Churches Improving Communities 2017 Annual Report

Online at: **ImprovingNJ.org**

Email: **ChurchesImprovingCommunities@gmail.com**

Note from the President

Here, at the close of 2017, our communities need churches that are engaged and energized more than ever. Our communities need churches that are committed to spreading the Good News of God's love through the work of our hands and through the sweat of our collective brow. Our communities truly need the churches of Classis New Brunswick!

It is both exciting and humbling to witness the many ways that our churches step in and serve their communities – especially when those that are served are often the marginalized and often forgotten members of our society. To that end, we at Churches Improving Communities (CIC) are excited that more Classis churches have opened up as host sites for CIC's Church Based Mental Health Services (CBMHS), which provides free and low-cost mental health counseling in a welcoming and caring environment. We are also thrilled that NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services (NC) has expanded its staff in order to better serve individuals who are transitioning out of Middlesex County Jail.

This year, CIC and Classis churches have also extended beyond our immediate communities by sending a wonderful group of volunteers to Michigan to help clean up flood damaged homes. In addition, CIC recently sent a group from Churches Accomplishing Long Term Recovery (CALTR, the "Hurricane Sandy" program) to help with Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts in Texas.

If, after reading this report, you feel called to get involved and perhaps to help lead programs under the CIC umbrella or to expand their services within your own church, why not consider becoming a member of CIC's Board of Trustees? I would welcome the opportunity to discuss Board service with you and with any other member of your consistory or church community. Having served on the Board for approximately eight years, I have found it a very rewarding and humbling experience. It has been a blessing to have worked with Classis New Brunswick churches and to help them meet the specific needs of their communities with the help of CIC staff. Please feel free to contact me either by phone (908-421-1242) or by email cic.president3@gmail.com any time.

Please contact our staff if you would like to explore ways that we can be of assistance to your church – after all, we are here to serve your church and its community! It is always a blessing to work, and to walk, with faith communities to help bring God's Kingdom to our communities. It is a blessing to be able to serve with you!

In Peace,

Brian P. Szura

Annual Classis-Wide Summer Mission Trip

For the second consecutive year CIC has coordinated an annual mission trip to assist in a location ravaged by natural disasters. This year The Reformed Church of Highland Park partnered with the New York Korean Evangelical Church in State Island which brought the total in attendance to 34, our largest group yet. Our trip required us to bring four vehicles, two passenger vans, a minivan and a GMC truck that also towed a trailer that held luggage and tools.

We made our home at The First Presbyterian Church of Dearborn Michigan where we were given access to a kitchen and plenty of rooms to eat and sleep. While in Michigan we were met by Mary Lloyd who was our point person for our worksites. Most of our work centered on massive clean ups like clearing out yards where the overgrowth of weeds had exceeded human heights, and basements still packed with ruined furniture and lost precious keepsakes, and mold remediation. Luckily, CALTR's Harry Pangemanan is certified for mold remediation, which was a large part of his work at the NJ shore after Super Storm Sandy. We worked in groups, fully covered head to toe in hazmat suits to remove walls and to spray for mold. We also hung dry wall and painted a few homes. In total we worked on nine houses.

I am inspired by the eagerness of those who came, wanting to contribute in a way that mattered to them. Many were already looking forward to next year as we were making our way home. I feel blessed and honored to be a part of these missions and to work alongside people I love. We thank God for the opportunity to help and to serve whenever we can.

-- Anthony DiGrigoli, CIC Board of Trustees

CALTR - Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery

online at: ImprovingNJ.org/CALTR

Since 2012, CALTR has rehabilitated over 200 homes along the New Jersey shore that were devastated by Hurricane Sandy in Monmouth, Middlesex and Ocean Counties, utilizing donated supplies and group volunteers from around the country, as well as local unemployed volunteers who improve their job prospects and earning potential.

