



UIC Neighborhoods *Initiative*

Building Partnerships for Stronger Communities and a Stronger University

Spring 1996

The University of Illinois at Chicago

Great Cities Institute

UIC Project at Suder School Uses Sports to Build Self Confidence

The UIC Neighborhoods Initiative (UICNI) is sponsoring the expansion of a program to foster resiliency and problem solving skills among elementary school students. Dr. Donald Hellison, a faculty member in UIC's School of Kinesiology, works with elementary and secondary school students in alternative physical education programs that use the concept of taking responsibility as a framework for teaching physical activities. For the past eight years, Dr. Hellison has offered these programs at Crane High School, Cabrini Green, Duncan YMCA, and elsewhere. He currently works with students at Bond School in Englewood and Suder Elementary School on the Near West Side.

Dr. Hellison is interested in adding a new component to the programming by drawing upon the work of a longtime colleague, Dr. Thomas Martinek from the University of North Carolina's Department of Exercise and Sport Science. Dr. Martinek has been working

in schools in Greensboro, North Carolina, as well as Denver and Seattle, to help students build selfconfidence and self development regardless of external forces that threaten to limit their visions and options for the future. Dr. Martinek is currently a visiting professor at UIC.

The expanded program has brought a mentoring component to a group of students at Suder School. The mentoring program is focused on teaching students how to take more positive personal choices, set goals for themselves, be more responsive to classmates and effectively handle conflicts.

Graduate students from UIC serve as mentors to students, helping them improve poor academic performances, and change negative behavior patterns. Training is provided to help teachers and parents reinforce these lessons in the classroom and at home.

University Offers Pilsen-Based MBA Program

As part of the university's Great Cities Initiative, the UIC College of Business Administration, through the Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, offers a community-based Master of Business Administration (MBA) program in cooperation with the El Valor Corporation. The program, which began in March 1995, is housed at the El Valor Guadalupe Reyes Children and Family Center, in the heart of the Pilsen community. A

non-profit community organization committed to the promotion of inclusiveness through educational opportunity, El Valor seeks to create opportunities for individuals and families to achieve personal excellence. A primary goal of the program is to help prepare historically under-represented groups to take their places in leadership positions in business and government.

Twenty-six students, representing a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences, are currently enrolled in the program. In a group-oriented, team-based approach to management education, the students advance through the program as a group, attending all courses together over the 21 month degree cycle. This model is intended to build cohesiveness, facilitate study groups and team projects, and encourage better integration of learning.

Terence Zarate, a senior human resources representative at Amoco Corporation, credits the program, now at the half-way point, with fostering his personal and professional growth: "The UIC MBA Program has increased my confidence in my abilities to meet the challenges all business people face. One year in the program has enabled me to make the transition from my previous assignment *in* Human Resources to work on a project team with the goal of implementing a fully integrated financial software package for a Fortune 50 corporation."

Terry's statement speaks to the success of the program in training individuals who might not otherwise have the opportunity to achieve higher leadership positions in business and management. Given the El Valor Program's offcampus location, flexible schedule and shorter- if-moreintense time frame, the program opens doors to an especially diverse group of students. Recruitment for a second program cycle is in process.

For more information about the program, contact Shari Holmer Lewis, Assistant Dean and Director, College of Business Administration, (312) 996-4751, or Lousie Wechsler, Program Coordinator, Office of Continuing Education and Public Service, (312) 996-2470.

Students Assist Community Organizations Through University Volunteer Program

More than eight years ago, UIC established the Get Involved with Volunteer Experience program (GIVE) to give students opportunities to practice community service and social and environmental responsibility. The GIVE program offers students ten areas of volunteer service to choose from, including literacy corps, youth assistance, and health care. Each year, more than 200 community agencies in the Chicago area submit requests for student volunteers through the GIVE program, and approximately the same number of UIC student volunteers are placed in agencies each year.

Understanding the needs of community organizations for volunteers, the Office of Student Development Services, in

conjunction with the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative, has recently developed a new focus for the student volunteer program: placement of students in 20 community organizations in the Near West Side and Pilsen, specifically those associated with the UIC Great Cities/Neighborhoods Initiative Program. A graduate assistant position has been created to facilitate placing volunteers in Pilsen and the Near West Side.

Student volunteers are placed throughout the year. No prior training or experience is required of volunteers, only the openness to learn about and work within communities.

