

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY  
COMMUNITY OUTREACH  
PARTNERSHIP CENTER**

**GRANT # COPC-NJ-98-029  
*SEMIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT*  
SEPTEMBER 1998 TO JUNE 1999**

***PART A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

***Submitted to:***

**Armand Carriere, Government Technical Representative  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

***Submitted by:***

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center (RCOPC) is completing the first half of Year One activities in the West Side Park community in Newark, New Jersey. During the period from grant inception (September 1998) through June 30, 1999, RCOPC has met or exceeded all of the goals for this period in the seven functional categories identified in the Project Management Work Plan in our funding proposal. Following is a summary of major highlights for the first half of Year One.

### COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

- § Established and met twice with the Community Advisory Committee to discuss RCOPC goals, identify community needs, and establish Year One research and outreach priorities.
- § Assisted the West Side Park Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC) to revise and develop the West Side Park Community Action Plan. The Plan won state approval as Newark's Urban Coordinating Council Initiative in December 1998.
- § Initiated a Community Asset Mapping Project for the West Side Park community, negotiating a Data Sharing Agreement with the City of Newark to obtain a digital parcel map that will be made available to community-based organizations.
- § Conducted an inventory and prepared a directory of social service providers in West Side Park. The project was completed by seven graduate students enrolled in the Urban Planning Department's Spring semester Community Development Studio, supervised by Dr. Robert Zdenek.
- § Created an RCOPC website at <http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/rcopc/>

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- § Provided technical assistance to facilitate planning and program coordination between the NEC and key community-based organizations in West Side Park.
- § Obtained designation of five community-based organizations in West Side Park as official community partners in the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) program at Rutgers University. As community partners, these agencies are recognized as placement sites for Rutgers undergraduate students who are enrolled in CASE courses and are required to complete 40 hours of community service each semester.
- § Participated in "Positioning the Urban University for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Teaching, Research and Community Partnerships," a conference sponsored by the Center for Public Policy and Urban Research at the New Jersey City University. SanDonna Bryant, Director of the Newark Community Development Network, presented the Rutgers COPC in a panel on universities and community building.

### NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

- § Initiated planning for the first RCOPC Youth Leadership Conference to be held on November 12, 1999 on the Newark campus of Rutgers University. Youth leaders from West Side Park will participate in the day-long conference that will feature the accomplishments of these young people, introduce them to city and university officials, and encourage other young people to undertake programs to benefit West Side Park and the city of Newark.

- § Provided more than 70 hours of technical assistance to the International Youth Organization (IYO) to develop a concept plan and to research funding opportunities for establishing a Youth Council in West Side Park.
- § Worked with the NEC and four community-based organizations to establish a Community Technology Network of computer training centers located in the four participating organizations. RCOPC assisted the NEC to prepare and submit a proposal to the Newark Millennium Group for computer hardware and software and to submit a Community Technology Center proposal to the U.S. Department of Education. The Rutgers Technical Training Program (RTTP) developed a uniform computer training curriculum for use at the four sites.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- § RCOPC provided more than 90 hours of technical assistance to help the NEC hire a merchant organizer to assist small businesses in West Side Park. Working with the NEC and Tri-City People's Corporation, a Planning Department graduate student prepared a job description, researched funding sources, and developed a proposal template.

#### **AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

- § Conducted a census of housing and property conditions in 130 square blocks of West Side Park, and entered the survey data into the West Side Park GIS-based Community Asset Map. CUPR faculty and staff and two housing interns teamed with five VISTA volunteers from the International Youth Organization to complete the housing census.
- § Completed an inventory of home ownership counseling services available to residents of West Side Park and prepared a referral guide for distribution to community-based organizations. A Geography Department graduate student with an extensive counseling background researched and compiled information on national best practices in homeownership counseling.

#### **HEALTHCARE**

- § RCOPC's Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC) worked with the Corinthian Housing Development Corporation and Tri-City People's Corporation to develop plans for a community health center to be jointly sponsored by the two organizations. While the plans are being developed, NCFC arranged with the Rutgers College of Nursing to provide health education programs and health screenings at the West Side Park community center beginning in the Fall semester.

