

**Montclair State University  
Final Report - July, 2005**

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**SECTION 1. MSU COPC OVERVIEW**

The three-year Montclair State University (MSU) COPC, typical of many campus/community partnership endeavors, produced both beneficial and controversial outcomes. The commencement of the project was fraught with setbacks such as claims of community exploitation by the local press and verbal resistance from residents opposing the association of their neighborhood with HUD programming. The identified community was inclusive of two demographically distinct neighborhoods with, at times, conflicting interests. Collectively uneasy and disappointed regarding a perceived disproportionate acclamation and benefit to the university, community residents and leaders openly criticized the COPC and passively protested through a lack of participation in meetings, events, and activities. Meanwhile, recruitment and retention of MSU faculty for COPC related projects and activities were challenged due to turnover and responsibilities associated with MSU tenure, promotion, rewards and incentives policies. Under pressure to satisfy teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities, a number of faculty involved with the COPC placed it low on their list of priorities, while others elected to forego involvement entirely.

Despite these challenges the MSU COPC Advisory Board and Executive Committee were committed to the success of the project. Consultation with experts in campus/community partnerships led the Advisory Board to alter its strategy, featuring community partners in public relations projects and utilizing community partner organizations for communication, meetings and events. University partners, especially administrators, increased recruitment efforts and support for participating faculty members. At the end of its three year funding period the COPC had served to strengthen existing relationships within both the community and university, as well as, between the university and the community. Additionally, it had contributed to, or was directly responsible for, numerous advantageous outcomes for both university and community stakeholders. As a measure of its success, many community partners have approached MSU to collaborate on projects developed

as a result of the MSU COPC. Such experiences have thrilled and inspired us to move forward in formalizing and deepening our partnerships with the Township of Montclair.

### **1.1. Project Accomplishments**

Over its three years, the MSU COPC did far more than simply meet its stated project and activity objectives; it served as a vehicle for developing substantial and enduring relationships between numerous community and university stakeholders. Montclair community members developed many individual relationships with MSU faculty and students. But, of equal import are the institutionalized relationships between MSU's Center for Community-Based Learning (CCBL) and Division of Student Development and Campus Life, and the Montclair Board of Education and other community-based organizations within Montclair such as Day Nurseries, HOME Corp and PineRidge of Montclair.

As a group, the MSU COPC has been primarily concerned with the long-term, institutional, and ideological accomplishments of our project. For us, individual projects and activities were instruments of change; a change which would qualitatively improve the lives and realities of residents in our surrounding neighborhoods through policy, program and personal initiatives. Our projects sought to empower all stakeholders through knowledge, training, organization, and collective victories. The MSU COPC answered the call of residents to whom it was accountable. Our COPC community groups were interested in mobilizing and activating their communities so as to secure affordable housing and economic diversity in the Township of Montclair and we responded by focusing our efforts and resources on such priorities.

We have learned much about partnership through our COPC, both through serendipity and systematic analysis. Most importantly, we have learned that partnering is a process. Often challenging, sometimes messy, and always demanding more than what you think you can handle, partnerships must leave room for growth, change, conflict and innovation. For those willing to travail, campus/community partnerships, when approached in earnest, offer an opportune vehicle for service, engagement and knowledge transfer between communities and universities.

The MSU COPC supported all of its partners through collaborative strategizing and invaluable community, governmental and academic resources. What we consider to be the most profound of our long-term, institutional and ideological accomplishments are discussed in the balance of this section.

#### Institutionalization

Through the support of a one-year COPC extension, we have institutionalized the last of our ongoing projects and are securing funding sources to continue these and related campus/community projects in the areas of Urban Education, Affordable Housing and Community Organizing. Our Neighborhood Assessment and Community Asset Mapping projects have been institutionalized through an interdepartmental partnership between the CCBL and the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences using an interactive web-based GIS. The institutional dedication to this partnership is evidenced in the establishment of a GIS Student Internship Program. This one-year, non-credit bearing internship requires ten hours of work per week and is paid through the Federal Work Study Program (for details regarding this project refer to Section 2.1. of this report).

Our Literacy, Mentoring and Computer Training programs have been institutionalized through a partnership between the CCBL Service Learning Program, the Department of Education and

Human Services, the Office of Student Development and Campus Life, and the Montclair Board of Education. All partners are equally committed to a long-term, expansive and creative partnership to address the educational needs of Montclair students in the Pine Street and Glenfield Park neighborhoods (for details regarding these projects refer to Section 2.3. of this report).

