

It takes **all** of us.



Annual Report



JULY 1, 2021 - JUNE 30, 2022

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Leadership Letter



Cassandra Kiger's Resignation Letter:

"I am choosing to view it as an incredible joy that leaving this position, this team, and this organization is so hard. I can say, without question, that this has been the greatest opportunity for personal and professional learning and growth that I have ever been offered, and that this is the best team that I have been privileged to work beside and learn from.

"Most importantly, I want to make abundantly clear that no single individual leads an organization. Affinity Mentoring is made up of a team of skilled, intelligent, creative, innovative humans whose time and effort each day make our work amazing, and provide desired and needed support in our community. I want to personally thank Rocio, Angela, Keyla, Monica, Holly, and Rachel, as well as our entire board of directors, for putting your trust in me, for not saying no to every crazy new idea, and for putting students, families, and their needs first and foremost in everything we do," says Cassandra.

Affinity Mentoring Welcomes Sharalle Ankrah:

Sharalle holds a wealth of experience in both education and mentoring. "We look forward to how she will help move Affinity Mentoring forward with her strong skill set which includes grant writing, diversity, equity and inclusion, and leadership experience," says John Robinson, Affinity Mentoring board president. "She is a passionate and experienced leader who has a deep understanding of the community. She brings critical perspective and insight, and was unanimously chosen by both the Affinity Mentoring team and board to step into this role."

Sharalle is a graduate from Grand Valley State University with a degree in English for Secondary Education. A Detroit native, Sharalle has always had a heart for community development through inspiring the forthcoming generation. She believes mentoring can help create equitable opportunities for growth and community impact among students and families who are often left in the margins. Sharalle has worked hard to develop curricula and facilitate programming that influences student's conduct, decisions, leadership, and helps reveal identity.

Sharalle's personal mission statement is to aid in identity development through education and example. She has a vision to be a leader in youth development in Grand Rapids with influence on a systematic level that brings revenue, impact, and action into Affinity Mentoring.



Who We Are



Mission

Facilitate equitable growth in academics, social emotional skills, and self-esteem through mutually beneficial mentoring relationships. We believe in cultivating a brave space that amplifies the voices of young agents of change in a diverse and inclusive community.

Vision

Be a leading nonprofit for fostering belonging alongside young people, families, and community.



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 students
- ▶ Schools with high populations of families who haven't been given access to resources
- ▶ Students that can benefit from additional academic and social-emotional support

Student Demographics

Gender

62% 37% 1%
female male non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

Grade/Age

70% Elementary Students

30% Middle School Students

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

Race/Ethnicity

96% Students of Color

4% White Students

MI School Data, 2022

Mentor Demographics

69% 30% 1%
female male non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

61% 25%
age 20-39 age 40-59

14%
age 60+

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

22% People of Color

77% White

1% Unknown
Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

Staff & Board Demographics

71% Staff who identify as People of Color

75% Board members who identify as People of Color

Mentorship Stories

Being the Mentor You Needed....

“For the past 3 years, I’ve spent one lunch hour a week at Southwest Community Campus School in Grand Rapids spending time with the same student through Affinity Mentoring.

Today my mentee graduated from the program and we said ‘see you later’ to one another. We laughed, cried, and reminisced on all the fun we had the past few years. This experience filled me in ways I couldn’t have imagined and I hope I impacted his life in the same way he did mine.

Being a student today is HARD, and I am grateful that organizations like Affinity exist. As I reflect on my life so far, I’m blessed to have had so many mentors who helped guide and encourage me to pursue my dreams.

Frank Acosta

Mentor at Southwest Community Campus & Affinity Mentoring Board Member



We asked mentors, mentees, and teachers, “What’s your favorite part of mentoring?”

“Those little moments of breakthrough with laughter, connection, and feeling like you are making a difference. I often felt like there was going to be this big moment in our relationship where we connected and became really close. For me it was over a long period of time but I feel like our relationship is strong. I feel we are in a position to share more personal things and talk about the tough parts of life while layering in several fun bonding activities.”

“Spending time with someone who makes me feel happy.”

“When I hear my mentee repeat the positive affirmations I say to her from session to session. I tell her, “you are a pro-reader!” and then I will hear her say “I want to read this page because I am a pro-reader! I am such a good reader!” It’s my hope to help her become a confident, strong young woman and it’s moments like those that show me she’s listening and taking to heart when I tell her all the ways in which she is a rockstar.”

“The students get to interact directly with another adult besides their teacher or their parents and relatives. It opens them up to being able to talk with others without feeling intimidated.”

