



Still
I Rise

**UPO's 60th Anniversary
Gala Celebration**

Thursday, July 20, 2023





*Congratulations
United Planning Organization
60th Anniversary*



December 9, 2022

As Mayor of Washington, DC, it is my pleasure to extend congratulations to the United Planning Organization (UPO) on the occasion of your 60th Anniversary.

Throughout its history, UPO has excelled in its mission to unite people with opportunities by providing our most vulnerable citizens with housing services, workforce training, wellness initiatives, Head Start programs, and more.

Each year, UPO's capable staff places more than 58,000 DC residents on a path away from poverty and toward economic security.

As you gather to celebrate this major milestone, may the occasion be a springboard to even higher heights of achievement through service.

On behalf of the nearly 700,000 residents of Washington, DC, you have my deepest appreciation for your dedication to changing lives and my best wishes for a

HAPPY 60th ANNIVERSARY!

Muriel Bowser
Muriel Bowser
Mayor, Washington, DC



ORDER OF PROGRAM

REGISTRATION OPENS 6:00PM

VIP COCKTAIL RECEPTION 6:00PM - 6:45PM

SILENT AUCTION OPENS 6:00PM

"STILL I RISE" (PHOTOS) Maya Angelou's Recitation of Her Poem

MASTER OF CEREMONIES Guy Lambert

INVOCATION

OPENING REMARKS Ruthven Phillip, Esq., Chair, UPO Board of Directors

WELCOME REMARKS AND SPONSOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT Andrea Thomas, UPO President & CEO

VIDEO & REMARKS Reggie Tucker Jr., UPO Workforce Institute Graduate

PADDLE RAISER Guy Lambert

DINNER & DESSERT

SILENT AUCTION - FINAL BIDS 8:00PM

STORY OF UPO Video Presentation

HALL OF FAME AWARDS Remarks by Ruthven Phillip, Esq., Chair, UPO Board of Directors

HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES Rev. Dr. Dana Jones, Honoree
Presenter: **Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton**

Vanessa Rawls, Honoree (Posthumously)
Presenters: **Vincent Blackson & Regina Murphy, UPO staff**

SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD Bainum Family Foundation, Honoree
Presenter: **Syrta Robinson, UPO Vice President, Office of Early Learning**

STORY OF UPO CONTINUED Video Presentation

CLOSING REMARKS Andrea Thomas, UPO President and CEO
Ruthven Phillip, Esq., Chair, UPO Board of Directors

AFTER-PARTY: DANCING

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT/CEO AND BOARD CHAIR



Andrea Thomas
President and CEO



Ruthven Phillip, Esq.
Board of Directors Chair

Dear Friend of UPO,

Other programs enable people to reach their dreams.

We don't limit people that way.

Instead, we show them **NEW possibilities for their lives**, beyond what they have dreamed or imagined so far.

For example, our Construction Trade Workshops open the eyes of high school students to career options that they had never considered. **You can see their 'aha' moment of discovery!** That's what drives them to take the next step: earning national certifications at our Building Careers Academy that propel them into professions with job security.

Or we could talk about Annie and Antoine Smith. One of our experts prepared their taxes for free and showed them how to get a \$13,000 refund. Then a financial counselor showed them how to use that money to get an apartment, buy a truck to start a scrap metal business, and plan for the future. **We revealed a new path and showed them how to navigate it.**

Some say that our customers are stuck in an endless cycle of poverty, that trying to break it is a waste of time, that it's impossible. Instead, we listen to Muhammad Ali:

"Impossible is not a fact. It's an opinion.
Impossible is not a declaration. It's a dare.
Impossible is potential. Impossible is temporary.
Impossible is nothing."

Every day, we give our customers the tools to become the change agents of their lives.

Reach their full potential.

Transform their families for generations.

This is why we fell in love with nonprofit work and Team UPO. **We see the difference that we make for our neighbors.** And sometimes our hearts feel like bursting.

At our 37th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast, we announced the latest students to earn our Beavers Scholarships. That's when **US Senator Cory Booker thanked UPO for helping to create The Beloved Community envisioned by Dr. King**, recognizing that "we all have equal dignity and abundant potential, but we also belong to each other, need each other, and must make investments so that we can thrive."

For 60 years, UPO has helped people thrive.

Removed barriers.

Delivered hope.

We will continue to innovate, open up new horizons, and lend people the courage to change their lives. **We are overjoyed that you have joined us on this journey.**

Welcome to

UPO's 60th Anniversary Gala Celebration

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Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton

relentlessly advocates for DC residents and Statehood. She broke down barriers as a civil rights and feminist leader, as a tenured law professor, as a Fortune 500 Board member, and as a UPO partner.

President Jimmy Carter appointed her as the first woman to chair the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In 1991, she was elected as Congresswoman for the District of Columbia. Her work for full congressional voting representation and for full democracy continues her lifelong struggle for universal human and civil rights.



Mark K. Shriver

is a lifelong advocate for children and a bestselling author. He is the president of Don Bosco Cristo Rey High School and the former president of Save the Children Action Network. Shriver founded the innovative Choice Program, which serves at-risk youth through intensive, community-based counseling.

His parents were Eunice Kennedy Shriver (President John F. Kennedy's sister) and Sargent Shriver, who created the Community Action Agencies across the U.S. that help people lift themselves out of poverty. (UPO is one of these agencies.)

MASTER OF CEREMONIES



Guy Lambert

TV and Radio Personality

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HALL OF FAME INDUCTEES



Rev. Dr. Dana M. Jones

a lifelong social justice champion, is a visionary, big-picture critical thinker who served as UPO's President and CEO from 2004-2019. He was invited to take this role by DC Court of Appeals Chief Judge Annice M. Wagner, who was VP of UPO's Board of Directors. She saw him as the ideal captain at a time when UPO was navigating troubled waters and needed to restore its position as the District's most effective organization for helping people lift themselves out of poverty.

As our captain, he was a great listener and eloquent communicator whose dedication, insight, and enthusiasm inspired Team UPO. He broadened and deepened our outreach via initiatives such as the Building Careers Academy (DC's largest construction training facility), Educare DC, and the POWER college readiness program.

In 2018, the Community Action Partnership – the national association of Community Action Agencies – honored UPO with the **National Award of Excellence**, which recognizes effectiveness and organizational quality. (Only 12 agencies, out of 1,000+ across the U.S., have ever received this best-in-class status.) The following year, the association gave Rev. Jones the **National Lyndon B. Johnson Leadership Award** for his outstanding expertise on how to help people achieve economic security. To use a phrase he loved, "That is a good thing."



Vanessa L. Rawls (1954-2018)

was a fighter for people and believed in second chances. She is fondly remembered for her intellect, strength, warmth, and spirit of joy.

Ms. Rawls was UPO's Director, Office of Strategic Positioning and Project Strategist for DC's Shelter Hotline (which UPO operates).

When she ran the BRIDGES program at UPO's Barry Farm office, she developed a foundation of insights that would later shape the design for Shelter Hotline. BRIDGES (Building Resources for Individual Development Geared to Encourage Self-Sufficiency) was a case management program that provided daytime support, resources, and activities for people experiencing homelessness.

At the time, people who were housed at shelters had to leave in the morning and return at night. While at BRIDGES, they could focus on improving life skills: applying for jobs and housing, banking, cooking, personal care, and more. BRIDGES became DC's first Community Resource Center and led to the creation of DC's Shelter Hotline, which now responds to 92,000+ emergency calls a year.

Another huge source of pride for Ms. Rawls was UPO's National Award of Excellence from the Community Action Partnership. **It meant so much because she and so many teammates had worked hard to ensure that UPO was worthy of the honor.**

Ms. Rawls, we're glad that we could share your bright, shining light. We treasure your memory.

SPIRIT OF PHILANTHROPY AWARD

The Spirit of Philanthropy Award honors people and organizations who are making a profound difference by devoting resources to help DC residents and communities flourish.



Bainum Family Foundation

has a vision of a society where all children thrive. It works alongside communities experiencing racial and economic disparities to create lasting systems change for the well-being of children and families. Bainum, founded in 1968, prioritizes 5 aspects of Early Childhood:

- Early learning
- Mental health and well-being
- Health, including prenatal and perinatal
- Family economic security
- Housing stability

In 2016, the Foundation reached out to Gail Govoni, UPO's VP of Early Learning, and began a long-term collaboration to enhance and expand early learning in Washington, DC. Since UPO is at the core of the District's Quality Improvement Network and is vital to the Birth-to-Three Coalition and the DC Head Start Association, UPO was instrumental in Bainum accomplishing its goal of **adding 750 high-quality early learning seats** in Wards 7 and 8.

Our fruitful partnership extends to the Eagle Academy Early Learning Center in Ward 8, where UPO provides innovative programming and comprehensive services for children from birth to 8th grade. **This was the first program of its kind in the District;** with the help of DC Public Schools, this effective, proven approach has expanded into the Malcolm X and Ketcham Elementary Schools.

During the pandemic when early education centers had to close, Bainum responded to the needs of UPO's staff, providing laptops for 123 staff which enabled them to stay connected to their UPO teammates and the families they continued to serve. Once our centers reopened, Bainum supported our teacher recruitment efforts so we could add to our core team of dynamic, passionate educators.

Right now, UPO is partnering with Bainum's WeVision EarlyEd, a collaborative effort designed to "make the ideal real" by re-envisioning what child care can be.

Bainum is devoted to helping children in their first 1,000 days, which lay the foundation for their future success. **The Foundation is a driving force for change in early education and is invested in equity.** Bainum's staff listen to families and convene thinkers and doers from a wide variety of fields because they know **that together we are stronger and can help children go farther.**

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**HELPING PEOPLE, CHANGING LIVES:
THE STORY OF UPO**



STORY OF UPO



As the District of Columbia entered the 1960s, many of its residents were crying out for help. The city's population was 70% black yet the median wages for blacks were 50% of white workers' wages. The unemployment rate for people ages 16-19 was 22% for blacks and 4% for whites. Hundreds of children were turned away from kindergarten due to lack of space in severely overcrowded schools.

The Commissioners who ran the city were appointed by Congress and not accountable to the citizens – there had been no local elections since 1874 when Home Rule was rescinded. Segregationists in Congress marshaled their appropriation and oversight authority to sabotage city agencies.*

The District needed a new way to help its residents thrive.

UPO came into being as a result of the needs identified in a 1960 study funded by the Health and Welfare Council of the National Capital Area, Washington Center for Metropolitan Studies, Brookings Institution, and Resources for the Future, Inc. The findings of the year-long study revealed:

THE PROBLEM

- No area-wide planning framework guided the development or coordination of human services.
- Efforts to improve human services had been too isolated from the economic development of the area.
- Local governments were playing a greater role in rendering human services but had not devoted enough resources to **planning** those services.
- No one had developed adequate techniques for gaining up-to-date knowledge about how to serve human needs.

THE SOLUTION

Form a united effort to plan the human services of the National Capital Area, based upon sound research and evaluation techniques, in partnership with government and private interests.

THE METHOD

The United Planning Organization of the National Capital Area (UPO), incorporated on December 10, 1962 as a private, nonprofit, educational institution that would be woven into the fabric of the District. UPO would be a catalyst for change, a stimulator of ideas, and a source of knowledge to help *existing* organizations improve their usefulness and productivity and encourage *new ones*.

* from Dr. George Derek Musgrove's *Black Power in Washington, DC project*



THE DAWN OF UPO

“A unique organization has been created” to improve community life in the Washington DC area, The Washington Star wrote in December 1962.

District Commissioners announced that the new nonprofit, named United Planning Organization, would serve the entire region – Maryland, DC, and Northern Virginia – and had two objectives:

1. Mobilize and coordinate research, education, and planning efforts for human needs, especially by meshing the plans of local governing officials, the social welfare movement, business, organized labor, physical planning, and the area's research potential.
2. “Direct the planning and implementation of a comprehensive attack on juvenile delinquency” and develop a systematic approach to address unemployment.

To launch UPO, the President's Committee on Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Crime gave a \$100,000 grant “to take the first step” in this “all-out attack.” The Washington Post wrote, “The grant is unique in that the staff...will be responsible directly to the three Cabinet officers who make up the President's Committee,” including its chair, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

The Committee wrote, “There is no American city about which [we are] more concerned than Washington, DC. [We] immediately...began meeting with Washington leaders to map out a new, concerted community effort against youth problems.”

UPO's first demonstration project, Washington Action for Youth, was a long-range effort aimed at addressing delinquency prevention and improving opportunities. The Cardozo area was chosen because of its high crime and poverty rates and because only half of the students entering Cardozo Senior High School stayed in school and graduated. As The New York Times wrote, Attorney General Kennedy soon gave his blessing to another grant to bring 10 returning Peace Corpsmen to the high school as teachers while they also did graduate work at Howard University. He said, “Too often, we've been more interested in Bangkok or Paris than the District of Columbia.”

UPO's effective project reached 6,200 students in 18 schools (over 1/3 of the student body) through the support of an additional \$1.5 million grant from the US Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare. In an editorial, The Washington Post wrote that the money **“has been very wisely assigned to improving reading instruction, afterschool programs, summer schools and, a matter of critical importance, the education of parents in helping their children to learn.”**

STORY OF UPO

PIVOTING TO MEET THE MOMENT

UPO was born to be the area's strategic planner of human services but a call to battle forever changed its character. When the War on Poverty was launched in 1964 by President Lyndon Johnson, the infant UPO became one of its first draftees. It became a battlefield activist that delivered programs on dozens of fronts across the city and in the suburbs.

"We got off the ground as a non-planning organization, as an operational organization," recalls James G. Banks, who took leave from his federal job in August 1963 to help write UPO's first grant proposal to the Ford Foundation ... and, 4 months later, became UPO's first Executive Director. "When [the Economic Opportunity Act] was passed in 1964, we were designated the [Community Action Agency] for the metropolitan area of Washington. We were under the gun to put together proposals rapidly in order to begin to get the money and use it."

Remembering those hectic days, Frederick B. Lee, UPO's President for its first 10 years, said that during the kickoff, there wasn't enough time to find or develop other agencies to operate the programs so UPO found itself playing an administrative role that no one had anticipated. UPO's planning role was still vital — in fact, such planning was included in a \$3.1 million 3-year grant from the Ford Foundation (following an initial \$261,000 grant) and a \$75,000 grant from the Meyer Foundation.

However, planning took a back seat to the grand-scale operations of President Lyndon Johnson's efforts to eradicate the poverty that had devastated the lives of millions of American families for generations. Sargent Shriver, head of the Peace Corps, also became the Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, which sent funding to 32 states in addition to DC. The goal was to help the 34.6 million people who lived in poverty and **finally give them a voice**: They would now have **opportunities to become the change agents of their lives** by shaping the programs that served their needs.

