



UIC Neighborhoods *Initiative*

Building Partnerships for Stronger Communities and a Stronger University

Fall 1995

The University of Illinois at Chicago

Great Cities Institute

Newsletter to Profile People and Programs of UIC Neighborhoods Initiative

Welcome to the first issue of the newsletter created to highlight information and news about the different projects and activities of the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative. Our intent is to present an interesting, informative, and concise method of sharing information about our efforts and to help those familiar with only a few of our programs keep informed about other efforts. In this first issue, we provide a snapshot of all of our programs, and highlight two that recently achieved some exciting accomplishments that we are proud to share with you. We welcome your feedback and suggestions for improving our ability to share information with you.

During 1993, James J. Stukel, then chancellor of the University of Illinois at Chicago, developed the idea for the Great Cities program at UIC. Great Cities is an institutional commitment to address human needs here in Chicago and in metropolitan areas worldwide. The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative (UICNI), one component of this program, is specifically created to work with residents and organizations in two neighborhoods adjacent to our campus, Pilsen and the Near West Side.

The Neighborhoods Initiative builds on the notion that improvement in the quality of life in neighborhoods requires a comprehensive approach that addresses interrelated problems. The three areas of emphasis are housing, economic development and jobs, and community education. By addressing these areas holistically, the programs will be more effective than if any one area is addressed alone.

In future issues you will find feature articles about issues pertinent to community-building in Pilsen and the Near West Side and profiles of individuals in the community and on campus who are making a difference by helping to support and improve the community.

As with any new effort, the best measure of success is to be useful to readers and to respond to their emerging and changing needs. Please call or write to tell us what you like and don't like about this newsletter and give us your suggestions for ways to make it more useful to you.

HUD Grant to Support Expansion of Neighborhoods Initiative Programs

The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative has recently been awarded a five-year, \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for the expansion of programming to meet the needs of the Pilsen and Near West Side communities. The new projects will be a part of the Neighborhoods Initiative's new Joint Community Development program, which will bring the city of Chicago, corporations, philanthropic organizations and other government agencies into the folds of Neighborhoods Initiative programming.

Ismael Guerrero, economic development director of the Resurrection Project, said he is pleased the grant will be used to strengthen relationships between community groups like his and the University. "We see the community, university, and businesses coming together as equal partners to discuss, plan, and implement solutions to community concerns."

Four new programs to be developed and implemented under the HUD grant are: an Affordable Housing Fund, which will use HUD funds to leverage \$10 million in loans and grants from banks and city government for home repair and home purchase; the Near West Side and Pilsen Joint Community Development Program, which will use HUD funds to create \$50 million in commercial and business development; a Job Creation Program implemented in concert with the Chicago Public Schools, the Chicago Housing Authority, and UIC's Hiring and Purchasing Department to expand job opportunities and improve school-to-work transitions for neighborhood youths; and an Education for Community Development Program, which will use the expertise of Neighborhood Initiative partners to expand training programs for future urban development professionals.

Community organizations, the University, and governmental organizations will share responsibility for program planning and oversight.

"We are particularly excited that this grant solidifies our relationships with community groups, the city of Chicago, and other organizations," said Wim Wiewel, director of UIC's Great Cities Program, of which the Neighborhoods Initiative is a part. "The grant also provides evidence that outside organizations value the partnerships we are creating."

The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative is overseen by an advisory committee of 80 representatives from community, government, educational, business and civic sectors. UICNI is implemented by working groups and a planning committee. Its administration is lodged in the Office of the Chancellor.

Residents and Dignitaries Gather, Mark Beginning of Demolition/Renovation of Henry Horner Homes

On Friday, August 11, 1995, a group of local and national dignitaries gathered in front of the shells of two abandoned buildings at the Henry Homer Homes to mark the end of an era in public housing in Chicago and to usher in a new beginning for the city and many residents of this complex. The event marked the first stage in the demolition of five high-rise buildings at Henry Homer, making way for newly constructed townhouses, along with two- and three-story apartment buildings.

U.S. Housing Secretary Henry Cisneros, who flew in from Washington, D.C. to attend the event, stated that, "Chicago stands as a symbol for the country [of] what we're going to be able to do in public housing." Homer tenant leader Maime Bone was a little more reserved, stating, "I can't say that I'm overjoyed, but I do feel that this is a road open for progress. And if it makes things better for the people of public housing and Henry Homer Homes, then I give it my sanction."

Mayor Richard M. Daley attempted to address the concerns voiced by skeptics at the podium and in the crowd by promising that construction of replacement housing would, indeed, take place. After the speeches, the wrecking ball swung and symbolically took a chunk out of the remnants of a housing policy that resulted in concentrated poverty in large public housing facilities that have plagued many inner city communities in Chicago and elsewhere.

