



SPARK Ohio Celebrates a Decade of Serving Families

On November 21, 200 individuals gathered at Walsh University to celebrate a milestone: SPARK Ohio's tenth birthday. SPARK (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids) is a highly effective, parent-focused kindergarten readiness program that works collaboratively with families, schools and communities.

SPARK began as an initiative of the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton in partnership with the W. K. Kellogg Foundation. The program's management and operations were recently transferred to the Early Childhood Resource Center. By engaging families and strengthening parents as advocates for their children's sustained success, SPARK has helped more than 4,200 children start school ready to succeed. Schools, community partners, and funders have invested more than \$13 million dollars in the program to date. By the end of 2014, SPARK is expected to serve 2,000 families annually in ten Ohio counties.



At the event, Keynote Speaker (and long-time Foundation Board member) Robert F. Belden highlighted SPARK's consistently impressive evaluation results. For eight consecutive years, SPARK children have scored significantly higher than their peers on the kindergarten entry assessment, and SPARK children consistently outscore their peers on the Ohio Achievement Assessments in reading and math, through the fifth grade.

In a special video address created for the celebration, Governor Kasich stated, "I congratulate the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton and all of its partners for leading the way to a better education for Ohio children through the SPARK program. ...You have a lot of reasons to be proud of all the things that you've accomplished." Watch Governor Kasich's full video at www.sparkohio.org

We thank all the funders, supporters, families, community members, community organizations, educators, and policymakers who have supported SPARK Ohio's decade-long journey from fledgling initiative to growing and thriving program. SPARK has always been, and will remain, a highly collaborative effort.



Grantee Spotlight: Workforce Initiative Association

In 2011, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton awarded a grant to the Workforce Initiative Association (better known as The Employment Source) for its Career Advancement Program and to provide short-term training programs for selected individuals in skills such as truck driving, welding, and various computer programs. Awarding this funding helps the Foundation meet its strategic goal of increasing the employment of the chronically unemployed and underemployed. The Employment Source provides a wide range of services for job seekers and employers. This grant allowed the organization to reinstitute programming for 200 adult clients that was previously supported by a government grant.



The Career Advancement Program serves unemployed or underemployed individuals in Stark and Tuscarawas counties whose income falls at 200% of the poverty level or below. Participants receive intensive career readiness and job search training, including information and tools for conducting a successful job search. They engage in role-playing exercises and mock interviews and learn how to retain a job and advance a career. Each participant is assigned a job coach who provides guidance and encouragement as the job search continues. A monthly job club allows the job seekers to stay connected and share strategies and job leads. To date, 85% of the participants have completed the program and 69 of the 177 participants have succeeded in obtaining employment.

Fund Development Workshop Offered for Local Nonprofits

For years, the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton has been making it possible for area nonprofit development and fundraising professionals to attend courses at The Fund Raising School® offered by the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. Participants learn a wide range of methods for helping their nonprofit organization achieve its financial goals.

Thomas Turner, president of the Mercy Medical Center Foundation and Marisa Rohn, vice president of marketing and fund development at Goodwill Industries have benefited from their experiences at the Fund Raising School and have agreed to partner with the Foundation to share information with local executive directors and fund development professionals.

We are happy to announce that a luncheon workshop will be held on **February 13, 2014 at Mercy Hall Amphitheater, Mercy Medical Center from 11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.** If you are interested in attending, be sure to register as soon as possible as attendance will be limited to 100 participants. To register for the workshop, please contact Liz Ford at (330) 454-5800 or lford@scfcanton.org.

Is Your Organization Seeking Funding?

The first step in seeking funding from the Sisters of Charity Foundation of Canton is to submit the two-page concept form, which is available for download on our website www.scfcanton.org. Concept forms are accepted on a rolling basis but must be received at the latest by the following due dates to be considered in that cycle:

- Responsive grant applications: February 1 and August 1
- Good Samaritan grant applications: May 1 and November 1

Although not required, we encourage organizations to send a representative to our newly restructured Grant Application Process Workshop before submitting a concept form. Workshops are held twice a year. Participants will learn about our grantmaking strategies, proposal guidelines, and application process. Foundation staff members will be on hand to answer questions.

The next workshop will be held on **April 15, 2014 from 9:00-10:30 a.m.** Reserve a seat by contacting Trudy Brown at (330) 454-5800 or tbrown@scfcanton.org.



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