



ANNUAL REPORT 2021



1 Favor St. Rochester, NY 14608
585-348-8596 www.projecturge.org
www.facebook.com/urgeousphere



PROJECT URGE

HEARTBEAT FOR CHANGE



Dear friends, volunteers and partners of Project URGE,

I joined the Board of Project URGE in 2011 with great enthusiasm about working with a diverse group of Christians that had a heartbeat for God, our city, the local church, and those who are negatively impacted by poverty and the various ways structural racism and biases impact our city.

The vision of having the local church and community cross invisible lines of denomination, race, class, gender and other boundaries – with an implicit goal of working together to fulfill the great commandment to love one another – continues to challenge me on every level.

In January 2021, I assumed the role as Board Chair of Project URGE to fill an immediate need and assist in the process of continuing to propel the vision forward amidst the ever invasive COVID-19 pandemic.

The vision and continuous efforts of “calling the church and community to partner together and create positive change” has been challenging.

*“Love the Lord thy
God with all your
heart, soul, mind,
and strength,
And demonstrate
this love by loving
your neighbor as
you would love
yourself.”*

Social distancing mandates have made it difficult for us to meet in person, which has put a damper on our efforts to host in person collaborative meetings. The person-to-person meetings afford us the ability to encourage, brainstorm and establish solid relationships that foster the type of care, concern and commitment needed to pull together strategies aimed at transforming communities in and around Rochester.

In spite of the challenges, Project URGE has managed to thrive and utilize the downtime to educate ourselves and many of our team members with the hopes of being wiser, and better equipped to serve as a liaison between the local church and community and potential partnering organizations in the future.

Educational opportunities that board members have attended include:

- PathStone Foundation's "**Beyond Profit**" 12 week training course aimed at helping non-profit organizations consider their vision, goal, structure, and processes for future growth and ministry effectiveness.
- **Causewave's RP3** (Rapid Prioritization, Planning and Process) multi-session evaluation and strategic planning for MINO
- Focused Communities Strategies **Change Makers** Open House (Lupton Center)
- **Network for Good** (multiple free seminars and consultations)
- Ongoing participation in Restoration Rochester's **Community Collaborative** networking group, and opportunities to present Project URGE to other serving organizations
- Consultations with United Way, City Shapers Roc City Faith-Based Community Service Alliance, Samra Brouk staff, Unite Us



While we were not able to host in person meetings we have had great dialogue via ZOOM meetings which have been organized and presented by Project URGE's Diversity Café Ministry and its leader, Candyce Singletary. Guest speakers and panelists shared insights, fielded questions and offered suggestions on various subjects, including the normalization of black murder, health disparity and the role race plays, racial healing and reconciliation, building generational wealth, and how race influences law enforcement conduct and approach.

Meetings are scheduled for the third Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. We invite all to join the conversation by emailing prouge.communication@gmail.com for a link, and welcome suggestions of topics of interest and potential speakers that those interested would like to see in the future.

Mother's in Need of Others (MINO) has continued to be a light in the community. Our collaborative work at and with the staff of Youth For Christ has proven to be a win/win situation. Maria Wehrle and her team have been busier than ever as the needs for assistance has grown exponentially.



Going forward, Project URGE hopes to add the House of David ministry under its umbrella. This initiative, under the direction of Candyce Singletary, would provide youth probation employment support in obtaining trade skills and certification and employment, and/or youth and adult parole employment support which would assist individuals on parole with job coaching and finding employment as part of reentry planning.

As community grants and donations have assisted in moving the ministry forward, so does the need for ongoing commitments to ensure that this ministry will continue to be available for the hundreds of needy mothers who find their way to our program throughout the year.

Please know that we are forever grateful for those who continue to support Project URGE, Inc. and its mission, and we are blessed to have a dedicated professionals such as Tim Beck handling the funds, keeping the books and ensuring the integrity of your gifts and how they are best put to work.

As we move forward, we are putting out a clarion call for an executive director who can dedicate their time and energy to building relationships and continuing to foster collaborations that move us from passive conversations to community builders proving our Love for God by our Commitment to Loving our Community into wholeness.

