



Planting Roots, Harvesting Growth

TRANSPLANT

HEROES

PROJECT

2025 Mayor's Breakfast



Rooted in Community, Cultivating Success, A Place to Flourish.

November 20, 2025

Courtyard by Marriott



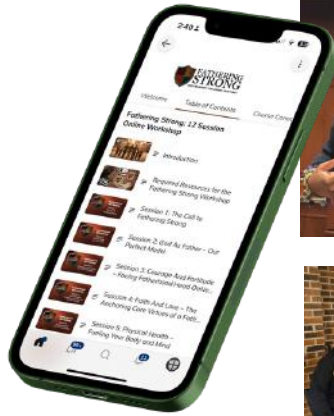
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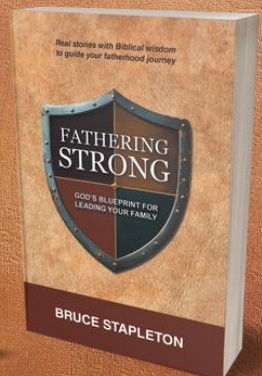
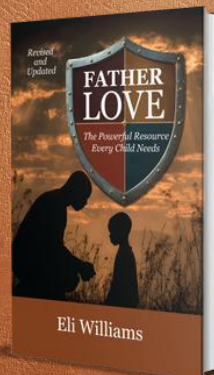


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resources for men's church ministries



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available

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to help support
this important mission



TRANSPLANT
HEROES
PROJECT

2025 Mayor's Breakfast

Program

Welcome and Opening Prayer	<i>Bishop Kevin McCraney, ULM Trustee</i>
Breakfast	<i>Music by Mr. Geoffrey Walker, Esq., and Tyler Detrick</i>
Tribute to Transplant Heroes	<i>Pastor Kermit Rowe ULM Trustee</i>
Music	<i>Mr. Geoffrey Walker, Esq., and Tyler Detrick</i>
Springfield Mayor Address	<i>Mayor Rob Rue</i>
Prayer of Thanksgiving	<i>Interdenominational Ministerial Fellowship Pastors</i>
Remarks and Recognition	<i>Pastor Eli Williams, ULM Co-Founder</i>
Prayer of Blessing of the City	<i>Simunye Pastors</i>
Remarks & Closing Prayer	<i>Pastor Cozette Snead ULM Trustee</i>
Mayor Meet & Greet with Sponsor Representatives	

Champion City Sponsor



Springfield became known as "The Champion City," a reference to the Champion Farm Equipment brand, manufactured by the Warder, Bushnell & Glessner Company. In 1902 this company was absorbed into International Harvester.



Thank You
MAYOR

★ **ROB RUE** ★





Rose City Sponsors

City of Roses name comes from the fact that, in 1919, Springfield was home to 33 greenhouses that produced more roses than any other city in the world.



Thank You to Urban Light Ministries Corporate Sponsors





Home City Sponsors



**Haitian
Community**
Help & Support Center



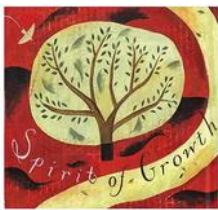
Mt. Zion Baptist Church
Est. 1878



Park
NATIONAL BANK



**CLARK COUNTY
OHIO**
Board of Clark County
Commissioners



**THE TURNER
FOUNDATION**



**GREATER SPRINGFIELD
PARTNERSHIP**





The designation of "Home City" is due to the retirement homes built in the early 1900s by the fraternal orders of Masons, Odd Fellows and Knights of Pythias.

Bernie Willis



Attorney Mark F. Roberts





Today, we honor local heroes who have made a positive impact on Springfield, Ohio. The Transplant Heroes Project was established by Urban Light Ministries and focuses on the following premise:

Cause Statement (*Why this Project*):

Because too many Springfield residents have a negative view of their hometown, it is good to celebrate Springfield and its desirability as a community at a Mayor's Breakfast on the Thursday before Thanksgiving each year.

