

It takes **all** of us.



Annual Report



JULY 1, 2019 - JUNE 30, 2020

It takes **all** of us.

Contents



Leadership Letter
Letter from the Executive Director 2

Who We Are
Our Work and Community-Based Model 3
Our Story 3

Who We Serve
Student Demographics and Referral Process 4
Mentorship Stories 5

How We Serve
Diversity and Inclusion and Community Partners 6
Impact and Outcomes 7

Our Team
Affinity Staff 8
Board of Directors 9

Growth and Sustainability
Financial Growth and Development Plan 10
Expenses and Revenue 11

Connect With Us
Contact Information and Locations 12
References 13



Leadership Letter



To Our Affinity Partners:

I cannot look to the future of Affinity without looking back at Laura Ward's amazing work over the past decade. We are grateful for her commitment and the strong foundation she built.

I began my role as executive director in May at the end of the lockdown. When individuals, organizations and communities face trials and change, we either come together and produce innovative, creative, inclusive, healing change, or we fall apart, become more divided, and hurt ourselves and those around us. I want to participate in the healing, equitable change in our community, and Affinity is one of the prominent platforms for me to do so now.

COVID-19 is a very real threat in our community. We give a special thank you to our school partners who continue working to safely provide students' education this year. We strive to be extraordinary partners alongside our schools by transitioning from in-person to virtual mentoring for over 250 students and mentors at 4 schools, even as we overhaul our fundraising, partnerships, and activities to keep our community safe, but increase accessibility and inclusivity in our work.

This coming year we will invite the community to hold us accountable through various community listening projects as we continue learning and challenging ourselves in diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism work as we build our next strategic plan. Some of the projects that we have already begun include:

- Continuing to provide equity-based barrier reduction assistance for families and students;
- Providing staff with paid time to participate in all elections;
- Identifying BIPOC owned businesses to reinvest our dollars;
- Actively recruiting more diverse mentors so students can see themselves more widely represented;
- Taking a public stance in support of the Black Lives Matter movement;
- Making our fundraising bilingual and more accessible to match these goals; and
- Ensuring staff are paid appropriately for the work that they do now and in the future.

Additionally, we have beautiful plans to grow organizationally by identifying ways to streamline, automate, and save resources without reducing our personability or expertise in mentor matches and barrier-reduction work. This will allow us to expand and grow without needing to double our revenue, and to have less students on our waiting list each year.

I thank you for your partnership with us in the past, and I ask you, how will you join us in our upcoming journey of learning and growth?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cass Kiger', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Cassandra Kiger
Executive Director, Affinity Mentoring
affinitymentoring.org

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Who We Are



Our Work

We envision that every student has a caring adult mentor to help improve academics, social skills, and self-esteem.

Mutual Liberation

We work towards the mutual liberation of all community members and believe that youth are already leaders and community members, but need equitable access and platforms to use their voice.

Our Model

We are a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that collaborates with individuals and organizations, in partnership with businesses and schools, to provide individual, one hour per week mentoring with trained, safe, supportive adults to support the growth of leadership and social-emotional skills, as well as math and literacy skills.



Our Story



Who We Serve

Why is Social Emotional Learning (SEL) important in education?

SEL competence shows benefits such as:

- ▶ improved test scores, grades, and attendance
- ▶ positive social behaviors and relationships with peers and adults

Durlak et al., 2011; Farrington et al., 2012; Sklad et al., 2012

SEL has been found to:

- ▶ improve achievement
- ▶ increase attitudes toward school
- ▶ reduce depression and stress

Durlak et al., 2011

Kindergartners stronger in SEL are more likely to:

- ▶ graduate high school
- ▶ earn a college degree
- ▶ obtain stable employment in young adulthood

Jones, Greenberg & Crowley, 2015

Target Population

- ▶ Kindergarten - 8th grade
- ▶ Schools with high populations of families lacking access and resources
- ▶ Students that can benefit from additional academic and social-emotional support



Our Students



94% elementary school students

6% middle school students



+80% identify as Hispanic or Latino

Referral Process

Teachers, parents, and administrative staff from our partner schools refer students to our program.

Matching Students and Mentors

Our program staff work one-on-one with students to pair them with a best-fit match based on common interests, background, student needs, etc.



Read more mentor stories at affinitymentoring.org/about/blog/

How We Serve

700%

increase in
mentors of color
since 2016

19%

of mentors live in
mentoring service
areas

30+

community
partners

Diversity and Inclusion

We develop strategic partnerships with community stakeholders to help recruit mentors, sponsor mentor matches, and increase overall organizational capacity. We continue to promote inclusion, celebrate diversity, and uphold equity in our business partnerships, mentoring relationships, and every aspect of service delivery, including materials, purchasing, recruitment, training, activities, and organizational culture even as we continue to learn and improve.

