What began three years ago as tornado recovery has become something much more powerful.

On June 1, 2011, the gale force winds that pushed through Springfield left both rubble and hardship in their wake.

But that was then. Now, we come together to remember not the devastation that was put upon us, but the strength with which we’ve met the challenge.

While the tornado changed the face of many Springfield neighborhoods, it is not that force that has charted our course forward. It is our residents, businesses, public servants, and nonprofit partners who have re-energized our city and proactively planned its redevelopment.

When we began the Rebuild Springfield planning process, more than 3,000 residents participated in setting redevelopment priorities for our tornado-damaged districts and for strengthening the city as a whole. Today, many of those people are still at work creating change within our community.

If you drive through Springfield today, you will see the early fruits of our labors: beautiful new homes are going up on Central Street, thousands of trees have been replanted, parks have been restored, the rehabilitation of Union Station is underway and the South End is poised for major new investment. In fact, an estimated $2.48 billion in new investment in private and public development projects is currently planned or underway.

Though we have made great progress, work still remains to be done. Unlike the fast and random acts of nature, the redevelopment process can be lengthy. However, even some of the largest and most difficult jobs, such as the replacement of Cathedral High School and the development of a new South End Community Center, are now seeing action.

What began three years ago as tornado recovery has turned into the building of a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous Springfield.

Respectfully,

Domenic J. Sarno
Mayor
ABOUT THE REBUILD SPRINGFIELD PLAN

The Rebuild Springfield Plan is a city-wide master plan designed to provide a framework for addressing the redevelopment needs of neighborhoods impacted by the June 1, 2011 tornado. Additionally, the plan serves as a guide for addressing a wide range of issues relevant to the city as a whole.

Tornado-impacted neighborhoods are grouped into three districts, each with respective sections in the plan. City-wide focus areas are divided into six sections referred to as nexus domains. These domains encompass the physical, cultural, social, organizational, educational, and economic components of a healthy and vibrant community. The Rebuild Springfield Plan includes specific recommendations and strategies for each district and domain developed through input from experts in a variety of fields, City leaders and staff, businesses and nonprofit organizations, and more than 3,000 individuals who participated in the planning process.

Just as the plan was developed through a broad-based and inclusive process, implementing its recommendations has involved the efforts of numerous City departments, state and federal agencies, businesses, nonprofits, and individual citizens from every Springfield neighborhood. In fact, before organized rebuild efforts were underway, 162 property owners whose homes were condemned due to tornado damage made repairs on their own — and twenty-one people whose homes were demolished built new homes. Hundreds more volunteered for recovery-assistance initiatives, participated in community-planning processes and have assisted in the rebuild effort in countless other ways. Implementing the Rebuild Plan is a collaborative and ongoing effort that continues as we work together to build a stronger Springfield.

The Rebuild Springfield Plan was released to the public in the spring of 2012. This publication is intended to provide a brief overview of the progress that has been made since that time. It is, of course, only a snapshot, as no summary can fully articulate the breadth of work that has been accomplished, adequately acknowledge those who have participated in the process to date, or completely outline what remains to be done. The full text of the Rebuild Springfield Plan is available online at www.DevelopSpringfield.com.

DEVELOP Springfield
1182 Main Street, Springfield, MA  01103
413-209-8808
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REBUILD SPRINGFIELD PLAN

PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS AT A GLANCE

**EDUCATIONAL DOMAIN**
- New school construction and rehabilitation projects completed or underway
- Expanded library hours implemented
- New adult education, job training, and advanced degree offerings
- UMass joins Cambridge College and Bay Path College, opening a satellite downtown campus

**PHYSICAL DOMAIN**
- Union Station rehabilitation underway
- Springfield’s first bike lane built on Plumtree Road
- Ordinance for expedited sale of vacant lots to abutters adopted
- New Community Garden Ordinance spurs more neighborhood gardens
- New homes built on vacant lots
- More than 5,000 trees planted in tornado impacted areas

**CULTURAL DOMAIN**
- Springfield Central Cultural District approved
- Walking tours, special exhibits, programs, and other “Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper” events offered

**SOCIAL DOMAIN**
- Enhanced downtown police deployments implemented
- $1 million grant received to launch new public-safety initiative in the South End
- Live Well Springfield public-health initiative launched
- Plans for development of a full-line grocery store in Mason Square in process

