

Project URGE, Inc.

Annual Report 2009

Urban Revitalization, God Experienced

Children and Youth Ministries Development:

Saturday Sonshine Program:

Since December of 2008 the Saturday Sonshine Program has met about twice a month and served over 100 individual children between the ages of 6–16, primarily residing in the 14613 and 14621 area codes of the city. Average attendance for each outing is 18–24.

A wide range of outings and activities are planned with the purpose of providing *educational, edifying and entertaining* experiences. An

element of exercise and spiritual direction is included. Adventures

include trips to

Watkins Glen, horse & wagon rides, horseback riding, basketball & relays at the gym, Gallery One, Mud About You (pottery), Museums, Slam High (urban poetry), Mendon Ponds hike, bowling, Taughannock Falls, Braddock Bay, Letchworth State Park, Elvin Weaver's Farm, Genesee River/Maplewood, and Grimes Glen.



Thanks to volunteers Jane Ames, Pamela Brown, Melody Burri, Darryl Holliday, Garry & Mary Manuel, as well as Bryan & Christin Babcock, Joony Lomenzo, and others.

Summer Camp Assistance:

Helping churches to partner with summer camp activities has been part of the Project URGE strategy since the year we began. The first step is making churches aware of the opportunity to either host a summer camp for two or three days or to assist with volunteers, financial scholarships or with drinks and snacks. These opportunities primarily exist within our Project URGE “family” of affiliates



such as, Community Lutheran Ministry, Rochester Family Mission and Grace Community Village. We promote this through our general meetings, newsletter, website and through our bi-monthly e-briefs.

Throughout the year there are numerous opportunities within our affiliated organizations and in Project URGE 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.

US (Urban/Suburban Youth Fellowship):

In August 2009 our group hosted a fellowship and service event. The large group met at Grace United Methodist Church and then divided into smaller groups, which went out to serve the community through Foodlink, SWAN, Outreach Temple, and Parsells Community Church. After our time of service we spent time in fellowship bowling at Terrace Gardens Bowling Center. It was a great day for **US**.



In November 2009, our group hosted a Concert of Praise at Fairport United Methodist Church. The Step Team from Roberts Wesleyan, dancers from Yahweh Ballet and Grace United Methodist Church, praise groups from Outreach Temple, Crosswinds Wesleyan and Fairport United Methodist Church all offered their praises to God during the concert.

In 2010 we have already planned a Sledding Event for March 13 – we hope many churches will join **US**! We are also planning to host another community service event. This year we will gather at Fairport United Methodist Church for the event, date to be determined. The annual Concert of Praise will be held in October or November, date and location to be determined.

We continue to seek to create new relationships through working together, discussion, prayer, worship and recreation.

URGEnt Presentation & Tour:



Our seventh annual URGEnt Presentation and Tour was one of the most successful to date. The Salvation Army (100 West Ave) proved to be a great location for approximately 60 people in attendance (about 20 no-shows and 10 walk-ins). Over 20 ministries and agencies participated, including Child Evangelism Fellowship, Children Awaiting Parents, Clowning Glory, Community Lutheran Ministries, Dance for Joy, Embracing Options, Foodlink, His Hands Nursing, Hope

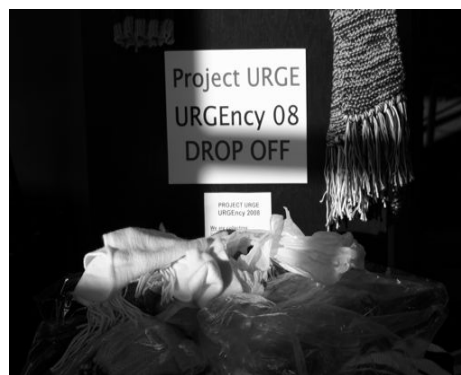
Initiatives, Gerhardt Neighborhood ORC, Grace Community Village, Jacob's Ladder, Moms in Touch, Outreach Temple Home Mission, Project URGE, Rochester Recovery House, Risego, Salvation Army, Sanctuary House, SWAN and Youth for Christ.

