

Project URGE, Inc. 2017 Annual Report



Urban Revitalization, God Experienced

**www.projecturge.org
46 Mt. Hope
Rochester, NY 14620**

Mission: Church and community partnering for postive change

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

Greetings to all of our friends from the Project URGE team,

As we remember what we've been blessed with and reminisce the changes that our communities and country have experienced in 2017, we continue to seek the Great Architect to show us his plans for Rochester and its surrounding area. Whether it be through racial conversations or clothing infants in need; establishing new relationships with financial liberation or restoration of dignity via obtainably priced Christmas gifts, we seek the heartbeat of God in His promise to show us the welfare of the city, if we seek it, as we also pray on its behalf. (Jeremiah 29:7)

This year, most of the changes that have been made have had to do with minimizing our financial and board structure, which has lead to a concentration and focus of energies to some core activities. As you read through the report you will find that Project URGE has done some downsizing, that has not resulted in serving fewer people or making less of an impact. In fact, it is just the opposite. We hope to double our efforts as we continue to dig deep to continue in these and new planning efforts that include a youth based racial inclusion program (D.I.S.C.) and a new focus on the MINO program!

One of the most challenging adjustments has been the 'changing of the guard,' as our founder, Garry Manuel, stepped down as the Executive Director, and a new Interm E.D. Jeannine Zona, has stepped up in his stead. Garry has continued to remain a part of Project URGE as the board chair, and remains faithfully committed to running the race along-side of the continuation of Project UrRGE's efforts.

We hope that you will join us in praying on behalf of the city of Rochester. And that you will continue to seek the welfare of our country through making a move toward the confrontation of injustice, community restoration and development, proclamation and formation of Faith, and demonstration of compassion.

Happy New Year!

Jeannine Zona

Project URGE, Inc.
Board of Directors 2017

Jeannine Zona
Interim Executive
Director



Katie Kreutter
Secretary



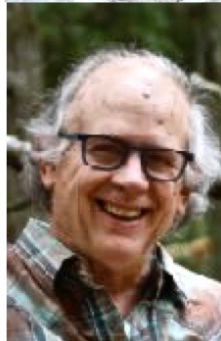
Phillip Hounshell
Vice Chair



Tim Beck
Treasurer



Garry Manuel
Board Chair/
Founder



Cindy Mead



Church and community partnering to create positive change

Community Outreaches Supported by Project URGE



As 2017 draws to a close, we are full of gratitude for those who have come alongside us this year and helped us to expand our efforts to serve others through our Furnished 4 Life and Mothers In Need of Others ministries! This Summer, our **Mothers In Need of Others (MINO) ministry** was blessed to receive diapers, diapering supplies, and personal hygiene products from the Zonta Club of Rochester, from Dr. Sonia Garcia, and Emily Howlter, who was working to earn her Girl Scout Silver Badge, when she coordinated a diaper drive for our ministry through her youth group at Browncroft Community Church. We are pleased to report that not only did Emily achieve her goal, but we were able to restock the shelves of our resource room with many cases of donated diapers and wipes for the moms and babies from the agencies and churches we assisted.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Wehrle – MINO ministry team leader





Beginning 2017 we served four participants. During 2017, two participants graduated and two are still with us going in to 2018. In addition to those two, in 2017 we accepted four additional participants who are still with us going in to 2018. Of the four new participants, one came because of a City of Rochester event, one came from the YWCA, one came because of the Christmas Store advertising, and one came because of a participant reference.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

The key to our model is community collaboration. We believe, among other priorities, that access to resources is a priority for those seeking independence and self-sufficiency. We demonstrate that belief by becoming familiar with and to other community organizations and resources. Our collaboration with Catholic Family Center did not continue in 2017 once they became involved with RMAPI. However, in 2017 we were fortunate to have Lisa Guernsey serve as our community liaison. She has successfully established contacts with 38 agencies in Rochester. We have been able to speak at or to most of these agencies and now have good collaboration relationship with YWCA and OACES.

PARTICIPANT RESOURCES

While we still use “Choosing to Thrive”¹ as our foundational curriculum, we relaxed its presentation this year. Jacky Smith is our Program Director and found that a monthly discussion session on one of the topics covered in the book was more effective. We continue to use “The Bridge”² as a way to measure progress toward self-sufficiency. Our collaboration with many agencies/organizations provides links our participants to multiple resources.

2017 PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Throughout 2017 participants met together once a month on a Saturday. Jacky Smith, our Program Director, led us in training sessions, participants worked on goal achievement and they were able to shop from our pantry. Coaches then meet with participants at least twice to continue progress toward goals. From 11-1 on those Saturdays, Mary Anderson, our Coaches Coach, arranges for a speaker or other training for coaches.

