

Movement City Impact Report 2004 - 2024

Nurturing Legends, Building a Legacy

MOVEMENT CITY

Lawrence COMMUNITY WORKS



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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The thing that I like most about Movement is that it's a really friendly environment. People get along really well here and you can just be yourself. Movement City taught me that creativity is all sorts of different things. It's not just art, but it's taking pictures, it's dancing, it's producing music.

Rania (15)




PROGRAM OVERVIEW



Movement City is a network of young Lawrencians, ages 10 to 19, who are exploring their own potential and helping shape the future of the City through a variety of creative, academic, leadership development, and civic activities. Lawrence is one of the youngest cities in the Commonwealth, with fully 30% of our 85,000+ residents under the age of 19. Investing in these young people is key to the city's future. MC offers workshops and studios in dance, music production, video/ graphic design/ animation, fine arts, singing, robotics, and other creative disciplines, to engage youth as producers, not just consumers, of culture. These workshops are complemented by academic support and college preparation, financial education, leadership training, civic engagement projects, an in-house college scholarship fund, and numerous performance opportunities.

In 2004, LCW first merged our existing "Young Professionals" program with the independent Hope Street Youth Center to create the dynamic new Movement City. In the years since, MC has grown into a powerful driver for youth self-development and success, launching hundreds of youth to college and to other opportunities to cultivate their talents and networks.



Movement City students are more likely to graduate from high school and enroll in college than their peers citywide, averaging a 95% HS graduation rate and 90% enrollment in higher education.



Elvis Cabral
MC Director (2019)
Member (2006)

The program is now directed by a former MC member, staffed by a dedicated mix of program alumni and other gifted local residents with a passion for youth development. **MC serves 150 youth annually** with a vibrant mix of after-school and summer programming shaped by youth interests and aspirations.

With an open programming model, MC youth explore and create using their skills, interests, and existing talents. On any given day, members can craft a 3D model of themselves, record lyrics for the hottest hit of the summer, dance on the moon by recording a video on our green screen, or code a uni-dolph-nut (a unicorn-dolphin-donut hybrid of course) to fly; if members dare to dream it, we find a way to help them make it happen. MC instructors serve as facilitators positioned to help members recognize and embrace the strengths they bring to the space while elevating them to grow. Workshop facilitation involves invitations for active learning; members tinker, play, question, and wrestle with new concepts and ideas in a safe environment to take risks. From public performances to intimate workshop conversations, we are constantly searching for ways to make learning personal, purposeful, impactful and accessible.











EVALUATION

My experience at MC has taught me to be more connected to my emotions, instead of just pushing them away like they are not needed. I learned to be more spiritual, mindful, calm, and collected.

Arianna (15)



EVALUATION









Movement City's core mission is holistic youth development that is accomplished through the use of creative art and technology outlets integrated with academic support, leadership development, mentorship, family engagement, and civic opportunities. MC seeks to provide genuine assistance and a supportive atmosphere for Lawrence families and future community leaders as they strive for greater economic and social stability. Key program goals include:

- *Creating a culture that is rich in connectivity, creativity, and support, and that is shaped by young people themselves*
  .
- *Bringing Lawrence youth together with volunteers and professionals from the fields of design, technology, and performing/creative arts to learn the basics of high-skill and diverse careers*
- *Connecting youth to institutions of higher education, giving them access to opportunities for educational success*
- *Engaging youth in local projects that encourage them to improve the community, showcase local talent or resources, and strengthen their leadership skills*

Movement City staff have developed a program logic model to cohesively connect key components and objectives of the program. We measure success by tracking progress toward the outcomes outlined in the logic model, which includes four long-term goals for youth achievement:

MC youth are emotionally and financially resilient

MC youth are skilled and knowledgeable

MC youth are connected to each other

MC youth are civically engaged

The logic model also identifies various short-term and intermediate outcomes, ranging from participation in certain events to increased self-confidence, that put youth on the path to reach these ultimate objectives. Each year we expect all active MC members (attending at least once per week) to reach at least one short-term logic model outcome, and hopefully intermediate and long-term outcomes as well.



