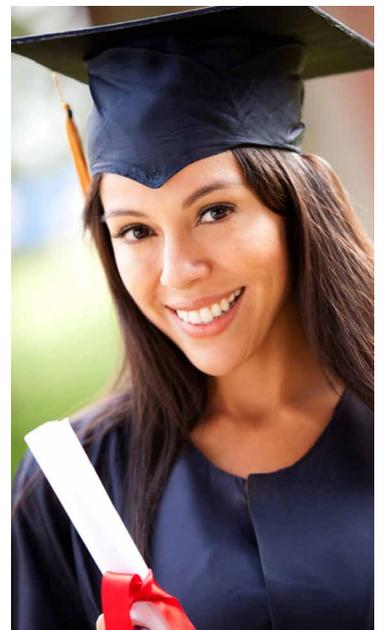
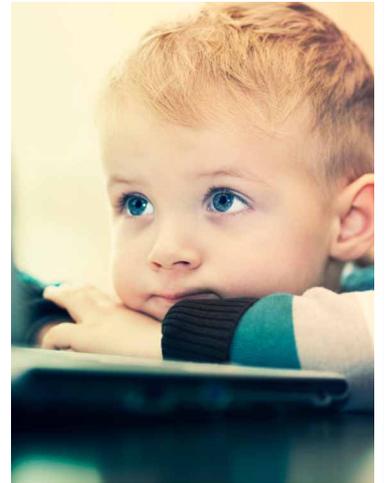




**BARTLEY-
DECATUR
NEIGHBORHOOD
CENTER**
Building Dreams, Nurturing Community



HISTORY

A COMMUNITY COMING TOGETHER

The site of the Bartley-Decatur Neighborhood Center (BDNC), located at 918 E. Calhoun Street in Springfield, Missouri, has a rich history of social service to the Midtown/Sherman Avenue neighborhood and surrounding community. Originally constructed as a private residence in the early 1900s, The Springfield Colored Hospital Association acquired the building in the early twenties and created a hospital to provide for the health-care needs of Springfield's Black community. Over the next 50 years, the building housed a nursing home and veteran's home for Springfield's African American population.

In 1972, Roberta Bartley continued this tradition of service when she opened Kiddie Kove daycare, with the support of her sister, Olive Decatur. The child-care center provided a rich learning environment for the children of the community and Kiddie Kove remained an integral part of the neighborhood until it ceased operations in 1999. The building subsequently fell into disrepair.

In 2002, a group of concerned citizens and community leaders came together and made the decision to renovate the building. With the assistance of former Senator Christopher

"Kit" Bond, BDNC, named after the Kiddie Kove founders, was awarded a \$500,000 Economic Development Initiative grant through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This grant made possible a complete renovation of the building to house the neighborhood center.

The goal of the BDNC is to remain a neighborhood center of service and seeks to provide coordination, networking, education and training aimed at alleviating poverty and increasing local economic growth, family neighborhood based support, and citizen driven community improvement initiatives.

'What Makes Us Unique':

Thanks to extensive community participation and diligent citizen involvement, an abandoned property has been transformed from a dangerous nuisance into a center of social connectivity for the neighborhood. The development of a neighborhood center at this location continues a nearly 100 year tradition and legacy of service and community involvement in neighborhood development.

THE COMMUNITY OUR NEIGHBORS

The Chamber of Commerce Community Focus 2011 report shows the average annual income in the Springfield area is just over \$30,000. But, the area of Springfield surrounding BDNC is one of the city's more disadvantaged neighborhoods. Census data reflects that approximately 20% of individuals and families residing in the community live on less than \$10,000 a year (nearly double the average poverty rate in the city). Additional research suggests that there are also fewer citizens in this neighborhood that are benefiting from public assistance than

in other areas of the metropolitan area. Simply stated, twice as many residents of the neighborhood are living in poverty than in other areas of city and many do not receive state, city, or government assistance. Local data also suggests that students in the Sherman Avenue neighborhood test below average in both math and reading with Boyd Elementary reporting that 22.6% of 3rd graders are reading below their grade level. The local primary and middle school also regularly fall short of the required proficiency scores during state testing and Central High School has the second lowest graduation rate of only 77.6%. While Springfield has been hailed as one of the 'Best Places to Live and Work' (Economic Review), not all neighborhoods are benefiting equally from the resources, benefits, and opportunity available within the Springfield metropolitan area.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Using a community member driven approach, BDNC seeks to provide access to the economic, educational, and developmental resources that are identified by community members as significant for their lives and the lives of their families. The neighborhood location where community members can gather, discuss ideas, and implement developmental strategies. Through this process of shared responsibility and ownership, BDNC seeks to be a vehicle by which resources, and access to these resources, can be provided and maintained.

‘What Makes Us Unique’: BDNC can help make a good community even better by utilizing community assets that are already in place and making those assets more accessible to those who would benefit the most.

OUR GOALS AND ANTICIPATED ACTIVITIES

Many of the BDNC goals are considered “Red Flag” issues in the Springfield-Greene County area. Particularly housing, health-care, and the persistence of poverty.

