

**2008
Listening
Sessions**



**McAULEY
MINISTRIES**

Prepared by:

Deborah A. Holland
DLJ & Associates

LaNella Hooper-Williams
Hooper Williams Communications

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BACKGROUND

McAuley Ministries is a non-profit foundation established by the Pittsburgh Mercy Health System (PMHS), and part of Catholic Health East (CHE). McAuley Ministries is the grantmaking arm of PMHS, created to administer the proceeds of the sale of Mercy Hospital of Pittsburgh to UPMC. McAuley Ministries will honor the legacy of the Sisters of Mercy by focusing its grantmaking on the Pittsburgh neighborhoods traditionally served by the Sisters of Mercy: the Hill District, Uptown, and West Oakland.

In June 2008, the Board of McAuley Ministries outlined a strategic direction for the foundation. This direction was based on an analysis of the target communities and some of the key issues and challenges facing them. The Board concluded that its grantmaking priorities will include the programs traditionally sponsored by the Sisters of Mercy, health initiatives that focus on wellness and prevention, and community development initiatives that will strengthen communities and the organizations that serve the most vulnerable residents.

McAuley Ministries envisions communities where individuals and families reach their full potential, where neighborhoods are safe, healthy, and vibrant, and where residents participate in and celebrate community life.

McAuley Ministries provides resources to support initiatives in four areas:

Health and Wellness: initiatives that address individual and community health, including physical, social, behavioral, and spiritual health. The goal is to support community-based programs that improve the overall health status for underserved and economically disadvantaged persons in the Hill District, Uptown, and West Oakland.

Community Development: initiatives that improve the fabric of the community and promote a healthy environment. The goal is to support programs that promote non-violence, safety, housing development, community aesthetics and cultural development in the Hill District, Uptown and West Oakland.

Non-profit Capacity Building: assistance to nonprofit organizations in the Hill District, Uptown and West Oakland that will strengthen nonprofit governance and leadership, strategic and business planning, program development, technology and information systems, management systems and practices, and financial resources.

Educational Advancement: initiatives that assist African American youth, immigrants, and single mothers achieve academic success.

“This is the first time a foundation has ever asked the community about their needs.”

OVERVIEW OF LISTENING SESSIONS

McAuley Ministries has established an aggressive goal to initiate grantmaking in the fourth quarter of 2008. In order to better understand the needs of residents located in the targeted communities of the Hill District, Uptown and West Oakland, as well as to assist in identifying new grant initiatives and specific grantmaking priorities, McAuley Ministries conducted a number of community listening sessions.

The objective was to move from evaluation of needs to identifying specific community priorities within the context of McAuley Ministries’ mission and vision.

METHODOLOGY

Deborah Holland (DLJ & Associates) and LaNella Hooper-Williams (Hooper-Williams Communications) facilitated four listening sessions between August 19th and September 16th, 2008. Two sessions were conducted in West Oakland, one session in Uptown and one session in the Hill District. In the two sessions conducted in West Oakland both community residents and leaders were invited to the listening sessions. In the Uptown and Hill District listening sessions, the invitees were a combination of residents, community and business leaders.

Michele Cooper, executive director of McAuley Ministries attended all sessions. Sister Sheila Carney, chair of the board of McAuley Ministries also attended the sessions held in West Oakland.

A moderator’s guide and pre-survey were developed by the facilitators and approved by the executive director of McAuley Ministries. Prior to the listening sessions, the pre-survey was distributed to the leadership teams of each community organization. The pre-survey asked respondents to rank the No.1 community priority, as well as the priorities within each of the four McAuley Ministries’ focus areas. The pre-survey responses were tallied in advance and the results were presented to each group to kick off the listening session. Each session lasted approximately one hour and a half to two hours in length. All sessions were videotaped and minutes were taken in order to analyze the data for the final report. Four main topics were explored during the listening sessions: health and wellness, community development, educational advancement and capacity building.

The listening sessions started with a review of the priorities gleaned in the survey. Attendees were told which focus area they ranked as the No. 1 priority from the McAuley Ministries’ four focus areas and how they ranked the specific initiatives in each focus area. In order to quickly engage participants in an open discussion, the facilitators asked participants if they were given \$1 million to spend on a subcategory of each of the four focus areas, where would they spend the dollars.

Participants were then asked a series of questions related to health & wellness, community development, educational advancement and capacity building.

As a closing exercise, to confirm priorities, all attendees were given a red dot and told that this dot represented \$1 million. Attendees were asked to go to the flip charts and place the red dot on the most important priority for their community-- the issue on which they would spend the \$1 million.

