

Project URGE, Inc. – 2007 Annual Report

BREAD RUN:

The Bread Run Team has been operational for about four years. In 2007 there were eight families and individuals who continued the weekly Saturday and every other Sunday deliveries of baked goods and desserts to Recovery House of Rochester, Women's Place (CFC), Outreach Temple Home Mission, Sanctuary House, Mercy Residential, Grace Community Village, Eastern Service Workers, Francis Center and if there are remaining goods, we take them to House of Mercy, St. Joseph's Hospitality House and the Open Door Mission. This team is made up of folks from Crosswinds Wesleyan Church in Canandaigua, who pick up the items from Tops in Canandaigua and then journey to Rochester for the deliveries. The round trip is approximately 60 miles, taking about two hours or so.



CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRIES DEVELOPMENT:

There are several aspects to this initiative. The first is making churches aware of the opportunity to either host summer camp for two or three days or to assist with volunteers, financial camp scholarships or with drinks and snacks. These opportunities primarily exist within Community Lutheran Ministry, Rochester Family Mission, Grace Community Village and Nevaeh.

In mid-summer (late July) we will be collecting back-to-school items for one weekend. Since we have several organizations sponsoring back-to-school give-a-ways, it was voted unanimously at our September 07 general meeting, to hold one weekend collection and distribute the items to our affiliated organizations involved

with handing out the supplies prior to the opening of school. Rather than having four or five organizations asking for supplies on a variety of dates, we can better serve affiliated organizations by having one concentrated weekend collection drive for school supplies through our Project URGE connections. In prior years lack of coordination of collections led to a more watered down effect, leaving people confused as to who needed what and when.



Throughout the year there are numerous opportunities within our affiliated organizations with training, mentoring, angel-to-angel and after-school programs working with under-resourced children. Since many of our volunteers work during the week, it is often difficult to secure those who can serve consistently in these areas. We continue working to build new relationships as well as exploring the possibilities of college student internships and experienced retired workers as possible solutions to this problem.

In December we met to plan our first Urban/Suburban Youth Mission event, set to take place at the end of March 2008. This inaugural event will have youth from our urban and suburban churches

coming together to volunteer at homeless shelters and soup kitchens with our affiliated organizations, but to also create new relationships through work, discussion, prayer and worship and recreation. This will be followed with the group taking in a Sunday service at one of our affiliated urban churches. This initiative will continue throughout the year, as groups will alternate between city and suburban churches. This effort is aimed to involve the youth in service-oriented ministry, while at the same time working toward our mission of breaking down the barriers of poverty and race in the name of Jesus Christ. We believe these efforts will bring about the needed transforming power that seldom has gone beyond the talking stage.

CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & 4 POINT PLAN



In April, Project URGE was the key sponsor and organizer of Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) Institute Classes. Co-sponsors were Grace Community Village, Foodlink and Roberts Wesleyan College's, Center for Christian Social Ministries. The topics for the two-day event were: Economic Development in the Hood, Urban/Suburban Partnerships, Youth Development and Wholistic Ministry, taught by some of the country's most experienced urban practitioners associated with the CCDA organization. Approximately 75 people took the classes with the vast majority of attendees expressing that the classes were either excellent or very helpful. CCDA materials and seminars have been extremely beneficial to Project URGE over the past several years, as we continue fostering that relationship. In June of 2008 CCDA CEO, Noel Castellanos, will be leading the Project URGE board and leaders through a strategic development session and our organizations will have an opportunity to meet with him as well.

While the "4 Point Plan" (see past articles and www.projecturge.org for more information) was slow in materializing, this effort continues to be a priority for our organization. The 4 Points refer to four areas



designated within the "poverty crescent" of Rochester. Two of the four areas are working in collaboration with a number of organizations that will serve these areas in integral ways. In addition, they are working to build involvement by people living and working in those specific neighborhoods. This encompasses the wholistic approach to solving the challenges confronting urban centers that has been touted heavily by CCDA leaders. As these two areas magnify these efforts, it is our hope the two remaining areas will begin to build their core plans by being inspired and learning from these efforts preceding.

