



How YOU INVEST

Dear Friends,

My name is Jay Van Groningen and as a 20 year practitioner of community development work around the nation, I see and experience what works and doesn't work as together we strive to build stronger neighborhoods. Across our country in poor and declining neighborhoods, many residents do not have the means to buy their way into an improving situation. The result being a neighborhood that goes into a declining spiral of social, economic and structural decline.

Two things can quickly lead to neighborhood improvement. The first is when gifts in a community are known and exchanged among residents, and second when residents break out of their isolation and work together. These strategies are the foundation of an asset-based community development approach; a proven process that has been in place for over 30 years across our nation.

I've seen this transformation effort first hand in Ottawa County with Good Samaritan Ministries' Neighborhood Connections initiative. Their work focuses on developing and coaching neighborhood leaders to discover the gifts in their community and mobilize residents to work together on the things they care about. This critical work in our declining neighborhoods is an investment that has multiple and long term positive returns.

Good Samaritan Ministries needs your support to expand their work in our vulnerable neighborhoods. Please consider a financial gift today to support Neighborhood Connections, an initiative that results in systemic change that strengthens our community and improves quality of life for all residents.

Blessings,

Jay Van Groningen
 Executive Director
 Community First Association
www.communityfirstassociation.org

WELCOME TO NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What is Neighborhood Connections?

Neighborhood Connections is an initiative designed to build strong neighborhoods where people are working together and using their talents to improve the quality of life for themselves and their community through relationship building and the collaborative efforts of neighbors, churches, non-profit organizations, associations, schools, businesses and government.

Why is Neighborhood Connections important to our community?

Good Sam has extensive experience working with churches interested in implementing community development in their neighborhoods. While churches are interested in doing community ministry, many are located in under-resourced areas and lack the financial resources, staff and volunteers to fully engage a neighborhood in community development work. A community engagement model that includes other partners is what is required to make the profound difference.

What is ABCD?

Community development is one tool that communities use to address under resourced neighborhoods and engage the residents residing therein. Asset-based community development (ABCD) is a proven approach focusing on the skills, resources, and strengths of the community – the assets-- as a way of solving community issues.

What activities are ABCD focused?

Regularly walking the neighborhood; intentionally building relationships; mapping the neighborhood, identifying all potential assets (people, skills, associations, resources, businesses, churches etc.); surveying the neighborhood and listening to discover talents, key leaders and concerns; forming neighborhood action groups to connect assets with local concerns; implementing action plans, bringing in outside resources when appropriate; and self assessment of process and outcome.



Neighborhood Connections Community Garden at Teusink's Farm.

A WORD FROM JUDY

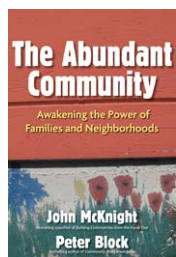


JUDY VAN DYKE
Neighborhood Connections Director

My husband Dave can fix anything. From lawn mowers to dishwashers to blow-dryers...he seems to know just what to do to get them running again. Yet, when it comes to cooking he has Domino's pizza on his speed dial! This was God's perfect plan to create us with different talents and abilities so we would need to be in relationship with each other. Unfortunately, we have become consumers rather than good neighbors and in the process have become less connected with each other. Neighborhood Connections

works to change this. We begin with the knowledge that everyone is needed and has capabilities to share and make our neighborhoods strong. As local resources decline we will need to do more with less. This is an opportunity for us to bring back the "barn raising" concept where everyone comes together to get something done. We can turn problems into possibilities when we share our talents with others. I know it works in our family...I love to cook but I can't fix a thing.

Judy Van Dyke is the Neighborhood Connections Director. Ms. Van Dyke has been extensively involved in community and urban ministries at New Community Fourth Reformed Church in Holland before joining Good Samaritan Ministries. She is a graduate of Western Theological Seminary and is trained in Ruby Payne's Aha Process on economic diversity. She facilitates trainings in Asset Based Community Development and leadership development in four Holland neighborhoods. Ms. Van Dyke works with grass roots non-profits as a Church and Community Consultant for Communities First Association and oversees AmeriCorps workers involved in community organizing. She has provided poverty and mentoring education for multiple church leadership groups, nonprofits and local organizations.



RECOMMENDED READING

"We are discovering it takes a village to do more than raise a child. It turns out we need our neighbors and a community to be healthy, produce jobs, protect the land, and care for the elderly and those on the margins." -Peter Block, author of The Abundant Community

Strong communities require a collaborative approach that involves all community sectors. Education on community development principles and methodology is a necessary step in building a social fabric that transforms neighborhoods. To aid your learning Good Sam is recommending *The Abundant Community* as an introduction to understanding community development and how it can work here.

