

2017

# The Milwaukee Promise Zones

Year One Impact Report



"Rebuilding and Stabilizing Neighborhoods, Block-By-Block!"



## Program Background and Summary

The Milwaukee Promise Zone Program was inspired by the federal Promise Neighborhood/Zone programs that began during President Barack Obama's time in office. In 2013, this designation allowed cities and neighborhoods to form a partnership with HUD and DoE to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, leverage private investment, and reduce violent crime. Milwaukee was inspired by this initiative and those goals remained paramount for Common Council President Ashanti Hamilton. In 2016, the Promise Zones Special Purpose Account was approved to implement a City-wide strategy in order to work towards those same objectives. In partnership with other members of the Common Council, Community Based Organizations, businesses, faith based organizations, and residents, this program was piloted in 2017 with the Greater Old North, Near Southside, North Division/Harambee, and Washington Park neighborhoods as the four areas being designated as Milwaukee Promise Zones (MPZs).

*"It will take a collaborative effort – between private business and federal, state and local officials; faith based and non-profit organizations; and striving kids and parents – to ensure that hard work leads to a decent living for every American in every community."  
-President Barack Obama*

## Strategy

The MPZ strategy has a five part approach that relates to the goals of the program mentioned above.

### **1. Identify the targeted residential groups' current assessments of their needs and assets in the designated Promise Zones**

The MPZ initiative aims to utilize an Asset-Based Community Development method (ABCD). This approach seeks to support the numerous existing assets that the Zones have in order to preserve the community's identity against the negative effects of gentrification. The City of Milwaukee helped prepare asset maps for each Zone that detail some of the institutions and businesses that can be utilized, but resident surveying in collaboration with the Office of Violence Prevention will lead the core directions of the MPZ's work. Having a more extensive knowledge of these aspects of the community from the perspective of residents will help guide our decision-making as we look to utilize current assets and bring in new ones.



WestCare Wisconsin 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Thanksgiving CommUnity Feast

## 2. Implement Healthy Neighborhoods Initiatives

Continuing with the ABCD model, the Healthy Neighborhoods Initiative is a focused grassroots strategy that places residents at the forefront of neighborhood development and marketing. Under the direction of a neighborhood-based agency, this initiative has four main components that can help neighborhoods see meaningful transformations:

- Enhancing the neighborhood image as a desirable place to live
- Focusing on the physical condition of the housing stock of the neighborhoods and addressing issues of blight.
- Incorporating neighborhood management through the development of block watches, block clubs, and resident groups
- Marketing the availability of affordable properties to ensure homes are purchased by responsible homeowners

By accomplishing these four objectives, resident-CBO partnerships can truly help strengthen their neighborhoods.

## 3. Creating Jobs and Increasing Economic Activity

The neighborhoods within the MPZs are characterized by higher levels of unemployment and lower average annual household incomes than those of both the City of Milwaukee and State of Wisconsin. In order to successfully rebuild and stabilize these neighborhoods, it is imperative to provide more opportunities to earn a livable income. The two key elements that can increase the earning capacity of Zone residents are:

- To attract more family supporting jobs to the Zones
- To improve the ability of residents to successfully access employment opportunities throughout the entire Metro-Milwaukee area.

These two elements can be accomplished through public/private partnerships and fall closely in line with the fourth goal listed below.



Kenneth Brown of WestCare at the Harambee Heroes Apple Orchard. Residents had just planted apple trees



Students in the Running Rebels Pipeline 2 Promise Program receiving CPR training

#### 4. Improving Educational Opportunities

Milwaukee Promise Zone neighborhoods tend to have a lower percentage of 18 and 19 year old young adults enrolled in school than the City and State averages as well as lower rates of bachelor's degree and high school diploma attainment. In order for people to successfully obtain and maintain meaningful employment in the new American economy, it is necessary to have access to a good education and opportunities for workforce training. The MPZ program hopes to provide connections to and programs for:

- GED and HSED training and testing
- Financial literacy
- Workforce-based education and job training
- Early childhood education

This goal of this MPZ strategy is to allow residents to obtain the skills necessary to increase their own personal earning capacities in addition to bringing about more economic activity to the larger community.

