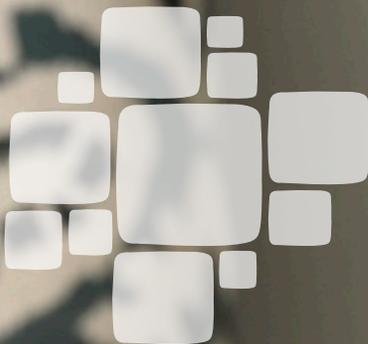


# THE CASE FOR **Community** IMPACT REPORT 2022

**Faithful  
& Fruitful**

A Matter of  
Habit and Hope



**Nehemiah**  
CLARK COUNTY'S CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



**NEHEMIAH WOULD LIKE  
TO SAY A SPECIAL**

*Thank you*

**WE ARE THANKING GOD FOR DEEP PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THESE LOCAL SPONSORS AND COLLABORATORS.**

The support we have received from these public and private sources allows us to research, collaborate and report on community transformation through this report and host the Case for Community Summit in downtown Springfield. We thank you for the investment - not only in these efforts - but in our community.

- **CELEBRATE SIMUNYE**
- **CITY OF SPRINGFIELD**
- **CLARK COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT**
- **CLARK COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT**
- **CLARK COUNTY PARTNERS IN PREVENTION**
- **GOOD COMMUNITY PROJECT**
- **KETTERING HEALTH**
- **LITTLETON AND RUE**
- **MERCY HEALTH**
- **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
- **SPRINGFIELD CITY SCHOOLS**

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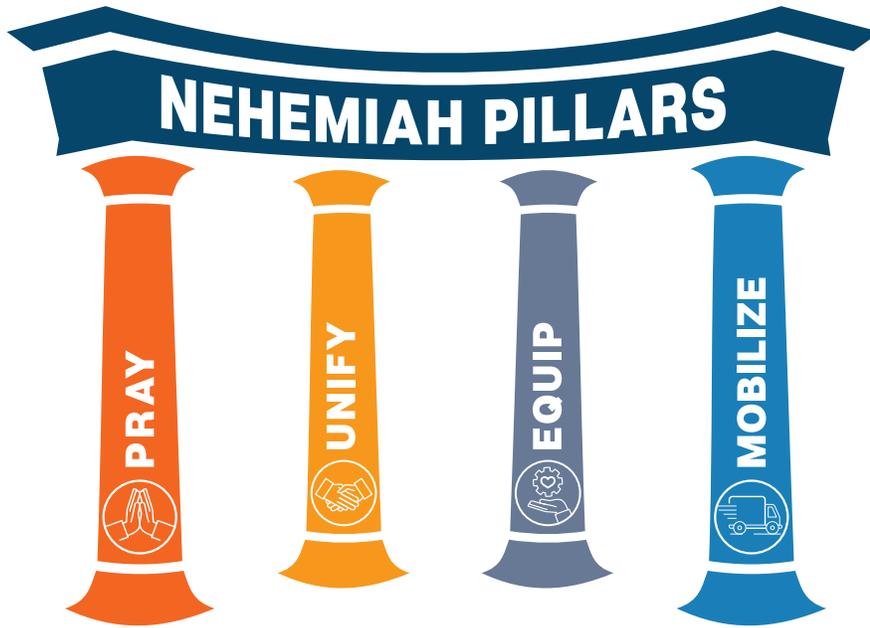
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# THE CASE FOR COMMUNITY

The biblical figure Nehemiah was instrumental in restoring the city of Jerusalem and rededicating its people to God. In the same way, our hope at The Nehemiah Foundation has been bringing healing and restoration to our city by uniting the Church around strategic ministry initiatives for over 25 years. At The Nehemiah Foundation, we envision Springfield and Clark County as a community where all people would know God's love for them.

Nehemiah provides a network for Christian churches and ministries to amplify their positive impact to build God's kingdom in Springfield and Clark County.





NEHEMIAH  
**PATHWAYS**

 **Flourishing Neighborhoods Initiative**  
Christian Community Development

 **Faith Community Crisis-Response Team Initiative**  
Collaboration in the Midst of Crisis

 **Streamline Initiative**  
Blessing Kids through Church-School Partnerships

 **Rise & Build Influence Initiative**  
Christian Leadership Development



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CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN

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# Nehemiah

## MINISTRY PARTNERS



# FAITHFUL & FRUITFUL-

## A Matter of Habit and Hope

BY AMY WILLMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, NEHEMIAH

One of my daddy's famous sage phrases is **“sometimes it seems like it takes God a long time to act suddenly.”**

In this Case for Community Impact Report, our goal is to **continually invite the entire Body of Christ to answer the Spirit's call to engage in incarnational community transformation right here in your own neighborhood - in Springfield and Clark County.**

We hope this edition of the Case for Community Impact Report contains a cohesive and continual clarifying message that will inspire and guide us all into this next season.

Looking back, our 2020 edition laid out some of our deepest common concerns. The 2021 edition articulated the mounting community challenges, as well as our Four Pillars and Four Pathways service design and vision for this next season.

This 3.0 edition is our way of chiming in to **cultivate even more conversation** and to issue a clarion call to “intimidate the enemy and encourage the troops!”



We invite you - community stakeholders, partners and champions - to read these pages with an open heart and mind. Ask yourself:

What are the biggest strongholds and roadblocks to human flourishing in our community?

**How can I be involved in repairing broken systems and bringing heaven to earth in my community?**

Which of the community transformation pillars and pathways am I most passionate about?

What do I have to learn where these topics are concerned?

What other topics are NOT covered in this publication that also need to be addressed by the faith-community?

What expertise can I bring to the table to help lead the faith-community into the next level of breakthrough and thriving?

We are so grateful to be able to announce **stories and testimonies of God's blessing and favor during a season when growth of any kind should not have been possible.** Though we still have a long way to go, we are seeing evidence that this new chapter is already full of so much hope and healthy growth. Maybe it is due to what some experts in the trauma-informed niche call “post-traumatic growth” - sometimes crisis and disaster and scarcity do force us to think outside of the box, develop new wineskins, collaborate with people we would have never collaborated with before and simply “get creative.” We know that our Heavenly Father can indeed bring all things together for our good like that!



**“As I look back at this past year, I am in awe of what God is doing. The world around us is broken in so many ways... but God is giving us glimpses of His glory to remind us that He is here and He is at work. It is so exciting to watch what He is doing through His Church in our community.”**

SARA DIXON, NEHEMIAH BOARD MEMBER

Or, maybe it is due to **over 25 years of faithful sowing and cultivating and tending**? Maybe we are all reaping the fruitful benefits of the prayers and efforts of people we haven't even met!

And maybe it's "all of the above."