Vision Statement (*The future we see*):

Through the Transplant Heroes Project, Springfield, Ohio, annually acknowledges and celebrates individuals and families who adopt the city as their new home and positively impact the community's well-being.

Mission Statement (*What we are doing*):

Urban Light Ministries sponsors an annual activity to honor residents who moved to Springfield, put down roots, and are making a significant contribution to the betterment of the community. The celebration consists of recognition at the Mayor's Breakfast and inclusion in the keepsake program booklet.

Desired Outcomes (*The result of the project*):

Transplant Heroes are made to feel valued for their part in making Springfield a better place to live, work, play, give, and worship. All citizens come to appreciate how attractive Springfield is to many nonresidents and develop a positive attitude about their hometown. Recognizing these individuals and organizations inspires others to become involved in their community and make a positive difference.



The Transplant Hero Symbolized by the Thriving House Plant

The symbolism of a flourishing transplanted house plant mirrors a person who moves to a new community and thrives. This metaphor can be explored through several key elements:

- **Roots:** A plant's roots symbolize an individual's connection to their past, origins, and family. Just as roots anchor a plant, an individual's roots provide stability and belonging. When transplanted, both must adapt to new environments—the plant to new soil, the person to a new culture and way of life.
- **Soil:** The soil represents an individual's environment and available resources. Just as soil provides nutrients and support for a plant's growth, a person's environment offers opportunities for development. A transplanted plant must adapt to new soil composition, just as a newcomer adapts to a new social and economic landscape.
- **Water:** Water is essential for a plant's survival, just as social interaction and community are vital for well-being. A transplanted plant adapts to new watering conditions, while a person adapts to new social dynamics and cultural norms.
- **Sunlight:** Sunlight energizes a plant's growth, just as positive experiences and relationships fuel an individual's flourishing. When transplanted, a plant adjusts to new light exposure and growth patterns, similar to how a person adapts to a new lifestyle and work-life balance.
- **New Growth:** New leaves and branches on a transplanted plant symbolize personal growth and development in a new community. Both plant and person grow stronger by adapting to their new surroundings through fresh experiences and connections.

In summary, a flourishing transplanted house plant serves as a powerful metaphor for individuals who successfully adapt and thrive in new communities. Just as a plant needs proper conditions to flourish, people require adequate support and opportunities to prosper in new environments.

Project Operation

Transplant Hero Selection Process

The sponsoring organization identifies qualifying individuals with recommendations from community leaders in various sectors.

Criteria

The individual's primary residence was within the Springfield city limits.
Alternatively, the individual lived in a home within the Springfield area and worked at or owned a business within the Springfield city limits.

The individual has contributed substantially to the betterment of the community through their occupation, charitable giving or direct volunteer involvement in a local nonprofit organization(s), community development and improvement, political, religious, humanitarian, and/or other notable work.

Nominations

Recommend Transplant Hero candidates to Urban Light Ministries no later than the last Friday in September by submitting an article (maximum of 250 words) about the individual. Include how long they have been a resident, their local community-serving activity, why they chose to make Springfield their home, and anything else you want to share about them.



**Join us in celebrating Springfield's
2025 Transplant Heroes**



2025 Recipients



Wes Babian



John Brown



**Sunil (Sunny)
Dhingra**



Levi Duncan



Adam Groshans



Moses Mbeseha



Jeff Pinkleton



**Rose Ann
Pratt**



Daniel Snow



**Dr. Yamini
Teegla**

2025 Springfield Hero

Wes Babian

Wes Babian grew up in Michigan as the son of a Baptist minister and public school teacher. After graduating from the University of Michigan and feeling called to pastoral ministry, he completed training at Northern Baptist Theological Seminary and was ordained in 1971. He earned a D.Min. from McCormick Theological Seminary while serving churches in Michigan and Iowa.



