

AmplifyGR

2020 Year in Review



Amplify GR

By the Numbers

\$124,000

COVID-19 relief funds distributed

12

rent
abatement

96

jobs
created

4

new companies
attracted

696

total hours worked
to create the
Voluntary Equitable
Development and Community
Partnership
Agreement (CPA)

\$800K

federal grant awarded

2,880

rolls of toilet
paper distributed
at the pandemic
prevention party

18

home repairs
completed
with Neighborhood
Strong Grant
(104 in total)

10

mini grants
distributed
(49 in total)

400

reusable masks
distributed

\$197,000

contracted services with minority,
women and/or 49507 businesses

385

educational
tablets distributed
to bridge the
digital divide



Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE CORNER04

AMPLIFY GR MILESTONES05

BOSTON SQUARE TOGETHER06-07

SPOTLIGHTS.....08-11

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS.....12-13

NEIGHBORHOOD ADVISORY COMMITTEE.....14

AMPLIFY GR TEAM.....15

AMPLIFY GR IN THE HEADLINES.....16

Executive Corner

As we enter a new year, we remain hopeful that greater health, prosperity and equality are achieved. We have seen tremendous resiliency throughout the community and a commitment to band together under difficult circumstances to support one another. This uplifting spirit is what makes neighbors powerful and reminds us that we are truly stronger together.

Amplify GR remains steadfast in its commitment to build upon its pillars to:

- **increase** access to local employment and business ownership opportunities,
- **expand** the neighborhood's vision for more cultural, racial and socially economic diverse housing,
- **accelerate** cradle-to-career educational outcomes, and
- **support** healthier, safer and vibrant neighborhoods.

I'd like to take the time to acknowledge the tireless efforts of those who have worked over the past few months to ensure our community had the proper support and resources needed during COVID-19.

Through the Family Independence Initiative, United Way, Amplify GR and other community stakeholders were able to help 248 individuals and who were laid off due to the pandemic by providing more than \$124,000 in grants.

Neighborhood champions like Kat Russell, Commissioner Robert S. Womack and Leah Baker, members of Amplify GR's neighborhood advisory committee and Boston Square Neighbors, worked to ensure that their neighbors had the proper PPE through funding of programs like AMP the GOOD. With support like this throughout the community, we continue to make progress in our mission to widen pathways for all.

As we move forward in 2021, we remain committed to working in deep partnership to increase justice, peace and friendship for all neighbors.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jon Ippele".

JON IPPELE
Executive Director





Amplify GR Milestones



**FOUNDED
IN 2017**



**LAUNCHED AMP
THE GOOD MINI-
GRANT PROGRAM IN
WINTER 2018**



**RELOCATED FIRST
TENANT IN
WINTER 2018**



**LAUNCHED
NEIGHBORHOOD
STRONG PROGRAM
IN SPRING 2018**



**RENOVATED FIRST
BUILDING IN
SPRING 2018**



**LAUNCHED SCHOLAR
STRONG PROGRAM
IN SPRING 2019**

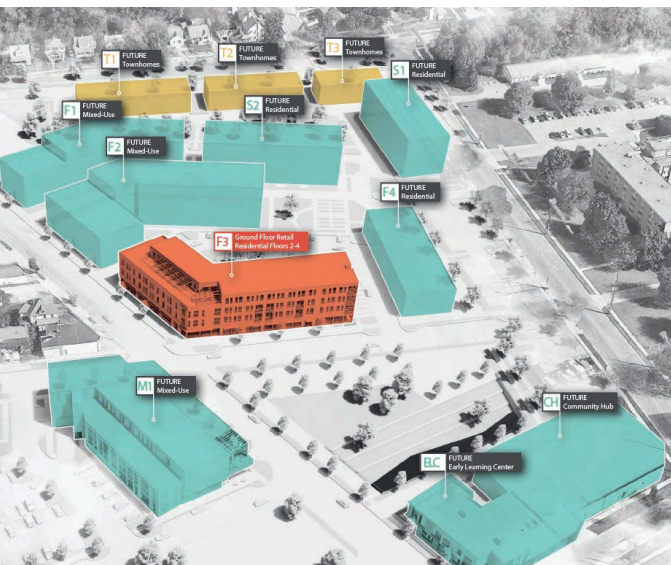


**CPA & VOLUNTARY
EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT
AND COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT
IN 2020**



