

***WELCOME
TO
ROSE CENTER!***





TERI CAMERON
PROJECT IN CED
LINDA HAGGER

ROSE CENTER
&
NEIGHBORHOOD
WOMEN, INC.



TERI CAMERON & LINDA HAGGER

PROJECT IN CED
FINAL REPORT

ADVISOR:
CHRIS CLAMP
JANUARY, 1994



**ADVISORY
BOARDMEMBERS**

Sharon Barber
Teri Cameron
Sally Daughton
Mary Beth Di Marco
Linda Westervelt-Hagger
Alice Kilbourn
Elena Levy
David Linton
Karen Mihalyi
Judy Nichols
Sue Nuccio
Diane Thomas-O'Brien
Viola Prince
Sandy Reinhardt
Maria Rodriguez
Rosetta Wash

Resident Groups

Neighborhood Women, Inc.
Social Justice Resource Center
Westside Community Board
Habitat for Humanity

**Teri Cameron,
Coordinator
(315) 478-5534**



A Women's Center & A Social Justice Center --

*A place for women and their families to get
good information, resources and support!*

420 1/2 Gifford St., Syracuse, NY 13204



ROSE CENTER
420 1/2 GIFFORD STREET
SYRACUSE, NY

CED PROJECT
FINAL REPORT
TERI CAMERON
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DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

The near Westside of Syracuse is an area which is primarily encompassed by the Economic Development Zone (EDZ or Enterprise Zone), established in 1987. It is a square mile of depressed housing, economy, and people. Just under 10% of the 163,860 people in the City of Syracuse reside in this neighborhood. This area's mean per capita income is approximately 50% (\$5,755) of the rest of the city. Unemployment is almost four times the city's average. 41% of the households receive public assistance, 17% of the homes are vacant, over 69% of the housing is deteriorated, and over 80% of the housing is absentee landlord-owned. The Zone is comprised of 45% whites/ethnics, 35.5% Blacks, 10% Hispanics, 2.8% Native Americans, .4% Asians, and 5.2% "others".

About 2,710 women are residents — with over 50% being single, female-heads-of-household compared to 1,316 male residents having approximately 15% single, male-heads-of-household. Only 387 married couple/family households are present. The clear majority of people over age 18 in the Zone have not even attained a high school education, less than 25% have only achieved a high school diploma, and less than 20 % have some level of college or graduate education. The median selling price of housing is roughly 50% of the rest of the City.

In recent years, the City Administration had targeted the Zone (the near Westside) for improvement. With the various incentives offered for development in the area, several changes have begun. The City also established an agency, Rebuild Syracuse, to specifically address the redevelopment of the neighborhood. In fact, over 50 new houses have been built and sold to families earning \$17,000+ per year. This, of course, is not reflective of most incomes in the neighborhood — it still excludes the majority of residents. Community Development Programs have also focused on “Target Blocks” and contributed to the effort by re-doing curbs and sidewalks, home improvement/repairs, paint projects, and commercial/ economic development projects. Zoning was changed to restrict housing for one & two families. Special areas are being re-developed. The overall effect of the efforts is that the property values are increasing — along with rents! We know that public assistance and unemployment insurance payments are not increasing. We know that people continue to face obstacles to any, let alone adequate, employment. So, we know that it is only a matter of time before people can no longer afford to live here. In fact, some are certain that regentrification and displacement have begun.

Another background element involved in the neighborhood is the lack of an overall sense of community. Aside from the internalized oppression which is rampant, the area has been inundated with “Programs”. Presumably well-meaning people and agencies have cropped up over the years in an effort to meet the various needs of the people in the community (of which there are many!). Many of them have been very good at what they do. Generally, they may be “social workers” who have studied long and hard. They “know” what “these people” need, they develop a project, and then, they tell the residents that “this” is “the answer”. The result is that most people (because they ARE needy and vulnerable!), ally themselves with one or more of these agencies, churches, organizations, or programs in order to get some help in meeting their needs. Dependency and a certain “allegiance” seem to develop and consequentially, the people may become divided against each other. In reality, the very thing many of these well-meaning people have set out to accomplish becomes undermined by the various factors impacting on the neighbors and the scarcity of funding dollars which creates “turf wars”. Although this is not the only reason, it certainly is one of the contributors to an overall lack of community and adversely affects the ability of the neighbors to “pull together”.

