



# Neighbor To Neighbor

A Publication of Northland Neighborhoods, Inc.

Serving Neighborhoods North of the River

January 2004

## Housing Demonstration Project Brings "It's a Wonderful Life" to a Northland Family

"It's A Wonderful Life" has become a nearly obligatory holiday tradition for American families. But one Northland family will take part in a real-life version of the Frank Capra classic thanks to an innovative demonstration project created by Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. (NNI), Northland Habitat for Humanity, and the Housing and Economic Development Financial Corporation (HEDFC).

Called C.H.A.P. (Community Housing Advocacy Partnership), the project offers Irene Jacobs and the four children in her care a new affordable house and a fresh start in life. Under an agreement announced today, Northland Habitat will construct the new home, HEDFC will provide financing and technical assistance, and NNI will coordinate the project and provide support services for the family.

Elements of the partnership have been brewing for several months, but the idea crystallized after NNI received a request for a home repair grant for the Jacobs family. The Jacobs' house on NE 60th Street was not eligible for the grant because it was located outside the target area,

but NNI inspected the house to see if other ways could be found to help the family. The inspection revealed a house in desperate shape, despite Ms. Jacobs' best efforts to provide basic maintenance. "The estimate for repairs to bring the house to minimum standards of safety and livability far exceeded the value of the house. In any case, Irene had no extra resources to make any of the necessary repairs. But we couldn't just turn away from this family," says NNI executive director Jim Rice.

That's when the partnership idea began to take shape. NNI had an ongoing relationship with HEDFC to produce new and rehab housing in targeted Northland neighborhoods. NNI and Habitat had held several meetings to discuss potential partnerships. And Irene Jacobs badly needed a new house.

"Irene not only needed a new house, she deserved a new house," Rice says. "This woman struggles each week to make ends meet, but her whole life is focused on the welfare of four children—two of her own and two foster children she rescued from very difficult circumstances. When we approached her with the idea of See "It's a Wonderful Life" on page 2

## Spotlight on Volunteerism:

### *The Domestic Violence Network—An Anonymous Avenue to Help*

by Reta Jo Mitchell

When country music legend Loretta Lynn sang: "Don't come home a-drinkin' with lovin' on your mind," many no doubt chuckled. But no one laughs at the televised message depicting a little boy hiding on the stairs, recoiling at each blow he hears his mother take.

Whether triggered by drunken rages or control tantrums, too many women do sustain physical (and emotional) abuse at the hands of the men in their lives. Self-defining is the label, "Domestic Violence."

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## **Domestic Violence Network**

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In an earlier column, I described how SYNERGY assists battered women. So does another Northland based agency called the DOMESTIC VIOLENCE NETWORK. DVN functions as a center for information, and as an anonymous avenue to services and referrals for the estimated 30,000 yearly victims of abuse in the Kansas City area.

Christi Campos, in her sixth year as DVN director, explained that callers receive information on safety, health and legal services, and on financial assistance. Through organizational donation drives, DVN collects and passes on to the various shelters such bare essentials as changes of clothing and diapers. In English or Spanish, a call to 816-995-1000 becomes an immediate helpline.

I also learned that DVN personnel have on occasion served without salary and that they are headquartered for free in a rental house owned by the Faubion Methodist Church. A shortage of funds has in no way meant a diminution of help.

While I was visiting the DVN office, a call came in, really bringing this awful problem home to me. Statistics are shocking. Over 3 million American women suffer domestic violence each year; one-third of women seeking emergency medical treatment are battered. A leading cause of birth defects is battering. Almost one-third of murdered women died as a consequence of spouse/mate abuse. In 2002 alone, 19 local, female homicides were domestic-violence related.

And as the children in these tortured households grow up, the cumulative affect is often heartbreaking, for "they learn what they live."

The Kansas City area has no shortage of shelters and helplines. But there is an urgent need to throw open the blinds on this shamed, too-often secret tragedy. The is where the SILENT WITNESS DISPLAY comes in.

Silent Witness is a nationwide exhibit about domestic violence, beginning in 1990, that consists of life-size silhouettes of actual victims and the stories of their wretched lives. Five such displays portraying real, local victims will be exhibited at branches of MidContinent Library. NewHouse, a major area shelter, is providing 13 of the silhouettes; the Lee's Summit Business and Professional Women's Club, the other three. One of the silhouettes is a little child.

In a better world, I wouldn't be urging attendance at this display. But see it we must, because knowledge is the first step on the road to change. There are no violent scenes, but children may well ask what all this means. I would tell my grandchildren that "these stories are about some people who needed a lot of help."

### **SILENT WITNESS DISPLAY SCHEDULE**

Antioch Branch: Jan. 8-15  
Claycomo Branch: Feb. 5-12  
Blue Springs South Branch: Feb. 12-26  
Blue Springs North Branch: March 4-11  
North Oak Branch: March 25 - April 1

For Display information contact Jody Carroll at 816-304-7201



Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord, my Mom to  
keep...

