



Project URGE

Urban Revitalization
God Experienced

"...let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth." John 3:18

www.projecturge.org

Project URGE, Inc. – 46 Mount Hope Ave., Rochester, NY 14620 – 585.223.8340

OUR VISION

Restore hurting neighborhoods in the City of Rochester by connecting churches, organizations and neighbors to work together within a holistic framework towards dismantling poverty, racism and despair

OUR MISSION

Church and community partnering to create positive change:

We are driven to redefine the concept of community by connecting neighbors, churches and organizations from different cultures, denominations and socioeconomic backgrounds. In partnering together we are able to fully understand the needs of a community or individual and can work towards creating necessary change to enable the poor to regain their dignity, become self-sufficient and to thrive. We seek to act as a catalyst in Rochester, working toward eradicating poverty and racism with a collaborative spirit.

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RELIEF AND COMPASSION

Project URGE programs like **Mothers In Need of Others** provide material resources to struggling families during times of urgent need. The aim is to relieve immediate suffering and alleviate hardship.

RESTORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Programs like **Free to Fly**, **Diversity Café** and our **Educational Outreach** strive to build relationships and synergy between neighbors and organizations from diverse backgrounds with the goal of *TRANSFORMING* the lives of the poor by *EMPOWERING* and *ENABLING* them to lead healthy self-sufficient lives.

ADVOCACY AND INJUSTICE

Through workshops and networking meetings we begin building **intentional relationships that break down racial barriers** and allow us to confront false stereotypes and identify and fight systemic injustices.

PROCLAMATION AND FORMATION

Matthew 28:19, 20 speaks of making disciples and John 15:8 expresses that as you "bear much fruit," you show yourself to be a disciple. Our intention is to build relationships and engaging the under-resourced in activities where there wasn't opportunity before. Additionally, those who are mentoring or discipling also grow spiritually. There is a mutual benefit, which then is reflected in uplifting the community as a whole.

Free To Fly: Achieving our Goals Friend to Friend

Free To Fly provides opportunities for personal growth and education for low-income individuals in Rochester neighborhoods in order to eliminate barriers to self-sufficiency. We seek to move away from a “relief” mode of charity, which provides only material resources, and move towards a “development” mode of charity which focuses on building the personal assets of a person or community. We know that authentic community is created when people are invested in each other. Free To Fly is rooted in idea that relationship building across socioeconomic divides creates a better community for all.

THROUGH OUR MENTORING SERVICES AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING WE OFFER A HAND UP, NOT OUT, TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY.

Each participant in the Free To Fly program has access to a trained mentor and an entire network of other resources. At the monthly programs, participants also have access to food and household items to help them stretch their disposable income. Individual workshops are also available to participants on topics such as financial literacy, budgeting, saving, credit worthiness, reliable transportation, cooking simply, and being resourceful. The monthly program is conducted using **Choosing to Thrive**. Choosing to Thrive is a workforce empowerment program that has a proven record of greatly increasing the job placement of its participants and reducing generational poverty.

We know that authentic community is created when people are invested in each other. Free To Fly is rooted in idea that relationship building across socioeconomic divides creates a better community for all.



“WITH NEARLY 70% of GRADUATES FINDING EMPLOYMENT AND NEARLY 80% OF THOSE RETAINING LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT, CHOOSING TO THRIVE IS TRULY CHANGING LIVES”²

*A participant was freed from near bankruptcy and found a job

*A Free to Fly provides a crucial, caring support system

THE CONCERT OF PRAISE: is an annual worship event which draws attendance from urban and suburban churches, organizations and ministries in the Rochester, Buffalo and Syracuse region. The Concert of Praise includes worship, prayer, dance, youth participation, educational workshops and service events. **The purpose is simply to praise God, pray for our city and worship together in unity.**

Donations of food, grocery coupons and monetary contributions collected at the Concert of Praise are used to fill Thanksgiving baskets for struggling families identified by our partners in social service



Mothers in Need of Others



Have Items to Donate? Our MINO Wish List

*Donations can be dropped off at the **Wedge Market** at **46 Mount Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620 - 585.348.8596** (call first please!)

- **Baby and toddler clothes** (preemie - 5T)
- **Baby care items:** diapers, wipes, formula, bottles, baby bath, etc.
- **Baby gear:** pack n plays, strollers, car seats, diaper bags, baby carriers, receiving blankets, towels, etc.
- **Maternity clothes** (all sizes) **and nursing items** (pads, privacy covers, Boppy Pillows)
- **Feminine & personal hygiene products:** sanitary napkins, tampons, soap, shampoo, antiperspirant, etc.
- **Paper products:** toilet paper, paper towels, tissues
- **Cleaning products:** laundry detergent, dishwashing liquid, cleaning sponges

*Donations may be tax deductible (check with your financial advisor)

MINO is a faith-based ministry under **Project URGE, Inc.**
a 501(c)(3) (www.projecturge.org)

Mothers In Need of Others (MINO-pronounced:

"minnow") offers compassionate relief to struggling single mothers and families in need in the Rochester community. We collect and distribute new and gently used maternity and baby items, personal hygiene, feminine, and cleaning products from our Resource Room assist case managers and church outreach workers in meeting the needs of their clients. Respect for the safety, privacy, and convenience of the client families from the agencies and churches we work with are of the utmost importance to us! We serve approximately 20 -30 case managers, social workers, and family advocates from over 50 local social service agencies and countless local churches per week who often bring lists of needs from co-workers to make their scheduled pick ups more efficient for the whole staff!

