

1947 – 2023

Communities Together, Inc.



2023 Annual Report



A Greater Lawrence Council of Churches was formed with the adoption of a constitution at a supper meeting held on Wednesday evening, December 10, 1947. The meeting was held at the Central Methodist Church with more than 100 delegates present from 38 churches and organizations in Lawrence, Methuen and North Andover.

Rev. George E. Brown, pastor of the South Congregational Church, chairman of the steering committee, welcomed the delegates to the mass meeting. Rev. Hans Sidon, Ph.D., pastor of Christ Presbyterian Church conducted the devotional.

Rev. Joseph W. Merchant, executive secretary of the new Bedford Council of Churches, addressed the gather on "*The Why, What and How of a Council of Churches.*" Rev. Merchant noted that a council was needed to "strengthen, expand, supplement and assist the work of the local churches and to personalize group life". He stated that "Churches have broken away from contact with community life. A council of churches bridges that gap. It would seem that the time is fully ripe for the church to assert itself in terms of service to the community". In all of the activities of the Council, Rev. Merchant suggested that "*We should develop a spirit of togetherness to build a bridge that will reach out where the people are*". He cast a vision of unity as the churches joined hands to "make our spiritual influence felt throughout the whole community".

Since that winter evening in 1947, the mission has not changed. On the 60th anniversary of the organization, the Council of Churches transitioned to become Communities Together. With the September 2007 announcement, the mission continued as churches "cooperated in efforts to create a more unified, loving community that responds and reacts to the needs of the people". The tag line, People of Faith Touching Lives was added. The mission did not change.

Over the years, many have served as directors, committee members, delegates and volunteers.. Staff members served and moved on to other opportunities. The office has moved to various locations. The mission has not changed.

*For 76 years the mission has remained constant: "The supporting congregations of **Communities Together** are called to be an instrument of Christ and to know and share His love. We are committed to witness, as one body, to the unity of Christ's love by supporting outreach programs, sharing worship experiences, and responding together to the needs of the people of Greater Lawrence and surrounding communities".*

On this occasion, may we pledge our unwavering support to preserve and prosper the mission of Communities Together. The mission has not changed.

The Board of Directors for Communities Together, Inc.

***Rev. Debra Adams
Marcia Hohn
Ciro Martinez III
Rev. Steven Murphy
Madelyn Sang
Klar P. Vajda
Andrea EK Vannett
Roberta Weller
Robert Zimmerman
Lee Schurter***

***“And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”
Colossians 3:14***

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<https://communitiestogetherinc.org>*



Communities Together, Inc. Annual Report for 2023

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76th Annual Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, March 13th, 2024 – 1:00 PM

St. Paul's Episcopal Church – North Andover



Welcome and Opening Prayer
Introduction of Executive Director

Steven Murphy – President

By-Laws Review

Rev. Debra Adams - Secretary

Ministries in Review

Lee Schurter – Director at Large

Approval of 2023 Annual Reports
Election of 2024 Officers and Directors-at-Large

Robert Zimmerman- Treasurer

Benediction and Adjournment

Rev. Debra Adams - Secretary



Annual Report of the President

The year 2023 has been both a challenging and a rewarding year for the Communities Together organization. We have faced both hardship and joyous moments. The hardships have been mostly in the financial area and the joyous moments have been bringing on new board members to serve our mission. We have had the good fortune of the talents and abilities of Lee Schurter continuing to serve as Executive Director of the organization until a replacement was found by the search committee. Fortunately, we were blessed to find Madelyn Sang, our new Assistant Executive Director, working under the mentorship of Lee. She was welcomed and elected by the Board of Directors on June 8, 2023 to officially begin her duties immediately. Some of the challenges and rewards of the past year include:

- The unfortunate loss of a few grants, which negatively impacted the financial operations of the organization. Our good fortune and positive spirit of the board and the staff with their creativity kept us going throughout the period to follow.
- It is a pleasure to state that Manos Felices – Happy Hands at the Stadium Courts Housing Projects and the Hancock Housing Projects in Lawrence, MA both remain staffed and operational.
- Under the direction of the President of the Board of Directors of Communities Together, a small work group was formed and the bylaws of Communities Together were reviewed, rewritten and approved by the board.
- The Inter-Faith Thanksgiving Service, Lenten Services and the National Day of Prayer gave us an opportunity to worship together. The staff worked tirelessly planning and executing the service and bringing them all to a successful outcome.
- Undies Sundays continues to be a very successful program where diapers are donated to help families in our community in need.
- The Prayer Shawl Tea, Vacation Bible School, Manos Felices Summer Enrichment Program are just a few more of the wonderful events provided by Communities Together.
- Each of these programs helps those in our community in times of need and by helping to build community.

I am very grateful to our grantors, parishes, and many individuals that give and support Communities Together financially. I am also most grateful to the many volunteers that give generously of their time which is our God given treasure.

I would also personally like to thank the staff and the board members that give freely of their time and talent to support and guide Communities Together.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Steven J. Murphy
Board President



Annual Report of the Executive Director

During 2023, Communities Together, Inc. stayed true to its mission of “The supporting congregations of Communities Together are called to be an instrument of Christ and to know and share His love. We are committed to witness, as one body, to the unity of Christ's love by supporting outreach programs, sharing worship experiences, and responding together to the needs of the people of greater Lawrence and surrounding communities”.

The greater community gathered for worship on multiple occasions throughout the year. Each occasion heightened the awareness of the need for individuals to continue meeting together in the expression of unity in Christ's love. From the Lenten Services in the beginning of the year through the Interfaith Thanksgiving Service in November, community members valued the relationships they established and nourished during the worship experiences.

In other areas:

- Ministry to children continued to be uppermost in the minds and hearts of congregations and individuals. Children from various churches in Lawrence learned that following Jesus changes the game as they studied ‘Twists and Turns’ in Vacation Bible School. We were pleased to welcome Third Baptist Church in Lawrence as a first-time host church in the VBS program.
- Our children of Manos Felices! prospered through the school year and celebrated their childhood during the summer experience. They have been blessed by the love and support of individuals and congregations who have supported them in their educational journey. Students from Concord Academy in Concord, MA initiated springtime visits at Manos Felices! Merrimack College established a closer relationship with Communities Together, Inc., adding their expertise in programming and stronger support.
- It was refreshing to add bilingual members to the board of directors. They have brought creativity and energy to leadership.
- Administratively, the organization transitioned from a weekly payroll to a bi-weekly one and outsourced the process as a cost-saving measure.

