



2017-2018

**STUDENT
ADVOCACY
CENTER**

ANNUAL REPORT

**642 STUDENTS
HELPED**



We didn't know what to expect for the 2017-2018 school year. After years of advocacy, state law finally changed, ending zero tolerance and requiring districts to at least consider alternatives to removal.

We got to work creating implementation tools (www.studentadvocacycenter.org/policy/rethink), updating training materials and prepping staff and volunteer advocates for this new approach. We were ready and cautiously hopeful.

And then we waited.

Our Helpline was hopping, because the Michigan Department of Education listed us as a resource in an online toolkit. But there weren't many expulsion hearings that required our help initially. Were we still needed? Should we shift our focus?

Not so fast.

Before long, our advocates were back at hearings, working on creative solutions. We had a few early successes, including a student who received a 30-day suspension (instead of a 180-day expulsion) for fighting.

Some districts told us flat out they would not follow the law. Parents called us devastated and angry that their districts were still suspending

without real consideration of alternatives. And then we saw a rise in quiet, informal removals, where students with significant needs were pushed into virtual settings.

So here we are. The needs remain. And thanks to the support from so many like you, we are prepared to respond to the calls from desperate families, who believe education is a right and their child needs it to claim a brighter future.

SAC hasn't just changed because of the new laws. We have been adapting to become a stronger, more effective organization. When I look back at the last 5 years, I am so proud. Please check out the next page to see the impact of your faithful support.

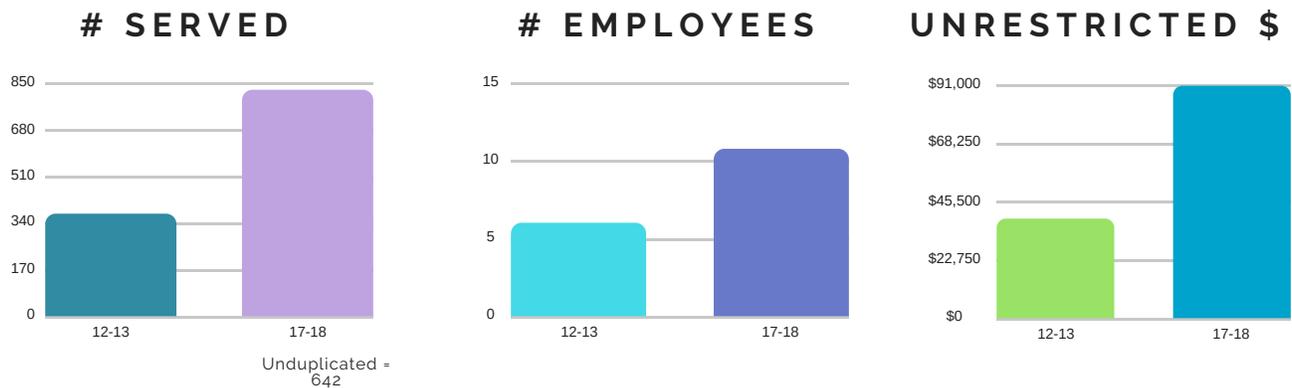
We couldn't have done this without you and we can't continue without your support. Thank you.

Peri Stone-Palmquist



5-YEAR SNAPSHOT

In the past 5 years, we have grown from two offices to three, added a core of highly skilled volunteer advocates, created a sustainable helpline model and centralized intake system, increased staffing 79% and created a true continuum of services to assist students. We have doubled the number served and more than doubled our unrestricted revenue.



Impact

STUDENTS IMPROVE DISCIPLINE RECORDS

82% of advocacy cases improve discipline

7% maintain

STUDENTS ATTEND MORE SCHOOL

60% advocacy cases increase attendance

23% maintain

STUDENTS PASS CLASSES

80% advocacy cases pass classes

LIVES CHANGED

We first met Jeremy in January of his 9th grade year. He had been denied enrollment and unable to attend even one day of school.

Jeremy had lived in the same district his whole life. He had been retained twice in elementary school and voluntarily attended a virtual school for parts of 7th and 8th grades. Jeremy knew he wanted more support for high school, so his father completed online enrollment for the local high school in August and called repeatedly about next steps.

The calls were not returned, and Jeremy's dad, who has struggled with homelessness and health challenges, didn't know what to do.

Finally, in November, the family had an appointment to provide proof of residency. A week later, they were told they would have to meet with the superintendent and Jeremy's probation officer. This meeting was unexpectedly cancelled with no explanation. Jeremy's dad kept trying to reschedule. Nothing.

In January, the family was told they needed a special meeting due to discipline issues, but Jeremy has never had school discipline issues. That's when his dad called the Student Advocacy Center (SAC).

We finally had a meeting with the school in February, but the reasons Jeremy wasn't allowed to attend kept changing. Now, he was too old. SAC persisted, pointing to laws that required the district to enroll him immediately.

Our persistence paid off. The following Monday, Jeremy was given a tour and schedule. He quickly settled into the rhythm of the school day. By early March, the reports from his teachers were glowing. SAC checked in weekly and brought him to our office for credit recovery, to earn the credits he missed while being denied enrollment.

