



SPACE TO SHINE

*Building Brighter Futures
East of the River*



CASE STATEMENT

ABOUT LITTLE LIGHTS

- 4 Letter from Steve
- 6 Our History
- 8 Our Impact
- 12 Building Design
- 16 Project Impact
- 18 Build with Us



OUR MISSION
 To empower underserved youth, families, and communities in Washington, DC by sharing the hope of Christ through compassionate action, caring relationships, and racial reconciliation.

OUR VISION
 To help build communities of compassion and joy where underserved children, youth, and families flourish through holistic, wrap-around support and practical resources.



We envision a community of racial and class reconciliation where mutual respect and authentic fellowship provide a place of healing and joy.



We envision adults engaged in gainful employment and moving out of the cycle of poverty.



We envision all children and youth thriving in every way through academic support, character-development, and arts and recreation.



We envision families being strengthened, children and youth becoming healthier and safer, and loving relationships flourishing.

“We envision a place of compassion, empowerment, and community where joy, hope, and humility find a home and grow to transform lives and the neighborhood.”

Steve Park



Dear Friends,

In 1995 I began meeting and building relationships with students in a low-income neighborhood in Washington, DC. As I got to know these students, I quickly saw the complex and profound needs that existed in their community, but I also came to a simple yet profound conviction. The lives and the futures of these students mattered deeply to God. These children were worth sacrificing my time, energy, and resources for because they were precious and irreplaceable. **They had inherent value and unique giftings and I deeply desired to see them grow and thrive. Out of this conviction, Little Lights began.**

Over the years, my wife Mary and I have dedicated our lives to seeing youth and young adults who are often left behind by the larger society find opportunities and the support needed to flourish despite these difficult circumstances. As we look back on close to 30 years of ministry, it is encouraging to see how God has provided from our humble beginnings to where we are now, **a sustainable non-profit ministry sharing the compassion and hope of Christ in places of great need in the nation’s capital.**

Little Lights has grown into a multi-faceted organization providing holistic care for youth and their families across five DC neighborhoods. We provide out-of-school time programs for elementary students with high quality academic support, social-emotional learning, enrichment opportunities, and character and spiritual development. We provide support for our middle and high school students through one-to-one mentoring and college and career readiness programming. We offer support and resources for the families in our community, including access to a computer lab and employment and economic empowerment opportunities. We also lead anti-racism training for the broader public.

+1,100

unique students served through our youth programs

27+

hours per week of youth programs on average

+110

community members hired



Although we have had the privilege of seeing lives transformed through Little Lights, the need in our city continues to be tremendous. The youth and families we serve are impacted by violence and poverty that persists in our communities. Far too many children, youth, and families lack the resources and support needed to flourish. This is particularly true in Ward 7, east of the Anacostia River.

In June 2023, through the support of many generous donors, **Little Lights secured and paid the down payment for the Jubilee Center, a 6,000 square foot church building in Ward 7, east of the river.** This new building will enable Little Lights to expand our work to neighborhoods in Ward 7, creating space for more students and their families to experience the care and support Little Lights provides. Our vision is to fully renovate and modernize this building to create a flourishing community center with space to provide our full array of programs in this new neighborhood. We envision a place of compassion, empowerment, and community where joy, hope, and humility find a home and grow to transform lives and the neighborhood.

Little Lights has been incredibly blessed with exceptional generosity, support, and service. Children, youth, and families have found caring relationships, practical assistance, and economic empowerment. I believe it is time for the next chapter for Little Lights to make an even greater impact for decades to come. **I am excited for what God has in store for the next 30 years and how many lives and futures will be changed for the better.**

However, the work is far from done and we cannot do this alone. The creation of this ministry center in Ward 7 is our largest expansion in our history – it truly is a step of faith. We need your support to multiply the good Little Lights is doing in our nation’s capital. **I would love for you to consider partnering with us in this next chapter of our journey as we expand our reach and impact.** The children, youth, and families we serve matter and deserve our best effort.

Let’s do good together,

Steve



From its foundation until now, Little Lights has remained committed to providing holistic support for under-resourced students and families in DC through compassionate care and practical assistance.

1995
STEVE PARK
FOUNDS
LITTLE LIGHTS



In 1995 while helping run a camp for under-resourced students in DC, Steve met an 8th grader named Darrell. When Steve realized Darrell could not read a simple Dr. Seuss book, he was heartbroken and felt a call to spend his life working to help students like Darrell. From this conviction, Little Lights began.

