



ROCK THE BLOCK

Neighborhood
revitalization celebration

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Sharing the Lift.

Greetings Friends,

I hope you and your families are safe and well. As I reflect on the first half of 2022, I think about these words: "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples." Mother Teresa.

There's so much happening in our community and across our nation. Now, more than ever, we must unify around shared goals. Each of us can lend ourselves to helping make our community become better.

I'm so grateful for the many people and organizations who are raising their hands to do their part. This year, we've been able to:

- Build and grow a hydroponics lab in the heart of Amani, which will enable training and enterprise and will educate residents of all ages in Amani about healthy, organic food and how to grow it.
- Partner with resident group Amani United to support their Responsible Gun Ownership campaign as a way to alleviate the growing gun violence in our city.
- Kick off efforts on the Beta Blocks with the partners in the Block-by-Block initiative. Already this spring we've engaged residents, held three clean ups and

two Rock the Block events.

There's still much to accomplish this year. On the horizon we will be cementing our partnership with Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin with our Mobile Food Pantries, which will be held June 28, July 26 and Aug. 23. Each date will include a giveaway of healthy food, and we'll highlight other resources available to Amani residents. On June 28, we'll also be holding our Spring Plant Sale featuring plants grown in DC's hydroponics lab!

And I would personally like to invite you to attend our annual fundraising luncheon, Green & Growing. This fun-filled event at the Wisconsin Club will feature a Gospel Choir performance, auctions and raffles and a delicious lunch, along with stories of DC's success and an awards ceremony to honor some individuals who are woven into the fiber of the Dominican Center and the Amani neighborhood. We hope you'll join us on June 26 at 11:30am.

We can't do this work alone. Thank you to all our partners and supporters who've helped in sharing the lift. We look forward to continuing to serve along with you as we work in tandem with residents to revitalize the neighborhood.

"There's so much happening in our community and across our nation. Now, more than ever, we must unify around shared goals. Each of us can lend ourselves to helping make our community become better."

Maricha Harris, DC Executive Director



YOU'RE CORDIALLY INVITED ...

Green & Growing.

DC throwing annual fundraising luncheon
at Wisconsin Club on June 26

Tickets are on sale now for Dominican Center's annual fundraising luncheon Green & Growing. Proceeds from this event support Amani resident identified priorities including: neighborhood safety, housing and economic development, education and family well-being.

Come support DC into 2022 and enjoy fellowship and fun! The event will feature an auction, which opens early on June 16, 2022 (www.DominicanCenter.givesmart.com), a delicious lunch, entertainment and an award ceremony featuring our award winners: The Dominican Sisters of Sinsinawa; Sr. Mary Menke, Csa (posthumously); Dr. Lester Carter (posthumously); Wes Landry of Dominican Center and Shelley Mathews of FullCircle, 26, Inc.

DC would like to thank our Presenting Sponsor, Northwestern Mutual; our Platinum Sponsor The Brewers Community Foundation; our Gold Sponsors American Family Insurance and the Kordsmeier Family; and our Silver Sponsor PNC Bank.

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

To purchase a ticket, participate in our auction (opens June 16!), or donate to our event, visit:
www.DominicanCenter.Givesmart.com

UPCOMING EVENTS

AMANI DAY

WHAT: A celebration of the Amani neighborhood and the residents who live there.

WHEN: June 20, 2022

DETAILS: TBD - For info & updates, dominican-center.org/amani-united

GREEN & GROWING

WHAT: Dominican Center's annual fundraising luncheon. Enjoy a delicious lunch, entertainment, auction, raffle, awards ceremony and more!

WHEN: June 26, 2022

TIME: 11:30am-2:30pm

WHERE: The Wisconsin Club, 900 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee

SPRING PLANT SALE

WHAT: Buy plants to beautify your home and support DC's hydroponics lab! All plants sold grown in Amani!.

WHEN: June 28, 2022

TIME: 12-2pm

WHERE: DC, 2470 W. Locust St.

