
LT. COL. MATT URBAN HUMAN SERVICES CENTER
OF WESTERN NEW YORK

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

CELEBRATING OUR 2019 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Dear friends,

Our agency closed out 2019 having served over 19,000 residents of the City of Buffalo's East Side and surrounding towns through a variety of human service programs - whether they were homeless clients or homeowners in our neighborhoods, students in local schools or senior citizens. That number alone speaks to the tremendous impact of our agency's diverse programs and the tireless dedication of the staff who report to work here every day. We strive every day, and every year, to fulfill the simple mission of serving individuals and families in need.

Now heading into 2020, that mission is as significant as ever. As our staff eagerly prepared for exciting new developments, such as the opening of our Hope House facility at the former P.S. 57, a global pandemic swept through. Because our programs and the staff who operate them are considered essential services, putting our work on hold was never an option. In the face of uncertainty, our staff adapted and continued to serve to the best of their ability, making any modifications necessary to ensure that they were still able to reach clients in need.

As we continue marching ahead through 2020, I am heartened by our agency's fortitude and excited to welcome some of the exciting changes we have been anticipating. We look forward to opening the doors of Hope House at School 57, and starting renovations to our senior apartments at 104 Lewis Street. We look forward to welcoming a new executive director who will lead the agency into its next chapter. And our board looks forward to continuing to support our staff and the residents of the community who make our work possible.

Sincerely,



MUC Board President

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VISION

Our agency 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.

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 our relationships with clients, contributors, customers, suppliers and employees.

OUR COMMUNITY

Our agency is located in the Broadway-Fillmore neighborhood on the East Side of Buffalo. For the past 43 years, we have proudly served the East Side of Buffalo and the town of Cheektowaga.

BY THE NUMBERS

In 2019, our agency served 19,421 residents of the City of Buffalo, Cheektowaga, and West Seneca

62

HOMES WEATHERIZED

Saving residents money on their utility bills by making their homes energy efficient.

120

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PLACEMENTS

Helping homeless clients secure safe, longterm housing through MUC sites and our local landlord partners.

30

HOMES REPAIRED

Helping homeowners in Fillmore and Lovejoy Districts make health and safety repairs to their homes.

995

SENIOR CITIZENS SUPPORTED

Providing elderly clients with resources to help them stay in their homes and out of assisted living.

111

HOMELESS CLIENTS HOUSED BY STREET OUTREACH

Connecting individuals living on the street with safe housing and resources to improve quality of life.

619

PEOPLE GIVEN SHELTER

Providing homeless women and children a safe place to stay in our Hope House emergency shelter.

834

CHILDREN SERVED

Supporting youth development through after-school, summer, and teen workforce programming.

10,344

MEALS SERVED

Offering daily hot meals at our Urban Diner through our partnership with Friends of Night People.

HOMELESS OUTREACH

Who we are

Skylar Diamond, Outreach Lead
 Zachery Russillo, Outreach Case
 Manager
 Alexandria Meranto, Outreach Case
 Manager



What we do

The Homeless Outreach Department serves individuals who are currently living in places not meant for habitation. We provide linkages to various programs including mental health, physical health, substance treatment, etc. The ultimate goal of our program is to get the individual into safe, stable housing. We do this by meeting the clients where they are at, and providing supplies such as blankets, clothing, and other items to build a rapport and work toward their goals, whatever those may be.



