



IN THIS ISSUE

Message
From the Director
PAGE 2

UCCP Event &
News Update
PAGE 2

Business
Planning Tools
Applied to
Community
Capital
Control Efforts
PAGE 3

Building Youth
and
Community
in Point Breeze
PAGE 4

Updates From: Youth
VOICES
and
Nueva Esperanza
Academy
PAGE 5

UCCP and Project H.O.M.E. Join Efforts to Create Community Resource Tool

By Dan Dougherty, Associate Director, CBR Network and Peter Gonzales, Economic Developer, Project H.O.M.E.

In 2000, Project H.O.M.E. and a small group of neighborhood business owners began working together to develop a vision for revitalizing the commercial corridor at Ridge and Cecil B. Moore Avenues. The planning group was determined to enhance the physical environment along the commercial corridor; improve the safety and quality of life of the residents; strengthen the existing businesses and stimulate the reuse of vacant property.

Many exciting ideas were solicited from the community and generated during the planning sessions. After hosting a series of focus group meetings and surveying over 300 community residents about their wants and needs for the business district, two things became apparent. First, although the community may be in desperate need of revitalization, there were already a plethora of institutions and organizations providing social, educational, spiritual, economic, and recreational opportunities. Second, there was no coordinated effort to promote these opportunities throughout the community. Thus, the idea was born to create *The Community Handbook* that would serve as a resource tool for community residents and a marketing tool for existing businesses and neighborhood institutions.

A recent partnership has begun between Project HO.M.E. and the UCCP to work with Project H.O.M.E. and the Cecil B. Moore/Ridge Avenue Business Association to develop *The Community Handbook*. After securing a Community-Based Research Network grant in the Fall of 2002 from the UCCP, UCCP staff helped identify Temple University students interested in working on the handbook. The students work began in November and in January Temple University



Denise Wade (right), President of the Cecil B. Moore/Ridge Avenue Business Association and Co-Owner of Charlie's Country Ribs, stands with a community resident who proudly displays the "Ridge on the Rise" sign; part a promotional campaign to market the business district to shoppers and potential new business.

students met with several community leaders and members of the Business Association to finalize the format and content of the handbook.

By the end of the spring 2003, *The Community Handbook* should include a directory for businesses; religious and spiritual institutions; community centers; schools and libraries; recreational activities; various programs for youth, adults, and seniors; contact information for elected officials and educational materials on voter registration; and who to contact for help with various issues from abandoned cars to small business loans. It will be distributed to residents throughout the community and a copy will be placed on reserve with Cecil B. Moore Branch of the Free Library.

(Continued on page 6)

A Message from the Director.....

The Fall and Winter has been a busy and productive time for the UCCP with the seeding of new initiatives, the development of more partnerships and the addition of new staff. This issue of *Partners for Change* provides a glimpse of these exciting activities. Of course, as always, we welcome requests for additional information.

In recognition of our work in the area of youth civic engagement, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) asked us to work with several HOPE VI sites in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware on implementing their Youth Leadership Initiative projects. Throughout the past few months, we have been meeting with youth and staff from several of these sites to plan a two day retreat which was held February 22nd & 23rd at Temple University. The retreat, **"Ideas in Action: A Community Youth Leadership Retreat"** consisted of a series of workshops and activities designed to address the needs of youth as they carry out their community projects. Our partner organization, Youth Empowerment Services (YES), developed the media component of the retreat through their digital media arts class. The UCCP and YES worked very closely with the University of California, Berkeley on this initiative and we are hoping to develop parallel East Coast-West Coast youth civic engagement projects. The retreat was an enormous success and we will be issuing a special edition of *"Partners for Change"* to document and share some of the highlights of the event. A big thank you goes out to everyone who helped make the retreat a rewarding and fruitful experience for the youth who participated!

As we attempt to better integrate our youth civic engagement and community economic development work, we have been greatly aided by several partner organizations. The Women's Community Revitalization Project (WCRP) enlisted the help of a VOICES class this past fall at American Street Youth Opportunity Center in a community housing survey. VOICES students developed and administered the survey, analyzed the data, and presented their findings at a community meeting attended by City

Councilman Richard Mariano. This collaboration will continue with the Spring VOICES class working on a project as well. Employing a different approach to merging youth civic engagement and community economic development, the UCCP is now exploring opportunities to place youth VOICES students in internship positions at interested community-based organizations.

We are pleased to welcome two new staff members: Jonathan Corliss and Katie Wepplo. Jonathan, a doctoral student in Anthropology, worked with the UCCP this past summer developing the video *Echoing Voices* that documented the Summer Academy. Beginning this spring, he will work with the various sites on incorporating video into community projects. Katie Wepplo, a graduate student in Political Science, comes to us with a strong background in youth organizing activities. Katie will coordinate our youth civic engagement work at Nueva Esperanza Academy Charter School. Jon Rogers, also an Anthropology doctoral student will be continuing his work with VOICES this fall by helping Catie with overall program coordination and oversight.

