



**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2015**

# A LETTER FROM JUDY

Judith Fischer Wollack, LMSW, ACSW  
Chief Executive Officer



Dear Friends,

**It has been another exciting year at Wolverine Human Services! We are proud of our many accomplishments: maintaining a balanced budget, celebrating with 13 GED recipients and 18 high school graduates, and welcoming 1,194 youth who passed through our doors.**

**We are always filled with joy when we see our children move into a permanent and loving home, whether that is through reunification with a birth family or by moving into a new forever family. This year, we were thrilled to see 51 finalized adoptions, creating forever families for Michigan's most vulnerable children.**

**Our partnership with the Beck Institute has continued to thrive. Our therapists, care staff, children, and families are growing more and more equipped with evidence-based tools to set children on a path to victory. We are growing more involved in the Detroit community, and helping this great city capture opportunities like never before.**

**I invite you to browse these stories of resiliency, challenge, love, and growth that exemplify another wonderful year of "Helping Children to be Victors."**

Thank you,

Judy

# LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees at Wolverine Human Services wishes to thank all of our donors and supporters for advancing the important mission of “Helping Children to be Victors.”

We have been thrilled to watch the growth of Wolverine Human Services over the years; it seems that each year brings new challenges and new opportunities for serving Michigan’s most vulnerable children and families.

This past year has been no different, and we would like to take this opportunity to express our deepest gratitude to our community of supporters. It is because of you that we are able to provide the daily supports necessary for many of our children and families to thrive.

Together, we can accomplish many great things on the journey of “Helping Children to be Victors.”

Thank you,

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# WHO WE ARE

**Our mission is simple. Everyday, in all that we do, we are “Helping Children to be Victors.”**

**Our purpose is to offer the most appropriate settings and most effective service providers to children, their families and their communities. We take part in a mutual effort assisting those in need to overcome social and economic barriers, to capitalize on their personal strengths, and to contribute to their own healing. Our approach is eclectic and is founded on the premise of unconditional care. Wolverine's continuum of services and effective network of referral sources provide a responsive and cost-effective system accessible at the community level.**

**We continue to use new treatment approaches, to reach out and collaborate with other services providers, and to utilize input from our many clients, constituents, funders, and supporters.**



# WHERE THE PATH TO VICTORY STARTED

Have you heard the story of our founder, Robert E. Wollack? It's a dramatic story of redemption and transformation, and it continues to inspire our work every day.

Mr. Wollack was a highly decorated but corrupt officer in the New York Police Department. His mistakes were discovered; he became a convicted felon sent to prison in Michigan. While there, he experienced the transformative power of education and rehabilitation. He earned a degree in social work before leaving prison, and went on to earn a Master's degree from the University of Michigan School of Social Work.

He began working with troubled youth, fueled by a passion of helping children overcome the same vacuum of opportunity that he experienced as a young man in Brooklyn, New York. He knew that he could use his guiding principles of Reality, Responsibility, Respect, Communication, Negotiation, Education, and Love to set children on a path to victory.

In 1987, he opened the doors of the Wolverine Human Services St. Jude's Home for Boys, a 40-bed facility on Detroit's east side, where he began the mission of "Helping Children to be Victors."

And the rest, as they say, is history.



# BECK INSTITUTE UPDATE

Great progress was made over the year! We are continuing into year 4 of our 5-year CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) blueprint. The venture and organizational change initiative with the Beck Institute and Indiana University is successfully creating a major paradigm shift in the methods used in “Helping Children to Be Victors!” WHS Treatment programs are moving toward an evidence-based milieu, with clients internalizing skills versus social control or other traditional institutional models.

Many amazing changes are occurring during the Implementation Phase and WHS is taking steps forward to Sustainability Phase work over the new year. 2014-15 changed the way that Wolverine therapists conduct therapy.

- Outcome monitoring and CBT session structure occur with each individual therapy session.
- Data collection strategies are in place.
- Language on program sites is turning evidence-based.
- Young people are learning an emotional vocabulary, mood monitoring, and regulation skills.
- All staff working with children are receiving specialized CBT training, Youth Mental Health First Aid Certification, and using clinical tools and material specially designed for our young people served at WHS.

We are looking forward to continuing our momentum!



# TORREY: A STORY OF FACING FEAR TO OVERCOME

When Torrey arrived at the Passages Program at Vassar House, she was a young 13 years old. She struggled with even the thought of change, and was resistant to understanding why she needed to change her behaviors.

She spent much of her young life being a victim of abuse and neglect. At the time, she thought that no one cared about her, so she didn't care about herself. It was even harder for her to understand the needs of other people.

Torrey left Vassar House in July 2013, but was back in March 2014. She carried a lot of anger and resentment, and wasn't interested in engaging with any real process of personal change. She passed 45 days at Vassar House with an attitude of disengagement, until she finally faced her fears. She broke down, and cried out "I'm tired of feeling and acting like this-I'm out of control and it scares me!" Her therapist listened as Torrey cried, and realized that she could no longer hide from the difficult task of personal change.