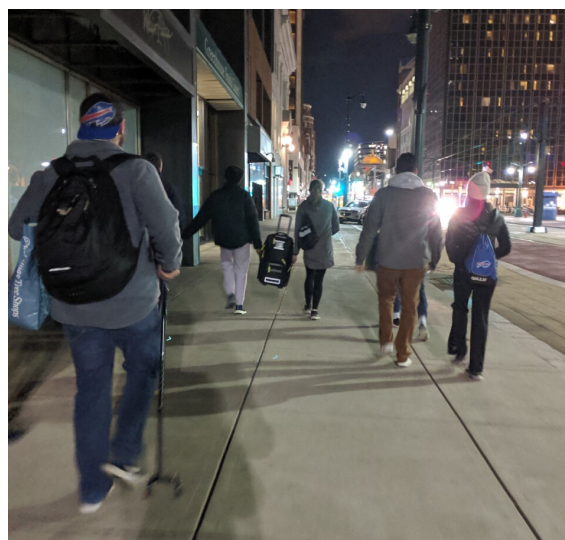
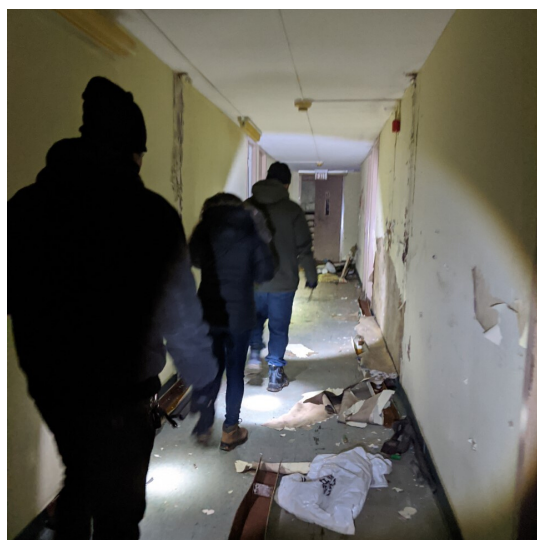
111

Homeless individuals placed
 in safe housing through street
 outreach in 2019.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

This year, the Outreach Team was asked to complete sweeps of the abandoned Shoreline Apartments. We met with Best Self Behavioral Health's outreach team and members of the Buffalo Police Department to conduct several late night sweeps and an early morning sweep the day demolition started.

Our teams were able to locate two individuals who were sleeping in one of the abandoned apartments the morning that demolition was supposed to start. We were able to safely remove the clients from the building and then offered our services. Our Homeless Outreach Lead, Skylar Diamond, spent over a year asking for permission to check to see if anyone was living in those apartments and was usually met by resistance. Being asked to do sweeps of these buildings was a big accomplishment for our team, and we are very grateful that we were able to be helpful to the construction crews and ensure everyone's safety.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

In 2019, our team exited 111 individuals to positive housing destinations—meaning safe, stable housing. Of those 111 people housed, 49 gained a permanent rental subsidy with a permanent supportive housing program.

Our program was completely re-staffed this year with two new outreach workers, Zac and Alex. We are proud to have them on the outreach team. We were also able to garner a better relationship with Neighborhood Health Center through their new LPN, Janette. Thanks to this ongoing relationship, we now have a medical professional that promotes walk-in days for our clients to receive primary care. We're now able to call and get our clients appointments in a very quick and easy manner.

HOPE CENTER

Who we are

Kevin Glover, Hope Center Director
Cherise Carson, Hope Center Coordinator
Earl Blacksheare, Intake Specialist



What we do

The Matt Urban Hope Center provides a myriad of programs for community members of all ages. The Hope Center offers an Urban Diner in partnership with Friends of Night People, where community members can receive a hot meal in the afternoon Monday- Friday. We also provide community members with a food pantry, clothing boutique, and personal essentials closet. Our Center is open Monday – Friday from 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We host numerous pop-up resource events for the community and will be starting a quarterly Health & Wellness/Job fair for community members in 2020.



10,344

Meals were served to community
members in need in 2019.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

We thankfully were able to assist a family this past year by providing them with a Hope Center Family Christmas. We proudly provided a family of seven with a Christmas tree with all the trimmings, as well as gifts for all of the children and items for them to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner. We are pleased and proud to be able to provide our families and community members with small tokens of our love and care for them and look forward to continuing this moving forward in 2020.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

Our department has been able to increase our numbers in terms of clients served over the past year. We have done this not only through the hard work of our staff, but through the great collaborative partnerships through both for profit and not-for-profit partners who believe in our mission and vision in serving the people of our community.



621

Individuals were served by our food pantry in 2019.

