

# sdcc Social Development Commission Journal

## Hundreds Connect with Jobs

Milwaukee residents seeking work were connected with potential employers at a series of job fairs coordinated by the SDC W-2 program.

Dozen of firms took applications and offered information on job openings at the career fairs held at SDC facilities and at the Wisconsin Army National Guard Armory on North Richards Street throughout the spring. The goal of the events was to link Milwaukee County residents seeking work with employment opportunities.



A young job seeker fills out an application at a W-2 Job Fair at the YWCA.

A wide range of employers talked with hundreds of potential new employees at the career fairs. Those firms included Manpower International, Masterson Personnel, Outpost Foods, Home Depot, Wells Fargo Bank, Avon, and Wisconsin Security Police Services.

The W-2 program is currently pooling their experience working with employers and potential employees with those of other agencies. W-2 has assisted in the job

component of SDC's Community Job and Resource Fairs that attracted hundreds of job seekers to apply for jobs. And W-2 program staff are helping coordinate employment resources for



Residents seeking work talk with a Manpower representative at a W-2 Career Fair held at the National Guard Armory.

the Milwaukee Fatherhood Initiative 6th Annual Fatherhood Summit in partnership with SDC being held October 7th and 8th. These job fairs and partnerships are examples of the varied job placement efforts coordinated by the SDC W-2 program that are actively connecting job seekers with employers.



An employer talks with an interested job applicant at a W-2 Mini-Job Fair.

## Rebuilding Homes and Lives

Monday through Friday, they help make homes of low-income Milwaukee County residents more energy efficient. In May, they spent a precious day-off helping a Milwaukee couple fix up their home.



SDC Weatherization staff volunteer to put up new gutters on a home.

Staff from SDC's Weatherization Program spent a Saturday participating in a day organized by Rebuilding Together Great Milwaukee. During the day, crews worked on the homes of low-income elderly and disabled residents to preserve and revitalize them.

The SDC Weatherization crew spent the day at the home of Russell and Charmaine. The couple

who suffer from a number of medical challenges has lived in their home for more than 20 years on the Westside of Milwaukee. Their house was found to be old with minimal insulation, has outdated and hazardous electrical service, deteriorating drywall, is in need of new gutters and down-spouts, and has a furnace that was in poor repair.

The SDC Weatherization crew spent the day working on the home, seeking to make it a healthier place as well as a more energy efficient and more affordable living space. The work performed by the volunteers will improve Russell and Charmaine's living conditions and allow for future work to be done on the home.



Homeowner and some of the volunteer staff from SDC Weatherization outside his home.

## SDC In The News

An SDC program garnered some positive national attention. CBS Evening News sent a crew to Milwaukee to do a story on how the Transitional Jobs Program is putting people back to work. In addition to spending time at a worksite and interviewing a program participant, CBS also interviewed CEO Deborah Blanks about the program.



CBS News Producer interviews Deborah Blanks about the Transitional Jobs Program for a CBS Evening News story.

## In-Kind Wish List

### PRIORITY ITEMS:

- Back to School Supplies & Backpacks
- Health & Hygiene products

### URGENT IN-KIND NEEDS:

- Gloves, scarves
- Men & women's socks
- Pillows & Blankets
- Towels
- Back Packs & school supplies
- Window insulator kits
- Electrical Power strips
- Door draft stops or sweeps
- LED night lights
- Electrical wall switch/outlets sealers
- Diapers
- Business Attire for interviews and work

### OTHER IN-KIND WISH LIST ITEMS:

- Art Supplies for Art Therapy Sessions
- Tickets to games, concerts etc. for families to attend together
- Grocery Store Gift Certificates
- Department Store Gift Certificates
- Board games, checkers, cards & puzzles
- Plants and flower baskets
- Paint
- Office supplies & stamps
- Printing services

\*Several times a year the Social Development Foundation hosts raffles and auctions to provide needed funds to our programs. If you have an item of service you would like to donate for the auction we welcome your gifts.

### HOSTING A COLLECTION DRIVE

Hosting a collection drive is a fun and rewarding way to give back to your community! Rallying together friends, family, co-workers, classmates and/or your church can be a fun way to build our community and directly support low-income families.