PIONEER IN CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

The Post wrote that UPO was "**the chief architect**" of "**this historic reform**" in the Washington metro area. And since UPO was at the fingertips of federal agencies, it became the testing ground for many of the innovative ideas that were sprouting in a friendly climate.

However, at every turn, UPO had to fight against the public's negative stereotypes about people with low incomes. The Post wrote that UPO's Margaret Cline "questioned the assumptions of contemporary sociologists" by saying that parents with low incomes are "enormously" concerned about their children's education. Cline added that these children know how to take responsibility and exhibit enormous imagination, constructing complex games from simple materials.

Over the decades, UPO would need to repeatedly trumpet that all residents are worthy of help. To quote Elizabeth Eckford, one of the Little Rock Nine, "Every voice in the community is important. Each of us is responsible for the kind of community we have."



1964

In November 1964, the Office of Economic Opportunity gave a grant of \$1.45 million to UPO as the Community Action Agency (CAA) for the National Capital Area. To be precise, this Community Service Block Grant is given to the local government, which then directs 90% of the grant to the CAA to serve residents' needs.



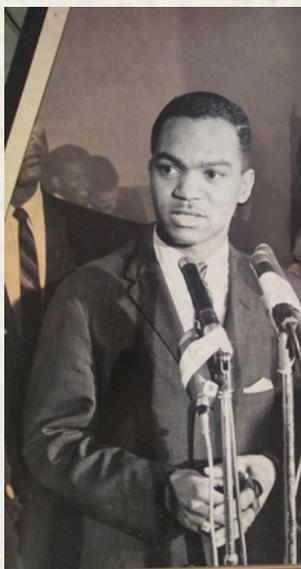
Being designated as a CAA meant that UPO was enlisted in the War on Poverty. Here is the purpose of the war, as written by Sargent Shriver in the Economic Opportunity Act: "The United States can achieve its full economic and social potential as a nation only if every individual has the opportunity to contribute to the full extent of his capabilities and to participate in the workings of our society. It is, therefore, the policy of the United States to eliminate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty in this Nation by opening to everyone the opportunity for education and training, the opportunity to work, and the opportunity to live in decency and dignity."

Each agency was called on to:

- address the root **causes and conditions** of poverty
- enable the **maximum feasible participation** of the intended beneficiaries, so they can shape the programs designed to improve their lives
- **mobilize public and private resources**



Walter E. Washington was on UPO's Board. He would become DC's first mayor; later, the city's convention center was named after him.



Lifelong activist Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy was on UPO's Board and was Dr. King's spokesman on Capitol Hill.

“**UPO's Community Action Promise:** We change people's lives, embody the spirit of hope, improve our community, and make it a better place to live. We care about the entire community and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.”

These were the priorities of UPO's first Board of Trustees (now called the Board of Directors). It was a prestigious body with 4 Presidential appointees, 6 members designated by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, and other representatives of local nonprofits, business, and labor, including **Walter E. Washington** (who became DC's Mayor-Commissioner in 1967 and was elected as its first Mayor in 1975) and **Rev. Walter E. Fauntroy**, one of the city's foremost activists, who was Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s spokesman on Capitol Hill (in his role as DC Bureau Director of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference). He was also pastor of the New Bethel Baptist Church, founder of the Model Inner City Community Organization, and in 1971 became DC's first (non-voting) Delegate in the US House of Representatives.

STORY OF UPO

UPO saw that **people with low incomes also had to have a direct voice** on the Board. Indeed, this was a crucial balancing act in the early years: How to include input from people who benefit from programs as well as advice from the local nonprofits who had helped to form UPO ... and had their own agendas.

The early solution was to assign 3 Board seats to residents with low incomes. This number was raised to 10 and eventually was set at 7, where it is today. The current Board is divided this way:

- 1/3 are democratically selected representatives of residents with low incomes **from all 8 Wards**, including one designated representative of the UPO Parent Policy Council
- 1/3 are elected public officials or their representatives (6 members designated by DC's Mayor and 1 member designated by DC's Delegate in the US House of Representatives)
- 1/3 are representatives of major groups and interests, elected by the UPO Board

The Cardozo project showed that another component was essential to success: **Bringing the programs into the neighborhoods that needed them.** Today this seems obvious but at the time it was bold, nearly unprecedented, and resisted by entrenched players. For example, UPO tried working with existing legal aid societies but could not get them to budge from their practice of having residents come to their distant law offices. To cross this gap, UPO founded the Neighborhood Legal Services Program (NLSP) with Ford Foundation funds.

By placing lawyers in **8 neighborhoods that needed them**, we broke away from other organizations' failed approaches. The Post wrote **how wonderful it was "for a neighborhood to have its 'own' law office, a magical thing** to stand between it and the perplexing world of law that sometimes traps people."

Our local model **launched a national movement** that expanded access to the civil justice system for Americans with low incomes.



Financial health was another area of need. **UPO opened new Community Credit Unions** so our job trainees could launch careers in banking while helping their neighbors open their first accounts, build their credit, and get financial counseling. **The bank teller training program became one of the few success paths for women** since they were shut out of other professions.

With this "bring the programs to the people" mindset, **UPO created 8 Neighborhood Development Centers across the city** to be hubs for literacy education, employment, crisis intervention, the NLSP's law offices, and other programs. Within a year, **the centers were in touch with 25,000 people a month.** And some of these residents became the most valuable assets of all: **volunteers** who aided programs and eventually ran them.

The centers used service delivery as a tool to gather information about community needs with the goal of offering comprehensive, holistic support to help people lift themselves out of poverty.

This was still true decades later when Shirley Price, who led the Anacostia Community Service Center, said, "We took them in and often we helped people by addressing needs that they didn't even come in for. They, in turn, helped us to find other people because they knew what the community needs were."

This informal method of collecting data supplemented the formal Community Needs Assessment, which UPO continues to conduct every 3 years. **By surveying residents to learn their most urgent concerns, UPO allows residents' input to drive the choices** of where to shift resources to make the most impact.

1965



René Davis, named "the original Head Start child," appears with key figures in the creation of UPO (l. to r.): DC Commissioner and UPO Board member John B. Duncan; Presidential Advisor for National Capital Affairs Charles A. Horsky (who wrote UPO's original by-laws); and UPO's first President, Frederick B. Lee.

On January 12, 1965, President Johnson introduced Project Head Start to Congress. He made a **direct connection between education and poverty** and called this initiative "one of the most constructive, and one of the most sensible, and also one of the most exciting programs that this nation has ever undertaken."

Project Head Start was to be an 8-week pilot over the summer and later become a full-time education program that would "help at every stage along the road to learning" because **every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential**. That summer, 8,546 pre-schoolers participated in UPO's Project Head Start program and 6,443 boys and girls enjoyed Summer Adventures for Youth.

(Note: In later years, UPO would set up a restaurant and use its commercial kitchen to prepare the food for Head Start centers and for meals for seniors.)

In May 1965, Sargent Shriver announced the creation of a "Foster Grandparents" program where seniors with low incomes would mentor and care for children. With 5 million seniors living below the poverty line, this was a win-win that would improve the lives of all participants. In 1972, **UPO started the DC Chapter of Foster Grandparents**, which is still thriving as part of AmeriCorps Seniors. (Note: In the 21st century, the White House reached out to UPO's seniors asking for input on how to improve inclusion in other programs.)

UPO received a grant from the US Dept. of Labor and the Office of Economic Opportunity to finance a **job development network that included training for returning citizens and youth**. The plan enabled the hiring of 140 new staff for the Neighborhood Development Centers. UPO now ran the Neighborhood Youth Corps, screened applicants for the Job Corps, and supported the Washington Institute for Employment Training.

STORY OF UPO

1966

UPO and its affiliates now employed 1,000+ residents with low incomes. Meanwhile, UPO and its Board members were creating civic institutions that led the push to restore Home Rule. (After that was achieved in 1974, the seeds planted by UPO continued to nourish the community.)

The District was a hotbed of advocacy and social action movements (which became hotter after the 1963 March on Washington), and UPO's efforts nurtured the reform energies that animated these causes. As Dr. George Derek Musgrove has written, **UPO gave funds to community groups** that created the Poverty Rights Action Center, Cardozo Area Arts Committee, Rebels with a Cause, Citywide Welfare Alliance, and Neighborhood Development Youth Program. **Within 3 years, these activists had built a dense citywide organizational infrastructure**, including a community museum in Anacostia, a student-run Freedom School in Northeast, and a pilot program for community control of the police in Shaw/Columbia Heights.

And when civil rights organizers migrated from the South, they were snapped up by UPO to continue helping people RISE. This was no surprise to anyone who knew UPO's 1st Executive Director James G. Banks. As the Post wrote, "UPO has some astounding successes in organizing ... [Banks' theory is that] it is far better to teach people how to exert influence on the established city agencies and get things done." And UPO's 2nd Executive Director was Wiley Branton; **he and Thurgood Marshall had been the lawyers for the Little Rock Nine.** Their lawsuit to integrate a school (implementing the Supreme Court's Brown v. Board of Education decision) was a civil rights landmark in American history.

UPO dove deep into DC neighborhoods to find more community organizers, whether they were single mothers or returning citizens, even ones who were still in Lorton prison (see Petey Greene's story on p.18).

UPO set up a Small Business Development Center to coach would-be entrepreneurs on how to apply for Small Business Administration loans and then convinced the SBA to give fairer consideration to black loan applicants. From 1950-1963, local blacks had been so frozen out that only 6 received SBA loans. During the first 9 months of UPO's effort, **38 SBA loans were granted to black businessmen. The resulting stores and restaurants created 800 jobs in neighborhoods that desperately needed them.**

Housing staff specialists helped UPO to create a nonprofit real estate development firm, the Housing Development Corporation, to buy, build, rehabilitate, and manage housing. By the early 1970s, HDC had **developed or rehabilitated homes for 1,375 families.** In addition, it assisted minority housing firms in obtaining contracts for housing development and served as a training ground for housing professionals and laborers.

UPO also gave grants to settlement houses including Friendship House and Southeast Neighborhood House to start neighborhood development programs. Such houses were important for people who had moved from the rural South and were getting used to the dynamics of living in a city. UPO also supported 5 group foster homes for children and gave intensive casework services to other families in their own homes.



1967

UPO was one of 21 Community Action Agencies nationwide chosen to operate a new federal Concentrated Employment Program. This was the first full-scale coordinated effort by the US Dept. of Labor to bridge the gap between the "hard-core unemployed" and the job market.

There are two tracks: job preparation and job development among public and private employers.



By 1970 there were 82 such programs.

The US Dept. of Labor judged that **UPO had the best program in the country.**

1968

April 4 was shattering: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. The event compounded a sense of hopelessness many felt about America's treatment of black citizens. People took to the streets; rioters, in their rage and frustration, burned block after block of District neighborhoods.

A few days later, with smoke still billowing from fires, Executive Director Wiley Branton was summoned to UPO because demonstrators had taken over his office. He found a crowd ranting that more of the city needed to be burned down, including the UPO centers. Then he barged into the center of the crowd and demanded to be heard.

By coincidence, there were a few people in the crowd, migrants from the South, who Branton had represented as their lawyer in hostile environments during civil rights struggles. He reminded them that he had gotten them out from behind bars. His speech defused the demonstration and he reclaimed his office.

Coda: A year later, the Nixon administration tried to cut \$1 million from UPO's budget. As officials from UPO and the Office of Economic Opportunity met at OEO headquarters, **600 people massed outside the building to protest the cut** and a few entered the building. Some of them had come spontaneously; others had answered the call of a new Ad Hoc Citizens Committee to Restore the Cuts. This event alerted OEO of **community support for UPO**. After strong protests from Mayor Washington, the City Council, and the School Board, negotiations saved most of the funds. However, this was just the first of many clashes with the President.

Food insecurity: **UPO addressed the huge post-riot problem of finding food by creating a food bank:** the UPO Community Food and Nutrition Program. This led to the 1979 development of the Capital Area Food Bank and the DC Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program.



1969

Continuing the effort to bring food into neighborhoods, UPO opens two Martin Luther King Food Cooperatives.

UPO funds the CHANGE Neighborhood Health Center and an anti-fraud consumer protection program.

PETEY GREENE: VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



Ralph Waldo “Petey” Greene was a comic genius and a Sergeant in the Korean War who became UPO’s Community Liaison and DC’s brightest radio and TV star.

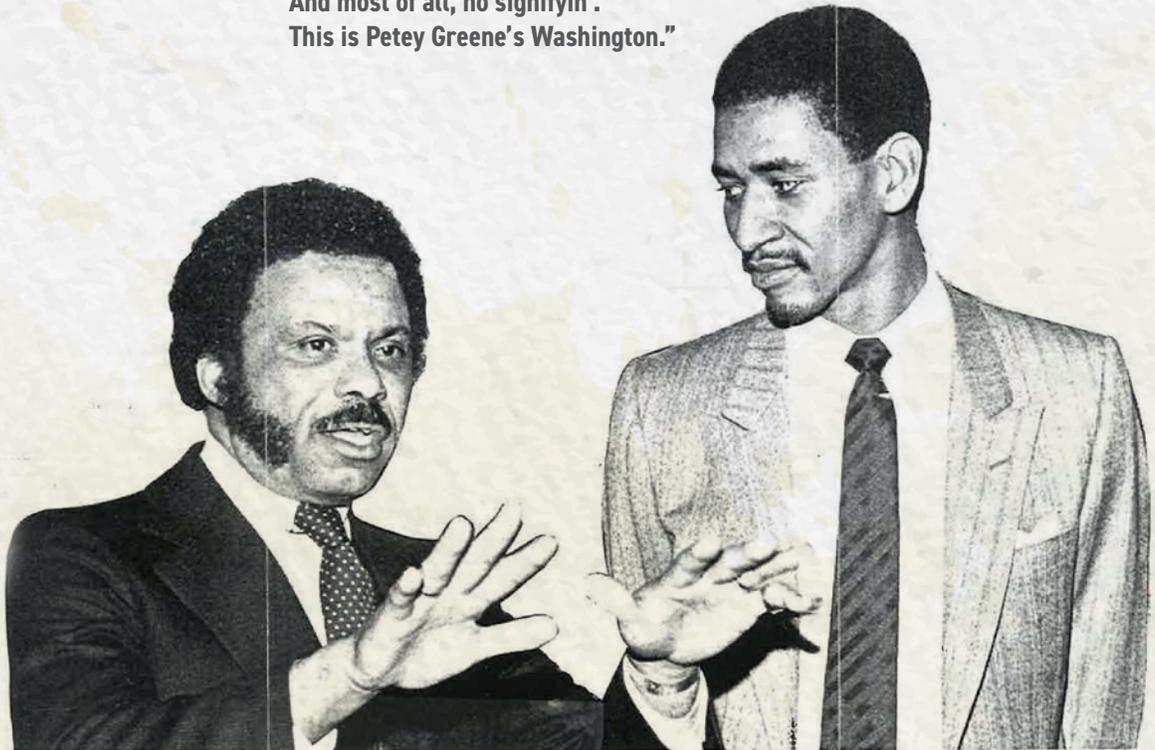
However, he reveled in fighting against rules and often found himself in jail. He was in Lorton prison, about to be paroled, when he first learned about UPO. He didn’t want just any job when he returned to society – he wanted one that he was comfortable doing. So he asked the warden to arrange for an interview. According to Greene, UPO’s George Holland and Dave Carter came to the prison “and they said, ‘Everybody seems to think you would be a great neighborhood worker. What do you know about poverty?’ I said, ‘I got my PhD in it.’”

