

Impact 100 Metro Detroit Grant Summary
Grant Finalist: **Accent Pontiac**
Project: **Social Change Through Music at Pontiac Middle School**

Background: Accent Pontiac provides during and after-school music programming for over 250 students at two Pontiac elementary school partners. Programming serves 2nd - 5th grade students four days per week for two hours per day at Walt Whitman and Alcott elementary schools. Accent Pontiac's curriculum includes: 1) Bucket Band classes, where students learn basic rhythmic and ear-training skills; 2) Brass, Woodwind and Percussion Ensemble and Sectionals, where students learn technical skills on the trumpet, euphonium, flute, clarinet, and saxophone; 3) Enrichment Activities, including music theory, homework help, team-building and leadership activities, and arts and crafts. A core component of Accent Pontiac's curriculum is student composition, a culturally-responsive teaching technique that provides opportunities for children to infuse their voice and experiences into their music education experience. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Accent Pontiac has stayed connected with students and families through porch lessons (outdoor, socially distanced lessons at students' homes), virtual instruction, and deliveries of groceries, essential household items and educational materials."

Unmet Need: Too often, a child's zip code determines their opportunity to participate in high quality music education. In Pontiac schools, financial challenges limit music programming. In addition, cost and transportation barriers prevent many Pontiac families from participating in extra-curricular music opportunities such as private lessons and youth orchestras. Research shows that students who participate in music education show many positive academic and social outcomes. Students of low socioeconomic status with a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes, including better grades and higher graduation rates and college enrollment, than students with less arts involvement (Catterall, 2012). In addition, students in the arts acquire socio-emotional skills including discipline, collaboration, patience, persistence, motivation, and self-esteem (Adderley, 2003). Without the opportunity to participate in strong music education, Pontiac students miss out on these benefits.

Project Summary: Accent Pontiac's project will expand our social change through music programming to Pontiac Middle School (PMS). In addition to giving us the ability to serve a new group of 6th-8th grade students, this project will provide a continuum of opportunity for students currently served at our partner elementary schools by allowing them to continue to participate in Accent Pontiac's transformational programming after they graduate from 5th grade. The Accent Pontiac site at PMS will: Serve ~40 students with free after-school music programming up to 4 days per week; Include ensemble and sectional classes for brass, woodwind, and percussion instruments as well as music theory/history and community time (homework help, team-building activities, etc.); Include a meal and transportation each day; Include opportunities for field trips and summer programming; Serve ~550 students with guest artist assemblies and student performances; Serve ~40 students through during-school music classes.

Uniqueness of program and population served: Accent Pontiac is an El Sistema-inspired program, distinct from other music education programs through its emphasis on using music as a vehicle for social change. As a program based on the El Sistema model, our programming is centered on the following values: social change, access, community, excellence, continuum, intensity, ensemble, and nucleo environment (safe learning space). In line with these values, all Accent Pontiac programming, including instruction, instruments, field trips, and more, is completely free to all student participants. Currently, there are very few opportunities for Pontiac students to access music education at no cost. There are no after-school music education programs at the Pontiac Middle School and no other El Sistema-inspired programs in Pontiac. At this time, Accent Pontiac provides the sole opportunity for Pontiac Middle School students to access free, intensive, high-quality social change through music education in their own community.

Sustainability: Accent Pontiac receives sustained funding from Kirk in the Hills and has secured multi-year funding from the Joseph Cejka and Florence Cejka Foundation, the Paul M Angell Foundation, the Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs, and the D'Addario Foundation. In addition, Accent Pontiac has an annual fundraising strategy to pursue multiple revenue streams including individual and corporate donations,

fundraising events and grant funding. Each year, Accent Pontiac has successfully expanded revenue from each of these sources by building our network of individual donors, growing our annual fundraising events (and adapting them during the pandemic), and securing new grants from the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan and other philanthropic organizations. After seed funding from Impact100 Metro Detroit is used to launch the project, we are confident that we will be able to build upon our existing infrastructure and attract new support to sustain the program.