

bright ideas

Practice Groups Promote Leadership

by Margo Kelly

Several years ago, Neighborhood Reinvestment's field division engaged in a somewhat risky venture. We gathered two separate groups of NeighborWorks® leaders (executive directors and board members) from all across the country in the same room with a talented consultant and asked them a number of questions.

No Corporation staff participated in these meetings, and participants were promised that none of their comments would be attributed to an individual. We asked them: What do Neighborhood Reinvestment's field staff members do well? What do we not do well? What is the most important role of a field service officer? What services provided to the network are the most important to them and unobtainable elsewhere?

We intended to use this feedback as the basis for a business plan for our fieldwork—and we did. The results were interesting and thought-provoking.

Lessons Learned

First, we were reminded that some parts of the country have little in the way of "infrastructure" to support non-profit, community-development efforts. In some locales, the resources and technical assistance that Neighborhood Reinvestment provides are all they have.

We also learned that network participants were much more interested in seeing us improve the quality of a limited, but strategic, number of services than in having a broader range from which to choose. Also on the subject of quality, they wanted our services to be consistent across all nine districts.

And, finally, these network leaders crystallized in a very succinct fashion the key programmatic activity areas in which our services were most widely wanted and needed. This information was particularly useful at a time when the range of network interests and activities had begun to expand geometrically while our staffing remained relatively constant. We simply didn't have the capacity to provide technical assistance in every area of network endeavor, and we wanted to focus on deepening our skills and tools in the areas most relevant to network operations.

The two focus groups identified six areas of programmatic need. Broader discussion with network leaders in the districts and with Corporation staff confirmed the following as key activities: single-family housing, multi-family housing, resource development and marketing, community revitalization and business planning, management systems, and organizational development.

While there were, and still are, a host of other endeavors underway in the network, most believed that more appropriate resources were available elsewhere to support them. Others simply believed that we should limit the number of priorities we tried to tackle because we couldn't be good at everything.

Promising Changes

Since our initial meetings, many changes have transpired. From my point of view, the change that has produced the most promising results for the network is the realignment of

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Photo by Hanna Richards

DIFFERENT STROKES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS. Ray Pierce and Heather Bouchard take different angles on a Paint the Town project organized by Rutland West NHS and sponsored in part by First Brandon National Bank, where Pierce and Bouchard work.

WINNING PHOTOS Capture Network Spirit

by Jean Byars

The winners of this year's *bright ideas* Photo Contest agree on tips for taking a photograph that depicts "Transforming Communities Together." Take lots of photographs, they advise; capture people engrossed in their work; remember that an artist's eye is more important than an expensive camera; and your best shot may not be the one you have carefully planned. Our judges are different every year and are usually Neighborhood Reinvestment employees. They do not know the names of the photographers or see the explanations of the images; they see only the photographs.

First Prize

Our first-place winner is Hannah Richards, a senior in high school who has been taking photography seriously since June. In August she took this photo (above) with a borrowed camera at Rutland West NHS' Paint the Town project in West Rutland, Vermont.

The image she captured was no fluke, however. She was concentrating on capturing a picture-perfect image. "I had been wandering around about two hours," Richards says. "I liked the angle of the ladders, and I was looking for shots of people working together. When I saw these two people painting, I waited for them to get closer [to each other]. I waited until they both reached out." The image she saw through her viewfinder reminded her of Michelangelo's "Creation of Adam" in the Sistine Chapel. "I have been studying Michelangelo," she says. "I thought, 'Oh, Wow!'"

There is always a certain amount of luck involved in photography, especially capturing people in action, but Richards had spent the summer developing her sense of balance and beauty. She took figure drawing and fiber arts classes for college credit.

"That might have helped me gain an artist's eye," she says.

Another secret to her success might be her teacher. Kris Pearson, a staff member of Rutland West NHS and last year's first-prize winner in our contest, is her photographic mentor. It was Pearson's 35-mm Canon and her telephoto lens that Richards was using. On her mentor's advice she

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A Good Rehab Specialist IS HARD TO FIND

by Catherine A. Smith

Wanted: A creative team player with excellent management skills, knowledge of construction methods and materials, ability to plan and bring projects in under budget, awareness of complex rules and regulations, good decision-making skills, and a sense of humor.

This could be the job description of a housing rehab specialist in a typical NeighborWorks® organization today. These professionals play a crucial part in revitalization. In doing so, they assume a myriad of roles, responsibilities and challenges.

There are two problems, though. How many people feel competent enough to reply to such an ad? And once an organization has landed such talent, what does it take to keep them?

Matching Skills with Needs

"I think people with all these attributes are very scarce," says Bob Santucci of Urban Renovation Consultants, who has been a trainer of rehab specialists for more than 20 years for Neighborhood Reinvestment Training Institutes. Yet filling these positions is crucial for many community-based developers.

Rehab specialists play a key role in management and client relations. They must understand how to use scheduling and cost-estimating software and also have a broad understanding of construction methods. They have to know the latest regulations governing construction and be aware of new construction materials.

"It's hard to find a person who's knowledgeable in all these areas and still compete in salary," says Bob Zelsdorf, executive director of NHS of Davenport, Iowa.

