



**Project
Transformation**

Transforming Lives Through Relationships

2013–2014 Annual Report



OUR MISSION:

To engage young adults in purposeful leadership and ministry, support underserved children and families and connect churches to communities in need.

OUR VISION:

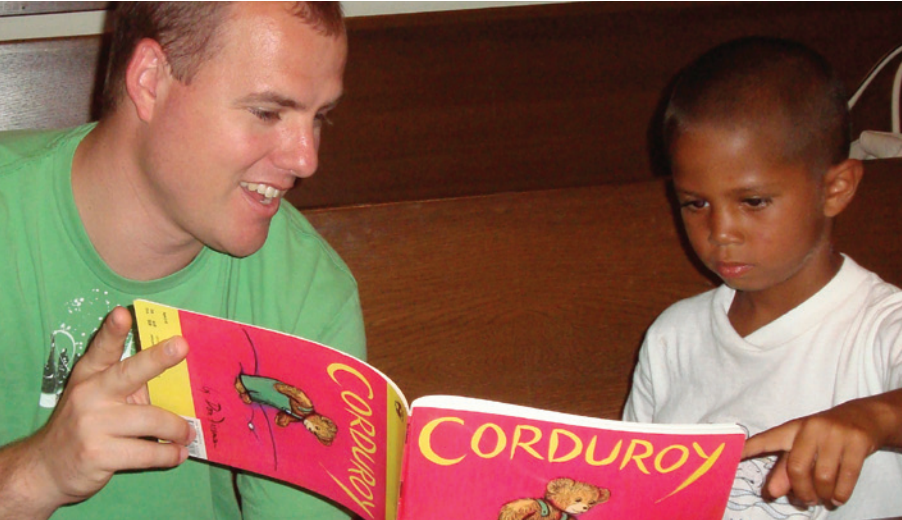
To be a respected, national model of service and ministry through which leaders emerge, communities change and lives transform.

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IT TAKES A VILLAGE. This has been our theme for the past summer. Taken from an African proverb, this theme has not only been a focal point in how we can change a child's trajectory in life, but it's been applicable to each of ***the three C's*** of Project Transformation mission: ***Children, College Students, and Churches***. We've seen this theme play out in the lives of the underserved children and youth attending our programs and building meaningful relationships with positive role models. These children were surrounded and supported by an entire village of volunteers

and young adult interns—over 1,500 of them—providing daily one-on-one attention to strengthen them in body, mind, and spirit and help them achieve their God-given potential. We've seen a village of churches, community partners, and volunteers come together to invest in the lives of 100 college age young adults, helping them discern their unique calling. And we've seen a whole village of churches join together in mission and ministry across geographic and socio-economic boundaries to carry out its mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the

transformation of the world. This idea of it taking ALL of us to raise a child, to encourage a young adult, or to transform a community is woven into the DNA of Project Transformation.

As we look ahead, we have some incredible opportunities to deepen and widen the impact that Project Transformation can make:

- To ensure that we are helping our children and youth in the most effective way possible, we will focus on creating a ***customized, research-based curriculum*** for our after-school and summer programs;
- To support these growing programs and the increasing number of young adult interns who serve with us, we will be ***expanding and restructuring several staff positions;***
- To provide the necessary infrastructure for this growth, we will be investing in ***new technology and office space*** to build our capacity; and
- To carry out our vision of becoming a national model of ministry, we will be

From the Director's Chair

forming a national organization to launch and support new Project Transformation chapters in other United Methodist conferences.

It's going to take a village of supporters and partners to make these bold dreams a reality, but I believe that we are on the cusp of something big. Project Transformation has never been about one person or a particular group. It takes all of us. I am proud to be a part of such a collaborative ministry where it takes a village to help leaders emerge, communities change, and lives transform.

Thank you for being such an important part of this village.



– Eric Lindh,
Executive Director



THE THREE C’S

The easiest way to understand how we live out our mission is remembering *the three C’s*: *Children*, *College Students*, and *Churches*. Since our founding in 1998, this ministry has been addressing three unique challenges with one program:

- 1) how to meet the academic, physical, and spiritual needs of of *children* from low-income communities,
- 2) how to provide meaningful ways for *college students* to explore ministry opportunities and develop as young adult leaders for the church and the world, and
- 3) how to help *churches* in low-income neighborhoods be in ministry with their communities

Project Transformation uses a collaborative model of ministry that successfully addresses all three of these challenges and achieves results—take a look!

AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

184 STUDENTS served through the after-school program

83% IMPROVED their overall reading abilities

98% PROGRESSED to the next grade level

“I plan on becoming a teacher solely from my experience with Project Transformation. I never knew my capacity for love in working with children.”

– Joseph, After-School Program Site Coordinator at Pleasant Mound UMC

SUMMER DAY CAMP PROGRAM

YOUTH (GRADES 6–9)

99% OF YOUTH maintained or improved their reading level

80,849 PAGES READ

4,188 GRADE LEVEL vocabulary words reviewed

1,632 MILES RIDDEN in our mountain biking program

“The best thing I learned at Project Transformation is that I now know I am a good reader.”