If your organization is in need of information on this program, contact Nora volunteers or if you would like more Saldivar or Andrea Smith at 413-2096.

Partnerships Help Put Area High School Students to Work

As part of UIC's Great Cities/Great Careers program, the UICNI is providing technical assistance to teachers at Crane High School on the Near West Side and Juarez High School in the Pilsen neighborhood, to aid the schools in developing School-to-Work programs.

"The School-to-Work concept is designed to help close the gap between the changing demands of many occupations and the ways in which young people in the U.S. are prepared for these jobs," said Joan Fitzgerald, professor, UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. "School-to-Work programs help students make the connection between what they learn in school and the skills they will need to succeed in the workplace."

Through on-the job experience and rigorous academic studies, students are prepared to enter high-skill careers, and to

participate in further education and training.

As part of its Great Careers Program, UIC has helped build partnerships with Montgomery Ward's and UPS Corp. to provide mentoring, training, job and educational assistance to students from Juarez High School.

Through the UPS program, Juarez students receive extended education services in addition to pay and benefits for part-time work. Students remain in school for an two extra hours each day, during which time they complete their homework, are tutored, and have access to computer labs. In addition to peer tutors who are already provided by the school, tutors will be hired and paid by UPS to be available to the students. Following this afternoon routine, students go to their after-school jobs at UPS.

Montgomery Ward has committed to providing jobs in both sales and automotive repair to eligible Juarez students on an on-going basis. Each student hired will receive twelve hours of employment training. Both Montgomery Ward's and UPS work with teachers at Juarez on staff development and in-class career development programs.

First Chicago Bank and the Executive Service Corps have committed to working with students and teachers at Crane High School to help (prepare students for job training, interviewing and work experience.

Also, through the Great Cities/Great Careers Program, UIC has facilitated a strategic planning process at Crane High School to restructure the school into four small tech-prep schools, providing students with opportunities to combine their academic studies with intensive vocational training,

through a curriculum designed to teach students about all aspects of an industry. For more information on the Great Cities/Great industry. Careers program, contact oan Fitzgerald at (312) 996-8361.

Belfast Learns from Chicago

Though recent events have overshadowed the Northern Ireland peace process, we have decided to run this report as an example of the possibilities that can open up for that region if peace can be maintained.

An Irish university wants to apply lessons from UIC's Neighborhoods Initiative to rebuild Belfast's strifetorn neighborhoods. The University of Ulster recently invited UIC's Great Cities Coordinator Wim Wiewel to Belfast to talk about UIC's partnership program with the Pilsen and Near West Side neighborhoods. Now that the Irish peace process is underway, the university wants to locate a new 5,000 student campus on the boundary between a Catholic and Protestant neighborhood. Separated until recently by a wall, these areas have been the frequent scene of riots, bombings and fighting over the past 25 years. The plan for the new campus symbolizes the effort to rebuild these working class neighborhoods that have seen a steady exodus of jobs and virtually no cross-community contact. U.S. universities are seen as a model for the involvement of higher education in neighborhood revitalization, and the Irish feel UIC is a particularly good example.

"The Irish faculty are very interested in how UIC faculty combine community work with scholarship," said Wiewel. "Also, the neighborhood and organizations wanted to know in what ways the university would be helpful to them, and how decisions about projects will be made."

The Catholic community in West Belfast hopes the university will spur economic development and jobs. Many factories have left, and the old buildings are being used as "incubators" by very marginal enterprises. It is hoped that the university's purchasing will strengthen some of these firms. One already successful company, which runs 300 taxi cabs, started because the city's bus system didn't operate in the neighborhood during the fighting. Now the company hopes to get a contract to be involved in the university's shuttle service.

The University of Ulster faculty also want to be involved in conflict resolution projects to overcome years of hostility. Many students in the allied health professions will do internships at a large community hospital, and the university is planning new outreach programs to ensure neighborhood youth will be able to enroll as students.

"Belfast is a very segregated city, like Chicago," said Wiewel. "Except there it is along religious lines. In twenty-seven of Belfast's thirty wards, 90% of the population is of just one re-

ligion. People live their lives as either Protestant or Catholics - schools, neighborhoods, clubs, and associations are either all Catholic or all Protestant. Even companies, including the larger ones, tend to have workforces of just one religion. The government and universities are the main exception. Therefore the University of Ulster is so important in helping people bridge the gap. This shows even in the design of the new campus, which will be accessible from both the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods."

