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Thank you to all the artists who contributed their work to this yearbook, Yalia Santos, Varangelys Ardon, Aisha Nadeem, and Yilly Rodriguez Lynch.



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



It has truly taken a village to raise more than a generation of Youth Center young people.

CELEBRATING A 25-YEAR JOURNEY

Old photos and thought-provoking stories about the early days make me realize how far the Worcester Youth Center has come in a quarter century. How the support of a few very persistent, sometime vocal, but always dedicated youth and adult advisors made the difference between keeping our doors open or shutting out new options for Worcester's young people.

It has truly taken a village to raise more than a generation of Youth Center young people. Dozens of adult volunteers and staff members committed to forging new futures for Youth Center members have stepped up over the years to help them see the possibilities that they might never have considered otherwise. I thank them for their selfless service.

One powerful voice absent from this yearbook is that of Lynne Simonds, the Worcester Youth Center's first executive director. Since our 20th anniversary, she has relocated outside the United States, and we were unable to reach her for this project. Her role is not forgotten, however, as the stories shared here by her friends and advisees discuss the impact she had on the Youth Center and on their lives.

We've come a long way since we sought donations just to make next month's rent. Our financial supporters have stood by us, and I'm grateful that many have taken the journey with us. Chief among them has been UMass Memorial Health Care, which shared both funds and talented staff members back when they were still two separate hospitals. That relationship continued and deepened after the merger. They recognize the critical connection of positive health outcomes and positive life outcomes.

As we begin our silver anniversary year, I am completing my seventh year as Executive Director. One hallmark of my tenure has been the funding we raised to renovate our creative spaces – the recording studio, the kitchen and the gallery for art display. With a recent grant to combat youth violence, the Center is poised for growth in the creative programming for which we are known.

I look forward to involving in our celebrations more youth and adults dedicated to creating our futures together.

Thank you for your continuing support.

Samuel Martin
Executive Director

TIMELINE 1991-2005

1991

July 29, 32 youth arrested for loitering at Worcester's courthouse. Lynne Simonds, City Manager's Youth Council chair, and Anne Moriarty, Director of Program Development at Plumley Village, convene weekly youth meetings, create Teen Action Group (TAG). Members see role for youth in Worcester. Planning for Worcester Youth Center begins

Teens say police 'went over the line'

City officials back officers

By Winston W. Wiley
 Worcester — A handful of the Worcester Youth Center protesters last night took to the streets to voice their displeasure against police officers who responded to a disturbance at the center Wednesday night.



The protesters said police used excessive force and that they were arrested without cause. They also said that police officers were not properly trained and that they were not given the opportunity to be heard.



EXAMPLE OF PROTEST
 The protesters said police used excessive force and that they were arrested without cause. They also said that police officers were not properly trained and that they were not given the opportunity to be heard.

Worcester officials said they were sorry about the incident and that they would be looking into the matter. They also said that they would be providing more training for the police officers.

The protesters said they were not given the opportunity to be heard and that they were not given the chance to explain their side of the story. They also said that they were not given the chance to be heard by the police officers.

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1994

April 29, TAG press conference announces Youth Center to open at 530 Main St. and host Youth Summit May 9. Lynne Simonds first executive director

1996

Adolfo Arrastia hired as executive director

1997

60 Minutes TV news features production of West Side Story. Youth Center named one of six Monroe E. Trout Premier Care Awards for outstanding grassroots effort to serve at-risk populations

October: Youth Collaborative launches with YMCA, YWCA and UMass Memorial – Youth Center serves as hub. Violence reduction, pregnancy prevention, career readiness programs

Teens have floor at Youth Summit

By Winston W. Wiley
 Telegram & Gazette Staff

WORCESTER — While School Committee members and a handful of parents were at Doherty High School last night discussing "school choice" issues, local youths crammed into a room at the Youth Center on Main Street to talk about getting more say in decisions affecting their lives.



The Worcester Palladium 261 Main St. Presents **HARMONIC VISION OF HIP-HOP**

Featuring a Showcase of Talented Young Stars

Over 25 acts Performing Hip Hop, Reggae, R&B, Freestyle, DJ's and Dancers

Worcester Youth Center Teen-Action Group

Monday, February 16, 1998, Doors Open from 6:30 to 11:30 pm
 All Ages Welcome! Tickets are \$8 in advance and \$10 at the door.
 For further information call (508) 792-8949

1998

February 16: youth-organized "Harmonic Vision of Hip Hop" fundraising concert held at Palladium – 25+ acts, audience of 1,500+ – raises \$12,000+

February: Youth Center moves to 27 Chandler Street, undergoes months of renovations

2001

Incubator begins for youth development activities, HOPE (Healthy Options for Prevention and Education) Coalition, teens identify issues of concerns and recommend solutions

2002

Youth Center receives Health Foundation of Central MA Community Award

2003

Youth Center implements Urban Community Action Planning for Teens (UCAPT), neighborhood problem-solving and planning youth model developed by board member, Clark professor Laurie Ross, PhD

2004

Youth present at national conference on youth violence programs

Community rallies for \$1.9 million capital campaign. Center moves to larger, permanent home at 326 Chandler Street

2005

Center receives "United Way Community Builder" award for outstanding achievement and initiatives to build better communities for the common good

New downtown home for youth center eyed

By Winston W. Wiley
 Telegram & Gazette Staff
WORCESTER — Plans to relocate the Worcester Youth Center to the former Bank of New England branch office at 40 Foster St. will be considered today in a meeting at the Worcester Area Chamber of Commerce.

Local political and business leaders, as well as representatives from the Chamber, YMCA, YWCA and Memorial Hospital are expected to attend. Memorial Hospital is the center's chief sponsor.

Dr. Peter H. Levine, president and chief executive officer of Memorial, said the hospital, which along with the University of Massachusetts

The story of the center for the past two years has been "Go, this is a wonderful program, but don't put it in my backyard."

DR. PETER H. LEVINE

Medical Center owns the two-story building on Foster Street, remains open to any practical alternatives to that site. But, he added, "having some miraculous appearance of an other home for it, I don't have an answer for where to put it and the program has been so remarkably successful that none of us want to

abandon it."

The center, located at 500 Main St., near Federal Square, has been looking for a new home for more than two years. The owner of the current site wants to reclaim it within six weeks, according to Levine.

Levine said he doesn't anticipate

receives last month approved using the 25,000 square-foot bank building for three purposes: day care, inter-generational programs and as a youth center.

Today's meeting at the chamber office, which is attached to the rear of the Foster Street building, is an informational meeting for the neighbors. The site is across Commercial Street from the Worcester Centrum Centre, across Waino Street from First Massachusetts Bank and Mechanics Hall, and across Foster Street from the Worcester Common Outlets parking garage and Shook's Restaurant.

