

# THE CASE FOR **Community**

## IMPACT REPORT 2023



**Nehemiah**  
CLARK COUNTY'S CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

**Framework  
for  
Flourishing**  
*in Springfield  
and Clark County*



**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.

- **BON SECOURS MERCY HEALTH**
- **CITY OF SPRINGFIELD**
- **CLARK COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT**
- **CLARK COUNTY PARTNERS IN PREVENTION**
- **CLARK COUNTY RE-ENTRY COALITION**
- **DAVIDSON TRUST**
- **GLOBAL ORPHAN PROJECT, INC.**
- **OHIO GOOD COMMUNITY PROJECT**
- **KETTERING HEALTH**
- **LITTLETON AND RUE**
- **OHIO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
- **SIMUNYE**
- **SPRINGFIELD CITY SCHOOLS  
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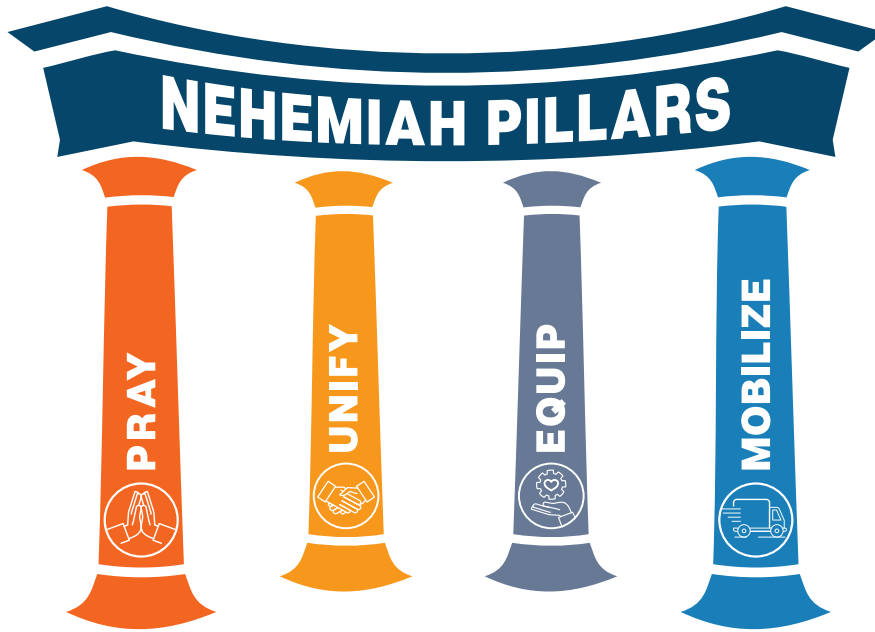
# THE CASE FOR COMMUNITY

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 30 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

*style.*

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# Nehemiah

## MINISTRY PARTNERS





# HELLO COMMUNITY BUILDERS!



We are thanking God for all of you – your prayers and partnership continue to provide the fuel and the focus as we pursue our mission:

“The Nehemiah Foundation provides a network for Christian churches and ministries to amplify their positive impact to build God’s kingdom in Springfield and Clark County.”

Together, we have enjoyed three years of recovery from some serious ministry challenges; we are balancing our intention to conserve and protect our original mission and developing strategies to re-envision and re-engineer our way forward.

Our four original Pillars – Pray. Unify. Equip. Mobilize. – and our four Pathways are initiatives to navigate and communicate to our entire community that 1) we really are here to serve and 2) we are inviting every community member to find their niche and join us!

This year, we have stumbled upon a final layer of foundational verbiage that I believe will allow us to deepen our ability to steward and evaluate the beautiful work we have all been called to do together.

**In this edition of our Case for Community Impact Report, we are excited to share with you this final piece to our framework for flourishing, which has helped bring clarity and refinement, while also creating more space for spark and innovation.**

## A FRAMEWORK FOR FLOURISHING

If you contemplate the phrase “Framework for Flourishing,” can you see the frame of a house or a church – plain, old, bare bones that also end up providing structure for a cozy home, or

steel beams that end up supporting stained glass and flying buttresses? Or do you see a plain, sturdy wooden trellis that ends up allowing a flowering vine to just grow and bloom and travel as it wishes?

Regardless of where your imagination takes you when you hear the phrase “Framework for Flourishing,” I hope you see the value of both of those realities at the same time – building a framework that is both concrete and yet allows for significant creativity.

When it comes to human flourishing at the community level, we at the Nehemiah Foundation believe that all of us can engage in meaningful and intentional work that is pragmatic and organized while also led by the fresh and innovative wind of the Spirit.

## AGENTS OF FLOURISHING

Dr. Amy Sherman is actually a friend of this ministry – she visited Springfield and interviewed our Nehemiah Foundation founder, Wally Martinson, in the early 2000s. I had the honor of speaking to her on a Zoom call and catching her up on our work. I learned more about her current work at the Sagamore Institute, and she shared her inspiration for her most recent book, “Agents of Flourishing: Pursuing Shalom from Every Corner of Society.” <https://sagamoreinstitute.org/>

In addition to her substantial work at the Sagamore Institute in Indianapolis, Dr. Sherman was inspired by the work of the Thriving Cities Group based in Charlottesville, Virginia. The Thriving Cities Group has developed a helpful framework, or ecosystem, for what they call “transforming cities through civic design.” <https://thrivingcitiesgroup.com>

Dr. Sherman’s book, though inspired by those Thriving Cities Group ideas, boldly takes the framework into the theological and ministry space in both profound and practical ways. In “Agents of Flourishing: Pursuing Shalom in Every Corner of Society,” she not only explains and unpacks this excellent framework for local pastors, ministry leaders and community members, but also shares her insight on how kingdom-minded people can build effective strategies for advancing the kingdom in ways that bless everyone, especially the most vulnerable in our midst.

She describes human flourishing in six realms, or endowments, and invites us all into pursuing and cultivating shalom in each of these areas of community life – bringing heaven to earth in complex and holistic ways.

### The Good

### The True

### The Beautiful

### The Just and Well-ordered

### The Prosperous

### The Sustainable

After spending some time in Dr. Sherman’s book, I am more convinced than ever that this level of shalom-work comes with its own home-work. This framework provides a wonderful opportunity to conduct a community scan, assess our energy inputs and outputs, ask Abba for help filling the gaps when we detect them and even “measure what matters,” as good stewards do.

Throughout this impact report, you will read stories about some of the Ministry Partners, community partners and Nehemiah team members who are serving in each of these realms. We also want to include honorable “shout-outs” to organizations that work tirelessly in each realm, even if it’s not directly underneath a faith umbrella or as part of our direct network. Part of the glory of this framework is that it allows us all to be flourishing detectives and share what we are seeing all over the place! Let’s celebrate these “sightings” of human flourishing in our midst, all while also noticing the gaps and rolling up our sleeves to address those gaps and the needs of others underneath that banner.

Who’s missing? In each section, you will find a QR code that will take you to our Facebook page. We will have a post pinned to the top of the page where you can share your honorable mentions and shout-outs, too! We already know these are just the tip of the iceberg – these people and projects are just to get us started! Please take some time to let us know your thoughts, ideas, and favorite individuals and groups who are serving in each of these realms. We can’t wait to hear from you!

