



COA
YOUTH & FAMILY CENTERS



2021 ANNUAL REPORT



Family is at the center of everything we do.

OUR MISSION

COA Youth & Family Centers nurtures children, supports families, and builds strong and resilient communities – one child, one family, one community at a time.

OUR VALUES

Children-first, Family-focused, Community-connected, Collaborations, Commitment, Empowerment.

OUR VISION

To provide children-centered, family-focused, community connected opportunities that expand possibilities, change lives and build futures.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hello COA Family and Friends,

In December of 2020, I accepted the baton to become COA Youth & Family Centers' (COA) Executive Director, becoming the first woman and the first person of color to lead the organization. COA's rich 115-year history of serving under-resourced children and families exemplifies the organization's legacy of commitment, community and compassion. For this historic opportunity I am truly grateful.

I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to my predecessor, Mr. Thomas Schneider. Tom was at the helm of COA for nearly twenty years. His vision transformed the Amani and Harambee neighborhoods in Milwaukee, creating opportunities for children and families to grow and thrive. It is because of his great leadership that COA is recognized as a leader in providing quality children-first, family-focused and community-connected programming and services. – **Thank you, Tom.**

Leadership during a pandemic poses many challenges, but those challenges can be mitigated when you have dedicated staff committed to your mission. Risking their own health and safety and the health and safety of their families, COA staff banded together during the pandemic to ensure that COVID-19 would not prevent us from being there for those who needed us the most – our children and front-line workers. While some agencies and programs were forced to close their doors during the pandemic, COA staff worked hard to continue to provide and in some cases expand quality programming and services to meet the needs of our community.

March brought us some much-needed relief, and many children returned to school. Summer arrived, and COA embraced the opportunity to resume programming like "Safe Summer Kick-Off," "Family Nights," and "Skyline Music," and to the delight of many, "Family Camp" at COA's Camp Helen Brachman. My heart is full of gratitude for the untold ways COA came together this past year to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt, "we are better together." - **To The Staff of COA, Thank you.**

As we look toward our limitless future, we are energized by our new mission statement **COA Youth & Family Centers nurtures children, supports families, and builds strong and resilient communities – one child, one family, one community at a time.** We are dedicated to reaching even more families in our communities while embracing our values: **Children-First, Family-Focused, Community- Connected, Collaboration, Commitment and Empowerment, and remembering, "Family is at the center of everything we do."**

While there still is much work to be done, we do it with a servant's heart and with our families and communities in mind.

Again, thank you Tom, thank you to the amazing COA Staff, and finally a big thank you to "YOU," our friends and families. It is only through your continuous and generous support of our children, families, and communities that COA can continue to do "GREAT WORKS." The best is yet to come.

Respectfully Submitted,



Charlotte Cannon-Sain

Executive Director

#IWII



PROGRAM AREAS



Early Childhood Development: COA takes a holistic, family-centered approach to enhance learning, where young children and caregivers have the support they need to thrive.

- Our two Early Education Centers, both five-star accredited by NAEYC as of 2021, provide safe nurturing environments where children foster critical skills and social-emotional development to help them become successful, lifelong learners.
- HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters), an internationally recognized bilingual literacy and school-readiness program, empowers parents as their child's first teacher.



Youth Development: COA provides Milwaukee youth with programming and resources that help drive academic achievement and foster personal development in supportive environments.

- COA provides after-school and summer programming for youth (6-18) at our two community centers and six Milwaukee Public Schools CLCs. Programs include daily academic enrichment, tutoring and homework help, and recreational/enrichment activities.
- Camp Helen Brachman, located in central Wisconsin, hosts summer camps, winter camps, and family camps with expert-guided programs in nature, art, swimming, boating, and archery.



Community Development: COA believes that the best way to understand the needs and goals of a community is to listen to them. By embracing a place-based focus, we are able to access community resources to rapidly respond to the needs of the community.

- Kadish & Moody Park bring people together through programming and events such as the Skyline Music Series, Safe Summer Kick-Off and Beyond the Bookbag and Community Fun Nights.
- COA's two Family Resource Centers, located in the Amani and Harambee/Riverwest neighborhoods, offer programming for families and resources based on community needs such as food pantries, energy assistance information, and more.





MAKING BASKETS WITH CREAM SKILLS

Over the Summer, teens at COA's Goldin Center participated in programming with Cream Skills Incorporated, an organization whose mission is to promote entrepreneurship skills through sports. Cream Skills is a unique basketball program. As a microcosm of the NBA, youth in Goldin's teen program had the chance to participate in a draft, playoffs, and even an all-star game complete with a three-point contest. COA hosted the games at the Goldin Center.