In the end, our intention is for youth members to go on to become productive and independent community leaders in Lawrence and beyond. By connecting them with supportive mentors, networks, tools, and other resources, we encourage all Movement City youth to pursue higher education, internships, and/or apprenticeships, and embark on a career path set for growth and success. While it is a challenging task to quantify and fully capture the expansiveness, the layers, the impact of a vibrant youth program like Movement City, we hope the following survey data, and the words of the youth themselves, paint a picture.

MOVEMENT CITY

TWO DECADES OF IMPACT

2004 - 2024 | 20 Facts *for* 20 Years



membership investment

2000+

total enrolled members
(not including the hundreds of young people attending public offerings)

100% grade level advancement

58% retention rate for 2+ years

8 MC's longest membership is 8 years!

19K hours of programming since 2004

academic achievement

95% of Movement City members graduate from high school

90% of Movement City members enroll in higher education

100K Total awarded Armand Hyatt scholarship funds

25+ COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Family Literacy Night
6 annual FLN events
450+ total attendance

Movement City in the Wild
25+ total hikes
200+ total members

International Accolades
30+ Global RE@CH Festival Submissions

individual growth

MC members share feedback through surveys, interviews, and town halls. Data collected helps staff make decisions and drives programmatic change.

91% I am learning new skills

90% I have increased my self esteem

91% What I learn at Movement City has value in my life

87% I feel empowered to make a change



connections + support

I have adult role models at Movement City. **98%**

I feel adult role models at Movement City learn from me. **95%**

I feel like I am part of the community. **91%**

I can make a difference in the community. **89%**



MEASUREMENTS OF SUCCESS

It takes courage to grow up and become who you are meant to be. Movement City is full of storytellers and world builders who are designing, disrupting, interpreting, translating, creating, and most importantly fearlessly sharing their ideas with anyone who will listen. Our framework examines three themes that remain consistent over the last twenty years:
Discovery of Self • Curriculum as Community • Pursuit of the Future

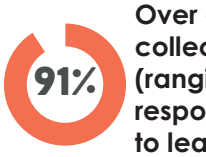


DISCOVERY OF SELF

DISCOVERY OF SELF

> *Being a Movement City member means being yourself, being who you want to be and not trying to fit in with everybody else just because of the hype or following what other people do. Movement City for me is a place where I come to express myself and work on becoming who I want to be, not just somebody who society is trying to turn me into.*
>
> **Eric R. (16)**

Movement City's main draw (initially) is our outstanding practice in art and technology. Many members know exactly what workshop they plan to join while others are curious to find their fit. Exploration is encouraged and embedded into the structure of workshops, allowing members to playtest each workshop before making a decision for the session. It is very common for members to try out other creative workshops throughout their time at Movement City, exposing them to many creative mediums.



Over a ten year span of data collection, 91% of MC members (ranging from 80% to 99%) responded agree or strongly agree to learning new skills.





Art and technology function as a vehicle for deeper learning; it's a practice of vulnerability and trust to share your work. MC hosts two public showcases per year. The prep behind the scenes is a collective effort spanning many months, and the final product is almost entirely youth-procduced. A critical component to preparation is a WIP (Work In Progress session) where all members practice sharing and performing for their peers and mentors, and giving constructive feedback to each other. For many, this is a vulnerable, raw space where creatives are not only sharing their latest passion projects, but also learning *how* to both deliver and accept feedback. Everyone is heard and every idea counts; competition is softened into collaboration as every member shares their unique strengths. From philosophy coded in lyrics to confidence translated into choreography, the real magic lies in the individual transformations and reflective growth unique to each member's journey.



From a program wide perspective, 90% of members over ten years indicated an increase in self-esteem (ranging from 86% to 97%).

MC members feel connected to something they've created in its final, polished form, yet the process itself remains the most important product.



I learned how to look at myself in some new ways that I hadn't thought about before.
Eric M. (18)



MC staff members witness courage, confidence, strength, and growth as incredible artists find their voice through expression daily. One long-term member stands out in her journey of discovering herself. Liz joined MC when she was 10, starting in the summer program. Despite mental health challenges, she kept engaging however she could, pushing herself to join multiple workshops. She struggled with finding her personality, but felt very comfortable behind the camera. MC staff recognized her untapped potential paired with a fierce work ethic. As a high school member, she was invited to become a Teacher's Assistant. Currently, she's in her final college semester while working on staff at Movement City, teaching photography to younger youth.

