



2023 YEAR END REPORT



United Way
Centraide
Windsor-Essex County

YEAR IN REVIEW

This past year, students in the On Track to Success (OTTS) program were busy achieving their goals and reaching pivotal milestones.

The OTTS program offers a wide range of supports for our youth and their families. We offer academic and career-focused support through our after-school tutoring program as well as mentoring and career exploration opportunities. We also promote social and recreational activities that prioritize both mental and physical wellness.

In 2023, we saw a full return to in-person learning at school and in our program. This allowed us to get back to some of those OTTS staples that our students benefit from such as after-school tutoring and community involvement. In addition, we saw some of our recently launched programs grow and flourish. We have added more students, but we have also focused on enhancing the quality and diversity of our programming to give everyone a programming experience that speaks to them.

THE UJIMA INITIATIVE

The Ujima Initiative had its busiest year to date with so much accomplished and even more to look forward to. The Ujima Initiative is an equity strategy of the OTTS program which aims to provide culturally relevant support and mentors to black youth. Some of this year's highlights included inviting local black professionals to discuss their educational paths and career journeys. We also welcomed local artists to provide storytelling experiences through music and art. However, nothing beat the fun and friendships that the Ujima Initiative fostered by getting our youth out in the community.



Windsor Express Basketball Game



Black Futures Graduation Celebration

YEAR IN REVIEW

EXECUTIVE MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

It was a year of growth for the Executive Mentorship Program (EMP). In its second year, the EMP is designed to provide graduates of OTTS, who are currently enrolled in post-secondary, with a meaningful and gainful mentorship opportunity over the summer.

“What is so unique to EMP is that in addition to providing real life experiences and applicable skills within a student’s chosen field, we go even further by developing professional competency, confidence and practical skill development in order to foster long-term career readiness.”
- Kaila DiCecco, Program Facilitator

Six students completed mentorship placements during July and August. The program ran for six weeks, with students being financially compensated for 20 hours of work per week. In addition, mentees were paid for a 30-hour pre-mentorship training which highlighted topics such as professional conduct, workplace communication, conflict resolution, personal branding, and interview skills.

Students come from a variety of educational fields including law, health care, construction, environmental sciences, robotics, architecture, and social justice and are enrolled in both college and university. Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare, City of Windsor, Essex Weld Solutions, Deans Paralegal Services, Wolseley Underground Specialties and Maged Basilius Architect are just a few of the organizations who have participated in the EMP program.



Kaila DiCecco with the 2023 EMP Mentees at a Community Networking Event

EMP is different than a regular placement because at its core, it is about mentorship.

83%

83% of participating mentors felt that their mentee would be “very prepared” to begin their career upon graduation

100%

100% of mentors stated they would take on another mentee through the EMP in the future.

100%

100% of mentees believe that participating in this program will help them succeed in their future job(s).

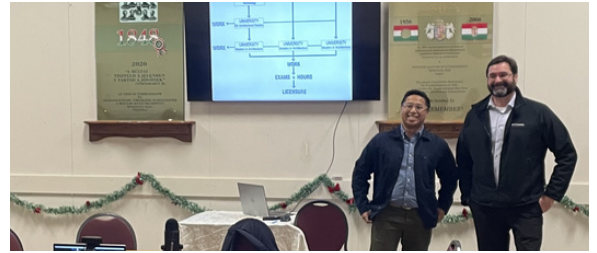


Gede Palar pictured with his Mentor Anne Marie Albidone Manager, Environmental Services

Gede, who is studying Environmental Sciences at the University of Windsor and who was placed with the City of Windsor, called his mentor “the best boss in the world” noting that her guidance made a significant impact on his personal and professional growth. Of the EMP program and his mentor, Gede wrote “I’m truly grateful for all of the valuable lessons and insights that were shared with me, as they have shaped my perspective and fueled my enthusiasm for making a difference in environmental sustainability.”

PROGRAMMING SPOTLIGHT

One of the strengths of the OTTS program is the grade-specific programming we run twice a month. This programming element provides invaluable social mentoring, volunteer and career focused opportunities and readies students for the transition to post-secondary studies and beyond. This year, being our first full school year back in person since the pandemic, our students made the most of getting out into the community and giving back.



