



OhioGuidestone

SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES
& COMMUNITIES

SEEDS

of Hope

Agency Newsletter
November 2015

Supporting All Students: Innovation Required

By Holly Davis Trifiro, Executive Director, Teach For America - Northeast Ohio - Cleveland

The classroom is a powerful place for students to find their voice. To prepare students to play an active role in their education and chart the course to their career aspirations, schools must think creatively about engaging students and families to facilitate systemic change in low-income communities.

In January 2015, an analysis of federal data showed that the majority of children in public schools nationwide live in poverty. In Greater Cleveland, just 40% of kids growing up in poverty scored proficient or above in math on state standardized exams, compared to 84% of their more affluent peers. In science, just 28% of kids from low-income communities scored proficient or above, compared to 77% of their wealthier neighbors.

While unequal access to quality education has long been drawn along lines of race and class, this challenge grows

ever more salient. The demographics and life experiences of children entering public schools are very different today than a half-century ago. This evolution requires educators to respond to the changing needs of kids and their families.

Cleveland is home to countless outstanding educators helping our schools keep pace with these changes. Alongside this growing network of school leaders and teachers, Teach For America corps members and alumni play leading roles in many of the region's organizations. They work tirelessly across sectors and in partnership alongside students, families, schools and communities to ensure that all children have the opportunity to obtain an excellent education.

What's more, a growing body of rigorous research indicates that Teach For America teachers have a positive impact on student learning. Several states have studied the effectiveness of beginning teachers and have identified Teach For America as one of the most effective teacher providers. Many of our alumni also choose to continue affecting change in education, with over 60% working in the field of education, including 30%

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OhioGuidestone serves over 23,000 children and families every year, but we can't do it without your help. Support OhioGuidestone today by calling 440.234.2006, 800.639.4974 or visiting www.OhioGuidestone.org.

President's Message



Richard R. Frank
President and CEO

Innovation is the introduction of something new. Before Stepstone Academy was founded in 2012, the need for something new in Cleveland's Central Neighborhood was evident. Of the 48,200 children estimated to be living in poverty in the City of Cleveland, central is one of the neighborhoods with the most need. Poverty in this area is often generational, and the rates are highest among those lacking a quality education, particularly those without a high school diploma. As an organization committed to providing solutions for our communities, OhioGuidestone recognized that the problems of poverty and education were directly related and our path was clear. The creation of a new charter school in the Central Neighborhood was the pathway to a brighter future for those we serve. In this issue, you will learn about the innovative strategies Stepstone Academy is implementing to provide education and support for our children and families, as well as see how our results are facilitating positive change. You'll also read how our partners and donors are making a real difference in our communities. I hope you'll join us in our continued efforts to help not only the children of Central, but of all of Ohio.

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who continue leading classrooms across the country. Cleveland harbors several important alumni, including Stephanie Klupinski, who serves as the executive director of charter schools for CMSD.

Teach For America is proud to be a community partner in Cleveland. Each member of our community shares an important role in education. We must recognize the evolving challenges families, kids and teachers face and build a system that is responsive to their changing needs. Together, we can be the Cleveland our kids deserve.

About the Author

Founded in 1990, Teach For America recruits and develops a diverse corps of outstanding college graduates and professionals to make an initial two-year commitment to teach in high-need schools and become lifelong leaders in the effort to end educational inequity. Today, 8,800 corps members are teaching in 52 urban and rural regions across the country while more than 42,000 alumni work across sectors to ensure that all children have access to an excellent education. Holly Davis Trifiro, is one of these. A former corps member, Holly holds a bachelor's degree from Ohio University and a master's from Johns Hopkins University. She believes deeply in students and families in Northeast Ohio and is committed to excellence for kids in her home region. For more information, visit www.teachforamerica.org.

