

**2013** REPORT TO COMMUNITY  
*our next generation*

# Letter to the Community

WE SEE THE POSSIBILITIES

To an untrained eye, dandelions are nothing more than an annoying weed. We mow them down, pull them up, soak them in herbicide, and generally expend a great deal of energy to get rid of them – often with little result. Dandelions are resilient.

Many are surprised to learn also that dandelion leaves are edible – and quite nutritious. Their flowers are essential to the ecosystem as an early spring food source for friendly pollinators like bumblebees and butterflies, and their roots provide valuable protection against soil erosion.

The world would not be the same without dandelions.

**Like dandelions, the kids at Our Next Generation are resilient and have the potential to greatly contribute to society.**

It only takes a moment with our kids to see that they have unlimited curiosity, talent, and passion. Too often in their young lives, our kids are ignored, overlooked, or dismissed as “weeds” due to circumstances outside their control –when instead they should be nurtured and helped to grow to their full potential.

At Our Next Generation, we help every child grow to become the best they can be. We create an environment where they feel welcomed, safe, and valued, and we build a network of supporters to help them meet their personal, social and academic needs. We do this because we see the possibilities.

**And we aren't the only ones...**

- **Our Community sees the possibilities.** No one can do it alone – and with the help of our inspiring community, we are making a difference together. In 2013, the greater Milwaukee community showed their support by honoring Our Next Generation with several prestigious awards (see page 1). We are humbled by this recognition and grateful for their support.
- **Our Supporters see the possibilities.** Their generosity sustains our mission and makes our work possible. We are ever so grateful to each and every one.
- **Our volunteers see the possibilities.** Week after week, they give selflessly of their time and talents to ensure our kids have the support they need to achieve their goals. Our volunteers do this because they know that the personal connections they build with our kids are invaluable in helping them believe in a safer and better future.

**All of these forces work together towards one common, integral goal – to help the kids of Our Next Generation see the possibilities for themselves.**

We know our kids are destined for big things, and it's our job to help them imagine more for themselves and to give them the tools to pursue the opportunities available to them. If they see the possibilities, nothing can stop them from becoming the best human beings they can be.



John Dawson  
Chairman of the Board



Robert Dunn  
President and CEO

# Our Successes

## THEY SEE THE POSSIBILITIES

In 2013, the Milwaukee community recognized the continued success of our programs. At Our Next Generation we owe our success to the caring volunteers who see the possibilities in our children and youth. Our deepest gratitude goes to them!

### 2013 MANDI – PNC Trail Blazer Award

2013 started with the MANDI recognition. Sponsored by U.S. Bank, in partnership with LISC Milwaukee, the Milwaukee Awards for Neighborhood Development Innovation (MANDI) recognize the outstanding work of organizations striving to improve Milwaukee's neighborhoods.

*On behalf of the city of Milwaukee, I wish to express my sincere congratulations to you on being selected winner of the 2013 PNC Trailblazer MANDI Award, honoring an innovative approach to a problem that is producing demonstrative results. Our Next Generation's Outbound Learning Program offers a creative approach to high quality educational and cultural experiences for our central city youth. Your extraordinary influence on neighborhood kids, as well as your drive and pure tenacity are quite remarkable.*

*I commend you for leading the efforts to rebuild and strengthen our central city neighborhoods. I wish you continued success in all future endeavors!*

*-Tom Barrett, Mayor, City of Milwaukee*

### 2013 Community Services LINKS Award

The Cream City Wisconsin Chapter of the LINKS, Inc., selected Our Next Generation as the 2013 winner in the Community Services category. We were deeply honored to receive this award, a testament to our success in providing quality academic support and life skills to thousands of children. Our President & CEO Bob Dunn was accompanied by eight of our youth, and he accepted the award on their behalf.

The LINKS is one of the nation's oldest and largest volunteer service organizations of professional women of color committed to enriching, sustaining, and ensuring the culture and economic development of African-Americans and other persons of African ancestry. The LINKS supports organizations and individuals working in the areas of health and human services, youth, education, the arts, economic development, and public policy.



BOB DUNN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY EIGHT OF OUR YOUTH, AND HE ACCEPTED THE LINKS AWARD ON THEIR BEHALF.

### 2013 Fellowship Open Award

An organization of notable African-American businessmen and community leaders in Milwaukee, the Fellowship Open was started in 2003 with the mission to support organizations serving low-income Milwaukee children. Each year, the Fellowship Open recognizes organizations making a meaningful and demonstrable difference in the community. Our Next Generation was among several organizations selected in 2013.

