

Project RIGHT, Inc.



Project RIGHT, Inc.: Programs and Events

Project RIGHT Inc.;
Dorchester, MA; 2000

Project RIGHT, Inc. Executive Summary of Activities

Project RIGHT Inc.;
Dorchester, MA; 2000

Project RIGHT Inc.: 5th Annual Report

Project RIGHT Inc.;
Dorchester, MA; October, 1999

Safe for Life: The Hyams Foundations's Building Community Initiative: Project RIGHT, Inc.

Dorchester, MA;

Project RIGHT, Incorporated
(Rebuild and Improve Grove Hall Together)

Projects Programs Events Organizing Efforts
Workshops Activities Mobilizations

Submitted March 1999

Project R.I.G.H.T. Incorporated (PRI)
(Rebuild and Improve Grove Hall Together)

"Neighborhood stabilization is the most effective anti-crime activity..."

Cherry Sumpter, a Crossing Guard (who was recently hit by a taxi at the crossing of Dudley Street and Blue Hill Avenue); Ms. Georgette Johnson-Leslie, Roxbury-North Dorchester APAC; Ms. Jacqueline Payne-Thompson, Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association; Reverend Bobby Thomas, Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association; and Dr. Steven Leonard, Headmaster of the Jeremiah E. Burke High School.

Program Objectives and Accomplishments

Our Year VII (1998) Program Objectives included:

1. Building upon existing and newly organized resident-based organizations working within our community. Building upon on-going work to further develop a stronger relationship and comprehensive network of active neighborhood/resident run entities that will ensure full participation of all PRI resident-based member organizations.
 - PRI, along with the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association have been working with the Boston Redevelopment Authority and the City of Boston's Development of Neighborhood Development in identifying and mapping the vacant lots and abandoned building in the Grove Hall target area.
 - A newly established resident association, the Hazelwood Residents Association was instrumental in ensuring that there was resident participation in the Roxbury YMCA's expansion/building of soccer field. Support to them was lend by a number of surrounding associations that included: the Holborn, Gannett, Gaston, Otisfield Betterment Association, the Five Streets N.A., the Garrison Trotter N.A.
 - The Grove Hall Tenants Association and the Franklin Park Development Tenants Association have requested full PRI membership. These two groups, since joining our collaboration as affiliates have been instrumental in providing information to our law enforcement partners on drug and gang activity within their area in Grove Hall. They have started to work very well with other non-tenant associations in the surrounding area.
 - PRI member organizations (half of which are resident lead) recently voted upon moving forward with a campaign to ensure that we (specifically the Greater Grove Hall community) receive a transportation planning study. PRI has in collaboration with the Blue Hill Avenue Initiative Task Force requested formally from the Mayor a transportation planning study. Further work to ensure that this request is honored is on going.
2. Focus on the five quality of life programs/campaigns that include: 1) prostitution/Johns, 2) crime against seniors/age 55 plus, 3) violations of restraining orders-domestic violence, 4) sale of alcohol to minors-public drinking, 5) motor vehicle violations on residential streets. PRI has dealt with the five quality of life issues through a number of ways. First, we have provided grants to five organizations that have proven to us that they can involve residents at every stage of their program or project. Secondly, we have involved residents through meetings, one to one

outreach, and through our bi-monthly (GHSNI) meetings and our PRI full membership meetings. This year we provided funding to five organizations to assist us in:

- Late night outreach to young women 'walking the streets.' This grant was provided to the Roxbury Comprehensive Community Health Center's WAR Project.
 - Domestic violence education and training to residents and tenants leadership and to provide a community education component for the Jeremiah Burke High School students. This grant was provided to the Children's Services of Roxbury.
 - Violence prevention education and intervention strategies to empower elders and hopefully reduce incidences of victimization in the Greater Grove Hall community. This grant was provided to a member community based organization, the Roxbury Multi-Service Center.
 - Deterring children at an early age from violence. Specifically, against seniors and to foster a sense of community by involving parents, teens, young adults and seniors in the implementation of this program. This grant was provided to new affiliated members (soon to be full members) Franklin Park Development Tenants Association and the Grove Hall Residents Association.
 - Increasing awareness in seniors about violence prevention and preventing future violence against seniors in the neighborhood by helping seniors learn how to help themselves.
3. Implement PRI's mission of reducing, preventing crime, and enhancing public safety/quality of life programming through our on-going law enforcement partnerships. To include drastically increasing our effectiveness in involving more residents in the policy setting stages of our partnerships. Examples include:
- By providing residents the leading role in advocating for the City of Boston's Licensing Board Hearing (as well as having the hearing within their own the community) that 'rolled back' the hours of two fast food restaurants from 4:00 a.m. to 1:00 a.m. we ensured that residents themselves fully understood their power to get things done.
 - By actively organizing residents around the Jeremiah E. Burke School's need (as well as Grove Hall's) in pursuing the development of a community/youth center in Grove Hall we set the stage for over 150 people to become very active in what we hope will become a major development within Grove Hall.
 - PRI and Office of the Attorney General's abandoned properties program (a rehabilitation of abandoned properties project) could not have been initiated without residents knowledge of the abandoned properties in question or their very active participation at every point in the decision making process. PRI resident membership will ultimately decide what properties will be targeted and who the receiver(s) will be. This ensures that residents are part of the policy setting from the beginning to the end.
4. Work on a media project to ensure an enhanced role for the communities of color, especially the resident-based leadership within the Greater Grove Hall community.

- On November 29, 1998, PRI will host, with the major media outlets a media conference/dialogue. The conference "Building Bridges to Communication"-Understanding Our Community, will entail an all day 'retreat' where representatives of Boston's media outlets and community residents work towards promoting awareness of the Roxbury/Dorchester/Greater Grove Hall Community. The 'retreat' will also foster the increasing of reporting positive newsworthy stories about our community. Media sponsors at this time include: the Boston Association of Black Journalists, WHDH-TV/Channel 7, WLVI-TV/Channel 56, New England Cable News, WCVB-TV Channel 5, and the Boston Globe. This event will be held at the Crispus Attucks Children's Center, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Other products of this work include a media study of Greater Roxbury's image on local television news that was done for PRI by the Boston College Media Research Action Project (MRAP).
 - "Urban Update" conducted a taping with Mr. Daniel Richardson, (PRI Board Member and Former Chair/President of the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association) on racism and development of Roxbury. Mr. Lester Strong also conducted a panel presentation with Mr. Peter Crawford (Pasadena, Supple, Columbia Roads Resident Association/PRI Member), Ms. Magdaline S. Jigba (Fayston Street Residents Association/PRI Board Officer), Rev. Bobbie Thomas and Ms. Alma Wright (Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association/PRI Members). This show will air in the winter as a special.
 - PRI has also launched a neighborhood survey (over 120 surveys returned to date) on how residents rate the media's news coverage of their community (Roxbury/Dorchester/Grove Hall).
5. Provide PRI board/staff training in the areas of strategic planning, non-profit board development, and board fundraising.
 - Board members and staff participated in four trainings held between May and July. Ms. Cynthia Bargar, the instructor focused upon fundraising (foundation, Corporation, individual donor, and board responsibilities) and proposal writing.
 - Ms. June Cooper instructed board members and staff strategic fundraising planning.
 - Mr. Eric Mello, Consultant/Accountant, instructed board members on how to read, analyze and interpret financial reports, as well as, planning and managing budgets (August, September 1998).
 - Ms. Lillian Gonzalez of Sandberg, Gonzalez & Creeden, PC provided staff technical assistance in reporting systems, accounting systems, and types/levels of fiscal controls (July, August 1998).
 - Ms. Lillian Gonzalez of Sandberg, Gonzalez & Creeden, PC provide board members trainings in types/levels of fiscal controls and interpreting audited statements.
 6. Facilitate the participation of teens in the implementing of a comprehensive public safety issue awareness and organizing campaign(s) to reduce crime; expand community awareness of the PRI's partnerships and to increase teen involvement within the Grove Hall community.
 - PRI facilitated the programming of various training's to over twenty youth (initially we were going to do only ten). The programming was extremely effective in drawing

youth to youth/community-based issues. The teens worked on green space campaigns (totlots), voter turnout, and environmental issues. The totlots were cleaned up and commitments from the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services are being follow-up upon to add/replace playground equipment. The youth participated in the Million Youth Mobilization March in Washington. PRI membership provided the funding for twenty of our youth to attend. The teens were also part of a number of partnerships with ACE, REAP, RMSC, Voter Power, and Children's Center of Roxbury. Fifty youth (ICO and others) were employed and most participated in outreach and peer leadership trainings.

