

Project NOW had its beginnings as a grass roots organization in the mid 60s when **Father Tom Murphy** and the former **Father Jack Real** as new pastors of Sacred Heart Church and St. Joseph's Church decided people in the neighborhoods needed more help than they were getting.

Members of their churches and neighborhood residents got together and planned on ways to bring attention of the authorities to the problems families and individuals were having. What was first the Catholic Interracial Council became the Rock Island County Interracial Council and the membership base increased. This resulted in more pressure on the decision makers to bring about changes. There were a few successes, but much remained to be done.

After the assassination of, **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**, the organization was recognized as one that deserved financial support. In May 1968, Project NOW, Neighborhood Outreach Work Inc., was established and officially recognized by the local governments. The budget of \$12,500 was supported by members, fundraisers and a generous donation from The Deere Foundation.

The next year Project NOW - as it soon was called – received federal funds and federal recognition as a Community Action Agency. Today Project NOW helps serve tens of thousands of individuals and families in **Rock Island, Henry and Mercer Counties in Illinois**. From an original staff of three, today there are 130 employees on the payroll with an annual budget of approximately \$12 million.

Many people you know have been connected with Project NOW over the years. Agency Directors include **Si Roberts**, the first director in 1968, followed by: **Jim Collins** (1968-1970) who was the first fulltime director, **Larry Pollard** (1970-1974), **Vince Thomas** (1974-2001), **Lucinda Mohr** (2001-2004), **Maureen "Mo" Hart** (2004 – 2020), & the current director is **Dwight Ford**.

Others you may know include **Rosie Pemberton, Ida Robinson, Rick Early, Roberta Jordan, Odessa Terry, Patsy Bewley, Peter Lardner, Nancy Pulfrey, Father Jack Real, Stella Schneekloth, Charlean "CT" Talbert, Lucy Luna, Richard Kincaid, Gwen Branch, Merritt Thomas, Toni Reyes, Rachel Beers, Bill Logan, Patricia Pullen, Donna Hymes, Betty Miller, Sandra Fowler, Betty Fort Willis, Lisa Lee, Favian Ortiz, Ohly Ohlson, Monique Lampe, Sandi Phillips, Tom Blade, Joyce King, Guadalupe Reyes, Alice Abbott, Pearl Hall, Nellie McBride, James Stampley, Jessie Lisle, Darlene Swim, Margaret Ingram, Art Sierra, Denise Haga, Frances Olvera, Ferne Perkins, Coleman Harris, Rusty Cather, Bob Hepner, Lo Milani, Marianne Moore, Cate Anthony...**and this list goes on. We are proud to be part of the community and have the support of the communities we serve.

We know there is much yet to be done to **"eradicate the paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty."** We are committed to this and hold onto the words of **Martin Luther King Jr.**, **"Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle."** Together we will persevere.

Historical Timeline

- 1968 **Project NOW – Neighborhood Outreach Work, Inc.** became incorporated; 1st Outreach office located at 617 9th Street, Rock Island. **Si Roberts**, begins serving as Interim Executive Director. **Jim Collins**, begins serving as Executive Director.
- 1969 First Annual Board Meeting.
- 1970 **East Moline Office** opens. **Larry Pollard**, begins serving as Executive Director.
- 1971 Project NOW designated a **Community Action Agency for Rock Island County**.
- 1974 Head Start/Home Start program begins; Weatherization program begins.
- 1975 First Senior Meal Site opens. **Vince Thomas**, begins serving as Executive Director.
- 1976 LIHEAP (utility assistance) program begins.
- 1977 **Aledo and Kewanee Outreach Offices open**; 400,000 Betty Crocker Coupons collected to purchase 1st Senior Transportation Van.
- 1978 Project NOW designated a **Community Action Agency for Mercer & Henry Counties**; **Aledo Head Start** programs begins.
- 1979 **Summer Lunch Program** begins @ Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Silvis which is purchased this year.
- 1980 Guadalupe Meal Site opens.
- 1981 **Mercer County Home Start Program** begins.
- 1982 **Rock Island County Senior Center opens** at 1919 5th Avenue Rock Island in the old Immanuel Lutheran School building and is designated as the **Community Focal Point for Seniors**. **Good Things NOW Used Clothing Store** opens in Rock Island.
- 1983 CSBG **Small Business Loan Pool** established.
- 1984 Project NOW distributes government food surplus. **CSBG Small Business Loan Program** makes first loans.
- 1985 **Homeless assistance begins**; 1st single family home donated to agency on 5th Ave Moline
- 1986 New Boston Meal Site Opens; **CSBG Scholarship Program** begins.
- 1987 **Self-Employment Training Program** begins and works well with the already established Small Business Loan Program. **Weatherization** now includes furnace replacement/repair.
- 1988 Community Gardens.
- 1989 Homeless Services expands to include **Transitional Housing**.
- 1990 Three buildings are rehabbed for **Affordable/Transitional Housing**, including duplex on 17th Street Rock Island, 12th Avenue Rock Island single family home and the Crouch Apartments 8-plex in Rock Island.
- 1992 **Kreative Kids Day Care** opens in the old Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Silvis; Amigo Park, Moline is established and dedicated. Moline Outreach building is acquired and rehabbed with 2 apartments upstairs and Outreach offices and a Good Things NOW store downstairs. Single family home acquired and rehabbed on 5th Street, Rock Island.
- 1993 Project NOW celebrates **25th YEAR ANNIVERSARY**; Project NOW forms a **Community Housing Development Corp** and becomes a **CHDO** (Community Housing Development Organization); Several properties are acquired and rehabbed including house next door to Moline Outreach building with 4 sleeping rooms and an apartment; Single family house on 13th Avenue and 4-plex on 20th St, Rock Island; Commercial property on 2nd Avenue, downtown Rock Island; flood relief is a focus.

