



CHALLENGE *DETROIT*



2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Developing diverse, innovative, community-minded leaders
through intellectual giving since 2012

The 2021-2022 Program Year was generously supported by Huntington Bank





A DECADE OF IMPACT

Looking back to a decade ago, Challenge Detroit emerged during a time when the city was facing a huge population decline and the economy, here and across the country, was in deep recession. The idea for Challenge Detroit came in response to the exodus of talent leaving Detroit and Michigan and, along with that, a desire to make an impact, create jobs, and contribute to the community efforts to move Detroit forward.

Doyle Mosher was the visionary behind that idea and Deirdre Groves, a recent college graduate working for Doyle's construction firm at the time, had the energy to put the idea to action. Together, with Shelley Danner who joined the team in 2012, they successfully launched the first program year in 2012 amidst Detroit's bankruptcy, embracing the challenge of attracting, retaining and developing community-minded leaders here. Over the last ten years, not only has Challenge Detroit developed talent, but the innovative model has catalyzed impact at many levels, for individuals, for the companies and nonprofits served, and in the greater workforce, community, and economy.

Each year, the team worked hard to continue fostering company partnerships and sponsors, to continue recruiting diverse, community-minded talent, and to keep reflecting on and refining the program. Of course, the year 2020 brought unprecedented change for Challenge Detroit.

The pandemic required resiliency and adaptability – Challenge Detroit pivoted from in-person programming into a successful virtual model and now a hybrid model in the tenth year. As a small but mighty nonprofit, Challenge Detroit continues to thrive on change and persevere through uncertainty and unknowns. Despite those uncertainties, one thing that is known for sure is that Challenge Detroit is resilient because of its community. It is the Fellows, partners, alumni, leaders, and supporters that continue to embrace the change and make the organization's meaningful work possible.

In acknowledgment of Challenge Detroit's dedication to the community and the power of its partnerships, Challenge Detroit was awarded the Spirit of Detroit award by the City Council at the close of the tenth program year. The Spirit of Detroit Award is given out by the Detroit City Council to honor an outstanding achievement or service and specifically to Challenge Detroit "in recognition of exceptional achievement, outstanding leadership and dedication to improving the quality of life."

Challenge Detroit is about coming together as a community to achieve something together - and this award is for all the people who have made a decade of impact possible.



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“Challenge Detroit is a once in a lifetime opportunity. The fellowship is centered around service and community building. It will push you, challenge you, water, and grow you into the type of servant leader you want to be.”

Karmel Reeves, 2021-2022 Fellow



How We Make an Impact

WHAT WE DO

- Attract and retain innovative talent by sharing about the issues and opportunities facing the city and giving selected individuals a chance to learn and make an impact alongside longtime Detroiters
- Portray Detroit and the surrounding region as a place people can live, work, play, give, and lead
- Make incremental impact in the community throughout the year by addressing the issues and opportunities facing the city while building awareness of the momentum in Detroit to support the economy, culture and innovation while developing the next generation of leaders and doers through learning and leading by doing

HOW WE DO IT

- Launch a local and national recruitment effort to raise awareness of Challenge Detroit and the amazing opportunities in the city
- Act as a platform to share balanced and positive messages about Detroit by showcasing the Fellows, companies and nonprofit partners that bring the program to life
- Create jobs and stimulate the economy by partnering with top companies to serve as hosts to Challenge Detroit’s Fellows
- Further work with these companies to build partnerships that ultimately support the professional development of the local workforce while contributing positively to community impact efforts
- Spearhead a robust leadership program centered around innovation and design thinking to support ongoing skill development that helps Fellows both in their jobs and also in their work with Challenge Detroit’s nonprofit partners
- Design multi-week team challenge projects to leverage the creativity, resources and intellectual capital of Fellows to positively impact operations, fundraising, programming, marketing and other critical functions of the nonprofits we serve

Ten Years of Impact

310+
alumni & Fellows



115+
host company partners



165+
nonprofits served



80,000+
social media connections



\$15,000,000+
economic value generated





Our 2021-2022 Fellows

Challenge Detroit attracts talent from Detroit and across the US to engage in an extensive recruitment and application process. The candidate pool is narrowed down to the top finalists who participate in an interview round during the Virtual Interview Experience. These finalists connect with host companies through formal interviews, meet alumni and staff, interact with each other through networking and immersive activities, and learn about what to expect if they are selected as a program Fellow. Following the interviews, Challenge Detroit reviews feedback from finalists and companies to finalize placements. This program year, 36 Fellows completed the program. The cohort brought diversity of skills, experiences, and backgrounds:

