



## **2015-2016 Annual Report**

To create lasting relationships between mentor and student in which student feels empowered to take responsibility for their own life.



## **Executive Summary**

- ✓ Provided adult mentors to 13 students that attended Denny International Middle School
- ✓ Hosted full group monthly workshops where students learned different skills to deal with the difficult topics that arise in middle school
- ✓ Hosted monthly community outings to engage with society and our community
- ✓ Implemented high school junior mentors to co-lead monthly workshops and assist students with homework completion
- ✓ All students raised their grades in at least one class
- ✓ Of our 47 goals, 22 goals were achieved
- ✓ Increased our assets by 50%
- ✓ Overhead was restricted to 30% of annual expenses
- ✓ Hosted a Mentor Appreciation Bowling event
- ✓ Hosted first annual spring fundraiser
- ✓ Read the full report at [www.empowermentoring.org](http://www.empowermentoring.org)

## Letter from the Executive Director

First and foremost, I want to thank every single mentor, donor, board member, advocate, supporter, student, family, friend, administrator, and teacher. You are the reason our program exists, and continues to change the life of our students. As the executive director and founder, it has been exciting to see the growth in the program these past three years, to witness the change in the students in just this past year, and to feel the love and support from all of you. THANK YOU!!!

For the 2015-2016 year we decided to try some new things, which worked out marvelously. The first big change, was to have the monthly workshops attended by all three grades, and food was provided. This was a change the board of directors and myself decided was necessary to foster deep conversation and build a larger and stronger community for the students and mentors. Each workshop was filled with meaningful discussion and the students were able to get support from the whole community. Having all three grades attend the workshops also fostered the creation of small groups between mentors and students, whom spent time together outside of workshops.

Another component we added this year was community outings. Each month, the group would be invited to attend different outings. The outings were to continue fostering community, to give matches different ideas of activities to do together, and to help with cost for matches when money can be tight. These outings were not required, but we had a good turn out every month.

One of the most important changes for me, was acknowledging and honoring our volunteer mentors. Mentoring a middle school student can be hard work, and time consuming. In the past we have always thanked the mentors in person, as well as on social media. This year, we made sure to have a volunteer appreciation budget. In January during Mentor Appreciation Month, mentors were sent cards signed by their students and myself, and a small gift as a token of our appreciation. Then in April for Volunteer Appreciation Week, mentors were honored on our social media accounts, and we hosted a Mentor Appreciation Bowling Party. The mentors felt appreciated, and loved the bowling party, as it brought them together as mentors, and they could use each other for advice and build their own connections.

This year we hosted our first fundraiser. It was a complete success, and be on the lookout for the invite for our future fundraisers. Included in this annual report you will find a recap on the fundraiser, information on our financial year, highlights from our program and hear reflections from students.

Thank you again, for supporting myself as a leader, and for continuing to support Empower Mentoring Program this past year.



Julia Hodges  
Executive Director  
Empower Mentoring Program

## Program Highlights

This year was an exciting year for our program as we had our first ever fundraiser. We were also able to increase our email subscribers by 18 subscribers!

We had a busy year with our students and mentees. The year started with 13 mentors and 13 students and we ended the year with 11 mentors and 12 students. We are actively recruiting mentors for the upcoming year and are looking into creative ways to recruit.



This year, to create a larger and deeper sense of community, all three grades attended the workshops together. This led to deeper conversations, varying insights, and connections between multiple matches that wouldn't have been possible if the workshops were grade based. Some of the favorite workshops this past year were, video games; with our guest speaker from Bungie, Jeff Guy, Healthy Living; and our talks on factory farming and eating local, and internet safety, and being aware of who you know, and

talk to on social media.

To further create community, and add a fun aspect to our program, we hosted monthly community outings. These outings were to different locations around Seattle, that sometimes tied into our monthly workshop theme. The outings were varied, so that there was something for everyone, and each match attended at least one. Our first outing was to the Living Computer Museum, and the matches spent hours learning about the history of technology and the impact it has on today's new and ever changing technology. One the most fun outings, was to play kickball, during our healthy living month. We meet at the school, on a warm spring day, and played countless games of kickball. We played mentor Vs. student, played boys vs girls, and many more variations. We had a very competitive group, and we were there for hours, in the hot sun, until the matches called it quits to go get Slurpee's.