#### **EDUCATION**

- § NCFC piloted two after-school programs during the Spring semester in which 24 Rutgers students and 70 public school children participated. Beginning in the Fall, the Rutgers program will become an integrated part of the after-school curriculum mandated by the city, with enrollment expected to increase to 150 children.

## **RELATED ACTIVITIES**

With a funding proposal submitted by CUPR on behalf of RCOPC, Rutgers University committed an additional \$25,000 in resources from the Reinvest in Rutgers Phase II Initiative designed to address academic priorities that advance the University's Strategic Plan. The funds were used during fiscal year 1999 (ending June 30<sup>th</sup>) for graduate student stipends and purchase of computer equipment used in development of the Community Asset Map and completion of the housing conditions census in West Side Park.

Beginning in the Fall semester (September 1999), Rutgers will also provide additional resources to support a Graduate Associate (GA) at CUPR dedicated to work on the RCOPC project. Through an agreement between CUPR and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers will pay an annual stipend and provide tuition remission for three graduate students from the Departments of Economics, Sociology, and Geography; one of those students will be assigned to RCOPC. These funds, as well as the Reinvest in Rutgers allocation described above, are in addition to the University matching funds identified in the original funding proposal.

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***PART B. NARRATIVE DISCUSSION***

***Submitted to:***

**Armand Carriere, Government Technical Representative  
Office of Community Partnerships  
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development**

***Submitted by:***

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## **OVERVIEW**

This report summarizes the activities of the Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center (RCOPC) during the period from inception of the grant in September 1998 through June 30, 1999. This is the first half of Year One of the three-year grant period. RCOPC has met or exceeded all of the goals for this period in the seven functional categories identified in the Project Management Work Plan included in our funding proposal.

RCOPC's target neighborhood is the West Side Park community of Newark, New Jersey. West Side Park, a community of approximately 20,000 residents in 130 square blocks on the west side of the Central Ward, is Newark's target area under New Jersey's Urban Coordinating Council initiative and is one of eight neighborhoods comprising Newark's federal Enterprise Community. RCOPC's principal objective is to assist and support the community-based revitalization efforts underway through these state and federal programs.

Our emphasis in this initial start-up phase of the project has been to establish a close working relationship among University and community partners; to initiate data collection and benchmarking to permit trend assessment and monitoring over the life of the project; and to begin concept development and planning in functional categories that involve a long implementation period. In several instances, identified below, RCOPC completed tasks originally scheduled for later in the grant period in order to accommodate the priorities and work schedules of our community partners.

During this reporting period, RCOPC has made substantial progress in all seven functional categories included in the Project Management Work Plan. Highlights for the period include development of a GIS-based Community Asset Map for West Side Park; completion of an inventory and assessment of social service providers resulting in a directory of 21 community-based organizations and 78 churches active in West Side Park; designation of five community-based organizations as placement sites for more than 200 students enrolled in the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) program at Rutgers University; completion of an inventory of housing and property conditions in 130 square blocks and entry of data in the GIS-based Community Asset Map; development of a referral guide to homeownership counseling services available to residents of West Side Park and distribution of the guide to community-based organizations; and substantial progress in planning and development of (1) a community technology network with computer centers in four community-based organizations; (2) a community health center; and (3) an after-school program.

We have developed a close and cooperative relationship with our community partners in West Side Park. Our principal community contact is the Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC) established under the New Jersey Urban Coordinating Council initiative to plan and implement the revitalization of West Side Park. We work closely with NEC Coordinator Alle Ries Levy (a graduate of the Rutgers Urban Planning program) to ensure that RCOPC activities contribute to the community goals and priorities set out in

the NEC's *West Side Park Community Action Plan*. RCOPC Director Robert Lake attends the monthly (now bimonthly) NEC meetings in Newark to report on RCOPC activities and to obtain input from the NEC's eight subcommittee chairs and community residents. On individual projects within the functional areas, we work closely with the community-based organizations in West Side Park including the International Youth Organization, United Community Corporation, Tri-City People's Organization, Salvation Army, and the Corinthian Housing Development Corporation.