In October 07 we held a seminar which focused on describing aspects of the "4 Point Plan", needs in the neighborhoods and closing with a presentation on "Social Entrepreneurship" by David Dey, founder of Risego, Inc. and former employee of City of Rochester NET office.

COATLINK:

The Coatlink 2007 collection was held in tandem with the URGEnt presentation and tour. There were approximately 200 women's, 100 men's and 160 children's coats collected from seven churches and individuals attending the presentation. Additionally, there were 200 sweaters and an assortment of clothes for women and children, as well as non-perishable foods. These were distributed to organizations dedicated to serving the under-resourced in the City of Rochester.

CONCERT of PRAISE:



In October the Project URGE praise concert was held at Crosswinds Wesleyan Church, as it has been for all but one year. This was our first year of holding the event on a Friday evening. Rev. George Nicholas from Grace United Methodist Church was the guest speaker. We also had praise singers and musicians from a variety of church denominations including the Morning Star Missionary Baptist



Church choir. There was also a dance team from Outreach Temple (COGICU). The attendance of about two hundred was lower than we had anticipated.

FORTH (Faith Organizations Restoring and Transitioning the Homeless):



This plan which was previously illustrated in our newsletters and on our website has yet to materialize. In April we held a seminar at Browncroft Community Church to discuss the details of the plan, with the hope of engaging churches to financially support and become involved in the mentoring process of helping homeless families transition out of homelessness. Only three attended the meeting from the hundreds of invitations and e-mails announcing the meeting. The main stumbling block to starting this program is financial. We did submit a grant application for this program, but were denied, as it did not align to the exact specifications of the

application. Our goal is to find someone to “drive” this program and continue to investigate funding opportunities to propel this worthwhile program. Project URGE has the planning book and the proposal from *Bridge Communities*, in Illinois, which describes how this program can be run.

FUNDRAISING:

A new fundraising plan and awareness strategy started development in the Fall of 07 and will be finished in early March 08. Churches and individual donors continue being our main source of funding. In order for the programs and strategies that hold the greatest depth and promise of a lasting impact to be successful, additional funding for staff and implementation will be necessary. Only since February of 2007 have we had one, part-time, paid staff person. If you look at the growth and accomplishments achieved toward our goals and mission in the past six years, this speaks well of the dedicated volunteers we have been blessed to have participating in Project URGE.

GRANT & RESEARCH TEAM:

The grant team has primarily been focused on work with FACT (Faith And Communities Together). The lead agency in this group has been Foodlink. This collaborative group has met for nearly four years, around the Federal Compassion Capital Grant, as well as looking toward other opportunities for in obtaining funding. Project URGE has been working in administering this grant mainly in conjunction with Roberts Wesleyan College, Center for Christian Social Ministries, offering technical assistance and training to mainly four out of the five organizations to which we were assigned (one group withdrew). This effort, though time consuming, has been very beneficial to the organizations with which we’ve been

working. This grant funding has been geared strictly toward capacity building and will conclude in early spring. The benefits have far outweighed the negatives and have served to strengthen many smaller organizations that are doing great work in the City of Rochester and surrounding areas. Additionally, this process has helped introduce organizations that wouldn't have necessarily been at the table together, to ways to which they can complement each other. While funding has not been extended past spring of 2008, these partnerships between our local universities and organizations hold promising benefits toward strengthening our community.

JACOB'S LADDER:



The Jacob's Ladder Team has been active for over four years, painting, patching walls, dry-walling, insulating, making bike racks, scraping floors, yard clean-up, sorting and delivering coats, building shelves, and much more. The team centers around helping to restore and renovate facilities of organizations who serve the under-resourced and who operate on highly restricted budgets. In 2007 the Jacob's Ladder team has worked at Francis Center (Catholic Family Center), R Community Bikes, Little Lakes Church, Outreach Temple, RAIHN (Rochester Interfaith Hospitality Network), and Rochester Family Mission. About half their work hours were spent at RiseGo, Inc., on Arnett Boulevard.

