



Our Piece of the Pie.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Growing from aspiration to accomplishment



“We don’t give up on people. We just don’t.”

This was one of the first lessons I learned from Hector Rivera, our Chief Operating Officer. For me, these words capture OPP perfectly.

I’d like to start by thanking you for your support; and for not giving up on our youth.

Together, we tackle the toughest issues.

The young people who come to OPP face challenges that can seem unreal and are not easily overcome. In some cases, they are the youth the system seems to have forgotten.

Before joining the board at OPP, I was an employer for OPP’s summer youth program. I could see the obstacles facing the youth; primarily, that they didn’t have the support system you and I may have experienced. Together, with OPP, we helped them learn — from how to say please and thank you to how to advocate for themselves and visualize a path forward.

We have a passion to deliver on our promise.

Our Piece of the Pie has the tools and the drive and the consistent ability to care deeply enough about our core purpose to ensure these young people are not forgotten.

From the board, to the administration, to the staff, we are laser focused on our mission: helping urban youth become economically independent adults.

At the heart of OPP’s approach is our relationship with each youth. Every young person who comes to OPP is assigned a Youth Development Specialist who becomes a mentor, advocate, and cheerleader to round out their support system.

Most importantly, everyone involved with OPP sees their role as being a devoted member of a family; committed to preserving an environment of encouragement and achievement.

You are an important part of that family.

Thank you for your attention. Thank you for your support. Thank you for being there for young people who need you.

In the following pages, you’ll read about young people — currently enrolled in one of our programs or alumni — who are moving from aspiration to accomplishment.

Your support for OPP is an incredible part of making their achievements possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jordan Coe". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jordan Cohen Coe, Chair of the Board

Thanks to you and OPP, these young people are determined to succeed

Most stories have a turning point. There's a moment when the hero must make a life-changing decision.

We see heroes every day at OPP, when young people make the choice to succeed. That decision isn't easy. It requires discipline, hard work, and a focus on their future. But thanks to you, OPP is here to help them.

On the following pages, we'll share stories of young people who faced serious obstacles. You'll learn how they chose to confront those obstacles with courage and purpose.

Our youth move from aspiration to achievement, thanks to you:

- We launched a partnership with College for America at Southern New Hampshire University, where our students can earn college credit while attending high school.
- We are proud to lead Mayor Luke Bronin's Hartford Youth Service Corps, giving Hartford youth the opportunity to complete service-learning projects while benefiting from OPP's wrap-around support.
- Our high schools for over-age, under-credited youth continue to turn dropouts into graduates.
- And our Pathways to Careers Initiative is preparing young people for careers in high demand fields, by helping them gain the necessary training and accreditation, and then placing them in jobs.

And because of your support, OPP continues to enjoy a national reputation as a change-maker and leader in the youth development field.

- Our staff members continue to be sought-after speakers at both local and national conferences, forums and webinars, including OPP's leadership at a Washington, D.C. congressional briefing in May.
- OPP's work is frequently cited in major reports and case studies, including recent publications released by The Brookings Institution and the Dalio Foundation.

OPP works. But we can't do it without your involvement.

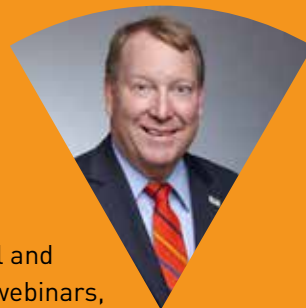
Thanks to OPP and you, the young people on the following pages had the opportunity to fight for their own success.

Please read on — we hope you'll be as inspired by these stories as we are.

Sincerely,



Bob Rath, Chief Executive Officer



TAHA SHABAZZ

“I’m so ready to prove myself worthy.”

Can passion turn a life around?

Taha was bullied in school. So he skipped it and hung out on the streets, instead.

He was held back. His grades were poor.

“I was just trouble,” Taha says. “I had to make a change.”