#### 5. Public Safety and Crime Reduction

In order to stabilize and revitalize neighborhoods, it is vital to have a safe environment in which these goals can develop and be accomplished. The MPZ initiative is developing an existing partnership with the Milwaukee Police Department to make strides in this area through:

- Improving public safety by enhancing the effectiveness of law enforcement through relationship-building and collaborative problem solving between MPD personnel, community residents, and local organizations
- Enhancing law enforcement activities that align non-law enforcement community resources and services in and around areas experiencing high levels of violent crime
- Having law enforcement leadership encourage, develop, and carry out community activities that encourage neighborliness, promote positive social norms, and increase community well-being.



WestCare Wisconsin's Live Li Hood Team at the 500 Black Tuxedo Boot Camp

Currently, MPD has agreed to work with us on at least two strategies per year to achieve this end, and Asst. Chief Raymond Banks has re-affirmed the commitment of the police to our shared objectives.

These five strategic goals provide solutions for many of the challenges that different communities face in their independent efforts to revitalize and improve their neighborhoods. The MPZ initiative will allow City resources to aid community-based partners in accomplishing their goals of development so that Milwaukee can be a great place to live, work, and play for everyone.

### **2017 Partner Outcomes**

In the first year of its existence, the Milwaukee Promise Zones initiative saw many victories through the different partnerships we have made with Community Based Organizations and other local businesses, faith institutions, and residents. The strategic area that saw the most progress was the goal of improving access to workforce-based education and job training programs for Zone residents. Our partners in this area went above and beyond to ensure a positive and rewarding experience for the youth participants involved. Our five main associates for achieving this particular goal were the Macpyles Corporation, Employ Milwaukee, Running Rebels, Groundwork Milwaukee and All Things in Common (ATIC). Brief summaries of what these partners accomplished are listed below as well as the achievements of our lead organizations.



Milwaukee Promise Zone Earn and Learn Kick-Off in Garden Homes



### **Macpyles Corporation**

Macpyles is a privately held corporation that owns McDonald's franchises throughout the Milwaukee area and has been a positive actor in the neighborhoods in which they operate. Their goal was to reach 100 MPZ youth and train them to be financially literate as well as certified in food safety management by the National Restaurant Association recognized ServeSafe® course. Additionally, the youth received paid in-store training and work experience as well as employment at a Macpyles location upon completion of the course. In the first year of the program, 27 students completed the training during the summer and 51 students participated in the fall. As this program continues to grow and expand to meet their goals, Macpyles has maintained its commitment to giving the students individualized attention by breaking the

cohorts into groups to allow each individual to have the most meaningful personal experience possible.



### Employ Milwaukee

The Earn & Learn program facilitated by Employ Milwaukee has been an instrumental partnership for the Milwaukee Promise Zone program. In addition to committing to a goal of having 104 MPZ students participate in the employment initiative, Employ Milwaukee also provided assistance with payroll processing, data tracking, career enrichment workshops, competitive procurement oversight for worksites, and other technical assistance. In the first summer of the MPZ program, Employ Milwaukee exceeded the goal and had 107 MPZ participants in Earn & Learn at 39 different worksites with the support of MPZ funding. Many of the students were employed with the standard wage of \$7.50, but a number of students were able to get experience in a supervisory role and earn \$10.25. Participants also learned skills in workplace communication, professional expectations, and preparation for applying for jobs in the future.

