



**ACE** AlaQuest  
Collaborative  
For Education

# Annual Report 2020-2021



[www.acealabama.org](http://www.acealabama.org)



## A Letter from our Operations Director



Hello friends,

As a new member of the ACE team, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself.

For as long as I can remember, I have been passionate about building equitable communities, deciding early on to channel my desire for long-term, positive change into working with non-profits. I have had the great fortune to work with and learn from many incredible individuals throughout my career. Still, I was staggered by the uniquely inspiring and deeply authentic

ACE team when I first joined as a contracted Marketing and Public Relations Specialist last fall before becoming Operations Director earlier this year.

The last year and a half has been incredibly challenging for communities everywhere. I am humbled to step into a team of staff and volunteers with genuine compassion and the commitment to ensure ACE's many programs and supports to social, emotional, and mental health remained accessible at every turn. I find ACE to be a true collaborative and highly attuned to those needing extra support in the midst of stress and uncertainty.

As a parent to three children, a kindergartener and twin preschoolers, I am personally invested in seeing Social and Emotional Learning become an integral part of Alabama's education system. Seeing the consistent growth in the engagement of SEL programming and the way you, our partners, have enthusiastically embraced and bolstered the addition of three legacy social justice programs to ACE this year gives me immense hope for the future of all our children.

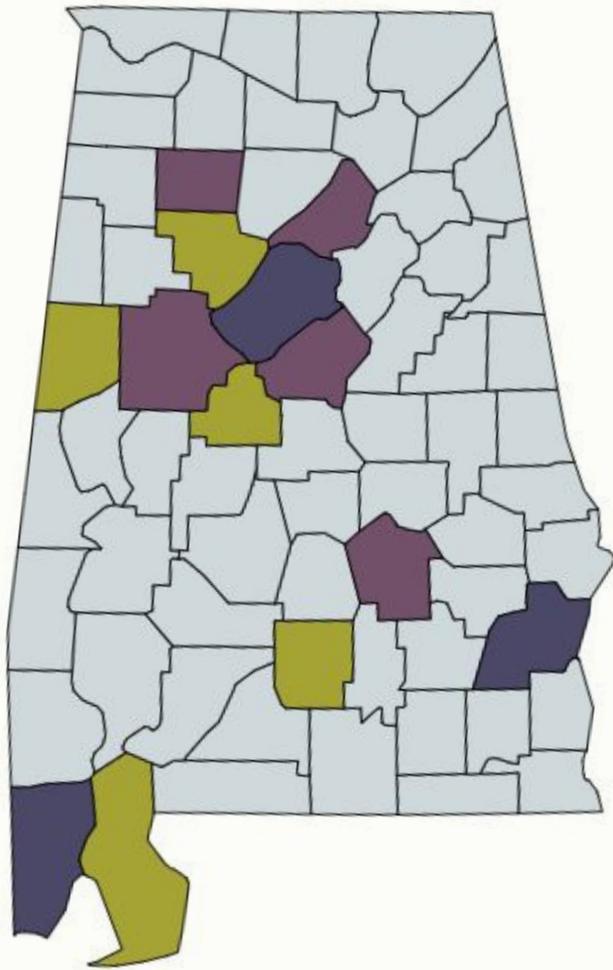
I look forward to getting to know each of you—our partners, volunteers, donors, and neighbors. From the entire ACE team, thank you for your continued support. We look forward to learning your stories and continuing to share ours with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shaina Berry". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Shaina Berry  
Operations Director

# 2020-2021 Program Year Impact



**47**

teens served through social justice programming

**146**

individuals served by community outreach

**177**

educators served through Professional Development

**278**

educators served by in-school programming

**3,161**

students served by in-school programming



**3,817**

individuals engaged w/ ACE in 2020-21

\*10,067 individuals since 2015



**7025**

hours of volunteer service in 2020-21

\*15,175 hours since 2015

**\$200,493.50**

estimated value was added to ACE through volunteer service hours alone during 2020-21

"It taught us how to evaluate and consider how our students are enduring so much outside of the time we see them. For some of them, school work is the last of their worries. They are just trying to make it through another day despite the trauma that they live with outside of school."

*-Professional Development, I3 Academy*



# New Social Justice Programs

During the last program year, ACE added three legacy social justice programs to our organization: Anytown Alabama, PEACE Birmingham, and Heritage Panel.

With decades of history in Birmingham, these programs provide opportunities for students to better understand diversity and social justice complexities that exist in their communities and throughout the world. Each program is uniquely designed to build student proficiency in the five core competencies of Social and Emotional Learning while empowering them to serve as leaders in building a more inclusive and just society.

Each unique program emphasizes healing, social-emotional well-being, interpersonal relationships and conflict management, emotional regulation, confidence building, decision making, accountability, and goal setting. Students in these programs are empowered to take their learnings from Social Justice programming and activate their positions within systems of inequity to take action in building a more inclusive society.



Heritage Panel is a fun, yet intensive, two-day training for area middle and high schools during which a diverse group of 25 to 30 students and 2 to 5 teachers or administrators make a commitment to discourage bullying, harassment, and discrimination at their school.



