

## PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided.

**Project name:** The Village of Arts and Humanities **Location:** North Philadelphia, PA  
**Owner:** Lily Yeh, Executive Director  
**Project Use(s):** Arts-based community organization aiming to develop a vital and wholesome urban village.  
**Project Size:** Organization serves over 10,000 people annually in 260 blocks  
**Total Development Cost:** \$6,408,702 (See attached breakdown)  
**Annual Operating Budget** (if appropriate) \$1.3 million  
**Date Initiated:** 1986 **Percent Completed, December 1, 2001**  
**Project Completion Date** (if appropriate) Phase I, completed 2000 Phase II to be completed 2005  
 Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

### Application submitted by:

**Name:** Lily Yeh **Title:** Executive Director  
**Organization:** The Village of Arts and Humanities  
**Address:** 2544 Germantown Ave. **City/State/Zip** Philadelphia, PA 19133  
**Telephone:** (215) 225-7830 **Fax** (215) 225-4339  
**Email:** [lily@villagearts.org](mailto:lily@villagearts.org) **Weekend Contact Number** (for notification): (215) 735-7968

### Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization	Key Participant	Telephone/email
<b>Public Agencies</b> Pennsylvania Council on the Arts	Philip Horn, Executive Dir.	717-787-6883
<b>Architect/Designer</b> Cicada Architects	Kurt Raymond	215-247-2019
University of Pennsylvania	Gary Hack	215-898-3425
<b>Developer</b> Philadelphia Green	Michael Gorman	215-988-8883
<b>Professional Consultant</b> Marcus & Liberto, Inc.	Jalma Marcus	215-654-0966
Center for Community Non-profit Organizations	Dan Shah	215-204-4543
<b>Community Group</b> Fairhill Weed and Seed	Elnor Dawkins	215-684-8444
Friends of Fotteral Square	Esther Wideman	215-769-9853
<b>Other</b> Village staff and board member	James Maxton	215-225-1069
Village board member	Donald Kelly	610-449-5825
Village board/Dean, College of Art and Design, U. of the Arts	Steve Tarantal	215-717-6120

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

Direct Mailing  Magazine Advertisement  Previous RBA entrants  Other (please specify)  
 Professional Org.  Newsletter  Previous Selection Member \_\_\_\_\_  
 Magazine Calendar

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Signature

*Lily Yeh*

*Dec. 1, 00*

### The Village of Arts and Humanities

Total Development Costs (from inception to the present)

	<u>Operating</u> <u>Expenses</u>	<u>Capital</u> <u>Additions</u>	<u>Total</u>
FY86	\$ 2,500	\$ -	\$ 2,500
FY87	\$ 3,000	\$ -	\$ 3,000
FY88	\$ 4,000	\$ -	\$ 4,000
FY89	\$ 5,423	\$ -	\$ 5,423
FY90	\$ 9,889	v	\$ 9,889
FY91	\$ 22,242	v	\$ 22,242
FY92	\$ 66,111	v	\$ 66,111
FY93	\$ 167,695	v	\$ 167,695
FY94	\$ 247,010	v	\$ 247,010
FY95	\$ 253,449	v	\$ 253,449
FY96	\$ 304,090	\$ 105,228 *	\$ 409,318
FY97	\$ 465,249	\$ 76,397	\$ 541,646
FY98	\$ 665,746	\$ 109,186	\$ 774,932
FY99	\$ 765,884	\$ 54,476	\$ 820,360
FY00	\$ 1,051,334	\$ 27,173	\$ 1,078,507
FY01	\$ 1,289,220	\$ 713,400	\$ 2,002,620
<u>Totals</u>	<u>\$ 5,322,842</u>	<u>\$ 1,085,860</u>	<u>\$ 6,408,702</u>

\* Capital additions shown in FY96 are the cumulative amount for FY90 through FY96

# SECTION: I I ABSTRACT



HARTANFT GARDEN MURAL

## ABSTRACT

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*Please answer questions in space provided.* Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the questions to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided.

**Project Name** The Village of Arts and Humanities

**Location** 2544 Germantown Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19133

### 1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

Deep in the heart of North Philadelphia, one of the City's most impoverished and crime-ridden neighborhoods, lies a beacon of hope and renewal called the Village of Arts and Humanities (the Village). The Village is a private nonprofit community-based organization dedicated to revitalizing its host neighborhood through the arts. What began in 1986 as a summer project of artist Lily Yeh 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. While thoroughly rooted in the very low-income community it serves, the Village has been recognized both locally and nationally as a successful model for engaging residents, both children and adults, in the process of rebuilding their neighborhood. Today the organization serves over ten thousands low-income, primarily African-American youth and families each year, covering several neighborhoods within a 260 square block area in North Philadelphia.

Everyday life in inner city area tends to be stressful, unsafe and often emotionally or financially challenging. To address a variety of community needs and interests, the Village has developed a broad range of programs using an innovative and effective arts-based approach. Art in this context means creativity in thinking, methodology and implementation as well as the visual and performing arts. The Village's Education through the Arts program provides after school, weekend and summer programs for youth and outreach activities to help other groups develop similar programs. Through Land Transformation and Construction, the Village works with community residents and other partners to transform abandoned lots into parks and gardens and to renovate abandoned properties. Through Economic Development, the Village provides small-scale employment and training opportunities including craft production, construction and a tree farm. To showcase the creative accomplishments of youth and to bring families together, the Village sponsors community festivals, exhibitions and field trips. To respond to the emotional needs of the community in telling their stories, the Village creates original theater each year to voice community concerns and celebrate its energy and cultural heritage.

Through the project we aim to establish a different way of revitalizing urban spaces and neighborhoods that delivers high quality results through an inclusive and organic process that inspires and empowers all participants, restore environment, and deepen people's understanding of and connection with each others.