What we do know is that we are seeing evidence that God has been working among us in the midst of some very challenging circumstances. Yes, we are still very early in our baby steps in this new season, and yet we are already sensing that God is doing some beautiful, creative and innovative things among us. Isn't that just like our Creator God to bring beauty and innovation out of the midst of chaos, emptiness and darkness? We should not be surprised, since that has been His M.O. all along, to beam with creative energy over the chaos and create something breathtaking when it seems impossible.

As we gathered for Ministry Partner Prayer on July 13 (it's always on the second Wednesday of the month – come join us sometime!), I sat this orchid in the middle of the prayer circle and told a little story. This particular orchid sat in my office for 19 months with only the pitiful green leaves on the bottom – no beautiful purple blossoms – until last month (July)!

**Suddenly, six fabulous purple pods sprang forth out of nowhere!** Then, over the next week, these miraculous blooms were unveiled. The first four seemed to appear at one time, though I wish I had a nanny cam/time-lapse camera in my office overnight to be sure. The last two blooms made their lovely and unfolding appearance over the next two days.

Isn't that like the kingdom sometimes? While "one plants, and another waters" and "God gives the increase," those things don't usually happen in a linear fashion or at a nice clip. There's often a considerable amount of TIME that goes by in this process, no matter what kind of Kingdom endeavor you are putting your heart, soul, sweat and tears into.

When this orchid rebloom - **after over a year of simply watering it out of habit more than hope** - I was reminded in a powerful way of how much gritty, faithful and mundane care is often required of us as we trust God for outcomes.

Therein lies the lesson - whether it is mostly HABIT or mostly HOPE, keep watering.

**Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, be firm, immovable, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NASB)



# ADVANCING NEHEMIAH'S PATHWAYS

## FLOURISHING NEIGHBORHOODS INITIATIVE

Christian Community Development



**Wellness:**  
Faith Community  
Nursing  
and Health  
Ministries

**Wholeness:**  
Mental Health  
and the Church



**Oneness:**  
Cultivating  
Reconciliation  
and Unity



## FAITH COMMUNITY CRISIS-RESPONSE TEAM INITIATIVE

Collaboration in the Midst of Crisis

Street  
Outreach



Trauma-  
informed  
Collaboration



Emergency  
Warming  
Shelter

In our 2020 Case for Community Report, we introduced four action Pillars. These verbs – Pray, Unify, Equip and Mobilize – demonstrate HOW we take action on our mission. It is indeed our desire to go prayerfully, as a unified faith community, with increasing resources - all so we can go, go, go! But that fourth action Pillar – mobilize - begs the question - **WHERE** are we going?

Our natural next step was to introduce four distinct Pathways to help fuel, focus, and drive outcomes

related to community transformation. These tangible Pathways are Nehemiah initiatives around which we can engage, collaborate, serve and lead in a way only Clark County's Christian Community can. Throughout this report, you will see ways these initiatives and their components are coming to life at Nehemiah. Please join us on our journey to community transformation and find your own unique way to contribute to the conversation along the way.

## STREAMLINE INITIATIVE

Blessing Kids through Church-School Partnerships

## RISE & BUILD INFLUENCE INITIATIVE

Christian Leadership Development



Mentoring Collaborative



Transformational Leadership Coaching

CarePortal



S.O.U.L. Talks



New Ministry "LaunchPad"

Teacher and Staff Encouragement



Ministry Partner Grants

# Flourishing Neighborhoods INITIATIVE

## Christian Community Development

As part of this initiative, Nehemiah will blaze new trails in three main areas:  
Wholeness · Wellness · Oneness

## PURSUING WHOLENESS Mental Health and the Church

BY BARB DOTSON, CITILOOKOUT

The BIG question... “If I seek help for my mental health, does that indicate I do not have enough faith in God?” At CitiLookout Counseling and Trauma Recovery Center, we are believers who help people learn that mental health is not an issue of faith, but of brain health.

God made us for fellowship, both with Him and each other. Counselors help people process the difficult times they are going through, teach them coping skills for dealing with trauma, grief, depression and anxiety (and many other issues), and help train their brains to



change their negative thought processes. In His word, God says, “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2 (NIV)

God can heal us and He can heal our minds. Just like we need physicians for our physical health, counselors help with our mental health. Have you ever had your doctor pray with you? When it happens, you can almost feel the healing touch that God is sending through the physician’s words. Imagine how powerful it can be to have someone listening to your heartache and praying with you.



# Journey to *freedom*

Imagine how powerful it could be in our community to have pastors, lay leaders and counselors working together to promote good health in all forms: physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. Our community is hurting. Mental health is a big issue. We need to come together as churches, ministries, community organizations and leaders to pull together for healing in our community.

As a Trauma Recovery Center, CitiLookout is coming alongside victims of violent crime to help them find practical resources like food and shelter, safety, navigating the legal system and counseling. We also established an educational group called Journey to Freedom for men and women who have been involved in domestic violence to learn new thought processes and behavior patterns to build healthier relationships. This group is both preventative and educational. It is addressing an acute need in our community and we want to partner with local churches to equip them to promote this group to those who are struggling. Our goal is to have groups meet at local churches to teach pastors and congregations how to address this critical problem happening outside of and within the church. We will be partnering with Nehemiah at the Sept. 9 Case for Community Summit to educate the community about Journey to Freedom and how we can come together to help families break down these unhealthy patterns.

CitiLookout's Journey to Freedom (J2F) program is the only one of its kind in our county and most surrounding areas. It is based on the Duluth Model out of Duluth, Minnesota, and is known and used internationally. There are only a few batterer's intervention programs in the state of Ohio. J2F is not a punitive program. Many of the men, women and youth attend on their own volition and many are court ordered. It is educational and focuses on changing thought processes and behavior patterns in order to form healthier relationships.

The Duluth Domestic Abuse Intervention Project (DAIP) has become internationally known for its pioneering efforts to shift the responsibility of stopping men's use of violence in their intimate relationships from the shoulders of the women being beaten onto community institutions of social control. The Duluth Model is not a prescription for how to intervene in domestic violence cases. It is rather a process for challenging fathers, mothers, families and communities to take on the responsibility of stopping men and women's violence against their partners and their families, thereby forming healthy family relationships. This also has a significant impact on keeping children safe. J2F staff and allies in the criminal justice system have worked together to build actions into institutional processes and practitioner's daily work routines that stop men's use of violence, keep children safe and protect women.



# FAITH AND WELLNESS

## Faith Community Nursing and Health Ministries

BY CAROLYN YOUNG, MERCY HEALTH

We are serving in unprecedented times. Health equity, access, transportation and education are just a few sectors impacting our community at critical levels. How do we respond as Christ calls us to enter in? How do we come alongside, partner and equip the faith community to bridge the gaps we see and experience?