With glistening hope,

*Amy*



# FRAMEWORK FOR FLOURISHING in Springfield and Clark County

## THE GOOD

**Flourishing in the Realm of Relationship with God and Others**

### Strategy

Investing in Healthy Families and Relationships

### Ministry Partners

- Encompass
- CitiLookout
- The Gathering
- Simunye
- Urban Light – Fathering Strong Project
- PRC – Fathering Program
- FYI – Family and Youth Initiatives
- Choosing Hope

### Flourishing Heroes

- Clark County Job and Family Services
- Clark County CFFC

## THE TRUE

**Flourishing in the Realm of Truth and Knowledge**

### Strategy

Investing in Public Education

### Ministry Partners

- CarePortal Churches
- CarePortal Requesting Agencies
- SCYM
- Awakenings
- Children’s Rescue Center
- Southwest Preparatory Academy
- Catholic Central
- Emmanuel Christian Academy
- Young Life
- Hope

### Flourishing Heroes

- Springfield City Schools
- Clark State College
- Wittenberg University

## THE BEAUTIFUL

**Flourishing in the Realm of Creativity, Aesthetics and Design**

### Strategy

Investing in the Arts

### Ministry Partners

- Agape
- Emmanuel Christian Academy Choir and Theater Department

### Flourishing Heroes

- Project Jericho
- Springfield Museum of Art
- Springfield Arts Council
- Springfield Symphony Orchestra
- Youth Ambassadors
- HATCH Studios



THE GOOD



THE TRUE



THE BEAUTIFUL



THE JUST &  
WELL-ORDERED



## THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED

### Flourishing in the Realm of Restorative Justice and Racial Reconciliation

#### Strategy

Racial Reconciliation and Restorative Justice

#### Ministry Partners

- Simunye
- Breaking Free to Be
- Clark County Jail Chaplaincy
- Welcome Springfield
- Safe Harbor House

#### Flourishing Heroes

- Refugee Coalition
- Saint Vincent de Paul
- ABLE
- Clark County Juvenile Court
- Clark County Job and Family Services
- Clark County Re-Entry

THE PROSPEROUS



## THE PROSPEROUS

### Flourishing in the Realm of Economic Life

#### Strategy

Redeeming Business for Community Good and Deploying Assets to Build Assets

#### Ministry Partners

- UpTurn Ohio
- Seeds of Grace
- SCYM: \$tartUp – Youth Entrepreneurs
- Good Samaritan Outreach Center
- Springfield Soup Kitchen
- Salvation Army
- Sheltered, Inc.
- Mission Increase Foundation
- Christian Leaders in Business
- Habitat for Humanity

#### Flourishing Heroes

- SBDC
- Think Tank
- Greater Springfield Partnership
- SOKO – Pastor Jawaad Love
- Minority Business Leaders

THE SUSTAINABLE



## THE SUSTAINABLE

### Flourishing in the Realm of Natural and Physical Health

#### Strategy

Investing in Creation Care and Holistic Wellness

#### Ministry Partners

- Faith Community Health Ministries
- Youth GROUP Work Camps/Service Day
- Pregnancy Resource Clinic
- Breaking Free to Be

#### Flourishing Heroes

- Nature Program
- Clark County Service Day
- Keep Clark County Beautiful
- Clark Co. Solid Waste District Recycling Program
- Adopt-a-Highway
- Grocery Land
- Mental Health and Recovery Board

These are examples of ministry partners and community partners doing this work in our community. **Do you know of an organization that is doing this, as well?**

Use the QR code to engage in our community conversation on Facebook and register for the Case for Community Summit!



# THE GOOD

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS

### STRATEGY

Investing in Healthy Families and Relationships

## INVESTING IN HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

BY LAVERN & RONDA NISSLEY

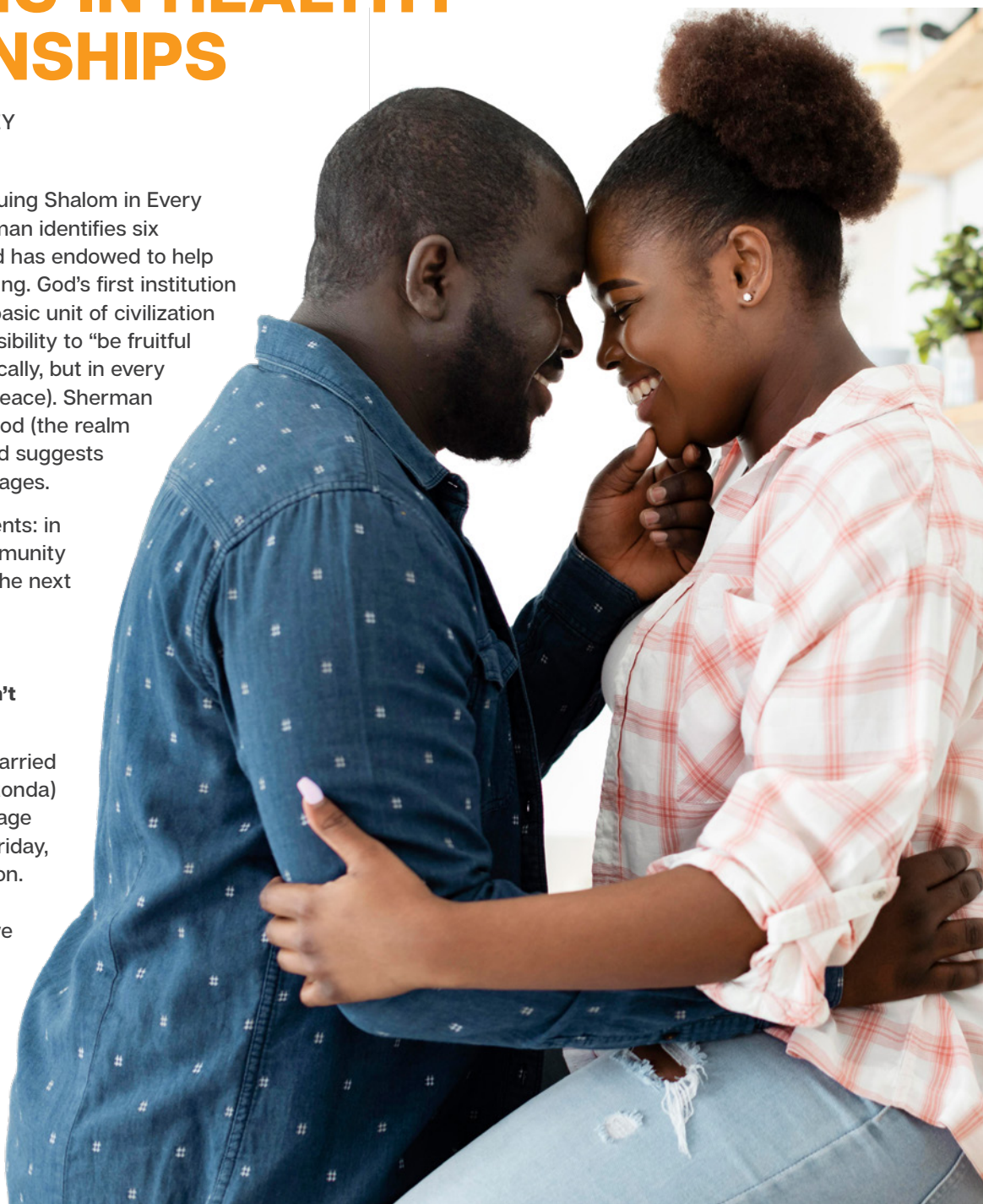
In “Agents of Flourishing: Pursuing Shalom in Every Corner of Society,” Amy Sherman identifies six arenas of civilized life that God has endowed to help communities experience thriving. God’s first institution was marriage, and upon this basic unit of civilization rests the capacity and responsibility to “be fruitful and multiply” - not just biologically, but in every sense of the word “shalom” (peace). Sherman identifies this arena as The Good (the realm of social mores and ethics) and suggests strategies to strengthen marriages.

