

## City of Holland Unveils 2014 Holland Youth Connections “Job” Program

**Press release date:** 2014-06-27

HOLLAND – The City of Holland partnered with Escape Ministries, Ottawa County Michigan Works, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce, Manpower, Lakeshore Advantage, and the City of Holland’s Department of Public Safety to continue the Holland Youth Connections Work program for at-risk youth. The City of Holland is particularly excited about the recent expansion of the Program to 77 public school students from Holland, Wavcrest, West Ottawa, Hamilton and other areas. These employment opportunities provide youth at-risk with job experience, career skills, and a chance to serve their communities. Since the implementation of this program, the Summer Youth Program grew from 12 students and revenues of \$20,020 in the summer of 2013 to 77 youth and employer and donor revenues of \$132,970 in the summer of 2014. We are grateful specifically to the 20 employers and 40 donors that made this expansion possible.

Last summer, two (2) youth teams successfully completed general landscaping and painting assistance for Holland Public Schools and the City of Holland’s Parks and Recreation Department.

This year, 77 youth, ages 14 - 17 will work across the City through partnerships with 20 employers including the Holland Board of Public Works, Ditto, Holland Fire Department, Spectrum Fabrication, City on a Hill Café, City of Holland and the Holland Public Schools. The priority is to provide safe and engaging summer opportunities for all youth at-risk in the City. This program benefits the entire region by providing a structured setting for our youth to learn and grow to the benefit of their community as well themselves. The added benefit is to grow the area’s workforce to reduce crime by investing in the City’s youth and providing pathways to prosperity.

“We are so honored to partner with this program.” Angie Barksdale, Program Supervisor, Ottawa County Michigan Works! said. “Exposing at risk youth to varied experiences helps to show them a path to future success, as well as provide them with some earned income for the summer! This is just one of many great efforts happening in our community to increase the talent pipeline.”

The City of Holland, ESCAPE Ministries and our generous donors and employer partners are committed to providing high-quality summer job programs, advocacy, and supportive services. We connect youth to resources and opportunities that enrich their lives while paying special attention to those who are at-risk.

“ESCAPE is grateful to everyone who partnered together to make this program a reality.” Willie J. Watt Jr., ESCAPE Ministries Executive Director said. “ESCAPE’s vision has always been to help improve the lives of at risk youth spiritually, academically, socially and economically. The Holland Youth Connections Program is a giant step in that direction. I want to give a big thank you to everyone who is involved and understands that by changing the lives of the youth in our community we change the future of our community for the better. With gratitude and expectation of continued growth in the years to come.”

We would like to call upon employers, large and small, across the City to join us in supporting the future of our young people by creating meaningful opportunities for our youth for next summer in 2015 and beyond.

Check out the video below to see the mutual return on investment for the employers as well as the youth on the first day of the 2014 program. The cost per work team of six (6) which includes a supervisor is \$1,000 per week.

[www.vimeo.com/channels/hyc](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/hyc)

Contacts: Ryan Cotton, City Manager, (616) 355.1310; Willie J. Watt Jr., Escape Ministries Director, (616) 796.0538

Holland information on the following sites, where we post news and events as they happen:

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Published on City of Holland Michigan Official Website (<http://www.cityofholland.com>)

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[www.facebook.com/hollandmichigan](http://www.facebook.com/hollandmichigan) \* [www.twitter.com/cityofholland](http://www.twitter.com/cityofholland)

[Holland Youth Connections Business Video](#) from [City of Holland](#) on [Vimeo](#).

### Supporting Documents



[press\\_release - holland youth connections program summer 2014.pdf](#)

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<http://www.cityofholland.com/youthconnections/city-holland-unveils-2014-holland-youth-connections-%E2%80%9Cjob%E2%80%9D-program>