

# 2016-2017

## Impact Report

01/01/2016 – 06/30/2017



WOODSONCENTER

- a special report for our closest friends and donors -

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## A Message from Bob Woodson

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Dear Friends,

This year, the Woodson Center (formerly known as the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise (CNE) will embark upon its 36th year of community restoration through shared community value as we work with you to help underserved neighborhoods address the problems of their communities. While others have turned away, our efforts have been successful because we have answered the call to serve and worked tirelessly to build strong communities and put fractured lives back together.

As we chart our new course for a future filled with hope and new vision, I realize that our success will be strengthened and achieved through the collective impact of everyone working together for the good of all. As we plan for future growth and development, I invite you to stand together with the Woodson Center (WC) as we continue the important work of healing and restoring communities.

I'd welcome you to read and review the WC's first Impact Report, which we've created for all of our donors and advocates, to provide you with a concise update on how we're leveraging your support to create change in communities throughout our nation.

Instead of sending you a coffee mug, tote bag or other thoughtful memento to express our gratitude for your past support, we've decided to put every dollar 'to work' transforming communities from the inside out and we look forward to sharing with you how your support has created real impact for the communities we serve – because of you.

Very sincerely,



Bob Woodson  
Founder & President



## Recapping Woodson Center's Mission

Transforming lives, schools, and troubled neighborhoods from the inside out by involving those suffering the problem, empowering local leaders to identify capacities of residents and helping them to achieve their potential.

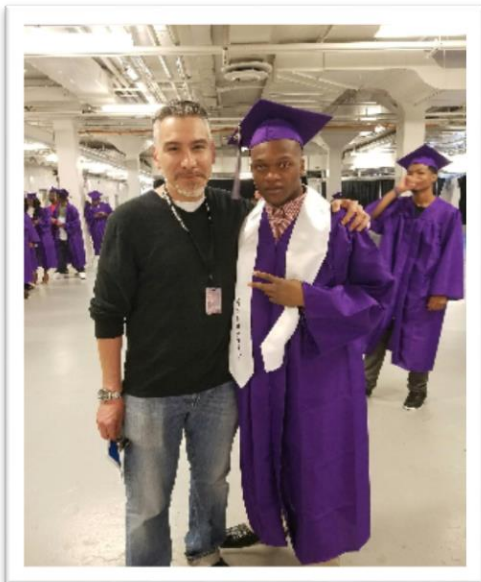
### Programs



#### **Community Affiliates Network (CAN) & Fellows**

Individuals and organizations working to revitalize communities receive invaluable training, mentorship, linkage to financial and supporting resources to enable their work and a voice to help translate their experiences to

public policy and legislation. In 2016-2017, 256 leaders were trained in six U.S. cities as a result of our Community Leadership Enterprise (CLE) training program.



#### **Violence Free Zones (VFZ)**

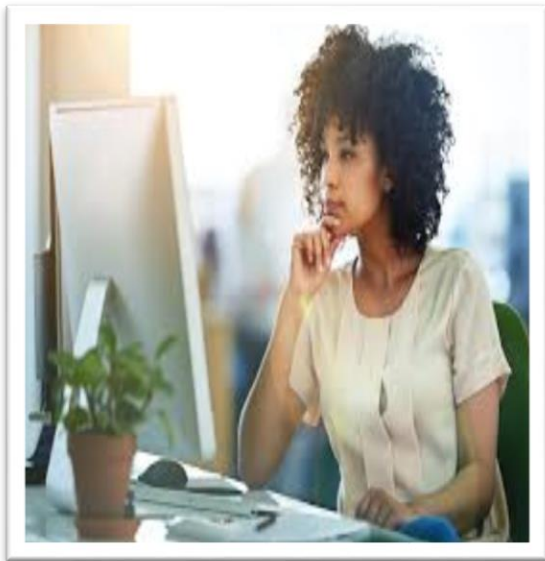
Endorsed by the National Gang Center [Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention] for its structure and effectiveness as a "Promising and Effective Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Gang Prevention Program," our evidence-based Violence-Free Zones model significantly reduces violence in schools and creates peace in the community. School districts implementing VFZ programming have increased student GPAs by 9.3% and graduation rates by 8%, and reduced truancy rates by 23% on

average, as compared to students enrolled in non-VFZ schools.



## Training & Leadership Development

Through an online, interactive and peer-approach to learning, the Woodson Center has trained over 3,000 leaders of grassroots organizations in 41 states, helping link them each to resources that total more than 10 times what the Center has expended – providing ample return for each dollar invested in training. In 2016-2017, 540 training and technical assistance units of service were provided to our CAN members.



