



ENGAGE. EMPOWER. UNDERSTAND.

### OUR MISSION

To engage communities around social and environmental justice issues by empowering untapped relationships, collaborations, and understandings across boundaries

### Community Life Collaborative

16349 Chillicothe Road  
PO Box 23368  
Chagrin Falls, OH 44023

[www.communitylifecollaborative.org](http://www.communitylifecollaborative.org) | 440-708-1961 | [ed@communitylifecollaborative.org](mailto:ed@communitylifecollaborative.org)

## OUR INCEPTION

The [Community Life Collaborative](#) (CLC) is a non-profit organization that was formed in response to the disconnect of resources and conversations around both societal social and environmental justice issues worldwide with an inceptive focus on connecting those here in Northeast Ohio. It was initially formed by some dedicated members of the Federated Church in Chagrin Falls to both save/manage the Family Life Center, or FLC (of which we became the managing entity), as well as create actionable societal change through a unique niche needed in our region. It has since become a dynamic independent 501(c)3 that is working regionally with a multitude of multi-disciplinary and diverse partners.



## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The [Community Life Collaborative](#) (CLC) is a nonprofit organization mobilizing community awareness, allyship and advocacy. We connect groups to create collective impact. Our partnerships foster social insight projects that build and strengthen relationships across boundaries. Exposure of social inequities and environmental crises through unconventional channels are imperative for true actionable change. Our partnerships across sectors make a cumulative difference.

Our collaborative was formed to weave connections and develop entry points of action among individuals and organizations eager to impact social and environmental change. We develop projects through partnerships, such as promoting responsible energy use, courageous discourse about systemic issues, and facilitating multi-platform forums for learning about current pressing issues and challenges. All that the CLC works on can be categorized within the guiding principles of:

**Engage. Empower. Understand.**



## ENGAGE

- Commit to diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do by strengthening conversations that put the voice of community members, scholars, and decision makers on the same level within our formalized forum framework.
- Actively promote projects that create greater representation and strength for communities that have historically been underserved.
- Curate each forum series by engaging within the communities that are most dramatically affected per respective subject.
- Host **Community Forums** in every series that immerses attendees in the culture in which we are highlighting.
- End every forum series with a **Framing Event** that pulls discussed subjects together through an interactive and actionable experience formatted specifically to move the needle in the positive direction per sector engaged.



## EMPOWER

- Build upon mutual respect and justice for all people, free from any form of discrimination or bias.
- Encourage healthy and productive dialogue through difficult subjects within sectors systemically discriminating via inequitable government regulation or intersocial treatment.
- Commit to innovation, adaptability, and growth to meet developing demands of the continuously changing societal cultures.
- Treat all people with dignity, compassion, and respect; elevate voices from the community into mainstream conversations by curating conversations that bring unique vantages to light giving the subject a true representative sample per focused forum.
- Create platforms that are welcoming for individuals eager to be heard.



## UNDERSTAND

Knowledge is power. It can be easy for individuals to turn a blind eye to inequities. Being unaffected by disparities makes them easy to ignore. But, when we hear about egregious systemic oppression from lived accounts, we cannot undo our knowledge. We all show up in the world differently...and transformed. It is our responsibility as members of society to continue to learn, evolve, and truly advocate for our neighbors. Especially those unfairly marginalized.

## OUR STRENGTHS & COMPETENCIES

The CLC organization, including the Staff and the Board of Directors, are recognized for exhibition of these core competencies and will continue to advocate and use these principles in its work and as guidance for future growth.

- Creation, curation, and refinement of the interactive multi-platform forum framework to maximize inter-social impact using materials that most communities will have access to.
- Building upon realized successes with the ability to consistently adjust for efficiencies as well as specific needs per subject.
- Providing technical expertise, experience, and willingness to pursue and undertake complex and challenging issues by engaging the organizations and individuals immediately affected as well as organizations working to enact that change.
- Providing a catalyst for organizations, agencies, individuals, universities, and corporations to work together to create actionable items that will move the needle on systemic social injustices.
- The internal ability to leverage program- and project-specific funding through private and public funds to ensure success.

- As the managing entity for the Family Life Center (FLC) in Bainbridge, OH, our organization has a unique and exciting resource in our 20k sq ft building and expansive 40 acres. Here, we host framing events, charrettes, workshops, conferences, retreats, fundraisers and more.
  - ▶ The FLC has a commercial “shared kitchen” currently being utilized by Meals on Wheels, a boutique caterer, and some smaller operations for increased revenue diversification.
  - ▶ The [CLC](#) also has user contracts for weddings and events for additional revenue sources.
  - ▶ Collaborative partners will have the ability to utilize the resources in the FLC as well for coming conferences, workshops, retreats, fundraisers, and other applications as needed within programmatic parameters.



