



Our vision is that youth who have suffered trauma can become our future leaders.

## Q&A with UCAN's CEO, Tom Vanden Berk



Tom Vanden Berk & UCAN Volunteer of the Year, Laurinia Ford.

**Q: You recently streamlined your role as CEO to focus specifically on fundraising, marketing and external affairs. Tell us about that, please.**

A: This process has been an evolution of UCAN and who I am. My goal is to spend more time in the external environment. I will be spending more time in Springfield with advocacy work, as well as with our donors and supporters, so that I can continue to tell the story of UCAN and the youth we serve.

I will also be focusing on helping UCAN realize an exciting new vision. We have recently embarked upon the early stages of a project that will not only build a new Residential Treatment Center for UCAN, but will also create a campus for transforming Chicagoland's at-risk youth. CITY, or Chicago Institute for Transforming Youth, starts with the premise that youth, their families and their communities all have the desire to improve; the model will take an all-inclusive approach to transforming communities through a variety of comprehensive programs and services.

I'm able to focus on all of this due to the accomplishments of Zack Schrantz, who has been named President & COO. Zack has been with UCAN for over twenty years and is now responsible for the day-to-day operations of UCAN.

**Q: What will be the focus of your work in Springfield?**

A: There are many groups lobbying for themselves in Springfield; for example, corporations spend a lot of time and money lobbying for their interests, while unions and other interest groups speak on behalf of their constituents. However, youth who are at risk do not have a spokesperson. The opportunity and need for me to represent these youth is essential to what I do. UCAN's purpose in Springfield is to advocate for social justice for our kids in order to make certain that our youth have a voice. We are not just here to serve youth; we are also here to represent them at the legislative and philanthropic level.

**Q: What kind of work is UCAN doing to empower young people and prevent violence?**

A: The majority of our youth have suffered trauma and have not had an opportunity to spend the time developing themselves as individuals. Our job is to help them feel a greater sense of power and control. Violence prevention has been the core of what we do for a very long time, through programs such as Project Visible Man, Phenomenal Woman, and Hands Without Guns. Most recently however, we have developed UCAN's 360° Model, which is a cohesive model approaching a youth's needs from all angles. Implemented in schools, the 360° Model not only works with youth but also with their families and their teachers so that everyone is able to recognize the signs of trauma. This network then works together to create safety for our students and to break these cycles of violence, enabling youth to focus on their education.

**Q: Tell us about being named to Governor Quinn's Violence Prevention Coalition. What kind of work will you be doing?**

A: The Governor has launched the Neighborhood Recovery Initiative, which will focus on violence prevention work in the city of Chicago. Part of our role is to help oversee that project as well as to discuss various laws that the Governor can use to help prevent violence. We are going to help the Governor have a proactive role in violence prevention in the state of Illinois.

Recently, we embarked upon a listening tour in four cities across the state, meeting with community members and learning about what we could be doing to help communities feel less threatened by the issue of violence. I heard a lot about the need for mentoring for our young people, which is something that UCAN is doing right here in Chicago.

**Q: Chicago residents have recently elected a new mayor, Mayor-elect Rahm Emanuel. What does this mean for UCAN?**

A: What I do know is that as a new mayor, Mayor-elect Emanuel will bring change to this city; change is always good. I am honored to have been asked to serve on Mayor-elect Emanuel's Public Safety transition team, which is concentrating on the issues of crime reduction, fire, and emergency management. I look forward to sharing UCAN's experience and knowledge in the area of violence prevention with this group and our Mayor-elect.

**Q: What is the best part of your job?**

A: The best of my job is watching our youth and our staff grow in both enthusiasm and excitement. We're in the growth industry!



