

Building Community.

Enriching Lives.

2014 ANNUAL REPORT





Why we exist

The Milwaukee Christian Center believes all people deserve to be treated with compassion and respect. We exist to move people beyond the challenges of poverty through life-affirming programs and supportive services.

MCC is a beacon of hope for the impoverished by compassionately guiding people out of poverty to create a community where suffering is alleviated, the inherent value of each person is cherished, and opportunities abound.



Message from our executive director

Someone recently asked me what Milwaukee Christian Center does. I explained that we're here to build, strengthen and enrich our south side community. And it's what the Center has been doing for 93 years.



As I reflected on that statement, our purpose, I felt a deep sense of pride. So many people have contributed their talents and passions to bring us closer as neighbors on the near south side and beyond. There are so many stories to tell. Good stories.

Our work continues to focus on four initiatives: neighborhood improvement, offerings for youth and seniors, and emergency food assistance.

In this report, we'll tell you about the exciting launch of the Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, which helps develop resident leaders to solve quality-of-life issues around the 1.5-square-mile area of Clark Square, Muskego Way and Historic Mitchell Street. We'll share stories about young people who now mentor others and seniors who rely on us to help them stay healthy, independent and socially involved. And we'll introduce you to someone who benefited directly from our food pantry—and who is holding her family together.

Yes, 2014 was a full and rich year.

We remain grateful for all the partners that make our work possible, from funders to community residents, to staff and members of our board of directors. Such commitment ensures our work goes on and that our community continues to grow.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Higgins". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Higgins,
Executive Director

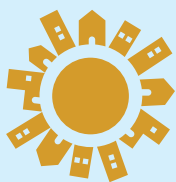
Neighborhood Improvement



Building tomorrows

Well-maintained homes that are safe, weather tight and free of hazardous materials are the building blocks of a healthy community. Our **Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP)** strengthens Milwaukee neighborhoods by providing low-income homeowners much-needed residential repairs, accessibility improvements and rehabilitation services.

With the aid of a block grant from the City of Milwaukee, we performed a variety of home repair services on 37 different properties this year. The services included structural repairs, lead abatement and window replacement.



Building Neighborhood Capacity Program

Recognition of our effort to build strong neighborhoods came in October when the federally-funded **Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP)** chose MCC to expand as its third site in Milwaukee. This program helps residents develop, implement and sustain plans that make their neighborhoods successful and vibrant places to live. Along with other local funding partners and collaborating agencies, we're focusing on the 1.5 square mile area of Clarke Square, Muskego Way and Historic Mitchell Street, helping revitalize critical neighborhoods of the south side.



Our **Youthbuild** program extends the promise of building tomorrows to the young people in the neighborhoods we serve. How? By teaching at-risk adults ages 18-25 hands-on construction skills while we help them to attain their GEDs. This year participants built and sold three homes to income-qualified first time homebuyers and began work on seven more structures. The program also received a three-year competitive AmeriCorps grant based on its ability to meet the extreme need of the community.

2014 Youthbuild by the Numbers



homes built and sold, 3
homes in construction, 7



Ariel's story

“The world moves in gears. We all need each other,” says Ariel Dotstry. But the gears didn’t always mesh for Ariel like they do now.

Neighborhood Improvement



School was a struggle. Despite above average test scores, he earned a reputation as a troublemaker. And in the 11th grade, Ariel learned he was going to be a father.

Ariel was working temporary jobs to support his family when he enrolled in the **Youthbuild** program at MCC. He wanted to earn his GED and make more money to support his daughter. It took Ariel just four months to earn his diploma and he completed the program with multiple professional certifications plus an AmeriCorps scholarship for continuing education.

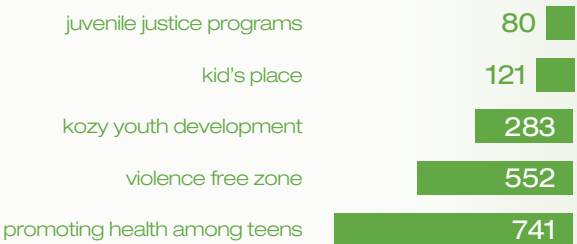
Now, Ariel will be an AmeriCorps worksite assistant for **Youthbuild**, learning new skills every day and mentoring future Youthbuild members. He's proud of his accomplishments, and more importantly, proud of his relationship with his fiancée and his daughter. We're proud of Ariel, too.