### **New challenges require new solutions.**

Faith Community Nursing and Health Ministry (FCN&HM) was envisioned through collaboration and partnership between Mercy Health (Mission, Community Health & Foundation) and Clark County Combined Health District in 2019. The idea was to break down the traditional walls of healthcare and bridge community gaps through authentic, faith-based partnership within the church. In 2020, the Bon Secours Mercy

Health Foundation funded the FCN&HM program as a community outreach grant for Springfield.

2020 was a slow start and 2021 followed suit. We were blessed to connect with Tina LeFaive, who continues to show Heaven's divine hand in establishing the timing and team to answer the prayers we have prayed for Springfield. In 2021, after many "holds," we were welcomed into relationships with five churches. They engaged, identified parishioners with gifts and talents in this health-oriented/ people space, and effectively launched the first year of the program. Each partner-church underwent a congregational assessment highlighting top areas of concern and parishioners were equipped through the FCN&HM training program through West Virginia University. Community health education, programs and partnership with Springfield Fire & EMS allowed different visitors to the church and new opportunities for relationship building, training and connections.

# Setting Foot on the Path to Pursuing Wholeness

BY ELAINE YOUNG

It was my lived experience that compelled me to host the first Pursuing Wholeness: Mental Health and the Church workshop at my church.

In 2007, I entered Project Women's Shelter for battered women. On June 13, 2008, my divorce was finalized. I started over by filing for bankruptcy in 2009. During this journey, I did a television interview as a survivor of domestic violence.

I began to reach out to women because of my experience and recognized the suffering of others. I noticed that there was a need in the church but the church was not ready to talk about abuse. My friend and I began a ministry called "Women at the Well" that strived to bring emotional healing to women at church and in the community.

Tina LeFaive introduced me to Amy Wilmann with Nehemiah. After sharing my heart, Amy presented a demonstration of a ministry on mental health. For me, there was no time to waste, as we could also reach women outside our church through the "Pursuing Wholeness: Mental Health and the Church Workshop."

In 2021, an expansion grant was written to the Bon Secours Mercy Health Foundation on behalf of FCN&HM. Recognizing the need and opportunities that God is creating in the program, our goals shifted to adding more churches and equipping more partners. After one church education session hit a scheduling snag, Nehemiah stepped in. The Nehemiah Mental Health and the Church campaign creates space for church-centered dialogue in an area of high need in the community. The biblical and kingdom connection of mind-body-spirit is so relevant and timely, and people of faith have so much hope to offer in these conversations. This was exactly what we were praying for. It is our hope to deliver Mental Health and the Church, through our partnership with Nehemiah, to all 11 FCN&HM churches and beyond.

To flourish is to be unencumbered, uninhibited by that which holds us back. Our goal is to equip the church, through partnership and collaboration, in caring for the mind, body, soul and spirits of the people in their congregations. It is our desire to come alongside to support the needs of our community and to respond in every instance we can, as Jesus did. With the church at the center, and the Holy Spirit as the guide, we are far better equipped to respond through authentic, trusting relationships. May God continue to do His work in His way to bless our community.



# Celebrating Simunye SPEAKING WHAT IS RIGHT

BY AARON ROY

One of the more daunting books of the Bible is the book of Job. It is a haunting yet hopeful story of a man named Job's suffering and God's care and sovereignty for him. When Job was at his lowest point, he was encountered by some well intentioned friends who, for days, sat in silence and mourned with him. Up to this point in the story they were model friends. And then they opened their mouths. And from their mouths came simple and shallow solutions as to why Job was suffering. Their commentary consisted of essentially blaming Job for his sufferings and calling Job to task for his spiritual pride. They

fell horribly short in offering any comfort and perspective for Job. God told us this much at the end of the book when He addressed Job's friends and said "you have not spoken of me what is right." (Job 42:7)

Historically, God's church in America has fumbled over how to talk about racism, injustice and suffering in our country. We have become good at giving shallow solutions. We say things like, "If we don't talk about racism, then it will go away," and, "Let's just focus on the Gospel and everything will fix itself." We come to the table with good intentions but when we open our mouths, we try to simplify and give cold, out-of-touch formulas as to how to become unified. Maybe God is saying to His church here, "You have not spoken what is right?" The fruit of our solutions have resulted in a church that is still divided and segregated.

Yet I still believe the church can create meaningful spaces for redemptive dialogue and solutions. Here are three confessions I think will be helpful as we carry on these hard discussions:

We must acknowledge that we all have prejudice within us. Ever since the "fall" in the garden of Eden, we have been running away from God and each other. It's helpful to acknowledge that we all struggle with thinking ourselves better than others



at times. This struggle can come in many forms (class, ethnicity, geography, weight etc.) This posture disarms us from our defensiveness and allows us to be present in hard discussions.

We must acknowledge that everyone comes to the table at very different starting points. Some are new to the conversation and just beginning to develop convictions concerning these issues. Others have spent their lives feeling the weight of racism and combating it daily and often feel racially exhausted. Understanding that people are at very different points along the path toward unity is crucial. This allows for grace and patience as we all journey toward the same goal.

Lastly, we must acknowledge that for far too long, the church has allowed politics to hijack the conversation. What should be a Spirit-filled, grace-filled dialogue towards unity has been infiltrated by blue vs. red. We must rescue the conversation from divisive political postures and focus on Kingdom practices.

This is what Simunye and Nehemiah are hoping to do. We are aiming to create spaces where gracious, yet hard truthful conversations can take place. The hope is that these conversations will lead to deep relationships that produce lasting fruit. When the church is unified the world sees Jesus more clearly!

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**“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”**

JOHN 17: 20-23 (NIV)



## Flourishing Neighborhoods Initiative

Christian Community Development



**PRAY** for the Faith  
Community Nursing and Health Ministry partnership and 11 churches participating



**UNIFY** - Attend a Summit break-out session revolving around the topic of unity and reconciliation in the Body of Christ and beyond



**EQUIP** - Join and invite others to monthly book club meetings as a part of the “Help Me Read This Book” program during 2022-2023



**MOBILIZE** - Encourage church involvement in the deep conversation and learning communities, including future ministry partner community events.

# Faith Community Crisis-Response Team INITIATIVE

“Jesus launched his ministry by declaring his commitment to justice for the marginalized. The Nehemiah Foundation’s efforts to facilitate a response to the needs of people living on the street goes straight to the heart of the gospel.”

- PASTOR CARL RUBY, CENTRAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH



How do we follow in Jesus’ footsteps and commit to justice for the marginalized? How do we declare that commitment through our actions? Being the answer to those questions is the heart of the Faith Community Crisis-Response Team Initiative. To be a collective of faith and civic leaders and vibrant community volunteers who have joined together to respond in the midst of crisis to serve some of the most vulnerable in our community.

