

# 2016 Annual Report



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Project URGE, Inc.  
46 Mount Hope Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14620

## Project URGE, Inc., 2016 Annual Report

### Mothers In Need of Others & Furnished 4 Life

It has been a busy year for the Furnished 4 Life and Mothers In Need of Others ministries! In October of this year, we found a permanent home in The Wedge Market of The Pillar Church led by Pastor Devin Lyles. **Mothers In Need of Others (MINO)** now has a beautiful new resource room to welcome our case managers and church outreach workers as they come to pick up donated maternity and baby items FREE of CHARGE for their clients! The resource room is open M/W/F from 10am – 2pm. Case workers can email us at any time with requests for items for their clients. If we have those items in stock, an appointment is scheduled for them to come and pick them up for their clients. Each business day we have anywhere from 2-5 client representatives who utilize our program. We are always looking for churches, businesses, and community organizations to host baby showers for our ministry to help provide the diapers, wipes, formula, personal hygiene and baby care products we distribute on an on-going basis. We encourage individuals to donate as well!

On September 19<sup>th</sup>, we opened the doors of the **Furnished 4 Life Thrift Store** also in The Wedge Market! The store hours are Mondays and Wednesdays from 10am- 5pm, Fridays from 10am – 2pm, and Saturdays from 1pm- 5pm. We offer donated housewares, linens, small appliances, and new and “like new” baby and children’s items at drastically discounted prices. Profits from the store will help support community development projects in the area.

We had a slow start, but business continues to grow as word spreads and we build relationships with the neighbors in the South Wedge community! They have welcomed us with open arms! We even have a handful of “regulars” now who stop by for a cup of coffee, to chat, and take advantage of our great bargains!

On Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup> and Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> we had a special **Christmas Store** event in our thrift store, inviting our neighbors in the South Wedge community and the case managers we work with. We would like to thank Henderson Ford, Fairport United Methodist Church, Williamson High School, the students from Manuel’s Music Studio, residents from the Meadowbrook Neighborhood Association, and other private individuals who donated brand new toys and gifts. The youth group from FUMC and Williamson High School also volunteered to work in the store helping us to price gifts, stock shelves, and clean the church for the event! The event wasn’t as big or as well attended as last year’s Christmas Store at 411 Ministries in the Beechwood area, but we did get the opportunity to build relationships with our guests and bless them with some nice gifts for their families at bargain prices! The leftover toys were distributed to Youth for Christ’s Successful Pathways program for their families. Proceeds from the event will be used to further our furniture and appliance distribution efforts in the community through our Furnished 4 Life ministry.

And speaking of the **Furnished 4 Life Lottery**, plans are in the works to evolve our furniture lottery distribution system into a furniture refinishing business to train and employ individuals to repair and restore donated furniture to sell in the store. The program would be similar to that of the thrift store and resource room. The furniture and appliances would be sold at drastically reduced prices to those who can pay for them. For those who cannot, (those receiving services) would have access to free items through their case managers and church outreach workers who would be invited to come and select items free of charge for their clients from our overstock and unsold items. They have the option of transporting those pieces to their clients themselves or paying a small delivery charge to have the items brought to the homes of their clients. We are in the process of pursuing funding and space for this venture.

All of these programs would not be possible without the following individuals who continue to provide support, encouragement, and advice in these efforts: Garry Manuel, Devin Lyles, Jeannine Zona, Larry Burnette, Tim Letzin, our volunteers, and the Man who makes ALL things possible...God Almighty!

Respectfully submitted

Maria Wehrle – Ministry Team Leader for MINO & F4L

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# Free to Fly

## PARTICIPANTS

Beginning 2016 we concentrated our recruiting for participants by forming an alliance with Catholic Family Center (CFC). One of their program directors refers participants to us. We had five applicants from CFC ; two were accepted and one has maintained her membership with us. Beginning the year, we served three participants. We had to ask one to leave the program, had one person come to us through The Pillar, and one come to us through Catholic Family Center. As of December 31, we serve four participants.

## BACKGROUND

On May 30, 2015 we launched our new curriculum, "Choosing to Thrive". Rhonda O'Connor, Director for Visions for Change, Syracuse NY, developed this curriculum. It is an advanced version of the curriculum that was a foundation of the Circles group which is based on the teachings of Ruby Payne.

In concert with our new curriculum, we also use "The Bridge" as a way to measure progress toward self-sufficiency. This method was originated by a group in Boston, The Crittendon Women's Union, and has been adopted by our coach training group, Focus+. It is well researched and is getting national attention. Rochester Catholic Family Center has also adopted this model.

## 2016 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2016 participants met together once a month on a Saturday from 9-11. At 9:00 Jacky Smith, our Program Director, led us in a training sessions from the Choosing to Thrive material. At 10:00, participants were able to shop from our storehouse. We also had skills based programs (like budgeting) on another Saturday each month which were optional but well attended by participants.

