

The Local Initiatives Support Corporation is dedicated to helping resident-led, community based development organizations transform distressed neighborhoods into healthy communities of choice and opportunity - good places to work, do business and raise children.

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LISC CEO Celebrates 20th Anniversaries

On October 1, 2008, Michigan LISC was honored to have LISC CEO Michael Rubinger visit for Kalamazoo and Grand Rapids' 20th Anniversary celebrations. The two day event honored the visionaries, stakeholders and financial supporters who make LISC's work in Michigan possible. Mr. Rubinger presented the MI LISC program with a \$290,000 HUD Section IV federal funding check from National LISC.



LISC CEO Michael Rubinger speaks during the Kalamazoo Gala Event.

In Kalamazoo, the Local Advisory Committee (LAC) held a gala event which was sponsored by State Farm. Twenty honorees were acknowledged by LISC for improving the lives of Kalamazoo residents. The 20 honorees exemplified LISC's mission to



20 Heroes of Kalamazoo Community Development: Front Row L to R: Kathy White, Mattie Jordan-Woods 2nd Row L to R: Phil Carra, Tim Lemanski, Tammy Barnard, Don Jones, Bryan Zocker, Ken Nacci, Diane Schrock, Ellen Kisinger-Rothi 3rd Row L to R: Jack Hopkins, Holly Fisher, Erma Gordan, Bob Ezell, Juan Oliverez

Microenterprise: Moving Forward in Michigan



Sue Peters speaks at the Microenterprise conference held at Lawrence Tech.

This one-day conference, the second in the series of Building Sustainable Communities, presented providers and policymakers an overview of the state of microenterprise in Michigan, highlighted innovations and best practices, and allowed participants to offer feedback on a plan to keep microenterprise moving forward in Michigan. This unique opportunity to get informed and updated on the proven community development tool of microenterprise featured speakers: Lisa Katz - Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, Dennis West - Northern Initiatives, Rose Jaspersen - Nebraska Enterprise Fund, Harry Ford - The Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, and Tamra Thetford - the Aspen Institute. Over 100 people attended and provided significant information on next steps and a policy agenda on microenterprise in Michigan. If you would like more information about this event or microenterprise contact, program officer, Sue Peters at speters@lisc.org.

LISC CEO Celebrates 20th Anniversaries *(continued)*



Louis Berra, Juan Oliverez, Bob Doud, Fred Upton, Tim Lemanski and Ed Sackley at the Gala Event in Kalamazoo.

transform distressed communities and neighborhoods into sustainable communities-- good places to live, do business, work and raise families.

In Grand Rapids, LISC has accomplished significant outcomes in neighborhood revitalization with the assistance of local CDCs. To honor those who have gone above and beyond the call of duty, the Grand

Rapids LAC, along with Michael Rubinger recognized two individuals and a local organization for their contributions in underserved areas.

National City Bank was awarded the 2008 Community Champion Award for their exemplary financing of affordable housing and commercial space. George Larimore of Grubb & Ellis | Paramount Commerce received the 2008 Community Leader Award for his valued commitment to setting standards of excellence in community development; and Denny Sturtevant of Dwelling Place of Grand Rapids was awarded the 2008 Community Leader Award for his vision, advocacy and leadership in neighborhood revitalization across the city. These outstanding community development partners truly deserve our congratulations.

L - R: George Larimore, Tahirih, Ziegler, Susan Giiian-Wilson, Michael Rubinger, and Denny Sturtevant walk "The Avenue for the Arts" in downtown Grand Rapids.



Sean Welsh & Jason Paulateer from National City Bank accept an award as LISC CEO Michael Rubinger looks on, during the Grand Rapids ceremony.



Kalamazoo LISC Annual Meeting

Kalamazoo LISC held its annual meeting on November 18, 2008 at the Fetzer Center sponsored by Western Michigan University. In total, 62 community leaders attended the event, which was chaired by Robert Doud, of the LISC Local Advisory Committee (LAC).

Tahirih Ziegler provided highlights of LISCs work during 2008, acknowledging the 15 year anniversary of the LISC AmeriCorps program. Ellen Kisinger-Rothi gave a report on the 2008 accomplishments of the LISC Affordable Housing Partnership (AHP) and premiered the video *Opening Doors; Ending Homelessness*, which reviews the

progress made on the LISC/AHP 10 year plan to end homelessness. Steve Denefeld gave a presentation on the 2008 accomplishments of the LISC Neighborhood Revitalization Committee and presented National City Bank with the 2008 Neighborhood Revitalization Award.

Additionally, Jack Hopkins presented Ellen Kisinger-Rothi with the 2008 LISC/AHP Door Prize, an award given to a community leader with outstanding achievements in the community development field. For more information, contact Assistant Program Officer, Michelle Schneider at mschneider@lisc.org.



Tahirih Ziegler (left) and Jack Hopkins (right) present Ellen Kisinger-Rothi (center) the Annual LISC/AHP Door Prize.

Go Green Garden - Grand Rapids

LISC believes that for a neighborhood to encourage strong minds and bodies, children need places to learn and grow. Using a \$3,000 grant provided by LISC, the South East Community Association (SECA) transformed a vacant city-owned lot into an urban garden in the Madison Square Business District.

