

SETTING THE STAGE FOR HEALTHY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



2014 Report to the Community



NORTHFIELD HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Since 1992, fostering a collaborative environment in Northfield that empowers youth, strengthens families and builds community.



2014 ANNUAL REPORT LETTER FROM BOARD CO-CHAIRS



Dear Friends,

The Northfield Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) sets the stage for initiatives that promote youth asset-building in the community, and provides support behind the scenes as our partner agencies build on those collaborations in inspiring ways.

We invite you to learn more about the past year of successes in the pages of this report, and by visiting our website, www.northfieldhci.org, and our Facebook page.

The important work we do wouldn't be possible without our wonderful partners and donors. We appreciate your past support and encourage you to contribute your time, expertise and financial donations in 2014. We all have a role to play in making Northfield a more inclusive community and a healthier place for youth and families.

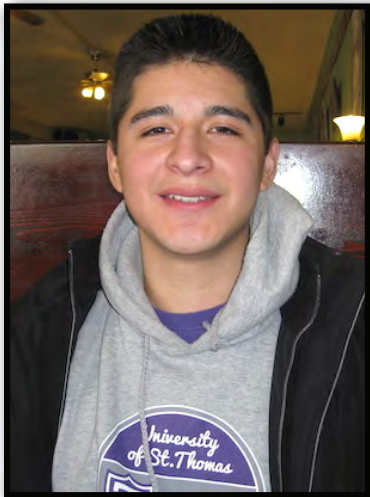
With gratitude,

Kris Estenson and Helen Forsythe

HCI Board Chairs 2013-14



HCI SPOTLIGHT



When **Rey Andrade** reflects on his high school experience, ninth grade stands out as a turning point. That's when his involvement with **TORCH** and the **Northfield Healthy Community Initiative** expanded his vision of what he could achieve.

"When I joined HCI, it was the first time I'd been involved

in any community organization," Rey says. "The more I kept going to meetings, the more it opened my eyes to different things available in the community and the different programs available to students."

Rey served on the HCI board for four years and was co-chair his senior year. He graduated from Northfield High School in June 2012 and is now a sophomore at St. Thomas University in St. Paul, where he is studying mechanical engineering.

Beth Berry, former TORCH coordinator, worked with Rey throughout his high school career, and she says it could have gone differently for him. She noticed that as a ninth-grader, Rey was struggling with the fact that his peer group didn't think it was "cool" to be academically successful.

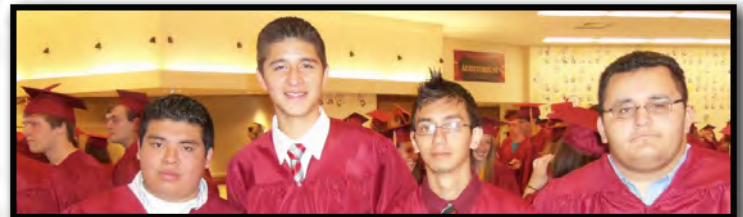
"Being on the HCI board helped him begin to change his self-concept that he had something to offer," she says. "I'd pick him up for the meetings and say, 'You are on this board because you have a perspective and you can help.' I saw a lot of growth in him, and part of it was putting him in situations where he could be successful."

Rey's parents, Rey and Norma, were supportive of his plans to attend college, but they didn't know much about the process, so through TORCH, Rey was able to learn about the process of applying to colleges and how to apply for scholarships.

He says St. Thomas offered the best of both worlds for him – it's a small liberal arts college, but it also offers engineering. Plus, he received a **prestigious full-tuition scholarship**. Although his studies keep him busy, he makes time to volunteer as a tutor once a week at a St. Paul elementary school, and he plays intramural basketball, soccer and football.

Rey has been selected for a **competitive paid internship** with Rosemount Inc. in Chanhassen, a subsidiary of the multinational Emerson Process Management corporation, and he will spend the next two summers receiving valuable on-the-job experience in instrumentation manufacture and design.

"At St. Thomas, it usually takes five years to finish an engineering degree. My goal is to finish in four years and have a job lined up before I graduate, so I can start working right away," Rey says.