We’ll reflect on three investments: in our own marriage, in this community and in the transfer of faith to the next generation.

### IN OUR OWN MARRIAGE

**You can’t export what you don’t have yourself**

In March 1990, having been married about 11 years, we (Lavern & Ronda) were invited to attend a marriage weekend workshop - all day Friday, Saturday and Sunday until noon. “We don’t have time, and our marriage is OK, but thanks,” we politely replied to the couple inviting us. You’d think those are strong enough reasons to break down any persistence. They weren’t.



**Our marriage journey became characterized by what happens to so many couples. We were co-existing as parents of three children, working full-time and just trying to get by. No divorce language or nasty fights, but also none of the romance and affection from 10 years earlier.**

“All right, we’ll go,” we finally said to the couple who kept pestering us to attend the marriage workshop. Inwardly, we were thinking, “We’ll go and pick up a few tools for those struggling couples we’re working with at the church.” A real gesture of humility and teachability for a seven-year pastor of a community church in Cincinnati!

Our experience and takeaways from this weekend adventure in March 1990 changed the trajectory of our own relationship. We became a team with productive communication and conflict resolution tools. On a blue and red plaid couch, we prayerfully vowed to invest in marriages for the rest of our lives. That date was March 11, 1990. Some 33 years later, we are grateful for that persistent couple who started the ripple effects by a simple invitation to enrich our own marriage.

### **IN CLARK COUNTY MARRIAGES**

#### **Going “upstream” to affect change**

In 2003-2004 Bob Suver, Wally Martinson and John Landess landed on an idea to invest in Clark County marriages and families. As the then-Director of Clark County Job and Family Services, Suver had been looking for a way to “go upstream” and strengthen marriages in order to reduce the number of fragile and unstable households his agency was serving. At that time in Clark County, there were as many marriage failures every year as weddings, one of the highest failure rates in the country.

Wally Martinson, then-director of the Nehemiah Foundation, had solid connections in the faith community. John Landess, director of the Turner Foundation, saw value in pursuing community transformation by investing in marriages. The product of this collaboration was the launch of a nonprofit agency named Marriage Savers of Clark County.

In 2004, 48 pastors and leaders signed a community agreement to raise the standard of marriage through premarital preparation, enrichment events and marriage mentoring. In time, over 300 clergy and community leaders in Clark, Greene and Champaign

Counties joined the agreement. The agency was renamed to Marriage Resource Center of Miami Valley to reflect a broader service area and to avoid being seen only as a “911 for marriages.”

By 2018, the marriage failure rate in Clark County decreased to 44.7% compared to 2003, about twice the 21.6% decrease of the Ohio rate and the 27.6% U.S. decrease. Also, the marriage rate was up 8.3% compared to declines of 16.4% for Ohio and 17.7% across the country.

Suver, who observed the community marriage investment model in Chattanooga, Tennessee at First Things First, has expressed pride and fulfillment in bringing it to Clark County, Ohio. Millions of dollars in taxpayer savings (at \$30,000 per divorce averted) and thousands of healthier relationships are a satisfying legacy to leave.

### **IN ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE**

#### **The connection between faith and family**

Would you agree that family is the primary means of transmitting faith to the next generation? It certainly seems clear from a familiar scripture in the Jewish Torah known as the Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9.





“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.”

In their book “Endgame: The Church’s Strategic Move to Save Faith and Family in America,” John Van Epp and J. P. De Gance cite declining religious affiliation as of 2015 by contrasting three generations:

BOOMERS 1946-64 - 87% affiliation

GEN XERS 1965-80 - 80% affiliation

MILLENNIALS 1981-96 - 65% affiliation

Also, in looking more closely at the percentage of millennials that attend church as of 2015, they discovered the following:

Not continually married parents - 18% attend church

All millennials - 28% attend church

Continually married parents - 35% attend church

**“Millennials from continually married parents are 78% more likely to attend church.**

This should encourage those who are strengthening marriages and families. Doing so appears to have an eternal significance.

Celebrating ROI (return on investment)

We celebrate the wins of marriage and family investment and impact in Clark County. While it appears that we’re on the right track as a community, may God raise up many more champions of The Good so that healthy relationships truly become a hallmark of this region.

Your investments into healthy relationships of time, talent, treasure and testimony truly are “laying up treasures” in heaven.



## THE GOOD IN THE COMMUNITY

- Clark County Job & Family Services
- Clark County Family and Children’s First Council
- WellSpring
- New Directions



**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**



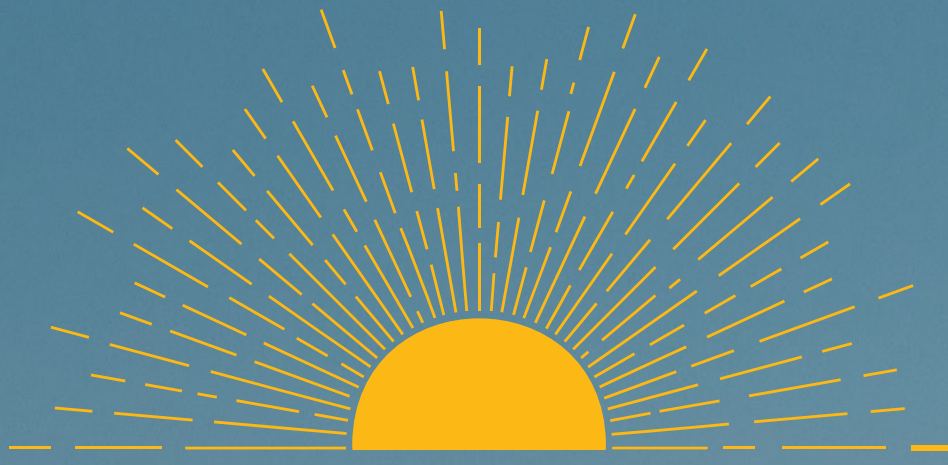
## THE GOOD IN MINISTRY

- CitiLookout
- The Gathering
- Simunye
- Urban Light - Fathering Strong project
- PRC - Fathering Program
- FYI - Family and Youth Initiatives



## TAKE ACTION!

- Spread the Word about these relationship-based projects
- Join a Locker Room with The Gathering
- Join Simunye Tables
- Download the Fathering Strong App



# RISE & BUILD

*Leadership*  
**BREAKFAST**  
CELEBRATING HOPEFUL LEADERS

---

**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2**  
**7:00-8:30 AM**

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

 **Nehemiah**

# THE TRUE

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE AND LEARNING

### STRATEGY

Partnering in  
Public Education

## UNLIKELY PARTNERSHIPS OFFER UNPRECEDENTED BLESSINGS

BY TAMI CARTER

**“If you want to build relationships with people across the socio-economic spectrum in your zip code, start with the local public school,” said Chuck Bomar, Serving Local Schools.**

It’s been a common belief that schools could not, and even would not, work with local churches for the sake of their community. In Clark County, we are proud to say this is not the case at all. Since bringing

CarePortal to Clark County in 2022, we have seen a beautiful partnership form between Springfield City School District (SCSD) and the faith community. This unlikely collaboration has not only helped to bless many families in our community, but it serves as a testimony that churches and local schools can work well together.

