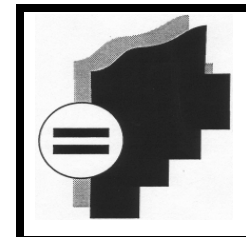


Together we can make a difference!



The Lorain County Urban League News

The Lorain County Urban League, Inc.

2004 Vol. I
March 2004

Message from Our President/CEO Mr. Fred Wright



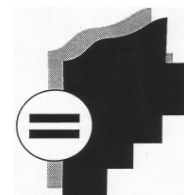
Greetings to all Lorain County Urban League (LCUL) Board of Directors, Staff, Members and the Lorain County Community at large. As I move into finishing up my second year as President/CEO of the LCUL, I would like to state how very elated I am in the progress that we have made over the last two years. In the upcoming year, the LCUL is looking to expand its capacity to serve the broader Lorain County Community. One of the first steps that we are taking to accomplish this, is moving to the first floor of the Robinson Bldg. Located at 401 Broad Street, on the square in downtown Elyria. This will give us a street presence as well as providing a key mark location for all who come to use the services of the LCUL.

I am looking forward to constructing our five - year strategic plan, that will lead us through the years 2004 - 2009. I thank everyone for all of the support that you have provided the LCUL in the past 26 years. We look forward to working collaboratively with organizations, businesses, individuals and others in Lorain County to help give those who need a hand-up and not a hand-out to achieve social and economic self-sufficiency and reliance. I also want to inform everyone that I have recently become the Vice-President for the Ohio Council of Urban Leagues and I believe that this will become an organization that will be a strong advocate in the State of Ohio.

In closing, I thank everyone for their support, and I look forward to working with you in the future.

"I would like to state how very elated I am in the progress that we have made over the last two years. "

The Lorain County Urban League, Inc.
401 Broad Street
Elyria, OH Phone: 440-323-3364
Fax: 440-323-5299
E-mail: kgromer@lcul.org



Inside this issue:

Message from our CEO/President	1
Meet our Board President	1
Board of Directors	1
Race Relations/Fund Raiser	3
Black College Tour	3
LCUL Coming Events	3
Fair Housing In Lorain County	4
Health Services	5
Employment Review	5
WIA Program	5
Meet Our Staff	6-7

LORAIN COUNTY URBAN LAEUGE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Citizen	\$ 10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Youth	\$ 10.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Personal	\$ 25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Organizational	\$125.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Professional	<u>\$ 35.00</u>
Total	\$

<input type="checkbox"/> Method of Payment	Name _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Check	Address _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill me	City _____ St _____ Zip _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Visa	Phone _____ Email _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Master Card	
<input type="checkbox"/> American Express	

Credit Card # _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____



Matthew Mullarkey, Chairman of the Board of Directors

We have welcomed Matthew Mullarkey as our new Board Chair in January of 2004. He is Vice President of HME Operations of Invacare Corporation. Matt is looking forward to a very productive year in regards to the Lorain County Urban League in its role as a leading advocacy and service provider for African Americans, people of color, minorities, and other disadvantaged individuals in Lorain County. Matthew will be working closely with the LCUL Strategic Planning Committee, to create a 5-year Strategic Plan for the LCUL. We look forward to the leadership and excitement that Matthew is bringing the LCUL.

Lorain County Urban League, Inc.

Executive Committee

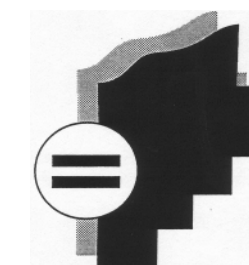
Board Chair: Matthew Mullarkey Vice Chair: Kevin R. Dudley

Treasurer: JoAnn Madison Secretary: Freddie Springfield

Board Members

**Roy Church
Gwendolyn Gilmore
Sherman Jones
Gregory Kruszka
Brian Lockwood**

**Troy L. Page
Beverly Reep
Charles Ross
Clarence Wills
Melvin J. Woodard**





The Lorain County Urban League moves to our new location March 2004

Effective March 1, 2004 the Lorain County Urban League, Inc. will be moving to the downstairs area of the Robinson Bldg. We are thrilled with the fact that we will now have street presence, right on the square in downtown Elyria.

