

Downtown Boxing Gym Youth Program: Transportation Fund

Grant Type: **Dollar support**

Dollar Amount: **\$33,000**

Foundation Name: **Dresner Foundation**

What was your objective with the grant or initiative?

The Dresner Foundation made this grant to eliminate the single largest barrier to consistent program participation for a Detroit-based boxing gym's youth program: transportation. The majority of the participants are low income students, and many of their families don't have a vehicle or the parents use it for employment. Because public transportation in the area is unreliable and unsafe, the founder/coach and, when possible, the executive director would spend 3 hours picking up and dropping off students daily. This clearly was not the best use of their time, and it decreased the amount of time the students could spend in the program. Furthermore, because of time limitations, the driver could not pick up all kids daily.

To resolve these issues and properly serve the participants, three part-time drivers were hired to transport the students to and from the gym daily, which had the benefit of allowing all participants to be picked up each day and increasing their time in the program. The Downtown Boxing Gym was fortunate to receive three new 16-passenger vans on loan from General Motors. However, the organization could not use those vans because it needed the funds to hire drivers and to pay annual maintenance and insurance costs. The grant provided the funds for the drivers, as well as the annual maintenance and insurance costs.

What were the results of this grant or initiative?

The grant provided reliable, safe transportation for program participants to increase their participation in programming that positively impacted their academic success and health outcomes.

Why would you say this grant or initiative had outsized impact?

The grant went beyond the initial intended purpose by serving the larger community. In addition to providing safe, reliable, and consistent transportation for all participants, it also provided employment for community members (including two parents of participants), which broadened the impact on the community as a whole. One driver took on the role of transportation coordinator to create the most efficient and cost-effective use of the vans and funds. In addition to transportation for daily programming, the organization has used the vans to provide a myriad of enrichment opportunities for the students and has facilitated the requirement that each student participate in community service projects.

The results of this grant underscore that smaller grants can make significant impact, contribute to long-term outcomes, and leverage other resources. Simple solutions are sometimes the best, and community effort is best at solving and resolving challenges.



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