ROSE CENTER and its members/affiliates would have secured funding to sustain its expenses and provide a salary for a director and at least one support staff.

“PEER EDUCATION” Program established. It is to involve neighbors sharing with each other, particularly the low-income, unemployed, and working poor adults on the near Westside.

The greater goal will be served by a strong, supported and informed group/base of neighborhood people who will be working on larger issues in the community. They will be developing ways of accomplishing goals they have already identified and expressed in a process of development. They will be better able to take control of space and resources within the community to meet their own needs in a holistic and comprehensive way. Rose Center will provide the groundwork and capacity building to create a cohesive sense of community amongst a sufficient number of residents to enable them to “pull together” and create whatever changes/improvements they deem appropriate for their community. Current long term plans call for the creation of another center, a Cooperative Community Center, owned and run by neighborhood people. The Center would incorporate diverse programs that would address many identified needs such as: an education & training center (literacy through college classes), job/employment center, cooperative small business incubator, cooperative credit union, food cooperative, cooperative consignment/craft shop, cooperative day care center, small stores and offices, recreation/activity center, health center, etc. The Cooperative Community Center will be large enough to accommodate sufficient numbers of people and programs /activities to provide an environment where the heretofore lacking “human development” in this neighborhood will take place and succeed in staving off the impending displacement.

OUTPUTS

The critical elements which have to be put in place to assure that there is a Product at the end of the project include, but are not limited to: 3 trainers will be trained in the Leadership Support Process. 30 women and their families will be participating regularly in programing at the center. They will be deriving support, advocacy, and resources to enable them to develop their leadership potential and improve the

I have lived and worked in this neighborhood for ten years. I have been active in my church and several community groups during this time. I have been an outspoken advocate for the rights of people in our community.

The problem is that if no solution is found in the low-income, near Westside of Syracuse, the loss of any sense of a cohesive community and a growing reluctance to take leadership will continue to worsen over the coming year until the existing community is predominantly regentrified and displaced.

PROJECT GOALS

To develop leadership training and support systems/programs to enable neighborhood women and their families to meet the needs of the low-income community of the near Westside of Syracuse.

To develop a physical location where a center of offices, meeting places, classes/support groups, individual counseling, resource and referral can be provided.

To provide a means by which neighborhood people can define our own problems and formulate our own solutions.

To foster unity through a spirit of cooperation and sense of community.

To improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

To ensure safe, decent, and affordable housing.

To create opportunities for people to actively participate in all aspects of our community (activities, projects, programs, solutions, employment, politics, government, etc.)

To develop projects, plans, and services which contribute to wholesome family life, support the needs of the diverse people in our neighborhood, assist in areas of education, training, employment, business development, housing, day care, programs for children and elderly, recreation, social activities, and enhance communication and understanding.

By the end of the project, it was expected that we would have accomplished the following:

ROSE CENTER was to be an established entity in the neighborhood, organized as a collective or cooperative, and provide a source of support (emotional & practical), advocacy, resource and referral.

Develop minimum and start-up annual budgets to create plan

Submit proposals to the NBI(Neighborhood Initiatives), the Catholic Bishop, Presbyterian Church, Rosamond Gifford Foundation, Community Foundation, and others

Initiate Fundraising campaign including letter writing, publicity, events, outright donor requests, etc.

Obtain materials, supplies, paint, etc. for clean-up and repairs Enlist volunteers to assist with clean-up, repairs, & operation

Obtain, through donors, equipment, furnishings, supplies, etc. including but not limited to: computers, printers, fax, copier, phones, typewriter, small refrigerator, microwave, toaster oven, coffee pots, chairs, desks, file cabinets, tables, rugs, vacuum, air conditioner, heaters, and so forth, according to plan

Develop and carry out survey of neighborhood people according to needs and plan

G. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Teri Cameron will coordinate, organize, negotiate the previously identified tasks. By January, 1993, the location will be committed and work will begin on the Center.

In order to accomplish this, several tasks need to be initiated. The work will either be done by Teri, in conjunction with others, or by volunteers. By the end of December, 1992, the following will be under-way:

Organize volunteers Develop materials and publicize, RAISE FUNDS Put out notices, flyers, etc. Do public relations (news articles, media, etc.) Prepare for clean-up Develop plan Create schedule for Center and prepare for opening

quality of their lives (ie. becoming self-sufficient, stronger financially, participating in training, employed, started their own business/cooperative, etc.).