We thank you and hope you will continue to stand with us on this incredible journey.

Blessings and peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Phillip Hounshell". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

PHILLIP HOUNSHELL

Project URGE, Inc. Board Chair



A LOOK BACK

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS



This March, Project URGE, Inc. celebrates two decades of bringing churches and community together to create positive change.

With planning underway in late summer 2001, its first formal meeting was held in March 2002.

Over the last twenty years, Project URGE has continued to work with the following goals in mind:

1) Provide opportunities for communication, networking, and fellowship among churches, community organizations, and individuals in order to foster collaboration among those who serve in under-resourced areas

2) Provide and support educational events in order to strengthen and better enable our combined urban ministry efforts

3) Provide tangible goods and services to those in need through our Project URGE-sponsored ministries.

Project URGE supporters have remained committed to demonstrating their faith through their works.

"Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds, and praise your Father in heaven." Matthew 5:15





Twenty years have seen a number of collaborative efforts with Project URGE leading the charge:

- The annual fall **URGEnt Presentation & Workshops**, which highlighted urban ministries working to make a difference within areas of poverty, and offered ways to empower under-resourced neighborhoods, increased participants' awareness of the number of different programs already functioning in the Rochester area, recruited people to volunteer, provide financial and prayer support, train and inspire community development with practical and achievable steps, and encourage congregations to work across racial and denominational lines.
- **The URGEncy Coat & Food Collection** was a key part of the annual Presentation & Tour. Area churches were asked to donate both winter coats and dry goods to be redistributed to Rochester ministries serving the poor.
- **The Bread Run** delivered baked goods to homeless shelters and soup kitchens weekly starting in 2004, thereby supporting and enhancing those services.
- **Jacob's Ladder** provided "handy-man" services to affiliated churches/organizations in order to maintain or renovate facilities. Their labor of love over the years saved affiliates thousands of dollars of expense, allowing ministries to spend more of their financial resources on serving those in need and less on the facility itself.
- **Volunteer coordination** provided by Project URGE allowed hundreds of students and others from church groups and schools to serve within partnering urban ministries. It also facilitated the partnering of urban and suburban churches in providing urban youth summer camps.
- **Mothers in Need of Others ministry [MINO]** has been effective in collecting and redistributing household and children's items to families in crisis.
- **Concerts of Praise**, the **Furnished 4 Life** thrift store, **Free to Fly Ministry**, **Saturday Sonshine Club** and the **Christmas Store** were also valuable initiatives that helped meet needs, connect people and build relationships across denominational, racial and class lines.

Project URGE, Inc. has historically maintained a close alignment with the principles of the Christian Community Development Association [CCDA]. Key Project URGE leaders have attended training conferences and have hosted CCDA speakers and urban practitioners in Rochester, including Dr. John Perkins, Dr. Wayne Gordon, Dr. Barbara Williams-Skinner, Leroy Barber, Noel Castellanos (CEO of CCDA), and Pastor Jonathan Brooks.

Going forward, the Project URGE, Inc. board and ministry leaders remain committed to connecting and uniting people from many different churches and organizations to work together to break down the barriers of poverty, racial divide, and despair in the name of Jesus Christ.