7. Implement resident mobilization efforts through the "Seasons of Safety" events.

This year PRI provided program support and technical assistance in five major events successfully co-sponsored by the neighborhood resident associations and the Grove Hall Board of Trade.

- The Holborn, Gannett, Gaston, Otisfield Betterment Association's "Neighbor to Neighbor Day" drew over 300 residents, including Senator Dianne Wilkerson and a number of other elected officials present throughout the day.
- The Pasadena, Supple, and Columbia Roads Crime Watch Association had it's 4th Annual Neighborhood Get Together which drew over 50 residents including Attorney General Scott Harshbarger, State Senator Dianne Wilkerson, State Representative Gloria Fox and City Councilor Charles Yancey.
- The Devon Street Association's Summer event drew over 150 residents, including a lively steel drum band.
- The Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association's 20th Anniversary was a great success with over 250 individuals attending.
- The Grove Hall Board of Trade held its annual fundraiser that was attended by 250-300 individuals. PRI co-sponsored the event to raise funds for the Board of Trade and PRI. The event was fruitful.

These events not only serve to highlight the wonderful work of the organizations, but also encourage people to become more active in those organizations and in their community. It also serves to educate people about public policy, issues, and on-going work.

PRI also held it's Fourth Annual Meeting on October 29, 1998. The annual meeting was a great success with over 125 individuals attending to hear about the organization's accomplishments.

8. To continue implementing the PRI/Inner City Organizers (ICO) leadership program. Our goal to increase teen involvement by 10% over the year.

(Please refer to Goal #6 above)

Strategic Planning

PRI is committed to start its formal strategic planning in 1999. The board of directors has acknowledged that to increase our performance a total review of our vision, mission, structure, support systems, etc. must be performed. The board has also recognized that because of all the day to day issues that we deal with we can at times lose our sense of direction and so they have with overwhelming consensus agreed to quickly move forward with a strategic planning process. The board has instructed staff to provide a scope of services for a Request for Proposal (RFP) and to move quickly with the initial phases of what we believe will be the beginning of an exciting process. The initial phase calls for staff team building that will lead to staff and board team building. In this initial phase, we envision an assessment of all of our strengths, limitations, resources, needs, etc.

We have contacted a few consultants (i.e. Goldstone Consulting Services, Interaction Institute for Social Change) who have submitted their organizational materials and we are contacting a number of other consultants from a list Mr. Prentice Zinn, the Boston Foundation provided. Our latest date to start the process is mid January 1999.

Project R.I.G.H.T., Inc.
(Rebuild and Improve Grove Hall Together)
320 Blue Hill Avenue, Roxbury/North Dorchester, Massachusetts 02121
(617) 541-5454 (Main number)

Executive Summary

Project R.I.G.H.T., Inc. Mission

PRI's mission is to promote resident leadership development and neighborhood stabilization through door-to-door organizing within Roxbury and North Dorchester (Greater Grove Hall Community).

Project R.I.G.H.T., Inc. Goals

PRI's goals are to: 1) Assist resident leadership to organize their neighbors to prevent all forms of violence from occurring within the Greater Grove Hall. 2) To develop new street associations and strengthen existing member organizations. 3) To institute formal communication, networking, and joint project activity between members. 4) To maintain the cultural and ethnic diversity within our coalition. 5) To effectively manage and evaluate the work of PRI in a manner accountable to the community. 6) To raise funding to provide administration and program support to members.

Project R.I.G.H.T., Inc. History

In 1991, eight groups within Grove Hall (neighborhood-based resident associations, churches, and service organizations) came together to form a collaborative to address the issue of violence (youth on youth violence) within the Grove Hall neighborhood of Roxbury and North Dorchester.

Project RIGHT, Inc. (PRI) was established to increase the capacity of neighborhood resident groups and other organizations in an effort to prevent crime and violence within the Grove Hall community. Since PRI's inception, the collaborative's organizational mission has been to strengthen and coordinate existing services and programs for our community through the grass roots organizing of neighborhood residents.

At present, there are well over thirty (30+) organizations represented in the collaborative. PRI places a priority of increasing the number of residents involved in the neighborhood block associations, crime watches, block watches and tenant associations within our target area.

Organizational Accountability

Representatives from the PRI's member organizations meet monthly through a "PRI Full Membership" meeting held the first Tuesday of every month to update the membership on

community wide issues, initiatives, campaigns. etc. Each member organization is required to have a spokesperson and an alternate for their representation to PRI. PRI's membership is directed by a Board of Directors of fourteen members (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and ten at-large members -- There are presently 10 sitting board members), who meet monthly (third Thursday of the month) to review the status of the on-going work, direct the staff, analyze issues and neighborhood concerns, develop plans and campaigns, assess the collaboration's that PRI are involved in, and monitor PRI's financial/fiscal records.

Accomplishments

- ◆ Played a role in the overall reduction of juvenile crime within the Greater Grove Hall Community.
- ◆ Through a number of partnerships helped to build nineteen (19) new houses on vacant lots, with additional six (6) about to be built this Spring/Summer (1999).
- ◆ Trained eight (8) residents in a yearlong program on leadership development and public policy issues.
- ◆ Helped create a partnership with law enforcement and city officials that ensured the Grove Hall community the designation of the U.S. Department of Justice's "Weed and Seed" program - A "WEED & SEED Site."
- ◆ Helped members to hold over 150 association/block meetings (FY 99).
- ◆ Improved resident communications with local elected and appointed city and state officials so that residents are empowered to address their concerns and issues proactively.
- ◆ Initiated a fair economic development planning process for a ten acre abandoned lot ("Brunswick Garden") that was a gang and drug haven.
- ◆ Identification of numerous drug & gang 'hotspots' for prevention, intervention and suppression activities and provided technical assistance to residents in the development of community impact statements. Mobilized residents to attend and speak out at the public hearings which address these "hot spots" has successfully closed down numerous "hot spots" that have historically affected the target area.
- ◆ Successfully advocated for a transportation planning study for Roxbury (Greater Grove Hall specifically).
- ◆ Identified and initiated the planning phase for a Jeremiah E. Burke High School Expansion/Grove Hall Community Youth Center.
- ◆ Provided technical assistance to over 20 associations/block watch groups in zoning, public safety, economic development issues. and a wide range of other public policy matters.
- ◆ Through the joint efforts of one of our partnerships we provided "Seed" mini grants (FY 99/00 -- \$80,000.) and "Special Emphasis" grants (FY 00 -- \$58,000.) to Grove Hall tenant and community based organizations to work on senior violence, intergenerational, domestic violence, senior advocacy issues, mentoring, and media development programming.
- ◆ Through the initiative of Project RIGHT, Inc. and the Garrison Trotter Neighborhood Association, a successful dialogue took place between Grove Hall residents with representatives of the Boston Association of Black Journalists, WHDH/ Channel 7, WLVI/ Channel 56, WCVB/ Channel 5, New England Cable News, The Boston Globe, WBZ/ Channel 4 and other media outlets over concerns about coverage of public safety issues in the greater Grove Hall neighborhood.

Organizational Issues to be Addressed (1999)

A five year strategic plan and implementation process that will include:

- ♦ Team building for staff and board members (separately and jointly).
- ♦ Managing and sustaining organizational growth (new organizations and staff members).
- ♦ Developing and sustaining leadership (members and staff).
- ♦ Progress report on mission, goals and objectives of PRI.
- ♦ Raising resources to support our mission, goals and objectives.

Statement of Need

The Grove Hall area of the Roxbury and North Dorchester neighborhoods, of the City of Boston, is a unique paradox of resources and divergent contrasts. On one hand, there is a multitude of public and private resources, while there are numerous boarded up buildings and vacant lots. A revitalized business district has stubbornly rebuilt its commercial activity during the past two decades, while the surrounding residential community weathered the impact of "redlining" and secondary mortgage "scams". Major insurance companies avoid issuing policies for area homeowners, while charging exorbitant rates for automobile coverage. There is a diverse mixture of housing ranging from triple-deckers, apartment buildings and subsidized units, but many private homeowners are "building" rich, and "cash" poor.

