Lackawanna, NY

The Hub @ Martha Chaney Bishop Community Center
Community Support Center and Meeting Space

My Idea for Change
My project aims to serve youth in Buffalo and Lackawanna to positively change their lives by providing a safe location that offers opportunities to increase their education and gain life skills. I believe that education and positive recreational opportunities will help youth grow up to be productive citizens that want to give back to their community. My inspiration comes from my personal life transformation from having an at-risk mindset to becoming a person resolved to give back. This transformation was enabled by caring, supportive people and the influence of the now demolished Friendship House. The Hub will also act as a meeting space for other organizations doing work in the community without a permanent home.

Where the Change Will Happen
The Hub honors the legacy of my grandparents who were the previous owners of the building as well as community “elders.” Eugene Bishop, my grandfather, worked long, grueling hours at Bethlehem Steel’s coke ovens to care for his family and support the business. While his wife, Martha Chaney Bishop, extended herself to the community at a time when the community pulled together to raise its children and teach them how to succeed in a divided world. 145 Steelewanna was the home of their tavern, The Du-Drop-Inn, a once prominent soul food, blues establishment that catered to Bethlehem Steel workers and the local community.

The Hub @ Martha Chaney Bishop Community Center is needed in the community because the decline of the industrial core brought social and economic instability, which has resulted in neighborhood blight and the dissolution of the social fabric which once held the community together. We need a place for youth to pursue education and positive social life. We need a place where youth can develop their potential and find the support they need to become the next generation of leaders in our community.

Planning a Change

Actions to Move It Forward
- Finish renovations
- Develop programming and schedule
- Finalize volunteer rooster
- Finalize center operation details

Resources Needed to Make It Happen
- Funding, Partnerships, Volunteers, Marketing, Grant writing assistance

Funding Range
$50,000 - $75,000 for building renovation costs

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About the Champion...
LaShanen is founder and President of MOC, a community hub in Lackawanna, New York. Inspired by his own transformation and the impact that the bygone Friendship House had on his life, LaShanen’s dream of bringing transformation and new life to the youth of that same community is coming together. LaShanen’s contacts across the spectrum of nonprofits, local businesses, community leaders and sports figures have endorsed his plans to change lives and provide opportunity where there is none. These highly experienced volunteers have already come forward to assist in the programming such as for tutoring, mentoring, sports, arts, music and camping events. Currently, LaShanen is getting ready to present his idea to the community and launch initial programming in July. He is also busy planning fundraising events in order to get the HUB @ The Martha Chaney Bishop Community Center off the ground.