“Students have a noticeable mood change on the days that they see their mentors. They are very excited and happy. They are in a good mood for most of the day, before and after meeting with their mentors.”



[Read more about what participants had to say in our Mentoring Feedback Survey.](#)

How We Serve



Equity Based Barrier Reduction (EBBR)

EBBR is the time spent by staff addressing and finding solutions to concerns and issues students and families may have that impede relationship building, educational success, and social-emotional growth and learning. The Program team estimated that 50% of their weekly hours were spent on EBBR related activities since COVID.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Efforts

- Partnered with Code for Good to make our website more accessible and in both English and Spanish
- Created an Affinity Mentoring DEI glossary that serves as a guide for staff members, board members, mentors, families, and community partners to create a shared understanding of Affinity's language that is central to our work and fulfilling our mission
- Improved our hiring process by updating job descriptions, making pay scales public, improving and expanding recruitment efforts, and using a blind hiring process
- Made a 3-part DEI Anti-Racism training available free of charge to all board members, mentors, and community partners (required for staff to attend) led by community DEI experts and leaders. Topics included white-privilege, intersectionality, implicit bias and an introduction to anti-racism, mezzo-macro anti-racism work in systems and policies, and school specific anti-racism work and advocacy
- Built and resourced an internal, staff-led DEI Committee that "advances equity in the organization by providing resources and education, implementing mechanisms for accountability, and advocating for community-centered approaches to our work. We strive to cultivate an inclusive culture where transparency is valued and stakeholders have the opportunity to name, own, and address concerns" through resources and education, accountability, and organizational culture
- Conducted a full internal Anti-Racism assessment with board and staff of policies, programming, and organizational culture
- Included specific DEI questions and lenses in all reporting and evaluation, including providing questions in English and Spanish, and increasing accessibility and age appropriate questions

Community Partners

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| • Aon | • Choice One Bank | • Godfrey Lee Public Schools | • Mars Hill |
| • Blue Cross Blue Shield Care Network of Michigan | • Custer | • Grand Rapids Public Schools | • Molina Healthcare |
| • Bold Socks | • Dollar General Literacy Foundation | • Gordon Food Services | • Steelcase Foundation |
| • Butterball Farms | • Grand Rapids Community Foundation | • Herman Miller Cares | • Tech Defenders |
| • Castro Motion Graphics | • Erhardt Construction | • Keller | • Code for Good |
| • Genesis Consulting Group | | • Kent District Library | • Wege Foundation |
| | | • Goei Center | • DWH |

2% increase in students reporting having strong developmental relationships*

7% decrease in students reporting being excluded in activities*

4% decrease in students reporting being treated without respect*

3% decrease in students reporting being treated like they're not smart*

*A 2 point change is considered statistically significant. For more information read about the [Developmental Relationships Framework](#)

Impact and Outcomes

9% decrease
in students
reporting
feeling
ignored*

3% increase in
students
reporting
strong social
emotional
competence*

7% increase in
students
reporting
strong levels
of mentoring
quality*

Student-Led Fundraising

Students were not only the highlight of our fundraising efforts this year at Affinity, but they were actively involved in our fundraising efforts by:

- Being a live emcee for our Better Together event
- Conducting filmed interviews with our guest speakers and partners
- Creating the beautiful art for our decorations and table settings at our Better Together event
- And students and families were actively prioritized as participants and attendees at our events, both in-person and online



Why it Matters

Our Mission statement says that “we believe in cultivating a brave space that amplifies the voices of young agents of change in a diverse and inclusive community”, and we put our money where our mouth is. We do **not** see students as helpless, uncreative, or uninvolved, but just the opposite! They are the heart of what we do and have skills and talents that we want to foster in every aspect of our work.

Community and People Matter



“Richie and Dave were matched through our program more than 10 years ago at Burton Elementary school through Affinity Mentoring. Dave and his wife Mary have continued to journey alongside Richie through high school and now college after Dave and Richie built their relationship through one-on-one, weekly mentoring. Rich reached out to let us know the good news: “We have had the privilege of knowing Richie for over 10 years. Today, we got to take a tour of The University of Michigan with him as an accepted student in their College of Engineering with a full ride scholarship. He hasn't made a final decision yet, Stanford is still in the mix! We could not be more proud of him. Go Blue!”

It takes a village to support a student and family from learning to read and do basic math to college acceptance. Our team is proud to congratulate Richie on his acceptance and full ride scholarship to Michigan, and grateful for the amazing mentoring example Dave has shown.