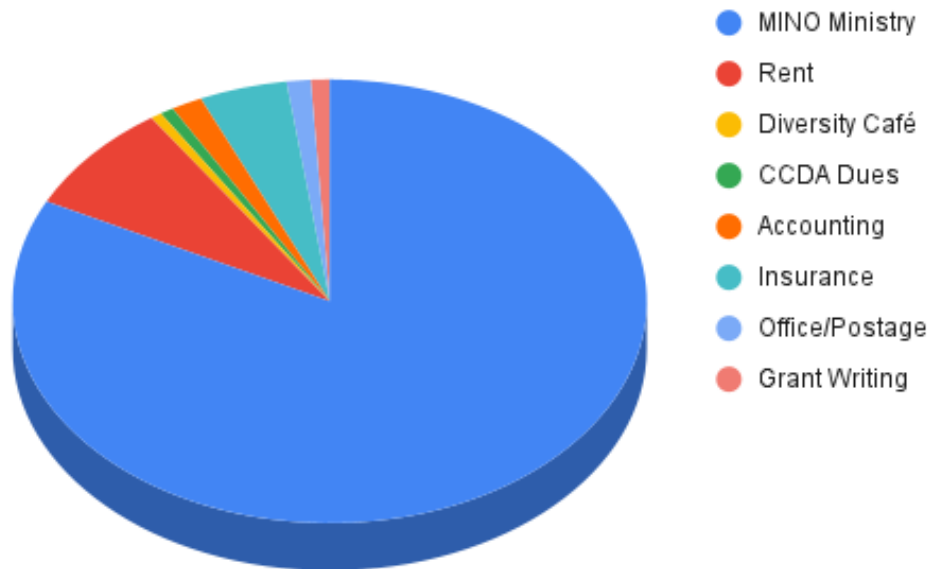


PROJECT URGE FINANCIAL REPORT 2021

2021 Expenses

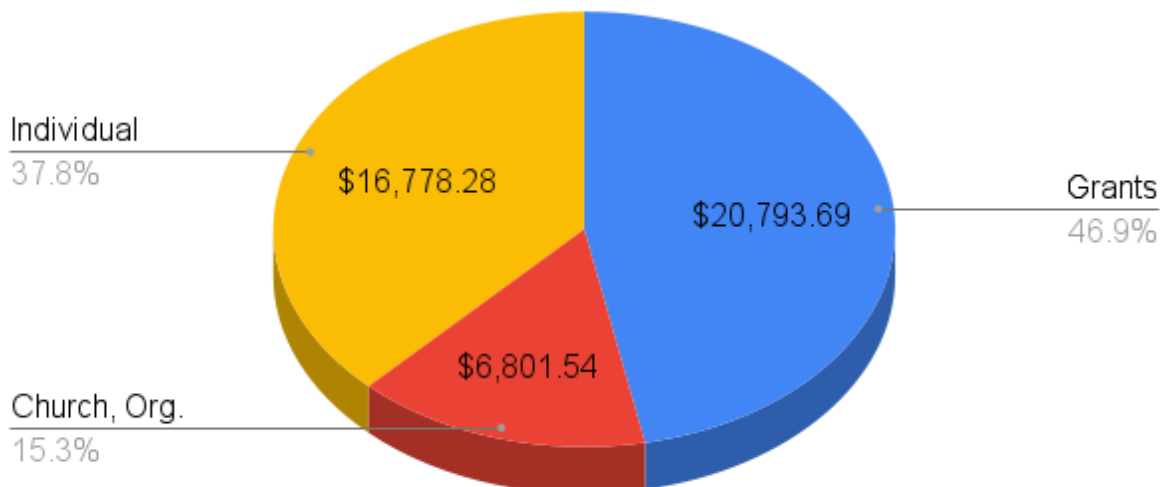
\$52,121.74

MINO Ministry	\$42,960
Rent	\$4,200
Diversity Café	\$300
CCDA Dues	\$360
Accounting	\$825
Insurance	\$2,338
Office	\$639
Grant Writing	\$500



2021 Donations

\$44,373.51



OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS

INDIVIDUALS

Mary Anderson	Susan LeDoux
Kingsley Beck	Roy & Kristine Macumber
Tim & Susan Beck	Emily Mance
Nancy Bernola	Garry & Mary Manuel
Chris & Laura Boss	Cathy Manuse
Lora Brown	Andrew & Allison Mathias
Sharon Bryce	Ellen McMinn
Melody Burri	Cindy Mead
Erin Campbell	Charles Onan
Charles Castilano	Yvonne O'Shea
Mary Lisa Chormann	Deborah Petersen
Robert Cohoon	Janna Rider
Aimee Conners	Anthony Rose
Mary Cooney	Elaine Rose
Deven Coulter	Terrill Smith
JoAnne Estey	Lynn Sober
Lara Ford	John & Marcy Spolar
Rebecca Girouard	Jodi Stewart
Kathleen Hahn	Jeff & Katie Telle
Martha Hanna	Ron & Catherine Tocci
Leah Houk	Michael Torrell
Aaron Howard	Mary Trabert
Dina Marie Isgro	Eric Wallen
Cathy Johnson	Jen Warmingham
Anne Katlic	John & Maria Wehrle
Leslie Dofron	Jeannine Zona