2005
LITTLE LIGHTS
CENTER OPENS



After years of renting office space, in 2005, Christian Fellowship Church sold the building that is now the Little Lights Center to Little Lights for just \$10. Owning this building that holds office and programming space has brought financial security and stability, allowing for more robust growth.

2008
POTOMAC
GARDENS
CENTER OPENS



Our first expansion was into apartment units within Potomac Gardens public housing. In 2008, DC Housing Authority made the decision to provide space for nonprofit service providers in 1st floor units within the apartment complex. Little Lights was chosen as one of the nonprofits to utilize this space, providing needed youth programming in the community.

2011
EXPANDED
ADULT & FAMILY
PROGRAMS



We opened the Family Center to provide practical assistance to adults through career counseling, school supplies, diaper distribution, Thanksgiving meals, and more. And, through our landscaping social enterprise, the Clean Green Team builds skills and experience while providing for their families.

2013
HOPKINS
CENTER OPENS



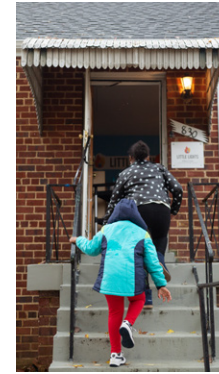
Seeing the impactful work Little Lights was providing residents in Potomac Gardens public housing, we were invited by the Resident Council of Hopkins public housing to expand our programming to provide regular direct services at Hopkins. With this invitation, our fourth site was launched.

2016
RACE LITERACY
CLASS BEGINS



In 2016, Little Lights had the organizational capacity for Steve to create a course to bring people together to not only learn about the difficult topic of race and systemic racism, but have healthy productive conversations around the topic. In the spring of 2016, 16 people gathered for Race Literacy 101. Since then, over 1,000 people have taken this course.

2017
HILLTOP
CENTER OPENS



Little Lights opened the Hilltop Center, our first in Ward 7, to serve the residents of Benning Terrace public housing. A local congregation, First Rock Baptist Church, who shares our vision generously provides the space rent-free.

2021
COLLEGE
AND CAREER
PROGRAM
LAUNCHES



While working with high school students and recent graduates, our staff realized that many of these students were struggling with school and trying to navigate the college process. Seeing these needs, we launched our College & Career program, serving high schoolers and young adults by providing academic support and advocacy.

2023
FUTURE HOME OF THE
LITTLE LIGHTS JUBILEE CENTER
PURCHASED IN WARD 7



The sad and unjust reality is that DC's students are struggling, particularly in lower-income communities like Ward 7 where 38% of children live in poverty. Seeing the urgent need for holistic support, Little Lights purchased a building east of the Anacostia River.

Our vision is to transform this new space into a community and ministry center where students can thrive. This new space will enable Little Lights to expand our reach, increase our impact, and sustain our mission.

OUR IMPACT

Little Lights provides long-term, year-round support and services for low-income, underserved communities in Washington, DC. Since 1995, Little Lights has built trusted relationships to provide effective ministry for children, youth, and adults with an array of programs that provide academic and youth development, economic empowerment, and relational support.



87%

of students who regularly attend Little Lights saw improved reading scores in 2023

92%

of students who regularly attend Little Lights saw improved math scores in 2023

\$220K

of scholarship money awarded to college students in 2023

+13K

Nutritional meals served to students each year

580

Gifts distributed at the 2023 Christmas Store

160

Individuals attended a Race Literacy event in 2023

484

Volunteers served at Little Lights in 2023

32

Community members employed by Little Lights in 2023

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Through after school, weekend, and summer programs, we provide academic support, tutoring, social-emotional learning, and mentoring to elementary and middle school students. This support provides a significant impact to students academic and emotional well-being.

COLLEGE AND CAREER

Our College and Career Readiness program helps students gain the skills and knowledge needed to navigate their postsecondary endeavors through one-to-one tutoring, college planning, and job training. Our goal is to provide the ongoing support system that is necessary to help remove many of the obstacles that keep low income students stuck in a cycle of poverty.



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We provide various services and support to families in our community through diaper distributions, a Thanksgiving meal drive, Christmas store, back to school supplies, and more. With many community partnerships, we are able to assist families in crises and help provide or connect them to the resources they need.

