



CHRISTIAN  
ACTIVITIES  
COUNCIL

Breaking Barriers  
Building Communities

SEPTEMBER 2010

# Bridges

NEWS FROM THE CHRISTIAN ACTIVITIES COUNCIL √ 36 UCC CHURCHES IN MISSION TO GREATER HARTFORD

## Comprehensive Community Development An emerging process in North Hartford

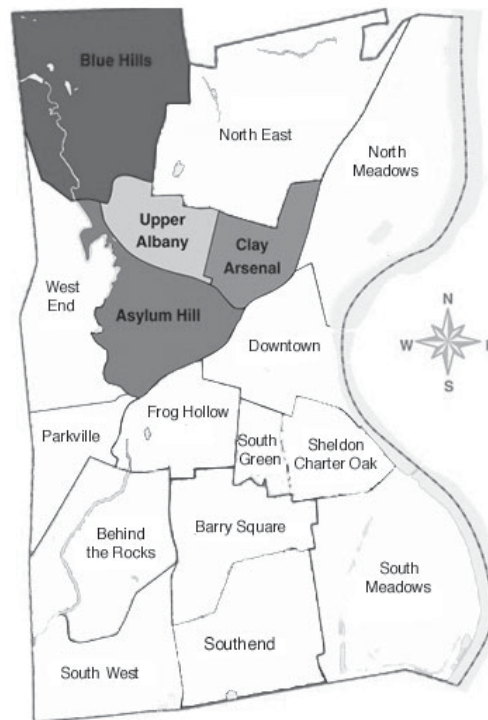
**T**he CAC has made huge strides on the Upper Albany Revitalization Initiative over the past decade—from affordable housing and neighborhood organization to financial literacy and healthy homes. Yet many Northend neighborhoods remain trapped in a cycle of poverty, and the welfare and quality of life of their residents have continued to decline.

One organization such as ours can accomplish only so much on its own, and the problems of one neighborhood cannot be addressed in isolation from its surrounding neighborhoods. To effect deeper and more lasting change, we have expanded our outreach through Comprehensive Community Development (CCD), a strategy of partnering with leaders and organizations in surrounding neighborhoods to bring about results beyond which each could individually.

### A Multi-Neighborhood Approach

To this end, we are working with community leaders from three of our adjacent neighborhoods: Asylum Hill, Blue Hills,

Upper Albany, and Clay Arsenal. Each of these neighborhoods can benefit from CCD. None has all the resources it needs to serve its respective population, and each



**Hartford's Neighborhoods**  
CAC's CCD initiative comprises those neighborhoods in the shaded areas

can be enriched by actively sharing resources and strategies across neighborhood boundaries. For instance:

### The CCD Approach

The potential of CCD lies in the identification and creation of strategic set of disparate program approaches, planned by local leadership, to be carried out by a wide array of partners that, when achieved, yield results beyond what these programs can achieve by themselves, because of the value they add to each other.

*CCD Consultant Jim Capraro*

- Asylum Hill has a major hospital (St. Francis), several insurance companies, a community development corporation, the Urban League and Boys and Girls Club;
- Blue Hills has a high level of homeownership, a major university (University of Hartford) and an active social service organization;
- Clay Arsenal has an impressive new YMCA, a major health center and a CDC;
- Upper Albany has a fine arts institution (Artist Collective), Upper Albany Main Street which works with the commercial corridor, and the CAC;

*(continues on page 3)*

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## Metropolitan Training & Advancement

### Immersion for Saint Francis Medical Residents

Cultural competency and the elimination of racial disparities go beyond traditional training when it comes to healthcare services. That's why we've offered inner city immersions to first- and second-year residents of Saint Francis Hospital Medical Center (SFHMC) Family Medicine Residency Program for the past 17 years.

In June, 2010, 10 participants from residency program attended an inner city immersion led by Rev. Edwin Ayala and Denise Best. The group was introduced to Hartford's signs of hope with a special emphasis on racial disparities in healthcare. This is phase one of a two-phase immersion program offered annually to SFHMC. The second phase is a fall immersion in Puerto Rico with second-year residents.

### Church Fellowship in the Fall

Beginning September 2010, reverends Donald Steinle, Edwin Ayala and Damaris Whittaker will be available to visit our partner congregations. Our goal is to visit two congregations each month to preach, worship and extend greetings from the CAC.

Please contact Rev. Edwin Ayala to schedule a visit with your congregation. We look forward to worshipping with you and sharing the great work we are doing at the CAC.

# Adventures in the City

## Featured Funders

**M**any thanks to Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, a long-time supporter of Adventures in the City Summer Educational Enrichment Program. This year, the foundation awarded \$37,500 to the educational program and an additional \$4,000 to the Counselors in Training Program.

And it was a beautiful morning when we were pleasantly surprised by a visit from representatives from TD Bank and a donation in the amount of \$5,000.

We are also grateful to all of the other organizations, friends and churches that so generously



*TD Bank representatives Chris Traczyk, Melissa Gran and Heidi Capodanno present the banks' generous \$5,000 donation toward Adventures In the City.*

## Birdies for Charity



For the first time, the CAC participated in Birdies for Charity, a fundraising effort sponsored by the

Travelers Championship golf tournament; J.H. Cohn LLP, a national accounting firm; and endorsing sponsor, the Connecticut Association of Nonprofits. The CAC finished with 54 pledges and various one-time donations.

"We are grateful for all pledges and donations," said Damaris Whittaker who led the campaign. "Our hope is to finish as one of the top ten non-profits next year."

All donations through Birdies for Charity will support our

contribute to the AIC, including these foundations: the Bissell Foundation, Goldfarb Foundation, Robinson Foundation, Ensworth Foundation, Fisher Foundation, Hoffman Mabel Foundation, Long Foundation and the Fund Greater Hartford Foundation.

