

TURNING OF OBSTACLES \cong OPPORTUNITIES

2015 Report to the Community



College Now
Greater Cleveland
Developing Tomorrow's Talent Today

LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND CEO

Dear Friends:

In many ways, College Now is in the business of turning obstacles into opportunities. Every day, our advisors—in schools, in community settings and in our Resource Center—help students of all ages remove barriers that are keeping them from pursuing higher education and provide a direct path toward achieving their postsecondary and career goals, be it a four-year degree, a two-year degree or a professional certificate program. For some students, the barrier is answering the questions “What do I want to do, and how do I get there?” or “Why do I need education beyond high school?” For others, the barrier is academic. For nearly all of the students we serve, however, the barrier is financial—“How do I pay for my degree?” or “How can I afford to stay in college once I get there?”

The demand for postsecondary credentials has never been greater, but then neither have the obstacles – particularly the financial, as college costs have increased exponentially. As such, the demand for our programs and services has increased as well. In the last four years, College Now’s budget and staff has nearly doubled, allowing us to increase the number of programs we offer and communities we serve. College Now’s service area has increased as well, now including Medina and Summit counties in addition to the work we have done for years in Cuyahoga and Lorain counties. The local, statewide and national spotlight is shining bright on postsecondary attainment and the need for a skilled workforce. The stakes are high. The Lumina Foundation reports that while Ohio is the **7th most populous state**, it falls behind **37 other states** in college graduation, with U.S Census data showing **32.9 percent** of adults 25 and over—only one-third of the population—with at least an associate’s degree.

We know that the Center for Education and the Workforce predicts that more than **60 percent** of Ohio’s jobs will require a postsecondary credential in the next five years. At the rate we are going, we will be able to fill a little less than two-thirds of those jobs. We also know, through research done by CEOs for Cities, that increasing attainment by just one percent adds **\$2.8 billion** annually to the local economy. Moreover in addition to the implications for the region as a whole, based on a study by The College Board, college graduates earn **\$1 million more** over the course of a career than high school graduates.

Our community and the individuals who comprise it will significantly benefit if we can increase postsecondary attainment. But the only way we are going to accomplish that is by continuing to work together to find ways to remove the seemingly insurmountable barriers from the path to higher education. We, at College Now, are up for the challenge, and we look forward to your partnership as we continue to turn obstacles into opportunities for Northeast Ohio students.

Sincerely,



William R. Koehler

William R. Koehler
Chair, Board of Trustees



Lee A. Friedman

Lee A. Friedman
CEO

MISSION

College Now’s mission is to increase college attainment through college access advising, financial aid counseling and scholarship services.

COLLEGE NOW AT A GLANCE

25,000

Number of individuals served by College Now in the 2013-14 academic year

\$60,000

Average amount of financial aid awarded per student over four years of college resulting from a \$500 investment in College Now advising services

\$150 Million

Amount of financial aid the more than 10,000 current college students served by College Now have received

1,345

Northeast Ohio high school students and adult learners who received College Now scholarships in 2013-14

\$62 Million

Amount of scholarships awarded to Greater Cleveland students since inception

\$1,880

Amount of average College Now renewable scholarship award in 2013-14

750

Number of community members volunteering as mentors for College Now scholarship recipients

\$2.6 Million

Amount of scholarship dollars awarded in 2013-14

99%

First- to second-year retention rate among College Now scholarship recipients, compared to 58% nationally for students from low-income backgrounds

150

Northeast Ohio venues – schools, community centers, businesses and our downtown Resource Center— where College Now provides its services

\$2.8 Billion

Economic boost to Northeast Ohio with each 1% increase in college attainment

60%

Graduation rate among College Now scholarship recipients, compared to 11 percent nationally for students from low-income backgrounds

FINANCIAL STABILITY

Operational Revenue for the Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2014

Foundations	\$2,957,436
Corporations	\$1,159,874
Individuals and Organizations	\$512,981
Government Grants	\$1,913,893
Fee for Service	\$1,262,250
Special Events	\$433,839
	\$8,240,273

