OPERATION FRESH START

ANNUAL REPORT



FISCAL YEAR 2022 OCT. 1, 2021 – SEPT. 30, 2022

ABOUT OPERATION FRESH START

MISSION

Operation Fresh Start empowers emerging adults on a path to self-sufficiency through education, mentoring and employment training.

VISION

All emerging adults ages 16-24 are assets in our community.

VALUES

Commitment, Community, Empowerment, Equity, Work



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Almost four years ago, Operation Fresh Start opened our wonderful new building on Milwaukee Street with the goal of serving twice as many people through diverse programming.

Earlier this month, I sat in a meeting with program managers at Operation Fresh Start. We led with a discussion of the state of emerging adults in our community. The young people today may always be known as the COVID generation. Often, at 18, 19 or 20, they realize that they aren't prepared for the struggles of being adults, as they get hit hard with the realities of homelessness, underemployment, health and food insecurity.

Meanwhile, there is a greater understanding in our community that these young people who come to Operation Fresh Start are essential to the future economy and workforce. But still, there is a lack of adequate resources dedicated to this population to help them transition successfully into adulthood. Then the conversation transitioned to program updates. And how young people at OFS were achieving a high school diploma they thought they left behind when virtual school wasn't working for them. They were coming to OFS to:

- attain a driver's license, knowing that it is vital for their economic success
- join the Build and Conservation Academies for a path to careers in construction and conservation
- engage in career counseling and gain connections with good employers
- connect with other community resources

Evident at that meeting was that **our vision was becoming a reality**. COVID may have been a pall over that vision, but it didn't obscure it. It didn't change it. The young people of this community find hope and understanding here at Operation Fresh Start. So many have worked hard to make this vision a reality. Thank you for being part of it.

Ang Markle

Greg Markle, Executive Director



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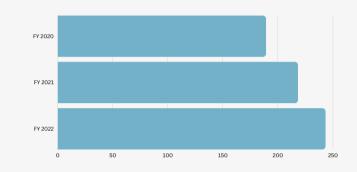


OFS BY THE NUMBERS

ALL PROGRAMS OCT. 1, 2021 - SEPT. 30, 2022

243 PARTICIPANTS SERVED

Ages 16-24



LOW-INCOME PARTICIPANTS 80% or less of the Dane County median family income





32 PRE-APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATIONS EARNED

In construction or conservation



22 DRIVER'S LICENSES EARNED Required to achieve higher-paying employment

LEGACY PROGRAM





The Legacy program supports participants in earning their high school diploma, driver's license, and developing employment readiness skills. Participants work in small groups with an in-house teaching staff. As AmeriCorps members, participants also engage in community service work: either affordable housing construction or conservation work. After program completion, OFS staff continue to support graduates as they transition into post-secondary education or self-sustaining employment.

This year, in partnership with the Madison Metropolitan School District and local financial institutions, OFS integrated financial literacy programming into the Legacy curriculum. OFS has continued a positive First Aid/CPR training partnership with retired Madison firefighter Johnny Winston Jr. OFS also added a full-time, certified OSHA safety trainer, Mike Price, to our staff.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

CONSTRUCTION

Legacy construction participants renovated a historic tobacco barn at Westport Prairie, a property owned by Groundswell Conservancy. The crew worked hard throughout the cold winter months to convert the interior of the barn into an enclosed storage shed for tools, prairie seeds, and a tractor. The crew added framing along the inside of the barn, installed a house wrap for weatherproofing, installed metal siding and roofing, increased the height of the garage door opening to allow the tractor to enter, and added an entry door. During this project, crew members were able to put math skills learned in the classroom into real-world applications by making precise measurements and cuts, troubleshooting design elements to ensure structural integrity and applying concepts such as plumb, level, and square.



CONSERVATION

Legacy conservation crews have made a substantial contribution helping harvest, process, and plant prairie seed throughout Dane County. Throughout the summer and fall months, crews work in prairies to collect desirable seeds. The work allows for targeted prairie planting to help restore public lands to their original prairie habitat. improving habitat for native animals and plants, and helping with water mitigation. In October, Legacy crews participated in the Dane County Prairie Seed Challenge, an interdepartmental prairie seed collection contest that includes organizations such as Dane County Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, and the Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources. OFS crews spent the morning working at Indian Lake County Park. In the afternoon ceremony, OFS was declared the winner and awarded a trophy by Dane County Executive Joe Parisi.



