

### **7. Strengthening the Organizational Capacity of Lansdowne**

Lansdowne has a variety of opportunities that can be embraced by the community and result in real positive change in the area. It will take the involvement and commitment of all residents in order to obtain any measure of success. The history of community development has shown that the presence of a strong and effective neighborhood organization is a minimum requirement if a significant amount of improvement is to be achieved. The Lansdowne neighborhood faces many difficult issues that need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of living within the community. Among these concerns is the lack of residential participation in confronting these matters. It is therefore a priority to increase participation and involvement in community development throughout the community. This should be achieved using a neighborhood organization as the main vehicle for organizing and involving residents.

The Lansdowne neighborhood is served by one such organization, the Lansdowne Steering Committee. This organization has been an active voice in the community for several years; however there is a significant need to increase interest from more residents and active participation must be greatly increased.

#### **Strategy**

One of the major goals of the Lansdowne Steering Committee is to increase their organizational capacity, thus becoming a diverse and valuable resource for future development plans. Another important initiative of the Committee is to create programs to improve educational and career opportunities of local residents. The following proposals address these concerns by outlining thorough and comprehensive suggestions for achieving improvement in these areas.

#### **Programs**

Through a collaborative planning process of residential survey feedback, monthly meetings, and presentations, the residents of Lansdowne along with students from the University of Illinois, have determined specific programs to be implemented in order to increase organizational capacity and improve human capital in the community. The first program will serve the function of attracting new members and increasing resident participation. The increased membership and participation will be necessary for the creation of the Lansdowne Directory, the second program. Next, CareerBuild would work on increasing human capital, possibly

# 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

utilizing the Lansdowne Directory or Neighborhood Databank. The fourth project would involve a great deal of manual labor and the security of a tight community network. Lansdowne Steering Committee will create an Organizational Capacity Committee that will implement the following programs:

1. **Meet Your Neighbors**
2. **Block captains**
3. **Lansdowne Directory**
4. **CareerBuild**
5. **Lansdowne Works**

## *1.1 Meet Your Neighbors*

### **Program Description:**

This program attempts to strengthen the relationship between Lansdowne residents through neighborhood events and outreach. Examples of events could be block group barbeques where people in a small section of the neighborhood get together to eat, talk and get to know each other; it could be larger scale events in Jones park or door knocking to invite people to participate in meetings and events. The sub committee will plan the specific events that will be implemented.

### **Rationale:**

In order for a community organization to be successful, strong residential relationships must be established. This program will allow residents to form the networks necessary to be an effective community resource. It will create an opportunity for residents to become acquainted with one another and to build community networks and support groups.

Meet Your Neighbors will provide knowledge and awareness of the Lansdowne Steering Committee's purpose and mission, as well as work to recruit more members to make it a larger and more productive organization.

### **Model Programs:**

There are a number of examples of strong, effective neighborhood organizations currently working in various neighborhoods of East St. Louis. These groups have all completed a similar process, which includes a series of community outreach and membership expansion efforts.

## 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

Contacting the leaders of these groups to help focus and determine previous lessons learned would aid LSC in their efforts to increase membership. There are also many other examples of neighborhood organizations in other parts of the country that have been successful in generating a broad base of community support. The Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston provides an excellent lesson on neighborhood organizing and creating citizen involvement. This grassroots organizing initiative worked to revitalize and redevelop their neighborhood into a thriving community.

### **Lead and Participating Agencies & Technical Assistance Providers:**

- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee (LSC)
- ?? Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center (NTAC)
- ?? East St. Louis Action Research Project (ESLARP)
- ?? Local churches

### **Activities:**

1. Hold a meeting of the current LSC members and create a sub-committee for Meet Your Neighbors to discuss timeline and goals.
2. Create timeline, including the desired events.
3. Contact local leaders to encourage residential support and coordinate talents.
4. Develop a multi-faceted fundraising plan to cover proposed project activities to include contributions from the following sources: family membership, institution membership, grassroots fundraising events, (i.e. annual dinner, raffle, ad book, etc.), religious funding opportunities, government grants and contracts, corporate donations and foundation support. Staff at NTAC and students involved with ESLARP can be of assistance with this.
5. Find a location to hold the first event (could possibly be an outdoor barbeque with live music in local park or vacant lot).
6. Do a comprehensive mailing campaign, sending flyers to all residents. Door-to-door flyering is also a practical method.
7. Establish a telephone tree to contact as many residents of Lansdowne as possible. Send out a press release announcing the event.
8. At the event, encourage socializing and sign up new members.