Building relationships, developing life skills and offering encouragement and support through prayer and empathetic listening have been long term goals for our MINO program and this Summer of 2018, we are about to bring those goals to fruition with the grand opening of our **T.E.A. (Training, Education, and Advocacy) Room!** Among our initial program offerings will be:

1) Moms on a Mission - a group to support and encourage moms as they experience the joys and challenges of raising children in today's society.

2) Y.A.R.D. (Young Adults Realizing their Dreams) a program for 17-24yr. old women to develop life skills and achieve personal goals resulting in growing self-confidence and success! And

3) Keystone Recovery - an addictions group available for young women who are struggling with various types of addictions. At the heart of all of these groups is the core belief that **all lives have equal value**. We strive to **empower and enable people to overcome economic and emotional despair** by giving them skills with which they



47% of Rochester's poor are women and children of female-headed

Compared with US cities its size, Rochester ranks:

- **1st in child poverty**
- **1st in poverty rate for female-headed families¹**

The Christmas Store

In an effort to give the gifts of pride and dignity to financially challenged parents over the holidays, MINO hosts a two-day sale of brand new donated toys and gifts which are offered at 40-50% off of retail value to individuals who are referred by agencies and churches! Proceeds offset our costs with any remaining funds supporting our many ministry efforts.

Collections begin the first week in October and run through the last week in November. Struggling parents were able to **select and purchase affordable gifts** for their children without the humiliation of relying on traditional Christmas gift programs that typically don't afford parents the joy of selecting gifts for their own children.

For over a decade, our MINO team has acted as a catalyst in Rochester working toward alleviating poverty and racism with a collaborative spirit, intentionally bridging the divide between faith-based and community-based organizations, denominationally and racially diverse groups.

Diversity Café began several years ago as a group that set out to bridge denominational, racial, and socioeconomic divides. In 2018 it was reinvigorated as a group gathering to dig deeper into understanding the systemic injustices that are often below the radar, but remain a persistent obstacle to healing and restoring relationships. We are fusing the a study of Michelle Alexander's book, *The New Jim Crow* with Dr. Rev. Brenda Salter McNeil's *Roadmap to Reconciliation*. Our monthly meetings and intentional relationship building between a culturally diverse team is leading to greater understanding of each other's lives and struggles, while at the same time providing an educational journey into the struggles and exploring a way forward to honor our diversity, but cultivating a "oneness" and caring for each other. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:28

As friendships develop and we experience each other's reality, solidarity of purpose is formed, powerfully changing the paradigm of "us and them" to "we". With this paradigm shift



RESTORING *Dignity* TO PARENTS



LOVE IS THE POWER THAT OVERCOMES ESTRANGEMENT.

"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus...There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26-28

Educational Outreach



Educational Outreach programs at Project URGE

seek to inspire and teach community members how to find sustainable solutions to alleviating poverty and to holistically restore vulnerable neighborhoods in our community. We connect community members with church ministries, social service agencies and organizations whose focus is serving the under-resourced.

Since 2004, we have hosted numerous nationally recognized urban practitioners and authors who have spoken and led workshops on community development and racial reconciliation.

In 2016 we completed the workshop ***Building Unity Out of Chaos - Collaborative Problem Solving***

which laid the ground work for developing relationships, consensus building and aligning leaders around the challenges facing under-resourced communities. This workshop was led by trainers from **SKEO Solutions**, a company that has successfully impacted impoverished neighborhoods and addressed environmental concerns across the nation.

We continue examining ways to **change the charitable paradigm** as we work through the **Lupton Center's Seeking Shalom Course**. The Lupton Center is the training division of the Atlanta based Focused Community Strategies that has been successfully transforming neighborhoods for 40 years.

Over the years we have also sponsored workshops on community development, tours of other vital non-profits, a poverty simulation and much more.

In 2018 **we'll be continuing to speak about addressing poverty and racism** in both schools and churches.

WHEN TRADITIONAL CHARITY MODELS FAIL, WE MUST TURN TO NEW METHODS OF TRANSFORMATIVE CHARITY.

“If we treat only the symptoms or if we misdiagnose the underlying problem, we will not improve their situation, and we might actually make their lives worse...”³

Networking and Volunteering



Networking/Collaborative Meetings

serve to educate the local community about the ongoing efforts of ministries, agencies and organizations serving the poor as well as provide a forum for these organizations to discuss steps towards achieving their mutual goals.

Meetings often provide the catalyst towards organizations partnering together in their efforts to empower and strengthen under-resourced communities.

One key aspect of Project URGE meetings is discovering new ways that churches can partner with each other and with secular organizations to have a greater impact in breaking down barriers in regard to race and poverty.

Volunteer Coordination at Project URGE involves coordinating volunteer opportunities for schools and church groups to serve non-profit organizations in the Rochester area.

**SINCE 2004, WE HAVE
COORDINATED OPPORTUNITIES
FOR THOUSANDS OF
VOLUNTEERS**

Williamson High School is an example of a school committed to serving the poor. Students, faculty and administration have served in the community alongside Project URGE over twenty times in the past dozen years!

Poverty is not only defined as a lack of material wealth and possessions. Poverty means living with shame, feelings of inadequacy and a loss of hope for the future.

**WORKING TOGETHER
BUILDS STRENGTH,
WHICH IN TURN
PRODUCES A GREATER
IMPACT ON THE
COMMUNITY AND
UNIFIES US IN OUR
FAITH AND DEEDS.**