CHURCHES, MINISTRIES, ORGANIZATIONS

Bethlehem Lutheran Church
Church of the Assumption
Community of the Savior
Deupree Family Foundation
Fairport United Methodist Church
Foundation of Rotary Club, Pittsford
Irondequoit United Church of Christ,
Endowment Fund
Irondequoit United Church of Christ,
Women's Fellowship
Kiwanis W. Central of Rochester
Foundation Inc.
Kiwanis - Southwest Rochester
National Christian Foundation
Wisconsin
Scrapbook Creations Retreats, LLC
Stomping Ground Camp Inc. Wesley
United Methodist Women

GRANTS

100 Women Who Care (Grapevine)
ESL Charitable Foundation Grant

**Project URGE and all who benefit from our ministry
are so grateful to ALL of YOU who have given so
generously!**

Special thanks to:

Attorney Julia Garver at Merzbach & Solomon, P.C.
Andrew Soucier of Soucier Design



TIM BECK

Treasurer, Project URGE, Inc.

MOTHERS IN NEED OF OTHERS



Serving mothers with the light of Christ's love



No one will deny that these are challenging times we are living in! One need not look far to see examples of a broken world.

But there are those who view adversity as an opportunity, a chance to do something different, to mend what is broken, to help heal ills, to try and leave this world a little better than it was before. It's not about refusing to see or denying "what is," but about not letting "what is" poison or prevent what could be.

Having had the privilege of running this ministry for seventeen years, I have seen a lot of what is, and I have chosen to be motivated, inspired by, and spurred into action by those who hold onto the hope of what could be and use that as a catalyst for change.

I am truly touched and encouraged to see the number of individuals who have stepped up and stepped out to say "enough is enough", "I choose to do something different," "change starts with "ME!"

And those "me" people are starting to work together to form groups of "we" people! Project URGE and MINO have always been about collaborating and networking with others to help families in need in our community. But this year, we took it to a whole new level and asked our partners to commit to sharing resources and time with us to serve the growing number of individuals in crisis.

We challenged them to share donations and supplies with us that we frequently distribute but that they might not have need for. We requested that they consider volunteering time with our ministry to pack supplies for families who need them.



We asked them to think about doing a donation drive or fundraiser with or for us in order for us to better serve not only the moms who utilize their services, but the other 126 agencies, churches, schools, and daycare programs MINO provides for.

I am here to tell you that this plea has yielded some AMAZING results! We are looking to develop reciprocal relationships with agencies, churches, schools, and home daycare programs in Monroe County, sharing volunteers, resources, and helping to advertise needs and events for one another.

The agencies listed here are actively partnering with us, providing extra diapers, baby food, formula, baby bottles, and hygiene and paper products that they had in surplus or do not distribute on a regular basis. Or they're hosting community baby showers to provide the items we regularly supply families in need through their care managers.

With the assistance of the agencies, churches, community service clubs, and individuals, we were able to distribute an INCREDIBLE 7,578 items to families in need throughout this year!

We were very grateful for the assistance of the Family Access and Connection Team (F.A.C.T) program who came to volunteer with us on their Community Service Day packing bags of supplies for families in need.