In September, we sponsored a "Reliable Transportation" seminar, open to the public but geared toward the needs of our participants. We welcomed Consumer Credit Counseling Services, Farmers Insurance, Reliant Community FCU, and S&D Automotive as guest speakers.

COACHES

Each participant has access to a personal coach. As of December, 2017 we have four active coaches and several more eligible. We also have one person who specializes only in job skills, and one who specializes in financial coaching. Mary Anderson continues to be our liaison with FocusPlus who provides initial training and orientation for new coaches. We will continue to rely on Focus+ to help in the recruiting efforts

FOOD and GOODS DISTRIBUTION

This year St. Christophers Church in North Chili donated over 1000 pounds of food for our pantry. We also received a generous food donation from the McQuaid Football team. 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 organization, or a neighborhood organization. We have done a few service projects for The Pillar and the participants help organize the food lockers. Some of our participants volunteered with The Christmas Store. For the year, we were blessed with 834 volunteer hours.

FACILITIES

We continue to appreciate our home at The Pillar and the relationships we have established.

RESULTS

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. In 2017, we celebrate two participants reaching the goals they set for themselves. In addition, many participants are making important and positive life changes.

Respectfully submitted

Marcia O'Brien

Diversity Café

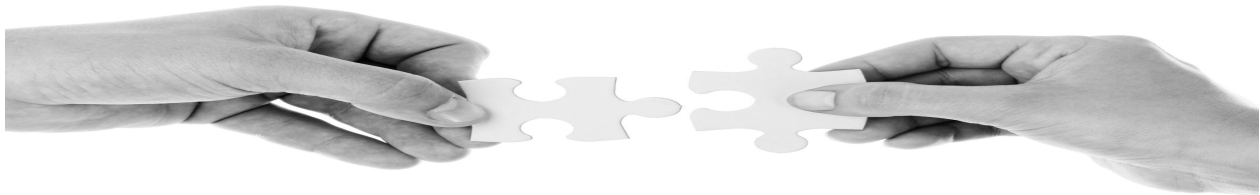


The Diversity Café has been gathering monthly for two and a half years. It began as a men's group, but transitioned to include all in 2017.

All one needs to do is look back at the events of the past several years to know that racial healing needs to be at the front and center of our efforts.

The church remains complicit in breaking the racial divide BUT whatever steps taken to bring people into relationship with one another lends itself to living out the message of Jesus.

These monthly meetings have provided an opportunity for a step toward that healing. These 2017 sessions have varied in attendance from a dozen to as few as four. No matter the number of participants, the discussions have been fruitful as we have heard each others personal stories that helped shape each person's viewpoint and led to discussions in regard to how the "church" can play a role in that healing. Perhaps the verses in Matthew 22:37-40 offers the most compelling command for adopting the Diversity Cafe: Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."



Networking, Collaborative & Training Meetings

In February we finished our series of trainings and discussions stemming from our *Changing the Charitable Paradigm* workshops which began in the Fall of 2016. This effort grew out of the input from the participants of our workshop the previous year. Project URGE itself has increasingly sought ways to implement new strategies that do not perpetuate programs that are not really working to alleviate poverty or attempt changing the charitable paradigm. We have continually brought these ideas from the Christian Community Development Association and FCS Ministries or the Lupton Center in Atlanta. Unequivocally these workshops have inspired others to begin to adopt these principles and there is evidence of this by the activities of several churches and organizations around Rochester; however, there remains a greater need for more to adapt these ideas into

their own programs. We were looking for ways to discuss charity in rebuilding lives, not only sustaining them in their poverty.

These efforts were followed up this past Fall when we sponsored a Networking luncheon at Foodlink, entitled "Beyond Food and Clothes," that allowed for many organizations to introduce their programs that illustrated how they have moved beyond handing out food and clothes toward more comprehensive programs that address the underlying concerns of those in poverty. This luncheon also provided an opportunity for churches and organizations to connect or reconnect with others collaboratively. Organizations and churches such as Center for Youth, Foodlink, Heritage Christian Services, Asbury UMC, 441 Ministries, The Pillar and others took part in the presentation.

A follow up training session was scheduled at the Pillar Church in November, which featured Paul Whitehouse, Executive Director at 441 Ministries, and Maria Wehrle, team leader of the Christmas Store, Mothers In Need of Others and Furnished 4 Life. The specific topics were on Community Development and How to Start a Christmas Store. Both of these workshops were examples of establishing ministries that go beyond handing out food and clothes. These presentations gave specifics on each of these operations and identified how they work toward the goal of strengthening the community by creating steps toward creating opportunities within the neighborhood, collaborating with others and bringing dignity to the process.