Liz's story is unique, but relevant to so many youth members (and adults!) struggling to discern their way while figuring out who they are in the process.



Justin (14) shares a similar sentiment, stating ***"When I first came to Movement City, I wasn't in a good spot. I was pretending to be somebody else, and then I came here and it taught me to be myself."*** Veronica (17), another member who found her passion in dance, reflected on MC's impact in her life, sharing, ***"My experience with MC... helped with my depression. It was a good way to get out of the house. It had a really good impact on me. I love this place."***

WHAT MAKES YOU AN ARTIST?











COMMUNITY AS CURRICULUM

COMMUNITY AS CURRICULUM

> *Being a Movement City member means being part of the community, helping the community, making and doing whatever you can do for the community.*
>
> **Darius (15)**

Instead of requiring a rigid curriculum, MC operates from a youth-led, inquiry-based model, allowing young people true ownership in what they create, how decisions are made, and the overall space itself. Program staff and instructors create a guiding syllabus for each workshop each semester, but leave room for adaptation. Members are actively involved in the decision-making process, strengthening community and building a culture of trust while disrupting power dynamics around voice; MC members know their opinion matters within our space and beyond through the decisions they help make. Our core workshops, dance, music production, creative technology (Clubhouse), and fine art, remain consistent. Based on the interests of members, we've offered various creative workshops over the years (often leveraging alumni expertise or local business/ corporate involvement) including architecture, podcasting, slam poetry, 3D animation, game design, glee club, robotics, circuitry, ballet, yoga, skateboard skills, sneaker design, and countless more.



Over ten years, an average of 91% of MC members (ranging from 85% to 98%) agreed that they felt like a part of the community.

While the overall program design and delivery directly reflect community needs and interest, the way members navigate the community outside of Movement City is also an important marker of impact. From design charettes (including for MC's new home in the DyeWorks project) and staff search committees to rallies and marches, MC activism and civic engagement looks different for each member. One pinnacle MC experience is the annual Youth Jobs Rally in Boston. **For many members, Movement City is their first job,** so this cause resonates deeply with young people. The march through Boston brings members in contact with other youth organizations from around the state, and ends at the State House, allowing groups to meet directly with their representatives.







One dedicated member, Marcello, contributes to many local youth organizations and considers his role as a mentor an incredibly rewarding experience. He is highly active in the Lawrence Public Schools, having participated in student panels and through building relationships with members of the Bread and Roses Heritage Committee, gaining the chance to interview finalists for the superintendent role. He is also a beloved TA in the Clubhouse at MC, sought out by youth members and peers for both creative guidance and life advice. Recently, he volunteered to speak at City Hall to share the impact MC has had on his life and trajectory with the City Council, and helped secure important funding for the DyeWorks Project. Ever grateful for these opportunities, he is determined to give back to the community, paving the way for the next generation of creative, empowered youth.




In Photos de Nosotros, a pre-pandemic project that photographed Lawrence residents while interviewing them about their passion, MC members challenged their own narrative about community. In reflection, one member shared about their experience, saying ***"This project gave me perspective about my community. What we had wanted to do with our project was to give people a perspective on our community and ironically it did the same thing for me. The people in my community are multi-faceted and have interesting passions."*** This cohort shared their work publicly through local gallery openings and multiple conferences, including at Harvard University. During a Q&A session with a panel of social justice leaders at a Harvard University conference, one of our members bravely took the mic to ask a question in a packed auditorium. Although the panelists had shared more about their individual efforts toward various causes, his question craved process, wondering, "How do you become an activist?" One panelist's response reframed a daunting, perhaps loaded word into a simple, manageable act: tell the truth out loud and in public.



Through a decade of survey responses, an average of 87% of MC members, the real truthtellers, feel empowered to make a change.



PURSUIT OF THE FUTURE

When I first came to MC, I was in the 8th Grade. I felt that here I could be myself. I felt that everything in this place was accepted and there was no such thing as weird. This place is an opening place to anybody, no one is ever excluded from here. The best part of Movement City are the people who come here. Everything happens because of the people who are here. The new people that come, they always leave a mark here and that is what makes up the MC experience, all of the different perspectives and talents.