Turn to NEW/Back Page

2007

Joseph C. O'Brien serves as interim executive director

2008

February: Hilda Ramirez becomes executive director

Center formalizes relationship with Worcester Police Department, included in Shannon Initiative

Micro-enterprise programs launch. First youth-led businesses include nail and hair salon, event organizer, music recording

September: Youth Center closes briefly after 3 feet of water pour into building during Tropical Storm Hanna

2010

United Way awards \$1,000 to Center to implement business plans created in micro-enterprise program

First YouthReach program begins with Worcester Art Museum. Youth create art in response to analysis of community challenges

2011

WPI student project team study possible new uses for space in the Worcester Youth Center, warehouse next door

Youth Center members testify on Beacon Hill on drop-out legislation raising to 18 mandatory school attendance age, providing graduation coaches for at-risk youth

Youth Center joins Youth Connect, eight agencies funded by United Way to coordinate after-school activities and youth development services

Forestry training program begins with Worcester Tree Initiative

Youth Center joins state's Safe and Successful Youth Initiative with youth at high risk of reoffending. Bridging the Opportunities Gap (BOG) programming includes "Game for Success" at Becker College

2011

"One Circle" program starts for girls ages 10 to 14 in collaboration with Latino Education Institute and Plumley Village

Collaboration with Quinsigamond Community College begins with culinary training and certification program, "Cooking up a Career"

2012

May: Samuel N. Martin named new executive director

Commonwealth Corporation praises culinary training program as state's most successful — 60 young adults receive food prep/work readiness training, work placements, industry certifications

Center joins Compass Project to address issues of youth homelessness in coordination with LUK, Inc., WPD, DYS, DCF

YouthReach collaborative program exhibits art at Sprinkler Factory Gallery

LOCAL

City to tap youth against gun violence

State grant to help Worcester Youth Center expand offerings

By CYNTHIA MULLIN
 Telegram & Gazette Staff

WORCESTER — The Worcester Youth Center has received a two-year, \$500,000 state grant to combat gun violence with expanded programming and perhaps a little bit of creativity.

"What else is there? — although we haven't fully thought it out yet — is to employ at-risk young people to create anti-gun violence messaging," said Samuel N. Martin, executive director of the Worcester Youth Center.

Mr. Martin said specific projects are yet to be identified but youth may be involved in creating anti-gun violence awareness, graphic art, and perhaps even a rap album.

"We want to get young people to use their creativity rather than having us just passing out flyers — and that that's not effective," Mr. Martin said with a laugh.

The grant is part of a nearly \$50 million state effort to combat gun violence in the state.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health announced this week that it has awarded a \$500,000, two-year grant to the City of Worcester to establish a Gun Violence Prevention Training Center for females.

The state said the center will be "the premier training facility in Massachusetts for addressing gun violence through both a public health and racial equity lens," according to a press release announcing the funding.

The center will also assist to community organizations, including the Worcester Youth Center, to



San Martin, executive director of the Worcester Youth Center, sits in the center's lounge area Thursday, June 1, 2012.

Mr. Martin said that creative messaging — whether in the form of graphic service announcements, bill, rap, or whatever the youth come up with — will be used extensively on social media.

"There are more fights that happen on social media, and we want to help counteract that," Mr. Martin said.

REPORTER & GAZETTE | wply.com | Photos: June 7, 2012 | B3
 Guest Report, columnist, managing editor
 2012-06-07
 Photo by Winston Wiley

2013

YouthReach participants create mixed-media art exhibit depicting addiction issues, displayed at Worcester's Davis Gallery

Grant awarded for clean energy/STEM career training initiative from the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center in partnership with Quinsigamond Community College, Central Mass Workforce Investment Board

2019

June: Massachusetts awards \$800,000, 2-year anti-gun violence grant to Center

DEMARIO ANDREWS



Demario Andrews felt the door to the Worcester Youth Center stood open for him.

“The Youth Center was always a welcoming place, even for kids who were staff like me, as I was a member and staffer of other youth-serving agencies,” he said. Demario was club director for the Plumley Village Boys & Girls Club, a member of the HOPE Coalition adult

staff, and the YouthConnect coordinator for four years.

He recalled the Youth Center was one of his first job interviews.

The Youth Center was always a welcoming place, even for kids who were staff like me...

“I also was a part of the remodeling for the very first Youth Center when it was on Main Street. It gave me a reason to be downtown without being harassed or asked to leave by the police,” he said.

Demario recommends youth become involved in the Worcester Youth Center.

“If you are looking for a place to go, head to the Youth Center. Once you are there, take advantage of the opportunities they have there that could end up having lasting effects on your life,” he said.

For him, one effect has been to continue working in youth development. Demario has been a branch director for the Boys & Girls Club of Western Pennsylvania in Pittsburgh for about a year and a half.

JASON HAMZA PEREZ



Jason Hamza Perez calls the time he spent at the Worcester Youth Center “The Golden Years.”

“We had lots of fun, but did some serious work helping at-risk youth, especially at 27 Chandler St.,” he said.

Through the Worcester Youth Center, Jason learned it’s possible to help youth turn their lives around.

“The Youth Center allowed me to see that we can take difficult and perhaps negative situations and turn them into beautiful learning experiences to help change peoples’ lives,” he said.

He believes youth empowerment saves lives. “A friend of mine said, ‘Youth need elders to show them the way, but not get in the way.’”

Youth need elders to show them the way, but not get in the way.

Jason, who now lives in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, is the director and founder of the YA-NE youth center (Youth Alliance for Networking and Empowerment). He also oversees a drug dealing-prevention program for youth in Pittsburgh Public Schools who sell and use drugs, called the Diversion Program.

His success with youth has drawn global attention. A co-founder of the Light of the Age Mosque in Pittsburgh, Jason was ranked as one of the top 500 most influential Muslims in the world in 2010 by The Royal Islamic Strategic Studies Centre for his work. In 2009, PBS released an award-winning film, “New Muslim Cool,” about his life, his music and his community.

JULIO JOYNER



Julio Joyner gained customer service and people skills in an office setting, thanks to a temporary internship at UMass Memorial Medical Center arranged through the Worcester Youth Center. Today he works in the science technology field selling clinical research data to hospitals.

“The major impact the Youth Center had on my life was

understanding the workforce and how things work,” he said.

**Stay focused on your dreams.
Not all things are what they
may appear to be.**

Julio joined the Youth Center in 2001, when he was 15 years old. His brother came home with an application for the former UCAPT (Urban Community Action Planning for Teens) program at the Youth Center. The program gave youth the opportunity to talk about the changes they wanted to see in the community. UCAPT, for example, targeted liquor stores selling to underage youths.

For the next 15 years, Julio remained involved with the Youth Center as a member, peer leader and youth leader.

He interned in several departments at UMass, including the cancer center and radiology. Being around physicians and seeing how things work at such a young age was an invaluable experience, he said.

Drawing on his experiences with the Youth Center, Julio is planning a nonprofit to help young boys who may not have a father figure as a role model.

He offers this advice to youths at the Center today: “Stay focused on your dreams. Not all things are what they may appear to be. So be patient, because things will fall into place.”

YESENIA MAYSONET



At 14, recalled Yesenia Maysonet, “I was always a curious person.” And with her friends at the Worcester Youth Center, supported by caring adults, they knew they could try other things, empowered to take risks in a place that felt safe.

While not a musician, she would sit in the Center’s recording studio, a popular

part of the new location at 326 Chandler St., which opened in 2004. Attracted by their passion, she wanted to learn how musicians were using the resources available. Joyner Lucas would be in there with friends, developing his early talent as a rapper, now a Grammy nominee.

**The Youth Center was
my introduction to Youth
Development... it gave me a
professional network.**

She chaired the Teen Action Group and, in that role, attended Executive Board meetings.

