# Colleges & Communities

## Partners in Urban Revitalization

*A Report on the Community Outreach Partnership Centers Program*

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
Office of Policy Development and Research

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YOUR COMMUNITY PARTNER

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March 1998

Office of University Partnerships

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This annual report was prepared by the University Partnerships Clearinghouse, the information service sponsored by HUD's Office of University Partnerships (OUP). The annual report highlights the contributions of universities and colleges to local community revitalization efforts. You may contact the University Partnerships Clearinghouse at P.O. Box 6091, Rockville, MD 20849, (800) 245–2691, (fax) (301) 519–5767.

# Table of Contents


Foreword ..... v

Introduction ..... 1

**Part I** - The Federal Role: Empowering Universities and Communities ..... 5

**Part II** - COPC: What It Is, How It Works ..... 9

Map of COPC Grantees ..... 13

**Part III** - Community Outreach Partnership Center Activities: A Broad Range ..... 15

***COPC Means ... a Vision and a Plan*** ..... 15

High School Students Create Computerized Neighborhood Maps ..... 16

***COPC Means ... Education*** ..... 19

COPC Builds on Penn's Tradition of Assisting Community Schools ..... 20

***COPC Means ... Jobs*** ..... 21

Marshall University Provides Community an On-ramp to the Information Superhighway ..... 23

***COPC Means ... Business*** ..... 25

Stillman College Helps Tuscaloosa Entrepreneurs ..... 26

Portland State Helps Businesses Thrive in the Minority Albina Community ..... 29

***COPC Means ... Better Housing Opportunities*** ..... 30

Tulsa College Helps Public Housing Residents Pursue Wide-Ranging Improvements ..... 31

Pittsburgh Senior Citizens and Local COPC Create Wellness Program ..... 33

***COPC Means ... Health, Safety, and the Environment*** ..... 36

Phoenix Block Watch Spurs Community Change ..... 38

***COPC Means ... Building Community Capacity and Leadership*** ..... 40

Partnership Builds Community Capacity in East St. Louis ..... 42

Fostering Resident Empowerment in the Colonias—Texas A&M's COPC ..... 44

**COPC Means ... Institutional Change** ..... 46

Bay Area Universities Team Up To Empower Communities ..... 48

# Foreword

Colleges and universities are among the greatest assets in any community, and yet too often they are isolated from their community's needs and aspirations. HUD's Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program is a new tool for repairing this old rift. COPC's modest grants provide a potent catalyst for community engagement, encouraging institutions of higher education to mobilize their unparalleled resources in initiatives that serve both town and gown.

COPC enriches the university's scholarship and the personal growth of its students by carrying education beyond the classroom and into the community. COPC encourages faculty and students alike to do more than simply *observe* a neighborhood's problems, challenging them instead to use their knowledge and creativity to *participate* directly in finding and implementing solutions.

Under the aegis of this program, colleges and universities are helping their community partners create job opportunities, nurture community-based entrepreneurs, expand services ranging from child care to health care, enhance public safety, combat homelessness and housing discrimination, improve education and training opportunities, and meet a host of other community needs.

Grassroots organizations and residents are not passive recipients of this assistance. Program rules ensure that targeted communities are not merely laboratories for urban research, but partners in identifying the priority issues that grantee activities will address. COPC empowers communities in an even more lasting way as well, by focusing university efforts on types of assistance that build community capacity. By transferring to their local partners the knowledge, the skills, and the information that they need to shape their own destinies, COPC grantees help bring about fundamental changes that will continue to strengthen communities and families long after the COPC grant ends.

COPC embodies many of the principles of empowerment that HUD has worked with Congress to instill in a new generation of community development programs and policies. Programs such as COPC—highly leveraged initiatives that involve stakeholders from throughout the community in comprehensive, sustainable revitalization efforts—can be invaluable tools in fostering socially and economically healthy neighborhoods for the 21st century.

—Andrew Cuomo
Secretary of Housing and
Urban Development

# Introduction

***"The era of big government may be over, but the era of big challenges for our country is not, and so we need an era of big citizenship."***

***—President William J. Clinton***
***Philadelphia, Pennsylvania***
***April 28, 1997***

A new movement is taking shape on America's college campuses. This movement is not based in protest, but in promise. It does not pit students or faculty against administrators or the university community against the larger community that surrounds it—instead, its goal is to unite them in very concrete and meaningful ways. But like other movements that have taken root in our colleges and universities, the burgeoning trend toward **university-community partnerships** is a response to one of the most fundamental challenges facing our society.

It is a tragic irony that today, in the midst of a strong and prolonged economic recovery, one of the most urgent problems facing the United States is the alarming concentration of poverty. As jobs and people—particularly the high-paying and the highly paid—continue to move to the suburbs, poor families are increasingly concentrated in places where the weight of intense and chronic poverty has left them economically, socially, racially, and even spatially isolated from the opportunities that are the promise of America. In communities large and small, urban and rural, there are pockets of despair where most people are poor, where educational and job prospects are few, where the vital fabric of mediating social institutions and relationships has become badly frayed. And many other neighborhoods are at risk of moving down the same path.

The challenges these places face are severe, complex, and often deeply rooted—they are not insurmountable. But reclaiming distressed neighborhoods and unleashing their tremendous human and economic potential will require the combined efforts of every part of our society. Neighborhood groups and individual residents, businesses, civic and religious institutions, government at every level—all have important roles to play in building healthier communities. However, another vital participant is too often overlooked. *Few institutions have more to contribute to the revitalization of urban communities than America's colleges and universities—and few have a greater stake in the effort and its success.* As educational

*... the destinies of cities and their universities are interwoven in very direct, tangible ways.*

institutions, they are creators, repositories, and disseminators of knowledge and understanding that can help address urban challenges. As leading institutions within their metropolitan communities, they are powerful economic engines, applied technology centers, major employers, investors, developers, and reservoirs of energetic faculty and students.

Each segment of the higher education community brings unique strengths to its grassroots partnerships. Universities, for example, offer highly developed skills and specialized knowledge in many different fields, while colleges are accustomed to working in an interdisciplinary fashion and community colleges are already focused on meeting their community's educational and vocational needs.

For institutions of higher education, applying these varied resources to the problems confronting urban America can be a fulfillment of their fundamental mission of teaching, research, and service and an investment in their very survival. Involvement in the community helps colleges attract and develop responsible and energetic students, providing them with learning experiences that generate intellectual excitement, test and enrich what they learn in the classroom, and build pragmatic competence. Participation in partnerships with community residents can reshape questions addressed in research, produce new sources of information, and lead to new insights, understandings, and lessons learned. And because many urban universities are themselves neighbors to distressed neighborhoods, the destinies of cities and their universities are interwoven in very direct, tangible ways. Ira Harkavy, vice dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences and director of the Penn Program for Public Service, succinctly describes the situation facing urban colleges and universities:

> There is no escape from the issues of poverty, crime, and physical deterioration that are at the gates of urban higher education institutions. The choice is to hold on to the mythic image of the university on the hill and suffer for it (as faculty, students, and staff become increasingly difficult to attract and retain, and as communities of scholars give way to collections of scholarly commuters), or to become engaged in an effective and proactive fashion.[1]

Increasingly, colleges and universities are choosing the path of engagement. Although the temptation to withdraw, like academic monasteries, from the difficult "secular" life of the city is ever present, universities are seeing a groundswell of action by administrators, faculty, students, and staff who are using their skills and resources to help low- and moderate-income communities identify their needs, plan for their futures, improve their housing and their health, foster new economic and educational opportunities, build the capacity of their grassroots organizations, attract new allies and resources to their initiatives, develop a more profound understanding of community building, and contribute to the vitality of cities in untold other ways.

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[1] Ira Harkavy, "Back to the Future: From Service-Learning to Strategic Academically-Based Community Service," *Metropolitan Universities*, Vol. 7, No. 1, Summer 1996.

Despite these many individual efforts, colleges and universities are not yet regarded as core partners in redevelopment efforts. A New Jersey county official spoke for many other development professionals when he acknowledged that until recently he did not know that university partnerships existed and had never envisioned a university as a tool in community development. Why has the potential value of university-community partnerships been so poorly understood? Perhaps it is their frequently ad hoc character or their reliance on the energy and commitment of individual leaders. One of the basic axioms of community development is that even the best intentioned and most prodigious efforts must be coordinated, targeted, and sustainable if they are to make a lasting difference for families and neighborhoods with entrenched problems.

*... efforts must be coordinated, targeted, and sustainable if they are to make a lasting difference for families and neighborhoods with entrenched problems.*

The Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its Office of University Partnerships (OUP), is designed to help two- and four-year colleges and universities take the next step in developing and sustaining effective partnerships with local governments and others. Under the leadership of Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Andrew Cuomo, COPC has become an important catalyst in the nascent movement toward university-community collaboration, providing seed money that is enabling dozens of institutions to mobilize their unparalleled array of intellectual, physical, financial, and human capital in effective, often multidisciplinary, community initiatives as well as to foster an abiding awareness of local partnerships throughout the university community.

This report describes COPC and the many activities it has made possible in its first four funding rounds. It explores the benefits of university-community partnerships for all who participate in them: the urban communities first of all, the community leadership that grows in expertise from the partnership experience, the higher education institutions themselves, and their students and faculty. The report then describes those benefits in action through a results-oriented review of dozens of individual COPC activities. Finally, it considers the COPC program as a catalyst that is joining colleges and universities with their communities in a shared search for answers to community problems as we move toward the 21st century.

# Part I

## The Federal Role: Empowering Universities and Communities

The growth of university-community collaboration in recent years has been fueled by the commitment and creativity of its local partners. Institutions of higher education aware of the full implications of their mission and the deteriorating conditions at their gates, students determined to test their ideas and to make a difference, communities forced to look inward to their own stakeholders by the gradual evaporation of public resources—all have found a common cause in efforts to revitalize urban neighborhoods.

The federal government, acting principally through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—which has the mission of fostering stronger communities—also assumes the important supporting role of encouraging community activism on the part of colleges and universities. Under President Clinton and Secretary Cuomo, HUD's approach to accomplishing this mission has continued its remarkable transformation. Breaking decisively with the failed policies of the past, HUD's agenda is based on an understanding that the federal government cannot try to impose solutions, however well intentioned, on states and localities through restrictive and narrowly focused programs, through highly prescriptive regulations, or through an emphasis on technical processes over real performance. In Secretary Cuomo's words, the "real solutions will be found in the local communities—through local partnerships and local initiatives."

However, this supporting role is no excuse for inaction or a prescription for passivity. HUD is using its unique scope and resources to do what Washington is particularly equipped to do: empower communities to help themselves by encouraging thoughtful plans and innovative strategies, contribute resources and know-how, build partnerships, and eliminate unnecessary bureaucratic barriers to effective action.

Recognizing the crucial role that America's colleges and universities can play in rebuilding communities large and small, HUD established the Office of University Partnerships (OUP) in 1994 to encourage and expand the efforts of colleges and universities that are striving to make a difference in their communities. Whether the institution has a venerable history of reaching out to lower income neighborhoods or is just beginning to explore the potential of such partnerships, OUP can help increase the scope, effectiveness,

*"Real solutions will be found in the local communities—through local partnerships and local initiatives."*

*—Andrew Cuomo*
*Secretary of Housing and Urban Development*

and sustainability of its community-building efforts. And OUP does this in ways that reflect the best of today's HUD:

**Fostering dialog** through which universities and their community partners can learn from one another about promising partnership activities and opportunities. OUP has sponsored many conferences on community partnerships. It has exhibited at several national meetings of professional associations in housing and public administration, as well as at the American Association of Community Colleges, the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges, the American Association of Higher Education, organizations of university urban extension programs, and other conferences of higher education groups.

**Disseminating models of joint university-community action,** through its *COPC Central* newsletter and through the two volumes of *University-Community Partnerships: Current Practices*, its compendium of more than 400 partnership initiatives across the country, and through other publications and forums.

**Brokering access to new partnership opportunities** by linking universities more closely to HUD's other programs and activities as well as by connecting them to potential national and local partners and resources. For example, OUP's *An Introduction to HUD for Institutions of Higher Education* describes HUD programs that offer resources to university-community partnerships. OUP's *Foundation Resource Guide* identifies charitable organizations that aid local community development activities.

**Training the urban leaders of today and tomorrow** through its various grant programs. The Community Development Work Study Program and the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Work Study Program provide tuition and other assistance to economically disadvantaged full-time graduate students and to students obtaining associate degrees at Hispanic-serving community colleges, respectively, who are pursuing a degree in community-building disciplines such as planning and public administration. The Community Renaissance Fellows Program offers middle-level professionals with real estate-related experience the opportunity to enhance their community-building skills through additional training and intensive experience with public housing authorities (PHAs) or with entities that work with PHAs to leverage public and private funds to revitalize distressed public housing communities.

**Channeling the vast research capacity of our nation's universities** to issues that directly address today's major urban problems, including affordable housing, sustainable community development, urban job creation, city and regional planning, and human service delivery. Each year OUP's Doctoral Dissertation Grant Program provides one-time grants of $15,000 to as many as 15 doctoral candidates to write dissertations that address policy-relevant issues in housing and urban development. In addition, local Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) are sponsoring important research on community issues and dynamics that can be applied at the local, regional, and national levels.

**Laying the foundation for lasting change,** both within the university and in the community it serves. Instead of directly providing facilities or services,

OUP programs increase the capacity, build the assets (such as a new cadre of community development professionals), and form the relationships (between colleges and community groups) that continue to drive revitalization efforts long after the last program dollar has been spent. This emphasis on sustainability is a primary thrust of OUP's programs and the keynote of its outreach activities.

Above all, though, **HUD's OUP is a catalyst,** adding key financial, human, and technical resources to the assets already available in a community. OUP's job is to mobilize institutions and individuals, helping universities and individuals turn ideas into action—while helping communities turn dreams into reality. With only modest public resources, OUP plays a vital role in nurturing and sustaining the movement toward university-community partnerships:

- Reaching out to raise awareness within the higher education community about how community partnerships work and what they can accomplish.
- Lending support and encouragement to budding partnerships.
- Providing the funding and contacts that help forge and sustain partnerships.
- Sharing new ideas and insights gleaned from the experience of other university-community alliances that can make partnerships more effective.
- Offering the consistent national leadership needed to institutionalize community partnerships as an integral part of America's approach to higher education.