Grove Hall has seen the flight of a major commercial institution (i.e. supermarket), yet in an adjacent area exists a shopping mall. Grove Hall is home to several major non-profit community institutions, but many of them are weathering extended transitional periods of management changes and financial difficulties. While there are many schools in the neighborhood, there is a glaring lack of afterschool programs and weekend facilities for area youth. Many active resident associations, crime watch block groups and other community groups organize and take responsibility for their surrounding areas, but the prevailing public view is that Grove Hall is overrun by gang violence and drug trafficking.

Within our 4 & 1/2 square mile target area, PRI has access to six public schools, two early learning centers, a private school, 20 churches (both large and "storefront"), two mosques, a pharmacy, a hardware store, a construction supplies store, a BPD "Special Operations" building, 4 "group" child care centers, one neighborhood health center and a dialysis center, YMCA and YWCA branches, one bank branch, a state public welfare office, a post office, a fire station, a museum, a library, twelve hair salons/barbershops, twelve "takeout food" (pizza, burger, restaurants...), fifteen grocery stores, two service stations, four Laundromats, three dry cleaners, a tire repair shop, six auto repair shops, a car wash, a Masonic temple, a funeral home, seven "liquor" establishments, a locksmith, a printer, three insurance agents, two check cashing stores, ten community based agencies (services, substance abuse, youth, residential), two outdoor basketball courts and a soccer field, several "tot" lots and parks.

Despite the outward appearances of numerous "thriving" small businesses, many of these operations are struggling day-to-day or some have closed. While there is the potential for a variety of resources to build up Grove Hall, there remains the pressing need to rebuild communication and cooperation between the public, commercial, community based and residential sectors. Grove Hall endured the neglect, and the inadequate government response to the wave of "crack" cocaine and gang violence during the late '80's and early 90's. The B.P.D.'s handling of the Carol Stuart murder investigation, and subsequent "Stop and Search" policies, only further drove a wedge in community relations. Within this historical context, PRI has set its sight on building a partnership between public and law enforcement agencies with resident and community based representatives.

Demographics

According to the 1990 Census Data, two census tracts that constitute a major part of our Grove Hall target area have about 13,000 residents (55.3% female). The racial breakdown is as follows: 83.6% - African American, 12.8% - Hispanic, 3.0% - White, and .4% - Asian. The income breakdown by household is as follows: 40.9% - <\$15,000, 16.8% - \$15,000 to \$25,000, 26.5% - \$25,000 to \$50,000, 11.3% - \$50,000 to \$75,000, 2.9% - \$75,000 to \$100,000, and 1.6% - >\$100,000.

Organizational Campaigns

To facilitate the participation of neighborhood residents and community representatives in the implementation of a comprehensive law enforcement and neighborhood policing effort to reduce crime (and the fear of crime), and to improve the quality of life in the Greater Grove Hall community, PRI is presently working with a number of partners on five "quality of life" issues. These five "quality of life" issues are prioritized as: 1) prostitution/ Johns; 2) violent crimes against seniors age 55 plus; 3) violations of restraining orders/ domestic violence; 4) sale of alcohol to minors/ public drinking; & 5) motor vehicles violations on residential streets (i.e. speeding, tractor trailer parking). We will continue to work on these on-going issues throughout this year.

Through our ongoing organizing efforts, we have identified two additional campaigns that we will actively be working on this year (FY 99/00).

The first is a Traffic Safety Campaign for the Blue Hill Avenue corridor. This campaign is a resident-lead initiative directed to increasing the safety for pedestrian and vehicular traffic along the Blue Hill Avenue corridor, particularly for local residents. The Traffic Safety Campaign has four areas of concentration: traffic flow, parking, speeding, and pedestrian safety.

The second is a Grove Hall Community & Youth Center at the Jeremiah E. Burke High School. This campaign involves building a multi-use facility that will serve the Greater Grove Hall community. Our proposed plan includes a Boston Community/Youth Center, a regulation football field, and expansions to the lunch room, gym, and library, as well as, crucial infrastructure/capital improvements (heating systems, etc.). Partners in this endeavor are: the Headmaster, parents, and students of the

Jeremiah E. Burke High School, the Grove Hall Board of Trade, the Pasadena, Supple, & Columbia Roads Neighborhood Association, and our elected and appointed officials.

Evaluation/Measuring Outcomes

We would like apply what we learned in your trainings (Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach) to assemble the tools to evaluate the Grove Hall Community & Youth Center. We will work on a model on the proposed Grove Hall Community & Youth Center in the next fifteen to thirty days and submit them to you for your review. We envision the possible outcomes to include:

Initially

- ◆ Residents are introduced through small group meetings and larger community wide meetings to the proposed project.
- ◆ Residents are surveyed about what they envision the center providing the community..
- ◆ More residents and CBO's become involved in the planning and advocacy.

Intermediate

- ◆ Residents/neighborhood associations and groups start working with the project implementation/review group to move the project forward.
- ◆ Resident empowerment builds through the negotiation process of the project. The negotiation process will include how large the center will be and what programs will be housed in the center. It will take a number of resident driven organizations to make the case for a large community/ youth center with a range of programming.
- ◆ An organized group of people becomes the project implementation/review group.
- ◆ Leadership development is another outcome considering that we have involved both residents who are abutters and (residents whom we consider) secondary spokespersons for the surrounding neighborhood associations/groups. These people will be the "driving force" for the project.

Long Term Benefits

- ◆ Residents are empowered/trained to address other areas of concern within the community.
- ◆ Residents learn new skills relating to architectural/urban design, environmental issues, program design, and management (as it pertains to the community center board that has to be established).
- ◆ Multi-use facility is built that serves the whole community (high school students and residents: young and old).
- ◆ Overall youth related crime decreases.

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FINANCIAL STATEMENT

PROJECT RIGHT, INC. Profit and Loss July 1998 through June 1999

	<u>Jul '98 - Jun '99</u>
Income	
Contributions Income	
Individual	\$4,365
Members	\$500
Campaign	\$5,250
Foundations	\$130,500
Government Contracts	
Safe Neighborhoods	\$57,957
Safe Futures	\$59,653
Other	\$8,943
Corporations	\$10,500
	=====
Total Income	\$277,669
Expense	
Salaries	\$121,779
Payroll Taxes	\$11,629
Project Initiatives & Other	\$42,350
Travel & Auto Expense	\$4,216
Contracted Services	\$28,965
Insurance	\$8,258
Dues/ Subsc. Adv.	\$2,729
Equipment Rental & Repairs	\$1,244
Equipment Purchases	\$1,059
Postage and Delivery	\$3,691
Printing and Reproduction	\$5,318
Office Rent & Utilities	\$9,846
Training Materials	\$1,065
Program Supplies/Misc.	\$3,037
Telephone	\$7,059
Office / Program Supplies	\$11,279
Special Events Prog. Exp.	\$916
	=====
Total Expense	\$264,440
Net Income	<u>\$13,228</u>

Audited financial reports prepared by Sandberg, Gonzales & Creeden, P.C. are available upon request

5th Annual Report



October 1999

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & DIRECTOR

October 22, 1999



If you will protest courageously and yet with dignity and Christian love, when the history books are written in future generations, the historians will have to pause and say, "There lived a great people — a black people — who injected new meaning and dignity into the veins of civilization." This is our challenge and our overwhelming responsibility. - From the M.L.King, Jr. Memorial.

To the Grove Hall Community:

We start by reporting that Project RIGHT, Inc. is a healthy organization spiritually, programmatically and financially. We are pleased to be poised to enter the next century in good shape. We are keenly aware, however, that it is the spirituality of our coalition that gives us our energy to tackle more issues.

The words above remind us of the importance of the work that we do. It reminds us that we have seen the love and dignity in our community every day and in every way. It reminds us of the Christian, Islamic and Judaic values melded together in our neighborhood. It reminded us that our strength lies in average people taking on extraordinary challenges. Our block associations, agencies, churches, youth and businesspersons in our membership are working hard:

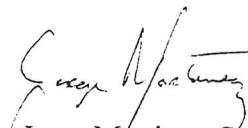
- To envision and create a Safe Haven for our older youth at the Burke High School;
- To clean up our environment after a massive gasoline spill;
- To be consistent and meet after a hard day's work to network with neighbors on policies and programs that impact our lives;
- To work to encourage everyone to participate in our democracy;
- To help more neighbors get the opportunity to own their own home; and
- To mentor young people and teach them by example how to respect themselves and their neighborhood.

