



Indianapolis Neighborhood Resource Center Collaborative Spirit Awardees

2022: [Mothers Against Violence](#)

The purpose of Mothers Against Violence Healing Ministry (MAVHM) is to build hope and provide emotional support and eventually some healing for families affected by violence. Donita Royal founded MAVHM. Her son, Walter, was killed in 2013 at 21 years old due to gun violence. Mothers Against Violence Healing Ministry offers several layers of help, including:

- Going to crime scenes to connect with the victims' family
- Offering resources such as funeral clothing, burial clothing, burial donations, etc.
- Attending the funeral, providing a card, and bringing flowers for the grieving mother and family
- Bringing food to families in the days following the death
- Attending vigils together and standing united against violence
- Offering a support application where they daily share words of encouragement
- Offering balloon releases and memorial vigils for the children of the mothers
- Gathering as a group for community outings to help uplift the spirits of mothers
- Continuing to connect and reach out to mothers to help them during their grieving process
- "A Time of Healing" support group

NOTE: On Saturday May 27, 2023, Mothers Against Violence was recognized as a finalist in the Best Neighborhood Program Award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!

2021: [Belmont Beach Project](#)

In May of 2021, the Friends of Belmont Beach (FBB) launched a pop-up park in Haughville along the banks of the White River. The land, once a segregated swimming hole for Black residents who were not allowed to patronize city facilities, had become overrun with invasive plants and dangerous trash dumping over the years. This overshadowed the true beauty of the land. FBB, a group of all volunteers - many of them community residents - worked over the course of two years to help realize the hidden potential. Since its launch, Belmont Beach has been home to monthly community gatherings like sound bath meditations and comedy shows as well as a concert series on the river, a cultural festival and ROWPort's 10th anniversary celebration. The group has engaged the Matchbook School (IPS #63) through a partnership with Arts for Learning where students studied the history of the beach and performed spoken word, dance and created art pieces with repurposed materials to showcase what they'd learned.

NOTE: On Friday, May 6, 2022, Friends of Belmont Beach received the Neighborhood of the Year Grand Prize Award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!

2020: Pathways over Pogue's (POP)

[Pathways over Pogue's \(POP\)](#) is a standing committee of the 501(c)(3) [Friends of Brookside and Spades Park](#). POP was formed by a grassroots group of neighbors on the Near Eastside of Indianapolis in 2017 to advocate for the repair of the historic but crumbling Nowland Avenue Bridge in Spades Park. The core group is made up of volunteers from several neighborhoods, including Spades Park, Springdale, Woodruff Place, Emerson Heights, and Little Flower. Early on, [Reconnecting to Our Waterways \(ROW\)](#) became a supporter and partner. POP learned that the City is severely underfunded for infrastructure repairs, but the City encouraged them to raise some of the funds themselves in order to be in a better position for the City to pitch in.

POP took the challenge. In 2020, POP celebrated many achievements: design work of the bridge was complete and a new fundraising campaign began, raising close to \$150,000 through grants and outreach to individuals and businesses.

Update: In 2021, POP secured the additional funds to repair the historic Nowland Avenue Bridge in Spades Park and pave the way to finish the Pogue's Run Trail.

2019: Far Eastside Community Council (FECC) Far Eastside Festival

The [Far Eastside Community Council \(FECC\)](#), founded by and is led by Far Eastside residents, worked with [Community Alliance of the Far Eastside \(CAFE\)](#) and many neighbors to plan and execute the Far Eastside Festival, held in May, 2019. The Festival was a community celebration event that combined fun, relationship building and information sharing that highlighted resources, services, and local vendors in the Far Eastside community.

With close to ten sponsors and 50+ resources and services vendors, the Festival has begun to unite the organizations, businesses, residents and neighborhoods in the Far Eastside community. The Festival helped create and strengthen many relationships, inspired the community's first Food Truck Friday, and will be an annual community event. Because of the support of CAFE and members of Public Allies Indianapolis, a structure and plan was developed that can be used in the future, and replicated by other neighborhoods.