We owe our progress and success to the effective administration and institutionalization of our interdisciplinary and interdepartmental projects through the CCBL. The CCBL is a mechanism through which the campus can connect with its surrounding communities. Offering opportunities to merge pedagogy, research and engagement, the CCBL serves as a resource to faculty interested in such endeavors through training, community networking, model programs and administrative support. The CCBL has learned much through the MSU COPC experience, much of which has encouraged and directed meaningful reflection regarding its future vision and capacity building efforts.

#### Montclair Affordable Housing Strategy

Without question, one of the greatest accomplishments of our COPC efforts has been being a part of the completion, submission, and township adoption of the Montclair Affordable Housing Strategy. All of our community partners and a few of our university partners have, at some point and some way, participated in this attempt at deliberative democracy. The process has been simultaneously fulfilling and frustrating, with our partners often finding themselves on opposite sides of relevant affordable housing issues being probed by the consultant in his effort to construct an exhaustive survey with feasible recommendations. Although all participants had to concede on some level, as is the nature of democracy, the process provided both a starting point for affordable housing in Montclair, and, arguably more importantly, a venue and purpose around which Montclair's diverse and divergent groups coalesced to learn about and practice agency, communication, and democracy (for details regarding the Montclair Affordable Housing strategy refer to Section 2.2. of this report).

#### Faculty Involvement and Development

An institutional shift in the direction of scholarship at MSU has presented a challenge to our faculty partners. Although committed to the philosophy of community engagement, many faculty members have found it difficult to integrate their engagement efforts with their scholarly responsibilities. As a result, the CCBL has provided faculty with innovative strategies for merging pedagogy, research and engagement. The CCBL has worked with MSU COPC faculty, staff and administrators on group and individual levels. Two half-day workshops were held to inform and train faculty and administration regarding existing models, strategies and tools to transform engagement into scholarly products. Workshops have also been aimed at expressing and demonstrating the value and benefits of creating a truly engaged campus; one which supports engaged scholarship.

We are thrilled to report the last year of the COPC saw an increased interest in the scholarship of engagement and community-based projects and initiatives among MSU faculty and administrators. Bryan Murdock, Associate Director of the CCBL, worked to expose interested faculty to the rich opportunities available in their neighboring town. Mr. Murdock has successfully matched community needs to faculty and departmental interests and expertise throughout the institution. Such efforts have resulted in the successful completion of COPC objectives through both planned and emerging projects.

### Celebration and Dissemination of Knowledge

The MSU COPC greatly values the celebration of partnership and dissemination of knowledge gained. Having knowledge, success and lessons to share, we created opportunities for such endeavors in the last year of our COPC. In May of 2004, we hosted a statewide COPC forum in which twelve individuals representing both community and university partners for three of the five funded New Jersey COPCs and one unfunded COPC applicant were in attendance. In keeping with HUD's interest in and support of partnership building, the forum offered a venue for New Jersey COPC recipients to share their experiences and lessons, as well as, to brainstorm about the institutionalization of campus-community partnership projects and activities. Mr. Kinnard Wright, Grants Specialist at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Office of University Partnerships, presented opening remarks. The all-day program consisted of: a funding panel with Gerard Joab, Senior Program Director for Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Nancy Hutchinson, Executive Director of Development for MSU, and Chanda Gibson, Associate in Corporate Services for Goldman Sachs; a session dedicated to building community infrastructure led by Edgar P. Lucas Jr., the Executive Director of Renacer Westside Community Network in Chicago, IL; and a session on creating a supportive university environment, led by Dr. Kenneth Brook, of MSU's Department of Anthropology.

In addition to the COPC Forum, the MSU COPC planned and hosted a public event in honor and recognition of the participants and outcomes of the MSU COPC at the Montclair Public Library in October of 2004. Ed Remsen, Mayor of Montclair, reviewed his role in the project and introduced Dr. Freyda Lazarus as the host of the event to an audience of over fifty including MSU staff, administrators and faculty, and community leaders and residents. Dr. Lazarus gave a brief history of the project, recognizing and thanking all community, university, and governmental partners. She separately thanked COPC Advisory Board members, identifying them among the audience. In addition to recognition at the event, all Advisory Board members and COPC partners received formal letters of appreciation from Dr. Lazarus and MSU, for their involvement in and dedication to the successful completion of the COPC project.

