

Building our future by supporting our youth

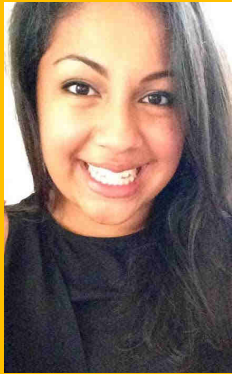
Our Community's Children

Annual Report 2015

Odilia M. Garcia

Graduate Administrative Associate, Office of Diversity and Inclusion, Ohio State University

"I can honestly say that Mayor's Youth Council provided me with essential leadership and networking skills ... it allowed me to gain confidence and showed me that diverse young people can make a positive difference in our communities."



- Odilia recently interned with a research consulting firm in Chicago on projects to better serve vulnerable communities.
- Odilia also serves as the president of the Multicultural Public Health Student Association at OSU as she pursues her Master's degree in Healthcare Administration.

Greg Ghering

Connection Desk Editor at WZZM 13

"Participating in the Mayor's Youth Council showed me concretely that our community becomes what we'd like it to be only with our involvement. It helped shape the sense of agency that has driven me to stay involved in my community ever since then."



- Double majoring in Broadcast/Cinematic Arts and Political Science, Greg earned his Bachelor's degree from Central Michigan University.
- Greg stays involved with community by volunteering with his church community, St. Alphonsus Parish and with Big Brothers, Big Sisters.

Growing Up

Our Community's Children is entering its 18th year. That is the amount of time a child takes to develop into "adulthood." OCC is no exception. We have acquired the wisdom of experience and the expertise of community work to produce better outcomes for children. As we look at the long-term impact of this office, we want to share with you the stories of young people who were among the first to go through the Mayor's Youth Council, the Grand Rapids Youth Commission, and the LEAD program. We think you'll agree that civic engagement and leadership at an early age makes a powerful impact!

Lynn Heemstra, Executive Director

Katie Van Zanen

Graduate Student at Boston College

"The Grand Rapids Youth Commission introduced me to asset-mapping and community development and pushed me to consider the challenges, needs, and capacities of young people of all backgrounds. That mindset influenced my approach to community development."

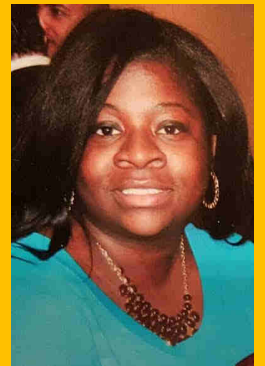


- Katie graduated from Calvin College with a degree in Writing and minors in Religion and Environmental Studies.
- Katie spent eleven months in Cairo, Egypt doing communications, grant-writing and donor relations work under the Episcopal/Anglican Diocese.

Ciara Colvin

City of Grand Rapids—City Clerk's Office

"The LEAD Program was more than I could have ever expected. It has opened up so many opportunities. The experience continues to help me as I perform my duties in the City Clerk's Office. I could never express just how appreciative I am!"



- Upon enrolling at Grand Rapids Community College, Ciara participated in the LEAD Program which provided her with an internship at City Hall.
- Since her internship, Ciara has worked in the City's Clerk's Office for the past 3-1/2 years assuming a variety of roles including Election Assistant.



Robby L. R. Saldaña

Associate at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison LLP

"I was involved with the Grand Rapids Mayor's Youth Council in the 9th, 10th and 12th grades and served as an intern with OCC in the 11th grade. This experience developed in me the importance of dialogue and active listening to advance the objective of better community outcomes."

For undergraduate studies, Robby attended the University of Michigan, double majoring in Psychology and Sociology, in which he received several awards for Best Sociology Honors Thesis. Robby then received his law degree from Yale Law School where he served in the Worker and Immigrant Rights Advocacy Clinic.

Our Community's Children improves the lives of children and families through public policy, programs and partnerships to ensure our children, youth and families thrive and hold promising futures.

www.grchildren.us

GREAT OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN

Invest in Afterschool!

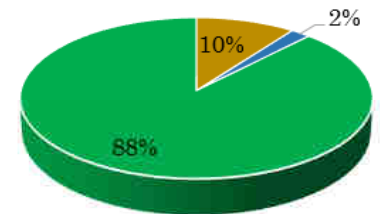
Afterschool programs have a *significant* impact on children's outcomes. The Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network of over 60 organizations agreed on success measures and then tracked its collective impact. Children who participate often in afterschool programs attend school at higher rates and do not get in trouble in the community. We also found that the majority of children being served in our ELO Network are those most in need! Go to www.gryouthdata.org to see a directory of afterschool programs in the ELO Network and our dashboard!



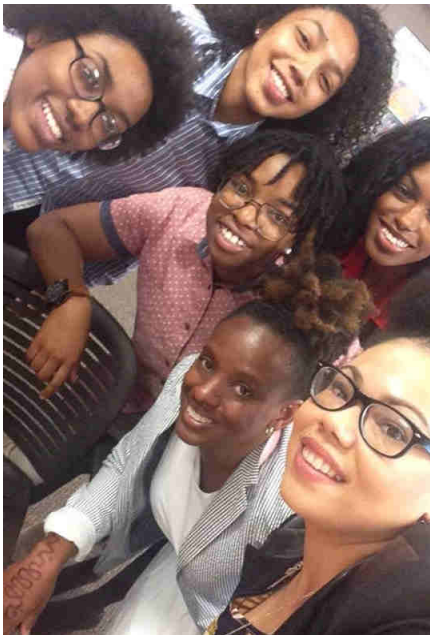
Our Community's Children thanks The Wallace Foundation, Believe to Become, Heart of West Michigan United Way, The Frey Foundation, Calvin College, Stanford University Gardner Center, and Grand Valley State University's Community Research Institute for their support.

OCC Financial
Total Budget - \$555,670*

- City/Schools In-Kind
- Donors
- Grants



48% (*\$270,265) of total budget is allocated back to community partners. All grants leverage 2-3 times their amounts in community contributions.



TCTC Center in the Works to Support Grand Rapids Students!

A strong and thriving city is one that builds on the talents and strengths of all residents. The more our city residents have college degrees, the greater our talent pool for innovation and growth ensuring a brighter future for all. Yet too many of our own city youth are finding a college degree beyond their grasp.

In response, Our Community's Children facilitates the 'To College, Through College' Initiative, a collaboration of higher education, non-profits, foundations and businesses. Building on best practices, they are filling the gap of student need and developing a community-based response to ensure all persons, particularly first generation college students and persons of color, get a degree. Mayor Heartwell's farewell legacy raised funds for a center specifically geared towards helping students sort through the complex maze of college support. This center will be based at the Grand Rapids Public Library with satellite sites for outreach. The Center is expected to open in Summer of 2016!

To contribute to this important work, send a check to:
Our Community's Children, MEMO: TCTC Center