**ECONOMIC DOMAIN**
- Major medical campus expansions in Metro Center and the North End
- State Data Center completed at the former Technical High School, preserving the Elliot Street façade and providing an estimated 100 permanent jobs
- MGM proposes transformative investments in Metro Center and South End
- Efforts to provide workforce training to residents of disaster impacted neighborhoods underway

**ORGANIZATIONAL DOMAIN**
- DevelopSpringfield strengthens role as City’s private nonprofit development partner through acquisition of several key redevelopment sites and initiation of prominent redevelopment projects
- Various groups working to improve the image and perception of Springfield

**DISTRICT 1**
- Caring Health Center and Square One rebuild in the South End along with several area businesses
- New South End Community Center design in process
- Phase I and II of Outing Park Historic District rehabilitation completed — Phase III underway
- Emerson Wight Park renovations completed

**DISTRICT 2**
- New Brookings School under construction
- Five new single-family homes under construction on Central Street, additional homes planned
- Commonwealth Academy opens at former MacDuffie School, repairs to the historic campus are underway

**DISTRICT 3**
- Dryden School renovation completed
- Insurance and federal aid awards finalized for Cathedral High School
- Residents working to bring a new library/community center to the neighborhood
Physical reconstruction was clearly a main focus of the Rebuild Springfield Plan. The effect of seeing devastated neighborhoods and bare skylines where large trees once stood had both practical and emotional impact on our city.

One of the most exciting and tangible signs of progress has been the rebuilding of Central Street. After more than two years of cleanup, planning, securing federal funding, and selecting developers, construction on Central Street is in full swing. The new homes will provide increased homeownership opportunities and a much-needed lift to the community as residents see new construction as the culmination of years of hard work.

The physical improvement of neighborhoods has gone beyond repairing tornado damage. Rebuilding Together recently announced an exciting “Green-N-Fit 10-in-10” initiative to revitalize the Old Hill neighborhood by rehabilitating homes on ten contiguous blocks from Tyler Street to Hickory Street over ten years. HAPHousing, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, Greater Springfield Habitat for Humanity, Home City Housing, and other nonprofit housing providers, along with private developers such as First Resource Companies, have contributed substantially to physical transformation in many neighborhoods throughout the “City of Homes.”

In addition to housing improvements, schools are being reconstructed, parks restored, and trees replanted. Major street, transportation, and other infrastructure improvements are planned or underway throughout the city, including in the tornado-impacted districts.

On Central Street, Viva Development works to complete four beautiful new homes to fill gaps left by the tornado. The City has committed federal funds to restore what Mayor Sarno called “the gateway to downtown and East Forest Park.” North End Housing Initiative is also building new homes in the area and the City will provide financial assistance to support development of 14 more homes in the neighborhood over the next three years.

When completed in 2016, Union Station will include a restored terminal building and central concourse servicing Amtrak intercity rail and planned New Haven-Hartford-Springfield commuter rail, local and intercity buses and taxi, bicycle and pedestrian travel in one state-of-the-art inter-modal transportation complex.
As we all know, a city is much more than just its buildings and streets; urban planning and access to resources have a direct impact on the health and safety of its residents and their overall quality of life. The Rebuild Springfield Plan took these factors into account and called for improved access to arts, culture, and health resources as well as for enhanced public safety for all Springfield residents.

Live Well Springfield is an example of a key initiative intended to improve the lives of Springfield residents and raise the profile of Springfield as a destination for healthy living in the region.

Funded through a federal grant, Live Well has engaged over 30 organizations and programs across the city, all working toward improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities. The Pioneer Valley Riverfront Club is offering indoor and outdoor rowing programs to Springfield residents of all ages, helping them build confidence, increase fitness, and enjoy the beauty of the Connecticut River. The GoFresh Mobile Market now has 12 stops across Springfield and a winter farmer’s market. Additionally, a new pedestrian and bike plan is being developed for the city.

Efforts to engage youth in programs to bring urban agriculture and sustainable living to the city are at the heart of Gardening the Community, an organization committed to healthy living and community transformation.