Operating Expenses for the Fiscal Year Ending July 31, 2014

Advising and Counseling Services	\$3,787,732
Scholarship Awards	\$2,649,270
Scholarship and Retention Services	\$1,017,495
General Administration	\$334,293
Fundraising	\$414,275
	\$8,203,065

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SEVEN-YEAR GEAR UP OHIO GRANT CREATES COLLEGE ACCESS OPPORTUNITY IN PARMA

Seventh through twelfth graders in Parma now receive intensive college access services, thanks to a highly competitive seven-year grant the State of Ohio recently received. College Now had the opportunity to partner with the Ohio Board of Regents on writing the \$24.5 million Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant, aimed at helping at-risk students in four Ohio school districts prepare for and achieve success in college. The GEAR UP funding the State received is administered by a coalition including the **Ohio Board of Regents**, the **Ohio Department of Education** and College Now, which also provides technical assistance.

Parma is one of the four sites to benefit from the grant. GEAR UP funding allows College Now and **Cuyahoga Community College** (Tri-C) West to deliver intensive college access to students in all three high schools in the **Parma City School District** and their feeder middle schools. Specifically, College Now and Tri-C West are tasked with increasing college readiness among GEAR UP students; high school graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates; and family awareness of postsecondary options, preparation and financing.

Among other activities, College Now is providing students with opportunities for career and college exploration, ACT/SAT preparation, college visits, college and scholarship application support and financial aid counseling. College Now GEAR UP advisors are also counseling students and their families on how to determine their “best fit” postsecondary option to set up students for a successful transition to college and degree completion.

Tri-C West is working closely with the Parma City School District to strengthen curriculum alignment, provide tutoring services as well as dual enrollment options and other activities for campus exposure with the goal of having more students arrive as freshmen prepared for college-level coursework thereby reducing the amount of time and money students spend on remediation.

This is the third GEAR UP grant in which College Now has participated. The most recent grant was from 2006-2011 for work in Elyria schools. Highly successful, outcomes included significant increases in the number of students testing at or above grade level in English Language Arts and mathematics. Additionally, the graduation rate at Elyria High School increased nearly nine percentage points, and the college-going rate among Elyria High School graduates increased 11 percentage points over the duration of the grant. Prior to that, College Now participated in the first GEAR UP grant received by the Ohio Board of Regents, which ran from 1999-2006.

College Now is excited to have the opportunity to participate in another GEAR UP grant, and we believe our college access expertise and our previous GEAR UP experience will provide a solid foundation for similar success in Parma, a community we have not had the privilege of serving to date.



CREATING A COLLEGE-GOING CULTURE AT JOHN ADAMS HIGH SCHOOL

In 2013, the **Cleveland Metropolitan School District** (CMSD) partnered with the **United Way of Greater Cleveland**: 13 schools within the District would be identified as “Investment” schools, with the goal of creating a framework for providing direct and comprehensive services to students, families and community members to address their educational, physical, social and emotional needs. CMSD believed that with a community wrap-around strategy, the District would increase learning readiness, academic achievement, healthy families and communities and socially responsible citizens. Each Investment school chose a “Lead Agency,” whose job it would be to organize and implement a wrap-around strategy for the many resources offered to students and their families in its building.

John Adams High School chose College Now as its Lead Agency with a singular goal of using a student-centered, case management approach to creating a college-going culture and a vision for academic excellence among its students and families. College Now’s Wrap-Around Site Coordinator, Darlene Toney, got right to work, taking an inventory of programs and services provided to John Adams students and identified gaps, particularly in non-sports extracurricular activities. Additionally, she organized a student leadership team that works with building faculty, staff, students and partners to develop the

school’s culture of academic excellence. Most importantly, though, Ms. Toney is individually matching students with the programs and services in the building that will set them up for success. While the long-term impact of this initiative will not be determined for some time, there is already evidence that our work is changing attitudes about higher education at John Adams. Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion, which is widely recognized as a metric that demonstrates intent to enroll in a postsecondary program, increased by 73 percent – from 49 FAFSAs in 2012-2013 to 85 FAFSAs in 2013-2014.

