

# North Camden Moving Forward

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Summer 2010

## Prison Down & MAJOR CHANGES in NC

Rodney Sadler, Executive Director, Save Our Waterfront

Demolition of the Riverfront State Prison, which began in December, 2009, is now complete. The site is cleared and being seeded. North Camden residents can now enjoy views of the Delaware River and Philadelphia skyline from their homes.

On Saturday, June 26th, North Camden residents gathered to celebrate this amazing accomplishment. Over 400 North Camden residents attended the BBQ on the parking lot of the old Riverfront Prison site from 6:30 to 10:00 pm. Friends, neighbors, and local civic and government leaders stopped by to enjoy complimentary food and entertainment.

Respond, Inc. provided free barbecue and delicious deserts to the crowd, and Edgardo Cintron and the Cintron Band, a Camden based group, entertained the crowd for hours. The happy voices of children could be heard all evening as

they bounced and slid down the giant slide. The Camden Fire Department also visited, and kids lined up to tour inside the Fire Safety Trailer and learn about fire and house safety.

The evening culminated with the WaWa Welcome America Independence Day Fireworks Display. As the fireworks peeded just above the bridge, North Camden residents sat with their friends and family, celebrating the Independence of our nation, dreaming of the potential growth of retail and housing along the waterfront site.

Finally, in closing, I would like to thank the Mayor and Chief Thomson for initiating the Clean and Safe Corridor Program that began in North Camden in early June. There has been a night and day change in the neighborhood, the return of positive control of

Pyne Poynt Park, and the general good feelings generated by the increased police presence. Keep up the good work!



*Neighborhood residents celebrating with food & fun at the former prison site.*

## Thank you Pastor Margaret Herz-Lane!



Reverend Margaret Herz-Lane, the beloved longtime pastor of Grace Lutheran Church in North Camden, retired in late June. Pastor Herz-Lane will be moving with her family from their home in

Cramer Hill to the Baltimore area. She leaves the Church in the capable hands of the Reverend Jesse Brown.

Rev. Herz-Lane came to Grace Lutheran Church 29 years ago and has been making a difference in the lives of her parish-

oners and members of the North Camden community ever since. Led by Rev. Herz-Lane, Grace Lutheran Church co-founded Hopeworks 'N Camden, a non-profit dedicated to the empowerment of at-risk youth, in 2000, and Creating Opportunity for Life Together in North Camden (COLT, INC.), an organization that seeks to weed out drugs and violence while seeding positive elements in the community, in 2002.

Hopeworks and COLT, INC. have made a sizeable impact on North Camden since their inception. According to Robert L. McGee, President of COLT, INC., "Working with Pastor was a great inspira-

tion to me. She has brought me to where I am today, trying to save Northgate Park, an important part of North Camden. I wish her and her family the best in the future".

Rev. Herz-Lane served on the board of directors of several North Camden organizations, including Save Our Waterfront, Hopeworks 'N Camden and COLT, INC. She was an active and energetic community leader who participated wholeheartedly in the development and implementation of the North Camden Neighborhood Plan, hosting countless meetings in her church. We thank her for her dedication to North Camden and wish her and her family the best in the future.

# Northgate Park Celebration

Bryon Morten, President, Concerned Citizens of North Camden

On Saturday, May 22, 2010 community leaders and residents gathered for a day of celebration in Northgate Park.

The smell of food spilled from the grill as music and laughter filled the air. Children's faces were brightly painted with butterflies and hearts, and a formerly graffiti covered wall turned into a magnificent mural composed of individual panels created by community members.



**Neighborhood children paint a mural at the BBQ**

The celebration sent a clear message that this park is a safe haven for children. Recent activities in and around Northgate Park have worried residents, making parents hesitant to allow their children into the park. The BBQ was an opportunity for the community to unite in their shared

self-interest, and support the safety of children and their right to live lives free of the pressures of violence, drug use and physical harassment. The goal of this and future organized activities within the park is to empower residents to understand how they may become involved in their community.

