

Community Unlimited Annual Report

October 1, 2016 - September 30, 2017

221 Ellen Street
Union City MI 49094
517-741-4656

www.communityunlimited.org



Mission: To build a community of character for all generations to interact and grow as we live, work and play - a healthy community for all. **Long Term Goals:** Youth residing in the area communities will learn and practice the skills of economic self-sufficiency, healthy relationships, and community involvement. Residents of the area communities will have resources to meet the needs of youth.

History: Community Unlimited was established on September 25, 1999 by a group of citizens interested in improving the community, which is defined by the geographical area served by Union City Community Schools. Non-profit 501(c)3 status was granted in December 2000, with final determination in 2005. The Board of Directors is representative of diverse age groups and the geographic service area. Active local and regional partnerships exist to provide programming and support organizational sustainability. Community Unlimited is a member in the MI AfterSchool Association, UC Rotary Club and The Coordinating Council of Calhoun County.

Board Goals for 2016-17 (unofficial) were:

1. Develop and maintain enriching opportunities for youth in our communities.
2. Create relationships and explore possibilities regarding Parent Advisory Committees and gather input from all programs served.
3. Intentionally develop action teams to fully utilize board members' expertise, time and commitment, and ensure a diversity of opinions. Create a personnel team and a finance team.

Board of Directors (current): Meets at 6:30 pm at the Community Center, 221 Ellen Street, Union City; board meets quarterly at dates set the previous meeting.

- Stacy Guertler, President
- Carrie Gallup, Vice President
- Faith Robertson, Treasurer
- Alona Hayden, Secretary
- Diane Haley
- Deb Geiger
- Judy Knowles
- Mandi MacDonald
- Susan Morton

Current Central Office Staff: Julie Dibert-Dunks, Executive Director; Teasha McIntosh, Administrative Assistant; Jolene Yeakey, Accountant and HR, and: Connie Kennedy, Grants Manager.

2016-17 Program Reports

BLAST provided before and after school programming four days a week for 115 elementary and middle school students. 99 (86%) attend regularly! The comprehensive program included homework help, individualized reading tutoring at UCES, choices of age appropriate activities, field trips and

community service. All participants have supper (plus snacks at the Middle School) and bus transportation home. The Site Coordinators are **Malinda Olmsted** (UCMS) and **Cher Troup** (UCES), both long-term BLAST employees. **Thirty-eight of 99 (38%) regular participants have identified risk factors. Fifty-three percent qualify for the free/reduced school lunch program**, an indicator of poverty. Twenty-five days of summer programming were offered in June, July and August for 5.5 hours a day. Seventy-three students participated in summer 2017; the average days of participation was 19 of 25, and; **73% participated 15 days or more**. Seventy-two students were enrolled this fall in BLAST.

Highlights from the 2016-17 year-end evaluation report from *iEval*:

- 86% of the participants in 2016-17 attended 30 days or more of programming, with **53% of the students during the school year attending 90 days** (of 128 days) or more.
- Participation in BLAST programming continues to have a **positive impact on school day attendance** at both Elementary and Middle Schools
- Participation in BLAST programming met goals for improvement in language arts grades and annual growth on Performance Series reading; Elementary School program met goal for Performance Series math scores
- The school district changed tests between spring and fall 2017, so there cannot be an achievement evaluation determined for the effectiveness of the summer program.

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP): GSRP utilizes high quality High Scope curriculum to prepare children from low income families **for success in Kindergarten**. We promote family engagement by offering play groups and family activities and offer the services of Family Liaison staff, who assist individual families. For the 2016-17 school year CU operated **eleven GSRP classrooms** in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer, Harper Creek and Lakeview school districts, all under the direction of Julie Dunks, serving a total of **184 children**. We were asked to take over operation of one of Harper Creek Community Schools' GSRP classrooms at the beginning of the 2016-17 school year, and for 2017-18 have one classroom in Pennfield School district.

CU-Early Childhood Connections: Jenny Rouble, our trained **Family Coach**, continued to develop CU's ECC program. She provided on-going resources and support to families with children ages 0-5 utilizing **Parents as Teachers** curriculum. The program year for CU-ECC is July 1-June 30, so for this time period for 2016-17 the caseload was 18 families with 31 children. 88 children ages 0-5 were registered in **Imagination Library** (each receives an age-appropriate book per month in the mail), and 24 families had **Welcome Baby Baskets** delivered. The program provided services to Athens and Tekonsha through partnerships with **local donors, CISD, Athens Area Community Foundation, Tekonsha Library, and the Research Club**. For 2017-18 Heidi Moyer joined the team as a Family Coach.

After School Pack Program provided almost **1,500 packs** for about **50 children** during the school year. This year we are already serving 60 kids! Each pack provides a weekend supply of nutritious, kid-friendly food. We want to thank all of the donors and volunteers to this program, especially UCMS BLAST students for packing the bags, the Food Bank of South Central Michigan, the Ladies of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Walters-Dimmick Petroleum, and the CU-UC Elementary & Middle School BLAST Program kids for their great fundraisers.

