partnerships to build resilience, influence behavior and reinforce learning opportunities for avoiding the pitfalls of violence.

Below is a list of our overarching programs at UCAN. Each has several departments that offer more specific services to the youth and families we serve.

- Alumni Services Program
- Counseling and Youth Development Services
- Diermeier Future Leaders Now Program
- Educational Support Program
- FamilyWorks Program
- Foster Care Program
- High-Risk Infant Program
- Independent Living Arrangements
- Life Skills and Financial Literacy
- Phenomenal Woman Program
- Project Visible Man Program
- Teen Parenting Service Network
- Therapeutic Day Schools (Grand and South)
- Therapeutic Residential Services
- Transitional Teen Services
- Violence Intervention and Prevention Services
- Workforce Development Program
Grief is a path no one should have to walk alone, and everyone’s path is different.

Unfortunately, for youth growing up in Chicago’s high-risk communities, it’s a path often all too familiar.

“Sophomore year, my father passed away,” explains Deja Burrell, a senior at Collins Academy in North Lawndale. “He got shot. He was outside, just hanging out with some friends. He wasn’t in a gang. When I was grieving, I just shut down. I stopped doing stuff. I quit doing my sports, my grades dropped.”

Through UCAN’s Counseling and Youth Development Services [CYDS] Schools Program, a service that works to bridge the gap between schools and UCAN, Deja was introduced to Darryl Clayton, a UCAN CYDS therapist. “Every time I talked to my counselor, he made me feel better. That’s why I was glad to have a counselor. If I didn’t, I probably would have went down the wrong path.”

Hoping to expand Deja’s support system, Clayton introduced her to Adreiona Fox, a development coach with UCAN’s Violence Intervention and Prevention Services [VIPS].

Deja began attending Adreiona’s group, where she met and interacted with peers who shared similar experiences. “I ended up joining it and kept going and going, and started loving it. Now, we are all just so close. We all come together and talk about stuff. Everything we do is positive. We go to White Sox games, Bears games, go camping and stuff.”

Deja knew she could depend on Adreiona and other development coaches from VIPS. Day or night, they were only a phone call away. “If I needed someone to talk to, they were there,” she explains. “They’ve been with me the whole way through.”

Though grief is a shadow not easily shaken, after two years with UCAN, Deja feels that she’s finally be able to accept her father’s death. “I’ve realized it’s not my fault,” she says. “I don’t have to say, ‘It should have been me.’ I don’t have to ask why. I know it’s hard to accept, but I finally was able to accept it.”

Adreiona also encouraged Deja to join Chicago Ideas Week’s youth program where she became a youth ambassador. There, Deja began public speaking, a skill she quickly learned she had an affinity for. “The director had me speak on stage in front of everybody,” she recalls. “I recently spoke at this amazing event [celebrating] three black women.”

Deja is confident about her future. “I want to go to college to study zoology,” she smiles. “I want to be around animals. The love that I have for animals won’t change.”

She plans to join UCAN’s Alumni Services Program and continue a lifelong relationship with UCAN. “I will always keep in touch with them,” she says of her relationship with Adreiona and the other youth development coaches in VIPS. “This is home.”

“Every time I talked to my counselor, he made me feel better. That’s why I was glad to have a counselor. If I didn’t, I probably would have went down the wrong path.”
On occasion, the backstories of UCAN youth sound similar to those of our foster parents and mentors who support them. And sometimes, there are foster parents like Michelle and Matthew Thill.

“It seems like a lot of foster parents we’ve met either experienced [trauma] or have been touched by it in the past,” says Michelle. “Our story is a little distinct in that we were sheltered from that whole world, but then it slowly became a passion or calling.”

Michelle and Matthew became friends at age 10, growing up in the western suburbs of Chicago. They belong to a small, tight-knit community and attend Wellspring Christian Church. A large portion of Wellspring’s charitable commitments focus on orphans, and as Michelle and Matthew’s relationship deepened through high school and college, so did their interest in giving back to those in need.

After they were married in 2005, Michelle began working for Joni and Friends, a non-profit that offers support and retreats for families affected by disability. At one of the retreats, Michelle was introduced to a foster parent from UCAN who was temporarily caring for then 2-year-old Trevor.* His foster mother explained that it was clear he was not going to be able to return to his birth parents, but that she was not going to be able to keep him in her care for much longer.