- Bethany Presbyterian Church in Greece
- Bethany House
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church
- Browncroft Community Church
- Cameron Community Ministry
- Caring Choices Pregnancy Center
- The Center for Youth
- The Childcare Council
- Children Awaiting Parents
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Cross Creek Church in Palmyra, NY
- The Esther Project
- The Father's Heart ministry
- Irondequoit United Church of Christ
- Jordan Health
- Kiwanis Club of Rochester
- Mary Cariola
- Mary's Place
- Mount Hope Family Center
- Providence Housing
- Recovery All Ways
- Restoration Rochester
- Rochester Rehabilitation
- Samaritan's Harvest
- Saving A.J. Emergency Daycare
- Trinity Emmanuel Church
- West Central Kiwanis Club
- Wheatland Community Church
- Zeta Amicae of Rochester. Auxiliary of Zeta Phi Beta Sorority

With the assistance of the agencies, churches, community service clubs, and individuals, we were able to distribute an INCREDIBLE 7,578 items to families in need throughout this year!

On Tuesday, Dec. 21, Providence Housing joined MINO in doing a collaborative fundraiser at Three Heads Brewery as a part of their “Be Kind Tuesdays” series, hosting the Jazz stylings of the John Nyerger Trio to benefit MINO. The event was a great success and \$601 was raised to help us purchase much needed baby, hygiene, and cleaning products for families in crisis.

It was also a privilege to be invited to take part in the following community events and presentations this year!

- Co-presenter on Children Awaiting Parents’ CAP Chat hosted by Lauri McKnight, CAP Executive Director
- Community Baby Shower hosted by Cameron Community Ministries
- Presentation at Bethany Presbyterian Church in Greece
- Presentation at United Methodist Women’s Group
- Presentation at Kiwanis Club of Rochester
- Vendor at Ibero’s Community Trunk or Treat Event
- Presentation at Perinton Presbyterian Church’s Mothers of Preschoolers (MOPS) group
- The Esther Project’s Purse Project 2 “The Pivot”
- Susan B. Anthony Center’s Webinar panel discussion on collaborative efforts to improve maternal health in our community

MINO ministry is a proud distributor of Pack-n-Plays for the Baby Safe Sleep organization and Feminine Hygiene kits provided by the National Council of Jewish Women’s P.A.D. Project. .



Special Thanks

To the Project URGE Board: Phillip Hounshell (Board Chair), Melody Burri (Vice Chair, Communication), Tim Beck (Treasurer), Jeff Telle (Secretary), Lauri McKnight (Board Member), Cindy Mead (Database Design and Data Entry)

To our regular supporters: Lara Ford, Barbara Higgins, Connie Hunt, Kristen LaBombard, Lynne Manuel, Elaine Rose, Rachel Rosen Simpson, Pam Soule.

To our Grants and Cash Awards providers: United Way's Crisis Fund, 100 Women Who Care, ESL Community Foundation, Susan Deupree Foundation, Andrew & Allison Mathias, Wegman's, Keri Gray and her Scrapbook Creations Fundraiser, Mary Anderson & the History Club, Mary Manuel and her Women's Group

To Our Volunteers: Mary Manuel, Melissa Melendez, Ellen McMinn, Bob & Diana Miller, Karen Sheh, Cheryl Sollinger, Jodi Stewart, Ruth VanGorder

To Members of our new MINO Task Force: Shawna Cody, Carolyn Delvecchio, Deborah LaBello, Cathy Little, Bob & Diana Miller, Andrea Leisten, Lauri McKnight, Laura Misa, Ben Schoenfelder, Jeannie Slaughter, Ruth VanGorder



Yes! MINO now has its own Task Force! Back in August, we were fortunate enough to participate in a Strategic Planning Class run by Causewave, a Rochester-based nonprofit organization that helps other nonprofits struggling with specific challenges. They helped us to identify two main goals we need to work on:

- 1) To establish a Task Force to delegate some of the responsibilities of the Program Director to others on the team who have experience and expertise in those areas.
- 2) to research database programs that would be able to make our data collection and retrieval of information easier and more efficient as we continue to grow.