Once a month on a Saturday, Mary Anderson had a coaches training session where she relayed new information, had time for coaches to give and receive feedback, and time for general sharing about the needs of the program.

John Housel from Browncroft Church has been our faithful devotion leader for another year. The program evolved a bit so that John came in with the coaches and also during general meetings.

We offered a special training session on how to relieve stress conducted by one of our Advisory Board members, Jeanette Battiste. Participants and coaches enjoyed and benefited from this opportunity.

## COACHES

Each participant has a personal coach. As of December, 2016 we have six active coaches. We also have one person waiting for training, one who specializes only in job skills, and one who specializes in financial coaching. We met with FocusPlus and re-instituted our memo of understanding with them.

We will continue to rely on Focus+ to help in the recruiting efforts and to be the orientation provider for our new coaches. After the orientation, Free to Fly will be providing ongoing training and support in addition to the ongoing training provided by Focus+.

We also are fortunate to have Joyce Wagner, a professional counselor and PhD in Psychology, volunteer her time to give special coach training and stand by to help answer any specific personal coaching questions.



## **PARTNERS AND COLLABORATION EFFORTS**

Advantage Federal Credit Union continues to be a partner with us. Marty Jacobson, Relationship Manager, occasionally provides financial workshops and has met 1:1 with participants.

Joyce Wagner, PhD was a guest speaker for one of our programs.

In July, Rhonda O'Connor and Marcia presented to the RMAPI steering group leader about the Visions for Change and Free to Fly model. We were not selected for the initial RMAPI pilot but we did get some good exposure. In December, Rhonda and Marcia were invited to submit a grant to the Monroe County Department of Human Services. As of this date, we have not heard whether the grant was accepted.

## **MARKETING**

Our web site was constructed and is maintained by Meg Hartmann. Susan Sullivan is helping us update our brochure and other collaterals. We expect new materials to be available first quarter of 2017.

## **FOOD and GOODS DISTRIBUTION**

In 2015 approximately 360 pounds of food was donated. We also swapped 800 pounds of food with Foodlink. Food drives will be necessary in Spring, 2016.

The idea that we have free food is a draw for people to be interested in Free to Fly. Having household items available for participants is unique and sets us apart. However, once people are in the program, they tell us that it's the program itself which is valuable and food is just a bonus.

## **VOLUNTEERING**

All participants are asked to volunteer two hours per month with us, a Project URGE affiliated organization, or a neighborhood organization. We have done a few service projects for The Pillar and the participants help organize the food lockers. We need to do a better job of this in the new year.

For the year, we were blessed with 960 volunteer hours.

## **FACILITIES**

In January, 2016 we moved into our new home at The Pillar. This move significantly reduced our rent expense from \$350/month to \$50/month but more importantly gave us a friendly and supportive home.

## **RESULTS**

We have learned that it takes five years on average for people to become self-sufficient coming from poverty. This work is about relationships and building skills so people can get to their definition of self-sufficiency and not fall back. We haven't been in operation long enough to report on anyone reaching self-sufficiency but there are a few note worthy life changes that has happened as a result of what Free to Fly offers:

- One participant has received extensive, one-on-one job training and has applied for more jobs in the past few months than they have in the past few years.
- Participants continue to affirm that having Free to Fly means they have a support system, people who care, hope. A common theme we hear in meetings is that at Free to Fly, our only color is red – the color of our blood which is the same for each of us. We all acknowledge that we are broken people before the Lord - we have that in common. In many ways, this demonstrates the Project Urge mission because we are suburban churches coming together with City residents to spread the Good News.
- Coaches are very committed to the program and come even if they don't have a participant assigned to them.
- One participant has been freed from near bankruptcy and eviction. This person went back to work to a full time job, with benefits, after having been out of work for quite a while.
- Advantage Federal Credit Union continues to be a supporter.

- Wherever we have the chance to talk about Free to Fly, we are positively received.
- It was significant that we were invited to the Rochester Anti-Poverty group as a potential partner and invited to submit a grant to DHS.

## QUICK LOOK AHEAD

- We have had a volunteer come forward to seek out more relationships with agencies in our area. CFC is steering more of their clients toward RMAPI programs, which has reduced our ability to receive referrals. With our new volunteer, we expect to establish more relationships, which should result in more referrals.