The next segment of the event involved a panel discussing the lessons learned from campus/community partnerships. Beverly Riddick, an Advisory Board member and the Executive Director of HOME Corp, discussed the benefits derived from taking the risk of engaging with academic neighbors. She spoke of the hurdles of trust and culture encountered by a community and community organizations when attempting to partner with a university and the subsequent benefits of facing and surmounting such hurdles. Karen Kadus, an Advisory Board member and Montclair Township's Director of Planning and Community Development, spoke of a deeper mutual understanding between the university and the community as a result of the project. She also acknowledged the importance of clearly recognizing and communicating, to all participants and community residents, the limitations of such projects, so as to avoid the confusion and unrealistic expectations experienced in the implementation stage of the MSU COPC. Dana Natale, COPC Coordinator, briefly discussed the more profound and unexpected data resulting from a systematic analysis of the MSU COPC.

The balance of event was dedicated to the screening and discussion of an historical documentary film series conducted via COPC's Community Organizing efforts. The audience viewed the final twenty minute compilation of three separate shows which aired on the MSU *Carpe Diem* program. Following the screening, the film makers and student interns responsible for the production were acknowledged, and the audience had an opportunity to learn about the development of the

documentary and to ask questions of the film makers. Letters of appreciation and copies of the video series were presented to; COPC Advisory Board members, documentary project participants, the Montclair Board of Education, Montclair Township Council members, MSU administrators involved with the COPC, and the Montclair Public Library (for more details regarding the documentary film series refer to Section 2.1 of this report).

## **1.2 CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED**

Our self-initiated MSU COPC Assessment Project, under the direction of Ms. Dana Natale, was designed and implemented with the goal of evaluating our COPC partners, projects and outcomes. The assessment employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods of analysis; researchers used both survey and interview modalities to assess the organizational structure and processes of the COPC, the outcomes produced by COPC projects and activities, and the perception of COPC held by both university and community COPC participants. The results emerging from our data analysis bore valuable insights regarding our partnerships specifically as well as partnerships in general. The ultimate goal of this effort is the dissemination of results to MSU COPC community members and all those dedicated to and interested in community/university partnerships and campus engagement. We have included reflections on a few of our results.

### Dispelling the Myth of the Bounded “Community”

Community-university partnerships are assumed to involve two entities; a university and a community. But, if you think about this carefully, a major challenge to such partnership begins with this all too often taken for granted and false assumption. Most universities have well-defined and highly bounded geographical and administrative structures within which they operate, making it very easy to define the university entity involved in the partnership. But, the identification of single, bounded “community” partner is not possible, as no such entity actually exists.

If a university uses geographic, social and economic variables to define the “community” with which it would like to partner, as many do in their attempt to partner with neighboring communities, it will learn, as many universities have, that such an area includes any number of distinct “communities” who are aware of one another, but do not necessarily make a habit out of socializing with or working with one another. Although individuals within an identified geographical area may live in fairly close proximity and appear similar based on social, racial and economic measures, they are self-assembled into multiple “communities” with both shared and opposing interests. These self-defined “communities” overlap and divide geographical areas based upon the various issues or interests which have been used to define them. Divides can occur as a result of physical conditions such as a bridge or highway separating one part of the geographical area from another or social issues such as increasing investment in senior housing over school renovations. Overlaps can occur as a result of shared interests such as a proposed park closure or racial profiling.

Universities seeking to partner with communities have repeatedly found themselves working with an amalgam of “communities” rather than the well-defined, geographically, socially and economically distinct and bounded “community” they were expecting. It is important to mention at this point that the tendency of universities to use such determining categories is not entirely a fault of their own; often, community-university projects are funded with the requirement of defining a somehow bounded “community” which is never much more than a statistical construction meaning little to those residing within the so-called “community.”

What is needed is an alternative way of looking at communities. It is time we do away with any attempts to use this notion of a bounded community and, rather, embrace the strengths and potential in their actual diversity. What we all intuitively know about communities, because we are members of them, is that they are flexible rather than fixed, and that individuals move in and out of them depending upon the set of issues at which you are looking. As residents of a specific area, we do not identify with our community or communities based on a solely geographic, social, political or economic basis.