- 16% of mentors speak a language other than English
- 16% of mentors identify as people of color
- 71% of staff identify as people of color
- 60% of board members identify as people of color

Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) Owned Business Where We've Reinvested Our Dollars

Burton Meat Farm | Carbon Stories | Culture Creative | El Globo Restaurant | El Granjero Mexican Grill | Lindo Mexico Restaurante | Shannon Cohen, Inc

Community Partners

“We are proud to support Affinity Mentoring as an organization, but it's our caring volunteer mentors that are the heart of our effort,” explains. “This recent donation of technology will help ensure kids continue to connect with and build relationships with their mentors, to the social and academic benefit of the students, their families, and our community.”

Rich Wolowski | Gordon Food Service, President and CEO



Affinity Mentoring's Community Partners 2019-2020

after the move
Aon
Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI
boldSOCKS
Butterball Farms
Carbon Stories
Chemical Bank
ChoiceOne Bank
COM 616
Dollar General Literacy Foundation
DWH LLC
Erhardt Construction

Kawasaki Engines
Keller Ford
Kent District Library
Kent County Mentoring Collaborative
Molina Healthcare
Geskus Photography
Godfrey-Lee Public Schools
Goei Center
Gordon Food Service
Grand Rapids Community Foundation
Greater Wyoming Area Community Resource Alliance

Grand Rapids Chamber
Grand Rapids Public Schools
Kent School Services Network
Mars Hill Bible Church
Rivertown Finance
Steelcase Foundation
The Wege Foundation
WM Hispanic Chamber
Wyoming Community Foundation
YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin
YMCA of Greater GR

Impact and Outcomes

94%
program
retention



286
mentor
matches

Affinity Named “Nonprofit of the Year”

Affinity Mentoring was recognized as the “2019 Nonprofit of the Year” by the Grand Rapids Chamber at the 10th annual EPIC (Entrepreneurial, Progressive, Innovative, Collaborative) Awards for demonstrating innovation and fostering community growth.

65%
of matches have
been together
2+ years

Data and Evaluation

Our evaluation data is dependent on many other parties including the district administration and third party evaluator. Due to the early shut-down of schools and virtual learning, our partners were not able to complete data collection for the year, inhibiting us from having data to access. As we continue on with the 20-21 school year and foresee the difficulties that partners face in data collection again, we are building a robust plan to complete data collection that we have access to; it is essential to show that we are making data-based improvements.

Community and People Matter



Promoting literacy skills is what we're all about so it was a natural fit for Kent District Library (KDL) to partner with Affinity Mentoring and encourage our staff to mentor young people and we're proud to continue that tradition in the year ahead. To help make this a reality all KDL employees can use one paid hour of time each week to mentor.”

Brian Mortimore | KDL, Director of HR and Organizational Development and Mentor at Burton Elementary



Gracias por ser la mejor mentora del mundo. Estoy muy feliz por ti. Quiero que seas mi mentora para siempre.”

(Thank you for being the best mentor in the world. I am very grateful for you. I want you to be my mentor forever.)

Ericka Lopez | Burton Elementary Student

Our Team

Program Team



Keyla Araujo
ECC Site Coordinator



Rocio Moreno
Burton Site Coordinator



Angela Reyna
Program Assistant



Monica Zavala
SWCC Site Coordinator

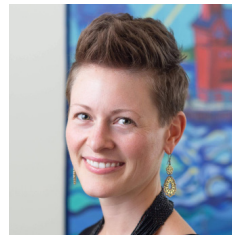
Administrative Team



Holly Hetherington
Office Coordinator



Rachel Humphreys
Development Director



Cassandra Kiger
Executive Director

Equity-Based Barrier Reduction Work

We regularly say that every youth needs 5-7 safe adults they can talk to and trust for healthy development and growth, but simply introducing a student and adult is not the same as fostering relationship building. That is why we have built a mentoring program that focuses on equity-based barrier reduction work to help address the myriad barriers that keep youth from building trusting, adult relationships.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs teaches us that we must first ensure family's basic needs are met - which we do through partnerships, referrals and regular communication with other organizations. Next, we reduce barriers to the relationship building process such as a lack of transportation or supervision for meetings, language barriers, or even having access to spaces where students can safely meet diverse, new adults.

Lastly, we focus on providing in-depth and regular training to all mentors to enhance the mentoring relationship, and are working hard to recruit diverse mentors so that students can more readily see themselves reflected in healthy adults. When you invest in students and families at Affinity Mentoring, you invest in a holistic and comprehensive program that puts equity at the core.