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

WHAT: DC and Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin are bringing a mobile food pantry to Amani

WHEN: June 28, July 26, Aug. 23

TIME: 12-2pm

WHERE: DC, 2470 W. Locust St.



BLOCK BY BLOCK UPDATE

Residents Ready to Rock the Block.

The Amani Block by Block initiative kicks off a summer of work on the Beta Blocks with clean ups and beautification efforts

Neighbors and Block by Block partners and volunteers came together under beautiful blue skies on May 7 for Rock the Block, a neighborhood beautification and revitalization event held on the Beta Block, the second block of the Amani Block by Block initiative.

Participants cleaned the streets, sidewalks and vacant lots of garbage, yard debris and weeds. They mowed lawns and helped plant front yard flower gardens, but most importantly, they came out to spend time together and they embark on a project to revitalize a neighborhood, one block at a time.

There were more than 60 people who joined in the efforts, including dozens of youth. Participants included residents, volunteers and partners, including Amani United, Milwaukee Christian Center, Ezekiel CDC, Habitat for Humanity, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, DNS Milwaukee. Additional Block by Block partners include Northwestern Mutual, KG Development Group and LISC Milwaukee.

The second Rock the Block event was held Saturday, June 4 on the 2800 block of N. 22nd Street. Residents, partners and volunteers came together to clean the second Beta Block. More than 60 people collected 30 bags of trash. Nine partners organizations engaged with block residents, including MPD Dist. 5 and the Milwaukee Fire Department. Participants enjoyed music, games and free food provided by Dominican Center. Pete's Pops were also on hand for a delicious treat.

Rock the Block and other engagement activities are part of the neighborhood revitalization taking place through the Block by Block initiative.



For more information on the Block by Block initiative, including upcoming events, visit. www.dominican-center.org/block-by-block



HYDROPONICS

'Farming for the Future'

DC teams up with residents, FullCircle26 to bring urban agriculture technology to Amani, create access to fresh produce

If you walk past the DC in the heart of the Amani neighborhood, you will see something you could never expect. A warm red glow radiates from the basement windows. Inside is DC's hydroponics lab and what hits you first are the smells of spring and walls of glistening green produce.

DC has been growing their hydroponics lab since 2019 as a way to bring fresh produce to Amani and to teach all ages of residents about the trade to influence enterprise and healthy living skills.

"There is power in building self-sustainable communities," said DC Executive Director Mari-cha Harris. "Not only can urban agriculture and agriculture technology (AgTech) be leveraged to create access to fresh produce in our communities, but it can also be leveraged to create jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities. I'm excited about the ways we can use hydroponics to develop an ecosystem that focuses on the intersections of food, education, vocational training and financial sustainability."

Currently, the hydroponics lab is growing flowers, plants and herbs for their Spring Plant Sale on June 28 and for DC's annual fundraising luncheon Green & Growing.

The lab will expand this summer thanks to a grant from Milwaukee Water Commons, which will support a resident with hydroponics training and employment.

For more, visit: www.dominican-center.org/hydroponics

Donate to hydroponics lab, visit: <https://bit.ly/DChydroponics>



Shemeka Owens earned her AA in criminal justice in May 2022 from MATC. She will be continuing her education at UW-Milwaukee.



Shemeka is pictured here (left) with Dominican Center classmates as she earned her GED in 2018.

ADULT EDUCATION UPDATE

Want More. Want Better for Your Life.

DC Adult education student continues life of education with degree in criminal justice

Shemeka Owens was a single mother, ready to make a better life for herself and her kids. "I had always wanted to go back and I tried, but I was going through so many different mental stages that I wasn't focused," she said "I was tired of sitting around, I wanted more. I wanted better for my life and my kids.

Shemeka signed up for the Adult Education Program at Dominican Center and through the program's partner MATC, she graduated and earned her GED in 2018. And that was only the beginning of her education journey. She graduated in May with her Associates of Art in Criminal Justice from MATC and she's been accepted to UW-Milwaukee to continue her education and complete her bachelor's degree.

