

# BRICK *by* BRICK

FOUNDATIONS FOR  
A STRONGER FUTURE



2015 ANNUAL REPORT

YOUTH  
  
ALLIANCE.  
St. Joseph, MO

# BRICK *by* BRICK

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## FOUNDATIONS *for* *a* STRONGER FUTURE



**ROBIN HAMMOND**

The Youth Alliance is pleased to present our 2015 Annual Report, Brick by Brick. We work to help the youth of the community thrive, and we understand this effort takes time and care—just as the mason must carefully lay one stone at a time. The structure will endure many trials, but the care in building on a firm foundation will ensure its sustainability. Youth Alliance also understands the importance of a strong foundation for youth. We utilize our programs and services as building blocks that fit together to fill in the gaps, and strengthen each child and family we serve. This year marks our 24th year of strengthening foundations and building upon successes for youth.

There are many people who have helped Youth Alliance achieve successes during this past year. You will see several of them highlighted throughout this report. Their dedication and support are sincerely appreciated. I hope in the pages that follow, you will enjoy reading more about their service and how they are laying the foundation for the youth in our community. For all their hard work and dedication, we thank them.

This report is in appreciation of our team of staff, community leaders, volunteers, youth and families, as we continue to place those bricks, build that foundation and help our youth shine—one at a time!



*Back Row from left to right:* Rhonda Ewing, Cindy McWhorter, Angie Reynolds, Linda Midyett, Kelly Tudor, Mayme Abbott, Gayle Babcock, Robin Hammond, Jill Smith.

*Front Row from left to right:* Judy Jacobs, Selena Good, Anita Jolly, David Rich, Patti Long, Leslie Stone, Ariel Swartz.

*Not Pictured:* Julie Wiedmer, Diane Guthery.

## *Will Stuck*



By instilling a love for reading and encouraging youth to be themselves, Will Stuck helps our community shine! Blessed with the gift of storytelling, Will shares his talent with children of all ages. In addition to his programs for preschoolers in our local library system, Will's creativity and enthusiasm has led to multiple opportunities to present Summer Reading Workshops on behalf of the Missouri State Library.

Will understands the importance of reading and speaks to parents, teachers and childcare workers on the importance of growing lifelong readers. He regularly participates in community events, and has been a vital part of Children's Fair for more than 10 years. He has served on the United Way Success by 6® Parent Education Team for many years, and has worked with several organizations throughout the community.

Aside from his performing arts talents, Will is also a gifted musician and graphic artist. He was instrumental in the Play Path at Hyde Park and provided creative ideas, leadership and the artwork for the project. In addition to his direct work with preschoolers and young children, he encourages older youth through the Teen Reading Program at the library, as well as being supportive to young people throughout the community. He is a role model, mentor and an example for youth to never stop learning, having fun and giving back to your community. Will is immersed in the community and by sharing his talents and enthusiasm, he is a shining example of a community partner. We appreciate his work, and thank him for all that he does to improve the lives of children and families in our community. Shine on, Will!

# CRISIS PREVENTION

Considered by the Alliance to be among its most vital services, Crisis Prevention links families, individuals and children with the tools and services needed to promote healthy and non-violent homes.

**169** FAMILIES SERVED

**863** HOME VISITS CONDUCTED

## EVERY CHILD MATTERS

Every Child Matters is a project focused on safe sleep practices primarily for children under the age of one year. Through funding from the Missouri Children's Trust Fund, the Alliance is able to provide cribs, pack n' plays and bedding to qualifying families free of charge.

## CIRCLE *of* PARENTS

Circle of Parents is a parent-led support group that offers an encouraging environment where parents can share with one another the ups and downs that make parenting both a joy and a challenge. A children's program is offered concurrently to make parental attendance easier.

## KEEPING KIDS SAFE

The Alliance, one of the founding partners of the child abuse prevention coalition called Keeping Kids Safe, discusses concerns affecting the safety of children and youth in our community. Some key issues are: safe sleep, safe haven, child sexual abuse and child abuse prevention awareness.

## FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Family Connections is the Alliance's home visitation program that serves families of children under the age of three, having incomes under 185% of the poverty level and residing in Andrew, Buchanan, Clinton or DeKalb counties. Using the Parents as Teachers Foundational curriculum, home visitors strive to increase: school readiness; child well-being, including physical, emotional and social development; and the prevention of child abuse.



*Breaking the chains of abuse*

## Joyce Estes



Joyce Estes is a true champion for children and families in our community. Joyce's employer is the NW Missouri Children's Advocacy Center, where she serves as the executive director. Anyone who knows Joyce knows that her time and efforts in ending child abuse extends far beyond her job—it is her passion. Joyce is active each year in April's Child Abuse Prevention Month, promoting the awareness and prevention of child abuse. She also serves on the Keeping Kids Safe coalition, the area child abuse prevention coalition. Joyce is currently spearheading a team of concerned community leaders to create a community plan to prevent child sexual abuse. Joyce is a great community partner, leader, advocate and friend. Joyce shines brightly as a star in our community.

# EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Youth Alliance's Early Childhood Education programs are designed with two priorities in mind: quality childcare and school readiness. These two goals are intended to improve the education and the overall quality of life for young children in the community.

In an effort to increase the quality of care received by each child, the Alliance offers one-on-one technical assistance to individuals providing childcare.

The Alliance collaborates with other community agencies to identify and improve school readiness. The Alliance also encourages ongoing education in the early childhood field with their programs throughout 11 counties in Northwest Missouri.

## EDUCARE

Educare works with unlicensed care providers receiving state subsidy, providing them with free resources for developmentally-rich early learning experiences and environments for the children in their care. From technical assistance and informative newsletters to training opportunities and monthly support groups, providers receive professional development intended to enrich the education of the children in their care. Educare's purpose is to provide a solid early educational foundation for low-income children from birth to six years of age so that all children can thrive at school in Kindergarten and beyond.

Educare works with childcare providers at monthly on-site technical assistance visits, designing individualized plans to enhance or improve the care given to the children entrusted to them. Funding for Educare is provided by the Missouri Department of Social Services, Children's Division, Early Childhood and Prevention Services Section.

## AGENCY PARTNERSHIP

Youth Alliance partners with local committees dedicated to supporting the United Way Success by 6® early childhood initiatives. United Way also contracts with the Youth Alliance to provide technical assistance to their early childhood projects.

## CHILDREN'S FAIR

Each year, the Alliance coordinates the Greater St. Joseph Area Community Children's Fair at the St. Joseph Civic Arena. There are over 30 activity areas designed for the enjoyment of children ages six and under. In 2015, 1,004 children attended the Fair.

**EDUCARE IMPACTED  
306 CHILDREN IN  
31 CHILDCARE PROGRAMS.**

**THE EARLY CHILDHOOD  
PROGRAM CONDUCTED  
275 ON-SITE VISITS.**



*Laticia Irvin*

Laticia Irvin is one of our Stars, demonstrating dedication in her consistent attendance of our monthly support group and trainings after a long day of caring for children. Laticia has made a commitment to increase her knowledge of the early childhood field and enjoys networking with other childcare providers to learn new ideas and strategies she can use with the children.

# YOUTH MENTORING

Youth mentoring is designed to pair young people with positive role models that provide a sense of belonging to a community that cares about them. Mentors also help youth understand their potential and then create a plan to optimize their abilities and opportunities. In 2015, there were 290 youth served.

**290** YOUTH SERVED

**48** YOUNG MOMS MATCHED WITH A MENTOR

**51** YOUTH PARTICIPATED IN JOB READINESS CLASSES



## NORTHWEST MISSOURI MENTORING PARTNERSHIP

The Northwest Missouri Mentoring Partnership provides employment skills to youth ages 14 to 24 through job preparatory classes. Skill development includes job search, resume and cover letter creation, application and interviewing proficiency, job retention, on-the-job mentoring and activities that build family identity and cohesiveness.

## JOURNEY *to* UNITE MENTORS *and* PARENTS

In a partnership with Mosaic Life Care and the YWCA, Journey to Unite Mentors and Parents (JUMP) pairs trained mentors with pregnant and parenting teens, providing teens with parenting skills, assistance with academics and long-term goal setting.

## YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

The Workforce Investment Act Youth Employment program supports youth, ages 14 to 24, in completing educational goals along with training programs designed to promote job readiness. These skills prepare youth for unsubsidized employment. A combination of ten elements support a balanced educational and job readiness approach, with a focus in areas such as leadership opportunities, tutoring and study skills and alternative secondary school offerings. This year, 159 students continued their education and 44 students completed their studies, resulting in either a diploma or High School Equivalency.

**159** YOUTH CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION

**44** YOUTH COMPLETED THEIR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM, HIGH SCHOOL EQUIVALENCY OR GRADUATION

*Tucker  
Gutenrieth*



Tucker is a Star at the Youth Employment Program, where he has participated since September 2014. Determined to obtain his HISET (High School Equivalency Test), he began a Paid Work Experience in our remedial studies class soon after enrollment. Though Tucker has encountered obstacles along the way, he has persevered, working side jobs to help out his household financially. He is not only a hard worker, but also kind hearted. He shows respect to the staff and impressed them with his amazing resiliency. Tucker passed the HISET, accomplishing his goal, and we look forward to seeing what the future holds for him.

# SUBSTANCE ABUSE PREVENTION

The Substance Abuse Prevention initiative reaches out to youth through community programs in Buchanan County, encouraging and empowering them to thrive without the use of alcohol or drugs.

## BREAKING THE SILENCE

Increased rates of suicide among teens and children highlights the importance of our alliance "Breaking the Silence." This suicide prevention coalition encourages at-risk individuals to talk about their struggles and connects youth with the help they need.