Kiara (15)

PURSUIT OF THE FUTURE





Over the last two decades, Movement City has enrolled over 2000 youth in our school year and summer programs. (Note that these are young people who have registered and attended programming, therefore not inclusive of the hundreds of young people attending open mics, showcases, collaboration workshops, and other public offerings.) From that total, we have over a 50% retention rate as **58% of members participated in MC for two or more years.** Many members join during middle school and stay with MC as they grow into young adults while navigating schoolwork, part-time employment, extracurricular activities, and other external factors.

My experience here has been great! They taught me many things about how to grow up and the real world, how to handle business outside of school stuff. I'm taught skills that I would've never learned if I never went here.

Justin (15)




Movement City surely would not exist without its members, but it also would not exist in the same way without the staff, volunteers, and mentors.



Over ten years, an average of 98% of MC members felt they have adult role models in the space.



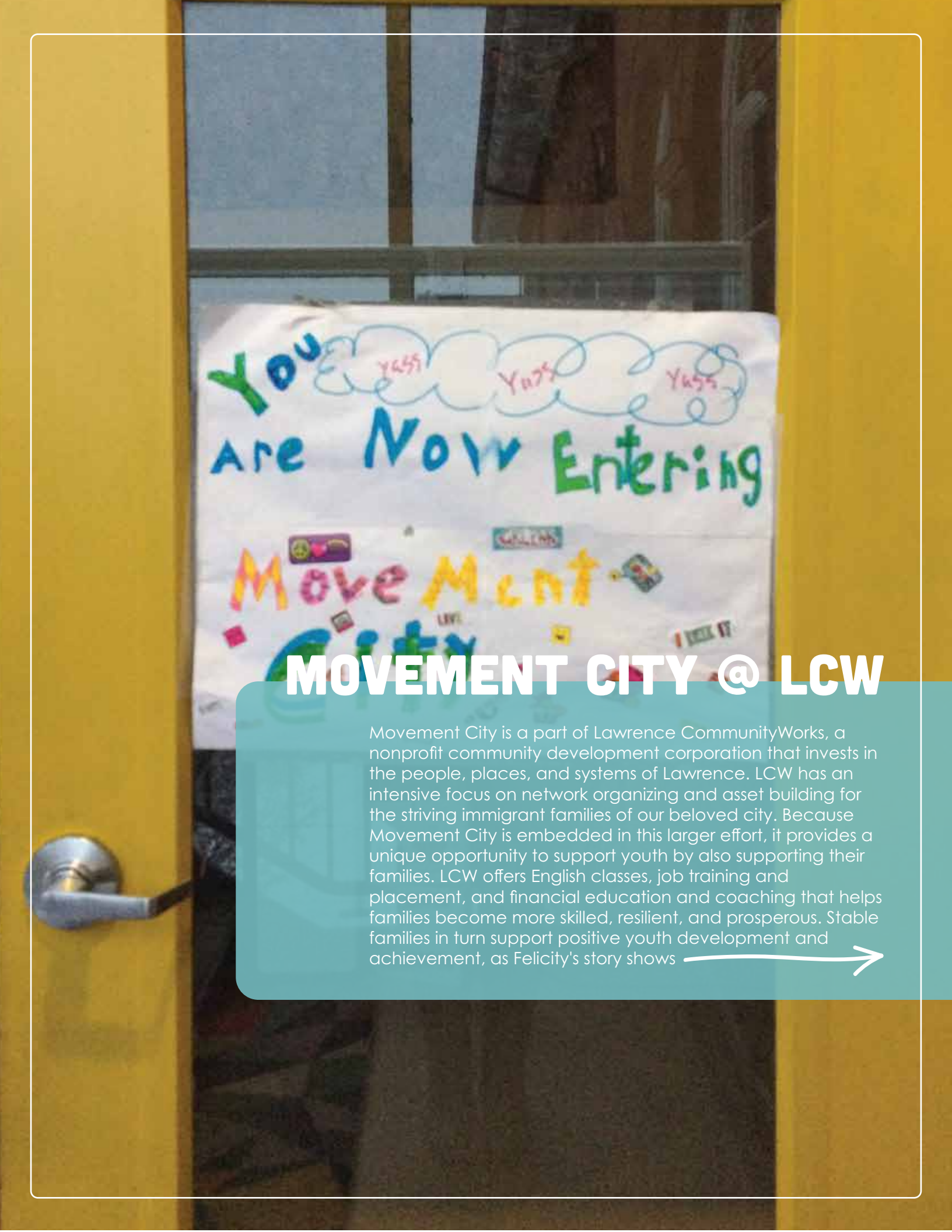
Going a bit further, 95% of members believe the adult mentors learn from them.

