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Maps, Markets and Magic

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

Imagine a church wall covered with huge maps of a neighborhood, with overlays showing commercial patterns, water flows, traffic flows, and pictures of key moments in local history. Imagine a room full of long-time residents, community organizers and students looking at the maps and pictures. Can't you just hear the buzz in the room, the myriad conversations? This was the scene in Norris Square Presbyterian Church on Norris Square as the Norris Square Civic Association (NSCA) enlisted the help of Temple University's Architecture and Landscape Architecture design studios in their efforts to plan their Mercado.

After over 4 years of work on their dream of a Mercado, or market place, for local Latino merchants, the NSCA recently acquired seven acres of rough promise sandwiched between its neighborhood and Fishtown, with one small, battered warehouse languishing under the elevated train line. With the land came a series of questions:

- What should be done with all the space? How could it be transformed from a wasteland, sometimes a battleground, separating disparate communities, to a well-used common space?
- What mix of merchants and activities would help the Mercado thrive?
- Could the Mercado become a destination? What would it take?
- Could the Mercado become an anchor development for the area, especially Front Street? And, if so, what businesses fit the neighborhood's character and location, could be locally owned, and could strengthen the local economy and community?

- Finally, how could the community maintain control while facilitating development?

Responding to early requests from NSCA director, Patricia DeCarlo, and Mercado developer, Elvin Padilla, the UCCP conducted research on other Mercados, finding examples in Minneapolis, Ohio and West Philadelphia. As the Mercado became more of a reality, NSCA asked the UCCP to begin to focus on what sorts of businesses might make sense for the neighborhood. To do this, the UCCP recruited Professor John Stapleford and graduate student Cynda Clyde from Eastern University to try to generate a short list of promising businesses. They started by generating a census of existing businesses (compiled by driving the streets and talking with NSCA staffers about unadvertised businesses) and then comparing this with city-wide patterns of distribution (number of establishments, say bakeries, per 10,000 residents) to create a short list of underrepresented businesses.



Norris Square residents discuss Mercado site plans with Temple University Landscape Architecture students.

At the same time, the UCCP was able to connect Norris Square with Temple University Landscape Architecture Professor Baldev Lamba, who was able to lend his expertise to NSCA for a grant application for a new, green roof for the warehouse on the site. This short-term collaboration soon blossomed into something much more when Professor Lamba offered to

make the site the focus of his senior-level design studio and then convinced Professors Sally Harrison and Peter di Carlo from Architecture, to do the same with their senior level design studio.

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A Message from the Director.....

As you will see from this newsletter, we have changed our look. However, we remain steadfastly committed to our community economic development work, our youth civic engagement projects and our promotion of community-driven research and technical assistance activities with our many partner organizations. Over these last few months we have expanded our work in all three areas, adding new partners and activities while deepening our relationships with existing partners.

In our continuing efforts to link community-driven research to larger policy issues, the UCCP is helping to launch an on-going **Policy Research Workshop**. Comprised of researchers from local universities and colleges and economic development practitioners and decision makers, the Workshop is designed to stimulate serious exchange and research on pressing policy issues facing the Philadelphia region. We expect that this Workshop will help and be helped by the UCCP's ongoing work in several Philadelphia neighborhoods. Our "on the ground work" includes commercial corridor revitalization research, business development planning, housing and land use strategies, and community safety research.

Our youth civic engagement initiative has continued to flourish. Our VOICES program, which is currently offered at all three Youth Opportunity Centers and at Nueva Esperanza Academy Charter School, continues to receive high praise. In a recent site visit, the U.S. Department of Labor again singled out VOICES as an exemplary program. Jobs For the Future, a Boston-based national intermediary organization, has selected VOICES as one of several programs with which they will work, helping us to go to scale and to replicate the project on a national level. And, the Philadelphia Foundation has just awarded us a grant to expand the program locally. Thus, it is with great enthusiasm that we approach our planning process for the new Summer Academy. The Academy will integrate VOICES classes at several sites in Philadelphia with a series of skills-based and community driven workshops at Temple University. We anticipate having lots to report on this new undertaking.

In February, we hosted a four day youth summit that brought high school students, teachers and staff from Chicago to Philadelphia for a series of workshops, neighborhood tours and lots of good discussion. Several hundred people took part in the varied activities. Much of the planning for this summit was carried out by Philadelphia youth enrolled in our VOICES classes and Temple University students. Our community partners were extremely helpful, leading several critical workshops and discussions on issues of police brutality, community revitalization and gentrification, and education. This truly was a partnership effort! Thanks to everyone who helped to make this summit such a success.

