Serving Children, Strengthening Families, Building Community since 1906

2014-15 ANNUAL REPORT
Dear COA Friends,

One of my greatest joys as COA’s Executive Director is sharing our history and the impact of our programs. There is a story that illustrates what sets COA apart, and I believe it captures COA’s unique character and distinct approach to serving children, strengthening families, and building community:

Several people are standing by a river, and they see a child flailing—about to drown in the water. So they all jump in and pull the child out. And then they see another child in the water… and they jump in and pull the child out. This keeps happening and as they are jumping in they notice one person has not jumped, but is instead walking up the bank. “Hey!” - they call. “Where are you going?” And the person answers: “I’m headed upstream to stop these children from falling into the water.”

This theory of lasting change is at the core of COA’s work since 1906, and it continues to guide the work we do to serve over 10,000 children and families annually at 10 locations throughout Milwaukee and our 206-acre camp in central Wisconsin. For more than a century, COA has understood that engaging parents in the creation of a nurturing foundation for their child is vital to any effort to address challenges faced by low-income children and families and break cycles of poverty, violence, and hopelessness.

COA’s focus is on early child development, youth development, and community development; and the impact of COA’s family-centered approach is evident in fundamental transformations we have achieved with the children and families we serve and through our partnerships with families and community members in the Amani and Riverwest/Harambee neighborhoods.

This report looks at some of the exciting milestones we have reached over the past year thanks to the support of donors, volunteers, and community stakeholders. We thank you for investing in COA and the children and families we serve, and for helping the most vulnerable members of our community build new traditions of success and a greater quality of life.

I invite you to give me a call and “walk upstream” with me. I would love to give you a personal tour of COA so you can see for yourself the impact of what we do and how we do it. We simply couldn’t do this without your support.

Sincerely,

Tom Schneider
Executive Director

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**Annual Operating Revenue**

- Contributions and Grants: $2,156,265 (37.64%)
- Government Grants: $1,522,171 (26.57%)
- Program Service Fees: $1,032,452 (18.03%)
- United Way: $735,329 (12.84%)
- Special Events: $281,866 (4.92%)
- **Total Annual Operating Revenue**: $5,727,983 (100.00%)

**Expenses by Program**

- Youth Development: $1,513,282 (26.26%)
- Family Support Services: $846,677 (14.69%)
- Community Services: $1,062,127 (18.43%)
- Early Childhood Education: $1,131,299 (19.63%)
- Camping: $556,910 (9.67%)
- **Total Program Expenses**: $5,110,295 (88.68%)

- Total Management & Fundraising: $652,169 (11.32%)
- **Total Annual Expenses**: $5,762,464 (100.00%)

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For the 10th consecutive year, COA Youth & Family Centers has received a four-star rating from Charity Navigator—a national evaluator monitoring America’s non-profit organizations. COA was rated:

- One of only 35 charities in Wisconsin with a four-star rating
- The highest rated Wisconsin youth & family services charity
- Only 1% of all charities nationally have 10 consecutive 4-star ratings
**Early Education Centers**

COA’s Riverwest Early Education Center (EEC) stands alone as a model of quality early education in the Riverwest and Harambee neighborhoods. We operate one of only nine Early Education Centers in the City of Milwaukee that are accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and moreover, one of only two NAEYC accredited programs in Milwaukee that are located in the lowest socioeconomic status zip code areas.

With the generous support of the Burke Foundation, in August 2015 COA opened the brand new Burke Early Education Center at COA’s Goldin Center. This center is modeled after COA’s Riverwest EEC and has the capacity to serve 116 children ages 6 weeks to 6 years in the Amani neighborhood.

**Early Child Development**

In 2015, COA DOUBLED its capacity to provide high-quality early education.

**FAMILY RESOURCE CENTERS**

COA’s Harry and Rose Samson Family Resource Center and its Ethel Nutis Gill Family Resource Center (FRC) provide fun, interactive activities and age-appropriate spaces for families with children ages birth to five. FRC programming is structured to provide an inviting space for parent and child to bond through shared experiences and for parents to cultivate a network of support and opportunities to learn from one another.

**Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngstergers (HIPPY)**

Parental engagement is the key to children’s academic success. The HIPPY program helps pre-school aged children develop the cognitive, literacy, communication, social-emotional, and behavioral skills to be ready to learn and succeed in school.

97% of parents in the program reported knowing what skills their child should have before entering kindergarten.
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Through COA’s holistic youth & family programs, youth have opportunities to develop skills necessary to break cycles of poverty, violence, and academic failure, grow in self-sufficiency, and positively contribute to their communities. We want to strike at the hopelessness that stands in the way of youth realizing their fullest potential.

COA’s youth program design incorporates academic enrichment, career exploration and job skills development, personal growth and development, cultural arts, community engagement, and recreation.

Education/Career: The academic enrichment component helps youth develop positive attitudes and passion for learning as well as the support they need to perform well in school.

Personal Growth and Development: Activities in conflict resolution, team building and communication skills grow youth’s confidence and self-sufficiency, and help them make improved life choices.

Cultural Enrichment: COA programs provide youth with opportunities for self-expression through the arts.

Community Engagement: Quality programs must interconnect with other key factors affecting the lives of the youth we serve including their families, schools and neighborhoods. COA provides youth with the opportunities to put their skills into action through community service and leadership opportunities.

Recreation: Indoor and outdoor recreation include a wide variety of activities throughout all of COA’s youth programming giving youth the opportunity for new experiences and skill building.

88% of youth improved on believing they could make a difference in their community.

100% of campers received a full or partial scholarship to attend camp.

Campers have the opportunity to try many new activities including:

- Kayaking
- Swimming
- Journaling
- Cheerleading
- Camping
- Weightlifting
- Meditation
- Drama
- Canoeing
- Yoga
- Football
- Biking
- ....and more!
With great support from residents and partners, we are fundamentally changing the neighborhoods we serve and improving the quality of life. COA is changing the environment that wraps around and affects the children and families we serve every day.

Located next to COA’s Goldin Center in the Amani neighborhood, the boarded-up former Moody Pool was a haven for illicit behavior. In partnership with residents and the Milwaukee County Parks Department, a new Moody Park was built, providing a vibrant community gathering space with a splash pad, community building, gardens, basketball courts, and a walking path. In August, 500 residents joined in opening this great new park. And there is a new Amani United neighborhood association, block watches, neighborhood clean-ups, and 250 - 500 residents regularly attend COA’s Family Fun nights.

At COA’s Riverwest Center, COA operates Kilbourn and Kadish Parks and provides an array of youth and family programming. This summer more than 9,000 people attended COA’s family-friendly Skyline Concert Series and other performances in COA’s Selig-Joseph-Folz Amphitheater. What was once a crime-ridden litter-strewn haven for illicit behavior. In partnership with residents and the Milwaukee County Parks Department, a new Moody Park was built, providing a vibrant community gathering space with a splash pad, community building, gardens, basketball courts, and a walking path. In August, 500 residents joined in opening this great new park. And there is a new Amani United neighborhood association, block watches, neighborhood clean-ups, and 250 - 500 residents regularly attend COA’s Family Fun nights.

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AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD ACHIEVEMENTS

• VOTING HAS DOUBLED IN THE AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD
• CRIME HAS DECREASED 31.5% IN THE LAST TWO YEARS IN AMANI
• THE GOLDIN CENTER PEDIATRIC AND FAMILY CLINIC AVERAGES 90 VISITS/MO
• NEW MOODY PARK OPENED
• NEW EARLY CHILD EDUCATION CENTER OPENED