

Community Unlimited Annual Report

October 1, 2015 - September 30, 2016

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 2015-16 (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.

- Lu Ann Hull, President
- Alona Hayden, Secretary
- Stacy Guertler, Treasurer
- Carrie Gallup
- 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.

2015-16 Program Reports

BLAST provided before and after school programming four days a week for 110 elementary and middle school students. 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.

Forty-two of 91 (47%) regular participants (attended at least 25 days) **have identified risk factors.** **Fifty-six percent qualify for the free/reduced** school lunch program, an indicator of poverty. Twenty-nine days of summer programming were offered in June, July and August for 5.5 hours, five days a week. **Ninety-six students** attended, with **69%** attending 15 or more of the 29 days.

For the 2015-16 school year two CU staff members worked in the UCHS After School Homework/Tutoring program. **Teasha McIntosh** and **Amanda Sours** offered academic support two days a week under the direction of a high school teacher.

Highlights from the 2015-16 year-end evaluation report from *iEval*, our external professional evaluators:

- **811 different students** have participated in BLAST over the past 7 years (21st CCLC funding)
- 83% of the participants in 2015-16 attended 30 days or more of programming, with **57% 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, as well as a **positive impact on student behavior**, as measured by out-of-school suspensions.
- Participation in BLAST programming may have had a **positive impact on reading progress** at UCES based on Performance Series testing.
- The summer BLAST program positively impacted math scores for 4th, 5th and 7th grade participants and reading scores for fourth graders.

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP): GSRP utilizes high quality High Scope curriculum to prepare children from low income families **for success in Kindergarten.** For the 2015-16 school year CU operated **ten GSRP classrooms** in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer, and Lakeview school districts, all under the direction of Julie Dunks, serving a total of **186 children.** We were asked to take over operation of Union City Community Schools GSRP classroom at the beginning of the 2015-16 school year, and in September 2016 we took over one classroom at Beadle Lake Elementary School, Harper Creek School district. We promote family engagement by offering play groups and family activities and offer the services of Family Liaison staff, who assist individual families.

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. As of 8.30.16 she had a caseload of 15 families with 26 children on her caseload. 170 children ages 0-5 are currently enrolled in **Imagination Library** (each receives an age-appropriate book per month in the mail); 68 families had **Welcome Baby Baskets** delivered and; 25 toddler **play groups** were offered for parents to learn how to play with their children and to form relationship networks. A Service Day provided dental, hearing and vision screenings to the communities. The program provided services to Athens and Tekonsha through partnerships with Athens Area Community Foundation, Tekonsha Library, and the Research Club.

After School Pack Program provided almost **1,300 packs** for about **40 children** during the school year. Each pack provided a weekend supply of nutritious, kid-friendly food. We want to thank all of the donors and volunteers to this program, especially the Food Bank of South Central Michigan, the Ladies of Our Savior Lutheran Church, Union City Middle and High School staff, UC Elementary PTO, Cequent Performance Products, Walters-Dimmick Petroleum, Don's Citgo, and the CU-UC Elementary & Middle School BLAST Program fundraisers.

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance): CU's free 2015 income tax site served **339 low-income area adults and children** for a total return amount (state, federal, and state credits) of **\$251,093**. 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, Anne Lightfoote, and Alice Goodsell. The site will operate at the CU Building February-April 2017 (2016 tax year). Call the office if you would like to volunteer as a tax preparer - we need you!!

Other activities:

- **Girls on the Run** - **28 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 **twenty-six** at-risk elementary and middle school students. UCCS staff Holly Bain assisted.

Community Unlimited Building - Our Funding Challenge

Because of the generosity of the **Bronson Family** and an anonymous community member, CU was able to start a three-stage renovation of the old school district building that was donated to CU. Marv Carman is leading the fundraising efforts to finish Phase 1 and move on to Phase 2. The first stage of renovation, completed during this fiscal year, replaced the heating system, and half the windows and doors on the building. Although replacing all windows and doors and installing air conditioning was really a part of Phase 1, the amount raised would only partially finish Phase 1. The **Bronson Family** has again generously donated the money to fund Phase 1, which is currently being completed. **We are so appreciative!!** A capital campaign to fund Phase 2 (interior work in the front half of building) and Phase 3 (interior work on community spaces in the back portion of building) will continue. The building houses the CU central office, a preschool classroom, the After School Pack program, and Vita site, as well as providing training space and storage. We also rent space to *Positive Image Dance Academy*.

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 2015-16 the total revenue was **\$1,591,758**:

- **79.4%** of the revenue came from program **contracts** with CISD (GSRP) and the State of Michigan (food programs)
- **18.1%** was **term-limited program grant funds**
- **2.5%** were donations, fundraising, field trip fees, building rent, and miscellaneous revenue.

In 2014 CU began to operate, in partnership with CISD, GSRP programs outside of its defined service area: Tekonsha, Homer and Lakeview and now Harper Creek. 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: 2016 GLOW RUN had 255 participants, 40 volunteers, 34 sponsors and **earned \$2287** in profits! The 2017 date is **July 14th**. **MANY THANKS** to staff and volunteers who make it run smoothly!

Our Funding Partners:

- **Michigan Department of Education**: CU is in the third 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 nine full day and two half day GSRP classrooms in ten state-licensed classrooms in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer and Lakeview (Battle Creek). In October 2016 they are also contracting 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.
- **United Way of Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region** -CU received a four month extension on the two-year grant (\$24,250 per year) for our CU-ECC program to complete this grant cycle. However, it was clear that a grant application for the 2016-19 cycle would not be successful because the CU-ECC program does not impact the current goals of UWBCKR - to positively impact state achievement scores of one of the Battle Creek school districts. We don't anticipate applying to UWBCKR in the future.
- **Branch County United Way** - We received an allocation of \$3000 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, 2016 is **\$19,525.90**, a good increase from last year's **\$17,919.80**. 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 Dibert Dunks, 517-741-4656/jdibert@communityunlimited.org.

