

June 2020



REACH News

REACH believes that HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT

The problem is not homeless men and women,
but a shortage of truly affordable homes.

In the light of all that is going on around us, two of our Board members, Deb Peiffer and Kevin Aiken penned these words:

REACH understands and supports the need for systemic change within our community and beyond. We see the importance of engaging with our friends and neighbors in a dialog that leads to equal justice for all. We encourage everyone to listen to people of different backgrounds and learn how we can help advocate to demand change.

BOARD MATTERS:

- The Unitarian Universalist Church gave us a grant of \$2,000 to help with building improvements. Thank you for your continued support.
- Andy reported that 50% or more of our guests were housed by the end of the season and that this exceeds prior years when we housed 40% of our guests.
- We are continuing to work with the Coptic Christian Community to arrange a long term use of their building.
- With the two resignations in the past few months we are looking for new Board members. Ideally we would like to find people who have gifts in the areas of fundraising and publicity. If you know of someone who would like to join our young organization please contact us at reachrochester@gmail.com.

Meet the Board - This month Rudy Rivera

My relationship with REACH began in the Spring of 2019. After meeting Peter, it became apparent we both had a deep passion for dignity and fairness. The way he spoke about the conditions faced by people who were homeless inspired me to get more involved with this segment of our community. The work of serving the homeless population compounded by challenges of drug addiction on Clinton Avenue was important to my



relationship with REACH.

The homeless community has a right to be treated with DIGNITY, RESPECT and LOVE. These are the core values of the Fr. Laurence (Larry) Tracy Advocacy Center, Inc. and my own. It became clear that Peter and I shared a common mission of uplifting people to their fullest potential which included housing with dignity.

I believe REACH serves a vital role in reminding all of us that housing is a human right and not just a necessity nor a luxury. Those who have a bed to sleep in every night should challenge themselves to ensure others have the same comfort and joy....a home of my own, a place to rest and place to share with friends and family. The things we sometimes take for granted.

I have joined to serve REACH, its advocacy and work to improve quality of life for our brothers and sisters who are marginalized and forgotten by virtue of their housing status.

I hope my contribution to REACH will be to raise the "voice" of the homeless community. And, to serve alongside others who have the same compassion and love for those who are "invisible" amongst us and cannot be without advocates.

To keep their "stories" before the public.

To challenge service providers and governmental structures through public advocacy to create systemic change.

To never stop serving as the "messengers" on behalf of the people we love.

Rudy Rivera

Shelter News

As usual REACH leaves the building in better shape than we found it! Meet the REACH Home Quixote Team who is doing much of this work. There is room for more members of this team. [Please read John Curran's note here.](#)

Meet the Quixote Team



Deacon Dan fixing an extensive plumbing problem



Connie added topsoil to grow a new lawn.



Jon S fixes the unfixable



Diane paints our basement.



John C brings order to the clothing

Shelter Committee Report



The shelter may be closed, but the work goes on! In Andy's report to the Board he included this gem: "These are turbulent times in the nation and Rochester. Many newly housed guests reached out to our social work team to offer their new apartments as refuge for people during the rioting on 5/29 & 5/30. One man texted, "I will take others in and keep them safe, like you did for me". This was a profound example of the importance of REACH and the philosophy of treating people with dignity and respect. We are part of the healing of a community in pain." [To read Andy's full report click here:](#)

The Shelter Committee is going through some re-organization and is in need of more volunteers. Each year we need to begin planning for the winter shelter as soon as we are able. This year a long time member of the team, Deb Peiffer is taking the lead on building the team and holding the planning meetings. Contact Deb at debbiejp116@yahoo.com.



Each year our volunteers form a close bond with one another and play an important role in creating a REACH Home to welcome and support housing deprived men and women during the winter months. Please consider joining this team. This kind of

hospitality is at the heart of REACH's mission.



This image of a committee at work is accurate--each is equal and each has a part of the puzzle to complete the task. What part of the puzzle will you bring to the table? And on top of solving the puzzle, you will have fun as we work together to create the REACH Home for 2020-2021..

Tiny Home Committee

From Susan Maxwell, Chair:

We continue to move forward incrementally on the Tiny Home Village. As I reported last month we have signed the MOU with City Roots Land Trust and the Ground lease is close to completion. We met with Joe DiFiore in May to discuss our collaborative efforts going forward. We identified next steps for community engagement and discussions. We will be meeting with community leaders, representatives from School for the Deaf and School 8 as well as city leaders in June. Community meetings with residents in the St. Paul St. neighborhood will be held in July. Once we have support from local residents and community leaders we will meet with City Council for approval to move forward on construction.

We have developed a subdomain on the REACH website where you will shortly be able to access our Fact sheet and Power Point on the Tiny Home Village. We are in the process of having these documents translated into Spanish. When completed the Spanish versions will be added to the Website. Throughout the year we hope to continue to update you on our progress on this site.

The pandemic has continued to impact our ability to get the soil testing completed. It appears that this test will be completed sometime in June. We will also be meeting with RGE in June to determine from their perspective what infrastructural issues need to be addressed on the property.

As we continue to move toward construction of our Village it has become more evident that the number one barrier to starting construction is the need for Capital to finance this project. We have been writing and submitting Grants to support our vision but we still need so much more before we can begin to build phase one of the Tiny Home Village. We continue to explore new ways to spread the news of our vision for this Tiny Home Village with hopes that more individuals like your self will donate.

We look forward to the day when this village will provide an environment that encourages residents to engage in communal life, utilize the on-site services provided and result in the enhancement of the quality of the residents' lives helping them become contributing citizens of the community and city.

Advocacy Committee

The Advocacy Committee spent a good deal of time at its monthly meeting talking about the two aspects of advocacy and how REACH might support each of them. First, is the idea of self-advocacy as people are empowered to advocate on their own behalf. We are interested in learning from the City Wide Tenants Union about this aspect of advocacy and have asked Liz McGiff to present to the Board at our July meeting.

Second, is the idea of effecting public policy and we are aware that it is better to do this collaboratively. So we are spending time learning what the policy priorities of other organizations are in order to see if there are some common concerns that we can support.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter W Peters, Chair pro tem.

We welcome others to join us in this work contact Peter if interested at peterwpeters@me.com.

Editorial: COVID 19, Black Lives Matter, & the housing crisis.

We invite you to reflect on the connection between the concentration of poverty, COVID 19, Black Lives Matter, and our local housing crisis. [Click here](#).

Upcoming Events of interest:

Poor People's Campaign June 20 Mass Moral March

Poor & low-income people are suffering the most in the current multiple crises we face. We won't be silent anymore. **The Poor Peoples Campaign's Mass Poor People's Assembly & Moral March on Washington is going digital! On June 20, 2020**, the Poor People's Campaign will hold the largest digital gathering of poor and low-income people and people of conscience in this nation's history. Learn more and register at: www.June2020.org. Sign up to raise your voice against systemic racism, wealth inequality, militarism, ecological devastation, and the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism. Spread the word to your family, friends, and social networks.

More Digital Resources: https://docs.google.com/document/u/2/d/e/2PACX-1vR-segUekEcEpQEMjkBlaNjOevedFCIoA--rOLGsyv_dili4fbF4C2_3op5W8RXkSKMNBzsg2YwSeLk/pub

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and please like us on Facebook!