#### Begin with a Flexible Definition of Partnership

It is crucial to involve partners on all sides of a given issue, with diverse perspectives and interests. Such an effort involves great risks, but ensures a soundness of reasoning not otherwise achievable. As long as there are acceptable benefits to all partners which can best be achieved through joint action and resource exchange, a partnership is possible. This means it is possible for each partner to have distinct priorities and long-term goals, while sharing with the newly formed partnership shorter-term goals or specific priorities. Such a strategy makes room for a more flexible definition and construction of partnerships than one which requires that all partners share a particular perspective on a given issue or agree that it should be solved in a particular way. A partnership is most likely to produce sound, just and effective solutions to a problem if its partners diverge in perspective. In fact, to find a just solution to a problem, one that is acceptable to all partners, the partnership must challenge the assumptions of any one community's perspective on an issue. All such partnerships will have limits; some issues will simply have to be left off the table due to irreconcilable perspectives or interests. This is not to be seen as a weakness of the partnership, but rather a reality of partnerships in general; no one partnership is a cure to all ills. These issues can and should be dealt with outside the partnership within or between individual community groups.

#### The Importance of Communication and Commitment

Frequent and candid communication among key Advisory Board members has been critical to the successful implementation of MSU COPC. In our final year, we experienced a curious lethargy among many of our partners, community and university alike. Those who have remained engaged seem to have more ideas and energy than ever before, but many have seemingly disengaged with the process altogether. COPC literature suggests such experiences as typical and informative when moving into the institutionalization stage of campus/community partnership.

A significant challenge to the institutionalization of MSU COPC endeavors was this incremental decrease in partner interest and commitment. A number of our partners, both campus and community alike, lost interest in the partnership and related projects. Such dwindling interest and involvement was, for some, the result of more pressing institutional, personal or organizational priorities. For others, a sincere commitment to sustained campus/community partnership was clearly lacking. We did our utmost to reinvigorate and reenergize existing partnerships through brainstorming, planning and implementation of new and innovative activities and projects.

### **1.3 The Future of Partnership at MSU**

Our COPC experience has served to strengthen our internal programs, such as Service Learning, broaden our connections within the university, and most importantly, deepen our commitment to and partnership with the communities residing in the Township of Montclair. In an effort to expand the scope of our community partnering efforts, we have engaged in the American Democracy Project (ADP). The ADP is a multi-campus initiative of nearly two hundred American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) that seeks to create an intellectual and experiential

understanding of civic engagement for undergraduates. The project seeks to produce graduates who understand and are committed to engaging in meaningful actions as citizens in a democracy. It is our hope that the confluence of our history of engagement, our COPC experience, and the enthusiasm and wisdom of ADP projects throughout the Nation will position MSU to:

- continue the projects and partnerships forged through our COPC initiatives;
- apply the valuable lessons learned through our various engagement initiatives such as COPC and Service Learning programs;
- research, describe and celebrate the breadth and depth of civic engagement activities already present on campus;
- identify all pockets of engagement occurring throughout the institution so as to create opportunities for interdisciplinary, collaborative efforts and communication;
- focus on issues related to citizenship and civic engagement at an institutional level;
- centralize, institutionalize, and legitimize engagement at MSU; and
- provide an arena and vehicle for developing standards for the Scholarship of Engagement at MSU.

## SECTION 2. DETAILED ACCOMPLISHMENTS BY FUNCTIONAL AREA

### **2.1. Community Organizing**

**Objectives:** 1) *Improve residents' capacity to work together in addressing the needs of the area.* 2) *Help residents get to know each other, share information, and develop solutions.* 3) *Increase communication within the area and publicize meetings and other activities.* 4) *Increase local pride by developing a greater awareness of local history and local issues.*

#### **1) *Improve residents' capacity to work together in addressing the needs of the area:***

##### ➤ **Community Organizer/Researcher**

In year three, the MSU COPC hired Michele Twyman-Murray, a concerned and active resident of Pine Street, to work as a part-time Community Organizer/Researcher. Michele is a member of the NAACP, has been active in MAHC since its inception, and participated in our COPC kickoff meeting at Mt. Carmel Church in March of 2001. She is a fourth generation resident of Montclair and has been a member of the board of Day Nurseries for four years. Additionally, the MSU COPC provided tuition for Michele's training program in leadership offered by the Governing Institute of New Jersey (GINJ) conducted on the Rutgers campus in New Brunswick. The GINJ is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to developing the leadership abilities of emerging leaders from diverse grassroots communities and non-profit organizations. COPC funded Michele's involvement in the program in an effort to support the strengthening her leadership abilities and prepare her for a proactive leadership role in the community.

##### ➤ **Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

###### ✓ **Community Directory**

The GIS project has accomplished its initial goal of developing public GIS maps of the associations, organizations and resources in the Pine Street and Glenfield Park neighborhoods. The maps have been used to create a Community Directory maintained and updated by MSU faculty and students ([www.montclair.edu/copc/directory.htm](http://www.montclair.edu/copc/directory.htm)). COPC partners and community members continue to access and print online versions of the Community Directory in their organizing, assessment, and development projects.

