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Nonprofit Provides \$70,000 in Grants to Detroit Community Organizations

DETROIT – April 5, 2013 –Michigan Community Resources recently issued 16 mini-grants for a total of \$70,000 to community groups working in Downtown and Midtown Detroit. The mini-grants are part of Michigan Community Resources' (MCR) Security Alternative Funding and Education (SAFE) program.

The request for submissions was issued in fall of 2012, with grants awarded the first quarter of 2013, just in time for spring clean-up projects. This is the first round of mini-grants awarded by MCR with a focus on community-based organizations serving Downtown and Midtown Detroit. It is also the second round of SAFE grants issued in 2012, with the first round awarding over \$220,000 in grants to community-based organizations across Detroit.

Community-based organizations that received a SAFE mini-grant this round are:

- Peace Zones 4 Life
- Northeast/Central Woodward Alliance Governing Board
- Mt. Elliott Community & Business Association
- Detroit Mural Factory
- CLEAR Corps Detroit
- Greater Woodward Community Development Corporation
- Christ in Action
- Hyde Park Resident Association
- Friends of Martin Luther King Apartments
- Team 313
- MOORE Community Council
- Gratiot Avenue Business Association
- Spirit of Hope
- Children First
- New Horizon Community Development Corporation
- Making Detroit Better Community Development Corporation

In its fifth year, SAFE provides mini-grants to support community-initiated action. Once a small program that provided assistance for neighborhood beautification projects, it now focuses on funding projects that improve neighborhood safety and reverse the impact of vacant and blighted properties.

Each of the 16 organizations received a small grant of up to \$5,000 for short-term community-initiated projects, or to help fund ongoing projects of community import.

Funded activities range widely, from vacant property boarding, clean-up and solar light installation to greening streetscapes.

One community-based organization awarded a mini-grant was Mt. Elliott Business and Community Association (MEBCA). They are using their mini-grant to purchase a riding mower for the use of the community and expand their stipend program for vacant lot maintenance.

Jeff Percherski of MEBCA spoke about the positive outcomes the SAFE mini-grant will have on their community, “The grant from MCR will give us the ability to maintain each and every empty lot in our area. We are very excited to begin our summer mowing campaign with a new mower.”

MCR developed SAFE in response to its clients needs to create and pay for unique approaches to solving neighborhood issues. Since 2009, MCR has awarded over \$700,000 in mini-grants to over 75 community-based organizations in Detroit.

Shamyle Nesfield, director of education & outreach, oversees the SAFE mini-grant program, “The success of the SAFE mini-grant program proves that communities are sources of innovation and action,” she said.

“By equipping residents with financial resources to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, MCR is decreasing the negative effects of blighted properties in Detroit and setting a standard for property owners to keep neighborhoods safe and beautiful.”

Michigan Community 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, MCR has provided over \$12 million in free legal assistance to over 1000 nonprofits in Michigan and vacant property related assistance to over 200 community organizations in Detroit. Find MCR at www.mi-community.org.

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