47

Areas of Experience

Architectural Engineering
African American & African Studies
Architecture
Arts and Humanities
Behavioral Healthcare
Bioengineering
Biology
Business Administration/Management/Studies
Civic Engagement
Cognitive Science
Communications
Corporate Responsibility
Critical Ethnic Studies
Cultural Anthropology
Engineering
Environmental Economics and Management
Environmental Studies
French
Global Inclusive Leadership/Diversity
Global Studies
Government and Legal Studies
Human Biology
Human Development and Family Studies
Humanities Pre-Law
Industrial Design
International Affairs/Relations/Studies
Journalism
Journalism and Religion
Management
Marketing
Media and Information
Media, Journalism, and Film
Music
Negotiation
Neuroscience
Philosophy
Photography
Political Science
Portuguese
Psychology
Public Administration
Public Policy
Spanish

29%

from Detroit

49%

from Michigan

22%

from out-of-state

66%

Identify as Women

66%

Identify as Racially/
Ethnically Diverse

100%

Have a Bachelor's
Degree or Higher

“ ”

“The fellowship experience is unmatched. It’s life changing... You get to experience Detroit in an authentic, hands on way, interact with diverse groups of people, create lasting relationships and networking connections, earn a living while making an impact—the opportunity is endless! I am blown away by what I have learned about and experienced in Detroit, and it’s my hometown! I am grateful for new connections I’ve made—Challenge Detroit opens up doors to connect you with powerful people.

Effie Alofoje-Carr, 2021-2022 Fellow



2021-2022 / Year 10 Fellows



AARON
JASON



AKASH
RAJE



ALBI
TAIPI



ANDRÉA
GUTIERREZ



BELLA
KISER



KHALIL
DAVIS



KRISTEN
CHU



KRISTIN
STEPANEK



LILY
PASSAFUME



MARIAM
MAKKI



BEN
RATNER



CALLIE
BRANTLEY



CHRISTINA
GLEATON



COURTNEY
HARPER



DEMITRIA
POWELL



MARISOL
DORANTES-SILVA



MIRANDA
GRALESKI



MOSOPE
ISMAIL



EMILY
WILSON



RYAN
SMITH



EFFIE
ALOFOJE-CARR



ELLINGTON
SMITH



EMILY
WILSON



GABRIELLE
LARKIN



HALEY
SCHULTEIS



SELENE
CLARK



TASNIA
CHOWDHURY



THOMAS
CAIRGLE



TORI
SULLIVAN-CORTEZ



VANESSA
VIGIER



JOSH
HUBBARD



KAJ
ALTHAUS



KARMEL-SERAH
REEVES



KELLY
ULRICH



VIRIDIANA
CAMACHO MURGA



ZHARIA
TERRY



2021-2022 / Year 10 Fellows (Continued)



“ ”

“Challenge allowed me to continue serving the community while growing and learning in a new professional space. I am grateful to Challenge for connecting me with my host company, where I was able to try out different roles, learn at my own pace and with the support of my team, and pivot my career to something drastically different than what I started out doing.”

Kristen Chu, 2021-2022 Fellow



Where Are They Now?

With over 275 program graduates, our alumni are making their mark in various industries locally and across the world. While many alumni pursue advanced degrees or continue on at their host companies, others evolve their careers. Regardless of what they do, they all continue to make an impact in the community through their work and volunteerism.

CAREER PATHWAYS BEYOND THE FELLOWSHIP

37% **NONPROFIT & PHILANTHROPIC** 

Nearly 37% of alumni work in the nonprofit sector including employment by challenge project partnership organizations after their fellowship year further supporting the implementation and continuation of our challenge project work and overall community engagement.

20% **ADVANCED EDUCATION** 

Nearly 20% of alumni have pursued advanced educational studies from local schools to ivy league institutions, in fields ranging from law and business to social work, public administration, design and community development.

50% **CORPORATE & PRIVATE SECTOR** 

Nearly 50% of our alumni work in the corporate and private sector, with many maintaining employment at their host companies and progressing into leadership roles.

