



**ROCK the BLOCK**

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# DC

DOMINICAN CENTER



www.dominican-center.org

Supporting Community Change Since 1995

Summer 2019

## 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, DC received grants from the following organizations:

- Brewers Community Foundation
- C W Marketing & Communications
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- Woman's Club of Wisconsin Foundation
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### SPRING FUNDRAISER

## 'Hold On To Your Hats' Fundraiser Helps Amani

An array of colorful hats and gracious generosity on full display at Dominican's annual spring luncheon

About 150 guests filled the Wisconsin Club on Sunday, May 5, for the Dominican Center's annual spring fundraiser: "Hold On To Your Hats" to raise money for Milwaukee's Amani neighborhood.

Hat-wearing participants bid on high-value raffle and silent auction items, were served a delicious lunch and watched an inspiring program



**FOR MORE:** To see photos from the event, and watch the exclusive video, visit [www.dominican-center.org](http://www.dominican-center.org)

which included speakers, a powerful exclusive video, and a wonderful performance from All Saints Gospel Choir.

We couldn't have celebrated this success without all of your support. We'd like to extend a special thank you to

our sponsors: Northwestern Mutual Foundation; the Milwaukee Bucks Foundation; Brewers Community Foundation, Inc.; Catholic Financial Life, Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.; Zilber Ltd.; the Kordsmeier Family; and Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

We'd also like to thank the fundraiser committee, the volunteers and staff.



## Notes from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Dominican Center will celebrate 25 years in 2020. This is an accomplishment not experienced by many small non-profits.



“The Dominican Center stands at the door of its mission.”

- Sr. Patricia Rogers, OP

The life of the Dominican Center is due to the vision and accomplishment of the founders, Sisters Ann Halloran, OP, and Anne Marie Doyle, OP. The relationships these two Sisters built with residents and partners set the stage for the Amani resident input and involvement experienced today.

The Dominican Center stands at the door of its mission, supporting community change, and the Amani residents have opened the door. Supporting change means embracing change through the talents, wisdom and gifts of those who will live with the decisions that impact their lives and being patient with the pace of change.

Your patience is the reason why we will celebrate 25 years. Your growth in understanding, that sustained change comes through resident led actions and decisions, gave the Dominican Center and Amani United the time we needed to grow into our roles together. Thank you.



**DONATE TO DC TODAY**

Visit: [www.dominican-center.org/make-a-donation.html](http://www.dominican-center.org/make-a-donation.html)

## ADULT EDUCATION PROGRAM UPDATES

# DC Students Look to the Future



Dominican Center student Latrese Johnson graduated with her HSED at Milwaukee Area Technical College on Wednesday, May 22. She plans on continuing her education in human services.

This year, the Dominican Center Education Program helped several students start their journey in education.

In December 2018, April Ladd and Sheryl Hudson graduated with their HSEDs, and Robert Taylor completed his lifelong dream of getting his HSED.

In May of 2019, two students completed programs at the Dominican Center: Latrese Johnson, who plans to continue her education in human services, and Katrisha Mallett, who wants to study cosmology. Both students graduated with their HSEDs.

In addition, former DC student Beverly Haynes, who graduated with her GED last year, has gone on to earn her diploma in Health and

Human Services. She will earn her Associates Degree next year.

DC Education Coordinator, Barbara Wells, said that the students worked hard in the education program. “Students overcame some very difficult obstacles to get here, but (they) came,” she said.

Wells said she is looking forward to working with potential HSED/GED students who want to avoid “brain drain” this summer. She will meet with students each Tuesday throughout the summer to work on math and reading skills and to prepare them for their first class in November.

Thank you to all of the students, volunteer tutors and staff, who support each student’s education goals.

**Are you interested in being a volunteer tutor in the fall? Or are you looking for free adult education classes with one-on-one tutor support? For info, please email Education Coordinator Barbara Wells at [barbara@dominican-center.org](mailto:barbara@dominican-center.org) or call (414) 444-9930.**

## STAFF NEWS

# Longtime Office Manager Retiring

The big smile you see each time you enter the Dominican Center belongs to Office Manager Connie Poth. After years of service, she’s looking toward retirement.

