



ANNUAL REPORT 2017

Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY

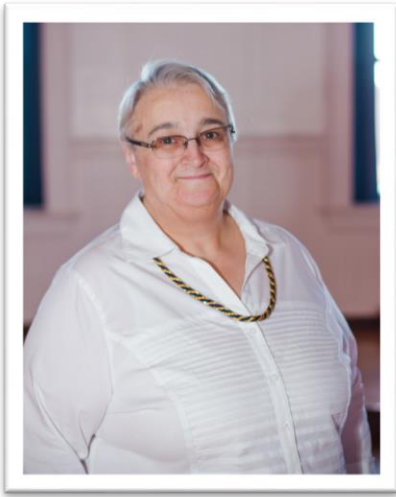
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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The Polish Community Center of Buffalo d/b/a the Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY (the Matt Urban Center) has been proudly serving the East Side of Buffalo, the town of Cheektowaga and a small portion of West Seneca for the past **42 years**. The Matt Urban Center continues to fulfill its mission of revitalizing neighborhoods, serving families and changing lives by bringing together public and private resources in an effort to assist community residents in becoming self-sustaining.

For the past 17 years, it has been my privilege to serve as the Matt Urban Center's Executive Director. It has been an interesting, exciting and enjoyable journey, and it has been a period of tremendous growth and opportunity. In 2001, the Matt Urban Center had a budget of \$1.9 million. Today, our budget has grown to a little over \$10 million. I started with 22 full and/or part time employees. Today, we have a staff of 195 employees. The growth of both funding and employees has allowed us to create additional programs and services to better meet the needs of the community we serve. The Matt Urban Center was responsible for five facilities when I started, three of which provided services to the community (the Matt Urban Center at 1081 Broadway, the Matt Urban HOPE Center and the T.J. Dulski Community Center) and two were apartment complexes for refugees and low-income community residents (the Anna Walentynowicz Apartments) and low-income senior citizens (T.J. Wojnar/Parkview Apartments). Today, we have five more affordable apartment complexes for special needs populations (Monroe Place for youth aging out of foster care; HOPE Gardens for chronically homeless women; HOPE House emergency shelter for women and children; and HELP I & HELP II for veterans and community residents.) Next year we will be adding the Matt Urban HOPE House (PS 57) and Crossroads at Genesee and Doat.

Over the course of the past fiscal year there have been many major accomplishments of which I would like to highlight just a few for you:

- Agency staff was successful in securing the funding necessary to convert the former P.S. #57 into 27 units of permanent affordable housing for women and women with children, as well as programming space for the Matt Urban HOPE Center.
- The HOPE Center's Street Outreach Staff secured housing for 92 homeless individuals.
- We weatherized 53 units of housing for low-income families, keeping them safe and warm during our long winter months, and reducing their utility bills on average by 25%.
- We provide support to over 1,040 low-income senior citizens, providing them with case management services, allowing them to remain independent and preventing them from being placed in an assisted living facility or a nursing home.
- Agency staff provided transportation to senior citizens so that they can attend doctor's appointments, conduct banking, shopping and participate in congregational meal programming. Our van drivers completed 4,206 one-way trips.
- Staff provided advocacy and support for 2,370 innocent victims of crime.
- Our housing department continues to provide safe and affordable housing for low-income senior citizens (32 units), refugees/low-income community residents (20 units), chronically homeless women (20 units) and to youth who have aged out of the foster care system (12 units/24 beds). The Matt Urban HOPE House provided emergency shelter for 620 women and women with children.

- We assisted 56 homeowners in securing housing repair grants that will help them make health and safety repairs to their home.
- The Youth Department provided after-school programming and a safe haven for 675 low-income, at-risk neighborhood youth.

As you know, one of the major issues confronting our community is the high unemployment rate. Unfortunately, there are no simple solutions. Knowing that the unemployment rate is such a major problem, staff has been looking for successful programs and/or strategies that have been implemented elsewhere, that have the potential to be both duplicated, and applied here, in the hopes of reducing and/or solving the unemployment problem.

None of this would have been possible without a hardworking, dedicated, and supportive administrative staff. Finally, I would like to say how proud I am of our staff and the work that they perform on a daily basis, against tremendous odds. Once again, thank you for giving me the opportunity and pleasure to serve this great agency and its surrounding community.