Call 414-906-2818 for more information.



Head Start Johnson Square students are recognized for completing the program.

## Youth Take a Step Forward

A group of preschoolers marked the completion of the latest stage in their education. Five year old members of the SDC Head Start- Johnson Square site were recognized at a Completion Ceremony.

The nine youngsters were singled out at the May celebration program for completing the Head Start program. They will be going on to continue their education at kindergarten next fall. Waunda Eison, Chairperson of the Parent Committee for the site, congratulated the children's families and urged them to continue encouraging the youngsters to keep learning through the coming summer months.

The SDC Johnson Square site is one of more than 20 Head Start locations the agency and its delegates operate throughout Milwaukee County. The program gets children ready for kindergarten with a blend of academic and social preparation, dental and health screenings, and parental involvement.

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Deborah Blanks

### Message from the Board Chair

As the newly elected Chair of the SDC Board of Commissioners, I invite you to learn more about this vital agency. I have been a member of the Board for more than five years and have become personally involved in a number of projects and committees for the Milwaukee County's Community Action Agency. Through my experiences, I have learned firsthand how SDC is impacting thousands of Milwaukee County residents. Please take a minute to read this journal and learn the many stories of how SDC is working to make a stronger and healthier community for us all.

Roy Williams, SDC Board Chair

### Social Development Commission

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### In this issue, learn about...

- Volunteer Spotlight Pg 2
- Ways to Work Success Story Pg 3
- W-2 Job Fairs Pg 4
- Weatherization Volunteers Pg 4

## July Job Fair

### Accessing Jobs and Much More

Hundreds of Milwaukee area residents were able to talk with employers seeking workers at the 5th Annual SDC Community Job and Resource Fair on July 9th.

The Fair was held at Parklawn Assembly of God Church and attracted more than 800 persons. The day featured a number of businesses and organizations seeking employees including Wells Fargo, Milwaukee County, the New Horizon Center, and Manpower Group.



Volunteers provide personal coaching at Community Job and Resource Fair.

The Job and Resource Fair also provided residents with the chance to get blood pressure and glucose testing, access to Child Support case workers, and Milwaukee Municipal Judge Derek Mosely who advised people seeking to get back their drivers licenses. Resources in the areas of Health, Finances, Housing, Education and Nutrition were also available to provide valuable direction.

A new aspect of the Fair was a group of personal coaches who were able to sit down with interested persons to talk about their goals and identify which vendors at the Fair best matched up with their needs. An area was also provided where persons attending could apply for jobs on-line.



Residents line up to participate in Community Job and Resource Fair.

## CEO's Corner

The economic recovery is coming but too slowly for far too many residents in Milwaukee County. Unemployment and underemployment impacts many families, keeping demand for our services and programs at a high level. The Social Development Commission continues to seek creative approaches to deal with the many impacts that this lingering poverty has on the individuals and families of the county.



Knowing we need to effectively deal with this, the agency is drawing up a new five year strategic plan. Work teams of staff have started developing a plan that will guide SDC in the future by prioritizing and refocusing our goals and efforts. With uncertainty in funding sources in both Washington and Madison, it is vital the agency have a strong vision of its mission and the plan that will allow us to achieve that.



Senior Companions staff show donated items for the Mother's Day Drive.

## Helping SDC Families

An effort focused on helping families coming to the agency made their lives healthier. A Social Development Foundation Mother's Day drive to collect donations of personal hygiene items was held in May and attracted efforts by SDC Commissioners, staff and volunteers.

Commissioner Hattie Daniels-Rush coordinated a drive for the items at her church, Holy Redeemer Church of God in Christ. Members the congregation stepped up and donated a large number of items like soap, toothpaste, and other sanitary products.

Virgie Wynn, another SDC Commissioner also collected items as did employees from programs like W-2 and Senior Companions. Those donations are being distributed to families enrolled in SDC programs to help them live a healthier lifestyle.



SDC Commissioner Hattie Daniels-Rush with contributions raised by her congregation for the Mother's Day Drive.