TEACHFORAMERICA

Impacting Education: Using Innovative Tools to Help Our Youth

Stepstone Academy, OhioGuidestone's charter school in Cleveland's Central neighborhood, is more than a school. It's a supportive, nurturing atmosphere providing children and their families all of the tools they need to be successful. At Stepstone we understand that learning doesn't just take place during the school day, but that a child's entire environment impacts his or her ability to learn. This recognition has led to the incorporation of innovative strategies, which allow students to strengthen their academic skills both in and out of the classroom. Our curriculum, Momentum Learning, combines teacher led instruction with digital content to provide personalized instruction for each child. Stepstone also provides a full circle of support

services through Stepstone 360°, a gateway to services and resources that can help solve the challenges our scholars and their families face.

Many resources offered by Stepstone 360° are available to our scholars during school hours. For example, our Think Room allows scholars a space to address a variety of emotional, social or behavioral issues during the school day, while still continuing to complete class assignments. Additionally, Stepstone Academy has implemented the use of Toggle Talk, which addresses gaps in language used in informal and formal settings and has been shown to help improve literacy outcomes. Because of its relationship with OhioGuidestone, Stepstone Academy is also able to provide families with access to services

such as behavioral health, family support and workforce preparation programming. By allowing parents to turn to Stepstone as their support system, we are able to provide a more stable environment for our scholars, enabling them to learn and thrive.

Stepstone's unique strategies have achieved great results. During Stepstone's first year of third grade, 75% of our scholars were tested to be reading proficient, outperforming individuals in the same at-risk groups throughout the state by over 15%. Additionally, scholars who have been enrolled at Stepstone since its founding made even greater strides, with 81% demonstrating reading proficiency. However, it's not only our third graders making progress. Overall, two-thirds of Stepstone Academy students displayed at least a year's worth or more of

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Two Families, One Path to Success

When Nicole Jackson's son, Kalen, was diagnosed with ADHD, Nicole was worried that she wouldn't be able to find a school that could give him the support he needed. She thought about this often, until one morning Nicole answered her door to find a smiling woman on the other side. "Have you heard about Stepstone Academy?" the women asked, handing Nicole a pamphlet.

Nakisha English had never heard of the school featured on the postcard in her mailbox, but was intrigued by what she saw. Her daughter, Talijha, was starting first grade and the school, Stepstone Academy, looked friendly. "Why not give it a try?" Nakisha thought. After all, she wanted to open as many doors for her daughter as possible.

The woman who had first showed up at Nicole Jackson's door was Millette Tucker, *Stepstone Academy Assistant Principal*. After choosing to enroll Kalen at Stepstone, Nicole spoke with Mrs. Tucker daily. Mrs. Tucker was always willing to discuss Kalen's behavior, both good and bad. But even on his difficult days, the school didn't suspend him or threaten to kick him out. Instead, they introduced Nicole to other services that could help. Kalen received School-Based counseling and saw a psychiatrist through



Nicole Jackson and her son.



Nakisha English and her daughter.

OhioGuidestone, and Nicole even used the OhioGuidestone Pharmacy to fill the prescriptions he received. Nicole wasn't sure what school would have been like for Kalen somewhere else, but she did know that Stepstone Academy felt like home.

Nicole loved Stepstone so much that she started volunteering at parent meetings and family events. When a Program Aide position became available, she jumped at the opportunity and was thrilled when she got the job. "I love working here!" she says. "It's like I'm part of a big family."

Meanwhile, Nakisha appreciated that Stepstone staff were willing to help her get any support she needed. From making sure she knew about upcoming school events to helping her look for employment, Nakisha knew that Stepstone really cared. She saw firsthand that parents and teachers working together could really make a difference, and she worked even harder to make sure Talijha's education was her top priority.

Nakisha never thought she'd have the opportunity to work at a place like Stepstone, but when she was hired as a Food Service Aide, she knew it was the right fit. Now, she is able to make sure the scholars receive nutritious meals, but she also nourishes them through relationships, connecting with them and giving them encouragement when they seem down. "I have found a place I can retire from!" she says.

When they pass each other in Stepstone Academy's hallways, Nicole and Nakisha smile. While their stories are different, they share a history of support from Stepstone 360° and OhioGuidestone. Thanks to Stepstone Academy, they not only have a great environment for their children, but also jobs that allow them to help other families work toward successful futures.

