Manchester Bidwell Corporation presents

STORIES OF SUCCESS
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As a teenager in 1960s Pittsburgh, I thought I understood what life had to offer—conflict, apathy and, eventually, prison or worse. There was no point worrying about my education because my environment told me what my future held. I was content to walk down this road because it was the only road I knew.

My world changed one day through a chance encounter. I was wandering the halls of my inner-city public high school when I smelled coffee. I was curious; I entered the unfamiliar classroom. I saw a man, bathed in afternoon light, shaping a mound of clay into an object, both beautiful and practical. The entire experience was alien to me. Art and light were not much a part of my world and certainly weren’t part of my school.

I started asking questions. The man explained to me what he was doing and invited me to try. This was not just an invitation to throw a pot; it was also art teacher Frank Ross saving my life by introducing me to education through the arts.

Mr. Ross became my mentor and invested in the potential he saw in me that I did not see in myself. He taught me how I was like the clay, unformed but with endless possibilities to become extraordinary and valuable. He showed me concrete examples of the power of human creativity through trips to places like the famous Fallingwater residence, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Mr. Ross encouraged me to attend college even when I balked at the idea. I enrolled in the University of Pittsburgh and graduated with honors. Again, he helped me rise above the adversity around me.
While still an undergraduate, I decided to provide the same transformational experience Mr. Ross gave me to other inner-city youth. In 1968, I founded Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG) to bring hope and education to Pittsburgh’s embattled North Side neighborhood.

Because of the success I was having with MCG, I was asked to take over a nearby struggling building trade school in 1972. That school, Bidwell Training Center (BTC), offered an opportunity to expand my aspirational philosophy to a new population. In a facility falling apart around us, the staff and I built a program to give adults the skills they needed to obtain jobs and make better lives for themselves, their families and their community.

Since then, the location and programming have changed. MCG now includes ceramics, photography, and digital and design arts. BTC grew from a trade-focused school to a career-training center with majors ranging from healthcare to horticulture, all designed to create valuable employees. The board, staff and I incorporated a parent company, Manchester Bidwell Corporation, to improve our efficiencies and better serve our constituents. We do this in the same neighborhood in which I was born and in a Frank Lloyd Wright–inspired building, filled with art, light, flowers, and music.

Through all this change, our philosophy remains constant. We use environment to positively shape lives; we treat people as assets, not liabilities; and we know that, by removing barriers to success, we are helping people achieve their potential.

Inside this book are stories, true tales of the triumphs of ordinary people who were given the chance to realize their potential through our programs. They will tell you the value of what we, as an organization, provide to them and the larger community. I hope you will join us in celebration by supporting our continued endeavors.

President, CEO and Founder of Manchester Bidwell Corporation
Bidwell Training Center creates opportunities for future growth. Many of the career choices that BTC offers were listed in a United States Bureau of Labor Statistics report projecting the occupations with a high rate of employment that do not require a four-year degree in 2004 through 2014.

MCG Youth & Arts’ 2010 survey showed that 93.0 percent of high-school seniors who have attended the MCG Youth & Arts graduated on time versus the national graduation rate of 75.5 percent.

Dionna Morris

MAJOR
Horticulture Technology

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Florist, Blooms Florist

YEARS ATTENDED
2010–11

“Bidwell not only trained me in a prosperous career, but they also taught me how to eat healthier and provide better for my children.”
Dionna Morris dropped out of high school in the ninth grade. She received her GED at the age of 18 and earned an associate’s degree in fashion management. Her education left her with more than $25,000 in student loan debt, and when she couldn’t find a job, she had no choice but to apply for public assistance.

While on public assistance and struggling to make ends meet, Dionna attended a presentation by a Bidwell Training Center (BTC) admissions representative and was inspired to apply to BTC’s Horticulture Technology program. Initially, Dionna found it difficult to dedicate the time required—six hours of class a day plus the commute, five days a week. However, she had three children at home that needed her support, so she remained focused on graduating and achieving meaningful employment in the horticulture field.