A priority is usually given to those affiliated with Project URGE (approximately twenty), because these organizations have demonstrated a willingness to collaborate with others. Three or four people working here and there on two Saturdays a month may not first appear significant; however, these efforts in 2007 alone accounted for more than 300 collective hours in service labor, and a savings to these organizations that exceeds \$8000!



PRAYER TEAM:

Six people currently are on the prayer team. Communication between team members occurs primarily through the internet or by phone. The prayer requests are sent to the team as they are received. Prayer Team members have specific prayer times individually and they pray prior to each Project URGE activity. The prayers are focused on various Project URGE initiatives, the city, organizations and individuals affiliated with Project URGE.



PUBLICITY (includes URGEnt Presentation & Tour, Newsletters, Website, Letter Writing, Booklets, Brochures, DVDs & Speaking Engagements):

In 2007 we distributed approximately 400 booklets and 100 brochures. We also mailed hundreds of cards, letters and invitations to social events, seminars and community collaborative workshops. Booklets and brochures provide information to groups and individuals about what affiliate organization needs and what volunteer opportunities exist if they should chose to become involved. Contact information for each affiliate is also provided.

The first Saturday in November has been the traditional time where we sponsor a Presentation and Tour. In 2007 it was titled, the “URGEnt Presentation & Tour”. This event gives people a chance to talk with twenty organizations and tour their facilities. There were approximately 55 concerned individuals and groups from various churches who attended the event. As in the past, approximately 70% of the participants were not aware of these organizations and ministries prior to attending the presentation. We know for certain that several people became involved with some of the ministry efforts presented as a result of attending the tour. Each organization has the primary responsibility for tracking their sign-ups and following up on prospective volunteers. The vast majority of the participants found the tour both informational and helpful with regard to possible engagement in the opportunities presented. There are some who have remained involved with volunteering since the very first tour held five years ago!



We continue keeping our community, organizations, volunteers, public servants and donors informed as to what has transpired and what is about to take place through our quarterly newsletter. This is both mailed out and posted on our website. Postage, printing and writing make this an ambitious effort both financially and time wise.

In 2007 a number of presentations were given to churches and individuals, both during services and separate events. We welcome the opportunity to speak before congregations and present them with our informational materials. Some of our activities and promotions have led to our affiliates also presenting their needs before congregations.

SOCIAL EVENTS:

In March 07 approximately fifty people attended our annual dinner and fellowship at the Fairport United Methodist Church, where people had a chance to acquaint themselves with other volunteers. Discussion took place about why churches are so racially divided. The number one response was that “people are afraid to come out of their comfort zone”. Other comments on the topic included: “fear, bigotry, cultural differences, afraid to walk the extra mile, music and time limits,” -plus others. This made for some lively discussion. The event also had prayer, music, and icebreakers, along with a presentation on what took place in Project URGE in 2006. The Fairport UMC Youth Group did a terrific job of cooking and serving as well.

In July we held our annual picnic in Ellison Park, where about fifty adults and children attended from a variety of organizations and churches involved with Project URGE, along with guests. We had canoe rides, games, great food and lively conversation. Bobo the Clown (from Clowning Glory Ministries)



entertained the children and even some adults with face painting, games and prizes.

The Link, which was an effort to get men from different races and churches to come together for an informal gathering to bridge the gap to build relationships with regard to race and denominations. The group met twice. While the effort showed promise, it did not continue due to the fact that no one volunteered in taking responsibility for keeping the effort going.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATING:

One of the major highlights of the past three years has been the service day opportunity that has been fulfilled by Williamson High School students, faculty and administrators. Twice in 2007 they visited and worked in the City of Rochester, helping organizations like Foodlink, Rochester Family Mission, Women's Place, Outreach Temple, Sanctuary House, Mercy Residential, Grace Community Village, Francis Center and Community Lutheran Ministry.



