



# SHARING THE JOURNEY

Dominican Center for Women, Inc. | [www.dominican-center.org](http://www.dominican-center.org) | October 2014



## 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 Amani residents of the Amani neighborhood.

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

- Augustine Stewardship Fund
- Dundon Trust
- Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
- Milwaukee School of Engineering/Brady Corporation Foundation
- Northwestern Mutual Foundation
- St. John Vianney Parish
- St. Joseph's Congregation
- St. Jude Parish
- United States Conference of Bishops CCHD



The reconstruction of Moody Park began with a groundbreaking and dedication event on August 29. Amani residents join County Executive Chris Abele (center), Supervisor David Bowen, and representatives from the COA Youth and Family Center, Friends of Moody Park, Dominican Center, Amani United, and Milwaukee County Parks to celebrate the beginning of the transformation of Moody Park.

## Celebrating Moody Park

Amani residents celebrated Milwaukee County's commitment to invest in the reconstruction of Moody Park during a groundbreaking ceremony on August 29. The community gathered with County Executive Chris Abele, Supervisor David Bowen, and representatives from the COA Youth and Family Center, Friends of Moody Park, Dominican Center, Amani United, and Milwaukee County Parks for the dedication event.

Amani resident Dennis Walton recalled learning to swim in Moody Pool and was hopeful that the reconstruction of Moody Park will bring positive changes to the neighborhood. "This is my home," Walton said. He called upon fellow residents to seize this opportunity to unite and be neighborly.

Building Neighborhood Capacity Coordinator Pepper Ray lives near the park and shared her appreciation.

"I am glad everyone came together to show their dedication for getting this park built," she said.

County Executive Abele first came to Moody Park in 2012 to announce the county's plan to revitalize Milwaukee's urban parks. Amani residents are happy to see the work in Moody Park begin. They look forward to the transformation of both the park and the well-being of the residents.

# Notes From the Executive Director

## Amani on the RISE

*Good things are happening in Amani!*



Sr. Patricia Rogers

- The Dominican Center Education Program is bursting at the seams with 46 registered students.
- COA-Goldin will house an early childhood development education program.
- Auer Avenue Elementary School will be nominated to become an MPS Community School.
- COA Goldin and Bethesda Baptist Church fed over 500 children and parents lunch and dinner this summer.
- Fifty six youth volunteered to help fight blight in their neighborhood by painting boards to resemble windows and doors on city-owned abandoned buildings.
- Residents helped with nine cleanups June–August 2014.
- The County Executive and Supervisor Bowen committed their support for the installation of the new Moody Park.
- Elected officials, partners, Lindsey Heights, Metcalfe Park, Washington Park, and Amani came to together to visually show their support for the revitalization of inner city neighborhoods at the Arms Around Us event.

Picture these two scenes in Amani: young children standing at the door of a police car SMILING while a police officer turned on the siren and police officers walking with young children on a neighborhood cleanup, holding the trash bag, talking, and picking up trash with the children. These may seem like small incidents, but they are rare sights in inner city neighborhoods today. The above two scenes are the results of the residents' requests that District 5 Police Officers be seen doing more than enforcing the law. No, this does not solve the shared distrust between Amani residents and the police, but it is a start.

The most significant thing happening in the Amani neighborhood is the emerging of a collective voice. Residents are attending community, police district, and town hall meetings to voice their concerns, be heard, and learn the procedures needed to solve the issues in their neighborhoods. The Arms Around Us event required elected officials and residents to commit to the revitalization of the four neighborhoods, being accountable to the roles each has to play in making revitalization possible and to holding each other accountable.

Losing the “area of least resistance” tag and holding self and elected officials accountable are life and community changing attitudes and behaviors. Pray with me for resident-led revitalization in the Amani community.

These capacity building events are the direct results of generous friends, supports, partners, donors, and hardworking residents. Thank you for supporting the Dominican Center's efforts to build neighborhood capacity block-by-block and neighbor-by-neighbor.

Sr. Patricia

# Education Program:

## Commitment and Openness

Dr. Veronica Rogers has identified two critical needs for student success. “Not books or pencils, there are plenty of these resources,” she said. “What students need most is commitment and openness.”

Veronica commented that student commitment propels the ongoing success of DCW students. She understands that adult education is difficult. “It is hard work and requires a strong level of commitment,” she stated. “One must be open and determined to make a life change. They must have ownership of this.” Additionally, she urges residents to speak candidly and engage in critical dialogues about their needs and to remain open minded and responsive to the resource people who will assist them on their journey.