## EXTERNAL OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES

Within the next five years, the [CLC](#) mission and efforts in the realm of justice will experience both opportunities and challenges that may affect the overall direction of the organization.

The ever-changing world in which we live creates many challenges that will help guide and shape the future of our work and also creates opportunities for advancement of our mission. These challenges provide unique openings for the [CLC](#) to expand its presence and leadership, increase awareness, and gain support throughout the diverse communities we serve.

### Opportunities

- More comprehensive utilization of the FLC: allotting partnership programmatic experiences to take place within the facility. Utilization of the 20k sq ft facility and 40 acres for conferences, workshops, charrettes, retreats, and similar events.
- Utilization of the full multi-channel forum being curated: for outreach content, contribution opportunities, message transmissions, and connecting populations, organizations, agencies, and decision makers through a uniform messaging platform.
- Expansion of the actionable items put forth by regional collaborative efforts that are moving the needle; creating a central receptacle for content through all sectors of social and environmental justice.
- Bring to light both systemic and current intersocial inequities, unequal governmental regulations, and environmental health equity issues.
- Become a member of the [CLC](#) collaborative model through Business (ESG/DEIJ), Education (humanities), Health (environmental health equity), Jurisprudence (restorative justice), Environment/Science/Research (conservation and restoration/connectivity equitability), Government Regulation, Policy and more.
- Social impact investing through direct programmatic funding, FLC infrastructural assistance (solar, geothermal, trails, pollinator/waystation gardens, community gardens/food forest, more), as well as operational and capacity building support for staffing efficiency.

## Challenges

- The ever-changing dynamic nature of society; creating needs for adjustment and evolution strategies.
- Managing the FLC; understanding repair, maintenance, replacement needs, and enhancement work to utilize the full 40 acres to fit within the structure of our mission.
- Courting focused collaboratives to be the “voice” within our forum structure regarding respective subjects in which they specialize.
- Master planning the FLC property (through capital campaigning) along with development work to sustain the CLC programmatic and administrative operations. Selling the dynamic impact of the resource product developed.
- Once fully established in Northeast Ohio, creating the avenue for Great Lakes Bioregion area-of-impact expansion.



## OUR GOALS

### Engage.

**Goal:** Formalize and curate the CLC multi-platform collaborative forum series framework.

#### Strategies

- Engage humanities scholars, experts, community members impacted, and practitioners of actionable change in the curation of each respective forum series.
- Continue and build upon successful forums to widen vantage points per subject within differing sectors of society.
  - ▶ Previous forums to be continued: Welcome Kettle (refugee/immigration), Freedom Speaker Series (jurisprudence and restorative justice), Our Nature (environmental justice). With expansion to other subjects, following a templated branding for continuity and clear messaging.
- Ensure that the forum series fits within the pillars of social and environmental justice (intersocial treatment, unequal government regulation, environmental health equity).
  - ▶ Engage sectors impacting justice inequities as content creators, beneficiaries of resources, and collaborative partners (business, education, health, arts, environment, peace, restorative justice, religion/spirituality/interfaith, science and research, social services, women, government, and more.)
  - ▶ Engage established regional collaboratives working toward specific social justice subjects; court them to be the central voice within the curated forum (poverty, health equity, social inclusion, food security, safe living conditions, water and sanitation rights, climate justice, gender equality, indigenous rights, systemic racism, education, religious freedom, immigration, refugees, xenophobia, incarceration, governmental regulation, women’s rights, employment inequities, disability discrimination, mental health, addiction destigmatization, environmental protection, greenspace access/connectivity, and more.)

- Utilize active practitioners of actionable change as direct partners for focused programming around their missions.
- Curate the multi-platform collaborative forum (platforms are defined as any means by which we engage).
  - ▶ Digital: We will engage in creating a “digital” experience that will double as our cultural accounting. This includes social media, “live” video, interactive video conferencing, and possibly a podcast or other media presence.
  - ▶ Written: This includes curated and tailored written pieces from scholars created for our site. We will be working alongside researchers, organizations, and other entities that will publish content found through the works provided by the [CLC](#) forum.
  - ▶ In-Person: Panels, debates, and speakers brought into the forum will (when appropriate) be hosted at community sites throughout the region including, but not limited to, the [CLC](#)’s facility “Family Life Center” in Bainbridge.
    - Most forum series will culminate in a framing event bringing all subjects discussed to a point and hosted at the Family Life Center.