We are hoping this move not only will help us to be able to better serve our clients, but will be providing us with much more space to expand our services.

Our address will remain the same, 401 Broad Street, but the address extension will be changed to Suite 401B. Our phone numbers and fax numbers will also remain the same.

The LCUL wins Grant from the Ohio Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Foundation

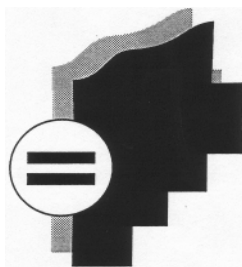
With the hiring of a new Tobacco Program Specialist, Judith Arzuaga in March of 2004, we will be working for a Smoke Free Lorain County starting with the City of Elyria.

We know that it is a great opportunity to work with the collaboration with other organizations who directly serve these high risk populations of African-Americans and Hispanic/Latino communities in the Lorain County area. Organizations such as the Lorain County Urban League, The Boys & Girls Clubs of Lorain County, El Centro, Compass House, both the Lorain and Elyria City Health Departments and others will make up the Lorain County Tobacco Prevention Partnership Coalition that will spearhead this effort.

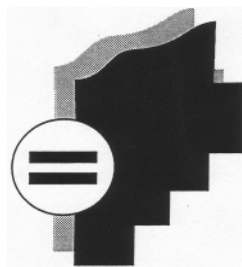
The tobacco use among the African-American and Latino populations is a great problem in our area. Lorain County is the eighth largest county in the State of Ohio, and the fact that we did not have any general or culturally specific tobacco prevention/cessation program or project of any significance until recently was a major concern.

Previous efforts to reach this population in health programming have not worked in the past. We look forwarding to being able to work in non-traditional ways to effect the behavioral changes necessary to improve the health of these populations that will be available to due this program.

LCUL Mission Statement



“The Lorain County Urban League seeks to assist African Americans, other persons of color, and the economically disadvantaged to achieve social and economic equality through a variety of programs and services advocacy, and bridge building among all races.”



Daisie Reish-Geiger is our Accountant. Before becoming the outside accountant for the Lorain County Urban League in 1997, I was the Financial Director of the Cleveland National Multiple Sclerosis Society and a staff accountant at American Motorists Association. I am a graduate of the Lorain County Community College and Cleveland State University. In November of 1992 I passed the test to be a certified public accountant. After growing up in a small town in central Pennsylvania, I went to school in Hagerstown, Maryland and lived in Washington, DC, Baltimore, Maryland, Buckhannon, W Va, Oklahoma City, OK, and have resided in Ohio for the past 34 years.



Judith Arzuaga our Tobacco Project Outreach Specialist was born in Lorain, OH. She is a graduate of Admiral King High School. She moved to Chicago, IL where she attended Waubensee Community College. While there she received training as an American Sign Language Interpreter. She returned to Ohio in 1993 where she joined the Cleveland Mission Team of Central America in 2001. Her Mission site was in El Salvador where she served for three years, returning to Ohio in December of 2003. She has three dogs, two females and one male who are her family.



T. Douglas Grayson, our Employment Specialist spends half of his day at the Employment Network in Lorain, and the other half at the LCUL offices. In this manner, he is able to meet the needs of clients in both areas of the County.

Doug is no stranger to Lorain County. With the exception of years spent in college, he has lived in this area all his life. He has been an educator for the majority of his professional career. He taught in the Lorain School System, the Elyria City Schools, Oberlin Schools, and a year on the campus of Bowling Green State University. Doug received his Bachelor's degree in education from Kent State and a Master's Degree from Bowling Green University.

Presently, Doug is the President of the Lorain County Alliance of Black School Educators (LCABSE), whose purpose is to help make education more meaningful for all students with a special focus on students of African descent.

Doug is married to Mary Ann with whom they have two daughters: Tierney Zahra and Asha Marie. He is the son of the late Thurman Edward Grayson and Eugenia Grayson-Howard of Ft. Wayne, Indiana.



