

# Herald-Star

October 1, 2022

## Plans for Urban Mission Opportunity Center Eyed

By Janice Kiaski

STEUBENVILLE — With start-up funds of \$1.6 million, Urban Mission Ministries laid out a phase-one plan to transform what many might remember as a grocery store of the past into an opportunity center of the future.

It was in this space in the Seventh Street Plaza on Thursday where mission officials hosted what was called a “community celebration,” announcing to an audience of about 70 supporters plans for the Urban Mission Opportunity Center.

The presentation was led by the Rev. Ashley Steele, the mission’s executive director, and Melanie Buzgan Dower of Rothschild Doyno Collaborative of Pittsburgh, an architecture and urban design firm the mission has been working alongside since the beginning of the year as it assesses community needs, its multiple ministry sites and how best to serve.

“We hope that what you hear tonight will excite you or inspire you and will also provide perhaps insight into how you can get involved, whether it’s at the Urban Mission or just within this downtown area of Steubenville and then ultimately the Ohio Valley. That is our hope, that we would celebrate, give thanks to God and that you would walk out of here excited at what’s to come,”



NEW DESIGN — Sandi Rue, an Urban Mission board member, checked out a design board Thursday envisioning how phase-one development plans will transform the Seventh Street Plaza former grocery store space into the Urban Mission Opportunity Center. -- Janice Kiaski

Steele told the audience as the presentation began.

Buzgan Dower expressed thanks for the input to date, noting that “as we have gotten to know Urban Mission and the Steubenville community, it has been quite an honor and quite an inspiration. We just really learned that you’re a wonderful community with a giant heart full of hope and great ideas.”

The center has four goals — to be a welcoming community and gathering space; to be a place to be cherished and loved; to be a haven to nourish body and soul; and to focus on education, jobs and life skills training.

Phase one will involve a new entrance, a training kitchen, flexible space, a prayer room, classroom space and public restrooms.

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Seed money for that comes from grants, including a \$980,374 Partnerships for Opportunity and Workforce and Economic Revitalization grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission that announced in September 2021; one from the state of Ohio; and gifts from local foundations.

“We know we can begin — when we finish is up to God — but we know we can begin and do this entire phase,” Steele said of the Seventh Street Plaza being “more than just a building.

Brochures audience members were given after the presentation ended included a note of thanks from Steele that read, in part, “It has been our dream and is now our plan to create a space where God’s love, mercy and grace flow freely, where people from all walks of life can come to experience healing and restoration and where transformation is happening on a daily basis. It is our hope that this space will also serve as another reminder that God is just getting



started in bringing revitalization and hope to our community.”

“We’re calling this building the Urban Mission Opportunity Center, and it is part of what we’re calling the ministry and opportunity corridor, which connects not only the plaza, but the food warehouse, the 2-acre green space and then down the road a bit where our church and War Memorial building

are,” Steele explained. The green space is across the street from the mission’s warehouse and behind the plaza.

For information on how to donate or help, contact the Urban Mission at (740) 282-8010 or visit the website at [www.urbanmission.org](http://www.urbanmission.org).

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