– Casa Linda UMC Youth

HIGH SCHOOL (GRADES 10–12)

“I would like to be a Project Transformation intern someday because I’ve been in this program since the first grade. I would like to help make the changes in others that I see in myself.”

– Walnut Hill UMC LITE, age 16

3,695 VOLUNTEER HOURS

89% INCREASED CONFIDENCE in making future education and career decisions

“This summer has been so much less about watching myself grow, and so much more about learning from the LITEs. I have learned so many lessons from my LITEs, but the most important have been about servant leadership.”

– Stacey, LITE Coordinator at Oak Cliff UMC

COLLEGE INTERNS

100 COLLEGE INTERNS and universities represented

57 COLLEGES and universities represented

97% OF INTERNS reported that they gained skills they plan to use in future education, service, or employment opportunities

95% INDICATED a desire to continue to serve their local community

“I will be forever grateful for the many opportunities Project Transformation has given me. As a future teacher, I have gained knowledge in my career path far beyond what I have learned while in classes at school. During my two summers, I have truly found ‘where my deepest passion meets the world’s deepest need’.”

– Emily, Elementary Reading Coordinator at Pleasant Mound-Urban Park UMC

URBAN CAMP

147 URBAN CAMPERS

“Being at camp made a big difference in my life because it taught me how to work in a team and how to get along with others. It has made me feel happy because of all the fun things we can do. This was a wonderful program.”

– Grace UMC Youth, age 10

VOLUNTEERS


1,400 VOLUNTEERS

11,241 VOLUNTEER HOURS

17,178 BOOKS READ

“One child thought we were paid and I told him our reward was improved reading and better grades!”


– Reading volunteer



After-School Program

THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM at Project Transformation provides a safe place where friends are made and a love a reading and learning is cultivated. Students receive homework help, engage in literacy-based games and activities, receive nutrition education, and participate in other enrichment activities. During the 2013-14 after-school program year, **184 students**, grades 1st-6th, were served at six program sites across Dallas. As a result, **83% of participants increased their overall reading abilities** and **84% increased their academic confidence.**

Kaci, a Site Coordinator, recounts a time she stopped by her local public library. There a little voice called her name and one of her students came running up to her with a tall stack of books in her hands. Among her collection of books, she was holding *The Rainbow Fish*, a book that had quickly become her favorite during the after-school program. Kaci shared, *“The whole time this was happening, I was thinking that moments like these are the reason I chose to apply for this program. Project Transformation focuses on literacy skills with the understanding that these skills will empower our kids and allow them to engage more deeply with the world.*



Summer Day Camp Program Elementary School (Grades 1-5)

SUMMER CAMP for Project Transformation students means individualized reading time, awesome science experiments and dancing and singing to favorite songs. But most important for these students, are the positive relationships they build with our young adult interns. It may be the first time a child hears the word “college” or has someone share that they are a good reader. Self-confidence, pride and love become emotions our students discover and it makes an impact in their lives.

“On the last day of program, a shy fourth grade girl came up to me and gave me a hug. At the end of our hug she looked at me and said “Miss Allie, I love you. I will always remember you and you will always be in my heart.” At that point, I lost it. You see, the thing about this child is that she was so quiet and well-behaved that she was often overlooked in a noisy classroom with behavior issues. I see hope in the fact that of the hundred or so people that she saw every day, she took the time to tell me that she loved me and that I would always have a place in her heart. Isn’t that what hope is? It is believing that you will make a difference. It is believing that you matter.”

– Allie, Intern at
Pleasant Mound-Urban Park UMC

Summer Day Camp Program
Middle School (Grades 6–9)



“For our youth service project, our students assembled gallon-sized ziplock baggies that contain several items that would be of some use to children and adults who are experiencing homelessness. The bags included: tooth brush and tooth paste, soap, crackers, bottles water, and encouraging notes that were hand written by our youth. The youth enjoyed the activity, and wrote some awesome things to these neighbors.”

– Youth Intern Team, Grace UMC

OUR 6TH–9TH GRADE YOUTH PROGRAMS may be where some of the most powerful relationships are formed—these former elementary students see Project Transformation as the only place they’ve known during the summer months. They have been around the energy of our young adults and now contemplate what leadership, service and future education mean in their own lives. Our youth participate in skillbuilding activities, mountain biking, literacy-focused activities and personal reflection/journaling time. But one of the most important aspects of their program is hands-on service—encouraging youth to give back to their local communities. These youth-designed projects range from car washes to support refugee families, cleaning up local parks and creating sleeping mats for the homeless.

Summer Day Camp Program
High School (Grades 10–12)



“I would like to be a Project Transformation intern because I love kids and I have been in the program for so many years and I cannot imagine a summer without attending Project Transformation.”

