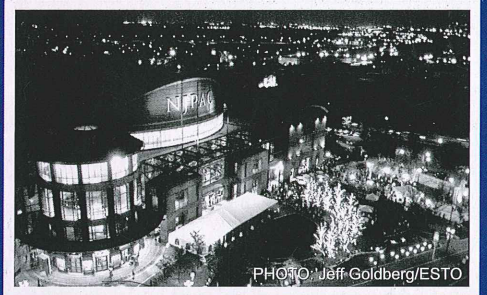


# PLACEMAKING FOR CHANGE:

2001 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE





# PLACEMAKING FOR CHANGE:

2001 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

BRUNER FOUNDATION, INC.

---

RICHARD WENER, PhD

*with*

EMILY AXELROD, MCP; JAY FARBSTAIN FAIA, PhD; ROBERT SHIBLEY, AIA, AICP; AND POLLY WELCH

---

2001 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

Graphic Design  
CDG Caronchi Design Group  
www.caronchi.com *or* cdg@caronchi.com

Copyediting by Elizabeth Chesla and Lauren Kozol

Library of Congress Control Number: 2002104398  
ISBN: 1-890286-04-4

© Copyright 2001 by the Bruner Foundation  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, microfilming, recording or otherwise, without the written permission from the publisher.

## CONTENTS

<b>Preface</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Introduction: The 2001 Rudy Bruner Award</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>1 The Village of Arts and Humanities</b> <i>Gold Medal Winner</i>	<b>1</b>
At a Glance [3]	
Project Description [6]	
Assessing Project Success [31]	
<b>2 Lower East Side Tenement Museum</b> <i>Silver Medal Winner</i>	<b>35</b>
At a Glance [37]	
Project Description [40]	
Assessing Project Success [59]	
<b>3 New Jersey Performing Arts Center</b> <i>Silver Medal Winner</i>	<b>63</b>
At a Glance [65]	
Project Description [68]	
Assessing Project Success [90]	
<b>4 South Platte River Greenway</b> <i>Silver Medal Winner</i>	<b>93</b>
At a Glance [95]	
Project Description [98]	
Assessing Project Success [119]	
<b>5 Swan's Marketplace</b> <i>Silver Medal Winner</i>	<b>121</b>
At a Glance [123]	
Project Description [126]	
Assessing Project Success [145]	
<b>6 Learning About Urban Excellence</b>	<b>149</b>





## PREFACE

Out of the scores of entrants for each cycle of the Rudy Bruner Award, it is always surprising to see which ones surface as the winners. As design professionals ourselves, we are often tempted to second-guess the Selection Committee. Inevitably, we're wrong. This is precisely the reason an independent third party Selection Committee is so important in a process like the Rudy Bruner Award. Human nature being what it seems to be, most of us are comfortable in our habituated beliefs and are generally loath to change. Without a new Committee for each round, this human attitude would result in a predictable process, slow to change, with easily anticipated — and not very expansive — results. Since the Award is dedicated to discovery, revealing structures and ideas hitherto unknown or marginalized, an independent, changing Selection Committee is critical to the process. This process fosters the kind of fresh thinking that keeps the Rudy Bruner Award in constant touch with innovative work. It drives the originality of the Award.

Each Selection Committee member is a talented professional in her/his own right, and each is a broad-based practitioner whose interest in the urban environment does not stop at a particular professional boundary. This overlapping of concerns and expertise, combined with independent professional excellence endows the Selection

Committee with an almost uncanny ability to root out creativity in the rough.

The Selection Committee proved their wisdom again this year in choosing five fascinating winners, all of them in the public realm: three in the arts, one greenway, and a small mixed-use development. Although they are at varying stages of maturation, the thoughtfulness that has gone into the creation of each is remarkable. It is always an amazing experience for us at the RBA to see how our initial understanding from reading the application relates to the actual project, and to talk with the people who have created these places and have made them work.

**The Village of Arts and Humanities:** Lily Yeh is trained in classical Chinese landscape painting. The place that is The Village of Arts and Humanities started as a mural exercise 20 years ago and is now a model cultural/educational center in one of our most troubled cities. Philadelphia has by one estimate 60,000 vacant lots and abandoned buildings, and more are abandoned each year. While its center is hot with development, many neighborhoods remain blighted. Lily Yeh has transformed the abandonment of buildings and their trash-filled lots into artistic opportunity, creating a sense of place through a process and work ethic far more complex than meets the eye.



**New Jersey Performing Arts Center:** Three years in advance of its opening NJPAC was already running one of the largest arts-education programs in New Jersey, a program that has since become one of the largest in the country. The director, Lawrence Goldman, was hired to run a state mandated arts complex, but turned it into an important educational institution and a multi-cultural performance venue creating a bridge between a predominantly black inner city Newark and New Jersey's affluent suburban communities. Go there on any Thursday evening in the summer, enjoy the music, and learn how different communities can come together through the universal language of art.

**Swan's Marketplace:** With an effort-to-profit ratio only possible in a non-profit, Swan's Market reminds us just how critical mixed-use is to neighborhoods where people live and work. It also reminds us that old buildings are important in maintaining a sense of history and place, and hence their preservation is important for community continuity and identity. The complexity of Swan's Marketplace also reminds us of how skilled professionals with a dedication to the inner city can make a difference in the urban environment

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum:** Most innovative programs seem to root in one place and grow, ideotropically, towards an established idea as they mature. The concept of a Tenement Museum sprang full-blown from the head of Ruth Abram. Looking for a way to bridge the self-interest and divisiveness that is prevalent today, Abram understood that the immigrant experience is a common thread linking most of us. Immigration is critical to our

national identity, and is prevalent in our family lore. If commonality is a bridge to tolerance, then the Tenement Museum is one approach in beginning to understand and accept our differences.

**South Platte River Greenway:** The South Platte River Greenway has reclaimed Denver's birthplace and restored an important piece of the natural environment in the midst of downtown Denver. The plan is a fascinating reverse-ground on the concept of nodal development. This length of greenspace in one of the fastest growing cities in Colorado is certainly a grandiose idea, though the Greenway is still a work-in-process. It remains for future generations to mould and judge the full extent of this ambitious project, but its scale and reach will ensure an important and memorable urban resource for generations to come.

It is this commonality of placemaking directed toward a greater good that the 2001 Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee has recognized as a critical catalyst for improved quality of life in our nation's cities. It will be exciting to see just where the 2003 Committee sets its sights. And we'll keep you informed.

Simeon Bruner, Architect  
*Founder*

## INTRODUCTION

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence (RBA) occupies a unique position among national awards for the urban built environment. The RBA is dedicated to discovering and celebrating places that are distinguished not only by the quality of their design but also by their social, economic, and contextual contributions to our cities. Understanding that every urban place grows out of complex layers of social, economic, aesthetic, and personal interactions, the RBA asks some important questions. What kinds of places make our cities better environments in which to live and work? How do these places enliven and enrich the urban landscape? Do they contribute to or revitalize the local economy? Do they enhance community pride? Do they build bridges among diverse populations or create beauty and vision where none existed before? And perhaps most important, what can we learn from them?

While this approach does not negate the significance of good design, it does alter the boundaries of urban architecture, placing new emphasis both on contextuality and on the underlying values and collaborative processes required to create an excellent urban place. It is this issue that is at the heart of the RBA: What constitutes urban excellence, and how can we learn from the creative thinking behind our winners in order to broaden our thinking about urban placemaking?

The criteria for submitting an application for the RBA are intentionally broad, encouraging applications from a wide variety of projects across the country. In the last two award cycles, over 40 states have been represented. It is no surprise, therefore, that the winners have been urban places that have made very different kinds of contributions to our nation's cities. Many represent new models of urban placemaking that have successfully challenged conventional wisdom about what is possible, and most are products of hard-won collaborations between diverse groups of people with differing agendas. All RBA winners have contributed to the vitality of the cities and neighborhoods in which they are located. By celebrating their success, the RBA highlights the intricate and challenging process of urban placemaking, emphasizing the complexity of the processes and values that produce significant urban spaces. Studying the varied stories of RBA winners, their histories, and their processes of development, we can discover creative ways to respond to some of our cities' most intractable problems.

## THE SELECTION COMMITTEE

To ensure lively and informed Selection Committee discussions inclusive of multiple perspectives, each Selection Committee is made up of urban experts representing diverse disciplines. Selection Committees always include the mayor of a major metropolitan area



as well architects, developers, community organizers, philanthropists, and financiers. As the Selection Committee members discuss the applications, they consider a wide variety of questions:

- What kinds of places make neighborhoods and cities better environments in which to live, work, and play?
- How did these places come into being?
- What visions powered their creation?
- How did these visions become a reality?
- What obstacles had to be overcome?
- What makes these places important in their urban context?

In this way, the Selection Committee explores the dynamic nature of urban excellence and contributes to a broader understanding of the critical urban issues of the day.

## THE 2001 SELECTION COMMITTEE

Craig E. Barton, AIA

*Department of Architecture, University of Virginia,  
Charlottesville, VA*

John Bok, Esq.

*formerly of Foley, Hoag, and Elliot, LLP, Boston, MA*

Rosanne Haggerty

*Common Ground HDPC, New York, NY*

Allan B. Jacobs

*Department of Urban Planning, University of California at  
Berkeley, Berkeley, CA*

Gail Shibley

*former Director of Communications, US Department of Labor,  
Washington, DC*

Wellington Webb

*Mayor, City of Denver, CO*



Craig E. Barton



John Bok



Rosanne Haggerty



Allan B. Jacobs



Gail Shibley



Mayor Wellington Webb

*0-TOC-Preface-pg-vi.ps*

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Since the RBA seeks excellence in places where it may not be expected, eligibility criteria are intentionally few. First, the project must be a real place, not a plan. It must exist and be able to demonstrate its excellence to a team of site visitors from the Bruner Foundation. And the project must be located in the United States. Site visits are integral to the award process, and it is not currently possible to conduct visits to international locations.

## THE SELECTION PROCESS

A new Selection Committee is appointed for each award cycle. The Committee meets twice: first to select the five finalists from a field of about 100 applicants, and then to select the Gold Medal Winner. Between these two meetings, Bruner Foundation staff research the



Mayor Webb and Allan B. Jacobs



Gail Shibley and John Bok



Rosanne Haggerty and Craig Barton





2001 Selection Committee at Work

finalists and visit each site for two or three days, exploring the projects and pursuing questions raised by the Selection Committee. The site visit team serves as the Committee's eyes and ears. The team members tour all parts of the projects, interview between 15 and 25 key participants (including "unofficial" community participants), take photographs, and observe patterns of use. This year's site visit team was led by Richard E. Wener, PhD, associate professor of environmental psychology at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, NY. The teams included Emily Axelrod, director of the Rudy Bruner Award; Jay Farbstein, PhD and president of Jay

Farbstein and Associates; Robert Shibley, professor of urban design at the State University of New York at Buffalo; and Polly Welch, professor of architecture at the University of Oregon.

After the site visits, the team prepares the *Site Visit Report* and an extensive slide show that is presented to the Selection Committee when it meets again to review the five finalists in depth. With the site visit team on hand to answer additional questions, the Committee debates the merits of each project to decide upon a winner. In their discussion, Committee members explore the issues facing urban areas, and come to a deeper understanding of the kinds of processes and places that embody urban excellence.

## 2001 AWARD PRESENTATIONS

Because the RBA is intended to stimulate a national discussion on the nature of urban excellence, award presentations offer an important opportunity to raise awareness of the issues addressed by each winning project. Past awards have been presented at the US Conference of Mayors, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and in a variety of cities in which winning projects are located. At the presentations, planners, community organizers, architects, and developers speak about their projects, and mayors are often present to recognize the contributions these projects have made to their respective communities.

This year's Gold Medal Award of \$50,000 was presented to The Village of Arts and Humanities in North Philadelphia. The presentation was first made at The Village and was attended by



Lawrence Goldman and Simeon Bruner at Silver Medal presentation at NJPAC

neighborhood residents and many of the individuals who have been involved in the project over its history. Silver Medal winners were each awarded \$10,000 at events in their respective cities, with local press and elected officials present to recognize their achievement. In June, The Village of Arts and Humanities was also presented to a special meeting, sponsored by the Mayor's Institute for City Design, at the annual meeting of the US Conference of Mayors, where over 60 mayors of American cities learned about the creative work being done in North Philadelphia.

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

As part of its effort to facilitate a national dialogue on the meaning and nature of urban excellence and to promote important new ideas about urban placemaking, the Bruner Foundation publishes a book containing case studies of the winners at the conclusion of each award cycle. Each case study is prefaced by a "Project at a Glance" section that briefly summarizes the project and the Selection Committee discussion. This overview is followed by "Project Description," containing detailed accounts of the history, character, financing, and operation of each winning project. "Assessing Project Success" identifies the most important themes recognized by the Selection Committee, and describes the dialogue among Selection Committee members.

## BRUNER FOUNDATION PUBLICATIONS

Bruner Foundation books are currently in use in graduate and undergraduate programs in universities across the country. The work of the Rudy Bruner Award and its winners has been recognized by the US Conference of Mayors, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Design Research Association. Recent articles on the RBA have appeared in *Foundation News*, *New Village Journal*, *Architectural Record*, *Design Book Review*, and *Architecture* magazine. See also the chapter on the RBA in Schneekloth and Shibley's *Placemaking: The Art and Practice of Building Community* (John Wiley and Sons, 1995).

Case studies contained in Bruner Foundation books are now also available on the Foundation's web site, [www.brunerfoundation.org](http://www.brunerfoundation.org), and will soon be available, together with images of each winner, on CD-ROM.

Bruner Foundation books, some of which are available from the Foundation, include:

- 1987 Philip Langdon with Robert Shibley and Polly Welch, *Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1990).
- 1989 Neal Peirce and Robert Guskind, *Breakthroughs: Re-creating the American City* (New Brunswick, NJ: Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers, State University of NJ, 1993).
- 1991 Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Connections: Creating Urban Excellence; 1991 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1992).
- 1993 Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Rebuilding Communities: Re-creating Urban Excellence; 1993 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1993).
- 1995 Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Building Coalitions for Urban Excellence; 1995 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1996).
- 1997 Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Visions of Urban Excellence; 1997 Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* (Bruner Foundation, Inc. 1998)
- 1999 Robert Shibley with Emily Axelrod, Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener, *Commitment to Place: Urban Excellence and Community* (Bruner Foundation, Inc. 1999).

An earlier Bruner Foundation endeavor revisited the winners and finalists from the first four cycles of the RBA to learn how the projects have fared over time. Which have continued to thrive and which have struggled, and why? Partially funded by a grant from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, teams of Foundation staff and consultants, HUD regional staff, and past Selection Committee members revisited 21 projects. The conclusions these observers reached can be found in:

- Jay Farbstein, Robert Shibley, Polly Welch and Richard Wener with Emily Axelrod, *Sustaining Urban Excellence: Learning from the Rudy Bruner Award, 1987-1993* (Bruner Foundation, Inc., 1998)

*Sustaining Urban Excellence* is available through the Bruner Foundation or through the HUD User web site.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Richard Wener, PhD**, an environmental psychologist, is associate professor of environmental psychology in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences at Polytechnic University in Brooklyn, NY. He has done extensive research on the effects of built environments on individuals and communities.

**Emily Axelrod, MCP**, is the director of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. She holds a masters degree in city planning from the Harvard Graduate School of Design and has worked in urban planning in both the public and private sectors in San Francisco and Boston.

**Jay Farbstein, PhD, FAIA**, is an architect by training. He leads a consulting practice in San Luis Obispo, CA, specializing in helping public sector and private clients develop and document their requirements for building projects as well as in evaluating the degree to which their completed buildings meet those requirements.

**Robert Shibley, AIA, AICP**, is a professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at the State University of New York, Buffalo. He is also the founding partner of Caucus Partnership, a consulting practice on environmental and organizational change. At the University at Buffalo, he is a former chairman of the Department of Architecture and now serves as the director of the Urban Design Project, a center in the school devoted to the study and practice of urban design.

**Polly Welch** is an architect and professor of architecture at the University of Oregon and is currently on leave working in economic development in Boston. She specializes in environmental design as well as housing, universal design, and the human context of design. She teaches and consults on social and political issues related to design.

## ACCESS TO OTHER RUDY BRUNER AWARD MATERIALS

All RBA applications through 1999 have been recorded on microfiche and are accessible through:

Interlibrary Loan Department  
Lockwood Memorial Library  
State University of New York at Buffalo  
Amherst, NY 14260  
Phone: 716.645.2812

An abstract and keyword identification has been prepared for each application and can be accessed through two major databases: RLIN/Research Library Information Network and OCLC/First Search.

In addition, the State University of New York at Buffalo maintains a web site with complete winner applications for all Rudy Bruner Award winners. The web site address is:

<http://ublib.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/bruner>

The Bruner Foundation also maintains a web site on the RBA. The site contains an overview of the RBA, visual images and summary



information on all past winners, recent case studies, a list of past Selection Committee members, publications, information on how to apply for the RBA, and brief profiles of each of the 2001 winners. The web site address is:

<http://www.brunerfoundation.org>

For more information, please contact:



BRUNER FOUNDATION  
130 Prospect Street  
Cambridge, MA 02139

PHONE: 617.492.8404

FAX: 617.876.4002

EMAIL: [info@brunerfoundation.org](mailto:info@brunerfoundation.org)



2001 Rudy Bruner Award

**GOLD**  
medal winner



**THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**GOLD MEDAL WINNER**

The Village of Arts and Humanities



Project location



Project location (detail)

## THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES AT A GLANCE

### SUBMITTED BY:

The Village of Arts and Humanities, Lily Yeh, *Executive Director*

### WHAT IS THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES?

- An urban neighborhood in inner city North Philadelphia, consisting of a series of art parks, renovated buildings and social programs.
- A community revitalization program in which art is used as a vehicle to create place, build self-esteem, and engender mutual respect.
- A series of inter-connected programs, built through an “organic,” grassroots democratic process, serving neighborhood youth and adults.
- An identifiable place in distressed North Philadelphia, where a consistent vocabulary of design, color, and streetscape signifies a neighborhood that is special and cared for.
- “A living piece of sculpture, in which sculpture is a communal event.” (Lily Yeh)

### MAJOR GOALS OF THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

- “To complete the process of transforming [The Village] neighborhood into a vital urban village in which people are reconnected with their families, sheltered in decent housing, sustained by meaningful work, nurtured by each other’s care, and together educate and raise their children.” (From *Mission Statement*.)
- “To build community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction and economic development programs and to do justice to the humanity of people who live in inner city North Philadelphia or similar urban situations.” (From *Mission Statement*.)
- To embrace what society disdains and throws away, thereby creating a new sense of possibility and hope in the community.
- To build democracy through a renewed sense of participation in the community.

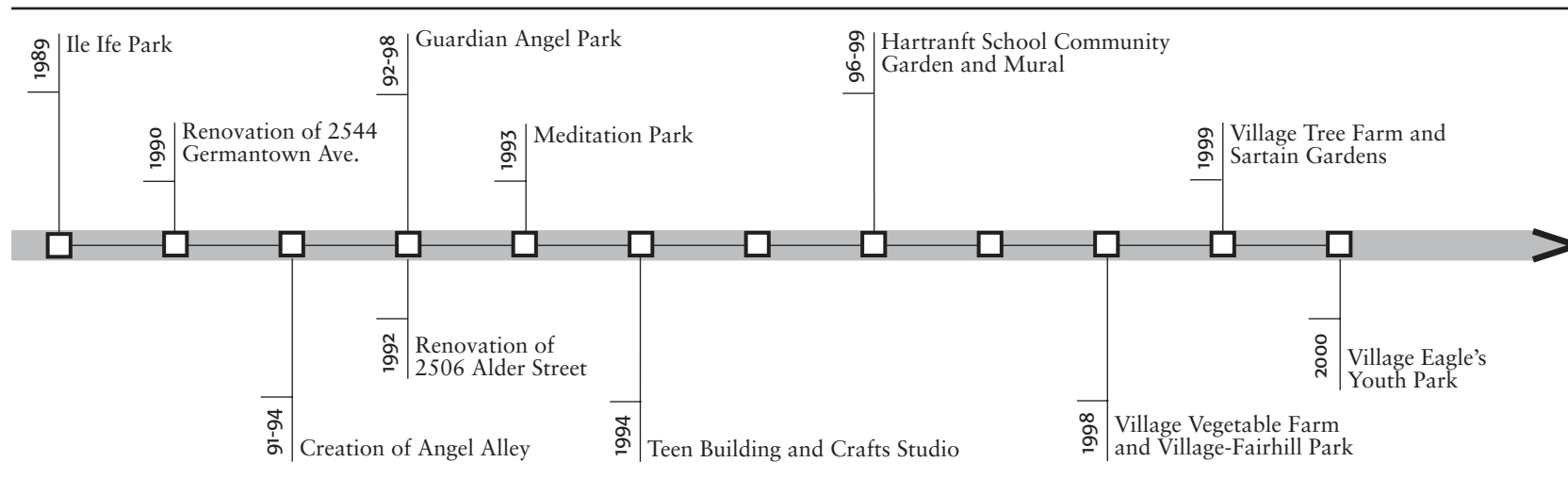


## GOLD MEDAL WINNER

The Village of Arts and Humanities

### CHRONOLOGY

- 1989 Completion of Ile Ife Park
- 1990 Renovation of 2544 Germantown Avenue into Arts & Education Center
- 1991-1994 Creation of Angel Alley and Angel Eyes mosaic mural
- 1992-1998 Creation of Magical Garden
- 1992 Renovation of 2506 Alder Street for administrative offices
- 1993 Creation of Community Vegetable Garden
- 1993 Creation of Meditation Park
- 1994 Renovation of 2526 and 2536 North Alder Street to Teen Building and Crafts Studio
- 1992-1998 Construction of Guardian Angel Park
- 1996-1999 Development of Hartranft School Community Garden and Mural
- 1998 Creation of Village Vegetable Farm
- 1998 Completion of Village-Fairhill Park
- 1999 Creation of Village Tree Farm
- 1999 Completion of Sartain Gardens with painted mural
- 2000 Creation of Village Eagles Youth Park with five painted and tile murals



## KEY PARTICIPANTS

Persons who were interviewed are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

### The Village of Arts and Humanities

#### *Executive Staff*

Lily Yeh,\* *Co-Founder and Executive Director*

Stephan Sayne, *Co-Founder*

Kelly Tannen,\* *Director of Development*

James Maxton,\* *Operations Director*

Jill Smith, *Managing Director*

Heidi Warren,\* *Former Managing Director*

#### *Board of Directors*

Gerry Givnish,\* *Painted Bride Arts Center*

Donald Kelley,\* *Community Development Consultant, The Village*

James Maxton,\* *Operations Director, The Village*

Steve Tarantal,\* *Dean, University of the Arts*

Esther Wideman,\* *Friends of Fotteral Square*

#### *Program Managers*

Christina Barbachano,\* *Administrative and Communications Manager*

Andres Chamorro,\* *Crafts Program Manager*

Rick Moss,\* *Maintenance Manager*

Julie Rae-Rosen,\* *Teen Program Manager*

Lia Rosen,\* *Outreach Programs Manager*

Melissa Talley-Palmer,\* *Fledglings Program Manager*

Brad Thompson,\* *Environmental Programs*

H. German Wilson,\* *Theater Director*

### Public Agencies

Philip Horn,\* *Executive Director, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts*

Darrell Clark, *Councilman, 5<sup>th</sup> District*

Heather Dougherty,\* *Deputy Director,*

*Pennsylvania Council on the Arts*

Shirley Kitchen,\* *State Representative*

Michael Koonce,\* *Assistant Director of Development, Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority*

John Kromer, *Director, Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development*

Scott Wilds,\* *Assistant Director for Housing, Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development*

### Architects and Designers

Gary Hack,\* *Dean, School of Fine Arts, University of Pennsylvania*

Rex Ingram, *Architect and Builder*

Ken Kolodziej,\* *Landscape Architect*

Kurt Raymond,\* *AIA, Cicada Architects*

Steve Sayre, *Builder*

Chris Wallace,\* *AIA, Cicada Architects*

### Community Groups

Elnor Dawkins,\* *Fairhill Weed and Seed*

Rose Grey, *Director of Housing Construction, Association of Puertorriquenos en Marcha, Inc. (APM)*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### URBAN CONTEXT

To appreciate The Village of Arts and Humanities (The Village), it is important to understand its urban context. Philadelphia, like many other American urban centers, has experienced significant population loss in its recent history. In 1950, the city boasted a population of 2.3 million and a lively manufacturing-based economy. Following World War II, a large number of Philadelphia residents, like their counterparts across the country, began moving outside the city to suburban locations. This trend has continued over the years and was most recently confirmed by the 2000 US Census, which counted Philadelphia's population as 1.5 million, a drop of 34%. Nowhere is the impact of that population loss more evident than in North Philadelphia.

Data from the Philadelphia City Planning Commission underscores the situation. In North Philadelphia, between 1970 and 1980, the population declined more than 33%, from about 7,300 to 4,900. By 1990, it had further declined to 3,815, with 80% of that population consisting of low to moderate income households. Ninety-five percent of the residents were African-American. Median household income in 1990 was \$9,898, with over 56% of the population living below the poverty level and 32% of the neighborhood labor force unemployed. As of the 2000 data, the population of the neighborhood was 94% African-American, with 43.4% of all homes having a single female as head of household.



Vacant lot, North Philadelphia

The Village, and in particular its core blocks, known as The Village Heart, is a microcosm of these conditions. The Village Long Range Plan states that there were once 105 row houses in The Village Heart, primarily two-story 13' x 25' brick structures. By 1990, all but 10 had been abandoned, many as long as 25 years ago. An additional 59 units were condemned and torn down, leaving gaping holes between the 56 row houses left standing. By 1995, only 10 row houses in The Village Heart had been continuously maintained by residents or landlords; 19 were restored by the Philadelphia Housing Authority, seven by The Village of Arts and Humanities, and 19 were vacant and boarded up. Thirty-six households in The Village neighborhood had no electricity, heat or water.



Abandoned houses, Village neighborhood

Depopulation, abandonment, and bleak demographics have brought the attendant urban ills: high crime rates, including drug trafficking and violent crime; at risk youth, high levels of incarceration, low skill levels, health problems, and low self-esteem. In the early 1980s, resident Terry Harrison, now an employee of The Village, reported that the drug wars between Dominicans, Puerto Ricans, and Black Muslims made the neighborhood so unsafe that residents were afraid to go outdoors. Public parks went unused and neighborhood residents remained virtually trapped in their homes.

In recent years, however, a variety of small businesses have begun attracting shoppers to the commercial strip on Germantown Avenue adjacent to The Village. Other community based organizations have also become active in the area. The Association of Puerto Ricans on the March has 50 units of housing under construction and has completed 90 townhouses and a new supermarket. It also has two major parcels about to begin construction. A women-owned community development corporation (CDC), the Women's Community Revitalization Project, has also completed several blocks of affordable housing in the same area. There are, however, virtually no private housing starts in the neighborhood.

The role of city government in North Philadelphia is also changing. The City of Philadelphia is now more actively helping North Philadelphia turn itself around. A recent bond issue for \$250 million, known as the Neighborhood Transformation Initiative, will focus on the removal of blighted properties. In addition, Temple University, located adjacent to The Village, has formed relationships with the

community to provide expertise and guidance in health care and legal matters.

There is anecdotal evidence that the population decline has also slowed. Some neighborhood residents whom we met returned to the neighborhood in recent years, largely because of improved safety. Others report that friends and family members, many of whom are now employed and self sufficient, are also interested in moving back.

## HISTORY OF THE VILLAGE

The Village of Arts and Humanities evolved from the vision, spirit, and creative methodology of artist Lily Yeh. In 1986, Yeh was invited by African-American dancer Arthur Hall to create an art park on the vacant lot adjacent to his studio. When Yeh accepted Hall's offer and came to North Philadelphia in the summer of 1986, she was an established artist, teaching at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia and showing her work successfully in local galleries. The invitation came at a crucial moment in Yeh's development, as she had been searching for a way to connect her art to social issues outside the traditional gallery and classroom world. Armed with a \$2,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Yeh embarked upon the creation of Ile Ife Park, literally translated (from Swahili) as "House of Love." Her intention at that time was to complete the summer project and return to her life of fine arts and teaching, but in her words, "Something grabbed hold of me; I thought of this place whenever I wasn't here. I experienced something so profound here...it drew me in."



Building Ile Ife Park

That's not to say it was easy for Yeh to gain neighborhood acceptance and support. As a Chinese woman in an African-American world, her efforts were initially met with suspicion and distrust. But as she began to work at Ile Ife, Joseph (JoJo) Williams, the first adult in the neighborhood to join Yeh, lent assistance to her effort and became a staunch protector of this building project. The children in the neighborhood were also attracted to Yeh, and they became the initial core group of workers. Over time, Yeh was joined by other pivotal people in the neighborhood such as James "Big Man" Maxton, who, although a drug dealer himself at the time, provided a critical link between Yeh and the community.

In the summer of 1987, Yeh returned to continue her work on Ile Ife Park, armed with an additional \$4,000 from the Pennsylvania





After school program in renovated building

Council on the Arts. With each new effort came a new corps of supporters, residents intrigued by the physical changes they saw in their neighborhood and by the excitement and involvement of their children. For Yeh, the challenge and spiritual importance of working in this area deepened. Her work with neighborhood residents became a vehicle for “catching the ‘living flame’” in each person, communicating to each person that “you are okay as you are.” As more and more people joined Yeh in her work, one lot after another was transformed by sculpture and murals.

Part of the Ile Ife effort was the renovation of what is now The Village’s education building. For this effort, Yeh was joined by Stephen Sayre, writer, builder and Harvard Law School graduate. Sayre’s expertise and commitment led to the transformation of a 25’

x 90’ three-story abandoned warehouse next to Ile Ife into a simple and spacious education facility. JoJo, Big Man, and several other adult residents participated in the restoration.

Yeh is motivated in part by the belief that the most serious deficits of the community can also serve as resources. She noted that, “Because of the extreme poverty and abandonment in the neighborhood, we were blessed with many vacant lots...We embrace what this society disdains, throws away, trashes to create a new sense of possibility and hope. By transforming deficits into resources, we deepen our understanding of ourselves.”

The Village has grown steadily since the meager days of 1986. It now encompasses a variety of different kinds of outdoor spaces and parks. Some provide settings for ritual celebrations and others offer space to enjoy colorful sculpture created by artists, including Yeh and Maxton. Some offer contemplative spaces for moments of quiet. The parks in The Village neighborhood include Ile Ife, Angel Alley, Magical Garden, Meditation Park, Guardian Angel Park, Family Park, Hartranft School Community Garden and Mural, Happy Alley, Village Vegetable Farm, Village-Fairhill Park, Village Tree Farm, Fawn St. Gardens, Sartain Gardens, and — the most recent addition — Village Eagles’ Youth Park, completed through a collaboration with the Philadelphia Eagles football team. Renovated buildings in The Village Heart include the Arts and Education Center, Teen Building, Crafts Studio, Silk Screen Studio, a health program office and general office space. These modest buildings host a variety of programs for children and adults. (See “Programs,” pg. 17.)

The concept underlying The Village Heart is one of “living sculpture” — that is, art objects that do not remain static and apart. Rather, their space and form are occupied by individuals and cultivated by the community. The spaces and forms in The Village Heart continually change and evolve as buildings are renovated and as new parks and gardens emerge out of abandoned lots. But the spirit and participatory character of the place remains consistent, validating and implementing concepts developed by the community for the ongoing transformation of its urban village.



Lily Yeh, Founder

## PHILOSOPHY AND VISION

For Yeh, the motivating force behind the design and programs of The Village is inherently spiritual. Yeh defines The Village as “a group of people looking for meaning.” It has been Yeh’s goal to rekindle a spirit of humanity in this inner-city neighborhood and to build a true community in which people are reconnected to each other. In her view, this commitment is a perfect reflection of the Taoist understanding that “our strength lies in our weakness and our vulnerability is our protection.” In so defining her work, Yeh has created a unique approach to urban revitalization.

The theme of art and the importance of art in rebuilding the human spirit and in creating place remains consistent. According to Yeh:

*The Village is where art and society and politics and social work are all merging into one, and this is where the arts are the skeleton and the backbone of everything we deliver. I always say that art is not just the product that we produce, like a mural, a park, and a performance. It’s much more essential to our daily activities. Art is creativity in thinking, in methodology, in implementation. That’s what we call art. (Local Heroes.)*

Village Board Member Donald Kelly suggests that in traditional revitalization programs, physical change (“bricks and mortar”) and economic programs (such as job training) have not been effective in fostering community change because they fail to address the motivations and spiritual needs of residents. The Village’s mission is to revitalize the neighborhood by rebuilding the spirit of its people and, through that transformative work, creating a place that reflects a new sense of beauty and caring.

Phil Laggiere, through his association with Con Kenney, director of reengineering at Fannie Mae, notes that “successful grassroots projects like The Village should be seen as crucial incubators for social innovation. There seems to be a growing consensus that The Village has made important discoveries about community revitalization that takes root not so much in buildings or training programs, but in a sense of trust and commitment that comes from hands-on involvement in rebuilding their neighborhood.” (*Penn Gazette*, alumnae magazine for University of Pennsylvania, August 2000.)

Yeh realized early on in the development of The Village that there was a basic paradox within this and other poor communities. Success was defined as ultimately gaining an economic position that would allow residents to leave the community for other neighborhoods or for the suburbs. She felt that the community could not rebuild itself if its best citizens were constantly leaving it behind. Consequently, her work in The Village has tried to help reconnect residents to their community by building self-esteem and pride of place. The goal is to encourage residents to stay in or to return to the neighborhood, thus forming a strong core of people who live in the area by choice and who bring to it skills, stability, and community pride.

### **Grass Roots Organizing**

Yeh and The Village staff maintain a deep commitment to grassroots democratic processes. Village projects from social programs to the creation of parks, educational space, and housing, have grown out

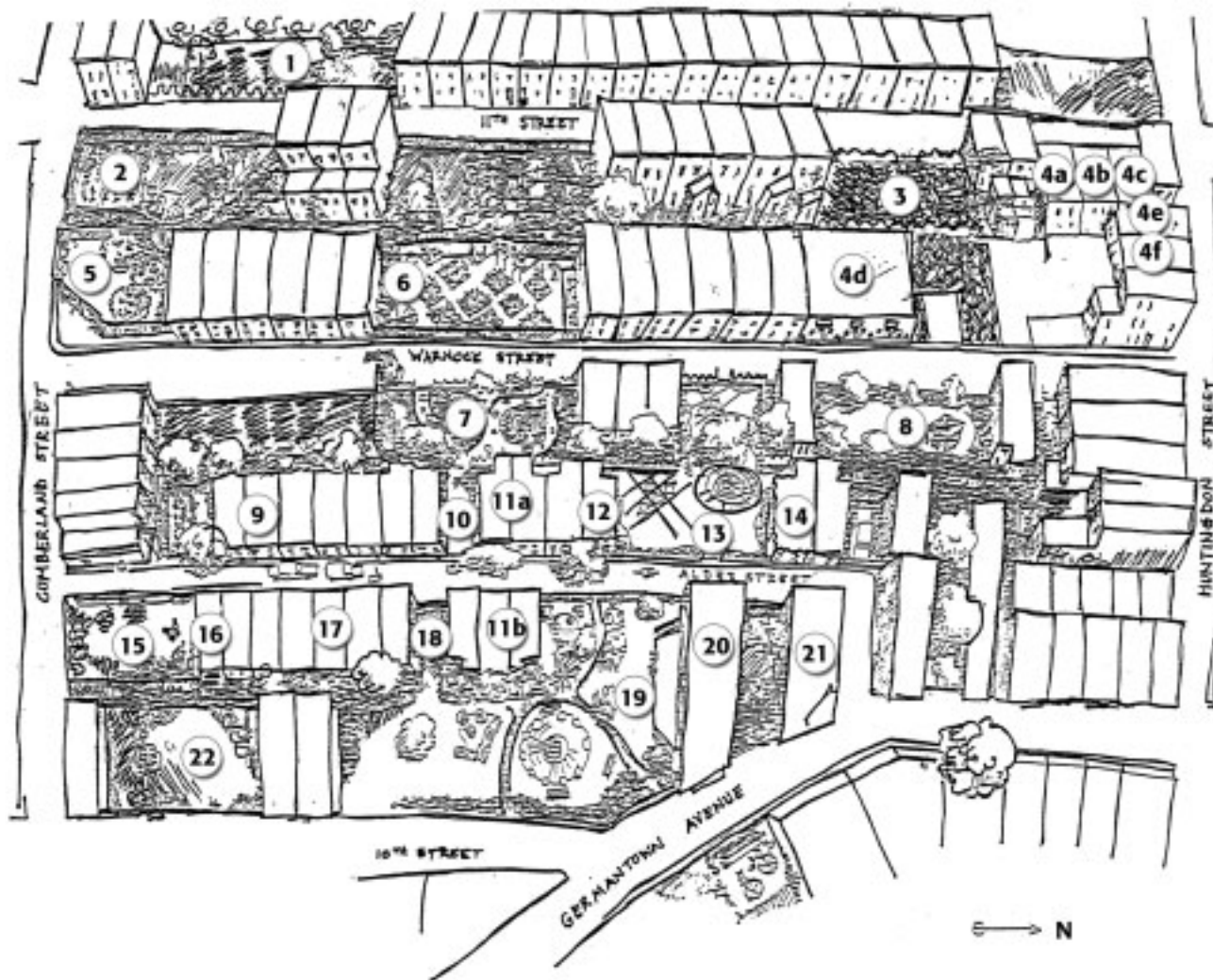
of the needs and concerns of community members. In the staff’s view, the process of community-based conceptualization and goal setting establishes a meaningful connection to the place. Staff members strive for a sense of connection with members of the neighborhood and with each other, believing that this will nurture community and create mutual respect and responsibility. While community participation can be complex, slow, and difficult; Village staff see it as “profound and deeply rewarding” when it works. In the view of neighborhood residents and State Senator Shirley Kitchen, it is difficult, if not impossible to bring about meaningful change through a top-down approach.

### **PLACE**

The brief trip from the center of Philadelphia to The Village is a journey from one world to another. The physical manifestations of abandonment are everywhere — boarded up buildings, trash-filled streets, and vacant lots filled with toxic debris. But traveling down Germantown Avenue, there are signs of hope. Although the physical buildings are modest and in disrepair, grocery, clothing, electronics, and furniture stores on Germantown Avenue are busy and filled with shoppers. People of all ages, including young mothers with children, are on the streets and in the restaurants.