Our community based research network continues to grow. In preparing to house the National Higher Education Community-Based Research Network, the UCCP hosted a regional partners meeting that included representatives from Washington, DC, Richmond, VA, the Trenton and Princeton areas of New Jersey and our Philadelphia area partners. The meeting generated three programmatic areas for regional collaboration (community economic development, youth leadership and civic engagement, and information infrastructure development) and significant enthusiasm for moving forward. We are quite excited about taking our collaborative experiences to the next level. Exploratory conversations with Campus Compact and the American Association of Higher Education on best ways to collaborate with these and other key national organizations have also been quite encouraging. Building and housing a national network will be both challenging and rewarding and we look forward to both. I hope you enjoy this newsletter which reports in detail on many of these exciting initiatives and more!

Barbara Ferman

Event & News Update

Funding

The UCCP received a grant from The Philadelphia Foundation to expand its very successful *Youth Voices* program.

Conferences/Meetings/Workshops

The UCCP hosted a four day youth summit in February that was planned by youth enrolled in VOICES classes, Temple students and UCCP staff. The summit brought together 32 youth from Chicago and Philadelphia and attracted over 150 participants in total.

Dan Dougherty and Barbara Ferman made presentations on the community based research network at the annual Urban Affairs Association meeting held in March in Boston, MA

The Youth VOICES class at the West Philadelphia YOC held a community wide health fair on Saturday, May 4, at the Evan's Park community center. The fair attracted 10 participating organizations and approximately 85 community residents attended.

In April, the UCCP hosted a meeting of regional partners from its community based research network to identify collaborative research and programming opportunities.

The UCCP conducted a community based research workshop at LaSalle University on April 24th.

Upcoming

The UCCP is busily planning its Summer Academy which will run from July 1-August 9 and will integrate youth from all three Youth Opportunity Centers.

UCCP Hosts Regional CBR Meeting

By Dan Dougherty, Associate Director, CBR Network

On Friday, April 12, 2002 a group of researchers came together from Virginia, Washington DC, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to discuss ways of promoting and practicing community based research (CBR) in our communities and on our campuses. The attendees are participants in the National CBR Network sponsored by the Bonner Foundation and supported through a Corporation for National and Community Service, Learn and Serve grant. The goal of the meeting was to exchange best practices on CBR courses and projects, and to think of ways to collaborate regionally on substantive issues regarding youth engagement, community and economic development, and technology infrastructure.

The Bonner Foundation, through the Learn and Serve grant, funds campus or community-based centers to encourage and support community-based research in seven regions/cities across the country. The University Community Collaborative of Philadelphia (UCCP) is one of those sites and hosted the regional meeting. In Philadelphia, the UCCP model is part of an initiative to leverage campus resources on behalf of marginalized communities by encouraging and supporting CBR in the region.

At the regional meeting there were three other centers from the mid-Atlantic area, with similar projects to promote CBR, located in Trenton, Washington DC, and metropolitan Richmond. The Trenton Center is a non-profit organization begun as a project between a number of community based organizations in Trenton along with faculty, staff and stu-

dents from area colleges and universities. The Trenton Center operates to provide meaningful collaboration and high quality research and service partnerships between campuses and communities. From Washington, DC the Community Research and Learning Network, or CoRAL, a community based research center housed at Georgetown



(From Left to Right): Sam Marullo, Director of Center for Research, Action and Learning at Georgetown University, Randy Stoecker, Professor of Sociology, University of Toledo and Pat Donahue, Director of The Trenton Center.

University attended. CoRAL is a partnership among higher education institutions and community based organizations in the DC area. At the University of Richmond is Connect Richmond, a collaborative effort between non-profit organizations and institutes of higher education throughout the Richmond area. The purpose of Connect Richmond is to provide high-quality research and information to the community to support and sustain existing community-driven initiatives.

The meeting was exciting and the outcome promising. A majority of the time was spent sharing the history and evolution of each CBR center, with a special emphasis on current

activities that engage in CBR. The last half of the meeting was given to brainstorming around partnerships across centers in order to develop a regional network based on a collaborative, community-driven research model. Particular attention was paid to linking programs and sharing ideas for youth engagement, community and economic development, and the use and dissemination of information to support community led efforts. To this end, three working groups were established for each of the areas to continue momentum and draw out broader organizational and policy implications for the region.

Maps, Markets and Magic

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The initial challenge was to integrate the design studio into the NSCA's community planning process, so that the designs stayed grounded in community needs and desires—which is what led to the exciting meeting in the church. As the evening progressed, and the residents looked over and talked about concrete models of their community, the residents became more and more specific about not just issues of (transportation, safety,



(Right) NSCA Director, Patricia DeCarlo, examines a Mercado site plan model prepared by Temple University Landscape Architecture students.