Marlies

Marlies Wesolowski
Executive Director



Administrative Staff

Marlies Wesolowski - Executive Director
Karen Baer - Chief Operations Officer
Joyelle Tedeschi - Chief Program Officer
Carla Kosmerl - Chief Financial Officer
Ron Parylo - Deputy Controller
Gail Shirley - Financial Assistant
Sarah Maurer - Development Coordinator



Maintenance Staff

Anthony Feagin - Director of Buildings & Grounds
Eugene Davis - Maintenance Assistant
Francisco Resto - Maintenance Assistant
Misty Miller - Maintenance Assistant
Keith Cotton - Maintenance Assistant
David Smith - Maintenance Assistant

Our Mission

The mission of the Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY is to provide programs that revitalize neighborhoods, serve families, and change lives.

Our Vision

The Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY will become a premier human services provider that will use research and best practices in the delivery of services for our clients and our community by 2019.

Our Core Values

Our commitment to the community is to render our programs and services with Compassion, Respect, and Integrity, in an Effective Manner, that are always Reliable and Accountable, embracing Diversity while taking the path that is Progressive. We embrace these core values in all of our relationships with clients, contributors, customers, suppliers and employees.

Our Community

The Lt. Col. Matt Urban Human Services Center of WNY is a multi-purpose community center located in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood on the East Side of Buffalo. For the past 42 years, we have proudly served the East Side of Buffalo, the town of Cheektowaga, and a small portion of West Seneca.

OUR IMPACT: BY THE NUMBERS

53

Homes weatherized in our community

56

Housing repair grants to homeowners in Fillmore & Lovejoy Districts

92

Homeless individuals housed by street outreach

620

Households served by the emergency shelter

675

Children served in free after-school and summer programs

1,040

Elderly clients able to stay in their own residence

2,370

Crime victims & families assisted

4,206

One-way trips for senior citizens

CRIME VICTIMS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



Our program completed our three-year funding contract with the NYS Office of Victims Services. They extended our contract for an additional two years and increased our funding for 2017-2018 by 30% to \$336,845.

Our program continues to be a safe haven for victims to turn to after the traumatization of becoming a victim. We have an immediate response from the Buffalo Police Department and our victim support groups and funeral directors are well aware of our program. We strive to provide the most

comprehensive and compassionate services available.

Of our 10 objectives that we've set since 2014, we met 9 out of 10 within the 85-115% range. We increased our number of clients reached by participating in the agency-wide "Get Set" initiative. Our staff met with every other program in the agency to educate them on the services that CVAP provides. This provided an uptick in referrals to CVAP. All programs are working more as a team, which helps clients in returning their lives back to normal.

Our staff are also engaging with the local community, attending Buffalo Peace Organization meetings and the Homicide Victims Vigil, and giving presentations at Hope House Shelter for Women and Children, Meals on Wheels, Walden Park Senior Housing, Schiller Park Senior Center, and Health Force. We put up information in community centers, health clinics, hospitals and churches. **Our efforts resulted in a 63% increase in new clients, with 2,370 new clients in the 2016-2017 contract year.**

Another goal of the program is to confirm that all the needs of crime victims and their families were met with success. CVAP staff conducted final reviews of client files to confirm OVS payments of medical bills, lost wages, and Essential Personal Property were complete. Follow-up calls and letters discovered that approximately 25% of clients have changed phone numbers or moved, but the remaining 75% clients were satisfied.

We increased our Criminal Advocacy/Court Accompaniment services to 103 in the 2016-2017 contract (a 21% increase). With the implementation of more frequent precinct visits, we foresee that our numbers will continue to increase in the 2017-2018 contract period. We will continue to make every effort to increase our number of court accompaniments in the future.

CVAP Staff

Dennis Mitchell, Program Coordinator

Denise Ervolina, Crime Victim Advocate

Gloria Stepney, Crime Victim Advocate

Ashleigh Then, Crime Victim Advocate

Alexandria Devonish, Crime Victim Advocate

MATT URBAN HOPE CENTER



The Hope Center had another successful year of serving families and individuals living in the Broadway-Fillmore area, providing a neighborhood hub where residents have access to basic needs services, family and educational events. The Hope Center continues to serve as an essential referral source, connecting clients with over 30 organizations that can support their needs.