A Year of Transition

After five years at the shore - repairing homes and providing meaningful volunteer experiences to thousands of individuals from New Jersey and across the U.S. and Canada – CALTR is beginning to transition its structure and capabilities from hurricane relief work to supporting affordable housing for those who are homeless and for people with special needs. CALTR will continue to host week-long volunteer groups with an emphasis on service learning and putting faith into action, while working on rehabilitating houses in collaboration with the Reformed Church of Highland Park Affordable Housing Corporation and Interfaith-RISE. Affordable housing in NJ is challenging for many and so CALTR looks forward to partnering with AHC to continuing helping to provide the vulnerable in our communities with safe, warm, and functional homes.

2017 Accomplishments

Despite funding challenges and the shifting nature of the recovery process, CALTR's Harry Pangemanan, along with local and nation-wide volunteers, continued to do much-needed work along the New Jersey shore, providing assistance to homeowners who are still in need of help. 2017 saw the following accomplishments:

- 106 week-long volunteers from 8 groups across the U.S.
- 25 local unemployed volunteers mentored in job skills
- 3,630 estimated total volunteer hours
- $83,900 in savings to homeowners on labor and materials

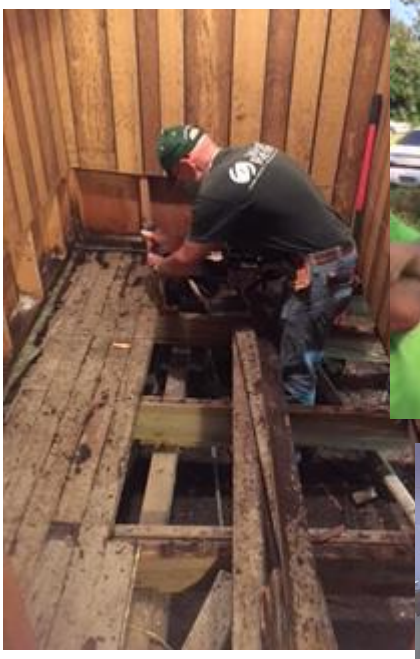
Program Highlights

- Our annual **Interfaith MLK Day of Service** this past January utilized the talents of a total of 20 volunteers from Alpha Phi Omega (Rutgers service organization); Volunteer Match and the Reformed Church of Highland Park.
- CALTR, in partnership with the Reformed Church of Highland Park, sent a **Rapid Response Mission Trip to Port Arthur, Texas**, September 15 - 27 to begin the process of cleaning out water-damaged homes affected by Hurricane Harvey. A group of four drove down and were joined by four others from the Islamic Center of New Brunswick. We are thankful for this truly interfaith effort. On the ground in Texas we partnered, as we have for the last five years, with World Renew, who had work sites vetted and ready to go for our team. We also funneled donations to two new RCA church start-ups who are in communities that suffered substantial devastation.

Funding & Generosity
The Foundation to Save the Jersey Shore continued to assist CALTR by funding a significant portion of the work done by CALTR; our thanks goes out to Brian Boms. CALTR also wishes to recognize and thank:

- The Community Outreach Group of Middletown, NJ
- New England Chapel – Franklin Massachusetts
- Colts Neck Reformed Church

This October marked the 5-year anniversary of Super Storm Sandy making landfall and the end of our week-long work group partnership with World Renew. We are grateful for the hundreds of volunteers supplied over that period by World Renew and the RCA; we could not have completed such amazing work without the tireless efforts of all the dedicated volunteers. Harry and local volunteers will continue to partner with World Renew on Rapid Response efforts and the annual Classis-wide mission trips.



NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services

online at: NeighborCorpsRe-Entry.org

NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services provides free, supportive services that help individuals to transition from Middlesex County Adult Correction Center (MCACC) back into society and avoid recidivism. NeighborCorps works with Participants and their network of supportive family members and friends, as well as with teams of trained volunteer Navigators that help Participants navigate the various pillars of successful re-entry into society: finding gainful employment and housing, pursuing personal development including counseling or drug/alcohol treatment, and regaining the trust of others through communication and accountability.

2017 Program Accomplishments

2017 is NeighborCorps' third full-program year. NeighborCorps is grateful to have received a Freeholders Support Grant from Middlesex County to help support program and operations. NeighborCorps is also a member of the Middlesex County Re-Entry Task Force which brings together organizations and entities involved in prisoner re-entry county-wide.

