



I AM AMANI

2021 NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS'

AMANI REPORT

Neighborhood Safety

WHAT AMANI WILL DO: Increase neighbors' willingness to support self, other neighbors, and community to achieve community peace.

INDICATOR OF SUCCESS: • Residents report willingness to actively support the achievement of community peace. • Residents report engagement in actively supporting the achievement of community peace. • Residents report engagement in addressing public safety efforts.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Safe & Sound Helps Residents, Partners to Improve Safety

• **3.13.21 Amani Cleanup with Barbara Smith** – Barbara Smith met with the D5 team in early March to suggest a few project ideas, including a cleanup. The team agreed to do a pop-up cleanup with her and her neighbors on 3/13. They went out for outreach on 3/9 to advertise the event and hosted the event on the following Saturday. The group worked for almost 3 hours picking up trash in the neighborhood and gathered 30 bags of trash. Mark brought supplies and called in the trash for special pick-up. The residents were very happy for the neighborhood to be clean after the February snow had melted, leaving behind month's worth of litter that needed to be picked up. **Adults: 11 bags collected: 30**

• **4.10.21 Cawker Park community feedback day** – MKE Parks together with Domini-

can Center and Safe & Sound co-sponsored a feedback day at Cawker Park to gather input from the community about improvements to make to the park. Parks received a grant to renovate the existing park structures and needed feedback to help guide decision-making about improvements to the space.

The event could have been better attended but bad weather kept turnout lower than the target the partners had discussed. Nonetheless, people came out and gave feedback. They would like to do another feedback day in June or July. **Adults: 10**

• **5.8.21 Amani Community Cleanup** – Mark Lisowski organized with the 26th Street block watch to host a cleanup. The event involved 21 participants and succeeded



in removing 25 full bags of trash from the area between Townsend and Burleigh, 20th and 26th.

• **9.15.21 Auer Ave resource fair** – Mark coordinated with Kim Bikulcius from Auer Ave School to put on a barbecue at the resource fair Kim was planning at the school. This partnership opportunity was to support the resource fair with grilled food for attendees while Safe & Sound staff surveyed attendees for their collective impact goals. Ten surveys were gathered and attendees were thankful for the food that was served. The event was successful and reached many

PRIORITY AREA: **NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY**



youth and residents to provide them information about key community services and programming from multiple partners. *Adults: 60 Youth:60 Comm. Org's: 25*

• **8.24.21 Dominican Center food distribution event** - Safe & Sound partnered with Do-

minican Center during a food distribution in August.. Mark asked if the S&S D5 team cooked out for participants and also administered their collective impact surveys. *Adults: 10*

Throughout 2021,, Safe & Sound hosted monthly virtual partner meetings for Amani





stakeholders and residents. These meetings consistently serve as a touchpoint for organizations to share updates, notify of meetings/events and explore ideas for collaboration. About 8-10 partners attended regularly and more on occasion.

We also held bi-weekly block club meetings with Brenda Hart-Richardson and her 26th Street coalition. The group held two community cleanups in coordination with Dominican Center, Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful, Ald. Rainey's office and other

partners. The group also hosted several community walks in the neighborhood north of Auer Ave School to assess and address DNS issues as well as the common problem of litter and illegal dumping.

Together, Safe & Sound and Dominican Center canvassed the neighborhood in 2021 to promote the Cawker Park feedback event back in April and encourage residents to attend the event to share their thoughts on park improvements. The team reached over 100 doors with flyer drops and spoke to sever-



al residents at their doorsteps.

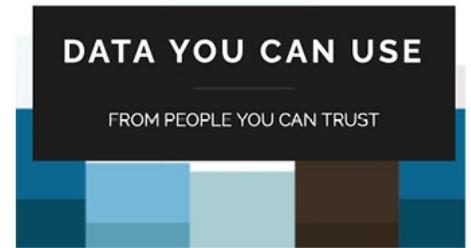
One other event that is noteworthy was the Easter egg hunt event hosted at COA in partnership with MPD. The event featured many giveaway items, the MPD ice cream truck, McGruff the crime dog, and opportunity for youth (roughly ages 6-10) to interact positively with police.