The Hope Center continued to build its partnership with the surrounding community, hosting quarterly

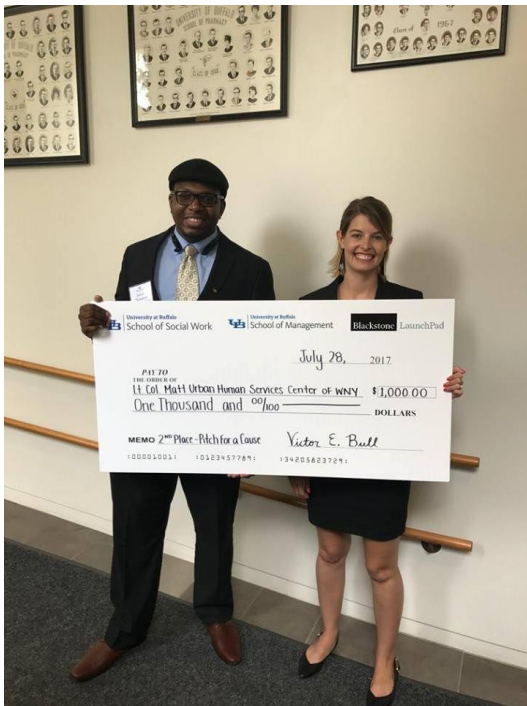
meetings with neighborhood residents, hosting and attending block club meetings, serving on boards of local organizations, and chairing coalitions and advocacy groups that address the issues faced on a daily basis by the community we serve.

The homeless outreach team – comprised of three street outreach workers, a clinical (nurse) outreach worker, and two rapid rehousing case managers - was able to secure housing for 92 homeless individuals this year and connect them with the supports they need to remain housed. Our team also coordinates referrals and linkages for chronically homeless individuals with permanent supportive housing opportunities.

We also continued our partnership with the NFTA officers to locate and assist homeless individuals in and around the downtown area, reducing arrests and misuse of valuable resources. Our clinical outreach worker continued the collaboration with UB HEALS to help meet the medical needs of our homeless clients. Our team continues its involvement with the WNY Coalition for the Homeless and the Homeless Alliance of WNY.



The Hope Center continued its participation in the Code Blue Collaborative, opening its doors from 8pm-8am during times of inclement winter weather in order to provide safe accessible shelter for those sleeping outside or in other places not meant for human habitation. The Code Blue effort is funded by Erie County, the City of Buffalo, National Fuel, and Rich Products.



Hope Center staff are also working on developing a new job training initiative for Hope Center and Housing First clients. **AMP Ink** is a social enterprise launched by Hope Services staff to give clients an opportunity to learn how to design and screen-print clothing, while also learning customer service and entrepreneurship skills.

In the summer of 2017, the Hope Center linked up with University at Buffalo's Social Impact fellowship and received the support of two students – one MBA and one MSW. The fellows helped create and implement a business plan for the social enterprise, submitting it to "Pitch for a Cause" where they won a 2nd place prize of \$1,000 to kick-start the initiative.

AMP Ink is working in partnership with the Western New York Book Arts Center to learn the aspects of printing. They began with making shirts for agency events, and would like to expand this effort in the coming year by setting up a website and taking on orders. They currently have two clients who are actively engaged in the effort and are looking forward to expanding it more in the coming year.



Hope Center Staff

Daniel Auflick, Hope Center Director

Earl Blacksheare, Intake Specialist

Nick Arlain, NFTA Outreach Case Manager

Sean Sticek, Homeless Outreach Case Manager

Joe Creek, Homeless Outreach Case Manager

Kim Burlingame, Clinical Outreach Specialist

Skylar Diamond, PSH Coordinated Entry Lead

Nycole Donaldson, RRH Case Manager

Stephanie Mejia, RRH Case Manager

Latasha Colbert, Asst. Case Manager

Antoinette Small, Hope Works Community Health Worker

Mary Rachel Keville, Americorps VISTA



HOPE GARDENS

Hope Gardens provides housing support to a sub-population of women within the chronically homeless community. The women we serve are highly vulnerable with needs that cannot be met with the scattered site Housing First model. Hope Gardens has created an innovative supportive service model that continues to adapt as the residents become more stable in their housing.

We strive to connect the residents with resources in the community, but have found a gap in services as it relates to mental health and substance use

counseling. The existing counseling services were difficult to access and were not in line with the harm reduction values that have made the residents' housing so successful. This gap in service exacerbated mental health symptoms and triggered substance use when the residents did access these services as the counseling facilities were in neighborhoods known for increased drug activity.