LEGACY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



28 PRE-APPRENTICESHIP CERTIFICATIONS EARNED



21 LEARNER'S PERMITS EARNED 16 DRIVER'S LICENSES EARNED



29 COMPLETED OSHA SAFETY TRAINING



27 COMPLETED FIRST AID/CPR TRAINING

AFFORDABLE HOME PROJECTS:

- 3138 Hermina St. (Madison)
- 1114 Abel Ct. (Stoughton)
- 1108 Kamperschroer Way (Sun Prairie)

TOTAL ACRES IMPROVED:



• 2022: 1,227

• 2021: 1,148

TOTAL MILES OF TRAIL IMPROVED:

- 2022: 16.25
- 2021: 4.5

RESOURCES

The top referrals the Resource Specialist makes for young adults are for housing assistance, access to safe and affordable food, and access to mental health treatment.

The Resource Specialist also organizes visits for partner organizations to come to OFS and connect with young adults. Public Health Madison & Dane County, Domestic Abuse Intervention Services, National Alliance on Mental Illness, and Rape Crisis Center have all come to educate OFS participants about sexual and mental health, plus healthy relationships.

Officials from Public Health also trained OFS staff members on nasal Narcan administration.

OFS provides free meals to all Legacy program participants. Providing free meals eliminates hunger as an educational obstacle and helps students reach their full potential.

New this year, the Resource Specialist partnered with WIOA/WorkSmart Network on a healthy cooking class. Participants learned how to make taco bowls in Operation Fresh Start's Diane Ballweg Training Kitchen.



REFERRALS MADE TO EXTERNAL AGENCIES BY THE OFS RESOURCE SPECIALIST



BREAKFAST & LUNCH MEALS PROVIDED TO LEGACY PARTICIPANTS

TRANSITIONS





PARTICIPANTS PLACED IN A JOB WITHIN 30 DAYS

Throughout their Legacy term, participants work with the OFS Transition Coordinators to explore college and career options.

Transitions support also includes:

- job shadow experiences and workplace visits
- job readiness training (resume writing and interview skills)
- earning certificates and licenses that will open doors to careers

Mentoring doesn't end once a participant graduates from the Legacy program. OFS staff continue to mentor young adults as they start their career or begin college. For the year following program completion, staff follow up with graduates to assist with career development and workplace or college challenges.

Employment Partner Highlight

Traditions Specialty Lighting & SolEnergy

OFS Transitions staff say the Traditions Lighting/SolEnergy team has been their favorite community partner to work with thus far. "There is no doubt that Traditions shares the same enthusiasm and commitment we do to supporting and empowering young people's path to self-sufficiency." says Transition Coordinator Lydia Partee.

"Not only has Traditions supported OFS financially, but they have provided job opportunities to multiple participants, which is what we ultimately appreciate in our community partners. Our shared investment in our young people provides a promising outlook for strengthening our community."



DRIVE PROGRAM



An often-forgotten challenge for Dane County young people is the inequity around driver's education. Once a staple of the public education system, the State of Wisconsin stopped providing driver's education in high schools in 2004, which created a ripple effect of obstacles for low-income families who are not able to afford private instruction. OFS provides Metro bus passes to participants who need them. However, this does not solve the larger issue. In 2019, OFS established the Drive program with the understanding that behind a high school diploma - a driver's license is the second mostrequired qualification for employment. Not having a driver's license is a major barrier to securing self-sustaining employment with growth potential.

The Drive program is a free driver's education program for young adults ages 18-24. Participants complete coursework to obtain their learner's permit, complete five behind-thewheel lessons, and take the DMV road test to earn their license. New this year, OFS has an inhouse, certified behind-the-wheel instructor: Thedora Smith. Previously, participants worked with 4 Lakes Driver Training School for behindthe-wheel instruction. Having an in-house, certified driving instructor opens up availability for OFS participants to spend more time on the roads practicing. We are grateful to 4 Lakes for their continued partnership, for providing the training for Thedora to become a certified driving instructor and allowing OFS to use their vehicles for lessons.



PARTICIPANTS SERVED



LEARNER'S PERMITS EARNED



DRIVER'S LICENSES EARNED



PARTICIPANTS STILL WORKING TOWARDS THEIR LICENSE



Drive participant Lydia came to OFS as a graduate student in International Studies at UW-Madison. When she came to her first behind-the-wheel lesson, instructor Thedora Smith assumed she had prior driving experience. "After almost hitting two parked vehicles when I asked her to pull out of the parking lot, I quickly learned she had never been behind the wheel before," says Thedora.