Historical Timeline continued...

- 1994 **Homebuyer and Home Rehabilitation Programs** begin; **Affordable Housing** continues to expand with the **acquisition & renovation** of 2 separate 4-plexes and 1 single family home in Rock Island as well as a duplex in Kewanee.
- 1995 **5 properties acquired** and rehabilitated by Project NOW including Administration building @ 418 19th Street, Rock Island, 2 single family homes, **Sojourner House** for Homeless women and the **Florecente Center** on 4th Avenue in Moline; **Good Things NOW Used Clothing Store opens in Aledo.**
- 1996 **Rivercrest Apartments** (8 units) are built in **Keithsburg**; Duplex acquired on 24th Street in Rock Island; Good Things NOW Rock Island building acquired.
- 1996 **Marigold Apartments** (8 senior housing units) are built in **Viola**; **15 County Continuum of Care** is organized for Homeless Service delivery.
- 1997 **Old Chicago** Apartments (11 units) are rehabbed in Rock Island.
- 1998 **New Boston** Apartments (8 units) are built.
- 2000 **Youth Transitional Housing** Program begins (Crouch Apartments).
- 2001 Rock Island County Senior Center relocates after 19 years to 2221 11th Street, Rock Island; **Head Start Florecente Building acquired** at 350 3rd Street, Moline for 2 classrooms. **Vince Thomas** retires, 29 years of service. **Lucinda Mohr** begins serving as Executive Director.
- 2003 **Knox Apartments** (11 units) in Kewanee are renovated.
- 2004 **Maureen “Mo” Hart**, begins serving as Executive Director.
- 2005 **Silvis Head Start relocates** after 15 years to the Florence Aldridge Building in East Moline; Kewanee Head Start relocates to St Paul’s Evangelical; Lutheran School Building; **Good Things NOW**, Rock Island, receives a facelift.
- 2006 **Senior Home-Delivered and Congregate Meal Programs** expand to **Mercer County**; American Dream Down-payment Initiative (ADDI) **Homebuyer Program** begins.
- 2007 **Weatherization’s Energy Conservation & Home Repair (ECHR) Program** begins.
- 2008 Project NOW celebrates our **40 YEAR ANNIVERSARY with a “Ruby Celebration of People”** at Blackhawk State Park in Rock Island; Rental Housing Support Program begins; flood relief is a focus.
- 2009 **RIM RURAL PUBLIC Transit** in Rock Island & Mercer Counties is formed with Project NOW as the operator; **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)** quadruples Weatherization Program funding and increases CSBG funding, allowing us to reach more Outreach customers.
- 2010 **ARRA funding** is in full swing, greatly increasing the capacity of Weatherization and Community Services programs (HPRP and CSBG). Project NOW’s audited revenues increase 34% from 6/30/08 (\$11.2 million) to 6/30/10 (\$15.0 million) due primarily to ARRA funding. **RIM Rural Public Transit** incorporates 2 new services, **Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC)** and **New Freedom** IDOT Transportation Programs.
- 2011 **Rebranding** of Project NOW! **Head Start** is declared a **“Center of Excellence”** by the Federal Office of Head Start.
- 2012 **Percentage of Income Payment Plan “PIPP”** is implemented as part of **LIHEAP** in the rural areas. 152 units of Housing at **Maple Ridge Apartments** in Rock Island receive **Weatherization** with ARRA funding. Rebranding efforts continue.

Historical Timeline continued...

- 2013 **RIM Rural Public Transit** shows strong growth. **Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG)** helps keep hundreds of families housed with Rental Assistance. **Sequestration** funding cuts affect programs especially Head Start. Outreach staff trained in **Affordable Care Act** enrollments.
- 2014 **Attorney General funds** allow for essential improvements to Project NOW's **Affordable Housing Rental** units. Sequestration cuts of previous year are restored. Strong year for **Illinois Housing Development (IHDA) Homebuyer and Home Rehab Programs**.
- 2015 **Old Chicago Apartments** receives extensive exterior renovation using Attorney General and **MidAmerican Energy** funds. **State of Illinois NO budget** negatively affects programs, with decreased and/or delayed funding. Board Member, **Bob Hepner**, of Henry County retires after 27 years of volunteer service to Project NOW.
- 2016 State of Illinois' lack of budget continues, halting Housing Programs and cancelling Senior Transportation for 2 months. **Stella Schneekloth**, Housing Director, celebrates 35 years of service to Project NOW. **CSBG Small Business Loan Program** is discontinued. New OMB Super-Circular impacts program accounting.
- 2017 **Amigo Park** in Moline's Floreciente Neighborhood is donated to Habitat for Humanity to build a single-family home. **Patsy Bewley**, Mercer County Outreach Worker, celebrates 35 years of service to Project NOW. Housing Rehab Programs cut in 2016 are restored. IDOT updates Transportation fleet with 7 new vehicles.
- 2018 Project NOW celebrates our **50 YEAR GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY**. **Rick Early**, Grant Accountant and **Nancy Pulfrey**, Head Start Manager, celebrate 35 years of service to Project NOW. **Ameren Illinois** makes available additional **Weatherization** funds.
- 2019 Moline Outreach offices partners with **Global Communities, City of Moline & Bob Ontiveros**; 1st Housing **Stability award** from ICAA Family of Distinction.
- 2020 **COVID-Cares Relief**-Due to the generosity of many our **partners**, we were able to help more people than ever before; we helped hundreds get through this crisis. Many of these people never dreamed they would have to ask for help.
- 2021 **Stella Schneekloth** retires after 40 years with Project NOW!