Santucci says there are two paths such people usually take. "One is an older, highly skilled contractor who's ready to come in from the field and do some office work. You train them in the finance and regulatory side. The other is younger people who know ... the paper side, but who need more experience in construction-management



Photo by Janet L. Weyandt

A HARD-WORKING CREW. In Barberton, Ohio, volunteers swarm over and around one of the eight houses that were transformed with donated paint on one Saturday in August. This hardy crew is part of more than 220 volunteers of all ages who pitched in to make Neighborhood Conservation Services of Barberton's ninth annual Paint Your Heart Out campaign an overwhelming success.

oversight, property inspections or spec writing. You train this group to get more of the field knowledge and hands-on stuff. You usually have to pick one or the other," he says, "unless you're really lucky."

Luck Happens—Sometimes

NHS of Davenport lucked out when Mike Mann came into its orbit. Mann calls his job as rehab manager "energizing."

"I'm still learning about the organization and the array of responsibilities," he says. For him, this includes "facilitating clients' rehab projects, serving as general contractor for in-house construction projects, assuring long-term client satisfaction and making sure the financial goals are met." Mann is proving to be up to these tasks, which is a good thing, since NHS of Davenport is a top producer of affordable housing in its region.

According to Santucci, what rehab specialists find most challenging probably depends on their background. "If you're really strong in the field stuff, the challenge is to learn to use the office tools. People who might be very computer literate will have to pay attention to things like new lead-paint abatement regulations [see below], new sub-trade tracking, and new materials and methods."

Mann's personal challenge is one surely echoed by his NeighborWorks® network peers: to balance the multitude of demands involved with coordinating client needs, managing files and paperwork, overseeing projects, and reporting out on them.

"Balancing all of this," he says, "is the greatest challenge of my position, but also the most rewarding."

Catherine A. Smith is a freelance writer based in Cheverly, Maryland.

THE RULES, THEY ARE A-CHANGIN'

On top of everything else they have to understand and do, rehab specialists also need to know the latest federal, state and local regulations and procedures that govern how they do their work.

For example, new regulations concerning lead-based paint abatement kicked in on September 15. These are designed to make paint removal a safer process. According to one of the new requirements, all housing known to contain lead-based paint must be vacated before renovation occurs.

Previously, only households with small children had to find—or be supplied with—temporary shelter.

Jerry Schechter, executive director of Westside Housing Organization in Kansas City, Missouri, fears that the new regulations "will stop the rehab activity in our community," which he describes as "marginal, with families making less than \$19,000 a year, and with a lot of 100- to 130-year-old houses that probably have

lead paint." Right now the appraised value of these homes doesn't cover the cost of renovation, he explains, which means that subsidies have to fill the gap.

The new regulations will enlarge that gap even further. Since the city has set limits on funds that can be used for gap financing, he says "federal subsidies have to fill the gap or we can't even do the rehab. We're at that limit now, even before the new regulations" add additional costs.

Neighborhood Reinvestment's legal department points out, though, that the use of Neighborhood Reinvestment funds over \$5,000 do not trigger the new federal lead-abatement regulations. In other words, if non-federal dollars (e.g., conventional financing) are used in an acquisition-rehab deal and only Neighborhood Reinvestment dollars exceed \$5,000, then the new regulations do not apply.

The four NeighborWorks® organizations in the Kansas City area and 13 other nonprofit organizations are now studying the regulations and their potential impact.

Bob Santucci, who is conducting training in lead-based paint abatement, likens these fears to the past "when people were skeptical about how they

could put electricity inside of houses, or move the old outhouse indoors, or add central heat. I think the construction and renovation industry very successfully addressed those issues," he says. "In the year 2000, it's now time that we include these environmental concerns."

Reducing lead-based paint hazards and relocating families out of the work zone, Santucci says, will "cost more money and involve new procedures ... It's not an insurmountable obstacle, but a lot of people are nervous about it."

Schechter shares Santucci's concerns about the hazards of renovating houses with lead-based paint. "I'm really torn, because I've always pushed for more abatement rules," he says. The new regulations "won't change our mission, but may change the manner in which we accomplish it."

Steve Tuminaro, Neighborhood Reinvestment's policy analysis director, suggests contacting HUD's regional offices to find out how the regulations might be interpreted locally. "I can't imagine that the new regulations will have that much of an impact," he says. "It will take too much housing out of the market."

Catherine Smith

NeighborWorks® *bright ideas*
Since 1982

This quarterly publication of Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation assists NeighborWorks® network organizations in their mission to rebuild and revitalize declining communities. Our intent is to publish success stories and innovative strategies from network organizations and information from Neighborhood Reinvestment staff to help NeighborWorks® organizations better serve their communities.

The Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation is a public, nonprofit organization.

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A NeighborWorks® Publication
© 2000 Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation
ISSN 0899-0921

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Photo Contest....

took dozens of shots during the painting project. She had the photo contest's theme in mind, but, she admits, "I was more centered around understanding the workings of the camera," and, she adds, "I had a wonderful teacher."

Second Prize

Diana Garcia went out on a day in late August to take a picture of something that might happen in the neighborhoods of Ithaca, New York, NHS any day of the week. A good photograph, she says, should capture people in action, and she suggests, "Originality is very important—and simplicity."

With these ideas in mind and a plan to enter the *bright ideas* Photo Contest, Ithaca NHS' director of lending services went in search of an activity that would be a good example of the transformation of communities. After 12 years with the organization, Garcia is a firm believer in the worth of her organization's Mini-Repair Program. Since 1981, staff members have been providing the labor to make minor repairs for the elderly, the handicapped and female heads of households. The recipients supply the materials.