Dave Veldink

Mentor, Donor, & Community Partner through Gordon Food Service

[Read more about Community Partnerships and DEI efforts](#)

It takes **all** of us.

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
Outgoing Office
Coordinator,
January 2022



Rachel Humphreys
Development and
Communications Director



Cassandra Kiger
Outgoing Executive
Director, May 2022

Welcome to the Team!



Sharalle Ankrah
Incoming Executive
Director, May 2022



Mayra Rodriguez
Incoming Office
Coordinator,
January 2022

How Affinity Prioritizes Staff

- Providing paid time to attend coaching and/or counseling every week for all staff and EAP benefits
- Facilitating in-house and external paid professional development opportunities and trainings
- Providing in-house training on all benefits provided and best uses with HR specialist
- Providing paid staff time for internal and external DEI trainings and discussions
- Providing paid time to vote in all local, state, and federal elections

[Read Staff Bios](#)

Board of Directors



Officers



John Robinson, President
Head Start for Kent Co.



Fuad Hasanovic, Vice President
Kamps Pallets



Ben Borisch, Treasurer
DWH, LLC



Malaina Weldy, Secretary
Warner Norcross + Judd

Directors



Jatnna Abreu
Amway



Frank Acosta
Independent Bank



Marcia Boyce
Attorney



Veronica Bradford
Spectrum Health



Abigail Bruins
Canopy Resources



Dr. Andrea Blue
Blue Pathways



Jason Loepp
Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI



Christine Mwangi
Kent District Library

Board Engagement & Learning

- Providing virtual and in-person opportunities for board and staff members to engage
- Providing DEI trainings free of charge for all board members
- Encouraging board members to learn and grow in new areas of expertise through committees
- Intentional board recruitment to match the diversity of staff and students

[Read Board Bios and Committee Descriptions](#)

Growth and Sustainability

We are dedicated to building a diverse and sustainable advancement plan. Since we officially became an independent 501(c)(3) we have greatly diversified our revenue and organizational sustainability. Despite operating through the pandemic, we have steadily increased giving at the individual and corporate levels since 2016, and have both diversified our grantors as well as obtained larger and multi-year grants.

Mentor Matches

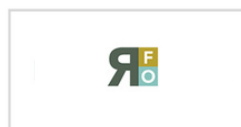
Due to the global pandemic, mentoring transitioned to comply with each school's cleaning and distancing measures to keep students and mentors safe, and each site facilitates in-person, hybrid, and virtual mentoring simultaneously, all with numbers slowly growing and students and families receiving the support they desperately need.

144
matches



Multi-Year Grants

This year we significantly expanded our multi-year grants and grant partners. This leaves us more room for mentoring and less for reporting and applying. Thank you to Steelcase Foundation, BCBS Foundation, Wege Foundation, and The Shine Redlam Family Foundation for helping make this possible!



Individual Donations

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

107
donors



2016

7
monthly
donors

869
donors



2022

38
monthly
donors

Thriving During COVID

Despite the incredible challenges that COVID brought, our team was up for the challenge and substantially increased revenue so that we could survive, grow, and thrive now and for years to come.