College Now believes that this wrap-around strategy can change the culture at John Adams and in the Mt. Pleasant neighborhood so much that we applied for and were awarded another United Way grant for the 2014-2015 academic year allowing us to work with middle school students enrolled in John Adams’ feeder schools: Charles Dickens, Nathan Hale and Paul Revere. The additional funding also allows College Now’s staff to do more work with ninth and tenth grade students at John Adams, because the sooner we intervene to put students on a college-going path, the more likely they will be to participate in a college-going curriculum, graduate from high school on time and enroll in their best-fit postsecondary option.





HELPING NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS OVERCOME OBSTACLES

It is well known that College Now works with high school students as they prepare for postsecondary education. There is another entire side of our business, however, devoted to working with non-traditional students, including adults and homeless students, which is primarily done through the College Now Resource Center.

With support from the **Dominion Foundation, Eaton Corporation, JPMorgan Chase Foundation** and the **John P. Murphy Foundation**, the Resource Center is a place for the community to receive college access services at no cost. Conveniently located in Tower City Center, the Resource Center served approximately 2,300 individuals during the 2013-2014 school year. More than 60 percent of Resource Center visitors are adults, and 50 percent of visitors have an income of \$30,000 or less. Individuals come to the Resource Center for help getting on the path to postsecondary education or career training that will create better opportunities for them. Based on the effectiveness of our work with adult learners in the downtown Resource Center, College Now opened an office in Barberton last year to serve adults in that community. You will read more about that later in this report.

College Now also provides scholarship funding for adults who meet academic and financial criteria. Adults 19 and older in 11 Northeast Ohio counties who have never pursued postsecondary education or discontinued their education can apply for College Now Adult Learner scholarships to achieve their goals. Thanks to grants from the **Jane D. White Fund, The Cleveland Foundation, the Reinberger Foundation, The John D. Huntington Fund for Education** and the **Kent H. Smith Charitable Trust**, nearly \$300,000 in renewable, need-based scholarships was awarded to 157 Northeast Ohio adults in 2013-2014. These scholarships make a

significant difference in an adult learner's ability to complete a postsecondary program. Mark, for example, is a 55 year-old veteran who enrolled in college through the Veterans Retraining and Assistance Program (VRAP). He found College Now when his VRAP funding ran out, and the Adult Learner scholarship allows him not to have to work while in college. As a result, he takes six classes per semester as opposed to only one or two classes at a time, and he will complete his Associate's degree in Spring 2015.

To ensure that more students like Mark are aware of the services College Now provides to adult learners, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation earmarked a portion of its funding specifically for marketing the Adult Learner program during the 2014-2015 fiscal year. College Now implemented a marketing plan that includes TV, print and public transportation advertising aimed at increasing Resource Center traffic as well as the number of Adult Learner scholarship applications.

College Now Resource Center staff also work with homeless students. **The Sisters of Charity Foundation of Cleveland** provides College Now with funding to seek out and deliver specialized college access advising to students at-risk of homelessness. College Now provides need-based scholarships and retention services (mentoring, supportive material purchases, housing support) to students enrolled in residential postsecondary programs to increase their chances of persisting toward graduation and for self-sustaining adulthood upon degree completion.

Our work with adults and homeless students is just another example of how College Now works every day to remove the obstacles students encounter – no matter how insurmountable they seem – on their path to college completion, and we are grateful to our dedicated partners who support our work in these areas.

MANAGEMENT OF OHIO AMERICORPS COLLEGE GUIDES PROGRAM INCREASES COLLEGE NOW'S VISIBILITY STATEWIDE

Since 2009, the **AmeriCorps College Guides** program has allowed College Now to strategically expand its reach and deepen its services within the Cleveland Metropolitan School District, ensuring that we not only have a presence in each high school every day of the school year but also can deploy several College Guides daily in our Resource Center. Additionally, since the first class completed its year of service in 2010, the AmeriCorps program has served as a training ground for College Now advisor positions; College Now currently employs 14 former College Guides.

