

Advocacy in Action



lutheran metropolitan ministry | January 2023

New Year, New Advocacy Priorities

Each year, LMM's Office of Advocacy shares its annual advocacy priorities, advocacy mission and advocacy vision, which guide the agency in its work to inform systems change at the local, state and federal level. By leveraging the expertise of staff and the experiences of program participants, we will advocate on behalf of those who are hurting to be empowered, valued, and healed.

In 2023, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry will advocate for funding that lessens the harm done by the pandemic and for systems change that support the agency's following core values:



Photo by Michele Lenni

- **Housing is a human right.** We believe that homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-reoccurring, and that individuals who are experiencing homelessness be treated with dignity and respect. Individuals, families, youth, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and seniors experiencing homelessness should have access to safe shelter, behavioral health supports, affordable housing, and the social services necessary to move toward stability and when appropriate, independence.
- **Returning citizens deserve second chances.** We believe that homelessness should be rare, brief, and non-reoccurring, and that individuals who are experiencing homelessness be treated with dignity and respect. Individuals, families, youth, members of the LGBTQI+ community, and seniors experiencing homelessness should have access to safe shelter, behavioral health supports, affordable housing, and the social services necessary to move toward stability and when appropriate, independence.
- **Ending racism in all its forms.** To move our nation forward, we must first acknowledge our past and craft policy solutions that both overcome this legacy of racism and advance equitable solutions that benefit all citizens. This includes addressing the nation's legacy of racism and segregation and how it directly influences policies related to housing, the criminal legal system, and health.

This work, conducted in partnership with program participants, the LMM Staff Advocacy Committee, the LMM Board of Directors, and partner organizations, will contribute to a stronger community with more equitable opportunity for all.



Photo by Michele Lenni

LMM encourages you to get involved with our Office of Advocacy to stay up-to-date with the latest advocacy and policy news relevant to the agency. Great ways to get involved are checking out our full list of [2023 Advocacy Priorities](#), signing up for our [Advocacy Alerts](#) and staying up to date with us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for upcoming advocacy-related forums and events happening throughout 2023.

From the Desk of the Community Engagement Coordinator



Happy New Year Everybody!

My name is Gloria Craig and I am the Community Engagement Coordinator here at Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry. I was raised in Indianapolis, IN and have lived in Cleveland for almost 4 years now. I originally moved here for school while pursuing my Master's Degree in Social Work at Case Western Reserve University. Prior to Case, I attended Wittenberg University where I received a Degree in Sociology, with a minor in Justice, Law, & Public Policy.

I stepped into the role of Community Engagement Coordinator in Sept., 2021. Since I started I have had the opportunity to engage with stakeholders, program participants, and staff throughout the LMM community. Advocating for policy change, increasing awareness of the importance of being civically engaged, and participating in the planning of forums & assemblies; is only half of what I have been up to lately as I move forward in this position.

From an organizational lens, often, when trying to figure out whether we want to partner with others our first line of business may be to take a look at their mission and vision statement. We do this to evaluate whether there is a connection between not just the work we do, but more importantly why we do the work and how we decide to do the work. While I am no organization, I once attended a presentation where the presenter asked his audience, "what is their personal mission statement"? This of course made me start to think about mine. What is my mission statement and how do I reflect that statement in my work and frankly in my day to day life?

Well, if I'm being honest I didn't know what my mission statement was at that time, and something I learned is that they may not be fixed-- meaning it can change or alter depending on where I am in life. The work I have been doing as the Community Engagement Coordinator at LMM has assisted me in understanding and clarifying my personal mission statement. Having the opportunity to put together programming for not just our program participants, but our staff has given me the ability to create spaces for people to not only learn and share pieces of themselves in the context of the work we do, but also in the context of social justice issues we are currently experiencing or have experienced. An example of this would be the recent Martin Luther King Jr. Day event titled *Protest History: Riots, Marches, & Movements*. (cont pg. 3)

Chopping for Change Expands to Grafton Reintegration

LMM is proud to have been awarded a \$900,000 Department of Justice grant in 2021 dedicated to the expansion of the Chopping for Change program. Chopping for Change (C4C) is an innovative program dedicated to reducing recidivism and empowering individuals with criminal justice-involvement by providing them with the tools they need to succeed post-incarceration. C4C initially began as a program dedicated to serving women at the Northeast Reintegration Center and providing them with culinary skills, education and trauma-informed care. Following the federal grant and collaboration with the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction, LMM is excited to announce that the program has officially expanded to the Grafton Reintegration Center for men, with students officially beginning programming earlier this year on January 3.