OVERALL FINDINGS

Many of the responses received from the participants were fairly consistent among all of the listening sessions. Across the board, the most common answers revealed the following:

1. The need for a multipurpose center in the community that would serve as a venue for recreation, health and wellness, social services and after school educational programs.
2. The need for programs for seniors such as health initiatives, companionship and transportation, as these appear to be a major challenge for this group.
3. The need to reduce violence and strengthen crime prevention programs. In addition, drug and alcohol abuse is prevalent across the board.
4. While each neighborhood was in a different stage of community development, all communities discussed the need for strategic planning to drive overall community improvements. Grocery stores and other commercial establishments were vital to each community.
5. There appeared to be many social services/community resources available to residents in the community, however, residents were unaware of the services.

Pre-survey Results

Community Development was ranked the No.1 priority by respondents to the pre-survey by Oak Hill, West Oakland and Uptown Partners. Educational Advancement was ranked the No. 1 priority by the Hill District respondents. The results of the pre-survey are attached as Exhibit A.

Priority Setting Exercise

The cumulative results of the priority setting exercise pointed to the need for strong programming for African American Youth. Violence prevention ranked No. 2, followed by cultural development. The results of the priority setting exercise are attached as Exhibit B.

Tuesday, August 19, 2008
Location: Oak Hill Rent Office
Attendance: 32 residents,
including 5 resident council board
members
Demographics: Mostly female;
Ages: 20 – 70 years



Oak Hill Apartments

“We need to teach our children how to deal with others and to respect their communities; our children need life skills.”

OAK HILL LISTENING SESSION

Pre-survey Results

Number of Responses: 7
No. 1 Overall Priority: Community Development

Within the McAuley Ministries’ four focus areas, the pre-survey results pointed to the following priorities:

- Health & Wellness – Spiritual Health
- Community Development – Housing Development
- Educational Advancement – Single Mothers
- Non-profit Capacity Building – Sustainability

Health & Wellness

When asked about health & wellness concerns within the community, residents stated the need to have health/social services within the community to deal with the elderly and promote healthy habits. They also suggested having aides in the community for the elderly as many of them have no one to check on them.

While residents stated that individuals don’t generally discuss their health issues, dementia and diabetes were mentioned as issues needing to be addressed. Alcohol and drug abuse also are epidemic. However, they stated that people must want to attend a rehab program in order for the programs to be successful.

Community Development

When asked what changes would help improve the community, attendees commented about the need for greater unity. Additionally, they mentioned the need for recreational and educational activities including: a playground, computer lab and literacy classes.

Attendees were also very vocal about the need for the renovation of Wadsworth Hall. This facility is viewed by the residents as a recreational and educational center. Residents stated that they wanted sustainable programming similar to that offered by Kingsley Center in East Liberty. Kingsley Center was described as an organization that has been successful in getting parents involved in their programming. It was stated that Kingsley will come to the community and set up a program.

Thursday, August 21, 2008

Location: Sisters of Mercy
Convent

Attendance: Approx 25

Demographics: Primarily
senior citizens who participate
in the Women of West
Oakland's monthly activities;
also leaders from Friendship
Church and other community
groups



West Oakland Community

*“Our community is
like a candle—the
flame is burning but
oxygen is being taken
away.”*

WEST OAKLAND LISTENING SESSION

Pre-survey Results

Number of Responses: 9

No. 1 Overall Priority: Community Development

Within the McAuley Ministries' four focus areas, the pre-survey results pointed to the following priorities:

- Health & Wellness—Prevention Initiatives
- Community Development – Violence Prevention
- Educational Advancement – African American Youth
- Non-profit Capacity Building – Strategic Planning

Health & Wellness

While attendees cited the connection to the local hospitals as an asset, many senior citizens voiced a need for a community-based agency that offered screenings, wellness and fitness activities that will help them live longer. The community would also benefit from diet and nutrition programs. There are currently no health prevention programs in the neighborhood. In addition, many seniors live alone and could benefit from a companion/caregiver program. The high cost of prescriptions and accessibility to quality healthcare was also a concern. Transportation to and from appointments was a challenge.

Drug addiction is the No.1 behavioral health problem in the community. Residents stressed the need for 12-step recovery programs that can connect residents to resources. Classes also should be conducted for young children to teach them the consequences of their actions.

While there seem to be social service programs available, many residents were unaware of many of these programs and needed more understanding of social services available to the community.

Community Development

Participants were asked what changes would improve the quality of life in the community and the majority recommended a recreation/multipurpose center that would include services such as: health & wellness, cultural activities, crafts, afterschool programs, etc.

