

It takes all of us.



# Annual Report



JULY 1, 2022 - JUNE 30, 2023

# Contents



**Leadership Transition**  
 Meet the new Board President ..... 2

**Who We Are**  
 Mission and Vision ..... 3

**Who We Serve**  
 Student and Mentor Demographics ..... 4  
 Mentorship Stories ..... 5

**How We Serve**  
 Social Emotional Learning 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  
 2023 Mentor Appreciation Month ..... 13  
 References ..... 13

# Leadership Letter



Affinity Mentoring is thrilled to have Fuad Hasanovic step into the role of Board President. Fuad brings expertise in marketing and communications, business administration, has previous non-profit leadership and fundraising experience, and has already stepped up in various ways to support the work of Affinity since 2021. Fuad earned a bachelor's degree in Business Administration with a specialization in Marketing from Davenport University; along with an MBA with a specialization in Strategic Management. He is fluent in Bosnian/Serbo-Croatian, English, and also speaks German and Russian.

Fuad has spent two years as a mentor at Lee Middle School. Fuad and Oracio were one of the pilot matches at the Lee Middle School site, and Oracio was able to review mentor profiles and specifically chose Fuad to be his mentor. Over the past two years we have watched as the pair practiced guitar, played ping-pong and board games, worked on homework, and built a genuine relationship. Fuad and Oracio have continued their mentorship beyond the program and Fuad keeps in touch with Oracio and his family to ensure he has another successful year as a freshmen in high school.

Fuad has shared with us pieces of his story and why Affinity's mission is so important to him. He and his family are originally from Bosnia Herzegovina, a country with a complex history that has seen extreme violence and fighting based on ethnic and religious lines in recent decades. His family arrived in the US as refugees, and Fuad is familiar with the challenges that a new student from a different country, language, and culture, faces when they arrive in a new place. Fuad wants to support students, especially those in ESL and who overcome cultural barriers in addition to the normal difficulties of school and growing up. He believes that mentors have the opportunity to provide an extra layer of support, guidance, and knowledge during these transitions that can make all of the difference in both short and long term outcomes for students and families.

Fuad says, "Affinity's mission is important because I know what it feels like to go through school without that support system and guidance that a mentor brings. My goal as President of the Board is to get us one step closer to a community where every child that wants or needs a mentor has the ability to get matched with one that truly cares about their success and emotional well-being."

We celebrate Fuad's journey, and his desire to use the skills and successes he has had in life to reach back and support others in a way he intimately understands. Join Fuad and the entire Affinity Mentoring team this year as we celebrate where we have been and where we are going.

Sincerely,  
The Affinity Mentoring Team



# 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?



## Target Population

- ▶ Kindergarten - 8th grade students
- ▶ Schools with high populations of resource constrained families
- ▶ Students that can benefit from additional academic and social-emotional support

**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

## Student Demographics

### Gender

**63%** female  
**36%** male  
**1%** non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

### Grade/Age

**74%** Elementary Students

**26%** Middle School Students

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

### Race/Ethnicity

**96%** Students of Color

**4%** White Students

MI School Data, 2022

## Mentor Demographics

**73%** female  
**26%** male  
**1%** non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

**52%** age 20-39  
**34%** age 40-59

**14%** age 60+

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

**27%** People of Color

**73%** White

**0%** Unknown

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

## Staff & Board Demographics

**87%** Staff who identify as People of Color

**89%** Board members who identify as People of Color

# Mentorship Stories

## What do students and parents say about mentoring?

- “My favorite part about my child attending mentoring is that he can talk about his feelings.” - Mentee Parent
- “She helps me do hard stuff like reading and big words.” -Mentee
- “My favorite part about being with my mentor is coloring and painting nails!” - Mentee
- “My favorite part about being with my mentor is that we can talk and trust and play.” - Mentee
- “I like it how my mentor does what I want and I get to play and read with them.” - Mentee
- “Mi parte favorita de la mentoría es jugar y reír con ella.” (My favorite part of mentoring is playing and laughing with her) - Mentee



98% of mentor responders feel comfortable getting help from their site coordinator\*