Mindy Cooper is our Operations/Housing Program Director. She has been with the LCUL for about 6 months and has already made a place for her self in the LCUL family. Mindy serves on the local Fair Housing Boards, the Homeless Task Force, and is actively involved in the community.

Mindy grew up in La Grange, Ohio graduating from Keystone High School. Later Mindy graduated from Magna Cum Laude from Cleveland State University with a major in Psychology and a minor in HR Management. Together with her significant other, Phillip she is the proud mother of Sydney, age 3, who keeps her hopping.



Saunjula Staton, Our Special Events Coordinator, was born in Detroit, Michigan but raised in Cleveland, Ohio. She graduated from Kent Sate University in 1994 with a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice. From 1994-1998 she worked at Lorain County Domestic Relations Court as a Probation Officer and Family Case Manager. From 1998—2003, she worked as the Program Director of Save Our Children, Inc. of Elyria. In January, she chose to work at the Lorain County Urban League, Inc. as the Special Events Coordinator to reach a broader spectrum of residents throughout Lorain County. She is married to T. J. Staton, and has two children, Tasaun & Amaya.



Kathy Groner our Executive Assistant came "home" to Ohio from California in 1978 to live in her Father's hometown, Elyria. While in California, she was a Theatre Arts and Music Major in college, leaving to become a secretary in the early 70's. She has owned her own business, "Kathy's Korner" - a gift shop /floral decoration store in Elyria. She has also owned a home-office business where she has worked as an executive assistant working in both manufacturing companies, and non-profit agencies in Lorain County. She has been with the LCUL for 4 years. She is happily married to Robert and has a son Tom who is a Junior at Kent State studying Computer Programming. She is very active in her Church and Community and enjoys the friendship of many wonderful people.

Meet Our Staff



Fred Wright, President/CEO of the Lorain County Urban League, Inc. has been with the LCUL for 22 months. During that time he has made great strides in securing financial stability for the agency and has helped the LCUL become a more viable organization

within the county.

Fred came to Lorain County from Nebraska where he served as Director of Programs and Special Projects for the Urban League of Nebraska, Inc., While there, Mr. Wright actively participated in various community service programs in Omaha for the 13 years, almost 7 of which were with the Urban League of Nebraska, Inc. He has received numerous awards for program successes and innovations locally, statewide and nationally.

Fred serves on numerous Boards and Advisory committees within Lorain County. Presently Fred serves on the Board of Directors for the Access Program and for the Oberlin Early Childhood Center. In addition, he serves on the Community Health Partners Diversity Council, is a Senior Advisor for the Elyria Little League South, is on the Lorain City Schools Bond Oversight Committee, is Vice President of the Ohio Council of Urban Leagues, and is a co-convenor for the African-American Leadership Roundtable and The Lorain County African-American Hispanic/Latino Coalitions here in Lorain County.

Fred is happily married to Judy Wright, who is currently Associate Director of Compass House, a substance treatment organization in Lorain. He has three daughters, Brandi – who lives in Dayton and is a Computer Information Specialist; Chanel who lives in Baltimore and is a Professional Basketball Player in Israel, and Annie who lives in Omaha and works for the State of Nebraska. He also is the Grandfather of Torrie.



Peter Ogbuji is currently the Director of Programs and Development for the Lorain County Urban League. In this capacity, he is directly responsible for all program and fund development activities, including grant proposal writing.



Previous to this position, Peter was the Assistant Director for the Center for Service and Learning at Oberlin College. This nationally acclaimed community service initiative links more than 1,000 Oberlin College student volunteers with non-profit and public sector agencies throughout Lorain County. Mr. Ogbuji was directly responsible coordinating community service efforts and identifying and sustaining partnership between the community-based organizations and the College. In addition, he taught two courses in Community Organizing and Grant Proposal writing through the College's "Experimental College."

Peter was also a Lead Organizer for United WE-CAN, a Faith-based Community Organizing group based in Cleveland, Ohio; United WE-CAN is affiliated with the Gamaliel Foundation, a national network of community organizing projects. Mr. Ogbuji was a member of the Gamaliel Foundation National Training Staff.