Friendship Church was often mentioned as one of the few organizations in the community with outreach activities. However, lack of resources to support the entire community is a big concern. The Hill House, Matilda Theiss Health



“A mentoring program for African American Youth would be helpful. Children learn by example, and many don’t have good examples.”

Center and Kingsley Center were cited as examples of community organizations that were successful. Additionally, the school to career program that is sponsored by Oakland Planning & Development was mentioned.

Residents stated that the demise of the Breachmenders organization was a major blow to community development in West Oakland.

Cameras on corners were suggested in order to help reduce crime and violence in the neighborhood.

There was a concern about seniors being able to stay in the community due to limited financial resources and community support (companionship, social services). Some residents stated that the community is overrun by student housing, which has become a challenge due to the transient nature of the student population. One resident suggested that a cultural experience that would tie the diversity of the community together (young, old, students) could be beneficial as everyone would have a vested interest in the community.

Other: Residents stated that streets need to be more accessible to handicapped residents. Also, there is a need for better signage and mirrors. Traffic lights should be extended to allow seniors ample time to cross the streets. Stop signs, sidewalks and streets are in need of repair.

Educational Advancement

Residents were asked what suggestions they had for advancing the quality of education in the community. Respondents stated the following:

A comprehensive, structured after school/summer program and computer lab would be beneficial to the community. Currently, many of the programs lack structure and do not promote a learning environment. The Pittsburgh Project, which is an after school program on the Northside of Pittsburgh, was cited as a successful program. Childcare centers are also needed for working parents and those who want to attend training/vocational schools.

Residents suggested a mentoring/role model program for African American youth, similar to Big Brothers/Big Sisters, would be helpful. It was proposed that an organization such as 100 Black Men could be enlisted to support high school students. The residents were very disappointed with the closing of Schenley High School and thought it should be reopened.

Non-Profit Capacity Building

Residents and community leaders stated that they needed a professional consulting group to work with the community to develop an overall strategy for the neighborhood. There is a fear of being lost in the shuffle, as there is no organization in the neighborhood that is focused on strategic planning. The consultants could help with a community needs assessment and lead the community through a process that would help outline a shared vision to

preserve the community.

Friendship Community Church was cited as the one organization that provided resources to the community. It is believed that it could expand the scope of its services with additional financial resources.

Monday, September 15, 2008
Location: Marriott
Attendance: 12
Demographics: Representatives from Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh, including: community leaders, business/property owners and residents

UPTOWN LISTENING SESSION

Pre-survey Results

Number of Responses: 10

No. 1 Overall Priority: Community Development

Within the McAuley Ministries' four focus areas, the pre-survey results pointed to the following priorities:

- Health & Wellness– Prevention Initiatives
- Community Development – Violence Prevention
- Educational Advancement – African American Youth
- Non-profit Capacity Building – Strategic Planning

“Education is not just an Uptown problem, it is a Pittsburgh problem.”

Health & Wellness

When asked about health & wellness concerns within the community, residents felt that focusing on prevention initiatives was a good way of getting people the help and medical assistance they need. This would include health clinics, a neighborhood physician practice and/or a mobile health unit to meet people where they are.

Drug & alcohol abuse is a major challenge for the Uptown neighborhood. There is a need to invest in drug prevention programs to help with individual recovery.

While this group admittedly did not understand all of the issues around health & wellness in their community, it was pointed out that many of the residents are unaware of the services available to them. Mercy Health Center seemed to be one of the resources utilized by many of the residents. However, according to one participant, Mercy has approximately 55 community-based programs, but most people, including Mercy employees, are unaware of them. A single point of entry for services was suggested (i.e. Neighborhood clinic).

A few social service agencies were named—Mercy Hospital, Jubilee Kitchen, Miryam's, Shepherds Heart Fellowship—but many of the participants were not clear about the purpose of these organizations.





Locust Street--Uptown

Community Development

Participants were asked what changes would improve the quality of life in the community. Below is a summary of the comments:

Public safety is a concern for residents. Drug trafficking and prostitution is prevalent in the neighborhood. Recommendations to reduce violence included: increasing police control, installing cameras on corners and creating a neighborhood watch program.

Participants believed that new housing (condos, townhouses) will drive demand for other services such as convenience stores, coffee shops, etc. Currently, there are a number of nuisance bars and vacant buildings. Code enforcement is necessary to reduce the number of vacant buildings. “Ugliness of the community, leads to more ugliness.”

After school programs can help keep youth active and possibly reduce violence. While it was pointed out that the number of residents has declined over the past few decades, there is still a need for a multicultural center in the neighborhood. Another alternative would be to transport individuals to the Hill District for these services.

