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From the Leadership

Dear Friend Of Hopeworks,

In July of 2019, when unemployment was low and the world was COVID-free, youth walked through our doors hoping for change. Some had experienced homelessness; others had not gotten the help they needed in school, and still others were not making enough money to support themselves or those they loved. Those young people trained with us, grew with us, worked with us, and, thanks to their hard work and your support, earned the opportunities that they wanted.

In March, when a frightening virus began to stalk the land, closing schools, businesses and so many opportunities for our young people, Hopeworks youth continued working. Typing on laptops dropped off at their doors by Hopeworks staff, our youth joined virtual meetings, picked up food deliveries for themselves and their families, and continued to earn jobs -- and money -- that they desperately needed.

In May, when much of the country awakened to the racial disparities and injustices that have long been familiar to so many, our youth addressed the issue head-on, sharing their experiences, advocating for change, and working to make opportunities for themselves and others in the world and in industry.

Our youth kept working, kept striving, and kept pushing to make their lives and our world a better place because they know, as do you, that hope works. Hope doesn't work just when unemployment is low, or when the sun is shining. Hope really comes to the forefront when things are dark, when layoffs are on the wind, and when injustice stands in the way.

Even when things seem hard, when things seem dark, we know that we will see things through. We know things will be hard, and we know we have struggles ahead. We also know that we can do it. We know we can do it because we see the power of hope to overcome adversity, combat injustice, and make a better world. We know because we see it every day in the work and faces of our youth.

If you are reading this, you know it, too. In these pages you will see the results of your investment of time, treasure, and attention. You will see the power of hope, hard work, and our young people. In these pages, you will see proof that, even in the toughest of times, hope works.

With Gratitude,

Dan Rhoton, Executive Director

Brad Aronson, President of the Board

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Growing Opportunities

From Cameroon To Philly: Philadelphia Parking Authority Offers A Path To Success

Just a few months ago, Hopeworks got great news. One of our youth, Marcel Njiehe-Tezeh, was hired by the Philadelphia Parking Authority for a permanent IT Support position! As Marcel’s supervisor, Jacqui, shared, “You should be very proud of Marcel. He is quite the HIRE and we all are so happy for him.” In fact, because of Marcel’s success, the PPA has opened up another slot for another Hopeworks youth!

The job made a huge difference for Marcel. As he shared, “Since I was 17, I have taken care of not just myself but also my beautiful family of 7 people. In high school, I had big dreams, but I imagined that my parents would take care of me. I didn’t think about how I would pay for college, or for food or housing. I didn’t imagine I would have to grow up and start paying for myself, and I didn’t realize to go to college I might have to take out a loan I couldn’t afford. I grew up far away from my extended family in Cameroon. To take care of my family, I have had to work overnight in a warehouse and by morning be on my way to school. Sustaining myself all this while has not been what anyone at my age would wish for but because of my dedication to success and the wellbeing of my family, I have accomplished the unexpected.”

However, it took more than just Marcel’s dedication to make this happen. Jacqueline Harris, Chief Information Officer of the Philadelphia Parking Authority, worked hard to make opportunities not just for Marcel, but for other youth looking to change their lives and diversify the tech sector. As she shared, “There are PLENTY of nerds [in the neighborhoods], I was one of them. I’ll take them!” The combination of Marcel’s incredible resilience and Jacqueline’s determination to make an opportunity for young people has led to amazing outcomes!
OpenForge Builds A Place For Opportunity!

OpenForge, experts in user experience, design, and application development, has another specialty -- creating exciting, open, and welcoming workspaces for Hopeworks youth!

This year, Jared Bradshaw, after completing his training at Hopeworks and interning in the communications department, was hired at OpenForge, joining the exciting work on the company’s growing team.

Working in Quality Assurance and Marketing, Jared is helping OpenForge further their mission to develop an exceptional user experience design and application development. The position is a natural outgrowth of Jared’s technical expertise that he developed in the Hopeworks training program, and his natural love for design and user experience!

As Jedi Weller, CEO of OpenForge shared, “it’s not just hiring, it’s creating a more in-depth system for partnering with Hopeworks” that really led to success.

