BECOME is an award-winning 501c3 Center for Community Engagement and Social Change with a mission to nourish communities affected by poverty and injustice to make their vision of a thriving community a reality.

BECOME 2020 REPORT

Building Community Power

Leaders of COURAGE TO LOVE use community organizing to help Auburn Gresham residents build love assets to address infant mortality with support from BECOME and others.
LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friend,

While the trauma we experienced in 2020 wrenched our work into new channels, it also sharpened our vision. The violence and disease we experienced showed up for all of us in ways that sadly were not new for many of us. The silver lining, we believe, is those traumatic experiences have convinced many more of the urgent need to redirect our collective will toward three big goals:

**Actualization**

Each community has a stake in the common good. Community members take their destiny and wellbeing into their own hands.

**Liberation**

Structural racism has been dismantled and replaced with new systems that support community in meeting needs and realizing dreams.

**Abundance**

Culture and economy uplift individuals so communities thrive.

---

**How will we achieve the goals?** Of course – in relationship with communities and institutions, and the people who make up those communities and institutions. It’s essential to the work of BECOME that we place a consistent focus on nourishing people alongside an understanding of how to shift power and create new systems.

BECOME’s mission is to nourish communities affected by poverty and injustice to make their vision of a thriving community a reality. We bring a ‘toolbox’ of services and strategies to help institutions and community members dream and effectively turn them into reality.

The tools include community engagement and organizing, culturally responsive evaluation, community-driven strategic planning, and restorative facilitation to contribute to creating flourishing communities. We use our tools to catalyze and shape desired change and move towards transformation, creating the conditions to thrive.

Given that most of our work is with and around communities that have been affected by the pandemic and structural violence, there has been profound learning this past year. We decided to share what we’re learning in our first annual report in eight years of successful partnership with communities and institutions from the grassroots to the national level.

Thank you for reading!

With love,

Dominica McBride PhD

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

THEORY OF CHANGE

CONTEXT

VALUES

Unity
Actualization
Excellence
Truth
Love

ISSUES

Current systems have created conditions of injustice, disparities, and social fragmentation.
Low income communities and communities of color have suffered from an oppressive structure and, thus, too often are not activated to dream and make these dreams reality.

ACTIONS

Research
Relationship
Restoration

APPROACH

Culturally Responsive Practice that facilitates community creativity and activation, builds on cultural strengths of communities and co-designs, implements, and evaluates systems that works for the people.

GOALS

1. ACTUALIZATION
   Each community has a stake in the common good and takes its potential destiny and wellbeing into its own hands.

2. LIBERATION
   Structural racism has been dismantled and replaced with new systems that support community in meeting needs and realizing dreams.

3. ABUNDANCE
   Culture and economy uplift individuals and communities to thrive.

TOOLS & STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, ORGANIZING, & ADVOCACY

Activate people’s hearts and minds to move towards self and group-actualization and systems creation

FACILITATION

Engage groups to foster critical thinking, relationship building, self-care, and collective understanding and healing

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Support communities to envision and create plans that are based on collective wisdom, intentions and critical consciousness

TRAINING

Build capacity for consciousness shifting success and well-being by sharing knowledge and connecting stakeholders

POLICY & PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Conduct community research and evaluation processes for innovation and development of structures for making effective social change

CATALYTIC EVALUATION

Research, learn, and develop insights using a framework that is culturally responsive, utilization-focused, and empowerment/positive psychology oriented

OUTCOMES

SOCIAL COHESION

New, stronger relationships that ‘rebuild the village’

COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

Individuals, communities, and institutions work successfully together

EFFECTIVE ACTION

Decision-makers and systems meet stakeholders’ needs and vision

ENHANCED RESOURCES

Increased resources, insight, and capacity to achieve objectives

VALUES ACTIONS

FACILITATION

Unity
Actualization
Excellence
Truth
Love

ISSUES

Current systems have created conditions of injustice, disparities, and social fragmentation.
Low income communities and communities of color have suffered from an oppressive structure and, thus, too often are not activated to dream and make these dreams reality.

