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FOUNDATION . . .

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OGILVY PR WORLDWIDE*MidAmerica Community Programs - On the cutting edge*

As our nation readies itself for the expected surge in youth population, especially among immigrant and minority groups, and the anticipated problems that may arise, MLF Community Programs offer a comprehensive approach to preventing such problems before they occur. Studies show that good health, close ties to parents or other responsible adults, jobs, and well-defined goals make youth less likely to engage in risky behavior. Many of the MLF Community Programs use a preventative rather than a problem-solving approach in order to help young people develop to their fullest potential.

ECOVIDA is a community-based organization in Pilsen that aims to preserve natural resources and improve the environment, health, well-being and future of families living in Chicago's Latino communities. ECOVIDA emphasizes youth leadership development and fosters understanding between its Latino youth and youth of other races.

In December, 15 ECOVIDA students at the Manuel Perez Elementary School located at 19th and Throop, came together to make chile strings to sell for Christmas decorations. Mexican families traditionally use jalapeno,

chile and other types of peppers for seasoning and also use the red chile peppers to make a natural Christmas decoration. The young people made over 100 chile strings, which they then sold throughout their Pilsen neighborhood. After expenses were paid, the children were able to keep \$3 for each chile pepper string they sold. All 100 strings were sold, netting \$300.

The children then used the money to purchase school supplies or to help their parents cover family expenses.

ECOVIDA has a partnership with a community-supported agriculture farm, Angelic Organics in Caledonia,

Illinois, where the children and their families grow four types of peppers for sale. ECOVIDA founders Jorge Montes and Neris Gonzalez believe it is very important to take children and families away from the stress of life in the city to connect with nature and to work in the garden. The parents and children relax, visit the farms, get acquainted with farm animals and work the soil. A recent result of their hard but enjoyable work was that six families grew enough potatoes, broccoli, onions, lettuce, carrots, beets and tomatoes to take home approximately 15 pounds of vegetables for their own use every 14 weeks during the growing season.



ECOVIDA youth making chile strings.

Continued on page 6



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CED Helps Make Dreams a Reality

When Vanessa Dean heard about the Community Economic Development (CED) Program, she wanted to use an Individual Development Account (IDA) to buy a home, but now she is thinking bigger and more long-term. Her goal is to buy a two-flat building with her IDA savings and use the extra rental income to help reach her future goals of receiving her master's in behavioral science and opening a recovery home for substance abusers.

In January of 2000, Vanessa started saving in an IDA and attended the financial literacy sessions. Since that time, she has taken many steps toward her goal. She has become more disciplined with her money. She found a rewarding job at an agency where she is getting experience working with substance abusers, and by Spring of 2000, she was no longer receiving a welfare check. She now proudly reports that the only assistance she gets is a medical card for her children.

In September, 2000, Vanessa hit the books, and by December 2001, she

plans to have her bachelor's degree in behavioral science. Being a part of the CED Program has helped keep her focus. It puts her end goal of opening a recovery home in the front of her mind and teaches her to "save money regularly and keep away from the credit cards." Vanessa has consistently saved \$50 per month in



Vanessa Dean and Family

her IDA, missing only one deposit. Each month, she goes to the bank and deposits money in her checking, savings and IDA account. "I think of them like bills I have to pay." In August of 2000, she also took out a one year secured loan from the bank to build good credit history and plans to have it paid off in half the time! She

describes the program as motivational and challenging and also shared, "The CED Program changed my life and helped me to seek goals and attain them. Saving money and paying yourself first doesn't mean getting your hair or nails done. It means putting money aside and creating a cash flow to where it becomes an asset instead of a liability."

Urban Pastor Award Winner Named



Reverend Juan Flores, Pastor of Grace and Peace Christian Reformed Church at 1651 N. Kedzie, Chicago, has been named the

William H. Leslie Urban Pastor Award Recipient for 2000. In addition to the award, Rev. Flores receives an unrestricted gift of \$2,000 from the William H. Leslie Memorial Fund at MidAmerica Leadership Foundation.

