

ANNUAL REPORT | 2014-15

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Dear Friends,

This year has been filled with change.

We welcomed four wonderful colleagues to new positions—Kelly Cousins, director of Program Services for Girls; Rosanne Plasky, director of Women’s Educational Services, Darlene Bidwell, Volunteer and Career Readiness manager, and Sally Jirjis, Future Pathways coordinator.

They’ve joined us at a time when we’re facing some invigorating challenges.

In our Women’s Educational Services program, this was our first class of GED candidates required to take all their tests on the computer. Our students—many of whom had never used a computer—had to develop computer literacy at the same time they were learning language arts, mathematics, social studies and science. In addition, the tests this year were substantially more difficult than they have been in the past, a change that has seen the number of GEDs awarded nationwide drop 83 percent. Yet despite all of this, our students are taking the new tests and passing!

In our Girls’ Program Services, we are continuing to see improvement in reading and math performance.

Focused on making our initiatives as relevant as possible, we are working to infuse our Emerging Leaders summer program for middle schoolers with a very important emphasis on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math).

In our high school program, we now host a four-day, spring break college camp that provides ACT preparation, college tours and a community activity to keep our girls focused on their future. It is with great pride that I can report that all of the girls in our first two high school graduating classes were accepted to college!

Despite rising costs, we continue to offer healthy meals, reliable transportation and onsite child care—eliminating some of the barriers to success for our students.

There is still so much more to do. We are answering the heightened need for technology in the classroom. We are looking for mentors to help our students as they make their way on to college and into the work world. We are working to make the best use of our facilities as enrollment continues to grow. And, through it all, we are eager to see what our future brings.

Of course, none of this would be possible without our volunteers and donors. We are grateful, as always, for your presence and participation.

On a sad note, we had to say good-bye to our founder and biggest fan, Sr. Canice Johnson, who passed away earlier this year. Her vision, passion and encouragement are with us in all that we do, and we will continue to challenge ourselves to make her proud of the legacy she has bequeathed to us.

You are all in our prayers.



David Parr
President and Chair



Amy Amador, MSW
Executive Director

A Girl with a Goal; A Tutor to Match

Fourteen-year-old Denasia and her tutor Ditte are a team. A lover of poetry who struggles in math, Denasia has had to deal with a chronic health issue most of her life. The middle of five children, she is a freshman at Cristo Rey High School and has been coming to MEP since fifth grade. "It's the brightness and happiness here that I enjoy so much," she said.

Ditte, who has her master's degree in education and special education, admits that she herself struggled in the transition from high school to college. She learned the important difference support and encouragement from teachers can make, and she wants to bring that experience to MEP. "I realized in college that students need assistance knowing how to get help."

On their first day together, Denasia told Ditte that she had her eyes set on becoming a veterinarian and she wasn't going to let math hold her back. Not likely. "Denasia has strength, courage and wisdom far beyond her years," said Ditte.



Ditte, left, and Denasia team up for success.

PROGRAM SERVICES FOR GIRLS

127
Girls Participated

Math Skills Improved by
2.5
Grade Levels

Reading Skills Improved by
1.6
Grade Levels

The girls' program continues to provide enriching activities for girls in grades one through 12 in a nurturing, supportive environment.



We welcomed Kelly Cousins, director, left; Fatimah Muhammed, program psychologist, and Sr. Marcia Haggins, education support specialist.

2,381
Meals Served

It was all giggles and good times at the Dr. Seuss-themed Family Night in honor of "March is Reading Month."

8,513

Hours of Youth Tutoring and Enrichment



Emerging Leaders, our summer program for middle school girls, offered a look at area businesses, schools and organizations, team building activities, STEM-related career discovery and creative arts.



We watched proudly as our second high school graduating class earned their diplomas and embarked on their next academic adventure—college.

2,296
Round-trip Rides

Three Generations of Change

One of nine children, Louisa said her childhood was filled with strong family ties and fond memories. In a bit of “youthful rebellion,” she married at 17 and soon was the mother of three young children.

When her marriage ended, she moved to Florida hoping for a fresh start. Louisa remarried and worked as a waitress for more than 15 years before moving back to Michigan to care for her ailing mother. She was grateful for the time they got to spend together.

At about the same time, she took in two grandnephews—their mother was an addict, their father incarcerated—eventually adopting them when their mother died. Both boys have physical and psychological issues. “I want them to be successful, so I need to be successful.”

When her granddaughter, Celeste, graduated from the GED program at MEP last year, she decided it was time. “I feel and I know I can do this,” she said. She and her two daughters, Sophia and Maria, are making it a three-generational family tradition. With 16 children among them, they are committed to completing the program. “They say it’s never too late. My daughters are smart—one wants to go into the medical field, the other into



Louisa heads three generations of MEP participants.

interior design,” she said. “I see they have the talent to achieve their dreams.” She hopes all of her children will have a better future.

WOMEN'S EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

140

Women Served

25,600

Hours of Adult Education and Support Services

82%

Of Adult Students Improved
By at Least One Grade Level

The women's program expands horizons for adult students with outreach efforts aimed at college and career opportunities. Last year, we exceeded all federal benchmarks for educational gains.



Adult students in the Social Studies class toured the Frida Kahlo exhibit at the DIA, which sponsored the trip and provided transportation for our students.



Rosanne Plasky, director of Women's Educational Services

888

Round-Trip Rides

5,977
Meals



GED graduation was a family affair this year as Jackie, left, and Cynthia Perkins made MEP history as the first mother-daughter team to graduate together!