Ten days later, he walked out of prison and into UPO to start his new job as a community organizer. His belief in second chances was central to his work of fighting for economic and social justice. Greene said that he felt blessed to do it.

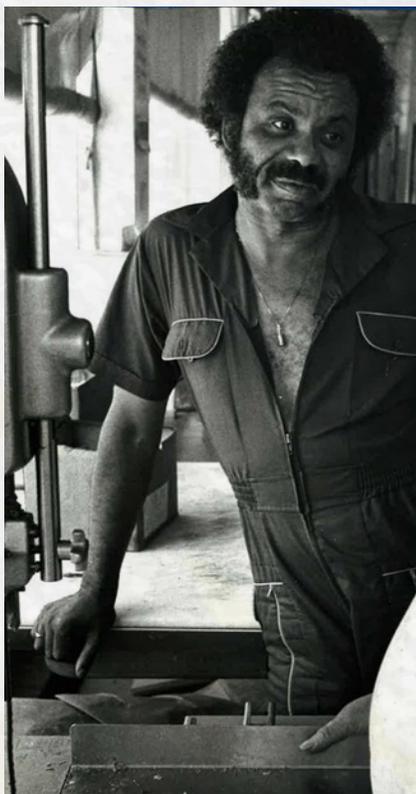
Soon he also became a DJ at WOL radio, started his own show, and talked his way into history. He won 2 Emmy Awards and was the subject of a documentary and a biography. A movie about his life, *Talk To Me*, starred Don Cheadle.

People fondly recall his rhymes:

**“I tell it to the hot,
I tell it to the cold.
I tell it to the young,
I tell it to the old.
Don’t want no laughin’,
don’t want no cryin’.
And most of all, no signifyin’.
This is Petey Greene’s Washington.”**



Petey Greene with superstar George Gervin, the “Iceman” of the NBA’s San Antonio Spurs.



In the aftermath of Dr. King's assassination on April 4, 1968, he was a voice of comfort. The MLK Jr. Library exhibit *Up From the People: Protest and Change in DC* says that "sharing the anger and despair that many felt over Dr. King's death, Greene broadcast for hours on WOL, providing a more peaceful outlet for locals to express their grief."

In 1969, Washingtonians demanded that April 4 become a District holiday. Greene, Dr. Calvin W. Rolark, and Wilhemina J. Rolark founded the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Peace Walk & Parade, a beloved tradition that continues to this day. (In 1979, Mayor Marion Barry's first official proclamation declared that Dr. King's birthday would be a DC holiday.)

When Greene died in 1984 at age 52, the city grieved; 20,000 people lined up for his wake and 2,000 attended his funeral. The *Washington Post* wrote in his obituary: "He was the Community Liaison of the United Planning Organization and the star of WOL radio's 'Rapping With Petey Greene' and WDCA-TV's 'Petey Greene's Washington.'"

"These jobs provided him with a forum. But the substance of his work came from an unblinking and encyclopedic knowledge of street life, and an ability to address people from all walks of life.

"On radio and television, he talked about prison reform, drug addiction and alcoholism, teenage pregnancy, welfare programs, education, politicians and business leaders, preachers, automobiles, clothes, presidents, etc."

Mayor Marion Barry gave him this tribute: "Petey has made tremendous contributions to our community as a meaningful role model for our youth and the community at large ... He was a broadcasting pioneer in giving a voice to the poor and the needy and giving community residents a chance to make their voices heard ... He cared for the people. He spoke for the people and he gave people an opportunity to communicate with each other."

In 2005, UPO honored his memory by naming a new Community Service Center on 2907 MLK Ave. SE after him. UPO honors his spirit and continues his legacy by fighting for equity throughout the District.



STORY OF UPO

1970s

The District was reeling from the aftermath of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. Few of the burned homes or stores were repaired. Some people were leaving in despair; the activists who stayed, tired of having no voice in local decisions, ramped up their efforts to restore Home Rule, and succeeded in 1973.

The nation was shell-shocked too, not just after mourning Dr. King but also from the painful end of the Vietnam War and President Nixon's resignation. People suffered through The Great Inflation (up to 14%), which was "the greatest failure" of US economic policy since WWII.*

As the new DC government took over responsibility for employment services from UPO, the agency became more creative. UPO opened a subsidiary to spark social enterprise ventures that served the public and were ideal settings for job trainees to start careers.

Seeing the steady rise in the number of senior citizens, UPO developed new approaches to help them. UPO also took on a greater role in early childhood development, opening its own centers.

** Jeremy Siegel (1994), quoted by Federal Reserve History*

1971

An economic development thrust begins with creation of the \$225,000 Brookland Fund. Operating with grants from this fund, Brookland Enterprises, Inc., a corporation of minority businessmen, takes over management of a large Anacostia apartment complex and develops the Georgia Aspen Motel and a Maine Avenue waterfront restaurant building.

1972

UPO opens its first Early Childhood Development Center, a model facility for the city, and steadily expands to 8 centers. Previously, UPO gave funds to other nonprofits for their Head Start programs.

Two organizations begin the Washington, DC chapter of the Foster Grandparents program, where senior volunteers use their love and wisdom to mentor children in math, literacy, motor skills, and social and emotional skills. The organizations are UPO and the Metro Washington Council of the AFL-CIO.



UPO Foster Grandmothers at St. Elizabeth's Hospital.

1973

Home Rule is restored with elections to come in the fall of 1974.

Passage of the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act divests UPO of its sponsorship of manpower programs, removing \$10 million in grants that supported a proven approach. The District government, eager to take on new responsibilities, chooses to use the funds to develop a Department of Employment Services.

President Nixon tries to abolish the Office of Economic Opportunity, having already transferred much of its authority to other

federal agencies. However, Congress steps in and saves the OEO. Nixon then directs the agency's leader to raze it and not to spend the money Congress had allocated. The Federal District Court in DC rules that Nixon could not refuse to spend funds allocated by the Congress.

Despite the clear value of Community Action, federal threats to eliminate it keep coming. These uncertainties lead Fairfax County to opt out of the UPO network and start its own CAA. Arlington County still supports UPO to the hilt, until a 1979 separation.



This was the fashion accessory to have in the early 1970s.

1974

The District holds its first elections in 100 years.

For a senior citizens nutrition program, the commercial kitchen in UPO's restaurant prepares food for congregate meals and delivery to homes. In the next 3 years, UPO serves or delivers 250,000+ meals.



1975

Responding to skyrocketing fuel prices, UPO weatherizes homes of senior citizens, often cutting their bills in half, and distributes money from a fuel emergency fund. The Energy Conservation Assistance Program weatherizes 1,600 dwellings over the next 5 years.

UPO launches an emergency shelter program.

1976



UPO Enterprises is formed as a subsidiary to develop and operate area's first Bonanza Sirloin Pit restaurant at 6428 Georgia Ave. NW. This economic development venture provided 200 jobs in its first 2 years, some for students who used their wages to continue their education; others were trained to become restaurant managers and operators.



UPO Community Development Corporation (UPO CDC) was formed as a nonprofit corporation to create housing for families with low incomes and to promote job creation through economic development.

1978

Community Services Administration Director Gracia Olivarez tours UPO facilities and presents Mayor Washington with a \$500,000 minority youth employment grant to be administered by UPO. (Note: The Office of Economic Opportunity had been transformed into the Community Services Administration.)

UPO forms a partnership with the US Army to provide work experience to disadvantaged youth.

1979

First Lady Rosalynn Carter helps to inaugurate the Cities in Schools project for community/school partnerships.

STORY OF UPO

1980s

DC government was financially stable and downtown was booming thanks to the new Metro system and new office buildings and hotels. Cultural life was flourishing with the Kennedy Center and the National Museum of American History, and when people weren't dancing to go-go music, they were watching the Redskins or the Georgetown Hoyas.

However, crime and poverty were up as the crack cocaine epidemic took a devastating toll and many people still had no homes. There were huge demographic shifts as immigrants came for refuge.

Responding to community needs, UPO became more deeply involved in neighborhood development and offered new job and educational opportunities to youth and their parents. UPO also opened a Homelessness Division with the intent of treating people who live on the street *how we would want to be treated* if we were in their shoes.

Politically, conservatives dominated the scene. President Ronald Reagan, who came into office in January 1981, broke with the idea that the federal government could help American life. Instead, he said that government was the problem. On September 19, 1981, a wave of 250,000 people marched to the Capitol to protest President Reagan's budget cuts and tax policies.

1981

UPO rehabilitates 5 boarded-up city-owned homes for sale to qualifying families with low incomes. The Community Services Administration becomes Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) administered through the federal Health and Human Services department. Due to budget cuts, UPO has to cut 125 staff jobs.

1982

In cooperation with the DC Office on Aging, UPO develops and runs the only transportation system available to seniors and people with disabilities: the Washington Elderly and Handicapped Transportation System. In 1994, MetroAccess takes over this responsibility.

After building relationships with taxicab companies, UPO also develops and runs Call and Ride, a taxi service for the same populations.

1983

UPO launches a new bank teller training program in cooperation with a consortium of banks, credit unions, and savings institutions. The agency also creates a rental/mortgage assistance program.

Pathways to Self-Sufficiency program is born to help parents of Head Start children obtain a GED and employment.

The UPO Crisis Response Center (or Community Resource Program) begins, which collects and distributes over 1 million pounds of food over the next 10 years.



1985

UPO holds its 1st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast and creates what is now known as Joseph A. Beavers Scholarship Program (in honor of the late civil rights activist, labor leader, and UPO Board member).

Our scholarships honor Dr. King's legacy by raising private funds to make college dreams come true. Each year at the breakfast we have awarded Beavers Scholarships to 5-10 outstanding DC students from families with difficult financial challenges. Thanks to our donors, UPO has invested over \$1 million to date to support 200 scholars. They have become scientists and teachers, music artists and entrepreneurs, innovators and leaders.

Summer Youth Employment Program begins, providing work experience for 200 high school students, and publishes a Spanish guide to emergency services in the District.

“

“Nancy and I have been privileged to know the Foster Grandparent program as a special kindness that touches many young lives with love and friendship. **Your devoted volunteers encourage and inspire every American to contribute** according to the talents he or she has been blessed with. [Your] hard work and dedication have given many of our senior citizens **a chance to love and be loved**, and our country is certainly the better for it. **Thank you for the joy you bring each day.** God bless you and God bless America.”

- Letter from President Ronald Reagan

”

1986

The agency inaugurates a 4-year teen pregnancy prevention education project that reaches more than 10,000 children.

The televised *UPO Citywide* interview show begins on DCTV, the public access channel. For 15 years, Cheryl Christmas hosts the show, discussing UPO's connection to all aspects of city life. From schools to jobs, health to politics, affordable housing to lead abatement, the show covered issues important to viewers and was sometimes a teacher, an organizer, or an alarm.

UPO opens its cafeteria, the Potomac Court Cafe, to the public.

STORY OF UPO

1987

UPO joins several churches and community organizations to form the Fuller/Church/Community Consortium to provide coordinated services to Northeast DC residents with low incomes.

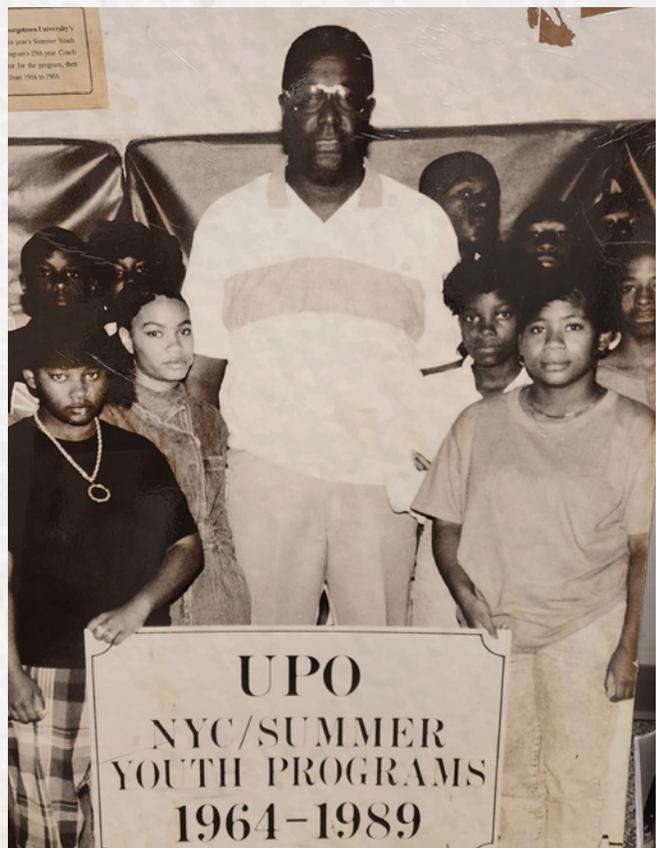
A model homeless program is developed with federal funding from the Stewart B. McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. The effort includes: lifesaving transportation during freezing conditions (through the D.C. Initiative, a continuum of care), a Head Start initiative targeting children of families experiencing homelessness, and a support program in partnership with the DC Depts. of Employment and Human Services. **This program is a precursor to the 1990 launch of the Shelter Hotline.**

24

1988

UPO's Life Management Training project, designed to prepare residents of DC shelters for employment and housing placement, evolves into a true case management model called Building Resources for Individual Development Geared to Encourage Self-Sufficiency (BRIDGES). The service program expands to become the Homelessness Division.

UPO conducts a historic preservation/community education program in Anacostia and petitions the DC Public Service Commission to require Washington Gas to improve its services to customers with low incomes. UPO opens a Neighborhood Development Center in the city's far eastern section, an area formerly served by Far East Community Services.



John Thompson, celebrated coach of Georgetown University's Hoyas, was a field coordinator for UPO's Neighborhood Youth Program from 1966-1968.