Transportation to services is an issue. Shuttle services are needed to get to the grocery store, library and new community center (YMCA) in the Hill District.

A “Visioning Session” will be held by Uptown Partners in the near future to get specific feedback from residents about the needs of the community. Participants stated both private and individual investors are needed in order to revitalize the community. Southside, East Liberty and the Northside were all cited as neighborhoods that have been successfully revitalized.

Educational Advancement

When asked about suggestions for advancing the quality of education in the community, respondents emphasized the need for educational alternatives to the current high school system. It was felt that students aren’t learning in the current public school system. Test scores are very low. Suggestions were made to have an after school program or Saturday school that could help boost student development and better prepare them for higher education. A comprehensive learning center to serve various constituents was proposed. The learning center could include: workforce development, English as a second language, K-12 after school programs and career development workshops. A voucher system for those on the right educational path was also recommended.

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· There is also a need for a mentoring program for African American youth, as
· well as a program that teaches computer skills. The Jerome Bettis program at
· Duquesne University is an example of a successful youth program that teaches
· computer skills.

· Training & development programs are critical in reducing high unemployment
· rates. A manufacturing training program was recommended to meet the
· growing demand for these jobs.

· It was also suggested that the community could use vacant land as a gardening
· experience for youth.

· ***Capacity Building***

· Members of Uptown Partners admitted that they had not yet reached out to
· nonprofit agencies in the area and, therefore, were unaware of the current
· resource constraints of these organizations. It was agreed that they needed an
· inventory of services before they could make recommendations.

· Participants pointed out that Duquesne University has provided assistance in
· capacity building through a few programs they offer to nonprofits and small
· businesses. They currently have a nonprofit leadership program.
· NeighborWorks was also highlighted as an organization that helps nonprofits in
· the Uptown community.

Tuesday, September 16, 2008
Location: Hill House Conference Room
Attendance: 9 Hill District Consensus Group members
Demographics: Male/Females;
Ages: 30 – 70 years



Crawford Square

HILL DISTRICT LISTENING SESSION

Pre-survey Results

Number of Responses: 13
No. 1 Overall Priority: Educational Advancement

Within the McAuley Ministries' four focus areas, the pre-survey results pointed to the following priorities:

- Health & Wellness – Prevention Initiatives
- Community Development – Violence Prevention
- Educational Advancement – African American Youth
- Non-profit Capacity Building – Sustainability

Health & Wellness

In response to questions concerning health & wellness within the community, attendees responded that a pharmacy is needed and that attention to prevention initiatives and education about drug and alcohol abuse, healthy eating habits and smoking would be very important.

Attendees identified several organizations or projects that contributed positively to the health of Hill District residents; Mercy Hospital, The Hill House, local churches and the Healthy Black Families Project. Several comments were made regarding the need to repeat health studies conducted by Mercy Hospital. This study was comprehensive and identified trends for health issues in the community.

Community Development

When asked specific questions about community development and needs of the community, residents responded that the Hill District needed affordable housing, more resources for crime prevention initiatives and most importantly, a comprehensive, approved community development plan.

Additionally, attendees indicated that monthly town meetings, a web site dedicated to the Hill District and a newsletter were all tools that could be utilized to “get the word out” about current programs. These tools would also be used to educate the community’s youth population about the history and cultural richness of the Hill District.

Attendees stated that a revitalized retail district, including a grocery store, restaurants, retail shops and a pharmacy would add significantly to the health and development of the community.



“The gem of the Hill District is the New Granada. The renovation of the theater will maintain the community’s rich history.”

When asked what is needed in the community that is not here now, attendees responded that safety should be first. Participants also mentioned the need to address the challenges related to heavy drug use and open drug trafficking. Attendees requested more resources from the police department and more cohesiveness from the organizations that exist now.

Attendees indicated that several organizations are addressing violence and drug issues, including: the Black Political Empowerment Project, One Vision One Life, Prevent Another Crime Today and One HOOD.

Cultural Programs

When asked if there were any cultural programs in the Hill District, attendees responded that the Dinwiddie Club, the August Wilson House, and Ammon Recreation Center at Macedonia Church were offering programs for children. Jazz at the Hurricane was mentioned as an adult cultural experience. Several comments were made about restoration plans for the New Granada Theater and the importance of completing this project.

Attendees felt strongly that there should be a connection between the August Wilson Center for African American Culture, in downtown Pittsburgh, and the August Wilson House, which is located in the Hill District. This connection could increase the attractiveness of the community and provide a history lesson for the community’s youth.