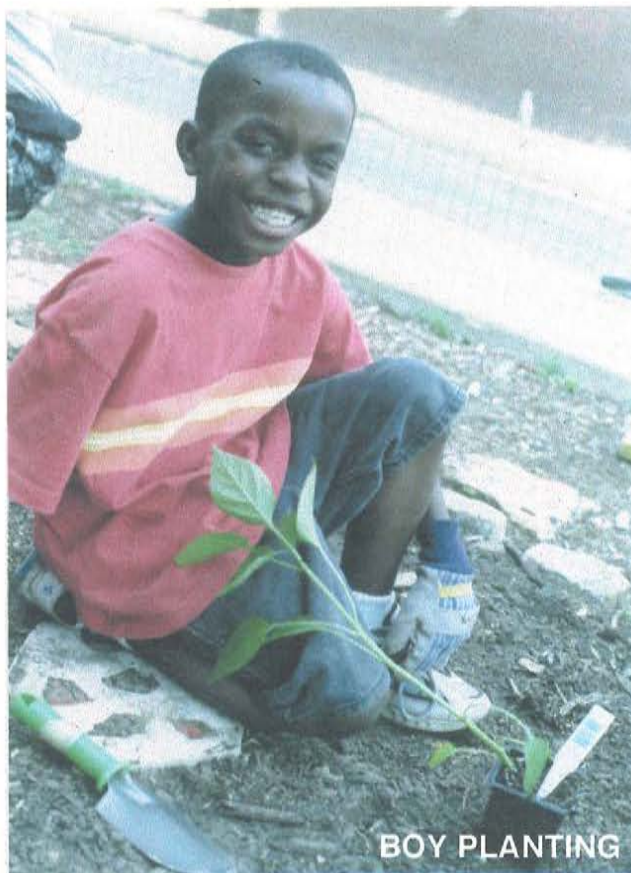
### 2. Why does the project merit the *Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence*? (Effect on urban environment; innovative or unique approaches to any aspect of project development; new and creative approaches to urban issues; design quality.)

The Village of Arts and Humanities merits the Rudy Bruner Award because it is an inspired project with vision, conviction, and compassion. It challenges the traditional concepts and methods in building community and urban places. Village staff and artists sense the profound humanity in places broken; we see hope and life beyond blight. Together, we have been inventing inclusive and transformative building methods, both of people and places. In all of our programs and activities, we aim to do justice to the people we serve, to honor, respect, and cherish them. The Village's innovative approach is truly community based yet provides professional deliverance. Due to scarcity of resources and the urgency of inner city situations, the Village has devised multi-faceted, multi-leveled, and inter-connected methods to address simultaneously the complex needs of our residents for better education, housing, meaningful jobs, identity, self esteem and community pride. We have devised innovative ways to create resources in the land of deprivation, poverty, and trash. We have found ways to turn apathy, cynicism, and despair into joy, hope, and a communal nurturing spirit. Breaking down barriers, our projects and activities aim to reconnect people to build true communities. We freely share our knowledge and methodology with others interested in similar work. Our motto is "Together we build."

Since 1986, the Village has completely changed the look of its immediate neighborhood by converting over 120 trash-strewn lots and brown fields into twelve parks, gardens, and green spaces including a 2-acre tree farm. The Village has renovated six abandoned buildings into its education facility, offices and workshop spaces with little government help. Innovative and dynamic programs benefiting thousands of residents yearly take place in these renovated spaces. The foundation of our land development process is a unique sense of aesthetic appeal through which we express our sense of value, sensitivity, and identity. We aim to bring people joy, peace, and comfort through the places that we touch. There is mystery in these places, for their appearances are deeply rooted in different cultural traditions, some with distant and ancient origins. The resulting Village environment provides a stark contrast to the surrounding blight defined by deteriorating buildings, trash-filled vacant lots, and graffiti. While local businesses are locked down with steel doors and gates after daytime business hours, Village gardens are without gates; our tree farm is without fences; our programs and facilities are open to all residents who want to participate.

# SECTION: III

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION



BOY PLANTING

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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## 1. What local issues did this project address? How has it affected the local community?

The Village is located in North Philadelphia, within the area designated as the North East Empowerment Zone. Like many inner city areas, this urban community is characterized by aged and deteriorating housing, high rates of vacancy and trash-filled abandoned lots, poverty, low employment, crime, incarceration, and environmental pollution. Residents living in the community are impacted daily by these factors and as a result experience low self esteem, at-risk youth with low academic and job skills, health problems, brokenness of places and family structure, a lack of hope, cynicism, and unexpressed grief.

The Village has worked to build its surrounding community, emotionally, mentally spiritually, and physically by offering a different sense of what is possible; transforming blight to beauty, pride, and joy. In terms of emotional well being, the Village facilitates a process through which life experiences become art (theater, publications, and exhibitions) through a catalytic process of working with highly creative artists and educators. Through this process, participants gain a new sense of pride in themselves and in their neighborhood. The Village builds mental capacity through education and job training activities, strengthening academic skills, teaching teamwork and entrepreneurial skills; and giving neighborhood residents opportunities to succeed in various field such as urban gardening, construction, office management, video production, writing; supporting teens going to college; and staff training and development. The spirit of the community is touched through the Village's sensitivity to aesthetics which value diverse cultural heritage. The Village celebrates each year by presenting unifying community events celebrating Black History Month, Earth Day Spring Clean, and a Winter Celebration. The culmination of the year is held in the fall with the annual Kujenga Pamoja Festival where families come together to celebrate individual and community achievements. Through the Rites of Passage Ceremony, the Village parks and gardens become sacred ground, where, by the light of candles, we evoke blessings for the future for our youth, their families, and the larger community. Furthermore, Village Theater is an important vehicle for the community to come together to express feelings, aspirations, grief and concerns on stage and to celebrate strength, creativity, care and love. Finally, the physical transformation of abandoned properties into art parks, gardens, and renovated buildings and the continued maintenance of completed projects trains residents to re-claim their land and maintain it for a healthier community providing physical testimony to the power of imagination and the effectiveness of art to express human values.