Connie started working at DC in 2015 as a volunteer tutor before being invited by Sisters Patricia Rogers, OP, and Ann Halloran, OP, to be part of the staff. Connie is a part of almost everything that goes on at DC. “The best part of my job is the variety of responsibilities – paying the bills, payroll, creating reports and especially working with some wonderful people,” Connie said.

Connie said her retirement will include gardening and many long walks with her dog, but she’ll miss DC and her coworkers. “I appreciate the good humor and dedication of some of my coworkers. I do love my coworkers and will miss them the most,” she said.



Connie Poth, left, pictured with Octavia Parker at Bloom & Groom at the Dominican Center in May.

## AMANI NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION

# Cleaning Up the Neighborhood, One Block At a Time

### Rock the Block, Bloom & Groom, Block Clean Up all held in Amani

On Saturday, May 18, the community came together in the name of building neighborhood capacity and sharing neighborhood pride.

Rock the Block, a DC and Habitat for Humanity event sponsored by Northwestern Mutual, was attended by about 100 residents and volunteers, as well as Bango, the Milwaukee Bucks' mascot, and Mayor Tom Barrett. All worked together to make minor home repairs, plant flowers and clean up a block on 26th Street. In addition, Alex Edwards, Amani Housing Coordinator, talked about new strategies.

Back at the Dominican Center, staff unloaded affordable plants from Lowe's Home Improvement to sell to residents for Bloom & Groom. This was one of several sales throughout Milwaukee, and some 50,000 flowers were sold through the help of 11 neighborhood organizations.

A dedicated group of Amani residents, along with DC staff and Amani United, also cleaned up several blocks around the neighborhood before heading to help at Rock the Block. Block Clean Ups will be held June 15, July 20, Aug. 17 and Sept. 21.

For more event photos, visit [www.dominican-center.org](http://www.dominican-center.org)



FIRST ROW: Residents, volunteers and DC work at Rock the Block. SECOND ROW, LEFT TO RIGHT: DC employee Alex Edwards talks to the Bucks' mascot Bango; Mayor Tom Barrett poses with Amani United Vice President Jarvis West and President Bro. Rice-Bey; Amani resident Barbara Smith. ABOVE: DC staff Connie Poth talks to a resident about plants. AT RIGHT: A group of residents participate in our Block Clean Up, which traveled throughout Amani.



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**MAKING AMANI VOICES HEARD**

**Residents Fight Against MCTS Cuts**

On April 23, Amani residents demanded a viewing of the MCTS NEXT Plan at COA Youth and Family Center. They knew that cuts to bus routes in the neighborhood would be made if they didn't view the plan. As they packed COA's NOVA high school library, they complained that these cuts put the neighborhood at a disadvantage.

Residents attended the next meeting on May 8 at the Transportation, Public Works and Transit Committee Board meeting, where the proposed cuts were again discussed.

Some success: MCTS decided to keep Route 80. Tom Winter, Director of Schedule and Planning for MCTS said that community outreach is what led them to keep the Route 80 at Hopkins Street and Locust Street.

"In the Amani Neighborhood ... we heard loud and clear that that was something that was really valuable and we're going to keep that service," Winter said.

Though Route 80 has been seemingly

saved, that isn't the case for other Amani bus routes, including Route 57, the Jobline, which will stop in August. Residents at the meeting said they wanted to be involved in the decisions being made to eliminate bus routes serving their neighborhoods.

"We have a lot of concerned people," said Bro. RiceBey, President of Amani United. "This almost passed my neighborhood by. There's too much going on with us basically not being at the table."

Richard Diaz of the Dominican Center also spoke about the cuts. "There needs to be a seat on the Milwaukee County Transit Board for riders," said Diaz. "Not only for riders but for residents and for workers of the Union ... this is all unacceptable from the lens of the working people who live and thrive in these neighborhoods."

"Many neighborhoods around Amani did not know about the MCTS Next Plan," he said. "Are people even aware that an impact to daily life is going to be made?"

The Committee meets next on July 10.