

Community Unlimited Annual Report

October 1, 2018 - September 30, 2019

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 wishing to improve the community, defined as 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 represents 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 and UC Rotary Club.

Annual Board Goal

To 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 the Community Center, 221 Ellen Street, Union City; meets quarterly at dates set the annual meeting. Call the office for dates.

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

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

A big change in our leadership happened October 28th. Julie Dunks, our long-time, fantastic Executive Director, has moved on and is now Director at a new MDE organization in early childhood resources serving western Michigan. We congratulate her as she applies her competent skills toward a wider mission and are so grateful for the innumerable contributions she made to CU. Her shoes will never be fully filled but her responsibilities will be covered by current staff until the position is reposted in Spring 2020. She continue to contribute her strengths as a consultant. We wish her well!!!!

2018-19 Program Reports

BLAST provided before and after school programming four days a week for 138 elementary and middle school students. 118 (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 had supper (plus snacks at the Middle School) and bus transportation home. The Site Coordinators were **Malinda Olmsted** (UCMS) and **Cher Troup** (UCES), both long-term BLAST employees. **Sixty-four percent qualified for the free/reduced** school lunch program, an indicator of poverty. Nineteen days of summer programming were offered in June and July for 5.5 hours a day. Eighty-two students participated in the 2019 Summer BLAST program.

Highlights from the 2018-19 year-end evaluation report from *iEval*:

- **86%** of the participants attended 30 days (of 128) or more of programming; **52% of the students attended 60 days or more.**
- Participation in BLAST continues to have a **positive impact on school day attendance**, especially for those students participating 60 days or more at the elementary or 90 days or more at the secondary level. **Attendance is recognized as a predictor of graduation, so BLAST adds to the effectiveness of the school experience.**
- Regular participation contributed to a **positive impact on school day behavior** at the Middle School for those students participating 90 days or more.
- Participation in BLAST programming contributed to a **positive impact on academic achievement in mathematics** at the middle school.
- **80%** of parents gave the BLAST program a grade of **A: Excellent.**

Unfortunately, a significant event for the BLAST program in 2019 was that CU was not funded for another five years. Thus, after a four-week summer program, **the BLAST program ended.** CU is funding a **morning program at the three Union City schools**, which supports a safe, supervised space for homework completion every school morning. The accumulated GLOW RUN profits will be able to fund this program for two years.

Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP): GSRP utilizes high quality High Scope curriculum to prepare children from low income families **for success in Kindergarten.** For 2018-19 CU operated **thirteen GSRP classrooms** in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer, Harper Creek, Pennfield and Lakeview school districts, serving a total of **216 children.** This remains the same for the 2019-20 school year. We hope that ultimately local school districts will understand GSRP is a vital contribution to their educational mission. We promote family engagement by offering family activities and the services of Family Liaison staff, who assist individual families. This year we hope to continue the parent program on the Five Protective Factors that we piloted last year in partnership with Battle Creek's BC Pulse.

CU-Early Childhood Connections: **Jenny Rouble**, our trained **Family Coach**, provided services to families in Union City, Sherwood, Burlington, Athens and Tekonsha until early June 2019. We were lucky enough to hire **Staci (Scherry) Beckmeyer**, a Union City native early childhood educator, as the new Family Coach. She continues to provide on-going resources and support to families with children ages 0-5 utilizing **Parents as Teachers** curriculum. All children in the program increased their ASQ development scores this year. For 2018-19: the caseload included 21 families with 27 children; 69 children ages 0-5 were newly registered in **Imagination Library** (each receives an age-appropriate book per month in the mail); 47 families had **Welcome Baby Baskets** delivered, and; books were distributed thru "Happy Endings by CU". The Little Free Library remains outside the CU building. This program operates a Diaper Pantry in Union City and Tekonsha. Financial partners are **local donors, CISD, Athens Area Community Foundation, Tekonsha Library**, and the **Research Club.** This program has an active donor campaign to raise funds for the Imagination Library and Diaper Pantries.