Besides all the fun we instilled this year, mentors and students bonded over their shared interests, and spent their one-on-one time doing things they loved. Some things seemed little, but meant the world to the students, such as their mentors attending their basketball games every weekend during the season. Another mentor and student created their own book club, and challenged each other to read new books together, and discuss afterwards. While the group would come together and be a great community with so much in common, each match was very individualized and

you could see this by the way the matches communicated with each other, the outings they participated in, and in the goals the students set.

This year we also added a high school junior mentor to help lead monthly workshops and provide academic support to our students monthly. Sam was a splendid junior mentor, always



helpful, full of new insight, and was able to connect with the students in a way we hadn't seen before. Our monthly after school homework help sessions, were not attended by all, with an average of 4 students a month. One main problem with adding an after school homework help session, was that the school already has many academic support groups after school. Students also meet with their teachers, and retake tests and quizzes after school, sports also practice at the same time. All the students whom

participated in our program attended some kind of academic support session, either hosted by us, or hosted by the school. They were getting the academic support that they needed, and they were also very busy.

While our academic support sessions were not highly attended, every single one of our students



raised their grades in at least one class over the course of the year. Our students also set multiple goals throughout the year, 47 goals in fact, and by our completion ceremony in June, students achieved 22 of those goals. Many students were close to achieving their goals. Setting goals is important, and it teaches students to look for something they want, and create steps to achieve it. Our students did just that.

Another fun addition this past year was the opportunity for students and mentors to attend Seattle Symphony concerts, free of charge, as part of the community connections program with the symphony. The students and mentors that attended, had a blast, and this was something that many of our students had never experienced before.

It was a fantastic year, and we are looking forward to seeing the continuing growth of the students this coming school year.

## Program Evaluation

At the end of the school year, the mentees reflect on their experiences in the program. Many students enjoyed the benefits of having a mentor and they want to continue for the following year. We want to develop the program in many ways where we can reach out to more students.

A common theme for improvement was to spend more time with their mentors. From the words of a mentee, “[mentors] let kids that don’t get along with other students get along with someone.” We want mentees to be comfortable with their mentors because a mentor’s role is not only to guide and to teach, but also to have fun and to provide support as a confidante.

Our mentors are essential to the quality of the program. Mentors ended the school year on great notes with many praising the experience. We want the pair to build a bond where they can learn from each other and tackle their own real life issues.

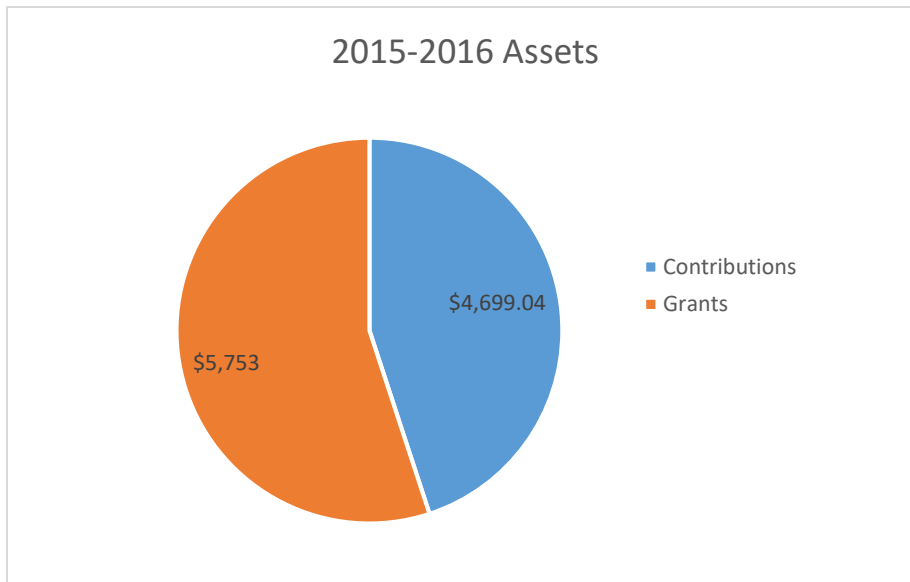
From the responses, mentors were satisfied with our program. Many were able to help the students in their home and academic life. The mentors were sharing their life stories and the students were learning from them. A trust is built over time and it strengthens the connection.

