



*Sacred Suds
Builds
Community*



*Empowerment &
Opportunity*



*Urban
Youth
Peace
Movement*

To empower people and build community in Downtown Muskegon by sharing God's love, as we walk alongside neighbors, seeking justice and a better quality of life for all through long-term, sustainable changes.

A word from Sarah:



Thanks for reading and staying involved in the work of Community enCompass! We invite and appreciate your feedback on our newsletter. Please e-mail me at sarah@communityencompass.org and let me know if there are other things you'd like to see in the next newsletter or e-newsletter! As usual, you can always find out more at our new website, www.communityencompass.org, or by joining our Facebook fan page!

Bethany Housing Sells 1428 Leahy!

In 2009, we purchased a rough looking house at 1428 Leahy for \$9,900. We had a vision for this home and, with the help of the Wolf Brothers, did a full rehabilitation to bring this home back to what we knew it once had been. During the rehab, we met Larry Klein, the grandson of the couple who built the home in 1902. He was excited to share pictures, stories, and memories of growing up in the home.

In September, Ben Worth, a first time homeowner, purchased 1428 Leahy. The picture of the Klein's hangs in a black frame on his living room wall. We all sense that we are blessed to be part of this rich history. Ben's words follow:

When I moved into my house on Leahy St., I was given an incentive for moving into the neighborhood by Bethany Church---a fifty dollar check made out to Meijer's. Meijer's on Harvey. Back in the suburb, where I'd come from.

Never one to turn down something free, I went into the store to cash in on the generosity. There at the entrance was a man shouting at the greeter because there weren't any of the small sized shopping carts for him to use. Is life so fragile that the wrong size shopping cart can bring it crashing down?

My reasons for wanting to move into the McLaughlin neighborhood are roiled; there's no clear path for me. The Wallflowers said in one of their songs, "There's got to be an opening somewhere here in front of me through this maze of ugliness and greed." Most of my adult life, I've been trying, and failing, to find it.

But that's how it's always been. The best things in my life are almost all the result of failing at something else. I have a job I love because I failed at college. My good friends became my good friends only after I let them down. But it's the second chance, the plan B, the rebirth that sticks.

Given that track record, it's perhaps not surprising that I try not to try. I try to listen. Listen for things that sound like goodness and love. More than anything, I hope that is what I have on Leahy St., a quiet place to listen. And to be found.



the enPULSE

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enStory

Loose Change....by William B Anthony, YEP

Investing in our own community—one block, one hood, one day, one person at a time—is something like offering loose change. Let me explain:

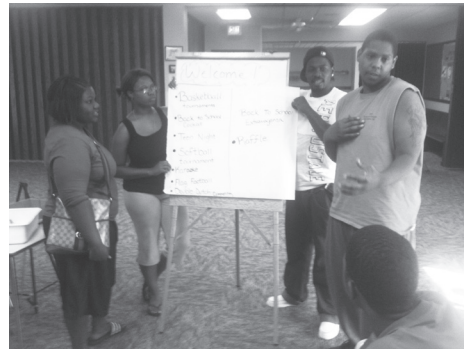
I grew up in a single-parent household, on the south-side of Chicago. It was me, my Mom, and my older Brother. Two things were for certain: Church and Community. I lived in a neighborhood where, if any elder seen you misbehaving, they had every right to discipline you on the spot. Chances are you would receive another beating when you got home.

When it came to Church, we were there every Sunday, faithfully: the first on the



church bus and the last to get dropped off. My favorite part of the service was the end. That's when I would leap into action; I had to be one of the fastest people up to the pulpit. Not for prayer, or even to congratulate the Preacher. Rather, I was there to beg my Pastor (Pastor John Gray of Holy Zion Missionary Baptist Church) for loose change, preferably a quarter. Most Sundays he would give it to me without question. This continued for 8 to 10 years, every week: "Reverend Johnnie, can I get a quarter?"

Later in life, Pastor Gray (who throughout the years has always a mentor to me, and an example of what a real Man is) pulled me aside. He shared that he was extremely



proud of the life that I had made for myself. He also reminded me of all the times I would come to him for that loose change. He said, "Boy, I did not think you would amount to anything. Now look at you."

These days in my community, here in Muskegon, things have drastically changed. The past summer, fall, and winter of 2010 have been some of the worst in our Community's history: so many senseless fights, shootings, incarcerations and deaths. I wanted to be part of some change in my hood, so I applied for a job with Community enCompass, as a Youth Employment Program (YEP!) Coordinator, and got it. One of my first tasks was to go and talk to the Youth Advisory Council of the Community Foundation for Muskegon County about the outbreak of violence affecting everyone in our community. After speaking with them, we had an opportunity to write

and receive a grant from them to support our efforts to creatively curb youth violence in our neighborhoods.

Over the last nine months, I've been working alongside youth in our community, organizing and mobilizing their energy to be the solution to this problem of violence. They have surprised me in their diligence and creativity. Sometimes we tend to think that the problem in our neighborhoods is that our youth will do nothing. Well, this effort is an example of EXTRAORDINARY work coming from our youth.

