

A photograph of three diverse students walking on a paved path on a college campus. The student on the left is a young woman with short dark hair, wearing a blue and grey hoodie with 'DUKE' and '95' on it. The student in the middle is a young woman with long braids, wearing a brown leather jacket over a yellow top and blue jeans, carrying a green folder. The student on the right is a young man wearing a dark jacket over a blue t-shirt that says 'OLD NAVY SINCE 1994 ATHLETIC DEPT.'. They are all smiling and looking towards each other. The background shows a brick building with large windows and some red-leafed bushes.

RIISING TO THE CHALLENGE

OUR PIECE OF THE PIE
2015 ANNUAL REPORT

OPP'S
YOUNG
PEOPLE
**RISING
TO THE
CHALLENGE**



YOUR SUPPORT MAKES OPP'S WORK POSSIBLE

Thank you. Together, we've helped young people move from tremendous challenges to concrete success. With your help, they're seeking education, training, and economic independence.

Tremendous Challenges

Lately, we've felt especially concerned for the health and wellbeing of our young people. There's been a huge spike in youth violence, both nationally and here in Connecticut.

For too many urban youth, trauma is a daily experience. It's heartbreaking.

On any given day, a young person could be dealing with a friend shot last week. Or suddenly living in a shelter. Or a parent telling him he's a sorry excuse for a human being.

It's overwhelming to think about. Imagine what it's like to live it?

We've learned over 20+ years building OPP that we can't do everything. But what we can do, we must do well.

And we do, with your support. Instead of trauma, we can provide an energizing, engaging environment for young people. We can stimulate hope and laughter.

We can be the anti-trauma place.

Determination and Success

Thanks to support like yours, we've been providing the setting for students to succeed. Young people can now see a future—and not only aspire to success but reach it.

Last year, we had 145 high school graduates—more than ever before. That alone is a tremendous achievement. But over their working lifetime, each high school graduate means \$500,000 of positive economic impact for Connecticut.

Another 80 students also completed their post secondary education, which is an even greater achievement for us.

OPP is not a Band-Aid. OPP changes lives.

Powerful Transformations

We're inspired by the teens and young adults we work with at OPP. Life has placed terrible obstacles in their paths. Yet they respond with grit, optimism, and resilience.

Read on to learn about just a few of the amazing young people OPP is working with. You'll read stories of struggle and success.

And you'll read about young people—and OPP—rising to the challenge, together.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob Rath'.

Bob Rath
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John N. Little'.

John N. Little
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS WITH HELP FROM OPP AND YOU

Terrance Roy, Jr. is soft-spoken but holds himself with a quiet confidence. That confidence was hard-won. When Terrance was 14, his family lost their home to domestic violence. His mother brought Terrance, his sisters and brother from Bridgeport to New London, where room could be found in a shelter.

For a shy boy, the move—away from friends and everything he'd known—was hard. Terrance says it made him stronger, but the trauma of his early years also affected his school performance.

"Growing up, people told me I wasn't smart enough. I wouldn't get far, wouldn't get my license. Basically, I'd have to depend on programs to get through life."

Terrance graduated high school with poor reading and math skills. He was afraid to even try. He believed everything he'd been told about himself.

Then his social worker introduced him to OPP.

With care and encouragement from OPP, Terrance slowly developed the confidence to learn. When he said "I can't," Sherrie Parenteau, his Youth Development Specialist at OPP, pushed back. "You're smarter than that. You can do it!"

At OPP, Terrance did homework, studied for his driver's license, and learned to budget.

Sherrie helped him secure his first job at Ocean State Job Lot. There he learned he was capable of much more than he'd ever believed. "I could do something more," he realized. So, with OPP's help, he looked for a better job. And an even better job after that.

At every step—a better job, academic achievement, getting his driver's license—he learned more about himself. And his confidence grew.

Sherrie says, "The growth over our first 2 years working together was amazing. He's just blossomed into the most amazing young man. I'm very proud of him."

Terrance works full-time as a spa attendant now, a job he loves. The atmosphere is tranquil, his manager respects him and his work, and he's being given more responsibility.

