

Celebrating 50 Years



Highfields
Changing Lives.
Strengthening Communities



Changing Lives



ANNUAL
REPORT
2012-2013



2013-2014 LEADERSHIP

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO

Caring, hope, promise, courage

Highfields is not your ordinary human services nonprofit. It is without doubt a progressive group of individuals — staff and supporters — that cares deeply for children and families. Collectively, we represent hope and the promise of a brighter future for families and communities. And we owe it all to you!



Because of your support this past year, we have been able to help heal broken hearts and restore families. And we have been able to do it creatively, more efficiently and through expanded roles and services.

So we invite you to join us as we continue to work beside courageous families that have asked for our help. Together we will continue to change lives and strengthen our communities.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Philson, ACSW, LMSW
President & CEO



THANKS TO YOU

Kadie, Ingham Academy graduate, is headed to college.

A former drug user chooses career to help others

As a high school student in a rural Michigan farming community, Kadie, 17, would routinely skip classes, go home, smoke marijuana and watch television. She had a difficult relationship with her father and little contact with her mother. She made the rounds of several youth homes and seemed to be on a pathway to becoming a high school dropout, or worse.

A juvenile court officer referred Kadie to the Ingham Academy in Lansing and a chance to catch up on all the high school credits she was missing.

Kadie did not immediately take to the program. In fact, she went AWOL for a time and got involved in prostitution. She says it was the caring Academy staff that helped her make a new start and begin to believe she could succeed. She responded to the one-on-one counseling with Highfields behavior treatment specialists and the small classes,

structured program and curriculum. She was able to immerse herself in her studies and keep away from the bad behavior that once defined her. In addition to a solid academic program where she excelled at math, Kadie worked on life skills and coping strategies and gained a better understanding of who she was and what her potential might be.

In July 2013, Kadie completed the requirements for a high school diploma, a year earlier than anticipated. She says the program not only helped her graduate, but possibly saved her life.

“By now, I might have been dead,” she suggested, if the Ingham Academy and Highfields had not been there for her.

Instead, Kadie has plans to attend Jackson Community College to pursue a degree in criminal justice and provide help and hope to others in similar situations.

Ingham Academy is a partnership of the Ingham Family Court, the Ingham Intermediate School District and Highfields. Highfields also provides help for teens involved with the court through PRIDE – Evening Reporting. This program offers supervision and behavioral treatment in the after-school and early evening hours.

Highfields’ Residential program provides 24-hour care and treatment for adolescent boys with behavioral problems from all over Michigan on our Onondaga campus.

A young mother gains strength and skills

I am a 25-year-old single mother of two small children. My dad was killed when I was young, so he wasn't around. I left my mom's house and went to Job Corps when I was 16. My mom chose Job Corps for me in hopes it would change my attitude. I began drinking, smoking weed and fighting. I received my CNA license but got kicked out for fighting and did not receive my GED.

Afterward, I moved around with family and friends and eventually ended up in Jackson. I took and sold drugs and danced. Dancing led me into more drugs and more bad people. I followed the path that life takes you when you are around people who sell dope, do dope and dance.

I chose that life for myself, until I had kids. I didn't see any reason to keep my life together until the kids came. When I met my child's father, life got a little bit worse before it got better. I went to jail. When I got out of jail and the father came home, our relationship began falling apart because of his cheating and abuse. I found out I was pregnant with my son, my first child. I lost my partner, my job and my apartment and moved back in with family. Soon I found out I was pregnant with my second child.

I had my medical marijuana license, and when I found out I was pregnant, I was already three months along. I let my license expire and stopped using. My child was born with slight traces of THC in her system. Child Protective Services then became involved and provided Highfields for outreach counseling.

I love Highfields. I loved my counselor, Kazia. I had the best emotional support ever. I could vent and cry and know that I wouldn't be judged for how angry I was that day. We got down to the bottom of what the triggers were for my anger and drug use. I learned how to better identify the poisonous people in my life and how to deal with them in a healthy and responsible way instead of violently. Highfields helped me with my son's biting and helped me know how to talk to my kids like a parent instead of treating them like adults.

