



My Connect Community 2025

Impact Report



A Year of Opening Doors

2025 was a year of transformation for My Connect Community. We opened doors, both literally and figuratively, by creating new spaces, new opportunities, and new pathways for families in Gulfton and Sharpstown to thrive.

The year began with a milestone nearly a decade in the making: Connect Highstar, our 77-unit mixed-income housing development on Hillcroft Avenue, reached full occupancy. The first new construction in this neighborhood in 40 years, Connect Highstar represents more than housing. It represents a belief that every family deserves a stable, dignified place to call home and a community built around their success.

In May, we opened Fabric Forge, our 9,000-square-foot textile lab and workforce hub, inside Connect Highstar. Together, these two spaces form the heart of what we believe place-based investment should look like: a community where residents don't just have a roof over their heads, but real pathways to economic opportunity right where they live.

Also in May, MCC welcomed new leadership as Anne Whitlock, our visionary founder, retired and I stepped into the role of President and CEO.

But this report isn't about buildings or transitions. It's about people, the families who showed up, worked hard, and proved that when we invest in place and people together, transformation happens. The pages ahead tell the story of 2025: a year of new beginnings for us and the extraordinary community we serve.

Alyssa L. Trometter, Ph.D.
President & CEO

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Who We Are

My Connect Community (MCC) is a place-based nonprofit serving Gulfton and Sharpstown, Houston's most densely populated neighborhood and home to one of the city's largest newcomer communities.

Founded in 2016, we work to align partners and marshal resources that break a persistent cycle of intergenerational poverty, enhance opportunity for residents seeking to make a meaningful life here, and offer a sense of place from which to flourish.

Our Impact Zone

- ① **19,000** residents
- ② **91%** speak a language other than English at home
- ③ **45%** lack a high school diploma
- ④ **44%** poverty rate (vs. 20% citywide)



What We Do

MCC operates across
FOUR INTEGRATED PILLARS
to create a
360-DEGREE APPROACH to
community transformation.

Housing

We develop mixed-income housing that offers security, dignity, and opportunity, demonstrating that affordable doesn't mean substandard.

Economic Vitality

We create pathways from unemployment to careers through workforce training, earn-to-learn ESL classes, entrepreneurship support, manufacturing opportunities, and on-site childcare at Fabric Forge.

Education

We remove barriers to learning from cradle to career, embedding multilingual support in schools and ensuring every child has access to quality education.

Health & Wellness

We connect families to health services, childcare, mental health support, and community resources through trusted partners and multilingual navigators.



Our Partners

Founding Partners

KIPP Texas | Legacy Community Health | St. Luke's United Methodist Church | YMCA of Greater Houston

Strategic Framework

MCC is a proud network member of Purpose Built Communities, the nation's leader in strengthening overlooked neighborhoods and paving pathways to prosperity. Our work is grounded in Purpose Built's beliefs in neighborhoods as engines of social change and hyperlocal organizations as uniquely positioned to understand and address their communities' needs.





Why We Do It

Because **place matters**. When neighborhoods are overlooked and disinvested in for decades, residents become locked out of opportunity even when they bring **talent, ambition, and drive**.

We believe every family in Gulfton and Sharpstown deserves the chance to lead a healthy, prosperous life in a **safe and vibrant neighborhood** where they can **live, learn, work, and thrive**.

Housing

The Foundation for Everything Else

Without safe, affordable housing, nothing else works. Children struggle in school and adults can't sustain employment. That's why in December 2024, MCC opened **Connect Highstar: 77 high-quality, mixed-income apartments** and the **first new construction in this neighborhood in 40 years**.

Just one month later, every unit was leased. As one resident told us: *"Though I've lived in the U.S. for eight years, I finally feel like I'm living in America."*

And Connect Highstar is more than housing, it's a **platform for transformation**. The ground floor houses:

- **Fabric Forge**, our 9,000-square-foot workforce development and manufacturing hub
- **Library of Things** for borrowing and sharing household items
- **Retail space** for entrepreneurial storefronts that put zing back into our neighborhood



Connect Highstar
is a **platform for transformation.**

Economic Vitality

From Talent to Careers

At **Fabric Forge**, we don't just teach skills, **we remove barriers**. Our work includes:

- Industrial sewing training program with embedded ESL and digital literacy training
- Free, on-site childcare enabling women who juggle family responsibilities to participate, learn, and earn
- Earn-to-learn ESL for adults
- Free job search coaching



Fabric Forge
removes barriers to
economic vitality.