Moving along Germantown Avenue not far from the commercial strip, the first glimpse of The Village is of the education building, a modest, brown, wooden structure whose exterior trim has been painted bright blue. The building is flanked by Ile Ife Park, the first of The Village’s art parks. The color, mosaic sculpture, and mural

## THE VILLAGE "HEART" NEIGHBORHOOD



- 1 11th Street Youth Construction Park
- 2 Village Vegetable Farm
- 3 Kujenga Pamoja Park
- 4 a-f Village Homes
- 5 Children's Garden
- 6 Community Vegetable Garden
- 7 Magical Garden
- 8 Family Park
- 9 2509 Alder Street (Administration Building)
- 10 Angel Alley
- 11 Alder 4 - buildings targeted for renovation
  - a. Crafts workshop and Teen Building
  - b. Teen Building
- 12 Teen Building and Computer Lab
- 13 Meditation Park
- 14 Crafts Building
- 15 Guardian Angel Park
- 16 2501 Alder Street (Staff Offices)
- 17 2509 Alder Street (Kitchen and Silk Screen Studio)
- 18 Happy Alley
- 19 Ile Ife Park
- 20 Educational Building
- 21 Abandoned Building - future renovation site for expanded education building
- 22 Vacant Lot - future site of the Village Garden Center

that define the park, signal an arrival to a place that is very different from its surrounding urban context. This area is the northernmost tip of The Village Heart.

Fifteen years ago, when The Village started, three quarters of its area consisted of vacant lots and abandoned properties. Today, over 100 garbage-strewn lots have been transformed into parks, gardens, murals and sculptures. Six dilapidated buildings have been converted into studios, education centers, and offices. The heart of The Village is readily identifiable through the consistent use of color and materials which differentiate it from neighboring streets and buildings. The low decorative walls surrounding the parks are all painted in a warm buff color and adorned with bits of mosaic tile. Brightly colored mosaic sculptures, larger-than-life figures, and



Restored Housing, Village Heart

murals depicting guardian angels in African-American motifs are startling in contrast to their stark surroundings. Although modest in budget and landscaping, the parks send a clear message that something important is happening.

The small, narrow, modestly-renovated buildings that house Village programs are painted the same buff color and are easily recognized by tile motifs on their facades and rooftops, decorated with the same undulating form as the park walls. The park spaces are open, not gated, and although simple in planting and “hardscape” materials, they bear no signs of vandalism or graffiti. The cornerstone building that is the main education facility was among the first spaces to be renovated. That first renovation team included Steve Sayre, a builder and writer who worked closely with Yeh in the early years, JoJo Williams, and Maxton. Rex Ingram, a local architect and dedicated volunteer, designed some early schemes for The Village Cultural Center.

The experience of walking the streets of The Village Heart stands in marked contrast to the devastation in nearby areas where abandoned buildings filled with trash and large expanses of vacant land have served as a repository for decades of neglect. Here, there is beauty in the bold murals and sculptures that adorn The Village parks. Guardian angels of colorful glass mosaics watch over an alley formerly used for drug deals, now clean and lit. Neighbors know and greet each other by name, and front stoops are swept and tended with planters.



## The Parks

### *Ile Ife Park*

Each park within The Village Heart has its own personality and history. Begun by Yeh in 1986 when funds were virtually nonexistent, Ile Ife was the first of The Village parks. The design revolves around a center circle created after the lot was cleared. Within this circle, Yeh and neighborhood children created a sculptural stand of trees made with bits of glass and debris cleared from the site and turned into a mosaic sculpture. To introduce color, the wall of the education center was transformed into a mural, and later a performance stage was added. Tanbark paths and simple plantings of shrubbery and trees added greenery.



Ile Ife Park

### *Angel Alley*

Angel Alley, an overlooked space between two buildings, was once a favorite hiding place for dealers and muggers. After clearing the alley, which is only about 10 feet across, it became a gallery space of sorts, with mosaic angels along one wall and mosaic faces along the other. In an inner city full of danger, Yeh evoked Ethiopian angels as guardians to protect The Village.



Angel Alley mosaic mural

*Meditation Park*

In Meditation Park, completed in 1993, Yeh wanted to create a place for neighbors to relax and reflect, to become “re-centered.” By this time, she was able to rely on the many local workers committed to The Village. Yeh created a design concept, discussed it with community residents, and formed a neighborhood team to build it. The mosaic tree mural reflects Islamic influences, as does the mosaic pattern of the pavement. The undulating walls that contain the park are characterized by undulating, decorative details from Mali architecture. Though some of the parks are seen as transitory, possibly giving way to future development, this one at the center of The Village has become the location for an annual Rites of Passage ceremony and has a special quality of tranquility. Yeh says that, “To save this park, I would lie down in front of the bulldozers.”



Meditation Park

*Warnock Street Park*

Warnock Street Park is a vegetable garden, producing fresh vegetables that are distributed throughout The Village at the August harvest. Since soil in the neighborhood is typically contaminated with arsenic and lead, soil was imported and planting beds were built. Residents have raised vegetables for use in nutrition and cooking programs.

*Guardian Angel Park*

At the foot of a key corner on Alder Street, Guardian Angel Park is one of the more dramatic sculpture gardens. The murals here are particularly bright and can be seen from several vantage points along adjacent streets. It is here that Big Man has created his colorful and powerful “larger-than-life” mosaic figures. These were



Guardian Angel Park

built by the children from nearby Harntraft Elementary School and The Village construction crew some years ago. Neighbors bring chairs and evening meals into this park, and children play protected by the low Village walls.

### *Village Eagles Youth Park*

A recent collaboration with the Philadelphia Eagles Youth Partnership, the philanthropy wing of the Philadelphia Eagles football team, has brought a potentially powerful partner to The Village. In the summer of 2000, team members came to The Village to work with residents on building the Village Eagles Youth Park. New play equipment for young children was donated by the team, and murals and design details, consistent with The Village's design vocabulary, were developed by Yeh, Big Man, Andre Chamorro (artist and manager of Village Crafts), and Village crews. The excitement generated by the visit of Philadelphia's NFL team to the neighborhood was enormous and bodes well for future collaborations. The Philadelphia Eagles and The Village are both eager to make this an annual event.

## DESIGN

The design concept of The Village is “organic,” emerging through the aesthetic sense, values, and identity of the local community. It is based upon the premise that ordinary people can take things into their own hands and change them for the better. Over time the builders, artists and community groups who participate in the creation of each place in The Village leave their own mark on the work and integrate it further into the fabric of the community.

Although Yeh oversees the design, it is, in the language of The Village, “architecture without architects.”

In the last three years Cicada Architects has been engaged to develop an informal series of design guidelines for The Village. The guidelines were intended to formalize the design vocabulary that had been established over the years, addressing such questions as “How do you know when you’ve entered The Village?” and “What makes it different from the surrounding neighborhood?” The guidelines will ensure that what has been established as the visual character of The Village will be understood and respected in the years to come.



Meditation Park mural



Village Crafts Building

The design vocabulary that emerged through the efforts of Yeh and of community members who participated over time is straightforward but surprisingly effective. Walls surrounding the parks and Village buildings are painted in a warm buff color that sets them off from neighboring buildings that are often brick or dark wood. Village buildings and walls are topped by an undulating pattern that draws on influences from Mali architecture. They also feature inset tiles that give a distinctive, colorful look to walls and facades. Mosaic themes continue on sidewalks, and mosaic inlay on the facades of Village buildings further announce a connection to each other. The mosaic motifs are consistent with the murals in Angel Alley and with the sculptures in several parks. Open spaces have been cultivated and are characterized by murals and sculptures built by community members. Together these elements create a beautiful and identifiable place.

## PROGRAMS

While a great deal of emphasis has been placed on Village parks and murals, in many ways its true heart is in social programs that have grown out of the building projects. Each program that has been developed addresses a multitude of needs. For example, when Yeh began working with neighborhood children, she discovered that many of them were hungry. As a result, The Village Community Vegetable Garden was conceived. In creating the garden, the community learned about soil and horticulture, and a program was developed to teach nutrition and cooking. Similarly, The Village Theater was born as a way to help children and families share history and to come to terms with their personal stories and the

## GOLD MEDAL WINNER

The Village of Arts and Humanities



Planting Village garden

losses many had suffered. Under the leadership of German Wilson, children and adults learn to enact their stories while improving their self-expression and writing skills.

Programs are organized into nine areas, each with a full-time manager as well as a clearly defined mandate.

- *Education through the Arts* encompasses after-school, weekend, and summer programs for youth of all ages. Programs include art for the “fledglings “ (six to twelve year old children), homework assistance for the older children, and a series of after-school cooking, art, and drama classes. In addition, The Village partners with local public schools and housing projects to teach art and to create art-based open spaces at or near the



Village student learning Chinese letters



Village children model hats they made

schools themselves. Recently, services for children have expanded to address the needs of those who are learning disabled.

- *Land Transformation and Environmental Programs* include park building on abandoned land, environmental education, and The Village Tree Farm, which has begun to grow trees and plants on a former brownfield site adjacent to Fotteral Square. The Tree Farm teaches environmental education to youth working there, grows trees for the greening outreach program, and hopes ultimately to become a profit center for The Village by selling trees to other organizations. The Grassroots Transformation Task Force mobilizes for lot clean-up and garden projects. The Outreach Greening Program, headed by Ken



Tree planting at farm

Kolodziej, has gone further, reaching out to the broader neighborhood to do simple planting and seeding on key vacant lots throughout North Philadelphia.

- *The Village Theater* grew out of an early realization by Yeh that the people in North Philadelphia had painful but important personal stories to tell, and through self-expression, they would begin to heal. Yeh felt that “we must do theater for our survival.” Common topics include rape, murder, and abandonment. “Dead Children Speaking,” one of the plays put together by Wilson and the community, deals with loss due to drugs and violence. The Village Theater has toured nationally.
- *Village Hands on Health* combines health education and promotion with art. Nutrition education, health care, pregnancy



## GOLD MEDAL WINNER

The Village of Arts and Humanities



Village theater

prevention, cooking, and a myriad of related programs including Narcotics Anonymous help teach residents to care for themselves and their families.

- ***Festivals, Events, and Exhibitions***, including a harvest celebration and a rites of passage festival, enable the community to come together to share accomplishments and to celebrate individual members. The Village commemorates the progression of each year during these special ceremonies. During Rites of Passage, Meditation Park is transformed into ritual space “in which we try to understand the meaning of our existence and come closer to each other.”



Annual harvest

During Kujenga Pamoja, according to Yeh, “Love, energy, and life force are celebrated at the end of each year. Kojenga Pomoja, the annual Village arts and harvest festival, is literally translated as ‘together we build.’” During this celebration, Villagers stop at each household and offer fresh vegetables from the garden with the message “May the Spirit bless this house. And may the Spirit bless the children.”

- ***Village Crafts*** encompasses several programs for young people in pottery, silk-screening, painting, and drawing, and is working toward production of Village crafts for sale. Currently the program is being redesigned to provide a better method of delivering products to market. This will help promote knowledge about running small businesses and other employment opportunities in the community.



Village crafts

- **Construction/Renovation** refers to the collective set of efforts required to return abandoned properties to community use. Reclaimed properties now provide space for The Village's education programs in the arts, a teen center, Village offices, and resident housing. These properties have been improved by community residents and the community is planning for the addition of new Village facilities.
- **Outreach Activities** include projects with community groups including prison inmates in the region and around the country, as well as greening projects in vacant lots around North Philadelphia. To date, The Village has "cleaned and greened" over 100 vacant lots in areas surrounding The Village. This group plans to bid on city contracts for lot maintenance and

rehabilitation, using Village youth and neighborhood residents as staff, who will receive training in urban ecology as part of their work.

At a recent conference sponsored by the Philadelphia University of the Arts and Painted Bride Center, The Village presented "Unimaginable Isolation: Stories from Graterford." This project helps long-term prison inmates "escape into creativity." A parallel project features thirteen self-portraits hung in cells at Eastern State Penitentiary.

- **The Village Press** focuses on the publication of books, newsletters, and curricula, and it hopes ultimately to publish program manuals about The Village's methods and philosophy.

## ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

### Staff in Transition

Like many projects organized by a visionary leader, The Village is deeply intertwined with the philosophy, methodology, and spirit of Yeh. In its initial stages, The Village organization was characterized by what Yeh termed "organized chaos" and by an iterative process which seemed to recognize multiple outcomes from every new venture. Projects such as vegetable gardening, mural painting and theatre productions developed as ways to address multiple community issues through shared artistic experience.

The Village staff and board recognize, however, that to succeed in the long-term, it must learn to thrive without the leadership and

## GOLD MEDAL WINNER

The Village of Arts and Humanities



Village staff

presence of Yeh. Yeh is trying to adjust her schedule so that it is not structured so rigidly by the needs of The Village. The organizational goal is to free her of day-to-day operating responsibilities but retain her creative input as “Director of Ideas.”

As the organization has grown in scope and stature, it has by necessity become more formalized in structure. The Village is professional and accountable for a broad range of services and programs and for dispensing the more than \$1 million that comes to the organization. What was once one woman working in a vacant lot with a few neighborhood children now has a \$1.2 million operating budget and a staff of 20 full-time equivalent workers. Staff members know they must continue the transition from a structure that revolves around Yeh, to an organization that is more decentralized and clear in its sense of purpose.

The staff has recently engaged in a series of retreats to build and strengthen the administration of The Village. The aim is to refine the goals of each program group and to further empower the professional program managers who have joined the staff in recent years. The retreats were developed in response to unrest among managers who did not feel empowered to act and were frustrated by vague job descriptions. At the same time, The Village is trying to devise self-evaluation systems to help it better measure the outcomes of its efforts and provide feedback to improve programs.

The mission statement that came out of the staff retreat reaffirms the goal that is manifest in The Village and its programs: “To build

community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction, and economic development programs and to do justice to the humanity of people who live in inner city North Philadelphia or similar urban situations.”

The retreat also resulted in an articulation of key principles centered around valuing each individual human being. Village staff identified essential outcomes for the organization which include:

- Maintaining a fiscally responsible and viable budget.
- Developing a nurturing, dynamic, and effective administrative structure.
- Engaging and supporting participants’ efforts to understand and deepen their investment in their community, their spirituality, and their emotional and physical well-being.
- Providing workshops and activities that foster self-esteem, inspire innate creativity, build skills, nurture individual aspirations, preserve the natural environment, and strengthen cultural heritage.

A series of specific standards guides the process of realizing these “essential outcomes.”

### **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors, like the staff, is currently in a period of transition. Historically, the Board has been composed of community

members and a few outsiders who Yeh had known through her previous work. All agree, however, that in order to “grow the organization,” the Board has to expand to encompass skills and talents that cannot be found in the inner circle.

The challenge is to help restructure the Board to assume more of a governing role and to launch an estimated \$11 million capital campaign to build an endowment for The Village. While the Board has historically served in an advisory role, it must now assume a more active supervisory role, keeping The Village from growing too quickly and determining how it will move forward when Yeh is no longer in charge.

### **FINANCES**

The accompanying chart shows a steady progression in operating expenses in the past decade. Since the 1995 fiscal year, significant investment has been made in capital improvements such as the Education Center, Crafts Studio, Teen Building, and other projects. Earlier projects reflect low-cost renovations of existing abandoned buildings. More recent capital expenditures reflect the construction of six new units of Village Homes, scheduled for occupancy in 2001.

As the operating and capital expenses have increased, so too have the variety and diversity of funding sources. Foundation grants from a wide variety of supporters constitute the largest single group of donors. The Village has on staff a full-time development officer whose job it is to write grants and obtain funding. While the Knight and Wallace-Reader’s Digest Funds provided the largest fund

**GOLD MEDAL WINNER**

The Village of Arts and Humanities

## THE VILLAGE OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED AUGUST 31, 2001

REVENUE, GAINS, AND OTHER SUPPORT:	2000	2001	EXPENSES:		
GRANTS	730,944	1,740,679	PROGRAM SERVICES		
GOVERNMENT FUNDING	165,574	335,991	COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	80,590	389,197
CONTRIBUTIONS	83,544	70,593	EDUCATION	384,236	401,207
PROGRAM INCOME	142,025	362,309	PERFORMANCE AND EVENTS	47,400	130,398
INTEREST AND DIVIDEND INCOME	17,496	41,215	PARKS AND GARDENS	373,425	501,353
<b>TOTAL REVENUES, GAINS, AND OTHER SUPPORT*</b>	<b>1,139,583</b>	<b>2,550,787</b>	TOTAL PROGRAM SERVICES	885,651	1,422,155
			SUPPORTING SERVICES		
			MANAGEMENT AND GENERAL	87,952	157,279
			FUNDRAISING	84,793	60,951
			TOTAL SUPPORTING SERVICES	172,745	218,230
			<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,058,396</b>	<b>1,640,385</b>
			INCREASE IN NET ASSETS	81,187	910,402
			NET ASSETS AT BEGINNING OF YEAR	916,663	997,850
			<b>NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR</b>	<b>997,850</b>	<b>1,908,252</b>

\* REVENUE FIGURES INCLUDE ALL NEW REVENUE RECORDED DURING THE FISCAL YEAR ACCORDING TO ACCEPTED ACCOUNTING PRINCIPLES. THEREFORE THIS FIGURE INCLUDES MULTI-YEAR GRANTS TO BE SPENT IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

amounts for fiscal year 2001, the William Penn Foundation, the First Union Bank, the Independence Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, and the Rockefeller PACT have made multi-year commitments which provide The Village with a degree of autonomy in planning its activities. Funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, which has supported The Village in increasing amounts since its inception, is virtually unrestricted, reflecting trust and confidence in the project. The National Endowment for the Arts has also contributed to The Village continuously for many years.

Village Homes, the recent housing initiative in The Village Heart, consists of six three-bedroom units (each 1,632 square feet) of affordable housing, including one handicapped-accessible home. The funding for Village Homes includes a \$638,000 grant from the State Office of Housing and Community Development through the Philadelphia Redevelopment Authority. Additional grants for housing have come through local banks and foundations. The per-unit cost to build is \$133,996. Although the Authority's per square foot goal was \$75, Village Homes are costing closer to \$84 dollars a foot, which the Authority feels is typical for the timing of construction in a busy real estate market. Each three-bedroom unit will sell for \$35,000 to an individual who qualifies as a low-income buyer.

Although first mortgages are obtained through conventional banks, "soft" second mortgages are available through the Redevelopment Authority. These second mortgages last for 10 years and will be forgiven at a rate of 10% per year as long as low-income individuals occupy the units. This is a standard Department of Housing and Urban

Development mechanism for supporting affordable housing, one that has worked successfully throughout Philadelphia. Both city and state representatives acknowledged that the main problem of first-time, low-income homebuyers is to secure the initial bank loan. In this area, the typical first-time homebuyer is a single woman with two children and an annual income of \$18,000. Although monthly expenses in one of these units will be less than average rents, it is often difficult for potential buyers to establish credit and procure a down payment.

Since the site visit, two three-story buildings have become available in The Village Heart. Although in the long run The Village does not wish to retain ownership of land, it recently decided to acquire those buildings and renovate them over time. This decision was based upon the importance of ensuring that any redevelopment of those parcels will not result in demolition and will respect the scale, character, and mix of uses critical to protecting the character of The Village Heart.

## IMPACT ON THE CITY

### Testimonials

As with many projects of this kind, measuring impact is difficult. Although there are beginning to be some quantitative measures, much of the evidence of impact is anecdotal, such as the comments of people who have lived in the neighborhood for years.

□ *Ester Wideman, Friends of Fotteral Square, Village Board:*

Ester Wideman became involved in the neighborhood when she decided to clean up Fotteral Square, a large public park across from Fairhill Housing which was at the time dominated by drug dealers and crime. She turned to The Village for help and was ultimately connected to city agencies that funded clean-up and assisted in maintenance and patrols. Wideman has since become a Board member and remains active in the community.

Although she grew up in The Village neighborhood, for many years Wideman lived outside the community. She recently moved back because of the changes going on in the neighborhood. She attests that others she knew from the neighborhood are also looking to come back because they now feel secure here. In Wideman's words, "There are now safe places to sit. There is color and beauty and brightness where there used to be trash. If you walk through trash you feel like trash; if you walk through beauty, you feel beautiful."

Wideman also felt that you could pick out The Village kids out on the street: "They have a different attitude; they feel good about themselves. Village kids walk tall, talk tall, and aim high."

She pointed out that the improvements have lasted and have been cared for, which "says a lot in this neighborhood where everything gets ruined."

□ *Terry Harrison, Vietnam Vet, Lifelong Resident, Village Maintenance Manager:*

Terry Harrison became involved with The Village by working as a volunteer to clean up Fotteral Square, and he is now maintenance manager for the entire project. He credits The Village with a large part of the neighborhood turnaround. In his words, he cannot believe that in North Philadelphia you "can now sit outside on a bench instead of ducking bullets. Before, if you weren't from the neighborhood, you couldn't come in; it was completely controlled by the drug trade."

Harrison, a Vietnam veteran, also has a personal reason for his loyalty to The Village. He openly discusses the fact that he had "a lot of anger" coming out of Vietnam and that in working with Yeh, he has managed to channel that anger into constructive actions: "I learned from Lily to manage myself and my anger, how to be diplomatic." It was with great pride that he told the site visit team, "I haven't been violent in 10 years."

□ *Elnor Dawkins, Fairhill Weed & Seed Committee, Fairhill Resident:*

Elnor Dawkins is a moving force at Fairhill Housing where she has lived for many years. She is deeply grateful to The Village. As she notes, "The Village took my kids off the street — offered them a choice for the first time. If given a choice, kids will choose what's positive."



Dawkins appreciates the fact that people come from all over the world to see The Village and the change in her neighborhood. Through its work, she noted, The Village took away the dealers' hiding places and anonymity. Then cops joined in and started "doing their job."

□ **James "Big Man" Maxton, Operations Director, The Village:**

In the Village's Long-Range Plan, James Maxton makes the following statement:

*I have watched as so many different races and nationalities of people have come to this once hell-hole and speak about its beauty...I've seen the light in the eyes of planners and developers from other urban areas who hope to export a piece of this*



James "Big Man" Maxton

*particular concept to their community. It has given me a great sense of pride to read in the newspaper and see on TV people talking about my community in relation to beauty and hope rather than drugs and death. To see the little kids run and play happily at The Village through a maze of colored sculpture-filled gardens as though they were in another place and time...*

□ **Heidi Warren, former managing director of The Village:**

Heidi Warren, The Village's first managing director, provided the following testimony of the program's impact:

*I witnessed and became an advocate for the power of art to build hope, pride, and a sense of possibility for the future. We knew that we couldn't solve people's problems, but we could inspire individuals with their own innate creativity. We could create beauty that changed people's attitudes about their neighborhoods and their neighbors. Making murals, building parks, and creating theater productions and festivals enabled people of very different backgrounds and perspectives to connect with and learn from each other. The result for many was heightened pride and a new, more optimistic view of the future. This led some participants to make major changes in their lives, to break free from addiction, to gain economic independence, to buy their own home, to improve their education, to seek new opportunities for their children. I learned that one doesn't have to confront those large societal problems head-on to make a difference. Simple answers can have a powerful impact. Ultimately change comes from within. Nurturing people by "feeding their spirit" is the real tool for building a just, empowered, and visionary society.*

### Other Measures of Impact

Residents indicated that they feel that the number of unsupervised children roaming the neighborhood and the number of incidents

## **GOLD MEDAL WINNER**

The Village of Arts and Humanities

involving such children has decreased dramatically over the past five years. Over 1,300 children and teens have participated in the lead poisoning prevention and awareness programs, and there is a reported increase in parents seeking lead testing for their children at the health centers in The Village area compared to the rest of the city.

Despite relatively modest program enrollment figures, The Village estimates that, broadly defined, it interacts with or becomes known to about 13,000 people annually. Through after-school programs and extensive outreach in Philadelphia, nationally, and internationally, as well as through employment and summer programs, adult activities and meetings, Village theatrical productions, collaborative ventures with other organizations, and speaking engagements around the country. Total enrollment in Village programs has increased over

30% from last year. Similarly, parental involvement in 1999 showed a 300% increase over previous years.

The Fledglings Program for the youngest children (six to 12 years) enrolls about 35 children per semester and involves about 20 parents. Within that group, 18 children are returning and 17 are coming for the first time. In 1999, 57% of the fledglings in the core program showed improvement on their report cards between the beginning and end of the school year. They greet their Fledglings teacher with a hug, get a snack when they come in, and are welcomed into a place that is safe.

Teen programs meet three days a week and have enrolled 38 young people. The teens have a Monday meeting in which they talk about



Village teens



Young Village artist

issues of concern to them; on other days they attend theater workshops, cooking class and other programs. In 1999, two teens graduated high school and won scholarships to attend college at Indiana University and the University of Pennsylvania. Teens can also access summer internships through this program. They get paid minimum wage to work in Village programs, learning horticulture, building repair, maintenance, and other skills. Summer programs will enroll about 25 teens and 60 fledglings and hire Village youth as counselors and tree farm staff. In 1999, summer programs had a waiting list of 75. It is also interesting to note that 90% of participants re-enroll. All paid jobs are minimum wage positions.

The Deputy Director of the Pennsylvania Council of the Arts, Heather Dougherty, feels that what The Village has done is “almost impossible,” given the initial scarcity of resources and the overwhelming social forces that conspire against this kind of project. In the Council’s view, The Village is more about revitalizing community than it is about the arts, although the aesthetics and social programs are not separable. According to the Council, The Village has had a greater effect on the community than most “arts” programs and has done more with fewer resources than any other group in the state. “This program,” says Philip Horn, Executive Director of the Council, “is about saving lives.”

Board and staff members feel that The Village’s impact goes far beyond North Philadelphia. Yeh’s work is well known at both the state and national level, and she has received a Governor’s Award

for her work. Yeh has spoken at the National Assembly of Arts Agencies and at other national conferences around the country. Recently Dean Gary Hack of the Graduate School of Fine Arts at the University of Pennsylvania included Yeh in an international conference in Bilbao, and in Hack’s words, “Lily stole the show with her account of The Village.”

The amount of national publicity received by The Village is unusual for a project of this size and scope. A National Public Radio documentary television series in which The Village is featured has made it relatively well known and has made residents feel proud of their community. Other national publications, such as *Reader’s Digest*, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* and *Shelterforce Magazine*, have done feature articles on this unusual place.

The reach of The Village also extends both nationally and internationally. Yeh has presented The Village at numerous national meetings around the country, most recently at the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In 1994, supported by a grant from the Lila Wallace Reader’s Digest Foundation, Yeh, Warren and Glenn Jolsten adapted The Village model to Nairobi’s Korogocho area—a vast slum of 100,000 people located next to a garbage dump. During this visit, Yeh and her staff worked in this impoverished village to create a new park/plaza in front of the bleak village church, with sculpture created by Korogocho residents and murals painted by Yeh and village children. In 2000 and 2001, Yeh and Wilson visited Korogocho again, and together with Father Alex, a local priest, continued the transformation of the church courtyard

into a garden with painted guardian angels and sculpture. With Wilson's theater skills, they organized performances and festivals for local people to celebrate their accomplishments.

## FUTURE PLANS

The Village has ambitious plans for the future. According to Yeh, it is essential to have two things firmly in place to ensure the future of The Village: 1) the successful completion of a capital campaign for close to \$11 million—enough to create an endowment and to complete the new performing arts venue, cafe, and headquarters

and 2) an endowment-based cash flow and income stream. Staff and Board are also pursuing income generation through the development of effective markets for Village crafts; the marketing of Village methods of urban revitalization; and the provision of technical assistance on horticulture and placemaking throughout the city. Finally, with the recent availability of two three-story buildings in The Village Heart, the organization is planning on acquiring, renovating and expanding gradually to ensure that the improved buildings remain consistent with the neighborhood and retain the small scale and mix of uses that characterize The Village Heart.



Guardian Angel Park

## ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS

### HOW WELL THE PROJECT MET ITS GOALS

*Transforming a neighborhood into a “vital urban village in which people are reconnected with their families, sheltered in decent housing, sustained by meaningful work, nurtured by each other's care, and together educate their children.”*

There is no doubt that The Village has had an important impact on the lives of many local residents. Community residents we talked to all attest to the impact of The Village on their perceptions of their own community and on the degree of safety and connection they now feel. As a result of The Village, people feel safe enough to use the parks and open spaces they have created; they note that their children have a new sense of possibility in their lives and that they “walk with their heads held high.” Drug dealers are no longer

operating on the streets and alleys of The Village. Observing interactions in after-school classes at the Village, and in talking with staff, it is clear that important bonds of caring and mutual respect have been established. This is, however, a goal whose completion is ultimately difficult to quantify.

*Building community through innovative arts, educational, social, construction and economic development programs.*

Clearly, the processes of reclaiming parks and alleys, the construction work that community residents have joined together to accomplish, and the extensive after-school and outreach programs have all reached many adults and children. The theatre program has given national recognition to the talents and stories of the people of this place that has been so long neglected. The Village's ongoing commitment to a grassroots approach to facility and program development represents a sustained determination to further this goal and to continue to build community.

*Creating a new sense of possibility and hope in the community.*

The approach of The Village to the creation of parks, art, and programs remains consistent with this philosophy. The parks have literally been created out of "what society has disdained and thrown away." The transformation of debris ridden lots into places of beauty and community pride is the physical manifestation of this philosophy. Similarly, the reclaiming of abandoned buildings and their transformation into centers for art and crafts programs, and more recently low-income housing, is a dramatic representation of this goal in action.

*Building democracy through a renewed sense of participation in the community.*

There is a strong commitment to grassroots organizing as the basis for decisions about which park will gain community attention and how it will be developed. Similarly, the staff has recently reorganized to continue to decentralize responsibility in a way that reflects The Village's mission. As more successful places are created and good programs continue to grow and be effective, more people will be attracted to The Village community, and that will create expanded opportunities for further democratization.

## SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee found The Village to be "bold...absolutely spectacular" in how it looks, what it has achieved, and the process it has used to get there. Committee members commented that it is the synergy of elements that makes The Village so exciting; it is visually striking while unpretentious and remaining a grassroots, hands-on effort. It involves people doing things with their own hands in their own community, "local people creating their neighborhood...and that is a spectacular achievement."

In the view of the Committee, the design and development work has been responsive to community needs yet has developed slowly and thoughtfully from a modest lot beautification effort into a community-based program. Although The Village is based in art and landscape design, its founders understood that other community needs could be addressed by the project and have helped

it expand to include a series of social and economic programs that address a wide variety of community issues.

The scale of The Village, for the Selection Committee members, was a strength and strongly connected to its achievement. They suggested that there is a need for alternatives to big projects with their potential dangers and inequities: “If it’s possible to make a difference on this small a scale, it is possible to make a difference anywhere.” They noted, in fact, that the relatively small scale of the project enabled The Village to remain nimble and responsive to the input of community members.

The Selection Committee admired the ability of the project to have an immediate visible impact on neighborhood blocks by clearing a lot and planting grass and trees, for instance, without wading through city bureaucracy. Projects that focus on housing, Committee members noted, often endure long waits for approvals and financing before they can do something that has a noticeable impact on the nature of the setting. “You can’t wait... if you’re going to wait for the buildings before you do anything, you’re not going to be able to capture opportunities that require a quick response.”

The small scale of The Village also creates limitations. The Selection Committee questioned whether the programs sponsored by The Village were comprehensive enough to have a long-term impact on the neighborhood. Members noted that with the scale and depth of devastation, in terms of both human spirit and physical infrastructure, a sustained and comprehensive effort is needed.

Similarly, Committee members both praised and raised questions concerning the origins and nature of The Village’s leadership. Often, truly unique and creative projects come from the inspiration of a single person — in this case, Yeh. Her special genius gave The Village its form and gave the community its inspiration. As always in the case of an innovative project such as The Village, the presence of an inspired and visionary leader raises concerns about the future of the project when the founder moves on. Fortunately, The Village has been far sighted in addressing this issue directly while Yeh is still involved.

The Committee was especially impressed by the unique approach to urban change embodied in The Village. The Committee noted that using art as a tool of urban redevelopment is unusual and praised the spiritual and creative nature of the project — aspects that many other good urban projects ignore (“the work is poetic”). Committee members also commended the ability of The Village to work with limited funds, suggesting that its impact might be greater in the long run because it is modeling the ability to take action with scarce resources. The Village has taken discarded land and buildings and transformed them, creating hope and pride of place. “Doin’ with what ya got” is an approach that allows progress even in lean times. Vacant land, they noted, was a common and under-used problem/resource in poor neighborhoods, and The Village provided a model for transforming that deficit into an asset. While they acknowledged the possibility that some of these improvements may not be lasting, they felt that the permanence of the physical improvements was not critical to changing lives and outlooks.

Finally, Committee members questioned how much The Village is an island — a small area of change in a very big ocean of poverty and decay — and hence how much of an impact it was having. They noted that it was not yet proven as a replicable model. Even so, however, they saw The Village as “the physical manifestation of hope and possibility within an abandoned place... [It] brought life and soul and creativity to a place in a way that can be replicated anywhere there are people wishing to bring visible and immediate change in their own neighborhoods and communities.”

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Csaszar, T. (1994, September). “On Paul Keene and Lily Yeh: The Village of Arts and Humanities.” *New Art Examiner*, 22, 40.

Ott, Gil. (1994, Winter). “The Village of Arts and Humanities.” *Philadelphia Source: High Performance*, 17, 32-3.

“The Heart is Creativity: Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.” (2000, Spring). Community Scale Economics. *New Village Journal: Building Sustainable Cultures*, 2. World Wide Web: <http://www.newvillage.net/currentissue.html>.

Seidel, M. (1997, February). “Lily Yeh at the Village of Arts and Humanities and other venues.” *Philadelphia Source: Art in America*, 85, 108.

“Sharing the Future: The Arts and Community Development.” (1994, Winter). *High Performance*, 17, 27-33.

## RELATED RUDY BRUNER AWARD WINNERS

Readers who are interested in The Village of Arts and Humanities may also wish to read about these Gold and Silver Medal winners from previous years:

ARTScorpsLA, Inc., Los Angeles, CA (1999)

National AIDS Memorial Grove,

Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA (1999)

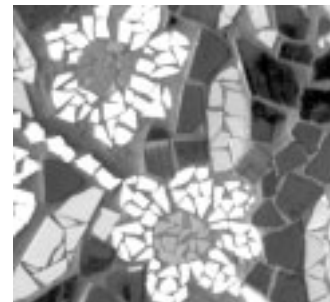
Project Row Houses, Houston, TX (1997)

Maya Angelou Community Initiative, Portland, OR (1995)

*(For full bibliographic citations, please see Introduction. Information on all RBA winning projects is available at [www.BrunerFoundation.org](http://www.BrunerFoundation.org).)*

## CONTACT

Web site: <http://www.villagearts.org/>



Lily Yeh  
Executive Director  
The Village of Arts and Humanities  
2544 Germantown Avenue  
Philadelphia, PA 19133  
PHONE: 215.225.7830  
FAX: 215.225.4339

**GOLD MEDAL WINNER**

The Village of Arts and Humanities



2001 Rudy Bruner Award

**SILVER**  
medal winner

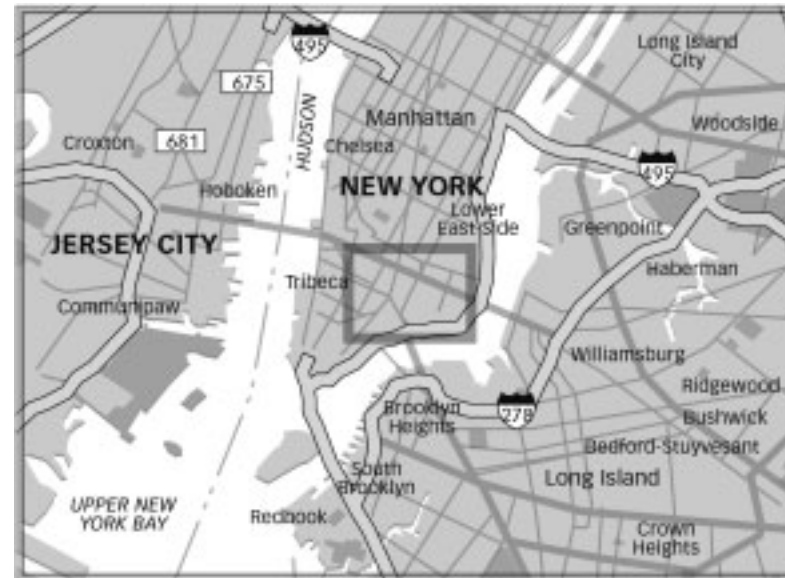


**LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM**

New York, New York

**SILVER MEDAL WINNER**

Lower East Side Tenement Museum



Project location



Project location (detail)

## THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM AT A GLANCE

### SUBMITTED BY:

Lower East Side Tenement Museum, Katherine Snider, *Vice President of Public Affairs*

### WHAT IS THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM (LESTM)?

- An 1863 New York tenement building at 97 Orchard Street, restored and later designated as a National Historic Landmark.
- A not-for-profit organization whose mission is “to promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan’s Lower East Side, a gateway to America.”
- A museum offering a variety of programs, including interpretive programs, educational programs, and community services.
- An example of how a museum can use history to promote public dialogue about a variety of issues affecting immigrant, urban working class, and poor populations.

### MAJOR GOALS OF THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM

- To promote historical perspective and tolerance of immigrant, migrant, urban working class, and poor experiences as exemplified on the Lower East Side.
- To use the history of immigration, as told through the stories of actual residents, to stimulate public dialogue about important contemporary issues.
- To foster dialogue and understanding amongst the diverse immigrant and migrant populations in the Museum’s neighborhood.
- To challenge the prevailing notion of the kinds of buildings that are worthy of preservation.

## CHRONOLOGY

1986

Ruth Abram and Anita Jacobson establish the Lower East Side Historical Conservancy.

1988

The Conservancy discovers 97 Orchard Street and rents it as office space. The Conservancy also becomes formally chartered as the Lower East Side Tenement Museum (LESTM).

1992-97

Orchard Street is placed on National Register of Historic Places.

1994

LESTM opens two apartments (Gumpertz and Baldizzi) to the public. The Museum is designated a National Historic Landmark.