## 2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant tradeoffs were required to implement the project?

Our project aims to deliver our mission – To build community through innovative arts, educational, construction, economic, and social initiatives. In all of its projects and activities, the Village seeks to do justice to the humanity of the people who live in inner city North Philadelphia or in similar urban situations. We aim to build a community where people are reconnected with their families, sustained by meaningful work, sheltered in decent housing, nurtured by each other's care, and together will raise and educate their young. The Village motto is "Together We Build".

There have been three key tradeoffs in the implementation of the Village. It is a complex organization with many programs and activities happening at the same time, all contributing to the creation of a new urban space and a new sense of community. As the Village developed from a simple art project into a complex organization, it has required more time and energy to maintain its effectiveness, such as staff support and development, effective internal communications, and facility upkeep. Thus, to ensure the long term stability of the organization and long term benefit to the community, a lot of resources and energy had to be diverted from direct program activities to management activities. The tradeoff is that the impact of new resources is not immediately felt by residents. Community involvement is crucial to every aspect of our work involving breaking down emotional and physical barriers to change. The process empowers residents to take ownership of projects, the land, and their community. However, the process of engaging the community is slow, laborious and full of setbacks. As founder and executive director, Lily Yeh has also made personal tradeoffs in the development of the Village. She has moved from being a hands-on artist to being the lead architect who conceives, plans, leads, and supervises without doing hands-on creating. Managing people and projects is complex work and provides less hands-on satisfaction. In this tradeoff, more people are involved and learn new ways of doing things with different standards of excellence. It is a lot of effort to share one's vision and inspiration. Yeh is moving art to the center stage of community building, economic development, and land transformation. She is creating a new kind of art, which cannot be captured and exhibited. It is like living water, which nurtures and provides but cannot be possessed. It is not about form, yet form gives it opportunity to manifest itself. In the process of expressing this energy and life, it discovers its own paths and creates its unique shapes, and forms. Yeh defines the Village as a living sculpture, which grows, expands, or diminishes according to its own health, strength, and environment. The history of the Village shows how it is possible to start an art project which slowly but steadily emerges to become an urban village involving thousands of people. Many people talk about community participation and organic process; we are doing it. It is complex and progress is often slow and difficult yet it is worth doing because it is profound and deeply rewarding when it works.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION (CONT'D)**

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### **3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where appropriate.**

The development of the Village began with an art project and has emerged to become an urban village (see Long Range Plan). It started with a request to have a park built on an inner city abandoned lot. Artist Lily Yeh responded with an idea, received funding from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, and began to explore the possibility of her idea. Yeh's work attracted the participation of children first, then neighborhood adults, and eventually engaged other artists/builders, educators, and volunteers. Responding to the expressed needs of the people and place, they launched additional projects which evolved into programs in greening, construction of more parks and gardens, an after school arts education program, building renovations, housing construction, community-based theater, health education, crafts production, festivals, teen internships, publications, and a tree farm. The long-term vision is that many of the programs will evolve into independent entities and spin off from the Village, creating jobs and bringing additional resources into the neighborhood. As a result, an urban village with holistic and multi-faceted activities will begin to become a reality.

A clear picture of the development process can be seen through the evolution of a project. For example, in park building, we have established well-defined procedures. New projects begin when individuals or groups express the desire to convert abandoned lots into parks and gardens. Village staff work with city agencies to gain site control. In community meetings people dream together and identify possibilities for the project. An agreement is made that if the Village helps to build the park, the residents will maintain it. Under the leadership of the artistic and executive director, the Village team proposes designs based on the community vision with the sensitivity of the Village artists and builders. The designs are presented to residents for feedback and approval. Then the steps and methods of construction are defined and designs implemented. The Village construction crew, composed of neighborhood adults, does the construction work with assistance from teen interns and neighborhood residents.

### **4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.**

Because the Village is a multi-faceted organization which sponsors multi-faceted projects and activities, it acquires and receives funding from multiple sources. The Village receives support from: (1) private foundations including: Wallace-Reader's Digest Funds, Rockefeller Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, William Penn Foundation, Surdna Foundation, Nathan Cummings Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Forrest Lattner Foundation, Butler Family Foundation, Carol Haas Gravagno Funds, Connelly Foundation, Samuel Fels Fund, New Path Foundation, and many more. (2) government funds include: National Endowment for the Arts, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, HUD, Office of Housing and Community Development (Phila.), Commerce Department of Philadelphia, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and Philadelphia Cultural Fund. (3) corporate funds including: First Union Foundation, PNC Bank, Smith Kline Beecham, Vanguard Foundation, WB17 Cares for Kids, Philadelphia Eagles Youth Partnership, Lucent Technologies, Philadelphia Newspapers, Inc. (4) individual donors and (5) earned income. During its 14 years of existence, the Village has brought over 7 million dollars worth of resources in cash, donations of materials, and volunteer services into the community. Yet, the most precious gift the Village brings to the community is a sense of hope and joy.

### **5. Is the project unique? if so, how is the model adaptable to other urban settings?**

The Village model is unique in its thinking, methodology, and implementation. It has a history and an organic evolution based on the use of art as a vehicle for community building and land transformation. The Village is unusual in that the beautiful is erected right next to the decayed. Artists, builders, and residents work together to find solutions and to create new projects and spaces. The Village work with the understanding that community building is not about constructing buildings alone, it is more about the process and how people work together and treat each other. We have a Taoist understanding that our strength lies in our weakness and that our vulnerability is our protection.

