

SOUTH WEDGE

15 YEARS OF NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION

BY REV. JUDY LEE HAY

Over 120 houses were vacant and boarded in 1975 when the South Wedge Planning Committee was only a small vision in the hearts and minds of Calvary St. Andrew's and community people. The business district had suffered a strategic blow with the creation of the Inner Loop. Like the houses standing boarded on each side street, several businesses looked like a ghost-town structure. Garbage dotted the area like the stars in the sky. Through concentrated block organizing and strategic planning the South Wedge neighborhood has become a symbol that the city is alive and filled with people who make a difference in their neighborhood.

"What has happened within the last 15 years?" a new resident asked. We thought that question deserved a public answer. How many of you know some of the following signs of revitalization?

1) Marie Daley Park was renovated to make the landscaped area more conducive for family activities.

2) Landscaped Open

Spaces. Two vacant lots on Alexander and South and Comfort and South housed abandoned cars and junk.

3) 120 houses reopened and unboarded. Several strategies were necessary to reclaim the housing stock and to get people to buy homes in the neighborhood. City and government funds provided a carrot of economic leverage for the multiple units.

4) Commercial Development. Greater Rochester Cablevision was not in the neighborhood and was at four different sites. Sentry Color Labs was a small business on Mt. Hope Avenue. Flower City, Masline Electronics, and Macke Williams were small stable businesses. Although too numerous to mention, we would like to highlight a few: renovation of the Security Safe, Filling Station, Brown Bag Deli, Laws, Balloon-O-Gram, South Wedge Beverage and Liquor, Parabes, and Cheesy Eddie's.

5) The Wedge Newspaper. Today the circulation is 2,500 with numerous volunteers to produce and dis-

tribute the entire publication.

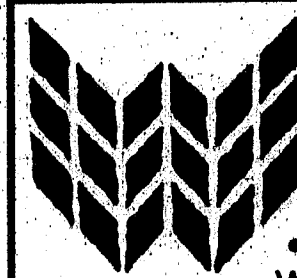
6) Urban Workcamp. The Urban Workcamp has hired and trained over 80 youths, fixed 30 houses and has been a nourishing environment in which teens have grown into adulthood.

7) Tool Library. We lend tools to anyone living in the neighborhood for a small yearly membership.

8) Condominiums. Gregory Park Commons — 30 units of new housing — and the consolidation of the school system to number 12.

9) Infrastructure improvements. Over a 10-year period, numerous meetings, letters, hassles, headaches, heartaches and headstrong vision thousands of dollars have been committed within the neighborhood to improve the sidewalks, curbs, street lights, major arteries, storm sewers, signage and general accessibility.

10) Public library. A new million-dollar facility was built adjacent to School 12. ▲



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