APPROACH

Culturally Responsive Practice that facilitates community creativity and activation, builds on cultural strengths of communities and co-designs, implements, and evaluates systems that works for the people.

BENEFITS

FOR INSTITUTIONS

New knowledge, data, stories, and lessons learned grounded in grassroots-level experience

Enhanced collaboration with community members and participants will create possibilities that are grounded in the needs, wisdom, & potential of their communities

More effective collaboration internally and externally

FOR COMMUNITIES & INDIVIDUALS

Activated motivation to work with neighbors towards actualization of their community

Bolstered cultural strengths, evaluative thinking, and action

Expanded skills and tools to support the actualization of their community & themselves

Greater power and voice in local and regional decision-making and systems creation

FOR SOCIETY

Greater awareness of collective potential

Increased appreciation for interpersonal and intercultural interdependence

Increased capacity to use evaluative thinking
Last March, it became clear COVID-19 would change all our lives. We convened a series of Zoom calls with partners and others on the frontlines working overtime to provide services and make sense of the day-to-day news.

During these calls, partners and colleagues detailed their responses and plans to continue serving their communities. What we learned on those calls helped to inform our response: Maximizing Impact, an initiative to amplify the positive impact frontline organizations, community members, leaders, and activists are or could be making around responding to community needs.

This includes understanding how individuals and families in the most affected communities are doing and what they need most, and getting that information back to our frontline agencies to deliver those services and care. Maximizing Impact also seeks to connect those who are currently disconnected from services and connect them to resources, help shape leaders’ decisions about allocating resources, and connect residents to each other for additional support.

One of our partners is South Shore Works, whose mission is to create a “collaboratory” that harnesses the collective power of South Shore organizations, agencies, and residents to design and create a thriving, sustainable community. As we collate responses, we’ll be able to assist South Shore Works to analyze patterns in the data and look for any gaps in services that they can then fill.

“Dominica is able to take that 30,000-foot view or vision and translate it into real street-level intervention,” says South Shore Works Executive Director Ernie Sanders. “I appreciate that range of thinking and that you’re able to do just what the program title says--to help me to understand as a community practitioner how I can fully maximize impact through the tools and resources available.”
Our Strategies

At BECOME, our mission is to create social change.

We do this by partnering with communities, asking questions, listening deeply, building relationships and helping community residents, leaders, and institutions to develop, implement, and improve a plan of action to achieve their vision of a thriving community — what we call our Culturally Responsive Community Transformation approach.

At BECOME, being Culturally Responsive means we are in a continual practice of learning about and valuing cultural differences, seeking truth, seeing the intricacies and consequence of the sociopolitical and broader context in all our lives, and catalyzing collective power with community members most impacted by oppressive policies and practices.

2020 Partners

The Faith Community of Saint Sabina

Courage to Love

At BECOME, our mission is to create social change.
CATALYTIC EVALUATION: POWER TO ASK, LEARN AND MOVE

Our process includes collectively learning what happens in a program and the effects of the program or policy, coming up with a plan to improve those effects (amplify the impact), and carry out that plan together. We engage the community in the process and teach organizations and communities to evaluate themselves so they can continue to learn and improve. Our model is one of activating and supporting empowerment.

For example, to help Chicago Foundation for Women better understand what motivates women of color donors, we designed a multi-step evaluation in which we engaged their giving circles and other groups in a visioning process, equipped volunteers with skills in evaluation methods to participate in the process, and gathered feedback from nearly 600 donors.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION: POWER TO LIBERATE

Many more organizations are focusing on issues of equity. We are happy to be a resource in this area, drawing on deep expertise and attention to transformative change and liberation. We take an inside/ outside strategy, working within lower-income communities of color to dream and achieve those dreams, and working outside and around communities to shape the mindset and efforts towards cultural humility and partnering for liberation of those who serve

Also in our toolbox

Action Research, Asset/Needs Assessments, Group Facilitation, Policy & Program Development, Organizational Development & Training
or work with communities. In 2020, we began one such journey with the Center for Health Care Strategies, which focuses on innovation in publicly financed health care for individuals with complex needs. They set a path for themselves and also an example for other organizations by moving forward on a journey of creating an internal culture of equity and liberation.

