

# GRACE NOTES

News from and about Grace Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Volume 3 # 6 June, 2011

## Believe 2 Become

Believe to Become is an initiative to mobilize Grand Rapids to raise the graduation percentage and readiness for college among the kids of our city. The graduation percentage for Grand Rapids Public Schools is 52%. The DeVos Foundation began this initiative, rallying the community around the question: how can we all together --



*From left to right: Cam Navis, Kadilyn Kneif, Eric VanGiesen, Jason Carrigan, Andrea Owens, Emily Derks, Liz Westerhof, Karl Westerhof. We have a Core Leadership Team of Mary Nasca, Andrea Owens, Jason Carrigan, Brenda Arnette and Marisol Ramirez. Mary is in charge.*

schools, churches, businesses, community organizations, families, students and parents -- work together to improve this situation? The Grace Deacons agreed that Grace should participate.

This summer Grace Church will begin a Thursday night "Believe" program. Instead of trying to give youth more information, we will use the summer months to have a program that builds relationships with the youth from our church and in Southgate. We also want to engage the children and help them experience that learning can be fun.

We will meet Thursday nights from 7:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M. There will be 6 fifteen minute time periods. The first 15 minutes will be for snack and sorting the children into 5 groups. The 5 groups will rotate between 5 Believe Classes. One of these classes will focus on music, another Bible and prayer. A third class will be an academic one. The fourth and fifth classes will be interactive with guest leaders. Each group will have a leader that takes them to the different classes. Each class will have a leader facilitating the class. Every class will also have extra adults in each room to help with "Crowd Control" and individuals ready to spend some one on one time with students having difficulty in a class.

Our focus will be on grades K – 8<sup>th</sup>; we hope to have a nursery for the children of volunteers and we are still in

discussion about including preschoolers. We'll be signing up kids and parents this summer for the school year, and when school starts in the fall we would like to move into a Thursday mentoring night. We'll also have a kickoff worship service to recognize the commitments being made.

There are numerous ways you can help with Believe this summer on Thursday nights. Many more opportunities in the fall to help children and youth with their homework, studying or playing educational games in a more one on one atmosphere.

Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, at 7:00 pm will be a volunteer informational meeting. Our first regular Believe night will be Thursday, June 23<sup>rd</sup>. The Believe night will function best with many volunteers working together. This will be a wonderful opportunity for us to make an impact on the lives of children and their families. Believe 2 Become also gives us an amazing

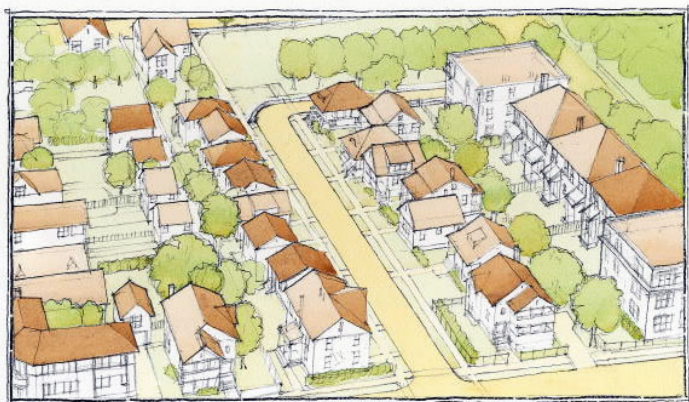
opportunity to work and fellowship with other members of our church family and with neighbors.

If you have questions or would like more detail about how you can become involved please contact Mary Nasca 616-570-2544, Andrea Owens (248-4056) or Jason Carrigan (551-9574).