Although Rey is the first one in his family to attend college, it's likely he won't be the last. His siblings Adolfo, a junior, and Abigail, a freshman, have paid close attention to the path their older brother has paved for them.

"They definitely see that it's possible now to get to college; they see what it takes to get there," he says.





HCI-SUPPORTED COLLABORATIONS

Tackling Obstacles and Raising College Hopes

(TORCH) expanded this year to serve more than 450 local low-income, minority and potential first-generation college students in grades 6-12. Thirty-eight seniors graduated last spring, and 19 TORCH graduates earned post-secondary degrees or certificates last year.

Rice County Mental Health Collective

has enrolled nearly 200 adults in its "Happy Hour" positive psychology program. The organization is working to transform the county's mental health system to a public health model.

Growing Up Healthy (GUH)

received a \$50,000 grant, with a chance for renewal a second year, from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation to support social capital development in low-income neighborhoods. GUH supports 25 neighborhood leaders across the county who work with their neighbors to identify and address issues in 5 low-income neighborhoods.

Rice County Chemical Health Coalition

is working toward implementing a drug court that will provide assistance and accountability to repeat drug offenders. Rice County was one of 10 communities nationwide selected for the National Adult Drug Court Planning Initiative.

The Mayor's Youth Council

launched a mindfulness campaign in the fall, specific to the introduction of iPads at the high school and middle school. This commission of 16 high school juniors and seniors, appointed by the City Council, also compiled a list of sites in town offering free WiFi for those who lack access at home.

Youth Sports Collaborative

has provided more than 1,400 scholarships to low-income youth, totaling more than \$130,000, since 2004. The volunteer-run organization is comprised of representatives from each of Northfield's youth sports associations.

LINK Center provided resource information to more than 2,300 newcomers and community members.

Take it to the Box has collected and safely disposed of more than 10,000 pounds – 5 tons! – of medication since it launched in 2009.

PRIMEtime was recognized by the National League of Cities as one of 27 outstanding collaborative initiatives nationwide. The out-of-school-time network provides free after-school and summer programming to more than 1,150 Northfield youth annually.

Dollars and Sense provided financial literacy education to more than 350 local middle and high school students. Nine students participated in Minnesota's first youth individual development account (IDA) program to fund college access.

Mayor's Task Force on Youth Alcohol & Drug Use cosponsored the "Life of an Athlete" education program at Northfield High School and led the "MOST Northfield students" campaign at the middle school. It also continued its parent education efforts.



HCI PROVIDES SUPPORT & RECOGNITION



Investing in Youth Grants

HCI provided funding to 61 youth civic engagement and intergenerational activities in the community in 2013. Among youth attendees, 86 percent reported that they got to know an adult they didn't know before and/or felt more connected to the Northfield community after participating.

Making a Difference Award

More than 75 individuals and groups have been honored for their efforts to make Northfield a better place for youth.

AmeriCorps

HCI helps support 10 full-time AmeriCorps members working one-on-one with youth and youth-serving efforts in Northfield.

Grant Writing

In the past 11 years, HCI has helped bring in **\$4.5 million** in grant funds from sources outside the community to support Northfield youth efforts.



NORTHFIELD PROMISE:
Every child. Cradle to career.

HCI was awarded a Bush Community Innovation Grant in 2013 to help with the launch of the Northfield Promise collective impact initiative. Northfield Promise was one of only 34 recipients of this regional grant, out of 618 applicants.

Northfield Promise is an initiative designed to achieve community-level change for children and youth growing up in Northfield. By aligning all the major community institutions around a shared set of measurable benchmarks, the project seeks to ensure that ALL Northfield youth receive the support they need to be successful from birth through high school and beyond.

Nineteen community leaders have joined the Northfield Promise Council of Champions, which will help convene action groups around these selected benchmarks.

Northfield is one of 50 communities nationwide invited into the Strive Network, the national leaders in collective impact. This allows Northfield to draw upon the expertise and best practices of communities across the country.



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THANK YOU

HCI thanks its generous donors for their ongoing support of the coalition's efforts. For a list of HCI's corporate and organizational sponsors, please visit www.northfieldhci.org



For more information about the Northfield Healthy Community Initiative

Visit www.northfieldhci.org

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Check out the HCI website and an introductory video about our work!

