**Worcester Youth Center Staff**

(as of May 1, 2014)

- Samuel Martin
  - Executive Director
- Laura Suroviak
  - Instructor
- Sheron Hozier
  - Program Manager
- Callista Perry
  - Program Facilitator
- Jeanette Roach
  - Program Manager
- Johanna Diaz
  - Program Coordinator
- Jyima Ofori-Atta
  - Program Coordinator/Case Manager
- Leena Varjabedian
  - Receptionist
- Andrea Howliet
  - MSPCC Counselor
- Egbert Pinero
  - Youth Development Specialist
- Maria Sanchez
  - Outreach Worker
- Jorge Escobar
  - Facilities
- Jesus Huertas
  - Transportation
- Christina Hatziemmanuel
  - Administrative Coordinator
- Rosa Medina
  - Youth Staff
- Jennifer Jimenez
  - Program Facilitator

**2013 Board Members**

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**Cover**

*SHELTER ME*, collaborative work, YouthReach Arts Program participants, acrylic on cardboard (2014). Through a process of community analysis, the group identified homelessness as a key issue facing young people and adults in Worcester. The silhouette serves as a reminder that any young person can become homeless. This annual report’s artwork was produced through the YouthReach Arts Program, funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council.

**Below and Opposite Page**

Youth Center members enjoy a safe space to be themselves.
Gearing up to Gain 21st Century Skills

The Worcester Youth Center enjoyed a year of accomplishment in 2013, with a renewed focus on academic support and creating connections to the workforce. Walking beside them on their journey to completing high school and accessing the opportunities of a college education, we also feel that offering ways to develop workforce skills for a continually challenging economy is one of the best ways we can equip our youth for lifelong success.

Our Massachusetts Clean Energy Center grant has sparked several new initiatives as we all learn more about how this new sector can change today’s jobs and create new ones never before imagined. You can read about these programs and other long-established efforts to direct youth to a path leading to a brighter future.

We will spend 2014 looking back as well as looking forward, as we celebrate our 20th anniversary. Please join us in some of our many activities throughout the year.

We thank you for the enthusiasm, energy and financial support you bring to the Worcester Youth Center and to the city’s youth.

Samuel Martin
Executive Director

Laurie Ross
President
New Directions, New Lives

The decision to change directions was critical for both GED graduate Gina Antuna and “Hope,” a teen girl participant in the Bridging Opportunities Gap (BOG) program. Gina was in a job with few prospects, a home health aide with some challenging clients. Without a high school diploma or a car, her options were limited. At 16, Hope had been in the juvenile justice system and was ready to put all that “drama,” as she called it, firmly into the past.

Both girls walked through the Youth Center’s doors at a turning point in their lives. Gina had been a member eight years earlier, when she was in high school and the Youth Center was closer to downtown. Ready to return to the classroom, she began taking GED classes with “Ms. Laura” to complete her high school equivalency program. A dedicated participant in the Bridge to College and Green Careers program (see story next page), Gina also worked with the younger teens in the One Circle program and may have found a possible career in counseling.

“I like how they’re spunky,” she says. But if they get out of line, she says, “I have a way of talking with them so they’ll listen.”

Hope was new to Worcester, in foster care, and looking for a job. Paid through BOG, she now has a paid internship, playing with five- and six-year-olds in an afterschool program. The children have a goal, she said in a soft-spoken voice, to learn to tie their own shoes before they leave the program. Her own goal is to pursue a degree in criminal justice, join the police force or maybe become a bounty hunter.

The time and effort put in by both women is showing positive results. After passing the GED exam, Gina gave a graduation speech at the Center. Thanking Ms. Laura for her “undenying passion for helping people succeed,” Gina acknowledged her own newfound passion for education. She is a member of the Leap to College program (see page 4), which is helping to demystify the college experience as well as the process of gaining credit for courses.

Hope will graduate early from high school in an accelerated program. Throughout the school year, her after-school charges get right to work when they arrive between 2:30 and 3:30 p.m. While they play games, assemble puzzles, and color, she’s building her future.
Growing with Green

While green jobs in clean energy may not be well understood, there has been plenty of interest among Worcester Youth Center members in a new program to prepare them to enter this growing sector. The ultimate goal of the new program, funded with a grant from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, is to help youth ages 16 to 24 explore green careers and plan for the further education required to enter the field.

“The Department of Labor has identified three sets of green jobs,” explains Jeanette Roach, who coordinates the program’s components at the Youth Center. Existing jobs revamped as “green,” such as driving a hybrid bus or inspecting organic farms; changing skills within occupations, such as construction managers who need to learn about green construction methods; and new jobs, such as solar panel installers or wind turbine manufacturing and maintenance.

More than a dozen youth have undergone OSHA training for safety certification, Microsoft Office training for computer skills, heard local speakers on green jobs and the science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) courses that these jobs require, and enjoyed field trips to Metech Recycling and Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives at Gateway Park, a former brownfield site. Some have attended classes at Quinsigamond Community College on college and career readiness, and identified projects to explore sustainable practices, such as starting a recycling program at the Youth Center.

Says Roach, “They’re seeing how they could make a future for themselves.”

BELOW

Looking Out, Luis R., acrylic on canvas (2014)
Set up for Success

For many youth, the leap from high school to college looks like a chasm too wide to cross. Some may not have considered college as their next step, but are now ready to make the transition.

