

2005

14th Annual
Dorothy Richardson
Awards



NeighborWorks®

for Resident Leadership

August 22, 2005

In the mid-1960s, Dorothy Mae Richardson emerged as an impressive community leader. Richardson actively responded to an urban renewal movement that threatened to eliminate her inner-city Pittsburgh neighborhood. “I could see houses starting to lean, windows rotting away. The solution was not to tear down the whole neighborhood and move everybody into public housing. The solution was to fix the houses,” said Richardson.

Richardson created a coalition that garnered \$750,000 in grants from two major foundations and area lending institutions. These funds planted the seeds that created the Neighborhood Housing Services of Pittsburgh.

Through the NHS, Richardson remained a prominent figure in her neighborhood. During the 1970s and 1980s, she educated and inspired many community leaders throughout the country and assisted them with establishing their own resident-led organizations.

In an article in the *Pittsburgh Press* right before her death, Richardson explained why she never left her neighborhood. “I went to school there. I got married there. All my friends are there,” she said. Richardson died of kidney failure in April 1991.

Richardson’s community development model led Congress to charter NeighborWorks® America in 1978 with its mission to create resident-led organizations. Today, Richardson is honored for her foresight and leadership through the presentation of the annual Dorothy Richardson Awards.

Each year at the August NeighborWorks® Training Institute, an award is presented to a resident leader from each NeighborWorks® America district who exemplifies Richardson’s legacy.

Over and over again, resident leaders like Richardson rise to the challenge of strengthening and transforming their communities. Remember to thank the community leaders in your neighborhood, and if they are NeighborWorks® resident members, nominate them for this prestigious award next year.

Keep Dorothy Richardson’s Spirit Alive!

“I believe people get their roots down when they own their houses... take pride in them. That in turn, is good for the whole city. Why should a neighborhood be a slum when it can be a place of good livable homes?”



Dorothy Richardson

Dorothy Richardson

August 2005

Award Recipients

Evangeline “Vann” R. Best Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa
Tampa, Florida

Joe Contreras Sacramento Neighborhood Housing Services
Sacramento, California

Arturo Estrada Homewise
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Lisa Quintana Oak Hill Community Development Corporation
Worcester, Massachusetts

Amelia “Amy” Remmert Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Jesus Torres Rentas Ponce Neighborhood Housing Services
Ponce, Puerto Rico

Betty Jo Swanson Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Paula Warrenfeltz Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore
Baltimore, Maryland



As a resident and social worker in East Tampa for 36 years, **Evangeline “Vann” R. Best** brings priceless knowledge and experience to her community. Working with the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Best played an instrumental role in the East Tampa School/Community Partnership that brought together more than 30 schools, which included their respective parents, community leaders and organizations, in an effort to bridge the gap between school and community. Best wears many hats and fills many shoes; but most importantly, residents know her as “someone you can depend on through good times and bad.” Best also values the skills of others. Once she identifies her residents’ interests and skills, she incorporates them with her ideas. Best’s persistent, yet gentle, way keeps most residents motivated. She believes in partnerships and enjoys bringing people together to make things happen. Best dedicated more than 35 years to the Hillsborough County Head Start Program. Her life’s goal is to increase school participation and family involvement.



Joe Contreras, resident board president for Sacramento Neighborhood Housing Services, spearheads grassroots organizing, volunteer recruitment, and resident training activities. Contreras proudly shares stories with new volunteers that highlight how he evolved from a shy person who could not speak publicly into a confident one who gladly speaks as a knowledgeable leader before diverse audiences. He attributes much of this newly found confidence to his learning experiences with SNHS and the NeighborWorks® Training Institutes. In conjunction with SNHS and Contreras’s leadership through knowledge sharing, a strong and vibrant neighborhood association – Gardenland Northgate Neighborhood Association – was created. While serving as president for this neighborhood association, Contreras raised money for scholarship funds; organized a “Take Back the Park” event; and supported a local church with establishing a much-needed, after-school program.