1996

LESTM purchases 97 Orchard Street for \$750,000. LESTM and University Settlement create Familiar Strangers (English for Speakers of Other Languages class).

1997

LESTM opens interactive, living history of the Confino Apartment.

1998

LESTM opens apartment of the Rogarshevsky family. Orchard Street block is designated the city's Centennial Block. Museum building becomes a featured property of National Trust for Historic Preservation. Congress signs bill designating the Museum an affiliated area of the National Park Service.

1999

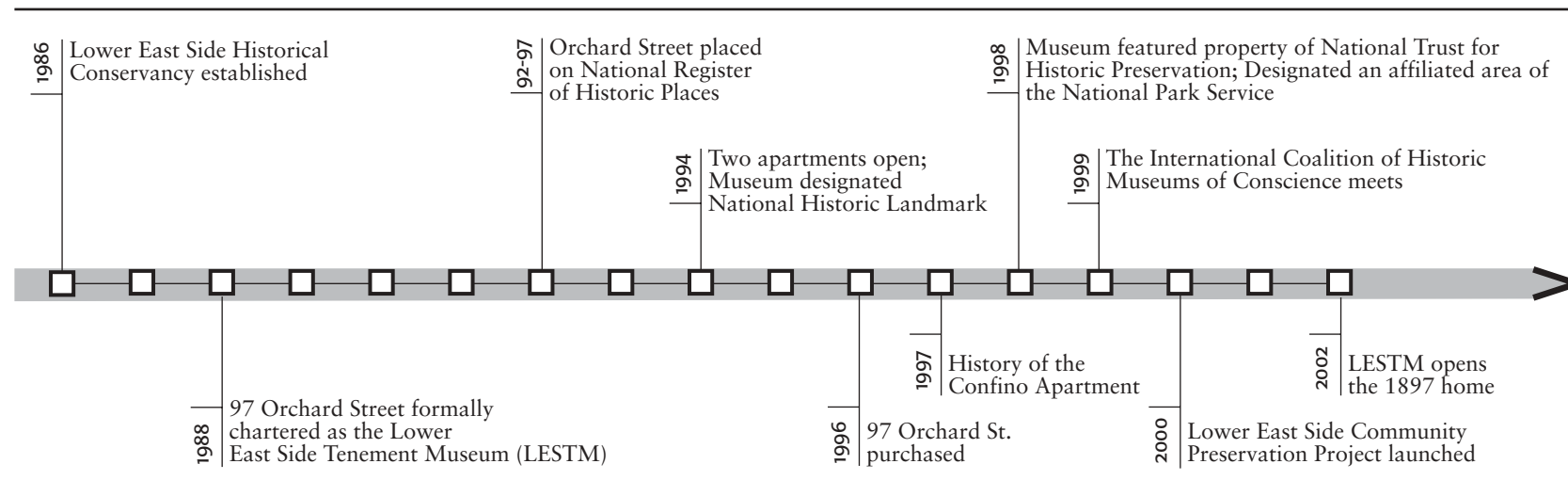
The International Coalition of Historic Museums of Conscience is formed largely at the initiative of Ruth Abram.

2000

LESTM's Lower East Side Community Preservation Project is launched with 200 neighborhood organizations. LESTM and City College launch Urban Museum Studies class.

2002

LESTM opens the 1897 home and sweatshop of Harris and Jennie Levine, Jewish immigrants from Poland.



## KEY PARTICIPANTS

Persons who were interviewed are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

### Museum Staff

Ruth Abram, \* *Founder and President*

Renee Epps, \* *Vice President for Properties and Administration*

Liz Sevcenko, \* *Vice President for Programs*

Katherine Snider, \* *Vice President for Public Affairs*

Kate Fermoile, \* *Education Director*

Lynda Kennedy, \* *Education Coordinator*

Steve Long, \* *Museum Curator*

Althea Davidson, \* *ESOL Instructor*

Jeff Tancil, \* *Web site Producer*

### Consultants

Andrew Dolkart, \* *Columbia University*

Judith Saltzman, \* *AIA,*

*Li/Saltzman Consulting Preservation Architects*

Pamela Keech, \* *Consulting Installation Curator*

William DuPont, \* *AIA, National Trust for Historic Preservation*

### Community Members

Reverend Harvey, \* *Rector, St. Augustine's Church*

Florence Li-Moldonado, *Chinese American Planning Council*

Michael Zisser, \* *Executive Director,*

*University Settlement House Society of New York*

Harriet Senie, *Director of Museum Studies, City College, CUNY*

### Government

Tom Dyer, \* *National Park Service*

Marie Rust, \* *Northeast Regional Director, National Park Service*

Kathy Hughes, *Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York*

### Others

Frank Sanchis, \* *Executive Director,*

*Municipal Arts Society New York*

*(formerly at the National Trust for Historic Preservation)*

Students in ESOL class\*

Visiting students from public elementary school in Brooklyn\*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY AND VISION

#### Inventing LESTM

LESTM is the embodiment of the dynamic vision of its founder, Ruth Abram. Her experiences growing up in the segregated South as the daughter of civil rights lawyer Morris Abram and her work for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the Women's Action Alliance contributed to the germination of this project. The seed for LESTM was planted when Abram found that strategies pulled from histories of the women's suffrage movement were helpful in her work for the Equal Rights Amendment. She realized that "useable history" could be a valuable part of social change agendas.

As a graduate student in American history, Abram started her first non-profit, Paraphrase. Through this organization, she "tried her hand at inviting the public to consider big questions through the presentation of history" and began to envision immigration as the common historical experience that could invite a heightened tolerance of ethnic and economic differences. Abram explains:

*All of us share the experience of dislocation, relocation and reinvention in our family histories...I hoped that through confrontation with ancestors who are held dear, Americans might be moved to a kind of national conversation about contemporary immigrants...and realize that today's 'strangers' hold something in common with the forebears we now admire.*



97 Orchard Street circa 1988

In 1985, Abram joined Anita Jacobson and others in restoring the Eldridge Street Synagogue and in developing walking tours of the Lower East Side and theatrical productions based upon the Jewish immigrant experience. It was in the search for office space for this venture that Abram's vision of immigration as an "everyman" story found a home. The first floor of 97 Orchard Street had office space available. The upper floors of the building, however, had been mothballed since 1935, when the last residents were evicted so that the landlord would not have to make code-required upgrades to the apartments. The coincidental availability of space and relatively untouched urban history at 97 Orchard provided the impetus for the founding of LESTM.



Lower East Side neighborhood

## History of 97 Orchard Street

Located in the heart of the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a neighborhood that continues to be a first home for many immigrants today, 97 Orchard Street housed some 7,000 immigrants from over 20 countries between 1863 and 1935. Still lined by classic tenement buildings, Orchard Street visually conveys how New York might have looked to a new immigrant. Many of the buildings in this neighborhood are original tenement structures, although their uses have changed. Much of the retail activity, especially on Sundays when vehicular traffic is banned, reflects the sidewalk merchandising and the intensity of street life as it would have looked 100 years ago. The Lower East Side has maintained much of its nineteenth century building fabric with 22 National Historic Register Sites and eight National Historic Landmarks located in the neighborhood.

In 1800, the Lower East Side was the center of New York society and commerce, but by 1860, the middle class had begun moving uptown, and the Lower East Side had become home to many newly-arrived immigrants. Immigration rates increased steadily, and by 1900, the Orchard Street block had a population density of 240,000 per square mile — more residents per acre than the most populated sections of East London or Bombay today.

Lucas Glockner, a German-born immigrant tailor, built the building at 97 Orchard Street in 1863 as a dwelling for himself and 19 other families. As one of the oldest buildings on this block, 97 Orchard Street predates the "Old Law" tenement buildings which had to be



Hallway of 97 Orchard

built only to minimal public health and sanitation requirements. The building's simple Italianate façade was probably created by the architect to be a "trickle down," brick version of the brownstone Italianate facades popular in uptown row houses. A narrow, unlit, unventilated central stair led to the three-room apartments, four to a floor. A water spigot and privies were provided in the backyard and each apartment had a fireplace. Cold water pipes were installed in the apartments in 1895. The "Old Law" housing reform act, passed in 1897, required additional sanitation facilities but only addressed tenements built after that date.

The Tenement House Act of 1901, known as the "New Law," had a significant impact on 97 Orchard Street. In response to that law,



Apartment in original condition



hallway windows and gas lighting were installed to provide illumination in the stairwell. Interior windows were added to the dark interior apartment rooms to borrow light from exterior windows. Two toilets and a ventilation shaft were added in small closets on each floor by taking space from the eight-foot square bedrooms. Electricity was added later, sometime after 1918, as discovered from the patent year found on the meters. After the Multiple Dwelling Act of 1929 was passed, the Helpern family, the building's owner at the time, was faced with the expense of fireproofing the staircase and adding more toilets. Instead, the Helperns evicted the residents and closed the residential portion of the building. The commercial space remained in use until 1988 when Abram and Jacobson discovered the building.

Dissection of layers of decorations and repairs has revealed to researchers how this tenement changed over the years as a result of housing reform and decoration and refurbishment by occupants. These discoveries show that the original owner, who lived in the building, built it to a somewhat higher standard than many other tenements, providing hallway windows and outdoor privies connected to sewer lines before either was required. The tenement owners also adorned the street façade and public hallways with classical decoration. This contradicts some of the stereotypes that suggest tenement builders sought to maximize their return with little regard for the occupants. It also appears that residents made significant improvements to their apartments in spite of their poverty. One apartment had 22 two layers of wallpaper, suggesting that it had been replaced on average every two years. Layers of

paint and floor coverings also contradict prevailing notions of tenement dwellers' impoverished domestic habits. All such decorative enhancements were publicly deplored by housing reformers who tried to get all tenement interiors painted white in the belief that decoration was a breeding ground for vermin and disease.

### Designing the Museum and Its Programs

When Abram chartered LESTM in 1988, it became the first American history museum to give voice to the stories and lives of urban, immigrant, working people. On an early walk through the building, Abram found apartments where belongings had been left behind, suggesting that their occupants had left hastily. LESTM founders decided that they could have greater impact by portraying



Natalie Gumpertz apartment

PHOTO: Bruce Buck



Rogarshevsky apartment



Rogarshevsky apartment

the lives of families who had actually lived in the building than by offering composite representations of typical ethnic families. They therefore sought to reconstruct as accurately as possible the domestic and cultural life of specific individuals and their families, choosing people who lived in the building at different periods in history and under different household circumstances, with an eye toward accounts that would touch visitors' emotions.

The apartment of Natalie Gumpertz, who set up shop in her front room to support her children, represents the first household headed by a woman to be exhibited in a National Historic Site. The Rogarshevsky apartment portrays the Jewish custom of Shiva (mourning) for a father who has just died of tuberculosis. The Baldizzi's apartment is furnished to capture the upheaval on the day they were evicted as well as their illegal status and need for welfare support.

As an outgrowth of researching occupants' stories, reconstructing apartments and offering tours, LESTM extended its vision to the neighborhood. Abram's notion of "the usable past" has guided the variety of outreach programs LESTM has developed. These programs now extend to New York school students, recent immigrants, and others whose stories have not been told.

In addition to running the Museum and securing financial support for a variety of interpretive, educational and community programs (see below), Abram has reached out globally to find others who are engaged in efforts to rescue historic sites and provoke critical

discourse about the past and present. In 1999, with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Ford Foundation, and the Trust for Mutual Understanding, Abram brought together a group that included directors from the Gulag Museum in Russia; the Slave House in Senegal, the District Six Museum in South Africa, the Liberation War Museum in Bangladesh, Terezin in the Czech Republic, The Workhouse in England, Project to Remember in Argentina, and the National Park Service (NPS) representing the Underground Railroad and Women's Rights National Historic Site. The group has formed the International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, an organization of museums and historic sites that address human rights. The Coalition's goal is to "assist the public in drawing connections between the history of our sites and its contemporary implications." The coalition is establishing connections with world-wide human rights organizations to further reinforce its agenda to use the lessons of history. Work is currently underway for linked Internet sites.

### ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

In just 10 years, LESTM has grown into a sizable and stable organization. Of the more than 100 people at work in its programs, 25 are full time, 10 are part time, and the number of volunteers, swelling with new docents, is more than 70. Since its inception, Abram and her deputy, Renee Epps, have run the day-to-day operations. Recently LESTM reorganized its management structure and created several new senior positions in an effort to respond to its tremendous growth. Epps now serves as Vice-President for Properties and Administration, taking increasing responsibility with

the growth of staff as well as owned and leased space. Liz Sevchenko has recently joined the organization as Vice-President for Programs and Coalition Coordinator to run and expand its educational and interpretive programs. Katherine Snider, Vice President for Public Affairs, directed marketing and public relations for two years before moving into her current position. Her promotion reflects LESTM's awareness that it must creatively develop its public relations and fundraising to sustain its innovative programs.

LESTM's internal reorganization is more in line with its philosophy that every employee should have opportunities for leadership. This is most evident in the expectation that each staff member, including the president, regularly conducts tours. Staff members also take individual responsibility for programming and chairing weekly staff



Ruth Abram and staff

## SILVER MEDAL WINNER

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

meetings. These gatherings are used for discussion of organizational issues and, more significantly, offer opportunities for staff development. Programs include presentations on neighborhood and ethnic history; field trips to nearby sites; workshops on writing, customer relations, and public speaking; and brainstorming for long-range planning. Every staff member is able to recite the museum's mission statement from memory.

Consultants on history, historic preservation, museum management, and financial and legal planning have also been essential to the LESTM operation. Many have been engaged since LESTM's inception, some working *pro bono* or making in-kind contributions. They continue to participate in interpretative projects and the



Presentation to staff

development of new programs. The NPS may make additional technical expertise available to the museum for investigative and interpretative services. The relationship between LESTM and the NPS may create a new model of public/private partnership.

In addition to researching and preparing interpretive programs, much of the organization's early work was intended to establish a solid set of historical documentation and credentials that would enable the museum to be recognized as an historic site. According to Frank Sanchis of the Municipal Arts Society, Abram realized that recognition by city, state and federal preservation agencies was critical to the financial success of the museum. Sanchis noted that Abram "single handedly got the museum the recognition it deserved by affiliating herself with the important organizations." This affiliation was needed to establish LESTM's credibility as an historical museum that was as significant as more traditionally defined landmarks. In 1992, the building was placed on the National Register of Historic Places; two years later, it was recognized as a National Landmark. Its partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation followed in 1998, making LESTM's tenement the twentieth featured property of America's foremost private preservation organization. The tenement building at 97 Orchard Street became the first National Trust property in New York City and the first anywhere not owned by wealthy or famous Americans.

Abram's overture to the NPS was perhaps the most propitious in terms of potential fiscal and technical support. The *NPS Special Resource Study*, which evaluated 97 Orchard Street by NPS criteria

for historic significance, suitability and feasibility, concluded that LESTM:

*represents an outstanding example of a surviving tenement associated with immigration and immigrant ways of life, a sub-theme not fully represented in the National Park Service. It also has exceptional value in representing the theme of housing reform, as well as its particular architectural style, and provides excellent opportunities for public education and enjoyment.*

The NPS report proposed that LESTM be designated an “affiliated area” rather than a unit owned and operated by the NPS. In its recommendations, the NPS recognized the unique nature of LESTM’s programs and its own inability as a federal agency to operate such innovative programs. It wanted to cement a relationship that would enhance the telling of the whole immigration story from the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island to LESTM. The NPS has found LESTM innovations useful in its own efforts to broaden its interpretive programs, make its resources relevant to a wider audience, and expand its existing sites to better reflect the diverse stories that can be told. Marie Rust, who oversees 65 parks in the region, finds that her staff members often miss opportunities to relate to issues and concerns beyond their parks’ boundaries. She hopes that the association with LESTM will foster new ideas and collaborations among New York City parks.

This new “affiliated area” status also confirms LESTM’s national significance and provides an advantage in raising money and attracting visitors. It does not, however, guarantee annual federal

dollars. The final agreement with the NPS will assure LESTM’s autonomy as an “affiliated site” and will likely include partnership on a wide range of operational and programmatic initiatives as well as representation on the management council of the National Parks of New York Harbor. The draft agreement recommends expansion of the site’s boundaries to coincide with the Lower East Side National Historic District to provide critical context for interpretive programs. Finally, the proposed agreement supports acquisition of the adjacent tenements to provide support space. It notes the need for new administrative offices and better transportation between LESTM and harbor sites.

LESTM’s relationships with the NPS and the National Trust have already led to increased publicity and attendance. LESTM is currently serving 85,000 visitors annually, representing 37 countries and all 50 states. The vast majority of visitors are from New York City (largely because of its popularity among school groups), except during the summer months when the number of national and international visitors increases. The museum hosted 24,000 school children in 2000, up 12-fold since 1995. In early April of 2001, the museum was completely booked for school groups through the end of the school year; other group tours were scheduled six weeks in advance.

## DESIGN AND EXHIBIT DEVELOPMENT

The physical setting of LESTM includes both the tenement building (the museum) and separate spaces in the neighborhood for a visitor center and offices. One side of the first floor of the museum is used

## SILVER MEDAL WINNER

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

as a class/conference room; the other side and basement, for support and collections space. Most visitors start their experience at 90 Orchard, across the street from the museum, in an antiquated 100-square-foot corner retail space that includes a gift shop and a long narrow room that serves as a gallery, a theater, and classroom for interpretive programs. Administrative, research and support functions are housed two blocks away on an upper floor at 66 Allen Street.

The museum is an on-going design and rehabilitation project. The architects, Li/Saltzman, started work on the building in 1988 before it was purchased. Judith Saltzman said that her technical consultation was to help preserve the structure as a vehicle for revealing the social history of the Lower East Side. She also remarked that her firm's dedication to this effort was related to immigration stories she and her partner had in their families.

The restoration challenges have been both technical and interpretive. Making the building weather-tight and structurally stable required considerable reconstruction but had little impact on the historic fabric of the exterior and interiors. Safety features such as sprinklers, additional exits, emergency lighting, and mechanical systems, however, were necessary interventions that could not be hidden. Instead, they were carefully placed to minimize impact on the authenticity of the original tenement. Working in phases over several years and keeping the scale of change modest, Li/Saltzman was able to limit the extent to which the building was altered to comply with codes. Saltzman made sure to engage the New York

City Building Department early in the process, to inform it of LESTM's mission to preserve the 1935 character and solicit its sympathetic review.

Accessibility for people who cannot climb stairs was a major problem that could not be resolved satisfactorily. It was not feasible to add an elevator, and widening the interior hallways would have fundamentally altered the spatial configuration of the tenement apartments. Even though historic buildings are not required to be in compliance with the American with Disabilities Act, LESTM has made a concerted effort to avoid messages of exclusion by offering other accommodations through programs and interpretive materials. Much of the architects' work was done in collaboration with Steve Long, the Museum's curator; Andrew Dolkart,



Baldizzi apartment

architectural historian on interpretive issues; and William DuPont, Graham Gund Architect with the National Trust. Saltzman notes that the process was always dynamic, enriched by many points of view and sometimes contradictory data, and that it challenged some of her assumptions as an architect.

As LESTM staff developed the museum's interpretive programs, it found itself forging new and innovative strategies for research and outreach. Conventional research methods were often fruitless because the lives of poor urban immigrants have generally gone unrecorded except for births, deaths, and residency. Many photographs and descriptive materials that were traditionally used, such as those by Jacob Riis, were published to support housing reform and immigrant re-education programs and may not



Window in Baldizzi apartment

accurately reflect all facets of tenement life. The curators looked for other sources that could capture apartment interiors in a “natural” state. For the Rogarshevsky apartment, for instance, researchers uncovered crime scene photographs in police archives from a murder that took place there in 1918. These revealed specific decorative details that had not been seen elsewhere. For the Baldizzi unit, LESTM was contacted by the family's only living relative, who described it in detail and provided a number of stories and artifacts, helping to recreate an authentic interior. The curators used traditional genealogical techniques to locate descendants, but they have discovered just as many through publicity in ethnic and neighborhood newspapers. LESTM staff and its consultants pride themselves on the rigor of their preservation research and note that their goal of presenting the “usable past” requires accuracy.

## INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMS

LESTM has developed a broad array of programs extending its mission to promote tolerance by drawing connections between the past and the present. Due to the demand for school-age educational visits and the increasing success of community outreach programs, LESTM now has four full-time staff members in education and four more in public programs.

### Public Programs

*Guided Tours:* LESTM feels that it is the stories of the immigrants, more than the artifacts or architecture, that move people and therefore only allows access to the tenement apartments through a guided tour with a docent. Groups are taken first to the apartment in

“ruin,” preserved as it was found. The guide uses elements of the setting such as layers of wallpaper and paint to make transparent the process of research and interpretation that produced the restored apartments. Tour groups then visit the apartments of the Gumpertz family, German Jews in the 1870s; the Rogarshevsky family, Eastern European Jews in the 1900s; the Baldizzi family, Italian Catholics in the 1930s; and the 1897 home and sweatshop of Harris and Jennie Levine, Jewish immigrants from Poland. The groups typically have 10–15 people, similar to the number of occupants in some of the units at 97 Orchard Street, viscerally conveying to visitors the experience of crowding.



Visitors gathering for tour

***Interactive Living History:*** The fifth apartment, occupied by the Confino family, Sephardic Jews from Turkey in 1916, provides an interactive, living history experience. Victoria Confino, the 16-year-old daughter, played by an actress, engages school groups and guided tours in a conversation about her life as a recent immigrant. This interpretive experience has been the subject of considerable research and experimentation. Visitors are specifically asked to take on the role of newly arrived immigrants seeking information that will help them settle into American life in the Lower East Side. This unique approach, called “two-way role-play” by one of the actresses, was developed after visiting other sites with “first-person interpreters.” According to evaluations, children have been far more comfortable and engaged than adults by this improvisational museum encounter.

## Education Programs

***School Tours:*** Every day LESTM hosts school groups, engaging children in age-appropriate exercises that have been carefully developed and evaluated by the education staff. This year LESTM served 24,000 students in 941 programs. Just over half of these youth are from New York City; 64% come from public schools. Groups of children from Canada, England, France, Germany and Australia have also visited. Typically, a package of materials is sent to teachers to help integrate exercises into their curricula before and after the visit. These assignments cover topics such as immigration and diversity, ethnic communities, similarities and differences between the past and the present, tenement housing, leaving home, cultural traditions, architecture’s social role, urban density, and oral



history. As part of the introduction and preparation for the Confino apartment, for example, students are asked to adopt the role of new immigrants arriving at the Lower East Side from Ellis Island, needing information on how to survive in their new country.

***Other School-Age Projects:*** Education programs help LESTM to reach beyond the walls of the museum. The new connection with the NPS has allowed LESTM to link to other sites that represent chapters in New York immigration history. LESTM staff piloted “After Ellis,” a new children’s program at Ellis Island, and trained NPS rangers to run it. The program simulates immigrant processing there in the nineteenth century as well as “settling in” at the tenement building.



Visitors in original apartment

Amplifying its mission to promote tolerance and to use history as a tool for understanding present-day social issues, LESTM developed the “Net Worth Project” to address socio-economic class prejudices among children. Its simple message is that a person’s worth cannot be determined by his/her material wealth. Approximately 500 young people have been involved in the initial phase. Working closely with both public and private schools in New York City, LESTM has documented changes in perception after a Museum visit. For instance, evaluations have shown that, after exposure to these programs, the number of negative associations with the word “poor” measurably decreased among visiting school children. Building on this investigation, LESTM is drafting a guide for teachers who wish to promote sensitivity and respect among students of different economic levels. Eager to diversify its visitor base, Lyndhurst, a National Trust site in Irvington, NY, has funded a partnership with LESTM to extend this program to another 500 youth that will visit both sites.

The most recent undertaking for school children is a project to illuminate housing reform issues for urban dwellers. The “Housing Inspection Program,” developed initially by the City’s Housing Preservation and Development Department, will provide New York school children with the lists of building code requirements given to inspectors in 1901 and 1910. They will have an opportunity to assess the conditions in the museum apartments as well as in their own homes, with an eye toward improving housing conditions today. Written reports will be sent to city housing agencies.



ESL class at museum

**Urban Museum Studies Program:** LESTM has initiated a new program with City College to offer graduate training in the museum profession to the college's predominantly working-class and immigrant student population.

## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

While LESTM is respected for its work in promoting economic development and awareness of ethnic heritage, its staff is also determined to have neighborhood residents perceive the museum as more than "just tourist-oriented." The Lower East Side is currently 30% Hispanic and 33% Asian, with 60% of the residents speaking a language other than English. Immigrants in the neighborhood often have to wait for up to three years to gain access to free English

classes, and LESTM staff has worked to address neighborhood needs. The University Settlement Society has teamed up with LESTM to offer more ESL classes in the museum, using its resources in immigrant history as material for teaching English. This first foray into community outreach helped define how LESTM identifies needs and uses its resources to give voice to neighborhood constituencies.

In addition to learning English, students in this new program are getting a first-hand understanding of how to manage as an immigrant. For example, one class used the story of Natalie Gumpertz setting up her business as a seamstress to understand how to enumerate one's skills on a resume. Some students are trained to lead museum tours in English as well as in their own language. One group of ESL students realized that "terrible things happen to immigrants because they do not have the right information," such as knowledge about the minimum wage. As a result of this conversation, the Museum approached *The New York Times* and St. Martin's Press about publishing a guide for newcomers to the City. In 2003, the guide will be published in English, Spanish and Chinese and will include a list of resources that have been vetted by immigrants themselves.

Other outreach efforts include:

- ***Walking Tours*** of the Lower East Side, which help visitors understand the history and diversity of the area today as a context for the museum tour.



St. Augustine's Church with slave gallery upper left

- *Around the Kitchen Table*, a dialogue series designed to test whether immigration stories are a basis for finding common ground. In collaboration with six local churches and community centers, this program brought together 50 Lower East Side immigrants from nine countries. Individuals shared their stories, and in spite of initial skepticism about what they might have in common, participants found surprising similarities in their experiences. These individuals have suggested concrete ways in which the immigration process could be improved and have developed plans to carry out their ideas.
- *Origins Theatre Project*, in collaboration with City Lights Youth Theater, which offers young people from the inner city

the opportunity to write, produce, and act in a musical about an immigrant family.

- *Good Neighbor Project*, which encourages neighborhood groups and organizations to participate in museum tours and waives the LESTM admission fee. LESTM welcomes several thousand such visitors each year.
- *Lower East Side Community Preservation Project (LESCPP)*, which brings together representatives of 200 of the area's multi-ethnic, racial and religious neighborhood organizations to discuss common agendas and advise LESTM on where to focus its efforts. Its first venture has been to lend support to St. Augustine's, an historic, local, predominantly African-American Episcopal church, in its investigation of a long-abandoned space believed to have been a "slave gallery." This powerful site inspired so many striking cross-cultural conversations that LESTM staff and other LESCPP members are now being trained as dialogue facilitators who will be able to organize professional dialogues in the community. LESCPP will help LESTM identify future projects to address histories that are not yet represented inside its walls.
- *Chinese American Planning Council Summer Youth Employment Program*, placed a group of ten high school students in internships with LESTM to research neighborhood business development. Their presentation to community leaders and business owners has fostered important support from the Chinese American community and established a steady supply of student volunteers.

- *Community Space for Immigrant Art*, offers the use of LESTM's storefront windows and gallery space to support local talent and amplify immigrant stories. The building's basement, a nineteenth-century beer garden, is used almost every weekend for performances by local theater groups and dance troupes as well as for readings by local authors and poets. LESTM has partnered with the New Immigrant Theatre Project on dozens of performances in the last three years and features crafts of contemporary immigrants as well as a vast array of published materials on New York housing, immigration, and ethnicity in its shop.

LESTM is also supporting the preservation of the larger Lower East Side community. It was instrumental in obtaining listing on the National Register of Historic Places for the Lower East Side Historic District, which consists of 443 buildings in a 31-block area. Listing on the National Register holds symbolic significance, demonstrating that an area considered by many a slum is worthy of preservation. LESTM has not sought the more restrictive city Landmark status for the area because of opposition from local landlords.

LESTM aims for broader influence through the development of its interactive Web site, [www.tenement.org](http://www.tenement.org), which receives over 200,000 "visitors" each year. The site provides basic logistical information on visiting the museum, becoming a member, and weekly and monthly special exhibits and programs. It also includes:

- Stories of the former residents and a virtual tour of the museum's five recreated tenement apartments.

- Historic information on tenements and housing reform laws including an Urban Housing History module.
- Descriptions of research in the building, including a detailed slide show of wallpaper layers that reveals new insights into immigrants' domestic lives.
- An opportunity for users to upload photographs and stories that might be of interest to those concerned with immigration.
- Digital Arts in Residence program for both adults and teens to create web-based exhibits on LESTM issues.

## FINANCES

LESTM has a current annual operating budget of \$3.1 million: slightly more than 50% (\$1.6 million) comes from corporate, foundation and government grants; more than 20% from individual contributions and memberships; and just over 30% from earned income. Half of LESTM's budget supports programs, exhibits, education, library and archives. Marketing and program administration divide the other \$1.5 million more or less equally.

LESTM has demonstrated success in securing foundation support, including significant grants from the Rockefeller Foundation (for the International Coalition for Historic Site Museums of Conscience), the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, the Altman Foundation, and the New York Times Company Foundation.

## LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM SUPPORT AND REVENUE

			(BUDGETED)
	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
CORPORATIONS	95,313	131,866	182,000
FOUNDATIONS	338,223	874,536	1,207,800
GOVERNMENT	136,207	215,110	228,000
INDIVIDUAL DONOR AND MEMBER	363,178	81,756	342,000
SPECIAL EVENTS	256,917	329,066	335,000
GIFT SHOP + OTHER EARNED INCOME	22,369	191,507	336,200
TOURS, SCHOOLS, AND GROUPS	68,672	443,577	485,000
FEES AND INTEREST	1,582	23,461	22,500
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,282,461</b>	<b>\$2,290,879</b>	<b>\$3,138,500</b>

## EXPENSES 2000-2001

### PROGRAMS, EXHIBITS, EDUCATION, LIBRARY & ARCHIVES

LIBRARY, ARCHIVES, PROGRAMS, AND EXHIBITS	\$43,550
MUSEUM SHOP AND PRODUCT DESIGN	208,000
PRINTING AND PROMOTION	83,020
PROFESSIONAL AND CONSULTING FEES	541,720
PROGRAM EVALUATION	25,000
SALARIES AND BENEFITS	675,385
TRAVEL, CONFERENCES, MEMBERSHIPS	48,600
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$1,625,275</b>

### MARKETING, COMMUNITY RELATIONS, & DEVELOPMENT

PRINTING, PROMOTION, EVENTS	67,520
PROFESSIONAL AND CONSULTING FEES	54,000
SALARIES AND BENEFITS	534,525
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$686,045</b>

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVEMENTS	61,000
INSURANCE, INTEREST, FEES, CONTINGENCY, & DEPRECIATION	108,292
OCCUPANCY	151,000
POSTAGE, SHIPPING, SUPPLIES	62,000
PRINTING AND PROMOTION	31,000
PROFESSIONAL AND CONSULTING FEES, TRAINING AND RECRUITMENT	13,000
SALARIES AND BENEFITS	401,057
TELEPHONE AND FAX	30,000
<b>SUBTOTAL:</b>	<b>\$857,349</b>

**GRAND TOTAL EXPENSES** **\$3,138,669**

LESTM has also obtained support from the city, state and federal governments. The National Endowment for the Humanities funded research on former tenants and the National Endowment for the Arts is currently providing support for the Origins Theater Project. Underwriting from the New York State Council on the Arts partially funded LESTM's *Historic Structure Report* and is now funding the development of the sweatshop apartment. Renovation of 97 Orchard Street began with \$500,000 from the New York State Urban Development Corporation, and the city's Department of Cultural Affairs contributed more than \$800,000 for capital work. In fiscal year 2001, LESTM's education programs, sweatshop project, and Web site were supported by \$150,000 from the City of New York, \$27,000 from the New York State Council on the Arts, and additional \$20,000 from the state budget.

LESTM maintains a strong relationship with city agencies, the mayor, and state and congressional legislators. It has made a number of government officials honorary trustees and has enjoyed the participation of elected officials at the city, state and federal levels. LESTM's consultants have been loyal supporters, providing \$78,000 of their time as in-kind contributions in 2001.

LESTM has developed a number of fundraising strategies at the individual level as well, including annual fundraisers that focus on an ethnic group represented in Lower East Side history. A committee raising funds to renovate an Irish family apartment has received a pledge for \$250,000. LESTM is successfully targeting donors among New York's social elite, many of whom have

immigrant roots, including former mayor Ed Koch. Another fundraising venture makes the first floor of the museum available to trustee-sponsored fundraising dinners as well as to groups of up to 30 people for private dinner parties. LESTM hosts around 40 such parties annually, primarily for individuals looking for a unique venue.

LESTM is looking more strategically at its long-term financial growth, realizing that it needs to increase the size of its corporate gifts, which are generally in the \$10-\$20,000 range, as well as the level of unrestricted giving, which currently comprises only about 10% of its total revenue.

Finally, LESTM has discovered a new avenue of fundraising as a result of its leadership in the International Coalition for Historic Site Museums of Conscience. The Open Society Institute awarded \$60,000 for the Coalition's Web site to recognize this new groundbreaking partnership between a cultural institution and human rights concerns.

## IMPACT ON THE CITY

LESTM has become an important part of a series of local sites, developed by the NPS, that together tell the story of immigration to America. The NPS plans to develop interpretive programs and transportation to better integrate these sites, linking Ellis Island, LESTM, and other such projects. Marie Rust of the NPS is planning to create a special superintendent position to serve as a liaison between the city and NPS to give these landmarks greater

visibility and to improve partnership opportunities with city government.

According to Sanchis, LESTM has also had an impact on cultural institutions in the city. It has “opened up a world that few understand with any clarity and offers a whole different twist on the development of the city.” Abram’s successful community programming and her linking of interpretive programs to LESTM’s geographic and demographic context have challenged more traditional museums and historic sites to question their assumptions about their relationship to the city.

LESTM has also taken on the role of advocate for the Lower East Side, encouraging awareness and pride, qualities that have long been missing for many with roots there and for residents still struggling to survive in a new world. LESTM, it might be said, takes care of the Lower East Side’s “soul” while the Business Improvement District (BID) works for its economic interests. Abram’s vision is that both must work together if the Lower East Side is to survive as a destination for new immigrants entering the country. According to the NPS:

*This larger context [the ethnic working-class neighborhood] is critical because no single building can adequately reveal the cultural, spiritual, and ideological dimensions of daily life. The Tenement Museum is situated in an environment that continues to reflect and illustrate the problems of immigrant life.*



## FUTURE PLANS

LESTM has seen 100% growth in visitors in the four years between 1997-2001. This increase far exceeds both LESTM's projections and its ability to expand programs and facilities to meet demand.

LESTM is now forced to turn away potential visitors because the tours sell out in advance. The number of tours is limited by the capacity of the building and by the speed with which new apartment exhibits can be researched and funded. Fire codes limit the museum to two restored apartments per floor, eight in total. With four apartments now complete, the plan is to open the sweatshop apartment in November 2001 and an Irish family apartment in 2002. Without major expansion, the museum has capacity for only two more apartment exhibits.

The senior staff is well aware of LESTM's need to grow. The staff's effort is currently focused on acquiring the adjacent tenement building, which shares a wall with the museum. The acquisition of this site would provide LESTM with much needed space for consolidating its operations in one location and enlarging its visitor center and program space. It would also allow LESTM to install an elevator to make the museum accessible for people with limited mobility and gain horizontal access to the upper floors of the building, relieving the museum of limited occupancy restrictions. Additional space would also permit LESTM to expand temporary exhibits, which are now generally limited to its storefront area. LESTM has also accumulated information and artifacts that would enhance visitors' understanding and contribute to the growing interest in the history of the Lower East Side.

LESTM staff is working to ensure a balance between its museum and "non-typical work" and is meeting this spring with the Board of Trustees to engage board members in that planning. A new board chair has been appointed to provide leadership in developing a ten-year plan. While the museum building has limited capacity, outreach to the community is potentially unlimited if it is managed strategically. Community programs have grown stronger under the management of Liz Sevchenko, who was promoted from consultant to vice president of programming two years ago. LESTM is receiving particular attention and recognition for combining human service outreach with museum stewardship. As the NPS and others draw on its progressive ideas about public dialogues and civic responsibility, LESTM undoubtedly feels pressure to maintain the financial and logistical success of that model.



Confino apartment

PHOTO: Mike Lilliard



LESTM has developed plans for a \$15 million capital campaign, including \$5 million for an endowment. The capital campaign will focus on LESTM's need to expand, anticipating the purchase and renovation of two additional buildings. The staff is predicting increases in earned income with the arrival of a new director of retail sales, more ticket sales with another apartment opening, and increased targeted membership development. The Altman Foundation has provided seed money and connections with licensors for the museum shop to develop more "tenement product" as a way to increase its sales revenues. Membership has grown from 400 to 650 in just two years. More direct mailings are planned to membership lists from organizations such as the National Trust.

LESTM's affiliate status with the NPS, as described above, will be an essential aspect of its future financial planning, especially to secure funding for a visitor center and restoration of adjacent facades. NPS plans to seek baseline funding of \$250,000 for LESTM in tandem with increases in allocations to other Manhattan sites to provide staff resources for partnerships on immigration. Through its affiliation with the NPS, LESTM will be eligible for an additional year of funding from Congress.

## ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS

### HOW WELL THE PROJECT MET ITS GOALS

*Promoting historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on the Lower East Side.*

LESTM has developed an impressive array of creative programs to help both children and adults understand the immigrant experience of tenement living. The interpretive activities have been artfully researched and designed to capture a range of circumstances that engage visitors from every walk of life. In the adult tour groups, visitors ask questions and offer information related to their own histories. In school group tours, fourth graders engage in activities that simulate immigrant arrival. The degree to which the docents describe the historical research and interpretive challenges embodied in the apartments also encourages visitors to reexamine history through a different lens. The exit surveys conducted by LESTM indicate that guests rate the tour experience very highly.

*Promoting tolerance through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on the Lower East Side.*

The success of LESTM's efforts to promote tolerance is much more difficult to assess. This year LESTM hired a consultant to conduct a more formal study to establish how well the school programs are meeting this mission. Building on work done by the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, LESTM is in the process of defining indicators of tolerance. This is

an ambitious task that should contribute to understanding tolerance measurement. In the meantime, the compelling reports of attitudinal change from the Net Worth program serve as evidence that LESTM is having a positive impact.