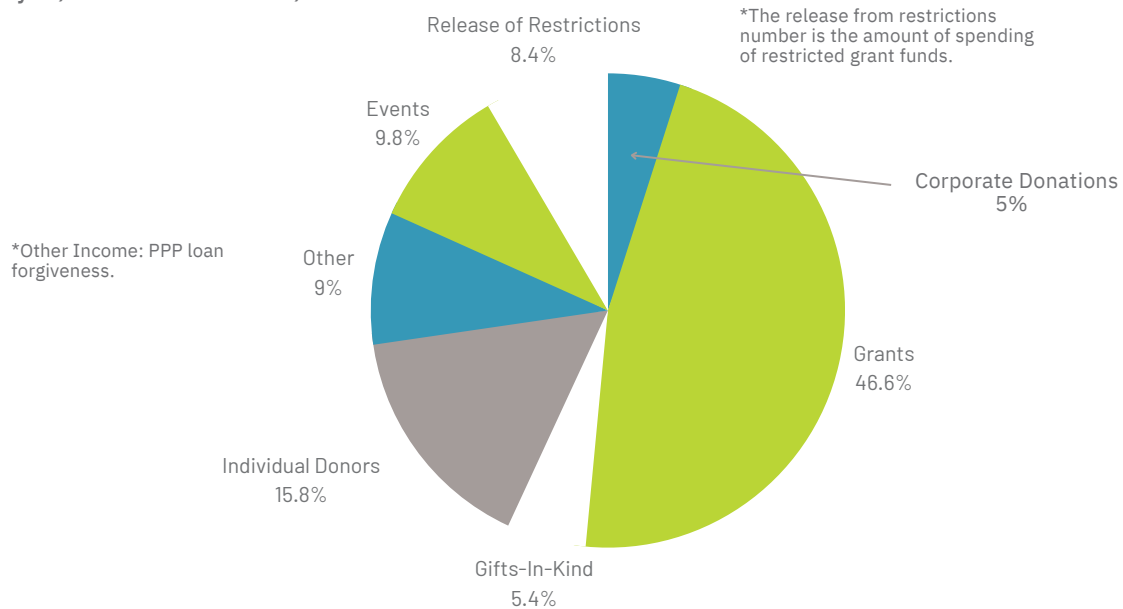
\$481,126
20-21 Revenue

\$609,971
21-22 Revenue

Financials

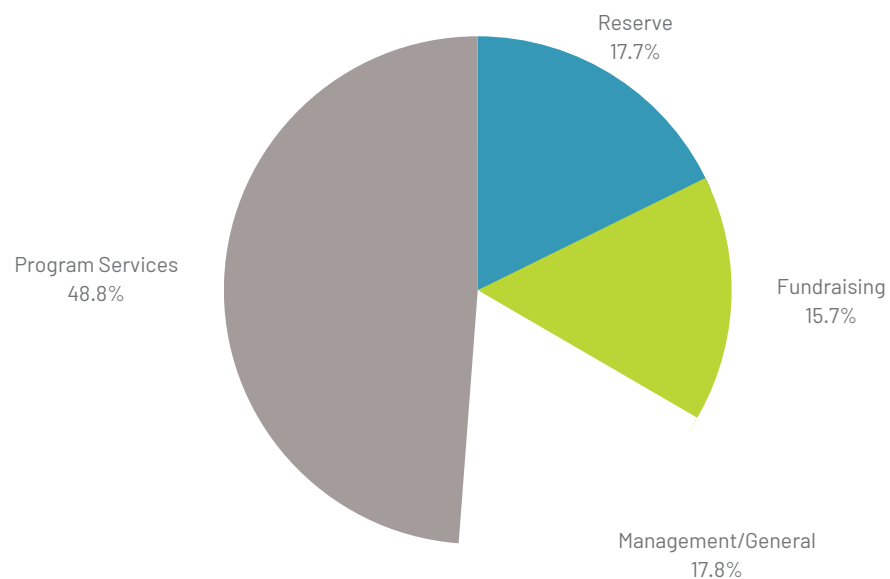
Revenue | \$609,971

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



Expenditures | \$609,971

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022



It takes **all** of us.

Connect With Us



Email

info@affinitymentoring.org



Call

616.209.8435



Follow Us on Social



Support Affinity Mentoring

- **Donate Online**
affinitymentoring.org/donate/
- **Mail a check to:**
Affinity Mentoring
PO Box 888317
3970 S Greenbrooke Dr SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49588

2021-22 Locations



Burton Elementary + Middle School

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



Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center

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



Godfrey-Lee Elementary School

1920 Godfrey St SW | Wyoming, MI 49509
616.243.0533 | glecc@affinitymentoring.org



Godfrey-Lee Middle School

1335 Lee St SW | Wyoming, MI 49509
616.452.3296 |
glpsmiddle@affinitymentoring.org



Celebrate



Mentor Appreciation Night Award Winners

Push-through Award: Geoffrey Bonham, Burton Elementary Mentor

Push-through Award: Kim Stoub, Burton Middle School Mentor

Go for the G.O.L.D Award: Karen Small, Godfrey-Lee ECC Mentor

Godfrey Lee Elementary Award: Veronica Meza, Godfrey Lee Elementary Mentor

Lee Middle School Award: Alex Stevenson, Lee Middle School Mentor

Soar High Award: Claire Wolters, SWCC Mentor

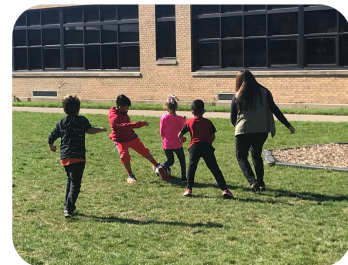
Longevity Award: Mike Zietse, SWCC Mentor and Donor

Priceless Partner Award: Mallowfields

Ripple Effect Award (individual): Erika VanDyke, ECC Mentor and Community Partner

Lukaart Legacy Award: Angel Barreto Cruz & Luis Perez, SWCC Mentors and Community Partners

[Watch Full Event Video](#)



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