Married and the father of three, Rev. Flores received this prestigious award because of his tireless work promoting cross-cultural urban mission and

reconciliation. Rev. Flores has exposed countless numbers of suburban youth from the U.S. and Canada to urban ministry through effective volunteerism. He serves on the Steering Committee of the Storehouse of Vision Chicago. He used Storehouse materials to remodel his own church. He has also recruited pastors of many urban churches along with other Christian leaders to use these materials for rebuilding their communities. By doing so, he has demonstrated and communicated the potential impact the Storehouse can have in Chicago.

From Executive Director Gary Nederveld



With gratitude to our community partners, volunteers, staff and donors, we report that MLF achieved its FY 2000 goals in two

critical areas: we increased the number and quality of our partnerships and enhanced MLF's sustainability through increased earned income. Our balance sheet (June 30, 2000) is stronger than last year's as a result. Our FY 2001 goals are: to achieve a balanced transition from 5 programmatic initiatives to 3 with the spin-off of both Vision Chicago and the Urban Enterprise Fund and to call a new President.

The CED program, with its purpose "to rebuild Chicago communities through the ministry of asset-building," continues to expand MLF's set of partners. The Seabury Foundation and the Chicago Community Trust have given grants. More banks have gotten involved. The Northern Trust, Uptown National and Firststar have joined the partnership. Community Bank of Lawndale is still our largest partner. The Illinois Department of Human Services supports the program in Cabrini. CRWRC has given \$16,000 this year.

The key words that characterize last year could be teaching and learning. Teaching—we have further

developed our training and technical assistance program for Community Programs. Thanks to a group effort, we have a written curriculum for a full range of topics, from strategic planning to resource development. We completed and co-published "Faith and Finances" our faith-based financial literacy curriculum with CRC Publications. We share in the revenue from sales. There is the opportunity elsewhere in this edition of Bridgebuilder to order your own copy. The National Center for Poverty Law is interested in partnering with us to bring financial education to low income, non-English speakers. We have contracted with groups in Denver and Holland, Michigan on an expansion of a Work Readiness Index. This is used by our Chicago partners to prepare people for first jobs or better jobs.

Learning - The community program leaders and our staff have learned some truths - that community organizations grow strong and last long when the leader develops: an ability to accept feedback from others and to consider adjusting his/her self-perception, relationship skills so that multiple leaders can come on board, a culture of trust and caring within the organization so that everyone feels ownership.

Thank you for staying the course with MidAmerica through your financial and prayer support.

—Gary

Latino Union Aids Earthquake Victims



Jose Landaverde, the Latino Union of Chicago

When a massive earthquake hit El Salvador on January 13, 2001, killing at least 400 people, Chicago's Latino community gave with sacrificial generosity to the Salvadoran earthquake relief effort. To date, residents of Back of the Yards, Pilsen and Little Village have collected more than \$15,000 in cash along with tons of clothing, food, water and medical supplies for the Latino Union of Chicago, 4314 S. Hermitage, one of MLF's current Start-Up Community Programs. On January 22, Jose Landaverde, founder of Latino Union, traveled to El Salvador to distribute the food and supplies. The cash is being used to buy medicine and supplies and hire trained Salvadoran health workers to supervise their use. Gary Nederveld, executive director, MLF, was able to arrange for the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) to wire transfer the donated funds to the CRWRC office in El Salvador at no charge to MidAmerica or to the Latino Union of Chicago. Gary said, "We thank our friends at CRWRC for helping us reduce the risk to Jose Landaverde without taking anything away from gifts given by people, most of whom earn minimum wage, if that."



From Board Chair Mary Nelson:

As joyful volunteers for MLF, we continue to see that the emerging leaders who succeed in the neighborhoods of Chicago have enormous stores of energy, commitment, and most of all, hope. They are able to ignore slights and disappointments and move on to draw the broader community into a vision that has the capacity to transform us all.

