



# VISION 2030

After an 18-month long discernment process, Servant Partners is announcing *Vision 2030*: a ten-year vision to **Build, Strengthen, and Bridge**.

By 2030, we want to **Build** the organization up to 30-40 sites which are addressing the 9 Signs of a Transforming Community. This will require us to roughly double our current number of sites and staff. We will also empower our staff and local partners to flourish spiritually and professionally.

We will **Strengthen** our organization so that our structures and communications systems equip people for the work God has called them to. We hope to increase our funding significantly in order to bolster both our local work and recruiting of new staff. We want to be

a thriving organization where people of any cultural and socio-economic background can answer God's call to love marginalized urban communities.

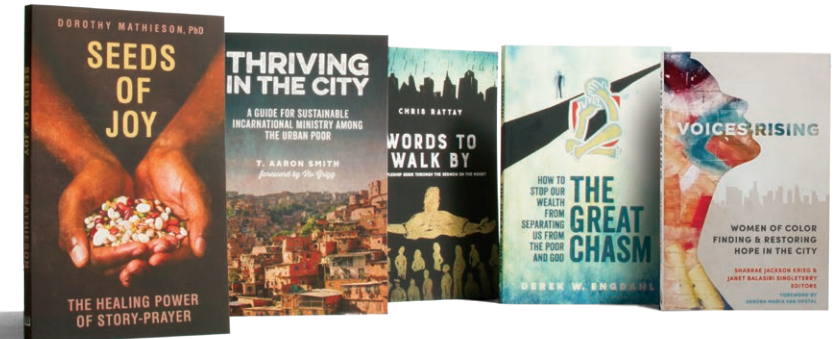
Finally, we will **Bridge** our U.S. organization to other emerging national movements committed to addressing urban poverty. By 2030, we desire to develop a truly global organization with several indigenously-led national movements, of which the U.S. movement will be a part. This is the most stretching aspect of our vision, but it recognizes what the Spirit is already doing in other parts of the world.

Please pray for us as we start to live into this new vision for the next season of growth. If you feel led to give towards this vision, you can do so at [www.servantpartners.org/donate](http://www.servantpartners.org/donate).

## SERVANT PARTNERS PRESS

RESOURCES FOR MINISTRY AMONG THE URBAN POOR

Currently available at [ServantPartnersPress.org](http://ServantPartnersPress.org), Amazon, and other major booksellers



- Seeds of Joy: The Healing Power of Story-Prayer**

by Dorothy Mathieson, PhD
- Thriving in the City: A Guide for Sustainable Incarnational Ministry Among the Urban Poor**

by T. Aaron Smith
- Words to Walk By: A Discipleship Guide through the Sermon on the Mount**

