MCG taught me the importance of hope...

Since Kindergarten, David Underwood had been in and out of the foster care system. While his experience was generally positive, David’s life in foster care was rarely stable. In 2005, when David was a sophomore at Pittsburgh Oliver High School, a friend told him about Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild youth arts education program. Desiring a place where he could express himself, David decided to attend MCG Youth & Arts. After taking classes in all four art studios, David found his true calling. “Photography gave me a meaningful focus in the midst of the chaos around me,” David recalls.

It wasn’t long before David’s focus on photography led him to consider furthering his education after high school. “I started to realize through photography that if you work for something, you have the ability to create something beautiful. MCG taught me that pretty quickly,” says David.

With encouragement from the teaching artists at MCG Youth & Arts and confidence built through field trips to various local colleges, David applied to the art education program at Edinboro University. “I hadn’t even thought of going to college until MCG,” recalls David. During his first year at college, David shifted his major. In 2012, he obtained his B.A. in Social Work with a minor in Sociology.

After graduating, David took a position as a case worker for families involved in the foster care system. David says that “MCG taught me the importance of hope and, having been in the foster care system, now I want to give hope to those who need it most.”

...Now I want to give hope to those who need it most.
Dear Friend:

As 2013 comes to a close, I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support of Manchester Bidwell Corporation (MBC). With your help, we have achieved many important milestones:

- Bidwell Training Center became one of only 17 out of 800 institutions nationally to receive the School of Excellence distinction, which is the highest level of recognition by Accrediting Commission of Career Schools & Colleges;
- In the 2012–13 school year, 98 percent of the students who attended MCG Youth & Arts classes graduated high school on time versus the national average of 78 percent; and
- MCG Jazz presented School of Swing, its signature music-based, youth education program, to more than 2,900 elementary-school students.

On the next page, we are highlighting the story of David Underwood, an alumnus of MCG Youth & Arts who was raised in the foster care system. Through our organization’s empowering environment, David was encouraged to finish high school and obtain his bachelor’s degree. After graduating, David returned to help families in the foster care system. This story underlines the importance of our work. I hope it inspires you to invest in MBC as we continue our mission of helping people like David throughout the Pittsburgh community.

We wish you happy holidays and look forward to sharing our accomplishments with you again in 2014.

Sincerely,

William E. Strickland Jr., President and CEO

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