

Dearest Friends and Family,

Hope this letter finds you well! We can't say it enough... we really are SO grateful for your support, prayers, and efforts with us in our call to serve Jesus among the poor! As we do this together, our prayer is that you too are experiencing the indescribable blessing of communing with the King among the hungry, naked, and lonely (Matt 25). Your loving, ongoing journey with us is a joy and encouragement beyond measure.

As always, there seems to be an uncontainable amount of activity and development here at MCD. The upside of this relentless pace is that God, in the midst of it all, continues to lead us into new and exciting frontiers. Undoubtedly this season at MCD is one of growth. Therefore, the question we've been considering is, "What has God put into our DNA that He desires to replicate outwards?"

Since the inception of Mosaic Community Development in 2001, one truth has been confirmed time and again: the formation of Christ-directed relationships is an ingredient *par excellence* of holistic human transformation. While nationally there is a relatively strong representation of viable (and very necessary) social relief and programmatic organizations working tirelessly in the massive work of affronting poverty, there are few groups focusing their attention on the foundational component of relationship.

With the desire to more broadly integrate this "missing piece" into the collective effort of addressing poverty, MCD is working toward expanding its efforts in the development of healthy, transformational relationships across socio-economic boundaries. There are several benefits in incorporating relational ministries within cities currently offering social programs for the impoverished: relational ministries complement current, existing social programs (non-competitive and low risk of service duplication) and markedly make room for the general public (particularly the Church) to share with an individual/family/community in overcoming poverty.

In this desire, and with great anticipation, MCD is currently working towards the development of a contextualized ministry location in the historic Park Avenue (Omaha) neighborhood. Throughout the last twenty years this predominately Hispanic neighborhood has experienced profound change. Once booming economically, renters now primarily occupy the Park Avenue neighborhood (89% renter occupied), many in high-rise multi-unit slums. Additionally, 20% of Park Avenue's residents live below the poverty threshold, and an informal economy of trafficking drugs and people for sex has developed in light of the area's recent economic depletion.

The outlook in the Park Avenue neighborhood may sound bleak, but there is substantial reason to remain hopeful. Within each of its blocks resides an enormous wealth of social capital, the critical resource with which MCD's involvement begins—developing relationships, learning from our neighbors, and envisioning together what is possible for this neighborhood (and so many like it), as a result of the Kingdom come in Jesus. Please pray and work with us toward the restoration of hope in this neighborhood and all those God may lead us to in the future.

Kingdom Come,
The Grays