



Highfields
Changing Lives,
Strengthening Communities

Annual Report 2014-2015

2015-2016 Highfields Leadership

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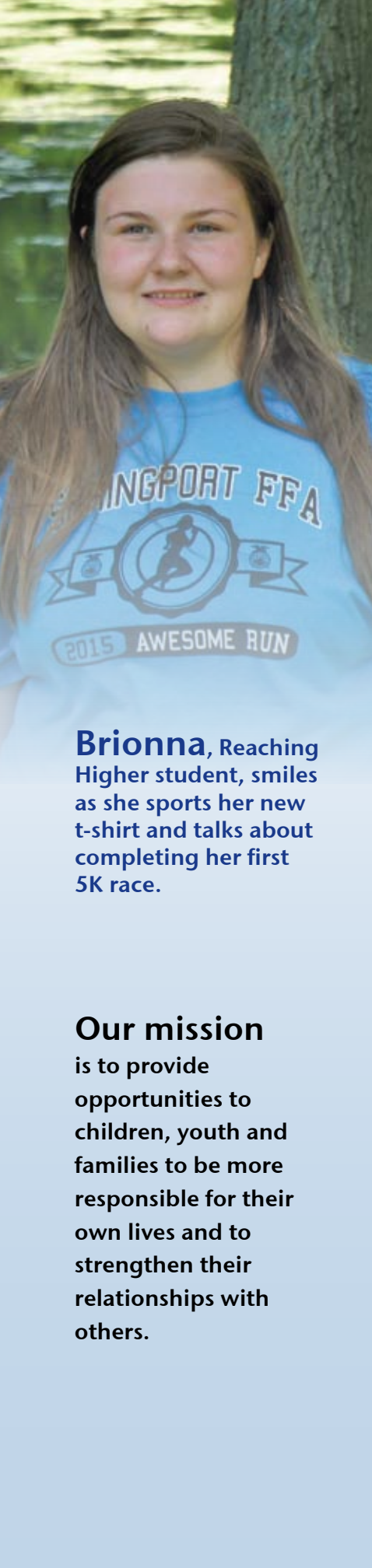
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Cover photo: Marcel is a residential student, and during this family weekend, he was teaching his sister to fish.



Brionna, Reaching Higher student, smiles as she sports her new t-shirt and talks about completing her first 5K race.

Our mission is to provide opportunities to children, youth and families to be more responsible for their own lives and to strengthen their relationships with others.

Dear Friends of Highfields,



High five! You made a difference for more

than 6,400 children and families this year! And it is with great joy and passion that we share the stories of Brionna, Drake and the Chacon family and how your support helped them overcome adversity and embrace a brighter future.

I have learned that helping a child to succeed is a powerful thing. Being able to participate in a family's move to self-sufficiency is truly remarkable. When a family goes from a place of frustration and tears, to strength, joy and laughter, we know our whole community benefits. We celebrate with our clients when they remove the "training wheels" and "take off" as a family. And it is all because of your support. Thank you!

I am happy to tell you that Highfields continues to be in a great position to give children and families the tools they need to change their lives. We offer nationally approved evidence-based programming that allows us to provide our families with the best possible outcomes. Our business model is excellent. We have worked hard to keep our "financial house in order," while equipping our staff with the best resources, technology and training so that they can be successful in their work.

I am honored to be the CEO of Highfields, with its rich history and great staff. I come to work every day with energy and enthusiasm because I know the work we do is making a difference; and that we have great donors, foundations and communities that believe in us and our mission.

This will be a great year as we continue to *Change Lives* while *Strengthening Communities*. We are privileged to have you as our partner and invite you to become more involved in bringing brighter futures to so many children and families.

Sincerely,

Brian D. Philson, LMSW, ACSW
President & CEO



Thanks to YOUR support Brionna's world is brighter

On this sunny summer day, Brionna Ward, 13, is all smiles as she ziplines with her Reaching Higher classmates at Highfields.

Brionna was in seventh grade at Vandercook Lake Middle School in Jackson, Michigan, and struggling with her grades. Because she was shy, Brionna's social life wasn't great either. Then she enrolled in Reaching Higher, Highfields' After-School Program, and is now earning As and Bs and has new friends.

Initially, she enrolled because she needed help with her homework. However, Brionna really loved the enrichment portion of Reaching Higher, where she had the opportunity to participate in art projects and field trips. Brionna and her friends even completed their first 5K run in new running shoes, thanks to donors from Highfields. Donors gave to our online "\$45 for 45" campaign on Giving Tuesday in December and provided 45 students in three Reaching Higher programs with new running shoes.

"The Reaching Higher staff is awesome and helps a lot with everything," Brionna said.

And the staff has really seen Brionna shine since she joined the program.

