

A black and white photograph of a hand holding a small white packet, possibly a dumpling or a small food item, over a tray filled with many similar items. The background is blurred, showing more of the tray and the items.

# 2016 Annual Report



**Towards Employment**



## LETTER FROM BRIAN

# This year, Towards Employment celebrated 40 years of operation, served more people than ever before, launched a social enterprise Bloom Bakery, and completed a national workforce pilot called WorkAdvance.

Towards Employment is in the business of connecting people to careers and changing lives by helping them acquire the skills they need to secure employment. Being employed is a transformative experience, giving people a sense of pride and meaning in their lives and making them feel like they're contributing – to their family, to their community, and to their overall well-being.

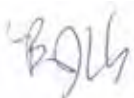
This has never been more true for us than in 2016. The numbers tell the story. We helped 560 people find good jobs. A significant portion of those individuals, 359 out of 560, had criminal backgrounds. 145 people advanced in their jobs. 184 people received technical training. We provided 1,991 supportive services to help transition people into jobs, and we provided 1,245 free legal services to help remove barriers to employment.

TE launched a social enterprise, Bloom Artisan Bakery & Cafe in March, 2016. Bloom Bakery now provides 16 jobs, 15 of which are filled by Towards Employment graduates. In addition, we have at least two intern slots that provide work experience for participants in our young adult programming. Bloom uses an apprenticeship model where new employees learn while they earn and gradually take on more responsibility as they gain skills in baking, food preparation and/or customer service. Employees move through a series of skills-trainings including safe food handling, job-specific skills and soft skills to prepare for employment outside of Bloom. It's been rewarding for TE to have an opportunity to make an impact in our graduates' lives by running an actual business.

The national WorkAdvance pilot we participated in over the last five years was completed in 2016 and validated our theories about the importance of career pathways. Through the proven results of the WorkAdvance program, we learned that comprehensive services that holistically address an individual's needs are effective in helping an individual get, keep, and advance in a job; that career coaching matters (as those who received post-employment coaching were ten times more likely to advance in their jobs); and that sector-focused training programs successfully build capacity across the workforce system (preparing people to handle the open jobs in our region). We are applying the lessons of WorkAdvance to our ongoing programs to support more individuals in their journey to finding good jobs.

It is a privilege to serve as an officer and board member of an organization that so profoundly changes peoples' lives. TE's workforce development model is best-in-class, as demonstrated by the nationally-recognized results of its programming. TE's staff is mission-driven and fully committed to the career pathways model. But the real heroes of the story are the over 3000 participants who go through TE's various programs each year, committed to achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency through employment. They are an inspiration to us all. See for yourself – contact TE today about attending a graduation ceremony, where you can join the participants and their loved ones in a life-changing celebration of empowerment, encouragement and optimism.

We have accomplished so much this year but each year thousands of previously incarcerated people return to our community looking to rebuild their lives and contribute. Our work continues to be more important than ever. As always, our work would not be possible without the generous support and ongoing partnership of our funders and donors and our employer partners. Thank you for continued faith in us to change people's lives and positively impact our community.



**BRIAN LAMB**  
Board President

## LETTER FROM JILL

# 2016 was a pivotal year for Towards Employment

On behalf of our staff, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors for their ongoing support and dedication to our work during 2016. This was a pivotal year for Towards Employment: with their leadership we are able to achieve some real milestones, including the completion of the national pilot of WorkAdvance and the launch of our very own social enterprise, Bloom Bakery.

I add a special thank you to two Directors who hit their own milestones this year. Brian Lamb completed his tenure as board president. His leadership of our strategic planning process, his drive to ensure that the board was operating at its best, and his ability to lift us all up with humor is appreciated by all at Towards Employment. And, after completing her 9 year term, we say farewell to Ellen Wisbar, President Emeritus and former Chair of the Board's Social Enterprise committee. We will miss her wisdom, her focus on excellence, and thoughtful way of building consensus. Without Brian and Ellen's passion for our mission and generosity of spirit, we would not have achieved the same success.

Mobility out of poverty is the bottom line in our work; the more impact we have on individual families, the more we can help lift the community. We have a lot of work ahead but our commitment to empowering individuals through skills and employment has never been as important as it is today. Thank you to our community for having faith in us for the past 41 years and to all of you who have had a hand in helping us change lives in our community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jill Rizika', followed by a long horizontal flourish.

