



Light Lines

A publication of United Methodist Christians in Partnership

Lancaster, Pennsylvania

JUNE 2018

New Ministry Partnership With IMPACT! & Lancaster Urban Connexion Churches

By Correen Russo, Executive Director of LUMINA

In March several members of the Lancaster Urban Connexion, including LUMINA's Executive Director, met with the EPAC Urban Commission to propose becoming an official Urban Alliance of the Conference. Becoming an alliance would make us eligible for a grant by the Commission, which manages the funds received from the sale of two Philadelphia City churches. These funds are to be used for specific collaborative urban outreach projects. Together with Matt Beakes, the Executive Director of IMPACT! Missions, we presented our idea of partnering on the rehab of 112 New Dorwart St. A portion of our presentation follows.

Seeking to be a visible witness to the redeeming power of God's love, we feel called to work together to alleviate hardship and revitalize our community. We know that affordable housing and a deteriorating sense of community is a problem in Lancaster. Lancaster is a city of over 59,000 people. Its poverty rate is nearly 30%, with some neighborhoods over 50%. Slumlords keep the poorer neighborhoods in continual chaos by outbidding low income families who want to buy a home at a manageable price. These absent landlords overcharge rent, fail to keep up with maintenance, and change tenants repeatedly. Some blighted, vacant properties shelter criminal

activity. Home ownership, which could stabilize a neighborhood, is 43%, less than the national average of 63.9%.

IMPACT! Missions has presented us with an opportunity to partner in the repair and rebuilding of a blighted property in one of the poorest neighborhoods. IMPACT! has already purchased the house and has materials, insurance, funds and staff to lead in the work. IMPACT! has made up a budget, a work



Manifest Partners in Ministry. L to R: Rev Jonette Gay, Otterbein UMC; Sue Grimm Mattox, West District Lay Leader; Rev Roseann Goldberg-Taylor, Christ UMC; Correen Russo, Executive Director, LUMINA; Susan Kepner, Lancaster First UMC; Matthew Beakes, Executive Director, IMPACT! Missions; Roger Kresge, Covenant UMC; Rev William Brawner, EPAC Urban Commission; Rev Quentin Wallace, Covenant UMC; Rev Andrea Brown, Grandview UMC; Fran Keller, Ross Street UMC.

plan, and a Memorandum of Understanding for this partnership. The Alliance will help raise funds for repairs and provide volunteers for work crews. The house will be sold to a low income family who will receive training on home ownership and maintenance. Deed restrictions will keep the house owned and affordable, to help add stability to the neighborhood. With this project, together we will not only rebuild a house, but also rebuild trust and relationships and begin the resurrection of community.

The Urban Commission accepted our proposal, and on May 18 we formalized our alliance as **MANIFEST**, which stands for **Methodists Aligned for Neighborhood**

Invigoration: Faithfully Embodying the Spirit Together. Rev William Brawner represented the Urban Commission. He read aloud the official agreement creating the urban alliance Manifest from the

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Rev Will Brawner presenting a check for \$6100 for urban ministry to Correen Russo, Administrator of the new Manifest Urban Alliance.

Our Vision for Lancaster and beyond: All persons restored to the vital and productive lives which God intended.



Our Mission: to share the love of God by equipping and encouraging people who experience poverty and hardship.

New Ministry Partnership *Continued from page 1*

following organizations: **Christ UMC, Covenant UMC, First UMC, Grandview UMC, New Creation UMC, Otterbein UMC, Ross Street UMC, and LUMINA.** The agreement declared that no organization is over another in this new venture, that all are equal partners; however, LUMINA will handle all Manifest finances and act as the administrator of communication. Every member of the new alliance agreed to encourage generous giving by their friends and members, toward the Manifest Project. LUMINA has pledged at least \$15,000. It is our hope that the churches will pull together and match that amount with their combined pledge. Our covenant was sealed by a simple service of Communion, led by Rev Andrea Brown. A final prayer was offered up, that the power of the Holy Spirit may be made manifest in our community through the work of our hands and the love we show our neighbors, and that everything we do may bring glory to God.

Now we are seeking volunteers to join our work teams. Workers will be scheduled each Sunday afternoon for the following week. Volunteers may serve as often as desired, but are needed most on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays from 9:00 AM to noon and 1:00 to 3:00 PM. Volunteers must complete registration paperwork and attend an orientation meeting (30-45 minutes) prior to serving.

The property at 112 New Dorwart Street is not in as rough a condition as most of the houses IMPACT volunteers have worked on, and they estimate it may be completed by late summer or early fall. The neigh-

bors seem very excited to hear about our plans. They say this house has been vacant for 4 or 5 years. Someone has already broken into it to steal the copper plumbing, and there may have been recent drug activity in the overgrown backyard. There are a lot of children in this neighborhood, and naturally residents are concerned.

In order to let the whole neighborhood know who we are and what we are doing, Manifest members are planning a block party, project dedication and prayer service on Saturday, June 24, 4 to 5:30 PM. Donations of food or money as well as volunteers would be greatly appreciated! Please email Correen.lumina@gmail.com to donate or volunteer. You may also call 717-394-8412 and leave a message.

