

# St. Francis Neighborhood Center

## Newsletter

Issue 1 October, 2002



St. Francis Neighborhood Center

### Hi Folks

Well, it's been a long time since we wrote. Lots of changes, all for the good. Under the prodding of David and Tracy (now Mr. & Mrs., and living in Portland, OR), I initiated new endeavors to get the Center set for stability in the future. We've been here since 1963, responding personally to neighborhood needs as they turn up. Now

it's time for strategic planning and a structure that will endure when those of us here now aren't.

We know how the Center has worked and what gives it a special character. So we are attempting to set those parameters so it will continue. First, we have formed an operative Board of Directors, imbued with the spirit of St. Francis, who have the life of the Center at heart. We currently have eight board members and five neighborhood residents as members of a Community Advisory Council.

Our second decision is deliberately to reach out to all our neighbors, soliciting their labors to own and operate the works of the Center. We want to continue as a *neighborhood center*, a center of working programs, run by neighborhood residents for neighborhood residents. Our neighborhood is changing (all is impermanent) and, in unity, we will be able to accomplish the best for our residents.

Right now we host two after school programs for neighborhood youngsters,

one run by Martina Woodard of Echo House, and the other run by Rebecca Yenawine and her staff from Kids On The Hill. Together these programs reach about sixty-five young people and their families.

We also participate in a "Greening Initiative," a project funded by the Parks and People Foundation, to take empty (ugly) lots and turn them into small parks. No small part of this initiative is soliciting the help of our residents to lend their labors for the betterment of the area. The response is super. Finally, folks are seeing visible improvement accomplished by their own labors.



Clearing the lot

### More

We're also a listening ear for folks who want to talk of weighty matters. Folks stop by when I'm sitting on the porch reading, say, to "ask me something." And when I listen, there are often heavy burdens shared, sometimes in the "code" that protects the sore soul. Tolstoi, in a reflection of Buddhist tradition, wrote that the most important moment is now, the most important person is the one next to me, and the most important thing to do is help that person be happy. I try to do

that. That's what we're all about. Did not a certain Gospel person do just that?

We offer many sincere thanks for all the gifts you have sent. Our continued existence relies almost entirely on your donations. At the moment we're seeking a special foundation grant to renew the Mobile Dental Service equipment. It's almost fifteen years old and paper clips and duct tape just won't work their repair magic any more. Baltimore Gas & Electric, who gave us our first Dental

van, has just given us an updated, refurbished van. For another task, we've sent a request to AmeriCorps for a volunteer team to paint the public rooms of the Center. They need some sprucing up after seven years of use. Please keep us in your prayers.



St. Francis Neighborhood Center is a non-profit organization, #52-0968759. All contributions are tax-deductible.

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