# SAVE THE DATE

## *June 16, 2011*



### *Present UCAN's 12th Annual*

## **Youth Leadership Awards Dinner**

**Please join us for  
an evening to honor  
our future leaders.**

**THURSDAY, JUNE 16, 2011**

**FOUR SEASONS HOTEL, CHICAGO**

120 E Delaware Place

**RECEPTION:** 5:30pm

**DINNER:** 6:30

**BUSINESS ATTIRE**

**INDIVIDUAL TICKETS:** \$500

**TABLE SPONSORSHIPS:**

Patron \$5,000

Benefactor \$10,000

Host \$25,000

Sponsorship/ticket form available  
at [www.ucanchicago.org/yla2011](http://www.ucanchicago.org/yla2011)

Each year, UCAN's Youth Leadership Awards Dinner recognizes the academic and personal achievements of some of our most outstanding youth, providing scholarships for secondary education to five individuals. A special award goes to the John E. Rooney Dynamic Scholar of the Year, which is sponsored by John E. Rooney, former CEO of U.S. Cellular.

UCAN also annually recognizes a Corporate Honoree for his/her exceptional commitment to the children and families of Illinois; this year, we will honor Harris Bank. 2010's Corporate Honoree Richard Driehaus will present the award to Ellen Costello, CEO of Harris Bank.

We are thrilled to announce that this year's keynote speech will be delivered by Melody Hobson, President of Ariel Investments and regular financial contributor to ABC's Good Morning America.

Led by emcee LeeAnn Trotter of NBC5 Chicago, the evening includes a cocktail reception, silent auction and dinner, followed by acceptance speeches by our award winners. Guests, including corporate and foundation partners, community leaders, donors and UCAN youth, have the chance to learn more about UCAN and to see our vision come to life: Youth who have suffered trauma can become our future leaders.

The Youth Leadership Awards Dinner is UCAN's flagship fundraising event, working to raise the funds needed to continue to provide quality programs for those in need and inspiring attendees to work together on behalf of UCAN's 12,000 children, youth and families served.

**Our esteemed event Vice Chairs include:**

- **Keith Cardoza**, *Chief Investment Officer Brownson, Rehmus & Foxworth, Inc.*
- **Jeff and Julie Diermeier**, *Diermeier Family Foundation*
- **Christopher Gardner**, *President & Chief Executive Officer, Gardner Rich LLC*
- **Ronald Gidwitz**, *Principal Partner, GCG Partners*
- **Judith C. Rice**, *SVP of Community Affairs & Economic Development, Harris Bank*
- **John E. Rooney**, *Retired CEO, U.S. Cellular*
- **Peter Q. Thompson**, *Chief Executive Officer, Perkins Investment*
- **David Vitale**, *Chairman of the Board of Directors, Academy for Urban School Leadership*

# Building future leaders



**Frederick Stagers** was an only child whose parents always supported him and encouraged him to stay involved in school. However, Fred grew up in a neighborhood on the southeast side of Chicago, which was “fairly safe, but bad people brought bad things into our neighborhood.”

Despite his reasonably stable family life, Fred found himself getting into trouble in middle school and often taking things for granted. He began running around with a bad crowd: “I spent time with gang bangers because I felt like they gave me a sense of protection,” said Fred. He soon became involved in gang activity and was even arrested and charged for a minor crime. Fred laments, “I used to glorify the wrong things, such as drug dealers and gang bangers.” He began cutting class because of the fear of having to fight and soon began failing many classes.

After Fred’s freshman year of high school, his mother jumped into action. “Thankfully my mom was able to transfer me to George Washington High School, where I was able to move away from gang activity,” said Fred. After hard work, including one semester of summer school, Fred graduated from high school. At that point, however, Fred was not very excited about

college. His parents again pushed him, encouraging Fred to go off on his own and attend Harold Washington College.

It was through Victor Spencer, a fellow student at Harold Washington, that Fred was introduced to UCAN and UCAN’s Project Visible Man program (PVM). Victor invited Fred and a few other friends from their neighborhood to come to PVM to have candid conversations about the developmental needs of young men of color. After attending his first session, Fred returned regularly; he even began to bring other friends and his younger cousin. Fred said, “I enjoyed being a part of a group that supported me and motivated me to stay in school. I appreciated the guest speakers who joined us to tell their stories; they became my real-life role models, and I felt that they were invested in my future.”

Fred began to represent PVM in all that he did. When he thought about doing something negative, he was reminded about the group’s responsibility for one another, and decided to stay on the more positive life track. He received mentoring from some of the senior PVM members, and in turn, later became a mentor to some of the younger boys. Fred also secured employment after enrolling in a six week job readiness program through a partnership between UCAN’s Workforce Development department and Project Visible Man.