Supporting New Ideas: Chuck & Stephanie Jarrett

Innovation can only work if there are people willing to commit their time, talents and resources to help the new idea take shape. From the moment the plans for Stepstone Academy came to light, Chuck Jarrett knew he wanted to be involved. “I thought it was a fabulous idea,” Chuck said. “I immediately wanted to help make this idea come to fruition.” His wife, Stephanie, was also impressed by the idea behind Stepstone, as well as the academic results that came out of the school during its first few years. “Having worked as a volunteer in a number of schools in very different districts, the performance of Stepstone’s students from the very beginning has been exceptional and extremely encouraging,” Stephanie says.

New ideas continued to be an important part of the school’s growth, as teachers and staff learned more and more about the challenges facing the students and their families. At the end of Stepstone’s third year, another innovative strategy was brought to the Jarretts’ attention. Toni Miller, *Stepstone Academy Principal*, and Susan Hyland, *Stepstone Superintendent*, wanted to find a way to better support the students over break in order to help eliminate the learning loss many children suffer during the summer. They had an idea for a six-week summer program, based upon the school’s Momentum Learning model, which would provide reading instruction for the scholars and allow them to start back to school prepared to move forward in their new grade level.

Chuck and Stephanie knew that this was an idea they needed to support. “We had the means to help through our family fund with the Cleveland Foundation,” says Chuck. “We wanted these students to stay motivated over the summer so they wouldn’t lose the progress they had gained during the school year.” Thanks to the Jarretts’ \$50,000 donation, the idea for Stepstone’s summer program became a reality.

Our scholars began the school year confident, prepared and ready to succeed,” says Toni. “Teachers are spending less time re-teaching concepts this school year and can focus on teaching new concepts. We are so grateful to the Jarretts for their support. We couldn’t have done it without them.”

The Jarretts believe that innovation in education is key to the future that OhioGuidestone is working to build in our communities, and they are dedicated to continuing their support. “Stepstone Academy really gives a return on your investment by making a change in the community, one student at a time,” says Chuck. “The teachers and staff are not only motivating these students for their personal futures, they are working with the entire family unit and giving them the chance to succeed. Stephanie and I are thrilled to be a part of this, and we are excited to see what the future holds for Stepstone Academy.”



OhioGuidestone: Treating, Supporting, Growing

OhioGuidestone is a community solutions organization. We offer a unique blend of behavioral health treatment services, skill building programs and prevention opportunities for children and families. At OhioGuidestone, many of our clients struggle with a lack of education and life skills, and don't know how to access personal or community resources to help them improve their situations. We not only help resolve problems that already exist, but teach skills to help individuals become self-sufficient, and prevent future obstacles to success. Each of our locations work on a continuum of these three important services to help the communities they serve.

Franklin County: Helping Grow Recovery Efforts in Our Community

This fall, OhioGuidestone's Central Ohio office has attended several events to help encourage the growth of substance abuse recovery services in our communities. The Rally for Recovery at the Ohio Statehouse, as well as the Unite to Face Addiction Rally in Washington DC, were great opportunities to promote recovery and share information about our services and the importance of expanding them through our Recovery 360° services.



The Rally for Recovery
at the Ohio Statehouse

Supporting Parent & Child Reunification through Supportive Visits:

Our Central Ohio office will expand our Supportive Visits program to provide Therapeutic Supervised Visitation for Family Drug Court participants in Franklin County. These visits allow parents who are involved with substance abuse issues to learn important parenting skills and be reunified with their children safely.

Lorain County: Increasing School Services to Treat Behavioral Health Issues

Thanks to funding from the Mental Health Board, our Lorain County school services are now able to provide consultation, education and prevention in six additional school systems. We are excited to provide services in Lorain City, Elyria City, North Ridgeville City, Avon Lake City and Elyria Constellation Schools.