In another key project, DevelopSpringfield is working with the Mason Square Food Justice Initiative and other community partners to develop a full-line grocery store in Mason Square. This initiative will provide area residents with access to fresh and healthy foods as well as increased job opportunities and new investment in an underserved community.

In the Metro Center and North End, Baystate Health and Mercy Medical Center are working with other healthcare providers to develop new facilities and expand existing medical campuses, significantly enhancing access to health services in the region. Expansion of Springfield’s Medical District is also a priority economic development strategy of the Rebuild Plan.

The creation of a walkable Springfield Central Cultural District, newly approved by the Mass Cultural Council, is intended to help promote existing city attractions, including the Springfield Museums, Old First Church, MassMutual Center, City Stage, and Symphony Hall.
In June of 2013, Mayor Sarno announced enhanced downtown police deployments, including increased patrols by cruiser, foot, and motorbikes. These efforts are designed to enhance public safety with crime suppression efforts and create greater police presence. Other important public safety initiatives are also planned or underway in Mason Square and the South End.

Important cultural developments include the recent designation of the Springfield Central Cultural District — a state designation designed to promote and expand the historic, artistic, and cultural assets in the downtown area. Additional planning is underway to apply for a second cultural district that would include the Springfield Armory National Historic Site area. These cultural district designations are expected to go a long way toward meeting the Rebuild Plan’s goals for “better connecting the community to its cultural amenities and assets.”

Pro Springfield Media, the Springfield Preservation Trust, Springfield Museums, and others have created walking tours of the city, including “Look up, Springfield,” a series of free lunchtime walking tours of downtown Springfield’s historic architecture, and the “Second Saturday Walking Tour” series. The museums also continue to provide numerous special exhibits and programs, including their popular Culture and Cocktails — a great example of the Lighter, Quicker, Cheaper events recommended in the Rebuild Plan.

Reconnecting the city to its riverfront is a key goal of the Rebuild Plan. The Pioneer Valley Riverfront Club has brought energy back to the Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway. It now houses learn-to-row programs for all ages, a dragon boat team for breast cancer survivors, bike rentals, and more.

Baystate completed a 640,000-square-foot, $296 million “Hospital of the Future” project at its North End campus in 2012. Called the MassMutual Wing, the facility houses the Davis Family Heart & Vascular Center, a 70,000 square foot emergency department, and the D’Amour Family Healing Garden.
Education, including higher education and workforce development, is a core focus of the Rebuild Springfield Plan. Of course, making sure that Springfield students have physically sound buildings has been a top priority after the tornado damaged several of the city’s schools. The Massachusetts School Building Authority approved full reimbursement for repairs and additions to the Mary A. Dryden Veterans Memorial School and replacement of the Elias Brookings School.

One of the most exciting developments has been the groundbreaking for the new Elias Brookings School. The tornado-damaged building on Hancock Street will be replaced with a new, larger building on Walnut Street, which will feature a number of improvements, including a large, well-lit cafeteria, a new media space, and a sizable gymnasium. The new school is expected to open in early 2015.

In 2013, the City increased hours at seven branch libraries in Springfield from 18 hours per week to 30 hours per week, while converting two other branches to community use. Increasing library hours was an important educational recommendation in the Rebuild Plan.

Springfield Public Schools partnered with the United Way and many other organizations to launch a citywide campaign, “Stay in School,” to positively impact graduation rates and decrease the dropout rate. Additionally, a Parent Portal has been created (currently implemented at the high school level) to allow families access to their students’ records online. Collaboration and access to information were among the recommendations of the Rebuild Springfield Plan.

After Springfield College’s International Hall was severely damaged by the tornado, $5 million in repairs were completed in record time to allow the residence hall to open for students the following year. Though the loss of hundreds of trees will take years to recover, the college has continued to invest in its Old Hill/Upper Hill area campus. Also committed to supporting improvements in its neighborhood, American International College plans to move forward with a $25 million renovation of the landmark Indian Motorcycle building and Mason Square Fire House in partnership with First Resource Companies.

Western New England University has expanded key programs, including their pharmacy and engineering programs. Springfield Technical Community College (STCC) has also invested in several facility and program improvements, including a new Mechanical Engineering Technology center, Adult Basic Education services and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) programs. In the fall of 2014, UMass will open a Center at Tower Square, joining Cambridge College and Bay Path
Springfield College’s International Hall underwent major repair to be ready for students returning to school in the fall.