In 1984, Babian was called to First Baptist Church of Springfield, where the congregation had committed to staying in and investing in their neighborhood. His family moved to South Fountain Avenue near the church. During his 19 years there, Babian engaged deeply with the community through advocacy work with Clark State Community College, Wittenberg University, South Fountain Preservation, and Springfield Central City Clergy. He participated in housing rehabilitation, employee-owned business development, school programs, direct action initiatives, and helped develop Rocking Horse Community Health Center.

In 2003, Babian accepted a call to First Baptist Church of Birmingham, Michigan, with similar commitments to social justice and community involvement. After retiring in 2015, he returned to Springfield, where he reconnected with Rocking Horse, joined a school mentoring program, supported South Fountain Avenue development, and worked to foster understanding for immigrant neighbors and long-time residents facing difficult circumstances. He was honored to become Pastor Emeritus of First Baptist Church.

Through these experiences, Babian recognized the immense courage and commitment of those living on the margins and those who stand with them, affirming life's goodness and beauty. His immediate family includes his late wife Patricia Spurr Babian, three sons and their spouses, and six grandchildren. After returning to Springfield, he met and married Peg Foley.

2025 Springfield Hero

John Brown

John Brown became President of Security National Bank, a Division of Park National Bank, in April 2016. Prior to Springfield, he held leadership positions with Park National Bank in Newark, Piqua and Mansfield. John began his banking career as a teller the Monday after graduating high school and pursued his full-time career with Park after earning his Bachelor of Business Administration from University of Toledo. He now serves as Park National Bank's Western Ohio Regional President, overseeing 20 locations across six Western Ohio counties. He and his wife, Dana Bennett, call Springfield home.



John attributes his community involvement to his leadership team and Park National Bank's supportive culture. He serves on multiple boards including The Greater Springfield Partnership, United Way of Clark, Champaign and Madison Counties, Clark State Foundation, Springfield City Schools Business Advisory Council and The Community Health Foundation. Last year, Park National Bank donated \$538,963 to Western Ohio communities and non-profit organizations, with colleagues volunteering nearly 3,000 hours. As legendary Park National Bank CEO John Alford said, "If we take care of our communities, our communities will take care of us."

On Springfield and Clark County, John says, "When we moved here almost ten years ago, we found a community that was on the rise. Having lived in other Ohio legacy communities, it was easy to recognize that Springfield was willing to take on the challenges that have paralyzed many other similar cities. Springfield is not perfect – no community is – but we are on the right track. I am proud to have played a small role in the revitalization of the Springfield area that has occurred the past ten years."

John and Dana live in downtown Springfield and enjoy Clark County's outdoor amenities, traveling and spending time with their two grandchildren.

2025 Springfield Hero

Sunil (Sunny) Dhingra

Sunny's American journey began in 1983 when he received approval for a Green card he'd petitioned for 14 years earlier. He arrived in Cincinnati, Ohio, on September 20th, 1983, with just \$43 and big dreams. After staying temporarily with a relative, he landed his first job as a cook's helper at LaRosa's Pizza on W 8th Street, working 6 p.m. to 2 a.m. for \$3.15 an hour. The job included one free meal per shift, which helped him get by.



Several months later, the owner wanted to promote him to a delivery driver. There was one challenge: Sunny didn't know how to drive on the right side of the road, having learned to drive on the left in India. The owner helped him get a learner's permit and arranged for another driver to teach him using the company car.

With a bachelor's degree in physics and chemistry from India, Sunny enrolled at Cincinnati Technical College and later transferred to Wright State in the fall of 1984. He worked multiple jobs to pay for his education, including a position at Click Camera and Video at Upper Valley Mall in Springfield. He spent most of his adult career as a sales manager and general manager at Monte Zinn Auto Mall.

Today, Sunny owns and operates four businesses, including Always Sunny Realty, which has offices in Springfield and Beavercreek. He's been married for 35 years to Dr. Seema Dhingra, an orthodontist with offices in Springfield, Bellefontaine, and Beavercreek. Their son Dr. Azie Dhingra, 31, is an orthodontist and partner at Dhingra Orthodontics, working alongside his mother. Their younger son, Aman, 24, will graduate with a dental degree from The Ohio State University in the summer of 2026.