His goal is to manage a spa. Terrance, it turns out, has a knack for business.

To reach his goal, he's been taking online classes in hotel and restaurant management through a fully accredited program paid for by OPP. He studies hard. The difficulty of his classwork amazes Sherrie. He plans to get his associate degree next at Three Rivers Community College—and then on to a four year college.

OPP helped him save to buy a car and find his own apartment. He's pleased to be so independent now. But he and Sherrie still talk at least once a week. "She's like a second mother to me," he says.

His ambition and determination make Sherrie proud. Like so many youth who come to OPP, Terrance needed someone to believe in him so he could believe in himself.

When asked about OPP, Terrance says, "They're like a family to you."

Then he adds: "Keep fighting. When someone says you can't, just keep going."

TERRANCE



THE CHALLENGE

Some youth face problems too big to handle alone. They've been told they're not worth the trouble and will never succeed. Some don't have a caring adult in their lives or a role model to guide them. And too many simply don't have the tools or resources to navigate the path to adulthood.

THE SOLUTION

OPP offers customized support to young people in communities around the state. Our focus is on the individual youth. Each youth is paired with a caring adult staff mentor, who learns about the youth's struggles and connects them to whatever support is needed at OPP—like tutoring, job skills, or financial literacy—or through a nonprofit partner for housing or mental health assistance. With the help of their mentor, young people face and remove the barriers that stand in their way and gain the skills and experience needed to succeed.

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IN FY15...

799

youth, ages 14–24, were enrolled in OPP's community programs, supported by caring staff

85

youth from OPP's community programs earned a high school diploma

48,712

staff hours were spent engaging with youth in OPP's community programs

THE CHALLENGE

Many high school graduates don't have the resources for a full-time college experience. Too often, they have to go right to work to support themselves and their families. But by 2020, 65% of all jobs in the US will require training beyond high school.

THE SOLUTION

OPP's Pathways to Careers Initiative (PCI) gets young people ready for good paying jobs in growing fields, like Allied Health, Advanced Manufacturing and Insurance. This "career pipeline" program offers training and assistance so the young person gains the skills and certifications needed for employment. Throughout, OPP helps identify and remove barriers to success, like transportation, tuition, books, tutoring, and even food, and continues to offer support through the first year on the job.

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IN FY15...

77

youth were enrolled in PCI, preparing for careers that will break the cycle for themselves and their families

58

youth participating in OPP's PCI program completed an internship

60

youth participating in OPP's PCI program completed a Career Competency Development Training



KASMAINE

A HEALTHY FUTURE THANKS TO OPP AND YOU

Kasmaine Clarke has bright eyes, a winning smile and a Jamaican lilt in her voice. When she was 3, her grandmother became ill. Little Kasmaine took care of her and made her tea. Though she was a little girl, Kasmaine knew then she wanted to be a nurse. But even with a goal, the road hasn't been easy.

When Kasmaine was 18, she and her mother left Jamaica and came to the U.S. Her mother wanted a better life for Kasmaine.

So a few days before her high school graduation, Kasmaine found herself in the middle of a cold New England November.

Her aunt urged her to register at the high school to get a U.S. diploma. But when Kasmaine brought her Jamaican transcript to Bloomfield High, she was told she'd be placed in 9th grade.

A new country. A new life. And a huge disappointment.

"I had to prove everybody wrong. I had to become something. I know what I want and what I want to be."

That's when Kasmaine met Brenda Colon and OPP. Brenda, the supervisor of Youth Development Services at OPP's Learning Academy at Bloomfield, ensured Kasmaine got the help she needed.

Kasmaine worked hard to earn her diploma in 2014. She shared her dream of becoming an RN with Brenda, who connected Kasmaine to OPP's Workforce Development team.

Kasmaine was thrilled to learn she could participate in the Allied Health career pipeline program, but Kasmaine also needs to work to help support her family.

Thanks to OPP, she learned about interviewing and presenting herself well. "I'd never had a job before. I didn't know how to act!"

She's working part-time at J.C. Penney's while finishing her classes. That means morning studies, afternoon classes and work in the evening.

