Regenerating Our Community
Aurora/St. Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation
2015-2017 Progress Report
THE LEGACY OF RONDO
Dear Friends of Aurora/St. Anthony,

In 2012, we co-led a series of discussions with local seniors, youth, and young adults on their memories, perspectives, and visions for their community. In these “Rondo Conversations,” many participants shared hopes of regaining an old spirit of harmony—a community where “people take care of you as if you were their own.” But many also sought new opportunities, from cultural businesses to public spaces. We heard a common wish to preserve Rondo’s history, but also an urgency for new ideas and energy. And we found consensus that our elders and our children need to talk to each other, so that our history, traditions, and spirit pass from one generation to the next.

These visions both reinforced and refocused our purpose: to work to make our community stronger. They also reminded us that, in places as rich in history and culture as Frogtown and Rondo, preservation and transformation are not opposites. In fact, they go hand-in-hand.

This truth is why we remain committed to the cause of regenerating our community. When we create new homes and small businesses, we want them to reflect the cultural depth, collective ownership, and self-sufficiency of homes and businesses of Old Rondo. When we empower our residents and youth, we want to build bonds across divisions and foster a sense of security that our elders remember from yesteryear. And when we organize to ensure we receive equal benefits and protections from the Green Line, we do not want its new possibilities to be at the expense of our history that lives on.

Lastly, the commitment to community engagement that distinguishes ASANDC is driven not only by a vision for our future, but by an ongoing process of healing from our past. This is why we continue to gather and share stories of those who lived through Rondo’s demolition. And it is why we ensure that those who have joined us since then—including our youth—not only understand what was lost, but know to sustain what has not been lost: the spirit of the community.

We at ASANDC try to preserve this spirit in each of our programs and activities that took major strides over the last three years, from our growing Frogtown-Rondo Action Network (FRAN) to our 68-unit mixed-use Western-U Plaza to our Youth Count program. If there is anything that Rondo’s history continues to teach us, it is that our work is stronger when our community works together. We hope you will continue to join us and guide us in this work.

Nieeta Presley
Executive Director

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OUR CAUSE
Mission and Vision

In 1980, a few dedicated neighbors brought their block clubs together to work to improve their community. Ever since then, ASANDC has been a steward of stability, togetherness, and growth in Frogtown and Rondo. Each year, we improve the lives of hundreds of members of our communities by creating new affordable housing opportunities, promoting small business development, engaging our youth in self-improvement, and organizing residents to effect change in their community.

Still, for many long-time members, we will always be known simply as the “block club” — the place you go when you need a neighbor’s helping hand.

MISSION
Our mission at ASANDC is to foster positive relationships within and between the communities we serve and to support our members in effecting the quality of life in their communities.

VISION
Our vision is to improve the social and economic well-being of the communities we serve.

SERVICE AREA
We serve members of Saint Paul’s historic Frogtown and Rondo communities.

OUR IMPACT
Over 35 Years of Change

BY THE NUMBERS
Since 1980, we have brought the following positive changes to our communities:

- **300** Affordable Homes for Rent/Ownership
- **18,000** Square Feet of Commercial Space
- **250** Trained Entrepreneurs
- **3,000+** Engaged Residents
- **500+** Engaged Youth

ENSURING LIGHT RAIL WORKS FOR US
Through organizing and advocacy, we helped to secure $70 million in affordable housing funds and $5.5 million in funds in commercial support along the Green Line, which helped over 500 businesses stay open through project construction and is ensuring that homes remain accessible to our low-income families.

AWARD-Winning PROJECTS
In 2006, our University-Dale Apartments project won Minneapolis-Saint Paul Business Journal’s award for Best Mixed-Use Development. And in 2013, our collaborative Frogtown Square/Kings Crossing project (55 units, 11,800 square feet of commercial space) was a finalist for NDC Academy’s national Community Development award.