Then he took a music class. Taha fell in love. “Music had always been on my side whenever I felt bad. It kept me calm.”

He desperately needed more structure, though. That’s when he found OPP. “They saw I was into music and taught me the ropes.”


Music was the focus he needed. And OPP gave him

the opportunity to learn about the music business at their Hartford youth center.

“I really wanted to do it for myself. I wanted to show myself that I can do something one day.”

Taha is now a senior at Southern Connecticut State University. He’s studying music and communications. He founded the school’s first Studio Club, where he shares his love of music production with other students. “I’m going to graduate with a degree, and hopefully go back for another one.”

But he hasn’t forgotten how OPP changed his life. “I would love to be part of a music program for kids. I could do for them what OPP did for me.”



Taha Shabazz (left), a college senior currently enrolled at OPP, learns about life as an entrepreneur from OPP alum Antwan Harris (right).



ANTWAN HARRIS

“Everybody has the potential to do a phenomenal thing. It’s just finding that light and turning it on.”

Antwan Harris is a force of nature.

Raised in Hartford, he attended public schools. But he says, “I was a big-time joker. School was never hard; I was just always trying to be the class clown.”

He credits OPP with helping him stay on track. “I stuck with the program and was one of OPP’s first youth to go to college. OPP gave me a lot of assistance with books and checking in on me.”

In the next few years, Antwan became a first-generation college graduate, taught

and coached in Hartford and in South Korea, played professional football, and earned his Master’s degree.

He also started a nonprofit organization. His Supreme Athlete Mentor Program helps young inner city athletes stay on track.

His two loves — fitness and teaching — came together when he launched his own fitness training business. His business is now successful and growing. But he’s grounded in his community. “You are, in my opinion, what you put out — who you help.”

He adds, “OPP has been steadfast. I considered the organization a foster parent whenever I needed assistance or direction. So I keep coming back — all the time.”

CHRISTINA CANTRELL

“I was determined to make the most of the opportunities OPP gave me.”

Christina’s early life would defeat many other people.

Homeless, without parents, from a family that struggled with addiction and mental illness — Christina learned early that survival meant planning.

But high school was tough. Then she found OPPportunity Academy.

“I went in with six credits. I came out with 15 in my first year there. I took every course I could.”

The supportive environment and small classes helped Christina. She says, “They’re miracle workers. It was really good to feel I could actually accomplish things.”


Christina graduated in 2015. She decided to become a paramedic. “I see things people need help with. And I feel like I can do it.”

She finished EMT classes and also volunteers with the Portland Fire Department. Her next step is police work.

Her goal is to do all three: police, fire and EMT. “I can try to save one person at a time. I want to make a difference in every field that’s possible.”

Christina returned to OPPportunity Academy for this year’s first day of school to talk with students. She told them, “Take every opportunity you have because it won’t always be there.”





OPPortunity Academy graduate, future doctor, and current OPP participant, Ydhalis Gonzalez (right) visits EMT Christina Cantrell (left) at the firehouse where Christina, a fellow graduate of OPPortunity Academy and alum of OPP, volunteers.

YDHALIS GONZALEZ

“If you really want something, it’s possible to make it happen.”

Ydhalis Gonzalez is one determined young woman.

In high school, she made the wrong friends. She didn’t focus on her studies. Soon, she fell behind in her classes.

She came to OPPortunity Academy in August 2015, after her second year of high school. When she arrived, she had only three credits.

From being behind her classmates, she pulled ahead, graduating in November 2016. “OPP helped me realize I need to better my life.”

Ydhalis wants to be a doctor — a dermatologist or pediatric surgeon. But the first stop is her RN.

She was doing so well with her studies that her OPP Youth Development Specialist suggested she take advantage of OPP’s program that lets students pursue a high school diploma and an associate’s degree at the same time.

Because of the head start she got at OPP, Ydhalis expects to have her Associate’s degree by July 2018.

She plans to attend a four-year college after that: “I’m not done.”

