



Project URGE, Inc.,

A 501(C)(3) Faith-based Organization

Mission: To initiate and support urban ministry efforts that connect and unite churches, organizations, and individuals in working together to break down the barriers of poverty, racial division and despair in the name of Jesus Christ.

Together we can do more!

Project URGE, Inc. 2012 Annual Report

www.projecturge.org

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URGency Collection – Chris Boss

Volunteer Coordination – Garry Manuel

Project URGE, Inc.

Urban Revitalization, God Experienced

Annual Report 2012

It is with great pleasure to offer you the 2012 Project URGE, Inc. Annual Report. This past year planning and collaboration began to result in greater outreach and impact in the Rochester Community.

Several of our ministry efforts expanded greatly and we launched some new trial balloons as well.

I believe we have faithfully represented our mission statement and underlying Bible theme:

Mission: To initiate and support urban ministry efforts that connect and unite churches, organizations, and individuals in working together to break down the barriers of poverty, racial division and despair in the name of Jesus Christ. Together we can do more!

1 John 3:18 – “Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.”

Our Networking and General Meetings have cultivated both relationship building and working partnerships in collaboration around community challenges. Participants have grown in number and diversity. The goal of opening the door to working together across racial and denomination lines has grown. We see this expanding to have an even greater impact in 2013. Working to break down barriers with regard to poverty and race in the name of Jesus Christ IS a reality that we have intentionally pursued and evidenced and continue to expand upon. As you read through our ministry efforts you will understand how these efforts are building. Whether it's helping children with literacy and mentoring after school, providing basic household needs to mothers and families in need, or our program that includes field trips, relevant life-skill Bible studies and exercise, the flag ministry that demonstrates to children and teens about how the colors of the flags represent certain aspects of the Bible and are often invited to be guests at various worship events or volunteering in the community; or whether it's the informal discussions around racial issues and personal experiences, distributing food and clothing,



plugging in volunteers to ministries and organizations around the Rochester area, like fostering urban suburban partnerships between churches and organizations – all these factor into the incremental steps needed to heal our wounds and address the challenges, while at the same time, living out the servant-like posture of the Bible. In addition we attend

valuable conferences and offer trainings and special events that offer practical and inspirational talks on urban revitalization.

We thank our volunteers, donors and all who surround us with prayer support throughout the year. Our efforts are not in vain and we continue to implement strategies and refine our ministry efforts, using our affiliation with the Christian Community Development Association (ccda.org) to help us frame the process.

Project URGE Networking & General Meetings:

Our networking and collaborative meetings continue to be held at different churches and organizations in the City of Rochester. They consist of light fare, sharing, planning and networking. The purpose of holding meetings on Friday evenings and Sunday afternoons is an effort to accommodate those who work but wish to participate in learning of the vast opportunities to serve and to build relationships.

The Networking and Collaborative Meetings continue to be a catalyst for organizations and churches to come together to share information, open doors to potential collaboration and connect with each other. The topics covered have been about volunteer opportunities, fundraising opportunities, CUPP training announcements, ministry and organization presentations, urban/suburban partnerships, racial reconciliation, gaining input on what Project URGE strategies and efforts can best reflect the needs of our affiliated collaborative members and the community.

For the second year participation in our meetings grew, with our 5/11 Networking/Meeting at Foodlink's headquarters exceeding sixty participants. These gatherings have grown into community planning sessions and often become the catalyst for relationship building that pave the path to working more collaboratively. The number of churches represented and diversity of organizations once again increased. Five meetings were held from September through June.

The Saturday Sonshine Program:

The Saturday Sonshine Program began in December of 2008. The age group has included children and youth from the ages of 6 to 16. The majority of the kids are coming from the 14609, 14613 & 14621 area codes. In 2012 the average attendance was 14 children per Saturday, as the group once again traveled to a wide variety of activities in the region, which included: Ganondagan State Park honoring Native Americans, Cummings Nature Center, Mendon Ponds Park, a crafts event, Crosswinds Wesleyan Church "The Box", Grimes Glen in Naples and the Weaver Farm in Rushville, NY.

Our goal is to provide educational, edifying and entertaining activities for the children, which will stimulate their minds, give them physical outdoor activity and contemplate life skills Bible lessons. In 2013 we will be shrinking the age differential from the ages of 7 to 13. It is our belief that this change will strengthen our ability to reach our goals.

Our volunteers come from a variety of churches. We continue to meet the children at Grace United



Methodist Church on Driving Park, where the children gather for breakfast, typically with a family member. Many of the children are introduced to the program at the Deacon's Table Breakfast.

