



Connecting Lawyers and Communities

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Community Legal Resources Awards over \$300,000 in Grants for Neighborhood Cleanup, Stabilization

DETROIT – July 15, 2011 – Beginning next week, Community Legal Resources (CLR) will issue 75 mini-grants of up to \$5,000 for a total of \$318,292 to community groups in Detroit as a part of CLR's Security Alternative Funding and Education (SAFE) program.

SAFE is the next step in the evolution of CLR's mini-grant program. Once a small program that provided assistance for neighborhood beautification projects, formerly known as the Community and Property preservation (CAPP) program, it has expanded to now include resident led safety initiatives.

CLR received over 130 grant applications in response to its request for submission in April. To help ensure a fair and balanced selection process, CLR convened four independent review committees comprised of community leaders from different areas of the City. As committee member Christine Kageff, Vice President of JPMorgan Chase Philanthropy & Community Relations, said, "The mix of representatives on the committee led to a lively discussion with different viewpoints that I think led to strong recommendations."

Funded activities range widely, from vacant lot landscaping and securing vacant properties to establishing neighborhood watch programs and CB radio patrols. Many groups will use a portion of its mini-grant paying stipends to young adults who help with neighborhood cleanup projects.

Special consideration was given to proposals that coordinate with existing neighborhood projects or collaborate with other local groups. Each funded activity is unique and will create tangible and positive results for its community.

One grantee, Julian Witherspoon of LaSalle Gardens Block Club, will use the mini-grant to cleanup several parks in his neighborhood, but says the real benefit is much greater. "It allows the community to come together," Witherspoon says, "creating a family-friendly place where neighbors can relax and get to know each other."

Included in the grant recipients are two Detroit Public Schools –Garvey Academy and Burton International School. Burton International will use the funds to implement a volunteer-led walking school bus, providing children in the area with safe passage to and from school.

Grant awardees range from large nonprofits to volunteer-only block clubs and are located across Detroit: 14 from the Lower East side, 12 from North End/Central Woodward, nine from Southwest Detroit, 12 from greater Downtown and Midtown, and 28 from remaining areas of the City.

MORE

CLR developed SAFE in response to its clients needs to create and pay for unique approaches to solving neighborhood issues. The SAFE program was made possible through generous funding from the Kresge Foundation, the Hudson-Webber Foundation, the JPMorgan Chase Foundation and the Community Foundation of Southeast Michigan.

Community Legal Resources supports and empowers nonprofit community organizations in Michigan that serve low-income individuals and communities – with an emphasis on community economic development – by providing pro bono legal services and technical assistance. Founded in 1998, CLR has provided over \$10 million in free legal assistance to over 1000 nonprofits in Michigan and vacant property related assistance to over 200 community organizations in Detroit. Find CLR at www.clronline.org and www.detroitvacantproperty.org and on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Peplemovers.

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