Now, more than ever in this era when "faith based initiatives" are in the limelight, the work of MidAmerica is even more important. We count on your support in these important times. — Mary



Fiscal Responsibility: Fiscal Year 2000
(July 1, 1999-June 30, 2000)

Income

Contracts and Partner Programs	\$ 889,721.00
General Contributions*	\$ 1,172,613.00
Community Programs	\$ 606,266.00
Interest and Miscellaneous	\$ 27,471.00
Total Income	\$ 2,696,071.00

Expenses

Program Activities	\$ 1,982,117.00
Management and General	\$ 103,600.00
Fund Raising	\$ 140,766.00
Total Expenses	\$ 2,226,483.00

*Includes \$375,922.08 contributed to the Urban Enterprise Fund during FY 2000 and transferred to the Urban Enterprise Fund during FY 2001. (FY 2000 audit in process)

Graduated Programs include:
(partial listing)

Chicago Communities in Schools,
Emmaus Ministries, Gethsemane
Wholistic Public Health Practice,
Greater Chicago Broadcast Ministries,
Imagine Chicago, International Urban
Associates, Roseland Christian
Community Homes Corporation,
Roseland Community Good News
Day Care, Starfish Learning Center,
Support Advocates for Women and
Young Men's Educational Network.

Five Initiatives Set Mission for MLF

During Fiscal Year 2000, MLF accomplished its mission through five programmatic initiatives:

1-Community Programs-

MidAmerica incubates start-up community programs that spin off as viable, sustainable, independent ministries within two to five years. During fiscal year 2000, three excellent start-ups spun off and moved to independence with great success. During their incubation, the Community Programs learned skills in time management, listening, handling meetings, conflict resolution, advocacy, action planning, and especially leadership development. MLF successfully incubates 88% of the start-up programs.

Start-up programs included:

Chauncy's Place, God's Gang, Gethsemane Wholistic Public Health Practice, Greater Works Ministries, Lawndale Community Outreach Services, Starfish Learning Center*, Support Advocates for Women* and Young Men's Educational Network*.

Established programs included:

For Your Consciousness Ministries, Network for Prisoner and Family Ministries, Growing Home and Near North Ministry Alliance including the Alliance for Community Peace, the Jenner Family Resource Center and Transforming Communities

2-Community and Economic Development:

This program is an asset-based development approach that begins with a "directed savings plan." The plan provides match funding as incentive to people living in poverty in inner city Chicago to save money, with the realistic hope of affording a mortgage, receiving post high school education or beginning their own business. The full program is operating in Cabrini and Lawndale and being introduced in Austin and Rogers Park.

Highlights of FY 00:

Preparation of Faith and Finances curriculum for publication.

Fifty-four IDA's were opened and \$13,156.78 was saved.

Approximately 265 people attended a financial education class. Many people completed the financial education, are taking classes in asset management and are eligible to use their match money. One participant used his match money to open a business.

3-America's Promise

America's Promise promotes five goals for each young person: a healthy start, a safe place, a mentoring relationship with an adult, marketable skills through an effective education, and the opportunity for service. During FY 2000, MLF coordinated the efforts of AmeriCorps Promise Fellows in nine Leadership Foundation cities, including Chicago. Here in Chicago, Ashley Dearborn completed her one-year term of service as an Americorps Promise Fellow and Vina Ariyaprakai has picked up the challenge.

During her year of service Ms. Dearborn's accomplishments included introducing 15 different groups to America's Promise, working to form the North Lawndale Work Group on Balanced and Restorative Justice for Juveniles (BARJ), and promoting volunteerism through AmeriCorps' Common Core. During her term, Ms. Dearborn is most proud of her work in coordinating a mural project for the Lawndale Community. "Incorporating art, faith and garden work is a great accomplishment for the youth in the Lawndale community." The mural project continues to support the community with Promise 2: Safe places, as well as Promise 4: Marketable skills through effective education.

