

## Subrecipient Spotlight – Wellspring

Wellspring is a faith-based youth development organization that has been serving the Brightmoor/Old Redford neighborhood of Northwest Detroit for over 30 years. Their mission is “to assist urban youth in developing themselves spiritually, socially, academically and economically.” In 2018/2019 Wellspring received funding from the City of Detroit Neighborhood Services, Neighborhood Opportunity Fund (NOF) for their Academic and Youth Development Program.



The Academic & Youth Development Program has multiple components. These include the Kumon math and reading curriculum, recreation, field trips, college prep, outdoor adventure and leadership development. Wellspring has been operating the Kumon program since 1993. The Kumon curriculum is the largest math and reading enrichment program in the world. Wellspring is the only non-profit Kumon Center in Michigan, and one of the few in the entire country, offering the same high-quality curriculum as for-profit Kumon centers, but on a subsidized/sliding scale tuition basis.

The NOF award let Wellspring accomplish more and further their mission. According to Wellspring’s Development Officer, Ms. Phyllis Lee, “We were able to provide our Academic & Youth Development program to 309 youth in 2018...

Programming costs roughly \$1000 a year, per youth. Because of the NOF support, we were able to provide programming at little or no cost to Detroit residents... We are also able to provide college prep support activities for 87 high school students who participated in one or more of the following areas: 2 college tours, College Night, College & Career Panel and Workshop, 20 SAT test prep sessions, financial aid application process and individual college prep and tracking.”

Students in Wellspring’s Kumon program typically advance three grade levels if they remain in the program for at least 12 months. A Kumon grade level is roughly equivalent to a school grade level. In 2018, Wellspring’s Kumon students achieved 358 grade level increases. In a survey of participants, 100% of youth reported that at Kumon they “learned not to give up when work is hard” and 100% reported that “I can do the hardest work if I try.” The effects of this programming persist well into the future. The program has a 94% high school graduation rate and 84% college enrollment rate for students who participated for at least one year, a significantly higher rate than other students in the Detroit area. In fact, multiple former participants have graduated college with Master’s degrees and come back to Wellspring to serve as instructors.

Here is one success story shared by Wellspring:

*Today, 10-year-old Michael is reading on the 7th grade level, but two years ago, there was no guarantee he would be promoted to the 3rd grade. Michael’s grandmother says that at the end of 2nd grade Michael was going to be held back because he could not read. Since he was doing well in his other subjects, Michael’s teacher said she would promote him on a trial basis—if he could improve his reading over the summer. Then she recommended Wellspring’s Kumon program. Michael enrolled and when he returned in the fall, the teacher was so amazed at his progress that he was fully promoted to 3rd grade. No trial was necessary.*

The NOF award also laid the groundwork for the future achievements for Wellspring and those they serve. Ms. Lee says the NOF award prepared them for success saying, “We are better prepared for the future because we have new financial and community partners... We have been invited to apply for other funding opportunities and have built partnerships that help us to support more youth... Receiving NOF funding not only contributed to our success in 2018, but was the foundation to support and partnerships we now enjoy and expect to maintain in the future.” NOF awards have leveraged over \$500,000 in additional funds over the last two years.

The City of Detroit’s Housing and Revitalization Department Neighborhood Opportunity Fund is proud to support Wellspring and the work they do for the youth of Detroit.



Learn more about Wellspring by visiting their website: <http://www.wellspringdetroit.org/>