ANNUAL REPORT





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DEAR COA FRIENDS,

It's been an exciting year for COA as we provided services to more than 10,000 children and families at 11 locations throughout Milwaukee and at our 206-acre camp in central Wisconsin. Enrollment in COA's quality early education centers doubled over the past two years. 13,000 parents and children visited COA's two family resource centers. Our nationally recognized HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) program continued to grow – with 300 families participating daily. And COA's youth programs provided structured academic, arts, and sports programming daily at 11 Milwaukee locations including seven MPS schools, two COA Centers, two parks, and at Camp Helen Brachman.

111 years ago (1906), a dedicated group of women created Wisconsin's first "Settlement House" and their legacy became COA Youth & Family Centers. The model they created – a holistic model providing children and families the tools to become self-sufficient – has stood the test of time and continues to lift thousands of low-income children and families to a place of hope, and learning, and achievement.

Eleven years ago we opened the COA Goldin Center in the Amani neighborhood in the heart of the most distressed area in the city of Milwaukee, and the impact has been dramatic. Our holistic model of engaging residents and building neighborhood assets included providing COA's core youth programming and engaging parents. We partnered with Children's Hospital of Wisconsin to open a pediatric and family clinic; and we partnered with Milwaukee County to create the new Moody Park with daily COA youth and family programming. We opened a family resource center, built the new Burke Early Education Center, and partnered with residents and community agencies to create a neighborhood association.

While there is much to be done, we are seeing change in empowered residents, new access to resources for children and families, and a four-year 26% decrease in crime. COA's innovative community development model is being recognized locally and nationally as a model for transforming and uplifting distressed neighborhoods and families.

This report looks at some of the exciting milestones we reached over the past year thanks to the support of donors, volunteers, and community stakeholders. We invite you to give us a call, take a tour, and see for yourself the impact of what we do and how we do it. Most important - THANK YOU SO MUCH for investing in COA, and for helping the most vulnerable members of our community build new traditions of success and a greater quality of life. We simply could not do this without your support.

Sincerely,

Tom Schneider Executive Director

Andrew Komisar Board President



Financials





CHARITY KAYICATOR 4-STAR RATING

For the 12th consecutive year,

COA Youth & Family Centers
received a four-star rating from

Charity Navigator - a national evaluator
monitoring America's non-profit
organizations. COA was rated:

- The highest rated Wisconsin youth & family services charity
- One of only 47 charities in Wisconsin with a four-star rating
- Only 1% of all charities nationally have 12 consecutive 4-star ratings



Programs

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

HIPPY:

- 98% of parents stated HIPPY would make their child more successful in school
- HIPPY Parent Partners provided
 6.014 home visits

EARLY EDUCATION CENTERS:

- Both Early Education Centers provide over 200 children with daily quality care
- 99% of children maintained or improved their behavior

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS:

- There were over 13,000 visits by children and family members to our Family Resource Centers!
- 7,800 healthy meals were provided to children and families in the new Moody Park





FARLY CHILD DEVILOPMENT

COA's Early Child Development programs build a foundation that fosters lifelong success. Each program integrates learning and play to fully engage children (from birth to age six) and their whole families! Parents also deepen their knowledge and gain access to resources that help them become their children's most important teacher.

EARLY EDUCATION CENTERS (EEC)

COA's two Early Education Centers (EEC) provide quality learning opportunities for at-risk children and families through a whole-family approach. At each step along the way, our highly-trained teachers ensure parents are involved in their children's positive development of the literacy, cognitive, communication, motor, and social/emotional skills that provide them tools to succeed in school and throughout life.

FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS (FRC)

COA's Harry and Rose Samson FRC (Riverwest Center) and Ethel Nutis Gill FRC (Goldin Center) unite parents and their children to build strong children and strong families. The FRC's provide access to vital resources, build strong family support networks, and provide fun and educational early child and family learning activities. From group discussions and events, to job help, guidance and referrals for essential medical and financial services, and family camps, the FRCs and family programming are at the core of COA's holistic mission.

Last summer, the Ethel Nutis Gill FRC helped facilitate a community meal program with Hunger Task Force to provide over 7,800 healthy meals in the new Moody Park, and at the same time provided intergenerational art and literacy activities. The Harry and Rose Samson FRC had more than 13,000 parent and child visits for family programming.

HOME INSTRUCTION FOR PARENTS OF PRE-SCHOOL YOUNGSTERS (HIPPY)

Daily parental engagement is the single most important predictor of a child academic success. The HIPPY program's core strategy is to engage parents every day in their child's development through daily reading, games, puzzles, science experiments and more. Parent Partners help guide and instruct parents through delivery of the 30-week curriculum, which has been proven to help children succeed academically and socially when they enter school.







