



2012  
ANNUAL REPORT



*Reaching a crossroads, choosing another way*

## WORCESTER YOUTH CENTER STAFF

(as of April 30, 2013)

Samuel Martin, *Executive Director*

Roberto Diaz, *Assistant Director*

Laura Suroviak, *GED Instructor*

Sheron Hozier, *Case Manager*

Callista Perry, *Program Coordinator*

Jeanette Roach, *Program Coordinator*

Crystal Then, *Program Coordinator*

Cristina Cabrero, *Receptionist*

Leena Varjabedian, *Receptionist*

Lucia Alfaro, *Counselor*

Egbert Pinero, *Outreach Worker*

Jorge Escobar, *Custodian*

Jesus Huertas, *Bus Driver*

Ruby Glover, *Youth Staff*

Rosa Medina, *Youth Staff*

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Stan Roy

Brenda Safford

## VOLUNTEERS

Richard Armstrong

Corey Beck

Robert Hunter

Kelly Kimball

Luke Lauchert

Daniel Loftus

Jerry Siplas

## COVER

“Realities of Addiction,” Vanessa Le,  
acrylic on canvas (2013)

“This piece is inspired by the photography  
of Roman Sakovich. One side of my  
portraits shows a healthy person with  
bright eyes and a hopeful future. The  
other side shows that same person  
affected by drug use and the violence  
and poor health that comes with it.”

All artwork in this annual report was  
created by participants in the 2012-13  
YouthReach Arts Program to address  
issues of addiction (*see story on page 3*).

“Shards of Glass,” Brielle Stovall,  
broken wine and beer bottles (2013)

This mosaic “depicts a crying eye to represent  
how detrimental alcohol can be when it  
is abused. In addition, it symbolizes how  
alcohol can shatter the lives of those  
indirectly affected by substance abuse.”



# Open Doors, New Beginnings



Executive Director  
Sam Martin (right)  
and staff members

*Our mission is to provide a place where young people can build lasting, positive changes in their lives. We accomplish this mission by seeking resources, collaborations and opportunities that help young people to realize their full potential, sharpen skills and enable them to become vital, responsible and contributing members of society.*

Youth that come through the doors of the Worcester Youth Center have already faced many choices in their lives. Their decision to become involved in Youth Center programs and activities is one we seek to support in many ways. Every new member goes through an individualized assessment to ensure we provide the programmatic supports they need. This process is part of our case management system.

Some youth are looking for new friends and different outlets for their passions and energy. Others come seeking assistance to overcome the myriad challenges they face in their young lives. They reach a crossroads, and we open our doors and invite them to choose a path that leads them to future success.

This past year has been one of transition for the Youth Center, but it's been a reasonably smooth change in administration. We value the team we work with every day here, and remain encouraged by the breadth of our community partnerships and support from dedicated individuals and foundations.

We urge you to read the stories in this Annual Report to learn how the Worcester Youth Center helps youth go farther in their lives.

With faith in the future,

Samuel Martin  
Executive Director

Laurie Ross  
Board President

# What's the best thing you've learned here this past year?



*"How to be responsible and maintain your job."*

– Rosa Medina, Youth Staff, snack and dinner preparer

*"How to make art."* – Jake

*"The culinary courses."*

– Tyrell Williams

*"Communication – We learned to talk to people, be gregarious and sociable."*

– Arelys Salome

*"I learned how to draw and how to be responsible."*

– Ashley Diaz, YouthReach arts program participant

*"Community – Everyone here helps each other out, we're one big, humongous family."*

– Steven Burgos

*"Friendship – a lot of friendship. How to turn friends into family."*

– Makentry Long

*"Respect others, treat others as your equal. Be passionate about your dreams and follow them to the fullest."* – Arnaldo

*"I learned how people can communicate without judgment."*

– Hans Williams



*"How to be a better person."*

– Jonathan Sears

*"To have better grades in school."* – Linda Rivera

*"I learned how to better myself in every way – personally, business-wise, work-wise."* – José Herrera

*"Teamwork – How to be better in communication, talking, making new friends, dancing, basketball, anything."* – Lester Ngo

# The Medium is the Message

*“We talked about how much addiction to alcohol and drugs can tear families and even communities apart.”*

*“Bottled Up,” Emmy Pham, aluminum sculpture wire, wood and glass bottles (2013)*

*“My artwork is a metaphor about being stuck in an addiction and then eventually overcoming it... I chose to create my figures with wire because the lack of identifying characteristics shows that the people who struggle with addiction can be anyone... This art piece was made to inspire people and show them that they are not alone, and it is possible to overcome alcohol addiction.”*



It started out as a once-a-week trip to the Worcester Art Museum. Fifteen youth – ages 14 to 18 – spent every Thursday in the fall of 2012 learning about drawing, painting and sculpture. Visits to the galleries helped them see how others used art to communicate a message. The 20th century modern American art collection was a favorite.