***The cornerstone of HUD's efforts to achieve these goals is the* Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) *program.***

***The Office of University Partnerships' job is to mobilize institutions and individuals, helping universities and individuals turn ideas into action—while helping communities turn dreams into reality.***

# Part II

## COPC: What It Is, How It Works

Congress created the Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) program in 1992 as a five-year demonstration to "determine the feasibility of facilitating partnerships between institutions of higher education and communities to solve urban problems through research, outreach, and exchange of information." Facilitation is the keynote of COPC. The program is designed to advance university-community partnerships through a wide range of resources, incentives, and guidelines. It involves all types of two- and four-year institutions of higher education, including universities, colleges, community colleges, and technical institutes—each has important attributes and resources to contribute to community revitalization. COPC offers these institutions a veritable toolkit for collaboration:

- **Seed money to start turning new ideas and good intentions into real action in the targeted communities.**

As with any local government or nonprofit organization, effective engagement in neighborhood initiatives is not without costs for colleges and universities. COPC helps them meet the cost of starting or expanding community-based partnerships through two- or three-year grants of up to $400,000. These funds enable grantee institutions to play an active and visible role in community revitalization—applying research to real urban problems, coordinating outreach efforts with neighborhood groups and residents, acting as a local information exchange, mobilizing support for improvement activities, developing public service projects and instructional programs, and collaborating with other institutions engaged in COPC activities.

But this federal grant is only intended to be a downpayment on partnership activities: The key to sustained success lies in the ability of universities and their local partners to attract funding from other sources, particularly from those within the community—and within the university itself. So Congress insists that grantees raise matching funds equivalent to at least 50 percent of the cost of proposed research activities and 25 percent of the cost of proposed outreach activities. COPC is laying a solid foundation for sustained action—the $30 million in COPC grants made between 1994 and 1997 has leveraged at least $35 million in nonfederal match.

The COPC match and the other university funds that flow into community partnerships are an investment in—and a pledge to—the community. As Bill Feyerherm of Portland State University's COPC declares, "This is not a moneymaker for the University." Instead, the COPC grant and the valuable

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*COPC empowers participating institutions ...*

resources it mobilizes from the university and elsewhere build confidence among partners in community-building efforts, as well as an awareness of shared commitment and shared benefits. "Most communities are savvy enough to be leery of those who come only while money is available," Feyerherm points out. "You have to be willing to come even when the money isn't available and stay there after the money runs out."

❖ **The flexibility to set priorities and tailor community-building strategies to local needs and resources.**

HUD understands that solutions to the problems of distressed neighborhoods are as varied as the neighborhoods themselves and the communities that surround them. There are no one-size-fits-all strategies that can be imposed nationally. Redevelopment initiatives must be directed and led by stakeholders in the community who know it best.

COPC is intended to give grantees' partners maximum flexibility in using program funds to design and implement strategies to address communities' needs. Instead of limiting grantees to a narrowly defined set of prescribed activities, COPC empowers participating institutions by placing relatively few restrictions on the types of outreach, technical assistance, information exchange, and applied research activities they may pursue with grant funds. When establishing COPC, Congress defined the potential field of action to include "problems associated with housing, economic development, neighborhood revitalization, infrastructure, health care, job training, education, crime prevention, planning, community organizing, *and other areas deemed appropriate by the Secretary* [emphasis added]."

Naturally, there are some limitations placed on eligible activities to safeguard the special public purposes of the COPC program. For example, grants may not be used to fund building construction, rehabilitation, or other physical development activities—HUD has a variety of programs available to fund such bricks-and-mortar work. Also to ensure that partnerships focus on work that can have a near-term impact on urgent community problems, HUD places some limits on the nature and extent of research that can be undertaken with COPC funds.

❖ **The (infra)structure to address community problems holistically through coordinated action.**

It has long been recognized that the poverty, deterioration, and despair that afflict distressed urban communities are complex problems that demand coordinated, comprehensive responses. Therefore, COPC—like other community development programs introduced by HUD in recent years—encourages universities and their partners to view the host community in a holistic way that acknowledges the complex interweaving of its assets and problems, its history and aspirations.

In the past, the role of colleges and universities in helping turn troubled neighborhoods around has been characterized by ad hoc, piecemeal efforts spearheaded by individual faculty members or student groups with little institutional support. COPC is designed to provide a framework into which these once isolated initiatives may coalesce, offering targeted communities an integrated array of skills and resources drawn from various social science and technical disciplines that are relevant to their particular needs. HUD

awards COPC grants to institutions of higher education proposing multifaceted activities that address at least three community problems simultaneously. To ensure that the impact of these activities are not dissipated, HUD requires each grantee to identify a target area—as small as a single neighborhood or as large as a metropolitan area—in which it will concentrate its efforts. Additionally, grantees must define objectively measurable impacts of these efforts in their application and set milestones for meeting them. HUD monitors COPC grantees to ensure that the anticipated impacts actually occur.

❖ **The leverage to bring about enduring, systemic change in both colleges and communities.**

The comparatively small COPC grants are designed to have an impact far greater than their dollar value. By requiring that colleges and universities carry out COPC activities themselves instead of being merely a funding conduit for other local nonprofit organizations, HUD is helping to mobilize for the community the vast physical and economic resources of that institution, the knowledge and enthusiasm of its students and faculty, and other assets that can continue to be tapped long after the grant funds have been exhausted.

COPC can have a similar transformative effect on universities themselves. Program rules give a preference to applicants that integrate community outreach into the university's basic teaching, research, and service missions—changing their curriculum to expand opportunities for service learning, changing their organizational structure to facilitate partnerships, and changing their faculty tenure and rewards systems to recognize community service and applied scholarship.

❖ **A mandate to work *with* communities instead of *on* them.**

COPC is designed to ensure that the communities and community-based organizations targeted by grantees are more than just an object of study for university faculty and students. The goals and priorities that shape COPC activities are to be those of neighborhood residents—not the product of what the university thinks is appropriate for the neighborhood. Accordingly, the program has several provisions to ensure that the community plays a leading role in the planning and implementation of COPC activities. For example, each COPC has a community advisory committee to identify local needs and develop strategies responsive to those needs. Community-based organizations must form partnerships with participating COPC grantees at every opportunity and at every stage from planning to project implementation so that university involvement benefits the community, not just through the direct outcome of the initiative, but through the increased capacity and experience of its grassroots institutions.

To further ensure that COPC-funded activities respond to the community's most immediate and significant needs, program rules require that all research has direct applications to actual community problems and current initiatives and that such research activities account for no more than 25 percent of total COPC project costs.

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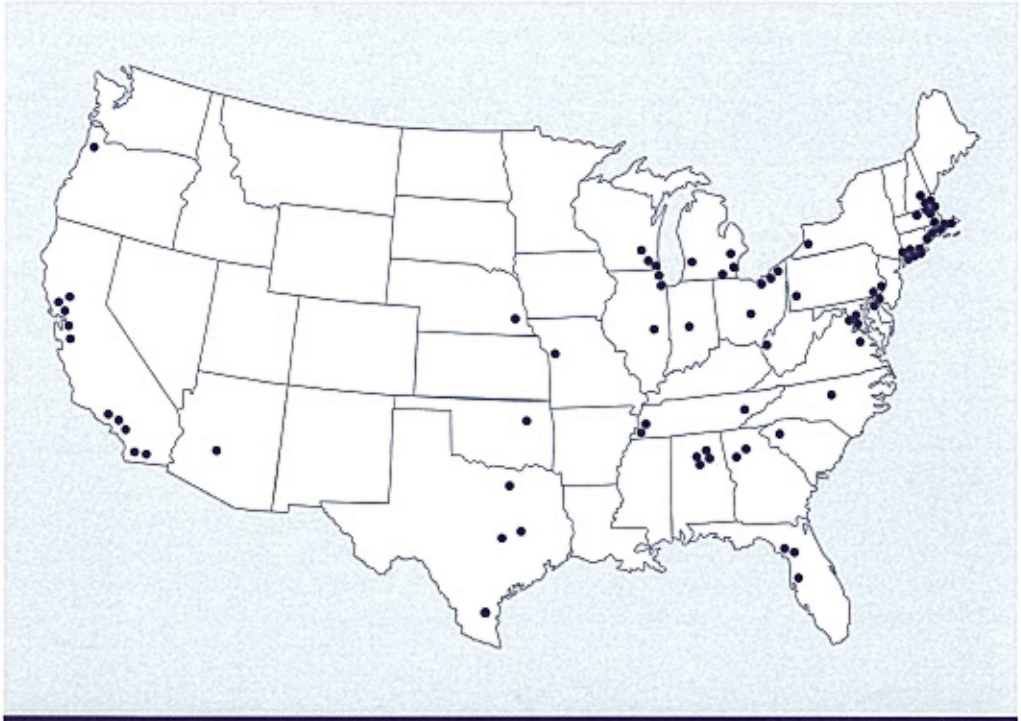
*The goals and priorities that shape COPC activities are to be those of neighborhood residents—not the product of what the university thinks is appropriate for the neighborhood.*

Over its first four grant cycles (1994–97), COPC has funded 77 higher education institutions, including universities and two- and four-year colleges in 27 states and the District of Columbia through 60 grants (see the display on page 13). These institutions are hard at work in their communities, engaged in projects ranging from job training to health care to youth mentoring and entrepreneurial assistance.

The following pages review the full range of ways in which COPC grantees are contributing to the renewal of urban America. Many COPC-supported projects are producing immediate, measurable results in addressing urgent community needs. However, the early years' output measures available for this report—though important—inevitably understate the true significance of this remarkable program. The COPC program is not merely a supplemental vehicle for providing services to distressed communities. Instead, its goal is to transfer to communities the tools—information, access to resources, new relationships, specific skills, organizational capacity, etc.—they need to help themselves. So the potency of these tools will only be revealed as COPC's community partners use them year after year to help residents build a better future for themselves.



# COPC Grantees

## 1994

Arizona State University
Barnard College/Columbia University/City College of the City University of New York
Duquesne University
Merrimack College
Michigan State University/University of Michigan/Wayne State University
Pratt Institute
San Francisco State University/University of California at Berkeley
Stanford University
Texas A&M University
Trinity College
University of California at Los Angeles
University of Illinois at Chicago
University of South Florida
University of Texas-Pan American
Yale University

## 1995

Case Western Reserve University/Cleveland State University/Cuyahoga Community College
DePaul University
George Mason University/Northern Virginia Community College
Georgia State University/Georgia Institute of Technology
Marshall University
Milwaukee Area Technical College/University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee
University of Alabama at Birmingham/Miles College/Lawson State Community College
University of Delaware/Delaware Technical and Community College
University of Florida/Santa Fe Community College
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
University of Massachusetts at Boston/Bunker Hill Community College/Roxbury Community College
University of Memphis/LeMoyne Owen College
University of Tennessee
University of Texas at Austin

## 1996

Central Connecticut State University
Howard University
Hunter College
Los Angeles Trade-Technical College
Northeastern University
Ohio State University
Portland State University
Stillman College
Temple University
Tulsa Community College
University of California at Davis
University of Massachusetts at Lowell
University of Michigan-Flint
University of Pennsylvania
University of San Diego

## 1997

Brooklyn College
Buffalo State College
Clemson University
Fitchburg State College
Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis
New Hampshire College
Rancho Santiago College
San Jose State University
University of Nebraska at Omaha
University of Missouri-Kansas City
University of California, San Diego
University of Rhode Island
University of North Carolina
University of North Texas
University of Wisconsin-Parkside
Virginia Commonwealth University

# Part III

## Community Outreach Partnership Center Activities: A Broad Range

The range of COPC-funded activities, which includes hundreds of projects in dozens of communities, can only be suggested here. Every grantee is sponsoring numerous activities that span the program's broad themes, which include planning; education; jobs; business; housing assistance; health, safety, and the environment; and capacity-building. By describing a handful of projects undertaken by a few COPC grantees, the following pages attempt to offer quick sketches of what COPC can mean in America's communities.

For the academic community, COPC means the pursuit of a more socially engaged approach to education—and to scholarship—that will enrich both students and teachers, intellectually and professionally. For the local community, COPC can be the means to a new level of empowerment that puts the tools for sustainable revitalization in its own hands. So, day by day, COPC can mean many things in many communities.

## *COPC Means . . . a Vision and a Plan*

*Successful community revitalization efforts have two essential prerequisites: a vision of what the community wants to be and a plan for implementing that vision. However, these things do not come spontaneously or unbidden. Although most communities already possess the vision and the will to renew their neighborhood, their community planning efforts are frequently hindered by other obstacles, such as lack of information, internal conflicts, difficulty developing strategies, and insufficient capacity to forge partnerships.*

**Marshall University**'s Community Outreach Partnership Center has been helping to organize and facilitate a "vision sharing" process through which its Huntington, West Virginia, partner community can begin to move beyond some recent economic shocks. In the wake of the 1993 closing of the Owens Illinois glass factory, a major area employer, key local institutions—including the university, a local television station, and the Huntington *Herald Dispatch*—sponsored a town meeting on *Our Jobs, Our Children, Our Future.* That watershed event drew more than 900 residents, business and civic leaders, and university and government officials.

