About 275 volunteers participated in Neighborhood Beautification Day 2014 in southwest Detroit on Saturday, June 14. The volunteers worked in teams at eleven sites – installing flower beds and community gardens, weeding and spreading mulch, and cleaning overgrown brush and debris. One event was held at the People’s Park site, which also hosts the annual event. Once again, it was truly a collaborative effort of organizations, businesses, community groups and individuals committed to community service and the continued revitalization of southwest Detroit.

We thank everyone who participated in Neighborhood Beautification Day 2014. Your generosity of time, energy, and skill make such an inspirational and rewarding experience, and we hope to see you next year.

To see a photo essay (more than 100 photos) of the event, please visit the Southwest Solutions Facebook page: www.facebook.com/swsolutions.

José Franco and Hector Ochoa

Both young men struggled in high school and they expected to pursue higher education in the future. Years went by, and they found a sense of purpose through life experience, advocacy, and education. Each, in his own way, learned that a college degree is important to his ambition.

As recipients of the 2014 Southwest Solutions college scholarships, Ochoa, Hector, and Jose were able to take advantage of the opportunities that college provides. Their scholarships were each value of $10,000. Both Ochoa and Jose say they would not have been able to attend full-time.

The scholarships are for $2,500 a year for four years; for a possible total of $10,000. Their scholarships will start at the beginning of the 2015 fall semester, and they will be awarded to the next two students.

“Since he graduated from Western International High School in southwest Detroit, José has been a passionate advocate for undocumented Latinos, particularly young individuals, like himself, who came to the United States as children with their parents, José founded One Michigan, a volunteer organization that works to rally public and policy support for their status and higher education opportunities for the undocumented.

José’s volunteer efforts have been documentary and have made a difference. After President Obama issued the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) executive order in 2012, José formed himself with the complicated DACA criteria and advised undocumented young people about applying so they could legally reside and work in the country. Just one year ago, José, and for the first time in his life, does not have to worry about deportation.

At the age of 22, José came from Mexico with his mother Olga. He had passed away when he was three months old. Because Olga never had the chance to go to school, she didn’t have a proper name for him, so they called him José. Olga did domestic and factory work to support the family.

José was a good student in high school, when he stated about how his undocumented status would restrict his ability to achieve a professional occupation. His resignation sapped his motivation in class. He would withdraw and depressed. José faded more than a third of his classes in high school.

“Me and my teachers and friends would tell me that I could do so much better, ” José said. “I would score high on standardized tests, but I felt that I had already lost this potential which I could never be able to use.”

José described dropping out – until he learned about the Dream Act, a legislative proposal that, if passed, could offer a path to citizenship. The possibility inspired José to finish high school and then embark on his education.

“At One Michigan, I remember meeting with young people who was struggling in high school for the same reasons, he thought about others who have been able to go to college because of DACA. José said.
**Save the Date:**
**September 11 -- Veterans Park at Piquette Square Dedication, followed by 2014 Patriot Day Observance.**

To RSVP for this special and significant event, please visit http://bit.ly/VeteransParkOpening.

**PATH from welfare to work event**

**GM Gala for veterans in need raises $250K**

**Deshonna Haynes at the PATH office**

Deshonna Haynes, 22, is a single mother who lost her job and can no longer meet those expectations. She is determined to improve her wellbeing and will provide a gathering space where veterans, their families, and the community can gather to support those who have served our country.

**PATH stands for Partnership, Accountability, Training, Hope**

Deshonna came to the PATH program at Southwest Solutions (SWSS) in partnership with Development Credit Corporation. The program started at the beginning of the year, and the office is located at 4010 Southfield Road. It serves veterans and their families in the northwest Detroit area.

**PATH is a result-driven program that aims to help clients and other organizations to make a difference. It involves a 21-24 month period in which PATH helps clients identify challenges to employment and then connects clients to the resources they need to overcome those challenges, which may include childcare, transportation, and work-readiness issues. Clients must complete assignments given by case managers to advance in the challenge.**

**GM Gala for veterans in need raises $250K**

**Steve Hill, Vice President of GM U.S. Sales and Service, and Alan Bates, Executive Vice President and President of GM North America, speak at the Easton Gala.**

**Hector Ochoa at the Asher School graduation**

Hector Ochoa at the Asher School graduation.

**Teneshia Moore presents the award to Terrell Johnson**

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