Congratulations to Jared on transforming his life, and congratulations to Jedi and OpenForge for creating space to grow and diversify the tech pipeline!

Video Games For A Job? Javon Is Making It Happen At PHL Collective

This year, Javon Skates made a dream for many young people come true -- he earned a permanent job at a video game company!

PHL Collective is a video game studio comprised of artists and programmers who are passionate about creating unique, bold, and exciting titles. Javon works in QA testing and development, and, with the support of the team at PHL collective, is working towards becoming an accomplished Project Manager.

As Nick Madonna, Founder of PHL Collective shared, “I love having Javon on board as a game tester and as a great human within the larger company.”

When Javon first arrived at Hopeworks, he didn’t know what he wanted to do. He had heard about Hopeworks on the bus, and had heard it was a path to opportunity. He knew he was interested in video games, and he knew that he didn’t want a future working low end warehouse or shipping jobs.

From that start, he built an amazing future for himself. He mastered coding in the training room and worked hard to build the professional and social skills he needed.

Now, thanks to Javon’s hard work and PHL Collective’s determination to create opportunity, Javon is changing his life and helping produce exceptional products for the world!
Meet Michael Cassel

“Hopeworks has saved the day for me again and again,” Cassel said. “I honestly don’t know how I would be if not for their help and support.”

Michael Cassel enrolled in the Hopeworks training program after graduating from Pennsauken High School in 2019 and spending a few months working in local warehouses and manufacturing plants. He joined the Web Development team as an intern after completing the training. Within a short period of time, COVID-19 sent Michael, and everyone, out of the office to work remotely.

During this time, Michael lost his housing. But despite dealing with homelessness, he spent several nights sleeping in his sister’s car until Hopeworks helped him find temporary housing, he managed to continue working remotely as an intern on the web team. Dan Rhoton said, “Michael never missed a daily huddle, even when he didn’t have a place to live. He never missed a deadline.” Michael would call in to join virtual morning and afternoon huddles on his phone.

Michael shares that he was raised by an aunt and his grandmother, Dorothy Mae Cassel. His grandmother’s death in 2009 from cancer shook his world but also inspired Michael. “She was my best friend,” Michael said. “I used to tell her, I can’t wait until I get older so I can take care of you. I promised my grandmother I would be there to take care of her,” Michael said, “I want to take care of others.”

Recently, Michael moved into Hopeworks youth residence, the CRIB, applied for a scholarship, and registered for classes at Camden County College. He plans to pursue a degree in exercise science and to eventually work with the elderly.

Even through difficult times, Michael rarely struggled to maintain a bright outlook. But he said the training and support from Hopeworks has provided him the tools to channel his can-do mindset into action. “I always knew I wanted my future job to be something where I can take care of senior citizens. Hopeworks is making that happen for me.”

* Adapted from Philadelphia Inquirer article, Phil Anastasia, Posted: June 25, 2020

Meet Alicia Hinkle

Before coming to Hopeworks, Alicia felt like she would be stuck in low paying jobs that didn’t make her happy, especially with no High School Diploma. When Alicia learned that Hopeworks offered training and Adult Basic Skills (ABS) classes, she knew immediately that Hopeworks was right for her. Alicia worked hard and earned her HS Diploma and is well on her way to fulfilling her dreams. She is currently a Townsend Scholar taking classes at Camden Community College to earn her certificate in Medical Billing and Coding.

After completing the training, Alicia earned an internship with the Youth Healing Team (YHT). She was extremely proud of herself and grateful for the opportunity. One key lesson that Alicia has learned from her internship is that “it is okay to ask for help or just ask questions in general. A lot of the time people are afraid to ask their coworkers or supervisors for help or more information, but I’ve learned a lot of supervisors are okay with it. They’d rather you have all the information you need than to struggle with something because you don’t fully understand it.”

Alicia has proven to be an asset to the YHT team, and is an emerging leader. Kate Daugherty, Director of Community Impact, shared that, “Alicia was a key intern who helped the Youth Healing Team convert all of our presentations to a virtual space. Since starting on the team Alicia has helped to launch a whole new presentation about the trauma and toxic stress caused by the Pandemic.”