Our intent is to expose the children to as much outdoor activity and exercise as possible. The past several years our trip to the Weaver's farm, about ten miles outside of Canandaigua, continues to be one of the most fun and active trips the kids experience. They roam among the cows, chickens, horses – play on swing sets, ride horseback and in a horse-driven buggy, as well as jump on a trampoline and paddling in a boat on a small pond. The Weaver family provides a terrific home cooked meal and *down home* hospitality.

The children also really got a workout as we trekked through the creek and hiked



back to the waterfalls in Grimes Glen. We all were a little wet, but it added to the fun. Their hard work was rewarded by a lunch at Polemini's in Bloomfield.

In 2013 we will have similar activities and more volunteers so that we may accommodate a few more children in the program. We have broadened our outreach to kids in the

Beechwood neighborhood, where ministry teams in Project URGE have remained active.

MINO (Mothers In Need of Others) & Furnished for Life:

Looking back on 2012, we, in the *Mothers In Need of Others and Furnished for Life* ministries are filled with gratitude and awe at just how God has taken this little grassroots ministry and has continued to evolve and mold it to change lives in our community! When we moved into our new home in the old Foodlink warehouse in February, we could scarcely imagine the enormous explosion we would experience in just 10 months! We quickly filled the room with gently used sofas, beds, desks, and house wares. We are taking in donated furniture from real estate agencies, educational institutions, nursing homes, and social service agencies. During the year we were blessed with a huge donation of 100 beds and dressers from St. John Fisher



College, which we cleaned, sanitized, and distributed to those in need! In just three short weeks, all of the beds were gone!

We formed partnerships with the Center for Employment Opportunity and Joy Community Church who provided us with moving men, a driver, and a church van one day a week to pick up and deliver our donated furniture.

We also became a Work Experience Program (WEP) worksite to benefit from their work staff as well. Also, on our volunteer staff is a seamstress who comes in to mend our torn mattresses and upholstered furniture. The rest of our “family” of volunteers are clients, whom we refer to as *friends in need* (FINs) who have opted to volunteer for our ministry in exchange for our access and delivery fees. This gives an individual the opportunity to participate in the process of providing for themselves and incubating a sense of dignity and worth as opposed to perpetuating a cycle of dependency.

For furniture and appliances coming directly from the homes of donors, we created a system called the “Furniture and Appliance Lottery”. This system offers the caseworkers and pastors we work with, the opportunity to have another avenue to receive furniture from without having the ministry incur the additional cost and manpower needed to transport the furniture to the clients. The items go to the first caseworker or pastor to notify us that they have a client in need of the available items and that they have access to transportation to pick up those items for their client.

As this ministry has grown, we quickly realized that we needed to find on-going sources of income to help make it financially sustainable! Our answer to that was the creation of “Furnished for Life”, the business end of our ministry! We are working with business students from Roberts Wesleyan College who are helping us with the development of data collecting, advertising, and accounting pieces of our business.

One of the most asked questions and concerns when people discover that we collect and redistribute beds and upholstered furniture, was the issue of health...mainly BEDBUGS!!! We’ve learned more about bedbugs in the past 10 months than anyone would probably want to know in a lifetime! And what we learned was that bedbugs HATE and can’t thrive in heat! With that in mind, we started researching extermination techniques. We found a company that makes a heating unit to exterminate bedbugs in all phases of development, thus eliminating the potential risk of causing an outbreak in the furniture that we distribute. With the delivery of this unit, we will begin using it not only to heat treat the furniture we take, but offering the extermination services to those non-profits who collect and redistribute furniture in their programs as well.

Another facet of our new Furnished for Life program that we will be looking to develop in the near future is our job-training program. We are seeking individuals

who are gifted in the areas of furniture, appliance, and upholstery repair to donate several hours of their time to come and teach our volunteers these skills so that they could use that training initially to fix our donations, but eventually, to move on and secure paid positions for themselves with other businesses.

We are committed to helping individuals to rebuilding their lives and regaining independence by “giving back” to the community and to others by sharing the love of Christ with them in a very real and practice way!

Bread Run Team:



The Bread Run Team has been faithfully delivering bread and baked goods to homeless shelters and soup kitchens in the City of Rochester each Saturday since 2004. The pick-up of the items occurs at Tops on Lake Ave. and then visits many sites including: Women's Place (Catholic Family Center/CFC), Nielson House, Sanctuary House (CFC), Outreach Temple Hot Meal Program, Grace UMC and others.