– Oak Cliff UMC LITE , age 17

OUR FASTEST GROWING PROGRAM, the 10th-12th grade LITE (Leaders in Training Experience) program is the future of our organization. Serving 76 LITEs this summer further increases the likelihood that these young leaders will return as college interns one day. To date, we have hired back 17 former partici-

pants as interns with more hired back each year. The program focuses on college and career readiness, service and leadership development and ends with a weeklong, statewide college tour. Nearly 90% of LITEs feel confident that this program prepares them for the next steps in their bright futures.

“I knew that Project Transformation was a transformational program, but I didn’t realize the full impact of the program until I met the high school students in the LITE program. Most of these students had been in the program since elementary school...Each day, I watch my students selflessly serve kids by reading with them, playing with them, serving them lunch, and helping them learn.”

– Stacey, LITE Coordinator at Oak Cliff UMC

Urban Camp at Camp Bridgeport

WHAT MANY 6TH–9TH GRADE YOUTH describe as the best week of their life, Urban Camp at Bridgeport Camp and Conference Center is the culmination of the summer program for youth aged attendees. In Summer 2014, 147 participants attended our weeklong, sleepaway camp and participated in multiple skill-development activities. It was the first time for many to ride a horse, shoot a bow and arrow, or catch a fish. Beyond learning new skills, campers formed new friendships and found a safe place where they could be themselves and open up about pressures they experience at school, home, and in their peer groups.

“Project Transformation has made an impact in my life by being a big family to me. All of the interns were like best friends to me. They made me feel better when I was sad. Project Transformation is everything to me. It’s like a great big family. Hopefully, I’ll go to Project Transformation every year because I love it with all my heart! They don’t care who you are or where you come from. They love you for who you are and that’s what matters.”

– Christ’s Foundry Youth, age 12



Volunteer Experience

“The great use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it.”
– William James

VOLUNTEERS ARE THE KEY to the success of many programs at Project Transformation. In Summer 2014, over **1,400 individuals** donated **11,241 hours** serving our children and college students through literacy program-ming and intern support. Elementary children read **17,178 books** with volunteers in our one-on-one reading program.

But beyond this, volunteers created a love of literacy for our students, as well as a sense of self-confidence. One volunteer reported:

“Very well organized and well documented. It was a pleasure helping this program!”

Another said, *“[This program is] absolutely critical for some of these kids—they would not read or improve their reading if it weren’t for THIS program.”*



CHILDREN AND YOUTH

AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER programming is implemented by college-aged young adults who are exploring service and leadership in underserved communities as a career. These interns, who serve as AmeriCorps members, quickly become best friends and role models to the children and youth they serve daily.

At the start of the summer, Abby traveled all the way from Michigan to be one of **100 college interns** serving at Project Transformation. She discovered a place where lasting friendships form and her passion for social work aligned with her role as an intern. When asked to share one reason why she enjoyed being a college intern she responded, ***“Project Transformation is giving these kids the chance of a lifetime to learn and grow in their literacy achievement. They may even be gaining the skills they need to be the first ones in their families to graduate high school and/or attend college. It is a privilege for me to witness such progress firsthand at my site.”*** Abby will be starting her master’s program in social work this fall.

VOCATIONAL CALLING

EACH FRIDAY, INTERNS SPEND A DAY reflecting on their weekly experience in underserved communities, as well as exploring their vocational calling through the lens of ministry and service. Over 25 groups partnered with us to expose interns to ministry and community service in North Texas. One of our college interns, Katie, was so inspired by an experience that she shared, ***“I...have decided that I want to go to seminary now because of the Friday Experiences.”*** Similarly, another intern shared, “I plan to serve in the communities that surround my college, as I continue my schooling, by actively searching for those who may be in need in the community and being intentional with my service. I also hope to come back to Project Transformation next summer!”

We are confident that this group of interns, like the interns who served before them, will go on to either work or volunteer in a ministry or community based program. In fact, **95% of interns** indicated their desire to serve their local community at the completion of their internship experience with Project Transformation.



“This program unifies us with one simple goal of building relationships.”
– College Intern

COMMUNITY LIVING

INTERNS AT PROJECT TRANSFORMATION live in community together during the summer at Southern Methodist University (Dallas sites) or Austin College (Denison site) where they share meals together, socialize, and engage in team building activities. This diverse group of interns from **57 different colleges and universities** and 19 states are brought together and find common ground in their mutual purpose—to build lasting relationships and serve children and youth in need.

It is not uncommon to hear from the interns that the friendships formed at Project Transformation will last a lifetime. Often it is said that **the bonds formed over 10-weeks in the summer at Project Transformation are greater than those formed over four years in college.** One intern even shared, ***“This summer, I have made so many friends that I can see being in my life for a long time to come.”***



Project Transformation
2013-2014 Donors

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We appreciate those who ensure our programs continue; thank you for your investment in this ministry! If you feel there is an error in your giving, please contact Kristin Kelley at 214-946-3600.

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