After that, Torrey worked exceptionally hard every day to improve her self-image and relationships with others. She committed to reaching her treatment goals, including her education.

When Torrey left Vassar House in October, she was placed in the care of foster parents who asked for her specifically. She has continued to do well in school and in her relationships with others, attending her first high school dance, homecoming football game, and other positive social activities. She is expected to graduate high school on time, and we are confident that she will go on to do amazing things as the wonderful, warm, caring, and brave young woman she is.





# THE WHITESIDE FAMILY

I have had the privilege of working with April Whiteside and Reverend Mable Allen since February 2015. They specialize in caring for fragile children who are dependent on medical care to survive and thrive.

Fortunately, Ms. Whiteside is a Registered Nurse (RN) with experience caring for medically fragile children. When she and Reverend Allen received a phone call regarding a newborn baby named Jeremiah Elijah with medical needs, they knew he was meant to be part of their family!

Jeremiah entered this loving home as a son and brother when he was adopted by Ms. Whiteside in August 2015. Despite his medical challenges, Jeremiah is thriving in their care and is beloved by his big sister!

Being a foster parent is no easy task, especially when a child has severe medical needs. Ms. Whiteside and Reverend Allen have given Jeremiah the absolute best home for him, and have promised him a lifetime of love and support-everything a child needs.

–Michelle Norman, Adoption Specialist

Are you interested in learning more about becoming an adoptive parent, foster parent, home provider, or simply how you can support children and families in need? Please contact us!! A member of our supportive and caring team is ready to speak with you.

(888) 625-8669

[providecare@wolverinehs.org](mailto:providecare@wolverinehs.org)





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# JUAN: A STORY OF FINDING HOPE AND HOME

Juan was born in January of 1999, the youngest of five with the whole world ahead of him. Throughout life, we all hit bumps in the road. Juan's road started to get challenging when he was only 6 years old; he became a Temporary Court Ward, and later a ward of the Michigan Children's Institute. At such a young age, Juan's family was already scattered and it was hard for him to understand what was happening.

Juan's pain slowly turned into anger in the coming years, and he bounced through 17 different foster homes. Nowhere seemed to be the right home for Juan.

He came to the St. Jude's Program in May 2014. He was shy and struggled to adapt to the environment. As time went on, he grew comfortable with us, and we discovered that his smile could light up a room. He started building relationships, and showed his passion for football and basketball. He started using positive skills to cope with his frustration, anger, and pain, and learned how to interact with his peers and adults with respect and care. Most importantly, he mastered a new level self-control that allowed him to become a leader in his group.

He started exhibiting a drive to succeed that we hadn't seen in him before. He would immediately start his homework at the end of a busy school day. He earned an off-site educational placement in a public school where he could try out for the basketball team. He came home to St. Jude's with a smile from ear to ear when he made the freshman basketball team!

Juan kept doing everything he could to succeed. He stayed after school for extra help, and brought his grades up to a 3.4 GPA. He became a star player on the basketball team!

Juan's hard work, dedication, and warmth caught the attention of his basketball coach, Joel Scott. Coach Scott and his wife were foster parents, and felt that they could provide love and stability to Juan. Placing him in their home would allow Juan to continue at his public school, and keep all the wonderful resources he had come to rely on.

In February of 2015, Juan finally found his loving home. He moved in with Mr. and Mrs. Scott, and has continued to work hard for his success. When asked what changed for him while he was at Wolverine, he said, "I learned there were two decisions I could make in life: the right decision or the wrong decision."

We are so proud of Juan for learning how to see the "right" decision, and for having the courage and dedication to work towards his goals each and everyday.





# FRESH ERA UPDATE

Fresh Era is Wolverine's young professional board. They are working with our youth, developing community, and networking for the future of the city of Detroit. The group has officially accepted its second round of members. Of the over forty young professionals that applied for selection, there were fifteen asked to join the group, which has brought the total membership to thirty select individuals.

Fresh Era brings together an elite group of individuals in their 20s and 30s that are committed to "Helping Children to be Victors." Currently, the group participates in four annual events focused around professional networking, community outreach, youth mentoring, and land development. Serving a two-year term, each member gets the opportunity to experience and understand the diverse needs of Wolverine's youth. Bringing together the different industries and backgrounds of Michigan is creating a unique opportunity for lasting impact.

Fresh Era is taking the lead for Wolverine's land development project on Detroit's eastside, installing 1700 apple trees and creating a safe play space for local children and families. This legacy project is bringing together community members and supporters to make a lasting impact on the city. Fresh Era is leaving a footprint on the city that will be there 20, 30, maybe even 100 years from now.

Fresh Era is always looking towards the future and ready to be part of positive change. Are you ready for a Fresh Era?