Soon, through the use of geographic information systems software, the Community Directory will be viewable online in an interactive environment.

✓ **Interactive Web-Based GIS**

We are ready to launch a comprehensive and interactive web-based GIS system for the Pine Street and Glenfield Park neighborhoods. The project has as its goal, increased community and university capacity in the fields of organizing, planning, research and development. The system is intended to function as a resource designed to provide vital social, economic, geographic, and demographic information to non-profit organizations, community residents, the Township of Montclair, and MSU staff, students, faculty and administrators. Consequently, MSU and the Township of Montclair jointly purchased GIS and ArcIMS (web-based) software, currently housed on a dedicated CCBL computer. This technology has enabled us to create digital models of terrain, infrastructure, political, administrative, land use, and cadastral features as a base map for the COPC Community Asset Map, as well as, future analysis and demonstration projects.

In year three of the grant, COPC partners, Advisory Board members, and the general public participated in a session held at the United Way to learn about the potential uses of GIS as a participatory public information system and planning tool. This event included demonstrations of GIS planning tools and technology. The event concluded with a focus group/feedback session where participants were invited to offer suggestions for GIS uses and future projects. Based upon feedback from this session, we have expanded and improved our Community Directory.

**2) Help residents get to know each other, share information, and develop solutions:**

➤ **Dialogue Sessions**

The Housing Task Force, created as a result of the COPC partners, has both provided a space for resident dialogue and strengthened the pre-existing Montclair Affordable Housing Coalition (MAHC). The Task Force and MAHC were influential in the development of the precedent setting Montclair Affordable Housing Strategy prepared by an outside consulting firm and presented to and approved by the Township of Montclair.

**3) Increase communication within the area and publicize meetings and other activities:**

➤ **Web Sites**

✓ **COPC Website**

An MSU graphic art student updated and redesigned the COPC website over the summer of 2004, creating a more user friendly, attractive and inviting format and structure. The COPC website continues to showcase COPC partners, projects, calendar of events, and opportunities for resident, faculty, student and staff involvement. Maintenance and regular updates are managed through the CCBL. The site, located at; [www.montclair.edu/copc](http://www.montclair.edu/copc), contains links to various related sites including university and community partner websites, the Housing Resource, the Community Directory, and the public GIS website.

✓ **HOME Corp Website**

The HOME Corp website was redesigned by an MSU graphic art student in the summer of 2004. The COPC Coordinator and MSU Webmaster provided technical support and

training in *DreamWeaver* software, enabling HOME Corp to independently manage and maintain their website in the future. The web-based Housing Resource, developed in years' two and three of the grant, was successfully relocated to the new HOME Corp website.

➤ **Local Publications**

Numerous local publications, such as the Montclair Times and the New York Times Jersey Section, included stories covering issues relevant to and/or highlighting COPC projects and partners.

➤ **Channel 34**

Throughout the COPC project, community and COPC events have been posted on this local cable channel. Additionally, Channel 34 aired the *Carpe Diem* Montclair Historical Documentary Series.

➤ **Campus and Community-Wide Bus System**

Responding to the MSU 2005 Federal Initiative for a Campus-Wide Bus System resulting from a strategic planning meeting between the Mayor of Montclair and MSU's President and Senior Vice Presidents, COPC community, government and university partners came together in an effort to strategize around a collaborative plan for an intermodal bus service regularly connecting the campus and the community. Individuals familiar with MSU and the Township of Montclair are well aware of the geographical challenges to building sustainable campus/community partnerships. MSU sits on a hill at the farthest end the township, with a significant amount of the university situated in Little Falls, NJ. MSU has been described by some as "the city on the hill," a perception which has done little to encourage the development of campus/community partnerships and projects.

The intermodal bus plan discussed by COPC partners would provide reliable transportation service to MSU Service Learning students working within the community and Montclair Middle School students in the MSU School Mentoring Program. In addition, the bus service would provide an affordable and convenient opportunity for getting Montclair seniors and lower-income residents onto the MSU campus for art, sport and intellectual events. At the same time, it would encourage MSU students to venture into the Township to explore and participate in its diverse entertainment and programmatic offerings. These are just a few ways in which this innovative transportation strategy could provide a mechanism for achieving greater physical, cultural and ideological understanding and respect between the campus and the community, thus creating opportunities to apply our theoretical understanding of how campus/community partnerships are built.