Those among the more hopeful at the demolition saw the event as a celebration of a larger plan to transform public housing, beginning with the development of a mixed income community on the Near West Side. The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative is working with community organizations and local residents to bring about this broader vision for the community and to ease the transitions of families who for many years called Henry Homer their home.

Neighborhoods Initiative Builds Community Partnerships, Yields Opportunities

The following is a description of UIC Neighborhoods Initiative programs. Contact persons can provide more information on programs and meeting times.

The following Neighborhoods Initiative Programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development:

Housing

- The Affordable Housing Consortium: Faculty and graduate students from the Urban Planning and Policy Program, the School of Architecture and the City Design Center are working with Community Development Corporations (CDCs) serving Pilsen and the Near West Side to improve housing conditions and enhance housing development efforts. Contact: Pat Wright, 996-5083.
- Commercial and Industrial Area Design Workshops: Being conducted by the UIC Schools of Architecture and Art and Design along with area CDCs to improve the physical attractiveness of commercial and industrial areas in Pilsen and the Near West Side. Contact: Pat Wright, 996-5083.

Economic Development and Jobs

- The Hiring and Purchasing Community Linkage: The UIC Center for Urban Economic Development and the Department of Economics are studying how job opportunities and contracts at UIC can be linked to workers and businesses in Pilsen and the Near West Side. Outreach workers will implement recommendations. Contact Persons: John Betancur 996-4323; Joe Persky, 996-2687.
- The Great Cities/Great Careers Partnership: Preparing students from public high schools in Pilsen and the Near West Side for entry level jobs upon graduation. Programs are in place at Crane High School on the Near West Side and Juarez High School in Pilsen. Montgomery Ward & Co. has committed to creating entry-level jobs and to securing the participation of other corporations. Contact: Joan Fitzgerald 996-8361; Steve Tozer 413-7782.
- The Incubators for Youth: Offers young men living in public housing the opportunity to explore entrepreneurial activities and learn business and life skills that will prepare them to become successful adults. The program is designed and implemented by the UIC Center for Urban Business in partnership with the Chicago Housing Authority. Contact: Cren McMath 996-4057.

Community Education

- Parent Leadership Programs: Focused on adult literacy and community health. Parents and adult friends of children attending public schools meet in workshops to write and discuss their experiences living in their communities. Some of their writings are published in community journals. Contact: Hal Adams 996-7357; Maria Ayala 890-0055.

- The Community Health Education Program (CHEP): A part of UIC's Midwest Latino Health Research, Training and Policy Center for Medical Treatment Effectiveness Program, CHEP is sponsoring community workshops and trainings to provide Hispanic residents of Pilsen with information on health and well-being. Contact: Jose Arrom 413-1836.
- UIC Neighborhoods and Non Profits Network: Strengthens the communication and information linkages between local community organizations, the university, ordinary citizens, foundations and corporate donors, and nonprofit organizations through on-line information exchange. Fifty groups will be connected to the Internet through UIC's Academic Data Network. Contact: Al Schorsch, 996-5342.

The following additional community partnerships have been established with University Departments:

Center for Urban Business (CUB), United Center Joint Venture Economic Development Fund, CUB is serving as the treasurer of this new \$1 million fund to support small business development on the Near West Side; Annenberg Challenge, the UIC College of Education faculty was the principal organizer in securing \$50 million to support decentralized school reform efforts. The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative is organizing a consortium of principals to apply for this program; Chicago Side-by-Side, the Americorps program whereby student participants provide tutoring, mentoring and service learning clubs in schools, health clinics and day care programs. The MBA at El Valor, a community-based MBA program held on Saturdays at the El Valor Corp. Children and Family Center in Pilsen for two years, to increase the pool of underrepresented groups in higher education and business fields; UIC Westside Club, provides tutoring and instruction in communications, computers and math to Near West Side students; **Suder School-Based Clinic**, a national demonstration project to provide comprehensive school--based health services to children and their families on the Near West Side; **Juarez-UIC Partnership in English Education**, to support the development of a writing center at the high school; **Dett School Action Research Group**, to assist teachers with a multimedia center and other school improvement efforts by the College of Education; **REACH (Realizing Artistic Choices)**, providing Artists in Residency to schools and community-based organizations; **Community-Based Asthma Intervention Project**, piloting a health education program for Head Start teachers and parent educators; **Pilsen Transportation Study**, to enable community activists and scholars from the College of Engineering to jointly review and evaluate planned programs and policies addressing traffic and transportation issues in Pilsen and to prioritize the community's transportation needs.