*"We want [youth] to know that there's an opportunity for them to work, there's an opportunity for them to make some money, and there's an opportunity for them to have a positive impact in this neighborhood".*  
-President Ashanti Hamilton



### All Things in Common

The ATIC initiative was a valuable partner to Employ Milwaukee through the 2017 Earn & Learn summer program. This collective of faith-based institutions provided experience and training in multiple different job functions for 68 youth at their 6 employment sites. In addition to the 20 hours worked for each of the program's 6 weeks, students also were taught about the focus of discipline, the importance of enhanced adult and peer-to-peer communication skills, and other life skills that will set them up well for future employment opportunities.



### Running Rebels

Running Rebels is a non-profit youth agency with 30 years of experience resolving delinquency, drug abuse, truancy, and teen pregnancy issues. As an MPZ partner, Running Rebels committed to assess, case manage, job train, certify, and mentor 20 youth to help with their long term employment and credentialing goals in many different industry sectors through their Pipeline 2 Promise (P2P) program. In the first summer of this partnership, 15 students completed the program with the end result of 10 students either being employed or in school with 6 receiving professional certifications. Running Rebels then added an additional 10 students for their fall cohort



Students getting work experience at Corvanta through Running Rebels

exceeding their goal of serving 20 students in the 2017 calendar year.



### **Crossing Jordan Ministries**

Under the direction and supervision of Minister Campbell, Crossing Jordan Ministries hired 7 youth to assist their staff with a variety of projects around the church campus. Students were able to assist with the re-doing of the campus' tot lot, the mulching of the outdoor spaces, prep work for the cultural mural being painted on the campus, and began installing the new day care facility in addition to other interior work. These youth were paid through Employ Milwaukee and attended the Kingdom Faith enrichment workshops once a week. In addition to the weekly enrichment workshops, Crossing Jordan provided youth with resume and cover letter writing, interviewing skills, and other professional development lessons in house during the summer. Crossing Jordan will be a worksite again this coming summer and we are excited for more youth to be engaged with this fantastic partner.



### **Groundwork Milwaukee**

Groundwork Milwaukee is a non-profit that aims to bring about the sustained regeneration, improvement, and management of the physical environment by developing community based partnerships that empower people, businesses and organizations to promote environmental, economic, and social wellbeing. Groundwork operates in all four Promise Zones and is a valuable partner for many of our strategic goals, particularly connecting residents with sources of fresh food and beautifying our neighborhoods. To this end, Groundwork managed, improved, developed or revitalized 112 gardens in the city in 2017 and created a pilot program for the Glean Team, an entity that will collect and redistribute surplus fresh food from community gardens. They also engaged in the workforce development goal by offering a 12 week course on green infrastructure entrepreneurship and small business setup for aspiring entrepreneurs. Groundwork focuses on preparing people for jobs that do not require college degrees and saw 30 participants in their programming obtain new jobs. In 2018, Groundwork has the goals of continuing to grow their workforce development efforts as well as developing the Fresh Food Connect App and the Milwaukee Farmers Union, among other goals.

These efforts made by our partners to invest in our youth and give them the skills to succeed in the workplace was an immense victory from the first year of the MPZ program and is an indicator of what is possible through this collaborative effort. Along with these partners, our 2017 lead partner organizations, West Care, The 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor, and the Southside Organizing Center, put in tremendous amounts of work on laying the foundation to see these objectives come to fruition in a meaningful way. Additionally, these lead partners engaged in many of their own efforts to realize our strategic goals

## The 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor

Under the leadership of Cheryl Blue, The 30th Street Industrial Corridor Corp served as our Lead Organization, convening the partners on a monthly basis, laying the foundation for this initiative. The Corridor was also the lead in the Old North Promise Zone, where they engaged over 200 residents and 50 entities (nonprofits, businesses, churches, etc.) to create a comprehensive neighborhood plan to improve the area focusing on 7 areas: neighborhood pride, safety, economic development, jobs, education and health and wellness. The Corridor also worked to help identify areas of blight and encouraged partners to utilize DPW and DNS to get complaints filed and resolved to improve the physical appearance of our neighborhoods. To assist in our youth employment efforts, the Corridor helped recruit worksites, conducted outreach for participants, set up the orientation sites for Employ Milwaukee, brought in the Young Enterprising Society to facilitate STEM workshops to provide educational enrichment for our youth. These efforts come in a long list of actions that The Corridor conducted in the project’s first year and their commitment is part of the reason this initiative was able to get off its feet.



