



seeds of change

lutheran metropolitan ministry

2021 Volume XXVII, Issue 3

September is National Workforce Development Month

National Workforce Development Month recognizes the contributions of working professionals and uplifts innovative initiatives that support jobseekers. Here at LMM, our Workforce Development program is pushing the envelope with initiatives such as the Chopping for Change program and our latest social enterprise, Metro45 Mobile Kitchen & Catering.

C4C is Back in the Building

After more than a year of remote instruction for our Chopping for Change program (C4C) in response to COVID-19, the program is back in person! We're excited for our students to return and can't wait to see what they accomplish.

C4C empowers women in the criminal justice system by providing them with significant work experience and training. This innovative partnership with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, and the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, also allows women to receive wraparound services including counseling and case management designed to facilitate their reentry experience and decrease recidivism.

Metro45 Mobile Kitchen & Catering

Metro45 Cafe & Catering will make its return on wheels as Metro45 Mobile Kitchen & Catering after temporarily suspending operations due to the pandemic. This enterprise, operated mainly out of our new food truck, aims to perform two unique social service activities: bringing quality food, education and benefit access to food deserts across Greater Cleveland; and using the mobile kitchen to bring variety and satisfaction to resident clients in shelter and congregate living settings.

Continued on back cover



To learn more about Chopping for Change, check out this video by scanning the QR code.



LMM staff work on removing old logos from our newly acquired food truck. It's time to brand it as our own!

Letter from the President & CEO



Andrew D. Genszler

Dear Friends,

Let me take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of our board and staff for the many ways you have continued to support LMM through a year and a half of unprecedented operations. Our programs have strategically expanded during this time of great need and our campaign for affordable housing, *Breaking New Ground*, is in the home stretch with close to \$3 million of our \$3.5 million goal achieved! We are deeply grateful for your commitment and support.

The past few months have been an intense time for our Housing and Shelter programs, in particular. You may know that LMM has been administering a program in response to the COVID pandemic, to provide shelter to people who are homeless at hotel sites across Cuyahoga County; some ten sites to date. Recent media coverage has focused on resistance with one suburb and the request for LMM to leave. The traumatic environment created by various forms of surveillance and confrontation were not conducive to our goals for shelter, especially among residents and many staff partners who have faced significant trauma in their own lives. This is especially true as threats such as “get off my sidewalk” were leveled at our residents – mostly BIPOC – by a police force representing an overwhelmingly white suburb; all as our national tensions and debate about race and policing reached a high point with the Chauvin trial verdict. Our decision was made to comply with the request to withdraw for the sake and safety of residents and staff, and I would make that same decision again.

However, I want to share a broader reflection with you as supporters of LMM. Whether it’s shelter services or housing placements; our fight for more broadly accepted housing vouchers or our creation of affordable housing in our *Breaking New Ground* campaign; the truth is “not-in-my-backyard” or “nimby” sentiment is everywhere. From fearful ex-urbs to legacy first-ring suburbs to expensive new developments in the city limits. “Nimby” is as endemic as the race and class boundaries we all are subtly taught, and as explicit as the gated communities we build.

The fact is LMM has faced resistance in some form – from outright threats of code enforcement to questions and suspicion – each of the times we’ve moved men into a hotel setting since March of 2020. We have had to *prove* that these residents of Cuyahoga County belonged where they were and, as important, to demonstrate that LMM knows what we are doing in providing services.

I was sharing thoughts about this letter with one of our VPs. She noted that, as complex as the government funding is, operationalizing this strategy was not the hard part. We have an excellent leadership and operations team, and truly dedicated partners. No, the hard part of this strategy continues to be breaking through the myths about homelessness, educating others on who is homeless, and convincing

communities that LMM’s residents will not pose an existential threat to their way of life (usually projected and assumed). This VP’s son attended high school across the street from one hotel location we used through this past April. She told me she was less concerned about his safety relative to the residents and more concerned with the environment for keeping *the residents* safe from unwanted intrusions.

Our team has been heartened by citizens and business owners nearby the troubled hotel sites who have made a point to stop in, bring donations, express support, share stories about how homelessness has touched them and, in short, to be *neighborly*. *We have indeed traveled far from the best values of our country when we have forgotten what it looks like to be neighborly.*

Because so much depends on being for each other, on being neighborly, LMM’s particular take on our “justice” mission value is essential for our charged national debate and our city: *justice is not first about procedure and rights; the term justice in its original form is about community and relationship – “right” – relationship*, as our mission statement declares. In this way, LMM can be inviting and constructive in working for justice, rather than cynical and divisive.

We are so appreciative of the ways you support LMM’s work and mission. One especially important current way to support our work is to stand with us to educate and advocate – challenging and inviting others to unlikely common ground conversations that are too rare as our society de-fracts into a thousand different news sources.