We assembled a team of eleven individuals who have experience in communications, social media, fundraising, and strategic planning to assist us in this endeavor. The enthusiasm and passion these eleven individuals have for helping our community and moving the vision of MINO into the future is incredible and inspiring! We are so grateful for Causewave and its President and CEO, Todd Butler, and Program Manager, Kate Hermann, for the opportunity and their efforts in helping us to identify these two goals to work on with our Task Force.

Despite the challenges of 2021, we end this year incredibly blessed and looking forward to what God has in store for MINO and our supporters in 2022! May God Bless you and your families with health, happiness, and love overflowing in the new year!

Maria Wehrle

MARIA WEHRLE

*Program Director
Mothers in Need of Others ministry
Project URGE, Inc.*



DIVERSITY CAFÉ ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Once again in 2021, Diversity Café attendees convened online via Zoom to tackle issues of racism, violence, poverty and inequality in Rochester.

Guest speakers and panelists gave insights and answered questions in sessions that included: Black Murder is Normal, Health Disparities: How race plays a role, Racial Healing and Reconciliation, Building Generational Health, and View from the Blue.

Under the leadership of DC coordinator and moderator, Candace Singletary, discussion was honest, open and quite often passionate.

"I think DC is an important and very crucial part of uniting churches across cultures and racial reconciliation," said Singletary. "This particular project allows people from all backgrounds, cultures, ethnicities and mindsets the opportunity to express feelings, share ideas, determine courses of actions and learn. Diversity Café seems to go beyond the politics and religion of issues, and speaks to the heart and also feeds the soul. I am very proud to be part of such great work and I pray that we can turn education into action and impact."

*Meaningful conversations
can help build
relationships, spark creative
solutions, foster unity and
lead to positive change
in Rochester.*



Diversity Café: "Black Murder is Normal"

Saturday, Nov. 20
11 a.m. via Zoom
To join the conversation, email
proure.communication@gmail.com



Health Disparities: "How race plays a role"

Featuring Common Ground Health of Rochester



Saturday, June 19
11 a.m. via Zoom
Join the conversation



Diversity Café: "Racial Healing & Reconciliation"

What better way to honor Black History Month than to have a discussion on racial healing and reconciliation? Take a few minutes to view this short video, which will kickstart the conversation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84imro3UVig>

Saturday, February 19
11 a.m. via Zoom
To join the conversation, email
proure.communication@gmail.com



Diversity Café: "View from the Blue"

James Patterson — Former New York State trooper and investigator, former Monroe County Sheriff's Office Vice Unit, newly elected Rochester City School District board commissioner.

Saturday, July 17
11 a.m. via Zoom
To join the conversation, email
proure.communication@gmail.com



Diversity Café: "Building Generational Wealth"

In a city with one of the nation's highest poverty levels, it's critical that individuals and families develop skills for obtaining financial wellness and sustaining economic growth. Legacy Makers' Pauline McCleary will share ways Rochester families can build generational wealth. The discussion will include plenty of time for questions.

Saturday, March 19
11 a.m. via Zoom
To join the conversation, email
proure.communication@gmail.com



Diversity Café: "Microaggression Matters"

Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities (intentional or unintentional), that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. We'll discuss how they play a role in bias and racism at home, work and play.

Saturday, January 22
11 a.m. via Zoom
To join the conversation, email
proure.communication@gmail.com



WHAT IS IT?

Diversity Café is a ministry of Project URGE, Inc. that brings together people from diverse backgrounds to discuss, better understand and create strategies for issues of systemic racism, poverty, violence and inequality in Rochester.

WHO'S INVITED?

