



Sustainable Community Development in Kansas City

Prepared by
The Co-Op



The Co-Op is a Sponsored Initiative of Significant Matters, 501c3, providing fiduciary oversight, transparency for all funds, and strategic leadership. | 12480 S. Black Bob Road | Olathe, KS 66062 | (816) 419-3291 | tom@significantmatters.com



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Background: The Co-Op at Work in the Kansas City Metro

The Co-Op is a faith-based initiative of Kansas City area churches working together to bring about transformation at the neighborhood level. The initiative's strategy is based on working with community leaders within a neighborhood inside of four catalytic program areas: *housing, economic development, cradle-to-career education, and health and wellness services.*

The idea of the Co-Op began as a conversation in 2006 as a way for churches across the Kansas City area to explore and create new models of working together, models that could contribute to neighborhood revitalization and sustainable community development. What emerged was a group of churches and nonprofits willing to move beyond the four walls of the church to be a part of the long-term work of sustainable neighborhood transformation.

In 2012 the Co-Op was officially launched and is now working in various stages with three neighborhoods across the Greater Kansas City Area. *The Co-Op's goal is to help these three neighborhoods become the kind of place one would want to live not leave.* Currently the Co-Op is incorporated in the state of Kansas and is in the process of seeking its own 501c3 status with the IRS. In the meantime, the Co-Op functions as an initiative under the Fiscal Sponsorship of Significant Matters.

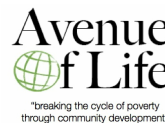
Our Mission

The Mission of the Co-Op is to mobilize, equip and facilitate collaboration among churches and other willing partners to bring about neighborhood transformation reflecting Christ's plan for a just and reconciled city.

Collaborative Partnerships

The Co-Op continually develops partnerships with area churches, business leaders, and service providers, as well as city and civic leaders across the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area. This alignment of faith-based marketplace leaders, community leaders, and church leaders is intended to bring a broad array of skills, abilities, and resources for neighborhood renewal efforts. The current Co-Op partnering entities include:

- [Avenue of Life](#)
- [Church of the Resurrection](#)
- [Colonial Presbyterian Church](#)
- [CrossPoint Community Church](#)
- [Paseo Baptist Church](#)
- [Significant Matters](#)
- [The Mission House Network](#)
- [UMKC](#)

