

Business-based Economic Development

TechTown

BLOCKS Business Unit

Since 2012, TechTown's place-based entrepreneurship programs (Blocks) have supported neighborhood enterprises to launch, stabilize and grow. Blocks' programs Retail Services and SWOT City remain focused on providing consistent and customized support for pop-up to permanent- stage brick-and-mortar businesses in Detroit.

The Blocks team launched its inaugural alumni newsletter in April, as part of a broader strategy with leadership from TechTown's PSN & Alumni Manager to support continuing education, peer-to-peer learning and networking, in an effort to keep our network of over 300 program alumni engaged with the organization.

Retail Services

Retail Services includes the ten-week accelerator Retail Boot Camp (RBC) program, monthly pop-up opportunities like The SHOP and retail workshops hosted at TechTown. The SHOP is the monthly pop-up held in TechTown's first floor community space, which offers opportunities to businesses needing first-time selling experience and also seasoned vendors. The custom fixture library designed by two local firms, RL Concetti and Brian DuBois studios was unveiled in June. The combination of investments in staff for on-site merchandising and sales coaching, redesigned fixtures, sponsored marketing campaign and an expanded, yet still curated, group of participants each month has generated a 20% increase in sales from last year. The vendor applications for 2019 are now closed due to generating enough quality demand to program the remaining eight events and the applications for 2020 pop-up events will open in October. These results feed the 2019 initiative to elevate and refine the pop-up experiences offered by TechTown as best-in-class in the area and to help businesses see the value of pop-ups as a part of sustainable omni-channel retail operations model.

The retail team graduated 16 businesses from the spring cohort of Retail Boot Camp in May and launched the second and final cohort of 2019 in August with 15 participants. In addition to the class sessions with external facilitators in the retail buying, merchandising, technology, accounting, architecture and legal fields, the participants had access to one-on-one sessions with the TechTown team throughout the cohort to assist with further business model refinement and preparation for the final pitch event.

To continue to elevate the program materials, the retail team collaborated with the instructional design faculty in the WSU Executive and Professional Development office to refine the curriculum content in

the existing workbook and slide deck. Additionally, the team is also supporting the development of a program facilitator guide and recommendations for pricing to external organizations. This work during the second and third quarter will strengthen the Retail Boot Camp program's position to be a packaged product ready for purchase. This project with WSU began in April and is anticipated to conclude in September.

To increase TechTown's thought leadership in the retail economic development space, a four-part free public workshop series was delivered in June to both current clients, alumni and prospective program participants to assist with preparation for the holiday season. Session topics included trade show preparations, customer service management, navigating the media and pop-up sales strategy were facilitated by members of the Professional Services Network in the public relations, marketing and retail industries. The timing of these topics were designed to encourage local businesses to plan their fourth sales quarter earlier in the year, as it is typically the busiest time of the year.

The retail team visited multiple retail industry conferences throughout June-August in order to inform elevating current programming, as well as begin to strategize the next plans for growth in 2020. These educational opportunities included a global retail industry summit at Columbia University, a national independent retailer conference in Grand Rapids and retail education train-the-trainer workshop in Grand Haven. The common theme of all three was that global retail is becoming more generic and impersonal, while local retail has the power to remain a relevant economic development force, as long as the owners have access to the tools and information to support them competing with larger operations. The bench of retail professionals seeking to support the place-based programming at TechTown continues to grow. Recruiting efforts resulted in new members joining the Professional Services Network (PSN) from the fields of buying, e-commerce, logistics and store management. The team looks forward to collaborating with the PSN Manager to standardize processes to assist with making the facilitated connections between businesses and experts to be as accessible as possible.

SWOT City

On August 12th, we celebrated a special neighborhood business grand opening for client Shears and Shaves, highlighting our partnership with the City of Detroit's Motor City Match program, as well as the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation's District Business Liaisons. In coordination with these partners, SWOT City supported the client, a longstanding barber on Livernois with over thirty years industry experience, in navigating a particularly complicated engagement, given the streetscape improvement project going on through November on Livernois on the city's west side.

