I. ‘Driving Hope’ Team Members
   • Mary Mattson, student team lead; School of Social Work
   • Ben Lawson, PhD student; LSA/Rackham
   • Aaron Mininger, PhD student; School of Engineering (EECS)
   • Dr. Mathieu Despard – Faculty Advisor - School of Social Work

II. Executive Summary
   ‘Driving Hope’ is an innovative and collaborative project that seeks to empower vulnerable families and individuals in Washtenaw County by providing low cost automotive services and advice. Clients are charged only for the parts needed for the repair, all labor costs are waived. Clients can also request additional financial support to pay for parts. Additionally, our team is equipped to provide advice on the purchase of a new or used car. This may include a phone consultation or a team member accompanying a client to inspect a used car.

   Our vision for this project focused on ensuring it is set up to be sustainable long after our ‘team’ involvement is completed. To accomplish this, we engaged Grace Ann Arbor (Grace) in a partnership, an established 501(c)3 organization in Washtenaw County, who is committed to supporting the vision and mission of ‘Driving Hope’. Our second key partner is Joao Simoes, an engineer by trade, who owns a fully operational garage and shares the vision for serving low income individuals. The task of the Driving Hope team was to create an infrastructure for Joao to provide services, and build a network of garages who will partner with Driving Hope by committing to provide services to one client referral from Drive Hope each month.

   These partnerships are critical to the sustainability of the project. However, working within the time constraints of Grace Ann Arbor made it difficult for us to move the project forward as quickly as we would have liked. Additionally, as we began regular meetings with Grace leadership in April, we realized that setting up the infrastructure for this service was more complex than originally thought, and our team hit a few road blocks.
First, the process of ensuring that we are compliant with MI laws was more complex than we planned. We sought legal advice from the Law School at UM and a lawyer affiliated with Grace. In order to operate within the law and protect ourselves and Grace from liability, we needed to develop a waiver that clients would sign before receiving services. We conducted research and made connections with other organizations providing similar services to inform our process (no one is Washtenaw County is doing this work, so we conducted a national scan). The information gathered from these interviews were key in the development of our administrative infrastructure (criteria for receiving service, garage operations, insurance, expected challenges). Two key relationships came about through these conversations; His Hands Auto Repair in North Carolina, and Second-Hand Garage in Maryland. We continue reaching out to these organizations for guidance and suggestions for best practice.

Second, the process of providing insurance for Joao’s garage took more time than we originally estimated. Providing details of the services that will be provided and explaining the process for how volunteers will be managed was an time intensive process, and also tied to the legal review of the services we could provide.

Third, as we began to reach out to other garages and referral partners, it became clear that we needed further structure in our administrative system and the criteria we would use to determine client eligibility. To help fill this administrative gap, we built relationships with SOS Community Services and Friend InDeed, two long-standing community organizations in Washtenaw County. Dr. Despard coached our team through the process of setting criteria that would ensure our target population is served, without making the process burdensome for the client. Our target population is low-income families and individuals (based on % of the poverty line according to household number) who rely on personal transportation to ensure work and education. Because our referral partners will have established relationships with these individuals (and have already collected personal information), they are in the ideal position to send us referrals.

Lastly, shortly after receiving the DOW grant Ben Lawson, one of our team members, received a job offer to teach in Africa, which he accepted. He is still connected with Grace and will continue to be involved with this project, but his capacity is extremely limited. A UM alumni Peter Attema joined our team to assist with the vacancy left by Ben’s departure.
Peter is an engineer by trade and is experienced working with cars. He is dedicated to this project and shares the vision of Driving Hope. He is also connected to Grace and has a strong connection to the leadership there.

Our initial timeframe for beginning service to clients was the end of the summer. We did not achieve this, but we are pleased with our progress and the quality of the process we have set up to ensure this is a sustainable service. Further information is provided below about achievements and progress of our team.

III. Additional funding

We believe this model is set up in a sustainable way because of our partners and volunteers. While additional funding would allow us to cover cost of parts for more individuals, it would also require more administrative and evaluation work than we have the capacity to handle. At this time, we are not requesting additional funding. However, we plan to recruit new students who have an interest in this project and want to continue pushing it forward. If we are successful in the recruiting process, we hope the new leadership will request funding later in the year.

IV. Progress Toward Milestones and Achievements

The administrative tasks required to establish a sustainable service program has required much more time then we planned. Working within the time constraints of our team members and, Grace leadership, and the pro bono assistance given from the legal team consumed the first several months of the project. Although this process has been laborsome and time consuming, we are confident that the quality of this work with ensure the integrity and sustainability of the services provided.