As part of this initiative in 2022, we mobilized the local church and coordinated these efforts through the following activities:

## **EMERGENCY WARMING SHELTER**

Project Coordination serves as a deep collaboration and mobilization of church volunteers, as well as local government and social services agencies during times of extreme weather to provide warmth and shelter for our unsheltered friends. Within this new initiative and model, Nehemiah led a community-wide effort to “spin-up” three warming shelter projects during the winter of 2021-22. In addition, many of the community members served were able to access case management and programming services through coordinated entry with Sheltered, Inc. (formerly IHN). As a model of deep collaboration, these organizations came together to operate the Emergency Warming Shelter at High Street Church of the Nazarene.

## THE STREET OUTREACH PROJECT

is a collaborative effort between Nehemiah, Central Christian Church and community volunteers to serve the unsheltered wherever they may be found. It is led by Kevin Sprinkle, retired Battalion Chief, City of Springfield.

Expressing a need for this type of ongoing project, City of Springfield Community Development Director, Shannon Meadows, expressed the need for a coordinated faith-based Street Outreach component. "Even with an Emergency Warming Shelter project in place, there is a segment of our population who will choose not to be served there. To complement the Emergency Warming Shelter, we need a better coordinated approach to serving those who live on the street. Many churches are doing good things but sometimes we stumble over each other or duplicate services. We need to make it easy for churches to do the things they would like to do for this population."

## HIRING AN INITIATIVE COORDINATOR

Nehemiah has hired Aaron Roy as the coordinator of this project and Matt Egan as the project assistant.

## EQUIPPING THROUGH RESOURCES

While facing a myriad of COVID pandemic realities, Nehemiah helped produce a Hot Meals and Pantries Booklet for community leaders to use as guidance toward effective outreach efforts.

## HIGHLIGHTING MINISTRY PARTNERS

Springfield Soup Kitchen, Good Samaritan Outreach and Sheltered, Inc. are Nehemiah Ministry Partners who continually serve in this space of crisis response, demonstrating mercy and relief to those in need. Their resources are vital to the success of this initiative.

Speaking of "collaboration in the midst of crisis," Nehemiah Ministry Partner, H.O.P.E., led by Jackie Mounts, in collaboration with Dream City Church and several other local partners, responded with generosity and radical hospitality. During a time of crisis and unprecedented challenges, this collaborative meal program "Feed the Need" served over 70,000 meals for over a year, using many volunteers, donors and community partners. Every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evening, people could come and eat. We're thankful to God for his faithfulness in raising up servants like this to impact our community!

## VOLUNTEER TRAINING COMPONENTS

In preparation for the Emergency Warming Shelter project, specialized volunteers were trained to administer Narcan. In addition, training materials also addressed how to recognize the signs of frostbite and hypothermia in order to facilitate medical intervention.



### Faith Community Crisis-Response Team Initiative

Collaboration in the Midst of Crisis



**PRAY** for those in need being served through the emergency warming shelter, street outreaches and food pantries



**UNIFY** - Get your church involved in the collective effort to provide warm shelter for people in urgent need during inclement weather conditions



**EQUIP** - Spread awareness about the Hot Meals and Pantry Booklet resource available to guide churches and ministries in their service efforts



**MOBILIZE** - Partner with, donate and support our ministry partners in crisis response and relief programs

# Streamline INITIATIVE

## Life-changing collaboration from God

Through our Streamline Initiative, we envision a community where every public school is lovingly and effectively supported by the Christian community in their neighborhood and where every student in need is supported through loving and caring relationships.

BY TAMI CARTER AND SARA DIXON, NEHEMIAH FOUNDATION

This big dream of life-changing collaboration between the faith-based community and Springfield City School District can only come from God. It has required years of ground-laying work, prayers, intercession and sacrifice to get us to this level of deep, family-serving collaboration between local churches and Clark County's public schools.

### The Streamline Initiative in Action:

#### CarePortal: Connecting children in need with people who care

Children should never have to pay the price for a broken world. With the use of CarePortal, vulnerable children and families can receive the care and support they need from churches and individuals in their community who care. In spring 2022, a partnership was formed between Springfield City School District (SCSD) and local churches helping to provide unified, holistic support for families in need in our community.

The school district makes local churches in the CarePortal network aware of real-time needs their students are experiencing. Those churches partnered with CarePortal are offered an opportunity to respond and make life-changing connections with those families. We have been amazed how CarePortal has made this kind of deep collaboration seamless between SCSD and local churches.

SINCE CLARK COUNTY LAUNCHED  
CAREPORTAL IN SPRING 2022

**513 children have  
been served** at an  
economic impact of \$39,034



DR. PAM SHAY, Director of Federal Programs, overseeing federal/state grants, the English Language Learner population and the Homeless Student population of Springfield City School District:

**“For those who think that you cannot partner between public schools and churches, we have evidence that you can. By focusing on the needs of the individuals and families, a community can come together from all walks of life (church, education, service organizations) to serve families...”**

As we worked through the operational model, I soon realized that we were all after the same thing – ways to support children and families, to remove some barriers that will allow the children to focus on education. Thus, the CarePortal partnership was solidified and we started the pilot program in spring 2022. The school district already had many resources and community partnerships to tap into. It was amazing. After our initial triage, if needs still existed,

we submitted requests through CarePortal. All of our needs were met by the local churches in a 1-3 day turnaround. Most often, the churches provided above and beyond what was requested.

We had so many families experiencing homelessness. The churches stepped up and met every one of our requests for beds and supplies. We distributed about 12 beds in the spring. We had someone whose car broke down and a church provided a member who was a mechanic to help troubleshoot the issues. We had a family that needed transportation to Cleveland for an immigration hearing and they provided a van and driver who also spoke the family’s language. In addition, as the students’ families have interacted with the CarePortal teams, they have met people who genuinely care for them. They are developing relationships on their own. The church members will call and check on the family just to let them know that someone in the community cares. The pilot of CarePortal with 8 of 16 schools was a great success. We will be expanding the service to all 16 buildings for the 2022-23 school year.”



**LYNN PAYTON, Family Outreach Connections Coordinator, McKinney-Vento Act Liaison for Springfield City School District:**

“The partnership with The Nehemiah Foundation has been such a blessing at a time when students and families in the Springfield City School District are experiencing such trauma, hardship and disparity. Church responders within CarePortal have provided such love and kindness to individuals in our community that have fallen on hard times. **They have stepped up without hesitation or judgment and provided hope at a time when things seem hopeless.** Springfield City School staff respond to the needs of our students on a daily basis. Words cannot express the gratitude we have for the Nehemiah Foundation, church leaders and church responders who have used their time, talents and treasurers to help those in need.”