"Brionna's confidence has really increased," Jason Tello, Reaching Higher coordinator, said. "Her outlook is brighter, and she feels more positive about her future."

Brionna completed Reaching Higher in August, but she plans to volunteer with the program.

"Without Reaching Higher, I would be like a pod, all to myself," she said.

Brionna zips with confidence during a Reaching Higher fieldtrip to the Highfields Onondaga campus.

Highfields' Reaching Higher is an after-school program with support from the 21st Century Community Learning Center grants, provided in eight Ingham and Jackson county elementary and middle schools. It reinforces academics while giving students the chance to catch up in school and participate in activities to develop their interests and social skills.



Drake and mom, Tanya. “Chris, Drake’s counselor at Highfields, did what I and the other supports systems here were not able to do...”

Highfields’ Residential Programs were established in 1962. Located on 140 acres in rural Ingham County, the campus includes a school, gymnasium and wellness center, guest cottages, lake, athletic fields, hiking trails and an indoor and outdoor experiential education course. Residential treatment services are available for males ages 11-17 involved in the juvenile justice system and/or presenting with delinquent-like behaviors. Residential stays are typically 4-8 months in length but vary based on the resident’s treatment needs.

Thanks to YOUR support Drake is making better choices

Drake Hester, age 16, was lying, stealing and running away. Worst of all, he was constantly fighting with his family.

Eventually, he landed in juvenile detention and placement facilities—with longer stays each time. The last stint was four months long.

“At that point, I was thinking he couldn’t come back home, both for my safety and his sister’s,” said Tanya, Drake’s mom. “That was when we knew Highfields would be a good fit for us.”

Highfields’ Residential Treatment Program, Phoenix, is designed for young men who exhibit delinquent behavior. But Drake’s case was a little different. He had an underlying cause: he had Asperger syndrome, a form of autism spectrum disorder.

“We’ve never had a student with a mental health problem like Asperger’s,” said Chris Jurasek, Drake’s family counselor. “Individuals with Asperger’s have minds that work differently. We try to teach most kids how to think and feel differently about situations. But for Drake, we had to learn new ways to help him deal with his emotional outbursts and to help prepare his mom.”

Tanya said Chris was fantastic with Drake.

“He did what I and the other support systems here were not able to do: make Drake think and make better choices and be more responsible for his own actions,” she said.

Drake said while he was at Highfields, he learned how to control his anger and how to evaluate his options in order to make a good decision—not an impulsive one.

“Some kids don’t learn,” Drake said. “I’m one of the kids who learned. I made a lot of improvements.”

The Chacon Family



Thanks to YOUR support

Family rallied for Jacob

The Chacon family knew the cycle well: Something would happen. The police would be called. Jacob, 11, their youngest, having become violent again, would be escorted to the emergency room. He would either be sent home or to a residential placement. And when he came back home, the cycle would start again. This went on for five years.

“There was a lot of discord,” said Donna, Jacob’s mom. “We worked with Community Mental Health for a while, and they were helpful, but it wasn’t enough.”

Jacob agreed.

“Chaos,” he said, describing his home life.

“You get a little bit jaded after dealing with so many facilities and hearing different diagnoses,” Donna said.

But Donna refused to give up. She kept asking questions and looking for new solutions.

Finally, when Jacob was 14, Donna found Highfields and the Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) program through the court system. This evidence-based therapy focuses on the many systems in a family’s life. As part of their treatment, the family went to Breakthrough, an experiential education program on Highfields’ Onondaga campus with a zipline, along with interactive games and activities that help develop leadership and team skills. It was an intensive family-strengthening day that everyone enjoyed.

“We didn’t know what we were getting ourselves into!” said Elijah, Jacob’s brother.

“There was a lot of laughing,” Donna said, smiling.


“And that’s what we needed,” said Carlos, Jacob’s dad.

Jacob is home now. While life may not be perfect, he continues to work things out at home—not in placement. His parents said they are grateful for the skills they learned through Highfields and the MST program.

Donna said the program was a lot of work for the entire family.

“But isn’t your child worth it?” she said.

Multi-Systemic Therapy, or MST, is an internationally recognized evidence-based program provided by Highfields for children and families residing in Hillsdale, Jackson and Livingston counties. MST is one of several home-based family counseling models Highfields provides across an 11-county region in mid-Michigan.

A portrait of Mike Miller, CEO of Orchid Orthopedic Solutions, smiling. He is wearing a white button-down shirt. In the background, there is a framed picture of a mountain landscape and a shelf with some items.

Mike Miller
CEO of Orchid Orthopedic
Solutions

Donor inspired by Highfields staff

“They work from the heart.”

Mike Miller has always found success doing what he likes. He opened a car dealership because he likes cars. And he opened a ski shop because he likes to ski. He lets his energy drive him.

So when Mike met Carl Latona, then-CEO and president of Highfields, he discovered a new passion—an energy to help kids while also improving the community.