I am so very pleased that LUMINA is in a position now to help with this ministry. Think of how faithful and good our God has been, to answer so many of our prayers! *I used to pray regularly to God for \$15,000 to give LUMINA a cushion for financial stability. God has provided, several times that amount, so that now we can even give away \$15,000!* May God multiply that amount for Manifest projects through our seven city churches and through all our LUMINA supporters. ***And to God be the glory!***

LUMINA Welcomes Intern

LUMINA would like to welcome Celso Mesias, a Lancaster Theological Seminary student who has chosen to do his field training at LUMINA. He will be giving LUMINA about 6 hours per week. Originally from Peru, Celso is very passionate about youth outreach and has some great ideas. He is willing to help in other ministries as well. Even though he officially does not begin his training with us until the end of June, Celso has already been a friend to LUMINA by inviting Correen to do a live interview on his weekly radio program on Radio Centro FM, “*Usted y Su Familia*” in May. LUMINA’s staff is very excited to see how God blesses our ministry this year through Celso!



Manifest /IMPACT project at 112 New Dorwart Street, Lancaster, Pa. Above is the front of the property, above left is back, right is interior downstairs view.



On the air: Correen and Celso Mesias, Lancaster Theological Seminary student and host of Usted y Su Familia.

IMPACT! Missions, Our Partner in Neighborhood Revitalization Ministry

IMPACT! Missions is a non-profit, interdenominational Christian Housing Ministry in Lancaster County. It was created to help low income homeowners (living at less than 2 times the poverty level) who are struggling with severe maintenance issues, even to the point of losing their homes. IMPACT! connects these homeowners with volunteers who can make their homes warm, safe, and dry—free of charge.



To keep these repairs free, IMPACT! generates funds through donations, through the sale of gently used cabinetry and building materials at their store in Refton, and through the sale of renovated properties in Lancaster City. But in everything, Executive Director Matthew Beakes says, “the focus is on showing Jesus Christ’s love through the work we do. We are building and strengthening our relationship with Jesus through service.”

IMPACT! has recently entered into an agreement with the Lancaster City Redevelopment Authority to rehab their most blighted properties. The goal is to provide affordable housing for low

to moderate income families ready to buy their first home. To date, IMPACT! has renovated and rebuilt over twenty houses, and their efforts are revitalizing whole neighborhoods. Wherever IMPACT! completes a project, neighbors begin fixing up their own homes and interacting with each other more. A sense of community is reborn.



Matthew Beakes,
Executive Director of
IMPACT! Missions

Matt calls the project houses “a win win” situation. For every house rehab project leading to a sale, IMPACT! can perform many essential services free to folks whose homes are no longer safe, warm, or dry. This year alone, IMPACT! volunteers have provided 6 new water heaters, insulated and repaired leaking windows at five houses, rebuilt a collapsing roof, and constructed several wheelchair ramps. IMPACT! supplies all the tools needed for the job, and volunteers provide the labor. Clients are referred to IMPACT! by churches and social services. For more information, please see the IMPACT! Missions website at <http://www.impact-camps.org> or contact Matt by email info@impactcamps.org



IMPACT! Missions volunteers
at 112 New Dorwart St.

Professional Clothing Bank

Thank you to Otterbein UMC for providing and installing an air conditioning unit in the Professional Clothing Bank! We now hope to offer services all summer. Here are two testimonials we received recently.

“We have a Career course that all students in our program are required to complete and, part of that course includes a mock interview process. The majority of our students have difficulty preparing for the mock interview because they do not have appropriate work clothes, nor do they have the funds to get them.”

Emily Fields, Director of the
Lancaster County Academy

“I just wanted to thank you for sending me the information and to let you know that you are not just giving people clothes, you are giving them self-confidence. You are giving them a hand up to begin a new chapter in their lives! Thank you for your services.”

Angela Germer, Family Development
Specialist, Community Action Program

Community Day Camp Newsflash

Community Day Camp will be **Monday June 30 through Friday August 3 from 10 am to 2 pm.** Our program will be Group’s “Shipwrecked.”

If your church is doing the same program, please consider donating to LUMINA any materials you have leftover or lending us scenery and props.

Most importantly, since you will already know the teaching material and the songs, PLEASE come join our team!

Especially needed are small group guides, cooks, administrative help, and music leaders.

Everyone who helps with Community Day Camp will be treated to a free ticket to see “Jesus” at Sight and Sound, because that’s where our field trip is this summer.

Thank you to Sight and Sound for donating free tickets for the children and discounted tickets for adult and youth helpers!



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Camper Care

All 22 of our campers have been matched to sponsors! We celebrated with an Italian ice party for campers, sponsors, and families. Gretna Glen sent a counselor to do an orientation program at our party, since 8 of our campers have never been to Gretna before. After the program, the children were invited to choose a new backpack and fill it with supplies for camp. LUMINA is still in need of drivers and chaperones to take the children to camp. Please call Correen to check dates and times we need help: 717-808-8633



Coleman Outlet employees gave Correen assistance loading up the camping supplies, and a twenty percent discount!

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Kids Night Mission Teams Sought for 2018-19 Schoolyear

LUMINA needs to find fresh new groups of 8-10 people who would be willing to help manage Kids' Night for 4 consecutive Monday evenings between September 10 and May 20. These mission teams would provide a hot, kid-friendly (but nutritious) dinner or substantial snack for approximately 35 children. Teams would also prepare a craft and an object lesson with Bible verse each week. One or two volunteers may also be asked to chaperone on the van rides to and from church. Most importantly, team volunteers would spend time with the children, play games with them, and give them love and undivided attention. We are looking for positive, Christian role models, with Safe Sanctuary clearances on file at their churches. If your church cannot raise an entire team, please consider partnering with another church to combine for a full group of 8-10. Youth are welcome for this ministry, but adults should make up at least half of your team.

NOTICE: If you have received this newsletter in error, or no longer wish to be on our mailing list, please notify us by phone or email. Thank you!



You can reach LUMINA with your requests, donations, suggestions or other information by contacting:

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