

Former Hitchner Building to be renovated by UNC

UNCDC recently purchased and is working to restore the historic Hitchner Biscuit Company property, located at 530 Exeter Avenue in West Pittston, to its former significance in Luzerne County. The dilapidated, four-story building that was considered an eyesore in the community since its vacancy in 1951 will now be a site of future hope and prosperity by offering affordable housing.

In keeping with the Borough of West Pittston's development objectives, it is UNCCDC's plan to rehabilitate the main building into

18, general occupancy units including 6 one-bedroom, 7 two-bedroom and 5 three-bedroom apartments.

The proposed development

will complement and enhance the residential character of the neighborhood and, in particular, the newly renovated public park situated directly across the street.

The property was sold to UNCCDC in December after nearly two years of fundraising. The Hitchner development team is comprised of Ralph Melone of Melone Architects, Charles Grimm Construction and Graysha Harris of



The Hitchner Biscuit Company building as it stands in its current state. The property will be turned into affordable housing by UNCCDC with 18 apartment units.



An architect rendering of what the former Hitchner Biscuit Company property in West Pittston will look like when UNCCDC's construction is complete in 2012.

GKH Consulting Company, as well as UNCCDC, which will act as the Developer/Management Agent. Construction is expected to begin in Spring 2011.

JUNC NEWS
Newsletter of United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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The mission of UNC is to work together with neighbors to provide services and create opportunities which empower individuals and build strong interdependent communities.

All questions regarding this publication should be referred to Alison Woody, Communications Coordinator, at awoody@uncnepa.org. If you wish to no longer receive this newsletter, please contact Bob O'Brien at (570) 346-0759.

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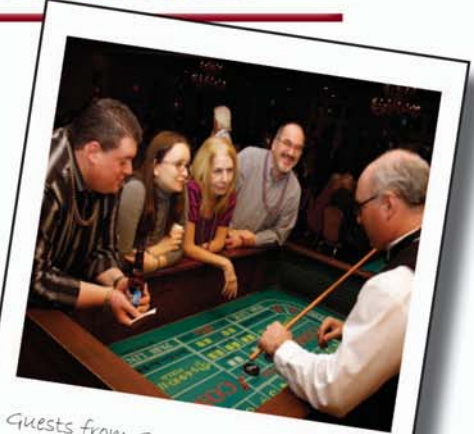
UNC NEWS

11th Annual Mardi Gras Another Success

On Friday, March 4, UNC celebrated its 11th Annual Mardi Gras fundraiser at the Radisson in downtown Scranton. The yearly event, which benefits the agency's emergency food and clothing bank Angel's Attic, raised over \$19,000— an increase over last year's totals. The celebration was made possible in part by Gold Sponsors PNC Bank, Bank of America and Sanofi-Pasteur, as well as many others.

The night featured music by Doug Smith's Dixieland All-Stars and fortune tellers. Table games, such as blackjack and poker, were available that guests could play to earn chips for a chance at the grand prize of a 3 day, 2 night vacation to Cove Haven Entertainment Resorts. The grand prize was eventually won by Pat Fortunato. A silent auction and basket raffle were also held at the end of the night.

UNC would like to thank everyone who supported and attended the event. We hope to see you at Mardi Gras 2012!



Guests from Genesis Healthcare enjoy UNC's 11th Annual Mardi Gras Celebration by taking part in a game of craps to earn chips for a chance at the night's grand prize.



Event attendees get ready to enjoy their meal at the Radisson in downtown Scranton. From left to right: PA Senator John Blake, Louise Blake, John Hennemuth, Diane Hennemuth, Gene Korjeski, Kim Korjeski, Kelly Swift and Peggy Swift.



Doug Smith's Dixieland All-Stars provided entertainment for the 11th Annual Mardi Gras Celebration all night.



A guest shows off her festive Mardi Gras mask.

Local non-profit SCOLA merges with UNC

State and federal budget cuts to literacy funding have caused SCOLA Volunteers for Literacy to merge with United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania, effective as of April 1.

This strategic move will enable SCOLA to continue as a program and service of UNC, using the same SCOLA staff and network of volunteers. UNC will provide administrative oversight while a greater portion of SCOLA's funding will be applied to direct services. This move will enable UNC to increase its services and forward its mission of "creating opportunities to empower individuals and build strong interdependent communities". The boards of directors of both organizations approved the merger. The current SCOLA board will function as an advisory board for SCOLA activities as of the merger date.

Michael Hanley, UNC Executive Director, explained, "Bringing SCOLA's adult literacy mission under our umbrella fits well into the UNC focus. We will

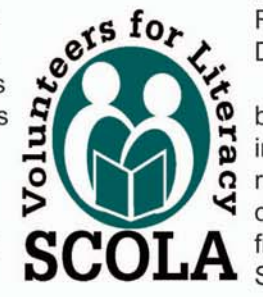
provide the administrative oversight while the SCOLA volunteers will continue assisting both native and foreign-born adults in acquiring the basic reading, writing and life skills necessary to function effectively in society."

