# isles/vorks



### 2016 Annual Report CELEBRATING 35 YEARS

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# MESSAGE from the President







Dear Friends,

Spring 2017

Through turbulent times, we're keeping our eyes on the prize. For us, the prize is more self-reliant families and healthier communities everywhere, but especially for those in low wealth, urban places.

How do we do that? We tackle the basics by partnering with communities (or "isles") to educate and train, build wealth, revitalize places, and promote green, healthy living. This 2016 Annual Report shines light on why these four business lines fit together and how we innovate for results.

Changing political winds in Washington, D.C. bring many questions about the future of resources and the health of cities. Proposed federal cuts will hit our communities hard. About 25% of Isles' funds come from federal sources to eliminate lead poisoning and educate and train high school dropouts. If these funds are cut, any short term taxpayer "savings" will be spent many times over when more kids get poisoned and/or end up in prison.

In short, Isles strives to get to the source of problems, not just treat symptoms.

Isles builds local solutions, but we feel a responsibility to learn from and inform others outside our region. For example, Isles tested and learned new ways to prevent childhood lead poisoning this year. We also helped others around the state and country re-think how they might apply the same lessons. We worked to bring smart new investments in lead remediation across New Jersey. By stretching and helping others, Isles impacts current and future Trenton kids—and many more.



By the way, this "learning, researching, and educating" part is powerful but really hard to fund! As a result, we increasingly rely on others like Princeton University to support our research, teaching, and sharing. In 2016, the Woodrow Wilson School and Isles hosted the firstof-its-kind conference on lead poisoning and education, bringing together experts from around the east coast. In addition, I continue to teach social entrepreneurship half-time at Princeton University.

Isles needs flexible funding to innovate, impact communities, build for the future, and now help others. That is where you come in. **Your support and friendship are more critical than ever!** 

Take a look at this report, and tell us what you think. We can't thank you enough for being there, especially during these times.

In community, *Marty* 



**Pathways to Our Mission** 



# PROMOTE

# Healthy Living



### Isles RETURNS up to \$221

to the community in lower taxes, special education expenses, and other societal costs.



Isles' Prince Moore tests the Ingram-Robinson home for lead with Mayor Eric Jackson and Congresswoman Bonnie Watson Coleman.

# Isles Gets the Lead Out

When Joy Ingram-Robinson's 2-year-old daughter started acting sick, her mother thought it was because she was a premature baby. "Her fingernails came off but she wasn't in any pain," Joy described. So Joy took little J'Selle to the doctor and found that the 2-year-old's blood lead levels tested at 5 micrograms per deciliter, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's reference point for action.

There is no cure for a child that has been poisoned by lead. Lead affects cognition, behavior, health, and IQ. The damage is permanent, though its effect on J'Selle will probably not be known for years. And J'Selle's poisoning was preventable. **It came from lead dust from old paint in her family's home**. A few new windows, encapsulating paint, and a roof repair could have spared this child from the lifelong effects of lead exposure.

J'Selle is not alone. Thousands of homes in Trenton—and other older NJ cities—have not been made lead-safe, and too few families know the potential danger in and around their homes. Thanks to funding from the NJ Department of Community Affairs and US Department of Housing and Urban Development, her home and 200 more will be made safe and energy efficient by Isles in the next 3 years.

#### Isles • ADVOCATES for

stronger, long-overdue lead policies to protect children;

• **TESTS** homes for the presence of lead and other hazards;

• **DELIVERS** education to protect families; and

• **TRAINS** contractors and community members to remove lead health hazards.

### **"Isles helped** push the state of New Jersey to **ADOPT THE NATIONAL STANDARD**

for identifying children who have been exposed to lead and require case management.<sup>99</sup>

# \$\$\$\$

Media & public attention led by **Isles** and others persuaded the state of New Jersey to commit

### \$20 million

to lead testing and home remediation.

### **Isles' Get the Lead Out**

campaign positions us to eliminate the threat of lead in Trenton by **2025**.

We're working to raise

over the next three years to make this possible. Join us by contributing to this critical effort!

Learn more at www.isles.org/GLO.



Christina Heimann, our Community Food Coordinator, teaches 17 classes in the four CHC schools.

# Healthy Food, Strong Bodies!

This year, Isles joined Novo Nordisk's Community Health Collaborative (CHC). The CHC works to prevent early onset diabetes and cultivate healthy lifestyles among second and third grade students at four elementary schools.

As part of the CHC, Isles educates students through gardening, cooking, and nutrition classes. Students discover where food comes from through handson gardening lessons and preparing healthy dishes in their classrooms. Fun and engaging lessons foster positive experiences with healthy foods. With more frequent exposure to healthy foods, kids are more willing to try them and more likely to improve their attitudes about health.