Serving as president and director of Project RIGHT, we feel honored to work with our board, staff and residents towards a positive vision for the future of Grove Hall. We are confident that the fate of Grove Hall is in very good hands. It is squarely in the hands of the community.

Yours in community service,



Laura E. Younger
President


Jorge Martinez, Sr.
Director/Organizer

WHO WE ARE



Project RIGHT, Inc. (Rebuild and Improve Grove Hall Together) has the pleasure of being a wonderful collaborative of organizations, a family of valiant people who care, and most importantly, active resident leadership willing to take on difficult and complex issues. Our organizing and capacity building supports individuals who contribute many hours of their time and energy to ensure that our community has the opportunity and the resources to accomplish our goals. We continue to strengthen our membership, build our network and we constantly challenge ourselves to achieve a higher standard.

In the early 90's when Boston was in turmoil with dramatic increases in violence affecting our youth, a few leaders within our community took it upon themselves to make a difference. They first reached within themselves, for their belief was that they and they alone could change the negative environment around their children. They then reached out to city and state government and the philanthropic world to find partners necessary to accomplish their goals.

It is a wonderful story of resident leadership and community based organizations taking the initiative to solve problems.

We know that we can organize, that we can plan, take action and make change when we all come together. We have proven this over and over again. We enter the next millennium knowing that we were right in our mission... *to strengthen our community by continuing to build, nurture and maintain a comprehensive community effort that is ever vigilant to the ever changing needs of our community.*

If we continue to put our resources in building, supporting, enhancing, and nurturing present and future leadership we then can truly count on continuing success in doing our part to ensure the revival of Grove Hall. We have in the past been made promises that our community would once again be whole, as it was many years ago. It is now our responsibility to ensure that we turn the promises into results. It will take all of our commitment, expertise, and dedication to ensure that our community will be able to take advantage of the (economic)



A working meeting with Mayor Menino and his Staff to design a Community Youth Center

good times. If we are prepared to address present and future economic and social issues then we will be able to succeed.

In our commitment to our community we have established a number of priorities that we believe will assure the continued rebuilding and improvement of Grove Hall (Rox. & Dorch).

Continued on page 5

ORGANIZING CAMPAIGNS 2000

Right Leaders In Action

Leadership Development: This training program is for our board and membership. It is designed to build the capacity of resident associations to participate more fully in community and economic development planning. Residents also learn how to monitor the actual development taking place in the Greater Grove Hall community. Resident associations' work has significantly and substantially increased during the last few years. Our main areas of focus will be building on our fundamental notion that "...neighborhood stabilization is the most effective anti-crime activity." We will strengthen our member organizations' capacity to acquire and manage resources crucial to the life of their resident associations. We will train our members to develop neighborhood standards for community development, including commercial and housing development. Project RIGHT, Inc. will mobilize residents within our associations to participate fully in framing public policy and increasing our exercise of the franchise so important to our community. Finally, we will enhance our members' capacity to analyze and address public safety issues in partnership with the local business community and law enforcement.

City Services: We have engaged a team of attorneys from Northeastern University School of Law's Culture and Difference Community

Lawyering Program to assist us with public policy pertaining to federal work projects such as the building of retaining walls within the city of Boston.

Strategic Multi-Year Action Plan: Our organization's plan to sustain our mission and economic vitality is of great importance to our board of directors, staff, and our community. We will begin the year 2000 actively working on our strategic plan with a special emphasis on fund raising. Our on-going organizational strategic planning efforts prioritizes our guiding principles. These principles have, from our birth, driven us to excel in our efforts to be comprehensive in our approach to organizing. A foundation of our organizing is effective planning to recruit into our fold bold new leadership. It is with leadership and a strong action plan that we will be able to deliver the advocacy required to succeed in the years ahead.

Media Advocacy: In keeping with our goal of changing the negative view of our community, we have committed to establishing a media resource center within Project RIGHT. This commitment will build upon our past and existing work in changing the negative media perception of our community. Our community is a wonderful place to raise our families, educate, and fund athletic and social outlets for our youth and ourselves.



Georgette Johnson-Leslie, Retired Executive Director of Roxbury / North Dorchester APAC

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October 1999 5

SETTING COMMUNITY STANDARDS

If we can focus upon these fundamental truths as a united community then we will overcome any and all difficulties and have fun and satisfaction in our work.

Safe Haven - Grove Hall Community Center:

This campaign is based on a commitment made to our older youth ages 13-19 years old. Our idea is to create a nurturing and safe environment for our youth and their families. The campaign has three components: academic, athletic, and a 'safe haven.' The academic component relies upon making enhancements to the Jeremiah E. Burke High School. The athletic component relies upon the building of an athletic facility. These two components, along with a parent and community policy board, will create a 'safe haven' for our youth.

The Grove Hall Safe Neighborhood Initiative (GHSNI): Through an equal partnership with law enforcement entities, we have been effective in addressing and decreasing crime within the Greater Grove Hall community.



Teaching Safety on the way to School

PRI's role in this resident/community driven partnership is as a grant-maker. PRI serves as the administering agent for 'SEED' grants. These grants provide community-based organizations with funding that enhances and expands their services. We are able to provide resources to a number of groups (5 to 6) each year. These resources thereby continually build the community's capacity to work on vital issues that affect the quality of life of every resident within our community. PRI also provides technical assistance, organizing, as well as the administration of this community-based effort.

The GHSNI launched the Senior Empowerment Initiative this year. A highly successful Senior Information Fair was held that drew over 200 seniors and 39 community and public agencies.

GHSNI Partners

- Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General
- Office of the Suffolk County District Attorney
- Office of the United States Attorney
- Boston Police Department
- Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services
- US Drug Enforcement Administration
- Project RIGHT, Inc.
- Garrison-Trotter Neighborhood Association
- Grove Hall Board of Trade
- Neighborhood Development Corporation of Grove Hall

Traffic Safety/Environmental Justice:

This project entails documenting, reporting, and following up with the appropriate public and appointed officials to address traffic safety within our community. As part of our commitment to the very serious issue of pedestrian safety and air pollution, we are working with Alternatives for Community & Environment (ACE) to address common links between the issues of transportation, development, and environment.

Continued on page 7

COMMITMENT TO THE MISSION

Our networking with ACE proved important when we needed an ally to work with us on an environmental issue concerning the 600-gallon gas spill on Seaver Street. A **PRI member organization**, the Pasadena, Supple, Columbia Roads Association has expanded it's catchment area to assist these residents in addressing this environmental crisis. •

The SafeFutures Initiative – ‘One Community...Three Neighborhoods’: This program is funded by the United States Department of Justice/Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Program. The city of Boston SafeFutures Initiative's goal is to reduce youth violence and delinquency and to focus on strengthening families in the communities of Grove Hall, Franklin Field/Franklin Hill, and Mattapan. SafeFutures is a comprehensive juvenile intervention and prevention program designed to focus on the areas of Gang Free Schools and Communities, At-Risk Girls, Family Strengthening, Health Services, Juvenile Mentoring, Delinquency Prevention and Employment Services. The program is administered by the city of Boston's Office of Community Partnerships. The Project RIGHT /Grove Hall Neighborhood Governance Board's role is to ensure that our community is provided with it's fair share of services and to explore any gaps in services within our neighborhood. Our campaign for the Grove Hall Community Center is a response to gaps in service for older children identified through our SafeFutures work.

We are currently providing technical assistance to the communities of Franklin Field/Franklin Hill NGB and Mattapan NGB to develop a community structure to support a continuum of services when the SafeFutures commitment is completed in 2001.

Mission and Goals

Our mission is to promote resident leadership development and neighborhood stabilization through door-to-door organizing campaigns within Roxbury and Dorchester.

Goals:

To identify resident leadership and organize neighbors to prevent all forms of violence.

