

WORKING CAPITAL

The Newsletter of the Chicago Program of Local Initiatives Support Corporation

14th Annual CNDA Honor Achievements in Chicago's Neighborhoods

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Valerie Jarrett, President and CEO of the Habitat Company and chair of this year's CNDA welcomes the crowd to the Ceremony.

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Also new to this year's ceremony was the pre-awards performance by Chicago's renowned The Second City. "Outside In: The Second City's Take on Community Improvement" provided a humorous retrospective of community development in Chicago over the last four decades.

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NCP – A National Model for Community Development

Neighborhood leaders and community development practitioners from Chicago and around the country will come together for a two-day work conference March 26-27 to share the best practices for improving communities.

The conference, "Getting It Done: New Tools for Communities," will be sponsored by LISC/Chicago, Bank of America, The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, LISC Sustainable Communities and State Farm Insurance and hosted by 16 Chicago neighborhoods that have planned, launched and executed the nation's largest demonstration project in comprehensive community development, the New Communities Program (NCP). NCP has impacted the City of Chicago in myriad ways, from arts and schools to housing and commercial development.

The gathering will bring together hundreds of community experts in everything from youth programming and safety to retail development and health care. Chicago practitioners will be joined by their counterparts across the country.



"We're hoping for some international participants, too," says Susana Vasquez, NCP Director at LISC/Chicago, the primary sponsor of the March conference. "We've had visitors from across the U.S. and all over the world and this is a great opportunity for them to learn more about the inspiring work underway in Chicago neighborhoods."

The conference will include workshops on organizing, communications, deal-making and other community-building tools. There also will be tours of NCP neighborhoods and discussion sessions to allow participants to trade information and network.

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Programs at Humboldt Park's Puerto Rican Cultural Center Foster Artistic Creativity, Cultural Pride and Community Ownership

Arts and culture increasingly are seen as key components of community development, just as important as housing, jobs and business to the life of a neighborhood.

The Puerto Rican Cultural Center in Humboldt Park, however, is much more than a center for arts and culture. It is a hub for creative thought and community action.

Jose Lopez, one of the founders and its executive director, said the Center emerges from a sense that the Puerto Rican community must take ownership of the process of urban revitalization. The Center runs programs addressing issues from housing to education, racism to economic development, gang violence to homophobia. Lopez quotes Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Nahn in discussing the work of the PRCC as building "a community of resistance."

"I think that communities of resistance should be places where people can return to themselves more easily, where the conditions are such that they can heal themselves and recover their wholeness," Lopez said.

Humboldt Park has long been a dynamic community and PRCC has been at the heart of it for 35 years. Susana Vasquez, director of the New Communities Program for LISC, says PRCC "is a critical neighborhood institution, almost like the R&D division for the neighborhood—they do the research and come up with the idea, then find a way to get it done."

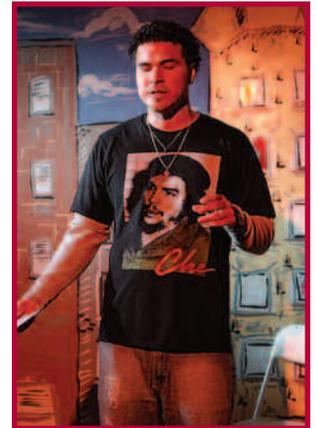
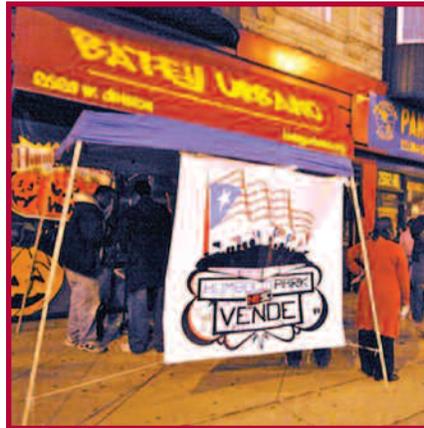
The Center engenders long-term commitment from the community as well. Its first theater project, a play titled "The Spark," was first presented in 1996 to mark the 40th anniversary of the Division Street Riots, an uprising widely regarded as building an urban Puerto Rican consciousness in the United States. One of the actors from the first production, Mike Reyes is now a producer of a new play he co-wrote called "Crime Against Humanity."

