



ANNUAL REPORT 2017



A WORD FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AARON BARTLEY

PUSH was founded with a vision for placing the neighborhood development process in the hands of residents living in Buffalo's struggling neighborhoods. Over the years, we've learned that holistic, community-rooted development requires participatory methods of planning affordable housing developments and parks, but also new forums for sharing our life stories in ways that build trust and deepen our collective understanding.

In 2017, we established the People's Summer School--an eight-week program grounded in auto-biography--to acknowledge and respect the knowledge and hidden histories that PUSH members bring to the task of building the Buffalo of the future. Confronting the systemic injustices embedded deeply in our culture--racism, classism, misogyny--requires a new kind of social movement that places healing, reconciliation, honesty, relationships, and emotional intelligence on an equal footing with social analysis and organizing practice. We are working on this transition at PUSH, but we've only just begun. We have also strengthened our Community Development and Energy Democracy Committees to center the voices of members in our campaigns and development; established a Racial Justice committee to provide a consistent voice and training capacity for anti-oppression analysis; established a Street Team to grow our membership and to better connect with residents; and worked with allies to shift the dialogue about the future of Buffalo and win concrete victories that will place more land and power in the hands of neighborhoods.



In a culture so clearly adrift, the organizers, workforce trainers, youth mentors, and PUSH members seek to build a new kind of safe house, one where youth can show their true selves and tap into their creative spirits, where workers value solidarity with one another, and member-residents have the space and voice to challenge all of us to build a just and vibrant West Side of Buffalo.

In November, I announced my intention to step down as PUSH Executive Director this coming August. Building PUSH has been at the center of my life for most of my adult existence. There have been too many highlights to recall or recount--buildings brought back from the brink of destruction to become high-quality affordable housing; community

residents with new careers; new relationships and a new sense of power and hope--and plenty of low moments, too. Seeing PUSH grow into the force for community power that it has become, and knowing how many people have stepped up to fight for the organization's mission because it aligns with their own hunger for justice, has been satisfying professionally and transformative at a more personal, spiritual level.

Everything has its season, and I am called at this point in my life to spend as much quality time as I can with my two young boys. Cultivating new leadership is at the core of the PUSH mission. With talented and committed leaders emerging at every level of the organization, I am more confident now than ever that PUSH has reached a point of maturity that does not require me to serve as director in perpetuity, and I expect to be inspired by what is to come.

The Mission of PUSH Buffalo is to:

- Mobilize residents to create strong neighborhoods with quality, affordable housing
- Expand local hiring opportunities
- Advance economic and environmental justice in Buffalo

We Believe That:

- Real people have real power
- We know what we want where we live
- We deserve a seat at the table
- When turning our neighborhoods around, we are all in this together
- When we show up in big numbers, people listen

A WORD FROM DEPUTY DIRECTOR RAHWA GHIRMATZION

PUSH Buffalo had many standout moments in 2017. We broke ground at School 77 after almost three years of resident engagement, planning, fundraising, and negotiating a community benefits agreement to employ workers from our Community Hiring Hall. We strengthened our internal infrastructure and capacity to carry out day-to-day operations. We expanded our organizing campaigns, deepened our leadership development trainings, and grew our coalition work locally, statewide, and nationally.

The biggest news of 2017 came from Aaron Bartley, our founder and fearless leader, announcing that he will be transitioning out of the organization and starting new adventures into fatherhood and beyond in late 2018. Aaron is a visionary leader that lives what he preaches; a generous leader that has cultivated and trained many leaders, especially those of us from frontline communities. We are grateful for his leadership and he will be greatly missed.

As I look back and highlight some of our accomplishments, I am reminded of my proudest moment in 2017. That moment came at the final walk-through at Luz Velez's home. Luz's story is one we are all too familiar with, living in a region with the second oldest housing stock in the country. While architecturally beautiful, most Buffalo homes are inefficient and toxic.

Luz came to Buffalo from Long Island in 1980 to attend Buffalo State College, fell in love with the city, and after receiving her social work degree decided to make it her home. Luz worked hard, started a family, and bought a fixer-upper on the West Side of Buffalo.

Being a single mom and earning low wages took their toll on Luz's health and her ability to make the necessary repairs to her home over the years. Forced to "medically retire" in 2006 and given 6 months to live in mid-2015, Luz was waiting out her death sentence on her couch

when she heard one of our members, Providencia Carrion, on a Spanish radio show talking about PUSH Green's green efficiency retrofit program. The next day, one of our organizers, Brenda Miller, knocked on Luz's door. Luz began to attend our monthly member meetings and scheduled a free energy audit with PUSH Green.