■ DATA HIGHLIGHTS WORK IN AMANI

Data You Can Use is Moving from Data to Action in Amani

In November, Data You Can Use (DYCU) was invited to present a workshop at the national *All In: Data for Community Health*. The workshop was "Collaborating with Residents to Move From Data to Action" and it seemed to be a perfect opportunity to highlight the work being done in Amani.

Denisha Tate-McAlister from the Dominican Center agreed to co-present on how engaging Amani residents around health and safety data had led to positive, direct action in Amani. This workshop was not only an opportunity to highlight the work being done in Amani, but also led to attendees following up



to learn more about how they could duplicate this process in their own neighborhoods.

■ WORKING TOGETHER GETS MORE DONE

Dominican Center and Amani United Partnership Thrives

The Dominican Center and Amani United teamed up for several events supporting safety throughout 2021.

Amani United's Ambassador Council (Safety Committee) included 28 Block Ambassadors from throughout the neighborhood. Dominican Center supported these Ambassadors with technical support at their eight community meetings this year.

Participants from Amani United, Dominican Center staff, and youth from Amani held seven community clean ups, worked together to report eight illegal dumping situations, and held more than seven community events to bring awareness and increase safety in Amani.

Dominican Center concentrated efforts to bring traffic calming planters to the neighborhood to reduce traffic flow and accidents at some of the most dangerous intersections. Nearly 100 signatures were collected to support



these efforts.

The two organizations also collaborated with neighborhood partners to support safety, including Wisconsin Voices, Safe & Sound, COA, Data You Can Use and Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee.

Lastly, DC and AU brought their safety concerns to elected and city officials including Gov. Tony Evers, Rep. Kalan Haywood II, Rep. David Bowen and County Supervisor Priscilla Coggs-Jones.



NEIGHBORHOOD
PRIORITY AREA:

Education & Family Well-Being

WHAT AMANI WILL DO: Increase family well-being and life-long learning.

INDICATOR OF SUCCESS: • Amani Residents serve on decision making teams in neighborhood organizations. • Organizations serving Amani connect with residents that need the services provided. • Amani Residents have access to all services needed to have positive family well-being.

■ ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF AMANI

LAS Provided Guidance to Residents in 113 Legal Matters

The Legal Aid Society remains actively engaged in the Amani Neighborhood through the pandemic. For the safety of staff and the public, our downtown office remains closed and we have paused our outreach at Coffee Makes You Black, House of Peace and the McCannon Brown Homeless Sanctuary.

We continue to conduct intake via an online form on our website (www.lasmilwaukee.com) and phone intake at (414) 727-5300.

Legal Aid's advocacy on behalf of Amani Neighborhood residents continues in these virtual formats, informed by residents' expressed needs. In 2021 alone, Legal Aid lawyers provided legal guidance and representation to 53206 residents in 113 total legal matters, inclusive of consumer law issues, unemployment and SSI



appeals, among others. Such advocacy educates and empowers residents about their legal rights today and tomorrow.

Our in-person seminars have been replaced for the time being by our Facebook

and webpage posts, which provide updates on the state of the law as well as critical resources and ever-changing public funding. Our social media sites can be found at: facebook.com/LASMilwaukee; www.lasmilwaukee.com.

The Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee is honored to partner with Amani Neighborhood residents to advance education and family well-being through impactful legal services.

PRIORITY AREA: EDUCATION & FAMILY WELL-BEING



COMMUNITY-LED EFFORTS

Wisconsin Voices Increases Engagement, Civic Action

As the world continues to learn how to connect with communities during pandemic times, one community in Milwaukee made sure residents in the Amani neighborhood knew about the free and/or low cost local and federal resources available to them.

In 2021, Wisconsin Voices provided the Dominican Center (DC) with a \$15,000 regrant to connect 3,000 households with resources and information through a robust community-led civic engagement project during the summer.