Photo by Michele Lenni

LMM's VP of Workforce Development, Ian Marks, and Workforce Development Program Manager, Malika Kidd, recently hosted a Lunch & Learn to educate staff on the expansion of Chopping for Change. The LMM team is energized around these efforts and we look forward to continue to offer innovative programming and offer key reentry services through Chopping for Change!

POLICY CORNER

Ohio Voter ID Changes: HB 458

On January 6, 2023, Gov. Mike DeWine signed House Bill 458, Ohio's first photo ID voting requirement, which will require voters to show photo identification when voting in person, early, or on Election Day.



Along with the photo ID requirement, HB 458 also includes a package of additional voting law changes, including, but not limited to:

- County board of elections may only offer a single drop box for absentee ballots
- Elimination of early, in-person voting the day before Election Day
- Excludes county-issued veterans' identification from the list of acceptable IDs one can use to vote
- Ending special elections in August
- Absentee ballot application deadline changed to seven days before Election Day, rather than the current three

Supporters of HB 458 claim that the bill will improve election integrity, while dissenters of the bill argue that HB 458 will only add more restrictions and difficulties for voters, especially those without current IDs, students, elderly and individuals with low incomes.

Want to learn more about HB 458? A summary of the bill from the Ohio Legislative Service Commission [can be found here](#).



Featured Advocacy Partner: Enterprise Community Partners, EITC Grant



LMM was selected to be a promotional partner and grantee of Enterprise, for the EITC/VITA program. This is the free tax preparation program of the State of Ohio, facilitated within each county. Enterprise Community Solutions is the local administrator of the program.

The Cuyahoga EITC Coalition helps hardworking taxpayers file their taxes for free. Taxpayers who make less than \$60,000 a year are eligible, and can save hundreds of dollars in tax preparation fees. To learn more about the program or refer a filer to the services, visit refundohio.org/volunteer.

From the Desk, cont.

This program focused on different uprisings and rebellions that have taken place throughout American history, as well as in Ohio and Cleveland. I learned a lot through reading about the history of these different events, but the true learning took place when staff shared their perspectives regarding proximity to certain events, thoughts, and feelings that they experienced during those moments.

I look forward to continuing to emphasize programming that allows people to walk away with clear information and allows people to foster community within the spaces they occupy. "Healing, reflection, learning, and the will to show compassion even in moments of discomfort or misunderstanding", is currently where my mission statement has landed for the year. With that being said, I fully acknowledge that it may be different by the end of this year. But what I know is that as long as it aligns with the work I enjoy doing and my purpose—I am in the right place! What is your personal mission statement?



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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.

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By the Numbers: Youth Incarceration in Ohio

While youth incarceration has declined in Ohio over the past decade, significant disparities persist, in regard to racial and ethnic inequities throughout Ohio's juvenile justice system. Data: (Urban Institute: Data Snapshot of Youth Incarceration in Ohio)

Black children make up **15.8%** of the overall youth population in Ohio and make up **55.6%** of youth incarcerated in JCFs.

Youth marking "other" make up **8.1%** of the overall youth population and make up **11.3%** of youth incarcerated.

As of December 2019, **91%** of youth in juvenile corrections facilities (JCF) were male, of those males in JCF or alternative placements **65%** required mental health treatment.

White children make up **76.1%** of the overall youth population and **33.1%** of youth incarcerated in JCFs.

As of December 2019, **9%** of youth in JCF were female, and those in JCF and alternative placements at the time were all receiving mental health treatment.

In The News: Charles R. See Forum on Reentry

The annual Charles R. See Forum on Reentry will return on Friday, April 28, 2023 at The City Club of Cleveland!

The Charles R. See Forum on Reentry honors Mr. See's 44 years of service at LMM and his work leading the innovative and nationally recognized Community Reentry program.

Each year, a keynote speaker is featured at the forum to spread awareness around criminal legal system reform and to share about their work and/or lived experience with reentry.



Charles R. See

LMM is excited to share that the 2023 Charles R. See Forum on Reentry's keynote speaker is Andre Ward, Associate Vice President of the David Rothenberg Center for Public Policy, Fortune Society. We will continue to share more details in the coming months and we look forward to seeing you there!

What We're Reading & Watching

- *Miseducated: A Memoir*, Brandon P. Fleming
- *Somos como las nubes / We Are Like The Clouds*, Jorge Argueta, Alfonso Ruano
- *Generation Wealth*
- *All In: The Fight for Democracy*