If the hotel situation played out as expected in our society between a defensive suburb and a business-as-usual non-profit, we would end our public statement after calling out the other party. But LMM is not a business-as-usual non-profit! Our mission is greater; our *m.o.* richer and more insightful than lining up on one side of a manufactured boundary. Our statement ends instead by inviting others together for education and talk about solutions.

LMM provides shelter services really well with a holistic concern for resident well-being. But we know better than most that shelter is not a solution to homelessness. What if we set a goal of *closing shelters in five years because everyone had a plan or resource including affordable housing*? What if that better conversation with unlikely allies generated solutions and became a place where the principle of “justice” was *realized*?

Hope, Housing & Healing During a Pandemic

COVID threw a wrench in all of our plans, but few were hit harder by the pandemic than the homeless community. With the fear and unknown of COVID, some people understandably froze, afraid of what's next. But not LMM. We led the charge with partners at the Cuyahoga County Office of Homeless Services by coming up with a temporary, emergency response to reduce the number of individuals at homeless shelters so that social distancing could occur. By using a Hotel Hub strategy, various hotels were repurposed as temporary housing for the most vulnerable of the Men's Shelter residents.

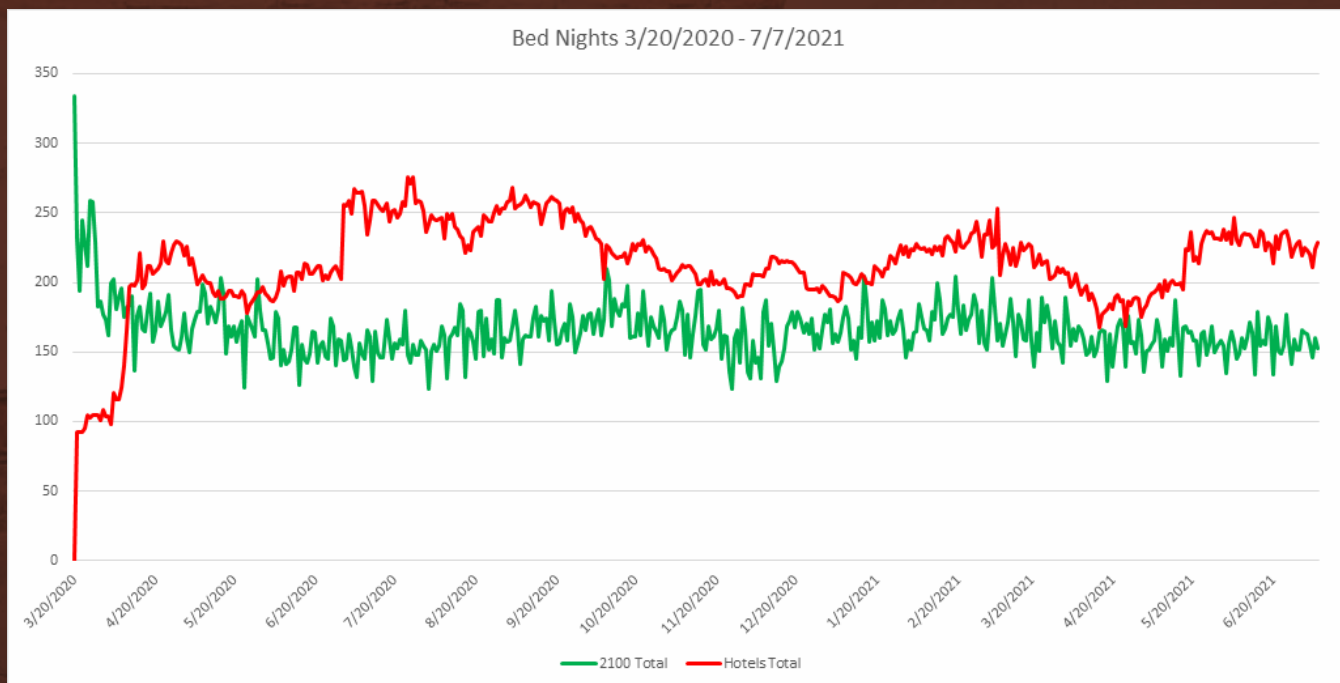
The Metrics Show Deconcentration Was a Success

LMM utilizes data-informed decision making and a biometric finger scanner to keep extremely accurate census data at the shelter sites. This chart shows daily census at the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside in green, and the combined hotels in red. As you can see, pre-COVID, we had all shelter beds and no hotel beds. In an effort to provide a quick and safe emergency response, we quickly ramped up and April 2020 was our first month where hotel bed usage exceeded shelter usage, which has been the trend line since. The Men's Shelter averaged about 170 people per night during this time, which reduced census by 63% of the pre-COVID bed count. We review this information daily and the real time data helps us continue to ensure that

everyone who needs a bed can get one. The COVID positivity rate among the local homeless community has been kept to 4.3% because of the use of hotels to deconcentrate the traditional shelter.