“The Youth Center was my introduction to Youth Development,” she said. “It gave me a professional network.” While attending Clark University she worked at the Center before moving to lead the academic programs at the Boys & Girls Club of Worcester. That led to a program director position with the Boys & Girls Club of Central Florida in 2012 and leadership roles in a charter school. She moved back north in 2018, now Assistant Development Director for the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell.

“Take full advantage of everything the Center has to offer,” she advised current members. “Even if you’re not passionate about it – get the experience.”

MELVIN MEDINA



From a kid on the streets to restaurant owner, Melvin Medina credits the Worcester Youth Center with making a big impact on his life.

“It was awesome,” Melvin said of the Worcester Youth Center. “They were great with the kids.”

An early member of the Youth Center for six years, beginning in middle school, Melvin felt

the Youth Center “changed everything,” he said. “I went there and got off the streets. It opened the door for a lot of us,” he added.

Programs offered there helped youth find employment. Activities such as basketball kept youth busy and off the streets, he recalled.

**Never give up.
Keep dreaming because
dreams do come true.**

Melvin returned to the Center 15 years later as program coordinator for Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) initiatives. These included workforce development, training and arts programs for youth involved with the Department of Youth Services.

“It was pretty fun working there,” he said.

The Center’s outreach hasn’t stopped with helping youth. It’s also involved in the community, for example, cleaning up areas that need to be cleaned up. The staff planted trees and flowers outside the Youth Center to make it look nice, he said.

Melvin has this advice for current youth members at the Center: “Never give up. Keep dreaming because dreams do come true.”

His life offers proof. A proud owner of the El Rincon Criollo restaurant in Worcester, Melvin works there together with his mother-in-law, who runs the operation.

EDUARDO PAGAN



Staying up all night at the train station and in parks left a homeless Eduardo Pagan exhausted. During the day, he slept on the wooden couch at the Worcester Youth Center — just long enough to boost his energy to get through another day.

“It was a safe haven for me when I was going through homelessness, hopelessness, depression and many

other challenges that the youth in Worcester have difficulty overcoming,” he said.

Staff at the Youth Center, particularly Roberto Diaz and Esayas Wureta, encouraged Eduardo to find a job, but that wasn’t his primary concern. “My focus was on housing,” he said.

His homelessness, which began in 2008, ended in 2010 when Esayas worked with Worcester Community Housing Resources and found a rooming house where Eduardo could live.

The support of the staff also helped him with a part-time job at Radio Shack. “They pushed me and pushed me to do better,” said Eduardo, now program manager of Friendly House in Worcester.

While working part time, he became certified as a medical assistant and landed a job at Family Health Center in Worcester. Promoted to health educator, he began working with the HIV population. He was running groups and visiting health centers to educate the public about HIV when he developed an interest in human services work. Spotting an ad for a position as case manager at Friendly House, he applied for the job and was hired. In early 2019, he was promoted from case manager to program manager. His experience at the Youth Center had prepared him well.

To Eduardo, the Center gave him the foundation on which to build his life and career.

“Once I got going, it just kept climbing from there,” he said.

He shared some advice for other youth in need of services at the Worcester Youth Center: “Never underestimate your power to change yourself. Never underestimate your skills and capabilities, and do not be afraid nor embarrassed to reach out to the staff at the Worcester Youth Center. Once you do, I promise they will move mountains for you. Nevertheless, be patient, because patience will produce results.”

ANGIE LOZADA



Once known as the “Panini Girl” at the Youth Center’s snack shop, Angie Lozada now works with mothers and babies as an OB/GYN nurse. And she loves her job.

“Honestly, I’ve come a long way,” she said. “I was a young girl who didn’t know what she wanted.”

Angie joined the Youth Center during her freshman year in

high school. A few friends were members and she walked in to hang out with them. Before long, they decided to become a part of as many of the Center’s programs as they could. Angie joined the Teen Action Group and regularly shared member concerns with board members, plus ideas to keep the Center fun and appealing.

Never give up. If you set your heart on something, you can definitely make it happen.

The snack shop was one of those ideas. A contest for the best business proposal for reusing the warehouse space next door was another. Angie credits her mentor, board member Richard Pyle, for his help with tuition and lots of advice.

Starting in Quinsigamond Community College’s criminal justice program, Angie moved over to nursing at Becker College and graduated in 2018 as a registered nurse. But without her mentor’s intervention, she might not have completed her program. Angie’s daughter, born with a host of complications, died at age 3. Devastated, Angie wanted to give up, but Richard encouraged her to go back and finish strong.

Her advice to current members? “Never give up. If you set your heart on something, you can definitely make it happen.” The Worcester Youth Center “wants to help get you where you need to be,” she said. “I’m proud of the person I’ve become.”

DAMIEN PAGAN



Damien Pagan used to be “very shy,” he said, but after serving as an outreach worker through the Worcester Youth Center, he speaks easily with people now. Spending time at the Youth Center was a big stepping-stone for him, he said. “They helped push me to do what I had to do.”

While the work readiness programs and community

service projects with local youth helped him prepare for new career directions, he credits his mentors, Hilda Ramirez and Roberto Diaz, for their persistence in keeping him focused on his education. He recently graduated from Becker College with a degree in criminal justice.

“Despite not liking school,” he said, “the big reason I completed college was their support.”

What you learn may not seem useful at the time, but in the long run, it is.

Today, he’s a mental health counselor in the UMass Memorial residential psychiatric unit, working with patients suffering from drug abuse and mental illness. He plans to start a nursing program in 2020. The graphic design skills he developed while creating the Youth Center’s annual report as a high school student still serve him well. He recently designed a logo for a friend’s new business.

Looking back on his time as a Center member, he offers this advice to current youth: “Whether you want to listen to it or not, take advantage of all those resources available,” he said. “Stick it out,” he added. “What you learn may not seem useful at the time, but in the long run, it is.”

NASYA AGYEKUM



In 2016, Nasya Agyekum came with a friend to a YouthConnect event at the Worcester Youth Center. Her friend's father worked there, and she wanted to see what it was all about.

She found a welcoming place. "That was three years ago," she said. "I couldn't stop coming. I'm there almost every day." Nasya has found that the

Youth Center offers the chance to learn something new, to find new friendships and to do "a lot of growing."

"I've met people I never expected to be friends with," she said. Once awkward and uncertain around people she didn't know, she will now "go and talk to anybody."

The Worcester Youth Center is very helpful. They show you how to be open-minded about a situation and help you find other solutions.

A junior in high school, she coaches 15 middle school girls in the Teen Circle program. As an assistant for program facilitator Nydia Colón, Nasya tracks attendance and transportation and occasionally gives the girls a lesson with an activity tied into the topic. The Teen Circle curriculum covers such themes as self-awareness, finding your voice and defining oppression.

Beyond her work experience with the young teens, Nasya knows how to write a resume and has gained new communications and other workforce skills.

She's also learned, she said, that "there's more to life than playing around." She pays more attention in class and is taking school seriously. When there's a problem, she said, "the Worcester Youth Center is very helpful. They show you how to be open-minded about a situation and help you find other solutions."

GEORGE RUSSELL



George Russell's first memory of the Worcester Youth Center was as a small child walking into the 27 Chandler St. building with his older brother and stepfather. By the time he was 13, the Youth Center had moved down Chandler Street to its permanent home, and he found his afterschool go-to place.