From late 2016 to July 2017, PUSH Green worked with Luz and our outside partners to bundle the necessary work and make Luz's home safe. Luz's home needed extensive work and there wasn't a single program that could do it. Luz's home had a gaping hole on one side of the roof, black mold that spanned from the attic to the basement, no insulation, and a furnace that didn't work. We used our intersectional and holistic model to bundle two of our programs and worked with outside partners to make the necessary repairs. Luz is now down to half the medications she was previously on, given a credit due to high estimates from her gas utility over the years, and has not paid a gas bill this entire winter.



All the while PUSH Green's work was happening, Luz began to find her voice and became one of our strongest members speaking on issues like the need for green affordable housing, energy efficiency, and the importance of transitioning to a renewable energy economy. She would make us her famous rice and beans, with flan for dessert,

when attending meetings. On countless days, I would return to my desk to find a note of support or a message to let me know that she left me a plate of food in the refrigerator.

Luz is our cheerleader and a voice of a community that has long been marginalized. Her story shows that we at the frontlines are not just poor, disenfranchised, and needy, but that we have a tremendous amount of social capital and community knowledge and if given a small boost, our communities can thrive.

ORGANIZING TO BUILD COMMUNITY POWER AND RESILIENCY

PUSH Buffalo was built on Community Organizing from the ground up. Over the years, the organizing work has grown more sophisticated as we follow through on the fights that the organization was built on. We believe that the quest for racial, economic, and environmental justice is an interconnected process and the most potent solutions are those that empower our members to address the systemic roots of our issues. The PUSH Organizing Team builds power through community building, community development, political education, and strategic campaigns.



The PUSH Street Team meets with residents living on the West Side of Buffalo every day.



Christian, Issa, and Antonio out canvassing as part of the PUSH Street Team's summer 2017 training.

Building Our Membership

We believe that creating connections and establishing relationships throughout our community builds a stronger movement for real progressive change. In 2017, PUSH started the PUSH Street Team. Led by PUSH organizer Christian Parra, under the direction of John Washington, the PUSH Street Team is dedicated to having a daily presence in PUSH's organizing zone through door knocking and one-to-one meetings. The PUSH Street Team goes out into the community every day to speak with Buffalo residents, including those who for whom English is a second language. Its main focus is building relationships and bringing people into PUSH's organizing by recognizing the intersectionality of all the issues we work on.

We also build up our membership through community events and celebrations. Last year we organized a Martin Luther King Jr. Born Day celebration, the Taste of PUSH, a holiday party, and a summer concert. We believe it is important to engage members of our community and build relationships outside of the political campaign work that occupies much of our time throughout the year.

"AFFORDABLE HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT."

—MAXINE MURPHY, PUSH BOARD OF DIRECTORS CHAIR

Advocating for Affordable Housing

At PUSH Buffalo, we recognize that the history of racial capitalism has intentionally and systematically destroyed our communities. We organize to rebuild our neighborhoods with people in a culture of gentrification that is pushing people out. In the model of Just Transition created by Movement Generation, our work is to Build the New, Stop the Bad, Invest in Our Power, and Divest from their power. Our affordable housing strategy is focused on building new capacity to own land and create affordable housing while building power to change the way development works in Buffalo.

We believe that in order to create a more equitable Buffalo, affordable housing is essential. We are working on a campaign to pass an Inclusionary Zoning Policy and introduce an Affordable Housing Policy Platform that takes power away from developers and gives it back to residents. Inclusionary Zoning would force developers to make 30% of new units in major developments affordable. Buffalo has seen a boom in luxury and market rate development with major public investment and it is driving a gentrification economy that is changing our city.

We are allies with the residents of the Fruit Belt on the East Side of Buffalo who have created the Fruit Belt Land Trust, and we are working to expand this development model to other parts of the City. A community land trust is a private, nonprofit corporation that acquires and

retains ownership over land, while selling the housing on that land to low and moderate-income households at below-market prices. Purchasers agree to cap the resale price at a certain level of profit, which keeps the house affordable for the next buyer. A community land trust is typically governed by a board with a majority of local residents. There are three important benefits of community land trusts: community control of land, preservation of housing affordability, and limitation of current resident displacement.

PUSH and its partners made significant progress toward affordable housing policy reform in 2017 with the City of Buffalo's issuance of a new policy that formally recognizes the importance of Inclusionary Zoning and community land trusts. In 2018, we will push the City of Buffalo to mandate Inclusionary Zoning for all new development, as well as increase the establishment of community land trusts.

Although we are working hard to create new, affordable low-income housing, the demand far outweighs the supply and there are many individuals and families who are currently experiencing inhumane living conditions as a result of neglectful landlords. Aminah Johnson, our Tenant Advocate, assists tenants in housing crises and holds landlords accountable for holding up their end of the lease and maintaining habitable properties.

PUSH Lead Organizer Brenda Miller speaking to the community on the West Side of Buffalo.



