

PRESENCE

PROJECTRENEWAL@REVEALED.NET | 563-324-0800

WWW.PROJECTRENEWAL.NET

2024



PROJECT
RENEWAL

Project Renewal celebrates

50 years.

One hand on her hip, the other hand making a big, circular wave, seven-year-old Khamorah skipped her way down the sidewalk and exclaimed, "Hiiiyaa, I like the building you're building." I asked her, "Do you know they are building that for you and all the Project Renewal kids?" Demurely she replied, "yes." We walked across the street, hand in hand, to meet some of our construction team workers to make sure they heard our appreciation for the work they are performing.

Another day, nine-year-old Laniah inquisitively polled kids and adults at the Treat House, "We already have a Treat House, what are we going to call the new house?" Her concern has us all brainstorming and thinking the right name will reveal itself as we start occupying our additional space.

These are a couple of many favorite memories this summer. This was also after we received the structural report about the next phase of Project Renewal's expansion/renovation project, 510 Warren Street, our current program house. Nobody expected to hear that the foundation of the house is beyond repair and nearing the end of its functional life. It took me a few days, err... weeks, to digest this change.

As my duties have expanded, finding time to spend with the kids is important to me and the best part of my day. The kids teach me as much as I hope we are teaching them.

It's the kids who....

- ▶ Lift spirits
- ▶ Shape lives
- ▶ Give meaning and value
- ▶ Are eager to learn and grow
- ▶ Build our community
- ▶ Develop our future
- ▶ Have needs
- ▶ Deserve the best we have to offer

Please join us as we recognize Project Renewal's 50 years of serving our community and help us build a strong future for another 50+ years. I recently heard someone say, "you can't be around for 50 years and not expect to change." While Project Renewal's mission is the same, we recognize opportunities for growth to meet the needs of our community. Thank you for believing in us and thank you for your support.

Ann Schwickerath



Laniah, looking forward to the completion of our new building! (Project Renewal's new building in the background)

Working for Project Renewal really changed my life; I wouldn't be the social worker I am today without you!

ALYSSA ORONA, ST. AMBROSE UNIVERSITY '22

A word from the Board of Directors

Dear Friends of Project Renewal,

For half a century Project Renewal has provided a stable, loving environment for our students, their families and the entire neighborhood and community. This year, as we celebrate fifty years of presence, we are proud to announce the completion of Phase 1 of Project Renewal's Campaign effort with the construction of the new Youth Center. The new Youth Center is a perfect way to celebrate 50 years of service as it will enhance our mission and provide expanded opportunities for our youth in academics, extra-curricular activities and well-being.

With the completion of the Phase 1 Youth Center, Project Renewal is now turning its attention to Phases 2 and 3 of our campaign efforts. Phase 2 is the rebuilding of the "Treat House" at 513 Warren Street and Phase 3 is the renovation of staff offices and housing at 906 W. 5th St. As you know from any home remodel, surprises always seem to emerge. For us, engineers found significant structural issues with the 99-year-old "Treat House" that requires a tear down and rebuild. While not desired, this will enable Project Renewal to create a new "Treat House" to last well into the future. However, because of this unexpected news, the budget for all three phases increased to \$2.5 million. To date, we have raised \$1.7 million of the total goal and our fundraising continues.

Your support and generosity have made Project Renewal's half century of service possible. We hope you will continue to partner with us as we continue to move forward with Phases 2 and 3 of our Campaign efforts with a pledge or contribution of any amount. Please reach out to visit our new Youth Center and see the daily good work and miracles Project Renewal's presence creates. Thank you for your friendship as we work to create an enduring future for our students and their families.

With much gratitude,
Alex Cahill,
President, Board of Directors



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volunteer spotlight

Bill Gallin



Q: How did you get involved at Project Renewal?

A: I heard they were looking for adults to read with children for 30-60 minutes a week in their Summer 2023 program.

Q: Why do you like to volunteer at Project Renewal?

A: The love I feel from the staff, other volunteers and students with whom I work. It is a privilege to get to spend time with them each week. Being around them makes me happy.

Q: What would you like other people to know about Project Renewal?

A: Working with these students will refresh you. They are imaginative, creative, and very grateful. It is an amazing return on a small investment of your time. The volunteers and staff are top notch and I'm proud to be part of this community.