She wanted to capture people in action, so she went to the home of Anna Maholl, who Garcia describes as "a really good lady who is well-known in the community." Maholl recently had a knee operation, and Tom Gudeman, an INHS repair specialist, was installing her new handrails. Using a telephoto lens on her Rebel camera, Garcia took several shots from different angles. Taking more than one shot is essential, she says. She liked the light coming in through the window at the top of the stairs, and the walls and railings that make a good frame. Most of all, she says, "I like the facial expression of Mrs. Maholl."



Photo by Diana Garcia



Photo by Jerry L. Petrik

TAKING PRIDE IN THEIR WORK. Jason, Rebekah, Jessica and Michael pause in their diligent efforts to pose for the camera. On a Saturday in August at Neighborhood Conservation Services of Barberton's ninth annual Paint Your Heart Out day, 220 volunteers gathered to paint eight homes for seniors.

Garcia is often called upon by her organization to bring her camera to take group shots at special NeighborWorks® events or pictures of rehabbed houses. However, she confesses that taking pictures of flowers is her specialty. She says that a good photograph doesn't require an expensive camera. "It has to do with the eye of the photographer. It's got to be an original of people doing their own thing."

The judges liked this photo because it tells a story. Garcia says, "It came out better than I expected."

Third Prize

Jerry Petrik spent the morning of August 12 driving back and forth among eight houses that were being painted by 220 volunteers. As executive director of Neighborhood Conservation Services of Barberton, Ohio, his job was to see that all the workers had what they needed to get the job done. Although he is accustomed to taking pictures at events like this ninth annual NCS Paint Your Heart Out, he left his 35-mm Nikon behind and brought his small, auto focus point-and-shoot. He had just dropped off the ladders needed at one house when he saw four young children engrossed in their painting and wearing the special "Neighbors Helping Neighbors" T-shirts supplied by his organization.

"They were doing their thing," Petrik recalls. "Not goofing off. I noticed they were different kids with different personalities. When I asked if I could take their picture and said, 'Do you like working with that big paint brush?' one kid looked over his shoulder as if to say, 'Leave me alone and let me paint.' The other boy sprang up holding his paint brush."

These children were with a group from the local Jesus Christ Church of the Latter Day Saints, among hundreds of volunteers from many organizations and businesses who came to paint houses of seniors or handicapped families. Other volunteers prepared lunch made from dozens of donations. Petrik says it takes five months to organize the event and to coordinate donations of materials, food and money.

Petrik's advice for taking a good photo: "You have to take a lot of them. Normally if I go somewhere and I want to capture the place or the action, I take a lot of shots." He also warns, "The one you think is going to be the best is often not what you expect. The really good ones are the off-the-wall stuff."

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HANDY RAIL ASSURES SAFE STEPS. Tom Gudeman, Ithaca NHS Mini-Repair specialist, installs a handrail to provide Anna Maholl secure steps after her knee surgery. The program can stop a leaking faucet, install a light bulb, build new steps and more.

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Leadership Development...

our services by specialty areas.

This does not mean that Neighborhood Reinvestment has abandoned its historic liaison assignments. Each management consultant still is assigned several network organizations for which he or she is responsible. We believe strongly that it is critical for all of our field staff to retain a holistic view of the challenges, opportunities and daily realities that network members face. And we continue to be committed to the principle that the districts are the focus and origin of service delivery to network organizations.

But over the last three years we also have dedicated resources, time and focus to enhancing staff skills in the six key areas of network priority. The individuals we hire have a high level of expertise, and we encourage them to further enhance their capacities through participation in the internal professional practice groups that meet quarterly.

Each practice group consists of one management consultant from each district. A skilled practitioner staffs each

group, which is facilitated by one of our district directors. The purpose of these group efforts is to enhance staff skills and expertise so that they can enhance the quality of services they provide to the NeighborWorks® network. All of our training and activity are measured against that objective.

Insights from the Insiders

This issue of *bright ideas* includes a sample of the tools and enhancements that have resulted from the work of these staff groups. Although evaluation of, and improvements to, this system will be ongoing, the revised structure allows us to fully focus our efforts, attention and resources in a more strategic and powerful manner.

The specialty practice groups have become the internal support network for the Campaign for Home Ownership and the Multifamily Initiative. They have also brought cogency and consistency to our approach to new affiliates and executive transitions.

Our ability to support the network's widespread business-planning activities has expanded significantly as a result of the community revitalization and business planning practice group as explained in Paula Planthaber's

article on page 4. The practice group venue also allows staff to share highly effective strategies like the resource development "clinic" described by LaRayne Hebert on page 5. The approach to technology diagnostics outlined in the article by Jose Fernandez on page 4 emerged directly from the focus group deliberations. Carilee Warner's article on page 5 provides a good explanation of how the process of organizational development works to improve systems and practices.

We are encouraged by our results and by the feedback we have solicited from the network organizations and the management consultants. This new emphasis has honed our skills and tools in critical activity areas, brought greater clarity and cogency to hiring efforts and greater consistency to the kind and quality of services available in each district.

With ongoing input from our customers and staff, we will continue to explore ways to enhance the effectiveness of our technical assistance efforts.

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Photo by Eric Youngberg



GETTING DOWN TO BUSINESS. In El Cenizo city hall, management consultant Oscar Saenz (center) discusses problems in the “colonias” with others involved in their revitalization. Members of the community revitalization and business practice group are (from left) David Johnson, Gloria Ortega, Michael Martinez and Durid Da’as. On the right is Angelo Piccarillo, executive director of Laredo-Webb NHS. Flora Barton, commissioner for the City of El Cenizo, is in the background.

by Paula Planthaber

Revitalizing communities is what makes the work of the NeighborWorks® network special. This long-term process involves many phases and the collective efforts of residents and other community stakeholders.

