They came, they saw, they left with job offers

First 38th and Sheridan Project hiring event a success for everyone involved. Many open positions still remain available.

On Saturday, April 17, representatives from all the subcontractors involved with the 38th and Sheridan Project, local union halls, and Goodwill Commercial Services were on hand for a hiring event at HIM By HER Collegiate School for the Arts. Every person who attended the event looking for work left with at least one job offer, as well as information about the project and additional training opportunities.

The 38th and Sheridan Project includes the construction of a Goodwill Commercial Services manufacturing facility which will produce medical devices for Bloomington-based Cook Medical.

For more information about both the construction and manufacturing jobs that are still available, go to www.38thandsheridan.com.
"What are you spending your time on?"

Harry Dunn III’s voice has a calm, even tone to it. As a listener you feel compelled to lean in to make sure you don’t miss a word of what he is saying, because Harry has one of the most interesting life stories, career paths, and life philosophies you are likely to ever encounter.

The reason we are talking is because in 2014, Harry and his wife Michelle started the HIM By HER Foundation, an Indianapolis-based nonprofit organization whose mission is “Helping Improve Mankind By Healing Every Race” (HIM By HER).

The most recent, and easily the most ambitious, part of that endeavor began last August when they opened the HIM By HER Collegiate School for the Arts in the former Forest Manor Middle School on East 32nd Street. It’s a sprawling 200,000 square foot building with three floors, that sits on 17 acres.

Starting a school would be a massive undertaking for someone with a long history in education, let alone for people like Harry and Michelle, who are both retired police officers.

Finding “commonalities”
With a grandfather and a father who both worked in law enforcement, it shouldn’t come as a surprise that Harry eventually wound up wearing a badge.

But his family’s history as police officers is complicated.

His grandfather, Harry Dunn Sr., retired from Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) after 32 years as the only homicide detective to have solved 100 percent of his homicides (a plaque in his honor is on display at IMPD headquarters). Harry III’s father, Harry Dunn Jr., had his career cut short, though, when he was shot and paralyzed by another African-American police officer in 1977, right around the time Harry III was born.

So, the route Harry III took to a law enforcement career was hardly a straight line. And a primary reason for that was something instilled in him by his family—that he didn’t necessarily have to follow in his grandfather and father’s footsteps—he could be his own man.

“They raised me to know that it was possible for me to do anything that I put my mind to,” Harry said.

So, before joining the IMPD, he held management positions at department and home improvement stores (including a stint as a regional manager based in Hawaii), and ran his own private investigation and catering businesses.

Harry III moved up quickly at IMPD, joining Robbery and Homicide after only two years on the force. Like his grandfather, he ended his career having solved all of his homicide cases. He left IMPD to serve as Director of Investigations for the Indiana state Attorney General’s office and stayed there until the charter application for the HIM by HER school was approved.

It was actually his time as a homicide detective that led him into education. Much of that job revolves around interviewing suspects and witnesses. It was during those interviews that Harry began to see what he calls the “commonalities” shared by those who were committing crimes.

"Who's Who?"
The first commonality is a lack of “time occupancy.” “If you are at work, you don’t have time to shoot that other human being,” he explained. “If you are at school, you don’t have time to shoot another human being. And those of us that go to school and work—you really don’t have the time to do it.”

The second commonality he identified is a lack of anger management skills. “A lot of times, mental health is what we hear is the reason people are pulling these triggers,” Harry said. “We fail to narrow it down the way that it deserves to be. Mental health is absolutely correct, but I know plenty of people who are gun owners who are not out here shooting people. At the end of the day, the reason why these individuals are shooting each other is because of not knowing how to make better decisions when it comes to dealing with their anger.”

Additionally, it became obvious to Harry that many of the violent crimes he was investigating were occurring in the communities around the 38th and Sheridan Project. Addressing those commonalities and their contributing factors in the neighborhood became Harry and Michelle’s motivation to create the HIM by HER Foundation and, ultimately, the HIM by HER Collegiate School for the Arts.

"Make a choice."
The school serves students in grades kindergarten through eight. As indicated in the name, the curriculum at HIM by HER is infused with the “arts.” “‘Arts’ is a wide variety of different things,” Harry explained. “We try to help people in this community understand just how wide and vast the arts really can be. It’s something that is a draw for a community like this that we are currently in.”

The Dunns are more than happy to encourage those students who wish to become entertainers. But they also make sure the students are aware of all the opportunities available to them that are arts related, but don’t happen in front of an audience. “If you want to be that rapper, that’s great,” Harry said. “But we also ask them, ‘Have you ever thought that instead of just wanting to be that rapper, you could own the recording studio? Maybe you might want to be that engineer behind the camera instead of being the entertainer. Did you know Jay-Z spent $6 million on his last video? Somebody made that $6 million.’"

To further address the issue of time occupancy, HIM by HER also works with several other Indianapolis-based organizations, like the IMPD, to offer a wide variety of after-school programs—including reading, mentoring, Officer Friendly, and several different sports. "Extracurricular activities have been successful at keeping people off the streets," Harry said. “And activities like football, basketball—which type of sports events—exhaust them while teaching them some key fundamentals about leadership and more. “So, what are you spending your time

Continued on the back page
on?” he continued. “It’s going to be at work, it’s going to be at school, or its going to be in prison. Make a choice.”

And to make sure kids have plenty of opportunities to occupy their time in productive ways, the building is open seven days a week from 7:00 am to 10:00 pm.

“Get up, get out, and get engaged”

The building is home to much more than just a school, it is also home to a wide variety of businesses, resources, and programs available to the community.

Among the current occupants are a vocational school, a nursing school run by home healthcare provider Sovereign Care, a workout facility, an anger management boxing program, a preschool, a Black history museum, and a domestic violence and sexual assault prevention program through Deborah’s Place.

Additionally, HIM by HER has partnered with Eskenazi Health to provide a variety of services including HIV testing, STD testing, lead testing, youth counseling, family counseling, and dental work.

“Partnered” is a critical element of all the above relationships. While the businesses pay rent to HIM By HER for their space in the building, Harry personally vets each organization to ensure they are only working with ones whose values and goals are in line with HIM By Her.

The school also serves as a host for regular community events.

The first Friday of every month they have a “community conversation” with community leaders, state reps and senators, city officials and police departments. On the first Saturday of every month, in cooperation with Fishers-based iTown Church, they distribute a week’s worth of food to those in need. They have been able to help over 600 families a month since starting this program. And later this spring, HIM By HER is planning to host a farmer’s market every weekend.

To see organizations from outside of their community, like iTown Church, that are willing to assist with what Harry calls the Dunn’s “ministry” of helping this community, has been extremely gratifying. And projects like the 38th and Sheridan Project, is one HIM by HER was quick to get behind, which is why the Dunns didn’t hesitate to offer up their building as a location for hiring events related to that project.

“I find it very important to be involved with their job fairs,” Harry said. “And I am really excited about the Cook family’s initiatives and hope that we can do more.

“You have to be willing to get up, get out, and get engaged,” he continued. “All you can really do for a person is limit their excuses and offer them an opportunity. You can’t fix all the world’s problems. So what we try to do here—we limit excuses and we give them an opportunity. And we do it with a holistic approach.”