**BETHANY BIRKHEAD, Hillside Avenue Church of God**

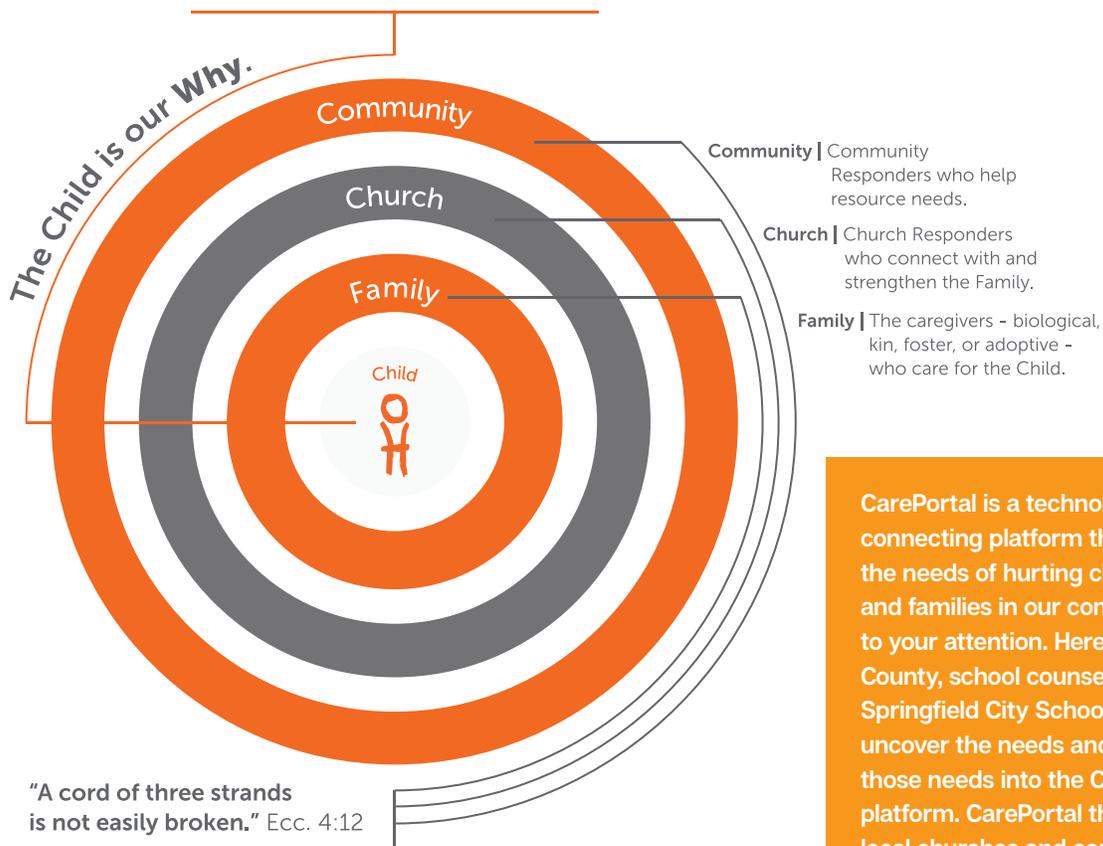
“There have been many times that Warder Park Elementary School has had overwhelming needs. CarePortal has lightened the load for the school's staff and allowed us to bless them further by partnering with other bodies of Christ to meet those needs. We love having DIRECT access to the families. It has also allowed church members who can't physically help, to help financially or with necessities. I have truly been blown away by CarePortal's impact in such a short amount of time. We are getting a taste of the Kingdom and seeing it right in front of us. **We are BEING THE CHURCH.**”

**Families served in our community:**

“You guys are angels. Thank you! I got the beds and boy did they hook me up!” - *A local woman who found herself unexpectedly having to care for her great-grandchildren.*

“The Church provided a memorial service and is even feeding us after the service. And, they are not charging us for anything.” - *Widowed father with 4 children whose wife passed away in the midst of transitioning from homelessness to permanent housing.*

**Circles of Care**



CarePortal is a technology connecting platform that brings the needs of hurting children and families in our community to your attention. Here in Clark County, school counselors within Springfield City School District uncover the needs and enter those needs into the CarePortal platform. CarePortal then makes local churches and community members aware, giving them a real-time opportunity to respond.

# MENTORING COLLABORATIVE

## Impacting the Trajectory of a Child's Life

**"EVERY KID IS ONE CARING ADULT AWAY FROM BEING A SUCCESS STORY."**

JOSH SHIPP

For years, churches mentoring through KidsHope USA and Nehemiah organizations, such as Children's Rescue Center, SCYM, HOPE, Urban Light, Young Life and Awakenings Ministries, have been on the front lines of impacting Clark County's kids. From out-of-school faith-based activities, academic enrichments, to summer camps and mentoring, all have made a deep investment in Clark County's kids, crushing the odds while opening the door to better opportunities and a brighter future. At Nehemiah, we believe each child is a gift, created by God in love, with purpose and destiny. Mentoring is a simple yet powerful tool that can lead a child on a path to success. Imagine yourself being the person to help lead a child from a statistic to success. Mentoring has the power to do that!

### The Power of Mentoring

Several of Nehemiah's Ministry Partners provide programming that supports the growth and development of youth in our community through the schools. Here they share how they're impacting lives on a daily basis:

#### TYLER WORLEY

**Springfield Christian Youth Ministries (SCYM)**

We all long to be noticed for who we really are. When someone we look up to sees us and confirms that we are on this Earth for a purpose, hope begins to rise. "Hey, watch what I can do!" echoes from every playground in the world. We, as adults, are the ones children look up to, literally and figuratively. This idea can make us feel uncomfortable because

maybe we still see ourselves as a work in progress and not yet qualified to carry the title of "role model."

Mentorship is a mutual sharing of life that causes both individuals to flourish. In a world system that makes billions of dollars by convincing us that we are not enough, we need to hear the voice of our Heavenly Father telling us something very different. He is telling us that He is enough. When we take all of who we are and entrust it to Him, He can work such a miracle that there will be more than enough, not only for us but for our community.

Last year, we surveyed 46 middle school boys from Springfield City School district to see if they would like to have a mentor.





## JACKIE MOUNTS HOPE and ONE2ONE Mentoring

As a person who has worked with youth for over 30 years, then directed a mentoring program for over 16 years, I have seen first-hand the effectiveness of one-on-one mentoring. The key for successful mentoring is consistency and intentionality. I've been blessed to see many of those mentoring relationships even last into adulthood for the young person. Through a positive, loving and healthy relationship with a caring adult, often grades and school attendance improve, self esteem improves and the MENTOR learns more than the mentee. Mentoring is about sharing your life, not additional time in your life. Love never fails. Regardless of the age of the mentors, young people just want someone to love them, respect them and enjoy spending time with them. We all can do that! The question is, will we?

## ANNE MARTINSON KidsHope

The longer I'm involved in mentoring students at Lagonda Elementary School, the more convinced I am of the value of mentoring!

An hour a week with one child throughout the school year seems like a pittance, but research makes it clear that 60 minutes with a caring, consistent adult can actually cause new pathways to form in a child's brain, enabling them to think and learn on a higher level! KidsHope makes our mentoring hour in the school so simple – they provide effective online training and show us what the hour can look like. Mentors feel prepared and equipped to spend the mentoring hour effectively.