## 2001 LANSLOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

9. At the next committee meeting of Meet Your Neighbors, compile a list of all members to be used for the Neighborhood Databank (*see 7.2*)

For future events, follow similar methods of planning and publicity campaign. Smaller events can be planned in block groups under the leadership of block captains (see next program)

### **Required Resources:**

- ?? Large residential support
- ?? LSC
- ?? NTAC
- ?? ESLARP
- ?? Locations to hold events

### **Funding Needs:**

The funding needs for the Meet Your Neighbors program will vary from year to year as the number of events and members increase. For the first year, the main costs incurred will be for publicity (flyers, letters, press release, etc.). Additional expenses will include food for events, and other entertainment.

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

Local food suppliers can be solicited for donated or discounted foods in return for advertising their products on flyers etc.. Residents could provide musical entertainment, which may help to publicize their own careers. There could be a small fee to participate in events. Additional funding should be researched.

### **Timeline:**

The process of publicizing Meet Your Neighbors should take approximately three months. It would be preferable to begin this work immediately, so that the warmer months can be utilized for outdoor activities. Indoor activities can take place in the winter, but it would be better to start with outdoor activities to provide the visual presence of the LSC that residents stressed was so essential.

## *1.2 Block Captains*

### **Program Description:**

This program assigns block captains all over the Lansdowne neighborhood. Once block captains are chosen, the block captain will have his/her office in his/her home. This home office will provide a center for block administration. It will also serve as a branch of the Lansdowne Steering Committee and will help as a center to relay information from the neighborhood organization to the people of each particular block. This program will help to provide organization and a focus for neighborhood improvement activities.

### **Rationale:**

This program is being implemented to help organize the neighborhood and to establish leaders of the community. It will help to voice the opinions and concerns of the people of each individual block by taking the efforts of the community to a more personal level. People often feel that their opinions and feelings are unheard in the larger context and are more comfortable voicing their concerns and ideas in a smaller setting. This program will help to make the people of the community heard and establish a person and a place to whom to voice concerns. This program will also supplement other programs of the community that require the leadership position of a block captain.

### **Model Programs:**

This program can in principle be compared to the well known “neighborhood watch” program. Although “neighborhood watch” is specifically designed to unite a neighborhood to protect against crime, it calls for block leaders in a similar fashion as we suggest here. The leader’s home serves as the block’s center and is the place where information from the local police department is relayed to the people of the neighborhood, just as the home office and block captain will serve to relay information from the Lansdowne Steering Committee and other sources of information relevant to residents.

### **Potential Participating Agencies:**

- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee
- ?? Neighborhood Based Services Subcommittee
- ?? Designated Block Captains

# 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

## **Technical Assistance Providers:**

- ?? Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center
- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee
- ?? ESLARP
- ?? Residents of Lansdowne
- ?? Designated Block Captains

## **Activities:**

1. Organize a Neighborhood Based Services Subcommittee
2. NBS subcommittee will divide neighborhood into blocks
3. Determine criteria for choosing Block Captains
4. Solicit and elect the Block Captains
5. Designate the home of the Block Captain as the block office
6. Use this office and the Block Captain to relay information from the LSC and the NBS subcommittee to the people who live on the block
7. Use this office and the Block Captain to organize block events and outreach that will strengthen the LSC and the Lansdowne neighborhood
8. Use this office and the Block Captain to supplement other programs that require Block Captains.

## **Required Resources:**

- ?? Neighborhood Participation
- ?? Neighborhood Based Services Subcommittee
- ?? Leadership Skills
- ?? Block Captain's homes

## **Timeline:**

This program is relatively easy to implement and should take approximately 3 months to implement. The length of time this program takes to implement would be determined by the amount of time taken for each activity. It may not necessarily take 3 months to implement, but note that activities 6, 7, and 8 are ongoing.

# 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

Month 1: Activity 1

Month 2: Activities 2 & 3

Month 3: Activities 4 & 5

Month 4 and beyond: Activities 6, 7, & 8

## *1.3 Lansdowne Directory*

### **Program Description:**

This program involves the creation of a directory that will provide residents with contact information for various social, financial, retail, and neighborhood-based services. The directory would also contain a Neighborhood Databank that would highlight residents' trades and skills.

