



Parker Lee Foundation

Support of Ohio Avenue Youth Center

March 2017 – February 2018 Report

If our report to you only had the following statement, it would be enough. I asked Jose Guajardo, Program Manager for our youth centers, for a quote to include in this report. And this is what he sent:

I've now had the pleasure of being a part of Directions for Youth & Families for eight and a half years. The majority of my tenure has been spent on the clinical side of the agency, but the last seven months I've had the privilege of being the After-School Program Manager.

This role entails new responsibilities from the development of staff, administrative work, overseeing the Crittenton and Ohio Avenue Youth Centers, and grant reporting. Not having the full scope of responsibilities at the onset became very overwhelming at first and quite frankly I've contemplated returning to the clinical side. I found myself at a crossroads of moving forward or making my return. In the end I truly believe the decision was made for me 11 years ago and I simply reminded myself why I entered this line of work, it's for the kids! Quite frankly the reason I've stayed with DFYF for so many years was because of the belief system of our CEO and staff, that the number one individuals within the agency are the client's we serve.

Until I became the After-School Program Manager I did not believe that there were many individuals or agencies who shared our philosophy regardless of their mission statement. Within my new line of responsibilities I've had the privilege of interacting and attending several events hosted by the Parker Lee Foundation. The Ohio Avenue and Crittenton Youth Centers have been fortunate to receive the full support from the Parker Lee Foundation and have provided funds that have given our youth experiential and educational opportunities.

As a child I was not fortunate enough to have agencies such as The Parker Lee Foundation or Directions for Youth & Families in my community, but I am so happy that the youth we serve do have this support. Without the funds we've received from The Parker Lee Foundation many of our youth would not

have had the opportunity to attend an Ohio State Basketball or football spring game even though they live five miles away; youth would not have been able to get their haircuts so close to the holidays because parents couldn't afford it; CIT's would not have gained work experience over the summer; graduating high

schoolers may not have the additional funds for books or supplies without the Yavitch Scholarship; youth may go without essential hygiene products. Without the Parker Lee Foundation the smiles and memories our youth experience wouldn't be possible. I'm so proud to be associated with a group such as the Parker Lee Foundation that shares the values of our agency and truly cares for the community in which they live! If you haven't yet, listen for it at every event and you'll hear Kim Niswander yell, "It's for the Kids!!!"



PARKER LEE FOUNDATION

Local Fun. Local Giving.

- Jose Guajardo, DFYF After-School Program Manager

A COMMUNITY GEM

In a high-risk neighborhood (highest crime rate in the city) with few opportunities, Ohio Avenue Youth Center offers a safe and trusting environment where positive relationships are built and disadvantaged youth are given the opportunity to try new experiences and discover interests. During the school year the Center is open Monday through Friday 3 pm to 7:30 pm providing structured activities during a time of day when the risk for youth's involvement in delinquent behavior is highest. Center activities are provided free of charge to youth, removing any financial barriers for families. Programming works to educate youth about the consequences of unhealthy lifestyle choices, teen sexual activity, substance use, and delinquency.



A WONDERFUL MANTRA: "WE'VE GOT THE PARKER LEE MONEY"

Directions for Youth & Families (DFYF) is so appreciative of the generous support from the Parker Lee Foundation. The \$27,500 check presented to Duane at PBR10K'17 has gone to great use. So many times, when we weren't sure how we would fund some of the "extras", or the fun things, the statement "we've got Parker Lee's money" was invariably made, time and time again. It is wonderful for us to have a pot of money that can be used as we need it.

USE OF FUNDS

→ \$6,400 Counselors-in-Training (CIT)

8 CIT's each received an \$800 stipend at the end of the summer. The CIT program is not only valuable to the youth we serve, but the CIT's get an opportunity to intern, serving as positive role models and assisting staff in all activities. CIT's share their own expertise and help staff implement all facets of the summer camp program. This is a great experience for all – staff, summer camp youth and CIT's. Candidates for the CIT positions are screened and interviewed by after-school staff, must have good academic standing and must demonstrate financial need. Many are youth who have been part of our after-school programs and are familiar with the center, staff and some of the youth. It is a great and coveted position for our after-school youth to strive towards. And for DFYF, it is another way we can give the youth we serve opportunity and experience.