The BBQ was more than the title suggests; for out

of something as simple as a meal together residents were able to communicate additional problems and other areas of concern that are important to the community; while discussing real solutions to these issues impacting

them. Listening and responding to members of the North Camden community and encouraging residents to participate further in addressing their community's issues were Mayor Dana R. Redd, Police Chief Scott Thomson, City Council Members Dana M. Burley, Luis A. Lopez, and Deborah Person-Polk. What started as a meal, became a conversation, and continues as a plan. To capitalize on the successes of the BBQ, community leaders hosted the first ever movie night in the park, on Friday June 25, 2010 at 7:00 pm. They showed the family movie "UP" and offered free popcorn and water ice to all. Many brought their lawnchairs and blankets and enjoyed a movie under the stars. As we in North Camden continue to move forward, remember, strength exists in numbers and resident involvement leads to community empowerment!

## The Hopeworks C.R.I.B.

Alaina Cronkright, CRIB Manager

Beginning this summer Hopeworks 'N Camden is partnering with youth in a bold new way as they pursue their D.R.E.A.M.S (Dynamic Realizable Efforts to Attain and Maintain Success). Pass by 517 State Street in North Camden and you'll see the C.R.I.B. (Community Responding in Belief), a residential community for youth who have earned a job at Hopeworks and are enrolled in an Associates Degree program at Camden County College. The C.R.I.B. is a youth community, a place where dreams take shape as they live, study, work, grow, and practice life skills together. This is a community of success where youth live together, sharing meals, going to college and working--- all in the pursuit of futures full of hope and possibility.

For nearly ten years, Hopeworks 'N Camden has succeeded in empowering youth to develop their D.R.E.A.M.S. and to own their future. We create hope-filled futures for inner-city Camden youth by expanding the learning opportunities available to them, enhancing self-esteem through

real-world jobs, working to identify their dreams and helping youth empower themselves to be successful and self-sufficient.

At Hopeworks we recognize that there is a critical need affecting youth: unsafe, insecure, or unsupportive housing with limited personal space. Youth come from chaotic living environments with family members with complex personal issues. Housing instability disrupts college plans, jeopardizes financial aid options, and hampers youth's ability to build on success established at Hopeworks. This is exactly why Hopeworks has built the C.R.I.B. This community living environment for youth will empower them to reach not only academic goals, but life goals. Youth will budget, grocery shop, cook and share meals together, as well as study and encourage one another.



**Hopeworks' C.R.I.B.**

The youth living at the C.R.I.B. are leaders. They have successfully participated in Hopeworks training and are now working in web design, GIS, or at a corporate internship. C.R.I.B. youth now have a great opportunity, known as P2P (Peer-to-Peer), to meet with Hopeworks trainees weekly to talk about training goals and D.R.E.A.M.S. and share how they have been able to attain success. They will travel to corporate internships with area business partners. After two years in the C.R.I.B., they will have earned their Associate's degree, and will transition into a four year college or a career.

This summer will begin with community dinners, evening literacy sessions, planting the C.R.I.B. garden, and more. You'll soon see vegetables, flowers, and most importantly, relationships developing solid roots at the C.R.I.B. Come visit!

## \$100,000 from Impact 100 Philadelphia for Camden

Beth Burrell of Impact 100 and Jessica Franzini of New Jersey Tree Foundation

At first glance, the 2010 Impact 100 grant is about improving the environment by planting trees in Camden, NJ. But Camden residents, city officials and NJ Tree Foundation staff can tell you – it's actually about much more!

The NJ Tree Foundation started its Urban Airshed Reforestation Program (UARP) in 2002 to combat air and water pollution in Camden while empowering residents to bring positive changes to their own communities. Through the UARP, trees offer beauty and a means to tackle social and environmental problems.

Funding from Impact 100 will allow the NJ Tree Foundation to plant 250 trees and 1,200 shrubs and perennials in Camden this year. Such work, according to NJTF Board Chair Roni Olizi, "expands the network of dedi-

cated and determined volunteers who refuse to let their neighborhoods disappear."

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, the NJ Tree Foundation was awarded the first installment of this grant at the Cramer Hill Community Development Corporation in Camden. Mayor Dana Redd recognized the work of NJTF: "I can tell you we are a much greener city because of your efforts and support. And this is the type of partnership we need in Camden -- more women in leadership impacting the community."