Respectfully submitted,

Marcia O'Brien

Free to Fly Ministry Team Leader

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## The Diversity Café



The men's group, "The Diversity Café", is a group of 10-15 men from several different churches, both urban and suburban, that has been meeting together for the past 2 years. Once a month we break bread, pray, share our opinions, stories, and hearts with one another. This community came together out of a perceived need for faithful men of different cultures and races to build relationships with one another. Martin Luther King Jr. famously commented on the segregated state of Sunday morning. In this, Sunday morning obviously holds a mirror up to the week that follows it. Without

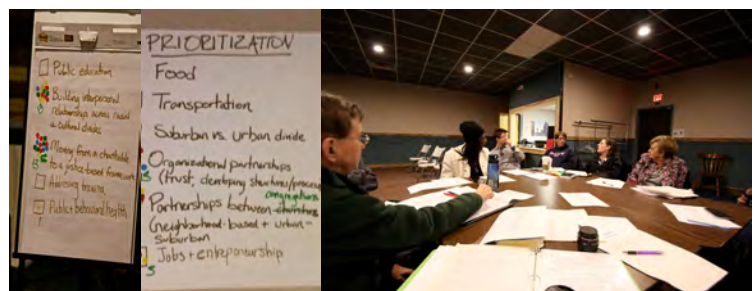
intentionally coming together, this will not change and we will continue to live in the broken, "fallen" world of racial and cultural division. Our mission going forward is continue nurturing the relationships that have developed within this group—for these are healing us every time we meet. Love is a power that overcomes estrangement, division. "Diversity Café" is "all about" overcoming estrangement, building bridges, and living out Paul's words, "There is no more Jew nor Greek, male nor female, we are all one in Christ Jesus".

Respectfully submitted

Pastor Christian Jewell

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## Networking/Collaborative/Training Meetings – Community Development





In September URGE offered a Collaborative Problem Solving workshop, which was facilitated by Vernice Miller-Travis and Sarah Malpass from SKEO Solutions, an organization that has successfully worked at community development planning and environmental concerns in many cities of the United States. The process then grew into a monthly course offering about “changing the charitable paradigm”. We used the inspiration of books like *Toxic Charity* (Bob Lupton) and *When Helping Hurts* (Fikkert & Corbett), as well as taking the course, *Seeking Shalom* offered by the Lupton Center. These workshops will be a seeding ground as others take the information back to their churches and organizations to enable leaders to change how they are doing ministry and make it more impacting and relational. There were 30 participants in the initial CPS meeting, with follow up meetings having 12-20 participants.

The NCT meetings are to open dialogue and learning about practical steps toward poverty alleviation and developing relationships that will lead to potential partnerships and the sharing of valuable information.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry Manuel – Executive Director/Founder

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## Volunteer Coordination

For the 11th year we set up volunteer opportunities twicet throughout the city of Rochester for Williamson High School. Once again the feedback we received from the organizations and the school were glowing. They volunteered for organizations such as: Cameron Ministries, The Pillar, Catholic Family Center, Prosper Rochester, Gerhardt Neighborhood Outreach Center, Foodlink, Lower Falls Foundation and others.



As always, we recruit volunteers for our existing ministries and often refer people to other organizations, whose programs might better align with a person’s passion for serving. Like the Bread Run, the intent is to show support for others in the community who work toward alleviating poverty or caring for others.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry Manuel – Executive Director/Founder

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## Concert of Praise:



The praise concert took place at the Rochester Bible Baptist Church in November with three or four churches represented. This event was coupled with a Thanksgiving basket give-a-way to families that might not otherwise be able to enjoy a Thanksgiving meal.

The praise and worship featured vocal/piano by Shawanda Owens, from Morning Star Missionary Baptist Church, Tony Hiler and band from RBBC, Quevas Walker, Brian McCormick from The Pillar and several other singers and speakers. Approximately 250-30 baskets were gifted.

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## **Saturday Sonshine Program:**

The Saturday Sonshine Program stalled out due to a couple major set-backs in the church building where the program was centered.

In 2017 we intend to revamp the program and refocus our efforts toward development and training of youth across racial and denominational lines on a monthly basis. The planning has begun.

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## **Bread Run Team:**

The Bread Run has been operating since 2004 and maintains a volunteer roster of 7 to 8 individuals and families. Half of our volunteers come from the Canandaigua area while the others live in the Greater Rochester area. Our volunteers pick up donated baked goods from Tops on Lake Avenue and deliver items to Sanctuary House, Mercy Community Services, Outreach Temple, Nielsen House, Women's Place and Francis Center.

This year has had it's challenges as the amount of food donated is unpredictable, but our volunteers are faithful in the large and the small.

We are always looking for new volunteers who are able to serve on our team. The Bread Run is a great way to start getting involved in the city. It's a low time commitment, with most volunteers spending 2 hours every 7 or 8 weeks delivering food. It is also a great opportunity to see Rochester in a different light as you connect with people from all different walks of life. What a blessing it is to see God in the unexpected and in the abandoned places of empire!