To successfully design and then implement the new SDC Management Plan, we are using a dynamic process called the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) system. The BSC will provide an excellent method to prioritize projects and measure outcomes for the agency as a whole and for individual programs. This will allow SDC to continuously improve strategic performance results and help us operate in an efficient and effective manner for our clients. The Social Development Commission Board will provide feedback on the plan which can serve as the foundation on which the board will develop the agency's strategic plan.

I hope you will enjoy and find educating the many articles in this edition of the SDC Journal. They will illustrate the depth and breadth of SDC services as well as involvement by members of the agency's staff and the community. I invite you to join us in our efforts to help Milwaukee County's low-income community realize their dreams of a better life.

Deborah Blanks  
Deborah Blanks, CEO  
Social Development Commission

## Calendar

**September 21 & 22** Commissioner Forums  
SDC Districts 1 & 2

**October 4** Commissioners Forum  
SDC District 3

**7 & 8** MFI & SDC Fatherhood Summit  
Destiny Youth Plaza  
7220 N. 76th Street

**November 9** 5th Annual Symposium on Poverty  
Italian Conference Center,  
631 E. Chicago Street

Visit [cr-sdc.org](http://cr-sdc.org) for more information on these events.



Two graduates celebrate earning their diplomas.

## Graduating to a New Life

38 men and women took a big step on the road to realizing their dreams. They graduated in May from the SDC GED/HSED program.

The graduates took coursework and tests at the SDC program to earn the equivalent of a high school diploma. Kristina McHenry, Vice Chair of the SDC Board of Commissioners, delivered the keynote address and in congratulating them, urged the women and men to continue their education. She asked them to do three things: set ambitious life goals, work every day to achieve them, and to identify mentors who can help them reach their goals.

Alex Edward, a 19-year old Milwaukee man, represented the graduating class during ceremonies. He described drifting away from school in his early teens into negative behavior until he found himself spiritually at the age of 18 and enrolled in the SDC GED/HSED program.



A new graduate shares her excitement.

For many of the GED/HSED graduates, the achievement is one in a series of goals they have set for themselves as they look to build a better life for themselves and their families. Many were surrounded by friends and relatives who shared in the joy of their success.



GED graduate Karl Jacobs celebrates a life goal with family and friends.

## Thousands Helped by Free Tax Program

A free tax preparation program marked its tenth year by honoring the volunteers who helped make it a success. The Milwaukee Asset Building Coalition (MABC) held its volunteer appreciation dinner in May.

The volunteer tax preparers learned that during the most recent tax season, they filed almost 11,000 tax returns that brought back more than \$15-million in tax refunds and credits to local residents. They also learned from Sheila Siegel of the IRS that in the ten years of MABC's existence, more than \$100-million has been returned to filers.

Sandra White, Division Manager for Adult Services at the Social Development Commission which is MABC's lead agency, said the free tax program has been able to put much needed funds back

## Delicious Fun Supports Foundation



SDC Commissioner Fred Royal cooks up dinner with some advice from Scott Steele of Today's TM4.

## Hitting the Links for a Good Cause



Jack Behlke of Klements Sausage and Susan Kim of Today's TM4 draw the name of a door prize winner at the Jeff Cirillo Golf outing dinner.

True and SDF Board Members Michael Webster and Dan Sweeney golfed and then bid on auction items, all to raise money for the Social Development Foundation. The Foundation supports SDC efforts including a yearly Youth College Tour and GED Graduation Ceremonies.

Jeff Cirillo told golfers following the day of golf at Geneva National Golf Course that he is glad to team up with SDC in supporting their programs that assist low-income families and individuals of Milwaukee County. The former Milwaukee Brewer player came to SDC two years ago with the idea of starting the charity tournament. During the dinner program MCed by Susan Kim of WTMJ TV, he also thanked corporate sponsors who include Klement's Sausage, Time Warner Cable and the Milwaukee Admirals for their critical support of the event.

The Charity Golf Classic was deemed a success in raising funds for SDC programs and Jeff Cirillo has announced that work is already underway to bring the event back for July of 2012.