"Shemeka is wonderful, I am so excited for her," said DC Education Coordinator Barbara Wells. "I think she likes wearing a cap and gown."

Shemeka says she owes her success and her degrees to her perseverance and hard

work. "I had crying days, but I did it," she said. "You might have hard days, especially if you have kids, but you have to keep trying." She said that being a single mother to five kids was a lot to manage when going to class and putting in the work to earn your degrees. She said that prayers and help from her support system helped her on hard days and that resources like free childcare allowed her to focus on her education and attend classes.

When Shemeka finishes her education, she wants to be a police officer. "I want to make a difference. There isn't enough color on the force. I can't make a change, but I can make a difference," she said. "Well maybe I can make a change!"

She wants others thinking about going back to school to know that it is always worth it and it is never too late. "It is not easy. I had a moment that I wanted to give up, but I kept trying. Stay focused and don't let anything come pass you, keep on pushing."

**For more: www.dominican-center.org/education-well-being
To donate or sponsor an adult education kit for our students visit: <https://bit.ly/DCeducationkits>**

CLEANING UP AMANI

DC, Partners Hold Spring Cleanups.

Earth Day Cleanup removes 42 bags of trash from Amani

The Dominican Center and partners are making their way through the Amani on a spring cleaning mission.

Cleaning up the neighborhood aligns with the Housing & Economic Development concentration area of the Amani Revitalization, as well as the Neighborhood Safety concentration area. Participating in cleanups helps beautify the neighborhood, restores neighborhood pride and allows residents and partners to take charge of their surroundings.

DC and Amani United, along with Welcome Home Milwaukee and Boardwalk Reality, held a community clean up in honor of Earth Day on April 22. The group saw rain all day, but they braved the elements to collect 42 bags full of trash between 20th and 27th Streets on Locust.

Another clean up was held on the 2800 block of N. 23rd Street on May 18. DC staff, Amani United, Coalition on Lead Emergency and MPD Dist. 5 all came together to remove debris on the Beta Block.

Pop-up clean ups happen weekly in Amani and larger event cleanups are also scheduled throughout the summer. Amani residents can plan a clean up on their block and DC will supply the supplies. Email jerusa@dominican-center.org for more information.



Dominican Center staff and Board, along with partners from Amani United, Welcome Home Milwaukee and Boardwalk Reality held an Earth Day Cleanup in Amani.



Another clean up was held in support of the Beta Block, 2800 block of N. 23rd St., on May 18, with Amani United, the Coalition on Lead Emergency and MPD Dist. 5.



AMANI YOUTH

Experiencing Nation's Capital

Herb Kohl Foundation funds field trip to Washington, D.C. for Amani Youth

On June 13, 2022, 28 Amani youth and 5 chaperons will board a bus to embark on a trip of a lifetime to Washington, D.C. Students will see the city, visit monuments, museums, the White House, and historic Black College, Howard University. Students will meet elected officials and experience the culture of the Capital.

This trip is a yearly tradition happening for the first time since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Students are able to have this experience thanks to funding from the Herb Kohl Foundation.

To make a donation to support Amani youth on the Washington trip & beyond, visit: <https://bit.ly/DCwashingtontrip>



Block by Block Partners Win Mayor's Design Award

The Amani Block by Block initiative was recognized in the Mayor's Design Awards for the Neighborhood Renaissance award for adding value to the city by providing new or improved options for neighborhood housing.

"These awards celebrate the innovative efforts that make our city a great place to live, work, and have fun. I am excited to recognize these deserving projects that showcase the power of urban design to build stronger communities and move Milwaukee forward," said Milwaukee Mayor Cavalier Johnson.

Block by Block partners include Dominican Center, Amani United, Northwestern Mutual Ezekiel CDC, Milwaukee Christian Center, Legal Aid Society of Milwaukee, LISC Milwaukee and KG Development Group.

