

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY
COMMUNITY OUTREACH
PARTNERSHIP CENTER**

**GRANT # COPC-NJ-98-029
SEMIANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT
JULY 1, 1999 - DECEMBER 31, 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:

**Robert W. Lake, Associate Director
Center for Urban Policy Research
Rutgers University
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Newark, NJ 07102
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center (RCOPC) completed its first year of activities in the West Side Park community in Newark, New Jersey by expanding projects and programs begun in the previous reporting period and introducing important new initiatives. During the current reporting period – July-December 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 original funding proposal. Following is a summary of major highlights for the second half of Year One.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

- Convened the bi-annual meeting of a vastly expanded Community Advisory Committee, now comprising 40 members representing the West Side Park Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC); community-based organizations; financial institutions; city, state, and federal governments; Rutgers University; and the private and foundation sectors.
- Conducted a three-day ArcView GIS training session on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus for 16 community partners (officers and staff) from six West Side Park community-based organizations.
- Assisted community partners to obtain ArcView GIS mapping software from the NJ Department of Environmental Protection.
- Distributed CD ROM's to all community partners containing the full data set and parcel map comprising the West Side Park Community Asset Map developed by RCOPC.
- Updated the RCOPC website at <http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/rcopc/>

COMMUNITY ORGANIZING

- Represented and reported on RCOPC at monthly NEC community meetings.
- Met bi-monthly with NEC subcommittee chairs to coordinate RCOPC's agenda with the NEC's Community Action Plan and neighborhood priorities.
- Assisted the instructor in the Rutgers Department of Urban Planning to plan a two-semester graduate community development seminar/studio sequence focused on West Side Park, for the Fall 1999 - Spring 2000 academic year.
- Arranged for two classes under the Citizenship and Service Education (CASE) Program on the Rutgers-Newark campus to focus on West Side Park during Spring semester 2000.
- Obtained external funding from the NJ Department of Community Affairs, First Union National Bank and Chase Manhattan Bank to administer two community internship programs on the Rutgers-Newark campus providing technical assistance to nonprofit housing and community development agencies.
- Coordinated two campus-wide community service events in West Side Park during the Fall 1999 semester.

NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

- Provided technical assistance to support the development and installation of the West Side Park Community Technology Network, comprising four networked community computer centers located at four community partner organizations.
- Continued technical assistance to the International Youth Organization (IYO) in planning and program design for a West Side Park Youth Council.
- In partnership with four community partner organizations, launched a youth leadership development program based on multimedia technology, titled *My Block: Students' Views of Their Neighborhoods*.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Continued and expanded planning, with Tri-City People's Corporation, of a merchant organizing initiative aimed to rejuvenate and energize the 16th Avenue Merchants Association and spur economic revitalization along this commercial corridor.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Met with the NEC Housing Subcommittee to discuss the housing component of the West Side Park Community Asset Map, to identify community partners' needs for housing data, and to prioritize RCOPC program activities pertaining to affordable housing.

HEALTHCARE

- Facilitated a series of meetings between two community partners (Tri-City People's Corporation and Corinthian HDC) and the Rutgers University College of Nursing to continue discussions and planning for a jointly sponsored community health center.

EDUCATION

- Began an initiative designed to improve planning and coordination between public schools and community partner organizations in West Side Park, focusing primarily on after-school programs, school-in-community programs, and Newark's community school program.
- Placed three Rutgers undergraduate students as *America Reads* tutors in West Side Park, providing one-on-one tutoring to children in the Camden Community Middle School.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Four RCOPC staff and a community partner representative attended the CIPC Annual Conference in Portland, OR on September 15-18, 1999.
- Presented RCOPC by invitation in a panel on "Higher Education Institutions and Community Development" at the 5th Annual New Jersey Governor's Conference on Housing and Community Development, held in Atlantic City on October 14, 1999.
- Participated by invitation in the City/University Mayors Forum sponsored by ULI-The Urban Land Institute in Columbus, OH on November 9-10, 1999.
- Participated by invitation in a Community Development Forum sponsored by Chase Manhattan Bank's Community Development Division in Newark on December 17, 1999.

