



The Skillman FOUNDATION

A voice for Detroit Children since 1960

Cody/Rouge Community Goal:

All children live in a village where they are safe, healthy, educated and have access to unlimited resources.

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NEIGHBORHOOD FACTS:

Cody/ Rouge are two communities of 42,233 residents in western Detroit, bordered on the East by the Southfield Freeway (M-39). It is bordered on the West by Westland and Dearborn Heights. The Northern border is the railroad line. The Southern border is with Dearborn and Dearborn Heights.

Total Population: 42,233

Poverty Rate: 19%

Home Ownership: 68%

Unemployment Rate: 10%

Don Bosco Hall Reenergizes Community with Unique Resource Center

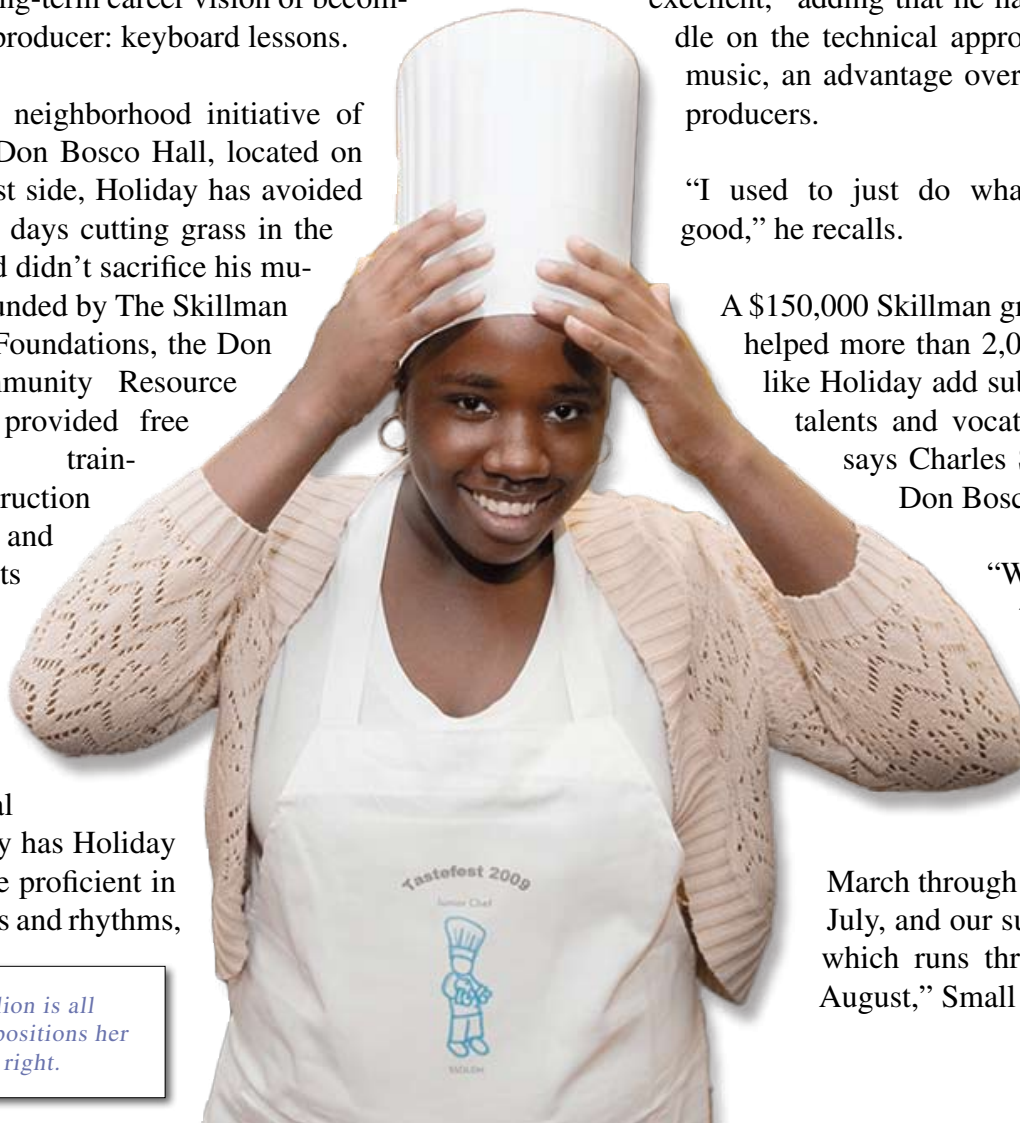
By Eddie B. Allen Jr.

Lots of lawn-mowing and odd jobs were all that Tim Holiday had planned for the summer. but he says he's picked up a few talents in the kitchen by taking the Center's cooking class.

In a shrinking employment market, a 19-year-old Detroiters' options for earning money are fairly limited, and Holiday had his heart set on a goal that would further his long-term career vision of becoming a music producer: keyboard lessons. "Anything that I can learn, I'll go to," says Holiday.

Thanks to a neighborhood initiative of the historic Don Bosco Hall, located on Detroit's west side, Holiday has avoided spending his days cutting grass in the hot sun – and didn't sacrifice his musical goal. Funded by The Skillman and Kresge Foundations, the Don Bosco Community Resource Center has provided free professional training and instruction for youths and young adults in everything from keyboarding to financial leadership and martial arts. Not only has Holiday become more proficient in creating beats and rhythms,

Ashley Gomillion is all smiles as she positions her chef's hat just right.



He describes the two-month keyboarding class as "excellent," adding that he has a better handle on the technical approach to making music, an advantage over other aspiring producers.

"I used to just do whatever sounded good," he recalls.

A \$150,000 Skillman grant is what has helped more than 2,000 participants like Holiday add substance to their talents and vocational interests, says Charles Small, CEO of Don Bosco.

"We've done two sessions of services for young people, a network of services that ran from

March through the first part of July, and our summer session, which runs through July and August," Small says.

KIDS MATTER HERE:

The Skillman Foundation's Good Neighborhoods is a 10-year \$100-million program that provides full-scale support to six Detroit neighborhoods where 65,000 children live.



L to R) Making Music! Tim Holiday, Angel Jones and Joel Hines enjoy keyboard class.

“What we are using it to do is really develop a network of community services that treat and develop children from the ages of 4 into adulthood. We’ve partnered with some other non-profits that were offering service in the area, but really needed a place to provide their services.”

The result was a planning strategy with Skillman, which issued the grant to enrich the city’s Cody-Rouge region as part of Skillman’s Good Neighborhoods program. Now Don Bosco’s Community Resource Center boasts classrooms and conference space, a full gym and auditorium stage, plus a kitchen and cafeteria. The exterior grounds will be used for a “Back-to-school Family Fun Day” at the end of August when participants in the summer program will showcase their skills and the Center will “celebrate the end of summer and the beginning of the new semester,” Small says.

An extension of the historic Don Bosco Hall youth home, the Center, located at 19321 West Chicago, was a welcome addition to the neighborhood for Ashley Gomillion.

“I came to a cooking class because I enjoy cooking and I wanted to see if I could enhance what I already know,” says Ashley, 15.

Chef Diallo McCaskle and his wife Tonya, who teach the cooking class, say they enjoy the “chemistry” with youth.

“My thing is that I like to have fun, on top of everything else,” adds “Chef D,” as he’s called in the community.

Small agrees that fun is part of the Center’s programming goals, adding that community enrichment is both the short- and long-term



Diallo McCaskill – “Chef D” – prepares a chicken dish while Ashley Gomillion (L), Jerree Cargile and Joselyn Webb watch and learn.

objective. Fall course schedules and hours for the Center will be posted at the Web site, www.donboscohall.org, along with additional information about the new facility.

“We want the Center to be a safe place where children, families and young people can go to have great activities, and we think we’re off to a great beginning,” says Small. “What we’ve learned is that it’s important for the children to have strong neighborhoods to grow up in.”

Photos: Paul Engstrom/Skillman Foundation

*Don Bosco Hall’s Community Resource Center at St. Suzanne
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