

# Community Unlimited Annual Report

October 1, 2020 - September 30, 2021 DRAFT 11.8.21



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 provide programming support and organizational sustainability. Community Unlimited is a member of American/Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children and UC Rotary Club.

## Annual Board Goal

To meet as a Board at least quarterly; to create a Personnel Committee.

**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.

- Judy Knowles, President
- Diane Haley, Vice-President
- Faith Robertson, Treasurer
- Alona Hayden, Secretary
- Sheryl Burlingame
- Deb Geiger
- Stacy Guertler
- Susan Morton
- Julie Dunks
- Pam Smith

**Current Central Office Staff:** Jenna VanDyke, Executive Director; Teasha McIntosh, Office Manager; Jolene Yeakey, Accountant/HR; Connie Kennedy, Grants Manager, and; Allie Ake, Receptionist/Assistant.

## 2020-21 Program Reports

The Covid 19 pandemic and its many effects was the predominant condition for Community Unlimited's 2020-21 year. We endured and continued to offer in-seat quality early childhood programming and parent/family coaching services with many health and safety protocols in place. As much as we hoped for a return to normal this year, the Delta variant continues to affect all aspects of programming.

No K-12 Out-of-School Time (OST) programming was offered in 2020-21. A MI Department of Education 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers Request for Proposals (RFP) is expected in January 2022. Our intention is to apply to reinstate before, after and summer school activities in partnership with UC

Schools for Kindergarten through twelfth grades. A successful application means new programs would start at the beginning of the 2022-23 school year. We are excited about being able to return to this major service to the Union City/Sherwood/Burlington communities.

The Michigan legislature has opened a grant opportunity for 2021-22 for Out-of-School Time (OST) programs for Community-Based Organizations. UCCS and CU are beginning discussions to see if we will apply. This is the first time the state has established a funding option to support OST programs.

### **Great Start Readiness Program (GSRP)**

GSRP utilizes high quality High Scope curriculum to prepare children from low/moderate income families **for success in Kindergarten**. We continue to aim toward our local school districts embracing GSRP as a vital contribution to the public school educational mission. GSRP is so much more than childcare.

In 2020-21 CU operated **eleven GSRP classrooms** in Union City, Tekonsha, Homer, Harper Creek, and Lakeview and added **two** new CU classrooms at Gordon Elementary School in Marshall. Enrollment was 180 children, down significantly due to Covid. All classrooms were in-seat, with distance learning offered full-time for some students and when a classroom needed to close. Parent engagement was offered using Zoom or a restricted Facebook group, which proved to be a successful method of parent contact.

The 2020-21 school year is not back to normal. Enrollment was very slow, and while finally increasing, CU still has a good number of empty slots (seats). As of October 26th, **201 children** are enrolled in **thirteen classrooms** with our core of **competent** staff. We have had to add many new faces. Hiring new staff has been a challenge! We appreciate the **significant revenue increase** the Governor and Michigan State legislature gave to GSRP. We were able to raise teacher and central office staff salaries by **seven percent** and our hourly staff **ten percent**.

### **Summer GSRP**

Community Unlimited wrote a successful competitive grant to Michigan Department of Education to offer a full summer program. Although the program was for K-12, our 2020-21 GSRP children could be considered "rising kindergarteners". We had two classrooms in both Union City and Lakeview School districts with a total of 51 children that met 4.5-hour days, five days a week for ten weeks. We used regular HighScope curriculum taught by our experienced school year staff to help students make up for the disrupted school year. We provided breakfast and lunch and took educational field trips. Our staff was very satisfied with the learning progress children made over the summer.

### **CU-Early Childhood Connections**

**Staci Beckmeyer**, our trained **Family Coach**, provided services to caseload families in Union City, Sherwood, Burlington, Athens and Tekonsha for the entire year, despite the challenges. She sent activity packets home, maintained contact with all of her caseload families, and modified Welcome Baby Basket deliveries and Diaper Pantry operations to respond to the increased need. She also assisted several GSRP classrooms.

She continues to provide on-going resources and support to families with children ages 0-5 utilizing **Parents as Teachers** curriculum. For 2020-21: the caseload served 18 families/42 children; 43 children ages 0-5 were newly registered in **Imagination Library** (each receives an age-appropriate book per month in the mail); 41 families received **Welcome Baby Baskets**, and; 416 books were distributed at local events. The **Diaper Pantry** distributed 887 diaper packs and 331 wipe packs!! All children being seen in the in-home coaching program increased their ASQ development scores this year. Financial partners are **local donors, CISD, AACF, Tekonsha Library, Green Thumb Garden Club, First Congregational Church** and FOUCL. This

program has an active donor campaign to raise funds for the Imagination Library and Diaper Pantries. **A special THANK YOU to generous donor Phyllis Bronson!**

**After School Pack Program** provided over **1700 packs** for about **70 children** at the three schools in Union City during the 2020-21 school year except for two months of closures. Each pack provided a weekend supply of nutritious, kid-friendly food. We want to thank all the donors to this program this year: Food Bank of South Central Michigan, Walters-Dimmick Petroleum, UC PS Food Mart (donated over 6000 Pop Tarts), and Ladies of Our Savior Lutheran Church. We also want to especially thank Stacy Guertler, Carrie Adams and Mandi McDonald, the school counselors, who distribute the packs to children every week. More thanks to the CU office and UC GSRP staff who packed all bags this last year. We are excited to have our community volunteers return to packing the bags this school year!

