



*My Commitment. My Community.*

# Start Here

**FOR FUTURE LEADERS**



2013 Annual Report



# — START HERE —

## A BRIEF REVIEW OF MYCOM'S HISTORY

### ● THE YEARS BEFORE MYCOM.

*You are a parent, trying to find an after-school program in your community—an activity your child would like. Or, you're a school principal with two groups asking to use your building for after-school programming—do they complement or compete with each other?*

*You are a foundation trying to assess the many funding requests from community programs—how can you determine which ones are delivering services efficiently and effectively, delivering on the outcomes they promise?*

*You are a high school student. You see a problem in your neighborhood, but the adults aren't interested in listening to what you have to say.*

*There is no coordinated way for young people in Cuyahoga County to find jobs or internship opportunities. There are youth employment programs, but few reach into city neighborhoods.*

In fact, there was no shortage of programs or providers in the years before MyCom. But there were overlaps, and there were gaps. Multiple groups worked with the same youth, but wouldn't work with each other. There was no measure of accountability for what worked and what didn't. No common or timely data to inform decisions. And young people had no voice—they simply were not viewed as part of the solution.

### ● THE START OF A NEW IDEA.

In 1999, the Cleveland Foundation in conjunction with County government and private funders began an initiative to develop a common lens through which to view children's development, service delivery and outcomes, thus creating a coordinated early childhood system. Their research showed lots of programs but lots of fragmentation, a lack of information, standards and accountability, a lack of coordination and no youth engagement or input.

By 2006 it was apparent that a new system was needed to serve young people in our community. To that end over 250 stakeholders were engaged, including youth. We examined national best practices and conducted site visits across the nation. We reviewed local data and assessed assets. Through this process we identified and engaged key partners.

*"Prior to MyCom, embracing youth voice and promoting youth leadership did not exist."*

**BUSINESS COMMUNITY PARTNER**

*"The youth provider organizations may have been strong, but their network was weak. Discussions began five years ago, and now there are strong networks."*

**MYCOM SUBCONTRACTOR**



The result is a comprehensive youth development strategy involving complex systems change, participatory decision-making, common vision and purpose, and evidence-based practices that would engage all sectors in our community over time. For the first time, funders, systems, neighborhoods, providers, families and young people would work together to deliver coordinated services and opportunities for youth, from pre-kindergarten through high school and beyond.

The organization put in place to coordinate this ambitious strategy in 2008 is known as MyCom.