The success of that first play has prompted the *Café Teatro Batey Urbano* to usher in a community-based theater movement where youth are trained as actors, technicians and playwrights. This youth-led storefront provides young people an outlet to showcase their talents in hip hop, poetry, music, murals, web pages, and creative writing – allowing them to "engage in a continuous dialogue about youth, art, culture and the community."

Lopez credits LISC's early grant for the play and a mural to complement the production with making it happen.

"It had a tremendous impact on the community, on creativity and on the youth themselves and their ability to become actors," he said.

More information on PRCC can be found at www.prcc-chgo.org.



TOP LEFT: Community youth line up for the Batey Urbano haunted house during Haunted Paseo Boricua, an annual culturally-relevant halloween event.

TOP RIGHT: "Poetry with Purpose" at Batey Urbano provides a venue for youth to creatively express issues that influence their community.

MIDDLE: Batey Urbano provides youth with an outlet to showcase their talents.

BOTTOM LEFT & RIGHT: Youth organize for affordable housing at the "No Se Vende" campaign's march and rally, organized by Batey Urbano leaders.

LISC invites commentaries from neighborhood partners for publication in this newsletter. This issue's column is by Melissa McDaniel, Executive Director of the North River Commission.

North River Commission Changes Face of Albany Park

Albany Park has become one of Chicago's hottest neighborhoods in which to dine and shop, a change that is due in great part to many years of community organizing and engagement led by the North River Commission (NRC).

NRC was founded on the belief that those who live and work in a community have the right and responsibility to make decisions for it. That belief is the driving force behind 45 years of successful neighborhood change. In Albany Park, NRC has leveraged more than \$300 million of reinvestment into the commercial area, created or retained 3,500 jobs, reduced the vacancy rate from 30 percent to 2 percent, and renovated more than 300 storefronts, more than any other group in the city.

But our work is not done. Through our two-year planning process called the Futures Forum, hundreds of community leaders representing thousands more came together to set forth visions and goals in the areas of economic development, education, housing, arts and culture and parks and open spaces.

For years, our economic development efforts have been at the forefront of community improvement. Business and community leaders envisioned our commercial area as a premier destination for shopping, dining, cultural attractions and entertainment on Chicago's Northwest side. We are working hard to achieve that vision by expanding business resources, beautifying storefronts, marketing our commercial districts, entertainment and cultural attractions and increasing parking options.

In collaboration with our development affiliates, the Lawrence Avenue Development Corporation and the Albany Park Chamber of Commerce, NRC has launched two exciting new initiatives this year: a Multi-Ethnic Sculpture Garden and the Albany Park Retail Marketing Campaign.

The retail campaign creates a cohesive identity for the growing number of ethnic shops, award-winning restaurants and bakeries and links them with arts and cultural venues that are treasured locally but are not well known outside the community, including the Cambodian Killing Fields Museum and the Albany Park Theatre Project. When it's completed, NRC's Multi-Ethnic Sculpture Garden will join that list.

NRC continues to lead the charge on storefront renovations. We turn out 25 completed projects every year through the City's Small Business Improvement Fund. This plays a vital part in leveraging reinvestment into the community and makes Albany Park an attractive place to shop, dine and live. From new awnings and signage to lighting and storefront windows without grates, we are changing the face of Albany Park.

NRC understands that its work in economic development plays a larger role in improving the community as a whole. So the next time you're in Albany Park for a bite to eat or to see a new museum exhibit, know that the new storefront awnings and new parks you passed are just a few of the concrete ways our community is turning dreams and visions into reality.