*continued on page 18*

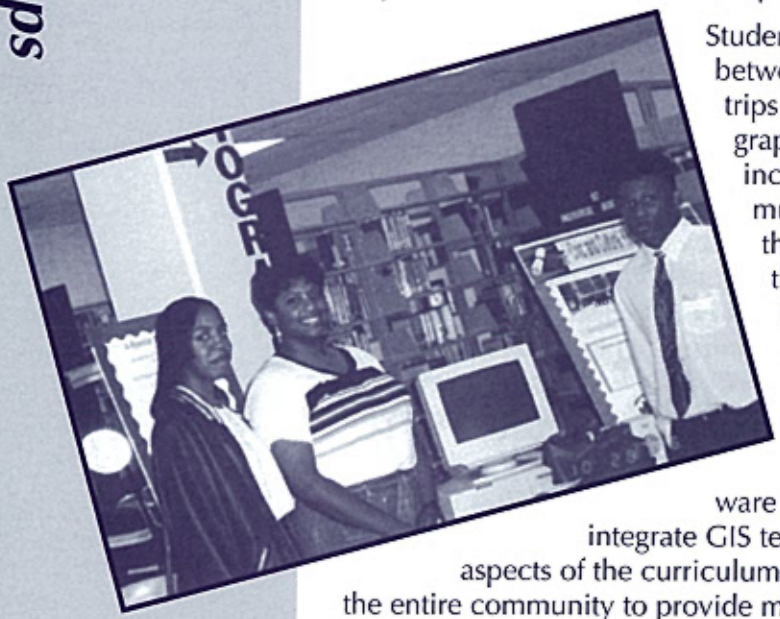
PROFILE

# High School Students Create Computerized Neighborhood Maps

A crucial first step for any community seeking its vision is to get reliable data on the community's physical features. To help the Orange Mound community of Memphis take this step in 1996, eight students from Orange Mound's Melrose High School completed an intensive summer course that introduced them to a sophisticated computer mapping system. Orange Mound, with a population of about 9,000, has a poverty rate of 37 percent. Despite the community's poverty-related problems, the students were able to use their new mapping skills to show that their neighborhood has assets—including material and human factors that constitute hidden resources. Entitled *Memphis Maps,* the geographical information system (GIS) program was expanded in the summer of 1997 to include 24 more students in two more high schools in north and southwest Memphis. Plans now call for further expansion to elementary students.

"The program raised students' awareness of their neighborhood and its history and instilled in them a sense of civic pride," said Dennis Campbell, Melrose High School science teacher and Memphis Maps instructor. Students can build on this exposure to computer mapping software and apply it to other areas of their education.

The 1996 summer pilot project was the product of a broad community partnership. It relied on a $20,000 grant from Orange Mound Collaborative and a Pentium computer donated by the city of Memphis, as well as on ArcView software provided by the University of Memphis. Sponsors included the Memphis COPC, the university's Ground Water Institute, and NationsBank. Additional support came from the city's Housing and Community Development Department, the Shelby County Community Service Agency, and the Community Foundation of Greater Memphis.



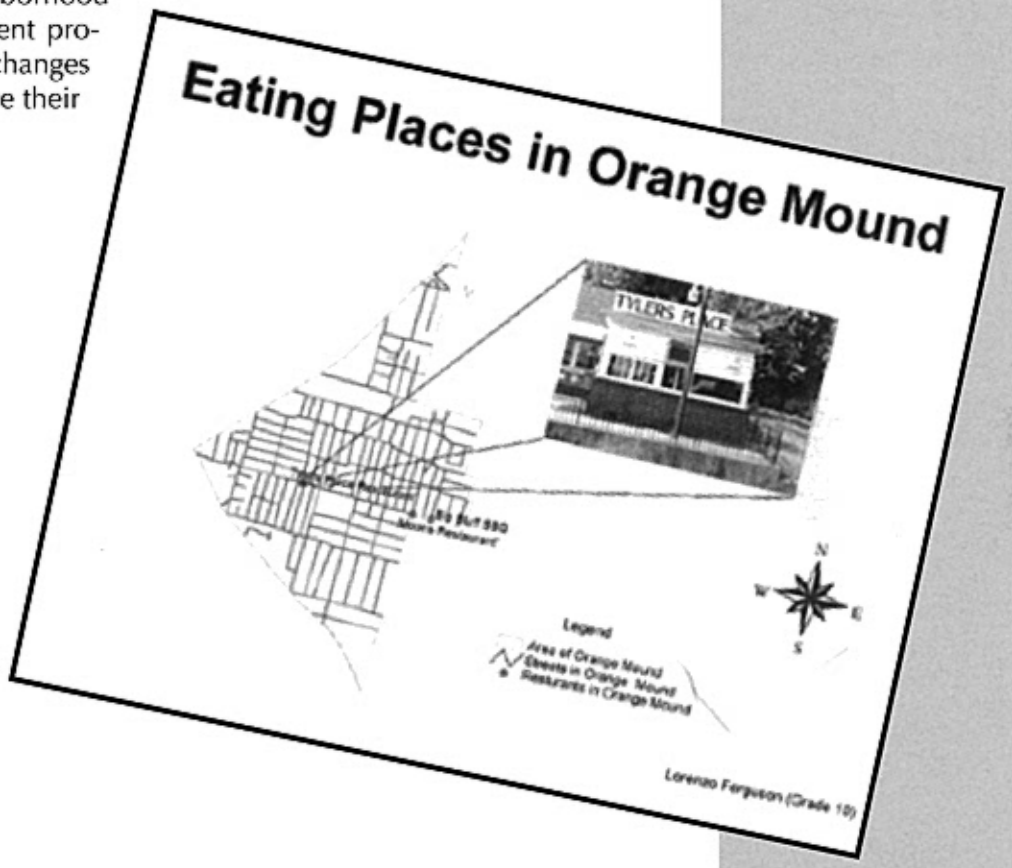
Students in the pilot project divided their time between computer laboratory instruction and field trips during which they identified and photographed community assets. These resources included businesses, parks, schools, and community centers. The students incorporated these assets into the community maps that they produced and—by mastering these high-technology tools themselves—became a new community asset.

As another benefit of the program, Melrose High School acquired a permanent GIS workstation, including up-to-date hardware and software. Faculty and students can now integrate GIS technology and community maps into many aspects of the curriculum, and the school can serve as a resource for the entire community to provide mapping.

**ABOVE:** ***Students of the Memphis Maps program.***

An October 1996 presentation introduced the new workstation to the high school, highlighted the accomplishments of pilot program students, and demonstrated the utility of community mapping software across the high school curriculum.

Additional funding for Memphis Maps of $70,000 from the city of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development ensures further expansion and continuance of the program. This project is one of several local efforts sponsored by the University of Memphis COPC in partnership with local organizations. Others include providing technical support, skills, and leadership training to help neighborhood residents plan and implement programs to achieve the policy changes needed to permanently solve their basic problems.◆




***"The program raised students' awareness of their neighborhood and its history and instilled in them a sense of civic pride," said Dennis Campbell, Melrose High School science teacher and Memphis Maps instructor.***

**ABOVE:** ***Map created by tenth grade student in the*** **Memphis Maps** ***program.***

***Planning activities also provide colleges and universities with the opportunity to use one of their most conspicuous strengths—the ability to collect and analyze data that can help identify community strengths and needs.***

The Marshall COPC, with strong support from the university's administration, is helping build on the momentum generated by the initial event. Community task forces were established to tackle a variety of issues seen as threatening the welfare of the Huntington community. In addition to supporting the work of these task forces through the development of resources such as the Community Learning and Information Network of the Tri-State area (see profile on page 23), the Marshall COPC is helping organize a followup "vision sharing" town meeting that will both assess the progress of those task forces and chart the community's future course. The meeting is going forward, although it was delayed once because the faculty member planning it has been tied up with all the new industries starting up in the Huntington United Industries business incubator that the university is assisting at the old Owens Illinois site.

*Planning activities also provide colleges and universities with the opportunity to use one of their most conspicuous strengths—the ability to collect and analyze data that can help identify community strengths and needs. These data can range from basic demographic and ethnographic material to advanced strategic matrices.*

The **University of Memphis** COPC has assisted a local partner, Orange Mound Collaborative, a community development corporation, with *Memphis Maps* (see profile on page 16), a successful pilot program that trained eight Melrose High School students to gather data using geographic information system (GIS) techniques for strategic planning. In the wake of the pilot's success, the partners have received $140,000 in grants to continue the work in Orange Mound and extend it to the North Memphis and South Memphis neighborhoods. Twenty-four high school students and at least one resident from each of the three neighborhoods will be getting GIS training this summer. And the benefits of the project for Memphis are very practical. For example, the GIS data can be used to identify market gaps where basic services—such as grocery stores—are so distant from residents that an opportunity exists for a new enterprise. Such data have proved so useful that the Memphis COPC is expanding the database into a metropolitan areawide resource.

In a similar initiative, **Yale University** has helped the city of New Haven create *City Room*, a virtual storehouse of data on the city that has grown from a database for the city's Web site to New Haven on Line, a prime dissemination tool for knowledge of everything from crime to community development. And for those without Internet access, the project provides New Haven on Disk.

The City Room also provides GIS and database design support for city agencies and community partners. The project is now developing a general-purpose citywide base map and core database for all city agencies and organizations. New Haven on Line's Web address is http://statlab.stat.yale.edu/nhol.

The COPC at **Texas A&M University** in College Station is a partner with the Texas Agricultural Extension Service, the Texas Transportation Institute, and the Webb Group in a campaign to clarify the information needs of Spanish-speaking residents of colonias along the Texas-Mexico border

(see profile on page 44). A team of field researchers has found that conventional information tools such as pamphlets are not effective because of low literacy rates in both English and Spanish and because residents tend to distrust printed materials that they feel represent the "authorities." These barriers are compounded by the embarrassment felt by illiterate residents who will deceive strangers rather than seek help with reading from their children or others.

But these residents responded to door-to-door outreach, especially after second and third visits. So the partners and the university are establishing a network of eight *promotoras*—residents hired to serve as ongoing information providers to their neighbors—in ten localities where the research had been conducted.

# COPC Means . . . Education

*The crisis in local public education is being faced by communities throughout the country. Possible solutions for the schools' troubles are being debated at all levels, from elementary and secondary to precollege, for all areas of concern, from curriculum reform to remedial programs. The analytical expertise of universities and colleges can be of particular use here. So COPC grantees are seeking innovative ways to assist communities to develop programs to meet their educational challenges.*

**Arizona State University**'s (ASU's) COPC (see profile on page 38) has used its tutoring program to help the community. At the Cesar E. Chavez School in Phoenix's Rio Vista Neighborhood, the university's first off-campus tutoring site, 15 ASU undergraduates volunteer each semester to tutor students from kindergarten through eighth grade. Two graduate interns provide oversight, and tutoring is generally done individually. At the end of the semester, tutors reflect on their experience by writing a paper for the undergraduate English class in which they are all enrolled.

The COPC at **George Mason University/Northern Virginia Community College** has helped the Arlington (Virginia) Education and Employment Program with the *Urban Alternative* program, which provides both English as a second language (ESL) and computer education programs for adults in the West Columbia Heights neighborhood. The ESL training has benefited approximately 40 participants. More than 100 residents of West Columbia Heights have received a full spectrum of computer training, and a number have gone on both to further course work with program partner Training Futures and to full-time jobs. Several *Urban Alternative* partners have asked for help establishing their own computer centers.

**Georgia State University**'s COPC is a partner with the Atlanta Public Schools and Decatur City School System in the *Teaching All Children To Read* project, which targets first- and second-grade students who need remedial help. During its first year, 175 students were taught at Atlanta's White Elementary School and at one middle and two elementary schools in Decatur. During its second year, the project has grown to include almost 900 students. The project uses Reading Mastery, a direct instruction system based on teaching letter-sound correspondences and blending skills.

*continued on page 21*

***More than 100 residents of West Columbia Heights have received a full spectrum of computer training, and a number have gone on both to further course work with program partner Training Futures and to full-time jobs.***

PROFILE

# COPC Builds on Penn's Tradition of Assisting Community Schools

One community with considerable experience in trying to improve local public education is West Philadelphia. This densely populated, diverse section of the city has many neighborhoods that are coping with high rates of unemployment and poverty. When the University of Pennsylvania (Penn), located in West Philadelphia, received a COPC grant in 1996, it had already been working as a partner with local schools for more than a decade to assist them to become *community schools*, a concept that goes beyond the usual educational role to serve as centers of services and involvement in their neighborhoods.

Working in partnership with schools and community groups in surrounding West Philadelphia, Penn has developed extensive service learning programs that engage youth in creative work designed to promote their skills and abilities through service to their school, families, and community. The university now coordinates a year-round effort that involves ten neighborhood schools; hundreds of children, parents, and community members; and thousands of Penn students, faculty, and staff. COPC funds expand upon this outreach.

**School-to-work programs.** At University City High, COPC funds helped expand school-to-work programs. This program gave more than 100 students a chance to gain job skills and career knowledge while working as interns with local employers, especially higher education and medical institutions. University City High School teachers worked with staff at Penn's Morris Arboretum to develop a program to train community youth in the cultivation of trees and shrubs.

In a 1997 COPC summer program, students from Sulzburger Middle School, West Philadelphia High School, and University City High School received Private Industry Council stipends while they learned geographical information system mapping, Web site design, and writing skills. The students mapped the Walnut Hill neighborhood block-by-block, indicating assets and liabilities. The Walnut Hill Community Neighborhood Association will use the maps for future planning projects and grant applications.

**Environmental education.** Sulzburger students also studied water control issues related to Mill Creek, a local river diverted into underground pipes in the 1880s. The middle school students are now incorporating neighborhood history and Mill Creek themes into the design of a proposed neighborhood miniature golf course.

In another COPC environmental initiative, Penn graduate students and University City High School students paired up last fall to study brownfield sites. They researched prior use of the properties, assessed the sites, and interviewed former owners and neighbors to document site history. Students presented their findings to the Philadelphia Empowerment Zone advisory board to help the board create a reuse plan for each site.

The Penn COPC target area includes all of the West Philadelphia portion of Philadelphia's Empowerment Zone. Along with the activities noted here, COPC is serving as a partner to provide technical assistance to the Empowerment Zone leadership to create minority entrepreneurship and to develop home repair workshops to help stabilize owner-occupied housing.◆

Teachers who are part of the project go through a training program and receive technical support from the university.