"While working with Lydia, she showed resilience, determination and a positive attitude."

As a college student, it was important for Lydia to obtain her driver's license to remove any barriers she would have upon graduation and moving into a career. She completed her five behind-the-wheel lessons. She did not pass her road test the first time around, but Thedora and Lydia discussed what she needed to work on and did one additional driving lesson. That helped her make minor corrections and pass the road test.

DRIVE TO SUCCEED PROGRAM









HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS EARNED

DRIVER'S LICENSES EARNED

The Drive to Succeed program offers mentoring to support young adults with past or current involvement in the justice system. Through partnerships with the Dept. of Corrections and Metro High School (located within the Dane County Jail), OFS supports young people in navigating the criminal justice process, satisfying fines to obtain their driver's license, and earning their high school diploma.

This program is a collaboration with JustDane, a nonprofit with expertise in supporting individuals reentering society after a period of incarceration. As an incentive, Drive to Succeed participants earn a \$20 gift card after attending each mentoring session.





Prince was the first Drive to Succeed participant to complete all program benchmarks. He earned his driver's license, completed all mentoring sessions, and graduated in June!



Drive to Succeed participant Trevor recently completed the program, finishing all mentoring sessions and earning his driver's license!

Program Coordinator Ericka Booey says Trevor overcame many obstacles, including having to live in a hotel room in a different county for six months while on a monitor bracelet. He got a job to pay for the hotel stay and the court fees that had accumulated. Ericka says Trevor never missed a single mentoring session.

Trevor says the Drive to Succeed program has been very helpful in his life and he wants to give back by becoming a mentor to other young adults. To celebrate his accomplishment of achieving his driver's license, his family gave him a truck!

Next, Trevor is enrolling in the Madison College GED program.

OPTIONS PROGRAM



The Options program provides an alternative way to finish high school, assisting young adults in earning their high school diploma, GED or HSED. OFS staff help participants identify the path that's right for them and provide continuous support while participants complete coursework.

The Program Coordinator is a mentor to participants, helping them build self-confidence, explore career options and build a clear pathway to achieve their goals. Participants receive assistance to overcome barriers such as transportation, technology, employment, mental health care, child care, and more.

Program Coordinator Ericka Booey says a challenge of the program is that participants in the 18-24 age range need to work while participating in the program. Most people of this age are viewed by their parents or guardian as adults, and they have to start supporting themselves. "The participants find it hard to actively work towards completing high school while working a job. This situation can be a turnoff to a participant or delay enrollment in a high school completion program," says Ericka. "We usually talk about finding part-time employment while enrolling in a high school completion program or finding employment around their high school completion program hours."





HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS EARNED

CAREERSCAPE COUNSELING



CareerScape Counseling assists young adults (ages 17-24) who need support with exploring career options, preparing for employment, and taking next steps towards achieving their career goals. CareerScape staff help participants identify their interests, assist with skill-building, and continue to provide support as they embark on their career journey.

A challenge for this program is outreach to Generation Z participants. CareerScape Coordinator Aram Donabedian says CareerScape's target demographic seldom congregates in public locations and prefers to gather in online venues. This makes social media and, more importantly, word of mouth referrals crucially important. CareerScape's success in attracting new participants is reliant on building positive relationships with participants which yield tangible results.



CareerScape participant Rossi had the opportunity to job shadow at Sony PlayStation. He met with three programmers who took him behind the scenes and demonstrated how core concepts are applied to

both the client and server sides of operations.

Rossi hopes to return to UW-Milwaukee in the spring semester and will focus his studies on computer science and web development. Since his experience at Sony, he has begun teaching himself JavaScript and has landed himself a full-time job at Geek Squad, where he works with clients to troubleshoot and resolve personal computer issues.



PARTICIPANTS SERVED





COMPLETED/REVISED A RESUME

\$7.79/HR

AVERAGE PAY INCREASE AFTER CAREERSCAPE SUPPORT



Berhan enrolled in CareerScape Counseling to get help finding a career pathway in dental health care. Working with the CareerScape Coordinator Aram Donabedian, Berhan identified Access Community Health Center's Dental Assistant Training program as a meaningful first stepping stone on this path. With help from CareerScape, Berhan applied for the paid training program and was offered an interview. Aram conducted a mock interview and helped her practice some persuasive answers to commonly asked questions. Feeling more confident, Berhan nailed the interview and was accepted into the program!