HOPE HOUSE SHELTER & RAPID REHOUSING

Who we are

Christal Guthrie, Director of Homeless Services

Janice Ried, Administrative Assistant

Sean Sticek, RRH Case Manager

Tabitha Williams, RRH Case Manager

Latoya White, Case Manager

Camille Radford, Case Manager

Atiya Weeks, Lead CHW

Cynthia Calhoun, CHW

Javiera Jones, CHW

Debra Page, CHW

Thomasa CarMichael, CHW

Sharon Vicente, CHW

Juanita Smith, CHW



What we do

Hope House is an emergency shelter for women and children that works with the homeless population. Our staff help clients manage their immediate needs, linking them with services that will benefit them and help them find affordable housing. Staff use a trauma informed approach to meet the client's needs, show empathy to their situation, and find the best services for them.

We also facilitate Erie County's Rapid Rehousing Continuum of Care program at our site, which is designed to reduce the length of homelessness and shelter time by helping clients to secure housing as quickly as possible. Our goal is to reduce return rates to homelessness by providing support services that help to eliminate any barriers to maintain housing; thus minimizing the traumatic effects of homelessness on individuals and families.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

A single mother with a family of four came to the shelter and it was her first time being homeless. She was afraid because she was nervous about trying to find a decent house for her children and the appropriate services to meet her and her children's needs. Staff saw the different struggles and immediate needs the client had. It was our duty to parallel with her to help her accomplish her goals. Motivation and dedication were what it took for the client to find a part-time job working at the grocery store, and find daycare that worked around her schedule. Our case manager helped her apply for emergency Section 8 assistance, which gave the client a more flexible housing budget. She was able to find a subsidized apartment in Niagara County and was able to transfer her Section 8 benefits. She also transferred her job to Grand Island to be close to her home. Staff was able to get her linked up to parenting resources to help her and her children. This was a success story because this client found it in herself to be a strong, single mother who was able to gain independent skills and maintain her own. With our staff's help, she was able to set an example to others in the shelter.

619

Women and children given a safe place to sleep and case management services.



219

Clients exited to safe housing thanks to Rapid Rehousing case management.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

Our 2019 accomplishment was giving back to our clients. Staff hosted a fish fry for the shelter families, which gave them the time to bond with their peers, staff, and ask any questions they had, while enjoying a home cooked meal. Staff worked hard to put this event together and there was a lot of teamwork involved in organizing it. Most importantly, our staff maintained an open line of communication and support with our clients, in order to assure the clients that they are safe, and to address any health concerns they may have had.

HOUSING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Who we are

Maya Shermer, Director
Christina Lincoln, Housing Rehab Program
Manager
Maribel Rodriguez, Housing Intake
Specialist
Deborah Skulski-Wakelam, Property
Manager
Joseph Kopera, Construction Analyst



What we do

The Housing & Community Development department focuses on creating and maintaining safe and affordable housing for our neighbors and community. We do so by partnering with municipalities, partner agencies, community organizations and residents to bring needed resources and dollars to home repair projects.



30

Home repairs completed in
the Fillmore and Lovejoy
Districts in 2019.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

We assisted a low-income household of three, with one disabled family member, living in a home on Newburgh Street that needed a significant amount of repairs. The family had initially contacted us for assistance in 2015, but unfortunately, their needs were outside the scope of our funding resources at that time. With the addition of funding from the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative and working closely with the City of Buffalo, the homeowner was able to resubmit their application to get the needed repairs made to their roof system. An updated roof will allow this family, in addition to 26 other households, to stay in their home longer with lower home maintenance costs.



\$521,724

Invested in repairing homes in the Fillmore
and Lovejoy Districts in 2019.

Our 2019 Accomplishments

We sold two more homes to low-income first-time homebuyers through our CHDO program in partnership with the Town of Cheektowaga. Both properties, located on Randolph Street, were new builds and turned previously vacant lots into affordable housing opportunities. We're also proud to have maintained valuable partnerships with other housing entities, such as the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative. These partnerships have helped us to leverage additional dollars towards completing much needed home repair projects in our community.

PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Who we are

Kadie Skulski, Director

Housing First:

Lonnie Patterson, Case Manager

Christina Waters, Case Manager

HELP Buffalo:

Gordon Williams, Senior Case Manager

Adonis Kernen, Case Manager

Hope Gardens:

Alicia Jackson, Lead Community Health Worker

Aleeyah Chestnut, Community Health Worker

Dawn Gawrys, Kitchen Coordinator



What we do

Our Permanent Supportive Housing team serves the homeless population and provides them with low demand case management. We are tasked with coordinating and scheduling services and activities for our clients and working directly with service providers. We provide support with relationship building, social engagement, financial literacy, asset development, and educational and vocational counseling. We promote ongoing linkages to medical and community supports. We evaluate independent living skills and work with our clients to foster maximum self-sufficiency. In addition, we complete, maintain and encourage Independent Services Plans, working towards client goals, updating and tracking progress at least every six months depending on their goals.



120

Homeless individuals placed
in permanent supportive
housing in 2019.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

Though the situation was challenging when it began, we assisted a client with realizing he needed more help with coping with his alcohol abuse and negative behavior towards his neighbors. The client has struggled with alcohol abuse on and off his entire life and became intensely verbally aggressive towards his neighbors (other clients in program) and was deemed an individual whom should be relocated.

Our case manager met with the client and empowered him to accept fault for his negative behavior and that he needed additional support with his excessive drinking. Almost immediately after the meeting, the client began to receive counseling at BestSelf and has been attending two sessions per week consistently. The client and the neighbors are grateful for the case manager's ability to immediately address the concern. The client has remained sober and stated to the case manager "I am grateful for your support in helping me realize I needed help. You saved my life."

Furthering his success, this client has returned to the Housing First Work team (Hope Works) and has remained sober for a period of 60 days and counting.



"I am grateful for your support in helping me realize I needed help. You saved my life."



HOUSING FIRST CLIENT

Our 2019 Accomplishments

An accomplishment that we are most proud of is that even though our department has been understaffed for an extended period of time in the last year within each program (Hope Gardens, Housing First, and HELP Buffalo I&II), we have continued to provide adequate and positive services to the clients and providers associated with Permanent Supportive Housing. The teamwork and dedication to our clients shown by the entire program staff has made the seemingly impossible, possible.

SENIOR SERVICES

Who we are

Tim Mutz, Director
Pat M., Case Manager
Lancelot McKenzie, Case Manager
David Bialkowski, Case Manager
Dana Murphy, Case Manager
Regina Johnson, Case Manager
Lawrie Stanton, Part Time Case Manager



What we do

The Senior Services Program strives to assist senior citizens, age 60 and over, with resources needed to remain in their own homes, thereby prolonging or negating the need for placement in assistive living or nursing facilities. Some of these measures include linkage to housekeeping, personal care aides, social adult day care, and/or personal emergency response systems (emergency buttons worn on the wrist or around the neck). Our service area covers half of the East Side of Buffalo, all of the Town of Cheektowaga, the Village of Sloan, half of the Village of Depew, and Northern West Seneca.



995

Senior citizens given the resources
needed to stay in their homes.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

We assisted one client by the name of Mary, who is 83 years old and lives alone. Mary suffers with congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, type 2 diabetes, and has mobility problems. Mary is unable to stand to cook, bathe, or clean her home. Mary is also low-income. Case Manager Lancelot McKenzie assessed Mary's needs, and was able to develop a care plan with her that eventually led to Mary receiving Meals on Wheels and a personal care aide twice a week. While making bi-monthly monitoring visits, Lance noticed a watermark on Mary's ceiling. Mary said she has a leaky roof, but she cannot afford to repair or replace it. Lance helped Mary fill out an application for the Cheektowaga Housing Rehab Program, and secured the monies to replace the roof. Mary was very grateful for Lance's work and assistance.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

We hired Regina Johnson to replace the departing Nadine Goodwin, who went on to work as Service Coordinator for a senior housing apartment complex in Niagara Falls. We were able to secure funding for a Part Time Case Manager, and hired Lawrie Stanton. We also added 5 new clients to our database through our outreach efforts at senior housing and senior centers.