The streetscape improvement project has unfortunately dramatically impacted the day-to-day operations of business owners on Livernois –with some business owners reporting over thirty percent decrease in sales. In continued support of business owners on Livernois, as part of a year-long series of

workshops on the city's east and west sides for neighborhood business owners, the most recent workshops taking place at client Canvas Livernois' pop-up event location directly addressed business owners in increasing revenue and financial management. Workshops with TechTown PSN and staff in July and August reached over fifty local business owners. The efforts have attracted new clients to the SWOT City programming. Additionally, the area's SWOT City Portfolio Manager has worked directly with TechTown alumni and clients to evaluate and (if appropriate) help prepare applications for the City's Livernois Construction Mitigation loan fund. This is a special loan fund intended for local business owners ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, which converts to a forgivable grant after twenty-four months of consecutive payments.

Other notable achievements in this time period include use of simultaneous translation equipment for the first time ever at TechTown. We used the equipment during two workshops in July (point of sales systems) and August (time management and organization strategies) in Southwest Detroit, where many of the business owners we serve are primarily Spanish speaking to great success, in reaching over thirty alumni, current and prospective SWOT City clients. The use of this equipment enables SWOT City to broaden the resources we can bring to Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs. The simultaneous translation process, in which an interpreter translates live side-by-side with the English-speaking facilitator with the aid of mobile listening devices for participants, is a much more efficient means of translation, cutting in half the amount of time it takes to deliver content to business owners. Using this process, we are also now able to leverage the skillsets of many more members of TechTown's Professional Service Network and team (at times before being limited by the smaller number of bilingual PSN) in service to entrepreneurs in Southwest Detroit.

TECH Programs

DTX Student Showcase – the culmination of the 2019 Summer DTX Launch Program – was held on August 8, 2019. Eight companies completed the program. Each company completed about 100 customer interviews and delivered a pitch to a standing-room only crowd at TechTown. The winners were as follows.

Raxplay (Blurring the lines between music and reality) - 'GM GO' Award (1st Place) -- \$15,000

Play\$mart (Inspiring students to greater performance) - 'SET' Award (2nd Place) -- \$7,500

TyFlos (Empowering the visually-impaired to instantly understand and easily navigate their surroundings) - 'READY' Award (3rd Place) -- \$2,500

Isaac Lymon, Raxplay - MVP Award (Peer Chosen) -- \$500

Kimberly Johnson, The Pet Shadow - Persistence Award (New Award Category) -- \$500

Start Studio is TechTown's new program for tech companies at the idea stage. We are piloting the program during the summer of 2019, with an official launch in the fall. Participants enter the program with a specific idea for a technology-based company and leave 1) having thoroughly tested the idea and

2) having created an early-stage prototype. These emerging founders are assigned an entrepreneur-in-residence to guide their idea. They also are assigned an anthropologist from Wayne State University to assist in the customer interviews they will conduct to test their ideas. The pilot program culminates in the Start Studio Showcase on Wednesday, September 25 from 6 pm to 8 pm at the i2C.

TECH Thought Leadership

VentureWell has funded research to determine best practices for creating inclusive spaces in tech entrepreneurship. Dr. Marlo Rencher, both in her previous role as the diversity and inclusion entrepreneur-in-residence and her current role as the director of technology-based programs, has conducted the research. She visited conferences, co-working spaces, accelerators and incubators in Atlanta, Georgia, Memphis, Tennessee, and Miami, Florida. We are creating a motion graphic to share her findings. Motion graphics are pieces of animation or digital footage which create the illusion of motion or rotation, and are usually combined with audio for use in multimedia projects. They are a particularly effective means for social media engagement. The intent with using that medium is to share the benchmarks as widely as possible so that other organizations can use them to increase their own inclusion. The research will be ready to share in October 2019.

Marlin Williams was a featured speaker on diversity and tech at the Blended Collective meeting at TechTown in July. Marlo Rencher will be a featured speaker at the Net Impact conference in October.