"They kept me off the streets," he said. "I found a summer job, got my GED, and learned how to type on a computer." He also learned gardening skills, building an urban garden on Oread Street and growing strawberries, kiwi, cucumbers and pumpkins, he said. He spent a summer planting trees to replace those attacked by the Asian longhorned beetle.

I've been involved with the Worcester Youth Center for a really long time and it's been really good for me.

"All they did was help me strive," he said.

After a few bumps in the road, George said, he returned to the Center for more support. Now 22, he started his own business in the spring of 2019, and has found that, once again, the Youth Center is a great resource.

"Sam helped me a little bit with paperwork to get started — my business certificate, IRS tax forms and a bank account." Other staff, including Sheron Hozier and Yoshada Kwaning, have shared advice as he launched Crazy4Junk, a junk removal business. His website, social media presence, lawn signs and T-shirts ready, he has secured his first few customers and some good feedback. "I can do anything they need," said the start-up salesman.

"I've been involved with the Worcester Youth Center for a really long time and it's been really good for me," said George. "I learned that they're here to help us, to take us from the environment we came from into a new place."



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TESTIMONIALS

What's been your experience with the Worcester Youth Center?



ROBERTO DIAZ
Senior Case Manager

“To make a difference in a young person’s life, you have to be involved for several years. At the Worcester Youth Center, we get to work with youth from 14 to 24 – that’s half a life!

“I find the drop-in aspect interesting. Today may be the day a young person decides ‘I want to change, I have nowhere else to go.’ They may be facing homelessness, a substance disorder or immigration issues. We could have three staff handling that one youth.

“My experience with the Youth Center has been a good one. I started working in 2006, when Adolfo was still executive director. The way the Center shared power with the youth — the Teen Action Planning Group, including youth on the board and in decision making, that fascinated me. I’ve been a recreational coordinator, case manager, work readiness program manager and assistant director while working alongside Denise, then Joe O’Brien, Brenda, Hilda and now Sam.

“I came back because I am passionate about youth development. The Youth Center helped my skills, my critical thinking, and taught me how to take an out-of-the-box approach.”



ALLEN FLETCHER
Former Board President

“Sometimes wonderful, sometimes insane. My experience goes back more than 20 years. I was the one who found the place at 27 Chandler St. owned by O’Connell Moving Company. We raised money, did renovations and moved in, simple as that.

“A high point for me was the ‘West Side Story’ saga in 1997. I talked about this hare-brained notion with Brian Tivnan, formerly of the Forum Theater, to put on the musical with a few Worcester gang members. Still kids at heart, they would be swept

into the magic of theater and be transformed. Well, it wasn’t as successful or magical as we thought it would be, as auditioning in front of their peers at the Youth Center was a problem, they were self-conscious. But a solid cohort of Youth Center members were in the cast. Brian trained them in dance, voice; he put them through exercises and drills. They performed at East Park, and Police Chief Ed Gardella played Officer Krupke. Then *60 Minutes* did a news special on it – a great production that generated national attention.

Here was the potential
magic of the Youth Center.

“About 10 years later, four men told me being a part of this had changed their lives. Here was the potential magic of the Youth Center.

“At the board level, we knew we needed more help in the community. Joel Greene recruited more business members like attorney Phil Davis. UMass Memorial believed in our mission. We ran a capital campaign and bought the building where we are now.

“The Worcester Youth Center gave me a lot of gray hair, but it’s made me feel I was doing something relevant, maybe even important. Good things are happening.”



SHERON HOZIER
Assistant Director

“Interacting with young people is the best part of my day. You don’t realize the impact you have on young people until they come back years later to say thank you for the role you played in their lives. So I can’t be discouraged, even when there are struggles. They are paying attention.

“There are benefits to this work, but you can’t expect to see them tomorrow. They will be there in the future – you just can’t say when.”

TESTIMONIALS



JEANETTE TOZER
Board Co-Chair
Former Staff Member

“I was the AmeriCorps Ambassador of Mentoring when I started at the Worcester Youth Center in 2010. As an AmeriCorps volunteer, I piloted a group mentoring program there. The Youth Center gives youth the space to form mentoring relationships

with adults. It’s informal, not school, not a job. They can hang out and form connections with adults that wouldn’t happen otherwise.

“I held two other positions at the Center – program coordinator for One Circle with middle school girls and program manager for work readiness and leadership development programming, which included a pilot STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) bridge to college program funded by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center.

The Youth Center gives youth the space to form mentoring relationships with adults... that wouldn’t happen otherwise.

“In my years at the Center, I was able to grow professionally and learn a lot about youth development, my own work style and what I care about. The needs that the Worcester Youth Center meets for young people have evolved over 25 years, but it’s still a great place for young people to go.”

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



PETER RONDON

Peter Rondon had been incarcerated for nearly nine months before he joined the Worcester Youth Center and started his first job.

“They help people when they’re struggling. That’s what they did for me,” he said.

Peter was the Center’s first Shannon youth. Roberto Diaz, a staff member who was Peter’s longtime mentor, hired him to work in maintenance at the Youth Center through a Shannon Community Safety Initiative grant, which funds gang and youth violence prevention efforts.

I think the Youth Center had a positive effect. It gave me opportunities.

He joined the Center in 2007. Twenty years old and in his second semester of community college, Peter remained a member/volunteer for the next six or seven years. He earned an associate degree in 2010, his Bachelor of Science degree in criminal justice in 2018, and he’s working toward an MBA in business administration.