We present to you the "Urban Youth Peace Movement: Fighting to bring our neighborhoods together, block by block, hood by hood." On September 24th, our youth lead team organized an event that gathered 100 youth from neighborhoods all across Muskegon and Muskegon Heights. We played games, shared food, and spoke from our hearts about how we can become different,

better, new people. And most importantly, we listened to each other.

So, as my Pastor showed me, I now get to show my youth. It's always more than a quarter and always more than a meal. The investment of time, energy, love, patience, understanding, and grace is what counts. Working with these kids has taught me a lot: how far they can overcome, if just given a chance.





Learning Lab: Empowerment & Opportunity

The search for employment compels people to face their fear of computers. Take, for example, a recent request to update a resume. The local Michigan Works! representative called in advance to make sure this person would get some individual attention. Three times the rep repeated, "He needs lots of help." Before me was a person who had training, skills, and a solid employment history until his most recent employer reduced the labor force.

Typical of many of the people who come to the Lab for the first time, this individual lacked confidence in using the computer, but he was eager to learn. He quickly picked up on the steps needed to set up an email account so it could be added to his resume. Next he wanted to work on his resume. He had previously entered his information on the Michigan Talent bank, so we used that as a starting point. His answers to my questions allowed him to clarify his skills and qualifications, but he wanted a one-page resume. He was willing, so, learning by doing, he patiently followed instructions to move his resume to a Word document. Despite the frustrations of navigating Microsoft Word for the first time, he reformatted his resume to a single page without sacrificing his many qualifications. Mission accomplished!



A few days later he came back with a question. Could I help him apply for a job? He had found one online that fit his qualifications, but the application had to be submitted by email. Fortunately he already had an email account and had a solid resume. By working from the job posting, he was able to pick out points to emphasize in his cover letter and, using a sample letter he liked from his Michigan Works! packet, he painstakingly composed a cover letter and polished it using the spelling and grammar checking functions of Word. Since we had already worked on attaching files to email as a means for saving information, all that was left was composing a brief email and

attaching the resume and cover letter.

Though this entire process may sound simple and straightforward to those of us who use computers daily, in practice novices experience many glitches as they learn the coordination required to navigate with a mouse and a keyboard. Fortunately, adult learners usually come to the Lab with resolve and perseverance. Their reward is a task completed; then the frown of determination breaks into a beaming grin. Shalom!by Delores Bray



From the heart of a volunteer.....



Sally Tardani is a volunteer with Community enCompass, working the hospitality desk at Sacred Suds every Monday morning. Be inspired to volunteer by Sally's words:

After retirement I looked for some meaningful volunteer work to do. Through CAST (Catholics Acting on Social Teaching), we were aware of Sacred Suds while it was still in the planning stage. I was there the first Monday they opened (in 2004) and have been there almost every Monday since.

Our neighbors who come for showers, washing, computers or just to have coffee, donuts, or lunch are so grateful! I'm especially moved by the way they look out for and help each other. It's exciting when someone comes in and says they don't need us anymore because their circumstances have changed for the better.



Unlike other volunteer work I've done, I never get tired of coming to Sacred Suds. It is such a worthwhile ministry!



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To empower people and build community in Downtown Muskegon by sharing God's love, as we walk alongside neighbors, seeking justice and a better quality of life for all through long-term, sustainable changes.

How Can You Help?

My donation will allow Community enCompass to continue working in Downtown Muskegon to seek positive and lasting change.

Therefore (please check):

- I have enclosed my donation of \$____
- I pledge to give \$____ monthly
- I request to be informed of ongoing work by Community enCompass

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, St, Zip: _____

Email: _____

 Please send to
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 Muskegon, MI 49442

Community enCompass Passes it On..... by Courtney VanderLaan

Allen Avenue CRC was ready for a change and wanted to become involved in our community differently than we had been in the past. However, we were unsure how that change was going to look. Then we were introduced to Asset Based Community Development (ABCD). After a few months, we are starting to feel a shift in the way that we think about and relate to our neighborhood. In the past, the statistics of this area have resulted in a skewed perception of the Angell neighborhood. Our opinions had been clouded by the things we were reading and hearing about concerning the crime rates, drug trafficking, violence, high rates of unemployment, etc. We had lost touch of the good things that were going on in our neighborhood and the strengths and assets already existing within it. Even more, we stopped knowing who our neighbors really were.

The Church at large has a long history of providing relief efforts to people in need. However, we are now striving, with the encouragement and guidance of Community enCompass' Kimi Zimmerman, to come together with our neighbors to shift from these relief efforts to ones of development with hopes of bring about lasting transformation. We are working to shift our focus from trying to solve problems we as-



sume exist to letting the neighborhood define the strengths and needs itself. Furthermore, we are beginning to have our eyes opened again to the good people and assets that are already in the neighborhood. Rather than seeing our neighbors as people who only are struggling and in need of our help, we are seeing them as individuals who have gifts, talents, strengths and the knowledge to make their neighborhood what they what it to be. Sustainable transformation does not come from the church doing things **for** a community. Instead, it comes out of the body of Christ joining together with its neighbors in relationships where everyone has the opportunity to bring their gifts and contribute to the transformation. As we continue moving forward with ABCD, we are grateful for our partnership with Community enCompass and look forward to what God has in store for us and our neighborhood.