Impact 100 Philadelphia was

founded in 2008 by Beth Margel Dahle and Mary Broach to bring together individual women in order to make a large, collective grant to a regional nonprofit organization. Impact members voted June 7 to award \$100,000 to the NJ Tree Foundation, as well as award two operating grants to the Federation of Neighborhood Centers (\$20,000) and to the SeniorLAW Center (\$19,000), both in Philadelphia. If you are interested in joining Impact 100 Philadelphia or applying for a future

grant, please visit <http://www.impact100philly.org/>.



**Jessica Franzini of NJTF stands with Camden residents Robert McGee, Gloria Banks, Jean Kehner, Luther Wallace, and Ollie Williams.**

## Camden Clean Campaign

Robert Corrales, Mayor's Office

Mayor Dana L. Redd launched a city-wide Camden Clean Campaign on June 8, 2010. This endeavor is an innovative initiative aimed to beautify the City, and restore pride and respect to its residents and its neighborhoods.

"I am extremely excited to kick-off the Camden Clean Campaign," Mayor Redd said. "The Camden Clean Campaign brings residents, businesses, and government together to advocate for a common goal, building a better, brighter, and cleaner future for Camden. "If we want our City to continue progressing and moving in the right direction, we all need to step-up and do our part."

The City will be divided into seven zones (neighborhoods). The CCC will engage community members to designate areas in their neighborhood that need special attention. Once specific lots, buildings, and/or parks are chosen, members of the community and various organizations will select a day to volunteer and clean-up those sites. The Camden Clean Campaign also seeks to improve the exterior facades of abandoned buildings by painting them and planting shrubs and other decorative greenery.

The next clean-up will occur on ?. Anyone interested in participating in the clean-up efforts should call the Camden Clean Campaign Hotline at 856-757-7671 or send an email to [Camden-Clean@ci.camden.nj.us](mailto:Camden-Clean@ci.camden.nj.us).

The CCC will supply tools, cleaning supplies and expanded garbage removal for citizens and friends of Camden during the clean-up dates.

Mayor Redd's initiative is generously supported and sponsored largely by Wachovia, a Wells Fargo Company and by PNC Bank. Both Wachovia and PNC Bank donated \$15,000 each for a total of \$30,000 to the CCC. Through these and other sponsors like the New Jersey Tree Foundation, the CCC will provide necessary tools such as trash bags, rakes, gloves, paint, and plants.

"Like so many urban areas, Camden has abandoned properties and overgrown and trash-strewn lots," Brenda Ross-Dulan, Regional President of Wachovia, said. "These create a negative image, economic instability and detract from public safety and quality of life. The Mayor's Camden Clean initiative addresses and mitigates these issues by

encouraging residents and volunteers to remove trash and plant trees, flowers and community gardens. We applaud her efforts and are pleased to partner with the Mayor and the City of Camden on this very worthwhile project."

"I am truly grateful to Wachovia, PNC Bank, and our many other corporate sponsors who have partnered with us to improve the quality of life in Camden," Mayor Redd said. "The Camden Clean Campaign sends a clear message to residents, businesses, and visitors – we want our City clean. This initiative will truly help revive and improve our image. It also restores pride in our City and makes us all proud to call Camden home."

**Clean-Up volunteers hard at work**

# Camden Lutheran Housing Homes for Sale!

New homes for sale are coming to North Camden. Tres Esquinas is named for the three corners at State and Second Streets where 5 twin homes will be built starting next year. Each home will include 3 bedrooms, 1.5 bathrooms, front porch, high-efficiency heating and central air conditioning, laundry closet and large clothes closets. Flooring will include carpet, ceramic tile and linoleum kitchen tile. Exteriors will be brick and stucco sided with off-street parking, fencing, lawn and storage sheds. All homes will be Energy Star-approved. They will be built to look like homes constructed on the 400 Block of State Street in 2008.

Camden Lutheran Housing is the developer and encourages anyone who is interested in purchasing their first home to call (856)342-8088 or come to the office at State and Ninth Streets in North Camden. Someone there can discuss income eligibility requirements, where to go for housing counseling and mortgage sources. Sales prices are expected to be \$55,000 and \$65,000.

Be among the few who will enjoy a terrific new home in an exciting, developing neighborhood near the waterfront. Call soon!