About OPP she says, “You can talk to them about anything. They push you to work harder. I set a goal each week.”

Asked what changed for her, she says, “It was me. I had to grow as a person. I really need to do for myself.”

JUAN RIVERA

“OPP is a blessing. It’s opportunity. Take advantage of it.”

Juan Rivera is looking for a place of his own.

Growing up, Juan fell in with the wrong group of friends. He got into trouble. He started missing school. Then his dream to become a marine was dashed when he was rejected as disabled.

So when he arrived at OPPportunity Academy, Juan brought a bad attitude with him.

But that changed quickly. Juan realized how many others would love to have his spot. With OPP’s guidance, he buckled down. “You work hard enough; you get things you want.”

His new attitude carried him through OPPportunity

Academy, and into Asnuntuck Community College with OPP’s manufacturing program. The first in his family to go to college, Juan took every opportunity and every internship OPP offered him.

But would he find a job?

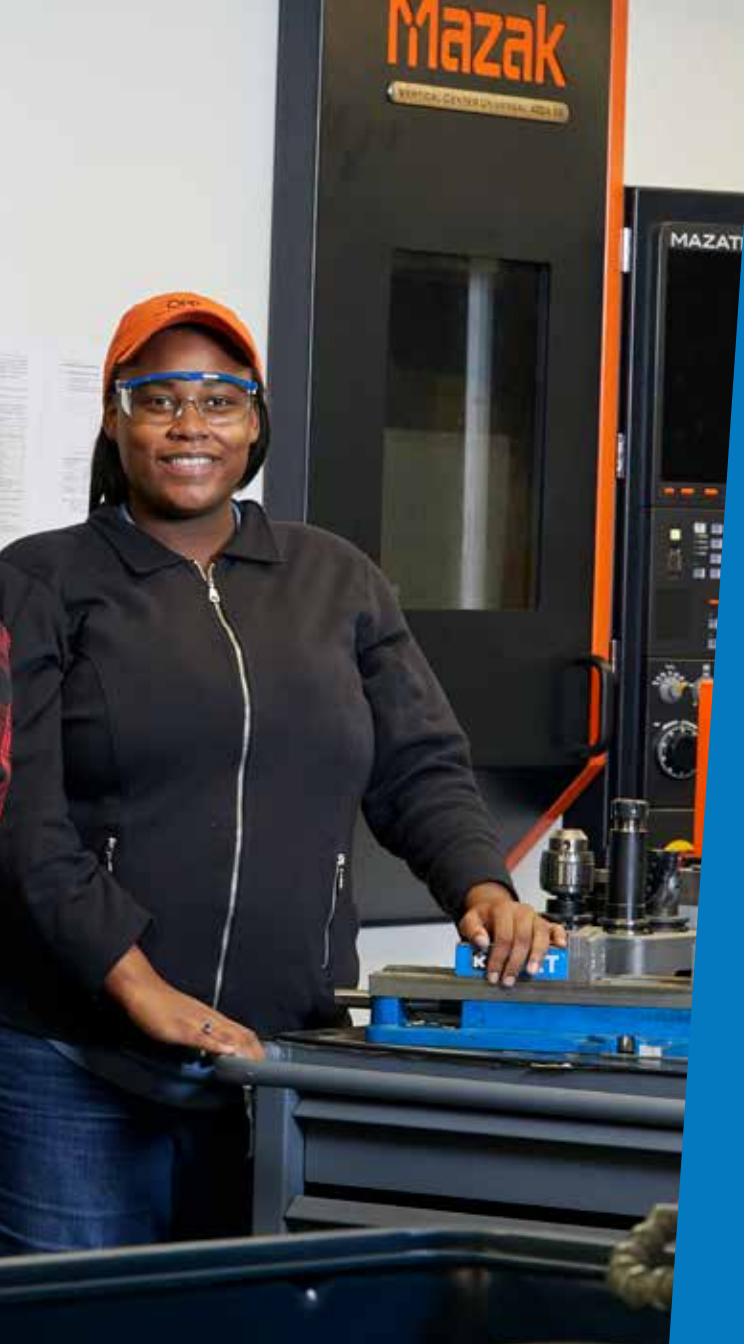
OPP set up an interview with a manufacturing company, where Juan began a three-month internship. Then he was offered an apprenticeship. Juan was on his way.