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PART B. NARRATIVE DISCUSSION

Submitted to:

**Armand Carriere, Government Technical Representative
Office of Community Partnerships
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OVERVIEW

This report summarizes the activities of the Rutgers Community Outreach Partnership Center (RCOPC) during the period from July 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999. This is the second 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 original 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 during this reporting period has been to strengthen the close working relationship between the University and our community partners; to improve the capacity of our community partners to obtain and use community-level data for neighborhood planning and program evaluation; to develop and expand programs initiated in the previous reporting period; and to introduce several new initiatives in the functional areas of education, youth training, and economic development.

RCOPC has made substantial progress in this reporting period in all seven functional categories included in the Project Management Work Plan. Highlights for the period include expanding the Community Advisory Committee to improve access to technical and financial resources; training community partners in GIS mapping and analysis; continuing assistance to the West Side Park Community Technology Network; launch of *My Block*, a multimedia-based youth leadership development program; and technical assistance to improve coordination between public schools and community-based organizations in West Side Park.

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 (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 leadership is provided by Dr. Robert W. Lake, Associate Director of the Center for Urban Policy Research (CUPR) and Dr. George Paschalis, Director of the Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC). On projects within functional areas, we work closely with our community partners in West Side Park including the Tri-City People's Corporation, International Youth Organization, Salvation Army, Corinthian Housing Development Corporation, United Community Corporation, and Habitat for Humanity.

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 second half of Year One include continuation of information sharing meetings; further development of the West Side Park Community Asset Map; and expansion of community capacity to collect and use community-level data for program planning and evaluation.*

Outcomes:

RCOPC activities under Comprehensive Planning focused primarily on cementing our relationship with our community partners and technical assistance in developing and using the West Side Park Community Asset Map.

Community Advisory Committee. RCOPC convened the bi-annual meeting of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) on October 21, 1999 at the Allen AME Church in West Side Park. This was the first meeting of the newly expanded CAC, now comprising 40 members representing the West Side Park Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC); community-based organizations; financial institutions; city, state, and federal governments; Rutgers University; and the private and foundation sectors (see next page for a list of CAC members). The functions of the expanded CAC are to facilitate information sharing across multiple constituencies and to help identify and mobilize technical, financial, and other resources to support the revitalization of West Side Park.

The October meeting was designed to introduce RCOPC to the new CAC members. Professors Robert Lake and Stephen Finn (CUPR) and George Paschalis (NCFC) presented an overview of RCOPC activities to date and outlined future directions. A spirited discussion followed, which ultimately identified priority projects for the next six months in each of the eight NEC functional areas (Economic Development, Education, Environment, Health and Social Services, Housing, Public Safety, Recreation, and Youth and Young Adult Issues). These priority projects define RCOPC's Year Two (1999-2000) agenda which is currently being implemented. CAC members also had an opportunity to identify the functional areas within which they were most interested in participating.

COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
RUTGERS COMMUNITY OUTREACH PARTNERSHIP CENTER (RCOPC)

COMMUNITY AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

SanDonna Bryant, Executive Director, Newark Community Development Network
Lt. Brian Glasco, Salvation Army West Side Center (Co-chair, NEC Health and Social Service Committee)
Fran Gray, Tri-City Peoples Corporation (Co-chair, NEC Health and Social Service Committee)
Hal Hamilton, Executive Director, Newark Habitat for Humanity (Chair, NEC Public Safety Committee)
Gerry Harvey, CREST/International Youth Organization (Chair, NEC Economic Development Committee)
Gerard Joab, Newark Local Initiatives Support Corporation
Curtis Johnson, Executive Director, Corinthian Housing Development Corporation
Carla Lerman, Episcopal Community Development Corporation (Chair, NEC Housing Committee)
Ollyn Lettman, Director of Community Development, Tri-City Peoples Corporation
Sheila Pitts, West Side Park resident (Chair, NEC Recreation Committee)
Alle Ries, Coordinator, Newark Neighborhood Empowerment Council
Dadisi Sanyiki, West Side Park resident (Chair, NEC Education Committee)
Carolyn Wallace, Exec. Director, International Youth Organization (Chair, NEC Youth Issues Committee)

UNIVERSITY

Patricia Bender, Director, The Writing Center, Rutgers-Newark
Kathe Callahan, School of Management, Rutgers-Newark
Steven Diner, Dean of Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Rutgers-Newark
George Paschalis, Director, Newark Center for Families and Communities
Michael Shafer, Director, Citizenship and Service Education Program (CASE)