## A new beginning on the Southeast



On Tuesday May 31 a number of members of Grace Church members attended the groundbreaking ceremonies for the Wealthy Jefferson Project. They were joined other members of the community, including Major George Heartwell, and staff members of ICCF. The ceremonies were both a conclusion, and a new beginning for residents in the South East Community Association (SECA) neighborhood. It is a conclusion, for it is the culmination of more than 10 years of planning and



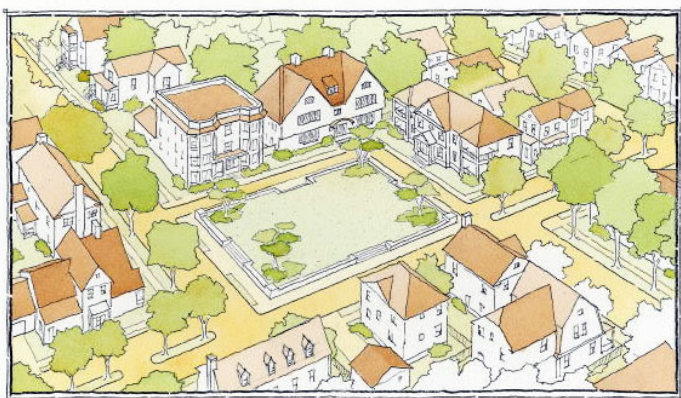
preparation to revitalize a 10-block neighborhood, just north of Grace Church, anchored at the corner of Wealthy and Division. The celebration was also a beginning. It was organized by ICCF and the Southgate Block Club (part of SECA) to kick off the construction work beginning June 1 at 100 Wealthy SE. This is the first phase of a mixed-use, economically diverse development that will take three years to complete.

The Wealthy Jefferson Development Initiative is a collaborative effort between the Inner City Christian Federation and a broad array of community based organizations including the South East Community Association (SECA), the Heritage Hills Neighborhood Association and a host of stakeholders from the target neighborhood.

The Initiative seeks to restore the residential character of this neighborhood while at the same time accommodating local businesses and institutions essential for a stable neighborhood.

Through two separate intensive events, a comprehensive plan has been developed to revitalize this area. The plan calls for a substantial increase in housing, retail and office space. Institutional parking needs will be addressed as part of infrastructure improvements that will calm traffic, enhance pedestrian movement and create public green spaces.

This Initiative will require broad and consistent resident participation to shape the physical design of the neighborhood, buildings that are to be built and services that will address the needs of existing residents.



Last week, the Michigan Economic Growth Authority (MEGA) approved nearly \$1.1M in Brownfield Redevelopment Authority tax credits, the final step for ICCF to break ground for this exciting project and the

beginning of over \$17 million in development.

The \$7.5M first phase of a massive six-phase undertaking could bring two three-story buildings with 30 one- and two-bedroom apartments and 8,500 square feet of retail space to the area on the south side of Wealthy, between LaGrave and Sheldon avenues.

"I believe the \$17 million estimate in future development (the amount stated in a May 17 press release from MEGA) is extremely conservative," says Jonathan Bradford, CEO of ICCF. "We anticipate a minimum of 150 housing units, attractive green spaces and 55,000 to 60,000 square feet of retail space, half of which would be a grocery store developed in phase four."

Bradford says it's crucial those subsequent phases of the project follow on the heels of this first phase as encouragement for potential investors in the proposed grocery store.

"We're talking about changing six decades, since the expressway opened, of disinvestment and relegating this area as one of little or no desire," Bradford says. "If you were a grocer, you would want to know with some high level of confidence that all this other stuff is going to happen, that you're not going to be the lone ranger."

Bradford expects phase one to wrap up in March 2012. The project architects are Seth Harry and Integrated Architecture. Rockford Construction is the construction manager.

## SHUT-INS DOROTHY BROYLES



Dorothy Broyles has a decades long relationship with Grace Church. Her sister Anita Burress (deceased) and Matilda Brandon- were charter members, as were her nieces Helen Brent and Edith McCreary.

Dorothy lives in an adult group home in a pleasant setting near Dutton, Michigan. She is blessed with wonderful care-givers in a lovely facility. Dorothy retired from her job with Hope Network in 2006.

"Aunt Dorothy," as Helen calls her, will be 70 years old on July 9. She is looking forward to it. Let's help her celebrate by sending her a card. Dorothy's address is: Dorothy Broyles, 3371 Mistywood SE, Caledonia, MI 49316. She will appreciate it.

If you have news items for Grace Notes, please pass it on to Chris and Greta Overvoorde. Call 616 956-7454 or email them at: [over@calvin.edu](mailto:over@calvin.edu).

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