"The regrant from Wiscon-



sin Voices really helped to make it possible for us to maximize our reach," said Maricha Harris, Executive Director of the Dominican Center.

In addition, to working with Wisconsin Voices, DC teamed up with Amani United, the neighborhood resident group, to safely disseminate informational door hangers and magnets to residents to educate them about community

meetings, food pantry, legal services, job fairs and listen to their needs and/or concerns for further to work together.

"We strive to work with our partners to energize communities with innovative, year-round civic engagement education and action projects," said -Timothy P. Schindler, Co-Executive Director of Wisconsin Voices. "The Dominican Center is a great partner, and their work helps to increase resident engagement and civic action in a neighborhood that is on the rise in Milwaukee's central city."

■ **ARTS IN OUR COMMUNITY**

The Rep Provides Entertainment, Awareness, Education



HIP HOP VACCINE VIDEOS EDUCATE ABOUT VACCINES

Four Hip Hop vaccine videos were created in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Health Services by Kiran Vedula and four young adults from the Amani neighborhood in the spring of 2021. These videos were made as PSA-like tools to educate Milwaukee residents around the COVID-19 Vaccines.

We encourage you to watch all four videos on the Rep's YouTube page.

As a part of preparing for the creation of the videos, we hosted a community listening session with Dr. Mark Niedfeldt to understand vaccine hesitancy. Here is a clip about the panel we hosted: Madison 365 <https://madison365.com/lets-talk-vaccinations-a-conversation-on-covid-19>

The videos received press coverage from Fox 6, CBS 58 and BroadwayWorld.



The Milwaukee Rep Theatre partnered with several organizations in 2021 to provide education and awareness through art. They provided entertainment, like a concert with Zonya Love (above), at the Safe Summer Kickoff held over the summer in Amani.

PRIORITY AREA: EDUCATION & FAMILY WELL-BEING



MILWAUKEE REP PROVIDES ENTERTAINMENT & SUPPORT AT NEIGHBORHOOD EVENTS

On Friday, June 11 2021, the Milwaukee Rep collaborated on the Safe Summer Kickoff with COA Youth & Family Centers and other organizations in Amani to celebrate the return to in-person neighborhood engagement in the first outdoor neighborhood event since the start of the pandemic.

We provided entertainment, food, vendors, vaccinations and family engagement activities. as we all celebrate the return to

This year we included a concert by the magnificent Zonya



Love. Zonya has been seen on our stages in *The Color Purple* and *The Devil's Music*. Zonya also appeared in the 2005 Broadway production of *The Color Purple*. We were thrilled to bring her talents to the Amani community.

In August, we once again provided entertainment for

the Amani community at the Beyond the Bookbag event.

In November, we co-hosted a Paint & Sip Harvest Celebration with COA Youth & Family Center.

In December we provided free tickets to Amani residents for our annual production of *A Christmas Carol*.

REP PARTNERS WITH AMANI SCHOOLS, OFFERS YOUTH PROGRAMMING

Additionally, we continue to partner with Amani schools to bring our Reading Residency, School Subscription and Next Narrative Monologue Competition to youth in the neighborhood.

PRIORITY AREA: **EDUCATION & FAMILY WELL-BEING**

■ **A PLACE FOR FAMILIES**

COA Provides Resources, Fun for Amani Youth & Families



FEEDING RESIDENTS OF ALL AGES IN AMANI

COA provided emergency food boxes for 2,081 community families, assisting 5,784 individuals with food over 147 service days.

Northwestern Mutual provided 2,000 meals that fed the homebound elderly and families from January-May

From January- August we served 2,571 youth breakfast and lunch totaling 16,242 meals

COMMUNITY FUN NIGHTS AT COA BRING FAMILIES TOGETHER

The Safe Summer Kickoff on June 11th had 673 registered attendees and over 50 vendors!

Beyond the Book Bag on August 20th provided meals and resources to over 130 families and provided back packs and supplies to over 400 children

Movie Night @ COA September 10th screened the movie "Crooklyn" provided light meal and refreshments served 36 families including 30 adults and 44 children

Goldin Fest was held on October 22nd and provided resources,



food crafts and activities for 58 adults and 81 children!