**PRD BSQ REZONING
APPROVALS
IN 2020**

Boston



BOSTON SQUARE TOGETHER

Boston Square Together, a collective community design and visioning process, began in 2019 utilizing input from community meetings, previous neighborhood plans, hundreds of Boston Square-area neighbors and stakeholders. The Boston Square Together project was approved by the City this past fall. The process remains anchored by principles focused on establishing more affordable housing and homeownership opportunities for residents, providing accessible early childhood learning services for families, and bringing jobs and business ownership opportunities to the area that are reflective of the community.

In 2020, neighbors continued to refine the plan through brown bag lunch and campfire listening sessions. Additionally, project partners worked alongside neighbors to create a Voluntary Equitable Development and Community Partnership Agreement (CPA) to ensure that neighborhood voiced priorities are met throughout the decade-long building and implementation process. We will continue to work with local minority contractors to ensure the assets emphasized during the community meetings last summer are brought to life the way neighbors envisioned.

Boston Square



Voluntary Equitable Development & Community Partnership Agreement

SHARED VISION, COLLECTIVE IMPACT

A dedicated team of residents, Oakdale Neighbors, the Boston Square Neighborhood Association, the City of Grand Rapids, and Amplify GR entered into the CPA. The CPA is a COMMUNITY COMMITMENT that takes a partnership approach to achieving outcomes that uplift resident priorities. The partners co-created a shared vision that highlights neighborhood values, project purpose and defines a shared focus.

“Boston Square is a community focused on families, neighbors, and the commitment to our deep roots in cultural, racial, and socioeconomic diversity. These qualities are embedded in the vision for Boston Square Together, a project that will bring growth to our Neighborhood.”

We collectively aspire to provide added quality of life to current and future residents and their families through accessible and inclusive opportunities in housing, education, health and well-being, employment, and business ownership.

Boston Square Together partners are committed to growing and developing our community in a holistic direction that is informed by residents and influenced by shared power among multiple parties with a common purpose. The Boston Square Together Project will deliver equitable outcomes for families and neighbors today and for future generations.”



The agreement frames a set of neighborhood priorities and investments that a group of committed residents and neighborhood organizations will try to achieve over the next 15+ years to create more equitable outcomes in the neighborhood. The primary objectives memorialized in the CPA include understandings around Community Spaces and City Infrastructure, Economic Opportunities, and Housing for All. The partners contributed nearly 700 collective hours in creating the agreement that City Manager Mark Washington described as “a model for other neighborhoods to follow.”

Thank you neighbors, local businesses, developers, community stakeholders, and Boston Square Together partners who helped shape this equitable and inclusive plan. Updates will be provided via email and BostonSquareGR.org as projects progress. We remain committed to ensuring the Boston Square neighborhood remains a place that celebrates diversity of thoughts, experiences, and perspectives.

Spotlights



With support from the community partners, members of the Neighborhood Advisory Committee delivered over 120 bottles of hand sanitizer to neighbors.

SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY

In response to the disproportionate rise of COVID-19 cases in 49507, neighbors quickly adapted to find new ways to support and uplift one another. The neighbors created and implemented a Block-by-Block Community Outreach Project to deliver hand sanitizer to resident doorsteps. We're so incredibly grateful to local partners for their generous donation of critical resources, and the local neighbors who continued to build upon the great things that are already happening in the neighborhood.