Network organizations often submit requests to Neighborhood Reinvestment for help with revitalization efforts. The Corporation employs at least one management consultant per district with a specialty in community revitalization and business planning. These individuals work with community leaders and local organization staff to develop revitalization strategies and business plans and to help establish links between the organization’s mission and the community’s vision. We also develop systems and tools to measure impact.

Members of our practice group share a wide spectrum of skills, knowledge and practical experience. Practice group activities are interactive and challenging and must be applicable to the diverse “real life” situations that we encounter.

We also get assistance from experts of the NeighborWorks® system and from external experts.

Sharing Information

We use many different vehicles to address the needs and enhance the skills of management consultants nationwide.

For example, at a meeting in Boston, we learned from three local executive directors their innovative strategies in planning processes and urban revitalization. Two external consultants delivered training about how NeighborWorks® organizations can make their business plans fit their mission and how they can develop a system for measuring their performance.

Other management consultants led the practice group through more than an hour of some of the best practices, tips and cutting-edge innovations in this specialty area.

Deciding on Strategies

One highly interactive exercise was recently completed in response to a technical assistance request from the Laredo-Webb NHS in Texas. NHS

leaders wanted help developing links between housing and non-housing revitalization strategies for community impact in El Cenizo on the border near Laredo. This is one of hundreds of “colonias” along the U.S.-Mexico border that have felt the effects of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the continuous migration of Mexican citizens into the United States. While the NHS continues to work with residents to improve their quality of life, this community has extremely high unemployment, little options for childcare and minimal means of transportation.

The request was assigned to Oscar Saenz, one of our practice group members, and we decided this request could serve as a field laboratory. A practice group subcommittee met with Laredo-Webb Executive Director Angelo Piccarillo and his staff to clarify and confirm the revitalization request, the objectives of the intervention, and the role of the practice group. We had a one-day meeting in San Antonio and a one-day, on-site assessment of El Cenizo. The NHS gave us historical information, current data and

planning for El Cenizo.

The practice group was divided into three working teams. One assessed the processes the NHS used to make planning and implementation decisions. Another performed an environmental scan of four target neighborhoods in the city of Laredo, Webb County and El Cenizo, evaluating the housing, non-housing, politics, economics, social and cultural areas, education, health and the role of the NHS. The third reviewed the organizational and resource-development capacity of Laredo-Webb NHS to implement revitalization strategies.

In May, three practice group members returned to conduct a vision-setting session with El Cenizo community residents and wrote a report describing their wants and desires. A resident of the community will be added to the NHS board of directors.

According to Saenz, “The NHS will continue to provide rehabilitation services and serve as a clearinghouse for ‘colonias’ border issues. Revitalization is a continuous process to improve the quality of life.

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SPECIAL SKILLS TOO SUPPORT NETWORK

“Techno” Teamwork Makes Connection



by Jose Fernandez

As is the case with most Neighborhood Reinvestment management consultants, the management system practice group (MSPG) usually provides advice and planning help to NeighborWorks® organizations. Our assignments as hands-on consultants have been limited, but this past May, that is exactly the job we did.

After receiving a technical assistance request, a team of MSPG members visited Richmond NHS in the Bay Area of California. After careful consultation with the organization’s executive director, its administrative manager and its lead management consultant, our team agreed to work at the NHS office to install a local area computer network (LAN)—from the ground up.

The team included: Armando de la Haya from South Central, Heath Courtney from the Southern district and Russell Hayes from the Pacific district. I served as coordinator for this project.

In many ways, this was an atypical technical assistance project for our practice group. We do not usually set up LANs for network organizations. Instead we advise them about the type of LAN equipment and configuration they should consider, help them find and review vendor quotes, and assess staffing and training needs.

However, we agreed to take on this unique and challenging request for two reasons. We needed to train several new management consultants on LAN installation and configuration, especially in the increasingly prevalent Microsoft Windows NT (new technology) operating system environment. We also wanted to significantly reduce consultant and equipment costs to a small network organization.

The LAN we installed included the following main components:

- ▶ A Windows NT 4 server, with extensive fault tolerance

- ▶ Ten connected Windows '95 or '98 clients
- ▶ Desktop Web and e-mail access for all staff
- ▶ Intranet and Internet e-mail services for all staff

- ▶ Internet firewall and extensive LAN security to protect data from internal and external threats and viruses
- ▶ “Always-on” Internet access through a digital subscriber line (DSL).

With this combination of components, the organization could accomplish its specific business needs and requirements. Those goals included facilitating communication with board members, allowing staff to securely share databases and financial data, and enhancing their capacity for researching fund-raising opportunities. Of course, they could reach these goals without the LAN but at much greater cost in dollars and time.

We also trained the organization’s staff to use customized software that would help meet organization-specific needs. As growth and expansion were highly likely at this organization, we recommended improvements that could be made in the future. Such expansions would give the staff greater internal capacity to manage their technology resources.

In our opinion, the technical assistance was a clear success for all concerned. Not only did the NHS staff benefit by obtaining a high-quality LAN with Internet access, but also, they saved an estimated \$5,000 to \$10,000 in consultant and software costs had they bought these services from private vendors.

At the same time, our practice group learned a great deal about the LAN requirements of a small NeighborWorks® organization, including the number of hours needed to install and configure the system plus costs of equipment and software.

Undoubtedly, this experience and information will make us better technical advisors and resources to every network organization.