Berhan has excelled in the Dental Assistant Training program, learning to operate an x-ray machine, assisting with tooth extractions and making dental impressions. Her training ended in mid-December 2022 and she was assigned to a permanent position at one of the area Access Community Health Center clinics.

STRIVE PROGRAM



9

PARTICIPANTS SERVED

PROGRAM COMPLETION

LEARNER'S PERMITS EARNED

The STRIVE program was a career exploration and employment training program in which high school graduates, ages 17-24, gain hands-on experience in construction. The STRIVE program has had a positive impact on dozens of young adults over the past five years. This spring, OFS ended this seven-week training program to focus on longer term, advanced-level construction training through the new Build Academy program. The final STRIVE cohort completed programming in May.

Program Manager Jasmine Banks reflects:

"From 2017 to 2022 STRIVE Construction built relationships with over 100 emerging adults that went on to do a variety of things in and outside of the Madison community. We were privileged to share space with our participants over the course of seven weeks to both teach and learn from. One thing that we do really well at Operation Fresh Start is to prepare young people for career opportunities. With STRIVE Construction, I wanted to provide that and life skills as well. We included community members to talk with our young people about financial literacy, toxic masculinity, mental wellness, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The reach of STRIVE included young moms, soon-to-be dads, those who went on to college, and those who decided that college was not for them because starting a career in the trades made more sense. If I could close with what my favorite part about STRIVE Construction was: it was the young people. Each and every one was my favorite and I couldn't be prouder of them all."

One project the STRIVE crew worked on this year was a siding project. The homeowner, Don Paul, first learned about Operation Fresh Start when he visited on behalf of his employer, Globalcom Technologies. From there, Don started giving presentations to Strive crews as part of the career exploration part of the curriculum. He kept coming back, fine tuning his presentation and tailoring it more to fit Strive participants. Don also started attending the weekly OFS assembly, recognizing and greeting participants. Then, the final Strive crew ended up siding his house.

"This was such a beautiful, full-circle story of what STRIVE embodied," says Construction Supervisor Joe Collins. "We asked the community for help and the community continued to show up for our participants by sharing knowledge to widen their perspectives and providing work site opportunities to enhance their construction skills. It proved how the construction site was just the backdrop to the real work we engaged in. While working on Don's siding, we witnessed our final three participants become a union painter, a union carpenter, and an intern at a premiere, local woodworker. Furthermore, it demonstrated that the more our community asked of our young people, the more Strive participants stepped up to meet the expectations. Strive was built upon community relationships that were fostered over years to assist our participants' lives over seven short weeks of their lives."

BUILD ACADEMY





AVERAGE STARTING WAGE FOR BUILD ACADEMY GRADUATES

Build Academy is a full-time, hands-on, paid training program for ages 18-24. Participants earn a starting wage of \$15/hour while training for a construction career. Build Academy Tier 1 members gain experience in residential construction, working on home renovations or new-construction projects. Build Academy Tier 2 members gain experience in commercial construction, working alongside industry professionals on multi-million dollar projects. Programming also includes earning a number of certifications to prepare young adults for their career, including OSHA 10 safety, first aid/CPR, and pre-apprenticeship certification from the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards. Successful program completion includes placement into a self-sustaining career in the trades.



TIER 1 RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS:

- 63 Hart Rd. (Sun Prairie)
- 1913 Northwestern Ave.
- 1130 E Mifflin St.
- 22 Camino Del Sol



TIER 2 COMMERCIAL PROJECTS:

- Epic (JP Cullen)
- One City Schools (Findorff)



In July 2021, Caden graduated from the OFS Legacy program, where he gained construction experience building affordable housing and earned his high school diploma. After initially planning to attend college to become a psychiatrist, he decided to pursue the trades instead.

"I realized I couldn't sit down for more than two seconds," says Caden. "Doing construction helped me see that if I couldn't help people mentally – I can help them physically by building affordable homes or working on projects like healthcare facilities."

Caden went on to join the advanced-level OFS construction training program called Build Academy. That experience helped him gain the skills and confidence to achieve his current position as carpenter apprentice at JP Cullen.

CONSERVATION ACADEMY





Conservation Academy is a full-time, hands-on, paid training program for ages 18–24. Earning a starting wage of \$15/hour, participants train alongside industry professionals working in parks, natural areas and neighborhoods throughout south-central Wisconsin. Participants build their professional network and earn credentials that employers are looking for. Successful program completion includes placement into a career in conservation, land management, parks, forestry, or landscaping.