The results from this survey showed that 54% said yes. In 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau showed that 1 in 4 children live without a father in the home. We must find a way to pair our young people with positive role models who will walk with them through the gauntlet of negativity and discouragement they are facing daily. I believe God has supplied Springfield with everything it needs to prosper according to His plan, but we must each do our part to answer His call to see His glory revealed.



**PRINCIPAL JOSHUA HARNING**  
**Lagonda Elementary School,**  
**Springfield City Schools**

The partnership that Fellowship Church has developed with us has been an impactful blessing for our community. What started, when I became principal in the summer of 2019, was a church giving extra supplies for our students and meals for our staff when they were required to stay late, grew into a constant support for our school and community that cannot be measured.

When Covid shut down our schools, Fellowship Church immediately came to ask how they could supply our families and students with meals, knowing that many of our students do not eat unless they come to school. We began passing out meals everyday and extras on Fridays to help families make it through the weekend. The youth group came to the school to help clean up the school property and playground areas. Once summer started, they wanted to provide opportunities

for our students and community to be supported with fun events, so they moved their largest event, the Block Party, to our school campus, provided school supplies, backpacks, water bottles, games, food, music, and emotional and spiritual support to our community. We changed it to a drive-thru experience to respect the Covid protocols.

Again, Fellowship was not done, and they started supporting our school through the year with a twice-a-week KidsHope Program, building a relationship with the STARS organization to further support. Our students are meeting with positive role models throughout the year and learning how to build relationships with adults and peers. This summer, we had nine events that our students and community could participate in, including going to Splash Zone. Our community is truly blessed and these events have helped keep us all connected and remember that we are all here for one another!



**CURRENT MENTORING STATUS**

Over 120 kids connected with SCYM have requested a mentor and are still waiting.

KidsHope USA partners with about 10 Clark County churches to mentor children in our local schools.

**MENTORING GOALS FOR 2023**

Help SCYM recruit mentors to fill those mentoring requests.

Add on at least 5 new churches from Clark County to partner with KidsHope USA in our schools.

Plan and host a calendar of mentor trainings and events.

**TOOLS TO GET THERE**

Develop and implement a Mentoring Campaign.

Get the word out to local churches about KidsHope USA.

Form a Community Action Team (CAT) to discuss and plan mentoring collaborative.

## NEHEMIAH MINISTRIES THAT SUPPORT SCHOOLS & STUDENTS

### Awakenings of Clark County

937-450-3158 · STEPHEN MASSEY  
Stephen@CitiLookout.org  
Strengthening families, individuals, and our community through prevention, intervention, education, and coaching

### Children's Rescue Center/The Ark

937-324-2529 · SUE RASTATTER · NANCY LUTZ  
FREE after-school program for kids ages K-6th grade

### Family Youth Initiatives

937-694-3808 · NICHOLE STEFANOW  
Youth and family programs, mentoring

### H.O.P.E.

937-322-4673 · JACKIE MOUNTS  
Afterschool programs, juvenile court ministry

### KidsHope Mentoring

DEBBIE HILDENBRAND · dhildenbrand@kidshopeusa.org  
Church/school partnerships for mentoring in elementary schools

### One2One Mentoring

937-322-4673 · JACKIE MOUNTS  
Mentoring: partnering with the juvenile courts to provide role models, training, and support for youth

### SCYM-Springfield Christian Youth Ministries

937-325-6183 · TYLER WORLEY  
After school clubs, summer reading clubs, middle-school mentoring

### Young Life

937-346-7170 · JEFF COLLINS  
High school ministry, mentoring

**“At-risk youth living in poverty know they need to find ways to do things differently, but they need a patient, loving, caring adult to show them new options.”**

**- RUBY PAYNE, FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING POVERTY**



### Streamline Initiative

Blessing Kids through Church-School Partnerships



**PRAY** for the children served by CarePortal and mentoring collaborative programs



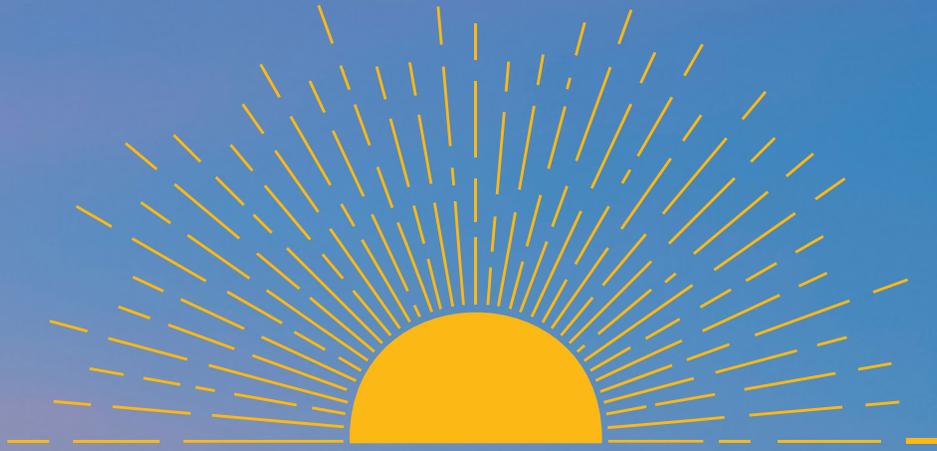
**UNIFY** - Build relationships with your church/partnering ministries and the Springfield City Schools staff, teachers or counselors



**EQUIP** - Partner your church with CarePortal to respond to the needs of the Springfield City School District and its students



**MOBILIZE** - Recruit other churches to partner with CarePortal and affiliated efforts



# RISE & BUILD

## *Leadership* BREAKFAST

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3**  
**7:00-8:30 AM**

**GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
**1801 ST. PARIS PIKE, SPRINGFIELD**

 **Nehemiah**

# Rise and Build INITIATIVE

## Christian Leadership Development

Nehemiah is determined to do its part in helping equip our active faith-filled leaders with the tools, training and resources they need to propel their visions for positive change and continue their united efforts. The four key components of this initiative include the Ministry Partner Grant Program, S.O.U.L.Talk Podcast, Leadership Coaching and the New Ministry LaunchPad. These ongoing activities are key to producing healthy leaders who are essential to a strong community, especially in the midst of transformative change.