Promoting an Energy Democracy

National Fuel Victory

In 2017, we successfully organized with our Crossroads Collective partners against a ruthless National Fuel gas rate hike. National Fuel had asked the Public Service Commission for a \$40 million rate hike, which it wanted to invest in new fracked gas transmission infrastructure. PUSH members attended the Public Service Commission rate hearings and demanded affordable bills and alternatives to dirty fossil fuel infrastructure. We also organized a number of direct actions in Buffalo. Our hard work paid off when the Public Service Commission granted National Fuel only a fraction of its requested rate hike, saving \$15 million in annual payments for National Fuel customers. We are currently in a fight with National Grid to prevent a similar rate hike and have engaged hundreds of residents in working with the PSC to make our voices heard.

NY Renews

PUSH Buffalo is a member of NYRenews, a coalition of over 100 organizations across New York State advocating for the NYS Climate and Community Protection Act, which would require the New York economy to run on 100% clean, renewable energy by 2050. NYRenews advocates for good green jobs, additional money invested in communities who have been disproportionately impacted by the fossil fuel economy through a “polluter pays” program, and economic justice for workers. Our Organizing Team recruited over 40 people to attend a day of action in Albany with NYRenews in February 2017. The statewide partner press conference pressured Governor Cuomo to put key provisions of the Climate and Community Protection Act into the New York State budget. On March 15, 2017, PUSH and NYRenews won a major victory when the New York State Assembly included the Climate and Community Protection Act into the New York budget plan. Unfortunately, the Senate did not follow suit, but NYRenews and our organizing team will continue to advocate for New Yorkers who want good, green jobs and healthy communities through regenerative legislation.

ENERGY DEMOCRACY:
a political, economic, social, and cultural concept that merges the technological energy transition from extractive to regenerative energy sources with a strengthening of democracy and public participation. Works to build resilient communities while remembering class, power, accountability, urgency, and the wisdom of Indigenous communities.



NYS Energy Democracy Alliance

In collaboration with NYS Energy Democracy Alliance, we are advocating for the inclusion of energy democracy principles into the Public Service Commission's transition away from net metering to a value of distributed energy resources (VDER) model. VDER more precisely calculates the value of distributed energy (such as rooftop and community solar) to the entire energy system. In early 2017, we submitted a sign-on letter to the PSC that raised concerns about its proposed VDER policy because it ignored important values associated with renewable energy development—local jobs, reduced energy burdens, low income access, community ownership, and co-pollutant emission reduction. In March 2017, the PSC adopted its new framework and, as a result of our advocacy, left the door open for considering the addition of the other important renewable energy values during its phase 2 implementation schedule. If we are successful, including the additional renewable energy values into the VDER valuation framework would translate into greater monetary value for the electricity generated by community energy systems sited in low income communities, which would create good solar installation jobs for disadvantaged workers and opportunities for cooperative ownership or community control of their energy system.

100% Buffalo

In November, we launched the 100% Buffalo campaign in solidarity with cities around the country who have committed to being 100% Renewable. We want Buffalo to be a leader in the Climate Justice Movement and to draw the principles of NYRenews into practice at a local level. For our campaign kickoff, we brought close to 100 people together to vision a future of Buffalo that considers the intersectionality of all the work that we do. Focusing on not just the renewable energy percentage but the tangible changes in people's lives that the number represents, we are working on solutions for Transit, Cooperative Business Models, Energy, and Food. Our vision is that Buffalo become a 100% City by giving power and resources to residents that are closest to the issues. Through better transportation, more cooperatives, renewable energy, and local food production we can make a positive impact on the people of Buffalo and our planet.



Winning Community Benefits

Banks continue to play a powerful role in low-income communities. Areas like Buffalo's West Side were historically "redlined" as too risky for a bank loan and are now being bought up and flipped into luxury housing, which displaces low-income residents and fuels gentrification. Without access to banking services and lending, communities fall prey to check cashers, buy-here-pay-here lenders, and other predatory financial institutions. While there are larger criticisms about our Banking System as a whole, the reality is that being unbanked is a major barrier to building wealth.

Due to our advocacy and relationship-building work with allies, Northwest and Key Bank are committed to investing in the West Side through community benefit agreements signed in 2017. Implementing the community benefit agreements will provide over \$1 billion in small business loans, mortgage loans, and home rehabilitation loans for low- to moderate-income borrowers, build new branches in underserved communities, improve language access at branches, fund local community development projects, create new banking products and services for those denied access to traditional checking accounts, and improve outreach to underserved communities. We are excited to see how implementation of KeyBank and Northwest Bank community agreements contributes to alleviating poverty and building up our community.

Expanding Community Consciousness

PUSH placed training for our members, board, staff, and community at the center of our culture in 2017. As we develop a deeper understanding of the need for a Just Transition from the extractive economy to the regenerative economy by putting people and planet first, our community is developing a deeper understanding of how racial, economic, and climate justice work intersect. New training materials focused on this intersection, as well as regenerative community energy planning, deepening political analysis, and strengthening community solution-building continue to be created by PUSH's Education Director Emily Terrana.