Adventures in the City Summer Education Enrichment program and Zizzo House.

## Lend a Hand

**D**o you have time or talent you'd like to donate? We have volunteer opportunities for whatever talent you would like to contribute. Here are a few possibilities:

- Tutors for elementary school children
- Financial analysis
- Fundraising
- Research
- Communications

Please call Damaris Whittaker at 860-527-9860 to volunteer your time and talents.

# Comprehensive Community Development *(continued from page 1)*

- Each neighborhood has an NRZ, each with differing strengths and strategies.

When you add churches and other social organizations, it is quite an array. What a wonderful opportunity to share the resources of each neighborhood to strengthen the whole!

“Rarely in the City of Hartford have so many people gathered to seek ways to share resources and improve the quality of life of our respective communities.”

## What Have We Accomplished?

The CAC has helped to initiate the CCD process with guidance and assistance from Jim Capraro of Chicago, whose services have been provided through the local LISC office.

Beginning in the fall of 2009, CAC staff interviewed nearly 40 community leaders and stakeholders in the four neighborhoods using a format that gathered perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). The data collected was compiled, categorized under various topics, and presented to several groups.

Two planning meetings have been held and another scheduled. All told nearly 70 leaders have been involved in the process.

## What Lies Ahead?

On April 17, an extended session designed to produce a

neighborhood vision was held with nearly 100 stakeholders and community leaders in attendance. Jim Capraro was present to guide us on this very important occasion. Congressman John Larson was also there.

Task forces were formed with participants from all neighborhoods, and each was assigned one or more topics (public safety, housing, economic development and employment, education and health). Over a couple of months, these task forces will reconvene to develop and implement specific strategies and concrete actions to achieve the vision for their assigned topic area(s).

Upon completing their tasks, the task forces will reconvene to present their strategies and actions to the Assembly for adoption. More than a plan, this CCD document will become an “agreement” or “covenant” by and for the target neighborhood.

It is fair to say that rarely in the City of Hartford have so many people gathered across neighborhood boundaries to seek ways together to share resources and improve the quality of life of our respective communities. What an exciting prospect!



*A glimpse of one of our landscaping projects*

## Housing Programs

### Housing Development

The CAC is in the process of buying the property at 270-272 Capen Street, a two-family foreclosure property. Our intent is to sell the property to a first-time homebuyer as part of Hartford’s Neighborhood Stabilization Program.

Other housing activity includes securing financial resources to complete construction of 54-56 Edgewood Street, a six-unit condominium for low-income persons, and to continue our new Healthy Homes Program.

We are pleased to report that all our completed properties on Edgewood Street have been sold!

### Neighborhood Beautification

The CAC has a landscaping plan for the Upper Albany Neighborhood, designed by Nicola Allen, a Burton Street resident. Our landscaping efforts began in 2009 at 345-347 Sigourney Street. In the spring of 2010, staff member Shawn Hallaway collaborated with volunteers from First Church of Glastonbury to landscape four additional properties on Sigourney Street. We are grateful to First Church of Glastonbury and Paul Fraleigh who led the project.

As we continue raise funds, we’ll set our landscaping sights to the neighborhoods west of Burton Street.

# Join us in welcoming our new staff



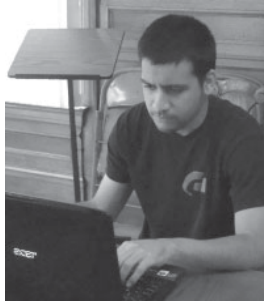
**D**enise Best has joined the CAC to lead our Comprehensive Community development effort in

Hartford's Northend. She comes to us from Trinity College where she was the director of graduate studies and special academic programs. Denise retired from Trinity in December 2009.

"I am excited about working and partnering with so many dedicated professionals who have the community's best interest at heart," Denise says.

Denise is an Upper Albany resident and an original plaintiff with the Sheff vs. O'Neil discrimination suit. She sits on the boards of several community organizations, including Upper Albany Main Street, the Deerfield Avenue Pride Block Association and Upper Albany Weed & Seed.

She has received awards from the CT Department of Higher Education, the New England Council for Continuing Education, the Educational Press Association of America, Literacy Volunteers, Upper Albany Main Street and the City of Hartford.



**C**esar Herrera has joined the CAC as a graphic design intern and is working closely with Damaris

Whittaker in the redesign of our promotional materials and other projects. He will be graduating in the fall of 2010 from Central Connecticut State University with a major in industrial technology and a specialization in graphics. Cesar previously worked at the CAC as an assistant to Rev. Edwin Ayala.

We are grateful for the contributions that Cesar is already making to our organization!

## Christian Activities Council Annual Awards Dinner

Thursday, October 28, 2010  
Bond Hotel Ballroom  
Hartford, CT

Outstanding Music!  
Great Food! Please join us!

**Christian Activities Council, Congregational**  
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### Staff

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**The Rev. Edwin Ayala**  
Associate Director CAC  
Director, MTAI

**Michelle Roberts**  
Office Manager

**The Rev. Nancy Allen**  
Assistant Director, MTAI

**Denise Best**  
CCD Coordinator

**Ken Esposito**  
Congregational Organizer,  
Universal Health Care

**Flora Foster**  
Office Assistant

**Sandra Foster**  
Resident Service Coordinator,  
Zezzo House

**Tori Hamilton**  
Housing Counseling Specialist


**Ralph Knighton**  
Community Development  
Director

**Antwan Morris**  
Resident Organizer

**The Rev. John Selders**  
Program Coordinator,  
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**Damaris Whittaker**  
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**Kathy Simpson**  
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