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Fleeta Barnes, Community Development Officer, First Union National Bank
Etta Denk, Vice President for Community Development, Chase Manhattan Bank
Joyce Harley, Senior Vice President, Fleet Bank
Lewis Hurd, Summit Bank
Peter Mosbacher, Community Reinvestment Officer, Citibank
Sidney Waymans, Manager, New Community Corporation Federal Credit Union
Stan Weeks, Vice President, City National Bank

GOVERNMENT

Leslie Anderson, Governor's Urban Coordinating Council
Cory Booker, Council Member, Newark City Council
Gloria Frederick, NJ Office of State Planning
Joel Freiser/Sharon Tepper, Newark Economic Development Corporation
Diane Johnson/Robert Kaplan, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Sheri Malnak, Division of Housing and Community Resources, NJ Department of Community Affairs
Tom Naughton, Director of Community Initiatives, NJ Department of Human Services
Daniel Salvante, Director, Essex County Department of Parks and Recreation

PRIVATE AND FOUNDATION SECTOR

Anthony Goldman/Katie Shelley, Goldman and Associates
India Larrier, Community Relations Coordinator, Horizon Blue Cross/Blue Shield of NJ
Elliott Lee, Senior Program Officer, Victoria Foundation
Brian O'Toole, Enterprise Foundation
Mary Puryear, Program Officer, Prudential Foundation
Michael Torrenz, New Jersey Community Loan Fund
Joseph Walsh/Adam Giuliano, Amelior Foundation
Shirley Ward, Manager of Strategic Urban Development, PSEG

Community Asset Mapping. RCOPC continued to develop the GIS-based Community Asset Map initiated in the previous reporting period. Our emphasis in the second half of 1999, however, was to expand the capacity of our community partners to use the data and information contained in the Community Asset Map and to participate directly in its creation and up-dating. The primary goal is to assist the NEC in implementing and sustaining GIS capability within its constituent community-based organizations.

Toward this end, RCOPC completed three primary tasks designed to increase community capacity to create and use the Community Asset Map of West Side Park. First, we assisted six community partners – all West Side Park community-based organizations – to apply for and obtain ArcView GIS mapping software from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP). ArcView is a powerful GIS mapping package that allows the user to create and manipulate maps showing the spatial distribution and geographic association of multiple data layers. Second, RCOPC provided all our community partners with CD ROM's containing the full data set and parcel map comprising the West Side Park Community Asset Map compiled during the first reporting period. Finally, RCOPC conducted a three-day ArcView GIS training session on August 11-13, 1999 for 16 community partners (officers and staff) from six West Side Park community-based organizations. The training was led by Mark Ontkush, computer specialist in the Rutgers-New Brunswick Department of Geography, and was held in the Geography Department's computer lab on the Rutgers-New Brunswick campus.

Taken together, these three tasks provided our community partners with the mapped data (on CD-ROM), the ArcView mapping software necessary to access, manipulate, and analyze the data, and the skills and capacity necessary to continue and develop these activities independently. In addition, RCOPC continues to fund a graduate student research associate from the Rutgers-New Brunswick Urban Planning Department (Nick Rattray) to provide on-going technical assistance and training to our community partners on an as-needed basis. This takes the form of intensive one-on-one work with individual staff in our community-partner organizations as well as assisting our partner organizations as a whole to integrate GIS capability and the Community Asset Map into their program planning and evaluation activities. RCOPC plans to provide another two- or three-day ArcView training session in mid-year 2000.

RCOPC Web site. We continue to maintain, expand, and updated the RCOPC web site at <http://www.policy.rutgers.edu/cupr/rcopc/> as an important means of information exchange regarding RCOPC activities. Newly added to the web site are the text of reports and directories produced by RCOPC and links to community organizations and others in West Side Park. RCOPC is currently assisting our community partners to develop their own web sites which will soon be linked to each other and the RCOPC site.

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 second half of Year One focused on capacity building assistance to the NEC, provision of Rutgers personnel and other resources in West Side Park, and student internship placement in community-based organizations.

