

It takes **all** of us.



Annual Report



JULY 1, 2023 - JUNE 30, 2024

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Leadership Letter

It takes **all** of us.

Dear Affinity Mentoring Community,

As we reflect on the past year at Affinity Mentoring, I am filled with pride and gratitude for our remarkable journey together. This has been a year of growth, transformation, and unwavering dedication to empowering youth and families in our community.

Our focus on supporting Kindergarten through 8th-grade students, particularly in schools with high populations of resource-constrained families, has been at the heart of our mission. These students benefit greatly from our additional academic and social-emotional support, which has proven to enhance their grades, attendance, social behaviors, and relationships with peers and adults.

We are thrilled to share our excitement about continuing to provide in-person events this year. Successfully resuming our in-person gatherings last year has been a significant achievement, and we have made it a priority within our programming efforts. Our Fall Family Dinner and Year-End Celebration saw 189 and 257 attendees, respectively. These events brought together mentees and their families, mentors, our staff, and partners, creating vital opportunities for key relationships to grow and strengthen.

The support from our partners—Safe Haven Ministries, Kent District Library, The Salvation Army, MSU, StoreHouse, Family Futures, and Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities—has been invaluable. Their resources and activities have significantly contributed to the success of these events, making them memorable and impactful for everyone involved.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of providing comprehensive support to our students and families. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of many, and I am grateful for the continued dedication and support from our entire community.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. I look forward to the year ahead and the many successes we will achieve together.

With gratitude,



Rocio Moreno
Executive Director
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:

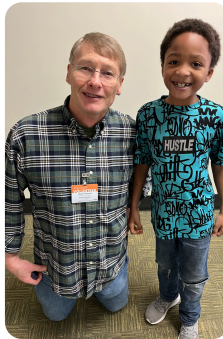
- ▶ improve achievement
- ▶ increase attitudes toward school
- ▶ reduce depression and stress

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 resource constrained families
- ▶ Students that can benefit from additional academic and social-emotional support

Student Demographics

Gender

64% female
35% male
0% non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2023

Grade/Age

84% Elementary Students

15% Middle School Students

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2023

Race/Ethnicity

96% Students of Color

4% White Students

MI School Data, 2023

Mentor Demographics

79% female
18% male
0% non binary

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2021

1% age 18-19
51% age 20-39

31% age 40-59
14% age 60+

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 2023

29% People of Color

70% White

0% Unknown

Affinity Intake Paperwork, 20203

Staff & Board Demographics

85% Staff who identify as People of Color

12% Board members who identify as People of Color

Mentorship Stories

What do students and parents say about mentoring?

- “My favorite part about mentoring is that when she (mentor) is there, she puts me first.” - Mentee
- “My favorite part is just spending time with her.” -Mentee
- “My favorite part is doing math together!” - Mentee
- “I like when we pretend we are recording a YouTube video” - Mentee
- “I want to have a thousand of my mentors because he is so nice!” - 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



100% of mentee responders say they are happy when they think about their mentor

96% of mentee responders said they feel happy and important with their mentor

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

86% of mentor responders say they can ask their mentor for help

What do mentors say about mentoring?

- “Seeing how excited he is to see me every time I go to his class and how much fun he has doing activities together” - Mentor
- “Watching my Mentee be herself when we are talking and playing. She used to be so shy!” - Mentor
- “I love seeing the positive changes with my mentee. She was always so quiet and withdrawn. Now she is interacting, smiling, laughing and wants to engage.” - Mentor
- “Building a positive relationship with my mentee and being available to help her where she needs it the most.” - Mentor
- “Hearing about all the things my mentee is interested in.” - Mentor
- “Being able to be creative with my mentee and see her grow week over week, year over year.” - Mentor



[*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 work with partners like the Safe Haven Ministries, 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 2023-2024 school year the GERI program was expanded to our Burton Elementary/Middle School site as well as our Southwest Elementary - Academia Bilingüe site.

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 2023-2024 mentoring year.



7% decrease in students reporting being treated without respect*

4% increase in students reporting strong levels of mentoring quality*

6% increase in students reporting strong social emotional competence*

1% decrease in students reporting feeling ignored*

13% decrease in students reporting being treated like they are not smart*

Limitations:

The Fall DRS had a total of 49 participants and the Spring DRS had a total of 37 participants.