Tony Smith of FSN tees off at Jeff Cirillo Charity Golf Classic.

into the hands of families to pay bills, buy clothes for their children, and begin to save money for the future. She thanked the individuals, businesses and organizations who make up MABC for their efforts to successfully help the community thrive.



MABC worker helps residents prepare their state and federal taxes.

An evening of festivities and fun supported the activities of the Social Development Foundation.

In February, the 2nd Annual Celebrity Chef Dinner was held at Benihana's Restaurant as a fundraiser for the foundation. Well known figures stepped up to serve as chefs for the event.

Among celebrity chefs were Jeff Cirillo a former Milwaukee Brewers player, Micheal King of the Wave, Scott Steele of WTMJ TV, Andrea Williams of Jammin' 98.3, Dr. Enrique Figueroa of UW-M, Don Cohen of Landmark Credit Union, Thelma Sias of We Energies, J.P. Cadorin of Time Warner Cable, and SDC's Board Chair Fred Royal. Serving as bartenders for the event were Willie Hines and Ashanti Hamilton of the Milwaukee City Council.

Silent auctions and a raffle were conducted in addition to the dinner, making the event a great success. Proceeds were designated to go to the Social Development Foundation which supports the programs and projects of SDC.

## Volunteer Spotlight: Rosemary Pearson

Rosemary Pearson is a registered art therapist who started working with youth enrolled in SDC programs two years ago. Each week she drives from her Kenosha home to Milwaukee to work with young people at the agency.

Rosemary offered youth through her art therapies a way to learn about and take steps to change themselves. Spending time on art has allowed the stressed youth to reflect on themselves.



Rosemary Pearson works with SDC youth on a wall mural project.

A recent art show in Walkers Point organized by Ms. Pearson showed off drawings, sculptures and poems created by the SDC youth around the theme of "home". The resulting work allowed the teen artists to express their feelings and thoughts about their current living conditions and what they would like them to become. Rosemary has also helped with an extensive mural painted by young artists in a well-traveled hallway of the agency's main Richards Street offices.

SDC Youth workers say the work Rosemary has done with the young women and men is extremely valuable and offers a way to both reach the youth and to allow them a constructive way to express themselves. They have described her as a "great asset" to SDC in working with young people.

## On the Road to Success

A Milwaukee woman is on the fast track to success, thanks to the Ways to Work Program. Nancy Yarbrough is the single mother of three children who was struggling to find family supporting work. She landed a part-time second-shift job on Milwaukee's far northwest side but was struggling to keep it because she had no reliable transportation to the job and buses do not service that area that late in the day.

That is when she heard about the Ways to Work Program, a national effort coordinated in Milwaukee County by SDC. She started working with the program, attending financial literacy workshops and sessions on what kind of cars are most affordable and reliable.



Nancy Yarbrough shows off the car purchased through Ways to Work.

When Nancy's low interest loan was approved by the Ways to Work staff at SDC, she went car shopping and found a 2002 Chevy Impala that was in good shape. Because she now had transportation to her job, she was able to take a full-time position with full benefits with the company and move to a day shift. She says this has made it easier for her to be home at night with her family as well as run errands and get to church.

Nancy credits Ways to Work with helping her get on the path to financial independence and called it "a blessing!"

## A Gift of Warmth

A volunteer is making sure elderly residents of a nursing facility stay warm during the cold Wisconsin winter. Martha Anderson is a volunteer for the Senior Companions Program of the Social Development Commission and part of her work in that program includes making regular visits to senior residents. As a Senior Companion, she helps the residents with light housework, making doctor's appointments, shopping and just being a friend.

On a visit earlier this past winter to one of her seniors who lives at Millway Rehab and Nursing Home, Martha noticed that a number of women residents at the home who are in wheel chairs appeared to be uncomfortable from the cool weather. Martha was at the time crocheting afghans and scarves through a group at St. Joseph Hospital and decided to put her skills to work for the chilled nursing residents at Millway.