The Road Ahead: Our Transition Plan from the Hotel Hubs

The first phase of the transition plan relocated the men from the Ramada Inn in Independence to the Men's Shelter at 2100 Lakeside Avenue. The shelter has been undergoing modifications to comply with COVID safety protocols since May 2020. LMM is now able to move men back to the shelter at 2100 Lakeside by fast-tracking the design, build, and installation of a "pod" concept. Pods will serve the purpose of safety through social distancing.





Pods concept by Sai Sinbondit, project designer.

The pods were developed by project designer Sai Sinbondit. “I hope this project will contribute to the built environment that can provide a sense of privacy, security and dignity. I also hope this project will help support the work of the staff, LMM’s mission and make a positive impact on the community,” said Sinbondit.

The pods are intentionally flexible, can be reconfigured within the shelter and are of different sizes, starting at 7x8 feet. They accommodate singles, doubles or quads. For safety, LMM is continuing the practice of COVID screenings for each resident, COVID testing on-site once a week, and making vaccinations consistently accessible to residents.

As for why Sai signed onto the project? “I come from a family that was displaced and without a permanent home for multiple years. This project is important to me because it was a way for me to give back to the community and to an organization that is working to lift up the community, using my skill sets and training.”

Breaking New Ground First Home Complete!

As we set out on a \$3.5 million campaign to renovate houses and rent them to families experiencing homelessness, we imagined what the homes would look like and how the families would feel as they move into their own place with their children. Now, the first renovation, located on Schaefer in the St. Clair-Superior neighborhood, is complete and a family will be moving in soon!

Your Treasure, Our Trust

What happens to your donation when you give to LMM?

We want all of our donors to rest assured that their gift and all of their information is handled with the utmost care and confidentiality. We appreciate your financial partnership with us and do all we can to ensure your confidence. At LMM, we adhere to the Association of Fundraising Professionals “[Donor Bill of Rights](#).” This bill has been the creed of philanthropy professionals since 1993.

In short, we strive for openness and accountability in sharing with you our mission, our governance, our finances, and our processes. We will gladly share with you our financial statements and audits. We want you to feel confident that when you designate a gift to a particular program, your donation does, indeed, go toward that program. When you have questions about any aspect of our organization, we do everything we can to respond as quickly and as honestly as we can. And we do this while protecting the privacy rights of our participating clients and staff.

When you provide a gift to LMM, you are offering us your trust and we commit to giving you our trust in return. We want you to know that we recognize and deeply appreciate the faith you have in us to fulfill our mission and to do so in an efficient, caring, and fiscally responsible way. You can feel good about giving to LMM, not only for the good that is done through your donation, but also for the care we take in ensuring your donation will be handled with respect. We love our donors. You make our mission to serve with those in our community who are oppressed, forgotten and hurting possible. Please continue to give to LMM generously! Thank you.

Charles R. See Forum: LMM's Next Gateway to Good Trouble

How do you appropriately honor the career of a reentry giant who changed the lives of countless men and women? How do you carry on the legacy so that future generations know his impact and continue his mission? The answer is an annual forum to elevate the challenges of reentry endowed in the name of "Charles R. See."

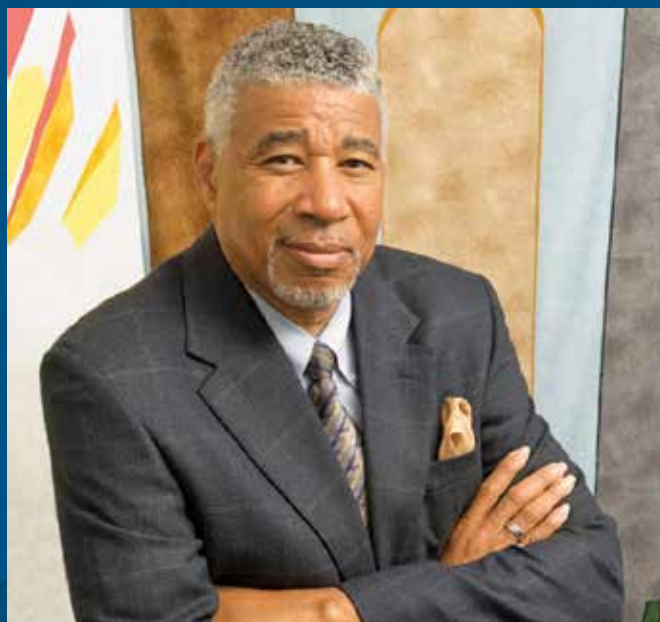
The idea for the forum followed Charles' 2017 retirement after 44 years of service at LMM. LMM leaders wanted to honor Charles, and continue his legacy through an annual forum on topics related to criminal justice and reentry. The forum was challenged with looking at innovative and forward-thinking solutions to the adverse life experiences faced by returning citizens and identifying new ideas for system-wide reform.