Program happenings

Project Renewal received a QC River Connections grant through the Quad Cities Community Foundation and the Clean River Advisory Council. Together, we've been developing a middle school curriculum for programs like ours to explore a variety of environmental issues facing Mississippi River communities in the Quad Cities. The kids learned about and watched eagles flying by the lock and dam, where they also toured with the Army Corps of Engineers. A visit to the electronic recycling facility and the land-fill with the Waste Commission of Scott County expanded knowledge of community responsibilities and future job possibilities. They looked into TerraCycle, a company committed to dealing with hard to recycle waste. Now they teach younger kids to sort their recycling into appropriate bins. During the summer, we were able to take all K-12 kids to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium in Dubuque – a phenomenal experience across the board. They're looking forward to a fishing trip soon!

In addition to environmental exploration, the middle school kids headed to Scott County Park to camp overnight. There they met another cohort, members of the 17-year cicadas. After adjusting to the noise and large bugs attaching to their clothes, the kids managed to swim, hike, eat, and play cards. They even saw a couple of shooting stars while heading to their tents for the night after the campfire.

One of the benefits of Project Renewal: Watching our kids grow up. We provide programs and opportunities for youth in all grades K-12, a whole family can come here, we have cohorts – elementary, middle school and high school. Whether a child starts attending in Kindergarten, 3rd grade or 6th grade they can, and 95% or more do, stay with us through high school graduation with a plan they create for life after high school.



After completing her Advanced Individual Training as Military Police this fall, Isis will return to Iowa and begin her college education. When asked about her experience, she had this to share: *"I feel like I'm changing for the better, and I'll definitely come visit when I get back. You meet people from around the world. I don't regret my decision at all."*

We are incredibly proud!

CARL'S 30 YEARS AT project renewal

As one volunteer summarized:

"I cannot overstate the importance of having Carl working with the kids at Project Renewal. Students know he expects them to put in effort to learn and that he will support them if they do. He is encouraging, kind and steady with them. He does not avoid the difficult conversations, such as 'You are not trying and that only hurts you.' Plus, with his tech, gaming and popular culture knowledge, Carl easily connects with the kids in upper elementary and middle school - critical years for establishing mentor relationships - but he's also VERY popular with the lower elementary kids."

Carl is engaging with students and volunteers, asks questions and is always trying to learn more about each individual. Project Renewal could not ask for a better Site Director and IT coordinator.

Carl Callaway has been instrumental to Project Renewal's success throughout the years. He provides stability with his enthusiasm, care for each student and his knowledge of how best to create a supportive environment. Project Renewal's daily programs are enhanced by Carl's presence and the organization is incredibly blessed by his dedication and many years of experience with the daily operations.

As many people note, Carl is exceptional with Project Renewal's students. He cares deeply about each child and works with each student towards academic success. He is known for his ability to set high standards for each child, but also meets



each child where they are in terms of ability. He has a knack for piquing interest in fun projects that involve learning.

He works with kids at all age levels figuring out electronic circuits, using a drawing pad and digital art program, learning to assemble things by reading instructions, and looking at diagrams and using tools. Carl generously allows students to take part in his activities to allow students to learn a new trade. This is but one example of how Carl finds innovative ways to explain and teach our students, especially to children who may process information in a different method.

Carl's focus on ensuring Project Renewal's budget goes towards student activities is exemplified by his informal status as Project Renewal's "handyman." His efforts and abilities in this regard contribute to Project Renewal's ability to operate

efficiently and save precious resources for student activities. Carl was a great asset in laying the foundation for Project Renewal to acquire our new property. He has been a great visionary imagining how Project Renewal can best use the future space to support our organization's programs. Simply put, Carl combines great imagination with his ability to concretely take and suggest steps to move projects forward.

Overall, Project Renewal could not be more fortunate to have an employee like Carl to support its daily operations. He is a terrific role model for students and goes above and beyond in his work to ensure Project Renewal succeeds in its mission. Project Renewal is a better organization because of his presence, wisdom and care for the students we serve. We greatly appreciate his efforts and value his vision and many talents.



“We are lucky to have a nice, caring, understandable person like you. You are the person I can talk to about anything. I can trust you and count on you. We have good talks and when I'm down you never fail to make me smile or laugh.”

“Thank you for always playing with me! I love making bracelets with you. You are very kind and positive. Thank you for all you do for us!”

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