STAFF
Samuel Martin
Executive Director
Sheron Hozier
Assistant Director
Maria Sanchez
Transitional Support
DuVone Mitchell
Transitional Support
Lulu Moyo
Program Coordinator
Rose Caraballo
Program Coordinator
Gina Antuna
Transitional Support
Sonya Campbell
HiSet Instructor
Ruby Glover
Work Readiness Coordinator
Demario Andrews
Program Coordinator
Dana Mordi
Transitional Support
Jorge Escobar
Custodian
Andrena Taylor
Bookkeeping
Colleen Vernitsky-Potts
Grant Writer

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Cesar A. Vega
Robb Zarges

COVER
Emily Alvarado
My Starry Self
Dear Friends,

This past year has been one of renovation and rebirth. In the second half of 2016, long-hoped-for plans to remove the old Capitol Toys warehouse next door became far more concrete. Thanks to the persistence of board member Andy Serrato, the eyesore of a condemned building is no longer part of the first impression visitors have when they come to the Youth Center building.

Renovation was also an unexpected feature of the fall of 2016, with an historic flood event in late October. The Friday night floodwaters stripped off all the wax from our flooring and drowned a few boxes of brochures and other papers, but the upside was that no one was hurt. The cleanup company had the dehumidifiers running in short order. After only one day of clearing out debris, we were back in business on Tuesday.

The Worcester Youth Center has become a six-day-a-week operation, with afterschool and Saturday programs ranging from baking to brotherhood, spoken word slams, sisterhood and community service. Take a few minutes to read about the power of art, listening and outreach in the lives of our members and our broader Worcester community.

As our grant funding sources continue to evolve with our changing economic and political climate, we are deeply grateful for your continuing support of our work with youth. Together, we are helping them see new directions for their lives and the Youth Center as a place to go further.

With all best wishes,

Samuel Martin          Laurie Ross
Executive Director     President
Simon Gregory grew up on the wrong side of the tracks in a small textile town, Chadwicks, New York. Although he lived close to a fine art museum in nearby Utica, he never visited and knew no one that did. On his return from his service in Vietnam where he served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps, he knew he wanted to help others. Connecting people with art became his passion.

“Art brings things out of people – it’s an expression of life,” said Simon in a recent interview. Long before his days in Vietnam, he always fought for the underdog. Standing up for others was “how I was raised,” he said. Simon sees creativity as a way for people to change their life circumstances. So he and his wife Nancy have been long-time supporters of the Worcester Youth Center, particularly its YouthReach arts program. They also contribute to the Hilda Ramirez Scholarship Fund.

Last year they purchased several cameras for the Center, and photography became a primary medium for the 2016 art exhibition. One photo of a homeless woman, which appeared in the 2015 annual report, was Simon’s anonymous contribution.

Nancy marvels at the multiple responsibilities the staff take on to ensure the Center’s success. “We’ve seen the effects of positive leadership at the Center,” said Simon. “They have a plan, they know what to do and how to measure it. Treated as young adults, the youth of Worcester are achieving new goals.”

“We get a lot of satisfaction out of helping the Youth Center,” they both agreed.
LABELS DON’T DEFINE US

For six years, Worcester Youth Center members involved in the YouthReach arts program have developed their creative talents while confronting a community concern. The group selects a theme, explores it through art at the Worcester Art Museum, and an art exhibit is born.

Throughout the 2016-17 school year, program coordinator Lulama Moyo has taken the group of 14- to 19-year-olds through some intense discussions. Through her passion for social justice and her work as a spoken word performer, Lulu has brought local experts into the group’s conversations around such topics as media literacy, gender roles/norms and the normalization of street violence through Hip Hop culture, bullying, queer and LGBT+ issues, urban farming and food justice, and the school-to-prison pipeline.

This year’s theme has emerged as intersectional empowered identity. The title of the showcase is “Pure. Proud. Self: A Collaborative Exploration of Community and Personal Identity.” Beginning with the personal, youth created different versions of self-portraits – in watercolor, painted masks, collages of media headlines and images. They illustrated themselves as inanimate objects they felt strongly drawn to – in one case, strawberry shortcake. Some of the final assignments that express their identity include small canvas acrylic paintings, t-shirts, masks, and their community in Worcester embodied in a group mural.

Program participants “were excited to translate what they’re talking about into something tangible,” said Lulu. “Art has the power to translate the challenges and triumphs the youth experience in their community.”
Every Thursday, a group of 7 to 12 men gather at the Youth Center. Ages 17 to 24, they meet to talk, checking in on each other’s lives, what’s bothering them, what’s going in their neighborhoods.

Organized in 2016 through a grant from the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI), these conversations are designed to help the men consider new approaches to recurring problems, how to stay away from trouble spots. All have been involved with government agencies from a young age, and all have seen violence firsthand. They come from different neighborhoods across the city.