Jeremy began to struggle with attendance as he juggled school and helping with his dad's medical care. We agreed he needed more intensive support, and over the summer of 2016, he joined our Check and Connect mentoring program, an evidence-based dropout prevention program.

His mentor, Anell, recalls things being rocky for awhile. Jeremy first moved in with his mom, and then into his own apartment, supporting himself with a dish cleaning job. Jeremy would fall asleep in class and miss school.

Eventually, Jeremy moved back with his dad and his school attendance quickly improved.

Anell helped Jeremy feel more motivated in school, he says. He worked harder, completing extra classes. He had some amazing teachers as well. Ultimately, he was able to graduate a year early, astonishing us all with his work ethic and persistence.



“

I had a lot of support. Anell would pop up on me in class ... It made me feel good. Like someone was really proud of me.

”

THE TEAM

STAFF

Peri Stone-Palmquist, Executive Director
 Danielle Flint, Assistant Director
 Anell Eccleston, Programs Manager
 Amy Wilhelm, Programs Manager

Dee Blair, Advocate
 Jacorey Brown, Mentor*
 Al Correa, Mentor*
 Kristina Cosgrove, Mentor
 Hakim Crampton, Adult Ally
 Julia Gilbert, Accountant
 Jordan Jones, Office Coordinator
 Kathleen Kosobud, Advocate
 Kat Layton, Mentor*
 Ben Murphy-Smith, Advocate*
 Jill Perticone, Family Advocate
 Jenna Pickman, Advocate*
 Shakel Raiford, Advocate
 Tina Woods, Advocate



Loki, Staff Dog & Resident Cuddler

* Joined our team after July 1, 2018

2017-2018 BOARD

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 Shanita Scott
 Rossi Ray-Taylor
 Dwight Wilson
 Ruth Zweifler

Board Member Emeritus

James Hawkins and Calvin Williams

VOLUNTEER HOURS + VALUE

INTERN	4,318 HRS	\$102,207
VOLUNTEER ADVOCATE	648 HRS	\$15,338
OTHER	992 HRS	\$23,480
TOTAL	5,958 HRS	\$141,025

SUPPORTER PROFILES



TONYA KNEFF-CHANG

PhD candidate in Educational Foundations and Policy, Executive Board Member and Volunteer Advocate for SAC's Student Rights Project

“ Disrupting, and eventually dismantling, the school-to-prison pipeline is crucial work and will take a collective effort. SAC is an organization that works with everyone - students, parents, principals, teachers - and takes a restorative justice approach to relationship building and policy making. We take on one case at a time, and for me, it is worth every letter, phone call, conversation, and amount of research to help a child be successful in school. Honestly, there are times when this work is frustrating, but I accept such challenges as part of the work of fighting injustice. Students deserve quality learning opportunities and I stand with SAC as we work with families, schools, districts, communities, and policy makers to defend the right to education. ”



The young men and adult advisors (at the Kappa Leadership Development League) felt strongly that the work SAC does to help keep kids in school (especially young black men) when they are often unfairly suspended or even expelled was a program that served a great purpose and one in which the young men readily identified with and could eagerly support

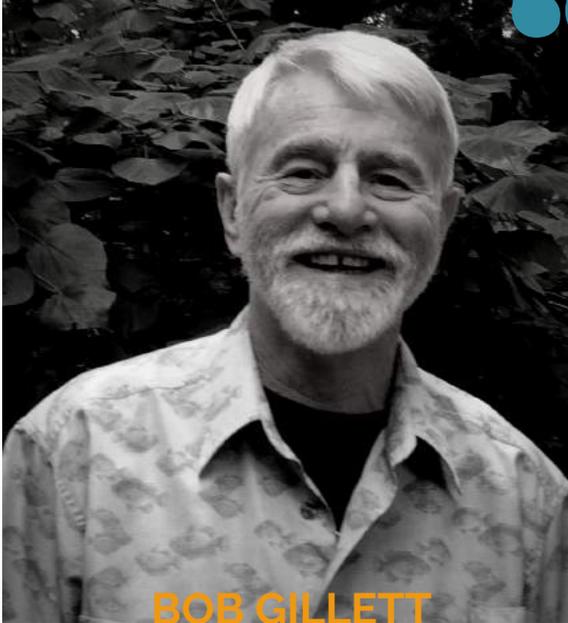
Kappa League is a leadership training and mentorship program for primarily African-American High School age males. SAC presented to the young men, who decided to have a carwash to support our work ending the school to prison pipeline.