Windsor Region Society of Architects presentation.

Our Social Mentoring program for Grade 9 students assists them with the adjustment to high school life. We expose students to various community supports and activities; however, we also promote their personal growth and discovery through art, culture and food and giving back to the communities in which they live.

We are extremely proud of our Career Exploration program for Grade 10 and 11 students. This program allows students to tour different workplaces throughout Windsor-Essex to learn about local, in-demand career options in our community. We also invite guest speakers to participate in our Sector Spotlight Series where students meet local professionals to learn about their place of business and the educational pathways they took to get there.



Tour of Kapco Tool & Die

Grade 12 students in our Post-Secondary Transition program receive support navigating the sometimes daunting world of post-secondary education. Specifically, we assist with the application process for the school and programs of choice, student loans as well as scholarships and bursaries. This program ensures that students feel supported in this significant time in their lives while also providing them with a sense of agency and independence as they set their sights on adulthood.



Grade 12 students attending personalized tours of St. Clair College and the University of Windsor.

We have received great feedback from students and community partners alike on this program. Ken Acton and his colleague Gerard Gutierrez, pictured above, from the Windsor Region Society of Architects (WRSA) have taken part in our Sector Spotlight series on several occasions. We've also worked with the WRSA and Ken to include our budding architects in community events and even help secure a co-op placement for a student interested in the field.

We are immensely appreciative of his ongoing support for our program and recognizing our students' potential. When asked about his support of OTTS, Ken remarked, "Whether it be through the WRSA or OPSEU (Ontario Public Service Employees Union), I'm always happy to help create the connections needed to support such a wonderful program. It truly is a vehicle for generational change. It opens doors and provides avenues for personal growth, while ensuring that the appropriate support mechanisms are in place to aid with the student's success!"

2022-2023 PROGRAM RESULTS

90%

Percentage of students in the program who graduate on time from high school.

76%

Percentage of graduates who are actively enrolled in a post-secondary program. In comparison, the national average is 47% for similar households.

91%

Percentage of students who started in the program and are still enrolled. This is a higher retention rate than similar support programs.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



Hello, my name is Julia, and I am a 17-year-old graduate from Assumption High School. I am happy to share my experience in the On Track to Success program and the tremendous impact it has had on me. I moved to Canada at age 10 with my family. It was not easy growing up as an immigrant in a foreign environment, and my family and I have faced many adversities that have shaped who I am today. Throughout my childhood, I always felt resentful for being forced to grow up sooner than my peers.

Once in grade 12, I was constantly asked about my plans for post-secondary education and the need to make a decision that would dictate the rest of my life. During this difficult period, I was introduced to a program called On Track to Success, which strives to ensure students' academic and personal success by providing unconditional help and support for any aspect of our lives. As a person who has become so independent through life experiences, it was very difficult for me to ask for help. However, through On Track to Success, I no longer felt the pressure to overcome challenges alone. The program created a safe space where I wasn't afraid to seek help, whether it be for school assignments or determining a pathway after high school.

With the support of On Track to Success, I finished my high school career as an Ontario Scholar and had the opportunity during the summer that followed to work as a tutor with ESL students in the classroom. This opportunity allowed me to work alongside and mentor other students, just like my experience in On Track. This program has truly allowed me to understand that it is okay to reach out and ask for help as that is the bravest thing one can do. I feel very secure in my future as I will be taking Business Administration and Psychology beginning in the Fall of 2023, and I am more motivated than ever to continue this journey with them by my side. With the support and guidance of On Track to Success coaches and mentors, I was able to apply to scholarships and gratefully become a recipient of multiple awards, such as the Eleanor Catherine Wallace Memorial Entrance Scholarship, the Ed Lumley Bursary and the On Track to Success Bursary, that will help ease the financial burden of post-secondary education and allow me to focus on my academic success. Hopefully one day, I will be able to spread love and kindness to others as this program has done to me.

