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“Whatever the problem, community is the answer.”

– Margaret Wheatley

Board of Directors

Brigit Hassig
Christian Schock
Dave Veltkamp
Jay VanGroningen
Ken Genzink
Ren Broekhuizen

At **CommunityWorks**, we help you activate your community’s potential to create meaningful, lasting change.

Find out more at comm-works.org.

What’s in a Name?

When I was a young boy growing up in rural Africa my friends nicknamed me Erikios. Later in life as I moved to the U.S. and began working in neighborhoods, I became known as E-money. These are names of endearment that remind me I have been known and seen, that I have a connection to those that call that place, that context, home.

But what about an organization? What happens if the context changes? Should the name remain the same, or change to fit its new circumstance? This was the question that the Board of Directors for Great Lakes Urban have been wrestling with for some time. We also put this question to you, our community of friends and supporters. Over time, and with your input, we decided to change our name to...



Below I would like to introduce you to our new logo and why this name is right for where we are headed. Our mission remains the same, but our scope and scale is bolder than ever. You can invest in this bold vision through multiple paths, which we discuss on the last page.

Keep reading to learn how your support has helped us deepen and expand our Michigan work, including in Grand Rapids and Isabella County. In addition, your support has made it possible to venture into new work in places like Texas as we begin to journey more deeply with communities across the country. A lot has happened, from Eastcore in Holland winning a national award to adding the Serving With Dignity curriculum to our roster of services. We are grateful that you have been with us on this journey!

Join us for a special virtual “fireside chat” on July 10th, for updates, a special raffle and to share your insights. Register at bit.ly/forallpossibilities.



Eric Smith
Executive Director

CommunityWorks because Community Works



Since 2008, we have been known as Great Lakes Urban. Most of who we are is the same. West Michigan has been, and will continue to be, home base. Our purpose to strengthen neighborhoods and transform lives through **Asset-Based Community Development** remains. However, some things are different.

Chief among these differences is our footprint. As you'll notice in the map, we are now supporting a network of ABCD leaders and neighborhoods from across the United States, not just the Great Lakes region. Even as we are invited into more and more places, we carry with us the conviction that, as our new name affirms, **community works**. Health & wellbeing, resilient economies, safety, and more starts with strong, connected neighborhoods. We are grateful to all who participated in the naming process.

Catalyzing vibrant neighborhoods **across the country** by unleashing community potential.

Our Foundation

Here is our new icon, which is formed out of the “**C**” and “**W**” of CommunityWorks. An image of a pin, like from a map, represents the power of **place**. The pin and “**W**” resemble a **person**, perhaps a neighbor who feels empowered to create change in the place they call home.

The **possibility** of a place is unlocked when the capacities of people and the power of place are woven together, as represented by celebratory swoop of the “**W**”. These are our three pillars: Place, People, and Possibility. For us they are the firm foundation upon which healthy **community works**.



See the new website here

Want to explore the possibilities in your neighborhood?

Check out our new website for stories, learning, and practical ways for all neighborhoods to reach their full potential. Scan the QR Code or go to comm-works.org.

Eastcore Neighborhood is Neighborhood of the Year!

At the Neighborhoods USA Conference, Eastcore Neighborhood won first place for **Neighborhood of the Year!**

Eastcore is home to 3Sixty, a neighborhood development organization, that through listening conversations launched the Tulip City Walls Mural Festival. We are proud their work to activate neighbors is being nationally recognized. Congratulations to Eastcore and the 3Sixty team!



Jake Norris, Executive Director of 3Sixty, receiving the Neighborhood of the Year award from the NUSA board

Neighborhoods USA Conference

In late May, our Project Director traveled to Lubbock, Texas, for the 49th annual Neighborhoods USA Conference. This conference included networking with leaders from across the country and learning best practices for strong neighborhoods.

CommunityWorks shared our learning and emerging practices on neighborhood connections through two workshops. We moderated a panel on **Neighboring Holidays** which included leaders from The Hopeful Neighborhood Project, University of Missouri Extension, and the City of Citrus Heights. Additionally, we co-hosted a workshop with The Neighboring Movement on **Congregations as Connectors** to help local leaders see the unique value congregations offer and how they can play a vital role in strengthening the social fabric of their community.