For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven Eccles. 3:1. My season as Executive Director for Communities Together, Inc. has come to an end. In October the Board of Directors hired Madelyn Sang to work alongside me as Assistant to the Executive Director. She has progressed well and officially assumed the Executive Director position on February 5, 2024.

I shall cherish the relationships that I have developed over the past 6+ years and will treasure the memories of the opportunities that I have enjoyed as I have worshipped with you and have been inspired by you. Thank you for your love and support. This has been a life-changing experience. I love you all.

Lee Schurter
Previous Executive Director

Chaplains Pastoral and Spiritual Care

Communities Together employs chaplains who serve Holy Family Hospital. One chaplain sees Hispanic clients. Our chaplains visit hundreds of individuals each year.

Our organization recognizes that being hospitalized is more than just physically challenging; it can be emotionally and spiritually challenging as well. Chaplains are there to provide support for the emotional and spiritual challenges that accompany illness and hospitalization.

Chaplains work with a diverse population and are tasked with counseling patients undergoing surgical procedures, facing end of life issues or involved in traumatic accidents. They also offer comfort and support to the patients' families. They may be called on by hospital staff to calm angry or emotionally distraught friends and family members of patients. Chaplains may conduct religious services in the hospital chapel, including officiating at memorial services and weddings. In some cases, a hospital chaplain will provide spiritual support to fellow staff members and care providers.

Thank you for all of your support of the chaplaincy at Holy Family Hospital. Through your prayers and support, you are making a difference in the lives of the patients, families and hospital staff.



Chaplains:
Rev. Dominic Barbieri
Rev. Fernando Gomez

Manos Felices! – Happy Hands

Communities Together offers an after school and summer enrichment program in two locations in Lawrence. Our Hancock Street location serves the children and families who reside in the Hancock Courts Housing Project. The program opened there in 1993 when Betty Smith visited the community and recognized the needs of the children living there. Initially, she and other volunteers created a safe area for outdoor play in one of the Housing Project's courtyards. When weather permitted, these dedicated individuals provided limited hours of supervised activities for the children. Eventually, the Lawrence Housing Authority set aside a residential unit in Hancock Courts for our program, allowing us to offer indoor activities year-round and providing us with the much-needed storage and a safe haven for the children. The organization implemented the same program for the children and families who reside in the Stadium Courts Housing Projects in June 2018.



During the school year, the weekday program included homework completion, reading as required by the Lawrence Public School Systems, STEM activities and a snack. Throughout the summer, children experienced activities and enjoyed events outside the small worlds of Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts. They enjoyed art lessons, music lessons and individual STEM projects as packaged and donated by the youth of South Church in Andover, MA. The children resumed swim lessons at the YWCA and other water sports activities at the Greater Lawrence Boating Program. Lisa Buglione, professional artist, taught weekly art lessons at both locations of the summer program.

The organization has benefited greatly from our partnership with Merrimack College. As a result of the Executive Director's participation in the service fair in September, *Manos Felices!* has been receiving the support of college students who have divided their time between Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts. The presence and encouragement of the students has opened the eyes of the children to possibilities of continued education. With their help, we know that our children have completed their homework and have engaged in independent reading (as required by their school), each day.

Leaders with the Andover Breadloaf program which is based at Phillips Academy in Andover provided a six-week writing program at both Hancock Courts and Stadium Courts locations of *Manos Felices!* beginning in October 2023.

Michael Kennealy, former Secretary of Housing for the Commonwealth, has introduced the students at Concord Academy in Concord, MA to *Manos Felices!* A group of students from the Academy will begin leading activities with our children on alternate Saturday mornings beginning in April. Their focus will be on encouraging our children in their schoolwork while engaging them in a variety of activities.

A popular program at *Manos Felices!* is "Birthday in a Box" for which monthly sponsors bring a birthday party (cake, drinks, decorations, favors, birthday cards, etc.) to our program site to celebrate the birthdays of the children born in that month. The program began in April 2008 to

provide birthday celebrations for all the children since some may not celebrate their birthdays at home. Sponsorship opportunities are available for churches or individuals to sponsor a particular birthday month and enjoy the party with the children.



Our objective is to maintain a culturally relevant and education-centered program for children that will focus on homework and independent reading, helping establish the children on a path toward academic achievement. With the support of congregations and individuals, *Manos Felices!* has continued to provide snacks, birthday parties, holiday celebrations, back-to-school backpacks, winter coats, hats and gloves, holiday gifts and various other items. Parents express their appreciation for the assistance, support and opportunities that are provided to their children. Children recognize the thoughtfulness and generosity of so many individuals and organizations. They are routinely encouraged to express their appreciation both verbally and in writing for the many acts of generosity.

2023 Lenten Diaper and Underwear Drive

Diapers are a major expense for any household. They cannot be purchased using WIC or SNAP benefits. Communities Together recognizes the impact of the expense on low-income families. Since 1998 during the Lenten season, the organization has been collecting diapers, pull-ups and small children's underwear for children in the Greater Lawrence area. The items are shared with agencies within the area for distribution to their clients.

Agencies who routinely receive diapers and other items from the Undie Sundays drive include:

- Lazarus House
- St. Vincent's Ministry
- Horizons for Children Family Shelter
- Si Se Puede
- Bread and Roses
- Pregnancy Care Center
- Fina House/YWCA
- People's Pantry
- Emmaus House
- Neighbors in Need

In 2023 we were able to witness an amazing outpouring of generosity and support from churches and individuals for Undie Sundays. Throughout a time when the cost of many goods has steadily increased, families needed the support of the community more than ever. The thoughtfulness and support demonstrated by churches and individuals made a difference in the lives of many families throughout the Greater Lawrence area.





Since 1975, children from kindergarten to Grade 6 have been participating in this value-centered program. They also enjoy a much-needed meal while attending. Although not all churches have returned to their traditional summer schedule following the pandemic, the lives of over 555 children and dozens of teen and adult volunteers were enriched through the 2023 VBS program. The program was hosted by six churches in the Greater Lawrence area and we also welcomed Third Baptist Church in Lawrence to our VBS program the summer of 2023, for the first time in participating in the program.