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

Impact and Outcomes

In-person activities!



We are thrilled to share how excited we are about continuing to provide in-person events this year. We successfully resumed our in-person gatherings last year and have continued to make it a priority within our programming efforts, with 189 attendees at our Fall Family Dinner and 257 attendees at the Year End Celebration!



These events bring together mentees and their families, mentors, our staff, and partners, creating vital opportunities for these key relationships to grow and strengthen. This support is invaluable to our students in many ways. We are immensely grateful to our partners— Safe Haven Ministries, Kent District Library, The Salvation Army, MSU, StoreHouse, Family Futures, and Grandville Avenue Arts & Humanities —for their resources and activities that made these events fantastic.

Community and People Matter



Sustainers:

- Avalanche Creative
- BCBS of Michigan Foundation
- COM 616
- Enterprise Holdings Foundation
- Fidelity Charitable
- Godfrey-Lee Public Schools
- Goei Center
- Grand Rapids Public Schools
- Independent Bank
- Anastaciu Homes



Champions:

- Keller
- KRW Foundation
- La Casa del Pollo Loco
- Larry and Karen Mulder Foundation
- Redlam Family Office - Shine Foundation
- Steelcase Foundation
- Supporting Act Counseling
- United Way
- Wege Foundation



Innovators:

- Choice One Bank
- Kent District Libraries
- Mars Hill Bible Church
- Warner, Norcross and Judd LLP
- Genesis Consulting Group
- Grand Valley State University
- Grounded in Equity
- Kennair Consulting
- Kent School Services Network
- Michelle De Bie
- Mija Leadership Coaching
- Safe Haven Ministries



Advocates

- Aon
- Bold Socks
- Fifth Wheel Freight
- Gordan Food Service
- Grand Rapids Label



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

It takes **all** of us.

Our Team

Program Team



Keyla Araujo
ECC Site Coordinator



Mayra Rodriguez
GEL Site Coordinator



Yanitza Valdez
Burton Site Coordinator



Monica Zavala
SWCC Site Coordinator

Administrative Team



Mayra Rodriguez
Office Coordinator



Rocio Moreno
Executive Director

Welcome to the Team!



Nicolette Chambery
Development &
Communications Director



Lauren Enos
Programming & DEI
Director

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



Fuad Hasanovic, President
Kamps Pallets



Michael Boon, Treasurer
Fifth Third Private Bank



Malaina Weldy, Secretary
Warner Norcross + Judd | Term Ending June 2024

Directors



John Robinson
Head Start for Kent Co. | Term Ended



Frank Acosta
Mercantile Bank | Term Ending June 2024



Abigail Bruins
Canopy Resources | Term Ended



Rayanne Beaudry
Avalanche Creative



Nate Nussbaum
Crowe LLP



Rachael Olsen
LINC UP



Candy Wilkes-Scheper

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 want to assure all of our donors and partners that we continue to be committed and working towards long-term financial sustainability. We continue to do this while never taking away from our amazing services and consistently above-goal outcomes in areas such as mentoring satisfaction and Social Emotional Learning growth. Key ways that we have gotten closer towards our goal of sustainability this year include:

- Increased our Major Donors program
- Increased our previous year's revenue by \$60,000
- Decreased our financial deficit from the previous year
- Hired a full-time Development Director after having the position vacant for over a year
- Successfully filled all vacant staffing positions, three of which include roles specifically dedicated to financial sustainability

We are incredibly grateful to all of our partners, donors, mentors, and community members who continue to believe in the mission and vision of Affinity. We look forward to showcasing to you all more ways that we are building our long-term sustainability in the coming year.

Mentor Matches

With the threat of Covid behind us, Affinity was able to continue in-person mentoring this year across our five sites!

129
matches



Multi-Year Grants

This fiscal year, our multi-year grant funding provided us with the stability to focus more on mentoring and programming, reducing the pressure to seek additional funding sources.



