

# Waco Community Development

*"We're revitalizing neighborhoods."*

July 2009



254-235-7358

1624 Colcord Ave.

www.WacoCDC.org

## Education, A Community Priority

By Walker Moore

During the last year, Waco Community Development joined with other groups to form the Greater Waco Education Alliance. This alliance was created to bring together different sectors of the community (e.g., businesses, educators, churches, parents, nonprofits, etc.) to support the education of Greater Waco's youth. The Alliance recognizes that education is not just the school's responsibility. It is also the community's responsibility. In this spirit, the Education Alliance has taken up a number of projects to support the education of Waco youth.

One of these projects has come out of the Alliance's nonprofit subcommittee, of which I am a member. In our discussion with educators, we realized that the efforts of nonprofits are not always aligned with the schools. For example, many nonprofits provide tutoring in reading, but too often nonprofits do not use the same methods that schools do. These well intentioned efforts become counterproductive, as the students become even more confused. In response, a partnership between the Education Alliance's nonprofit and education groups was created to provide training for tutors. This will ensure that tutors and schools are using the same reading methodology. This is not a cure-all, but it is a step in the right direction and an example of the Education Alliance's efforts to support education (for more information on the Education Alliance, please visit <http://www.educatewaco.com/>).

Waco Community Development's support of the education system is not limited to the Education Alliance. Through our Parental Engagement Project, we are actively working in our own neighborhood to support Brook Avenue Elementary and West Avenue Elementary. This program works with the two schools to increase parental involvement. We are helping the schools design and execute culturally relevant plans to increase parental involvement. The program is creating an environment where teachers and parents are working together instead of against each other. Make no mistake, issues still exist, but the schools and parents are beginning to come together. For example, both schools have always hosted Family Learning Nights. Family Learning Nights are designed to show parents what their children are learning and how they can help their children at home. In the past, only a handful of parents would attend. This year, both schools had a Family Learning Night with over 100 parents in attendance. Successes like these are changing perceptions. Parents are discovering the quality education their children are receiving, and the schools are realizing how much parents truly care about their child's education.

The Greater Waco Education Alliance and the Parental Engagement Project are great examples of the community working together to strengthen and improve the education of our youth. Community support of our schools is a necessary ingredient to quality education, and I am proud to say that Waco Community Development is actively supporting the education of our youth in our north Waco neighborhood and throughout Greater Waco.

## CALENDAR

**\*2009 Homebuyer Education  
Homebuyer Education I.  
6-8 PM for 6 weeks  
Begins Thursday, August 6th  
To register call (254) 235-7358.  
Classes are free!**

**\*September 12, 2009  
Homebuyer Education II.  
Saturday, September 12th, 1-6 PM  
Call the office to register.  
Classes are free.**

**Waco Community Development  
Board of Directors Meeting.  
\*Wednesday August 19, 2009**

***Board of Directors:***  
***Ken Cooper, President***  
***Carolina Ramos, VP***  
***Tim Holtkamp, Secretary***  
***Bill Shirley, Treasurer***  
***Melvin Carter***  
***Juan Castellano***  
***Billy H. Davis Jr.***  
***Walt Keeler***  
***Ada Nun***  
***Rev. Steve Ramsdell***  
***Dr. Gaynor Yancey***

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Issue 25 - 2009

Newsletter of Waco Community Development, a Christian-based organization committed to promoting housing, economic, and community development throughout Waco.

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Construction Manager

## ANOTHER PROUD HOMEOWNER!

Traze's "Welcome to the Neighborhood" party was a huge success! On a hot and humid July day, family, friends and neighbors joined together to celebrate with Traze.

Traze first heard about Waco Community Development last year through Waco Housing Authority's Family Self-Sufficiency Program. They introduced her to Darrell Abercrombie, and the rest was history.

Traze expressed appreciation for the support and encouragement Darrell gave her. As a result of her perseverance and Darrell's encouragement, she fulfilled her dream of becoming a homeowner.