The many COPC-funded activities of the **University of Illinois, Chicago** include the *Great Cities/Great Careers* program, originally created with its partners—the predominantly African-American Crane High School and the mostly Mexican-American Benito Juarez High School—to supplement the schools' vocational education efforts. During its first year, the program trained and found jobs for five students, but staff changes at corporate partners and school curriculum changes forced the program to shift to training only.

The program has since run successfully revised training at both the schools' computer labs and at the UIC College of Education computer lab. Ten Crane and 15 Juarez students have completed the training, and 15 more Juarez students will be added next year. The program also will expand to give students career awareness training by enabling them to get to know university departments where computers are used.

The **University of Pennsylvania**'s COPC, Philadelphia's University City High School (UCHS), and the city's Morris Arboretum have teamed up to establish an innovative horticulture and arboriculture school-to-work program. A core group of UCHS teachers and the arboretum staff developed the curriculum, and 20 high school students have gained hands-on experience doing tree-care work on a field trip to the arboretum. Another group of 25 students has practiced the same skills on the trees at the university campus.

Through the high school's environmental studies program, students have been encouraged to develop a school-based business; the result was a community plant and garden supply sale last spring that gave the young entrepreneurs a rewarding taste of "green" commerce. And last summer, students applied their knowledge doing landscaping in their Empowerment Zone (EZ), with salaries paid by federally funded Phil-a-Jobs.

The COPC at **Howard University** in Washington, D.C., is working with community youth programs to establish life skills mentoring. One potential partner, the Latin American Youth Center, has taught construction skills training with YouthBuild and other funds. The mentors will be Howard students—some to be supported by COPC and others supported by the AmeriCorps program. Mentoring will include a health awareness curriculum developed as a separate initiative with COPC assistance for presentation at a neighborhood middle school. These efforts should increase both the number of positive role models that local young people encounter and the impact of information and insight these role models impart.

# COPC Means . . . Jobs

*The national economy has been producing jobs at an impressive pace in recent years. However, these opportunities too often remain out of reach for residents of troubled urban communities who must overcome fundamental obstacles such as lack of basic education or marketable skills, discrimination, and distance from suburban employment centers where entry-level*

***Last summer, UCHS students applied their knowledge doing landscaping in their Empowerment Zone (EZ), with salaries paid by federally funded Phil-a-Jobs.***

***Hunter College's COPC is collaborating with a local youth services organization to create a multifaceted program that helps high school students learn about and prepare for careers in one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the American economy—the health sciences.***

*jobs are more plentiful. COPC promotes activities that actually help residents of poor neighborhoods break down barriers to economic opportunity. Universities and their community partners are working to train people for the jobs that today's economy is creating and to assist them in finding jobs—even by developing job opportunities within institutions of higher education.*

In the South Bronx, **Hunter College**'s COPC is collaborating with a local youth services organization to create a multifaceted program that helps high school students learn about and prepare for careers in one of the largest and fastest growing sectors of the American economy—the health sciences. Each year it places 20 neighborhood high school students in summer jobs with community healthcare facilities. The students work four days each week for seven weeks and on the fifth day attend career advisement/college transition classes at the college.

In 1997 the program's focus was on primary care—in 1998 it shifts to environmental health, and then to environmental science for the third summer. The program is designed to prepare young people to be more than just workers in a burgeoning field: Some of the participating students are selected for followup leadership training. And some will quickly use the leadership skills they gain as part of a task force of healthcare employers, researchers, and educators being convened to consider the future direction of healthcare in New York City.

*In addition to nurturing personal skills, every community needs to develop job opportunities—decent jobs that offer its residents the hope that hard work and application will yield a better future for themselves and their families. But in many of the neighborhoods where COPC grantees are at work, jobs are few and hope is fragile. So in Milwaukee, Phoenix, and other cities, COPC-supported universities have joined with business, civic, government, and nonprofit partners to ensure that residents of the federally designated Enterprise Communities (ECs) share in the revitalized economic activity that is beginning to occur in their neighborhoods.*

A substantial portion of the work of **Arizona State University**'s Community Outreach Partnership has focused on stimulating employment in the Phoenix EC and the larger Central City and South Mountain "urban villages." The ASU COPC brought some unique and important resources to the community's strategic planning and implementation activities. Economist Tom Rex examined the composition of the regional economy, while geography professors Elizabeth Burns and Patricia Gober produced complementary studies of where the region's workers live and the extent of their geographic mobility. Nancy Welch of the University's Morrison Institute for Public Policy explored a number of employment issues, such as how the region's employers, job service providers, and residents define "quality" jobs.

This research has produced important outcomes—uncovering substantial employment opportunities in the region and identifying ways in which residents could be linked to those opportunities. The results were used by the Job Linkages Subcommittee of the city of Phoenix's EC Steering Committee to develop recommendations on job linkages, transportation, training,

*continued on page 24*

PROFILE

# Marshall University Provides Community an On-ramp to the Information Superhighway

A shrinking job market is at the root of one of Huntington, West Virginia's, challenges. Jobs have been lost as industry has moved away, and now more than one-third of the city's people are poor and there is a lack of basic services such as affordable medical care. Within this distressed city, the neighborhoods where Marshall University's COPC serves as a partner are especially disadvantaged, with many people living in substandard housing and dealing with other symptoms of poverty.

To help neighborhood residents do more than cope with poverty—to empower them to prepare for jobs in the new information economy—the Community Learning Information Network of the Tri-State (CLINT) area (Ohio-Kentucky-West Virginia) has been created with support from the Marshall University COPC and its community partners. Marshall helped prepare the proposal that enabled CLINT to open in the nonprofit Center for Independent Living in downtown Huntington in the fall of 1996, and university representatives serve on the board.

"The CLINT site will allow local communities to compete globally, create new jobs, stimulate technological innovation, and provide the ability to individualize instruction for all learners, from preschool through senior citizens," says Dr. Kyle of the Marshall COPC. Offering a range of computer applications and computer-facilitated training programs for individuals and organizations, CLINT hosts business and educational training courses using its video-conferencing equipment. The facility has a training room containing computer workstations and a full range of computer equipment. CLINT provides the community with:

- Direct computer access.
- Computer-based instruction.
- Two-way interactive video.
- Remote-site access.
- Inexpensive access to computer software.
- Use of video technology by request for education and training.
- Video-conference technology, integrated with computer-based learning.

Marshall University identifies community groups that may benefit from specific training and facilitates the development of workshops. Recently, the COPC program hosted a demonstration for 30 business and government employees on distance learning at CLINT.

Along with CLINT, because the city of Huntington forms an Enterprise Community, the COPC grant is helping the city implement part of its strategic plan, including establishing a volunteer skills clearinghouse, developing a plan to rehabilitate the central business district, identifying barriers to business development and expansion, evaluating community policing efforts, and assisting community leaders to develop their skills.◆

*The success of this COPC-supported project has drawn the attention of other funders: A recent state grant of almost $300,000 will allow the center to expand.*

child care, labor markets, and related topics. The research also informed development of several job training demonstration projects that are now under way in the EC.

The Milwaukee Community Outreach Partnership Center (MCOPC) of the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee** (UWM) is collaborating with the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Area Technical College, the Milwaukee Public Schools, the Private Industry Council of Milwaukee County, and community organizations in the Milwaukee Enterprise Community to attack the severe, chronic unemployment that plagues much of the EC.

MCOPC has helped lay the groundwork for much of the EC's employment strategies, using the university's expertise in survey research to conduct a survey (in English and Spanish) about the skills of unemployed and underemployed job seekers, the kinds of training they want, and the adequacy of existing local employment services. It also surveys area job openings and worker needs on an ongoing basis. These data, along with technical assistance reports prepared by the UWM Employment and Training Institute, are posted on the Internet at http://www.umw.edu/Dept/ETI/.

The survey results give EC residents and stakeholders another avenue for making their needs and priorities known to community leaders. MCOPC feeds the data back to local nonprofits serving the Milwaukee EC through workshops and technical assistance designed to aid them in developing employment strategies, assessing the impact of public policy decisions, and proposing initiatives to overcome barriers to employment in the community.

As these schools have learned through their COPC experience, one of the most significant ways in which colleges and universities can help communities expand employment possibilities for their residents is by helping them identify the strengths and needs of the local workforce and how these can be best matched with the needs of area employers. But COPC grantees are not relying only on analysis to make their contribution—some are also acting as community clearinghouses of employment and training information.

One of the greatest successes to emerge from the **University of South Florida**'s community outreach program has been the One Stop Job Development Center. Spurred into development by the advent of welfare reform in 1996, the center offers comprehensive training, from interview techniques to childcare assistance to on-the-job behavior training. In addition, the center is also working with a peer lending program that encourages entrepreneurship by providing loans to welfare recipients.

Working with a HUD contract, the center, which opened in October 1996, aimed to place 48 welfare recipients in nonsubsidized jobs with an average wage of $6 an hour. Within the first year of the program, those goals had been far exceeded. The center has placed 83 people in nonsubsidized jobs with an average wage of $6.12 an hour. The success of this COPC-supported project has drawn the attention of other funders: A recent state grant of almost $300,000 will allow the center to expand from one site to four and ensure that it is able to thrive after the university's COPC grant ends.

In many of the communities in which COPC grantees operate, the university itself is one of the largest local employers. So Community Outreach Partner-

ship Centers have sometimes become forces working within the university to increase area residents' access to jobs and contracting opportunities. In Chicago, the **DePaul University**/West Humboldt Alliance has been working to identify and develop jobs for area residents. Working with a job-readiness organization called STRIVE, the Alliance has placed two STRIVE graduates in jobs with the university. Currently, efforts are under way to place residents with the university's food service vendor. DePaul's Office of Applied Innovation, which offers a culinary arts training program, has expressed an interest in placing some of its graduates with the same vendor. Seeing an opportunity to meet both STRIVE's and the University's objectives, eight STRIVE graduates are presently enrolled in the culinary arts program. With this additional training, they will have little trouble being placed in the food service industry.

***COPCs ... can show local industries how to grow and build on their competitive advantage.***

# COPC Means . . . Business

*From planning to management, from product development to production technologies, from finance to marketing, companies in the United States and around the world look to America's colleges and universities for the people, the knowledge, and the business know-how that are essential to success in today's economy. COPC is helping these schools put the same cutting-edge ideas and proven practices to work in communities struggling to ensure access to goods and services—and economic opportunities—for their residents.*

*To be sure, many of the neighborhoods in which COPC grantees are active seem to present formidable obstacles for businesses: a disproportionately low-income population, a history of disinvestment and decay, poor public services, and weak business support networks. However, they also have important advantages: local markets largely ignored by other businesses, a central location, enterprising entrepreneurs, and a motivated workforce. Universities are helping communities enhance their competitive advantages in a number of ways—by helping identify business opportunities, by providing technical assistance and expertise to budding entrepreneurs, by nurturing small businesses, and by providing other activities.*

In the five Boston neighborhoods adjoining their schools, a COPC consortium consisting of the **University of Massachusetts at Boston** (UMB), **Roxbury Community College**, and **Bunker Hill Community College** has joined with three local business associations to establish a small business task force that is helping the communities to develop and implement strategic economic plans more effectively and to find solutions to shared problems. UMB professor Bette Woody prepared a small business market assessment for the area, which the task force is using to create a plan for diversifying local businesses into industries for which there is market demand within the community and beyond. Such forward-looking activities have helped the task force grow to include five business associations representing some 500 businesses.

COPCs not only help community-based businesses identify new opportunities, they can show local industries how to grow and build on their competitive advantage. In the Los Angeles EZ, where the apparel industry is the

*continued on page 28*

PROFILE

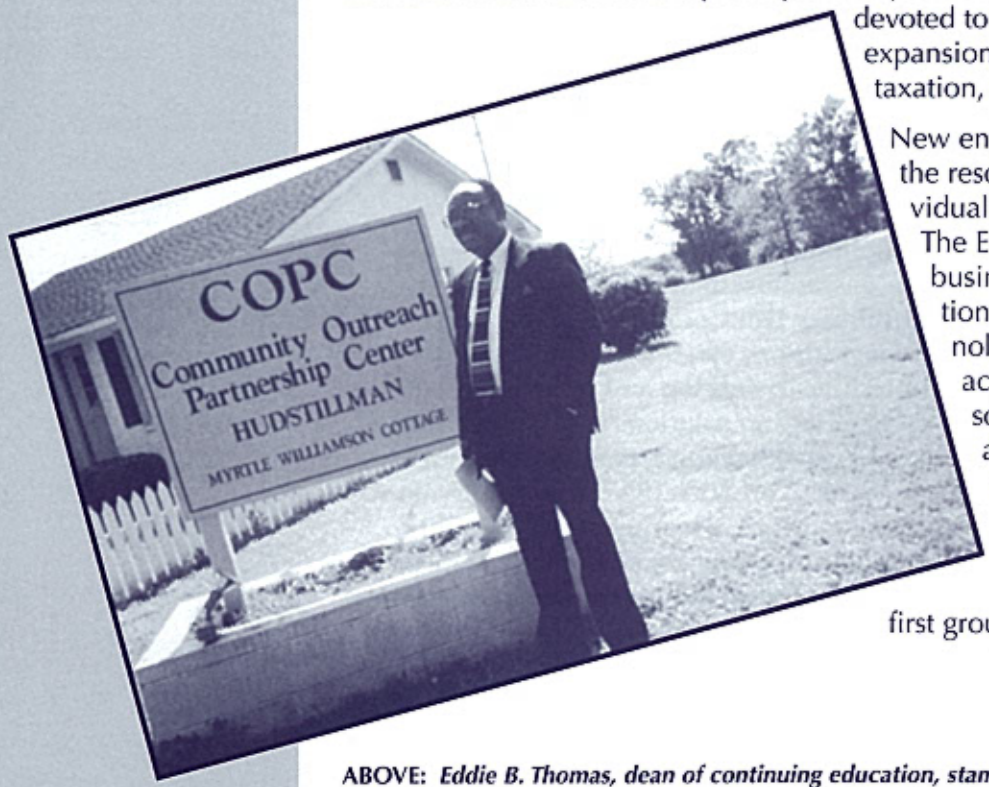
# Stillman COPC Helps Tuscaloosa Entrepreneurs

The mostly low-income, African-American Westside of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, lacks everything from banks to food stores. Many residents lack the skills that could get them jobs—if there were any jobs. Because it cares about its home, the Westside, Stillman College seeks through its COPC to serve as a partner with its neighborhood (as well as the surrounding poor rural area, Greene County, which forms part of an Enterprise Community) to leverage assets to enable community residents to start successful businesses. Stillman's academic partners in this effort include Lawson State College, Shelton State College, and Alabama State University; other partners include the Alabama Department of Human Resources and Goodrich Tire Company.