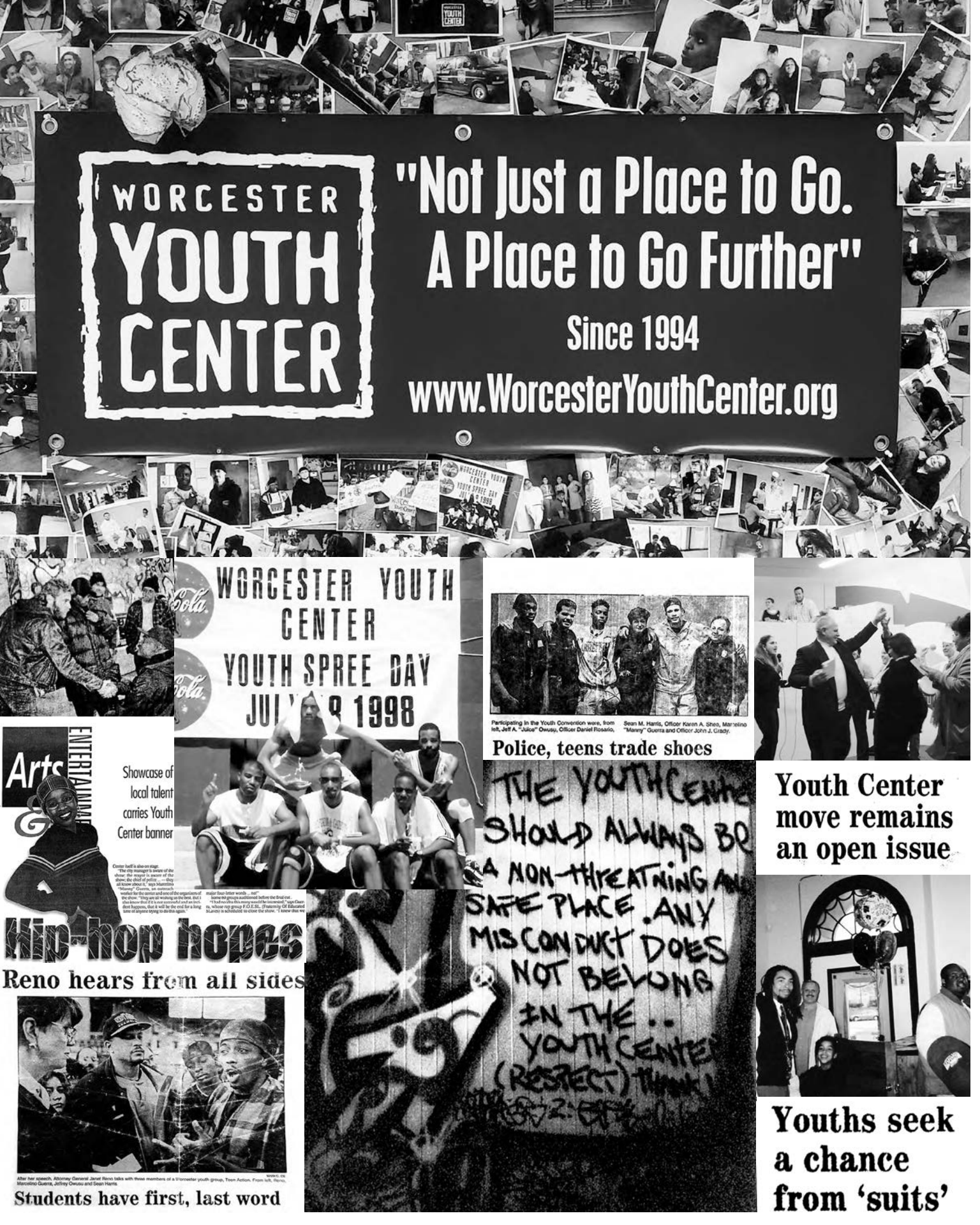
“Roberto brought me to the Center and has always guided me where I needed to be,” said Peter, who now works in the UMass Department of Psychiatry’s Psychiatric Treatment and Recovery Clinic.

In January 2019, he started a nonprofit, ONPAR CARS FOR LIFE, to help individuals re-entering society after incarceration with free transportation to and from work.

“I think the Youth Center had a positive effect. It gave me opportunities,” Peter said. “They made you believe in what you needed to do to move forward.”

The effects have been long-lasting. He keeps in touch with staff for advice and positive feedback.

His own advice for youth at the Center today? “Focus on educating yourself. Focus on bettering yourself,” he said. “Everything else will fall into place.”



WORCESTER YOUTH CENTER

"Not Just a Place to Go. A Place to Go Further"

Since 1994

www.WorcesterYouthCenter.org



**WORCESTER YOUTH
CENTER
YOUTH SPREE DAY
JULY 9 1998**



Participating in the Youth Convention were, from left, Jeff A. "Juice" Owsay, Officer Daniel Frosario, Sean M. Harris, Officer Karen A. Sheo, Marlene "Manny" Guerra and Officer John J. Crady.



Police, teens trade shoes

Arts & Entertainment Weekly



Showcase of local talent carries Youth Center banner

Center staff is also on stage. The city manager is wiser of the show, the mayor is wiser of the show, the chief of police... they all know what's going on.



THE YOUTH CENTER SHOULD ALWAYS BE A NON-THREATENING AND SAFE PLACE. ANY MISCONDUCT DOES NOT BELONG IN THE YOUTH CENTER (RESPECT) THANK!

Youth Center move remains an open issue

Hip-hop hopes

Reno hears from all sides



After her speech, Attorney General Janet Reno talks with these members of a Worcester youth group, Team Action. From left, Thomas M. Guerin, Jeffrey Owsay and Sean Harris.



Youths seek a chance from 'suits'

Students have first, last word



MANNY GUERRA

Youth work started well before the Worcester Youth Center for Marcelino “Manny” Guerra.

“I remember walking through Plumley Village and this white lady asked me, ‘Want a job?’” Manny said. He was 14. The woman was Anne Moriarty, Director of Program Development for Plumley Village. That summer he and three other teenagers started a children’s summer program, the first created for residents.

“She taught us bookkeeping, how to communicate with parents and kids, how to schedule events, plan trips, get the buses,” he recalled. That first job turned into community outreach worker, recruiting more youth to attend meetings and plan a new gathering place. Before long, he was participating in youth “speak outs” with city officials and other adults. Those conversations eventually led to the creation of the Worcester Youth Center at 530 Main St.

“I give a lot of credit to Lynne Simonds and Anne Moriarty for holding the reins and teaching us,” he said. Both women were involved with the Teen Action Group meetings in City Hall’s basement. A local activist, Lynne had worked with young people for years, and was “constantly in the community,” Manny said. The first director of the Youth Center, Lynne “was fearless.” Anne showed him how to write a resume and pointed him to a full-time community liaison job for UMass, connecting Worcester residents in three locations with medical services or social service agencies.

Manny also worked three days a week at the Youth Center, an adult presence at 19. But he was not alone. He gained wisdom from community members who understood the importance of supporting Worcester’s young people. On the board, structured so youth outnumbered adult members, he was paired up with a mentor, first the late minister Michael Scrogin, and then



I want to pass along the positive things I’ve learned, and a lot of my Youth Center experience.

philanthropist Allen Fletcher. Worcester’s police chief, Ed Gardella, would come in to play pool. College students tutored after school. Several times a week, UMass family physician Dr. Ronald Adler offered free health care and guidance.

When Lynne stepped down as director, Sean Harris filled the role, with Manny now a full-time assistant director. While not in the job description, Manny said he mediated several gang disputes, following Lynne’s initial work, and defused situations to prevent further violence. “We saved a few lives,” he said.

He also identified the next executive director. While training for hotline service at Worcester’s rape crisis center, he met fellow trainee Adolfo Arrastia. A Puerto Rican native from Brooklyn, “he understood the dynamics of youth,” Manny said. “We loved him.”

The mediation skills learned through the Youth Center helped launch Manny’s next career. He worked with Department of Youth Services-involved youth in Fitchburg, Lancaster and Roslindale. He returned to work with Adolfo to manage youth programming and helped start the recording studio in the Center’s permanent home at 326 Chandler St. The former member of the band FOESL, Manny worked with other musicians on recording and production.

After moving to Atlanta in 2010, Manny started a construction company and began fundraising for his own youth organization, Life Under Construction (LUC), to train area youth in construction skills. A serious accident, however, has meant a return to Worcester and his roots. Remaining upbeat, he said, “I want to pass along the positive things I’ve learned, and a lot of my Youth Center experience.”

SEAN HARRIS

At age 20, Sean Harris found himself interim director of the Worcester Youth Center. “I’d never been in charge of anything before,” he said. But co-founders Lynne Simonds and Anne Moriarty had seen his potential years before, when he first showed up for a Teen Action Group meeting in the basement of City Hall.

Back in 1991, Sean had just graduated from high school. He and several friends would spend time hanging out at Worcester’s City Hall, “doing nothing positive,” he said. “We were just dumb kids.” But after “these two persistent white women” came out of City Hall, repeatedly asking the group to help them discuss starting a youth center, they finally relented to see what they were talking about.

