investing in social change

INVESTMENT UPDATE

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All of us know that the challenges our young people face are larger and more complex than ever. We’ve already started to write the next chapter in our success story through our Capital Kids Portfolio.

We have designed a cross-sector approach that aligns the actions and resources of philanthropy, government, business and nonprofits. No one entity can single-handedly solve the challenges our youth face.

This investment portfolio will ensure that more young people are ready to enter kindergarten, have the support they need to succeed through school and graduate and obtain marketable credentials and skills that will enable them to get good jobs and thrive as adults.

The goal for our third portfolio is to impact tens of thousands of youth in the National Capital Region.

We want their futures to shine brighter and aspirations to be lifted higher.
CHAMPIONS FOR CAREER AND COLLEGE READY GRADUATES IN PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY

We have ambitious plans for the National Capital Region. We are starting in Prince George’s County, Maryland.

Ready for Work: Champions for Career and College Ready Graduates in Prince George’s County is VPP’s first investment of the Capital Kids Portfolio.

Nearly a quarter of Prince George’s County youth drop out of high school and never earn a diploma. Meanwhile, in five years, 65 percent of all jobs in the County will require education and/or training beyond a high school degree.

Now is the time to take action. Through Ready for Work, we can make a real and lasting impact on the lives of these youth and their families. This investment will provide youth the skills needed to be successful in the workplace and in college.

We are implementing a three-pronged strategy across three high schools: Suitland, High Point and Oxon Hill.

Strengthen Career Academies

Our strategy is three-fold:

1) Partnership with TFA-DC Region to improve academic achievement;

2) Build capacity of Career Academies to enhance technical skill development and expand enrollment numbers so more students can graduate career and college ready; and

3) Partnerships with industry representatives who will serve on Career Academy Advisory Boards. These boards help to make sure the curriculum and learning experiences are current and relevant.

Develop Student’s Foundational Life Skills

We will set up youthCONNECT into all three high schools. youthCONNECT is a group of high-performing nonprofits that collaborate with the schools to improve students’ readiness for employment and postsecondary education.

We have already integrated a youthCONNECT network into Suitland High School. By the end of this academic year, 700 students will have been served by our five nonprofit partners (College Summit-NCR, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, Maryland Multicultural Youth Center, Urban Alliance and Year Up-NCR).

Connect Students to Internships and Jobs

Young people need real work experiences before they graduate. We are partnering with business leaders and employers to make certain the skills and competencies students are learning are relevant.
Three Cheers for Ryan Taurainen, The Washington Post’s Principal of the Year!

Congratulations to Ryan Taurainen, head of AppleTree Institute’s Columbia Heights campus, for being named The Washington Post’s Principal of the Year.

He became principal of AppleTree’s Southwest, DC campus at 26 and now at 30 has become one of the top early childhood education leaders in the District.

(Read more about Ryan’s achievements in The Washington Post article “The Post’s 2016 Principal of the Year: ‘A teacher first, and a principal second.’”)

INTRO

Currently, AppleTree and its partners are closing the achievement gap by providing more than 1,200 high-quality preschool and pre-kindergarten seats to children from low-income and underserved communities.

HIGHLIGHTS

AppleTree has successfully developed a new model for expansion, AppleTree@.

AppleTree@ schools are innovative partnerships in which K-8 public charter schools invite AppleTree to operate their preschool program. The idea for these unique collaborations emerged during the business planning phase of VPP’s investment.

This new model yields several benefits:

• AppleTree@ schools put families at ease because students can enroll in the partner elementary school without re-entering DC’s charter school lottery;
• AppleTree is able to expand to new locations in the city without bearing the full costs of opening, furnishing and maintaining a new building; and
• AppleTree can use AppleTree@ campuses to pilot refinements of their Every Child Ready instructional model that can be expanded to other campuses.

In addition to children served directly by AppleTree, eight other local early childhood providers are using AppleTree’s tools to give nearly 1,000 more children access to high-quality education. That number will expand significantly this fall with new partnerships with Achievement Prep and Rocketship, two highly-regarded charters that will operate in Ward 8.
INTRO

VPP’s investment is helping Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HW-SC) more than triple the number of students it serves in Prince George’s County, Maryland, by 2017. In addition to funding programmatic elements, our support has created new, local capacity in both operations and performance management to enable HW-SC to continue to maintain its quality and results during this period of rapid growth.