Staff

In July 2017, Justina Otero, NeighborCorps Program Director, resigned from her position after over two years of successful program leadership. After her departure, the program staffing was restructured to order to provide a better focus on each component of the program. NeighborCorps welcomes a new team approach to our re-entry work, and we are already seeing the benefits of this new approach including close communication about Participant status, and a strong team dynamic.

Each of our new staff members brings unique strengths and gifts to the program, and we are very excited to have everyone on board!

- Tracy Cangiano, Administrative Director
- Valerie Jones, Re-Entry Coordinator for Re-Entry Planning
- Austin Morreale, Service Director

Participants

NeighborCorps has provided support to over 30 Participants this year, a significant increase from 10 Participants in 2015. With the help of all our interns and volunteers, our Participants have been able to receive reliable, unconditional support and empowerment beginning inside the jail and continuing throughout their re-entry process. Along with this support, they have also been able to obtain emergency housing and prevent homelessness, gain substantial employment, enroll in drug and alcohol treatment programs, receive accompaniment to court, probation and parole appointments, and any additional assistance when needed.

We continue to rely on jail staff support and obtaining the "County Sentence Report," which contains the

list of all individuals being released within the year. Staff use this list to contact potential Participants directly and inform them of our program's support and services. By obtaining this list, we have established a reliable referral system and can maintain our numbers consistently. We have also worked to build a relationship with the Social Services department of MCACC who also refer individuals to our program.

Navigators

This year, NeighborCorps has continued to grow our volunteer Navigation team, while also working to support our long-term volunteers who continue to contribute to the program's success. NeighborCorps continuously outreaches to local churches, communities, organizations, and colleges in order to meet our growing demand of Participants. We continue to utilize volunteers in a wide array of positions in addition to our Navigator volunteers. These roles include assisting with employment, transportation, and accompaniment.

Interns

NeighborCorps was blessed with the work of a master's level student intern from the Rutgers school of public health, who created two new online training modules to be used by our program volunteers. One module addresses healthy boundaries and self-care for volunteers, and one addresses the mental health topic known as "learned helplessness."

Events & Initiatives

NeighborCorps held several important events and initiatives in 2017.

- In January, NeighborCorps hosted a **film viewing and panel discussion** of "Solitary" on the issue of solitary confinement in the United States.
- **BACKPACK DRIVE:** Donate the following items for people as they leave Middlesex County jail.
  What: Backpacks with: water bottle, non-perishable snack, pen and notepaper, toothbrush, toothpaste, comb and feminine hygiene products.
  Where: Drop off at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, 19 South 2nd Avenue, Highland Park.
- **WINTER COAT DRIVE:** Donate winter coats, hats, scarves and gloves for people to wear as they are released from Middlesex County Adult Correctional Facility. Individuals are released with only the clothing they went in with – often summer clothing – even in cold weather.
  What: Winter coats and outerwear. Adult sizes only.
  Where: Drop off at the Reformed Church of Highland Park, 19 South 2nd Avenue, Highland Park.
- **NeighborCorps is partnering with CoLAB Arts** in 2017. CoLAB is a New Brunswick non-profit arts organization that pairs artists with community and social service organizations. NeighborCorps is one of several organizations who are paired with an artist in residence. We have been paired with modern dance choreographer, Stephanie Beauchamp, who will be creating an original modern dance work about incarceration that will be performed in December in New Brunswick. Performances are December 8 and 9 in New Brunswick.

Partnerships

NeighborCorps continues to establish collaborations and partnerships with local organizations, business, faith communities and volunteers. In this capacity, NeighborCorps partners assist in job training and placement, including:

- Elijah's Promise Soup Kitchen, which has provided many part-time painting and landscaping jobs
- Grace Way Presbyterian Church
- Gilbert USA
- Anderson Corporation
- Silver Line Building Products LLC
- Man Power
- God's Army
- Aldi
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital
- Advanced Health and Education
- Renewal LLC
- Five Star Painting
- Community Cares United
- Puerto Rican Action Board
- NJ Re-Entry Corporation
- JLM Painting
- Community Action Network—Princeton

Church Based Mental Health Services

Online at: NJCommunityMentalHealth.org

Church Based Mental Health Services Provides free and low-cost professional mental health counseling to individuals at churches in Middlesex, Monmouth, Somerset, and Ocean Counties.