This year the presentation included a video with leaders from each organization sharing their purpose and vision, and listing specific ways volunteers could become involved. This video will be posted on the Project URGE website to encourage others to find opportunities to join. As a result of the tour, some "tourists" have already become involved with some of the organizations and representatives from new churches have begun attending the meetings. The event was orchestrated by Ron Tocci, Garry Manuel and Melody Burri, and remains an excellent example of organizations sharing and coming together for the common purpose of educating the public and inviting participation in the various programs offered. We were very grateful for the Salvation Army's willingness to host the event in their spacious and strategically placed building.

URGEncy Collection of Food & Clothing:

Giving was down this year and underlined the need to get more churches involved. Those who donated included Crosswinds Wesleyan Church, St. John's Lutheran Church, folks in the Mennonite community of Rushville and individuals ("tourists") who participated in the Presentation and Tour. Many thanks to Fred, Kim and Juliana Stressing, and Kathryn Pridey for their hard work collecting, sorting and delivering the following contributions:

Men's coats – 82
Women's coats – 69
Children's coats – 37
Bedclothes – 5 large bags
Towels – 2 large bags
Knitted hats – 115
Scarves – 40



Gloves and mittens – 35 pairs
Men's clothes – 4 large bags
Women's clothes – 3 bags
Baby/toddler clothing and supplies – 1 bag
Shoes and boots – 2 boxes
Baseball caps – 1 box
Food – 250 lbs.

An additional 12 bags of clothing and coats arrived after the conclusion of the collection and were delivered in the following weeks. Proceeds from the day were distributed to: Catholic Family Services, Embracing Options, Gerhardt Outreach Ministry Center, Grace Community Village, Outreach Temple, Salvation Army, and Hope Initiatives.



The Bread Run Team, affectionately known as the “BreadRunners”, has now been operational for 6 years. In 2009 there were approximately 9 families and/or individuals who continued the weekly Saturday deliveries of baked goods and desserts to Women’s Place (CFC), Nielsen House, Outreach Temple Home Mission, Sanctuary House, Mercy Residential, Grace Community Village, Eastern Service Workers, Francis Center and if there were remaining goods, they are taken to House of Mercy, St. Joseph’s Hospitality House and the Open Door Mission. This team consists of folks primarily from the Canandaigua/Farmington area, who pick up the items from Tops on Lake Avenue in Rochester for the deliveries. The round trip is approximately 60 miles, taking about two hours or so.

This Bread Run continues to be a ministry appreciated by the many organizations we serve, who in turn, serve under-resourced neighborhoods. It is a great opportunity for folks who would like to be involved, but just aren’t sure how. Once “BreadRunners” experience first-hand the needs of the city many of them find other ways of using their gifts to become more involved. Some have even accepted positions on the Project URGE Board of Directors. But most importantly, the first time you hear, “We didn’t have any bread today” in a place that is caring for women and children, you know you’re doing something more than dropping off groceries.

Concert of Praise:

On November 15 the Project URGE Concert of Praise was hosted by **US** and held at the Fairport United Methodist Church. The event was youth-led with both urban and suburban churches involved and approximately 180 attending. As in past years the service included worship and praise music in various styles, prayer, dance, drama and mime. It was an inspiring service of honoring our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and celebrating our unity in Him. Participants enjoyed a refreshing absence of the typical divisions we find in many of our churches.



Jacob's Ladder Team:

While activities this year have been relatively light, we expect much activity in 2010. Ministries and agencies served by Jacob's Ladder in 2009 include Parsells Community Church, Risego, Inc, and Warwick Full Gospel COGIC. In each case multiple workdays were invested with skilled volunteers logging in a total of 105 man-hours. The work included painting, dry wall, fixing a leak in a roof, and other renovations.



Dr. Peter Grinion of Parsells Community Church writes:

“On behalf of the officers and members of Parsells Avenue Community Church, I use this medium to express our profound gratitude to you/Project URGE for the many volunteers you provided to help with our Church renovation. Indeed, our building has come a long way since our first workday, ten months ago. We highlight the services of the Jacob's Ladder Team, the young people's group (US), and others...”

