

Partnership **Update**

 news and information from *The Partnership for New Communities*



Recruitment and Plans for Shops and Lofts at Forty-Seven Underway

Almost one in every four residential units will be dedicated to affordable housing in the Shops and Lofts at Forty-Seven

Cottage Grove Commercial Revitalization Initiative in April when the organization convinced development company Mahogany Ventures to build a sprawling 300,000 square foot combination retail, office and residential space in the heart of Cottage Grove.

Quad Communities Development Corporation (QCDC) revealed the latest step in the

The Shops and Lofts at Forty-Seven will not only add 32 units of affordable housing among 129 market rate condominiums and townhouses, but also provide retail space for up to 31 businesses, creating more than 300 new jobs for Cottage Grove residents.

“The amount of employment opportunities this project will provide to community members is tremendous,” said QCDC Executive Director Bernita Johnson-Gabriel.

QCDC, a South Side planning and development organization that just received its second grant from the Partnership (see p. 6), is collaborating with Mahogany Ventures, a joint endeavor consisting of urban development company TROY Enterprises and retail development company Skilken. Johnson-Gabriel said that the developers’ focus on retail will be key to recruiting businesses that will sustain economic and workforce development on Cottage Grove.

The project’s first recruitment event took place in May at the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) spring conference. Developers said they are looking for a variety of retailers, including convenience and gourmet grocery stores, banks and fitness centers. **(Cont’d on p. 2)**

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"The response was very positive," said Skilken official Frank Petruziello. "Not only because of the project itself, but also because the neighborhood is so underserved."

A 2005 QCDC study showed that 90 percent of dollars spent by Cottage Grove residents went to businesses outside of the community, while a *Chicago Sun-Times* article that same year ranked Cottage Grove at No. 18 in buying power among Chicago's 77 neighborhoods – one spot ahead of the Loop.

It was studies like the ones above that Johnson-Gabriel presented to Mahogany Ventures at the ICSC spring conference two years ago that convinced the development company to sign on to the project.

"We talked about our area and the lack of businesses on the south side. We talked about our geographic location – next to University of Chicago, U.S. Cellular Field and other Chicago landmarks, and we gave them enough information to whet their appetites and they were enthusiastic to undertake this endeavor," Johnson-Gabriel said.

With the construction of surrounding new residential units nearly complete, Petruziello says that Shops and Lofts will be an easy sell to retailers at their next recruitment event, the ICSC Next Generation Program and Reception in Chicago in July. "When you drive through the neighborhood and see the new condominiums and new developments, you begin to understand that there's a real opportunity here."

The groundbreaking for this 18-month project is set for April 2008.

Women's Business Development Center start-ups: Samone Spa Bar and Maui Wowi



Samone Rhodes stands behind the "bar," featuring five full-service manicure stations and a flat-screen television for entertainment.

Samone Rhodes came to the Women's Business Development Center (WBDC) with a successful corporate career behind her and a dream: to open a spa where stressed-out professional women could unwind, recharge, and socialize at the same time. A WBDC counselor reviewed her business plan and connected her with Banco Popular, who

Through a one-year grant from The Partnership, The Women's Business Development Center is helping women in and around Transformation communities to launch and sustain their own small businesses. This month, *Partnership Update* features two new West Loop hotspots that are creating new employment and leisure opportunities for Chicago residents.



Alla Diraduryan (receptionist), Samone Rhodes, and Patricia Trzcionkowska (nail technician) work to pamper Spa clients.

provided her first business loan. Rhodes followed up with WBDC, taking classes in retail management, final interviews, and training and said that networking at these sessions led to her first successful hire.

Samone Spa Bar opened in the West Loop in September 2006. Rhodes distinguishes herself as an employer supporting her employees' businesses outside of the spa. "I understand what it is to be an independent contractor, and I encourage home-based sales businesses...in-home, mobile spa parties are getting really popular," she said. Rhodes got started in the spa business as an independent contractor herself, selling the Warm Spirit product line that she now uses at the spa and markets through her website.

"Staffing is a challenge. It's hard to find good people." Samone Spa Bar is always looking for assistant technicians and Rhodes was receptive to the idea of participating in a transitional jobs training program in the future.

Rhodes will look to WBDC for help in the future, as she works for certification as a Minority Business Enterprise. In the meantime, when she receives inquiries from women inspired by the Spa Bar and eager to start their own businesses, Rhodes says, "I send them to the Women's Business Development Center!"