The Bread Run continues to run smoothly. The amount of food we receive is inconsistent, but our volunteers enjoy the feeling of helping. Our need is always to find other food sources, which has been unsuccessful in recent months of contacting additional grocery stores in the immediate area of drop off locations.

We received a large donation of canned goods and paper products from the "Bumper Crop" at Crosswinds Wesleyan Church, which then were delivered to various churches and organizations serving the under-resourced, including those on our regular Bread Run route.

Heart for the City:

The location of the reading program was transferred from the Teen Lounge of the Ryan Recreation Center to the Sully Library children's corner and is now under the day-to-day direction of the Children's Librarian. With this change, the partnership between the Recreation Center, Sully Library and Heart for the City has reached maturity as envisioned in 2009. From this point on the primary role of Heart for the City will be to source and monitor Volunteer Readers from within the Rochester Faith Community.

We started out with 2 Volunteers per day (Tuesday-Wednesday-Thursday).



The results through October 31st:

- 37 kids have registered and taken at least one quiz
- 14 kids have achieved 2.5 quiz points or more. Four of these children have read 20 or more books each; 2 have read large chapter books (this is a first for the program) and all are reading in grade range
- 10 kids have read 2 or more books and are in range to achieve the “2.5” level

The negative reality mixed with the positive of this report is that 11 kids have come to the program only once or twice and have not returned.

Diversity Café:



The hope for these gatherings are to create a “safe” environment where folks can converse informally in regard to racial issues and discuss various perceptions across racial lines as experienced by participants, in order that we might begin to build an understanding of cultural differences and to grow relationships in the process of tearing down the racial divide.

The Diversity Cafe met 4 times this year, beginning in late June 2012. The first meeting in June had approximately 10 individuals, then in September (4), October (10) and in November (11).

(men also participated, but are not shown in photo – to clear any misperception)

This journey has been a continuous learning experience in regards to one's views, thoughts, biases, and assumptions, and basically - our different ways of life, past and present.

Participation in Facing Race, Embracing Equity (FR=EE):

Project URGE participated in and continues to participate in a new initiative in Rochester entitled, ***Facing Race, Embracing Equity***. This initiative is designed to promote awareness about racial issues in Rochester and foster meaningful conversations about how we can substantially improve our understanding of each other, identify pathways to alleviate structural inequity, and reduce disparities that exist in our community. Members of Project URGE attended Dialogues on Race (a series of community discussions held at local libraries) as well as lectures on Race & Politics and films such as July '64, The Power of Illusion, Slavery by Another Name, and Hidden Colors. In 2013, Project URGE members will be trained by FR=EE to act

as exhibit guides and Conversation on Race facilitators for the RMSC Exhibition, "RACE: Are We So Different?" In addition, members will participate in one or more FR=EE workgroups to assist with the development of a community agenda to address racial inequities in healthcare, education, housing, employment, and juvenile/criminal justice in the City of Rochester. For more information about this initiative go to www.faceraceroc.org

YWCA Stand Against Racism:

Project URGE participated in the YWCA's Stand Against Racism. The mission of the Stand Against Racism is to raise awareness that racism still exists. Garry Manuel provided a five-week study at Community of the Savior Church on the racial divide in the church and proposed strategies for racial reconciliation through Christian Community Development Association resources, as well as other articles and studies. In 2013, Project URGE will develop this training into an official offering for local churches to promote racial reconciliation through the establishment of urban-suburban-rural partnerships.

S.P.E.A.K.

Through the art of worshipping God, our youth reached out to the community through the ministry of flags and dance at the Christian Heritage Heart of Dance Event. These youth were able to capture the hearts of the audience and present the saving grace of Jesus Christ. S.P.E.A.K. attended this year's ROC the Lakes event and met several of the gospel artists.

SPEAK was invited this year to minister through flags and dance at two funerals.

In 2012 we were not able to complete the goal of hosting a Youth Fair and Concert of Praise, but through God's grace and mercy these events will flourish in 2013, as we currently are planning. S.P.E.A.K. participants committed to making each other accountable for actions taken throughout the year and plan to continue through 2013. S.P.E.A.K. flag ministries had a total of seven youth involved



this year with one in college. SPEAK engagements in the Fall 2012 were for MINO Noel-a-bration, Outreach Temple's *Beauty for Ashes* and a New Years Eve celebration.

The S.P.E.A.K. flag ministry needs new flags and poles in 2013. They are also in need of a location to have rehearsal due to inability to access current location as needed. SPEAK is always in need of prayer, and especially when they are released to minister to others.