Martha accepted the task of making lap blankets for the more than 20 female residents at the home who are in wheel chairs. Each lap robe takes about ten hours to crochet but she says she doesn't mind all the work. When asked why she has taken on the project to provide the crocheted items for the nursing home residents, she said she wanted to use her talents to give to others. And her gifts will do more than just keep the residents warm, they will show them there are people who care for them.



Martha Anderson of the Senior Companions program shows off a lap blanket she made for nursing home residents.

## SDC Annual Meeting



County Exec Chris Abele (left) talks with Commissioners Roy Williams and Kristina McHenry at the SDC Annual Meeting.

The future will hold many challenges and opportunities... that was the message at the Annual Meeting of SDC. The anti-poverty agency held its yearly meeting in June at ManpowerGroup Headquarters. Pamela Brown of Manpower noted in her welcome

that SDC and her firm have partnered during the last year on a number of projects including the Black Knowledge Bowl, providing volunteer readers at Head Start sites and participating in a Celebrity Chef dinner. The meeting attracted many community residents and leaders including County Executive Chris Abele.

and stated SDC needs to commit to work more efficiently to continue to achieve solid outcomes and real impacts on the low-income community in the challenging days that lie ahead.

Dr. Howard Garber of the Milwaukee Center for Independence gave the keynote address for the meeting. He presented a sobering look at the state of children in the Milwaukee area that included statistics like two-thirds of City of Milwaukee children up to the age of six living in poverty.



Kay Vang explains how the Energy Assistance Program works to visitors at the SDC Annual Meeting.

Auditor Baker Tilley was also presented to the Board that applauded the agency's controls and management practices.

## Youth Show Off Knowledge

Young people demonstrated that African American history is alive and well at the 3rd Annual Black Knowledge Bowl held in February at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Teams of Milwaukee area high school and middle school youth competed in the contest that tested them on knowledge of Black History. The event was sponsored by SDC and featured questions on a wide range of questions. Topics covered by the competition included Africa, Discovery and Industry, Milwaukee Black History, and Education and Science.

A team of youths from Urban Underground took the top prize in the high school age category, defeating a team from Grandview High School in the final round. Hickman Academy won the middle school bracket, overcoming a



Team members from Urban Underground consider their answer during the Black Knowledge Bowl.



A team from Grandview High School talk over an answer at the Black Knowledge Bowl.

team from Banner Prep in the finals. The final rounds were taped by Time Warner Cable and were rebroadcast on their Video on Demand Channel 1111 during the spring.

Jason Newton, anchor and reporter for WISN TV, addressed the participants in the Black Knowledge Bowl. He congratulated them on their strong showings at the contest but urged them to keep working to be their best and take their quest for knowledge to the next level. Deborah Blanks, SDC CEO, also encouraged the participants to continue their learning about the many contributions African Americans have made to the nation and to the world.

The Black Knowledge Bowl was made possible by Presenting Sponsor Cricket and support from We Energies, Landmark Credit Union, Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare, Associated Bank, Assurant Health and the Blood Center of Wisconsin.



Young father works on art projects with his two children at On My Shoulders graduation program.

## Reconnecting Fathers with Children

A pilot program is successfully connecting Milwaukee area fathers with the lives of their children.

The On My Shoulders program is improving the quality of father-child and co-parenting relationships among Milwaukee area families. The program is one of only a few pilot efforts being offered around the country. In Milwaukee County, it is coordinated by the Social Development Commission as part of the agency's Head Start Healthy Relationships and Marriage Enhancement Program.

On March 26, all participants of the On My Shoulders pilot class sessions were invited to attend a father-child event entitled Reading, Eating, and Doing Activities with My Dad (READ). Fathers gathered at this graduation and program celebration where they bonded with their children over various arts projects and literacy activities.

For many of the fathers, READ is the 3rd tier of SDC's family strengthening programming. The pilot is also part of the larger Fathers Strengthening Families program that seeks to create healthier relationships between mothers and fathers. Healthy Relationships Program staff noted the On My Shoulders program is helping fathers build more intimate, nurturing relationships with their children. More involvement by fathers in the lives of children, staff note, will mean stronger and more stable families for the youngsters and ultimately stronger communities.



On My Shoulders graduate proudly shows off his certificate to his two daughters.