# 2012 REPORT TO COMMUNITY



PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER our next generation

# Letter to the Community

Standing on stage in the Grand Ballroom of the Pfister Hotel, holding the prestigious MANDI award high overhead, we felt humbled and grateful. The Outbound Learning program for which we were honored (page 2) is one example of our continuing efforts to expand our reach and impact.

We've managed the growth and development of our programs to ensure our **number one priority**: providing a safe, encouraging place that enables children to succeed academically, mature with the guidance of dedicated staff and volunteers, and gain awareness of the vast opportunities available to them beyond their narrow, immediate environment.

#### In 2012 we had much to celebrate:

- Froedtert Health became an Outbound Learning partner.
- We acquired a 32-passenger bus, thanks to generous financial gifts from Froedtert Health, Elizabeth Elser Doolittle Charitable Trust and Edward U. Demmer Foundation, supplemented by individual gifts.
- Microsoft Corporation employees helped us obtain computers with up-to-date software for schoolwork use.
- With generosity and technical skills, MSOE helped us greatly improve our facility and website, and provided engaging science programs to our youth.
- The leadership of Washington Park Partners and LISC Milwaukee inspired the community to see our neighborhood's potential and join the revitalization effort. We are proud to be part of the team. (Page 3).
- Our committed staff and volunteers who motivate and support our youth to overcome their obstacles and dream of the wonderful things life offers.
- The special grants and gifts we received that enabled us to improve our academic, tutoring and mentoring programs, serve hot, balanced meals every day, and offer exciting arts and other special programs such as Phenomenal Ladies, Leadership Academy, and High School Connection.
- The growth of our board of directors, where long-time members blended their wisdom and experience with the energy of new members, and together they led the organization forward. When a dedicated member such as Julie Krey (VP ManpowerGroup) finally yielded to the growing demands of her job, we felt the loss of her wisdom, foresight and generous personality. But then we were heartened to meet Kathy Bennett, managing partner at Komisar Brady, who joined the board and succeeded Julie as our Treasurer.
- After offering Jamie Reeve our deepest thanks when his term as Chairman of the Board ended, we celebrated when he recommitted to the board and accepted the role of Development Co-Chair.
- Finally, we are happy to report that we were able to satisfy the stringent demands of our budget this year without turning to our endowment for help.

For another successful year we thank our donors, who believed in the potential of our children; our volunteers, who gave them love and acceptance; and our Board and staff, who will always know that the measure of our success is found in the hearts and minds of our children.

John Dawson

John Dawson Chairman of the Board

Robert Dunn President and CEO

## Our Families

### LESSONS FROM DIVERSITY

Several years ago a few children from African refugee families were brought to us, their parents looking for a safe, nurturing place. Seeing their enthusiasm for our program, other refugee children soon followed and our involvement with the refugee community quickly grew.

For the important job of serving them we are grateful to have the guidance of our Program Leader Omar Mursal, and no one is better suited for the role. Originally from Somalia, Omar grew up at a refugee camp in Kenya, arriving in the U.S. as a refugee in 2004. He is now an American citizen and a 2012 Marquette University graduate with a bachelor's degree in Social Welfare and Justice. Omar not only speaks their language, he also deeply understands their challenges. As Omar explains:

I was born in the midst of civil unrest and spent my childhood surrounded by the indescribable hardships of war, poverty and dislocation. I experienced horrors that most will never face.

As a newcomer in the U.S., I was an outcast. I didn't speak the language nor did I behave like everyone else. I spoke and dressed differently, reason enough to be treated poorly. My classmates and the adults in my neighborhood would gaze at me as if I were abnormal, and some called me names. Adjustment was difficult, but little did I know that the hardships from my childhood would prepare me for the challenges of integrating into a new country, a new culture, and, most of all, a hostile neighborhood.

Many Somalian refugees in Milwaukee, especially the younger ones, have a harder time dealing with name-calling and unfair treatment. They become confused and disheartened. Some of them, although born in the U.S., are treated as outsiders. Many parents struggle to maintain their roots and culture



KENDREA WITH OMAR MURSAL AND FROEDTERT VOLUNTEER



HALIMA AND ALIYAH ENJOY LEARNING TOGETHER

through food, language, clothing and religion, yet their children often feel caught between two worlds and find it difficult to assimilate.