Many of our local churches have the resources - the heart, the manpower and the passion - to bless the most vulnerable in our community. What they often lack are the inroads in making connections with them. That’s where CarePortal comes in!

Because every request is vetted properly, churches have the confidence that every request entered into the system is a real-time, heart-felt need and an invitation to be the hands and feet of Jesus to someone in crisis.

Our community has been transformed by this unique and powerful collaboration. In the past year and a half, 13 local churches have partnered with SCSD and other requesting agencies to serve over 700 Clark County children at an economic impact of over \$107,000!

We recognize this is just the tip of the iceberg. The needs in our community are immense, and if we are ever going to make a difference, it will require more unique collaborations: local schools and churches and churches working alongside other churches. Simply said, we need more CarePortal churches interested in supporting families in crisis. More churches means more children being served. To sign up your church to become a CarePortal church, scan the QR code or go to [careportal.org](https://careportal.org). Clark County children need you!







## THE TRUE IN THE COMMUNITY

“I have spent more than 30 years investing in people through helping them attain credentials, skills and knowledge to improve their lives and the lives of those around them. Higher education, at its core, is centered on the concept of flourishing: flourishing personally, academically, economically and civically. Ensuring that current and future generations have the skills, knowledge and experience to live their best lives is an absolute gift and has never felt like a job to me, but rather a calling.

Clark State flourishes because of its partnerships, and the faith communities in our region are key partners for us in helping our students meet their basic needs. We serve such a diverse population of students in very distinctive communities in the region, and being as inclusive as possible of these students and communities is a hallmark of community colleges. Additionally, our faith communities share many of our mission-driven characteristics, such as serving the underserved and ensuring that everyone feels welcome and can strive to be their best - and feels supported doing so.”

- Dr. Jo Alice Blondin, President, Clark State College

“The partnership between CarePortal and the Springfield City School District has been nothing short of amazing. As one of the larger urban school districts in Ohio, the district is considered 100% economically disadvantaged, providing no-cost breakfast and lunch to ALL students. Approximately 70% of our students are Medicaid eligible and our homeless student population exceeds 300 students, demonstrating the adverse socio-economic conditions that our families face each day. The district is rich in resources, but we would not be able to meet the needs of our families without this partnership. Specifically, and over the course of the school year, 395 children were served through 39 different requests for support, with an economic impact of over \$35,000. However, statistics do not tell the whole story, as the relationships that are built between our community members and the families served develops an ongoing support system for our most needy population.”