Homewise, a NeighborWorks® organization in Santa Fe, New Mexico, attributes the strength of the Los Portales community to resident **Arturo Estrada**. As a new Los Portales resident, Estrada began an informal neighborhood association that met in his home. From this group, a neighborhood watch group evolved as well as a neighborhood publication entitled *Next Door News*, which was shared with the larger community known as Tierra Contenta. Once the association, watch group, and publication were firmly established, Estrada did what every great leader does – he delegated responsibility to others. When an infrastructure challenge arose in Estrada’s neighborhood, he sought assistance from Homewise. This sparked the beginning of a valuable relationship between Homewise and the Tierra Contenta community. Through a meeting that encouraged open dialogue and creative thinking, a difficult and contentious problem was solved. By emphasizing that a community problem is “everyone’s” problem, Estrada made this possible.



Lisa Quintana epitomizes the power and potential that resident leadership brings. As an active board member with the Oak Hill Community Development Corporation, Quintana worked with residents and the city of Worcester to accomplish small successes, like getting additional stop signs installed on their neighborhood streets. Building upon these successes, Quintana encouraged her neighbors to take on a more challenging task – to shut down a neighborhood bar that attracted local gangs and drug activity. Quintana organized a community walk that included both the city manager and the mayor. After witnessing first-hand the negative impact of this property, both the city manager and the mayor called for immediate action. Continued community outcry at council hearings and subsequent investigations revealed a history of unpaid taxes and liquor license irregularities. As a result, the bar was closed. As an advocate for action, Quintana does not wait for someone else to do something. She does it.



Currently serving as board president with Kalamazoo Neighborhood Housing Services, **Amelia Remmert** leads by example. Remmert's leadership revealed itself when the KNHS faced a financial crisis with its loan pool. Since Remmert worked for a financial institution, she approached her employer, who agreed to provide funding to the KNHS loan pool until a new pool could be implemented by all the community partners. Although Remmert holds numerous high-visibility leadership positions throughout her community, she is not afraid to get her hands dirty. According to Remmert, "I believe that the only way to make change is to take an active role in your community. Quality of life issues are very important to me, and I'm not afraid to roll up my sleeves to get the job done." If there's a community challenge to be met or a meeting to be attended, Remmert will be there.



Jesus Torres Rentas serves as a board president with Ponce Neighborhood Housing Services. In this role, he advocated for the expansion of the NHS impact area, which now reaches more people in need of its services. Under Rentas' leadership, 15 new neighborhoods have been organized and are working toward shared community goals. Residents have praised Rentas for his role in returning affordable housing to the Biaggi sector, one of the most economically disadvantaged neighborhoods in the Ponce community. Like many outstanding leaders, Rentas serves in various roles in his community. His passion includes not only developing better neighborhoods but also developing residents' self-esteem, which empowers them to become active community members. Residents often quote Rentas as saying, "I was born, and I live to serve."



As block club president, **Betty Jo Swanson** attacks her community challenges head on. She rallied her neighbors and involved police, community leaders, and local officials to halt the downward spiral of her neighborhood. Working with the Neighborhood Housing Services of Chicago, Swanson concentrated on eliminating vacant buildings, such as those referred to as “New Jack City,” where constant shooting and drug trafficking occurred. Through Swanson’s efforts, “New Jack City” became the first NeighborWorks® Day project in her Auburn Gresham/Englewood community. As a result, this property has been transformed into a community garden. During a related press conference in September 2004, Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley praised Swanson for drawing attention to the issues caused by blighted communities. “Just one bad building on a block can create a devastating cycle of deterioration and erode neighborhood confidence,” remarked Daley. Swanson holds that memory as one of her proudest moments. “My block is testimony that things can turn around.”



At the forefront of most successful community programs in Baltimore’s Greater Hillendale community, you’ll find **Paula Warrenfeltz**. Her voluminous community leadership experience reads like a “Who’s Who” in community development. Through the Neighborhood Housing Services of Baltimore, Warrenfeltz led an effort to hire a community organizer for the NHS program. She not only contributed to writing the grant application, but she personally advocated for the grant before the Baltimore Neighborhood Collaborative. When Warrenfeltz was asked by BNC what the community would do if the grant was denied, she confidently answered, “We’ll get the money someplace else!” In response, BNC awarded the full grant, totaling \$150,000. Understandably, Warrenfeltz has been referred to as “the internal spring that keeps things happening.”

