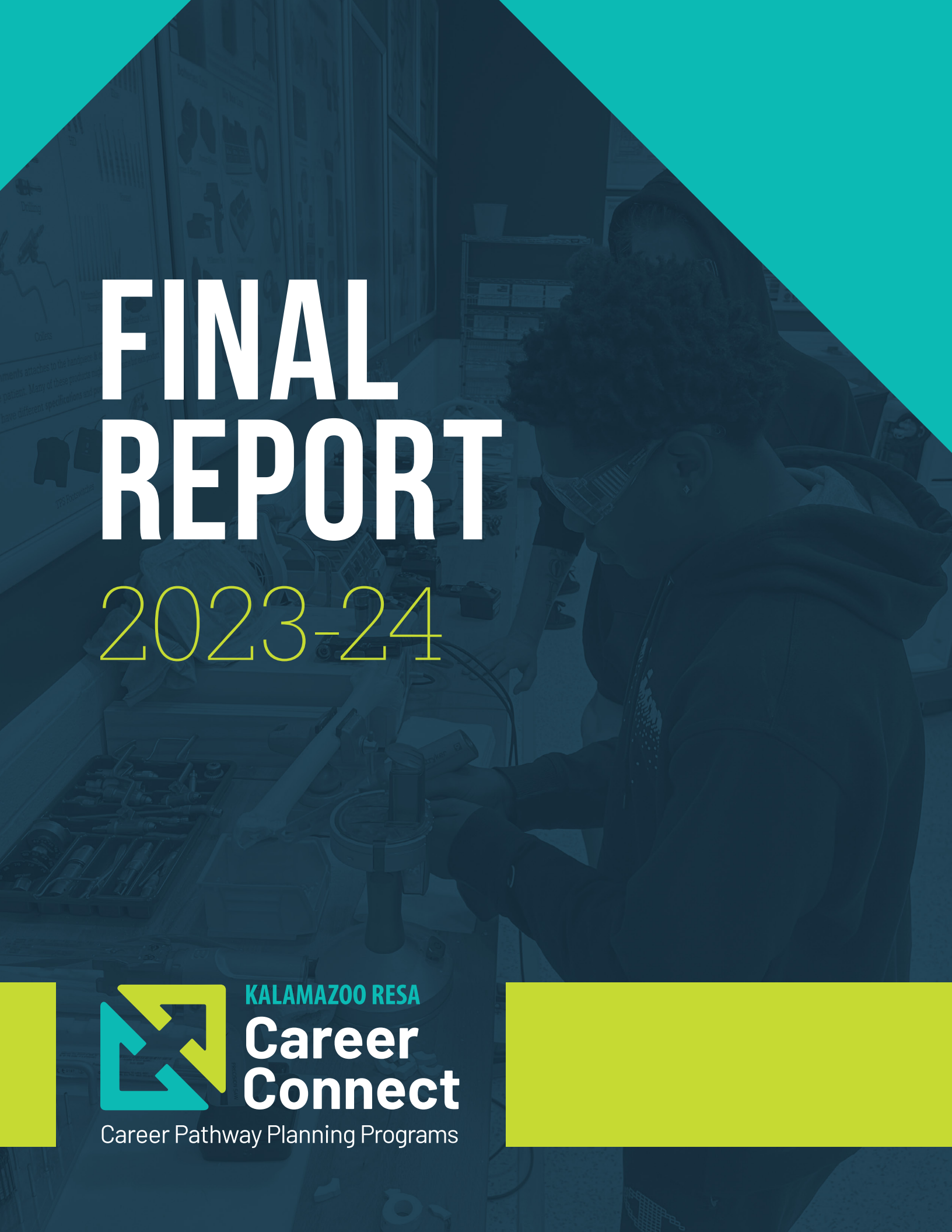


FINAL REPORT

2023-24

KALAMAZOO RESA

Career Connect

Career Pathway Planning Programs

MyCITY

MyCITY is a seasonal youth employment program that serves as the gateway to paid internship and work experience. During our fall, spring, and summer sessions, young people ages 14-24, can get paid to explore career paths, develop essential skills in communication, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-management and connect with employers in their community.

Participation in our summer session was a wonderful opportunity for young people to spend time in career exploration while gaining valuable work experience. Participants spent seven weeks of their summer developing their soft skills, networking with community employers, exploring career interests and options, and working at community job sites.