Shades of Love Harvest Celebration was held on November 19th and provided resources, food crafts and activities for 34 adults and 37 children!

Winter Wonderland served 87 families with much needed resources and gifts for children up to age 17. Families had a chance to meet and take pictures with Santa as they received their gifts total impact 110 adults and 284 children!

HELPING AMANI WITH JOBS, COVID-19 TESTING

Hosted a Job Fair on December 15th featuring over 30 employers and resource providers with 20 registered attendees.

Joined into an ongoing partnership with Milwaukee Health Department to come into the community to administer COVID-19 testing and vaccinations on a weekly basis

COA SERVES AMANI'S YOUNGEST RESIDENTS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Pamper Distributions started for parents in The Amani neighborhood in need on August 26th.

COA's Burke EEC was National-ly accredited being the only center in 53206 with this high-quality standard.

Prenatal Resource Fair on September 3rd served 20 families with much needed resources to prepare for childbirth or care for children under age 1.

PRIORITY AREA: **EDUCATION & FAMILY WELL-BEING**



■ **STRENGTHENING FAMILIES IN AMANI**

Adult Education, Food Access, Engagement Focus at DC

In 2021, the Dominican Center's Adult Education students participate in online classes to work toward their HSED and GED degrees. DC partners with Milwaukee Area Technical College to test students and create a one-on-one plan for each student.

Despite the challenge of virtual learning, 15 students enrolled in the program and 4 earned their degrees in 2021.

Adult Education Coordinator Barbara Wells works with each student to ensure they succeed. She keeps constant



contact with students and attends their online classes to ensure success. She also works tirelessly to find out what resources each student and their family may need so they can focus on their education.

In addition, to support Family Well-being, DC held three mobile food pantries and gave

away 200 holiday food boxes to Amani residents and DC students. DC employee Wesly Landry personally delivered healthy food boxes to homebound seniors in the community. He delivered 416 boxes in 2021.

DC also increased engagement in Amani with help from Wisconsin Voices. DC partnered with 10 residents, 4 youth, to deliver a package with information on neighborhood organizations and helpful resources to nearly 3,000 homes and business in Amani.

NEIGHBORHOOD
PRIORITY AREA:

Housing & Economic Development

WHAT AMANI WILL DO: Improve housing conditions through the model block strategy in the Amani Neighborhood.

INDICATOR OF SUCCESS: • Improve conditions on the Model Block and Beta Block.
• Increased reported resident participation in Amani Beautification Efforts by 100%.

WORKING TOWARD REVITALIZATION

Dominican Center Helps Revitalize Block, Employees Youth

The Dominican Center has worked with partners Northwestern Mutual, Amani United, Ezekiel Hope, LISC Milwaukee, Legal Aid Society, Milwaukee Christian Center and KG Development Group on Block by Block, an initiative to repair and bring homes up to code in order to renovate and revitalize an entire block. Residents can receive hands-on training at the Training House, setting them up for future economic success.

This initiative requires investment from neighborhood partners, the City of Milwaukee, and sweat equity from the homeowners and landlords who's properties are receiving repaired.

In 2022, the initiative will finish on the Model Block and move to the second and third blocks, named the Beta Blocks.

In addition, the Dominican



Center has supported the Amani United Housing & Economic Development committee with technical support. DC also employed youth through Earn & Learn this summer and dedicated more than 75 hours to helping youth fill out employment applications.

DC
DOMINICAN CENTER

PRIORITY AREA: HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



KEEPING AN EYE ON LEGAL ISSUES

LAS Works to Advance Housing & Economic Goals in Amani

The Legal Aid Society remains actively engaged in the Amani Neighborhood through the pandemic. Legal Aid is a partner in the Amani Model Block project (and now the Beta Block), attending bi-weekly meetings with the Dominican Center and lead partners and providing advice and counsel on legal matters as they arise.