In the welcoming cottage that houses the Stillman COPC, local residents can find a wealth of educational and vocational opportunities, including the Entreé Project. The project, launched in 1996, provides a range of resources designed to assist small business entrepreneurs: a training program, one-on-one counseling, and a business resource center. The heart of the project is a training curriculum of practical workshops and seminars, tailored to the entrepreneurs' planning, startup, and operational new business needs. The approach is squarely hands-on, as illustrated by the initial financial forum training session, where entrepreneurs meet with the people with the fiscal power to make small business dreams a reality. The participants learn about loan and training options from representatives of banks, financial organizations, and the U.S. Small Business Administration.

To help budding entrepreneurs with their business plans, Entreé's initial curriculum meticulously walks students through important planning issues such as location, merchandise choice, startup costs, short- and long-term business objectives, and more specialized marketing and management goals. Later seminars in the series move participants beyond the startup phase with sessions devoted to customer service, financing expansion, accounting, licensure and taxation, and advertising.

New entrepreneurs have welcomed the resource center and the individualized business counseling. The Entreé Project provides business people with publications and offers access to technology such as the Internet and accounting and inventory software. COPC staff have already met with more than 50 entrepreneurs to iron out project-specific difficulties or to fine-tune individual business plans. When the first group completes the seminars,




**ABOVE:** ***Eddie B. Thomas, dean of continuing education, stands in front of the Myrtle Williamson cottage, the site for Stillman College's COPC.***

COPC will assign mentors to each participant for followup so that continued assistance can be provided.

Along with Entreé, in partnership with Tuscaloosa's Westside community, the Stillman COPC is also addressing many other pressing local issues, including housing, education, safety, and community involvement. The COPC's activities include collaborative research with other communities, applied research through community participation, technical assistance for economic development, computer and employment training for residents, and community outreach training for faculty and students. The COPC will also become the basis for a coalition of Alabama's 15 historically black colleges and universities.◆

**ABOVE:** ***Mr. Irving Blue, coordinator of the Stillman COPC (left), and Mr. James Adams, a participant in the Small Business Entrepreneurial Training Program, standing in front of Mr. Adams' business, the Skies the Limit Clothing Store.***

*... the community quickly focused the Merrimack College Urban Resource Institute on the challenge of supporting the work of some 300 family daycare providers in the area.*

largest employer, the **Los Angeles Trade Technical College** (LATTC)—itself located in the heart of the garment district—has entered into a series of partnerships designed to reach out to and assist apparel makers while enriching the educational and professional opportunities available to its students.

The LATTC COPC, known as L.A. PROSPER Partners (LAPP), is composed of the school's Community Development Technology Center, L.A. PROSPER (the nonprofit economic development subsidiary of the Los Angeles Community College District), and Rebuild LA. LAPP began by conducting focus groups with apparel manufacturers and contractors to determine capital needs that institutions, such as the EZ-funded Los Angeles Community Development Bank, could help serve.

LAPP is also participating in partnerships that address other industry needs. In collaboration with Southern California Edison and LATTC's Fashion Design Center, LAPP is developing an apparel technology demonstration project and incubator to promote state-of-the-art production techniques and work organization. LAPP has funded training workshops and on-site, value-added technical assistance services for EZ apparel companies and has orchestrated a job collaborative between LATTC's Career/Equity Center and four community development corporations in the neighborhood. A proposal has been submitted to the city of Los Angeles to transform the effort into a one-stop job center.

Many communities are nurturing new enterprises by resident entrepreneurs, particularly those that would help serve community needs. In Lawrence, Massachusetts, the community quickly focused the **Merrimack College** Urban Resource Institute on the challenge of supporting the work of some 300 family daycare providers in the area. In part, this initiative stemmed from concurrent state initiatives to reform welfare, which made childcare affordable—a critical need for residents. But it also represents a recognition of the many ways in which community-based daycare providers contribute to other community goals, from economic revitalization to neighborhood watches during the day.

On-site assessments disclosed that many family daycare providers had difficulty obtaining and keeping licenses, were unfamiliar with common business practices and tax regulations, and because they frequently did not own their residences, were often evicted by landlords fearing increased water bills, property damage, and liability problems.

Based on this assessment, Merrimack students and faculty mounted a series of 20 two-hour training sessions for a group of 20 daycare providers. This pilot program was so successful that ongoing training is now being offered—with more than 40 daycare providers participating. Merrimack has also helped these self-employed women organize an Association of Family Day Care Providers to share information, promote sound business practices among its members, and save money by buying supplies in volume.

In the Weinland Park neighborhood of Columbus, **Ohio State University** is working to establish the Enterprise Greenhouse conceived by the Weinland Park Community Collaborative, one of the university's community partners.

*continued on page 30*

PROFILE

# Portland State Helps Businesses Thrive in the Minority Albina Community

Portland State (Oregon) University's (PSU's) COPC is joining forces with local partners in the Albina neighborhood to conquer some of Portland's most persistent employment, health, and housing challenges. Among their many efforts, the partners are particularly focusing on encouraging people to start their own businesses.

A new business is a sign of hope, and there is a real need for hope in Albina. This Northeast Portland community is home to 75,000 residents, 40 percent of whom live below the poverty line, with an unemployment rate more than three times that of the rest of the city. The majority of Portland's African-American population lives in Albina, along with growing numbers of Native Americans and Southeast Asian immigrants. Vacant land and abandoned buildings blight the area, and affordable housing is scarce.

The centerpiece of the partners' work is the Business Outreach Program, which assists minority entrepreneurs to start and grow their own businesses. In two years of operation, the program has served more than 80 small businesses in the area, creating several jobs for Albina residents. Its success is a result of the assistance and long-term mentoring provided by faculty and students from PSU's school of business in partnership with local economic development agencies. The COPC computer lab gives Albina entrepreneurs access to computer technology and business software and offers both group and individual training.

To supplement these opportunities for entrepreneurs, PSU's Oregon Community Development Training Institute provides training for Albina community development corporations in such areas as strategic planning, organizational development, fund raising, board leadership, and program implementation. The center emphasizes expanding the capacity of community groups, such as the Northeast Workforce Center, to provide job readiness skills to link Albina residents with local companies.

A new community-based curriculum in the PSU graduate school of social work builds on the COPC partnership with the Albina neighborhood. Two new courses—community organization and empowerment-based practice with communities—will have students undertaking other projects within the community.

Other efforts of the Albina community-COPC partners include commercial revitalization and the delivery of family services. And along with its activities in Albina, Portland State's COPC grant will enable it to team with other local partners to create the kinds of community-based teaching and learning opportunities that fulfill PSU's mission for students and faculty at both the undergraduate and graduate/professional levels.◆

***In two years of operation, the program has served more than 80 small businesses in the area ... a result of the assistance and long-term mentoring provided by faculty and students from PSU's school of business in partnership with local economic development agencies.***

*When the Inner City Knoxville Community Investment Corporation realized that the financial curriculum of its school for entrepreneurs was weak ... it turned to the University of Tennessee-Knoxville for help.*

The Greenhouse would serve as a business incubator to assist residents in starting small businesses by providing inexpensive office space, shared support staff, telephones and office equipment, and business skills training. A five-member advisory committee, composed primarily of business people, is overseeing the progress of the initiative. Negotiations are under way to acquire a building to house the Greenhouse, and prospective Greenhouse enterprises are being identified.

With their faculty and students talented in business-related fields, universities are well positioned to fill gaps in existing community initiatives. When the Inner City Knoxville Community Investment Corporation realized that the financial curriculum of its school for entrepreneurs was weak—and that this weakness was reflected in business plans produced by the school's students—it turned to the **University of Tennessee-Knoxville** for help.

The COPC responded by assigning a uniquely qualified team to the challenge. One member was an adult educator/literacy specialist from the university's Center for Literacy Studies. The other was a doctoral student in the business school who was also a certified public accountant and had owned her own small business. The result was an accounting curriculum that was both accurate and tailored to the needs and learning styles of adult students. Approximately 60 students have completed the course and have developed solid business plans.

The **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** (see profile on page 42) is channeling its diverse resources to the community through the COPC-supported Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center in East St. Louis, where it has provided customized assistance to some 15 minority-owned businesses in the center's first year of operation. This support has included computer consulting and business documentation for a local grocer, supplying maps and census data for a consulting firm, and helping a tax broker with computer access and invoice preparation.

# COPC Means . . . Better Housing Opportunities

*COPC does not fund the production or operation of affordable housing—there are many federal programs that can help communities with such bricks-and-mortar projects. Nonetheless, COPCs can play a less tangible, but no less important, role in meeting local housing needs by conducting research and providing technical assistance and skills training that help housing developers produce more affordable housing—and help consumers navigate the process of buying and maintaining it.*

The **University of Florida**'s Community Outreach Partnership Center and the local coalition for Gainesville and Alachua County have developed a comprehensive homeownership training program. The first element of the program is a two-night, eight-hour presentation for first-time homebuyers. During the past year, more than 300 households have completed the training.

*continued on page 35*

PROFILE

# Tulsa College Helps Public Housing Residents Pursue Wide-Ranging Improvements

One dreary day in late March 1997, faculty and students from Tulsa Community College (TCC) arrived at the Apache Manor public housing complex to help the residents break ground for their new garden. Developing the garden was one of the first outreach projects of the college's new Institute for Community Outreach and Research (ICOR), established through a three-year, $400,000 COPC grant a few months earlier. ICOR's mission is to assist the 4,000 Tulsa public housing residents with a wide range of community-building activities.

Working with the Tulsa Housing Authority's resident service department, ICOR has established a home base that is convenient for residents at learning resource centers in each of the city's ten public housing communities. ICOR staff and volunteers cooperate with resource center staff. Faculty and interns in the field of social work emphasize coordination of services, assessment, and referral to established provider agencies in the community. The college also runs a wellness program to empower housing authority residents to assume responsibility for their own and their family's health.

At the learning centers and beyond, ICOR brings together faculty, staff, more than 20 partner community agencies and organizations, and student volunteers and interns from TCC's four campuses to pursue their comprehensive partnership. The partners are working in seven areas of concern that the public housing residents have chosen as most important: housing, economic development, education, job training, crime prevention, public health and health care, and community building. Residents are particularly interested in family budgeting and credit counseling, small business development, leadership training, improved medical care, and community gardens.

By pursuing these concerns, students help residents with recreational activities, youth athletics, computer instruction, interventions for at-risk youth, and the collection of research data. The housing authority estimates that, counting facilities, equipment, staff, and in-kind services, COPC participation is adding more than $84,000 in value

**ABOVE:** ***Tulsa Housing Authority (THA) resident Larry Addison in a community garden with young plants.***

to the centers' operations—an amount that surely is just the tip of the leveraging iceberg.

The partnership between the community and Tulsa Community College is natural because TCC has always encouraged its students to develop a community service ethic, believing this produces well-rounded graduates. In fact, TCC is one of the first community colleges to win a COPC grant on its own, rather than as part of a consortium with a university. (Only in 1996 did HUD, noting the crucial role of community colleges in their communities, begin awarding grants to community colleges that were not part of a consortium.) And its COPC grant was the first federal funding that TCC had ever sought.

Along with its housing efforts, ICOR is establishing relationships with a variety of community and educational partners, including the Tulsa public schools, Tulsa police department, and the Greenwood Chamber of Commerce. For example, ICOR will provide technical assistance to awardees of a local loan pool, totaling $100,000, for small business development, which the Chamber of Commerce is administering. In all its activities, TCC is seeking to serve as a partner with the local community to help residents achieve self-sufficiency.◆

**ABOVE:** ***Tulsa Housing Authority (THA) resident youth audition for scholarships to Tulsa Community College's summer music camp.***

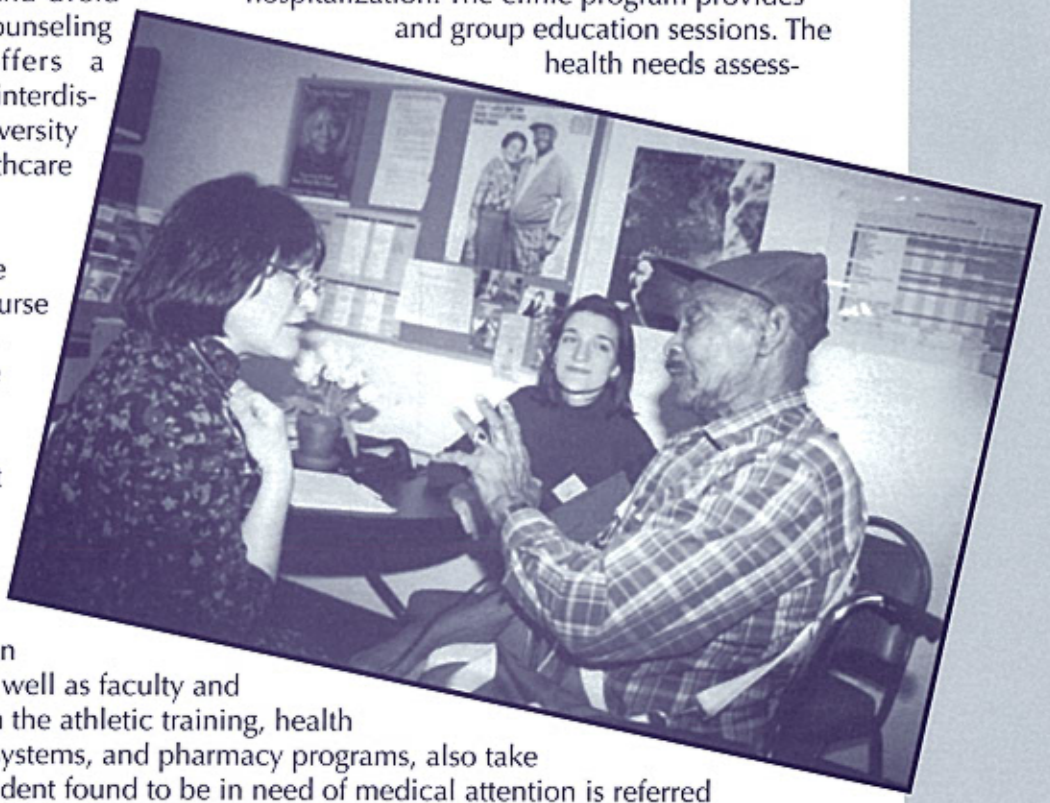
PROFILE

# Pittsburgh Senior Citizens and Local COPC Create Wellness Program

Residents of the K. Leroy Irvis Towers in Pittsburgh need only step outside the doors of their apartments for answers to medical questions and information about health issues—thanks to a residential wellness clinic established in partnership with the Duquesne University COPC. For the residents of this HUD-funded, independent-living, highrise complex for the elderly, this convenience has proved helpful and even life-saving.