Previous Dorothy Richardson Award Recipients

1992

June Garcia
Highland United
Neighbors Inc.
Denver, Colorado

Lennon Kennedy
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Jamaica
Jamaica, New York

Rose Espinoza
La Habra Neighborhood
Housing Service
La Habra, California

Ural Campbell
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Milwaukee
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

1993

Ruth Henderson
Neighborhood Housing
Services of New Haven
New Haven, Connecticut

Ann Kennedy
Scranton Neighborhood
Housing Services
Scranton, Pennsylvania

Rick Rios
Neighborhood Renewal
Services of Saginaw
Saginaw, Michigan

Carol Seneff
San Diego Neighborhood
Housing Services
San Diego, California

1994

Floyd "Pete" Elliott
Cumberland Neighborhood
Housing Services
Cumberland, Maryland

Marian Hager
Los Angeles Neighborhood
Housing Services
Los Angeles, California

Rioto Medina
Tierra del Sol Housing
Corporation
Las Cruces, New Mexico

Clarissa Walker
Southside Neighborhood
Housing Services
Minneapolis, Minnesota

1995

Gwen Finegan
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio

The Rev. Juan A. Gonzalez
Miami-Dade Neighborhood
Housing Services
Miami, Florida

Eddie Mae Lewis
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Birmingham
Birmingham, Alabama

Shirley Randolph
Boise Neighborhood
Housing Services
Boise, Idaho

Mary Ella Whitfield
Mutual Housing Association of
Southwestern Connecticut
Stamford, Connecticut

1996

William Scot Barraclough
Salt Lake Neighborhood
Housing Services
Salt Lake City, Utah

Naomi Brown
Savannah Neighborhood
Housing Services
Savannah, Georgia

Lilia Cooper
Urban Edge Housing
Corporation
Roxbury, Massachusetts

Mary Lou Gomez
La Habra Neighborhood
Housing Services
La Habra, California

Thomas James Jr.
Richmond Neighborhood
Housing Services
Richmond, Virginia

Betty Lewis
Neighborhood Housing
Services of St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri

Cynthia Ortiz Ramirez
Midland Neighborhood
Housing Services
Midland, Texas

Edward Saunders
Kensington-Bailey Neighbor-
hood Housing Services
Buffalo, New York

George Stovall
Louisville Neighborhood
Housing Services
Louisville, Kentucky

1997

Dolores Cansler
Project Renew
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Justo Correa
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Dimmit County
Carrizo Springs, Texas

Frank Corso
East Bluff Neighborhood
Housing Services
Peoria, Illinois

Linda Daggett
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Great Falls
Great Falls, Montana

Jack Hill
Neighborhood Housing
Services of the Inland Empire
San Bernadino, California

1998

Amanda Alcock
Rocky Mountain Mutual
Housing Association
Denver, Colorado

Chris Calloway
Chattanooga Neighborhood
Enterprise
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Jacqueline Castillo
Salisbury Neighborhood
Housing Services
Salisbury, Maryland

Danyel Davis
Kankakee Neighborhood
Housing Services
Kankakee, Illinois

Vincent Davis
Housing Partnership Inc.
West Palm Beach, Florida

Neil Giacobbi
Ithaca Neighborhood
Housing Services
Ithaca, New York

Matthew Gleason
Oak Hill Community
Development Corporation
Worcester, Massachusetts

Cleophus Mills, Jr.
Arkansas Land and Farm
Development Corporation
Marvell, Arkansas

Yer Yang
San Diego Neighborhood
Housing Services
San Diego, California

1999

Olympia Boucree, Ed.D.
Neighborhood Housing
Services of New Orleans
New Orleans, Louisiana

Lucy Brown
Ithaca Neighborhood
Housing Services
Ithaca, New York

Nettie Ford
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Kenosha
Kenosha, Wisconsin

Rev. Joseph H. Garlic
Brand New Day
Elizabeth, New Jersey

Betty Greene
Urban Edge Housing
Corporation
Roxbury, Massachusetts

Tolisa Jamison
Vallejo Neighborhood
Housing Services
Vallejo, California

Joe Manzanares
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Pueblo
Pueblo, Colorado

David McEachern
St. Petersburg Neighborhood
Housing Services
St. Petersburg, Florida

Gwen Winfrey
Knox Housing Partnership
Knoxville, Tennessee

2000

Lynn Barnhart
Burlington Community
Land Trust
Burlington, Vermont

Faye Connolly
Anchorage Neighborhood
Housing Services and
Anchorage Mutual Housing
Association
Anchorage, Alaska