Additionally, Legal Aid attended a Model Block tour on September 1 with special guest U.S. Representative Gwen Moore, along with other partners.

Our neighborhood lawyer Joe Riepenhoff represented the agency at a partner meeting at the Wisconsin Black Historical Society on September 30.

We attended and presented



at an October 2 Tenant Resource Fair at the Andrew S. Douglas Middle School at 3620 N. 18th Street organized by Alderwoman Milele Coggs.

And we rolled up our sleeves and helped out at a Beta Block cleanup event on Saturday, November 13.

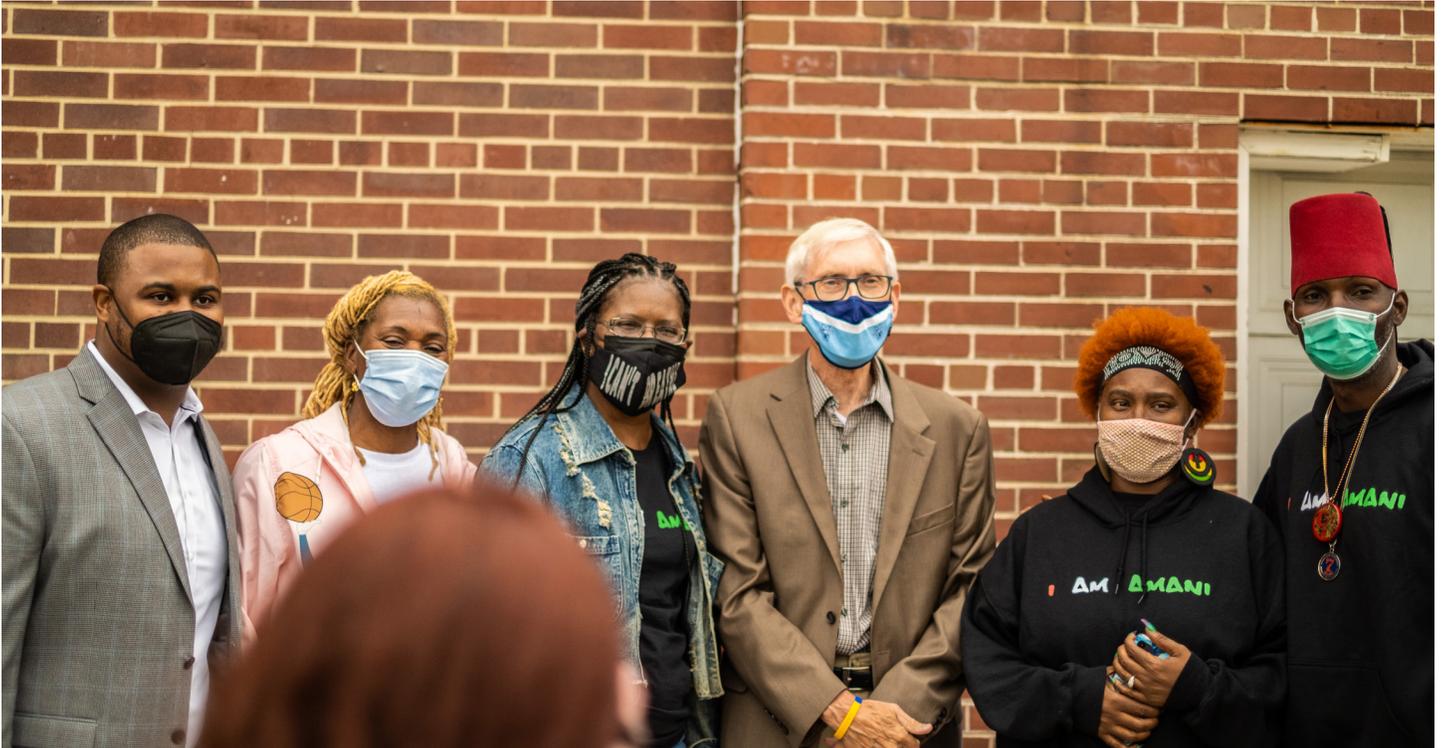
Legal Aid staff regularly provide legal advice and representation to Amani residents (133 total cases for 53206 in 2021 alone) including on housing security issues (landlord-tenant, code violations, property tax fore-

closures), pardon applications, and entrepreneurship/business matters. We directly field inquiries from residents via Dominican Center referrals to ensure we are immediately responsive to residents' legal concerns.