Place-Based Economic Development

Placemaking Initiatives

Woodward and Warren Park: OED raised \$100,000 to add a new seating area, native landscaping, Fermob bistro seating, shade umbrellas and a welcome kiosk to Woodward | Warren Park. Improvements were completed in May 2019. We held a grand opening on Wednesday, June 5, and are partnering with the Detroit Experience Factory (DXF) to program the park six days a week through October 30. The landscaping, seating and shade umbrellas can be enjoyed all-day, every-day. During programmed hours, OED and DXF Park Ambassadors make games (ex. extra-large chess) and materials (ex. area maps) available and answer questions about WSU and our Midtown neighborhood.



BEFORE



AFTER

The response to the improvements has been overwhelming positive. Despite storms, dozens of our donors and partners came to our grand opening. The following Wednesday, hundreds of people stopped by during WSU’s weekly Farmers Market, and we’ve already received multiple requests from both our WSU and Midtown communities to use the space for special events—including The Detroit Book Festival, which was recently named one of 62 Knight Arts Challenge finalists. Furthermore, we received an additional \$32,500 from the Community Foundation to add bike racks, solar panels and marketplace lighting to the park, along with \$17,000 from Lyft for a large mural and park programming.

Porous Borders

DIA Plaza: OED continues coordinating WSU participation in the DIA Plaza | Midtown Cultural Connections initiative. Our leadership serves on the Steering Committee (Ned Staebler) and Marketing and Programming Committee (Emily Thompson). France’s Agence Ter and Detroit’s Akoaki and rooftopwo, as well as Harley Etienne of the University of Michigan’s Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, were selected as winners of the professional design competition in June 2019. They are now in an 18-month planning phase, during which they will be doing a deep-dive into the neighborhood including an ongoing series stakeholder meetings and public workshops.

APLU IEP Award: WSU is an Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) – Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) designee. Each year, at the APLU Annual Meeting, the world’s largest convening of public university presidents, provosts, vice presidents, and other senior administrations, the APLU gives four prestigious awards to celebrate innovative and exemplary work in the three facets of economic engagement: talent, innovation and place. In June 2019, WSU named one of three finalists for the IEP Talent Award for our leadership on the Mayor’s Workforce Development Board and in the Detroit Drives Degrees Initiative, and efforts to increase college access, success and graduate retention.

Transportation & Mobility

WayneRides: OED continues partnering with DOSO and Parking and Transportation on WayneRides—an initiative designed to increase WSU knowledge and use of local transportation options. WayneRides’

programming is coordinated by a student Transportation Ambassador, a position currently held by Kristina Curtiss, an undergraduate studying public affairs and urban studies. This fall, OED helped:

- Update all WayneRides promotional materials to reflect DDOT and SMART's new shared fare system, Dart, which will also include the QLINE as of October;
- Organize a Transportation Zone during FestiFall featuring representatives from DDOT, SMART, MoGo, the QLINE and SEMCOG; and
- Participate in Warrior VIP's Momentum Summer Program, Orientation Part Two, MISB's Back to School Bash, and an Academic Success Center Study Skills Workshop.

TechTown Buildings & Facilities

Industry Innovation Center (I2C): In partnership, TechTown and WSU are working to transform the now Industry Innovation Center (I2C) building and site into a place where university, industry and our surrounding community come together and collaborate. We co-lead a participatory design process facilitated by the Detroit Collaborative Design Center (DCDC) in partnership with Community Development Advocates of Detroit (CDAD) and Hamilton Anderson Associates, engaging more than 150 stakeholders in a series of design workshops and meetings. The process also included immediate improvements to the space including brightly painted sidewalks, new landscaping and furniture. We will have a completed conceptual I2C (re)design in September 2019, which we plan to share widely beginning with a design reveal on Thursday, September 26. This process was funded by TechTown via a grant from the William Davidson Foundation.