In 2017, PUSH trained more than 250 members, board, and staff in political education, community organizing, energy democracy, and regenerative economic development using a Just Transition framework. Through a new place- and story-based training format called People's Summer School, around 40 members of the Buffalo community explored social and economic issues in the City of Buffalo. PUSH also held a week-long organizing training, which paid participants to learn basic organizing tools and then canvas in the community. This training was the impetus of the Street Team.

This past summer PUSH and our Crossroads Collective allies brought Movement Generation to the Rochester Folk Art Guild to train 40 people in the Just Transition Framework. The energy from the training went beyond information and got to the core human issues that hold us back from building power together. Many of our leaders also participated in the People and Planet First Convening, which focused on training people in our national work around Climate Justice with Peoples Action and the Climate Justice Alliance.

Last year, PUSH's Racial Justice Committee hosted several effective all-staff trainings on anti-oppression. These trainings have helped to foster a culture of self-awareness and respect within our organization. We facilitated one training on racial justice, as well as our first-ever gender justice training. We focused on the history of Buffalo in both trainings, highlighting the impacts that racism and patriarchy have had on the cultural and economic development of our city.



IN 2017, PUSH TRAINED MORE THAN 250 MEMBERS, BOARD, AND STAFF IN POLITICAL EDUCATION, COMMUNITY ORGANIZING, ENERGY DEMOCRACY, AND REGENERATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT USING A JUST TRANSITION FRAMEWORK.



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY

Grant Street Neighborhood Center

In 2017, PUSH served more than 400 neighborhood youth and many adults at our Grant Street Neighborhood Center: an open, safe, and productive space for our community. On an average day, 60 youth speaking about 15 different languages come by the Center, with the majority representing recently resettled immigrant and refugee communities from Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Burma, Thailand, and more. In 2017, the Center completed Phase 2 of its renovations by remodeling and repainting the Center's walls.

Center programming in 2017 included West Side Studios, Grant Street Global Drumming, Youth Action Team, Girl Talk, and Guy Talk. West Side Studios, in partnership with Squeaky Wheel and Ujima Theatre, is a workforce-track program that teaches youth the skills needed to work in the media and film industry. This past year, West Side Studios participants critiqued films, created their own films, and visited the set of *The Purge 4*, which was filmed in Buffalo last fall.

In the Youth Action Team program, youth learn community organizing skills through hands-on experience at local, state, and national levels. The Youth Action Team participated in direct actions supporting our accountable development and energy democracy work at Buffalo City Hall throughout the year. The Youth Action Team also hit the road, rallying for school funding and energy democracy with other PUSH members in Albany. Seven PUSH Youth attended the UPROSE Climate Justice Youth Summit in NYC, which focused on building an authentic climate justice movement by creating opportunities for young people of color to lead teach-ins, trainings, art builds, and more. Youth also helped to comprise PUSH's delegation to the People's Action Founding Conference in Washington DC in April.





Amplifying Our Voice

In 2017, we worked hard to communicate intentionally with our members as well as our larger Western New York Community. We are now broadcasting our events and announcements through a variety of networks in order to reach as many people as possible:

- We partnered with Karibu News, a multilingual and multicultural refugee and immigrant-focused newspaper in Buffalo, and published our newsletter in its pages once a month. Karibu News is published in multiple languages and works to integrate the refugee and immigrant community with the rest of Western New York.
- We launched our new website, which provides greater functionality and accessibility for our members and people throughout the world who are interested in learning more about our work, how to contribute to our mission, and how to replicate our ideas in their own communities.
- This past fall, we launched THE PUSH BACK, a 30-minute live-on-air radio show that airs every first and last Wednesday of the month from 7:00 to 7:30pm on Power 96.5 FM and WUFO Mix 1080 AM. Hosted by Lou DeJesus with Lonnie Barlow and John Washington, THE PUSH BACK raises awareness of issues plaguing our communities and speaks truth to people power.
- In 2017, we boosted our social media presence with regular updates on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and video content of THE PUSH BACK on YouTube. Connecting online is no substitute for in-person relationship building, but it allows us to cast a wider net and inform our local, state, national, and international community about the events and campaigns we care about.

CREATING A CULTURE OF CHANGE



Drumming at the Juneteenth Festival.



Celebrating May Day at Skateland.



Community mural at 460 Massachusetts Ave.

Free Fred Brown

With the leadership of Ujima Theatre, PUSH advanced an arts-based conversation on housing justice and environmental justice with the launch of *Free Fred Brown*, an original, full-scale, staged theatre production focused on the life of a low-income, African-American youth navigating overlapping systems of oppression in the City of Buffalo and finding power in organizing. The play has been produced in community centers and schools across the city.