HIGHLIGHTS

• HW-SC continues to deliver strong outcomes for the youth they serve, all of whom possess at least two factors that make them at risk of dropping out of high school. In fact, 100 percent of students who completed HW-SC graduated from high school, compared to Prince George’s County’s overall graduation rate of 74 percent;

• HW-SC has become a provider of choice in Prince George’s County, partnering with government agencies on multiple initiatives, including expanding their core model to new schools and teaching customized career preparation and training modules to students not enrolled in HW-SC; and

• Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection’s headquarters has recently launched ‘Develop 5,’ a campaign to secure new national business partners who will commit to employing five or more students at each of its local affiliate sites around the country. Locally, HW-SC has cultivated relationships with two of these corporations, providing nearly a dozen job placement opportunities for their students.

OVERVIEW

Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection (HW-SC) is a youth-development program that for nearly three decades has helped at-risk students stay in school and successfully graduate. HW-SC identifies promising middle and high school students at risk of dropping out and provides them with academic support, mentoring, skills training and the opportunity for part-time work. VPP’s $1.95 million investment in Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, made in February 2014, will give 870 more middle and high school students in Prince George’s County, Maryland access to these services.
VPP is helping Urban Alliance fulfill its mission of empowering under-resourced youth to aspire, work and succeed through paid internships, formal training and mentorship.

INTRO
Urban Alliance is growing to scale in the National Capital Region by expanding their core direct services program into Northern Virginia. They are increasing the number of youth who can benefit from their expertise through an expanded Curriculum Services Outreach program. They have also increased organizational capacity to serve more youth and meet the demands of expansion.

HIGHLIGHTS
- One hundred percent of the initial Northern Virginia cohort graduated from high school and 66 percent enrolled in college, compared to a national average of 49 percent for low-income students enrolled in college;
- A partnership with the U.S. Patent and Trade Office has expanded to offer up to 25 Urban Alliance students paid internships year-round; and
- Urban Alliance has leveraged its partnership with the Urban Institute to redesign the way UA measures the critical foundational employment and life skills that students gain from the program. Through participation in youthCONNECT, Urban Alliance is conducting its first random-assignment study, the “gold standard” in the evaluation field.

OVERVIEW
Urban Alliance is a year-long employment program that places high school students in paid internships with local employers and the federal government while also providing students with professional development workshops. VPP committed $2.8 million in November 2012 to help Urban Alliance expand the program into Northern Virginia to offer its High School Internship Program, Alumni Services and Curriculum Outreach services to an additional 1,000 youth and to explore growth into Maryland.
VPP’s youthCONNECT initiative is a network of six high-performing nonprofits that has provided youth in the National Capital Region with a range of services and supports to help them successfully navigate the multiple pathways from high school to postsecondary education and adulthood.

INTRO

In 2010, VPP, the Social Innovation Fund (SIF) and six high-performing nonprofit organizations entered into a ground-breaking five-year partnership to help 20,000 vulnerable youth in the National Capital Region successfully transition into adulthood. By the end of the 4th year, we not only met that goal, we exceeded it. Now, in our fifth year, we have served more than 21,000 youth and are working to integrate and sustain the innovative programs that are helping youth succeed.

HIGHLIGHTS

In the span of five years, the youthCONNECT initiative offers a new framework for how nonprofits can collectively support young people.

• The network creates opportunities for partners to build relationships and learn from and leverage the strengths of each other;
• A few partners developed formal agreements with each other that enabled them to better support youth through critical transitions;
• Several of the youth development indicators, tracked and measured by multiple organizations, such as high school completion rates and postsecondary enrollment, increased over time. This suggests that increasing numbers of youth served by the youthCONNECT partners are moving toward adulthood while gaining the knowledge and skills that will enable them to be successful; and
• Each network partner is conducting a rigorous evaluation and has enhanced their ability to gather data and use it to improve their programming.

OVERVIEW

YouthCONNECT is a network of nonprofits that help young people successfully transition to adulthood. With a $10M investment from VPP and the Social Innovation Fund and $13M from match funders, network partners have increased the education and employment outcomes for thousands of youth throughout the Region. The network provides a continuum of coordinated support, as network partners gain valuable experience developing the trust and relationships that allow them to collaborate and combine efforts to achieve stronger outcomes for youth.
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