College in providing satellite facilities downtown. Course offerings for the fall of 2014 will be concentrated in the areas of advanced manufacturing, management, cyber security, information technology, and casino management. The UMass programs, designed to meet regional industry needs, are being developed in partnership with STCC and Holyoke Community College. Initiatives such as these help to meet the Rebuild Plan’s goal of “creating a system of connected and integrated partnerships for a continuum of education.”

The UMass Center at Springfield is the first satellite center for the five-campus University of Massachusetts system. Located at Tower Square, the center will offer more than 120 programs in health, fine arts, natural sciences, engineering, green industries, management, sports, and education.
The tornado hit businesses and institutions in the South End especially hard, but it wasn’t long before most found new spaces or were able to repair damage and get back to business as usual.

The Red Rose Pizzeria, Milano Imported Fine Food, Dave’s Furniture, and Glory Shoes are among the businesses that committed to reinvesting in the South End after the tornado. Storefront Improvement grants from DevelopSpringfield helped many of these businesses make substantial improvements to their facades on Main Street, both before and after the tornado. The South End Business Association has also been revitalized and now has close to 50 members.

The new, 186-seat LUXe Burger Bar opened on the riverfront in December of 2013, providing a $2 million investment in new business along with 90 jobs to downtown.

Two anchors of the South End, the Caring Health Center and Square One, had longer roads to recovery. The Caring Health Center planned a move to a new building before the tornado hit, but when both the old building and the new site were damaged, plans were set back.

As of today, the Caring Health Center has completed construction on a new 45,000 square foot facility and offers an expanded array of services to the South End. After 130 years in the South End, Square One’s executive director, Joan Kagan, said that the 2011 tornado “knocked the organization off its foundation.”

As the program regained its footing, another program site on Worthington Street was lost in the November 2012 gas explosion. Refusing to be derailed, Square One reopened this past September in a new building in the South End, and like Caring Health Center, took the opportunity to expand its community services in the process.

The City is committed to rebuilding the South End Community Center and the design of the new facility is underway. A construction timeline is not currently available but City officials anticipate the community center will be under construction within the next year. The Outing Park Historic District (a.k.a. Metro Center South End)
Hollywood District) has seen tremendous public and private investments in the past two years. The City completed streetscape improvements to Dwight Street Extension and extensive renovations to Emerson Wight Park in the past two years. First Resource Companies recently completed the second of three phases in rehabilitating 22 historic apartment buildings. Future planned improvements for this area include the street connections of Marble to Ashmun Street with the goal of improving visibility to the park, traffic circulation, and safety.

Plans for demolition of the now obsolete Marble Street Apartments (public housing buildings) are underway; units will be replaced in other locations in the city.

In addition to enhanced patrols downtown and in the South End, the City has also been awarded a three-year, $1 million Byrne Public Safety Grant from the US Department of Justice to implement a place-based public safety initiative in the South End. This grant is designed to allow the City to replicate the North End’s C3 program in the South End. The initiative will include state and city police, the Sheriff’s Department, many non-profits, and local businesses working closely with churches and residents. Consistent with this model, HAPHousing will be funded under the grant to expand the community-building role it has played in the South End. The objective of this funding is to improve public safety over time through carefully orchestrated community-building and policing strategies. These are all identified as priorities in the Rebuild Plan.

In the days following the 2011 tornado, Samalid Hogan, a senior project manager for the City and co-chair of District 1 during the Rebuild Springfield plan, knocked on doors and visited businesses throughout the South End. She saw an already struggling neighborhood that had been sent reeling by the devastation. “What else can happen to us?” one resident asked her.

But according to Hogan, what happened in the weeks and months that followed laid the groundwork for a significant turnaround in District 1. “It amazed me how quickly neighbors got out and got active in rebuilding,” she said. “People felt the loss, but they knew we could recover from it. It wasn’t a question of ‘can we,’ but ‘how soon?’”

The community turned out in droves to local planning meetings, and many voiced renewed commitment to the neighborhood. “With the help of the Rebuild Springfield plan, many residents and business owners alike said, ‘You know what? We’re staying here,’” said Hogan.