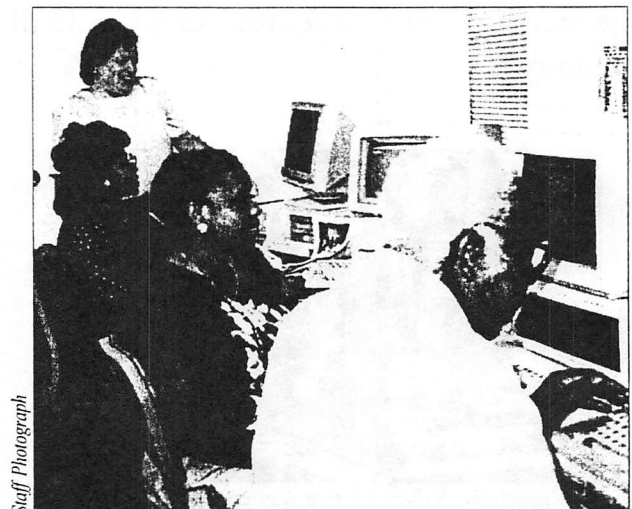
To develop new street associations and strengthen member organizations.

To ensure communication, networking and joint project activity between members.

To maintain the cultural and ethnic diversity within our coalition.

To manage and evaluate our work in a manner accountable to the community.

To raise funding to provide operating and project resources to members.

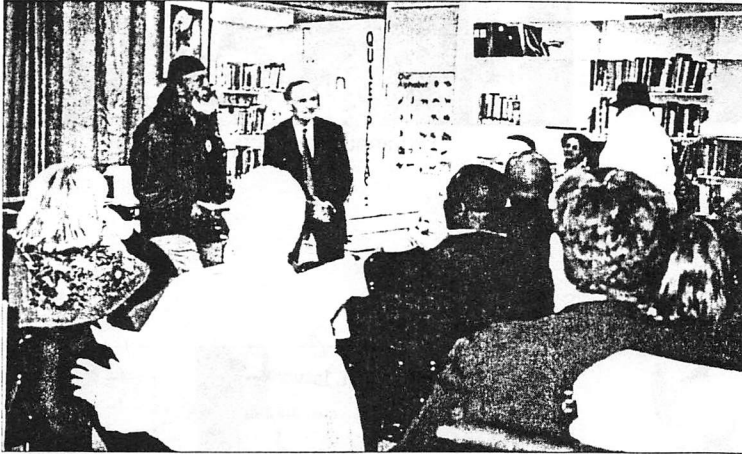


Staff Photograph

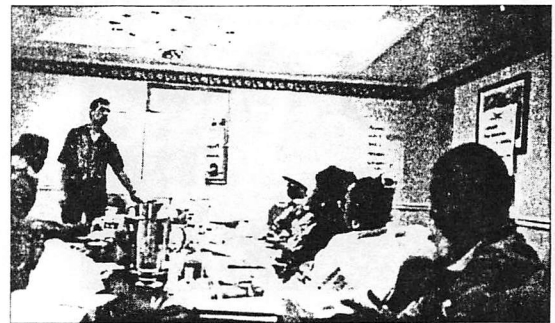
PRI residents taking a computer course

OUR COMMUNITY

A GREAT MIX . . .



Discussing public safety with Tom Reilly, Attorney General



PRI Board strategic planning session



Residents speaking out on education



Photograph by: Chris Aduana

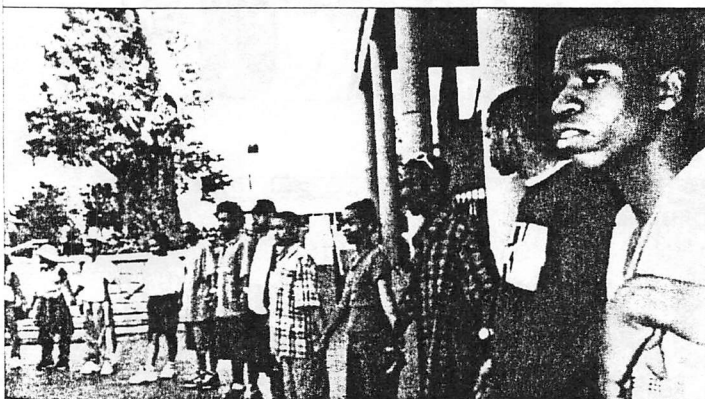


PRJ annual meeting 1998



Photograph by: Chris Adunama

Brenda Gadson Exec. Dir., RMSC



Building youth leadership



Photograph by: Idella Payne

... OF PEOPLE

MEMBERS & ALLIANCES

The Holborn, Gannett, Gaston, Otisfield
Betterment Association

The Five Streets Neighborhood Association

The Devon Street Group

Fayston Street Residents Association

The Residents Association Strategic Committee - RASC

The Pasadena, Supple & Columbia Roads
Neighborhood Association

The Roxbury Multi-Service Center, Inc.,

The Mt. Calvary Holy Church of Boston

The First Haitian Baptist Church of Boston

The Quincy-Geneva Housing Development Corporation/
NewVision CDC

The Caribbean Foundation/Urban Community
Homemaking Home Health Aide & Chores Services

F.I.R.S.T., Inc.

The Three W's Block Association
Wabon/Wabeno/Wyoming Streets

Garrison-Trotter Neighborhood Association

Grove Hall Board of Trade

Elm Hill Park Improvement Association

The Jeremiah E. Burke School Parents Council

Seaver Street/Nazing Court Tenants Association

The Friends of Franklin Park Zoo

Intervale/Normandy Street Residents Association

Senator Dianne Wilkerson

City Councillor Gareth Saunders

Representative Marie St. Fleur

The Crawford, Howland, Ruthven, Wenonah, Waumbeck
BlockWatch Association

Representative Gloria Fox

Stanwood Street/Columbia Road Resident Association

The John D. O'Bryant Community Youth Center

Community Programs against Sexual Assault

NDC of Grove Hall

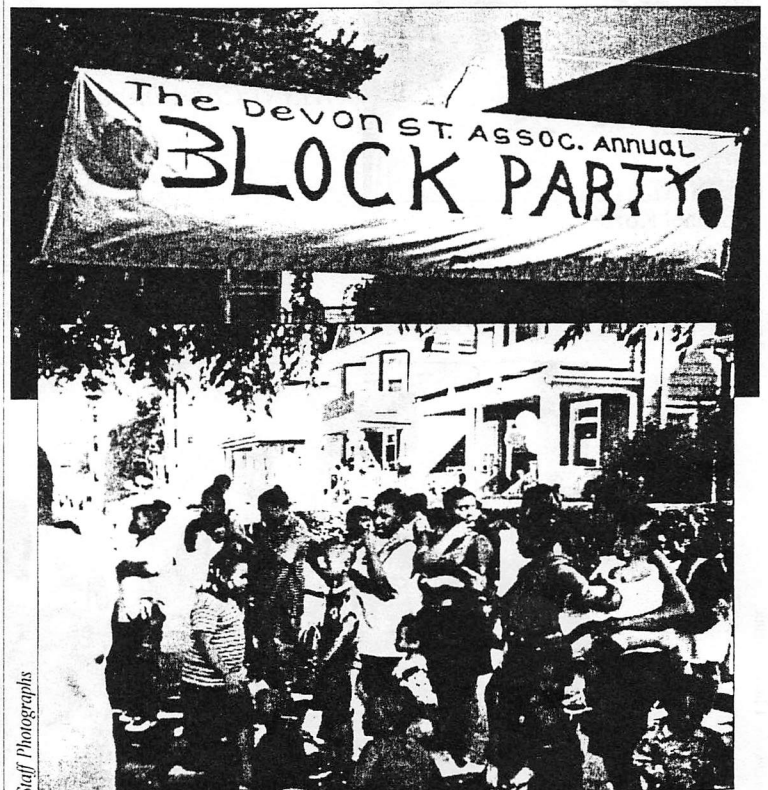
The Magnolia Plus Five Neighborhood Association

The Lawrence Avenue Group

Freedom House Inc.

The Grove Hall Elder Housing Advocacy Group

La Alianza Hispana, Inc.



Staff Photographs

Summer of Safety - Devon Street

OUR STAFF



Zakiya Alake
Community Organizer
NGB Coordinator

Zakiya Alake



Jorge Martinez, Sr.
Director/Organizer

Jorge Martinez, Sr.