Location to be established

Determine organizational structure and establish

Funding/fundraising researched & obtained

Programs/workshops/curriculum developed

Trainers, resource people, advocates, and leaders trained

Advisory Board developed

Support Groups established

Scheduling created

Developing & performing outreach

Volunteers organized

Participants located and involved

PR/literature/materials/brochure/flyers developed & published

Speak & join with other groups

Establish a library and resource center

Research & cultivate/foster further planning & development for the Center and the Neighborhood

INPUTS

The following resources are needed to assure that these Outputs will occur in a timely fashion:

Assistance in determining the most effective organizational structure — collective, cooperative, corporation, CLT, etc.?

Develop a Plan

Visible and easily located building with exclusive control

Location with adequate size and appropriate structure/design

Liability Insurance Finances: Minimum of \$3,000 to begin working in & preparing the Center

METHODS

The primary focus of this year has been the procurement, re-development and occupation of a physical location to use as the base of operations in order to address the identified problem/issues. When the vacancy of one half of the former convent of a still active, inner-city parish was identified, permission and support were sought for its conversion into ROSE CENTER. This was to be a new Women's Center and Social Justice Center, designed specifically to address the needs of the neighborhood's low-income residents, in a highly participatory way, primarily through the provision of good information, resources and support. Rose Center would provide the opportunity for neighborhood groups, who had thus far never had an office or access to their own meeting space, to obtain offices and shared meeting space. Some of the purposes for sharing space in the Center is to enable such groups to stabilize, build their capacity, facilitate an opportunity for the group/organization to grow/expand, to combine/access resources and to offer/derive support. Negotiated low costs -- no rent (in lieu of desktop publishing the landlord agency's bi-monthly newsletter), \$100 per month towards utilities, \$55 per month for phone and responsibility for all improvements, maintenance, etc. With such low costs, it was possible to bring in a good mix of groups lacking funds and a stable group. Such low overhead makes it possible to manage in spite of a lack of funding.

Full advantage was made of our unique situation and even prior to our "Grand Opening", the media's interest was piqued. Media releases were combined with requests for contributions. Donations were solicited not only for money, but also for identified equipment, furnishings, supplies, materials and volunteers. Flyers and posters were developed and distributed. Presentations, speaking engagements, tables and booths in appropriate locations yielded opportunities for conversations, introductions, follow-up contacts, distributions of requests for needed items and signing up of interested parties. People were invited to designate (self-select) their potential involvement -- mailing list, advisory board, volunteer, donor and various committees. In addition to mailings, phone calling and personal requests brought in numerous and ample supplies, furnishings and some equipment.

By January 31, 1993, the following will be initiated:

Research grants, funding and write proposals

Do outreach—in cooperation with others, door-to-door

Speak with other groups Join Advisory Boards of NBI, the Health Center, etc.

Organize speakers, presentations, classes, workshops, etc

Establish library/resource center

Publish “Community Gatherings”, a St. Lucy’s Newsletter

Create and publish other publications

Research options for further planning and development for the Center and the Neighborhood

On February 15, 1993

Grand opening of ROSE CENTER

MINIMUM OBJECTIVES

Within the next year, ROSE CENTER will be up and running with adequate funding and established programs. The 3 trainers will be trained and 30 women(minimally) will be “in progress”. The peer education program will have regularly scheduled classes and 6 leadership support groups will be on-going. Sufficient “sense of community” will have developed so that neighborhood people will be able to work together and address their own needs more effectively.

NOTE: LINDA HAGGER AND TERI CAMERON ARE WORKING ON THIS PROJECT. THE PRIMARY DISTINCTIONS ARE THAT LINDA IS PRESIDENT OF ONE OF THE GROUPS, NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN, INC., WHICH IS TO BE A PART OF ROSECENTER. TERI IS THE COORDINATOR FOR THE OVERALL CENTER.