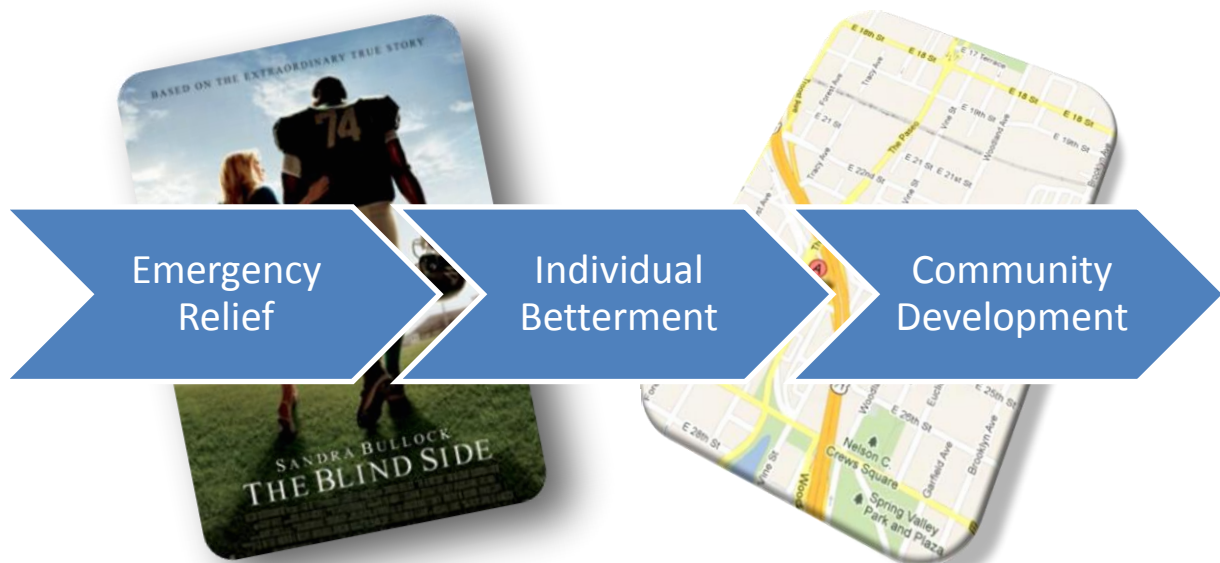


The Issue at Hand

According to a report by the United Community Services of Johnson County, more than 225,000 people in the six-county area of the Greater Kansas City Metropolitan Area lived in poverty in 2010. From 2000-2010 the number of poor increased by 65 percent to nearly 90,000 people, and one-half of the increase occurred since 2007. The federal poverty rate in the Kansas City area increased from 8.6 percent of the population in 2000 to 12.7 percent in 2010. While the average poverty rate is 12.7 percent metro-wide, it is 20 percent within the urban core. The bottom line is Kansas City is losing ground, and urban neighborhoods with the highest concentrations of poverty are suffering the most. There are no easy answers, however, to continue to rely solely on imperfect government institutions or very overwhelmed private charity is a recipe for continued decline.

Sustainable Community Development ... A Place to Live Not Leave

The Co-Op team is leveraging its efforts and expertise to address SUSTAINABLE community development along a continuum of *Emergency Relief – Individual Betterment – Community Development*. Experience has shown that relief and betterment without COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT becomes a **way out of the community**, leaving the community itself further depleted.



Sustainability

Our vision is to help create a neighborhood where basic needs are being met without outside charitable resources and where the community itself can provide the means and opportunities for individuals to grow and achieve their potential.

What We Mean by “Community Development”



Although the phrase “Community Development” is used by many people to mean many things, the Co-Op uses it to describe the work we do to bring together a set of vital components necessary for holistic neighborhood revitalization: high quality mixed-income housing, an effective cradle-to-career education pipeline, comprehensive health and wellness resources and access to living wage jobs.

Evidence has shown that changing the way a neighborhood exists in all four of these catalytic areas is essential to creating long-term, sustainable change.

1.) Housing

Many who live in struggling neighborhoods lack affordable, quality housing options. Mixed-income housing contributes to residents' well-being and builds a greater sense of safety, comfort and community.



2.) Economic Development

People need jobs and communities need businesses as anchors to change the economic realities of a neighborhood. The Co-Op works with a wide array of programs and initiatives around job training and placement assistance, new business start-ups as well as how to attract existing business to the area.



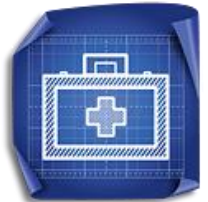
3.) Education

A Cradle-to-Career Education Pipeline is essential. Success in America depends on the quality of education you receive. We believe working with the community to help develop a cradle to career pipeline designed to maximize student learning and achievement at every level is critical to the long-term success of a neighborhood.



4.) Health & Wellness

Our model includes a community-specific mix of facilities, programs and services to improve the quality of life and enrich the diversity among residents. These include better access to food, health care and recreation, after-school enrichment programs and better proximity to grocery stores, banks and other commercial amenities.



A Neighborhood Approach

Neighborhood Transformation Initiatives (NTI's)

The Co-Op is currently focused on three specific neighborhoods in the greater Kansas City area. As we grow our partnerships and our understanding of the process we plan to add new neighborhoods. Our current NTI's are as follows:

1. The **Wendell Phillips** area
Paseo Blvd. to Prospect Ave., 18th to 31st Streets
just south of downtown Kansas City, MO
2. The **Hickman Mills** area
Bannister Rd. to Red Bridge Rd., Hickman Mills Dr. to Blue Ridge Rd.
Near the Grandview Triangle in south Kansas City, MO
3. A third NTI is under consideration in the **Kansas City, Kansas** area.