PANDEMIC PREVENTION PARTY POWERED BY AMP UP THE GOOD

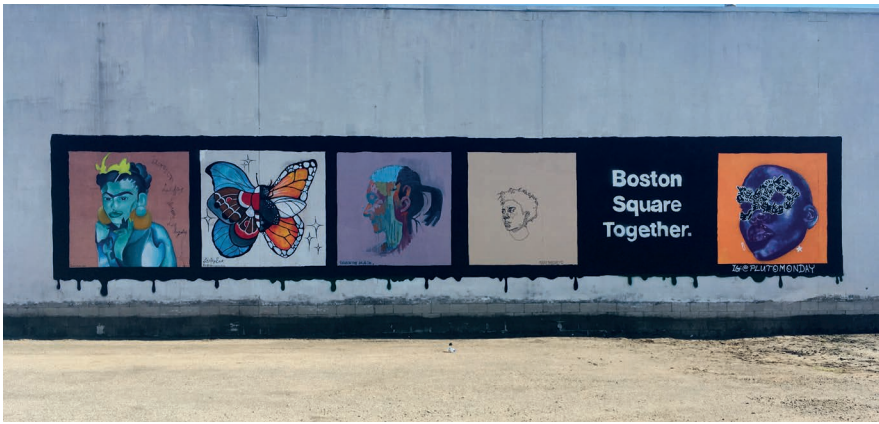
"There Is no force greater than a neighborhood working together to uncover its collective purpose. There Is no greater joy than having the opportunity to serve others and connect my neighbors with the resources they need".

- Maxine Adams, Neighbor

The neighbors of Boston Square/Oakdale threw a pandemic prevention party at Amplify GR this summer. Neighbors were invited to stop by the Amplify garage to pick up free COVID-19 personal protective equipment. This event was led by neighbor Kat Russell, who applied for an AMP Up the Good grant to ensure that all neighbors could be protected amidst the pandemic. In her application she wrote, "we want our neighbors to be safe and well. Many of our neighbors are Seniors and others are at high-risk for dying from this disease." The application was approved by a peer review committee of neighbors and Kat joined forces with other neighbors to work together to defeat a common enemy.

Neighbors received reusable and disposable face masks, hand sanitizer, hand soap, toilet tissue and frozen treats to beat the summer heat from the Ice Box Brand food truck. The musical soundscape was provided by 97.3 The Beat, a local, community-based radio station. This event had an extraordinary impact in the 49507 community, which has been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Way to go Kat!





Top left: Graffiti Artist, Monk Matteus - Give Back Together.

Art Amplified



Artist: Esan Sommersell

Neighbor and Artist Esan Sommersell led a collaboration with four local artists to create a mural centered around the question “what can you do with a single square?” This community-centric mural activates Boston Square with a distinctive and vivid mosaic around the theme of “community working together.”

Through this effort and a graffiti art installation on Kalamazoo Ave., these artists were able to beautify the neighborhood by adding vibrancy to vacant wall space on a large, unoccupied buildings in the neighborhood.

SINGLE SQUARE ARTISTS:

Esan Sommersell, Shannon Mack, Daniel Rivera, Marie Couretas, Lesley Esse.
Graffiti artist: Monk Matthaueus

The two projects are part of Art Amplified, a new initiative that supports more neighborhood-based public art. We look forward to new opportunities to beautify the neighborhood together in 2021!





NEIGHBORHOOD STRONG

Neighborhood Strong

ACCEPTING HOME REPAIR GRANT APPLICATIONS

The Neighborhood Strong homeowner grant is provided through a partnership between Home Repair Services and Amplify GR. Is it time for a new roof? Do you need a new furnace for the winter?

The Neighborhood Strong Home Repair Grant is dependent on income and grants are provided with a 15%-25% copay by homeowners. Residents can receive up to \$5,000 to make improvements inside and outside of the home.

Apply today at amplifygr.org

AMP the GOOD

ACCEPTING COMMUNITY GRANT APPLICATIONS

The AMP the GOOD grant program, which launched in 2018, has funded more than 40 neighborhood-based projects that strengthen the health, safety and economy of the Boston Square and Oakdale neighborhoods.

Grant applicants can apply for up to \$1,000 for project ideas that support collaborative projects intended to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the community while honoring neighborhood culture, traditions and values.