### 2013 REACH Award

The Real Estate Alliance for Charity (REACH) is the charitable arm of Milwaukee's real estate professionals. REACH invests in the future of Milwaukee by investing in its residents. Every year, REACH recognizes one recipient and commits to a generous financial contribution over three years. Early in 2013, Ryan Marks, a REACH member visited Our Next Generation and wrote a letter of recommendation to REACH's Board of Directors. Our Next Generation was selected among a large number of applicants. Ryan Marks' letter emphasized what we do better:

*Last week I spent some time at ONG and met many of the people at the heart of this organization. I was impressed with the lasting connection that they have with the children and the positive impact ONG has even after the children have grown and move into new challenges in college and becoming responsible, hardworking citizens. ONG is oftentimes the only safe and consistent place in these children's lives. This fosters an environment for the children to learn, grow and achieve.*

**Our community sees the endless potential our students – what they have to offer our community, our city, and our world. The generosity of our supporters sustains our mission and makes our work possible, and we are forever grateful.**

# Our Programming

## ALWAYS STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE



JANE KONKEL, OUR LITERACY SPECIALIST, WORKS WITH STUDENTS IN A SMALL GROUP SETTING ON LITERACY ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS.

### Arts & Literacy

Arts and literacy go hand in hand – both are key to emotional and social development, and help children engage in learning. Creative outlets are especially critical, as they provide effective coping mechanisms against the trauma of growing up in poverty.

In 2013, we welcomed Jane Konkel as Literacy Specialist. Jane works with our program staff to create lesson plans, activities, and projects that engage and excite even our most reluctant learners.

“Our students are so resilient,” says Jane, “they put up with so much change and uncertainty, but given the right tools and support they can still achieve so much.”

Jane recalled a special moment when a group of students debated the merits of edible bugs. The topic was particularly engaging for students, who had very strong opinions on the subject. Whatever side they were on, they participated in a lively and animated debate that drew on both their personal experiences and a variety of articles and materials to support their case – a high-level skill that elementary students often struggle to master.

“They were able to broaden their viewpoints beyond their immediate experience, and think about a topic critically, in a different way. That’s huge.”

We are already seeing remarkable improvements in children’s reading, writing, and speaking skills.

### Leadership Training Club

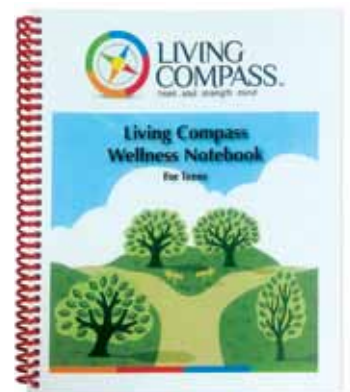
The majority of students who drop out of high school do so during their freshman year. Our Leadership Training Club helps middle school students make a smooth transition to high school with the support they need to stay in school and be successful.

This pilot program facilitated by our Teen Program Coordinator, De’Shawn Ewing, included 20 seventh and eighth graders who meet weekly to get academic help as well as engage in peer discussions, workshops, goal-setting, and high school preparation. The club also partners with our High School Connection, to allow middle school students to interact with their high school peers in a positive setting.

### Living Compass

A key study by the Office of National Statistics found that one in ten children now suffer from mental health problems. In our community, that stress is compounded by the fact that three out of every four children live below the poverty line. Children that grow up in chronic poverty experience what doctors and psychologists call “toxic stress”, a prolonged activation of the stress response system that occurs when children experience strong, frequent, and prolonged adversity without adequate adult support. Toxic stress can disrupt brain development as well as take a lifelong toll on physical and mental health – and the effect is cumulative.

That’s why the *Living Well with Living Compass for Teens* pilot program was such a welcome addition to our programming this year. The Living Compass Wellness Notebook provides guided self-reflective and group curriculum to help students process their stress, reflect on their decision-making, and take proactive steps to improve their personal health and wellness.



“Our teens strive for a better life but fear they will never escape their negative environment,” said Rukiya Alexander, Associate Director of Programs. “Our students need help pushing through the negative stereotypes and low expectations they confront on a daily basis. By shedding light on the unspoken darkness in their lives, *Living Compass* provides a forum of reflection where our teens become aware of unhealthy patterns and learn to take steps toward positive behaviors.”



A VOLUNTEER MENTOR READS WITH HER HOMEWORK CLUB PARTNER IN FRONT OF OUR NEXT GENERATION'S CENTER.

Our Next Generation received this pilot program through a grant from the Charles E. Kubly Foundation, a charity that focuses on mental health issues. The curriculum and facilitators' guide were prepared by Holly Stoner of *Living Compass*, who has worked with hundreds of teens and families in her private therapy practice and led scores of Living Compass groups for teens, parents and adults. We hope to continue the program in conjunction with the re-launch of our teen program this fall.