This health program is one of the activities of community partners and the Duquesne COPC that focuses on East Liberty and the Hill District, two Pittsburgh neighborhoods with predominately African-American and poor residents. Both communities have suffered disinvestment but have long-established organizations that can serve as partners for providing services, including the Kingsley Association in East Liberty and the Hill House Association in the Hill District. Both areas now receive special city government attention. And in both communities, private firms are investing in new housing and commercial developments.

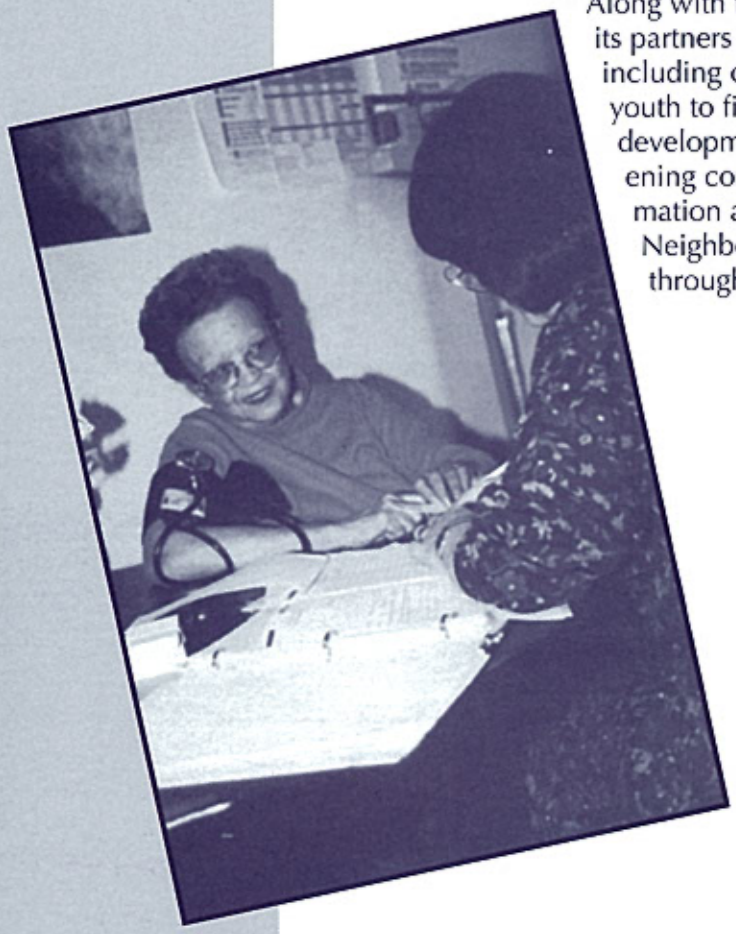
The community-COPC wellness program—staffed by university healthcare students and professionals—emphasizes prevention and provides residents with information on medication, nutrition, and exercise. By learning prevention techniques, residents maintain current wellness levels, improve the quality of their lives, and avoid hospitalization. The clinic program provides individual counseling and group education sessions. The program offers a health needs assessment by an interdisciplinary university team of healthcare providers—gerontology clinical nurse specialists, nurse practitioners, and graduate nursing students. Physician assistant students, under the direction of a primary care physician instructor, as well as faculty and students from the athletic training, health information systems, and pharmacy programs, also take part. Any resident found to be in need of medical attention is referred to an independent physician for treatment. Students participating in the program gain hands-on experience dealing with the largest growing segment of the population—the elderly.



**ABOVE:** ***Project Director Lenore Resick, MSN, RN, CRNP (left) and a patient enjoy a light-hearted moment during a visit as a nursing student (center) looks on.***

Since the program's inception in 1995, more than one-half of Irvin Towers residents have taken advantage of its services—either information, referral, medication, nutrition, or the exercise facilities. Managers of the elderly residential facility report real improvements in weight loss, blood pressure control, and wound healing. In addition, several medical crises in the making were averted by discovery in the clinic of prescription medication errors.

Along with their housing-health effort, the local COPC and its partners plan to work on a variety of other projects, including creating job opportunities and counseling for youth to fight violent gangs, providing services for local development corporations and businesses, and strengthening community institutions. Dissemination of information about these activities will be done through Neighbor LINE, an on-line computer system available throughout Pittsburgh's neighborhoods.◆



**ABOVE:** ***A resident of Irvis Towers takes advantage of the wellness clinic established by the Duquesne University COPC and staffed by various university healthcare students and professionals.***

The program's other element is a three-part post-purchase effort. First, new homebuyers walk through their property along with program staff and are given a copy of *My Home Book* (prepared by the university's Shimberg Center for Affordable Housing and the Cooperative Extension Service), which has maintenance information and a place to keep appliance operating instructions and warranties. Second, a newsletter is sent to all households that get downpayment assistance through the state housing initiatives program. Third, a homebuyer's club—set up with the local, nonprofit neighborhood housing and development corporation—can assist residents whose credit or other problems keep them from buying a house.

The COPC at the **University of Memphis** has teamed up with the local United Way to study affordable housing to increase the quantity of affordable housing. The university's Center for Urban Research and Extension has interviewed focus groups—composed of people affiliated with local community development corporations and major lenders—about how to address barriers to affordable housing production.

The project's final report recommends ways to increase productivity and coordinate social and information support systems. COPC support has also enabled the project to publish a directory of community development corporations. Both of these projects helped spur a collaboration among area community development corporations to provide development training for neighborhood residents and explore new funding mechanisms for affordable housing.

For example, the **University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**'s Milwaukee Community Outreach Partnership Center (MCOPC) and its neighborhood partner, the Fair Lending Coalition, have studied local mortgage lending practices and thus been able to negotiate reinvestment agreements with area lenders that are increasing homeownership opportunities for minorities throughout the community. First, MCOPC produced detailed reports on more than 200 mortgage lending institutions for the coalition. Next, MCOPC prepared and disseminated reports on area mortgage lending for the previous five years. This led to discussions of the racial gap in Milwaukee's suburbs and of other problems related to inequities in local mortgage lending.

Using the MCOPC data, the Fair Lending Coalition has negotiated reinvestment agreements with several local banks. Each agreement commits millions of dollars to new loans for residents of Milwaukee's central city and for racial minorities throughout the metropolitan area.

*One of the conditions essential to better housing opportunities is full access to the available housing stock and to crucial homebuying resources such as mortgage credit. Many communities served by COPC institutions are struggling to overcome the legacy of decades of disinvestment and discrimination in home financing and insurance.*

***Using the MCOPC data, the Fair Lending Coalition has negotiated reinvestment agreements with several local banks. Each agreement commits millions of dollars to new loans for residents of Milwaukee's central city.***

*Georgia Institute of Technology's geographic information system, has mapped and analyzed neighborhood crime data....*

# COPC Means . . . Health, Safety, and the Environment

*A threat to health and safety—whether it is a high incidence of disease, an epidemic of crime or illegal drugs, or environmental contamination—can be particularly frightening for a community because it can strike randomly and seems to be beyond any individual's control. Colleges and universities can be especially valuable partners for dealing with such problems—they are rich in the specialized human and scientific resources that communities need to identify, understand, and respond to threats to their well-being. So COPCs are helping their neighbors create innovative projects to fight disease, crime, and environmental degradation.*

**Merrimack College**'s Urban Resource Institute and the Greater Lawrence (Massachusetts) Family Health Center have together pursued a three-prong attack on area children's high incidence of whooping cough, which has been four times the state average. First, working on the hypothesis that early childhood immunizations were a factor, student interns studied inoculation rates for 1994–95 kindergarten students and learned that only 62 percent of area students had been fully immunized by the age of two years, compared with the state average of 80 percent. Second, the region has started an annual immunization week, for which Merrimack students provide transportation and other services. About 500 children have been vaccinated during each of the past two immunization weeks. Third, students are now entering all immunization records into a computer database. The Urban Resource Institute is now turning its attention toward the abnormally high rate of asthma in the Lawrence area.

The COPC at **Georgia State University**'s (GSU's) downtown Atlanta campus has responded to the desire of residents of the neighborhood to the east of the campus to help fight crime and increase safety. Two faculty members from GSU's Department of Criminal Justice who are experts in community policing have presented a ten-week course based on input from residents. PEACE, a community development organization established by the manager of a major Section 8 housing complex in the neighborhood, serves as a partner.

About 20 residents have attended each class. The curriculum includes both entrepreneurship and job skills training, along with community policing. Information from the course has been applied by neighborhood residents, who have worked within the system to shut down a liquor store that had been a focal point for criminal activity. A related initiative, **Georgia Institute of Technology**'s geographic information system, has mapped and analyzed neighborhood crime data, and thus has contributed greatly to the success of the training. Additional training is being presented to a class of both residents and Atlanta police officers.

The **University of Pennsylvania**'s COPC (see profile on page 20) is cooperating with the West Philadelphia EZ, the West Philadelphia Partnership, and the West Philadelphia Enterprise Center to determine the most effective strategy to transform urban brownfield sites into economically useful properties. The team has developed a list of potential sites and assigned them priorities according to the development needs of the community. Two sites will be selected and analyzed regarding their past use. This analysis—consisting of interviews with former owners and neighbors and documentary research—will be conducted by Penn students paired with students from University City High School. Once the environmental conditions of the two sites are known, the partners will work with those undertaking planning efforts.

**Texas A&M University**'s (see profile on page 44) colonias program has created a unique way to present health, environmental, and social-issue information to local Spanish-speaking residents. They have produced a videotape of a Mexican-style soap opera or a telenovela with the messages embedded in the storyline.

The story revolves around the lives of a fictional family portrayed by local residents. The issues presented include safe food preparation, recycling, and other environmental concerns. The video is distributed through community resource centers that the university has established (one of which was built with COPC matching funds) and is also provided to some local social service providers.

The **Tulsa Community College** (see profile on page 31) Institute for Community Outreach and Research (ICOR) and the Tulsa Housing Authority's Resident Services Program have a strong partnership through which more than 30 college students have provided assistance to residents; 40 college sociology students have carried out a pilot needs assessment; and, along with the Tulsa CC performing arts program, 20 resident young people have received music instruction.

ICOR already employs one service coordinator and a second will be hired next year. The coordinator assists resident associations to plan special programs, supervises Tulsa CC students engaged in service learning projects and internships, and develops additional services. The coordinator also reports to ICOR on needs and evaluates program progress.

*continued on page 40*

***Community Outreach Partnership Centers are assisting city students and small business people to learn both the techniques and the human dynamics of civic leadership.***

PROFILE

# Phoenix Block Watch Spurs Community Change

A primarily Hispanic community of about 2,500 residents located in Phoenix's Enterprise Community, Rio Vista had no official neighborhood institutions. However, with the help of the Arizona State University (ASU) COPC, Rio Vista has organized an active community-led block watch group to help the community address quality-of-life issues such as graffiti, litter, and infrastructure improvements. The community of Rio Vista forms part of an area designated as an "urban village" in the Phoenix comprehensive plan. Each village is intended to be a center of employment and commerce, and creating local institutions to increase safety is fundamental to the village concept.

To bring Rio Vista residents together as a community, ASU COPC first teamed with the city of Phoenix Enterprise Community Advisory Committee to hold monthly workshops on community planning, job development, and education—topics of interest to the residents, 42 percent of whom have less than a ninth-grade education and almost 13 percent of whom are unemployed. Although many workshop participants had no previous community involvement experience, they quickly assumed leadership roles and launched the block watch group. ASU also helped the group obtain a city grant for crime prevention activities and community-based adult education classes.

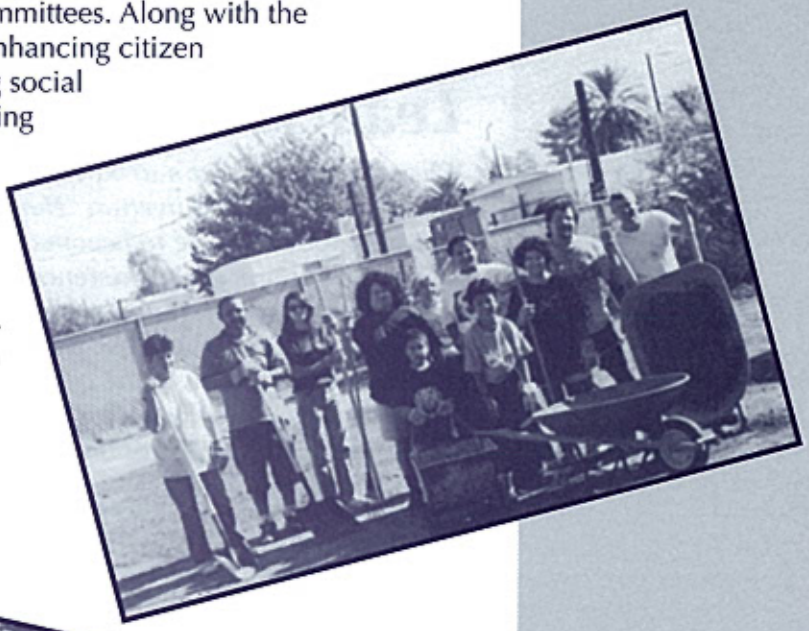
Approximately 40 residents—as well as local police officers—now attend the twice-monthly meetings. During its first year the block watch:

- Published a monthly neighborhood newsletter.
- Brought adult evening English as a second language classes to the Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School.
- Installed 11 signs at entrances to the community, indicating an organized neighborhood presence that will not tolerate crime.
- Initiated discussions with the city to install street lighting and to pave dirt roads and sidewalks in the neighborhood.