### **Rationale:**

There is a wealth of information and services in Lansdowne and the East St. Louis area. Lansdowne residents are unaware of many of these resources and may not know each other well enough to be aware of the various skills that residents possess. As the region has declined over the past 50 years, agencies have failed to keep residents informed about programs and resources in the area. Residents have identified this lack of an available comprehensive list of resources, and the Lansdowne Steering Committee would like to remedy this situation by creating an easy accessible directory for the neighborhood. This directory will provide LSC and the neighborhood with information and contacts for various community, social service, financial and employment programs and opportunities in the area. Once awareness of services in the area is increased, residents can take full advantage of what Lansdowne has to offer. The directory can also help to publicize any local businesses. The directory can highlight residents' skills and let people support friends and neighbors in renovation, home improvements, and regular maintenance projects.

### **Model Programs:**

Champaign County United Way developed the Champaign Helpbook, which is a comprehensive listing of social service agencies; local, county, state, and federal government agencies and programs; community organizations and charities, among other organizations within the county. The Helpbook listings include the organization's contact information as well as a brief description of the services provided by the organization. The Lansdowne directory would augment the idea of the Helpbook with the Neighborhood Databank

# 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

## **Lead and Participating Agencies & Technical Assistance Providers:**

- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee
- ?? United Way
- ?? Ameritech
- ?? Area Lenders
- ?? Insurance Companies
- ?? Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center (NTAC)
- ?? East St. Louis Action Research Project
- ?? East St. Louis Leadership Council
- ?? Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House
- ?? Local churches

## **Activities:**

1. From the LSC develop another sub-committee responsible for the creation of the Lansdowne directory.
2. Brainstorm service questions from among LSC members by the Lansdowne Directory Committee. This brainstorming session will provide a list of information that should be included in the directory.
3. Use available comprehensive resource listings to compile the Lansdowne Directory.
4. Request listings from neighborhood residents for services provided and personal skills, useful crafts/hobbies and artistic talents. Use ESLARP to provide volunteers to gather this information through door-to-door outreach
5. Compile service and contact information for all social service and community development providers in the city, county, or region, as well as neighborhood resident service listings. NTAC staff will be of assistance in contacting relevant agencies.
6. Formulate and prepare draft document for review by LSC.
7. Receive resident feedback after sample introduction of directory. Distribute draft document for review and use for a six-month period. Revise the draft document based on user input.
8. Approach local businesses for advertising opportunities within the Lansdowne Directory.
9. Produce final document, print, and distribute to residents of Lansdowne neighborhood.

## 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

### **Required Resources:**

The primary resource required for this activity will be a group of LSC members who are willing to accept the responsibility of conducting the activity list above and completing the Lansdowne Directory for distribution. The committee would require three to four members to be effective and efficient. Creating a form that can be picked up at the LSC office and completed would be useful for maintaining accuracy of the directory.

### **Funding Needs:**

LSC would incur costs in collecting and compiling the information as well as in the production and distribution of the directories. Preparing drafts, buying supplies, etc. will cost approximate \$400. At approximately \$3 per copy, a directory for each household in the Lansdowne neighborhood could cost as much as \$3,600.

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

Local merchants should be contacted regarding advertising space within the Lansdowne Directory to offset the cost of producing and distributing the book. Additionally, the following sources may be contacted for financial support:

- ?? United Way
- ?? Ameritech
- ?? Area Lenders
- ?? Local Insurance Companies

### **Timeline:**

The committee should begin creating the directory in May 2001 and plan to complete this project by the end of the 2001 calendar year. The information compiled within the directory would then be available for initial distribution beginning in the year 2002. Mid-year 2002, resident feedback in input should be considered and appropriate revisions should be made. LSC staff and Lansdowne Directory Committee members should remain in charge of keeping the information current and adding new information as it becomes available.

## *1.4 Career Build*

### **Program Description:**

Human capital is defined as the skills and knowledge that a person acquires through job training and formal education. It is the qualities that an individual possesses that make them a competitive and valuable resource in the corporate arena. This program will work to improve the human capital of Lansdowne residents. Some of the activities that will be included are career fairs, résumé and cover letter workshops, and mock interview sessions.

### **Rationale:**

Through residential surveys and neighborhood meetings, it has become clear that employment opportunities and educational training is a concern for many. Residents feel that there is an absence of programs in the community that provide local youth and adults with career training. By offering job training, skill development and career enhancement programs, the employment opportunities of residents could be greatly increased. The development of leadership skills and personal talents that will empower residents to be competitive in the workforce will also be encouraged.

### **Lead and Participating Agencies & Technical Assistance Providers:**

- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee
- ?? Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center
- ?? East St. Louis Action Research Project
- ?? University of Illinois Career Center and/or Business department
- ?? Local teachers and community college
- ?? Local churches
- ?? East St. Louis Public Library
- ?? Large corporations (Arthur Anderson, Price Waterhouse Cooper, etc.)