Juan has almost completed his apprenticeship. Completion means a nice wage increase. Now he can look for his own place: an apartment or even a house.

Juan’s been back to talk with students at OPP. He tells them, “It’s overwhelming when you first start. But it’s so worth it in the end.”



Adina Howard (right), a participant in OPP’s Pathways to Careers job pipeline program, shares stories with Juan Rivera (left), an alum of the Pathways to Careers program.



ADINA HOWARD

“I’m excited. I can’t wait to see what life has in store for me.”

Like many OPP youth, Adina had a difficult family situation. She relied on herself and close friends to get by.

Always a hard worker, she came to OPP hoping for a summer job. She stayed through high school, developing relationships with the staff. Those relationships would get her through some of the toughest times of her life.

Adina had just enrolled in a training program to become a dental assistant when tragedy struck.

Her closest friend — who was like a brother to her — died.

She gave up on school and moved into a women’s shelter. “I felt like the world was crashing in on me.”

But OPP was there for her.

OPP supported her emotionally and helped her get back on track. “They’re all my family. They’re here to get on my tail when I need them to.”

Adina now works several jobs and is enrolled in OPP’s Pathways to Careers program at Asnuntuck Community College, studying for her registered medical assistant certificate. She’ll finish next year.

“I’m definitely on the road to success. I’m just going to keep driving down that road. I believe in myself more than I ever did before. OPP did that.”

Financials

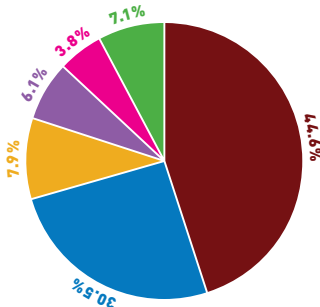
for the year ended JUNE 30, 2016

Net Assets (beginning)	\$ 1,951,546
Total Revenue	\$ 7,109,823
Program Expenses	\$ 5,907,786
Supporting Services	702,060
Interest and Depreciation	504,138
Total Expenses	\$ 7,113,984
Change in Temporary Restricted Net Assets	\$ 360,568
Net Assets (ending)	\$ 2,307,953

Expenses

for the year ended JUNE 30, 2016

OPP in the Community	44.6%	\$ 3,174,541
OPP in Schools	30.5%	2,168,690
Program Initiatives	7.9%	564,555
Management & General	6.1%	435,163
Fundraising	3.8%	266,897
Interest & Depreciation	7.1%	504,138
Total Expenses		\$ 7,113,984

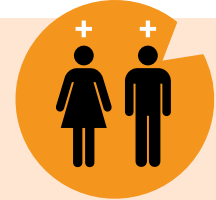


OPP Annual Achievements



1610 youth

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



779 of these youth

were newly enrolled last year alone



There are another

117 youth

on the waitlist for enrollment



160 youth

demonstrated career competencies through our workforce readiness course



102 youth

earned a high school diploma



236 youth

had an internship or work experience



126 youth

completed a postsecondary program



375 former- or near-dropouts

were enrolled at one of OPP's three high schools



76 youth

maintained sustainable employment

Funding & Support, July 2015–June 2016

Community

Achieve Hartford!
Advanced Behavioral Health
American Outlaws Hartford Chapter, Inc.
American Youth Policy Forum
Asnuntuck Community College
Business Networking International
College for America at Southern New Hampshire University
Connecticut Public Broadcasting Network
Connecticut Science Center
East Woodstock Congregational Church
FAVOR, Inc.
Gloria Dei Lutheran Church
Goodwin College
Hartford Healthcare
Hartford Public Access Television
Intensive Education Academy, Inc.
Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum
Middlesex United Way
Mystic Seaport
Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity, University of Connecticut Chapter
Sports Museum of New England
St. Thomas the Apostle, West Hartford
The YMCA of Greater Hartford
TheaterWorks
United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut
United Way of Coastal Fairfield County

