

A Journal of **HOPE**

FALL UPDATE 2009

Dear Friend,

Think about what it really means if you have very few resources. Most of the families in Hope's rental apartments are working families, and still the median annual income for a family of three or more at Hope is \$17,700. One of the well-known impacts is isolation. There's little extra for transportation or signing kids up for classes that cost money. It takes enormous energy to keep a family going. Decent, affordable housing makes such a difference. That's why Hope builds housing and keeps it strong and healthy year after year. But there's so much more. In this update are just some of the ways that people use opportunities at Hope to come out of their isolation and make a difference for themselves.

There are dozens of people who live in this community and get involved at Hope who take on leadership roles. They volunteer in the programs as mentors or tutors. They help plan community events — a group of tenants call themselves "Community Getting Together," and they do just that. In fact recently we counted 65 kids and adults taking on leadership roles in a variety of ways — hundreds more participate. Too often we hear these days that most people are cynical and won't get involved. Or that people will get involved only when they are angry and polarized. Or that people are just too busy with their own lives to get involved with others. Well, that's not what we experience at Hope.



Photo by Bruce Silcox

Tia and her daughters at the Hope Summer Camp Send-Off.

Recently we spoke with Tia, the mother of two young children who participated in an intensive, months-long leadership program at Hope and has been working to bring more resources to a local park. She is convinced that taking her own leadership seriously is the best thing she can do for her daughters, Tara, age 11 and Teadra, age 13, and they have noticed. She says her work at Hope, "has opened their eyes at a young age. It has taught them that they have an influence on what happens in their community." Her daughters joined the Saturday mentoring program at Hope, and according to Tia, they come home with a new word about leadership every Saturday.

Tia's story is multiplied hundreds of times each year at Hope as people move from isolation to opportunity and connection. So many are connected to Hope in many ways. Together we are building a strong community and all of you are part of that community. Despite the economic climate — with your support we keep making things happen.

Mary Keefe, executive director

Fall Highlights

The Hope “Living Green Handbook” — This fall, Hope will present a green living guide to new tenants of The Wellstone. The guide will describe the building’s green features and offer tips for reducing energy usage.

A Critical Renovation Project for the Hope Block

— Renovation and upgrade work on the Hope Block will begin on 16 affordable rental units in small buildings and outdoor common spaces. These are some of our oldest buildings, and this project funded by the city, county and state will keep them strong.

Community Literacy — Siblings, parents, volunteers and Hope staff come together weekly for a night where children ages 6-9 are paired with a volunteer mentor and learn that reading, writing and storytelling is fun.

Adolescent Mentor Group — Kids will focus on strategies for academic achievement and civic engagement.

Learning Through Art — In Hope’s hop-hop music program and through a documentary project, youth learn about art and all the skills that make a project successful. All projects focus on leadership and self-advocacy skills with community at the center.

Leadership — A new eight-month leadership training will begin for a group of young adults—SPEAC (Sustainable Progress for Engaging Active Citizens). Trained leaders from past groups will help teach the new group. Together they continue to address inequity issues related to a park resources one block from Hope.

Adult Education — Immigrant adult students return for a new season of Essential Skills Certificate program and Distance Learning. Students learn reading, writing, speaking/listening, math and computers.

Community-Building — Tenants have formed a group called, Community Getting Together, and are meeting regularly to build community among Hope tenants and neighbors.

Visit Our New Website

www.hope-community.org

Lean more about Hope.
Donate online. Get involved.

Making a Difference: AMERICORPS VOLUNTEERS

A dedicated team of 14 staff and over 60 annual volunteers makes Hope’s vision a reality. Some of the most special volunteers come to us through the federal Americorps and VISTA programs. They get paid a small living stipend to work full-time in the community for a year. They reach out to families, help design programs, recruit and train volunteers, engage youth and so much more. The only hard part is saying good-bye to them after a year.

At the end of summer we honored the work of three of these full time volunteers. Azeta first came to Hope as a student from the University and then made the VISTA commitment for a year. Kristy spent six months at Hope in a civic engagement project before her VISTA commitment. Jodi joined us from the Americorps Community Empowerment Technology program (CTEP). Their work touched many parts of Hope.

Hope’s adult education program helps nearly 200 immigrant adults learn essential skills to obtain jobs. Azeta helped coordinate the program and created new



Kristy Clemmons speaks to the community.

opportunities for student discussion. Jodi developed a computer lab for the adult students to learn basic skills. She created a collection of student stories that can be found at www.hopecommunity.edublogs.org.

From making story boards with children in a community literacy program to facilitating small group dialogues with community members about



Jodi Struck with participants from Hope’s media program for youth, Urban 4H.

what’s important to them, Azeta, Jodi and Kristy were a part of a continuum of opportunities that keep people engaged, inspired and rooted in community. Azeta recruited many volunteers for Hope. Kristy brought residents together in potlucks, neighborhood safety meetings, and community-building events. Jodi partnered with Urban 4H to create a media program for youth ages 11-14.

We honor the contributions and impact these three women have had on our success this year. And as we say good-bye, we welcome new, energetic, dedicated VISTA and Americorps volunteers to Hope. With their help, the mission continues to unfold.



Azeta Garthune celebrates Hope’s annual volunteer recognition dinner.

Photos by Bruce Sileo