Project Visible Man gave Fred a new drive for life and for school. “PVM asked me to create three goals for myself, the first of which was to graduate from college, and my mentors made sure that I stayed on track to complete those goals. I know for a fact that without PVM I wouldn’t have finished college. PVM made me sit down and think about my future.”

After graduating from college, Fred accomplished his second goal, which was to secure a position in the Chicago Public School system. Now 27, Fred

Stagers works as a Special Education Teaching Assistant on Chicago’s west side at Howe School of Excellence. He enjoys working with his students, many of whom have grown up in similar or much more difficult situations than his. He speaks with his students about changing their lives, and tries to give them his perspective by explaining some of the things he went through when he was their age. Fred says, “They need somebody who looks like them that has made it and gotten off the streets,” telling his students that “there are opportunities for you—I can attest to that.”

“Fred was a wonderful and positive addition to Project Visible Man. I was mostly impressed with his desire to make a difference in the lives of others, and was glad to see him gain employment with the Chicago Public Schools. I am pleased to see him form and grow a family of his own.”

—*Claude Robinson, UCAN’s EVP External Affairs & Diversity, and one of Fred’s mentors.*

Today Fred lives in the Kenwood neighborhood of Chicago with his fiancée Tiawanna and their three year old daughter—this completes Fred’s third PVM goal of finding a home for his then girlfriend and their future child! Tiawanna is graduating in May with a BA in Social Work, and Fred says, “We both want to help other people—we want to reach people and inspire them.”

**Project Visible Man** is a group mentoring program for young men of color ages 13-24 designed to encourage self-respect and transform dysfunctional behaviors through the exercise of will power, positive reinforcement and real-life role models. For more information, please visit [www.ucanchicago.org](http://www.ucanchicago.org).

# Plan for your future so you can add to your legacy

UCAN has recently launched the 1869 Society, named for the year in which UCAN was founded; the society highlights those individuals who have chosen to include UCAN in their estate plans. Leaving a gift to UCAN in your estate plans is a wonderful way to make a lasting impact on Chicago's youth and families. With a planned gift you can combine your desire to give to charity with you overall financial, tax, and estate planning goals. You'll also be leaving behind a legacy for years to follow, and you will be honored as a member of our 1869 Society. The exciting developments at UCAN did not happen overnight; they are often the result of careful planning by dedicated supporters like you.

There are multiple ways to include UCAN in your plans, and we would greatly appreciate your support:

- Make a donation to UCAN in a will or living trust
- Name UCAN as the beneficiary of a charitable gift annuity or a charitable remainder trust
- Name UCAN as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a 401k/IRA retirement plan

Your financial advisor would be best suited to consult with you on your plans, but if you'd like more information on how to support UCAN with a planned gift, please contact Rebecca Faulk, Director of Development, at 773-290-5086 or [faulkr@ucanchicago.org](mailto:faulkr@ucanchicago.org). To learn more about potential ways to include UCAN in your estate plans, please visit [www.ucanchicago.org/1869-society](http://www.ucanchicago.org/1869-society).

Thank you to all of our current 1869 Society members! We greatly appreciate your commitment to UCAN. By including UCAN in your estate you have chosen to ensure future income for UCAN and allow us to continue our mission for years to come.



**“UCAN is an organization that focuses on helping children to become future leaders and as such when my husband and I are gone, I like the idea of knowing that somehow we are helping to make that come true. Others should consider leaving a planned gift because they want to do the same. The children are the leaders of the future.”**

*—Tracy Robinson, 1869 Society Member and UCAN Governing Board Member*



The 1869 Society, named for the year in which UCAN was founded, honors those who have chosen to include UCAN in their estate plans.