SUCCESS STORY: TUCK TURNS A CORNER

Tuck is a 3-year old who joined the Riverwest Early Education Center (EEC) as an infant. At 24 months, teachers noticed delays in his speech development and sensory/emotional issues emerged, including meltdowns. Based on the regular developmental screening all kids at COA receive, his family supported his enrollment in speech therapy and occupational therapy. Tuck's teachers teamed up with his parents and therapists to help him, creating a box full of items he enjoyed to create positive alternatives when he had a meltdown.

When Tuck was 30 months old and first began receiving specialized services, his speech and behavioral development matched a typical 18 month old's. He is now showing the speech and social/emotional development of a typical 38-40 month old!

Tuck even self-initiated his transition from the two to three year old classroom. His teachers intended to stay and help smooth the transition, but when they got to the new room Tuck said goodbye and told his former teacher she could go back upstairs! Because of the successful partnership between his parents, EEC teachers, and specialists, Tuck continues to flourish and now has the tools to succeed.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

PRE-TEEN & TEEN PROGRAMMING

- COA added a new STEM Program!
- 95% of youth improved on trying their best in school.
- 92% of youth improved on having goals and plans for the future.
- 93% of youth improved on believing they could make a difference in their community.

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS (CLCs)

- Our Hopkins-Lloyd CLC was one of only 10 sites statewide and **the ONLY site in Milwaukee** that participated in a prestigious National Aeronautics and Space Agency (NASA) STEM program.
- The Riverside Robotigers robotics team from our Riverside University High School CLC went to the **national championships** for the second year in a row!

CAMP

- 284 (100%) of campers needed and received scholarships!
- 98% of campers said they had the opportunity to do fun and healthy physical activity at camp.
- 92% of campers felt they had the opportunity to learn a lot about people different from themselves.
- Campers cumulatively read over900 hours!



YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

COA's structured youth development programs provide positive opportunities for youth to grow academically, socially, physically, and encourage active civic involvement. Youth programs are designed to meet the changing needs of the community through constant evaluation and by including youth involvement in program design. This year, saw many new additions, including the Kohl's Explore Your Future Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) program, and great new computers for youth at both our Riverwest and Goldin Centers.

PRE-TEEN & TEEN PROGRAMMING

COA provides productive outlets for diverse, at-risk youth from Milwaukee ages 6-18 to learn critical thinking skills, engage in community-building activities, discover healthy habits, develop the ability to express themselves, and strengthen their leadership skills. COA programs are delivered in safe, encouraging environments where youth participants have a voice in program design, resulting in sustained engagement. And COA's elected Pre-teen Leadership and Teen Leadership Councils help shape program creation and development, including academic, physical recreation, career/post-secondary, arts, and life skills programs that annually serve over 1,000 youth.

CAMP HELEN BRACHMAN

COA's beautiful 206-acre Camp Helen Brachman in Almond, WI provides life-changing experiences for hundreds of low-income and at-risk children every year. Camp Helen Brachman extends the learning all summer long through immersive three 13-day and one 6-day session that reinforce the lessons taught in our year-round after school programming and also encourage a love for nature. Each summer, youth learn to swim, canoe, kayak, and catch fish at our Pickerel Lake. And they learn wilderness skills, and hike, bike, and play sports; and make life-long friends. And it's not just summer, with winter camps, Youth Leadership Institutes, and family camps year-round.





SUCCESS STORY: TRUTH FINDS HER VOICE AT COA

Truth, 19, has spent much of her life in COA programs, recently as a participant in teen programming and now as an assistant in COA's Ethel Nutis Gill Family Resource Center.

Her older brother was a COA participant and took her to COA because he enjoyed the programs and knew it was a safe, positive place. Truth believes in COA's mission, saying "It's really important to serve the whole family. Being able to talk with my older brother

and get guidance, to visit my younger sisters in childcare, I wouldn't change a thing."

"A lot of what I do now, my job, volunteer experience, etc. is all based off what I learned at COA. I think my time at Camp Helen Brachman was especially important. Creative writing was my favorite subject. It made me think about how I could share my voice, my perspective, and helped me realize that I could be that type of resource!"

Truth also volunteers with The Gathering on State Street, a food pantry, and credits her time working as a volunteer with COA as having taught her vital skills including the importance of youth leadership and showing that teens make positive contributions. Truth is attending Marquette University majoring in journalism and is a regular contributor to the Amani United Community Newsletter.

Programs

COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTERS (CLCs):

Anna F Doerfler School
Auer Avenue School
Hopkins-Lloyd Community School
Lincoln Center of the Arts Middle School
O.W. Holmes School

Riverside University High School
Westside Academy

In partnership with seven Milwaukee Public Schools, our CLCs expand the reach of COA's positive youth development programming. This partnership gives thousands of children and teens access to an assortment of activities that encourage healthy living, physical activity, academic achievement, and cultural awareness. And our partnership with Auer Avenue School, located next to COA's Goldin Center, allows for combined pre-teen programming and full access to the Goldin Center and our adjacent Moody Park programming.