The Networking/Collaborative/Training events were well attended and some participants have begun their quest to strengthen the efforts of their outreach. It is evident that these efforts need to continue because they are positively affecting the city of Rochester and many still have not heard the benefits of realigning programs to be more impactful toward deep seeded issues in regard to poverty and providing dignity for the under-resourced.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry Manuel



Volunteer Coordination

Twice a year we set up volunteer opportunities for Williamson High School. This was their 12th year serving non-profits in the city of Rochester! The feedback we received from the organizations and the school was stellar (as usual). They volunteered for organizations such as: Cameron Ministries, The Pillar, Gerhardt Neighborhood Outreach Center, Foodlink, Furnished 4 Life, the Christmas Store, REACH Home and others.

In addition, we have continually referred those wishing to volunteer to other organizations as well as our own, based upon the input they give with regard to how they wish to serve.

This year we had many volunteers helping to serve at the Furnished 4 Life Christmas Store. Several others contributed to our preparation of writing grants and creating documents that we were able to circulate about our work in the community. We are grateful to our many volunteers as they have been the backbone of Project URGE, Inc. since its inception.

Respectfully submitted,

Garry Manuel



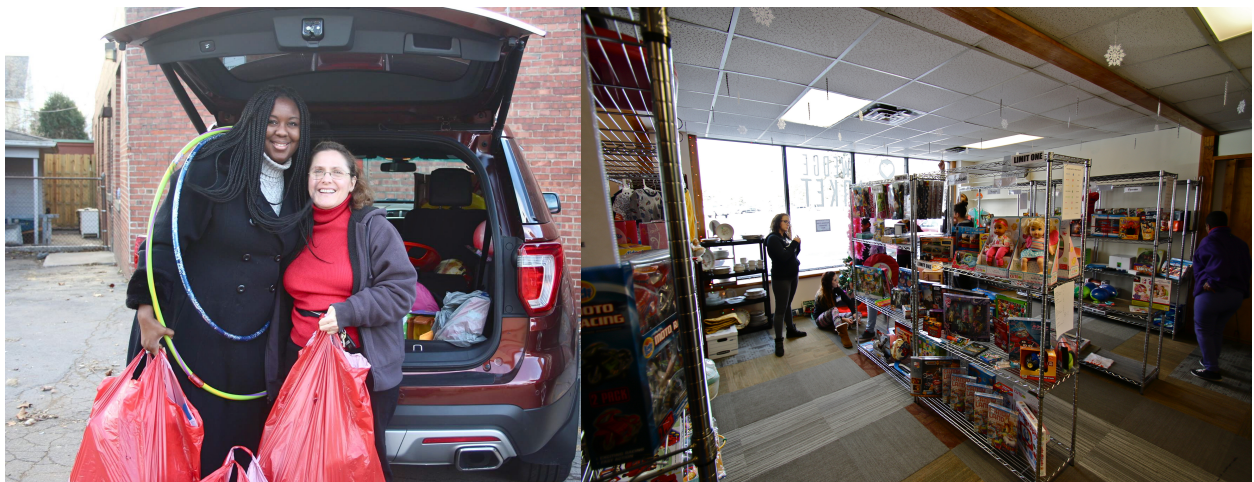
Events

Project URGE Turns 15!