When it comes to partnerships with the university, groups in the Belfast neighborhoods have many of the same interests and concerns as their Chicago counterparts. They are excited about the possible resources, but also worry about whether the university is just "using" them for its own purposes, resources, and whether it will live up to its promises once the new campus is built. They want to make sure that faculty don't treat them like guinea pigs, but deliver programs that are of real use. Residents want to the university's commitment to be comprehensive, involving academic programs, hiring, student admissions and use of facilities - not just a few token projects. And they want to have a true partnership, where both parties decide what will be done.

Wiewel was brought over to give a seminar for university, community, and government representatives on the occasion for the announcement of the University of Ulster plans. He also toured the neighborhoods and met with several neighborhood organizations.

"It would be really interesting to bring representatives from the University of Ulster and from the Catholic and Protestant neighborhoods to Chicago," Wiewel said. "They could see how our partnership works, and we could learn from their dedication and commitment under very difficult circumstances. While there are many obvious differences between our two cities, it is amazing how many similar problems and approaches there are as well."

Renacer Helps Bring Jobs and Renewal to Neighborhoods

The Renacer Westside Community Network, Inc., established in March 1995, is a community based organization committed to the economic revitalization of Chicago's West Side. Renacer is Columbian for "renewal or reawakening." This is exactly what Renacer is attempting to do for the West Side community. Renacer is committed to raising the educational, cultural, and economic awareness of West Side community residents.

Renacer was founded by Edgar Lucas, Jr., executive director, and Rod Farrar, chairman of the Board of Directors. Both these individuals have been involved in community activities for a number of years and have committed themselves to finding solutions to some of the problems plaguing the West Side community.

Renacer is located in the Damen Court Apartments Community Center. Since its inception, the organization has been instrumental in helping the residents of Damen Courts Apartments form a resident organization. Renacer is providing technical assistance and the community organization has begun to address the issues that effect their complex. In addition to planning programs and activities that will improve the quality of life for the, residents in the complex, the resident organization is becoming involved in the political and economic process in their community. Through this involvement, they are becoming amore informed and active part of the community.

Renacer is also involved in community basic skills assessments and testing, health screenings, job placement, financial planning and housing development. In September 1995, Renacer, in conjunction with Argonne National Laboratory, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the U.S. Department of Energy and Munizzo Appraisal Company, implemented a program to train residents to become Home Energy Audit Consultants. Home Energy Audit Consultants perform analyses of homes and buildings and make recommendations to owners on how to make their properties more energy efficient. These analyses result in fuel and electric savings for home and building owners. Importantly, this program has also created jobs in the community and will give residents opportunities to explore the field of energy efficiency.

In addition to the Energy Consultants program, Renacer has been awarded a contract from the UIC Neighborhoods Initiative Hiring and Purchasing Community Linkage Program to refer Near West Side residents for possible employment opportunities at UIC. This partnership between the University and community organizations expresses the commitment that all parties share in helping to bring economic stability to the Near West Side.

Renacer is also pursuing viable alternatives to keep youths of street gangs and away from drugs. In April, Renacer, in conjunction with the Mabel Manning Library, will sponsor photography workshops for youth ages 13-17. The workshops will be eight weeks each and will be held Saturday mornings at the library. The workshops are FREE and will teach teens all aspects of photography. Parkway Photo Labs and Marketing Visual Services are the corporate sponsors of the workshops. Renacer is recruiting students from local elementary schools, housing developments and the apartment complexes in the areas to participate. For more information, contact Ed Lucas at (312) 226-6007.

UIC Group Implementing National Empowerment Zone Research Project

A group of faculty, staff and students at UIC, committed to research in economic development and poverty alleviation, have embarked on a three-year project to follow and examine events and issues in the six U.S. cities designated as Empowerment Zones (Atlanta,

Baltimore, Chicago, Detroit, New York and Philadelphia-Camden) and the two cities designated as Supplemental Empowerment Zones (Cleveland and Los Angeles).

Over the three years, the National Empowerment Zone Action Research Project will provide policy makers and activists with evaluative research on the Empowerment Zone implementation process. A major goal will be to assess the effectiveness of the zones in promoting citizen participation.

"We are interested in seeing what kind of community partnerships are formed when these partnerships are required for funding. We also want to see what the positive effects of increased community partnerships are on economic development" said Noah Temaner, project coordinator.

