

Strategies for Strengthening Communities

Office of University Partnerships 2012 National Conference

Following both site visits, conference participants will meet at Dillard University to view a short film and enjoy a reception sponsored by the university. Buses will return to The Roosevelt Hotel 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Site Visit One: Harmony Oaks, Iberville, Lafitte, and Gentilly

Harmony Oaks

Urban Strategies has been engaged in the Harmony Oaks community since 2007, when the agency was selected to lead the human capital and supportive services efforts for the former C.J. Peete Public Housing Development. Now a vibrant, mixed-income community and home to 460 families, Harmony Oaks is a safe, stable neighborhood where families can thrive. Today at Harmony Oaks, Urban Strategies continues its work to prepare and promote socioeconomic mobility for its residents, provide children and youth with access to and opportunity for academic achievement, and ensure a sustainable community.

In 2011, Urban Strategies was awarded a 1-year \$500,000 grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation for its human capital building efforts in New Orleans. The funds are targeted toward the continuation and expansion of construction and health workforce programs that have employed more than 60 residents, and planning for an Early Childhood Learning Center to complement the Woodson Learning Campus currently under development in the Harmony Oaks community. Efforts will focus on ensuring high-quality education and training opportunities for all Harmony Oaks residents.

Iberville

In August 2011, HUD announced the Housing Authority of New Orleans/City of New Orleans was among the first grantees selected to receive a Choice Neighborhoods Implement Grant. This \$30.5 million award will be used to redevelop distressed housing and bring comprehensive neighborhood revitalization to blighted areas in the Iberville/Tremé community. Designed in 1940, the historic neighborhood of 74 two- and three-story buildings is adjacent to the thriving French Quarter and Central Business District, yet more than 52 percent of households are living in poverty.

Preservation plans call for 24 of the existing buildings to be reconfigured and renovated while the remaining 50 buildings will be replaced. The new development will consist of 913 units, of which 304 will be public housing available to current residents of the Iberville development. The development team will implement a results-oriented case management model to help adults achieve self-sufficiency through access to place-based job training and readiness programs; and to help children access targeted education/training and literacy strategy.



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Iberville (continued)

Based on extensive neighborhood planning and resident engagement, the development team intends to leverage a \$2 million Sustainable Communities Challenge Grant to study the removal of an elevated stretch of Interstate I-10, the return of a new streetcar line (named Desire), and further city investment in the Lafitte Greenway. These efforts are all intended to capitalize on the new Veterans' Affairs Medical Center and BioDistrict being developed in the neighborhood. The team also plans to construct street connectivity enhancements, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, and appropriate street lighting; create neighborhood retail in ground floor spaces of the new residential properties and a grocery store and farmer's market; focus arts and cultural investments in this neighborhood; and expedite improvements to Louis Armstrong Park, the Municipal Auditorium, and Saenger Theatre.

Lafitte

Providence Community Housing was formed when representatives from local faith-based organizations came together to see how they might use their joint talents, experience, and resources to help address the critical need for affordable and supportive housing in southern Louisiana. Their goal was to bring home 20,000 victims of Hurricane Katrina by rebuilding and/or developing 7,000 units of single-family homes and apartments for seniors, mixed-income, and special needs residents. Their largest project is a joint effort with Enterprise Foundation to plan and develop a new community on and around the site of the former Lafitte public housing development, in the Tremé/Lafitte neighborhood of New Orleans. Upon completion, the project will feature 1,500 homes and apartments: a one-for-one replacement of all 900 subsidized rentals, and the development of an additional 600 homes for sale to working families and first-time homeowners. Since 2006, Providence has cleaned and gutted 2,000 homes and apartments; and completed construction on more than 1,500 homes, with an additional 1,500 in various construction stages.

Gentilly

Gentilly is a collection of sub-neighborhoods, which includes Filmore, Milneberg, Lake Terrace/Lake Oaks, St. Anthony, Gentilly Terrace, Dillard, Gentilly Woods, and Pontchartrain Park, that spans a large area on the northeast side of New Orleans. While they collectively form Gentilly, each sub-neighborhood has a unique history and culture. Gentilly Terrace, planned in 1909 and built largely between the 1910s and 1940s, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Architecture in this district includes craftsman bungalows, Tudor cottages, and Mediterranean Revival-style homes. Pontchartrain Park is recognized as one of the first African-American suburbs in the United States. At the center of the neighborhood is the Joseph M. Bartholomew Golf Course, named for the African-American professional golfer who designed it.



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Gentilly (continued)

Gentilly is also known for a number of green spaces, including golf courses, parks, and the campuses of three universities: Dillard University, Southern University at New Orleans and The University of New Orleans.

Much of Gentilly was badly damaged when Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans in 2005. Levees along the London Avenue Canal broke during the storm, creating massive flood damage in the low-lying areas of the neighborhood. With a high homeownership rate, many residents of Gentilly have since returned to their homes, restoring, rebuilding, and in some cases raising houses on piers to protect them against future flood damage. Neighborhood associations like Gentilly Civic Improvement Association, Pontchartrain Park Neighborhood Association, and Gentilly Terrace Neighborhood Association, have played a pivotal role in these revitalization efforts and act as a resource for new and returning homeowners.



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