Authors John McKnight and Peter Block share ideas on how to awaken the power of families and neighborhoods using an asset-based approach. Good Sam board members, staff, community connectors and residents are reading this book. Order your copy today from Reader's World (616.396.8548) or check out the Book-Group-to-Go Bag from the Herrick District Library (616.355.3100) after June 1st. Visit www.abundantcommunity.com/.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR
PETER BLOCK COMING TO
WEST MICHIGAN IN MARCH 2012

BUILDING A SAFE PLACE FOR OLIVER

Good Samaritan Ministries provides leadership and organizational development for a local nonprofit, 3sixty that recently worked with 80 volunteers to help a family remodel their home for their 4 year old son, Oliver who has been battling cancer. Parts of the home needed to become germ free for Oliver to live at home after receiving a bone marrow transplant. After six busy weeks and 800 volunteer hours later the kitchen, stairway, hallway, bathroom and Oliver's bedroom were all remodeled and ready for him to come home. 3sixty coordinated businesses and individuals that donate time, money, and materials to the project along with many professional builders, electricians, plumber, painters, drywallers and plasterers (most from the neighborhood) that shared their expertise to support the effort. There were many neighbors that came together to work on the project...many meeting for the first time because of their time shared in service. They did everything from demolition, to hanging drywall, painting, and baking fresh cinnamon rolls for the work crews.

Larry Spitzley, a semi-retired neighbor from around the corner offered his time, tools and talent in carpentry to help the family. Larry says, "It felt good to help someone out. This is what neighbors are for and what a neighborhood is all about." Brian Wolthuis, the director of 3sixty was amazed at the generous outpouring from the neighborhood. "We would have been completely unable to accomplish what we did without the neighborhood and the family's own community in partnership. I'm thankful for the new friends, neighbors, and fellow servants that I've met in the process." Now Oliver can be in a safe and healthy environment with his family because of the generosity and talents shared by a supportive community of care.





COMMUNITY CONNECTORS

MEET THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE THIS HAPPEN



MEET RAUL @ WESTCORE NEIGHBORS

NAME: Raul Garcia

NEIGHBORHOOD/ORGANIZATION: Westcore Neighbors

WHAT TYPE OF WORK/ACTIVITY DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDE? Community development/organizing

INTERESTS/PASSIONS: Playing music, working with my hands, loving/caring for people, structure

FAVORITE QUOTE: "People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO SEE HAPPEN IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AS A RESULT OF YOUR BEING THERE? I hope to see people of different ages, races, backgrounds, and economic status doing life together, crossing those boundaries to create the ideal community where neighbors care for their neighbors.

HOW CAN PEOPLE CONNECT WITH YOU? Facebook page and group @ Westcore Neighbors.



MEET SUZIE @ TEUSINK'S NEIGHBORHOOD

NAME: Suzie Steen

NEIGHBORHOOD/ORGANIZATION: Teusink's Neighborhood; Park Church

WHAT TYPE OF WORK/ACTIVITY DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION PROVIDE? Care Closet, Teusink's Neighborhood Garden, Tae Kwon Do and women's exercise, ABC's of Dining, free summer movie nights, and a community picnic.

INTERESTS/PASSIONS: I'm passionate about people discovering their assets and strengths and then growing them into more and more.

FAVORITE QUOTE: Every time you say "no" to something, you are saying "yes" to something else.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO SEE HAPPEN IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD AS A RESULT OF YOUR BEING THERE? I hope neighbors will know one another better and lives will improve because neighbors are helping neighbors.

HOW CAN PEOPLE CONNECT WITH YOU? www.parkchurchholland.org; <http://teusinkneighborhoodgarden.wordpress.com/>

GET INVOLVED

You can become involved in Neighborhood Connections in a variety of ways:

- Provide a financial gift to start a new neighborhood site
- Offer resources and in-kind donations for a new or existing neighborhood
- Contribute to our mini-grant fund for neighborhood projects
- Become involved in a neighborhood by sharing your talents with others.

If you have any questions or want to become involved, contact Judy Van Dyke Neighborhood Connections Director at jvandyke@goodsamministries.com or call 616.392.7159.

OUR VALUES

- A holistic approach to community development is necessary, recognizing that people grow emotionally, physically, relationally, spiritually, and mentally.
- We respect and value all people and celebrate our cultural diversity.
- Each person has gifts and abilities that can be shared with others.
- People are capable of participating in the improvement of their own lives and the community.
- Positive relationships enhance lives, families and neighborhoods.
- Working together helps people achieve their dreams and accomplish goals.