Fall and Spring sessions included our 4-week internship prep session. Participants earned a stipend for completion of weekly activities, including engagement in career training workshops once a week held in person. During the prep session, participants had the opportunity to interview for competitive internships with our employer partners. Participants who were matched to internships continued into a 7-week internship session. They were paid to work directly with local employers to gain hands-on work experience.

Over 90% of participants surveyed reported that:

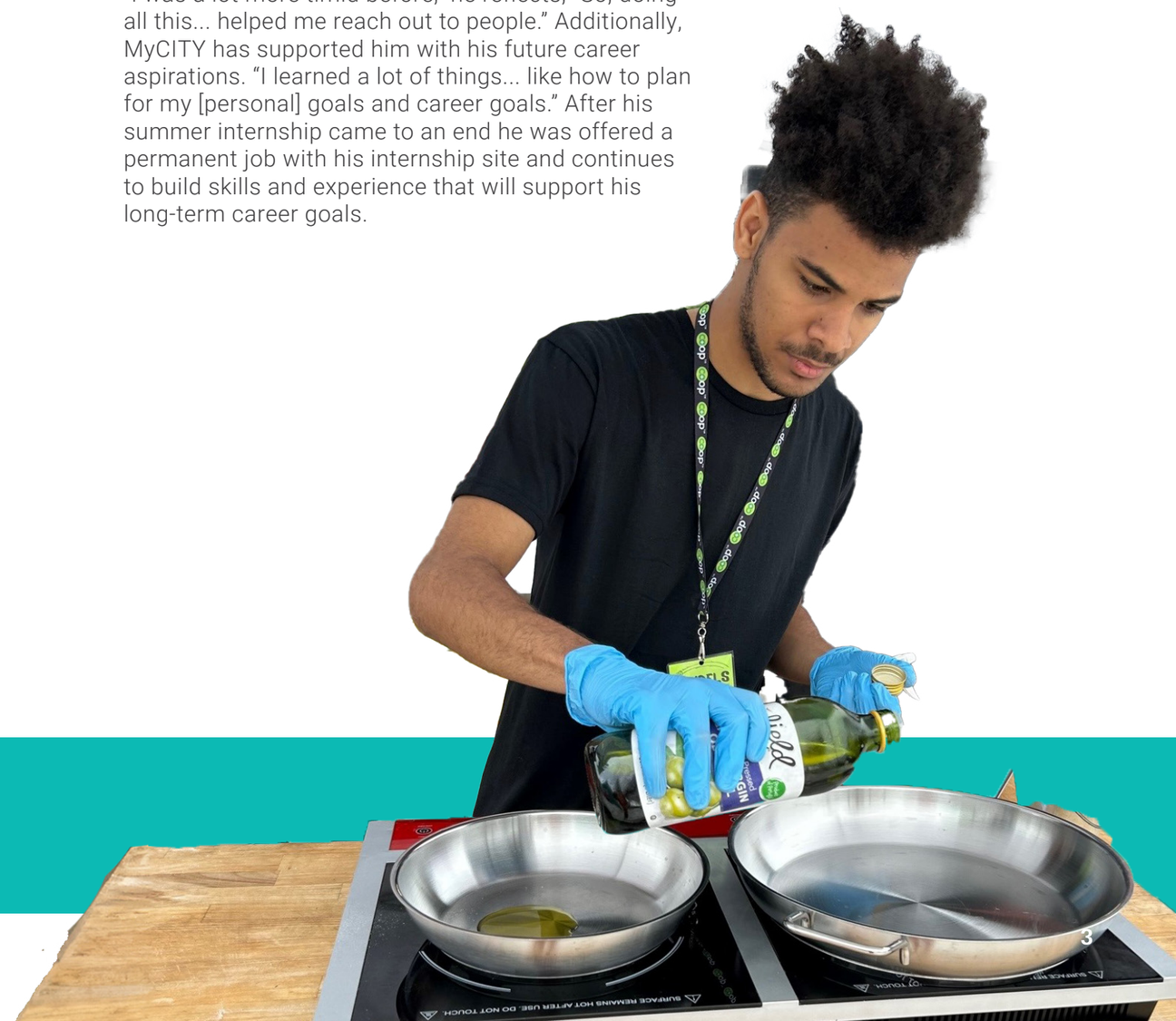
- They are confident that they can be successful at work
- They know their strengths
- They can use their skills and strengths to reach their goals
- They are capable of growth and change
- They made at least one new friend over the course of our summer program
- They enjoyed their summer with MyCITY!