The depth of relationships and sense of connection exists well beyond high school graduation, allowing for an ever growing, active alumni network to flourish. MC alumni take their creative foundation and work as emergency dispatchers, freelance designers, HVAC apprentices, business owners, software engineers, financial counselors at local nonprofits, educators, mental health mentors, professional dance performers, musicians, youth program coordinators, art therapists, real estate agents, DJs, and so much more. In conversation with a previous MC staff member recently, Joselito, a long-time member, shared an important life update: ***I wanted to share some news with you! I was just hired as the Program Director for the Boys and Girls Club. Just makes me think of how grateful I am to have had great role models like you impact my life so much and how exciting it is now that I'll be able to do the same.***



Success is different and unique for everybody; there's no one size fits all when it comes to success metrics of a Movement City alum. For MC, it takes the shape of scholarships, grad school, traveling abroad, an electrician's license, owning a home, and having financial freedom. ***It's someone that continues fighting for and following whatever their dreams may be.***





MOVEMENT CITY @ LCW

Movement City is a part of Lawrence CommunityWorks, a nonprofit community development corporation that invests in the people, places, and systems of Lawrence. LCW has an intensive focus on network organizing and asset building for the striving immigrant families of our beloved city. Because Movement City is embedded in this larger effort, it provides a unique opportunity to support youth by also supporting their families. LCW offers English classes, job training and placement, and financial education and coaching that helps families become more skilled, resilient, and prosperous. Stable families in turn support positive youth development and achievement, as Felicity's story shows

MOVEMENT CITY @ LCW

Felicity and her family have been involved with LCW since 2013. Felicity's mom had the opportunity to participate in the IDA Program and was able to invest her money in education in 2018 for Felicity's brother.

Felicity joined Movement City in 2021 through the music production workshop, where she honed her singing skills. After her first year, MC alumnus and voice instructor Dewin Hernandez recognized her talent and advocated for her to participate in Berklee College of Music's Summer Program for high school students, allowing her to further develop her training and gain exposure. Felicity graduated from high school and has since enrolled at UMass Lowell, where she is pursuing a degree in Music Therapy.

In May 2023, Felicity enrolled in Asset Building's Credit Builder Program. **One year later she had boosted her credit from no credit history to a score of 691.** Her financial journey didn't stop there. She then applied for our IDA Program, to be able to save money to support her college education. At the end of the 6 months of the program, Felicity completed 12 hours of education and asset-specific training, was able to save $1,200, and obtained a match of $4,800. She has been investing her savings and the match to pay tuition bills and plans to also use part of these funds for a car down payment to ease her commute to college.



I feel very grateful to LCW... Thanks to the education I received, I can now better manage my finances and achieve my financial goals.

Felicity

MOVING FORWARD

"Movement City is like a second home and a family."

(2024)

"MC is, like, the best place in the world. You meet new people, make friends that become like family, and you have fun while working on your future. Best place in the world!"

(2014)



Although these quotes were recorded ten years apart from two different members, they could have easily been exchanged in the same conversation. There has been a tremendous amount of change, with more on the horizon, but the feeling and pulse of Movement City remains stable, strong, and rooted in recognizing young people as creative agents of change. The expansion and move to DyeWorks positions Movement City to scale this transformative work while we continue making beats, making meaning, making our mark, and making a new home.

Cheers to the next twenty years!



THANK YOU

We are *beyond* grateful to those who help make this work possible. Thank you for holistically expanding the capacity of young people while recognizing Lawrence youth as powerful, creative agents of change.

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And so everyday I come here these people make me believe that anything is possible! whether it's in homework or normal life stuff, they make me believe! That's why movement city is so important to me!