Another area we ventured into was -- politics! I sought to advantage of an open forum in our city -- an opportunity for media attention and to address a number of issues that would, most likely, have gone unnoticed. I attempted to run for mayor. Although the campaign barely got off the ground, we certainly received a good deal of publicity. Naturally, as coordinator of the newly founded Rose Center, this Center was mentioned in all the article written about the candidate. One of the primary commitments of the campaign was to increase voter awareness and voter registration/participation. Though getting the 1500 valid signatures required to be on the ballot proved to be too much for our small committee (especially without any major party support), voter's interest and attention was certainly gained (of course, not all was positive!). On one televised speech alone, it must have been shown no less than 25 times! Comments are still being made by city residents who liked what they had heard!

With the physical work that needed to be accomplished to re-develop the former convent, several sources were accessed. Since no monies were available, materials, supplies, labor and so forth, needed to be donated or covered by another agency. Application was made to a local youth project called "Year-Round Syracuse". This group had monies to purchase needed paints, sheetrock, materials & supplies. They also furnished the youth to do most of the initial painting. When the old plaster began to crumble, greater expertise was needed to proceed. We connected with a group of retired professional workers who graciously donated their time and materials to complete a great deal of the work. Local college students and supportive community people also contributed their time and skills. Between the mailings and other efforts at "getting the word out", enough people came through to get the place functional -- even attractive. The primary method we utilized was to ASK -- and keep asking!

Once the Advisory Board was established, we began weekly meetings to discuss policy and planning for the Center. The slated "resident groups", those who would have office space within the Center, met also, by direction of the Board to discuss structure, policies, responsibilities and agreements that would facilitate the operation of the Center as well as the relationships between the groups and as part of the Center. Pro bono legal assistance was sought, requested and granted through the Syracuse University Housing and Finance Law Clinic. Law students were assigned to assist Rose Center in its application for incorporation and 501 (c)(3) status. After some initial difficulties in discerning the structure and procedures for this particular Center, it was determined to proceed with incorporation.

The Advisory Board took leadership in committing to those weekly meetings to work through a process of developing a mission statement and objectives. Further, they have spent considerable time developing fundraising ideas and plans. They each developed lists of potential donors and supporters, helping to build our mailing list -- some even did their own mailing, sent personal notes and followed up with phone calls or personal requests. We are committed to building our base of individual donors in addition to writing for grants.

In keeping with the identified objectives for the Center in the area of employment, training and self-sufficiency, and in an effort to address the Center's fiscal needs, a plan has been developed to promote desktop publishing services for fees. A business plan for this project -- "Roses By Design" -- is included in this report. Essentially, the Center will provide training to neighborhood individuals in using computers, word-processing and desktop publishing to complete the orders. Initially, work would be volunteered, eventually paid and a goal would be for those who were trained to potentially seek more training, seek employment and or use the skills for their personal benefit.

The press conference and reception at our Grand Opening has now become tradition. When we welcomed a new group in the fall, we held another -- and it seemed that it was even more successful. The media has been very supportive. With the entre of another group -- Habitat for Humanity -- we are planning even another event very soon!

ally taking shape. Some books have been contributed and a couple of folks from the neighborhood are trying to build shelves and organize a library system. Habitat for Humanity has finally moved in and offered us the use of a warehouse for storage of some of our "excess" items -- they even helped to move it all, and then, helped to clean up and re-arrange things! Space seems to be getting used up quickly.

Programs and activities have been planned and taken place. Several are on-going and continue. Narcotics Anonymous(NA) meets daily at noon. CCCA is very active and, in addition to frequent phone calls, this group has "walk-in" hours and meetings. Habitat for Humanity is frequently in and out of the office. They held their first board meeting, recently, in the Center. Although the exercise classes ceased, an "Eating Issues" weekly support group is starting in February/March. Other community groups are using the Center for their meetings, for example, CommonWorks just spent a Saturday with their Board doing a Strategic Planning Workshop. One of the grants we participated in was funded -- Project Legal. We now teach youths in the neighborhood about the legal system -- in hopes of averting them from it! These classes will run all year on Mondays and Wednesdays, after school. Rose Center continues to have "walk-in" hours from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m., Monday - Friday. I am certain that I am overlooking some of the things that are going on at the Center, but then, that is just testimony to the results we have accomplished with this project!

In addition to all this, we have begun doing our desktop publishing services for fees as a means to produce income to sustain the center. As we progress, it will also be utilized as a training and employment activity as discussed in the business plan located in the appendix.

Word is getting out and more people are gaining awareness of our existence. We received excellent media coverage at our grand opening, during the mayoral campaign, and even recently, when we held our traditional press conference and reception for CCCA, the media did very well for us. In fact, we were on all three local news stations!