It's a busy schedule. But OPP is there to help.

Shanee Ransom, Kasmaine's Workforce Development Specialist, is an important presence in her life. To make sure Kasmaine has the support she needs, OPP provides her with a tutor and helps her get to school. Shanee asks about her grades, how things are at home, how her job is going. "Do you need anything?"

"OPP has great people who know what you're going through because they've been there. They help you get jobs, help you get a place, help you if your back is up against the wall. They push you to do your best."

Kasmaine hopes to complete her certification courses in March. When she does, OPP has arranged an externship as a medical assistant and will then help her secure a permanent position, coaching her throughout her first year on the job. She's excited about moving from the classroom to the real world.

She'd still like to continue her education to become an RN. As she knew when she was a little girl, she'll be in a hospital, nursing people back to health. With her passion and OPP's support she is well on her way.

REALIZING POSSIBILITIES WITH OPP'S HELP AND YOUR SUPPORT

Maricely Maisonet speaks quietly but her personality draws you in. You want to pay close attention to her words.

She was born and raised in Hartford. Her family moved around a lot, so Maricely attended 7 elementary schools. It was hard adjusting to new friends and classmates. But she learned to adapt.

“When I was young, I was in really diverse communities. I was always interested in learning about cultures and languages. Picking up languages became easy for me.”

Maricely is an artist. She loves to draw and play the piano. So she was happy to be accepted to a high school for the arts.

But soon, it became a struggle. In addition to family issues, Maricely battled anxiety and depression—serious problems that kept her from school. Her grades suffered. She was behind and it was getting worse. She needed support—support her school wasn't able to offer.

“My grandmother always said ‘I want you to go to school.’ But I felt I was doing it for her and not for myself. I've since learned to love myself and want the best for me.”

A therapist suggested Maricely look into OPPportunity Academy (OA) at OPP. She was anxious before the interview, but she was accepted to the program. Nydia Roman became her Youth Development Specialist.

Maricely soon realized how much the school offered. “Ms. Roman would call me all the time to make sure I got to school. She even visited my house to work on a plan to get me back to school when I was having attendance issues.”

At OA, Maricely found understanding. Not just in her academic coursework, but from adults—especially

Nydia, the teachers, and the school social worker—who were there to help.

“I struggled in math, but all I had to do was ask and I received help. Whenever I get 100 on a test, it's a really good feeling.”

Thanks to OPP, Maricely also got the training and summer job she wanted most—at Shop Rite.

And it was at work that she found her goal.

A woman came into the store, frantic. But she spoke only Spanish and no one could help her. Maricely stepped in and translated. She learned the woman had a medical issue and needed to reach a relative right away.

Maricely's boss was impressed. And Maricely knew she wanted to help more people as a translator.

She's focused on her schoolwork now. At OA, she's learning at her own pace and getting As and high Bs. She will graduate in 2016.

When she does, she'll be the first person in her family to graduate from high school. She wants to continue her education, either at a community college or a university.

“I always tell myself this quote from Eric Thomas: When you want to succeed as bad as you want to breathe, then you will be successful.” Maricely needed understanding to succeed. She gets that at OPP.

Next she hopes to bring understanding to the world. Maricely wants to work as a translator in a hospital and then work towards being a translator in the U.N. Already fluent in English and Spanish, she is now studying Mandarin and wants to study Arabic, French, and many more languages.

MARICELY



THE CHALLENGE

The traditional classroom experience doesn't work for all youth. And students who fail to get the support they need often fall behind in credits and grade levels. These are the students most at-risk for dropping out. Leaving school without a high school diploma has harsh consequences and costs the state \$500,000 per dropout over their working lifetime.

THE SOLUTION

Some young people need a different approach to learning. That's why OPP created fully accredited high schools for young people who have dropped out or are at risk of dropping out. OPP's schools help students overcome academic and emotional barriers to learning. Working at their own pace, students earn credit for what they know, not the amount of time they sit in a classroom. Students can access workforce training, college preparation, and internship opportunities. And, like all OPP programs, students benefit from the ongoing guidance and support of their Youth Development Specialist throughout their individual journeys.

