Meet Countryside’s Service Partners

The mission of Partners for Our Community (POC) -- formerly known as Palatine Opportunity Center -- is to connect under-served residents in the Palatine area to services and resources to build a community of empowered people, healthy families and vibrant neighbors.

POC works collectively with providers housed in the center along with outside agencies to provide programs including the ICompete Youth Program (summer camp, mentoring, sport and art clinics) and the Edgebrook Community Center, which offers after school homework assistance, youth clubs and children’s activities.

Family Learning Lab The work of building stronger families and stronger communities takes patience, time and the investment of many people and groups working together. Immigrants and other adults living in Palatine, Hoffman Estates and Rolling Meadows attend POC’s Learning Lab to receive job skills training, English as a Second Language (ESL) conversation, social emotional support, GED skills help, and to participate in a book club. Skilled professionals and volunteers, including several Countrysiders, provide these services as well as citizenship preparation, education certificates, and employment opportunities.

Health and Wellness Studio In 2017, funds raised by Countryside were used to help create and furnish a health and wellness studio at the POC facility on Rand Road in Palatine. The studio is also supported by Northwest Community Hospital. Yoga, meditation, sewing and other health and wellness programming is offered daily.

This year, members of the studio’s sewing team designed, made and donated a Christmas quilt to Countryside’s Time and Talent Auction.

Community School POC and Community Consolidated School District 15 joined forces in 2015 to offer educational programs to the District families and students in need. The project is unique in that programs are not only available to students, but to their families as well. Students stay after school for academic help and join with other students and their families in the evening where they participate in learning enrichment activities such as cooking, health & wellness activities, music, and arts activities. These programs help build stronger families and more confident and successful students in the high-risk population that participates in these services.

ROOTS Community Garden is a vegetable and flower garden run by women leaders from POC. Their goal is to provide POC clients and families in need with healthy foods and in the process, build a stronger, connected community. At the height of the growing season, nearly 70 adult portions of vegetables were picked daily!

The ROLE (Reaching Out, Lifting to Excellence) program helps Spanish speakers transition into active participation in the community through Women’s Leadership Classes. The classes range from public policy to self-esteem. Students build a personal or community-centered action plan that helps build programming for POC.

See more at POC.org and follow POC on Facebook and Twitter

For more information, contact Outreach Steering Committee member Janet McDonnell, mcdonnells@sbcglobal.net
Faith in Place empowers Illinois people of all faiths to be leaders in caring for the Earth, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities. Since 1999, Faith in Place has worked with more than 1,000 houses of worship throughout Illinois to protect our common land, water, and air. With outreach staff working across the state and office located in Chicago, the North & West Suburbs, Lake County, and Central Illinois, Faith in Place inspires faithful people to care for the Earth through four program areas: Energy & Climate Change, Sustainable Food & Land Use, Water Preservation, and Advocacy. Faith in Place is the Illinois Affiliate of Interfaith Power and Light.

North & West Roots
With outreach staff working across the state and offices located in Chicago, Lake County, and Central Illinois, in 2017 Faith in Place added a fourth office location in Palatine on Vermont Street to put down long term roots in the North & West Suburbs. This will help us solidify our relationship with our current N&W faith partners and create new relationships as we work to build healthier communities together.

Youth Eco-Ambassador Program
Faith in Place provides environmental education during the summer for our beloved youth. Ages range from 14-18, and applications are accepted at the beginning of every summer from our faith partners to send a youth representative from their house of worship to join Faith in Place staff to put their faith into action. Staff work with youth to learn more about environmental issues, leadership development, and outreach methods. Field trips to see environmental education in action is a key part of the program.

By the end of the program the Eco-Ambassadors are empowered to work and provide leadership with existing Green Teams at their faith communities. Training includes education, connection, and advocacy in all of Faith in Place's program areas. In 2018, with CCUU’s generous 2017 Time & Talent donations, we expanded the program to the N&W and three youth participated in the Water Preservation and Camping weeks. With further support we will expand the N&W program to include more youth participants and lengthen the N&W program to three weeks.

Winter Farmer’s Markets Each winter, November through March, Faith in Place partners with faith communities to host a series of indoor farmer’s markets on Saturdays and Sundays. The farmer’s markets provide an additional source of income for local vendors during the off-season, promote sustainable farming methods and economic justice for regional farm families, encourage healthy, wholesome eating, and support the building of relationships between producers and consumers. Illinois Link Cards/SNAP Benefits are accepted at all of our markets; this increases the affordability and accessibility of locally produced food for economically disadvantaged Illinoisans.

Smart Energy Program
The Smart Energy program works to educate houses of worship and their members about energy efficiency and clean energy options. It has helped many houses of worship in the North & West suburbs -- including Countryside -- and across the state to lower their utilities bills, reduce pollution, and install clean energy.

See more at FaithInPlace.org and follow them on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @faithinplace

For more information, contact Outreach Steering Committee member Tom Frech, tdfrech@gmail.com
Interfaith Community for Detained Immigrants (ICDI) is a non-profit, faith-based organization of staff and volunteers called to respond to the suffering of adults and children affected by our broken and inhumane immigration system and advocate for change.

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Jail Visitation
Teams of volunteers visit people in detention weekly in four detention centers: McHenry, IL; Kankakee, IL; Kenosha, WI; and Dodge, WI. ICDI puts $10 into the commissary account of anyone with a balance under $10 so they can make phone calls and purchase necessities.

Unaccompanied Children’s Interfaith Ministry
Teams of volunteers visit immigrant children who came to the US without a parent. The children live in group homes run by Interfaith Alliance. ICDI visits include music, art, and interfaith spiritual activities.

Deportation Ministry
Every Friday people are deported through Kankakee, IL. ICDI volunteers provide pastoral care to people being deported and their families. They also board and pray on the buses before they depart.

Court Watch
Volunteers provide a presence in immigration court and document hearings to note irregularities or concerns and forward them to our legal partners at the National Immigrant Justice Center.

Release Accompaniment
Teams of volunteers respond to hotline calls to accompany people who released from detention and need clothing, food, transportation to get to family or friends somewhere in the US.

Houses of Hospitality
ICDI has several residences for people who are released from detention and do not have family or friends in the US. In the first level of care, participants receive case management, legal referrals, room and board, medical and dental care, transportation, English lessons if needed, and education or training for self-sufficiency. ICDI does not receive government funds and is entirely dependent on private donations.

See more at ICDI Chicago.org and follow them on Facebook

For more information, contact Outreach Steering Committee member
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