Anonymous  
Mr. Garold W. Ashley and  
Mrs. Petrine C. Ashley  
Mr. and Mrs. Frederic B. Biederman  
Mr. Markell Bridges  
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence D. Damron  
Mr. and Mrs. Philip A. Desenis  
Ms. Jodi Doane  
Mrs. Doris Drost  
Mr. and Mrs. George T. Drost  
Ms. Gloria R. Geiman  
Mrs. Kathryn W. Harding  
Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence I. Hayes  
Ms. Sharon D. Herzog  
Ms. Sherry Holland  
Mr. Kevin B. Hynes  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Loveman  
Ms. Susan McNally  
Ms. Julie C. Miller  
Mr. Patrick W. Pierce  
Mr. Fred E. Reid and  
Ms. Candida Miranda  
Mr. and Mrs. Otto L. Reinisch III  
Mr. and Mrs. Noah Robinson  
Mr. and Mrs. Herbert J. Schmalz  
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stevenson  
Mr. Thomas G. Stinchcomb  
Mr. Michael Ramage and  
Ms. Rosemary E. Szurko  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas C. Vanden Berk

## WELCOME!

UCAN would like to recognize the following people as our newest Board members! Thank you for your commitment.

### **President's Board:**

Michael McDermott & Lester Coney

### **Governing Board:**

John Hill Jr., Krista Rivers &  
Curtis Spears  
Sherry Holland, as the new  
Board Secretary

### **Advisory Board:**

Dino De Vita, Dr. Jens Ludwig &  
Kathy Volpi

### **Auxiliary Board:**

Elisabeth Clinger, Melissa Gold &  
Robert Vincencio  
Samantha Frost & Chaidan Upp,  
as the new Vice Presidents

**For a complete list of our boards,  
please visit [www.ucanchicago.org](http://www.ucanchicago.org).**

# UCAN launches the Office of Spiritual Formation

This year UCAN launched the Office of Spiritual Formation, led by The Reverend Tyrone Fowlkes. Spiritual formation at UCAN is not a school of religion or religious practices and beliefs. Instead, the purpose of spiritual formation at UCAN is to create a stronger, more compassionate and more nurturing environment that stimulates transformation, leadership, growth and stamina. Our end goal is a positive youth development experience that leads to an awareness of identity, purpose, self-respect, satisfaction, self-care and service to others.

The Reverend Tyrone Fowlkes is an ordained priest of The Episcopal Church who currently serves Church of Our Savior in Lincoln Park as well as directing the Office of Spiritual Formation for UCAN. Reverend Fowlkes says, "Spiritual Formation affirms the search for identity, purpose and meaning. The spiritual lives of clients and staff are integral to our vision that youth who have suffered trauma can become our future leaders. Spiritual Formation is about the creation of an environment where the entire organization can reflect upon the role of spirituality in our lives as well as how it manifests itself in UCAN's daily work."

UCAN's founding is rooted in spirituality. In 1869, UCAN was founded by concerned St. Pauls United Church of Christ (UCC) members in order to provide a home for orphaned children of Civil War soldiers. As a denomination, UCC and its predecessors have a long and proud history of advocating for social justice, including advocating for the abolition of slavery and being the first to ordain African-Americans, women, and openly gay persons as clergy. Today, UCAN is an active member of the Council of Health and Human Service Ministries of UCC, and in addition to The Reverend Fowlkes, boasts three Diakonal Ministers on our Senior Leadership Team. Further, Reverend Jeffrey Carlson of St. Pauls UCC is a member of our Governing Board.

Through the work of this office, UCAN is developing a multi-pronged curriculum for the organization incorporating UCAN's UCC history, various spiritual practices, spiritual direction, and information and methods on accomplishing spiritual formation with our youth. We are also working to strengthen our denominational ties with the United Church of Christ across the Chicago-land area. Finally, we are establishing an employee Spiritual Formation affinity group, providing interested staff with support and the voice to influence agency goals and objectives.



When asked what the role of spirituality is in healing youth who have suffered trauma, Reverend Fowlkes replied, "Spirituality not only heals us but [more importantly] helps us to understand who we are and where we are going. If we start from the idea that spirituality is the search for meaning and the journey of becoming, then spirituality becomes very integral to helping us face challenges, overcome barriers, and truly become the person who God created us to be. Learning to live beyond a traumatic past can then become possible because we know that our lives carry a far greater purpose than the pain and misery that we seemingly have been prescribed."