*Using the history of immigration to stimulate public dialogue about important contemporary issues.*

While the tour proved to be a powerful experience — a visceral comprehension of tenement conditions — the connections with contemporary conditions of immigrant struggle, exploitation and overcrowding that exist elsewhere in the neighborhood were not explicitly made to visitors. According to a 1993 NPS study, Chinese workers labored in about 500 garment sweatshops in the neighborhood and an estimated 40 percent of the city's Chinese residents live in overcrowded conditions, often ten to a room. The museum believes “that it is easier to consider an issue when it is presented in an historical context because it appears less threatening.”

In LESTM's interpretive and educational programs where innovative materials and strategies draw out explicit connections between immigration and contemporary life, the concept of “the usable past” is clear. The staff's ability to see possible links and build new connections is exemplary and ambitious. The “Around the Kitchen Table” program brings people together to share immigration experiences. It provides a social service for immigrants and an opportunity for staff to have personal contact with contemporary

immigrants, thus helping LESTM keep its primary mission in focus.

The International Coalition of Historic Site Museums of Conscience, conceived and led by LESTM, vividly demonstrates the value of “the usable past.” Proposed linkages with human rights organizations give this idea a specific interpretation that leaves no doubt of its social and political message. It has the potential to spawn many more museums that examine history from a critical social and political perspective.

*Challenging the prevailing notion of what kinds of buildings are worthy of preservation.*

LESTM's redefinition of what is worthy of preservation has already had national impact and is provoking organizations like the NPS and National Trust to rethink their programs. LESTM has certainly made its mark in demonstrating that buildings associated with the lives of the masses are an important part of American history and as worthy of preservation as any mansion of the rich and famous.

*Telling the true stories of real people.*

According to Pamela Keech, consulting curator who works for a number of historical and natural history museums, LESTM is the first museum in the US to exhibit the household material culture of the urban poor and working classes. The oral histories collected from residents and their descendants have been instrumental in dispelling the stereotypes about cleanliness in tenement apartments. The untouched apartment lets those who experienced tenement living

recreate and momentarily relive their own memories. For some, these are long repressed or forgotten components of their family history; for more recent immigrants, it can help normalize their current struggles.

LESTM has also made innovative use of living history presentations by asking visitors to role-play along with the interpreters who are in period costumes.

### SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON LESTM

The Selection Committee saw LESTM as a unique and unusual kind of urban project, one that set out to change our understanding of cities from a mere physical landscape to one that is also cultural, social, and economic. Committee members noted that LESTM was created as part of a plan to change the way urban dwellers think about their common roots and, in so doing, find connections that are common to many ethnic groups. As such, it is a “spectacular achievement with long-term community significance.”

The Committee also noted that while LESTM did not significantly change the physical attributes of the Lower East Side, it did transform the experience of the neighborhood. The museum and the programs it sponsors have become a significant presence in the area. “Really good urban places change the way in which you think about cities,” the committee noted. “This place has done that by virtue of giving you a rich and multi-layered understanding of the cultural landscapes of those who are newly arrived.”

In the view of the Selection Committee, LESTM’s newly-forged relationship with the NPS is one of its the most lasting and replicable achievements. LESTM’s impact on the values and approach of this huge bureaucracy will have important repercussions across the country.

The Selection Committee also noted that preservation is “an inherently interpretive act, and this landscape is much more powerful because of its authenticity.” Understanding how a city has evolved socially provides a critical context for current residents, particularly in light of LESTM’s goal of making common social threads useable for social change.

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Abelson, E. S. (2001, June). Review of ‘Urban castles: Tenement housing and landlord activism in New York City, 1890-1943.’ *Journal of American History*, 88 (1), 253-254.

Abram, R. J. (2001) “Using the past to shape the future: New concepts for a historic site.” *Museum International*, 53 (1), 4-9.

Day, J. (1999). *Urban Castles: Tenement Housing and Landlord Activism in New York City, 1890-1943*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Drye, W. (2001, June). “The Tenement Museum.” *American History*, 36 (2), 18.

Garb, M. (1999, November). “Lower East Side Tenement Museum.” *Journal of Urban History*, 26 (1), PG. 108.

#### SILVER MEDAL WINNER

Lower East Side Tenement Museum

“Lower East Side Tenement Museum (Newest historic site of the National Trust)”. (1999). Preservation 51, NO. 1 (January - February): p83.

Horn, D. “The Tenement Museum- On Manhattan’s Lower East Side you can visit a haunting re-creation of a life that was at once harder and better than we remember”: (2000) American Heritage, 51, NO. 2 (April).

Lower East Side Tenement Museum: Special Resource Study. (1995). National Park Service, North Atlantic Regional Office.

Plunz, R. (1990). A History of Housing in New York City. New York: Columbia University Press.

#### Related Rudy Bruner Award Winners

Readers who are interested in The Lower East Side Tenement Museum may also wish to read about these gold and silver medal winners from previous years:

Parkside Preservation, Philadelphia, PA (1999)

The Times Square, New York, NY (1997)

Project Row Houses, Houston, TX (1997)

Cleveland Historic Warehouse District, Cleveland, OH (1997)

Center in the Square Roanoke, VA (1997)

Lowertown, St. Paul, MN (1995)

*(For full bibliographic citations of Bruner Foundation books, please see Introduction. Information on all RBA winning projects is available at [www.BrunerFoundation.org](http://www.BrunerFoundation.org).)*

#### Contact

Web site: <http://www.tenement.org/>



Katherine E. Snyder  
Vice President of Public Affairs  
Lower East Side Tenement Museum  
66 Allen Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10002  
PHONE: 212.431.0233 X217  
FAX: 212.431.0402  
TTY: 212.431.0714

2001 Rudy Bruner Award

**SILVER**  
medal winner



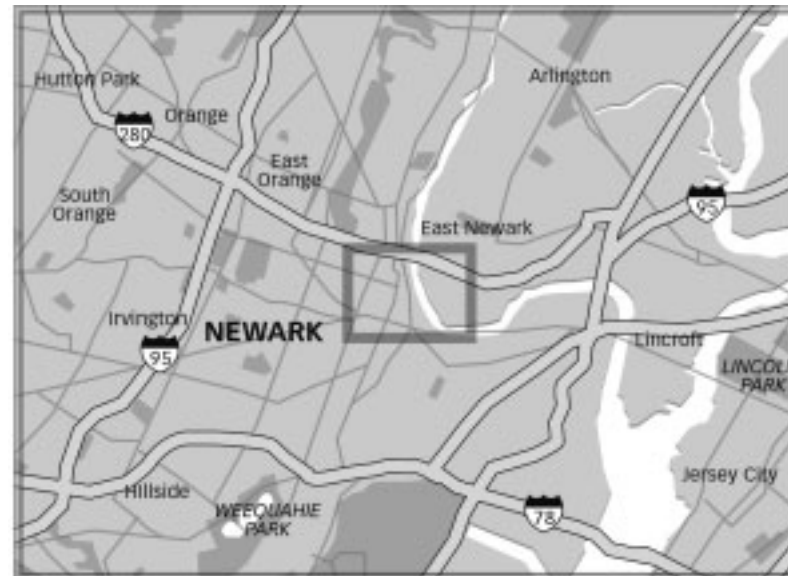
PHOTO: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO

**NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER**

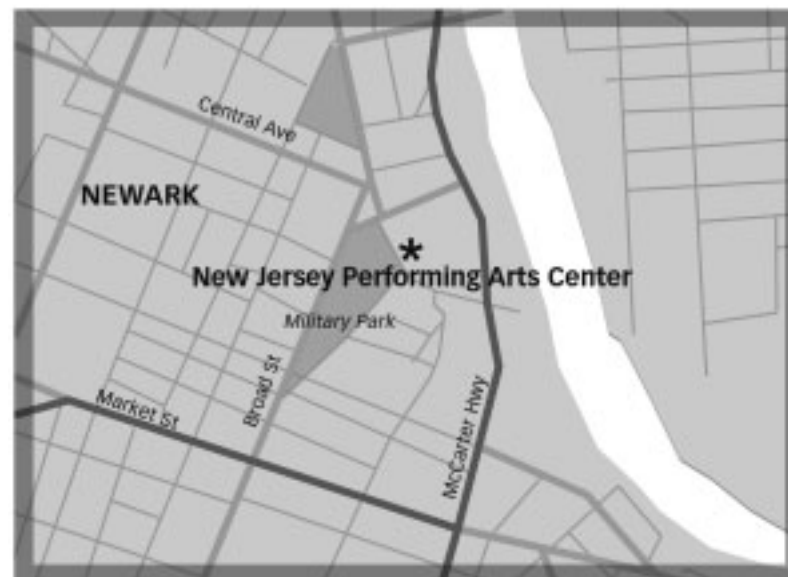
Newark, New Jersey

**SILVER MEDAL WINNER**

New Jersey Performing Arts Center



Project location



Project location (detail)

## NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER AT A GLANCE

### SUBMITTED BY:

New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Lawrence P. Goldman,  
*President and CEO*

### WHAT IS THE NEW JERSEY PERFORMING ARTS CENTER?

The New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) is a downtown performing arts complex that includes:

- A 2840-seat multi-purpose concert hall.
- A 514-seat theater.
- Two restaurants.
- An outdoor plaza.
- A gift shop.
- Rehearsal space.
- Banquet spaces.
- A 1700-space parking garage.
- The Lucent Technology Center for Arts Education, which houses practice rooms, classrooms and performance space for students.
- Extensive arts education programs for residents of Newark and other communities throughout New Jersey.

### MAJOR GOALS OF NJPAC

- To present world-class performances to diverse audiences.
- To promote New Jersey's best artists.
- To provide arts education opportunities for children and their families.
- To bring diverse communities together through the universality of the arts.
- To serve as a revitalization engine for Newark.
- To improve the reputation and image of Newark and contribute to a new sense of community pride.

## CHRONOLOGY

1986

Governor Thomas Kean commissions study to assess needs and prospective sites for a performing arts center. Newark Mayor Sharpe James establishes Mayor's Performing Arts Center Task Force.

1987

Consultant study recommends creating the New Jersey Performing Arts Center (NJPAC) and locating it in downtown Newark.

1988

Raymond G. Chambers (Chairman of the Amelior Foundation) heads a committee appointed to advance NJPAC and guarantees funds from private sector to match state support.

1989

Lawrence P. Goldman named President of NJPAC; Amelior Foundation pledges \$5 million, state commits \$20 million to purchase site; New Jersey State Senate approves funding for planning, design, and site preparation.

1990

Prudential pledges \$3 million; Barton Myers selected as architect.

1991

Master plan for site unveiled.

1992

Victoria Foundation pledges \$2.5 million.

1992

Phillip S. Thomas joins NJPAC as Director of Arts Education.

1993

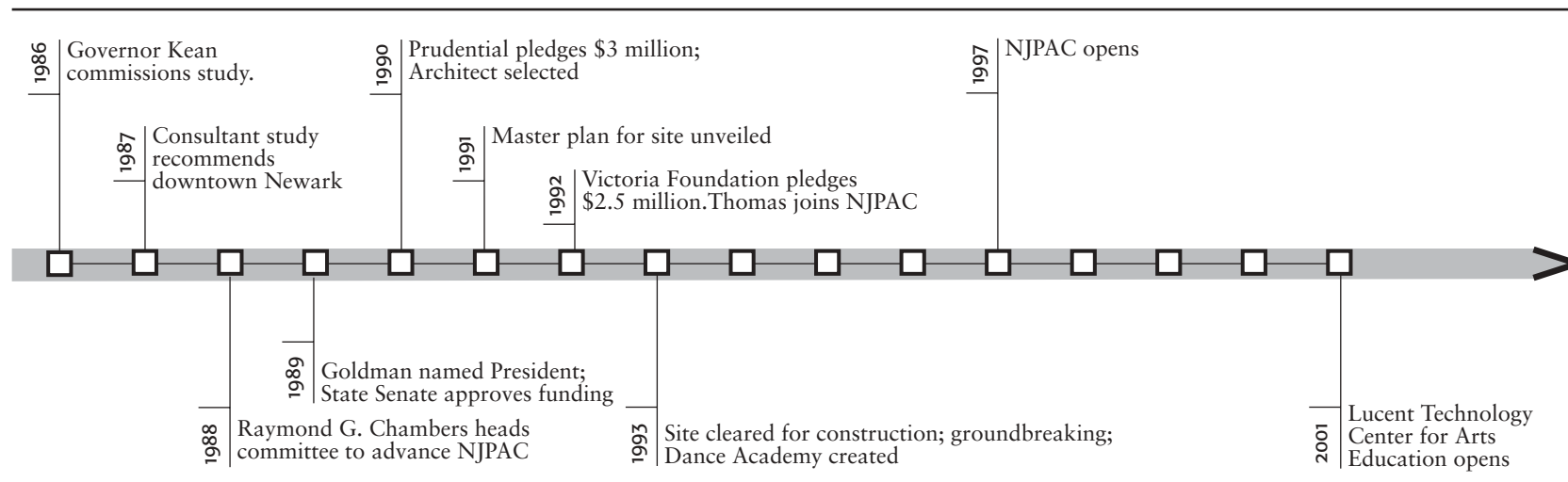
Military Park Hotel imploded, clearing site for construction; groundbreaking; creation of NJPAC Dance Academy in cooperation with Alvin Ailey Dance Theater.

1997

NJPAC opens.

2001

Lucent Technology Center for Arts Education opens.





## KEY PARTICIPANTS

Persons who were interviewed are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

### NJPAC

Lawrence P. Goldman,\* *President and CEO*

Phillip Thomas,\* *Vice President of Arts Education*

Mary Oleniczak,\* *Arts Education*

Donna Bost-White,\* *Arts Education*

Jeremy Johnson,\* *Assistant Vice-President of Development Initiatives*

Gustav Heningburg,\* *Gus Heningburg Associates*

Peter Hansen,\* *Vice President of Development*

Bobbie Arbesfeld,\* *Vice President and CFO*

M. John Richard,\* *Vice President and COO*

Gail Thompson, *former Vice President, Design & Construction*

### Public Agencies

#### *State of New Jersey*

Governor Thomas Kean\* (1982-1990)

Governor James Florio (1990-1994)

Governor Christine Todd Whitman (1994-2001)

Caren S. Franzini,\* *New Jersey Economic Development Authority*

Mayor Sharpe James,\* *City of Newark*

Raymond G. Chambers,\* *Amelior Foundation*

Catherine McFarland,\* *Victoria Foundation*

Gabriella Morris,\* *Prudential Foundation*

### Architect/Designer

Barton Myers,\* *Barton Myers Associates*

### Community Groups

Cynthia Banks,\* *Deputy Director of Operations, Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark*

Pastor Robert Jeffries,\* *University Bible Center*

James Kriedle,\* *Assistant Dean, Student Affairs, Rutgers University, Newark*

Dr. Clement Alexander Price,\* *New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Rutgers University*

### Professional Consultants

Albert Milano,\* *Milano Ruff & Associates*

James Abruzzo,\* *formerly of A.T. Kearny*

### Others Interviewed

Arthur Stern,\* *Owner, 744 Broad Street*

Cory Booker,\* *Newark City Council*

Ray Codey,\* *Director of Development, New Communities Corporation*

Mark Gordon,\* *Vice President for Capital Improvement, New Jersey Transit*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY OF NJPAC

#### Newark Context

Newark is the third oldest city on the eastern seaboard. Founded in the seventeenth century, Newark is known for its history as an important shipping and industrial city. Although it has long been in the shadow of New York, Newark has its own cultural identity as a jazz center and home of strong ethnic neighborhoods. It is also a major transportation hub located at the convergence of several major interstate highways and serving as an entry and exit point for New York City by rail.

In the mid-twentieth century, Newark became a major settlement site for African-Americans migrating from the South. At the same time, there was significant migration of white citizens to suburban communities, and by 1967, African-Americans made up the majority of the city's population. In the mid-1960s, Newark had the highest percentage of substandard housing; the heaviest per capita tax burden; the highest rate of sexually transmitted disease, maternal mortality and new cases of tuberculosis; and the most crime per 100,000 people. The city was second in birth rate and infant mortality and seventh in the number of drug addicts per capita in the United States. The unemployment rate was more than 15% in the black community. (Hayden, 1967) During the riots of 1967, in three days, 26 people were killed, 1,500 were arrested, and hundreds of

businesses were destroyed. The riots both underscored and accelerated the deterioration process. (Strom, 1999)

Newark has taken decades to begin to recover from the effects of those riots and improve the built environment, image, and social fabric of the city. Newark's population has dropped by more than 25% since the mid-1960s, and the downtown has felt the decline in the loss of major businesses and street life. Some rebuilding occurred in the 1980s, but this development was mainly in the form of office buildings connected to parking garages by enclosed walkways, clearly a concession to the nervousness of suburban white-collar workers commuting to the city.

In the late 1980s, when NJPAC was being planned, Newark remained a very poor city with a small middle class and, except for



Typical Newark enclosed building connector

a few pocket neighborhoods, a largely African-American and Hispanic population. Its Symphony Hall was run down and under-utilized (the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra played many concerts in other sites to attract suburban audiences), and there were few reasons for suburbanites to visit.

Newark was also a city with no clear plan for urban revival. There was at the time no city planning department *per se*, and redevelopment had long had an *ad hoc* quality, taking whatever offers of building came its way. A minor league baseball stadium, for example, opened in 1999, shortly after NJPAC, and is located next to a commuter rail station, effectively minimizing visitor interface with the central city.

### **The Idea of a Performing Arts Center for Newark**

By all accounts, the initial concept of building a world-class performing arts center in New Jersey came from former Governor Thomas Kean. Governor Kean had a strong and longstanding interest in the arts and chafed at the absence of a serious venue for music, dance and drama in New Jersey. In 1986, he proposed a state effort to fund and develop such an enterprise and commissioned a feasibility study by a private consultant group. Newark philanthropist Raymond G. Chambers commented that “we were all surprised when Shaver [the consultant] selected Newark” as the most appropriate spot for such a center, and, as a former state official noted, “we set out to address cultural deficits in the state, not to save Newark.” (in Strom, 1998, p.427) Kean notes that he had always

thought a performing arts center would make sense for Newark but needed the findings of an outside expert to provide credibility.

Newark’s reputation at that point could hardly have been worse. A white or middle-class presence in the downtown was almost negligible, save suburban-based office workers who rarely used the city and who fled back to the suburbs as soon as the workday ended. Once Newark was formally proposed as a possible site and the potential positive impacts began to be recognized, Mayor Sharpe James became a strong advocate of the project.

The case for Newark was based largely on location. Over 4.6 million potential patrons (not counting New York City residents) live within 25 minutes by highway, rail and bus. Still, in spite of Shaver’s research, there were many skeptical and seemingly contradictory responses to the idea of placing a performing arts center in Newark. Some felt that suburban concertgoers would be too afraid to travel to Newark for a performance, and the center would therefore fail to attract enough visitors to make it viable. Conversely, others argued that any benefits of NJPAC would accrue only to wealthy suburbanites, since the “elitist fare” shown would be of no interest to the poor and largely minority citizens of Newark.

Other New Jersey communities used these same points to lobby for the center to be placed in their area, diminishing the legislature’s already lukewarm enthusiasm. The turning point came with the

## SILVER MEDAL WINNER

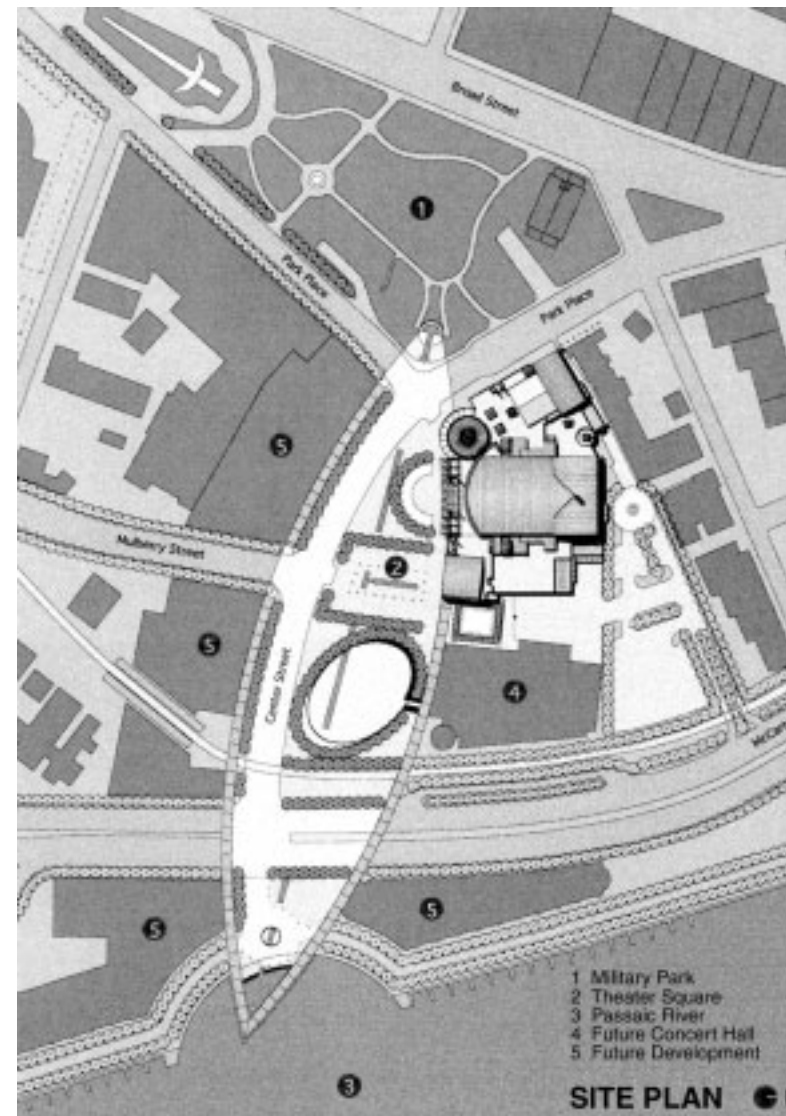
New Jersey Performing Arts Center

promise of support from the private sector. Chambers, a longtime Newark businessman and philanthropist, met with Kean and pledged \$5 million toward construction of the performing arts center in Newark. More significantly, he lent his credibility to the effort to raise another \$33 million from private and non-profit sources. With that inducement, and support from Newark's mayor and legislators, the state agreed to fund construction.

The early planning process was also compromised by the fact that it spanned the terms of three New Jersey governors. When Kean, a Republican, left office, Democrat Jim Florio replaced him. Florio, not known as a strong supporter of the arts, was not inclined to invest significant state funds in a project strongly identified with his predecessor. Mayor James, however, had been an important resource to the Florio campaign and was effective in lobbying the governor to maintain funding and keep the project alive. Four years later, the governorship changed parties again with the election of Republican Christine Todd Whitman. Elected as a tax and cost cutter, her initial inclination was to cut back on the funding for NJPAC. This time, Republican supporters like Chambers were able to lobby successfully to maintain funding.

## DEVELOPMENT

In 1988, with the assurance of \$20 million in state funds, development began in earnest. The first important step in the process was the hiring of Lawrence P. Goldman, then vice president of Carnegie Hall. Goldman has consistently been described as the



NJPAC plan drawings, Barton Myers Assoc., (Webb, 1998)

creative force behind NJPAC, bringing to the project a commitment to creating a “world-class” facility while achieving meaningful social change through programming, hiring, and arts education. Goldman began his tenure with the promise that he would not compromise on quality and would hire and build “the best,” even at the political cost of seeking talent outside of New Jersey. Architect Barton Myers of Los Angeles was hired after a national search because he was deemed to have both the design skill and the social sensitivity to respond to NJPAC’s agenda.

The planning process began with interviews of nine nationally esteemed performing arts leaders, first individually and then in focus group sessions run in Newark. The leaders were asked, “What is ‘world class’ and how do you get there?” They emphasized, first, that “world class” performing arts always fail to cover expenses with ticket sales and that the more “cutting edge” you are, more likely you are to run in the red. “Even if you are great and successful,” the message went, “you will lose money.”

The focus group also supported Goldman’s belief that NJPAC should focus heavily on community needs, suggesting that “world class” for Newark had to include a significant commitment to the local community. Goldman insisted that the programming should include not only the well-known “marquis performers” but should also reach out to the community with a variety of top-quality performances that would attract diverse local audiences.

At the same time, the concept of arts education as integral to NJPAC began to develop. Planning consultant James Abruzzo says that the arts education philosophy started to percolate well before the Victoria Foundation offered funding for that purpose. Goldman had learned of arts education programs in other cities and already had a strong commitment to developing youth and family programs to bring the arts to local inner-city residents. He concluded that a quality education program would be good for the organization, for the community, for community relations, and for fundraising.

In planning NJPAC, community input was solicited through advisory groups formed to represent a wide range of interests. These groups had real input in the programming mix that today reflects the interests of a broad audience. Ethnic and international performances appeal to the diverse cultural heritage of Newark residents, who are largely African-American, Hispanic, or Portuguese. Nationally and internationally renowned performers bring audiences from a wide geographic radius as well as from the local community. The programming developed for NJPAC has demonstrated initial success in attracting diverse audiences to the center.

### **Job Equity and Affirmative Action**

NJPAC made a strong commitment to affirmative action programs during construction and to minority hiring for the long-term. To manage the affirmative action program in the construction phase, Goldman hired Gus Heningburg, a civil rights and affirmative action activist, experienced in dealing with construction unions. In

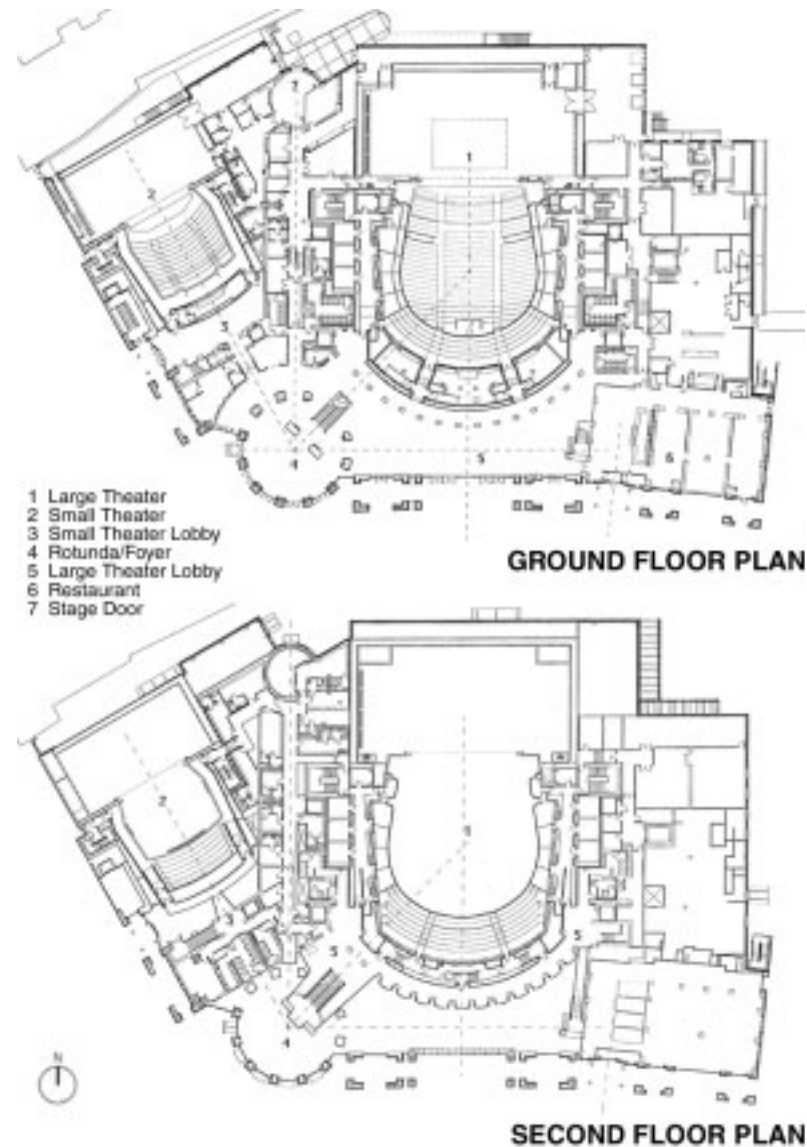
## SILVER MEDAL WINNER

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

addition, as noted by Heningburg, Goldman's selection of Gail Thompson, a young African-American woman, as vice president for design and construction was an important symbol to the community and the contractors. Thompson had previously been responsible for planning, design and construction at the American Stock Exchange.

Minority participation in construction was made a contractual obligation based on percentage of actual hours worked. Minority and women tradespersons provided 42% of the person hours worked for each trade; 24% of the subcontract awards had to go to minority-owned firms, and 7% had to be awarded to women-owned firms. Ultimately, 37% of the contracts were awarded to minority and women-owned enterprises. This reliance on an objective standard made the goals sanctionable. Historian Clement Price commented that the job site "looked like New Jersey," with Hispanics, blacks, and women in hard hats. The community liked seeing minorities in both skilled and management positions on the job site and began to develop a sense that NJPAC was serious about its commitment to diversity. The first concert in the hall, two months before the official opening, was given for union workers and their families, further underscoring NJPAC's community orientation.

Heningburg and Goldman felt that it was also critical to have diversity within the skilled labor pool and so worked closely with the unions representing backstage operations. The stagehand union was not experienced in minority hiring, but, according to Goldman, "The union cooperated, and together we achieved something



NJPAC plan drawings, Barton Myers Assoc., (Webb, 1998)

unique in the performing arts.” Minority workers now comprise 50% of the backstage workforce at NJPAC.

### NJPAC’S VISION

NJPAC began with the simple but challenging vision of bringing world-class performers and diverse audiences from New Jersey and New York to a well-designed performing arts facility in Newark. The developers hoped that a successful project would add prestige to a state caught in the media shadow of New York and Philadelphia and would help overcome the negative image of Newark as a dangerous, riot-torn city.

As the plan developed and it became clear that the center would be located in Newark, the concept became layered with other goals. A vision emerged of a non-elitist facility with a warm and inviting design, a management and operations team that reflected Newark’s cultural and racial diversity, and significant cultural programming that would be inclusive of all potential patrons. Further, planners hoped the performing arts center might serve as a catalyst for the revival of Newark’s downtown. Last but not least, the plan expanded to make use of the center and the talent it attracted as a platform to lift the quality of arts education in Newark and the state.

### DESIGN

Design issues for NJPAC encompassed interrelated questions of urban planning, the symbolism of the architecture, and the functionality of the interior spaces. The first decisions were concerned with where and how to site the facility in relation to

downtown Newark and the local streets. The final site was attractive in part because of its proximity to the Passaic River, an idea suggested by developer James Rouse. (Plans have since been developed to create an esplanade along the river, a project that has the potential to open Newark’s main waterway to its citizens for the first time in its modern history.) The presence of an 1100-space underground garage across the street also argued persuasively for the site. The 11 acres that were purchased provided enough area to construct the proposed buildings and still leave over five acres untouched (essentially land-banked) for future development.



Entry elevations



PHOTO: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO

**SILVER MEDAL WINNER**

New Jersey Performing Arts Center



NJPAC lobby

The visual and symbolic aspects of this building were considered crucial. Because of the extent of Newark's negative image, the building needed to give a striking impression of change and quality; it needed a "wow factor" to help attract suburban audiences. At the same time, Goldman was convinced that the facility had to appear unthreatening, warm, and inviting to help make members of the local community feel it was accessible to them. The glass front of the rotunda reveals warm colors, steel, painted stucco and includes "accents of copper in handrails, light sconces and elevator doors." (Webb, 1998, p.85) Decorations have themes from community cultures, including a Portuguese design for the inlaid patio and African themes in etchings on elevator doors, in the carpet, and in various artifacts throughout the building.



Night view of NJPAC

PHOTO: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO



The architect, Barton Myers, wanted to make NJPAC a contemporary building for Newark, but not a “space ship,” or a “temple on a podium.” To avoid monumentality, significant setback from the street was avoided; the façade was brought right up to the sidewalk so that users could drive to the front door. The large expanses of glass and transparent lighting at night were intended to make the space feel open, safe, and inviting. An attached plaza provides open public space for outdoor presentations and contains an entrance arch reconstructed from the demolished Military Park Hotel that previously stood on the site.

Myers sought to create within the lobby a semblance of the active street life that is not yet common in downtown Newark. The

rotunda serves both theaters and is designed to bring their respective audiences together before, during, and after performances. The lobby has a theatrical motif; the “show begins on the sidewalk” (Webb, 1998, p.76), and faux boxes on the upper levels of the lobby allow patrons to watch the traffic and interactions below. The lobby is a “carapace of glass and brick wrapped around a wooden core and tied together by its arched steel truss,” (Webb, 1998, p.76) reflecting the structure of the nearby bridge over the Passaic River.

Prudential Hall, the larger of the two theaters, was designed to meet Isaac Stern’s dictum (learned by Goldman during his Carnegie Hall years) that the concert space should “hug the performer.” There is a broad upper gallery that wraps all the way around the hall to create



Lobby interior



Prudential Hall

PHOTO: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO

## SILVER MEDAL WINNER

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

a unified look and feel. Again, part of the experience is seeing other patrons. The room is designed with many adjustable acoustic features, such as the ability to extend or retract the curtains that cover most walls. There are moveable ceiling sections and back walls that also adjust to meet specific acoustical needs by changing the degree of reverberation. Thick plaster and joints assure that each room within the facility is acoustically separate, allowing no infiltration of sound. Twenty-four boxes and private salons were included to support fund-raising. Gifts of \$1 million or more bought a personalized box and salon with telephone, TV, and wet bar adjacent to Prudential Hall.

The original plan called for three theaters – a major concert hall, a smaller 350-seat stage, and a small “black box” space for intimate productions. This changed for several reasons. First, the complete site including all three theaters would have cost at least \$200 million, \$20 million more than the board thought it could raise. Second, discussions with artists and producers suggested that a 350-seat hall was too small. A somewhat larger stage with about 500 seats would allow for more economically viable productions. In response, the second theater was scaled up to 500 seats and the black box space was eventually scrapped in favor of converting the adjacent seminary building into a much less expensive arts



Victoria Hall

PHOTOS: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO



Lucent Technologies Center for Arts Education

education center. Built on a restricted budget, the Lucent Technologies Center for Arts Education opened in February 2001 and features bright graphics and simple finishes.

### ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

Lawrence Goldman is the inspirational leader of NJPAC. Chambers brought him in as the first paid employee, and Goldman has been at the helm of NJPAC ever since. He reports to a board of directors that includes not only major funders but also individuals with a long history in Newark and others, like Chambers, who were part of the creation of the original concept.

While Goldman is clearly in charge, he has been described as a manager who delegates and empowers the strong individuals below him in the organization and seeks to infuse a creative tension among his staff. A management review was conducted, leading to a reorganization in which John Richards, who was the first person hired by Goldman in 1989, was named executive vice president and chief operating officer. In addition, there are seven vice presidents.

Goldman has been very deliberate in shaping a diverse management and operations team. NJPAC has 114 full-time and 32 part-time staff, of whom 44% are African-American, 7% Hispanic, 73% female, and 25% Newark residents. Persons of color run major program elements of NJPAC, such as programming and arts education, and NJPAC was insistent that local residents of color be employed in the formerly white stagehand union, a feat of which Goldman is very proud. NJPAC's goal of being distinct from New York City theaters



President and CEO, Lawrence P. Goldman



NJPAC and Bruner Foundation staff at site visit

in the way it treats its guests has permeated all levels of staff as is evident in the smiles and greetings from the concession stand vendors, ushers, and ticket agents.

## PERFORMANCES

NJPAC has completed its fourth season of arts performances. In the 2000-2001 season, NJPAC presented 423 performances, including 143 adult presentations, 45 FamilyTime sessions and 113 SchoolTime sessions to over 562,000 patrons. At these events, 18,000 ticket holders were series subscribers and over 100,000 were children, educators, or parents in special programs.

The performance calendar is full and varied and includes Broadway productions, classical music (opera, concerts, symphonies), popular music, theater, dance and jazz. There is a significant emphasis on culturally diverse productions, including NJPAC's annual World Festival of International Culture (which offered "Spanish Routes and Rhythms" in 1999-2000 and will present "Dance and Culture of Taiwan" in 2001-2002). NJPAC is the home base of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra and presents an array of both renowned and lesser-known New Jersey artists.

Audiences were to a significant extent local (26% from Essex County and another 40% from neighboring counties, with smaller amounts from more distant counties). Only 2% came from New York. About one-fourth of the audience members were minorities. Fifty-three performances were rated at or near sellout (up from 30 the year before).



NJPAC ushers

Abruzzo, an early consultant to the project, noted that NJPAC has also been responsive to other cultural institutions in the state. It has supported the New Jersey Symphony, for example, as a key tenant with prime weekend time slots.

NJPAC also had great success last year with its "Absolut Sounds of the City" free outdoor concerts on Thursday nights throughout the summer. Fifty-two bands, most of which were local groups, were selected by tryout. Those concerts became summer happenings, attracting up to 3,000 white-collar workers (earlier in the evening) and residents (later in the night), and crowds often spilled out into local streets. The success of those concerts was noted by the local

press and the *New York Times*, prompting them to call Newark the newest “hip” venue.

Both programming and ticket costs at NJPAC are designed to attract and welcome diverse audiences, including many who have had little or no exposure to the arts. In Goldman’s view, art is a universal language that can and should help to build bridges among diverse populations. NJPAC’s Bildner Ticket Fund provides performance tickets at \$5 each to qualified organizations. Last year, 4,000 tickets were distributed for forty-four performances in all sections and ticket price ranges. James Kriedle, head of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Newark, indicated that some of his club’s members had been to a number of concerts and were feeling quite at home within the Prudential Hall.

In marketing NJPAC, Goldman adopted what Price calls a “suburban strategy,” appealing to New Jersey chauvinism by pointing out that residents could see better performances with greater ease in Newark than in New York. As part of this strategy, NJPAC has had to provide guarantees of convenient and safe parking, which it achieved by gaining control of the adjacent parking garage under Military Park, and to attract world-class performers who might be difficult to see elsewhere. The strategy seems to have met with significant success.