93% of mentee responders said they feel happy and important with their mentor\*

88% of mentor responders report a strong relationship with their mentee\*

100% of mentee responders said they feel safe with their mentor\*



## What do mentors and teachers say about mentoring?

- “I really enjoy watching my mentee grow emotionally, socially, and in her reading skills. Watching her confidence soar this year in her reading skills has been so much fun.” - Mentor
- “I love spending time with my mentee and watching her grow and develop her character and writing skills.” - Mentor
- “When my mentee confides in me about his life and what he’s happy and sad about.” - Mentor
- “Students look forward to having that one on one attention with their adult!” - Teacher
- “Having mentors here helps in every aspect of the student’s growth.” - Teacher
- “Que los estudiantes reciban ayudas que de otra manera no sucedería.” (That students receive supports that otherwise would never happen.) - Teacher

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

# How We Serve



## Social Emotional Learning through partnerships

Social Emotional Learning is at the core of what we do at Affinity; it's literally in our [mission](#). We posted a [blog](#) in 2021 specifically outlining why Social Emotional Learning is so critical to short-term success in school, and long-term success in life. We work with partners like the [Steelcase Foundation](#), [Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan](#), and literacy experts who recognize how social emotional learning impacts our equity, health, education, and our community.

In 2022 Affinity Mentoring continued to grow our skills and resources in social emotional learning through mentoring by partnering with Safe Haven Ministries and Grand Rapids Public Libraries to expand the [GERI program \(Grow, Engage, Read, Imagine\)](#) where specific books are used to help students learn about healthy boundaries, emotions, and how to safely feel and express emotions. One student talked about how she and her mentor read books about emotions and discuss positive ways to express emotions like anger. "Sometimes when I get really angry, like when someone's being mean to me, I get out of control. She tells me I should use my words instead of my hands because sometimes I get really mad." Mykolaiv Ward, the Training and Education Manager of Safe Haven Ministries, explained, "When you feel that connection, that togetherness with your community, that sense of belonging and that sense of welcome; that keeps you from wanting to harm your community, or be a part of anything that is harmful towards your community."

In 2022-2023 school year the GERI program was piloted at our Godfrey-Lee Early Childhood Center site, and will be expanding to more sites in the coming year.

## Developmental Relationships Survey Results

To affirm that we are making a positive impact we conduct pre and post surveys with AM mentees in fourth through eighth grade using the [Developmental Relationships Survey](#), which provides "actionable data on relationships, equity, and social emotional learning". Check out some of our key findings below for the 2022-2023 mentoring year.



**7% decrease in students reporting being excluded in activities\***

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

**3% increase in students reporting strong social emotional competence\***

**9% decrease in students reporting feeling ignored\***

**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 are not smart\***

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

# Impact and Outcomes



## In-person activities are back!

One of the hardest parts about COVID was that we could not have our normal in-person events. That's why we are so excited to share that we were able to start up our in-person events this year, with 175 attendees at our Fall Family Dinner, and 174 attendees at the Year End Celebration!



These events include mentees and their families, mentors, our staff, and partners. They are critical opportunities for these key relationships to grow and strengthen, which helps support students in a multitude of ways. We are so grateful to our partners Catherine's Health Center, La Casa del Pollo Loco, and Kent District Libraries for helping with resources and activities to make these events fantastic.

## Community and People Matter



**Sustainer**

### Sustainers:

- Avalanche Creative
- BCBS of Michigan Foundation
- Blue Pathways Educational Mentorship Services
- Butterball Farms
- Catherine's Health Center
- COM 616
- Custer
- Dollar General Literacy Foundation
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation
- Erdhrdt Construction
- Fidelity Charitable
- Fifth Third Bank
- Godfrey-Lee Public Schools
- Goei Center
- Grand Rapids Community Foundation
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Herman Miller Cares
- Independent Bank



**Champion**

### Champions:

- Keller
- KRW Foundation
- La Casa del Pollo Loco
- Larry and Karen Mulder Foundation
- Molina Healthcare
- Redlam Family Office - Shine Foundation
- Speactrum Health
- Healthier Communities
- Steelcase Foundation
- Supporting Act Counseling
- Tech Defenders
- United Way
- Wege Foundation
- Wyoming Community Foundation