Several units within Rutgers University have worked together effectively to produce a high level of productivity during this important start-up phase of the project. Leadership is provided by Dr. Robert W. Lake, Associate Director of the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) and Dr. Kathe Callahan, Director of the Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC). Important contributions have also been provided by units affiliated with NCFC, including student internship placements through the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) program directed by Professor Michael Shafer, and development of a unified computer training curriculum by Joann Laurel and Michael Green at the Rutgers Technical Training Program.

The graduate Community Development Studio offered by the Department of Urban Planning continues to play a central role in RCOPC. The West Side Park Comprehensive Plan completed by faculty and students in the Studio two years ago, which received the Comprehensive Planning award from the New Jersey chapter of the American Planning Association, laid the groundwork for our RCOPC proposal. This year, a team of seven graduate students led by faculty advisor Robert Zdenek completed a survey and assessment of social service providers in West Side Park.

Several past and upcoming staffing changes affect the composition of the RCOPC. Co-principal investigator Kathe Callahan will step down in August as Director of the Newark Center for Families and Communities to accept another position within the University. Her successor, George Paschalis, is currently Assistant Director of the Office of Community and Public Service at the New Jersey Institute of Technology in Newark. In this position, Dr. Paschalis has extensive outreach and research experience, considerable familiarity with community development in Newark, and is an enthusiastic supporter of the RCOPC program. We anticipate that the transition to the new Director at NCFC will be a seamless one.

Two faculty members at the Rutgers-Newark Graduate School of Management, Professors Patricia Greene and Alan Wink, have left the University. Identifying their replacements will receive high priority when the University session resumes in September, in order to maintain continuity in the Economic Development functional category.

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The following sections of this report describe our activities in the seven functional categories included in the Project Management Work Plan in our funding proposal. The statement of the functional category from the Work Plan is highlighted in italics.

## **1. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING**

***Objective:** To support and assist the comprehensive planning process being undertaken through the Newark Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC). Outreach activities in this functional category will involve collaborative plan development, regular and frequent consultation with NEC subcommittee chairs, technical assistance, database generation, neighborhood mapping, trend monitoring, dissemination, and facilitation of information sharing among community-based organizations.*

***Proposed Activities:** Activities proposed for the first half of Year One include extensive information sharing meetings; technical assistance in revising the NEC's Community Action Plan; and baseline data collection for the West Side Park Community Asset Map.*

### **Outcomes:**

RCOPC activities under Comprehensive Planning focused primarily on solidifying our relationship with our community partners and initiating collection and mapping of baseline data for the West Side Park Community Asset Map.

**Community Advisory Committee.** The Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for the first half of Year One comprised NEC Coordinator Alle Ries Levy and the chairs of the eight NEC subcommittees (Economic Development, Education, Environment, Healthcare and Social Services, Housing, Public Safety, Recreation, and Youth and Young Adult Issues). All CAC members live and/or work in West Side Park. Two formal meetings of the CAC were convened, on January 20<sup>th</sup> and April 20<sup>th</sup>, both at the International Youth Organization offices in West Side Park. Professors Robert Lake and Stephen Finn (CUPR) and Kathe Callahan (NCFC) introduced the RCOPC project and the subcommittee chairs outlined their plans and priorities for the ensuing six-month periods. In addition to the formal CAC meetings, an update on RCOPC activities is part of the regular agenda at the monthly NEC meetings in West Side Park, and Lake, Callahan, and Finn meet frequently with NEC members, collectively and individually, to discuss and update projects and activities.

The decision to keep the CAC confined to the NEC chairs during this initial start-up period was a conscious one, and one that we believe contributed to establishing a close working relationship with our community partners. These meetings were an opportunity for information-sharing, joint decision-making on project priorities, and the establishment of personal and professional relationships. Half way through Year One, we are now ready to expand the CAC to include a wider array of representatives of the private, non-profit, financial, government, and university sectors; invitations were distributed in late July to approximately 40 individuals selected jointly by RCOPC and NEC. Now that the RCOPC

program is firmly established, we anticipate that an expanded CAC will help to identify resources to support revitalization in West Side Park.

