



Focus Area: Education

Grant Finalist: Midnight Golf Program (MGP)

Project: College, Career and Beyond

Background: We believe in the unlimited potential of our young people and are focused on providing life-changing opportunities and resources that are essential for their success. In the initial phase of MGP's programming, 250 seniors from 65 different high schools throughout Southeast Michigan take part in a 30-week Life Skills and Mentorship afterschool program where they're equipped with a wide array of professional, financial and educational skills. They also learn the game of golf as a professional asset that can open doors, affording them access to new people, places, experiences, and historically exclusive networks.

MGP is a "lifetime program" and as our students graduate and make the transition from high school to college, we are right there with them, providing continued support throughout their collegiate experience. Our young people become part of the MGP family, and once you've formed these relationships, you want nothing more than for each of them to succeed. Recognizing a need to further support our students to improve their college graduation rate, and ultimately, their success in career and life, this innovative program launched the *College, Career and Beyond* initiative and implemented a team of staff "coaches" to work with students. These full-time, trained coaches hold regular 1-on-1 sessions with each student to assist them with the college selection and application process; helping students gain admission to colleges that suit them academically and financially. Mentors and coaches remain connected with our students, throughout their college experience, through regular check-ins to provide hands-on, proactive and data-driven guidance. Additionally, the coaching team hosts a series of professional development workshops and training sessions on college campuses and offsite.

Unmet Need: Many students in Detroit are operating at a disadvantage when it comes to their education. As few as 15% of Detroit Public Schools' recent graduating classes will complete college within six years of graduating high school. A study funded by the Gates Foundation revealed that financial challenges, supportive counseling, and "fit" accounted for the most common reasons students leave college. The focus of MGP is to help students access financial support, provide professional counseling, and exposure to the wide span of college-going opportunities. MGP students are selected without regard for GPA or test scores. 80% of our students live in low-to-moderate income households, and 34% are first-generation college students. They face these challenges and rely on the transformative support system developed through the Midnight Golf Program.

Outcomes: MGP measures success by not only assessing the effectiveness of our life skills program in preparing our students for success in college, but also in the effectiveness of the resources made available to ensure they are successfully persisting toward a degree. Success is defined by making a significant improvement in the 70% of MGP alumni who graduate from college within six years at present - a rate four times that of their unsupported peers.

Further success is measured by tracking the percentage of students who enter their second, and each subsequent year of college. We verify student success through check-ins with their dedicated coaches who also collect pertinent college enrollment data including transcripts, schedules, proof of satisfactory academic progress and good academic and financial standing. We have invested in software and tools to track this data. We will measure success against the achieved overall 95% persistence rate from last year.

Sustainability: MGP has, for more than 20 years, managed to sustain the program through a blend of individual, corporate and philanthropic support. We have long and lasting relationships with several significant grant making organizations including the Skillman, McGregor, Dresner and Jacob Family Foundations; the latter of whom has committed to match any funding awarded by Impact100 Metro Detroit, dollar for dollar, furthering our ability to fuel transformation in the greater Detroit community.

We also have several other family foundations that support our work, many of which have been directed to MGP through the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan. There are also several corporations that support our work through their foundations or other community support initiatives that ensure the long-term growth of MGP. We have a committed working Board of Directors who are each committed to personal and overall

fundraising support of MGP. Our social media presence has gone a long way to communicate our work along with a marketing and communications team who keep the message clear and accurate.