The following achievements have been accomplished:

- Filing Form 541 to the County Clerk (Doing Business As) for Grace Ann Arbor. This allows donors, partners, and clients to write checks to Driving Hope. Driving Hope has been added as a category in the Grace Ann Arbor budget. The ongoing administrative financial component of Driving Hope will be executed by Grace staff (this is key to the sustainability of the project).
• Received **additional funds and volunteers** from Grace Ann Arbor. Driving Hope was announced to the members of Grace, and our team provided opportunities to get involved. Individuals are also welcome to give financially to the project. So far, **$1,000 in additional funding** has been given to this project. We will continue to recruit volunteers to join our team, with the primary purpose of providing connections to expand our partner garages.

• **Criteria for receiving services** is articulated and clearly communicated with Grace Staff and our referral partners. All of our referrals will come from local non-profit, human service organizations, who have an established relationship with the client. Our team decided that this was the best way to reach our target population while also removing the administrative burden from Grace staff. We believe that receiving referrals only through these partners will maximize the administrative capacity of our team. It also ensures that the service we provided takes place in a holistic model of care, because the individual referred to us is already connected to assistance from other organizations.

• **A brochure and information sheet** were designed, and are now being used to communicate the mission, scope, and details of Diving Hope to prospective partners and volunteers.

• Our primary garage is now **insured** through Barker Weber Insurance Agency. The policy is owned by Grace Ann Arbor, and it covers all work occurring at the garage and the volunteers.

• The services we will provide are in **compliance with MI laws**, and our insurance, waiver, and administrative structure ensure that we are operating with integrity.

• **A client database** was developed and is being used to keep all service records and relevant client information. This database will also be used to conduct an impact assessment in the future.

• A **customer satisfaction survey** was developed and will be used to evaluate services provided by Driving Hope and to ensure quality improvement. As the
service is expanded to include more partnering garages, the survey will be updated appropriately.

• Through our partnership with Grace Ann Arbor we have added several members to our team. Two mechanics have joined us, as well as several volunteers. The growth of our team is a key factor in sustainability, particularly the addition of mechanics.

• We currently have two key referral partners, SOS Community Services and Friends InDeed. We targeted both organizations because they are trusted community partners, and serve a population that aligns with the vision for who Driving Hope seeks to serve. We will not look to grow the number of referral partners until we are able to gain partnerships with more garages.

V. Remaining Project Plan

We are now prepared and equipped to provide services, and are waiting for our first referral. As we begin serving clients, our team will continue meeting monthly to discuss process and quality improvement. As we move forward we will use the client satisfaction survey to provide feedback on this service and start gathering data.

Our focus moving forward is expanding the number of partnerships with garages. We will continue to grow our base of partners and volunteers, following the project access model\(^1\), commonly used in the medical community to serve low income individuals. Our goal is to grow our base of partner garages to five by the end of the year. We are excited to begin serving our community through Driving Hope, and look forward to engaging partners across Washtenaw County in this innovative project.

VI. Driving Hope Brochure

**WHO ARE WE?**

Our team is passionate about serving our community.

**Driving Hope**

Empowering vulnerable families and individuals through low cost automotive service and advice.

**MISSION**

Driving Hope seeks to empower vulnerable families and individuals in Washtenaw County by providing low cost automotive service and advice.

- 60 million American families are just one month away from being unable to pay for basic needs such as food, housing, and car repairs.

**WHO WE SERVE**

Independents and families in Washtenaw County who can demonstrate a financial and transportation need.

**WHAT WE DO**

Routine maintenance and repairs including:

- Engine maintenance
- Brakes & suspension work
- Diagnostics
- Oil changes
- Exhaust repair
- Vehicle inspection
- Automotive advice

**HOW TO ACCESS SERVICES**

Contact the Driving Hope team to determine eligibility.

734-619-0692
driverhope@gracanumber.com

**WE NEED YOU**

- Interested in working on cars? Join our maintenance team.
- Refer qualifying individuals to Driving Hope for repair services.
- Spread the word: Talk to your mechanic about Driving Hope and provide a referral if you think they would be a good partner.

**PARTNERSHIPS**

Building community partnerships are key in maximizing impact. We seek to build relationships with garages in Washtenaw County who want to make a positive impact in their community.

Please contact our team with partnership referrals.

VII. Team member CV:

1. CV_17 Aaron Mininger.pdf
2. LawsonCV.pdf
3. Peter Attema Resume.pdf
4. Resume Portfolio Mary Mattson Resume .pdf