Just five months in, students' perceptions of healthy food are beginning to shift. Each week, they cheer as they prepare a healthy dish or care for the plants in their garden. They request fruits and vegetables more frequently, and they more easily recognize healthy food. It's amazing to see their excitement grow about trying these foods.

Students practice voting on their favorite leafy green.

# **REVITALIZE** Communities



Trenton's neighborhoods often make headlines because of what they appear to lack—stable housing, clean and safe parks, recreation, or residents committed to making a difference.

At Isles, we know the real Trenton is better defined by its unique assets—residents and workers committed to a safer, greener city that links to the broader region. Revitalizing and protecting Trenton's places—its parks, gardens, homes, and more—also creates a safer city. Isles helps create collaborations across the city that involve residents and stakeholders. Trenton: Safe City coordinates community leaders, Trenton city agencies, and nonprofits to prevent violence, strengthen neighborhoods, and increase intolerance for violence in our communities. 2,119 youth and 1,527 adults joined mobile recreation truck, **T-Recs**, for safe community fun.

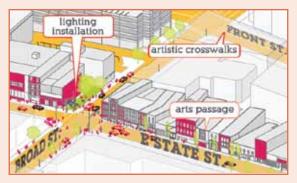
This year, **T-Recs** held **144** events to activate 20 underutilized spaces for **592** hours of operation—that's **360** miles of fun in 365 days!

In 2016, **T-Recs** accounted for: **252** pieces of chalk used water balloons **1,080** thrown **1,536** pool balls scored football passes and **15,552** catches **80,352** ping pong strikes basketball **1,555,200** dribbles

Volleyball? I'd play anything—it's better than playing video games inside.

**—RJ** (age 15)

### Trenton Arts in Focus



See the plan at bit.ly/ArtsinFocus

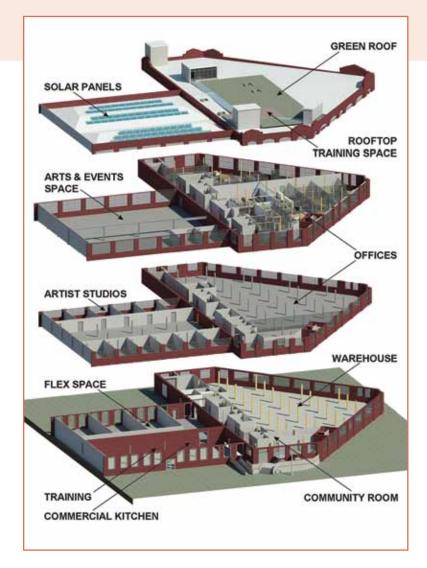
With funding from the NEA and in collaboration with Passage Theatre and many other local organizations, Isles led a city-wide communitydriven planning process to develop a plan for Trenton's first arts and culture district, the downtown Creek to Canal Creative District. More than 750 people shared their thoughts about how the arts can help to drive community and economic development in Trenton. This project enhances Isles' long-term revitalization work in the Old Trenton Neighborhood, links it to broader downtown planning and redevelopment efforts, and highlights the strength of Trenton's existing artists and arts organizations. Implementation of the plan is already underway with several catalytic projects and an active team of Trenton stakeholders committed to making the Creative District a reality.

## The Social Profit Center at Mill One

Isles is converting the historic former Atlantic Products mill into a shared space for nonprofits, social for-profit businesses, and artists. New windows, elevator, masonry, and a green and solar roof system were installed this year. The Social Profit Center is about 1/3 leased with artists, Isles training spaces and offices, and nonprofit tenants involved in literacy, job training, recycling, and the arts.

Generous donors to the Volcker Capital Challenge are highlighted on page 11. The 70,000 sqft center will serve a vital role in the region. As we near completion, we're grateful to all who make this ambitious project possible.

Come take a tour of this exciting space! Call Corey Waldron at 609-341-4734.





Last year, Clean & Green

improved and maintained



safe and beautiful places.

Anthony Cannon, our Clean and Green Crew Foreman maintains a vacant lot.

# TRAIN and Educate

The Healthy Homes training was very informative, well organized, and helpful. Both Emily and Andre were great speakers, very knowledgeable, friendly and well prepared. I personally would use this training to inform family child care providers of any problems that I may see in the home apart from our inspection report. The training helped me feel confident about sharing the information. My favorite part of the training was interacting with other professionals and hearing about their experiences inspecting homes. I recommend that everyone who owns, rents, or works in homes be educated on keeping homes healthy.

> - Liz Willingham Family Child Care Specialist



Andre Thomas, our Training Manager, trains and certifies people in energy efficiency, healthy homes, and environmental health. In 2016, Isles trained 330 individuals.

## Building a Culture of Health One Home at a Time

For too many children, home is the most dangerous place to be. Studies show that high-quality home visiting programs counter that cruel reality and improve family health, school attendance, and family self-sufficiency. Isles trains and supports an array of home visitors—social workers, peer educators, weatherization professionals, and building inspectors—on lead and other indoor hazards. Home visitors learn to perform lead and healthy homes assessments as part of their in-home duties, helping families make simple changes that can greatly decrease lead poisoning, asthma attacks, falls, and fire hazards.