Eric Mello
Financial Manager

Eric Mello



Michael Koza
Community Organizer
GHSNI Coordinator

Michael Koza



Angela Jackson-Huff
Administrative Asst.

Angela Jackson-Huff



Staff giving updates to general membership



SAFE FOR LIFE

THE HYAMS FOUNDATION'S
BUILDING COMMUNITY INITIATIVE

Project R.I.G.H.T.

"I got a whole block of buildings torn down in six months," is what Lilla Frederick says about her first experience with community activism. Every day for years, on her way home from work, Frederick had passed a row of abandoned buildings. In her words:

Everything was happening in those buildings — prostitution, drugs... You name it. Each day, I was so upset just to get by that corner. And then one day, I said to myself, "Enough is enough."

Frederick decided to contact Project R.I.G.H.T. (Rebuild and Improve Grove Hall together), which had been circulating flyers offering "free help in organizing your street or areas." She says:

They told me that I had to write a letter and get a list of all of the residents who wanted the building down. It was that easy, but no one had been willing to take that extra step. The important thing was that there was somebody to guide me.

The "somebody" Frederick refers to is Jorge Martinez, who has been the Director/Organizer of Project R.I.G.H.T. since its inception in 1992. Martinez insists on including the word "organizer" in his title, because he believes that every staff member of the coalition must be, first and foremost, a community organizer. With his assistance, Frederick was able to tap into the right people (she dropped the letters personally on the important desks at City Hall), and even got federal funds to underwrite the demolition of the building.

This is just one of many success stories told by representatives of the 30 member organizations that make up Project R.I.G.H.T. The coalition originally was formed when Hyams approached Roxbury Multi-Service Center about applying to the Building Community Initiative. Henry Allen explains:

Grove Hall was experiencing a lot of drug-related violence in the late '80s and early '90s — but it also had a lot going for it. There were two community development corporations, and a lot of rehabbing and tenant organizing



Project R.I.G.H.T. has been blessed by strength and continuity in its leadership — at both the board and staff level.



The Project...provides block associations and neighborhood groups with guidance, organizing expertise and resources...

going on. There was also a very strong anchor organization in Roxbury Multi-Service Center.

In its earliest days, Project R.I.G.H.T. was primarily a series of block associations and crime watch groups that operated communally, with no real leadership structure. Soon, the limitations of this operational style were recognized, and a more formal structure was created, which included elected officers and a broad membership base. Since then, Project R.I.G.H.T. has grown stronger and stronger. Today, it is regarded as one of the most successful models for grassroots community organizing in Boston.

Project R.I.G.H.T. has been blessed by strength and continuity in its leadership -- at both the board and staff level. Laura Younger, President of the board, is deeply involved in her own block association and a knowledgeable spokesperson for the coalition. And Jorge Martinez has directed the staff since the Project's earliest days.

The Project runs successful community events, and provides block associations and neighborhood groups with guidance, organizing expertise and resources, like small grants for newsletters or computers. In exchange for this support, groups are required to become members and attend meetings. Laura Younger sums up the coalition's approach to community organizing as "block by block, street by street and resident by resident."

One of the most recent beneficiaries of the coalition's support was the Fayston Street block group led by Magdaline Jigba, who says:

My street was very violent and had a lot of drugs. It looked bad and had potholes — had not been paved in a long time. All the residents had given up about trying to do anything about it.

Like most active and concerned residents of Grove Hall, Jigba heard about Project R.I.G.H.T., and on her first visit, staff organizer Nelson Cardona offered to help. She says:

Nelson went door-to-door with me to get the neighbors to come together. We were surprised that 20 people showed up at our first meeting. We put

together our needs, and we formed an association. One of the first things we did was write a letter to the city about our potholes. Now, the neighbors know each other and greet each other. And our street is being paved, and the trees are being trimmed, so everyone wants more meetings.

Another block organizer, Claudia Owumi, feels empowered by the support of Project R.I.G.H.T.:

When I first moved to Stanwood Street, right outside our door was nothing but hard core selling of drugs. It got to the point where my children were trapped in our home. Laura and Jorge gave me the tools to document what I was seeing and make sure the information was passed on to the right agencies. Now, I am able to stand up for myself, and my children are successfully walking the neighborhood.

Of the role Project R.I.G.H.T. plays with members like Jigba and Owumi, Jorge Martinez says:

We give them funding and manuals that are full of information. We help them create flyers, and provide postage and computers. But we try not to do things for them. We give them the assistance they need to do for themselves.

Largely due to the success of Project R.I.G.H.T., there is a general feeling of greater safety in Grove Hall today. Drugs are still a major problem, but since so many of the dealers have been forced out, the coalition is turning its attention to getting help for individual drug users. The Hyams Foundation would like to see Project R.I.G.H.T. conduct more effective outreach to ethnic groups beyond the African-American leadership that currently prevails in the coalition, especially to the sizable number of Latino and Haitian residents in Grove Hall. But Project R.I.G.H.T.'s relationship to its founding organization, Roxbury Multi-Service Center, is better than ever. And, although the Project's relationship with Boston police was non-existent — even openly hostile — for the first couple of years, today it has turned around completely,



Largely due to the success of Project R.I.G.H.T., there is a general feeling of greater safety in Grove Hall today.

BLOCK BY BLOCK



Our primary goal will always be to nurture the efforts of the individuals who live in Grove Hall.

and is strong and healthy. Deputy Superintendent Bobbie Johnson, Commander of Area B, says:

Our close working relationship with Project R.I.G.H.T. helps us to be vigilant. They call us when their members identify a problem, so that we can respond; and we let them know when we are about to do something that might affect them. It's a real collaboration.

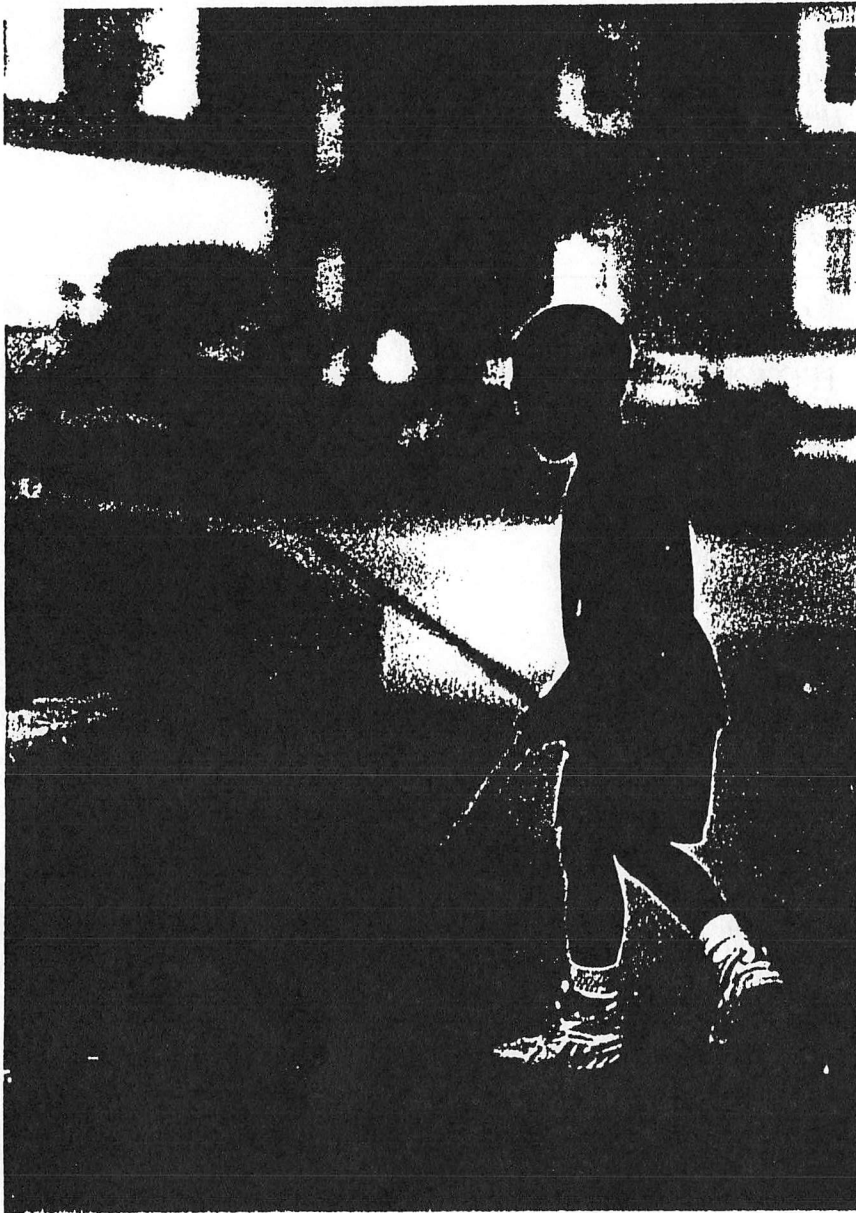
To encourage even more collaboration, Project R.I.G.H.T. is establishing a computer network that will place computer hardware and software in the homes of all block association leaders, and create a vehicle for the rapid dissemination of information between groups.