- Dr. Robert Hill, Superintendent, Springfield City School District

## CarePortal churches helped SCSD this past year by providing:



Furniture



Student fees



Household donations



Hygiene products



Medical support



Book bags



Transportation support



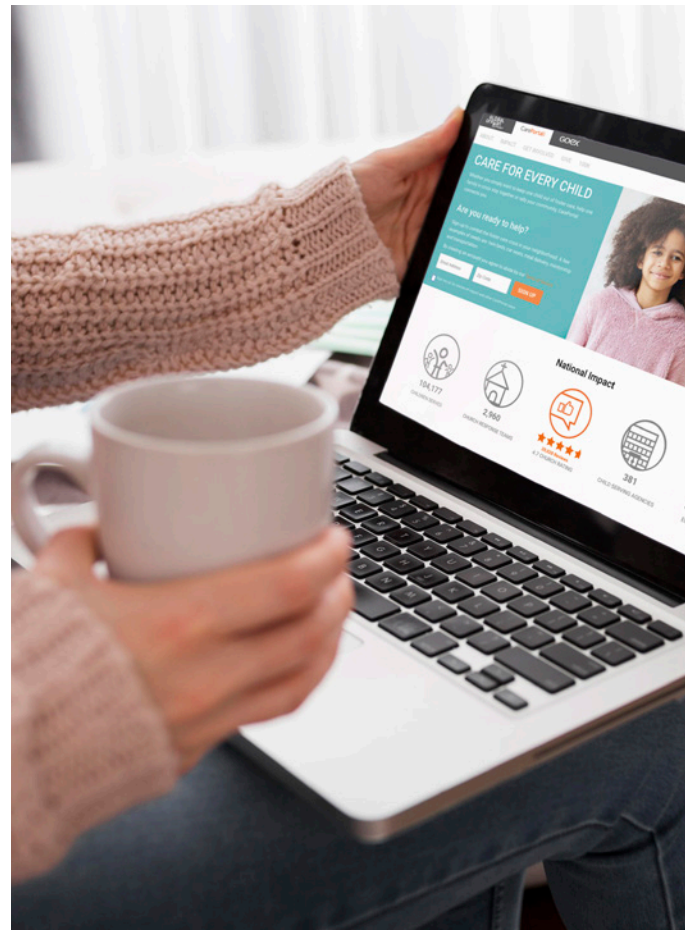
School supplies



Funeral expenses

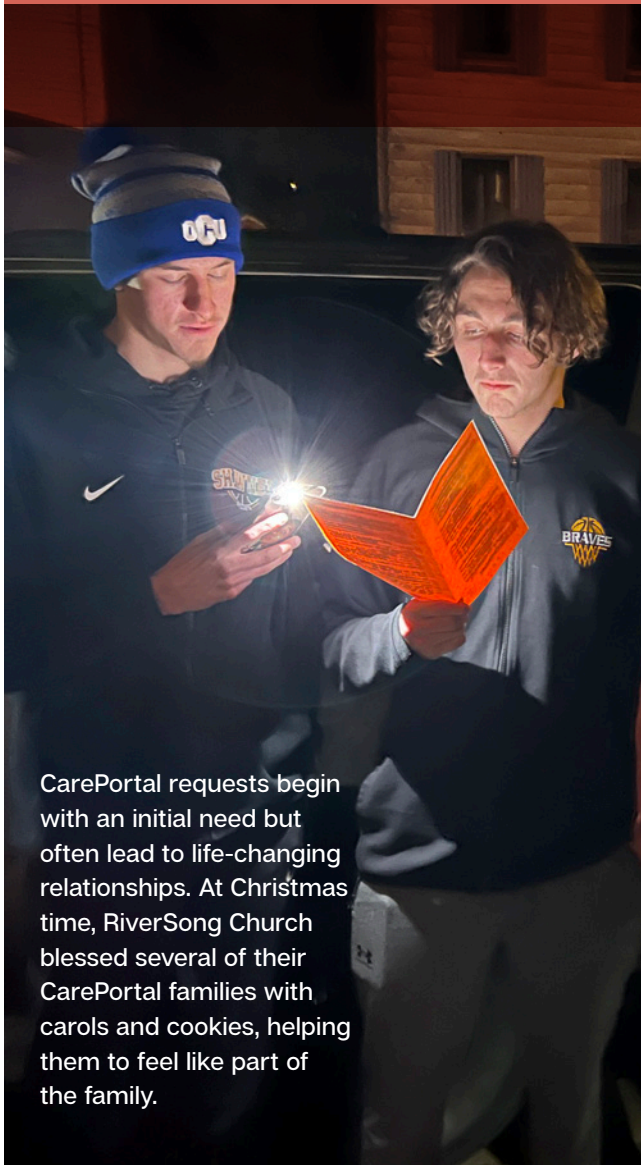


Follow-up connections





## THE TRUE IN MINISTRY



CarePortal requests begin with an initial need but often lead to life-changing relationships. At Christmas time, RiverSong Church blessed several of their CarePortal families with carols and cookies, helping them to feel like part of the family.

### Hayward Christmas Concert

When some of Hayward Middle School students were in need of uniforms for their Christmas Concert, local churches stepped in to help. Providing the students with proper uniforms was only part of the blessing. **“They helped the mental health of students by removing anxiety that otherwise would be there due to being out of uniform with their peers.”**

– Jill Heintz, Springfield City School District



# 1.5

NUMBER OF YEARS CAREPORTAL HAS BEEN IN CLARK COUNTY

# 13

CLARK COUNTY CHURCHES SIGNED ON TO PARTNER WITH CAREPORTAL

# 704

CHILDREN SERVED THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES

# 287

ADULTS SERVED THROUGH THE PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL CHURCHES

# \$107,251

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THESE LIFE-CHANGING PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCSD, OTHER REQUESTING AGENCIES AND CLARK COUNTY CHURCHES USING CAREPORTAL



A young girl from a local elementary school was struggling with her studies due to her desperate need for glasses. Needing to be replaced, her current glasses were being held together by duct tape, resulting in ridicule from her classmates. Understanding the embarrassment this girl was experiencing and her struggle to keep up with her studies, our friends at Dream City Church helped to purchase her a new set of glasses. When her glasses were delivered, the school counselor shared, "I've never seen a bigger smile! And, Dream City Church even purchased a back up pair as well!"

“  
I’VE NEVER  
SEEN A BIGGER  
SMILE!



Restoration Park Church continues to help Springfield City Schools with thousands of pieces of clothing being donated each year.

**During the 2022-23 school year, they provided over 300 bags of clothing.**



**TAKE ACTION!**

- Volunteer to mentor a student
- Respond to CarePortal requests
- Donate children's clothing through Restoration Park Church
- Sign up your church for CarePortal



**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**





# THE BEAUTIFUL

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF CREATIVITY, AESTHETICS AND DESIGN

**STRATEGY**  
Investing in the Arts

### INVESTING IN BEAUTY AND DESIGN

BY AMY WILLMANN

“Beauty and happiness go together.” – Dr. Amy Sherman, “Agents of Flourishing: Flourishing in the Realm of Creativity, Aesthetics, and Design”

“Beauty has a way of sneaking past defenses and speaking in unique ways. To a generation suspicious of truth claims and unconvinced by moral assertions, beauty has a surprising allure. And everything about Jesus Christ is beautiful!” – Brian Zahnd, “Beauty Will Save the World”

More than the obvious realms of human flourishing, such as economics and justice, the realm of “The Beautiful” sometimes requires a smidgen of defense.

“  
BEAUTY HAS A WAY  
OF SNEAKING PAST  
DEFENSES AND SPEAKING  
IN UNIQUE WAYS.”

In her book, “Agents of Flourishing: Pursuing Shalom in Every Corner of Society,” Dr. Amy Sherman reminds us that:

The places people inhabit matter and have a significant influence on human flourishing. Investing in the beauty and design of the natural environment and the built environment in Clark County will have a “well-being” impact on our community. Any investment in those arenas is good for Springfield and good for the kingdom of God! (Sherman, p. 104).

The arts create avenues for strengthening social relationships – cultivating empathy, understanding and tearing down walls of division. I would imagine and hope that the people of God can see the biblical kingdom benefits speedier than anyone else. (Sherman, p. 105)

Art and beauty teach us, showing us something we could learn no other way. The intuitive and creative process is even fundamental to understanding the realms of math and science, argues artist Makoto Fujimuro. (Sherman, p. 105-106)

**Art is healing.** Artists speak of the cathartic and therapeutic effects embedded in their own personal creative process, and those of us who experience art can also benefit from the positive effect on our souls. “It’s no wonder the discipline of art therapy has arisen in the mental health field.” (Sherman, p.106).

Over the next few years, we at the Nehemiah Foundation plan to deepen our exploration of the theological work found in this endowment – The Beautiful. With newer Ministry Partners serving in this realm, such as Agape Dance Company and The UNIFIED Worship Collective, we see a direct opportunity to invest in the arts and cultivate human flourishing in the realm of the arts! Furthermore, many of our Ministry Partners have programming elements that utilize and maximize the benefits of the arts in the lives of those they serve.



## THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE COMMUNITY

We are inspired to see all the signs of growth in this realm throughout every sector of our community – increased creativity and therapeutic expressions of beauty within the social service, education, government and ministry niches. Even amid the most harsh conditions, the creatives in Springfield and Clark County have found innovative ways to thrive. Let us all celebrate the work of talented muralists, the transformational work being done at Project Jericho, the innovative makers at HATCH Studios, Springfield Arts Council Summer Arts Festival, Springfield Symphony, the Springfield Museum of Art, local creative small businesses like Frame Haven and more!



**JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION**





## THE TRUE IN MINISTRY

### CASSANDRA CLARK, AGAPE DANCE COMPANY

I started Agape Dance Company because I've always had a passion for dance and theater arts since I was a child. I was surrounded by it growing up in Pittsburgh. Little did I know that once I gave my life to Christ at 23, that God was going to show me that my passion in dance was for His purpose. I wanted to provide a platform for dancers that fosters the gift of dance to

be a vehicle that spreads the word of God, instills love in our community, and enriches the Kingdom of God. I want to help change the narrative of dancing for the world to dancing for the Word. I believe there is an alliance of worship and communion between the gift of dance and the kingdom of God, and I want all to experience the power of it. Some exciting things that are on our horizon are our upcoming showcase, dance workshops and expanding our curriculum into the City of Springfield.

We live in a world that was designed by the most artistic power there is - God. God's creation isn't something that was done carelessly; it was done on purpose, FOR a purpose. The power of our creativity in the arts holds weight and capability for influential change in our world. There's healing and love in the arts, and it's a proven fact that the arts can spring commonality amongst differences - culture, race and diversity. There's a unifying purpose behind this creative power, and it's our job to be wise stewards over it in our community.