Board of Directors

President

John Robinson

Head Start for Kent County

Vice President

Adam Russo

COM 616

Treasurer

Benjamin Borisch

DWH, LLC

Secretary

Madeline Aguilon

Gordon Food Service

Directors

Jatnna Abreu

Amway

Johana Rodriguez-Quist

Literacy Center of WM

Veronica Bradford

Gordon Food Service

Mia Jankowiak

Grand Rapids Chamber

Jason Loepp

Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI



Front Row [L-R]: Jason Loepp, Madeline Aguilon, Adam Russo, Veronica Bradford, and Johana Rodriguez-Quist.

Back Row [L-R]: Mia Jankowiak, Benjamin Borisch, Jatnna Abreu, and John Robinson.

It's so impactful for underrepresented students to see someone like us. I want to make sure that she is successful, to see me as a role model, and to feel that there's nothing she cannot do."

Jatnna Abreu

Board Member and
Mentor at SWCC



Growth and Sustainability

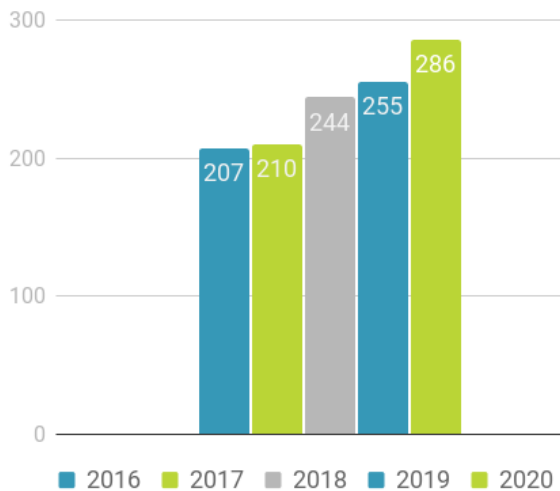
We have been dedicated to building and implementing a diverse and sustainable fund development plan. Over the past five years since we officially became an independent 501(c)(3) we have greatly diversified our revenue and organizational sustainability. Despite being in a pandemic, we saw a 53% increase in total revenue from 2018 to 2020. Including:

611% INCREASE
in corporate donations

12% INCREASE
in individual donations

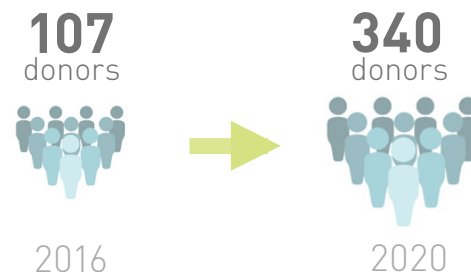
98% INCREASE
in grant revenue

Mentor Matches



Individual Donations

We invest in cultivating meaningful relationships with our stakeholders. We've seen a significant increase in individual contributions and match sponsorships.



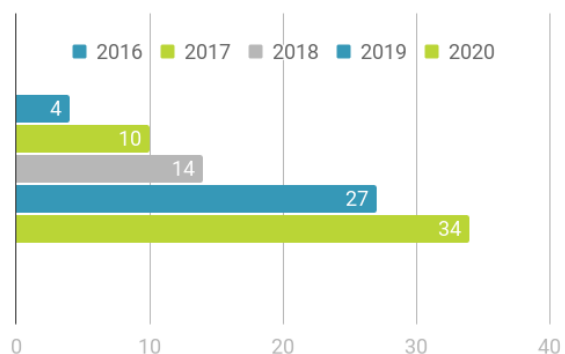
Staff

We strive to meet best practice standards of no more than 100 matches per 1 FTE. In 2015, we had 2 part-time and 1 full-time staff.

Now we've grown to ...