Stark/Summit/Tuscarawas Counties: Treating Substance Abuse Issues



Stark County staff
members at the Akron
Recovery Walk

September was National Recovery Month, and both PFCS and OhioGuidestone celebrated the month by focusing on how we are treating these important issues. PFCS has opened Recovery Point, a sober living environment which provides holistic programming to address recovery, as well as employment, social connectedness, and overall health and wellness for men. OhioGuidestone's Summit County office has also expanded recovery treatment options. In addition to providing Nurturing Parenting classes to caregivers in recovery, we have expanded to also be a provider of Recovery Coaching services. In addition, both organizations took part in several events to celebrate recovery.

Supporting Domestic Violence Awareness in Tuscarawas County:



Harbor House, the PFCS domestic violence shelter, provides emergency, safe shelter and supportive services for women and children who are victims of domestic violence. During the month of October, PFCS raised awareness about the issues of domestic violence during Harbor House's Annual Domestic

Violence Awareness Walk in Tuscarawas County and spread the word about the support that is available for women in crisis.

Cuyahoga County: Supporting Families with Stepstone 360° Services

As part of Stepstone 360°, OhioGuidestone's Family Life Child Care Centers are offering a fun, safe and enriching after school program for Stepstone Academy Families. After School All Stars will include homework assistance, nutritious snacks, reading and math time, enrichment activities and field trips for Stepstone Academy scholars several days a week.



Helping Young Adults Grow through YouthBuild

OhioGuidestone's YouthBuild Program, a part of Workforce 360°, has been awarded a \$1.1 million dollar federal grant to continue helping young adults in Cuyahoga County work toward their employment and educational goals.

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academic growth in reading, and three-fourths have shown a year's worth of growth in math. With the continued implementation of our forward thinking strategies, we know our scholars will continue to succeed.

While Stepstone receives government funding, it costs the school an additional \$4,500 annually per student to provide the quality education our scholars receive. In addition to these costs, our Stepstone 360° model of support requires a separate budget of \$210,000 annually. Stepstone Academy is providing an innovative approach to education, but we need your support to offset the costs of these much needed services. Your charitable gift can help us continue to provide quality education and support to our children and families. To make a charitable gift, call Cindy Naegele, *Vice President of Advancement* at 440.260.8341 or visit www.StepstoneAcademy.org.

LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS

Ohio Dept. of Job & Family Services | Ohio Dept. of Mental Health | Ohio Dept. of Mental Retardation & Developmental Disabilities



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OhioGuidestone

SOLUTIONS FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES
& COMMUNITIES

Our Vision

Future generations are educated, self reliant and contributing members of strong communities.

Our Mission

To provide pathways for growth, achievement and lifelong success.

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DATED MATERIAL

SAVE THE DATE: Join Us for These Upcoming Events

Pack the Q

Wednesday, March 23, 2016
Quicken Loans Arena



Stepstone Academy will be teaming up with the Cleveland Cavaliers to promote our school at a game against the Milwaukee Bucks! A portion of the proceeds from discounted tickets sold by Stepstone will go to our school. To purchase tickets, please contact Kelley Likes, *Annual Giving Coordinator*, at 440.260.8231

Giving Tuesday

December 1, 2015 **#GIVINGTUESDAY™**

Giving Tuesday is a global day to give back to those in need! Join OhioGuidestone by spreading the word through our social media campaign and donating to help provide better futures for our children and families. For more information, contact Jessica Kanelos, *Advancement Coordinator*, at 440.260.8362.

Holiday Shop

December 9 -December 23, 2015



Donate brand new clothing, toys, games, toiletries and much more to our Holiday Shop to give our clients and their families a bright holiday season! For more information, contact Arian May, *Communications Assistant*, at 440.260.8212.

OhioGuidestone Promise Run

Saturday, May 21, 2016
9:00 a.m. Berea, Ohio



Take a step today for stronger communities tomorrow! Join us for a 10K run, 5K run or 2 hour Zumba session to help children and families in crisis. The run benefits our emergency fund, which provides meals, emergency shelter, clothing, and other necessities. For more information, contact Jessica Kanelos, *Advancement Coordinator*, at 440.260.8362.