## Fund Development Campaigns

Nineteen CAN member organizations are engaging in customized and specialized technical assistance from Network for Good (NFG) through its partnership with us. This hands-on technical assistance pairs a member of each organization with a dedicated fund development coach through our virtual learning platform. For five hours weekly, sites engage in independent fund development, receive an hour of direct coaching each month from a NFG

professional, and two hours per month of intensified technical assistance from the Woodson Center. Leaders learn proven fundraising strategies and how, when implemented, those strategies result in organizational know-how and greater funding potential for the agency. Organizations selected learn to plan, organize, coordinate, implement and evaluate an organizational fund development campaign. Those that follow the 12-month process through its entirety are expected to enhance their funding capabilities by 45% during year one.

CAN members engaged in the 2016-2017 fund development campaigns:

**Avenue of Life, Inc.**  
Kansas City, Kansas

**Pine Bluff Interested Citizens for Voter Registration, Inc.**  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

**BRYCE Project, Inc.**  
Alexandria, Virginia

**Project Detour, Inc.**  
Harvey, Louisiana

**Creation House, Inc.**  
Elyria, Ohio

**Sasha Bruce Youthworks, Inc.**  
Washington, District of Columbia

**Convergence Resource Center, Inc.**  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Springboard to Opportunities**  
Jackson, Mississippi

**Get Together Northwest, Inc.**  
Cypress, Texas

**UPLIFT, Inc.**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Hartford Communities that Care, Inc.**  
Hartford, Connecticut

**W. Leo Daniels Towers, Inc.**  
Houston, Texas

**Hope for Prisoners, Inc.**  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**The House DC**  
Washington, District of Columbia

**Mary Nelson Youth Center**  
Syracuse, New York

**Mothers United Against Violence Healing Ministry**  
Indianapolis, Indiana

**Motherly Intercessions, Inc.**  
Flint, Michigan

**True to Life Foundation**  
Chicago, Illinois

**New Vision Youth Services, Inc.**  
Baltimore, Maryland

**EZE Foundation**  
Greenbelt, Maryland

**Northeast Performing Arts Group, Inc.**  
Washington, District of Columbia

**Your Sister's Project**  
Chicago, Illinois

**Pathway Resource Center, Inc.**  
Indianapolis, Indiana





## NONPROFIT TRAINING & IMPACT

**179** INDIVIDUALS  
ENROLLED  
IN TRAINING

8 OUT OF 10  
HIGHLY ENGAGED  
IN PROGRAMMING



540 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE (TA)  
UNITS PROVIDED



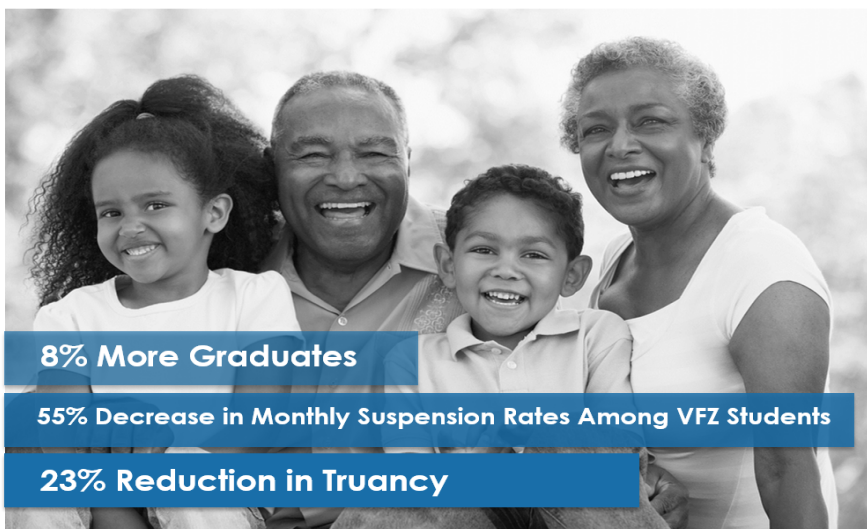
**\$5,742,199**

Nonprofit Contracts and Grant Funding  
**DEPLOYED**

### COMMUNITY AFFILIATE NETWORK

Individual  
Members

Organizational  
Members



**8% More Graduates**

**55% Decrease in Monthly Suspension Rates Among VFZ Students**

**23% Reduction in Truancy**

### Violence Free Zones

When school districts and youth communities are transformed – where violence is decreased and education is increased – real impact is created for multiple family members, touching many, many lives.