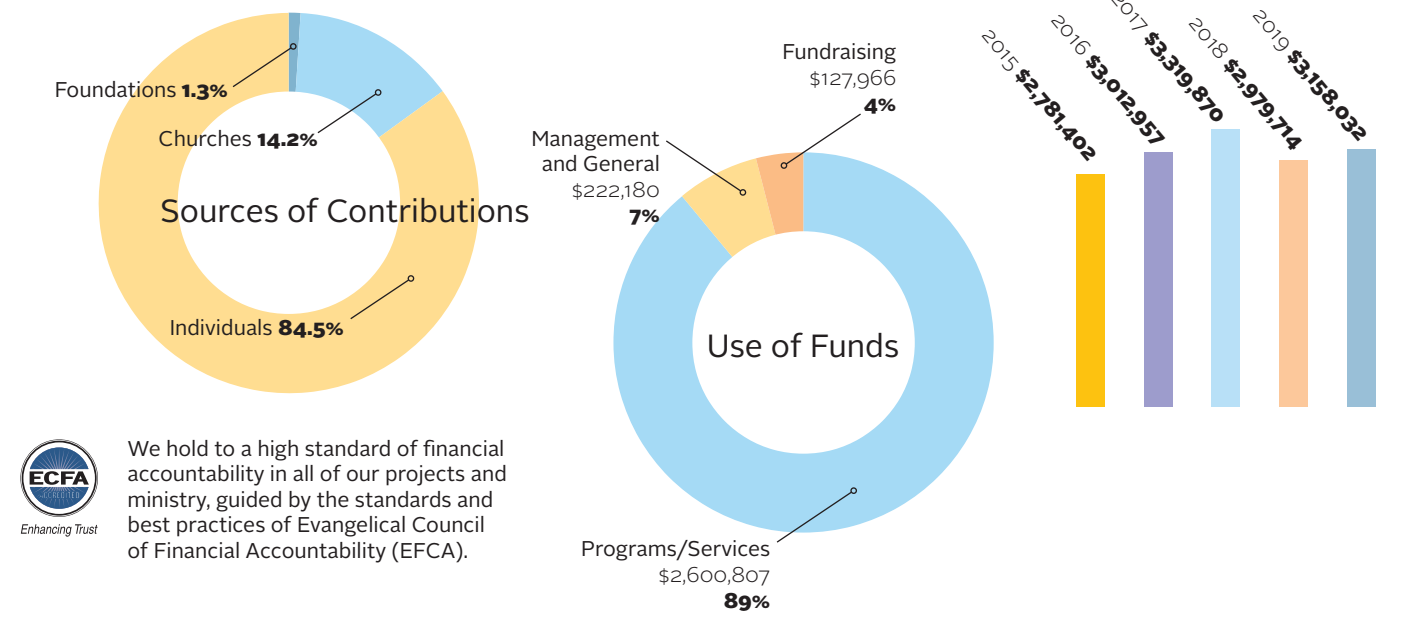
by Chris Rattay  
*soon to be out on audiobook*
- The Great Chasm: How to Stop Our Wealth from Separating Us from the Poor and God**

by Derek W. Engdahl
- Voices Rising: Women of Color Finding and Restoring Hope in the City**

edited by Shabrae Jackson Krieg and Janet Balasiri Singleterry

- GIVE** online at [servantpartners.org](http://servantpartners.org)
- PRAY** for Servant Partners, our staff, and the communities where we work. Join our mailing list at [servantpartners.org](http://servantpartners.org) to get regular updates on our work and prayer requests.
- FOLLOW** us on Facebook (/servantpartners) and Twitter (@ServantPartners)
- PARTICIPATE** in one of our internships. We offer short-term domestic and international opportunities, in addition to our two-year program. Email us for more information.
- JOIN US!** Work to break the cycle of urban poverty. Email us to learn more about joining Servant Partners staff.

## 2019 FINANCES



**COVID-19 RESPONSE** If you are interested in supporting urban poor communities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, visit [www.servantpartners.org/covid19](http://www.servantpartners.org/covid19).

# 2019 ANNUAL REPORT



Transforming Communities with the Urban Poor

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We live in challenging times. The world is swept by a pandemic that affects rich and poor alike. But urban poor communities will suffer the brunt of it. At our sites, our staff have supplied basic necessities to neighbors and mobilized their communities into response.

Additionally, the pandemic of racism continues inflicting sickening violence against the African-American community. Amid the murder of George Floyd and countless others, many lament continued abuses of power and disregard for Black life. We too grieve and seek justice.

In such times, it is tempting to grow anxious and despondent. We may be tempted to focus on ourselves, or give in to despair. However, in I Thessalonians 4:13, Paul says that those of us who trust in Jesus cannot live like those who have no hope. It is precisely in times like these that the people of God must live out the Kingdom with generosity, justice, servanthood, and compassion.

Although we are actively responding to these crises, Servant Partners is not primarily a relief agency. Rather, we are committed to the lengthy work of equipping people to seek holistic transformation in themselves and their communities, empowered by the Holy Spirit. We desire to see marginalized communities strengthened and flourishing despite hardships.

Growth is a sign of hope. God calls us not to settle for survival, but to pray for the growth of His holistic Kingdom, for the growth of the body of Christ and of the Spirit's work in our lives. Evil, like a weed or virus, can grow too, but we can rest assured that the Kingdom's expansion cannot be slowed. And one day, the Kingdom will choke out all that is invasive.

In Jesus' Hope,  
Derek and Lisa Engdahl  
General Directors



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## THRIVING AT THE BORDER

### A Church Welcomes and Develops Migrant Leaders

#### SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Gisela hails from San Pedro Sula, Honduras—known as the “murder capital of the world.” Fleeing gang violence, deindustrialization, and widespread corruption, Gisela migrated to Eastside San Antonio, Texas. When she encountered Iglesia La Luz en el Barrio, she found a new home.