Teresa Salinas, Waco Housing Authority's Director of the Family Self-Sufficiency Program attended Traze's party and said, "I enjoyed Waco Community Development's party for my former client Traze. I am very excited about her becoming a new homeowner and very proud of all of her accomplishments she made through the Family Self-Sufficiency Program."

**Congratulations Traze!**



## REPOSITIONING YOURSELF

By Darrell Abercrombie

Growing up in north Waco was one of the best things that could have happened to me. My family moved to North 10th in 1968. My oldest sister was in college and my other sister was attending West Junior High, the future site of West Avenue Elementary. As the youngest, I was attending Brook Avenue School, which was about one block from our house.

My parents grew up in the rural areas surrounding Waco. Most of my summers were spent with other family members, sisters, cousins, who worked, played and worshiped together in Elm Mott, Texas. Both of my parents worked and always told us that if we worked hard we would be able to do anything we wanted. My sisters and I all went to college due to the sacrifices that our parents made. Our parents wanted us to work hard, but things were different from when they grew up. 1968 was a new day and it called for a new outlook. Most of us know that even though you work hard things may not come out as you would like them. Just because you are busy does not mean that you are productive. So we would need to focus our energies and talents to get the most production out of them. We learned how to reposition ourselves in order to maximize our potential.

One of my good friends was a very gifted student and athlete. We played baseball together during our years at North Junior High School and played against each other when we went to opposing high schools. In college, we had the opportunity to play together again at Ranger Junior College and St. Edwards University in Austin, TX. Since we had played together for so many years, we were in tune to each others' abilities and talents. He had speed on the baseball field like Deion Sanders. He was a centerfielder, and I played right field. Due to his speed, I could reposition myself closer to the right field line to keep balls from falling in that normally would be base hits. I could reposition myself because I knew he had speed and range to cover what I could not.

In life, we need to reposition ourselves so that we can maximize our potential. Greatness is built on progress, and progress is measured from the starting point. Greatness is not an elusive state of temporary bliss. Repositioning yourself is meant to give you the tools to help you succeed. Success equals good grades if you are a student. Success is buying a house after many years of renting. It is closing a deal if you are in business. It is getting your GED no matter how long it has taken. There are valuable lessons to learn from losses and defeat. You learn to throw off limitations and behaviors that caused past defeats.

If you change a person's thoughts, you will change their ways. If you change their ways, you will change their actions. Too many times we think that we can continue to do the same old thing and get a different result. My parents lived in the industrial age. My daughter lives in the computer age. There is nothing wrong with the industrial age, but my daughter has to reposition herself to adapt to the changing times. She has to manage the challenges strategically rather than just getting by.

Transformation is a process that begins with the understanding that we can prevail over adversity if we refuse to accept the average or ordinary. You can succeed, because you have been trained to win, conditioned to prevail, and called to conquer. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Reposition yourselves so that you can maximize all your opportunities.

# Community Development and Homeownership in Rural El Salvador

By: Gabriela Gatlin

For a week in June, I had the great privilege to visit El Salvador on a "learning delegation" with members of my local church, Hope Fellowship, and folks from a couple of our sister churches in San Francisco and Evanston, IL.

We went to El Salvador to learn more about martyred Archbishop Romero's legacy of nonviolent action and the practice of reading the Gospel into our current realities. We went to learn about the art of Fernando Llort, and we went to learn about how a nation that has suffered through years of civil war attempts to remember the past and walk into the future.

We also traveled to El Salvador to continue the 17 year tradition of visiting the people of Valle Nuevo, a group of former refugees living in the hillsides of the state of Cabañas.

Prior to this year, I had already enjoyed the honor of visiting Valle Nuevo several times, but this year I went with my new experience as a housing counselor at Waco Community Development. My six months as a housing counselor helped me to appreciate Valle Nuevo even more, as I learned from the story of their community's effort to secure homeownership and build community.