Without Highfields, I wouldn't have been able to identify when I need to just stop and think. It has helped me manage my anger and other emotions. I appreciate Highfields and Kazia, and I would recommend it to anybody who feels that they need emotional support and help with patience.

Counselor Kazia Siler and Brandee celebrate Brandee's success.



THANKS TO YOU



Jack and Jennifer Eddy are looking forward to another great school year.

ALWAYS REACHING HIGHER

“Thank you isn’t enough”

Jack was a 7th grade student who was shy and had difficulty with his peers and just generally fitting in with any group. He wanted to make friends and tried repeatedly, but many times he came away frustrated and with hurt feelings.

Jack’s relationships with his fellow students began to change once he joined the Reaching Higher program at his middle school. He learned valuable problem solving and relationship building skills and began to be more confident in himself. By the end of the year, Jack had friends across all grade levels and peer groups. Others wanted to be around him and often made the effort to seek him out.

“I can honestly attribute Jack’s personal growth to being an active part of Reaching Higher,” says his teacher. “The growth he showed does not just naturally happen in middle school. If anything, students tend to go

the other way during these difficult hormonal years. It was great to witness the positive influence of Reaching Higher first hand.”

In addition to Jack’s emotional growth, his mother saw other benefits.

“Jack got homework help as well as physical activity,” she explains. “The supper and transportation were a real bonus and made the hectic hours after work much easier. The program is wonderful.”

“My grades went up!” Jack says. “I really like the help with homework.”

Jack’s mother praised the Reaching Higher team for helping kids get the life skills they’ll need for the future.

“You and your team are making a huge difference in the world,” she adds. “Thank you isn’t enough.”

Reaching Higher, Highfields’ After-School program, is currently available in Ingham County at Gardner Middle School, Leslie Middle School and Shabazz Academy. In Jackson County, Reaching Higher is at DaVinci Primary School, Springport Middle School and Western Middle School.

“Kids deserve a second chance”

For Olivia Letts, supporting Highfields has been all about family. Her late husband, Richard, was one of Highfields’ first board members, and his involvement later led her to also join the organization’s board. Today, the opportunity to have a positive impact on the lives of mid-Michigan families sustains her support of Highfields.

“It’s an organization that’s worth your time,” says Letts, a retired Lansing School District teacher and administrator who served on the Highfields board from 1984 through 1991, including a year as chair.

Since then, she has contributed to Highfields financially, responding faithfully to fund-raising initiatives.



Olivia Letts has believed in Highfields’ mission for 50 years.

“I do believe in Highfields,” she stresses. “I try to be a supporter. I do as much as I can financially.”

Letts says she has a limited budget for charitable giving, and Highfields makes the cut because she believes in its leadership and mission of giving opportunities to families and youth.

“I think they have always had good leadership,” she explains. “If you have good leaders, you have a better chance of having good programs.”

Letts has seen the number of programs offered by Highfields grow greatly over the years. When her husband, Richard, joined the board in 1966, Highfields consisted only of the residential program in Onondaga, where one of the dorms carries his name. Richard, who died in 1997, served on Highfields’ board from 1966 through 1976 and was the human relations director for the City of Lansing.

Letts particularly believes in Highfields’ focus on intervening early in the lives of youth before whatever trouble they’re having becomes an insurmountable problem.

“If you can get them out before they get in too deep, you want to do that,” she notes. “There’s so much peer pressure on kids today, and it’s easier to find trouble to get into. Kids deserve a second chance.”

For more information on giving to Highfields, visit www.highfields.org.

A SUPPORTER SPEAKS OUT

HIGHLIGHTS & A



Table display at 50th Gala.

More than 500 people celebrated **Highfields' 50th Anniversary.**

Seven students graduated in June 2012 from the **Ingham Academy**, a program for students who are on probation and are struggling in public school settings. Highfields provides behavioral treatment and support to students, and the Ingham ISD provides the educational program. Former MSU and NBA basketball player **Mateen Cleaves** was the graduation ceremony's keynote speaker.