Dr. Freyda Lazarus, COPC Director, convened a meeting on January 4, 2005 to discuss institutional support for the COPC plan. In attendance were COPC and CCBL staff and MSU administrators from offices including: Senior Vice President for Administration, Facilities Operations, Community Relations and Special Events and Governmental Relations. Present parties expressed general interest in supporting such a plan through the dedication of one or two fuel efficient, environmentally clean buses recently purchased using Congressional funds. Logistical and liability issues were tabled pending a meeting between COPC representatives and Mr. Joe Hartnett, Montclair Town Manager.

#### **4) Increase local pride by developing a greater awareness of local history and local issues:**

##### **➤ Montclair Documentary Project**

Dr. Bill Berlin, with the support of the MSU Department of Broadcasting, used funds from COPC and the NJ Council for the Humanities to develop a three part historical documentary series of the Pine Street and Glenfield Park neighborhoods for *Carpe Diem*. Dr. Berlin, with direction from COPC Advisory Board members, compiled information from MSU History faculty and students, local historians, long-term neighborhoods residents, and local civil servants and politicians. The *Carpe Diem* shows aired throughout the fall of 2004 on numerous public television stations, including: Bergen Cablevision; Montclair Channel 34; Comcast Channel 26; Morris & Paterson Cablevision; Oakland, Clifton & Pompton Cablevision; and Clifton Cable Channel 77.

Additionally, Patty Piroh, the Coordinating Producer of *Carpe Diem*, and Dr. Larry Londino, the Executive Producer of *Carpe Diem*, produced a fifteen minute compilation, composed of video footage and in-studio *Carpe Diem* shows. The compilation was premiered at the October 25, 2004 COPC recognition event (see Section 1.1 for details of the event and the film premiere). Copies of the shows and the compilation piece were disseminated among COPC partners, Advisory Board members, local organizations and institutions, and township officials.

##### **➤ Historical Manuscript**

Drs. Leslie Wilson and Joel Schwartz have written a manuscript of over four hundred pages documenting the African American history of the Pine Street and Glenfield Park neighborhoods. They plan to publish the document in the near future.

##### **➤ The Italians of Montclair Oral History Project**

Conceived and initiated by Dr. Marisa Trubiano, The Italians of Montclair Oral History Project has employed students, residents, and local knowledge experts in uncovering the rich history of Italian Americans and African Americans in Montclair, primarily from the perspective of the Pine Street and Glenfield Park Neighborhoods. One of the outcomes of this project has been the exhibition of scanned or photo recorded historical family relics, photos, and images documenting the Italian American experience(s) in Montclair's historically ethnic neighborhoods. Dr. Trubiano has and continues to expand her oral history project exhibiting it throughout the state of New Jersey and within her academic associations.

## **2.2. Housing**

**Objectives:** 1) *Assist residents in maintaining neighborhood stability by working to ensure that the local housing stock is maintained and kept affordable.* 2) *Increase opportunities for home ownership among target area residents to improve their quality of life.*

### **1) Assist residents in maintaining neighborhood stability by working to ensure that the local housing stock is maintained and kept affordable:**

#### **➤ Tenant Education**

The COPC Housing Team facilitated a number of projects with the goal of educating tenants around issues of tenants' rights, fair housing and rent regulation.

Dr. Jerry Kloby produced and disseminated two tenant rights manuals. Preliminary work on one of them (How to Challenge a Rent Increase) was done by a team of students in Dr. Kloby's Senior Research Project course. Much of the work on the second (Ensuring Quality Housing) was done by Susan Irby, COPC's Community Organizing graduate intern. The manuals are brief, containing essential information on the topics, along with a page of contacts for further information, including a number of local agencies and organizations.

Dr. Kloby also created a PowerPoint presentation on Montclair's housing situation. This undertaking was completed in cooperation with HOME Corp and the help of Susan Irby. The presentation was viewed by the Montclair Affordable Housing Coalition as well as by the COPC Executive Committee. Kathryn Hammond, the former COPC Coordinator, developed a resource manual for Community Land Trusts, which HOME Corp has used as a resource to explore the possibility of creating a CLT in Montclair.