Sunny shares his story not to brag, but to reaffirm his belief that America is the greatest country in the world, and that Americans are the kindest, most helpful, and generous people.

2025 Springfield Hero

Levi Duncan

Levi Duncan was born in Trinidad and raised in Brooklyn, NY. His 24-year career in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force brought him and his wife, Meghan, to Springfield, Ohio, in 2020, where they're now raising seven children. What began as handyman work during the pandemic grew into the launch of Liberty Remodeling Company.



In 2023, Levi took on his first commercial project—transforming the 42,000-square-foot historic Central United Methodist Church into The Springfield Metropolis, a revitalized event venue now home to local small businesses and nonprofits.

Today, just five years after arriving in Springfield, Levi serves as CEO of Liberty Remodeling Company, DeLong Heating & Air, and The Springfield Metropolis. He's focused on creating jobs, mentoring young tradespeople, and opening pathways for others to succeed. Beyond his businesses, Levi serves at Grace Baptist Church in Cedarville and is pursuing an Executive MBA at The Ohio State University.

Those who know Levi describe him as a visionary doer—someone who sees potential where others see challenges and brings a contagious sense of optimism to every project. His story reflects not only personal achievement but a deep commitment to building a stronger, more hopeful community.

When asked why he chose to stay in Springfield after retiring from military service, Levi shared:

"I chose to stay in Springfield after retiring because this city isn't finished yet. There's potential around every corner—in its historic downtown, its young entrepreneurs, and the shared vision of those who still see possibility instead of decline. Staying here gives me the opportunity to help shape that future—by creating jobs, restoring properties, and building spaces that bring people together."

2025 Springfield Hero

Adam Groshans



Adam Groshans is market president for Bon Secours Mercy Health's Springfield Market, overseeing acute care hospitals in two counties and health services in surrounding areas. Since 2019, he has guided a workforce of nearly 2,000 through the pandemic and driven significant regional growth, launching interventional neurology, a midwife program, a maternal fetal medicine program, and expanding oncology services to Urbana.

He also champions social determinants of health, overseeing the market's efforts, including a local housing project and small business loan funding program – initiatives that earned him a spot on Becker's 2025 list of "Rural Hospital and Health System Presidents and CEOs to Know."

Before joining Bon Secours Mercy Health, Adam served on the administrative leadership team at Tennova Healthcare Lebanon in Tennessee and as Senior Director of Marketing and Business Development at Dallas Regional Medical Center. He began his healthcare career in marketing and recruitment for nursing, allied, and clinical professionals.

Adam holds an MBA from Cumberland University and dual bachelor's degrees in business/marketing and psychology from Austin College in Sherman, Texas. He and his wife, Amber, have three daughters.

2025 Springfield Hero

Moses B. Mbeseha



Moses B. Mbeseha, MPH, MBA, is the Co-Founder of The Conscious Connect Community Development Corporation, a Springfield-based nonprofit transforming neighborhoods through equity-driven redevelopment, literacy, and greenspace revitalization. A proud 2013 graduate of Wittenberg University, Moses has co-led The Conscious Connect since 2015, helping to secure millions in public and private funding to establish Children’s Equity Zones—safe, vibrant, and opportunity-rich spaces that advance education, health, peace, and culture for Black and historically underserved communities across South Springfield.

Under his leadership, The Conscious Connect ended South Springfield’s designation as an urban book desert, launched major park projects including Sully Jaymes Memorial Park and Tink Memorial Park, among others and guided community-driven initiatives through the Unified Collective. His work bridges community development, policy, planning, and public health—centering resident leadership in shaping the future of our neighborhoods.

A Forbes 30 Under 30 and Dayton Business Journal 40 Under 40 honoree, Moses has been recognized by the Library of Congress, City of Springfield, and numerous other institutions for his leadership in equity and place-based transformation. He continues to build collaborative systems that align community voice, public investment, and generational opportunity across Springfield and the Greater Miami Valley."