## Minerva Freeman and Pitt County Family Development Corporation: Lifting the Sights of Young Students

Minerva Freeman first entered our Community Affiliates Network in 2016. After assessing her training and technical assistance needs, she was entered into the Neighborhood Leadership Development Institute Online (NLDI Online) to learn how to strengthen her organization to better assist her community. Minerva used her training and seed funding to launch a program for young students in her community.



As a social worker in Pitt County, NC, Minerva Freeman had first-hand knowledge of the pressing issues in her community. Through her work with the Health Department, she knew that one of the most serious concerns was the high rate of infant mortality among African Americans, which was twice as high as that for whites.

Minerva decided to launch her own organization to provide social and educational programs for children, families and senior citizens in and around the county, and with that goal, she created the Pitt County Family Development Corporation, whose first initiative focused on women's well-being. "If you keep a woman healthy, you are helping the whole family," she said.

Minerva first met the Woodson Center through a moment of serendipity (Bob Woodson's "shorthand word" for God at work in our lives.) At a family reunion, she overheard someone telling a relative about seed grants that the Woodson Center's Community Affiliate Network (CAN) was offering, and she determined that she would apply for funding for her organization, which typically operates on a shoe-string budget from fund-raising activities and her own resources.



Minerva says she now tries to tune into as many of CAN's weekly web forums as she can. "I always get some helpful information, especially about networking," she said. "And it's good to hear from people who have been involved for a long time who talk about what they're doing."

The Pitt County Family Development Center was awarded the Woodson Center Fellows grant, and its membership in CAN was a natural fit. Minerva's approach resonates with principles and practices of the Woodson Center and its affiliates. For example, she makes effort to hear first-hand from community residents about their concerns and the solutions they would suggest to address the problems. In addition, her efforts are often collaborative, involving local schools, her church community, and even law-enforcement agencies.

Minerva used her grant to create a program called "Diamond in the Rough" for high-risk girls. Subsequently, she initiated a program for girls in grades K through 5 in the local school, Falkland Elementary, in which she focused on improving the girls' self-image, their goals, and their behavior. She named the program GEM (Girls' Empowerment Mentoring). Identifying elements for the participants were nametags bordered with rhinestones and a burgundy bandana. During every session, the girls were given some token to remember the messages that were given, including a ring with tags that bore inspirational quotes and a pocket mirror to remind them that they were special.

With the success of that program for girls, the school principal, Shammah Barrett, asked Minerva if she could initiate a program for the boys. With that, the idea for an "Atomic Boys" one-day forum for 4th and 5th grade boys was launched. "The goal of the event was to let boys know that they are special and that if they stayed in school and worked hard, they could become whatever they wanted to be," said Minerva.



Presentations, demonstrations, and hands-on activities were offered by representatives from spectrum of local organizations, featuring topics that ranged from STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) subjects and computer animation to bee-keeping and hand-crafted soap.

“When they discuss future occupations, people typically mention doctors or lawyers, but not everybody is going to be on that level,” said Minerva. “I told them ‘You can be what you want to be.’ Someone interested in nature might want to be a beekeeper, while someone interested in science might follow that path.”

Presentations included a motivational speech by Robert Braxton, who was injured playing baseball when he was the boys’ age and was in a coma for weeks but rebounded to finish school and to be successful as an adult. Also among the speakers was David Shackelford, a commissioner of the nearby town of Farmville who said he looked forward to visiting their classes when they moved on to the middle school there, and Pastor Ernis Simons, whose congregation at St. John Missionary Baptist Church supported and staffed the event and who urged the students to consider attending the community college where he serves as the IT director. In addition, Pitt County sheriff Tony Williams gave a presentation, focusing not



on gangs and violence but on career opportunities with law enforcement. His involvement with the event did not conclude with his talk and he remained on-site to help with any tasks at-hand.

The Atomic Boys forum was truly a success, with nearly 100 boys in attendance. The local television station interviewed Pastor Simons (who later praised Minerva’s work and jokingly said he sent the link on to his mama!) The enthusiasm and gratitude of the participants was best voiced by one student who declared to Principal Barrett: “Today is a good day to be a boy at Falkland School!”



## Man to Man: Life-Changing Outreach to Youth

As employees of the Alfred D. Noyes Children's Center, a juvenile detention center in Maryland, Allen Graham and Carlton Ferguson had much in common. They started their jobs the same day, attended orientation together, and

received promotions at nearly the same time: even their birthdays were just two days apart. But the life-changing element they shared in common was a deep concern about the lives and futures of the young people they worked with. Both felt an irresistible calling to work to create an avenue where they could reach the hearts of the youths and instill a sense of self-value, vision, values, and goals.