2018: Laurelwood Apartments and the Intercollegiate YMCA

For 11 years, the [Intercollegiate YMCA](#) has partnered with the [Indianapolis Housing Agency \(IHA\)](#), Laurelwood Apartments and [UIndy](#), providing high-quality, developmentally-appropriate and values-based programming to nearly half of the 500 youth (ages 6-17) who live in the [Laurelwood neighborhood](#). Ms. Sandra Bailey, Laurelwood Resident Council President, worked with the YMCA to develop and offer programming; as a result, the Intercollegiate YMCA partnered with IHA and Laurelwood leadership to provide a free after-school and summer camp program to the youth at Laurelwood. The Intercollegiate YMCA also engages students from nearby University of Indianapolis.

Operating since 2009, the partnership received several awards and investment in 2017 and early 2018 to support the program, including the renewal of a federal grant to support service positions, and an AmeriCorps grant award that allows for more mentors and tutors. Additionally, 2017-2018 year saw some of the highest educational improvements to date for this program with 80% of students increasing their Math and/or English/Language Arts grades throughout the year. In addition to helping youth increase their grades and academic achievement, college students have engaged with youth, public safety has improved, and families have become more engaged in their community.

2017: Pogue's Run Art and Nature Park Revitalization Task Force

The Pogue's Run Art and Nature Park Revitalization Task Force was formed after neighbors voted support for the project in the summer of 2016 at a near eastside Quality of Life Plan summit. Working with several partners, including [Indy Parks](#), the [Department of Public Works](#), [Otterbein Neighborhood Association](#), and [Keep Indianapolis Beautiful](#), neighbors cleared the trail, planted over 100 trees and erected signage. [Paramount School of Excellence](#) engaged 8th grade students to develop youth art installations, and [The Weekly View](#) developed a welcome/history panel of the park. A new grant from [Reconnecting to Our Waterways \(ROW\)](#) will enable the repair and replacement of park benches. The Task Force has also developed plans to maintain trails and trees, and formed the Park Watch Program in partnership with the IMPD Rangers to ensuring that the property and amenities remain safe and maintained for people to visit and enjoy.

NOTE: On Friday, May 25, 2018, the Pogue's Run Art and Nature Park Revitalization Task Force was awarded first place in the [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) Multi-Neighborhood Partnership category!

2016: I Am Ubuntu: Indy East Diversity and Inclusion

On April 23, 2016, [I Am Ubuntu: Indy East Diversity and Inclusion](#) hosted the Near Eastside Reentry Expo. The 2016 Reentry Expo hosted about 100 attendees, and included community dialogues, a service provider fair, free haircuts for neighbors reentering the community, a catered dinner, live entertainment, and family friendly activities. The Expo served to bridge relationships between those who are impacted by incarceration and those who are not, and to begin to build a network of relationships within a supportive community that promotes successful reentry.

Neighbors, service providers, business owners, city representatives, and community leaders from across Indianapolis' east side came together to celebrate fellow neighbors who have returned from incarceration and are focused on leading lives as productive citizens.

NOTE: On Friday, May 26, 2017, I Am Ubuntu: Indy Easy Diversity and Inclusion Taskforce received the Neighborhood of the Year award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!

2015: The Inaugural Virginia Avenue Folk Fest now Virginia Avenue Music Fest

The [Virginia Avenue Folk Fest](#) celebrated Fountain Square's renaissance with stages, vendors and activities on both sides of Virginia Avenue. Virginia Avenue was celebrated as a vibrant destination, bustling with activity. It was designed to showcase the music of the region and the businesses throughout the Fountain Square neighborhoods. "We wanted to create an event that would help build community by bringing together musicians, artists, businesses ...supporting a good cause." In its first year, the Virginia Avenue Folk Fest celebrated with 70 live performances that took place over nine different stages.