While it is innovative, the Village's philosophy can be readily shared and replicated not only locally, but nationally and internationally as well. Locally, Village artists and educators have conducted workshops for children and adults that build self-esteem and community pride while teaching concepts such as conflict resolution and community health through hands-on visual arts and puppet theater. Village staff have also presented the Village story, philosophy, and methodology and held hands-on workshops for numerous conferences and community groups across the country. Numerous groups in North Philadelphia have learned Village land transformation methodology, resulting in the greening of various neighborhoods in the 260 city block area. Nationally, the Village has presented community-building through the arts workshops in Boston, Washington D.C., New Hampshire, Georgia, and New Mexico. In Korogocho, Kenya, three Village artists conducted workshops for hundreds of children and adults in a shanty town situated next to a city dump. This month, artists will return to continue to bring energy, guidance, and support to this community. Other international projects have been initiated in Ivory Coast, Ecuador, the Republic of Georgia, Italy, and China.

# SECTION: IV

## PERSPECTIVE SHEETS





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**2001**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**REPRESENTATIVE**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name Elmer Dawkins Title Director of after school program  
Organization Fairhill Wood used comm. Ctr Telephone 815-684-8494  
Address 2415 G. Ermonthorn ave City/State/ZIP Phila PA 19133  
Fax 815-684-8663 E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature Elmer Dawkins

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

I have always been involved with the community. I work at a low-income housing project a few blocks from where the Village began. Like many of our community members I was concerned about the way the community was looking. Due to the extreme dilapidation of the community, many of the residents had given up and become frustrated with the idea that we could do something to change the conditions we were living in. However, when Lily came along, I was overwhelmed by her vision- and sincere belief that our situation was not hopeless- and that together we could do something to make a difference in our community.

My major role in the beginning of this project, and to this day, is to encourage the children to be involved with the project. There are a lot of children who live in our community housing project and they did not have anything constructive to do with their time. Being raised in the South, I strongly believe in tending to, and cultivating the land. Therefore, what Lily was doing made sense and I strongly encouraged the children to participate in gardening, planting, and cleaning up the lots. Inner-city children rarely have the opportunity to fresh vegetables and plants grow. They did not realize that the land they occupied could be beneficial to their survival. I knew that having this experience was instrumental to my childhood and I wanted to share it with these children.

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

The community was not against this project, nor did they embrace it whole-heartedly. Lily's motive was not clear to the community, at first. We had wanted something to happen to change the look of the land for years; we just didn't know how to go about doing it. Due to the many vacant lots we were experiencing a rise in the crime rate, rodent problems, and a lack of hope, coupled with an extreme sense of depression among our community members. The children in the community were excited about the project the most and made up about ninety percent of the work force. Some parents were skeptical at first but after seeing how proud the children were about their accomplishments and contributions those feelings soon sub-sided.

Another concern about the project was the means in which Lily had proposed to change the community. Many of the residents had never been exposed to art of the creative process and did not understand how effective this type of work could be in changing their community. This community has never been exposed to this type of artwork and they had never been to a museum or learned about mosaics. But for the first time people's ideas were changed about what art could be because this art spoke directly to the individuals in this community, old and young alike. Lily had the skills to not only create art but to teach the artistic process and it made the community excited about participating in this project.

3. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

The adults gave up some of their personal time, while the children gave up some of their play-time. The people in the housing project made an exchange of services with the Village because they knew this was worthwhile. The children would work from sun up to sun down during the summer. It gave the community something to look forward to and feel good about.

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

Definitely! For many years I was afraid to walk by the vacant lots. The crime rate in this neighborhood was extremely high. The neighborhood was a war zone and I did not want to be a casualty. But now, the majority of the vacant lots are clean. Residents have beautiful parks with trees, flowers and place for their children to play safely. The atmosphere is more relaxed and people are not afraid to go out and socialize with their neighbors. The attitudes of the community residents have changed. They are proud of the artwork they helped to create and feel a sense of accomplishment. The effect of their involvement is that they can point to the project and it belongs to them. It has built character and showed them they can have a positive effect on their community.

5. What would you change about this project, or the process you went through?

I would like to discover new ways to get more adults to participate. While the main thing for me is to keep the children involved, I would like for the parents and adults to become stronger participants.

# COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by someone who was involved, or represents an organization that was involved, in helping the project respond to neighborhood issues.

Name ESTHER Wideman Title President  
Organization Friends of Fotteral Square Telephone (205) 269-9853  
Address 1040 W York St City/State/ZIP Phila Pa  
Fax ( ) E-mail

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Signature Esther Wideman

1. How did you, or the organization you represent, become involved in this project? What role did you play?

During the summer of 1999 I became involved in efforts to reclaim Fotteral Square, a park owned by the City Department of Recreation. At the time, the park was a mess, the grass needed cut and there was a lot of trash and glass on the grounds. In trying to get the park cleaned up, I was referred by Barbara McCabe at the Department of Recreation, to seek help from the Village. Village staff gave me advice and resources and taught me how to advocate for the park. This has included teaching me how to apply for funds, connecting me to people who could help me with the park, connected me with City Year volunteers, and lent me tools and supplies for park clean up events. With direction from the Village, the Friends of Fotteral Square has received \$10,500 from grants. Through this partnership I became involved with the Village as a board member and a volunteer with the teen program

2. From the community's point of view, what were the major issues concerning this project?

This is a neighborhood impacted by drug problems, crime, and a serious lack of self esteem in the youth. There was a lot of undeveloped land and pollution that has been changed by the Village. I see the Village working well with the youth, giving them direction, and involving them in positive activities like theater and the summer camp. The Village teaches people about taking ownership for the community, keeping it clean, and developing trashed lots into parks. The Village has brought a lot of pride back into the community.

3. What tradeoffs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Successful parks and gardens serve as visual aids and give other people ideas for how they can develop lots on their blocks. The Village has traded off its hard work in creating parks and gardens to the point that now more neighborhood residents are ready and willing to help more in the process.

## COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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4. Has this project made the community a better place to live or work? If so, how?

The Village has changed the whole environment of the neighborhood from a dirty, trashy, unsafe environment to a clean, safe and happy environment. It has motivated the community and done excellent outreach for the children. The Village has decreased crime and drug use among teens, and motivated younger children to want to get involved in Village activities.

