PEC and Sustainable Communities

Kira Strong, Vice President, People’s Emergency Center
It is becoming clearer and clearer that an individual’s health is influenced by where they live.
“The social and economic environment, physical environment, and services found in a neighborhood all affect health outcomes.” (Policy Link 2002)
1. Expanding capital investment in housing and other real estate.
2. Increasing family income and wealth.
3. Stimulating local economic activity and connections to the regional economies.
4. Improving access to quality education.
5. Supporting healthy environments and lifestyles.
Fertile Ground for a Collaborative Partnership
SCI West Partners

The sum is greater than the parts
Philadelphia at a Glance

- Population 1,448,394
- Female 53%
- Median age 35
- White 47%
- Black 45%
- Asian 5%
- Hispanic/Latino 3%
- Per Capita $19,500
- Below Poverty 23%
SCI West at a Glance

- Population 28,479
- Female 52%
- Median age 31
- White 14%
- Black 77%
- Asian 6%
- Hispanic/Latino 2%
- Per Capita $14,200
- Below Poverty 38%
About PEC and the CDC
PEC provides a range of social services and housing activities to help homeless families achieve stability:

- Shelter and housing
- On-site counseling
- Employment, health, and parenting programs
People's Emergency Center (PEC) works to revitalize the West Philadelphia community through its CDC.
PEC’s Programs

As a powerful catalyst for change, we take a comprehensive, resident-driven approach to neighborhood revitalization that builds upon neighborhood assets and responds directly to the needs of the community.
In 2003, community stakeholders created the West Powelton/Saunders Park Neighborhood Plan.

The plan included:
- A five to ten year strategy for growth and development
- Quality of life improvements
- Housing, open space, and community development
- Economic development; and transportation improvements
PEC's Neighborhoods

- West Powelton
- Saunders Park
- Mantua
Program Overview

Through the CDC, PEC has grown from a supportive service housing developer to a comprehensive community organization that deals with the full spectrum of neighborhood needs.

Program areas:
- Affordable housing
- Economic development
- Quality of life
**Affordable Housing**

**Housing developments** involve a wide range of projects that address the need for affordable and moderately priced housing.
Affordable Housing

Transformed over 110 blighted properties into:

- 192 units of rental and ownership housing
- Four social service facilities
- Community playground
Economic Development

Stimulate growth along Lancaster Avenue:

- Safety and security measures
- Business retention and attraction
- Beautification
- Promotional activities
Economic Development

Growth:

- We have attracted over 25 new businesses to the corridor
- Enhanced over 11 commercial façades
- Improved the streetscape with new trash receptacles, flower planters, trees, mosaic tree pits
- Promoted public safety
Economic Development
Economic Development
Quality of Life

Programs include:

- Financial literacy workshops
- Credit repair assistance
- Homeownership seminars
- Digital Inclusion Program
The goals of the program are to increase the technological literacy of low-income families and increase their access to the internet.

- 238 computers have been distributed
- 474 students have participated in the technology programs
IT IS BECOMING CLEARER AND CLEARER THAT AN INDIVIDUAL’S HEALTH IS INFLUENCED BY WHERE THEY LIVE.
PEC Addresses Risk Factors

- Poverty
- Physical Environment
- Indoor Environment
- Public Safety
- Social Capital
- Access to Services
Poverty

Living in poverty can lead to higher stress levels and other health-related issues.

PEC’s works to increase economic opportunities and access to resources for the community.

- affordable housing
- creating jobs
- offering educational courses in technology and financial literacy
Reducing Poverty
PEC improves outdoor spaces throughout the community:

- Improving streetscapes with trees, art, and increased cleanliness
- Improving Saunders Park Greene
- Providing daily cleaning services on Lancaster Avenue
Improving the physical environment
Improving the physical environment
Indoor environments can be filled with exposures that have a negative effect on health.

PEC provides high-quality housing and has transformed over 100 vacant properties into nearly 200 safe and affordable homes.
Improving Indoor Environments
Public Safety

Crime is a source of injury and mortality and beyond that, fear of crime is a disincentive for outdoor recreation and physical activity.

PEC partnered with UCD to have their Safety Ambassadors patrol the Lancaster Avenue commercial corridor and helped to institute a local Town Watch group.
Increasing Public Safety
Social Capital

A community made up of civically engaged residents has greater leverage for attracting resources that improve health.

PEC strives to build neighborhood cohesion and to empower residents.

- Neighborhood planning processes
- Direct efforts to build the capacity of local organizations
Building community
Access affects health.

Access to medical services, other goods and services such as fresh foods, recreational facilities, and child care centers is very important to maintaining a healthy lifestyle.
Increasing access
Increasing access

Through PEC’s quality of life activities, we provide access to educational classes in financial literacy, computer skills, as well as a local childcare center.
Concluding Remarks

QUESTIONS?
Sources

Thank You