**JILL RIZIKA**  
Executive Director

# We helped 560 people find good jobs.



**560 PEOPLE**  
found good jobs; 359 of those  
had criminal backgrounds



**JOB RETENTION WAS 93%**  
at 30 days; 78% at 90 days



**184 PEOPLE**  
received technical training



**\$10.40 AN HOUR**  
was the average  
starting wage



**145 ADVANCEMENTS**  
including raises  
and promotions



**300 EMPLOYERS**  
hired TE graduates



**1,991 SUPPORTIVE SERVICES**  
were provided to help people  
transition into jobs



**1,245 LEGAL SERVICES**  
were offered for credit, housing  
and other issues



—  
**Meet  
Chris**

## CHRIS'S STORY

**Stuck in an unsatisfying job due to a criminal background, Chris found Towards Employment in 2013 through a co-worker and enrolled in WorkAdvance and chose to go into a manufacturing field.**

He found the CITC CNC training course exciting, and on completing the course, Chris gained the ability to do what he had wanted to do for a long time: support his family.

"You can't raise kids from a jail cell," Chris said. His kids had been the number one motivator for his decision to make the first step in pursuing a long-term career. He felt he had to better himself, and his career, so that he could better their lives by extension. "You control your destiny. You need to control your own life and actions. You can choose to settle for less, but I can't settle for less anymore."

Chris has continued to work in manufacturing and has only had one change in employer since he finished his training nearly four years ago: That change was to pursue a higher wage and better hours. Chris's wage has increased 85% over the course of 4 years. Chris sees his future as "nothing but going up."

**He wanted  
to better  
himself.**



# 2016 Board





# 2016 Board

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—  
**Meet  
D’Vaughn**

## D'VAUGHN'S STORY

**“Towards Employment is one of the best things that has ever happened to me,” recalls D’Vaughn on a day earlier this summer.**

Motivated to become a better dad, husband, brother, and son, D’Vaughn, as a participant in the Reentry program with a focus on Fatherhood.

Before enrolling in TE’s program, D’Vaughn cycled in and out of prison and had a difficult time finding a job due to his inability to talk openly about his felonies with potential employers. “Towards Employment taught me how to explain myself and how to be upfront with my past.” With Towards Employment’s help D’Vaughn was able to get his driver’s license back after 20 years and secure a position in a fulltime general labor position. After a year in his position, he enrolled in TE Advancement Academy and completed a Tow Motor certification course. His Tow Motor license resulted in a promotion at his employer. After some time in this role, he returned to seek out additional opportunities and TE was able to assist him in finding a new employer with improved hours and a higher wage.

“I feel like Toward Employment was a big stepping stone for me and opened a lot of doors and was the best decision I have ever made. Ever since, Towards Employment has been showing me that they are there and that they care about the situation that I am in. It feels good to have someone other than family that cares about me,” says D’Vaughn.

He and his wife have five children at home and take a team approach to parenting. His new hours allow him to pick up the kids from school daily, while his wife handles drop-off in the morning. Every day after school, D’Vaughn helps with homework and housework, but most importantly, he gets to spend more time with his kids.

This year, D’Vaughn won the 2017 Cuyahoga County Fatherhood Award for his 2016 achievements. “I am proud that I can contribute to my family in both financial and personal ways.”

**He wanted  
to be the  
best father.**

—

# 2016 Staff &





# 2016 Staff

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Timika Bradley  
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Chelsea Van Bergen  
Tailyn Walborn  
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Gail Weintraub  
David Wilson  
Larry Wise  
Nan Zieleniec

A special thanks to corporate day of service volunteers  
from Key Bank, Swagelok and HandsOn Northeast Ohio.



**Meet  
Ellen**

## ELLEN'S STORY

# In August 2015, Ellen stepped up and onto a career pathway.

She was a returning citizen who went through Towards Employment job readiness program. She decided she wanted a career in construction and after a work experience with Habitat for Humanity, she achieved a Level 1 carpenter's apprentice certification with just two levels left to become a journeyman. She felt a deep sense of achievement but sometimes it felt as if she was just earning a paycheck. She talked a bit to her career coaches about "purpose." She wanted to work with purpose.

Towards Employment was in the process of opening Bloom Bakery. The shift supervisor slot was open. Ellen's career coaches went to bat for her – they knew she would be perfect and it would achieve her goal of working with purpose. Ellen interviewed the next day – and left the interview knowing that this was something she wanted to do. It was not construction but she felt ready. She was called back that day for a second interview and hired on the spot.

Now part of the leadership team, Ellen is director of retail operations – with day to day responsibilities of supervising the retail staff, the catering business, and growing the sales of this social enterprise. Ellen often shares her experience with employers and funders and other Bloom visitors. She can truly articulate the importance of jobs– specifically for people returning from incarceration.

"There are very specific hurdles that we face that others do not. Bloom's mission is to help people to learn a new skill and a new outlook so they are prepared for work. When they come to us they may not be able to work that first job – after working in the bakery or on the retail side, scheduling and thinking through the day's next step are easier. We help people so they are ready for the next employer."

"I feel I have purpose. I am part of the first generation of Bloom employees – we (and I always include myself) have to succeed because we need others to have this chance."