Summer concert crowd

## ARTS EDUCATION

One of the key early decisions for NJPAC was to place a heavy emphasis on the arts education program, which was launched and in operation five years before NJPAC even opened its doors. Chambers and Goldman are credited with having the vision to make NJPAC more than a theater. Arts education presented itself as a tool through which NJPAC could have an impact on its community and address some largely unmet needs in the public school performing arts curriculum. While a special focus was given to local Newark schools, the Arts Education Department's program, centered on the performing arts, also allowed NJPAC to spread its reach and reputation to many other communities throughout the state.

Arts education also made good economic sense. While a number of supporters note that the concept came prior to and not as a demand of the funding, financial support for arts education has been strong and has helped the organization's broader campaigns. Fundraisers say that arts education has been the easiest item for which to find support, and it has attracted a broad range of givers.

Arts education has also been an effective way for NJPAC to gain support and build trust in the community. Because the Arts Education program began before NJPAC formally opened, for years it was the only part of NJPAC that residents actually encountered. NJPAC was fortunate in the hiring of Phillip Thomas, who began developing programs shortly after the project was founded. Thomas was experienced, sophisticated, and highly effective. Three years before its first concert, NJPAC had the fourth largest arts education



Director of Arts Education, Philip Thomas

program in the country. The Arts Education program has been an important way for NJPAC to establish a local reputation as an organization that keeps its word, and programming opportunities have continued to grow and expand.

At the outset, Thomas conducted a needs assessment with educators, state officials, and parents to find out which populations were not being served and what performing arts genres were under-represented. He discovered that New Jersey schools offered little in music, dance, and theater arts, so the program has been designed to focus on those areas. At the same time, the Arts Education program committed itself to providing New Jersey children, families, and educators exposure to local, national, and international artists.

The Arts Education program cover four major areas:

### Performances for Children

- *The Verizon Passport to Culture SchoolTime and FamilyTime Performance Series.* In the previous season, this series included 170 events, encompassing music, theater, puppetry, dance, and holiday shows serving kindergarten through twelfth grade students. NJPAC provides curriculum materials and professional support workshops “designed to reinforce the educational value of each program.”
- *Meet-the-Artist* sessions are also offered as parent-child workshops prior to selected weekend performances. The workshops, for up to 35 participants, are led by artists and

attempt “to enhance the appreciation of the performance participants are about to see.”

### Residency Programs

NJPAC has formal partnership arrangements to bring artists to 70 New Jersey schools to help fulfill arts curricula. Services include planning sessions, professional development workshops, curriculum materials, and live performances. Typically, NJPAC pays half of the program cost. Programs include:

- *Arts Academy*, a 10-week program that brings theater and dance instruction into the classroom.
- *Early Learning through the Arts*, co-sponsored by the Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning through the Arts, which teaches three- to five-year-old children “basic academic and life skills through the performing arts.”
- *United Way Partnership*, a 10-week program providing two 90-minute classes per week in various arts for organizations sponsored by the United Way .

### Arts Training Programs

At the yearly *Young Artist Talent Search*, students audition for entry into one of six NJPAC arts training programs:

- *The Star-Ledger Scholarship for the Performing Arts* provides \$80,000 in college tuition and internships for Newark high school seniors.

- *NJPAC/WBGO Jazz for Teens* provides master instruction for 13 to 18 year olds, culminating in a performance in the Victoria Theater.
- *NJPAC/Jeffrey Carollo Music Scholarship* provides scholarships to attend the Newark Community School of the Arts.
- *NJPAC/NJSO Youth Orchestra Festival and Workshop* alternates two programs: a three-day festival where students study with members of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, and a workshop in which each youth orchestra in the state is invited to play at Prudential Hall and receive feedback from New Jersey Orchestra members.
- *Summer Youth Performance Workshop* offers teens 13 to 18 years old five weeks of study in music, theater, and dance with professionals.
- *NJPAC/WYACT Summer Musical Theater Production* is a series of summer musical workshops in which students put on fully-staged performances with a cast of 40 student performers and 25 student musicians. The program culminates in eight professionally presented-performances in NJPAC's Victoria Theater.

### Professional Development Programs

- *The Arts Basic to the Curriculum Conference* is a two-day conference in arts education for teachers, parents, and artists.
- *Professional development workshops* offer two professional development days for teachers in the New Jersey public school system.
- *Curriculum materials* provided by NJPAC address and enhance New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- *Internship programs* are also available in arts education and administration for college students.

In some programs, students pay a portion of the cost, but all programs are subsidized to some degree. For example, the Jazz for Teens program raises about \$10,000 from tuition but also solicits another \$45,000 from sponsors.

Arts education remains a significant effort for NJPAC in terms of budget, time, fundraising, and staffing. In the 2000-2001 fiscal year, it accounted for 13 % of all expenses, with about half of that cost covered by user fees and the rest by outside fundraising. The new Lucent Technology Center for Arts Education, adjacent to NJPAC, provides rehearsal, lesson, and recital space and should allow new and expanded possibilities for on-site programs. That building has a 100-seat black box theater, a 50-seat recital hall, eight classrooms, nine practice rooms, two dance studios, a library resource room, a distributed technology room, and a technology classroom.



## CONSTRUCTION BUDGET

SOURCES		
<b>CITY</b>		\$10,000,000
<b>STATE</b>	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	105,200,000
	NJ STATE COUNCIL ON THE ARTS	1,600,000
<b>FEDERAL</b>	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT	1,166,000
	FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEV. ADMINISTRATION	3,800,000
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>121,766,000</b>
<b>CASINO REINVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY</b>		<b>5,000,000</b>
<b>PRIVATE</b>	<i>LARGEST GIFTS INCLUDE:</i>	<b>60,502,141</b>
	AMELIOR FOUNDATION	5,000,000
	PRUDENTIAL FOUNDATION	3,600,000
	VICTORIA FOUNDATION	2,395,000
<b>TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED</b>		<b>\$187,268,141</b>
USES		
PLANNING		1,333,000
SITE PREPARATION		3,159,060
LAND		20,012,696
INFRASTRUCTURE		13,674,444
THEATER		107,570,800
GARAGE		5,000,000
FF&E		1,250,000
ANTICIPATED ADDITIONAL CAPITAL EXPENSE		4,000,000
CAPITAL RESERVE		1,000,000
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS 1988 THROUGH 1995		9,600,000
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES 1988 THROUGH 1995		3,650,000
INTEREST EXPENSE		2,500,000
ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS 1996 THROUGH 1997		6,300,000
FUNDRAISING COSTS 1996 THROUGH 1997		1,700,000
OPERATING DEFICIT (1ST SEASON)		4,500,000
ARTS EDUCATION AND SPONSORSHIP (1ST SEASON)		1,735,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$186,985,000</b>

## FINANCES

### Construction

NJPAC's construction was financed with approximately two-thirds public funds (from a variety of local, state, and federal agencies) and one-third private donations. The most unusual and creative aspect of the financing was the approximately \$27 million that was folded into the capital campaign to cover nine years of administrative and operational expenses as well as the costs of the first season of the Arts Education program and the anticipated first year operating loss. By including these in the capital campaign, NJPAC was able to focus on one fund-raising effort at a time (thus avoiding asking donors both for capital and operational funds) and to eliminate much of the financial pressure on its initial season.

### Annual Budget

NJPAC recognized early on that it would require significant additional revenue to fulfill its mission of trying to serve multiple communities with a wide mix of traditional and contemporary programming. In fact, ticket and other earned income only covers about 55% of costs in the \$23 million budget. The remaining expenses are covered by an annual campaign, currently raising about \$11 million per year.

Programmers are given a fixed amount of projected loss each year, allowing them significant discretion in their choice of artists. While the first season reached projected revenue and expense figures, the second season expanded too quickly from 130 to 175 adult

**SILVER MEDAL WINNER**

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

performances, and NJPAC had “a tough year”—average attendance was too low. In the third year, therefore, the schedule was cut back to 130 NJPAC presentations, although in the fourth year NJPAC expanded again to 147 performances. In addition to NJPAC

presentations, the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra calls NJPAC home and performs in Prudential Hall 70 times per season. There are also over 50 “rental” performances each year. SchoolTime and FamilyTime performances account for an additional 150

**LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES CENTER RENOVATION****CONSTRUCTION SOURCES**

LUCENT TECHNOLOGIES FOUNDATION	\$1,000,000
VICTORIA FOUNDATION	1,000,000
AMELIOR FOUNDATION	500,000
INDEPENDENCE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION	250,000
WOMAN'S BOARD ASSOCIATION	250,000
OTHER FOUNDATIONS	58,000
TO BE RAISED	1,300,000

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,358,000</b>
--------------	--------------------

**USES**

HARD COSTS	\$3,237,000
ASBESTOS ABATEMENT	125,000
GRAPHICS AND SIGNAGE	155,000
FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT	60,000
TELECOMMUNICATION	104,000
PROJECT MANAGEMENT	244,000
ARCHITECT	323,000
THEATER EQUIPMENT	80,000
ALL OTHER	30,000

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,358,000</b>
--------------	--------------------

**NJPAC FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2000****OPERATIONS****EXPENSES**

PERFORMANCES AND RELATED EXPENSES	\$9,041,230
ARTS EDUCATION	2,679,906
THEATER OPERATION	3,876,060
MARKETING/PR	1,071,875
GENERAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	2,817,435
BUILDING-RELATED	1,515,167
DEVELOPMENT	1,466,468

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,468,141</b>
--------------	---------------------

**REVENUE**

PERFORMANCES	\$9,432,730
ARTS EDUCATION	1,305,321
OTHER	1,504,630
CONTRIBUTIONS, GRANTS	10,476,033

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$22,718,714</b>
--------------	---------------------

performances annually. A healthy endowment of \$100 million or more could reduce fundraising \$11 million per year to \$6 million per year and give programmers more room for experimentation. NJPAC's financial future may also be considerably aided by the eventual development of its remaining 5.5 acres.

### IMPACT ON THE CITY

The long period of planning for and developing NJPAC, and the considerable expense of making it a reality, have often been justified by its projected economic impact on downtown Newark and, to a lesser degree, on the region and state. The range of effects that have been predicted or discussed include transforming the image of the City of Newark, improving the streetscape and immediate physical and business environment of downtown Newark, and serving as a catalyst to increase development and attract new business to the center city. Planners also hoped that NJPAC would promote a ripple of new housing development in neighborhoods adjacent to downtown. There was also concern in some quarters that NJPAC would encourage gentrification or siphon money and attention from other worthy areas, projects and programs, but to date this has not proven to be the case.

### Psychological Impact and Image

NJPAC has clearly changed the way many see Newark. The *New York Times* has recently printed articles about NJPAC's impact on the city, describing Newark as a "hip" community. Many suburbanites and those further out who had studiously avoided the city are now coming to Newark to see performances. Mayor James

stated that "we built a better mouse trap and they [suburbanites] are coming." For example, one couple we spoke to had driven over an hour to attend a concert and "to see what all the fuss [over NJPAC] was about." For Newark, that is a very big change.

It isn't just the people associated with NJPAC who feel that it has created a more positive image for Newark. Cory Booker, an independent city council figure and frequent critic of the mayor, believes NJPAC has been successful in changing how Newark is perceived and even how residents see themselves. He does have reservations, however, about a downtown strategy that consistently focuses on mega-projects, such as the baseball stadium and the proposed basketball/hockey arena.



Summer concert crowd at NJPAC

The head of the local Boys and Girls Clubs feels NJPAC is the “best thing to happen to Newark” and believes the frequent visits to performances there have helped the children’s self-esteem and pride. The dean of students at Rutgers’ Newark campus feels that NJPAC has given local residents and the university community additional pride. Price believes NJPAC has “ratcheted up expectations, especially among the Rutgers administration.” Many professionals who work downtown reported that their own image of Newark had been changed for the better by NJPAC.

### Impact on Downtown

NJPAC has had a dramatic impact on its immediate area. Visible along the length of Broad Street, Newark’s central commercial street, NJPAC adds a striking visual terminus to a street that has suffered from disinvestment and crime. Since the opening of NJPAC, street life has improved. The Robert Treat Hotel has been renovated and several high-end restaurants have come into the neighborhood. Office buildings are leasing newly renovated space, and office workers are coming to the center city for lunch and shopping.

Elizabeth Strom, a Rutgers University professor who is studying the impact of arts centers on cities, predicts, however, that the direct financial benefits to the city or state from NJPAC are likely to be marginal. She feels like NJPAC does not provide the number of jobs or the level of additional spending by customers that could alone justify its costs. Its impact is likely to be in the tangible but

secondary ripple effects on other development and in the less tangible areas relating to art, including enlightenment, culture and pride.

NJPAC seems to have had some success serving as a catalyst for development, although the direct causal effects are somewhat unclear. Several significant companies, such as IDT and MBNA, have recently moved into downtown Newark, and the leasing rate for office space has increased several-fold since NJPAC’s inception. Arthur Stern, a New York real estate investor, has purchased and renovated several prominent office towers on a nearby section of Broad Street. According to Stern, when his first building, 744 Broad Street, came up for sale, he had never been in Newark. Nervously, he came across the river to



NJPAC in context of downtown Newark

PHOTO: Jeff Goldberg/ESTO

inspect the property. Later that day, he walked two blocks to look at the construction of NJPAC and now claims that this view convinced him to proceed. He felt he could use NJPAC to attract tenants to a “new” Newark.

Stern notes that when he first started leasing space in his new facility, the toughest job was to convince prospective tenants that Newark was a reasonable place to locate. Now, because of NJPAC, he argues, he can skip that part of the sales pitch completely. Stern has leased out 400,000 square feet, has seen rental rates go from \$11 per square foot to \$102, and has added “Empire State Building” exterior lighting to 744 Broad. He has since invested in two other



Hanes building

buildings in the area (over \$150 million in total) and is optimistic about downtown Newark’s future. Gabriella Morris of the Prudential Foundation notes that there is a group of real estate “young Turks,” spurred by NJPAC, who are developing projects in downtown Newark. “Newark has,” she says, “turned the corner on downtown growth.”

Many of those responsible for NJPAC have founded the New Newark Foundation, which aims at facilitating the development of the land between NJPAC and University Heights and acts as a kind of private urban renewal agency in lieu of a comprehensive public plan for urban development. New Newark has purchased an abandoned department store several blocks from NJPAC and has received several credible proposals to renovate it for retail and residential re-use. If successful, this would be the first new market-rate housing in the area in 20 years. New Newark’s goal is to provide a bridge between NJPAC and the Rutgers campus and to create a university village setting for students and faculty.

It is not clear exactly how much recent financial activity can be attributed to NJPAC. These developments occurred when the national economy was nearing the end of a long period of economic growth, and all areas on the fringe of New York City were benefiting. There have been other additions to downtown, such as the minor league baseball stadium. Many, including Goldman, presume that it will take several more years to see the true scale of NJPAC’s impact on development. Still, most observers seem to agree

that NJPAC stands out as the most prominent and positive of the changes to Newark. Caren Franzini, director of the New Jersey Economic Development Authority, feels that NJPAC has played a major role in downtown Newark and that the IDT and MBNA facilities would not have come to the area without it. James Kriedle, Rutgers' dean of students, sees NJPAC as the final piece in the puzzle of major projects (Rutgers' campus, Essex County Community College, and the Newark Museum) in downtown Newark, the piece that allows the area to reach a critical mass that will allow private sector development to proceed on its own.

For all the emphasis on symbolism, culture, design, and real estate, it may be the educational impact of NJPAC that is the most widespread. The Arts Education group now has its own building and a staff of 12 devoted to developing and delivering programs. These programs focus on Newark but are spread throughout the state. Nearly every school child in Newark is touched by NJPAC each year, benefiting from free or low-cost performances, teachers in the school, summer academies, and other programs. For Newark's youth, NJPAC provides, in the words of Mayor James, a chance to "step over the crack vile and onto the stage."

### Potential Negative Impacts

Due to the long-term social and economic difficulties faced by Newark, there does not seem to be any significant risk of gentrification because of NJPAC. New development is still being actively sought. Most leaders of community organizations with whom we spoke are pleased with NJPAC, citing its impact on

children and education, jobs, and Newark's image. "We all thought it would be isolated - something we would see from afar." Many parents felt their children would never get inside the building, "but we were wrong," says one community organizer. Many children are "aware of scholarships only because of NJPAC," he added, noting that NJPAC offers job fairs in the spring and is generally good at sharing information with community groups.

The only prominent critic in Newark to argue that NJPAC is a significant drain on the city's neighborhoods is the New Communities Corporation (NCC) — a well-established community development corporation that has been operating out of Newark's impoverished Central Ward for over 30 years. Ray Codey, NCC's vice president for development, argues that NJPAC monopolizes both funding and attention with relatively little benefit for Newark's communities in jobs (it produces relatively few jobs per dollar spent) or culture (according to Codey, most residents, especially adults, never go to a performance). To a significant degree the issue for NCC isn't the quality of NJPAC's architecture or its success as a performing art center, or even how powerful a stimulus it is for downtown development. NCC is posing a broader question to city, state, and national policy makers about priorities and methods in rebuilding cities.

Several of NJPAC's biggest supporters, such as Chambers, McFarland, and Morris, are also longtime supporters and funders of NCC. They tend to sympathize with NCC's perspective but disagree with its conclusion. Chambers, for example, agrees that Newark

neighborhoods are ignored and badly underserved but argues that most of the state and private funds that supported NJPAC would not have been available to neighborhood efforts. Supporters also suggest that the choice should not be between neighborhoods and downtown and that a successful city needs both to thrive. Art, several informants noted, adds a special element to city life by providing “something to get up and go to work for.”

### FUTURE PLANS

The main focus for NJPAC now is an endowment campaign intended to raise funds to support NJPAC’s core missions and ease the burden on annual fundraising efforts.

NJPAC also expects to continue to expand the range and number of performances offered. The highly successful summer program is likely to grow, and the addition of the new Lucent Technology Center for Arts Education should provide major new capabilities for the Arts Education staff, especially allowing significant expansion of in-house efforts. In the long-term future, NJPAC still has development options for its remaining 5.5 acres. When and how they are developed may depend upon the growth of the surrounding areas and may also have a major impact on the downtown.

Major projects being planned for downtown Newark include the mixed-use development by the New Newark Foundation, on whose board Goldman serves, and the more controversial arena for professional hockey and basketball. There are also plans for an

esplanade along the Passaic River which would extend up to NJPAC. A new federal building along that waterfront is under construction. Several have noted, however, that Newark does not have a planning department. Changes to downtown are often made on an *ad hoc* basis, leaving a void to be filled by private developers, who may or may not have an understanding of the city’s broader needs.



NJPAC entrance lobby

## ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS

### HOW WELL THE PROJECT MET ITS GOALS

NJPAC has done an extraordinary job of achieving the goals it set for itself and in supporting the revitalization of Newark. NJPAC presents nationally and internationally known performers and offers a large and varied range of programming. It has attracted audiences in significant numbers and from diverse populations. The Arts Education program is large and reaches thousands of children in Newark and across the state. NJPAC's impact on downtown development is, if anything, larger and occurring more quickly than expected. NJPAC is well known in the New York metropolitan area and has been regularly featured in the *New York Times*.

*Promoting New Jersey's best artists.*

New Jersey artists are featured regularly in NJPAC's traditional programming and are also found via audition for outdoor summer concerts, thus providing local artists with the opportunity to perform for several different audiences.

*Providing an arts education environment for children and their families.*

Arts Education is one of the most innovative and successful aspects of NJPAC. Its arts education programs are numerous, well funded, and inventive. The program was successful well before NJPAC gave its first concert and has touched almost every school-age child in Newark.

*Bringing diverse communities together.*

NJPAC works hard to serve a diverse community through specialized programming and events. It does not pretend to be a panacea for social problems. There are racially and ethnically mixed crowds often, but not always. Some argue that the poor from Newark's neighborhoods rarely go, despite NJPAC's low-cost ticket program. Summer concerts, however, seem to be attracting both professional downtown workers and resident minorities, although with some stratification in time of day.

*Serving as a revitalization engine for Newark.*

For many, NJPAC is an important symbol of change in Newark. It has clearly been an important influence in the renewal of the office market in the downtown area and has brought people and some retail (restaurants) to the area. Most observers are impressed with the change but say it is too soon to know how broad the impact will be.

*Providing a workable model for affirmative action.*

As part of its commitment to representing its community, NJPAC strove for full representation of women and minorities during construction as well as for hiring its own staff. It established a sanctionable standard by requiring contractors to demonstrate the required number of minority hours on the job before bills would be paid. NJPAC was also successful in integrating the unions that operate back stage as well as having a diverse workforce of its own.



## SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee was tremendously impressed by the breadth of vision and quality of NJPAC, as well as with the difficult environment in which project proponents had to work. Creating a “world-class facility” in Newark was no small feat, given the city’s history and image. Committee members saw NJPAC as a model for other cities undertaking mega-projects — a model for “doing a big project right.” NJPAC’s building is very well designed, uses handsome materials, and reflects both cultural sensitivity and NJPAC’s goal of serving local residents.

Committee members applauded NJPAC’s efforts to provide diversity and equity in employment for the construction workers and, after completion, for the facility staff, including stage unions. NJPAC showed a “commitment to diversifying all stages of the process from administration to nail pounding.” Committee members noted that NJPAC used innovative approaches to assure that contractors made sufficient use of minority workers, methods that can be modeled by other construction projects.

The Selection Committee recognized the Arts Education program as a significant accomplishment, both locally (in the Newark metropolitan area) and throughout New Jersey. The involvement of New Jersey children in concerts and arts education is both broad and deep and shows a number of innovative ways “to provide classes and do things for kids in the schools where art programs are being seriously curtailed.”

NJPAC may also be an important model for other communities in demonstrating the possibilities of arts as an engine for community development. The Selection Committee noted that “depleted northeastern cities that try development gimmicks to jump-start their downtown economies or just their physical environments” have not succeeded as NJPAC has. “What is really important,” the committee concluded, “is the idea that one of these big projects could have the same type of revitalizing impact on a community as a more traditional community development project.”

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Giovannini, J. (1998, March). “Encore performance: Newark’s new performing arts center is music to the ears of a city struggling to rebound.” *Architecture*, 87(3), 118-127.

Giovannini, J. (1998). “Design Notebook: African inspired décor inspires Newark arts center.” *The New York Times*, August 27, F, p. 10.

Hayden, T. (1967). *Rebellion in Newark: Official Violence and Ghetto Response*. New York: Vintage Books.

Jacobs, A. (2000, November 24). “A newly cool Newark says, ‘C’mon over!” *The New York Times*, p. E1.

Kuehl, C. (2000). “The cheapest seats in the house.” *The New York Times*, July 15, 14NJ, p. 8.

Kurtz, G. (2001). “Summer in the city. Yes, that city.” *The New York Times*, May, 20, 14NJ, p. 14.

#### SILVER MEDAL WINNER

New Jersey Performing Arts Center

Stearns, D. (1997). "Arts center puts downtown Newark center stage." USA Today; Oct 6, 1997; pg. 06.D.

Strom, E. (1999). "Let's put on a show." Journal of Urban Affairs, 21 (4), 423-435.

Strum, C. (1998). "NJ PAC is almost too busy to celebrate successes." The New York Times, Sept. 20, 14NJ, p. 10.

Smother, R. (2001, June 20). "\$160 million Newark plan focuses on new housing." The New York Times, p. B6.

Webb, M. (1998). New Stage for a City. Mulgrave, Victoria, Australia: Images Publishing Group.

#### RELATED RUDY BRUNER AWARD WINNERS

Readers who are interested in The New Jersey Performing Arts Center may also wish to read about these gold and silver award-winning projects from previous years:

Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, CA (1999)

ARTScorpsLA, Inc., Los Angeles, CA (1999)

Center in the Square, Roanoke, VA (1997)

Project Row Houses, Houston, TX (1997)

*(For full bibliographic citations of Bruner Foundation books, please see Introduction. Information on all RBA winning projects is available at [www.BrunerFoundation.org](http://www.BrunerFoundation.org).)*

#### CONTACT

Web site: <http://www.njpac.org/>



Lawrence P. Goldman  
President and CEO  
New Jersey Performing Arts Center  
One Center Street  
Newark, NJ 07102  
PHONE: 973.642.8989  
FAX: 973.642.5485

2001 Rudy Bruner Award

**SILVER**  
medal winner

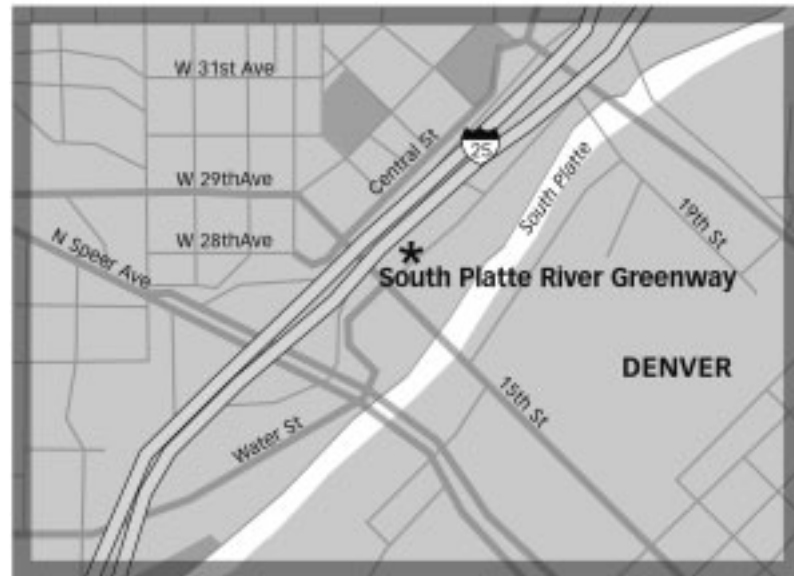


**SOUTH PLATTE RIVER GREENWAY**

Denver, Colorado



Project location



Project location (detail)

## SOUTH PLATTE RIVER GREENWAY AT A GLANCE

### SUBMITTED BY:

Greenway Foundation, Douglas Ellis, *Associate Director*

### WHAT IS THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER GREENWAY?

- Sixty-seven miles of reclaimed land along the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, running through Denver and neighboring counties, connecting to another 35 miles along minor tributaries.
- A continuous hiking/biking path.
- Reclamation of a previously polluted river and its degraded surroundings.
- Re-vegetation of the river's banks.
- Reuse of adjacent areas for wildlife habitation and recreation.
- A series of 17 interconnected urban parks along the Denver portion of the South Platte, plus others along tributaries.
- Removal of impediments to boating along the river and creation of recreational rapids for kayaks and rafts.
- An historic trolley that runs along a portion of the Greenway and is slated to connect to an urban light rail system.
- Programs that foster stewardship, environmental awareness, and recreational activities for urban youth and adults.

- Significant contributions to the redevelopment of Denver's urban core through the attraction of adjacent housing and commercial developments as well as major cultural, entertainment, and sporting facilities, including a children's museum, aquarium, and amusement park.

### MAJOR GOALS OF THE SOUTH PLATTE RIVER GREENWAY

- To reclaim a severely polluted river and its blighted environs.
- To create a bikeable, hikeable, "boatable" Greenway through downtown.
- To link the Greenway to the city and to a regional open space and bikeway system.
- To engage members of Denver's marginalized communities in the Greenway.

## CHRONOLOGY

Three distinct phases of activity can be identified for this project. The mid-1970s until the early 1980s was a period of initiation and intense activity of cleanup, design, and construction. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the pace slowed and emphasis shifted to programming and extension of the Greenway into surrounding counties (Adams and Arapahoe). The period from the late 1990s to the present has seen investment in new parks as well as consolidation of the Greenway parks into Denver's municipal park system.

1974

Mayor Bill McNichols appoints Joe Shoemaker chairman of the new Platte River Development Committee (PRDC) with \$1.9 million in seed money.

1975

First project, Confluence Park, is dedicated.

1976-1983

PRDC becomes The Greenway Foundation, a conduit for private funding. In this period, the first major achievements are completed, including:

- Elimination of over 250 sources of pollution.
- Construction of 10.5 miles of bike paths along the downtown section of the river.

- Construction of the first part of the Cherry Creek path.
- Completion of three more parks in Denver and 10 more on nearby former landfill sites.
- Removal of 10 obstructions on the river, replaced by boating chutes.
- Initiation of the River Rangers, a program that employs young people to assist in the maintenance of parks and trails.

1984-1986

Two tributary greenways are built; outdoor education program is initiated.

1986-1989

More of Cherry Creek and the Cherry Creek South Greenway are completed.

1993-1995

"Punt the Creek" boating attraction is created.

1996

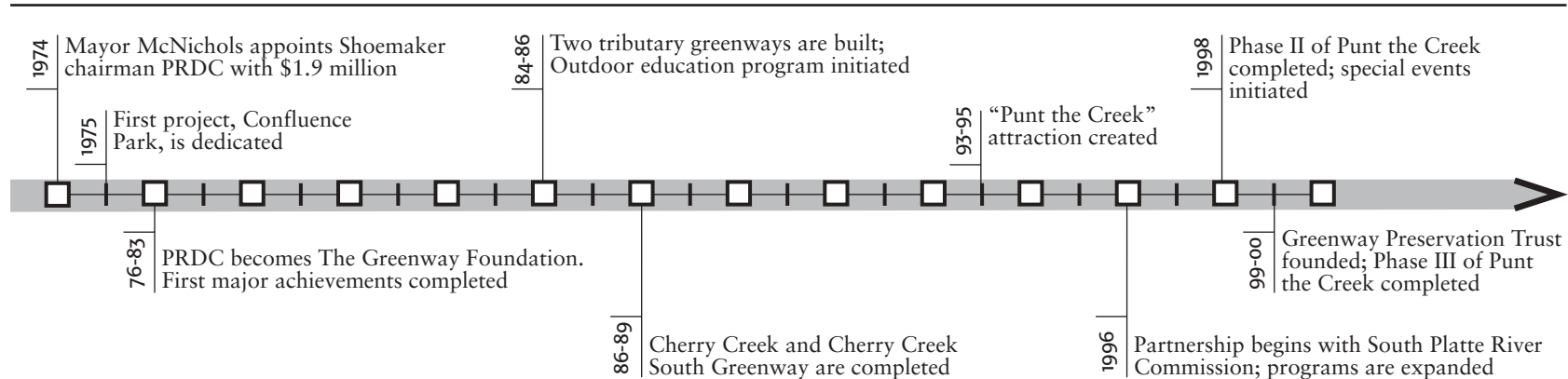
Partnership begins with South Platte River Commission; programs are expanded.

1998

Phase II of Punt the Creek completed; special events initiated.

1999-2000

Greenway Preservation Trust founded; \$1.5 of \$5 million goal raised; Phase III of Punt the Creek completed.



## KEY PARTICIPANTS

Persons who were interviewed are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

### The Greenway Foundation

Joe Shoemaker,\* *Founder of PRDC/The Greenway Foundation*

Jeff Shoemaker,\* *Executive Director*

Doug Ellis,\* *Associate Director*

### City and County of Denver

Bill McNichols, *Mayor (1969-1983)*

Federico Pena, *Mayor (1983-1991)*

Wellington Webb, *Mayor (1991-present)*

Andrew Wallach,\* *Assistant to the Mayor,*

*Manager for the South Platte River Initiative*

Bar Chadwick,\* *Director, South Platte River Initiative,*

*City Parks Department*

Jennifer Moulton,\*<sup>+</sup> *Director, Community Development Department*

### Local Community & Non-Profit Groups

Greg Pratt,\*<sup>+</sup> *Director, River Reach Youth Initiative*

### Foundations and Funding Sources

Tom Abbott,\*<sup>+</sup> *Denver Rail Heritage Society*

Anschutz Foundation

Boettcher Foundation

Casey Davenport,\*<sup>+</sup> *Audubon Society*

Denver Foundation

El Pomar Foundation

Ellen Fischer,\* *Gates Family Foundation*

Johnson Foundation

Piton Foundation

Jane Taylor,\*<sup>+</sup> *James Beckwourth Society*

### Museums and Recreational Attractions

Susan Skahill\* and Paul Aldretti,\* *Colorado Ocean Journey*

Wendy Holmes,\* *Children's Museum*

### Landscape Architect/Urban Designers

Merle Grimes,\* *MDG, Inc.*

Mark Johnson,\* *Civitas*

### Facilitator/Agency Relations

Tracy Bouvette,\* *Principal, Camp, Dresser, McKee, Inc.*

### Local Business Owners/Managers

Bob Voltz,\* *General Manager, Recreational Equipment, Inc.*

Jon Kahn,\* *Confluence Kayaks*

### Private Developers

Dana Crawford,\* *Urban Neighborhoods, Inc., Developer of the  
Flour Mill Lofts (and an original committee member)*

Diane Groff,\* *Marketing Specialist, East-West Partners,  
developer of Riverfront Park*

Trillium Corporation *(developer of the balance of Burlington  
Northern's rail yard)*

<sup>+</sup> *(Also on South Platte River Commission)*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### HISTORY AND VISION

The South Platte River Greenway is centered around the confluence of the South Platte River and Cherry Creek, the site where Native Americans camped and where modern Denver was founded in the mid-1800s. Due to periodic flooding and other considerations, central Denver developed somewhat further east, and the edges of the river became the site of industrial activity.

In the period between the late nineteenth and mid-twentieth centuries, there was a general disregard for the health of the river,



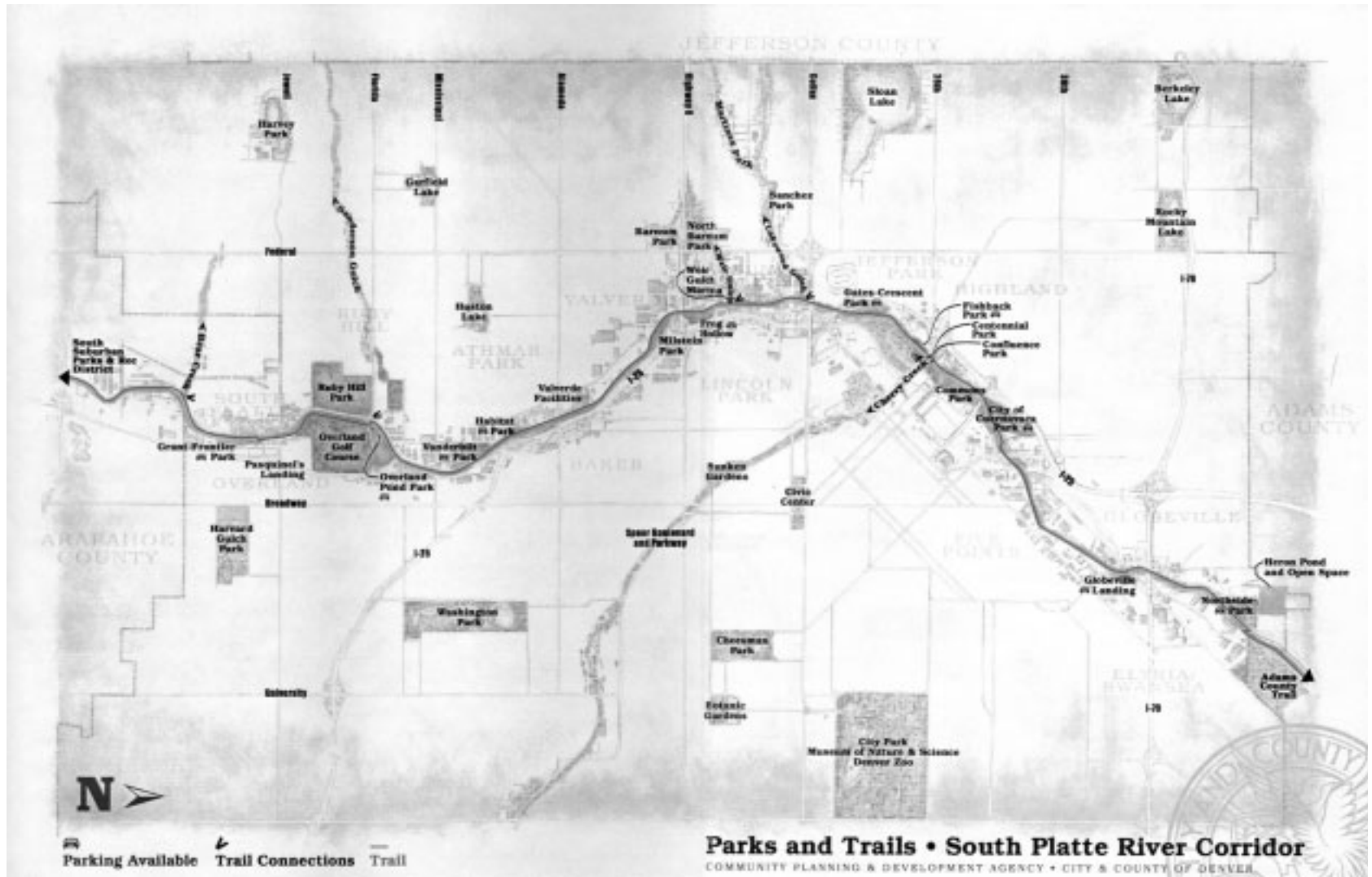
River polluted by industrial waste

and it soon became heavily polluted by both industrial and domestic waste. In attempting to convey the state of the river in frontier times, James Michener's *Centennial* described the South Platte as "a sad, bewildered nothing of a river ... a mean pestiferous bother ... a mile wide and an inch deep — too thick to drink, too thin to plow." Nor was it much improved by the 1960s, when at least 250 sources of pollution were still dumping various forms of waste and effluent into the river. The South Platte was considered so toxic that drinking from it could be lethal and even mere skin exposure dangerous. Denver turned its back on the river, shut its eyes, and held its nose.

But the river was capable of demanding attention. In 1965, there was what hydrologists termed a "100-year flood" which devastated surrounding areas, causing \$325 million in damage. A subsequent report suggested spending over \$600 million on flood control and redevelopment, but no such measures were implemented except for the construction of an upstream dam in Chatfield which greatly reduced the flood threat. This lack of action was seen by local residents as just one more failed attempt to deal effectively with a troubled urban river that had returned to its pre-flood state.

In 1974, the city's attitude toward the river changed. Mayor Bill McNichols set aside Denver's remaining \$1.9 million in revenue-sharing funds to address the needs of the river and prepared to form a committee to oversee its disbursement. It was at this moment that Joe Shoemaker took an interest in the river, spurred in part by a visit to the Riverwalk in San Antonio, Texas. Shoemaker was a





City plan for Greenway

highly experienced public servant and politician who had served as Denver's manager of public works and in the state legislature as the powerful chairman of the Joint Budget Committee. (He had recently been defeated by McNichols in the mayoral election.)