Youth

We're raising opportunities

The young people we serve today will grow into the adults who shape the future of our neighborhoods. We nurture their full potential by providing academic enrichment, social development, recreation and leadership activities in a safe and supportive environment.

MCC Youth Programs by the Numbers



Our two afterschool programs, **Kid's Place** and **Kozy Youth Development**, provided positive academic and social activities for more than 400 neighborhood kids ages 7-18. And, through our work with Milwaukee County Children's Court and in schools citywide via our **Violence Free Zone (VFZ)** and **Promoting Health Among Teens (PHAT)** programs, we helped hundreds more by giving them the tools and the confidence to become responsible and productive members of the community.

In all, we served more than 1,750 kids last year.

Daisy's story

“I grew up not knowing how to dance. Now when I go to a quinceañera, I can dance,” exclaims 14-year-old Daisy Del Aguila.

A former self-described wallflower, Daisy used to idle away her summers. “A couch potato,” she says. Not anymore. This summer, Daisy became a counselor at our MCC Summer Camp, part of our **Kosciuszko Youth Development** program. This is her fourth year participating in the eight-week day camp for kids ages 6-13.

“I grew up not knowing how to dance. Now... I can dance!”

– Daisy Del Aguila

In her years as a camper, Daisy loved interacting with all the other kids from the neighborhood. “The camp helped me get over my shyness,” she said. She made friends with kids from varied ethnic and economic backgrounds while participating in a wide range of recreational, educational and cultural activities. Her favorites are dance class and the Super Readers Program.

Daisy relishes her position as a camp counselor and role model to younger campers. “The kids look up to me now—the little kids, especially,” she beams. “Before, no one looked up to me; I was just the girl in the corner.”



Senior Support



We're caring like family

Our senior support programming helps adults over 60 remain healthy, in their homes and vitally connected to their community. We serve this population in two ways: through our onsite **Senior Center**, a welcoming space where seniors learn, socialize and exercise in a multilingual atmosphere, and through our **Family Care Unit**, where case managers and nurses provide critical services to seniors so they can stay in their homes.



In 2014, we served 90 seniors, specializing in meeting the needs of Hmong and Lao resettled refugees, while integrating a growing population of African American, Caucasian and Latino seniors from the neighborhood.



Seniors enjoyed 4,975 hot and nutritious meals prepared onsite, five days a week.



We provided 491 health checks to participants, with case managers following up with the seniors' healthcare providers, if needed.



We teamed up with Marquette University's Exercise Science program to engage seniors in activities proven to decrease chronic illness. Seniors participating in low-impact exercise: a walking program, fall prevention exercises and gardening.



Twice a week we conducted English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) classes to empower our seniors with the communication tools they need to advocate for their overall health and well-being.



Through our Family Care Unit, we served 232 seniors and people with disabilities, providing them with comprehensive case management to keep them healthy and supported in the least restrictive environment.



Senior Support



The Ellington's Story

Roger and Kathy Ellington live in a duplex on Milwaukee's east side. It's the home Kathy grew up in, the one she's shared with her husband of 55 years, the house they made a home for three children, who now have children of their own.

Their home, their family, is their everything.

It's true that Kathy's knees, wrists and back aren't what they used to be. But Roger's diagnosis of diabetes came as a surprise and a challenge to manage. In 2012, when son Barry found his father deathly ill on the sofa, he quit his job and moved to the upstairs flat with his wife and their dog. He made it his mission to care for his parents.

MCC's **Family Care Unit** helps. Jessica, an MCC case manager, and Melissa, a nurse, visit regularly to oversee Kathy's and Roger's medications and to conduct health checks. They also ensure a safe environment, which is why MCC helped the family install support bars, a transfer chair and a safety mat in the bathroom, in the home that has served them so well.