Mr. Ogbuji's experiences as a young man in Nigeria during that country's bloody civil war have led him to make a life-long commitment to become an avid advocate for justice. As a student at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) he led a successful divestment campaign. BGSU divested \$78m of its holdings in companies doing business in Apartheid South Africa as a result of this campaign. A position paper he wrote for an Ethnic Studies class and subsequently presented to the Ohio Board of Regents in 1981 became a model for a Multi-Cultural curriculum at Bowling Green State University. His essays, short stories and poetry have been featured in college publications.

Peter believes that individual pursuit of excellence loses its essence if it is not expressed in service to community. He is a Life-Member of the NAACP and the National Urban League and serves on the board of the African American Community Fund. He lives in the City of Lorain, Ohio with his wife Damita Jo Ogbuji and their three children.

Race Relations/Fundraiser Seeks to Inspire

First Annual Lorain County Urban League Sunday

The first annual Urban League Sunday Race Relations/Fundraiser will be held on March 14, 2004, at Mt. Zion Baptist Church of Oberlin. This year's theme will be "Bridging the Gap Between Us". The fund-raiser will strengthen funding for the program areas of Education, Fair-Housing, Employment, and Health. The speakers of the event will be Fred Wright, LCUL President/CEO, Author Lou Acosta, Magistrate Jessica Baggett, Pastor Brian Wade, and Reverend Kevin R. Dudley. Each speaker has contributed much time and effort to building better lines of communication between the residents of Lorain County.

Hopefully, this event will be one of many to mark the progress of Race Relations within the area of Lorain County. Participants are asked to collect donations at their area church and then present their donations to the Urban League President during the fundraiser. Each participant will be acknowledged for their contributions at the time of the event. All residents are encouraged to participate in this uplifting event.

Students to visit 11 Historically Black Colleges

The all new tour of historical black colleges will take place April 12th thru 16th. during spring break. Schools visited will be Central State, Wilberforce, Fisk University, Johnson C. Smith University, North Carolina A&T, North Carolina Central University, Tennessee State University, Winston-Salem State University, Kentucky State University, Knoxville College, and Shaw University for a total of eleven schools. The students for the tour have to be participants of the Workforce Investment Youth Council Project

There will be twenty students along with four chaperones attending the tour. Each participant has to write an essay entitled, "Why is attending a historical black college important to me?" This tour will be a great educational as well as social experience. Parents may contact Peter Ogbuji to find out more information about the Workforce Investment Act Trainings provided to students by the Urban League. For further information regarding the tour, you may contact Saunjula Staton at 323-3364, #28.

Upcoming Events for 2004

Urban League Sunday	March 14, 2004
Annual Black College Tour	April 2004
Annual Youth Summit	April 2004
April Fair Housing Conference	April 2004
Minority Health Month Kick Off	April 2004
Annual Career Fair	May 2004
Equal Opportunity Day Luncheon	June 4, 2004
Annual Dinner/Gala	June 5, 2004
Annual Membership Campaign Kickoff	June 2004
Annual Black Family Summit	July 2004
Annual Membership Campaign Closeout	August 2004
Annual Urban League Meeting	December 2004

Spotlight on Lorain County Fair Housing



The Lorain County Urban League was established in 1978 to serve all the residents of Lorain County. One of our service program areas for the past several years has been Fair Housing. Fair Housing is a difficult message to deliver because most people in the community have never heard of the Federal Fair Housing Act. Most people do not know anything about the protected classes and therefore do not recognize that their rights have actually been violated. These classes are defined by law as:

- Race
- Color
- Religion
- Sex
- National Origin
- Familial Status
- Disability

Ohio's Fair Housing Law has an additional Protected Class, which is ancestry. In addition, Oberlin was the second city in the Nation next to New York City to include sexual orientation as a protected class.