20% **DESIGN & CREATIVE** 

Nearly 20% of alumni work in the creative space, including architecture, graphic / communication design, human-centered design, videography/ photography and more. Furthermore, alums apply design thinking skills from the fellowship across careers.

46 **BUSINESS & COMMUNITY VENTURES** 

46 alumni have launched business and community ventures ranging from tech startups to social enterprises to freelance consulting businesses to nonprofits and more.

13 **GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC SERVICE** 

13 alumni have worked in government for the City of Detroit and State of Michigan in parks, planning, grants, housing, mobility, and civil rights, as well as supporting both the Mayor and Governor directly.

Our alumni are catalyzing multidisciplinary impact across sectors, across Detroit, and across the community. They continue to deepen ties, connect and collaborate as part of the Challenge Detroit network.

ABOUT 80%
of Fellows stay in Detroit following their fellowship program year.



Featured Alumni Fellows

During our Ten Year Anniversary Celebration, two inaugural alumni Fellows, Brittany (Sanders) Rhodes and Zac Berlin, were invited to speak about how their time as Fellows impacted their personal and professional lives, and to reflect on ten years of Challenge Detroit.

Brittany (Sanders) Rhodes

“Thanks to Challenge Detroit I got to work at an amazing host company, support incredible challenge projects with lasting impact, build lifelong friendships, and be propelled into social entrepreneurship.”

Inaugural Fellow
Founder, Black Girl MATHgic



Brittany Rhodes (nee Sanders) was born and raised in Detroit. She spent over a decade traveling for school and work, but couldn't quell the desire to come home. When Brittany joined Challenge Detroit's inaugural program year, she shared that she was compelled to be in Detroit because “there would be no perception

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Featured Alumni Fellows (Continued)

shifts of Detroit on a national scale if the positive things occurring here are never highlighted.” Brittany spent her fellowship year doing just that through her host company employment and challenge project work in the program. At her host company, Focus: HOPE, she supported entrepreneurs in the Hope Village neighborhood, and was inspired to make an impact. A graduate of Spelman College and Carnegie Mellon University, Brittany went on to work for a variety of organizations doing good things in the city before launching her own business, Black Girl MATHgic, a monthly subscription box curated to increase math confidence and decrease math anxiety in girls. Today, Brittany continues to create change and make an impact inspiring not only the future generation of Fellows, but the girls served by Black Girl MATHgic (and now, MATHgic Prince) and all individuals who seek to make a difference in the communities they love.



Zac Berlin

“Challenge Detroit was one of the best things to happen in my life. Ten years later and I am still with my host company having built a successful career thanks to this program.”

Inaugural Fellow
Manager, Creative Design
Credit Acceptance

Zac Berlin grew up just outside the City of Detroit borders. While attending University of Michigan, he felt a tug towards the city because “to be part of something bigger than yourself has always been appealing to me.” When Zac joined the program, one of the first questions he asked a community leader was how he could make a splash in the city. She responded that it wasn’t about a splash, but rather about small ripples over time. That comment resonated with Zac who focused on the importance of his work on the challenge projects and at his host company, Credit Acceptance. Zac has made many ripples and is now in a leadership role for the creative work of his original host company. Zac also has launched and lifted up multiple opportunities at Credit Acceptance for his colleagues to engage in the community much like he did as a Fellow.





Our Host Company Partners

Host companies commit to hiring and hosting a Fellow for one year - working at their organization each week, Monday through Thursday, and providing them a chance to contribute in the community through intellectual service every Friday with Challenge Detroit. Participating companies are in a variety of industries, and range from small businesses to nonprofits to large corporations. These companies reflect the diverse Detroit business marketplace, and hold belief in the importance of retaining and attracting innovative, community-minded, entrepreneurial thinkers. Along with the Fellows they employ, they're committed to philanthropic initiatives and bettering the city of Detroit.

2021-2022 Host Company Partners















Featured Host Companies

Host companies DTE and OneMagnify have been with Challenge Detroit since the beginning. They were two of the first companies to make a commitment to hosting a Fellow and have hosted Fellows year over year, providing incredible career opportunities for the individuals they employ. During our Ten Year Anniversary event, we invited them to speak about the partnership.