Michelle realized that she and Matthew could offer Trevor stability, particularly because he had already experienced so much uncertainty in a few short years.

“What’s great about UCAN is they surround you with 100% support and are always there to answer your questions.”

“I’m never sure how to explain it to people, but in that moment I could just tell Trevor was going to be part of our story,” Michelle says.

The Thills had given little thought to starting a family but always talked about adopting one day. Matthew, who works two jobs in construction and as a firefighter, knew that Michelle would have to accept a large amount of daily responsibility during this life-changing undertaking.

“This was not the type of thing where we could go halfway in. But after some soul searching, we decided it felt right and would give it our all,” Matthew explains.

Michael Ann Wiley, a licensing supervisor at UCAN, conducted the training Parent Resources for Information, Development, and Education (PRIDE) to get the Thills formally licensed as foster parents. Since then, the Thills attribute much of their success with Trevor to the learning process and tools offered through UCAN’s services.

Michelle recalls, “I think with us both coming from stable families we thought all kids just need a little nurturing and structure. Then, very quickly, we realized there is so much more to it than that.”

The Thills noted that the good times have far outweighed the difficult ones in the three years they’ve cared for Trevor, but that the key to any foster parents’ success is a solid support system.

“The biggest thing to remember once you commit to fostering is to throw almost everything you’ve learned about parenting away because working with traumatized youth takes a different set of skills. What’s great about UCAN is they surround you with 100% support and are always there to answer your questions,” Matthew says.

Michelle notes, “Sometimes it is easy to become isolated. You are so focused on your child’s needs that you forget to take care of yourself. I encourage new foster parents to practice self-care because you can easily get burned out.”

The Thills are hoping to officially adopt Trevor soon. They will continue to attend UCAN’s trainings and services and we will continue to tell their inspiring story.

*Name changed to protect identity.
“Joining UCAN has been one of the best decisions I could have ever made because UCAN helped me find a purpose in my life.”
— Leo R. Boler IV, Project Visible Man

“What I took mostly from UCAN is to be an inspiration and to empower the youth. The only thing I want to do is inspire, inspire, inspire.”
— Danielle Hamilton, Foster Care

“As a result of being a part of UCAN, I have grown dramatically, and developed skills such as perseverance, flexibility, time management and goal setting.”
— Terrance Lindsey, Project Visible Man

“I had been blaming myself and everyone around me for my life circumstances. But I came to realize that I could only make it better by finishing school and continuing my education further.”
— Dionjana Owens, Transitional Teen Services

“I just love UCAN; they gave me guidance. They showed me how to put all my energy into something positive. They’re at all my games, no matter how far they are. They support me. We talk. It’s like a big old family.”
— Jarvis Robinson, Violence Intervention and Prevention Services
In fiscal year 2016-2017, 13,105 people were served and impacted by UCAN—roughly 1,500 more than the previous year. 1,399 youth and adults received mental health services from UCAN. 519 youth received mentoring services from UCAN.

Program Spotlight: Workforce Development

- Placed an additional 284 youth and adults in year-round employment
- 119 additional youth successfully completed year-round work-based learning
- 90-day retention rate is 81% versus the national average, which is below 50%
- 94% feel confident they can succeed in keeping a job
- 94% feel UCAN has given them the opportunity to improve their future

95% of youth feel that UCAN respects their values and their culture.

94% of participants stated that UCAN gave them the opportunity to improve their future.

94% stated that UCAN helped them learn and grow.

91% of participants stated that UCAN helped them to develop leadership skills.

90% would refer a family member or friend for UCAN services.
Brion Williams didn’t come to UCAN on his own accord. It was his mother’s idea.

When she began working in UCAN’s finance department three years ago, Brion was a freshman, and though he wasn’t a bad student, he was frequently kicked out of class for disruption.

It was a common pattern dating back to elementary school, but by eighth grade it was affecting his grades. “That year was a little tough. I kept getting put out of class. I was on the brink of failing math, my favorite class,” he confesses.

During the winter of his freshman year, Brion was expelled from high school for misconduct. He found himself at Obudsman, a Chicago alternative high school, which, unbeknownst to him, did not have a basketball team.

“I just went to school and went home. I still wasn’t really doing anything except practicing basketball. That’s the only thing that helped me keep my composure, like being who I am,” he recalls.