WEATHERIZATION

Who we are

Joan Parylo, Director
Dan Szymendera, Energy Auditor
Luan Nguyen, Crew chief
Luis Colon, Crew laborer
Jose Rivera, Crew laborer
Gabriel Concepcion, Crew laborer



What we do

The Weatherization program provides energy saving services to income eligible residents of the East Side of Buffalo. Our clients receive high quality energy saving and health and safety improvements to their homes. Our weatherization clients include low income home owners and tenants. They are senior citizens, households with persons with disabilities, and single parent households with children. They receive full weatherization services, which include measures such as attic and sidewall insulation, heat system repair or replacement, door and window weather stripping, and replacement and general air sealing and health and safety measures.



62

Homes weatherized in 2019,
making them safer and more
energy efficient.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

We weatherized a four-unit building occupied by a low-income owner, along with three low-income tenant apartments. The units were in need of energy saving measures including air sealing, upgraded heat systems, and doors and windows. The units also required health and safety measures including proper ventilation and smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. The owner and tenants will benefit from a safer apartment and a more comfortable and energy efficient living space.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

We completed a 10-unit apartment building that is a part of a larger apartment complex. We completed the work in partnership with South Buffalo Neighborhood Housing Services' Weatherization Program. We also coordinated work with Broadway Fillmore Neighborhood Housing Services, HEAP and the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative.

YOUTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

Who we are

Danyel Sease, Director
Justin Larke, Quality & Program
Manager
Patricia Chisim-Melvin, Site Coordinator
(BPS #31)
Reginald Johnson, Youth Program
Assistant/Site Coordinator (BPS #74)
Asha Brown, Site Coordinator (BPS #92)
Laura Crump, Site Coordinator (BPS #97)



What we do

Our Youth Department serves youth and teens primarily in the Fillmore District. Our after-school and summer programs are designed to improve students' academic achievement and promote healthy social-emotional development. Our Teen Workforce Development program enriches lives through continuing educational instruction and cultural exposure while encouraging the futures of economic success.

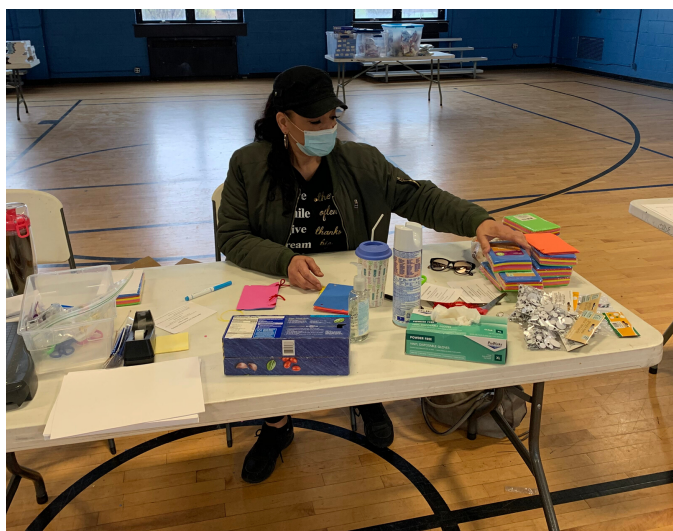


834

Youth served in our after-school,
summer, and teen programs.

Our 2019 Memorable Moment

“Marcus,” one of our students at BPS #74, was mischievous and spoke back to his teachers and administrators. The administration didn't want him to enter the after school program, but we felt that he could benefit from some of the resources we offer. We spoke with our partner, My Brother's Keeper (MBK) about Marcus and they wanted him to sign up for their program, which provides a Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching curriculum. He participated in the 30-week program and completed it successfully. Both teachers and administration noticed a change in him. Marcus received an award from MBK for his efforts in his behavioral transition. We are very proud of him and hope he continues to grow as he enters high school and faces new challenges.