Featured Host Company: DTE



“Challenge Detroit’s impact in this community and beyond is important and exciting. We are proud to continue this partnership.”

Chris Polk, Senior Program Manager,
Public Affairs, DTE

DTE

DTE has been an integral partner and host company since Challenge Detroit’s inception in 2012. DTE was the first company to say “yes” when Challenge Detroit was just an idea. They believed in the mission and vision joining forces with Challenge Detroit leading the way and setting an example for other companies across the greater Detroit area. In ten-years, DTE has hosted over 30-Fellows in various roles and departments from working to increase diversity with human resources, striving to increase healthy outcomes with the employee wellness team, and comprising a large portion of public affairs working on projects such as volunteer engagement, neighborhoods, parks, and more.

Featured Host Company: OneMagnify

“The challenges you have worked on over the years have evolved and continue to make an impact at OneMagnify and across the community.”

Cristin Costanza, Senior Director,
Talent, OneMagnify


onemagnify



OneMagnify has been part of the program since the inaugural year, leading the way for like-minded businesses in the heart of the city. They have been an incredible host company hiring from Challenge Detroit’s candidate pool and even launching an in-house recruitment program making Challenge Detroit available to current employees. Today, Challenge Detroit alumni work intimately with leadership to continue hosting Fellows and building awareness in the company and community.



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“Hosting Challenge Detroit Fellows has been an incredible way to bring exceptional talent from in and around Detroit to support our work in Detroit Public Schools Community District. The Fellows we host are committed to our mission, bring talents and perspectives that add value to our work, and are often instrumental in advancing critical projects in the District. Challenge Detroit is now one of our top pipeline partners for future central office staff and we look forward to hosting more Fellows in the future!”

Ben Jackson, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources,
Detroit Public Schools Community District

Our Challenge Projects

The heart of the Challenge Detroit program and a key driver of successfully attracting talent and impacting the community are the challenge projects. Every Friday, Fellows come together working in teams to generate innovative and meaningful solutions to pressing challenges and opportunities facing our Challenge Detroit nonprofit partners and the communities they serve.

2021-2022 Fellows participated in three cohort challenge projects and one teamchoice challenge project, in partnership with Detroit nonprofit organizations to help further their missions. These projects focused on issues including Black business support and entrepreneurship, community development (with a focus on arts, culture and entrepreneurship), neighborhood engagement and family development, and more. The Fellows contributed their unique perspectives, skill sets, and innovative ideas to produce implementable recommendations and tangible, ready-to-go work products for the nonprofits. Our Fellows came through to deliver successfully in the hybrid environment and continued to add value for our partners. The projects build nonprofit organizational capacity by offering intellectual service and collaboration with top talent at no cost to the nonprofit.

Challenge Detroit has developed a robust needs assessment used to design projects that will most effectively leverage Fellows' talent while achieving optimal impact for a nonprofit. As a part of their orientation, Fellows learn about Detroit's neighborhoods, history and the policies that shaped the City to gain context. Fellows are then trained in the design thinking framework — a human-centered, creative, problem-solving tool where empathy is a key element. At the beginning of a project, Fellows participate in empathy based activities to understand the needs of the partner organization, individuals and community they are serving through each project. Fellows work on small teams and use the design thinking framework and project management skills to execute their work, and collaborate with the nonprofit partner throughout the project. Challenge Detroit has refined the process, tools, and frameworks used to deliver on innovative team challenge projects.

At the end of each project, the nonprofit partner is provided with a comprehensive set of ready-to-go deliverables ranging from marketing and fundraising campaigns to organizational strategies and assessments and beyond. The nonprofits then leverage and integrate these deliverables both internally and externally to move their work forward.

2021-2022 Challenge Partners



“Through Challenge Detroit, I was able to understand the deep commitment of Detroit’s non-profit community to creating a more equitable city. I worked with partners who are committed to supporting Black businesses, changing economic ecosystems in the city, and transforming education for Detroit’s children. In one year, I got to develop my own professional skills while seeing the impact of the important work that Detroiters have been doing for years.”

Albi Taipi, 2021-2022 Fellow



CHALLENGE PROJECT #1

Black Business Support & Entrepreneurship



DESIGN QUESTION:

How might we maximize the impact of the Metro Detroit Black Business Alliance?