To fill this gap and meet the residents' needs we began offering mental health and substance use counseling at the Hope Gardens residence. We now partner with Evergreen Health, a leader in the community whose mission is to provide supportive services using harm reduction. Shannon Curry-Izzo has developed trusting relationships with the residents who, at first, ranged from highly interested in counseling to extremely mistrusting. Shannon has adopted a low barrier, flexible, and nontraditional therapeutic approach focused on meeting the residents where they are and has developed creative engagement tools including cooking one on one with the residents. Shannon's insight into the resident's strengths and goals provides staff the opportunity to develop wrap around service plans with community health worker engagement and case management focused around the same goals.

Additionally, Shannon remains an independent resource aside from the Hope Gardens staff allowing for confidentiality and discussions beyond their housing needs and goals. Lastly, Shannon is a leader in the Harm Reduction Coalition and provides training and insight to Hope Gardens staff in harm reduction best practices, strategies for engagement, and has assisted with developing behavior plans for the residents. This collaboration has developed a creative solution to meet the needs of the residents beyond their housing and begins the process of treating the trauma experienced by the residents at Hope Gardens.

Hope Gardens Staff

Sarah Gorry- Director of Permanent Supportive Housing

Amanda Fischer- Trauma Informed Services Supervisor

Shamika Williams - Case Manager

Alicia Jackson - Lead Community Health Worker

Tasha Moore - Community Health Worker

Aleeyah Chestnut - Community Health Worker

Cynthia Glenn - Community Health Worker



In 2017, we assisted 78 households through this program. Last contract year, our average days from program entry to housing was 23 days (our funder's goal mark is 30).

We are again benefactors of the Buffalo Bills' generosity, including a Thanksgiving meal and several players spending extended time with the children. Our partnership with Erie County Department of Social Services continues, receiving referrals for placements and a per diem for our costs.

Other funders for our shelter and support services include the City of Buffalo and NYS STEHP funds. NYS CACFP assists by covering the cost of our eligible child meals. We had another successful year in our collaboration with Imagine Community Gardens, which produced a great amount of fresh vegetables and fruit.

ICG volunteer-led activities throughout the season educate guests on how to grow and prepare produce, as well as fun activities for children. The shelter has been undergoing minor capital improvements to meet new regulations required for all emergency shelters to meet New York State licensing guidelines.

HOPE HOUSE SHELTER

In 2017, 620 individuals were served by the Hope House shelter for at least one night, for an average of 45 individuals per night. Our Continuum of Care funds, through HUD, were renewed. These funds allow us to assist families in rapid rehousing out of the shelter via a Housing Specialist, aftercare case management and rental subsidies.

Hope House Staff

Christal Guthrie - Shelter Director

Linda Dougherty - Housing Specialist

Alohndra Maxwell - Rapid Re-Housing Specialist

Victoria Fontana - Rapid Re-Housing Specialist

Sara Wagner - Case Manager for Single Women

LaKea Palmer - Child & Family Case Manager

Ebony Hunter - Lead Community Health Worker

Precious Scott - Lead Community Health Worker

Atiya Weeks - COC Community Health Worker

Alexander Negron - Community Health Worker

Eileen Jensen - Community Health Worker

Thamar Irizarry - Community Health Worker

Gloryann Olmeda- Bi-lingual Community Health Worker

Jessie Molak - University at Buffalo Intern



HOUSING FIRST

The Permanent Supportive Housing Program is a locally top-ranking Housing First program serving 88 formerly chronically homeless men and women. We have a 68-bed scattered site Housing First program and a 20-bed single site housing first program called Hope Gardens. We connect with people experiencing chronic homelessness through Matt Urban's homeless outreach team and provide housing to individuals directly from the streets. Our objective is to provide housing first, then surround a

person with support and linkages to help the individual maintain and succeed in their housing. Our mission is to explore ways to engage with individuals, pursue partnerships with agencies in the community, and develop creative solutions to the barriers that exist after an individual moves into housing.

