



selfpower : 2016
ANNUAL REPORT





LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Selfpower and Project Self-Sufficiency

In 2016, our Participants, stakeholders, staff and donors helped us understand that the foundation of our work is **selfpower**. A more consumable and relatable concept to our community, **selfpower**, is becoming the outward identity of the Project Self-Sufficiency organization. Looking to the future, you can expect to see more of this bold, powerful term and visuals throughout our communications.

What is selfpower?

Selfpower is the power and confidence that comes from deep within the human spirit.

Selfpower is what pushes someone through a challenge, even on the worst day.

Selfpower is intangible; you can't actually see it, but you can see the results of it.

Selfpower is essential to write new future stories.

Our goal at Project Self-Sufficiency is to cultivate the grit and determination necessary for a lifetime of achievements for single parents and their children. **Selfpower** honors the crucial role that each Participant plays in their own success, in pushing through barriers in order to accomplish their education and career goals. The journey to a new life is very much self-driven. At Project Self-Sufficiency we simply help Participants own their **selfpower**...to see it, to believe it, and to achieve it.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *continued*

With this new way of describing our work with single parents, we adopted a stronger color palette and logo. The new logo symbolizes the journey that one will experience in our program. Central to the journey is the spirit and determination of the Participant, indicated by the negative space in the center of the concentric circles. The concentric circles represent a new level of power coming from the Participant. The circles go on in perpetuity, just as the selfpower gained through Project Self-Sufficiency carries on forever. The multiple colors demonstrate the uniqueness of our Participants and their journey, which is always different for each person. The vibrancy of the colors aligns with the energy and effort of the daily journey while in the program.

You will note that there are gaps and incomplete spaces in the circles, as well as spots where the color appears to have faded. This is indicative of what our Participants bring to the table when they arrive here - some already have college coursework, some do not; most are working, but in low-wage jobs; they may need housing or child care; and many need so many things they do not know where to begin in order to accomplish a completely different life. Making the circle whole requires lots of support and hard work. Ultimately, the families in our program are partnering with us to fill in gaps and complete the circles where possible, and perhaps most importantly, to access their own selfpower and learn to thrive despite gaps. What do you see in our logo? How does it represent the journey of our single parents to you?

While our name Project Self-Sufficiency will stay the same, we consider selfpower to be the cornerstone of our programs and our work with single parents. We are enormously grateful to you for the power you have brought to our work in your role as supporter, collaborator and friend. I want to emphasize that your role in our work continues, as it is only by working together that we can bring the required resources to counsel Participants, to remove barriers, and to coordinate services to our single-parent families while they accomplish their education and career goals. Together, we embolden single parents to tap into their selfpower so they reach the finish line and create a vibrant and sustainable future for themselves and their children. **Help us bring the power of education to single parents!**

In gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tracy Mead". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tracy" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Mead".

Tracy Mead
Executive Director

LETTER FROM 2017 BOARD PRESIDENT

I am betting that each of us has some interaction with single parents in our community. Perhaps we were raised by a single parent, maybe we have a sibling who is raising their children alone, or we may know a neighbor, a friend, or a work colleague. My wife and I are raising two kids together and I know how challenging it can be so, superficially, I know that raising children alone is no easy task. However, when you dig more deeply and consider the challenges of creating a home life where children can thrive, while simultaneously accessing the education and career development needed to provide for a family as a single head-of-household, you realize the complexity of this reality. Then also recognize the resources, the encouragement, the guidance, and the all-important self-care that sustains one along this challenging journey, and it becomes overwhelming.



These are the things that we may not think about unless we have some exposure to single parenthood. I was introduced to Project Self-Sufficiency in 2009 when a colleague of mine asked me to consider being a math tutor for a Participant struggling with a college course. I was paired with Sylvia, a young Latina woman with an adorable daughter. Sylvia was a high-school dropout with two felony convictions, a learning disability, and a determination to move her life forward in a way that no one in her family had done or even considered before. Sylvia was the epitome of selfpower, she just didn't know it yet.

It was through my experience of tutoring and then befriending Sylvia that I truly began to understand why raising children alone is no easy task. And I really saw how at Project Self-Sufficiency we are setting single parents up to actually thrive while doing it. Today, Sylvia has a successful career. She owns her own home and perhaps most importantly, by example and through encouragement, she is setting her daughter up for college and a successful future.

