

**N E U V U E**

**VUE THE POSSIBILITIES**

**CREATING AN INNOVATIVE PLACE FOR INNOVATIVE PEOPLE**

A Capital Campaign for NeuVue

neuvue

FARM & FORK



## A NEW WAY TO INDEPENDENCE

Do you remember what it felt like to be a young adult, taking the first steps toward independence? Maybe you were starting a job or about to head off to school. Maybe you were juggling both.

During that time, you likely went through a range of emotions. There were moments when you felt invincible and ready to conquer anything. But there were also times when you felt scared and overwhelmed, unsure if things would turn out as you had envisioned.

If you were fortunate, you took those initial steps to independence with the support and guidance of people who cared about you and had your back—family, friends, maybe employers, co-workers and a teacher or two. People who were there for you when you lost confidence or faced an obstacle you didn't know how to overcome. People who provided the structure, advice or listening ear that always made your dreams seem possible once again.

At Neu-Life Community Development, we know a thing or two about young people and the realities they face, having spent the last 20+ years helping thousands of Milwaukee's urban youth get and stay on track to a better future. We understand the enormous, life-altering difference it makes to have someone in your corner and the benefits of giving youth access to the things that so many people can take for granted, like structure and routine and a safe place to live, study and work.

Historically we've focused our efforts on youth 18 and under, but now we're launching a program that takes those efforts to an older demographic: young people aged 18-24. This age group can be just as vulnerable as their younger brethren and just as much in need of our services and support. We believe offering extra help as they navigate the early years of adulthood will put them on firmer footing and help ensure they make a successful transition to fulfilling adult lives. Lives of community and giving back. Lives that matter for them and the world around them. We've created a bold, innovative and self-sustaining plan to make that support possible. With your help, we can make it happen.



## MORE THAN 20 YEARS OF CREATING A NEW PATH FOR MILWAUKEE'S URBAN YOUTH

Back in 2000, what would eventually become Neu-Life Community Development started small, as a program of activities for youth living in the Lindsay Heights neighborhood. A local woman named Joann Harris-Comodore noticed kids in the area were at loose ends when school wasn't in session, lacking access to the sports, camps and activities that so many kids took for granted. She decided to do something about it and founded Neu-Life—and remains our hands-on and very committed CEO to this day.

Over the years, that modest program has grown into something truly remarkable: An agency that delivers innovative, year-round educational and recreational programming that impacts participants' lives in myriad ways, from academic to social to emotional. Today, as our reputation and connections continue to grow, we serve more than 3,000 unduplicated young people annually.

Youth typically intersect with Neu-Life through their school or at one of our four neighborhood sites. We've created strong partnerships with local academic partners at public, charter and private schools across the city. Our program sites are all within a mile of one another in two of Milwaukee's—and Wisconsin's—most distressed zip codes, 53205 and 53206. In these neighborhoods, the poverty rate is over 42%, while the average is just over 25% for Milwaukee overall and just 13% nationally. And that reality is even more disheartening for the children in those zip codes, with two-thirds living in poverty.

No matter where youth encounter Neu-Life, they learn the same basic foundations of personal accountability, responsibility and respect for life. We are a prevention-focused organization dedicated to giving youth the skills and strategies they need to make their best life choices like staying in school and completing their schoolwork, while avoiding



**Neu-Life is one of the state's only youth-serving agencies to have earned accreditation as a Child and Youth Development program from the national Council on Accreditation (COA). The COA is an objective and independent body. Their accreditation confirms that our business practices are well-coordinated, culturally competent, evidence-based and outcomes-oriented, and that we are committed to ongoing operational improvement.**

the temptations of crime, drugs and other risky behaviors. We've seen excellent results and have achieved national accreditation for our efforts.

Many who came to our program as participants, transition to become youth workers and team members at Neu-Life. We are proud to report that 64% of our staff are alumni of Neu-Life Community Development, people who have experienced firsthand the difference our program can make.

And Neu-Life youth don't just give back to our organization, they also give back to the community at large. Today, those who grew up in Neu-Life are architects and teachers. They are social workers, work in criminal justice and support our health care systems in myriad ways. They are homeowners, taxpayers, employees and business owners. Responsible, community-focused adults who have taken what they learned at Neu-Life and live our "Better Our Best" challenge each day.

## BETTER FUTURES START HERE

At Neu-Life, we make it a priority to help youth build work-ready skills.

Our Youth Work Innovation Center is a project-based environment where 6-12 grade youth gain the workforce skills and experience to be exceptional employees.

We are especially committed to offering training and support in areas driven by workforce needs.