RESULTS

A major result of this project is that Rose Center exists. Not only does it exist, but it seems to be thriving. It is still in its infancy with much more to grow and mature, yet it thrives.

The vacant half of the former convent at Saint Lucy's has been transformed by people in the community who had -- and still have -- a vision of what it could be like to have a place where neighborhood residents could come and obtain resources, good information and support. At the same time, they saw how the space could be shared so that many could use the meeting space, and a few "homeless" groups could find a home. This vision is coming into fruition.

Over the past year, the building has been redeveloped and renovated. Cleaning, patching and painting have been the least of the efforts. Money was raised to cover expenses, several groups and individuals were enlisted to assist in the work, some local professionals were imposed upon and gave generously of their expertise, neighbors contributed their labor and some equipment and we even had fun in the process. When the old plaster came tumbling down, we had some big delays while we sought and found some volunteers with the right expertise. Some electrical and plumbing work also required "specialists" -- and they came. All but two of the rooms have been completed -- and of course, refinishing the floors (beautiful oak!).

We are an inner-city neighborhood, and while many people have helped from the neighborhood, many have also come from supporters/allies in the suburbs, universities, etc. The exciting part is getting folks together and making new friends.

Once the building work was wrapping up, groups started to claim their offices. Neighborhood Women, Inc. cleaned, decorated and furnished their office -- then, they even welcomed another group, Citizens Committee on Court Abuse (CCCA), to share their office. The Social Justice Resource Room is gradu-

With all this, and a strong core group in our Advisory Board, we seem to be off to a good start. We have also obtained pro bono legal assistance from our local university, Syracuse University Housing and Finance Law Clinic. Soon, we will be incorporated and getting our own 501 (c)(3) status.

So, what have we really accomplished? I would have to say that as I review the year, we have travelled many "miles". The fact that we actually have our own "space" still amazes me. We can have offices and meetings as we see fit -- we can control, for ourselves, what goes on here -- and we have the key! Wow! Anyone who has worked in groups as I have -- meeting in peoples homes, running around & begging for space for any little event, lugging boxes with supplies, records, materials and so on, would be able to understand our excitement. Further, we negotiated very low overhead in exchange for desktop publishing a bi-monthly newsletter. We have received wonderful donations, probably due to our good promotions, letter writing and appeals (at least in part). We are building a decent database of supporters. We have succeeded in having two of our grants funded. We repaired, renovated and furnished our Center and offices. We also negotiated to have our insurance covered (liability/building) under the Roman Catholic Diocese of Syracuse, at no cost to us. We have a great bunch of "resident groups" (those who have offices at the Center) and most of our Advisory Board is willing to transition to a formal board of directors upon incorporation. This same board has diligently worked through a process of weekly meetings to develop policies, planning and fundraising strategies -- even a wonderful mission statement and lists of objectives (in the appendix). Also included in the appendix are the Fund-raising Plan and Business Plan which were compiled for the respective classes and are about Rose Center. They will be very useful.

With growing interest, increasing awareness, heightened commitment -- even with spring soon to come (I hope!), it seems that the results we have had are only the beginning.

figure out policies and practices for maintaining and running the center, cooperatively. This required many meetings and much discussion. Decision-making is by consensus and discussion incorporates the agreements of Neighborhood Women, Inc.'s Leadership Support Model. Each resident group is to have a representative on the Board and one who participates in regular resident group meetings. Resident groups are those who have physical office space at the center, and they have the primary responsibility of running the center. Resident groups now include: Neighborhood Women, Inc., Citizens Committee on Court Abuse, Social Justice Resource Room and Habitat for Humanity. We also have a teen room and supervised playroom. We have worked through a process and come up with a mission statement, "Human Development -- Neighbor to Neighbor!", as well as identified several objectives.

Rose Center has obtained pro bono (free) legal services from the local law school, Syracuse University's Housing and Finance Law Clinic. We are prepared to move ahead with our incorporation and application for our 501(c)(3) status.