The following initiatives are being undertaken by UIC Departments:

Center for Urban Educational Research and Development, working with school principals; **Dept. of Anthropology**, evaluating interactions between faculty and communities; **Dept. of Kinesiology**, running after-school athletic and character development programs;

School of Public Health, developing a community-based violence prevention program; **Latin American Studies**, analyzing connections between Pilsen and residents' regions of origin; **Mile Square Health Center**, treating 40,000 neighborhood patients each year; **Literacy Center**, involving UIC students in teaching family literacy to Mexican immigrants; Office for Entrepreneurial Studies, teaching entrepreneurship to public housing residents; **Office of Social Science Research**, studying the role of the church in the communities; **Library Special Collections Department**, helping community organizations archive their histories and records; **Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences**, requiring all incoming health sciences students to study an aspect of the communities to increase community awareness; **Vorhees Neighborhood Center**, conducting housing-related studies.

For more information on the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative and its programs, contact the UIC Great Cities Institute at (312) 996-8700.

MEDTEP Funded To Improve Health Care In Pilsen

The Midwest Latino Research Training and Policy Center for Medical Treatment Effectiveness (MEDTEP) has received funding from UICNI to offer technical assistance to Pilsen organizations, including health education to benefit local residents. Since the beginning of this year, MEDTEP has put this funding to good use, providing workshops and seminars on health issues, and establishing a lecture series to present the findings of its research on Latino health. The

MEDTEP Resource Library also has made available a recently completed bibliography of articles on asthma, pregnancy outcomes, hypertension and diabetes. The group will be participating in two major upcoming conferences, one focusing on the health and social needs of Hispanic/Latino elderly in Chicago, and a video conference on Hispanic Health, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Stukel Named President of University of Illinois, Broski Named Interim Chancellor

On August 1, 1995, James J. Stukel assumed the position as president of the University of Illinois system, ending his term as chancellor of UIC. In this new position, Stukel will oversee the entire University system, which includes all campuses and facilities throughout the state. Though President Stukel will be based at the Urbana-Champaign campus, he will maintain an office here at UIC.

David C. Broski, provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs, has been named interim chancellor of UIC. Broski has been at UIC since 1983, when he came from Ohio State University to become dean of the College of Associated Health Professions. Broski succeeded Stukel as interim vice chancellor for academic affairs in 1991 and received a permanent appointment the following year. The title of provost was added in 1994 to formalize his position as chief academic and operating officer. The search for a new chancellor is underway and is expected to take up to two years.

It was through the vision of then Chancellor Stukel, that the Great Cities Initiative, and within it the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, was developed in 1994. One of Stukel's goals was to move the University toward greater involvement with local communities, utilizing the expertise and resources of UIC to address some of the pressing problems in the surrounding communities and throughout Chicago. Since its establishment, the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative has grown and flourished with partnerships and activities operating throughout Pilsen and the Near West Side.

Those within the University view these recent changes in leadership at the University of Illinois and UIC with great enthusiasm. We wish President Stukel and Chancellor Broski well in their new positions.

Parent Education Programs in Pilsen, Near West Side Publish the Thoughts and Opinions of Local Women

The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative has supported two parallel efforts to foster community leadership development and to facilitate greater involvement by neighborhood residents on community issues. Parents of children who attend the Dett Elementary School on the Near West Side and Walsh Elementary School in Pilsen participated in separate eight week programs to identify

and learn more about issues affecting their communities. Each group was composed of approximately 6-7 women active in the schools their children attend. The parent groups spent time researching, learning, and increasing their understanding of community issues, then began documenting their thoughts and opinions through writing workshops.

As a result, the Dett School group produced the 10th edition of the community magazine, *The Journal of Ordinary Thought*, focusing on members' reflections on living and working in the neighborhood surrounding the Henry Homer Homes. Six African American women, some of whom are long-term residents of Henry Homer, wrote about their perceptions of their neighborhood, the changes that have occurred since they

have lived there, along with the fears, pain, and hope that they experience day to day. Though they recognize that significant change is underway at Homer, exemplified by the demolition of many of the high-rise buildings, the women still cling to the hope that the better parts of their experiences in this neighborhood can be preserved.

The journal Community Voices was produced by women from the Walsh School parents group. The writings reflect their experiences migrating to Chicago from Mexico and the southwestern United States.

After a difficult journey to this country where they anticipated hope, promise, and opportunity, many of the women expressed the shock and disappointment that they experienced coming to Chicago when faced with the level of crime, gang violence, and poverty in their neighborhood. Despite these problems, the writings also expressed pride and satisfaction in working toward improving their neighborhood, the hope the women have that their children will obtain good educations, and the joys and comforts they have found in the personal relationships they have established along the way.

Plans for continuing the Parent Education Programs are already underway. The Dett School group is developing plans for their next journal publication and hopes to make greater use of pictures and graphics to present a more visual reflection of their community. The Walsh school group continues to focus on several of the community issues they have identified and is actively recruiting other women to participate in the program and become more involved in working on community issues. Completion of new editions of each publication is anticipated by late fall.