At present, that includes two programs with strong employer demand—that have proven to be very popular with our youth!

**Farmfork.** This urban agriculture and youth culinary arts program teaches youth how to grow, prepare and promote healthy, sustainable food.

**NeuMedia Studio.** Here our 21st-century youth learn the media and production skills that will prepare them for jobs across a variety of creative fields. Providing access to these resources is especially valuable because there are so few people of color in media production.



## CREATING A FOUNDATION FOR LIFE

At Neu-Life, our top priority is to give our young people the skills and resources they need to achieve their best possible life. To do this, we take a holistic, research-based and community-centric approach that builds skills and resiliency while exposing our youth to opportunities and connections in the larger world. Our services fall into three overarching categories:

### CAREER DEVELOPMENT

We believe in the power of meaningful employment and the life-changing difference it can make. We live that belief in two ways: by creating programs to support our students' career aspirations (see sidebar) and by taking an innovative approach to growing and retaining talent. In short, we recruit our own teen program participants to become the next generation of Neu-Life staff. We offer interested middle and high school students in-depth training, professional feedback and one-on-one coaching. This model is widely recognized as a professional development best practice and has been highly successful at our organization. Today a noteworthy 64% of our staff are former Neu-Life participants.

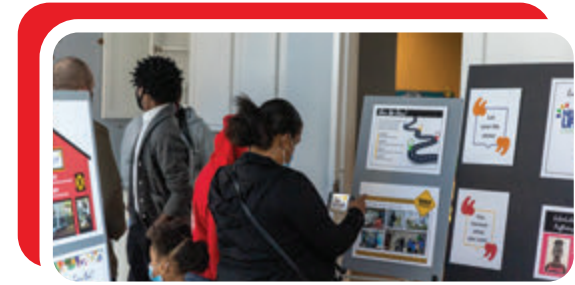
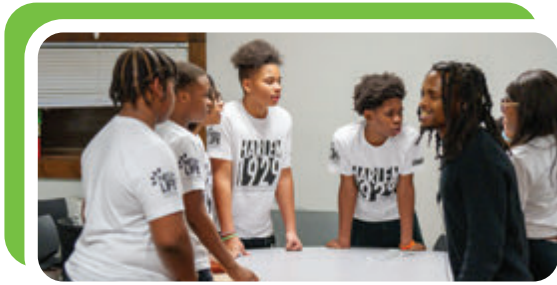
### AFTER-SCHOOL AND SUMMER PROGRAMS

Before and after-school activities matter. They can combat drug use, discourage criminal behavior, improve academics and build self-confidence. They also create a sense of community and provide respite for struggling families. We offer our students programs in a number of areas, including arts education, urban agriculture, culinary skills, service projects, sports, and media production.

### PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Our evidence-based programs teach young people personal accountability and responsibility while offering support and guidance in several lifechanging areas, including teen pregnancy and HIV/STD prevention, life skills, dealing with emotions, personal development and decision making and human and sex trafficking prevention.





## BECAUSE THE TOUGH TIMES DON'T ALWAYS END AT ADULTHOOD

Over the years, it has been a gift to watch and contribute as the students who have come to us as shy, tentative youth have grown, matured and blossomed into independent, community-focused young men and women. We've watched with pride as they've taken their first steps toward adulthood, calling on the skills, life lessons and support they gained at Neu-Life.

But sadly, we've sometimes seen that things don't always go well for our youth as they graduate from the circle of nurturing support they find at Neu-Life.

For some, losing the day-to-day safety net of positive mentors and peers means they don't have the context and support they need to say "no" to unhealthy choices.

For others, the reality of providing for themselves or other dependents leaves them stressed and overwhelmed. They work hard to attend classes and be responsible, productive employees—usually both. But they're exhausted and struggle to find a safe, affordable place to live, time to study and someone to listen when everything feels like way too much.

And all of them are dealing with the reality that the pandemic has taken an awful toll. They may have lost loved ones. Their social, emotional and mental well-being have likely taken a hit. And an already challenging and complicated life, just feels more difficult.

Our young people know what they need to thrive: stability, housing and a sense of community and support.

And we'd like to show them they can continue to count on the one place that's always been in their corner: Neu-Life.



## **CREATING AN INNOVATIVE PLACE WHERE MILWAUKEE'S YOUTH CAN SOAR AND THRIVE**

Roughly five years ago, the Neu-Life staff, board and a variety of community partners began to take the first steps toward envisioning how we could evolve our programs to continue to support our youth as they moved into their adult lives. Together, we came up with a plan that supports Milwaukee's young people and does so in a way that's innovative and financially self-sustaining. The project has been subjected to extensive due diligence by a team that includes legal experts, community investment resources and skilled architects.