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jobs, local entertainment and culture) but specific ideas – for light-infused designs, skating rinks, entertainment clusters, certain kinds of work. In fact, one of the most important and surprising outcomes of that meeting was a resident-generated short list of desired businesses! This enlivened the business targeting research, grounding it in residents' needs and desires, while also pushing the needs of the Mercado closer to the center of that research.

The meeting demonstrated the potential organizing power of concrete, cross-disciplinary, well-presented research. Mixing markets and maps and business and design, with community-led planning can be magical. But the process can also be trying, as the needs and realities of the community group and classroom pull in different directions, threatening to separate ideas from reality yet again. Already, both projects – the business targeting and the Mercado design – are at another crossroads. Both are

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A VOICES Update: From the Summit to the Summer

By Cathy Smith, Youth Engagement Coordinator

Philadelphia Youth Summit: Thirty-Two Youth and a Whole Lot of Learning!

***This story is part of series of articles reporting on the **Youth Voices in Policy: Strategies for Engaging Youth in Civic Activities**, a UCCP launched project, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. To review other full-text related articles, please visit the UCCP website (www.temple.edu/uccp) and click on "UCCP Newsletters."*

The Philadelphia Youth Summit was held Thursday, February 21st – Sunday, February 24th and welcomed 15 students and three teachers from Cristo Rey High School, a Jesuit school for Mexican/Mexican-American students. The Chicago students were accompanied by two representatives from CURL (Center for Urban Research and Learning at Loyola University). VOICES participants spent many, many hours preparing for all aspects of the summit, and were completely engaged in the process. From constructing presentations and contacting community organizations, to organizing social events that included an authentic Puerto Rican meal prepared by several participants' families,



Sharing the stage for one final group shot, the Philly and Chicago youth pose with the Temple Instructors at the conclusion of the Philadelphia Youth Summit.

youth generated topics, highlights of the Summit included:

- A workshop focusing on Police Brutality featuring skits written and presented by youth as well as a presentation from the *Police Barrio Relations Project*, a non-profit organization in the American Street corridor dedicated to improving the relationship between Latinos and police officers.
- A formal debate on diversity in schools held at Ben Franklin High School and brilliantly facilitated by our Temple University VOICES Instructors.
- A panel discussion on community economic development featuring Patricia DeCarlo from Norris Square Civic Association and Fred Snead, a community activist from the Francisville section of Philadelphia. The audi-

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Spring 2002 and Beyond...

The VOICES program continues to mature with rapid speed. Although only in our second year, we are very proud of the tremendous progress we have made over the past several months. The enthusiasm from the Youth Summit led to easy recruitment for the Spring iteration of VOICES at the three Youth Opportunity Centers (YOCs). In operation at all three centers (American Street, North Central, and West Philadelphia), the youth worked overtime to meet the goals of the projects they envisioned from the beginning of their classes. Members at American Street produced a workshop

(complete with literature packet they created) on sexual health, and led an interactive presentation at our final all-group celebration.



North Central folks designed a project that deconstructed how pop culture influences image. Their survey data, analysis and youth-led discussion were also presented at the all-group celebration. The West Philadelphia youth planned two projects. The first was an advocacy campaign for an employee who was recently fired. Their eloquent letters and speeches to management on behalf of this individual and in protest of the process were applauded. In recognition of their activism, they were asked to nominate two youth representatives to be part of future staff interviews. Their second project was the organization of a Community Health Fair that was held on Saturday, May 4th in West Philadelphia. Participating in the Health Fair were 10 local organizations and nearly 100 community residents.

A lot of synergy has been created as a result of these projects. The success of VOICES at all three centers is largely due to the commitment and vision of the Temple University VOICES Instructors who work with the youth on a bi-weekly basis. There are currently plans to expand the program to other sites this summer, as well as host the first **VOICES Summer Academy**. The Academy will enable youth to work at their host site for 6 weeks on a community issue of their choice, coming together once a week at Temple to participate in joint workshops and college readiness activities. Although in its infancy, VOICES is seeding the next generation of youth leaders and supporting them as they discover their incredible potential to affect change in their communities.

Voices from VOICES: Reflections from the Field

For Temple University Education Student, VOICES is a Dynamic Experience

By Brendan Mims, VOICES Instructor



Life is an exciting adventure in which we utilize all of our skills in order to achieve our goals. The people we interact with, the situations we encounter and our response to the things we are exposed to help build our character and morale. To

this respect, enrolling at Temple University and being a member of VOICES has enabled me to understand who I am, what I stand for, and the impact that I want to have on other people.