A good example is the Village Tree Farm which has changed the look of the neighborhood. Where we used to be afraid to walk by the large, trash-filled, rodent-infested lot – we are now proud to see the beautiful trees and wildflowers. A space that used to be used for criminal activity and drug use is now a place for community activities that gives jobs to neighbors.

The Village has also brought a lot of resources to this community including funding from government and private sources, access to the arts, and access to government agencies and their resources.

5. What would you change about this project, or the process you went through?

I wouldn't change anything, I feel as though the Village is well ran and has a nice open door policy for any community member to come to.

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**2001**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**PUBLIC AGENCY**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



# PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by staff representative(s) of public agency(ies) who were directly involved in the financing, design review, or public approvals that affected this project.

Name	Philip Horn	Title	Executive Director
Organization	PA Council on the Arts	Telephone	(717) 787-6883 x3028
Address	216 Finance Building	City/State/ZIP	Harrisburg, PA 17120
Fax	(717) 705-6588	E-mail	phorn@state.pa.us

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Signature

1. What role did your agency play in the development of this project? Describe any requirements made of this project by your agency (e.g., zoning, public participation, public benefits, impact statements).

Fourteen years ago, a \$2,500 grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts provided the first matching funds used to create the sculpture garden that has since become the nationally-recognized community development organization known as the Village of Arts and Humanities. It is gratifying and humbling for a public agency to see the long-term beneficial impact on an urban environment made possible by modest state support for the arts. Since that first project grant (which provided half the wherewithal for artist Lily Yeh, builder "JoJo" Williams and a small, but enthusiastic group of neighborhood children to transform an abandoned, garbage-strewn lot in the "badlands" of Philadelphia into a sculpture garden) the Village has received growing state arts funding support that has included participation in the Council's Strategies for Success program, which promotes and encourages the development of culturally specific, community-based organizations through board development, strategic and long-range planning, cultural vision and staff development. Over the Village's five-year period of participation in the Strategies program, its annual state funding support increased from a combined grant of \$7,066 in 1990 to \$60,548 in 1995 (see enclosed publication *Preserving Diverse Cultures Through the Arts*). A benchmark Strategies graduate, the Village receives annual operating support through the Arts Organizations and Arts Programs Track. Beyond funding, the Council, its staff and consultants have "walked with" the Village in building organizational infrastructure, implementing professional staff positions, and seeking corporate and foundation support and the Village has been required to address weighted criteria that include fiscal management, artistic quality, and availability of the arts (through education, outreach, and to special populations) through annual applications and required final reports.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What tradeoffs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

The mission of the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts is to foster the excellence, diversity, and vitality of the arts in Pennsylvania and to broaden the availability and appreciation of those arts throughout the state. Responsive funding for arts organizations and arts projects supports the best arts for the most people. Special initiatives such as the Council's Strategies for Success program address statewide goals -- in the case of Strategies, to develop a strong culturally specific, community-based support systems for the continued stabilization and expansion of multi-cultural arts and community organizations through Pennsylvania. Organizations that have sought and received Strategies support have primarily been found in urban environments and face the often extreme challenges of their place. The Village of Arts and Humanities is a classic example, developing in one of the City of Philadelphia's most impoverished and crime-ridden neighborhoods. When the Strategies for Success program was envisioned for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, it took much inspiration from the leadership of two state legislators, the late Rep. David P. Richardson, Jr. and former Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives K. Leroy Irvis (the first African American to serve as a Speaker of the House in the nation). Speaker Irvis, who was also a sponsor of the legislation that created the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, once said "It is important for people to recognize that the development of humankind is a cultural as well as physical development." Thus, the intended benefits of state arts funding for the Village of the Arts and Humanities must be seen in the light of Speaker Irvis' statement of values. Government funding for the arts and for cultural development both supports and is integral to physical development of Pennsylvania's community organizations and urban environments. In the most blighted of urban places, tradeoffs and compromises inevitably come from the obstacles to change, the dangers of place and the inertia that accompanies the social ills of neglect, hopelessness, economic disparity and abandonment. The hands-on nature of Strategies support from this agency recognizes and adapts to the specific needs and challenges of grantees like the Village.

## PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the project's impact on the neighborhood and the city. Please attach relevant data where available.

The Village's impact can be measured on many scales. The first is in square footage of reclaimed urban property – 120 abandoned lots and brown fields have become an educational center, 12 community art parks, gardens and green spaces including a tree farm (that provides trees to one of the nation's oldest green space projects for an urban environment, Philadelphia's Fairmont Park). The next must be the scale of neighborhood involvement and connection – over 10,000 primarily African-American youth and families within a 260 block area are served by the Village's programs and events. Community festivals and celebrations spill into the streets, bringing music, food, light, laughter, costume and ceremony to blocks that know darkness, danger and despair too well. Artists from across Philadelphia, the state, the nation and other parts of the globe come to the Village to create, to teach, to learn and find inspiration. The Village's annual theatre project provides a voice for the community and its stories. Art experiences and training provide tools that reconnect families, rebuild properties, educate children and build community pride. The Village has developed a business incubator for the production and sale of crafts designed by professional artists from children's artwork and fabricated by local residents. It has a health education program, offering nutritional information. A project to build affordable housing in the neighborhood is also underway. Finally, the impact of the Village must be measured on a scale that speaks of the beauty that has been created there. To see 'before' and 'after' images of an abandoned lot that has become a sculpture garden is to see the art of possibility and the possibility of art. Gone are the ragged weeds, the rusting lumps of metal, the trash, the unmistakable signs of discarded drug paraphernalia, the crumbling walls, graffiti and flaking paint. In their place are lovely murals, graceful sculptural forms and tiled walkways, bright colors, glittering surfaces, and towering painted figures representing hope, protection, courage and community.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