We continue to promote our launch of the Eviction Free MKE project to better reach residents on the vital issue of stable rental housing and tenant representation in eviction court.

Ultimately, Legal Aid's work helps build capacity of the neighborhood anchor organization, residents, and those working to support and advance housing and economic development goals in the Amani Neighborhood.

PRIORITY AREA: HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



■ REPRESENTING AMANI RESIDENTS

Amani United Tackles Housing, Econ Development Issues

The Amani United Housing and Economic Development Committee has been working for Amani residents throughout the last year. The board got off to a slow start, but our inauguration took place on Feb. 6, 2021, and we were officially sworn in to do the work of the Amani Revitalization Plan.

As the Housing and Economic Development Chair, I saw some challenges. It was difficult to find a date and time for virtual committee meetings, but as time went on, I found it was more convenient for residents to engage on the first Saturday of the month, so we combined our meeting

with the Ambassadors (Safety) Council, which takes place at 10am after the Amani United 1st Saturday Meeting. We are looking forward to engaging with and getting more residents activated in 2022.

Some of our highlights from 2021 include:

- HOUSING REPAIR – We continue to utilize our partnership with Community Warehouse; 13 vouchers for home repair supplies were distributed to residents who stated a need and requested them.
- MEETING WITH ELECTED



OFFICIALS – We had several opportunities to meet with elected officials who represent Amani. We discussed the Amani Revitalization Plan, our Housing Initiative, our neighborhood identity (signage, street signs and beautification), and entrepreneurship in Amani. Inclement weather prevented our officials from

PRIORITY AREA: HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

walking the Pilot Block in the Block By Block initiative, but all have agreed to return to see first-hand the great working being done. The elected officials include:

- Gov. Evers (along with his team)
- State Rep. Kalan Haywood II (on two different occasions)
- State Rep. David Bowen
- County Supervisor Priscilla Coggs-Jones (we partnered with her for a clean-up of Moody Park)
- We're looking forward to meeting with Mayor Cavalier Johnson after postponing our meeting.

- **BLOCK BY BLOCK INITIATIVE** – Pilot Block work is winding up and the next two blocks have been identified: 22nd-23rd between Locust Street and Hadley Avenue. Residents are being engaged (neighborhood clean-up and free lunch from Makin' Jamaican on Nov. 13), they are finding out what the process is and what their home repair requirements are. This area was chosen as the next two Pilot Blocks because there is an investor who is interested in purchasing city-owned property located in the same area. The next steps include continuing to engage residents, holding virtual meetings to introduce homeownership process, educating residents on non-traditional



ways to be a homeowner, and establishing BID in Amani.

- **FOOD DRIVES** – Amani United assisted with Dominican Center and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin for food drives throughout the year. There were three mobile food pantries in the summer and giveaways for Thanksgiving and Christmas, which included food, resources, holiday gifts and winter gear.

- **AMANI UNITED BOARD** – President, Vice President and Secretary positions are coming up for election in October 2022 (these are two-year positions). The committee chairperson positions were extended to four years, most will be up for election in October 2024. We're excited for the next election and to see Amani residents take on leadership positions.



Be sure to get on the Amani United email list (click here: <http://eepurl.com/hrlkmD>) to see the greatness coming up in 2022 and get informed and help with the work we're doing.

We're asking that we also keep in our prayers those who have lost a loved one this year.

"Let us be about what we talk about! The change starts with us!" is my motto. Wishing you all a prosperous New Year.

*Submitted by Barbara Smith,
Housing and Economic
Development Committee
Chair, Amani United*



THANK YOU 2021 NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERS FOR
CELEBRATING ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN AMANI