Our 2019 Accomplishments

We dealt with some staffing issues, as there was a lack of interest to fill teacher and teacher aide positions at our school sites. Coordinators had to combine classes and use vendor services that were academically engaging and fun. Due to lack of staff, we had a long waiting list. Justin Larke offered programming at Polonia Hall and provided bussing to ensure enrollment. During this staffing struggle, we still were able to offer high quality programming. Our Teen Workforce Development Program placed 20 students in off-site internships based on their interest. Five of those youth were offered part-time employment. Our former Director of Community Services, Alissa Venturini, took the position of Chief Program Officer for the agency. Danyel Sease accepted the position of Director of Community Services in November, and Justin Larke became the department's Quality & Program Manager.

ADMINISTRATION

Who we are

Alissa Venturini, Acting Executive Director

Karen Baer, Chief Operations Officer

Zacchary Tenhuisen, Chief Financial Officer

Douglas Renning, Deputy Controller

Gail Shirley, Accounting Assistant

Jonathan Szwajkos, Accounting Assistant

Stephanie Von Wald, Accounting Coordinator

Sarah Maurer, Development Coordinator

Andrew Linneman, Purchasing Agent



MAINTENANCE

Who we are

David Smith, Director of Buildings and Grounds

Francisco Resto, Maintenance Assistant

Frederick Ross, Maintenance Assistant

Jennifer Anderson, Maintenance Assistant

Daniel McNab, Supportive Services Worker/Cleaner



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Janice Swinnich, Chair

Marcia Pacciotti, Vice Chair

Douglas Butler, Treasurer

Annette Juncewicz, Secretary

James Chlebowy

Irene Cieslak

David Pfaff

Marcus Deveso

Brandon Jones

Christine Raczka

Marva Threat

Dr. Zulkharnain

Carl Campbell

Contact Our Board: bod@urbanctr.org

OUR EVENTS

Hearts for Hope



Dyngus Day



Buffalonia



OUR EVENTS

Trunk or Treat



Thanksgiving Dinner



Santas of Swig



Cookies for a Cause



LOOKING AHEAD

Hope House @ P.S. 57

The former Buffalo Public School 57, located behind our main headquarters on Broadway, has sat vacant for the past 15 years. MUC is turning this building back into a community asset by renovating it into a multipurpose facility called “Hope House.” The site will include 27 supportive, affordable apartments with case management services in partnership with Best Self Behavioral Health; new space for the Matt Urban Hope Center; an expanded Urban Diner and commercial kitchen for Hope Works job trainees. We are thrilled to be opening this facility in 2020, thanks to our funders: City of Buffalo, Evans Bank, M&T Bank/Federal Home Loan Bank of New York, NYS Homeless Housing & Assistance Corporation, and NYS Housing Trust Fund Corporation.



Parkview Apartments Renovation

The renovation of our T.J. Wojnar Apartments at 104 Lewis Street will commence in 2020. The project will upgrade all 32 apartments to include aging-in-place features for our senior residents. The building will receive new Energy Star windows, roof, gutters, and siding, a re-stripped parking lot, and a new concrete entrance. The apartments will have new flooring, cabinets, counter-tops, appliances, bathroom fixtures, intercoms and emergency call systems. Financing for the project was made possible by the Community Investment Fund (Division of Homes & Community Renewal/Housing Trust Fund Corporation), NYS Office of the Attorney General MS Settlement Fund, and Preservation Initiative Program (PIP).

CONTACT US

Main Headquarters, 1081 Broadway

Administration

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Housing & Community Development

(716) 893-7222 x214, housing@urbanctr.org

Senior Services

(716) 893-7222 x207, tmutz@urbanctr.org

Weatherization

(716) 893-7222 x218, jparylo@urbanctr.org

Hope Center, 385 Paderewski Drive

(716) 893-7222 x306, kglover@urbanctr.org

Permanent Supportive Housing, 58 Oberlin Avenue

(716) 893-7222 x530, kskulski@urbanctr.org

Youth Department, 129 Lewis Street

(716) 893-7222 x403, dsease@urbanctr.org

Learn more about our programs and what we've been up to
at www.urbanctr.org



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