**TOP:** ***The Rio Vista neighborhood cleanup included the grounds of the local Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School. The sign, made by students, welcomes the community to the "work fiesta." The ASU COPC cosponsored the event.***

**BOTTOM:** ***An ASU architecture student explains to Rio Vista community youth a model for the future Community Resource Center planned for the neighborhood. Last spring, an entire ASU Architecture Studio interviewed Rio Vista residents before developing potential models for the Resource Center.***

As Rio Vista and other Phoenix communities in partnership with the ASU COPC pursue the urban village concept, they are basing their work on well-established citizen-based planning committees. Along with the safety project, their activities will include enhancing citizen participation and empowerment, increasing social service delivery, providing housing counseling on improving individual housing conditions, developing and marketing a strategic vision for economic development, and implementing customized job training and youth leadership development programs. They will also provide opportunities for students (as well as faculty and staff) to serve as mentors and educators.◆



**TOP:** ***Some of the Rio Vista residents who participated in a Block Watch sponsored a neighborhood cleanup. Supplies were procured from the City of Phoenix's Tool Lending Program.***

**MIDDLE and BOTTOM:** ***Rio Vista youth pitched in to help clean up the neighborhood.***

# *COPC Means . . . Building Community Capacity and Leadership*

*Where are tomorrow's urban leaders? To help the most promising young people answer this question "Here!"—to give them the mental and emotional space to aspire to become leaders and not be consumed by the demands of their daily existence—Community Outreach Partnership Centers are assisting city students and small business people to learn both the techniques and the human dynamics of civic leadership. And this learning is done in the context of community organizations, which Community Outreach Partnership Centers are helping to create—thus nurturing the capacity of the community both to send forth and respond to new leaders.*

The COPC of the **University of Massachusetts at Boston** (UMB), **Roxbury Community College**, and **Bunker Hill Community College** set out initially to train managers of small businesses in some of the poorest communities in Boston, including Chinatown, Roxbury, and Dorchester. But the initiative evolved into "training for trainers," in which the staffs of the program's nearly 30 partner community-based organizations (CBOs) are trained and then in turn train small business owners.

A curriculum in computerized accounting, developed by a UMB professor in conjunction with CBO partners VietAid and This Neighborhood Means Business, has been presented to 40 CBO staff members. Three of the participating CBOs are in the process of implementing this training through their own agencies.

The COPC at **Hunter College** in New York City is choosing high school students with the greatest leadership potential from all those in its program for disadvantaged youth from the South Bronx and then is offering special leadership training to those chosen. After an initial 12-hour program, these students will be prepared to work in their communities and within their service organizations as advocates and spokespersons for youth education, environmental issues, and other related areas. Followup in-service training will be provided. The plan calls for more than 100 youth from the South Bronx to be trained over three years.

The COPC at the **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign** has carried out a *Neighborhood College* to give community leaders the skills to operate more effectively. In 1995, 43 community leaders completed a course in basic community building. In 1996, 30 community leaders were trained in community-based crime prevention. A course on state and local governments, begun recently, has as many as 40 community leaders participating.

These courses have been so successful and the interest in more courses is so high that funds have been allocated to hire a coordinator and to offer courses in grant writing, nonprofit management, volunteer recruitment and training, and faith-based community organizing/development.

**Arizona State University** COPC's community-building efforts have centered on the neglected very-low-income Rio Vista neighborhood of South Phoenix. Through sustained, issue-based interaction among the community, the city, and the university, two neighborhood advocacy organizations have been developed that can serve as the locus of community leadership for COPC efforts and other revitalization activities.

At first, the university worked with the newly formed Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) of Cesar E. Chavez Elementary School—a main partner in all the Rio Vista COPC initiatives. Through the PTO, a series of strategic planning meetings were held to identify issues beyond the school that touched the lives of the children and their families. On the basis of these issues, plans were made to connect to the institutions and policymakers in the larger community that could make a difference in Rio Vista. More recently, the university has teamed up with a new block watch group in the Rio Vista neighborhood, which was formed in part with COPC assistance in obtaining a grant from the city. The group holds monthly meetings to resolve problems and sponsors special events—in conjunction with city staff or university faculty—to attack a particular issue or problem. The block watch group even has standing committees for lighting, community policing, graffiti removal (see profile on page 38), and watch-alert street signs.

*continued on page 46*

***Perhaps one reason why activities funded by COPC have become so quickly institutionalized is that HUD's program has provided the needed core around which ideals and concerns long embraced by university students, faculty, and administration could finally coalesce and find clear direction.***

PROFILE

# Partnership Builds Community Capacity in East St. Louis

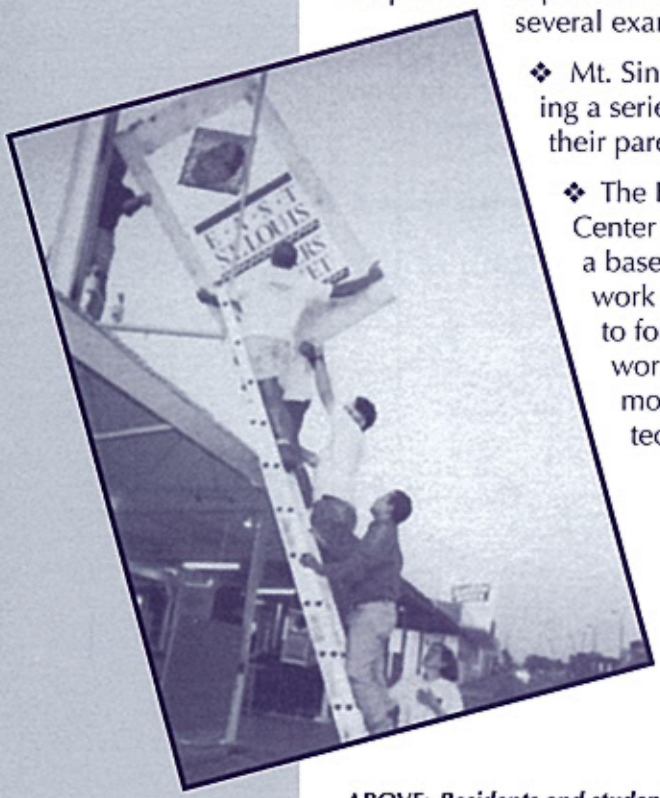
The old industrial city of East St. Louis has seen its community fabric shredded by dramatic levels of depopulation and unemployment bringing abandoned buildings, deteriorated housing, vast cleared tracts of unused land, and the collapse of many municipal services. To serve as a partner in re-creating East St. Louis's capacity to nurture new leaders and community resources, the COPC at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has taken an existing university-community revitalization effort—the East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP), established in 1990—and expanded its activities dramatically.

ESLARP—a program that since 1990 has involved seven faculty members, a full-time project coordinator, and more than 1,000 student volunteers—is a collaborative effort of UIUC's architecture school, departments of landscape architecture and urban and regional planning, and cooperative extension service. ESLARP has long cooperated with the Winstanley/Industry Park Neighborhood Organization (WIPNO) on high-viability projects, such as a farmers' market, a housing rehabilitation program, and the construction of a Head Start playground.

COPC has teamed with WIPNO to expand these efforts. Student volunteers have performed cleanup and maintenance tasks at the farmers' market, readying the facility for a harsh midwestern winter. UIUC students also canvassed the neighborhoods, identifying 50 people who wished to become involved in WIPNO. Studio architecture students and their professor worked on construction drawings for a new headquarters for WIPNO and ESL CAN.

Along with this capacity-building effort, the East St. Louis community has in partner- ship with COPC pursued several other related activities. To cite several examples:

- Mt. Sinai Baptist Church and a youth organization is presenting a series of computer education workshops for youth and their parents.
- The East St. Louis Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center (NTAC), which opened in the fall of 1996, has become a base of operations for ESLARP, enabling the organization to work more effectively with existing community partners and to forge bonds with new ones. Since its opening, NTAC has worked with 15 minority-owned businesses and assisted more than 30 community-based organizations with 80 technical assistance requests.



**ABOVE:** ***Residents and students hang the sign to officially open the East St. Louis Farmers' Market. University students, staff, and faculty volunteered more than 35,000 hours to assist WIPNO in designing, building, and promoting the East St. Louis Farmers' Market.***

- During the fall 1996 semester, more than 200 university students traveled to East St. Louis for community outreach weekends, during which they participated in a dozen different community development projects and made the challenges of East St. Louis part of their learning experience.

The university's commitment to community partnership continues to grow. UIUC awarded ESL CAN a $15,000 Partnership Illinois grant to create a civic education class. Planning to replicate the ESLARP model in North Champaign with a permanent university project has begun.◆

***TOP: The community and the university pull together to construct the Head Start playground.***

***BOTTOM: Children playing at the Head Start park.***

PROFILE

# Fostering Resident Empowerment in the Colonias—Texas A&M's COPC

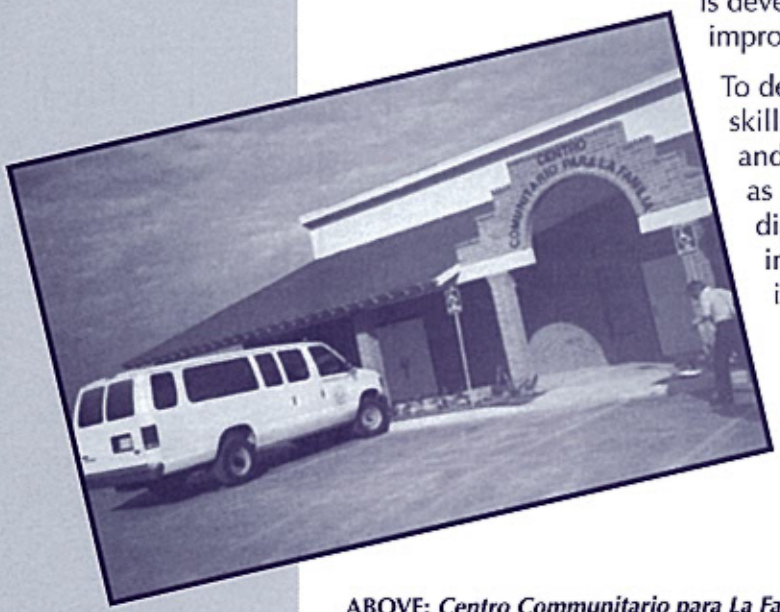
The goal of Texas A&M University's COPC is to build the capacity of residents to help themselves in ten rural, underdeveloped Hispanic colonias in southern Texas. Colonias, unincorporated rural settlements on the U.S. side of the U.S./Mexican border, are characterized by substandard housing and an absence of sewer systems, clean drinking water, garbage collection, or paved roads. Funded in part by a 1994 HUD COPC grant, the project is a collaboration with the university, Texas Engineering Extension Service, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, Texas Transportation Institute, and Webb County, Texas.

"Building trust and gaining resident input has been the key to our work," says Dr. Pradip Pramanik, COPC program coordinator. After a series of door-to-door visits and communitywide meetings with resident and service providers, "COPC really blossomed," says Pramanik. As part of its institutionalization efforts in the community, COPC recently recruited ten residents with leadership potential to act as promotoras (community liaison workers) who will encourage resident participation in self-development activities and assist researchers with data collection.

The hub of COPC activities is a 3,150-square-foot community resource center that opened in September 1996, built with university funds and administered by Webb County. The center serves as a platform for delivery of health, education, human services, economic development, housing, and other programs recruited by COPC. Eight other centers, like the one in Webb County, are now in operation, receiving a total of 29,000 visits (some are duplicates) per month from colonias residents. Three additional centers are currently under construction.

COPC staff helped organize a community center resident advisory committee in Webb County, which will be applying for its own 501 (c)3 status with technical assistance from several local organizations. Incorporated as an independent nonprofit organization, the group will be able to apply for new funding sources at the conclusion of the COPC grant in fall 1997. Building on the community center's success, Webb County has built a Head Start center next to COPC and is developing soccer fields and other recreational improvements in the area.