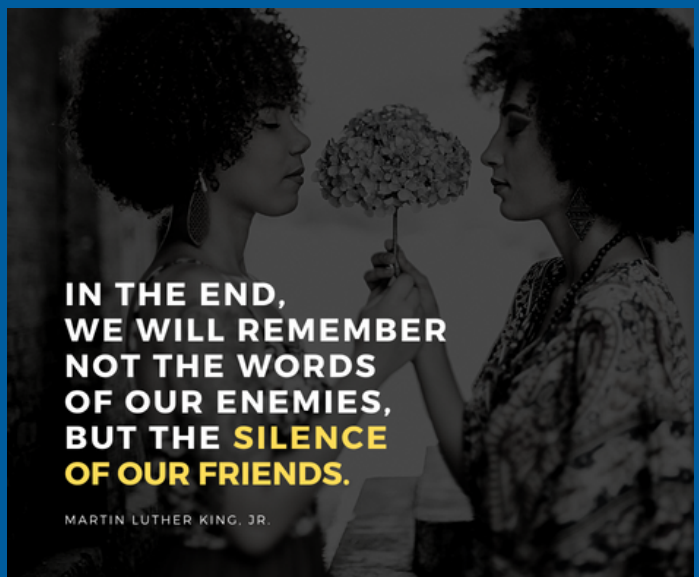
Community members and leaders from area churches, agencies, organizations, government, law enforcement and the judicial system.

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

Monthly online and in person forums, panel discussions and guest presentations with regional experts are hosted on the third Saturday of each month at 11 a.m. via Zoom.

WHAT'S THE GOAL?

To start meaningful conversations that will build lasting relationships, spark creative solutions, foster unity and lead to positive change in Rochester.



**Third Saturday of each month
at 11 a.m. For a link, email
proure.communication@gmail.com**



VOLUNTEER COORDINATION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Volunteer Coordination

Volunteer opportunities have been greatly diminished over the past two years due to the pandemic. In the past we have plugged in volunteers from high schools, church groups and individuals, who wanted to find a place to serve their community, but that has been greatly compromised recently.

When we have had calls or emails requesting us to assist with finding volunteer opportunities, after ascertaining what types of tasks the person would be looking to fill or what capacity they are qualified to serve, most inquiries have been referred to our own ministry team, Mothers In Need of Others (MINO), or to Foodlink's volunteer site.

It does not appear that circumstance will change in the immediate future, although we all hope they will sooner than later.

Community Development

Our efforts put forward on community development centered around what has been termed The 5 Point Plan, which has been in existence since 2006 and has had numerous revisions.

In brief, that plan is focused on bringing leaders in neighborhoods, residents, business people and non-profit organizations to form a cohesive group to plan and advocate for what is needed, as well as, to draw on assets that are already present in five neighborhoods.

It's a plan that fuses Asset Based Community Development, Common Wealth, and ideas from dozens of workshops offered by the Christian Community Development Association, that have successes throughout the country. As a bonus opportunity with the plan, there was the possibility of working with the Lupton Group as consultants to these efforts. The Lupton Group, along with FCS Ministries, has been a leader in transforming under-resourced neighborhoods in South Atlanta for over twenty years.

Discussions on how this plan could roll out took place on several occasions with United Way representatives, staff at Senator Samra Brouk's office and with several non-profits. Despite efforts to bring a multitude of organizations together to have an informative discussion on how we might all share and build a concerted effort toward transforming hurting neighborhoods, nothing materialized from these attempts, despite an opportunity for some initial funding to get the wheels in motion.

After dozens of years lamenting major recurring problems and the disconnect between organizations working in tandem toward the alleviation of poverty, there continue to be only minor changes in cultivating meaningful working relationships that will foster and propel the community toward more positive outcomes in under-resourced neighborhoods. The pandemic has served to augment these challenges.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garry E. Manuel". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

GARRY E. MANUEL

*Project URGE, Inc. Founder,
Community Development Leader*

Board Members



Phillip Hounshell
Board Chair



Melody Burri
*Board Vice Chair
Communication*

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

*"Dear children, let us not love
with words or tongue, but
with actions and in truth."
— 1 John 3:18*



Tim Beck
*Treasurer
Board Member*



Lauri McKnight
*Board Member
MINO Liaison*



Jeff Telle
*Secretary
Board Member*

Ministry Leaders



Maria Wehrle
*Program Director
Mothers In Need of Others*



Candyce Singletary
*Lead Facilitator
Diversity Café*



Garry Manuel
*Community Development Leader
Project URGE, Inc. Founder*