PROJECT PARTNER TEAM:

- Charity Dean, President/CEO
- Kai Bowman, COO
- Ryanne Taylor, Program Coordinator

ABOUT OUR NONPROFIT PARTNER:

The Metro Detroit Black Business Alliance (MDBBA) is a recently launched nonprofit committed to advocacy, programming, and providing resources for Black businesses and entrepreneurs.

OUR CHALLENGE:

Teams of Fellows created strategies to attract and retain members including a welcome toolkit, built out further events and uses for the Black Business Resource Center and the BizWiz, designed programming and mentorship for youth entrepreneurs, shaped assessment and tracking metrics and surveys, created recommendations for enhancing the Hastings Street Index, an online local Black-Owned business directory, and more.



“ ”

“As we work to close the wealth gap for Black entrepreneurs, this project [with the Fellows] will be essential to MDBBA by allowing us to leverage resources in service of accomplishing the audacious goals we have set.”

Charity Dean, President/CEO, MDBBA



CHALLENGE PROJECT #2

Community Development
Art, Culture and Entrepreneurship



DESIGN QUESTION:

How might we work to ensure entrepreneurial and economic advancement of culture-bearers in the Live6 communities?

ABOUT THE NONPROFIT PARTNER:

Marygrove Conservancy's mission is to preserve the legacy of Marygrove College through equitable stewardship of a campus that exemplifies excellence in education, serving Northwest Detroit and the city overall.

OUR CHALLENGE:

This project elevated the important role of art, culture and entrepreneurship in community development. The Fellows learned about and focused on the concept of culture-bearers - people who are working to ensure that elements of their traditions and community are preserved. Teams of Fellows developed training and skill-building resources, a community map of the culture-bearer ecosystem, mentorship programming and strategies, an integrated leadership program, a platform to amplify stories, and beyond.

PROJECT PARTNER TEAM:

- Racheal Allen, COO
- Turkessa Baldrige, Program Manager

"We need to know what our neighbors are doing."

- April McGee Flo
Owner, Design Studio

“Working with the Challenge Detroit fellows was an extremely valuable opportunity for Marygrove Conservancy. As a lean organization, we benefited tremendously from the collective thought leadership, creativity and energy. The additional capacity gave us a plethora of resources that we can implement as our project develops. We truly appreciated the partnership and the opportunity to be selected as a program partner!”

Racheal Allen, COO, Marygrove Conservancy



CHALLENGE PROJECT #3

Neighborhood Engagement and Family Development



DESIGN QUESTION:

How might we measure the outcomes that neighborhoods and Brilliant Detroit care most about to better understand local and citywide change in early childhood support over time?

ABOUT THE NONPROFIT PARTNER:

Brilliant Detroit is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building kid success families and neighborhoods where families with children 0-8 have what they need to be school-ready, healthy and stable.

OUR CHALLENGE:

The project was framed around understanding local and citywide change in early childhood support over time through the creation of a dashboard tool that will show important results and progress. Teams identified community-determined, kid success outcomes for the Morningside neighborhood as well as metrics and a core outcomes bank to be used across neighborhoods, with respect to topics including health, family and individual support, and more. Additionally, teams provided recommendations on the visual dashboard display, how to sustain and scale use of a dashboard platform as well as developed internal training, engagement plans and external communication strategies.

PROJECT PARTNER TEAM:

- Cindy Eggleton, CEO & Co-Founder
- Aaron Appel, Senior Growth Manager
- Maria Montoya, Director of Strategic Communications and Systems
- Emma Laut, Senior Operations Manager
- Leena Mangrulkar, Interim Evaluator
- Susie Schechter, Chief of Development and Volunteer Engagement
- Rakisha Odom, Community Outreach Manager
- Rachel Schafer, Special Initiatives Consultant



“Without a doubt this project would not be where it is today without Challenge Detroit. The fellows inspired engagement from across our organization and stakeholders, and expertly wove all of this input together into a rich tapestry. They led with listening and we are determined to build upon their foundation to engage our neighbors and other stakeholders in truly understanding how the children are doing in each Brilliant Detroit neighborhood.”