We are also pleased to welcome our new Steering Committee members—Erin Horvat and Gregory Acavedo. Erin is an Assistant Professor in Urban Education and Greg is an Assistant Professor in the School of Social Work/Social Administration at Temple University.

Sadly, we must bid a temporary farewell to Valerie Adams who will be spending the next six months in Numibia working on youth programs through the sponsorship of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Valerie, we wish you all the best in Numibia and, most of all, a very speedy return to Philadelphia and the UCCP and YES!

Barbara Ferman

Event & News Update

Funding

The UCCP received funding from HUD through Abt Associates to work with several HOPE VI sites on implementing their Youth Leadership Initiatives.

Conferences/Meetings/ Workshops

UCCP Steering Committee met on December 2nd and engaged in fruitful discussions on how to better integrate youth into community economic development activities. UCCP staff are working on implementing some of these suggestions.

CBR Network bi-monthly meeting: A spirited discussion, led by William Gonzalez of Ceiba, Inc. and Cynda Clyde (Eastern University) on the benefits of and challenges to community development financial institutions.

Catie Cavanaugh, Barbara Ferman, and Mike Sack (YES) met with representatives from HUD, the US Department of Labor, the Corporation for National Service, the Justice Department, the American Legacy Foundation and the Close-Up Foundation on ways to enrich youth leadership initiatives at HUD's HOPE VI sites and other organizational sites.

PHENND

Workshops on Youth Engagement and Community-Based Research were facilitated by UCCP staff for PHEEND's 5th annual conference held at Byrn Mawr College on January 25th.

Barbara Ferman and Dan Dougherty along with Patricia DeCarlo(NSCA) and Peter Gonzales(Project H.O.M.E) participated in a planning meeting of the CBR Higher Education Network held in Philadelphia, February 7th and 8th.

February 22nd and 23rd, the UCCP, in partnership with HUD, hosted **"Ideas in Action: A Community Youth Leadership Retreat"** for young people who live in HOPE VI Housing in Delaware, Eastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey.



Business Research, Business Planning and Community Control of Capital

By T.L. Hill, Associate Director, Community Economic Development

One of the fascinating challenges of managing university-community research partnerships is trying to apply academic techniques to community development in ways that are truly useful. This past year, our community partners prompted us to reach into the business school toolkit to apply the tools of private profit businesses to the community control of capital.

Business Planning for Community Control

The tool we adapted is the business plan. Business planning involves convincing key partners, notably investors, that a business opportunity is worthy of investments of money and time. A good business plan identifies an opportunity to serve a specific market, develops a strategy, designs a business to deliver a product or service to the target market, predicts a timeline and financial outcomes, and tests every idea against researched reality. Because business plans integrate various disciplines (accounting, marketing, strategy), are grounded in research, and emphasize presentation, they can be quite useful to community groups assessing the viability of new programs – especially if the groups want to “sell” their ideas to partners and foundations. The trick is re-orienting the business plan to speak to the double bottom line of financial viability and social return (in this case, community control).

Three Examples

For Ceiba, a consortium of Latino community development organizations, the UCCP found an Eastern University graduate student, Cynda Clyde, to work on a plan for a Community Development Financial Institution. The project included identifying the market potential, assessing competition and possible partners, predicting likely interest rates, interest rate spreads and fees, and thinking through logistics and costs. The project resulted in increased clarity about Ceiba's overall strategy, a credible draft of a business plan for the CDFI, financial statements, and key introductions.

For the Empowerment Group, a new technical assistance and development organization in Norris Square and Kensington, the UCCP found a Temple University MBA student, Amanda Elzey, to work on a plan for a mentor/consulting-intensive business incubator for small locally owned firms. This project featured a careful definition of the need for the service and a detailed description of the services and management required. The completed plan formed the core of a successful \$350,000 federal grant.



In keeping its strategy of increasing Latino nonprofits' access to capital, CEIBA provided a bridge loan for the renovation of Norris Square Civic Association's Mercado (pictured above). Photo by William Gonzalez

Finally, for the Point Breeze Community Development Coalition, the UCCP organized a team of Temple MBA students to do a class project exploring how a church-based credit union could be transformed into a neighborhood-wide community development credit union. This project involved the following: primary research into the size and nature of the demand for financial services; a study of the competition and larger trends in financial services; exploration of existing church support; a detailed description of operational requirements; and financial projections. The results included both sobering data about the deposits needed to sustain a sophisticated credit union and intriguing ways to move forward featuring organizing, education and trial products designed to build the necessary constituency and leadership.