Thank you for picking up this report and for taking the time to learn about our work. Our success is directly related to support from the community. Please consider your own involvement: donate your car to our Cars for Families Program, schedule a \$25 per month recurring donation, be a volunteer tutor just like me, sponsor gifts for a family during the holidays, so kids can feel celebrated. The possibilities are endless and your role is essential. **Can you join us in bringing the power of education to single parents?**

In gratitude,

Paul Thayer

2017 Board President

OUR MODEL



DISCOVER

Stabilize, explore career options, lay foundation

Key resources and basic needs met for a healthy foundation in order to reach career goals and recognize selfpower.

STRENGTHEN

Engage, learn, apply skills, balance family life

Accomplish educational goals to cultivate selfpower as GEDs, Certificates, Degrees and internships are completed, while maintaining a healthy family life.

ACTUALIZE

Initiate job search, career prep and begin family transition to a new life

Selfpower is fully realized, families are grounded in their new future and the rewarding job search is on, charting new territory in career field.

LAUNCH

Graduate selfpowered and employed in chosen career path

Full transition to selfpower. Long-term careers begin, better income and stability become the new normal. This is the payoff for the grit and determination it takes to commit to full transformation through education.

OUR FINANCIALS

Two-thousand and sixteen marked our 30th year serving single-parent families in Larimer County. With that longevity, we know how important financial stability is in order to continue our programs for another 30 years. We strive for the financial continuity that is essential to allow us to do our best work. Just as for-profit businesses need working capital to function at peak capacity, so do nonprofits need the equivalent in operating reserves. Without a robust reserve, an organization can be thrown into cash flow stress and become distracted from effective, long-term decision-making. It can be forced to make expensive, short-term, crisis-based decisions or worse, it may not have the resources to continue delivery of its programs. In 2016, we added \$100,000 to our operating reserves, accomplishing a key Board-defined, strategic financial objective.

The second part of our long-term stability includes growing our endowment with the ultimate goal of providing ongoing operating funds for the organization. In 2016, thanks to the generosity of donors, we added \$55,886 to our endowment, making our total \$712,082.

FY2016 STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

INCOME	
Grant Income	\$469,766
Donations and Contributions	\$885,360
Interest Income	\$21,830
Unrealized Gain/(Losses) on Investments	\$43,575
In-Kind Value of Donated Vehicles, Goods & Services	\$169,560
TOTAL : \$1,590,091	

EXPENSES	
Program Direct Support	\$339,347
Staff Salary & Wages, Payroll Taxes, Benefits	\$664,360
Occupancy & Office Expenses	\$125,222
In-Kind Value of Donated Vehicles, Goods & Services	\$169,560
Contract Services	\$40,668
Recognition Activities - Staff, Volunteer, Donors	\$4,530
Depreciation	\$10,020
TOTAL : \$1,353,707	



OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Each year, serving over **160 Participants** and their families on the road to **selfpower**, Project Self-Sufficiency brings resources and strategies to single moms and dads committed to accomplishing transformational education and career goals.

What is so special about how Project Self-Sufficiency operates?

We embrace and cultivate a culture of unconditional positive regard at Project Self-Sufficiency. This means that we seek first to understand and we work hard to meet our families where they are at and help them envision and create their future story.

We bring trauma-informed care and mental health supports to our families and their children because nothing can derail someone on the road to success faster than unresolved trauma.

We strategically build housing partnerships in the community in order to facilitate the secure and stable home base that is needed for a family to do their best work.

Our Advisor team has specific expertise in navigating post-secondary education institutions and building partnerships with college staff.

Since we know that STEM careers pay a higher wage upon graduation and provide for greater earning potential throughout one's career, our career exploration curriculum highlights local STEM-career opportunities.

30% of Participants are **ethnically diverse**

77% of Participants and **43%** of their **children** are victims of abuse

55% of Participants **were homeless** when they entered the program in 2016

70% of Participants are **first-generation college students**

64% of our single parents are **pursuing STEM degrees**



KEY SUCCESSES IN 2016

In 2016, we can report the following successes:

9 program graduates; of which one is continuing on with graduate school; the remaining eight landed in career-related employment with our top wage being **\$26.02** per hour with a median wage of **\$18.74** per hour.

25 Participants earned **degrees, certificates** or **High School Diploma/GED**.

69 percent were enrolled in post-secondary education, which means they are en route to a degree, the gateway to a career, a sustainable wage and **a different life for themselves and their children**.

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Photo Credit: Sandberg Photography

Front Row (L-R): Tracy Mead, Amanda Chenkin, Audrey McElwain, Michele Scheetz, Susan Dominica
Back Row (L-R): Connie DeMercurio, Hannah Bade, Nicole Gawronski, Jason Johnson, Maggie Murray, Stephanie Slayton, Diane Ellsworth

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