

ACCESS GETS THE GRADE WITH APS

The start of another school year always means a renewed hope and excitement for the future. Classrooms across Ohio are bursting with energized students mapping out a path for another successful school year. For some students however, that journey will include learning about philanthropy and the impact of nonprofits in our communities.

In 2017, the Akron Public Schools established the College & Career Academies of Akron. The program, in partnership with the Akron Community Foundation, exposes students to numerous career paths, and assists them in achieving their post-graduation career goals. In addition to learning about career paths in areas such as business and healthcare, middle schoolers, such as those attending the Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts, have an opportunity to engage and learn about nonprofits and philanthropy.

ACCESS is proud to be one of the 53 local nonprofit organizations that have joined into a partnership with Akron Public Schools, working with students at Miller South to learn about the difficulties of homelessness and ways to help members of the community experiencing homelessness.

"In our first session, students participated in a roleplay activity in order to understand the firsthand perspective of people experiencing homelessness and looking for housing," said Jackie Hemsworth. "Each student received an identity and had to search for a place to live. Every seven minutes constituted a new day, and after a couple of challenging days, some students sat on the floor and gave up. They said it was impossible. It was an enlightening experience that was well received."

"The experiences provided to the students at Miller South have been transformative. Through our collaboration with ACCESS, Inc. students have had exposure to the causes and challenges presented to individuals experiencing homelessness. Students have had multiple opportunities to meet and collaborate with ACCESS, Inc.," said Sarah Appleby, Miller South Academy Coach. "Each experience has built upon the prior knowledge obtained through this partnership. Students are more aware of the struggles within their community as well as the resources available. The students at Miller South look forward to and frequently ask about their next experience at ACCESS!"

The shift to a College and Career Academy model began at the high school level and is now being implemented at the middle school level. The middle school transformation started with 6th graders participating in a nonprofit discovery event. This event introduced students to the mission of local nonprofits as well as their role within the community. As 7th graders, students will participate in a service learning opportunity in which they give back to the community. Lastly, as 8th graders in the 2023-2024 school year, students will collaborate with partners to solve real-world problems that nonprofits face regularly.

"Working with ACCESS has been such a fun time. When I went there for the first time I felt comfortable. They are about woman empowerment and I love that, especially because of what is happening to women right now. They are so fun, empowering, and kind. They make you feel right at home and I would love to go and volunteer there again!" said seventh grader, Addisyn Hruby.

While these opportunities provide students a chance to discover nonprofits and to be exposed to the community-oriented work they are doing every day, the learning through this program is not a one-way street. For ACCESS, it is an opportunity to reflect on the messaging and who is making an impact on the community. "We really believe it is a multigenerational strategy that will help move our community forward in the right direction," said Jackie.



Karen Chancey, Director of Operations at ACCESS, role plays tenant and landlord with sixth graders from Miller South School for the Visual and Performing Arts

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- Jackie Hemsworth



The Jewelry I.P. Night
Saturday, Nov. 5
TICKETS: \$100 or \$175 per couple

Featuring Honorary Chair
THERESA CARTER

Tickets on Sale Now:
access-shelter.org/the-jewelry-box

Jackie's Corner



Like many organizations, ACCESS has been on a journey to make progress on identified diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

At the beginning of the summer, ACCESS engaged facilitator Carla Chapman to provide both an assessment and future direction planning for ACCESS. Since that time, all staff have taken an inter-cultural inventory (IDI) assessment. The result let us know where our individual and organizational mindset falls regarding cultural differences and commonalities. We are now using this information to move forward as individuals and as an organization. All staff members have their own questions they plan to reflect upon, while the organization is forming a group to identify and move forward on the group objectives.

Ultimately, it is important to ACCESS that we are working towards upholding our organization's values and within that, is achieving an inclusive environment.



WHY I VOLUNTEER WITH ACCESS

By Kristen Swinehart
ACCESS Volunteer

My first interaction with ACCESS came during the annual breakfast event. I am from Cuyahoga Falls, but I had never heard of ACCESS prior to the event. However, it was immediately obvious to me just how much the board and staff truly cared about their mission of helping women in need.