NOTE: On Friday, May 27, 2016 the Virginia Avenue Folk Fest received the Neighborhood of the Year award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!

2014: Near West Collaborative Abandoned Places Mural Project

This project artistically painted over tag art and graffiti on 75 houses and garages and a dozen railroad boxes, turning them into fanciful murals, enhancing the attractiveness of this part of Indianapolis's near west side. An unusual collaboration by [Near West](#) was with state representative Justin Moed, who created the state's Good Samaritan Law, which allowed Near West's artists and painters, with the approval of IMPD and the Marion County Health Department, to go onto abandoned properties to paint over eyesores. City-County councilor Jeff Miller assisted in the law's passage. Near West also collaborated with nearby IUUI for student painters who were part of the school's I Serve project. Other collaborators included Keep Indianapolis Beautiful, Sherwin Williams, Home Depot, and Asset Recycling.

The mural project, named "Abandoned Mural Masterpiece," has created interest among other groups and neighborhoods in Indianapolis, and Near West is sharing its action plan with them, spreading the benefits of its work well beyond the city's near west side. Near West has not discovered tagging on its murals, and the organization plans for additional murals to be painted next spring.

2013: Near West Collaborative

This extensive and well-organized grassroots effort involved more than 400 area residents and other volunteers, supported by a diverse group of collaborating organizations and led by the [Near West Collaborative](#) to clean up, beautify, and establish an identity for the area. Near West planned its projects with the Great Indy Cleanup and principal collaborator Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB), and hosted the kick-off of KIB's spring 2013 effort. Going beyond the 10 truckloads of basic trash cleanup, Near West also focused on beautifying three area parks and a bike trail, planted 40 trees, and organized projects that included covering graffiti, creating murals on 2 bridges, repainting fire hydrants, and stenciling Near West logos on street corners.

These projects were implemented with the Haughville, Hawthorne, Stringtown, and We Care neighborhood associations. In addition to involving resident leaders, Near West recruited 80 IUUI students and 40 residents of the Natural Guardians re-entry program of the Hawthorne Community Center to help. In addition to KIB, collaborators were Indy Parks, Citizens Energy Group and the food donors: King Ribs Bar-B-Q, Papa John's pizza, and Kroger and Marsh supermarkets.

NOTE: On Friday, May 23, 2014 the Near West Collaborative received the Neighborhood of the Year award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!

2012: Lafayette Square Area Coalition (LSAC) now International Marketplace Coalition

Select neighborhoods in Indianapolis and beyond had the opportunity to be Super Celebration Welcome Sites for Super Bowl XLVI. The [Lafayette Square Area Coalition \(LSAC\)](#) embraced that opportunity and created a Welcome Site and events that brought together local stakeholders to advance the neighborhood. LSAC formed a planning committee of members that represented the International Marketplace's array of cultures, to plan three World Parties to celebrate its international cultures. Celebrations included music, dance, food, costumes, displays and fellowship.

Held at Big Car's Service Center for Culture and Community, the service bay area was transformed into a gathering place for conversation and eating, surrounded by displays from different countries. Area restaurants provided food appropriate to each night's party. Each party included a variety of cultural performers and DJs providing world music. Area restaurants and markets, committee members, and cultural organizations provided cultural display items including clothing, jewelry, artwork, furniture, flags, and more. The front area, decorated with international textiles, flags, and Super Bowl Banners, became a performance stage. At the party, LSAC launched its International Food Guide.

2011: Millersville at Fall Creek Valley

[Millersville at Fall Creek Valley \(MFCV\)](#), a multi-neighborhood organization that formed with the focus of beautifying, renovating and revitalizing the community surrounding 56th Street and Emerson Way, accomplished several initiatives. These included the Treasures of Millersville Tour and booklet, a narrated bus tour that highlighted the area's natural resources and rich heritage. An accompanying booklet of historic and environmental information was written and produced. During the summer of 2011, the group added summer concerts on the lawn at the neighborhood IPS School #106.