Outcomes:

Capacity Building. Issues of cooperation and coordination among the principal non-profit anchoring institutions in West Side Park continue to pose a significant challenge to the revitalization efforts spearheaded by the Neighborhood Empowerment Council (NEC). Consequently, RCOPC's role in capacity building continues to focus on supporting the NEC and assisting NEC Coordinator Alle Ries's efforts to mobilize community-based non-profits to implement the *West Side Park Community Action Plan*. As in the previous reporting period, RCOPC continues to work with and through the 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*.

Toward this end, RCOPC faculty and staff attend the regularly scheduled (monthly or bimonthly) NEC meetings held within the West Side Park community. Regular meeting attendance maintains the visibility of RCOPC within the community, facilitates reporting on RCOPC activities, provides accessibility to RCOPC staff for our community partners, and helps to keep RCOPC staff current on community issues.

In addition, RCOPC Directors Lake and Finn met bimonthly with the NEC sub-committee chairs throughout the reporting period. These meetings were (and continue to be) crucial opportunities to review sub-committee programs and priorities, identify the sub-committees' research and outreach needs that can be filled by RCOPC, and maintain the flow of information between RCOPC and the NEC.

Mobilizing University Resources. One of the major capacity-building activities available to RCOPC is to mobilize University faculty and students to work directly with our community partners in West Side Park's revitalization. In this regard, RCOPC Director Lake met repeatedly during the Summer and early Fall with Kathe Newman, Instructor in the Rutgers-New Brunswick Department of Urban Planning and Policy

Development, to plan a two-semester graduate-level community development seminar/studio sequence focused on West Side Park for the Fall 1999 – Spring 2000 academic year. In the Community Development Seminar held in the Fall '99 semester, Professor Newman introduced students to principles of community development and to the particular challenges and issues confronting West Side Park. The Community Development Studio, held in the Spring 2000 semester, is a field practicum in which twelve Urban Planning graduate students are applying the principles introduced in the Fall seminar by preparing a redevelopment plan for the 31-acre county park located at the heart of the West Side Park community. The park redevelopment project combines a facility planning and design exercise within a process of community organizing, resident mobilization, and institution building that contributes to both the material quality of life and institutional capacities in West Side Park.

Student Internship Placement. Through the initiative of George Paschalis, Director of Rutgers' Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC), two CASE classes will focus on West Side Park during the Spring 2000 semester. Under CASE, the Citizenship and Service Education program, undergraduate students enrolled in CASE courses complete 40 hours of community service each semester, providing needed personnel to expand the capacity of community-based organizations to deliver services. During the Spring semester, Patricia Bender, Director of the Writing Center at Rutgers-Newark (and a member of RCOPC's Community Advisory Committee) will teach Advanced Exposition, and Professor John Boyer will teach Journalism and Communication Media. Students in both classes will work closely with West Side Park youth on improving writing skills and promoting a better understanding of communications technology.

In addition to the CASE program, NCFC has received external funding from the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs, First Union National Bank, and Chase Manhattan Bank to administer two community internship programs on the Rutgers-Newark campus, both focused on providing technical assistance to nonprofit housing and community development organizations.

The *Housing Scholars Program* places undergraduate and graduate students in paid summer internships with non-profit housing developers. The program facilitates the production of affordable housing in two ways: by introducing students to issues and policies surrounding the development of affordable housing in New Jersey, and by providing much needed technical support to non-profit organizations involved in housing development. As part of the program, each Housing Scholar participates in an orientation and training program designed to familiarize the student with affordable housing policies and programs, the demographics of low-income households, the housing development process, and the role of non-profit community development organizations. NCFC will place a minimum of four students in the program this summer.

The *Community Scholars Program* builds the capacity of non-profit organizations by providing comprehensive assistance to agencies actively involved in community and economic development. Eligible upper-level

undergraduate and graduate students majoring in management and public administration at Rutgers-Newark will apply their academic knowledge to challenges facing the non-profit community, through development and implementation of business and marketing plans, grant-writing, and organizational management. NCFC is actively recruiting students for the Spring 2000 semester.

Community Service. NCFC coordinated two campus-wide community service events in the West Side Park neighborhood during the Fall. In the *NCFC Holiday Gift Drive*, NCFC partnered with various Rutgers student organizations and the Salvation Army to collect toys for the holidays for children in the West Side Park community. Toys were distributed to more than 70 families. In *National Make a Difference Day*, more than 30 Rutgers students, staff, and alumni participated in a one-day “Blitzbuild” on Saturday, October 23rd to help Habitat for Humanity construct homes in the West Side Park neighborhood.