Nearly two years later, Hogan sees a neighborhood transforming. Much of the blight caused by or even preceding the tornado has been removed, the renovation of Emerson Wight Park has created a haven for children and families, and the mood among the residents of the South End is markedly different. “So much has changed,” said Samalid. “The streets are cleaner, the buildings better maintained...The process of rebuilding has really galvanized this community.”
Nowhere has the rebuilding process infused more energy than in District 2, where collaborative projects and a new sense of purpose are fulfilling the promise of renewal and transformation.

In a one-two punch, this area of the city suffered damage even before the tornado struck due to a foreclosure crisis that left many properties vacant and unemployment rates that caused many to live below the poverty line. The tornado added insult to injury, cutting a swath through neighborhoods that lost hundreds of homes, both apartments and single-family residences.

If residents were discouraged, however, they quickly turned their losses into action. Neighbors who had not previously known each other made new acquaintance and proved that they had each others’ backs. They were ready and willing when the City, HAPHousing, DevelopSpringfield, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, and many other collaborative partners focused their resources on creating a detailed plan for revitalization. A series of charettes, or intensive planning sessions, brought neighbors, collaborators, and designers into quick agreement.

A major outcome of the planning process has been the design of the new 65,000 square foot Elias Brookings School, now under construction on Walnut Street. In addition to its educational value, the school will serve as a community resource and neighborhood anchor.

On Central Street, new infill housing was identified as a priority to fill the gaps left by tornado devastation. By winter, four brand new, energy-efficient homes were framed and construction is expected to be complete by early summer. Another three homes will replace the former Spruce Manor Nursing Home site and additional homes are planned on privately owned vacant lots in the area.

The New Hope Pentecostal Church found fortitude in their community as they rebuilt from the substantial devastation caused by the June 2011 tornado.

Newly strengthened neighborhood councils have kept residents involved and informed, and in Old Hill, a huge repair effort by Rebuilding Together brought 1,000 volunteers and high hopes for full recovery to the district. In all, 25 damaged homes were repaired in year one of the non-profit’s 10-year commitment to help residents upgrade housing and achieve energy-efficiency: a meaningful initiative in a neighborhood where the average house age is 94 years old.
The residents of District 2 made immediate use of a new city ordinance that would help reclaim vacant lots for community gardens. Working with the City, organizations like HAPHousing and the Old Hill Neighborhood Council consulted with Gardening the Community and now have active community gardens to grow healthy food and turn urban blight into greenspace.

HAPHousing provides leadership awards to Old Hill and Maple High-Six Corners residents for completing their Community Leadership Program and putting their new skills to work in District 2.

The City, meanwhile, used new ordinances to repurpose vacant properties and make way for new uses ranging from community gardens and expedited sales to abutting property owners to new infill housing. Plans for the future include a bike path, redevelopment of the Watershops Pond area, and a full-service grocery store.

While challenges remain in this severely impacted area, including the rehabilitation of the former MacDuffie School on Ames Hill Drive, progress and investment in this area are evident. The Commonwealth Academy, an independent coeducational day and boarding school, opened in 2012 on the former MacDuffie campus with plans to expand to accommodate additional students over time.

Renovation efforts have made a huge difference in the physical transformation of District 2. HAPHousing, Rebuilding Together, Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services, and Habitat for Humanity have all worked to make sure that residents have safe, attractive, and efficient housing.

In the hours following the 2011 tornado, Maple High Six Corners resident and City Councilor Melvin Edwards walked the streets of his neighborhood to assess the damage. He knew that time was of the essence — not just in terms of rescue and recovery, but in rebuilding the neighborhood better than before. “We knew the City would develop an official plan, so we wanted to be ready to have our voice heard,” he said.

Edwards joined his fellow Neighborhood Council members and other volunteers in gathering a list of damaged properties, homeownership rates, crime statistics, and other essential data. When Mayor Domenic Sarno announced public hearings for the Rebuild Springfield master plan, Edwards and the group were ready.

“We came with a vision of how we wanted District 2 to improve, and the City listened,” said Edwards. “I was one of the biggest skeptics at the outset, but they responded to our input and took action. The process was outstanding.”