In 2023, the children enjoyed Twists and Turns, a fantastical celebration of games of all kinds. From classic tabletop games, to video games, and more, the children who attended had a wonderful time. The children played their way through VBS while learning that Jesus guides them through all the twists and turns of their lives. They found that even when they mess up, it's never "*game over*".

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Communities Together, Inc. hosted the 19th Annual Prayer Shawl Tea on Friday, November 10th, 2023 at St. Augustine Church in Andover. The organization was delighted to welcome ministry participants in person.



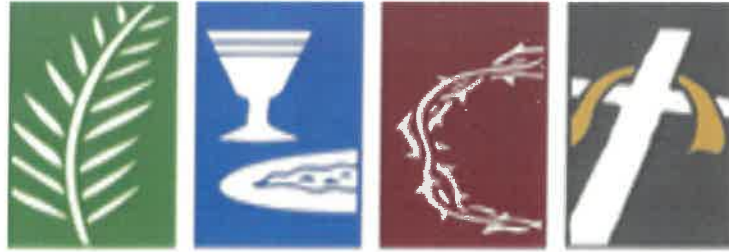
Attendees celebrated the spirit of the Prayer Shawl Ministry, each other and those who have received Prayer Shawls. Prayer shawl creators came from churches in the Merrimack Valley and Southern New Hampshire, joined by representatives of healthcare facilities. They brought with them the fruits of their labors: a vast array of colors, textures and different styles woven into Prayer Shawls. It was a heartwarming event.

The guest speaker was Chaplain Dominic Barbieri of Holy Family Hospital in Methuen. He shared personal stories of a few recipients of a prayer shawl and they way in which they impacted their lives even when of different faith. Explaining it comforted many to know the makers of these pray shawls, embedded within each shawl, their prayers, thus being a blessing for both the giver and the receiver.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry was created by Jane Bristow and Vicky Gallo decades ago as a project, while they attended a program in applied spirituality at The Women's Leadership Institute in Hartford, CT. The weaving of healing prayers into the fabric of each shawl resulted in a new ministry that reaches out to those in need of comfort. Shawls have been given during illness or recovery, at times of loss and in times of joy. Chaplains distribute them at hospitals and other healthcare facilities including the VA.



The tradition of the annual Interfaith Prayer Shawl Tea in the Merrimack Valley began in 2004. It was first held at the First Calvary Baptist Church with Dana Bennett and Klara Vajda working together to initiate the annual event. Saint Augustine's Parish began to host the event in 2007. Trinitarian Congregational Church hosted the event in 2018 and 2019.



2023 Lenten Noon Service Series

Worshippers from throughout the Greater Lawrence area came together for our series of Wednesday Lenten Services. It was a time of spiritual reflection and renewal.

February 14th: Faith Lutheran of Andover – 360 S. Main St. Andover, MA 01810

- Host Pastor: Reverend Jeanette Leisek
- Guest Homilist: Reverend Carrie Ann Burnap, Forrest Street Union Church of Methuen

February 21st: Forest Street Union Church – 15 Forest St. Methuen, MA 01844

- Host Pastor: Reverend Carrie Burnap
- Guest Homilist: Reverend Debra Adams, Trinitarian Congregational Church of North Andover

February 28th: Parish of Christ Church Episcopal – 33 Central St. Andover, MA 01810

- Host Pastor: Reverend Michael Hodges
- Guest Homilist: Reverend Eleanor Prior,
St Paul's Episcopal Church of N. Andover and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church of Methuen

March 6th: St. Theresa Church of Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish–22 Plymouth St. Methuen, MA

- Host Pastor: Father Gregory Vozzo
- Guest Homilist: Deacon Lou Piazza, St Augustine's Parish of Andover

March 13th: St Paul Episcopal Church – 390 Main St. North Andover, MA 01845

- Host Pastor: Reverend Eleanor Prior
- Guest Homilist: Reverend Lewis Floyd, Third Baptist Church of Lawrence

March 20th: St Michael Parish – 196 Main St. North Andover, MA

- Host Pastor: Father Kevin Deeley
- Guest Homilist: Father Daniel Madden, Director of Austin Scholars formation at Merrimack College of North Andover



Please join us for the National Day of Prayer annual observance. People of all faiths are encouraged to pray for the nation.

Thursday – May 4, 2023 at 6:00 PM

**'Stations of the Cross' Garden and Gazebo
Holy Family Hospital – 70 East Street – Methuen, MA 01844**

Prayers will be offered for families, students, educators, government and civic leaders, medical professionals and many others. We will pray for patience, peace and understanding.

The 'Stations of the Cross' garden is beyond the main entrance, just beyond the final building. The most convenient parking lot will be the furthest lot on the hospital driveway. Take the right fork when you enter the hospital, up to, and past the main entrance. The end parking lot lies alongside the garden.

If the weather is inclement, we will move inside in the hospital chapel, which is near the garden.

Please remember to bring your lawn chairs!



“O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever”. Psalm 107:1.

**Communities Together, Inc.
*Interfaith Thanksgiving Service and Luncheon***

Wednesday, November 15, 2023 at 11:30 a.m.

***Trinitarian Congregational Church
72 Elm Street – North Andover, MA 01845
Luncheon catered by Rolling Ridge Retreat & Conference Center***

WORSHIP LEADERS:

Fr. Vart Gyoalyan – Armenian Apostolic Church at Hye Pointe
Fr. Larry Tumminelli – St. Basil Salvatorian Center
Rabbi Howard Mandell – Congregation Beth Israel
Rev. Fernando Gomez – Evangelical Primitive Methodist Church
Melissa Marrama – Islamic Center of Andover
Ann Walsh – First Calvary Baptist Church
Diane Dickie – Pianist



**COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, INC.
2023-2024 Officers and Board of Directors**

PRESIDENT	REV. STEVEN MURPHY	Retired Executive
SECRETARY	REV. DEBRA ADAMS	Pastor
TREASURER	ROBERTA WELLER	Retired CFO
DIRECTOR	ANDREA EK VANNETT	Self-Employed
DIRECTOR	REV. STEVEN MURPHY	Retired Executive
DIRECTOR	KLARA P. VAJDA	CASA
DIRECTOR	ROBERT ZIMMERMAN	Retired Teacher
DIRECTOR	CIRO MARTINEZ	3 rd Year Law Student
DIRECTOR	MARCIA HOHN	Business Administration
DIRECTOR	MADELYN SANG	Accounting and Business

