

Impact 100 Metro Detroit Grant Summary
Grant Finalist: **Brilliant Detroit**
Project: **Central Detroit Kid Success Pocket Park**

Background: Brilliant Detroit is dedicated to building “kid success neighborhoods” where families with children ages 0-8 have what they need to be school-ready, healthy, and stable. We do this by establishing and operating homes in high need neighborhoods that offer proven programming to families with children.

Normally families with young children have to travel across the city to access the variety of high-quality programs that can support their children as they grow. Brilliant Detroit coordinates these existing programs through 12 early childhood and family hubs in the middle of Detroit neighborhoods. This way, families can access everything they need by walking up to 20 minutes from their home. In addition, Brilliant Detroit staff guide families through these programs on specialized paths tailored to the families’ goals and needs.

Unmet Need: Beyond the physical infrastructure that will allow for more educational programming and community enhancement, the Kid Success Pocket Park is the product of local residents leveraging its creativity and diversity in order to realize a shared vision. The vision is that all children deserve access to a stable, safe, and well-maintained environment to grow and experience community. This project is unique in that it highlights the importance of amplifying the will of those living in the neighborhood and receiving collective buy-in. Instead of stepping in and servicing them according to our terms and judgements as an outsider, Brilliant Detroit proudly partners with neighbors and supports them in steering the future of their own community through means such as this project. Additionally, this vision shared by an intergenerational group of residents and established organizations has shed an even bigger light on the essential role of local parks and recreation in the midst of the pandemic.

Project Summary: The support of Impact100 Metro Detroit will help build the stage, treehouse, and mobility path that was collaboratively designed by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center, a group of passionate Brilliant Detroit neighbors, and children living in the Central neighborhood. The stage will serve as a place for expanded programming in the Brilliant Detroit Central hub, as well as a space for the community to gather beyond Brilliant Detroit’s uses. The stage was requested by neighborhood children specifically for them to perform. The treehouse will be a recreational space for community-building and educational programming. Finally, the mobility loop will be an educational path for children to explore and learn how to ride bicycles. Thanks to the collaborative process that included neighbors every step of the way, the Kid Success Pocket Park will offer significant health and education opportunities to a neighborhood seeking a self-determined future.

Uniqueness of program and population served: Due to the history of structural discrimination that has limited Detroiters, particularly Black Detroiters, from accessing health and wealth, the pandemic has hit predominantly Black neighborhoods, such as the Central Detroit community, the hardest. Our neighbors are not only disproportionately represented in frontline essential work, but are also dealing with increased child care responsibilities with schools shortening their hours. Furthermore, young children in our community are acutely feeling the effects of the digital divide. Unreliable wifi, inadequate technology, and underdeveloped digital literacy compound the already uphill battle our students face in the fight for quality education.

In response, we launched “We’re Here for You!” efforts ranging from food and learn-at-home kit distributions to laptop provision, virtual tutoring, and Wayne Medical School supported health advice. During these times when indoor programming is impossible, the Kid Success Pocket Park will further.

Sustainability: With the cost of building the Kid Success Pocket Park covered by the generosity of Impact100, Brilliant Detroit can commit to staffing and maintaining the park as part of our Central Hub annual operating expenses. These expenses are sponsored annually by two of our Co-Founders, Carolyn and Jim Bellinson.