



REACH News

March 2021

Housing is a Human Right

Notes from the Board

- Rudy Rivera told us about his role in the creation of the Fr. Tracy Advocacy Center. REACH is pleased to be a collaborating organization with this center of outreach. In the course of telling us about the Center Rudy told us about his own journey of childhood trauma, anger, drugs and loss. Most of all he told us that if we want to help others we have to move next to them and be near them no matter what.
- Next month we will have a presentation by Joe DiFiore on the City Roots Community Land Trust.
- We approved changing the name of the Marketing and Fundraising Committee to the Development Committee and we were excited to receive the report of the new Chair of this Committee, Janelle Duda-Banwar. We learned that Deb McKinzie, who has a long history in fundraising, has joined this committee.
- We still have two vacancies on our Board. Peter suggests that we take our time and find the right people to join us who will help to promote the work of REACH in our community. A note to readers, if you or anyone you know is interested in serving in this way please contact Peter at peterwpeters@me.com.

Shelter Committee

On 3/9/21 Andy, Peter and Deb will meet with the Coptic Christian Community to discuss the lease for 720 W Main. We are anticipating that this will be the next step in finalizing a commitment to make this our permanent home.



When we have a lease, we will be able to start serious planning on the utilization of 720 as a neighborhood resource center, which is very exciting. We of course intend to also open our winter shelter this coming fall, and we can't wait!!!

REACH continues to support the Outreach Zone with supplies as needed and bagged lunches for the team to hand out during their walks. In addition, we were asked to help with meals at the hotel where people are still being sheltered. As of Saturday, March 6 we have agreed to provide dinner once weekly through April, and then we will reevaluate.

It should be noted that Carol Santos, our meal coordinator, published a sign-up genius for Saturday dinner at about 6:00PM Thursday and by 9:00 every slot but one was signed for. **THANK YOU!**

People have been incredibly generous and supportive of everything the REACH shelter committee does, so we are looking forward to the time we can have more in-person interaction...and so are they.

Andy and Deb

A BIG THANK YOU...

To Carol and Alvani Santos and Peter von Bucher for a grant through the Rochester Area Community Foundation that enables us to purchase a GrandPad.

To Barbara Deitz, a social work intern with MC Collaborative, and her friend Susan Johnson for coming up with the idea.

This device, mounted on a cart, will enable our guests to have access to email, teleconference calls, and job interviews etc..



The Tiny Home Committee



Reports that:

- We had a very good meeting with Carlos Torres, Administrator from the Northeast Quadrant Neighborhood Service Center. Carlos expressed enthusiasm for our project and invites us to make a presentation at a virtual community meeting on March 18.
- We are now actively seeking letters of support for the Village.
- Paul Randazzese, our building contractor agreed to put together a construction plan that will involve young adults from Youth Build.

- The Tiny Home Village Team was one of four finalists for the Community Design Center Reshaping Rochester Awards for Activism. We received a beautifully framed certificate.



New **Founding Members** this past month donated \$625. **Thank you!** This brings the total donation by our Founders to the **Tiny Home Village Fund** to \$41,782. Can readers help us get this amount to \$50,000?

Here are this month's new Founder donors:
The Church of Saint Charles Borromeo
Mary Schiller

We have a long way to go, but these Founders have voted in favor of our Tiny Home Village as a way to offer truly affordable and supportive housing to housing deprived men and women of our community.

If you would like to become a Tiny Home Village Founder by making a donation of \$250 or more, please send your check to REACH Advocacy, P.O. Box 10845, Rochester, NY 14610 and mark your check "Tiny Home Fund". Thank you, every gift helps us to get to our goal.

As of today we have \$96,400.04 toward our target of \$250,000 for the building of the first phase of our Tiny Home Village.

Advocacy Opportunities etc.

The NYS Budget is not yet finalized! It is not too late to contact your **State Legislators**. Please take the time to call or write them now. For a breakdown of the legislative proposals see [Invest in Our New York](#). To get sample letters go to either [VOCAL New York](#) or [Housing Justice for All](#).

Puzzled why US eviction law is so complicated? Take 11 minutes of your time and listen to Prof. Emily Benfer, Professor of Law at Wake Forest University, and Chair of the American Bar Association's COVID-19 Task Force Committee on Eviction speak about the connections between health and housing, and what needs to change in our housing and eviction systems--not just now, but once the pandemic is past. Thanks to **Shelter Force** for this video - [Watch here](#).

Worth Reading:

Laura Stivers, **Disrupting Homelessness: Alternative Christian Approaches**, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011.

While this book is directed to Christian congregations, there are lessons for all of us. Here is why I recommend this book. In 2017 REACH became REACH Advocacy. It was a recognition that in order to fully address the challenges of homelessness we needed to address the systemic issues of housing and poverty. But we have much to learn before we engage in these concerns. Laura Stivers shows us the way we need to journey if we are to move from just sheltering the homeless or building homes for the housing deprived, to changing the system that perpetuates homelessness. *We need to change how we look at the causes of homelessness.* Using the liberation theological methodology developed by Traci West, Stivers explores the limitations of traditional charity models in addressing homelessness. What she argues is that, first we need to listen to the voices of those who are experiencing homelessness and learn from them. Next, we need to look at the economic, social, and political systems that contribute to their experience of homelessness. Then we need to organize to challenge the systemic patterns of social reality that perpetuates poverty and homelessness. In short, she invites us to become *disruptive* agents of change if we are to more effectively address the roots of homelessness.



Peter W. Peters, Editor.

Please consider sponsoring a **REACH presentation** in your faith community or other organization. We have presentations on The History of REACH, The Tiny Home Village project, and "The Housing Crisis and Communities of Faith". For information and to book a date for any of these, contact our Secretary, Sarah Peters at reachrochester@gmail.com.

Thank you for your interest and support of REACH.
For more information please check out our Website
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