- 83% success rate in keeping people housed or graduating people from the program
- 79% of our clients served moved into PSH directly from the streets into housing
- 89% of PSH clients have been in the program for 365 days or more
- 19% of Housing First clients have obtained earned income
- 59% of PSH clients have increases in income after they move into housing

Housing First Staff

Sarah Gorry- Director of Permanent Supportive Housing

Lisa Genztler-Housing First Supervisor

Geoffrey Ralls- Housing First Case Manager

Sharon Vicente-Housing First Community Health Worker

"My kids kept me alive through everything - absolutely everything. I always have their pictures with me. They're the main reason why I am still standing here." Her eyes open, and her smile returns. "Because Matt Urban helped me get housing and a job - my kids are coming home. They're coming to live with me on June 18, 2017. We'll be the first family to ever be housed together. My biggest dream is to work permanently with the Matt Urban Center. They've helped me so much."

-Housing First client



SENIOR SERVICES

In our Erie County Department of Senior Services 2017-2018 contract, our objectives were to serve 950 Case Management clients and to provide 5,742 Case Management hours. We actually provided 5,673 hours to 1,012 clients.

Our contract called for 2,178 units of Information and Assistance service. This was not an achievable number from the start, seeing as though we receive very few “drop-in” clients like agencies with a senior center do. We were only able to provide 87 units of service.

Our Chore Service never got off the ground, as we were unable to find someone to work only 10 hours per week, as the contract provided.

Transportation is usually our biggest numbers. We contracted for 6,400 one-way trips with 450 unduplicated clients. However, we served 208 unduplicated clients with 3,845 rides. This is partly because the Director of Senior Services forgot to account for one of the vans not driven twice a week, and partly because one van was completely out of service while we hired a new Van Operator.

Senior Services Staff

Tim Mutz - Director of Senior Services

Pat Mmegwa - Case Manager

Lancelot McKenzie - Case Manager

Nadine Goodwin - Case Manager

David Bialkowski - Case Manager

Dana Murphy - Case Manager

Carlos Torres - Transportation Coordinator

Thomas Stolowski - Van Operator

Andres Albelo - Van Operator

Robert Brown - Part-Time Van Operator

Joseph Gallagher -Part-Time Van Operator

Harriett Wallace -Part-Time Van Operator



HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our department continues working toward our mission to provide safe and affordable housing conditions for all members of the community – from renters to homeowners. We strive to create a strong and stable

neighborhood by working with the surrounding community to create new affordable housing opportunities, while also working to improve existing housing options, and to obtain and maintain homeownership where appropriate.

Our department worked with our partners at HELP USA to complete Help Buffalo II, a 47-unit affordable housing project that provides apartments for both low-income families and homeless veterans, located adjacent to the original HELP Buffalo project on Broadway and Hickory Streets.

We also completed our first gut rehab of a property in Cheektowaga (18 Stratford Place) which was sold to a first-time homebuyer through the CHDO program. We also completed three full rehab CHDO projects at properties in the City of Buffalo (928 Fillmore, 933 Fillmore, and 21 South Ryan) and two CHDO new build properties in Cheektowaga (18 Randolph and 20 Randolph).

Our repair programs assisted over 35 homeowners with critical repairs to their homes, including repair of 28 roofs. Through our receivership program, we have worked to improve over 60 rental properties within the City of Buffalo that were in housing court.

Housing & Community Development Staff

Carla Kosmerl - Chief Development Officer

Maya Shermer - Housing & Community Development Director

Christina Lincoln - Housing Rehab Program Manager

Latasha McGill - Community Housing Specialist

Joseph Kopera - Resident Construction Analyst

Sonya Stepney - Property Manager

Gordon Williams - Case Manager



WEATHERIZATION

Work on our 2017 contract is in process. The original budget was \$431,576. An amendment in September raised the budget to \$504,647. The contract will run until May 31, 2018

To date, 19 units have been completed. Our goal is 61 units. Our clients receive high quality energy saving and health and safety measures to their homes.

Our weatherization clients include low-income homeowners and tenants. They are seniors, households with persons with disabilities, and single parent households with children.

Clients receive full weatherization services, which include measures such as attic and sidewall insulation, heat system repair or replacement, door and window weather stripping, door and window replacement, and general air sealing and health and safety measures.

Production for the 2018 contract will begin on June 1, 2018. The budget is \$421,291. An amendment with additional funding is expected.

We continue to perform coordinated work with NYSERDA's Empower NY program to generate program income funds. We are also coordinating work with Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services with their HOME program.

We look forward to the upcoming year's challenges and opportunities!