ANTIRACISM TRAININGS

We offer various anti-racism trainings and workshops to help individuals authentically learn and reflect on race and racism in a grace-filled environment. Our aim is to be part of the solution in the racial divide and work toward helping one another find healing of this collective wound.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Little Lights helps people in our community become workforce ready through on-the-job training and job search assistance. Our goal is to hire as many people as possible from the communities we serve in order to funnel paychecks back into our neighborhoods and help people gain the experience they need to pursue other job opportunities.

OUR IMPACT

Over the years, we have had the privilege of watching students and families' lives be transformed through the support Little Lights offers. Seeing community members flourish inspires us to expand our work and deepen our investment.

“We’re very excited to have Little Lights come and be a part of our community. We appreciate the fact that they focus on bringing their services to our immediate community and we really look forward to it.”

John Adams, *ANC Commissioner for Ward 7*

“I gladly invited Little Lights to start offering programming at Hopkins because they help provide what we need to create a positive environment for the children. I thank God for Little Lights being in the neighborhood because they’ve helped a lot of kids.”

Gloria Matthews,
*President of Hopkins
Resident Council*

“Every time I enter the new building, I see different possibilities. Having a space like this, the possibilities are endless and I’m very excited. It’s going to be a lot of hard work, and there is a lot of support that we need, but we’re very excited that we can do something like this in Ward 7 of Washington DC. It’s going to be very special that we get to do something like this for the families that we serve.”

Mary Park, *Deputy Director*

“Receiving all of the support, resources, and love from the staff and volunteers through my time as a student at Little Lights, it was a no-brainer for me to give back to my community by working on staff at Little Lights”

Cierra Peterson, *former Little Lights student and current staff member*



“If you do something for one generation, that effect trickles down. A lot of times, kids from poorer neighborhoods don’t hear ‘wow, you’re going to be so great when you get older’, but having those few words said to you over a long period of time, it really starts to change you—your values, your personality, how you see the world, and how you see yourself.”