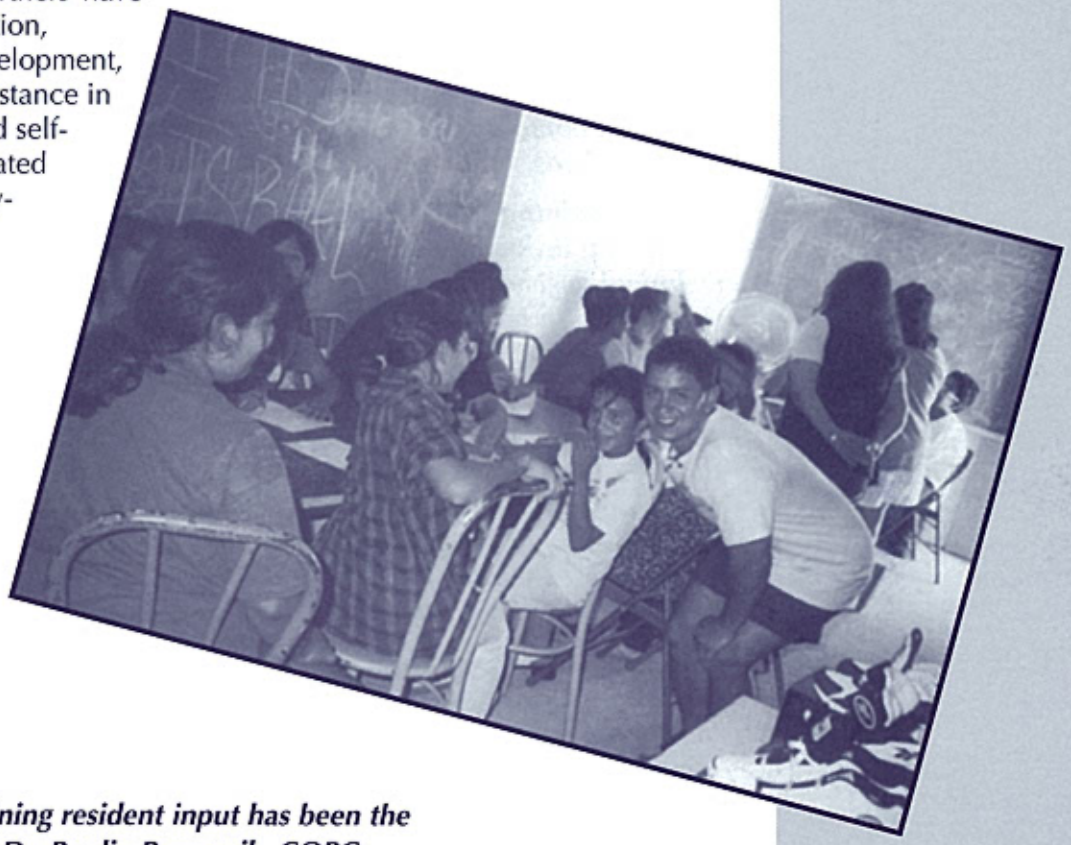
To develop resident educational and leadership skills, COPC established the Family Academic and Skills Training (FAST) program, with English as a second language, general equivalency diploma, computer literacy, and leadership instructions as key components. Participants in the leadership component have gained proficiency in public speaking, problem-solving, community organizing, and job interviewing skills. Thirty adults have completed the 12-week FAST program, and another 18 are currently enrolled.




**ABOVE:** ***Centro Communitario para La Familia was constructed with matching funds. COPC funds paid for a transportation analysis and plan.***

In another COPC initiative, the Texas Transportation Institute (TTI) last year negotiated an agreement to mitigate some of the extreme geographic isolation of the colonias. Using state of Texas funds, TTI purchased a 15-passenger van for public transportation. Webb County pays for a driver and insurance. Since October, the van has made regular runs among the ten colonias, the community resource center, and a connecting point to Laredo's city bus service. TTI is currently working with the state to obtain two more vans.

In addition, COPC partners have arranged health education, fostered economic development, provided technical assistance in land-use regulation and self-help housing, and initiated many other community-building efforts.◆



***"Building trust and gaining resident input has been the key to our work," says Dr. Pradip Pramanik, COPC program coordinator.***

**ABOVE:** ***Hundreds of adults and youth have participated in classes and workshops at the resource center in areas as diverse as nutrition, food safety, water quality and conservation, money management, parenting, and painting.***

*COPC is intended to be a catalyst for change.*

# COPC Means . . . Institutional Change

*COPC is intended to be a catalyst for change. This relatively modest grant has the ambitious goal of fundamentally altering the agents of community change—institutions of higher education and their community partners—with which they come into contact so that their impact will be stronger and more enduring. The examples offered throughout this report illustrate how COPC is fostering lasting change in communities by helping grassroots organizations and individuals acquire the information, skills, experience, and contacts they need to enhance their own assets, remedy their own problems, and realize their own potential.*

*COPC is helping transform colleges and universities as well. In addition to mobilizing university resources to undertake specific research, outreach, technical assistance, and service provision activities to address fundamental urban needs over the three-year life of the grant, many COPC schools are taking concrete steps to ensure that service learning becomes an integral part of their educational mission.*

These changes can take many different forms. Some institutions are modifying their administrative, tenure, or compensation rules to encourage faculty to incorporate opportunities for community involvement into their teaching. The **University of Massachusetts-Lowell** has changed its administrative rules to grant release time to faculty members who are developing new courses that would involve students in community learning.

Other schools are expanding their course offerings with classes and practica that allow students to focus on issues confronting a particular community or to hone their professional skills in a community setting. As an extension of its COPC-supported partnership with Knoxville CDCs, the **University of Tennessee** is introducing a new course on nonprofit corporation law, in which law students will provide technical legal assistance to community groups. The **University of Texas-Pan American** has established a multidisciplinary colonia development course to introduce students from throughout the university to the unique challenges facing its community partners.

Pan American is also one of several universities that will be using its internship programs to place students with community groups. Another is the **University of Nebraska-Omaha**, which is creating a doctoral development program to place postgraduate students in nonprofit community-based organizations.

*The very structure of some universities are changing to give applied scholarship and engagement in community issues a permanent base from which to grow. COPC activities helped inspire the establishment of a university-level center for urban research and extension that has already brokered new partnerships with the area business community, local governments, and foundations and has built a metropolitan-areawide information database.*

*Perhaps one reason why activities funded by COPC have become so quickly institutionalized is that HUD's program has provided the needed core around which ideals and concerns long embraced by university students, faculty, and administration could finally coalesce and find clear direction. People who want their labor and creativity to serve their community can be found on every campus in America. HUD's COPC program is one way to ensure that colleges and universities become catalysts for ushering in the "era of big citizenship" that these times demand.*

# Bay Area Universities Team Up To Empower Communities

The San Francisco Bay Area is a thriving metropolitan region, but hidden from view are poor, isolated communities—such as the Visitation Valley in the city of San Francisco—that can benefit greatly from a COPC partnership. Therefore three prominent local universities (the University of California, at Berkeley; San Francisco State University; and Stanford University) are working together in the Bay Area COPC (BACOPC) to help create and institutionalize coordinated structures and activities as partners with several poor communities in the Bay Area.

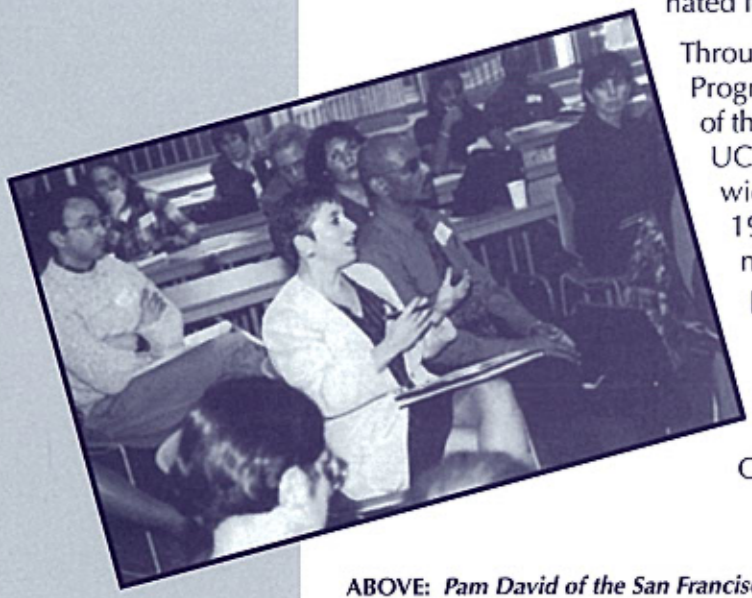
In Visitation Valley—a distressed minority neighborhood—COPC is planning for housing and jobs in an economic empowerment project with the Geneva Valley Development Corporation and the Visitation Valley Jobs, Education, and Training Center. The project includes starting a business whose income will support a local youth center.

In East Palo Alto, an urban community in affluent San Mateo County with 30 percent of its population below the poverty line, Stanford students are working with community organizations to analyze data and prepare a video documentary history of the area for use by local schools. A Stanford faculty service learning institute helped 8 of 13 faculty incorporate service learning into at least one of their classes within the next year. Stanford and its East Palo Alto partners have established a clearinghouse for these projects.

In Berkeley, BACOPC is assisting the community to fight homelessness. Students from San Francisco State and UC Berkeley are working with local partners to plan services for homeless people. UC Berkeley has identified long-term strategies and recommended specific immediate actions for campus involvement in homelessness issues. The university and community are developing ways to jointly address these concerns over the long term.

In Oakland, BACOPC has assisted the city to analyze the use of Community Development Block Grant funds and to enable citizens to participate in the city's planning process; seven public information meetings have been held in the region. And UC Berkeley has given technical assistance on the development of Oakland's Urban Enhanced Enterprise Community—1 of 12 localities designated for national urban policy demonstration efforts.

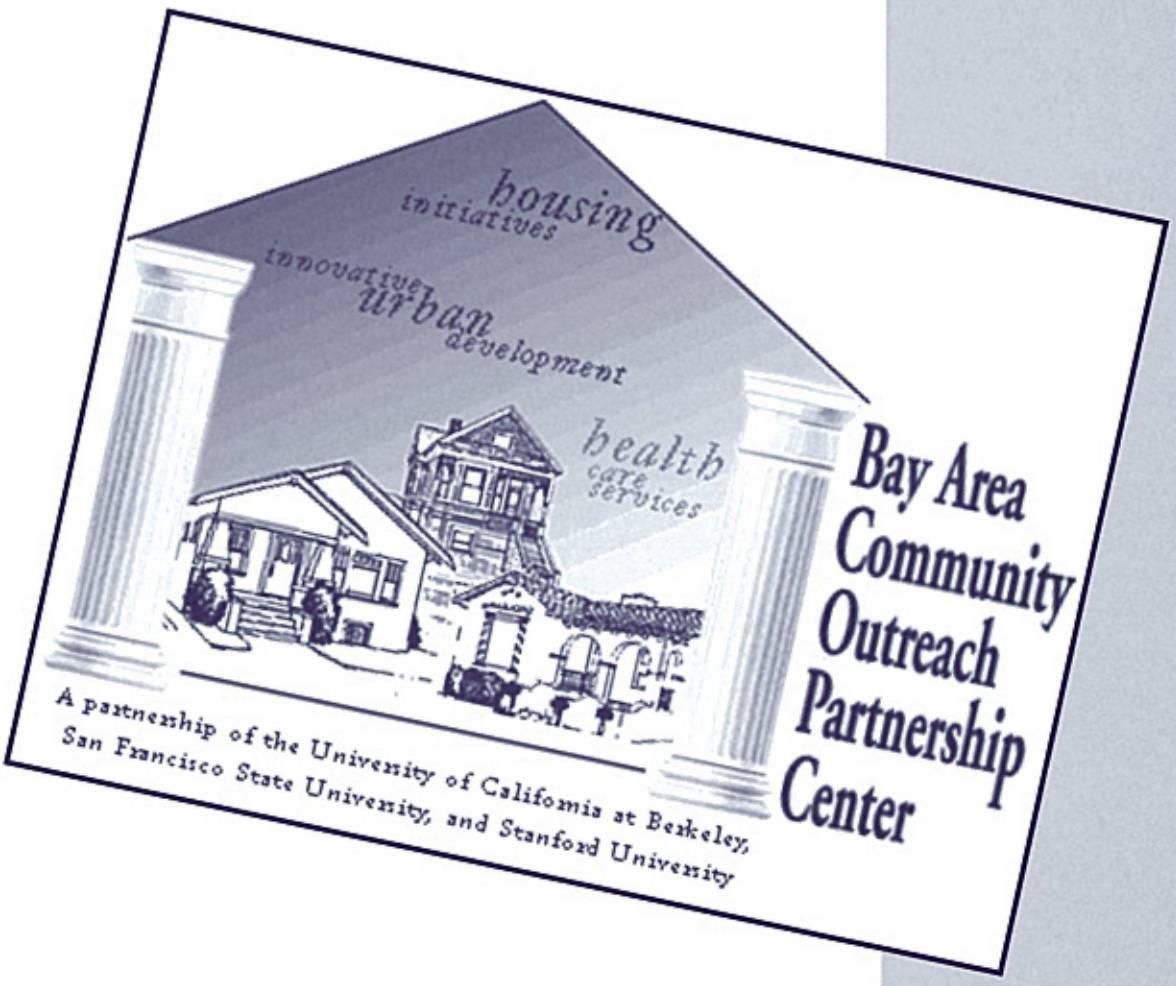
Throughout the Bay Area, the 100-member Partner Program Network has matched students and faculty of the Public and Nonprofit Management Program of UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business with a wide variety of community agencies. By July 1997, 49 projects to improve management of nonprofits were completed, with another 8 projects still in progress. Participants carried out strategic planning, developed business plans, assessed and redesigned agency management systems, and analyzed computer networking needs. For example, for the Alameda County Community Food Bank, one Haas student



**ABOVE:** ***Pam David of the San Francisco Mayor's Office of Community Development speaks at the Bay Area COPC Regional Roundtable on Economic Development and Job Training.***

analyzed the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of acquiring new space, another helped develop an operations manual for a regional food solicitation, and still another researched new options for business development. A Haas student identified resource material on existing microloan programs for the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation and improved the organization's existing procedures for borrowers.

As BACOPC begins its third year, its activities are becoming institutionalized. For example, the BACOPC Clearinghouse has conducted a community workshop on economic development and launched its new Web site at http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/bacopc. And as BACOPC continues to assist in creating local institutions to improve Bay Area daily life, each community is continuing to develop its distinct relationship with its university partner. For example, new community-building projects include developing a consolidated housing plan for San Francisco; capacity building for economic development and service integration in the Oakland neighborhoods of West Oakland, San Antonio, and Central East Oakland; establishing a homeless healthcare project in the Southside neighborhood of Berkeley; starting up the Stanford Community Development Research Institute to promote new grassroots organizations; and developing a partnership between UC Berkeley and the city of Richmond.◆




**ABOVE:** ***The BACOPC Clearinghouse's Web page at http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/bacopc.***

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