

Building our future by supporting our youth

# Our Community's Children

## Annual Report 2014

### Helping Young People Realize Their Full Potential

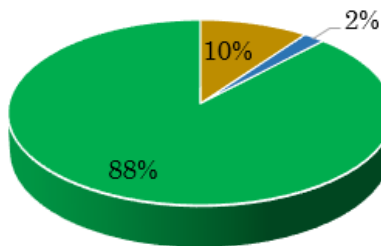
How do you realize your potential? What has defined you and your success? How do you overcome the odds and achieve what others do not think is possible? Every one of us faces these questions at some point in our lives. OCC is dedicated to ensuring that every child and young person in the city has the resources and opportunities to be successful in college, work and life. We are working to address the post-secondary and college degree attainment disparities that exist based on one's race, income, and gender. We are working to ensure young people get connected to community leaders and corporate employers, and know the skills required to be successful both in work and in college. We are aligning after-school efforts to produce the best outcomes for youth. We, with community partners, are working to make sure the community's narrative for ALL young people is one of high expectations for a bright future. This requires persistence, innovation and collaboration; many hands and minds. Thank you to our national partners, investors, and community organizations who have supported us every step of the way.



Lynn Heemstra, Executive Director

OCC Financial  
Total Budget - \$745,002\*

- City/Schools In-Kind
- Donors
- Grants



**49%** (\*\$371,000) of total budget is allocated back to community partners. All grants leverage 2-3 times their amounts in community contributions.

### OCC's Major Accomplishments of 2014

- 216 students have enrolled in the Leadership and Employment, Achievement and Direction (LEAD) Program. 87% are offered employment.
- We were host to a national gathering of system builders for afterschool programs with The Wallace Foundation, ten national partners and eight cities.
- Our Mayor's Youth Council organized KidSpeak® 2014, where 23 youth gave testimony about degree attainment to legislators, resulting in new programs and scholarships.
- We held a GradNation Summit with national partner, America's Promise Alliance, and the Grand Rapids Public Schools promoting graduation success among 500 high school seniors.
- Through the ELO Network, we piloted a ground-breaking Youth Community Data Center which aligns the after-school providers on shared outcomes for youth.



Thanks to our investors, Lumina Foundation, The Wallace Foundation, National League of Cities, W. K. Kellogg Foundation, Doug and Maria DeVos Foundation, Frey Foundation, America's Promise, Give Me 5 Contributors, Mayor's 100 Businesses, City of Grand Rapids and Grand Rapids Public Schools.

## Mayor's 100 Businesses and the LEAD Program give students the tools for future career success!

Announced at his State of the City Address, Mayor George Heartwell expanded the Mayor's 50 Campaign to the Mayor's 100 Campaign creating more employment opportunities for graduates of the LEAD Program. The LEAD Program has been successful in preparing young people, age 15-24, for professional employment throughout the Grand Rapids region. The LEAD Program guides students through professional development workshops, giving students the tools to be successful in the workplace.



***"Because of the LEAD Program, I believe I can do anything I set my mind to."***

Adriana Perez-Rittenhouse  
LEAD Participant

## GradNation Summit empowers students for their futures!

Nearly 500 Grand Rapids Public School seniors gathered for a day of learning and support at the GradNation Summit, organized by GRPS and the "To College, Through College Initiative" (TCTC). Businesses, higher education professional and community based partners engaged students in table discussions about their futures. Most students said they need mentors and internships/jobs from businesses. All seniors signed a pledge to attend college in Fall of 2016 — the next major step in realizing their potential.



'To College, Through College' continues to make strides towards college success. Since its inception in 2013, the TCTC Initiative of over 30 community partners is working to increase post-secondary success for all persons, particularly first generation college students and persons of color. The initial goal is to increase degree attainment for GRPS 2013 and 2014 graduates from 18% to 40% within six years or in other words, an additional 234 college degrees. TCTC continues to engage young people in the development of a collective, community-based approach that will help young people get to and through college and obtain their degree.

## Moving Forward: 2015 - 2016 Goals

1. Promote city, community and school partnerships to address the needs of youth
2. Create opportunities for youth to engage with city officials, influence policy, and have their voices heard
3. Develop the diploma-to-degree-to-career pipeline for young people
4. Expand the Mayor's 100 and LEAD Program to provide greater employment opportunities for youth
5. Increase post-secondary degree attainment by 31% in the next 10 years to keep up with demand. 'To College, Through College' Community Compact will continue to work to convene community partners and work towards increasing college degree attainment in our city