Walking into a meeting “in our baggy pants,” Sean recalled, Anne Moriarty was “talking to radio show host Jordan Levy on a speaker phone about the state of young people in Worcester.”

As Sean acknowledged, “never one to keep my mouth shut,” he told then-Mayor Levy that he had it wrong, he did not know what he was talking about. Sean had opinions and street savvy, and after that first meeting, “felt like somebody heard what I said.”

Those Wednesday night meetings became the Teen Action Group, and together with his friends Manny Guerra, Jeff Owusu and Dekedras Wright, Sean worked with Anne and Lynne to reach out to youth in the city to join their group. It was paid work, and he even had a business card. Sam Addo and Jason Perez were among the first group as well.

Organizing took more than a year, but in November 1993, the Worcester Youth Center signed a two-year lease for 530-34 Main St., formerly Mac-Ben Sporting Goods. The doors opened officially in 1994.

“I don’t think anyone expected the number of young people we got initially,” he said. Nor the population – members of competing gangs willing to be in the same room together. Thanks to Lynne’s efforts, the Youth Center was considered neutral



We put our
blood, sweat
and tears into
this place.

turf, and everyone wanted to have a place to go. “Lynne has always been the greatest advocate for youth I’ve ever known.”

While the city authorities didn’t like youth hanging out on the steps of City Hall, they didn’t appreciate the Youth Center’s location across the street from City Hall, either. Regular visits from the police and fire marshal, including several headline-generating raids, delivered that message.

“The Worcester economic development plan did not include young people,” said Sean. The Center convened a youth forum and attempted to make their case for staying on Main Street. Critical supporters in these early days included Police Chief Ed Gardella, business owner Doug Cutler and physician and hospital leader Dr. Peter Levine.

After Lynne stepped down as Center director, Sean took on the role for more than a year — long enough to help the board find and train Veronica Hale, a California lawyer with youth

development experience. She only lasted a few months, so Sean resumed his leadership role.

As the city and local businesses stepped up pressure for the Center to move, Adolfo Arrastia came in as executive director. With the decision to move to 27 Chandler St., Sean stepped away from his work at the Youth Center. At a board meeting, he recalled saying “we put our blood, sweat and tears into this place. We did nothing wrong.” And that safe space, he continued, “saved a ton of lives.” Sean’s work at the Youth Center gave him the opportunity to influence youth from all over in a positive manner. He received several local and regional community service awards, including the T&G Young Leader Award.

Sean appreciates the impact that the Worcester Youth Center has had on all those involved with its mission. “There are people I would never had had the opportunity to meet if not for the Youth Center,” he said. Through those conversations, “I know 100 percent that we changed their perceptions of what young people from all walks of life are capable of achieving when working together for good.”

ANNE MORIARTY

One of the first events held at the Worcester Youth Center was a Youth Summit that was coordinated and facilitated “by youth, for youth.” Center Youth Leaders, Manny Guerra and Sean Harris, who had worked with Anne Moriarty and Lynn Simonds, co-facilitated the meeting. Youth Center members had decided that only youth could speak at this Summit. With guidance, the young people drafted all the rules for the event, youth served as panelists, and much to the consternation of one outspoken politician in the audience, only youth could speak.

“Young people wanted an opportunity to be heard. We wanted to give youth the opportunity to share their ideas and showcase their skills and abilities,” said Anne, who at the time was the Resident Service Coordinator for the Plumley Village housing development. Hence the Youth Summit. “Lynne and I were aware of the strength of the youth; we wanted to give youth an opportunity to demonstrate to other adults how intelligent and articulate they were.” One politician had started speaking, but as moderator, Manny interjected, calmly repeating the rules of the event to him: Only youth can speak tonight. He listened.

In the early 1990s, young people in Worcester did not have a place where their voices could be heard. The Teen Action Group (TAG) was convened in 1991 by Anne and community activist Lynn Simonds after police arrested 32 young people for loitering. TAG gathered in a City Hall basement room for two hours every Wednesday evening for two years. Included among its priorities, beyond addressing the AIDS epidemic and bridging the gaps between teachers, police and youth, was “finding a safe place to go,” Anne recalled.

“No one had asked them for their ideas,” she said. “They had incredible ideas, were incredibly intelligent problem-solvers.”

Anne and Lynn, the Center’s first executive director, complemented each other as a team. Youth Center leadership



Today, the Center has support from the city and many community organizations. It was well worth the effort.

needed to be heard. “Lynne was the more vocal partner; I was the more quiet partner,” she said. To find the right home for the Center, Lynne drew on her extensive connections. All told, they looked at eight locations, accompanied by a young person each time. It needed to be near public transportation, but not in any gang territory. So ironically, Anne said, “we needed to be near City Hall, where we began.”

When they signed the lease for 530 Main St. in November 1993, they did not publicly announce their intentions. They took advice from Brooklyn public health organizer Luis Garden Acosta, who had created a community space bridging two warring neighborhoods. Traveling to New York with youth member Ivette Izquierdo to meet him, Anne and Lynn were advised, “Don’t tell City Hall that you’re opening. They’re going to try to shut you down. Open the doors, call it the Youth Center and keep it going.”

They covered the windows with newspapers without a sign. Hours were limited from 4 to 10 or 11 p.m., Thursdays through Saturdays. Initially called “A Place for Us,” the Center had one cardinal rule, painted on the wall – Respect. Board member Doug Cutler ensured the space met code requirements and helped youth paint the rooms. In addition to Anne and Lynn, community collaborators Mike Pattota and Sonia

Dobson volunteered as adult supervisors. Attempts were made by the City to close the Center, including a raid where Anne was nearly arrested for asking a police officer for his badge number.

“We stayed open,” Anne said. They entered mediation with the city, Lynn stepped down as director, and the Center eventually moved to 27 Chandler St. in 1998. Anne moved in early 1997, but remained as an adviser, staying in touch over the years with those early youth leaders.

“We had fun, we had struggles,” said Anne. “It was a very powerful experience. Today, the Center has support from the city and many community organizations. It was well worth the effort.”

CATHY RECHT

The Worcester Youth Center stood at the vanguard of the acceptance of youth empowerment in the city.

“Youth weren’t at the table before, but they are now,” said Cathy Recht, R.N., a former adult adviser at the Youth Center.

Cathy became involved with the Center in its early days when she was director of Women and Children’s Services at what was then Memorial Hospital in Worcester. She was looking into the root causes of youth violence and poor health in an effort to improve community wellness and the health of youth at risk. Root cause prevention is the underpinning of a healthy community.

“I just loved the concept of the center. The model of youth leading an organization in partnership with adult advisors made so much sense to me,” she said.

And she loved the young people at the Center. She learned a great deal from them, including to listen and offer respect to all no matter the age, and understand the challenges of being low-income and a minority in Worcester.

“The youth changed my life and helped me to see the world from a different perspective. I became a better parent to my teenagers,” said Cathy, who was the mother of a pre-teen and a teenager at that time.

Cathy was instrumental in bringing together the HOPE Coalition (Healthy Options for Prevention and Education),



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helped me
to see the
world from
a different
perspective.

which launched a citywide effort to reduce youth violence and promote youth voices.