“We talk about how to minimize negative risk factors,” said DuVone Mitchell, transitional support staff, who co-facilitates the group with MSPCC mental health provider Lauren Hollins. “We try to give them a sense of hope.”

“The main thing,” DuVone continued, “is finding positive role models.” Meetings may include people who are on a successful path, such as one member who is developing a business plan to bring solar power to poor neighborhoods and non-profit agencies. Concluded DuVone, “we identify with leaders and develop more.”
Reducing youth violence in Worcester is a long-term goal, and the Worcester Youth Center has played a key role in the city’s ongoing efforts. Most recently, partnering with the Main South Community Development Corporation (CDC), Clark University, Boys & Girls Club and Straight Ahead Ministries, the Youth Center hired a youth outreach coordinator in July 2016 for the Main South area. Since then, Transitional Support staffer Ruby Glover has worked closely with Egbert Pinero of Straight Ahead Ministries to become a known face in the neighborhood. Their daily work last summer found them connecting with youth between the ages of 14 and 24 along Main Street from Hammond down to Freeland Streets, during basketball games in Crystal Park and on the blocks toward the train tracks. Funded through a three-year $992,000 grant awarded to Main South CDC by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), their outreach may lead to referrals to job training programs at the Youth Center, memberships in the Boys & Girls Club, a home visit with parents, or just a chance to be heard. The pair also participates in a Youth/Police Dialogue program for middle and high school students, designed to dispel stereotypes and build relationships between youth and Worcester Police officers. The DOJ program selects communities to use data-driven strategies to reduce crime and violence in targeted neighborhoods. Worcester’s planning year began in 2015 with 2016 as the first of two years to implement strategies developed through a web of cross-sector partnerships. Clark University researchers have collected data and monitored changes in the neighborhood’s crime statistics and other measures. “The Worcester Youth Center has a proven record of working with young people who might not engage with the city’s more traditional agencies,” said Steven Teasdale, Main South CDC’s executive director. “They provide a meaningful role for youth to speak to youth.”
YOUR INVESTMENT IN OUR WORK

Support for the Worcester Youth Center is an investment in our collective future. For more than 20 years, the Center’s work has created positive change for thousands of young people, encouraging new directions and better life decisions. Your contributions have had a significant impact on our community. We remain grateful for your confidence and continuing support.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION — DECEMBER 31, 2016

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>Liabilities and Net Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Assets</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cash and equivalents $100,732</td>
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<td>Investments $657,462</td>
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<td>Grants and contracts receivable $155,976</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses $22,972</td>
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<td><strong>Total Current Assets</strong> $937,142</td>
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<td>Temporarily restricted $29,120</td>
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<td><strong>Property and equipment, net</strong> $592,725</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</strong> $1,529,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Assets</strong> $1,529,867</td>
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</tbody>
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REVENUE Year ending December 31, 2016

- Grants and contracts $596,968
- Temporarily restricted $26,325
- Contributions $193,114
- Temporarily restricted $43,500
- Investment income, net of investment fees $14,860
- Net realized and unrealized gain (loss) on investments $(47,280)
- Contributions in-kind $29,790
- Other income $7,817

**Total Revenue and Support** $959,654

EXPENSES Year ending December 31, 2016

- Recreation $38,010
- Leadership $69,634
- Health and wellness $172,006
- Work readiness $583,654
- Education $141,560
- Management and general $57,858
- Fundraising $47,775

**Total Expenses** $1,110,497
MANY THANKS TO OUR
2016 SUPPORTERS

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FOUNDATION AND
GOVERNMENT DONORS

$100,000 and above
City of Worcester

$25,000 - 49,999
Commonwealth Corporation
Greater Worcester Community Foundation
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
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$10,000 - $24,999
The Ruth H. and Warren A. Ellsworth Foundation
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UMass Memorial Health Care - Community Benefits
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Main South CDC
The Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation
Rockwell Foundation
Worcester State University

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The Hart Foundation
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Warner and Mary Fletcher
Simon and Nancy Gregory
Todd and Benjamin Keating
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Charles and Lenore Monahan
David and Marlene Persky
Roger and Serra May Plourde
Greg Potts and Colleen Vernitsky-Potts
Richard Pyle
Cathy K. Recht
Laurie Ross and Jeff Black
Carol L. Seager
Samuel Soji Wada
Up to $249
Larry and Gloria Abramoff
Chris and Ingeborg Baehrecke
Joseph and Kristin Bafaro
Thomas and Lynora Bartholomew
Judith Barton
Allen and Sarah Berry
Diane Blake-Johnson
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Debbie and Charlie Cary
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*I Am Because We Are*