When Shoemaker approached McNichols about reclaiming the river, the timing was opportune. McNichols needed someone to head the newly formed Platte River Development Committee (PRDC), and who better for this difficult and politically risky position than his former political opponent, Shoemaker.

The four key goals of the committee were to:

- clean up the river's pollution;
- create a continuous hiking and bicycle path along the river;
- open the river for boating along its entire urban course; and
- reconnect the river to the city.

## ORGANIZATION/LEADERSHIP

The importance of Joe Shoemaker to the Greenway cannot be over-emphasized. He is, most observers agree, both tough and charismatic and has brought to the effort a powerful presence and his considerable political experience and connections. He is totally committed to the Greenway, the primary focus of his career for over 25 years.

When Shoemaker was asked by Mayor McNichols to head the PRDC, its membership had not yet been determined. Shoemaker

helped structure the committee to be representative of the broad range of technical, business, recreational and community interests around the river. He lobbied for inclusion of those who might resist or mistrust the effort and was able to get them all to work together with impressive effectiveness, as described in the next section.

Several years later, after its initial phase of activity and expenditure of the \$1.9 million, the PRDC evolved into The Greenway Foundation. As a non-profit organization, the Foundation could raise funds from foundations and other sources in a way that a city-sponsored entity could not. Until recently, when the city's interest was rekindled, most of the achievements in developing the Greenway had been accomplished by the Foundation.

Shoemaker brought his son Jeff on board in 1982 in a temporary capacity — and Jeff stayed, taking over the lead from his father. Jeff, a musician and music educator by training, has a different style from his father, but one that may be more appropriate to a time that demands broader participation and more patience. Jeff also served in the state legislature and is both knowledgeable in politics and well connected.

During the mayoral administration of Federico Pena (1983 to 1991), the Greenway received less attention; Pena's focus was on the new airport, a stadium, and downtown development. During that time, the Foundation directed its efforts toward developing programs and extending the Greenway into neighboring counties, where there was both interest and funding.

In recent years, the involvement of the City and County of Denver has increased. Mayor Wellington Webb has helped to conceive of the Greenway as a linear park system that could be completed during his administration (and which was described by several interviewees as “his legacy”). The mayor declared 1996 the “Year of the River.” The city has built Commons Park along the Greenway, at the terminus of an axis down 16<sup>th</sup> Street from the State Capitol—the first such new park created in Denver in 100 years. The mayor’s office was active in the landscape planning for this park, suggesting the installation of formal gardens inspired by Versailles. The city has also sponsored another new park, Northside, at the north end of the Greenway.

In 1995, the Mayor created the South Platte River Commission to plan and oversee development in the corridor around the Greenway. In 2000, the Commission, co-chaired by the Mayor, produced the *Long Range Management Framework, South Platte River Corridor*, a master plan that called for institutionalization of a corridor oversight board whose functions would be to:

- provide a focus for the agencies and groups interested in the river;
- document and update information about the area;
- designate the river zone as a natural area with added protection for its ecology;

- establish priorities and criteria for projects and review development proposals;
- be a focus for resources needed to maintain and enhance the area; and
- develop a strategy for maintaining water quality.

The Commission’s name can be seen on signs labeling recent park improvement projects along the Greenway, suggesting that it is active in channeling resources into the area. Recently, the mayor was instrumental in having the 17 parks that border the Denver portion of the Greenway declared a park district. This action has assured ongoing development and maintenance of these parks by the Denver Parks Department.

In the meantime, recognizing that the Greenway receives different levels of priority as mayoral administrations change, The Greenway Foundation has formed a second entity, The Greenway Preservation Trust, to raise an endowment for the permanent programming and maintenance of the Greenway. It has so far raised \$3.15 million of its \$5 million goal which it hopes will generate approximately \$250,000 annually for expenditure on the Greenway.

The Greenway Foundation and its leaders have demonstrated an ability to be flexible and work within prevailing political constraints and possibilities. From an emphasis on physical development, to programming, to management and maintenance, the organization

has grown and matured with a necessary change in leadership. It has formed an effective partnership with the city and other agencies (recently the Army Corps of Engineers), where the Foundation's role remains that of an advocate able to get things done quickly, which is often impossible for a large bureaucracy. The formation of The Greenway Preservation Trust manifests a desire to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

## THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Beginning in 1974, Joe Shoemaker used short, effective meetings to drive a process aimed at demonstrating that real improvements could be made to the river in a brief period of time. He was working to counter years of negativity about the impossibility of the task and the undesirability of the river by involving city bureaucrats and by becoming an "ambassador" for the river — taking anyone who would go (especially if he or she had power or resources) — on a tour. Shoemaker's task was a significant one as the river was so degraded that it was difficult for many people to visualize it as a place that would be attractive to the general public. There were reportedly comments in the press that the project seemed laughable.

Shoemaker initiated the PRDC's planning process with very high expectations for its achievements (see goals under "History and Vision,"). The PRDC began by selecting four one-mile-long study areas and assigning each one to a team of committee members and engineering consultants. Other sub-committees worked on design

issues such as lighting, seating, planting, and trail configuration. Astonishingly, the PRDC put four projects out to bid in 60 days.

Not everything went smoothly. There was resistance, for instance, from a citizen group that advocated for a very large and expensive park near one part of the river. This early dispute delayed a grant application that would have augmented the funds available for construction.

The actual bids for river cleanup were double the \$1.9 million that had been allocated for the effort. With no immediate prospect of



Globeville Landing

additional funding, Shoemaker pressed to spend the available funds to complete two of the four sections of the river originally selected in a manner that would have the greatest environmental and political impact. The two projects he and his committee identified were Confluence Park, the most historically significant and prominent site, and Globeville Landing at the north end of town. The Globeville site was close to a low-income, minority neighborhood. Addressing these two sites demonstrated that multiple interests would be served by the effort to reclaim the river. Because the PRDC focused all its efforts on these two projects, within several months there were tangible improvements that could be used to demonstrate progress and attract additional funding. A large celebration was held on Labor Day of 1975, less than a year after the rehabilitation and development process was initiated.

The Greenway Foundation's effort has always sought to include diverse constituencies, but the ways these constituencies have been included have changed over time. At the start, it made use of a representative model, identifying individuals who could represent various groups and interests and placing them on the primary committee. In more recent times, the Greenway's planning has become a more participatory process, at least where major projects are concerned. Though meetings of the original committee were open to the public, now public forums are held and broad input is encouraged. From the beginning, the Greenway Foundation's leadership has demonstrated an ability to balance competing interests and to satisfy the primary goals of recreational users, environmentalists, and developers.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE GREENWAY

The Greenway is a linear system of open space that follows the South Platte River and its tributaries through Denver. It consists of a total of 67 miles, 10.5 of which run along the South Platte in Denver. The remaining sections run along Cherry Creek and other tributaries.

The Greenway consists of:

- A continuous hiking and bicycle path, at least eight feet wide in the narrow portions, sometimes running on both sides of the river, with bridges as needed to allow movement from one side to another. With the popularity of biking and rollerblading, newer sections of the path are typically 10 feet wide in the central area, reflecting the greater usage that could not have been foreseen initially. Wherever possible, The Greenway Foundation provides separate paths for walkers and cyclists, rollerbladers.



Bike trail along South Platte

- Seventeen parks of varying size and character along the Denver reach of the South Platte, all of which are now owned and maintained by Denver's Parks and Recreation Department. Only

three of these parks existed before the Greenway was created, and the most recent of these are currently being built by the city. Parks are identified by attractive, modern signs, and there are also postings about hours of use and allowable activities.



Play area at Grant Park

- River banks and adjacent areas that have been reclaimed and planted, often with native species that provide a wildlife habitat. It is reported that many species have returned to the river, including beaver, otters, fish, and numerous kinds of birds, such as herons and kingfishers.



Long view of river

- The river itself has been almost entirely cleared of impediments to boating for rafts and kayaks. Several rapids have been improved or created. One dam remains and will be revamped in the future. Even on a cold, early spring weekday, many kayakers were shooting and surfing the rapids.



Kayak in the rapids

- Paths which line both sides of Cherry Creek, one designated for pedestrians, the other for bikes and skaters. There is also a series of locks that are for punting (the Greenway derives some income from renting punts in season).



Cherry Creek path

The cleanup of the river entailed not only the elimination of 250 direct sources of pollution, but also changing the local mindset concerning the nature and importance of the river — from that of an open sewer fit only to be abused and avoided to that of a potential recreational and environmental resource. The Greenway Foundation has been very active in restoring the wildlife habitat and in effectively balancing the competing interests of those who want to use the river for recreation and those who want to keep it natural for ecological reasons.

The system of parks along the Greenway is worthy of more detailed description. Some are small neighborhood parks with play structures

and picnic benches that are also provided at the more central park near the Children's Museum. Most are planted with Kentucky Blue Grass which is hardy and wears well but requires a great deal of water. This contrasts with native grasses and vegetation planted in many newer parks that are similarly designed as natural habitats and require much less water.

Representative parks along the Greenway include:

- ***Confluence Park*** (where Cherry Creek joins the South Platte River), which is one of the first two parks developed over 25 years ago and currently undergoing renovation. It includes a bridge across



Confluence Park



Confluence Park view toward downtown



Kiosk at Globeville Landing

the South Platte, a developed rapids area on the river, a stage platform cantilevered over the river, and seating and viewing areas on steps and grass. It is flanked by an historic building that was a transport museum and has recently been renovated as a Recreational Equipment, Inc. (REI) flagship store.

- **Globeville Landing**, which is at the north end of the Denver portion of the Greenway and was the other park built in the first phase of construction to demonstrate a commitment to the surrounding neighborhoods. The Globeville neighborhood consists of modest, generally well maintained bungalows and

has a population that is primarily Hispanic and African-American. The Pepsi Co. bottling facility to the east of the park also supported the clean-up and improvement along the sections of the South Platte River that pass through the area.

- **Commons Park**, which is the newest park in the chain. The park is bordered on the east by the first phase of East-West Partners' major housing development. East-West Partners was not willing to close escrow on the purchase of this adjacent land until the city had purchased the park site and committed to its construction — an indication of the importance of this open space as an amenity to the housing development.
- **Habitat Park**, which is located in the southern portion of the Greenway and is in need of further improvement including paving and planting. It houses a building constructed by the Boy Scouts where rafts and other equipment for use on the river are stored. The park has been adopted by the James Beckwourth Society, an African-American outdoors group that brings inner-city children to the Greenway and will assist in its maintenance.
- **Grant-Frontier Park**, which is at the far south end of the Greenway in a mainly residential neighborhood of well kept houses which border the park. The park provides play structures and picnic benches for local use. Near the park entrance is a small compound which houses antique mining gear used for school field trips during which students are given the opportunity to “pan for gold.” There are also naturalized areas that flank a particularly scenic sweep of the river.



The edges of the central portion of the Denver Greenway, closest to downtown, have become the site of major sporting, entertainment, and cultural attractions such as ball parks and museums (described in “Associated Development”). There is clearly a synergy between the Greenway and these facilities. People who come to facilities located along the river, especially the cultural sites, often use the Greenway, arriving on foot or by bicycle or trolley rather than by car. Many of these facilities would not have considered this area in its previous polluted and industrial condition.

Extended use of the Greenway as an alternative transportation system depends in part on its connection to the larger urban bikeway system and to the planned light rail system. The Greenway currently connects downtown Denver and many suburban neighborhoods to the river and the attractions that run along the Greenway.

The Cherry Creek stretch in particular links the Greenway to downtown and the eastern suburbs, running 13.5 miles to the Cherry Creek Reservoir and another 23 miles beyond it. (The latter stretch has both a hard path and a soft equestrian trail.) When the downtown section was improved, locks were installed to allow punting on the creek. Running along a portion of the Greenway on the west bank is a rail line (the main rail line for Denver’s Union Station), reclaimed for use by an historic trolley run in conjunction with the overall cleanup and rehabilitation. Operated since 1995 by



Biker at Cherry Creek

the Rail Heritage Society, the single car is a modern replica of a turn-of-the-century trolley. In spring 2001, it ran from Confluence Park and the REI building to the Children’s Museum. On a typical Saturday morning, it was packed with families with children. Plans call for the rail line to extend further north and south and to connect with Denver’s new light rail transit system. At that time, it will be operated in conjunction with Denver’s Department of Transportation, which will own and maintain the tracks. This will provide an even more important alternative to automobiles for access to downtown, lightening the burden on the sporting venues’ heavily used parking lots.

## ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

As mentioned above, the Greenway supports a variety of informal recreational activities. The pathway system built by The Greenway Foundation is used for biking, skating, and walking. Rafting and kayaking have been made possible by the cleanup of the river, the removal of impediments, and the creation and stabilization of rapids. Punting is an organized boating activity made possible by the system of locks constructed on Cherry Creek.

The Greenway Foundation is very active in programming and maintaining the Greenway. Its operations budget (along with contributions from many sources) is partially devoted to sponsoring activities in the area. These include festivals, concerts and clean-up days. For example, in the summer of 2001, there were four free Confluence Concerts held in Confluence Park. With the Mayor's South Platte River Commission, the Foundation sponsored Riverfest, which includes competition for prizes and family-oriented entertainment. NIMBY, with numerous sponsors, is an annual clean-up day held in September when the water level is sufficiently low.

The River Reach Youth Initiative has provided organized activities for thousands of Denver public school children since 1992. A typical outing on the river will involve education and awareness through talks and demonstrations; service, such as planting trees or cleaning up an area; and a river raft ride, which serves as the "carrot" to keep kids interested throughout the day. The South Platte River Environmental Education (SPREE) is another environmental learning



Punting the Creek



Trolley near Ocean Adventure

program. Since 1975, over 65,000 students and parents have participated in numerous activities with the South Platte as the focal point. With the recent support of Mayor Webb and the South Platte River Commission, the program has expanded dramatically.

Regular maintenance is now provided by the Denver Parks Department, but the River Rangers, the Greenway's initial program for maintaining the river, is still operating as a youth employment program. Each summer, the Foundation employs Denver area youth to serve as River Rangers, hired in partnership with the Metro Denver Chamber of Commerce's Youth at Work program. These young people provide additional maintenance to the various urban waterway trails, assist at all Foundation special events, and partner with other similar youth crews to improve the landscape of the various parks and open spaces along the river.

## ASSOCIATED DEVELOPMENTS

Many projects have been developed or are slated for development in the vicinity of the Greenway. Because there is so much development – project budgets total around \$2 billion – it is important to consider the extent to which the presence of the Greenway with its river, paths, and parks has contributed to these projects. Some of them would most likely have happened anyway, but others would have located elsewhere or not have been developed at all without the Greenway.

Part of the story of the associated developments is linked to the general urban context and economic base of Denver as it has ebbed

and flowed over the years. When the project began, Denver's economy, primarily driven by the energy industry, was experiencing a boom that turned to bust in the 1980s. In recent years, the energy sector has grown again and the economy is even stronger, having diversified with a new emphasis on telecommunications. In general, the robust economy of Denver has made possible much of the development associated with the Greenway, including the cultural and the sporting venues as well as the market-rate housing.

Projects next to or near the Greenway include:

- ***Children's Museum.*** The museum opened in 1983 on the west bank of the South Platte and was the first of the large facilities to locate there. The museum “chose” this site largely because The Greenway Foundation made the land available for \$1.



Children's Museum



Family activities at Children's Museum



Children panning for gold

Even so, the decision entailed some risk. At that time it was difficult for people to find the museum, since there was nothing else of note in the area to use as a landmark. The museum is a progressive institution, with colorful, child-oriented architecture. It has recently redefined its mission as serving early childhood development through interactive play. After this change in mission, the museum's attendance increased by 60% from its previous level of about 250,000 per year. The museum considers The Greenway Foundation to be a "partner in spirit" and feels that it would not be located here and might not even exist without Greenway synergy. The museum and Greenway jointly market each other's activities. In addition to its extensive indoor programming and displays, the museum operates nature walks





REI headquarters



Ocean Adventure

along the river and attracts families who also come to ride the trolley and use the open space at Gates-Crescent Park.

- ***Colorado Ocean Journey.*** This non-profit organization raised the \$93 million needed to create a self-described “world-class” aquarium and is now in its third year of operation. Exhibits emphasize the aquatic habitat with a focus on rivers as they run down to the ocean. The site was selected for its proximity to the South Platte, but this was only appropriate after the river had been cleaned up. The facility includes a “river walk” and a wetland habitat that attracts native wildlife.
- ***Recreational Equipment, Inc.*** REI recently opened a 94,000 square foot flagship store opposite Confluence Park. The

location is ideal for this purpose, since customers use the bike path to travel to the store and to test bikes for possible purchase. Its 100 bicycle parking spaces are often full on weekends. Similarly, customers can test kayaks on the rapids immediately outside the store. REI is housed in a restored historic building which was originally a trolley barn and later a transportation museum. The building was described as having been a wreck until REI spent \$32 million restore and renovate it (made up, in part, by about \$10 million in city, state, and historic preservation tax credits). This project was full of challenges but was an immediate commercial success. Described by some visitors as “awesome” for its soaring space and indoor climbing wall, it had a million visitors its first year and generates the highest volume of sales of any store in the company.



Flour Mill



Six Flags Elitch Gardens

- ***Six Flags Elitch Gardens.*** This amusement park is located across the river from and just south of Confluence Park. Elitch's Gardens had long been a fixture in Denver, and, but for the cleanup of the river, would likely have relocated to a suburban site.
- ***Sports Venues.*** The area is also the home of two major new sporting venues: a brand new basketball and hockey arena, the ***Pepsi Center***, and, for football, ***INVESCO Field at Mile High Stadium***. These facilities are directly linked to the Greenway, enabling access via bicycle or trolley.
- ***Flour Mill Lofts.*** This converted mill between the newly-created Cuernavaca Park (named for Denver's sister city in Mexico) and the remaining rail lines was developed by Dana Crawford, who previously created Larimer Square, the first retail revival project in lower downtown Denver (LoDo). She was an original member of the Greenway PRDC. The first phase of the Flour Mill was completed in early 1999 and has 17 loft units. Since it was the first residential project in the area, it faced many financing hurdles. Despite her experience and previous successes, Crawford was "turned down by every bank in Colorado" and only obtained financing after half the units had been presold. Because they have

so much window area, the apartments have tremendous light and views of downtown, the river, and the Rockies. Most of the buyers were empty nesters or young professionals without children. Construction of a new section is well underway, built in a similar style to the original concrete frame mill. While the original units sold for about \$250 per square foot, the new ones will be priced near \$400 per square foot. Crawford has purchased an additional 5.5 acre site across the tracks that will include financing for subsidized housing and thus a small percentage of units that are “affordable.”

- **Other Developments.** There are also other significant housing and commercial developments planned, under construction, or recently completed adjacent to the Greenway. This includes the development of the old Burlington Northern rail yards that lie between the Greenway and downtown. The yards were purchased by Trillium Corporation, which in turn sold the portion bordering the Greenway to East-West Partners, which plans to build about 2,000 units of housing in a 25-acre mixed-use complex to be called **Riverfront Park**. Three buildings with 183 mostly loft-style units, many of which have been pre-sold, are under construction at 16<sup>th</sup> Street. This land would certainly have been developed in any case, but the Greenway and its parks, particularly Commons Park, are a major sales point for the complex which emphasizes the views, nearby recreation, and convenient access to LoDo via a new pedestrian bridge over the remaining rail lines. East-West is enthusiastic enough about the prospects for this area that it purchased seven more acres for another development that will eventually hold an additional 1,000 units.

While there would have been pressure for developing the area around the Greenway (with downtown pushing in its direction, the success of LoDo and Larimer Square, and the availability of the Burlington Northern site), new development is happening faster, and the area is attracting more housing, sporting, and entertainment venues than it would have without the Greenway.



Model for nearby development

## FINANCES

The Greenway and its projects have been funded by a rich mix of sources. The initial seed money of \$1.9 million was provided by the city from federal revenue-sharing funds. It was spent on the first two clean-up and improvement projects (the Confluence Park area and Globeville Park) and, with supplemental funding, also contributed to the next two projects. Perhaps the Greenway founders sensed that their organization would be around for a while, as they also used part of the funds to buy a warehouse near the river to serve as their offices.

The seed money was followed by another \$23 million from city, state and federal sources; the state lottery; private contributions; and

foundation grants. Nearly \$50 million more has been invested by the city's South Platte River Commission in parks, drainage improvements, and the like. Those funds came from city, state, and federal governments as well as from levies or fees from private developers such as Trillium, which provided \$2 million.

Actual and anticipated investments in area projects total over \$2 billion and include the following (in \$ millions):

COORS FIELD	\$215
PEPSI CENTER	\$170
BRONCO STADIUM	\$350
REI	\$32
SIX FLAGS ELITCH GARDENS	\$105
COLORADO OCEAN JOURNEY	\$100
CHILDREN'S MUSEUM	\$10
OTHER RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS.	\$35
TRILIUM-EAST-WEST (ESTIMATED)	\$1,000
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$2,017</b>



Confluence Park



The Greenway Foundation, with its very small staff and low overhead, currently has an operating budget of just under \$1 million per year, of which two-thirds will be expended on river capital improvements. Funds come mostly from the City and County of Denver and are supplemented by contributions, earned income (e.g., from Punt the Creek), and a modest amount of interest from the Preservation Trust endowment. This last source will become increasingly important in the future as a permanent provider of funds for maintenance and programming.

### IMPACT ON THE CITY

It would be difficult to overstate the positive impact the Greenway has had on Denver. Some effects are very obvious, such as the replacement of a polluted and degraded river with a significant open space and a recreational amenity. Others, such as changing the attitudes of residents about the river and perhaps the city, are more subtle.

The creation of such an amenity may be even more important in Denver than in other cities, since it is such an outdoor- and recreationally-oriented community. Many people move there for the easy access to skiing, hiking, fishing, and camping and to take advantage of a climate with over 300 sunny days per year. Yet before the Greenway, these activities and the expression of these values were largely available only outside the city.

The Greenway demonstrates to Denver residents and other observers that it is possible to restore a ruined part of the city to a



Rapids near Confluence Park



Rollerblading along the river

healthy and beneficial state and to improve the quality of life for all segments of society. At a time when many are pessimistic about contemporary urban life, it is positive and even uplifting to see that, with appropriate interventions, nature can heal itself and that a place can be created where human activity and interaction with nature can flourish and be enjoyed by the entire city. The Greenway has achieved remarkable success in reconnecting the city with its river, strengthening the association of urban life with the natural environment and reuniting the once-separated halves of the city.

## CURRENT PROJECTS AND FUTURE PLANS

In addition to private developments, there are many projects currently underway, sponsored by the Greenway or independent organizations, that will expand and improve this area. These include Commons Park, the newly completed Skate Park and improvements along the Colfax Reach of the river (currently under construction near Mile High Stadium and including Bronco Bridge — a foot bridge that will likely be heavily used).

The Greenway Foundation's main plans for the future fall into four areas:

### Physical Improvements

- Addition of the Zuni-Sun Valley Reach — about eight blocks long, likely to cost \$18 million — which will be constructed by the Army Corp of Engineers.

- Removal of the last impediment to boating by modifying a dam that serves a power plant.
- Ongoing improvements to river banks, plantings, habitat and natural areas.
- Ongoing expansion and improvement of parks.
- Extension of light rail to downtown and suburbs via the rail line that runs along the Greenway and is now used by the trolley.



Aerial view of Globeville Landing

## The Endowment

Three million dollars of the \$5 million endowment target has already been raised. The Foundation's goal is to raise the rest by 2003. It is worth noting that 2003 is when the current administration leaves office. The endowment goals may reflect uncertainty about continuity of maintenance funding if the parks become a reduced priority of the next administration.

## The Framework Master Plan

The Framework Master Plan describes the city's plan for preservation and enhancement of the river. The future role of The Greenway Foundation will be to assure that the provisions of the master plan are realized.

## Park Maintenance District

The city has made the Greenway into a single park district, resulting in improved funding and the use of stable crews that have come to know how to maintain the river as well as the parks that it runs through or past. The Greenway Foundation was instrumental in the negotiations that created this district and will be active in assuring its full implementation.

# ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS

## HOW WELL THE PROJECT MET ITS GOALS

*Reclaiming a severely polluted river and its blighted environs.*

Pollution in the South Platte has essentially been eliminated, and the environs of the river have been reclaimed for open space, recreation, and wildlife habitat, as well as for housing and cultural and sports facilities.

*Changing the image of a blighted part of town and a ruined natural resource, providing a positive model for effective urban change and environmental rehabilitation.*

The Greenway is a potentially important model for other American cities, many of which have grown up around waterways which have been abused or ignored by recent development.

*Creating a bikeable, hikeable, "boatable" greenway through downtown.*

The Greenway has created a continuous pedestrian and bicycle path of 10.5 miles along the Denver portion of the South Platte, with an additional 13.5 miles along Cherry Creek in Denver. Along the South Platte, almost all impediments to rafting and kayaking have been removed (with the last one slated for removal in a project that will be implemented soon), and along the lower portion of Cherry Creek, locks were installed to allow punting.

*Linking the Greenway to the city and to a regional open space and bikeway system, connecting outlying neighborhoods and suburbs to the city center.*

The original Greenway ran along the in-town Denver stretch of the South Platte River. It has since been extended along Cherry Creek, which runs along one edge of downtown, and linked to a system with over 100 miles of hike-bike paths. This allows suburban residents to bike into downtown as well as to major sporting events. This is an important accomplishment in a modern city, so many of which are fragmented and polarized into the center and the periphery by natural or manufactured barriers.

*Engaging members of Denver's marginalized communities in the Greenway and bridging and uniting the diverse constituencies in the city.*

The Greenway Foundation and related entities have reached out to Denver's marginalized communities in a number of ways. In structuring the original committee, Shoemaker took pains to involve representatives of minority groups and disadvantaged communities that bordered the river, even though a degree of resistance was anticipated. Current outreach activities bring inner-city children to the Greenway for education and activities. A minority-run outdoor organization has adopted one of the parks. The only group that has not benefited has been the homeless, who used to camp along the river and have had to move to other locations. The removal of the homeless was reportedly undertaken with the involvement of social service agencies and advocacy groups who offered shelter and other services.

The Greenway has also contributed to social cohesion in Denver. It has gained the support of several mayoral administrations (though not always with equal enthusiasm), united Democrats and Republicans around a common cause, and found solutions that appear to successfully balance the concerns of environmentalists, recreation buffs, community activists, and developers.

*Become a resource and supportive amenity for a new downtown residential community to be developed between Union Station and the Greenway.*

The Greenway has received a lot of attention from other cities trying to reclaim their rivers. That said, there are ways in which the Greenway can be generalized and ways in which its application as a model may be limited. For example, Denver has recently been an economically successful and expanding city with resources to spend on the river. The availability of significant funding has been key to its development. The availability of a leader as powerful and connected as Joe Shoemaker was also a central factor in the Greenway's success. The Greenway joins the growing list of high-profile urban projects that have reclaimed waterfronts and rivers to enliven the environments and economies of their respective cities, including Baltimore's Inner Harbor, San Antonio's River Walk, and Seattle's Pike Place Market.

## SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Committee was very impressed with the scope and quality of the South Platte River Greenway project. Committee members noted that while the river had a prominent role in the early history of

Denver, it had not, until this effort, been a significant part of the urban fabric of the metropolitan area other than as a source of blight. The Committee commented that rivers can play a powerful role in shaping the urban experience, citing Boston and San Antonio as models. The committee felt that it is critical to “turn around and embrace a river, to clean it up and make it part of a community.”

The ambitious and sensitive design and landscaping of the South Platte Greenway, committee members felt, was likely to make it a critical part of Denver’s future. In that sense, they viewed this project as “an Olmsteadian” creation. The combined environmental clean-up, parks, recreation, and alternative transportation aspects of the Greenway will make this area “a home” for Denver residents for many years to come. Committee members saw the Greenway as an important “opportunity to bring disparate parts of the community together” and applauded the project’s ability to connect people to nature. The committee felt that the Greenway “truly gives them a sense of place, that this is where I belong, that this is where this community belongs.”

Committee members also emphasized, however, the long-term nature of the impact of the Greenway. As a landscape project, they felt, the Greenway is not yet fully mature. “This is a 100 year project...It is a big achievement that will help structure this area for a long time to come.”

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Chapman, G. (2001, June). “The Intersection of Environmental Planning and Social Justice: Denver’s Platte River Greenway.” Masters of City Planning thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Urban Studies and Planning, City, MA.

Featured case study: South Platte River Greenway. University of Kentucky, Department of Landscape Architecture. World Wide Web: [http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/LA/web\\_pages/case\\_study.html](http://www.uky.edu/Agriculture/LA/web_pages/case_study.html).

Kirkpatrick, T. The South Platte River Greenway Trail. Englewood CO: Trails ‘N Tales Publishing Co., 1998.

Mayor’s South Platte River Commission (2000, November). Long Range Management Framework: South Platte River Corridor. Denver, CO: Office of the Mayor.

Shoemaker, J. with Stevens, L. (1981). Returning the Platte to the People. Denver, CO: Greenway Foundation.

“South Platte River Greenway.” Urban Parks Online: The Urban Parks Institute. World [http://urbanparks.pps.org/greatplaces/one?public\\_place\\_id=57](http://urbanparks.pps.org/greatplaces/one?public_place_id=57).

## RELATED RUDY BRUNER AWARD WINNERS

Readers who are interested in the South Platte River Greenway may also wish to read about these gold and silver award-winning projects from previous years:

Yerba Buena Gardens, San Francisco, CA (1999)

Nation Aids Memorial Grove, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, CA (1999)

Harlem Meer, Central Park, New York, NY (1995)

The Park at Post Office Square, Boston, MA (1993)

Brooklyn-Queens Greenway, New York, NY (1991)

Stowe Recreation Path, Stowe, VT (1989)

Radial Reuse Plan, Lincoln, NB (1989)

*(For full bibliographic citations of Bruner Foundation books, please see Introduction. Information on all RBA winning projects is available at [www.BrunerFoundation.org](http://www.BrunerFoundation.org).)*

## CONTACT

Web site: <http://www.greenwayfoundation.org/>



Jeff Shoemaker  
The Greenway Foundation  
1550 Platte Street Suite C  
Denver, Colorado 80202

303.455.7109  
[info@greenwayfoundation.org](mailto:info@greenwayfoundation.org)

2001 Rudy Bruner Award

**SILVER**  
medal winner



**SWAN'S MARKETPLACE**

Oakland, California



Project location



Project location (detail)



## SWAN'S MARKETPLACE AT A GLANCE

### SUBMITTED BY:

Michael Pyatok, FAIA, *Principal, Pyatok Associates*

### WHAT IS SWAN'S MARKETPLACE?

- A \$20 million mixed-use development in the “Old Oakland” historic district in Oakland, California.
- Adaptive reuse of eight buildings on a single 200' x 300' block, all constructed between 1917 and 1940.
- Twenty co-housing units within a common building and 18 low- and moderate-income apartments.
- Space for the six vendors of the relocated Housewives Market.
- Four office tenants occupying 17,400 square feet.
- Seventeen retail and restaurant tenants with at total of 26,800 square feet.
- The Museum of Children's Art and gift shop.
- An important contribution to the Old Oakland district, which is listed on the Historic Resources Inventory of the State of California Department of Parks and Recreation and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, pending approval of alterations that occurred as part of the project.

### MAJOR GOALS OF SWAN'S MARKETPLACE

- To build an economically viable project founded on small local businesses, including vendors from the historic Housewives Market.
- To convert a blighted block into a community gathering place and source of community pride.
- To establish a mix of artistic, cultural and culinary traditions to serve a diverse downtown.
- To attract middle- and upper-income households to live and invest in the downtown near Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) and major employment centers.
- To provide new affordable housing with opportunities for residents to increase their social support network.
- To attract new investment downtown without displacing existing residents and businesses.
- To support the efforts of traditionally disadvantaged, small, local business owners.
- To create and retain full-time, permanent jobs, offering openings for low-skilled workers and opportunities to build skills.
- To preserve a unique historic landmark slated for demolition by the City of Oakland.

## CHRONOLOGY

1890

Oakland Free Market established near the site.

1907

Housewives Market opens near the site.

1917

Jacob Pantosky constructs new building on present location;  
Oakland Free Market relocated.

1940

Largest addition added to the block's southeast corner and  
renamed Swan's Tenth Street Market.

1960-1990

Disinvestment in the area; construction of Interstates 880 and  
980 cuts off Old Oakland from the waterfront. Nine thousand  
housing units demolished; Convention Center construction  
divides downtown along Tenth Street.

1984

Housewives Market closes; block of buildings listed on the  
Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources  
Inventory.

1989

Loma Prieta earthquake; Swan's block and two others on Clay  
Street purchased by the Oakland Redevelopment Agency (ORA).

1994

ORA issues request for proposals for market-rate housing on  
three blocks including the Swan's block.

DEC. 1994

Co-Housing Company advertises for people interested in living in  
a co-housing development in downtown Oakland. Fifteen people  
show up on a rainy Saturday to look at sites and talk of the  
potential.

1996

East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)  
selected by the ORA and City Council to develop the Swan's  
Marketplace block.

1996-1998

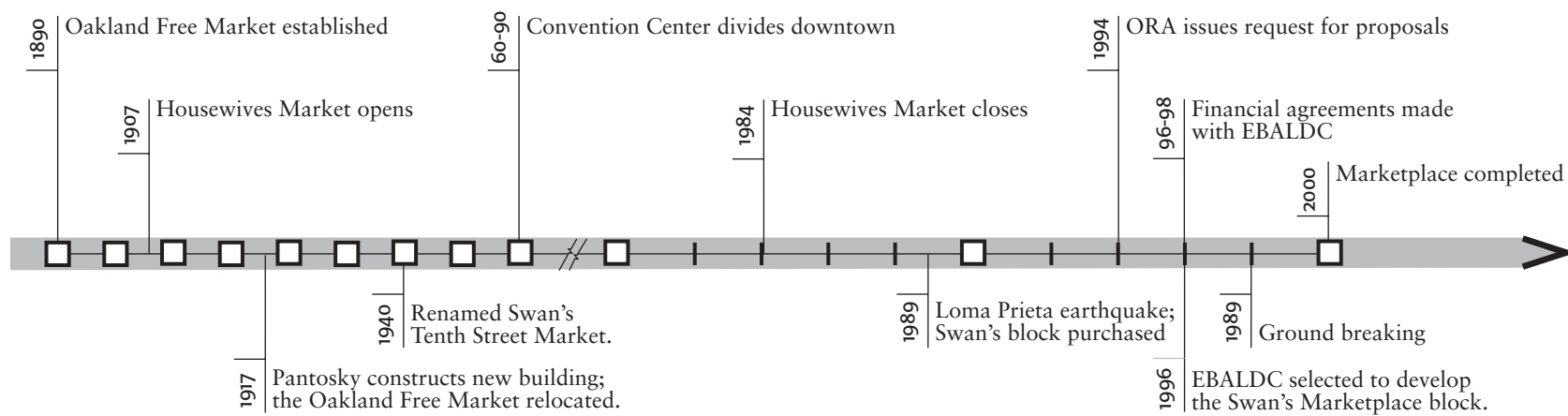
Numerous financial agreements made among three primary  
EBALDC affiliates and over 15 lenders.

1998

Ground breaking.

2000

Swan's Marketplace completed.



## KEY PARTICIPANTS

Persons who were interviewed are indicated by an asterisk (\*).

### Public Agencies

#### *Oakland Redevelopment Agency*

Alex Greenwood,\* *Project Manager*

Mark Beratta,\* *Urban Economic Coordinator*

#### *California Housing Finance Agency*

Linn Warren, *Mortgage Loan Officer*

Kathleen Weremiuk, *Mortgage Loan Officer*

#### *Other*

Diane Church,\* *US Department of Commerce/Economic Development Administration*

Stead Craigo, *Senior Restoration Architect, State Historic Preservation Office*

Amy Hodgett,\* *HCD Manager, Housing Community and Development Program, Alameda County Planning Department*

Nancy Nadel,\* *Member, Oakland City Council*

Helen Prentice, *Preservation Architect, Oakland Office of Historic Preservation*

### Architects / Designers

*Prime Architect - Pyatok Associates, Architects*

Michael Pyatok,\* *FAIA*

Peter Weller,\* *Project Architect*

Alan Dreyfus,\* *Historic Preservation Consultant*

Kathy Garrett,\* *Principal Landscape Architects, Pattillo & Garrett Associates*

Ed Fernandez, *Project Architect, Museum of Children's Art, Ed Fernandez Architects*

Y.H. Lee, *Associated Architect, Y.H. Lee Associates*

Katherine McCamant,\* *Co-Housing Consultant, The Co-Housing Company*

### Professional Consultants

Scott Barshay,\* *Attorney, Gubb & Barshay*

Arthur Goldman, *Leasing Broker, Ritchie Commercial*

Joel Rubenzahl,\* *Financial Consultant, Community Economics, Inc.*

### Community Representatives

JoAnne Coleman, *Administrative Director, Oakland Heritage Alliance*

Michael Coleman,\* *Old Oakland Co-Housing*

James Myers, *HUD Community Builder & Neighbor*

### Tenants

(selected to illustrate the range of residential and commercial tenants)

David Mansch,\* *Café Metropolis (recently purchased by Cafe Atzlan)*

Yoshi Suruki,\* *Suruki's Japanese Restaurant*

***Housewives Market***

Bert Abraham,\* *Housewives Seafood*

Raymond Gee,\* *Taylor's Sausage*

Eugenia Harrison,\* *Allan's Ham and Bacon*

Sam Wong,\* *Sam's Liquors*

Steve Wong,\* *Jack's Meats*

***Galleries***

Laura Grimshaw,\* *Paper Song Gallery*

Corinne Innis, *Chi Gallery*

Mary Marx,\* *Executive Director, Museum of Children's Art*

Lizabeth Oliveria, *Oliveria Gallery*

***Office Tenants***

Community Economics Inc.