**Innovator**

### Innovators:

- Choice One Bank
- DWH
- Gordon Food Services
- Kent District Libraries
- Mars Hill Bible Church
- Warner, Norcross and Judd LLP
- Castro Motion Graphics
- Code for Good
- Genesis Consulting Group
- Grand Valley State University
- Grounded in Equity
- Kennair Consulting
- Kent School Services Network
- Mezcla Mosaic Collaborative
- Michelle De Bie
- Mika Leadership Coaching
- Safe Haven Ministries



**Advocate**

### Advocates

- Aon
- Bold Socks
- Fifth Wheel Freight



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



# Our Team



## Program Team



**Keyla Araujo**  
GLE & ECC Site  
Coordinator



**Rocio Moreno**  
Program Director &  
Burton Site Coordinator



**Angela Reyna**  
GLMS & Burton Site  
Coordinator  
Outgoing October 2022



**Monica Zavala**  
SWCC Site Coordinator

## Administrative Team



**Mayra Rodriguez**  
Office Coordinator



**Sharalle Ankrah**  
Executive Director



**Rachel Humphreys**  
Development &  
Communications Director  
Outgoing October 2022

## Welcome to the Team!



**Yanitza Valdez**  
Burton Site Coordinator

## Blind Hiring at Affinity Mentoring

We want to ensure that every aspect of our job and organization are equitable, and that includes our hiring process. Affinity uses a specific system to do this called blind hiring. It includes:

- Active, diverse recruitment for every job opening with local, diverse leaders and organizations;
- Resume and Cover Letter redacting before review;
- Blind scoring of every application by multiple individuals with a pre-set rubric;
- And standardized interview questions and scoring for all applicants.

[Read Staff Bios](#)

# Board of Directors



## Officers



**John Robinson, President**  
Head Start for Kent Co.



**Fuad Hasanovic, Vice President**  
Kamps Pallets



**Malaina Weldy, Secretary**  
Warner Norcross + Judd

## Directors



**Jatna Abreu**  
Amway



**Frank Acosta**  
Independent Bank



**Marcia Boyce**  
Attorney



**Abigail Bruins**  
Canopy Resources



**Dr. Andrea Blue**  
Blue Pathways



**Christine Mwangi**  
Kent District Library

## How Affinity Does Board Recruitment

Affinity is just as committed to an excellent, equitable, and diverse board as we are with our staff. That's why we are diligent and intentional in our board recruitment and training, which includes:

- Identifying areas of need in both expertise and location when recruiting new board members;
- Active recruitment in local, diverse networks and organizations;
- Interviews and introductions for all potential applications;
- A full application process and board review;
- Yearly board commitment agreements;
- And yearly training opportunities.

[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 and beyond, 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

As our community continues to recover from COVID we continue to provide the option for in-person, hybrid, and virtual mentoring simultaneously. Additionally, we brought back in-person activities this year to continue fostering meaningful relationships.

**137**  
matches



## Multi-Year Grants

We maintained \$188,000 of our budget in multi-year grants in this fiscal year alone, which allowed us to focus more on mentoring and programming and less on finding new cash flow.



## Individual Donations

We invest in cultivating meaningful relationships with our stakeholders. We've seen a significant increase in four key areas:

**2016**

**2023**

**107**  
donors

**907**  
donors



**7**  
monthly donors

**38**  
monthly donors



**17**  
major donors

**44**  
major donors



**2**  
grantors

**13**  
grantors



# Connect With Us



## Email

info@affinitymentoring.org



## Call

616.209.8435



## Follow Us on Social



## Support Affinity Mentoring

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

# 2022-23 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 & Teacher Appreciation

This year we had so much to celebrate, so we wanted to recognize everyone who makes mentoring possible. That is why we made a specialized gift of a personalized coffee mug with an approved photo of themselves with their mentee to every mentor. Additionally, we brought in cakes to share in the teacher lounge of each of our partner schools so that teachers, staff, and admin could know how much we appreciate their partnerships. This work is done in community, and we are so grateful for ours.



## References

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