Our Impact: 2015-2017

BY THE NUMBERS
In our last three years, our impact has included:

- **68** Affordable Multi-Family Rental Homes
- **7** Affordable Single Homes for Ownership
- **50** Trained Entrepreneurs
- **30** Resident Leadership Program Graduates
- **65** Youth Count Graduates
- **500+** Residents Engaged via FRAN

COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
Our community engagement goes beyond the numbers:

- Our **Youth Count** program fought for several ordinances to reduce youth tobacco access
- Our **Frogtown-Rondo Action Network (FRAN)** engaged residents in a campaign to win the provision of vouchers to allow hundreds of low-income youth to access local recreation centers.
- Our 68-unit **Western-U Plaza** (formerly the Old Home Dairy project) won a 2016 “Impact Award” from the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota.
- We co-launched **Housing Opportunity Made Equitable (HOMECo)**, a partnership to increase homeownership and asset building for people of color in the seven-county metro area.
Finding a Stable Home at Western-U

Charlene can recite all 17 addresses in Frogtown-Rondo where she has lived. Like so many people born into poverty, housing stability was always elusive for Charlene, but in Frogtown-Rondo, at least she always had her family and community nearby.

“I have a lot of kids that call me momma,” says Charlene. Indeed, beyond her three biological children, two stepchildren, and two adopted children, she has been a foster mom for over 20 youth and a support system for many more. But when her son Devonte was born with autism in 2003, she faced a new challenge, and when her home became unsafe for him last year, she left quickly. For over two months, she moved from one family member to the next, waiting for a new opportunity. That opportunity was Western-U Plaza. When she saw the building being constructed in July 2015, she visited the ASANDC office and inquired about securing a unit. She was able to move in by early December, avoiding being homeless into winter, and since then she has fallen in love with her new home. “The managers met with each tenant one-by-one to welcome them, and they make sure we have what we need” she says. “I felt that my child was in a safe place, that we were wanted here.” Her neighbors all know and take care of one another. “We all stick together. If one of us has a problem, we talk amongst each other and we try to fix it.”

Charlene has never called anywhere home for more than five years, but she believes that will change soon. “I’m not moving again,” she says. “I’m staying here for the rest of my life.”

“I’m staying here for the rest of my life.”
REGENERATION THROUGH
COMMUNITY ACTION

We began Frogtown-Rondo Action Network (FRAN) in 2009 to empower our residents to reshape local policy and planning decisions that impact their lives. Working with partner organizations and resident leaders in our Power of One Plus One program, FRAN has since surveyed, trained, engaged, and strategized with over 300 residents. After FRAN’s successful campaign to increase youth access to our recreation centers, we are looking to build on its success and effect change in housing, employment, and youth outcomes.

Discovering the Power of One Plus One

In 2009, after over a decade on the road and bound by prostitution, Tisha finally returned home to Saint Paul, settling in Rondo. With five children and few opportunities, Tisha relied on her community to find stability for the first time, and she wanted to give something back. She found her vehicle in the Power of One Plus One resident leadership program.

After joining the program, Tisha and nine fellow resident leaders were trained on civic engagement, leadership skills, community healing, and the roots of poverty. Through the program, Tisha became a leader in FRAN’s implementation, going door-to-door to survey her community about their priorities from employment, to medical assistance, to education for their children. “People just cared that I cared,” she says. Many of the people Tisha met became involved in FRAN strategy sessions, community visioning, and meeting with local leaders to advocate for new programs.

In helping her community grow, Tisha has grown too. She became a parent leader at Minnesota Communities Caring for Children (where she worked under State Representative Rena Moran, one of our first One Plus One resident leaders), then a paralegal at Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services, and then launched her own nonprofit to connect families to resources. “I go to the village to get my help,” she says, “and I want everyone else to think the same way.”

Tisha credits ASANDC and the Power of One Plus One for giving her the leadership skills she needed to turn her own life around. “A lot of healing goes on in that little office,” she says.

