



# New Song Urban Ministries

## Restoring Hope and Opportunity

**I**n the mid-1980s, the West Baltimore neighborhood of Sandtown struggled with challenges common to many inner-city neighborhoods: vacant houses, staggering unemployment and rampant drug addiction. Working side-by-side with residents, the faith-based New Song Urban Ministries has rebuilt hope and restored opportunity. Today, New Song is a resident-led community development program that has transformed the neighborhood through housing, education, health care and job development.

Many families come to New Song through the Community Learning Center, where children thrive in preschool programs and a K-8 public school under Baltimore's New Schools Initiative. Small classes and individualized attention combine with an extended-day schedule that helps children learn and stay off the streets year round. Sandtown's youth also blossom in New Song's extraordinary arts programs. Young singers in the Sandtown Children of Praise Choir gain confidence and exposure to new worlds during national tours.

New Song, through EDEN Jobs, helps families build their assets through financial literacy classes and individual development accounts that complement job placement and training. Parents facing the most severe barriers to employment, such as a prison record or history of substance abuse, find help reentering the workforce through job placements in the neighborhood. Community members serve as role models and work with parents to support their success in the workplace.

All this activity hums through a 15-block area that New Song has rebuilt house by house and block by block. With 10,000 volunteers a year and the can-do spirit of families contributing sweat equity, Sandtown Habitat for Humanity has helped 200 families move into their first homes. The recent construction of a new community center rounds out a strong neighborhood core.

### Transformation, One Family at a Time

**N**ew Song makes this community a better place to live," says Ruth Dix, a 42-year-old single mother and clothing store manager. "Growing up in Sandtown, I have seen so many people going to the job training program and making significant changes in their lives." Five years ago, Dix experienced the transformative power of New Song first-hand. Her daughter Jasmine was struggling in school and having trouble learning to read. When a friend told Dix about New Song Academy, Dix enrolled

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**"The staff at New Song are your neighbors so it gives you a sense of stability. You aren't taking your problems to a bunch of strangers. It's neighbors helping neighbors."**

**Ruth Dix, New Song participant**

## Transformation, One Family at a Time

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Jasmine. Once she started working with a reading specialist, Jasmine's skills improved dramatically. "Now Jasmine is giving it her best effort and really thriving," says Dix.

When Dix was unable to find affordable housing, she turned to New Song's Habitat for Humanity program for help. Working with other neighborhood families and Habitat volunteers, Dix built her own house and received a no-interest mortgage. "I feel so proud that I did this for Jasmine," Dix says. "Now she can see that with hard work and patience, anything can be accomplished."

**"We work with families to create tangible opportunities that will assure a brighter future."**

**Allan M. Tibbels  
Executive Director**

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## A Catalyst for Change

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**I**n 1986, Allan and Susan Tibbels and Rev. Mark Gornik moved to the inner-city neighborhood of Sandtown. They left behind a comfortable suburban existence to live out the principles of "Christian community development." "We spent two years getting to know the neighborhood and letting our neighbors get to know us," recalls Tibbels, New Song executive director. They began New Song Community Church, the foundation for Sandtown's rejuvenation, in Gornik's living room.

As they gained their neighbors' trust, New Song's founders learned that the most pressing need was decent housing. So they started a Habitat for Humanity program and tapped the community's strength to build 200 houses concentrated in a 15-square block area. New Song worked in close partnership with the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, a public-private partnership of The Enterprise Foundation, the City of Baltimore and residents to rebuild the Sandtown-Winchester community. Today New Song is laying plans to build another 150 homes and move beyond its 15-block core.

**Children do well when their families do well, and families do better when they live in supportive communities.**

## New Song Urban Ministries

### CONTACT

Allan M. Tibbels  
Executive Director

### ADDRESS

1300 North Fulton Avenue  
Baltimore, MD 21217

### TELEPHONE

410-669-3309

### FAX

410-523-3015

### E-MAIL

amt@nsum.org

### WEB ADDRESS

www.nsum.org

### NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES

75

### PARTICIPATING FAMILIES

1,000

### MAJOR FUNDERS

- The Abell Foundation
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation
- Baltimore Community Foundation
- Baltimore Ravens
- Black & Decker
- City of Baltimore
- Deutsche Bank Alex. Brown
- The Enterprise Foundation
- Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta
- France-Merrick Foundations
- Goldseker Foundation
- Habitat for Humanity International
- Kids R VIPs
- Lockhart Vaughan Foundation
- Maryland State Arts Council
- Municipal Employees Credit Union
- Presbyterian Church in America (Chesapeake Presbytery)
- Procter & Gamble
- Provident Bank
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- St. Paul Companies
- Stonington Partners
- Surdna Foundation
- The Rouse Company
- T. Rowe Price
- The Harry & Jeanette Weinberg Fdn.
- State of Maryland
- Numerous individuals and congregations