A storefront renovation completed by the North River Commission and the City's Small Business Improvement Fund



Melissa McDaniel, Executive Director, North River Commission

Rewriting Business Planning for Urban Areas

Traditionally, retailers seeking new locations for their shops and stores look at consultants' reports about the median income of the area. It's an approach that doesn't work for low-income, high-density urban neighborhoods. Ten years ago, ShoreBank came up with another way to measure the economic strength of an inner-city neighborhood: by looking more closely at how population density translates into community buying power.

Called MetroEdge, this market analysis approach looks at the amount of money spent by residents of a densely-packed urban neighborhood. While a household's median income might be low, taken as a whole, the neighborhood packs a solid economic punch.

The market analysis work was taken over by LISC nearly three years ago and paired with RetailEdge, a program that helps communities create marketing and development plans to use the MetroEdge analysis and attract new businesses.

In 2004, MetroEdge completed a study in the Quad Communities of North Kenwood, Oakland, Douglas and Grand Boulevard. Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC) took that information and a marketing plan developed by RetailEdge and headed out to Las Vegas for the annual meeting of the International Council of Shopping Centers. The result: The Shops and Lofts at 47th will begin construction this spring.



"It will be the first new quality retail development in this community in 30 or 40 years," says Joel Bookman, director of programs for LISC/Chicago.

LISC MetroEdge also has completed or is working on market analyses for South Chicago, North Lawndale, Auburn Gresham, West Haven, Humboldt Park and Woodlawn. In addition to figuring out the buying power of a community, the studies point out "what steps need to be done to make a community competitive—safety, security, amenities, parking, and other factors that a city community must deal with to be competitive with other areas," Bookman says.

That's where RetailEdge comes in, says Jake Cowan, business manager for LISC MetroEdge. "There might be a laundry list of things a community might need. RetailEdge can help sort those out."

The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Committed to Enhancing the Urban Environment: Interview with Sunny Fischer, Executive Director of The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards for Architectural Excellence in Community Design. The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation has provided grants since 1992 to organizations working to benefit individuals and communities by preserving and enhancing both built and natural environments. Executive Director Sunny Fischer spoke with LISC about the foundation's commitment to improving the urban environment.

The Driehaus Foundation has a long history of involvement in Chicago's communities. Can you give examples of some of your efforts to promote quality community design?

The Driehaus Foundation has supported a wide range of initiatives such as Archeworks, an alternative architecture school in which students work with non-profit partners to create design solutions for social needs. We have partnered with the City to support the Greystone and Bungalow Initiatives, which maintain the historic character of Chicago's neighborhoods. We're particularly interested in how to use what we learn from landmarks preservation to maintain affordable housing. In addition, we funded a competition for the design of the Millennium Park Garden and the restoration of the Alfred Caldwell Lily Pool in Lincoln Park.

What type of long-term impact does the Driehaus Foundation hope to make and how does it plan to do it?

Funders are only as successful as those we fund, and we know that success is measured in small steps. We support efforts that deepen the public's understanding of architecture and encourage quality

design. Through funding advocacy and public awareness, we are working to ensure that our landmarks – both landscape and buildings – are treasured and cared for. In addition, we seek to encourage and support good design for those who are often without it.



Sunny Fischer, Executive Director,
The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

The Driehaus Foundation's commitment to preserving and enhancing the built environment drives much of its community work. How does the Foundation's involvement with the Chicago Neighborhood Development Awards (CNDA) support its goals?

We believe that LISC has the outreach capability to support our goal of building a more knowledgeable, more involved public – a public more demanding of good design. CNDA raises awareness by rewarding developers who care about good design and architects who work on the neighborhood level. We can see how the results contribute to the quality of life for the community and the entire city.

This year marks the 10th Anniversary of The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Awards. Can you tell us what motivated Richard H. Driehaus to create the Awards?

Richard and his family grew up in a bungalow on the South Side of Chicago and he always appreciated the need for well-crafted homes. His love for the City, long-standing passion for quality architecture and eye for design led him to establish the Awards, which recognize architects, and project sponsors who, through restoration or new construction, have created buildings and spaces that continue to enhance Chicago's neighborhoods.