Thanks Be to God for the opportunity to serve!

Participating Churches
In 2017, the following churches participated in CBMHS: First Reformed Church of South River and the Reformed Church of Highland Park in Middlesex County; Colts Neck Reformed Church, the Community Church of Keyport and The Church in Brielle in Monmouth County; and Middlebush Reformed Church in Somerset County. CBMHS welcomed Ocean Community Church in Ocean County to the program in March, bringing the total churches served to seven and the number of counties represented to four.

Each of the participating Churches answered a call to serve members of the community who have difficulty obtaining non-crisis mental health services as a direct result of the stigma of mental illness, the cost of mental health services (with or without insurance) or the complexity of our mental health care referral system.

Thanks be to God for the gifts that we have received!

Resources
Participating Churches supported CBMHS with free office space, staff consultation time and sliding scale financial commitments. Sustainable funding for CBMHS remains our greatest challenge.

Staff Resources
In 2017, CIC hired Lorrie McGough, LPC, LCADC to serve as mental health counselor in Ocean County. April Humes, hired by CIC in 2016, continued to serve as mental health counselor at the other six locations. Additionally, the CBMHS Steering Committee designated April Humes, LPC as Clinical Director of the program. The Executive Director of CIC, Carrie Dirks Amodeo, Dr. Carol Turner, Consulting Psychologist, and the CBMHS Steering Committee provided additional support as needed. (Special thanks to Dana Eugenio, Colts Neck; Pastor Lou LaFazia, Brielle; Pastor Seth Kaper-Dale, Highland Park; Pastor George Montanari, Middlebush; Beth Luckas, South River; Pastor Dawn Seaman, Keyport, and Pastor Phil Bakelaar, Ocean Community).

Referrals
CBMHS continued to develop relationships with mental health professionals in our church communities who are willing to offer pro bono or reduced fee services to our clients. Our preferred professional networks have expanded to meet population needs for certain clinical specialties. Many thanks to Sonya Johnson, LPC, Renee Di Grigoli, LPC, Susan Levine, MSW, John Rametta, LPC and others who have worked with us to deliver free or affordable longer-term service to clients in need.

Program Structure
CBMHS provided twenty-four hours per week of onsite mental health consultation: approximately four hours per week at each of the six church locations. Ms. Humes met regularly with Pastors to establish relationships, develop mental health programs, and provide direct services.

Thanks be to God for the gifts that we have shared

Direct Client Service
CBMHS continued to meet its potential for direct service to clients in need of assistance.

- Approximately **90 new individuals received timely screenings, compassionate assessment** of needs and resources, vetted referrals, and when appropriate, short-term counseling and/or support from CBMHS mental health counselors or support groups
- Client Problems addressed included **depression, anxiety, chronic pain, marital or family relationship problems, substance use problems, grief and stress** due to unemployment.
- Client Services included weekly or biweekly**, individual or couple's sessions.**
- **Caregiver Support groups** continued to meet monthly and CBMHS proudly introduced a new **Chronic Pain and Chronic Illness support group**. Participation and access to this monthly support group was enhanced by the launching of the CBMHS website http://njcommunitymentalhealth.org
- Client Donations: To date, approximately $3500 in small donations, $20 to $25 per session, have been received from financially able clients. No one is refused service for lack of funds.

Mental Health Awareness and Education Programming
CBMHS responded to congregational needs by providing general mental health education through **adult education classes.** Topics included a **Faith Based Response to Intimate Partner Violence** and **The Role of Connection in Uncertain Times**.