2025 Springfield Hero

Jeff Pinkleton

Jeff Pinkleton was born in Nashville, TN, but grew up in Springfield, Ohio. He graduated from Shawnee High School in 1987 and earned a B.A. in Mass Communication from Wright State University in 1992.



Jeff's career spans the financial industry, sports journalism, retail, and college admissions. For the last three decades, he has focused on non-profit ministry. He founded Springfield City Youth Mission (formerly Springfield Christian Youth Ministries), which continues to thrive 18 years after his tenure under the leadership of a former youth from his ministry. He currently serves as executive director/founder of The Gathering of the Miami Valley (formerly The Gathering of Greater Springfield).

The Gathering was founded in 2008 by a group of men with a heart to see Springfield transformed and to connect men to men and men to God in the workplace. What began with a goal of seeing 100 men radically transformed by Christ has grown exponentially, impacting the community in greater numbers.

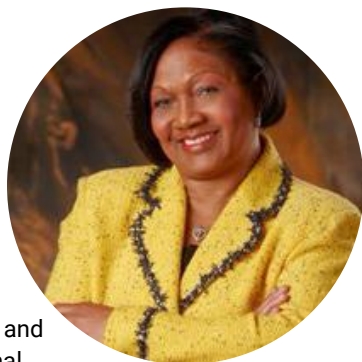
The ministry partners with like-minded organizations throughout Springfield, Clark County, and the Miami Valley, including chambers, schools, churches, small businesses, and civic groups. It has served as an incubator for other leaders, helping launch organizations like a campus ministry at Wittenberg University and a local Man in the Mirror chapter in Dayton.

Jeff has served on numerous boards and in leadership roles with organizations such as Encompass Connection Center, Clark County Young Life, Springfield YMCA, and Athletes In Action. He hosts the Pinkleton PullAside podcast, available on Apple and Spotify. His interests include travel, reading, documentaries, retreats, coffee shops, sports, comedy, concerts, and unique experiences that allow him to connect and engage others.

2025 Springfield Hero

Ann Storey Pratt

Bishop Ann Storey Pratt grew up in Harlem, New York City. During her teenage years, she experienced a life-threatening medical condition from which she received a miracle healing from God. This miracle healing led to her accepting a spiritual call to ministry. As a powerful, impactful, and charismatic preacher, she developed into a national evangelist, transforming many Christian lives through her sermons. She attended the prestigious Manhattan Bible Institute and was ultimately awarded an honorary doctorate from Grace Apostolic University. As a life-long learner, Bishop Pratt attended educational seminars and workshops at Yale University and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.



In 1978, Bishop Ann Storey Pratt married the late Bishop Cecil Alexander Pratt, long-tenured Pastor of The Church of Jesus Family Worship Center in Springfield, Ohio. Together, they formed a powerful duo for Christ. Under this union, dozens of Pentecostal leaders were developed, mentored and are now pastors and religious leaders around the world.

Under Bishop Pratt's visionary leadership, the Church of Jesus Family Worship Center functions as a place of refuge for all citizens of Springfield. She has coordinated multiple social support ministries including a community food pantry, a nationally recognized recording choir, Precious Gifts Daycare and Learning Center, and partnerships with the Juvenile Court and Mental Health boards. Committed to education, she successfully operated the Springfield Academy of Excellence, a K-6 public school approved by the Ohio Department of Education.

Bishop Pratt is highly recognized by the Pentecostal Assemblies of the World, Inc. She served as National Lay Director, Assistant General Secretary, and currently serves on the Bishop Board. She made history as the first woman in Ohio named to the position of Bishop. Bishop Pratt currently serves as an Ambassador and Advisor for Aeon Bible College, where her leadership has led to the first offering of accredited coursework in the school's history.

2025 Springfield Hero

Dan Snow

Born the fourth of five siblings in Wooster, Ohio, Daniel Snow's connection to Springfield began in 1966 when Wittenberg University recruited him to play football. After graduating from Ohio University in 1971, he married and made the pivotal decision to move to Springfield, establishing roots he would nurture for the next five decades.