Want access to these resources? Reach out to our Project Director for the inside scoop on the emerging practices we shared at the Neighborhoods USA conference. You can email Megan at megan@comm-works.org.



Participants at NUSA Awards Luncheon



CommunityWorks with 3Sixty, University of Missouri Extension, and The Neighboring Movement



CommunityWorks co-hosting a workshop on Congregations as Connectors

Accelerating Social Connection in Michigan

CommunityWorks is one of five organizations, out of 96 applications, selected to implement the **Action Guide for Building Socially Connected Communities!** This Toolkit, created by the Foundation for Social Connection, is a six step process to develop a customized plan to enhance social connection using local strengths. CommunityWorks will partner with local organizations and neighbors to implement this process in Isabella County, MI.



Want to learn more? Reach out to our Community Empowerment Coach to learn about our approach to strengthening neighborhoods. You can email Jenna at jonna@comm-works.org.

New Resource Alert!

How can churches leverage what makes them unique for the good of their neighborhood?



CommunityWorks is proud to announce the addition of **Serving with Dignity** to our learning resources! This curriculum, rooted in true stories, best practices, and biblical principles, equips participants to develop a posture for serving their community. We are excited to partner with the author, Phil Hissom, to equip more churches and faith-based organizations with this resource.

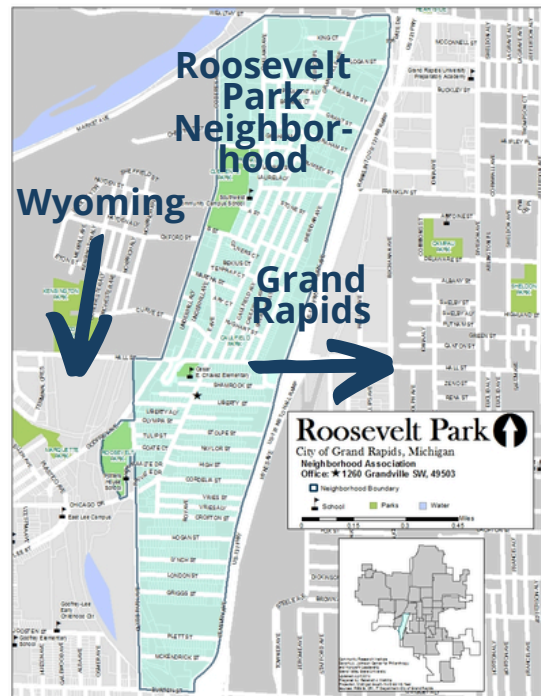


Want to host a course at your organization, or become a trained facilitator? Email megan@comm-works.org for more information.

Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association: Inaugural Winner of the CommunityWorks Seed Grant

Established in 1978, the Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (RPNA) has worked to make the Roosevelt Park neighborhood a safe, attractive place for residents and businesses alike. Successes include:

- Built a new playground/basketball courts at Hall School in 1994
- Built the first Grandville Avenue Neighborhood Library in 1996
- Built the Grandville Avenue Academy for the Arts in 2001
- Renovated the old Fire House with the Hispanic Center in 2006
- Built the Cook Library Center with GA Arts & Humanities in 2008
- Created an Area Specific Plan approved by the City of GR in 2017



RPNA also runs a community garden, a neighborhood farmer's market, and a free tool lending library. As well, RPNA's focus on the Grandville Ave. is seeing results as redevelopment comes to this critical corridor in 2024. Ensuring the success of such initiatives is the RPNA Executive Director and two bilingual Community Organizers.

Their work is made possible through support from the City of Grand Rapids, area foundations and businesses, and YOU! Your support of the **CommunityWorks Seed Grant fund** has helped RPNA hire its Community Organizers. RPNA organizers are being equipped in the principles and practices of Asset-Based Community Development by Wayne Squires, Grand Rapids Regional Coach and Bates Place Neighbors Executive Director.

Community in Action: Meet Andres Hernandez

Andres is one of the Bilingual Crime Prevention and Community Organizers with Roosevelt Park Neighborhood Association (RPNA). Having joined the organization earlier this year, he was motivated by his girlfriend's passion to be a voice for the most vulnerable.