1989

The Edward C. Maziqne Parent and Child Center, a UPO delegate agency, receives one of 22 federal grants awarded under the new Comprehensive Child Development Act.

UPO launches a multi-generational case management demonstration project designed to serve 120 families.

Marshall Heights Community Development Organization becomes UPO's newest delegate agency.

1990s

In 1994 and 1995, the city's deficit ballooned for many reasons including federally imposed restrictions, population loss, inadequate federal support, and a recession. Wall Street dropped the District's bond rating to "junk" status, creating the perception that lending to the city was risky. Without the ability to borrow, DC couldn't pay its bills.

Congress set up the DC Financial Control Board to oversee the city's finances with the goal of addressing structural problems and then restoring Home Rule. The board had the power to override decisions by the mayor and city council. By the end of 1998, after the federal government removed a few key financial burdens and the city kept running budget surpluses, the Control Board gave up some of its power, restoring a measure of Home Rule.

UPO continued to help people achieve economic security and dove deeper into health and education as well as case management — offering wraparound services that address a person's issues as a whole.

1990

DC's Dept. of Human Services asks UPO to start a new Shelter Hotline, a citywide transportation system to respond to emergencies for people experiencing homelessness. UPO outreach workers protect the health of people who live on the streets and are determined to "treat them the way we would want to be treated if we were in their shoes." Shelter Hotline became a critical part of the District's continuum of care and continues to this day.

UPO initiates Project HOME, a program involving the discounted purchase and rehabilitation of federally owned single-family dwellings for resale to low- and moderate-income purchasers. We open a Head Start center in the Lincoln Heights public housing complex and fund the Rosemount Day Care Center, which serves a multicultural population.



STORY OF UPO

1991

The federal office of Substance Abuse Prevention awards a \$1.5 million 5-year grant to provide substance abuse prevention education to preschoolers and their parents in Columbia Heights.

UPO opens an early education center in the Edgewood Terrace housing project and, under contract with the DC Dept. of Human Services, opens an employer-provided early education center for children of DC government employees.

With US Dept. of Health and Human Services funding, UPO initiates a demonstration self-sufficiency program for 60 minority men and an Integrated Services Initiative based on the BRIDGES case management model.

BRIDGES becomes the **model for** and is designated as the city's **first fully operational Community Resource Center (CRC)** for people experiencing homelessness.

The UPO Anacostia Community Service Center opens in an area formerly served by Southeast House.

UPO employees elect the Communications Workers of America as their collective bargaining agent.

Eleanor Holmes Norton becomes DC's new (non-voting) Delegate in the US House of Representatives, replacing Rev. Walter E. Fautroy. In December, she partners with UPO to hold her first annual Children's Holiday Party so that children from Title 1 schools (whose students need the most help) feel cared for and appreciated. The annual events share these features:

- P** - Perfectly Fun Meal
- A** - Amazing Puppet Show
- R** - Ridiculous Gingerbread Folk
- T** - Tons of Gifts
- Y** - Yummy Ice Cream

1992

UPO holds Minority Male Forums to learn about health and lifestyle issues. The eye-opening discoveries become recommendations in a report that sparks changes in health approaches and spurs the creation of the DC Council's Men's Commission.

John A. Wilson, Chairman of the D.C. Council, gave his final, and finest, speech to the 600 men at one of the forums. He spoke from the heart about the winding path of his life starting with his struggles in an abusive family. Did his vulnerability spur the men in the audience to

open up as they never had before? Maybe that's why they revealed so much about their minds and behavior in the post-talk discussion.

For example, District statistics showed that emergency rooms were the primary health providers for many black men. But why? One of

the reasons they shared: Every part of the clinic environment was designed for women and children. Men's experience had not been considered and they did not feel welcomed.

After brainstorming, one idea emerged as a solution: set aside Men's Hours at clinics. This insight was brought to certain clinics which saw its value and applied it. Soon the idea spread to other cities that had the same problem: Boston, Miami, and Riverside, California. While the experiment did not last in the District, the new approach took hold in the other cities and is still practiced.

UPO launches Project REACH OUT, a program to provide nutrition education and expand federal food program participation in Ward 8. The assistance program for people experiencing homelessness receives grants to expand its case management program for families living in shelters and help them move into permanent housing.

The East Capitol Dwellings public housing complex is the site of a new UPO Head Start center.



1993

UPO funds Bright Beginnings to provide Head Start services to children whose families are experiencing homelessness.

A new Head Start center is created through funding from DC's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services Administration to accommodate children of parents in the city's drug and alcohol treatment program.

Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act. It required all Federal agencies to produce strategic plans with long-term goals and performance goals; to identify results and outcome measures for their strategies; and to submit their budget requests to Congress based on the projected results.

To implement the intent of the law, the Office of Community Services in the US Dept. of Health and Human Services worked with the national associations for states and CAAs to develop goals and outcome measures. The solution was the Results Oriented Management and Accountability system (ROMA). It created national goals with suggested outcome measures to evaluate CAAs' effectiveness.

UPO was familiar with measuring its impact and proving its worth, since the DC Council evaluated the agency's impact every 3 years and voted on whether to continue designating it as the city's Community Action Agency.

UPO embraced the ROMA evaluation system and kept honing it to a fine point. In 2017, **Daniel Ofori-Addo developed an agency-wide Performance Scorecard that became the model for agencies across the country**: A month after appearing on the Community Action Partnership's website, the scorecard was the site's most-downloaded file.



Taking Accountability Seriously

The Performance Scorecard developed by UPO has been an invaluable resource for other Community Action Agencies. Many agencies still report on their outcomes program by program, so the Scorecard has helped show the value of a truly agency-wide approach to results accountability. It's one of the most sophisticated performance management tools we've seen and has helped numerous other agencies improve their systems and processes.

*- Jarle Crocker, PhD, NCRT, CCAP
Director, Training and Technical Assistance
National Community Action Partnership*



STORY OF UPO

1994

Children's Defense Fund head Marion Wright Edelman challenges the audience to focus more on children during her keynote address at UPO's 10th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast.

Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly signs agreement with UPO creating citywide Youth Programs to provide youth with employment and education activities in their neighborhoods.

UPO plays a major role in the local grassroots preservation movement, participating in a Thematic Study of African American Architects, Builders, and Developers.

Two Joseph A. Beavers Scholarship winners graduate from the University of the District of Columbia: Veronica Laney receives a BBA in Accounting and Agustin Chicas receives a BS in Biology.

UPO's Integrated Services Initiative results in the Community Action Statistical Access (CASA),

an automated client database. The system provides tracking of client data and ROMA outcomes with a Local Area Network to link UPO programs, delegate agencies and special programs providers.

UPO Executive Director Benjamin Jennings is elected 2nd VP of the National Association of Community Action Agencies. This was possible only through UPO's laser focus on gaining a new level of representation for inner city advocacy on the national stage. The next step: UPO founded The Association of African American Community Action Leaders.

Also, UPO was on the committee that created the certification for Community Action Professionals, and the first class of such professionals included UPO's Cheryl Christmas, Benjamin Jennings, Gladys Mack, and Wayne Thompson.

DC Council Chairman Dave Clarke honors UPO employees who have served 25 or more years.

1995

UPO hosts National Head Start Conference and co-sponsors the First Annual Run/Walk for Head Start.

A self-help program in Langston Terrace is launched, training and hiring residents to provide case management to individuals and families.

UPO relocates its headquarters to 941 North Capitol Street, NE, saving the agency more than \$100,000 in annual lease rates.

President Bill Clinton and First Lady Hillary Clinton spoke with DC elementary school mentees of UPO Foster Grandparents (senior volunteers who mentor children in math, literacy, motor skills, and social and emotional skills).

Note: In 2012, their daughter Chelsea Clinton interviewed UPO Foster Grandparents for NBC Nightly News's *Making a Difference* story. She highlighted the importance of mentoring for children and seniors.

Building the Capacity to Serve

It takes a village to help people become economically secure. That's why "delegate agencies" form the backbone of UPO's service delivery and citywide capacity building. These are effective community-based organizations (CBOs) who partner with us to reach different corners of the city. UPO began by embracing their work and gleaning insights on hyperlocal issues, then provided fiscal, program, and public relations support. Also, for 20 years (until the mid-1990s) these CBOs relied on the industrial copy machines at UPO's 801 Potomac Ave. SE office to spread the word about their programs.

Since then, we have shifted from the term "delegate agencies" and refer to these CBOs as part of our Network of Service Providers.

A New Breed of Citizen Activist

Center City Community Corp. (4 C's), a neighborhood development nonprofit, was one of UPO's delegate agencies. The staff gave counseling and referrals for housing, basic adult education, and employment.



Visitors from UPO saw a familiar face there, Alverta Munlyn. In the 1960s she was a UPO organizer who was acclaimed for being part of the lifeblood of community action – she found her calling by helping others. In the 1970s, she continued her mission by taking a job at the 4 C's.

In 1992, she was chair of the local Advisory Neighborhood Commission and still at 4 C's when she participated in the groundbreaking for 29 homes at First and M streets NW, a moment she treasured. "Our hope is to cut the chain of poverty, to make our community more viable," she said. "With the Rodney King case, people felt they had no hope. Housing gives people hope, makes them feel as though they have a say in their destiny." By 1996, she was Board Chair for 4 C's and had made a longtime dream come true by opening the Perry School Community Services Center.

1996

UPO kicks off an expanded hypothermia program specifically aimed toward the family.

Launch of the "HOME" program for 138 families and children, giving them case management/social services and ultimately placing them into non-subsidized housing and jobs.

Alongside the DC Agenda, **UPO co-sponsors the Washington, DC Dialogue on Poverty.** Results are presented at the national conference of the National Association of Community Action Agencies.

The Bridges to Work Program is launched to transport DC residents to jobs along the Dulles Corridor.

1997

With funding from the U.S. Dept. of Labor and the DC Dept. of Employment Services, UPO launches the Quantum Opportunity Partnership (QOP) activity, a drop-out prevention program that targets select students at Anacostia and Eastern High Schools.

UPO sponsors 3rd Annual Run/Walk for Head Start.

UPO awards funds to 5 organizations located in the Latino community.

Community Transition Project for youth offenders is renewed.

UPO begins Medicaid Managed Care project to help transition DC Medicaid recipients into managed care (HMOs).

1998

UPO begins a Welfare-To-Work Initiative to help recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program move from dependency to self-sufficiency.

1999

Ms. Barbara Skinner, widow of Rev. Thomas Skinner (the keynote speaker at UPO's 1st Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast), keynotes the 15th Annual MLK Breakfast.

UPO celebrates DC Veterans of the War on Poverty with a citywide event.

More than 600 UPO Youth Program participants celebrate and receive citywide recognition.

UPO's Head Start program receives its largest grant ever from the federal Dept. of Health and Human Services.

UPO holds the groundbreaking for the Anacostia Community Service Center.

STORY OF UPO

2000s

The DC Financial Control Board dissolved itself on September 30, 2001, a year ahead of schedule, because the District had achieved real financial progress. There was huge investment and growth, the Washington Nationals arrived, and the city emerged as a hip foodie destination. For some people, the uncertainty of the past decade was falling away and the city was opening up to new joys and prosperity. But income inequality grew and some people suffered amidst the affluence.

A study by the National Community Reinvestment Coalition showed that the District had the highest percentage of gentrifying neighborhoods in the US; an estimated 20,000 black residents were displaced as affordable housing evaporated. In an essay accompanying the report, Dr. Sabiyha Prince, an activist with Empower DC, asked why longtime residents were being pushed out of “the District of Gentrification” by newcomers.

Other residents had sleepless nights for different reasons. Many felt deeply unsettled after the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon and, a year later, the DC sniper attacks. People needed help and reassurance.

UPO convened 500 experts for the *DC Poverty Summit: Strategies for the New Millennium*. They shared innovations and best practices that help District neighborhoods thrive; their insights were essential to UPO’s next strategic plan.

2000

UPO creates the Comprehensive Treatment Center (CTC) in a new partnership with the Addiction Prevention and Recovery Administration of the DC Dept. of Behavioral Health. CTC is a medication-assisted treatment program that helps people with opioid addiction to achieve abstinence. CTC staff tailor the treatment to each customer including individual, group, and family counseling and helps to address the city’s health issues: in 2000, CTC addressed the rise in HIV/AIDS cases; today, CTC fights against the fentanyl epidemic.

2001

UPO convenes the DC Poverty Summit: Strategies for the New Millennium, which brings together 500 national and local experts to discuss ideas and learn new trends. **The discussion of best practices** is then summarized in a report by The Urban Institute and the Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, *Poverty in the District of Columbia—Then and Now*.

UPO serves as a co-host for the Head Start Conference in partnership with the National Head Start Association.

UPO begins operating a case management-based fatherhood initiative, targeting ex-offenders and their families: “Always On Saturday,” designed to reunite and enhance positive interaction between parents and children, operates through 2004.

2002

A Living Legend Recognition Award is established as veteran employee Walter C. Murray becomes the first recipient during a testimonial luncheon.

UPO and partners finalize issuance of a bond to finance a new headquarters at 301 Rhode Island Avenue, NW. Totally renovated, the building is a milestone in UPO history: Financing is achieved using tax Free Enterprise Zone bond financing. Also included in the financing is the new Anacostia Community Service Center and the Petey Greene Community Service Center (in Congress Heights).



The People's Champion

Theresa Howe Jones (1933-2017) was a lifelong activist. On every important issue, she would say, "The community has to be involved."

Ms. Howe was a community organizer for 10 years before she came to UPO as an Assistant Branch Chief. She was an ambassador to the community for 30 years, eventually becoming our Public Policy Analyst. A strong, courageous champion of the people, she was revered as a powerful force for change. Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton wrote that DC was "privileged to have a leader like yourself in the vanguard of advancing tenants' rights."

DC Council Chair Phil Mendelson said she was "in the trenches fighting for District residents and teaching them how to fight for themselves. Your input on the East of the River Needs Assessment helped to highlight the dearth of services and economic development. Your work on the Emergency Shelter Housing Program and utility bill assistance provided a voice for the unheard."

At a 2001 dinner at Bolling Air Force Base, she was honored for her 40 years of dedicated service to the community.

Thank you, Ms. Jones, for being the blueprint for community service.



Mayor Anthony Williams cut the ribbon at the grand opening of UPO's Headquarters at 301 Rhode Island Ave. NW. He noted the vast community support for this new chapter in UPO's service to the District.

STORY OF UPO

2003

UPO opened its new Headquarters at 301 Rhode Island Ave. NW. Only the 2nd Community Action Agency in the US to own its own property, UPO had more stability and a new capacity to grow to meet community needs.