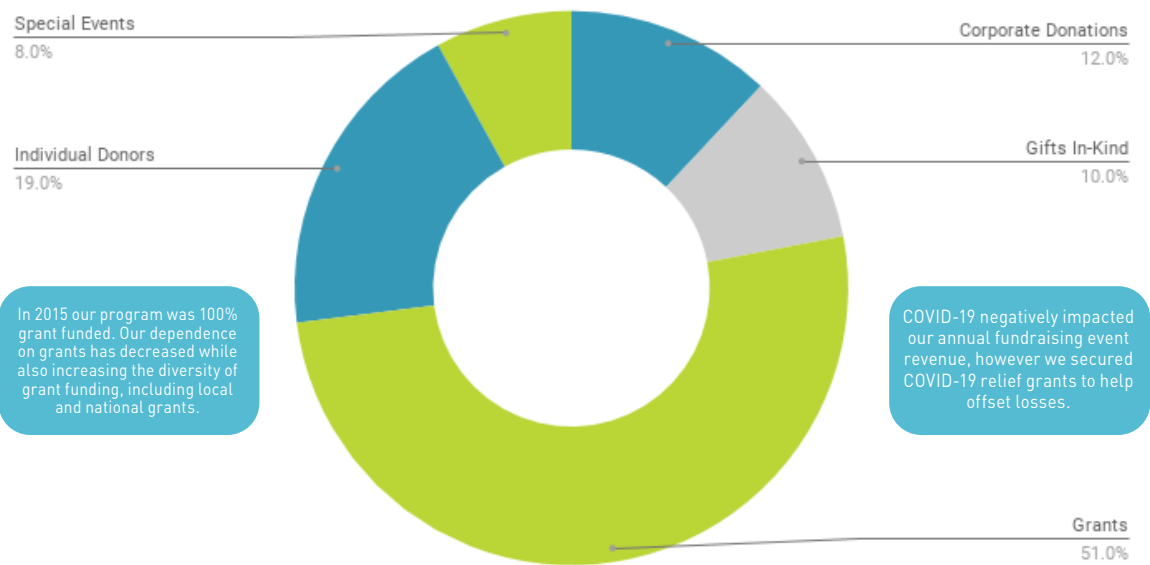
Community Partnerships



Financials

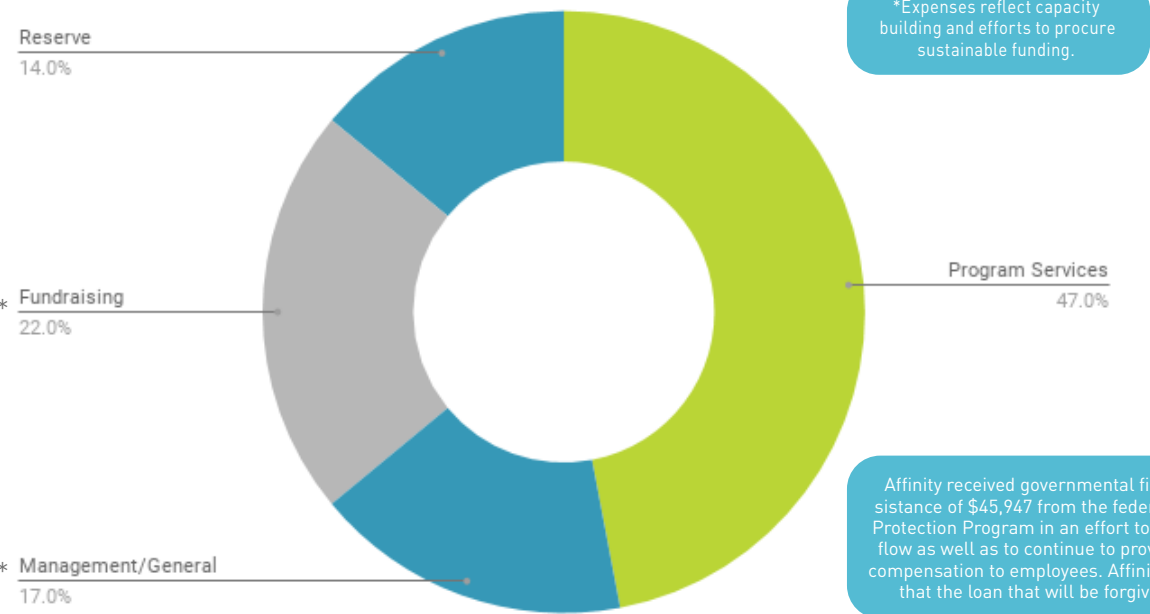
Revenue | \$452,379

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



Expenditures | \$452,379

July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020



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Connect With Us



Join

affinitymentoring.org



Sponsor a Mentor Match

affinitymentoring.org/sponsor/



Email

info@affinitymentoring.org



Like

facebook.com/AffinityMentoring



Call

616.209.8435



Follow

linkedin.com/company/affinity-mentoring

Current Locations



Burton Elementary + Middle School

2133 Buchanan Ave SW | Grand Rapids, MI 49507
616.819.2262 | burton@affinitymentoring.org



Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center [NEW 2019]

961 Joosten St SW | Wyoming, MI 49509
616.241.4722 x 1336 | glecc@affinitymentoring.org



Southwest Community Campus

801 Oakland Ave SW | Grand Rapids, MI 49503
616.819.6799 | swcc@affinitymentoring.org



Administrative Office - Goei Center

818 Butterworth St SW | Grand Rapids, MI 49504
616.209.8435 | info@affinitymentoring.org

References

Durlak, J.A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A.B., Taylor, R.D., & Schellinger, K.B. (2011). "The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions." *Child Development*, 82, pp.405-432.

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Sklad, M., Diekstra, R., Ritter, M.D., Ben, J., & Gravesteyn, C. (2012). "Effectiveness of school-based universal social, emotional, and behavioral programs: Do they enhance students' development in the area of skill, behavior, and adjustment?" *Psychology in the Schools*, 49(9), pp.892-909.



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