While at Obudsman, Brion joined UCAN’s Project Visible Man (PVM), a male mentoring group. “I wasn’t that interactive with PVM at first,” he admits. But by his sophomore year, after he transferred to DRW College Prep, he began spending more time with PVM. “After I got comfortable, I couldn’t stop talking.”

Since then, Brion has participated in numerous UCAN events and programs. Last summer he completed the Diermeier Future Leaders Now (DFLN) program, which teaches leadership skills, and then joined UCAN’s Youth Advisory Board.

“We are like the youth version of the decision makers,” he says of the board. “They run everything through us to get it from a kid’s perspective. Because that’s UCAN: they want to be more about the kids than anything. I think that’s important. It’s a two-sided thing, when it comes to ideas and I feel like we bring a lot of good ideas to the table.”

Brion is often featured on speaking panels, and has been on the Youth Peace Summit Counsel for the past three years.

“Jason put me in a leadership role at UCAN,” he says of his mentor, Jason Daniels, who leads PVM. “I think that’s why I really like UCAN as a whole, because it changed my life. It brought me into new ideas. If I didn’t have UCAN, I would probably still be the kid that was like … I just didn’t really care about a lot of things. UCAN made me care about a lot of things. It presented me with a lot of opportunities. It made me want to be an entrepreneur. I had never seen myself in college or being something like that, but after I met Jason, Claude [Robinson], Fred [Long] and Zack [Schrantz], they changed my experience; they made me want to be something. They made me see the better side of life. They inspired me to want to do what I want to do. They inspired me to speak about stuff, like my community and the violence and peace and speak about it more. I feel like I’m an activist now and pushing stuff for my society.”

Brion now is a junior at DRW College Prep, playing basketball and continuing his UCAN involvement.

“I feel like I have a family here [at UCAN]. I feel like the people here want to see me successful. I can say my hard work with UCAN has been paying off.”

“UCAN made me care about a lot of things. It presented me with a lot of opportunities. It made me want to be an entrepreneur.”
It takes a village to raise a child. Or at least a reliable support system, which Bryanna Dellas knew she would need to give her child the best life possible.

“I ended up getting pregnant my last year of high school,” she explains. Though she was able to graduate on time, she was not sure where to go next. How would she work and raise a child? How would she continue her education?

Bryanna was separated from her family and placed into the foster care system when she was 13. She was not used to being apart from her 12 siblings whom she helped raise. “It was hard to adjust to that new lifestyle and living with new people, people I didn’t know, in a stranger’s house,” she recalls.

Though she had her share of good and bad times as a youth in care, she didn’t want that for her own child.

“My caseworker asked me if I wanted a parenting coach and I told her yes because I wanted to learn as much as I possibly could about parenting. They paired me with a parenting coach and an education coach at UCAN.”

Bryanna was six months pregnant when she met her parenting coach, Caitlin Quinlivan, a family development specialist from UCAN’s Teen Parenting Services Network. “[She] prepared me by giving me information about newborns and things that they go through: the baby stages, the crawling, rolling over and trying to talk, and how to cope with … if I get frustrated. She taught me coping skills on how to deal with being a parent because it can get frustrating at times, and she just wants to make sure you’re prepared and have an idea what to do when those times are upon you.”

Bryanna also attended a risk reduction class at UCAN where she was glad to have support after having no contact with her mother and limited contact with her father, who is incarcerated.

“It’s tough,” she confesses. “But you find a way to manage. Times are going to be hard, but you can’t give up because you have too much to lose.”

She knew it wasn’t going to be easy to be a single mother but didn’t let that fear stop her. Bryanna is currently studying at South Suburban College to become a radiology technician, and continues to meet with her TPSN parenting coach. “He [my son] is the reason I matured and why I’m pursuing going to school.

“Everybody needs help and guidance,” she says. “Having UCAN as someone in your corner can really open up your eyes to some things that you didn’t know because they helped me better myself as a parent and prepare myself for things I probably wouldn’t have been prepared for if I didn’t have them.”
EDUCATING & EMPOWERING YOUTH
In 2008, UCAN’s Governing Board made a decision to pursue an ambitious plan to move the organization’s outdated administrative offices and therapeutic youth home on Chicago’s Northwest Side closer to the youth and families in the communities we serve. With support from public and private donors, corporations, small businesses, foundations, elected officials, government agencies and UCAN employees, the multi-year Capital Campaign raised an impressive $49.2 million for the campus and new community-based programs that have enabled us to expand our services six-fold for North Lawndale residents.

