

STEELCASE FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2015

With a vision to “empower people to reach their full potential,” the Steelcase Foundation strives to nurture the growth and development of community as an ecosystem through foundation grants.

How can the Steelcase Foundation encourage achievement in children of all ages? Help troubled families flourish? Establish roots for homeless youth? Improve infant and maternal health through neighborhood doula services? Engage urban teens in solving problems in their community? What role can libraries play in nurturing early child literacy? How important is play to a child’s whole development? The questions are many; the stakes are high.

This commitment to building thriving ecosystems is demonstrated through the Steelcase Foundation’s efforts to identify root causes and foster systemic solutions that nourish the complex path of the child to adulthood and support the well-being of the encompassing ecosystem of parents, infants, teens and teachers—and all who nurture and encourage.

We invite you to dig in and explore the Steelcase Foundation 2015 Annual Report, the ecosystem created within this work and the cultivation and growth of the roots and shoots along the way.

KATE PEW WOLTERS
Chairperson

JULIE RIDENOUR
President

Training women who guide women—through birthing and beyond

MOMSBLOOM *»* COMMUNITY-BASED DOULA PILOT

Women are increasingly turning to professional doulas for physical, emotional, and informational support in the birthing process. And for good reason. Studies link doulas’ involvement before, during, and after delivery with lower numbers of preterm birth and cesarean births, healthier newborns, greater success in breastfeeding, and an overall reduction in healthcare costs. Unfortunately, prohibitive cultural norms and economic challenges often put doula services out of reach for many women of color. MomsBloom hopes to change that with a three-year pilot program that trains and certifies women to work as doulas in their own communities—bringing social parity to low-income families and creating a viable career path for women who are called to serve.

Nurturing literacy-rich environments for toddlers

KENT DISTRICT LIBRARY/GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY *»* STORYTIME & PRE-READING EVALUATION PROJECT

Can libraries help parents and caregivers nurture early literacy development in children? Youth librarians at Kent District and Grand Rapids public libraries set out to answer that very question in a first-of-its-kind study on the effectiveness of their story time and pre-reading programs for 0- to 3-year olds. Early results show that, among other gains, parents and caregivers who attended with their toddlers increased their use of strategies that nurture early literacy—singing, pointing, using finger play, etc.—by as much as 200%. For libraries, which traditionally measure their effectiveness solely by attendance, these results underscore the importance of their early literacy programs and will help them attract essential funding.

Inspiring urban kids to bloom in nature

CAMP BLODGETT *»* SUMMER ACADEMY

Lake Michigan may be right next door, but plenty of kids in metro Grand Rapids never have seen the lake. Camp Blodgett’s Summer Academy is changing that. Designed to get kids outside and stem summer learning loss, the four-week camp balances core academic work with sailing, swimming, hiking, and more—all at little or no cost to low-income families. As they return each summer, Academy students build lifelong friendships, fortify their academic and social skills, and deepen their connection to nature. Many graduates continue as youth leaders—inspiring younger students to learn and grow as part of this special community.

Planting the seeds of play

GRAND RAPIDS CHILDREN’S MUSEUM *»* ACCESS

Unstructured playtime is essential to children’s cognitive, physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. Unfortunately, children who live in poverty have fewer opportunities to just play. That’s why the Grand Rapids Children’s Museum is expanding access to more than 38,000 children and their caregivers with free admission for children from low-income neighborhoods, low-cost entrance fees on family nights, programming that provides greater access for children with disabilities, and free memberships for children and families that rely on local human service agencies. It’s a multi-pronged approach to ensuring that all children in our community have access to the transformative power of play.

Engaging urban teens in community problem solving

WEST MICHIGAN CENTER FOR ARTS + TECHNOLOGY (WMCAT) *»* TEEN ARTS & TECH PROGRAM

Many students—particularly urban teens—find themselves disenfranchised from traditional education. WMCAT’s after-school program engages students in hands-on opportunities to explore art, photography, fashion, video game design, and more. Then WMCAT gives them an opportunity to put their design skills to work—pairing teams of students with opportunities to solve needs in their community. Across the city, teens are employing design-thinking principles to tackle tough issues like animal welfare, neighborhood development, homelessness, cancer support, and park preservation. WMCAT’s goal is not just to engage and inspire these teens, but to help them build the social capital and skills they need to find their own paths forward, and create positive change in their communities at the same time.

Thrive

Establishing roots for homeless youth

HQ *»* YOUTH DATA COLLABORATIVE

Most local social services focus on programs for homeless adults and families, leaving about 500 young people in Grand Rapids with no safe place to call home.

HQ is helping to fill that gap with a first-of-its-kind, downtown drop-in center: a safe place for homeless and runaway teens to rest; tend to hygiene; do laundry; and connect with housing, counseling, employment, and educational resources. This new model of assistance is centered on building both trust and a sense of belonging. As teens share their personal stories, HQ staff members are gaining fresh insight into the unique and complex challenges facing teens who are living on the street. That understanding is fueling the development of new and innovative ways to help young people move beyond trauma and toward healthy adult lives.