In addition, we continued to organize volunteer service for participating church groups, individuals and the 30 Hour Famine weekend. We estimate that during the year we plugged in approximately 250 volunteers or more. We anticipate this number will triple for 2008, as more organizations are learning about the organizational component of linking volunteers up through Project URGE to our affiliated organizations.

WELLS CHRISTMAS PROJECT:

For the past two years people from a variety of denominations have come together to provide Christmas presents for 18 – 24 children in an impoverished area of the Adirondack Mountains, where an entire school is on the “free-lunch” program. Urban and suburban denominations symbolize the heart and soul of Project URGE, coming together in the name of Jesus, with a simple gesture of giving gifts at Christmas.

The beauty of this effort is found in how God connects people in such unique ways and how a casual conversation on a beach in the Adirondacks turned into an opportunity to minister to rural children in poverty. One of the main contributors to the project these past two years happens to spring from a primarily African-American church, located along the “poverty crescent” of the City of Rochester. For this inner city church to reach out to predominantly poor, Caucasian children, nestled in a rural Adirondack Mountain community, in a profound way, epitomizes what Project URGE is about.

A BRIEF GLIMPSE INTO 2008:

At this time I want to share with readers a glimpse into what has begun and our continuing plans for 2008. Although this window will only provide a somewhat limited view, the plans are deep and far reaching. God planted the seed and now these roots are taking hold, growing deeper, as more branches are sprouting and the fruit is becoming more plentiful. This is true because Project URGE has faithful volunteers, who understand and remain committed to the vision and mission, which intersects with the biblical mandate to “love thy neighbor” and “to help the poor” as this love is expressed through “actions and in truth”. Those who choose to walk this path with us will see God's provision as we share this growth together and become disciplined toward meeting the deep rooted challenges that lie before us.

Already in early 2008, we are lining up service opportunities for seven dates organizations such as: Williamson High School, R.I.T. College (2 dates), Lott-Carey Foreign Mission, Project URGE Urban/Suburban Youth Mission and two 30 Hour Famine Youth programs, which will account for over 500 volunteers serving the majority of our affiliated organizations.



In two of our designated areas along the “poverty crescent” in the City of Rochester, the Project URGE “4 Point Plan” seed seems to be sprouting. We continue the task of partnering with other organizations and ministries, currently with a collaborative called W.I.N. (e.g., Wellness In the Neighborhood (WIN) Project in the northwest, and the Community Roundtable, serving the southwest). Our focus is to engage more folks living and working in the neighborhoods with the primary responsibility being to assist and stand with them as they undertake a number of initiatives that will lead to positive changes in those neighborhoods. These programs often employ many strategic plans learned and practiced through the Christian Community Development Association (CCDA), of which Project URGE is a member, and will be carried out in conjunction with area residents, workers and collaborating organizations. The role of Project URGE will be to supply the following: organizational support, prayer support and engaging the expertise of those volunteering with Project URGE and affiliated organizations, to train or fill a missing component that could strengthen the community building effort in a particular area. The crux of this plan is to impact root and systemic causes of the cycle of poverty, going well beyond handing out food and clothes.

Project URGE will continue our collaborative efforts with the organizations involved with FACT (Faith and Communities Together) and CUPP (Community University Partnership Project). These groups have been meeting for over three years and continue to find ways to build capacity and link university strengths with community organizations. We have all worked together on the Capital Compassion Funding that was awarded by the Federal Government. Foodlink was the lead organization in the FACT consortium.

Additionally, the collaborative effort of Project URGE and Grace Community Village with combining two part-time positions to enable both of us to afford additional staff was a win/win situation. Jane Ames, MSW, who interned with Project URGE through the Center for Christian Social Ministries, while at Roberts Wesleyan College, accepted the position and performed dutifully with excellence, adapting to many roles that were instrumental in the cohesiveness of both ministries.