➤ **Affordable Housing Strategy**

On September 14, 2004 the Montclair Town Council ratified a ground-breaking affordable housing strategy for the Township of Montclair. The plan, written by Baird & Driskell Community Planning, proposes that Montclair Township institute innovative strategies in an effort to create and/or preserve 1,113 units of affordable housing out of a total 4,240 units representing the calculated actual needs by 2010. The authors propose a comprehensive array of programs and initiatives for consideration by the township to achieve the housing goals, including: an inclusionary zoning ordinance; acquisition/rehab housing programs; partnerships developments with builders/financial institutions; and extensive community education and outreach.

The report, developed through a participatory process involving residents, organizational representatives, and Township Council members, lays out: a number of guiding principals developed by the council appointed Affordable Housing Task Force and Council resolutions; a summary of existing housing conditions based on original research and existing documents; housing needs, targets, and indicators; eight key strategies identified through the planning process; recommendations regarding the funding of suggested strategies; and a clear action plan, identifying tasks, responsibilities, and timelines for initiating and implementing the strategy over a two year period. For the first year, the plan calls for: the hiring of a housing specialist; the formation of a housing commission; an increase in developer fees and a commitment to CDBG and Section 8 Surplus funds; the development of community education and outreach programs; and the execution of a baseline rent survey. A number of these goals involve our COPC partners and entities created as a result of COPC partnerships and projects. We are proud of our partners, respect their creativity and tenacity, and intend to continue working with them in creating an affordable housing stock in Montclair. The full report can be found through the Township of Montclair website, or at: <http://www.to.montclair.nj.us/planningdept/MAHS.pdf>.

***2) Increase opportunities for home ownership among target area residents to improve their quality of life:***

➤ **Housing Workshops**

Over the life of the COPC project, one-hundred-forty people attended seven HOME Corp workshops designed to propel home buying among first-time home buyers. In October 2003

the Consumer Credit Counseling Center of Essex County joined the HOME Corp/COPC team to provide a HUD certificate to attendees. Subjects covered in the newly structured workshops included: preparing to buy a home; shopping for a home; applying for mortgage; closing on a home; and preparing for life as a homeowner. HUD certification provides evidence that a prospective homebuyer has received the necessary counseling and training to effectively and responsibly approach homeownership. Financial institutions are more favorable in their evaluation of loan applicants with HUD certificates and HUD certified mortgage applicants are eligible for special first-time mortgage programs and other initiatives. Eighty-seven workshop attendees received HUD certificates through this project.

HOME Corp held its final COPC housing seminar on October 2, 2004. Of the twenty-five participants, eighteen were awarded HUD certificates (tardy and early departing participants were not awarded certificates). HOME Corp plans to continue their workshops, using the knowledge learned and partnerships forged through their COPC experience.

➤ **Web Based Housing Resource**

Since July 2004 HOME Corp has been effectively housing and maintaining the web-based Housing Resource, used by numerous COPC partners and area residents for the purposes of information gathering, community education and the production of grant proposals and reports. The Housing Resource was designed to assist Montclair residents seeking information about housing affordability in New Jersey. Content includes: statistics on affordable housing; resources for tenants, homeowners, homebuyers and residents with special needs; and contact information for organizations that support housing initiatives. The Housing Resource evolved out of a COPC partnership between HOME Corp, the Township of Montclair, the NAACP Housing Committee and MSU faculty, staff and students.

➤ **Sub-Contract**

A HUD approved subcontract was extended to our community partner HOME Corp during year three in the amount of \$22,383. Leadership has been provided by Beverly Riddick, Executive Director, who has worked with the MSU COPC team from the grant planning stage through the implementation of activities for year one and two.

➤ **Community-Based Research**

A survey assessing the needs of HOME Corp's three hundred applicants has been developed as a result of the combined efforts of HOME Corp staff and an MSU student intern.

### **2.3. Urban Education**

**Objectives:** 1) *Address the achievement gap among students living within the target area.* 2) *The establishment and implementation of a mentoring program at the Glenfield Middle School that will serve as a pilot program.* 3) *To address the impact of the digital divide among children and families residing in the target neighborhoods.*

**1) Address the achievement gap among students living within the target area:**

➤ **“What Happened to the Street”**

This documentary highlighted the experiences of Montclair's Fourth Ward residents in the wake of the construction and opening of the Montclair Connection, a one-seat direct train line to Manhattan. This project was completed with faculty and students of the Montclair

High School Center for Social Justice (CSJ) and MSU with a presentation by participating students and teachers about the experience. A *Carpe Diem* cable show in 2002 captured the insights of participating students and faculty.

