

## Dominican Center for Women, Inc.

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# SHARING THE JOURNEY

Dominican Center for Women, Inc. | [www.dominican-center.org](http://www.dominican-center.org) | September 2015



## Welcome New Dominican Center Staff: Octavia Parker, Community Organizer

The Dominican Center is pleased to welcome Octavia Parker as its new Building Neighborhood Capacity Community Organizer. A lifetime Amani resident, Octavia's experiences demonstrate her enthusiastic devotion to the Amani neighborhood. A former vice president of MICAH and active member of Bethesda Baptist Church, Octavia currently serves as the Food Pantry coordinator. She has also expanded the annual church picnic to an annual community picnic to which she personally invited the alderman, the mayor, and Milwaukee Police District 5. As a result, this event connected local leaders to residents and sparked Octavia's interest in community work.

Octavia graduated from the Neighborhood Leadership Institute at Cardinal Stritch University in June. She works hand-in-hand with fellow Amani residents for a healthy, crime-free neighborhood. Octavia is especially sensitive to the children of Amani neighborhood. At the recent celebration of the new Moody Park, Octavia was pleased to see the children with smiles on their faces. Octavia explains that too often our children are burdened with worries about their parents or where their next meal will come from. "Let them not worry" insists Octavia. "I strive to make a difference for the children."



Photo by Dominican Center for Women

Lifetime Amani resident Octavia Parker is the DCW's new Building Neighborhood Capacity Community Organizer.

### Thank You TO OUR Generous Donors

The Dominican Center is grateful for the generous support of our donors. Your donations make a difference in the lives of the residents of the Amani neighborhood.

During the past several months, the Dominican Center received generous donations and grants from the following organizations:

- Agnesian Caring Through Sharing Grant
- Augustine Stewardship Fund
- Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
- Earn & Learn, operated jointly by the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board and the Milwaukee Department of City Development
- Lauber CFOs
- Park Bank Foundation
- St. John Vianney Parish
- St. Jude the Apostle Parish
- St. Matthew Parish
- St. Sebastian Parish
- Sts. Peter and Paul Catholic Church
- Wells Fargo & Company



Photo by Dominican Center for Women

The delight on this child's face expresses the feelings of the Amani neighborhood as they celebrate the grand opening of the new Moody Park on August 20. Residents and local leaders enjoyed a beautiful day of fun-filled activities at the park.

## The Amani Neighborhood Celebrates Moody Park Opening

More than 500 Amani neighbors and community supporters celebrated the opening of the new Moody Park on August 20, 2015. The celebration was the culmination of more than 12 years of neighborhood efforts to revitalize the cherished park.

Dominican Center's Building Neighborhood Capacity coordinator, Pepper Ray, collaborated with Amani United and Friends of Moody Park to organize this grand opening event, complete with family activities, refreshments, and entertainment.

Children delighted in the splash pad and the basketball courts.

Many local leaders participated in the day's events, including Alderman Willie Wade, 13<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Willie Johnson Jr., 10<sup>th</sup> District County Supervisor Supreme Moore-Omokunde, Representative David Bowen, County Executive Chris Abele, Milwaukee County Parks Director John Dargle and Administrator Laura Schloesser, Milwaukee Police Chief Ed Flynn, and City of Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

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# Notes From the Executive Director



Sr. Patricia Rogers

## Efficacy in Amani

The mission of the Dominican Center at inception was to develop a relationship with community women, learn their dreams and goals, and together create opportunities/actions that would help them achieve their personal goals.

In John Schmid's article in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, "The Enduring Effects of Place on a City's Health" on September 13, 2015, he recalled Robert Sampson's findings regarding the kind of communities that survived the turmoil Milwaukee's north side communities are currently experiencing. Sampson describes these communities as having achieved collective efficacy. He goes on to explain, when a group of individuals share a common desire, trust each other, and believe together they can reach a shared community goal, their collective efficacy results in social change.

The Dominican Center for Women has witnessed the birth of self/individual efficacy many times in more than 20 years. The Dominican Center's current strategic planning work has led the staff to believe that social change is our vision and working to achieve collective efficacy in Amani is our mission. Please pray with us as we commit to accompanying the Amani residents in the process of achieving collective efficacy.

Thank you, volunteers and donors, for your faith and support in the Dominican Center for Women.

Sr. Patricia

# Rewarding Tutor Experience

Sr. Mary Menke, CSA, volunteers five days a week in the Dominican Center's Adult Education Program.

She discovered the Dominican Center in 2014. "After I rang the doorbell and spoke with Sr. Patricia, the spirit of the place just swallowed me up" explains Sr. Mary.

As a retired school teacher, Sr. Mary brings a wealth of experience to her volunteer service work. She firmly believes in the importance of developing a relationship of trust with each individual adult learner. Sr. Mary is committed to supporting students as lifelong learners.

The Dominican Center for Women welcomes new tutors to support adult learners as they prepare for the GED or HSED exam. Tutors provide individualized support in basic reading, writing, math, and computers. Please consider volunteering. Tutors are asked to commit to two hours a week. Contact Dr. Veronica Rogers for more information [veronica@dominican-center.org](mailto:veronica@dominican-center.org) or 414-444-9930.



Sr. Mary Menke, CSA



Photo by Dominican Center for Women

Sr. Mary Menke works with Dominican Center student Ndey Jatta. Sr. Mary enjoys volunteering five days a week.

# Summer in the City: Amani Youth at Work and Play

This summer the Dominican Center hosted several groups of Amani area youth who developed a variety of communication and leadership skills while serving the community.

Youth served in local meal programs, picked up litter in parks and neighborhood streets, tended to gardens and lawns, and participated in organized games of rugby. Our youth brought positive energy to community relationships and developed critical insights into their responsibility for neighborhood well-being.

Our thanks to LIFT Greater Milwaukee Neighborhoods Initiative, Earn & Learn—operated jointly by the Milwaukee Area Workforce Investment Board and the Milwaukee Department of City Development, and PeppNation for supporting Amani youth.



Earn and Learn Team



LIFT Team with PeppNation



Mr. Wes and a LIFT Team Member



Earn and Learn Team



Earn and Learn Team



Rugby Game

# Moody Park

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The day's success is the result of generous and caring community partners. A special thank you to Northwestern Mutual Foundation, Zilber Family Foundation, Milwaukee Police Department – District 5, Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, Safe and Sound, LISC, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, J.P. Cullen & Sons, COA Youth and Family Centers, Milwaukee County Parks Department, Hunger Task Force, Friends of Moody Park, Milwaukee County Sheriff's Office, Wisconsin Black Historical Society, Milwaukee Bucks, Inc., Building Neighborhood Capacity Program, Artists Working in Education, Pepsi Beverages Co., Chess Academics, Schlitz Audubon Nature Center, Molina Health Care, Auer Avenue School, PeppNation, and other city and county leaders.

The Dominican Center for Women partners with the community to maintain and enhance a beautiful, stable, healthy, and safe neighborhood consisting of residents who are community-minded and are striving to be meaningfully educated and employed.