Letter from the Executive Director

In 2016, Bridging Communities, Inc. (BCI) celebrated the 36th anniversary of its founding. This occasion was a moment to reflect upon our enduring value of being committed to providing eldercare services, while stabilizing the communities in which they reside. Likewise, the anniversary was a moment to reflect upon our history and to consider how we renew and instantiate these values today and in the future.

The activities of BCI and its staff span an enormous range. This report outlines some achievements and progress in selected key areas over the past year, and some of the extraordinary neighborhood stabilization work made possible. In addition, the report provides an update on the status of our financial results for the 2016 fiscal year.

As we continue into 2017, I would like to thank the advisory board, board of directors, funders, volunteers, partners, interns, staff, residents, parents, and friends for their ongoing commitment and their dedication to, and support of, the values that have made Bridging Communities what it is today.

Our ongoing goal is to enhance our current programs, increase our staff, and continue to meet the increasing needs of our aging society. Together, this is possible! BCI is stronger than ever due to our beautifully diverse and expanding community who come together to donate their time, resources, and talents in support of our important mission. This year alone our volunteers provided over 5000 hours of service, with an estimated dollar value of more than $130,600! They helped to deliver meals, provide lawn and snow service, secure abandoned properties, repurpose vacant land, restore abandoned parks, and provide necessary medical transportation to seniors in need. Our Board of Directors has helped us dramatically increase our donor base; and our Advisory Board has assisted us in expanding our reach into corporate funding streams to enhance our current and future programs.

Thank you for wholeheartedly being a part of the Bridging Communities movement. We are looking forward to the unlimited possibilities 2017 may bring!

Remember: “If living is your priority, then aging is your destiny” plan for your future now!

Phyllis Edwards, LMSW
Executive Director
**Compassion**

The Bridging Communities Eldercare Program offers professional assessments for the elderly to identify their specific needs, and partner with volunteers from across Michigan to meet and fulfill those needs. Our services range from case management to friendly visiting, supportive transportation, minor home repairs, and much more. Our compassion ensures a comprehensive assessment and resolve of identified needs.

**Care**

Home is where the heart is, and is the center of strong neighborhoods. In order to stabilize our communities, our Development Program transforms foreclosed properties into resident owned and occupied homes; we rehabilitate low to moderate income housing, and create affordable senior housing communities. This creates a safe and walkable neighborhood, and neighbors who feel free to enjoy it and each other.

**Connectivity**

Our intergenerational programs ignite a circle of learning that destroys age-based stereotypes by including “all ages for all stages” of our service provision. We create a connection between our youth and seniors to establish a line of communication that is mutually beneficial and strengthens our community, one connection at a time.
Eldercare

Our Eldercare Services team continues to provide quality services to those 60 years and over who reside within our target area (zip codes: 48204, 48206, 48208, 48209, 48210, 48216, 48217, and 48238). Our Eldercare Team provides quality case management, referral resources, and with the help of our volunteers also assists with small home repairs, medical transportation, supplemental food support, lawn-care and snow removal, and friendly calls.

We served over 1,000 seniors, and made house calls to more than 100 homebound clients. Case Managers assisted with dozens of Medicaid and SNAP (food assistance) applications through the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as more than a dozen applications for Extra Help in the Home for clients in need.

We completed recertifications for the Focus: HOPE food program for clients who are not able to get to the center and ensured holiday meals to hundreds of seniors in need. With the help of about a dozen Social Work Interns we participated in over 20 outreach events, hosted a dozen workshops, completed client satisfaction surveys, and were able to refer hundreds of seniors to partner organizations when they did not reside within our service area.

Volunteer Services

The volunteer services we provide contribute to the continuation of our elderly community members’ quality of life. As their needs change, we want to be able to support them so they may remain in their home and be as independent as possible. In 2016, our dedicated volunteers logged 5,411.75 hours at a value of $130,639.65 (at the 2016 rate of $24.14/hr). This included delivering nearly 400 Holiday Remembrance gifts to seniors for Valentine’s Day, Easter, Sweetest Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. They spent 219 hours delivering Focus: HOPE food supplement boxes to homebound seniors, and delivered more than 1,000 hot meals to seniors in need. Our volunteers provided lawn care and snow removal to 22 seniors throughout the year and assisted with hundreds of hours of minor home repairs. Minor home repairs completed include porch railing repair, installing smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, yard clean-ups, and gutter repair. Our NCBA older worker trainees provided 7,753 friendly phone calls to isolated seniors and coordinated nearly 200 non-emergency medical transportation rides for our clients.
Movies on the Green

Movies on the Green is a culturally rich, community based, series of outdoor movies hosted by Bridging Communities Youth Group. The youth learn about grant writing and fundraising, community activities and inclusion, and the impact they can have on their community through giving back.

We began Movies on the Green in 2011, and averaged around 40 community members attending per night. In 2016 we hit an astonishing high, where in one night alone we had more than 600 people attending.

These free events have become an adored and awaited community activity. Each year grows in participants, attendance, and activities. We welcome the community for free food and entertainment starting at 7PM, and as soon as it’s dark enough we begin the outdoor movie. All movies are geared for younger children to ensure that they are appropriate for all ages. Movies, cultural themes, and entertainment are picked by the youth group, and each night has a different cultural theme.

