

If you come on a Saturday morning to Highland Park High School, you will find a bunch of little kids yelling and running around. Those kids, mothers and babies, come to our program, Working Together.

Since the beginning in 2009, Working Together has taken on an important mission, to promote, encourage and support the low-income Hispanic community with programs that are educational, cultural and recreational. Our goal is to expose children and parents to fun and engaging activities, so those little children may find a healthy and positive passion to pursue through elementary and high school.

We started WT with a budget of \$0 dollars, one small donation here or there; once, we received a big donation of used taekwondo uniforms, so we passed the uniforms from one growing kid to the other, waiting for more donated uniforms for the new kids. We asked for used tutus for our presentations and we have been creative with what we've gotten - if they are long, we cut them, if they are now short, we add raffles, we add gems, we add pompoms, we add ribbons, but they were the same tutus. We are very environmentally conscious, so we recycle and recycle and recycle every donation we receive, paper, fabric, pencils, paint, tutus, etc. We recycle and recycle.

Our logo is composed of pieces of a puzzle; each piece represents a part of our community, like the Highland Park Community Foundation. At WT we are very thankful for the Foundation; thanks to their grants, we had been able to afford the cost of insurance for our different programs, we can afford the coding classes, we can buy new costumes, taekwondo uniforms, and the art teachers can get new supplies for any piece they want to work on.

Thanks to the Foundation, our program had grown considerably. We are now offering two art classes, one for kids under 6 years old and one for 7 and up with 55 participants. When we approached the Art Center Director for help looking for an art teacher for more than 40 students, he thought we were joking. Teachers Jane and Ivan are very happy to see the number of children who come to the classes each week.

Last year, we had more than 90 children participating in the dance showcase, all wearing new costumes. We were able to continue offering coding classes, with 4 teachers from Tech Giants. And thanks to the Foundation, we continue offering Giant Splash; in collaboration with the HPAC, we offered 2 swimming classes with 40 participants for each class.

From offering just one dance class for girls, our program now offers more than 12 classes for children from 6 months to 13 years old and their parents, ballet, hip-hop, guitar, swimming, Tae-kwon-do, art, breakdance, coding and animation, baby and me, folkloric dance from Mexico, You Go Girl, yoga, Zumba and the newest addition, football. Thanks to the Foundation, we are collaborating with other organizations like The Art Center, HPAC, Family Network and HP Varsity Football Team.