➤ **Organizational Analysis for Computer Learning Centers**

MSU faculty and students collaborated with Day Nurseries Inc. for a needs assessment of that organization. The faculty and students followed a “teaching is learning twice paradigm.” Students learned management concepts and principles in the course and then taught what they learned to computer learning center staff. Through this service learning course, students and faculty also produced a report that was presented to the leadership of Day Nurseries.

**2) *The establishment and implementation of a mentoring program at the Glenfield Middle School that will serve as a pilot program:***

➤ **Emerging Leaders Program**

The Emerging Leaders Learning Community (ELLC) is a campus-wide, inter-departmental program developed and run as a joint venture between the CCBL and the Division of Student Development and Campus Life. One-hundred first-year MSU students engage in one of four service projects including: literacy, where students participate in an after-school tutoring program in the Montclair Public Schools; digital divide, where students serve as tutors and lab assistants in local non-profit computer learning centers located within the COPC target area; mentoring, where students continue to serve as mentors for at-risk youth in Montclair’s Glenfield Middle School; and, environment, where students conduct a recycling and waste audit of the Montclair State University campus. All projects, except the environmental, involve and have been either created or enriched by COPC partnerships.

➤ **School Mentoring Program**

As part of the ELLC, the mentoring program has been jointly institutionalized through Glenfield Middle School, a public school located in Montclair’s COPC neighborhood, and the CCBL. A planning meeting between educators, staff, and students from MSU and Glenfield Middle School, taking place in August 2003, resulted in the production of a mentoring curriculum and recruitment materials as well as a plan to transport middle school students to the MSU campus weekly.

The mentoring program offers middle school students an opportunity to master the physical, social, and academic geography of the MSU campus, while simultaneously teaching students, from both MSU and Glenfield Middle School, leadership, team-building, and diversity skills and sensitivities within a diverse environment.

**3) *To address the impact of the digital divide among children and families residing in the target neighborhoods:***

➤ **The Digital Divide Project**

The CCBL collaborated with Technology Education Access and Mentoring (TEAM) representatives and partner agencies (PineRidge of Montclair and Hollow Day Care Center) to develop customized technology curricula that relies heavily on the work of the National Urban Technology Center and focuses on practical proficiencies and personal expression.

### SECTION 3. MSU COPC ADVISORY BOARD

We are deeply appreciative for the guidance and support of the following dedicated members of the MSU COPC (\* indicates members who have served for the life of the project):

- ❖ \* **Ken Brook:** Montclair State University, Department of Anthropology
- ❖ **Albert J. Faas:** Montclair State University, Center for Community-Based Learning
- ❖ **Audrey Fletcher-Lee:** Montclair Child Development Corporation
- ❖ \* **Richard Gigliotti:** Montclair State University, College of Humanities and Social Sciences
- ❖ **Kathryn Hammond:** Montclair State University, Center for Community-Based Learning
- ❖ \* **Rev. Michael Harriot:** St. Mark's United Methodist Church
- ❖ **Brigid Harrison:** Montclair State University, Department of Political Science
- ❖ **Barbara Hudson:** NAACP, Montclair Chapter
- ❖ \* **Karen Kadus:** Township of Montclair
- ❖ **David Keiser:** Montclair State University, Department of Curriculum and Teaching
- ❖ **Gerald Kloby:** Montclair State University, Institute for Community Studies
- ❖ \* **Ruth Kunstadter:** Rand School
- ❖ \* **Freyda Lazarus:** Montclair State University, Center for Community Based Learning
- ❖ **Anthony Lazroe:** College of Education and Human Services
- ❖ **Elliott Lee:** Dodge Foundation
- ❖ **Joan Mahoney:** Montclair State University, Department of Management
- ❖ **Bryan Murdock:** Montclair State University, Center for Community Based Learning
- ❖ **Dana Natale:** Montclair State University, Community Outreach Partnership Center
- ❖ **Katherine Nicholas:** Montclair Child Development
- ❖ **Richard Peterson:** Montclair State University, Department of Information and Decision Sciences
- ❖ **Fr. Thomas Petrillo:** Mount Carmel R.C. Church
- ❖ **Tanya Poteat:** Kean University
- ❖ **Frank Rennie:** Township of Montclair
- ❖ \* **Beverly Riddick:** HOME Corp.
- ❖ **Fr. Roberts:** Mount Carmel R.C. Church
- ❖ **Phyllis Rogers:** Day Nurseries Inc.
- ❖ **Kevin Salters:** Montclair Board of Education
- ❖ \* **Lincoln Turner:** Montclair Resident