Our plan includes the following:

### **A NEARBY, NORTHSIDE LOCATION**

Throughout the history of Neu-Life, we have focused on meeting the needs of Milwaukee's most vulnerable communities: the community of the 53205 and 53206 zip codes. Our four existing facilities all lie within this area, all within a mile of one another, and we believed it was essential our new facility was also conveniently nearby. Through a combination of generous land donations and a commitment to seek out economical methods of land purchase, we have been able to affordably secure 100% site control of an entire block of land, right in our current neighborhood.



An architectural rendering of a large, multi-purpose community facility interior. The space features a high ceiling with a complex, geometric wooden slat pattern and recessed lighting. The walls are made of light-colored concrete with vertical slits for windows. The floor is a polished wooden basketball court. In the center, a basketball hoop is mounted on a tall, dark, tree-like structure. To the left, a large window offers a view of a city skyline. Several green silhouettes of people are scattered throughout the space, some playing soccer on the court, others standing near a chalkboard on the right wall. The overall atmosphere is bright and modern.

## A FACILITY THAT BENEFITS OUR YOUTH AND THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE

Our proposed six-story, 106,050 sq. ft. multi-purpose space will provide resources for our residents, local non-profits and businesses and the larger community.

Our current design includes the following:

- 36 studio and one- and two-bedroom housing units
- Indoor basketball court
- Outdoor courtyard
- Possible restaurant (which will be operated by a partner)
- Community gathering spaces
- Program spaces and offices
- Administrative offices for staff who oversee this facility
- Rentable office spaces for non-profit partners
- Rentable shared spaces for one-time use
- Onsite parking

We will also use this facility to grow two of Neu-Life's most popular workforce driven programs, NeuMedia, our professional audio-visual production studio, and FarmFork, our youth culinary arts program.

## AN INNOVATIVE HOUSING MODEL

Residents of the building's 36 units will be split between Neu-Life employees (who will receive subsidized rent) and students and young professionals, who can receive a market rate rent discount if they give back to Neu-Life in some way, for instance, by mentoring or volunteering.

Our goal is to provide not just a place for young people to live, but a supportive, interconnected community where residents can thrive. Residents will have access not just to housing but to continued educational opportunities, job training and supportive services. There will be specific expectations around behavior and community contributions: NeuVue will be more than just a place to live. And this is true for all residents—including students and young professionals with no prior relationship with Neu-Life.

We want everyone who lives at NeuVue to understand they are choosing to be part of something bigger than they are and expected to play an active role in creating that environment.







## **A SELF-SUSTAINING FINANCIAL MODEL**

Every non-profit dreams of creating a self-sustaining funding model. With NeuVue, we can accomplish that goal by generating revenue through multiple sources. These will include apartment rentals, office rent (we have vetted two trusted community non-profits that are already long-term partners of Neu-Life), parking fees and the potential for community groups, businesses and individuals to rent our various facilities for media production, food preparation, training, events and more. We have created an operating proforma, using models to estimate revenue and expenses at various capacity levels and over different periods of time. Each model confirms our ability to meet anticipated expenses with a cushion of revenue. NeuVue will be a different type of development, explicitly created to support Neu-Life's long-term mission of improving the lives of Milwaukee's youth.

# VUE THE POSSIBILITIES WITH NEUVUE

Over the past two decades, vulnerable families on Milwaukee’s north side have counted on Neu-Life to help their children get on the path to a better life. It has been our honor and our privilege to play that role. And our honor and privilege to partner with the organizations, community groups and supporters like you that share our deep commitment to these families in need.

Even though we are surrounded by examples of success and heartened by the many ways young people are growing and thriving every day thanks to the foundation of support they’ve received at Neu-Life, we know there is much hard work ahead. With NeuVue, we will take critical steps toward improving housing stability and continuing to provide the tools and support our young people need to feel connected to our community—needs the Milwaukee community has long struggled to meet.





## **TO MAKE NEUVUE POSSIBLE, WE NEED TO RAISE \$13.5 MILLION.**

To date, we've secured \$3.5 million in new market tax credits with the help of Forward Community Investments. To complete the project, we must raise an additional \$10 million. Through the *Vue the Possibilities* campaign, we strive to do just that.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to learn more about our facility and our goals for the future. Community support has made all Neu-Life has accomplished since 2000 possible. And with continued support and a NeuVue, we'll be able to create even more possibilities for today's young people. And tomorrow's.



## Neu-Life Community Development

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