Another day each week, they focused on community analysis. Part of the Youth Center’s signature Urban Community Action Planning for Teens (UCAPT) program, the group elected to create art that would address issues of addiction. “We talked about how much addiction to alcohol and drugs can tear families and even communities apart,” said Callista Perry, YouthReach Arts Program Coordinator.

During the winter and spring of 2013, the youth spent both days each week at the museum. The work was very student-driven, according to artist and educator Jen Swan. They illustrated both the dark side of addiction and the ways people could overcome it. Shards of broken beer bottles, for example, turned into something beautiful – a mosaic of a crying eye. A wire figure manages to crawl out of a bottle.

Their artistic messages were displayed for a month at the Davis Art Gallery in downtown Worcester. The exhibit received positive coverage in local media.

“These young people are growing into adulthood as artists and as community members,” said Callista.

# Clearing Brush, Wearing Steel

You learn a lot about customer service when you ask an adult not to touch an historic artifact and they do it anyway. Another lesson on the job – when your supervisor tells you “no texting,” it’s not just a suggestion.

Some three dozen Worcester Youth Center members spent six weeks gaining all kinds of job skills at organizations across the city, thanks to grants from the Commonwealth Corporation and through the Worcester Community Action Council’s YouthWorks Summer Jobs program. Summer work for two teen teams involved caring for “a really big backyard,” as Mass Audubon Central Sanctuaries Director Deborah Cary described the 400-plus acre city preserve at Broad Meadow Brook Conservation Center and Wildlife Sanctuary (BMB). Another student group learned history and public speaking skills as interpreters and guards at the Higgins Armory Museum.

“Youth crew” tasks at BMB could be anything from clearing brush, removing invasive exotic plants and digging post holes, to cleaning the stairwell. At the Higgins Armory, youth modeled chain mail, answered questions about medieval weapons and explained (often why touching armor creates rust.

Both groups worked closely with caring adults and a Youth Center supervisor. “Very skilled naturalists and property managers” offered guidance at BMB, said Cary. Experts at Higgins made history seem cool and interesting.

“I loved seeing their excitement,” said Higgins program coordinator Nancy Huntington. She could witness the moment that students realized, “I can be good at this.”



*“I loved seeing their excitement.”*

*Prepared for a public presentation at Higgins Armory, Summer 2012*

# A Second Chance at Education



Laura Suroviak, Jose Alvarez, Mayor Petty and Althea Ostrow

*“I can go to college, I can have a good career, I can be something and someone.”*

Ten students from the Worcester Youth Center graduated with a General Educational Development (GED) diploma in 2012. Jose Alvarez was one of them. At his graduation last June, he called the Youth Center’s GED program “that second chance at education.” Entering the program changed his future expectations. “I felt like I could do this,” he said. “I can go to college, I can have a good career, I can be something and someone.”

Since graduation, six have entered college, two started jobs, one started cosmetology school, and one enlisted in the military.

For 14 hours a week, Laura Suroviak, GED Instructor, bridges the gaps in her students’ previous education experiences. Some come from other countries, where different school systems test without multiple choice questions. Others struggle with reading or fell behind in math. Laura sees herself as a youth worker first and teacher second. Every day, she reminds her students that she values them, and so does the Youth Center.

A typical classroom may find her with eight students, teaching algebra in Spanish, asking for a complete sentence in English and explaining what an atom is. Over the course of a year, 85 students pass through her classroom. She piloted Spanish-language GED classes last year with three students, and the numbers are growing.

An “amazing volunteer,” Jerry Siplas assists Laura twice a week. Training for teacher certification as a second career, Jerry helps especially with math, a subject many students fear.

Outside the classroom, students often work with a counselor from the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (MSPCC). Addressing behavioral health issues is as important as mastering algebra. “People work to pass the GED test for so many reasons,” says Laura, “but it’s just one step.”

# Education + Counseling = Successful Life Skills

Many youth arrive at the Worcester Youth Center with a complicated back story. To identify needs and address them comprehensively, Youth Center staff members often collaborate with Lucia Alfaro, an onsite behavioral health counselor, and other community resource providers. Their support is key to successful youth development and helps staff to understand behaviors and develop strategies in their work with youth such as Grace.

Grace (not her real name) came to Worcester from another city to escape past crimes and life-threatening situations. Multiple moves and ongoing learning challenges meant she had not completed high school. Over 18, she needed life skills to become an independent adult. She struggled in a new city without access to transportation. Anxious about taking the bus, she had other behavioral health issues. A Youth Center counselor referred her to an outpatient counselor and together, they developed an individualized service plan to support her goals.