## DRUG FREE COMMUNITY COALITION

The Drug Free Community Coalition (DFC) combines the efforts of citizens, educators, business leaders and other community leaders to create proactive anti-substance use initiatives that promote the health and safety of the community. The Coalition works with community partners on important programs like Red Ribbon Week, media campaigns, the Safe Prom initiative, Prescription Take Back and Project Graduation, an all-night substance-free event for all seniors in St. Joseph, and many more events.

**2857** COMMUNITY MEMBERS ATTENDED COMMUNITY EVENTS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG PREVENTION

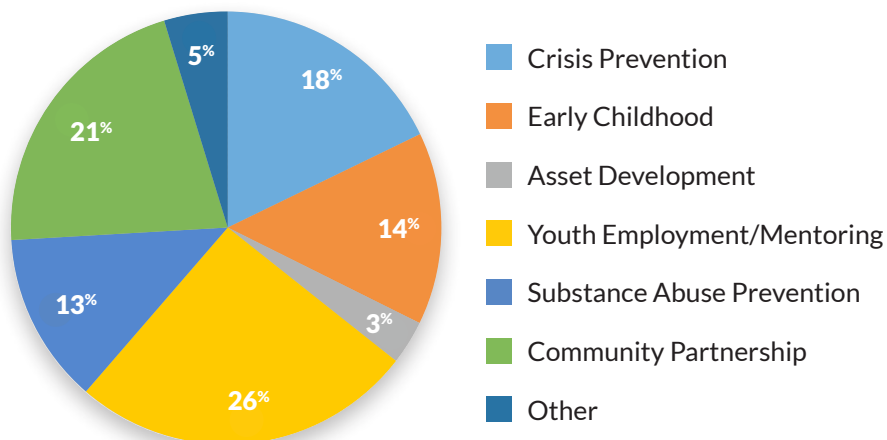
**1,013,244** MEDIA IMPRESSIONS EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY ABOUT ALCOHOL AND DRUG PREVENTION

## Shannon Hutcherson



Shannon Hutcherson, an active Drug Free Community Coalition member, is one of our Stars. Shannon shares her knowledge and insights of substance abuse trends as a staff member at the Mosaic Life Care ER. Shannon has played an instrumental role in Red Ribbon Week and in developing and implementing a middle school prescription drug awareness presentation. Shannon is also a key player in planning and executing the docu-dramas across Northwest Missouri. Her hard work and dedication along with her passion to assist youth in the community makes her a Star.

## Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Revenues



The St. Joseph Youth Alliance, which formed as a non-profit in 1994, has supported youth and their families by bringing in more than \$26 million in resources over the past 21 years to address crisis prevention, substance abuse prevention, early childhood development, youth employment/mentoring and youth asset development. For the fiscal year ending, June 30, 2015, program and cash revenues totaled \$1,362,495.25. Volunteers logged 1211 hours valued at \$24,609.03. In-kind donations totaled \$262,689.35. Overall, the Youth Alliance's total contributed resources for FY 14-15 were valued at \$1,649,793.63.

# YOUTH ASSET DEVELOPMENT



**2798** VOLUNTEER  
HOURS SERVED

**30** BIKE RIDES

## YOUTH VOLUNTEER CORPS

Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC) of St. Joseph, an affiliate of the international YVC, works to engage youth 11-18 in team-based, structured, diverse, flexible service-learning opportunities. The mission of YVC is to “create volunteer opportunities to address community needs and to inspire youth for a lifetime commitment to service.” YVC of St. Joseph offers service opportunities both during the school-year and during the summer months. Volunteer hours are recorded and tracked for each activity. Eligible candidates will be nominated to receive a Presidential Volunteer Service Award.

## YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD

Youth Advisory Board (YAB) is a body of youth volunteers who have been nominated by staff because of their level of participation and their display of leadership skills. Participation in the YAB gives youth volunteers a voice by providing an ongoing forum to exchange ideas, express concern and share resources. Board members commit to a term of one year. They contribute a unique and crucial perspective to support YVC in project feedback, new project ideas, volunteer recruitment, retention, recognition, public relations and fundraising.

## TRIPS for KIDS

Trips for Kids (TFK) teaches youth about fitness, health and wellness through mountain biking adventures. TFK offered 30 rides this fiscal year.



## St Joseph Parks and Rec



St Joseph Parks and Rec staff are some of our brightest stars. Without their support, the Trips for Kids program couldn't begin to provide the number of rides for the number of riders that come out to participate. They store and transport our 35 bikes, helmets and gear making the impossible possible. Parks and Rec, under the leadership and direction of Chuck Kempf and Jeff Atkins, is committed to the families and young people of this community. We greatly appreciate the Parks and Rec team for their leadership and dedication.



The following lists include our fiscal donors, business partners and members.  
With sincere appreciation, we thank the following:

## 2015 Fiscal year Donors

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First Lutheran Church  
First Trust of Mid America  
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Mosaic Life Care  
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5223 Mitchell  
St. Joseph, MO 64507  
sjya@youth-alliance.org  
816-232-0050  
youth-alliance.org

 @youthalli