Asset-Based Community Development

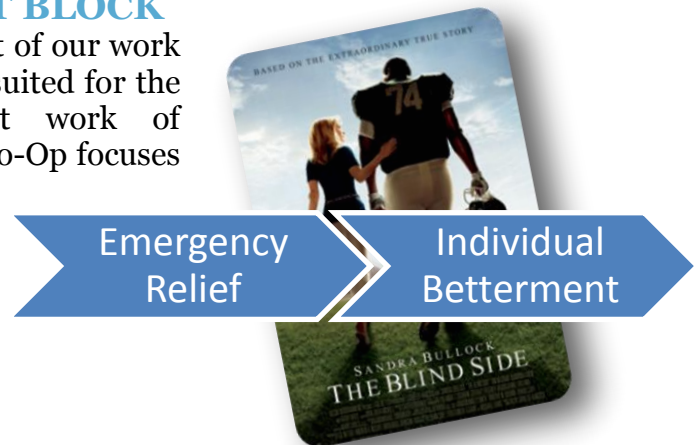
The Co-Op uses Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) as our underlying approach. By “assets” we mean the full-range of resources already available within a community to address its concerns such as individual skills, property, voluntary associations and institutions, to name a few. The ABCD approach has consistently demonstrated two common features when a chronically distressed neighborhood transforms for the better in the United States:

1. local assets are at the core of the community transformation (participation, leadership, ideas)
2. the faith community plays a primary role in supporting these local assets.

We work through a neighborhood church/pastor connected to a network of suburban churches to mobilize resources and volunteers for meaningful service in the community. With the help of that neighborhood church and its leadership we train volunteers to come alongside the community and help without hurting. It’s about building relationships and participating with their plans rather than imposing “our” ideas.

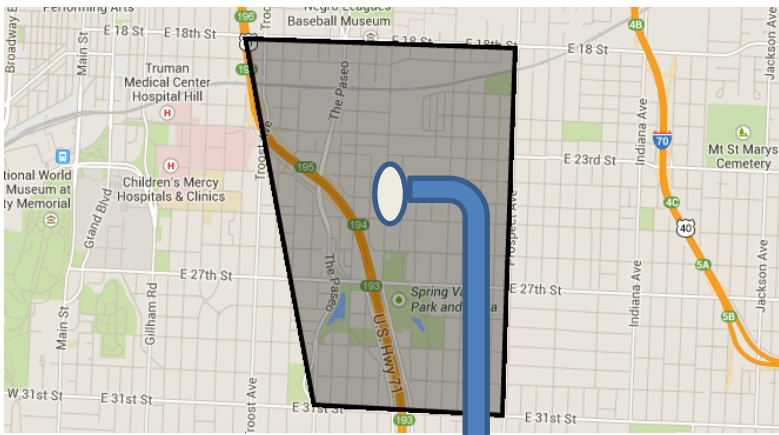
Neighborhood Stabilization - FIRST BLOCK

Neighborhood stabilization is the starting point of our work within a community. The Church is perfectly suited for the highly relational and critically important work of Neighborhood Stabilization. In this stage the Co-Op focuses on one block in the neighborhood to establish its presence and begin to stage a more coordinated effort to utilize volunteers and provide relief and betterment services to the community through the following projects/programs:



- **Opportunity House** – To help and prepare vulnerable families facing homelessness and other barriers for home ownership through the “Good Neighbors” Program.
- **Mission House** – A group home in the neighborhood for people seeking a year-long, hands-on experience of ministry in the urban core.
- **The Equipping Center** – A community center that can be used to train volunteers and connect them to helpful work in the community and provide space for service providers already in the neighborhood.
- **Good Neighbor Housing Program** – Working with the Opportunity House Program and the anchor churches to put families into homeownership.

Example: Neighborhood Stabilization - FIRST BLOCK – Wendell Phillips NTI



The Wendell Phillips NTI is located just south of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, from Paseo Blvd. to Prospect Ave., and from 18th to 31st Streets.

The Co-Op's anchor church is Paseo Baptist Church pastored by Rev. Greg Ealey.