**COMMUNITIES TOGETHER, INC.
2024-2025 Officers and Board of Directors**

PRESIDENT	REV. STEVEN MURPHY	Retired Executive
VICE PRESIDENT	REV. DEBRA ADAMS	Pastor
SECRETARY	LEE SCHURTER	Retired Executive
TREASURER	ROBERT ZIMMERMAN	Retired Teacher
DIRECTOR	ANDREA EK VANNETT	Self-Employed
DIRECTOR	CIRO MARTINEZ	3 rd Year Law Student
DIRECTOR	MARCIA HOHN	Business Administration

2023 Donors

Thank you for impacting lives through your generosity.

2023 Unrestricted Contributions

Adam, Donna
Amazon Smiles
Ball, Margaret
Barker, Dorothea
Bartle, Priscilla
Bostock, Dean G.
Chateau Resturant
Di Napoli, James
Fines, Paula
Harris, Joanna
Kalafarski, Leslie
Kooken, Jean
Kress, Louise
Martel, Anne
McKernan, Debra
Meyer, Mark G.
Moran, Mary
Nawrocki, Richard
Petzold, Natalie
Rea, Kenneth
Robinson, Willard
Stevens, Margaret
Swelway, Brian
Swett, Valerie
Tyler, Phyllis
Wong, Mary Lee
Weller, Carl & Roberta
Zimmerman, Robert & Phyllis

Undies Sunday

Cleary, Linda
First Church Congregational
Hinkle, Marianne C.
Ireland, Peg
Kalafarski, Leslie
Kettner, Caroline
McGravey, Anne
Martel, Anne
Moran, Mary
Tyler, Phyllis
Zimmerman, Robert & Phyllis

Chaplaincy

Brown, Beverly
Colburn, Robert
Dunigan, Susan
Giannone, Lucille M.
Kalafarski, Leslie
Miller, Elecia
Orchard, Hazel
Prior, Eleanor
Schurter, Lee
Smith, John E.
Tyler, Phyllis
Vajda, Klara
Vannett, Andrea
Weller, Carl & Roberta

2023 Participating Congregations

Andover Baptist Church
Ballardvale United Church
Centro de Adoracion Jesucristo es el Senor
The Parish of Christ Church Andover
Christian Fellowship of Merrimack Valley
Christ United Methodist Church
Ebenezer Christian Church
Faith Lutheran Church
First Baptist Church of Methuen
First-Calvary Baptist Church
First Church Congregational
First Spanish Free Methodist Church
First United Methodist Church of North Andover
First Street Union Church
Free Christian Church
Iglesia Cristiana Metodista
Iglesia Episcopal de Gracia
Iglesia Cristo Principe de Paz
Iglesia Dios de la Profesia
New England Conference of United Methodist Church
North Parish Unitarian Universalist
One Voice Church
Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish
Redeemer Lutheran Church
St. Augustine Parish Andover
St. Lucy Parish
St. Mary of the Assumption Parish
St. Michael Parish
St. Monica Parish
St. Patrick Parish
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
South Church in Andover
Spanish Assemblies of God Church
Spanish Free Methodist Church
Spanish Primitive Methodist Church
Third Baptist Church
Trinitarian Congregational Church
United Riverside Congregational Church
West Parish Church

2024 Communities Together, Inc. Grant Applications

Manos Felices!

Grantor	Request
Saab Family Foundation	\$4,000.00
Josephine G. Russell Trust	\$9,500.00
Artemas W. Stearns Trust	\$4,000.00
Nathaniel & Elizabeth P. Stevens Foundation	\$26,000.00
Greater Lawrence Community Fund	\$1,000.00
ECCF - Summer Program	\$5,000.00
Amelia Peabody Foundation	\$30,000.00
South Church	\$3,200.00
Charles G. Pringle Foundation	\$3,000.00
Margaret Collins Charitable Foundation	\$3,000.00
Catherine McCarthy Memorial Trust Foundation	\$2,000.00
DESE	\$20,000.00
UW-ASOST-R	\$20,000.00
Rogers Family Foundation	\$5,000.00
Lawrence Cultural Council	\$1,500.00
Total	\$137,200.00
NiSource – New Application	\$10,000.00

Vacation Bible School

Boston Baptist Social Union	\$5,000.00
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2024 Communities Together, Inc. Organizational Budget
Organizational Budget 2024

	<u>Income</u>
Restricted Grants	153,200
Restricted Gifts	13,865
Unrestricted Gifts:	
Churches	12,500
Friends	8,000
Fundraisers/Events	4,000
Total Unrestricted Gifts	21,750
Total Income	191,815
Carry Forward from 2023	15,898
Total Funds Available	207,713

	<u>Expense</u>
Program Budgets:	
<i>Manos Felices!</i> – Hancock Courts	77,041
<i>Manos Felices!</i> – Stadium Courts	75,313
Vacation Bible School	6,800
Diaper & Underwear Drive	2,565
Total Program Expense	161,719
Operating Expense:	
Unallocated Salaries	21,157
Unallocated Salary Expense	1,619
Property & Liability Insurance	3,900
Workers Comp	1,250
Rent	2,400
Postage and Delivery	850
Printing and Reproduction	700
Telephone and Internet	5,300
Travel Allowance	600
Equipment/Copier	300
Fundraisers/Events	300
Other Office Expenses	200
Miscellaneous	300
Subtract Allocated Operating Expense s	- 12,319
Total Unallocated Operating Expense	16,800
 Total Expense	 201,295
 Carry Forward to 2025	 7,118

