

FY20 Opportunity Fund Grantees Stories of Impact Highlights

United Way of Washtenaw County awards Opportunity Fund grants annually which supports programs, projects and initiatives benefiting people with low incomes, communities of color and groups deemed to be marginalized. In FY20, UWWC invested \$200,000 through this fund, and at the start of the pandemic in March, released restrictions on funding use to allow grantees to responsively attend to the impacts of COVID-19 on the people and communities in which they work. As part of our final reporting, we asked grantees to please share a participant or organizational success story related to this grant.

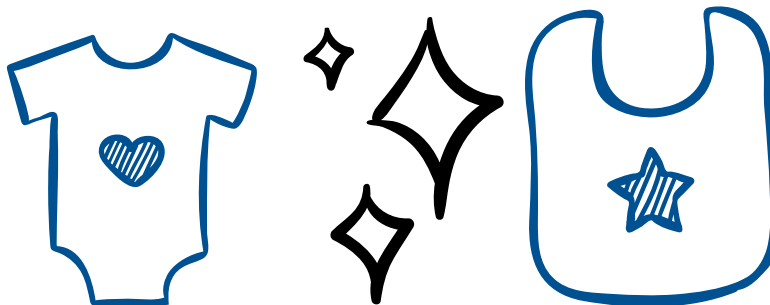
Journey of Faith Christian Church

Lisa is a volunteer who found us through Facebook around Thanksgiving time of 2019. She has a big vegan meal and her initial plan was to drop off leftovers and for her it allows her to introduce vegan food to a new community. She has been coming now since we've been delivering and has been coming every Thursday's. She brings food to the boxes. She feels connected to myself and to the guests. She will ask where someone is or has listened deeply to their concerns that they share with them. She has really befriended people and built relationships in such a way. This is why we do this work. We build relationships across differences.



Our House

When COVID started we had three youth who were pregnant. Because of the pandemic the baby showers were canceled and families were unable to provide when the babies came. They had no baby stuff. We came together with staff, BOD, and mentors to coordinate donations. The youth had more than enough. One young youth had three car seats, and the mother donated another one to other people in need. We have several more youth pregnant. Unintentionally we have developed a closet of baby stuff for youths in need.



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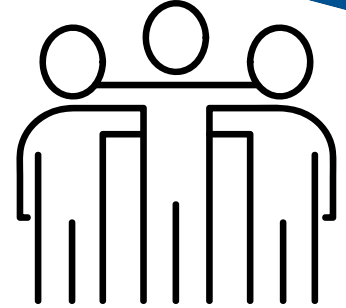
For additional information about our Opportunity Fund efforts,
please visit uwgive.org or contact Bridget Herrmann, bherrmann@uwwashtenaw.org

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Neutral Zone

This story is about a 19 year old youth in the Future Corps program. The young person came through Ozone House and had troubles with mental health and housing. He had dropped out of school and told me "I have applied to so many jobs and no one has called me back. I have hope and I don't feel so desperate. I think this could help me" (referring to Future Corps). He was very interested in IT and tech. We have a train trust with HR from the city and several community partners. There was one meeting with WCC and a person said "There's one kid who hasn't been here in four months and he won't finish his GED". And I told them, I just saw this youth on the city tour. The youth went to WCC and signed up for his GED. The youth went through all four tests. He passed by December and they hosted a party celebrating that he was the first youth to finish all four tests. We might not see how our roles intersect but it was great to see how he could be recruited into a position. He needed to see how he could do this and how qualified and capable he was. He needed to see how some possibilities could work for him to go do the work.



Faith in Action

A client who also serves as a pantry volunteer was discussing her job hunt challenges with our new staff. She had a fair amount of schooling and experience, but her self-esteem had not held up over recent years so she just couldn't see herself securing the right job for her. While she was willing to do any available work, she really hoped that someday she could find the information and organizational skills to get her in the right job. She also had some computer proficiency but not quite enough considering that most jobs she wanted to apply for were online applications and she just needed help with all of it. Our new employment staff person reached out to her and scheduled an appointment with the client, and had also been in touch with a professional job coach who agreed to meet with the staff person and the new client as well to put a big picture job hunting plan together. They schedule a couple of meetings with some homework assignments in between during which the client could work on writing down a list of skills and experiences she had from each of her past jobs and experiences. Unfortunately, COVID directly impacted this story at this point, but all parties are holding tight for whenever the economy and employment opportunities perk back up. We are still in touch with all involved parties and will resume where we left off. The client still maintains a positive outlook and has been able to stay afloat during COVID with our food pantry and free clothing room support.

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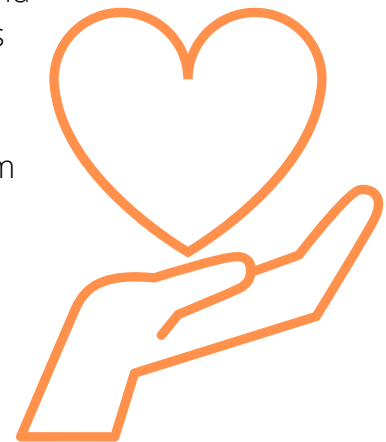
Michigan Organization

on Adolescent Sexual Health (MOASH)



One of the youngest members of the Michigan Youth (MY) Trans Voice Youth Advisory Council - Washtenaw County and their parent.

The parent of one of the youngest members of MY Trans Voice shared with MOASH staff how important the youth advisory council has been for their child. For the first time, this young person wanted to tell their story and advocate for their trans peers. Much of this is due to the support given, skills learned, and opportunities provided for advocacy and awareness raising in the youth advisory council. The parent also shared the importance of the youth advisory council and this specific connection to peers during COVID-19 shelter at home and social distance regulations. The impact is that this young person has influenced decisions made by the Washtenaw County Transgender Task Force by sitting on panels and sharing experiences. This young person is impacting trans youth in Washtenaw County and nationwide with a TikTok video sharing how important getting support is for trans youth. The video has almost 2000 views. It has been extraordinary to see this young person's journey in such a short time. The confidence gained from connecting with peers, learning self-advocacy skills, and being provided a platform has been invaluable to all who have heard this young person speak.



For a full listing of Opportunity Fund grantees with descriptions of their work, please [click here](#). For an overview of the investments made through our Opportunity Fund, please [click here](#).

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