## GOOD COMMUNITY PROJECT

### Q&A with Amy Willmann, Executive Director

In 2021, Nehemiah executive director Amy Willmann was asked to join a cohort from across Ohio in a two-year immersive discussion around the next generation of leadership in faith-based community transformation. We sat down with Amy to learn about her experience:

**Q: IN 3 WORDS, DESCRIBE THE GOOD COMMUNITY PROJECT.**

**AMY:** Strategic. Catalytic. Transformation

**Q: HOW DID YOU BECOME INVOLVED IN THE GCP?**

**A:** Chip Weiant “crashed” our Case for Community Summit last fall. I had never met him, but I later found out that Wally Martinson had invited him to join us and learn more about the Nehemiah Foundation mission and



model. Chip shared that day that he was searching for what he called “community catalysts” – leaders who are deeply committed to a faith-centric approach to community transformation. (I later learned that Chip is a Senior Fellow at the Sagamore Institute, the Project Director for the Good Community Project, and a board member for the Governor’s Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives).

**TELL US ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE YOU HAD BEING PART OF THE GCP LAST YEAR.**

First, I met the other nine members of the GCP cohort for a meet-and-greet. How encouraging – to meet the people who are doing very similar work in their own communities across Ohio. Some members of the cohort lead community-based organizations in larger

cities like Cincinnati, Dayton and Cleveland, and yet others lead in smaller cities and towns. Simply being able to share successes, failures, roadblocks, and challenges was immediately beneficial.

We started reading some of the same materials to generate collaborative discussion, and within the first six months, we were all at the Good Community Project Forum at the Ohio statehouse together. That inspiring and informative event in March 2022 consisted of the original 10 members of the cohort plus six guests from each person's region. A diverse group of leaders from across Ohio shared their most innovative ideas and heartfelt challenges in panel discussions and presentations. Along with Nick Nye from ForColumbus, I was asked to share about our Nehemiah service design – our four pillars and four pathways, the history of our organization, and what our work looks like in Springfield.

### **WHAT DID YOU LEARN THAT YOU HAVE BROUGHT BACK TO THE SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY TO IMPLEMENT?**

I am encouraged to receive confirmation that we're still on the right track in so many ways, even after more than 25 years in this city-reaching work. What we are doing is kingdom work that is worth doing - worth the risk and the cost.

It is also immediately noticeable when others are doing things we haven't even tried yet! When we can "zoom

out" and look at what other organizations are pursuing, the creativity and innovation begets more innovation. I'm particularly obsessed with swapping evidence-based best practices anyway, and this provides the perfect opportunity for that. For example, I was able to visit an XLSummit in the Cincinnati area with Chuck Proudfit from At Work on Purpose and gained a lot of insight about how they engage the marketplace and business community in Christian community-building.

### **WHAT SEEDS DO YOU HOPE WILL BE PLANTED WITH THE GCP?**

One of the main goals is that by the end of the two-year process we will develop an actual Ohio Community Catalyst Practicum – a learning and practice mentor-based community. This learning track will exist for those who are coming after us in Christ-centered community transformation endeavors.

### **Q: WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT THE SPRINGFIELD COMMUNITY TO KNOW ABOUT GCP?**

**A.** I feel blessed to have met Chip! It's like an entire world of community-reaching has opened up to me. Like so many others, "I didn't know what I didn't know," and Chip is leading us all into a valuable educational process. It is an honor to be asked to lead while also sitting at his feet.



It's a little bit like taking a plant and putting it in a bigger container to allow its roots to become unbound and to expand. That's where so much personal and professional growth comes from - when God, the Master Gardener, takes us out of our own paradigm and allows us to gain new perspective.

# NEHEMIAH BOOK CLUB PICKS

Our Nehemiah “Help Me Read this Book” project is rooted in the idea that we need one another in order to read deeply and thoughtfully, in order to cultivate crucial conversations, and even to pursue civil discourse around challenging topics. These are some of the books we are excited to gather around over the next year. Please join us!

## Until Unity

BY FRANCIS CHAN

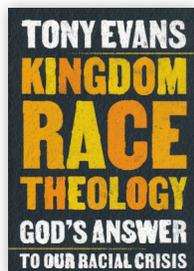
“It seems that the church is becoming more and more divided. Why are we failing to love each other---and allowing jealousy and ambition to prevail? Challenging God’s people to come together as one body, Chan encourages us to hate sin, pursue peace, and strive for unity within the church---without compromising holiness or truth. 224 pages, softcover from Cook.”



## Kingdom Race Theology: God’s Answer to Our Racial Crisis

BY TONY EVANS

“Drawing on forty years of ministry experience, Tony Evans writes with a fearless and prophetic voice, probing to the heart of the issue and pointing to God’s Word as the solution. Kingdom Race Theology helps people and churches commit to restitution, reconciliation, and responsibility. His penetrating and practical ideas will help pastors and church leaders sort through the conflicting theories, finding sensible solutions in the form of individual and collective action plans. Christians can work together across racial lines to repair the damage done by a long history of racial injustice.”

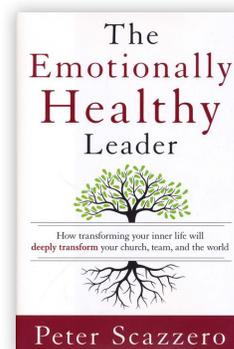


## The Emotionally Healthy Leader

BY PETE SCAZZERO

Become a more effective leader by integrating who you are with what you do.

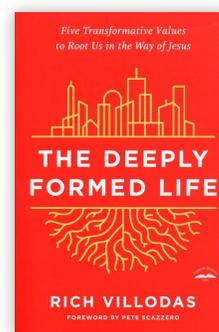
“Examining the intersection between leaders’ inner lives and the “doing” of ministry, Scazzero explores four areas---your “shadow,” marriage or singleness, relationship with Jesus, and Sabbath delight---to reveal how they affect your planning, decision making, team building, and more.”



## The Deeply Formed Life

BY RICH VILLODAS

“Root yourself in Christ and find balance, focus, and meaning in today’s restless world! Pastor Villodas offers an antidote to the constant noise and distraction surrounding us with this expansive and interconnected vision of spiritual formation based on the five key paths of monastic, multiracial, emotional, sexual, and missional values. Foreword by Pete Scazzero. 288 pages, softcover from Waterbrook.”



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## Propel your new ministry partner with NEHEMIAH'S

# launch PAD



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Since establishing the Ministry LaunchPad, Nehemiah has introduced five new ministries to its Ministry Partners program. Nehemiah's new Ministry Partner LaunchPad supports up-and-coming nonprofit organizations and ministries around the Springfield area as they expand to be all God has called them to be. Among these new ministry partners are the following organizations: Agape Dance Company, Legacy Community Development, Southwest Ohio Preparatory Academies, UpTurn Ohio and Seeds of Grace.

"It's our dream that this would eventually become an incubator, even cooler than Shark Tank," said Amy Willmann, executive director of Nehemiah. "We hope it transforms into a catalyst for faith-based change around the community."

The above ministry partners and future additions are separated into two category types:

- Academy partners are fledgling organizations that have yet to be established as legal nonprofits with official 501(c)3 authorization.
- Full partners are organizations already established as 501(c)3 nonprofit with completely developed boards in healthy conditions.