In its second year, the Leap to College program builds a bridge for youth to arrive on campus equipped to face new challenges. Two components prepare participants for college-level work and orient them to campus life – an Accuplacer prep class and ORT 110, a Quinsigamond Community College course, “Strategies for College and Career.”

As program coordinator Laura Suroviak explains, even among college-bound high school graduates, “there is a gap where high school education does not align with what you need in college.” The Accuplacer test, administered by state colleges and universities, assesses a student’s readiness for college-level math and writing courses. Placement in a remedial course does not count toward the credits required for graduation and adds to a student’s college costs.

The Accuplacer prep class, taught at the Youth Center by Ruth Seward, is a high-energy classroom where up to 10 students focus on a multitude of math and writing skills. She customizes her lessons to meet the specific needs of the group, making math relevant to everyday life and helping students overcome writer’s block. Their work has resulted in gains in both math and writing scores.

The QCC course offers a “gentle transition” from the comfort of the Worcester Youth Center to a college environment. Bussed over to the West Boylston Street campus, youth members who have achieved certain Accuplacer results participate in a nine-week accelerated course designed specifically for them. Thanks to grants from Hoche-Scofield Foundation, United Bank Foundation and The Francis A. and Jacquelyn H. Harrington Foundation, says Laura, “we can set young people up for a greater likelihood of success.”
Circle of Support and Sharing

It’s easier to develop leadership skills when you’re in a circle of friends, and the One Circle program, funded by the Fred Harris Daniels Foundation and the United Way of Central Massachusetts Women’s Initiative, encourages girls ages 12 to 14 from Sullivan Middle School to support each other in the face of many social pressures. Now in its third year, the program produces “lightbulb moments” that continue to surprise Jennifer Jimenez, who coordinates the group at the Youth Center. Two other groups, run by Community Builders at Plumley Village and the Latino Education Institute (LEI), meet at Worcester East Middle School and the LEI building.

Jennifer admires the girls’ ability to “see the big picture and identify deep issues with such clarity.” Whether the topic of discussion is communicating with authority figures, body image or cyber bullying, her group, whose members came from different academies within Sullivan, were willing to share personal stories and work collectively to solve problems.

One social problem they focused on was homelessness and poverty, holding a bake sale to make care packages for battered women living at Abby’s House, and soliciting household donations from the teachers at Sullivan.

Together with the other groups, they have gone rock climbing and toured a college campus. And at the Worcester Center for Crafts, they have built a “growth dress,” forming pots of clay, planting flowers and arranging them in a metal dress form sculpture to create a blossoming positive fashion statement.
Your Dollars at Work

Lives are changing at the Worcester Youth Center. We are giving youth the skills required to succeed in school, the workplace and in life. The process can be slow and the results long-term, but your contributions make a significant difference in many ways. We celebrate every success and remain grateful for your confidence and support of our work.


**ASSETS**

**Current Assets**
- Cash and equivalents: $116,124
- Investments: $825,474
- Grants and contracts receivable: $147,682
- Prepaid expenses: $20,888
- **Total Current Assets**: $1,110,168

Property and equipment, net: $558,878

**TOTAL ASSETS**: $1,669,046

**LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**

**Liabilities**
- Accounts payable: $37,343
- Accrued expenses: $17,005
- **Total Liabilities**: $54,348

**Net Assets**
- Unrestricted: $1,504,534
- Temporarily restricted: $110,164
- **Total Net Assets**: $1,614,698

**TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS**: $1,669,046

**REVENUE** Year ending December 31, 2013

- Grants and contracts: $292,363
- Temporarily restricted: $80,102
- Contributions: $169,467
- Temporarily restricted: $98,270
- Investment income, net of investment fees: $12,024
- Net realized and unrealized gain on investments: $101,097
- Contributions in-kind: $119,136
- Other income: $2,369
- **Total Revenue and Support**: $874,828

**EXPENSES** Year ending December 31, 2013

- Recreation: $74,245
- Leadership: $121,884
- Health and wellness: $62,252
- Work readiness: $302,423
- Education: $119,288
- General administration: $97,561
- **Total Expenses**: $777,653
Thank You to Our Generous Donors in 2013

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$50,000-$99,999
Commonwealth Corporation
Fred Harris Daniels Foundation, Inc.
UMass Memorial Health Care

$25,000-$49,999
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United Way of Central Massachusetts

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Expecting, Idalis Rios, mixed media on canvas (2014)
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Edward and Marie Driscoll
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Ann Flynn
Ninoza S. Garcia

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT

Holding on to comfort, Idalis Rios, acrylic on canvas (2014); Worcester Youth Center members Stand Against Racism; YouthReach 2014 artist at work; Willie and Bob, Willie Clarence Hargrove III, acrylic on canvas (2014); dancing in renovated studio.
Joan Green  
David and Rosalie Grenon  
Alan and Evelyn Harris  
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Mass Audubon Society  
New England Fitness Compound  
Nuestro Huerto  
One Love Café  
Our Neighborhood Peace Park  
Sol de Mexico  
Straight Ahead Ministries  
Viva Bene  
Worcester County Food Bank  
Worcester Public Library
BELOW

Home, youth artist collaboration, acrylic on wood (2014). “Creating home” may require many helping hands.

Not just a place to go. A place to go further.

worcesteryouthcenter.org 508 - 791 - 4702