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by Carilee Warner

Everyone in the NeighborWorks® network knows that to achieve our goals we must work together. Neighborhood Reinvestment management consultants are often asked to help organizations do this, and one process we use is called organizational development.

Our role is to help staff and board members clarify their own values, issues and resources so that they may function more effectively. Instead of prescriptions for change or easy solutions to problems, we use this process to help individuals come to their own solutions, and often this requires change.



Photo by Heath Courtney

Organizational Development: A Process of Change

Even small changes—planned as well as unexpected—affect people and the work they do. Often, this begins with a problem. To move forward, strong leaders must stand behind the change, and the people affected must be involved. When asked, we help organizations realign their structures and processes. We also provide them with the tools and/or people needed to provide the best services.

Recasting the Vision

We often help boards during critical transitions, such as a assistance with recruiting, evaluating and selecting executive directors.

For example, the former San Jose NHS in California found itself with a small board, a new executive director and an eager city partner who wanted expanded services.

Operating in a very highly priced market with little visibility, the organization faced several challenges, including diverse opinions of leaders on future direction.

With the guidance of Michael Gabriel, a management consultant from the Pacific district, the board and staff agreed on a new vision and the need to operate in a larger community. They also changed the organization's name to NHS of Silicon Valley.

The San Juan NHS in Puerto Rico was trying to provide services and to tackle significant operating deficits. Major differences among board and staff members led to the resignation of most of the staff. Tubal Padilla, our practice group's management consultant from the New York/Puerto Rico district, worked with leaders to determine the

causes of the problems. With his assistance, they adopted a year-long redevelopment and reorganization project that culminated in the election of a new board.

Since then, the NHS completed its first scattered-site rehab project and approved numerous purchase-and-rehab loans. It

organized a multineighborhood coalition and a youth leadership program, converted its former budget deficits into a small surplus and obtained its NeighborWorks® charter.

Learning the Ropes

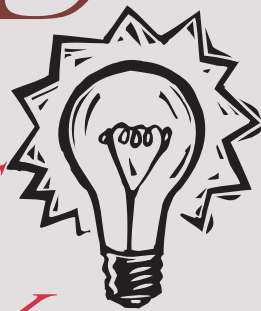
In May, Betsy Wallace, a Southern district management consultant, facilitated a meeting for new executive directors, including Marina Peed of the Gwinnett Housing Resource Partnership (GHRP) in Norcross, Georgia. Peed said that the information pre-

sented gave her "a lot to think about as we move forward with our strategic-planning process. I feel confident that GHRP will become an even stronger organization as a result of our affiliation with Neighborhood Reinvestment. Building on the experiences of others across the country will shorten our learning curve on some new ventures."

The management consultants who specialize in organizational development are dedicated to supporting individuals in the network to become better leaders and to assist groups of people working together to rebuild their neighborhoods.

Carilee Warner (cwarner@nw.org) is a Neighborhood Reinvestment management consultant, organizational development, Southern district.

QUALITY TOOLS SUPPORT NETWORK



by LaRayne Hebert

A monthly collegial gathering focused on diversifying the funding bases of nine New England district network members had its origins in nine cries for help.

Underlying each request was the implication that resource development was a challenge and perhaps a new or recently reborn effort. Working to establish an effective resource-development plan individually with each organi-

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT BRINGS JOY TO NHS. Michael Gabriel (right), management consultant, organizational development, from the Pacific district, presents a check to Ed Moncrief, executive director of the NHS of Silicon Valley, at L'Augerge Del Mar, California, in May 2000.



Photo by Heath Courtney

and case statement for their organizations, and commit to an increase in their operating funds from new sources by a minimum of 5 percent.

Successful completion of the clinic entitled the participants to a \$5,000 grant to be used to implement the resource-development plan. This component earned another fond label from David Woods, executive director of AHEAD, who referred to it as "The 5K Race."

RD Boot Camp included participants from Burlington Community Land Trust, Gilman Housing Trust, and Rockingham Area Land Trust in Vermont, Twin Cities CDC and Codman Square CDC in Massachusetts, AHEAD in New Hampshire, and West Elmwood NHS and Woonsocket NHS in Rhode Island. All met as the guests of Oak Hill CDC in Worcester, Massachusetts,

and camaraderie that was established in the first group meeting. The remaining seven full-day sessions covered the topics of relationship-based fundraising, cultivation and stewardship, resource mining, solicitation, writing and making the case, evaluation strategies and designing the annual plan. Participants also found that spreading the clinic over several months enabled them to try new methods and ideas and bring back results to share and evaluate with their peers.

Participants cheered as Karen Roy from AHEAD came right out and asked for a gift of \$10,000. They were amazed when electronic prospect research pointed out that someone sitting in the room was an excellent prospect for solicitation by one of the groups. They rapidly took notes as Lena Julien, fundraising committee

chair from Codman Square, started creating unmatched slogans for marketing efforts. Most satisfying, results from the new methods started accumulating almost immediately and successes became a group achievement.

RD Boot Camp graduates have asked for a reunion one year from the completion of the clinic to share successes and ongoing challenges in diversifying their resource bases. In the district, we look forward to the next recruits. The clinic approach has seemed to invigorate the difficult and ongoing task of keeping resource-development efforts fresh and effective.

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RD "Boot Camp" Teaches Fundraising



zation would have severely strained the capacity of the district's resource-development management consultants.

Therefore, we met the challenge by organizing a resource development clinic. We invited the chief staff person(s) responsible for resource development and one volunteer from each organization to attend an eight-month series that became affectionately known as the RD Boot Camp.