Learn more at amplifygr.org

“I’ve lived in the Oakdale community for 60 years and Amplify GR cares about the residents. They’re not just talking about doing things in the neighborhood, they’re doing them. Over 75 homeowners in the area have been helped through Neighborhood Strong and Home Repair Services, including me. This work is remarkable and they’re really making a difference and keeping all neighbors informed along the way.”



BURL MCLIECHEY
Neighborhood Strong Homeowner
Repair Grant Receiver



Do you or someone you know own a business and are looking to expand?

Reach out to Danielle Williams at danielle@amplifygr.org to learn how AGR could support your endeavor.



Caption here.

UPCOMING MADISON SQUARE RENOVATIONS –

To support the growth of neighborhood businesses, AGR will renovate two properties in Madison Square – 1600 Madison and 1420 Madison. Renovating these vacant buildings aligns the neighbor-voiced priority of increased minority and women-owned business ownership.

Look for more updates on these renovations in the coming months.

LET'S CONNECT.

Do you or someone you know own a business and are looking to expand? Reach out to Danielle Williams at Danielle@amplifygr.org to learn how AGR may be able to amplify your endeavor.



Amplify GR Neighborhood Champions sporting their new shirts provided by Bare All.



Jovan Naves, Owner of Bare All, dropping off Amplify GR's apparel order.



Thank you, Beverly Grant!

We appreciate you and will miss you! As one of the very first Board of Director asked to join Amplify GR, Beverly has given generously of her time and talent. We regret that a move to Pennsylvania takes her away from our work for now, but we wish Beverly and George all the best in their new adventure at Pennsylvania State University, Berks! We will miss Beverly's passion, her clarity for high quality early childhood and K-8 education and her deep connections in the community.

Community Partnerships

The Amplify GR team was fortunate to have numerous opportunities this year to connect with local organizations to widen pathways for our neighbors. Here are several key partnerships from 2020:

HOME REPAIR SERVICES



Through a partnership with Home Repair Services, a local nonprofit that offers services to create safer, healthier homes, Amplify GR was able to assist 71 homeowners. The Neighborhood Strong Homeownership Grant, developed by Home Repair Services and Amplify GR, allowed local homeowners to make critical repairs to their homes like the installation of a new furnace or repairing a roof. We would be remiss not to acknowledge that a large part of the program’s success comes from the commitment of Deb Armstrong, a local resident and Home Repair Services employee. Deb has worked alongside us to ensure a seamless process. Thank you, Deb, for your dedication to strengthening supports for local homeowners and our community.



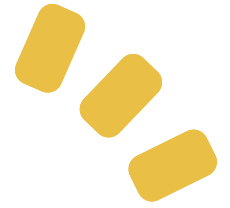
RENDE PROGRESS CAPITAL (RPC)

RPG, Spring GR and Amplify GR are working together to raise awareness for a new loan program focused on Excluded Entrepreneurs – those who have been in operation less than two years. The loan is specifically intended for African American, Latinx, Asian-American, Native American and Immigrant business owners facing lending barriers.

OAKDALE NEIGHBORS



Oakdale Neighbors, a Christian community development organization that has a goal to create a neighborhood of grace and vitality by discovering, developing and connecting skills and resources, has been a key organization within the Oakdale neighborhood for more than 20 years. Amplify GR partnered with Oakdale Neighbors to host the Summer Celebration in partnership with Revolution Church. Oakdale Neighbors also partnered with Amplify GR and the Boston Square Neighborhood Association for the BSQ Together community planning process. We’re thankful to work with an organization like Oakdale Neighbors that is steadfast in its devotion to its community.



Partner with Amplify GR

Email info@amplifygr.com or call 616-555-1122



BOSTON SQUARE NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION

As one of the newest organizations in the neighborhood, Amplify GR was ecstatic to welcome this group through partnership in its early stages. The Boston Square Neighborhood Association is a growing organization committed to providing opportunities to residents within the neighborhood. Our team is proud to have worked with the Association during its first year as project partners for BSQ Together and we are eager to strengthen the relationship in future years.