As a result, when presented with the opportunity to assume the responsibility of managing the statewide

AmeriCorps College Guides program last year, it was an easy decision for College Now. Expanded program management has allowed College Now the opportunity to implement our research-based college access methods on a wider scale as we work closely with partners across Ohio to train and develop the College Guides serving at these organizations. Working collectively to increase college attainment in Ohio through managing the statewide College Guides program has also meant increasing our staff. College Now provided oversight and direction through collaborative partnerships with 10 organizations across Ohio who housed 60 College Guides and served more than 16,000 Ohio students in 2013-2014.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES IN SUMMIT COUNTY

College Now has forged several partnerships in Summit County. Last year, the **GAR Foundation, the Summit Education Initiative** and **ProjectGrad Akron** tasked College Now with strengthening the college-going culture in the **Akron Public School system (APS)**. In the 2013-2014 school year, College Now worked with the Buchtel Community Learning Center, an APS high school, providing the full spectrum of college access and financial aid services to students, taking them through all of the necessary steps for successful college enrollment.

With the GAR Foundation's renewed support, further augmented by a grant from the **Akron Community Foundation**, College Now is serving students in Ellet High School and Garfield High School in 2014-2015. We are already seeing a shift in attitudes about college in Akron: Jordan, a senior at Garfield, did not think he could attend college, so he decided to pursue a manufacturing job. After meeting with the College Now

advisor, he learned that college was, in fact, an option, and he applied to Stark State College with a goal of studying business.

College Now is not only serving traditional students in Summit County, however. In partnership with the **Barberton Community Foundation, the Barberton Public Library** and the **City of Barberton**, College Now opened a Barberton office last April to focus primarily on serving adult learners. The College Now advisor inventories individuals' career goals, past educational experiences and financial situations and, as needed, helps them reconcile past student debt issues, locate GED programs, apply for financial aid, explore and compare postsecondary options and enroll in the best-fit option. The advisor also makes referrals to other community services that help adults address issues that hinder college completion.

We are thrilled to be serving Summit County, and we are grateful for the support of partners who are making it possible for us to remove the obstacles to higher education for the County's residents.





MENTORING PROGRAM WORKS TO ELIMINATE STUDENTS' POSTSECONDARY OBSTACLES

College Now's Mentoring Program received a number of significant gifts last year supporting program expansion as it ramps up toward matching all College Now scholarship recipients with mentors who will guide them through their college journey. To date, **750** mentors, representing over **250** regional employers, have been matched with a College Now scholarship recipient.

Mentors communicate with their mentees primarily over a virtual platform that enables easy contact and eliminates common time constraints that can make mentoring difficult. Mentors and mentees are required to meet in-person several times a year, though many do so more often. Mentors offer mentees guidance on basic college issues—completing financial aid forms, figuring out where to buy books, learning their way around campus—to the more complex, such as dealing with difficult roommates, coping with homesickness and even helping students find additional funding for their education should they be faced with monetary strife.

College Now bestows Outstanding Mentor of the Year Awards to community members who have been nominated by their mentees for their exceptional work and service within the program. These mentors are recognized at College Now's annual Mentor Appreciation Luncheon in January. Ann Conrad (Baldwin Wallace University), Dan Hollowell (Medical Mutual of Ohio), Larry Oskowski (Sherwin-Williams Corporation) and Teresa Schleicher (City Year) received the 2015 awards.

Thanks to Our 2013-2014 Mentoring Program Funders

Alton F. and Carrie S. Davis Foundation
 The Business of Good Foundation
 Doreen and Richard Cahoon
 Eaton
 Energizer Charitable Trust
 JoAnn and Robert Glick
 The George Gund Foundation
 Grant Thornton LLP
 Hyland Software
 Lincoln Electric Company
 The Lubrizol Foundation
 The Murphy Family Foundation
 TG
 The Treu-Mart Fund



The Mentoring Program boasted a **96 percent first-to second-year retention rate** during its first two years, exceeding the national retention rate of 58 percent for low-income students. As a result of this success, College Now is providing training and technical assistance to **I Know I Can**, Columbus' college access organization, as that organization begins virtual mentoring with their students. The true impact of our mentoring program, however, will be felt in the coming months, as many students in the pilot class of mentees will reach their on-time graduation date in May 2015.