Aaron Appel, Senior Growth Manager, Brilliant Detroit



CHALLENGE PROJECT #4

For the final project of the program year, teams of Fellows selected nonprofits to work with that they were passionate to support. The Fellows leveraged the design thinking and community engagement skills they developed through the course of the program, along with their unique talents, to address needs and opportunities of eight nonprofit organizations. Teams co-designed these project collaborations with eight partner organizations working across Detroit neighborhoods. The projects culminated with a gallery showcase where teams shared project outcomes with the partners and the greater Challenge Detroit community during the Fellow graduation and Challenge Detroit Ten Year Anniversary event at Beacon Park.

Team Choice Project Partners



Sidewalk Detroit: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we imagine Sidewalk Detroit’s inaugural artist residency for community-based artists in Detroit?”

About the Nonprofit:

Sidewalk Detroit exists to advance public life and strong social infrastructure through the lens of arts, culture, collaborative design and deep engagement with residents.

Project Partners:

- Augusta Morrison, Program Strategist
- Ryan Myers-Johnson, Director and Founder

About the Challenge:

The project sought to create a foundation for a community-based artist residency program which Sidewalk Detroit can implement in the future, bringing public, functional art to the Brightmoor neighborhood. Fellows developed an application form for the residency, marketing materials including recruitment content for social media as well as proposed logistics and program design for the art residency.

Fellow Team:

- Bella Kiser
- Marisol Dorantes-Silva
- Gabrielle Larkin
- Kaj Althaus
- Mariam Makki





“Working with Challenge Detroit Fellows [brought] a new and innovative perspective called design-based thinking which we are excited to learn from -- it assisted us in the development of a new artist residency we are launching as part of our Sidewalk Festival for 2023.”

Augusta Morrison (she/they)
Program Strategist,
Sidewalk Detroit



Class Act Detroit: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we help Class Act Detroit grow sustainably?

About the Nonprofit:

Class Act Detroit provides free youth programming based on the elements of hip-hop. Their mission is to empower youth via music and arts education in Detroit. The purpose is to promote equity racial healing and build community for future generations via the elements of hip-hop. As educators in Detroit, they interact with students who display their creative aptitude daily. However, many scholars lack opportunities to manifest their superpowers. The program utilizes hip-hop culture (MCing, DJing, Dance, Graffiti, and Knowledge) as a tool for knowledge acquisition and liberation. Students master processes and acquire new skills through strategically designed projects and performances, and project-based, game-based, and hands-on experiences.

Project Partner:

- Rashard Dobbins, Executive Director

About the Challenge:

This project focused on aiding Class Act Detroit in identifying options and resources for sustainable growth. Fellows created a funding kit, annual report, funding plan and partnership/resource recommendations to support long-term success.

Fellow Team:

- Andrea Gutierrez
- Miranda Galeski
- Lily Passafume
- Demitria Powell
- Kelly Ulrich



**CLASS Act
DETROIT**

“We [were] excited to have more hands on deck with our team of Challenge Detroit Fellows! We’re an intimate organization that does amazing work and has the potential to do more. More bandwidth [through this project] to help think through hurdles and address problems [was] a major plus for us.”

Rashard Dobbins, Executive Director, Class Act Detroit



Abayomi CDC: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we expand access to comprehensive programs and services to our community?

About the Nonprofit:

Abayomi CDC strengthens and secures families and the local community through comprehensive community building. Abayomi CDC envisions equitable communities that are sustained through individual and collective growth, mutual respect, and achievement and prosperity for all.

Project Partner:

- Hannah Morris, Deputy Director

About the Challenge:

The project addressed how to increase the community's access to services that can fit their daily needs, dreams, and goals, growing awareness and education towards financial freedom. Fellows created an ecosystem map, toolkit, resource database and an accessible community needs assessment tool for Abayomi.

Fellow Team:

- Selene Clark
- Mosope Ismail
- Vanessa Vigier
- Ellington Smith
- Effie Alofoje-Carr



“Challenge Detroit fellows produced project management materials for each pillar of our organization. Their work will help us immediately expand our potential partnership network and improve our resources for our community. We believe their work will allow us to strengthen relationships with our community members and reach upwards of 500+ new clients.”

Hannah Morris
Deputy Director, ABAYOMI





Mercado Food Hub (with Gleaners & FREC): Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we streamline the distribution process at the Mercado Food Hub and improve operational efficiency?