Focusing on the cultural diversity of the community allows us to celebrate our neighbors, ourselves, our ancestors, and our future. We know that this community will continue to grow and thrive through love, acceptance, and understanding.
Intergenerational Programming
Youth engagement and leadership plays a crucial part in our work. Although our focus is Eldercare, we know that youth involvement in our work is necessary. Our youth lead many of our community projects and activities, give their time to assist clients, and gain valuable leadership skills as well.

We create a variety of opportunities for intergenerational interaction through volunteerism, and we utilize the youth program to help with community activities that nurture those efforts. They help create community activities that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities, and learn the importance of inclusion, diversity, and cultural awareness. They learn necessary job skills, and are held to very high standards as representatives of the organization.

Another way we celebrate the youth of our community is by offering two five hundred dollar scholarships every year in the name of our founding executive director Marion J. Bloye. These scholarships go to community minded, hard-working youth, who reside in our service area, and who show a continued dedication to our mission. Awards are given out at our annual Spirit of the New Year event held each January.

Neighborhood Stabilization
Bridging Communities continues to be an invaluable asset to the Southwest Detroit communities as it relates to grassroots neighborhood stabilization and housing. As the owners of the Pablo Davis Elder Living Center and Springwells Village Townhomes, we lead the way for housing geared for older adults. In an effort to address housing needs across the board Bridging Communities also provides housing solutions through the Detroit Land Bank, Wayne County Tax Foreclosure Auctions, and our Land Contract Program.

In 2016 we became a HUD Certified Agency, received scholarships for staff to become certified counselors, and were approved to participate in the LISC Multifamily Green Initiative. We continue to host Homeowner Education Workshops in partnership with Chase Bank.

Bridging Communities continues to be a site for the City of Detroit 0% Interest Home Repair Loan, and has also taken the lead on providing the community with information about, and applications for, the Lead Abatement Grant. We have taken several hundred referrals to our agency to assist with these programs.

2016 was a great year for development of public parks and spaces! Thanks to the partnerships formed through the McGraw Resource Stop, we have been able to work with SDEV and CCCO to beautify the Movies on the Green Park, located near McGraw and Larkins, with flower beds, benches, in ground solar lights, and more! Much work was also able to take place at Bieniek Park, located on Martin Street, thanks to the McGraw Resource Stop and many dedicated residents.
Bieniek Park

In early 2016, The McGraw Resource Stop (a collaborative effort of Bridging Communities, which includes partners such as Southwest Detroit Environmental Vision, Chadsey Condon Community Organization, and residents of our surrounding neighborhood) adopted Bieniek Park from Detroit’s Park & Recreation Department. The agreement through Detroit’s "Adopt-A-Park" program involved a commitment of the following: the park is kept clean and garbage is removed; the grass is mowed at least once every ten to fourteen days to be no higher than six inches; the grass is trimmed around park edges, fences, paths, trees, and equipment.

Bieniek Park, or Martin Park as long-time residents remember it, was once a vibrant community gathering space with basketball courts, baseball diamonds, swings, and other typical park amenities. When we adopted this decommissioned park, it was just a vacant lot. However, with the dedication of residents, and their children, along with support from neighbors, volunteer groups, and our community partners, we were able to transform this blighted land back into a safe, clean, welcoming space for the community.

Within a year, we installed a community garden with twelve raised vegetable beds, eight fruit trees, and used-tire flowerbed border. At the end of the season, plans were made to install benches, a picnic table and Little Free Library. It's amazing what can be accomplished when people come together to help build community!
## Revenue Sources

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**Total 2016 Revenue: $318,854.18**

## Funders

- DAAA
- LISC
- Bernie Ricke Charity Foundation
- Enroll Michigan
- Huntington Bank
- Flagstar Bank
- City of Detroit
- Community Connections/Prevention Network
- JP Morgan Chase
- Ford Motor Company
- UAW Local 600
- Rory Gamble – UAW Region 1A
- HAP
- Comprehensive Logistics
- Kryaso, LLC
- MHT Housing
- Cindy Estrada – UAW – GM
- Jimmy Settles – UAW – Ford

## Board of Directors

- Bernie Ricke, President
- Marilyn Mullan, Vice President
- Tiffany Smith-Morgan, Secretary
- Rhonda Bost, Treasurer
- Jesse Gonzales
- Sue Hale
- Juanita Hernandez
- Michael Joseph
- Stan King
- Gay Salsberry
- J. Lee Tilson
- Ian Zitron
- Matthew Burchi
- Patrick Southward
- Donovan McKinney

## Leadership

- Phyllis Edwards – Executive Director
- Alicia Knott – Case Manager
- Sarah DeLeon – Case Manager
- Jennie Weakley – Volunteer Coordinator
- Barbara Branch – Administrative Assistant
- Corey Moore – Facilities Manager
- Gabrielle White – Housing Coordinator
- Mary Riesing – Housing Coordinator
- Susan McKnight – Support Staff

### Bridging Communities, Inc.
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- Detroit, MI 48210
- 313-361-6377
- www.bridgingcommunities.org

## Advisory Board

- Don Davis
- Henry Ford III
- Rick Popp
- Victor Abla
- Rev. Steve Archer
- Paul Bridgewater
- Kenneth King
- Mitch Meisner
- Patrick Irwin
- John Serda
- Rashida Tlaib
- Jack Scwab
- Ted Stawikowski
- Bob King
- Chuck Browning