Andres spends his day listening to neighbors and empowering them to solve local problems. Having been in the role for four months, what he enjoys the most is hearing people's stories. In his own words, "Neighbors tell and will show you their whole

journey. **Engaging with the community is precious to me and it makes the streets feel alive.** Everyone knows each other and is happy to work together to accomplish stuff in the neighborhood.” He shared that his favorite thing about the neighborhood is how peaceful it is. And yet, it’s also alive with activity as they have neighbors tending to a community garden and planning for two community events this fall.

Amy, RPNA’s Executive Director since 2017, feels the same and has seen the impact the seed grant is having. Amy shared, “The Seed Grant has helped the RPNA build capacity in our bilingual community organizers and to support them through Wayne’s mentorship. This has allowed the RPNA to more effectively integrate Asset-Based Community Development principles in our community engagement work.”



Photos of Andres facilitating a recent community meeting in Roosevelt Park

Join the Movement | Fuel the Cause

Even as we grow our reach and deepen our impact, we are also expanding the ways you can join in the movement with us. On the following page you will hear about the kind of Connectors that your contribution of time, talent, or treasure will support, and on the last page we describe several ways to fuel the cause. Below is one such example.

DID YOU KNOW? A Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) is a transfer of funds directly from an IRA of a person at least 70 1/2 years old to a qualifying charity, such as CommunityWorks. QCDs of up to \$105,000 may count toward your required minimum distributions for the year. Unlike regular IRA withdrawals, QCDs are not taxable income.

“I’m in my senior years now – recently turned 71! One thing I learned from my financial advisor is that there are tax breaks for seniors who do their charitable giving through Qualified charitable distributions (QCDs). After prayer and conversation, my wife and I decided to give to CommunityWorks because we think their unique approach to community building is a proven method to build robust, flourishing neighborhoods all around the USA. Isolation is the perpetuator of so many social and physical ills, Community building is the antidote, and CommunityWorks does it so very well!”

– Donor, CommunityWorks

We boldly believe that

COMMUNITY WORKS

for all *people*, all *places*, and all *possibilities*.

The future you long for starts in the neighborhood.

The **CommunityWorks framework** is rooted in best practices proven to impact many of the issues our communities face today. At the heart of the model are the Neighborhood Connectors that your gift will support. Connectors like Makya and Robin are key to rebuilding and revitalizing under-resourced neighbors.

Makya and Robin are Connectors in South Holland working in different neighborhoods. Their desire to bring people together is contagious and the impact is just beginning.



Robin and neighbors in Pioneer Village



Robin, Makaya, and participants in the Connectors Class

Robin shares about her connecting work in Pioneer Village and explains, “We have convened a group, Pioneer Neighbors, who meet regularly to care about each other. We reach out to others with a newsletter, and provide activities that include a sports evening with a picnic, as well as regular gatherings of people interested in crafts, watching movies, and going out together for coffee and conversation. **We know that isolation is not good for anyone and that each person here has something to give and to receive.**” Makya and Robin are just two of a growing network of connectors activating residents to own their story.

Ready to unleash the capacities of people, the potential of place, and the power of possibility? Sign up today and become a part of a bold future! Here's how.

- Become a **Donor** by making a one-time donation. Every amount matters and is deeply appreciated! We commit to keeping you informed of your impact!
- Make it a monthly, reoccurring donation of \$20 or more and become a **Catalyst**. You'll receive a pass to select events, exclusive updates, and more.
- Become a **Partner** as a corporate donor of \$500 or more and gain sponsorship recognition among our large and growing community!
- Make a difference in your neighborhood. Become a **Block Connector**. Need inspiration or ideas? Visit comm-works.org.

Make a bigger impact and invest in neighborhood connections. ***Give today for a more sustainable approach to solving social problems.***

You'll be investing in a field-tested model rooted in best practices and proven to impact many of the issues our communities face today. Every day, the Neighborhood Connectors your gift will support are working tirelessly to improve:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| • Local Leadership | • Physical Health | • Financial Security |
| • Civic Engagement | • Safety | • Food Security |
| • Loneliness | • A Sense of Trust | • And so much more |

Want more information on QCDs and the many ways to partner, give and volunteer?

Email our Executive Director, Eric Smith to learn how you can maximize the impact and benefits of your giving. You can email Eric at eric@comm-works.org.

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