Focused on helping seniors, empowering urban American Indians and West African immigrants, nurturing families, fighting hunger and mentoring youth, the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches is a nonprofit where compassion inspires action by uniting people of faith to serve people in need.

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West African Family & Community Services
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If we could look into each other's hearts and understand the unique challenges each of us faces, I think we would treat each other much more gently, with more love, patience, tolerance, and care.”

– Marvin J. Ashton.

The programs of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC) serve people from all walks of life, each with a unique story and a unique set of needs.

There’s the 90-year-old man who wants to keep living independently but doesn’t have the money to maintain his home; the immigrant family who needs extra support as they look for steady work; the food shelf coordinator striving to provide healthy options to clients; the fourth-grader who gets lonely because her mom works evenings to pay the bills; the mother striving to be the kind of parent she wants to be.

One of the strengths of GMCC is our ability, through our family of programs, to meet people where they are.

One of our major accomplishments in 2015 was re-launching West African Family & Community Services (formerly Center for Families) on the border of Brooklyn Park and Brooklyn Center. This was crucial because of the high concentration of West African immigrants in that area. Along with the move, we developed a slate of services specifically tailored to the needs of the West African immigrant community: a culturally specific food shelf, a clothing closet with a focus on professional clothing, free career development classes and free legal service clinics.

In its new location, the program has served hundreds of people and is a shining example of GMCC doing what it does best: serving people in a dynamic and responsive way, going beyond basic needs to address the whole person. Additional 2015 highlights include:

• More than 450 youth in the Twin Cities benefited from the support and encouragement of a Kinship mentor. In 2015 alone, 46 new matches were formed.

• Horizons Unlimited, the DIW food shelf, served almost 200,000 pounds of food to more than 6,000 individuals. Over the past few years, Horizons Unlimited has grown to be more than just a food shelf—there is also a clothing closet, a free summer farmers market and many opportunities to connect with community resources.

• More than 1,200 volunteers contributed more than 10,000 volunteer hours as Metro Paint-A-Thon celebrated its 32nd year. The program has completed 6,494 painting projects since 1984.

• Minnesota FoodShare’s Harvest Campaign, aimed at bringing more fresh, locally grown produce into food shelves, was launched as a statewide effort during the months of August and September.

• Almost 2,000 participants learned about the complexities of poverty through customized retreats and trainings with Urban Immersion Service Retreats.

Across our family of programs, our dedicated staff works tirelessly to provide services rooted in empathy and compassion. And because of the support of volunteers and donors, we continue to deepen our impact.

Thanks for your commitment to serving those in need,

Noya Woodrich
President and CEO

Paula Phillippe
Chair of the Board of Directors
Our Family of Programs

Through four program areas, the Division of Indian Work serves the needs of urban American Indian families while honoring cultural traditions. Our mission is to empower American Indian people through culturally based education, counseling, advocacy and leadership development. Our goals are to honor the American Indian culture, nurture and guide youth, strengthen families and provide basic needs such as food and shelter.

Minnesota FoodShare fights hunger by mobilizing individuals and groups to raise food and funds for 300 partnering food shelves during the March Campaign, promotes healthy, locally-grown food through its GardenShare and Harvest Campaign projects and works year-round to advocate on behalf of the hungry.

Kinship of Greater Minneapolis invites individuals, couples and families into positive mentoring relationships with boys and girls ages 5-18. Focused on building lasting friendships through fun activities and quality time, Kinship creates sustained, supportive connections capable of giving kids the tools they need to succeed.

Metro Paint-A-Thon helps low-income seniors and people with permanent physical disabilities live independently in their own homes longer. Each summer, particularly the first weekend in August, teams of volunteers paint home exteriors in Hennepin and Ramsey counties for those who are not able to do the maintenance themselves and cannot afford to hire a contractor. This service, offered at no cost to the homeowner, restores not only the homes we paint but also the homeowner’s sense of pride in their property and community.

Through retreats and trainings, we create a deeper understanding of the complexities of poverty through team building activities and critical reflection. Retreats of various lengths are a way for groups to experience the many issues contributing to poverty, to serve those affected and to take what they learn and address the issues in their own communities. Poverty and Privilege is a customized training program tailored to the specific needs of individual companies, community and congregational groups.

West African Family & Community Services seeks to improve self-sufficiency for low-income West African immigrants by serving as a focal point for comprehensive family services. Through three main program areas, we help immigrants acquire the tools they need to support their families and contribute to the broader community.

HandyWorks provides home and yard care chore services for low-income seniors and those with permanent physical disabilities, matching those who are looking for assistance in south, southeast and northeast Minneapolis with a network of volunteer chore workers.

Clinical Pastoral Education - Trains pastors and faith leaders to provide spiritual care for men, women and children in community settings.