"Larry (Oskowski) has been a support system in my life. Last year he supported my decision to switch my major from Marketing to English after I told [him] that I didn't think business was for me. Larry gave me great input and helped me understand the pros and cons of the switch, and helped me to ultimately decide to still minor in business. His support has helped me go after my dream of teaching high school English.

– Kevin Callahan, Junior, John Carroll University

JEANETTE GRASSALI BROWN: CELEBRATING A CAREER DEDICATED TO CREATING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

As John F. Kennedy once said, "One person can make a difference, and everyone should try." Last year, College Now recognized one individual who succeeded in making that difference, greatly impacting our organization and our community. On May 27, 2014, former Board Chair and education advocate Jeanette (Jenny) Grasselli Brown was honored at College Now's second Invest in Success event, which was sponsored by **Northern Trust** and **Thompson Hine** and held at ideastream in downtown Cleveland.

Event attendees heard from College Now CEO Lee Friedman and Ambassador John D. Ong as well as Dr. E. Gordon Gee, president of West Virginia University and former president of The Ohio State University, who provided the keynote address. Dr. Gee and Mrs. Brown worked together during her time at the Board of Regents, while he was leading OSU. In his address, Dr. Gee told the audience that while this is the first generation for which it is not assumed their lives will be better than those in the previous generation, educational opportunity is the pathway for young people who yearn to rise above their current circumstances. He recognized Mrs. Brown for her unique ability to simultaneously lead "like a drum



major" and do the hard work "like a foot soldier." Dr. Gee echoed College Now's mission, challenging the audience to continue to support the cause of finding a way to increase the quality of education while making it affordable and accessible to all.



REMOVING THE FINANCIAL BARRIERS TO POSTSECONDARY OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

Providing scholarships and opportunities for educational access is a backbone of College Now's work with the community. Last year, College Now awarded more than **\$2.6 million** to **1,300** students in need, giving them the opportunity to achieve their educational goals, bringing the total to **\$62 million** in scholarship awards since the organization's inception!

College Now administers three types of scholarships: traditional scholarships, which are awarded to students graduating from high schools served by College Now who are recommended by their advisor; Adult Learner scholarships, which are reserved for individuals 19 and over who are either returning to college or starting their post-secondary paths for the first time; and managed fund scholarships, which are funded by outside organizations for purposes they determine but for whom College Now provides all administrative services. Each scholarship has the same objective: to increase the accessibility of postsecondary education for students who would otherwise be unable to realize such goals.

The **Cleveland Browns Marion Motley Scholarship** was founded in 2006 and honors former Browns fullback and linebacker Marion Motley, who played with the Browns from 1946 to 1953. He was one of the first African-American players in the NFL and the second African-American to be inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in his native Canton. Each year, the Marion Motley scholarship provides two deserving high school seniors with a \$10,000 scholarship (\$2,500 per year, renewable for four years). Applicants must plan to enroll in a

two- or four-year college and intend to major in education or an area that could lead to a career working for a professional sports organization in some capacity. This year, Joshua Hill (John Hay High School) and Kaitlin Tennant (John Marshall High School) were selected and recognized during an on-field ceremony prior to the December 14 Cleveland Browns game. The Cleveland Browns Foundation has selected 19 students since 2006 and these scholarship recipients have an impressive six-year graduation rate of 100 percent.

In 1993, Cleveland radio personality Jimmy Malone and his wife, April, created a scholarship fund at College Now for high school students graduating from schools served by College Now advisors and who meet College Now academic and financial criteria. Since the fund's inception, the Malones have placed a heavy emphasis on providing individualized mentoring to the selected recipients of the four-year renewable scholarship, and the results of their commitment are evident. To date, the Malone Scholarship has awarded funding to more than 140 students and boasts an impressive 80 percent graduation rate. In 2013-2014, a total of 43 students received the **Malone Scholarship**.