Lessons

While each of these efforts was well received, doing three in a row highlighted several lessons:

- Most importantly, community groups should expect to edit the business plan in order to incorporate their own voice.
- Second, because business plans require a wide range of skills (research, analysis, strategizing, writing), they are suitable for group projects.
- If possible, plan for four to six months per plan, due to the amount of research and analysis required.
- Modest funding (in our case, \$2500-\$5000 per project from the Bonner Foundation) helps secure graduate student time while defraying the organizational cost of supervising the projects.



Building Youth and Community in Point Breeze

By Ximena Varela, Graduate Assistant, Community Youth Development

Hope is the pillar of the world.

African Proverb

In September of 2002, the UCCP began a nine-month youth services coordination planning project to assist two key umbrella organizations in the Point Breeze section of Philadelphia: the Point Breeze Community Development Coalition (PBCDC), and Diversified Community Services. Funded by a grant from the William Penn Foundation, the goal of this project is to "coordinate a coalition of youth serving agencies in Point Breeze and facilitate a planning process to develop a place-based youth development strategy."

In order to achieve the collective goal of developing a coordinated network of youth services, the planning committee, which includes members of PBCDC and Diversified Community Services, is seeking to:

- ◆ Gain a deeper understanding of youth and family issues in Point Breeze.
- ◆ Identify and understand needs and priorities of youth in Point Breeze.
- ◆ Identify existing youth resources.
- ◆ Foster organization commitment from key stakeholders.
- ◆ Develop a structure and mechanisms for coordinated youth services.
- ◆ Foster collaborative projects.
- ◆ Develop measurable definitions and criteria for success.
- ◆ Foster the development of parent, youth and neighborhood councils.

These ambitious objectives would be impossible to reach without the knowledge, talent and commitment of the planning group members in the Point Breeze community. These organizations include: the Point Breeze Performing Arts Center, South Philadelphia H.O.M.E.S., St. Thomas Aquinas Church, Church of the Redeemer, the Point Breeze Family Center, the Beacon Community School, Dixon House, and John Gloucester House.

Since September, we have held several meetings with the planning committee (which have included youth participation), sat in on several youth councils, and partici-



The above pictured mural entitled, "Where we Come From", is located at 22nd and Dickinson Streets in Point Breeze. The people in Point Breeze are building on their past to create their future. Photo taken by Ximena Varela

pated in meetings with organizations going through similar processes (convened by the William Penn Foundation), all of which have enriched our understanding.

Our work began with the identification of linkages within the planning committee itself. Already this has resulted in collaborations between several of the members, and a gradual realization that this may be just the start of many things to come. A key part of the process has been the establishment of objectives and working methods. The group has been committed from the beginning to the preservation of community and spiritual values that make Point Breeze unique.

Additionally, we are developing research in a variety of areas, building on existing knowledge within the UCCP and the community, and finding ways to link this process with the existing plans for economic development. This responds to the PBCDC's belief that both areas are inextricably linked: "in order to effectively address community revitalization, there needs to be a deliberate effort devoted to youth in the community".

Thus far we have discovered that adults and youth in the Point Breeze community share three critical areas of concern: Education and opportunities, violence and safety, and families. The next phase of our work will be to assess in what ways these three areas are currently being targeted in Point Breeze, the problems that exist in these efforts, and devise ways to overcome them.



Recapping Youth VOICES Fall 2002: Smart Questions Driving Strong Projects

By Catie Cavanaugh, Associate Director, Youth Civic Engagement

“Can you give us an example of where people without power fought people with power and won?” asked sixteen year old Tiffany Hood at a meeting with the Women’s Community Revitalization Project (WCRP). She was trying to understand how her efforts, and those of her fellow VOICES participants at the American Street Youth Opportunity Center (YOC) could possibly lead to better housing conditions in North Philadelphia. This fall, over the course of 10 weeks, youth surveyed community residents about their housing concerns in order to help WCRP prepare for a community meeting with 7th District City Councilman, Richard Mariano. After presenting their findings at the meeting, and being invited to choose a representative to sit on the Board of WCRP’s Advocacy Committee, these young people are beginning to understand the potential of community organizing to amass power in oppressed communities.