In September, Mitch completed the OFS Legacy program, earning his high school diploma and pre-apprenticeship certification in conservation and forestry from the Wisconsin Bureau of Apprenticeship Standards.

After completing the Legacy program, Mitch joined the OFS Conservation Academy, where he's gaining experience that will help him achieve his goal of becoming an arborist.

Mitch enjoys the problem solving process of determining how to safely cut a tree that needs removal – making cuts to account for the lean and avoiding hazards like power lines.

"Through the Conservation Academy, I've gotten a lot of help to prepare me to take my next steps and start moving towards my career," says Mitch.



The Conservation Academy was able to work alongside the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for 10 total weeks during 2022. This partnership allowed the Conservation Academy crew to explore many different facets of conservation work through the diverse projects.

In September alone, the crew had the opportunity to visit a fish hatchery and witness the feeding process, tag butterflies for future monitoring, apply herbicide to invasive brush and trees, fell and remove nondesirable trees, cut and clear burn breaks for prescribed fire season, and participate in a prescribed burn. During the prescribed burn, the Conservation Academy was able to assist in the ignition of 160 acres at Mud Lake, allowing the crew to put their recent wildland fire training to good use.

HEALTHCARE ACADEMY



Healthcare Academy participants receive support from Program Manager Jasmine Banks as they progress through Nursing Assistant training and clinicals. Jasmine helps participants access resources like childcare, transportation, technology, housing, food, or culturallycompetent mental health care to navigate unaddressed trauma. Jasmine herself is a mentor, supporter and listener.

Jasmine recalls highlights from the past year: "Over the course of the 2021/2022 school year, two young women from different backgrounds, during the midst of a pandemic, decide to enroll in our STRIVE Healthcare program. In addition to holding down a job, taking care of children, and running households, they completed 42 hours of lectures, 24 hours of labs, and 24 hours of clinicals, and passed their State of Wisconsin Nursing Assistant exams to become certified. If you ask either one of them if it was easy, the answer would be no. But what they will tell you is they had access to support, someone to help them navigate and provide resources, and someone to listen."

OFS is looking forward to starting a new partnership with UW Health in January 2023! After completing a 12-week, paid Nursing Assistant Apprenticeship Program, participants will have the opportunity to take the state licensure exam to become a certified nursing assistant (CNA). They'll also be eligible to interview for available Nursing Assistant positions at UW Health hospitals.



Program Manager Jasmine Banks (left) and Beatrice (right)

OFS Healthcare Academy graduate Beatrice is now working as a CNA at UnityPoint Health -Meriter.

"I would not have been able to become a CNA without this program," says Beatrice. "I felt like I could breathe because I had the financial stability. That's a big, big thing."

Beatrice says Program Manager Jasmine Banks provided her the tough love and support she desperately needed to overcome trauma in her life and keep moving forward.

In addition to working at UnityPoint Health – Meriter, Beatrice is continuing her education in the Madison College Pre-Health Science Program and hopes to become a pediatric doctor.

FINANCE REPORT

OPERATING BUDGET OCT. 2021 – SEPT. 2022

INCOME

GRANTS & CONTRACTS	\$3,025,219
DONATIONS	\$462,000
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,487,219

EXPENSES

PROGRAM SERVICES	\$3,264,353
MANAGEMENT & GENERAL	\$258,798
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$3,523,151

EXCESS (DEFICIT)

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION OCT. 2020 – SEPT. 2021

ASSETS

TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,086,899
PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT	\$460,887
OTHER ASSETS	\$3,903,949
CURRENT ASSETS	\$1,722,063

LIABILITIES

LIABILITIES	\$365,912
UNRESTRICTED	\$5,720,987
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$6,086,899

FRESH START SOCIETY

CUMULATIVE GIFTS OF \$1,000 OR MORE DATED BETWEEN 10/1/2021 - 9/30/2022

Asterisk (*) denotes in-kind gifts

1901 Inc.

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VOLUNTEERS

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

39 VOLUNTEERS

1,098 VOLUNTEER HOURS



Volunteers help Operation Fresh Start provide improved services and support to young adults in our community. The addition of your diverse perspectives improves our planning, decision making and marketing efforts. Over the last year, the Board of Directors, academic tutors, and storytellers have given their time and talents to OFS.

We couldn't do what we do without you!

OFS LEADERSHIP









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