Education

Building Bridges

Language opens doors. Our **TranslatorCorps** embeds multilingual residents across **10 schools and 3 community centers**, serving as trusted cultural navigators for newcomer families. The residents support students transitioning to school for the first time and help parents navigate the school system including parent-teacher conferences and advocating in special education meetings. The TranslatorCorps is critical to building and sustaining trust between families and schools.



Serving as
cultural navigators for
newcomer families.

Health & Wellness

Trusted Connections

Through our **Connector Program**, an AmeriCorps partnership with Legacy Community Health, we employ multilingual community ambassadors to link families to health services, education, and resources.



Linking families to
health services, education
and *resources*.



2025

A Year of Milestones

JANUARY

Connect Highstar Fully Leased and Activated

Occupancy was just the beginning. MCC immediately launched programming to turn the building into a community hub. In June, MCC hosted community focus groups in three different languages inside Connect Highstar, listening deeply to residents to understand their most pressing needs. What emerged was clear: neighbors needed dedicated, on-site support. In August, MCC launched the Resident Assistant (RA) program, placing three AmeriCorps members on-site to provide resource navigation to more than 38 Connect Highstar residents and delivering 300+ hours of support for weekly classes and events. MCC leveraged its unique foothold in the building to offer earn-to-learn ESL classes, arts and crafts activities, workout sessions, and highly popular Prelude Music Circles that brought neighbors together. With zero evictions throughout the year, Connect Highstar demonstrated that when you offer quality, dignity, and connection, families thrive.

APRIL

Houston Hosts Purpose Built Communities Annual Conference

MCC welcomed over 600 leaders from across the Purpose Built Communities network to Houston for the 2025 annual conference. The gathering showcased Gulfton/Sharpstown's transformation as a national model for place-based community development, with tours of Connect Highstar and convenings that highlighted MCC's integrated approach to housing, education, economic vitality, and health & wellness. Hosting this conference affirmed what we've long believed: our place-based approach works and our people are thriving.



MAY

Fabric Forge and Library of Things Open Their Doors

In a single month, MCC launched two transformative spaces. Fabric Forge, our 9,000-square-foot textile lab and entrepreneurship center, opened on the ground floor of Connect Highstar, immediately serving two dozen women in our industrial sewing program. Just steps away, the Library of Things began lending tools, kitchen equipment, and creative supplies to neighbors and achieved 92 active borrowers by year-end. Both spaces prove that community infrastructure isn't just about buildings; it's about creating places where people can learn, create, and connect.

May also marked a leadership transition as founder Anne Whitlock retired after nearly a decade of visionary work and leadership, and Dr. Alyssa Trometter was hired as President and CEO to embark on MCC's second decade.

OCTOBER

Celebrating Fabric Forge at Our Annual Luncheon

MCC's funders, partners, and friends gathered for our 9th Annual Connect + Amplify Luncheon under the theme "Made Here. Made Strong," a celebration of Fabric Forge and the talent it unleashes. The event raised over \$350,000 and featured a vibrant pop-up market where guests purchased goods handcrafted by our sewists and local entrepreneurs. Co-chaired by Jen Kahn of Scenery Bags and Merin Guthrie of Kit, two Houston makers who embody the power of local manufacturing, the luncheon showcased how workforce development, entrepreneurship, and community investment create pathways to prosperity.

DECEMBER

Connect Hillcroft Site Acquired

MCC capped off 2025 by acquiring 6420 Hillcroft Avenue. The property will become Connect Hillcroft, a 90-unit senior affordable housing development with an 8,000-square-foot early childhood learning center on the ground floor. This intergenerational design will reduce isolation among older adults, support early childhood development, and strengthen multi-generational bonds across the entire neighborhood.