The Go Green Garden is now a hands-on learning tool that provides leadership, skill-building and positive recreational opportunities to youth in the neighborhood. Other partners included the City of Grand Rapids and Lighthouse Communities, Inc. The Go Green Garden contributes to the city's Neighborhood Revitalization Strategy Area outcome of "increasing neighborhood-based leadership and involvement" and helps SECA to connect in a tangible way to the larger community and the Green Grand Rapids Project.



Lamont George, LISC Program Officer
Tom Pfister, Jamarius Bartee, SECA
Community Organizer Arnice Riley and
Troncy Rientstra pose in the Go Green
Garden.

Twenty to thirty neighborhood youth have learned to plant, nurture and harvest a variety of healthy foods such as tomatoes, collard greens, turnips, beets, beans, onions, cucumbers and strawberries. For some of the children it is their first seed to mouth experience. Annuals and perennials

brighten the garden landscape and the business corridor, and give residents a destination place for nightly walks three seasons of the year.

This year's plans are already underway and include expansion into two new sites. The garden has become a source of local pride and has been instrumental in developing a healthy environment and lifestyle for residents in the community. For more information contact Program Officer, Tom Pfister at tpfister@lisc.org.

Greening the Carrier Crest Apartments

Located in a former convent adjacent to the Creston Business District, Carrier Crest Apartments was one of the first senior affordable housing developments in Grand Rapids. Developed by a partnership between the Creston Neighborhood Association and the Creston Nonprofit Housing Corporation in 1991, this well maintained two-story brick building has six efficiency apartments and six one-bedroom units. The 15 year tax credit compliance period is expiring, but the partnership's goal is to continue to provide affordable apartments to seniors while at the same time "greening" upgrades during rehabilitation for energy efficiency.

With a \$3,000 technical assistance grant from National LISC, the Creston Neighborhood Association will hire a green consultant to write an integrated design that will determine priorities of green initiatives and write payback estimates and specifications. LISC is known for providing creative funding to secure professional expertise for early-stage

real estate development endeavors. The partnership will then secure financing for the rehabilitation of Carrier Crest, contributing to Grand Rapids' notoriety of being both an affordable and green community. For more information, contact Program Officer, Tom Pfister at tpfister@lisc.org.



Resident Connie Lindsey gets assistance from
Christa Lenssen, Creston Neighborhood
Association VISTA AmeriCorps

Coming Soon:

The report 'The Past, Present and Future of Microenterprise in Grand Rapids'. This report will be posted at www.lisc.org/michigan/resources once it is available.

Berridge Place - Flint

In December of 2008, the Genesee County Land Bank (GCLB) and Court Street Village Nonprofit Housing Corporation (CSV) held the grand opening ceremony for the newly restored Berridge Place in Flint, MI. This project involved the renovation of a historic Flint hotel (Built in 1928) into 17 urban loft-style mixed-income apartments and two commercial spaces that will convert to a condominium development in the next five



Front entrance of the historically renovated Berridge Place, formerly the Berridge Hotel located in downtown Flint.

years. This project included the renovation of the historic Tinlinn House, a four unit apartment building, located adjacent to the Berridge Place.

Over the years, these structures fell into significant disrepair, and quickly became a

source of blight and illegal activities. In 2004, neighborhood residents approached the GCLB to support a new vision for these structures in Flint's downtown historic district. This vision was supported with a \$50,000 recoverable grant from LISC.

Despite significant development barriers, GCLB and CSV were able to assemble construction and permanent financing from 18 different funding sources, including philanthropy and tax credits. LISC provided the sole construction and permanent financing of \$1.38 million for this \$6.2 million development. For more information, contact Senior Program Officer, Michael Freeman at mfreeman@lisc.org.



Interior of one of 17 new units in the Berridge Place.

LISC AmeriCorps Members Help in New Orleans



A LISC AmeriCorps member works to repair fences for a New Orleans family.

In September 2008, the Michigan LISC program welcomed 27 new LISC AmeriCorps members into the 2008-2009 program year and celebrated the 15 year anniversary of the LISC AmeriCorps program. Members are serving at community development host site organizations across the state in Kalamazoo, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Flint and Detroit. Members are working in communities to build and maintain safe affordable housing, recruit volunteers, form and strengthen neighborhood resident groups, support Centers for Working

Families sites and prevent foreclosures. Additionally, eight Michigan LISC Members are serving the MSHDA Cities of Promise program in Benton Harbor, Muskegon Heights, Saginaw, Flint, Pontiac, Hamtramck, Highland Park and Detroit to provide intensive assistance to each city's Safe Routes to School project and other physical transformation projects in the eight poorest cities in the state. Over the next year, members will positively impact the capacity of their host sites to "get things done" and assist in

empowering community residents to take leadership roles in their communities.

In October, 2008, all of the Michigan LISC AmeriCorps members joined their peers across the country in New Orleans, LA for a week of training and service to assist Hurricane Katrina and Rita survivors. Members spent two days in skills training and two days working directly with New Orleans Preservation Society rebuilding flood damaged homes in the lower 9th Ward of New Orleans. Over the course of two days, the members worked on more than 10 homes by gutting properties', clearing yards of debris, painting home and garage exteriors, and building and painting new fences to replace those destroyed by flooding. For more information contact Program Officer, Sonja Dean at sdean@lisc.org.



LISC AmeriCorps members work together to clear debris from a New Orleans home.