COMMUNITY DIFVILOPMIENT

COA unites neighborhoods with services, programs and events that engage and empower residents and connect the dots between the people we serve and our many community partners and collaborators—all helping strong families flourish.



AMANI COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COA continues to work tirelessly to engage residents and build Amani neighborhood resources. COA hosts regular Amani United neighborhood association meetings and family events that help bring the community together. This year, the adjacent new Moody Park saw its first full summer of programs which included daily activities promoting literacy, arts, and healthy activities. Partners including The Milwaukee Repertory Theater engaged youth in theater camps, PEPP Nation and Simba Soccer Club introduced unique sports including rugby and lacrosse; First Stage held fun dramatic storytelling; the family and pediatric clinic operated in partnership with Children's Hospital served children and families: and thousands of healthy meals were provided thanks to our collaboration with Hunger Task Force. COA's Stories in the Park, a longtime favorite in Riverwest was introduced to Amani, along with a new adult book club!



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Working with residents, the Amani neighborhood surrounding the COA Goldin Center now has a pediatric & family clinic, the new Moody Park, a family resource center, the new Burke Early Education Center, a great neighborhood association AND there has been a 26% drop in the crime rate in Amani over the past four years.
- COA's community developmentwork has been recognized and honored locally (the MANDI Award for outstanding neighborhood development) and nationally (by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and UCLA Center for Healthier Children, Families and Communities.)
- Over 9,000 children and families attended COA's free Skyline Music Series in Riverwest
- COA gave away thousands of books for all ages, bicycle helmets, holiday presents, and more at community events in Moody and Kadish Parks.



RIVERWEST COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

COA has called the Riverwest neighborhood home for nearly forty years, and our work has helped contribute to the stunning revitalization that continues today. Our focus on creating strong families is shown through our top-rated early education center, the largest family resource enter in the state, and quality after-school and summer programming for all ages. COA worked with the City to create the new Kilbourn - Kadish Park and this year, COA's Skyline Music Series was enjoyed by over 9,000 community members, we helped dozens of families safely install their car seats, and we were proud to be honored with the support of the Locust Street Festival.



FACILITIES

COA is grateful to have been able to improve several of the facilities that make our programs possible during the past year.

NEW KITCHEN

With the continuing growth of COA's youth and early education programs a new kitchen was essential to providing more than 160,000 meals annually at our Goldin and Riverwest Centers. In October, COA opened the new Irving Chortek Kitchen in memory of Robert and Jennie Chortek, which greatly increases our capacity to provide nutritious meals to the children in our early education and youth development programming.



UPGRADED COMPUTER LABS

Thanks to a generous donation, COA was able to fully renovate and upgrade the Daniel M. Soref Computer Learning Center at our Riverwest Center, and also provided all new computers to the lab at our Goldin Center! The great new PCs are immensely popular, have already helped kids mitigate summer learning loss through educational games and activities, and will be valuable assets serving our after school academic support programming all year long.



REVAMPED SELIG FIELD

Selig Field at the COA Goldin Center had to be relocated to help make room for the new Burke Early Education Center last year. But with 25 wonderful volunteers, we built the new Selig Field and made it ready for youth in our Badges for Baseball instructional league, kickball, and lots of other fun recreational activities all year long!



SPECIAL EVENTS

PARENTS OF THE YEAR

For the past 35 years, COA has gathered with community members to champion the critical role that parents play in achieving positive academic and social outcomes for youth by honoring parents who demonstrate leadership, commitment to bettering the lives of others, and dedication to raising strong families. We are proud to honor Linda Gorens-Levey & Michael Levey and Suzanne & Michael Hupy as our 2017 Parents of the Year! COA's Parents of the Year Luncheon was held at the Italian Community Center on August 22nd, and included speeches from recipients and their loving children and a delightful performance by our Early Education Choir. We also recognized COA parent participant Shapayl Parker with the Ethel Nutis Gill Award. This year, the celebration raised more than \$167,000 to support COA's family-centered programming! Thank you to our event chairs: Jason Abraham, JoAnne Anton, and David Lubar; and to our wonderful sponsors.







HOLLYWOOD GALA

Each year we celebrate the shining stars in our programs alongside the stars of tinsel town during our Hollywood Gala. Presented by the Marcus Corporation and the National Association of Theatre Owners of Wisconsin & Upper Michigan, this event raised funds to support COA's array of family-centered programs and featured a formal dinner, silent auction, and a live screening of the 89th Academy Awards. At COA's 19th Annual Hollywood Gala, COA raised over \$163,000 to support life-changing programs reaching over 10,000 children and families. Special thanks go to our event chairs, Lina & Santino Cicero and Kim & Daryl Lueck!

We have over one hundred years of history making positive changes to Milwaukee's most distressed neighborhoods. The generous support of our wonderful donors enables us to change the lives of children and families all throughout our community.

Thanks to the following for your generous contributions to COA's Endowment:

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