Vina Ariyaprakai, a native New

Continued on page 6



*Graduated during the year

We thank the donors and friends whose faithfulness supports the programmatic initiatives of MidAmerica Leadership Foundation. We apologize in advance for omissions, misspellings or any other unintended affronts to those listed here. We take this opportunity to thank those, not listed, who designate their gifts directly to the programs or funds for which MLF is fiscal agent.

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MidAmerica Leadership Foundation, a Christian institution, transforms Chicago's impoverished communities by equipping local leaders with the tools necessary to turn their visionary ideals into viable and self-sustaining organizations.



Initiatives *Continued from page 4*

Yorker, is a 2000 graduate of the University of Chicago with a longstanding interest in service to others. She sees MLF's one-year AmeriCorps position as an opportunity to serve Chicago through an initiative that matches her values, skills and interests. After her Promise Fellow term is completed, Vina plans to attend medical school, using what she learns this year about God's compassion and vision for



Vina Ariyaprakai

children in need throughout the world as a foundation for her future career. Vina says, "As the next Promise Fellow, I hope to continue to increase Chicago's faith-based organizations' awareness and

commitment to America's Promise. I believe America's Promise and the 40 Assets are valuable tools for effective programming both on an organizational and community level. They have the ability to encourage, empower, and challenge us to fully serve Chicago's youth."

4-The Vision Chicago Programs operate the Storehouse of Vision Chicago, the Gifts in Kind, the Kids in Need and the CityLINC programs. These programs all operate out of 5001 W. Harrison. The CityLINC programs spun off from MidAmerica as of October 1, 2000.

5- MLF's Urban Enterprise Fund - a "welfare to work fund" with a mission to create employment opportunities for hard-to-serve individuals spun off from MLF during 2000. The Fund provides loans, management assistance, and access to corporate networks to start or grow small companies. In addition, MLF Board member, Case Hoogendoorn and MLF helped the Fund obtain a \$55,000 grant for the purpose of providing small loans to organizations with a past affiliation to MidAmerica. These loans must be used to start or expand social purpose business ventures that create jobs for the unemployed. Interested organizations are encouraged to contact Doug Kenshol at 312-573-8908

Bud Ipema: A Value-Driven Visionary



Bud Ipema

Despite a busy travel schedule, Rev. William (Bud) Ipema, founder of MidAmerica Leadership Foundation in Chicago, recently shared his thoughts about the organization, its history, and its uniqueness among Christian agencies in the area. As MLF's President Emeritus, he continues to serve on special projects, and promotes the concept of leadership foundations through his work with the Council of Leadership Foundations (CLF)

Q: What led you to develop an organization like MLF?

A: I traveled the streets many years working with gang kids members, here and in 60 cities, and I kept meeting people with vision. I gathered the opinions of about 60 people to see what kept people from making their vision a reality. I learned they needed skills, specifically planning, organizing and communicating skills; and connecting with appropriate resources.

In using the term "planning" I refer primarily to sustainability over the long term. We find many of these visionaries just trying to make it from day-to-day. The same goes for organizing, which includes board development and constituency building. Communicating is about speaking the language of those who traditionally regulate resources — governmental agencies, corporations, and foundations. Those who work in the trenches in communities must learn to speak the language of the gatekeepers of systemic resources. And yet, the need is for both! The individual visionary who successfully communicates with system gatekeepers are essential elements for change, if it is to happen.

MLF helps these builders work on their skills with key individuals in their community. As they develop, we help them find funding until the organization is sufficiently developed to do this on their own, and then they are directed to potential resources.

Q: Are there any other organizations in the Chicago land area that do the same thing as MLF?