Syracuse Chapter of Project URGE:

Pastor Turner, senior pastor of Bethany Baptist Church, and Professor Erb continue to co-lead the Syracuse Chapter. We are meeting monthly at the former St. Mary's Catholic Church, now leased by Exodus3Ministries from the restaurant next door.

The three city ministries that are partners with Project URGE are Bethany Baptist Church, Exodus3Ministries, and Destination Center. We have several other suburban churches that feed volunteers into these ministries and a black ministerial group that periodically works with the chapter along with 15-20 of the member churches of the Greater Syracuse Association of Evangelicals that we send our monthly notice to. We also participated in the National Day of Prayer in May that brings black and white leadership together at the Onondaga County Courthouse to pray with a significant group of people from all Christian churches that gather for this event.

Social Events (Annual Dinner/Fundraiser & July Picnic):



In March, Project URGE, Inc. celebrated ten years of ministry on the exact date of it's first meeting at the restaurant ONE. Approximately 50 people attended, which included volunteers with URGE as well as many from affiliated ministries that Project URGE has supported and collaborated with over the past decade.

A special commemorative DVD was shown to chronicle the ten years of ministry to the community. We give special thanks to LaBarge Media for this special gift!

Garry Manuel and his wife, Mary, were honored for their ten years of dedication and service. Garry is the Founder and Executive Director of Project URGE, Inc.

In July we once again held our annual picnic that brings volunteer families and guests together for an afternoon of food, fun and fellowship.

Whether it's lemonade under the pavilion, canoeing down Irondequoit Creek or playing games with marshmallows – it was an enjoyable afternoon.



URGEncy Collection:

Typically the URGEnt Collection occurs on the same weekend as our URGEnt Presentation and Tour. This year Project URGE opted not to have the Presentation and Tour, but to wait and host a CCDA (Christian Community Development Association) training and offer various workshops in the Spring of 2013.

In conjunction with Crosswinds Wesleyan Church we collected mainly grocery items and some clothing. Crosswinds holds what is termed a “Bumper Crop”, announcing to the congregation a week in advance that they will be collecting groceries and placing grocery bags, with a list of items requested stapled to the bag, on the cars in the parking lot. The following week people bring their donated food items and leave the bags behind the bumpers of their cars. Crosswinds has offered to give one collection of food to Project URGE for distribution once a year.



This year the items were distributed to: Foodlink, Grace United Methodist Church (on Driving Park), Sanctuary House (CFC), Women's Place (CFC), Nielson House, House of Mercy, Community Place, Mothers In Need of Others, Gerhardt Neighborhood Outreach, Outreach Temple and a couple other ministries serving the under-resourced. Approximately 180 bags of groceries were distributed in this effort. Our thanks to Crosswinds Wesleyan Church for partnering with us.

Imagine if every church in the Rochester area collected groceries for just one week out of the year, what an impact it could have on those who are serving those in need in and around the City of Rochester!

5 Point Plan (Community Symphony):

At our May Networking/General Meeting we handed out folders of material to frame how organizations, neighbors and churches in the community could outline problems and solutions. Included with this material was the Project URGE, 5 Point Plan, which provided a template for transforming communities through an Asset-Based-Community Development approach, engaging stakeholders and people in the community to begin community building in a practical and creative way. Also included were lists of websites and web resources categorized by their expertise. This was provided so that participants might glean new ideas or build on existing plans that have proven successful throughout the nation. Many of these listed sites were associated with faith-based organizations working in areas of poverty.

A group of people has begun to plan how to engage the community in the Lyell/Murray neighborhood, using the materials. In addition, our continuing efforts to get churches, organizations and ministries in the Beechwood area is beginning to bear fruit. Suburban and urban churches helped with the summer activities and Foodlink's summer meals at 411 Ministry on Parsells Ave. Rochester Bible Baptist Church (RBBC) helped with 411 and is now ready to also help engage children with the Saturday Sonshine Program, organized and financed by Project URGE, but in collaboration with Parsells Community Church, 411 and RBBC. The Project URGE ministry team of Heart for the City continued their reading program at the Ryan Center afterschool program. This was a logical fit for leading kids to participate at both 411 and the Sonshine Program. In addition, one of the youth leaders at Joy Community Church offered to take any of the older teens into his teen group that had outgrown the Sat. Sonshine Program. We believe this is the unity that is conveyed as desirable in numerous Bible verses. Matthew 5:15 "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."

It is our sincere hope that these examples can spur other areas of the community toward collaboration and community development, as well as furthering the goal of more urban/suburban partnerships. We plan to continue building on these relationships for 2013. This is an effort that requires time and building trust among churches and organizations.