The principal challenge during this early stage was to convey to our community partners both the opportunities and the limitations presented by the RCOPC program. The grant amount of \$400,000 is a major distraction for community-based organizations struggling with limited resources. Initial distrust is just below the surface. Why are funds of this magnitude going to the University rather than directly to the community? What can the University do for us? Are you here to take over our program, to make us look bad, to tell us what to do? Resolution of these issues obviously takes time, but is facilitated by a willingness to listen, by aligning RCOPC's activities to correspond with the community partners' priorities, and by delivering usable products.

**Community Asset Mapping.** Community Asset Mapping formed the second major activity under Comprehensive Planning. Collection and mapping of baseline data at the outset of the project serves multiple objectives. Identifying community assets and liabilities helps establish planning priorities, forms a baseline for monitoring trends, and provides a picture to help planners and residents to visualize their community.

After a period of prolonged negotiations, RCOPC has obtained a data sharing agreement with the City of Newark allowing us to compile a vast array of city data on a parcel map of West Side Park and to distribute these data to community-based organizations. Mark Ontkush, the Spatial Data Analyst in the Rutgers Geography Department, has created a GIS-based parcel map for the approximately 130-block area of West Side Park and is able to display an expanding inventory of housing, demographic, economic, environmental, and social data for the community. Selected maps will soon be accessible through the RCOPC website (see below).

A primary goal is to have the NEC succeed in implementing and sustaining GIS capability within its constituent organizations. Six community-based organizations in West Side Park have submitted applications to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection to obtain ArcView mapping software that will allow them to input data to and manipulate the West Side Park Community Asset Map. RCOPC has scheduled a three-day GIS/ArcView training session, designed and run by Mark Ontkush, for 12 residents and staff from our community partner organizations to be held in mid-August at the Geography Department computer laboratory at Rutgers-New Brunswick.

**Social Service Directory.** Community Asset Mapping requires surveys and other forms of street-level data collection to obtain information not available from other sources. Following discussions with the NEC's Healthcare and Social Services Subcommittee, we identified a need to inventory and assess social service providers within West Side Park. This task was taken on as the Spring semester project of the Community Development Studio in the Rutgers Urban Planning Department. The seven graduate students met with the Social Services Subcommittee to define the project. Through a mail and telephone survey and extensive on-site interviews, the Studio identified 21 social service organizations and 78 churches within the West Side Park community providing after-school programs, continuing education and training, recreation and meeting facilities,

computer training, childcare, and other social services. A Directory produced by the Studio indicates location, days and hours of operation, programs offered, and a brief description. The Studio report also assessed organizational capacity, noted expansion plans, and identified barriers to expansion. The students presented their report to a public meeting of the Social Services Subcommittee at the Salvation Army West Side Branch on May 10<sup>th</sup> and released their report (in both paper and CD-ROM) on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Copies of the report have been widely distributed, and will soon be posted on the RCOPC website.

**RCOPC Website.** As an important means of information exchange, we have established an RCOPC website at <http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/rcopc/>. The website describes RCOPC activities and identifies the University and community partners. As the project develops, the website will also contain the text of reports and directories and links to community organizations and others in West Side Park.

## 2. COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

**Objective:** *The community organizations partnering in RCOPC are expanding their missions to keep pace with the challenges confronting their neighborhoods: affordable housing, economic development, day care, social services, health care, education, and neighborhood planning. The CBOs are stretching themselves internally to undertake these many project directions. These groups must do this work in the face of serious constraints: minimal staffing, little training, inadequate planning, and low operating budgets. These organizations could benefit from additional expertise to identify their capacity needs and locate resources to fill these demands.*

**Proposed Activities:** *Tasks scheduled for the first half of Year One focus on capacity building assistance and student internship placement in community-based organizations.*

### **Outcomes:**

**Capacity Building.** The West Side Park Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC) comprises a coalition of several independent community-based organizations, several of which have been in existence for two decades or more. The *West Side Park Community Action Plan*, the NEC's comprehensive plan for community revitalization, represents a statement of collective goals as well as an amalgamation of projects sponsored by the individual community organizations. Most of the NEC's subcommittee chairs also occupy leadership positions within these anchoring organizations.