Nonprofit Capacity-Building & Innovation

Co.act Detroit

Background: In December of 2017, TechTown Detroit was awarded a three year grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation in the amount of \$4.75 million to launch the Center for Nonprofit Support at 6568 Woodward Avenue, just five blocks from the current TechTown building. Partners in the launch of the Center include the Michigan Nonprofit Association and Michigan Community Resources locally, as well as Community Wealth Partners nationally. Detroit's nonprofit community is both diverse and expansive, addressing the myriad needs and opportunities across southeast Michigan with relevant and impactful programming. However, many of these nonprofit organizations struggle to sustain themselves and fight a constant uphill battle to keep their doors open and invest in their staffs' long-term development. At the same time, countless opportunities for nonprofits in our region to partner, leverage efforts and deepen their impact go unrealized, either for lack of knowledge of one another's work or lack of capacity to solidify connections. Through the establishment of a Nonprofit Center for Support, the Foundation and TechTown will meet these challenges of our nonprofit sector head-on.

Brand Identity Development: Co.act Detroit has contracted with EarlyworksLLC, a Detroit based strategy and insights firm, to develop an integrated launch and rollout strategy, develop brand assets and a positioning approach to tell the organizational story. The landing webpage for Co.act Detroit launched in January and a phased approach will guide the development of the official website. A more robust website will be available publicly in April at www.coactdetroit.org

Staffing: Charnae Sanders was selected from over 60 applicants to serve as the Program Coordinator at Co.act Detroit. Charnae will begin her post on April 1. In addition, Esteria Rogan was hired to serve as the Executive Assistant and will begin on April 15. Interviews for the Director of Programs role are currently underway, for which approximately 70 candidates applied.

Programming: Co.act Detroit received a \$1,975,000 grant from the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation in November to support the creation of a Technical Assistance Fund for nonprofits receiving services through the Center for Nonprofit Support. Co.act Detroit is currently developing the preliminary program design to provide these meaningful resources to Southeast Michigan's nonprofit community. Since the December open houses, Co.act has hosted more than 35 convenings, events and workshops in partnership with the nonprofit community. For example, in January Co.act collaborated with Michigan Community Resources to host a pro bono legal clinic for 10 nonprofit organizations serving children and families. Our partner, Data Driven Detroit, has also begun piloting office hours in the Co.act Detroit space. In April, Co.act Detroit will collaborate with the Urban Consulate to host Candid Conversations at Co.act, a biweekly speaker series addressing topics pertinent to the nonprofit community. Additional early program offerings will include nonprofit organizational assessments, professional office hours with subject matter experts and workshops with national and local partners.

Talent-based Economic Development

Detroit Revitalization Fellows, a program of Wayne State University

Launched at Wayne State University in 2011, the Detroit Revitalization Fellows (DRF) program places talented, mid-career professionals at local organizations at the forefront of the city and region's civic, community and economic development. This select group of doers engages in a rigorous two-year leadership development program while serving full-time at their host organizations. DRF has been generously funded by the Kresge Foundation, Ford Foundation, Hudson-Webber Foundation, Fred A. and Barbara M. Erb Family Foundation, Skillman Foundation, DTE Energy Foundation, the Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, the PwC Charitable Foundation, Rock Ventures and Wayne State University.

DRF's fourth cohort (DRF IV) launched in August 2017 with 19 new Fellows, 13 of whom remain in the program. Like previous cohorts, the DRF IV Fellows are engaging in two years of cohort building, leadership development and meaningful work. However, this cohort has had a more intentional focus on applying a broad sustainability lens to revitalization in the city's civic, community and economic development landscape via monthly session programming. Leadership development focuses simultaneously on the cohort of Fellows collectively, as well as each Fellow individually, via a blend of 21 monthly group sessions, three study trips and investment in coaching and training for each Fellow individually.

Monthly Sessions:

The May session occurred May 30th and 31st. This month's theme was homelessness and poverty. Fellows learned about the efforts to address homelessness in Detroit and developed a better understanding of how homelessness and poverty impact the stabilization, sustainability and/or growth of the city and its neighborhoods. Fellows also identified opportunities to support existing work in the space.

On June 27th and 28th, the Fellows explored workforce development. They were introduced to the landscape, connected with various Detroit programs and services and walked away from the session more knowledgeable about the implications for workforce development related to the civic, community and economic development ecosystem.

July was DRF IV's last monthly session. The day was centered on their fellowship reflections and celebration of their accomplishments, growth and development. The Fellows presented on their impact over the two years followed by an intimate Detroit river cruise celebration. The evening celebration brought together Fellows' family, friends and colleagues as well as other DRF stakeholders.