EARLY LEARNING NEIGHBORHOOD COLLABORATIVE (ELNC)

In the final stretch of 2019, we are fortunate to be starting our collaborative efforts with the Early Learning Neighborhood Collaborative. One of Amplify GR's core principles is to invest in education opportunities for the children of our neighborhoods. ELNC and Amplify GR are committed to a cradle-to-career approach to education. Through this partnership, we look to provide more resources to educators, more programs for students and more tools for parents – one of which is the proposed early learning center in the Boston Square neighborhood. Through our partnership with ELNC, we look forward to working toward opening a center in the heart of Boston Square that provides childcare services and learning opportunities for our neighborhood's youth.

A big thank you to all of our partners for the continued opportunity to strengthen our communities together.

2020 Neighborhood Advisory Committee

Amplify GR remains committed to working in partnership with neighbors to explore new opportunities for our community. The Neighborhood Advisory Committee is comprised of 17 community members (a diverse representation, including individuals of different ages, races, backgrounds, numbers of years living in the neighborhood, etc.) from the neighborhoods we serve. This Committee serves as an advisory group for the following:

- Review of Amplify GR opportunities and projects before they go public
- Share feedback on processes and strategies
- Vet ideas and provide neighbor input
- Learn the goals and objectives of Purpose Built Communities
- Planning and engaging neighbors in community events

PICTURED RIGHT: Victor Williams, Kimberly Williams, Robert S. Womack, Tyrese Guyton, Brandon McBride, Andrea Owens, Burl McLiechy, Leah Baker, GraceShawn Bracey, Kim Duncan, Jenney Griffin, Kenny Hoskins

NOT PICTURED: Whitney White, Maxine Adams, Joan Huyser-Honig, Melisha Roberts and Maria Mendez



Comissioner Robert S. Womack



Photo Credit:
Neighbor Alfield Reeves

Congrats are in order for Neighborhood Advisor and Kent County Comissioner Robert S. Womack on his appointment this year to the Black Advisory Council by Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

This is an amazing appointment for a great commmunity advocate and partner. Therefore, we honor and recognize Comissoiner Womack for his hard work, creativity and dedication to improving quality of life in the neighborhoods we collectively serve.

Robert Womack, of Grand Rapids, is a county commissioner in Kent County where he serves on the Finance and Physical Resources Committee. He is also the general manager and program director for WYGR 94.9 FM and Community Empowerment Radio, Inc. Commissioner Womack is appointed to represent Black leadership in public policy for a term commencing Nov. 12- Dec. 31, 2023. The Governor has designated Womack to serve as Co-Chair of the Council.

We see you and salute you for being a rising tide that lifts all boats in thought and action.

Board Members

CHAIR

Kenyatta Brame, Cascade Engineering

PRESIDENT

Cheri DeVos, CDV5 LLC

SECRETARY

Beverly Grant, Retired, GVSU

TREASURER

Bruce Osterink, Retired, Osterink Construction

Maria DeVos, Doug & Maria DeVos Foundation

Bing Goei, Eastern Floral

Andrea Owens, HourGlass Testing Solutions/WMCAT

Ben Emdin

Father Jose Quintana, Shrine of St. Francis Xavier & Our Lady of Guadalupe Church