Michael Flynn
West Side Neighborhood
Housing Services
Buffalo, New York

Julio A. Guridy
Allentown Neighborhood
Housing Services
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Andrew R. Mickle
Neighborhood Housing &
Development Corporation
HomeOwnership Center
Gainesville, Florida

David O'Dell
Central Texas Mutual
Housing Association
Austin, Texas

John W. Purce
Pocatello Neighborhood
Housing Services
Pocatello, Idaho

James Simmons
West Humbolt Neighborhood
Housing Services of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Sister Dinah White
Neighborhood Renewal
Services of Saginaw
Saginaw, Michigan

2001

Thomas Beehan
Housing Development
Corporation of the
Clinch Valley
Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Elise Dreher
Argenta Community
Development Corporation
North Little Rock,
Arkansas

Eugene Green
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Reading
Reading, Pennsylvania

MaryAnn Hampton
Los Angeles Neighborhood
Housing Services
Los Angeles, California

Mae Ruth Harrell
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Housing Partnership
Charlotte, North Carolina

Inky Meng
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Green Bay
Green Bay, Wisconsin

Anita Murillo
Salt Lake Neighborhood
Housing Services
Salt Lake City, Utah

Jerry Poole
Mutual Housing Association
of South Central Connecticut
New Haven, Connecticut

Kelly Walters
UNHS NeighborWorks®
HomeOwnership CenterSM
Utica, New York

2002

Ernest Atiyeh, Jr.
Allentown Neighborhood
Housing Services
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Bettye Baker Houston
Roseland Neighborhood
Housing Services of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Debra D. Clark
Pocatello Neighborhood
Housing Services
Pocatello, Idaho

Louella Grayson
Miami-Dade Neighborhood
Housing Services
Miami, Florida

Christina Jones
Neighborhood Renewal
Services
Saginaw, Michigan

Grace V. Lawrence
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Northern Queens
Woodside, New York

Nellye Joyce Punch
Fifth Ward Community
Redevelopment
Corporation
Houston, Texas

Sondra Roberts
Inglewood Neighborhood
Housing Services
Inglewood, California

Luz Sanchez
Twin Cities Community
Development Corporation
Fitchburg, Massachusetts

2003

Ersilia Cruz
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Pueblo
Pueblo, Colorado

Tracy Degges
Manchester Neighborhood
Housing Services
Manchester, New Hampshire

Norma Garces
Foundation Communities
Austin, Texas

Lucretia Hunt
NeighborWorks HomeOwner-
ship Center®
Utica, New York

Floyd and Myrtis Minor
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

James Patterson
Neighborhood Housing
Services of Birmingham
Birmingham, Alabama

Linette Robinson
Manna Community Develop-
ment Corporation
Washington, D.C.

Beatrice Warfield
Neighborhood Housing Part-
nership of Greater Springfield
Springfield, Ohio

Darnell Watson
Los Angeles Neighborhood
Housing Services
Los Angeles, California

2004

Pamela Cates
Gwinnet Housing Resource
Partnership
Norcross, Georgia

Meg Grande
NHS of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

James K. Howard
Pasadena NHS
Pasadena, California

Maye Johnson
Project Renew
Fort Wayne, Indiana

Mishell Lilly
West Elmwood Housing
Development Corporation
Providence, Rhode Island

Andrea Pardo
El Centro, Inc.
Kansas City, Kansas

Kerra Thurston
Community Housing Partners
Corporation, Inc.
Charlottesville, Virginia

Cleola Williams
Avenue Community
Development Corporation
Houston, Texas

Strengthening Resident Leadership

NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing Initiative

The NeighborWorks® Community Building and Organizing Initiative develops, coordinates and implements strategies that support NeighborWorks® America's core value of resident-led community development. The initiative strengthens NeighborWorks® resident leadership development by building leadership capacity through technical assistance and training.

The NeighborWorks® System

NeighborWorks® America

A national nonprofit organization created by Congress to provide financial support, technical assistance, and training for community-based revitalization efforts.

NeighborWorks® Network

A national network of more than 235 community-based organizations creating healthy communities through the work of thousands of residents, business people, government officials, and other partners.

Neighborhood Housing Services of America

Provides direct financial services to NeighborWorks® network organizations by serving as a unique secondary market that brings assets to communities suffering from disinvestment and decline.

NeighborWorks® has successfully built healthy communities for more than 25 years.



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NeighborWorks® America

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