Temaner added that the reason the project is referred to as "action research," is that it is to be a resource to people active in the Empowerment Zones. "Through the Research Project, information will be exchanged between the zones, so people are able to compare experiences and learn from each other."

The Project publishes a quarterly newsletter, "EZ Exchange," which reports news and implementation efforts in each Empowerment Zone city. The Project is funded by the MacArthur Foundation, the Joyce Foundation and UIC Great Cities Program.

To contribute to EZ Exchange, contact Kathy Feingold by phone, (312) 996-3668 or fax, (312) 996-8933. To join a discussion about the Empowerment Zones on the Internet, subscribe to EMPOWER at list.serv@uicvm.uic.edu.

Briefly...

* **Mark Your Calendar** for a reception celebrating the official establishment of the Great Cities Institute as a unit of the UIC College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs. Though the Institute has been operating since 1994, approval by the Illinois Board of Education was required to make it an official part of the College. The reception will be on April 24, from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Great Cities institute, 322 South Green Street. University President James Stukel and UIC Chancellor David Broski are invited to attend. For more information, contact the Great Cities Institute at 996-8700.

* **Great Cities Scholars:** Dr. Nancy Guerra and Dr. Patrick Tolan, leading researchers in the areas of violence prevention and intervention, are two of the four principal investigators in UIC'S Metropolitan Area Child Study. The study is funded by National Institute of Mental Health and has several goals: to decrease the percentage of children with serious behavior problems; to understand how neighborhood, school, individual, and family characteristics work together to influence violent behavior; and to develop violence prevention methods that take into account the realities of individual communities and residents. Program designers say they are

not working under the premise of fixing peoples' lives, but learning how to help them manage their lives better. Drs. Guerra and Tolan hope to use the research findings to develop and implement violence prevention programs in the Pilsen and Near West Side communities.

UPDATE: Redevelopment Moves Slowly at Henry Homer Homes

On Friday, August 11, 1995, a ground breaking ceremony was held marking the beginning of the Redevelopment Project at the Chicago Housing Authority's Henry Homer Homes. The first stage of this project was to be the demolition of five high-rise buildings to make way for newly constructed town homes, along with two- and three-story apartment buildings.

Since that time, the redevelopment process continues to move forward, but has slowed due to the need to address a number of related, and more difficult issues. Construction of new housing is scheduled to begin this spring, but a series of legal issues now accompanies the demolition of the high-rise buildings. Ongoing negotiations are taking place between residents and CHA management over issues such as repair of units not slated for replacement, maintaining a security force within the development and overall management of the redevelopment process and of the complex. Much of the activity has taken place in the courtroom, as well as on the site referred to as the superblock, roughly bounded by Washington Boulevard, Western Avenue, Lake Street and Damen Avenue.



The first stage of the redevelopment of the Henry Horner Homes was the demolition of five high-rise buildings,

In this column, we will run a periodic update of progress being made with the redevelopment of the Henry Horner Homes.

A contempt motion was filed against the CHA in the fall of 1995, alleging that families were forced to move, or illegally moved, out of the building at 2051 W. Lake St. The court was asked to award \$5,000 per family in punitive damages as a result of these actions. The motion was accepted for hearing and trial on this matter is anticipated. CHA employees are expected to be subpoenaed to determine how this situation was handled and what actually occurred.

Repairs: Toward the end of last year, CHA began a \$5 million program to address the backlog of repair and work orders. However, by mid-December, administration of this program had become so problematic that CHA was unable to account for the amount of money spent up to that point, and was unable to provide work orders that had been agreed to by residents. They also felt the program was too costly.

A contempt motion was filed, in which residents asked that their engineer/architect be given the authority to supervise this program. A negotiated settlement was reached, in which a large portion of the repair work would be contracted out to private individuals. This work will include kitchen and bath repairs, iron work, trash chutes, installation of new hand rails, coverings on stairs and plumbing. New elevators will be built for all seven mid-rise buildings on the exteriors of these buildings, and will be fully insulated and operational prior to the old elevators being abandoned. Work is to begin in the 1920 W. Lake Street building.

Private Management: In April 1995, a specified level of occupancy was set for CHA buildings at Homer. Any unit that became vacant after this time was to be reoccupied. A Tenant Selection Committee was established for residents to screen applicants, giving them the authority to determine who their neighbors would be. Since April 1st, only two families have been placed in 129 units that have become vacant, causing another contempt motion to be filed.

