

EASTERN STAR CHURCH the **ROCK** initiative

renewing our community for the kingdom

And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels;
and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him.
Malachi 3:17 (KJV)



HOME | PARTNERSHIPS | COMMUNITY

SAFETY | INFRASTRUCTURE | ADVOCACY | NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION
FINANCIAL SERVICES | EMPLOYMENT | TRANSPORTATION
EDUCATION | JOB-TRAINING | COMMUNITY RESOURCES

HISTORY OF ESC CARE



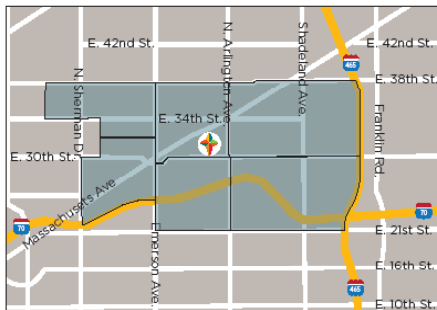
Eastern Star Church (ESC) Care, established in 2001 as JEWEL Human Services, provides a variety of services to address the needs of the less fortunate, including a food and clothing pantry, emergency assistance, local/global missions, counseling services, and

scholarships. ESC Care also partners with area service organizations to connect both members of the church and the greater Indianapolis community with programs that focus on more specific needs.

CHALLENGES

Eastern Star Church's Main Campus (East 30th Street) neighborhood is blessed with strong assets such as schools, public safety facilities, a library, parks, and available public transportation, but it also has many significant challenges. Data about the area within a one-mile radius of the church paints a bleak picture of the long-term

effects of poverty and broken families. High poverty rates and unemployment, low household income and home values, and virtually no access to financial services and healthy food options are all disturbing indicators of a neighborhood in economic decline.



The ROCK Initiative (one-mile radius)

THE ROCK INITIATIVE

ESC is compelled by the church's mission and faith to reach out and work to improve the quality of life in this community. Church-initiated projects involving diverse community partners will focus on:

- Building a sense of community among neighbors.
- Enhancing the range of housing options.
- Growing overall financial security of residents.
- Enhancing both formal and informal educational opportunities.

UNDERSTANDING THE NEED

Eastern Star Church's Main Campus is on the eastern edge of the 46218 zip code, an area of the city with an overwhelmingly African-American population (73%). According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010-2014 American Community Survey Five Year Estimates:

- **38.2%** of the residents in 46218 (compared to 21% of Marion County residents) are living at or below the poverty line.*
- Household income for residents is **\$25,292** (versus \$42,378 for Marion County residents).*
- Unemployment is **4.6%**, compared to 4% for Marion County residents.*
- The area has a significant lack of healthy food and grocery options as well as minimal choices for non-predatory financial services.

Rather than trying to tackle the overwhelming needs of the entire 46218 area, ESC believes it can make the biggest impact closer to home, and will focus its initial efforts on the one-mile radius around its campus. This radius does extend slightly outside the eastern border of the 46218 area, though the data for the six census tracts that make up the focus area present an even starker picture of a neighborhood in decline:

- Between 11% and 28% (depending on the census tract) of the nearly 6,000 housing units in this area are vacant.
- Following the 2008 financial crisis, home real estate prices generally have begun to recover – but not for homeowners in this area. Homes in all six of these census tracts declined in value between 2010 and 2014.
- Most disturbing, the cost burden for housing (the percent of a residents' income that is spent on housing) is alarmingly high. Conventional public policy indicators suggest that no more than 30% of a household's income should be spent on housing; the cost burden in this area varies from 42% to 61%.

*Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Best Places, Mapping the Local Area

THE ROCK INITIATIVE

Eastern Star Church is committed to building partnerships and securing resources to nurture a sustainable community where neighbors care about improving their own lives and each other's.

This initiative has four specific goal areas:



Goal 1: Build a sense of community among the people who live and work in this neighborhood.

Strategic focus areas:

- Neighborhood Association creation
- Branding/identity
- Safety
- Public sector infrastructure investments
- Support services
- Advocacy
- Food availability



Goal 3: Grow the overall financial security of residents living in this neighborhood.

Strategic focus areas:

- Non-predatory financial services
- Financial education programs
- Neighborhood business support for hiring local residents
- Expand job access for people who have been away from the workforce for extended periods of time
- Assistance with expungements
- Public and private transportation services



Goal 2: Enhance the range of housing options available within a one-mile radius of Eastern Star Church.

Strategic focus areas:

- Building 25-30 new homes
- Building a mixed-use facility with rental units, community services, and businesses
- Rehab of owner-occupied homes
- Legal partnerships to assist in landlord tenant disputes



Goal 4: Enhance both formal and informal educational opportunities available for neighborhood residents.

Strategic focus areas:

- Regular educational programs focused on building self-sufficiency skills
- Leverage church and community resources to help improve K-12 educational institutions
- After-school programming in school facilities or at the church
- Job-training certifications
- Early childhood education in partnership with Day Early Learning and Arlington Woods School 99
- GED and college-readiness programming



INITIATIVE OUTCOMES

The ROCK Initiative represents a long-term plan for comprehensive community development. ESC's five-year expectations are simple but powerful:

- Individual/family buyers will move into 25-30 new homes in this neighborhood. This project is already under way, with up to five new homes being built in partnership with Habitat for Humanity scheduled to be completed in 2017. Ultimately, Eastern Star Church and its partners plan 25-30 total units for development over the next five years.
- A functioning and self-sustaining neighborhood association will be established. A strong neighborhood association of concerned advocates who can effect change will be critical to the overall success of this plan. ESC is committed to recruiting neighborhood leaders, working with them to build skills and trust, and ensuring they are connected with community development resources to ensure that an effective and self-sustaining neighborhood group develops.
- Eastern Star Church will be one of many financial investors in the neighborhood. ESC has already committed to developing new housing units and to providing staff support to spearhead the initiatives in this plan. However, completion of the entire plan will require ESC to involve many partners. By developing partnerships with the city, corporations, individual investors, and nonprofit organizations, ESC is committed to bringing additional financial investments into this neighborhood to strengthen the community for both residents and employers.

ESC recognizes that it probably will take a decade or longer for the true impact of this work to be noticeable: The decades-long decline in economic indicators for this neighborhood will be reversed to show positive improvement. Examples include:

- The percentage of neighborhood residents living in poverty will decline.
- The median home value of homes in the area will increase.
- The median income of residents will increase.
- The percentage of households spending more than 30% on housing costs will decline.
- The number of family households headed by a husband and wife will exceed the number of family households headed by women with no husbands present.
- There will be options for non-predatory financial services and healthy grocery choices within walking distance for residents.

EASTERN STAR CHURCH

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