"I liked it because it gave me a chance to speak out," said Julian, a High School Connection student. "It gave me a chance to verbalize my stress without feeling like I'm being a burden."

## Summer Program

Students who do not engage in academics throughout the summer experience a cumulative learning loss that leaves them struggling to catch up during the school year. This phenomenon more acutely affects low-income students, who often do not have access to books, enrichment activities, and learning opportunities outside of school. The effects can be drastic - approximately two-thirds of the reading achievement gap by ninth grade could be attributed to the summer learning loss in the first five years of schooling.

2013 brought significant changes to our summer program, which in the past focused on providing after-hours enrichment opportunities through the Milwaukee Public School system. When budget cuts forced MPS to cancel their summer school program, we stepped up and transformed our summer program into a eight-week, all-day camp, balancing enrichment and recreational activities with the direct academic support that our students need to keep their brains sharp.

A record enrollment of over 180 campers joined us at our center for mornings of literacy, math, and science programming presented in creative and engaging ways though storytelling, web-based programming, robotics, nature exploration, and more. Afternoons were reserved for recreation and enrichment activities, supporting learning

through exploration, free play, games, sports, outdoor activities, field trips, dance, art, and music. Throughout the summer, we embarked on field trips, participated in bike camps and swim lessons, created arts and crafts, enjoyed daily nutritional meals, and had lots of fun!

None of this would have been possible without the generous support of our funding partners. We are deeply grateful to our three main sponsors, Wells Fargo, Gentine Foundation, and Charles Benidt, as well as to our numerous other individual and corporate donors who gave selflessly of their resources to make our summer program a reality.

We see the success of our program reflected both in the enthusiastic smiles of our campers and in their literacy levels - 100% of which improved or held even over the summer, allowing our students to return to school ready to succeed.



RUKIYA ALEXANDER, OUR ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS, TRAVELED WITH HIGH SCHOOL CONNECTION PARTICIPANTS TO WASHINGTON D.C. FOR PRESIDENT OBAMA'S 2013 INAUGURATION.

## Educational Trip to Washington D.C.

In January 2013 four of our youth joined five students from Marquette University's Educational Opportunity Program on an educational trip to Washington, D.C. The trip included visits to Georgetown University and other area universities and museums, the Pentagon, Arlington National Cemetery, DuPont Circle, and the National Mall. The trip culminated with Barack Obama's Presidential Inauguration.

While the purpose of this trip was to visit colleges to expose our youth to college life so they see it at a possibility for themselves, we planned this trip to coincide with the Presidential Inauguration to deepen their experience.

Before the trip, our students never expected to be so enthusiastic about a political event. The enthusiasm started when they saw a highly diverse crowd waiting to walk into the Inauguration grounds. Our youth began to feel like they were part of the crowd, and soon they understood they were witnessing a historic moment. One of our youth commented: "I became truly inspired when I listened to President Obama's speech. I never expected this experience to touch me so deeply."