Social Events:

Our volunteers work together all year long. In keeping with our mission of breaking down barriers and creating relationships, we are intentional about social events that help us become better acquainted and provide an opportunity to celebrate our efforts to reflect God's "kingdom on earth as it is in heaven."

Annual Dinner

At the Project URGE annual dinner Noel Castellanos, Jim Swearingen and Dave Clark from CCDA (Christian Community Development Association) were our special guests. Bill Brown provided gospel/blues music prior to and during dinner. Approximately fifty people attended dinner and fellowship at the Triphammer Restaurant in High Falls, where people had a chance to acquaint themselves with other leaders and volunteers. A short, celebratory presentation honoring the volunteers in the organization was given as well.

Annual Picnic

In July we held our annual picnic at Ellison Park, where about 50 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 conversation.



Volunteer Coordination:

Project URGE organized service projects and volunteer opportunities for approximately 250 plus volunteers from high schools, colleges, church groups and individuals serving organizations such as: Community Lutheran Ministry, Eastern Service Workers, Foodlink, Grace Community Village, His Hands Nursing, His Branches, Homeless & Housing along with Catholic Family Center's Resource Center and Elder Care, Mercy Residential, Outreach Temple, Parsells Ave. Community Church, SWAN, Volunteers of America, Risego, Inc., and others.

Williamson High School continues to be a major highlight each year. For five years their service day has been a win/win for our affiliated organizations and the school. They typically have visited twice a year, serving 7-8 organizations each time.

We find ourselves receiving more calls and e-mails requesting this service. One of the primary goals of Project URGE is to introduce people to ways they can become

involved and serve others. A conservative estimate of value in regard to hours of In-Kind-Service volunteering for and through Project URGE totaled approximately 3000 plus for 2009. This includes folks serving on our various ministry teams within URGE.

Prayer Team:

The prayer team's responsibility is to pray for the organizations, initiatives and people working and volunteering with Project URGE and the collaborative affiliates. Prayer requests are sent to the team as they are received, and members have specific prayer times individually and they pray prior to each Project URGE meeting and/or event. Communication between team members occurs primarily through the internet or by phone. The prayers are focused on various Project URGE initiatives, the city, organizations and individuals affiliated with Project URGE. Our hope is to continue to increase the size of this team and meet corporately more often for 2010.

Publicity and Information:

(Includes URGE Presentation & Tour, Newsletters, Website, Letters, Booklets, Brochures, DVDs, E-briefs & Speaking Engagements):

We rely on our website, booklets and brochures to provide information to groups and individuals about affiliate organization needs and what volunteer opportunities exist if they chose to become involved. Our E-briefs (e-mail alerts) are sent approximately twice a month to approximately 200 people covering both organizations and individuals to keep participants informed about needs and upcoming events.

In 2009 we distributed approximately one hundred booklets and brochures. We also mailed hundreds of cards, letters and invitations to social events, seminars and community collaborative workshops.

Through our newsletter (distributed to approximately 750), we keep our community, organizations, volunteers, churches, public servants and donors informed as to what has transpired and what is about to take place. This newsletter is both mailed out and posted on our website. Due to the cost we sent two newsletters in 2009.

Our seventh annual "URGE Presentation & Tour" was once again held in November and is a major means of publicizing agencies, ministries, needs and volunteer opportunities. More detail is provided above.

Community Building - Christian Community Development - 4 Point Plan:

General Meetings serve in our effort to communicate what's happening in our circles, build



relationships and share information. Each general meeting features one or two organizations discussing their needs and elaborating on their focus. The collaborative process often begins at our general meetings.

Attendance at both meetings and events are up, and more people and agencies are connecting as a result. Sandy Arena sent this update from "Dance for Joy Ballet:" *"We are having the Roberts Step Team come to the studio for a free workshop on Friday night (met them through the Concert of Praise!) Project URGE is doing its job and has helped us in soooooo many ways. I don't know what we would have done last summer without having the Rochester Bible church for rehearsal space!!!"*

In addition, more organizations are becoming Affiliated Collaborative Partners, for example Children Awaiting Parents, A Heart for the City, Hope Initiatives, Gerhardt Neighborhood Outreach Center, and Comfort In Crisis.