One of the greatest challenges she encountered was the effort by the city and Police Department to close the Youth Center. The federal Office of Civil Rights and U.S. Department of Justice mediated the talks. Ultimately, Cathy and others fighting to keep the Center open agreed to hire a new director and to serve as supervising adults in the interim. They also agreed to move the Center further from City Hall.

Still in contact with some of the early members of the Youth Center, Cathy has seen many graduate as the first in their families to finish high school and go on to college or start jobs. Their accomplishments are proof that working to help people understand the value of the program was worthwhile.

“It lets me know that the fight was worth it, because it was a struggle,” she said.

In addition to the individual growth of the Youth Center members, 10 years after the Center’s doors first opened, finding a permanent home at 326 Chandler St. was one of the many successes, she said.

“I’m a better person because of my experiences with the young people at the Worcester Youth Center. I’ve carried what I learned through my life,” said Cathy, now retired and a grandmother.

ADOLFO ARRASTIA

Before he was Executive Director of the Worcester Youth Center, Adolfo Arrastia was a volunteer, foster parent, Marine and Puerto Rico native from Brooklyn. Then-board president Manny Guerra had introduced him to the organization. Adolfo witnessed what he called Manny's heroic work, "keeping the Center alive."

Named Executive Director in February 1996, Adolfo took the reins from Sean Harris and Manny, who had continued as interim leaders after the brief tenure of Veronica Hale.

The biggest challenge, said Adolfo, "was the political side of it. The attitude of 'not in my backyard' towards young people at risk." When it seemed the Youth Center might close, "we pulled in the friends and support we needed then," he said, citing critical help from Dr. Peter Levine and Cathy Recht, R.N., of Memorial Hospital. With the chief's blessing, Worcester police had a board seat. New programming, including GED classes coordinated with Worcester Public Schools, saw space getting tight. The landlord wanted new tenants in the storefront.

But no one wanted the Center in their neighborhood, and each proposed location generated fierce opposition. Police pressure continued with a raid in March 1997. By the end of Adolfo's second year, in the spring of 1998, the Center found a home at 27 Chandler St., further from City Hall critics but not from the needs of city youth. The new space was more than twice the size of the original site.

"Infrastructure is not important," said Adolfo. "It's seeing young people succeeding, standing on their own two feet and voicing their opinions."

Enhancing those voices was part of the work of Laurie Ross, then a public policy doctoral student at UMass Boston. Having



I think I gained just as much as those young people did. It lifted me up, and I am grateful.

been a Worcester resident for the past 13 years, she had seen the Center embroiled in controversy, and the city's youth devalued. Her work, creating a youth-driven urban neighborhood planning process and evaluating its impact on low-income adolescents of color, became the core of her dissertation research. The Youth Center hosted the new program. Participating youth thrived.

The board continued to include youth "not afraid of speaking their mind," noted Adolfo, including Yesenia Maysonet and the "crucial voice" of founding supporter Sabrina Rivera. The move helped city leaders come to understand that it was "a good idea to have a Youth Center established in Worcester."

The Center passed another hurdle — the city's gang leaders accepted the new space as a neutral zone, and soon pool, Ping-Pong, video games, music and dance nights attracted more members.

Adolfo's goals were to create new opportunities for youth and strengthen the Center's funding capabilities. Collaborative relationships with Quinsigamond Community College and Clark University "allowed our youth to succeed," he said. "I witnessed an awakening of what they could do."

A committed fundraising committee, including Allen Fletcher, Joel Green and Cathy Recht, raised "enough for us to declare ourselves financially viable," he said. Those funds enabled the Center to establish a permanent home at 326 Chandler, which opened in 2004 with space for new programming and a dedicated room for mental health counseling.

Looking back, Adolfo said, "I think I gained just as much as those young people did. It lifted me up, and I am grateful."

JOSEPH C. O'BRIEN

It's still doing the work. Twenty-five years later, that's the Worcester Youth Center's greatest success, according to Joseph C. O'Brien, a six-year member of the Board of Directors who served as interim Executive Director in 2007.

The Youth Center "has proven they really do critical work and are an asset for the neighborhood and community," said Joe, who also is a former Worcester mayor, School Committee member and YMCA youth program manager.

With a mission to work with youth in middle and high school, and youth who have dropped out of school, the Youth Center has continued to evolve. As the needs of the community have changed, it has been willing to change its work and programming to meet those needs, Joe said.

He joined the board as the decision was underway to move the Center to a larger facility and permanent home at 326 Chandler Street.

Among the Youth Center's achievements, he said, was a positive impact on the Beaver Brook neighborhood. The former Capitol Toy Distributors building, the blighted property at 326 Chandler St., was purchased by the Youth



They go on
to do great
things they
might have
thought
impossible
before going
to the Youth
Center.

Center, renovated and improved. For older youth who were at risk of dropping out or had dropped out of school, it also had a powerful impact. As Joe said, the Center offered them support "to stay on track or get back on track."

The Youth Center recognized that youth work is a long-term investment. As an organization, it "had a commitment to working with kids, not just when they were in school, but when they had adversity in their lives," he said.

The Center has been able to fund and sustain the work and continues to grow its youth development programs for greater impact even after 25 years. It's "a real testament to the leadership of the staff and, even more so, the leadership on the board," he said.

Joe is grateful for "the opportunity to work with a remarkable group of young people who were given the opportunity by the Youth Center and were able to succeed and overcome their challenges."

"They go on to do great things they might have thought impossible before going to the Youth Center," he said.

HISTORY MAKERS

HILDA RAMIREZ

When Hilda Ramirez began as Executive Director of the Worcester Youth Center in 2008, she came from a business background as the founder of Ritmos Academy for Latin dance instruction. It was clear to her that the Youth Center needed not just a mission, but clear values and a vision to move forward.

Creating “a place for all kids to feel safe and just be themselves is a wonderful idea,” she said. “But how do we get the greater community to support that notion?” People need to see youth as “thriving with great potential. Some need supports, others don’t.”

She worked to introduce or restructure youth programs with a greater focus on education and positive youth development. She reached out to create new partnerships with community organizations. For Hilda, the Youth Center was “a place to go further, not just hang out.”

Youth learned new skills working on game design at Becker College. They tried cooking up a career at Quinsigamond Community College. They gained cultural and historical awareness through internships with the Ecotarium and Higgins Armory. A new program, YouthReach, brought youth to the Worcester Art Museum to learn basic art techniques and then create art that illustrated a community challenge the group selected after much discussion.

The daily routine at the Youth Center became, Hilda explained, “come for support from 2 to 4 p.m.,” whether for homework help, GED classes or learning about leadership, in a space conducive to learning. After 4 p.m., it was time to “have fun after



The
community
is helping
to make the
Youth Center
a vibrant
experience
for youth.

doing something to be proud of.” That’s when dance, music and culinary activities got underway.

The Youth Center also worked to respond to broader community concerns involving youth – youth homelessness, juvenile justice reform, and services for those aging out of Department of Youth Services or foster care programs. Entering the realm of policy-making gave the Youth Center a greater voice and stature in the community.

She points to the Center’s degree of board involvement as another strength of the organization. “The board commitment speaks volumes,” she said. “Very giving individuals, they are vested in the wellness of the city.” The board also continued to build or solidify partnerships for the Center, particularly with UMass Memorial Medical Center, with thanks to Monica Lowell, and the Worcester Police Department, with the support of Police Chief Gary Gemme, Sgt. Miguel Lopez and Officer Spencer Tatum.