After School Pack Program provided over **2,300 packs** for about **80 children** during the school year. Each pack provided a weekend supply of nutritious, kid-friendly food. We want to thank all of the donors to this program for their generous donations, including: the UC Elementary, Middle, and High Schools; the CU BLAST programs for their HUGE fundraising efforts (and the UC families for donating); the Food Bank of South Central Michigan; Walters-Dimmick Petroleum; UC PS Food Mart; Ladies of Our Savior Lutheran Church; Strandmasters Unlimited; American Legion Post 196; UC Rotary, and: Tom Manning & Associates. We also need to thank the UC Athletic teams, UCHS Interact, Mr. Bob Collins, and the UC GSRP staff for helping pack the packs each month. This is truly a community effort!

VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance): CU's free income tax site prepared 270 state and federal returns for a federal return amount of **\$271,004**, including **\$64,966** 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, Judy Knowles, Sheryl Watson, and Anne Lightfoote. **And thank you to the First Congregational UCC** who provided our space in 2019. For the coming tax year - February-April 2020 - VITA will be back at the CU Building. Please call the office if you would like to volunteer as a tax preparer.

Other activities:

- **Girls on the Run** - CU provided supper and bus transportation home to the third-fifth grade girl participants of this local program. Some participants were also active in BLAST.
- **Reading/Mentoring** - Union City Rotary continued to provide long-term mentors and books to at-risk elementary and middle school students. CU staff assisted Rotary's development of this program.

Community Unlimited Building - Our Continuing Funding Challenge

Renovation of our building began three years ago. Our plan specified phases to accommodate our fundraising progress, as well as the need to work around the GSRP school year. Three years ago 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.

Two years ago we renovated the main office area, and last year we completed the Executive Director's office, a children's restroom, an adult restroom. This is significant, because the plumbing had been original to the building and was a constant headache. The next project was to be the completion of the GSRP classrooms. However, when CU did not receive the grant renewal for BLAST in May, the resulting budget modification did not have sufficient money for any renovation project. In addition, while roof leaks are being temporarily repaired soon, the need for a new roof has risen to the top of the building renovation project list, at an estimated cost of \$35,000.

Sustainability

In 2018-19 the revenue maintained the same level of sustainable funding as the previous two fiscal years. The annual audit report prepared by Taylor, Plant and Watkins, PC, Coldwater MI is available upon request.

- Total revenue was **\$1,950,565** (\$1,983,318, 2017-18):
- **96.8%** (97.6%, 2017-18) of the revenue came from program **contracts** with CISD (GSRP) and the State of Michigan (21st CCLC and food programs)
- **1.8%** (1.7%, 2017-18) was **term-limited program grant funds**
- **1.5%** (.7%, 2017-18) were donations, fundraising, field trip fees, and miscellaneous revenue.

A disruption to the funding stream occurred in May when **CU's 21st CCLC** continuation grant very narrowly missed the cut-off score for renewal. This program fully funded the after school and summer programs in UC

Schools and shared organizational/personnel expenses with other CU programs. Therefore, the budgets of other programs, especially GSRP, were affected. One impact is that GSRP revenue will not be a source of building renovation funds. CU will have to return to traditional fundraising to cover the cost of necessary repairs, as well as changes to our building.

Fundraising: The **2019 GLOW RUN** earned **\$5348** in profits! **MANY THANKS** to staff and volunteers who have made it run smoothly for **SEVEN** years!

Fundraising in 2019-20 will include Imagination Library/books, the Diaper Pantry, and a new roof for the CU building. Development of a long-term plan for BLAST program funding will be a major 2020 task.

Our Funding Partners:

- **Michigan Department of Education:** 2018-19 was the last of a five-year **21st Century Community Learning Centers** grant. We were recognized for top program quality.
- **Calhoun Intermediate School District** contracted with CU to provide thirteen full day, state-licensed GSRP classrooms and Family Coaching in rural Calhoun County.
- **Michigan's Child and Adult Care Food Program/Summer Food Service Program** reimbursed meals/snacks.
- **Binda Foundation** funded \$26,000 per year for two years (2018-20) for our CU-ECC program.
- **Branch County United Way** - We received an allocation of \$6000, primarily for the CU-ECC program.
- As in previous years we gratefully received in-kind funding from partners, including **Union City Community Schools**, for space, maintenance, equipment use, and a great deal of cooperation.

The **CU Endowment fund** with the **Branch County Community Foundation** has a value as of September 30, 2019 of **\$26,206.68**, an increase from last year's **\$25,458.30**. 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. Thank you!

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 Connie Kennedy at 517-741-4656 or ckennedy@communityunlimited.org