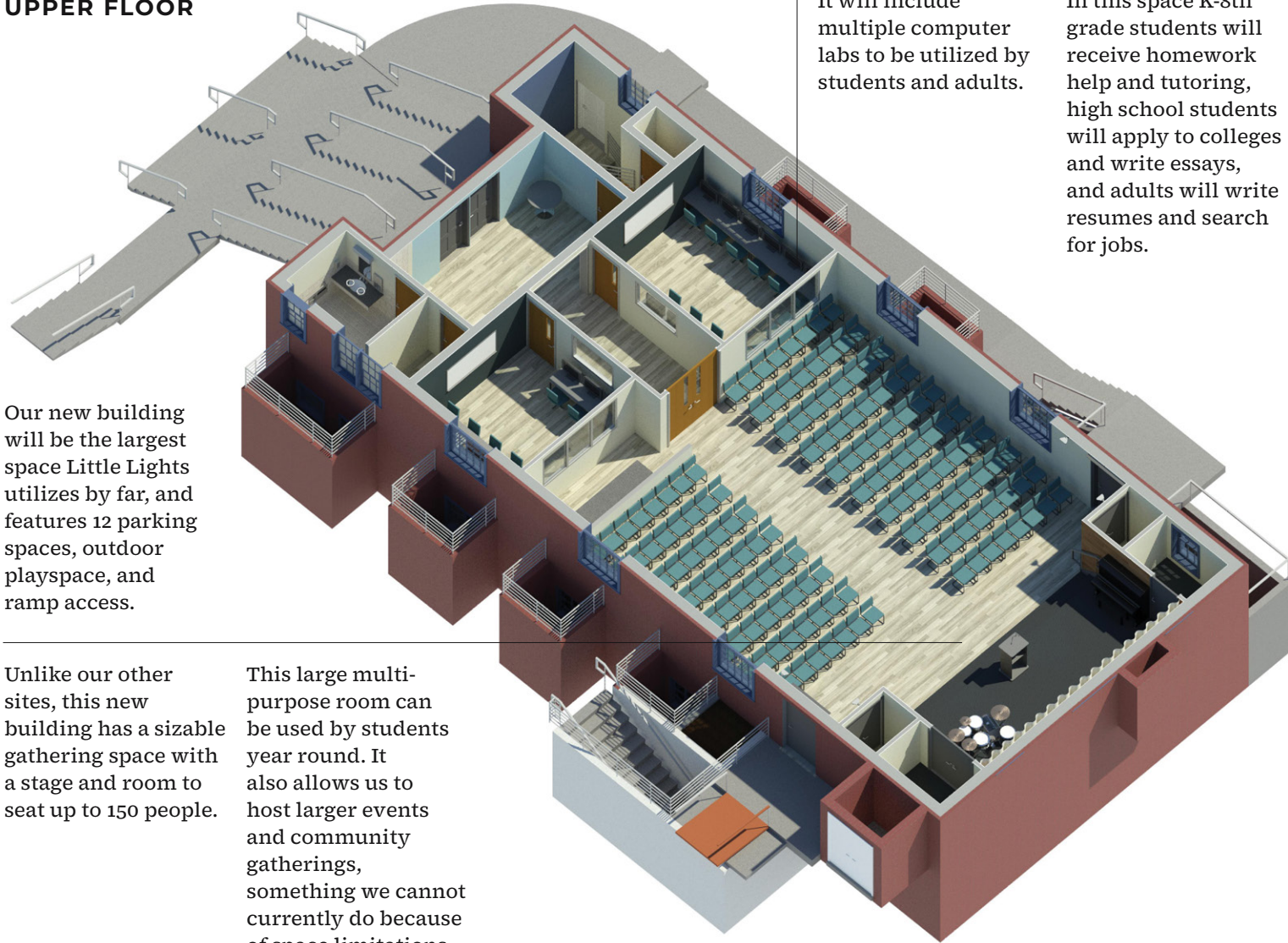
Jasmin, *High school student*

UPPER FLOOR

Our new building will be the largest space Little Lights utilizes by far, and features 12 parking spaces, outdoor playspace, and ramp access.

Unlike our other sites, this new building has a sizable gathering space with a stage and room to seat up to 150 people.

This large multi-purpose room can be used by students year round. It also allows us to host larger events and community gatherings, something we cannot currently do because of space limitations.



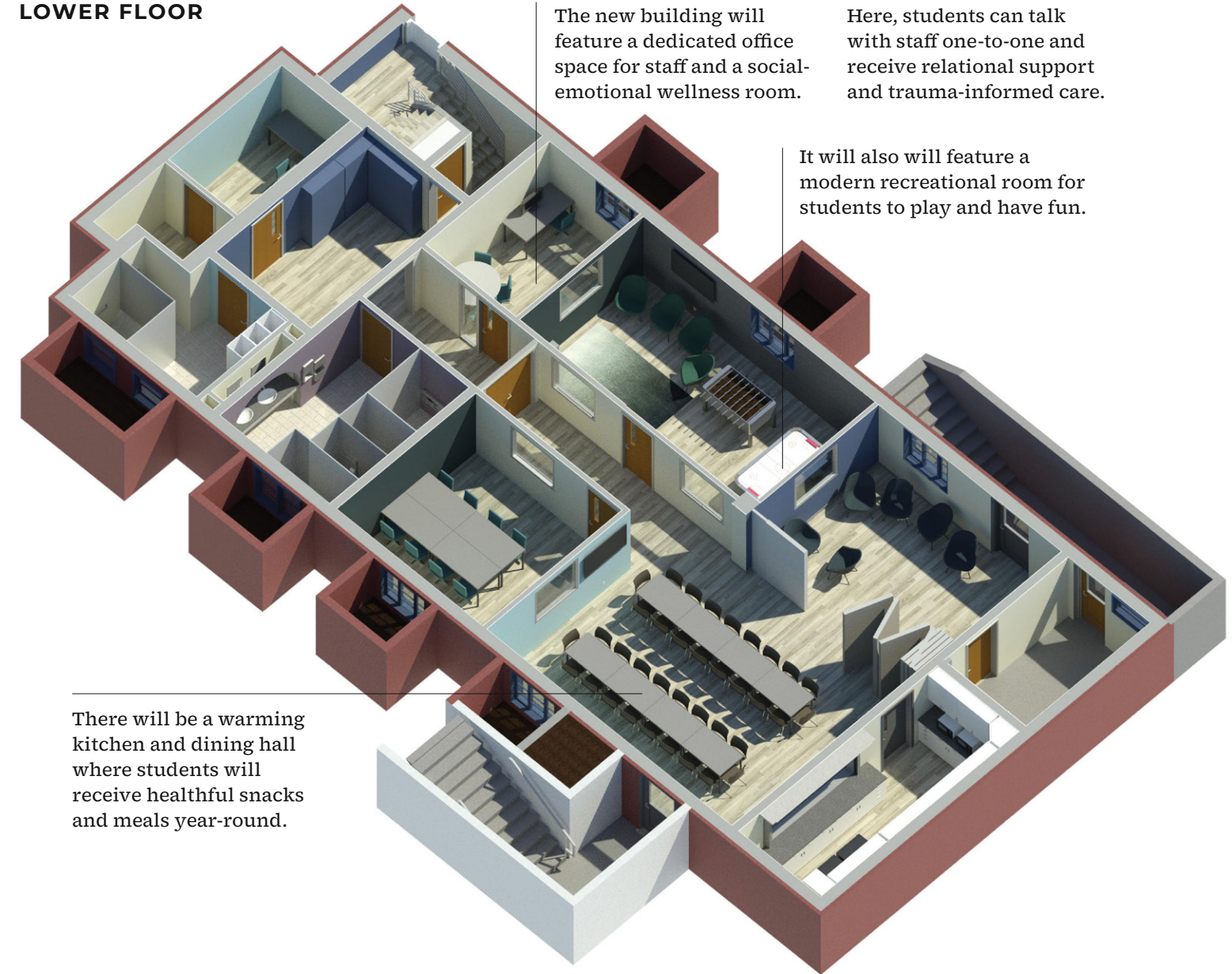
It will include multiple computer labs to be utilized by students and adults.