- In February, in Recognition of **Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month,** CBMHS offered education to youth groups and parents through open forums and "In Their Shoes" simulation trainings.
- In May, several churches participated in **Mental Health Awareness Month** activities: CBMHS participated in a community forum addressing **teen suicide** held with representatives from schools and churches across Middlesex and Somerset Counties. Also in May, CBMHS and the Middlebush Reformed Church offered a wellness event on **Prayer and Meditation**.
- In June, CBMHS partnered with 7SeedsYoga to offer a training and wellness event on **Trauma, Addiction, and Recovery** for community mental health volunteers and ministry leaders.
- The CBMHS counselor also provided **education and training** to volunteer first responders and parents of young children in effort to reduce stigma and increase mental health awareness.

Looking Ahead
CBMHS will continue to identify referrals and resources for greater impact. We will continue to develop relationships with professionals and organizations that meet the most basic needs of our clients for housing, employment and re-entry services.

Program Impact - One Pastor's Statement
I am grateful for our church's partnership with Church Based Mental Health Services and its director, April Humes. Her services provide expanded pastoral care beyond what my schedule or level of training can offer. She has led occasional small groups which have created meaningful experiences of prayer, support and community. Her services also expand the arms of our congregational outreach. She has networked with community groups and other service providers in ways that have people experiencing care in our facility who would otherwise not have known about us. April's ministry through CBMHS is increasing the reach of our ministry and the visibility of the church, but most importantly, is helping people experience healing and hope. For this, I am deeply grateful, and remain committed to the investment our church is making in this ministry.

--Pastor George Montanari, Middlebush Reformed Church

Focus Church Development Program

Online at: ImprovingNJ.org/FCDP

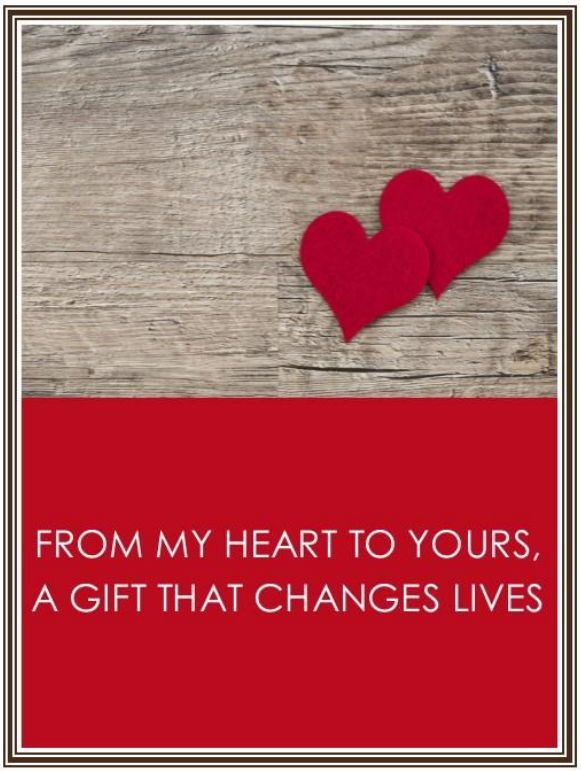
The Focus Church Development Program (FCDP) is a collaboration between Classis New Brunswick and Churches Improving Communities that pairs one Classis New Brunswick church with CIC staff members for one year to identify and carry out initiatives that respond simultaneously to the needs of the church and of the community. The desired result is a deeper understanding of how a congregation can be God's hands and feet in the world, an expanded view of the possibilities for their ministry, and positive growth of their congregation in the community.

In 2017/18, FCDP is focused on Trinity Reformed Church of North Plainfield. You can follow our progress online at ImprovingNJ.org/fcc.

Alternative Gift Catalog

Online at: ImprovingNJ.org/Alternative-Gift-Catalog

CIC's online Alternative Gift Catalog is a convenient and easy way to purchase gift donations in honor of friends or family members who care about giving back! Shop now at ImprovingNJ.org/alternative-gift-catalog and choose from several beautiful honor cards to print out and give. All proceeds benefit the CIC program of your choice. Please share with others who want to make a difference in the lives of people in central New Jersey through their gifts!



CIC in the Coming Year

Social Adult Day Program

Based on a need expressed by several Classis churches, CIC is exploring the possibility of developing a Social Adult Day Program that would provide programming for older adults or adults with memory impairment, while their caregivers are able to take respite that includes support groups, connections to community services, and free time.