RICHARD KING

Retired, College of Business, EMU
Volunteer, Kappa Alpha Psi
Organized car wash fundraiser for SAC with Kappa

SUPPORTER PROFILES

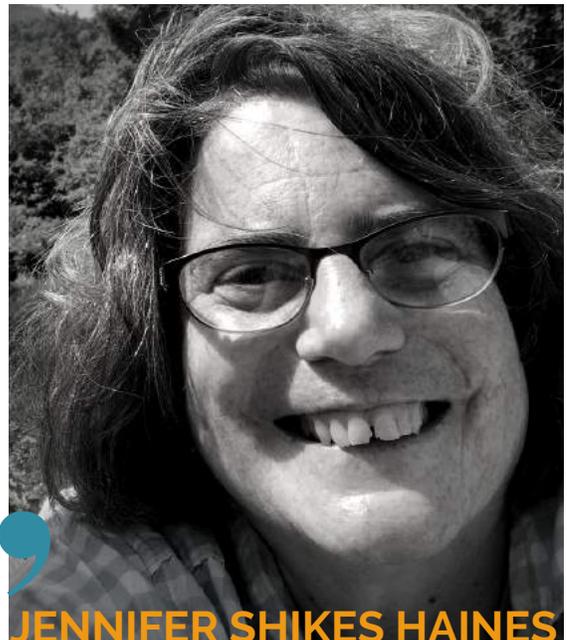


Attorney, Executive Director Michigan Advocacy Program and SAC Supporter

“ As a legal aid lawyer, I see how whole families are disrupted by a conflict between a student and their school system, especially when that conflict involves a suspension or expulsion. I also see how often school discipline systems seem overwhelming to families - and how these systems can be stacked against students, especially low-income and minority students. I appreciate how connected the Student Advocacy Center is to low-income families; how it is seen as an advocate and support by families. I also appreciate the effectiveness of SAC's advocacy in suspension and expulsion cases. It is really important to me that our community reach out to children who are struggling in the school system. Our community is stronger in the long run if we engage with these students and understand and meet their needs - than it is if we stigmatize children and exclude them from accessing critical resources, like a public education. ”



I am a teacher and I have seen many cases where schools go for the 'easiest fix' and don't have student needs front and center where they need to be. The SAC keeps schools on the straight and narrow and is an all-important advocate and watchdog that keeps student needs front and center 24/7. This is the only organization that does this kind of advocacy work with the school systems and state agencies.



Teacher, SAC Supporter who first learned about SAC through a colleague and became more involved after attending "Telling Tales"

SUPPORTERS

Funders 2017-2018

Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation, Ann Arbor Jaycees, The Arc of Michigan, Bend the Arc: A Jewish Partnership for Justice (The National Youth Alliance on Boys and Men of Color), Gerald Beckwith Constitutional Liberties Fund, Carls Foundation, Charles Mott Foundation, Children's Trust Fund, Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan (DADA), Department of Health and Human Services, Dignity In Schools, First Unitarian Universalist, Freudenberg Group, Karen Colina Wilson Foundation, Louise Tuller Miller Trust, Oakland County Bar Association, Edward F. Redies Foundation, Inc., Speckhard-Knight Charitable Foundation, Towsley Foundation, United Way of Washtenaw County, United Way of Jackson County, Washtenaw Coordinated Funders, Washtenaw County Community Mental Health, Washtenaw County Trial Court, Wayne County, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

Annual Event Support

Salutatorian:

Joan Binkow, Michigan Medicine

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Monthly Givers

A special thank you to our monthly donors who have committed to regular and ongoing support: Jessica "Decky" Alexander and Bruce Kutinsky, Faye Askew-King & Richard King, Nakisha Chaney, Anonymous, Carrie and Greg Hammerman, Katie Hoener, Marjorie Kauth-Karjala, Jeralyn Lowe, Francisco Sanchez, Cynthia Maritato Shick, Peri and Matt Stone-Palmquist, Dwight Wilson, Gail Wolkoff, Ruth and Andy Zweifler

SUPPORTERS

Launch Giving Circle

Thank you to our young professionals and college students who are committed to fighting the school-to-prison pipeline and are "launching" our community's students on a path to learning!

Jimmie Jones

Legacy Society

We are thankful for our Legacy Society who include SAC in their Will or Charitable Trust!

Peri and Matt Stone-Palmquist

Special thanks to these other supporters:

Patti Aaron, Cindy Strang, Esther Floyd, Daniel and Margaret Francis, Adrienne Kaplan, Olivia Maynard and Olaf Karlstrom, Mike Merrick and Catherine McClary, Dr. Richard Tolman and Naomi Woloshin, Mark Wallace, Ambassador Ronald and Ms. Eileen Weiser, and The Wellman Family

And many thanks to everyone who supports our work!

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

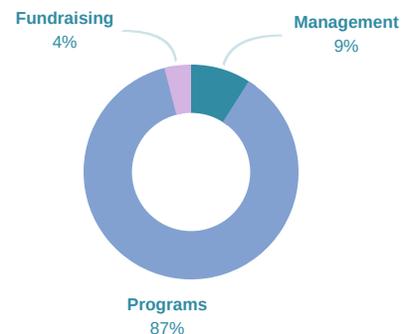
REVENUE

GRANTS	\$1,452,023
CONTRIBUTIONS	\$75,112
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$34,553
FEES FOR ADVOCACY	\$2,131
TOTAL	\$1,563,819



EXPENSES

PROGRAMS	\$552,714
MANAGEMENT	\$56,827
FUNDRAISING	\$25,849
TOTAL	\$635,390



Note: The difference between revenue and expenses is due to the timing of grants.

YEAR IN PHOTOS

