“Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or to the present are certain to miss the future…” - JFK

The Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC) is indeed going through a number of changes. These changes, although challenging, bring new energy and direction towards sustaining the organization’s future.

Working closely with our many stakeholders, we are affirming who we are in relation to who we serve, deeply rooted by a legacy of faith-based work. By developing new strategies for our social and human services delivery, we are allowing changes to happen in areas that need it most. In the midst of it all, we remain steadfast to our mission of “Uniting people of faith, serving people in need.”

We are taking a hard look at our program offerings by digging into both the outcomes and the internal structures that make programming possible. This means looking critically at our past, present and future with financial and sustainability matters at the forefront of our plans moving forward.

Because of this, we have recently reached the difficult decision to close two of our programs; HandyWorks and the West African Family & Community Center.

Financial strains and market needs are the main factors that led to this decision.

Another recent action step has been establishing an open and healthy conversation regarding the relationship between GMCC and its largest program, Division of Indian Work (DIW). This means we are evaluating how we both can serve the urban American Indian community most effectively, which may require a financial and organizational structure shift in the future. We are also evaluating and exploring the revising of the current GMCC board structure for optimal governance.

Lastly, we will define more clearly what we want to see within a new GMCC leader as well as how we might want to shift our branding with a new name change. All very exciting!

I thank all of our many friends for their many, many years of support. GMCC would not be here today without your friendship and loyalty. On behalf of our staff and board, we thank you all!

Sincerely,

Curt Peterson
Interim President & CEO

Visit our NEW website at GMCC.ORG

Fall 2016
**Program Highlights**

**Division of Indian Work:** What an empowering summer for many Native American youth in our community! “Beginning in June and ending in August, 75 kids participated in Anishinabe Freedom School’s reading curriculum, making learning fun and worth while” says Amanda Williams, ATODP Cultural Coordinator.

**Minnesota FoodShare:** Minnesota FoodShare (MFS) fights hunger by mobilizing individuals and groups to raise food and funds for partnering food shelves, promotes healthy, locally-grown food and advocates on behalf of the hungry. In August, more than 300 of those food shelves received MFS’s food fund distribution checks raised during the 2016 March Campaign. Summer can be an especially difficult time to keep shelves stocked while donors are distracted with vacations and family. “We really appreciate you organizing this campaign that gets people excited about donating. We appreciate this so much!” read a thank you note we received from the Willmar Area Food Shelf.

**Kinship:** Fifty area youth in our mentoring program received Back to School "packs" to make sure they were ready to start the school year right. Donated by Thrivent Financial, these packs included notebooks, folders, binders, hand sanitizer and kleenex. The summer season was also full of Kinship Kids going with their mentors to sporting events including Twins and Lynx games. For many of these kids, it was their first time experiencing the roar of a stadium crowd. Smiles all around! A lot of lasting friendships were formed in the past few months through fun activities and quality time.

**Metro Paint-A-Thon:** Nearly 30 groups of volunteers turned out for the program’s Paint-A-Thon Weekend in early August. Across Minneapolis, the houses of senior citizens were scraped of their chipping paint and given a fresh coat. One homeowner turned 76 while having her house re-painted. Her face brightened when she told us: “They became my family during the scraping and painting. When they came back with balloons and cake I had to hug each one. They shared their stories with me and I became even more impressed!”

**Urban Immersion Service Retreats:** Urban Immersion Service Retreats creates and facilitates retreats focused on educating participants about the complexities of poverty through a lens of faith. The program seeks change: from going on mission trips to living the mission; from ignoring poverty to effecting a positive response to the issue while empowering people to take what they’ve learned and become change-makers in their own communities. “If I hadn't attended one of these retreats, I would never have understood the immense complexities of poverty,” remarked Tanner, a UISR participant this summer. "I had a huge blindspot when it came to the systemic barriers, intergenerational poverty and institutionalized racism faced by the working poor in our community. You can't change it if you don't see it. Thanks to UISR, I see it and am doing my part to change it.”

**Clinical Pastoral Education:** Did you know that the GMCC CPE Center is now offering immersion learning in social justice settings? This fall 8 pastors went to Rosebud Reservation in SD to learn Wellbriety- the Red Road to Sobriety. They will soon go into Stillwater prison to learn antiracism strategies from incarcerated men. Then they will go to Kwanzaa Presbyterian to learn about sexual trauma from women at the Northside Healing Space. This prophetic approach to theological education earned The Rev. Dr. Susan Allers-Hatlie, our CPE Supervisor the 2016 Leysath Award which is given annually from the MN United Church of Christ.

Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC) serves youth, elders, mothers and fathers in the Twin Cities area and throughout Minnesota. Our core mission is ‘Uniting People of Faith, Serving People in Need,’ accomplished by volunteers and staff working together in a family of programs. We are an organization that brings people, organizations, companies and congregations together for the common good by providing volunteer opportunities that meets the needs of those who need it most.
Calling all friends & allies!

Do you have a few hours a week to spare? Good with your hands? Green-thumbed? A self-proclaimed neat freak? A filing fanatic?

Autumn is an incredibly busy time for our organization. Help us help others by gifting a few hours per week to the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches and its family of programs. We seek:

**Fixer Friends** who can perform maintenance and minor repairs to community buildings and facilities.

**Administrative Allies** who can assist with administrative duties and office support.

Individuals interested in becoming a Fixer Friend or an Administrative Ally must be dependable and possess cultural awareness and sensitivity. We’re looking for folks with flexible schedules and big hearts! This is community taking care of community.

For these and other ways to take action, visit our NEW website at gmcc.org or call 612-271-8687.

Thank you for recent gifts from our many supporters, some of which include:

- Allina Health Community Engagement
- Bethlehem Lutheran Church Foundation
- Children’s Defense Fund
- FINNEGANS Brew Co
- Graco Foundation
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