We are so thankful to our volunteers for their time and continued service to God, the city of Rochester and those on the margins! Thanks to Nelson Bowen, Steve Copeland, Debra Faulkner, Dave and Jeanne Gloss, Cindy Mead, Ruth and Tim VanGorder, Chrissie Walls and Karen Walrath.

Respectfully submitted,

Christin Babcock – ministry team leader

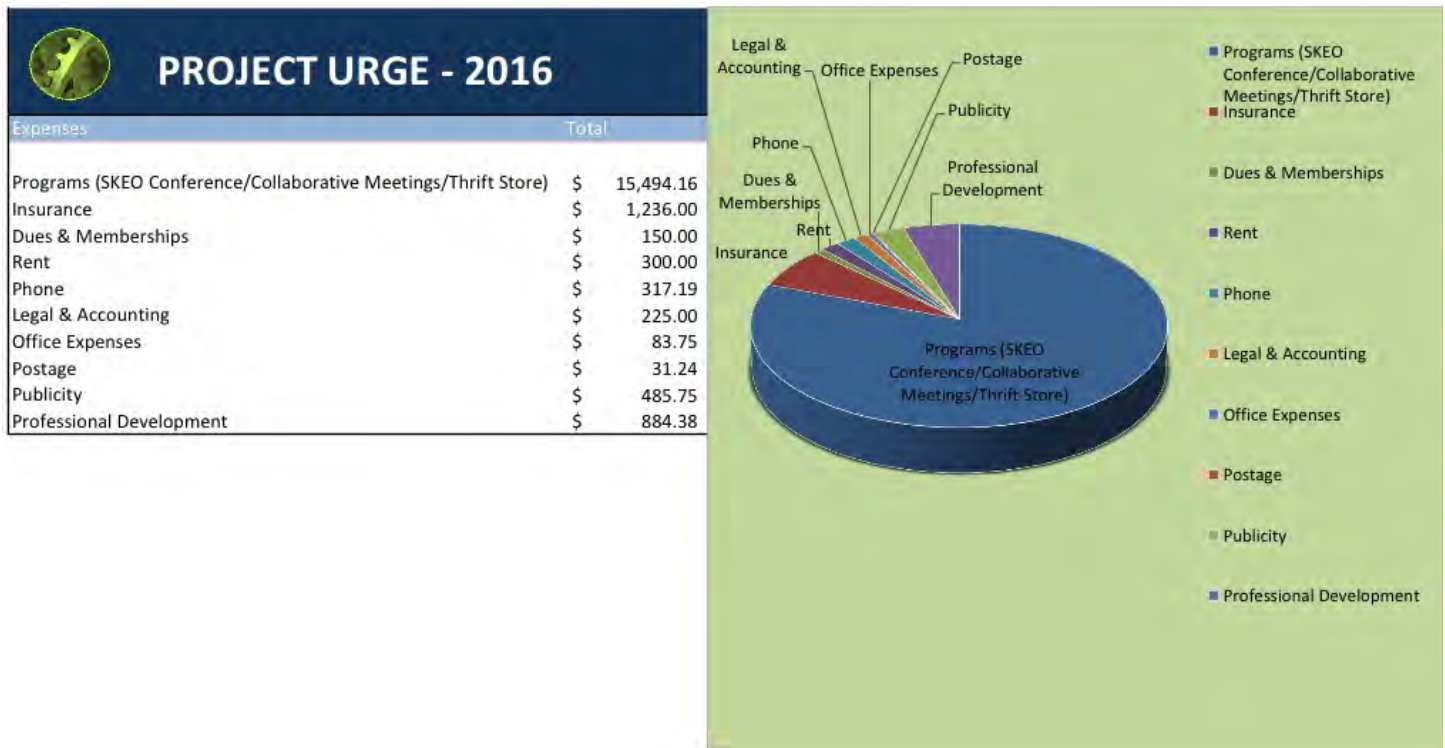
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## **Special thanks to our donors and contributors!**

Churches & Businesses: Fairport United Methodist Church and FUMC-Men's Group, Crosswinds Wesleyan Church, Church of the Savior, Church of the Assumption, Manuel's Music Studio, Parkview Pediatrics.

Individual donors: Dan Bardeen, Tim & Susan Beck, Chris & Laura Boss, David Honness, Brigit Hurley, Wayne Magaw, Garry & Mary Manuel, Andrew & Allison Mathias, John McNeill, Brian & Natalie Rooney, Jeff Telle, Ron & Catherine Tocci, and Mary Trabert.

Contributors: Julia Garver, Attorney & Andrew Soucier, Soucier Design



Respectfully submitted,

Tim Beck – Project URGE, Inc., Treasurer

### Church and community partnering to create positive change.







1 John 3:18 "Dear children, do not love with word or tongue but with action and in truth."