East Bay Housing Organization

HKIT Architects

**Private Sector Financiers**

CitiBank, FSB

Wells Fargo Bank, NA

StanCorp Mortgage Investors Company

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION****HISTORY****An Important Block**

The project site, bounded by Clay, Tenth, Washington, and Ninth Streets, has a long history of retail and mixed use, dating back to construction of the Oakland Free Market in 1917. The original proprietor, Jacob Pantosky, was a self-described poultry dealer, broker, speculator, junk dealer, shoe merchant, and hotel manager. He operated the original Oakland Free Market just four blocks away, on Clay Street between Fourth and Fifth, from 1890 to 1910. In a sense, Pantosky's career established a consistent mixed-use theme for the history of what is now known as Swan's Marketplace. As late as 1981, Swan's was listed in the Oakland phone book variously as "department store," "drug store," and "food store."

Swan's Marketplace was a site of some prestige. For 60 years following Pantosky's 1917 commission to the Oakland architectural firm of Oliver and Thomas, the multiple buildings on the Swan's block were among the most important shopping destinations in Oakland. Washington Street was the premier retail street in downtown, running a full 14 blocks from the waterfront to City Hall at Fourteenth Street. Swan's Marketplace was its centerpiece.

Subsequent construction on the Swan's block reinforced its importance and attracted increasingly prestigious tenants and architects. The *Historic Resources Inventory* of the block identifies

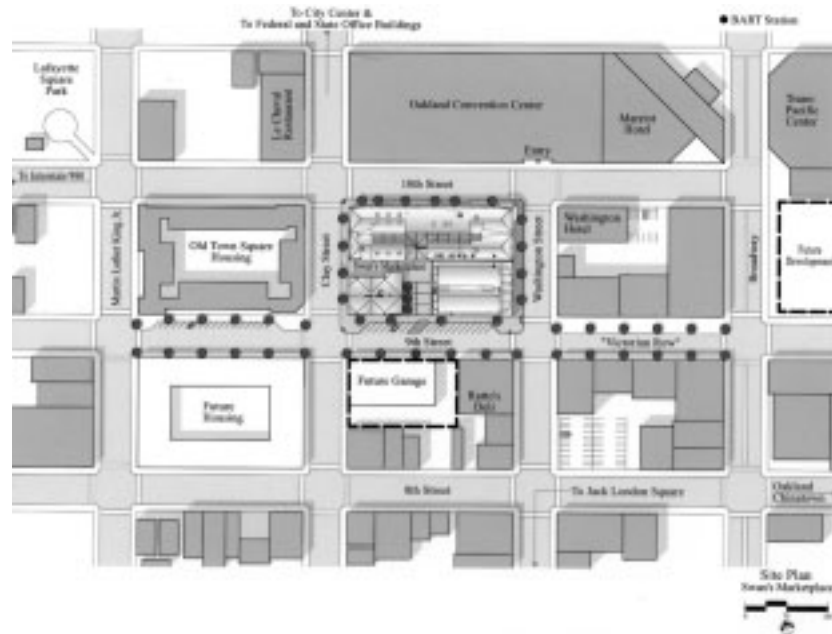


## Swan's Marketplace

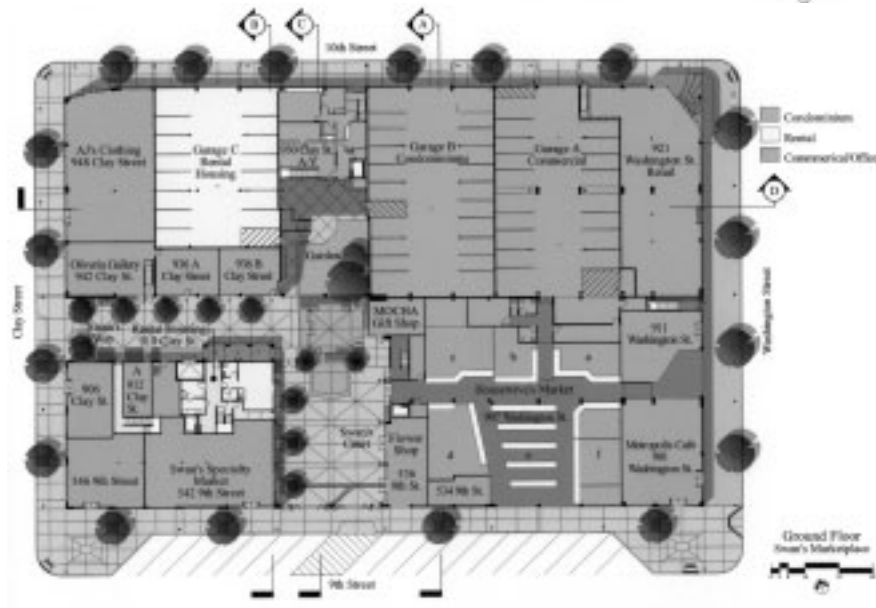
View from 10th Street  
C. 1939

Historic Swan's Marketplace

"Growing business has forced the 10th Street Market to undertake an expansion and modernization program which will double its floor space. The picture shows the present market building which will be connected to the new building (dotted lines). Work of removing the old building would cost \$100. The project was started 3/11/40."



Site Plan, Pyatok & Assoc



Ground floor Plan, Pyatok & Assoc

a 1921 addition at 910 Clay Street by architect A.W. Smith and three more additions by William Knowles between 1925 and 1927. In 1940, the block was filled out at the corner of Ninth and Washington Streets with what became the Swan's Department Store. The architect, Edward T. Foulkes, also designed other significant structures in Oakland, including the Elks Building on Broadway and the Roos Brothers Tribune Tower. Knowles, Foulkes, Smith, and others working on the Swan's block helped sustain Oliver and Thomas' original design with the use of white glazed brick and multi-colored terra cotta medallions. The consistent use of these materials, the structural module, and the window treatments helped give the block a unified appearance over 23 years of building additions. Architect Michael Pyatok's recent design for Swan's Marketplace has continued the tradition of respecting the original architecture. The renovated structure is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

### A Downtown Neighborhood in Decline

Since the 1950s, Oakland's downtown district has been in decline. The broad trend of suburbanization combined with the local urban renewal program contributed to the depopulation of Oakland. As the center declined, so did commercial traffic at the market and maintenance of the facility. Swan's Marketplace finally closed in 1984. Four major infrastructure developments in and near Old Oakland contributed to the decline:

- Construction of a new convention center that cut off Old Oakland from the city center to the north and turned a 600-foot blank wall toward the Swan's block.

- Termination of Tenth Street at Broadway to construct a new office building.
- Construction of Interstate 980, which separated Old Oakland from the waterfront to the northwest.
- Construction of Interstate 880, which separated Old Oakland from the waterfront and blocked access for Swan's customers.

By the 1990s, the neighborhood surrounding the Swan's block was physically isolated and largely abandoned. Only the struggling Housewives Market, established in 1907, and the Ninth Street Farmer's Market suggested any urban life at all. The historic redevelopment of "Victorian Row" on the neighboring block of



Rear facades with no street activity prior to re-use

Ninth Street, between Broadway and Washington, was floundering badly. At the end of the decade, unemployment in the area was 25% and the median household income was \$7,620. As the East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) manager for the project put it, “Old Oakland is where you used to park your car for conventions.”

### A Downtown Neighborhood Coming Back

In 1989, after the Loma Prieta earthquake and following five years of vacancy, three blocks of Old Oakland including Swan's Marketplace were purchased by the City of Oakland Redevelopment Authority (ORA). The complexity of the vacant buildings, their apparent lack of suitability for housing, and the fear

that the structures might be unstable led the ORA to suggest demolition despite their historic status.

The City issued a request for proposals (RFP) for housing and mixed-use development on the three blocks. Three developers responded, including EBALDC, whose proposal was controversial; it suggested retaining the structures on the Swan's block and working with the historic fabric it offered. While EBALDC drew support from preservation forces, it was criticized for the low number of units it planned relative to its competitors. There were also questions about the overall feasibility of EBALDC's proposal. The City Council intervened and the ORA eventually awarded EBALDC the Swan's block — but not the other two blocks identified in the original RFP. If creating a financial package for a diverse mixed-use program on three blocks was difficult, doing it on a single block without the economies of scale of the larger package was even more complicated.

In the end, the ORA's desire for housing and EBALDC's and others' understanding of the importance of mixed uses to create density and street life converged in a complex program accommodating a variety of uses. Despite the reduced size of the site and program, there have been a number of successes. Three new retail establishments and five new restaurants have opened in the area since the project began in 2000. One hundred and twenty new jobs have been created in Swan's Marketplace itself, with 25 more expected when the restaurant opens at Ninth and Washington Streets. Combined with 20 owner-occupied and 18 rental housing



Downtown Oakland



units, the mix of commercial and retail tenancies has brought new levels of activity to a formerly vacant block.

## VISION

The vision for Swan's Marketplace was as complex and sometimes as contradictory as its constituency. Preservationists wanted to save historic buildings. Mayor Jerry Brown advocated "an elegant density of housing for downtown Oakland." Others wanted mixed uses to create 24-hour, seven-day-a-week life in the neighborhood, to reconnect the fragments of downtown Oakland, and to revitalize the economy of Old Oakland. Preservationists, the Mayor, EBALDC, its team of architects, prospective tenants, and the ORA all pulled in different directions. In the end, these visions converged to create a program that reflects the interests and concerns of all of the stakeholders.

## Preservation

Preservationists were divided on the vision for the project. Strict preservationists argued that the original building fronts on Tenth Street, large open spaces, and warehouses were important urban fabric and should be retained. Others argued successfully that it was enough to retain the ornamental glazed terra cotta details, white glazed brick, regular bay rhythm on street facades, clerestories, and south facing saw tooth windows. Even professional preservationists were of two minds about the approach. After visiting the site, the responsible State Preservation Officer expressed his regret over the loss of the large interior volumes at the same time as he expressed his pride in the result. Helaine Prentice, member of

the American Society of Landscape Architects and secretary of the Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board for the City of Oakland, recommended the Swan's Marketplace project as a model for statewide recognition. "It illustrates with verve," she wrote, "how a historic building type – a 1917 public market, modified mid-century, then permanently closed in 1984 – can inspire imaginative solutions while respecting architectural integrity." The California Preservation Foundation concurred.

## A Mixed-Use Program

A complex mixed-use program was another key element of the vision for the new Swan's Marketplace. The ORA's RFP emphasized housing while the developer and its constituents sought a full-service



Detail of historic façade



Retail at street level



Housewives' Market

neighborhood with grocery, retail, and office space and active street life. The ORA came to embrace the EBALDC economic development and mixed-use program and satisfied its aspiration for residential density in other nearby locations. Project goals evolved to the point where the ORA's Economic Development Administration grant in 1997 recognized the importance of historic preservation and elimination of blight as well as job creation, retention of low- and moderate-income households, and provision of necessary goods and services in an under served neighborhood.

Mixed use at Swan's Marketplace has come to include a children's art museum, co-housing, low- to moderate-income rentals, a vendors' market, retail shops, restaurants, and offices. Together these uses constitute a mini-neighborhood within the bounds of a

single block. The different uses are connected internally as well as on the street front. The developers envisioned that parents leaving children at the Museum of Children's Art (MoCHA) would shop the stores and galleries on the block, office workers would eat in restaurants, residents would buy groceries from the stores and Housewives Market, and all these users would secure the place around the clock with "eyes on the street."

Another important aspiration for the project was to demonstrate that middle- and upper-income home ownership could work downtown. The 20-unit Old Oakland Co-Housing project provided compelling evidence that, contrary to popular belief, middle- and upper-income people were willing to live together in downtown Oakland. But it was also an economic lynch pin for the project.



Cafes looking toward street

Overall, Swan's Marketplace satisfied the aspirations of a variety of stakeholders as it infused new life into a racially, economically, culturally, and environmentally heterogeneous community.

### An "Elegant Density"

Mayor Jerry Brown added a significant element to the vision for Old Oakland by setting a goal to create 10,000 new units of middle- and upper-income housing in Oakland within five years. The Mayor's frank intention is to serve relatively affluent households with incomes above \$70,000 as part of a strategy to attract new investment in retail and entertainment venues in downtown Oakland. These 10,000 units are intended to augment the city's existing low- and moderate-income populations by attracting residents who can no longer afford housing in other parts of the Bay



Housing development on part of original site

Area's hyper-inflated residential market. Brown promotes the program with a call for an "elegant density" in places like Old Oakland

### Reconnecting the City

Finally, the project vision included the desire to reconnect the fragments of a downtown broken by demolitions, infrastructure obstructions, and poor urban renewal planning. Such errors have left Old Oakland isolated from the rest of the city. Broadway, a block east of Swan's Marketplace, is the only remaining north-south link from Swan's Marketplace to the waterfront in one direction and to the City Center in the other. Washington Street links to the waterfront but is blocked by the Convention Center to the North. Clay Street links to the City Center but is blocked by the



Café activity near Victorian row

freeway and BART to the south. Ninth Street, which is one-way, provides a direct link to Chinatown two blocks east of Swan's Marketplace. Tenth Street is closed at Broadway and both Ninth and Tenth Streets are cut off by a freeway from West Oakland, four blocks to the west. A vacant block at Swan's, the blocked streets, and the deadening effect of the blank walls of the Convention Center created a "hole in the donut" between the surrounding City Center, Jack London Square, and Chinatown. It is hoped that, together with adjacent development, Swan's Marketplace will provide part of the common ground needed to reconnect these three urban nodes.

## ORGANIZATION AND LEADERSHIP

The Swan's block development was in a sense organized and led by the dynamics of project finance. The combination of different financial methods exerted powerful limitations on the program and design of the project. At the same time, a workable solution was devised at the intersection of these approaches. Financing mechanisms included market-rate condominium loans, low-income housing tax credits, historic preservation tax credits, and business relocation assistance, among others. Project developers succeeded by concentrating on what their financial tools made possible, not what they prohibited.

Other contributions to the organization and leadership of the project included the driving force of the Co-Housing Company, a community development corporation (CDC) with a clear mission and strong track record; a design team with skill and experience in complex mixed-use projects; and key players who drew on the advice of "smart friends." Partners who simply knew their jobs and did them well were crucial ingredients in the mix.

### East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC)

EBALDC is a not-for-profit corporation with a strong commitment to the development of the East Bay community, especially in low-income Asian and Pacific Islander populations. It has a track record of meeting the housing needs of lower-income residents in a regional housing market where the median home price is about

\$450,000. Since its founding in 1975, EBALDC has developed more than 800 units of housing and 185,000 square feet of commercial space. EBALDC's experience extends to mixed-use development with 190,000 square feet of office and retail space to its credit. It was EBALDC that perceived the possibilities in a tangle of financing options and guided a complex and difficult venture to completion.

With the Swan's project, EBALDC met the challenge of affordable housing by delivering a modest array of new units for a range of owners and renters. Twenty co-housing units sold at an average of \$315,000 each – more or less market rate. Eighteen one- and two-bedroom apartments were for renters earning between 20% and

60% of median household income. Initial rents ranged from \$199 per month for a one-bedroom unit (for a household at 20% of median income) to \$760 per month for a two-bedroom unit (for a household at 60% of the median).

It was Joshua Simon, EBALDC project manager, who stitched together the patchwork quilt of financing mechanisms that made it possible to engage the emerging visions, fulfill the program, and make the Swan's block both a financial and social success (see "Finance"). A key element of the approach was EBALDC's willingness to accept and adapt to constraints imposed by lenders. For example, both the organizational mission of the CDC and the social vision of the co-housers shaped an aspiration to integrate the lower-income renters with the more affluent owners. But lenders wanted the two populations to be separate. Rather than resist this demand at the risk of delaying the project or worse, EBALDC designed around it. Renters and co-housing owners are in separate buildings, and the co-housers are behind a security gate. But the two structures are connected by common spaces – a public plaza and community garden.

### Doing Their Jobs Well

Another important aspect of the organization and leadership of the project was simply that the development partners knew their jobs and did them well. The architectural team applied its extensive experience in low- and moderate-income housing design; the CDC brought a strong track record in mixed-use development; the



Pete Waller, Josh Simon and Michael Pyatok

Oakland Heritage Alliance worked well with both state and local regulators, advocating positions with clarity and flexibility; and co-housing project managers all contributed the experience and patience necessary to bring the project to fruition.

Pyatok Associates brought solid qualifications in low- and moderate-income housing development and showed skill and creativity in fitting a challenging program into a complex ensemble of historic structures. Pyatok Associates had also designed EBALDC's Hismen Hin-Nu Terrace project, which, in 1997, won both a Platinum Award for design from HUD and a Silver Medal from the Rudy Bruner Award in 1997. Pyatok Associates' experience and talent, combined with its previous working relationship with EBALDC, was a major asset for the Swan's Marketplace project.

The Oakland Heritage Alliance was an able advocate for the preservation of historic resources on the Swan's block. It monitored the ORA's proposal process, supported the EBALDC proposal at City Council, worked with the architect and EBALDC, and participated in negotiations with the Oakland Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board and the State Historic Preservation Office.

The ORA initiated the project, acquired the property, and sought proposals for redevelopment. The ORA also supported EBALDC in lengthy negotiations with the federal Economic Development Authority for a crucial \$1.7 million grant. Finally, the ORA provided low-cost financing for all three elements of the project.

## The Co-Housing Company

The co-housing core group provided an unusual combination of financial, technical and social resources for the Swan's Marketplace project. The co-housers brought a share of private equity into the enterprise and recruited new members continuously. The Co-Housing Company added top-notch design and development expertise in its specialization, manifesting a particular vision for community living that exerted a powerful force on the development of the project. The decision by middle- and upper-income people to live at Swan's Marketplace provided a convincing argument for the validity of the whole development and for the desirability of living in Old Oakland in general.

The job of organizing and working with prospective co-housers through the development process to the delivery of pre-sold units fell to Katherine McCamant, an international expert on co-housing. McCamant and her partner, Charles Durrett, literally wrote the book on the subject, *Co-Housing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves*. In it, they describe co-housing as:

*a grass-roots movement that grew directly out of people's dissatisfaction with existing housing choices. Its initiators draw inspiration from the increasing popularity of shared households, in which several unrelated people share a traditional house, and from the cooperative movement in general. Yet co-housing is distinctive in that each family or household has a separate dwelling and chooses how much they want to participate in community activities.*



Co-housing exterior



Co-housing interior

*[....]Co-housing communities are unique in their extensive common facilities, and more importantly, in that they are organized, planned, and managed by the residents themselves. (McCamant and Durrett, 17-18)*

In some ways, a co-housing complex is indistinguishable from a condominium. It has shared community space and semi-public areas supported by fees. Indeed, in a legal sense, the co-housing element in Swan's Marketplace is a condominium. But it differs dramatically in the way it was developed, the reasons people chose to buy, and the social process through which community relationships are created.

The co-housing initiative pre-dated the ORA's involvement in the Old Oakland project. McCamant and her team held an initial meeting on December 4, 1994, with 15 families interested in the possibility of co-housing in downtown Oakland. Later, McCamant approached all three organizations that responded and asked to be included in their proposals.

"Josh [Simon] was initially very conservative," McCamant recalled, "but later warmed up to the idea." She persisted, however, not only with the principals of the EBALDC proposal, who included co-housing in their winning submission, but also with prospective co-housers. The original core group dwindled to just five over the years of project development. McCamant recruited new prospects continuously, setting out tables Saturday mornings at the Ninth Street Farmer's Market, giving talks at churches, and generally stumping for her version of a communal, urban lifestyle. Before the

date of occupancy, all 20 units were sold. The group formed an investment entity of over 20 families who ultimately invested in the development during construction.

In response to the ORA's request for architectural services for the project, the Co-Housing Company originally joined one of the losing teams but was later retained to work with Pyatok Associates as consultants on the development of the site. The company helped dovetail the co-housing program for common areas – kitchen, dining room, play area, lounge – with the design of outdoor spaces shared by both residential elements of the project. It also demonstrated that there was a demand for purchase of market-rate housing in one of Oakland's poorest neighborhoods. This gave lenders the confidence to fund the development.

### Smart Friends

Simon describes the project as very “local.” EBALDC, Pyatok Associates, the Co-Housing Company, the Housewives Market tenants, the local contractor, and other participants were all Oakland based. Yet EBALDC, the architects, and the co-housing consultants are also recognized nationally and even internationally as being among the best at what they do. This was a sophisticated team.

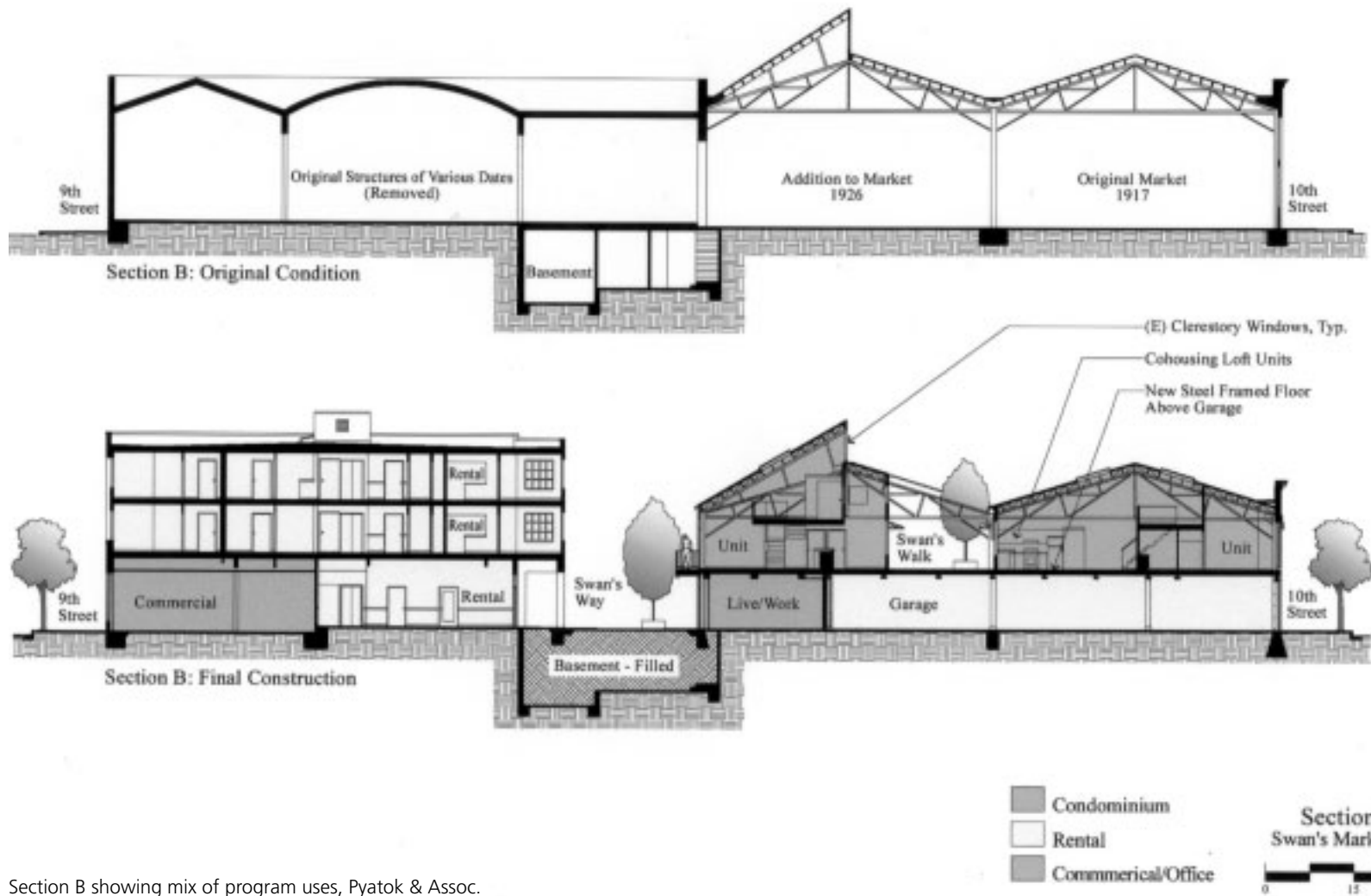
## DESIGN

The design challenge for the Swan's block was to find a way to link diverse program elements — public and private, those in and outside the project area — while also preserving historic resources on a modest budget in an untested market. Making the desired links meant creating physical relationships among the various uses within the block, weaving the Swan's block into the larger fabric of Old Oakland, and connecting Old Oakland to other nearby urban districts. Preserving historic resources involved the practical and programmatic tradeoffs between large open spaces in the existing buildings and the complex subdivision of mixed uses demanded by the new program.

### Context: Linking Diverse Program Elements on Several Levels

It is a tall order to expect this one-block project, or developments in Old Oakland more generally, to “reconnect” the fragments of the city. Neither Swan's Marketplace by itself nor redevelopment in the four-block Old Oakland Historic District will be able to defeat the isolating effects of the interruption of Washington Street by the Convention Center or of the way the center turns its back on the neighborhood with a continuous blank wall, running two blocks from Clay to Broadway. Still, new life in Old Oakland attracts people from adjoining areas and can be attributed, in part, to Swan's Marketplace. Both Clay Street (which borders on Swan's block) and Broadway now serve as stronger links between the City Center to the north and the Jack London waterfront entertainment and retailing district to the south.





Section B showing mix of program uses, Pyatok & Assoc.

Similarly, burgeoning street life on Ninth Street (which borders on Swan's block and the new housing developments to the south) helps make the east-west connection to a thriving Chinatown and to the reborn Victorian Row. New restaurants and galleries that have followed MoCHA onto the Swan's block, together with streetscape improvements, have all contributed to the creation of an important activity node in the larger city.

Tenth Street is not so successful. The public market's original front door on Tenth is now its back door, a reaction to the mass and coldness of the Convention Center across the street. Circulation is provided through the block as well as around it. Overall project design, including the new building on the corner of Tenth and Clay,



Shops and banners animate street level

goes as far as it can to offer 360-degree access to the site. The corners are canted to offer entrances on both streets. The Tenth Street facades offer evening illumination and the windows of the co-housing units overlooking the site provide eyes on the street. The regular bay rhythm, tile details, and mix of materials along the facade also serve to counter the effect of the Convention Center's brutalist box. Even so, Tenth Street is where co-housing residents and public market patrons park. There is no access to the interior of the block except on the corners or through the covered parking on the block. Despite the best efforts of the development team, Tenth Street remains inactive.

Clay, Washington, and Ninth Streets have fared much better. They all have shops opening to the street. Pedestrians on Washington and Clay are invited to the interior of the block through stores, restaurants, or market venues as well as through Swan's Court, a public plaza off Ninth Street, or through Swan's Way, extending to the plaza from Washington Street. Merchants complain about inadequate signage, but there are colorful banners and clear indications to pedestrians about where the interior market is. There are many opportunities to see through one venue into another, effectively announcing the visitor's choices from the street. The real problem may well be the already problematic lack of pedestrian traffic in the area, a result, no doubt, of the site's proximity to the Convention Center and freeways.

For the architects, the biggest challenge was how to incorporate new uses, especially the condominium units, within the envelope of the

historic market. Because of the multiple buildings and complicated site dynamics, there were 15 custom approaches to roof design for only 20 different units. A glance at building sections describes much of the complexity of pulling together the co-housing development.

There were a number of other vexing problems to be solved on the Swan's block:

- Lenders demanded that subsidized renters be segregated from market-rate owners while tenants in both categories desired an integrated project.
- Good urban design demanded that attention be paid to providing a stimulus for life on the street, but program requirements called for a unified interior through which pedestrians could traverse the middle of the block.
- The historic resources of the block were defined by the large open areas in the warehouse and retail sections of the market, but the density requirements of the program demanded commercial and retail functions be stacked and separated, subdividing the historic interior spaces.

The architecture uses common spaces like Swan's Way, Swan's Court, and the community garden to connect program components to each other and to the streets. It also visually connects the Housewives Market to Swan's Court and to Washington Street via a café entrance and other connecting spaces. These devices help to create a feeling of coherence among the different uses.

Initially, plans for the Swan's block were rejected by the State Historic Preservation Office. The local landmark preservation board and Oakland Heritage Alliance also had concerns. Many of the contributing characteristics of the historic structure were compromised by the way interior spaces were carved up to meet the program. Eventually, however, through a remarkable process of collaboration, consultation, and design development, the project won support from the entire array of preservation agencies. Even if there was some loss of the block's historic character, preservation of historic resources remained an important motivation in the design process.



Swan's Court

Some of the design choices that made this set of endorsements possible included:

- Exposure of roof trusses over Swan's Court and in office spaces as a way to interpret the original large open interiors.
- Retention of 80% of the block perimeter. The design held the corners and retained the outward appearance of the historic public market, including bay spacing and facade rhythms.
- Preservation of details of the historic facade ornamentation, window treatments, clerestory windows, and south-facing saw-tooth windows.



Trusses above Swan's Court



Historic façade restored

# VALUES

The visions at work in the creation of Swan's Marketplace embody an understanding of what it takes to be urban and of the use of mixes required to create a successful urban place. By working to create a small "village" atmosphere with something for everyone, and by including everyone, the project demonstrates the highest aspirations we have for reclaiming our central cities, making good use of the historic stock of buildings and sustaining a high quality of life for all income levels.

# FINANCES

Project financing involved a complex set of agreements involving EBALDC; three of its affiliates; the ORA; the Economic Development Authority; housing finance agencies at the federal, state, county and municipal levels; preservation agencies; an array of private sector lenders; and others. Some of these lenders participated in more than one element of the project. A full summary of funding sources is provided in Table 1 as supplied by EBALDC in its original application for the award and later confirmed by the complete *pro forma* for the project.

Uses for the funds involve the provision of the following space types and areas:

# SQUARE FEET

<b>OFFICE SPACE:</b>	17,402 SF
<b>STORE FRONT RETAIL:</b>	25,500 SF
<b>LIVE/WORK RENTAL:</b>	1,320 SF
<b>RETAIL PARKING GARAGE:</b>	5,600 SF
<b>RESIDENTIAL:</b>	50,822 SF
<i>20 CO-HOUSING WITH 1:1 PARKING SPACES 18 RENTAL AT AN AVERAGE OF 50-60% OF MEDIAN RENTS AND 15 PARKING SPACES RENTED SEPARATELY</i>	
<b>CIRCULATION AND UTILITY SPACE:</b>	10,089 SF
<b>COURTYARD</b>	7,856 SF
<b>TOTAL SF:</b>	<b>118,500 SF</b>

## SWAN'S MARKETPLACE FUNDING SOURCES

### EBALDC AFFILIATE - SWAN'S MARKETPLACE LP (COMMERCIAL AND EDA PARCELS)

LENDERS	LOAN	TERMS
WELLS FARGO*	\$3,350,000	CONVENTIONAL LOAN
ORA	1,150,000	3% SIMPLE-30 YRS DEFERRED
HHS-OCS GRANT	500,000	GRANT
EDA GRANT	1,700,000	GRANT
PREPAID TENANT IMPRV.	1,700,000	
PREPAID RENTS FOR TI	1,700,000	TI FUND
CAPITAL CAMPAIGN	1,150,000	EQUITY
STAN CORP MORTGAGE INVESTORS	3,500,000	CONVENTIONAL LOAN
HISTORIC TAX CREDITS (CEF)	2,100,000	EQUITY INVESTMENT
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$13,500,000</b>	

### EBALDC AFFILIATE - SWAN'S MARKETPLACE LP (RENTAL HOUSING)

LENDERS	LOAN	TERMS
WELLS FARGO*	\$1,561,830	CONVENTIONAL LOAN
FANNIE MAE PRI LOAN*	200,000	1% INTEREST ONLY - 2 YRS
ORA	600,000	3% SIMPLE - 55 YRS DEFERRED
ALAMEDA COUNTY HCD	500,000	3% SIMPLE - 59 YRS DEFERRED
SHP GRANT (CitiBank)	90,000	0% DEFERRED
FANNIE MAE GRANTS	65,000	GRANT
CHFA TAX CREDIT BRIDGE*	730,000	6.75% 5 YEARS - 5 PAYMENTS
CHFA	775,000	6.75% 40 YEARS
CHFA-HAT LOAN	240,000	3% SIMPLE - 40 YEARS RESIDUAL
TAX CREDIT PURCHASE (CEF)	1,350,000	EQUITY INVESTMENT
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,620,000</b>	

### EBALDC AFFILIATE - INNOVATIONS FOR HOMEOWNERSHIP (CONDOMINIUM)

LENDERS	LOAN	TERMS
WELLS FARGO	2,810,000	LENDER'S PRIME +1% - 15 MTHS.
OLD OAKLAND GROUP LLC	315,000	10% SIMPLE, 18 MONTHS
ORA	750,000	6% SIMPLE, 18 MONTHS
PROCEEDS FROM SALES	675,000	PAID FOR UPGRADES & CHANGES
<b>SUB TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$4,550,000</b>	

**GRAND TOTAL: \$21,670,000**

SHORT TERM LOANS, NOT IN TOTAL\*

Several aspects of the financing were very creative:

- Developers split the project into multiple air-rights parcels to separate types of uses and match them with the limitations imposed by funding sources. The investors purchased both historic and affordable housing tax credits on three separate parcels with two different owners. Each parcel has its own financing structure. By separating the financing by parcel, the funders' requirements did not conflict with each other.
- The condominium (co-housing) units established a solid economic base for the project and reinforced lender confidence in the project. A limited liability corporation formed by future owners of co-housing loaned money to the project.
- The developers syndicated tax credits through the California Equity Fund (CEF), which is an affiliate of the National Equity Fund. EBALDC views this funding mechanism as a model for CDCs across the country. It is a conservative approach that employs large capitalized reserve deposits and relies on annual contributions to the reserve accounts. This is done to "ensure long-term security for the development." The model assumes high operating expenses and conservative underwriting. CEF reports that, based on Swan's experience, it has encouraged others to take a similar approach.
- EBALDC negotiated with an exceptionally large number of lenders, relative to the size of the project, and accommodated the programmatic constraints that each imposed.

- \$1,150,000 was raised through a capital campaign to support the Swan's Marketplace Partnership and fund the common spaces and rental housing.
- The ORA sold the property to EBALDC for \$5, helped the developers win approval for the \$1.7 million Economic Development Authority grant, and lent more than \$3 million to the project in three separate loans.

The development team harbors a number of reservations about project financing. The team knows it missed certain economies of scale because of the large number of lenders and deals involved and because it was able to develop only one block rather than the three blocks originally offered by the ORA. The developers realize their eagerness to fill retail space led them to sign a lease restricting their options for attracting other vendors (the lease stipulated, for example, that no other vendors could sell cappuccino to go). Other leases locked in square foot rates favorable to tenants, leaving the developers helpless to take advantage of rapidly rising prices in the booming Bay Area economy. As the economy has begun to slow, however, many of these leases now look favorable.

## IMPACT ON THE CITY

Prior to recent recessionary trends, economic conditions had improved broadly throughout the Bay Area, making it difficult to assess the overall impact of Swan's Marketplace on Oakland. Still, Swan's Marketplace is clearly a pioneering development. It

introduced middle-income home ownership to the area and demonstrated the potential for diverse mixed-use developments. On the other hand, tenants of the Housewives Market and other retailers are concerned about their future survival. They complain of inadequate parking, high rent relative to their old location, and a lack of attention to marketing, signage, and a few "punch list" details. Some are concerned that some of the early retailers and Housewives Market tenants might fail while waiting for more housing and street life to return to Old Oakland, while others see this as a natural attrition.

To date, the impacts, positive or negative, are difficult to substantiate, but the following observations are possible. Swan's Marketplace:

- Created an activity node that better connects the City Center, Jack London Square, and Chinatown and further establishes the vitality of Old Oakland. It provides a diverse mix of activities, including programs at MoCHA, restaurants, upscale retail stores, the Housewives Market, galleries, live/work space, low-income apartments, and co-housing units.
- Modeled a successful public/private partnership across several agencies and lending agents with minimal conflict.
- Eliminated blight and preserved a historic market.
- Created or retained 120 jobs with 25 more to come when the last restaurant space is completed.

- Provided 18 long-term, deed-restricted affordable housing units, 20 condominium units, and live/work space currently rented to galleries.
- Provided a shared, though minimal, parking arrangement for commercial and apartment users.
- Helped spark the development of five new restaurants and three new stores in Old Oakland (now open) and two new hotels (under construction).
- Retained seven tenants from the Housewives Market and provided new equipment and training to improve business practices.

## FUTURE PLANS

Merchants are organizing to establish a clearer voice in the management of the market. EBALDC is finishing signage to make primary entrances and shopping opportunities more visible. All involved are eager for the completion of additional nearby housing to reinforce the market for retail and market vendors.

## ASSESSING PROJECT SUCCESS

### SUCCESS IN MEETING ITS OWN GOALS

*Building an economically viable project founded on small local businesses, including existing Housewives Market vendors.*

The *pro forma* illustrates that the mix of office and retail uses results in an economically viable development. Although the current tenants of the Housewives Market have experienced mixed degrees of retail success, they continue to operate. The business owners are optimistic that, as Swan's Marketplace becomes more established, retail trade will improve.

*Converting a blighted block into a community gathering place and source of community pride.*

The project has certainly eliminated the blight of the block itself, and the Swan's project includes many essential elements of community. Although the scale and density of the project falls somewhat short of the original three-block development proposed to the city, everything possible has been done to mitigate the change in project size. The new owners of the adjacent blocks are also working to build on the retail start that Swan's Marketplace has initiated.

*Establishing a mix of artistic, cultural, and culinary traditions to serve a diverse downtown.*

With the children's art museum, accompanying galleries, restaurants, office space, and a diverse resident population, Swan's Marketplace



has introduced a solid urban mix of uses and populations into downtown Oakland.

*Convincing middle- and upper-income households to live and invest downtown near BART and major employment centers.*

The project has demonstrated the possibility of attracting residents across a broad socio-economic spectrum and given confidence to developers of subsequent projects.

*Providing new affordable housing with opportunities for residents to increase their social support network.*

The project has provided a modest number of affordable housing units. Additional social support such as job training was outside the scope of the project. The skilled and caring facility manager, however, pays close attention to the needs of her residents. A contract also provides support services for the residents of four apartments for people living with AIDS.

*Attracting new investment downtown without displacement of existing residents and businesses.*

As noted, five new retail outlets, three restaurants, and various offices have been drawn to the project without displacing the vendors in the Housewives Market. Although recent recessionary conditions will pose a challenge to fledgling retail efforts, such uses are clearly needed in struggling downtown Oakland.

*Supporting the efforts of traditionally disadvantaged, small, local business owners.*

Provision of space and fit-out for the relocated Housewives Market meets this goal, as does the training on small business management practices made available by the ORA to the project vendors. All of the businesses are small and local. Seven of the 15 retail business owners are either African-American or South American. Five of the 15 are Asian and one is from Afghanistan.