2023 Year-End Financial Reports

Communities Together, Inc. Income & Expense January through December 2023

1:13 PM
1/05/24
Cash Basis

	Jan - Dec 23		
Income			
Federal Tax Reimbursement		4.05	
Gifts			
Restricted			
Chaplains			
Lenten Services Proceeds	2,431.00		
Total Chaplains	2,431.00		
Diaper and Underwear Drive	1,065.61		
Hancock Courts (HC)			
HC- Summer Enrichment Program	150.00		
HC - Special Assistance			
Cummings Special Fund	3,000.00		
William Thoden Memorial Fund	3,092.50		
Total HC - Special Assistance	6,092.50		
Mentors Program	480.00		
Hancock Courts (HC) - Other	100.00		
Total Hancock Courts (HC)	6,822.50		
Stadium Courts			
Mentors Program	460.00		
SC- Special Assistance			
Cummings Special Fund	3,000.00		
William Thoden Memorial Fund	3,089.50		
Total SC- Special Assistance	6,089.50		
SC- Summer Enrichment Program	150.00		
Stadium Courts - Other	100.00		
Total Stadium Courts	6,799.50		
Vacation Bible School	7,598.48		
Total Restricted	24,717.09		
Unrestricted			
Annual - Fundraising, Events			
Delegates Fundraiser	15.00		
Friends of CT	7,228.85		
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	955.00		
Total Annual - Fundraising, Events	8,198.85		
Church Pledges	13,550.00		
Miscellaneous (Reimburse to CT)	57.48		
Unrestricted - Other	150.00		
Total Unrestricted	21,956.33		
Total Gifts	46,673.42		
Grants (Restricted)			
Chaplains	12,500.00		
Hancock Courts			
HC- Summer Enrichment	2,750.00		
Hancock Courts - Other	56,319.55		
Total Hancock Courts	59,069.55		
Stadium Courts			
SC- Summer Enrichment	2,750.00		
Stadium Courts - Other	57,119.56		
Total Stadium Courts	59,869.56		
Vacation Bible School	6,200.00		

Communities Together, Inc.
Income & Expense
 January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
Total Grants (Restricted)	137,639.11
Total Income	184,316.58
Gross Profit	184,316.58
Expense	
Events	
Interfaith Thanksgiving Service	1,050.00
Total Events	1,050.00
Miscellaneous	232.47
Office	
Equipment	250.51
Insurance	
Liability Insurance	4,127.95
Worker's Comp Insurance	1,025.00
Total Insurance	5,152.95
Miscellaneous	2,175.77
Postage and Delivery	922.86
Printing and Reproduction	1,231.43
Rent	4,822.73
Telephone and Internet	5,442.63
Total Office	19,998.88
Payroll Expenses	
Misc. Payroll Adjustment	116.26
P/R Tax - FICA employer portion	8,505.20
P/R Tax - Medi Employer portion	2,012.74
Payroll Expenses - Other	137,276.73
Total Payroll Expenses	147,910.93
Program Expense	
Chaplains Compensation (1099)	
Chap - Holy Family Hosp	
Chap-Latino	3,784.00
Chap - Holy Family Hosp - Other	13,275.00
Total Chap - Holy Family Hosp	17,059.00
Total Chaplains Compensation (1099)	17,059.00
Diapers and Underwear Drive	
Diaper Purchase	98.84
Total Diapers and Underwear Drive	98.84
Hancock Courts	
Program	
Birthday In a Box	54.25
Crafts and Activities	390.27
HC- Special Assistance	
Cummings Special Fund	609.97
Thoden Memorial Fund	190.12
Total HC- Special Assistance	800.09
Miscellaneous	1,243.84
Other Celebrations on Site	91.64
Outings and Celebrations	184.37
Refreshments	52.49
Summer Enrichment Program	1,959.94

Communities Together, Inc.
Income & Expense
January through December 2023

	Jan - Dec 23
Total Program	4,776.89
Special Assistance	50.00
Total Hancock Courts	4,826.89
Stadium Courts Program	
Birthday in a Box	214.21
Crafts and Activities	390.30
Miscellaneous	1,274.96
Other Celebrations On Site	91.66
Outings and Celebrations	184.38
Refreshments	52.49
SC- Special Assistance	
Cummings Special Fund	759.96
SC- Special Assistance - Other	77.97
Total SC- Special Assistance	837.93
Summer Enrichment Program	1,601.79
Total Program	4,647.72
Total Stadium Courts	4,647.72
Vacation Bible School	
Craft materials	140.49
Materials	6,309.85
Miscellaneous	270.58
Vacation Bible School - Other	-20.00
Total Vacation Bible School	6,700.92
Total Program Expense	33,333.37
Reconciliation Discrepancies	-1.32
Tax Liability	0.52
Total Expense	202,524.85
Net Income	-18,208.27

Communities Together, Inc.
Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison
As of December 31, 2023

	Dec 31, 23	Dec 31, 22	\$ Change	% Change
ASSETS				
Current Assets				
Checking/Savings				
Enterprise Bank	15,898.02	54,334.86	-38,436.84	-70.7%
Total Checking/Savings	15,898.02	54,334.86	-38,436.84	-70.7%
Total Current Assets	15,898.02	54,334.86	-38,436.84	-70.7%
TOTAL ASSETS	15,898.02	54,334.86	-38,436.84	-70.7%
LIABILITIES & EQUITY				
Liabilities				
Current Liabilities				
Other Current Liabilities				
Amount due to Alfred Weller	200.00	200.00	0.00	0.0%
Deferred Revenue	0.00	17,149.61	-17,149.61	-100.0%
Payroll Liabilities				
Mass Dept of FMLA	0.19	0.00	0.19	100.0%
P/R - Federal tax Withholding	-324.00	422.00	-746.00	-176.8%
P/R - FICA	-90.41	1,448.75	-1,539.16	-106.2%
P/R - Medi	40.86	339.69	-298.83	-88.0%
P/R - State tax withholding	264.41	656.70	-392.29	-59.7%
Payroll Liabilities - Other	59.38	162.25	-102.87	-63.4%
Total Payroll Liabilities	-49.57	3,029.39	-3,078.96	-101.6%
Total Other Current Liabilities	150.43	20,379.00	-20,228.57	-99.3%
Total Current Liabilities	150.43	20,379.00	-20,228.57	-99.3%
Total Liabilities	150.43	20,379.00	-20,228.57	-99.3%
Equity				
Opening Bal Equity	17,223.48	17,223.48	0.00	0.0%
Retained Earnings	16,732.38	29,468.31	-12,735.93	-43.2%
Net Income	-18,208.27	-12,735.93	-5,472.34	-43.0%
Total Equity	15,747.59	33,955.86	-18,208.27	-53.6%
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	15,898.02	54,334.86	-38,436.84	-70.7%

Communities Together, Inc. By-Law Revision Team

Proposals for Communities Together, Inc. By-Law Changes for vote at 2024 Annual Mtg.