But for those Somali-Bantu youth fortunate enough to be involved in Our Next Generation, adapting to their new world becomes a gentler process. At Our Next Generation they interact with other youth who have learned not to belittle them, but to welcome and treat them with kindness.

Indeed, through their interactions with refugees, our American youth have learned that all people have equal rights, regardless of their origins. At Our Next Generation, we create an environment where differences are celebrated, and where all children respect and accept each other.

We have also opened our doors to the Somali-Bantu families and adults, who use our Center as a gathering place. At Our Next Generation they feel they belong.

By responding to the growing diversity in our community, we have all benefited. Our African refugee families have started to feel safe and to envision a second chance for themselves, and we in turn have learned that diversity, inclusion and acceptance create a richer and stronger community.

## Our Partners

## OUTBOUND LEARNING PROGRAM BUILDS NURTURING RELATIONSHIPS

The conclusions of recent research may come as no surprise: poverty stunts brain development and the ability to learn and socialize. In addition, before a child can become an effective learner, emotional healing from trauma is necessary.

At Our Next Generation, we help children recover from the trauma of poverty by first creating an environment where they receive one-on-one attention, patience, encouragement, and affection. We consider the bond that forms between the children and their adult role models to be the most important step in healing. In an atmosphere where children can relax and feel loved, we then engage them in a variety of learning and enrichment activities.

One of our innovative approaches to counteracting the effects of poverty is our Outbound Learning Program, which provides a wide variety of enrichment activities while

expanding our children's circle of positive relationships. By matching each of our children with a volunteer mentor at Froedtert Hospital, ManpowerGroup, Milwaukee School of Engineering, Saint John's on the Lake, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee or University School of Milwaukee, we help our children develop rewarding relationships as they learn to envision futures for themselves they might never otherwise imagine.

In 2012, the Outbound Learning Program was selected as a MANDI finalist (and ultimately the MANDI winner) in the PNC Trail Blazer Award category, which honors an innovative approach to a community problem.

Our Outbound Learning partners agree – it is through nurturing relationships that we build strong people and strong communities.

The partnership with Our Next Generation provides UWM students the opportunity to engage in experiential learning while fulfilling UWM's civic mission. Our Next Generation's kids and staff give as much to UWM students as they receive. Our students learn the value of relationship-building while developing a sense of social responsibility and their own civic identity.

> Laurie Marks, Executive Director, Center for Community-Based Learning, Leadership and Research University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee



IBRAHIM WITH MANPOWERGROUP VOLUNTEER BEN PUIBELLO

Residents and staff at Saint John's on the Lake all love having the children from Our Next Generation come to us. We share our love of books and learning with the children in various ways: reading stories aloud, painting pictures, and doing science experiments. We enjoy getting to know the children and look forward to their Monday visits, especially their smiles and hugs.

Suzanne Osetek, Resident St. John's on the Lake

We are a proud supporter of the Outbound Learning Program. As experts in the world of work, we see the looming global talent shortages and we understand the critical need to ensure that every child has an opportunity to succeed in the workforce of the future. Through the Outbound Learning Program, our employers serve as tutors, mentors, and role models who help instill the keys to future success. Our employees are delighted to be a part of this outstanding program and return year after year as volunteers.

#### Pamila Brown, Community Investment Specialist Corporate Affairs, ManpowerGroup

I was delighted that Our Next Generation was the winner of the PNC Trailblazer Award. What a wonderful recognition of our special effort to improve the education and self-esteem of many children! The homework club and other enrichment oportunities have benefited a significant number of children throughout the years. I have witnessed this firsthand.

> Brian Pack, faculty member (retired), University School of Milwaukee

## Our Neighborhood POSITIVE CHANGES IN WASHINGTON PARK

### THE POWER OF COLLABORATION

Struck by poverty, Washington Park is one of Milwaukee's most challenged neighborhoods, but it's also blessed with residents and community members working hard to improve the quality of life in the area.

Revitalization efforts started several years ago. Recognizing that a well-organized neighborhood attracts resources, the first step was to create Washington Park Partners, a group that would define a vision and construct a plan for meaningful, positive change.

After much planning and hard work, and with the collaboration of residents, nonprofit organizations, businesses, corporations and the government, Washington Park began experiencing positive results in 2012, including: the new Autumn West treatment center built across the street from our Center; 24 new housing units completed by United Methodist Children's Center a few blocks west; Milwaukee Habitat for Humanity's investment of \$20 million for new housing and rehab; 27 homes sold by ACTS Housing to low-income families; and Progressive Community Health Center's 40,000 square-foot expansion project slated to break ground in the fall of 2013.