As a graduate of the Council's Strategies for Success the Village provides a national model of a public/private partnership to support the development of culturally specific, community-based organizations. The Village is one of eight organizations in the Commonwealth featured in the Council's anniversary publication *Preserving Diverse Cultures Through the Arts: Lifeline to the Next Generation*. An example of the successful use of the arts in community development and revitalization, the Village was recognized by Governor Tom Ridge this year when he presented it under Lily Yeh with a Year 2000 Governor's Award for the Arts for Arts Leadership and Service. This year the Village also received national recognition from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts with one of 10 *Coming Up Taller* Awards. These awards "recognize and reward outstanding arts and humanities programs that encourage and engage children by giving them safe, stable environments in which to learn and opportunities to develop their skills and aspirations." The Village was selected out of a nominated field of 247 programs from 44 states. The Village has also become an international model through the work of founder Lily Yeh in Kenya, China, the Ivory Coast, Italy, the Republic of Georgia and Ecuador. Aspects of the Strategies for Success program that would be instructive for agencies like ours in other states or cities include the multi-year tiered funding strategy incorporating consultants who provide long-term professional development and organizational stabilization.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The most successful aspects of this project are the profound physical and spiritual changes that have taken place on Germantown Avenue and its surrounding neighborhood. The very existence of the Village is a miracle of creativity and will. The Village's Education Through the Arts program provides year-round, after-school, weekend and summer programs for more than 2,500 youth-at-risk. The youngest participants, known as "fledglings" learn to paint, dance, sculpt, act, write and garden. They also learn to be on time, work with others, eat nutritious foods, and do their schoolwork well. Fifty-seven percent showed improvement on their report cards last year. If there are any less successful aspects of this project, they would be the minor setbacks experienced in doing something difficult but worthy in an incredibly hostile environment. The Village, its staff and board of directors have always responded creatively to such obstacles, disappointments and delays. Over fourteen years, the Village has persevered against enormous odds and continues to strive to attain its full potential. From the young "fledglings" in the Village art classes and the painted angels of "Angel Alley" (a place once favored by drug dealers and their clientele) to the crafts products the business incubator is producing for sale, the Village has brought numerous images of wings and winged creatures to its urban environment. These images of transformation, of rising above urban problems through creative solutions and artistic inspiration, are Village emblems. The Village is indeed a special place, a place of urban excellence, participation, innovation, beauty, change and value, worthy of highest recognition.



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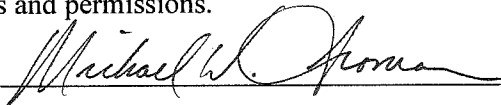
**2001**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**DEVELOPER**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



## DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

Name: Michael Groman  
Title: Director, Philadelphia Green  
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Signature: 

### *Background on Philadelphia Green*

The Pennsylvania Horticultural Society's (PHS) urban greening program, Philadelphia Green, works with community groups and residents in neighborhoods throughout the City to plan and implement greening projects. The program also partners with private and public organizations to landscape and maintain public spaces in the city's downtown area and at its gateways. Proceeds from the Society's Philadelphia Flower Show, along with funding from local foundations, corporations, and government agencies, help to support its projects.

(Special Note: Philadelphia Green is more a partner and supporter of the Village of Arts and Humanities' efforts than a "developer"; since the Village's inception in 1986, we have provided ongoing material and horticultural technical assistance. The answers to the questions below detail our work with the Village.)

*1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.*

Philadelphia Green's work with the Village started in 1986, when Village founder Lily Yeh contacted us for assistance in starting a community garden and park. Our staff worked with Lily on the construction of Ile Ife Park, supplying trees recycled from the Flower Show. Since then, Philadelphia Green has provided materials, horticultural technical support, and workshops for the Village's various park and garden projects. In recent years, Philadelphia Green has assisted the efforts of the Village through our Keystone Gardens Project, which aims to ensure that established community gardens remain focal points for their neighborhoods and are well maintained and supported by effective gardening groups. (The Village uses gardening as a part of its own educational programming efforts.) We also plan to assist their Environmental Leadership Internship for Teens program – done in partnership with the Norris Square Neighborhood Project – which involves youth from both the Village and Norris Square neighborhoods. The overall goal of this program is to encourage careers in the environmental field through workshops, presentations, and a work exchange initiative between the two communities.

*2. What, if any, modifications were made to the original proposal as the project was developed? What tradeoffs or compromises were required during the development of the project?*

As Philadelphia Green's partnership with the Village of Arts and Humanities has developed, both organizations have realized benefits beyond our original expectations. Through our 16-year relationship,

we have kept an open dialogue going and have enjoyed a solid, mutually productive relationship. Philadelphia Green often showcases the Village as a wonderful example of community revitalization – our annual tour for PHS's Council members and supporters has made several trips to the Village. We have also brought members of the Garden Writers Association of America to see the successes and hope instilled in this North Philadelphia neighborhood. And, Lily Yeh has been an inspirational speaker at the Philadelphia Green Brunch for community gardeners at the Flower Show, as well as for other PHS-related events.

*3. How was the project financed?*

Since Philadelphia Green's function is as a supporter of the Village's efforts, we can only comment on our own funds committed to this partnership. In the late 1980s, The William Penn Foundation funded Philadelphia Green's citywide work with gardens, and the Village fell under this purview. In the last few years, through our Keystone Gardens Project, funding for our work with the Village has come from The Pew Charitable Trusts.

*4. How did the financial benefits and economic impacts of this project compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?*

The mission of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society and its Philadelphia Green program is to motivate people to improve the quality of life and create a sense of community through horticulture. Though we recognize that there can be financial and economic benefits from our efforts, it is not the thrust of our work.