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN STRATEGIC PLANNING: POWER TO ENVISION

Our strategic planning processes help organizations and community groups develop innovative, community-rooted solutions to achieve their mission and move powerfully towards actualizing their vision.

For example, Sojourner Truth Center for Liberation and Justice in Battle Creek, Mich., was focused on building infrastructure for a revitalized community institution. We facilitated a visioning process with four generations of residents and other stakeholders from across the community.

Then, we worked backwards to begin concretizing that vision into outcomes, helping them to create a new theory of change as part of a strategic plan for the organization’s renaissance for living out the legacy of Sojourner Truth.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, ORGANIZING, & ADVOCACY: POWER TO LEAD

We help design and implement processes and strategies for community engagement and participatory leadership. Be it structural development or a necessary collective decision-making process, we have a toolbox of engagement, facilitation and meeting design tools to develop and support partnerships across stakeholder groups and engage community members in exercising their voice towards an end that works for everyone.

For example, we are working with IFF in the North Chicago community surrounding the redevelopment of Neal Math and Science Academy. Our work includes facilitating and building leadership capacity of students, parents, teachers, and administrators to shape the direction of a new school building, to inform others about the development process, and reinvigorate community pride.

With BECOME’s leadership and coordination, the community women who helped collect data and conduct focus groups exemplified the type of agency and sense of empowerment that exists within communities.

Emily Dreke, VP, Development and Communications, Chicago Foundation for Women
Leading toward structural transformation with education and research.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS AND INTERPERSONAL COMPETENCE AS EVALUATOR COMPETENCIES
In American Journal of Evaluation by Gabriela Garcia and Laurie Stevahn (March)

READ THE ARTICLE

INCITING SOCIAL CHANGE THROUGH EVALUATION
In Issue 166 of New Directions for Evaluation: Examining Issues Facing Communities of Color Today: the Role of Evaluation to Incite Change (issue co-edited by Dominica McBride), by Dominica McBride, Wanda Casillas and Jennifer LoPiccolo (July)

READ THE ARTICLE

SYSTEMS REFORM VS. SYSTEMS CREATION: EXPLORING HOW CRE CAN HELP CREATE A NEW SOCIETY
Opening Plenary at Sixth International Culturally Responsive Evaluation and Assessment Conference, by Dominica McBride (September)

VIEW THE PRESENTATION

EVALUATION HAS A KEY ROLE TO PLAY IN RACIAL EQUITY WORK
In Philanthropy News Digest, by Dominica McBride (October)

READ THE ARTICLE

Our core philosophy is that the community must be at the heart of identifying their capabilities to address their challenges and to create their desired reality.
**FINANCIALS + DONORS**

**BECOME expanded strategically** into pandemic response work such as Maximizing Impact. While we put more of our human and sweat equity into responding to the pandemic, we are actively engaging in future fundraising for our strategic neighborhood-specific and systems development initiatives.

### REVENUE & EXPENSE JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2020*

**Revenue**
- Programs & Contracts: $297,759
- Grants, Donations & Other income: $21,888
- Total: $319,647

**Expenses**
- Salaries, Benefits & Contractors: $352,127
- Operations: $33,795
- Grants, Donations & Other income: $21,888
- Total: $385,922

**Net Income**
- $66,275

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

**ASSETS & LIABILITIES**
- Total Assets: $101,973
- Net Assets: $53,973
- Total Liabilities: $48,000

* Cash basis. Unaudited 2020 financials.