A [Project Greenspace](#) grant from [Keep Indianapolis Beautiful](#) and IPL supported the group as they implemented a landscape design to beautify the right-of-way areas in the Village including planting trees and perennials along the neighborhood gateways. Finally, a Café Market featuring a weekly mini-fest of live music and select vendors was added.

2010: Irvington Terrace Neighborhood Crime Watch

A grassroots effort of the [Irvington Terrace Crime Watch/Neighborhood Organization](#), schools, and other neighborhood organizations businesses, this collaboration focused on bringing people together across geographic, economic, and cultural boundaries to work toward the common good. This was a four-part project: step one was planting trees to create a gateway to the neighborhood at the Washington and Shadeland cloverleaf; step two consisted of a campaign for neighborhood residents to shop at the local Marsh during the entire month of April. Working with Marsh, residents completed inventory request forms and Marsh ordered every requested item. Tree planting along Washington Street was step three and step four was painting a mural on Washington Street that celebrated the area's rich diversity.

2009: Bates Hendricks Neighborhood Association/Southeast Neighborhood Development

The Fab For Less collaboration (now called Building Blocks) was designed to enhance the 1400 & 1500 blocks of South New Jersey Street. This initiative engaged residents in visioning, planning and implementing a transformation of their two blocks and eventually leveraged over a million dollars of investment. Three homes were completely rehabilitated, and over 35 additional houses received various improvements. Historic lighting was added, and the city of Indianapolis repaved and widened the street, and replaced the sidewalks. As a result of this project, many residents became engaged in the community, and an [Esplanade Association](#) was formed.

2008: Near Eastside Collaborative Taskforce

Over 530 neighbors and stakeholders of the Near Eastside contributed over 1,000 volunteer hours in creating their visionary comprehensive quality of life plan. The plan details 150 objectives with concrete action steps and a timeline to support comprehensive community development on the Near Eastside. From February through June 2007, 25 Near Eastside residents volunteered to be part of a new neighbor engagement team and conducted 110 one-on-one “appreciative” interviews with new neighborhood leaders. These interviews served as invitations to a planning kickoff, the Near Eastside Visioning Event. The Visioning Event drew over 400 neighbors, with eight Action Teams formed to address quality of life issues most important to the Near Eastside. This [initiative](#) has been credited with helping the City of Indianapolis successfully secure serving as host to Super Bowl XLVI in 2012 through the Legacy Project.

2007: Martindale-Brightwood and Perry Township: Bridging School and Community

In the fall of 2006, the [Metropolitan School District \(MSD\) of Perry Township](#) partnered with [Oasis of Hope Baptist Church](#) in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood, as well as several neighborhood partners, to sponsor 4 dialogue sessions. The sessions were held with parents and students who are bussed from the Brightwood/Forest Manor communities to Perry Township Schools. Outcomes from the dialogue include: families in the “bussed” community now feel a greater connection with the school district where their children attend school; participants were able to establish a communication vehicle between the school and the community that is genuine and collaborative; and, all of the participants developed projects to implement ideas that surfaced during the dialogue sessions.

2006: Old Speedway City Neighborhood Association and Speedway Junior High School

[Old Speedway City Neighborhood Association's \(OSCNA\)'s](#) initial concept of capturing their history and identifying home styles was realized when the association learned that the Speedway Junior High social studies teacher was interested in historical architecture. To support the project, OSCNA gave funds to the junior high to purchase a digital camera, used by the students during their architectural and historical study of the area. The information gathered became the catalyst for nominating the original platted area of Speedway as a state and national historic district. Ball State University Historic Preservation students provided guidance to the partners about the nomination process. The historic designation was granted by the [Indiana Department of Natural Resources](#) on July 27, 2005 and the National Historic Designation was received on October 21, 2005.

NOTE: In 2007, the partnership between Old Speedway City Neighborhood Association and Speedway Junior High School received the Neighborhood of the Year award at the annual [Neighborhoods, USA \(NUSA\)](#) conference!