Daniel quickly immersed himself in the community, working at the Oesterlen Home for Children before opening Springfield's first Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance office in November 1973. In 1976, he opened the NM District Office, managing it for 27 years. This month, he proudly celebrates 52 years with Northwestern Mutual. He dedicated himself to Springfield's civic structure through the Northridge Breakfast Lions Club, the Jaycees, and board service at Northwood Hills Country Club and the Springfield Association of Life Underwriters, where he served as President.

Daniel's commitment to public good culminated in his 1991 election to the Springfield City Board, where he served two consecutive four-year terms as Vice President. He also dedicated five years to the JVS board, four years to the 648 Board, and chaired the "Nobody's Fool Running Race" for two years.

Faith has been a significant force in his life. After a Christian retreat at age 39, Daniel raised funds for High Street Church's "Walk To Emmaus," served three years in prison ministry at Lebanon Correctional Facility, and spent ten years on the Urban Light Ministries Board, the last six as Chairman. For the past eight years, he has been an active member of the "Locker Room" men's fellowship.

Daniel has been married to his wife, Ruth, for 22 years. He has four children, two stepchildren, and eighteen grandchildren.

2025 Springfield Hero

Dr. Yamini Teegala

Dr. Yamini Teegala has been a dedicated member of Rocking Horse Community Health Center since 2007. A family physician by training, she earned her medical degree in India and moved to the United States in 2001 with her husband to pursue higher education. She completed her Master of Public Health at Western Kentucky University in 2003 and her Family Medicine residency at Wright State University's Boonshoft School of Medicine, where she now serves as a Clinical Assistant Professor of Family Medicine and Pediatrics.



At Rocking Horse, Dr. Teegala served as Chief Medical Officer for over a decade before becoming Chief Executive Officer in 2024. Her passion for healthcare leadership inspired her to earn an MBA from Wright State University in 2018. As a physician leader, she is deeply committed to advancing integrated care, fostering interdisciplinary teamwork, and improving healthcare affordability—guided by a strong understanding of how social determinants shape health outcomes.

Outside of her professional roles, Dr. Teegala enjoys cooking, reading, traveling, and spending time with her family.

Gammon House Celebrating!

The 3rd Annual Springfield Mayor's Breakfast

Springfield united celebrating our heritage and growing our community



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and Support the Capital Campaign

★ Future Gammon Interpretive Center ★

*The Gammon House, Springfield's historic Underground Railroad stop owned and operated by people of color, proudly announces our forthcoming **Gammon Interpretive Center** that will serve as a beacon of learning, discovery, and connection for all.*

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- Theater
- Catering Kitchen
- Spacious Board Room
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Providing homeless families a special Christmas for their children

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Jeff Wyler Charity Golf Invitational



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BLESS A CHILD
THIS CHRISTMAS**

*Preserve the
parent's
dignity!*

Easy 3 Step Process



1. Urban Light Identifies Families

- Works with local homeless shelter for names of needy families with school age kids
- Parents provide the kid's wish lists with ages, genders, clothing sizes, etc.
- Being anonymous givers honors the parents and helps build the parent/child bonds.

**Parents are
the Hero!**



2. You Purchase and Wrap Gifts

- Adopt a family to purchase gifts for
- You buy the gifts, wrap and label them
- Deliver the wrapped gifts to the shelter who distributes them to the parents

**Program reimburses
up to
\$100 / Child**



3. Parents give gifts to children

- Parent surprises their child on Christmas with the gifts
- The parent builds a bond with their child and gets to be the hero!

**Kid's get a Christmas
to remember**

To adopt a family or donate scan the
QR code or go to: www.urbanlight.org





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King**

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**Springfielders have a lot for which to be grateful.
O' give thanks unto the Lord... Psalm 136:1**

Happy Thanksgiving!



**URBAN LIGHT
MINISTRIES**