Both academy and full partners are active and inspiring change happening around Clark County and its Christian community. However, each partner also acknowledges the importance of collaboration among the community.

The Ministry Partner LaunchPad is committed to that mission and currently searching for a \$10,000 sponsor to further incubate these relevant ministries for community transformation. This vital sponsor would serve as the backbone of future efforts and jumpstart numerous valuable opportunities for these ministries to move forward in their purposeful development.

**"It takes a community to create lasting change and this once in a lifetime opportunity could lead to monumental progress in Springfield,"** said Willmann.



## SEEDS OF GRACE MINISTRIES



Seeds of Grace is an established 501(c)3 born out of a vision Luke Snyder received to aid in transforming the City of Springfield. Four local properties are on track to serve as hubs, including a central space to facilitate neighborhood programs, transitional housing for those looking to improve their current situation, a community center for gathering and accessing essential services such as laundry facilities and missionary housing for inner-city ministers.

## SOUTHWEST PREPARATORY AND FITNESS ACADEMY



Southwest Ohio Preparatory Academy, SWOPA, led by Rod Pierce, is a faith-based gap-year program for basketball players who are seeking loyal coaches and staff, a family environment, mentorship, academic credit recovery, ACT/SAT test prep, college credit, and help with college placement.



## Legacy Community Development

Legacy Community Development was founded by Truman and Ashley Harris underneath the banner of "Building Trust, Restoring Hope, and Transforming Lives." Their mission is to further the development of communities by facilitating opportunities for individuals to unite together and create positive change. Their partnership with Champion City Church has served as a local example of racial reconciliation in the faith-community, and their recent "Beyond Beauty" and cultural education projects with Choosing Hope Adoptions demonstrates the willingness to collaborate and launch innovative approaches to biblical justice and unity work.





## AGAPE DANCE COMPANY

Agape Dance Company, directed by Cassandra Clark, offers challenging, fun and rewarding courses for all skill levels designed to cultivate inspiring dancers to worship God in theatrical, artistic ways. Through unique instruction, dancers are taught to utilize their own self-expression and passion for the art of dance, encouraging environments of creative development.



## UPTURN OHIO

Upturn Ohio is a 501(c)3 Community Development Corporation empowering impoverished sectors to thrive and grow as flourishing neighborhoods in Springfield. Motivated to end cycles of isolation and poverty while helping improve overall quality of life of area individuals, the non-profit collaborates with private, public and other nonprofit organizations.



### Rise & Build Influence Initiative

Christian Leadership Development



**PRAY** for the five NEW Ministry Partners who joined our network in 2021-22 (listed in LaunchPad section)



**UNIFY** - Join us for unified prayer and fellowship - 2nd Wednesdays at 10 a.m.



**EQUIP** - Help us with a new project and invest in our equipping S.O.U.L. Talk podcast for leaders



**MOBILIZE** - Help us design a spiritual retreat space for leaders at the Nehemiah office suite

# NEHEMIAH FLOURISHING NEIGHBORHOODS PATHWAY CATCHES ATTENTION OF OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

## Grant will Further Nehemiah Work – Wellness, Wholeness, and Oneness

On August 2, Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Bruce Vanderhoff announced that ODH and its Office of Health Opportunity awarded \$6.89 million of grant funding to 26 organizations to fund projects designed to address community conditions that impact health and improve the lives of residents in Ohio Improvement Zones. The Nehemiah Foundation portion is \$350,000 for a one-year period.

**“As part of our commitment to ensure that every Ohioan has an opportunity to achieve their optimal health, the Ohio Department of Health is focused on elevating the voice of communities across the state who consistently experience health disparities,” he said.**

Nehemiah was among three organizations in the Dayton Region who were awarded funding, including Dayton Children’s Hospital and the Safety Council of Southwestern Ohio.

Nehemiah’s Flourishing Neighborhoods Initiative aligns with the funding goals, and includes expansion of the Faith-Community Nursing and Health Ministries program, Mental Health and the Church Campaign, as well as projects and activities designed to cultivate reconciliation and unity. (Read more about these aspects of Flourishing Neighborhoods elsewhere in this report.)

“As a Christian Community Development endeavor, the Flourishing Neighborhoods Initiative focuses on wellness, wholeness and oneness,” said Nehemiah Executive Director Amy Willmann. “In many ways, I am not surprised that God has allowed his favor and funding to rest on this work. On the other hand, I am astounded and completely overjoyed to hear that the ODH took notice and decided to bless us in this way. We are eager to take this work to the next level and will seek to be stellar stewards of such capacity-building funding.”

Please join us in thanking God for this opportunity to elevate the voices of our beloved community and for the empowerment to innovate and co-create with our Father God.



**“We are eager to take this work to the next level and will seek to be stellar stewards of such capacity-building funding.”**



# Steadfast

BY MEAGAN RUBY WAGNER

Written for and dedicated to our Nehemiah Ministry Partners –  
“Rise and Build” Leadership Breakfast, November 2021

Blessed are the steadfast  
The early morning risers  
And late night closers  
Who unlock doors and start the coffee  
When the sun is still on her way up  
And take out the trash long after everyone else  
has settled in at home

Blessed are the steadfast  
Those who show up again and again  
In the midst of their own weariness  
Who listen and listen and listen some more  
While their own burdens sit heavy on the tongue  
Who do not abandon even when the siren song  
Of escape is loud and lovely

Blessed are the steadfast  
Who are simply present  
Who do not retreat to their  
Enclaves of comfort  
But who bear steady witness  
And keep coming back  
Even when heartbreak  
Comes round a time too many

Blessed are the steadfast  
Whose work is quiet and humble (Humble and holy)  
No glamour, all goodness  
Baked bread and full bellies  
Safe beds and fresh linens  
Tended gardens and hearty harvests  
Parcels of hope and sustenance  
Spoon fed to the hungry  
Blessed are the steadfast  
Who fight for justice  
And amplify the voices of the  
Too long rejected  
Who fight systems of oppression  
Who hunger for righteousness  
And mercy and restoration  
And justice  
Justice  
Justice

Blessed are the steadfast  
Who mark out some small space  
For their own breathing  
Who allow themselves healing time  
Like old growth forests roped off for rest  
Who know that all the sorrows in the world  
Are not theirs to bear alone  
For yours is the kingdom of heaven  
That comes down and manifests itself on  
Deserted street corners  
And left-behind neighborhoods  
That springs up from abandoned lots  
And brings hope to the world-weary  
Hope to the despised and rejected  
Hope to the oppressed and neglected

For yours is holy rest  
And holy harvest  
And surely goodness and mercy  
Mercy and goodness  
Shall follow your footsteps  
All the way home



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FORUM



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[www.nehemiahfoundation.org](http://www.nehemiahfoundation.org)