Planning for the forum commenced following the onboarding of LMM Advocacy Director Margie Glick in the summer of 2019. With the support and leadership of a Forum Host Committee comprised of forum donors, LMM Board Members, former members of the Community Reentry Board, and community advocates, planning ramped up during the fall of 2019. The forum was initially scheduled for the summer of 2020, but due to the COVID pandemic, the forum was ultimately postponed.

The Inaugural Charles R. See Forum on Reentry was at last held on Friday, June 18, 2021. The forum began with a private gathering of friends, family and colleagues of Charles to join together and honor his career. There was nary a dry eye in sight as LMM CEO Drew Genszler shared memories told by LMM staff members whose lives Charles, in their words, "saved." The event continued with Charles opening a gift from the host committee and LMM staff: an honorary red Care Team jacket. With this jacket, Charles joined the ranks of visiting dignitaries, including Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Attorney General Janet Reno, who were gifted identical jackets during their visits to LMM.

The event continued with remarks from Charles who spoke to the time a resident in CMHA only trusted her Care Team member with the \$36,000 she had been hiding in her apartment. Called to the CMHA site by the Care Team member, Charles asked the member, "What do you think you should do?" The Care Team Member made the decision to help the resident open a bank account and safely deposit the funds. The trust this resident had for their Care Team member brought tears to Charles's eyes.

The celebration went on with stories from Beth Sersig, a forum Host Committee member and LMM Board Member whose father, Jack, worked closely with Charles. Judge Ronald B. Adrine, former member of the Community Reentry Board; Michael Sering, Vice President of Housing and Shelter at LMM, and long-time friend of Charles; and Lana Mendis, LMM staff member and recent graduate of the Chopping for Change Program, shared stories of the impact Charles had on their lives and careers.



Charles R. See

The pre-event concluded, and attendees transitioned to the City Club of Cleveland for a virtual forum featuring DeAnna Hoskins, President of JustLeadershipUSA (JLUSA). Dedicated to cutting the U.S. correctional population in half by 2030, JLUSA empowers people most affected by incarceration to drive policy reform. In a conversation with City Club CEO Dan Moulthrop, Ms. Hoskins shared the importance of using policy and advocacy to drive systems change, the role that politics inevitably plays in all policy decisions, and how empowering those with lived experience to be advocates is the most powerful way to change the status quo. Ms. Hoskins spent many of her younger days involved in the criminal justice system as she battled addiction. She is a living example of how those who have justice involvement are often the most powerful speakers against harmful criminal justice policies.

Following the conclusion of the forum, attendees of the pre-event reconvened for continued conversation and comradery before disbanding for the afternoon. LMM is grateful for the support of the many staff members, host committee members, donors, partner organizations, and especially Charles, for making this inaugural event a success. We look forward to hosting many more critical conversations on topics related to criminal justice in future Charles R. See Forum on Reentry!

To view Inaugural Charles R. See Forum on Reentry, visit lutheranmetro.org/publications/videos.



lutheran metropolitan ministry
seeds of change
4515 superior avenue
cleveland, ohio 44103

Our Mission:

To promote shalom (peace, well-being) and justice (right relationships) through a Christian ministry of service and advocacy with those who are oppressed, forgotten and hurting.

Link with LMM



@LMMCleveland



@LMMCleveland



Facebook.com/LMMCleveland



YouTube.com



E-newsletter sign-up at
www.lutheranmetro.org



Latest news at
www.lutheranmetro.org

Contacting LMM

LMM Main Office
216.696.2715

Development & Communications
216.696.1724

Office of Advocacy
216.658.4627

Housing & Shelter
216.566.0047

Workforce Development
216.658.4608

Health & Wellness Services
216.281.2500

Youth Resiliency Services
216.696.0370

Guardianship
216.696.1132

To add, delete or change your address, contact 216.696.1882 or mail@lutheranmetro.org.

September is National Workforce Development Month — from page 1

Metro45 Mobile Kitchen will operate as a retail food truck 75% of the time, providing delicious sandwiches and sides in a brunch concept. The unique selling principle of the truck will create funding for our vital mission across Workforce Development and the agency as a whole.

Outside of operating as a social enterprise, the truck will also be available for corporate lunch events at local companies, privately catered events, festivals, fairs, bars, pubs, breweries and more. To learn more about Metro45 Mobile Kitchen & Catering, contact our Vice President of Workforce Development, Ian Marks at imarks@lutheranmetro.org. We're looking forward to getting the truck on the road and putting Metro45 on wheels!



LMM food truck will soon don the LMM logo.