In addition to showing their skills off on the court, each participant attended weekly training camps at MATC. These training camps focused on teaching financial literacy, and life, health, and fitness skills. A memorable training session was when representatives from BMO Bank visited COA's Goldin Center to teach youth how to open a checking account and answer additional banking questions. Teens also learned more about auto mechanics, gaining important skills such as how to change a tire and check their car's oil.

Nigel Harvey, Director and Founder of Cream Skills Inc., shared that at CSI, him and his staff strive to, "create a nurturing environment where, win or lose, all participants feel like they are a part of a family."

COA Youth & Family Centers has been a proud partner of Cream Skills Inc. since its founding in 2016 and we look forward to continuing to strengthen our partnership in the years to come.



BROADENING HORIZONS AT CAMP HELEN BRACHMAN

"This experience gave us an opportunity to get away from everyday city life and brought us closer together. Camp Helen Brachman gave us memories for a lifetime."



Camp
Helen
Brachman

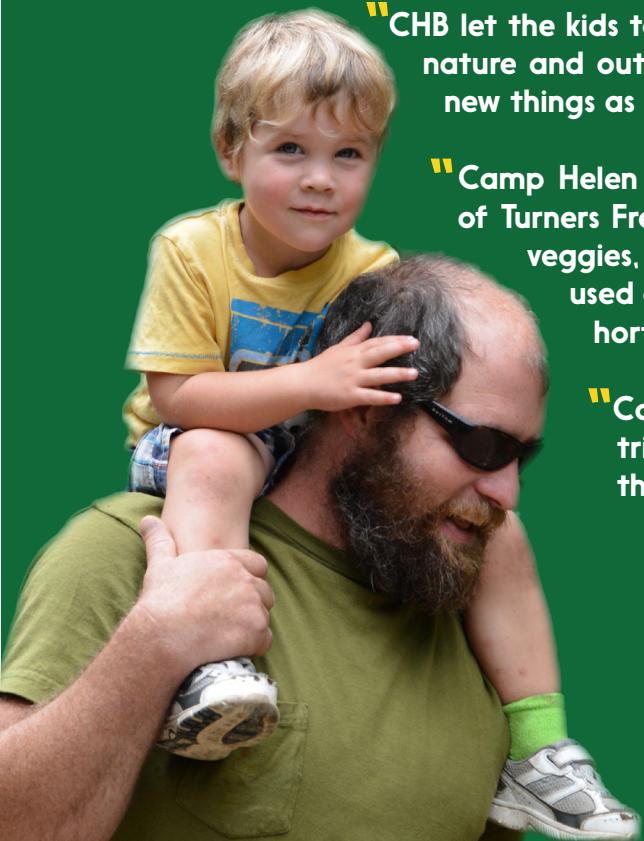
This summer, Camp Helen Brachman offered families a mini-vacation like no other. After a brief camp hiatus in 2020, family campers engaged in three days of programming filled with activities that helped families connect, enjoy time in nature, try new activities, and grow. Campers were able to enjoy new camp amenities including expanded hiking trails, a new waterfront, and renovated cabins. Participants shared that the experience brought their families closer together by providing them with an opportunity to slow down and enjoy each other's company.

CAMPERS AND CAMP COUNSELORS SAY:

"CHB let the kids take time away from the city and their electronics, and find out nature and outdoor activities can be super fun. Camp opened their minds to new things as well."

"Camp Helen Brachman cultivated a thriving garden! Kelly and John Turner of Turners Fresh Market and Assistant Camp Director, Hope Gibson, planted veggies, fruits, herbs, and plants in the camp garden. The garden was used as an educational tool to help educate families and campers on horticulture and nutrition!"

"Coming to CHB brought my family closer together. Together we tried and learned new things. Surviving off the grid? Best feeling in the world!"



COA'S HIPPY PROGRAM EMPOWERS CHILDREN AND PARENTS

At the heart of COA's Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program is the mission to empower parents as their child's first teacher and improve school readiness for children along the way. But to Jessica Namaste, COA's HIPPY Program Director, HIPPY is more than a place of employment; it is where her own transformation as a parent began:

"When I was in HIPPY, my Parent Partner, Sarah, taught me a lot about patience. At the time, I was a young mother and she helped me navigate parenthood. She taught me how to have more fun with my daughter and the importance of spending meaningful, one-on-one time together."

Since becoming Program Director, Jessica has led the HIPPY program through many exciting changes including: introducing new initiatives for families, supporting her staff in the transition to virtual learning sessions during the COVID-19 pandemic, aiding in the creation of HIPPY programming at COA's Burke Center, and expanding summer programming for families.