## What's Happening at Respond

### Judy Everts, Respond Inc

The Respond, Inc. New Worker Job Development Center continues to expand its programs and its presence as an anchor facility in North Camden.

On Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> the first Automotive Technology class will hold graduation exercises at 925 N. 8<sup>th</sup> Street (at Erie) at 11 a.m. The class has been in session for 22 weeks. Class members completed a one-week internship with J & N Motors in East Camden, and proved themselves to be capable and adept. Two members of the class have enrolled at Camden County College to continue their studies. Fall classes will begin in September.

The Culinary Arts center has added a new program this summer, a "Families Cooking Together" class through the Camden County Differential Response Initiative. Parents and teen age children are coming together four evenings each week to prepare a family meal, and serve and partake of the food they have prepared. A different family participates each evening for 20 weeks, learning healthy cooking, working together as a family, and consuming their product!

**The NJ Juvenile Justice Commission** class has expanded to two classes per day, and continues to show excellent results. October will be the start-up month for the class from the Camden County Correctional facility. Students complete the class prior to their release, and are well trained to become employed in the industry. Several of our students from the last class are working for the Riversharks this summer.

Adult Basic Education classes are expanding to include daytime weekday hours in September. There will be classes in Basic Skills, GED, and ESL. The Tuesday and Thursday night GED class will also be back. More specific information will be available by mid-August.

A highlight of the summer is Respond's hosting of an AmeriCorps team which is living in the community for six weeks. Among other tasks, the team will be painting selected houses on blocks in North Camden, cleaning and planting empty lots, building raised beds and assisting students in summer camp to develop and plant a vegetable garden. They will also participate in Respond's block-long family fun event scheduled for Saturday, August 14<sup>th</sup> between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Streets. Watch for flyers giving details about this free family event that features children's games and activities, food, information tables, music, fresh air and sunshine!

## Camden Clean and Safe Corridors!

### Robert Corrales, Mayor's Office

On July 1, 2010, Mayor Dana L. Redd and Police Chief John S. Thomson announced a new public safety initiative – the Camden Clean and Safe Corridor Program – that will focus on community patrols, cleaning-up of our city and revitalizing our neighborhoods.

"We are sending a clear message – we are ready to work in unity to take back our streets and neighborhoods," Mayor Redd said. "Ensuring the safety of our public and making parents feel comfortable letting their children play in front of their homes or at the playground is the prerequisite for everything we do as a society. The Camden Clean and Safe Corridor Program brings us a step closer to improving the quality of life for all our residents."

Safety Corridors are areas of the city which are being identified as vital passage ways and areas for our residents that have been infested with drugs and other criminal activities. This program will seek to revitalize these vital areas and return them to our law abiding residents and visitors.

"We need to work together, residents, law enforcement, elected officials, community leaders and city businesses to combat the illegal drug trade and illegal activity that plague our neighborhoods," Chief Thomson said. "Working together, we can take back our neighborhood...step by step, block by block."

The Camden Clean and Safe Corridor Program will also look to bring law enforcement and community volunteers to the Safety Corridors to patrol the parks and escort children through these corridors; from dawn to dusk, to create a safe and secure environment for Camden's youth. The goal is to infuse these Safety Corridors with law abiding, caring and safety motivated individuals to counter the criminals that are currently operating within these corridors.

The illegal drug trade thrives on community inaction and blight and this is why this program is promoting community involvement and clean up. This program seeks to empower the residents of these communities to take back their neighborhoods, step by step and block by block.

This new initiative compliments Mayor Redd's "Camden Clean Campaign" by making Camden clean, green, and safe for its residents and businesses.

The Mayor also officially "waved-in" the opening of the City's public pools. The public pools, along with the spray pools, are safe havens where Camden's youth and their families can go to escape from the summer heat.

*For more information about the North Camden Neighborhood Plan, or to submit an article for consideration, please contact: Cooper's Ferry Development Association at (856) 757.9154. All articles must pertain to North Camden, are subject to editing and should be between 100 to 250 words. Please visit [sow-Camden.org](http://sow-Camden.org) for more information, or contact Rod Sadler, Executive Director of SOW at 609-238-4031)*