Helping troubled families to flourish

BRIEF STRATEGIC FAMILY THERAPY PILOT PROGRAM *»* D.A. BLODGETT-ST. JOHN’S

Facing diminishing resources and growing pressure to achieve faster results from family therapy, D.A. Blodgett-St. John’s launched a three-year pilot program that focuses on the present, rather than the past, to change destructive patterns. This new model, originally developed to assist Cuban refugees in Miami, promises better outcomes faster, as well as higher rates of engagement, retention, and completion among families. Foundation funding is being used to provide staff training and accreditation and to document the findings of this pilot program. If successful, the concept will offer new hope for preventing child abuse and neglect and for building healthier families in Kent County—D.A. Blodgett-St. John’s mission since 1887.

Restoring programs that connect seniors with young people in need

SENIOR NEIGHBORS & GERONTOLOGY NETWORK *»* MERGER

When financial constraints forced the Gerontology Network to close last summer, it left four key programs in limbo. At risk were a respite program for caregivers as well as several programs that paired senior citizens with vulnerable youth, including a reading and math tutoring program, a foster grand parenting program for children with special needs, and a mentoring program for at-risk 11- to 21-year olds. Senior Neighbors, a local organization working to improve the lives of area seniors, recognized the loss to both young people and seniors and stepped in to bring these programs under their umbrella of operation. The merger’s costs—legal and financial consults, space needs, and staff development—were underwritten by the Steelcase Foundation, ensuring the seamless continuance of these cross-generational programs that give meaning and purpose to senior citizens and a lifeline to vulnerable youth.

Guiding nonprofits toward fresh perspectives

DOROTHY JOHNSON CENTER FOR PHILANTHROPY AT GVSU & KENDALL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN *»* DESIGN FOR THE GREATER GOOD CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVE

Amazing things can happen when you look at a problem and ask, “How might we...?” That question—and the design thinking process from which it springs—are at the center of a collaborative venture between GVSU’s Johnson Center for Philanthropy and KCAD. During an 8-week workshop, area nonprofits bring their knottiest problems to the table and then work collaboratively toward developing solutions using the expansive power of design thinking—a user-centric, creative and fruitful process for developing fresh solutions to problems new and old. As ideas emerge, the Johnson Center is working alongside participating nonprofits to help them implement those ideas—whether that means finding new ways to reach homeless youth or new ideas on how to spur an organization’s supporters to become financial donors. This workshop has enormous potential to grow the effectiveness of the region’s nonprofits and help the greater community thrive.

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\$1,602,461
is the total granted
to support projects in
EDUCATION
with \$2,287,449
pledged for 2016

\$362,500
is the total granted
to support projects in
ARTS & CULTURE
with \$40,000
pledged for 2016

\$149,400
is the total granted
to support projects in
**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
AND OTHER
PROGRAM AREAS**
with \$762,000
pledged for 2016

\$4,253,778
TOTAL GIVING IN 2015

\$3,736,323
GRANTED TO 47 ORGANIZATIONS
\$3,520,482
IN FUTURE PLEDGES
\$517,455
IN MATCHING FUNDS

\$40,000
is the total granted
to support projects in
ENVIRONMENT

\$70,000
is the total granted
to support projects in
HEALTH

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES

YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30

	2015	2014
Revenues		
In-kind contributions	\$ 338,277	\$ 331,153
Contributions	917,000	1,076,000
Investment income:		
Dividends and interest	707,166	673,509
Net realized & unrealized gain on investments	(2,123,144)	5,498,388
Total Revenues	\$ (160,671)	\$ 7,579,050
Expenses		
Grants & matching gifts	\$ 4,876,810	\$ 3,211,930
Investment management & agency fees	1,154,375	1,161,570
Current provision for federal excise tax	103,346	75,093
General & administrative	338,277	331,153
Total Expenses	\$ 6,472,808	\$ 4,799,746
Increase in Net Assets	\$ (6,633,479)	\$ 2,799,304
Net Assets, beginning of year	\$ 96,803,567	\$ 94,004,263
Net Assets, end of year	\$ 90,170,088	\$ 96,803,567

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION

YEAR ENDED NOVEMBER 30

	2015	2014
Assets		
Cash & cash equivalents	\$ 516,500	\$ 1,322,403
Accrued interest receivable	16,663	21,178
Investments, at fair value	93,115,302	98,311,985
Federal excise tax refundable	22,155	25,501
Total Assets	\$ 93,670,620	\$ 99,681,067
Liabilities & Net Assets		
Liabilities: Grants payable	\$ 3,500,532	\$ 2,877,500
Net Assets: Unrestricted	\$ 90,170,088	\$ 96,803,567
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	\$ 93,670,620	\$ 99,681,067