



NEHEMIAH  
Community Revitalization Corporation

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Fall 2004

NEHEMIAH COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION CORPORATION

ARISE AND BUILD!

Nehemiah 2:20 "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build."

## Nehemiah Notes



Rev. Samuel McPherson, Board Chairman

Nehemiah is presently embarking on a new and exciting course. We have changed our bylaws to include economic development activities as a part of our mission. Due to our increasing interest in supporting the work of CDC's that are developed by churches, we have to come to appreciate the great challenge that these community-based organi-

zations have. Quality, affordable housing alone does not lead to a neighborhood's revitalization. We must learn to work hand in hand with neighborhood residents to develop comprehensive neighborhood plans that address not only housing opportunities, but also education, transportation, small business development, recreation, social support, and spiritual awakening.

With this view of comprehensive neighborhood revitalization as a new goal of Nehemiah, we have decided to change our name to Nehemiah Community Revitalization Corporation. We hope better to prepare

our Board and staff to the new challenge that comprehensive neighborhood planning brings to our organization. We see this new challenge as an outgrowth of Nehemiah's vision to arise and build communities where people remember that they are the people of God. With this recognition comes the realization that the Kingdom of God is ever present in our neighborhoods. We only have to strive with faith and hope to find this Kingdom in our midst and to celebrate it to God's glory.

## President's Corner



Thomas G. Faulkner, III, President

The foundation of Nehemiah Community Revitalization Corporation continues to be our experience of faith in our work. We remain convinced that a person's faith can transform the world in which that per-

son lives. We welcome people from all faith traditions to join us in revitalizing South Carolina's neighborhoods. We are striving to get to know the neighbors we serve and to help them celebrate and use them. This issue highlights one of our new initiatives which is to partner with the residents of the Sterling neighborhood in their effort to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for their neighborhood. We have also featured

Yvonne Simpson as our newest board member. Finally, we celebrate the completion of Rosewood II, a group home for women suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. Rosewood II was featured in our November 2002 newsletter. We are privileged to play a small part in providing living space to women who are escaping their addictions and learning to celebrate and use their God-given gifts to the benefit of themselves and their families.

Newsletter of the Nehemiah Corporation

An interfaith organization committed to renewing low income communities in the same spirit that Nehemiah rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem in the 5th century B.C.

## *A Dream for Eagle's Nest Becomes a Reality*

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After the death of Walter L. Gorham in 1992 in a motorcycle accident, friends and fellow motorcycle riders of the Greenwood area decided to do something in his memory. The group decided to raise money to provide a residence for troubled youth in the Greenwood community that they would call The Eagle's Nest. Through various fund raising events, they were able to raise a total of nearly \$75,000 dollars. As they continued their dedicated effort, they began to realize that the goal of developing the residence was extremely difficult. They learned not only of funding constraints, but also of challenges to operate the residence.

In 1998 The Beckman Center for Mental Health Services obtained a major grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health

Services Administration to develop a model program to help teens and young adults struggling towards independence to become self-sufficient, successful people. This program called Gateways to Success is about collaboration and developing a system of care for children and youth that provides a bridge to adulthood. It became obvious to Gateways as they struggle to meet the needs of young adults that there is need for stability and housing in their lives. Gateways and The Eagles Nest soon discovered that they had the same vision for young people, and that together they may be able to fulfill their dreams of a safe and secure place for young people to live. They contacted Nehemiah Corporation and together they began to plan for the development of 12 one bedroom apartments with a community building that would focus on housing this population of young

adults with emotional problems.

After over two years of planning and organizing, Nehemiah has been awarded funding to build this promising development. The complex will become a component of a comprehensive program across Greenwood to provide care and support to troubled young people and adults as they move on their journey toward recovery. Nehemiah will be the owner of the complex and rental assistance will be provided through the Greenwood Housing Authority.

After many years of dreaming and determination, Gateways to Success and their many system partners are looking forward to celebrating the opening of The Eagle's Nest in early 2005.