PEACE (People Engaged in A Cultural Exchange) Birmingham is a monthly dialogue group for Birmingham Area teens from different cultures and faiths with the goal to create doors through which we can enter each other's communities to nurture and sustain a Birmingham that values and welcomes people of different identities. Since its founding in 1996, nearly 1,000 youth have participated in PEACE Birmingham.

In honor of its 25th Anniversary, the PEACE Birmingham Advisory Committee is raising \$25,000 for 25 years by December 31st. Already, we have raised \$9,000 towards our goal. The committee pledged an additional \$8,500 to match any gifts that come in between now and year end. Donations fund supplies, trips, and ensuring access for teenagers to PEACE Birmingham's safe, welcoming, open environment where they can develop leadership skills that last a lifetime.

Donate to PEACE Bham



[qrco.de/Give2PEACE](https://qrco.de/Give2PEACE)

# Anytown Alabama 2021



Anytown Alabama is a residential social justice and leadership experience designed to give students in grades 9 through 11 an intensive and interactive learning experience. Teens discuss social justice issues and learn leadership skills during the weeklong summit

For 30 years Anytown Alabama has empowered student delegates as leaders in the community. Each year, delegates spend the week in a refreshingly open and supportive environment sharing their cultures and beliefs and developing leadership skills and new perspectives.

This past June, ACE hosted Anytown Alabama for the first time with a 4-day hybrid camp. Delegates met over 2 virtual days and 2 in-person days. Forty-three delegates represented nineteen schools across Alabama.

**Anytown Alabama is made possible by partnership with NCCJ Alabama.**

**Thank you to the Jewish Community Relations Council Community Impact Microgrant Initiative for helping fund Anytown Alabama 2021!**



"I can speak out and lead discussions. I can facilitate and allow others to feel more comfortable to speak. I'm proud of myself for being so outspoken."

-Anytown Alabama 2021 Delegate

# Who we are



**AlaQuest Collaborative for Education (ACE)** envisions a self-sustainable culture of peace, productivity, and prosperity in the schools and communities where we interact.

**Our mission** is to make Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) an integral part of education in Alabama.

## Why SEL?

Research shows that social and emotional skills are keys to success in life and violence reduction. Investing in SEL leads to improved academic performance, college and career readiness, better mental health, and overall desirable life outcomes. Our programs encourage safe, positive environments in schools, families, and communities while building proficiency in the vital skills required to successfully navigate the social and emotional realities of everyday life.



## ACE Programs

**LIFE SKILLS  
EDUCATION**



**Social Justice  
Programs**



[qrco.de/  
ProgramGuide](http://qrco.de/ProgramGuide)

"I shouldn't stay silent out of fear. I've confirmed in myself that I know what to say, I know how to do things, and I should be confident in my abilities. Maybe sometimes people have different or more serious experiences to tell, but I can help encourage them to say it. I am not less than anyone else, and I'm not average."

*-Anytown 2021 Delegate*

"I liked learning about mindfulness during our ACE lessons this year. I learned to calm down when I'm mad."

*-Kindergarten Student,  
Life skills Education*

"I learned not to judge others, and to find your strengths and weaknesses and use them to your ability!"

*-8th Grade Student,  
Life skills Education*

# Join us!



## Why I Give: Bobbie Siegal

ACE is an organization that is close to my heart. I have seen, first hand, the life changes that its programs have produced for so many young people who are being the change that they want to see in our world. As one of the founders of PEACE Birmingham 25 years ago, I am so glad that ACE has inherited PEACE Birmingham, Heritage Panel, and Anytown Alabama in order to continue these legacy programs and their important work.

My family and I have been long-time supporters for in-school Social and Emotional Learning for Alabama schools and for social justice. In fact, not only did I serve as an Advisor at eight Anytown Alabama sessions, my son, Brian, attended the very first Birmingham Camp Anytown in 1989. Among many other amazing activities that Brian has participated in and continues to do so as a result of his experience at the very first Anytown is his membership in the international organization The Council on Foreign Relations. Brian is one of the youngest members of that very important and prestigious organization.

I give to ACE because I have witnessed the powerful impact each of its programs has on young people and believe in its mission. It's why three generations of my own family, including my grandson, have engaged with Anytown and why I continue to support ACE's many programs as a volunteer and donor. I hope you will join me in supporting ACE so we can continue the important work of Social and Emotional learning and making a better world.

**Bobbie has partnered with ACE as a major donor on numerous projects this year giving generously to PEACE Birmingham, program staffing, and helping finance development initiatives. Bobbie is also incredibly engaged with ACE's programs, volunteering with Anytown Alabama, PEACE Birmingham, The PEACE Birmingham Advisory Committee, and Heritage Panel.**



## Welcome to the ACE team!

Rosa Delgado joined the ACE team full time as our Programs Manager earlier this year after serving with us through AmeriCorps. Rosa graduated from the University of Alabama at Birmingham with a Psychology degree in 2018 and is passionate about destigmatizing mental health, sharing the healing powers of art, and incorporating emotional intelligence within her community.

Rosa's favorite part of serving with ACE is bringing and sharing Social and Emotional Learning with the future leaders of the world (kids) and connecting with like-minded individuals with the passion to help our communities. Rosa is super creative, enjoys being outside, painting, and dancing to Latin music. We are grateful for the vibrancy and passion Rosa brings to our team!

## Learn More



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THANK YOU!!!



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