Of Jessica and Melissa, says Kathy, "They're like family." And to the Ellingtons, family is everything.

Khamphanh's Story

As a child in Laos, Khamphanh Saphanethong farmed alongside his family—growing fruits, vegetables and rice. He joined the army at 21 to fight communism and he did for 25 years. But when a communist organization captured Laos in 1975, he fled for his own safety, forced into leaving his wife and five children behind. For 15 years, a refugee camp in Thailand was home.

Senior Support continued

There, he began a new life and remarried, eventually immigrating to Hawaii and then moving to Milwaukee to live with his wife's daughter. Together, Khamphanh and his wife attended MCC's Senior Center programs, grateful for translators who spoke Laotian, and enjoying the company of others with similar backgrounds.

But in 2009, Khamphanh's wife died. He fell into a deep depression and no longer participated in the programs they once loved. Years passed. Then, out of the blue, he chose to rekindle his relationships with the people at the MCC, the only service agency that can provide the translation and transportation services he needed.

It didn't take long for staff members to recognize that Khamphanh's home required a new roof, gutters, windows and other improvements, and that he would benefit from funding made possible through the agency's **Neighborhood Improvement Project** (NIP). And it didn't take Khamphanh long to realize that he'd benefit from socializing at the center, just like he used to do.

Now, three times a week, he plays games and meets friends old and new. Turns out that one served with him in the Vietnam War. Another is from his village in Laos. And now there's something else for Khamphanh to look forward to: the fall. That's when it's time to harvest the rice.



Food Pantry



We're nourishing our community

The vitality of our community reflects the vitality of our neighbors. A family that has enough to eat is happier, more active and a more productive part of the community. We help alleviate hunger in the neighborhoods surrounding MCC by providing those in need with emergency food supplies and connections to community-based resources.

In 2014, we provided 4,820 of our neighbors with 14,511 allotments of emergency food—containing a 3-5 day supply of fresh food and pantry staples—and more than 162 allotments of infant formula and 413 allotments of diapers. Additionally, we provided 4,211 stock boxes filled with commodity foods, given exclusively to seniors, pregnant women and mothers with young children. And, because we are a Choice Pantry, families can select the items



Emergency Food Pantry by the Numbers

4,820 individuals served

4,211 stock boxes distributed

14,511 allotments of emergency food distributed



that best meet their needs, which minimizes waste and contributes to a more gracious atmosphere. We're the only Choice Pantry in Milwaukee open five days a week.

As a sign of our effectiveness and the dignity in which we provide our services, the Hunger Task Force repeatedly awards us their highest rating.

Sheila's Story

"You never expect these things to happen to you," Sheila admitted, a working mother of four. Funding cuts at the nonprofit where she worked cost Sheila her job. And just like that, her best efforts to put food on the table and to give her kids a brighter future seemed like insurmountable tasks.

Food Pantry



“You never expect these things to happen to you.”

Stretching her FoodShare dollars as far as she could, Sheila realized she still needed extra help. “It was really hard breaking it to the kids that there was no money for Christmas,” Sheila said.

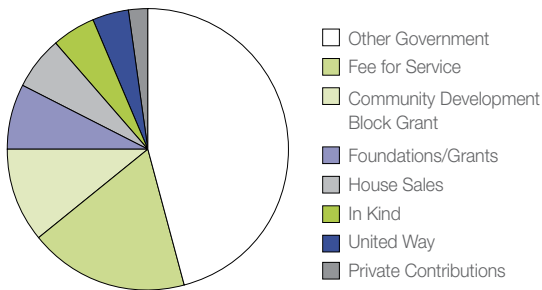
The staff at our **Emergency Food Pantry** stepped in to lighten her load. Sheila selected the food she knew how to prepare and learned about local job opportunities.

Sheila remains optimistic that her family will find long-term financial stability. In the meantime, the Emergency Food Pantry staff continues to provide her with community resources that help her family meet its basic needs, relieving some of the stress she feels day-to-day.