Happening Documentary

In 2017, PUSH Buffalo and its Green Development Zone were featured in the HBO documentary *Happening: A Clean Energy Revolution* by James Redford. *Happening* showcases Redford's personal journey of exploring the dawn of the clean energy era, which has the potential to create jobs, turn profits, and make communities stronger and healthier across the United States. When Redford arrives at the Green Development Zone, he tours Maxine Murphy's net-zero house (which produces as much or more energy than it consumes), visits a PUSH community garden, and speaks with PUSH staff and members about the importance of building an energy democracy that works for everyone.

May Day Celebration

In collaboration with our Crossroads Collective partners, we organized and participated in the second annual May Day celebration at SkateLand. Two weeks before the event, Crossroads Collective held two Just Transition trainings and created puppets for a political theatre production depicting the extractive and regenerative

economy. At the Celebration, artists, musicians, and spoken-word poets highlighted what May Day/ International Workers Day is all about: a celebration of the Labor Movement and its organizing efforts that won us the 8-hour work day and 40-hour work week.

Parades

PUSH participated in three parades in 2017, where we celebrated our city's diversity and demonstrated solidarity with other progressive groups in our community, including the Dyke March during Pride Week, the Juneteenth Festival, and the Puerto Rican Day Parade.

Murals

In the spirit of neighborhood beautification and community pride, we continue to work with the local art community to create murals throughout the Green Development Zone. In 2017, Resource:Art commissioned Max Collins, an acclaimed photographer and multimedia artist, to use imagery sourced from Milton Rogovin's photographs to create two wheat-pasted murals in the City of Buffalo. The new mural on our wooden fence at 460 Massachusetts is part of a cross-city mural project titled *Community*, which celebrates our culturally rich city and represents a continued effort to unify Buffalo and the organizations working to protect the community through art-making and placement. We also collaborated with CEPA Art Gallery and Stacey Robinson to install a mural on the front side of the handball court at the Massachusetts Avenue Park on Lawrence Street as part of CEPA's West Side Lots Public Arts Initiative.

COMMUNITY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Creating Affordable Housing

The Buffalo Neighborhood Stabilization Corporation (BNSC) is PUSH's nonprofit housing development corporation, specializing in managing affordable rental units, land banking, property stabilization, green infrastructure, landscape management, and community planning. BNSC strives to decrease the rate of housing abandonment by reclaiming empty houses from neglectful owners and redeveloping them for occupancy by low-income residents.

BNSC celebrated multiple achievements in 2017, including keeping all properties maintained, rented up, and in compliance with all codes and regulations. BNSC closed on financing and started construction on the renovation of School 77, which is currently on schedule to open in Summer 2018. BNSC also completed the MASH project, which includes five affordable apartments in the Green Development Zone. It partnered with Youth Build to rehabilitate 236 Normal Avenue, which provided a learning laboratory to teach low-income workers valuable construction skills. BNSC also got funding and is completing predevelopment on GDZ Homes, an 11-unit renovation in two vacant buildings on Massachusetts Avenue, with the intention of starting construction in 2018.



As a new approach to community planning, in 2017 BNSC worked with the PUSH Organizing Team to create three Community Congresses at block parties in the Green Development Zone, where we spoke with community members of all ages about what they want to see in their neighborhood. This feedback has been an invaluable source of fresh ideas and perspectives on the needs of the community, priority projects, and critical campaigns that we will use to further our mission in 2018 and beyond.



Acquiring Sites for Future Development

BNSC maintains a Community Land Bank by acquiring and holding vacant lots for neighborhood stabilization purposes. Many of the vacant lots serve as demonstration projects for community gardens and green infrastructure, which are created by PUSH Blue. In 2017, BNSC acquired three lots in the Green Development Zone: 132 Herkimer, 297 Parkdale, and 431 14th Street.





Community Hiring Hall

The PUSH Community Hiring Hall operates as a high road employment staffing agency for disadvantaged workers who are interested in pursuing careers in construction and various sustainability sectors like solar, weatherization, stormwater management, and environmental remediation. Hiring Hall workers are placed with host contractors in jobs where they're counted on to perform select demolition work, material handling and assembly, environmental hazard mitigation, and light carpentry. PUSH serves as the employer of record and assumes responsibility for workforce recruitment, screening, hiring, personnel management, and administration. We also provide or coordinate access to no-cost training, certifications, and other wrap-around support services for Hiring Hall workers. PUSH offers Hiring Hall workers a family-sustaining wage and benefits package that includes paid time off and a monthly transportation allowance.

In 2017, we connected six Hiring Hall workers with Montante Solar to install solar panels at 25 buildings owned by Buffalo Public Schools. We trained the Hiring Hall workers to install the panels, ensured they had

the required certifications, and negotiated contracts so that Montante Solar paid them the equivalent of union wages. Now that the PUSH Hiring Hall has a solar installation training program established, we will be able to capitalize on solar installation partnerships for more Hiring Hall workers in the future. Also in 2017, we trained and employed 10 Hiring Hall workers on our School 77 renovation project.