With construction complete, UCAN now is an accessible partner and pillar in North Lawndale through our award-winning Drost Harding Campus. As the community’s sixth-largest employer, the campus makes us a proud, long-term investor in North Lawndale.

The numbers from our Capital Campaign, minority supplier spending and community outreach tell an impressive, impactful story.

More than 300 full- and part-time employees work at the Drost Harding campus, including more than 110 of whom live in North Lawndale and on the greater West Side.

UCAN spent more than $22 million with over 60 minority- and women-owned businesses, including eight North Lawndale businesses. We surpassed our ambitious goal to spend 50% of the campus construction costs with MBEs and WBEs by 10% as part of UCAN’s comprehensive diversity and inclusion initiative.

59 local residents were hired for the campus project exceeding our goal of 46 for community hires.

226 UCAN employees pledged $237,221 to the Capital Campaign in a remarkable show of support and confidence in our vision.
UCAN committed to spend $200,000 with community businesses before and after the campus opened.

More than 700 youth and families throughout North Lawndale are supported by our expanded services and programs in youth leadership, violence intervention and prevention, clinical and counseling services, mentoring, family support services, and workforce development.

Over 1,000 youth and adults participate in sports and recreation programming that UCAN hosts annually, as well as a growing number of community events for residents of all ages.

Named Project of the Year by the Federation of Women Contractors, the Drost Harding campus has earned awards from Neighborhood Housing Services and the Chicago Builders Congress.
“UCAN gives us a safe place to go so we aren’t out on the streets where it’s not safe.” — Dimetriana Chambers, Violence Intervention and Prevention Services, North Lawndale resident and student

761 youth and families were directly served in North Lawndale—a 10% increase over the previous year.

74 UCAN employees are North Lawndale residents.

68 North Lawndale residents from our Workforce Development programs were placed in year-round employment.

67 youth from North Lawndale successfully completed year-round work based learning.

31% increase in residents impacted in North Lawndale in the last year—from 3,046 residents to 3,978 residents.

30% of those served and impacted by UCAN programs live in North Lawndale.

“I really enjoy working with my mentor and we take fun trips with UCAN.” — Danyel Smith, Violence Intervention and Prevention Services, North Lawndale resident and student

UCAN’S COMMITMENT
In the early 1860’s, as men left to serve in the Civil War, the members of St. Pauls United Church of Christ made a promise to care for the children of fallen soldiers. This promise was the spark to ignite the idea of UCAN.

In 1867, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Gottfried Uhlich announced the donation of a large piece of property that would perpetually endow our first youth home that housed 30 children.

In 1872, a home was built at Burling and Center streets, which housed our youth for the next 56 years.

In 1924, a campaign was started for funds to build a new home. Mr. and Mrs. Carl Buehler generously donated 10 large city lots in the 3700 block of North California and ground was broken in 1927.

With the establishment of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services in 1965, Uhlich Children Home’s enrollment became almost completely that of youth in care.

Tom Vanden Berk takes over as CEO of UCAN and has a new vision for the organization. Through his leadership, the organization was put on a path for tremendous growth from a small orphanage to an organization serving the varying and growing needs of youth and families in Chicago.

In 2002, Uhlich Children’s Home changed its name to Uhlich Children’s Advantage Network (UCAN) to reflect the wide variety of services provided, and in 2004, UCAN merged with FamilyCare of Illinois, another agency with a rich history.

TODAY, we are officially known as UCAN, and are fully operational at our new headquarters in North Lawndale where we continue to meet the critical needs of at-risk youth and families. As we approach our 150th anniversary, we aim to celebrate and nurture our rich and vibrant history with the city of Chicago.
FISCAL YEAR 2017

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
As of June 30, 2017

Total Assets $63,390,940
Total Liabilities $23,246,141

TOTAL NET ASSETS $40,144,799
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS $63,390,940

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017

Revenue
Program $35,340,121
Fundraising $2,983,532
Trust $594,295
Investment $80,637

Total Revenue $38,998,585

Expense
Program ($33,877,413)
Fundraising, Support, Management & General ($5,284,256)

Total Expense ($39,161,669)

Net Operations ($163,084)

Gain on Sale of Properties $1,348,246
Gain on Investments & Trusts $1,528,222
North Lawndale Campus ($663,409)
Pension Plan Adjustment ($80,648)

Current Year Change in Net Assets $1,969,327

Net Assets at Beginning of Year $38,175,472

Net Assets at End of Year $40,144,799

Financials reflect UCAN Operations only. Title Holding Company information not included.
FISCAL YEAR 2017 DONORS

The following gifts were generously made during our 2017 fiscal year. (Totals reflect and include overall pledges from our Capital Campaign.)