Fair Housing covers a broad spectrum of situations. Discrimination can occur with the advertisement of a unit for rent or sale (No Children, Adults only, etc...) Realtors may resort to Blockbusting (Getting people to sell by telling them that minorities are moving into the neighborhood) or Steering (Showing prospective buyer's only neighborhoods with their racial make-up). Insurance Companies may Red Line (Refuse to insure certain neighborhoods or offer sub-standard policies such as insuring for property value rather than replacement value). Mortgage Lenders may refuse to offer a loan to certain protected classes. If you feel that you have been discriminated against, in any area of housing which includes those discussed above, please contact your Fair Housing Coordinator,

Malynda Cooper at 1-800-662-FAIR.

Over the years we have had Fair Housing contracts with Elyria, Lorain, North Ridgeville, and Lorain County as a whole in an effort to address these issues. Part of our responsibility in the contracts is to provide training sessions to City Councils on Fair Housing Laws and Issues. In addition we have contracts with Oberlin and North Ridgeville to provide First Time Home Buyer Counseling.

Another aspect of the Fair Housing Program of the LCUL is our collaboration with other Social Service and Non-Profit Agencies in providing Rental Assistance to homeowners and renters. When the income is available we can provide first months' rent or one month delinquent rent if the family meets eligibility requirements.

This past year we have also become involved in the Homeless Task Force in Lorain County. The goal is to assist the homeless in finding suitable housing, and to get them out of the shelters and off the street. We are one of the designated agencies who offer preferences through this program to enable clients to get into LMHA housing.

Part of the responsibility we have to the county agencies is to provide information about Fair Housing Issues to the community. This past year, informational materials were distributed to County Agencies and material was handed out at events such as the Martin Luther King Celebration in January at Elyria High School and the Senior Fest at Midway Mall in May, the Taste of the South Celebration in Elyria in June, the Port Fest in Lorain in July and at the Agency Fair at the Oberlin FAA in November.

For further information, please contact Malynda Cooper at 440-323-3364 x22.

Health Services

Our goal in providing Health Services to the Community entails the following guidelines:

- Provide counseling as well as health and community services.
- Address health issues that affect people of color as well as the community at large.
- Make direct referrals to health systems, agencies and programs.
- Advocate for increased utilization of health facilities.
- Encourage and enhance awareness of health maintenance for all concerned.
- Develop and provide educational and preventative programs to aid and assist in the training and empowerment of community members about HIV infection.

Serve as a facilitator to the community in becoming better informed regarding health services and to ensure equality of opportunity in the delivery of health services.

Education & You Development

One of the core goals of the National Urban League is "Ensuring that our children are well-educated and equipped for economic self-reliance in the 21st century."

At the Lorain County Urban League, we take that commitment very seriously. We have over the years devised different strategies for meeting that goal. The In-school Mentoring Program, which operated in 12 buildings in Lorain, Oberlin and Elyria, is one good example of how we work with the schools to help African American and other students of color.

The mentoring program uses the 7 Principles of Kwanzaa to help student appreciate the value of community – working together to accomplish goals that benefit the community and the individual. The students meet as a group, with the guidance of an adult mentor and work out solutions to both personal and social issue.

Students are usually referred to the program by a Guidance Counselor or a teacher, but any student can ask to join the group. We are looking for leaders.

The other program that we have put in place is the Youth Professional Development Program. This program is designed to prepare young adults for the challenges of the workplace. We offer help on how to put together a resume, cover letter and complete a job application. Core topics include: "Landing the Job", "Making the Most of Job Benefits", and "Making Your Paychecks Count." We deal with life skills- getting along with other, teamwork, and acceptable and unacceptable workplace behaviors. Enrollment in the program is open to young men and women ages 14-21. The program is funded with a grant provided by the Workforce Investment Board (WIA). **Call 440-323-3364 if you want to sign up or ask questions about this or other programs.**

Employment Services

Through our Employment Program we are able to offer the following services to the community:

Job Placement Services

- Assists employers in identifying qualified people of color, as well as other Lorain County residents to fill job vacancies.
- Assists clients in finding employment based on educational attainment and previous employment experience.
- Introduce training programs to employers and/or employees which are mutually beneficial.

Career & Training Counseling

- Provide employment counseling, orientation and placement for those seeking employment.

Job Readiness

- Case Management
- Resume Writing
- Interview Techniques
- Cover Letters
- Counseling and placement services.