Highfields launched its **Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) program** in Livingston County, giving youth who are just entering the juvenile system an opportunity to get back on track. MST strives to prevent youth from being removed from their homes and placed in a juvenile facility. The program's emphasis on prevention and treatment is more cost effective than the alternative of incarceration.

Mid-Michigan residents and Ford dealerships helped make Christmas brighter for



Dr. Alvin Poussaint, guest speaker at Highfields 50th Anniversary Gala, signs his book for Lindsay Huddleston.

kids and families. Toys, books and clothes for more than 220 children served by Highfields programs were donated at area Ford dealerships during the annual "**Happy Holidays for Highfields Kids**" campaign.

Governor Rick Snyder appointed Highfields President and CEO **Brian D. Philson** to the **Michigan Board of Social Work**. Philson's four-year term began Jan. 1, 2013.



2012 graduates of Ingham Academy.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Highfields' **endowment fund** hit the \$1 million mark for the first time in its 28-year history. The fund exists to help provide scholarships and to keep Highfields kids in schools.

The Dart Foundation awarded a \$50,000 grant to Highfields in honor of its 50 years of serving at-risk families and children. Highfields is using the funds to continue its services and programs that rely on public funding.

Highfields residential students learned character and values on the golf course thanks to a \$1,200 grant from the **Uplift Our Youth Foundation** to participate in the First Tee Mid-Michigan's summer 2012 program.

More than \$21,000 was raised at the Highfields 32nd Annual Golf Outing, held in June 2012 at Walnut Hills Country Club. **Dart Bank** topped the list of corporate sponsors. Other major sponsors included **Dean Transportation, Lyman & Sheets Insurance Agency, Maner Costerisan, Physicians Health Plan** and **Walmart Stores**.

Highfields presented a \$1,000 John Aldinger Scholarship to Muskegon resident **Elliot Wallace**, who was determined to turn his life around after being released from youth prison in 2011. He plans to pursue an associate degree at Grand Rapids Community College to prepare for a career in auto mechanics.



Mateen Cleeves and Sharlein Krom, Highfields program coordinator, at Ingham Academy graduation.

James Moore of Jackson is the recipient of a \$1,000 scholarship from the Highfields Inc. Aldinger Scholarship Fund. The scholarship will assist with tuition and expenses as he pursues a degree in computer technology at Baker College. Moore currently works two part-time jobs and has a son with Asperger's Disorder. He has benefited from Highfields programs such as Wraparound and Parenting Wisely.



Robert Drake congratulates Barbara Lezotte, Lezotte Miller Inc. (left), who earned Highfields' Partnership Award, and Shirley Richards of Mason, who earned the Drake Citizenship Award.



Residential student Tony tees up thanks to a grant from Uplift Our Youth Foundation.



Brian Philson with Jim and Mary Francis and Maggie and Ken Frankland at Highfields' 32nd Annual Golf Outing.

HIGHFIELDS SERVICES PROVIDE A SAFETY NET

Highfields is a human service agency providing a safety net for at-risk children and families through counseling, residential treatment and educational programs. It provides the following services:

Community services

- Family violence counseling
- Intervention programs helping boys and girls overcome social and educational struggles
- Early intervention programs confronting child abuse and neglect
- Counseling for families with children returning from out-of-home placements
- Intensive counseling programs for children struggling with a mental health disorder
- On-site counseling at hospitals to redirect behavior for families
- Programs for families of teens with a severe emotional disability or anti-social behavior

Residential services

- Full-time residential treatment for young men with behavioral problems

Educational services

- Hands-on after school programs
- Alternative high school
- Evening reporting program for youth involved in family court
- Teamwork development program for organizations and groups

"Highfields made my family very comfortable. It was very helpful to talk about how to deal with my anxiety and guilt, how to discipline my child and stick to it. I am so thankful for everything that Highfields did for my family. My life has changed forever for the better."