Training House on 236 Normal Avenue

236 Normal Avenue, now the Hiring Hall Training House, is a two-family house that had been vacant for years. The Training House has facilitated a partnership with our training partner, YouthBuild, an organization that provides workforce training to low-income individuals without a high school diploma. The Training House serves as a feeder to identify and train new Hiring Hall participants, and provides an opportunity for Hiring Hall workers to teach their skills to up-and-coming construction workers. For example, two of the lead Training House trainers, Daniel Colón and Hyman Eldridge, were former Hiring Hall workers who gained the skills needed to give back to their community in a training role.

GREEN SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

PUSH Green

PUSH Green is a community-based energy efficiency program funded through NYSERDA as part of a statewide effort to make homes and small businesses more comfortable, reduce energy usage and bills, address climate change, and create local jobs. PUSH Green provides Erie County residents with access to free energy assessments, solar installation services, low-cost financing for home and small business energy efficiency projects, and workforce opportunities.

PUSH Green has helped weatherize over 500 homes in Western New York since 2011. Over 350 homes have been weatherized through Green Jobs Green New York, and PUSH has connected 700 renters and homeowners to free weatherization services. Weatherization and energy efficiency projects cut bills by an average of 40% and significantly reduce carbon emissions. In 2017, we completed six additional units in our Warm & Dry on the West Side Program.

This past year PUSH Green received approval for the Community Energy Engagement Program (CEEP) through NYSERDA. Through CEEP, we will engage with residents, small businesses, and multifamily building owners on how to reduce energy use and greenhouse gas emissions. We also participated in Buffalo's first annual Yes in My Backyard (YIMBY) Festival. The event was a hit with over 300 attendees from across Western New York coming together to share ideas, and we are helping plan the 2018 YIMBY festival.



PUSH Blue Eco Landscaping

PUSH Blue Eco Landscaping is equipped to install a variety of stormwater management interventions throughout the Green Development Zone and Western New York, including rain gardens with native plants, bioswales, downspout disconnects, stormwater harvesting, passive irrigation for urban agriculture sites, permeable pavers, living walls, and green roofs. A typical PUSH Blue rain garden will capture over 14,000 gallons of stormwater annually. Green infrastructure projects keep stormwater out of the sewer system and thus prevent combined sewer overflows.

For residents of the West Side, addressing environmental issues such as combined sewer overflows is a matter of survival. Sewage overflows are discharged into the Black Rock Canal and Scajaquada Creek, which flow into the Niagara River, where many neighborhood residents swim and fish. Health impacts range from gastrointestinal illness to rashes after water exposure. Other residents face even worse health impacts from eating fish out of the Niagara River. Fish consumption is a source of sustenance for many of the refugees and people with low incomes in the neighborhood.

In 2015, we launched a major partnership with the Buffalo Sewer Authority to landscape 230 vacant lots as stormwater management sites to combat Buffalo's stormwater overflow crisis. This partnership created 10 new high-wage jobs. In 2017, PUSH Blue completed this project and installed green infrastructure on 19 acres of post-demolition sites across the City. PUSH Blue also installed a pocket park underneath the Peace Bridge.

In 2016, PUSH Blue formed PUSH Gro as a B-Corporation to implement a compost and native plant initiative that has contributed to a more sustainable and climate-resilient Buffalo. PUSH Gro processes organic waste into high quality compost at a facility located at Silo City, uses the compost at its own native plant greenhouses and community gardens, and also sells the compost at the Lexington Food Co-Op. PUSH Gro continued providing quality, organic compost to our community in 2017.

WELCOMING ORGANIZATIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD



The PUSH Tour Committee gives tours of the Green Development Zone to local, regional, national, and international groups.

Tours, Inspiration, & Training in the Green Development Zone

PUSH created the Green Development Zone model, anchored in a 25-block section on Buffalo's West Side, as a replicable, place-based initiative that combines green affordable housing construction, community-based renewable energy projects, weatherization, green jobs training, green infrastructure, vacant land restoration, urban agriculture, and community organizing to build a strong and sustainable community economy while reducing our carbon footprint.

The Green Development Zone has become a model of community regeneration that has gained national attention. PUSH's Tour Committee, a group of dedicated staff and volunteer members, has hosted more than 150 community organizations and professional associations for tours of the Green Development Zone, and we also offer consultant and community development training to replicate our regenerative model. Thousands of individuals have toured the Green Development Zone to learn about PUSH's community-engaged design practice, with an emphasis on concentrated energy efficiency retrofits and renewables, as well as next-generation energy, food, and water infrastructure. In 2017, the PUSH Tour Committee gave tours of the Green Development Zone to groups from other regions such as California, Toronto, and New York City, as well as local university and nonprofit groups.