Educational Advancement

When asked specifically about educational advancement and educational programs in the community, attendees responded that the new library, Wesley Center Cares, Pittsburgh Community Services, the Hill House and Ammon Recreation Center at Macedonia Church are organizations that currently address the needs of the elementary and teen population. These organizations provide after school care, a chess club, a computer lab, African drumming and career development.

It was suggested that a review of schools located in the community, including St. Benedict and St. Agnes, would be helpful. If these schools are doing a good job, attendance for Hill District children should be encouraged.

Attendees felt strongly that programs need to be developed to address educational and training needs for the 18 – 24 year old age group. This group is viewed as being more vulnerable to drug activity, crime and high unemployment. Residents felt that one infraction by these individuals locked them out of the majority of opportunities for a productive life.

Non-profit Capacity Building

Attendees responded overwhelmingly that the biggest challenge for the sustainability of non-profits in the community is funding. Attendees indicated that non-profit organizations work very hard to deliver programs but are spending a great deal of time on “retooling” their programs because the funders are constantly shifting their focus.

Attendees were unanimous in their appreciation for McAuley Ministries when the point was made that this listening session was the first opportunity provided by a foundation to ask the community leaders and residents for their ideas and priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As the findings from these listening sessions indicate, there remains a need to invest in these communities. Recommendations for improving the quality of life in these communities, as well as helping individuals and families reach their full potential is contingent upon an array of community resources, as well as increased knowledge about the services available.

1. Educational Advancement - Educational programs for African American youth are critical to ensuring the success of the next generation and the stability of the community. Without the necessary focus on this group, the communities will continue to erode and we will lose this generation.
2. Recreation - The support of a multipurpose facility with sustainable programming is vital to the enrichment of youth—physically, mentally and culturally. Activities that channel the mind toward positive activities are critical to their success. A model such as Kingsley Center and other successful programs should be evaluated.
3. Safety & Violence - Safety and violence prevention are keys in every viable community. Resources should be invested in policing initiatives and other neighborhood watch programs.
4. Senior Citizens - Programs that address medical, healthy lifestyles and companionship would be an asset to senior citizens. Convenient, reliable, affordable transportation could significantly improve the quality of life for these residents.
5. Capacity Building - In addition to strategic planning and the need for resources, stronger communications about programs and services available to residents is needed. It was noted that many of the programs change on a regular basis as they are often based on short-term funding. An annual online/printed directory of services might help build awareness. Also, a neighborhood call center could be an option, especially for senior citizens who do not have access to computers. In addition, the development of neighborhood web sites could be helpful for residents in promoting the neighborhood benefits and resources available.

LISTENING SESSIONS PRE-SURVEY RESULTS

EXHIBIT A				
COMMUNITY	OAK HILL	WEST OAKLAND	UPTOWN	HILL DISTRICT
No. 1 OVERALL PRIORITY	Community Development	Community Development	Community Development	Educational Advancement
HEALTH AND WELLNESS:				
Prevention Initiatives		✓	✓	✓
Screening Programs				
Behavioral Health				
Spiritual Health	✓			
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:				
Violence Prevention		✓	✓	✓
Housing Development	✓			
Community Aesthetics				
Recreation				
Cultural Development				
EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT				
African-American Youth		✓	✓	✓
Immigrants				
Single Mothers	✓			
NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING:				
Governance & Leadership				
Strategic Planning		✓	✓	
Program Development				
Technology				
Management Systems				
Sustainability	✓			✓
N =	7	9	10	13

LISTENING SESSIONS PRIORITY SETTING EXERCISE RESULTS

EXHIBIT B

COMMUNITY	Oak Hill	West Oakland	Uptown	Hill District	TOTAL
HEALTH AND WELLNESS:					
Prevention Initiatives	0	0	0	2	2
Screening Programs	2	0	0	0	2
Behavioral Health	1	0	0	0	1
Spiritual Health	0	3	0	1	4
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:					
Violence Prevention	1	3	3	0	7
Housing Development	5	0	0	0	5
Community Aesthetics	0	0	0	0	0
Recreation	1	0	0	0	1
Cultural Development	0	3	3	0	6
EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT:					
African-American Youth	8	3	3	3	17
Immigrants	0	0	0	0	0
Single Mothers	3	1	0	0	4
NONPROFIT CAPACITY BUILDING:					
Governance & Leadership	0	0	3	0	3
Strategic Planning	0	3	0	0	3
Program Development	1	0	0	0	1
Technology	1	0	0	0	1
Management Systems	1	0	0	0	1
Sustainability	1	0	0	0	1
N =	25	13	9	6	52