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**IN THIS ISSUE NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTIONS
SUMMER 2011**

- INTERVIEW WITH JUDY
- MEET YOUR COMMUNITY CONNECTORS
- HOW YOU CAN HELP
- BUILDING A SAFE PLACE FOR OLIVER



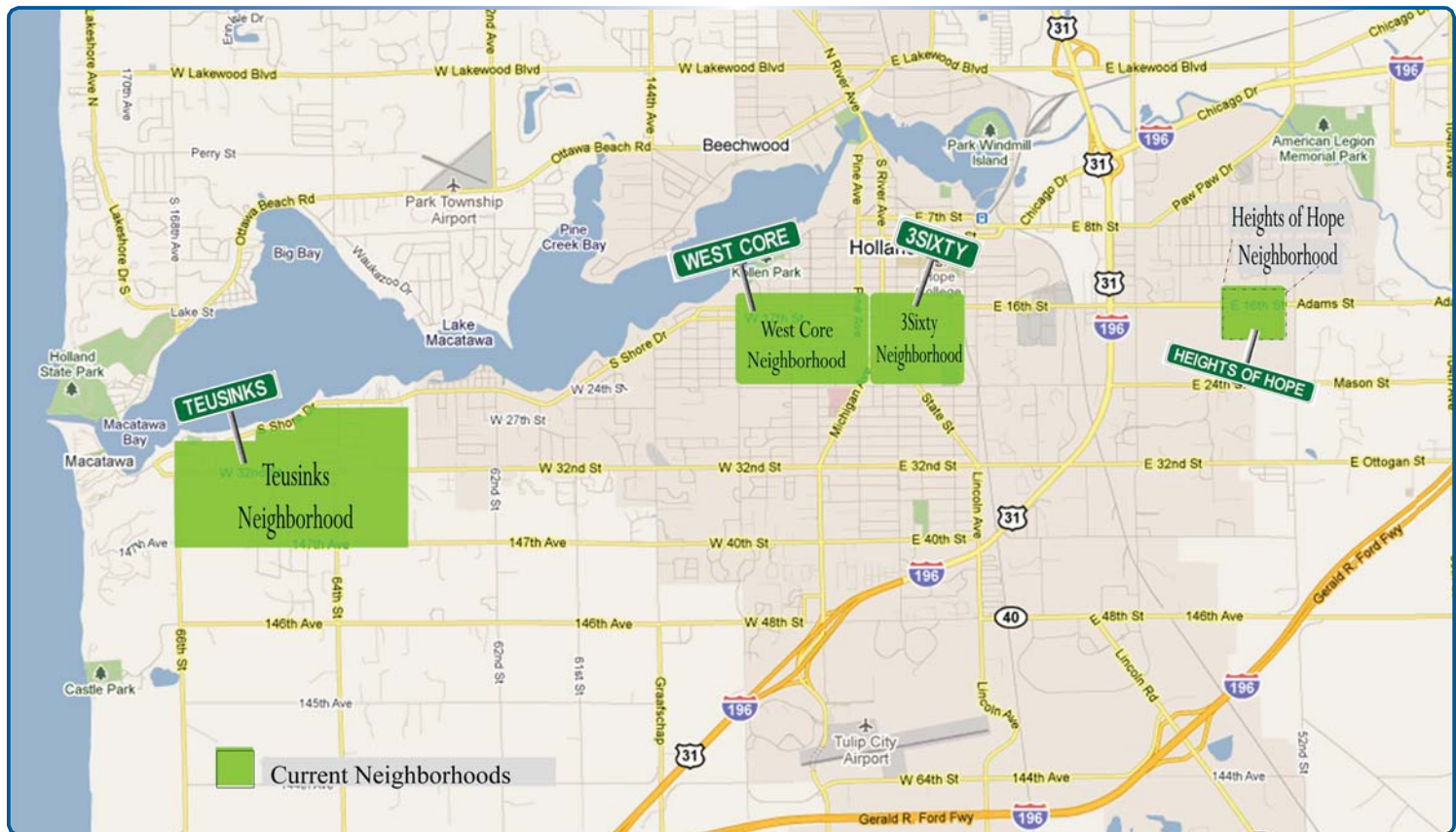
Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM) depends on the investment of community partners to make Neighborhood Connections work. **Fifth Third Bank** is recognized as the first investor for the mini-grant program contributing \$11,000. A portion of this investment will be available for neighborhood projects with the remainder for operational support. According to Patrick Longeran, Vice-President/CRA Manager, "Fifth Third Bank is pleased to support our local community in such a positive way making a difference at the neighborhood level."

Holland for providing the necessary seed money needed to launch this initiative. Each organization invested \$5,000 confirming their belief in using an asset-based approach. According to Linda Jacobs, GSM Executive Director, "We envision people working together to use their gifts and talents to improve the quality of life for themselves and their entire community. This happens in our community because local government, business and our community foundation combine their resources for the good of all."



In addition, special thanks to **Fifth Third Bank, Holland/Zeeland Community Foundation, and the City of**

Mark your calendar for the Fifth Third Bank e-bus, August 30, 2011.



If you would prefer to receive this electronically, contact goodsam2@goodsamministries.com visit www.goodsamministries.com phone 616.392.7159
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