School 77: Our Future Home

With input from more than 800 residents and the Community Development Committee, PUSH is rehabilitating School 77, a Buffalo Public School that had been abandoned for nearly six years. When completed, School 77 will include 30 low-income senior apartments, a youth gymnasium, a community theater that will serve as the home base for Ujima Theatre, and offices for PUSH Buffalo as well as other local organizations. PUSH was awarded Low Income Housing Tax Credit funding for the project in May 2016 by NYS Homes and Community Renewal. Construction on the project broke ground in Spring 2017 with an anticipated completion date in Summer 2018. A community solar array is planned for the project as well.

Establishing a Community-shared Solar Cooperative

After PUSH purchased School 77, it became clear that there was a real opportunity to have a shared solar installation on top of the building to provide energy to the tenants and surrounding neighborhood residents. In addition to the legislative work that PUSH's Energy Democracy campaign has been carrying out, School 77 presented the option of advocating for the concrete victories to happen on the ground in the Green Development Zone.

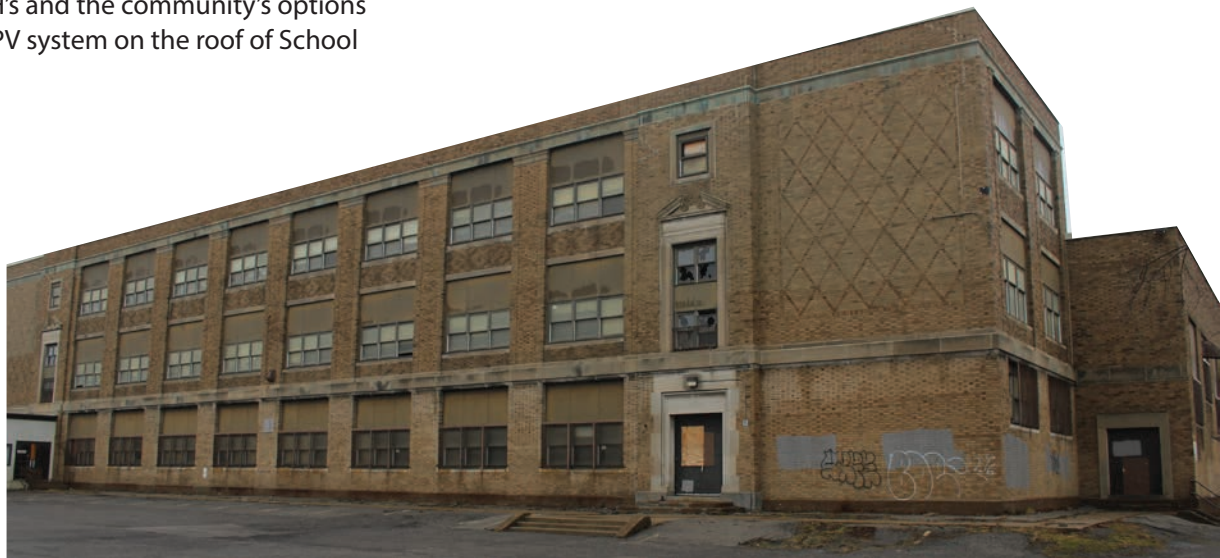
A member-led shared community solar sub-committee met with Montante Solar, a regional solar installer, to learn more about PUSH's and the community's options for developing a solar PV system on the roof of School

77. After extensively exploring different options for a solar array at School 77, PUSH worked with New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's (NYSERDA) Cleaner Greener Communities to advocate for the public funding of a 65 KW community solar installation on the school. As a result, \$90,000 of NYSERDA funding has been allocated to the project. This will enable PUSH to own the installation and offer tenants in the building and the surrounding neighborhood the opportunity to subscribe to electricity generated by the system that would save them money on their electric bills. We plan to use the School 77 community solar array as a model for community-shared solar co-ops in Buffalo and throughout the United States.

Strengthening Our Community Hiring Hall

We are actively strengthening our Community Hiring Hall training-to-employment pathway program in order to equip workers in Buffalo's low-income communities with the training and certifications needed to work in green construction and environmental remediation careers, including green affordable housing, weatherization, solar installation, and green infrastructure. Our 2018 goal is to train and certify 20 Hiring Hall workers in core construction and green energy competencies. We are also working to transform our Hiring Hall into a standalone entity and scale up the model with designated staff and a system to provide wraparound services for our workers.

After three years of planning and community input, School 77 will be PUSH's new home, a community center, Ujima Theatre's home base, and the site of 30 low-income senior apartments. Opening Summer 2018!





100% Buffalo Campaign

In 2018, we and our partners at Crossroads Collective will be raising our voices and ramping up our efforts for the 100% Buffalo campaign, which is pushing for the formal adoption of a city policy to transition to 100% renewable energy by 2040. We want this just transition to provide good sustainable jobs, grow cooperative-based businesses, create access to clean and reliable public transportation, and localize food systems. As part of this effort, campaign stakeholders and our Energy Democracy Committee will emphasize the need for other resilience indicators to include 100% access to affordable housing and living wage jobs through a series of community forums, demonstrations, direct actions, and public education. The 100% Buffalo campaign builds on PUSH's extensive work at the state level with NYSERDA to craft policies that broaden access to weatherization and community solar facilities in frontline communities.