In addition to the required attendance, participation in the clinic required a commitment to read four basic texts and other resources, produce a resource-development plan

chosen as the most central location for all participants.

Starting in October 1999, the teams began their exploration of the discipline of resource development with a look at the concept of values-based philanthropy, which is well-articulated by Kay Sprinkle Grace in her book, *Beyond Fundraising*. According to Joe Garlick, executive director of Woonsocket NHS, "This idea struck me so strongly that I went home and wrote a values-based mission statement for our organization."

The benefit of gathering all nine organizations together for this work became immediately apparent in the synergy



Dorothy Richardson Award Winners LEADING BY EXAMPLE

by Janis Oppelt

As in previous years, the winners of the 10th Annual Dorothy Richardson Awards are experts at reaching out and bringing personal and physical resources into their communities. Just like the award's namesake, a Pittsburgh homemaker who fought urban renewal that threatened her inner-city neighborhood during the 1960s and 1970s, these volunteers work hard to improve the health and integrity of their communities. When they're not urging their neighbors to lend a hand, they're initiating projects to stop crime, organizing work groups for home repair and cleanups, and soliciting contributions from local business owners.

Each of this year's award winners offer their unique personal gifts to help. Selected from organizations in each of Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation's nine districts across the country, they not only lead from the head and the heart, they also lead by example. They roll up their sleeves and dig into what ails their home turfs. Just like Dorothy Richardson, they give others someone to admire and to follow.

Lynn Barnhart, Burlington Community Land Trust, Vermont



More than 10 years ago, Lynn Barnhart joined a resident initiative to ensure that a local apartment complex remained affordable. She later became president of its resident association and helped raise \$21 million to purchase and rehab the development. Now, Barnhart is president of

BCLT, where she supports her views with hard work and team-building spirit. Her specialty is revitalizing resident and membership leadership and participation.

Faye Connolly, Anchorage MHA, Alaska



Faye Connolly personally met Dorothy Richardson years ago. She says that it was the inspiration Richardson exuded that helped focus her own personal mission. Since 1982, this award winner has served on the Anchorage NHS' board and also helped create the Anchorage MHA in 1989. She is an MHA

board member and on a regular basis makes significant contributions in developing and encouraging the leadership of other residents.

Michael Flynn, West Side NHS, Buffalo, New York



A good example of a community leader is how many describe Michael Flynn, who has been chairperson of the West Side NHS since 1998. Since he assumed this role, he has recruited new residents and business owners to participate in projects and serve on the NHS board. Flynn never stops working to

improve his community and has helped make his organization one of the top two housing agencies in Buffalo.

Julio A. Guridy, Allentown NHS, Pennsylvania



Julio Guridy, a member of the NHS board, works diligently to bring cultures together, and residents and business owners alike see him as a great community unifier. His outreach efforts include engaging Hispanic leaders in the NHS' work, promoting the home-ownership program

to the Latino community, and creating alliances between the NHS and a variety of Latino organizations.

Andrew J. Mickle, Neighborhood Housing and Development Corporation Home Ownership Center, Gainesville, Florida



A recent article in the *Gainesville Sun* paid tribute to Andrew Mickle as a "local treasure" for his 37 years as an educator and school administrator. Since his retirement, Mickle has focused his community dedication on leadership development, equal

opportunity and fair housing. He has served on NHDC's board since 1990 and is a resident member of its loan committee. His colleagues and friends say that he provides personal insight and a human touch to difficult lending decisions.

David O'Dell, Central Texas MHA, Austin, Texas



David O'Dell, a long-time resident of the CTMHA's Shadow Brook community, wanted to form a strong resident association to act on the community's needs and ideas. At the association's first meeting, he encouraged the group to address safety concerns and took the lead in that effort. O'Dell's achievements

are a direct result of his significant footwork plus his knack for organizing and motivating resident participation. His enthusiasm and hard work have been cited as reasons for the tripling of the association's size.

John Purce, Pocatello NHS, Idaho



Civil rights, racial and economic equality, and affordable housing have been at the heart of John Purce's community efforts for the last 50 years. He is a founding member of the NHS who served on its board of directors for five years and continues active volunteer efforts. He also is a founding member

of the Bonneville Neighborhood Association, where he has spent the last 25 years strengthening and expanding its membership and activities. His role as community leader and activist include mentoring youth and advocating for the disadvantaged.

James Simmons, NHS of Chicago's West Humboldt Neighborhood Office



This award winner is recognized throughout Chicago as a leader and spokesperson for the needs of his community. James Simmons' contributions to neighborhood change are numerous. Under his leadership, residents and local police transformed the community's worst block into a safe haven.

Simmons has developed block clubs and safety committees and has advised the mayor on neighborhood issues, such as gangs and community development. Simmons inspires countless residents to become involved and leads by setting an example.

Sister Dinah White, Neighborhood Renewal Services of Saginaw, Michigan



Those who know her say that Sister Dinah White is a woman with a vision for, and a commitment to, her neighborhood. She expresses this not only by words and personal actions, but also by mobilizing other people and organizations. White coaxed administrators at St. Mary's Hospital, her employer, to

commit more than \$1.7 million to revitalize the Cathedral District neighborhood. She worked with the NRS to form the Cathedral District Planning and Development Council, which developed and implemented major neighborhood changes. Throughout all of them, White has played a key role.

Janis Oppelt (janiso@nw.org) is assistant editor of bright ideas.

