2012–2016 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

Published: August 2017

We Are Mantua!
LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Seven years ago, I received a call that would change the course of my life. At the time, Mt. Vernon Manor (MVM) needed an infusion of new energy and ideas. Passionate about lifting up the community that raised me, I jumped at the opportunity to come on as Board Chair and contribute my real estate experience to the affordable housing organization.

For decades, the West Philadelphia neighborhood of Mantua has struggled with the challenges caused by disinvestment. In 2010, the federal Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Choice Neighborhoods Initiative supported a comprehensive community planning effort that re-invigorated residents and partners to address neighborhood concerns. Led by Mt. Vernon Manor Community Development Corporation and its partners, the community-driven planning process resulted in the "We Are Mantua!" Neighborhood Transformation Plan, published June 2013.

The We Are Mantua! neighborhood plan unlocked a variety of opportunities for the community. It refocused attention and investment in Mantua, providing an opportunity to implement priority initiatives supported by federal, state, and local government agencies, non-profits, and community stakeholders.

MVM thanks everyone who has been involved in improving the quality of life in Mantua. We extend our hand in partnership to all willing to work with us in continuing to make our neighborhood safe, vibrant, and full of opportunities.

In partnership,
Michael Thorpe, Executive Director

Mt. Vernon Manor CDC (MVM) was awarded a Department of Justice Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Grant (2012) to address the public safety priorities identified in the We Are Mantua! Neighborhood Transformation Plan. In partnership with residents, the Philadelphia Police Department, Local Initiatives Support Corporation, Parks and Recreation, EducationWorks, Drexel University, and the National Coalition-Building Institute, MVM has implemented a strategy to target eight (8) identified crime hotspots. Community engagement, youth violence prevention and intervention, improvements to the built environment, and relationship-building between residents and police were integral to making Mantua safer.

By the Numbers

Decline in overall crime and the elimination of 5 crime hotspots (2012-2016)
Mantua Greenway

In 2012, residents began to develop a plan and take action to transform the blighted Mantua Avenue into the Mantua Greenway—a bike and walking trail that will beautify the community’s northern boundary, connect residents to neighborhood assets, and encourage healthy outdoor activities for children and families. Since then, the Friends of the Mantua Greenway (formerly, the Residents Advisory Committee), supported by Mt. Vernon Manor CDC, have organized clean-ups, collaborated with key partners and supporters, and secured funding. With the design expertise of Whitman, Requardt & Associates, LLP, the Greenway project is wrapping up the creation of final designs and construction-ready plans.

List of key Mantua Greenway partners: National Park Service, Philadelphia LISC, Philadelphia Department of Commerce, Philadelphia City Planning Commission, Philadelphia Water Department, and Mantua Civic Association

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design

To address a crime hotspot at a busy intersection (home to a recreation center, library, corner store, and senior center), Mt. Vernon Manor CDC utilized “Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)”. This strategy aims to deter criminal behavior by changing the physical environment. Mantua residents, community artists (Lucy Pistilli and Brian Bazemore), the Philadelphia Police Department, Parks and Recreation, and youth were engaged in various aspects of the project to beautify the corner and improve safety.

Impact

75% decline in crime incidents and a 100% reduction in arrests at the intersection as a result of the CPTED project.

Mt. Vernon Manor Apartments Rehabilitation

As voiced in the We Are Mantua! Plan, it is a key priority for the Mantua community to protect and create safe, affordable housing opportunities. In October 2016, Mt. Vernon Manor completed the rehabilitation of 121 units of existing affordable housing, 14 of which are wheelchair-accessible. The $29 million development was supported by: the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority, PNC Bank, TD Bank, Reinvestment Fund, and the Local initiatives Support Corporation (LISC).

Home Preservation Initiative

Philadelphia LISC in 2014 convened Mt. Vernon Manor CDC, the People’s Emergency Center, Habitat for Humanity Philadelphia, Rebuilding Together Philadelphia, and Drexel’s Dornsife School of Public Health, to collaboratively deliver home repair services to low-income homeowners. These services have allowed seniors to age in place, provided families with healthy homes, and beautified neighborhood blocks. Between 2014-2017, 124 Mantua homeowners have received basic systems home repairs at no or very low cost through HPI.
Community/Police Relationship-Building

Developing trust and relationships between residents and law enforcement officers is key to promoting community safety. Events that bring together community members and police include the Annual 16th Police District/Promise Zone Community Fun Day and the Speak Up! Lace ‘Em Up! Basketball Program. Block leaders and the District Police Captain also meet regularly to solve problems related to violence.

Partnering with the National Coalition Building Institute, MVM hosted a series of Equal Partners in Change Workshops, bringing together 33 residents and 43 police officers. They engaged in honest conversations about stereotypes, power, and community/police concerns. This was followed up by a 3-day Train-the-Trainer Workshop, during which 26 participants gained the skills to facilitate relationship-building activities in the community going forward.

Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

Based on the success of the Block-by-Block Program in engaging community residents, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC received city support to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), which serves and engages residents of Mantua, East Parkside, and Powelton Village. Mt. Vernon Manor NAC provides connections to critical services, community education workshops on a range of resident-identified topics, and a support system for community members to implement ideas for their neighborhoods. The experiences of the thousands of residents who have utilized the MVM NAC since its opening in October 2015 reflect the value of its services as key to achieving residents’ health, housing, and safety goals.

Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

Based on the success of the Block-by-Block Program in engaging community residents, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC received city support to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), which serves and engages residents of Mantua, East Parkside, and Powelton Village. Mt. Vernon Manor NAC provides connections to critical services, community education workshops on a range of resident-identified topics, and a support system for community members to implement ideas for their neighborhoods. The experiences of the thousands of residents who have utilized the MVM NAC since its opening in October 2015 reflect the value of its services as key to achieving residents’ health, housing, and safety goals.

Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

Based on the success of the Block-by-Block Program in engaging community residents, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC received city support to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), which serves and engages residents of Mantua, East Parkside, and Powelton Village. Mt. Vernon Manor NAC provides connections to critical services, community education workshops on a range of resident-identified topics, and a support system for community members to implement ideas for their neighborhoods. The experiences of the thousands of residents who have utilized the MVM NAC since its opening in October 2015 reflect the value of its services as key to achieving residents’ health, housing, and safety goals.

Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

Based on the success of the Block-by-Block Program in engaging community residents, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC received city support to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), which serves and engages residents of Mantua, East Parkside, and Powelton Village. Mt. Vernon Manor NAC provides connections to critical services, community education workshops on a range of resident-identified topics, and a support system for community members to implement ideas for their neighborhoods. The experiences of the thousands of residents who have utilized the MVM NAC since its opening in October 2015 reflect the value of its services as key to achieving residents’ health, housing, and safety goals.

Mt. Vernon Manor Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

Based on the success of the Block-by-Block Program in engaging community residents, Mt. Vernon Manor CDC received city support to establish a Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC), which serves and engages residents of Mantua, East Parkside, and Powelton Village. Mt. Vernon Manor NAC provides connections to critical services, community education workshops on a range of resident-identified topics, and a support system for community members to implement ideas for their neighborhoods. The experiences of the thousands of residents who have utilized the MVM NAC since its opening in October 2015 reflect the value of its services as key to achieving residents’ health, housing, and safety goals.
Mt. Vernon Manor CDC acknowledges the invaluable support of our partners and funders:


Interested in staying up to date on Mantua community resources, events, and news? Subscribe to the monthly Mt. Vernon Manor newsletter by emailing info@mvmcdc.org.

www.mvmcdc.org

MountVernonManorCDC

@MVMCDC