### A WORD FROM OUR DANCERS:

**ASHA VANCE** has been dancing with Agape since 2019 when God first birthed this vision. She has been by Cassandra's side since day one from when they started rehearsing in the basements and sanctuaries of churches. Though she is away at school, she still continues to dance for Agape Dance Company in showcases and other events.

Asha Vance: "Two of the most influential things in this life to me are music and dance. Having the ability





to share the gospel through those two gifts is such a blessing! Springfield is a community that needs so much more than just different activities and paved streets. It needs love and people who strive to live by The Word.”

“Fine Arts ministries like this allow individuals to see our Father work and move in a different setting. It is so important to fellowship in a sanctuary, but it is also important for individuals who may not know Christ to understand that God’s presence does not just exist in a church.”

**“Being surrounded by so many beautiful and seasoned women of God makes me feel so full. Hearing their different testimonies and pieces of advice only make me want to strive to grow and be a better young woman.”**

**DESTINI ROBINSON** has been with the organization since 2020 and is still dancing for Agape Dance Company. She is dedicated and faithful to what God is doing through her. Her willingness to always step in and volunteer to help is extremely valued and appreciated.

“Music, dance and art allows people to express themselves in a positive way. It’s a way to make others happy who are involved. It gives our city a sense of community. I love that I’m able to showcase my ability to dance with God’s people. My prayer every time is that I bring someone a little closer to Jesus and that they don’t see me, but only Him.”

“Dancing in Agape allows me to be in an intimate space with God. When I dance, it’s just me and Him. Agape shows others that dance is just another way to praise God. When I dance, I’m reminded why I started at 11 years old. So many people are used to just seeing dance in the church. There isn’t anything wrong with that, but this ministry is more than being within the four walls of a building. I love that we can reach others inside and outside the church.”

“Belonging to a group like Agape is like being a part of a family. This group has pushed me to do things through dance I never thought I could do! Agape reminds me who I’m dancing for and why I love it so much. I love being on a team with dancers that are so different, but gifted all at the same time. Everyone brings something different to the table that we can all use as we grow closer to God. We’re growing as individuals, but most of all, we’re growing as a unified team.”



## THE BEAUTIFUL IN THE MINISTRY

- Safe Harbor Art Therapy Programming
- Emmanuel Christian Academy Choir and Theater Awards



## TAKE ACTION!

- Join an Art and Faith book club
- Visit the Springfield Art Museum
- Visit HATCH Studios on First Friday
- Do a photo tour of our downtown murals and post on our Facebook page!

# THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED

**STRATEGY**  
Racial Reconciliation and Restorative Justice

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND RACIAL RECONCILIATION

### RECONCILIATION IS THE GOSPEL

Through the years, I have found myself in countless conversations with Christ followers who view racial unity and reconciliation as a secondary spiritual issue. Statements like, “Just preach the Gospel,” are often thrown out as a trump card whose aim is to avoid uncomfortable discussions about racial division in the church. This is very frustrating, but here is the irony... they are right! Let me explain.

Historically in America, we as Christ followers have reduced the Gospel to mean a personal call to salvation that guarantees we have a spot in heaven. This has often led to a spiritually-lazy lifestyle that emphasizes this earth is passing and we are just passively waiting it out. This has led to lax views on creation care, justice and community engagement.

The good news is that the Gospel is far bigger than just our personal salvation plan. It is a cosmic story of God reconciling people to Himself, reconciling people to one another and ultimately restoring all of creation to its former

glory (a new “Eden”). This is the Gospel!

So, yes, we need to, “Just preach the Gospel,” but not a small, truncated Gospel that relegates us to spiritual hermit crabs waiting on the day of judgment. Rather, preach the Gospel that has the power to both save our eternal souls and transform our earthly dwellings. The Gospel transforms us, and we, in turn, join with God as He transforms the world.

Racial unity is a part of this cosmic Gospel plan of reconciliation. At Simunye, we believe that we are living out the Gospel by creating safe spaces that encourage deep relationships marked by repentance, forgiveness, honesty and vulnerability. And these relationships lead to continued efforts toward racial healing, racial justice and, ultimately, the peace and shalom of our city. Please join us as we “preach the Gospel” and live it out in our city.

Grace and peace,  
**AARON ROY**  
[aaron@nehemiahfoundation.org](mailto:aaron@nehemiahfoundation.org)







Judge Katrine Lancaster, Ohio Supreme Court  
Justice Melody Stewart, and Amy Willmann at the Bar  
Association Breakfast



**“If it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.”**

ROMANS 12:8

I am a firm believer that we are part of a greater community where each of us has been bestowed with gifts to be shared. In order for our community to be successful, we need to value each person despite the fact we may find differences in religion, race, politics or culture. I hope for a community where each member feels loved, cherished, supported and celebrated; that each person feels safe and protected. In my position, I see clearly that our juvenile justice-involved children want what we all want – to truly belong and be seen as valuable, to be given a light during moments of darkness, to be cheered on at moments of success and to know there is hope for the future. Much work is being done - not only by our dedicated staff - but also community members like Jackie Mounts and her HOPE team, Dr. Mecca and therapeutic journaling, and Aaron Clark to inspire this sense of belonging and hope.

So much more is needed. Please ask yourself, how can I help create a community of belonging for every child, how will I use my gifts to mentor a child who wants to belong, and what action can I take to inspire a child in need of hope?”

~ Juvenile Court Judge Katrine Lancaster

## Juvenile Detention Center Gives Back with Ice Cream

The arts are a great way for kids to lose themselves in projects that help them to reflect on their situations and find how they can make something beautiful from a bad situation. That’s why Clark County Juvenile Detention Director Joe Hunter helped detainees organize a homemade ice cream stand and host an ice cream social for community members.

“Everyone likes ice cream,” said Hunter. “The kids get to eat their own creations and see the public enjoy something they made; it is a great experience for them to serve the community that cares about them.”

Hunter dreams about mending “broken and hurt kids” and giving them the opportunity to heal, and wants to give back to the community.

“I would personally love to hire as many of them as I can to work in the detention center and be able to

relate and pass on their wisdom to detained youth in similar situations,” he said. “Fix, heal, give back, repeat!” Hunter said that adults being engaged with the kids is important in their rehabilitation. “When adults give time, share and relate, you can actually see growth and love, which ultimately leads to salvation.”



The Nehemiah Team enjoys culinary creations –  
homemade ice cream – at Juvenile Detention Center.





## Helping Citizens Return to Society

BROOKE WAGNER,  
CLARK COUNTY RE-ENTRY DIRECTOR

In order to have a thriving community, everyone needs the opportunity to thrive. It is our mission at the Clark County Re-Entry Department to support the flourishing of returned citizens ( i.e. people coming out of jail or prison, as well as those with prior criminal records). To help our clients thrive, we partner with community groups to provide resources, services and connections to expand their opportunities for success.