UPO enhances customer service, creating a committee to ensure that all UPO customers receive excellent services.

Progressive Partners Program starts up to assist minorities, women, and disadvantaged DC residents. Customers are trained to gain access to employment in the highway construction trade.

32

2004

More than 1,250 attend agency's historic 20th Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast where Dr. Johnnetta B. Coles, president, Bennett College serves as keynote speaker.

The 7,100 sq. ft. Anacostia Community Service Center opens.

At the District's request, UPO takes charge of EBT (Electronic Benefits Transfer), with offices at the Anacostia Community Service Center and H Street, NE locations. EBT refers to the cards given to people who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps).



Anacostia Community Service Center

2005

More than 1,000 attend UPO's historic 21st Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast where Dr. Charles J. Ogletree, Jr., Professor of Law at Harvard University is the keynote speaker.

Staff move into the new 18,000 sq. ft. Petey Greene Community Service Center.

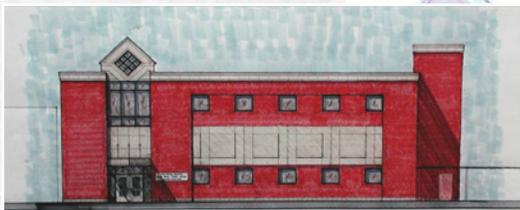
Rev. Dr. Dana M. Jones is named the official President and CEO, having previously served in an interim capacity.

Launch of Income Tax Workshops and a Resolution Center in partnership with the IRS's Low Income Tax Advocate Program.

Start of Geriatric Day Care Program serving seniors in Wards 6, 7, and 8.

Launch of new Family Strengthening Program in Ward 8.

UPO Board formally approves a new agency logo and corporate identity, the first such revision in 30 years.



Petey Greene Community Service Center



2006

More than 1,000 attend the 22nd Annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Breakfast where Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton is the keynote speaker.

UPO launches free tax preparation program in partnership with AARP.

2007

UPO launched a Youth Services division focused on helping DC youth thrive.



UPO Safe Summer Peace Walk: Creating safe spaces for our youth: To address the increase in violence around Hendley Elementary, UPO partnered with parents, students, school administrators, MPD, and community members to march in unity.

2008

UPO launches a Transitional Employment Program.

2009

UPO launched the **POWER** youth program: Providing Opportunities with Educational Readiness. This multi-year program (in partnership with American University) is for 6th graders in Ward 8, to propel them to success in college and careers through hands-on project-based learning.



UPO creates the Employment and Career Development Division.

STORY OF UPO

2010s

The largest events were:

- The Pope's visit in 2015
- Sports championships by the Capitals, Nationals, and Mystics
- Two protests with hundreds of thousands of marchers:
 - The Women's March on January 21, 2017 against the policies that President Trump promised to implement
 - The March for Our Lives on March 24, 2018 seeking an end to gun violence

The last one on that list touched a nerve. Among the most vexing problems in DC were gun violence, Metro safety, and affordable housing.

To address the increase in violence and the need to create safe spaces for youth, UPO's Advocacy division partnered with the community to hold a Safe Summer Peace Walk and stepped up its collaborations with violence-prevention groups.

UPO opened an Office of Affordable Housing with premier developers as partners to build new homes for people who earn under 50% of the area's median income.

UPO's Office of Early Learning built a highly effective structure, with coaches for teachers and deep parental involvement. UPO became **DC's largest Early Head Start provider** with 15 early learning centers. After seeing how our approach helped children blossom, DC's Office of the Superintendent of Education chose UPO to oversee other centers throughout the city.

34

2010

A program helping to train new community leaders is fully operational.

The US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development certifies UPO as a housing counseling agency.

Helping People Launch Careers

To address the pain of the Great Recession, **Congress passed and President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)**. This economic stimulus package included a burst of **funds allocated to Community Action Agencies because they help people gain skills and jumpstart their careers.** (Note: This approach was repeated in 2020 in response to the COVID pandemic.)

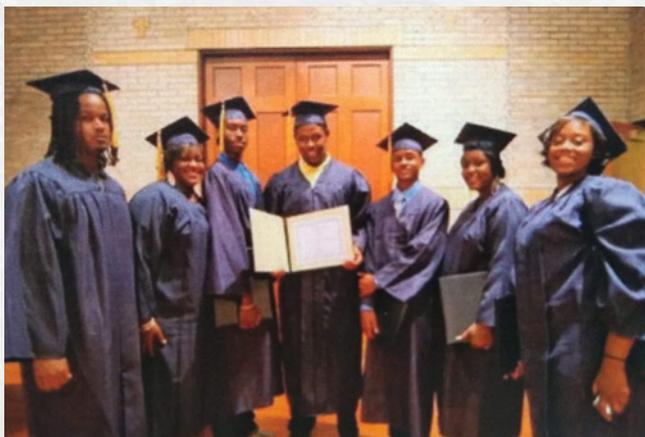
Since UPO sees education as the key to helping people achieve economic security, the ARRA projects were an ideal match, especially one to spur people to earn GED diplomas.

To ensure the greatest impact, UPO designed a "pay for performance" system and then awarded \$4 million to 8 partners throughout the District **to conduct GED recruitment and training as well as wraparound services.** These supports included mental health referrals, housing, clothing, drug abuse counseling, and mentoring needs for students' children. Case

managers built rapport and trust with the students, then helped them overcome barriers.

The GED programs' lesson plans were not only innovative, they were also tailored to each student's strengths and weaknesses. In some cases, additional tutors were hired and became critical to students' success. During the 15 months of the program, UPO held roundtables to share best practices and program challenges; insights from these discussions improved students' outcomes.

The impact of this careful, holistic attention to students' needs: **139 people earned GEDs, a 93% success rate.** Some of them obtained a GED in just 3 months; others who needed more help took longer.



These DC residents were among the 139 students who earned their GEDs, preparing them for their next education and work opportunities.

UPO's ARRA programs included:

- **Green Jobs and Technology**

UPO created the Weatherization Training Center to teach students a set of skills that help homeowners to reduce home energy costs. 61 trainees quickly obtained jobs and 23 went on to earn Building Performance Institute certifications as Energy Auditors. The center continued to be a valuable source of training for projects such as 2011's Sweat Equity Program for people transitioning from homelessness.

- **Medical Training**

UPO trained 103 students who became certified phlebotomy practitioners. They also received supportive services and job placement; 37 were quickly placed in full-time jobs.

- **Green Cleaning and Landscaping**

DC residents received on-the-job training in building maintenance and green cleaning or in landscaping; UPO case managers helped them to succeed. Of the 89 trainees, 59 began new jobs and 55 earned landscaping certifications.

- **Pre-Apprentice Training**

To raise the skill levels of adults, UPO offered education, case management, and job readiness services. The goals were to increase each person's math and reading skills by 2 grade levels and either place them in a follow-up program for education or job training, or in an entry-level job. 94 people successfully completed the program. 42 were placed into jobs; the others stepped up to their next level of training.

- **Supported Employment Services**

Job placement specialists matched 36 participants to work that maximized and further developed their skills.

- **Workforce Development for CTC Customers**

UPO's Comprehensive Treatment Center (CTC) helps people with opioid addiction to achieve abstinence. The UPO Workforce Institute helped 105 CTC customers eliminate health-related barriers to employment.

- **Head Start Staff: Going Further in Their Education**

Head Start teachers needed to meet new enhanced educational requirements. With ARRA funds, 32 teachers began their coursework for Associate's degrees and 24 started earning their Bachelor's degrees.

- **Foreclosure Prevention**

A new Foreclosure Prevention unit in Ward 8 helped 149 customers to be proactive about their homes. 124 completed their credit counseling, 35 obtained loan modifications, and 5 refinanced their loans.

- **Environmental Improvement and Beautification**

UPO launched **The Blue Team: field training and job readiness training for 50 residents of Wards 7 and 8 who were motivated to help themselves and their community.**

Their environmental improvement and beautification efforts drew attention: When they were off duty and wore their blue uniforms, neighbors would come up to them and start conversations about what to do next to benefit their block!



Our Early Learning Centers serve more Latino families each year. We also have longstanding partnerships with organizations that are vital to Latino residents and provide programs for all ages.

STORY OF UPO

2011



UPO began planting a new network of early learning centers within several public high schools that will primarily serve teen mothers. These centers encourage graduation and healthy parenting.

The UPO Inspire Foundation is incorporated. The foundation gives strivers the skills and confidence to turn their motivation into money for an economically secure future.

The Community Engagement program successfully cultivated the UPO Urban Garden located at Headquarters. Customers and seniors received fresh vegetables from the harvest so they could enjoy freshly grown produce.

They learned the benefits of growing their own food at home, for healthy eating and as a way to reduce grocery expenses. UPO staff also distributed vegetable plants and seeds, to motivate residents to jumpstart their home gardens.

UPO was chosen as a Children's Defense Fund (CDF) Freedom Schools summer camp program site. The camp provided a summer enrichment opportunity for 50 youth with the aim of helping youth fall in love with reading, increase their self-esteem, and generate more positive attitudes towards learning. This was UPO's first time hosting a Freedom Schools program and it was the only CDF program offered in the city.

"A hammer, not a handout: City program allows poor to build their future residences"

That was the title of The Washington Post's article on UPO as a partner in a collaborative effort called the Sweat Equity Program:

"Led by the DC Department of Human Services, the Sweat Equity Program selects DC residents who have been homeless and on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and gives them jobs refurbishing vacant city dwellings. Once the buildings have been restored, the participants can live in the units rentcontrolled for two years.

"As the community partner, UPO used its state-of-the-art Weatherization Training Center to provide training on Occupational Safety and Health Administration Safety and Standards, Construction Site Maintenance, and Carpentry

101 to prepare the participants for their construction jobs [in collaboration with Pedula Construction].

"The success of the program is already being felt by participants. 'I'm not stressed any more,' said a 49-year-old mother of five. 'I feel better about myself than I did before, because, you know, I'm doing something.' A 28-year-old father of three added, 'My son gets to see what a man should be doing — working. I get to show him firsthand.'

Life skills development is also an essential part of the program's success, according to Gloria Gaskins, UPO TANF Project Director. **'You can't just bring someone in to get a job. You have to build them up,'** she said. To that end, UPO administers Individual Development Accounts for the participants [in partnership with Capital Area Asset Builders], which can be used for future educational, business, and home-buying endeavors."

UPO's program included a full-time Financial Literacy Counselor who helped trainees open bank accounts, build up their credit scores, and develop financial action plans.

The Sweat Equity Program's success led to the creation of a new \$1 million training lab for UPO, the Building Careers Academy. The building, at 915 Girard St. NE, is the District's largest construction training center. Here, students receive hands-on training and earn national certifications in Professional Building Maintenance; Electrical Technician; Plumbing; and Telecommunications/Broadband (Introduction to Telecommunications and 5 other areas).



UPO President and CEO Rev. Dr. Dana Jones (left) and DC Mayor Vincent Gray at the groundbreaking for UPO's Sweat Equity Program.



Mayor Vincent Gray and Sweat Equity Program participants.



First Lady Michelle Obama addressed the National Mentoring Summit at the Library of Congress. **She honored many people who help children reach their full potential, including UPO Foster Grandma Delores Campbell** (pictured at right). In 2011, Ms. Campbell was one of 242 UPO Foster Grandparents – senior volunteers who mentored 2,400 children one-on-one and 9,000 children in group settings.

2012

Educare DC was founded to eliminate the opportunity gap for young children in DC experiencing poverty by helping them to build the skills they need to succeed. For its first 2 years, UPO was the local partner, serving on the Board and guiding the agency to ensure stabilization.

2013

Within our early learning programs, we restructured how we work with children ages 0 to 5 to adhere to an evidence-based curriculum with great focus on child outcomes, ongoing staff development, reflective supervision, technology use and results tracking. We also acquired new high quality partnerships to construct an early learning and Head Start success model.

2014

UPO began a new strategic partnership with Ward 8's Washington Highlands neighborhood. Residents shared their concerns in the Community Needs Assessment and UPO responded by launching the Washington Highlands Community Advancement Network (WHCAN) initiative. This place-based strategy makes visible improvements in employment, education, food, and health because of a deep collaboration between stakeholders, community members, and businesses.

UPO's Youth Services received a grant from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to extend the Freedom Schools summer program to a year-round initiative. The program

included students K-2nd graders at Ketcham Elementary School.

UPO's Office of Early Learning (OEL) secured \$9 million in funding from the Head Start Birth-to-Five project. This grant enriched the already wide-ranging services such as age-appropriate, curriculum-based educational programs, health screenings, and nutritious meals.

UPO was selected to be a Hub for OSSE's Quality Improvement Network. This distinction recognized UPO as a leader in early learning and positioned the agency to provide training and technical assistance to other early learning centers so they can achieve program excellence.

STORY OF UPO

2015

Youth Services' first cohort of POWER graduates put on their mortar boards and walked proudly across the graduation stages of several DC public and charter schools.



How to Change a Family for Generations

In the 1970s, UPO trained a single mom as a bank teller. She excelled in her banking career and gave a stellar education to her daughter Denise Turner Roth, who was appointed by President Barack Obama to lead the General Services Administration. Ms. Roth (pictured) said:

“

My mom was able to improve our economic situation through a public-private partnership that allowed her to earn her GED, train for a job as a bank teller, and receive job placement. That forward-thinking collaborative program changed the trajectory of our family. I went into public service to create the same opportunities for others. It serves as my motivation.

”

2016

Four UPO early learning classrooms received awards at the “It Takes a City: DC Does it Best” institute hosted by DC’s Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE). The award-winning classrooms – Anacostia High School, Ballou High School, Edgewood and Marie Reed – were recognized for earning excellent scores through an industry-standard classroom assessment scoring system.

UPO earned a grant from the Mayor’s Office of Latino Affairs to conduct more early learning socialization events for our customers. Throughout September, health-focused activities were held to educate parents on nutrition, baby checkups, immunizations and developmental stages.

In collaboration with the Bainum Family Foundation, UPO’s Office of Early Learning (OEL) took a holistic approach to build the capacity of child development centers in Washington, DC’s Wards 7 and 8 around family engagement and support.

UPO deepened its relationship with the Washington Highlands community through 8 focus group discussions. To better understand the perceptions of WH single

parents 18-30 years old, UPO asked them to talk about barriers to good personal, parental, and community health (including healthy relationships). The parents also shared their preferred means of service delivery.