Stories from Our Community

Norma Delgado

Norma Delgado, an immigrant from Central America, came to Fabric Forge with no previous sewing experience and no formal employment history. She started on home machines and quickly advanced to industrial equipment. Over twelve months, her technical skills grew alongside something harder to teach: leadership. Norma became a patient guide for emerging sewists, took a genuine interest in machine maintenance, and pushed herself further by studying English and computer skills outside of work. That growth led to her promotion to Production Coordinator, a role that became full-time in 2026.

“When I came to Fabric Forge, I was nervous. Could I step into the workforce? But here, I learned to sew, I learned to drive, and I improved my English. I gained confidence and began providing for my family. Today, I’m the Production Coordinator at Fabric Forge. I’ve done more than I ever imagined, and I know this is just the beginning.”

Jacqueline Mulengezi

Jacqueline Mulengezi moved to Houston from the Congo with one goal: to build a better life and give her six children access to better opportunities. Like many newcomer mothers, she faced a challenge that felt impossible to solve. How do you earn income when you’re raising a family, learning a new language, and navigating an entirely new country all at once?

At Fabric Forge, Jacqueline found her answer. As a sewist, she earns steady income doing work she’s proud of, while ESL classes embedded in the program allow her to build language skills alongside her career.

When asked what Fabric Forge means to her, Jacqueline doesn’t hesitate: “I love my job.”

The impact reaches well beyond Jacqueline herself. Her daughter Neema now serves as MCC’s Associate Director of Health & Wellness, helping other newcomer families navigate the same challenges her mother once faced. Jacqueline also tends a plot at Shamba Ya Amani, a local community garden, bringing fresh produce home to her family.

For Jacqueline, MCC didn’t just provide a paycheck. It provided a pathway, for her, for her children, and for the community she now helps serve.

Housing

77 families

Lived in Connect Highstar with zero evictions

3 Resident Assistants

Delivered 312 hours of on-site support to 38 residents

90 Units Planned

Connect Hillcroft senior housing underway

Economic Vitality

697 people

Participated in Fabric Forge programs and events in 2025

41 students

Completed the 150-hour industrial sewing training program

\$138,600

Revenue generated through Fabric Forge production, space rental, and training

Education

800 students & parents

Supported by 13 translators in 9 languages

45 residents

Enrolled in Earn-to-Learn ESL with 96% attendance rate

80%

Students met academic benchmarks

Health & Wellness

730 residents

Connected to resources through Connector Program

92 neighbors

Borrowed items and built community at Library of Things

31 families

Served at Connect Highstar's inaugural Health Fair in partnership with Legacy Community Health

86%

of Gulfton/Sharpstown families have at least one member engaging with MCC regularly



2025 Financial Summary

The following summary is based on internal financial statements and is unaudited.

Total Revenue	\$3,174,711	Total Assets	\$26,622,154
Total Expenses	\$2,289,037	Total Liabilities	\$20,601,312
Net Revenue	\$885,674	Net Assets	\$6,020,842



Looking Ahead

As I write MCC's 2025 Impact Report, I find myself reflecting on open doors and the extraordinary things that happen when talented, determined people walk through them.

As we enter 2026, MCC's 10th anniversary year, we do so with clear vision and growing momentum. The December purchase of 6420 Hillcroft Avenue marks the beginning of our next chapter: pairing affordable senior housing with high-quality early childhood education; an intergenerational hub where wisdom meets wonder; and only the second new construction in this neighborhood in over 40 years, both led by MCC.

The doors we opened in 2025 are just the beginning. Our neighbors continue to lead, create, and shape this work every day. Our partners recognize the power of collaboration and shared vision. Our funders invest in community-driven solutions and long-term transformation. Our staff and board bring excellence, heart, and deep respect for both the talent and the challenges all around us. Together, we are building something extraordinary.

You are the reason 2025 was a year of opening doors. You are the reason that families like Norma's and Jacqueline's are writing their own stories of success. And you are the reason that we step into 2026 knowing that Gulfton and Sharpstown's greatest assets have always been its people.

The work continues. The doors remain open. And the community we're building together, led by residents and powered by partnership, grows stronger every day.

With deepest gratitude,

Alyssa L. Trometter, Ph.D.
President & CEO



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