Edwards estimates that he and his neighbors got 90 percent of what they had requested, including a redesign of the Brookings School as a community center, the rehabilitation of Johnny Appleseed Park, and an emphasis on single-family housing. Beyond the tangible, Edwards notes that the mood has shifted in his neighborhood. “We’re seeing a plan that is actually being carried out and people seem to have real hope. There’s a new attitude here.”
Cathedral High School, a longtime anchor of the East Forest Park neighborhood of District 3, suffered critical damage in the tornado. For two years, the reconstruction of the school seemed in jeopardy as the Diocese of Springfield tried to obtain Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funding for the demolition and construction. In March, an agreement was finally reached and the diocese committed to rebuilding the school with $29 million in federal disaster aid and close to $50 million in insurance funds. The diocese is moving forward with demolition and the design for the new school, but a timetable for reopening has not yet been set.

Most Reverend Timothy A. McDonnell speaks at the podium during a press conference held at the front entrance of the tornado-damaged Cathedral High School. Reverend McDonnell announced that the building will be replaced and reopened. This signaled the end of a long wait for residents, students, and parents. FEMA will contribute $29 million of the $38.5 million needed to rebuild the school.

The Mary A. Dryden Veterans Memorial School has been renovated and a new addition built following the damage it sustained from the tornado. In the fall of 2013, the school's 5th graders were honored with top rankings in the commonwealth for their MCAS results.

While institutions like Cathedral and the Dryden School are highly visible and critical aspects to the tornado rebuilding progress, District 3 has also had other exciting developments in the interim. Springfield’s first bike lane was established on Plumtree Road in October of last year. The bike lane is currently one mile long and connects Western New England University to Sixteen Acres Center.
and a number of parks. This bike lane is the first visible step in a city-wide pedestrian and bike plan. It also represents collaboration between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Springfield’s Office of Planning and Economic Development, the City, MassBike, Live Well Springfield, and the neighborhood residents.

MassMutual, the Springfield Parks Department, DevelopSpringfield, and other community partners have also been active in District 3, coordinating tree plantings, including 2,400 trees replanted at Camp Wilder. This effort will help to replace the tree canopy that was destroyed in the tornado. Enhancements and plantings for the restoration of South Branch Park have also taken place. Residents are working with library and city officials to advance their initiative to bring a new library/community center to the neighborhood, an effort that would greatly improve access and provide opportunity for enhanced programming.
Many organizations raised funds to support tornado relief and recovery. The list below reflects only those contributions made directly to DevelopSpringfield to support Rebuild Springfield initiatives.

**MAJOR DONORS OF $100,000 OR MORE**

- Balise Motor Sales Co.
- Berkshire Bank Foundation, Inc.
- Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
- Gene Rosenberg Associates, LLC
- Irene E. & George A. Davis Foundation

**MAJOR DONORS OF $10,000 TO $99,999**

- 90 Meat Outlet
- AARP Massachusetts
- Kimberly Threlfall Akerblom
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- Bacon Wilson, R.C.
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- Roger Bernier
- Kenneth Breeden
- Bristol County Agricultural High School
- Bulkeley Richardson
- C & W Real Estate Company LLC
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- Center for Yoga and Healing Arts
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- New England Farm Workers’ Council
- New North Citizens’ Council, Inc.
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- Peter Pan Bus Lines
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- Tim Plante
- Terry D. Powe
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- Henry S. Rauschenbach
- Rebuilding Together
- Regional Employment Board
- The Republican
- Rousseau Brothers
- Darrel and Jennie Seal
- Ronald and Rosalyn Shepard
- SHINE-Department of Elder Affairs
- Victoria Small
- South End Community Center
- James and Estelle Spencer
- Springfield Adult Education Center
- Springfield Armory
- Springfield College
- Springfield Housing Authority
- Springfield Neighborhood Housing Services
- Springfield Public Forum
- Springfield Teachers Credit Union (STCU)
- Springfield Technical Community College
- Square One
- Jeffrey Sullivan
- Kevin M. Sweeney
- Gloria Torres
- United Personnel
- Michael Vedovelli
- Bob and Pat Webler
- Glenn Welch
- Westfield Bank
- Sandra Yager
- YMCA of Greater Springfield