Dionna graduated as a member of BTC’s Alpha Beta Kappa honor society and is currently employed by Blooms Florist. “Bidwell not only trained me in a prosperous career, but they also taught me how to eat healthier and provide better for my children,” Dionna says. “I knew that I needed to start making more than minimum wage, which barely covers bus fare and food for my family.”
Born and raised in war-torn Somalia, Haji Muya was no stranger to adversity. In 2004, Haji came to Pittsburgh and, though in a much safer environment, had difficulty being accepted by his peers. Enrolled in English as a Second Language classes, he struggled daily to express himself.

Haji heard about Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG) from a friend. Immediately after he started attending MCG, he began to feel comfortable with his new surroundings and, in turn, with himself. His passion for music finally had a place to flourish. He found himself spending most of his time in the digital arts studio. “MCG let me create what I wanted to create without saying, ‘this is right and that is wrong,’” Haji says. He produced his own songs, videos and album art. Haji graduated in 2010 from the MCG Youth & Arts program and enrolled at The Art Institute of Pittsburgh to study digital filmmaking and video production. He graduated in June 2012.

He was recently awarded a fellowship in The Game Changers Project. This prestigious national media fellowship program seeks to change the portrayal of African American males in the media by catalyzing young African American filmmakers across the nation to produce four-minute documentaries.
Haji Muya

FAVORITE STUDIO
Digital Arts

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Graduate, The Art Institute of Pittsburgh
Fellow, The Game Changer Project

YEARS ATTENDED
2009–10

“MCG let me create what I wanted to create without saying ‘this is right and that is wrong.’”
MCG Youth & Arts students are dedicated to continuing their education. A 2011 survey showed that 91 percent of those who attended MCG Youth & Arts programming and graduated from high school planned to pursue a post-secondary education.
Bidwell Training Center offers training at no cost to eligible Pennsylvania residents in one of seven majors. This opportunity is made possible by funding from the State of Pennsylvania.
Marcus Bland

MAJOR
Culinary Arts

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Manager, Eat n’ Park

YEARS ATTENDED
2008–09

“BTC teaches everything you need to know in the field and inspires people to find the drive in themselves to be successful.”
Marcus Bland grew up in Virginia and moved to Pittsburgh’s North Side in 2000, graduating from Perry High School in 2007. Two weeks after graduation, he applied to Robert Morris University (RMU) and was accepted, but was unable to afford the tuition he needed to enter his first semester of school.

He moved to Maryland to work in logistics for Nordstrom but, just seven months later, he decided to move back to Pittsburgh. His mother told him about Bidwell Training Center. Before he turned 21, Marcus enrolled in the Culinary Arts program and, within three months of graduation, was offered a job at The Cheesecake Factory.

Six months after he began at The Cheesecake Factory, he was promoted to certified trainer. In this capacity, Marcus traveled around the U.S. to train kitchen staff at many of their restaurants.

Following that experience, he accepted a position in Eat n’ Park’s management training program. Today, he is working as a manager at Eat n’ Park in Sewickley. “BTC teaches everything you need to know in the field and inspires people to find the drive in themselves to be successful,” he says.
Keren Gilboa had never really felt focused in school. At the end of her ninth-grade year, Keren heard about Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG) from a few of her friends who had been attending MCG classes.

A year after she started taking classes in the photography and ceramics studios, she regained her academic motivation and began to be more constructive with her time. “The environment of MCG allowed me and others to feel welcome and safe to express ourselves,” she says. “MCG got me reengaged in school and interested in actually going to college.”

Keren decided to go to Earlham College in Indiana. After graduating, Keren began a six-year career as a personal chef.

Eventually, Keren decided to continue her education. She is now earning her master’s degree at the Silver School of Social Work at New York University. During her first year of graduate school, she worked for an agency that used drama therapy to engage students in the public schools. “I began to see how much MCG impacts people’s lives and how much it was like counseling to me and many others. When I was a student, we never thought of it that way.”
Keren Gilboa

FAVORITE STUDIO
Ceramics/Photography

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Graduate Student,
Silver School of Social Work
at New York University

YEARS ATTENDED
1996–99

“MCG got me reengaged in school and the thought of actually going to college.”
Bidwell Training Center boasts an 80-percent placement rate for its graduates. Placement officers work with each student to prepare them for training-related opportunities in their field of study.