Individual Donations

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

2016

107
donors



7
monthly
donors



17
major
donors



2
grantors

2024

866
donors



36
monthly
donors



50
major
donors

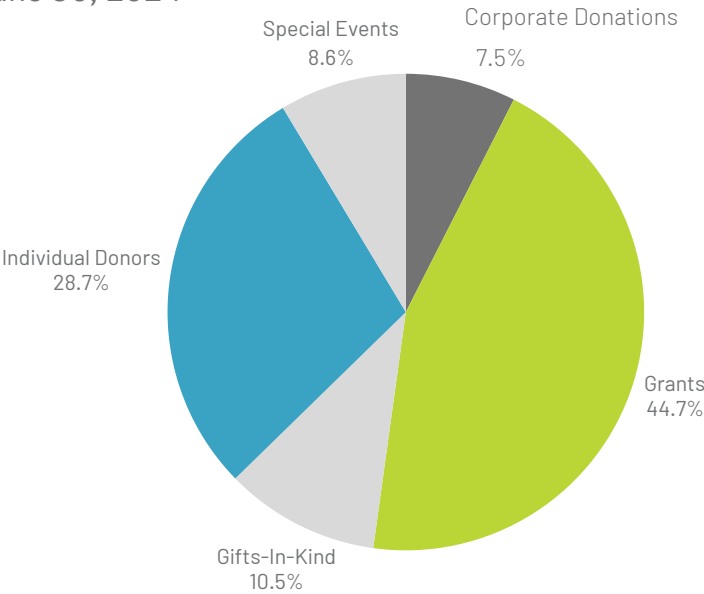


12
grantors

Financials

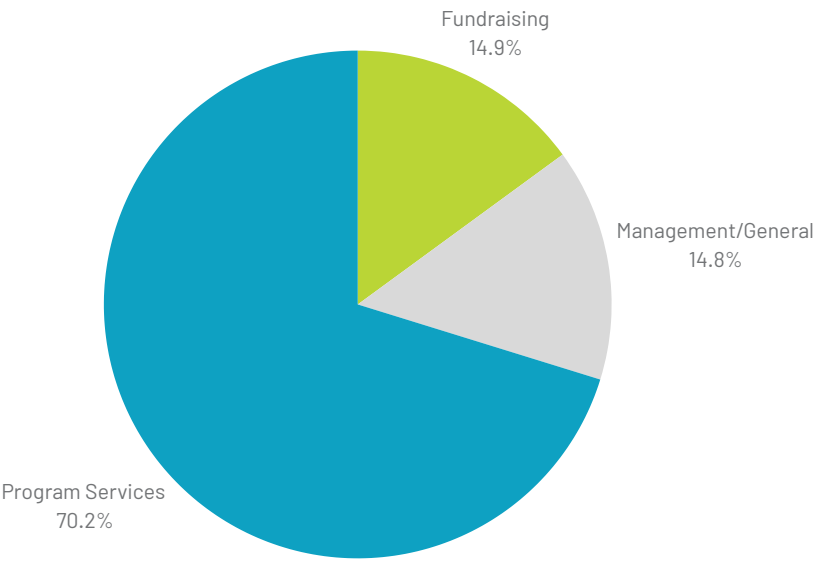
Revenue | \$369,524.84

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



Expenditures | \$514,518

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024



It takes **all** of us.

Connect With Us



Email

info@affinitymentoring.org



Call

616.209.8435



Follow Us on Social



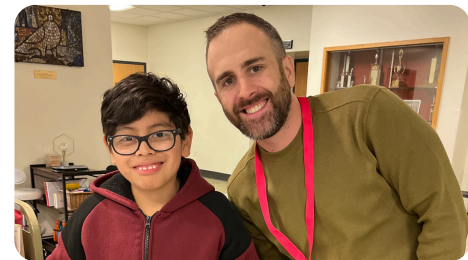
Support Affinity Mentoring

● Donate Online

affinitymentoring.org/donate/

● Mail a check to:

Affinity Mentoring
818 Butterworth St SW,
Grand Rapids, MI 49504



2024-25 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 Elementary Academia Bilingüe

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

Reinstated: For the 24-25 School Year.

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 Stanley water bottle with an approved photo of themselves with their mentee to every mentor. Site coordinators also brought in donuts to share in the teacher so teachers, staff, and admin could know how much we appreciate their partnerships. This work of mentoring is done in community, and we are so grateful for ours.



References

Developmental relationships framework. Search Institute. (2022, November 2). <https://www.search-institute.org/developmental-relationships/developmental-relationships-framework/>

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