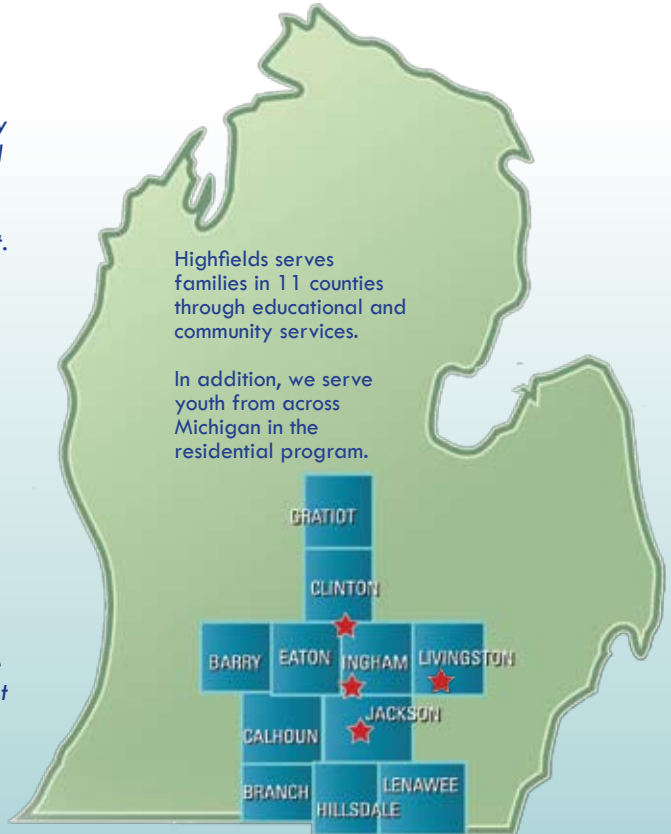
Brittany,* 39-year-old mom

"I realized I had leadership qualities that I initially didn't know I had..."

Highfields residential student

"This program really helped me improve my behavior and taught me to look at my goals."

Highfields residential student





Staff in team training at Highfields' Breakthrough Experiential Education program.

Total Revenue \$7,344,510

Government fees
\$7,011,028
95.5%

Donations
\$270,176
3.7%

Special events
\$51,754
.7%

Interest
\$11,552
.1%

"My counselor always understood my feelings. I will truly miss her."
Service recipient

"Most days are tough and rewarding. Today I could see that Chris, only 11 years old, is starting to work through the trauma he's suffered. He is beginning to gain the freedom to be a child again. It was a good day."*
Highfields counselor

Total Expenses \$7,297,243

Indirect
\$214,394
2.9%

Direct
\$1,607,447
20.06%

Personnel
\$5,475,402
75.1%

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

*Name is changed to respect confidentiality.

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We are grateful to the following individuals and businesses who made financial contributions to Highfields from May 1, 2012, through April 30, 2013.

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We are grateful to our donors and wish to be as accurate as possible. If a mistake has been made, please contact Bev McGill at (517) 628-2287 ext. 332 or bmcgill@highfields.org so that we can correct it. Thank you.

*Special thanks to the
Dart Foundation for its
\$50,000 grant in honor of
Highfields' 50th Anniversary!*



*Residential student Isaiah (left) with Gary Turner.
Turner has been a counselor at Highfields
for 32 years.*

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“I am referring William to Highfields for the intensive counseling he can receive from a therapist who will be a positive African-American male role model.... William will also benefit from the family-friendly component that is built into receiving treatment at Highfields.”*



Residential students work out mentally and physically.

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*Highfields senior staffers (l-r)
Tim Monroe, Israel Velez, Jr.,
Jill Clark at the 50th Gala.*



*Check out the new wellness room
at Highfields.*



*We celebrated our founder,
Judge Robert Drake, and his 90th
birthday at our Annual Meeting.*

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*Painting by former Highfields CEO and artist
Carl Latona reflects the many faces of Highfields
in celebration of HF 50th Anniversary.*



*L-R: Highfields Board Chair Richard Martin, 50th Gala
Guest Speaker Dr. Alvin Poussaint, CEO Brian Philson.*