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: establishment of a Community Technology Network, youth leadership development and training, and redevelopment of the 31-acre county park (West Side Park) in the heart of the West Side Park community.*

***Proposed Activities:** Tasks scheduled for the July-December 1999 period focus on two of the three programs identified above: the Community Technology Network and youth leadership development. (The park redevelopment activities are currently underway and will be discussed in the next report.)*

Outcomes:

Community Technology Network. RCOPC/CUPR continues to assist 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 Tri-City People’s Corporation – are each establishing computer training centers providing classes and activities for school-age children, young adults, and senior citizens. The four centers operate independently but are also networked so that programs and operating hours are coordinated to provide maximum accessibility for neighborhood residents.

RCOPC continues to provide technical assistance to facilitate start-up of the individual centers, to facilitate information sharing, and to network the centers into a coordinated program. CUPR graduate research assistants Julie Silva and Nick Rattray devoted more than 150 hours to these tasks during the summer and fall semesters. Their time was evenly divided between working with the individual centers on hardware and software installation; on program development and coordination of the Network; and on site visits to operating community computer centers in the region to obtain information about program design and operations.

West Side Park Youth Council. RCOPC continued to work closely with the International Youth Organization (IYO) to develop a concept plan and research funding opportunities to establish the West Side Park Youth Council. CUPR graduate research assistant Mark Pendras continued his project, initiated in the first reporting period, to research Youth Council programs in other locations and compile a Youth Council Handbook outlining an organizational structure, by-laws, and program activities. CUPR also assisted 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, which is still pending.

Youth Leadership Development. The Newark Center for Families and Communities (NCFC), under the directorship of George Paschalis, partnered with four community-based organizations – International Youth Organization, Salvation Army, Corinthian HDC, and Tri-City People’s Corporation – to launch a West Side Park youth leadership development project titled *My Block: Students’ Views of their Neighborhoods*. The project combines the goals of promoting youth leadership and promoting computer literacy in the community.

My Block: Students’ Views of their Neighborhoods builds on a pilot program designed to explore ways of using multimedia technology in the community and classroom. In the pilot program, *A Day in Newark*, 45 students from Malcolm X Shabazz High School and Rutgers-Newark worked collaboratively to create a book that captured their views of different Newark communities. The goal of the pilot program was to bring students and faculty together in an extra-curricular activity that would create interest in composing in multimedia and strengthen academic strategies, including writing and revision. The students used digital cameras to record images of their neighborhoods and computers to design their final projects.

The idea behind *My Block* is to use multimedia technology as a means to encourage interaction among students of all ages – elementary, high school, and college – as well as parents, teachers, school administrators, and community leaders. The project has three main objectives: to promote a better understanding of communications technology, to promote literacy through writing, and to engage youth in identifying issues that affect their community.

Building on the pilot program, *My Block* consists of a number of student teams that are exploring their neighborhoods with digital cameras and video equipment, conducting interviews with community leaders, and recording their own impressions and

experiences. With the assistance of high school and college mentors under the direction of Rutgers faculty and staff, students in West Side Park are learning how to design books and web sites using various software applications including Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and QuarkXpress. Graphics computer stations located at NCFC and the Rutgers-Newark Writing Center complement the four computer centers in the West Side Park Community Technology Network.

A presentation of **My Block** projects will be the basis for the West Side Park Youth Leadership Conference to be held on the Rutgers-Newark campus on April 15, 2000. The conference will include presentations, discussion groups, role playing, and hands-on interactive activities focused on team building, conflict resolution, issue analysis, leadership, public speaking, and communication skills. To date, NCFC and the Writing Center have recruited more than twenty Rutgers college students to participate in the **My Block** project.

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, originally scheduled to begin in the second half of Year One, were initiated at the outset of RCOPC funding in recognition of the importance of small business development to the community's economic health. 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 and these activities continued in the current reporting period.*

Outcomes:

Merchant Organizing. Building on work initiated in the earlier period, RCOPC has continued to work with Olyyn Lettman, Community Development Director of the Tri-City People's Corporation, on a merchant organizing initiative aimed to rejuvenate and energize the 16th Avenue Merchants Association and spur economic development along this commercial corridor. One of three principal commercial corridors within West Side Park, 16th Avenue is an important neighborhood shopping and convenience goods location and fronts the county park that gives the West Side Park community its name. Commercial deterioration along this corridor creates a hardship for residents and threatens to undermine the major park redevelopment effort that is currently underway. CUPR and Tri-City are collaborating to organize 16th Avenue small business owners into

a Merchants Association to facilitate information sharing, offer technical assistance, and provide visibility and an institutional voice to this critical sector of the community.