At Temple University, the instructors of the VOICES program are its own graduate and undergraduate students. Being involved in a program like VOICES gives college students an opportunity to interact with upcoming students and members of the neighborhood. Simultaneously, it gives the youth an opportunity to collaborate on a project and work with positive people. Being an instructor in VOICES has broadened my horizons and reconstructed my view of the world. Prior to being an instructor in this program I did not know how to engage myself with people of a given community. This program has taught me how to effectively engage myself in a community and be a positive role model at the same time. I am proud of the accomplishments of VOICES and I am honored to be a member.

During the month of February I had the privilege to participate in the Youth Summit that was conducted by the UCCP and Temple students. Bringing Cristo Rey students to Philadelphia gave all of the students involved an opportunity to interact with people from a different culture. Although the students from Cristo Rey were from predominantly Mexican neighborhoods, they agreed that in order to become well-rounded individuals they must engage themselves with people of all races. The Youth Summit served as a stepping-stone towards a world of diversity and appreciation of culture.

Being a member of the panel for the Youth Summit was an out of body experience for me. This was the first time that I was put in a position to share my college and life experiences with a large group of people. Even though the students who participated in the Youth Summit were very close to my age, they responded to me effectively and respected my words of wisdom. In a similar fashion, I was allowed to listen to their points of view and understand where they were coming from. This also gave me an opportunity to look through the eyes of a teenager once again, but from a wiser perspective.

The Youth Summit and the VOICES program were learning

experiences that taught me how to establish a bond with students. Establishing bonds and building relationships with students are two essential things that I will have to master in order to become an effective teacher. I would like to thank all of the students I worked with as well as the staff for the experience and memories that will live forever.

Brendan Mims, an Education Major at Temple University, became a VOICES instructor in the Spring of 2002. After helping to prepare for the Philadelphia Youth Summit, Brendan worked as an instructor at the West Philadelphia YOC, where he helped youth plan and carry-out a very successful Health Fair (see related story on page 4).

My Experience with VOICES

By Brookelynn Williams, VOICES Student



Well, when I first heard of VOICES, I wasn't enthused. I thought it was just another program. However, after joining VOICES, my opinion changed. VOICES brought up a whole new situation--gentrification (not really new—I wasn't informed). When I saw all the college students moving into the renovated houses in our neighborhoods, I thought

nothing of it. I figured it would benefit the community. College students moving in, abandoned houses now renovated, and new institutions in the community seemed like good things, but it's not that simple.

Being a part of VOICES helped me realize there are two sides to every story. Before VOICES, I had no idea what gentrification meant, and that is what was affecting me. What happens when these institutions and renovated houses increase the taxes in our neighborhood, and we are not able to afford them? What happens when we don't have the money? They buy us out of our homes! My involvement with VOICES made me realize that everything that looks nice isn't always right.

VOICES also helped when we made a visit to peers in Chicago last October. It was like deja vu to actually see other people going through the same things we were. I have to say that VOICES is a program that I wish could run forever. It was a fun learning experience. By learning what I did in VOICES, I was able to go back to the people in my community and inform them of the situation. It is always good when a child can go back and teach their community and peers.

Brookelynn Williams is a graduate of Multicultural Academy in Philadelphia and is planning to attend Temple University in January of 2003. Currently she is working at Global Abstract Title Insurance Agency. Brookelynn has been participating in VOICES since Fall of 2001 and participated in both the Chicago and Philadelphia Youth Civic Engagement Summits.

Philadelphia Youth Summit

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ence learned about economic strategies to improve their communities that simultaneously prevent gentrification from occurring.

- A final workshop featured the Temple University VOICES Instructors who spoke eloquently and honestly about their experiences of being a minority on a college campus.

Outside of the formal learning environment, youth bonded during the many extra-curricular activities planned throughout the weekend. They toured the city in a private trolley, ice-skated at the Penn's Landing RiverRink, and shared their moves at a dance held at the American Street Youth Opportunity Center. The event was an incredible learning experience for everyone involved!

Maps, Markets & Magic

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completed in one sense: the short list of businesses and a set of designs now exist, and they highlight some underlying issues, such as: Are there ways to breach the cultural and physical wall that separates Latino Norris Square from Anglo Fishtown? Who will run the new businesses? How will NSCA find, train and support owners with the right skills, experience and temperament? And how can the power of designs and research be kept harnessed to NSCA and its needs?

With all this, our plates will be full this summer as we try to knit even more creatively and closely architecture, landscape architecture, business analysis, business experience and community experience into a coherent design and development plan for Norris Square Civic Association's Mercado!