ACCESS doesn't just give women and their children temporary housing; they empower women to take charge of their lives. They provide the resources necessary for these women to get the assistance they need for their individual situation, so they can lift themselves up and eventually move into permanent housing.

We all find ourselves in situations where we may need help at times. ACCESS provides this help to women in our community while upholding their dignity and giving them hope for a brighter future. I know the time I volunteer to ACCESS is empowering women and is improving our local community.

Please visit access-shelter.org/volunteer today to find volunteer opportunities with ACCESS.

HOBAN STUDENTS PROVIDE HOPE, AND A LESSON

This summer, students from Archbishop Hoban High School visited ACCESS for three days as part of their service program Summer J.A.M. The students interacted and played with our resident children, while they were on summer break from school. One of the resident children they interacted with was Zoe (last name not provided due to privacy).

Zoe was enamored with the students from Hoban. Each day that they arrived, she would immediately become inseparable from them. Zoe was also very curious. She would ask them a range of questions from various topics, which included questions about Archbishop Hoban High School. Much to their credit, with each question, the students were always respectful and generous with their answers. This interaction was so meaningful to Zoe that one day she proclaimed that when she was older, she would be attending Hoban, which led to the students doing something unexpected.

On their last day, and understanding her interest, the students presented Zoe with her very own Archbishop Hoban High School shirt, which meant the world to Zoe and everyone at ACCESS.

While this may seem like a very simple act, the Hoban students actually provided us all a lesson on how we can enrich the lives of individuals in our community that are undergoing hardships, such as homelessness. The students very simply could have spent their three days going through the motions to complete their requirement, but instead they



Jesse Noda, former ACCESS Volunteer Coordinator, stands with students who participated in the Summer J.A.M. at ACCESS.

took the time to truly get to know Zoe and actively listen to her.

They also showed that Zoe has value and that her dreams, such as attending Hoban in the future, deserve to be encouraged. While the students may have thought this was a small gesture, the smile on Zoe's face that day showed that this will be a moment that will stick with her for the rest of her life.

Too often we want to help members in our community who need assistance, but we often feel that this would require a grand gesture, and due to our hectic personal schedules, that this is something that we cannot fit in. However, as the Hoban students showed, sometimes a simple act, such as having a genuine conversation where you are actively listening, can have the biggest difference. As Maya Angelou once said, "Try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud."

ACCESS & HUDSON HIGH SERVICE LEARNING

25 YEAR PARTNERSHIP OF EMPOWERING WOMEN EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Since 1998, ACCESS has partnered with Hudson High School as part of the Service Learning program, a partnership which will mark 25 years with the participation of the Class of 2023.

The program is a unique 12th grade elective that combines the disciplines of social studies and English, with an application in community service. The course connects students with community agencies, such as ACCESS, to develop a relationship where students have the opportunity to gain insight for professional growth and future career development, as well as has the rare opportunity to develop empathy to help break down barriers in society.

"Throughout our partnership, lasting 25 years, ACCESS has provided wonderful opportunities for our Service Learning student volunteers," said Marty Bach, Program Coordinator.

"In the process of assisting ACCESS, our students have become more empowered and empathetic. They have taken care of children, helped with fundraising and donations, organized and implemented programming, and built lasting relationships with supervisors. We at Hudson High School greatly value ACCESS and we are proud that it is part of our classroom community."

Following the completion of the classroom learning segment of the program, the students are given a hands-on experience regarding the concepts they learned in the classroom, such as diversity, tolerance and social justice.

"The partnership with the Hudson High School and the Service Learning program has been invaluable," stated Jackie Hemsworth. "Beyond teaching the students the value of service, the students have provided us new perspectives on how we can help empower women experiencing homelessness in our community."



VOLUNTEER with ACCESS!

- Serve a meal
- Assist with childcare
- Sort donations
- Watch for Holiday Elf Opportunities, coming soon!

PLEASE VISIT access-shelter.org/volunteer

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