This program model would be similar to the Church-Based Mental Health Services model, where CIC employs a professional staff member to implement the program at separate church sites weekly. Participating churches would recruit volunteers to assist with the program, and provide a member to sit on the program steering committee. In 2017 we have explored funding opportunities and will continue to do so.

If you would like to explore the possibility of your church participating in this new initiative, please contact us at ChurchesImprovingCommunities@gmail.com.

Your Idea

CIC is always on the lookout for ways to assist churches engage and serve their communities! We welcome your input and ideas – please email or call if you have an idea, a dream, or a question. We are here to help move your ideas forward in ways that make sense for your church. If you'd like to start a conversation, please contact us at ChurchesImprovingCommunities@gmail.com.

Finances – Programs

Churches Improving Communities operates as the non-profit umbrella organization for NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services, Church-Based Mental Health Services, and Churches Accomplishing Long-Term Recovery. The Focus Church Development Program budget is part of the general CIC budget because its only expense is staff time. CIC resources such as bookkeeping, grant writing, administrative oversight and others are shared among the programs, and with churches who seek assistance with their own community projects. Similarly, certain CIC expenses are also shared such as insurance costs and a portion of the CIC Executive Director salary.

Programmatic budgets reside under CIC but are managed separately by the program steering committees who conduct their own fundraising and are responsible for programmatic expenses**.** Because of the volunteer focus of NeighborCorps and CALTR, and the collaborative nature of CBMHS, each is able to leverage a tremendous amount of value from its modest budget.

CALTR 2017 Budget

INCOME	
Volunteer Group Donations	$27,000
Grants	$20,000
Fundraising	$5,000
Construction Reimbursement from Save the Jersey Shore	$10,000
Partnership with RCHP-AHC on Keyport Housing Rehabilitation Program	$7,500
TOTAL INCOME	**$69,500**
EXPENSES	
Salary:	
Project Manager – ½ time position	$24,000
Volunteer Coordinator – hourly, part-time	$6,000
Van (gas and maintenance)	$2,000
Hospitality (food for groups)	$6,000
Construction Materials	$24,000
CIC Contribution (overhead for administration)	$6,000
Insurance	$1,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	**$69,000**

**NOTE:* The value of CALTR's volunteer labor in 2017 is approximately $87,000 according to national standards.

2017 NeighborCorps Re-Entry Services Budget

INCOME	**2017**
Freeholder Support Grant	$51,347
Fundraising	$7,000
TOTAL INCOME:	**$58,347**
IN-KIND	
Volunteer Navigator Hours	$67,284
Office Space	$18,000
Interns	$15,198
Equipment – Computer & Printer	$2,000
TOTAL IN-KIND	**$102,482**
EXPENSES	
Salary	$42,864
Payroll taxes	$6,000
Insurance	$1,000
CIC Contribution	$6,000
Printing	$500
Phone	$360
Events – food, speaker fee	$1,000
Bus passes, ID fees & participant clothing	$300
Professional Continuing Education	$500
TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$58,524**

CBMHS 2017 Budget

INCOME	**2017**
	8 churches
Client Contributions @$100/month/site	$9,600
Church Site Contributions	$27,000
Synod Foundation Grant	$7,500
Rollover from Previous Year	$12,132
TOTAL INCOME: (without rollover)	**$44,100**
Total with rollover	$56,232
EXPENSES	
Salary	$34,560
Program Costs – printing, supplies	$1,500
Insurance	$1,250
CIC Contribution	$6,500
TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$43,810**

Finances – CIC

Churches Improving Communities' lean annual budget provides programmatic and administrative support that helps programs successfully obtain and administer grants, conduct communications and fundraising efforts, grow their support base, and employ program personnel – resources that are also available to churches who want to begin or expand community service projects.