As reported to Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges in 2011. The above rates reflect numbers on a certain date. Job placement is an ongoing activity and will therefore increase as students continue to get jobs.
MCG Youth & Arts produced the 2012 MCG Invitational Arts Exhibition, a showcase for artistic excellence, featuring 153 students from seven school districts in the Pittsburgh area. More than 340 students, parents and members of Pittsburgh’s corporate, nonprofit, government and arts communities attended the exhibition reception. A total of 60 awards and more than $95,000 in scholarships and cash prizes were awarded to students based on their artistic achievements.

Celebrating Achievement
Katrina Callen

MAJOR
Chemical Laboratory Technician

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Research Lab Assistant, The H.J. Heinz Company Global Innovation & Quality Center

YEARS ATTENDED
2008–09

"The teachers at BTC encouraged us daily to achieve our full potential."
Katrina Callen grew up in Maryland and, after attending Utah Valley University for music, moved to Pittsburgh to live with friends. While aiding adults with mental and physical disabilities through Citizen Care, Inc., Katrina saw an ad for Bidwell Training Center (BTC). Since she was already in debt from her college education, she was intrigued by the opportunity to continue her education without additional financial burden.

Katrina began to plan for a career with opportunities for advancement, and in October 2008, she entered the Chemical Laboratory Technician program while working the night shift at Citizen Care, Inc. “The teachers at BTC encouraged us daily to achieve our full potential,” Katrina says. Despite her arduous daily schedule, with her teachers’ support, Katrina graduated with an Occupational Associate’s Degree in Specialized Technology. Also, she was inducted into the Alpha Beta Kappa national honor society.

She completed her externship at Bayer MaterialScience and, immediately following graduation, started working at Bayer for the next two years. Afterward, she accepted a position at The H.J. Heinz Company Global Innovation & Quality Center. “The chemistry lab at BTC greatly prepared me for working in both the Bayer and Heinz labs,” Katrina says.
Kate Stevens moved to Pittsburgh while in sixth grade. A big transition such as this wasn’t easy for her, but she was able to seek solace in her passion for the arts. She picked up a camera in eighth grade and began to enjoy the art of photography.

After hearing about Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG) from a family friend, Kate knew MCG would be the place where her love of art could thrive. Spending most of her time in the photography studio at MCG, Kate’s skills as a photographer became more refined. “I looked up to the teachers at MCG as mentors,” she says.

In addition to mentoring her in the classroom, the staff of MCG Youth & Arts encouraged her to think about her future. They took her class to visit Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA). Inspired, Kate decided to apply and was accepted. “I couldn’t have gotten into college without the portfolio that MCG helped me create,” she says. “MCG even paid for the slides in my portfolio.”

After completing half of her undergraduate education at MICA, she transferred to Point Park University and graduated with a B.A. in Photojournalism. Kate is now certified in art education and, prior to her current position at The Children’s School, taught art at Pittsburgh Greenfield K-8.
Kate Stevens

FAVORITE STUDIO
Photography

YEARS ATTENDED
1998–2002

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Teacher, The Children’s School (Pre-K on Carnegie Mellon University’s campus)

“I couldn’t have gotten into college without the portfolio that MCG helped me create.”
MCG Youth & Arts includes school-day, arts-integrated curricula and after-school studio-arts classes as well as summer workshops. All programs are led by teaching artists who actively practice art and mentor students. Students also work with visiting artists who not only exhibit their work onsite, but also conduct workshops and seminars for students.
Bidwell Training Center works directly with many of Pittsburgh’s corporate employers to provide students with market-driven curricula. This ensures that BTC graduates are prepared for careers in fields that are vital to the future of the region.
Vincent Falgione

MAJOR
Medical Coder

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Lead Cancer Registrar/
Quality Improvement
Coordinator, University of
Pittsburgh Medical Center

YEARS ATTENDED
2000–01

“I wanted to achieve more and BTC allowed me to do that.”
Vincent Falgione grew up in Pittsburgh’s Bloomfield neighborhood. After driving a truck for a local bakery for 10 years, he decided to pursue a career that would offer opportunities for growth.