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Changing Saint Paul's Tobacco Laws

When William was in fourth grade at Maxfield Elementary, Damone Presley visited his class as part of ASANDC’s Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood Community Partnership to improve local academic success. Damone shared his “Vision in Living Life” leadership curriculum and invited students to join Youth Count to begin taking on issues affecting their community. William and a few classmates chose to give the program a try.

At their first Youth Count meeting at ASANDC’s office, William’s cohort began talking about the problem of tobacco use among Rondo’s youth. Before long, they were presenting the issue to City Council members, holding anti-tobacco signs in community parades, and recruiting neighbors to sign petitions to change local laws. William even testified at City Hall. Thanks in part to their advocacy, the Council has passed laws to raise tobacco prices, remove flavored tobacco from convenience stores, and most recently, to restrict the sale of menthol tobacco.

“I felt really proud of myself that I was making a difference in Saint Paul,” William says. “And I learned that I don’t have to be afraid to use my voice.” He says that Youth Count’s six-lesson curriculum taught him the skills he needed to become a leader: self-perception; accountability; relationship-building. “If it’s just one or two people, you can’t get the job done,” he says. “You need a bunch of people with a bunch of ideas so you can put them all together to solve a problem.”

William plans to stay in Youth Count as he gets older. “The thing I like most is trying to make change,” he says, “and being with other people who want to do the same thing.”

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REGENERATION THROUGH YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

In 2017, Youth Count began its 14th year, continuing our long history of guiding our youth into healthy, responsible, community-minded leaders. Through an empowerment curriculum, education and mentorship, and a leadership program designed to tackle local challenges, Youth Count gives our young residents the tools they need to change their community for the better. In doing so, we advance our neighborhood’s generational legacy of togetherness and self-determination.

YOUTH COUNT IMPACT 2015-2017

140
Youth Count Members Served

3
Ordinances Passed Restricting Youth Access to Tobacco (2017: Menthol Tobacco only to be Sold in Adult Tobacco Shops)
OUR SUPPORTERS
The Value of a Contribution

As a small community organization, our impact is not easily measured. We cannot quantify connections among neighbors or the empowerment they feel when they resolve a local issue with our support, but these outcomes are invaluable. We are proud that, as we have grown to advance housing and economic development, we have sustained our primary role: community builder.

We thank the individuals, foundations, and corporations who share our belief in community and have supported our efforts to make ours stronger. We continue to rely on contributions of all sizes to carry our vision forward.

ASANDC INCOME: 2015-2017

- Foundation Grants $666,850
- Government Grants and Contracts 494,504
- Corporate Contributions 445,782
- Earned Income / Developer Fees 291,556
- Individual Contributions 3,234
- Special Projects 500
- Miscellaneous Revenue 2,026
- Other Income 6,198

Total $1,910,660

ASANDC EXPENSES: 2015-2017

- Payroll Expenses $331,257
- Contract Services 469,580
- Facilities and Equipment 67,857
- Travel and Meetings 15,293
- Operations 50,837
- Board Relations 513
- Marketing 12,675
- Other Expenses 47,545

Total $995,557

INSTITUTIONAL GRANTORS AND FUNDERS

- African American Leadership Forum
- BuildWealth Minnesota
- Bush Foundation
- Camphor Memorial United Methodist Church
- Central Corridor Funders Collaborative
- City of Saint Paul
- F.R. Bigelow Foundation
- Mardag Foundation
- McKnight Foundation
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- Minnesota Historical Society - Legacy Funds
- Minnesota Housing
- Model Cities
- Neighborhood Development Center
- Northwest Area Foundation
- Otto Bremer Trust
- Propel Nonprofits
- Ramsey Tobacco Coalition
- Saint Paul Foundation
- Tobacco Free Alliance
- Twin Cities LISC
- Wilder Foundation
- Youthprise

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774 University Avenue West, Saint Paul, MN 55104
P: 651-222-0399 • F: 651-288-0034
www.aurorastAnthony.org