Another remarkable outcome is a 57% reduction in crime. Seeing this number and an organized community ready for change, the U.S. Department of Justice offered the Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant to the Milwaukee Police Department – \$600,000 over the next three years to help implement safety strategies in the Washington Park community. This initiative is one clear example of the role of government in neighborhood revitalization. Corporate support is also emerging in Washington Park: Froedtert Health, active throughout the community, helped purchase our new bus and became our newest Outbound Learning site; and Wells Fargo, committed to a variety of efforts to support neighborhood revitalization, is a major donor to Our Next Generation's summer academic and enrichment camp.

## OUR NEXT GENERATION, A KEY PLAYER

As part of our mission to help build a safe and healthy community around our children and youth, we are fully engaged in improving the quality of life in the neighborhood. Our Next Generation is a Washington Park Patners' member, currently active on its Steering and Education Committees. By hosting strategic planning meetings and other community events throughout the year, our Center has become a hub of activity and an integral part of the community.

Our youth, already benefiting from the changes in the neighborhood, are proudly giving back. In 2012 they helped at community events, participated in the Summer of Peace Parade, converted vacant lots into art spaces and worked on other art projects to beautify the neighborhood. Under the direction of artist and neighbor Muneer Bahaudeen, they created the Peace Posts, which have been installed throughout the neighborhood, and built mini-lending libraries as part of a community-wide effort to highlight the importance and fun of reading.

In our neighborhood we are all working together. Because no one can do it alone.

-Leo Ries, LISC Milwaukee Executive Director

### An organized neighborhood is a resilient neighborhood.



OUR CHILDREN AND YOUTH PARTICIPATING IN THE 2012 SUMMER OF PEACE PARADE



OUR YOUTH HELPING AT A WASHINGTON PARK PARTNERS' COMMUNITY EVENT HELD AT OUR CENTER



MUNEER BAHAUDDEEN SHOWING ONE OF THE MINI-LENDING LIBRARIES CREATED BY OUR CHILDREN

## Donors

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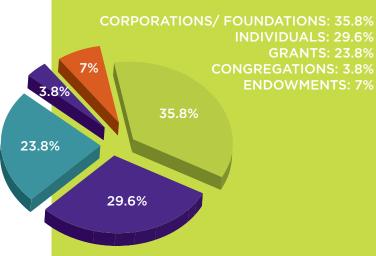
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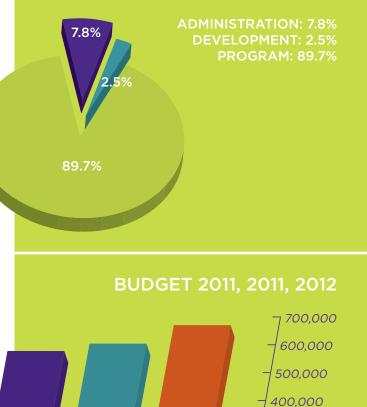
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### 2012 OPERATING REVENUE %



#### 2012 OPERATING EXPENSES %



(projected)

2011

\$580.000

2012

\$610.000

300,000

Board of Directors

The future of the organization depends on a healthy and active board of directors. Board and committee members reach out to the larger community by participating in neighborhood activities and building relationships with funders, while providing operational oversight and strategic planning.

#### DIRECTORS

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Ms. Susan Ball\* Director, Client Development Schenck SC Milwaukee, WI 53224

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Immediate Past Chair: Mr. James S. Reeve III

President/CEO: Mr. Robert Dunn rdunn@ongkids.org

\*Board Committee only

# Special Thanks ...



Our Next Generation's **Enhancing Learning through the Arts** programs have become an essential driver of our students' academic success. Established as a fun activity, the arts have proven to be a powerful method for teaching our youth positive ways to express themselves and to find their unique voice and talents. This creative outlet also provides an effective coping mechanism against the stress and trauma of growing up in poverty.

In 2012, these programs were supported in part by a grant from the Wisconsin Arts Board with funds from the State of Wisconsin and the National Endowment for the Arts; MPS Partnership for the Arts; the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary L. Nohl Fund; Bert L. & Patricia S. Steigleder Charitable Trust; and Jerome & Dorothy Holz Family Foundation.



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