Samone Spa Bar is located in the West Loop at 915 W. Washington. www.samonespabar.com



Taylor displays her system for getting to know Maui Wowi's regulars – a rolodex filled with personalized "Loyalty Cards" good for one free smoothie with every ten purchased.

A self-described "boomer" looking for a mid-life career change, Taylor came to WBDC's "Jump Start" series with the goal of starting up an online shoe store specializing in hard-to-find sizes. "[WBDC] will teach you how to research an idea, and determine whether it's viable or not. As a result of 'Jump Start', it's safe to say that I altered my path completely!"

"Getting to know my customers is one of the biggest benefits of this particular business, in this particular location." And it's true – though the store has only been open since December 2006, Taylor greets five of the seven customers that walk in the door during our interview by name. "To be able to get to know each face and name of my customers, to know their favorite drinks, see them coming and start making them before they've asked – to me, that's customer service."

Maui Wowi is located at 850 W. Jackson Blvd., 312.738.3610.

If you're craving sunshine, warm breezes, and a pina colada, a trip to Hawaii at this time of year can be pricey. Instead, head to Maui Wowi for a fresh fruit smoothie complete with cocktail umbrella that will cost you just under \$4. Sit and relax to the sight of rolling waves on the flat-screen television and the peaceful sounds of Hawaiian music that filter through the first Chicago outpost of this successful franchise.

Owner Priscilla Taylor didn't set out to open a little slice of paradise in the West Loop.



DeMarvin Blandin, a West Side resident and Maui Wowi employee since the opening in December 2006, blends up a delicious fresh fruit smoothie.

Women's Business Development Center co-hosts project NEXT event with Chicago Urban League



In a two-day conference that included insights from accomplished entrepreneurs, franchisors and franchisees, the Chicago Urban League opened the Entrepreneurship Center, the latest step in project NEXT, an initiative focused to catalyze social change through economic empowerment. The Women's Business Development Center, which received a grant from the Partnership in March 2006, co-sponsored the series of workshops and panel discussions that took place June 28-29.

Thursday workshops focused on entrepreneurship, while Friday (**cont'd on pg 7**).

Franchisee Priscilla Taylor (center), who participated in a panel discussion on day two of the event, worked with Retail/Franchise and Child Care Initiatives Director Elizabeth Gardner (right) and WBDC counselor Deborah Minor Harvey (left) to open the first Maui Wowi smoothie franchise in the West Loop.

"Investment with Compassion" is Key to Entrepreneurial Involvement in Economic Redevelopment

Partnership Advisory Committee member and CEO of Capri Capital Partners, LLC., Quintin E. Primo III urged entrepreneurs to look further than profit margins and into the needs of marginalized residents when investing in redeveloping communities at Crain's Chicago Annual Entrepreneurs Luncheon on June 5.

"As the world changes, social philanthropy will be of critical impact as the gap between rich and poor widens. In all projects in urban markets, [Capri Capital endeavors] to reach out to the community and do something unique," he said.

Primo pointed to the Metropolis project as a beacon of economic development on 39th and State Streets that addresses the needs of the mixed-income neighborhoods Park Boulevard and Legends South, while providing a sizable profit to investors. The \$500 million project will include an arts and technology center as well as retail space and residential condominium units, one-fifth of which will be dedicated to affordable housing.

Primo also talked about the Preservation Compact, a leadership collaborative including the Urban Land Institute and Partnership Advisory Committee co-chair organization The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation that will establish a \$100 million fund devoted to the rescue of affordable housing units through non-profit organizations. The fund is projected to save or renovate about 75,000 units of affordable housing.

"Everyone should have the ability to live close to where they work – rich or poor," Primo said. "Affordable housing is part of an overall compact that makes this city livable. These are service professionals, policemen and artists that need to live close to where they work and enjoy the great city that Chicago is."

For more information on the Preservation Compact, visit the Urban Land Institute's Website at <http://chicago.uli.org/Content/NavigationMenu12/Initiatives/ThePreservationCompact/default.htm>.

Opportunity Chicago Participant Finds Security in Home and Work

Since March, William Moss has been working as a security guard at the downtown Marriott Hotel on Michigan Avenue where he works five nights a week, punching in at 11:30 p.m. and clocking out by 8 o'clock each morning.

"He's a good worker," said Chief of Security and supervisor George McDade. "We really appreciate and support the program that connected us to him."