This organizational structure allows the NEC to draw from a rich array of organizations and resources throughout the community. It also, however, raises recurring and difficult issues of coordination and potentially divided loyalties between the NEC and the individual organizations. Funding obligations and accountability issues sometimes understandably place the priorities of individual organizations above those of the NEC's collective enterprise. It is not always clear whether an individual is speaking as an NEC committee member or a member of a community organization. Successfully negotiating

the process of coalition building and forging of a collective identity for the NEC may be the single most important hurdle confronting the revitalization of West Side Park.

RCOPC has worked closely with NEC Coordinator Alle Ries Levy to address this issue. Our first and perhaps most crucial step has been to decisively determine that the NEC is our primary source of contact with the community and that all RCOPC activities must be coordinated through the NEC rather than individually with separate community organizations. That is, we are able to build the NEC's capacity by recognizing and reinforcing the NEC's role through our actions. It is difficult (and probably unwise) for RCOPC, as an "outside" organization, to attempt to direct the community organizations to cooperate with the NEC. It is possible, however, to facilitate cooperation indirectly through example. This means being careful to work with and through NEC at all times, to keep NEC fully informed of RCOPC activities with individual organizations, and to make clear to our community partner organizations that our work with them is guided by NEC priorities as stated in the *Community Action Plan*.

**Student Internship Placement.** Five community-based organizations in West Side Park are now recognized as official community partners for the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) program at Rutgers. Corinthian Housing Development Corporation, International Youth Organization, Crest Community Development Corporation, Babyland 6, and the Women's Urban Renewal Corporation all signed agreements with Rutgers University to provide meaningful community service opportunities for undergraduate students enrolled in CASE courses. Fourteen undergraduate courses on the Rutgers-Newark campus will be offered as CASE courses beginning in the Fall 1999 semester. Students enrolled in CASE courses are required to complete 40 hours of community service each semester. A conservative estimate of student enrollment indicates that approximately 200 Rutgers undergraduates will provide a total of 8,000 hours of community service during the Fall semester. Urban Politics, Current Moral and Social Issues, and Introduction to Social Work are just three of the courses that will be offered as CASE courses in which placement in one of the West Side Park community organizations would be appropriate. These student placements will help provide needed personnel to expand the capacity of community-based organizations to deliver services.

The Instrumental Jazz Ensemble studio course also will be offered as a CASE course this Fall and we are currently working with Professor Bill Bauer and NEC Coordinator Alle Ries Levy to develop an appropriate community placement site that will benefit the children of West Side Park. We are currently exploring two possible approaches. One is to have members of the Jazz Ensemble perform and provide a brief history of jazz and jazz instruments at each of the elementary schools in the West Side Park community. The other option is to work with three community-based organizations that run after-school programs in the neighborhood – the International Youth Organization (IYO), Salvation Army, and Corinthian Housing Development Corporation – and have these organizations bring small groups of after-school students, once a week, to the Rutgers-Newark campus for a mini-tour of the Department of Visual and Performing Arts and a performance by the Jazz Ensemble.

### 3. NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

**Objectives:** *RCOPC's neighborhood revitalization activities focus on maximizing the positive neighborhood spin-off effects of the community's most visible physical and social assets. The neighborhood revitalization efforts listed here represent high-priority projects as identified by community residents and NEC subcommittee chairs. Following consultation with community leaders, we have identified three major projects to anchor RCOPC's neighborhood revitalization agenda. These include the redevelopment of the 31-acre County park (West Side Park) in the heart of the community, training in youth leadership, and establishment of a Technical Skills Development Center, representing investments in the physical, social, and economic capital, respectively, of the West Side Park community.*

**Proposed Activities:** *Tasks scheduled for this period focus on planning for the first of three annual Youth Leadership Development Training Conferences. Planning for the redevelopment of West Side Park and establishment of a Technical Skills Development Center were originally scheduled for Years 2 and 3 but we have initiated work on the latter project to accord with the priorities of our community partners.*

#### **Outcomes:**

**Youth Leadership Development.** The first Youth Leadership Development Training Conference is planned for Friday, November 12<sup>th</sup> (a public school holiday) on the Rutgers-Newark campus. The all-day conference, organized by NCFC Director Kathe Callahan, will feature the accomplishments of the West Side Park Youth Council and the peer mentors at Shabazz High School. The conference will be youth-driven and will feature the positive achievements of these young people so that they may serve as role models for other young people in Newark.