Making Inclusionary Zoning a Reality

In 2018, PUSH will work to institutionalize the commitments made in the City of Buffalo's Housing Opportunity Study to ensure substantial new investment in affordable housing and the creation of a new framework for development. This will include formal adoption of an Inclusionary Zoning policy

requiring subsidized developers to lease at least 30% of their apartments to low-income individuals. It will also include formal adoption of a community benefits agreement for the disposition of all city-owned land. The activities to support this institutional change include strong community organizing efforts, coalition building, community forums, direct action, media-focused events, and the publication of reports. Base-building and leadership development underlie all of our affordable housing advocacy work.

Creating a Community Development Curriculum

We are working to develop an accessible, arts-infused, and engaging curriculum for demystifying the practice of community development and contextualize it in the green economy strategies needed to combat the grinding effects of climate change and poverty. We will disseminate best practices on community-driven sustainability efforts and serve as a technical assistance resource for similarly situated community nonprofit organizations. We are developing the curriculum in partnership with the technical, capacity-building, and public engagement expertise of Hester Street, a NYC-based nonprofit specializing in community-driven planning, design, and development.

2017 YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT



PUSH Buffalo's Finance Department celebrated its own accomplishments in 2017. We achieved a clean and early completion of our annual audit, a major success considering the expansion of the organization in recent years. In response to the organization's growth, we needed to update our financial reporting to accommodate the six entities PUSH manages. As a result, we set out on a year-long project which enabled us to successfully upgrade our accounting software/systems and produce consolidated financial statements that conform to industry standards. We revamped our budgeting process to be more in-sync with annual goals, inclusive of various departments' needs, and transparent.

PUSH Buffalo Income by Category*

- Grants Income \$1,497,438
- Contributions \$237,759
- Tenant Income \$143,478
- Passthrough Income \$649,865
- Other Income \$1,365,491

Total Income \$3,894,031



PUSH Buffalo Expense by Category*

- Staff Salaries \$1,631,125
- Employee Benefits \$139,783
- Contracted Services \$36,330
- Office Expenses \$8,827
- Passthrough Expenses 617,001
- Other Expenses \$1,016,846

Total Expense \$3,449,913



Net Income \$444,119

* PUSH Income and Expense numbers are preliminary, unaudited drafts.

THANK YOU

PUSH 2017 Board of Directors:

Our Board of Directors is drawn from among our 400 members and represents the full diversity of Buffalo's low-income communities. Seventy-five percent of our board members are local residents living in PUSH's Green Development Zone.

Maxine Murphy (Board Chair)	Carl Nightingale
John Buckley	Saint Rodriguez
Felicita Cintron	Niki Rodriguez
Anaida Cruz	William Yelder
Mohammed Mere	Shirley Sarmiento
Terry Richard	
Ramone Alexander	
Marshall Bertram	

PUSH 2017 Development Committee Members:

Anne Saldanha, MD (Chair)
Stuart Angert
Barbara Bono
Providencia Carrion
Ellen Daly
Linda Kahn
Holly Mergenhagen
Jamie Perry
Laurence Rubin
Luz "Lucy" Velez
Bill Wachob
Jim Williams

PUSH 2017 Funding Partners:

11th Hour Project	The John R. Oishei Foundation	New York State Homes and Community Renewal
Buffalo Sewer Authority	Joy Family Foundation	Niagara District Common Councilman David Rivera
Buffalo Urban Renewal Agency	JPB Foundation	Open Buffalo
Catholic Campaign for Human Development	The Kendeda Fund	Open Society Foundations
The Chorus Foundation	The Kresge Foundation	People's Action Institute
The City of Buffalo	Local Initiatives Support Corporation	Richard W. Rupp Foundation
Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo	The M & T Charitable Foundation	Roche Foundation, Inc.
East Hill Foundation	The National Equity Fund	The Rowboat Foundation
Empire State Development Corporation	The New York Community Trust	The Solutions Project
Energy Foundation	New York Renews	Surdna Foundation
Evans-Devereux Memorial	New York State Affordable Housing Corporation	Unitarian Universalist Veatch at Shelter Rock
First Niagara Bank	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Funders' Collaborative on Youth Organizing	New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA)	

PUSH Buffalo
271 Grant St.
Buffalo, NY 14213

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. MAKE A GIFT

Please contact PUSH development staff at development@pushbuffalo.org if you are interested in investing in our efforts to rebuild our members' neighborhoods.

2. GET INVOLVED

Become a PUSH member! Contact Christian Parra at christian@pushbuffalo.org to become a member and/or join one of our committees: Community Development Committee, Energy Democracy Committee, or Racial Justice Committee.

3. JOIN THE CONVERSATION



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