Over the past year, we have held several events to support returned citizens, such as record-sealing clinics, Fair Chance Wednesdays (a resource fair) and a wallet drive. The Re-Entry Department also offers one-on-one case management, assisting individuals with finding employment, mental health and housing resources, accessing official documents (such as IDs and birth certificates) and educational training programs. We know that successful reintegration is dependent on a supportive and active community. We are thankful for the community members and organizations across Clark County that help us help others. Your involvement and support creates more opportunities for us to expand our reach and strengthen our flourishing community as a whole.



### THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED IN THE COMMUNITY

- Haitian Refugee Coalition
- Saint Vincent de Paul
- ABLE



### THE JUST AND WELL-ORDERED IN THE MINISTRY

## Welcome to Our Newest Ministry Partner: Breaking Free to Be!

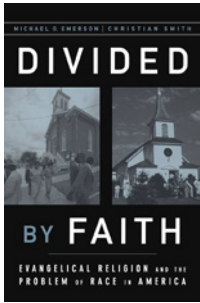
In 2023, we welcomed one new ministry partner, Dr. Mecca S. Carter-Marshall and Breaking Free to Be, Inc. Dr. Mecca is a pastoral Christian counselor and life coach with over 30 years of experience helping survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence. [breakingfreetobe.org](http://breakingfreetobe.org)

“Angela Davis said, ‘I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change... I’m changing the things I cannot accept.’ We cannot always focus on controlling what has happened; instead, let’s change the narrative of what will happen. If we want a better community for our youth, we cannot focus on systems of justice that may have failed them. We must do what is needed to create systems of justice that will advance them!”

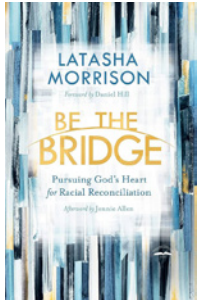
- Dr. Mecca S. Carter-Marshall



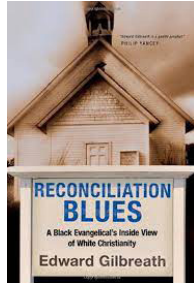
## 5 Books on Racial Unity to Consider



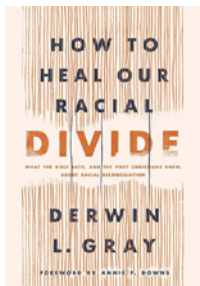
**Divided by Faith**  
by Michael O. Emerson & Christian Smith



**Reconciliation Blues**  
by Edward Gilbreath



**Be the Bridge**  
by Latasha Morrison



**Weep With Me**  
by Mark Vroegop



**How to Heal Our Racial Divide**  
by Derwin L. Gray



## TAKE ACTION!

There are several ways you can commit to The Just and Well-Ordered in Springfield:

**Become a volunteer with Juvenile Court to change a child's story by becoming a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA).** In this role, you can advocate for safety and permanency of the young people assigned to their case and will be provided the training to succeed. Search for our local program at [ohiocasa.org](http://ohiocasa.org) to learn how you can get involved!

**Become a trauma-informed volunteer** for Dr. Mecca's "Breaking Free to Be" faith-based nonprofit.

**Join Simunye Tables this fall.** "Simunye Tables" are safe gatherings where we listen well to each others stories, learn while reading a book together and also dream and strategize practical ways we can fight for racial unity and racial justice in our community. These "tables" meet bi weekly for 6-8 weeks at various locations in our city. We are inviting you to join this growing movement by signing up for a Simunye Table which start back up this fall! Please email [aaron@nehemiahfoundation.org](mailto:aaron@nehemiahfoundation.org) to sign up and receive more info about Simunye and our upcoming events.

**Order Simunye apparel and make "We Are One" part of your everyday wardrobe.**





# THE PROSPEROUS

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF ECONOMIC LIFE

### STRATEGY

Redeeming Business for Community Good and Deploying Assets to Build Assets

## PRACTICING PROSPERITY IN OUR COMMUNITY

BY MARLO FOX, THINK TANK

One of the tenets of Think Tank is the idea that what we believe about poverty - and those affected by it - greatly shapes our response. For this reason, we offer a poverty simulation and invite participants to connect to the human impact of poverty, rather than viewing it only through a material lens. This is not an invitation to discount material realities, but to show the connection between economic well-being and human well-being.

To not care about the economic well-being of our neighbor is to not fully care about our neighbor. As Christ followers situated in a community, we must ask ourselves two simple and vital questions: 1) What is God's desire for all of us? and 2) How should we envision flourishing among us?

Amy Sherman, in her book "Agents of Flourishing" writes, "God does not insist that everyone's economic status be the same. Some people will have more and some less. But his normative intention is for a world without material poverty, period." Throughout history, the church has been the forerunner of tackling poverty, and when we've done it well, we've approached poverty in holistic ways with our neighbors who've faced its damaging effects. God has instructed us

individually and corporately to pursue the wellbeing of our neighbors, from all parts of our community, whether that is through business development, just employment, affordable rental property, homeownership or material relief. As we do, let our guiding image be one of a potluck, where everyone has a place and brings something to the table, rather than a traditional soup kitchen, where only the haves provide food and the have-nots are kept at arm's length (Practicing the Kings Economy).



*C.O.P.E. – Cost of Poverty Experience helps participants gain valuable perspective about the true nature of poverty.*



# CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP MENTORING

Nehemiah's new Christian Leadership Mentoring partners trusted experts who subscribe to faith-based business principles and philosophies with ministry leaders who want to position themselves and their organizations for growth. These mentors aim to teach new skills and hone existing ones, instill best practices, create growth accountability and drive different conversations with the mentees they serve, and take great pride in being a partner in personal Christian leadership journeys.

## Overarching goal

To provide assistance with any aspect of your operation, including but not limited to:

- Mergers and shared core services between organizations
- Succession planning
- Leadership coaching
- Thinking "outside the box"
- Navigating challenges and ever-changing ministry environments
- Audit services

## Values

- Enriching leadership
- Imparting legacies
- "Breaking it to save it"
- Encouraging and exhorting
- Creating a culture of prayer

## Interested in learning more about Christian Leadership Mentoring Services?

Scan the QR code or visit [www.nehemiahfoundation.org/christian-leadership-mentoring](http://www.nehemiahfoundation.org/christian-leadership-mentoring) to fill out a contact form.



*\*Currently, Christian Leadership Mentoring is focused on serving existing Nehemiah ministry partners. The goal is to serve all Christian leaders in our community in the near future.*



## CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP MENTORING TEAM

### FAITH BOSLAND

*Grants and Program Manager, Community Health Foundation*

**Coaching areas** - Small nonprofit leadership and nonprofit health, staff development, succession planning, building a team

### JAY WEYGANDT

*AmeriCorps VISTA Leader, ThinkTank*

**Coaching areas** - Bookkeeping, assess and measure organizational progress with Rickter Scale

### SERGIO LOPEZ

*President, Lopez Consulting Services*

**Coaching areas** - Thinking outside of the box, creating action plans, problem-solving, and evolving your personal relationship with God

### MIKE GANNON

*President, MHG Solutions LLC*

**Coaching areas** - Marketing, strategic planning, business development, sales, logistics, accounting

### BRUCE WILLMANN

*Director, Rise and Build Influence Initiative: Christian Leadership Development*

**Coaching areas** - Leadership development, soul care, coaching/mentoring leaders, S3 class (scripts, saboteurs and strongholds-identify how our past is affecting our leadership), project management

### MONTE ZINN

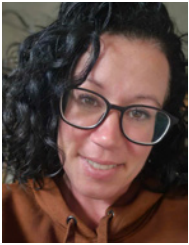
*Automotive consultant*

**Coaching areas** - Entrepreneurship, ROI, negotiation, sales



## \$tartUp Inspires Entrepreneurial Skills

\$tartUp is an entrepreneurial program for middle school students that teaches and provides students with entrepreneurial skills as they explore and enhance their career aspirations. As the program continues to expand into new schools and new opportunities within the community, \$tartUp hired Jackie Downing who holds a business degree from Western Governors University and will bring new and exciting things. StartUp has expanded and will now offer a class at Springfield High School for 9th grade students for the 23-24 school year.