A: Not one. It is a costly process - about \$25,000 per year per organization. Organizations that provided similar incubation services did so at a much later time in the process. In fact, they required fledgling organizations to have their non-profit status established with the IRS before engaging their services. MidAmerica works with the raw vision prior to any organizational development.

Institutionalized funding bodies traditionally view our work in incubating community visionaries as Technical Assistance (T/A). As leadership foundations grew in other cities, they also engaged in some form of incubation, but those of us on this side of the equation have come to realize that understanding only comes through personal relationships, through strong and time-consuming mentoring. Launching a sustainable community ministry program requires a leader that can take the initiative forward, has entrepreneurial skills and can clearly articulate a realistic vision. And that vision, and I haven't said this yet, comes from God's Spirit moving in and on the city.

Continued on back page



Cutting Edge *Continued from cover*

Families who are members of ECOVIDA, located at 1840 South Throop, also grow vegetables in ECOVIDA's small urban garden plot. Though the garden measures just 20 feet by 20 feet, it yielded 50 pounds of tomatoes, 15 pounds of onions, 10 pounds of beets and 20 pounds of lettuce for the families to feed themselves during the Summer of 2000.

God's Gang, serving families in and around the Robert Taylor Homes at 5247 S. Federal and 5201 S. Federal #101, involves youth in volunteering at the Mother's Cupboard food pantry and developing micro-enterprises including raising worms, tilapia fish, and organic vegetables and working in God's Gang's small landscaping business. Youth build self-confidence as they contribute to their families' incomes. The God's Gang kids will have an extra opportunity for service to others this year in training and mentoring the kids from Chicago Youth Centers' Elliott Donnelley in how to raise worms and fish.

Lawndale Community Outreach Services (LCOS), at 4522 West 16th Street, completed its second year of providing paid summer jobs to youth through the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD). At an awards ceremony for the 350 youth programs monitored by MOWD, Chester Robertson, Executive Director, said, "Of all the programs attending LCOS was used as an example of a quality program six times during the presentation." LCOS

was also selected as a 2001 Youth Garden Grant Winner by the National Gardening Association. This award will

mean gifts of tools, seeds, plants and garden products provided by company sponsors of the National Gardening Association.

LCOS reaches out to at-risk youth in Lawndale through organic urban gardening, the arts (a mural on the wall of the manufacturing company next door to the garden), and the programs of Greater Mount Calvary Missionary Baptist Church, which also provides the land for the garden. LCOS is very excited about introducing organic urban gardening to more students in the nine public schools in Lawndale through class field trips.

Recovery Plus Two, located at 5083 W. Monroe, is a transitional shelter for women and their children. The women could be coming out of the criminal justice system because of illegal drug use or be victims of domestic violence. Single mothers and their children who would otherwise be split apart or homeless live in a warm, family environment at Recovery Plus II.

Starfish Studios, a spin-off of the successful Starfish Learning Center, plans to work with other grassroots organizations in impoverished neighborhoods to help youth see the value in themselves and others through participating in the production of quality entertainment for television.

Started by Scott

Parker, a graduate of Northwestern's film school and a tutor at Starfish Learning Center, Starfish Studios is

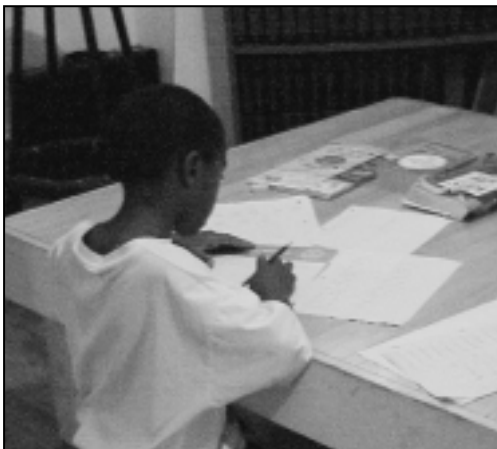


ECOVIDA youth and a farm animal get acquainted.

following an ambitious three-tiered plan to: (1) create an original digital movie using students, volunteers and community members; (2) create a television pilot for a show called "Butterflies" with students and market it to network television; and (3) create three 10-15 minute documentaries on people whose lives are being changed by social service organizations in Rogers Park. All three strategies involve children and youth as writers, actors and production crew working along with professional and volunteer adults.

