

Biography of John J. George  
Executive Director and Co-Founder of Detroit Blight Busters, Inc.

Detroit native John J. George, Executive Director of Detroit Blight Busters (DBB). Co-founded the neighborhood revitalization non-profit in 1988 when he and two neighbors took a stand to make their own neighborhood safer. Unhappy about an abandoned house on their northwest Detroit block that was attracting drug dealers and other unsavory characters, George along with Albert E. Mack, and Felix B. Wright III bought plywood and paint, boarded up the windows and doors, mowed the grass, trimmed the bushes and stabilized the property. When the drug dealers returned at night, they couldn't get in and left. This one small act of defiance has led to a decades-long fight against the decay and blight that have plagued Detroit and so many other urban areas.

Over time DBB has grown into an internationally recognized, grass-roots organization committed to being a positive catalyst in Detroit by stabilizing, revitalizing and beautifying the city of Detroit. Working with thousands of volunteers each year, George's "Blight Buster's" tear down abandoned houses, renovate existing homes, clean up parks and other public spaces, and help people become home and business owners.

Supported by corporations, foundations and individual donors, DBB brings people together from all walks of life from both the city and the suburbs to make George's vision of creating safe, clean, healthy viable neighborhoods for *all* Children a reality.

In 1995, the organization purchased and renovated a former Masonic Temple into the Motor City Resource Center. Today, it provides operational space for tenants and programs. It also offers full banquet and meeting facilities that are for rent and accessible to the community.

His efforts have spawned a variety of other initiatives in the area, including:

- "Artist Village Detroit" - A neighborhood space co-developed by DBB and partners.
- "Motor City Java and Tea House" – A cozy gathering place for community residents and volunteers.
- "Creative Juices" – Live Saturday night performances of jazz and open-mic poetry on a community stage that celebrates local life and art.
- "Public Art Workz" – The studio of renowned muralist Chazz Miller, who is involving young artists in his public mural initiative.
- United Peace Relief, Veterans Village Detroit

In addition, he has co-founded "Farm City Detroit", a collaborative project between "Fertile Ground Collective" and DBB to reclaim two city blocks and turn them in to urban farmland, providing free fruits and vegetables to residents as well as a picnic grounds, a meditation garden and other community areas.

Through his ongoing neighborhood stabilization and revitalization efforts he has helped create a variety of new businesses, including "Sweet Potato Sensations" and "Detroit Tire and Wheel". He was recently instrumental in helping secure the development of a Meijer's mega-store for local residents. He was the founding chairman of the "Brightmoor Alliance" and past president of the "Old Redford Business Association".

George was awarded a "Point of Light" from President Bill Clinton, was named Michiganian of the Year" in 1995 by the Detroit News and was selected to speak at the Detroit Regional Chamber Policy

Conference on Mackinaw Island. He was recognized by Oprah Winfrey as one of the country's community heroes.

He has worked with the past six Detroit Mayors to bring neighborhood issues to the forefront and helped run Governor Jennifer Granholm's Michigan Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative. In 1995 he coined the phrase "Angel's Night" and convinced then Mayor Dennis Archer to take Blight Busters Community clean up known as "Blight Flight" citywide later known as "Clean sweep"

George and DBB have been the subject of articles in magazines, newspapers and online publication around the world, including Time Magazine and were featured on CNN Live. Recently, John was the star of a TV reality show pilot called, D-Town.

A former insurance salesman, George is a graduate of Bishop Borgess High School. He and his wife Alicia George, have three grown children all of which have worked in various capacities furthering their fathers cause. Alicia is one of the city's newest entrepreneurs, owning and operating the Motor City Java and Tea House coffee shop in the Old Redford section of Detroit.

For More Information Contact:  
Detroit Blight Busters  
18220 Lahser Rd.  
Detroit, MI, 48219  
[BlightBustersAnn@yahoo.com](mailto:BlightBustersAnn@yahoo.com)