Diana Statsman, SCOLA's Executive Director added, "There will be a smooth continuity of services as SCOLA transitions under the UNC umbrella. SCOLA will continue to exist as a distinct, volunteer driven organization. The only difference is that I can now retire knowing that SCOLA is in capable hands." Stephanie Bressler, former manager of the Elm Street Revitalization Project, is now UNC's Director of Adult Literacy.

SCOLA Volunteers for Literacy has been providing confidential literacy instruction at little or no charge to adult residents of Lackawanna County for over 30 years. It currently serves adults from its offices on Boulevard Avenue in Scranton.



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Letter from the Executive Director

This is a historic time for United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania. We have now officially merged with SCOLA Volunteers for Literacy, a 30 year-old agency in Scranton that has been providing adult literacy and English as a Second Language for new immigrants in our community. This move harkens back to the history of settlement house agencies, much like UNC, that were originally founded in the latter part of the 19th Century in New York and Chicago to assist new immigrants assimilate into society and move toward citizenship. With the increase of new immigrants in Scranton, which has been confirmed by the latest census data, the services of SCOLA are now more important than any time in our recent history.



Unfortunately, state and federal budget cuts over the past few years threatened the ability of SCOLA to continue. Now, under the umbrella of UNC, SCOLA has a new lease on life and we are proud to count them as a program at United Neighborhood Centers. Through this merger we hope to be able to extend the scope of services offered to families and individuals already involved with UNC, as well as reach out to new participants by making SCOLA programs more accessible through our nine locations in Lackawanna County. The struggles of SCOLA are an indication of the state of non-profit organizations providing vital services throughout our community. With the recent, as well as pending, budget cuts we are challenged to make the best use of each and every dollar entrusted to us. The merger of SCOLA and UNC will do just that. So, as we enter this wonderful spring season, we wish you all the excitement that we feel as we embark on this new and exciting venture.

Michael Hanley
Michael Hanley

UNC conducts Christmas Toy Store

United Neighborhood Centers held their annual Christmas Toy Store giveaway to help families put presents underneath the tree for their children during these tough economic times.

On Tuesday, December 21 presents were distributed throughout the Carbondale region and on Wednesday, December 22 families who participate in Project Hope and Childcare programs were invited to receive a toy at the Progressive Center. Parents were also treated to a slideshow of their children that culminated the 2010 year at Project Hope Summer Camp and its 40th anniversary. The general public was invited to come on December 23.

Thanks in part from community donations and Toys For Tots, UNC helped close to 400 families this holidays season by distributing over 2,500 toys.



Around the Agency

UNC Board of Directors recently elected new officers for the 2011-12 year. The officers are Kevin Rogers, President; Betty Burns, 1st Vice President; Dr. Paul Kaczmarcik, 2nd Vice President; Gail Waters, Secretary; Rose Broderick, Assitant Secretary; and Kathy Price, Treasurer.



United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania was recently selected as one of only four national recipients of an Advocates for Youth grant to support lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) teens. The grant will be used to create public service announcements made by the youth, promote HIV prevention and turn UNC's teen centers into "safe spaces."

Bank of America has graciously awarded a \$25,000 grant to UNC to successfully continue their Foreclosure Prevention program. In the past year, UNC met with 310 clients who had entered or were near to entering foreclosure, a 300% increase from previous years.

UNC was chosen as one of three finalists by the Greater Scranton Chamber of Commerce for the 2010 Nonprofit Organization of the Year Award. The Chamber's annual awards ceremony was turned into a red-carpet gala this year held at Lackawanna College. Being recognized for the significant work UNC does throughout the Northeast PA community is an achievement all its own.



In December, youth members of the Inner City Music Program hosted a First Friday event at the Melberger Arts Gallery where they performed and auctioned off a mural they created with the help of local artist, Ted Michalowski. After the event, the mural was anonymously donated back to UNC where it will be hung in the Progressive Center for all to see.



The Green Ridge Childcare Center, located at 1917 Boulevard Avenue, recently announced a new pre-school program for children 3-4 years of age. The Center is a 3-star rated center by the Pennsylvania Keystone STARS performance standards and is open Monday through Friday,



Teens in UNC's photography program hosted an exhibit and spaghetti dinner fundraiser at the West Side Senior Center. The group raised over \$300 to put towards a trip to Washington, D.C.



The older adults from UNC's four senior centers- Mid Valley, Carbondale, South Side and West Side- came together for a day of dancing and fun with their families for their first annual Christmas Celebration.



UNC hosted a variety of activities as part of the City of Scranton's MLK Day. Members of UNC's Youth Performance Troupe performed a skit about segregation and Jim Crow laws.



The UNICO choir sings a Christmas song in Italian at UNC/Elm Street's "Here We Come A Caroling" event at the South Side Senior Center on December 15. The event brought together different ethnic choirs from Scranton.



Members of UNC's Leaders in Training held a pancake breakfast on February 26 to raise money for their scholarship fund and graffiti prevention program.



Two members of the South Side Senior Center celebrate St. Patrick's Day. The center hosted live music, food and dancing throughout the day.