Fourth Quarter LISC Grant & Loan Activity

LISC closed the final quarter of 2007 having dispersed a total of \$1,390,159 in loans and grants to community development projects across Chicago's neighborhoods.

Four lead agencies in the **New Communities Program** received grants totaling \$318,670 for operational support to carry out development activities and a variety of quality of life projects. A \$36,500 grant was made to Logan Square Neighborhood Association to support a three-year service learning partnership at Kelvyn Park High School.

To preserve affordable rental housing in Chicago, **The Homestead Fund** provided a \$20,000 grant to Greater Southwest Development Corporation to support its Green Bungalow Initiative. A \$33,000 project initiation loan was made to Heartland Housing Inc., to support pre-development expenses for their partnership with Humboldt Park Social Services on a proposed redevelopment of a mixed-use property in Logan Square.

Through **The Main Street Fund**, LISC approved a \$15,000 grant to Growing Home Inc., an urban farming program that provides job training and employment opportunities for homeless and low-income families. This grant allowed Growing Home Inc. to purchase equipment for the Wood Street Urban Farm in Englewood, where produce is grown year round.

A \$50,000 project initiation loan was made to the Quad Communities Development Corporation through **The Civic Life Fund**, to cover the predevelopment expenses associated with the proposed Arts and Recreation Center at 35th and Cottage Grove.

Finally, Teamwork Englewood received a \$5,000 grant through **The Leadership Fund** which will allow six individuals to attend the Grantsmanship Center for a comprehensive workshop related to researching funding sources, writing and reviewing grant proposals.

CNDA (Continued from cover)

During the Awards Ceremony, nine awards were given out in seven categories, with the following groups and individuals receiving honors:

The Chicago Community Trust Outstanding Community Strategy of the Year



Lawndale Christian Development Corporation

The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Outstanding Non-Profit Neighborhood Real Estate Project



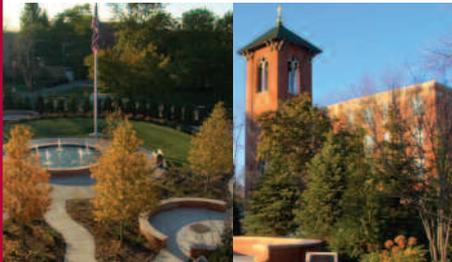
Center on Halsted

Outstanding For-Profit Neighborhood Real Estate Project Award



Chicago GreenWorks for Rancho Verde

Special Recognition Award



St. Leo's Campus for Veterans

The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation Award for Architectural Excellence in Community Design



First Place
Landon Bone Baker Architects for La Casa Norte's Solid Ground Supportive Housing Building

Second Place
Stanley Tigerman for Pacific Garden Mission

Third Place
Murphy/Jahn for Mercy Housing Lakefront's Margot and Harold Schiff Residences

The Friend of the Neighborhoods Award



Richard H. Driehaus, Chairman and Chief Investment Officer, Driehaus Capital Management LLC and President of the Richard H. Driehaus Foundation

The Norman Bobins Leadership Award



Carlos Nelson, Executive Director, Greater Auburn-Gresham Development Corporation

"The winners of this year's awards represent a broad range of creative and effective responses to local challenges," says Andrew Mooney, executive director of LISC/Chicago. "The strength and vitality of Chicago's neighborhoods is contingent on projects like those honored at CNDA and we look forward to continued development for years to come."

New LISC/Chicago Board Members

LISC/Chicago welcomes Gene Saffold, Managing Director of JPMorgan Chase and Ellen Sahli, Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Housing, to the Board of Advisors.



Gene Saffold, Managing Director, JPMorgan Chase



Ellen Sahli, Commissioner, Chicago Department of Housing

New LISC/Chicago Staff Member

LISC/Chicago would also like to welcome new staff member Chris Brown. Brown is the Director of Education Programs. He has extensive experience in community organizing, public education and affordable housing development. He has previously worked at the Steans Family Foundation, the United Way, the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform and ACORN.



Chris Brown, Director of Education Programs, LISC/Chicago

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