A branch of Project URGE is now "officially" up and running in Syracuse, being launched and led by Professor Len Erb, who also is on the faculty of Roberts Wesleyan College.

CCDA (Christian Community Development Association)

We continue our membership in CCDA. This fall, Project URGE assisted five in attending the annual CCDA conference, held in Ohio. Each time we have sent representatives to the conference, they have come back with fresh ideas, new resources for community development and inspired by both the workshops, Bible teaching and worship. In addition CCDA CEO, Noel Castellanos, Jim Swearingen and others did a CCDA Café at our annual dinner.

We continued meeting once a month with FACT (Faith and Communities Together) and CUPP (Community University Partnership Project). Training sessions correlating to capacity building were offered in 2009 and will again be presented in spring of 2010. Project URGE will participate in the Collaboration training session and distribute the information to its organizations affiliates.

While the "4 Point Plan" (see past articles and www.projecturge.org for more information) continues to be 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. One of the groups established is WIN (Wellness In the Neighborhood), with the lead organization being Grace Community Village, working to build involvement by people living and working in those specific neighborhoods. WIN is funded by the Greater Rochester Health Foundation, which is looking at a grassroots approach to Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) that applies to creating healthier neighborhoods. This encompasses a wholistic approach to solving the challenges confronting urban centers, which Project URGE had first encountered through Christian Community Development Association (CCDA) leaders.

The second collaborative we have been involved with is the **South West Community Roundtable**, which also meets once a month at School #29, off Genesee St. Their mission is: To provide enriched and supportive school and community environments for youth, families, and seniors by promoting cooperation among service providers who have complementary objectives as they relate to holistic “community health” (physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, educational, nutritional, economic, environmental, and safety).

Our focus remains on building stronger alliances through a collaborative approach. Our advantage is in the fact that Project URGE takes the posture of a servant and seeks ways that we may strengthen others, by way of our resourceful connections and talents being applied where needed.

Housing and Homeless Programs:

Hearts and Homes Program and FORTH (Faith Organizations Restoring and Transitioning the Homeless): After three years this plan remains to materialize. The stumbling block to starting this program has been one of finances. We have submitted two grant applications (07 & 08) for this program, but were denied. Furthermore, a couple opportunities to partner with two other agencies did not materialize. This was a disappointment in lieu of the time and effort invested in the preparation. We must reassess our efforts in the coming year and find a leader who is able to champion this initiative and devote full attention to the housing dilemma.

Fundraising:

Our fundraising came once again through churches and individuals. While we do plan a more aggressive campaign for 2010, we will continue to avoid events and activities that might compromise the integrity of the organization. The band MeRJe, raised \$500.00 by offering a concert at Bloomfield High School. We broke even on our fundraiser dinner. There were many gifts donated in memory of Howard Manuel (our Director/Founder’s father), who went home to be with the Lord in early 2009.

This coming year we’ll be applying for grants to support specific missions within URGE.

We are grateful to a core group of individuals and churches who support our efforts on a regular basis. Several of the churches supporting Project URGE not only do so financially, but their members are actively engaged either with URGE or some of our affiliated collaborative partners. Three churches have been with us every step of our eight year journey!

Grant & Research Team:

Once again, we were part of a consortium (FACT/CUPP) of organizations that applied for the Capital Compassion Fund; however, this grant request did not materialize. This team is also in need of a team leader for 2010.

Testimonials and Words of Thanks to Project URGE:

“We are grateful for your generous gift of coats, towels, blankets, hats and also for the bread you bring to us each week.” Susan Aiello, Exec. Director, Mercy Residential Services

“I want to express my sincere thanks for your assistance with coordinating service days projects for our students. Project URGE provides opportunities that otherwise would not be available to them.”