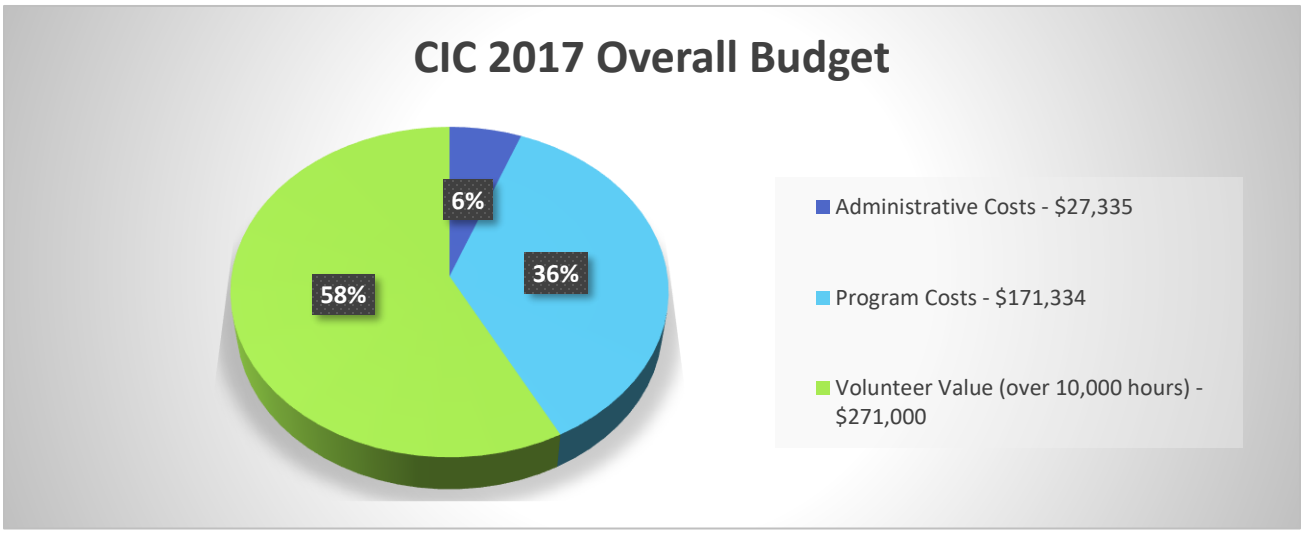
This model of resource pooling is a strategic and effective way to invest in communities, ensuring that overhead expenses for programs remain extremely low. The CIC overall budget – including programs and administration – for our most recent complete program year reflects this investment.

CHURCHES IMPROVING COMMUNITIES BUDGET	
	2017
INCOME:	
Individual Donations	$4,000
Congregation Donations	$5,000
Amazon Smile Foundation	$25
Operating Contribution from Programs	$19,100
Insurance Contribution from Programs	$3,300
TOTAL INCOME:	**$31,425**
EXPENSES:	
Membership Fees	$200
Postage	$125
Marketing	$400
Data Protect/PYRL Subscription	$600
Bank Fees	$80
PayPal Fees	$40
Insurance	$4,500
Registration Fees	$25
Payroll -Wages	$20,000
Payroll (FICA & Medicare)	$1,365
TOTAL EXPENSES:	**$27,335**
DIFFERENCE:	**$4,090**

Please Help Support Our Work

It is the Churches Improving Communities' mission to assist churches in Classis New Brunswick to develop and expand justice and mercy service projects in their communities. We do this by pooling skills and expertise to leverage funding, volunteers and community support. To this end, we are committed to using our resources wisely and effectively, and CIC accomplishes much with very lean operational practices and programmatic budgets. Churches Improving Communities is funded solely through foundation grants, and individual, church and corporate donations. We count on your support to positively impact the lives of people in need in our communities.

Please donate today to help us continue this important work in 2018.



Become a Friend of the CIC! Support CIC by joining the Board of Trustees, volunteering for a program, or by making a donation that will help CIC assist churches and communities throughout the Classis.

Classis New Brunswick Community Development Corporation *doing business as Churches Improving Communities* is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. Your contribution is tax deductible.

Donations by Check
Please make checks payable to **Classis New Brunswick CDC** and mail to:

Classis New Brunswick CDC
100 College Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Donations by Credit Card
Donations can also be made via credit card or PayPal on our website, ImprovingNJ.org.

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