

TECHNOLOGY ANUFACTURT CONSTRUCTION

# Start Here

FOR FUTURE LEADERS

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2013 Annual Report

### TO OUR COMMUNITIES AND OUR MANY SUPPORTERS

## THE START OF A NEW WAY OF THINKING ABOUT DELIVERING SERVICES FOR OUR YOUTH



LISA L. BOTTOMS PROGRAM DIRECTOR HUMAN SERVICES AND CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CLEVELAND FOUNDATION

I want to begin with some comments on the theme for our Annual Report, "Start Here for Future Leaders." This is not a statement of bragging or a marketing slogan. It is simply a fact. Leaders do not magically appear or fall from the sky. They are the product of the communities in which they grew up. For proof, one needs only to look at the members of Council for the City of Cleveland. Of the 000 members, 000 grew up in the neighborhood they now represent, or in a neighborhood close to it.

Mayor Frank Jackson grew up in Central.

U.S. Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge graduated from Shaker Heights High School.

Ohio House Representatives Bill Patmon, Sandra Williams, John E. Barnes, Jr. and Ohio State Senators Shirley Smith, Michael Skindell, and Nina Turner were all born and raised in Cleveland.

The concept of youth development is important for so many reasons, not the least of which is to provide the environment and programs that will prepare the young people in our neighborhoods to become the leaders of tomorrow.

To accomplish that goal, MyCom has been engaged in a strategy focused on four themes:

- Coordination
- Capacity
- System Integration
- Opportunities for Young People

We seek to coordinate the many youth development programs that already exist. We identify overlaps and discover gaps. And we make it easy for parents and their children to access the programs that fit their interests and needs.

By coordinating programs we also expand capacity for delivering services. We help make our partners more efficient. We help our neighborhoods find ways to expand the services they offer. We provide a platform for agencies and partners to leverage their funding from private and public resources. We promote growth. We are breaking down silos of programming and integrating systems in ways that improve the quality of the services our partners provide. We are enabling our partners and agencies to implement national best practices, including data that can be easily shared and understood-introducing new levels of accountability to youth development.

Above all, we are helping to create new opportunities for young people to learn, grow and develop the skills they'll need for school, for work, for life, for leadership.

Leaders for our communities, for our schools, for our local businesses, will not, for the most part, come from prestigious business schools or multi-national corporations. Tomorrow's leaders are already here. They are waiting and watching for their opportunity.

What are you doing to help prepare them for the challenges they will face?

Where are you going to find your future leaders?



For years, the challenge for funding agencies like the Cleveland Foundation or government entities like Cuyahoga County has been working with youth service programs that often overlapped or, worse, had gaps. Meanwhile the needs of our youth for quality programming continued to grow. To some extent it was like plugging the proverbial dam with a finger: you'd see a need and try to plug the gap. The problem was too many holes and not enough fingers.

We needed bigger ideas. We needed a solution that covered more needs.

Since 2006 MyCom has been the bigger idea that has worked to coordinate youth development programs. And, to engage both neighborhoods and young people themselves in programs that expand opportunities, encourage educational goals, and create our future leaders.



**RONALD B. RICHARD** PRESIDENT & CEO CLEVELAND FOUNDATION



**EDWARD FITZGERALD** CUYAHOGA COUNTY EXECUTIVE



# - START HERE - A BRIEF REVIEW OF MYCOM'S HISTORY

#### • THE YEARS BEFORE MYCOM.

You are a parent, trying to find an after-school program in your community-an activity your child would like. Or, you're a school principal with two groups asking to use your building for after-school programming-do they complement or compete with each other?

You are a foundation trying to assess the many funding requests from community programs-how can you determine which ones are delivering services efficiently and effectively, delivering on the outcomes they promise?

You are a high school student. You see a problem in your neighborhood, but the adults aren't interested in listening to what you have to say.

There is no coordinated way for young people in Cuyahoga County to find jobs or internship opportunities. There are youth employment programs, but few reach into city neighborhoods. In fact, there was no shortage of programs or providers in the years before MyCom. But there were overlaps, and there were gaps. Multiple groups worked with the same youth, but wouldn't work with each other. There was no measure of accountability for what worked and what didn't. No common or timely data to inform decisions. And young people had no voice-they simply were not viewed as part of the solution.

### THE START OF A NEW IDEA.

In 1999, the Cleveland Foundation in conjunction with County government and private funders began an initiative to develop a common lens through which to view children's development, service delivery and outcomes, thus creating a coordinated early childhood system. Their research showed lots of programs but lots of fragmentation, a lack of information, standards and accountability, a lack of coordination and no youth engagement or input. By 2006 it was apparent that a new system was needed to serve young people in our community. To that end over 250 stakeholders were engaged, including youth. We examined national best practices and conducted site visits across the nation. We reviewed local datal and assessed assets. Through this process we identified and engaged key partners.

"The youth provider organizations may have been strong, but their network was weak. Discussions began five years ago, and now there are strong networks."

**MYCOM SUBCONTRACTOR** 

The result is a comprehensive youth development strategy involving complex systems change, participatory decision-making, common vision and purpose, and evidence-based practices that would engage all sectors in our community over time. For the first time, funders, systems, neighborhoods, providers, families and young people would work together to deliver coordinated services and opportunities for youth, from pre-kindergarten through high school and beyond.

The organization put in place to coordinate this ambitious strategy in 2008 is known as MyCom.

"Prior to MyCom, embracing youth voice and promoting youth leadership did not exist."

BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNER