



**COMMUNITY BUILDERS
NETWORK OF METRO ST. LOUIS**

2013 ANNUAL REVIEW



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Front Cover: Nate Johnson, Jeanne Marra, Alex Fennoy, Kevin Buchek
Top: Sal Martinez,, Charles Bryson, Cynthia Jordon, Pastor Mike Jones, Deacon James Joiner
Bottom: Reggie Scott and Mary Campbell

A Letter from the Staff

The Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis (CBN) has enjoyed an eventful second year. With support from the *University of Missouri- St. Louis Des Lee Creating Whole Communities Initiative* and the great participation of Network members, we have continued to stay focused on our three primary goals of fostering stronger community building organizations, strengthening our community building system, and raising awareness about the importance to the region of building strong neighborhoods.

Throughout the year we have focused our efforts in organizational capacity building on financial sustainability and collaboration. We also updated our online resource manual and conducted our annual organizational assessment survey which informs future capacity building programming.

Policy advocacy and development has become a growing part of the Network's activity. By coming together around a set of policy recommendations, the network has been able to engage in policy discussions with the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, and the St. Louis Economic

Development Partnership Strategic Planning Process. Looking to 2014, CBN will be embarking on a task force with the Metropolitan St. Louis CRA Association to explore ways to strengthen our local community building system.

CBN worked with the University of Missouri St. Louis and the Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation on a series of events for funders on place based community building.

2013 also saw significant change in the City of St. Louis. The Department of Housing and Urban Development worked with the City to change its Community Development Block Grant and HOME grant process away from ward-based granting to a centralized grant process. CBN provided a forum where members can share information about the process and get feedback on their grant applications. CBN also advocated for greater objectivity and transparency in the granting process.

Before we close, we want to extend a warm welcome to new members, Hamilton Heights Neighborhood Organization and Gateway Housing Foundation, as well as a new resource partner for the Network, Urban Strategies. We also want to give a fond



Ernecia Coles receives CBN Award from Rev. Starsky Wilson

farewell to David Whiteman, Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council, as he retires. We will miss your participation in the Network.

CBN's mission and work from the beginning has been to support the St. Louis region's neighborhoods, the people that live there, and is done in recognition of their importance to regional vibrancy. Thank you for a great second year and high hopes for 2014.

Thank you,
Karl Guenther and Todd Swanstrom

Year in Review

Fostering Strong Organizations

CBN's Organizational Capacity Building Committee has been focused on activities and strategies that will help individual organizations increase their ability to do the important work their communities ask of them. Throughout the last year, the Network has put time and effort into:

- Updating the online resource library
- Training and support on financial sustainability and collaboration
- Hosting a CBN book club on current research, best practices, and leading thinking in the field
- Providing access to trainings through the Des Lee Creating Whole Communities Scholarship
- Exploring relationships with professional development providers
- Making the organizational assessment an annual activity of the network
- Providing peer review support to organizations applying for Community Development Block Grant funding in the City of St. Louis

Two of the Network's most significant initiatives to date have been the financial sustainability and collaboration ladders of capacity building. 12 organizations went through the financial sustainability workshop with three organizations

completing the whole capacity building series earning a mini-grant to increase their financial sustainability. Currently four collaborations, comprised of 12 organizations, are working through the second of four phases in the collaboration ladder of capacity building. Through technical support and mini-grant resources, CBN hopes to foster larger scale community building collaborations.

Creating a Strong Community Building System

The Network's Civic Capacity Building Committee is responsible for fostering a strong community building system in the region to increase effective investment in our region's neighborhoods. CBN recognizes that our region is at its best when the public, private, and nonprofit sectors are working together. For that reason, we have:

- Researched and developed policy recommendations for each sector in the region, St. Louis City, and St. Louis County
- Discussed policy opportunities with St. Louis City officials and alderpersons, St. Louis County, and the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership
- Placed an op-ed in local news outlets advocating for more objectivity and transparency in CDBG and HOME grant programs in the City of St. Louis

- Worked with UMSL and the Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation to bring David Erickson from the San Francisco Federal Reserve to St. Louis to present on place-based community building
- Developed a proposal to the City of St. Louis to help increase community engagement in the next Consolidated Planning Process

Raising the Community Building Sector's Profile

One reason CBN members came together was to collectively tell the story of the important work they do building vibrant neighborhoods that create a stronger and more competitive regional economy. To raise the profile of all those who do community building, CBN:

- Continued to publish the bi-weekly St. Louis Community Builders Exchange in partnership with Home Repair Network and St. Louis Federal Reserve Office of Community Development
- Introduced a new website and newsletter design to better communicate information
- Hosted the first annual CBN Awards Reception honoring organizations, businesses, and individuals in all sectors for their outstanding work in community building

2013 Timeline

January:

- New website and newsletter formats are launched
- Second financial sustainability workshop held and ladder of capacity building began
- Approved regional policy recommendations

February:

- Approved policy recommendations for the City of St. Louis
- Advocated for more objectivity and transparency in City of St. Louis community development grant programs

April:

- First Annual CBN Awards Reception held at Il Monastero at St. Louis University
- Awarded financial sustainability mini-grants
- Approved policy recommendations for St. Louis County

May:

- Collaboration Workshop and Ladder of Capacity Building began
- CBN Board President and Vice President publish op-ed on HUD changes to the City of St. Louis HUD funded grant programs in St. Louis Beacon and Post-Dispatch

June-August:

- Coordinated CBN member feedback on draft St. Louis Community Development Administration CDBG and HOME Grant
- Provided peer review opportunity for CBN members applying for CDBG and HOME funding from the City of St. Louis
- 2013 CBN organizational assessment conducted

September:

- Began work with the St. Louis University Legal Clinic to complete forms needed to file for tax exempt status
- Began conversations with professional development providers about better communication and coordination with the community building sector
- Worked with UMSL and the Greater Saint Louis Community Foundation to host an event on what is working in America's communities with David Erickson from the San Francisco Federal Reserve
- Held the first CBN Book Club meeting to help leaders stay connected to current research and practices

October:

- Developed draft white paper on policy opportunities for St. Louis County
- Held fall CBN meeting to review the year's work and discuss 2014 goals
- Developed and approved CBN proposal to encourage public participation in the City of St. Louis' Consolidated Planning Process

December:

- Met with St. Louis County Planning Department about policy opportunities and collaboration

CBN Members

General Members:

Beyond Housing
Carondelet Community Betterment Foundation and Housing Corporation
Community Action Agency of St. Louis County
Community Renewal and Development, Inc.
Cornerstone Corporation
DeSales Community Housing Corporation
Dutchtown South Community Corporation
Gateway Housing Foundation
Grace Hill Settlement House
Grand Oak Hill Community Corporation
Greater Ville Neighborhood Preservation Association
Habitat for Humanity St. Louis
Hamilton Heights Neighborhood Association
Lemay Development Corporation
Lemay Housing Partnership
Lutheran Housing Support
North Newstead Association
Northside Community Housing, Inc.
Old North St. Louis Restoration Group
Park Central Development
Rebuilding Together St. Louis
Riverview West Florissant Development Corporation
Saint Charles County Housing Corporation
Saint Louis Association of Community Organizations
Saint Vincent Greenway, Inc.
Shaw Neighborhood Housing Corporation
Skinker DeBaliviere Community Council
Southwest Garden Neighborhood Association

Resource Partner Members:

Rise
Urban Strategies

For more information on these organizations and the Community Builders Network of Metro St. Louis contact Karl Guenther at guentherk@umsl.edu and visit us online at

www.communitybuildersstl.org