At the end of the focus group discussions, several themes emerged:

- health as multi-dimensional (focus on mental health)
- challenges in parenting (effective communication and lack of support)
- lack of trust (institutional and personal)
- lack of accountability (security/police and lack of professionalism from health care providers)
- community members’ readiness (changing negative behavior)
- gaps in knowledge on health topics (inability to make healthy life decisions)
- gaps in resources (daycare, job training and placement)



At The United State of Women Summit, **First Lady Michelle Obama hugged many mentees of UPO Foster Grandparents.** These were students of Excel Academy, DC’s only all-girls public school, known for its Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics programs – including technical training on the airplane in its basement.

The summit focused on gender equality in the United States. It was hosted by the White House, the US Dept. of State, the US Dept. of Labor, and the Aspen Institute. It was held at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center (named after the District’s first mayor, who was also on UPO’s Board).



UPO has a very good reputation in the community ...
UPO's leadership role in advocacy and leadership development is more relevant now than ever before.
UPO's Advocacy team understands that community vision and development comes from the bottom up: **engaging members of the community, training them to be leaders ...** to make a visible, viable difference.

- Mustafa Abdul-Salaam, managing partner of Community Economic Development Partners and member of the UPO Advocacy Advisory Council



2017

To help people meet their financial goals, UPO partnered with Capital Area Asset Builders on Individual Development Accounts (IDA). Participants needed to save \$500 over 6 months to get an 8:1 match — each person received a total of \$4,500. After taking a financial literacy course, they took other workshops related to their goals. The entrepreneurs also had to complete a full business plan.

Of the 32 people who enrolled, 31 completed it: 26 people used their funds to start or expand a business, 3 returned to school, and 2 bought homes. This **96% success rate is astounding** — the national success rate is 56%.

One person who benefited was Aaron Lovett, CEO of Foundation Brothers, a company he founded. He completed our homebuying workshop, earned a national certification through our Building Maintenance Professional job training course, then completed the IDA program. He said, "When I needed help, **I researched organizations that were making a difference for low-income people.** UPO was most closely aligned with my personal and professional goals. I took advantage of every possible program and now I run a landscaping and home improvement business. **I'm so grateful for the opportunities UPO provided for me.**"

UPO earns the GuideStar Platinum Seal of Transparency. Platinum is the highest level of recognition given by GuideStar, the world's largest source for nonprofit accountability.



2018

Our Office of Early Learning is **DC's largest Early Head Start provider**, with 15 early learning centers. One way that **our educators make a profound impact is by improving children's literacy**. For example, the number of students who were below their grade level in literacy dropped by 54% from the start of the year to the end.

We also celebrated **the opening of a new Early Learning Center at Eagle Academy Public Charter School**. It's just one example of our partnership with the Bainum Family Foundation to create new high-quality seats in neighborhoods that need them the most. At Eagle, UPO provides innovative programming and comprehensive services for children from birth to 8th grade. **This was the first program of its kind** in the District. With the help of DC Public Schools, our effective, proven approach has since expanded into the Malcolm X and Ketcham Elementary Schools.

Our certification training for Childhood Development Associates is bearing fruit. We are graduating exceptional educators and encouraging them to join our dynamic, passionate team! One graduate said, "Because of this program, **I now have the confidence to continue my education and go further in life.** This is the first time I ever completed a class as an adult and it's because my instructor really cared about me being successful."

2018 Robotics Team

Positive, profound impact: The students in UPO's Robotics Club at Hendley Elementary became the State Champions in the DC VEX IQ Robotics League and advanced to the VEX Robotics World Championships. The "Robonauts" team was the only 100% African-American team among the 400 competitors from 30 countries and all 50 states.



The Community Action Partnership honored UPO with the **National Award for Excellence for responsiveness to customers as they strive to achieve economic security**. The award's peer-reviewed standards are modeled on the principles of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. Only 12 agencies have ever won this best-in-class honor (out of 1000+

agencies across the country). "UPO demonstrated excellence across the organization through solid management and engaged leadership. [UPO] now sets the bar for community action," said Denise Harlow, CEO of the Community Action Partnership.



Team UPO onstage accepting the Award of Excellence



UPO WELCOMES ANDREA THOMAS AS ITS FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT



On October 1, 2019, UPO named Andrea Thomas as its first woman President and CEO. The staff welcomed her with open arms; they already knew Ms. Thomas as a progressive leader who focuses on continuous improvement, program oversight and development, and fiscal performance.

Ms. Thomas joined UPO in 2007 as the founding director of the new Youth Services division. She designed and launched the division, which reached hundreds of youth through direct service and UPO's community-wide network.

Two years later, she was promoted to Chief of Staff and then Executive Vice President. In this role, she developed and implemented strategic plans and business objectives, while setting comprehensive goals for both performance and business growth. Ms. Thomas also expanded partnerships and increased agency visibility, brand recognition, and funding.

She has served on the Board of College and Career Connections in Washington, DC and the Montgomery County Community Development Advisory Committee in Maryland. Ms. Thomas is currently a member of: the national Board of DiabetesSisters women's health organization (headquartered in North Carolina); the State Early Childhood Development Coordination Council for Washington, DC; the Board of the Mount Jezreel Christian School; the regional Maryland Community Action Partnership; and the National Community Action Excellence Commission. She is also a longtime volunteer at the National Center for Children and Families.

Ms. Thomas's peers say that her qualities of integrity, creativity, and compassion make her a strong leader. She leaned into these traits when, 6 months into her tenure, the pandemic struck our beloved city and UPO suddenly faced an unprecedented challenge.

She is now working hand-in-hand with our staff and Board of Directors to prepare a 3-year Strategic Plan that will map out the best path for UPO to continue Uniting People with Opportunities.





STORY OF UPO

2019

Ms. Andrea Thomas is named UPO President and CEO. She is the first woman in this role. (Previously, women have served as UPO Board Chairs.)

UPO opens the Office of Affordable Housing to address one of the District's greatest needs. **We will partner with developers to create new affordable homes.** The goal is to help deliver 500 homes in 5 years – homes of market-rate quality exclusively for DC residents who earn below 50% of the area's median income. These homes will set a new standard for the city and beyond.

Building on a place-based strategy in Ward 8's Washington Highlands neighborhood, **UPO creates a Community Impact division** to extend this approach to 3 Community Impact Zones: Brentwood in Ward 5, SW neighborhood in Ward 6, and Benning Terrace in Ward 7. Our recipe for community change: respond to residents' needs, bring stakeholders together, and integrate our programs into the community.

This effort will support strategies that reduce the causes and conditions of poverty.

Building a foundation for housing equity: **UPO launched a pioneering ADU | DC Initiative** that enables more people to build accessory dwelling units (ADUs) – an additional home in their backyard or basement. This collaboration with the Coalition for Smarter Growth and founding corporate supporter Citi Community Foundation will **boost intergenerational wealth, help people to age in place, and add affordable housing.** After the launch, UPO held workshops for over 500 DC residents.

UPO holds the 1st annual **Equity Forum**, where experts discuss practical actions to improve equity in the District and beyond. This year's forum is on Education. Subsequent forums are on Affordable Housing; Bridging the Digital Divide with Transformation, Equity, and Innovation; and Mental & Behavioral Health.



After 40 years in prison, Michael Hood-Bey had grown from a boy into a man. The UPO Workforce Institute placed him in a job at the Environmental Protection Agency. He was promoted to Lead Supervisor 6 months later and hopes to complete his career there.

2020s

In 2020, the global pandemic shut down the economy. People who never imagined they would need help were suddenly desperate.

The passage of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act on March 27, 2020 increased funds to Community Action Agencies to address emergency needs and economic stabilization for residents. UPO already had the technology to support teleworking and rapid response. The agency nimbly protected staff and customers while delivering compassionate service.

Two months later, the murder of George Floyd sparked national unrest. Millions of people marched for racial justice in the nation's largest-ever outpouring of civil rights protests.

As the crises receded, DC residents dealt with the after-effects of the pandemic and brought new perspectives to the need for economic and racial equity.

2020

To address the vast economic insecurity caused by the pandemic, UPO developed innovative interventions at the direction of President and CEO Andrea Thomas and the Board. She also created an impact response team that worked 7 days a week to identify and serve the families who were most affected, keeping them fed, housed, and safe.



UPO is the designated Community Action Agency for the District's residents with low incomes, which means that its purpose is to **Unite People with Opportunities so they can reach economic security.**

Federal funds from the CARES Act **enabled UPO to expand programs** to District residents who earn up to 200% of the federal poverty level. By weaving this funding throughout the programs, UPO increased the number of families served and helped them get back on their feet.

UPO tailored its support to each person and family to meet their needs. For some families, that meant supermarket gift cards for groceries. For others, it meant diapers, clothing, and toddler beds, help from UPO's in-house mental health consultant, or a referral to a licensed mental health provider.



Thanks to CARES Act funding, District residents were able to get GED and ESL (English as a Second Language) certificates, preparing them for post-pandemic education and work opportunities.

STORY OF UPO



A HOME, A DEGREE, A PATH TO SUCCESS

Jasmine is a dynamo. But even dynamos need help to focus their energy.

Jasmine's children were being nurtured in a UPO Early Head Start center when she realized

that she needed help. **She was suicidal, needed a home for her family, and aspired to finally get a high school diploma.** A Family Engagement Specialist at UPO's Office of Early Learning helped her address each of her issues, step by step.

As UPO helped Jasmine, her determination grew and grew.

For example, the day after she had her new baby, she called into class **from her hospital bed.** She said, "Don't tell me I can't go to class!" Her teacher explained to Jasmine that she already had a passing grade; then Jasmine got off the phone and returned to feeding her baby.

The funding for Jasmine's diploma course came from the CARES Act funding, which was designed to ensure that families could thrive after the pandemic.

Jasmine is now a formidable advocate for her family and she is eagerly developing even more skills: **"I can be whatever I put my mind to...and I'm still trying to achieve...[Team UPO,] you are so wonderful."**

Please watch her riveting video at: www.upo.org/cares

SHE CAN STAY IN HER HOME

After 20 years on the job, Ms. A had to take medical leave. **Short-term disability wasn't enough to cover her rent** and she soon fell behind. Then a neighbor heard about UPO's Homelessness Prevention program on the radio. Ms. A didn't believe it, but fearing eviction, she reached out to UPO.

The result was life-changing. UPO provided back rent to get her back on track.

"There was no pressure [any more]," Ms. A said. "That feeling was wonderful. People are working but **they are still behind, and they need to know there is hope.**" **UPO's assistance was essential** for so many of our neighbors — **UPO continued to save people from eviction** even after the city's pandemic rental assistance funds (STAY DC) were exhausted.

The impact of CARES Act funding

- **UPO prevented eviction for 518 households** by distributing \$3 million in rental support.
- **UPO prevented disconnection for 695 households** with Emergency Utility Assistance.
- **UPO trained 219 District residents** in courses where the graduates earned a national certification. These classes included:
 - **IT: Network+ and Security+** because UPO sees that cybersecurity and managing computer networks are growing fields; these courses were at the UPO Workforce Institute.
 - **Cleaning and Sanitation Training & Small Business Startup**, with 98 motivated graduates. Most of them gained paid assignments (including a contract with DC government), 28 began full-time jobs, and 20 started new businesses.
- UPO provided **2,000 laptops** to support children's distance learning, and to seniors to prevent social isolation and encourage telehealth visits.
- UPO sponsored and referred **392 people to licensed mental health providers** so they could have a safe space to deal with their trauma, grief, and loss. As the pandemic continued, we saw that more men and children (ages 4-13) came for counseling, including people who saw that the pandemic worsened their depression or anxiety. Many said, "I didn't know that I needed this, but I really did."
- UPO paid for **GED and ESL (English as a Second Language) classes** for residents who needed that extra incentive to take the next step in their education.
- **UPO addressed food insecurity** by partnering with Capital Area Food Bank, Martha's Table, and 25 other organizations for weekly drop-offs of food as well as distributions of hot meals, produce, household goods, and PPE (personal protective equipment).
- UPO supported **200 families when they were quarantined**, delivering the care packages and food they needed.
- UPO helped **36 families** with medical bills, baby supplies, summer camp tuition, and burial support.
- UPO enabled community-based organizations to run **high-quality summer camps that addressed children's learning loss.** Then UPO created an EPIC Book Club for grades K-5 while supporting their social and emotional wellness.
- **UPO trained 150 high school students** in the CARES Construction Trade Workshops, a collaboration with our UPO Workforce Institute that sparks new ideas for careers. Please see the video at www.upo.org/cares

2020

DC Census and the Bainum Family Foundation asked UPO to go all-out with a Census campaign to reach underserved communities in Wards 5, 6, 7, and 8. UPO staff and volunteers built partnerships, trained trusted messengers, held recruiting fairs, and scheduled outreach events ... which then had to be completely rethought when the pandemic struck.



At that point, the Bainum team put DC residents' needs first – they allowed UPO to reallocate some donations to support individuals and families through a COVID relief and recovery fund. UPO's previously scheduled events quickly turned into food distributions, Grab and Go Meals, PPE giveaways, and online talks, and staff found ways to keep educating and engaging residents on the importance of "Being Heard and Being Counted" in the Census. Over the summer, Bainum collaborated on further promotions such as UPO's op-ed in The DC Line news site ("Moving Mountains for the Census" by Director of Community Advocacy Ayana Bias) and the Take 10 for DC ad campaign.

WAMU, the local NPR station, noticed how UPO got creative to reach hard-to-count populations and ran a story about the agency's effective grassroots efforts. Bottom line: Despite the pandemic, UPO achieved the goals set by DC Census.

The Washington Post



Nurturing the Children of Essential Workers

After the pandemic reached the District and all child education centers were shut down, the Office of the State Superintendent of Education suddenly needed to set up and staff 3 emergency child education centers for children (up to age 3) of first responders and healthcare workers. They called UPO, whose Office of Early Learning raced to get the centers ready.

The Washington Post wrote a story about UPO as "a savior" for Nacole Thrower. She is an essential worker and so are all of her family members, so she was grateful that UPO had an education center for her son Hudson. **"I appreciate the love and support from his teacher, the center director, and the coach. They cater to him as if he were their own."**

STORY OF UPO

2021

CARES Act funds continue to be a lifeline for District residents. (See details under "2020.") One example: Angelo Brandon was in the prime of his life, a talented 30-year-old artist and painter. He was also a single dad with no job. He had previous experience in cleaning and janitorial services. But with no one else to watch his 8-month-old son and 2-year-old daughter, he was unable to work. As he struggled to provide for his children, he dreamed of starting his own business instead of working for someone else.

Then Angelo found UPO's Paradise Early Childhood Center. When he enrolled his children, the center director talked with him about UPO's CARES Act programs. One caught his attention — a cleaning and sanitation certification course specifically **for entrepreneurs who want to start their own businesses.** In addition to the course, Angelo and his family received help with rent, utilities, and car repair so he could get himself to class. Plus groceries, clothing, toddler beds, diapers, and a stroller, "so I won't have to be Hercules

trying to carry them both," he said.