## Financials

This was a huge year of growth for us. We grew our assets by 50.65%, giving us an operating budget of \$10353. We were able to keep our expenses down, even with expanding our pool of participants, to only \$8228. All of this growth is due to our loyal supporters. The year started out by us being nominated and receiving a BECU People Helping Peoples Award grant of \$5000. That award set the stage for the great year ahead. As a kick off to the start of our program year, we were part of a ‘Dine Out’ experience partnered with Endolyne Joes, on Oct 27<sup>th</sup>. Endolyne Joes donated 25% of all food sales to Empower Mentoring Program, equaling to \$1025.33. It was a fund event to get the while community connected to our mission. Our next big show of support from you happened on May 3<sup>rd</sup>, as a part of the Seattle Foundations Give Big. This year, there was a bit of a struggle due to technology failures on the donation platform, but



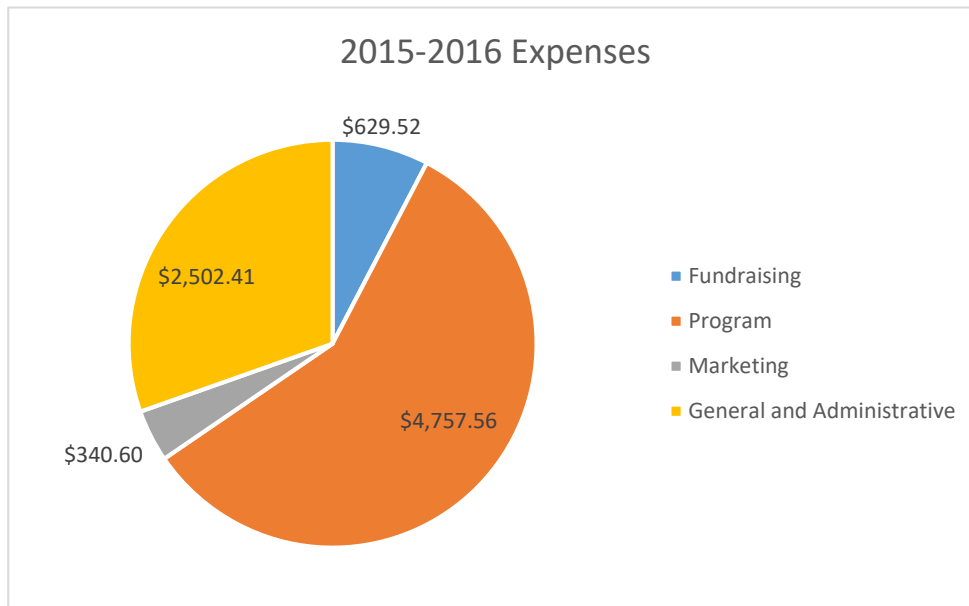
the one day of giving was extended and we brought home \$1420 from individual donors,



employer matching, our board of directors matching pool and by the stretch pool through Give Big. From Give Big 2015, that was a growth of 66%, on just one day of giving. Another big accomplishment we had this year was planning and executing our first fundraiser. One June 5<sup>th</sup> we hosted a meet and greet

fundraiser and honored our 8<sup>th</sup> grade students.