- Small Business Development Center
- Greater Springfield Partnership
- Hands-on Job Training
- Neighborhood Housing Partnership
- Housing Consortium



- Host a table at the Rise & Build Leadership Breakfast
- Become a mentor
- Join the Rise & Build Community Action Team (CAT)
- Participate in Think Tank's Cost of Poverty Experience





**JOIN THE  
CONVERSATION**





# THE SUSTAINABLE

## FLOURISHING IN THE REALM OF NATURAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

### STRATEGY

Investing in Creation Care and  
Holistic Wellness

## FAITH COMMUNITY HEALTH MINISTRIES ORGANIZES, GETS NEW LOOK

Faith Community Health Ministries was born in 2020 through a collaboration between Mercy Health and Clark County Combined Health District in Springfield and made possible through grant funds received from the Bon Secours Mercy Health Foundation. The program began as a pilot with five churches closest in proximity to the “Engaged Neighborhood,” which was identified by a community housing study as an area of focus (Pleasant to Perrin, S. Limestone Street to Yellow Springs Street).



After the success of the pilot year and first five churches, the program received a continuance grant, again through the BSMH Foundation, and has grown to a total of 11 churches, focusing on churches with both interest and investment in areas of need in the community. In conjunction with the growth of the participating churches, a Springfield faith-based health ministry collaborative was established for cross-congregational connection. The program also grew in partnership, adding The Nehemiah Foundation as a supporting programmatic partner through Pursuing Wholeness: Mental Health & the Church, as well as the receipt of a faith-based partnership Ohio Department of Health grant. Fifteen churches are currently in the program.

Program coordinator, Tina Le Faive, has worked collaboratively with churches, their parishioners



# Faith Community Health Ministry

BUILDING CAPACITY. BRIDGING RESOURCES.

and church leadership to identify appropriate candidates from the congregations who could be a Faith Community Nurse or Health Minister. These identified parishioners receive additional training through the grant to provide additional health care support, navigation and capacity directly within the faith community. Tina has also assisted in supporting congregational assessments, as well as facilitating introductions to local nonprofits, health and safety agencies, advocates (like the Springfield Fire Rescue Division) and more.

“The Faith Community Health Ministries Program walks alongside our churches to equip them with training, resources and tools to care for the needs of their church and community,” said Le Faive. “The essential piece of this program is to develop trusting relationships. We have churches supporting one another, learning from each other and walking together to reach those in need. The resources in the Springfield community have been gracious to come to our church services, meetings and events to share their knowledge and program opportunities. We are breaking down denominational barriers, racial barriers and socioeconomic barriers.”

Carolyn Young, community health director for Mercy Health, Springfield has been coordinating Mercy’s involvement in the program.



*Le Faive and elves enjoy the Holiday Extravaganza.*

“  
WE ARE BREAKING DOWN  
DENOMINATIONAL BARRIERS,  
RACIAL BARRIERS AND  
SOCIOECONOMIC  
BARRIERS.”



*Nehemiah, Wittenberg and Dance Stomp Shake collaborated with Faith Community Health Ministries on the Holiday Extravaganza.*

“The FCN & HM Program has - and continues to be - a much needed source of good health and resource information for our community and it is sparking impactful change through the equipment of the church body!” said Young. “For Mercy to have the opportunity to collaboratively equip the members of our community and empower them to share resources and information in an authentic relational way is relieving the logistical, mental and physical health strain for many, especially those who experience higher social determinants of health. The program answers the call of many barriers individuals and families in our community experience. In this way, it is like the body of Christ, with each member having value, purpose and intention in the way we are all connected to one another.”



**JOIN THE CONVERSATION**





## **Work Hard, Pray Hard! Youth Mission Trip**

Two hundred and fifty youth from all over the country embarked upon our community for the Springfield Mission Trip in June. The youth missionaries conducted home repair projects, such as interior and exterior painting, porch/steps building and repair, and wheelchair ramp construction, for 30 elderly, disabled, low-income and veteran residents. This was made possible by VFW post 1031, Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Crabill Family Foundation.



Thank you to all who participated as well as those who lifted up these young missionaries in your prayers during their time here in Springfield. To learn more about the parent organization of this mission, Group Mission Trips, and its commitment to faith-based service opportunities, visit [groupmissiontrips.com](http://groupmissiontrips.com).



## Good Shepherd Village and Restoration at Hillside Church

The Salvation Army hosted a work event at the Good Shepherd Village retirement community in collaboration with volunteers from Restoration at Hillside Church on Jul 8. Their goal was to construct an outdoor space with six raised beds, a big fishpond surrounded by beautiful flowers, garden benches, bird feeders and bird baths. It was supposed to be an all-day event, but early afternoon rain forced them to pause their work.

Restoration at Hillside began working with the Clark County Senior Citizens Task Force at the beginning of 2023 and agreed to become a partnering church with Good Shepherd Village with the goal to “dramatically improve the quality of life for the residents living there,” according to Andrea Shroyer, community outreach coordinator at Hillside.

## Mental Health and the Church Campaign

Kelton Moore, Nehemiah's new Community Chaplain has joined the Suicide Prevention Coalition, and is in the midst of QPR Training in order to be able to help equip youth workers and youth pastors to become even more supportive around the topic of teen suicide prevention. Both he and Amy Willmann participate in the Mental Health Task Force. This is an opportunity for the church and the community to come together again on this important topic.



### THE SUSTAINABLE IN THE COMMUNITY

- Clark County Service Day
- Community Gardens
- Groceryland
- Conscious Connect
- Parks
- Keep Clark County Beautiful
- Mental Health and Recovery Board

## TAKE ACTION!

- Volunteer for Clark County Service Day
- Serve on a beautification committee
- Plant and maintain a community garden
- Connect your church to Faith Community Health Ministries
- Sign up for an Emotionally Healthy Leader book club this fall!

## Emotionally Healthy Leader Book Club Continues

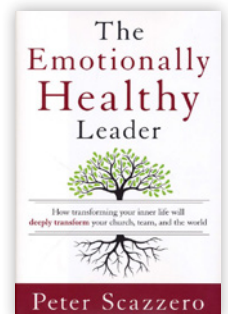
The Nehemiah staff will be launching a second EHL book club in the fall.

### 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.”







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