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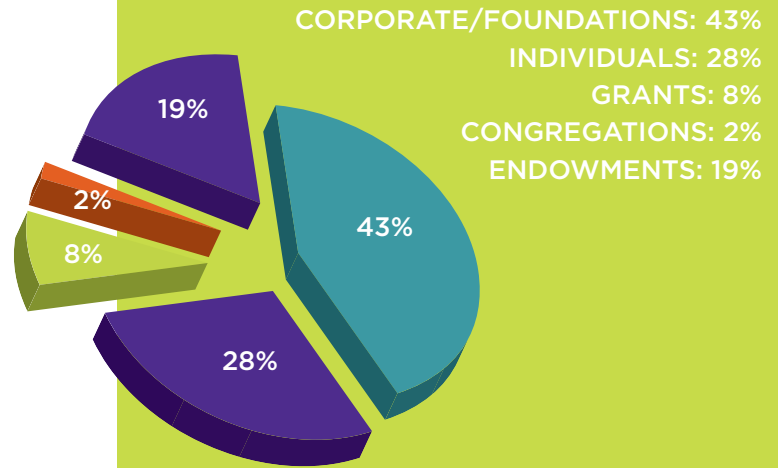
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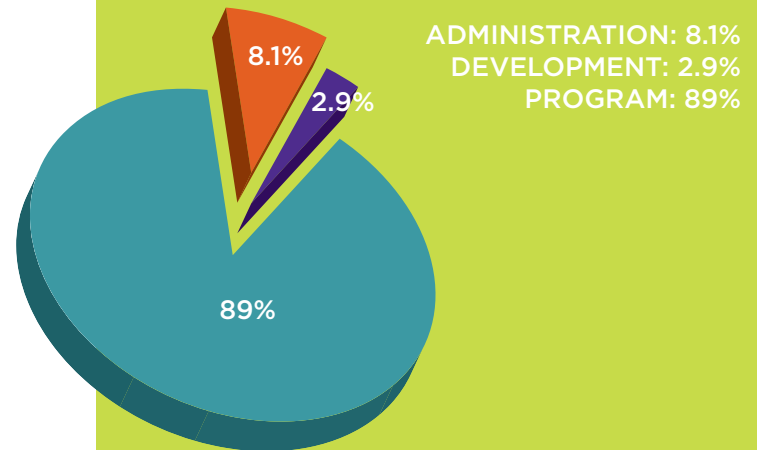
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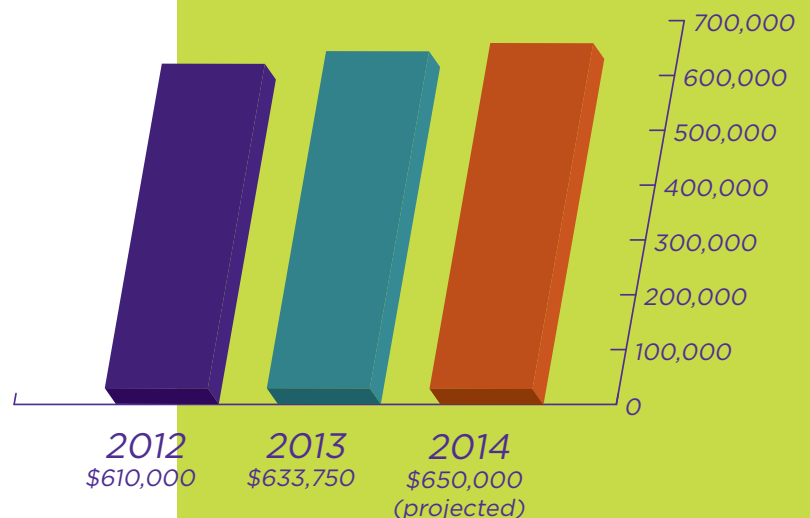
## 2013 OPERATING REVENUE %



## 2013 OPERATING EXPENSES %



## BUDGET 2012, 2013, 2014



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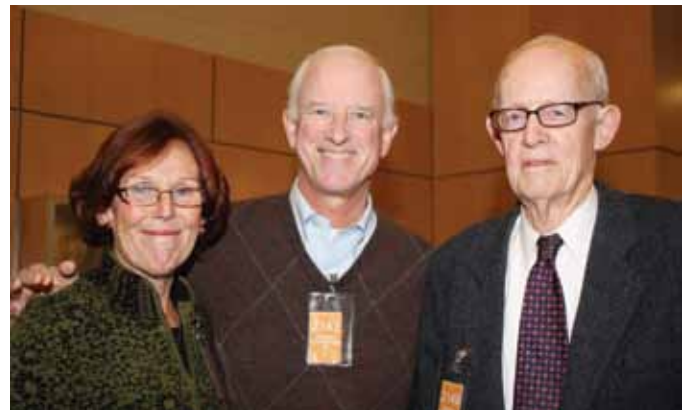
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# Special Thanks...



OUR FOUNDING MEMBER, CHARLIE DRAKE, PICTURED WITH TOM AND SUE, SAID OF THE NEILLS: "WE ARE FOREVER GRATEFUL TO ALL THE GOOD WORK THEY HAVE DONE. KNOWING TOM AND SUE, I KNOW THE GOOD WORK CONTINUES IN COLORADO."

The voice of a young child from Our Next Generation touched the hearts of Tom and Sue Neill two decades ago. Soon after, they began committing much of their time and talents to our children. Sue volunteered as tutor and mentor, believing that each child, if only provided help and encouragement, could blossom. Tom, in his humble way said, "Sue made a commitment while I took the easy way out and joined the board."

By taking the "easy way out", as Development Chair Tom helped us grow from serving a few dozen children to more than 600; from using a small tutoring space at St. Andrew's Church to opening two Learning Centers and acquiring our current building. He helped develop the highly successful High School Connection, a Teen Development center, and the award-winning Outbound Learning program, and assisted in growing a college endowment and scholarship fund. Always sharing their passion to help children, Tom and Sue encouraged all to get involved.

Tom retired in late 2013 and the Neills moved to Colorado Springs. Goodbyes are tough. We take to heart the words of the fox when he said goodbye to the Little Prince: "And now here is my secret, a very simple secret: It is only with the heart that one can see rightly - what is essential is invisible to the eye." Tom and Sue see rightly.

our next  
generation  
WE SEE THE POSSIBILITIES

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