Moss's placement at the Marriott is a result of the Career Advancement Network transitional jobs program. CAN is a job development firm that works in conjunction with the Partnership's collaborative workforce development initiative, Opportunity Chicago.

Participants engage in a three-week course that offers on-the-job training at the hotel, with the possibility of being hired at completion. Moss, who had been looking to break into hotel maintenance and management, knew the program would be an opportunity to help him get a start in the profession.

"In the long run I could see this was a good career move," he said. "The program had training sessions to help me on the job and long-term employment afterward is almost guaranteed. There was just too much room for advancement to pass it up."

The hours his job requires are a perfect fit for the single father, who has joint custody of his eleven-year-old daughter. During the school year, Moss leaves work with enough time see his daughter off to school and get enough sleep to meet her at home in the afternoon.

Last October, Moss relocated into the mixed-income development West End – a familiar location for the lifelong Chicagoan who lived in the neighborhood when it was the Rockwell Gardens housing projects.

"I was really excited to move back in," Moss said. "I got the keys on my birthday and moved in the following day. I couldn't have asked for a better present." When reflecting on his thirtieth year, the CHA resident says that his life has changed significantly because of the initiatives and developments launched with the Plan for Transformation.

"I love my job. I love my home," Moss said. "To know where I came from and see where I am now is proof that I am truly blessed."

For more information on the Career Advancement Network's transitional jobs program, visit their website at www.careeradvancementnetwork.org.



Marriott hire Will Moss (bottom left) enjoys a laugh with his co-worker. The West End resident says the best part of the Career Advancement Network's program is that "the people helping you have a positive attitude and help you set goals that are reachable."

Small Businesses Owners Eager to Mentor Workers following Transitional Jobs Workshop



Taneesha Harris, assistant director at Little Giants Childcare Center, has been engaged in Heartland's Transitional Jobs program since April 2007.

When Taneesha Harris, assistant director of Little Giants Child Care Center, attended The Partnership's March 2007 Connecting Opportunities event, "Transitional Jobs and the Small Business Employer," she was pleasantly surprised by what she learned.

"I never knew there were agencies and programs like this that allow small businesses to mentor workers, while paying the mentees to participate," Harris said.

It was this sentiment among small business employers that led The Partnership to highlight this subject at the first installation of Connecting Opportunities, a series of networking breakfasts designed to generate links between Partnership grantees and projects. Each meeting varies in topic – from business development to honing in on a particular opportunity in a specific industry or neighborhood.

Following the workshop, hosting organization Heartland Human Care Services received requests to engage in the transitional jobs program from nearly half of the 40 employers who attended. After an extensive application process that ensured that the sites could provide substantial valuable work experience to participants, five small business owners have engaged in various transitional job and mentoring programs,

including Little Giants, an East Garfield Park after school and summer program for children aged two to 18.

"It's a win-win situation for both parties involved. We can always use an extra hand when dealing with the children, and the workers get meaningful professional advice and experience," said Harris. "Two participants have already come through here and we have a request pending for two more."

Due to physical constraints, Harris was unable to offer full-time employment to the first two participants, but she hopes to find a worker eligible to work permanently with the childcare center through Heartland.

Denise Pryor-Bryant, Director of Workforce Development at Heartland, said the initiative of employers following the workshop has been overwhelming.

"Even those who are not engaged have been helpful in spreading information to other small businesses," Pryor-Bryant said in reference to the Loop-based Cosmopolitan Chamber of Commerce, which is offering computer training to job seekers.

August's Connecting Opportunities event will focus on connecting retailers to openings in mixed-income neighborhoods. For more information on Heartland's transitional jobs program, visit



"Mentoring is the best part of the program. There's nothing like taking someone under your wing and offering your experiences, while understanding theirs," Harris said.

<http://www.heartlandalliance.org>.

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featured a round of panel discussions and exhibitions that showcased different franchising opportunities. Priscilla Taylor, who opened her own Maui Wowi store with the help of WBDC (see p. 2-3), shared her insights with attendees in a question-and-answer session called "Experiences in Franchising: The Franchisee's Perspective."

"There are a wealth of organizations that will help you get off the ground," she said citing WBDC as an example. "You just need to think long and hard and do your homework."

For more information on franchise assistance, contact the Women's Business Development Center, www.wbdc.org. Visit the Chicago Urban League's Website at www.thechicagourbanleague.org to learn more about the Entrepreneurship Center and project NEXT.