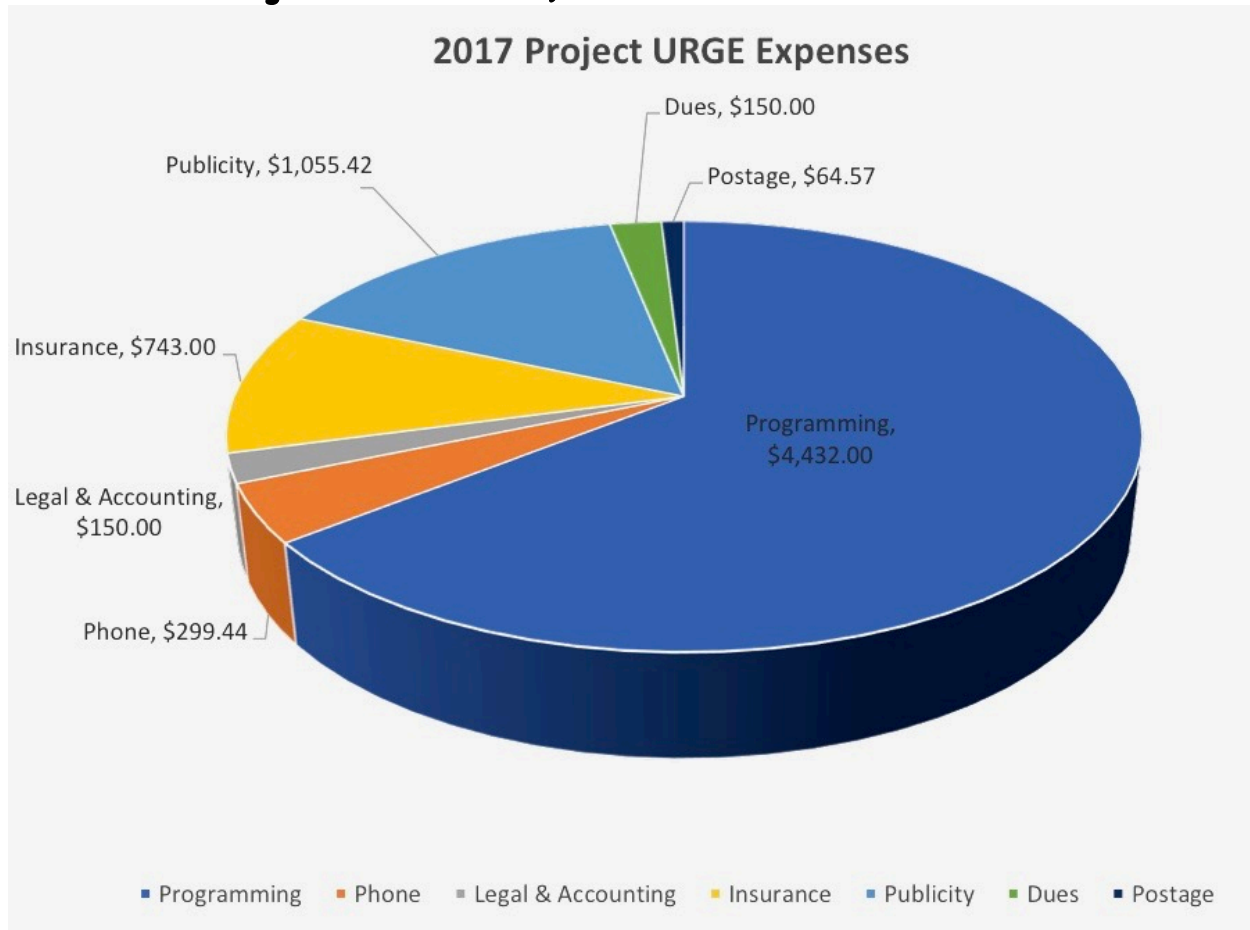
This year Project Urge celebrated its 15th year in the making. We hosted a dinner at the City Grill on March 25th, and celebrated together with our Community Leaders and volunteers who all make our city and the work of our focus come to life. We enjoyed hearing from Garry as he shared from his heart about the work being done through the organization, and his vision for the work ahead of us in the years to come.

The Christmas Store

On Friday, December 8th and Saturday, December 9th we had our annual **Christmas Store** event in our thrift store, inviting our neighbors in the South Wedge community and the case managers and their clients we work with. Our donations, attendance, AND profits were all up from last year! Between cash donations and sales we made a total of \$1,545.07. We would like to thank the local businesses that were involved in the toy collections efforts: ESL Victor Credit Union, Northwest Bank (Rochester, Brighton, Greece, Gates/Chili), Williamson High School, Henderson Ford, Rochester Area Music Project (RAMP), Edge Advertising Group, Steinmiller Insurance, Omero's Custom, Ltd., Webster Chamber Health Insurance, The UPS store at Baytowne in Webster, Meadowbrook Townhome Association, Pat's Coffee House, Crane Realty Group, Webster Girl Scout Troop 60023, Fairport Central School District High School and Fairport United Methodist Church and other private individuals who donated brand new toys and gifts. We would also like to thank our wonderful volunteers who spent many hours cleaning, decorating, pricing, wrapping, and cooking for this event! We couldn't have done it without you!



Project URGE, Inc. 2017 Finances



Thanks to our Volunteers and Contributors this Year!

Churches: Church of the Assumption, Community of the Savior, Fairport UMC, The Pillar

Our Individual Donors:

Tim and Susan Beck, George and Susan Campbell, Charles Casilano Jr, Marie Cuatt, Ann Griffi, Bill and Karen Harnett, David Honness, Floyd & Gretchen Hughes, Lisa Kemp, Katie Kreutter, Joel Kinkler, Wayne Magaw, Garry Manuel, John McNeill, Carol Rizzo, Brian Rooney, Elaine Rose, Jeff Telle, Ron and Cathy Tocci, and Mary Trabert and Jeannine Zona

Our Facebook Donors:

Brigit Hurley, Karen Schwarzman, Robert DeRosa, Sam Lewis, Pam Soule, Jackie Green, Lynne Manuel, Mary Blowers, James Wilson, Phil Rhonda, Mike Mc Neill, Joe Conte, Maria Gillard, Bernie Bader and Marshall Manuel.

*Note: In Free to Fly, many of our coaches and leadership team members provide financial support by paying for items out of their own pockets. Budget represents expected cash payout if items weren't donated by others.