*5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?*

Philadelphia Green's work with the Village, particularly with its Tree Farm, provides an apt example of how inner-city youth can acquire essential job-related skills. Utilizing the Village's Tree Farm, youth from the community involved in the Core Leadership Teen Group learn about horticulture, and acquire the job skills and responsibility needed to run a business. The neighborhood benefits from the trees grown at the farm (they are used to help stabilize vacant lots, line city blocks, etc.). And, the tree farm sells to the Fairmount Park Commission as well as local landscape contractors.

*6. What are the most and least successful aspects of this project?*

One successful aspect of this project can be found in the collaboration between Philadelphia Green and the Village of Arts and Humanities – two organizations who share a common goal of community revitalization. Also, the Village has grown tremendously as an organization – starting with two staff at its inception and now boasting 15 who work full-time. It is a testament to their powerful work in this distressed North Philadelphia community, and illustrates that funders have had an ongoing and enthusiastic interest in their progress and achievements.

## DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided.

This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name Kenneth J. Kolodziej Title Owner  
 Organization KJK Associates Telephone (215) 843-3058  
 Address 3006 Foxx Lane City/State/ZIP Philadelphia, PA 19144  
 Fax (215) 849-4804 E-mail J.Ken@NNI.COM

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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the scope of involvement.

K.J.K. Associates was awarded an eight thousand dollar design-build contract to provide an area for growing and maintaining trees. This project had become a priority master plan site years before, but the land and grant money was not available until February, 1999. We were to work with the Village staff and community to develop a 2.5 area lot filled with debris, abandoned cars, garbage, and weeds. It was to be operational by May 1999. More specifically, my role has been to coordinate the execution of the tree farm project, procurement of materials, coordinate sub-contractors and reviewing volunteer requirements. In addition, I was involved in the review of the overall design for the tree farm with community residents. From this project my role has expanded to include oversight of the outreach greening projects and contracts.

2. What, if any, modifications were made to the original proposal as the project was developed? What tradeoffs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

The planning phase involved meetings with the neighbors to insure they were involved and ready to support this project. Knowing this process could use all available funds for design, we used a landscape Architect who volunteered his services. Using other volunteers and supplies offered free of cost, we proceeded and completed \$30,000 of work in twenty-one days for the original \$8,000.

3. How was the project financed? What, if any, innovative means of financing were used?

A Philadelphia Urban Resources Partnership grant was combined with monies from the William Penn Foundation Environmental program to provide the seed money for the tree farm. A state senator helped to secure the land. Area commercial growers supplied trees for free or below cost. Recycled buildings materials (crushed brick) was used for walkways and demonstration areas.

## DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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4. How did the financial benefits and economic impacts of this project compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

Because of the Tree Farm project, we were able to develop programs to grow trees for use by the community as well as for sale. Local residents were hired and trained in the care and maintenance of the tree seedlings and saplings. 103 additional lots were cleared, cleaned, and greened. In my experience, the initial investment has never before gone so far, to do so much, to help so many and influence an area's future so significantly.

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

Dreams are good planning tools. The needs of communities must be heard and felt, in order to develop a project to meet their collective needs. On this job, the needs were different, seniors needed a safe, clean haven; teens needed to learn about trees and working as community; adults needed the jobs and an area of pride. Developers must dream along with the community.

6. What are the most and least successful aspects of this project?

In 2000, the Village Tree Farm potted and raised 22,000 trees for sale at a cost of \$80,000. They have sold 18,000 trees to recupe that investment, but future sales will require up-grades to existing facilities and finding new markets. The tree farm has provided this neighborhood with the knowledge that they can make a difference and protect what is theirs without fences, gates, and locks. The tree farm has trained over 100 people about tree care but there is still no clear leader to run the show. Time will tell if the nursery by committee will work.

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**2001**  
**RUDY BRUNER AWARD**  
**ARCHITECT**  
**OR DESIGNER**  
**PERSPECTIVE**



## ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

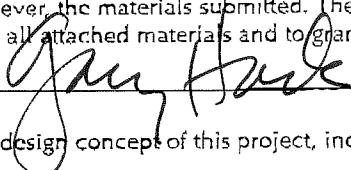
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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name GARY A HACK Title DEAN  
Organization UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA Telephone (215) 985-2966 / 215 898-3425  
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Fax (215) 573-6654 E-mail gahack@pobox.upenn.edu

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Signature 

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

*Please see attached letter*

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

# UNIVERSITY of PENNSYLVANIA

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## The Graduate School of Fine Arts

Gary Hack, Dean and Paley Professor  
102 Meyerson Hall  
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6311  
Tel. 215-898-3425  
Fax: 215-573-6654

November 29, 2000

TO THE RUDY BRUNER AWARD SELECTION COMMITTEE:

I wanted to tell you what a remarkable project the Village of Arts and Humanities is.

In the Badlands of North Philadelphia, the worst-of-the-worst abandoned, crime ridden neighborhoods of an American city, a shining example of hope has been created. Beginning with a single public space, transformed by neighborhood children as an art project started 14 years ago, the Village has spread – to become an art center, several community spaces, community gardens, rehabilitated houses, indeed a true village of 20 or more blocks. It stands as a model of the best grassroots transformation of our cities. I know of nothing like it in another city, nothing that has spread to transform an entire neighborhood, and it should be known in every place looking for hope and vision.

The Village stands as another important example – how the arts can become a binding force for neighborhood transformation. The Village is all about art, which is why it could be done and be seen not as a takeover of the neighborhood, but as an expression of its hopes and aspirations. The art is expressive and representational, some would say “folk art”, and it is everywhere, on walls, in paving, in the objects that have been created, in the pattern of the planting, indoors and out. Hardly a surface is untouched by human creativity. In that sense, it can't be judged as conventional public art, for the art was made with the purpose of mobilizing spirits and energy in a downtrodden community so it could imagine a new future. Art and neighborhood artists are inseparable.