### **IYI** Alumni Association

Since 1995, Isles Youth Institute has been a powerful force within Trenton, helping over 1,000 disconnected young people gain diplomas and careers. Today, our alumni are part of the fabric of Trenton: they run businesses, own homes, and lead community improvement efforts. They prove the potential for self-reliance.

Our alumni can be a powerful resource for each other and current students. Recently, Isles launched an Alumni Association, similar to alumni groups of local colleges and universities. The Alumni Association helps current and former students network, learn, and find support. For more info, contact Cherie Hooks at 609-341-4756 or chooks@isles.org.



The Davis family celebrating Sha'Kiera at IYI's 2016 graduation.

### **Isles Youth Institute:** A National Award

This year, Isles Youth Institute's Sha'Kiera Davis was selected as one of only twenty national 2016 Helene D. Stoneman Scholars by YouthBuild USA.

Sha'Kiera joined Isles Youth Institute in April 2014. Motivated by her two young children, Sha'Kiera earned her high school diploma and Certified Nursing Assistant license in June 2016. Since then, Sha'Kiera gained a job as a CNA and entered an Associate's program for nursing at Mercer County Community College. She credits the support of IYI staff, her peers, and her family for her success, noting, "I always planned to follow my mother's footsteps to become a registered nurse. IYI's education and hands on learning have taught me what I need to know."

Sha'Kiera plans to continue working as a CNA while she attends school. She tells us,

I plan to involve myself in a lot of community service to give back to an inner city clinic to help those in need.

Sha'Kiera is positive, eager to learn, and committed to her long term goals, traits that will lead to her continued success. The Helene D. Stoneman Scholarship will bolster her on her journey.

## Isles' Leadership Academy at **Isles Youth Institute**

With targeted support from individual donors, Isles created the IYI Leadership Academy to produce Trenton's next generation of community leaders. The academy helps students develop skills to counter violence, create safe spaces, improve their relationships, and set and achieve personal goals. Students learn how to be civically engaged and develop long-term, positive habits. Stay tuned for updates from the first cohort of student leaders!

\*\* Though the leadership academy is in its early stages, we're already seeing progress in our students! They are applying skills learned in the academy to become leaders in the school and their community. It's great to see students make the connection between the academy and their decision-making and behavior in other settings. \*\*

> - Andre Thomas Isles Training Manager



# BUILD Wealth

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# A Counselor, An Advocate, A Friend

In early January, Eliza Perez came to Isles in tears. A predatory mortgage company was about to take her home. Based on our experience with this company, we knew this would be tough. They often tried to foreclose on homeowners rather than modify loans. Our senior housing counselor, Markese Humphrey, set out to help. Markese and Eliza moved quickly, gathering documentation and preparing for the mortgage company's questions. As a result, Eliza secured a trial payment plan that turned into a permanent one. Instead of a mortgage increase of hundreds of dollars, Eliza's increased by \$17, a change she could afford. Isles is proud to have helped Eliza succeed, along with hundreds of others like her, since 2008.

#### 10 Isles Works

\$

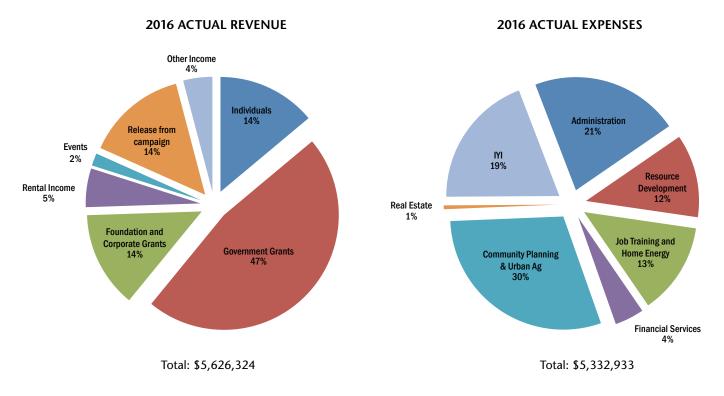
**Isles** provided innovative employer-based **financial solutions** to **205** employees of Princeton University, the YMCA, Community Options, WomanSpace and Capital Health.

80% of financial counseling customers **met their finance goals** for credit, savings, or debt.



Last year, **Isles helped 12** families save their homes from foreclosure and **11** families buy their first home.

# FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2016



A complete audited financial statement will be available at our office or at isles.org/about/publications/financials.

### **Volcker Challenge**

In 2015, Paul and Anke Volcker established a \$1 million challenge grant to support the development of the Social Profit Center at Mill One. Thank you to the following donors who helped match these funds.

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### **Isles Bridge Builders**

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