“Seeing the changing police perceptions of youth in our city” was particularly encouraging, she said.

Ultimately, Hilda’s vision pushed the Center in new, positive directions as she stepped down in 2012. “I was glad to leave the organization in a place where it’s organized and structured so youth are proud to be a part of it,” said Hilda. “The community is helping to make the Youth Center a vibrant experience for youth. They continue to thrive and I am inspired by them.”



DONOR RECOGNITION

PETER LEVINE

Powerful Supporter When It Counted



I think the Youth Center is an absolutely superb addition to the city and definitely should stay around.

Supporters come in many styles, and the Worcester Youth Center is proud to claim the late Dr. Peter H. Levine as one of its first and best.

President and CEO of the Medical Center of Central Massachusetts (Memorial Hospital) in the early 1990s, “Peter was associated with the Worcester Youth Center almost since the beginning,” said his widow, Catherine Levine. The Med Center became a significant donor over time, but initially, and most critically, offered jobs to Youth Center leaders and shared the talents of Cathy Recht R.N., director of Women and Children’s Services, as an adult adviser and board member.

The Youth Center had a difficult start and needed every friend it had. Almost as soon as it opened in July 1994 in the former Mac-Ben Sporting Goods space at 530 Main St., business owners in the area complained to the city manager about its presence and the increased numbers of young people near their stores. Active discussions about where the Center could relocate began within a year, but the search for new space continued for another two years into 1998 as various sites were deemed unsuitable – too far from public transportation or not on neutral turf for the city’s gang members.

Memorial Hospital and the University of Massachusetts Medical Center together owned a building at 40 Foster St. and proposed that the Youth Center move there with a separate entrance. The former bank building would also house a day care center and space for intergenerational programs. Neighboring businesses, which included the Worcester Chamber of Commerce, Mechanics Hall and the Centrum, weren’t happy at the prospect. If no alternative locations could be found, the Center might close.

“Pete stood up to City Manager Tom Hoover,” Catherine said. “He wouldn’t let it close.” Always “very supportive of the concept of the Center, he felt it did a lot of good for at-risk youth.”

Having arrived in Worcester in 1975 as chief of medicine for Memorial Hospital, he was “a strong believer in community,” Catherine said. “He encouraged his staff to be involved in the community, too.” In 1990, he was named CEO of Memorial, which merged with UMass Medical Center in 1998.

A member or leader of a wide variety of community groups, including Worcester Fights Back (against drug use), the United Way and Worcester Business Development Corp., Peter Levine was never a board member of the Youth Center. But he served the organization well as a vocal early supporter.

“I think the Youth Center is an absolutely superb addition to the city and definitely should stay around,” Peter told *Worcester Magazine* in January 1998, at the time of the relocation discussions. “It’s a whole new approach to the issue of teens and violence – working from the inside instead of from the outside. And teens are trying to help us understand and combat the problem. What could be better?”

2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

Your Dollars at Work

Over the past quarter century, the Worcester Youth Center has touched thousands of young people's lives and helped them make positive changes. Your contributions make a significant difference in many ways. We have much to celebrate and remain grateful for the community's confidence and support.

Statements of Financial Position December 31, 2018

ASSETS

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Current Assets: | 2018 |
| Cash and cash equivalents | \$431,484 |
| Grants and contracts receivable | 80,737 |
| Prepaid expenses | 22,942 |
| Total current assets | 535,163 |
| Investments | 489,796 |
| Property and Equipment, net | 623,367 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$1,648,326 |

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Current Liabilities: | 2018 |
| Accounts payable | \$23,754 |
| Accrued expenses | 34,577 |
| Total current liabilities | 58,331 |
| Net Assets: | |
| Without donor restrictions | 1,218,902 |
| With donor restrictions | 371,093 |
| Total net assets | 1,589,995 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$1,648,326 |

Statements of Activities December 31, 2018

REVENUE

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Grants and contracts | \$413,424 |
| Temporarily restricted | \$12,967 |
| Contributions | \$243,044 |
| Temporarily restricted | \$396,988 |
| Contributions in-kind | \$39,690 |
| Other income | \$9,468 |
| Net assets released from program restrictions | \$96,072 |
| Total Revenue and Support | \$1,115,581 |



EXPENSES

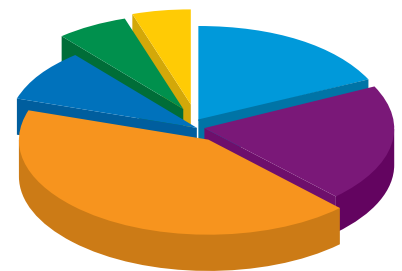
Program Services

| | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Leadership | \$142,160 |
| Health and wellness | \$163,147 |
| Work readiness | \$382,264 |
| Education | \$99,953 |

Supporting Services

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Management and general | \$57,159 |
| Fundraising | \$41,694 |

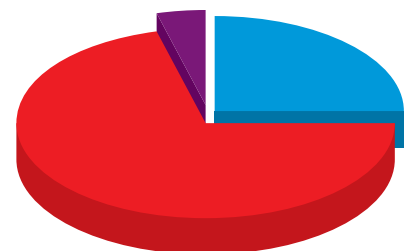
Total Expenses \$886,377



NONOPERATING ACTIVITIES

| | |
|---|------------|
| Investment income, net of investment fees | \$24,913 |
| Net realized and unrealized gain on investments | (\$68,730) |
| Gain in disposal of property and equipment | \$400 |

Total Nonoperating Activities (\$43,417)



| | |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Net Assets - Beginning | 1,404,208 |
| NET ASSETS - ENDING | 1,589,995 |



THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 DONORS

\$100,000 AND ABOVE

City of Worcester
 Stoddard Charitable Trust

\$25,000 - \$999,000

United Way of Central Massachusetts
 Commonwealth Corporation
 Greater Worcester Community Foundation
 The Fletcher Foundation
 George F. and Sybil H. Fuller Foundation
 Amelia Peabody Charitable Fund

\$10,000 - \$24,999

Massachusetts Cultural Council
 UMass Memorial Health Care - Community Benefits
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 US Trust, Bank Of America Private Wealth Mgmt
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THANK YOU TO OUR 2018 DONORS

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- The Fred Harris Daniels Foundation
- UNUM Group
- Mass Bankers Association

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- The Hart Foundation
- Webster Five Foundation
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- The Hanover Insurance Company
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UP TO \$999

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Benevity

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Allen Fletcher

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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\$1,000 - \$4,999

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Ross and Lisa Dik

Simon and Nancy Gregory

Tony and Judy King

Arthur M. and Martha R. Pappas Foundation

Laurie Ross and Jeff Black

Samuel Soji Wada

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Laurie and Phil Davis

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Warner S. and Mary F. Fletcher

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Peter and Catherine Levine Family Fund

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Roger and Serra May Plourde

Greg Potts and Colleen Vernitsky-Potts

Cathy K. Recht

Carol L. Seager

UP TO \$249

Gloria Abramoff

Arthur Allen and Jennifer Bravo

John T. Andrews

Joe and Kristin Bafaro

David Baril

Thomas and Lynora Bartholomew

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