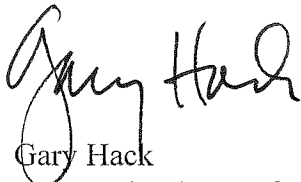
And there is a third thing that the Village celebrates: the leadership of Lily Yeh, one of the most remarkable people I have ever met. A “small Chinese woman”, as she describes herself, she is a giant of a leader. Nobody who comes in contact with her can avoid being swept into her enthusiasms. She arrived in North Philadelphia, at a time and in an area that no outsider would dare set foot in, and somehow managed to gain the confidence of a community and enlist them in the cause of remaking their community. Lily exemplifies just how much difference one person can make. She, of course, would say it was not one person but an army of people collaborating on something that inspired them. But it would not have happened without her.



About a month ago I had the pleasure of organizing a day-long symposium at the Guggenheim Bilbao Museum on “learning from cities”. I invited Lily to show the Village and speak about how it came about – subconsciously assuming that it would counterbalance a set of presentations that centered mainly on large scale development and planning of Philadelphia. Lily and the Village literally stole the day! The Europeans in the audience had never seen anything like what she showed, and there were dozens of questions from the audience about how it came about. Afterward, she had several invitations to visit neighborhoods and places in Bilbao struggling with similar issues. Her presentation had struck a responsive chord among people wrestling for the first time with ways that immigrant and minority communities can create places for themselves in European cities. So the model that the Village represents clearly has broad universal relevance.

I think the Village of Arts and Humanities would be a wonderful choice for the Rudy Bruner Award.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Hack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "G".

Gary Hack  
Dean and Paley Professor  
Chairman, Philadelphia City Planning Commission

# ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

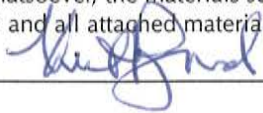
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This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other design professionals if desired.

Name	Kurt Raymond, AIA	Title	Principal
Organization	CICADA Architecture/Planning, Inc.	Telephone (215)	247-2019
Address	184-D E. Evergreen Ave.	City/State/ZIP	Philadelphia, PA 19118
Fax (215)	247-2098	E-mail	<a href="mailto:kraymond@cicadaarchitecture.com">kraymond@cicadaarchitecture.com</a>

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Signature



1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

CICADA has been collaborating with the Village on a series of projects since 1997. That year, with the increasing size and ambitions of the performing arts programs and the perceived need to create a cultural heart for the Village, we were hired to facilitate the production of a **Conceptual Design for a Theatre/Café**. This facility was to support the goals of providing education, economic development and community – education through the teaching of food service skills and fundamentals of nutrition at the Café and carpentry, costume design and production/performance at the Theatre; economic development through the income derived from the Café and theatre productions; and community by acting as a magnet for neighborhood activity and reflecting, in its forms and materials, the spirit of the Village.

The Theatre/Café and an affordable housing project simultaneously in development were both goals identified by the Long Range Strategic Plan that the Village had adopted in 1995. As the potential ripple effect of these two projects on the physical form of the community was understood, however, it became apparent that the Village needed a complementary plan to inform the actual design of future development. This realization resulted in the production of a **Master Plan and Design Guidelines** for the neighborhood by the Village and CICADA. The first step in this process was coming to an understanding of existing program uses and the derivation of recurring decorative motifs that had developed organically over the life of the Village. A second step involved locating new uses, such as craft workshops, renovated housing and community gardens to support the long range vision and take maximum advantage of existing structures and open space and the relationship between the two. The third step involved the development of a series of design interventions, at multiple scales and inspired by Christopher Alexander's *Pattern Language*, to reinforce and carry forward the profoundly human experience of the Village.

We were then engaged to help develop the first of the projects identified by the Long Range Plan and reinforced by the Master Plan. Known as **Alder Street 5**, this project is intended to create both educational opportunities and an income stream through the conversion of five existing rowhouses into a Café/Craft store, Craft Workshop and Teen Center along a small street at the center of the Village.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

As Architects and Planners, we work hard to find both elegant solutions to the functional requirements inherent in any design problem and to ground our projects in a relevant, resonant cultural and spiritual context. We are consistently struck, and inspired, by the Village's ability to meld an understanding of the neighborhood culture, an intuitive sense of scale, form and aesthetics and belief in the creative potential of the most disadvantaged members of our society to yield a community of hope and possibilities that somehow seems completely rooted in its environment.

## ARCHITECT OR DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

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3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design tradeoffs or compromises required to complete the project.

The primary challenge in our work with the Village has been to make the most of extremely limited financial means. For the Theatre/Café and Alder Street 5 projects, this has meant inclusion of only the bare essentials of interior fit-out and building systems and the development of an approach to construction that takes maximum advantage of volunteer or semi-skilled labor.

A secondary challenge has been to work with the predominant building type – two-story, brick-front rowhouses with 325 sq. ft. floor plates. For the Teen Center and Craft Workshop, this has meant finding methods of economically stabilizing deteriorated masonry facades, and inserting new internal structural systems so adjacent house can be joined to accommodate the program requirements.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

As the manufacturing jobs that once supported the rowhouse neighborhoods of North Philadelphia have disappeared, population density has decreased significantly. As abandoned houses are cleared for vacant lots, gaps are created in these once contiguous blocks. A major focus of planning efforts in these distressed communities has been reconciling this decreasing density with the desire to maintain their urban character - the Village has arrived at a successful strategy for dealing with this issue through creation of a series of connected parks, gardens and alleys, selective renovation of existing housing stock and careful insertion of new housing and commercial and institutional uses to reinforce its intimate character.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the project's design and architecture.

The constraints placed on the designs by limited finances has also created opportunities. The greatest strength of the projects at the Village has been their "incompleteness" in the traditional architectural sense. For the Theatre/Café and Alder Street 5, CICADA was charged with producing a sympathetic external scale and solving internal technical and programmatic issues. This minimal scope is intended to provide a blank canvas of exterior surface and interior space so that the Village craftsmen can apply the decorative motifs and palette of colored stucco and mosaic tile that tie this community together.