The Lloyd A. Fry Foundation Supports Opportunity Chicago

The Partnership is pleased to announce a \$150,000 grant from the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation for Opportunity Chicago, a three-year effort to prepare CHA residents for work. The initiative also seeks to improve the workforce system's ability to meet the needs of low-skilled job seekers, a key factor in the Fry Foundation's decision-making process.

"The whole promise of Opportunity Chicago is an overall systems change that doesn't leave lower skilled residents behind. There are a significant number of low-skilled CHA residents who remain chronically unemployed, so there needs to be incentive to develop more comprehensive programming for those who are not usually included in the typical workforce structure. It's the potential response to that group we see the most promise in," said Sharon Bush, Program Officer at the Fry Foundation.

The grant will be used to evaluate and document Opportunity Chicago's effectiveness and execute the initiative's two-phase employer engagement strategy. By the end of 2008, the project hopes to engage 40 new employers, 80 percent of which will be partners in the high-growth fields of healthcare, manufacturing, basic office and transportation, warehousing and logistics industries.

"Work is the foundation for family self-sufficiency – a key tenet of the Plan for Transformation. The Fry Foundation's grant will contribute significantly to helping residents attach to the workforce and advance in their careers. So, we're grateful for the foundation's generous support," said Partnership Executive Director Maria Hibbs.

Partnership Continues Support of Quad Communities Transformation Project

By October 2007, the corridor between 39th and 51st Streets on Cottage Grove Avenue will be artistically prepared to welcome new retail and residential developments, thanks to a \$210,000 Partnership grant to Phase II of the Quad Communities Development Corporation's (QCDC) Cottage Grove Revitalization Initiative.

Funds will go to neighborhood beautification projects, including corridor clean up, landscaping and art installations. This includes the construction of five 8-by-4-foot mobile murals, designed by students in the Little Black Pearl Workshop – an after school program that allows area high school students to create and conceptualize public artwork to help brand and market the transformation of Cottage Grove. The Chicago Christian Industrial League will also provide landscaping services.

"We're very appreciative that the Partnership funded us for Phase II. It's encouraging to know they were so pleased with Phase I," said QCDC Executive Director Bernita Johnson-Gabriel. "Look out because there's surely more to come!"

The Partnership's 2005 grant of \$110,000 to QCDC supported the creation of several conceptualized banners designed by students in the Little Black Pearl program, the hiring of 34 CleanSlate interns consisting of at-risk workers looking to transition into permanent jobs to tidy up the corridor and the marketing of the corridor to developers and retailers (see page 1).

Cottage Grove Residents Enjoy Groovin' on the Grove Festival

Gray clouds and sporadic bursts of rainfall didn't deter over 300 Cottage Grove residents from bouncing on inflatables, winning bingo prizes and having a good time at the first Groovin' on the Grove festival hosted by the Quad Communities Development Corporation. Thirty vendors set up booths at the June 23 event to celebrate the progress made in the Cottage Grove Revitalization Initiative, a project that the Partnership has supported with \$320,000 in economic development grants since 2005 (see p. 6).

"This event took six to eight months of planning, which consisted of working with the Chicago Police Department, University of Chicago Police, business owners along the corridor and a variety of sponsors," said event coordinator and NCP organizer Yvette Kelly. "There was a lot of collaboration that went into this event, so the rain didn't move us much."

The nine-hour program, which got a late start after noon, featured entertainment for audiences of all ages, including a karate exhibition by Discovery Martial Arts, a fashion show by Sensual Steps Shoe Salon and an inspirational mini-concert from Bright Star Choir.

"We wanted to make the festival accessible to everyone from small children to senior citizens," Kelly said. Organizers hope the strong turnout and positive response from attendees continues, as the festival becomes an annual event.

"Several residents said nothing of this magnitude has happened to their community before, and they're definitely looking forward to next year," Kelly said.

To read more about the festival and QCDC's other projects, visit www.qcdc.org.

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Partnership Update

July 2007

The Partnership for New Communities is a funders collaborative bringing together business, civic and philanthropic leaders to invest in strategic economic development, community-building and employment-related initiatives to promote large-scale improvements to the neighborhoods most affected by public-housing transformation in Chicago.

Partnership Update is published regularly by The Partnership for New Communities to provide information on a variety of topics, including status reports on the CHA's Plan for Transformation, updates on The Partnership's activities and projects and highlights of relevant research findings.

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