The Amplify Team



**JON
IPPELE**
Executive Director



**LATESHA
LIPSCOMB**
Director of Engagement



**BETHANY
UNDERWOOD**
Operations Manager



**DANIELLE
WILLIAMS**
Director of Economic Opportunities



**KIMBERLY
DUNCAN**
Admin Assistant

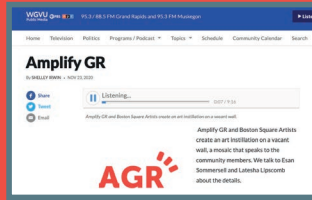


**LEAH
BAKER**
Neighborhood Lead

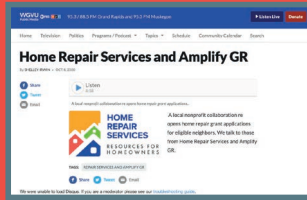
Amplify GR in the Headlines



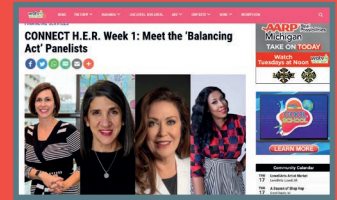
One Good Thing: Neighborhood Strong Home Repair Grant



WGJU Public Media: Amplify GR



Home Repair Services and Amplify GR



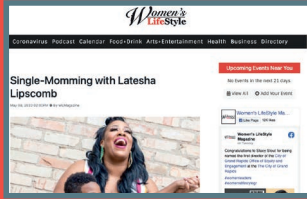
CONNECT H.E.R. Week 1: Meet the 'Balancing Act' Panelists



Nonprofits reopen home repair grant applications



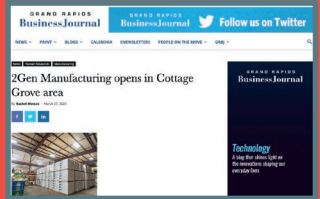
MOH: Amplify GR



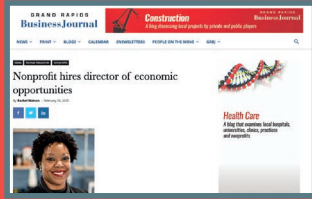
Single-Momming with Latesha Lipscomb



Community agreement, zoning changes approved for GR development



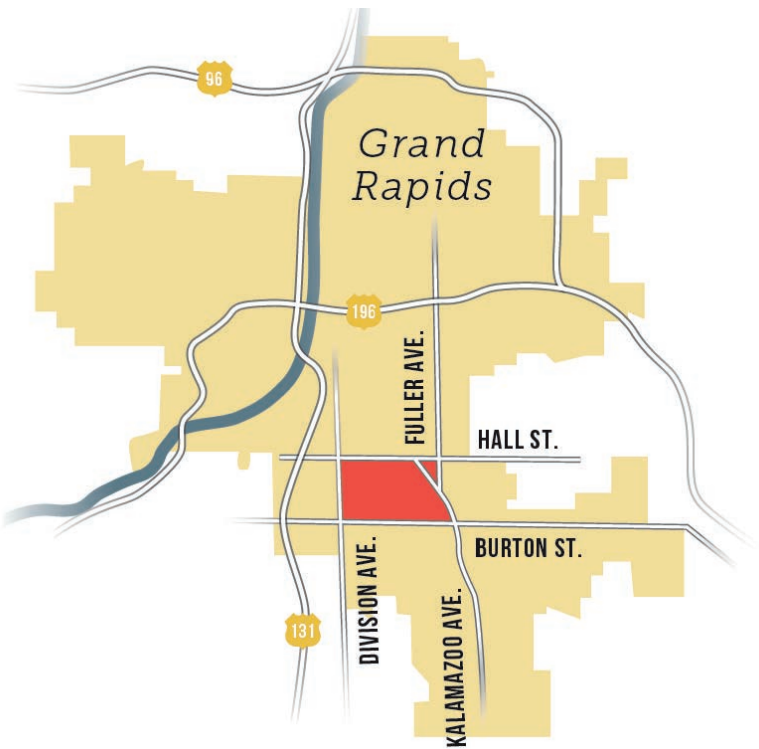
2Gen Manufacturing opens in Cottage Grove area



Nonprofit hires director of economic opportunities



Boston Square developers receive rezoning approval



In A Defined Area



seeks to widen pathways so that all residents can participate in and benefit from community growth.

By working in partnership to:



EXPAND
economic opportunities



INCREASE
healthy and affordable housing



STRENGTHEN
cradle-to-career educational outcomes



SUPPORT
community health and well-being