85% completion rate

PARTICIPANT/PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

"It's 100% worth it," according to Hendels, a MyCITY participant. This summer, participants engaged in tours with local employers and academic providers, completed hands-on projects related to popular career pathways, received training directly from program staff and participated in internships with local employer partners. During the summer, Hendels was an intern at the Kalamazoo Farmer's Market in connection with PFC Natural Grocery & Deli.

For him, the experience has helped him break out of his shell. "I was a lot more timid before," he reflects, "So, doing all this... helped me reach out to people." Additionally, MyCITY has supported him with his future career aspirations. "I learned a lot of things... like how to plan for my [personal] goals and career goals." After his summer internship came to an end he was offered a permanent job with his internship site and continues to build skills and experience that will support his long-term career goals.



CareerNOW

CareerNOW supports youth ages 18-21 in free, hands-on, short-term career training programs for individuals interested in obtaining an industry-recognized credential. As a career pathway modeled program, CareerNOW helps individuals not only get certified and employed, but also develop a plan to continue climbing their career ladder in industries with in-demand and well-paying occupations.

> *"MyCity/CareerNOW provided me with internship opportunities and scheduled meetings to improve my communication skills and organization. MyCity provided me with a great opportunity to kick start my career and taught me valuable skills such as socializing, professionalism, and self-management. I was fortunate enough to meet kind and helpful individuals who were always willing to answer my questions and guide me through any challenges I faced in the workplace."*
>
> **– Elisia McPherson**
>
> ***Participant of Pre-Apprenticeship Progrm***

10 students served

- CNA
- ECE
- Phlebotomy







100% Completed the program.

100% increased option and self-awareness as indicated on survey data.

PARTICIPANT/PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Early Childhood Education



Elisia McPherson participated in an Early Childhood Education Pre-Apprenticeship program where classroom and work experience credit hours are earned toward the national Child Development Associate Certificate through the Council for Professional Recognition as well as the US Department of Labor Early Childhood Education Registered Apprenticeship. Elisia is now employed full-time with Michigan Afterschool Association to complete the certificate training and apprenticeship requirements. She will take her state exam in fall of 2024.

Elisia is an excellent example of how a youth can successfully gain entry-level work experience through skills training and on the job learning starting at a young age and move through the career pathways available in the MyCITY and CareerNOW programs. Elisia started her journey with MyCITY in the summer of 2022 where she gained employment experience as a program aide at Read and Write Kalamazoo, Washington Writers. She moved on to participate in the MyCITY Fall 2022 Prep Session and the MyCITY Fall 2022 Internship Session as a childcare aide at Bread and Roses Preschool. MyCITY Spring Prep Session and the MyCITY Spring Internship Session as a childcare aide at Michigan Afterschool Association. Finally, Elisia is now participating in the Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship Program through CareerNOW which includes a continued internship at Michigan Afterschool Association and the Child Development Associate National Certification training program.

2Gen

2Gen is a paid career exploration and pathway planning program for families. Youth ages 14-19 and an adult in their household will explore their strengths, set goals, learn about opportunities in the community, and build a network of support with other families.

> *"The 2Gen program was an amazing thing for us. We learned how to tackle our barriers, we learned that having barriers is normal, and we learned better communication with each other. This program was a really great experience for all of us."*
>
> **– 2Gen Parent**

3 **Generations** of family members participated in our program this year

20 **youth** participated and completed the program



94% reported increased self and option awareness.

83% felt more aware of career and training opportunities in the community.

PARTICIPANT/PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Family Feature: Lisa & Savannah



Lisa and Savannah joined the 2Gen program to learn about training opportunities and spend some time together. Families explored their strengths, career interests, and learned from over a dozen community partners. As a 9th grader, Savannah is still learning about her career interests. She also participated and completed the MyCITY summer program where she spent 7 weeks learning about a variety of career pathways.

Savannah returned to complete the MyCITY fall program: a 4-week prep session followed by a 7-week paid internship opportunity. During her time in this program, staff shared that she was fully engaged, had great attendance, and even earned a bonus. Savannah completed her internship at the Michigan Afterschool Association where she was able to work with younger youth.

After completing the program, the 2Gen team continues to provide support to families through ongoing check-ins, resource emails, and optional coaching sessions.



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Career Pathway Planning Programs

Kalamazoo Foundation for Excellence

Through the generous support of the City of Kalamazoo and the Foundation for Excellence, the MyCITY youth program in Kalamazoo was a great success.