One day on his way to lunch in the Lawrenceville section of Pittsburgh, Vincent ducked into a community center to see what kind of job leads he could find there. While there, he met with a Bidwell Training Center (BTC) admissions representative who told him about the many majors BTC offers. Vincent’s wife was already in the medical field, so he decided he’d enter BTC’s Medical Coder program.

After graduating from BTC in 2001, Vincent got a job at University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) St. Margaret hospital, located just outside of Pittsburgh, as a medical coder in the medical records department. “I was completely prepared to work in my profession after graduating,” Vincent says.

After a year of working at UPMC, Vincent was given the opportunity to attend classes at the University of Pittsburgh to become a certified tumor registrar. Vincent has worked as the lead cancer registrar/quality improvement coordinator for the oncology department at UPMC St. Margaret since 2004. “I wanted to achieve more and BTC allowed me to do that,” Vincent says.
Maribeth Joy grew up in Pittsburgh and discovered her passion for photography while attending free classes at Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild (MCG). After high school, Maribeth studied photography and social work at Antioch College in Ohio.

Upon graduating in 2000, she moved to Chicago and began working full-time with Blue Man Group. Over the eight years she worked there, she put her creativity to use in the wardrobe department and as a photographer.

In 2003, Maribeth started volunteering for the non-profit CircEsteem, The Chicago Youth Circus. The CircEsteem mission of uniting youth from diverse cultural, racial and economic backgrounds and building self-esteem was familiar to Maribeth as it echoed her experience with MCG’s mission of empowering diverse urban youth through the arts. Since connecting with CircEsteem, she has gone from being a volunteer to working as a juggling instructor, photographer, program director, managing director and, currently, CircEsteem’s executive director.

She attributes her success directly to her experience at MCG. Maribeth says “Learning photography at MCG helped me look critically at the world around me. I’ve come to realize what a profound impact MCG had on my life.”
Maribeth Joy

FAVORITE STUDIO
Photography

YEARS ATTENDED
1994–96

CURRENT OCCUPATION
Executive Director,
CircEsteem, The Chicago Youth Circus

“I’ve come to realize what a profound impact MCG had on my life.”
If you have reached these final pages, I trust you have read the words of our alumni. You have heard from them how Manchester Bidwell Corporation and our affiliates have helped them to change the trajectory of their lives. Through their stories, you have learned firsthand the power a positive environment has in helping people realize a future brighter than their past.

Their accounts are living testaments to our belief that environment shapes behavior and that every human being is an asset. Whether through the arts or career training, their transformations affirm the principal that—when surrounded by beauty, sunlight, art, dignity and respect—the human spirit can grow powerful enough to defy any limitation to personal achievement.

The stories of these graduates represent a small percentage of the lives positively impacted by Manchester Bidwell Corporation. Unrecorded are the stories of generations of young people who discovered resilience from centering clay. Unreported are the stories of teenagers who acquired self-confidence by creating handmade artwork. Untold are the tales of adults whose lives were redeemed by learning to prepare gourmet food or whose sense of worth was restored because they gained skills that made them employable.
All these lives have been positively changed because organizations and individuals believe in helping people hungry for a chance to improve their situations. Corporations see the value of our training programs and hire our graduates. Foundations realize the arts provide an extraordinary tool to engage young people and inspire them to live, learn and achieve. Our elected officials recognize the importance of helping people who are trying to help themselves.

With such inspiring stories, we might be tempted to pat ourselves on the back and announce a job well done. But the disadvantaged, the forgotten and the forsaken are still among us. So our job here at Manchester Bidwell is far from complete. Another generation awaits this transformative environment that calls people to rise above the adversity binds personal development and impedes meaningful achievement.

For this reason, we ask you to join us in our continuing and unwavering effort to foster and strengthen the human spirit. For those of you who have helped us in the past, we thank you for your support. For those still waiting in the wings, we extend to you an invitation: Help us help others create a better tomorrow. With your assistance, I am certain there will be many more inspiring stories to tell.

With deepest gratitude,

Paulo Nzambi

Executive Vice President and COO of Manchester Bidwell Corporation