

PRAYER PROFILE: CAMERON COMMUNITY MINISTRIES, Rochester N.Y.

Our prayer profiles have always centered on our congregations, but this profile marks the start of a new dimension in our prayers—the programs and agencies we support through our Presbytery mission budget—and this commitment to mission saves lives!

At Cameron it's been all about resurrection from the very start. In the early 1990's the Lyell Avenue Baptist Church on the west side of Rochester had to close and the Baptist Association entered into **prayerful** conversation with the Presbytery about how this building could be used for a new form of ministry, not centered on Sunday worship, but on weekday community mission. And so Cameron Community Ministries was born with **many, many prayers** for success in a challenging neighborhood. The **prayers** are still needed!

More than 25 years later the original vision has grown to become a national model of community service and transformation. There are a variety of successful programs, too many to cover in just one page, but what Cameron is most known for is daily free lunches and work with neighborhood children. Many of our Presbyterian congregations have taken an active role in Cameron, donating needed goods, serving as volunteers, board members, and staff. Please **pray** for more volunteers to find Cameron!

Jennifer Muniga, Cameron's executive director, describes the successes and challenges currently being experienced as Christmas approaches. The cancellation of in-school learning in Rochester has given Cameron a fresh purpose, opening its building five days each week to school-aged children for a safe, positive, caring learning environment with highly capable teaching volunteers. Children are also fed during their eight-hour day. It is Jennifer's **prayer** that this care for children will continue to grow in 2021.

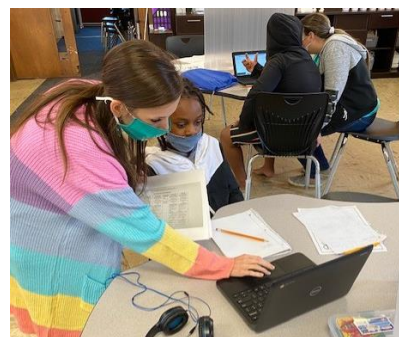
A new five-year plan is developing. Caring for basic needs will be matched by preventive advocacy work to change the conditions that lead to poverty and powerlessness in the surrounding community. A project for children in 2021 features a "Freedom School" model that builds on themes of equity and inclusion, a project made possible by support from the Children's Defense Fund. This new effort is the answer to many **prayers**.

None of this is easy. So as much as the vision soars in spite of COVID crisis, the challenges become more stubborn. Keeping the doors open for children requires the introduction of health protocols, improved building security and more staff/volunteers. Moving from a four-hour daily children's program to eight hours is very expensive. Cameron leadership is very skilled at solving serious problems and facing major challenges, but they sure do welcome our **prayers** (and they wouldn't turn down additional support, either!).

How about the daily lunch program that serves meals to 100-200 people seven days of the week? Well, it's all take-out at the door for the time being, and Manuel in the kitchen helps guide it all. **Pray** for him and all of the volunteers who every day live into the Bible story of the hungry crowd miraculously fed.

Resurrection is all about hope, and that is something we can keep **praying** for at Cameron Community Ministries!

Cameron Community Ministries
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Lots of opportunities to learn ...



... and to grow!



Manuel always delivers!