Annual Holiday Shop with donated items from churches and corporations along with vital financial support from Ford Motor Company allowed women—depending on the size of their family and their attendance record at MEP—to shop for holiday gifts. They also received bags of non-perishable food.



The guests of Lear Corporation, we were able to hear world-renowned self-help author and television personality Iyanla Vanzant speak at the 53rd annual Inforum Meeting.

5,976
Hours of Child Care

A Quiet Hero Serves

Bernadette Mary Frank, RSM, has had a lifelong passion to serve the poor, sick and uneducated. In grade school, she sold handmade bookmarks so she could send money to the missions. After joining the Sisters of Mercy and completing her nursing education, she went on to work as a nursing supervisor and later director of nursing services at Trinity Health. She retired in 2000. But retirement is a relative term.

She continues to volunteer at two clinics in Pontiac and Detroit, and in 2005 she began lending her administrative expertise to Mercy Education Project assisting in various development and marketing efforts. Always a "hands-on" person, she sews clothes for young girls in the Benton Harbor project along with cross-stitching and quilting items for sale at craft shows—with all the proceeds going to Mercy Education Project.

Sr. Bernadette recently celebrated her tenth anniversary as an MEP volunteer.



Sr. Bernadette Mary Frank is making a difference.

VOLUNTEER EFFORTS



Sally Jirjis, left, Future Pathways coordinator, and Darlene Bidwell, Volunteer and Career Readiness manager.



Greg Moore, a long-time volunteer, now is on staff as an adult education instructor.

132

Volunteers



Mercy Education Project paid final respects to Mary Canice Johnson, RSM, our founding director, who died in May 2015.

7,106

Hours of Volunteer Services

\$147,864

Estimated Value of Volunteers' Efforts

BEING GRATEFUL FOR SUCH GENEROSITY

Endowment Gifts

July 2014–June 2015

Elizabeth Mary Burns, RSM
Charles Paul Werthman and Doris
Steinhauer Educational Trust
Conrad Charitable Foundation
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Annual Giving

July 2014–June 2015

\$100,000 +

Sisters of Mercy, West Midwest
Community

\$50,000–\$99,999

Community Foundation for
SE Michigan

\$25,000–\$49,999

DTE Energy Foundation
Geraldine S. Kilsdonk
The Thomas and Carol Cracchiolo
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University of Michigan—School of
Education

\$10,000–\$24,999

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\$5,000–\$9,999

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St. Mary Mercy Hospital
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Marc and Terri Tahnoose
Trinity Home Health Services
Wolverine Packing Company

\$1,000–\$2,499

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FUNDING SOURCES

Annual expenditures: \$978,265

Sisters of Mercy Events

including corporate sponsorships



Chart numbers = percent

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\$500–\$999

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\$250-\$499

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July 2014–June 2015

Continued from page 9

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Mercy Education Project makes every effort to report information accurately, but occasionally mistakes do happen. If you notice an error, please let us know by contacting Mary E. Madigan, director of development and marketing, at mmadigan@mercyed.net or 313-963-5881. All donors are listed on our website at www.mercyed.net.

Breaking Bread with Our Family

The annual Doorway to the Future Dinner & Auction was held at Cobo Center's Grand Riverview Ballroom, and our longtime friend and supporter columnist Rochelle Riley was on hand to act as emcee for the largest, most successful fundraiser in our history. With Lear Corporation as the presenting sponsor, we also received significant financial support from Ford Motor Company, R. Hirt, Jr. Company, Beaumont Health System-Beaumont Foundation, the Thomas and Carol Cracchiolo Foundation and Trinity Health. Two women were honored with PHDs—degrees for Positive Attitude, Hard Work and Dedication—MEP's founding director, Canice Johnson, RSM, and Felicia Fields, group vice president of human resources at Ford Motor Company.

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Event Sponsors



Rochelle Riley emceed our most successful, best attended Doorway to the Future Dinner & Auction.

\$250,000

Raised

500+

Attendees—The Most In Our History

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS



Ron Wagner; Charlotte Young, RSM; Lila Lazarus, and Greg Drutchas at this year's Side-by-Side Golf Outing that raised more than \$80,000.

Friends Sharing the Journey

- The 22nd annual **Side-by-Side Golf Outing at Walnut Creek Country Club**, emceed by local TV personality Lila Lazarus, attracted more than 160 golfers and netted more than \$80,000 for MEP.
- **DTE employees** raised more than \$4,500 with a bowling fundraiser and three McCarthy grants.
- **St. Mary Mercy Hospital** executives collected \$1,300 for MEP at their leadership development retreat.
- **Trinity Health Cider & Donuts** event raised \$1,110 for MEP
- **Quicken Loans and The Office of the United States Trustee** both sponsored a Jeans Day and donated the proceeds to MEP.
- **Granite City Brewery** in Northville and Troy organized a Dine & Donate Program.
- The 4th Annual **Irish Music Fundraiser** at Corktown's Gaelic League featured two traditional Irish music groups and raised \$3,000.
- Mercy Education Project was one of the charities selected by **UAW-GM** to be featured at the **Spirit of Detroit HydroFest**.
- **Batch Brewing Company** designated a portion of all credit card sales to MEP.



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ANNUAL REPORT 2014-15

CELEBRATING DIVERSITY



MEP'S 10TH ANNUAL DOORWAY TO THE FUTURE DINNER

FORD MOTOR COMPANY CONFERENCE AND EVENT CENTER, DEARBORN

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, 2016 INFO: 313-963-5881 • WWW.MERCYED.NET