“This church has helped me a lot, and I feel very welcome here,” she said. “I host Bible studies at my house in Spanish, which have been very good for my family. The church is also helping me prepare for marriage with my partner of nine years, because we want to be obedient to God in every area of our lives.”

Gisela’s story of transformation is one of many at La Luz en el Barrio. The church congregation of 100 is made up completely of Eastside locals, mainly migrants from Latin America and longtime African American residents. When Servant Partners staff Jennie and Mark Cloherty planted the church four years ago, they sought to

minister to an increasingly diverse neighborhood.

When we first arrived, we noticed that most churches weren’t active with people in the neighborhood,” Mark reflected. “We wanted to start a new expression of church in the community, where everyone living here would feel welcome.”

Though their call was strong, Jennie and Mark hit several walls. Without other staff or local help, they initially did everything themselves—from preaching to childcare. Overwhelmed, they decided to shift their focus from perfecting Sunday services to developing local leaders. After they invited neighbors to start initiatives within the church, leaders stepped up. And La Luz en el Barrio thrived.

Today, local leaders are a driving force within the church. Sixteen local leaders regularly minister in various capacities within the church. They completed an English discipleship school with eight leaders, and plan to start a Spanish discipleship school this year. While the Mexico-United States border creates strong language divisions, two of the church’s four Bible studies are in Spanish, and both Spanish and English members meet together monthly

to sustain relationships with one another.

“We’ve seen God break down barriers of culture and segregation that have existed in neighborhoods like this,” Mark said. “People are building relationships with one another, and God is working through very difficult and impossible circumstances in peoples’ lives.”

Jennie and Mark are also increasingly involved at the border, working with organizations and migrants in navigating the complex and traumatic terrain of border migration. When Gisela’s brother was detained by immigration enforcement for six months, La Luz en el Barrio helped her family access legal support. He’s since returned to his family.

“We’ve gone through four, five situations like that,” Mark recounted. “God has taught us much about church-planting among people who have experienced significant trauma. We’ve learned that this is slow work, and there is much need for patience.”

Life at the border can be defined by hostile barriers, but La Luz en el Barrio stands

as a thriving beacon of refuge, healing, and community in Eastside San Antonio.

## WELDING THERAPY

### A Welding Program Quietly Disciples Students

#### PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

“We need to talk about Jesus more in this class!” Hector exclaimed. Dan’s face went pale with shock. Hector was not a pastor or priest, but a street-hardened neighborhood leader challenging Dan to share his faith. As they talked, Dan realized that God was using Hector to shape their welding program—not simply benefit from it.

When Dan Anderson stumbled into a welding project during his internship with Servant Partners in South Los Angeles, he never anticipated what would come of it. Two years later, he and his wife Denise moved to a predominantly Puerto Rican and African American neighborhood in North Philadelphia, where he enrolled in a nearby welding



program. Through the class, he connected with his neighbor Hector Pérez, and they began dreaming together about creating a similar program to meet their community’s needs. After much prayer, planning, and partnership, Relgnite Philly was born—a community-driven welding and fabrication shop that supports North Philadelphia with affordable job training, community projects, and a welcoming space.

Since its inception two and a half years ago, Relgnite Philly has blossomed into a fruitful welding program. They have completed six classes with 36 students, and in the last three, every student received a welding credential. But most remarkably, Dan’s ministry through Servant Partners has given the program a uniquely holistic focus.

“It’s more than a job training

program,” Dan said. “We’ve built a sense of community within the class. People engage in round table discussions and Bible studies, whereas in most welding schools, people work by themselves and it’s purely skills-focused. Though a job can be transformative, there are deeper things in people’s lives that God is interested in working on. We’re not about achieving a middle-class lifestyle; we’re about God bringing transformation in people’s whole beings.”

At Relgnite Philly, students learn welding skills—but also engage in team-building activities on topics like perseverance. The program’s four local leaders connect students’ professional and personal lives, equipping them with tools to manage both.