Former Award Winner Pushes For Perfection



"On any given day, you can see him cutting the grass throughout the parklets of North East," begins an article in Maryland's *Cumberland Times-News* of May 21. The article is about Cumberland NHS honoring Floyd "Pete" Elliott, one of its three founders, for his steadfast support of the organization for 20 years. He and his wife, Louise, have lived in Cumberland for 52 years, and he has been president of the organization since 1982. Elliott was a Dorothy Richardson Award winner in 1994. At that time he was recognized for his dedication to revitalizing the town's business and for being instrumental in creating a lenders' pool for new homeowners.

Photo Courtesy of Cumberland NHS

PEOPLE

Claire S. Mitchell-Dumas is the new neighborhood director of the Staten Island office of the NHS of New York City. A certified credit counselor with the National Foundation for Consumer Credit and a graduate of Baruch College Women of Color Network, she will work with local community leaders and organizations to revitalize Staten Island and assist individuals to make the transition from renting to buying. "Being at NHS puts me in a better position to assist residents in matters ranging from home ownership to predatory lending," said Mitchell-Dumas.

Harold Nassau is the Corporation's first asset manager spe-

cialist for the Multifamily Initiative with an office in Boston. He was previously asset manager for the Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership where he ensured the performance of MBHP's properties and played a critical capacity-building role with its nonprofit partners.

As a training specialist, **Lynsey Wood** applies a mixture of academic and experiential knowledge of community development. She is a recent graduate of the University of Pittsburgh with a master's in public administration. As a Ford Foundation-sponsored intern, Lynsey analyzed the market-growth potential and economic impact of NHS of Santa Fe. She has

also worked with the United Way, National Coalition for the Homeless, and NHS of Pittsburgh.

Adetoun A. "Toun" Sodimu is an information systems specialist in the Corporation's DC office. Her role is process project control, which means that she will ultimately be responsible for the maintenance of the business process tool for the Corporation. With a degree in public relations and advertising from Bowie State University in Maryland, she is currently working on her master's in management and information systems at the University of Maryland. Sodimu previously worked as a business analyst with a consulting firm in Baltimore.



Claire Mitchell-Dumas



Lynsey Wood

NOTICES

The National Neighborhood Coalition has released a study proposing strategies for community involvement in smart growth and development. "Smart Growth, Better Neighborhoods: Communities Leading the Way" details the problems created by unchecked growth and examines how grassroots organizations are tackling the crisis. Featuring 15 case studies, the study stresses transportation, housing, education, planning and land use as well as the importance of integrating neighborhood goals with regional planning. For a \$25 copy of the study or a free short summary, contact Leah Kalinosky, (202) 986-2096 or leah@neighborhoodcoalition.org. For more information visit the NNC Web site at www.Neighborhoodcoalition.org.

NHS of NYC Celebrates a Decade of Free Workshops

by Deborah Samuelson

This fall, the NHS of New York City will celebrate its 10th year of offering free home-ownership workshops to residents. The sponsorship of the IJB Foundation of The Industrial Bank of Japan, which focuses its grants on educating global citizens and strengthening urban communities, has made this service possible.

"We enjoy being a full-service housing organization and our free NHS-IBJ Educational Seminar Series helps support our core-lending programs," said NHS Executive Director Francine Justa. "Our mission is to help people help themselves through education, encourage and support neighborhood self-reliance, and create and preserve affordable housing in New York City."

When the program began, seminar topics focused on

home-ownership issues such as taxes, first-time home ownership and home improvement. In subsequent years, each of the NHS's community-based offices tailored seminars to meet special community needs. Over the past decade, more than 20,000 residents have attended these educational sessions.

Here are some examples of the workshops.

Through its two Bronx offices, the NHS offers its most successful workshop, a co-op and condo seminar. On average, 15 percent of the attendees return for additional education.

In Bedford-Stuyvesant, an urban-gardening workshop is offered in the spring and fall for homeowners who want information and help on landscaping their brownstones.

To help meet the needs of senior citizens on limited incomes, the Staten Island office offers seminars on

reverse mortgages. As a result, the Staten Island office has packaged and submitted 23 reverse mortgages that closed for \$3,325,352.

The Harlem office started holding landlord-tenant training seminars this year in response to residents clamoring for basic information and places to go for help. Six of the first 11 loan applications made to the Harlem office originated from its seminars.

This fall, NHS-IBJ Educational Seminar Series also will be offered to New York City residents. Workshops planned include home maintenance training, buying a house or condo, stained glass and tenant-landlord relations.

Deborah Samuelson is director of public relations and marketing at the NHS of New York City.



Photo by Sean Bennett

CONGRATULATIONS. Rachelle Bakke (left) receives a commemorative poster from Kathy Bailey, training specialist for Neighborhood Reinvestment.

Training Institute Offers Neighborhood Revitalization Certificate

To the strains of *Pomp and Circumstance* hummed by colleagues, Rachelle "Chelle" Bakke became the first graduate to earn the Neighborhood Reinvestment Training Institute's (NRTI) Professional Certificate in Neighborhood Revitalization. This June event marked her successful completion of coursework taken at three week-long Institutes.

Through this program, participants experience courses that provide the theoretical framework, specialized tools and technical skills necessary to design and implement successful revitalization strategies.

Bakke has worked as neighborhood revitalization coordinator at the Spirit Valley Citizens' Neighborhood Development Association in Duluth, MN, for

the last four years. She says that a lot of the information presented in the NRTI classes was new to her, but it was easy to bring the classroom back to her workplace.

