Introduction

The Center for Neighborhoods is a community-university partnership established in the Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (AUP+D) to build the capacity of Kansas City’s neighborhoods. We opened our doors to the public on April 23, 2016.

As part of the University of Missouri Kansas City’s Urban Mission, the Center for Neighborhoods provides a physical space, a leadership program, technical assistance, and applied research to realize our mission of education, outreach and research.

Over the past year we have accomplished much, but the most important outcome has been the community building and fellowship among the leaders of Kansas City’s neighborhoods. Our team has worked hard this year to meet the needs of neighborhood leaders from more than 30 neighborhoods with a reach of over 80,000 residents.

As part of our work, the Center employs an equity lens to understand and bring light to neighborhood conditions and health disparities, while promoting opportunities for better planning and development. We have worked with neighborhoods and homes associations across Kansas City, Missouri from Downtown to Red Bridge, and from Blue Valley East to the Westside. The Center provides an inclusive space where community leaders can meet and work with UMKC faculty, staff and students to address the challenges they face in their neighborhoods and share good news.

This is our first Annual Report and we are proud to share the results with you.
Hello Friends,

As I look back over this past year, I am amazed by the accomplishments that we have made since we opened our doors on April 23, 2016! With a dedicated staff, the support of our families, friends and partners, and our remarkable community, the Center for Neighborhoods has engaged, empowered and equipped over 60 leaders – representing 30 unique neighborhood organizations.

The diverse range of age, ethnicity, and neighborhood demographics of the two Cohorts exceeded our expectations. Alliances were made amongst “Sister-Neighborhoods”, information sharing expanded beyond the classroom, and new leaders and not-so-new leaders were provided with free technical assistance, leadership training and the capacity-building tools to address the challenge of neighborhood revitalization.

Going forward, it is our deepest desire to continue our work with the amazing CFN graduates, as well as those emerging leaders who have already signed up for Cohort 3 and Cohort 4. In 2017 as we focus on “The Culture of Healthy Neighborhoods,” it is essential that we continue to provide a space for neighborhood leaders to train and to grow, and this is why your support is needed now more than ever.

Thank you for helping us to improve our Kansas City neighborhoods!

Sincerely,
Building Neighborhood Capacity

Neighborhood leaders work with the Center to build the capacity of their organization. Each leader participates in a 10-12 week program of classes using an asset-based community development model. Neighborhoods attend classes at UMKC’s Department of Architecture, Urban Planning and Design (AUPD) in Katz Hall on the Volker campus. Through this program, each leader develops a project to implement in their neighborhood, which provides a strategy for each leader to pursue after they complete the program.

Neighborhood leaders develop an asset map of their neighborhood. These maps identify the people, institutions and associations that are beneficial to the development of neighborhood capacity. Without a clear understanding of the neighborhood’s resources, leaders often fail to take advantage of these assets. Our goal is to help leaders visualize a clear image of a successful and revitalized neighborhood.
Leadership and Governance

- Bylaws
- Conflict of Interest
- Community Governance
- Effective Meetings
- Fiscal Agency
- State of MO Good Standing

“I enjoyed collaborating with other neighborhoods and hearing about the different concerns that motivate other leaders.”

“Very informative. Great class to jump start our association. Thank you!”

Health and Safety

- Health Asset Maps
- Block Contacts and Neighborhood Watch
- Community Policing
- Social Determinants of Health

“Thank you! I must be a part of the solution! One organization, one person cannot solve these issues!”

“I liked learning about food deserts.”

“I was impressed with the video Officer Cooley showed. I thought it was good to see a different perspective. I enjoyed hearing about Dina’s “Lots of Love” project. It gave me hope.”
Planning and Development

- City Planning in KCMO
- Community Economic Development
- Equity Planning
- GIS and mapping
- Land Use and Zoning

“The City information is very informative.”

“I loved learning about all of the aspects of mapping.”

“Discussion about the different type of plans and the process for their development was useful.”

Communication and Technology

- Google Services; gmail, google drive
- Parcel Viewer
- Facebook
- NextDoor

“I learned how to successfully maneuver around the different online searches.”

“Loved the new information about how to get the word out on Nextdoor.com”

“I learned how to use a projector which is helpful if I’m in a meeting. I learned about online forms and Google Drive.”
Leadership and Governance

A neighborhood organization in the State of Missouri is a corporation that must be established according to state laws and maintained in “good standing” so that it can serve the interests of the residents and members. The Neighborhood Leadership and Governance area of our curriculum focuses on encouraging leaders to get organized and be effective managers of local organizations. Neighborhoods and Homeowners Associations typically have a set of officers who manage the organization and run meetings as well as a set of Bylaws that govern their operations. Officers of these local organizations also need to operate within the bounds of state law, maintain a clear understanding of their role, and eliminate potential conflicts of interest. Our guest speakers on the topic of Neighborhood Leadership and Governance typically includes local neighborhood leaders sharing their wealth of knowledge and expertise, as well as staff from Western Missouri Legal Aid.
Health and Safety

Many neighborhoods struggle with limited capacity to address larger public health issues. As the well-known author Jane Jacobs once stated – the goal of a neighborhood organization is to avoid being swallowed by the issues that it faces and to increase effectiveness at addressing its problems over time.

Health and Safety issues addressed by the Center for Neighborhoods include community policing in partnership with the Kansas City Police Department and Healthy Neighborhoods strategies in partnership with local partner organizations – such as KC Healthy Kids or the KCMO Health Commission. The Center for Neighborhoods has a goal to create a “culture of health” and neighborhood organizations will play a critical role in helping to transform health outcomes at the local level.
Neighborhoods are places. They include homes, local businesses, public streets and sidewalks, parks, bus routes and other forms of transportation. Without effective neighborhood organizations it is often difficult or impossible for city government to function. In fact, many of the processes led by local government are more effective when there is strong neighborhood participation.