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:** All Workplan tasks under Affordable Housing originally scheduled for the second half of Year One, including the neighborhood inventory of housing and property conditions, were completed during the previous reporting period.*

Outcomes:

Housing and Property Census. As noted above, the housing and property census of West Side Park, originally scheduled for the current reporting period, was completed during the first half of Year One at the request of our community partners. The census of structure and property conditions yielded data for every tax parcel within the 130 square blocks of West Side Park, including street address, land use type, building condition, sidewalk/street condition, vacant lot condition, occupancy status, and number of units per structure. These data were entered into the GIS-based West Side Park Community Asset Map and copies were distributed on CD-ROM to all community partners, as described above. During the current reporting period, RCOPC has continued to meet with the NEC Housing Subcommittee to discuss the housing component of the Community Asset Map, to identify community partners' needs for housing data, and to prioritize RCOPC program activities pertaining to affordable housing.

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 continue the planning and development process to establish a community health care center within West Side Park.*

Outcomes:

Neighborhood Health Clinic. Tri-City People’s Corporation operates the only health center in West Side Park, providing a limited schedule of services targeted to young women and children. At the same time, Corinthian Housing Development Corporation has received a \$250,000 grant from the New Jersey Department of Health and Human Services to establish a community health center, although these funds may be in jeopardy if progress is not demonstrated in a timely fashion. RCOPC has engaged in discussions with Corinthian and Tri-City 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. NCFC coordinated a series of meetings between the two organizations and the Rutgers College of Nursing, and Corinthian has obtained an extension for its grant from NJ DHHS. The discussions are complex and sensitive but progress is being made and the two community partner organizations express a commitment to work together for their mutual benefit and that of the West Side Park community. We anticipate that successful inauguration of the neighborhood health center under joint sponsorship is feasible within the term of the RCOPC program.

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 14th Avenue School. The 14th 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. Beginning in this reporting period, RCOPC inaugurated a major initiative designed to improve and facilitate planning and coordination between the public schools and community-based organizations in West Side Park, focusing primarily on after-school programs. CUPR graduate research assistant Melina Patterson devoted more than 100 hours of technical assistance to a variety of tasks under this initiative including: (1) collecting information about after-school programs in the schools and disseminating the information to community-based organizations; (2) informing the public schools

about activities and programs sponsored by community-based organizations; (3) facilitating collaboration between the schools and community organizations in obtaining funding for after-school programs; and (4) building confidence and trust through improved communication and expanded awareness of shared interests and perspectives. The activities completed during this reporting period will lay the ground work for expanded program initiatives through the remainder of the RCOPC program.

NCFC 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. NCFC was successful in placing three *America Reads* tutors in the West Side Park community, providing one-on-one tutoring to children in the Camden Community Middle School.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

- Four RCOPC staff (Robert Lake, Steve Finn, Kathe Callahan, and George Paschalis) and NEC Coordinator Alle Ries attended the COPC Annual Conference at Portland State University in Portland, OR on September 15-18, 1999.
- RCOPC was presented by invitation in a panel on “Partnering Community Groups and Institutions of Higher Learning” at the 5th Annual New Jersey Governor’s Conference on Housing and Community Development, held in Atlantic City on October 14, 1999. Panel participants included Robert Lake and Steve Finn (CUPR); George Paschalis (NCFC); Alle Ries (NEC); SanDonna Bryant (NCDN); and Ollyn Lettman (Tri-City).
- CUPR Associate Director Robert Lake participated by invitation in the City/University Mayors Forum on “City and University Cooperation for Urban Revitalization,” sponsored by ULI-The Urban Land Institute in Columbus, OH on November 9-10, 1999.
- Robert Lake and Steve Finn (CUPR) participated by invitation in a Community Development Forum sponsored by Chase Manhattan Bank’s Community Development Division in Newark on December 17, 1999.