Opportunity House – 2538 Woodland

Working with pastors, school administrators and neighborhood associations the Opportunity House gives motivated families the opportunity to move into homeownership within the neighborhood. The Opportunity House provides 12-18 months of living in one of our homes during which time families participate in financial literacy, personal discipleship, home ownership classes in order to prepare them for home ownership through the “Good Neighbors” Program.



Community Development



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School of Education

UMKC School of Law

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

psychology

College of Arts and Science

Department of Public Affairs



REGNIER INSTITUTE

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UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI-KANSAS CITY



Department
of
Economics

Department of Global Entrepreneurship and Innovation

Center for Economic Information



Education

Collaborative,
Customized
Transformation
Program

Health &
Wellness

Housing

Economic
Development

Even as the Co-Op is focused on Neighborhood Stabilization in each of the three neighborhoods it is also actively working with UMKC on feasibility studies, baseline data for each neighborhood and success metrics for each of the four catalytic areas.

The Co-Op is also working with developers, financial institutions, city government, and various other relevant entities in pursuit of opportunities to purchase land for a mixed-income housing project and build out of a Business/Trades Center in the Wendell Phillips neighborhood.

Example: Community Development Project – Wendell Phillips Recycling and Business Training Center (Summer 2014)



Job Training
Recycling Program
Apprenticeship
Mentoring
Economic Development
Career Development
Staffing
Entrepreneurial Incubator



Next Steps

- Completing neighborhood assessments with UMKC
- Expanding collaborative team
- Creating organizational structure for long-term deployment
- Refining strategic transformation plan
- Marshalling resources
- Implementing transformation program

Addendum

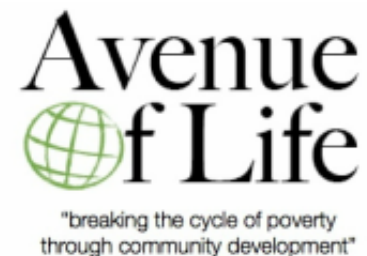
More about Significant Matters

Significant Matters is an organization that believes extreme poverty in the U.S. can end by working together to tackle tough problems in sustainable ways. As a 501(c)(3) Christian-based nonprofit organization, Significant Matters provides consulting and collaborative facilitation services for groups and organizations seeking to address complex societal issues in sustainable ways. Significant Matters works with individuals, private business, city government, nonprofits, and the faith-based community both locally and internationally to create lasting solutions. (<http://significantmatters.com>)



More about Avenue of Life

Opportunity House Project Partner. Avenue of Life is a nonprofit organization with a vision to be a catalyst for transformation in its community by breaking the cycle of poverty through community development, collaborative partnerships, and wrap-around services. Avenue of Life's mission is to mobilize its community to equip and empower low-income individuals and families to be self-sustained and independent.



Central to Avenue of Life's mission is their commitment to equip and mobilize the community, and their overarching goal is to facilitate the journey from hand-outs (emergency relief) in crisis, to hand-ups (individual betterment) for those ready to rise above their circumstances, to hand-offs (community development) to local leaders of a transformed community.

Avenue of Life is a well-known nonprofit and one of the Co-Op's most committed and efficient partners in executing projects to help the people of the Kansas City Metro. (<http://avenueoflife.org>)

Gospel Sharing ... Disciple Making

The work of the Church is centered in sharing the “gospel” and making disciples. The entirety of the work we seek to accomplish through the Co-Op is based on the unflinching conviction that “gospel sharing” and “disciple making” are in fact an inexorable mix of proclamation, demonstration, and implementation. As His disciples, the Co-Op seeks to share hope in Christ, demonstrate His character living within, and allow Him to bring God-given time, talent, and treasure to bear upon the needs of others. Disciple making must include a life of stewardship, surrender, and sacrifice in service to others for God’s ultimate glory. And surely, as more and more of God’s people begin to see their lives as disciples in such terms, they will see themselves and the Body of Christ become the instruments He uses to fulfill the words of Jesus in the Lord’s Prayer, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” Everything the Co-Op does is based upon the deep theological conviction that God’s plan for both “disciple making” and “gospel sharing” is a picture of the whole church sharing the whole gospel, for the whole person, with the whole world; reflecting Christ’s plan for a just and reconciled world.