Education was central to her plan. Collaborating to monitor Grace's progress, the counselor and GED teacher noticed she was not attending classes. Without her medication, she had trouble sleeping, and could not take the bus. Grace was assigned a Community Support Program worker, who connects with the Youth Center counselor weekly.

Today, Grace is a leader at the Youth Center. More confident and eager to help, she has made friends. Working with her support team to overcome public speaking fears and present her ideas, she discussed her experiences as a GED student with the Youth Center board and spoke with program funders. Still facing two court cases, Grace has experienced such positive growth that her team sent a character letter to the judge.

*"Inner Strength," group drawing mural, conte crayon, charcoal, colored pencils and graphite on paper, 48" x 60" (2013) YouthReach Arts Program participants*

*"This group drawing image was created by dividing the image of a tiger into separate abstract panels. The tiger symbolizes inner strength, for one needs a ferocious attitude to overcome the harshest of addictions." – Jen Swan*





# Financial Report

## Your Dollars at Work

### Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2012

#### ASSETS

##### Current Assets

Cash and equivalents	\$190,861
Investments	\$723,815
Grants and contracts receivable	\$121,333
Prepaid expenses	\$20,561

**TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS** \$1,056,570

Property and equipment, net \$576,930

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$1,633,500

#### LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

Accounts payable	\$48,138
Accrued expenses	\$67,839

**TOTAL LIABILITIES** \$115,977

##### Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$1,350,486
Temporarily restricted	\$167,037

**TOTAL ASSETS** \$1,517,523

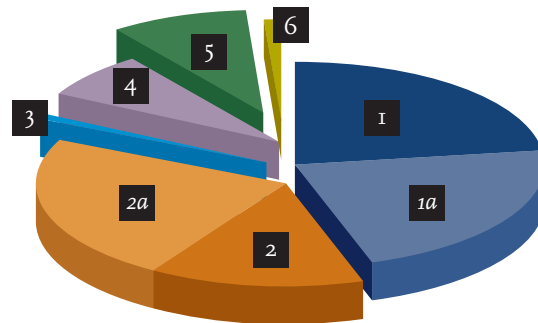
**TOTAL LIABILITIES  
AND NET ASSETS** \$1,633,500

Growing numbers of youth are creating positive changes in their lives at the Worcester Youth Center. We are doing important work, and your contributions make possible the time, energy and flexibility required to help them choose new directions. As we approach

our 20th anniversary next year, we celebrate both our longstanding individual and corporate donors, and those who more recently have found our investment in youth valuable. The balance sheet is healthy, and we are grateful.

#### REVENUE

Year ending December 31, 2012

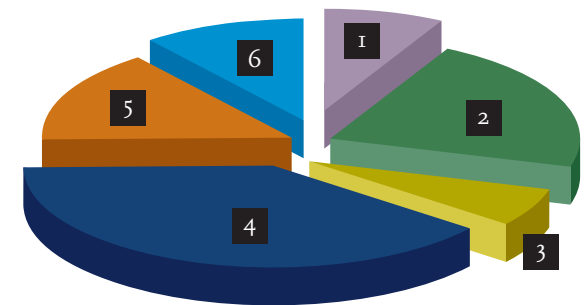


<b>1</b>	Grants and contracts	\$237,624	23%
<b>1a</b>	Temporarily restricted	\$231,640	22%
<b>2</b>	Contributions	\$141,966	14%
<b>2a</b>	Temporarily restricted	\$240,089	23%
<b>3</b>	Investment income, net of investment fees	\$14,038	1%
<b>4</b>	Net realized and unrealized gain on investments	\$70,102	7%
<b>5</b>	Contributions in-kind	\$95,906	9%
<b>6</b>	Other income	\$8,722	1%

**TOTAL REVENUE AND SUPPORT** \$1,040,087

#### EXPENSES

Year ending December 31, 2012



<b>1</b>	Program Services		
<b>1</b>	Recreation	\$70,135	7%
<b>2</b>	Leadership	\$205,116	21%
<b>3</b>	Health and wellness	\$61,769	6%
<b>4</b>	Work readiness*	\$380,680	40%
<b>5</b>	Education	\$148,610	15%
<b>6</b>	General administration	\$94,029	10%

**TOTAL EXPENSES** \$960,339

\* Includes provision of behavioral health and supportive services

# Thank You to Our Generous Donors in 2012

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## \$50,000-\$99,999

Fred Harris Daniels Foundation, Inc.  
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*"Sunrise," Lovashia Rosario,  
chalk pastels (2013)*

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Worcester Tree Initiative



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[www.worcesteryouthcenter.org](http://www.worcesteryouthcenter.org)



*"Your Choices Pave the Way," Nashali Vargas, acrylic on wood (2013) "There is a man at a crossroads in life... The two worlds are a mirror image of one another, but they are the two different futures that can be the outcome of the choices he makes. This painting is important because it shows how every choice you make, big or small, will determine your future."*