Dr. Clement Price, a Rutgers Professor and Newark historian, will conduct a tour of Newark and provide a historical overview of the City for the youth leaders. We have learned through the RCOPC project that many of the young people who live in West Side Park have never set foot on the Rutgers-Newark campus and many do not know what the city looks like beyond the boundaries of Bergen Street and Springfield Avenue. The tour will include the historic James Street and Lincoln Park neighborhoods where many musicians, artists, and writers got their start. The tour will also include the Ironbound section of the city where Portuguese and Brazilian residents have established and maintain a vibrant ethnic community.

Also as part of the day-long conference, meetings will be arranged with elected officials including Mayor Sharpe James, City Council Central Ward representative Cory Booker, and New Jersey State Assemblywoman Nia Gill. The young leaders will also meet with Rutgers faculty and students to discuss educational opportunities available at Rutgers and other area universities. Student volunteers from the University financial aid office will provide information on scholarship and fellowship opportunities.

**West Side Park Youth Council.** In addition to planning the Youth Leadership Development Training Conference, RCOPC is working closely with the International Youth Organization (IYO) to develop a concept plan and research funding opportunities to establish a Youth Council in West Side Park. CUPR research assistant Mark Pendas contributed more than 70 hours of technical assistance in a project, still on-going, to research Youth Council programs in other locations and compile a Youth Council Handbook outlining an organizational structure, sample by-laws, and program activities. Objectives and program suggestions were identified through focus groups with West Side Park residents age 16 – 21. RCOPC will also assist IYO to work with the City of Newark to submit a proposal for a \$6 million Youth Opportunity grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The intent is to inaugurate the West Side Park Youth Council in conjunction with RCOPC's Youth Leadership Development Training Conference in November.

**Community Technology Network.** RCOPC is assisting four community-based organizations to establish a Community Technology Network in West Side Park. The four organizations – Corinthian Housing Development Corporation, International Youth Organization (IYO), Salvation Army West Side Branch, and United Community Corporation (UCC) – are each establishing computer training centers providing training and activities for school-age children, young adults, and senior citizens. Youth programming, including an after-school curriculum in basic computer literacy, typing, word processing and an introduction to the Internet, is expected to serve up to 188 school-age children in the first year, increasing to more than 300 by year three. Adult education will cover basic computer literacy and skills training for new job placement or employment upgrading, with enrollment expected to increase from 124 in year one to more than 200 by year three. Two of the four centers will offer basic computing and Internet training for senior citizens, increasing from 50 in year one to 90 by year three.

RCOPC is providing technical assistance to facilitate start-up of the individual centers, to facilitate information sharing, and to network the centers into a coordinated program. CUPR research assistant Julie Silva devoted 50 hours in June to maintain coordination across the four centers. In an effort to provide uniformity in program content and offerings, Joann Laurel and Michael Green from the Rutgers Technical Training Program worked with the four organizations to develop a uniform curriculum. As a result, a resident taking a course in word processing at IYO will learn the same things as a resident learning word processing at the Salvation Army's center. All four computer training sites will offer the same basic curriculum and, over time, each center will also specialize in a particular area of expertise. For example, IYO might offer classes in hardware design and installation while UCC offers courses in web page design. Networking and coordination of program schedules will allow each center to focus its resources while allowing residents to choose courses across centers according to need.

Through a contact made by Professor Michael Shafer, director of the Rutgers CASE program, the NEC submitted a proposal and made a formal presentation to the Newark Millennium Group requesting computer hardware and software. The Millennium Group is a non-profit foundation comprised of representatives of technology-based corporations including Microsoft, Lucent Technologies, and CompUSA, that supports technological

advancement of community-based organizations in Newark. Millennium Group representatives conducted site visits at Corinthian and the Salvation Army to inspect their computer center installations. Another meeting is scheduled for the end of August to discuss the laying of fiber optic cable linking the training sites, with the possibility of Bell Atlantic donating the cable. RCOPC also assisted the NEC to prepare and submit a detailed proposal to the U.S. Department of Education to fund the Community Technology Network described above.