With some technical assistance from the Building Community Initiative, Project R.I.G.H.T. also has been successful in raising funds from other foundations and has played a key role in attracting a large amount of support from the federal government. Federal funding is coming into Grove Hall from the Safe Futures Initiative and the Safe Neighborhoods Initiative, both sponsored by the U.S. Department of Justice.

With major federal funds coming into the neighborhood, there is some concern that Project R.I.G.H.T.'s emphasis could shift from organizing to the administration of programs, or even the provision of services. There is also the challenge of managing its impressive growth. According to Laura Younger, however, Project R.I.G.H.T. has its priorities in place:

One of our missions is to bring additional resources into this community, and the fact that we have helped do that is wonderful. But it is not our intent to run service programs. Our primary goal will always be to nurture the efforts of the individuals who live in Grove Hall. We are giving people the tools they need, so that if Project R.I.G.H.T. disappeared tomorrow, they would have the ability to continue to network, to continue to work together and to continue to make Grove Hall a wonderful neighborhood that is safe for everyone who lives here.

CONCLUSION



The Hyams Foundation built an intensive evaluation component into the Building Community Initiative, so that the entire process would be a learning experience for the coalitions and for its own staff and trustees. In their "Final Retrospective Evaluation of the Initiative," an evaluation team of people knowledgeable about community-based organizations and community organizing concluded that the Building Community Initiative had generated a number of significant and tangible successes.

Foremost among these are the many new relationships that were formed and strengthened, and will last far beyond the funding. They include relationships between and among residents, between residents and the police, and among government agencies, community-based organizations, and grassroots neighborhood groups. These relationships are now a permanent part of a community infrastructure that can, over time, reduce neighborhood crime and violence and increase feelings of confidence and connectedness among residents. They also can further a broad community development agenda that will contribute significantly to creating and sustaining healthy and prosperous neighborhoods.

Most significantly, however, the Initiative has provided compelling evidence that community organizing can be an effective strategy for preventing neighborhood violence and increasing a general sense of safety among residents. This is important, because feeling safer is a first step and necessary precondition to being safer.

Sharing Lessons Learned

The evaluation also documented a number of important lessons for communities and philanthropic institutions considering similar efforts to reduce neighborhood violence. They are

presented here, in the hope that they may be helpful to other funders, nonprofit organizations and coalitions.

The Challenge and the Value of Community Organizing

Community organizing is long-term work. It's not something that happens in one or two years, or even four years. It's a lifetime of work.

This sentiment, voiced by Project R.I.G.H.T.'s Jorge Martinez, articulates one of the primary lessons learned by The Hyams Foundation over the course of the Building Community Initiative. The Initiative was launched in early 1992 and designed to span four years. As this publication is being prepared, it is in the midst of its sixth year; and all of the coalitions are still receiving major support.

Andrea Nagel, a member of the Initiative's Advisory Committee, believes Hyams also learned that community organizing is not a straightforward activity. She says:

Community organizing is a process that varies tremendously from group to group and neighborhood to neighborhood. And it has to be flexible enough to respond to lots of sharp curves in the road and sometimes even some backing up and trying again.

Nagel, who formerly was on the staff of the nationally recognized Dudley Street Neighborhood Initiative; credits Hyams for committing itself so deeply to community organizing:

It's something that most foundations shy away from, because it's hard to control and to measure. I think Hyams understood from the beginning that this would be a learning process which wouldn't necessarily produce measurable or clear results.

The Many Forms of Community Organizing

As Andrea Nagel points out, there is no single model or approach to community organizing that can be applied to every neighborhood and every set of circumstances. Rather, organizing can take many forms — from street outreach to leadership development to tenant organizing to networking between already existing organizations. As a result, funders should not be overly limiting in defining the specific activities that can be regarded as violence prevention neighborhood organizing — and should be open to new models and approaches.

Relationship Between Neighborhood Safety and Community Development

Community organizing and community development are natural partners. Groups that are engaged in community organizing, especially if their goal is to prevent neighborhood crime and violence, should be encouraged to work collaboratively with development efforts and to broaden the scope of their activities to include community development goals — like renovating vacant buildings or revitalizing commercial centers and open spaces. Victories that emerge from these kinds of efforts are encouraging. They can build neighborhood pride and even directly prevent crime and violence. This can only happen, however, if the victories were achieved through the efforts of a broad base of neighborhood residents and grassroots leadership.

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Positive Alternatives for Youth

The development of positive alternatives for youth is also a critical element of any violence prevention strategy. These alternatives can take many different forms — from providing space and programming for a teen center to involving youth in community development efforts to organized sports and other recreational activities. To an extent, criminal behavior among youth is a by-product of their participation in a particular type of social network. It is key to offer and support a positive alternative network if young people are to avoid crime and criminal activity. Community organizing can mobilize the power of neighborhood residents to secure greater public and private investments in youth programs.

The Importance of Organizational Infrastructure

Fragility in a community-based organization's infrastructure can severely limit its effectiveness and its ability to survive turnovers in staff and other unexpected events. Therefore, infrastructure issues must be treated as a high priority. And although links with other organizations that have strong infrastructures can help, such relationships are potentially problematic and should be carefully and strategically designed and nurtured. For grassroots coalitions that involve a number of community-based groups, the responsibilities of each group should be clearly defined.

When designing any kind of organizational infrastructure, an effective governing body should be established, one that will serve as a steward for the project and hold staff and volunteer leadership accountable for meeting specific goals. A strong infrastructure also should include plans for resource development beyond the course of a particular funding initiative. It may even

be advisable for the funder to make an increasing portion of each year's grant a matching grant — to challenge grantees to focus on fundraising early on.

Organizing as a Profession

Community organizing really is a profession, one that demands training, experience and support. Organizer staff positions should be viewed not as entry level jobs for novices, but rather as professional positions that require highly qualified individuals. Having a professional community organizer on staff is key to truly effective coalition building and to all efforts to prevent crime and violence in neighborhoods.

Staff turnover, especially turnover of organizers, is one of the most disruptive elements in the life of any coalition. As a result, staff should be well compensated, supported and supervised. They also should receive training and professional development — and even assistance with problem-solving.

Because the level of The Hyams Foundation's yearly grants could support only one professional organizer for each coalition, if that staff person left, and the position was not filled quickly, it was extremely destabilizing, and one of the primary reasons for the ups and downs over the course of the Initiative.

Consistency During Change

The dramatic peaks and valleys, or "ups and downs" in the life cycles of some of the coalitions were among the greatest challenges faced — and deepest frustrations felt — by the coalitions and Hyams over the last five years. The Foundation's trustees, perhaps because they were in the position to be more objective than staff, seemed to grasp the inevitability of these

kinds of ups and downs, and helped staff to stay the course. The consistency of financial, staff and technical support on the part of Hyams through these staffing transitions was deeply appreciated by all of the coalitions.

The Importance of Communication

The only way that community organizing can fulfill its promise of increased connectedness between individuals and groups in a neighborhood is if its programs and successes are effectively communicated. Its overall success, in fact, relies on the perceptions of key neighborhood constituencies and stakeholders. Therefore, it is crucial to establish mechanisms for communicating the activities of a coalition in an accurate and timely way from the very earliest stages, and to keep all parties informed and involved as much as possible over the entire course of a coalition's activities.