### **Activities:**

1. A sub committee responsible for this program must be established
2. Send out surveys/questionnaires to residents requesting feedback on what services would be most valuable.
3. Compile a list of short-term and long-term activities based upon residential demand.

## 2001 LANSLOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

4. Plan each event in details including location, teaching material and teachers. NTAC and ESLARP staff can be of assistance in developing this.
5. Identify and contact residents from Lansdowne Directory who would be resourceful contributors to the programs.
6. Approach local businesses for advertising opportunities of events.
7. Set up calendar of events and distribute flyers to residents.

### **Required Resources:**

In order for this program to be successful, a group of residents will have to take a leadership role in order to implement the activities above. It will be necessary to establish a relationship with the listed agencies and request their assistance.

### **Funding Needs:**

Once the needs are identified and activities are planned in details, it will be necessary to identify potential resources. This program will incur costs for agencies participating in events such as career fairs and mock interview sessions. The amount that will be needed depends on the number of participants and the specific events offered. Also the cost of printing flyers to advertise events should be taken into consideration.

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

To be researched when need is established with assistance of NTAC and ESLARP.

# 2001 LANSDOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

## *1.5 Lansdowne Works*

### **Program Description:**

This program will assist people who want to have their homes repaired or renovated, but find the costs to be overwhelming. The Lansdowne Works program suggests that residents help each other with projects so that skills of different residents can be utilized optimally. Residents coordinate with other residents and supply their labor in exchange help when they need it. The program would help to revitalize the neighborhood, make improvements that the residents would like to see, and help tighten the community network.

### **Rationale:**

From the data collected in the Neighborhood Conditions Survey, it was estimated that only half of the single-family houses were in good condition. The cost to individual residents to repair damages to their homes and do regular maintenance can be overwhelming. This program would help to overcome these costs by using local skills and labor to clean, renovate, landscape, or remodel each other's houses.

### **Model Programs:**

Habitat for Humanity has what is called the "Sweat Equity" program where volunteers assist residents in the construction of homes. The work is not done unless the resident is actually putting in his/her work and receiving "Sweat Equity." The Lansdowne works would be similar, but the volunteers would be their neighbors.

### **Lead and Participating Agencies & Technical Assistance Providers:**

- ?? Lansdowne Steering Committee
- ?? Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center
- ?? East St. Louis Action Research Project
- ?? Habitat for Humanity

### **Activities:**

1. The Lansdowne Steering Committee would select a group of people desiring home renovation and who are willing to work on others residents homes in exchange. The Lansdowne Directory can be consulted for residents with particular skills.
2. The group of residents (approximately 8-10) would establish a timeline and set of rules and guidelines for work to be completed. The rules would state responsibilities and consequences for not fulfilling duties.
3. The group would compile a list of necessary resources and building materials.

## 2001 LANSLOWNE REVITALIZATION PLAN

---

4. Using the list of materials, letters can be written to hardware and supply stores such as Sam's Club, Lowe's, Wal-Mart, etc. to ask for donations and discounts on materials in exchange for advertising opportunities at the sites.
5. Once the materials have been collected for work on the first house, building and/or landscaping would begin.
6. At the approximate rate of one small-to-medium project per month, during nice weather, approximately 8 projects should be completed in a year. The winter months can be used for planning and collecting materials.

### **Required Resources:**

This project would require a lot of physical materials and manual labor. The labor will come from the residents, and possibly ESLARP volunteers or other available volunteers. Large hardware supply stores could supply the materials through donations. Technical skills will also be required for more difficult tasks. The Neighborhood Technical Assistance Center could assist in that department.

### **Funding Needs:**

The funding needs depend on the willingness of companies to donate materials for the construction projects. Also, the companies could provide plants and seeds for landscaping.

### **Potential Funding Sources:**

The companies may be inclined to donate materials for tax incentives and publicity reasons. The Lansdowne Steering Committee could create t-shirts that would highlight the donors and provide free advertising space for merchants. Residents could wear the t-shirts while they work on the houses. This would have the added benefit of providing publicity for the Lansdowne Steering Committee and all of its hard work.

### **Timeline:**

The LSC should start planning for this program in late fall or early winter of 2001. This would enable enough time to gather residents, create guidelines, and solicit donated materials from companies by the time that the weather is nice enough to begin work. Work should begin in April of 2002 and continue through November, with approximately one house completed each month.