The 24-hour-a-day DVN helpline is  
816-995-1000

## **"It's a Wonderful Life"**

*(continued from page 1)*

a new house her first response was concern about whether the kids could remain in their neighborhood schools. Irene's first priority is that those children have a stable and successful education. That spoke volumes about her character."

When representatives from Habitat, HEDFC and NNI met to work out details of the demonstration, the effort took on the working title, the "It's A Wonderful Life" project. "The message of the movie is that each individual life makes a big difference to a lot of people and, when someone is in trouble, the community comes together to help. The demonstration project is a complex financial and organizational undertaking, but the fundamental message is that same 'It's A Wonderful Life' theme," Rice says.

Under the demonstration project, Irene's house will be purchased and demolished with funds loaned by HEDFC to NNI. NNI will temporarily relocate Irene and the children while Habitat constructs a new three-bedroom home on the lot. Proceeds from the new mortgage will go into a revolving fund so that other families can benefit from the demonstration program.

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. has also set up a special fund to help furnish the Jacobs' new home. Contributions can be mailed to NNI, 5312 NE Chouteau Trafficway, KCMO 64119, or call 816/454-2000 for information on how you can help.

## We need your membership certification!!!

There is still time to get your NNI Neighborhood association certified. Several weeks ago, a form was mailed to Northland neighborhood associations. Completing those forms is required to establish or maintain official membership in NNI. This "member certification" process is necessary 1) to make sure NNI has updated information on association addresses and contact persons and, 2) to qualify an association for voting at NNI's annual meeting in June 2004.

Under NNI's by-laws, members are defined as organized and active neighborhood associations that hold open meetings, have submitted a written request for membership, and have been admitted for membership by vote of the NNI board.

If your organization has not received the form, please call Janet Shaffer at 454-2000. The information will be mailed to you promptly. If you have received the form but have not yet completed it, please do so today.

Neighborhood associations and block clubs that return the forms will receive an official NNI Member certificate. Mail to NNI at 5312 NE Chouteau Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64119 or fax to 816/454-1747.

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc.  
Board of Directors - Executive Committee

Mike Lewis	President
Doniele Kane	Vice-President
Wayne St. Vincent	Treasurer
Pam Moore	Secretary

Jim Rice - Executive Director  
Janet Shaffer - Newsletter Editor  
Christy Harris - Director of Operations

webnni@nni.org

## NNI Seniors: Senior Safety Assessment

Join Gini Toyneon, President of Creative Care Consultants on Wednesday, January 14th, 9:00am at NNI for a safety assessment of your home and to evaluate your driving abilities. Learn how to make your home safe from accidents and fall prevention.

Refreshments will be served and there will be a drawing for door prizes. For more information call: **Janet @ 454-2000.**

## Events at NNI

5312 NE Chouteau Trafficway

- |                |        |   |
|----------------|--------|---|
| <b>Jan. 1</b>  |        | Office Closed                               |
| <b>Jan. 8</b>  | 7:00pm | Greenhaven Neighborhood Mtg                 |
| <b>Jan. 9</b>  | 7:00pm | Turn About Wood Reception                   |
| <b>Jan. 12</b> | 6:30pm | NNI Board Mtg.                              |
| <b>Jan. 14</b> | 9:00am | Senior's Workshop                           |
| <b>Jan. 19</b> |        | Office Closed<br>Martin Luther King Jr. Day |
| <b>Jan. 26</b> | 6:00pm | Meet Your Councilman                        |
| <b>Jan. 26</b> | 7:00pm | Leader's Mtg.                               |



## Happy Holidays



The staff at Northland Neighborhoods would like to wish you and your family a Happy Holiday Season.

We thank you for your hard work and dedication to make our northland community a huge success.

*Jim Rice*

*Christy Harris*

*Lola McCloud*

*Yvonne Herrick*

*Nathan Pare'*

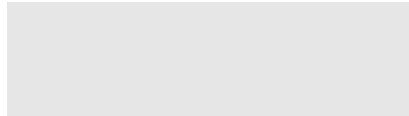
*Janet Shaffer*

*Jenny Ellis*

*Mark Morales*

*Ricki Carter*

Northland Neighborhoods, Inc.  
5312 NE Chouteau Trafficway  
Kansas City, MO 64119



**Northland Neighborhood leaders** will meet Monday, January 26 at NNI to talk with council members and discuss several upcoming programs and initiatives. NNI staff will be on hand to answer questions about NNI. The meeting begins with chats with City Council members at 6 pm followed by the roundtable discussion at 7pm.

**The NNI Board of Directors will meet January 12 at 6:30 pm.**

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## **Free Income Tax Services Sponsored by NNI**

Beginning in February 2004, Northland Neighborhoods, Inc. will sponsor free income tax services through Liberty Tax Service.

NNI offers this service to residents of the Northland who are senior citizens, disabled or low income.

For more information and to pick up your free certificate, call Janet @ 454-2000.