Lunch & Learns: Two workshops were held to support Fellows' transition out of the fellowship. In June, Minito Reasor, Minito HR Solutions, and Beki Fraser, Focus for Growth, co-led a Creative Storytelling Resume Strategies workshop. July's workshop, Strengthening Your Authentic Brand, was facilitated by Shelley Danner. Several alumni Fellows attended the workshops.

Future of DRF: Acknowledging the changes across the city since DRF launched in 2011, in April the program embarked on a strategic assessment. With an aggressive four-month timeline, DRF partnered with The Work Department and Public Sector Consultants to engage approximately 100 diverse stakeholders including current and alumni Fellows, funders, Advisory Council members, current and previous employers, coaches, other sector leaders and residents via phone interviews, surveys, focus groups, and strategic planning sessions. The goal was to understand and develop a vision for how the fellowship could make a greater impact while continuing to nurture and promote the leaders Detroit needs now.

The assessment is now complete and an executive summary will be shared in September. The strategic planning process began in June and below are highlights from DRF's five-year plan.

- Vision Statement
We envision a leadership culture that promotes and values equity, inclusion, and effective collaboration through courageous leadership.
- Mission Statement
To expand the impact and network of diverse leaders who drive positive systemic change within Detroit's civic, community, and economic development landscape.
- Four strategic priorities: Support Our Current Network of Change Agents (Alumni), Invest in Community Leaders & Organizations, Grow Our Network of Change Agents, and Sustain Our Work
 - Priority One: Supporting Our Current Network of Change Agents
 - Robust investment in alumni
 - Priority Two: Invest in Community Leaders & Organizations

- Increase opportunities for Detroit's community leaders and resident-led organizations to access DRF's programming and the network via future cohorts starting in early 2020
- Priority Three: Grow Our Network of Change Agents
 - Provide access to our leadership development offerings to folks outside DRF's network
- Priority Four: Sustain Our Work
 - Develop an adequate staffing capacity model
 - Improve communication about the program's work and Fellows' impact
 - Pursue strategic partnerships with other programs/organizations to secure various collaborative opportunities

Alumni engagement activities will begin ramping up this fall and the fellowship will pilot the next cohort in early 2020. The staff is excited about sustaining and better connecting the alumni network, evolving and expanding the fellowship's cohort model, and disrupting and democratizing Detroit's leadership culture.

Funding: DRF staff, Foundation Relations, and the Office of Economic Development met with program officers from the Kresge and Ford Foundations about funding the program's future initiatives starting in 2020.

Alumni Engagement: DRF continues to invest in our alumni network. Cohort IV Fellows will receive 12 hours of alumni coaching through July 2020. The 3rd biennial Homecoming Celebration was June 7th and 8th and welcomed several alumni back to Detroit. The weekend included a moderated panel discussion, Fellow-led workshops, an evening celebration followed by a Michigan Central Station tour, lunch and fun activities the next day. The Alumni Council will reconvene in September for 2020 planning.

Raising DRF's Profile: The Detroit Revitalization Fellows is now regarded as the longest-standing mid-career urban fellowship program in the country. The staff is regularly looked to for guidance from other institutions that are considering launching their own fellowship programs, and to share its expertise. Current Fellows and DRF alumni are regularly being recognized for their contributions to the future of Detroit and the region, and being given increasingly influential professional opportunities. Recent examples include:

Cohort I Fellow Sarida Scott was interviewed for Design Core Detroit's Detroit City of Design Podcast earlier this month. Cohort IV Fellow Emily Thompson was promoted to Director of Economic and Community Development in WSU's Office of Economic Development in August. Cohort IV Fellow Aaron Goodman joined the City of Detroit's Planning and Development Department as the Planner - Community Benefits Ordinance in July. Cohort I Fellow Sarida Scott attended Harvard Business School's Strategic Perspectives in Nonprofit Management Executive Education program this summer. Cohort I Fellow Erin Kelly and Cohort III Fellow Leslie Tom presented a PechaKucha on equity with Detroit Design 139 in July.