“How can we protect the children in our neighborhoods from kidnapping?” This was the question that kicked off a *Kidnapping Awareness and Prevention Campaign* by VOICES participants at the North Central Youth

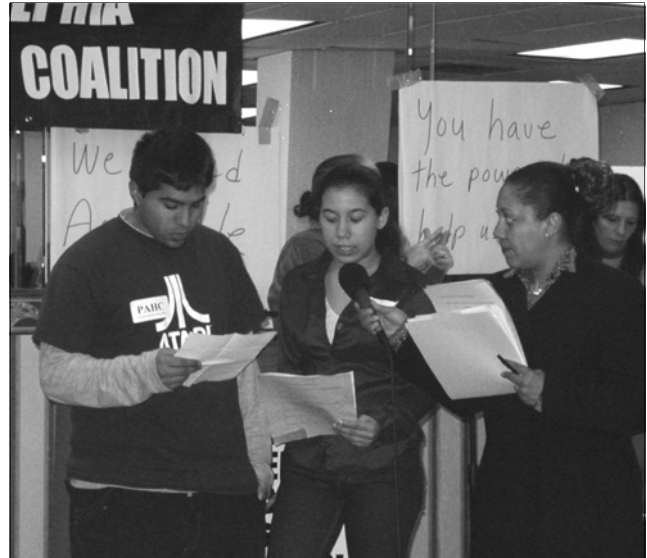
Opportunity Center. On December 10, 2002, they brought their message to the children of George Meade Middle School in North Philadelphia at an after-school assembly. VOICES youth presented short skits, answered questions and sent everyone home with a pamphlet they designed to help children and parents learn more about ways to stay safe.

“When is the best time to influence young people to make good choices?” “When they are in elementary school,” re-

sponded a group of VOICES participants at the Sayre Beacon school, “by the time we get to high school, it is too easy to follow negative role models.” With this agreed upon, the group began laying the foundation

for a local Big Brother/Big Sister Program. They surveyed children and parents in the neighborhood to gauge interest, compiled a list of appropriate

(Continued on page 6)



Orlando Leon (left) and Tiffany Sierra (center), VOICES participants at the American Street Youth Opportunity Center, present the results of their housing survey to Councilman Richard Mariano at a community meeting organized by the Philadelphia Affordable Housing Coalition.

An Update From Nueva Esperanza Academy

By Katie Wepplo, Graduate Assistant, Youth and Community-Based Research

As the second trimester comes to a close, students in my community-based research classes at Nueva Esperanza Academy are busy collecting surveys and analyzing results. Nueva Esperanza Academy, committed to improving student success overall, is also very interested in finding ways to increase parent involvement in the school. Thus, last year began a process to teach students how to conduct community-based research specifically on issues that affect their school.

We began this trimester by doing an analysis of last year’s research on parent involvement by looking at

trends in the survey results. Last year’s research had included a survey of parents from many schools in addition to Nueva Esperanza. While a relatively small percentage of parents said that barriers to their involvement in school were transportation and lack of time, an overwhelming 78% of parents said that they felt disrespected when they came into their children’s schools. Based on these findings and others, we began the class by asking questions such as “*how is power structured in the education system?*” and “*what is institutional racism?*” Because we wanted to be able to ask these

broader questions as well to continue investigating issues in Nueva Esperanza Academy, my 6th period class created a survey for Philadelphia public high school students and their parents, and my 1st period class created a survey for students, parents and teachers at Nueva Esperanza Academy. While my goal for both classes is to be able to obtain information that can be used to benefit the work of Nueva Esperanza Academy and broader Philadelphia community, I also hope to get students excited about using community-based research as a tool to affect change in their communities in a positive way.





UCCP and Project H.O.M.E. Join Efforts

(Continued from page 1)

The hope, of course, is that *The Community Handbook* will be a useful tool to highlight the assets in the neighborhood and throughout the city, while it functions to organize the community, welcome new residents, and give a greater positive identity to the area surrounding Ridge and Cecil B. Moore Avenues.

Recapping Fall 2002 VOICES

(Continued from page 5)

activities and outlined program guidelines. This winter they will begin recruiting children for whom they, themselves, will serve as Big Brothers and Big Sisters when the program gets underway this spring.

“What can we do to make the holidays brighter for homeless children in West Philadelphia?” asked a group of VOICES participants at the West Philadelphia Youth Opportunity Center. In the process of raising money and soliciting donations to support a toy

drive for homeless children, the young people driving this initiative developed skills in project management, public speaking, leveraging resources and networking.

“What lies in store as The Youth VOICES Project kicks off its spring session?” That is the question on the minds of youth, Temple student instructors and UCCP staff as we prepare to support continuing projects and foster the ideas of young people getting started on new things. We look forward to all we will have to report on in our June update! Stay tuned!

THE UCCP HAS RECEIVED FUNDING FROM:

- * THE WILLIAM PENN FOUNDATION * THE FEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS * THE PHILADELPHIA FOUNDATION *
 - * THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE THROUGH THE CORELLA & BERTRAM F. BONNER FOUNDATION *
 - * THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR THROUGH THE PHILADELPHIA YOUTH NETWORK *
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