Rose Center has walk-in hours on Monday - Friday from 1 - 3, with a number available for people to call to receive phone assistance/referral, find out about other scheduled activities and schedule appointments. Our goal is to expand volunteer involvement to allow more walk-in hours. Citizen's Committee on Court Abuse and Neighborhood Women have walk-in hours on Tuesday evenings and Saturday afternoons. So far, this seem to be adequate. We are in the process of developing a survey and needs assessment, not only to assist with development planning within the center, but also as a means to reach out to neighbors. We have held Saturday morning exercise classes and are planning more "self-improvement" activities. There is an interest in GED classes and we are pursuing it, and many other activities. There is so much more, but it seems that what I have shared thus far is indicative of how well things are going.

We seem to benefit each time another group joins us. The reception we held for the Court Abuse Group (CCCA) gave us excellent coverage in the media. Habitat has finally completed their move and held their first board meeting here, too. I will be much more careful about what we accept -- and think carefully about what we ask for -- since we may just get it!!

ROSE CENTER

ANALYSIS/CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

Basically, I would have to say that we not only achieved all of our project goals, to some degree or another, but also had some things occur beyond our expectations. We certainly did obtain a location for a "cooperative center", including an office for Neighborhood Women, Inc. We also negotiated a great deal for covering our costs, keeping our "overhead" below \$200 per month. Considering that the groups we wanted to assist have no money, this goes a long way towards making the center affordable -- even with minimal fund-raising efforts. We took on clean-up and renovation of this old building with few resources and little experience, but reached out into our community to find what we needed to get the work done. We found it. People came forward to help with painting, patching, sheetrocking, plumbing, electrical, clean-up, fix-up and general spruce-up! We asked for donations of supplies, equipment and furnishings -- and we got them! Tables, chairs, desks, bookshelves, some computers, a T.V., pictures/posters, a sideboard, coffeepot, coffee cups/mugs, file cabinets, curtains, carpet/rugs, carpet sweeper, refrigerator, copier, toys for the playroom, all kinds of office supplies, cleaning supplies, paint and materials -- even a beautiful electric organ! Sure, it took time. Sometimes it took more time than I cared for, yet it has been done. It is still being done. The center is like a work "in progress". We have so much done, and so much more to do. Two of the fifteen rooms have yet to be "finished", but they are "under way". We have plans to build in a first floor, accessible bathroom and a ramp to make the center accessible to all. The old oak floors have yet to be refinished, but I know that they will be soon. Gradually, we will continue to upgrade and improve the beautiful, but old structure.

The structure is not the only thing we have had to deal with, although it became so very time- and energy-consuming. The structure was only ever intended to house the most important aspects of the center -- its residents and activities. Aside from Rose Center taking on its own activities of providing good information, resources and support for neighborhood women and their families, we had to create an Advisory Board, predominantly of neighborhood people, and not only move residents in, but also ensure that they fit with the mission of the center. Beyond that we had to work with the groups to help them

I keep getting calls from other groups and those in need of space. This experience further convinces me of the need for such a "non-profit cooperative incubator", as some have called it. I want to be careful to label it, because I see it as much more than an incubator. It is more of a "sustainability center" and I see no reason it could not work with both "non-profit" and "for-profit" groups/individuals, together. I hope that we will have the opportunity to continue to develop the center -- even to expand, both in size and content. The groups have agreed on the concept of "pitching in" to make the center work. They do this financially and practically. The meeting space is to be scheduled with priority for the resident groups, but made available to anyone or any group in the neighborhood, in keeping with our mission. The commitment is to support -- those within the center, and by doing so, offer greater support to those in the neighborhood. It does seem to be taking on a life of its own.

Eventually, they may decide they no longer need someone as a coordinator. Personally, I can see where it is advantageous to have someone to be coordinating and facilitating the center, overall. A question is whether or not we can raise enough money -- between ourselves or from grants/donations/fees for service to afford to pay someone. For myself, I am committed to continuing with the center. However, the reality is that I have financial & parental/familial responsibilities -- currently, we have no medical coverage and no stable income. Therefore, not only will I put concerted effort into making the center viable, but I am forced to look for employment and ways to produce income. At the moment, I am looking for something flexible, possibly part-time and involving related work. I remain optimistic.

I would have to call this project a success. Further, I would have to recommend that I could see "Rose Centers", or something very much like them, in in all neighborhoods, particularly low- to moderate-income neighborhoods. Not only is the center becoming a resource of its own, but it is supporting and sustaining the development and capacity of its resident groups. I have great hopes for the future growth of this concept.