Starfish Learning Center continues its mission in Rogers Park to disciple, mentor and tutor 25 students in a comprehensive after-school program in one of the most risky neighborhoods in Chicago. Starfish graduated from MLF's incubation process during 2000 but chose to use MLF's fiscal agency services for an additional year.

Near North Ministry Alliance, an established program for which MLF serves as fiscal agent, operates the Alliance for Community Peace, which provides safe passage for children to and from four elementary schools in the Cabrini neighborhood. Near North also operates an after school program and houses a Christian childcare program.



Homework pays off for a Starfish student.



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Ipema Continued from page 6

Q: Of the programs launched by or with MLF, what has been the survival rate?

A. Amazingly, 24 out of 27 programs have survived, and this includes major programs such as Vision Chicago and the Urban Enterprise Fund. We have also helped an additional 20 programs; including Chicago Broadcast Ministries and Daystar, by developing boards of directors or defining vision which is a tough process. When we come to the aid of an organization, it is not unusual to spend a fair amount of time in crafting a raw, unrefined vision into one that is realistic, attainable and reflects sustainability.

Q: You worked with World Vision to create a new strategy for the cities called Vision Chicago, which has now spread to many cities as Vision Cities; how would you rate its performance and delivery of service, so far?

A: Vision Chicago, by its various programs, has given great service to the community. It really took a great deal of effort to get and keep it going-kind of like turning a steamship around. Because it's a strategic shift for World Vision, the steamship is still turning, and I believe even a little faster under its new top management, committed to the concept even more than their predecessors.

The Storehouse is a great concept, and is sure to catch on in many more communities. CityLINC grew rapidly, but could use more volunteers. Kids in Need has grown to 7 such initiatives around the country. It is really a delight to watch as teachers come in and stock up with supplies badly needed for kids in urban classrooms.

Q: MLF obviously means a lot to you, but would you do it all over again?

A: Absolutely! It has been a great run. MLF is unique in Illinois. There is immeasurable but tremendous product. A good example is Pearl Willis on the city's south side. While

MLF worked with her for about 3 years, yet there will be a lifetime of benefits through Pearl and her programs serving 50 single high- school aged moms and their babies get onto a productive track. This program continues to grow.

But to be honest, I wouldn't start an MLF, now, because it takes a lot of energy and entrepreneurial skill. During the first 8 years, I spent usually 80 hours a week working, and occasionally much more.

Q: What's ahead for you now?

A: I hope to be able to use what I've learned over the past 15-30 years and contribute some of that to MLF's future as well as spread it around to other cities through CLF. Likewise, there are some things happening with the other leadership foundations that should be looked at by MLF, such as City as Parish, which engages the whole church in a city to work on quality of life issues, or the Urban Youth Initiative that teaches African American churches to reach the kids "outside" the church. So I hope to do some quality cross-pollination of concepts and programs.

Q: What one message do you have for MidAmerica's constituencies, board, staff, community leaders and supporters?

A: What we do in the incubation process is unique, takes a great deal of resources and has better and longer payoff than anything in Chicago. Sustaining the activity of the community visionary often is done without any evident benefit for a good while. Once we get past the necessary development hurdles, however, there isn't much that gives longer-term benefit.

Also, never forget that there is a spiritual discipline to MLF work that we don't talk about a lot, but we know it's there. It is God's Spirit, hovering over the city, and giving people vision, His vision, and drawing them, and others, into His work, to sacrifice, to give their time and energy, and to give their resource, all for Kingdom building!