



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 10, 2020

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McAULEY MINISTRIES ANNOUNCES

2020 Sister Susan Welsh Good Neighbor Award recipient, an Uptown resident

PITTSBURGH (June 10, 2020) – [McAuley Ministries](#), [Pittsburgh Mercy's](#) grant-making foundation, announces the 2020 Sister Susan Welsh Good Neighbor Award recipient, Uptown resident Mr. Christopher R. Roach, Jr. Mr. Roach was nominated by Ms. Jeanne McNutt, executive director of Uptown Partners of Pittsburgh, and Ms. Raqueeb Bey, founder and executive director of Black Urban Gardeners and Farmers of Pittsburgh Co-op.

The Good Neighbor Award was created to honor the legacy of Sister Susan Welsh, RSM, retired president and CEO of Pittsburgh Mercy, and current board chairperson and founding board member of McAuley Ministries Foundation. Sister Susan has been a compassionate, friendly, helpful, and willing volunteer, beyond the scope of her leadership responsibilities. In honor of Sister Susan's service to Pittsburgh Mercy and her continued works of mercy, the Sister Susan Welsh Good Neighbor Award was born.

The award recognizes a resident of the Hill District, Uptown, or West Oakland, the neighborhoods served by McAuley Ministries, who exemplifies the ideals of a "good neighbor" willing to devote time, talents, and resources to make their neighborhood a better place to live. The award celebrates an individual resident who is working at the grassroots level to make a positive difference for his or her neighbors and community, beyond their day-to-day work responsibilities.

Ms. Bey affirmed why Mr. Roach was nominated: "Chris is a good natured person in our community and beyond. He is extremely empathetic to the needs of his neighbors, especially helping those who are less fortunate than others. Chris is not only a grassroots organizer in our community, he is a brave champion for our residents."

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Chris is a founding volunteer of the Tustin Street Community Garden, becoming the volunteer manager, and has taken a leadership role in the MLK Community Garden that links Uptown to the rest of the Hill District. Recently, Chris began work with Pittsburgh Water & Sewer Authority (PWSA) to reconfigure the MLK Garden footprint to implement significant underground storm water mitigation strategies.

Chris formerly worked with Operation Safety Net, where he provided street outreach and advocated on behalf of the homeless community. Chris worked with the City of Pittsburgh to develop important policies to make sure that the underserved homeless population, in not only Uptown, but across the city, was treated with decent human respect. Beyond his job expectations, Chris took on the role of vice president of the Allegheny County Homeless Advisory Board and chaired the Street Outreach Coordinating Committee, which focused on law enforcement collaboration, transition homeless encampments, and veteran homelessness.

Chris has helped organize numerous events in Uptown, including those that fight gentrification for fair, just, and equitable development. He helped with events in support of MLK Community Garden and Tustin Street, where the local playground is located.

In addition to lending time and talent to the Tustin Street and MLK Community Gardens, Chris volunteers on the board of Bridge to the Mountains, a nonprofit that, among other services, provides basic survival resources and builds relationships with men and women of all ages who are navigating life on the streets. Chris also volunteers with the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Mother Teresa Conference, serving the Hill District and downtown Pittsburgh regions. Here he connects his neighbors in need to services available for food, repairs, and assistance with bills.

Chris is currently vice president of the board for Uptown Partners. Ms. Bey mentioned that she served on the Uptown Partners board with Roach. After a hiatus, Mr. Roach is back on the board. Ms. Bey remarked, "This is comforting and assuring to Uptown residents who may not have a voice at the table. We are assured with him being there, that our needs and concerns are paramount."

With an interest in equitable development, Chris recently joined the Hill Community Development Corporation (CDC) Development Review Panel to help ensure that proposed projects are in appropriate alignment with the Greater Hill Master Plan. He does the same as a member of the Uptown Partners board, which strives to actualize the Uptown EcolInnovation District plan to assure that Uptown's revitalization is vibrant, sustainable, and benefits all in the community.

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Ms. McNutt, who has worked with Roach since he was a student at Duquesne University, summed up how he has had a positive impact on his neighbors and community. “Quietly, Chris seems to work and give from a place of deep faith. He has built lasting friendships in our diverse neighborhood, and continues to perform random, selfless acts of community support. A hands-on guy, he has freely given kitchen sink, furnace, and gutter repairs for his neighbors, helping others with moving and snow removal. Chris is a constant and trusted advocate and link to resources for those in need.”

McAuley Ministries plans to present the 2020 Sister Susan Welsh Good Neighbor Award to Mr. Roach in person this summer, hopefully, during an outdoor event. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the event will take place when it is deemed safe to gather.

About McAuley Ministries

Named in honor of [Catherine McAuley](#), founder of the [Sisters of Mercy](#), [McAuley Ministries](#) is the grant-making foundation of [Pittsburgh Mercy](#). McAuley Ministries serves as a catalyst for change, committing resources and working collaboratively to promote healthy, safe, and vibrant communities. Grant-making priorities include health and wellness, community and economic development, education, and capacity-building initiatives for nonprofit organizations which focus on the Hill District, Uptown, and West Oakland, communities historically served by the Sisters of Mercy. McAuley Ministries also provides support to organizations that are sponsored by and/or affiliated with the Sisters. Since its founding by the Sisters of Mercy in 2008, McAuley Ministries has awarded 782 grants and community support totaling more than \$33.5 million. It awards approximately \$3.5 million in grants annually, making it one of the largest philanthropic foundations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. To learn more about McAuley Ministries and the initiatives it supports, visit www.mcauleyministries.org.

About Pittsburgh Mercy

[Pittsburgh Mercy](#), a member of [Trinity Health](#), serving in the tradition of the [Sisters of Mercy](#), is a person-centered, population-based, trauma-informed community health and wellness provider. Pittsburgh Mercy, home to the region’s only Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic, is also one of the largest nonprofit organizations and employers in Southwestern Pennsylvania. Pittsburgh Mercy includes Bethlehem Haven, McAuley Ministries, Pittsburgh Mercy Behavioral Health, Pittsburgh Mercy Community Health, Pittsburgh Mercy Intellectual Disabilities Services, the Pittsburgh Mercy Parish Nurse & Health Ministry Program, Pittsburgh Mercy’s Operation Safety Net®, and Pittsburgh Mercy Family Health Center. Together, these Pittsburgh Mercy programs and their 1,500 colleagues serve more than 33,000 individuals annually at 70+ locations in Southwestern Pennsylvania. To learn more about [Pittsburgh Mercy](#), or to make a donation in support of its important work in the community, visit www.pittsburghmercy.org.

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