Mike has been always been interested in working with children. He is active in his church, and he also worked with Debbie Stabenow (then serving in the Michigan House of Representatives) to keep kids safe. But it was Carl and the people of Highfields who left a big imprint on Mike.

“The more I learned, the more impressed I was with the passion of the staff,” Mike said. “It was that infectious passion that drove my interest.”

Mike joined the Highfields Board of Directors in 1988, the same year the organization began its first home-based counseling program. He said he was pleased Highfields decided to expand its program to try to help children before they get into too much trouble.

“If we could just change the circumstances before bad choices put kids in the system, they would have a chance to have a better life,” he said.

Mike said he is inspired by the work the Highfields’ staff does every day. Mike said he wouldn’t know how to go into someone’s home and change their life for the better, that’s why he does what he can to support Highfields.

“I’m always humbled by what people do for others,” he said. “Many people want to be recognized and to be paid more money. But these people [at Highfields] are not like that. They work from the heart. I just admire that so much.”

For information on how to support Highfields’ work or how to include Highfields in your will or estate plan, please contact Bev McGill at 517-628-2287 ext. 332 or bmcgill@highfields.org. Visit our website at www.highfields.org to make a donation online.



Highlights of 2014-2015

YOU helped Highfields in many ways.

Programming!

Thanks to our Highfields 34th Annual Golf Outing Title Sponsor, **Jackson National Life**, and our Silver Sponsors—**Architectural Metals, Dean Transportation, Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, PC, Lyman and Sheets Insurance, Maner Costerisan PC, Orchid Orthopedic Solutions and PHP**—our programs will continue helping families long after the clubs are put away. The event raised more than \$41,000.

Generous donors gave more than \$113,000 at the Strengthening Families Fundraising Breakfast, held October 23, 2014, at the Kellogg Center.

Family weekends!

Thanks to a grant from **Jackson National Life**, the Residential Program was able to expand its inclusion of parents and families by hosting “Family Weekends” with classes, recreation and treatment sessions.



Cameron shares a quiet talk with his mom during a family weekend.

New vehicle!

The **Lansing Area 100 Women Who Care** donated \$17,300 for the purchase of a van to transport students and families.

Training!

The **Granger Foundation Treatment and Training Grant** brought a week-long training to 30 Highfields staff, focusing on the assessment and treatment of trauma. Aggression Replacement Training was implemented in the Residential Program. Staff also received training in Motivational Interviewing.

Toys!

Community members donated toys, books and clothes for more than 120 families as part of the **11th Annual WLNS and Midwest Ford Dealership “Happy Holidays for Highfields Kids”** campaign.

New location!

Our Lansing office moved to 4305 S. Cedar in September 2014 with donated furniture, thanks to **Two Men and A Truck®** and **Dart Container**.



Move-in day in Lansing!

YOU helped Highfields grow!

New programs address...

Family maintenance: A new family counseling program was added in Eaton County.

Educational neglect: Parenting Wisely is now offered to families referred through the Ingham County Family Court as a part of the 1st Step Program dealing with elementary school truancy.

Autism spectrum: Case management services for families with children on the autism spectrum have begun out of our Jackson office.

Expansion and improvements

Reaching Higher After-School Program added two new locations.

Multi-Systemic Therapy (MST) added another therapist to serve 15 more families in Livingston County.

Breakthrough added a zipline!

Residential Gym Renovation Project received a new floor, insulated and painted walls, new scoreboard and American flag. All we need now are bleachers!

Thanks to the **Dart Foundation**, we completed an agency-wide investment in information technology.

Awards and recognition

The 2015 *Robert L. Drake Citizenship Award* was given to **Rollin B. Dart** for his unwavering dedication

to Highfields and the continued need for “an alternative for troubled youths.”

The 2015 *Highfields Partnership Award* was presented to **Two Men and a Truck** for their leadership and generosity.

Julie Duffey, Highfields Intake Coordinator for the Residential Treatment Program, was the 2015 recipient of the *Carl J. Latona Distinguished Service Award*. She was chosen by her peers for her leadership and dedication to “always doing the right thing.”

Christopher Robinson, Clinical Manager of the Residential Treatment Program was recognized by Department of Health and Human Services with the *Mentorship Award*.

Aldinger Scholarships for education were awarded to the following clients or client family members **Autumn Ball, Christopher Dykstra, Michelle Hopkins, Sarah Monroy, Russell Patterson, Rebecca Russell, and Shelley Webb**. The Aldinger Scholarship fund was created in 1996 by the late philanthropist, John Aldinger, to provide Highfields clients with support for their educational goals. Scholarships are awarded yearly at the Highfields Annual Meeting.

Highfields was successfully **reaccredited** through the national standards-setting Council on Accreditation.