“As resident advisors or supervisors within the facility, our job was pretty simple—telling kids when to line up, when to move, feeding them, putting them to bed, and trying to keep them from fighting in school,” said Graham. “But kids are kids and they are still developing, and if that development isn’t guided, it can go the wrong way. New kids might become prey for the ones who have been there for a long while. They might become addicted to prescription drugs. They learn how to navigate life on the inside. The kid you get coming in is not the same kid when he leaves. We wanted to address that “elephant in the room”—which is really an octopus because there were so many different arms and different ways kids were being affected.”

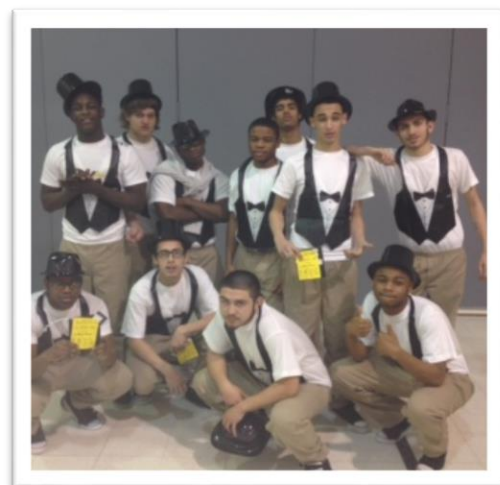
Their effort started small, with a biweekly “Men's Night Out” event where, in recognition of their good behavior and effort in school, the youths could have pizza, listen to music, and share with mentors. From there, Graham and Ferguson gradually proposed a range of programs, and were given permission from the superintendent to implement the programs. In time, with the assistance of a friend with non-profit experience, they created a certified non-profit organization, THUGS Inc. (Together Helping Unite God's Sons) with a core staff of seven that remains active today. The organization’s outreach was made up of a

three-step program. The Life-Skills stage provided a chance for the mentors and youths to get to know each other and focused on developing self-esteem and self-confidence. The subsequent Checks and Balances stage conveyed practical skills including creating a resume, applying for a job and embracing a work ethic, and financial literacy—with a goal of helping them to graduate, pursue higher education and or trade skills, and pursue employment opportunities. On that foundation, a Black Wall Street element gave kids an opportunity to develop an entrepreneurial venture idea, incorporating a business plan, marketing skills, and hands-on experience.

The youths responded to the mentors' investment and, in what was once the most aggressive unit of the facility, the incidence of violent incidents fell and academic achievement and graduation rates rose—all of which were duly noted by the regional directors in evaluation sessions with the superintendents of various juvenile facilities.

But Graham and Ferguson were not satisfied with that progress and were troubled by high rates of recidivism and the fact that kids kept entering life-altering detention because of the bad decisions and mistakes they made. They felt compelled to bring their efforts into the community. Initially, their efforts in the community consisted of Community Give-Backs, where they would host neighborhood events through donations and volunteer services to provide hair-cuts, school supplies, clothing and food.

Less than a year ago, the dream of the THUGS Inc. visionaries was realized, and they were given the opportunity to bring their three-stage curriculum and mentoring program, called “Man to Man,” into a Montgomery County, Maryland, high-school and middle school. From the time parents enroll their children, their involvement in the program and communication with the mentors is encouraged. “We have dialogue with the teachers and administrators, and





provide resources for the parents who may be struggling to help their kids with their homework, or maintain a household, or communicate effectively,” said Graham.

“This is something I have poured my heart and soul into, and it involved sacrifices for me and my family” said Graham. “We needed an avenue and a voice, and that chance was given to us. It took us ten years to earn the opportunity to work in that middle school and high school. People don’t always make the right moves or the right choices. I could have easily been one of those kids who was locked up and lost their dream. I could have been one of those men who are spending their life behind bars—all because of one choice or one mistake. I could have easily been lost. The question I ask myself is: How many more ‘ME’s’ are out there?”

Man to Man joined our Community Affiliates Network in 2017.



## Looking Forward to the Year Ahead

Terence Mathis, Vice President, COO

In July 2017, the Woodson Center entered its 36<sup>th</sup> year of identifying and supporting community-based leaders and organizations that are effectively bringing about positive change in their neighborhoods. The organization was launched in 1981 as the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise and, in its 25<sup>th</sup> year of service, was renamed the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise. Last year, in recognition of the milestones it has reached throughout more than three decades of promoting community revitalization guided by indigenous leadership, the Center rebranded as the Woodson Center (WC).

This name change connotes a tribute to Robert Woodson, the Center's founder and president, who has been the inspiration, motivation, and voice of the organization since its inception. In the minds of supporters, the general public, and grassroots leaders, our organization was already synonymous with Mr. Woodson. The name "Woodson Center" simply formalizes an association that already exists in the minds of our most important target audiences as we focus on exciting opportunities to achieve new goals in the coming years.