Rationale for revisions: The bylaws have not been revised for fifteen years. During that time, the landscape of our supporting congregations has been such that securing members for the Board, particularly clergy persons, has become a monumental task. Although the Board still actively seeks a balance of laypersons and clergy, as well as, working to maintain a robust Board of Directors, the revisions that are being proposed reflect the reality of this changing landscape.

Current:

- **Article IV – SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS**

- **Section 1 – Supporting Congregations**

- Christian Churches that support the mission and programs of Communities Together shall be referred to as “supporting congregations.” These congregations are expected to support the work of Communities Together by providing pastoral participation, delegate cooperation, congregational member involvement, and/or financial contributions.

Revised:

- **Article IV – SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS**

- **Section 1 – Supporting Congregations**

- Christian Churches that support the mission and programs of *Communities Together* shall be referred to as “supporting congregations.” These congregations are **encouraged** to support the work of *Communities Together* by providing pastoral participation, delegate cooperation, congregational member involvement, and/or financial contributions.

Current:

- **Article IV – SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS**

- **Section 2 – Delegates**

- a. Each supporting congregation may elect or appoint, in accordance with its own by-laws or traditions, two or more of its members to act as “delegates” to *Communities Together*.
 - b. A delegate gives his or her supporting congregation a presence at *CT* meetings, advocates for *CT* in the delegate’s congregation, and becomes an extension of the congregation into the community through *CT*’s programs.

- c. A delegate is expected to attend meetings of *Communities Together*, publicize and garner support for *CT's* programs, and to volunteer.
- d. A delegate or member of a supporting congregation may be elected by the Board of Directors to the status of Honorary Life Delegate in recognition of his or her outstanding service to *Communities Together*.

Revised:

- **Article IV – SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS**

- Section 2 – Delegates**

- a. Each supporting congregation may elect or appoint in accordance with its own by-laws or traditions, one or more of its members to act as “delegates” to *Communities Together*.
 - b. Pursuant to Section 2a, referenced herein the *Communities Together* by-laws, in the event that a supporting congregation elects or appoints a delegate, this gives the delegate’s supporting congregation a presence at *Communities Together* meetings, advocates for *Communities Together* in the delegate’s congregation, and becomes an extension of the congregation, into the community through *Communities Together* programs.
 - c. A delegate is encouraged, but not required, to attend meetings of *Communities Together*, publicize and garner support for *Communities Together* programs, and to volunteer.
 - d. A delegate or member of a supporting congregation may be elected by the Board of Directors to the status of Honorary Life Delegate in recognition of his or her outstanding service to *Communities Together*.
 - e. All new delegates will receive an orientation which will be provided by the Board of Directors.

Current:

- **Article VII – THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Section 1 – Composition and Number**

The Board of Directors shall include:

- a. The Executive Committee (the officers of *Communities Together*, as provided in Article VIII, Section 1) and
 - b. At least five, but no more than ten, directors-at-large.

Revised:

- **Article VII – THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Section 1 – Composition and Number**

The Board of Directors shall include:

- a. The Executive Committee (the officers of *Communities Together*, as provided in Article VIII, Section 1) and
 - b. At least five, but no more than ten, directors-at-large.
 - c. The Board of Directors is encouraged to have at least one clergyperson serve as a Director.
-

Current:

- **Article VIII – THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- **Section 2 – Election and Term of Officers**

- d. The offices of President and Vice-President preferably should alternate between a clergyperson and a layperson.

Revised:

- **Article VIII – THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

- **Section 2 – Election and Term of Officers**

- d. The Executive Committee is encouraged to have a clergyperson to serve as an officer in at least one of the available positions.
- e. The offices of the President and Vice-President are not required to have a clergyperson serve as an officer in either of the previously mentioned positions; therefore, it is not necessary for the offices of the President and Vice-President to alternate between a clergyperson and a layperson.

THE BYLAWS OF *COMMUNITIES TOGETHER*

DRAFT (with Board approved changes) to the BYLAWS that were VOTED at Annual Meeting 3-26-09

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this corporation shall be *Communities Together, Inc.*, a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, hereinafter also referred to as "*Communities Together*" or "*CT*."

ARTICLE II - IDENTITY

Founded on December 10, 1947 and formerly known as The Greater Lawrence Council of Churches, *Communities Together* is a voluntary association of diverse Christian churches in the greater Lawrence area. Through this association, our supporting congregations engage in common activities of witness and service, manifesting our ecumenical unity as people of faith touching lives.

ARTICLE III - MISSION

The supporting congregations of *Communities Together* are called to be an instrument of Christ and to know and share His love. We are committed to witness, as one body, to the unity of Christ's love by supporting outreach programs, sharing worship experiences, and responding together to the needs of the people of greater Lawrence and surrounding communities.

ARTICLE IV - SUPPORTING CONGREGATIONS

Section 1 - Supporting Congregations

Christian churches that support the mission and programs of *Communities Together* shall be referred to as "supporting congregations." These congregations are encouraged to support the *work* of *Communities Together* by providing pastoral participation, delegate cooperation, congregational member involvement, and/or financial contributions.

Section 2 - Delegates

- a. Each supporting congregation may elect or appoint, in accordance with its own by-laws or traditions, one or more of its members to act as "delegates" to *Communities Together*.
- b. Pursuant to Section 2a, referenced herein the *Communities Together* by-laws, in the event that a supporting congregation elects or appoints a delegate, this gives the delegates supporting congregation a presence at *CT* meetings, advocates for *CT* in the delegate's congregation, and becomes an extension of the congregation into the community through *CT*'s programs.
- c. A delegate is encouraged, but not required, to attend meetings of *Communities Together*, publicize and garner support for *CT*'s programs, and to volunteer.
- d. A delegate or member of a supporting congregation may be elected by the Board of Directors to the status of Honorary Life Delegate in recognition of his or her outstanding service to *Communities Together*.
- e. All new delegates will receive an orientation which will be provided by the Board of Directors.

