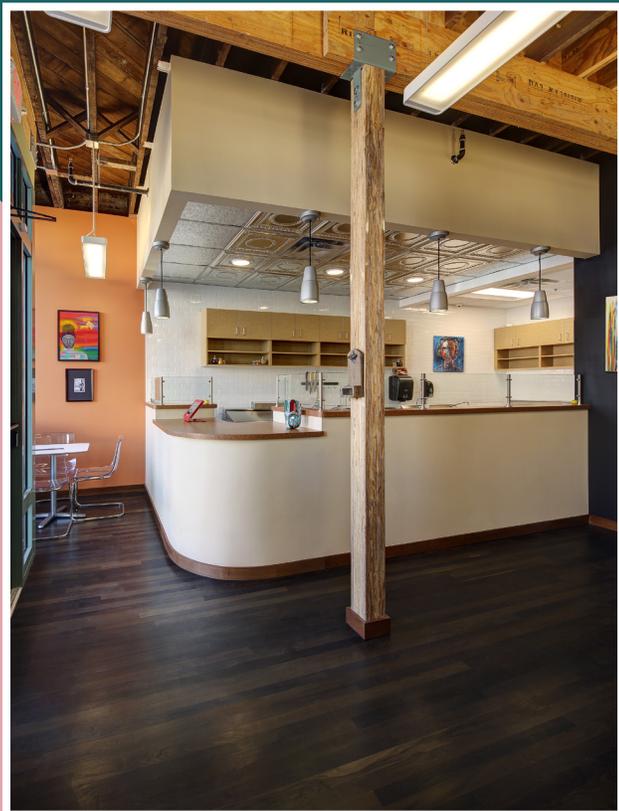
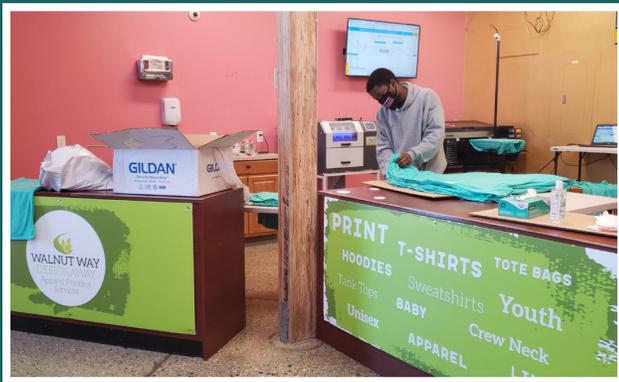




COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING CAMPAIGN

Neighbors Driving Economic Development

WINTER 2021 STATUS REPORT



Why We Invest in Community Wealth Building?

For the past 1.5 years Walnut Way and other community organizations in Milwaukee's Lindsay Heights neighborhood have been implementing a resident centered, neighborhood focused development strategy called **Community Wealth Building (CWB)**. CWB addresses the missing piece of many local economic development efforts: the skills, talents and gifts of residents - in other words their assets. This is where we start.

How it Works

Cultivating residents' assets requires building solid relationships and making connections between individuals and other neighborhood assets like schools, churches, businesses and community organizations. The CWB team continually learns about residents' assets and then scouts for resources and opportunities that help move "side hustles" to more established businesses.

The CWB strategy is showing measurable results. For example, a group of CWB residents, with food at the heart of their business, came together to provide catering services. The momentum they generated led to an opportunity to develop a take-out restaurant. The "Taste of Lindsay Heights" has emerged as an incubator café. It will soon serve the community with creative and healthy food, entrepreneurship, job opportunities, and enliven the North Avenue corridor with a revitalized storefront. A Fresh Food Grant from the City of Milwaukee will support capital investments in this social enterprise.

Accomplishments

The CWB team has conducted 77 resident asset interviews and connected with 38 organizations to support the effort. Neighbors have increased both business opportunities and connectedness by forming interest groups focused on cooking, arts and crafts, and construction/landscaping.

A "Side Hustle Workshop" series launched with support of Wisconsin Women's Business Initiative Corporation and the Zilber Family Foundation has provided training to residents on business basics. A second series will begin in spring 2021 and will

provide the chance to earn a \$2,500 start-up business grant. These two organizations are also providing \$2,000 matching savings grants to eight Lindsay Heights residents over the next two years. In addition, CWB participants are learning about cooperatives as an alternative ownership model through a webinar series co-sponsored by the Urban Economic Development Association.

In addition to the Taste of Lindsay Heights, the Community Wealth Building team has launched Designaway, an apparel printing social enterprise. This opportunity grew from identifying the technology, marketing, and design skills among residents and tying them to investments Walnut Way made in apparel printing technology. This business will provide opportunities for neighborhood employment and business training, and allow local businesses and artists to generate income by selling their branded apparel. Moreover, it will inject the neighborhood with new economic energy.

Milwaukee School of Engineering (MSOE) students are assisting with process design and standard operating procedures, and Marquette University faculty and students are supporting marketing plan development. UWM has placed a graduate student to serve as a Designaway customer service representative.

Moving Forward with Covid-19

As our world has abruptly transformed, we are now thinking through how to move CWB forward in an environment with less face-to-face interaction and more pressure on businesses to adapt to the pandemic. In response, the CWB team has:

- Co-produced with Running Rebels Community Organization the “Online Showcase” video highlighting 13 neighborhood businesses and their owners.
- Published a skill, talent and side hustle directory for neighbors to publicize their businesses and interests.
- Offered personal finance education and coaching via Zoom with the support of the YWCA.
- Planned, along with MSOE honors students, an online marketplace for neighborhood businesses to sell their products and services.

As an asset-based approach to economic development, CWB has shown how engaging Lindsay Heights residents around their skills and talents can address the historic disinvestment that has resulted in pervasive poverty as well as alarming health and social disparities. Covid-19 has exacerbated these conditions requiring an even more robust CWB effort.

We are up to the challenge!

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