#### **4. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Objectives:** *RCOPC work under this functional category provides research and outreach in support of small business development within the West Side Park community. RCOPC recognizes the far-reaching positive multiplier effects of a strong small business sector in the community and, in cooperation with the NEC Economic Development Subcommittee, will focus a considerable portion of its research and outreach efforts to promote the development of small businesses in the West Side Park community.*

**Proposed Activities:** *Tasks in the Economic Development functional category are scheduled to begin in the second half of Year One. Recognizing the high priority of small business development in the community's economic health, however, RCOPC initiated activities in this functional category with technical assistance to help the NEC hire a merchant organizer to work with small businesses in West Side Park.*

**Outcomes:**

**Merchant Organizing.** RCOPC has provided more than 90 hours of technical assistance to the NEC and Tri-City People's Corporation to define the position of merchant organizer and research possible funding sources. CUPR research assistant Peggy Jen met with Tri-City Community Development Director Ollyn Lettman to discuss the project and subsequently prepared a job description, researched funding opportunities, and developed a proposal template to use in approaching potential funders. A proposal will also be prepared for presentation to the expanded Community Advisory Committee in early Fall.

#### **5. AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

**Objective:** *Within a context of acute housing need, community-based organizations in West Side Park have taken a major role in the development of affordable housing. Corinthian Housing Development Corporation and the United Community Corporation both have identified affordable housing development as among their leading priorities. RCOPC will support this activity by filling research needs identified by the community-based groups and the NEC Housing Subcommittee. The results of this research will also*

*directly support the data gathering and community asset mapping activities identified above.*

***Proposed Activities:*** *No Workplan tasks are scheduled for the first half of Year One under Affordable Housing. However, in line with our emphasis on providing baseline data for the Community Assets Map at the outset of the project period, we moved up the survey of housing conditions originally scheduled for the second half of Year One. In addition, in response to a request from the NEC Housing Subcommittee, we accelerated completion of the homeownership counseling Tasks from Year Three to the first half of Year One.*

***Outcomes:***

**Housing and Property Census.** Data obtained from the city of Newark for the Community Asset Map provides extensive coverage of ownership characteristics, land use, vacancy status, sale price, and assessed value of all properties in West Side Park. The city data do not provide subjective assessments of structure and property conditions, property abandonment, rehabilitation potential, and structures in need of demolition. To fill this gap, RCOPC conducted a complete census of structure and property conditions in approximately 130 square blocks in West Side Park. CUPR faculty and staff and two housing interns teamed with five VISTA volunteers from IYO to complete the housing census. For each tax parcel, data were collected on street address, land use type, building condition, sidewalk/street condition, vacant lot condition, occupancy status, and number of units in structure. The data were entered into the GIS-based Community Asset Map, and individual maps are being prepared in response to requests from our community partners (e.g., maps of vacant developable land; new construction; structures in need of demolition; structures suitable for renovation; mixed-use buildings, etc.).

**Homeownership Counseling.** A survey compiled by the NEC Housing Subcommittee identifies more than 700 units of new affordable housing in the production pipeline scheduled for completion in West Side Park in the next three years. While non-profit housing developers are changing the face of housing supply in West Side Park, finding qualified buyers and renters remains an on-going problem. As a result, and at the request of the Housing Subcommittee, RCOPC moved the homeownership counseling task originally scheduled for Year Three to the present reporting period.

This task has two components. CUPR research assistant Raysa Martinez surveyed existing sources of housing counseling available to homebuyers and tenants in West Side Park and prepared a referral guide for distribution to community-based organizations. The guide identifies counseling providers and describes the type of counseling available, geographic area served, client restrictions (if any), hours of operation, and contact information. Housing providers can use this guide to refer potential buyers and/or renters to counseling services within the community. In the second component, Ms. Martinez collected information on best practices in homeownership counseling from HUD, Fannie Mae, Neighborhood Reinvestment Corporation, Neighborhood Housing Services, Enterprise Foundation, the American Homeowner Education and Counseling Institute,

and other sources. This information will be available for housing providers that choose to develop their own counseling services rather than rely on referrals to other organizations.