We are hopeful in the coming year that churches will play a much more significant role in this effort to meet challenges and curb the unnecessary suffering – Matthew 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men.” In our churches sit businessmen, craftsmen, attorneys, doctors, teachers and other skilled individuals who are not yet engaged with the needs of the community, either through volunteerism or financial contributions.

Perhaps Chicago pastor and CCDA board member, Dr. Wayne Gordon, articulates the scenario best by stating, “Nehemiah begins with lamenting over the city of Jerusalem. “Those back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.” Neh. 1:3b. This describes the situation in parts of most American cities today. They have been neglected and allowed to deteriorate for almost forty years. The church of Jesus Christ has at best sat back and watched this happen yet in many areas has contributed to the problem. The words of Nehemiah, “great trouble and disgrace,” ring true for us in the church today.

The question arises as to what the response as Christians will be to the troubles of the poor and the inner cities today. The desperate conditions that face the poor call for a revolution in the church's attempts at a solution. Through years of experience among the poor, many have come to see these desperate problems cannot be solved without strong commitment and risky actions on the part of ordinary Christians with heroic faith.” (www.ccda.org)

Project URGE plans to bring the CEO of CCDA, Noel Castellanos, in mid-June for a strategy and planning session for the board and team leaders. We will then invite our affiliated organizations, churches and collaborative partners to an event to meet Mr. Castellanos to receive his insights toward further clarity into how CCDA functions and a better understanding of how collaborations, such as Project URGE, can flourish to embellish and help fulfill to the goals of all participating organizations.

Additionally in 2008, we anticipate continuing with providing booklets, DVDs and information to assist in creating awareness of opportunities and informing the community of specific items of need and volunteering. This information will also be available on our website (www.projecturge.org).

We'll be continuing with our annual URGEnt Presentation & Tour, as well as our coat and food drive, the first Saturday in November, in an effort to help sustain our affiliated organizations with goods and volunteers, as well as new financial supporters.

It was decided by a vote at our September 07 meeting to hold one major back-to-school supply collection event the last weekend in July, which will help provide school items to the many organizations working with Project URGE, who distribute school needs to under-resourced children. This will alleviate the confusion as to where, when and who these items should be delivered.



Project URGE will also continue to find support for hosting summer camps to our affiliated ministries and supporting creative ways to impact the lives of children from under-resourced areas of our community, as we have done since day one.

In closing, we again plead for churches to join all of us in working together to uncover ways they can aptly and passionately serve. It is illustrated most appropriately in this verse from Galatians 5:14, 15 - The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor

as yourself. If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other."

Please note our mission, goals and objectives. Keep in mind, that all these initiatives were accomplished with one part-time staff person. We believe this provides a more than adequate testimony to the power of God and the blessings upon us when people are faithful to the call.

Is Project URGE not worthy of your support?





Our mission:

Connecting and uniting churches, organizations and individuals to work together in breaking down barriers of poverty, race and despair in the name of Jesus Christ.

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

Goals & Objectives:

- 1. Assist churches** in uniting to minister together, in an effort to promote and spread the Gospel message by working on problems that deal with (a) poverty, (b) racism, (c) health related issues, (d) employment & (e) spiritual empowerment.
- 2. Provide information** listing ministry titles, needs and contacts. Collect and distribute materials that may be helpful to ministries and organizations affiliated with the Project URGE family.
- 3. Be a catalyst for church partnering.** Linking those who are willing to serve in specific areas, with those who might benefit most with regard to available strengths in resources, talents and gifting.
- 4. Create a forum for dialogue** on how to implement change and forming subgroups to work on specific initiatives.
- 5. Encourage cross-cultural exchange**, both in worship, teen ministry and outreach in general.
- 6. Establish workshops**, seminars & task force meetings as needed, in regard to the development of the various ministries and Project URGE itself.

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.”

Respectively submitted,

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