Section 3 - Attendance at meetings of *Communities Together*

- a. The following individuals from our supporting congregations are encouraged to attend meetings of *Communities Together*: members of the pastoral staff, duly elected or appointed delegates (see Article IV, Section 2), members who are involved in the work of *Communities Together*, and delegates and members who have been elected by the Board of Directors to the status of Honorary Life Delegate.

- b. Notwithstanding designations such as “supporting congregation,” “delegate,” and “Honorary Life Delegate” in Article IV, nothing in these By-Laws shall be construed as conveying to any congregation, individual staff member, delegate, or representative thereof a right to notice of any meeting, to vote at any meeting, or be considered for purposes of establishing a quorum. Nor shall any congregation, individual staff member, delegate, or representative thereof have any other rights with respect to the organization other than as determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V — COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Non-Christian congregations, community organizations, social service agencies, charitable foundations, and individuals who are not associated with a supporting congregation may recognize our mission and support our programs. These entities and individuals shall be referred to as “community partners.” Community partners are welcome to attend meetings of *Communities Together*. Notwithstanding the designation “community partner,” nothing in these By-Laws shall be construed as conveying to any entity or individual a right to notice of any meeting, to vote at any meeting, or to be considered for purposes of establishing a quorum. Nor shall any entity or individual have any other rights with respect to the *Communities Together* other than as determined by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE VI - MEETINGS OF *COMMUNITIES TOGETHER*

Section 1 - Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of *Communities Together* shall take place as follows: The Annual Meeting shall be held in the first quarter of the calendar year with a Fall Meeting to be held at a time and place designated by the Board of Directors,

Section 2 - Special Meetings

The Board of Directors may call special meetings of *Communities Together* at any time.

Section 3 - Notice

Each Director shall be notified at least seven days in advance of any meeting of *Communities Together*. Although not required, notice may be provided as a courtesy to the administrative offices, pastoral staff, and delegates of supporting congregations.

Section 4 - Quorum

A quorum for meetings of *Communities Together* shall be a simple majority of the Board of Directors as constituted at the time of the meeting. When a quorum is present, voting shall be by majority vote.

ARTICLE VII — THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1 - Composition and Number

The Board of Directors shall include:

- a. The Executive Committee (the officers of *Communities Together*, as provided in Article VIII, Section 1) and
- b. At least five, but not more than ten, directors-at-large.
- c. The Board of Directors is encouraged to have at least one clergyperson serve as a Director.

Section 2 - Election and Term

- a. The Board of Directors shall elect new Directors at the Annual Meeting.
- b. The election and term of office for Directors who are officers is governed by Article

VIII, Section 2.

- c. Directors-at-large shall serve a term of two years, and their terms shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. Directors-at-large shall be elected for shorter terms to fill vacancies or to stagger terms so that, as nearly as possible, one-half of the directors-at-large shall be elected each year.
- d. New directors-at-large may be elected at any meeting of the Board of Directors to fill vacancies occurring between annual meetings and to increase the number of directors-at-large.
- e. A director-at-large may resign by delivering his or her written resignation to any officer of *Communities Together* or by mailing the resignation to *Communities Together*. The resignation shall be effective upon receipt, unless specified to be effective at some other time, and acceptance thereof shall not be necessary to make it effective unless it so states.

Section 3 - Duties and Powers

- a. The Board of Directors shall:
 1. Determine matters of policy, programming, and the management of *Communities Together*;
 2. Report at *CT* meetings regarding the Board's activities and the management of *Communities Together*;
 3. Fix the time, place, and agenda for the regular meetings of *Communities Together* in accordance with Article VI, Section 1;
 4. Approve the annual budget and any revisions thereto;
 5. Exercise its powers with respect to committees of *Communities Together* as provided in Article IX;
 6. Employ the Executive Director and such additional staff or administrative assistants as the need arises and funds are available, and fix the terms of their employment, including responsibilities, compensation, and benefits;
 7. Refrain from committing *CT* to any activities or resolutions contrary to the usual beliefs, practices, and traditions of its supporting congregations;
 8. Maintain affiliations with *CT's* community partners; and
 9. Maintain fellowship and cooperation with local councils of churches, the Massachusetts Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., and the World Council of Churches to the extent practicable and consistent with these By-Laws.
- b. The Board of Directors may:
 1. Call special meetings of *Communities Together* in accordance with Article VI, Section 2;
 2. Create committees and appoint committee chairpersons to make recommendations to the Board about some aspect of the work of *Communities Together* and/or to carry out activities approved by the Board as provided in Article IX, Section 4;
 3. Elect a delegate or member of a supporting congregation to the status of Honorary Life Delegate in recognition of his or her outstanding service to *Communities Together*; and
 4. Empower the Executive Director and/or the President to sign contracts and obligations authorized by the Board.
- c. Directors-at-large may attend meetings of the Executive Committee as ex-officio voting members of the Executive Committee, as provided in Article VIII, Section 1.

Section 4 - Meetings

- a. The Board of Directors shall hold Board meetings coinciding with the regular

- meetings of *Communities Together*.
- b. The President may call special meetings of the Board of Directors at any time.
 - c. Each Director shall be notified at least seven days in advance of any Board meeting.
 - d. A quorum for meetings of the Board of Directors shall be a simple majority of the Board as constituted at the time of the meeting. When a quorum is present, voting shall be by majority vote.

ARTICLE VIII — THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Section 1 - Composition and Number

The Executive Committee shall include the elected officers and the Immediate Past-President of *Communities Together*. The elected officers shall be a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and a Treasurer. The Immediate Past-President shall automatically serve, without election, as an officer and voting member. All members of the Executive Committee shall also be Directors. Directors-at-large may attend meetings of the Executive Committee as ex-officio voting members of the Executive Committee.