→ \$5,741 Rewards

Rewards can be a real motivator! PLF funded reward programs for perfect attendance, Positive Points store supplies, Incentive Program, rewards for Stride Academy hours, and the coveted year end trip to King's Island for those kids who had good attendance and demonstrated consistent behaviors.

→ \$5,144 Special items

How about the \$413 battery for defibulator; or the \$100 spent for haircuts for kids right before Christmas. \$650 for new recreation equipment – basketballs, frisbees, footballs, etc. The movie sensation “Black Panther”? Your dollars funded a group of kids to see the show. \$73 for OSU basketball tickets along with \$85 spending money given to the The Falcons team members to spend at the game. These special items are just that!



→ \$4,046 Food for the kids

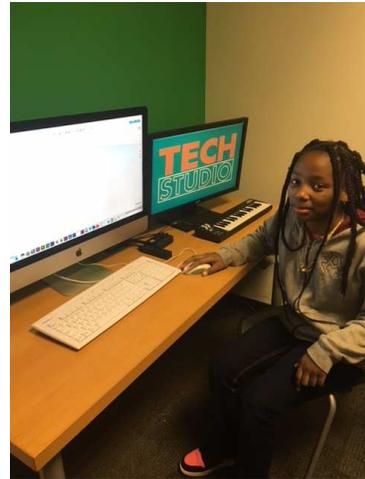
OAYC provides a nutritious meal for 60 to 80 youth each evening, Monday through Friday, fulfilling a basic, important need to youth ages 8-18. The average weekly food expense at OAYC is \$500 per week. We utilize free food programs when we can, but the need for healthy, fresh ingredients means we need to grocery shop each week. Thank you to PLF for providing us with funds to do so.

→ \$3,656 Event support

We try to have families and caregivers involved as much as possible. Thank you for helping us fund family night, holiday party/meal, parent night, and black history celebration. For all of these the kids take a part in presenting and/or performing what they've been working on at the Center.



- ➔ \$1,511 Program Supplies
This includes new equipment and supplies for different program areas.
- ➔ \$1,002 Staff Development
PLF allowed DFYF prevention staff to attend the “Great Start” Conference, an annual continuing education seminar about best-practices in engaging kids. Additionally your funding covered CPR classes for our youth center staff.
- ➔ A grand, wonderful total of \$27,500 spent “for the kids”



THE BEST \$9 YOU EVER SPENT

Of the “special” items above, there is a seemingly inconsequential Wal-Mart purchase. Here’s the story submitted by Shannon Napier, Supervisor of Ohio Avenue Youth Center.

A young boy- 8 years old- named Robert came to me in tears and said a peer had made fun of him. I asked why and he responded it was because his “shoes were talking”. I realized that the sole of his shoe had begun to tear away and his toes were visible when he walked. We talked about how everyone comes from different backgrounds and has different clothing and that’s ok. We talked about how everyone is equal and it wasn’t right what his peer said. Robert said he felt better and went back to his activity.

I realized we had some flexibility with some of our funding and I wanted to get Robert some functioning gym shoes. I went to Wal-Mart and purchased a pair of \$9 gym shoes. When I returned to the center I pulled Robert aside and said a wonderful thing had happened and some items had been donated. We went into my office and I “happened” to have a pair in his size. The level of pure joy that came from this young man was palpable. He couldn’t have put those shoes on fast enough. As we were walking out of my office he stopped and looked at me and said “You know Miss. Shannon- it’s really nice that people donate stuff” and just beamed the biggest smile I could imagine. It was moving what a \$9 pair of shoes could do to a person.



THANK YOU

In conclusion, because of Parker Lee Foundation’s support, we are able to fund “the extras” because “we can use the Parker Lee funds” - that wonderful go-to statement for the things we aren’t sure how we’ll fund.

On behalf of the kids,
thank you Parker Lee Foundation!