A settlement process is underway concerning this matter, which may result in a private management company overseeing the entire Homer complex. A screening process is underway to identify qualified managers who could undertake management of such a large development. Public hearings will be held to allow residents to voice their opinions on any finalists.

Security Last fall, CHA pulled security guards out of the buildings at Homer. As a result, extensive vandalism took place in several buildings. The building at 2051 W. Lake St. eventually was vacated due to damage that occurred in vacant units, including toilets pulled off walls causing water to run over floors and down the exterior of the building.

A contempt motion was filed by the Residents Council, charging that CHA's failure to provide security was creating a situation that would increase vacancies in buildings because of deteriorating conditions. CHA was not maintaining property as it had agreed to last April. The judge agreed to listen to this, and asked that residents get an outside expert to put together a proposal on what CHA should be required to do.

In late December, in an attempt to settle, CHA placed \$3.4 million on the table for residents to come up with a security plan. If the residents came up with a plan that they were more comfortable with, and if the judge approved it, CHA vowed to abide by it, recognizing that they were unable to control the situation by themselves.



The demolition of one of the Henry Homer high rises

Subsequent to this, Homer residents went to the Chicago Police Department asking for input. Residents feel that the CHA police are a part of the problem, citing 4 lawsuits and 3 internal investigations all stemming from allegations of brutality. An expert from the New York Police Department, who is a former chief of the NYC Housing Police, and has several years of experience working in Harlem, Brooklyn, and the Bronx, has also been contacted to provide recommendations.

New Housing Bids are out for the first 28 units of replacement housing to be located between Lake, Western, Damen and Van Buren. Construction is anticipated to begin around May 1. Additional 30-40 unit packages will come out in the next 7-8 months that will allow more units to be constructed. By April, 1997, 466 units will be newly constructed, and 90 units of rehabilitated housing will be completed.

History of Pilsen and Little Pillage Discussed at the Historical Society

As part of efforts to educate the staff of the Chicago Historical Society on the history of the Pilsen/Little Village area, two lunchtime lecture presentations were held in January. The first session, held January 26, featured Louise Kerr, who spoke about the Mexican community in Chicago and in Pilsen/Little Village. Dominic Pacyga spoke at the second session, held January 30. Pacyga discussed European ethnic settlement in Pilsen/Little Village, the labor history of the

area, immigrant settlements in Pilsen/Little Village through the last century and ways the ethnic population there has achieved labor and economic progress. Pacyga also explained the effects of city and national developments (i.e., the Immigration Act of 1924 and the opening of McCormick Reaper Works) and their impacts on the community. Current events and the future of Pilsen/Little Village also were discussed.

"University as Neighborhood Partner" Philosophy Shows Signs it's Catching On

Last year, the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development (HUD) awarded 14 urban universities across the country, including UIC, a total of more than \$7 million to improve the communities surrounding them, through economic development, education, health and housing assistance. At UIC, these dollars are channeled to Near West Side and Pilsen communities through the Great Cities program. The resources have helped bolster hope that the university and its neighbors can work together to build stronger communities.

Previously, HUD has made similar grants to help historically black colleges improve low-income neighborhoods. But the program in which UIC is participating, run largely by Michael A. Stegman, HUD Assistant Secretary for Policy Development and Research, is the first HUD effort to use universities to spark broad changes in places like Chicago's Near West Side and Pilsen.

Amid the optimism generated by the Great Cities program comes a report of a community development effort now underway at Yale University, also sponsored in part by HUD, which is sparking hope that more U.S. universities are taking real steps to link their resources with those of their neighboring communities.

At Yale, a program called The President's Service Fellowship, was created by Yale's president, Richard C. Levin. The fellowship program, which began operating in 1993, provides Yale students with opportunities to study and work in impoverished communities in the neighboring city of New Haven for the summer. The students are not given course credit, but do receive stipends for the summer. Students have taken positions that range from teaching summer school to helping operate city shelters.

According to a recent *New York Times* news story about the program, the University will invest \$50 million of its \$3.53 billion endowment in the New Haven program.

Each week during the summer, the student fellows gather to meet prominent New Haven residents, discuss urban issues, and talk about how they can assist each other.

According to the *New York Times* report, some students say they realize that, at this point, they are probably learning more from their efforts than they are helping the city. But more importantly, they understand they are part of a growing effort by Yale to grapple with the New Haven that lies outside of its campus.

In April, Yale will host a conference with 43 other universities, including UIC, which have received HUD funding for community partnership programs.