Often lacking a supportive community and positive social spaces in the neighborhood,

students are eager to immerse themselves in these conversations. Many of them have been through prison or rehabilitation programs, and Relgnite Philly’s program offers a rare space for personal, professional, and spiritual development.

“This class has been an amazing escape from outside drama,” one student said. “When I go into the booth and put my helmet down, it’s just three hours of me and that metal. I get to work on myself for a little while, and not worry about everything else going on in my life. It’s therapy.”

Students coined the term “welding therapy” to describe the program: a chance to not only leave the drama of daily life—but also step into holistic professional and personal development.

“I’ve learned to let God grow this program the way he wants to,” said Dan. “God isn’t sending us as only a jobs program; he’s been sending us to work on community projects and peoples’ character. It’s quiet—but transformational—discipleship.”

What started with an unexpected opportunity in Dan’s internship evolved into a locally-led ministry, connecting neighbors across North Philadelphia with a



#### GENTLY PERSEVERING

Overwhelmed with family challenges, Evan [above] wanted to give up on welding. Dan and Hector encouraged him, gently inviting him to persevere through the class. And he did! He received his certification and landed an excellent job at North Philadelphia’s regional transportation service. When he returned to speak to the students, he shared that he couldn’t have made it without Dan and Hector’s encouragement—something that doesn’t happen often in most welding programs.

6 CLASSES

4 LOCAL LEADERS

6 FEMALE STUDENTS

36 STUDENTS

100% OF STUDENTS RECEIVED WELDING CERTIFICATIONS IN LAST THREE CLASSES

spiritual haven, jobs training, and holistic discipleship.

## REFUGEES RECLAIM HOPE

### Refugees Experience Hope Through Civic Leadership

#### THE MIDDLE EAST

How do you measure a community’s hope? Servant Partners staff James and Zoe Williams have been asking this question as they journey with a Middle Eastern refugee community awaiting resettlement.

“We don’t just want to cultivate hope for the future, but hope for today,” Zoe said. “Often, our neighbors will talk pessimistically about the present and optimistically about the future. They’ll say, ‘Life here is hell; we can’t wait to leave for America.’ We want to change the way our neighbors see their lives.”

Six years ago, James and Zoe felt a strong call to minister to refugees. But as access to war-torn countries is often limited, they relocated to the Middle East to discern other ministry opportunities. In God’s mysterious way, they ultimately found themselves living and working among a large refugee community displaced by war.

The Middle East has received millions of people fleeing war, genocide, and persecution in surrounding countries. As refugees, they are highly marginalized—enduring severe racism, poverty, and trauma. As James and Zoe spoke with neighbors, they learned that refugees and

locals alike had an unhealthy relationship with outsiders and non-governmental organizations. Due to a long history of misguided external assistance, many refugees had been disempowered and developed an unhealthy dependency on foreign aid. When James and Zoe started the community center in 2016, they aimed to support the refugee community in building upon their internal strengths.

“We wanted to help the community inspire hope amongst themselves,” Zoe said.



“There are many professionals and well-educated folks among refugees, but because they’re not in their home country, they can’t practice those things. The community center develops peoples’ gifts, skills, and assets to help others develop as well.”

Built on core values of hope, development, and family, the community center provides a space for refugees to plan and lead programs they desire in the community, replacing their former dependency with sustainable transformation. Despite strong divisions in the community, refugees are crossing tribal, religious, and gender lines to build

relationships with one another and lead this transformation.

Nadima, a young refugee woman, befriended two men in English class, Faheem and Marwan. These three come from tribes that would not normally associate with one another, and their friendship would have been frowned upon. Their classroom conversations turned into a deep friendship, and they would often be found joking together after class. After their final exam, the instructor noticed Nadima and Faheem



#### STARTING TO DREAM AGAIN

When Syed was asked about his plans for the future, he was struck. In his home country, people are so worried about living through the day, that they do not think at all about the future or discuss it with others. Through the center’s work, Syed dreams of inspiring change in future generations and wants to study history, so he can teach others and improve his home country.

3 REFUGEE LEADERS

20 REFUGEES INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZING INITIATIVES

250 REFUGEES ATTENDING COURSES

10 CLASSES

3 WORKSHOPS



Junior and Jordan’s family has lived on the Eastside for several generations before they joined La Luz en el Barrio.