Veronica supports Amani residents on this journey because she understands the many challenges residents face. As she works with students to set educational goals and to prevent absenteeism and tardiness, Veronica reminds them that she is here “to help them think.”

DCW enrolls learners of every age and ability into a personal, goal-directed program and a welcoming and supportive community of learners. More than 20 volunteer tutors work one-on-one with students to achieve their goals. If you would like to enroll in the DCW Education Program or volunteer as a tutor, please contact Veronica directly at 414-444-9930 or [Veronica@dominican-center.org](mailto:Veronica@dominican-center.org)



Amani neighbors gather during a Vacant Lot Party on Saturday, August 23.

# Arms Around Us Event

## Building Neighborhood Capacity Program News

In the spirit of solidarity, residents of the Amani, Lindsey Heights, Metcalf Park, and Washington Park neighborhoods joined arms on September 6. Organized by area Building Neighborhood Capacity Program (BNCP) coordinators, the Arms Around Us event served as a living commitment to restoring peace and well-being in the community.

Alderman Russell Stamper II, Alderman Willie Hines, County Supervisor David Bowen, Milwaukee Police, and the Dominican Center were among the supporters. The Fitzsimmons Boys & Girls Club hosted a resource fair after the event.

Similar community building activities are held frequently in the Amani Neighborhood. Vacant Lot Parties, organized by residents, BNCP coordinators, or other organizations, help neighbors get to know one another. Monthly Amani United meetings held at the COA facilitate dialogue about critical neighborhood issues.



### Building Neighborhood Capacity Upcoming Events

#### Turn Up Our Voice Youth Summit

October 17–18  
Tommy G. Thompson Youth Center,  
West Allis

#### Amani United Neighborhood Meeting

Tuesday, October 28, 4:30 p.m.

## Volunteers Needed to Tutor

The Dominican Center for Women enrolls learners of every age and ability into a personal, goal-directed program through one-on-one tutoring. Education at DCW is unique because the only requirement is student commitment. More than 50 students wish to participate in this year's program. Tutors are needed to better serve this growing education program.

Tutors must commit to at least two hours one day a week. Sessions are held Monday—Thursday, 9–11:30 a.m. and 12:30–2:30 p.m. Reading specialists or tutors with some teaching or tutoring experience are especially needed. Additionally, DCW needs tutors to teach basic computer skills and social studies (especially history) on Fridays, 9–11:30 a.m.

Classes begin September 8 and the first session ends December 12. The second session begins January 2015. Tutor training will be provided on site on mutually convenient dates.

Please consider making a difference in the life of a student. Contact Veronica Rogers at 414-444-9930 or [Veronica@dominican-center.org](mailto:Veronica@dominican-center.org) to volunteer.



Dr. Veronica Rogers, Dominican Center's new coordinator of the Adult Basic Education and GED programs tutors a student. The program is growing, with more than 50 students participating this year and has openings for additional tutors to teach reading skills, computer skills, and social studies.

# Dominican Center for Women, Inc.

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## Welcome New Staff Members:

*These extraordinary women bring professional expertise, personal wisdom, and a profound commitment to empowering the residents of the Amani neighborhood. We are truly blessed to have them with us.*

### **Pepper Ray, Building Neighborhood Capacity Coordinator**



Pepper grew up in the Amani Neighborhood and has great memories of her Milwaukee childhood. Pepper attended Alabama A & M University to earn her bachelor's degree in Education and is happy to be back in this area. Active in Amani United, Pepper enjoys working with her neighbors to create a new revitalization plan. Pepper possesses great energy and empathy. "I'm level headed and have a listening ear." She invites everyone to share their ideas and suggestions with her.

### **Fatima Benhaddou, Program Coordinator**



Fatima earned her master's degree in Architecture and Urban Planning from UW-M School of Architecture and Urban Planning. She worked with the Dominican Center to write the Amani Action Plan, an in-depth study of the history, land use, and community dynamics in the Amani neighborhood. Committed to neighborhood housing, restoration, and revitalization, she works to understand the context and her ethical responsibility. "When restoration of a vacant building is done correctly, it serves as a catalyst for other positive community changes."

### **Dr. Veronica Rogers, Adult Basic Education & GED Programs Coordinator**



Veronica earned her doctorate degree in Leadership for the Advancement of Learning and Service from Cardinal Stritch University. A previous DCW volunteer, she is modest when speaking about her achievements and global work experience. "Nothing is above me or below me," explains Dr. Veronica. "If a task is challenging, I take out my ladder and climb up to achieve it." Her goals for this year are introducing social studies and keyboarding into a Friday morning curriculum.