"Thank you for the great help with my house. My house looks beautiful inside and out. Your team did a wonderful job and I just want to say thank you."
-Weatherization client

Weatherization Staff

Joan Parylo - Program Coordinator

Dan Szymendera - Energy Auditor

Luan Nguyen - Crew Chief

Andrae Waldrop - Crew Laborer

Dwayne Wilson - Crew Laborer

YOUTH DEPARTMENT



Our Block Grant youth programs at Polonia Hall and TJ Dulski work to reduce incidents of juvenile crime and youth gang participation by providing youth with constructive, supervised programs with a focus on educational, recreational and social components. They work to maintain the grade point average of youth with after-school and summer programming. They also focus on meeting nutritional needs by providing a Kid's Café and Food Pantry. The Empire After School Program at School 74 provides academic enrichment activities that supplement and reinforce what is learned during the regular school day. It also encourages health and wellness by promoting healthy habits and lifestyles.

The Say YES Summer Program works with two age groups (K-2 and 3-6) on reading/ELA and math, as well as reading for the Mayor's Summer Youth Challenge. The program engages families with open house and orientation events, and invites parents to participate in activities, field trips, and volunteer in our programs.

Our STSJP program at Polonia Hall and TJ Dulski works to link youth who are at risk of becoming, alleged to be, or are adjudicated as juvenile delinquents, juvenile offenders, or persons in need of supervision to community based resources.

Our Teen Program at Polonia Hall and TJ Dulski offers work readiness, career development, and life skill supports. The youth are prepared for economic self-sufficiency and entering college, the workforce, or other meaningful activities.

Our department served 675 children in our free after school and summer programs. Our 21st Century After-School Programs, based at Polonia Hall, TJ Dulski Center, School #91, School #31, and School #97 continued working to enhance our students' academic achievement. Our staff work to develop good citizens who make healthy choices at home, at school, and in the community, while also working to increase family involvement in the child's education and school community.

Youth Department Staff

Alissa Venturini - Director of Community Services

Patricia Melvin-Chisim - School #31 Site Coordinator

Cherise Carson - School #91 Site Coordinator

Justin Larke - School #97 Site Coordinator

Danyel Sease - TJ Dulski Program Manager

Benjamin Connor - Polonia Hall Site Coordinator

Lavette Gray - TJ Dulski Teacher Aide

Rachel Platt - TJ Dulski Teacher

Amber Galloway - Polonia Hall Teacher Aide

Rena Discerson - Polonia Hall Teacher Aide

Isatou N'dow - Polonia Hall Teacher Aide

Damion Anderson - Polonia Hall Security guard

Reginald Johnson - School #74 Site Coordinator

Shaun White - Polonia Hall Teen/STSJP Program Coordinator

Danyelle Truesdale - Intensive Case Manager

Cathie Blaszyk - Pantry Coordinator

OUR EVENTS

Buffalonia



Harvest for Hope



Buffalo Bills visit Hope Center



Nickel City CrossFit Fundraiser



Dyngus Day



Trunk or Treat



OUR VOLUNTEERS

A heartfelt thank you to all of our volunteers and donors who support us!



United Way Day of Caring



Neighborhood Clean-Up



Junior League Little Leaguers



Diocese of Buffalo Give Back



Saginaw University



Alpha Phi Omega



MLK Day of Service



Canisius College



SUNY Fredonia



Back2School Backpack Prep



B-Team of Buffalo



Christmas Cookie Decorating

OUR BOARD

2017-2018 Matt Urban Center Board of Directors

Board Officers

Zoe Zacharek: Chairperson

Janice Swinnich: Vice Chairperson

Douglas Butler: Treasurer

Annette Junczewicz: Secretary

Directors

James Chlebowy

Irene Cieslak

Marcia Pacciotti

David Pfaff

Christine Raczka

James Rykowski

Marva Threat

Dr. Zulkharnain

Emeritus/Advisory Board

Edward Dudek

ANNUAL MEETING AGENDA

May 16, 2018

6:00 PM

Voting
Attendance
Refreshments

6:15 PM

Call to Order

Chairperson Zoe Zacharek

Approval of minutes from May 24, 2017 Annual Board Meeting

Chairperson/Nomination Committee report

Board Election of Officers

To serve term of May 2018-May 2019
Tally election ballots
Announcement of 2018 election results

2017 Year in Review

Marlies A. Wesolowski, Executive Director

Closing Remarks

Ajournment

Regular monthly meeting to immediately follow annual meeting



Lt. Col.

MATT URBAN

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