Cheryl Blue from the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor speaking at the Milwaukee Promise Zone Kickoff Event in Garden Homes Park

## Southside Organizing Center

Tammy Rivera, Executive Director of the Southside Organizing Center, engaged in numerous meaningful activities to advance the MPZ agenda. The SOC was at the forefront of our efforts to form positive relationships with the Milwaukee Police Department. Through collaborating on monthly Crime and Safety meetings, assisting the Fire and Police commission on recruitment efforts, hosting resource tables for families, and maintaining a relationship with the assistant District Attorney for the area, the SOC displayed a commitment to keeping the community safe and collaborating on ways that resident groups can assist with safety. Not only are they an MPZ lead partner, but the Southside Organizing Center also serves as a City funded and selected Community Prosecution Unit. In addition to their emphasis on safety, the SOC made great efforts to reach out to youth and young adults with their new employment support service, registering more than 50



Catherine Rodriguez, from the Near South Side Promise Zone, working with SOC’s Yolanda Leon to fill out an online application to UPS



participants. The SOC also reached out to numerous other potential partners in the region to start forming relationships that can yield results for their Zone.



### **WestCare Wisconsin**

WestCare Wisconsin, under the guidance of Executive Director Elizabeth Coggs, was another instrumental lead partner in the first year of the MPZ initiative. This organization serves as our lead partner for youth employment and was instrumental in coordinating our summer employment programming. Through speaking at press conferences and attending meetings on behalf of MPZ goals, WestCare also brought this initiative further into the conversation surrounding the development and improvement of the communities we serve. WestCare also made foundational connections with over 48 other businesses and organizations in order to create a network of partners to utilize as we continue to move forward with the MPZ initiative. They also engaged in numerous clean-ups, food pantry projects, and planted orchards around the Promise Zone neighborhoods. The WestCare Wisconsin Youth Action Council also has a strong presence in through the City of Milwaukee doing canvassing, asset mapping, community engagement and are strong advocates for gun safety with the Love Up, Lock Down...Gun Locks Saves Lives, Hugs, No Drugs and It Is Not Big to Make Others feel Small Anti-Bullying Programs. This partnership is invaluable and we look forward to the progress that comes from WestCare's leadership moving into the second year.



WestCare Wisconsin Youth Action Council serving residents at the E.A.T.S. Pantry every Wednesday

### **2018 Goals**

As we enter into 2018, the MPZ program looks to build on lessons learned and successes experienced during the pilot year and spread our accomplishments to every strategic area of our plan. We will work to continue to partner with organizations on every strategic measure to round out efforts while also seeing new and greater goals achieved by the programs that saw the most success in 2017. In addition to working with our existing partners, we are excited to be adding new partners to the initiative as well. Most notably, the State of Wisconsin has expressed commitment of their support through the Federal Economic Opportunity Zones program. They will be contributing invaluable resources and expertise to reach our common goal of improved Milwaukee neighborhoods. Our four lead institutions for 2018, West Care, Northwest Side CDC, Southside Organizing Center, and Our Next Generation, are also committed to achieving this end and will serve as our primary partners in each of the different Zones to implement our strategy in



the most effective way possible. The 30<sup>th</sup> Street Industrial Corridor will remain our Lead Organization Coordinator. If you would like to collaborate on this effort overall or with one of our Zones, please contact us at [PromiseZones@Milwaukee.gov](mailto:PromiseZones@Milwaukee.gov).

## 2017 Logic Model

**Milwaukee Promise Zones Goals:** (1) Define Community Needs. Increase Concentration of Services. (2) Engage community in local job training and placement opportunities. (3) Improve outcomes for children and families.