Section 2 - Election and Term of Officers

- a. The Board of Directors shall elect officers at the Annual Meeting.
- b. Officers shall serve a term of two years, or until their successors are elected, and their terms of office shall begin at the close of the Annual Meeting at which they are elected. Officers shall be elected for shorter terms to fill vacancies.
- c. No officer shall hold more than one office at a time.
- d. The Executive Committee is encouraged to have a clergyperson to serve as an officer in at least one of the available positions.
- e. The offices of the President and Vice-President are not required to have a clergyperson serve as an officer of the previously mentioned positions; therefore, it is not necessary for the offices of the President and Vice-President to alternate between a clergyperson and a layperson.
- f. The Immediate Past-President shall automatically serve, without election, as an officer with vote until the current President becomes the Immediate Past-President.
- g. New officers may be elected at any meeting of the Board of Directors to fill vacancies occurring between annual meetings.
- h. An officer may resign by delivering his or her written resignation to any other officer of *Communities Together* or by mailing the resignation to *Communities Together*. The resignation shall be effective upon receipt, unless specified to be effective at some other time, and acceptance thereof shall not be necessary to make it effective unless it so states.

Section 3 - Duties and Powers

- a. **The Executive Committee**
The Executive Committee has all the duties and powers of the Board of Directors and is empowered to act for the Board during the intervals between Board meetings. The Executive Committee shall report any such action taken to the Board of Directors at the Board's next meeting.
- b. **Individual Officers**
 1. The President shall preside at all meetings of *Communities Together*, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. The President shall be an ex-officio voting member of all committees established by or created in accordance with Article IX. The President may call special meetings of the Board of Directors at any time. The Board of Directors may empower the Executive Director and/or the President to sign contracts and obligations

authorized by the Board. The Executive Director and/or the President signs all checks.

2. The Vice-President shall assist the President in carrying out the President's duties and shall preside at meetings of *Communities Together*, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee in the absence of the President or in the event of a vacancy in the office of President.
3. The Secretary shall keep the records of all meetings of *Communities Together*, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee.
4. The Treasurer has no check-writing authority. The Executive Director and/or the President signs all checks. Prior to and in preparation for the Annual Meeting, the Treasurer and the Audit Committee, as provided in Article IX, Section 2, shall review the Annual Financial Report prepared by the Executive Director and/or the Administrative Assistant. The Treasurer or a member of the Audit Committee shall comment on the Annual Financial Report at the Annual Meeting. If trained and qualified to do so, the Treasurer may provide accounting and tax advice on an ad hoc basis to the Executive Director and/or the Administrative Assistant. Any other duties related to maintaining the organization's accounts and reporting on the organization's finances may be carried out by the Executive Director and/or the Administrative Assistant in a manner approved by the Board of Directors.
5. The Immediate Past-President shall assist the President and Vice President in carrying out their duties,

Section 4 - Meetings

- a. The Executive Committee shall meet as necessary to carry out its duties.
- b. Each Director shall be notified at least seven days in advance of any Executive Committee meeting.
- c. A quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee shall be either:
 1. A simple majority of the Executive Committee as constituted at the time of the meeting or
 2. Two officers and two directors-at-large attending the meeting as ex officio voting members of the Executive Committee.
- d. If the Immediate Past-President refuses or is unable to serve on the Executive Committee, a quorum for meetings of the Executive Committee shall be either:
 1. Two officers or
 2. One officer and two directors-at-large attending the meeting as ex-officio voting members of the Executive Committee.
- e. When a quorum is present, voting shall be by majority vote.

ARTICLE IX — OTHER COMMITTEES

Section 1 - Role of the President and the Executive Director

The President shall be an ex-officio voting member of all committees established by or created in accordance with Article IX. The Executive Director may attend any meeting of any committee established by or created in accordance with Article IX.

Section 2 - Audit Committee

The Board of Directors shall serve, or appoint a committee of two to serve, as the Audit Committee. Prior to and in preparation for the Annual Meeting, the Audit Committee and the Treasurer shall review the Annual Financial Report prepared by the Executive Director and/or the Administrative Assistant. If a public accounting firm is hired to audit, review, or compile the financial statements of *Communities Together*, the Audit Committee shall be the primary contact with the firm and shall receive the report prepared by the firm. The Audit Committee shall confirm that all

findings in the accounting firm's report are properly addressed.

Section 3 — Delegates Committee

There shall be a Delegates Committee, with a chairperson appointed by the Board of Directors, responsible for organizing delegate cooperation from each supporting congregation. The Delegates Committee reports to the Board of Directors and shall encourage the participation of delegates in activities consistent with the role and expectations of delegates set forth in Article IV, Section 2. The Delegates Committee shall plan and organize such other activities or fundraisers as may be suggested by the Board.

Section 4 - Committees Created by the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors may create committees and appoint committee chairpersons to make recommendations to the Board about some aspect of the work of *Communities Together* and/or to carry out activities approved by the Board.

ARTICLE X - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND STAFF

The Board of Directors shall employ an Executive Director and such additional staff or administrative assistants as the need arises and funds are available, and fix the terms of their employment, including responsibilities, compensation, and benefits. The Executive Director shall attend all meetings of *Communities Together*, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee, except when the Executive Director's contract, benefits, and performance are under consideration. The Executive Director may attend any meeting of any committee established by or created in accordance with Article IX. The Board of Directors may empower the Executive Director and/or the President to sign contracts and obligations authorized by the Board. The Executive Director and/or the President signs all checks. The Executive Director and/or the Administrative Assistant may carry out duties related to maintaining the organization's accounts and reporting on the organization's finances as provided in Article VIII, Section 3(b)(4).

ARTICLE XI - RESTRICTED GIFTS/GRANTS AND OPERATING COSTS

A percentage of restricted gifts and grants to *Communities Together* will be allocated toward the operating costs of the organization. If the gift or grant is for a one-time project of limited duration, a maximum of 15% of the total will be allocated. If the gift or grant is to be invested and the annual income used for a designated purpose, a maximum of 15% of the initial gift or grant will be allocated and a maximum of 15% of the earned income per year will be allocated. These revenues for operating costs will appear in the budget of *Communities Together* in the miscellaneous income line item.

ARTICLE XII - FISCAL YEAR

The fiscal year shall run from January 1 through December 31.

ARTICLE XIII - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order* shall govern *Communities Together* in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these By-Laws.

ARTICLE XIV - AMENDMENTS TO THESE BY-LAWS

The Board of Directors may amend the By-Laws of *Communities Together* at any duly called Board meeting. Each Director shall be notified of the proposed amendment at least seven days in advance of the meeting at which action on the amendment is to be taken.