“Hopeworks has given me another chance to make a better future for myself. One that I didn’t think I could have. Hopeworks is life-changing. Everyone here has changed my life forever, in a good way.”
Meet Timothy Vo

When Tim was referred to Hopework by his Vocational Rehabilitation Case Manager, he was already earning honors at Camden County Community College. He came to Hopeworks to improve his computer skills so he could pursue his dream of attending Rutgers Camden and earning a BA in information technology.

A self starter who embraces the "learn to learn" model, Tim’s biggest challenge was overcoming his fear of public speaking. But he managed to do that by "focusing on one person and looking at the top of everyone else’s head."

Tim credits his professional development to his time as a GIS intern, where he’s learning how to create maps and use GIS software quickly. So quickly in fact, that Tim processed over 1000 records ahead of schedule while working on the Tennessee American Water project and proved to be a valuable member of the team. Luis Olivieri, Director of GIS, shared: “Tim is one of the biggest assets of the GIS Program. His productivity and the quality of the records he is processing are always higher than our client’s expectations. Because of this, we have given Tim additional responsibility on the projects including helping with the assessment of the quality of the records of the team.”

Tim is grateful for the support he receives from Hopeworks staff, especially his academic and career readiness coaches who Tim says, "helped build me up" and taught him about self care. When asked to describe Hopeworks in one word he said, "Supportive. Hopeworks makes a difference in your future and dreams."

Employing Interns

Hopeworks employed 120 interns in our social enterprises and training room this year. Growing our businesses = more youth internships and more youth wages earned!
Recoding Futures Virtually

When Erich Smith came on board in the second half of 2019 as the training room manager, we were excited by his experience in Technology Education and by how he improved the training program and skills assessment process for Hopeworks youth. Little did we know then that Erich would also need to shift the training to virtual learning and equip the trainees to succeed in this new environment, with both the technology and with virtual support. Some of the shifts he implemented included:

01 Remote Support
Using Training Room interns to facilitate peer groups and increase remote interactions among trainees.

02 Virtual Presentations
Creating new content, like the Virtual Presentations Webinar to train youth to present in the virtual space.

03 Google IT Certification
Adding the Google IT certification as an additional training option for youth.

04 Increase In Stipends & Wages
Increased training stipends and intern hourly wages to ensure youth are earning the income needed to stay on their path to success.

05 Laptop Distribution
Distributed over 96 Laptops and Chrome books to youth so that they can work remotely.

06 Expanded Geographic Reach
Enrolled 2 youth in Central New Jersey completed 100% virtual training.

Blake Banks
“Hopeworks gives me the power to not be a statistic.”

Erin Hernandez
“This program is teaching me job skills that I will need to move into the field that I want...it is exactly what I need to focus my energy on in times of this crisis.”

Elvis Achu
“I believe that by the end of my training at Hopeworks, I’ll have the knowledge and skills needed to get into the IT department.”
Empowering Entrepreneurs

Hopeworks has many youth entrepreneurs who take advantage of our hands-on entrepreneurship program. Young people in the program start their own businesses or, if they already have a business, focus on growing it. There are weekly coaching sessions, and area entrepreneurs regularly join us to share their expertise. Our young people have started many exciting and profitable businesses including a Christian clothing business, a web development company, a kid’s club and camp, a food service, a photography business, and more. The class helps students learn to manage a business, solve problems, and understand finance. Starting a company also gives our young people compelling experience to share with employers and, most importantly, helps them realize their dreams.

Yanlexis Arizaga

"Before stepping into Entrepreneurship class, I had no idea what value I could provide to my future clients. The only thing I did know is how much I desired to independently make my mother proud through my artistic skills. But now, I can confidently say I have provided services in photography, digital art, and traditional art! I have progressed from $100 commissions to commissions over $800!"

Charlene Newbill

"I dreamed about becoming an entrepreneur but didn’t think I was capable of becoming one. I’ve seen others doing their thing and all I could do was imagine having my own business. Then Hopeworks offered an entrepreneurship class and I decided to enroll and start a Christian T-shirt business. Along the way, I began to get a little discouraged, but with the help of God and the support of my entrepreneur instructor and class, I can proudly say I am officially a business owner of Young, Saved, and Unashamed (YSU) Christian Apparel!"