UPO becomes DC's official Financial Navigator, a critical support for people facing financial problems during the pandemic. DC's Dept. of Insurance, Securities, and Banking chooses our team to provide one-on-one expert counseling that helps people get through the crisis.

IRS-certified experts prepared 1,228 tax returns for free, generating **\$2.37 million in refunds to be poured back into the community.** **UPO became the largest free tax preparation program in Ward 8 and the 2nd largest in the city.**

In the Washington Highlands neighborhood, where UPO has been embedded since 2014, we saw **an opportunity to bring back joy** in the midst of the pandemic. Proms and graduations were cancelled so **UPO and 7 partners created a Graduation Celebration** for children that brightened the community and brought it together.

UPO's Office of Affordable Housing is partnering with premier developer TM Associates to create new affordable homes, including the first new ones in SW in well over a decade (above, at 1550 First St. SW). These high-quality apartments are for people who earn under 50% of the area's median income — and there are many more to come. (Read more in the description under "2022.")



2022

CARES Act funds keep helping District residents through the pandemic. (See details under "2020.")

Building on UPO's experience as the District's official Financial Navigator, **UPO opened the city's first Financial Empowerment Center**, funded by DC's Dept. of Insurance, Securities, and Banking (DISB). The center will serve as the model for financial counseling: DISB intends to create a center in each Ward to help people meet their financial goals and achieve tangible milestones.

UPO's Office of Affordable Housing is partnering with developers to create new affordable homes. Once a family has a home, we can help them address other needs including education, employment, and health.

Our partnership with premier developer TM Associates is a reflection of our shared values. We are both **committed to creating high-quality affordable apartments exclusively for people who earn under 50% of the area's median income.** As soon as we completed our first building, the 76-apartment MDL Flats at 1550 First St. SW, we began construction of its larger sibling next door. MDXL Flats at 1530 First St. SW will have 101 units.

(Note: 20% of the apartments are reserved for people transitioning out of homelessness, who earn under 30% of the area's median income.

They will receive intensive case management from UPO's Permanent Supportive Housing staff to help them stay in their new homes and achieve the greatest possible quality of life.)

These new homes — **the first new affordable housing in SW in well over a decade** — share the beauty, comfort, and dignity of market-rate homes. **They will inspire others to follow, changing the DC housing landscape to a more equitable and**

community-centric approach. DC's Dept. of Housing and Community Development says the project's combination of high quality and deep affordability is "unprecedented" and "we look to this as a model" for the District.

To address DC's economic and racial inequities, UPO opened a Legislative Advocacy division which will fight for systemic changes by amplifying the voices of our customers. The director is Ed Lazere, who led the DC Fiscal Policy Institute for 20 years. Current priorities include Mental Health (residents' challenges and lack of access to treatment), Affordable Housing, and Gun Violence Prevention. With this initiative, UPO is coming full circle because it was founded to develop new grassroots approaches to achieving economic security and improving the community.

The afterschool programs run by our Youth Services team help students learn:

- At the start of the year, 51% of our students in grades 1-5 were below proficient in math or English. At the end, **98% of these students improved to proficient or better.**
- After 6 sessions of our EPIC Book Club Literacy Program, **63% of students had improved their reading skills.**

225 District residents participated in UPO's Community Leadership Academy, where UPO trains, engages, empowers, and mobilizes community residents to create shared visions, address local concerns and work together to manage and direct positive change. These residents are advocating for their neighborhoods by jumpstarting policy changes and economic development.



“

From day care to summer camp, from embracing young folks who continue their education to taking care of people who live with the scars of violence, UPO makes it all possible.

”

- Ab Jordan, Ward 8 Commissioner (Advisory Neighborhood Commission 8D03) and President of the Southern Hills Tenant Association

STORY OF UPO

2022

Comprehensive Treatment Center is **fighting a vigorous campaign against Fentanyl use to prevent overdose deaths**. UPO is also a key partner in the Advancing Health Literacy and Promoting Health Equity Collaborative, an initiative of the DC Health Dept. Programs included vaccine clinics, HIV awareness drives, workshops on STIs and chronic diseases, and **education about COVID that led to new, more effective language** in DC Health ads around the city. Residents who previously were skeptical about vaccines said **they were grateful to “walk outside my door to get my vaccine.”**

Wanda Dudley, UPO's Volunteer Program Coordinator Team Lead, **wins AARP's nationwide General Volunteer of the Year Award** for her devotion and effectiveness. Her 7 years of passionate advocacy has sparked changes in citywide programs: Thanks to her, seniors receive healthier food each month. To learn how Wanda gets more out of volunteering than she gives, watch NBC4's video about her at



www.upo.org/media

Foster Grandparents Noted by the White House



*Do you remember when Virginia McLaurin's dance went viral? She was invited to meet President Barack Obama and Michele Obama **because of her 23 years of mentoring children as a UPO Foster Grandparent**. She was 106 at the time of this photo; she joined her ancestors in 2022 at age 112.*



President Joe Biden's White House staff welcomed UPO Foster Grandparents who volunteered at the Easter Egg Roll, thanked them for helping children blossom, and asked them for advice on improving inclusion.

OUR FUTURE

UPO's work is driven by the needs of our community. Based on residents' input, we see these as key strategic areas to help our customers thrive:

- **Affordable Housing:** In 2019, we set a goal of helping to deliver 500 new homes in 5 years and we are on track to meet our goal. Our partnerships will continue far into the future because residents say that this is one of their greatest needs.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** We are fighting for systemic changes by amplifying the voices of residents. Among DC's economic and racial inequities, our current priorities include Mental Health (residents' challenges and lack of access to treatment), Affordable Housing, and Gun Violence Prevention.
- **Portfolio of programs offered regionally:** UPO was born to serve the region and we did that for over a decade until the suburbs chose to go in their own directions. Now we have identified issues that require regional approaches, including ones that would benefit from expansion of our most effective current programs.
- **Social enterprise opportunities:** We are exploring businesses that will cater to the needs of the public and serve as entrepreneurial experiences for our trainees to jumpstart their careers.
- **New partners in the private sector:** We know how to improve lives. And our productive partnerships with companies such as Citi, TD Bank, TM Associates, and Comcast have helped people lift themselves out of poverty. We are reaching out to more partners because together we can do more for more people. Jim Masters of the Center for Community Futures says that without Community Action programs like ours and similar supports, the poverty rate would be twice what it is now.
- **Mental health assessment of our customers:** We supported customers' mental health needs during the pandemic and will move to make it a standard part of our service intake model in the future.

As we look to the future, the only constants are change and our tireless devotion to fulfilling President Lyndon B. Johnson's vision of The Great Society (which bears a striking resemblance to Dr. King's global vision of The Beloved Community):

“

“The Great Society rests on abundance and liberty for all. It demands an end to poverty and racial injustice, to which we are totally committed in our time. But that is just the beginning ... The Great Society is not a safe harbor, a resting place, a final objective, a finished work. It is a challenge constantly renewed, beckoning us toward a destiny where the meaning of our lives matches the marvelous products of our labor.”

- President Lyndon B. Johnson, May 22, 1964

”

We keep this vision in mind as we put passion into action so our neighbors can transform their lives.

And yes, we are helping ourselves too. People join Team UPO to make a difference and that's why they stay. We relish the chance to weave our community together.

We look forward to having you walk alongside us on this road to a brighter tomorrow.

UPO LEADERS



Andrea Thomas
President and CEO
2019-present



Rev. Dr. Dana M. Jones
President and CEO
2004-2019



Russell D. Simmons
President
1993-2004



Ruthven Phillip, Esq.
Chair
2023-present



Thornell K. Page
President
1981-1993



Delano E. Lewis
President
1979-1981



Walter B. Lewis
President
1975-1979



Jeffrey Page, Esq.
Chair
2020-2023



H. Albion Ferrell
President
1973-1975



John D. Fautleroy
President
1972-1973



Frederick B. Lee
President
1962-1972



Jacqueline Kinlow
Chair
2016-2020



Dontai L. Smalls
Chair
2015



John L. Oberdorfer
Chair
2012-2014



Keenan R. Keller, Esq.
Chair
2010-2012



Stanley J. Mayes
Chair
2007-2010



F. Alexis H. Roberson
Chair
2005-2007



Benjamin W. Jennings
Executive Director
1987-2004



Ernest P. Ward
Executive Director
1982-1987



William L. Davis
Executive Director
1973-1981



Jeanus B. Parks, Jr
Executive Director
1969-1973



Wiley A. Branton
Executive Director
1967-1969



James G. Banks
Executive Director
1963-1967

The background is a dark blue gradient filled with white and light blue stars and fireworks. The fireworks are depicted as bursts of lines radiating from a central point, creating a celebratory atmosphere.

Congratulations

on 60 years of supporting
D.C. families and children.

The logo consists of a light blue circle with a white border. Inside the circle, the text "Bainum Family Foundation" is written in white, with "Bainum Family" on the top line and "Foundation" on the bottom line.

Bainum Family
Foundation

The Bainum Family Foundation is working
to create a society where all children thrive.
Visit us at bainumfdn.org.

Stella Groves

ettagroves.com

SCAN THE CODE

women's sizes 7 m - 14 m

Educare DC works to eliminate the opportunity gap for young children experiencing poverty in Washington, DC and helps them build the skills necessary for success in kindergarten and beyond.

Congratulations to UPO for celebrating 60 years of changing lives!



educaredc.org

2023 - Celebrating 10 Years of Learning and Growing - 2023

Knowledge. Investment. Transformation.

TM Associates Celebrates UPO on 60 Years of Helping Residents Rise and Thrive!



We are proud to stand beside UPO as we honor their extraordinary legacy and shared dedication to building stronger, more vibrant neighborhoods for all.

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60th Anniversary

People's Counsel Sandra Mattavous-Frye
and the Office of the People's Counsel
congratulate the United Planning Organization
for 60 years of providing critical tools to
help Washingtonians rise up from poverty.

UPO and OPC are Uniting People with
Opportunities, and despite challenges,
still the people rise!



**OPC is "Preparing Today
for a Better Energy Future"**



People's Counsel
Sandra Mattavous-Frye

*Just like moons
and like suns,
With the certainty
of tides,
Just like hopes
springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

*- Maya
Angelou*

655 15th Street NW, Suite 200
Washington, DC 20005

P: (202) 727-3071
F: (202) 727-1014

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TTY/TDD: (202) 727-2876

The Delta Housing Corporation of D.C.



PROUDLY SALUTES THE UNITED PLANNING ORGANIZATION

Trinette Smith-Campbell, President
Merlene White Price, Vice-President
Terri D. Stroud, Secretary
Priscilla Streater Jamison, Asst. Secretary
Karen Roberts Turner, Treasurer
Kelli M. Brown
Katrina D. Jones
Natasha I. Osborne
Michelle D. Robertson
Pamela M. Robinson
Antoinette White-Richardson



THE DELTA PEARL



COMING SUMMER 2023

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RCM&D is proud to support UPO and congratulates them on **60 years of uniting people with opportunities**

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CONGRATULATIONS

We congratulate the United Planning Organization as they celebrate their 60th Anniversary




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Just like hopes springing high, **Still I'll Rise.** — **Maya Angelou**

MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia cares about and supports uniting people with opportunities to achieve economic security. We congratulate and celebrate UPO's milestone of 60 years of giving DC residents opportunities to reach their full potential and **rise above their circumstances and thrive.**

To learn more about MedStar Family Choice District of Columbia, visit our website at **MedStarFamilyChoiceDC.com**



This program is funded in part by the Government of the District of Columbia Department of Health Care Finance.



Energized to Make a Difference

We are proud to support the United Planning Organization and those who come together to make a difference in our local communities.

pepco.com



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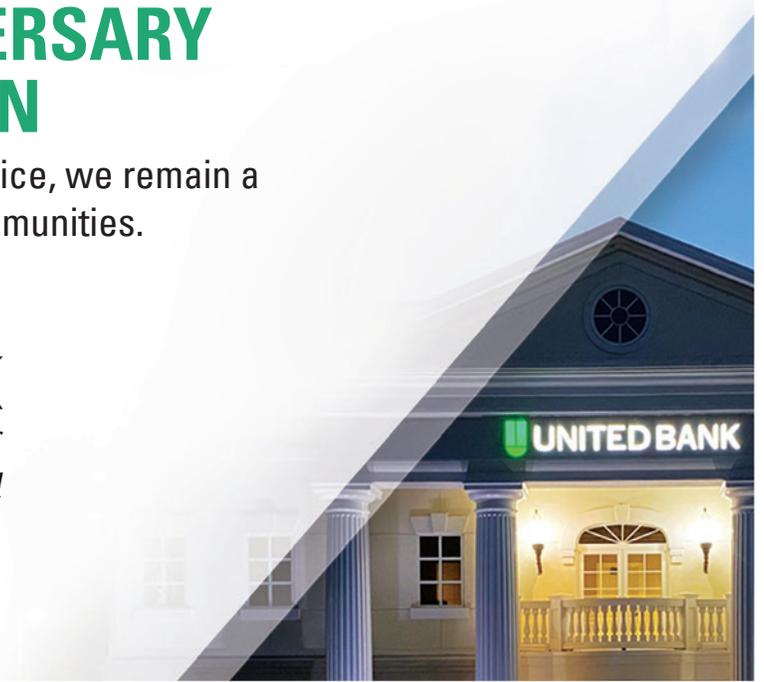


UNITED BANK IS PROUD TO SPONSOR UPO'S 60TH ANNIVERSARY GALA CELEBRATION

With a history of excellence in service, we remain a trusted financial partner in our communities.



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Protecting employees and their families for over 50 years

Congrats UPO on your 60th anniversary!!

Terry Solimeo, BVP LegalShield - MidAtlantic

Terry@Solimeo.com (302) 299-2901



Safeway Foundation
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**United Planning
Organization**





IS PROUD TO SPONSOR THE

UPO'S 60TH

ANNIVERSARY

GALA

Celebration

CELEBRATING PEOPLE WHO POWERED UPO

In its early years, UPO launched 8 Neighborhood Development Centers (known as NDCs) which were later called Community Service Centers. All programs radiated from these suns, thanks to devoted staff members such as Gloria H. Anderson, Lula P. Gowens, and Mary V. Peters. They were UPO's first employees and worked in Neighborhood Development Center #1 (known as NDC #1).

These photos are from their wonderful retirement party in 1999. Thank you for helping us shine, **Gloria H. Anderson, Lula P. Gowens, and Mary V. Peters!**



(L. to r.) Gloria H. Anderson, Lula P. Gowens, Mary V. Peters, and Lee P. Walker (the previous director of NDC #1, who became mayor of Landover Hills, Maryland for 24 years).