# She wanted to work with purpose.







# 2016 Donors

## **\$250,000 AND UP**

Deaconess Community Foundation  
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## **\$100,000 TO \$249,999**

Annie E. Casey Foundation  
The Cleveland Foundation  
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United Way of Greater Cleveland

## **\$50,000 TO \$99,999**

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## **\$20,000 TO \$49,999**

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A note to our supporters: Donation levels reflected are from January 1, 2016 to December 31, 2016. We appreciate your generous donations to Towards Employment, and we want to recognize everyone accordingly with 100% accuracy. If we have inadvertently made an error, please contact 216.696.5750 with concerns or corrections.



# 2016 Donors

## UP TO \$500

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—  
**Meet  
Yaquisha**

## YAQUISHA'S STORY

# Yaquisha came to Towards Employment in 2012 having dropped out of college and cycled through a series of dead end jobs.

Having grown up with a single mother and as the oldest of four siblings, she knew how to work hard. But in 2012, she was having trouble staying motivated and seeing a pathway forward. At TE going through the WorkAdvance program - with its focus on career coaching, training and career planning - she found the additional support, direction and challenges she needed to thrive.

She worked with the legal department to work through a court case that had become an employment barrier and received transportation assistance to get to a manufacturing job that was not accessible with public transportation. Placed with Merit Brass two years ago, she has had three advancements; and is also just a few credits away from completing a personal milestone - her degree.

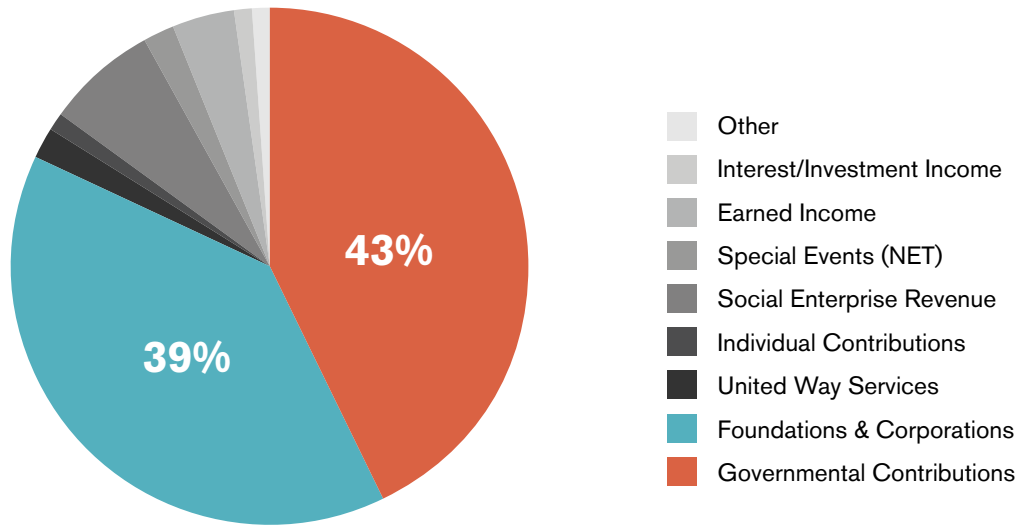
# She wanted to thrive.

# — 2016 Financials



# Financials

## SOURCES OF REVENUE



SOURCES OF REVENUE	2014	2015	2016
Governmental Contributions	\$973,169	\$1,740,743	\$2,616,024
Foundations & Corporations	\$1,683,299	\$2,578,771	\$2,318,976
United Way Services	\$150,999	\$147,980	\$141,321
Individual Contributions	\$165,659	\$116,807	\$89,195
Cy Pres			
Social Enterprise Revenue			\$395,776
Special Events (NET)	\$131,337	\$151,406	\$139,813
Earned Income	\$38,351	\$161,003	\$211,336
Interest/Investment Income	\$24,759	\$22,570	\$65,198
Other	\$12,809	\$44,486	\$40,837
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,180,382</b>	<b>\$4,963,766</b>	<b>\$6,018,476</b>
USES OF REVENUE			
Staffing	\$2,190,546	\$2,574,214	\$3,605,561
Supportive Services	\$218,770	\$374,928	\$757,888
Other Program Costs	\$254,396	\$619,294	\$1,067,133
Occupancy	\$293,433	\$246,951	\$374,463
Cost of Goods Sold			\$281,413
Other Operating Costs	\$108,865	\$375,428	\$609,698
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,066,010</b>	<b>\$4,190,815</b>	<b>\$6,696,156</b>
Change in Net Assets	\$114,372	\$772,951	(\$677,680)
Begginig Net Assets	\$1,706,957	\$1,821,329	\$2,594,280
<b>ENDING NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$1,821,329</b>	<b>\$2,594,280</b>	<b>\$1,916,600</b>



Towards **Employment**

1255 Euclid Ave, 300 | Cleveland, OH 44115 | 216.696.5750 | [info@towardsemployment.org](mailto:info@towardsemployment.org) | [towardsemployment.org](http://towardsemployment.org)