Mark Schichtel – Assistant Principal, Williamson High School

“Thank you for the heads up regarding the Community Forum, also, please let me again tell you that I appreciate you so much for all that you are doing for the children.” Pamela Brown

“On behalf of the officers and members of Parsells Avenue Community Church, I use this medium to express our profound gratitude to you/Project URGE for the many volunteers you provided to help with our Church renovation. Indeed, our building has come a long way since our first workday, ten months ago. We highlight the services of the Jacob’s Ladder Team, the young people’s group (US), RIT volunteers, Lott Carey Mission’s group and the group from Chattanooga, Tennessee.”

Peter Grinion, M.Div., Ed.D, Ph.D., LCSW, Pastor

“Hey Garry – last Saturday we served at Outreach Temple. It was a great experience. Eva and Paula are wonderful women of God, it was great to serve with them.” Kate Alden, Student at Roberts Wesleyan College

“Overall our youth and adults learned a lot about parts of the city that they were not familiar with and achieved a sense of accomplishment and pride in reaching out to those in need right here in our own community while raising money (through the 30 Hour Famine) to help those worldwide.”

Frank Mancini – Trinity Emmanuel Church

“Thanks so much for the bread/pastries. It helps so much here at the house. Your kindness will not be forgotten.” Staff & Residents of Nielsen House

“Your support through the Bread Drop and Youth Groups are blessings.” Mildred Anderson – ESWA

“I appreciate you for taking the time and earnestness in what you do along with the faithfulness to complete the task and a job well done.” Mary A. Jones, The Seedtime and Harvest Outreach Program

“We appreciate Project URGE’s ability to network within the community and help arrange service projects, such as the volunteer workday with Williamson School District. Getting to know other members of faith-based ministries in our community is also helpful; because we know another set of colleagues we can call for advice or to share experiences and brainstorming.” Ruth Fischer, Catholic Family Center

A Look Ahead into 2010

The economic downturn seems to be on the lips of everyone these days. People are genuinely fearful of their future. Most organizations will need to trim their budgets and many non-profits will suffer severe financial hits. On the other hand, we, as Christians now have one of our greatest opportunities to live out our call.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Philippians 2:3 & 4

“It really boils down to this: all life is interrelated. We are all caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied into a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects us all indirectly.” – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

“Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Hebrews 10:23 & 24

In 2010 we'll begin by lining up service projects for three groups, including Williamson High School once again. Project URGE will continue its participation in the WIN Project, SW Community Roundtable, FACT (Faith and Communities Together), along with our various teams like Jacob's Ladder and the Bread Run. There is excitement around the *Saturday Sunshine Program* and *US* with the promise that it holds for children and youth to experience biblical relevance in tandem with entertaining activities. Our goal is filling their lives with positive reinforcement that will deter their involvement in unhealthy lifestyles. Additionally developing more high impact ministry efforts around this program such as, Hearts In Homes, FORTH, Jobs for Life and the Parent Project around these efforts will further stabilize families and contribute to transforming neighborhoods.

Project URGE will be continuing it's annual URGEnt Presentation & Tour, as well as our URGEncy Clothing and Food Collection the first Saturday in November. This is one way we help sustain our affiliated organizations with goods and volunteers, as well as prospective financial supporters.

In closing, we once again plead for churches to join all of us in working together to discover ways they can aptly and passionately serve. “Love your neighbor as yourself. If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.”

Your support will continue to keep Project URGE's current programs operational. Despite the economic illness worldwide our belief is that in 2010 supporters of our mission will rally to allow us to dig deeper into the systemic causes of poverty. We have the plans and much of the expertise. Our hindrance is financial. If you currently are a donor or volunteer, we offer our sincere thanks. For those standing on the sidelines, we invite you to participate with us. Join us to see what God can do through you and in you!

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.

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



Goals & Objectives:

- 1. Assist churches to unite in ministering together, in an effort to promote and spread the Gospel message by working on problems that deal with (a) poverty, (b) racism and (c) raising awareness of opportunities to serve and helping to facilitate the involvement of more volunteers in a variety of ministry settings.**
- 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.**

“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.” Matthew 5:15

Respectfully submitted,

**Garry E Manuel
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