### **VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)**

CU's free income tax site opened as planned in early February, with health/safety precautions in place. It prepared 254 state and federal returns. Earned Income Tax Credit refunds increase local spending, as well as helps our community's high-need children and families. **Thank you** to our volunteers: Dennis Stanton, Sheryl Watson, Anne Lightfoote, Kris Clark, Judy Knowles, and Doreen Counterman as well as Office Manager Teasha McIntosh. Our VITA site will provide free tax preparation for the coming tax season February 2-April 15 at the CU Building. Please call the office if you would like to volunteer as a tax preparer.

### **Glow Run Mini-Grant Program**

Using numerous years of Glow Run profits, we have initiated a program to support clubs or activities operated by UCCS staff under supervision of the UCCS Principals. Children need to be active in "disguised academics", fun and hands-on activities in regularly scheduled meetings outside regular school hours. Staff can apply using the form available from their Principal or from our office.

## **Community Unlimited Building - Our Continuing Funding Challenge**

Renovation of our building began five years ago. We replaced all windows and doors, replaced the heating/cooling system in the front of the building, removed all asbestos, renovated the main office area, the Executive Director's office, adult restrooms, and improved the outside water drainage issues.

This year we replaced the roof, extended the heating/cooling system to the back of the building, replaced the sidewalk on the building's east side, and completely finished one GSRP classroom, including a two-stall children's restroom. With a surprise federal food program application, we are renovating the kitchen in a new space. Once the current kitchen space is cleared, the Early Childhood Connections program will relocate to the front west room. In the current GSRP budget we are requesting funds to complete a second classroom in the southeast part of the building. The building renovation program is making significant progress, but will remain on CU's agenda.

### **Sustainability**

Revenue Summary:

Total revenue was **\$1,902,176** (\$2,044,049, 2019-20):

- **\$1,610,452 (84.7%)** of the revenue came from stable program **contracts** with CISD (GSRP, Coaching) and the State of Michigan (food programs)
- **\$285,005 (15%)** of the revenue came from non-stable or variable grants from MDE, AACF, Binda Foundation, Branch County United Way, and the PPP federal small business loan that was forgiven.
- **\$6,719 (.4%)** (4.1%, 2019-20) were donations and fundraising revenue

The revenue stream changed somewhat in 2020-21 because of new programs offered (PPP and Summer GSRP) and changes in how the state-funded food programs operated in the local school systems - all pandemic related. However, the continuity of our current main source of revenue (GSRP) has been very stable with no anticipated changes for the future, all of which defines the organization's sustainability. While GSRP is very stable, the ECC revenue stream is more variable. It is funded by seven revenue streams of renewing grants and donations. Establishing a more secure funding stream for this program is desirable.

Fundraising in 2021-22 will include Imagination Library/ECCC give-away books, the Diaper Pantry, the After School Pack Program, and CU building renovation. Donors can now conveniently **use the Donor Button at [www.communityunlimited.org](http://www.communityunlimited.org)** to contribute to these programs, as well as sending them to **CU, 221 Ellen Street, Union City MI 49094**. Annual audit reports, prepared by Taylor, Plant and Watkins, PC, Coldwater MI, are available on the website or upon request.

#### **Our Funding Partners:**

- **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** reimbursed meals/snacks.
- **Michigan Department of Education** - We received a \$76,000 grant for a summer program for GSRP kids.
- **Binda Foundation** funded \$16,000 per year for two years (2020-22) for our CU-ECC program.
- **Branch County United Way** - We received an allocation of \$10,000 for the CU-ECC program.
- **Athens Area Community Foundation** - We received a one-year \$3300 grant for the CU-ECC program.
- **Our community donors**, for whom we are **SO** grateful.

The **CU Endowment fund** with the **Branch County Community Foundation** has a value as of September 30, 2021 of **\$**. **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 is sustained by passionate people who contribute to a healthy, thriving community. We appreciate our volunteers and employees** who embrace our dedication to children and families. CU is known for being eager to learn, striving toward excellence, and embracing best practice procedures, squeezing a lot out of a little while providing high quality programs, maintaining our sense of humor as 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](http://www.communityunlimited.org) or like us on Facebook!

**This organization is an equal opportunity provider.**

Questions? Contact Jenna VanDyke at 517-741-4656 or [director@communityunlimited.org](mailto:director@communityunlimited.org)



**Tekonsha Library Friends**