In this space K-8th grade students will receive homework help and tutoring, high school students will apply to colleges and write essays, and adults will write resumes and search for jobs.





LOWER FLOOR



The new building will feature a dedicated office space for staff and a social-emotional wellness room.

Here, students can talk with staff one-to-one and receive relational support and trauma-informed care.

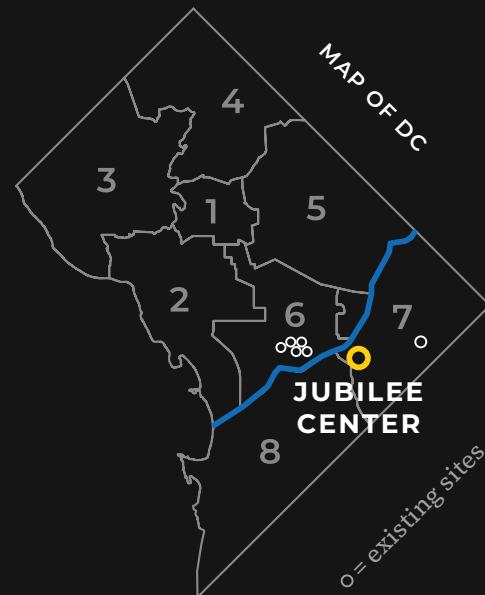
It will also will feature a modern recreational room for students to play and have fun.

There will be a warming kitchen and dining hall where students will receive healthful snacks and meals year-round.

PROJECT IMPACT

Seeing the ongoing, complex, and pervasive needs that exist within low-income communities in DC, we are committed to serving these students and families for the long haul.

We recently acquired a building in Ward 7, east of the Anacostia River because of this need and our commitment to serve. We are excited to build the Jubilee Center upon our proven model of success and expand into this new neighborhood in Ward 7. We are passionate about providing our unique model of holistic care to more students and families, increasing our impact in the community, and making an investment in sustainability for our organization.



EXPAND OUR REACH



With more than 28 years of experience, we have created robust and effective programming that has a proven track record of cultivating transformation in the lives of our students & families.



With this new building we will open our 6th site where we will provide wrap-around programming to underserved children and youth. At this site we will offer our year-round out-of-school time programming to elementary and middle school students, provide support to high school students and young adults through our high-impact College and Career Program, and offer programs for adults during the day including computer classes, workshops, and a free diaper distribution center.

INCREASE OUR IMPACT



With a large gathering space, this new building will become a community center for all of Little Light's programming as well as a space for collaboration with other organizations, churches, and the broader community.



We will be able to gather as a larger group of students for special events and performances, including music and theater performances, movie nights, community events, and more in the large multi-purpose space.

SUSTAIN OUR MISSION



A majority of our programming sites are hosted by DC Housing Authority, but these sites are not permanent. Possible housing re-developments make our future work in these spaces uncertain. Not only will the Jubilee Center be an expansion of our current programming, but it will also serve as a long-term hub for Little Lights, as it is not directly tied to public housing.



This space will be an additional permanent home for Little Lights to serve vulnerable children, youth, and families in DC for decades to come.