About the Nonprofit:

Mercado Food Hub, housed out of the Ford Resource and Engagement Center (FREC 1), is a client-choice pantry serving residents of southwest Detroit. FREC 1 provides a community gathering space for residents to develop new talents, learn new skills and access essential services. Located at the Mexicantown Mercado, the center brings more than 10 nonprofit partners together under one roof to offer critical services and programs, such as a Gleaners client choice food hub, legal assistance, income tax preparation, education and job initiatives, as well as cultural activities for individuals and families in the surrounding neighborhoods.

Project Partners:

- Nicholas Hill, Distribution Coordinator (Mercado)
- Alma Perez, Pantry Coordinator (Mercado)

About the Challenge:

The project focused on building out a food distribution model at the Mercado Food Hub to increase the pantry's accessibility and imagine ways to reintroduce client-choice. Fellows designed marketing and promotional materials for the Mercado that can help increase the visibility of the pantry in southwest Detroit neighborhoods. They also developed a Food Distribution Model that prioritizes client choice at the pantry, addresses the factors limiting clients' access to distributions, and accounts for the upcoming renovations at the FREC by proposing a plan for the pantry space.

Fellow Team:

- Hannah Rainaldi
- Kristin Stepanek
- Khalil Davis
- Christina Gleaton



Our Fellows did fantastic work. They were able to provide us with a detailed map of the pantry, new logos, public outreach material, floor plans, and even alternative distribution models. They were able to provide great practical advice from an outside perspective and we have already made a few changes based on their input. We will be distributing materials drafted by our Fellows to clients, volunteers, and donors. And within one month we will have tried out a few of their distribution models and have the logo they created painted onto shirts and the pantry itself.

Nico Hill, Distribution Coordinator (Mercado)



Artist Village (with Detroit Blight Busters): Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we create a cohesive vision for Artist Village that incorporates a community arts center into a broader framework for neighborhood change?

About the Nonprofit:

Artist Village is a nonprofit organization with the mission to revitalize the community through public art and educating youth on ways they can market their art.

Detroit Blight Busters' mission is to stabilize, revitalize and rebuild Detroit neighborhoods. They achieve this by demolishing, renovating and boarding up blighted homes for community use, building community partnerships, and sponsoring events that cater to low to middle-income families in Detroit.

Project Partners:

- Chazz Miller, Artist & Founder, Artist Village
- Amy Wellington, Founding Member & Business Partner
- John George, Artist & Business Partner, Detroit Blight Busters

About the Challenge:

This project focused on highlighting the value of a community-based arts center and community-based storytelling to both connect artists with each other and build awareness for the creation of the proposed Sunflower Art Center in the Old Redford/Brightmoor community. Fellows shaped a strategic plan for the new art center along with an event plan and promotional materials.

Fellow Team:

- Aaron Jason (Team Lead)
- Ben Ratner
- Karmel Reeves
- Haley Schultheis
- Tasnia Chowdhury



“Our team thanks the team of Challenge Detroit Fellows for their exceptional work ethic on our project collaboration. Their patience and guidance have been essential to helping us visualize our vision for moving forward with our expanding community-based arts initiative.”

Chazz Miller, Artist & Founder, Artist Village





Motor City Street Dance Academy: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

“How might we build a Youth Intervention Program and Scholarship for staff-wide implementation at MCSDA?”

About the Nonprofit:

Motor City Street Dance Academy, founded in 2016, is dedicated to bringing hip hop culture to Southwest Detroit and mentoring youth from all around Detroit. MCSDA offers dance, art, and music classes through traditional styles of hip hop; Aerosol Art, Breakin', Popping, Jit, DJing, beat-making, anime/comic design, and yoga. Using the elements of hip hop as a tool to empower youth with social-emotional development, professional skills, career paths, and healthy living, MCSDA works to enhance the lives of Detroiters through hip-hop, physical activity, and healthy living. Their purpose is grounded to uplift the disenfranchised communities in Detroit, much like the way the pioneers of hip-hop did decades ago. They work actively to provide a safe space for everyone to express themselves freely.”

Project Partners:

- Benito “MavOne” Vasquez, Executive Director, MCSDA
- Mateo Rodriguez, Community Relations Liaison, MCSDA

About the Challenge:

The project focused on youth social-emotional learning. Fellows assessed organizational capacity and designed a Youth Intervention Program, utilizing the offerings (breaking, DJing, beat making, hip-hop, anime art, etc.) at MCSDA to build a program for youth with behavioral concerns. They also create marketing and external partnership materials along with program training materials for MCSDA staff.