In Fall 2019, we held an inaugural annual pitch competition for entrepreneurs!

Congratulations to Caloua, Gabrielle, Brandon, Azaris, Duane, Kayla, and Carlos!
Camden Capacity Fund Project Launch

The first Camden Capacity Fund project was launched! Camden Lutheran Housing needed a website to expand their community work in North Camden and Hopeworks web team and interns were able to give back to their community by updating and managing the site.

"CLHI is so appreciative to Hopeworks for creating the Camden Capacity Fund! Our small non-profit was able to get a fully updated website at no charge, which has increased our capacity to serve the North Camden community, while providing opportunities for Camden youth to learn web design. We are extremely grateful to the funders who made this program possible, and we hope it will continue."

Jessica Franzini, Executive Director, CLHI

Social Enterprises

Building A Better Future For Those In Need

Led by Annie Rose Webb, the Hopeworks Web Team were busier than ever. With a record year in both revenue and websites developed, their talent, skill sets, and eye for art, were on display. The Web Team’s professional achievements rivaled their personal accomplishments. From enrolling in college, to being hired by leading firms, the young professionals quickly became seasoned vets.

Thanks to the Hummel Foundation and other Hopeworks partners and advocates, we were able to launch the Camden Capacity Fund. This innovative idea allowed for community organizations that were in need, to access critical business services that will help grow their capacity. Organizations such as Camden FireWorks, TeenSharp, Project Refit, Philadelphia Dance Projects, and I Run This City: Camden, were able to leverage the Camden Capacity Fund and are having Hopeworks Web Team design their websites. Stay tuned for the launch announcements for these websites.
GIS Team Continues To Raise The Bar
Comcast and Tennessee American Water were new clients that gave our GIS team an opportunity to prove themselves. Led by Luis Olivieri, and with the new addition of Esteban Romero and Paul Caris, our young professionals backed up the leadership team and went above and beyond for our new clients. Starting with pilot projects, Comcast and Tennessee American Water quickly realized our capabilities and happily requested we take on much larger projects.

For Tennessee American Water, the team is continuing work on a map that provides water service information to customers. "Like everybody, they had a change period of getting used to a virtual working environment, but they’re delivering this project well ahead of schedule," said Megan Catalina, Tennessee American Water’s geographic information system supervisor.

Expanding Their Reach In More Ways Than One
From being a Keynote Speaker at Walsh University’s Mental Health Conference in Ohio, to providing training sessions in DC, Baltimore, and NYC, Kate Daugherty led the talented Youth Healing Team (YHT) to new heights. The YHT also increased their impact by training new audiences. Reaching beyond the typical nonprofit and educational professionals, the team trained City Council Members, Healthcare Organizations (such as AmeriHealth Caritas), and Government Agencies.

Just as business was booming, the Pandemic started. Then came powerful acts of racial and social injustice. As the need for their services became greater, the YHT was unable to provide in-person training. However, recognizing the opportunity they had to help in a time of crisis, they crafted an engaging, thoughtful, and much needed virtual training series.

Finishing the year strong, they incorporated in the presentation how COVID-19 and racial injustice cause toxic stress and trauma. By sharing trauma informed strategies and best practices, the YHT was able to support more people than ever at a critical time.
**Financials & Outcomes**

**Revenue**

- Grants | 43.0%
- Donors | 37.0%
- Businesses | 17.3%
- Special Events | 2.7%

**Expenses**

- Youth Development | 45.3%
- Businesses * | 38.0%
- Fundraising | 10.4%
- Admin & Support Services | 6.3%

* including youth salaries

**Total Revenue**

- $2,979,099.42

**Wages & Stipends to Youth**

- $532,858

**Average Wage at Entry**

- $868

**Average Wage at Exit**

- $36,089

**12 Month Job Retention**

- 90.4%

**Jobs Earned**

- 116

**11**
Hopeworks seeks to recognize all who so generously support us.

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