While Reverend Fowlkes acknowledges the possible challenges of working with young people, he suspects the greatest challenge of his role will be selling the idea that we can and should integrate our spirituality within our daily work. He says, "Rarely are we given the invitation to bring our spiritual identity to the workplace. Many of us have learned to squelch this part of ourselves and with good reason. Our culture has not done a very good job at listening to, understanding and embracing diverse spiritual and religious perspectives. In this and other matters of diversity and inclusion, UCAN thinks and acts differently."

**Come join us for UCAN Day  
May 1st at 11am  
Trinity United Church of Christ  
400 West 95th Street, Chicago**



## President's Board Corner



**Will Hobert** founded WH Trading LLC in 1994, and currently serves as its Managing Member. Will first learned about UCAN through his membership at Epiphany United Church of Christ, where UCAN's Residential Treatment Center youth regularly volunteered on Wednesday evenings. He was "impressed to see the youth come together to serve and pray for such a diverse group of people when these youth themselves had seen such trauma in their lives." After learning more about UCAN's mission to build strong youth and families, Will became further involved with UCAN. His interest is due in part to the makeup of his family: Will and his wife Julie have four children, one of whom is adopted from the foster care system. One of Will's sons also played on the same football team with one of our Residential youth.

Recognizing the importance of our youths' volunteer work at Epiphany in their spiritual development, UCAN CEO Tom Vanden Berk approached Will to seek his involvement in the development of UCAN's Office of Spiritual Formation. Will wanted to help fill the spiritual void in our clients' experience, and played an integral role in the creation of the Office of Spiritual Formation. He continues to support our work in this area today, having officially joined UCAN's President's Board in the fall of 2008.

UCAN is grateful for Will's leadership and his investment in the future of UCAN and our youth.



Ulich Children's Advantage Network  
3737 N. Mozart Street  
Chicago, IL 60618-3615

[www.ucanchicago.org](http://www.ucanchicago.org)  
773-588-0180  
[info@ucanchicago.org](mailto:info@ucanchicago.org)

Network with us on:



UCAN is accredited by the  
Council on Accreditation.

# UCAN honors outstanding foster parents, mentors, and volunteers



**Foster Parents of the Year: Bill and Sara McGuinn** always knew from the beginning of their marriage that they wanted to adopt from the Foster Care system, especially after seeing the joy it brought other family members and friends who had been foster parents who had done the same. After going through the screening process, Bill and Sara couldn't wait any longer—they wanted to have kids in their home immediately! Their wish soon came true; after fostering a total of four youth over the past couple of years, today Bill and Sara are in the process of adopting the remaining two foster children they currently have in their home. UCAN would like to thank the McGuinns for their service to the children and families of Illinois and commend them for their selflessness and generosity.

**Mentor of the Year: David Vukits** is a strong "Type A" personality and when he found himself out of work from the marketing industry in 2009 due to an office closure, he began looking for ways to stay involved in the community. David connected with UCAN and began volunteering with the STARS program once a week, focusing on their resumes and teaching them about business etiquette and communication. He constructed weekly lesson plans and gave the group assignments to work on during the week. Most importantly, he would show up for the youth rain or shine. "I wanted to be held accountable to them, just as I wanted them to be held accountable to me," says David. He began to really connect with the STARS and what began as volunteering soon blossomed into full mentoring. Thank you, David, for inspiring our youth!

**Volunteer of the Year: Laurinia Ford** has been volunteering at UCAN Academy once a week for over a year now. She serves as an extension of the teaching staff, and some of her volunteer work includes assisting the students with writing daily journal entries, cheering them on in gym class, and helping them complete their work they are struggling on in English and Math classes. The children even like to sit with Laurinia at lunch—often rushing to grab a seat at her lunch table! One student said, "I like Ms. Ford being in class with us; she helped me with my work when I get stuck on something. Ms. Ford is the kindest lady I've ever known. She will always remember us; she will never forget us." Thank you for your service to our youth at UCAN Academy, Laurinia!

To read more about this year's winners and each of the programs they serve, please visit [www.ucanchicago.org](http://www.ucanchicago.org).