The problems experienced at the neighborhood level – if not addressed locally, will become larger social challenges. Neighborhood organizations provide an early warning system for local government and help to reduce the costs of government through better communication and collaboration. Code enforcement, for example, relies on a network of engaged citizens to solve problems and to maintain property values. Effective and well-organized neighborhoods can help to address local issues and alert local officials before a neighborhood issue becomes a larger, more expensive problem.

The Center for Neighborhoods provides a place where local government and neighborhood leaders can meet to solve neighborhood planning issues and promote the sustainable development of local communities.
The foundation of effective neighborhood governance is good communication. Without clear communication between citizens, neighborhood officers, and local government—nothing can get accomplished.

Neighborhood leaders have a variety of tools that they can use to improve communication within the neighborhood and among its members, as well as ways to increase communication with local public officials and the State of Missouri.

Everyday more of our communications occur online through computer technology, email and the web. Neighborhood leaders need a place where they can be trained in the latest practices for online communication and learn from others to problem-solve local issues.

The Center for Neighborhoods provides access to a computer lab as well as the staff capacity to help neighborhood leaders find online information and communicate to their constituents.

Neighborhood leaders are volunteers and they may have limited knowledge of the ways in which local government makes important decisions. To promote and encourage meaningful participation in local government, the Center provides a place where leaders can access computers and develop their skills for online communication and technology.
80,000
People in neighborhoods = Neighborhood Reach
3,709
Individuals Engaged on Facebook (Since January 1, 2017)
525
Hours of In-Depth Leadership Development Training
263
Facebook “Likes”

Value

30
Neighborhood Class Presentations
18
Leadership Training Sessions
12
Hours of Topic-Specific Workshops
4
“Junior Leaders in Training”
206 hours of Technical Assistance Provided (Outside of Classroom Training)

100 (+) Visitors at the CFN Grand Opening

97 Walk-in Visitors

58 Class Participants

**Impact**

3 CFN Sponsored Events

2 Neighborhood Leader Class Presentations

2 Cohorts of Leaders Graduated with more than 25 in each class

1 Award (South Town Foundation 2016 Award - Institution Achievement)
Cohort Two Neighborhoods - 2016

Blue Hills
Blue Valley
Boston Heights – Mt. Hope
Citadel HOA
Indian Mound
Knoches Park
Mayfair HOA
McCoy Park Neighbors
Renaissance Place HOA
Southmoreland
Volker
Wendell Phillips
West Plaza
Westside
Guest Speakers, Partner Organizations and Sponsors

Alt-Cap and Community Capital Fund
American Heart Association
BikeWalk KC
Brass Pinnacle Group - Bonita Powell
Charlotte Street Foundation/Rocket Grants
Julia Cole
Communities Creating Opportunities
Seft Hunter
Erica Dobreff
Jim Wanser
Joseph Jackson
Karen Slaughter
Kansas City Police Department
Kansas City No Violence Alliance (KCNOVA)

Kanbe Markets
KC Healthy Kids
Mutual Musicians Foundation
UMKC Department of Architecture, Urban Planning + Design (AUP+D)
Toya Like, UMKC Department of Criminal Justice and Criminology
UMKC Parking Operations
UMKC School of Social Work
Urban Neighborhood Initiative (UNI), Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Western Missouri Legal Aid
Westside Housing Organization
Get Involved!

Our capacity building approach meets neighborhood leaders where they are – and we help to build the pipeline for new leaders in the neighborhoods that we work with. If you’d like to attend a class – please call us today.

In less than one year our staff have served over 30 neighborhoods with a reach of more than 80,000 people in Kansas City. With additional investment, we can expand our team and work with more neighborhoods and homes associations.

Our Neighborhood Leadership Program is offered twice per year. Your financial support can help us sustain our efforts and reach more neighborhoods. Each class is offered for free to the volunteer neighborhood leaders who join our program. You can sponsor a neighborhood leader today to participate in our program with a donation of $100 or more.

Your investment in the Center for Neighborhoods will help to sustain our efforts and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods across the city. You and your organization can support our work through the UMKC Foundation:

http://www.umkc.edu/umkc-foundation/

If you would prefer to donate your time, please contact us about the opportunity of volunteering with the Center or with the neighborhood leaders and organizations that we support.
Members are drawn from local community development organizations, foundations and philanthropy. They are asked to serve for one term of two years and can be nominated to serve for a second term also of two years in duration.

Jason Cooley  
Kansas City Missouri Police Department (KCPD)

Michael Duffy  
Legal Aid of Western Missouri

Becky Forrest  
President, Town Fork Creek Neighborhood Association

Richard Moore  
President of Commerce Mortgage and the Director of Consumer Risk for Commerce Bank, retired

Erica Dobreff  
President, Kansas City Equity Fund, Kansas City, MO

Gloria Ortiz Fisher  
Executive Director, Westside Housing Organization

Shawn Hughes  
Development Specialist, City Planning and Development Dept., City of Kansas City, MO

Triveece Penelton, AICP  
City Planner, Vireo, Kansas City, MO
Center Staff

Joy Swallow
UMKC AUP+D chair

Dina Newman
Center Director

Clint Wynn
Neighborhood Technology

Dr. Jacob Wagner
Faculty Director

William Bates
Neighborhood Outreach

Laura Kozak
Social Work Intern
Contact us for more information and to participate in our Leadership Training Cohorts

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