

**UIC Neighborhoods Initiative**

**Evaluation Report**

**1997-1998**

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### Affordable Housing Fund

As of June 1998 funds became available for deposit. TRP's loan committee was organized, trained, and had made four loans by June 1998. Near West had yet to complete formation of its loan committee, as of that time.

### Commercial Development Projects

Near West Community Development Corporation was successful in its bid to develop city owned land at Madison and Western, with Walgreens committed to putting in a facility there. Information collected by Pat Wright and her students contributed to Near West's successful bid, as did the JCD money that provided leverage with Near West's commercial partner.

After two years of painstaking work by Jim Isaacs, the ESDC's Board of Directors, Pat Wright, and Yittaji Zalelam, ESDC has launched its first major commercial development project in many years. Entering into a limited partnership with TRP, ESDC has bought a three-story department store on 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Then department store will be the tenant on the lower floors, while a health clinic sponsored by TRP and UIC will be the tenant on the top floor. This project is remarkable in that it substantively advances a partnership between TRP and UIC medical campus that has been three years in planning, marks the first major joint project between TRP and ESDC, and provides ESDC with a major commercial presence that should be profitable.

### Great Cities – Great Careers

Although beset with a host of difficulties since its inception, much of it owing to new CPS Board policies (probation at both Crane and Juarez, instituting and then canceling tech prep at Crane, and turnover of administration at Juarez and of teachers at both schools), few of the original goals of the projects have been accomplished at either school. What has been accomplished since 1996, however, although not part of the original plans, has had lasting results both for the schools and for UIC.

## Esperanza Familiar

This partnership between TRP, St. Pius, St Adalbertm and St. Procopisu churches, and the Jane Addams School of Social Work is designed to provide trouble families in Pilsen with training support networks, and counseling in problem areas identified by Pilsen residents as central concerns. These include domestic violence, teen sex, school dropout, gang activity, and the like.

Since 1996, the Esperanza Familiar Steering Committee, supported by Jan Addams graduate students under the supervision of Rich Kordeok, Megan Riley, and now Melanee M. have accomplished the following:

- A needs assessment study using focus groups to determine the major concerns of parents, spouses, and children in Pilsen.
- Completed research leading to the formulation of a curriculum by the Steering Committee.
- Organized the Steering Committee into working groups.
- Sought funding sources and submitted grant proposals, at least one of which has been funded.
- Organized the recruitment of families for the program at the three churches.
- Actively sought out partnerships with schools for conducting the program.
- Hired a program director for EF.
- Completed at least the first round of classes at all three churches.
- Presented the project and its process of development at a professional meeting.
- EF has become the second half of a book by Prof. Kordessh.

The response of the participants in these classes thus far had been overwhelmingly positive. UIC students, according to EF staff, have been “the engine that drives the program.” UIC students have gotten valuable experience in community organizing, applied research, consulting, curriculum planning, grant writing, counseling, and conduction workshops.

## Guadalupano Cultural (Family) Center

Begun as a center for visual, performing, and recording arts. Guadalupano involved a partnership between TRP, UIC School of Art and Design, and LARES. With seed money from UICNI and grant money secured by UIC faculty, Guadalupano experimented with classes in the visual arts and a series of sound studio workshops in 1996 and 1997. TRP also investigated the possibility of designing, building and equipping its own sound studio (as a commercial venture). While moderately successful, the visual arts program was discontinued, Hugo Teruel, who conducted them, has drawn together the best of the sound projects recorded and mixed during these workshops and is producing a compact disk of these finished products.

## Hiring and Purchasing Project

The initial goals of this project – 30 full time jobs for Pilsen and Near West residents and 18 contracts for Pilsen and Near West businesses – were never realized. Frustrated by a hiring freeze in 1996 and 1997, by difficulties recruiting potential vendors, and sabotaged by an illegal agreement by Chancellor Brosky with Jesus Gracia, Danny Soliz, and many others, this project was a time drain on Reancer and ESDC. As doomed as this project may appear it has made two very important contributions to UIC administrative policy (for which UICNI had gotten neither credit nor recognition).

- The chancellor’s planning for hiring has been augmented by the inclusion of purchasing (through President Stukel, who learned of the Hiring and Purchasing project just hours before his press release following the flak over Brosky’s agreement).
- The chancellor’s recognition that for any such program to work, it requires his active support not just at the top level. But at the level of Human Resources and Purchasing personnel (as made clear through Pat Gill’s presentation of Joe Persky’s and Jon Betancur’s report on campus hiring and purchasing practices and the 1996-97 UICNI report on the hiring and purchasing project).

As a result of the information generated by this project – and a cruel irony – the chancellor has found a way around the Civil Service exam for local hires.

### Parent Leadership Program

Although this program ceased in 1997, Juan Gamino has been working with Mike Lieber to do an analysis of the processed of change that the Walsh School mothers experienced. Juan Gamino will present the first phase of this research at a conference on research and public policy in Chicago. A grant proposal, submitted to the Humanities Institute to support this research, was not funded.

### UICNI Roundtable

Instituted by Loomis Mayfield, the ROUNDTABLE is an informal discussion of like-minded people interested in university-community partnerships and issues. Discussion is kicked off by brief presentations. Roundtables have been held at Great Cities and off campus with Wim Wiewel, Nacho Gonzales, and Lowell Livesey among the presenters. They have been well attended, lively, and well received. This style of forum is a context that appears to attract a diverse audience, and it has benefit of advertising UICNI.

### UICNI Steering Committee

The Steering Committee has focused on its supervisory role this year, hearing progress reports of projects and proposals for new projects, e.g., Virginia Martinez's mediation proposal. Responses to these reports are typically specific questions aimed at clarification with occasional suggestions for strengthening a project.

A continuing difficulty has been membership and attendance. Turnover in city administration has deprived the Steering Committee of regular attendance by city staff. Getting wider representation from the Near West Side has been difficult. It is clear, however that there is a core membership consisting of those with the greatest involvement in UICNI, i.e., the core is a set of stakeholders; people recruited as members who are not involved in other UICNI activities do not stay long; and targeting an area from which to recruit members does not work.