*Creating and retaining full-time, permanent jobs, offering openings for low-skilled workers and opportunities to build skills.*

A significant number of private sector jobs have been created, with more on the way. The project is of such a small scale, however, that there is no specific reference to placements for low-skilled workers or job training. However, most of the businesses require low-skilled employees to operate. Many of the owners started out as employees. The fish store, for example, was recently purchased by an employee who worked for the former owners for over 20 years. If this model continues, then a traditional path for low-skilled workers to become business owners will have been retained.

*Preserving a unique historic landmark slated for demolition by the City.*

The design of the project preserved the exterior image of the original Swan's Marketplace, including materials, ceramic details and fenestration. The character of the interior was necessarily altered to meet the needs of the new users.

## SELECTION COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The Selection Committee felt that Swan's Marketplace represents a mix of retail and office space and multiple kinds of housing, including low-income residences, that downtown areas like Oakland desperately need. EBALDC and its partners came up with a creative and historically sensitive response to the city's RFP and developed an attractive and successful project under difficult physical and financial constraints. The Committee was impressed by the ability of EBALDC to work effectively in this constrained environment.

Committee members noted that EBALDC faced problems on many fronts. First, the neighborhood in which it was building was without significant resources or an existing residential base. Second, the political climate for new development in Oakland has always been a difficult one in which to work. In addition, EBALDC was forced to develop a site one-third the size of that which was laid out in the original RFP, eliminating any economies of scale.

Committee members also noted that the final site was "much too small," limiting the impact the development could have on downtown Oakland, even given the tremendous effort and the quality of design involved. Because of the developers' goals and values for Swan's Marketplace (creating a multi-use development, including low-income, affordable housing while maintaining the traditional neighborhood retail shops), financing was extremely complex. The Committee commended the Swan's Marketplace development team on the sophistication of the financing package

and intricacy of design required to implement the project, noting that not many development teams in the country possess this capability.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

(2001). "California Historic Preservation Awards." Architecture Week, February 28, pg. N1.  
[http://www.architectureweek.com/2001/0228/news\\_1-1.html](http://www.architectureweek.com/2001/0228/news_1-1.html)

"Downtown housing as an urban redevelopment tool: Hype or hope? (1999)." Housing Policy Debate, 10(2), 477. [http://www.fanniemae.foundation.org/programs/hpd/pdf/hpd\\_1002\\_sohmer.pdf](http://www.fanniemae.foundation.org/programs/hpd/pdf/hpd_1002_sohmer.pdf).

McCamant, K. & Durrett, C. (1993). Co-Housing: A Contemporary Approach to Housing Ourselves (2nd ed.). Berkeley, CA.: Ten Speed Press.

OaklandNet: The Official Website of the City of Oakland.  
<http://www.oaklandnet.com/10k-a/10Kprojects.cfm>.

"Old Oakland Cohousing at Swan's Market" (2001). Cohousing: The Journal of the Cohousing Network, (Winter) 14, 3.  
<http://www.cohousing.org/services/journal>.

Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research. Swan's Market offers model for mixed-use developments. HUD User. <http://www.huduser.org:80/periodicals/fieldworks/0202/fworks5.html>.

## RELATED RUDY BRUNER AWARD WINNERS

Readers who are interested in Swan's Marketplace may also wish to read about these gold and silver award-winning projects from previous years:

The Portland Public Market, Portland, ME (1999)

Hismen Hin-Nu Terrace, Oakland, CA (1997)

Cleveland Historic Warehouse District, Cleveland, OH (1997)

Center in the Square, Roanoke, VA (1997)

Lowertown, St. Paul, MN (1995)

Greenmarket, New York, NY (1991)

Pike Place Market, Seattle, WA (1987)

*(For full bibliographic citations of Bruner Foundation books, please see Introduction. Information on all RBA winning projects is available at [www.BrunerFoundation.org](http://www.BrunerFoundation.org).)*

## CONTACT

Web site: <http://www.swansmarket.com>



Joshua Simon

East Asian Bay Area Local Development  
Corporation

310 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200

Phone: 510.287.5353 x567

Fax: 514.763.4143

[jsimon@ebaldc.com](mailto:jsimon@ebaldc.com)

Michael Pyatok, FAIA

Pyatok Associates

1629 Telegraph

Oakland, CA 94612

Phone: 510.465.7010

Fax: 510.465.8575

SILVER MEDAL WINNER

Swan's Marketplace



## LEARNING ABOUT URBAN EXCELLENCE



## THE SELECTION PROCESS

The choice of the 2001 winners by the Selection Committee is the result of the unique collaborative process that characterizes the Rudy Bruner Award. The Committee discussion highlights its assessment of the most significant issues facing our cities today. The Bruner Foundation does not provide explicit criteria for determining excellence. Rather, definitions and descriptions of urban excellence emerge from the RBA submissions themselves. In evaluating the applications, Committee members are asked to make determinations about the importance of a project to its urban setting and to broader urban issues, to articulate the reasons why it was important, and to assess the impact it has had within its urban context. The Committee's collective vision of what constitutes urban excellence evolves from its selection of finalists, its findings from the on-site case studies, and ultimately, its determination of the gold and silver medal winners. For the Selection Committee, this is not an easy process, but it is invariably one that leads to rich and thought-provoking discussions. Faced with an abundance of successful projects and a limited amount of time, the Selection Committee set about making choices and creating a framework of significant issues and themes from which to judge these projects. The themes that emerged relate to the 2001 winners and also recall themes from previous RBA cycles.

## THE WINNERS

The 2001 RBA recognized five projects that have made their cities better places to live and work and represent important models of urban placemaking. These winners have improved the lives of the

residents of their communities and have changed the way people think and feel about their cities. As our Selection Committee noted, "the best urban projects always do."

**The Village of Arts and Humanities, Philadelphia, PA - *Gold Medal Winner*** - a private, non-profit, community based organization dedicated to revitalizing its host neighborhood through the arts. What began in 1986 as a summer project to engage neighborhood children in building a community park has grown into a major provider of arts-inspired programs in education, land transformation, construction, and economic development. The Selection Committee found The Village "bold...absolutely spectacular" in the way it "involved people doing things with their own hands in their own community...local people creating their neighborhood and developing a new sense of pride in a formerly neglected inner-city neighborhood."

The Selection Committee chose The Village as the 2001 Gold Medal Winner because of the boldness of its vision; its adaptability to other urban settings; the way in which it showed that one person can make a difference; its being part of and growing out of the neighborhood; and its tackling of difficult (some said impossible) problems without relying on large-scale public programs or funding. Equally important was the way in which The Village addressed the spiritual as well as physical needs of its community.

**Lower East Side Tenement Museum, New York, NY - *Silver Medal Winner*** - a unique museum in a landmark tenement building that

was home to an estimated 7,000 people from over 20 nations between 1863 and 1935. The museum's mission is to promote tolerance and historical perspective through the presentation and interpretation of the variety of immigrant and migrant experiences on Manhattan's Lower East Side, a gateway to America. LESTM set out to change our understanding of the way cities evolve by illuminating the universal nature of the American immigrant experience. The Selection Committee recognized the importance of honoring the untold story of immigrants to America and found immigration to be a compelling and socially unifying theme.

**New Jersey Performing Arts Center, Newark, NJ - *Silver Medal Winner*** - opened on October 18, 1997, with the dream of being a world-class performing arts center with a significant social agenda. NJPAC serves as a cultural complex for the world's greatest performing artists, as well as a setting for multicultural performances that attract New Jersey's diverse audiences. NJPAC also strives to be an educational and cultural resource for New Jersey children and families as well as an economic engine to spur the revival of Newark. The Committee was impressed by the breadth of vision and quality of NJPAC as a model for other cities undertaking mega-projects, demonstrating the feasibility of major development that maintains a commitment to serving local residents.

**South Platte River Greenway, Denver, CO - *Silver Medal Winner*** - encompasses 10.5 miles of the South Platte River, running through the birthplace of the City of Denver. Prior to the establishment of

the Platte River Development Committee in 1974, the river was seriously polluted and unfit for recreational use. Since 1974, the river has been fully reclaimed, opening the waterway and its banks for a mix of public recreational uses. The Selection Committee viewed this project as "Olmsteadian" in scale and an important "opportunity to bring disparate parts of the community together" through new public facilities located along the river's edge. The Committee applauded the creation of a major new natural resource in the heart of the city, one that gives Denver residents "a renewed sense of place, and a new sense of pride in the natural resources of the urban core."

**Swan's Marketplace, Oakland, CA - *Silver Medal Winner*** - an adaptive reuse of an historic downtown public market, incorporating mixed-income residential units and 24 separate commercial and arts-related uses organized around a shared courtyard. The project houses the 93-year-old Housewives Fresh Food Market, Old Oakland Co-Housing, and 18 units of affordable housing in a combination of new and restored architecture in downtown Oakland. It is an excellent example of mixed use and socially and historically sensitive development, and it is important as a model for a city that is trying to create 10,000 new housing units in a downtown that had been depopulated by the impact of suburbanization and urban renewal programs.

## CREATING MEANINGFUL URBAN PLACES

The process used in selecting RBA winners typically results varied in group of finalists, and 2001 was no exception. These five finalists



cover a broad spectrum of geography, scale, setting, purpose, and approach. No two were in the same city or addressed precisely the same urban issue. What they had in common was a foundation of core values as they addressed basic human needs in their own original ways.

This year's finalists all had social agendas that permeated their primary missions. The Village built gardens and filled them with art, but at a more basic level, it was about re-building a community and providing opportunities for residents to create personal meaning in their lives. LESTM created a showcase of tenement housing and immigrant lives, but its underlying purpose was to use the lessons of the past to reveal important commonalities among diverse immigrant groups. NJPAC was built to bring world-class performing arts to New Jersey, but it spends equal time and effort bringing children to the arts and art to classrooms throughout the state. The South Platte River Greenway cleaned up a river and opened some parks, and in the process it connected long-separated neighborhoods and brought a city back to its natural and historic beginnings. Swan's Marketplace saved a well-known and beloved shopping site while it worked to create a much-needed presence and vitality, as well as mixed-income housing in Oakland's neglected downtown.

A number of issues emerged in the process of researching and writing the site reports and the ensuing Selection Committee discussions. These issues relate to the nature of creating meaningful and important urban places. They are reflective of issues that have

been noted in past RBA cycles but are still in many ways unique to the people, projects and contexts of these five winning sites.

## ART AS AN ENGINE FOR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT

Efforts at rebuilding urban areas have traditionally focused on providing shelter and jobs. While no one would argue with the need for economic development and affordable housing, Strom (1994) cites a growing list of cities that have used culture and creativity as a focal point for revival. Art and culture, in museums, theatre, and public settings, have historically been an important part of what makes urban centers vital. What is new, as illustrated by several recent RBA winners, is the number of projects that make art the central focus and driving force in urban redevelopment. For example, Circle in the Square (RBA 1997) in Roanoke, Virginia, took a variety of museums and theatres, each too small to have an impact on its own, and brought them together in a cooperative facility. Together they provided a critical mass of cultural opportunities sufficient to significantly boost visitorship, while also helping to support the revival of downtown Roanoke. Project Row Houses (RBA 1997), in Houston's low-income Third Ward, saved a series of historic row houses by converting them into exhibit spaces and, in the process, provided critical support services and a sense of identity and cohesion to an underserved neighborhood. In ARTScorpsLA (RBA 1999), young people promoted community building and pride by transforming blighted parcels of abandoned land into public art. Museums and cultural sites are also a key part of Yerba Buena Gardens (RBA 1999), a revitalization that is drawing people back to the South of Market area in San Francisco to live, shop and play.

This theme is even more explicit in the 2001 RBA, particularly as demonstrated by The Village and NJPAC. While these two projects could not be more different in scale and style, they are both impressive and successful in how they have used art to directly address creative needs and to initiate broad urban development. For The Village, the use of the arts for social programs is a clear, explicit, and founding philosophy. Lily Yeh came to a neighborhood in which social and physical systems were disintegrating. She felt that the human spirit of residents had to be nurtured and strengthened before “bricks and mortar” could have a lasting effect or value. The Village engages in many different kinds of community-building activities -- housing, landscaping, job-creation — but making art and using art to change the environment is central to it all. The process of creating art serves multiple purposes for The Village. It provides a way to engage children — to get them off the street and into supervised programs and give them an experience of success. Adults have also discovered their own creative interests and abilities and from there have developed self-esteem and leadership potential. Sculptures, mosaics, and parks beautify the neighborhood as they reclaim spaces and personalize them to fit the character of the community. The arts serve to help people discover and address personal and spiritual issues that then become a basis for personal growth and community building.

NJPAC appeared as a bright spot in what was an otherwise bleak and lifeless part of downtown Newark. It has effectively married excellent design with top-notch artistic programming to overcome significant psychological barriers in bringing arts patrons to this

beleaguered city. NJPAC is unique in its fusion of the traditional functions of a performing arts center with an attention to the social needs of its community. NJPAC has made arts education its social banner and has channeled significant fund-raising efforts, personnel, and resources into its educational programs. NJPAC’s art education programs were in full swing years before the Center itself opened, sending artists to school systems around the state to support local curricula and teachers and providing lessons and resources to young artists. Currently, NJPAC offers hundreds of learning-based concerts each year for children and their families. The new Lucent Technology Center for Arts Education provides enhanced opportunities for lessons, classes, training, and practice space. NJPAC found a way to have a significant impact on Newark’s (and New Jersey’s) school children and, in particular, its low-income and under-served population, thus managing to avoid being an institution solely of and for the cultural elite.

The Museum of Children’s Art (MoCHA) in Swan’s Marketplace has played a similar though more limited role supporting art education in Oakland. MoCHA offers free art classes in a number of Oakland public schools. The Oakland public school system has been largely without an arts program since California’s Proposition 13, which led to years of reduced state funding for education. These classes are the only opportunity for a regular, structured, creative experience in the arts for many students.

## PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION OF PLACES AND VALUES

Preservation of places with great personal meaning for individuals and communities is another theme in this year's RBA, as it has been in past award cycles. This is no surprise or accident – historic preservation as a meaningful movement in American communities has its basis in saving and restoring those sites that have the most symbolic importance to communities. Local preservation movements have frequently been founded on coalitions formed when landmarks are threatened. Preservation movements support the community by helping maintain places that are beautiful, familiar, and/or historically important (Goldstone and Dalrymple, 1974).

LESTM is in some ways unique as a site for building preservation. The building at 97 Orchard Street has been meticulously studied and restored with extraordinary care, and the resultant spaces have been viewed by many people. It is unusual in that it was not, by typical preservation standards, “special.” The building is not a work of architectural significance or opulence and did not house figures of historical note. It was typical of a building type, and at many points in the twentieth century, its demolition would have been seen as a sign of civic improvement, not as a great community loss.

LESTM was preserved and restored precisely *because* it is ordinary and represents a critical part in the lives of thousands of immigrants makes a statement that, contrary to traditional preservation sites, ordinary lives are also worthy of rigorous research and interpretation. It has helped foster a new attitude among preservationists towards addressing the artifacts of the lives of common people. By saving and

preserving this building and telling the stories of immigrant families who lived there throughout its history, LESTM has made those lives significant and has created a place with broad appeal. The idea behind LESTM — to honor the immigrant experience and use immigrant history as a social tool — has impact because of the visual and symbolic importance of the building. It is similar in some respects to Houston's Project Row Houses, which preserved and adaptively used the “shotgun houses” of freed slaves to provide resources and a sense of identity for a neglected community.

The development of Swan's Marketplace in downtown Oakland also took strength from preserving a place of importance to ordinary people. There is symbolic value in having maintained the visible elements of the facade and the superstructure of a building which generations of Oakland residents had come to know. The restoration of Swan's Marketplace provided continuity to the neighborhood whose downtown landscape had been visibly assaulted by the construction of an intrusive concrete convention center. The market has helped preserve the practical functions and services of the nearby Housewives Market, which provides everyday goods for the area's underserved residents.

The Greenway is an example of environmental conservation that, by restoring water quality and returning the river to public use, has evoked a sense of Denver's history. Denver was founded on the river, it was critical to the development of a city in an arid environment. The city is now finding a way to grow back to instead of out from its roots, and this success is being shared by communities along Denver's economic and racial spectrum.

The Village supports preservation of another kind — neighborhood preservation. The threat to this area of North Philadelphia was not so much to individual buildings as to the fabric of the community itself. Many of the small houses and apartment buildings there had been abandoned and destroyed at such a rate that the neighborhood was fast becoming depopulated. Vacant lots in turn became dangerous eyesores filled with debris and weeds that provided a safe haven for drug dealing and crime. By transforming these abandoned spaces, in some cases taking historical symbols from other contexts (such as statues of African “angels”), The Village has succeeded in preserving the scale, the ambience, and possibly even the very existence of this community.

Historic preservation has been a regular theme running through RBA cycles. Past winners with strong preservation components have included The Times Square (New York City, 1997), Parkside Preservation (Philadelphia, 1999), Tenant Interim Lease Program (New York City, 1989), Project Row Houses, Campus Circle (Milwaukee, 1995), and the Maya Angelou Community Initiative (Portland, 1995), all of which used restoration and adaptive reuse to honor, save, and support housing for low-income people. Other winners, like Pike Place Market (Seattle, 1987), Lowertown (St. Paul, 1995), Circle in the Square, and the Cleveland Historic Warehouse District (Cleveland, 1997) have shown how community-based preservation, often combined with innovative development strategies, can revive a neighborhood and provide important symbolic landmarks for residents.

The built environment in general, and preservation in particular, can play an important role in establishing what has been called the “psychological sense of community” (Sarason, 1975).

Preservation, in typical as well as non-traditional ways exemplified in these winners, help provide the familiarity of landscape, consistency of scale, and meaningful symbols that can enable people to establish and maintain their sense of attachment to an area. The Village has helped support the development of a renewed pride in and connection to the community, and there is some evidence that people have begun moving back to the neighborhood, slowing or ending the long trend of abandonment. There are shoppers who come for miles to buy goods at Swan’s Marketplace, not because they find items that cannot be purchased anywhere else, but because of tradition, comfort, and familiarity. Newness has its place, as the striking success of NJPAC in Newark has shown. But even there, part of NJPAC’s goal and benefit has been not to create a new Newark but to help support, revive, and bring people back to the old city.

## PLACE AS A VEHICLE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Sometimes buildings themselves are artifacts of a broader social agenda and are the physical manifestation of a philosophy or goal for social change. This has been true of many past RBA winners. For example, the beautiful restoration and reuse of The Times Square was undertaken to provide shelter for homeless individuals, low-income adults, and persons in need of social service. The massive Tenant Interim Lease Program was designed to assist low-income tenants in becoming homeowners.

The idea behind LESTM expresses itself in the physical facility of the museum, but it also goes well beyond that site. Ruth Abram began with the concept of the “usable past,” a notion that historical lessons can be practically instructive for confronting current social problems. Without historical context for their situations, she reasoned, communities were likely to repeat past mistakes or ignore more effective strategies for change. Abram’s challenge was to find a way to make history salient and prominent – to deliver the lessons in a way that was visible and easily accessible. Once she identified the critical social problem she wanted to address – the plight of immigrant populations – she conceived of LESTM as a solution. By saving and restoring this tenement building, she hoped to tell the stories of a variety of immigrant families in a way that would unite different racial and ethnic communities, helping them to understand their common situation. In many ways, the museum has been successful beyond anyone’s imagination, and thousands of school groups and other visitors have learned from the building’s history and message. Frank Sanchis, formerly with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, notes that it was the first such museum to engage in social programming. The educational, social, and community development programs supported by LESTM show the power of an idea to affect change, working out of and through the physical presence of the museum.

While NJPAC’s primary mission was and is to present great performances, the presence of the building, organization, and staff provided an opportunity and a base from which to create one of the largest arts education programs in the country. The performances

and educational programs have a symbiotic relationship. NJPAC’s facilities, personnel, and fundraising make possible a variety of outreach programs and on-site support. Many of these programs do not explicitly require the presence of the NJPAC buildings (and operated effectively before the structures were built). However, it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to support arts education programs at their current level without the synergy they have with the facility. The prestige and prominence of NJPAC enhances the education program. These programs, in turn, help NJPAC raise operational and endowment funds; the social benefits attract individual and institutional donors who might otherwise overlook a purely artistic enterprise.

In The Village, the visual arts draw young people off the streets and into a safe haven, where they can become engaged in education, training, and service programs that may affect their lives in profound ways. Through direct exposure to artistic production, many discover modes of creativity and self-expression that provide the basis for a renewed sense of self and connection to the community. In addition, art in The Village Heart defines the neighborhood. It is the physical incarnation of Yeh’s ideas. You know where you are and when you have arrived at The Village by the distinct visual cues that help it stand apart from the rest of the community.

## NATURE AND THE URBAN EXPERIENCE

Cities are the epitome of the built environment – places where growing, organic forms take a distant second place in focus and

quantity to streets and buildings. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that access to the natural environment, to growing and living things, is critical to human comfort and development and to creating livable urban places (Whiston Spirn, 1984; Wilson and Kellert, 1993; Appleton, 1996). Natural landscapes in cities provide visual relief, comfort, protection from wind and sun, and benefits to air and water quality. There is increasing evidence that access to natural settings for active or passive recreation can play important roles in relieving stress and alleviating mental fatigue (Kaplan and Kaplan, 1998; Ulrich, 1993). Nowhere is this more relevant than in the poor inner-city core where one often finds neighborhoods with restricted access to city parks and the most daunting environmental degradation from dumping and industrial spillover. In these neighborhoods, residents lack the resources to escape to more natural, restorative settings. The restoration of Harlem Meer (RBA 1995) provided a connection with nature for lower-income residents in the midst of New York, the most urbanized city in the United States. ArtsCorpLA had a similar impact when it transformed blighted land into an arts space with lush vegetation and, in one instance, a pond for inner-city Los Angeles residents.

Among the 2001 winners, The Village and the Greenway engage significantly with the urban natural environment. The Village provides important connections to nature for North Philadelphia residents, especially children, through its small parks, organic gardens, and tree farm, as well as the opportunity for residents to design, plant, and grow things in these spaces.

The Greenway provides access to a living river at a scale that may be unprecedented as an addition to an established urban core. This previously polluted industrial zone, ignored for years by most of Denver's citizens, has become 10.5 miles (much more if one considers the full length of the improvements beyond the municipal borders) of grass and trees, bike and jogging paths, water recreation, commerce, and sports and cultural centers. The revitalized South Platte River and Cherry Creek have played an important role in connecting and "re-knitting" the disparate parts of the city. Denver has a reputation for having citizens with a passion for outdoor activities; and the Greenway provides a way to connect that passion to the urban core. It is similar in some respect to the Lincoln, Nebraska Radial Reuse Plan (RBA 1989), the Brooklyn-Queens Greenway (RBA 1991) and the Stowe Recreation Path (RBA 1989), all of which were opportunistic in finding ways to create access to nature in urban contexts and important links among local communities.

With respect to its river, Newark may be where Denver was 15 years ago. With NJPAC as its entry point and anchor, Newark is looking to create access to the Passaic River. The development of a pedestrian promenade along the river right at NJPAC's back door will provide the first major public recreational water access in centuries. Such a reclamation could significantly change the image and feel of this gritty industrial city.

## THE BENEFITS AND LIMITATIONS OF SCALE IN ADDRESSING URBAN PROBLEMS

The Selection Committee was well aware of the disparities of project scale among the five finalists. The Village, LESTM, and Swan's Marketplace are relatively small in terms of physical size and budget, whereas NJPAC and the Greenway are mega-projects involving hundreds of millions of dollars of building and development. Smaller organizations can be more nimble in responding to changes or new opportunities. Such agility was demonstrated by LESTM in its dealings with the National Park Service and various neighborhood organizations. The Village has shown the ability to respond rapidly when neighborhood sites become available, implementing clean-up, planting or other more ambitious activities.

The size of these smaller projects makes them accessible as models for other communities. Because the time and fundraising horizons are comparatively modest, citizens in other neighborhoods or other cities can more readily imagine how to replicate aspects of such projects, and by imagining them, can be spurred to develop plans of their own. Given scarce resources and the inconsistent levels of public support common in many urban areas, these projects do great service by showing how even a few committed people operating independently with minimal funding can improve a community.

Their small scale, however, also carries with it limitations and added burdens. It is hard for an effort of modest scope to leave a significant imprint on the broader landscape of urban needs. Swan's

Marketplace covers a square block of downtown real estate with a program intended for (and needing) a larger swath of land that it was eventually denied. The Village is changing a neighborhood in important ways, but the problems of North Philadelphia are vast. LESTM is a single building in the midst of one of America's most densely populated communities. Some will be impatient with the ability of smaller projects to address the huge and seemingly intractable problems of our cities. However, others, like Lily Yeh, founder of The Village, note that efforts benefiting even a single life or neighborhood are valuable, and that locally developed and small-scale projects could be an antidote to grandiose and often misdirected attempts at urban renewal.

By way of contrast, NJPAC and the Greenway (and the 1999 Gold Medal winner, Yerba Buena Gardens, in San Francisco) have broad political and geographic reach and multi-million dollar budgets that allow them to leave a significant mark on their cities. NJPAC has had much to do with a change in the way Newark is perceived and is the anchor in the restructuring of a significant portion of its downtown area. Only a very large lever could move so heavy a weight in a short period of time. The Greenway is changing the manner in which one of America's most successful and fastest growing cities orients itself and is attracting a significant share of Denver's new development. As it expands and matures, the Greenway promises to be an even more powerful force affecting the way Denver's population plays and lives and its awareness of its historical roots.

The funding, time frame, and political connections needed to make such large-scale projects happen are daunting. Even NJPAC was over ten years in the making. This makes the success of NJPAC and the Greenway all the more impressive, and there is no denying that they have become significant forces in shaping their metropolitan areas. It is hard, though, for the average involved citizen, or even an active community organizer or public official, to imagine pulling together the energy and resources required to create something similar. Who can undertake such efforts without the complicity and active support of significant government bodies and without major funding in the coffers?

The RBA has from its inception recognized places of widely varying scope, expense, and ambition, from an urban park (Harlem Meer; Park at Post Office Square), art galleries (Project Row Houses) or a farmer's market (Greenmarket; Pike's Place) to initiatives that changed the shape of major urban centers (Portland Downtown Plan; Yerba Buena Gardens). Together these winners demonstrate that excellence is independent of scale. The 2001 Selection Committee wanted to recognize both kinds of endeavors. Committee members thought the stories of a few people "making a difference" by dint of their own efforts offer stirring and important models. They were also impressed that NJPAC and the Greenway showed how a massive urban development project could maintain a focus on and sensitivity to the social needs of the entire community.

## LEADERSHIP, VISION, AND SUSTAINABLE URBAN CHANGE

An important theme in the 2001 RBA is the ability of one committed person to have an impact. Each of the 2001 winners had leaders who were deeply committed to creating urban places that would not only change the urban landscape, but would also change lives. As each project evolved, it was the vision of this key person that governed crucial policy decisions in the service of explicit values and clear priorities. This clarity of vision is invariably an important element in the creation of significant urban projects and has been notable in many RBA winners.

The 2001 winners show that an individual can affect change, even when facing challenges of daunting magnitude with few material resources at hand. Yeh's vision has led to an effort that has dramatically transformed places and lives. Similarly, Ruth Abram set out to address significant social issues with no initial funding or organizational backing. While the Greenway is now a large and well-funded effort, the polluted river languished until Joe Shoemaker took it upon himself to find a way to clean it and reintegrate it into Denver's urban fabric. These leaders had a vision and deep commitment to what was possible and important in their city.

There is an inherent contradiction, however, in focusing on visionary leaders as the crucial link in creating urban excellence. Although a charismatic leader may be essential to project development, sustainability often depends upon the development of broad-based collaborations. Too much emphasis on one strong leader may limit



the ability of others to feel a connection to the processes and successes of the project. Each of these winners has sought ways to broaden the base of leadership within the community. While all of these projects needed and had strong leadership to get them off the ground, they succeeded because they were able to develop deeply collaborative processes and organizations. Yeh was always aware that she was an outsider to North Philadelphia. The work of The Village – including sculptures, gardens, and murals – is maintained and sustained because of the level of participation and ownership of the community. The Village's future depends upon the community's continued participation in shaping its vision, decisions, and operations.

While a focus on community involvement is intrinsic in a project like The Village, it is more surprising to find a deep community commitment in NJPAC. The nature and scale of a new performing arts center could have easily resulted in a top-down, management-by-fiat organization. Instead, through Goldman's vision and leadership, NJPAC has developed a decentralized management style and has included community leaders in the decision-making process. NJPAC's ability to work collaboratively with community leaders and with staff at all levels of the organization will help sustain the high level of its community and arts education programs in the future.

The East Bay Asian Local Development Corporation (EBALDC) is unique in having twice been an RBA winner – in 2001 for Swan's Marketplace and in 1997 for another community development effort in Oakland, Hismen Hin-nu. EBALDC's continuing success is in no small measure related to the organization's proven ability to tap into

community resources and work collaboratively with a wide variety of groups. EBALDC showed great skill and professionalism in the way it managed the myriad of organizations, agencies, community groups, and lenders to make Swan's Marketplace a reality, just as for Hismen Hin-nu it created partnerships with neighborhood organizations to make its first foray out of the Asian community a success.

In Denver, Shoemaker's approach to cleaning up the South Platte River provides another example of leadership using collaborative models to create a sustainable base of support. Shoemaker made sure that representatives of Denver's marginalized communities were on the Platte River Development Committee from the start. He also invited activists from groups he thought might oppose his efforts. When project costs limited the initial clean up to two sites, Shoemaker's committee made sure that one was in a low-income, minority community, helping to build support for the effort and avoiding the label of a project for the elite.

In addition, an over-dependence on the founder inevitably leads to concerns about transition, succession and long-term viability. The more success is seen as the product of a single dedicated genius, the more dubious others (community members, politicians, and funders) are of a project's ability to thrive after the leader leaves. A truly excellent project has to be able to survive the eventual loss of the first generation of founders. How well the organization recognizes and plans for transition is a critical process that affects institutional longevity. All of the 2001 RBA winners have confronted that

problem directly and have begun planning for new leadership. The Village, for example, has recently gone through such a process. For many years the organization was small and planning could be done on an informal, ad hoc basis by Yeh or one of her compatriots. But The Village now has an impressive portfolio of properties and programs and a large, competent staff that was feeling insufficiently involved in the planning and goal-setting processes. Following a series of introspective retreats, The Village transformed its organizational structure into one that involves more of its staff in planning and management and one that, it hopes, is capable of carrying on when its founder chooses to leave. Yeh has made no secret of her desire to reduce her direct involvement in day-to-day decision-making, which has in turn spurred the organization to focus on the upcoming transition.

### **PUBLIC, NON-PROFIT, AND PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP**

Excellent urban projects are rarely the creation of one organization or even one sector of the economy, but rather the result of collaborations between non-profit, private/for-profit, and public (government) entities. The kinds of projects that emerge as RBA winners almost always involve close cooperation among organizations from two or all three of these sectors, even though many are created and driven by non-profit organizations. The resources and income stream that are available for most of these efforts simply do not make them attractive for private, for profit enterprises. Governments often have their resources and attention focused elsewhere, on basic responsibilities or longer-range planning. Similarly, innovative models of urban placemaking (like The

Village) may not fit established categories of government funding. Non-profits are more likely to have both the public-spirited mission and the motivation to focus on 'niche' issues with the single-minded dedication needed to bring them to fruition.

On the other hand, non-profits usually don't have the resources to bring about broad social change and need to partner with others to achieve longer-term goals and sometimes to gain an added degree of legitimacy. LESTM, for example, succeeded admirably in creating its organization and museum facility and in working with various neighborhood groups. It stands ready, however, to make a quantum leap in the impact it can have in the Lower East Side by virtue of its new partnership with the National Park Service (NPS). That partnership will provide an infusion of resources, in terms of funds and skills, as well as access to a much broader audience. Conversely, the NPS would not have created LESTM by itself. It had never focused on that kind of site (housing for poor immigrants) and had neither the mandate nor the creativity to develop the museum as it now stands. This new liaison will not only change the reach of LESTM, but also the way NPS sees its own goals and mission.

NJPAC is the result of a significant effort by the state government and funding and support from non-profit and private sources. It took the strong lobbying of significant business figures and others to maintain state support through three successive administrations. Funds from the state were clearly critical for this project with its nine-figure development tab. It could never have emerged as the

force it is, however, without the assistance of other groups. It shares with LESTM an attention to detail and quality in design and planning that would have been unlikely to result under a government agency. It took the single-minded focus of Lawrence Goldman, as head of a special non-profit agency, to develop a mission for NJPAC. It went well beyond the initial concepts and included the meaningful social and educational agenda that has been so critical to NJPAC's success.

The Greenway's history is similar to NJPAC in several respects. City government and a non-profit organization worked hand in hand from the start, with public funding as the underpinning, to clean the river and create the Greenway. For the Greenway, private sector investment played an important role in bringing some "there," creating the housing, shopping and event sites that make the Greenway a path to somewhere important. The non-profit Greenway Foundation has provided the day-to-day dedication, management and coordination; the city government has invested in parks and critical infrastructure; and businesses have done what they do best and have taken advantage of an increasingly attractive site to provide necessities and amenities for the public. It is reminiscent, in some respects, of the Greenmarket in New York City, which operates as a non-profit affiliated with a city agency, and providing a highly desirable amenity that has helped stimulate development and improve the quality of life in the neighborhoods it inhabits.

The Village for many years accomplished a great deal and operated largely on its own with little private investment, minimal public

funding, and, at best, benign neglect from the city. As it has grown and expanded, however, its connections to and support from other entities has become more significant. The Village now has an annual budget of over \$1 million and gets funding from an array of public as well as non-profit sources. The new affordable housing in The Village Heart, for example, is funded by the Philadelphia Office of Housing and Community Development. The Village has supported local businesses and has also started its own for-profit operation to create an income stream that can fund other village activities.

## CONCLUSION

Each round of the Rudy Bruner Award is separate and distinct; for each cycle, a new Selection Committee works with the raw material of a unique set of submissions. Yet together the Award represents a growing body of knowledge of people, places, issues, and approaches to creating excellent urban places. Each group of winners contributes to this body of knowledge by providing new ideas and supporting earlier hypotheses. Some issues, like the role of preservation, have appeared in RBA-winning projects regularly through the award cycles. They serve to remind us of the failures of the "urban removal" strategies of the mid-twentieth century and of the importance of continuity, history and shared memory in creating urban excellence.

Other issues, such as the use of art as an urban redevelopment strategy and the importance of natural environments in urban areas, are clearly growing in importance in the RBA winning projects. One NJPAC interviewee argued that the redevelopment of Newark should

not be a “jobs versus arts” competition. Jobs are critical, he said, to give people the chance to make a decent living. The arts, he added, help us understand what we are living for. The same might be said about natural settings.

As a group the RBA winners add to our common knowledge about the elements and processes of successful placemaking. The RBA has always believed that every city and every neighborhood must create its own approach toward finding excellence. None of our winning projects can provide a blueprint for change. Each place has a unique historical, social, political and organizational context that requires individualized solutions. What the winning projects presented here can offer, however, are ideas, approaches, and inspiration for community leaders dealing with the daunting challenges faced by American cities. It was this belief that led the Bruner Foundation to sponsor and organize a conference following the 1992 Los Angeles disturbances (“An alternative conference seeking power in stories drawn from the Rudy Bruner Award”) in which community leaders and residents from South Central Los Angeles met representatives of RBA winners to exchange stories and ideas. We hope the stories presented in this book can start conversations in other communities about ways people can work together to find solutions to our cities’ problems and in so doing promote urban excellence.

## REFERENCES

- Appleton, J. (1996). The experience of landscape. Rochester, New York: Wiley & Sons.
- Bruner Foundation. (1992). Los Angeles: Working through the crisis to quality urban living: An alternative conference seeking power in stories drawn from the Rudy Bruner Award for Excellence in the Urban Environment. Hosted by the Executive Office of the President and the Office of Drug Control Policy, Washington, D.C.
- Goldstone, H., & Dalrymple, M. (1974). History Preserved: A guide to New York City landmarks and historic districts. New York: Schocken Books.
- Kaplan, R., Kaplan, S., & Ryan, R. (1998). With people in mind: Design and management of everyday nature. Washington, D.C.: Island Press.
- Kellert, S. R., & Wilson, E. O. (Eds.) (1993). The biophilia hypothesis. Washington, DC: Island Press.
- Sarason, S. (1975). The psychological sense of community: Prospects for a community psychology. San Francisco: Josey-Bass.
- Spirn, A. W. (1984). The granite garden. New York: Basic Books Inc.
- Strom, E. (1994). “Let’s put on a show! Performing arts and urban revitalization in Newark, New Jersey.” Journal of Urban Affairs, 21(4), 423-435.
- Ulrich, R. S. (1993). “Biophilia, biophobia, and natural landscapes.” In S. Kellert & E. O. Wilson (Eds.), The biophilia hypothesis. Washington, DC: Island Press.







## 2001 RUDY BRUNER AWARD FOR URBAN EXCELLENCE

The *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence* is dedicated to discovering and celebrating urban places that integrate effective process and meaningful values into good design. These special places are also distinguished by their social, economic, and contextual contributions to the urban environment. *Rudy Bruner Award* winners transcend the boundaries between architecture, urban design and planning, and are often developed with such vision and imagination that they transform urban problems into creative solutions that can be adapted to cities across the country.

This book presents five outstanding projects which comprise the 2001 *Rudy Bruner Award* winners. They reflect creative approaches to urban placemaking in a variety of settings. Each of the places reflects a deep commitment by groups of citizens, public agencies, and individuals who dedicated themselves to visions of what could be, and worked to make those places become a reality.

*The winners include:*

**Gold Medal Winner:** The Village of Arts and Humanities, *Philadelphia, PA*  
**Silver Medal Winners:** Lower East Side Tenement Museum, *New York, NY*  
New Jersey Performing Arts Center, *Newark, NJ*  
South Platte River Greenway, *Denver, CO*  
Swan's Marketplace, *Oakland, CA*

The *Rudy Bruner Award* is biennial. The Gold Medal Winner receives \$50,000, and each Silver Medal Winner receives \$10,000. This book and publications on past winners are available from:

**Bruner Foundation**  
130 Prospect St.  
Cambridge, MA 02139

[www.brunerfoundation.org](http://www.brunerfoundation.org)