---

**Thank you!**

### FOUNDATIONS + GRANTORS

- Healing Illinois Fund
  (ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES / THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST)
- Illinois Humanities Council COVID-19 Emergency Community Resilience Grant
- Meginnes Charitable Fund
- Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People
- The Faster Forward Fund
  (MARIN COMMUNITY FOUNDATION)

### INDIVIDUAL DONORS

- Shana Alford
- Nancy & John DeCherney
- Talia Euell
- Pamela Frazier-Anderson
- Emily Gates
- Jill Glenn
- Alison Hamm
- Deborah Minor Harvey
- April Hasson
- Lisa Jackson
- Stuart Barnes Jamieson
- Randall L Corley
- Camille Lemieux
- Michelle Lodge
- Maria Alexa LoPiccolo
- Mary LoPiccolo
- Joseph LoPiccolo
- Lauren LoPiccolo
- Kristy Luessen
- Francoise Lynch
- Niama Malachi
- Lisa Marie Pickens
- Rachael Marusarz
- Gordon Mayer
- Regine Mullery
- Jessica, Rebekah, Kimberly, & Albert Svevo-Cianci
  **IN MEMORY OF GINO SVEVO**
- Karen Terry
- Katherine A Tibbets
- Corrie Whitmore
- Lindi Zimmermann
FOUNDER AND CEO

**Dr. Dominica McBride PhD**
Dominica is a leading thinker on how we evolve beyond the current racial-equity paradigm, a champion of Culturally Responsive Evaluation, and a grassroots advocacy strategist.

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

**Adriana Trajkovski**
Adriana could not be happier to support a passionate and resolute team of people dedicated to social justice and community development.

SENIOR OPERATIONS AND SYSTEMS ADVOCATE

**Jen LoPiccolo MSW**
Jen is driven by the power of combining evaluation and grassroots work to make socio-political change.

EVALUATION ADVOCATE AND PROJECT COORDINATOR

**Lisa Sargent MA**
Lisa’s lessons learned from her time as a community organizer and multi-issue advocate ground her thinking around accessibility, nonprofit sustainability, and collective power building.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Cassandra Boyd MSW**
Cassandra is passionate about combining the areas of social work and program evaluation to influence data-driven change within nonprofit organizations.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Dr. Yvette D. Castaneda MPH, MBA, PhD**
Yvette is a practice/research hybrid: a community-engaged scholar with extensive experience in mixed-method research design, implementation, assessment, and evaluation as well as data collection and analysis.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Dr. Gabriela Garcia PhD**
Gabriela is driven by a commitment to advocate for and nourish communities that have been affected by poverty and injustice.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Casey Solomon-Filer MA**
Casey’s passion for Culturally Responsive Evaluation stems from interest in how distributions of power influence the everyday lives of individuals and communities, and how evaluation can serve as a tool to help redistribute power towards a more just world.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Dr. Keisha Farmer-Smith PhD**
Keisha has partnered with organizations dedicated to supporting safe, healthy spaces for youth for 18 years.

EVALUATOR ADVOCATE

**Dr. Dara Lewis PhD**
Dara is guided by the principle of using research and evaluation as tools for building capacity within communities and increasing knowledge by drawing on cultural strengths.

SENIOR PARTNER ADVOCATE

**Dr. Keisha Farmer-Smith PhD**
BECOME, as an organization, speaks openly of love, the ultimate manifestation of respect married with deep caring.

BECOME Advisor Michael Quinn Patton, PhD
2021 is the year that we can show and share love for our communities in service to our goals of actualization, liberation and abundance. We’re currently working on a book on the power of women to lead change in our communities, responding to the COVID-19 pandemic with Maximizing Impact among other projects that will empower community transformation.

WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US ON THIS PATH.
HERE ARE A FEW WAYS YOU CAN BE INVOLVED AND CONNECT WITH THIS WORK:

Invest
As a 501c3 nonprofit, contributions to our vision and work are tax deductible. We welcome your donation!

Partner
We’re always glad to discuss collaborations around any of our core strategies with prospective partners & community members. Please contact us at info@becomecenter.org.

Keep in touch
Visit us online at BECOMECENTER.ORG
Sign up to receive email communications and connect with us via our social media.