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IN FY15...

299

students at-risk of becoming dropouts enrolled in one of OPP's high schools

60

students graduated from OPP schools



for the year ended JUNE 30, 2015

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Net Assets (beginning)	\$ 1,577,504
Total Revenue	\$ 7,125,777
Program Expenses	\$ 5,278,862
Supporting Services	810,695
Interest and Depreciation	507,451

Total Expenses \$ 6,597,008

Change in Temporary Restricted Net Assets	\$ (154,727)
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Net Assets (ending) \$ 1,951,546

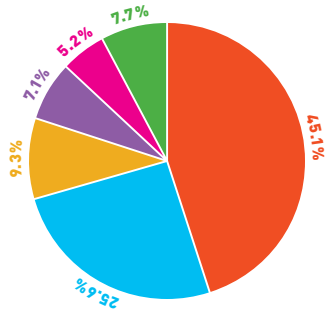


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CHALLENGE

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At OPP they get the support, resources, and tools they need to overcome those challenges and become successful, economically independent adults.



CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS • YOUTH-CENTERED SUPPORT • FINANCIAL AID WORKSHOPS
 TRANSPORTATION • COLLEGE TOURS • PAID INTERNSHIPS • GOAL-SETTING
 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE • CAREER TRAINING • LIFE SKILLS
 JOB RETENTION • COLLEGE COUNSELING



Lack of Role Models
 No Transportation
 Learning Difficulties
 Lack of Job Skills
 Mental Health Issues
 Early Parenthood
 Dropping Out
 Language Barriers
 Self-Esteem Issues
 Lack of Resources
 Child Welfare
 Homelessness
 Criminal History

FUNDING & SUPPORT JULY 2014–JUNE 2015

COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

American Youth Policy Forum
The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts
Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network
Connecticut Science Center
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Goodwin College
Greater Hartford West Indian Lions Club
Northeast Charter School Network
United Way of Central and Northeastern CT
The Village for Families and Children
Trinity College
Woodstock Congregational Church

CORPORATE & FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS

2 Fly Wines
Aetna Foundation
Anonymous Foundation
Avon Prime Meats
Ayer Family Foundation
Bank of America
Barnes Group Foundation, Inc.
Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Berkshire Bank Foundation
Besito
Best Buy Foundation
J. Walton Bissell Foundation
Budd Family Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Cahoots Hair Design
Career Resources
Carlyle Johnson Machine Company

The Cheesecake Factory
Anna F. and David C. Clark Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Comcast—Western New England Region
ConnectiCare
Construction Resources, Inc.
Cooney, Scully and Dowling
Crosskey Architects, LLC
D.H. Bolton, Inc.
Dime Bank Foundation
Eastern Savings Bank
Ensworth Charitable Foundation, Bank of America N.A. Trustee
Eversource
E-Tech Systems, LLC
Fairfield County's Community Foundation
Farmington Bank Community Foundation
Fichman Eye Center
The Stanley D. and Hinda N. Fisher Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
The Fund For Greater Hartford
GARO Consulting
Geissler's Supermarket
Gibb's Wire & Steel Company
Halloran & Sage, LLP
The Hartford
Hartford Business Journal
Hartford Economic Development Corporation
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Hartford Hospital
Hartford Marriott Downtown
Hartford Restaurant Group
Hartford Stage

Hartford Steam Boiler
Henkel Corporation
Hoffman Auto
HP Hood, LLC
John Hunt Scholarship Program at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Identidad Latina
Jackson Lewis, LLP
Jamel Family Charitable Fund
Joining Technologies
Joseph Family Markets, LLC
Kate Family Foundation
John A. Klein Leadership Fund at Fairfield County's Community Foundation
The Knox Foundation
L&R Benefits, LLC
L&R Productions
Landmark Partners
Launch Trampoline Park CT, LLC
Lean Value Solutions International, LLC
Legrand Electrical Wiring Systems Division
Liberty Bank Foundation
Lincoln Financial Foundation
Little Consulting, LLC
George A. & Grace L. Long Foundation, Bank of America N.A. Trustee
Robert E. & Stacy T. Malecki Family Fund at Schwab Charitable Foundation
Max Oyster Bar
McFadden Family Foundation
Mohegan Sun
Mutual of America
Nellie Mae Education Foundation