As this year was a year of expansion our total expenses went up, equaling out to be \$8230.09 with 57.8% of these expenses going directly to program costs. One large new expense for us, was providing funds for monthly group outings. These outings were difference experiences in the community. Some of the trips we took included visiting the Living Computer Museum, vising the Center for Wooden Boats and seeing the Anne Frank exhibit. These outings



were meant to deepen the connections between the mentors and students within the group, and to expand the groups knowledge within our city.

This year we were able to keep our marketing expenses low, because we had great mentors who

recruited for us via word of mouth. This is the best kind of recruitment, because it brings people

to the program who care about our mission and it keeps them involved because they are participating with friends.

The general and administrative expenses also increased. Since we added more mentors and more students, our insurance rates went up. The board of directors also issued a yearly stipend to executive director, Julia, of \$1500, and a professional development fund for her to use to attend conferences, webinars, classes and other professional development to be the best director possible, and keep pushing the program further. The general and administrative expense was a bit high, being at 30% of our total expenses, but this covered the executive director stipend, professional development, insurance coverage, office supplies, and website hosting. These things are costly, but without them, the program cannot exist. Every year, we look to see how we can cut expenses, and this year we will continue to keep our expenses down, and only spend what is absolutely necessary to keep our program running smoothly.

Our fundraising expense was higher than in years past, because we hosted our first fundraiser, which was a hit and easily covered all those expenses.

## **Fundraiser**

First and foremost, I want to thank every single one of you for attending our fundraising event on June 5<sup>th</sup>. As our first event, it was great to see new and current supporters gather together to learn more about the goals, mission, and successes of Empower Mentoring Program.

We heard from our founder and Executive Director, Julia Hodges, on why Empower Mentoring Program was founded, learned what the mission and program goals were, and the how students are increasing their developmental assets on average by 5.5 points every year.



Tabitha, our student speaker, talked about how being a part of the community, and working with a mentor, helped her realize that people were there for her, even when it seemed like she was alone. She has grown into a more confident, self-aware, and positive young lady over the past three years. Meagan, our mentor speaker, talked about what it meant to be a mentor and work with her students, and the impact she hopes to have made on them, and the impact they have had on her. You also saw, Luke and Tabitha, two of our 5 eighth grade students, get honored for their time and commitment and growth.



At the end of the day, our board of directors felt the event was a success, and had thoroughly enjoyed the afternoon, as I hope all of you did too. Through our silent auction we were able to raise \$636, and through donations we raised \$1030. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your support. With these donations, we will be able to providing mentors to more students in the fall, and keep working to increase their developmental assets, their self-confidence, their passions and so much more!



I want to also thank all our silent auction donations, and other donors that helped this fundraiser go on without a hitch; Luke Cruise, our DJ for the afternoon, Phong Dang, our photographer, Safeway and West Seattle Thriftway for gift cards for food purchases, Chris Brownrigg for contributing hard cider, NW Wine Academy for contributing wine, Bakery Nouveau for the donation of their chocolate cake, and World Vision for

donating pieces of the student's gifts.

If you are looking for other ways to support us throughout the year, please select us as your charity of choice on AmazonSmile, and engage with us on social media, or via email.

Again, thank you so much for joining the web of support for our students. Everything is done because of you.



# Thank You

## Donors

Jan Kozlow  
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Julie Ngo  
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Andrew Thomas  
Jessica Johnson

## Board of Directors

Shelani Vanniasinkam  
Nicole Agne  
Kim Co  
Wes Harris  
Andy Zhang  
Julia Hodges

## **In the future:**

These past three years have been a whirlwind. We have had many challenges as a new, young organization, but have had many more successes. As we continue to grow and expand, be on the lookout for our new and exciting future endeavors.

Within the next three years we plan to:

- Create an alumni program to keep past students and mentors engaged by hosting fun and educational events throughout the year
- Expand our High School Junior Mentor Program by recruiting our past students to return as volunteers
- Reach out and expand the one-on-one mentoring to all middle school students in the West Seattle vicinity
- Have a base of 40 adult mentors

Within the next five years we plan to:

- Achieve 100% high school graduation rate with our past students
- Expand our program to other schools and cities in the Pacific Northwest, particularly in the South King County region