## **6. HEALTH CARE**

**Objective:** *Adequate health care is an essential part of any plan for neighborhood renewal. RCOPC will contribute to this objective by assisting in development of a proposal, and seeking funding for, a nurse-managed neighborhood clinic within the West Side Park community.*

**Proposed Activities:** *In conjunction with the NEC Healthcare Subcommittee, RCOPC will begin the process of developing a proposal and securing funding through the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Nursing, to establish a nurse-managed health care center in a school-based setting within West Side Park.*

### **Outcomes:**

**Neighborhood Health Clinic.** As noted above, our original intent was to work with the Health and Social Services Subcommittee and the Newark Public Schools to explore the possibility of establishing a nurse-managed health center in the 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue School. This focus has changed based on changing circumstances since proposal submission. In discussion with the Health and Social Services Subcommittee, we learned that the Corinthian Housing Development Corporation received a three-year \$250,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services to establish a community health center. To date, however, very little has been done to establish the health center and Corinthian is in jeopardy of losing the funds if they cannot show progress by the end of this calendar year.

RCOPC has initiated discussions with Corinthian and Tri-City People's Corporation to facilitate collaboration between the two community organizations and the University to establish a community health center, to be jointly sponsored by Corinthian and Tri-City. At this moment, Tri-City operates the only health center in West Side Park and the services they provide are limited. The Tri-City health center is open only a few days a week and, as a result of the funding they receive, the care they provide is targeted to young women and children. Rutgers College of Nursing seeks to work with these two community organizations to establish a comprehensive health center and to build on the resources currently provided to Corinthian. Proposals will be developed and submitted to the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Nursing, and to the Health Care Foundation of New Jersey.

In the interim, while the collaborative relationships and proposals are being developed, students from Rutgers College of Nursing will provide health education programs and health screenings at the West Side Park community center two afternoons a week beginning in the Fall semester. A health education curriculum has been established by nursing students and includes programs appropriate for children and older adults. The

curriculum for children includes sessions on diet, exercise, personal and dental hygiene, self-esteem, and decision-making. The curriculum for older adults includes sessions on diabetes, heart disease, cancer, depression, and personal safety. Nursing students will also conduct health screenings for blood pressure, diabetes, cholesterol, vision, and hearing.

## 7. EDUCATION

**Objective:** *In partnership with the NEC Education Subcommittee and the Newark Public Schools, RCOPC will design a comprehensive after-school program to provide a safe haven and structured activities for children attending the 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue School. The 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue School has been designated as the community school for West Side Park and will be open extended hours in the evening. This school has been identified by our Community Partners as the most appropriate location for the after-school program.*

**Proposed Activities:** *Working with the NEC Education Subcommittee, the United Community Corporation, and the Newark Public Schools, RCOPC will develop a concept and strategic plan and will identify possible funding sources for an after-school program in the public schools.*

### **Outcomes:**

**After-School Program.** The Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC) piloted two after-school programs during the Spring semester and seeks to expand the program to include two additional schools in the coming academic year. Twenty-four Rutgers students participated in the after-school program this past semester and we expect to attract the same number of students in the Fall. Approximately 70 public school children participated in the after-school program on a regular basis. The program has a health emphasis and focuses on healthy diets, regular exercise, and decision-making skills. While the curriculum focuses on health, it also involves basic skills in reading, math, and science.

When we first introduced the program in January, the RCOPC initiative was perceived as an add-on and the public school staff perceived the Rutgers students as classroom aides. We have worked diligently to emphasize the integrity and importance of our curriculum and have met with success. The Rutgers curriculum and the public school curriculum will be interrelated and the Rutgers program will become an integrated part of the after-school curriculum mandated by the city. As a result, there will be greater coordination between programs and less disruption for the public school children. Through this coordinated effort, we hope to reach additional public school students in the Fall, increasing enrollment to 150 children.

NCFC also coordinates the America Reads program on the Rutgers-Newark campus. In conjunction with the New Jersey Institute of Technology and the Newark Literacy Campaign, more than 70 undergraduate students at these two Universities have been trained as America Reads tutors. These tutors spend 12 hours a week, on average,

working one-on-one with public school children in grades K-3. The national aim of the America Reads program is to ensure that all third graders read independently, at grade level, by the end of the third grade. Our goal for this Fall semester is to include additional schools in the West Side Park community as placement sites for the America Reads program.