Fellow Team:

- Thomas Cairgle
- Albi Taipi
- Callie Brantley
- Akash Raje
- Courtney Harper

MCSDA
MOTOR CITY STREET DANCE ACADEMY

“What excites me most about partnering with Challenge Detroit [was] working with young professionals from our city. People who understand the importance of the work and are passionate about helping us accelerate to the next level. The value this collaboration is going to provide is being able to help us develop more behind-the-scenes work in our programming to better serve our community.”

Benito “MavOne” Vasquez,
Executive Director, Motor City
Street Dance Academy



L!fe Leaders Inc.: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we co-design a Detroit based youth policy summit to encourage young emerging leaders to build their own future?

About the Nonprofit:

L!fe Leaders Inc. helps Detroit youth define, name, hone, & turn personal ambitions into thriving futures. The L!fe Leaders organization builds programs and career pathways training, connects mentors and drives real actions for Detroit youth.

Project Partners:

- Amy Nedelander, Co-Founder
- Liaison: Angelica Williams, Student

About the Challenge:

The project focused on designing and supporting the Detroit Youth Summit, an annual gathering powered by L!fe Leaders, Inc. to bring together Youth and Leaders from across the Metro Detroit area to network, brainstorm, and collaborate with each other to bring about positive change in our communities. Fellows created event recommendations along with materials to promote the Detroit Youth Summit to youth and partners in the community.

Fellow Team:

- Emily Wilson
- Viridiana Camacho Murga
- Kristen Chu



“Thank you for working with us!”

Amy Nederlander, Co-Founder,
L!fe Leaders Inc.



Detroit Collaborative Design Center: Team Choice Project

Project Design Question:

How might we formalize the storytelling process for DCDC, so that they can feasibly reach broader audiences?

About the Nonprofit:

DCDC works with neighborhood partners on high-quality community-engaged design projects across Detroit. Their scope of work follows these primary areas of focus: Design, Engage, Educate and Share.

Project Partners:

- Julia Kowalski, Project Manager / Designer
- Ceara O'Leary, Co-Executive Director, Detroit Collaborative Design Center

About the Challenge:

The project focused on helping DCDC communicate the importance of their work and mission to community members, nonprofit organizations, and other stakeholders through storytelling. Fellows produced a creative, implementable storytelling toolkit centered around collaboration and lifting up community voices.

Fellow Team:

- Ryan Smith
- Josh Hubbard
- Tori Sullivan-Cortez
- Zharia Terry



“[The Fellows] have already brought energy, curiosity, and excitement to the project that has positively impacted our office! The team of Fellows [provided] us with capacity, research, and strategies around storytelling that will help DCDC share our work and celebrate our partners locally and nationally.”

Julia Kowalski, Project Manager / Designer and Ceara O'Leary, Co-Executive Director, Detroit Collaborative Design Center



Leadership Development

A cornerstone of the program is lead, specifically leading and learning by doing. Fellows have the chance to hold leadership roles on challenge project teams, and also participate in leadership development programming. After each project, Challenge Detroit hosts a Leadership Friday, consisting of speaker presentations from various roles, industries and leadership positions, interactive panels and workshops, and bonding and skill development activities, as well as sessions focused on Detroit history, racial equity, and more.

Some of this year’s featured speakers included Lt. Governor Garlin Gilchrist, Kresge Literary Arts Fellow Jassmine Parks, Chief Storyteller for the City of Detroit Eric Thomas and Historian Jamon Jordan along with alumni from various fields and many others.



Women's Leadership Panel (L to R): Regina Ann Campbell, Sonia Plata, Shelley Danner (standing) Carole Leigh Hutton, Shamyle Dobbs



“ ”

“Challenge Detroit exposes you to so many different opportunities that allows you to explore... You have access to a network of people and organizations who want to see you succeed. I’ve learned so much about myself through this experience and each challenge allows me to learn something new. I’m constantly being pushed out of my comfort zone. I’m constantly growing. And I’m constantly gaining new skills.”

Zharia Terry, 2021-2022 Fellow

The Challenge Detroit Team



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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



SHELLEY DANNER
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Challenge Detroit is thankful for the generous support from our sponsors and donors that made this program year possible.

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