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## *Sterling- A Neighborhood of Healing and Hope*

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The Sterling community that overlaps the boundaries of both Greenville County and the City of Greenville is one of the region's most historic African American neighborhoods. Since the sixties, the neighborhood has slowly lost many of its younger families and the remaining residents are working to build a new sense of hope there. Nehemiah became involved with the neighborhood last summer when the residents met to determine what they felt their neighborhood's boundaries were and what issues were confronting the area.

This past fall, three resident committees met several times to outline preliminary strategies to address these areas of concern. Ne-

hemiah presented a preliminary plan to the neighborhood association this past Spring and hopes to have another, more thorough, draft of the plan ready to discuss and refine with the neighborhood's residents. The plan will include strategies (1) to improve the neighborhood's housing stock through rehabilitation and new construction, (2) to support existing businesses and nurture new small businesses, and (3) to address the neighborhood's traffic concerns.

The first step is to continue to help the residents build on their individual giftedness. If the neighborhood plan springs from the gifts of the individual neighborhood residents, then the likelihood of the

plan's success will be greatly enhanced.



# Nehemiah's Second Annual Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships Conference



Nehemiah Corporation held its second annual Faith-Based Neighborhood Partnerships Conference in Mount Pleasant in January of this

year. The conference's theme, "Experiencing God's Kingdom in our Neighborhoods," was evident in all of the conference's activities, which included a panel discussion, a musical performance, and small group discussions. The capstone of the conference was an address entitled "A Christian Alternative to Urban Gentrification" by Dr. Robert Lupton, who called upon us to "transform that which was blight into that which is a blessing," by working to revitalize urban

neighborhoods.

Dr. Lupton is the founder of Family Consultation Services of Atlanta. Through his efforts in the Grant Park area of South Atlanta, he has been able to improve his community while providing for current residents to stay in place, avoiding complete gentrification of the area. Gentrification, in his opinion, will become more and more common as sprawl reaches the point of diminishing returns in terms of quality of life issues and



urban areas will become increasingly attractive as gas prices rise and commuting times increase.

Dr. Lupton is the author of the books *Theirs is the Kingdom* and *Return Flight*. For more information about Dr. Lupton's work, please visit [www.fcsministries.org](http://www.fcsministries.org). The Christian Community Development Association's Annual Conference will be held in Atlanta October 27-31. This conference will highlight some of Dr. Lupton's developments and he will be a speaker there. For more information, please visit [www.cdda.org](http://www.cdda.org).

We at Nehemiah would like to thank everyone who attended this year's conference and made it a success. Next year's conference will be held in Greenville next February, and we look forward to seeing everyone there!

## Nehemiah Welcomes New Board Member



Nehemiah Corporation is proud to have Ms. Yvonne Simpson as our newest Board Member. She has been elected

by the Sterling Neighborhood Association to represent their interests on Nehemiah's Board. She is a housing and economic development consultant with a rich background in the Upstate. Ms. Simpson is President of Simpson and Associates. This firm provides marketing support to small and mid-sized businesses and consulting services

in the area of minority/women-owned business utilization. The firm also assists small business owners in preparing and submitting bid packages to corporate buyers, as well as federal, state and local governments.

She previously worked for the Greater Greenville Chamber of Commerce where she was Vice President for Membership and also Vice President for Small Business. She also worked previously for the South Carolina Appalachian Council of Governments and the Lower Savannah Council of Governments where she was Director, Area Agency on Aging.

Nehemiah Corporation plans to partner with the Sterling

Neighborhood Association to revitalize the Sterling neighborhood in Greenville, SC.

Ms. Simpson volunteered her services to the residents of the Sterling community to be responsible to them for articulating their vision for their community and to assist them in marshalling the resources to carry out their plans. She deeply believes in the principles of assets-based community development (ABCD). ABCD places emphasis on the utilization of the individual gifts of Sterling's residents as the primary vehicle for transforming a neighborhood. Nehemiah is privileged to assist her in this endeavor while benefiting greatly from her participation on Nehemiah's Board.

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