## Empower.

**Goal:** Give voice to underserved populations and practitioners of change, with a focus on ones that may need additional resources to enact actionable items within their respective missions or communities.

### Strategies

- Seek out community needs, utilizing community groups and established collaboratives or CDCs to gain insight and connection to the individuals directly impacted.
- Curation of the multi-platform forum noted in [ENGAGE](#) with a blueprint for equalizing the voices of individuals, decision makers, organizations, and corporations.
- Incorporate “lived” accounts along with scholars’ knowledge and resources available for each subject matter. Creation of both a “Community Speaker Series” as well as a “Framing Event” that serves as the culmination of the program. The structure of the framing event will rely on the issues, community, and end goal of each forum and will be fully interactive with attendees incorporated in the conversation. Each will address context to allow for an intrinsically-focused reflection of all involved.



## Understand.

**Goal:** Continue to be students of Mother Earth’s sacredness, ecological unity, the interdependence of all species, and the right to be free from ecological destruction.

### Strategies

- Between eco-spirituality, environmental restoration, responsible stewardship, equitable connectivity, and more systemic environmental issues, each “Our Nature” forum will focus on inequities that are within the realm of environmental justice.

**Goal:** Utilize the resource and knowledge of “lived” accounts per respective subject explored. Continue to expand upon understanding and have unbiased, honest conversations about systemically divisive subject matter.

### Strategies

- Inviting conflicting populations to highlight unique cultural stories, raise communities’ voices, disrupt complacency, and destigmatize stereotypes of populations of people throughout our social structure. Educating with non-combative and open-minded facilitation.
- Give a platform for marginalized populations and experts of systemic issues to educate attendees and site visitors about real-world vantage points for the issues at hand.



## ORGANIZATIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Sustain a healthy and high-performing organization within the humanities end of the social and environmental justice spectrum.

**Goal:** Build and maintain a talented, diverse, and inclusive Staff and Board to support the mission and evolution of the CLC and maintain a consistent, robust, and diversified funding stream for the organization.

### Strategies:

- Support the organization and its Staff with a strong, diverse, and sustaining Board that is representative of our region and the communities we serve.
- Track and measure the effectiveness of Board Committees and revise as necessary to ensure Staff and Board resources are efficiently and pragmatically utilized.
- Ensure the organization is provided with all of the resources necessary to support an efficacious, high-performing, and diverse Staff.
- Enhance the volunteer engagement and management program to include both individuals and organizations.
- Improve brand, identity, outreach, and awareness to better connect with donors and members.
- Continue to explore creative strategies to expand impact. (CDFI creation, Great Lakes regional effort alignment, FLC utilization, conference community parallel conversations, etc.)
- Begin to create and build a CLC endowment.
- Create a multi-dimensional membership structure.
- Increase revenue through diversification and other means as applicable and practical.



## OUR 5-YEAR DIRECTION & CHARGE

Over the next five years, the **CLC** will maintain and expand its role in Northeast Ohio and throughout the region to increase community impact by highlighting real world accounts, connecting communities through inter-social collaboration, improving social and environmental justice, and elevating actionable change. The organization will be recognized as the premier resource for social and environmental justice topics and will continue to maintain and further develop expertise to be a regional leader in hosting consistent conversational content.

The **CLC** will continue to build a diverse and inclusive Board of Directors and Staff that will sustain a healthy and high-performing organization utilizing active, engaged committees. Working together, they will generate and execute alternative funding sources to expand programmatic staff and obtain resources necessary to execute at the highest level.

Creative and opportunistic connections for impact are being curated in our 5-year strategy including alignment with community advancement firms, master planning consultants, cities and park districts, conferences, and others where a parallel forum series into the community would bridge the gaps of fragmented messaging and intrinsically incorporate populations that may not be able to otherwise participate. Other avenues being explored include creating a focused Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI), aligning with Great Lakes-wide efforts (Area of Concern program/Great Lakes Alliance/Council of the Great Lakes region), formalizing a sustainable membership structure, and constructing a collective of regional collaboratives around the sectors of Social and Environmental Justice throughout the bio-region. Increased utilization of the FLC will include expansion of the “shared kitchen” model, exploring a co-op daycare, community garden, sensory path, food forest, expanded visibility as a center for social change through workshops, charrettes, conferences, etc., and increasing user agreements for weddings and similar events. This comprehensive structure will solidify the **CLC** collaborative framework as a central “go to” resource for the humanities end of the social and environmental justice spectrum.



NATURE



**Freedom Speaker Series**