Hopes & Plans for 2013:

2011 & 2012 paved the path for the growth in ministry that we anticipate for 2013. I offer up these three verses:

Proverbs 15:22 "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (NIV)

Proverbs 16:3 "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will succeed."(NIV)

Matthew 13:33 He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough?" (NIV)

It is our intention to continue our Networking/General Meetings approximately five times a year in and around the City of Rochester, utilizing different hosting sites made available to us by various churches and organizations. This has proven to be the catalyst for relationship building, disseminating information and community building. We will be introducing concepts from CCDA (Christian Community Development Association) at each gathering, as well as discussing and planning meaningful ways of ministering, collaborating and developing neighborhoods in targeted areas. We will limit guest presentations to one per meeting so that there is ample time for networking and working on strategic planning.

April 27th we'll be providing a conference titled, "What Would You Have Us Do?" that will include two Pastor/Ministry Leaders from CCDA, who have extensive experience in working with those in poverty, youth and in community development. In addition, there will be a minimum of five workshops covering a wide swath of topics related to urban ministry, re-entry from prison and community development. It is our belief that this conference comes at a strategic time and will offer an opportunity for people to come away both inspired and with practical methods that can expand our impact and be applied to new developments in the city.

The Mothers In Need of Others ministry team continues to grow beyond its capacity. In 2013 the Roberts Wesleyan College student led SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise) team will be working in tandem with Maria Wehrle and her team to strengthen and grow this ministry effectively, with the hope to spin off an entrepreneurial job and income producing facet to this dynamic. Showing the love of Christ along with building dignity in the lives of the under-resourced is becoming a focal point of this ministry. Once again, relationship building is a key ingredient.

The Saturday Sonshine program has extended from the Driving Park area to the Parsells/Beechwood area. Approximately every other week during the school year we are providing field trips, Bible studies, art projects to children between the ages of 7 – 13. Our hope is to train up future leaders for their neighborhoods and this ministry specifically. We continue to build new and healthy experiences into these children weaving a moral fabric through our interaction and Bible studies.

Our Jacob's Ladder building and maintenance team continues to be on hold until we are able to find a leader having the skills to evaluate the needs of projects and to organize the volunteers.

Board member and Roberts Wesleyan College adjunct nursing faculty member, Mary Stevens, continues to work on health initiatives in the community with a focus

on diabetes, which is adversely impacting many in the City of Rochester, as the disease carries with it many other health related issues.

We anticipate being equipped to send out a Project URGE-multi-racial team to various churches to discuss the racial divide in our churches and offer practical solutions toward a Biblical vision for racial reconciliation within our area. This idea spawned after Garry Manuel presented this mini-course at two churches in 2012 and with board member, Rev. Judith Davis' work on fighting racism.

Project URGE anticipates that we'll be organizing a Concert of Praise in the Fall of 2013, which will be spearheaded by our S.P.E.A.K. Ministry team.

Our prayer team continues to converse and email concerns and projects that need to be lifted up in prayer throughout the year. Prayer is not taken for granted. It is vital to our mission and breathes life into God's vision for our future.

Project URGE, Inc. continues with its membership in the Christian Community Development Association (ccda.org). We are also members of SMART (Safer Monroe Area Re-entry Team) and participate in CUPP (Community University Partnership Project) and the Social Economy Working Group. Leaders from our Heart for the City ministry participate in the Youth Consortium meetings.

One cannot help but see the multi-tiered approach Project URGE, Inc. has employed throughout its history, but more importantly in the past two years in regard to building relationships by engaging people cross racially and cross denominationally, not only within our own ministries, but assisting with teaming other churches and organizations with one another. You can see that by participating together in ministry efforts, while at the same time offering workshops, informal Diversity Café gatherings and participating in an overarching initiative to "face" racism all work together to achieve our goal outlined in these verses:

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body." Ephesians 4:25 (NIV)

"For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power." 1 Corinthians 4:20 (NIV)

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!" Psalm 133:1 (NIV)

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." Philippians 2:3 & 4 (NIV)

*"This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples".
John 15:8*

In closing, we are so very grateful to our volunteers, financial supporters and those who faithfully pray for the vision of Project URGE, Inc. in moving forward toward in the tasks that the Lord has instructed.

We hope you will continue your work with us. If you're just learning about our efforts at this reading, we invite you to participate with us. We believe as you work toward **Urban Revitalization**, **God** will be **Experienced**!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Garry E. Manuel". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized 'G' and 'M'.

Garry E. Manuel
Founder/Executive Director
Project URGE, Inc.