The Woodson Center Vision is to: "To Transform Lives, Schools, and Troubled Neighborhoods from the Inside Out." In just ten words, that goal reveals the strategy that has been key to its effectiveness in helping America's underserved communities become safe, healthy, good places to live, work, conduct business and raise productive families. We think this strategy differentiates the Woodson Center from many other organizations—public and private.

As we look forward towards the year ahead, we focus intensely on making sure we are being good stewards of the resources supporters entrust to us for the purpose of making lives better.

Goals for the future include:

- **Expand the Violence-Free Zone Initiative**—which has proven effective in restoring civil order and improving academic performance-- to more schools and more cities throughout the nation, in response to requests we have received from community leaders and school administrators throughout the country.
- **Provide continued training and capacity-building technical assistance-** to neighborhood-based groups throughout the country so that they



can better serve their communities and develop practices of accountability that can improve their opportunities for funding.

- **Work to formalize our Cops, Community and Country (CCC) Initiative**—that provides tangible evidence that law enforcement and residents of low-income communities can forge positive relationships of trust and mutual support as they work together to facilitate successful re-entry, address lawlessness, and improve the safety of communities.
- **Strive to identify general support funds**—that will further advance the “Woodson Principles” validated in successful programs and activities currently being carried out across the country. The funds would allow the Center to identify effective strategies to address problems and to communicate best practices and respond quickly to requests to strengthen and support community-based initiatives that are making significant headway in addressing some of the nation’s most pressing problems.

Our deepest gratitude goes to those whose support has made it possible to realize the vision that has guided the Woodson Center since its inception. Everything we do starts with your generosity and willingness to give.

To all of you, on behalf of our board and WC staff, thank you for standing with us and believing in our mission.

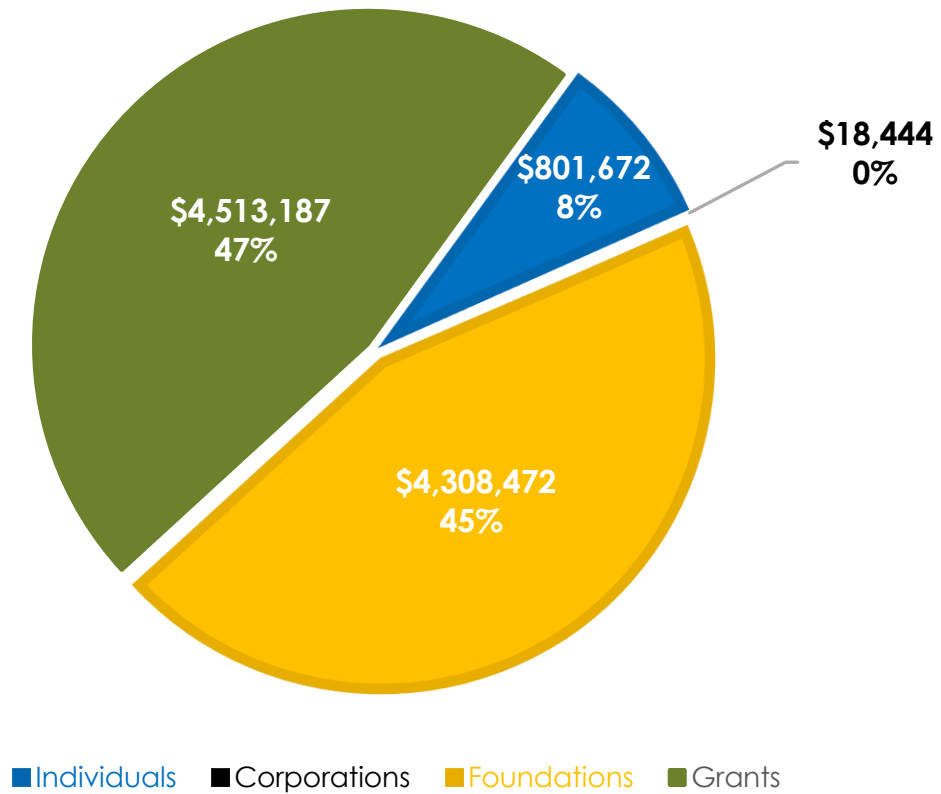
With all best wishes,

Terence

Thank You, To All of Our Donors

### DONOR GIVING & WC GRANT AWARDS

JAN 1, 2016 - JUNE 30, 2017





# Transforming Communities, Together

WoodsonCenter.org

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info@woodsoncenter.org