Submitted by: Ned Staebler, Vice President for Economic Development

Cohort III Fellow Gracie Xavier was a panelist for the *Looking for America* exhibit at the Detroit Historical Museum in July. Cohort I Fellow Sarida Scott presented on community engagement, placemaking and resident expertise in Favara, Sicily in July. Also in July, Cohort IV Fellows Andrea Benson, Lily Gonzalez and Alaina Jackson hosted two additional free hands-on energy efficiency workshops for residents with an Erb Family Foundation grant. Cohort III Fellow Joel Howrani Heeres' Office of Sustainability released the city's Sustainability Action Agenda and report in June. Latina Black, Fellows' Experience Manager, was an Urban Consulate parlor talk panelist in June. DRF joined the Youth in Community Development Consortium convened by Building the Engine of Community Development in Detroit (BECDD). Since May, the Kresge Foundation, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, BECDD and Arabella Advisors have contacted DRF to either learn more about the program model, explore possible collaborations locally and/or in other communities, or discuss how DRF staff might be able to further advance their work and mission.

Development

The Economic Development Group at Wayne State University has been actively pursuing funding in the three areas of focus—Business, Place and Talent—while formalizing operations for the team including standardizing recognition and developing portfolios with moves management tracking.

September 2019.

Business-Based Economic Development Fundraising

TechTown

Programs @ TechTown

The fundraising team has applied for three new potential sources of funding to support the tech-based entrepreneurship programs including two via the US Small Business Administration program: The Growth Accelerator and FAST grant programs. With a newly structured approach to meeting the needs of Detroit's tech entrepreneurs, including particular focus on the ideation phase, the fundraising team is finding new opportunities to request support for our work. Additionally, we are leveraging the opportunity to be a guest judge at the inaugural pitch night for "Start Studio" as a way to cultivate prospective funders and steward existing.

The fundraising team has secured three new gifts from banks to support the place-based entrepreneurship programs. Ranging from \$2,500 to \$150,000, these smaller, pipeline-building gifts represent a critical piece of the long-term fundraising strategy to introduce new donors to the work with the opportunity to grow support over time.

We are in the last few weeks of planning for and executing another successful Toast of the Town (October 10).

Place-based + Talent-based Economic Development

Submitted by: Ned Staebler, Vice President for Economic Development

After a long cultivation period with Lyft, we are in the final stages of sign-off for a really creative partnership that creates a safer, more established PUDO (pick up and drop off) rideshare location at the Woodward | Warren Park. The sponsorship will engage students and include multiple activations including events and a visible yet-to-be-revealed element. We are very excited to utilize this as a model and hope to replicate the PUDO on the north end of campus near TechTown and I2C.

Together, with the Detroit Urban Solutions team, we have requested a grant from the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan to support the Motown Musician Accelerator.

Communications

Media Outreach

In Q2 2019, there were a total of 40 media hits on economic development topics across 64 outlets, representing 7% of the university total.

There were an additional 37 hits across 534 outlets for TechTown.

Trending Topics: David Mackenzie House (*Detroit News, Curbed Detroit, Detroit Metro Times*), Ned Staebler's opinion piece on taxes in *Bridge*, Woodward | Warren Park in *Model D*, new basketball arena (*Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, WJBK-TV, WXYZ-TV, Crain's Detroit Business, Deadline Detroit, MLive, NBA, ESPN, Yahoo Sports, Fox Sports, Arena Digest, WFMZ-TV, Seattle Times, Washington Times, MLive*), Michigan Mobility Institute and Wayne State partnership (*Detroit Free Press, Detroit News, WJBK-TV, WXYZ-TV, Crain's Detroit Business, Deadline Detroit, MLive, NBA, ESPN, Yahoo Sports, Fox Sports, Arena Digest, WFMZ-TV, Seattle Times, Washington Times*)

Public Relations Campaign

Finn Partners is providing pro bono public relations support including messaging and strategy for local and national coverage to elevate TechTown's reputation. The campaign will launch in the fall announcing programmatic changes at TechTown.