College Now also maintains the scholarship fund for **ACE Mentor Program of Cleveland**, which is for seniors currently attending high schools in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District who are members of the ACE Mentor Program. The ACE Mentor Program informs high school students about career opportunities in architecture, construction and engineering and encourages students to pursue secondary and postsecondary education

to prepare them for such careers. The program has a heavy high school mentoring component to support the development of basic and technical skills for students who participate. In addition, each year, many students graduating from high school and the ACE Mentor Program receive four-year renewable scholarships up to \$3,000 per year, with select students also receiving individual, one-time awards up to \$1,500. In four short years, the ACE program has grown from 12 students receiving \$17,000 a year to 40 students receiving a total of over \$70,000 annually. ACE scholarship recipients perform extremely well, too. The class of 2013 had a first- to second-year retention rate of 91 percent.

Thanks to the generosity of the Cleveland City Council, 95 current College Now scholarship recipients received an email in late October informing them that they had been awarded an additional one-time scholarship of \$1,000 for the 2014-2015 school year. Recognizing that many times a gap remains between the amount of financial aid a qualified Cleveland student receives to attend college and the actual cost of attending, the Cleveland City Council used some proceeds from the sale of the Convention Center to establish the **City of Cleveland Scholarship Fund**. This recently-created fund provides supplemental, one-time scholarships to eligible Cleveland residents who currently receive scholarships from College Now and who nonetheless still faced, on average in 2013-2014, an annual funding gap of \$6,735.

Last April, Cuyahoga County Council passed a resolution awarding College Now Greater Cleveland \$500,000 to be used for scholarships and mentoring services for eligible high school students from Cuyahoga County to pursue their postsecondary education at a college or university located within the county. The money, which the County has set aside through its Cuyahoga County Educational

The impact of our scholarship awards is easy to see as Joshua, a scholarship recipient attending The Ohio State University recently wrote:

Dear Cleveland City Council Members,

Thank you so much for providing additional funds for my education! This generous award from the City of Cleveland Scholarship Fund will help me immensely as I complete my bachelor degree in Sustainable Plant Systems with a specialization in Horticulture. Knowing that others recognize my efforts helps me to see that I am on the right track, and gives me the support I need to finish strong.

Assistance Program, funded 70 Cuyahoga County graduating high school seniors, at \$1,500 per year for four years, a total scholarship of \$6,000 per student. Recipients are Cuyahoga County residents who met College Now's academic and income criteria and graduated from a high school in which College Now provides its services. To help ensure success when these students arrived on campuses last fall, College Now paired each recipient with a mentor from the Greater Cleveland community, who will help them navigate the college experience. The 2014-2015 school year is the second year in which cohorts of Cuyahoga County students are benefiting from the **Cuyahoga County Council Scholarship Fund**.

These scholarships are just a few examples of the many ways in which our partners work with us to help alleviate the financial burden of postsecondary education. We are grateful to all of our scholarship partners for their support!



COLLEGE NOW DONORS

This list reflects cash payments and multi-year pledges from January 1 - December 31, 2014. We have made every effort to ensure the completeness and accuracy of this report. If an error or omission has occurred, please accept our sincere apologies.

\$1,000,000 and above

The Cleveland Foundation

\$500,000 - \$999,999

Cuyahoga County
The John Huntington Fund
for Education

\$250,000 - \$499,999

Richard and Doreen Cahoon
Nordson Corporation
Foundation
Swagelok Company

\$100,000 - \$249,999

City of Cleveland
The George Gund Foundation
Pipefitters Local 120
United Way of Greater
Cleveland
Jane D. White Fund No. 2

\$50,000 - \$99,999

ACE Mentor Program
of Cleveland
Barberton Community
Foundation
Jack and Shirley Berger
Endowment Fund of the
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Eva L. and Joseph M. Bruening
Foundation
Business of Good Foundation
Eaton Corporation
Honor Project Trust
KeyBank
Maltz Museum of
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Medical Mutual of Ohio
Perkins Charitable Foundation
Fred E. Scholl
Charitable Foundation
Sisters of Charity
Foundation of Cleveland
Treu-Mart Fund
University Hospitals
Health System
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\$25,000 - \$49,999

ALCOA
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Swamy Family Foundation
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Zupon Family Charitable Fund

\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Northern Trust Bank
O'Neill Brothers Foundation
Parker Hannifin Corporation
Sears-Swetland Foundation
Sherwick Fund
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