FIELD TRIP FUN



"How Did We Get Here" by Black Kids in Action at the Capital Theatre

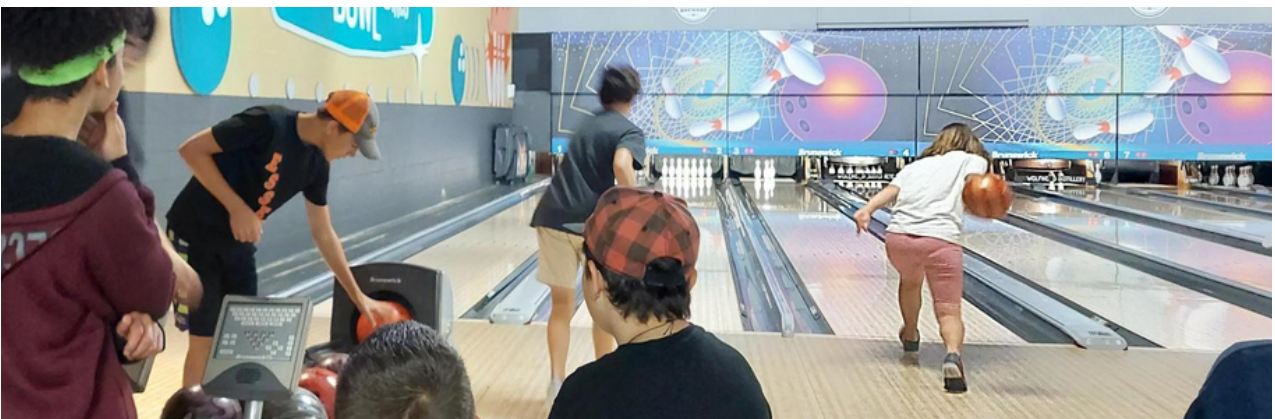


Low Ropes Course at the Toldo Lancer Centre

While we are proud of the academic and career assistance we provide for our youth, sometimes students need to have some fun just for the sake of it. Our OTTS fieldtrips allow our youth the opportunity to connect with their peers and create bonds that we hope will transcend their time in high school and in our program.



Stratford Festival Field Trip to see the rock musical, "Rent" by Jonathan Larson



Summer Bowling Excursion

ON TRACK TO SUCCESS DONORS

The On Track to Success program would not be possible without the generosity of donors. We are grateful to all those who are creating opportunities for local youth, and supporting children from Cradle to Career.

\$1200 - \$4999

- Debra Salter
- Desjardins Group
- Mary Jean Gallagher
- Mike Clark
- Trillium Mutual Insurance Company
- Unifor Local 195

\$5000 - \$9999

- BASF Canada
- Bill & Rochelle Tepperman Foundation
- Carl Hooper
- Champion Products
- Cheryl & Barry Horrobin
- CUPE Local 1393
- CUPE Local 3137
- CUPE Local 543
- Dr. Douglas Paterson & Margaret Cole-Paterson
- Freed-Orman Family Fund at the Windsor Essex Community Foundation
- Hotel Dieu Grace Healthcare Foundation
- Jem D International Partners LP DBA Red Sun Farms
- Leamington Chrysler
- The Morris and Beverly Baker Foundation
- OPSEU Local 138
- Retiree Volunteer Council
- Sean & Jennifer White
- UE Enclosures
- Windsor Regional Society of Architects

\$10,000 - \$24,999

- ArcelorMittal Windsor
- Carl Hooper
- CIBC
- Laval International Tool & Mold
- Michael & Sandy Beneteau
- Next Dimension
- O'Brien Jackson Family Foundation
- Patrick & Arlene Goggins
- Tamblyn Family Trust

\$25,000 - \$49,999

- St. Clair College
- Stephanie & Barry Zekelman Foundation
- University of Windsor

\$50,000 - \$99,999

- Ministry of Citizenship & Multiculturalism
- Ministry of Colleges and Universities
- RBC Royal Bank

\$100,000+

- Women United

*The donors on this list supported On Track to Success from April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023.



**United Way
Centraide**
Windsor-Essex County



THANK YOU

Visit www.weareunited.com/ontrack to learn more about our incredible donors, volunteers, and students.

To see how your donations are being invested visit weareunited.com/Impact. United Way strives towards the highest standards of accountability and trust.

Our 2022-23 audited financial statements will be available to the public in October 2023 at weareunited.com/FinancialStatements

If you have any questions about this report, please call 519-259-6164 or email info@weareunited.com

Charitable Registration # 108160334RR0001