“The things that the people at the MCC do matter so much,” she says. “I’m so thankful for their help.”

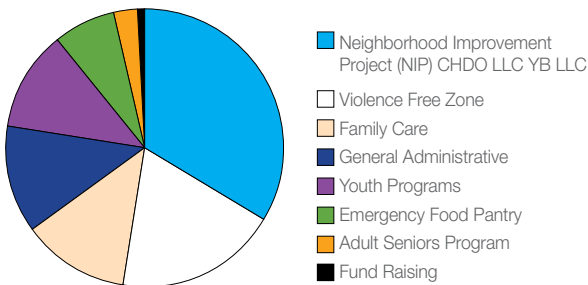


Audited Financials



REVENUES

Other Government	\$2,993,157.85
Fee For Service	\$1,112,032.48
Community Development Block Grant	\$656,899.00
Foundations/Grants.....	\$260,625.00
House Sales.....	\$382,940.20
In Kind.....	\$304,361.34
United Way.....	\$256,738.93
Private Contributions	\$119,426.20
Total	\$6,086,181.00



EXPENSES

Neighborhood Improvement Project (NIP); CHDO LLC; YB LLC.....	\$2,001,597.39
Violence Free Zone.....	\$1,137,810.57
Family Care	\$738,484.43
General Administrative.....	\$734,578.45
Youth Programs	\$698,070.22
Emergency Food Pantry	\$426,722.21
Adult Seniors Program	\$174,115.05
Fund Raising	\$37,691.37
Total	(\$5,953,383.00)



Community Support

Milwaukee Christian Center is grateful to all of our donors and supporters.





Thank you

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Samantha Collier

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Dodge Powell, Youthbuild member, hits the books in pursuit of his GED.

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Mindy Biedrzycki

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Chia Xiong, Senior Center participant, selects items from the Emergency Food Pantry.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Sally De Quadro | Marsha Gardner |
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Lettenberger
Margaret Ley
Jim Lindenberg
Ardys Listug
James Litscher, Jr.
Bob and Kathy Litzau



Arleta Cobb, Promoting Health Among Teens' Program Manager, is proud of her participants' progress and leadership.

Ana Lopez	Gregory and
Candice Lovell	Jacqueline Parrish
Graciela Lucio	Laura Patten
Gregory and Therese Lyons	Neal Pease
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Elenie Opffer	Joseph Stultz
Corey Oschmann	Ashley Sweda
Esther Padrick	Kathryn Taylor

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Melissa Tempel
Taahiraa Thomas
Megan Thomassen
Kris Tontis
Tamika Townsend
Naomi Treder
Robert and Mary Trimmier
Timothy Twaddle
Maritza Ugarte
Kristin Vaillencourt
Catherine Valentine
Patricia Van Acker
Barbara Van Alstine
Michael Van Alstine and
Pat Nelson
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Kristin Weber
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Anne Zizzo



Youthbuild members look out for hungry families in the neighborhood by donating food to the Emergency Food Pantry.

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Neighborhood children unite with local firefighters at a Building Neighborhood Capacity block party.

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Wauwatosa Avenue United Methodist Church
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Housing Authority
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A day of fishing in Kosciusko Youth Development's summer camp.



Pulaski High School students tutor children at Curtin Elementary School through the Violence Free Zone's student leadership group.

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 Feeding the Hungry
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 and Staff
 The Higgins Family

Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy in the 2014 donor list. If your name has been omitted, misspelled or incorrectly listed, please bring the error to the attention of MCC by calling **414-645-5350** or emailing **amazon@mccwi.org**. Thank you.

Milwaukee Christian Center

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Karen Higgins

Milwaukee Christian Center



“The world moves in gears.
We all need each other,”

- Ariel Dotstry, former client and now site supervisor for MCC's Youthbuild program

We invite you to join us as we move people beyond the challenges of poverty, through life-affirming programs and supportive services.

Milwaukee Christian Center
807 S. 14th Street, Milwaukee, WI 53204

www.mccwi.org

p: 414-645-5350 | f: 414-645-1859