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance): CU's free 2016 income tax site served **305 low-income area adults and children** for a total return amount (state, federal, and state credits) of **\$229,334**, including **\$80,542** in EITC. Increasing Earned Income Tax Credit refunds increases local spending, as well as helps

our community's high-need children and families. **Thank you** to our volunteers: Dennis Stanton, Paula Blue, Sheryl Watson, and Anne Lightfoote. The site will operate at the CU Building February-April 2018 (2017 tax year). Call the office if you would like to volunteer as a tax preparer - we need you!!

Other activities:

- **Girls on the Run** - 31 third-fifth grade girls participated last school year. In this partnership CU provides supper and bus transportation home. Some participants are also active in BLAST.
- **Reading/Mentoring** partnership with Union City Rotary continued to provide long-term mentors and books to **thirty** at-risk elementary and middle school students. UCCS staff Holly Bain assisted.

Community Unlimited Building - Our Funding Challenge

The long-awaited renovation of our building began last year. Our plan will require phases to accommodate our fundraising progress, as well as the need to work around the GSRP school year. Last year we replaced the heating system and half the windows and doors, as well as remove asbestos. The **Bronson Family** generously donated an additional significant sum in order to finish Phase 1 by installing the remaining windows and doors. And then there was the expensive, unanticipated roof repair required during the spring deluges.

Renovation of the interior front half of the building started in August with reconstruction of the office area, though it has been stalled by a needed outside drainage issue. This project will be completed by the end of the year and is fully funded. The next project, in the process of being estimated, will renovate a classroom and children's restrooms. A capital campaign is needed to help fund the remaining projects of Phase 2, the front interior of the building.

We cannot write about our building renovation without speaking of our dear friend, **Marv Carman**. He was a one-in-a-million. Always working in his own, distinctive way to fund our building projects. We were honored by and so very grateful for his dedication to our organization. We are the beneficiaries of his memorial contributions that - of course! -- will go into our building fund.

Sustainability

Community Unlimited made a major advancement in its long-term sustainability in 2013 when it added early childhood GSRP programming. It moved the major source of organizational revenue from grants to state program revenues, making CU's future more secure. In 2016-17 the total revenue was **\$1,861,697**:

- **79.5%** of the revenue came from program **contracts** with CISD (GSRP) and the State of Michigan (21st CCLC and food programs)
- **15.9%** was **term-limited program grant funds**
- **4.7%** were donations, fundraising, field trip fees, and miscellaneous revenue.

In 2014 CU began to operate, in partnership with CISD, GSRP programs outside of its defined service area: Tekonsha, Homer, Harper Creek, Lakeview and Pennfield. While we extended our programming success to the region, we have increased our capacity to provide high quality programming to children, youth and families to the Burlington/Sherwood/Union City communities.

Fundraising: 2017 GLOW RUN had about 200 participants, 75 volunteers, 31 sponsors and **earned \$2833** in profits! Watch for the 2018 date. **MANY THANKS** to staff and volunteers who make it run smoothly!

Our Funding Partners:

- **Michigan Department of Education:** CU is in the fourth of a five-year **21st Century Community Learning Centers** grant. We are recognized for top program quality, and Julie Dunks serves on the MDE 21st CCLC Advisory Committee and MiSAYD Credential Committee.
- **Calhoun Intermediate School District** contracted with CU to provide eleven full day, state-licensed GSRP classrooms in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer, Harper Creek and Lakeview (Battle Creek) school districts. In October 2016 they also contracted with us to provide Family Coaching in Calhoun County.
- **Michigan's Child and Adult Care Food Program** and **Summer Food Service Program** reimburse for most meals/snacks for BLAST and GSRP. We have food contracts with the school districts to provide meals.
- **Binda Foundation** funded \$25,000 per year for two years for our CU-ECC program. This is our second grant from the Battle Creek foundation that is a major supporter of early childhood programming.
- **Branch County United Way** - We received an allocation of \$1800 this year, primarily for the CU-ECC program. Julie Dunks serves as President on the BCUW Board of Directors.
- As in previous years we gratefully received **in-kind** funding from partners, **Union City Community Schools** for space, maintenance, equipment use, and a great deal of cooperation. We also have a long list of local partners that contribute to our programming.

The **endowment fund** that CU has with the **Branch County Community Foundation** will eventually provide undesignated revenue. The value as of September 30, 2017 is **\$23,135.71**, a good increase from last year's **\$19,525.90**. We **appreciate** having community members contribute to this fund directly. Send donations to Branch County Community Foundation, 2 W. Chicago St., Coldwater, MI 49036 and indicate on your check that it is for the CU Endowment.

Community Unlimited continues to be sustained by the passionate people who join together to contribute to the life of our community. We appreciate our volunteers and employees who embrace our dedication to children, quality programs and a close connection to our community. CU is known for being eager to learn, striving toward excellence and embracing best practice procedures, squeezing a lot out of a little and still having high quality programs, maintaining our sense of humor while we push beyond our comfort zones, taking sensible risks - and ***always*** asking "how does this positively impact children and families?"

Established in 1999, **Community Unlimited** is committed to improving the **quality of life** for all who live in Burlington, Sherwood and Union City. We provide enriching opportunities for **children and their families**, with a focus on **early childhood** and helping **youth** achieve their academic goals and practice community involvement.

Keep in touch with what we are doing at www.communityunlimited.org or like us on Facebook!

This organization is an equal opportunity provider.

Questions? Contact Julie Dunks, 517-741-4656/jdibert@communityunlimited.org.

