

## **November 2010 Newsletter**

### **The October 21<sup>st</sup> Credit Workshop Well Attended**

The Somerville Community Corporation collaborated with Cambridge Savings Bank to host an evening workshop on Credit. We had 22 participants who attended and learned about how credit works, the things that can hurt and help your credit and ways to improve your credit score. The participants really enjoyed it and many said that they learned things that they never knew and felt that they had a better understanding of credit and things they could do to improve their own personal credit. For information on future classes, contact Sam Davidson-Weiss at 617-776-5931 x225.

### **Somerville Rallies for Affordable Housing!**

Early Thursday evening approximately 80 Somerville community members and affordable housing supporters gathered with sleeping bags, pillows and signs at the front steps of City Hall to protest the recent denial by the Zoning Board of Appeals of an affordable housing proposal that would have provided stable housing to six homeless families in Somerville. "In my back yard!" was just one of the chants that echoed against the brick building as Alderman filed past the crowd en route to their bimonthly Board of Alderman meeting. The energy was palpable as multiple community members voiced their frustration and anger at the recent decision to deny these families a home. One woman, a homeless resident at a local shelter, stood before the crowd and spoke to the hardship of caring for her son, who has multiple disabilities, without a stable place to live. Another formerly homeless resident stood with her daughter and described the positive impact that having a home has had on herself, her four children and her young granddaughter.

With final cheers of support and a clear message that everyone in Somerville deserves a place to sleep, the group made their way up the steps of City Hall and into the Board of Alderman Chamber. There they expressed their disapproval of the decision and presented a resolution demanding City leaders to work with the community in creating implementable strategies for achieving the City's own goal to provide permanent housing for homeless families and to promote affordable housing throughout the city. Despite pushback from several Aldermen, the board unanimously voted to approve the resolution and committed themselves to move forward with the community in taking action so that all people can afford to live in the city. Somerville residents are mobilizing to make sure that this promise is kept!

### **Saint Polycarp Village Update - Retail, Sustainability and Phase 2!**

You may have noticed there's a lot going on at Saint Polycarp Village these days. Avalon Dental Center, the third retail business in SCC's newest building, is opened for business! Avalon Dental accepts all insurances, including MassHealth, and offers new patient specials. Support a local business and maintain your oral health at the same time. They can be reached at 617-776-9000.

With Avalon Dental open alongside Central Convenience and the Just-A-Start Futures GED and job training program, our goal of providing a retail presence along Mystic Avenue has been fulfilled!

SCC has also been successful in meeting our goals of minimizing the impact that the Saint Polycarp Village Apartments building has on the environment, and on the people who live there. Our Certified status from the US Green Building Council's LEED for New Construction green building rating system has been updated to Silver! Silver status reflects the design team's emphasis on energy efficiency, water conservation, renewable energy, use of recycled and healthy building materials (low VOCs), and the location of the site near public transit and amenities, among other items.

Related to that, installers are currently putting up solar thermal panels on the roof of the building. These panels will directly heat hot water tanks in the basement and generate heat for 50% of the domestic hot water used in the building. The solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are also up and running and will offset the common area electricity inside and outside the building. If you'd like to see how much electricity the PV panels are generating on a given day, go to :

<http://www.solrenview.com>

Our other good news is that SCC has been awarded the final pieces of funding needed from the MA Department of Housing and Community Development and we can now move forward with Saint Polycarp Village Phase II. Phase II will consist of twenty-nine 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom affordable rental units in three, four-story buildings around a courtyard. The buildings will be located across Butler Drive from the Phase I building. Four units will be reserved for formerly homeless individuals and families, and 2 will be reserved for clients of the Mass Rehabilitation Commission. There will also be a community room and a playground. We hope to begin construction in early winter 2011 and be completed in fall 2011. We're looking forward to continuing to revive this underutilized parcel.

## **Calling All LDI Graduates**

Calling all graduates from the first 3 years of LDI (Leadership Development Institute)! We are holding an all day intensive advanced leadership training on Saturday, December 4th. Mark your calendars! Details to follow.

## **A Successful MACDC Convention!**

On Saturday October 16th, 400 board members, staff members, and community leaders from across the State gathered at Holy Cross College in Worcester for the Mass. Association of CDCs 5th biennial convention, including 15 from SCC. Senior Project Manager Courtney Koslow was honored with one of MACDC's Rising Star awards, Community Organizer Tito Meza co-facilitated one of the convention workshops on working in immigrant communities, and CEO Danny LeBlanc moderated the appearances of 3 of the candidates for Governor in the upcoming election. For more details go to MACDC's website at

<http://www.macdc.org/about/conventions/2010>