Nemec Family Foundation
NETS—Newgen North America
Onyx Moonshine
PCC Technology
People's United Community Foundation
Prudential Financial
The Prudential Foundation
Reid & Riege, P.C.
ReTech USA, LLC
Rob Alberti's Event Services
Charles Nelson Robinson Fund, Bank of America N.A. Trustee
Roundgrille Inc.
Santander Bank
SBM Charitable Foundation
Scene Art Bar
Security Technologies
ShopRite of Manchester/ East Hartford—Waverly Markets, LLC
Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation
Solinsky Eye Care
Suburban Stationers
Sullivan & Leshane, Inc.
Super Cellar Warehouse Liquors
TD Bank Charitable Foundation
The Technology Group
Thomas Byrne Associates
Thomas Hooker Brewery
The Tow Foundation
Travelers
Travelers Foundation
United Technologies Corporation
H. A. Vance Foundation
Walgreen Co.
Waterford Group Charitable Foundation
Webster Bank

Whittlesey & Hadley, P.C.
Willis
WondriskaRusso
Workers' Compensation Trust
Xes Beauty Lounge

GOVERNMENT

Bloomfield Public Schools
Capital Workforce Partners
Connecticut Department of Children & Families
Connecticut Department of Education
City of Hartford
City of Hartford Department of Families, Children, Youth & Recreation
Hartford Public Schools
MetroHartford Alliance
City of Norwich
United States Department of Education
United States Department of Labor
University of Connecticut
Windham Public Schools

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Frank Leone
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Stephen Peterson
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Natan & Barri Tabak
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Jennifer Wilder-Jackson
L. Kay Wilson
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Ellen Ziegler

In honor of Debra Pittorie Forand

Barbara Bartucca

**In loving memory of
Betty Rath and Fritz & Tim Kate**

Fred A. Kate
Patricia A. Kate

In memory of Betty Rath

Robert Moke
Dr. Charles Rath
Elizabeth Rath
Jim & Terry Schaeffer

In memory of Barry Ress

Dr. Charles Rath III

In honor of Mary Jane Wrenn

Lynn Dolan & Kevin Wojcik



Our Piece of the Pie.

*Helping urban youth become
economically independent adults*

Administrative Office
20–28 Sargeant Street
Hartford, CT 06105
860.761.7300

WWW.OPP.ORG

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CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

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CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

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Edward Budd
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Mickey E. Herbert
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United Way of Central
and Northeastern Connecticut

Design by WondriskaRusso (wondriskarusso.com)
Photography by Lanny Nagler (lannynagler.com)



for the year ended JUNE 30, 2015

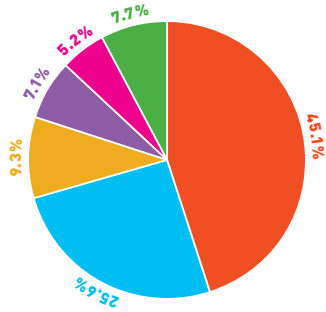
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 No Transportation
 Learning Difficulties
 Lack of Job Skills
 Mental Health Issues
 Early Parenthood
 Dropping Out
 Language Barriers
 Self-Esteem Issues
 Lack of Resources
 Child Welfare
 Homelessness
 Criminal History



OPP's unique approach focuses on the individual.



With OPP by their side, our youth are working hard, setting goals and achieving them.



High School Diploma



College Degree



Professional Certification



Rewarding, Well-Paying Jobs



1,585

youth were enrolled at OPP, setting and achieving goals for their future

78,623

staff hours were spent engaging with youth, helping them to identify obstacles, connecting them with services and guiding them to success

163

youth demonstrated career competencies through our workforce readiness course

144

youth had an internship or work experience

145

youth earned a high school diploma

186

youth completed a postsecondary program

86

youth maintained sustainable employment