$500,000 +
Diermeier Family Foundation
George and Beth Drost
Richard and Diana Fleming
Metropolitan Family Services
Steans Family Foundation

$100,000 +
BMO Harris Bank
John and Rita Canning
Chicago Community Trust
Heartland Alliance
Robert R. McCormick Foundation

$50,000 +
Blue Cross Blue Shield of Illinois
Boeing Company
First Nonprofit Insurance Company
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Zack and Lisa Schrantz
Jim and Diana Skogsergh

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Alper Services LLC
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Amelia B. Hess - Trust
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The Links, Incorporated - Chicago Chapter
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Alliance Pension Consultants, LLC
Aon Foundation
Axion RMS Employee Benefits
Colleen and Ryan Bradley
Markell Bridges
Byline Bank
David and Jane Casper
CSX
DePaul University
Julie and Jeffrey Diermeier
Dr. Scholl Foundation
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund
Grace Bersted Foundation
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Kevin B. Hynes
Beth Havens
Michael and Rosalind Keiser
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Peter and Karen Maitland
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Northwestern Memorial Healthcare
Pricer Inc.
Brian Ripp
Rothschild Investment Corp.
RSM US LLP
E. Scott and Nancy Santi
Vanita and Charles Stevenson
U.S. Cellular
Thomas and Kathryn Vanden Berk

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American Chartered Bank
Amtrak
Laura Angelucci
Applegate & Thorne-Thomsen
Barbara Arsenault
Janice and Richard Bail
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Kelly Engels
Lisa Fang
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Eileen Felson
Ashley Fetters
David Fisher
Benjamin Fialkty
Mary Foster-Carrer
Lorne and Marcia Frank
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Joseph and Maria Friedman
Lora Gelbort
Robert and Lourdes Gonzalez
Gale Gottlieb
Emily Greco
Thomas Greco
Phyllis Grinon
Philip and Katherine Groth
Lynn Gryll
Guild of the Congregational Church of Jefferson Park
Charles and Lynne Gunn
Jennifer Gunning
Salvador Gutierrez
Brian Hafner
Michael Halberstam
Amy Hand
Margaret Hanley
Nancy and Sean Hefferman
Jennifer Heiney
Jeffrey and Carol Heisler
David and Mary Alice Heins
Thomas and Colleen Henry
Corinne and Brendan Henry
Scott Hibbard and Tara Magner
Rodney and Julie Higginbotham
Lina F. Hiklo
John Hogan
Steve Hoke
Margaret Holst
Holy Family Ministries
Paddy Homan
Kirsten Hull
Toni Hunter
Melinda Hutchinson
Jonas and Georgia Ichen
Erin Inman
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James Javoric
Carl Jenkins
Krisann Jennings
Annie Johnson
Loren Johnson
Chantell Johnson
Nashaua Johnson-Lenoir
Barbara Kaiser
Cassie Kim
Blake and Kelly Kirkman
Dennis Knatz
Mary E. Konopacki
Mary C. Kotovski
Ann Kuhlman
Mark and Paula Laboe
Rick Lacher
Ted Lachus
Toni Larson
Raymond Latimore
Betty Latson
Todd and Melanie Lavigne
Brigitte Lenz
Kevin Lewis
Shalanda Lobban
Mark LoSchiaovo
Wendy Love
Cosmin Lucaci
Robert and Gail Luckman
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Lenore McCarthy
Debora McDonald
Christopher and Lindy McGuire
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Galen and Robert Minett
Robert Mintz
Susan Missner
Tara Molinero
Geraldine Moore
Leslie Morse-Dudley
Chrys a Moyer
Robert and Carol Mucha
Maryrose T. Murphy
Frank and Suzanne Mynard
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Elizabeth Nichols
Alexandra Nikitas
Daniel J. Obinger
Stacy O’Connell
Hilary Odom
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