(L. to r.) Lula Gowenz and Mary Peters



(L. to r.) Gloria H. Anderson, Lula P. Gowens, Mary V. Peters, and Priscilla Francis, who was the director of NDC #1.

UPO SALUTES OUR HEROES: OUR CURRENT STAFF (as of June 30, 2023)

Zoqueen Abengowe	Mary Brinkley	Daryl A. Daniels	Lisa E. Greene
Mengesha Abesho	Michelle Broadie	Vernette Daniels	Shariah Greene
Sheri Adams	Michelle Brooks	Felicia Davis	Lakisha Grier
Patrick N Agbionu	Dervin Brown	Trejour Davis	Edme Grogue
Charles Akinmade	Lenise Brown	Tyrone Davis	Marshon Grooms
Michael Alexander Jr	Regina Brown	Takaro Day	Jasmine Gross
Luline Almonacy	Sallie Brown	Alcina De Sousa Lucas	Dianna Guinyard
Olayinka Amodu	Cynthia Brown-Thomas	Kossi Degboevi	Tesha Hager
Donna Anderson	Novella Brown-White	Dionne Dennis	Royace Hagler
Courtney Arrington	Gerika Brownlee	Glenda Diaz	Angela Hamilton
Ana Artiga Gallegos	Tai Bruton	Jacqueline Diaz	Rizwanul Haque
Lakita M. Atkinson	Kevin Bryant	Maria Diaz	Laura Hare
Brittaney Austin	Alexus Burgess	Ashanti Dickerson	Althea Harris
Jessica Austin	Denise Burks	Sharnetta Diggs	Andrew Harris
Gwendolyn Baccous	Lashawn Butler	Bianca Dolberry	Rachel Harrison
Tyrone Bailey	Jackie Byers	Felicia Echols	J'Lyn Henderson
Velma Bakarr	Tameeka Byrd	Isaiah Ellis	Ronika Henson
Earline Baker	Tiffany Cabbell	Lyzianah Emakoua	Mirna Hernandez
Madeline Baker	Mary Cain	Dominique Ennis Bottoms	Yanet Y. Hernandez
Kevin Baldwin	Iscela Carballo	Nicole Ervin	Carmen Herrera
Sarah Balogun	Kenneth Carroll	Joyce Evans	Griselda Herrera Hernandez
Tamekia Balthrop	Temika Carroll	Charity Ezenwa-Onuaku	Shanika D. Hickman-Lipscomb
Lawren Baltimore	Nuckia B Carter	Ahmad Farhan	Annie Higginbotham
Tierionna Barnes	Olufunke Carter	Wendy Faxio	Laurette Hilliard
Robin Bates	Candice Cassell	Shayla Fegans	Barbara Hlavacek
Kimberly Beaman-Thompson	Jessica Cassell	Eva Fernandez	Jean Hodges
Arthur Bell	Marco Castro	Bernardette Ferrell	Vanessa Hoey
Debra L. Benson	Juana A. Cedillos	Maria Flores de Campos	Sherolyn A Holmes-Brown
Shaonya Bey	Tanisha Chase	Victorine M. Fonge	Meaza Homma
Tijuana Beynum	Carlton G. Chatman	Janice Ford	Camille Howell
Ayana Bias	William Chatman	Christina Franklin	Keena Howse
Vincent B. Blackson	Cheryl Christmas	Rosann Frazier	Andrew Hulett
Ada Bonilla	Patricia Cisneros	Glenda Freeman	Nicole Humphrey
Darlene Booker	Marcia Claggett	Johanna Fryer	Imani Hunt
Jo Raffa Boukhira	Victoria Clayborne	Anita Fuller-White	Gisela Hurtado Minano
Portia Boyd	Lisa Cleveland	Carlos D Garvizu	Derrick Jackson
Melissa Bradley	Richard Cochran Jr	Cheryl Gilbert-Robinson	Keshon Jackson
Shayla Bradley	Ana Coto de Aparicio	Carla Gilham	Louis Jackson
Raynard Bradshaw	Shonda Cromartie	Violeta Gonzalez	Maurice Jackson
Shonda Bragg	Ronald Crowder	Vanessa Gopaul-Austin	Olivia Jackson
Luz Bran	Maria Cruz	Orlando Gore	Terry Jackson
Chitqueta Brandon	Henry Cabbage	Matilde Gorski	Rena Jacobs
Kalyn Braxton	Hilary Daniel	Lisa Graham	Gordon F James

Margaret Jarboe
Hyvron Jean
Mitzy Jimenez
Angel Johnson
Charles Johnson
Detra A. Johnson
Joann Johnson
Larnice M Johnson
Mario Johnson II
Christopher Jones
Jayner Acker Jones
Jonetta Jones
Larry Jones
Sheri B Jones
Alice Jordan
Rochelle Y. Jordan
Shatasha Jordan
Yohlan Josiah-Simon
Kaisa Juosila
Sister Kassa
Mary J. Kiptepkut
Lora Kluber
Mark Koiwai
Joyce M. Koskey
Samuel Kwofie
Ivan Laney
Nickalaus Langley
Merybel Lara-Cruz
Edward Lazere
Latisha Leake
Albert Lee
LaVerne Lee
Marcia Lee
Jacqueline Lemons
Monica Lewis
Terrance Lewis
Theresa Lewis
Sheila Link
Denzel Little
Andre R. Livingston
Arthur Lloyd
Felicia A. Long
Malek Long

Jesus Lopez
Mayra Lopez Cor
Melissa Lorenzana
Madelin Lucero-Garza
Debra Lyons
Raynard Mabry
Angela M. Mack-Lee
Rashida Madison
Zoely Marcano
Linda M. Marshall
Theodora Martin
Yenis Martinez Hernandez
Sonja A. Mason
Lisa McCullers
Camille McLean
Michele D. McNeely
Lachelle McPherson
Pamela Meade
Shawnise Meekins
Nino Meladze-Zullo
Johnny Middleton
Doris Miller
Ericka Miner
Lucia Mizhquero
Francis Monroe
Joseph Monroe
Gregory Moore
Joshua Moore
Michelle Moore
Charles S Morris
Duane Mosby
Anthony Murphy
Regina Murphy
Maureen Murray
David Myers
Robin Myers
Jasmine Myles
Patrice Napper
Kewana Nedd
Shirley M Nesbitt
Latoyria Nesby
Jerusha Nixon-Baugh
Richena Nolan

Nasrin Noory
Shelby Nowlin
Jane Nwoke
Hope C. Nwosu
Maame Nyarko
Jaunice Odom
Daniel Ofori-Addo
Meti Oli
Doneisha Owensby
Daisy Pagala
Juan F. Palacios
Tracey Parham
Tamica Pate
Tyrone V. Patterson Sr.
Jernasia Pearce
Kashae Perry
Myesha Petersen
Doretha A. Peterson
Michael Peterson-Bey
Lakita Phelps
Rowan Pinkett
Rosalind Pinkney
Chelsea Polite
Linda Prescott
Shirley Price
Melanie Prillaman
Janiya Proctor
Toi Proctor
Charles N. Pyatt
Alicia Ramadhani
Esther Ramirez
Margo Reed
Michelle Reuter
Floyd Rich
Breyona Richardson
Nimia Rigoroso
Roxana Rivas
Ameka Robinson
Ebony Robinson
Keiara Robinson
Maurice L. Robinson
Ronnique Robinson
Syritya Robinson

Zohar Rom
Rosa Romero
Cheryl L Ross
Marques Ross
John H Rouse Jr.
Carolina Rubi Arce
Rosario Rubio
Charmie Salas
Diana Salinas
Laura Sampson
Elizabeth Sanchez
Mariel Sanchez
Brenton Sanford
Annie Scott
Cynthia Senefawo-Amedoda
Gerri Shaw
Shaquise Sheffey
Mia Short
Gaylene Silver
Gayniel Silver
Ronnea Simpkins
Harold Singletary
Jenna Smachetti
Charn Smith
Lyndriell Smith
Janet Smith-Coles
Barbara Snowden
Eduardo Solares Jobel
Crystal Stephens
Ingrid Stevenson
Tierra Stewart
Kane'a Stover
Roneka Stringer
Nadia Sturdivant
Niharika Sunkam
Ricky Swinson
Niya Taylor
Jima Telele
Natasha J. Terry
Tatiyona Thigpen
Andrea Thomas
Annette Thomas
Jerald Thomas

UPO SALUTES OUR HEROES: OUR CURRENT STAFF (as of June 30, 2023)

Nadine Thomas
 Kalia Thompson
 Yvette Thompson
 Larissa Torres-Espinoza
 Leslie Tramuel
 Dashawn Turner
 Ronita Turner
 Milagro Uceda
 Thomas Valayathil
 Jaynise Vandervort
 Remberto Vargas
 Tyra Vaughn

Patrocinia Velasquez
 Chi Vo
 Betty Walker
 Melva Walker
 Nia Walker
 Eric Wang
 Avis Warley
 Antwan Washington
 Tiffany Washington
 James A. Washington II
 Christopher Watson
 Fern Watson

Rebecca Webb
 Tena Weedon
 Ashley Weems
 Lisa West
 Taikasha Weston
 Linda Westpoint
 Larry Whitaker
 Milton Whiting Jr.
 Tanisha Wilfred-Laudman
 LaShawn Williams
 Laconia Williams
 Marvin Williams

Nakea Williams
 Shirleeta Williams
 Tiara Williams
 Jamea Wilson
 Symone Woodard
 Keenan Woods
 Colbretta Wright
 Juliet W Wright-Fuller
 Olivia Young
 Taressa T. Young
 Cynthia Young-Anderson



Here are our longest-serving current staff who joined us to make a difference...and have enjoyed a career here. They inspire us every day!

Front row (L. to R.):
 Anita White (49 years)
 Shirley Price (32 years)
 Jesus Lopez (35 years)

Back row (L. to R.):
 Cheryl Christmas (34 years)
 Regina Brown (42 years)
 Mark Koiwai (34 years)
 Mary Brinkley (34 years)
 President and CEO Andrea Thomas
 Darlene Booker (47 years)
 Regina Murphy (41 years)
 CIO Daniel Ofori-Addo

UPO HALL OF FAME

The UPO Hall of Fame recognizes members of the UPO Family who have served the residents of Washington, DC in the most exemplary fashion.

The current members are:



MAYOR MURIEL BOWSER

The Executive Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser would like to formally congratulate the United Planning Organization on providing over 60 years of services and community resources to District residents!



GOVERNMENT OF THE
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR



**UNITING PEOPLE
WITH OPPORTUNITIES**

We are Educators.

We are Dream Builders.

We are Opportunity-makers and Poverty-fighters.

We believe that everyone deserves a chance to pursue and live sustainable, successful lives. With our help, people become the change agents of their lives and pave their pathways to economic security.

VISION

**UPO's Washington:
A city of thriving communities
and self-sufficient residents**

MISSION

**Uniting People with
Opportunities**

Our mission is to **Unite People with Opportunities** so they and their communities can thrive. A human and community development organization, UPO serves over 50,000 DC residents annually. Our team treats education as the key to helping people lift themselves out of poverty.

We are United Planning Organization

Our approach is holistic and generational. As the only Community Action Agency serving the residents of Washington, DC, we've touched thousands of lives over our 60 years. We offer more than 30 programs and human services. We help our customers get a job; learn a skill, find and stay in affordable housing. We teach financial literacy, offer early learning and adult education, help send high school students to college and keep our seniors physically and mentally active.

From newborn babies to senior adults, when you're a part of the UPO family, we wrap our arms around you and are with you every step of the way.

Office of Early Learning: DC's largest Early Head Start provider

Youth Services: Hands-on project-based STEM enrichments that drive student success in college and careers

UPO Workforce Institute: Job training and placement, with the city's largest Construction Skills Center

Community Advocacy: Opportunities to lead, serve, and engage that change lives and strengthen communities

Legislative Advocacy: Tackling the causes and conditions of poverty by voicing how policy impacts opportunity

Affordable Housing: Case management to keep people in stable homes (Permanent Supportive Housing), partnerships with developers to create new housing, and innovative initiatives

Community Reinvestment: Financial counseling, housing counseling (including foreclosure prevention), and free tax preparation

Foster Grandparent Program: Classroom mentoring by 200 AmeriCorps Seniors volunteers; UPO's DC chapter is the most prominent in the nation

Community Health: Comprehensive Treatment Center (methadone treatment), EBT, and Shelter Hotline

Community Impact: Place-based strategies that help neighborhoods flourish

SHE WAS AT THE END OF HER ROPE. WE SAW POTENTIAL.

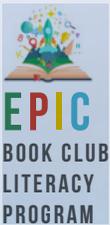


Janae was living in her car ... even while working part-time. When the pandemic arrived, her hours were cut, then she was laid off. **“UPO was my lifeline. I had nowhere else to turn,”** she said. “I don’t know what you saw in me. I was hopeless and you saw potential.”

Team UPO helped to sharpen her resume: “This helped improve my writing skills and readied me for an unexpected career change.” When she saw an opening for a receptionist, Janae quickly sent her new resume and **was hired immediately**. She has since been promoted.

Now she is going back to school and is a community leader. As Janae says, “A person without a plan, plans to fail. **UPO has a brilliant plan for the community:** use their resources wisely and as often as needed. They guided me through one of the most vulnerable times a young woman could have, homeless and alone. Hats off to the UPO staff. **I am forever grateful.**”

REVERSING LEARNING LOSS



This new initiative **reverses some of the COVID-related learning loss** for K-5th graders. EPIC literacy activities also help them develop positive coping strategies. With funding from Learn24, EPIC will continue at two new school sites in 2022-23, expanding to serve 60 youth.

“Thank you! **Bringing EPIC into our classrooms truly made a tangible difference. It was a joy to see so many students making personal connections to the texts.** The follow-up activities allowed for deeper exploration in hands-on and exciting ways.

What became especially meaningful for our students was the social-emotional component that allowed us to create safe spaces for them to share, reflect and practice emotional regulation strategies.

The small group setting was ideal for ... more opportunities to develop closer friendships and bonds with their peers and teachers. **Our students’ love of literacy was positively enriched, as evidenced by growth and record achievement in their academic outcomes...**”

- *The Randle Highlands EPIC Book Club Team*
(Shelby Cook, Kimberly Kenley, Winfred Thomas, Jazzmyne Townsend, Crystal Wilson)

After 6 sessions,

63%

of EPIC Book Club participants demonstrated improvement in reading





United Planning Organization
301 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20001

WWW.UPO.ORG



Donations are tax-deductible to the full extent of the law since UPO is a 501c3 nonprofit organization.