# FINANCIAL REPORT

SEPTEMBER 1ST, 2014 - AUGUST 31ST, 2015



## REVENUES

Government: \$29,841,944

Other: \$391,629

TOTAL: **\$30,233,573**

## EXPENSES

Supervision and Treatment: \$21,246,668

MAS (Salaries + Benefits + Payroll Taxes + PF (General Personnel; General Pers WC;  
GW Psych Exp; FC Ref Fee) + Emp Contrib)

Supplies: \$1,968,453

Communication: \$556,431

Facilities and Equipment: \$1,687,544

Transportation: \$499,874

Specific Assistance: \$675,749

Other Operational: \$980,738

Depreciation: \$1,129,220

Interest: \$958,813

TOTAL: **\$29,703,490**

# WOLVERINE ORCHARD

Wolverine has made an active commitment to stay in on Detroit's East Side and rebuild the foundation for the community. Our vision is simple and true to Michigan. Plant over 3,500 Honey-Crisp Apple Trees to create Detroit's only U-Pick Apple Orchard.



## Wolverine Orchard Conceptual Master Plan

Wolverine Human Services, Detroit, MI  
Conceptual Master Plan - Alternative 1  
05/22/2016

Nothing is sure for the common community. 0 50 100 120

# **POLICE STATION UPDATE**

**Remember the police mini-station that we hosted in the John S. Vitale Community Center back in the day? Well, it's coming back!!**

**As Detroit gets back on it's feet, the police presence in neighborhoods like ours (Jefferson-Mack) is increasing. This is fantastic news for reducing crime and increasing safety, but it also can bring some nervousness to our youth who have seen media coverage of police violence in areas like Ferguson and Baltimore.**

**We want our youth to know that the vast majority of police officers take their oath to "protect and serve" to heart-and that includes protecting and serving them! Having the police mini-station reopen on our campus will give the youth opportunities to play basketball with police officers, have friendly everyday conversations, and generally engage with law enforcement in a positive way.**

**Special thank you to 5th Precinct Captain Mark Bliss and Neighborhood Officer DeAndre Gaines for spearheading this initiative to support our youth!**



# LENDING A HELPING HAND

the Community Development Department  
Educators. Neighbors. Volunteers.

We are happy to introduce the Community Development Department of Wolverine Human Services. The Community Development Department is engaged in a three-prong approach to develop stronger bonds between the communities and neighborhoods through out the State. Our goal is to support educational opportunities, build positive communities, and provide volunteer efforts.

First, we've worked to expand our educational partnerships with a variety of universities through our expanded internship programs. At present, Wolverine has ten interns representing six different universities in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Wolverine's reputation for educational training in child welfare continues to grow.

Second, we've built new relationships with community organizations and municipal groups. These efforts are rebuilding our presence in the East Side Detroit community. We are now working with Recovery Park Farms, the Eastside Community Network, and Jefferson East Incorporated, in the spirit of sharing of best practices and meeting neighborhood needs without duplication of services.

Third, we are providing more direct volunteer opportunities at Wolverine Human Services Facilities. We have worked to engage volunteers from local universities, high schools, religious institutions and corporate offices. These volunteers have participated in neighborhood cleanups, helped to organize activities for residential program clients, helped at recruiting events for foster care and adoption outreach, and have staffed the John S Vitale Community Center Soup Kitchen for the expanded meal services on Saturdays.

Volunteering at Wolverine Human Services is an amazing chance for our supporters to work directly with our youth, staff, and our amazing treatment programs. Are you interested in volunteering? Great!

Some of the exciting opportunities to volunteer at Wolverine Human Services are:

- Helping to plant and maintain gardens at our residential facilities
- Preparing and serving meals in the John S Vitale Community Center Soup Kitchen on Saturdays
- Neighborhood and Wolverine Facilities Clean-Ups
- Planning recreational activities at Wolverine sites
- Helping to organize field trips for youth
- Mentoring young adults
- Guest speaking about careers, education, and the community
- Academic Tutoring
- Art and music projects with youth
- Sports and recreation instruction at the JSV Community Center

....and coming in the spring of 2017, planting apple trees in our apple orchard!



# INTRODUCING THE MICHIGAN COUNSELING CENTERS!

On February 16th, Wolverine Human Services celebrated the Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at our newest program!

Michigan Counseling Centers has opened its doors in north Bloomfield Hills on Woodward Ave. We welcomed over 70 guests to our Grand Opening, including supporters from Hour Magazine, Daly Merritt Insurance, Michigan.com, and Right-Size Facility Performance. The Bloomfield Hills Chamber of Commerce welcomed Wolverine and Michigan Counseling Centers into the community with a short ceremony and photo opportunity.

Michigan Counseling Centers is Wolverine's new avenue to serving Michigan's most vulnerable children and families. Not everyone who struggles with an emotional or psychological challenge needs 24/7 care-some can be greatly supported by an hourly session each week.

Michigan Counseling Centers will provide those services, allowing Wolverine to reach people who need a little extra support coping with life's challenges. We are proud to offer counseling, psychotherapy, and assessment and referral services.

We're bringing these services to our communities, and plan to open a second location in Taylor later this year.





**THANK YOU!**