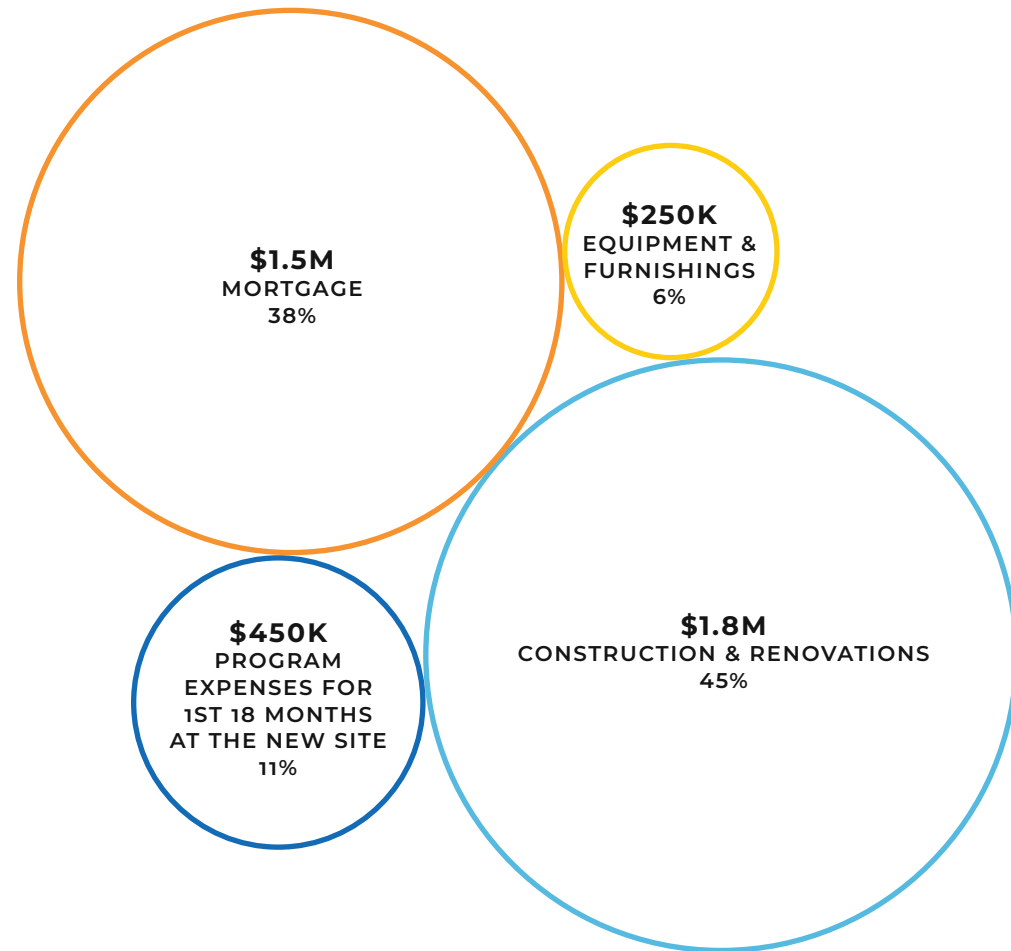
BUILD WITH US

In order to fully purchase, renovate, equip, and launch our programs in this new space, it will cost approximately \$4 million.

BREAKDOWN OF \$4 MILLION BUDGET

Through many generous donors, we were able to pay the down payment on the building, but there is much work to be done to fully own and renovate this space into the safe and welcoming hub in the community we desire it to be.

We cannot do this work alone—we need donors, volunteers, community partners, and staff to partner together to make this possible.



Would you partner with us in providing sanctuaries of encouragement, hope, and practical assistance to underserved children, youth, and families in Washington, DC? Would you help us build brighter futures East of the River, creating a space for students to shine?

YOU CAN DONATE TO THIS CAMPAIGN IN ONE OF THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

ONLINE

Scan the QR code to give via credit card or bank transfer.



CHECK

Make a check out to Little Lights and write "Space to Shine" in the memo line. Mail check to 760 7th St, SE, Washington, DC 20003.

DONOR ADVISED FUND

Contact your sponsoring organization to direct a gift to Little Lights.

APPRECIATE STOCK

Visit www.littlelights.org/give for instructions on giving stock.





760 7th Street SE
Washington, DC 20003
202.548.4021
CFC #89156 | UW #8543

www.littlelights.org
[@littlelightsdc](https://www.instagram.com/littlelightsdc)
[/LittleLightsUrbanMinistries](https://www.facebook.com/LittleLightsUrbanMinistries)
[/LittleLightsVideos](https://www.youtube.com/LittleLightsVideos)