"HIPPY is not just a school readiness program; it is so much more. It is a parent empowerment program that gives parents tools to not only educate their children but to bond as a family, learn more about their children, and gain an understanding of their child's development."

For many families, like Jessica's, HIPPY is not just about the curriculum. HIPPY encourages one-on-one time with children, and helps establish new routines, like homework time or reading together before bed. It strengthens relationships parents have with not only their child enrolled in HIPPY, but with the entire family. HIPPY has a lasting impact on families that continues long after they graduate the program.



HIPPY PARTICIPANTS SAY:

"The most important lesson I have learned is that any moment can be a teaching moment."

"We've learned the importance of dedicating specific time to have quality experiences with our children."

"The most important thing I have learned from the program is that my children are the most important thing to me and seeing their happy faces as we spend time together is priceless."

DARIEN GETS BACK ON TRACK THANKS TO HIS PARENTS AND COA TEACHERS

Darien, an 8-year-old participant at COA's Riverwest Youth Development Center, is known by COA staff for his fun and energetic personality. Like other kids his age, Darien enjoys playing soccer with his friends and spends his free time playing computer games.

Darien was one of many students nationwide whose educational experience was drastically altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Though usually someone who was described by staff as having an open mind, Darien grappled with the new changes that came with virtual learning.

When Darien first started to attend COA for support with his virtual learning, he struggled. Learning from a screen was an entirely different experience from his former school days. Zoom sessions made focusing on his schoolwork difficult and he would exit out of learning sessions out of frustration. Darien struggled with asking for help and soon began to submit incomplete work to his teachers, and disengage from his learning.

Seeing Darien struggle, COA teachers partnered with his parents and school teachers to ensure he was getting the support he needed. Shortly after, Darien started being more honest with his teachers and asked for help with his assignments. Once he began being transparent about his struggles, COA staff learned more about his needs to help him better succeed.

It didn't take long for Darien to show a complete 180 in his care and attitude towards virtual learning. He soon began to understand the importance of staying logged on to his classes and stayed engaged by keeping his camera on. Darien became invested in his virtual learning and ended up making the most of his experience.

Not only did COA staff provide Darien, and fellow program participants, with a safe and accepting environment to complete online learning, they ensured that Darien's voice was being heard, his needs were being listened to, and he had a community of support to help him persevere.



OUR IMPACT



432

CHILDREN REGISTERED IN COA'S EARLY EDUCATION CENTER PROGRAMS



471

YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN COA'S AFTER SCHOOL COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER PROGRAM



6,160

VISITS TO COA'S FOOD PANTRY IN THE AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD

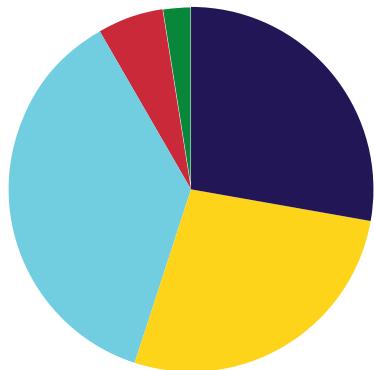


54

FAMILIES ATTENDED COA'S CAMP HELEN BRACHMAN THIS SUMMER

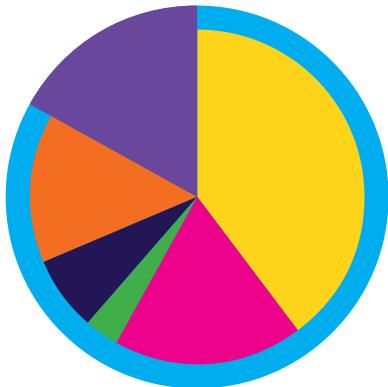
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FINANCIALS



ANNUAL OPERATING REVENUE

Contributions and Grants	\$1,862,921	27.83%
Program Service Fees	\$1,821,851	27.21%
Government Grants	\$2,460,298	36.75%
United Way	\$399,237	5.96%
Special Events	\$149,996	5.2%
Total Annual Operating Revenue	\$6,694,303	100.0%



EXPENSES BY PROGRAM

Early Childhood Education	\$2,556,252	39.81%
Youth Development	\$1,179,393	18.37%
Family Support Services	\$217,429	3.39%
Camp	\$465,776	7.25%
Community Services	\$926,447	14.43%
Total Program Expenses	\$5,345,297	83.24%
Total Management & Fundraising	\$1,076,136	16.76%
Total Annual Expenses	\$6,421,433	100.0%



Charity Navigator awarded COA its highest 4-star rating for the 16th consecutive year for financial transparency and quality of programs and services. COA is Charity Navigator's highest-rated human services agency in Wisconsin, and the third highest-rated non-profit in Wisconsin!

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