Valle Nuevo and our neighborhood in north Waco seem to have very little in common. Valle Nuevo is a rural community. ALL of the residents speak Spanish, and FEW speak English! There is no waste management system. Potable water is piped to houses about once a week and is stored in uncovered basins. A favorite pastime of the young people is to sit in the center of the village by the soccer field and drink warm goat milk.

Despite these differences and more, I can see some similarities between Valle Nuevo and our north Waco neighborhood. Both communities have experienced flight and return. Both communities are struggling to build a local economy so that young people do not have to leave to find work. The positive activity of both communities is centered around local schools, youth recreation centers and groups of worship. Finally, both communities are working creatively to meet the housing needs of their residents.

You and I know about the efforts of Waco Community Development, other businesses, nonprofits and our neighbors to meet housing needs in north Waco. For Valle Nuevo, this effort to address housing needs includes the participation of Habitat for Humanity El Salvador and the incredible persistence of the community's leaders over 10 years to secure title to their land.

I would love to share with you more stories of Valle Nuevo. And thanks be to God for friends in other countries and contexts who can speak into our lives!

## ***Beware of Foreclosure Rescue Scams - - Help Is Free!***

Here are some tips that will help you recognize and avoid scams.

- Scam artists often target homeowners who are struggling to meet their mortgage commitment or anxious to sell their homes.
- Assistance from a HUD-approved housing counselor is FREE.
- Beware of anyone who asks you to pay a fee in exchange for a counseling service or modification of a delinquent loan.
- Beware of people who pressure you to sign papers immediately, or who try to convince you that they can "save" your home if you sign or transfer over the deed to your house.
- Do not sign over the deed to your property to any organization or individual unless you are working directly with your mortgage company to forgive your debt.
- Never make a mortgage payment to anyone other than your mortgage company without their approval.



## **CONGRATULATIONS TO JEFF GRAVENS!**

Waco Community Development would like to congratulate and pray God's blessing for Jeff Gravens. He was recently voted in as the 41st pastor of First Baptist Church of Crawford, Texas. Jeff's first Sunday to preach will be August 2, 2009. Jeff served as the Volunteer/Community Service Coordinator for Waco Community Development from September 2008 - May 2009.

## **THANK YOU!**

Waco Community Development thanks the Shield-Ayres Foundation for their generous grant. Thank you for supporting our Parental Engagement Project.

## **THANK YOU!**

Waco Community Development would like to thank the Bank of America - Waco for their generous grant. Thank you for helping us revitalize North Waco.

**\*Donations-Pledge Donations  
Memorials- Honorariums\***

**Waco Community Development offers you the ability to support our ministry through the giving of donations. Your generous donation, pledge, memorial or honorarium allows us to continue our mission of revitalizing one of Waco's historical neighborhoods.**

**TAKE A LOOK INSIDE OUR HOUSES!**



**1105 N. 14th St.  
\$83,000**



**826 N. 15th St.  
\$81,000**



**1110 N. 15th St.  
\$83,000**



**726 N. 13th St.  
REMODEL  
\$80,000**



**By the Numbers**

<b>Housing:</b>	
New Homeowners	108
New Homes:	35
Renovated:	10
<b>Opportunities:</b>	
Counseled:	933
Active:	145
<b>Maintenance:</b>	
Volunteers:	4,187
Vol. Hours:	22,514
Lots Mowed:	1,222

**MEET OUR NEW  
COMMUNITY SERVICE  
COORDINATOR**

Waco Community Development welcomes Dan Ritter to our organization. Dan comes to us from Spring, Texas and attends Baylor University studying political science and working on career plans. Dan is an Eagle Scout and an avid outdoorsman. He also enjoys exercising and reading. We are glad to have Dan as a part of Waco Community Development.



**Waco**  
Community  
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1624 Colcord Ave.  
Waco, TX 76707

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“Success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome.” Booker T. Washington

**Issue 26 - 2009**

**Newsletter from Waco Community Development.**  
*Waco Community Development is a Non-Profit, Christian-based organization committed to promoting housing, economic, and community development throughout Waco.*

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