"The first week I went to the session on creating neighborhoods of choice. I came back to work with renewed enthusiasm and ideas on how to revitalize a neighborhood," Bakke said. Working with funders, residents

and city officials, her organization soon had a strategic plan.

The courses were very helpful, she said, because "the instructors were straight from the field." She also found real value in networking at the Institute. She said it gave her "an opportunity to look at alternatives for programs, issues and ideas."

Bakke explained her most important lesson. "Sometimes organizations think they can do everything themselves, and that's what I thought, too. But now

my approach is that to help, you have to get residential and business involvement. It's a more holistic process and it takes everybody in the community working together."

NRTI offers certificate programs in neighborhood revitalization, community economic development, and construction and production management. To learn more about these professional certificate opportunities, call (800) 438-5547 or visit our Web site: www.nw.org/training.

Calendar

NeighborWorks® Training and Events 2000

Training Institute – Tampa, FL • Oct. 16-20

Asset Management Conference for Housing Professionals – New Orleans • Dec. 8-10

Training Institute – New Orleans • Dec. 11-15

2001

Nonprofit Housing Management Specialist Training – Chicago • Jan. 17-21

Executive Director Orientation – (TBA) • Jan. 23-26 (tentative)

Training Institute – Atlanta • Feb. 12-16

Executive Director Symposium – (TBA) • Mar. 6-9 (tentative)

Community Leadership Institute, North Central District – Minneapolis • Mar. 14-18

Training Institute – Chicago • Apr. 16-20

Community Leadership Institute, South Central District – San Antonio • May 31-June 3

Training Institute – Washington, DC • Aug. 20-24

Training Institute – Minneapolis • Oct. 15-19

Training Institute – San Francisco • Dec. 10-14

Boise is Among the Best of the Best

by Barbara Wright

It is a real honor to be recognized as one of HUD's 100 'Best of the Best' Best Practices Award national winners," proudly states Susan Rainey, program manager of Boise, Idaho, NHS's Homeward Bound program.

Homeward Bound is a program that has been a part of Boise NHS since 1987. This innovative two-year transitional and supportive housing program serves homeless, at-risk, and new American families with minor-aged children. These families live in nice homes in neighborhoods scattered throughout Boise while being offered a full range of social services including career development, nutritional education, case management, counseling, budgeting, home maintenance, home ownership, and parenting workshops. By maximizing the resources at NHS, in the community, and in each individual whom we serve, we strive to make a significant difference in the lives of these families as they move from homelessness to home ownership.

Recently, The Idaho Statesman ran several articles highlighting our Homeward Bound Back-to-School Program, which connects sponsors with more than 70 of our school-aged children. As a result, these children received needed school supplies, backpacks, shoes and new clothes to start the school year on a positive note. The publicity resulted in generous donations and support.

"Our kids are going back to school in style!" said Karen Hall, the NHS's director of resource development. "One lady brought in tons of school supplies and back packs, and we've had several people call for our mailing address so they could send money."

Barbara Wright is Homeward Bound program assistant at Boise NHS.

Editors' note: Other top winners from the NeighborWorks® network included the NHS of Great Falls, Montana, a partner of the Montana Homeownership Network, and the HomeOwnership Centers of Vermont that include Burlington Community Land Trust, Gilman Housing Trust, Rockingham Area Community Land Trust, Central Vermont Community Land Trust, and Rutland West NHS. For more information on these and other award winners, go to www.hud.gov. Look up "Local Best Practices Awards" under "HUD's 2000 Best Practices Winners."



PICTURE PERFECT. Susan Rainey, Boise, Idaho, NHS Homeward Bound program manager, gives a cash award to one of the winners of the "My Neighborhood" art contest. Nearly 40 children living in the NHS's Homeward Bound program area entered the contest. The winning drawings will be used for NHS thank-you note cards.

Board Members Participate in NeighborWorks® Week Activities

National NeighborWorks® Week 2000 was a huge success as nearly 150 organizations held more than 300 events June 3 through 10 to celebrate their accomplishments and to honor the partners, residents and other volunteers who made it possible. Many organizations planned community paint-a-thons, rehab work and neighborhood cleanups. Several also held events that brought together their partners and community stakeholders.

Neighborhood Reinvestment Board Chair Ellen Seidman, director of the Office of Thrift Supervision, and Vice Chair Edward M. Gramlich, a member of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, also participated. In Maryland, Seidman and several of her staff members visited the Salisbury, Maryland, NHS. They donned the organization's T-shirts and dug into a land-

scaping project in one of the NHS's neighborhoods and then picnicked with community residents and NHS staff at a local park.

Gramlich spent three days on a whirlwind tour of four network organizations in the Rocky Mountain District. He addressed residents and partners at the Rocky Mountain Mutual Housing Association in Denver, as well as Pocatello NHS in Idaho, and Salt Lake NHS and Provo NHS in Utah about the important role the NeighborWorks® system plays in community revitalization. At a ribbon-cutting for Pocatello's NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center, Gramlich complimented the NHS on its unique strategies for providing housing (including basement houses and houses built by high school students). "You've done well," he said, "but there is a lot more to do."

BOARD MEMBER VISITS POCATELLO. In Idaho, Edward M. Gramlich, vice chairman of the Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation Board of Directors (second from left), oversees the ribbon-cutting ceremony of Pocatello NHS's NeighborWorks® HomeOwnership Center during NeighborWorks® Week. Pocatello NHS Executive Director Richard Stallings supplies the muscle as Grace Buckley, Rocky Mountain district director, and Idaho State Representative Donna Boe observe.



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