Best Practices for Foundations

Staff Involvement

A major lesson learned by Hyams is that a high level of foundation staff involvement and staff support is essential for an ambitious initiative of this kind. A related lesson is that a qualitatively different working relationship is required than the classic grantor-grantee relationship — one that is more like a partnership. Accessibility, involvement in problem solving discussions with grantees, and willingness to use the foundation's access to other funders on behalf of the coalitions are some characteristics of this "partnership" relationship. It also is important to keep all foundation staff informed about the initiative and to provide opportunities for other staff to make recommendations, so that they can feel connected and invested in the initiative.

The Role of Trustees

In special foundation initiatives, trustees need to develop an understanding of the complex issues that impact the effectiveness of the coalitions, so that they can be patient and supportive and make informed decisions about a full array of difficult questions. From the point of view of Hyams staff members, the relatively high degree of trustee involvement in the Building Community Initiative yielded very positive results. Trustees were involved in the research that led to the design of the Initiative, and attended gatherings of the coalitions, as well as a breakfast designed to inform other funders about the Initiative. Trustees also reviewed and discussed each of the annual evaluation reports.

During the evaluation period, Hyams trustees identified a number of lessons they learned over the course of the Initiative. These included the necessity to plan for an extended period of involvement when taking on a special initiative, the importance of having a clear vision of the change the initiative is seeking to promote or catalyze, and a way to measure whether that change has taken place.

It also is important for foundation trustees to understand from the outset that any anti-violence initiative will take time — at least three to five years — before even preliminary results can be expected. Trustees need to have a real understanding of the complexities of the issues, so that they can be patient and supportive of staff members over this span of time.

More than anything, the trustees felt that it was important to be kept informed — formally and informally, but consistently and regularly. And that trustees should take every opportunity to participate in site visits and other activities which provide

CONCLUSION

direct observation of the coalitions, so that they can develop a deeper understanding of the process of community organizing and social change.

Planning

With hindsight, almost everyone agrees that a more comprehensive planning process early on, during the proposal development stage of the Initiative, would have been extremely beneficial to all of the groups. If more support had been provided for planning, it might have allowed more time for the development of trust and working relationships among the coalitions.

Funding Levels

Everyone — staff, trustees and other funders — should be aware that a substantial amount of funding and other resources will be necessary to achieve community-building goals through community organizing and community development. While the Building Community Initiative represented the single largest grant commitment in The Hyams Foundation's history, each year the grant supported only one full-time staff person and other support costs for each coalition. While this represented a solid base on which to build, it was a relatively small amount in relation to the nature of the challenges faced by the coalitions.

The Foundation followed the practice of giving more or less the same grant amounts to each of the coalitions each year, but now recognizes that decisions could have been made to fund coalitions at different levels in response to given performance and evaluation results. The decision to fund at essentially the same level was driven primarily by lack of additional dollars.

Involving Other Funders

Both staff and trustees of Hyams believe that foundations should involve other funders in the very earliest stages of a violence prevention initiative. This would offer those interested funders the opportunity to help to shape the initiative and commit resources for its implementation. Although this would require a lengthier process, it might yield a higher level of resources for each coalition. Hyams warns, however, that collaborations among funders are subject to all of the problems that collaborations in other areas face, such as turf and control issues.

Diversity and Collaboration

The Hyams Foundation regrets that the Initiative did not include a coalition which focused primarily on the Latino community — although one coalition has two Latino organizers on staff and has been able to encourage the involvement of some Latino residents in organizing efforts.

The Foundation also is disappointed that the four coalitions did not come together to do advocacy work on public policy issues which affected them all — although individual coalitions had some successes in influencing policies affecting their own neighborhoods. While foundations should actively encourage collaboration, they should resist the temptation to force or facilitate organizational relationships. Rather, they should help to empower neighborhood groups to do it for themselves.

The Foundation did fund an effort in the second year of the Initiative that was designed to bring the four coalitions together to work on public policy issues related to community policing. Unfortunately, this effort did not succeed for two reasons. First the coalitions were still in the early stages of develop-

ing their organizing capacity and were not yet ready to take on additional work. In retrospect, Hyams believed that it pushed the coalitions too soon to work on public policy. Second, the organization selected by the coalitions to coordinate this public policy work was unable to develop an effective working relationship with the coalitions.

In 1995, the four coalitions did develop, through their own initiative, a plan to work together to strengthen the drug asset forfeiture laws. However, the Foundation decided not to support this plan because it felt that the coalition selected to coordinate this work did not have the staff capacity to carry it out.

Technical Assistance and Advisory Committees

Hyams trustees and staff now believe that providing resources for technical assistance — in areas like fundraising and strategy development — is essential to ambitious community organizing initiatives. And that technical assistance during a planning phase would have been very helpful. But they also think that flexibility should be applied to those resources, and that it may be best to assign coordination of the resources to a person other than the foundation staff person managing the initiative to avoid any confusion of roles.

Technical assistance, as a whole, played an even greater role than Hyams originally had planned. For the first year or two, the coalitions were slow to identify the need for technical assistance, but in later years, with the help and insistence of Hyams, targeted technical assistance was helpful to the individual coalitions, especially in the areas of strategic planning and fundraising.

The fact that Hyams provided separate grants for technical assistance over the course of the Initiative, however, is viewed favorably; with the general assumption that it would have been hard to take funds from precious organizational budgets for technical assistance.

Advisory committees for special initiatives can be of enormous value, but they must have a clear, time-limited role, an articulated process, a reasonable meeting schedule, and a membership whose skills, experiences and contacts are compatible with the initiative's goals. Such committees can participate in the design of the initiative, trouble-shoot difficulties that arise, coordinate external evaluation, and help trustees with their funding decisions.

Impact on Future Grantmaking

The Building Community Initiative changed forever the ways in which The Hyams Foundation will fund community organizing and violence prevention work. It also had an effect on the Foundation's grantmaking practices in general. As Hyams Associate Director Sylvia Johnson says:

The Initiative raised my consciousness about the relationship between community organizing and empowerment. This new awareness will influence my evaluation of proposals in the future.

Hyams staff members also voice a higher level of understanding about the neighborhoods involved in the Initiative. As a result, Beth Smith says:

CONCLUSION

We now can evaluate proposals from organizations in these neighborhoods within a broader context. We also are far more conscious of the importance of collaboration among groups in neighborhoods and can better determine whether a grant will effectively further collaboration.

Partly as a result of the Initiative, Hyams staff members express interest in working more intensively with fewer grantees in the future, and in making more multi-year grants. When designing future special initiatives, Hyams will pay even more attention to involving other funders early on. Although this may delay the launching of future initiatives, the Foundation believes it could yield a higher level of resources, and thus close the gap between what Hyams is able to commit, and the funding level that is necessary to achieve ambitious goals.

A Lifetime of Work

Those touched by The Hyams Foundation's Building Community Initiative are much richer for the knowledge they have gained. They include residents of the neighborhoods, members and staff of the four coalitions, The Hyams Foundation staff and trustees, police and other law enforcement officials, technical assistance providers, advisors, evaluators and many others indirectly touched by the Initiative over the last six years.

This knowledge has been gained not only by celebrating the right choices and the victories, but by acknowledging honestly the mistakes and the failures.

In the spring of 1997, five years after the Building Community Initiative was launched, Boston was the subject of numerous newspaper articles and other media attention, locally



and nationally, because of this city's remarkable success in preventing youth violence. The city even received a congratulatory visit from the President of the United States, during which he announced a national program based on Boston's successful violence prevention models.

All of this attention was due to the fact that from the summer of 1995 through the spring of 1997, no young person was murdered on the streets of Boston, and shootings among youth were down 40 percent. In the midst of all of the media recognition, Police Commissioner Paul Evans, Suffolk County District Attorney Ralph Martin and Mayor Thomas Menino, over and over again, credited not only law enforcement officials with this remarkable success, but all of the groups and individuals that mobilized back in 1990, when the scene in Boston was so very bleak.

Neighborhood residents and coalition members that have participated in The Hyams Foundation's Building Community Initiative must certainly be counted among those who made a difference. But there will be no resting on laurels in these Boston neighborhoods. There is still a lot of work to be done. As Project R.I.C.H.T.'s Jorge Martinez says, "It's a lifetime of work."

(Credits)

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