GOALS	ACTIVITIES	PROJECTED OUTCOMES
INCREASE QUALITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING	Advice and information on affordable housing opportunities and financial assistance available in Springfield	Improve knowledge and access to quality affordable housing. Increase participation in underutilized services for low income residents and assist in locating housing appropriate to resident needs.
INCREASE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE AND HEALTHCARE ACCESS	Affordable, easily accessible health screenings and lifestyle counseling for improved health and fitness. Both physical and mental health will be addressed as well as drug use/abuse (where applicable).	Increase availability, quality and awareness of locally available affordable or subsidized healthcare. Provide easily accessible health screenings which will allow earlier detection and treatment as well as enhance quality of life through health education and disease prevention.
EMPLOYMENT SEEKING AND JOB SKILLS TRAINING	Provide generalized job skills training and aid in job placement with services (such as online application assistance) designed to facilitate employment searches. Education and training will also be provided with the goal of increasing entrepreneurship in the community.	Increase employment and income, particularly in sustainable, well- paying professions with reasonable job security.
TUTORING AND EDUCATION ASSISTANCE	Provide academic guidance and tutoring for all ages.	Increase high school graduation rates and academic achievement among neighborhood youth and substantially reduce adult illiteracy and improve math and science skills at all ages.
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT	Provide general meeting space with presentation and telecommunications equipment for local gatherings and conferences. In addition, there is public computer access and basic computer skills training.	Enhance community involvement and coordination through communication and networking. A community gathering place equipped with the latest communications and information technology will allow profoundly increased participation and neighborhood outreach.

OUR FOCUS AREAS

The community has identified education as a high priority for the neighborhood. Therefore, educational programs are where BDNC is currently most active in direct services. This includes tutoring for elementary and junior high students as well as partnerships with Drury University and Missouri State University who both have implemented programs to increase college enrollment among at risk students.

Employment opportunities have also been identified as a significant need by community members. Therefore, workshops on resume writing, job searches and career training are also areas of direct service focus for the center. The residents of the Midtown/Sherman Avenue neighborhood have identified that the most valuable asset to the community is local entrepreneurship. Therefore, BDNC plans to bring in financial and business professionals to guide and advise startup businesses.

Access to healthy food and affordable housing have also been identified as neighborhood needs. Partnerships with local health organizations and hospitals could be able to provide regular health education and screenings. Since good health begins with a

healthy diet, BDNC supports backyard and neighborhood cooperative gardens. Regional family farmers and urban gardening practitioners are projected to offer classes and demonstrations on producing cost affordable, simple, small-scale food gardens. We also expect to partner with local food banks to arrange mobile food distribution from the community center several times a year. Assistance with housing will include visits from legal professionals for questions on homeowner and renter's rights as well as access to agencies working to improve affordable housing availability.



OTHER POTENTIAL USES FOR THE CENTER

- The technologically advanced conference room is available for members of the community to rent for a small fee (either by the hour or the day).
- Bartering Program –it is our hope that members of the community will take this opportunity to get to know each other and share services.
- BDNC is optimistic that local nonprofits will utilize office space in the building. This collaboration between assistance nonprofits in one location will increase community access to needed services.
- Pick up site for scheduled mobile food pantry and similar services.

Since the renovation is complete, BDNC is seeking operational funding to provide for staff to manage activities, volunteers, and

coordinate services as well as funding for occupancy costs in order to provide these critical services for neighborhood members.

‘What Makes Us Unique’: BDNC can help make a good community even better by utilizing community assets that are already in place and making those assets more accessible to those who would benefit the most.

LEADERSHIP

A Missouri native and lifelong resident, Mark Dixon has lived and worked in Springfield, Missouri since 1978. He earned his bachelor’s degree in psychology and religious studies at Missouri State University. He is also an

ordained minister with Deliverance Temple Ministries, in Springfield, Missouri.

He is currently the Chairman and Executive Director of the Bartley-Decatur Neighborhood Center, Inc. For seven years Mark worked with the Caring Communities initiative at the Community Partnership of the Ozarks, where he has functioned as a Site Coordinator,

Community Development Specialist, and more recently, planning and implementation consultant. His previous work experience includes a broad range of activities from laboratory technician, sales representative, and small business owner. Mark serves, and has served, on a number of community and regional boards and committees.

Board Members: Mark A. Dixon, President.
David Huskisson, Vice President, Tyrone

McKinney, Treasurer Samuel G. Knox, Secretary, Sidney Needem and Cheryl Clay.

The six permanent member organizations are: The African American Agenda Collaborative, Inc, The Ministers' Coalition of Springfield, Inc., Unite of Southwest Missouri, The Springfield Branch NAACP, The Sherman Avenue Project Area Committee, and Washington Ave Baptist Church.

'What Makes Us Unique': BDNC is made up of community members, volunteers, and board members from a variety of racial and ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, all with unique ties to the Midtown/Sherman Avenue neighborhood.