Aldinger Scholarship awardee **Chris Dykstra** with mom **Shelley Webb**, also an Aldinger awardee, and family



Christopher Robinson

Rollin Dart and Hon. Robert L. Drake



Community impact

During 2014-2015,
Highfields...

SERVED

6,847 children and families



Highfields counselor Peggy McComb, far left, with the Moore family and Home Depot team that donated the rebuilding of the Moore's bathroom.

EMPLOYED

249 staff



Employee Julie Duffey, 2015 recipient of the *Carl J. Latona Distinguished Service Award*

PROVIDED SERVICES
THROUGHOUT

11 counties

OPERATING FROM

4 regional offices



AND CHANGED LIVES

1 person at a time



Witney, with counselor Angie

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

- **Reaching Higher:** Hands-on after-school programs
- **Ingham Academy:** Alternative high school partnership with Ingham Intermediate School District, family court and Peckham Industries
- **PRIDE:** Evening reporting program for youth involved in family court
- **Breakthrough:** Teamwork development program for organizations and groups

Personal impact

“We just wanted to thank you for everything you have done for our family. We really appreciate you and all you teach us. Thank you!”

—*Mom and teen daughters,
Community Services, Jackson*

“You are my hero. You inspire me to do better.”

—*Teen, Community Services, Jackson*

“Every good and bad moment was worth it because it made me realize that people cared and that I had to gain self-control or I would fail. I think the biggest thing I have to thank you all for is taking the time; because I’m hard to work with and so stubborn at times, so it means so much to me that you didn’t give up on me.”

—*Ingham Academy graduate*

“Our worker saved us and helped turn things around.”

—*Family, Community Services,
Lansing*

“Thank you for a wonderful time last week. The students really liked the experience and lessons taught. We very much appreciated your team’s diligence and focus on helping our students succeed.”

—*The Early College, Lansing
Community College,
Breakthrough client*

“Our group bonded in a way that would never happen in a Board room setting. I highly encourage others to take advantage of this amazing opportunity in our community!”

—*The Greater Lansing Homebuilders
Association, Breakthrough client*



Director Emeritus Duane Vernon with former board member Alfreda Schmidt

Financial overview

During 2014-2015, Highfields...

GENERATED TOTAL REVENUE OF
\$8,663,663

96.7% PROGRAM REVENUE
\$8,381,205

2.6% DONATIONS
\$223,167

.7% INTEREST
\$59,291

AND SPENT A TOTAL OF
\$8,388,277

74.8% PERSONNEL
\$6,277,444

22.4% DIRECT COSTS
\$1,880,594

2.8% INDIRECT COSTS
\$230,239



Aldinger Scholarship awardee Autumn Ball from DaVinci Reaching Higher

Thank you to our generous donors

We are grateful to the following individuals and businesses who made financial contributions to Highfields from May 1, 2014, through April 30, 2015.

STRENGTHENING FAMILIES GIVING SOCIETY – Individuals and businesses who have a current multi-year commitment of \$1,000 or more per year for five or more years:

Randy and Peg Asmus
 Kristin and Todd Bartley
 Sara and Jared Bennett
 Elizabeth D. Boyd
 Fred Brown
 Melanie Dart
 Rollin Dart
 Dean Transportation, Inc.
 Patrick and Allyson Dean
 Jonathan and Linda Dickinson
 Douglas Steel Fabricating Corporation
 The Honorable Robert L. Drake
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 Marlon and Amanda Roberts
 Mary Ellen Sheets and Tom Amiss
 Michael Sheets
 Randy Thayer
 Mike and Nancy Zamiara

ROBERT DRAKE SOCIETY – Those who have included Highfields in their estate planning:

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 Anonymous
 Albert Biergans*
 John* and Jenny Bond
 Rhea M. Bradford*
 Louise R. Breisch*
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 Minerva Dee*
 Mary Ann Dovey*
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 Alex Zynda Endowment Fund

TRIBUTE GIFTS IN MEMORY OF:

Brian Cavanaugh
 Sam Dault
 Jane Drake
 George Fogle
 Rose Latona
 James Lewandowski
 Elizabeth Vernier



Above: Brian Philson, Donna Oade, Bev McGill, Rose Zack, Wally Markham, with \$17,300 check. The funds were raised by Lansing Area 100 Women Who Care and used to purchase a van, pictured on the right.

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Accident Fund Insurance
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Financial Technology
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Sheila A. Brake
Mary Ann Dovey Trust
Richard and Whitney Duffield
Thomas and Ann Emmerich
Alton and Janice Granger



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.

Jerry and Lynne Granger
Betty Guerriero
Peter Kubacki
Frances and John J. Loose
Frances Overholt and Family
Francine and James Sorber
Jeff Stevens
Mark and Nicole Tithof
Lois Walker
Kenneth and Julia Walz

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