The Village for Families and Children
Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art
Windham Charter School Corp

Corporate & Foundation

Aetna Foundation
Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Anonymous Foundation
AVANGRID
Bank of America
Barnes Group Foundation, Inc.
Benevity Community Impact Fund
Berkshire Bank Foundation
J. Walton Bissell Foundation
Budd Family Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Annie E. Casey Foundation
Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative
CBS Connecticut
The Cheesecake Factory
Chelsea Groton Foundation
Cigna Foundation
City Steam Brewery
Anna F. and David C. Clark Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Comcast, Western New England Region
Construction Resources, Inc.
Cooney, Scully and Dowling
Crosskey Architects, LLC
Dalio Foundation

Dave & Buster's
Dime Bank Foundation
Dish Bar & Grill
Vincent Dowling Family Fund
Ensworth Charitable Foundation, Bank of America N.A. Trustee
Fairfield County's Community Foundation
Farmington Bank Community Foundation
First Niagara Foundation
The Stanley D. and Hinda N. Fisher Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Fox 61
Foxwoods Resort Casino
The Fund for Greater Hartford
Gouveia Vineyards
Halloran & Sage, LLP
The Hartford
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company
John Hunt Scholarship Program at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Jackson Lewis, LLP
Joining Technologies, Inc.
Kate Family Foundation
The Betty Knox Foundation
Lake Compounce
Landmark Partners
Legrand Electrical Wiring Systems Division
Liberty Bank Foundation

Lincoln Financial Foundation
Lone Pine Foundation
Robert E. & Stacy T. Malecki Family Fund at Schwab Charitable
McFadden Family Foundation
Mohegan Sun
Muse Paintbar
Mutual of America
National Fund for Workforce Solutions
National Life Group
National Youth Employment Coalition
Nellie Mae Education Foundation
New Park Office & Conference Center
Newman's Own Foundation
Robert & Margaret Patricelli Family Foundation, Inc.
People's United Community Foundation
Pratt & Whitney
Priam Vineyards
Prudential Financial
The Prudential Foundation
Charles Nelson Robinson Fund, Bank of America N.A. Trustee
Rosedale Farms & Vineyards
Salute
Savers, Inc.
Saybrook Point Inn
SBM Charitable Foundation
Scene Art Bar
Schwab Charitable Fund
Security Technologies

ShopRite of Manchester / East Hartford — Waverly Markets, LLC
Storyland
Suburban Stationers
Sullivan & LeShane Public Relations, Inc.
TD Bank Charitable Foundation
The Technology Group
Thomas Hooker Brewery
The Tow Foundation
Travelers
Travelers Foundation
United Technologies Corporation
Valassis
H.A. Vance Foundation
Waterford Group Charitable Foundation
Webster Bank
Whittlesey & Hadley, P.C.
Willis Towers Watson

Government

Bloomfield Public Schools
Bristol Eastern High School
Capital Workforce Partners
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Connecticut Department of Children and Families
Connecticut Department of Education
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management
City of Hartford

City of Hartford Department of
Children, Youth, Families &
Recreation
Hartford Public Schools
MetroHartford Alliance
City of Norwich
United States Department
of Education
Windham Public Schools

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Robert Moke
Charles and Betty Rath
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Jim & Terry Schaeffer

*In loving memory of Betty Rath
and Fritz & Tim Kate*
Fred A. Kate
Patricia A. Kate

In honor of Jane Wrenn
Lynn Dolan & Kevin Wojcik



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

WWW.OPP.ORG

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